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Contact:
democracy@welhat.gov.uk

* Reporting to Cabinet

7 January 2025

You are requested to attend a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL to be held on Thursday 16 January 2025 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

AGENDA
PART 1

1. **APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS**

To note any substitution of Panel Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rules.

2. **MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2024 (previously circulated).

3. **NOTIFICATION OR URGENT BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM 9**

4. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS**

To note declarations of Members' disclosable pecuniary interests, non-disclosable pecuniary interests and non-pecuniary interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

5. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS**

Up to thirty minutes will be made available for questions from members of the public on issues relating to the work of the Committee and to receive any petitions.

6. **MARSHMOOR MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**
(Pages 5 - 110)

Report of the Assistant Director (Planning)

7. LOCAL PLAN EARLY ENGAGEMENT AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME UPDATE (Pages 111 - 126)

Report of the Assistant Director (Planning).

8. LOCAL PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2023/24 (Pages 127 - 192)

Report of the Assistant Director (Planning).

9. SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN, IS OF SUFFICIENT URGENCY TO WARRANT IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Panel is asked to resolve:

That under Section 100(A)(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting for item 11 (if any) on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) and Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

In resolving to exclude the public in respect of the exempt information, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

PART II

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF A CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT NATURE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

<u>Circulation:</u>	Councillors	K.Thorpe	L.Musk
		R.Platt (Chair)	S.Thusu
		S.Bonfante	L.Gilbert (Vice-Chairman)
		S.Goldwater	P.Shah
		T.Kingsbury	M.Hobbs
		G.Michaelides	J.Quinton

Co-opted Members:-
Tenants' Panel Representatives
To be appointed

Senior Leadership Team
Press and Public (except Part II Items)

If you require any further information about this Agenda please contact Democratic Services, Governance Services on or email – democracy@welhat.gov.uk

Part I

Item No: 0

Main authors: Matt Pyecroft & Conor Matthews

Executive Member: Cllr Rose Grewal

Wards: Welham Green & Hatfield South

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL – 16 JANUARY 2025
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PLANNING)

MARSHMOOR MASTERPLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Marshmoor is a large strategic site in Welham Green, east of the railway line and west of the A1000. Policy SP23 of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan allocated the site for around 40,500sqm of employment and around 100 dwellings, the largest employment allocation in the Plan. The policy states that a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide future development will be prepared and that any application for development should be preceded by and consistent with the masterplan.
- 1.2 A Development Framework SPD, containing development principles for the Marshmoor site (also referred to as the Hatfield Innovation Campus by the landowner for marketing purposes) has been prepared by the landowner and their consultant team, in collaboration with officers from Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council. These principles ensure the site is planned comprehensively to deliver a high quality employment site and to ensure that the site integrates as well as possible with the rest of Welham Green. The document has been prepared in line with the Council's Approach to Masterplanning Guidance note which was endorsed by the Council in March 2024.
- 1.3 SPDs are non-statutory documents that build upon policies in Adopted Local Plans to give more detailed guidance on how policies or proposals will be implemented. Prior to adoption SPD's must be subject to a minimum of 4 weeks public consultation¹. Representations made during this period must be considered by the council and summarised in a report identifying the main issues raised and how these have been addressed in the SPD.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel (CPPP) recommend to Cabinet that
- a) the Marshmoor Masterplan, as detailed in Appendix A, be taken forward for public consultation for a period of six weeks;
 - b) any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content prior to consultation be delegated to Assistant Director (Planning) in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning; and

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Regulation 12

- c) if unanimously agreed by the Panel, for the decision to be taken by the executive member using their delegated powers under paragraph 18.1(b) of the Cabinet procedure rules.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016-2036) sets out the Council's strategy for delivering growth in the Borough over the Plan period up to 2036. This includes the development of new neighbourhoods masterplanned to create new sustainable locations incorporating the principles of high-quality design.
- 3.2 The Plan sets out that a comprehensive approach will be taken to large sites. Masterplans will provide a spatial framework that will be agreed by the Council prior to the determination of any relevant planning application. They will set out the vision and objective for the development; establish the quantum and distribution of land uses; identify sustainable transport linkages and a movement hierarchy; and establish the core design concepts for the site, building on the principles set out in the Local Plan.
- 3.3 Masterplanning is not a one-size-fits-all approach, the process is based upon a collaborative approach to identifying and resolving issues, creating a vision for what the site aspires to achieve, testing design options and seeking views upon preferred solutions. The output of this process is a Masterplanning Framework or Masterplan which is presented to members for consideration.
- 3.4 Marshmoor (also called Hatfield Innovation Campus by the landowner) is a large strategic site in Welham Green, east of the village and railway line and west of the A1000. Much of the site is currently undeveloped though a number of homes and businesses front the A1000, and there is a parkhome site on Marshmoor Lane. The site was removed from the Green Belt by the adoption of the Local Plan in 2023.
- 3.5 Policy SP23 of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (adopted October 2023), allocates the Marshmoor site for approximately 40,500sqm of employment space and around 100 dwellings, which it is intended would be linked to the employment space and occupied by those working at the site. The policy contains a requirement for the production of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide further guidance on site specific matters including (but not limited to) the quantum and distribution of land uses, sustainable design and layout principles, sustainable access and transport measures, treatment of ecological and heritage assets, landscaping, relationship with existing properties and uses, SuDs, and phasing and delivery of infrastructure. Any application for development should be preceded by, and consistent with, the masterplan.
- 3.6 A Supplementary Planning Document for Marshmoor has been prepared and is included as Appendix A. The document has been produced by the landowner's consultants Tibbalds on behalf of the landowner Gascoyne Estates. Officers from WHBC and HCC have reviewed the document at various stages of production and provided feedback.
- 3.7 A project liaison Group was established, this comprised Local Councillors and a representative from North Mymms Parish Council who, along with Council officers, attended a series of meetings to discuss development of the Masterplan and content of the SPD, and undertook a site visit. Attendees were presented with

information on various topics such as transport and accessibility and land use, and given the opportunity to discuss and provide critical feedback.

- 3.8 In June 2024 an early draft of the proposals were presented and tested at the Hertfordshire Design Review Panel, an independent and impartial process for evaluating the design quality and sustainability of development proposals in Hertfordshire. Following a site visit the panel of multidisciplinary experts reviewed the draft masterplan and gave constructive criticism, the feedback from which was considered by the consultant team and responded to in the document, and the Liaison Group were briefed on the report.
- 3.9 The Draft Development Framework SPD is now at the final stages of production and is presented here for consideration (see appendix A). Following an introduction to the Local Plan policy requirements for the site, the document provides a contextual analysis of the current site, identifying issues and constraints such as heritage, ecology and landscape, flood risk, connectivity and acoustics. This is followed by an explanation of the lengthy engagement process that has fed into the vision, including the land owners response to the observations of the June 2024 Hertfordshire Design Review Panel. This has contributed to a five point vision and series of Development Objectives, with a series of Design Principles underneath each of the Objectives. These Objectives are:
- i. A new nationally recognised “Innovation and Technology” campus for Hatfield.
 - ii. A rich biodiverse and climate responsive landscape at the heart of new development
 - iii. A well connected neighbourhood supporting active and sustainable travel
 - iv. A well integrated and sensitive neighbour
 - v. An exemplar of high quality design and sustainability.

Statutory Requirements for Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.10 Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) do not form part of the statutory development plan and as such cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan. SPD's should build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. In this case the main policy is Policy SP23. Once adopted SPD's are a material consideration in the decision making process and as such draft SPD must be subject to consultation.

Public Consultation

- 3.11 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 require that prior to adoption of a Supplementary Planning Document, a Local Planning Authority (LPA) must make the document available for inspection for a minimum of four weeks for the purpose of seeking representations. In accordance with regulation 35 a document is taken to be made available by a LPA when it is available for inspection at their principal office and at such other places within their area as the LPA consider appropriate, during normal office hours, and published on the LPAs website (regulation 35).

- 3.12 Following consultation and prior to adoption of an SPD, the LPA must prepare a statement setting out: the persons the LPA consulted when preparing the SPD; a summary of the main issues raised by those persons; and how those issues have been addressed in the SPD. Copies of this statement and the SPD itself must be made available in accordance with Regulation 35.
- 3.13 It is proposed that the Draft Marshmoor SPD undergo a six week public consultation commencing as soon as possible. The consultation will take place online, paper copies of the document and response forms will be deposited at locations as per the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and as required by regulation 35. The landowner is to arrange an in-person information event to supplement the consultation activities of the council.
- 3.14 The consultation seeks to gain public comments on contents of the SPD and Masterplan proposals. The results of consultation will be presented to a meeting of the Council to inform any decision on adoption.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.15 The Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) require that an assessment is carried out of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. This includes those plans and programmes prepared and/or adopted by any authority at a local level, including supplementary planning documents. A plan or project may also require a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA), as set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) if it is considered likely to have significant effects on a habitats site.
- 3.16 An initial SEA / HRA screening report has been produced by WHBC for the Marshmoor Development Framework SPD. Based on the available evidence and taking account of the relationship of the proposed SPD to the adopted Local Plan it is considered that the SPD would not give rise to activities that would result in significant environmental effects of a type or scale different to those already considered in the SA (SEA) or HRA of the Local Plan.
- 3.17 Officers are therefore of the opinion that the SPD does not require environmental assessment under the provisions of the above regulations. The regulations require that the screening report, once prepared, should be sent to the three statutory consultees for SEA: the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England. The screening report will also be made available as part of the consultation on the SPD and is included at Appendix B.

Next Steps

- 3.18 Following the close of public consultation, the SPD will be amended as required and, together with a summary of the representations received, will be reported to CPPP ahead of progressing to Cabinet and a meeting of Full Council. Full Council will then decide if the SPD should be adopted.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 There are no direct legal implications associated with this report. Consultation on the draft Marshmoor SPD will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the

Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Once adopted the SPD will become a material consideration in determining applications for development of the Marshmoor site.

5 Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly in relation to this report. If adopted by the Council the SPD will be a material consideration in determining planning applications for development at Marshmoor and as such will provide greater certainty for developers and decision makers. The purpose of such an approach is to reduce the risk of poor quality applications coming forward, being refused and then going to a costly planning appeal.

6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 Production of a Masterplan SPD for Marshmoor in Welham Green is compliant with local plan policies SP9 and SP23. The masterplan SPD provides a framework to guide future sustainable development of the site and should help to shape development proposals by setting standards for layout, design quality and phasing of development in the interests of the community. The masterplan will provide a useful tool for officers when negotiating with developers and determining applications for development and should therefore reduce the risk of uncoordinated poor-quality development coming forward.

7 Security and Terrorism Implication(s)

- 7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications arising directly in relation to this report.

8 Procurement Implication(s)

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications arising directly in relation to this report. The Marshmoor Masterplan SPD has been produced by the landowner and their consultant team with input from Council Officers.

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 9.1 The masterplan proposes development on what is currently a greenfield site and as such has several climate change implications. Construction of this scale will use high levels of raw materials and energy, whilst operation of the development will obviously lead to greater energy consumption. Development of undeveloped land will inevitably lead to more hard surfacing which can have implications for surface water runoff and drainage. The masterplan includes a drainage strategy plan, but further details of mitigation measures will be necessary at the planning application stage.
- 9.2 The masterplan identifies sustainability principles and promotes sustainable design and forms of development both in terms of construction and function of the site. Having a masterplan in place should help to secure more sustainable forms of development by setting a framework for more detailed design and providing a tool for officers when reviewing applications and negotiating with developers.
- 9.3 Council officers have undertaken an initial SEA Screening of the Draft SPD, the outcome of this process concluded that full SEA/ HRA screening is not required.

This screening had been sent to appropriate statutory bodies, the result of which will be reported to Council in due course.

10 Human Resources Implication(s)

- 10.1 There are no Human Resources implications arising directly in relation to this report. The draft SPD consultation process will be managed by Council Planning Officers as part of their existing workload. The presence of a masterplan SPD for development management purposes will assist planning officers in decision making.

11 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

- 11.1 Health and wellbeing has been considered in the masterplan design process. The masterplan aims to facilitate active travel by providing attractive environments for walking and cycling and ensuring provision of public transport along with links to existing networks. The form of development and layout of streets has been designed to provide pleasant environments to encourage community engagement.

12 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)

- 12.1 The allocation of the site for development has been consulted upon and the subject of examination by the Inspector of Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan over several years. The Landowner has also undertaken a range of engagement exercises over several years. The masterplan builds on the policy requirements of the Adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2106 - 2036) and has been the subject to engagement with the Liaison Group.
- 12.2 Formal consultation on the Draft Masterplan SPD will be the responsibility of the Council. Council officers will manage this process as part of their usual workload, and the results of the consultation will be reported to members at a future date.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 13.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Plan, in particular Priority 1: Attractive and accessible green spaces – providing a variety of green spaces for all communities to enjoy, Priority 3: Quality homes through managed growth – delivering affordable homes to meet local need, high quality housing thriving neighbourhoods and sustainable communities, and Priority 4: A sense of community where people feel safe - Design and maintain attractive neighbourhoods which our communities can enjoy and take pride in.

14 Equality and Diversity

- 14.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was not completed because the draft SPD does not introduce any new policies to what is already contained in the adopted local plan. Additionally, this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

Background papers: None

Appendices

Appendix A: Marshmoor Welham Green (also known as Hatfield Innovation Campus)
Masterplan SPD

Appendix B: SEA / HRA screening report

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MARSHMOOR, WELHAM GREEN

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT | 2025

DRAFT



**WELWYN
HATFIELD**

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I.0 INTRODUCTION

I.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This SPD sets out the ambitions for the Marshmoor SPD area and the associated development site to deliver Hatfield Innovation Campus. This SPD has been produced through close collaboration between Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and a key landowner in the SPD Area, Gascoyne Estates.

This report is a Supplementary Planning Document supporting Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's Local Plan 2016-2036 to guide and provide further detail for development on the SDS7 Policy Area.

CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

This report sets out the baseline and contextual analysis of the policy, spatial and environmental context of the SPD area, outlining its key opportunities and constraints that inform the vision and spatial framework.

The key opportunity for the site lies in its strategic location within the London-Cambridge Innovation Corridor. There is an anticipated demand for employment space supporting innovation and research industries more widely around Welham Green and Hatfield. The SPD area provides a distinct opportunity to address some of these demands.

The site has considerable constraints, including: a railway line running along the west; limited connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists; areas of medium to high flood risk; multiple veteran trees; existing sewers and watercourses; woodlands and hedgerows of high ecological value; Public Right of Way routes; electricity pylons and buffer zones on either side; and sensitivity to existing residential uses and areas of heritage value. These collectively constrain wholesale development across the SPD area and require a more sensitive and nuanced approach to development.

The development site has therefore been divided into three development zones. These zones reflect the impact of constraints.

VISION

The vision for the Marshmoor Policy Area is supported by five Vision Statements. These statements set out the long term ambition for any proposed developments and interventions.

Hatfield Innovation Campus will be well-placed in this context to contribute to the wider innovation ecosystem as it is situated in the London-Cambridge 'science corridor' with many Research and Development uses and campuses in proximity.

The SPD sets out five overarching vision objectives that all development proposals should respond to by supporting their delivery in the short, medium and long term. The vision for the SPD area outlines ambitions for:

1. A new, nationally recognised 'innovation and technology' campus.
2. A rich, biodiverse and climate-responsive landscape at the heart of new development.
3. A well-connected neighbourhood supporting active and sustainable travel.
4. A well-integrates and sensitive neighbour.
5. An exemplar of high-quality design and sustainability.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The Vision Statements are supported by Development Objectives, which set out 'What' are essentially commitments and deliverables for the development. These Objectives collectively help to achieve the long-term vision and should be used as key criteria against which applications will be appraised.

For example, under the second vision statement relating to a rich, biodiverse and climate responsive landscape at the heart of new development, the development objectives require that proposals should demonstrate how they:

- *Implement a landscape-led approach that responds to the existing environmental sensitivities to create a positive working environment and place to live.*
- *Provide a variety of landscape and environmental conditions, creating space for amenity, events, experimentation and respite to support talent attraction and retention, collaboration and knowledge exchange.*
- *Ensure management and restoration of habitats to enhance biodiversity, supporting the landowner's ambition for the integration of wildlife into operations, working at scale to deliver abundant natural landscapes.*
- *Enhance existing ecology and mitigate for site conditions such as air and noise pollution and flood risk through careful site planning and integrated water management.*

Similar objectives are provided for each vision statement.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Design Principles support both the Vision Statements and Development Objectives, setting out 'how' these objectives should be achieved with actions and prompts for design decisions. These sometimes relate directly to development objectives, at other times they are more directly linked to the vision. These are intended to inform the design development process and should be addressed through pre-application processes and engagement with the local authority and key stakeholders as a clear brief and output for the associated developments is realised.

For example, Principle 2B supports both the vision statement no.2, and the development objectives that sit below it through requiring proposals to:

- *Create a large, central and distinct green open space at the heart of the new campus that connects different development parcels together.*

SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

The Spatial Framework illustrates the key spatial parameters linking to the Design Principles - this is the first step in the process of translating the design principles to a spatial proposal. This framework provides a baseline which proposals can adapt and add detail to as design decisions are tested and agreed.

The Spatial Framework sets out parameters for consideration and for demonstration through design proposals, such as sensitive edges, vehicular access to the site, indicative locations for a central, unifying landscape, potential areas for SuDs and other landscape interventions - all of which reflect the contextual analysis, but will require more detailed surveys to inform design decisions supporting planning applications.

ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The illustrative masterplan provides a high-level example of how development could be realised in the SPD area to deliver on the vision and objectives by applying the principles on site. It outlines certain assumptions that the layout and block sizes respond to. It demonstrates one of several ways that development could come forward on the site.

I.2 PURPOSE AND STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT

This report is a Supplementary Planning Document supporting Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's Local Plan 2016-2036 to guide and provide further detail for development on the SDS7 Policy Area.

Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies into the development plan. They are however a material consideration in decision-making. They should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2018 to 2021) and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Published: 13 September 2018
Last updated: 4 October 2021

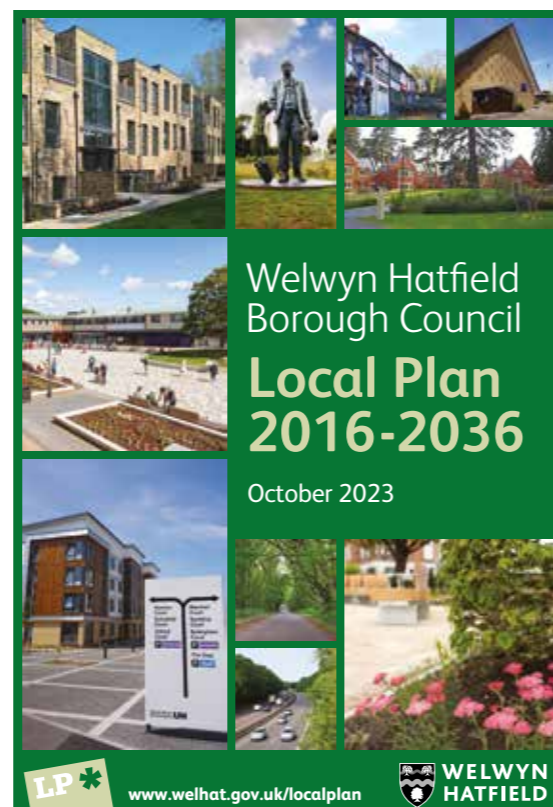


Fig I.1

Cover page for the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Local Plan 2016-2036

I.3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016-2036: Policy SP23

In the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2023) Policy SP23 provides in-depth guidance for one of the borough's strategic sites (SDS7 and other land within the wider Marshmoor Policy Area). The SDS7 site is allocated for a mixed-use development containing 40,500sq.m of employment floorspace (Class E(g) and 100 dwellings (Class C3) which will provide affordable accommodation for those employed at the SDS7 site. The accommodation will be primarily for employment use and will form part of an incentive for business owners to attract skilled workers.

Development proposals within the SDS7 site and Marshmoor Policy Area will be required to comply with Policy SP23.

The delivery of SDS7 will need to address the specific issues set out in SP23 alongside other material considerations, outlined in this SPD, in order to bring forward successful development on SDS7 and to ensure development in the wider area is acceptable.

SP23 provides a basic framework for this Marshmoor Policy Area SPD, which will also guide development in the wider area.



Fig I.2

Extract of Figure I5 from the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Local Plan 2016-2036, outlining SDS7 (WeG4B) Marshmoor Policy Area

Policy SP23 requires that the final quantum and phasing of development within SDS7 will be set out within the Supplementary Planning Document.

Access and Movement

There are limited usable footways, cycle lanes or Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the land east of the railway line, and currently the connectivity between Marshmoor and Welham Green (west of the railway line) is poor due to the lack of suitable routes and appropriate crossings for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair-users. Therefore, key to the success of any development proposals within the Marshmoor Policy Area, and in particular SDS7, will be the creation of routes through the Marshmoor Policy Area for those wishing to travel without the use of a motor vehicle throughout the site and into Welham Green.

Policy SP23 requires:

1. Primary vehicular access into SDS7 should be taken from the Dixons Hill Road/A1000 roundabout;
2. A new secondary vehicular access, or the intensification of an existing access, onto the A1000 to serve SDS7 will only be supported if there is a demonstrable need to facilitate development of SDS7 and any access proposals comply with the Council's movement and highways policies;
3. Proportionate provision or contribution toward improvements, in line with the Welwyn Hatfield Infrastructure Delivery Plan, must be made for:
 - Accessibility and movement throughout the Marshmoor Policy Area;
 - Connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between the Marshmoor Policy Area and Welham Green Railway Station and village centre, as well as other origins and destinations in the wider area that have a demonstrable relationship with the proposal, such as other town and neighbourhood centres, local primary schools and educational establishments; and
 - Rail and bus transport accessibility of the Marshmoor Policy Area and to support wider sustainable travel initiatives, including improved bus stop facilities and support for bus services that serve the Marshmoor Policy Area.

Heritage, Landscape, Ecology and Design

Hatfield House Historic Park and Garden is Grade I listed and lies immediately to the east of the SDS7 and Marshmoor Policy Area. Development of SDS7 and other development in the Marshmoor area will be expected to improve this part of the setting of the heritage asset and at least mitigate any adverse impacts upon its significance.

The protection/enhancement of Wildlife Sites (Millwards Park and the Marshmoor Lane Grassland Strip) will also need to be considered in development proposals for the SDS7 site.

Policy SP23 requires:

1. A Heritage Impact Assessment may be required for development proposals, depending on their location, scale and relationship to Hatfield House and Hatfield House Historic Park and Garden. Impact Assessments should inform the siting, layout, scale and overall design of development so that substantial harm to heritage assets is avoided, any less than substantial harm is minimised, and opportunities to improve the setting of those heritage assets are implemented;
2. Proposals will be required to adopt a high quality landscape-led approach to design, with significant planting of tree and shrub species that maintain and enhance a verdant setting across the Marshmoor Policy Area and enhance biodiversity;
3. Proposals will be expected to retain a substantial set back of buildings from the A1000 in order to help mitigate heritage impacts and noise and air pollution;
4. Proposals on land within close proximity to the A1000 will be required to incorporate high quality and extensive tree planting within those areas closest to the A1000 in order to help mitigate heritage impacts, improve the setting of Hatfield House Park and Garden, create and improve the general appearance of a countryside setting, and maintain the perceived separation between the Marshmoor Area and Hatfield when travelling along the A1000;

5. The design of the main vehicular access into SDS7, boundary treatments along the northern side of Dixons Hill Road, and the scale of built development and its relationship with the Dixons Hill Road frontage should create a verdant and spacious gateway and route into and out of Welham Green that also reflects the open countryside context to the south and east of Dixons Hill Road;
6. Building heights should be restricted to minimise heritage impacts, and in general should be lower in the eastern and far northern areas of the site;
7. Boundaries to existing residential development are appropriately designed and landscaped to protect the amenity of those residents, particularly where the proposed development adjacent to them will be for employment uses;
8. The siting and design of development, including the use of landscaping and buffers, should support the mitigation of air and noise pollution arising from the railway and A1000 in order to minimise the need for mechanical ventilation within buildings; and
9. Proposals should provide appropriate protection, and where possible enhancement, of identified wildlife sites and critical environmental assets that would be affected, notably Millwards Park and the Marshmoor Lane Grassland Strip Wildlife Sites and Water End SSSI.

Flood Risk and Drainage

At present, the northern and southern parts of the Marshmoor Policy Area and SDS7 in particular are prone to surface and fluvial flood risk with the considerable potential to affect the siting and design of development. Flood risk will be expected to be key consideration in the layout and design of proposals, and where possible any flood risk mitigation measures should seek to improve flood risk within and beyond the policy area if possible.

Policy SP23 requires:

1. A more detailed understanding of flood risk associated with SDS7 will need to be established via a Flood Risk Assessment, informed by detailed hydraulic models where necessary, that takes account of all sources of flood risk, in particular fluvial flood risk from ordinary watercourses and surface water flood risk. Any Flood Risk Assessment should be informed by the Council's latest Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 report and Level 2 assessment of the Marshmoor Area. The recommendations and guidance set out in the Level 2 assessment for the Marshmoor Area should be considered and addressed in full;
2. The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems should be prioritised to manage surface water runoff and flood risk;
3. A sequential approach to layout within SDS7 should be adopted so that built development is confined to Flood Zone 1 and avoids areas identified as being at high risk of surface water flooding, taking account of the vulnerability of the proposed uses and mitigation afforded by the Sustainable Drainage System;
4. Flood risk management solutions, including Sustainable Drainage Systems, within the site should seek to reduce flood risk to third party land and the wider area wherever possible; and
5. Necessary new utilities infrastructure, in particular upgrades to the local sewerage network, are provided.

Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)

The LTP4 was adopted in May 2018 and sets out the future transport vision for Hertfordshire. This framework covers the period up to 2031 and provides a balanced approach to guide all forms of transport, which seeks to encourage a switch from private vehicles to sustainable modes of transport. Due to the high levels of car-ownership, poor east-west connection, high levels of cross-boundary commuting and complicated movement patterns, it is evident that there is a need for better travel solutions. It has been noted that transport is key to facilitating economic growth and delivering sustainable housing developments, and the objectives and principles within this document aim to tackle the future increase in travel demand. Therefore, new developments will be required to take into consideration the LTP4 policies, in order to prioritise sustainable transport modes. LTP4 also sets out a user hierarchy for new developments which focuses on the needs of sustainable modes of private vehicles.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

In October 2023, the LCWIP was adopted which showcased the shared central government’s ambition to make cycling and walking the desired choice for both short and parts of longer journeys. This document highlights the benefits that are associated with active travel and identifies the aspirations for the Welwyn Hatfield Borough such as the creation of routes and prioritising infrastructure improvements, which influence the connectivity across the borough and nearby areas.

Two area boundaries have been used throughout this report, to illustrate where studies and analysis have been carried out and where proposed interventions are applicable.

-- SPD Area Boundary

The SPD Area Boundary reflects the boundary set out in the Local Plan for the Marshmoor Policy Area.

— Site Boundary

The Site Boundary refers to the areas where development is being considered. These have been further categorised as Development Zones in Section 4.0 Spatial Framework.

The area identified for the ‘Site Boundary’ varies slightly to that allocated and shown on the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Policies Map (2023). Technical work undertaken as part of the preparation of this SPD has identified the most appropriate area for access from the A1000. The land identified for this still falls within the Marshmoor Policy area covered by Policy SP23 and it should be noted that this area will only be used for accessing the site and will not see built development.

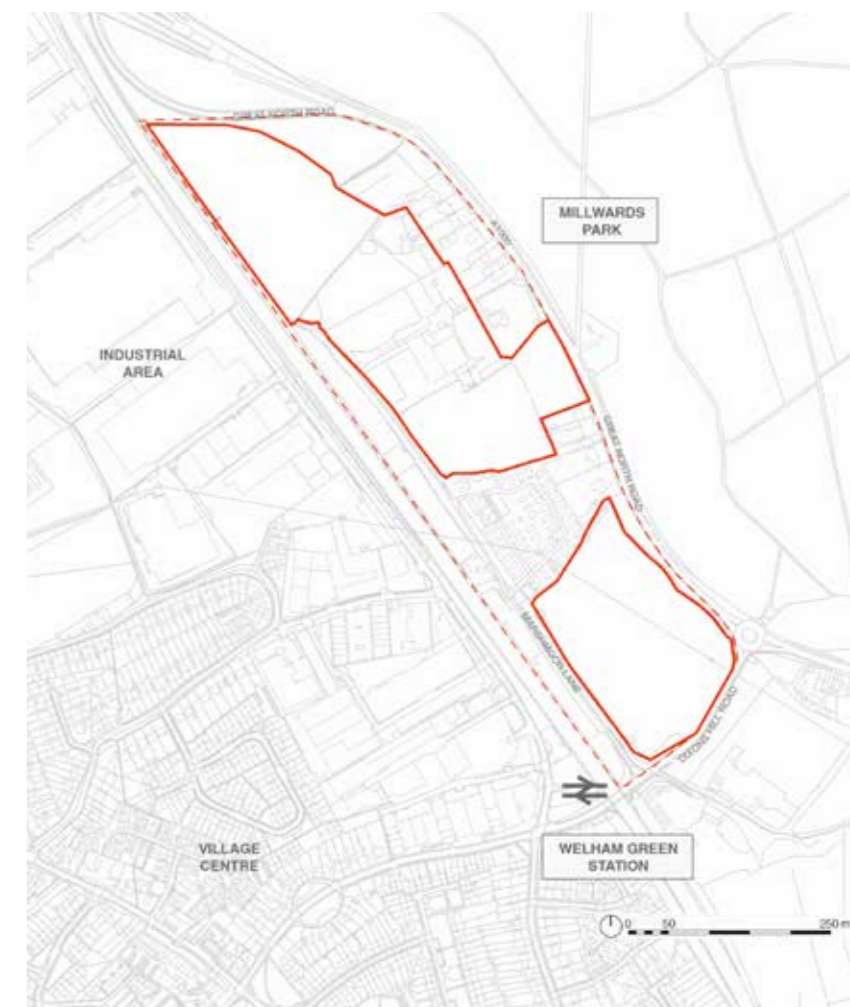


Fig I.3
Site Boundary and SPD Area Boundary Map

2.0 APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

2.1 STRATEGIC LOCATION

Hertfordshire is already an established location for science and innovation, with a wide range of companies having a presence in the area.

Hatfield Innovation Campus will be well-placed in this context to contribute to the wider innovation ecosystem as it is situated in the London-Cambridge 'science corridor' with many Research and Development uses and campuses in proximity.

Biopharma

- 1 Eisai EMEA Knowledge Centre, Hatfield
- 2 Roche Pharma R&D Hub, Welham
- 3 National Institute for Biological Standards & Control, Potters Bar
- 4 Ascend Gene and Cell Therapies (GMP), Potters Bar
- 5 Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, Stevenage
- 6 Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst, Stevenage
- 7 GSK R&D, Stevenage
- 8 GSK respiratory manufacturing plant Ware, Medigen,

Hoddesdon

- 9 Pharmaron, Hoddesdon
- 10 IQVIA Biotech, Stevenage
- 11 Thermo Fisher Scientific, Stevenage
- 12 Autolus, Stevenage

Agri-tech

- 1 Rothamsted Research, Harpenden
- 2 Rothamsted Agri-tech Business Centre, Harpenden
- 3 PheroSyn, Harpenden
- 4 Gowan Crop Protection, Harpenden
- 5 Agricultural & Environmental Research Unit, Hatfield

Clean tech

Hertfordshire's low carbon environmental industries account for 12.4% of the UK's GDP, with 2,000 businesses employing 40,000 people. The top twelve Clean Tech sub-sectors in Hertfordshire in terms of revenues are: Alternative Fuels, Wind, Building Technologies, Alternative Fuel Vehicles, Geothermal, Photovoltaic, Energy from Waste, Biomass, Recovery & Recycling, Water & Waste Water, Waste Management and Carbon Finance.

Clean tech

- 1 BRE Group, Watford
- 2 Symphony Environmental, Borehamwood
- 3 Drakes Renewables, Harpenden
- 4 Cactus Energy, Berkhamsted
- 5 Herts Renewable Energy Solutions, Hatfield
- 6 VPI Power, Hoddesdon

Tech

- 1 Computacenter, Hatfield
- 2 SynApps Solutions, Hatfield
- 3 EE, Hatfield
- 4 Denso, Hatfield
- 5 Mitsubishi Electric, Hatfield
- 6 BAE Systems, Hatfield
- 7 Imagination Technologies, Kings Langley
- 8 Nordic Semiconductor, Hatfield Park
- 9 DigiHaul, Hatfield Park

Universities and research organisations

- 1 University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield
- 2 Royal Veterinary College, Brookmans Park
- 3 UCL Clare Hall, Potters Bar

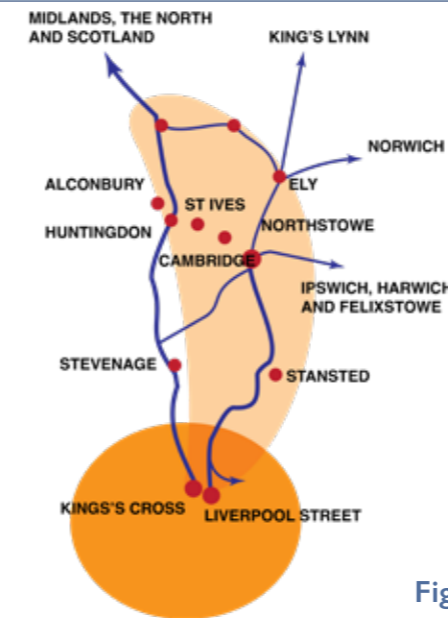


Fig 2.1 London-Cambridge Innovation Corridor



Fig 2.2 Innovation and Technology clusters around Hatfield (Source: The Gascoyne Estate, Hatfield Innovation Campus brochure)

2.2 STRATEGIC CONNECTIVITY

With direct links south to London Kings Cross and north to Cambridge, the town occupies a strategic position midway between these two centres of innovation and commerce.

Welham Green Railway Station is adjacent to the southwest corner of Hatfield Innovation Campus. Trains run to both London Kings Cross and Moorgate providing access to the city in under 1 hour.

Hatfield Station is located 1.7 miles (a less than 10 minutes cycle) to the north of the Campus. Additionally, four of London's five international airports are within a one hour drive. This strategic context of connectivity and surrounding innovation uses make it a prime location for a new research and development campus.

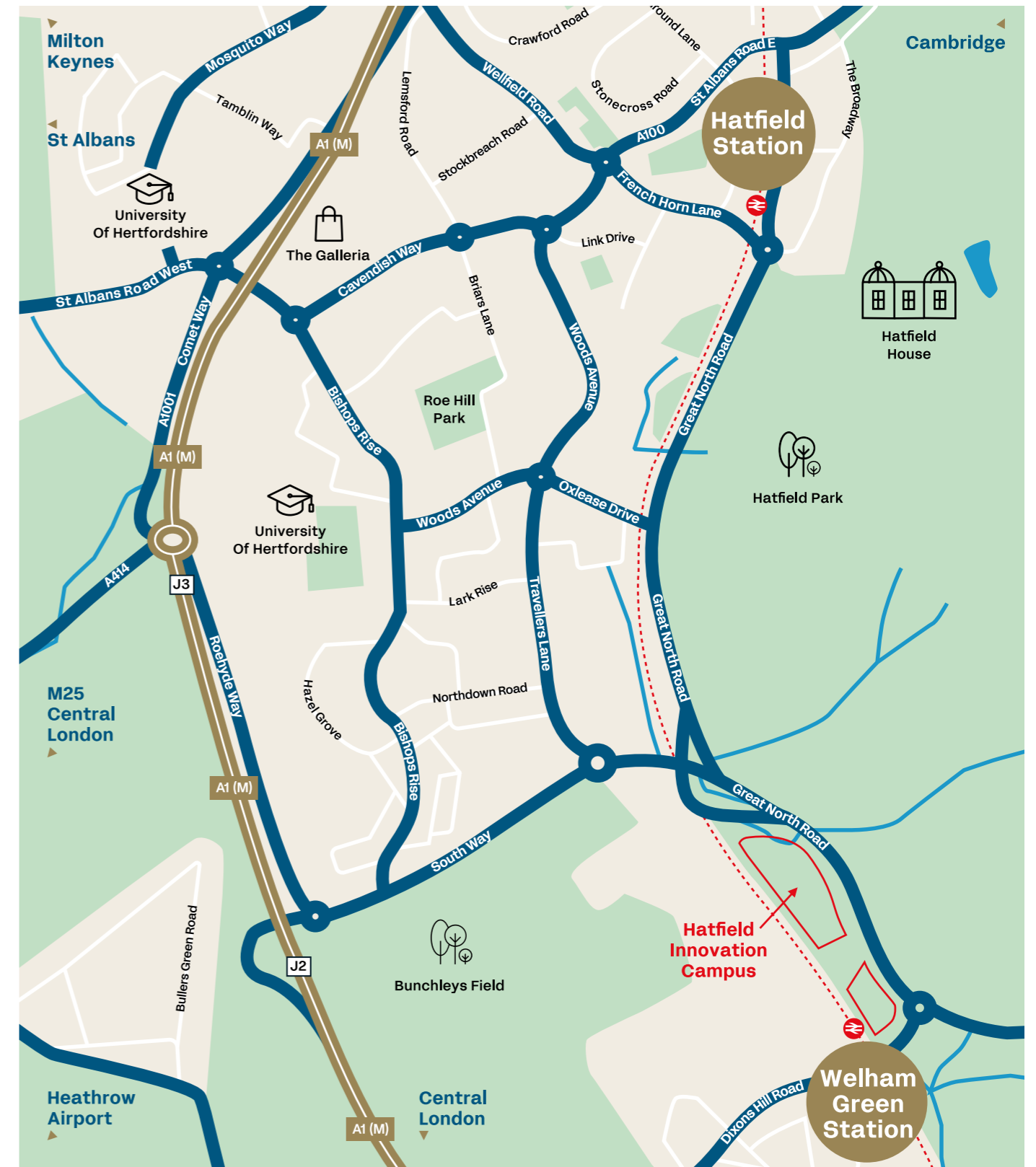


Fig 2.3 Strategic Connectivity (Source: The Gascoyne Estate, Hatfield Innovation Campus brochure)

2.3 SITE LOCATION

The site is situated east of Welham Green and is predominantly grassland. The site itself is bound by a railway line to the west, the Great Northern Road (A1000) to the north and east, and Dixons Hill Road to the south. The site is therefore wholly enclosed by transport infrastructure.

To the west of the railway line is an industrial estate with residential beyond. The Great Northern Road separates the site from the Grade I registered Hatfield Park that is located to the north-east of the site.

The site is split into two (north and south) parcels by a section of land that is being used for park homes. The two sides of the site are connected via Marshmoor lane.



Fig 2.4

Map showing Marshmoor red line and photo locations



Fig 2.5

1. Southern parcel of Marshmoor site, looking North East



Fig 2.6

2. Marshmoor train station, looking towards the site



Fig 2.7

3. Great Northern Road looking south with site on the right(A1000)



Fig 2.8

4. Dixons Hill Road, looking North East with site on the left



Fig 2.9

5. Travellers Lane Industrial Estate



Fig 2.10

6. Millwards Park



Fig 2.11

7. Marshmoor Lane, looking North



Fig 2.12

8. Park homes

2.4 LAND USES AND BUILDING HEIGHTS

The site is located at the edge of Welham Green Village that consists mainly of two and three story residential homes. On the western side of the site there is an industrial site, with most buildings being between two to three commercial storeys, most buildings being more substantial, the tallest and largest buildings in this area are at least 14-16m in height.

Immediately surrounding the site to the north east, and in between the two parcels of the site, there are predominantly residential uses. These include single storey park homes separating the parcels, and predominantly two storey homes along the A1000 boundary. There are also a couple of commercial premises along the A1000 of one to two storeys in height. There is a site for educational use to the North West of the site. However, this site is currently closed and unused. The industrial uses separate the site from the school.

Other land uses surrounding the site are predominantly Hatfield and Millwards Park to the north and east, as well as the countryside edge to the south-east.



Fig 2.13
Industrial Estate



Fig 2.14
Welham Green residential area



Fig 2.15
Park Homes

Key

- Site Boundary
- Parkland
- Residential Area
- Industrial Area
- Educational Site

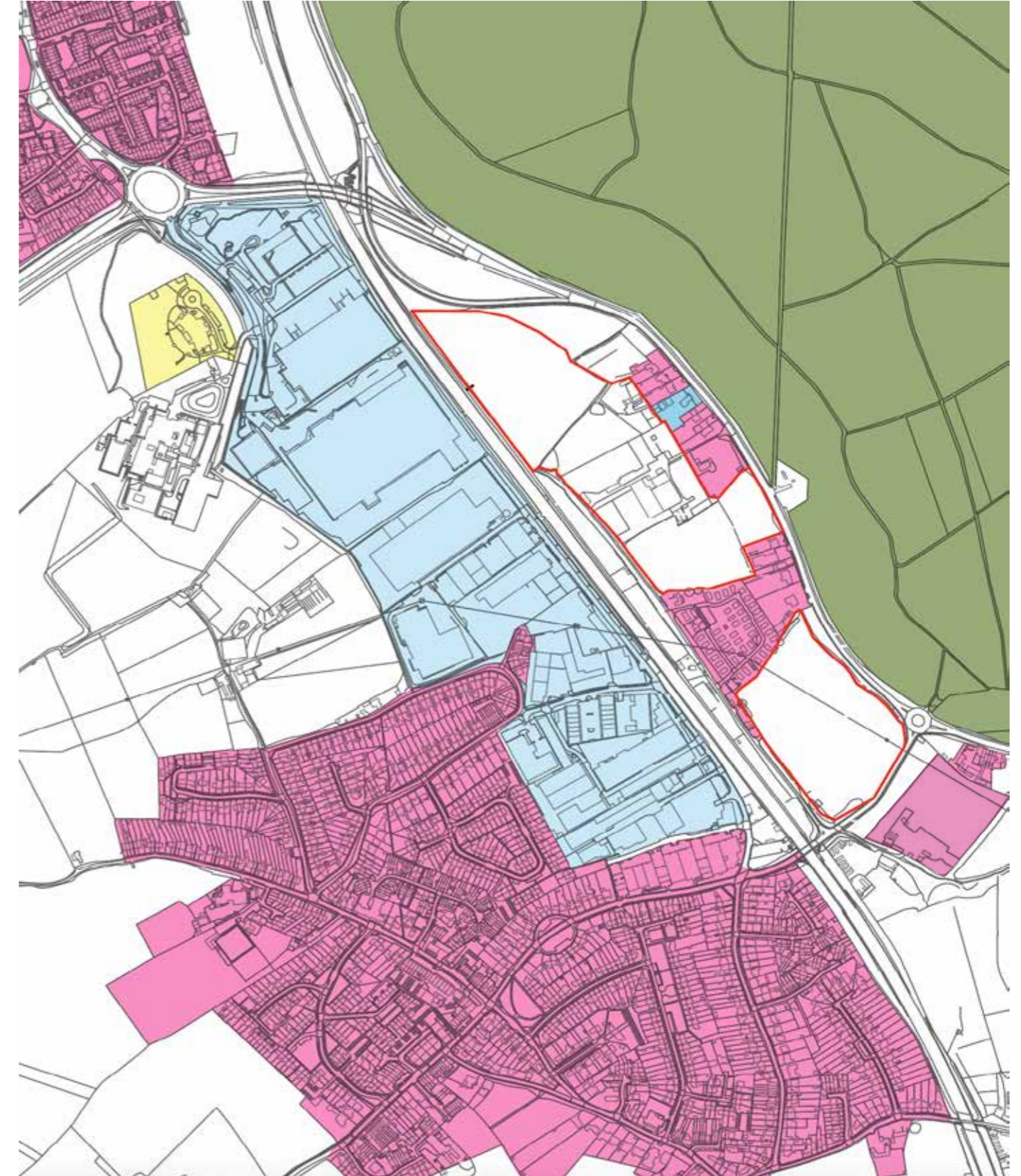


Fig 2.16
Land uses around the site

2.5 BUILT HERITAGE, LAND OWNERSHIP, LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Heritage

The site is bound by infrastructure and does not include any built heritage assets. The site neighbours the Grade I registered Hatfield Park (A Registered Park and Garden (RPG)) on the north-eastern side, which has been identified as the only heritage asset that has the potential to be affected by the proposals. Millwards Park, the part of the RPG which lies adjacent to the site was incorporated within Hatfield Park in the 19th century, when the Great North Road was re-routed to the south. Although Hatfield House (Grade I listed building) and the Bishop's Palace (Grade I listed building) lie within the RPG they are some distance from the site and separated by woodlands, as such they are not considered to have the potential to be impacted by proposals on the site.

In the centre of the site (outside the site boundary) there is a 19th century farmhouse that is a non-designated heritage asset comprising the site of Marshmoor Farm (HER Ref: I8581). This has potential to be impacted by development on the site, however the farmhouse is in an advanced state of ruin and is surrounded by an unremarkable group of 19th century agricultural buildings.

On the southern edge of Millwards Park is the mid-19th century South Lodge to Hatfield Park. This is adjacent to the site on the northern side of the A1000 and was constructed when the road was re-routed to include Millwards Park within Hatfield Park. This has the potential to be affected by the proposals on the Site.

Contrary to its name, the site is not located on a marsh.

Land ownership

Most of the site is owned by Gascoyne Cecil Estates, with the remaining land owned by GT Towing and other land interests. The immediate surrounding land owners are largely private residential and the Park Homes site.

Legal considerations

There is a Public Right of Way (PRoW) running through the southern part of the site from Dixon's Hill roundabout.



Fig 2.17 Millwards Park



Fig 2.18 Site of Marshmoor Farm (HER I8581)



Fig 2.19 Mid 19th century south lodge in Hatfield park, opposite the site

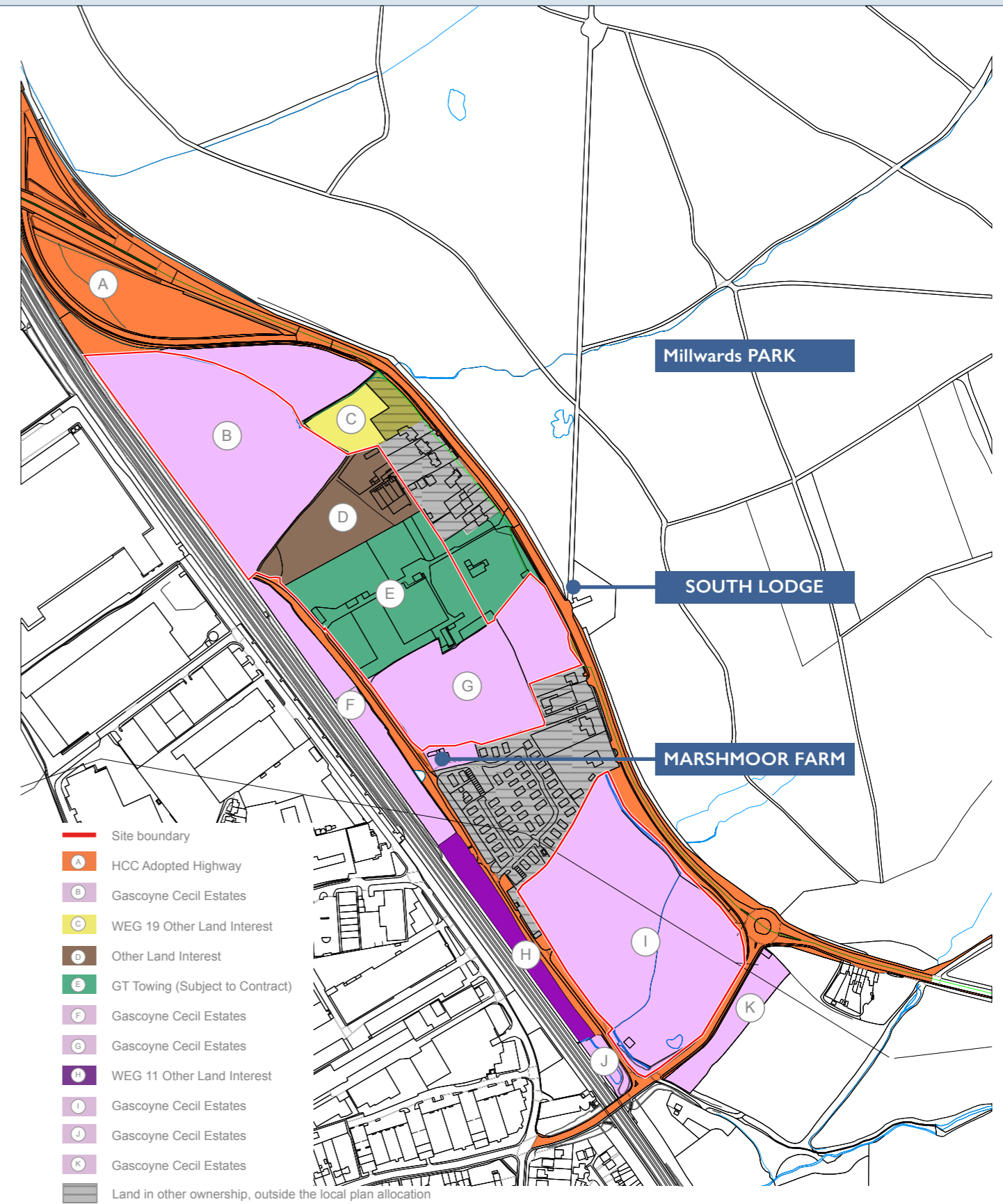


Fig 2.20 Land ownership plan with overlay of key heritage assets

2.6 ECOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE

The Marshmoor site is separated into various areas consisting of an arable field, a semi-improved grassland field, horse grazed paddocks, a woodland parcel and vehicle storage yard. The habitats across these parcels vary greatly and include a number of wet and dry ditches, mature oak trees and ruderal edges. There are also number of mature/veteran trees across the site. The strip of grassland along the edge of the railway, was identified as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and designated for diversity and acid grassland indicators. Marshmoor Lane Grassland Strip North LWS is mentioned specifically within Policy SP23 as well as Millwards Park LWS which forms the extensive area of woodland on the opposite side of Great North Road to the east. This area should be a focus of retention and enhancement.



Fig 2.21

Priority habitat ditch

The site can be broken down into 4 key areas to better understand the ecology. Field 1 and 2 consist of poor-quality grassland. Field 3 to the north was mown to the east of the ditch and left to a long sward to the west of the ditch. The field seemed to be damp with lots of areas of sedges and rushes. The field was lined with hedgerows along the north and the roadside. Field 4 is the designated as the local wildlife site (LWS). The site designation describes the field as a “narrow field of diverse old neutral to somewhat acidic grassland”. During the survey, the field was not noted as being especially diverse and no acidic indicators were found.



Fig 2.22

Local Wildlife Site

Surveys were conducted in 2017 and 2018 for protected species on site and it was concluded that low numbers of red list breeding bird's species were present, as well as non-breeding lapwings and common species of bats.

The site has evergreen hedgerows that act as a barrier between the site and the park homes plot. There are also key views from the park home site across the site. There are also views from Dixon Hill Roundabout and Marshmoor Lane that could be considered key views. There are two watercourses in the site. One on the north-eastern edge of the northern section, and another that cuts across the southern section.



Fig 2.23

Priority habitat ditch



Key

- Approximate red line boundary
- Ecological constraint zone

- 1 - Local Wildlife Site
- 2 - Priority habitat woodland
- 3 - Priority habitat hedgerow
- 4 - Priority habitat ditch - EPS species likely present
- 5 - Mature/veteran trees
- 6 - Mature tree line
- 7 - Pond
- 8 - Ditch

Drawing Title: Initial Ecological Constraints Map
 Site: Land at Marshmoor Lane
 Client: Tibbalds
 Author(s): A.Bailey, C.Jennings
 Drawing Date: 01.12.2023
 Basemap: Google Satellite
 (imagery date: 10.04.2020)

ECOLOGY
 PARTNERSHIP

Thorncroft Manor, Thorncroft Drive, Leatherhead, KT22 8JB
 t: 01372 364 133 w: ecologypartnership.com



Fig 2.24

Observational Landscape Appraisal

1. Southern Parcel

- a.** Existing green buffer to eastern's edge of southern parcel provides buffer to main road and transition to the ancient woodlands of Millwards Park.
- b.** The character of Millwards Park extends across Great North Road, into the tree-lined boundary to the eastern edge of the southern parcel. A buffer of 10+ metres should be provided from the canopy line of the oaks to allow for future growth and continued protection. Buffer requirements to be co-ordinated with the Arboricultural and Ecological constraints.
- c.** Existing mature trees associated with ditch lines. These should be retained and provided with a 10+m buffer. Buffer requirements to be co-ordinated with the Arboricultural and Ecological constraints.
- d.** Mature trees provide green edge to either side of Marshmoor Lane. These should be retained.
- e.** Existing Public Right of Way. This should be retained where possible.
- f.** Existing pylon and buffer required clear area with no development running through the southern parcel
- g.** There are opportunities for strengthening the boundary adjacent to the railway line, strengthening the ecological corridor.

2. Central Parcel

- a.** Dense woodland with mature Oak and Hornbeam trees at the interface with Great North Road. This provides one of the few opportunities for creating vehicular access to the site, but it will need to be designed carefully and sensitively to minimise impact. A 10+m buffer should be introduced between the western edge of the woodland and any proposed development.
- b.** Clearance in woodlands can provide opportunity for continuing access along Marshmoor Lane - however, this is still relatively constrained and may not be sufficiently wide to cater to vehicles. It may be able to accommodate walking and cycling routes.

- c.** Existing paddocks are visually well contained by mature trees.
- d.** Veteran trees will need to be protected and provided with a sufficient buffer from adjacent development.
- e.** Hedgerows along fields of high ecological value provide a natural separation between potential plots. These should be protected from development, with access through designed carefully and sensitively.
- f.** Potential to continue tree lines to provide green buffer to the eastern and southern edge, towards existing residential areas.

3. Northern Parcel

- a.** Existing green buffer to the northern edge of northern parcel, facing Great North Road, provides a useful separation from the road. This should be retained while exploring opportunities for creative views across to new development.
- b.** Existing ditch line within centre of the field divides land parcels with vegetation of limited value. Opportunities to widen the ditches to form ponds or other SuDs interventions could be explored.
- c.** Individual mature and veteran trees to be retained. A buffer of 10+m should be provided from the canopy line of the trees. Buffer requirements to be co-ordinated with the Arboricultural and Ecological constraints.
- d.** The character of Millwards Park extends across Great North Road,.

These observations are further detailed with desktop research in the following pages.

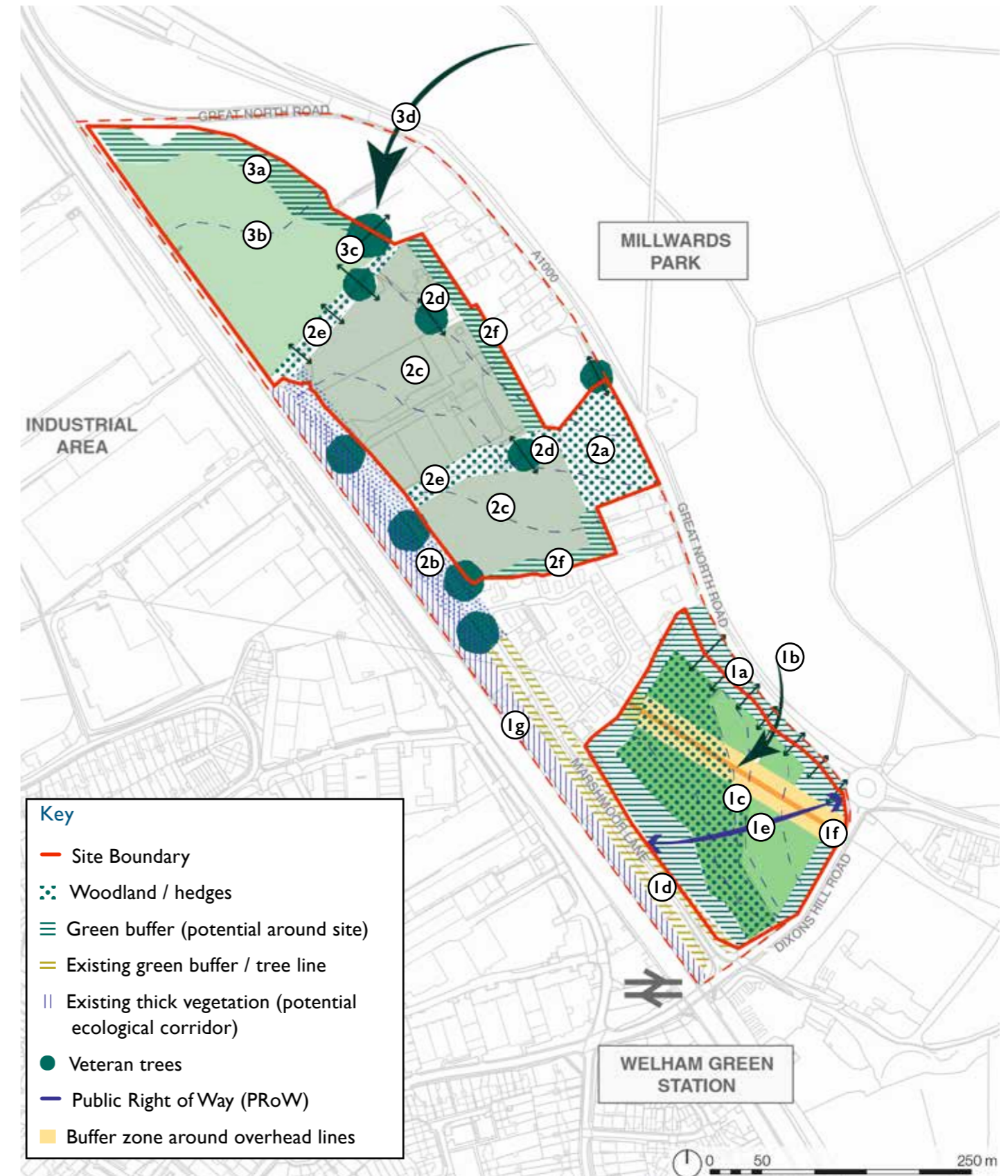


Fig 2.25

Landscape Opportunities and Constraints diagram

2.7 TREES AND LANDSCAPE

Most of the trees and hedgerows are located around the boundary of the site. The northern boundary is delineated by a continuous boundary hedge of mostly blackthorn, with occasional hawthorn and self-set goat willow tree. The central field area features vegetation along the boundaries only. A dense off-site woodland to the east is delineated by a row of multi stem Hornbeam trees which form a valuable landscape feature and boundary line of vegetation. Trees and hedgerows create a visual barrier between the park homes and the site on both the northern and southern side. This southern field is bisected by a watercourse with dense brambles aligning its length. This also intersects with the Public Right of Way (PRoW). The eastern boundary comprises of many mature Oak trees, several of which have died in the central and northern sections of the group. This boundary forms a defensible boundary and a prominent landscape feature. The southern boundary comprises of a managed native hedge of mostly blackthorn, with a scrubby area of vegetation in the south-eastern corner with a shallow depression.

There are over 50 trees across the site, with the key trees being predominately mature Oak trees with other species such as Cypress, Willow, Ash and Hornbeam also present. Nine of the trees on site have been identified as Veteran trees. These trees and their buffers should be retained and respected. Except for a few, most of the veteran trees can be found around the site boundary. The majority of the trees found on the site are typical of their age and species.

Key

- Site Boundary
- Veteran Tree and buffer
- Category B tree
- Category C tree
- Woodland
- Priority Habitat (hedgerows and ditch line)



Fig 2.26

Veteran trees located on X of Marshmoor site



Fig 2.27

T50 Veteran tree on the Marshmoor site

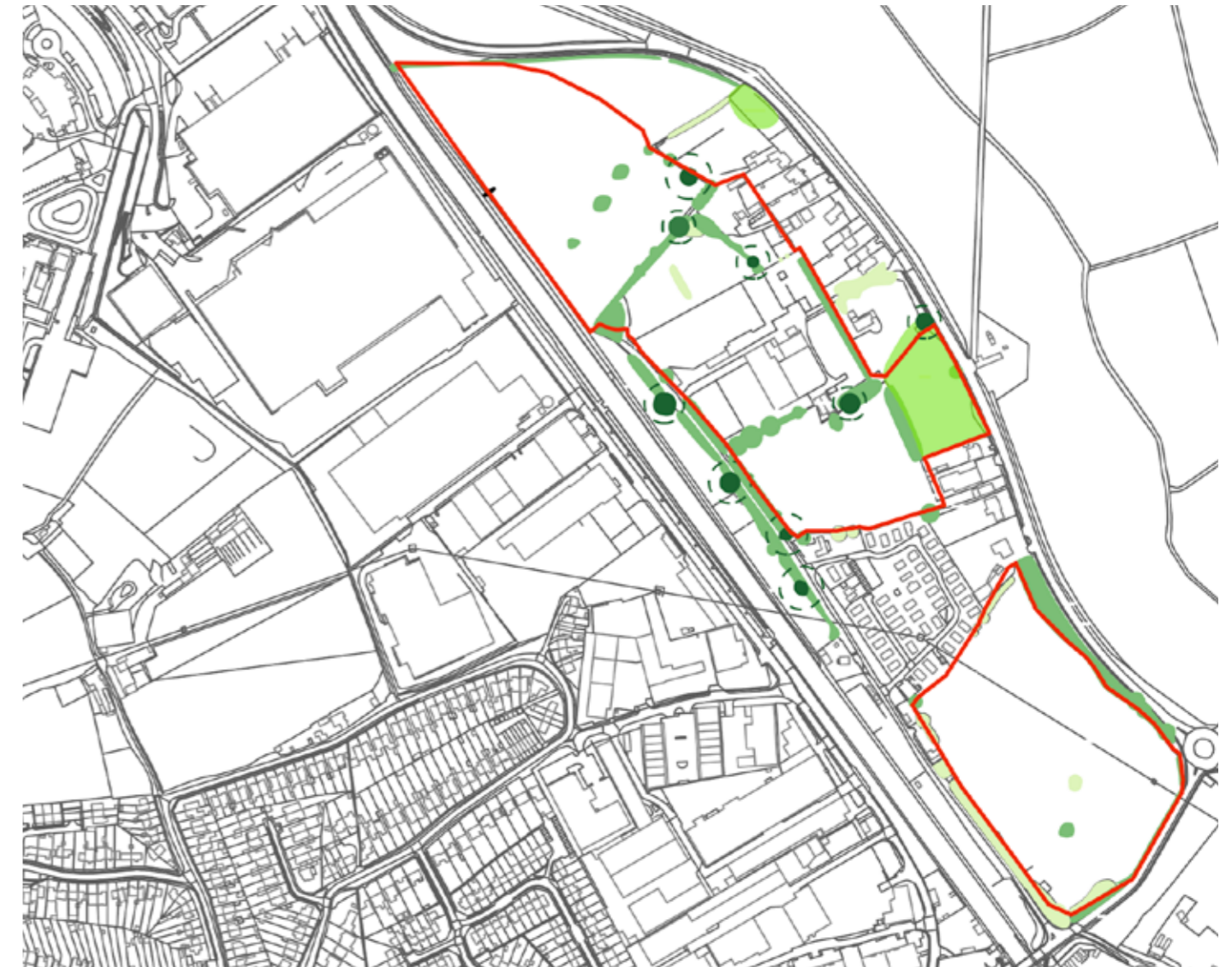


Fig 2.28

Map showing location of trees and woodland on and around the site

2.8 TRANSPORT, CONNECTIVITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Walking

The local walking infrastructure network is limited, with no footway provision on the northern side of the Dixons Hill Road carriageway and a limited width footway on the western side of the A1000 carriageway. Within Welham Green village centre, there is a network of local walking routes and footways which connect with the existing services, facilities, residential area and railway station. A Public Right of Way (PROW) - Footpath 26 - routes through the southern section of the site, providing a connection between the Dixons Hill Road roundabout and Marshmoor Lane.

Cycling

There is no dedicated cycle infrastructure on the surrounding network. The site is within a reasonable cycle of a number of key destinations, including Welham Green and Hatfield which provide opportunities for future users of the site to travel by bicycle to a range of local services, facilities and public transport services.

As the site is located on the edge of Welham Green village, it is within a walkable distance (15 minutes) to the village's local facilities which include a café, pharmacy, and corner shop.

Rail

Welham Green railway station provides access to services towards connecting the site to Hatfield, and Welwyn Garden City (to the north) and London (via Finsbury Park) (to the south). Although the station is very close to the site, it can currently only be accessed via Travellers Lane (via a small station car park for step free access – northbound services only) or from the southern side of the bridge on Dixons Hill Road overbridge (via steps only). There is no step free access for southbound services. Dixon Hill Road acts as a barrier between the site and the station, impacting on accessibility.

Hatfield railway station is located a circa 1.7 miles from the centre of the Development to the north, equivalent to a less than 10 minute cycle. The station is also located on the Moorgate to Welwyn Garden City line as well as the London Kings Cross to Cambridge line, providing access to additional services and destinations.



Fig 2.29
PROW locations



Fig 2.30
Access to PROW on the site from Dixon Hill Road

Bus

There are 5 bus routes in walking distance of the site, the most frequent of which come serve the local bus stops twice per hour. Existing bus stops are provided within Welham Green village and also on the A1000, which currently consist of flag poles only. These bus routes connect the site to Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City, Waltham Cross, Luton, St Albans, and Cockfosters. Although there are a reasonable amount of sustainable travel options, due to their infrequency, the site is not serviced very well by them.

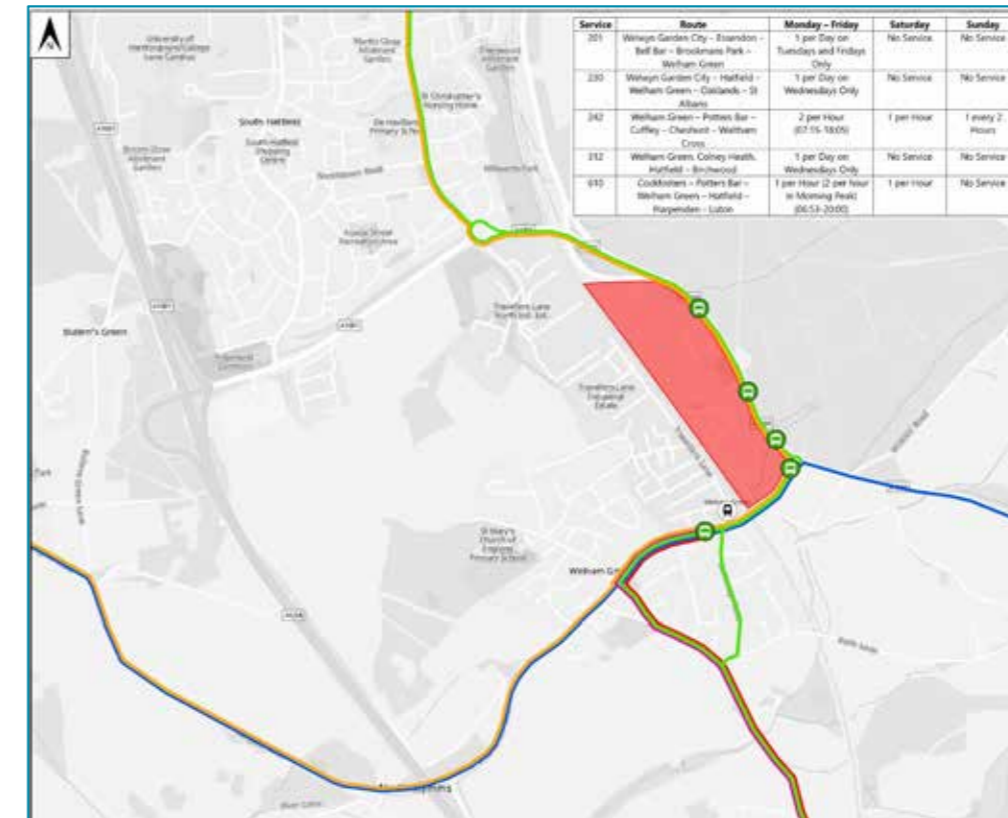


Fig 2.31
Bus routes adjacent to the site

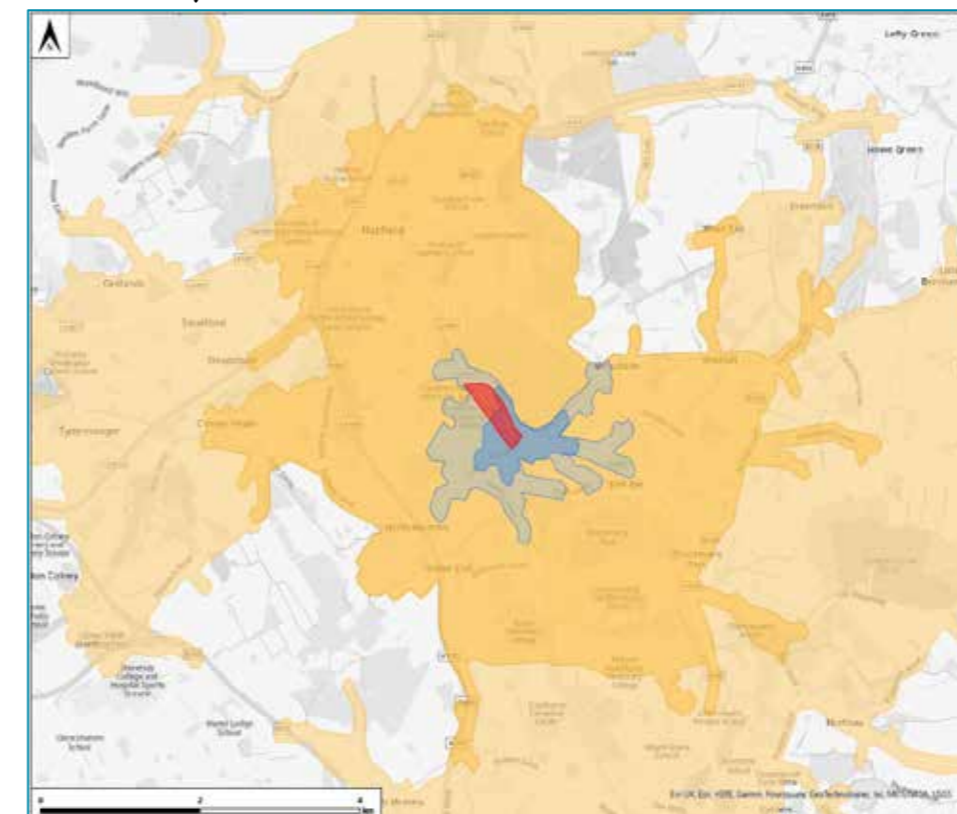


Fig 2.32
Walking and Cycling opportunities around the site

Cars

The site is accessible by car via Marshmoor Lane. Marshmoor Lane routes along the western boundary of the Development and immediately to the east of the railway tracks. It provides access to a handful of properties, as well as the Marshmoor Mobile Home park. At its northern end, circa 410m from Dixons Hill Road, the carriageway is overgrown and unpassable. The carriageway is narrow (ranging from circa 2.8m to 3.9m), with limited passing places. The road is adopted highway.

Marshmoor Lane is a narrow lane that serves the northern part of the site as well as the park homes. It is constrained by the site to the east, and trees/hedgerows to the west.

Dixons Hill Road, to the south of the site, forms the main route from the site to Welham Green. It is a two way, single carriageway with limited footway provision on the southern side of the carriageway. At the railway tracks an overbridge is provided across the railway, with high kerbs on the southern side of the carriageway and some guard railing. There is no formal pedestrian crossing facilities along Dixons Hill Road between Marshmoor Lane and Welham Green station.

The A1000 routes along the site's eastern boundary and is a key distributor road in the local area, providing access towards Hatfield in the north and Potters Bar to the south. The road provides direct residential frontages along its length, with the majority of the route subject to a 40mph speed limit. At the Great North Road/ South Way junction, the national speed limit is enforceable.

Options for vehicle access to the site have been appraised, looking at:

Southern parcel:

1. Off Marshmoor Lane (likely only to support residential access)
2. From Dixon's Hill Rd
3. Off the Dixon's Hill roundabout (outlined in Local Plan)
4. Off the A1000

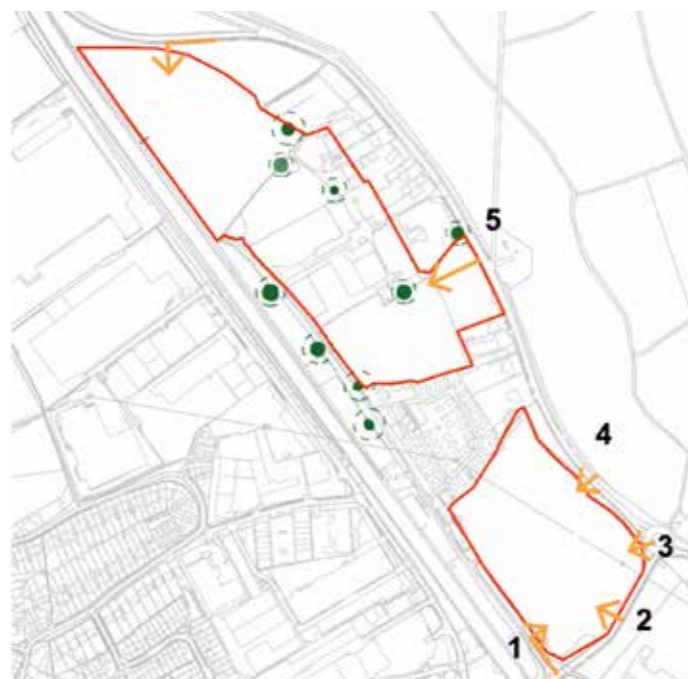


Fig 2.33

Testing vehicular access points to site

Northern parcel:

5. Off the A1000
6. New strategic link off A1000 slip road

An appraisal of each of these access options is provided in the Appendix. The Local Plan policy recommends access coming off the A1000 roundabout. However, the options appraisal highlights alternative access points that better respond to site constraints and access requirements.

Accessibility

National Travel Survey data identifies the vast majority (80%) of trips of up to one mile (1.6km) are undertaken on foot, with approximately 31% of journeys between 1 and 2 miles (3.2km) also on foot. With regards to cycling, a distance of 3 miles (5km) represents a reasonable everyday cycle distance, with 5 miles (8km) being a likely everyday upper distance. These distances are supported by government cycling guidance including 'Gear Change'.

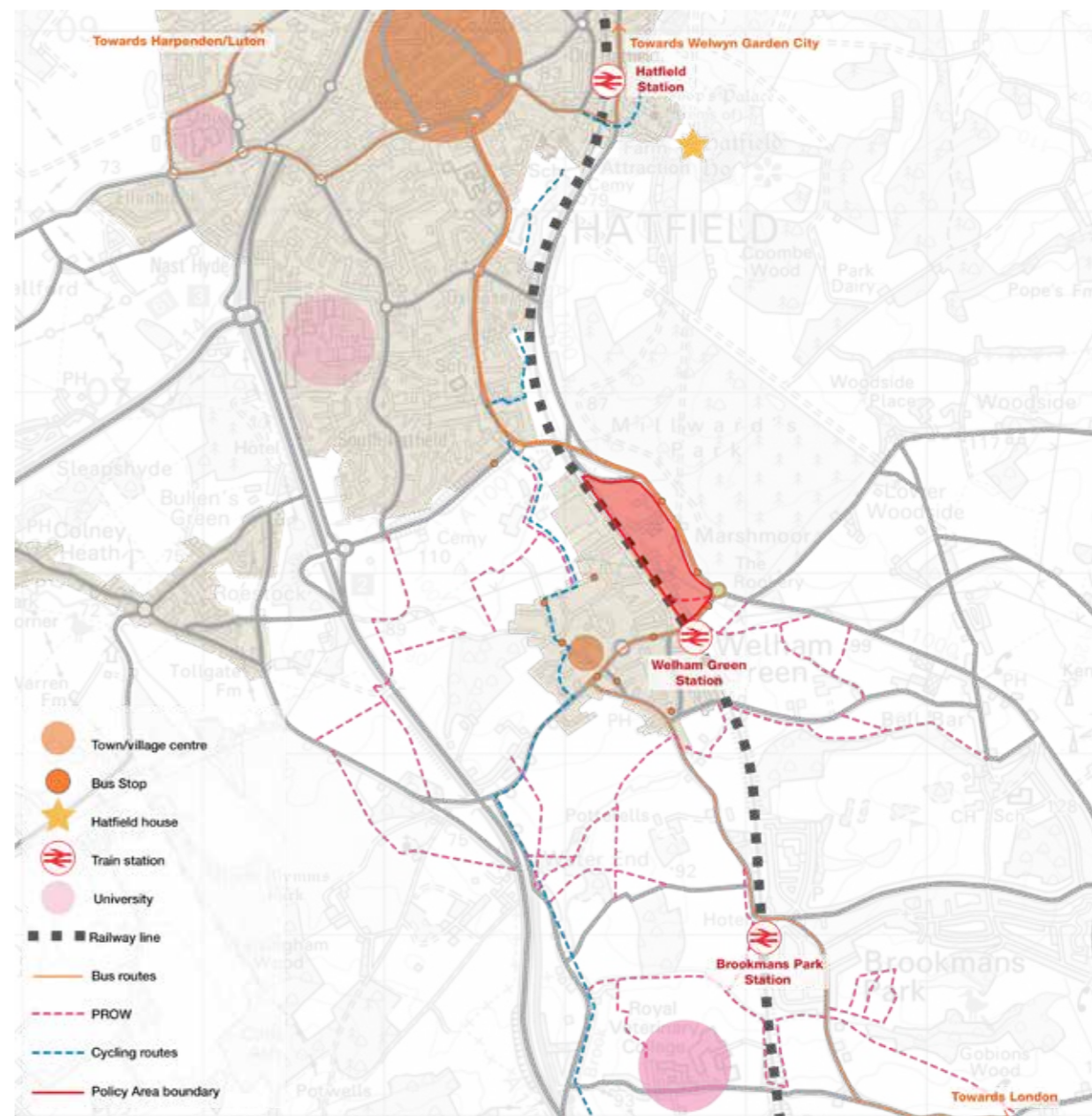


Fig 2.34

Wider context map showing the site, Welham Green village, Hatfield and the surrounding area

The key journey purposes and reasons for travelling are for leisure, shopping, commuting/ business, and education.

Welham Green and Hatfield both provide access to a range of everyday services and facilities that future users of the site will have access to, including the key journey purposes. The site will also benefit from

linked housing on-site, there reducing the need for future users to travel off-site and the reliance on the private car. The local walking and cycling isochrones (illustrated on the previous page) demonstrate the range of services available within these catchments. However, this appraisal is quantitative and does not account for the quality of these routes.

Flood Risk

The site is fairly flat; however, it does slope down towards the western edge of the site. The main concern area for flooding is located on the western edge of the southern site, where there is a high risk of flooding.

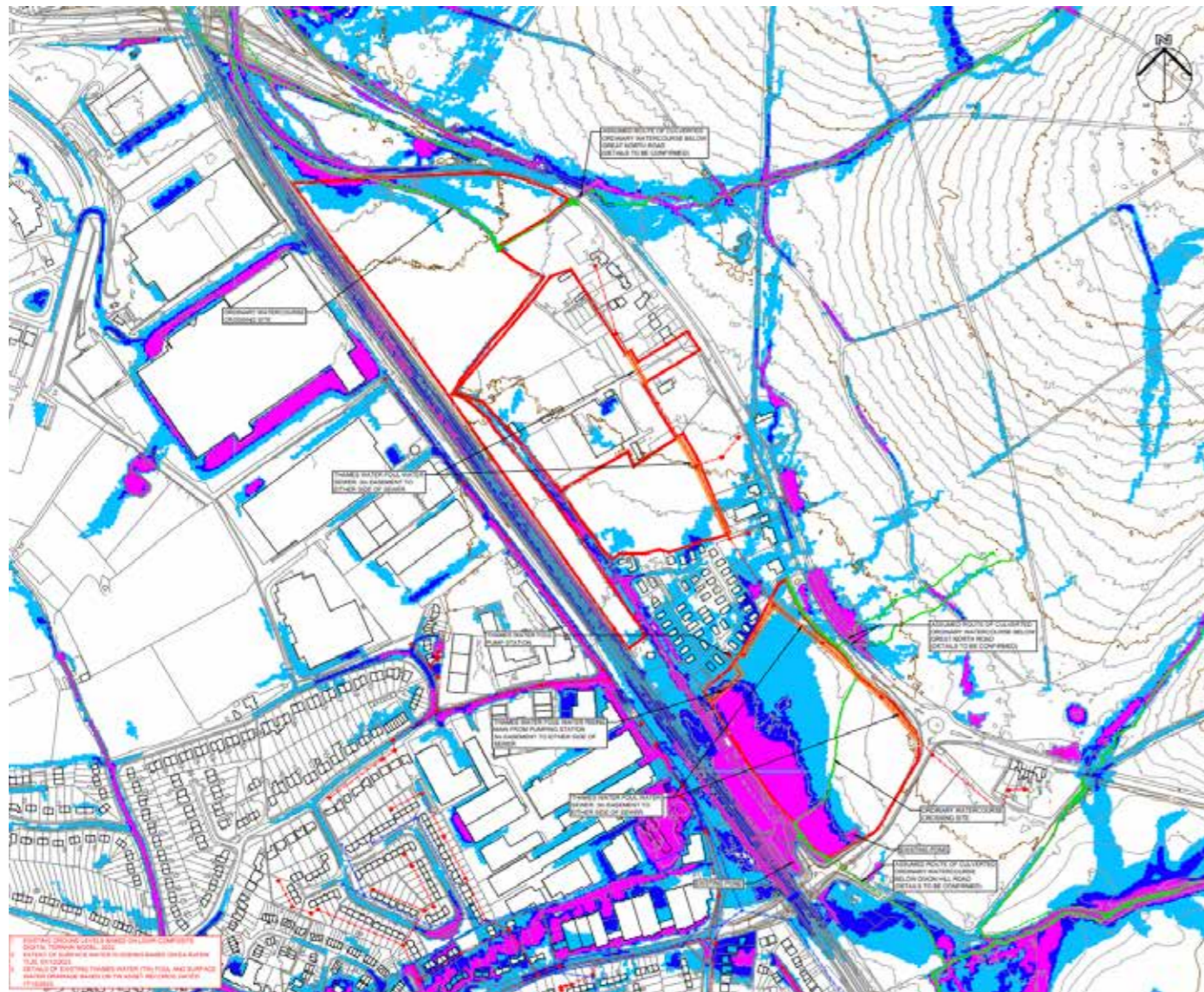


Fig 2.35
Map showing potential flood risk zones

Low risk
High risk

Air quality

Air quality on the site is primarily influenced by vehicle emissions along the adjacent A1000 Great North Road and the East Coast Mainline railway. There are also various industrial/commercial uses which may contribute to the prevailing odour character in the vicinity of the site. Overall the site is deemed suitable for the development in terms of air quality and odour that there are no air quality constraints at present.

Acoustics

A noise impact survey was carried out on the site in November 2023. The noise levels at the site were dictated by road traffic noise emissions from the adjacent road and rail networks. The acoustic assessment concludes that in summary the site is suitable for residential uses as part of an employment-led development in terms of noise level, however potential effects would need to be assessed in detail as part of any future planning application for the site and mitigation considered as the design progresses.

Internal noise levels across the site are anticipated to be controllable to suitable levels using commercially available glazing and ventilation products. Acoustic modelling shows the areas of the site in which garden noise levels may be in excess of the relevant guidelines. In these areas garden noise levels should be reduced as far as possible but are not considered in themselves reasons to preclude any residential development.

Building Regulations Part O has also been considered. It is considered that any future residential buildings will need to be designed so that windows can remain closed at night (or no more than partially opened) without the rooms overheating. This can be assessed further in due course as the development design progresses and the thermal performances of the buildings established.

The acoustic assessment advises that non-residential uses (which are usually less noise sensitive) are situated closest to the surrounding noise sources to reduce the need for mitigation for the residential uses.

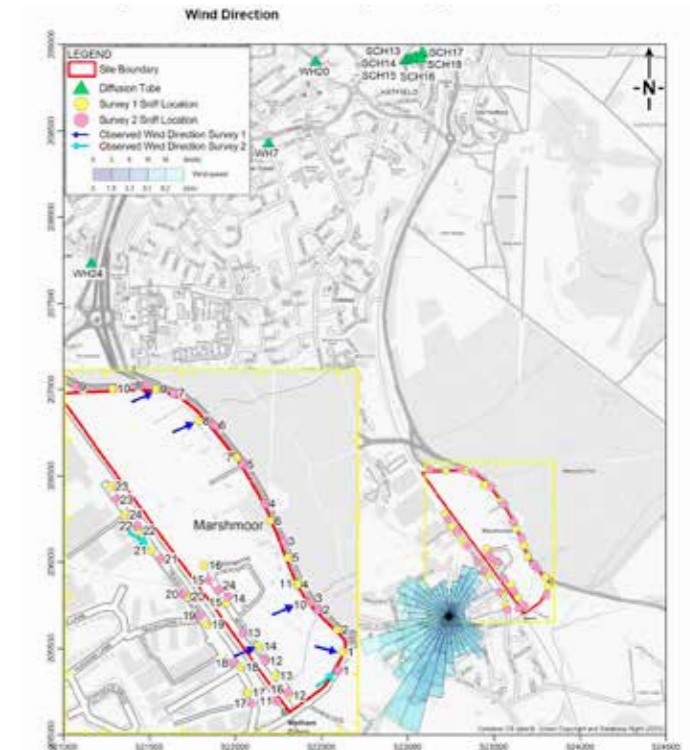


Fig 2.36
Air quality onsite

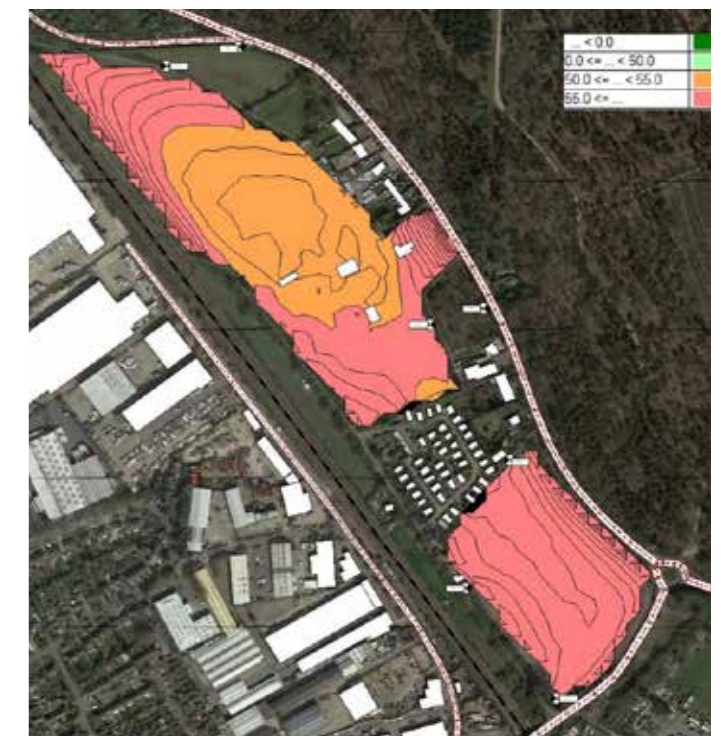


Fig 2.37
Acoustic modelling onsite

2.11 UTILITIES

There are gas, water and broadband lines in and around the site. The primary constraint in regard to utilities is the overhead pylon line in the southern part of the site. Two of the pylons sit within the site boundary. Record information is aged and does not state the voltage of these services, but their configuration suggests they are >33kV.

A corridor of 15m (7.5m from the centre line of the pylons) has been used as an assumed buffer zone in which no buildings would be acceptable.



Fig 2.38

Overhead pylon lines on the site



Fig 2.39

Location of pylon lines across the site

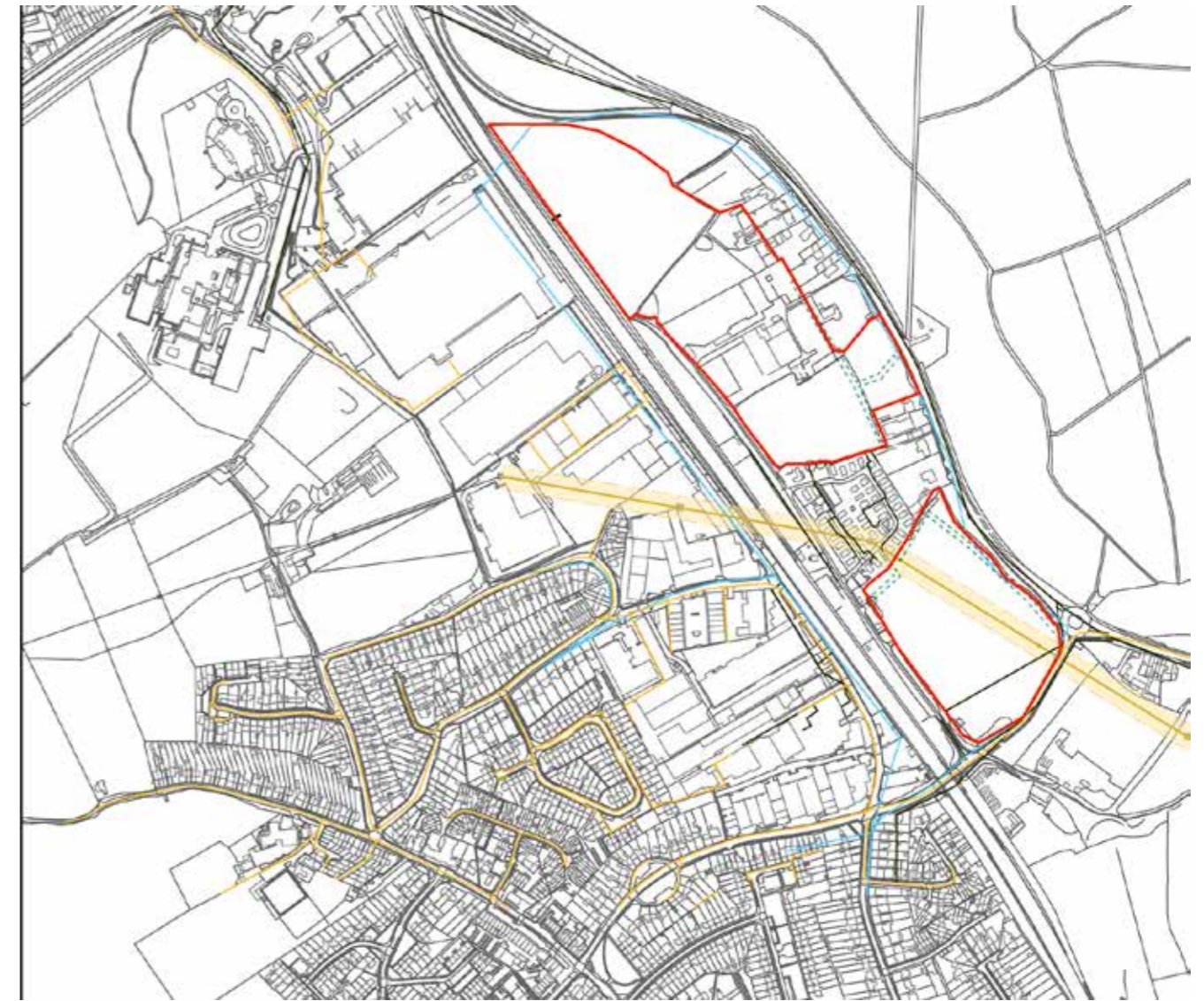


Fig 2.40

Combined utilities plan

2.12 COMBINED CONSTRAINTS PLAN

The approach taken to the key constraints is to separate them into categories describing them as hard, medium, and soft, indicating how flexible they can be.

We have used the following assumptions around the different categories of constraints and the approach to mitigation that will be necessary. Further technical studies will in many cases be required to determine the costs and therefore feasibility of mitigation.

- Hard constraints are key considerations for masterplanning, and considered immovable
- Medium constraints are significant with considerable potential impact, but are considered possible to mitigate / relocate for the purpose of achieving development here
- Soft constraints are identified constraints that are considered less challenging to overcome, but are still potential considerations in the masterplanning.

- SPD Area Boundary
- PRow (on definitive map, may differ on the ground)
- Ordinary Watercourse
- High risk of surface water flooding
- Medium risk of surface water flooding
- Low risk of surface water flooding
- Pylon line with 30m corridor
- 1m contour
- Veteran tree and buffer
- Category B Tree
- Category C Tree
- Woodland
- Land in other ownership, outside Local Plan allocation
- Local Wildlife Site
- Utilities**
- 3m easement either side of TW sewer
- Water
- Broadband
- Gas

Hard constraints	Medium Constraints	Soft constraints
Electricity Pylons	PRow	
Medium to high risk flooding areas (no residential accommodation within any risk areas)	All other Flood risk areas	
Veteran trees	Mature trees (cat B) and woodland blocks	Trees/ hedgerows lower than Category B, other vegetation e.g. brambles
Land-ownership in relation to Marshmoor Lane	Existing sewers	Other utilities such as comms and lower voltage electricity
	Ordinary watercourse	Minimise need for mechanical ventilation

Table 1
Evaluating of constraints

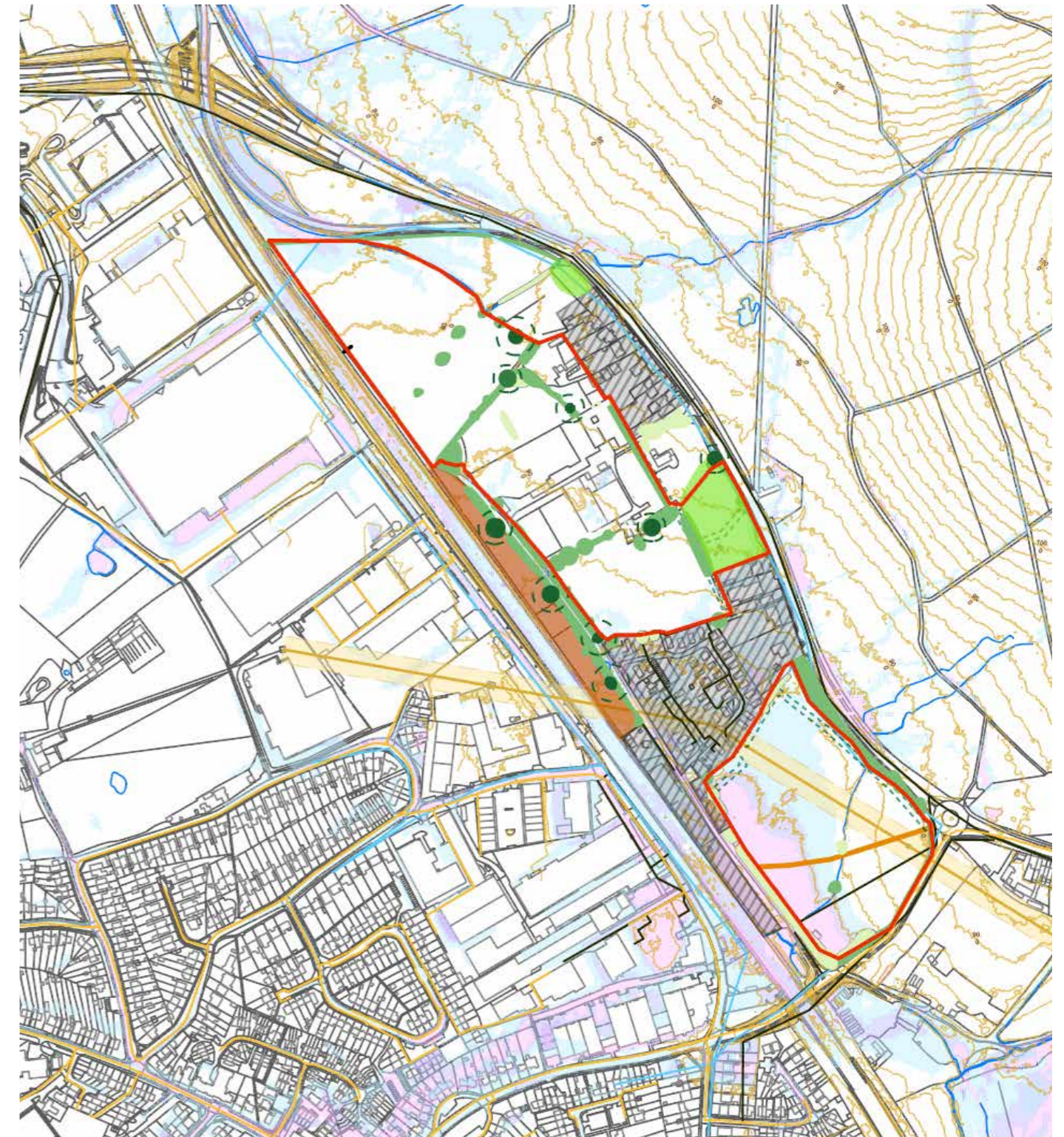


Fig 2.41
Combined constraints plan

3.0 SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT

3.1 ENGAGEMENT TO DATE

Engagement Process

Engagement with key local stakeholders has been carried out to inform the development of this SPD. The two key stakeholder groups engaged leading up to the statutory consultation are:

- Marshmoor Liaison Group
- Hertfordshire Design Review Panel

Marshmoor Liaison Group Meeting 1

- The project design team met with the Marshmoor Liaison Group on 26 February 2024.
- The Marshmoor Liaison Group consists local councillors and officers from the council.
- The following topics were covered in discussion and detailed notes are provided in Appendix B.
 - › Format and purpose of SPD, in the context of the Local Plan
 - › Land ownership
 - › Project aspiration and targets
 - › Land use and potential occupiers
 - › Housing provision
 - › Development scenarios
 - › Roads, connectivity and parking
 - › Landscape and architecture
- Notes and actions of this meeting were incorporated as amendments to the draft report

Hertfordshire Design Review

- The project design team presented work in progress from the SPD design testing and emerging thinking to the Hertfordshire Design Review Service on 4 June 2024.
- The Hertfordshire Design Review Service provides an independent and impartial process for evaluating the design quality and sustainability of development proposals in Hertfordshire.
- The following topics were covered in discussion and detailed notes are provided in Appendix B.
 - › Green infrastructure and the existing environmental context
 - › Density and infrastructure provision
 - › Housing typologies, mix and distribution
 - › Local character and context
 - › Visual impact and building heights
 - › Connectivity and movement
 - › Access strategy
 - › Arrival experience and car parking
 - › Marshmoor Lane pedestrian and cycle route
 - › Sustainability and Drainage

Marshmoor Liaison Group Meeting 2

- The project design team met with the Marshmoor Liaison Group for the second time on 24 June 2024.
- A working draft of the SPD document was reviewed and commented on. The comments are specific to sections of the report and are detailed in Appendix B.
- Notes and feedback from this session has been incorporated into the SPD document.

Marshmoor Liaison Group Meeting 3

- The project design team met with the Marshmoor Liaison Group for the third time on 16 Dec 2024.
- A summary presentation of the SPD, highlighting the vision, objectives and principles were presented.
- Notes and feedback from this session has been incorporated into this SPD document.

The following have also been consulted as part of the development of this SPD.

- Hertfordshire County Council as highways authority
- Hertfordshire County Council walking and cycling team

Impact of Engagement

The liaison group and DRP have shaped the SPD through its production responding to a range of issues related to the site conditions, design, landscape and access. Further updates on how this has informed the proposals will be included following statutory consultation.

Further Consultation

Wider engagement will be undertaken as part of the adoption process for the SPD and is anticipated in the late Autumn/Winter 2024

4.0 VISION

4.1 USING THE VISION, DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

This SPD sets out the ambitions for the SPD area and associated development sites through:

VISION

The vision for the Marshmoor Policy Area is supported by five Vision Statements. These statements set out the long term ambition for any proposed developments and interventions.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

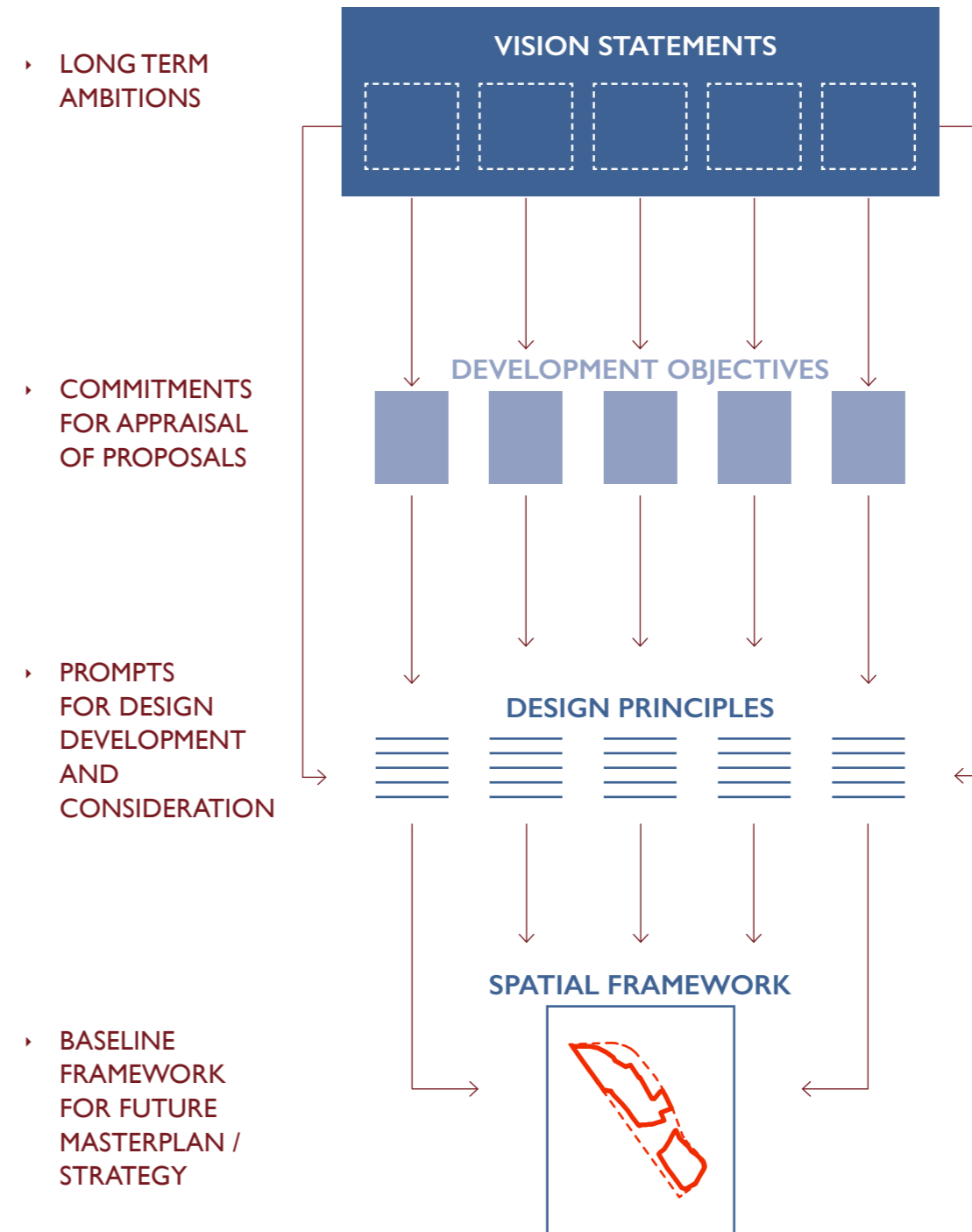
The Vision Statements are supported by Development Objectives, which set out 'What' are essentially commitments and deliverables for the development. These Objectives collectively help to achieve the long-term vision and should be used as key criteria against which applications will be appraised.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

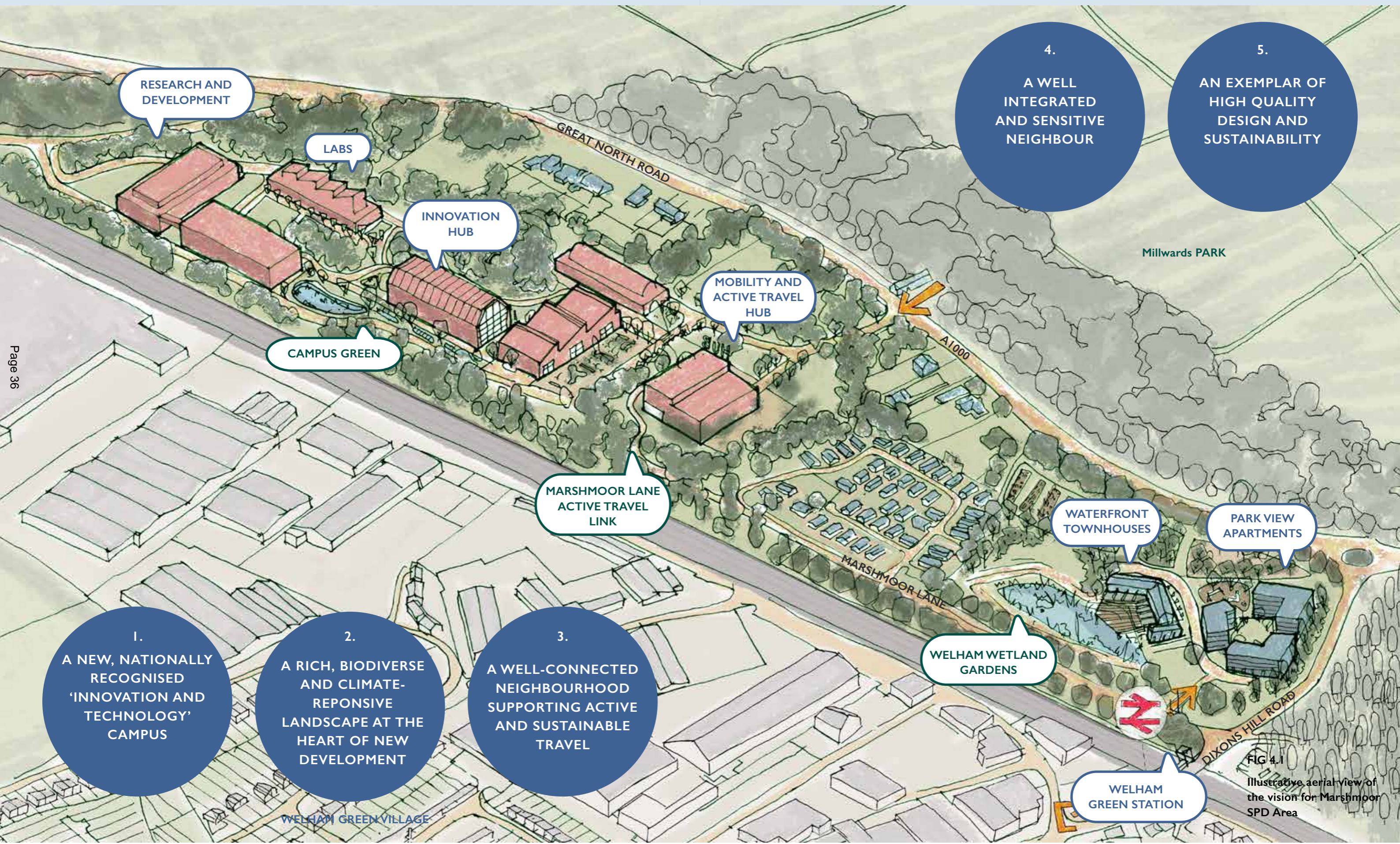
The Design Principles support both the Vision Statements and Development Objectives, setting out 'how' these objectives should be achieved with actions and prompts for design decisions. These sometime relate directly to development objectives, at other times they are more directly linked to the vision. These are intended to inform the design development process and should be addressed through pre-application processes and engagement with the local authority and key stakeholders as a clear brief and output for the associated developments is realised.

SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

The Spatial Framework illustrates the key spatial parameters linking to the Design Principles - this is the first step in the process of translating the design principles to a spatial proposal. This framework provides a baseline which proposals can adapt and add detail to as design decisions are tested and agreed..



4.2 VISION FOR HATFIELD INNOVATION PARK AT MARSHMOOR



RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

LABS

INNOVATION HUB

MOBILITY AND ACTIVE TRAVEL HUB

CAMPUS GREEN

MARSHMOOR LANE ACTIVE TRAVEL LINK

WATERFRONT TOWNHOUSES

PARK VIEW APARTMENTS

WELHAM WETLAND GARDENS

WELHAM GREEN STATION

4. A WELL INTEGRATED AND SENSITIVE NEIGHBOUR

5. AN EXEMPLAR OF HIGH QUALITY DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY

1. A NEW, NATIONALLY RECOGNISED 'INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY' CAMPUS

2. A RICH, BIODIVERSE AND CLIMATE-REPOSIVE LANDSCAPE AT THE HEART OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

3. A WELL-CONNECTED NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORTING ACTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

FIG 4.1 Illustrative aerial view of the vision for Marshmoor SPD Area

4.3 FIVE POINT VISION AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

1. A NEW, NATIONALLY RECOGNISED 'INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY' CAMPUS

The development of Marshmoor Policy Area will:

- Contribute to the economic success and innovation focus of the wider sub-region, capitalising on its strategic location.
- Introduce new employment uses in emerging innovation and technology sectors of up to 40,500 sqm of new employment floorspace, supporting a range of occupiers to scale up their businesses.
- Provide high-quality housing through up to 100 new homes to attract skilled employees, supporting a lively live-work environment.
- Demonstrate long-term stewardship and careful management of the sensitive site.



FIG 4.2

2. A RICH, BIODIVERSE AND CLIMATE-RESPONSIVE LANDSCAPE AT THE HEART OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

The development of Marshmoor Policy Area will:

- Implement a landscape-led approach that responds to the existing environmental sensitivities to create a positive working environment and place to live.
- Provide a variety of landscape and environmental conditions, creating space for amenity, events, experimentation and respite to support talent attraction and retention, collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- Ensure management and restoration of habitats to enhance biodiversity, supporting the landowner's ambition for the integration of wildlife into operations, working at scale to deliver abundant natural landscapes.
- Enhance existing ecology and mitigate for site conditions such as air and noise pollution and flood risk through careful site planning and integrated water management.



FIG 4.3

3. A WELL-CONNECTED NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORTING ACTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

The development of Marshmoor Policy Area will:

- Be well-connected to its surroundings, overcoming physical barriers to better integrate the site with Welham Green and Hatfield.
- Prioritise infrastructure supporting active and sustainable travel, enabling wider active travel connectivity to the town and transport connections.
- Reduce car-dependency through improved access and connections with strategic public transport, as well as minimising and consolidating car use within the site.
- Provide access off the existing road network, minimising impact on existing green assets.



FIG 4.4

4. A WELL-INTEGRATED AND SENSITIVE NEIGHBOUR

The development of Marshmoor Policy Area will:

- Positively contribute to its context and will be sensitive to its neighbours and Welham Green village across all hours of the day, as well as enhancing the heritage context of Hatfield Park.
- Be mindful of its interface with existing buildings and developments, ensuring heights and massing do not overwhelm sensitive edges and ensure the provision of sufficient setbacks and buffers along key interfaces.



FIG 4.5

5. AN EXEMPLAR OF HIGH-QUALITY DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY

The development of Marshmoor Policy Area will:

- Demonstrate a holistic design approach, delivering resilient, future-proofed and environmentally sustainable design and site planning.
- Push for achieving high and forward-thinking sustainability standards, driving down carbon emissions across all stages, including the design, construction and operation of buildings with a clear strategy for integrating circular economy principles.



FIG 4.6

4.4 ILLUSTRATIVE VIEWS



FIG 4.7
Arrival into the 'campus' from the A1000, weaving through woodlands and dense planting.



FIG 4.8
Looking towards the central landscaped area forming the 'campus green'. providing a space for social interaction, rest and respite.

4.4 ILLUSTRATIVE VIEWS



FIG 4.9

Looking across Marshmoor Lane to the southern edge of the site, where a new watery landscape will manage flood risk.

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5.0 SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

Section 2.0 details the complexity of the constraints across the site, for which all proposed developments will require to demonstrate a careful and considered response. The diagram opposite summarises these constraints through 'development zones', which categorises the zones across the site where constraints are relatively limited to where constraints may highly restrict development. This includes consideration for veteran trees, sensitive edges along existing residential uses and areas of high flood risk. These constraints give shape to four indicative development plots, three in the northern site and one in the southern site.

This provides a useful overlay for identifying areas of higher development potential and areas where the complexities may be to challenging. The term 'developable area' refers to where built development could be located, with consideration for constraints such as trees, planting and areas of low flood risk. 'Non-Developable' areas refer to where it is recommended for built development to not be located, while acknowledging that these zones will need intervention to provide access between plots.

Key

- SPD Area Boundary
- Developable Area with limited constraints
- ▨ Developable Area with several constraints requiring further investigation, testing and mitigation. Please refer to Section 2.0 for detailed constraints
- ⋮ Non-Developable Area around hedgerows, trees, and clearance zones - where through access and infrastructure may need to be provided. Requires further investigation, testing and mitigation. Please refer to Section 2.0 for detailed constraints
- Buffer zone around veteran trees and root protection zone
- ⊗ Development Zones (indicative)

Development Zone considerations

D1: The northernmost zone holds a prominent position and is highly visible from the Great North Road. The north-eastern part of the site is an area of low flood risk and with the potential to connect to Great North Road. The southern edge is bordered by hedgerows, with veteran trees to the south east and the train line along the western edge.

D2: The second zone from the north is connected to the north and south by other development zones, requiring these sites to be developed in order to provide access. It has the railway line along the western edge, hedgerows to the northern and southern edges which will need to be carefully addressed to provide access, and the backs of residential uses along its eastern edge. It has several veteran trees dispersed across the area.

D3: The southernmost site of the northern parcel has the potential to provide vehicle access to the parcel, carefully manoeuvring through woodlands and around the veteran tree to its north-eastern corner. Similar to the other zones, it has hedgerows running along the north, additional veteran trees to the western edge along the railway line. This also provides the opportunity to provide east-west connections to Marshmoor Lane.

D4: The southern parcel consists of one highly constrained development zone, with a prominent frontage to Dixons Hill Road and marking a gateway to the Welham Green village from the south east. Overhead lines and the PRoW bisect the site, with the northern and western part further constrained by areas at risk of flooding (varying across low-high risk).



Fig 5.1 Development Zones

5.2 SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

This diagram sets out an overarching spatial framework for the site, illustrating some of the key spatial design principles for which future applications and detailed proposals should provide clear design responses. The following pages provide further detail on these principles and their application across the site.

These principles illustrate a key outcome that the development should achieve in order to deliver on Development Objectives and the Vision for the site. This spatial framework is applicable for all potential land use mix and distribution options.

Key

--- SPD Area Boundary

Responding to Constraints

- ☐ Developable Area with several constraints requiring further investigation, testing and mitigation. Please refer to Section 2.0 for detailed constraints (Principle 2A)
- ☐ Non-Developable Area around hedgerows and trees, where through access and infrastructure may need to be provided. Requires further investigation, testing and mitigation. Please refer to Section 2.0 for detailed constraints (Principle 2A)
- Buffer zone around veteran trees and root protection zone (Principle 2A)
- |||| Sensitive Edges towards existing residential uses (Principles 4A and 4B)
- Overhead electricity line and clearance zone
- Public Right of Way (PROW)

Application of Principles to SPD Area

- ≡ Interconnected central landscape, free of road and vehicle infrastructure (Principles 2B and 3D)
- /// Amphibious landscape features for mitigating flood risk and surface water management (Principle 2E)
- Primary gateway from south-east signified by buildings of high architectural quality and strong primary frontage towards Dixons Hill Road (Principle 4F)
- Secondary gateway to campus from A1000 through dense woodland (Principle 4F) and key E-W connection to Marshmoor Lane
- Active frontages overlooking green open space and at key corners as a minimum along active travel routes (Principles 4C)
- Pedestrian and cycle routes to weave through the site across development plots, sensitively interfacing with existing hedges and trees (Principles 2A and 3C)
- ➔ Primary vehicle access to northern parcel from A1000, sensitive to woodland and existing trees. Primary vehicle access to southern parcel from Marshmoor Lane (Preferred approach - Principle 3F)
- > Potential for secondary vehicle access connecting to Great North Road (Principle 3F)
- ... Consolidated servicing to edge of site to mitigate interface with existing buildings, providing secured yards and maintain car-free central landscape (Principles 2B, 3D, 3E and 4A)
- |||| Dense trees and planting along A1000 and Dixons Hill Road to create green buffer (Principle 4D)

Application of Principles outside SPD Area

- Strong north-south pedestrian and cycle route along existing Marshmoor Lane, providing connections to Hatfield Station (Principle 3A). Improved east-west connection to Welham Green village and station.
- Improved site interface with Welham Green Station supported by public realm and access improvements, including active travel connections (Principle 3B), as well as improved links to Welham Green village.

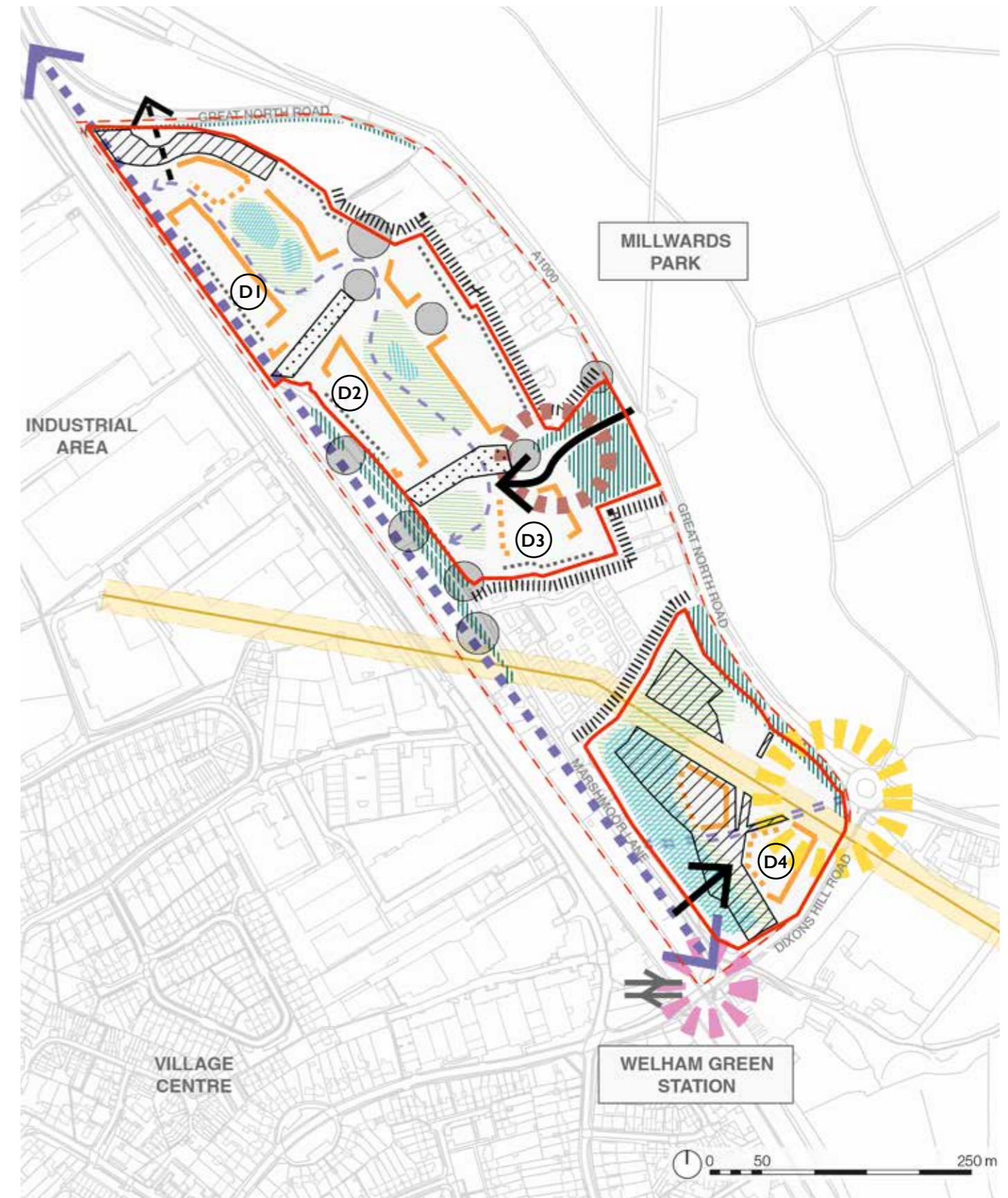


Fig 5.2 Spatial Framework Diagram

5.3 ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

OVERVIEW

This indicative masterplan has been used to illustrate an approach for developing the site and for conveying how development objectives and design principles could be translated to the site. It illustrates one, but not the only approach, for delivering development across the site. It has also been tested for capacity and floorspace to ensure that the minimum policy requirements can be met.

Assumptions:

- 4m heights have been assumed per storey for employment uses.
- 2.7m heights have been assumed per storey for the mobility hub. Vehicle movements and capacity needed for development unknown at this stage - dimensions for mobility hub based on existing case studies.
- 3m heights have been assumed per storey for residential use

Please refer to Principle 4B for assumed heights for illustrative masterplan,

- Employment Floorspace: E(g)ii Research and Development of products and processes and ancillary uses
- Mobility hub (Multi-storey car parking, active travel hub and ancillary uses)
- Residential uses (including apartment blocks and maisonettes)
- Vehicle access routes
- Pedestrian and cycle routes
- SuDs (development plot scale water management)



Fig 5.3 Illustrative masterplan

I. A NEW, NATIONALLY RECOGNISED 'INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY' CAMPUS

The development of Marshmoor Policy Area will:

- Contribute to the economic success and innovation focus of the wider sub-region, capitalising on its strategic location.
- Introduce new employment uses in emerging innovation and technology sectors over up to 40,500 sqm of new employment floorspace, supporting a range of occupiers to scale up their businesses.
- Provide high-quality housing through up to 100 new homes to attract skilled employees, supporting a lively live-work environment.
- Demonstrate long-term stewardship and careful management of the sensitive site.

PRINCIPLE IA

Deliver the type of employment floorspace and linked residential accommodation that is suitable for a nationally recognised 'Innovation and Technology' Campus.

Marshmoor Policy Area has been allocated for 40,500sqm of Class E(g) employment floorspace and 100 no dwellings (Class C3) providing affordable accommodation for those employed on the site.

While local policy allows for any of the below uses to be delivered on the site, there are a number of factors that influence their likely success and potential for delivering the allocated floorspace to meet the vision and development objectives for the site.

- E(g)(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions
- E(g)(ii) Research and development of products or processes
- E(g)(iii) Industrial processes

Recommended Use Class for delivering employment floorspace: E(g) (ii) Research and development of products or processes

Research and development uses are considered the most appropriate for this site, given a range of influences including the landowner's aspirations for the site, its strategic location within the London Cambridge Innovation Corridor and the potential to deliver up to the full allocation of employment space of 40500sqm through related typologies.

Development proposals should clearly demonstrate how these uses will be accommodated and how they relate to demand and relationship with the wider context of the innovation corridor.

Traffic generation for this type of employment use could be significantly lower than for office uses, and comparable research and development sites are indicative of a car parking demand that could be

accommodated on site with a mixture of multi-storey and surface car parking. The exact demand for parking and vehicle infrastructure will depend on the brief for employment uses introduced on site - to be clearly set out as part of application.

Rationale for discounting other use classes for delivering employment floorspace

The remaining use classes of E(g)(i) Offices and E(g)(iii) Industrial processes have been largely discounted through the process of developing this SPD. This is largely attributed to whether these uses can:

- Support a 'Innovation and Technology' campus.
- Create a hub for attracting highly-skilled employees to live and work in Hatfield and Welham Green.
- Minimise the impact of parking and limited car use and impact on existing network.

E(g) (i) Offices

The main challenge with delivering a significant quantum of office space is sufficient space for car parking that is appropriately and sensitively designed. Office uses up to 40500sqm would likely generate high requirement of car parking spaces and significant additional traffic volume to the site and surrounding area. Early site testing indicates that more than 500-600 parking spaces on site would limit the potential for green space and other uses, and it would likely limit the quantum of employment space deliverable.

E(g) (iii) Industrial processes

The potential for introducing industrial process uses are the impact on the neighbouring residential uses along the north-eastern boundary of the northern parcel, and in between the north and southern parcels of the site. Uses such as large data centres or large industrial uses, similar to those to the west of the railway line, will not be acceptable.

This makes it a less likely land use but may be appropriate as a form of technology and innovation led development perhaps as a mix of employment uses in accordance with the site allocation policy

Any proposed programme of uses should be considerate of parking and servicing requirements, ensuring that Vision Statements 2 and 3, introducing a biodiverse landscape at the heart of the development and supporting active travel and sustainable transport, are not compromised.

Residential Accommodation

The introduction of residential accommodation on the site will enhance the attractiveness of the employment campus to future employees. Many of the larger operators of the type who may be interested in developing this site would be looking for this approach for land use mix.

The 100 units would house a relatively small proportion of the total employees on site, which would be expected in the many hundreds depending on the type of operator and use. However, a range of types and size of home should be provided that are accessible to a wide range of employees.

Residential accommodation should be delivered at an appropriate time for when the employment land is in use. While the exact phasing of residential uses in relation to employment floorspace will vary depending on the type of occupier, the proposed 100 homes should be delivered before or in line with 50% of the overall commercial floorspace across the SPD area.

PRINCIPLE 1B

Distribute land uses across the development plots to make best use of developable land with consideration for site constraints, enabling good access and supporting well planned uses and adjacencies.

Due to the nature of the site being split over two parcels, linked by Marshmoor Lane, careful consideration of the distribution of uses across these parcels is necessary. The southern parcel is considerably more constrained than the northern parcel, however it provides a strong presence on Dixons Hill Road and a key gateway to the village.

Capacity testing has indicated that the development will most likely need to be spread across all of the development zones in order to accommodate the employment floorspace together to support a campus function. However this should not dissuade a future applicant from providing all of the development on the northern parcel if other objectives can be met.

A comparison of the different options in Table 2 highlights the pros and cons of each illustrated approach. Option 1 is the preferred approach at this stage, based on the available site information and building in the flexibility to accommodate employment floorspace to suit a range of potential occupiers. However, applicants are encouraged to explore different options and clearly set out the pros and cons of each, informing the preferred selection.

Key

- Site Boundary
- Employment
- Residential
- Parks and Landscape
- Consolidated Parking



Fig 5.4
Land Use Distribution Option 1



Fig 5.5
Land Use Distribution Option 2



Fig 5.6
Land Use Distribution Option 3

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for large floorplate uses to be clustered together for campus feeling • Allows for built gateway to south • Consolidated parking on periphery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for a diverse mix of uses and activity throughout the day • Enables shared infrastructure, including amenity and social infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for a diverse mix of uses and activity throughout the day
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could lead to inactive areas around employment uses in the evening and night time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking to the south not useful for campus - adverse impact on use for station • Landscape not in area of campus activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern parcel too constrained for large floorplate uses • Breaks up the 'campus'

Table 2

Land Use Distribution - Options Comparison table

PRINCIPLE IC

Deliver a mix of ancillary uses that activate the site for workers, residents and visitors.

The development should provide a mix of ancillary uses supporting the ‘technology and innovation’ campus, giving employees and residents a reason to spend time on and use the area beyond the working day. Where possible, these uses should be clustered together to activate open and public spaces. A careful appraisal of nearby uses in Welham Green village should be carried out to demonstrate that any new land use offer is complementary, rather than competing with these uses.

Food and Beverage

The development should provide food and beverage uses for employees on site. These uses should be focussed around areas of employment floorspace and should provide an opportunity for employees to gather and socialise. They should not compete with Welham Green local centre and should provide a complementary offer for employees.

These uses should activate the ground floor, overlooking pedestrian and cycle routes and spilling out into parks and open spaces.

Shared Amenity

The development may also provide additional shared amenity within the campus such as gyms, co-working space, workshops and flexible social spaces. These should also activate the ground and first floor.

Active Travel Hub

The development should support active and sustainable travel for employees and people using the campus through providing good quality infrastructure, including uses such as cycle hubs and repair spaces. These can also provide a useful resource for the wider community and help to activate active travel routes both within and passing through the development.



Fig 5.7 Spillover activity from ancillary uses can activate landscaped spaces



Fig 5.8 Active travel hub can support active and sustainable travel for users



Fig 5.9 Activate rooftop spaces for shared amenity and infrastructure to support the campus

2. A RICH, BIODIVERSE AND CLIMATE-RESPONSIVE LANDSCAPE AT THE HEART OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

The development of Marshmoor Policy Area will:

- Implement a landscape-led approach that responds to the existing environmental sensitivities to create a positive working environment and place to live.
- Provide a variety of landscape and environmental conditions, creating space for amenity, events, experimentation and respite to support talent attraction and retention, collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- Ensure management and restoration of habitats to enhance biodiversity, supporting the landowner’s ambition for the integration of wildlife into operations, working at scale to deliver abundant natural landscapes.
- Enhance existing ecology and mitigate for site conditions such as air and noise pollution and flood risk through careful site planning and integrated water management.

Definition:

Landscape-led masterplanning is an approach where the landscape proposals inform the shape of development, including the strategic layout, design of buildings, phasing and land use options. The landscape is the central driver for design and placemaking within the new development. A landscape-led masterplan should respond sensitively and proactively to existing landscape, topography and environmental conditions - using these as assets and key features to characterise the new development.

PRINCIPLE 2A

Respond sensitively to existing environmental constraints and use these as an opportunity to shape the strategic masterplan.

The existing landscape across the site is fundamental to the site’s character. This character should be celebrated and enhanced through the delivery of new development that protects and adds to the site’s natural assets,

The development proposals for the site should be informed and accompanied by an integrated landscape masterplan that serves to integrate the development into the site and the local context.

Retain and respond to existing assets

Landscape features on the site should be retained as far as possible (or rerouted where appropriate). This includes:

- Areas of existing woodland
- Areas of existing structure planting
- Perimeter tree and shrub planting along the A1000 and lining the eastern side of the railway line
- Veteran trees
- Existing Trees and habitat planting associated with Marshmoor Lane
- Areas of adjoining grassland, particularly within the highest flood risk area in the southern land parcel
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees within both land parcels, where possible and acknowledging that connections through these areas will likely be required but should minimise tree and hedgerow loss

The introduction of new planting is strongly encouraged and should be sympathetic to the existing landscape context.

No Net Loss of Trees

Trees, hedgerows and areas of significant planting are key characteristics and natural assets for the SPD Area, and these should be retained where possible. The protection of these assets has informed the Development Zones and development proposals should demonstrate how designs are responding to these sensitively.

Where trees or planting may be impacted, such as for providing access between development plots, trees of similar species and maturity should be reprovided in order to meet biodiversity net gain requirements and to enhance landscape character of the site.

The proposals should seek to retain the core of the existing landscape attributes of the site – belts of trees and hedgerows and veteran/feature trees – to bring continuity and add to the sense of place. The proposals should include significant new tree and shrub planting that will reflect and relate to the existing on-site and adjoining vegetation.



Fig 5.10

Veteran tree (Oak) on middle-right side



Fig 5.11

Hedgerows along road South West of site



Fig 5.12

Category B trees in open field

PRINCIPLE 2B

Create a large, central and distinct green open space at the heart of the new campus that connects different development parcels together.

Developments must demonstrate a landscape-led approach for the employment campus, at the heart of which a large, landscaped open space should provide a 'campus green'. Due to the many hedgerows and natural barriers across the northern parcel, this open space should be provided as a network of open spaces across the different development parcel, connected together by walking and cycling routes. These open spaces should provide a cohesive approach to supporting local biodiversity and ecosystems, but they can vary in programme and character - encouraging employees to explore and use different parts of the landscape.

The landscape should provide a central unifying element connecting different buildings of the campus, encouraging adjacent buildings to open out onto the landscape and provide a range of amenity uses to support activation outside of working hours.

For the southern parcel and in order to respond to site constraints open space and flood mitigation as a wetland area will be located in the west and northern edges of the site. These areas can create a high quality wetland landscape setting for the new development and also provide important flood attenuation

These landscapes should also play an important role in creating a sense of arrival into the campus, through maintaining views across and supporting orientation around the campus. There is opportunity for the development to have a presence on Great North Road and Marshmoor Lane through landscape interventions that respond to the existing environmental condition.



Fig 5.13

The Wellcome Sanger Institute provides a useful case study for a science and innovation campus informed by design and landscape

Image Credit: Wellcome Sanger Institute

The character of the central landscape can be wild and natural, as the existing landscape, or it could be more curated and ornamental as demonstrated at the Wellcome Sanger Institute in the images on this page. Proposals are encouraged to push for an innovative central landscape that integrates with the character and identity of its surroundings and the new built uses, ensuring that biodiversity and resilience are prioritised.



Fig 5.14

A central unifying landscape ties together the campus at Wellcome Sanger Institute.

Image Credit: Phil Mynott / Wellcome Sanger Institute

PRINCIPLE 2C

Deliver measurable improvements in local biodiversity and wildlife, addressing the different blue and green environments across the site.

Proposals should make the best use of existing habitats and site features to extend its potential to increase biodiversity net gain.

Any proposed landscape strategy must reflect the local context of the site and be developed with the intention of maximising opportunities for ecological enhancement.

This should include the introduction and enhancement of wetland areas, grassland and woodland habitats, and should retain ponds, ditches, hedgerows, tree lines, mature trees and woodland wherever possible. These areas should be adequately buffered from development and construction processes to protect their biodiversity.

Through the provision of interconnected ecologically important habitats and features across site, the strategy should provide green corridors which are appropriately managed for the benefit of wildlife and biodiversity.

Mitigation, compensation and enhancement for protected species on site should be designed into the scheme, aiming to provide areas of optimal habitat for legally protected species that maybe present. Mitigation requirements will be designed following best practice guidance and where required meeting Natural England licence obligations.

Requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) will need to be designed into the landscape strategy, with an aim of achieving a minimum net gain of 10%. However, achieving a higher BNG is strongly encouraged and supported. BNG calculations and methodology should follow the mitigation hierarchy.



Fig 5.15

New wetland landscapes providing new opportunities for enhancing biodiversity

In the first instance landscape design should aim to deliver the required net gain on site retaining and protecting the most ecologically important features where possible. Mitigation for loss of habitat and onsite enhancement of retained habitat will then be designed into the landscape scheme and as a last resort any remaining biodiversity credits, required bought from reputable offsite providers to ensure BNG commitments are met or if possible exceeded. All habitats covered under BNG commitments must be appropriately managed for a minimum of 30 years post completion of the development.

PRINCIPLE 2D

Use planting and landscape elements to inform the experience of moving around the campus, strengthening character areas across the two sites and of each distinct landscape.

A key benefit of a landscape-led approach will be the use of landscape features to create strong landscape led high quality character areas that are distinct for the different parts of the site, informing the experience of employees and residents using the campus everyday.

New planting should be located strategically to contribute to the framing of attractive and desirable views and the filtering of unattractive views, in particular those of the industrial units to the west of the site.

New structural/framework planting should relate to, and enhance, the site's existing landscape attributes. The framework planting shall seek to physically and visually reduce the divisive linearity of the railway and A1000 corridors by expressing east-west landscape connectivity and linkages.

Landscape interventions should consider:

- Framework planting in naturalistic and biodiversity rich areas
- Wildflower margins and indigenous mix planting
- Enhanced hedgerows – incorporating clumps and drifts of informally grouped tree planting
- Areas of wetland public open space incorporating SuDS/ponds, footpath routes and seating areas
- Central connection routes – with more formalised tree and shrub planting
- Central meeting places/courtyards – with attractive feature tree and shrub planting and associated structures/buildings



Fig 5.16

Wildflower margins and indigenous mixed planting

PRINCIPLE 2E

Implement landscape features and nature-based solutions for the management of surface water and flood risk through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Development layout should minimise potential flood risk to buildings, as reflected in the summarised constraints plan. This makes a considerable area in the southern parcel unsuitable for built development or requiring a mitigation strategy in order to accommodate buildings.

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) must be used to manage surface water runoff and minimise flood risk, particularly in the southern parcel. This approach also provides an opportunity for management of surface water through nature-based solutions in the northern parcel, particularly when linked with water systems of new developments.

SuDS strategies should be carefully considered and calculated to provide sufficient capacity to effectively manage surface water runoff and flood risk, including in relation to new developments and their impact. SuDS strategies need to be appropriately coordinated with the landscape strategy and designed and profiled in a sympathetic manner that relates well to, and is compatible with, the landscape proposals and ecological enhancement requirements. The creation of unnaturally profiled water retention pits should be avoided.

The southwestern boundary area of the southern parcel provides a particular opportunity to create an attractive localised wetland landscape that will contribute to biodiversity enhancement and could be readily accessible.

Policy SADM 14 Flood Risk and Surface Water Management in the Local Plan should be referenced.

The central landscape in the northern parcel provides an opportunity to create a different typology of SuDS intervention, less likely to remain flooded but with greater potential for a more amphibious wet/dry landscape.

Development should be designed to minimise water consumption – residential units should be designed to use no more than 110 litres/person/day and incorporate water reuse and recycling and rainwater harvesting.



Fig 5.17

Housing fronting on to SuDs landscape



Fig 5.20

Bioswales



Fig 5.18

SuDs interventions creating wetlands



Fig 5.21

Routes and connections over water



Fig 5.19

SUDS / pond with viewing platform

3. A WELL-CONNECTED NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORTING ACTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

The development of Marshmoor Policy Area will:

- Be well-connected to its surroundings, overcoming physical barriers to better integrate the site with Welham Green and Hatfield.
- Prioritise infrastructure supporting active and sustainable travel, enabling wider active travel connectivity to the town and transport connections.
- Reduce car-dependency through improved access and connections with strategic public transport, as well as minimising and consolidating car use within the site.
- Provide access off the existing road network, minimising impact on existing green assets.

PRINCIPLE 3A

Improve strategic north-south and east-west active travel connections and experience between the proposed campus; Welham Green village; and Hatfield.

Proposals must promote and support strategic active travel connectivity between the site, village centre and key public transport destinations. These will support and complement WHBC's adopted Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) aspirations and seek to promote active travel trips over the private vehicle.

This includes the provision of a dedicated north-south pedestrian and cycle route, running through the SPD area connecting Dixons Hill Road to the south to Great North Road to the north - providing safe and signposted onward connections to Hatfield Station and town centre. This would require strategic interventions including:

- Provision of pedestrian priority crossings, including dropped kerbs and tactile paving on the main roads surround the sites.
- Provision of raised table crossings at key junctions as traffic calming measures.
- Provision of off-carriageway route for pedestrians and cyclists running north-south through the SPD area - this could be alongside the railway line to provide a more rural, natural route and/or it could meander through the site providing a more active and overlooked route.
- Provision of improved pedestrian and cycle connections running east-west from the SPD area to Welham Green Station and further into the village.
- Co-ordinated strategy for lighting and signage connecting up strategic walking and cycling routes.

These strategic improvements should be initiated and delivered as part of the first phase, linked to the delivery of the first 10% of development floorspace. The early implementation of these improvements will help facilitate a modal shift and prioritise sustainable transport from the inception of the site's use.



Fig 5.23 Shared active travel route through nature along Marshmoor Lane

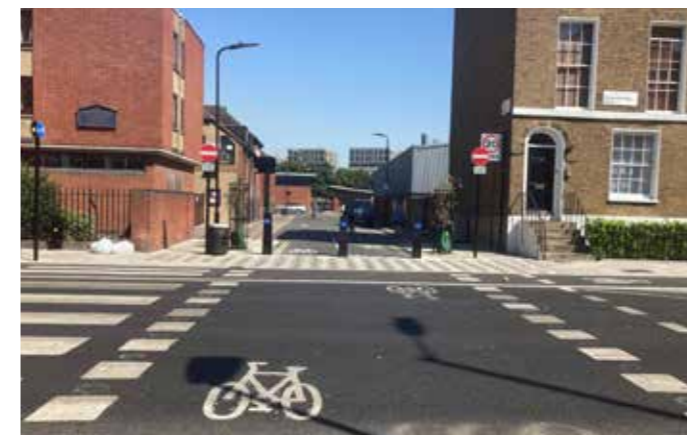


Fig 5.24 Pedestrian and cycle priority crossing at key junctions connecting the site to its surroundings



Fig 5.25 Well signposted cycling routes connecting Welham Green village centre and Hatfield Station through the site

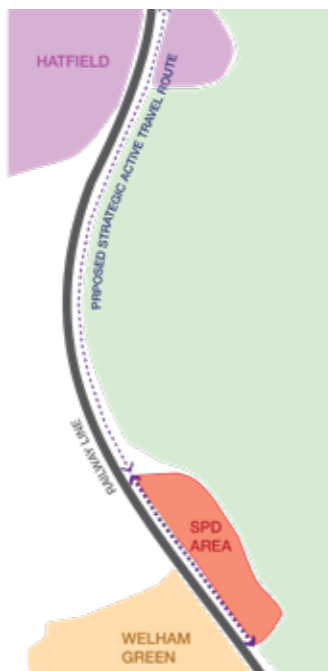


Fig 5.22 Strategic active travel connection from SPD Area to Hatfield

PRINCIPLE 3B

Improve walking and cycling connectivity to existing public transport infrastructure in Welham Green and Hatfield.

The development should support improvements to the local public transport services and infrastructure in the local area through the following:

- Improvements to local bus services including local routes 230 and 610 which the A1000 in the vicinity of the site, as well as local bus services 312 within Welham Green
- Explore opportunities for improvements to the existing bus stops on the A1000 to include:
 - New bus shelters, and seating
 - Timetable information, including potential for real time information updates
 - Bus boarders or high kerbs for accessible boarding
- The internal network at the campus should be designed to accommodate future Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services that operate in the area (such as the Herts Lynx), providing frequent services connecting to Hatfield Station and key residential areas when employees might locate,

Welham Green Station

Currently, access to Welham Green railway station is via stepped access (direct from Dixons Hill Road) to each platform or via the car park (and station forecourt) off Travellers Lane. The current access, via Travellers Lane, does not provide any formal pedestrian infrastructure or crossing facilities across either Travellers Lane or Dixons Hill Road to access to and from the station.

Development should contribute towards improving accessibility to Welham Green station through the following:

- New pedestrian crossing facilities on Dixons Hill Road (in the vicinity of the potential new access arrangements);
- New pedestrian crossing facilities on Dixons Hill Road (west of Holloways Lane);
- New crossing facilities on Holloways Lane;
- Provision of new footway and/or shared cycleway on Travellers Lane, connecting between Dixons Hill Road and the existing station car park access.

Any provision will need to ensure access to the industrial estate is retained and not compromised;

- Improvements to the existing cycle parking at the station (including potential new spaces and/or improved storage facilities); and
- Safeguarding the land immediately east of the railway tracks, and west of Marshmoor Lane, for any future potential station improvement works.

As these interventions are located outside the site boundary, but within the SPD area boundary, developments are not expected to deliver these interventions independently. However, a partnership or contribution approach should be agreed with the local authority to enable these changes.

Hatfield Station

In addition to improving the accessibility to Welham Green station, the site has the potential to contribute towards improved pedestrian and cyclist access between Welham Green and Hatfield railway station, via the A1000. It is anticipated that this could include:

- Upgrading the existing footway on the A1000 to a 3.0m shared footway/cycleway; and
- Improved crossing facilities at key junctions (including Oxlease Drive and the Great North Road/ B197/ The Broadway).



Fig 5.26 Public lift at Hackney Wick, London

A lift can provide accessible and direct connections to the station from the SPD area

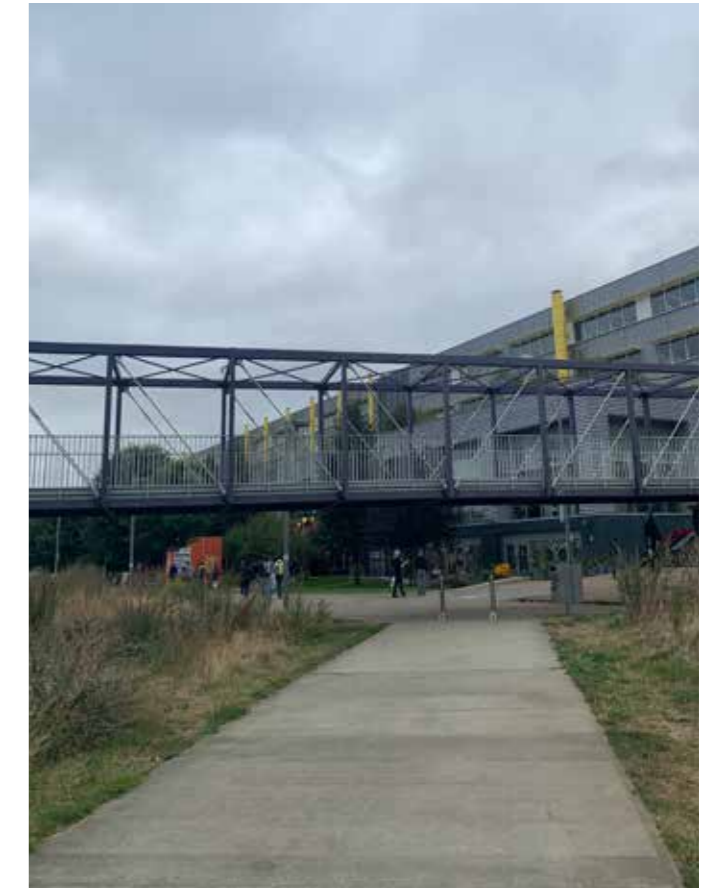


Fig 5.27 Pedestrian Footbridge at Hackney Wick, London

A potential footbridge can provide direct access between the two platforms, integrating with a lift for street level access

As a minimum, the design and layout of proposed development should enable the future delivery of this routes. These improvements should be initiated and delivered as part of the first phase of development, linked to the delivery of the first 10% of development floorspace. The early implementation of these improvements will help facilitate a modal shift and prioritise sustainable transport from the inception of the site's use.

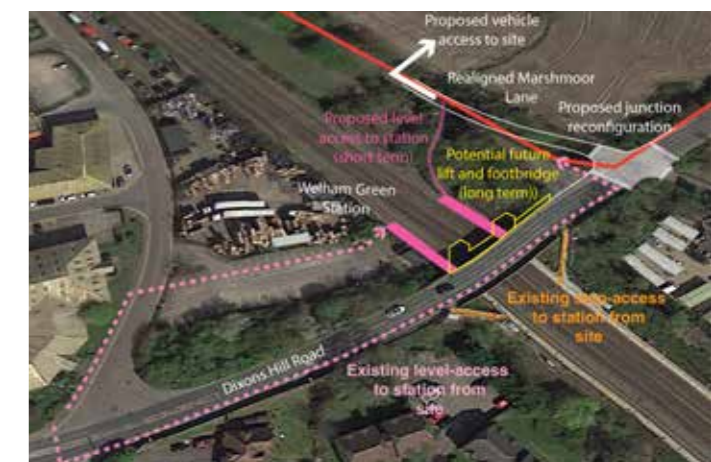


Fig 5.28 Potential for creating direct connections and step free access to Welham Green station from the site, and providing access between platforms

PRINCIPLE 3C

Ensure that pedestrians and cyclists are prioritised across all movement infrastructure within the site, maintaining car free zones in and around the central landscaped areas and connecting with strategic active travel infrastructure.

Proposals should be designed with a network of streets which promote and ensure that walking and cycling are the preferred, and prioritised, method of travel through the site. This should include 'hard' infrastructure measures, such as the provision of safe and accessible walking and cycling routes connecting the different development parcels, as well as 'softer' promotion by making these routes more attractive through planting, lighting and active frontages providing passive surveillance. Users should have a choice of routes, including fast and direct connections to more meandering, leisurely routes.

Development proposals should demonstrate:

- Central landscaped areas and routes connecting Development Zones as car-free pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Pedestrian and cycle priority where routes are on carriageways shared with vehicles.
- Mitigate and remove potential conflict between pedestrians, cycling and vehicles - including service vehicles with consideration for turning and reversing.
- Provision of footways and cycleways of sufficient width for different types of users through the site connecting the various parcels and new buildings;
- Provision of pedestrian and cyclist priority crossings across the side roads within the site;
- Provision of pedestrian and cyclist connections to the existing highway network and to strategic cycle infrastructure;

- Design of low speed streets which prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement on vehicular roads;
- Secure and covered cycle parking provided for all future users, including residents, employees and visitors;
- Provision of electric bicycle charging infrastructure;
- Safeguarding within the site for future sustainable travel initiatives which could include e-bikes, e-scooters, cargo bikes and cycle hire schemes (for example Beryl Bikes);
- Potential provision of Active Travel Hubs, providing cycle repair, cycle hire, storage and ancillary uses such as cafes, launderettes and other everyday amenity can plug into a wide variety of buildings as well as standalone pavilions activating routes and open spaces. These can be part of a larger mobility hub that consolidates parking.

In addition to providing segregated infrastructure for walking and cycling, road infrastructure should also prioritise pedestrian and cycle use, as well as support more sustainable travel by car.

- Provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across all parking spaces;
- Provision and promotion of car club spaces (for both the residential and employment future users);
- Design of the internal network to accommodate future DRT bus service through the site;
- A Travel Plan which will bring all of the above together, alongside soft measures to support;



Fig 5.29

Safe and attractive routes for pedestrians, separate from vehicular movement



Fig 5.30

Incorporating infrastructure for cycle parking and movement as part of good street design



Fig 5.31

Provide cycle parking in and around key public and open spaces

PRINCIPLE 3D

Deliver a consolidated and efficient internal road network that minimises areas of grey infrastructure (roads, parking, servicing and other asphalt surfaces) and maximises areas of landscape, public realm and amenity

Internal roads should be designed to minimise grey infrastructure and help to create an attractive public realm in the campus by minimising the road infrastructure's impact. Road networks should be designed with consideration for pedestrians and cyclists as a primary concern - maintaining low speeds and excluding and cut-throughs to avoid rat-running. Proposals should maximise the green and permeable surfaces for flood risk mitigation and surface water management across the campus.

Due to the related employment uses for 'innovation and technology' campuses requiring larger vehicles for servicing and maintenance, road layouts should be carefully considered to minimise the need for reversing and turning to avoid conflict with pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles. Clear segregated routes for pedestrians and cyclists should be provided where routes are to be shared with larger vehicles.

These routes should be buffered with trees and planting.

Roads should be located to maintain a vehicle-free internal green route for pedestrians and cyclists only, creating an attractive and people-friendly, landscaped environment.



Fig 5.32

Tree-lined paths and maximising soft landscape

PRINCIPLE 3E

Deliver a strategy for consolidated servicing that makes best use of spaces that are less attractive for public amenity and landscape.

Service access and yards for built development should be located away from the central landscaped space, ensuring that they are less visible from amenity and well-used spaces. Servicing strategies should also consider the need for securing these spaces and requirements for different types of vehicles.

These servicing spaces can provide a useful interface for mitigating against sensitive edges where buildings will need to be set back from edges against residential buildings.

Servicing routes should be kept separate from pedestrian and cycle routes, demonstrating that conflict between the two is mitigated and safely managed.

The day-to-day operations of the campus should be managed by a consolidated strategy for servicing, ensuring that large articulated vehicles are not accessing all parts of the campus.

Similarly, deliveries and local distribution should make use of active travel infrastructure where possible, e.g. cycle deliveries.

PRINCIPLE 3F

Locate vehicular access to limit impact on strategic road network and on existing environmental constraints on the edges of the site

The Local Plan requires the primary vehicular access to the site should be provided from Dixons Hill Roundabout and a secondary access, onto the A1000, will only be supported if there is a demonstrable need.

However, due to the site constraints along Marshmoor Lane, a vehicular link between the key parcels of the site, along this route to the west of the site, is unviable and therefore separate access options to the northern and southern parcels will be required. An access appraisal for the site has been undertaken for both parcels options which sets out the following options for vehicular access:

Options for vehicle access are:

Southern parcel:

1. Off Marshmoor Lane (likely only to support residential access)
2. From Dixon's Hill Rd
3. Off the Dixon's Hill roundabout (outlined in Local Plan)
4. Off the A1000

Northern parcel:

5. Off the A1000
6. New strategic link off A1000 slip road

An appraisal of each of these access options, from various disciplines, is provided in the Appendix.

Preferred Access Options

The preferred approach to accessing the different zones of the site is as follows:

- For the southern parcel for access to be provided via a realigned southern end of Marshmoor Lane and then into the development site with the remainder of Marshmoor Lane used for active travel and access only for existing users;
- For the northern parcel from Great North Road (location 5) through the block of existing woodland as a carefully planned route that minimises the loss of trees;
- Secondary or later phase access for the northern parcel as left in/left out in Location 6.

Other locations may be possible subject to further testing and agreement with the highways authority once more specific land uses, trip generation and parking numbers are known.

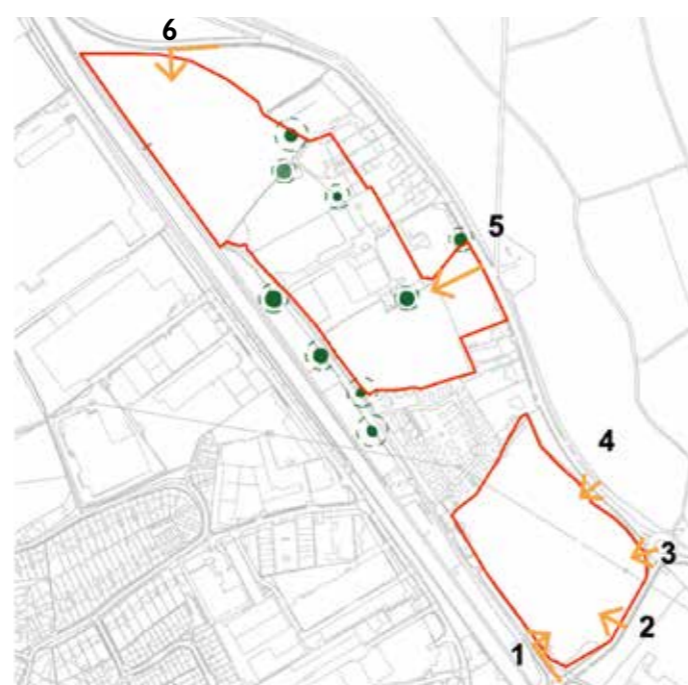


Fig 5.33

Vehicular access points

PRINCIPLE 3G

Optimise parking to minimise land take and impact on the landscape, ensuring flexible arrangements and future adaptability responding to potential reductions in parking demand

All car parking should be carefully sited in the landscape, reflecting the green and natural landscape. It should be located close to site access points from the existing main roads, minimising car travel through the site.

A considerable number of car parking spaces are likely to be required and the use of multi-storey car park(s) may be an efficient way of delivering these spaces while minimising land take. Multi-storey car parks can be designed and delivered to be lightweight and more easily deconstructed at the end of their lifespan.

Car parking structures generally have a lower floor to floor height than employment or residential uses and this means, for example, that a floor to floor depth of around 2.7m could generate four storeys of car parking at around 11m in overall height and may represent an efficient way of delivering car parking on the site. Lower storey heights will help with the setting of the buildings in relation to the heritage context and wider views. This approach should be carefully considered in line with future adaptability of the structure if repurposed for future office or research use, or informed a clear strategy for deconstruction and reuse. This aligns with Local Plan policy SPI0 that buildings are designed for their lifecycle and to be recyclable at the end of their use.

Secure short-term cycle parking should be provided across the campus, but long term parking can be provided in combination with a consolidated parking approach. These should be located in highly accessible and visible location, along strategic active travel routes.

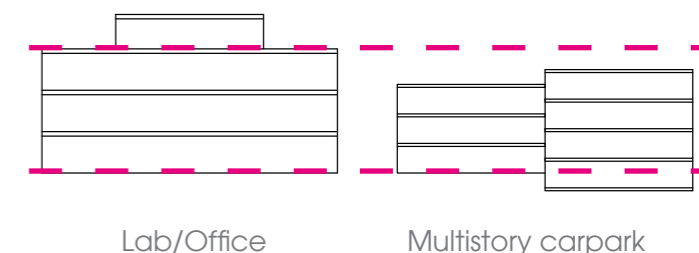


Fig 5.34

Heights comparison between Lab and Multi-storey car park



Fig 5.35

Multi-storey car park - Ejler Bille Parking House

Image Credit: JAJA Architects



Fig 5.36

Mobility Hub with play amenity of roof - Parking House + Konditaget Lüders

Image Credit: Rasmus Hjortshøj for JAJA Architects

4. A WELL-INTEGRATED AND SENSITIVE NEIGHBOUR

The development of Marshmoor Policy Area will:

- Positively contribute to its context and will be sensitive to its neighbours and Welham Green village across all hours of the day, as well as enhancing the heritage context of Hatfield Park.
- Be mindful of its interface with existing buildings and developments, ensuring heights and massing do not overwhelm sensitive edges and ensure the provision of sufficient setbacks and buffers along key interfaces.

PRINCIPLE 4A

Provide a clear setback from adjacent residential uses, carefully planning the use and programme of these spaces to minimise disruption and visibility for existing uses.

There must be a minimum set back of 15m for buildings from surrounding residential properties. Uses that would be acceptable within this 15m buffer area would include private gardens, public landscaped areas (if well overlooked by new development), service yards and parking. The exact use and approach will be dependent on how land uses are distributed across the Development Zones.

The landscape strategy for the site should carefully consider and demonstrate the design of edge conditions with neighbouring properties through landscape and choice of land uses, particularly in relation to the residential properties located between the two land parcels. These should be illustrated in plan and section to demonstrate the interface in detail.

The use of new and existing planting to reinforce the site's boundaries will aid the spatial and visual separation between contrasting land uses and the local context and will support Vision Statement 2.

PRINCIPLE 4B

Distribute buildings heights to respond to constraints and the context, with consideration for visual impact on the surroundings including the railway line and industrial uses to the west, and the sensitive Millwards Park to the east,

Proposals must consider building heights carefully in relation to visual impact from surrounding spaces, key views and amenity of neighbouring uses.

Taller building heights - up to 18-20m including plant – should be concentrated on western edge in proximity to existing industrial uses, which are less sensitive. This can help to create a strong frontage along the railway line.

Building heights should step down in proximity to sensitive and open edges:

- in proximity to surrounding residential uses
- along the A100 where open views and / or proximity to Millwards Park create a sensitive edge and development should complement the existing character

There is an opportunity to deliver a more 'urban; scale at the south-eastern gateway to Welham Green village along Dixon's Hill Road. The heights here can sit between the taller elements along the railway line and the lower-rise blocks towards Millwards Park.

The visual impact of the proposed development on key receptors, such as Hatfield House, will need to be carefully assessed and considered as part of the development proposals. This may further impact on the scale of development once the detail of proposed impact is known



Land use and urban design
 ■ Development zone with building heights up to two residential storeys (10m ground floor to ridge height)
 ■ Development zone with medium building heights (up to 13m)
 ■ Development zone with potential for taller building heights (max. height 18-20m including plant)

Fig 5.37

Land use and heights diagram

PRINCIPLE 4C

Create a positive frontage towards the western edge facing the railway line, providing overlooking and activation for the strategic active travel route

The site layout should address the railway edge to create a positive frontage for passing rail passengers, providing a distinct landmark along the train journey.

Building orientation and massing should create active edges and overlooking to ensure a positive relationship with this part of the site that will be regularly viewed by many people and that is an opportunity to foster a positive image for the campus.

In the northern parcel, ground and first floor uses should overlook and activate pedestrian and cycle routes, including a north-south active travel route if it is routed along the railway line.

In the southern parcel, frontages towards the railway line will be buffered by existing trees and planting and potential wetland landscapes introduced as part of flood risk mitigation measures. The roofscape and visibility of buildings from the railways line should be well considered.



Fig 5.38

Activate ground floor frontages by creating visual connections between internal and external spaces

PRINCIPLE 4D

Provide a green buffer along the eastern edge of the site, enhancing existing trees and planting to mark the transition towards the more rural character of Millwards Park

The existing, well-enclosed character of the A1000 should be retained and strengthened through appropriate landscape treatment along the northwest site boundaries that reflects the woodland of Millwards Park.

Both land parcels should be sensitively designed to minimise any detrimental impacts upon the existing trees and woodland. Proposals should, simultaneously, create an attractive, appropriate and inviting route into the land parcels.

The eastern edge of the northern parcel should be set back behind existing and enhanced planting on the A1000 to enhance this landscape setting. The north-eastern edge is quite open in character, meaning that this edge of the development will be highly visible from the road. The elevated view from the A1000 should be considered in the building layout and design. A green buffer should be provided towards the edge of the ownership boundary. However, this should be mindful of creating carefully considered views to the new development in the SPD area.

The eastern edge of the southern land parcel should minimise the loss of existing hedgerow and trees in order to retain the existing character of the A1000. The density of planting can be eased at the junction with the roundabout and along Dixons Hill Road to ensure that new developments provide a strong presence and gateway to Welham Green village.

Vehicle access into the southern land parcel off an enlarged roundabout is not favoured due to the consequential loss of existing vegetation, hedgerows and trees and the unattractive pylon and overhead cables. Landscape proposals should enhance this setting.



Fig 5.39

Homes set back from A1000



Fig 5.40

A1000 interface with Millwards Park



Fig 5.41

Woodland (left) separating site from A1000

PRINCIPLE 4E

Ensure that development is appropriate for and reflective of its heritage and semi-rural context

Development proposals will need to include a Heritage Impact Assessment to demonstrate that they will not impact negatively on surrounding heritage areas and structures. Proposals should reflect the character and features, while ensuring that development is a contemporary not to local vernacular, adapting it to better reflect the uses and densities proposed.

Building heights must be considered in relation to Hatfield House and Millwards Park, and any potential impact on Hatfield House must be assessed as per Principle 4B.



Fig 5.42

Gatehouse as part of Millwards Park on the west site of the A1000.



Fig 5.43

Millwards Park as seen from the A1000

PRINCIPLE 4F

Create a new gateway to Welham Green village from the south-eastern edge of the site

Welham Green village is a key neighbour to the site and development proposals should carefully consider the relationship with the village to create a more positive entrance to the village from Dixon's Hill Road.

Development on this edge should mark a transition from rural eastern edge of the A1000, arriving at the 'innovation and technology campus' before continuing the journey to Welham Green or Hatfield.

The development should clearly address this corner and views of the development from this position should be provided and interrogated as part of the design development process. This includes careful consideration of the roofscape and elevations towards the roundabout and Dixons Hill Road.

Improvements to the station area and entrance will be key to this relationship as well as the design and layout of the built form in the southern parcel, which should contribute positively to the character of the village.

The implementation of this principle is encouraged to be delivered in the early phases of development.

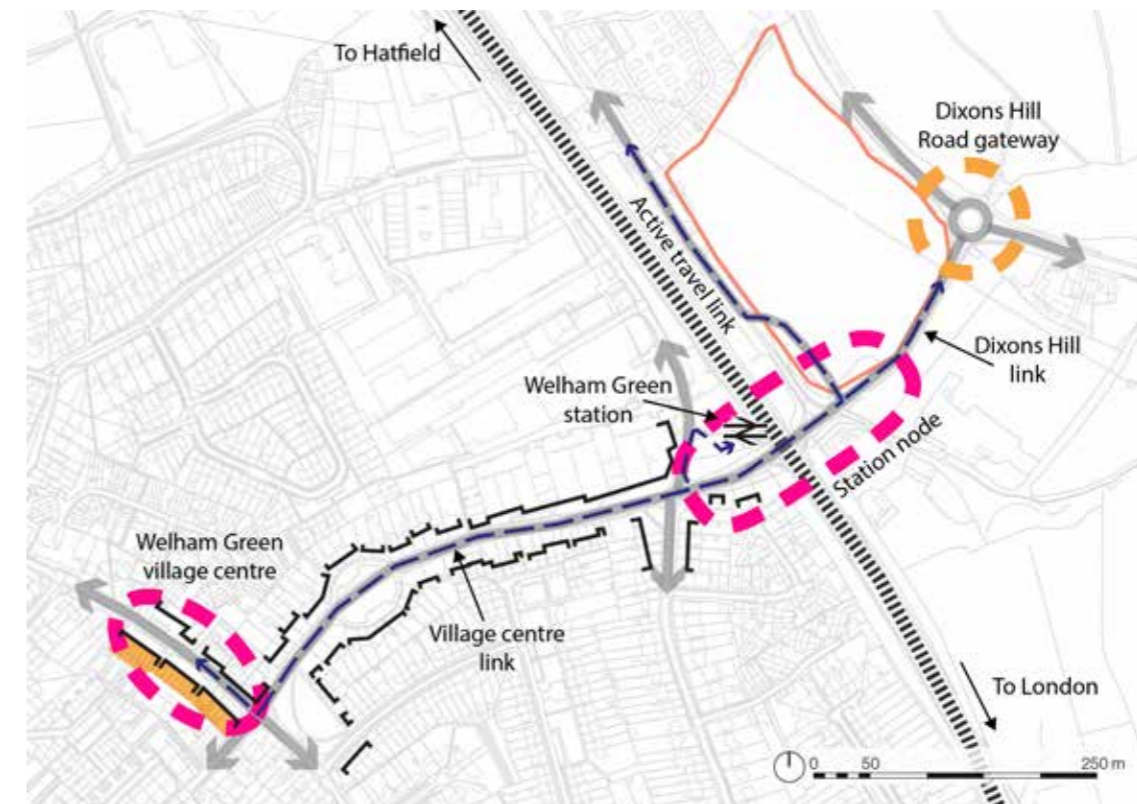


Fig 5.44

Village approach strategy showing the key arrival point the east along Dixons Hill Road, through the station area with improved access arrangements around the over bridge and on to the village centre.

5. AN EXEMPLAR OF HIGH-QUALITY DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY

The development of Marshmoor Policy Area will:

- Demonstrate a holistic design approach, delivering resilient, future-proofed and environmentally sustainable design and site planning.
- Push for achieving high and forward-thinking sustainability standards, driving down carbon emissions across all stages, including the design, construction and operation of buildings with a clear strategy for integrating circular economy principles.

PRINCIPLE 5A

Sustainability should be embedded throughout the design, construction and operations process for all architectural, infrastructure and landscape proposals

Policy SPI0 in the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan sets out a framework for development in the borough to achieve sustainable design and construction. Planning applications should demonstrate their sustainability solutions through a Sustainable Design Statement.

Proposals should demonstrate, for example, that:

- They prioritise reuse and recycling of materials in construction
- Low carbon materials and construction techniques will be used (including full-life cycle carbon assessments)
- They are designed for adaptability and flexibility for future use.
- The design and layout of buildings will minimise embodied and operational carbon, including accommodating the potential for solar panels and heat pumps.
- They will be resilient to future climate change, e.g. overheating and flooding

Policy SADM 13 sets out sustainability requirements, including that all non-residential development with a floorspace of 1,000sqm or more will be required to meeting BREEAM 'Excellent' rating or higher.

Newly constructed dwellings will be required to achieve an estimated water consumption of no more than 110 litres/person/day, with water reuse and recycling and rainwater harvesting incorporated wherever feasible to reduce demand on mains water supply. This provides distinct opportunities for creating closed water systems through flood risk and surface water management infrastructure (Policy SADM 14) and grey water use in new developments.



Fig 5.45



Fig 5.46

Sustainable building materials should be utilised



Fig 5.47 Accordia, Cambridge



Fig 5.48 Great Kneighton, Cambridge

Residential developments should be of high quality, creating attractive streets and neighbourhoods

PRINCIPLE 5B

Incorporate positive measures to mitigate for noise and air pollution from surrounding transport and infrastructure

- Site planning and layouts of buildings should aim to reduce the impact of noise pollution through orientation of buildings and amenity space
- Green buffers should be utilised to mitigate for both air and noise pollutions where possible
- Building design should carefully consider window and ventilation strategies that respond to the context of busy roads and railway infrastructure

The site is surrounded on all sides by transport infrastructure that is a source of noise and / or air pollution. While analysis has suggested that the levels of noise pollution onsite do not preclude development, it will need to be considered in building layout and design.

Building layouts should be designed to reduce the impact of noise pollution through orientation of buildings and amenity space. Noise levels in gardens or private amenity space are likely to exceed upper guideline limits, and therefore should be reduced where possible. Buildings and/or fencing should be used to provide screening for more sensitive buildings more distant from the road and rail. The size, shape and layout of the buildings will need to be considered as the design develops in order to maximise the screening effect. This is typically done with either designing long buildings close together or staggering the buildings to effectively make a hit-and-miss layout, or a combination of both.

Internal noise levels across the site are anticipated to be controllable to suitable levels using commercially available glazing and ventilation products, and consideration of noise and air pollution should be designed from the outset to avoid overheating.



Fig 5.49

Line of trees providing acoustic and visual buffer

PRINCIPLE 5C

Design for future adaptability through reuse of buildings and recycling of building material

Consideration must be given to the suitability and longevity of the buildings accommodating employment floorspace in particular, as it is anticipated to require highly specialised spaces and infrastructure. A clear strategy should be in place demonstrating how the buildings can accommodate alternative uses and layouts and should be designed to be adapted without demolition wherever possible.

This includes careful planning of:

- Floor to ceiling heights, for appropriate servicing of buildings for a range of technology and innovation uses;
- Building floorplates, to insure their adaptability for future occupiers;
- Adequate space and height for plant features designed into buildings;
- Carefully planned servicing of the buildings with access roads

Buildings should try to incorporate reused and sustainable materials. A circular economy strategy should also demonstrate how building components could be repurposed.



Fig 5.50



Fig 5.51 Sainsbury Laboratory

Image Credit: Stanton Williams

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

6.1 PHASING

While the exact phasing and delivery of development across the site and the different development zones is dependent on a range of variables - certain constraints require development to be phased to enable infrastructure and access to unlock further development potential.

It is anticipated that the first phases of development will likely be Development Zone 3 as this is key to opening up the site and gaining access for construction. It may require Development Zone 2 to be delivered in parallel or in close sequence as this zone can accommodate a greater development quantum.

Residential accommodation should be brought forward before or in line with the delivery of the first 50% of development floorspace.

This early phase should come forward alongside active travel and access improvements to the station and the delivery of improvements to the entrance to Marshmoor Lane

Later phases of development will move north, and into the southern parcel. - Each phase should set out clear linked proposals for open space, transport and other mitigations broadly as related to each phase.

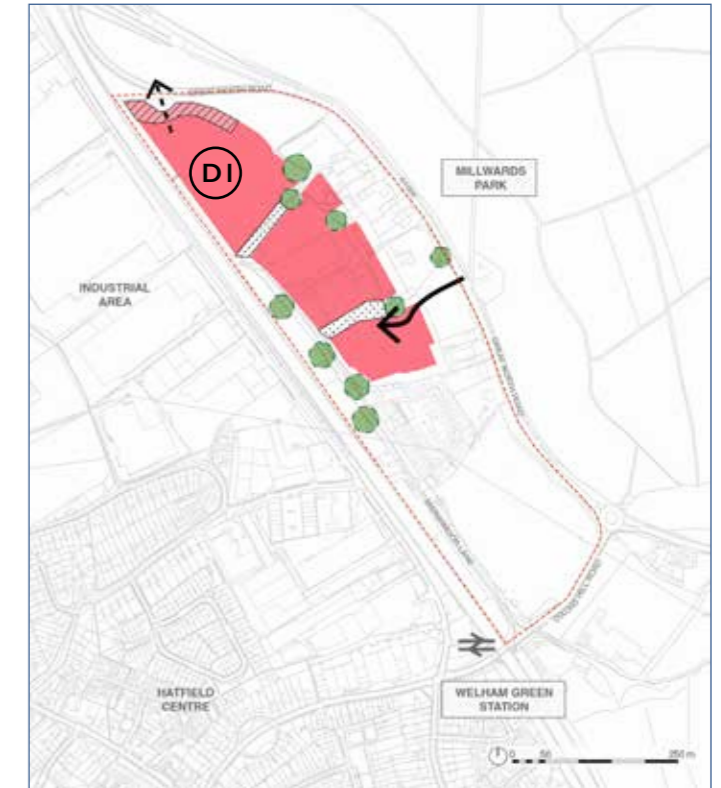
Detailed proposals for development phases and linked on and off site infrastructure must be set out with any future planning application.

Planning applications will be expected on a comprehensive basis to avoid piecemeal development and a failure to plan for the needs of the site in a considered and timely manner.

Indicative Phase 1



Indicative Phase 2



Indicative Phase 3



Fig 6.1-6.3

Phasing diagrams

APPENDICES

- A ADOPTED PLAN - EXTRACT
- B CONSULTATION NOTES AND FEEDBACK
- C LIST OF FIGURES
- D ACCESS OPTIONS

A ADOPTED PLAN - EXTRACTS

Marshmoor Policy Area

20.7 Policy SP 23 guides development at one of the borough's strategic sites, which is key to the delivery of the growth strategy of the Plan.

Policy SP 23

Marshmoor Policy Area - SDS7 and wider area

A Supplementary Planning Document for the Marshmoor Policy Area, informed by the Strategy Diagram in Figure 15 below, will be prepared to guide development of SDS7 and other land within the wider Marshmoor Policy Area, which are both defined on the Policies Map. The final quantum and phasing of development within SDS7 will be set out within the Supplementary Planning Document.

Site SDS7 is allocated for a mixed use development comprising 40,500sqm of Class E(g) employment floorspace and 100 no dwellings (Class C3) providing affordable accommodation for those employed on the site. It is intended that this site will primarily be for employment and that the accommodation will form part of the offer of the site to business users, helping them to attract skilled employees and thereby assisting in bringing jobs to this site at an early date. To ensure that this link is retained, the accommodation requirement will be secured through a planning condition or a legal agreement. Once completed, all new Class E(g) development on SDS7 will be afforded the same policy protection as that provided by Policy SADM10.

Development proposals within site SDS7 and the Marshmoor Policy Area will be expected to be consistent with the Supplementary Planning Document, and as a minimum will also be required to comply with the provisions and guidelines set out below:

Access and movement

- i. The primary vehicular access into SDS7 should be taken from the Dixons Hill Road/A1000 roundabout;
- ii. A new secondary vehicular access, or the intensification of an existing access, onto the A1000 to serve SDS7 will only be supported if there is a demonstrable need to facilitate development of SDS7 and any access proposals comply with the Council's movement and highways policies;
- iii. Proportionate provision or contribution toward improvements, in line with the Welwyn Hatfield Infrastructure Delivery Plan, must be made for:
 - a. Accessibility and movement throughout the Marshmoor Policy Area;
 - b. Connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between the Marshmoor Policy Area and Welham Green Railway Station and village centre, as well as other origins and destinations in the wider area that have a demonstrable relationship with

- the proposal, such as other town and neighbourhood centres, local primary schools and educational establishments; and
- c. Rail and bus transport accessibility of the Marshmoor Policy Area and to support wider sustainable travel initiatives, including improved bus stop facilities and support for bus services that serve the Marshmoor Policy Area.

Heritage, Landscape, Ecology and Design

- iv. A Heritage Impact Assessment may be required for development proposals, depending on their location, scale and relationship to Hatfield House and Hatfield House Historic Park and Garden. Impact Assessments should inform the siting, layout, scale and overall design of development so that substantial harm to heritage assets is avoided, any less than substantial harm is minimised, and opportunities to improve the setting of those heritage assets are implemented;
- v. Proposals will be required to adopt a high quality landscape-led approach to design, with significant planting of tree and shrub species that maintain and enhance a verdant setting across the Marshmoor Policy Area and enhance biodiversity;
- vi. Proposals will be expected to retain a substantial set back of buildings from the A1000 in order to help mitigate heritage impacts and noise and air pollution;
- vii. Proposals on land within close proximity to the A1000 will be required to incorporate high quality and extensive tree planting within those areas closest to the A1000 in order to help mitigate heritage impacts, improve the setting of Hatfield House Park and Garden, create and improve the general appearance of a countryside setting, and maintain the perceived separation between the Marshmoor Area and Hatfield when travelling along the A1000;
- viii. The design of the main vehicular access into SDS7, boundary treatments along the northern side of Dixons Hill Road, and the scale of built development and its relationship with the Dixons Hill Road frontage should create a verdant and spacious gateway and route into and out of Welham Green that also reflects the open countryside context to the south and east of Dixons Hill Road;
- ix. Building heights should be restricted to minimise heritage impacts, and in general should be lower in the eastern and far northern areas of the site;
- x. Boundaries to existing residential development are appropriately designed and landscaped to protect the amenity of those residents, particularly where the proposed development adjacent to them will be for employment uses;
- xi. The siting and design of development, including the use of landscaping and buffers, should support the mitigation of air and noise pollution arising from the railway and A1000 in order to minimise the need for mechanical ventilation within buildings; and
- xii. Proposals should provide appropriate protection, and where possible enhancement, of identified wildlife sites and critical environmental assets that would be affected, notably Millwards Park and the Marshmoor Lane Grassland Strip Wildlife Sites and Water End SSSI.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- xiii. A more detailed understanding of flood risk associated with SDS7 will need to be established via a Flood Risk Assessment, informed by detailed hydraulic models where necessary, that takes account of all sources of flood risk, in particular fluvial flood risk from ordinary watercourses and surface water flood risk. Any Flood Risk Assessment should be informed by the Council's latest Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 report and Level 2 assessment of the Marshmoor Area. The

Welham Green

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recommendations and guidance set out in the Level 2 assessment for the Marshmoor Area should be considered and addressed in full;

- xiv. The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems should be prioritised to manage surface water runoff and flood risk;
- xv. A sequential approach to layout within SDS7 should be adopted so that built development is confined to Flood Zone 1 and avoids areas identified as being at high risk of surface water flooding, taking account of the vulnerability of the proposed uses and mitigation afforded by the Sustainable Drainage System;
- xvi. Flood risk management solutions, including Sustainable Drainage Systems, within the site should seek to reduce flood risk to third party land and the wider area wherever possible; and
- xvii. Necessary new utilities infrastructure, in particular upgrades to the local sewerage network, are provided.

Justification

20.8 This policy will be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. It supports the spatial vision and borough-wide objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 11.

20.9 SDS7 will deliver a mixed use development comprising 4.1 hectares of employment uses (Class E(g)) together with a limited amount of residential development. The Council's preference is for E(g)(ii) employment development related to life sciences and research. Proposals for other uses within Class E(g), in particular E(g)(iii), would need to give particular regard to protecting the amenity of existing residential occupiers within the Marshmoor Policy Area, in terms of the the design of development and operational impacts such as air quality, noise and traffic generation. The Council would in particular welcome residential development that would support and be occupied by those employed on the site within the life sciences and research industry.

Figure 15
SDS7 (WeG4B)
Marshmoor Policy Area



Welham Green

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20.10 The Marshmoor Policy Area primarily covers SDS7 but also takes in a wider area beyond the allocation which has also been released from the Green Belt. A key characteristic of this wider area is large residential and commercial plots which run along the Great North Road. These plots, once removed from the Green Belt, have a greater potential for change than previously possible which may result in them becoming more intensively developed over time. This raises the possibility of incremental change to the wider setting of the Hatfield House Historic and Park and Garden and wildlife site. As such, a policy approach to this wider area has been adopted in order to ensure development of these plots other land in the policy area will improve the setting of the Hatfield House Historic Park and Garden and avoid or mitigate wider landscape and ecological impacts, principally through the siting and design of built development and the quality of landscaping proposals.

20.11 Therefore, the delivery of SDS7 will need to address the specific issues set out in SP 23 alongside other material considerations in order to bring forward successful development on SDS7 and to ensure development in the wider area is acceptable. These are primarily:

- **Access and connectivity:** The land east of the railway line does not have a network public rights of way or usable footpaths or cycle paths which development of the site could make use of. Therefore, key to the success of any development proposals within the Marshmoor Policy Area, and in particular SDS7, will be the creation of routes through the Marshmoor Policy Area for those wishing to travel without the use of a motor vehicle throughout the site and into Welham Green. At present, connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users between Marshmoor and Welham Green west of the railway line is poor due to the lack of appropriate crossing points and suitable routes.
- **Heritage and landscape:** This Grade I registered park and garden lies immediately to the east of SDS7 and the Marshmoor area. Development of SDS7 and other development in the Marshmoor area will be expected to improve this part of the setting of the heritage asset and at least mitigate any adverse impacts upon its significance .
- **Flood risk:** At present, the northern and southern parts of the Marshmoor Policy Area and SDS7 in particular are prone to surface and fluvial flood risk with the considerable potential to affect the siting and design of development. Flood risk will be expected to be key consideration in the layout and design of proposals, and where possible any flood risk mitigation measures should seek to improve flood risk within and beyond the policy area if possible.

20.12 SP 23 also provide a basic framework for the Marshmoor Policy Area SPD which will also guide development in the wider area.

Implementation

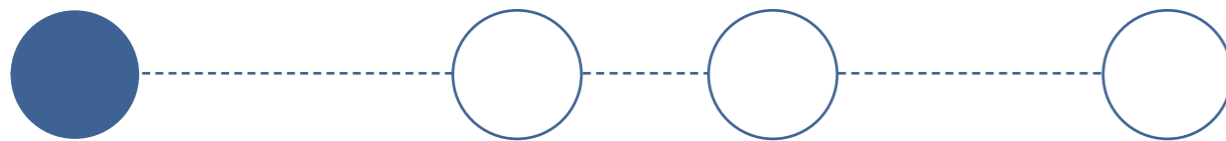
20.13 Site SDS7 will be delivered in accordance with Policy SP 23 which sets out a more detailed policy framework for this strategic site. In accordance with Policy SP 23, development at SDS7 will be further guided by a Supplementary Planning Document, which will be prepared for the Marshmoor Policy Area. It is anticipated that site SDS7 could be delivered within the first 10 years of the plan period.

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B STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION

BI MARSHMOOR LIAISON GROUP MEETING I

26 February 2024



Attendees

- Councillor Adrienne Nix, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Councillor Jane Quinton, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Councillor Stephen Boulton, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and North Mymms Parish Council
- Councillor Rose Grewal, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Teresa Travell, Chair of North Mymms Parish Council
- Matt Wilson Planning Policy and Implementation Manager, Welwyn Hatfield BC - CHAIR
- Matt Pyecroft Principal Planning Officer, Welwyn Hatfield BC
- Conor Matthews Planning Policy officer, Welwyn Hatfield BC
- Chris Carter Assistant Director Planning, Welwyn Hatfield BC
- Rachael Walsh, Gascoyne Estates (principal landowner)
- Hilary Satchwell Tibbalds (planning and urban design lead)

Key Discussion Points

Local Plan and SPD

- SPD will be based on the Local Plan policy and may outline any reasons for change and the need for doing so and show any alternatives
- Gascoyne's team are leading on the production of the SPD working with Welwyn Hatfield officers

Ownership

- Most of the site is owned by Gascoyne Estates (GE) with two smaller landownerships both of whom have agreed that GE can act on their behalf. This approach has been agreed with Welwyn Hatfield Officers.

Project Aspiration and Targets

- Gascoyne Estate's aspiration for a science and technology focussed campus on the site with linked housing for those working on site
- Allocation is for 40,500 sqm of employment floorspace (class E(g)) and 100 linked homes
- Important strategic location in the London Oxford Cambridge Triangle and part of the Hertfordshire Innovations Quarter.
- Campus to be open and outward looking, with landscape accessible to the public.

Land Use and Occupiers

- Use Class E(g) is for employment uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity and includes:
 - E(g)(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions
 - E(g)(ii) Research and development of products or processes
 - E(g)(iii) Industrial processes
- GE are talking to a range of potential developers, occupiers and operators to gauge interest and requirements. This includes local organisations like the Royal Veterinary College.

- There are some uses that are not likely to be acceptable e.g. large data centre or the type of employment uses to the west of the railway line
- Residential is included as many of the larger operators of the type who may be interested would be looking for this
- Need to locate appropriate uses around the park homes and along the homes fronting onto the A1000 New North Road, with consideration for distance from surrounding and adjacent buildings and railway line.
- 5 different land use distribution scenarios explored, SPD to remain flexible.

Housing

- Discussions around the housing included:
 - Whether this would be key worker housing?
 - What kind of affordable housing?
 - Planning mechanisms to be considered
 - Flexibility needed over time if needs should change
 - To consider what if no one wants the housing
 - Policy requires that there is a link secured by condition or legal agreement.
- Housing to be near the station and the village rather than off to the north.
- Proximity of housing to the existing park homes to 'blend' the use of land together
- More likely to be more apartments rather than houses.

Development Scenarios

- GE's intention is to find one developer or occupier that takes all the site and who will then bring it forward in phases
- GE looking at a range of scenarios, including
 - Scenario 1 – specialist developer
 - Scenario 2 - Investor manager with shared infrastructure and investment backed
 - Scenario 3 – Long lease to single occupier

Roads, Connectivity and Parking

- Numbers of employees on the site might vary from 1000 to 4000 depending on the specific use, with office uses likely to generate much higher occupancy than research.
- Speed along the A1000 adjacent to the site may need to be considered.
- Marshmoor Lane as an exit is poor
- Range of access options to be considered and that the southern and northern site areas may need to be independently accessed for vehicles with a sustainable and active travel spine along Marshmoor Lane (with local access preserved for existing users).
- Important to make the most of existing link to station and to support existing village uses e.g. shop and café, rather than to compete with them

Landscape and Architecture

- Buildings need to be long lasting and durable and still to look good in 10-15+ years time and longer.
- Preference expressed for housing in nice local materials, not timber cladding or concrete.

B STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION

B2 HERTFORDSHIRE DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

4 June 2024



Attendees

Design Review Panel

- Chair: Tim Riley, RCKa
- Paul Dodd, Outdesign Studio
- Kevin Burrell, Kevin Burrell Consulting
- Annabel Keegan, PJA

Project Design Team

- Hilary Satchwell, Director, Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design
- Augusta Grey, Senior Urban Designer, Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design
- Sanjay Ghodke, Senior Associate, Stanton Williams Architects
- Melanie Dobson, Associate i-Transport LLP
- Rachel Walsh, Gascoyne Estates

Local Planning Authority

- Matt Pyecroft, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Conor Matthews, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Annemarie De Boom, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Hertfordshire Design Review Service

- Jennifer Owen, Design Review Service Coordinator

Panel Observations and Recommendations

Summary and Conclusion

The Panel appreciate that this is a particularly challenging site and that translating the objectives of the Plan Allocation relies on some flexibility. The Panel agree that a separate vehicular access to the site from the A1000 is essential.

The Design Team have made a good start with some thoughtful analysis and agree with the campus approach, however, due to the multiple landscape constraints and opportunities, the influence of the landscape design response needs greater prominence. Linked to this is the opportunity to lean into the characteristics of the site to establish a unique character – To assist, the Panel believe that taller buildings may be appropriate to reduce footprint and better integrate with the landscape.

The SPD needs to describe how car dependency can be reduced in terms of access to and movement within the site. To this end, greater consideration is required for how alternative connections with the wider community can be improved. Much of this is outside the remit of the SPD but the potential to allow for future improvements to strategic pedestrian and cycle connections should be addressed.

Most importantly, the isolated nature of the site relative to Hatfield and Welham Green presents a significant challenge in terms of community cohesion. Addressing cycle and pedestrian connectivity will improve matters, however, a greater emphasis on placemaking to encourage sustained activity. This can be achieved with greater integration of employment and residential uses, and with complementary social infrastructure, the wider community could contribute to the life of the site.

The Panel appreciate that the purpose of the review is for the Hatfield Innovation Park, Marshmoor SPD. Whilst there is some sense in providing an SPD that is broad in definition, the work to date has demonstrated that a more definitive approach is required. This will allow the team to address the multiple constraints of the site with a more integrated approach that can be more responsive to the landscape character. Furthermore this will provide the Development Management Team with a better framework to judge future planning applications against.

We trust that our comments are helpful and look forward to seeing the developed SPD.

Green Infrastructure

- The Panel support the principle of a landscape led approach in this rural settlement edge location, however this was not evident within the emerging proposals. In addition the Panel noted that the project design team did not include a landscape architect, and strongly recommends that landscape expertise is required from the outset to help enrich and influence the approach at this strategic stage.
- It is strongly advised that green infrastructure should provide the framework that underpins and shapes the development, and runs as a golden thread throughout the SPD, pulling together landscape, topography, drainage, ecology, climate change resilience and adaptation, demonstrating a truly sustainable approach. Green Infrastructure assets should be celebrated, and the SPD should provide details and aspirations for how the employment campus knits with its landscape setting.
- It is advised that principles should set a high bar for environmental standards, which exceed national and local policy requirements, and ensure the delivery of high quality and sustainable buildings and places.

Density and Infrastructure provision

- The Panel agreed that this a complex site, with extensive physical constraints, and as such the infrastructure costs required to facilitate the development are likely to be extremely high. With this in mind, there is concern for the low-density approach to the campus development and, it is queried whether such a low-density approach will indeed deliver the infrastructure required. It is encouraged to explore more sustainable options with a greater density of development, subject to Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and other relevant survey and analysis. This site is the only Green Belt allocation for employment in the new Local Plan and is an opportunity that should be maximised to provide much needed high-quality employment. The quantum of employment space could be more ambitious.

Housing Typologies, Mix and Distribution

- The southern site parcel is severely affected by a range of constraints such as the existing caravan park edge, flooding, the pylons, and issues surrounding accessibility. It is therefore queried if there is sufficient space and conditions to realistically provide high quality housing in this location and whether it may be better suited to the delivery of biodiversity net gain, attenuation, and flood mitigation. Electricity pylons and their associated exclusion zone passing through a small residential neighbourhood will isolate the homes to the east and be harmful to community cohesion. Alternatively, it may be possible to deal with the majority of surface water drainage further up the slope to the east to release more land for housing development along the western boundary.
- The housing typology requires resolution as this will impact upon the character and quality of place. There is concern that a single typology of one bed flats will be dormitory to the village and create a quiet and dead space in the evenings

and weekends, whereas a more mixed typology, spread across the northern and southern site parcels, may encourage activity and vibrancy outside working hours. Whilst the benefits of providing housing for employees from further afield may be an attractive option for businesses, there should be an equal emphasis on provision of local jobs and training.

Local Character and Context

- The Panel were concerned that the response to local character is a key policy requirement, however it was not adequately addressed in the design team's presentation and needs to inform the approach to the site more strongly. The panel don't believe that the proposals need to mimic a particular character and instead character can be led by use, integration with the landscape and a response to this unique place.
- Integrating the new community with the existing local communities is a challenge, and it is suggested that creating more flexibility in the housing offer (not just for campus workers) and encouraging more cross over between the new development and wider settlement, could help overcome this.
- It is advised that the approach to the southern site parcel should be informed by what is happening within its immediate context. This includes future plans for intensification around the train station, and future expansion plans for the traveller's site, which all require deeper investigation and clarification.
- It is suggested that there is an opportunity to deal with the existing residences along the A1000, by creating a back to back arrangement, that could include residential, and would provide a more positive and comfortable relationship by creating a secure perimeter block arrangement with existing properties. It is important not to create a planning buffer zone along here, and to ensure that conditions are flexible enough to react positively to potential future changes on the adjoining land.

Visual Impact and Building Heights

- The Panel felt that the emerging proposals may be too sensitive in terms of the treatment of edges and building heights. It is encouraged to think about restricting heights in terms of the most sensitive views from the wider area (such as those from Hatfield House), and to not place such great weight on views from lower sensitivity receptors such as passing motorists. Increasing heights may result in reduced footprints and free up space for more generous green infrastructure. The conversation needs to be about visual impact – not height.

Connectivity and Movement

- Despite being geographically close to local settlements, the Panel agreed that the site feels isolated from Welham Green and the wider area. There is concern that the development will be highly car dependant and that clearer more ambitious targets for reducing car use need to be set.
- It is essential that the scheme is knitted into its surroundings via high quality, direct and legible active travel routes. This needs to be considered as part of the wider context, and alongside the LCWIP to ensure that the development does not become dependent on car-based trips. There needs to be clear principle to link Marshmoor Drive to NCN 12.
- It was mentioned that there is potential to deliver a wider link as part of a linear park corridor also in applicants' ownership. This should be included in the vision.
- Links to the train station are currently tortuous and require significant improvement. The Design Team indicated that conversations with Network Rail are ongoing. Clear options to demonstrate how access to the station can be improved to benefit both the new and existing communities should be included in the vision.

Access Strategy

- There is concern that the access strategy remains unresolved. It is encouraged to focus on the issues and bottom out the approach now, as they are key to unlocking the site and ensuring it can be delivered.

Arrival Experience and Car Parking

- Multiple potential points of vehicular access are described. It is suggested that these should be limited to create fewer and ideally one high quality moment of arrival.
- The location of the multi-storey car park in a highly exposed location at the development gateway to the north detracts from the quality of the arrival experience. Views of the site from the north would benefit from a building and use that reflects the high quality and exceptional campus..
- A multi-storey car park solution is sensible and locating it near a vehicular entrance will reduce car movement and encourage pedestrian activity within the campus. The challenge for the design team is to do so in a way that does not harm the character of the site and the initial arrival experience.
- The Panel support the provision of a multi-storey car park, which will reduce the amount of land given over to parking and increase the area of landscape. It is understood that the earlier phases of development may require some surface car parking provision, it is advised that the SPD should provide principles that ensure that these areas are rewilded once the multi storey is in operation. The Design Team are encouraged to look at options for creation of a mobility hub within the multi-storey car park to improve access by sustainable modes.

Marshmoor Lane Pedestrian and Cycle Route

- The Panel fully supported the proposal to provide an active travel route for pedestrians and cyclists along Marshmoor Lane. They advised that it should be treated as a primary route, providing important direct links with the wider settlements to the north and south, and of a high quality, legible, and safe for pedestrians and cyclists to use day and night. How the proposed housing addresses and accesses the route will also require careful consideration.
- There was concern for the conflict between vehicular traffic using Marshmoor Lane, and pedestrians and cyclists (as experienced on the site visit), due to the constrained width of the carriageway. With this in mind, issues around land ownership, and opportunities for enhancement, are critical to the success of this route and require thorough exploration. The Design Team indicated that there may be potential to re-route traffic from the caravan park via the new development. This should be investigated further and included in the Design Vision if practicable.
- It was recommended to consider a 'quiet lane' designation.

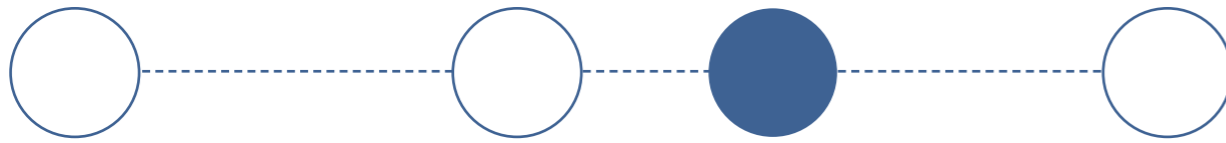
Sustainability and Drainage

- Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act is likely to be enacted in 2024 and will mandate SuDS on all development. A landscaped approach can integrate SuDs and swales into the vision for the site and help define a unique character.
- The supplementary planning document (SPD) must ensure that SuDS are embedded within the development from the outset, it is likely that it will be required to mitigate greater volumes of surface water than currently anticipated. Opportunities to capture water at the source, and further up the management train, should be utilised.

B STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION

B3 MARSHMOOR LIAISON GROUP MEETING 2

24 June 2024



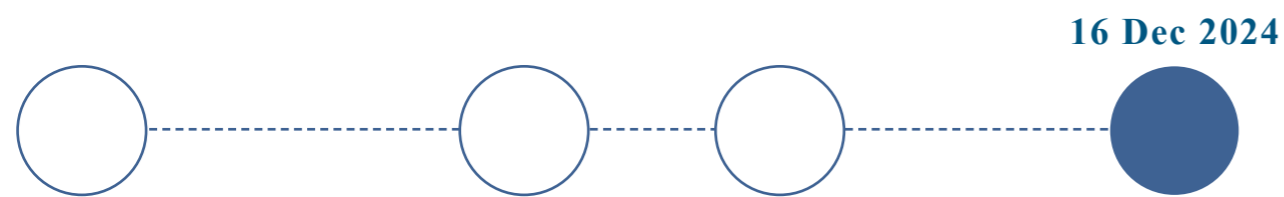
Attendees

- Teresa Travell, Chair of North Mymms Parish Council
- Councillor Stephen Boulton, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and North Mymms Parish Council
- Councillor Adrienne Nix, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Councillor Rose Grewal, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Conor Matthews Planning Policy officer, Welwyn Hatfield BC
- Chris Carter Assistant Director Planning, Welwyn Hatfield BC
- Matt Pyecroft Principal Planning Officer, Welwyn Hatfield BC
- Matt Wilson Planning Policy and Implementation Manager, Welwyn Hatfield BC - CHAIR
- Councillor Jane Quinton, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Rachael Walsh, Gascoyne Estates (principal landowner)
- Melanie Dobson, iTransport
- Hilary Satchwell Tibbalds (planning and urban design lead)

Key Discussion Points

- Reviews of constraints analysis
- Potential reference - Wellcome Genome Campus
- Importance of the transition to the village in regards to scale and aesthetic of development
- The importance of the heritage setting should be emphasised
- Development should be visible and reflect the 'innovation' of the campus
- Operators / occupiers will want to control the visibility of internal activity
- Flexibility needs to be built into the design for future operators
- Phasing in the SPD should highlight preference or likely approach - but maintain flexibility
- Need to provide an anchor use or occupier
- The vision needs to capture the sustainability of buildings, natural environment and people
- Campus should provide small buses / shuttle service - to support car free development.
- Demand Responsive Travel (DRT) can be site specific or app based (such as Wellcome Genome Campus)
- Emphasise how the development can and should add value to the existing community
 - Open space provision and access
 - Pedestrian and cycle connections
- Consider light and dark spaces - which are accessible at night time
- Need to consider the risk of ASB or fly-tipping, particularly along the ditch in Marshmoor Lane
- Explore opportunities to introduce multi-storey car parking at the rear, so people are encouraged to walk around the campus
- Need to get people out of their cars at the earliest stages of the project
- No building within 15m of rear gardens of existing residential uses
- Below ground parking is great and could be useful
- SPD can not be too fixed or prescriptive as end uses and users are still unknown
- There is a Sustainability SPD being prepared in parallel - how will this inform the Marshmoor Area SPD and vice versa?
- There is some concern about impacting or blocking access to the village - this should be carefully considered and worded in SPD
- Concern about development impact on Dixons Hill Road
- Consideration of traffic speed reduction and impact on the village
- Consider sensor-operated traffic light system
- Residents of Welham Green are very interested in the transport aspects

B4 MARSHMOOR LIAISON GROUP MEETING 3



Attendees

- Teresa Travell - North Mymms Parish Council
- Councillor Stephen Boulton - Hertfordshire County Council
- Councillor Adrienne Nix - Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Councillor Rose Grewal - Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Conor Matthews - Planning Policy Officer, Welwyn Hatfield BC
- Chris Carter - Assistant Director Planning, Welwyn Hatfield BC
- Matt Pycroft - Principal Planning Officer, Welwyn Hatfield BC
- Matt Wilson - Planning Policy and Implementation Manager, Welwyn Hatfield BC
- Councillor Jane Quinton - Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
- Rachael Elvin - Principal landowner, Gascoyne Estates
- Hilary Satchwell - Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design

Summary of Discussion Points

MW and HS updated on progress with the draft SPD since the last meeting in June. In terms of programme the plan is now for the SPD to go to CPPP in January and out to consultation in February/ March. It was confirmed that the document would principally be called Marshmoor SPD to relate to the Local Plan policy and would also reference the Hatfield Innovation Park name that is being promoted by GE.

It was discussed that in person consultation would be organised by GE after half term in February and that a good location in Welham Green for a weekday/ evening drop in event would be identified nearer the time. It was agreed that the consultation needs to present things simply and from the beginning as it is some time since the local community have had involvement in this site. It will need to break down the technical issues such as flooding and drainage, access and noise in was that is easily understandable by many. It is expected that there will be strong interest in the site from local residents in particular in terms of what the site will look like, impact on local residents and how it can benefit the village. An FAQ for the consultation stage was also agreed to be useful.

RE updated on the progress that Gascoyne Estates had been making in looking for a development partner or developer for the Hatfield Innovation Park site. They confirmed a good level of interest and have now appointed an agent. Confirmation of the likely type of developers and occupiers was requested but it was explained that this can't yet be confirmed but that they will be expected to relate to the local market and area.

RE also explained the intention that GE remain an interested party in the development to retain some control over time.

HS took the group through updates to the structure, vision and principles for the Marshmoor SPD and how this had responded to previous comments raised and additional technical work.

Key issues raised and discussed included the following:

- How would parking and vehicular be managed given that this is already a problem for the existing industrial estate? It was noted that the industrial estate was not planned or managed as one estate and that uses had changed over time and that the intention for the Marshmoor site was that it is much more coordinated.
- It was raised that Welham Green residents would be concerned about vehicular access in general and the impact on queuing along Dixons Hill Road in particular, including during the construction stages. It was agreed that the document needs to explain more clearly the changes proposed along Dixons Hill Road/ Marshmoor Lane junction and how these provide a wider benefit for pedestrians wanting to cross this road safely, and those seeking level access to the station on both sides. A further diagram and text to explain this would be beneficial so it could be more widely understood as the indicative road layouts that are proposed to be in the appendix are not simple to understand for non-technical people. In particular it needs to be explained in the SPD that the employment traffic accessing the main and northern part of the site will not be via Marshmoor Lane and it is only existing user plus the likely residential in the south that would be accessing this route in this way.

- Potential for solar panels on rooftops was discussed and it was agreed that whilst the proposals will be expected to conform with the Council's sustainability policy it isn't appropriate for the SPD to prescribe that solar panels are necessarily the answer when it may be that technologies such as air source or ground source heat pumps better meets the site's needs. It was agreed that the SPD could suggest the use of solar panels as an appropriate solution. The site should be built to high standards and should not need retrofitting in a few years time.
- Discussion around the relationship between the site and Welham Green and Hatfield. Agreed that the site needs to relate to the village as it will change a key gateway into the village from the east but that it will also have a role for wider Hatfield. For example the benefits that the development makes to the wider area should be clearly set out e.g. that the site delivers the first third of a possible new cycle route from Welham Green to Hatfield and brings high quality jobs to the area.
- It is important that the new development remains well managed and does not look scruffy over time. There was a discussion about landscape and building quality being important as well as biodiversity and ecology.
- A question was raised about noise from the new building on existing and adjacent homes. It was confirmed that this would need to be tested and considered through a future planning application but is not expected to be significant at this stage. A concern was raised about things like servicing and refuse collections from the existing industrial estate on the other side of the railway line and the disturbance this causes to nearby households.

As mentioned above the coordinated planning and management of this site will make this easier to control and this issue will be considered in a servicing plan submitted with a future comprehensive planning application. For now in the SPD this needs to be considered as part of “being a good neighbour”.

- In terms of phasing it was asked whether some of the phasing could be concurrent and it was agreed that it could be as long as all other tests were met. Phasing is also set out indicatively in the draft SPD and will be considered in more detail later as part of a comprehensive planning application. RVV confirmed that it was unlikely that an application for the site would come forward until the back end of 2026.
- The status and protection for the residential part of the site was discussed and it was confirmed that this can't be sold separately as the policy clearly links its use to the employment site. It is expected that this is more likely to be for employees e.g. researchers for limited time period rather than long term family accommodation but this will depend on the different occupier's needs.
- There was a good level of support in the discussion on progress with the document and it was agreed that it had come along way. A clear movement forward from the policy in the Local Plan.

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D ACCESS OPTIONS

A number of possible junction arrangements have been tested at high level for vehicular and active travel access to the site as part of the development of this SPD.

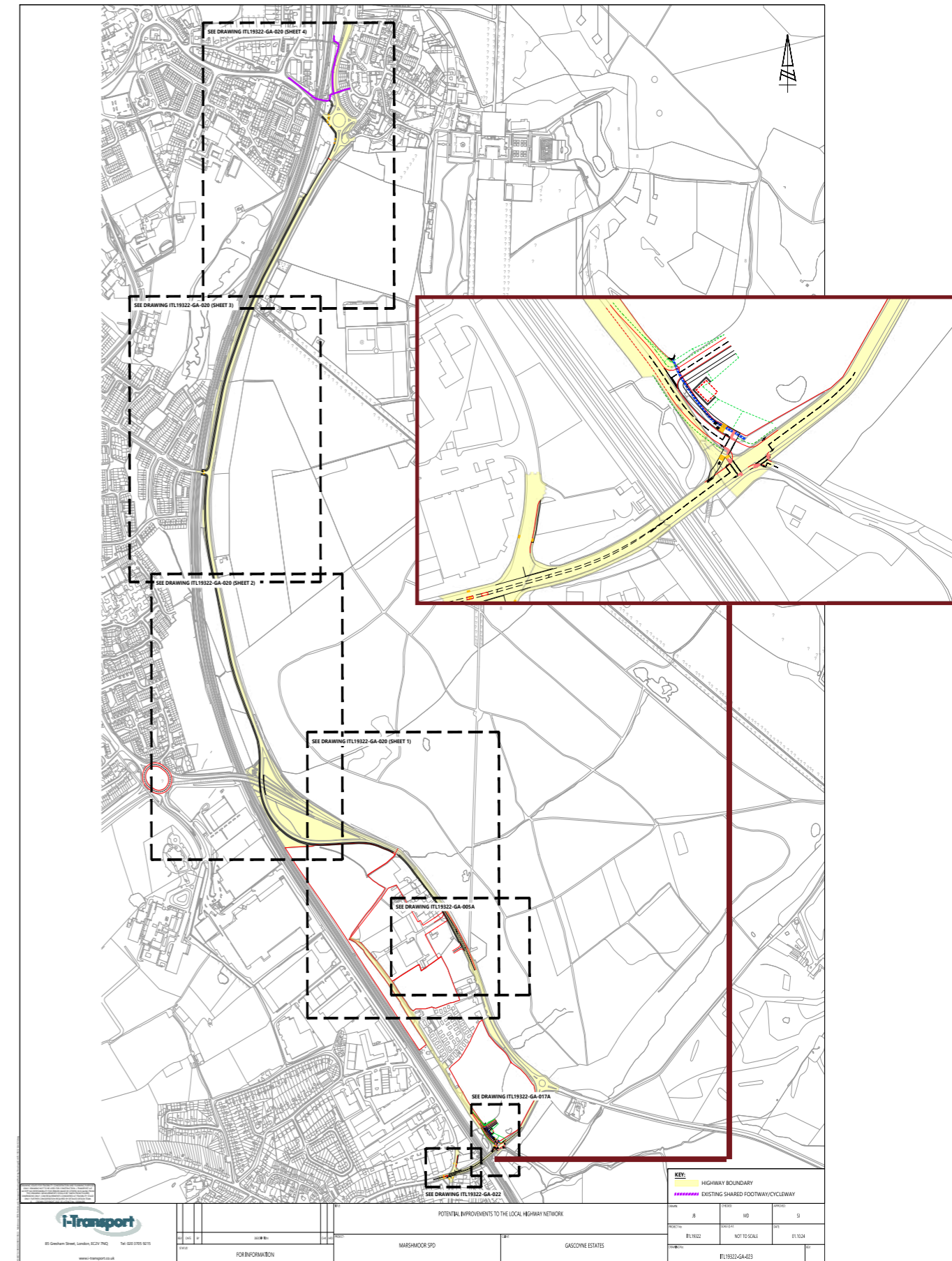
These plans are set out on the following pages and whilst they should not be relied upon as an agreed solution they have been informally discussed with the County Council as highways authority.

Indicative access and movement ideas are included for the following locations:

- A potential new cycle link north to Hatfield Rail station (Figure A)
- A potential improved access at the southern end of Marshmoor Lane that also includes improved arrangements for pedestrians and cyclists and access to Welham Green Rail Station [preferred](Figure B)
- A potential upgrade to the roundabout at the junction of the Great North Road and Dixons Hill Road but that is not thought to be of an appropriate scale for the development (Figure C)

- A possible new access to the southern development area from the Great North Road [not preferred] (Figure D)
- A possible new access to the southern development area from Dixons Hill Road [not preferred] (Figure E)
- An access to the northern parcel from the Great North Road [preferred] (Figure F)
- A possible left in left out arrangement from the slip road to the north into the northern parcel (Figure G)

Fig A





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Marshmoor Policy Area SPD

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Initial screening report

December 2024

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

AAS	Area of Archaeological Significance
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BC	Borough Council
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPS	European Protected Species
EU	European Union
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
NNR	National Nature Reserve
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SNCI	Site of Nature Conservation Importance
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

Part 1: Introduction & Legal Context

- 1.1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) implement the requirements of EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. Under the terms of the Regulations certain types of plans and programmes, which as defined in Regulation 2 includes those prepared and adopted by any authority at national, regional, or local level, and required by legislative, regulatory, or administrative provisions, must be subject to an assessment of their likely implications for the environment. The environmental assessment must be undertaken during the preparation of the plan or programme in order to inform its development and must be completed and reported on prior to the adoption of the plan or programme.
- 1.2 The SEA Regulations make provision under Regulation 9 (determinations of the responsible authority) for public authorities to decide whether a particular plan or programme requires environmental assessment. Where implementation of the plan or programme would not result in significant impacts on the environment SEA is not required. When making a determination under Regulation 9 the responsible authority must establish whether the plan or programme is one:
- For which the first formal preparatory act was carried out after 21 July 2004 (Regulation 5(1)(a) and (4)(a)).
 - Concerned with activities in one of the following sectors – agriculture; forestry; fisheries; energy; industry; transport; waste management; water management; telecommunications; tourism; or town and country planning or land use (Regulation 5(2)(a)).
 - That sets the framework for future development consent of projects¹ listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive), as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC (Regulation 5(2)(b) and (4)(b)).
 - That requires assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (Directive 91/43/EC) in that it would give rise to adverse impacts on the integrity of sites of European importance for nature conservation (Regulation 5(3)).

¹ Article 1(2) of the EIA Directive defines ‘projects’ as “the execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes,” or as “other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of minerals”.

1.3 Regulation 5(6) sets out the circumstances in which an environmental assessment may not be required for a plan or programme that otherwise falls within the scope of the Regulations, so long as there would be no significant environmental effects. Exceptions can be made for a plan or programme that determines the use of a small area at the local level, or for minor modifications to a plan or programme.

1.4 When making a determination under Regulation 9 the responsible authority must take account of the criteria (see below) set out in Schedule 1 to the SEA Regulations (Regulation 9(2)(a)). They must also consult Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England – the ‘consultation bodies’ specified in Regulation 4(1) of the SEA Regulations.

Paragraph 1: The characteristics of the plan or programme, having regard, in particular to –

- (a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size & operating conditions or by allocating resources;
- (b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans & programmes including those in a hierarchy;
- (c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
- (d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
- (e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans or programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

Paragraph 2: Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected having regard, in particular, to –

- (a) The probability, duration, frequency & reversibility of the effects;
- (b) The cumulative nature of the effects;
- (c) The transboundary nature of the effects;
- (d) The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);
- (e) The magnitude & spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- (f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to –
 - (i) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
 - (ii) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
 - (iii) Intensive land-use; and
- (g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, Community or international protection status.

- 1.5 A statement of reasons must be prepared, and published, where the responsible authority, having taken account of the available evidence and the views of the consultation bodies, determines that a plan or programme does not require environmental assessment (i.e., that it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects) (Regulation 9(3) and Regulation 11).
- 1.6 The responsible authority's determination on the need for environmental assessment of a given plan or programme, and the statement of their reasons for that decision, must be published within 28 days of the determination having been made. Regulation 11 of the SEA Regulations sets out the following requirements with respect to the publication of determinations made under Regulation 9.
- A copy of the determination (and statement of reasons where environmental assessment is not required) must be sent to each of the consultation bodies (Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England) (Regulation 11(1)(a) and 1(b)).
 - The determination (and statement of reasons where environmental assessment is not required) must be available for inspection by the public at the responsible authority's principal office, at all reasonable times and free of charge (Regulation 11(2)(a)).
 - The responsible authority must take appropriate steps to bring to the attention of the public the title of the plan to which the determination relates, the fact that it has been determined that environmental assessment is not required, and the address (including websites) at which the determination and any accompanying statement of reasons may be inspected or from which a copy may be obtained (Regulation 11(2)(b)).

Part 2: The proposed Marshmoor Policy Area Supplementary Planning Document

2.A Context for the Marshmoor Policy Area Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 2.1 The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan was adopted by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in October 2023. The Local Plan sets out the spatial strategy for the development of the borough for the period up to 2036. The Plan addresses the borough’s objectively assessed need for additional housing and employment space and supporting infrastructure including accessible greenspace. The Plan allocates five strategic sites for development: four residential-led mixed use sites, and one Class E(g) employment and residential site, which is Marshmoor in Welham Green (site SDS7).
- 2.2 Policy SP 2 (Targets for Growth) mentions Marshmoor as a strategic development site for the delivery of employment floorspace. The development of the Marshmoor site (SDS7) is provided for in policy SADM 30 (Welham Green). Site SDS7 is allocated for a mixed use development comprising approx. 40,500sqm of Class E(g) employment space and around 100 (Class C3) dwellings.
- 2.3 Policy SP 23 (Marshmoor Policy Area – SDS7 and wider area) provides further policy guidance for the site. The Marshmoor Policy Area primarily covers SDS7 but also takes in a wider area beyond the allocation which has been released from the Green Belt (para 20.10, Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016)). It is a requirement of policy SP 23 that an SPD is produced to guide development of site SDS7 and other land within the Marshmoor Policy Area, both of which are defined on the Local Plan Policies Map.
- 2.4 Once completed, all new Class E(g) development on SDS7 will be afforded the same policy protection as that provided by policy SADM 10 Employment Development. The dwellings are to provide affordable accommodation for those employed on the site, which will be secured through a planning condition or legal agreement (policy SP 23). Policy SP 23 also sets out requirements for access and movement; heritage, landscape, ecology and design; and flood risk and drainage.
- 2.5 The polices and allocations set out in the adopted Local Plan were subject to Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA) and to HRA during the preparation of the

Plan. For the Marshmoor Policy Area, the Local Plan Inspector concluded that, “I have not been referred to any other site in the Borough that in my view could better its advantages as a location for a strategic employment site. I therefore conclude that there are exceptional circumstances to remove site SDS 7 Marshmoor from the Green Belt.” (paragraph 311, p.77, Report on the Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016), 25 September 2023)

- 2.6 The Marshmoor Policy Area (including site SDS7 or WeG4b) was originally allocated for 4.1ha of Class B1 employment floor space and around 80 new homes in the Welwyn Hatfield Proposed Submission Local Plan 2016 (submission document SUB/6). The site and related policy SP 23, were assessed in the Sustainability Appraisal 2016 (submission document SUB/3).
- 2.7 During the course of the examination, there were some amendments to policy SP 23 and the Marshmoor Policy Area. These amendments included clarification of the employment floor space as 40,500sqm in Class E(g) use, and an increase of the residential capacity of the site to 100 (Class C3) dwellings. This was reflected in main modification MM50 and further main modification FMM20.
- 2.8 The amendments, main modifications and further main modifications were considered under addendums to the 2016 Sustainability Appraisal (examination documents EX200, EX297 and EX303B²). It was concluded that overall, the cumulative effects of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan remain unchanged and the overall sustainability of the Local Plan is not considered to be changed by the modifications (paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3, page 11, Sustainability Appraisal Report Local Plan Addendum Main Modifications, November 2022; and paragraph 1.8, page 2, Sustainability Appraisal Report Local Plan Addendum Further Main Modifications, June 2023).
- 2.9 Subject to these modifications, policy SP 23 (Marshmoor Policy Area - SDS7 and wider area) was considered “justified, effective and consistent with national policy” (paragraph 312, p.78, Report on the Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016), 25 September 2023), and was confirmed in the Plan adopted in October 2023.
- 2.10 As mentioned above, Policy SP 23 requires that a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Marshmoor Policy Area, is prepared to guide development of SDS7 and

² The Sustainability Appraisal and subsequent addendums are available at: <https://www.welhat.gov.uk/homepage/36/local-plan>, and relevant extracts included in Appendix B of this report

other land within the wider Marshmoor Policy Area. The SPD is to be informed by the Strategy Diagram in Figure 15 of the Local Plan, and the final quantum and phasing of development within SDS7 will be set out within the SPD. Development proposals within site SDS7 and the Marshmoor Policy Area will be expected to be consistent with the SPD, and as a minimum will also be required to comply with the provisions and guidelines set out in policy SP 23.

- 2.11 A masterplan SPD for the development of the Marshmoor Policy Area is in the process of being produced by the landowner and is the subject of this initial screening.

2.B Structure and content of the Marshmoor Policy Area SPD

- 2.12 The Marshmoor Policy Area SPD will set out a masterplan framework for the development of the Marshmoor Policy Area. The SPD will incorporate the provisions set out in Policy SP 23 and will be informed by Figure 15 of the Local Plan.

- 2.13 The proposed SPD is likely to be composed of the following key parts:

- Introduction: setting out the purpose of the document, the planning policy context and status of the SPD
- Vision: an overarching vision, development objectives and design principles for the future development of the site with illustrative views
- Context: an overview of the key features and constraints of the site and wider area summarised in a Combined Constraints Plan
- Engagement: a summary of the engagement undertaken to date in preparation of the SPD, including feedback from the Marshmoor Liaison Group and Hertfordshire Design Review Panel
- Spatial Framework: setting out development constraints, a spatial framework, an illustrative masterplan and design principles
- Implementation and Delivery: an indicative phasing plan for delivery of development on site

Part 3: Determining the need for Environmental Assessment of the proposed Marshmoor Policy Area SPD

3.A Establishing the need for Environmental Assessment

Does the plan or programme fall within the scope of the definition given in Regulation 2 (Interpretation)?

3.1 Yes. The proposed SPD will be a material planning consideration in planning decisions once adopted. The SPD will be prepared by the landowner in conjunction with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. It will be adopted by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, an organisation that is a local level government body in England acting in its capacity as the Local Planning Authority for the borough of Welwyn Hatfield. The SPD will be prepared and adopted in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Planning Act 2008 and of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Was the first formal preparatory act for the plan or programme carried out after 21 July 2004? Regulation 5(1)(a) and 5(4)(a)

3.2 Yes. Preparation of the proposed Marshmoor Policy Area SPD commenced in 2023.

Is the plan or programme concerned with activities in one of the following sectors – agriculture; forestry; fisheries; energy; industry; transport; waste management; water management; telecommunications; tourism; or town and country planning or land use? Regulation 5 (2)(a)

3.3 Yes. The proposed SPD is concerned with activities that fall within the scope of the ‘town and country planning or land use’ sector.

3.4 The proposed SPD will provide additional guidance to that already set out in Policies SADM 30 and SP 23 (as well as policies SADM 10 and SP 2) of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (October 2023) and provide for the development of the Marshmoor Policy Area to create a new mixed use development comprising approx. 40,500sqm of Class E(g) employment space and 100 (Class C3) dwellings.

3.5 The main parameters for the development and key issues that would need to be addressed are set out in Policy SP 23 (Marshmoor Policy Area – SDS7 and wider area) of the adopted Local Plan.

3.6 The proposed SPD sets out a vision, development objectives and design principles for the

site. It will comprise a spatial framework for the site which provides further detail on the development of the site whilst respecting the limitations on the amount of additional employment floorspace and number of new homes as set out in the adopted Plan.

Does the plan or programme set the framework for future development consent of projects³ listed in Annex I or II to Council Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC? Regulation 5(2)(b) and 5(4)(b)

- 3.7 Yes. The development to be covered by the SPD includes land-uses that fall within project categories listed in Annex II of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2017 (as amended)). The development of the Marshmoor Policy Area would involve works that fall within the scope of paragraphs 10(a) (industrial estate development projects) and 10(b) (urban development projects) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations.
- 3.8 The proposed SPD would not alter the type, mix or quantum of development to be delivered at the Marshmoor Policy Area from that defined by policies in the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan. The Local Plan was subject to Sustainability Appraisal (including SEA), and to HRA, during its preparation and no allocation would have been made if the examining Inspector were not convinced that the evidence supported the conclusion that the Plan would not give rise to significant environmental effects.
- 3.9 The quantum of development for the Marshmoor Policy Area in the SPD is consistent with that in the adopted Local Plan. Other uses are indicated in the SPD, but these would be ancillary to the employment and residential uses on the site.
- 3.10 The development appears to fall below the thresholds requiring an EIA as set out in 10(a) (industrial estate development projects), 10(b) (urban development projects) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations. To confirm this, an EIA screening opinion may be requested at planning application stage to determine whether EIA is required, a fact that would not be materially altered by the proposed SPD.

Does the plan or programme require assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive (Directive 91/43/EC)? Regulation 5(3)

- 3.11 The proposed SPD will be a material planning consideration for projects of a type that could give rise to impacts on the integrity of European designated sites.

³ Article 1, paragraph 2 of the EIA Directive defines ‘projects’ as “the execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes,” or as “other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of minerals”.

- 3.12 There are four European sites identified as being within 10km of Welwyn Hatfield Borough. Their location is shown in Appendix C:
- Epping Forest SAC
 - The Lee Valley SPA
 - The Lee Valley Ramsar
 - Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC
- 3.13 The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan was subject to Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) as part of the plan preparation process. The HRA (and subsequent addendums at main modifications and further main modifications stages) considered the potential effects of the Plan, including the allocation of the Marshmoor Policy Area for development of 40,500sqm employment space and 100 new dwellings, on European sites within a 10km radius of Welwyn Hatfield borough. The HRA concluded that the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan would not have any significant environmental effects on any of these sites.
- 3.14 The proposed SPD will not alter the amount of development that could be brought forward at the Marshmoor Policy Area from that allowed for under Policy SADM 30 and Policy SP 23 of the adopted Local Plan. There would be no material change to the type or amount of development on the site and the conclusions of the earlier HRA for the Plan would remain valid. Further consideration of HRA screening is included below (see section 4 of this report).

Does the plan or programme determine the use of a small area at local level?

Regulation 5(6)(a)

- 3.15 Yes. The proposed SPD will focus solely on development of the allocated site at the Marshmoor Policy Area and would not apply beyond that area.

3.B Determining whether significant environmental effects are likely

- 3.16 The proposed Marshmoor Policy Area SPD is a plan or programme of a type that falls within the scope of the SEA Regulations but relates to the use of a small area at local level. To determine whether SEA is required consideration must be given to the extent that the proposed SPD could result in significant environmental effects. As the allocation of the site for development was subject to SEA during the preparation of the adopted Local Plan further assessment of the SPD would only be warranted if impacts different or additional to those considered in the earlier SEA work would result from the adoption of the SPD.
- 3.17 In line with the requirements of Regulation 9(2)(a) the proposed SPD has been considered against the criteria listed in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. The findings of that work with respect to Schedule 1(1) are set out in Table 3-1. The findings of that work with respect to Schedule 1(2) are set out in Table 3-2.

Table 3-1: Consideration of the SPD against Schedule 1(1) of the SEA Regulations – Characteristics of plans and programmes

Schedule 1 Criteria	Discussion
<p>The degree to which the plan ... sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources</p> <p><i>Schedule 1(1)(a)</i></p>	<p>The proposed SPD would expand on the design guidance set out in Policy SP 23 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan in respect of the development of the Marshmoor Policy Area.</p> <p>The site to be addressed by the proposed SPD is allocated for future development under Policies SADM 30 and SP 23 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan, and the quantum and mix of development to be included in that settlement is also defined in those policies with further design guidance and principles set out in policy SP 23.</p> <p>The proposed SPD would not alter those pre-determined parameters but would provide further detailed guidance on the design, form and character of the development of the site.</p> <p>The environmental effects associated with the development of the allocated site as previously assessed in the SEA and SA for the Local Plan would not be significantly altered or added to as a result of the adoption of the SPD. No further assessment is required.</p>
<p>The degree to which the plan ... influences other plans ... including those in a hierarchy</p> <p><i>Schedule 1(1)(b)</i></p>	<p>The proposed SPD would support the objectives of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan with respect to the design, form, and character of the new development of the Marshmoor Policy Area, but would not influence (as in change) the aims and objectives of any other plans or programmes in the land use sector that apply in the borough.</p> <p>No previously assessed environmental effects would be altered or added to as a result of the adoption of the SPD. No further assessment</p>

	is required.
Schedule 1 Criteria Discussion	
<p>The relevance of the plan ... for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development Schedule 1(1)(c)</p>	<p>The proposed SPD would provide guidance on the development of SDS7 and other land within the wider Marshmoor Policy Area. The site has been allocated for development in the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan which seeks to enable the sustainable development of the borough by, inter alia, identifying land that can be appropriately developed to meet the projected housing and employment needs of the borough and the wider area over the Plan period.</p> <p>Regarding the allocation of the site, the examining Inspector commented that, <i>“Being adjacent to a railway station and the large village of Welham Green, as well as close to Hatfield, this is an opportunity to provide a sustainable employment campus whose workforce is less reliant upon the use of the private car, to travel to work, than is the norm in Welwyn Hatfield...I have not been referred to any other site in the Borough that in my view could better its advantages as a location for a strategic employment site. I therefore conclude that there are exceptional circumstances to remove site SDS 7 Marshmoor from the Green Belt.”</i> (paragraph 311, p.77, Report on the Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016), 25 September 2023).</p> <p>The sustainability of the development of the allocated site as previously assessed in the SEA and SA for the Local Plan would not be significantly altered as a result of the adoption of the SPD. No further assessment is required.</p>

<p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan ... <i>Schedule 1(1)(d)</i></p>	<p>The Marshmoor Policy Area is not subject to any environmental problems that are relevant to the adopted Local Plan or the proposed SPD.</p> <p>The need for suitable access, sustainable transport measures, consideration of nearby heritage and environmental assets, a landscaped approach, siting and design, noise and air pollution mitigation, sustainable drainage and flood risk mitigation are included in policy SP 23 and have been considered as part of the SEA and SA process.</p> <p>The SPD makes reference to the above factors and notes that these are issues which will need to be resolved at the planning application stage.</p> <p>The environmental effects associated with the development of the allocated site as previously assessed in the SEA and SA for the Local Plan would not be significantly altered or added to as a result of the adoption of the SPD. No further assessment is required.</p>
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Schedule 1 Criteria	Discussion
<p>The relevance of the plan... for the implementation of European legislation on the environment (for example, plans ... linked to waste management or water protection)</p> <p><i>Schedule 1(1)(e)</i></p>	<p>The proposed SPD would form part of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan with respect to the development of the Marshmoor Policy Area.</p> <p>Strategies relating to waste disposal or water protection are mostly dealt with by Hertfordshire County Council.</p> <p>The adopted Local Plan includes a number of policies that contribute to the implementation of EU environmental law and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has a number of strategies in place, relating to waste management and environmental protection.</p> <p>The environmental protections provided by other policies in the adopted Local Plan would not be altered or disapplied by the proposed SPD and no previously assessed environmental effects would be altered. No further assessment is required.</p>

Table 3-2: Consideration of the SPD against Schedule 1(2) of the SEA Regulations – characteristics of the effects and the area to be affected

Schedule 1 Criteria	Discussion
<p>The probability, duration, frequency & reversibility of the effects</p> <p><i>Schedule 1(2)(a)</i></p>	<p>The development of the Marshmoor Policy Area will give rise to both temporary and permanent effects.</p> <p>In the case of temporary effects these would arise during the construction phase and would be more likely to be adverse in character – e.g. emissions of noise and dust, additional HGVs on the local highway network, etc. Such effects would be subject to control through conditions attached to any planning permission granted. Such conditions would be formulated in the context of relevant policies in the adopted Local Plan. Such effects are not matters that would be appropriately addressed within the context of a site masterplan and would be unaffected by the proposed SPD.</p> <p>In the case of the permanent effects on the land associated with the construction and occupation of the site, the vision set out in the adopted Local Plan policy for the site (SP 23) is largely positive and would contribute to the sustainable development of the borough over the Plan period. The SPD would build on the design principles already set out for the site in the adopted Local Plan policies to ensure that development delivers a high quality mixed-use area with a distinct local character.</p> <p>The sustainability of the development of the allocated site as previously assessed in the SEA and SA for the Local Plan would not be significantly altered as a result of the adoption of the SPD. No further assessment is required.</p>

Schedule 1 Criteria	Discussion
<p>The cumulative nature of the effects <i>Schedule 1(2)(b)</i></p>	<p>The Marshmoor Policy Area is located adjacent to existing development in Welham Green. The cumulative effects of the proposed development in the Local Plan have been considered in the Sustainability Appraisal (SUB/3, 2016) and all of the subsequent addendums. The proposed SPD would not alter the quantum of development to be delivered at the site, which is set by policies SADM 30 and SP 23 of the adopted Local Plan. No further assessment is required.</p>
<p>The trans-boundary nature of the effects <i>Schedule 1(2)(c)</i></p>	<p>None of the guidance set out in the proposed SPD would impact upon land within the jurisdictions of any EU Member States.</p> <p>None of the guidance set out in the proposed SPD would significantly impact upon land within the jurisdictions of any neighbouring Local Authority. Cross boundary matters have been discussed and agreed as part of the Duty to Cooperate under the Local Plan Making process.</p> <p>No further assessment is required.</p>
<p>The risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents) <i>Schedule 1(2)(d)</i></p>	<p>The proposed development of the Marshmoor Policy Area does not include any forms of development that would give rise to novel or particularly hazardous risks to the environment or human health.</p> <p>Policy SP 23 includes consideration of the need for mitigation of noise and air pollution from the A1000 and railway line, and protection for the amenity of residents near to employment uses.</p> <p>The adopted Local Plan includes policies that provide for the protection of the environment and human health that apply across all applications for planning permission. The proposed SPD would not alter or disapply any of those policies in the context of the development of the Marshmoor Policy Area and no previously assessed environmental effects would be altered.</p> <p>No further assessment is required.</p>
<p>The magnitude & spatial extent of the effects (geographical area & size of the population likely to be affected) <i>Schedule 1(2)(e)</i></p>	<p>The proposed SPD will focus solely on development of the allocated site at the Marshmoor Policy Area and would not apply beyond that area. The likely impacts of the development of the site were subject to SEA and SA during the preparation of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan, which includes the policies (SADM 30 and SP 23) that allocated the site for development and defined the type and quantum of development to be provided for on the site. The SPD would not alter the boundary of the Marshmoor Policy Area.</p> <p>The environmental effects associated with the development of the allocated site as previously assessed in the SEA and SA for the Local Plan would not be significantly altered or added to as a result of the adoption of the SPD. No further assessment is required.</p>

Schedule 1 Criteria	Discussion
<p>The value & vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: special natural characteristics or cultural heritage <i>Schedule 1(2)(f)(i)</i></p>	<p>The site is located near to designated heritage assets, including Grade I Listed Hatfield House and Hatfield Historic Park and Garden. There are a couple of non-designated heritage assets located within the wider policy area or near the site (Marshmoor Farm, and South Lodge to Millward's Park).</p> <p>There are also several identified wildlife sites and environmental assets nearby including Millward's Park, the Marshmoor Lane Grassland Strip Wildlife Sites and Water End SSSI.</p> <p>Policy SP 23 of the adopted Local Plan makes explicit reference to heritage assets and their settings, and environmental assets, requiring impact assessments, sensitive design and a landscape-led approach to mitigate against any harm/provide enhancement where possible. The proposed SPD will expand on the principles set out in policy SP 23 of the adopted Local Plan and will provide further guidance on the ways in which the site can be developed in a manner that is sympathetic to its heritage and environmental assets.</p> <p>The adopted Local Plan includes policies that provide for the protection of the historic and natural environment that apply across all applications for planning permission. The proposed SPD would not alter or disapply any of those policies in the context of the development of the Marshmoor Policy Area and no previously assessed environmental effects would be altered.</p> <p>No further assessment is required.</p>
<p>The value & vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values <i>Schedule 1(2)(f)(ii)</i></p>	<p>The Marshmoor Policy Area is not subject to any environmental problems that are relevant to the adopted Local Plan or the proposed SPD.</p> <p>The need to consider noise and air pollution is included in Policy SP 23.</p> <p>The adopted Local Plan also includes policies that protect the environment and apply across all applications for planning permission. The proposed SPD would not alter or disapply any of those policies in the context of the development of the Marshmoor Policy Area and no previously assessed environmental effects would be altered. No further assessment is required.</p>

Schedule 1 Criteria	Discussion
<p>The value & vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: intensive land-use <i>Schedule 1(2)(f)(iii)</i></p>	<p>The Marshmoor Policy Area is allocated for development under Policies SADM 30 and SP 23 of the adopted Local Plan, which outline the intensity of future use and the types of land-uses to be accommodated.</p> <p>The proposed SPD would not alter those pre-determined parameters but would provide further detailed guidance on the design, form and character of the mixed-use development that is to be created.</p> <p>According to the SA Addendum (EX200, Jan 2020; page C-63, criterion 4.10), <i>“The site is spread across urban, non-agricultural and grade 3 agricultural land according to the agricultural land classification, but it is a mixture of previously developed land and greenfield land and therefore the effect is assumed to be mixed.”</i></p> <p>The adopted Local Plan includes policies that protect the environment and apply across all applications for planning permission. The proposed SPD would not alter or disapply any of those policies in the context of the development of the Marshmoor Policy Area and no previously assessed environmental effects would be altered. No further assessment is required.</p>
<p>The effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, European or international protection status <i>Schedule 1(2)(g)</i></p>	<p>The Marshmoor Policy Area is not located within any national or higher level designations for landscape or nature conservation.</p> <p>Welwyn Hatfield has a number of sites of importance for nature conservation, but these are protected by separate policies in the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan. The proposed SPD does not seek to disapply the nature conservation policies of the adopted Local Plan with reference to the development of the Marshmoor Policy Area and does not alter the quantum of development from that defined by policies SADM 30 and SP 23.</p> <p>The environmental effects associated with the development of the allocated site as previously assessed in the SEA and SA for the Local Plan would not be significantly altered or added to as a result of the adoption of the SPD.</p> <p>The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan was subject to Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) as part of the plan preparation process. That HRA considered the potential effects of the Plan, including the allocation of the Marshmoor Policy Area, on European sites within a 10km radius of Welwyn Hatfield borough. The HRA concluded that the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan would not have any significant environmental effects on any of these sites. A HRA screening has been undertaken for this SPD (see section 4 below). No further assessment is required.</p>

3.C Conclusion on the need for Environmental Assessment

- 3.18 The proposed SPD falls within the scope of the description given in Regulation 5(6)(a) as it would determine the use of a small area at the local level. The type and volume of development to be provided at the Marshmoor Policy Area is defined by Policies SADM 30 and SP 23 of the adopted Local Plan, the preparation of which was subject to and informed by a combined SA and SEA. The proposed SPD would not alter the quantum of development to be provided at the Marshmoor Policy Area but would further expand on the design guidance and principles set out in Policy SP 23 of the adopted Local Plan. The area of land covered by the proposed SPD (the Marshmoor Policy Area) would be consistent with that identified by Policy SP 23 of the adopted Local Plan and the Policies Map.
- 3.19 Based on the available evidence and taking account of the relationship of the proposed SPD to the adopted Local Plan it is concluded that the SPD would not give rise to activities that would result in significant environmental effects of a type or scale different to those already considered in the SEA and SA of the Local Plan. The proposed SPD would not alter or disapply any of the policies set out for the protection of the environment or communities in the adopted Local Plan, and it can therefore be concluded that any environmental effects arising from the development of the Marshmoor Policy Area would be appropriately addressed in the context of any planning permission that may be granted.
- 3.20 It is recommended that the preparation and adoption of the proposed Marshmoor Policy Area SPD would not give rise to significant environmental effects. The SPD therefore does not require environmental assessment under the provisions of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Part 4: Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) Screening for the Marshmoor Policy Area SPD

- 4.1 The requirement to undertake HRA of development plans was confirmed by the amendments to the Habitats Regulations published for England and Wales in 2007; the currently applicable version is the Habitats Regulations 2017 as amended. These updates were consolidated into the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The assessment process examines the likely significant effects of the different spatial options on the integrity of the European wildlife sites of nature conservation importance within, close to or connected to the plan area. European wildlife sites are areas of international nature conservation importance that are protected for the benefit of the habitats and species they support. This assessment is known as a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA).
- 4.2 For the purposes of the HRA, international designated wildlife sites are Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and Ramsar wetland sites.
- 4.3 The SEA Directive requires that if an eligible plan or programme requires an appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive, then that plan or programme will also require an SEA. It is therefore advisable to check whether an assessment under the Habitats Regulations is required by undertaking HRA screening at the same time as screening for SEA.
- 4.4 The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan document has been subject to both SEA and HRA. These documents can be found on the WHBC website, under Submission Documents. Both the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulation Assessment were updated in 2020, following the promotion of additional sites for housing. Further updates/addendums were made for the main modifications and further main modifications stages of the Local Plan examination.
- 4.5 The following four European sites are identified as being within 10km of Welwyn Hatfield Borough. Their location is shown in Appendix C.
- Epping Forest SAC
 - The Lee Valley SPA
 - The Lee Valley Ramsar

- Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC

4.6 The environmental effects of the policies contained in the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan were subject to a screening assessment. In relation to policies SADM 30 and SP 23, the outcome of the screening was that European sites could potentially be affected in the following ways:

- Epping Forest SAC could be affected by increased disturbance from recreational pressure.
- Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site could be affected by air pollution, recreational disturbance, water pollution and change in water quantity.
- Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC could be affected by air pollution from increased vehicle use and damage from increased levels of recreational disturbance.

4.7 An Appropriate Assessment was carried out and concluded that adverse effects on the integrity of any of the European sites were able to be ruled out in relation to air pollution, recreational pressure and water quality and quantity. It also concluded that there would also be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites in combination with other plans and projects.

4.8 However, it did refer to issues that relate to the capacity of Rye Meads Wastewater Treatment Works and its relationship with the Lee Valley Special Protection Area and Ramsar site. The examining inspector recommended changes to Policy SP 13 and its supporting text to address this.

4.9 As noted by the examining inspector, *“An updated HRA was prepared to accompany the MMs consultation and a further one to accompany the FMMs consultation. They do not recommend any further changes. In its responses to the consultations, Natural England has indicated that it does not object to the plan as modified by the MMs and FMMs.”* (paragraph 32, p.12, Report on the Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016), 25 September 2023).

4.A HRA screening of the Marshmoor Policy Area SPD conclusion

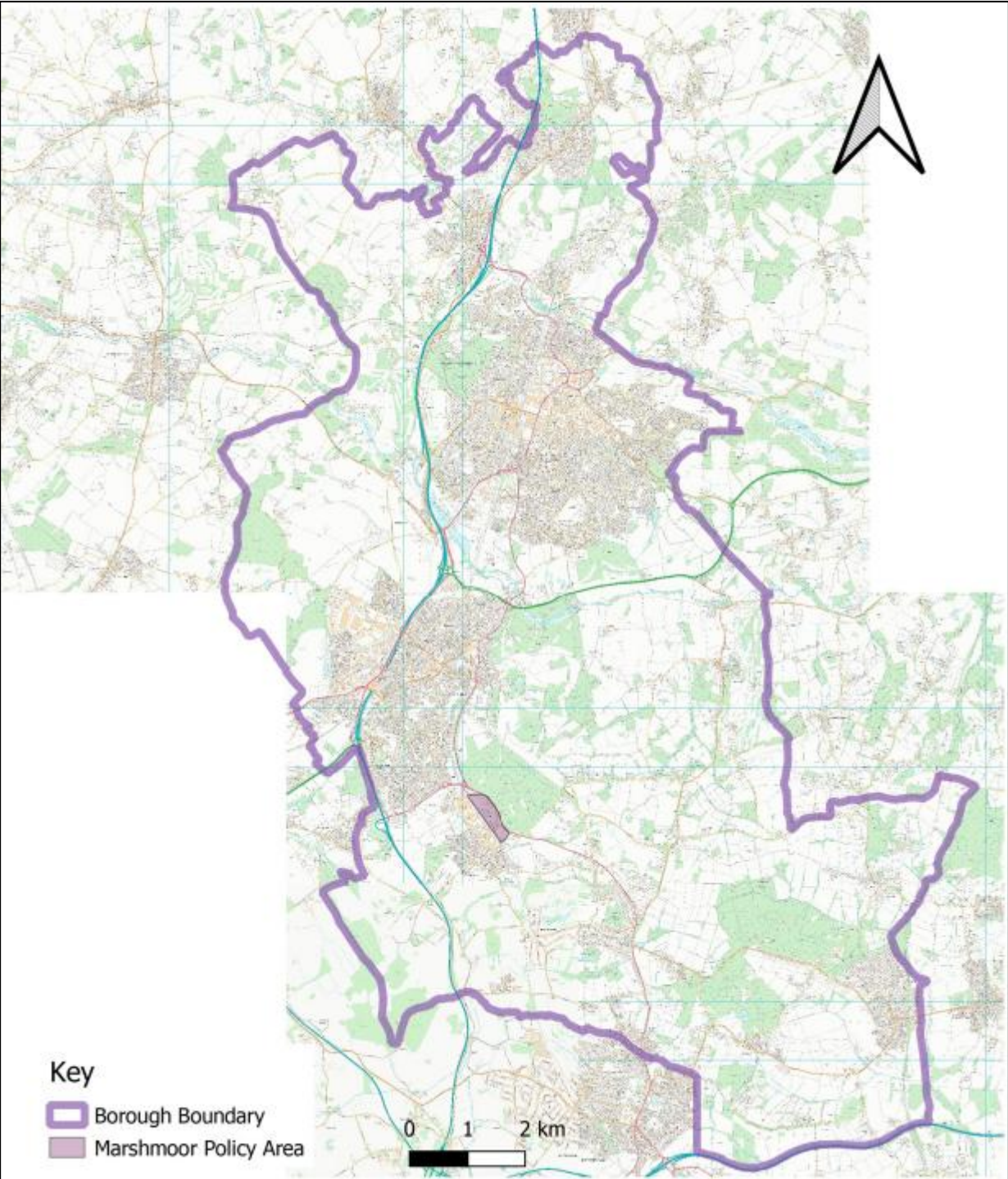
- 4.10 The HRA of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan assessed the impact of development in Welwyn Hatfield on the four international designated European sites and concluded that the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan would not have any significant environmental effects on any of these sites.
- 4.11 The proposed SPD would not alter the parameters set out in policies SADM 30 and SP 23 but rather would provide further detailed guidance on the design, form and character of the development. The environmental effects associated with the Marshmoor Policy Area allocated site as previously assessed would not be significantly altered as a result of the adoption of the SPD. Therefore, a HRA of the proposed Marshmoor Policy Area SPD is not required.

Part 5: Next stage of the SEA/HRA determination

- 5.1 The Initial Screening Report will be sent to the consultation bodies for a six-week consultation period, as set out in Regulation 4 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004; these are Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

- 5.2 A final determination report will then be produced, incorporating the responses received from the consultees and this will then form the formal determination as to whether the Marshmoor Policy Area SPD requires SEA/HRA.

Appendix A: Map to show Welwyn Hatfield borough boundary and the Marshmoor Policy Area (including site SDS7)



Appendix B: Extract from the Sustainability Appraisal of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (LUC, January 2020)

EX200

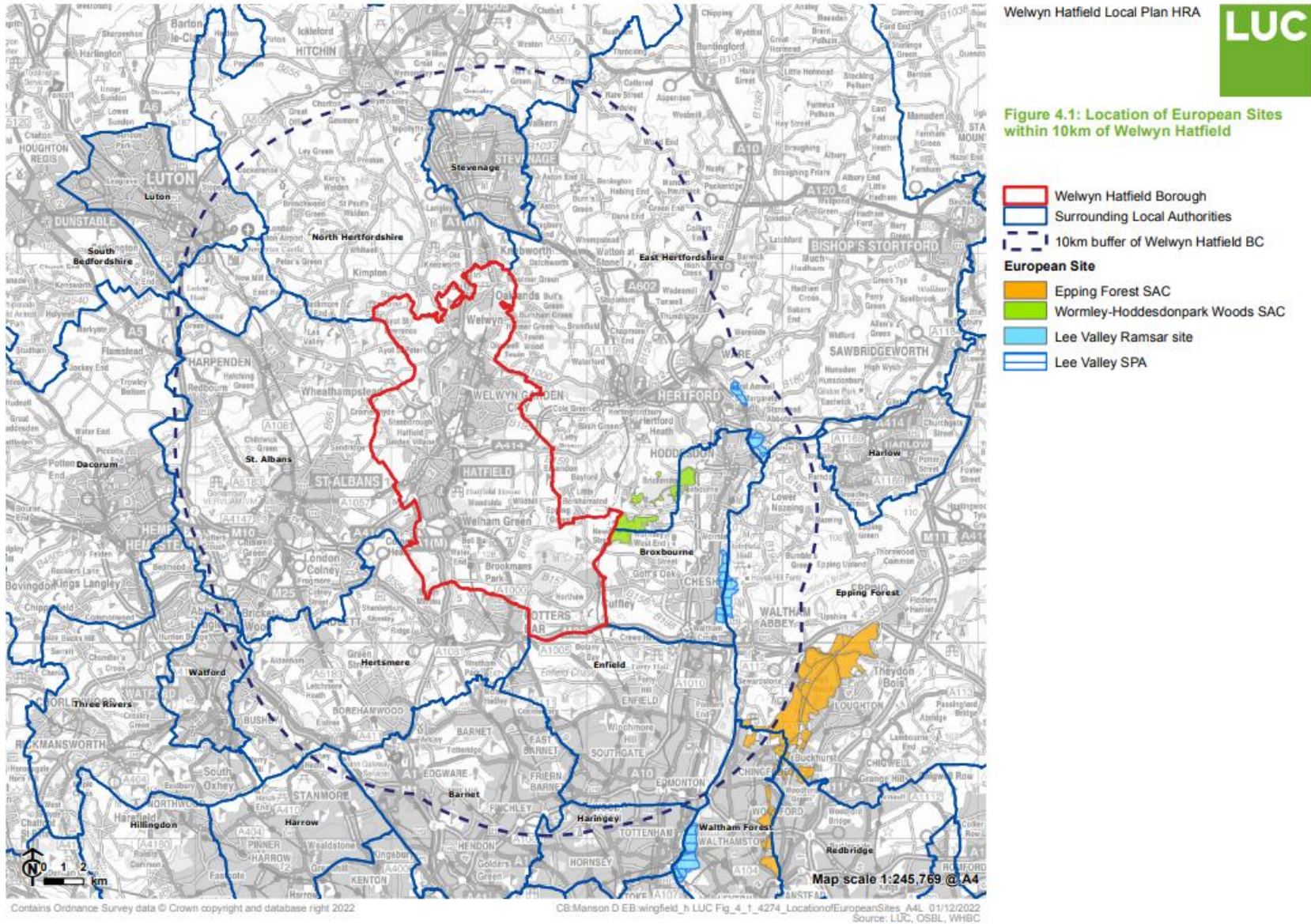
Chapter 4

Appraisal of Previously Assessed Sites

Addendum to the Sustainability Appraisal of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan
January 2020

	1.1 & 1.2 Health		2.2 flood risk				4.2 greenhouse gas emissions from transport		4.3 air pollution		4.4 open space and landscape and character, retaining local distinctiveness				4.5 Character, sense of place and local distinctiveness, historic environment		4.6 Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity		4.8 water pollution		4.10 productive agricultural land and previously developed land		5.1 Housing			6.1 business and employment		6.2 economic investment and regeneration		6.3 Enhance the vitality and attraction of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield town		6.4 Sustain rural communities and their economies		6.5 mineral resources		6.6 Learning and skills	
	Proximity to employment and services	Proximity to transport	Proximity to employment and services	Proximity to transport	Open Space	Landscape character	Previously Developed Land	local distinctiveness	4.5	4.6	4.8	4.10	Amount of housing	Affordable housing	Dwellings for older people	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6																
SDS5 / Hat 1 & Hat 13	+	0	++	++	++	++	0	-?	0	--	--?	-?	0	--	++	++	++	++	+	0	0	0	++?														
HS11/Hat11 (Scenario 1)	+	0	++	++	++	++	0	-?	0	-	-?	--?	0	-	0	++	++	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	++?														
SDS7/WeG4b	+	0	++	++	++	++	0	-?	+?	0	--	?/+?	--	0	-/+	0	++	++	++	+	0	+?	0	++?													
HS22/BrP4	+	-	+	++	+	++	0	--?	0	--	0	--?	-?	-	+	++	++	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	++?														
HS24/BrP7	+	0	++	++	++	++	0	--	0	--	-?	?	0	-	0	++	++	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	++?														
SDS6/Hat15	+	0	++	0	++	0	0	--?	0	0	--?	--?	0	-	++	++	++	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	++?														

Appendix C: Location of European Sites within 10km of Welwyn Hatfield



Appendix D: Extract from the Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Further Main Modifications (LUC, June 2023)

Appendix B
HRA Screening of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (as Proposed to be Modified)

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Main Modification
June 2023

Local Plan Policy	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the proposal	Likely effects if proposal implemented	European site(s) potentially affected
SADM29: Welwyn	<p>Development of 69 new homes.</p> <p>Increase in vehicle use.</p> <p>Increase in recreational activities.</p> <p>Increase water demand and treatment.</p>	<p>Increased air pollution.</p> <p>Disturbance from recreation.</p> <p>Increased water pollution and change in water quantity.</p>	<p>Epping Forest SAC could be affected by increased disturbance from recreational pressure.</p> <p>Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site could be affected by air pollution, recreational disturbance, water pollution and change in water quantity.</p> <p>Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC could be affected by air pollution from increased vehicle use and damage from increased levels of recreational disturbance.</p>
SADM30: Welham Green	<p>Development of 304 new homes.</p> <p>Development of 40,500 sqm of employment floorspace.</p> <p>Development of Gypsy and Traveller site (12 pitches).</p> <p>Development of a new primary school.</p> <p>Increase in vehicle use.</p> <p>Increase in recreational activities.</p> <p>Increase water demand and treatment.</p>	<p>Increased air pollution.</p> <p>Disturbance from recreation.</p> <p>Increased water pollution and change in water quantity.</p>	<p>Epping Forest SAC could be affected by increased disturbance from recreational pressure.</p> <p>Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site could be affected by air pollution, recreational disturbance, water pollution and change in water quantity.</p> <p>Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC could be affected by air pollution from increased vehicle use and damage from increased levels of recreational disturbance.</p>
SP23: Marshmoor Policy Area (SDS7 and wider area)	<p>Mixed use development comprising 40,500sqm of Class E(g) employment floorspace and 100 dwellings.</p> <p>Increase in vehicle use.</p> <p>Increase in recreational activities.</p> <p>Increase water demand and treatment.</p>	<p>Increased air pollution.</p> <p>Disturbance from recreation.</p> <p>Increased water pollution and change in water quantity.</p>	<p>Epping Forest SAC could be affected by increased disturbance from recreational pressure.</p> <p>Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site could be affected by air pollution, recreational disturbance, water pollution and change in water quantity.</p>

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Appendix D: Extract from the Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Further Main Modifications (LUC, June 2023)

Appendix B
HRA Screening of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (as Proposed to be Modified)

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Main Modification
June 2023

Local Plan Policy	Likely activities (operations) to result as a consequence of the proposal	Likely effects if proposal implemented	European site(s) potentially affected
			Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC could be affected by air pollution from increased vehicle use and damage from increased levels of recreational disturbance.
SADM31: Bell Bar and Brookmans Park	<p>Development of 428 new dwellings.</p> <p>Two form entry primary school</p> <p>Increase in vehicle use.</p> <p>Increase in recreational activities.</p> <p>Increase water demand and treatment.</p>	<p>Increased air pollution.</p> <p>Disturbance from recreation.</p> <p>Increased water pollution and change in water quantity.</p>	<p>Epping Forest SAC could be affected by increased disturbance from recreational pressure.</p> <p>Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site could be affected by air pollution, recreational disturbance, water pollution and change in water quantity.</p> <p>Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC could be affected by air pollution from increased vehicle use and damage from increased levels of recreational disturbance.</p>
SADM32: Little Heath	<p>Development of 63 new homes.</p> <p>Increase in vehicle use.</p> <p>Increase in recreational activities.</p> <p>Increase water demand and treatment.</p>	<p>Increased air pollution.</p> <p>Disturbance from recreation.</p> <p>Increased water pollution and change in water quantity.</p>	<p>Epping Forest SAC could be affected by increased disturbance from recreational pressure.</p> <p>Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site could be affected by air pollution, recreational disturbance, water pollution and change in water quantity.</p> <p>Wormley Hoddesdonpark Woods SAC could be affected by air pollution from increased vehicle use and damage from increased levels of recreational disturbance.</p>
SADM33: Cuffley	<p>Development of 335 new homes.</p> <p>Increase in vehicle use.</p> <p>Increase in recreational activities.</p>	<p>Increased air pollution.</p> <p>Disturbance from recreation.</p>	Epping Forest SAC could be affected by increased disturbance from recreational pressure.

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Appendix E: SEA and HRA Initial Screening Report - Statutory Consultee Responses

(To be added following consultation with the Statutory Consultees)

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Part I

Item No:

Main author: Conor Matthews/Elizabeth Burnham

Executive Member: Councillor Rose Grewal

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL – 16 JANUARY 2025
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PLANNING)

LOCAL PLAN EARLY ENGAGEMENT AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME UPDATE

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The current Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016 - 2036 (WHLP) was adopted in October 2023. The WHLP contains Policy SP2 which commits the Council to undertake a review of the plan, to be submitted for examination no later than October 2026.
- 1.2 In September 2024, Cabinet agreed that a Local Plan (full review) is prepared and, as part of the early scoping of a new local plan, public engagement take place inviting reflections on the current opportunities, challenges and aspirations of the borough.
- 1.3 An early engagement on the new local plan took place between 23rd September 2024 and 4th November 2024, asking for reflections on the challenges and opportunities facing the borough with regard to topics on living, working, environment and movement & infrastructure. The engagement also asked for people's aspirations for the future of the borough.
- 1.4 From the responses, recurring opportunities, challenges and aspirations for the borough have been collated to produce a series of key themes. These key themes will help establish the context in which the new local plan is prepared.
- 1.5 The government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 12 December 2024. The ministerial statement that accompanied the publication of the new NPPF included a requirement for all local planning authorities to produce an updated LDS within 12 weeks of the publication of the NPPF. The LDS agreed by Cabinet on 3 September has been updated (appendix C).

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel notes the outcome and summary of responses of the new local plan early engagement and recommends to Cabinet that the key themes inform the preparation of the Local Plan; and, recommends that Cabinet agrees to the Local Development Scheme being published on the Council's website and for a copy to be sent to the Secretary of State to comply with the Written Ministerial Statement of 12 December 2024.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 The current Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan was adopted in October 2023. It contains Policy SP2 which commits the Council to undertake a review of the plan, this review is to commence no later than one year after the adoption of the plan [by October 2024] and for an updated or replacement plan to be submitted for examination no later than three years after the date of adoption of the plan [by October 2026].

Engagement

- 3.2 In September 2024, Cabinet agreed to conduct a full review of the Local Plan. It was also agreed that an early engagement event be conducted to ascertain the opportunities and challenges felt by people working, living or interested in the borough based on four key themes.
- 3.3 These four themes were related to: Living, which sought to encompass '*where we live, the homes we live in, our health and well-being, and the communities we belong to*'; Working, which sought to encompass '*the economy, jobs, retail, services, investment, skills and training*'; Environment, which sought to cover '*buildings, structures, landscapes, water, green spaces and the impact of climate change*'; and Movement and Infrastructure, which sought to encompass '*travel, transport services and facilities, as well as physical, social and green infrastructure*'. The engagement event also asked for people's ambitions and aspirations for the future of Welwyn Hatfield.
- 3.4 The early engagement was hosted on a new engagement platform and supplemented with new branding. The platform and branding were utilised specifically for the new local plan and will continue to be used for future engagement. A tool called a 'digital place portrait' was also utilised for this engagement event that follows the government's focus on digitalisation of planning and offered users access to spatial data to better understand what issues are affecting the area.
- 3.5 The engagement was open for comments from stakeholders and the wider community between 23rd September 2024 and 4th November 2024. It was publicised through the Council website and the Council's official social media accounts throughout this period. The engagement platform also contained short videos about the early engagement and about what a local plan is, and an FAQ to aid knowledge about the purpose and process of a local plan was also created.
- 3.6 Two in-person drop-in events were also carried out to allow members of the public to visit, discuss and ask questions about the early engagement and the new local plan. These were run and attended by Planning Policy officers, and engagement material in the form of roller banners, business cards and paper forms were also utilised. The two drop-in events were held at The Howard Centre, Welwyn Garden City, and Hatfield Library, Hatfield, and both ran from 3pm to 7pm on a Thursday and Friday respectively. As above, these were also publicised on the Council's website and social media accounts.

Responses

- 3.7 In total, 209 contributions were made from various sources, including (but not limited to) members of the public, local community groups, local businesses and parish councils. The early engagement platform had over 1,100 visitors in 6 weeks and over 150 email subscriptions.
- 3.8 Following the closure of the early engagement event, Planning Policy Officers have reviewed all responses received and collated recurring/common responses into set themes to inform the context of the new local plan. The themes from the engagement are (in no particular order):
- Housing related - *Meeting local housing needs*
 - Climate related - *A local response to the global issue of climate change*

- Infrastructure related - *Improving facilities and services and accessibility to them*
- Health related - *Supporting active and healthy lifestyles*
- Travel related - *A borough that is better connected and is more accessible to all*
- Green Belt related - *Valuing the borough's Green Belt*
- Environment related - *Supporting and enhancing the borough's natural infrastructure*
- Employment related - *Sustaining and promoting the borough's employment and education opportunities*
- Town centre related - *Recognising the changing role and opportunities that our town centres offer*
- Community related - *Creating and maintaining community values and a sense of place*

3.9 Appendix A describes and summarises the 10 themes. It is proposed that the key themes be reported via the Local Plan consultation platform to conclude the Local Plan Early Engagement. In addition, a summary of all the responses received during the engagement are included at Appendix B. All responses are also viewable via the Local Plan engagement platform.

3.10 The exercise was limited to ascertain the opportunities and challenges, and it should be recognised there is potential to be conflict between some themes. Addressing some of the opportunities/challenges may fall outside the scope of the Local Plan or may require collaboration with other stakeholders/service providers. There may also be other considerations/priorities which emerge during the course of the Local Plan process.

3.11 It is through the preparation of the Local Plan that the council, with the community, will identify the strategic priorities for the development and use of land in the borough. In doing so, there will need to be regard to national policies and advice. The formal plan making stages for the Local Plan are set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

Local Plan Timetable

3.12 A Local Development Scheme (LDS) is the timetable to produce a Local Plan. A timetable for the preparation of a new local plan was agreed by Cabinet on 3 September 2024 and is on the website. The government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 12 December 2024. The framework sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

3.13 The ministerial statement that accompanied the publication of the new NPPF included a requirement for all local planning authorities to produce an updated LDS within 12 weeks of the publication of the NPPF (no later than 6 March 2025). Once updated the LDS is to be made publicly available, a copy is to be sent to the Ministry via email, and certain key information be recorded by filling out a form.

3.14 The LDS agreed by Cabinet on 3 September has been updated (appendix C), the

extent of the updates are limited e.g. references to the updated LDS taking effect from February 2025 in several places and confirmation that the Local Plan Early Engagement in Autumn 2024 has taken place. The overall timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan remains unaltered.

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 The current legal framework for the preparation of Local Plans is set out in the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA) and associated regulations (as amended). Under regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), local planning authorities must review their Local Plans within five years of the adoption date. However, as stated the adoption of the WHLP includes a commitment to an early review.
- 4.2 The adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016 – 2036 forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the Borough. Section 38(6) of the PCPA states that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Any progress on a new Local Plan does not affect its Development Plan status and the current Local Plan is the starting point for consideration of planning applications in Welwyn Hatfield. Emerging policies in any new Plan may become a material consideration as they progress through the system. However, the material weight an emerging plan may be given is typically proportionate to how far it has progressed.
- 4.3 The complete early engagement is prior to the formal consultation on a new Local Plan. The themes assist in providing the context for the preparation of the Local Plan

5 Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 There are no financial implications relating to the recommendations of this report. The financial implications of the early engagement has been met through existing budgets.

6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 There are no anticipated risk management implications from publishing the emerging themes following the collation of comments received during the early engagement exercise.

7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

- 7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications as a direct result of producing the Local Plan

8 Procurement Implication(s)

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 9.1 The emerging themes from the early engagement event has revealed that many stakeholders and the wider community believe that climate change is a challenge/issue for the borough. A new Local Plan provides an opportunity to address the matter of climate change.

10 Policy Implications

- 10.1 There are no policy implications directly arising from the recommendations of this report and the completed Local Plan early engagement. The new Local Plan will include policies for development in the borough that will be subject to formal consultation and be required to be consistent with national planning policy.

11 Human Resources Implications

- 11.1 The Planning Policy team has the responsibility to service, support and facilitate the Council's plan-making activity. The publication of a document detailing the emerging themes following the previously agreed early engagement exercise will be done entirely by Planning Policy officers during normal working hours.

12 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 12.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's agreed Corporate Priorities including running an effective council and creating opportunities for our communities.

13 Equalities and Diversity

- 13.1 The report does not propose changes to existing Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies. Accordingly, an Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed.

Appendices:

Appendix A Key Themes

Appendix B Responses to new Local Plan early engagement exercise

Appendix C Local Development Scheme (LDS) February 2025

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Appendix A: Key Themes

Improving facilities and services and accessibility to them

New developments to be sustainably located, with access to medical and education services, amenities, transport links and green spaces

Provide infrastructure including services, transport links and utilities, to serve existing communities and support future growth prior to new housing development

Valuing the borough's Green Belt

Protect the borough's Green Belt

Prioritise development on brownfield land within existing sustainable areas and reuse empty buildings/office space

Retain the characteristics of the borough with its two main towns and surrounding villages, set within the Green Belt

A borough that is better connected and is more accessible for all

Working with infrastructure providers to ensure additional transport capacity

Prioritise public transport and active travel to avoid car dependency and reduce traffic congestion

Encourage use of public transport by improving interconnectivity, frequency and off peak operation of buses, trains and other public transport services

Promote active travel through walkable neighbourhoods and improved safety, maintenance and connectivity of walking and cycling routes

New development supported by appropriate parking and safe movement for all

Meeting local housing needs

Provide a range of homes to meet the varied needs of all residents including first time buyers, students, families and older persons

Provide affordable homes and council/social housing, for both rental and ownership

Homes to be well designed, good quality and energy efficient

Supporting active and healthy lifestyles

Promote good health and wellbeing (physical and mental) through access to green spaces and the natural environment for all

Promote a healthy, safe and clean environment by reducing air, noise and light pollution, improving road safety and addressing fly tipping

Ensure good healthcare for all residents, including the sick and elderly

Supporting and enhancing the borough's natural infrastructure

Protect wildlife and enhance biodiversity across the borough

Enable access to the natural environment for all for leisure and recreation

Green the urban environment through measures such as living walls, green roofs and treelined streets

Sustaining and promoting the borough's employment and education opportunities

Support the borough's employers and key educational providers

Ensure employment areas are well connected to enable accessibility for all to the borough's employment opportunities

Support small and medium businesses and business start ups

Encourage collaboration between the borough's employers and education providers to develop the workforce and enable access to skilled jobs

Recognising the changing role and opportunities that our town centres offer

Both town centres to be viable, offering a range of retail, entertainment and leisure facilities for both daytime and evening use

Town centres to be mixed-use, attractive, vibrant, safe and active, providing a space for social interaction for all ages and helping to build a strong sense of community

Provide appropriate levels of parking to support retail and businesses

A local response to the global issue of climate change

New homes/developments to be environmentally sustainable, through use of measures such as solar panels, heat pumps, good insulation, electric vehicle charging

Help achieve net zero targets by locating development within sustainable areas of the borough, with good access to services, amenities and public transport, reducing the need to travel

Ensure effective drainage to help tackle flood risk

Creating and maintaining community values and a sense of place

Create places that encourage social interaction and community values

New development should positively complement existing local communities

Appendix B: Summary of Early Engagement Responses

An early engagement on the new local plan took place between 23rd September 2024 and 4th November 2024, asking for reflections on the challenges and opportunities facing the borough with regard to topics on living, working, environment and movement & infrastructure. The engagement also asked for people's aspirations for the future of the borough. The following is summary of the responses.

Living

- Need for affordable homes – both rental and ownership
- Need for a range of homes to suit first time buyers, families, older persons, students
- Need for houses and bungalows, not just apartments
- Build on brownfield sites and reuse empty buildings/offices
- Need to protect the Green Belt
- New homes to be well designed, good quality, energy efficient
- New homes to be environmentally sustainable (eg. solar panels, well-insulated, heat pumps)
- New homes to be sustainably located, near existing transport links, facilities and services, and enable community interaction
- Sufficient infrastructure is needed, prior to new housing development
- Access to green space is important for all residents
- New developments should focus on walkability, access to cycle routes and public transport, but sufficient parking also needed

Working

- Better transport links and public transport needed to enable access to existing and new business areas, and reduce congestion on roads
- Town centres should be attractive, vibrant and safe, with good retail and leisure facilities, and flexibility of tenure for other uses
- Hatfield town centre in particular to be improved so both town centres in the borough are viable
- Local population growth should be supported by growth in employment, retail and leisure
- Need to attract and support small and medium businesses and business start-ups in the borough
- Collaboration between local businesses and education providers needed to create more apprenticeships and provide skills for high level jobs
- Concern over loss of employment uses, and need for retail uses in employment areas to be protected

Environment

- Preserve the Green Belt
- Protect green spaces and green corridors and introduce greenspace in built up areas eg. through living walls, green roofs, tree-lined streets
- Protect wildlife and biodiversity eg, through measures like swift bricks
- Prioritise brownfield sites for development, convert unused offices and buildings, and build in existing built up areas near public transport links, facilities and services
- Avoid coalescence of villages so communities can maintain their own identities

- Air, noise and light pollution and fly tipping are a problem in the borough
- Measures to help achieve net zero should be used on all new developments eg. good insulation, solar panels, heat pumps, car charging points
- Improve public transport, reduce traffic congestion and ensure new developments are locationally sustainable rather than car dependent

Movement and Infrastructure

- Infrastructure delivery should be agreed prior to new housing developments being approved – including medical facilities, schools/creches/specialist education provision, public transport/active travel routes, and utilities
- Improvements to public transport and active travel routes are needed to encourage reduced use of cars and help achieve net zero
- Cycle routes need to be well maintained, safe and fully connected to encourage usage
- Improvements to train and bus services including additional bus routes and greater frequency of services is needed (including in evenings)
- Introduce integrated ticketing across public transport services
- Road maintenance and introduction of 20mph speed limits is needed
- Improved road safety, bus services and footpaths near schools would encourage less car dependency and reduce congestion around schools

Aspirations

- Retain the characteristics of the borough as a pleasant and well-functioning place to live, incorporating the two main towns and surrounding villages set within the Green Belt
- Protect the Green Belt and green spaces to encourage biodiversity, wildlife, for recreation, and to promote health and wellbeing
- Borough to be a calm, peaceful place to live and work - a safe, healthy, clean and unpolluted place that people can be proud of, with a strong sense of community
- Housing to be built on brownfield land and sustainable locations which are walkable/cyclable, and near to public transport, education and health services and amenities
- For town centres to be thriving and active with more leisure facilities, and a greater number and variety of restaurants and shops, providing opportunities to socialise
- For good quality jobs and a stable economy, supported by a mix of good quality, affordable homes in sustainable locations within the borough, reducing the need for car dependent travel
- A green environment with environmentally resilient homes, solar panels on all new buildings and trees/vegetation

The comments from individuals and/or groups are available at:

<https://www.welhat.gov.uk/ourlocalplan>

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires local planning authorities to prepare, maintain, and make available to the public, a Local Development Scheme¹.
- 1.2 A Local Development Scheme sets out the timetable for the production of the Council's Development Plan Documents. It enables those with an interest in the plan-making process to understand which documents are to be prepared for the area and at what stages they will be able to participate.

2 What must a Local Development Scheme specify, how is it brought into effect, reviewed and made available

- 2.1 A Local Development Scheme (LDS) must specify:
- The local development documents which are to be development plan documents.
 - The subject matter and geographical area to which each development plan document is to relate.
 - Which development plan documents (if any) are to be prepared jointly with one or more other local planning authorities.
 - Any matter or area in respect of which the authority has agreed (or propose to agree) to the constitution of a joint committee (under section 29)
 - The timetable for the preparation and revision of the development plan documents.
 - Such other matters as are prescribed.
- 2.2 Local planning authorities are also encouraged to include details of other documents which form (or will form) part of the development plan for the area, e.g. Neighbourhood Plans².
- 2.3 To bring the LDS into effect, LPAs must: (a) resolve that the LDS is to have effect; and (b) specify in the resolution the date from which the LDS is to have effect.
- 2.4 So that it is kept up to date, a local planning authority must revise its LDS at a time it considers appropriate, (or as otherwise directed to do so by the Secretary of State).
- 2.5 In order that local communities and interested parties can keep track of progress, local planning authorities must make the following available to the public:
- An up to date copy of the scheme.
 - A copy of any amendments.
 - Up to date information showing compliance or otherwise with the timetable.

¹ [Section 15 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#)

² [National Planning Practice Guidance Plan-Making](#) Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 61-003-20190315

- 2.6 The LDS should be published on the Council's website.
- 2.7 The Council's previous LDS (July 2023) set out the timetable for the preparation of, what is now, the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016-2036). The previous LDS is replaced by this new LDS, which sets out the proposed timetable for a new Local Plan for the borough, until such time as the LDS may be reviewed and revised as appropriate.

3. The existing Development Plan for the area

- 3.1 The Development Plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) and (c) of the P&CP 2004³ Act as "*the development plan documents (taken as a whole) which have been adopted or approved in relation to that area*", and "*the neighbourhood development plans which have been made in relation to that area.*"
- 3.2 The Development Plan for an area comprises the combination of strategic and non-strategic policies which are in force at a particular time.
- 3.3 The Development Plan for the Welwyn Hatfield area currently comprises:
- The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016-2036), (adopted Oct 2023).
 - The Northaw and Cuffley Neighbourhood Plan (made, June 2023)
 - The Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2011-2026 (adopted, July 2014).
 - The Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2011-2026, (adopted 2012).
 - The Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016, (adopted 2007).
- 3.4 Hertfordshire County Council, as Waste and Minerals Planning Authority, is preparing a new Waste and Minerals Plan. A draft plan was published for consultation in 2022. The County Council is responsible for preparing, maintaining and publishing an LDS for the Waste and Minerals Local Plan⁴.
- 3.5 Neighbourhood Planning is not a legal requirement but a right which communities in England may choose to use. Neighbourhood Plans can be prepared by three types of qualifying bodies: a parish or town council, a neighbourhood forum, or a community organisation. A town or parish council is responsible for neighbourhood planning for a designated neighbourhood area which contains all or part of its administrative area.
- 3.6 It is for such qualifying bodies to ensure that the wider community is kept informed of its neighbourhood planning proposals, the opportunities to be involved in shaping an emerging neighbourhood plan and when views can be made throughout the process.

³ [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

⁴ [Emerging Minerals and Waste Local Plan | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

4 The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Review

- 4.1 Local Planning Authorities are required to complete a review of their local plans at least once every 5 years from the adoption date of a plan⁵. This is to ensure that policies remain relevant, taking into account matters such as changes to local circumstances, conformity with national planning policy, whether issues have arisen which impact on the deliverability of key site allocations, significant economic changes that may impact on viability, and whether any new social, environmental or economic priorities may have arisen etc.
- 4.2 National planning practice guidance⁶ also states that there will be occasions where there are significant changes in circumstances, which may mean its necessary to review relevant strategic policies earlier than the statutory minimum of 5 years, e.g. where a plan has been adopted, on a basis of a [housing] number that is significantly below the number generated using the standard method.
- 4.3 Policy SP 2 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016-2036 states that the Council will undertake a review of the Local Plan, commencing no later than one year after the adoption of the plan (i.e., by October 2024), with an updated or replacement plan being submitted for examination no later than three years after the plan's adoption, (i.e., by October 2026).
- 4.4 The need for this review arises as the plan does not make provision for the full objectively assessed need for housing over the full plan period and will be undertaken in the context of housing need, national policy and relevant circumstances at the time.
- 4.5 However, an initial review of the adopted Local Plan (report to CPPP, August 2024), concludes that there is a need for a full review and update to the plan, rather than a limited review.

5 Prospective plan-making reforms

- 5.1 The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 paves the way for reforms to the plan-making system, subject to parliamentary approval of the relevant regulations, together with the publication of national policy and guidance. The reforms propose a 30 month timeframe (plus a scoping and early participation stage) to prepare and adopt a Local Plan.⁷
- 5.2 Recent announcements by the (new) Government⁸ indicate its intention to implement the new system, as set out in The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act, from summer or autumn in 2025. The Government intends to publish further details of its intentions around plan-making in due course.

⁵ [T&CP \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

⁶ [National Planning Practice Guidance – Plan-making](#)

⁷ (Para 43) [Plan-making Reforms Consultation July 2023](#)

⁸ [Proposed reforms to the NPPF and other changes to the planning system](#)
[Ministerial Statement 12 December 2024](#)

6 The plan-making stages and timetable for the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Review

- 6.1 Table 1 in Appendix A sets out the key plan-making stages and timetable for the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Review.
- 6.2 This is the document that the Council intends to prepare, which will form part of the development plan for the area. The key milestones are based on the current statutory framework for plan-making.
- 6.3 The Council will review and amend the LDS at a future date as appropriate.
- 6.4 Any deletions are shown with a ~~strike through~~ and additions are shown with an underline.

Table 1 – Development Plan Document

Document Title	The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan Review	
Subject matter	A local plan setting out a vision for the borough and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure, as well as a basis for conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and achieving well designed places. ⁹	
Geographical area	The administrative area of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	
Plan-making stage	Description	Timetable
Survey of area S13 of the P&CP Act 2004	Matters which may be expected to affect the development of the area or the planning of its development.	To keep under review
Pre-production	Early engagement	Autumn 2024 (completed)
Consultation (plan preparation) Regulation 18 of the T&CP (LP) (England) Regulations 2012	The LPA notifies certain specified bodies or persons of the subject of a local plan which the LPA propose to prepare and invites representations about what that local plan ought to contain.	Summer 2025
Evidence gathering	This stage will include a Call for Sites	2024 - 2026
Publication and Representations Regulations 19 and 20	Make available the proposed submission documents and a statement of representation procedure. Any person may make representations about the Local Plan the LPA proposes to submit to the Secretary of State by a specified date.	Spring 2026
Submission to the Secretary of State Regulation 22	Submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination along with certain prescribed documents/statements including copies of the representations made at Regulation 20.	October 2026
Independent Examination Regulations 23 and 24	The Local Plan is independently examined by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.	November 2026 to April 2027
Publication of Inspector's Report Regulation 25	The LPA publishes the recommendations of the Inspector	May 2027 [*]
Adoption Regulation 26	The LPA adopts the Local Plan, makes it available and sends the adoption statement to certain persons	June 2027

⁹ Paragraph 001 Reference ID: 61-001-20190315: [National Planning Practice Guidance – Plan-making](#)

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Part I

Main author: Lucy Palmer

Executive Member: Cllr Rose Grewal

All Wards

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL – 16TH JANUARY 2025
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - PLANNING

LOCAL PLAN – ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2023/24

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) monitors the progress and effectiveness of the strategic policies set out in the Local Plan. The AMR sets out development that has taken place in the borough during the year and over the plan period to date and assesses whether this development meets targets across a number of Local Plan indicators. The AMR covers a range of topics including housing, employment, the environment and infrastructure.
- 1.2 The 2023/24 AMR covers the period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. While the AMR may also refer to development and changes since the 31st March 2024, the 2024/25 AMR will report on these in more detail.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel recommends to Cabinet that the AMR be approved for publication, and that the Assistant Director (Planning) be given delegated authority to agree any minor alterations to finalise the AMR, following consultation with the Executive Member, Planning. If unanimously agreed by the Panel, for the decision to be taken by the executive member using their delegated powers under paragraph 18.1(b) of the Cabinet procedure rules.

3 Background

- 3.1 In line with previous Annual Monitoring reports, the 2023/24 AMR reports on development progress set out in the Local Plan monitoring framework. The AMR is set out over nine chapters. Chapter 1 is contextual and sets out key information about the borough and its people. Chapter 2 covers the Council's forward 'plan-making' duties, while Chapter 3 examines the effectiveness of policies for dealing with planning applications. Chapters 4-8 cover the amount and quality of new development being built in the borough and how the borough's population and places are performing, whilst Chapter 9 deals with specific major and mixed-use development sites allocated in the Local Plan.

4 Explanation

- 4.1 The key indicators and conclusions from the AMR are summarised on pages 4 and 5 of the report, and include:
 - The ONS mid-year population estimates for 2023 show the population of Welwyn Hatfield to be 121,749 persons. This was an increase of 1.1% over the year since mid-2022 and compared with average growth of 0.9% for Hertfordshire.

- In 2023/24, 51 planning appeal decisions were received. The proportion of planning appeals that were allowed was 18%, which was much lower than the 40% allowed in 2022/23 and less than the national average of 28% for 2023/24.
- During the year there were 359 net new housing units completed, including 324 C3 dwellings and 35 C2 care home dwelling equivalents.
- These completions included 150 new affordable homes, including 102 social rent, 46 affordable rent and 2 shared ownership homes. The Local Plan estimates that over the entire plan period 20% of new homes delivered will be affordable. Delivery of affordable homes for the plan period to date (2016-24) is currently slightly above this at 22%.
- The Council's Affordable Housing Policy SP7 sets out a requirement that affordable housing should be sought on proposals for 10 or more dwellings at a proportion of 25%-35% depending on location. In 2023/24, only two sites for 10+ dwellings were granted permission during the year. One of which met the Local Plan requirement (Policy SP7) for affordable housing provision, whilst the other site secured a commuted sum towards affordable housing provision instead. In total, 12 affordable dwellings were granted planning permission during the year. However, there were 759 affordable homes in the housing supply with planning permission (at 1st April 2024).
- ONS figures for 2023 show that median house prices in Welwyn Hatfield (£435,000) were 10.88 times the median income for those working in the borough (£39,994). Median earnings saw an increase of 3.4%, while median house prices increased by 0.7% this meant that overall affordability saw a slight improvement compared with 2022 (from a ratio of 11.16).
- The recently revised (December 2024) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a 5-year supply of specific deliverable sites even if their adopted plan is less than five years old. A five-year housing land supply update has therefore been included in the AMR and sets out that the borough has a deliverable housing land supply of 2.5 years against the adopted Local Plan requirement of 760 dwellings per annum. Delays and slower than anticipated progress at some of the larger strategic sites means that the supply is lower than previously projected and below the national 5-year requirement. However, an increasing number of allocated sites are now coming forward following the adoption of the Local Plan.
- There was a small net gain in employment floorspace this year (+1,162m²) and overall, since the start of the plan period in 2016, there has been a net gain in employment floorspace of +7,389 m².
- Herts Environmental Records Centre reported three new Local Wildlife Sites designated in the borough following surveys undertaken in 2023 and 2024. All three sites were at the River Mimram and are included under the designation of flowing water (rivers and streams) and together total 1.68 ha.

Implications

5 Legal Implication(s)

- 5.1 The Council has a statutory requirement under section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) to publish an 'authority monitoring report' every year. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, prescribe the information which must be included in the report. This is required to contain information on various measures, including how the Council has complied with the statutory Duty to Cooperate and the borough's current housing land supply position.

6 Financial Implication(s)

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising as a result of producing the AMR.

7 Risk Management Implications

- 7.1 The AMR forms part of the Council's evidence base and is an important record of development progress within the borough. There are no risk implications in publishing the AMR, indeed there would be risks in not publishing it as the Council would be less able to robustly defend unsuitable planning applications.
- 7.2 There are risks associated with not having a five year supply of housing sites and a Housing Delivery Test result of lower than 75% and the weight that can be given to policies in the Local Plan.

8 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

- 8.1 There are no security and terrorism implications as a result of producing the AMR.

9 Procurement Implication(s)

- 9.1 There are no procurement implications arising as a result of producing the AMR.

10 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 10.1 The AMR has a role in monitoring the environmental impacts of development on the borough, including in terms of climate change.

11 Policy Implication(s)

- 11.1 Whilst the AMR reports directly on Council policies, it has limited policy implications.

12 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 12.1 The subject of this report is linked to several of the Council's Corporate Priorities. The AMR reports on homes delivered throughout the year, the borough's economy and environmental assets. Therefore, it is linked to Corporate Priorities "Homes to be proud of", "Enable an economy that delivers for everyone" and "Action on climate change".

13 Equality and Diversity

- 13.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out, as the AMR does not include any proposals in its own right.

14 Health and Wellbeing

14.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising as a result of publishing the AMR.

15 Human Resources

15.1 There are no human resources implications arising as a result of publishing the AMR.

16 Communications and Engagement

16.1 There are no communications and engagement implications arising as a result of publishing the AMR.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24



Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Annual Monitoring Report

2023/24



Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24

Covering 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Published January 2025

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Except where shown, the source of the data in the AMR is Hertfordshire County Council via the CDP Smart development monitoring software.

Overall summary

This Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), produced by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, reports on development progress in the borough between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.

The borough and its people

- The ONS mid-year population estimates for 2023 show the population of Welwyn Hatfield to be 121,749 persons, an increase of 1.1% from the mid-2022 estimate. This compared with growth of 0.9% for Hertfordshire for the same period.
- The Index of Multiple Deprivation was last released in 2019 by MHCLG, it showed that the borough has one area among the most 20% deprived in England. The next update is expected in 2025.
- In terms of the health of the borough's population, Welwyn Hatfield scores better than the national average for 12 indicators in Public Health England's Health Profiles and worse than average for five indicators.

Planning for the future

- In September 2023, the Council received the Inspector's final report on the examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan which concluded that, subject to modifications, the plan was sound and capable of adoption.
- The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016-2036 was subsequently adopted at a meeting of the Council on 12th October 2023 and is now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the Borough.
- The Local Plan includes a commitment to undertake an early review commencing within one year following adoption, with an updated or replacement plan submitted for examination no later than three years after the plan's adoption.
- Work has now begun on preparing various evidence base studies which will support the Local Plan review, and an early engagement consultation was carried out in Autumn 2024.

Monitoring of Local Plan Policies

- In 2023/24, 51 planning appeal decisions were received. The proportion of planning appeals allowed was 18%, which compared with 40% in 2022/23.

Centres, Services and Facilities

- There was a net loss in retail floorspace of -695m² in 2023/24. Overall, since the start of the plan period in 2016/17 there has been a net increase of just under 230m².
- In Welwyn Garden City Town Centre, vacant retail frontage length increased slightly to 10.2% in 2024 from 9.1% in 2023. Vacancy within WGC remains largely concentrated within the Howards Centre. In Hatfield Town Centre vacancy was 4.6% down slightly from 5.0% in 2023. Previously reported figures for Hatfield have been revised to exclude vacancy which was as a result of the redevelopment of 1-9 Town Centre (for which demolition works started in 2019).

Housing

- There were 359 net new homes completed in 2023/24, including 324 net C3 dwellings and 64 net C2 care home bedspaces (35 dwelling equivalents).
- A total of 150 new affordable homes were completed, equivalent to 50% of total new C3 dwelling completions.
- The borough has a deliverable housing land supply of 2.5 years against the adopted Local Plan requirement of 760 dwellings per annum for the five years 1 Apr 2024 - 31 March 2029.

- The average house price in Welwyn Hatfield over the 12 months April 2023 - March 2024 was £431,393, a decrease of 1.1% from the same period the previous year.
- The figures for 2023 show that median house prices (£435,000) were 10.88 times the median workplace-based income (£39,994), indicating a slight improvement in affordability compared with the 2022 figure of 11.16.

The Economy

- The borough saw a net gain in employment floorspace in 2023/24 of +1,162m². Overall, since the start of the plan period in 2016, there has now been a net gain in employment floorspace of just under +7,400m².
- Data from the ONS on the number of claimants of Job Seekers Allowance/Universal Credit shows that the rate of claimants in Welwyn Hatfield had been steadily declining since peaking at 4.7% between Feb-Apr 2021. In March 2024, the rate of claimants was 2.6%, still above the rate recorded prior to the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 (of 1.9%).

Environmental Assets

- Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register includes three listed structures in the borough at risk – all at Brocket Hall in Lemsford, including the Grade II* Paine Bridge, the Temple and the gates, lodges and screen wall at the South-East entrance - all at risk of further rapid deterioration or loss.
- In July 2023, the Lemsford area was designated as a conservation area ('areas of special architectural or historic interest which it is desirable to preserve or enhance').
- Herts Environmental Records Centre reported three new Local Wildlife Sites designated in the borough following surveys undertaken in 2023 and 2024. All three sites were at the River Mimram (at Mimram Valley Marsh, Sherradswood School and Singlers Marsh) and are included under the designation of flowing water (rivers and streams) and together total 1.68 ha.

Infrastructure and Movement

- During the year, the Council received just under £1m in Section 106 funds secured from new development, committed to a range of Borough Council projects.
- Hertfordshire County Council received just under £4.5m in Section 106 funds from new development in the borough during the year, funding schemes related to education and transport.

Introduction to the AMR

The Council is required by section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) to prepare a report each year providing information on the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which policies in the Council's Local Plan are being achieved.

Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 further describes the matters that a local planning authority's monitoring report must contain.

On the 12th October 2023, the Welwyn Hatfield 2016-36 Local Plan was adopted¹ and now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the Borough.

This Annual Monitoring Report covers the period between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 (referred to throughout as 'the year') and amongst other matters, monitors performance against the adopted planning policies and targets set out in the Welwyn Hatfield 2016-36 Local Plan. Previous AMRs had been monitoring against Local Plan targets for a number of years since the Draft Plan was published.

The AMR uses the most up-to-date information at the time the report is prepared.

Indicators

In order to monitor on an effective and consistent basis and enable trends to be established, the AMR contains a number of indicators. There are two types of indicators – Local Plan indicators, and contextual indicators. The Local Plan indicators each specifically relate to at least one policy in the Local Plan and monitor progress against a specific target or threshold set out in the Plan in order to understand if objectives are being delivered effectively.

The contextual indicators do not specifically relate to Local Plan policies but are useful indicators of how the borough's people and places are performing. As these indicators are contextual and relate to issues outside the Council's direct control, it is not appropriate for them to have targets.

Chapters and contents

The main contents of the AMR are set out across 9 chapters and follow the structure of the Local Plan and are themed by topic:

- Chapter 1 is contextual, setting out key information about the borough and its people;
- Chapter 2 covers the Council's 'plan-making' duties, and how it engages with the public and cooperates with other public authorities and stakeholders;
- Chapter 3 examines the effectiveness of policies for dealing with planning applications;
- Chapters 4-8 cover the amount and quality of new development built in the borough;
- Chapter 9 reports on the development progress of the Mixed Use Sites and Strategic Development Sites allocated in the Local Plan.

¹ The Local Development Scheme July 2023 indicated adoption by September 2023. The Inspector issued his Final Report on 25 September 2023, adoption took place at the earliest opportunity after its receipt.

1. The Borough and its People

This chapter introduces the borough and its context and contains indicators covering the borough's population and socio-economic state.

Geography

- 1.1 Welwyn Hatfield is located centrally within Hertfordshire and covers an area of approximately 130 square kilometres (12,954 hectares). The borough is bordered by Hertsmere to the south, St Albans to the west, North Hertfordshire to the north, and East Hertfordshire and Broxbourne to the east. The borough also has a short border with the London Borough of Enfield to the south. Following the adoption of the Local Plan, around 76.7% of the borough is designated as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt (previously 79.1%) – this remains a relatively high proportion, reflecting the borough's extensive areas of countryside in close proximity to London.
- 1.2 Welwyn Garden City is the largest town in the borough and had an estimated population (derived from output area data) of 49,600 at the 2021 Census – around 41% of the borough's total population. The other main town is Hatfield, slightly smaller with an estimated population of 40,900 in 2021 – around 34% of the borough's population. Both towns have a wide range of retail and services serving both the towns themselves and the wider local area, as well as large regionally significant employment areas with a particular prevalence of large businesses and national headquarters. Hatfield is also home to the two main campuses of the University of Hertfordshire, giving the town a notable student population and character. The Royal Veterinary Collage is also located within the borough, south of Brookmans Park and Oaklands College has a campus in Welwyn Garden City.
- 1.3 The remaining 25% of the borough's population lives in a number of smaller settlements and in rural areas. The villages of Brookmans Park, Cuffley, Digswell, Oaklands & Mardley Heath, Welham Green, Welwyn and Woolmer Green are excluded from the Green Belt, as is Little Heath – a northern extension to the town of Potters Bar, largely in Hertsmere. Most of these villages contain a good provision of retail and services; whilst Cuffley, Welham Green and Woolmer Green also have employment areas. A further 13 smaller villages and hamlets are 'washed over' by the green belt – as are areas of more sporadic and ribbon development, particularly along the old Great North Road.
- 1.4 The nature of the borough's location on radial routes out of London means that it is highly accessible by rail and road. The East Coast Main Line has stations at Welwyn North (in Digswell), Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield, Welham Green and Brookmans Park, with services south into London and north towards Stevenage, Peterborough and Cambridge. Cuffley, in the east of the borough, is served by trains south into London and north towards Hertford. The A1(M) passes north-south through the borough, linking London to Peterborough, the East Midlands and beyond, as well as connecting with the M25 just south of the borough boundary, providing orbital connectivity around London. In addition, the A414 passes east-west through Welwyn Hatfield and is a key cross county route connecting with other districts within Hertfordshire.
- 1.5 The borough's physical geography is defined by a number of watercourses, predominantly running across the borough from north-west to south-east. The River Lea and River Mimram

are the most significant, running towards the Thames in East London. The Lea runs in a shallow valley separating Welwyn Garden City from Hatfield, whilst the Mimram runs in a deeper valley through Welwyn and between Welwyn Garden City and Digswell. With the exception of Welwyn, most settlements in the borough are on higher ground. The Cuffley Brook and its tributaries form another relatively deep valley between Cuffley and Goffs Oak within Broxbourne to the east, and meet the Lea in Enfield. The Mimms Hall Brook and River Colne drain the south-west corner of the borough and run in a very different direction, south west through Watford to Staines-upon-Thames in Surrey.

Figure 1 - Map of Welwyn Hatfield



Population

Indicator BP1

Contextual Indicator

Borough population

- 1.6 The 2021 Census took place on 21st March 2021 and the first results were released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 28th June 2022. The size of Welwyn Hatfield's population on Census day in 2021 was 119,900 persons, this was an 8.5% increase (+9,365 persons) from the 2011 Census when the population was 110,535 persons. This growth was higher than for England, which saw a 6.6% increase in population, as well as countywide growth for Hertfordshire (+7.4%). However, growth was not as high as some surrounding areas in Hertfordshire, such as Watford (+13.3%) and East Herts (+9.0%).
- 1.7 The Census also reported the number of households, which for Welwyn Hatfield had increased by 5.9% to 46,209 households in 2021 compared with 43,613 in 2011. This increase was slightly lower than countywide growth for Herts (+6.4%) and for England (6.2%). The number of usual residents living in households in Welwyn Hatfield was 114,710, the remaining 5,126 lived in communal establishments. This amounts to 4% of the population living in communal accommodation, which is somewhat higher than the 1.7% for England & Wales – likely reflecting the student population of the borough.
- 1.8 Between censuses the ONS produces annual mid-year population estimates which use the previous Census as a benchmark and roll forward the population each year. The estimated annual change is made up of components including births, deaths, internal migration, international migration and other. The mid-year estimates for 2023 indicate that Welwyn Hatfield's population grew by 0.9% to 121,749 persons. This was just slightly below the Hertfordshire average of 1.1%. The table below shows the components of population growth in surrounding areas over the year. However, it should be noted that the mid-year estimates have previously overestimated population growth in Welwyn Hatfield in the past.

Table 1 - 2023 Mid-year Population Estimates

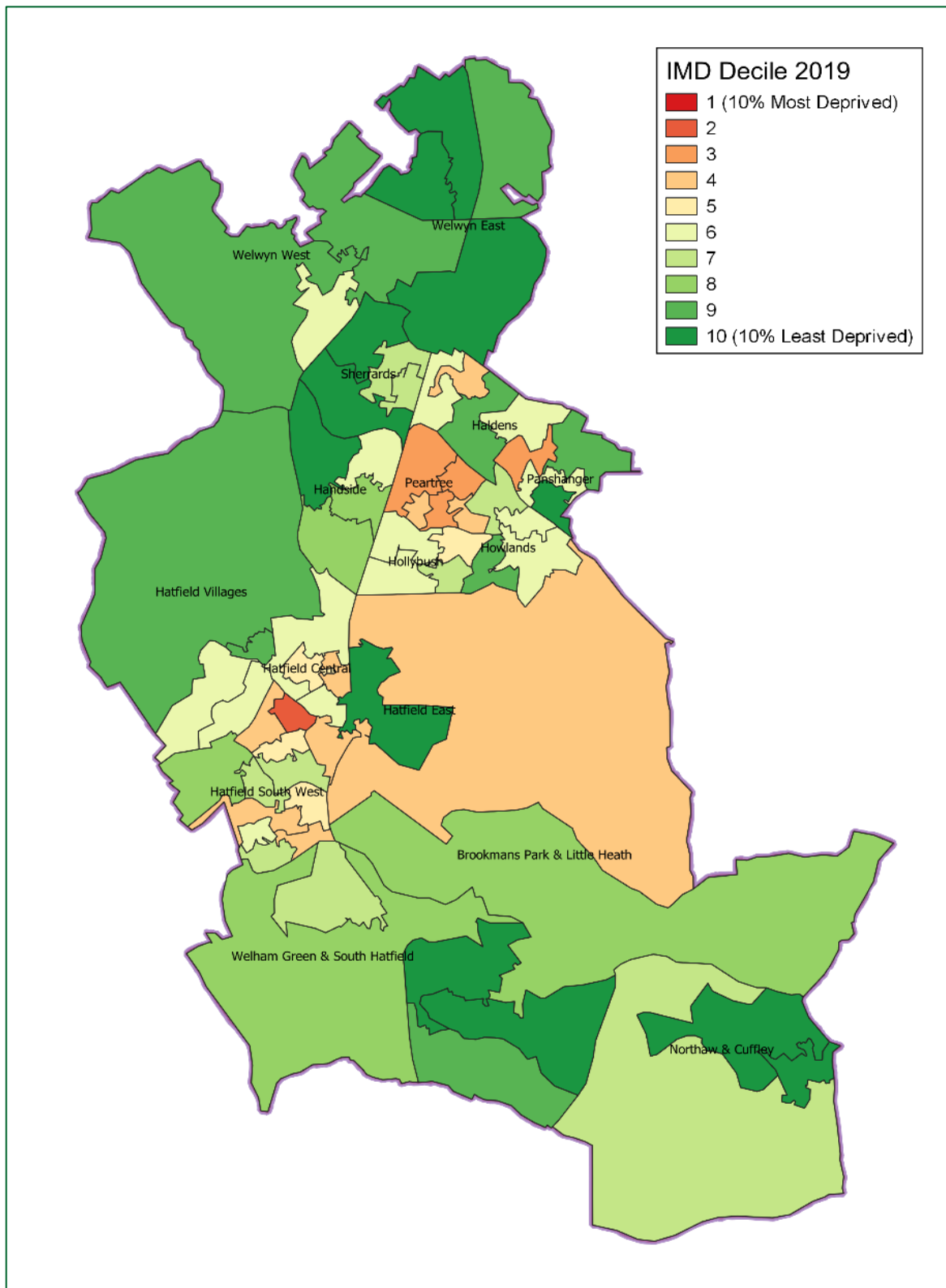
Surrounding Authorities	Mid-2022 Estimate	Natural Change	Internal Migration	International Migration	Other	Mid-2023 Estimate	Annual % change
St Albans	148,524	145	-903	987	2	148,755	0.2%
Hertsmere	108,311	130	31	504	17	108,993	0.6%
Broxbourne	98,999	254	193	586	10	100,042	1.1%
Stevenage	89,616	180	-941	1,284	7	90,146	0.6%
North Hertfordshire	134,161	13	1,014	415	-7	135,596	1.1%
Barnet	390,346	2,053	-2,620	5,273	-45	395,007	1.2%
Enfield	327,426	1,573	-3,418	1,838	10	327,429	0.0%
East Hertfordshire	151,717	189	1,128	356	1	153,391	1.1%
Hertfordshire	1,205,137	1,900	-1,408	9,657	101	1,215,387	0.9%
Welwyn Hatfield	120,420	188	-1,532	2,682	-9	121,749	1.1%

Source: Office for National Statistics - [ONS 2023 Annual Mid-year Population Estimates](#)

- 1.9 'Deprivation' is most comprehensively measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) published by the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government, which ranks each of England's LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas - small areas with populations of around 1,500 people). The IMD combines seven topics to give a broad coverage of ways by which people can be 'deprived' – income, employment, health, education, skills and training, barriers to housing, and living environment and crime. The LSOA with a rank of 1 is the most deprived in England, while the LSOA with a rank of 32,844 is the least deprived.
- 1.10 The IMD is published roughly every five years with the next release currently expected in 2025. The most recently published remains the 2019 IMD – therefore, the data remains unchanged from that reported in the last AMR. This showed that generally the overall picture of deprivation within the borough is good, though appears slightly less positive than when the index was last published in 2015. The borough had one LSOA amongst the most deprived 20% in England in 2019, as the area that had moved out of the most deprived 20% in 2015 moved back. In terms of the least deprived 20%, the borough had 19 LSOAs in 2019, down slightly from 24 in 2015 and 20 in 2010. It is important to note that the IMD shows *relative* change in deprivation over time - i.e. an area now falling in the least deprived 20% does not *necessarily* mean that deprivation has got worse as it could be that *all* areas have improved and this LSOA has improved more slowly.
- 1.11 The most deprived LSOA in the borough is within the Hatfield Central ward, which ranks at 6,540 out of 32,844 in England (in 2015 the area ranked at 8,669). The area ranks particularly poorly in terms of crime, falling in the most deprived 10% of LSOAs in England for this metric. It also ranks less well in terms of education, skills and training. Lower Super Output Areas within Peartree also do not score so well, with three of the four LSOAs in the ward falling in the 30% least deprived in England. At the other end of the scale, the least deprived LSOA within the borough is within the ward of Sherrards, ranking 32,657 of 32,844 in England (among the country's 0.6% least deprived LSOAs). In terms of wards, LSOAs within Northaw and Cuffley and Welwyn East also perform well.

Figure 2 – MHCLG’s Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)

Data Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)



Indicator BP3**Contextual Indicator****Recorded incidences of crime**

- 1.12 Welwyn Hatfield continued to record a slightly higher number of reported crimes per 1,000 population compared with Hertfordshire. Recorded incidences of crime in Welwyn Hatfield fell during the year to 71.2 per 1,000 in 2023/24 (-3.3% compared with the previous year). Hertfordshire also reported a decline (-2.0%) to 63.4 recorded incidences per 1,000 of the population.

Table 2 - Recorded Incidences of Crime

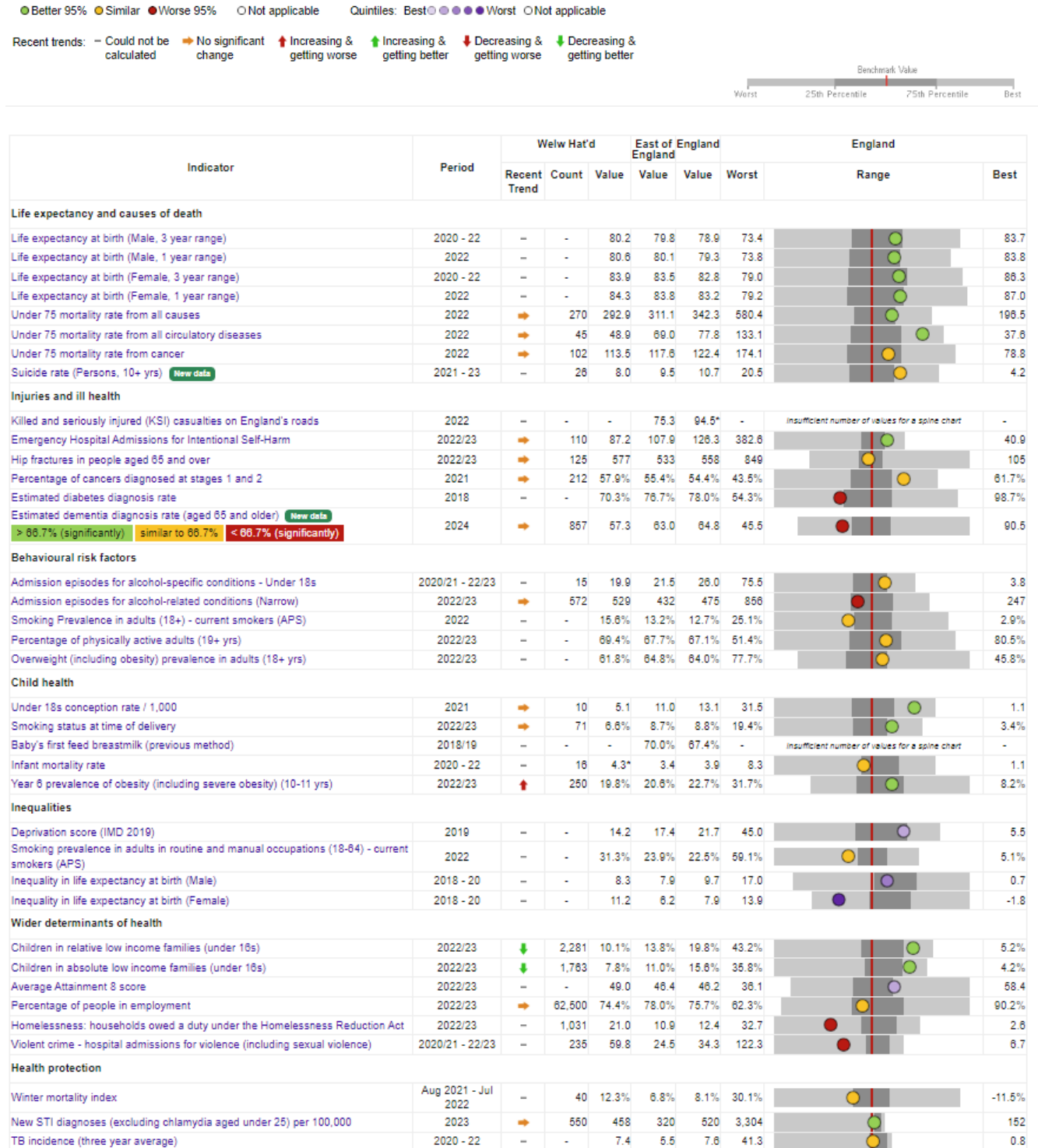
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Change 22/23 – 23/24
Recorded offences per 1,000 population in Welwyn Hatfield	77	67	69	73.6	71.2	-3.3%
Recorded offences per 1,000 population in Hertfordshire	71	60	63	64.7	63.4	-2.0%

Source: Home Office, [Police recorded crime open data tables by Community Safety Partnership](#)

Indicator BP4**Contextual Indicator****Health profile and life expectancy**

- 1.13 The latest figures for 2022 show that life expectancy in Welwyn Hatfield remains above average for both men and women (see Figure 3 on the following page). For men, life expectancy is 80.6 years, 1.3 years above the national average, and for women 84.3 years, 1.1 years above average.
- 1.14 Welwyn Hatfield scored better than the national average for 13 indicators and worse than the national average for 5 indicators in Public Health England's Public Health Profiles. A small number of indicators have still not been updated – including diabetes diagnosis which was one indicator for which the borough performed worse than average.

Figure 3 - Welwyn Hatfield 2023 Public Health Profile Indicators



Source: Public Health England. Public Health Profiles. <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown Copyright 2024

2. Planning for the Future

This chapter summarises the progress made in relation to the borough's Local Plan, as well as how the Council is working with neighbouring authorities and statutory bodies on joint strategic issues.

Current planning policies for Welwyn Hatfield

- 2.1 Decisions on planning applications are taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for the area comprises the development plan documents (taken as a whole) which have been adopted or approved in relation to that area, and the neighbourhood development plans which have been made in relation to the area. The Development Plan for the Welwyn Hatfield area currently comprises:
- The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016-2036 (adopted Oct 2023)
 - The Northaw and Cuffley Neighbourhood Plan (made June 2023)
 - The Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2011-2026 (adopted July 2014)
 - The Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2011-2026 (adopted 2012)
 - The Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2002-2016 (adopted 2007).

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

- 2.2 On 25th September 2023, the Council received the Inspector's Report on the Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016-36. The Inspector's Report concluded that subject to the recommended main modifications, further main modifications and consequential modifications, set out in an Appendix to the Report, the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016-36) satisfies the requirements of Section 20(5)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and is sound and therefore capable of adoption.
- 2.3 The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016-36) was subsequently adopted at a meeting of the Council on 12th October 2023. The Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan now forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the Borough. This means it has full weight (together with the Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan, the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, and the Waste Site Allocations development plan documents and any 'made' neighbourhood plans for the area) in determining planning applications and development decisions within the Borough.

Minerals and Waste

- 2.4 Separate plans govern development of waste and minerals across the whole of Hertfordshire, produced by Hertfordshire County Council. The Waste Local Plan is made up of the [Waste Core Strategy](#) document, which was adopted in 2012 and the [Waste Site Allocations](#) document, which was adopted in 2014. The Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2002-2016 was adopted in March 2007. The County Council has been reviewing both and is combining work carried out to form a single Minerals and Waste Local Plan, having undertaken consultation on a Draft version of this in July-Oct 2022.

Neighbourhood Plans

2.5 Neighbourhood plans also form part of the statutory development plan once they have been 'made'. Neighbourhood Plans can be prepared by three types of qualifying bodies: a parish or town council, a neighbourhood forum, or a community organisation. A town or parish council is responsible for neighbourhood planning for a designated neighbourhood area which contains all or part of its administrative area. The Northaw and Cuffley Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in June 2023. A neighbourhood plan is currently being prepared for the Welwyn Parish area.

Supporting documents

2.6 Supplementary planning documents are not part of the statutory development plan but provide additional guidance on related matters. The Council produces a number of supplementary plans and guidance notes. Existing adopted supplementary plans and guidance include:

- [Welwyn Garden City Guide to Shopfront and Advertisement Design](#)
- [Houses in Multiple Occupation \(HMO\) SPD](#)
- [Planning Obligations SPD](#)
- [Welwyn Garden City Town Centre North SPD](#)
- [Highview \(Hatfield\) Site SPD](#)
- [Broadwater Road West \(Welwyn Garden City\) Site SPD](#)
- [Boroughwide Supplementary Design Guidance](#)
- [Boroughwide Parking Standards](#)
- [Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Guidance Note](#)
- [Approach to Masterplanning](#)

Planning for the future of Welwyn Hatfield

2.7 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is the means by which the Council formally sets out the timetable for the production of the Council's Development Plan Documents. It enables those with an interest in the plan making process to understand which documents are to be prepared for the area and at what stages they will be able to participate. It is a procedural requirement that Local Plans are prepared in accordance with an adopted LDS.

2.8 Local Planning Authorities are required to complete a review of their local plans at least once every 5 years from the adoption date of a plan in order to assess whether policies need updating, taking into account changing circumstances affecting the area or any relevant changes to national policy. However, Policy SP2 of the adopted 2016-36 Local Plan includes a commitment to undertake an early review commencing within one year following adoption (i.e. by October 2024), with an updated or replacement plan submitted for examination no later than three years after the plan's adoption (i.e. by October 2026).

2.9 The previous LDS was published in July 2023 which set out the timetable for the preparation of what is now the adopted Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan (2016-2036). An updated Local Development Scheme was since agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 3 September 2024 and sets out the key milestones for the production of the Council's Local Plan Review. The full Local Development Scheme can be found on the Council's website [here](#) and a summary is presented in the table below. The key milestones are based on the current statutory framework for plan-making and the Council will review and amend the LDS as appropriate.

Table 3 - Local Development Scheme - Summary

Plan-making stage	Timetable
Survey of area	To be kept under review
Pre-production (Early engagement)	Autumn 2024
Consultation (Plan preparation – Regulation 18)	Summer 2025
Evidence gathering	2024 - 2026
Publication and representations (Regulations 19 & 20)	Spring 2026
Submission of Local Plan to the secretary of state (Regulation 22)	October 2026

- 2.10 In line with the LDS, work has begun on preparing various evidence base studies which will support the Local Plan Review. Consultants have recently been appointed to undertake a Retail and Leisure Study, a Housing and Economic Needs Assessment, and an assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The Green Belt Study will be reviewed as considered necessary, including in light of changes to the NPPF. The pre-production stage has also commenced in line with the LDS, with an Early Engagement consultation which ran from 23rd September – 4th November 2024 (this is reported in further detail at paragraph 2.18).

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 2.11 The Council is preparing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), by which it will be able to collect money from developers to fund all types of infrastructure within the borough. The Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule was published in spring 2017 and was consulted upon in May 2017-June 2017. The consultation informed the production of the Draft Charging Schedule (DCS), which was subject to an eight-week public consultation in September – November 2020. It was intended that this would come into effect following the adoption of the Local Plan, however delays to adoption meant that this did not happen as envisaged.
- 2.12 In 2023, a new viability analysis was undertaken, and consultation was carried out in January-February 2024. As a result of representations received, amendments to the Draft Charging Schedule were considered necessary and a further consultation was undertaken in August – September 2024. The draft charging schedule was subsequently submitted for public examination in October 2024 and the examination took place in December 2024.

The Duty to Cooperate

- 2.13 The 'duty to cooperate' requirement was introduced via the 2011 Localism Act and requires local planning authorities to co-operate with each other and other public bodies in relation to strategic issues and the plan making process, in accordance with S33 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Paragraphs 24-27 of the National Planning Policy Framework state that cooperation is required on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries, in particular highlighting that joint working should help determine where additional infrastructure may be needed and whether development needs that cannot be met within a plan area could be met elsewhere. It also states that strategic policy making authorities should prepare and maintain statements of common ground documenting cross boundary matters to be addressed.
- 2.14 Liaison with a number of duty to cooperate bodies took place throughout preparation of the adopted Local Plan (2016-36) in order to identify specific priorities with cross-boundary

implications. The Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities and other bodies in undertaking the Local Plan review and other development plan documents.

- 2.15 The eleven authorities in the county have created Hertfordshire Growth Board to establish long-term vision and objectives and to engage with the Government to agree a growth deal to help fund the delivery of new homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure. The Board is supported by Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership (HIPP) which seeks to progress joint projects and evidence. The five authorities in South-West Hertfordshire are working together on the preparation of a joint strategic plan to 2050 to help set a long-term vision for their respective local plans.
- 2.16 The North East Central Hertfordshire authorities (NEC), which includes Welwyn Hatfield, have commissioned a Growth Study. The intention of the Study is to create a key piece of initial evidence to support the potential preparation of a NEC Herts Joint Strategic Plan (JSP). AECOM were appointed to carry out this commission. The Growth Study was procured as a two-stage project with Stage 1 providing a baseline data assessment of the strategic housing and economic demand. Stage 2 of the Growth Study commenced in Summer 2024 and will use the conclusions reached in Stage 1 to develop and then appraise a series of strategic growth options. These growth options will be considered against a set of 'Good Growth Principles' that will cover the key influences and themes that relate to the type of strategic growth the Councils (and other stakeholders) will want to see across NEC Herts

Community Engagement

- 2.17 All members of the community who wish to do so should be able to engage in plan-making. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a document that sets out how and when the council will consult and involve the community and other stakeholders in planning matters including in the preparation of Welwyn Hatfield's development plan, its supporting documents, and the planning application decision-making process. An updated draft SCI was consulted upon from September – October 2024. The SCI was approved by the Executive Member for Planning on 26 November 2024 following a unanimous vote by councillors at the 19 November Cabinet Planning and Planning Panel (CPPP) meeting.
- 2.18 In relation to the Local Plan Review, an initial early engagement public consultation was undertaken following the end of the monitoring year from 23rd September – 4th November 2024. The consultation asked residents and those with an interest in the borough for their views on challenges and opportunities on four key themes - Living, Working, Environment and Movement and Infrastructure, as well as their aspirations for the borough. Responses from the consultation will assist in forming a future vision for the borough that will help shape the new Local Plan. A variety of methods were used to raise awareness of the consultation and drop-in events took place in Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield town centres. A total of 200 comments were received from around 80 respondents.
- 2.19 As noted in paragraph 2.12, in relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a consultation was carried out from 10th January – 28th February 2024 on the Draft Charging Schedule. There were 24 representations received and, after consideration of these comments, amendments to the Draft Charging schedule were proposed and a further consultation on these changes took place from 2nd August – 2nd September 2024, which received 15 representations.

3. Monitoring of Current Planning Policies

This chapter contains indicators on the use of policies in the Local Plan, including where decisions are appealed. It also examines the impact of permitted development rights which are contrary to those policies.

Current planning policy effectiveness

Indicator LP1	Contextual Indicator
<i>Policies used in planning application refusals</i>	

3.1 One way to assess the effectiveness of policies and guidance is to examine how often each policy is referred to as a ‘reason for refusal’ within the decision notices sent to unsuccessful applicants for planning permission. However, it should be noted that some policies relate to very specific uses or sites – these are unlikely to be used often, but that does not in itself mean that they are ineffective. As the Local Plan was adopted part way through the year (October 2023) both the former District Plan policies and the newly adopted Local Plan policies have been reported this year.

Table 4 – Policies mentioned in Planning Application Refusals

Policy Number	Description	Times mentioned 2023/24
NPPF	The National Planning Policy Framework	146
SP9 (LP)	Place making and high-quality design	110
SDG	Supplementary Design Guidance	102
D1 (DP)	Quality and Design	75
D2 (DP)	Character and Context	67
SP1 (LP)	Delivering sustainable development	62
SADM11 (LP)	Amenity and Layout	46
SADM15 (LP)	Heritage	37
GBSP2 (DP)	Towns and Specified Settlements	26
SADM2 (LP)	Highway Network & Safety	24
SADM34 (LP)	Development in the Green Belt	23
M14 (DP)	Parking Standards for New Development	22

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has continued to be used to supplement policies in reasons for refusal. This helps to demonstrate general conformity of those policies with the NPPF. In addition to the NPPF and the Supplementary Design Guidance, design policies (D1, D2 / SP9, SADM11) continued to be the most frequently used policies in the refusal of applications by a reasonable margin. Policies GBSP2 /SP1, SADM34 are also frequently used against inappropriate proposals in the Green Belt. Meanwhile policies M14/SADM2 were frequently used alongside the Interim Policy for Car Parking Standards supplementary guidance where proposals provided insufficient parking.

Indicator LP2	Contextual Indicator
<i>Planning applications allowed on appeal</i>	

3.3 During the 2023/24 monitoring year, 51 planning appeal decisions were received. The extent to which Inspectors for appealed applications agree with Local Plan policies is another indicator of their effectiveness. In 2023/24, 18% of appeals were allowed. This compared with

40% allowed in 2022/23 and 32% allowed in 2021/22. The local proportion of appeals allowed was also less than the national average of 28% for 2023/24 ([Planning Inspectorate Statistics Table 2.4](#)).

Table 5 – Planning Application Appeals

Decision	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Allowed	22	32%	22	40%	9	18%
Dismissed	40	58%	29	53%	35	69%
Other (Split Decisions or Withdrawn)	7	10%	4	7%	7	14%
Total	69	100%	55	100%	51	100%

3.4 Where appeals were allowed, design policies relating to character and appearance of the local area, continued to be most frequently referred to by inspectors in their decision to allow an appeal. As design can be subjective and a matter of interpretation, this may be expected to some extent.

Permitted development rights

3.5 Permitted development rights are set down in law and grant a blanket nationwide planning permission for certain types of development. They were originally intended to remove the need for local authorities to deal with small non-contentious schemes such as fences and porches but are now used by the government more widely.

3.6 Permitted development (PD) rights for change of use of a building from Class B1(a) (offices) to Class C3 (dwelling houses) were temporarily introduced in 2013, before being made permanent in 2016. Indicator EC3 reports on the impact this has had on loss of employment land in the borough. These permitted development rights were later extended to enable B1(c) light industrial and B8 distribution to be converted to residential. However, the significant loss of office floor space that had arisen through PD rights resulted in an Article 4 Direction being developed, covering the majority of four of the key employment areas in the borough – Welwyn Garden City Employment Area, Hatfield Business Park, Beaconsfield Road and Great North Road in Hatfield and Sopers Road in Cuffley. Following consultation in autumn 2019, this took effect on 12 October 2020 and means that in these identified employment areas, planning permission is required for change of use from B1 office to C3 residential.

3.7 In August 2020, the government introduced further permitted development rights in relation to building upwards extensions as well as demolition and rebuild of vacant commercial premises. In addition, changes to the use class system to create a new broader category of commercial, business and service were also introduced to make it easier for high street uses to change use without the need for planning applications.

3.8 The Council proposed further Article 4 Directions in relation to these new permitted development rights, which would remove them in certain instances. In relation to the demolition of commercial buildings and replacement with blocks of flats/single dwelling houses, an Article 4 Direction was proposed and approved in June 2021 and came into effect in February 2022. As with the Article 4 Direction for office to residential conversions, this covers most of the four strategic employment sites (Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield Business Park, Beaconsfield and Great North Road and Sopers Road, Cuffley), where planning

permission will be required for demolition of commercial buildings for replacement with residential.

- 3.9 An Article 4 Direction was also proposed in relation to additional floors of flats being constructed on top of existing blocks of flats in parts of Hatfield. There was concern that this permitted development right could present an issue in some parts of Hatfield due to the town's heritage assets, in particular the potential for harm to the significance of the Grade I Hatfield House and Registered Park and Garden, and the potential impact on character and setting. A consultation was carried out in July and August 2021. This Article 4 Direction came into effect from July 2022.

4. Centres, Services and Facilities

This chapter sets out indicators covering the health of the borough's centres; including the amount of new retail, leisure and community facility floorspace built during the year and progress on town centre redevelopment.

Changes in Retail Floorspace

Indicator CS1	Local Plan Indicator (Policies SP2 & SP5)
Changes in retail floorspace	
Targets:	- Delivery of 12,500m ² new retail floorspace by 2025/26 - 15-20% of new town centre comparison floorspace to be in food & drink uses
Achieved to date:	Net increase of 229m ² since plan period start (2016/17)

4.1 This indicator covers changes in the amount of retail floorspace in the Borough. From the 1st September 2020, changes to planning use classes were introduced with the new Employment - Class E use replacing the previous retail use classes A1 (Shops), A2 (Financial/Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes). The new Class E use also includes the former B1 (Business) class and some uses within former D1 (Non-residential institutions) and D2 (Assembly and leisure) classes. The former retail use classes A4 (Pubs and Bars) and A5 (Hot Food Takeaways) now fall under sui generis (SG). The use classes that are monitored here include E(a) – Retail other than hot food, E(b) – Food and drink consumed on premises, E(c) – Financial/professional services. Retail-type 'sui generis' uses (i.e. those not in a specific use class) are also included. The figures only include development which requires planning permission or prior approval – some changes of use between the retail use classes benefit from permitted development rights.

Table 6 – Floorspace Change by Use Class in 2023/24

	E(a) / A1	E(b) / A3	E(c) / A2	SG	Total
Welwyn Garden City Town Centre	-	-	-	-	-
Hatfield Town Centre	-	-	-	-	-
Village & Neighbourhood Centres	-630 m ²	-	-	-	-630m²
Out-of-centre	-	-65m ²	-	-	-65m²
Borough Totals	-630m²	-65m²	0m²	0m²	-695m²

4.2 This year there was a net loss in retail floorspace of -695m², this largely resulted from the redevelopment at Salisbury Square in Old Hatfield, with the loss of the seven retail units (630m² of floorspace) recorded during the year. The Square had been struggling for some time and the redevelopment will re-provide a reduced level of retail floorspace (246m²) as well as office floorspace and housing.

4.3 Overall, since the start of the plan period in 2016/17 there has been a small net increase of 229m² of retail floorspace in the borough. Whilst the Local Plan identifies a target of 12,500m² of new retail floorspace, given the increasing shift towards online shopping - likely accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the future of retail remains somewhat uncertain. The Council has commissioned a review of its evidence base and will keep policies relating to town centres and retail under review.

Indicator CS2**Local Plan Indicator (Policy SADM5)****New retail floorspace outside designated centres**

Target: No target until the new Local Plan is adopted (Target of no further gain thereafter)
Performance: N/A

- 4.4 Other than small individual convenience shops below 280m², Policy SADM5 of the newly adopted Local Plan resists new out-of-centre retail floorspace unless it has been demonstrated that no suitable, viable and available sites exist in sequentially preferable locations. There were no approvals above the 280m² threshold this year.

Indicator CS3**Local Plan Indicator (Policy SADM4)****Proportion of Class E retail uses by centre**

Target:

- Retention of at least 70% retail uses in town centre primary frontages
- Retention of at least 30% retail uses in town centre secondary frontages
- Retention of at least 50% retail frontage in large neighbourhood and village centres

Performance: Meeting or exceeding target in 30 of 34 frontages

Table 7 – Proportion of Retail Frontage

Town Centre Primary Frontages % within Class E retail frontage – by length				Town Centre Secondary Frontages % within Class E retail frontage – by length			
		2023	2024			2023	2024
WGC	Howard Centre Gd. Floor	61%	55%	WGC	3-5 (Od.) Stonehills	100%	100%
	Howard Centre 1 st Floor	84%	87%		1-19 (Ev.) Howardsgate	70%	70%
	7-13 (Od.) Stonehills	100%	100%		4-24 (Ev.) Howardsgate	100%	100%
	21-31 (Od.) Stonehills	100%	100%		30-50 (Ev.) Howardsgate	100%	100%
	26-36 (Ev.) Stonehills	100%	100%		2-46 (Ev.) Fretherne Rd	93%	93%
	31-49 (Od.) Howardsgate	100%	97%		8-22 (Ev.) Church Road	93%	93%
	51-63 (Od.) Howardsgate	100%	60%		4-17 Wigmores South	63%	63%
	52-66 (Ev.) Howardsgate	84%	100%		11-17 (Od.) Town Centre	63%	63%
Hatfield	37-51 (Od.) Fretherne Rd	90%	90%	Hatfield	10-36 (Ev.) White Lion Sq	76%	76%
	19-47 (Od.) Town Centre	73%*	73%		38-66 (Ev.) White Lion Sq	84%	84%
	68-96 (Od.) Town Centre	81%	81%		Market Place Gd. Floor	84%	63%
	1-21 (Od.) The Arcade	81%*	81%		Market Place 1 st Floor	67%	67%
	2-14 (Ev.) The Arcade	56%	56%		38-54 (Ev.) The Common	32%	32%

Large Neighbourhood & Village Centres % within Class E Retail Frontage – by units			
		2023	2024
Neighbourhood Centres	Haldens	64%	57%
	Moors Walk	62%	62%
	Woodhall	72%	72%
	Parkhouse Court	61%	62%
	Old Hatfield	42%	N/A
	High View	N/A	N/A
Villages	Welwyn	68%	68%
	Welham Green	71%	71%
	Brookmans Park	71%	73%
	Cuffley	69%	64%

- 4.5 The Local Plan sets out a range of thresholds for ‘frontages’ within the borough’s retail centres, above which proposals for changes of use away from retail can be considered. It

also allows for a level of flexibility where a lack of demand for retail use can be demonstrated. The thresholds in the submitted Draft Local Plan related to A1 retail uses (shops only). However, a modification to the plan was proposed in light of the changes to planning use classes and the threshold now relates to all class E retail uses. The figures in table 7 on the previous page show the proportion of class E retail uses by centre.

Indicator CS4 **Contextual Indicator**
Proportion of vacant retail floorspace

Table 8 – Proportion of Vacant Retail Floorspace

Town/Village	Retail Centre	Vacancy Rate						Change 23-24
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Designated Town Centres (% of vacant frontage by length)								
Welwyn Garden City Town Centre		4.1%	8.6%	9.9%	12.7%	9.1%	11.7%	↑
Hatfield Town Centre*		7.4%	10.2%	15.9%	5.9%*	5.9%*	4.6%*	↓
Designated Large Neighbourhood Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)								
Welwyn Garden City	Haldens	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	7.1%	↑
	Moors Walk	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Woodhall	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
Hatfield	High View	13.6%	13.6%	9.5%	9.5%	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Parkhouse Court	8.0%	4.0%	4.0%	0.0%	3.8%	7.7%	↑
	Old Hatfield	40.7%	40.7%	40.7%	30.8%	34.6%	N/A	N/A
Designated Small Neighbourhood Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)								
Welwyn Garden City	Shoplands	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Peartree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Handside	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	↔
	Hollybush	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Hall Grove	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
Hatfield	Manor Parade	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Birchwood	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Crawford Road	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	↑
	St Albans Road East	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Roe Green	0.0%	20.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	↑
Designated Large Village Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)								
Brookmans Park Village Centre		2.4%	0.0%	4.8%	2.4%	2.4%	0.0%	↓
Cuffley Village Centre		7.7%	5.1%	5.1%	7.7%	5.1%	10.3%	↑
Welham Green Village Centre		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%	5.9%	↔
Welwyn Village Centre		7.9%	7.9%	7.9%	7.9%	10.5%	5.4%	↓
Designated Small Village Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)								
Digswell Village Centre		0.0%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	28.6%	↑
Oaklands & Mardley Heath Village Centre		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	↑
Woolmer Green Village Centre		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	↔
Undesignated Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)								
The Galleria, Hatfield		13.3%	24.4%	28.2%	28.2%	32.9%	28.2%	↓
Oldings Corner, Hatfield		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20%	↑

*Previously reported figures for Hatfield have been revised to exclude vacancy which was as a result of the redevelopment of 1-9 Town Centre (for which demolition works started in 2019). The new commercial units within the redevelopment will be included within the survey once they are completed and ready for occupation.

4.6 Table 8 sets out vacancy statistics from the most recent Retail Frontage Survey. Vacancy in the Town Centres is presented in terms of frontage length. In Welwyn Garden City Town Centre, vacant frontage length increased to 11.7% from 9.1% in 2023. The increase was the result of three larger units becoming vacant during the year, although some smaller previously vacant units were also newly occupied. Vacancy remains largely concentrated within the Howards Centre (with vacant frontage length at 33%), meanwhile vacancy outside

is somewhat lower at 3.1%. In terms of the total *number* of vacant units, this increased by one during the year to 13 vacant units (7.7%). In comparison, figures from the Local Data Company show that national retail vacancy was at 14% in the fourth quarter of 2023 - for shopping centres average vacancy was somewhat higher at 17.7%.

- 4.7 In Hatfield Town Centre, vacancy in terms of frontage length was 4.6%, down slightly from 5.0% in 2023. Previously reported figures for Hatfield have been revised to exclude vacancy which was as a result of the redevelopment of 1-9 Town Centre (for which demolition works started in 2019). The new commercial units within the redevelopment will be included within the survey once they are completed and ready for occupation. In terms of the number of vacant units, this fell by one to 5 units (or 4.1%) from 6 units in 2023.
- 4.8 At the neighbourhood centres in Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, vacancy rates increased in four centres, although this was the result of just one unit becoming available at each of these centres during the year. Nine of the 14 neighbourhood centres for which vacancy rates have been reported remain at full occupancy with no vacant units. Due to the ongoing redevelopment at High View in Hatfield and at Salisbury Square in Old Hatfield, vacancy has not been reported for these centres this year. In the villages, vacancy rates fell in Brookmans Park (now at full occupancy) and Welwyn (now at 5.4% with only two vacant units), while vacancy increased slightly in Cuffley (to 10.3%), Oaklands & Mardley Heath (14.3%) and Digswell (28.6%).

Indicator CS5 **Contextual Indicator**
Number of evening economy premises

Table 9 – Number of Evening Economy Premises

Centre	Total premises 2023	Number of premises 2024			Total 2024	Change 2023-24
		Restaurants (Former A3 now E(b))	Drinking establishments (Former A4 now Sui Generis)	Leisure (Former D2 now E(d)/F(c-d)/Sui Generis)		
WGC Town Centre	18	14	2	2	18	-
The Galleria, Hatfield	8	7	0	1	8	-
Hatfield Town Centre	8	6	1	1	8	-
Welwyn Village	8	4	4	0	8	-
Parkhouse Court	6	5	1	0	6	-
Old Hatfield	3	1	2	0	3	-
Brookmans Park	4	3	1	0	4	-
Cuffley	2	2	0	0	2	-

- 4.9 As the future of ‘conventional’ retail becomes less certain, the evening economy of retail centres is an increasingly important component of their vitality. Welwyn Garden City Town Centre has the largest concentration of evening economy premises in the borough, with smaller concentrations in Hatfield Town Centre and some of the borough’s larger village and neighbourhood centres. The Galleria in Hatfield also has a significant cluster.

Hatfield 2030+ Update



In 2015 the Council formed the Hatfield Renewal Partnership; which incorporates Hatfield Town Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Gascoyne Cecil Estates, the University of Hertfordshire, Oaklands College, Greenwich Leisure Ltd, Arlington Business Parks, and the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The regeneration of Hatfield has historically been focussed around efforts to revitalise the town centre, however the Hatfield 2030+ project will guide regeneration across the whole of the town. It has culminated in the [Hatfield New Town Renewal Framework](#), with six broad themes: Hatfield’s Centres; Housing in Hatfield; Business and Enterprise; Identity and Placemaking; Walking, Cycling and Transportation; and Community and Leisure.

In the town centre, the Council’s programme of improvements has continued. The 420 space multi-storey car park at The Common opened in March 2021. This consolidated town centre car parking in one place, freeing up sites elsewhere in the town centre for new homes, shops and leisure. Work commenced in March 2022 at the redevelopment of 1-9 Town Centre (a scheme to regenerate the eastern end of the town centre with new shops and homes) and completed in Summer 2023. Work is currently underway at Link Drive, a development of 80 new homes on the edge of the town centre. Meanwhile, a planning application has been submitted in relation to the regeneration of Market Place which will aim to enhance the public realm including a new layout and landscaping.

Outside the Town Centre, at High View in South Hatfield, the development scheme has re-provided the existing neighbourhood centre alongside delivering 146 new homes, a new doctor’s surgery, 18 new commercial units for both current tenants and new businesses as well as new green spaces and play areas.

Indicator CS7	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP6)
<i>Changes in leisure and community facility floorspace</i>	
Target:	Net gain in community and leisure facility floorspace
Achieved to date:	13,010m ² gain between 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2024

Table 10 – Floorspace Change 2023/24

Floorspace change	Community Uses (Former D1 use class)	Leisure Uses (Former D2 use class)
Floorspace gain	382m ²	0m ²
Floorspace loss	0m ²	0m ²
Net change	+382m²	No change

4.10 The changes to the planning use classes that were introduced in September 2020 also saw the D1 (community) and D2 (leisure) use classes revoked. The former D1 use is now incorporated into the Employment class E(e-f) as well as F1, while D2 is now covered across: E(d)– indoor sport/recreation, F2(c-d)– outdoor sport/swimming pools/skating rinks as well as some Sui Generis uses including cinemas and bingo halls. During the year there was a net gain of +382m² of community use floorspace (F1 use), which resulted from extensions to existing facilities.

Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Update



Welwyn Garden City Town Centre is the main shopping and service centre for the borough. In 2016 the former Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Partnership, of which the Council was a member, was successful in becoming a Business Improvement District (BID), through a referendum. The BID is business-led and business-funded, although the Council continues to have officer and member-level representation on the BID's Development Board. The BID has 4 objectives – to make the town centre more animated and attractive, well promoted and celebrated, welcoming and accessible, and have a great business and leisure offer.

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), in partnership with the council, developed a scheme to improve the pedestrian environment, cycle routes and traffic circulation in Welwyn Garden City Town Centre. The first phase was completed in 2021 and upgraded the area in and around Stonehills, including the reconfiguration of parking bays, as well as a new public space being provided with benches and planting to create an area for outdoor events. The next phase included a dedicated space for cycling on Bridge Road (Hunters Bridge) and completed early in 2023. A new crossing was also installed at Osborn Way and works to install new walking and cycling facilities around Howardsgate, Fretherne Road and the town centre have also now completed.

The remodelling of the Anniversary gardens in the Town Centre was completed in spring 2022. The remodel followed on from the completion of the work around Stonehills and included a new pathway, benches, bins and landscaping.

The new Campus West car park completed in 2023. The car park offers around an additional 140 spaces compared with the old car park and includes 12 electric charging bays. This is the first step in the wider regeneration plans for WGC Town Centre. A planning application for the redevelopment of the Campus East car park to residential was submitted in December 2022.

5. Housing

This chapter sets out housing progress in the borough across a number of indicators, including new housing; affordable housing and housing affordability; Gypsy & Traveller accommodation; and future housing land supply.

New Homes

Indicator HO1 <i>New dwellings and progress against housing target</i>	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP2)
Target:	Local Plan target of 760 dwellings per annum
Achieved to date:	359 net new homes complete this year, 3,577 net since 2016/17

- 5.1 Planning appropriately for new homes and aiming to ensure that the housing needs of the local population are met are some of the Council's most important duties. Like all other planning authorities, the Council must do this by establishing a housing target which it then needs to meet. The housing target identified in the newly adopted Local Plan is 15,200 homes over the 2016-36 plan period (760 dwellings per annum).
- 5.2 During the 2023/24 monitoring year, **359 net new housing units completed**, including 324 C3 dwellings and 64 net C2 care home bedspaces (35 dwelling equivalents)². Total completions were significantly below the Local Plan target of 760 dpa. Over the 8 years since the start of the plan period, housing completions amount to 3,577 dwellings against a target of 6,080 dwellings. This results in a shortfall of 2,503 dwellings which will need to be made up over the remaining plan period. Housing completions are expected to increase from around 2027 as more allocated Local Plan sites begin to deliver. A number of these sites now have planning permission granted, or applications submitted.

Table 11 – Annual Housing Completions

Year	Gross Completions	Losses	Net C3 Dwelling Completions	Net Dwelling Equivalents	Total Net Completions
2016/17*	693	22	347	324	671
2017/18	343	28	238	77	315
2018/19	500	38	456	6	462
2019/20	694	21	671	2	673
2020/21	421	69	352	0	352
2021/22	292	34	258	0	258
2022/23	509	22	442	45	487
2023/24	404	45	324	35	359
Plan period avg.	482	35	386	61	447
Plan period total	3,856	279	3,088	489	3,577

- 5.3 Table 12 sets out a breakdown of new dwellings built in 2023/24 by settlement, as well as the plan period total. Over the plan period to date, Welwyn Garden City has delivered around half of total housing completions, while Hatfield has delivered 35% of completions. Welwyn village and Woolmer Green make up the highest numbers outside the two towns.

² In accordance with Planning Practice Guidance - Housing Supply & Delivery, paragraph 35, older people's housing is counted based on the 'amount of accommodation released in the housing market'. A ratio of 1.8:1 for communal C2 accommodation has been applied.

*Figures for 2016/17 were revised from those published in some earlier AMR reports to reflect the published ratios for counting student and C2 accommodation.

Table 12 - Housing Completions by Settlement

Settlement	Net Completions by year			
	This year 2023/34	% of total	Plan period 2016/17 – 2023/24	% of total
Welwyn Garden City	104	29%	1,793	50%
Hatfield	210	58%	1,239	35%
Welwyn	5	1%	188	5%
Brookmans Park	7	2%	69	2%
Rural Areas	14	4%	81	2%
Woolmer Green	0	0%	76	2%
Cuffley	0	0%	53	1%
Oaklands & Mardley Heath	1	0%	31	1%
Digswell	18	5%	30	1%
Welham Green	0	0%	11	0%
Little Heath	0	0%	6	0%
Total	359	100%	3,577	100%

5.4 The sites with the largest number of recorded completions in 2023/24:

- 91 homes at Minster House in Hatfield (net gain of 50, the loss was recorded in 20/21) – Local Plan site allocation (HS41)
- 71 homes at 1-9 Town Centre in Hatfield – Local Plan site allocation (HS36)
- 104-bed care home development (C2) at Broadwater Road (58 dwelling equivalents)
- 42 homes at Onslow St Audreys in Hatfield – Local Plan site allocation (HS9).

Housing Delivery Test

5.5 The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) is an annual measure of housing delivery which compares ‘total net homes delivered’ against the ‘number of homes required’ over a three-year rolling period. The 2023 Housing Delivery Test was published in December 2024. This set out that Welwyn Hatfield had delivered 52% of homes against its requirement for the three-year period 2020/21- 2022/23.

5.6 As completions were below the 75% threshold, the Council will need to continue to apply presumption in favour of sustainable development when determining planning applications, in addition to applying a 20% buffer to the five-year housing land supply. The current shortfall in completions is expected given that the Local Plan was only recently adopted. It is anticipated that housing delivery will start to improve as more allocated sites come forward for development. However, a shortfall, (as measured by the HDT), is likely to continue in the short term.

Indicator HO2	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SADM1)
<i>Proportion of dwellings on allocated sites/windfall</i>	
Target:	<i>No target until 2026/27</i>
Achieved to date:	<i>N/A. 56% of dwelling completions in 2023/24 at allocated sites</i>

5.7 Within a ‘plan-led’ system, it is generally expected that the majority of new homes will come forward on sites which are either allocated in a development plan or identified through processes such as the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. However, it is inevitable that proposals will arise for sites which had not previously been envisaged for development. Such development is known as ‘windfall’ and is particularly common for smaller

sites but can sometimes take place on much larger sites as well. The Local Plan housing supply included an allowance for windfall sites not yet known about from 2026/27 at 139 dwellings per annum (1,390 dwellings over ten years).

- 5.8 The last allocated site to come forward from the District Plan was in 2016/17, therefore windfall had accounted for almost all housing completions in the years since. However, an increasing number of sites identified within the newly adopted Local Plan have planning permission and some urban sites have started delivering completions in recent years. This year, 56% of completions were at sites allocated in the newly adopted Local Plan.

Table 13 – Proportion of gross housing completions at proposed site allocations

	Housing completions (gross)	Completions at Local Plan Allocations (gross)	% of completions at Local Plan Allocations
2020/21	421	2	0.5%
2021/22	292	50	17%
2022/23	509	375	74%
2023/24	404	228	56%

Indicator HO3	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP1)
<i>Proportion of new dwellings on previously developed land (PDL)</i>	
Target:	95% on PDL until the Local Plan is adopted, 55% on PDL for the whole plan period
Achieved to date:	96% on PDL in 23/24, 95% on PDL for the plan period to date

- 5.9 The effective reuse of previously developed land (PDL) is a key component of national planning policy. Welwyn Hatfield has always taken a ‘brownfield first’ approach when identifying land for development. The figures in table 13 indicate the proportion of new dwellings which have been built on previously developed land since the start of the plan period – this shows the vast majority (95%) of completions since 2016/17 have been on land that was previously developed. This year 96% of completions were on previously developed land. Completions that were not included new homes at Mill Green Lane. Whilst some of this site was a redevelopment, part was on undeveloped land. Similarly, the residential development at Onslow St Audreys in Hatfield (Local Plan allocation HS9) was partly on undeveloped land.

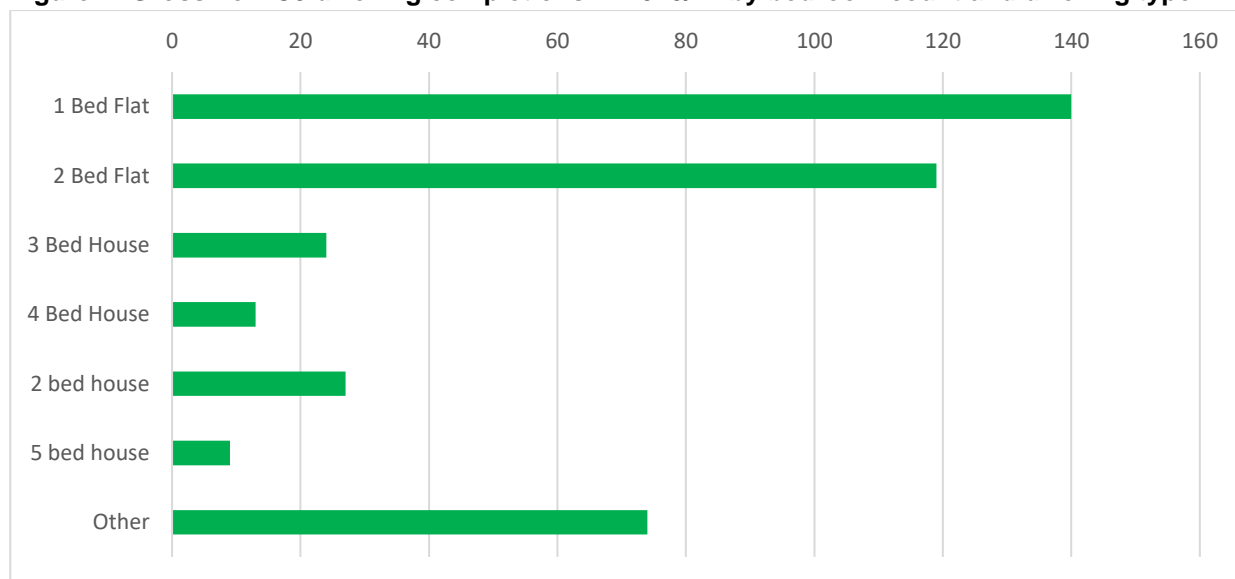
Table 14 – Proportion of Completions on PDL

Year	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total
Gross Completions	693	343	500	694	421	292	509	404	3,856
Of which PDL	671 (97%)	322 (94%)	474 (95%)	688 (99%)	351 (83%)	288 (99%)	498 (98%)	388 (96%)	3,680 (95%)

- 5.10 In 2017 the Government introduced requirements for each local authority to produce a Brownfield Land Register and update at least once each year, listing all PDL sites in their area which are considered to be suitable for development. The Council’s Brownfield Land Register is available to view at www.welhat.gov.uk/brownfieldland, although it has not resulted in the identification of any significant new dwelling capacity on PDL. Since the first register in 2017, 61 sites included have since completed amounting to 1,483 dwellings.

5.11 Policy SP7 of the newly adopted Local Plan requires proposals for major new housing developments to include a mix of dwelling sizes and types which reflect the Council’s latest evidence of housing need. As this will change over time this is a contextual indicator, albeit monitoring against the estimated figures in the Local Plan. The breakdown in size of gross new C3 dwellings completed in 2023/24 are shown in the chart below. Flats accounted for 65% of completions, houses accounted for 19%, while the remaining 16% of completions were dwelling equivalents (C2 care home bedspaces).

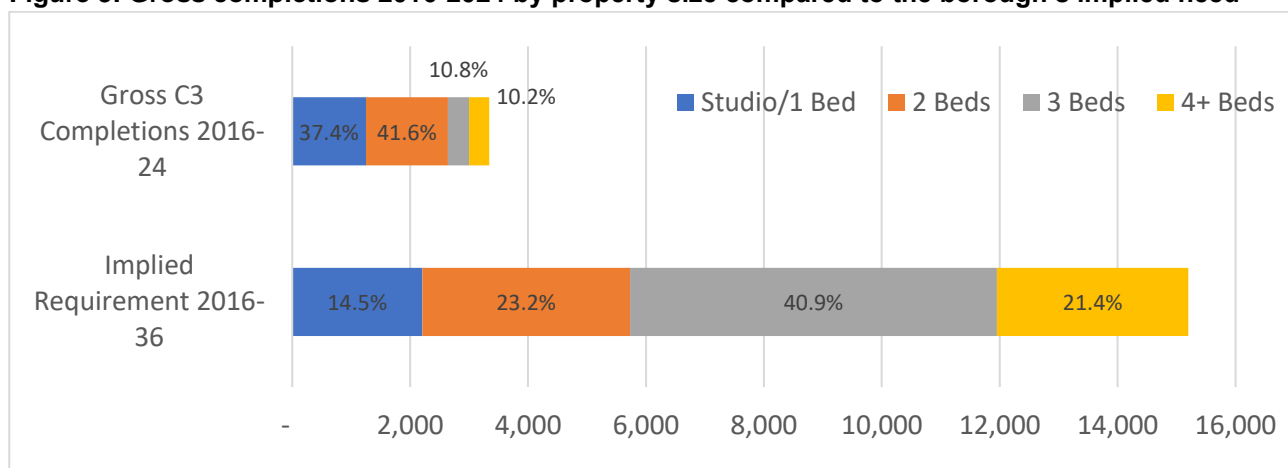
Figure 4: Gross new C3 dwelling completions in 2023/24 by bedroom count and dwelling type



5.12 The chart on the next page shows the number of new dwellings delivered during the plan period to date, split by size against the borough’s implied need. This confirms that delivery so far since 2016 has largely been made up of one and two bed properties. When applying the implied need for these property sizes (38%) to an OAN of 15,200 this would equate to a need for approximately 5,200 1 and 2 bed dwellings over the plan period (the number delivered so far is still well below this at just over 2,600), however they have made up the greatest proportion of delivery to date. The implied need for larger properties (3 and 4+ beds) is higher at 62%, although so far these property sizes have made up a lower proportion of the housing delivered. However, it is important to note that, as highlighted in the 2017 SHMA, the implied need is: “an illustrative interpretation of available historic evidence to estimate the size of housing which may be required in Welwyn Hatfield over the plan period. It is recommended that policies are not overly prescriptive in directly basing requirements for individual sites on the illustrative mix”.³ The high proportion of flats delivered to date is partly due to the nature of developments that have come forward - within urban areas and some of which conversions. It is expected that as more Local Plan allocations come forward, they will deliver a higher proportion of houses.

³ 2017 Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update, paragraphs 5.19 – 5.20, Examination Document HOU/21

Figure 5: Gross completions 2016-2024 by property size compared to the borough's implied need



Indicator HO5 **Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP9)**
New dwelling density

Target: The Local Plan contains no specific target for this indicator
Achieved to date: 55.7 dph average density this year

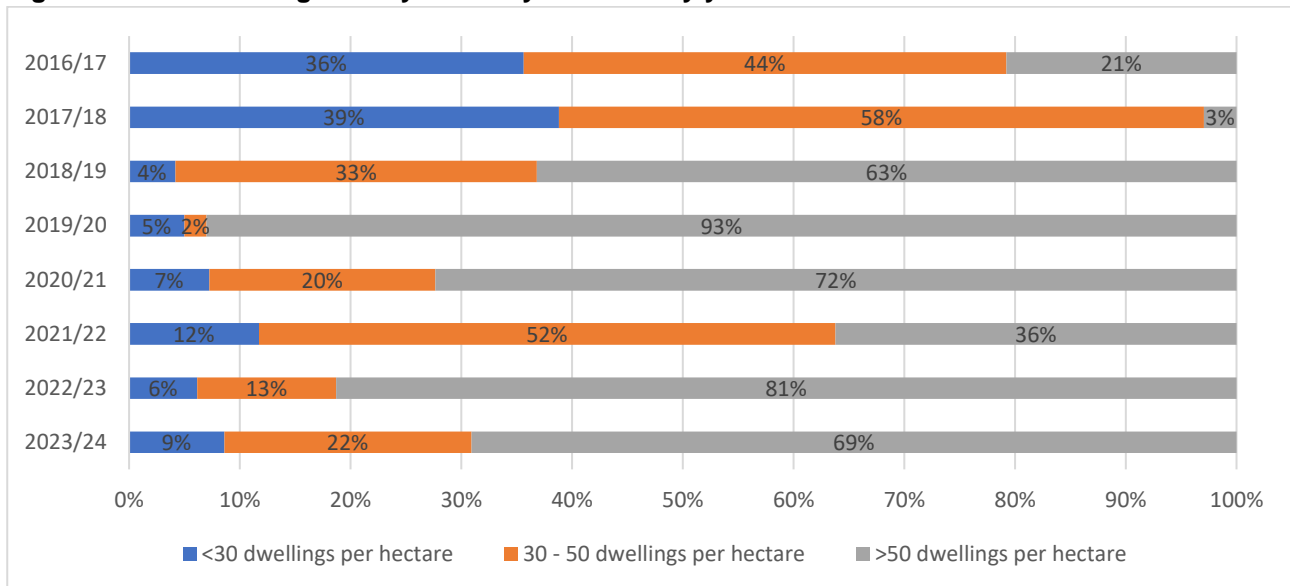
5.13 For the purposes of the AMR, the density of new development is calculated by dividing the number of gross completions during the monitoring year (excluding conversions) by the total development area of all sites. This gives an average density for new dwellings completed in 2023/24 of 55.7 dwellings per hectare (dph). This year the two sites Minster House and 1-9 Town Centre in Hatfield accounted for a high proportion of completions. Both were flatted developments and had densities of above 50 dph.

Table 15 – New dwelling density 2023/24

Gross completions (excluding conversions)	Total development area	Average density	<30dph		30-50dph		>50dph	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
372	6.7 hectares	55.7dph	32	9%	83	22%	257	69%

5.14 Figure 6 shows dwelling density over the plan period to date. A high number of flats completing in recent years has resulted in a higher proportion of completions at above 50dph than has been seen historically. In contrast, in years 2016/17 and 2017/18 a high number of completions at The Frythe in Welwyn contributed to a lower average density and a high proportion of completions at under 30dph.

Figure 6 – New Dwelling Density in Welwyn Hatfield by year



Future Housing Land Supply

Indicator HO6 **Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP2)**
Housing trajectory and 5-year housing land supply

- 5.15 The December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a 5-year supply of specific deliverable sites.
- 5.16 Table 16 on the next page sets out that the borough has a deliverable **housing land supply of 2.5 years** against the adopted Local Plan requirement of 760 dwellings per annum. Over the 8 years since the start of the plan period (2016-24), housing completions have totalled 3,577 homes, compared with a requirement for 6,080 homes (760 x 8 years). Therefore, there is a shortfall of 2,503 homes to date. The Liverpool approach, in which the shortfall is made up over the remaining plan period, has been used and was considered an appropriate approach by the Local Plan Examination Inspector.
- 5.17 The five-year housing supply is largely made up of full planning permissions, although a small number of allocated Local Plan sites with outline permission or that have been granted permission subject to s106 agreement are included where delivery is expected within the five years. Further detail on the sites included in the five-year housing land supply is presented in Appendix 2. Delays and slower than anticipated progress at some of the larger strategic sites means that the supply is lower than previously projected and below the national 5-year requirement. However, an increasing number of allocated sites are now coming forward following the adoption of the Local Plan. The Local Plan identifies opportunities on specific sites to facilitate the delivery of 9,343 dwellings between 2023/24 and 2032/33 and 13,400 dwellings over the plan period 2016-36.

Table 16 – Five-year Housing Land Supply 2024/25 – 2028/29

A	Housing Target (760 x 5)	3,800
B	NPPF 20% buffer adjustment (A X 0.20) ¹	760
C	Shortfall 2016-24 (Liverpool Methodology)	1,043
D	Housing requirement for 5-year period (A+B+C)	5,603
E	Projected supply of sites in 5-year period (set out in Appendix 2)	2,571
F	Windfall assumption (139 x 2 years) ²	278
G	Actual projected supply (E+F)	2,849
Number of years supply (G divided by D, multiplied by 5 years)		2.5

¹The NPPF requires either a 5% or 20% buffer to be added depending on whether an area has seen ‘significant under-delivery of housing over the previous three years’. This is measured against the Housing Delivery Test, where delivery is below 85% of the housing requirement.

²A windfall allowance of 139 dwellings per annum has been made from 2027/28 for completions from future planning permissions not yet known about. Further information on the calculation of the windfall allowance is presented in Examination Documents EX221 and EX276.

Homes for all

Indicator HO7 Contextual Indicator House prices and housing affordability

5.18 The chart below and table on the next page show Land Registry’s House Price Index. The average house price in Welwyn Hatfield between April 2023 and March 2024 was £431,393, a decrease of -1.1% from the same period the previous year. This decrease was less than the average for Hertfordshire (-3.4%) as well as for the region (-4.4%) and nationally (-1.8%). The peak in the number of sales in June 2021 coincided with the end of the reduction in rates of Stamp Duty which applied from July 2020 and was phased out in the Summer of 2021. Table 16 shows the average price paid in Apr 23 – Mar 24 split by property type.

Figure 7 – Average House Prices and Sales Volumes in Welwyn Hatfield



Source: Land Registry - <http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi>

Table 17 – Average House Prices

	Apr 22 - Mar 23	Apr 23 – Mar 24	% Change
Welwyn Hatfield	£436,201	£431,393	-1.1%
Hertfordshire	£457,117	£441,372	-3.4%
East of England	£351,065	£335,524	-4.4%
UK	£286,133	£280,934	-1.8%

Source: Land Registry, House Price Statistics - <http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi>

Table 18 – Average Price Paid by Property Type, 1 Apr 2023 – 31 Mar 2024

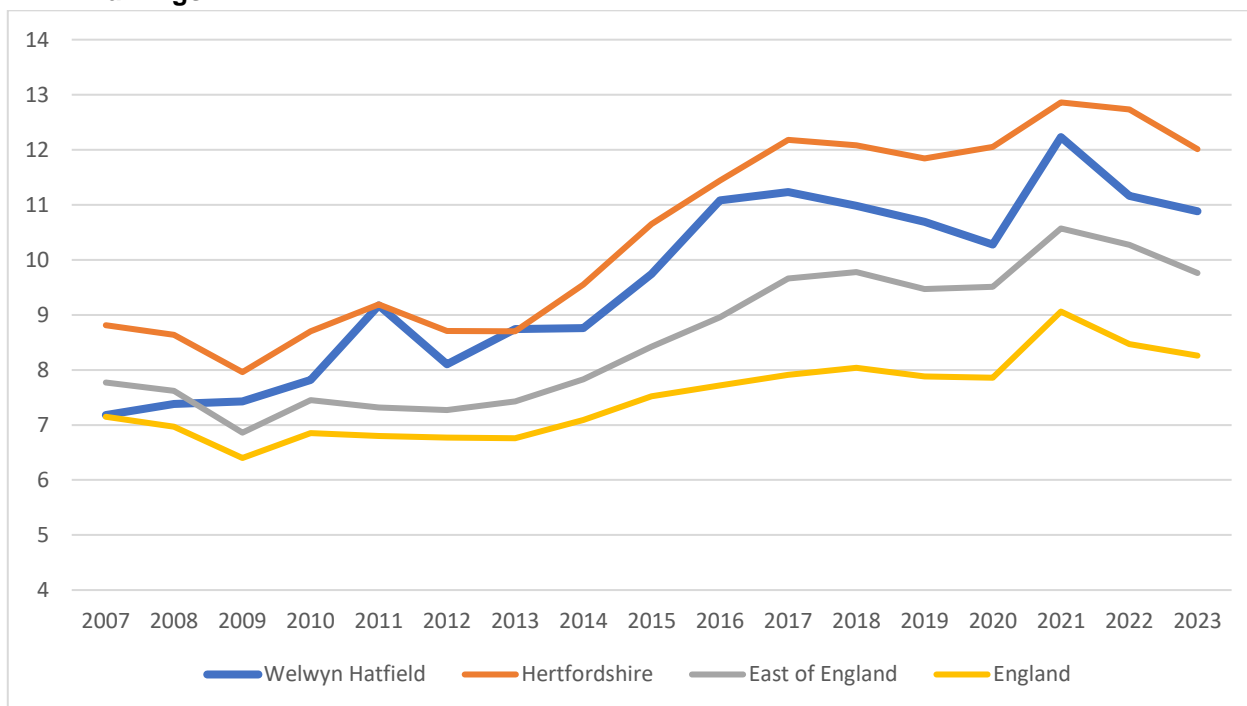
	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flat
Welwyn Hatfield	£922,217	£516,267	£391,187	£245,767

Source: Land Registry, House Price Statistics - <http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi>

5.19 The relationship between house prices and income allows a further understanding of housing affordability. The ONS workplace-based affordability ratio is presented below. This metric is used in the ‘standard method’ calculation for assessing local housing need. Workplace-based earnings are used, demonstrating the level of affordability for those finding accommodation in the area in which they work.

5.20 Houses continue to be much less affordable in Welwyn Hatfield and Hertfordshire than the national average. The figures for 2023 show that median house prices (£435,000) are 10.88 times the median income for those working in the borough (£39,994). Median earnings saw an increase of 3.4%, while median house prices increased by 0.7% this meant that overall affordability saw a slight improvement again this year.

Figure 8 – Housing Affordability: Ratio of Median House Prices to Median Annual Workplace-Based Earnings



Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 19 - Ratio of median house prices to median annual workplace-based earnings

Area	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change 2022-23
Welwyn Hatfield	11.08	11.23	10.98	10.69	10.28	12.23	11.16	10.88	-2.5%
Hertfordshire	11.44	12.18	12.08	11.84	12.05	12.86	12.73	12.01	-5.7%
London	12.03	12.38	12.26	12.05	11.83	12.9	12.5	11.95	-4.4%
England	7.72	7.91	8.04	7.88	7.86	9.06	8.47	8.26	-2.5%

Source: Office for National Statistics -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

5.21 The provision of affordable housing in the borough is a key response to pressures of housing affordability. Affordable housing can either be provided by the Council or a number of housing associations operating locally. A large proportion of new affordable properties are secured through 'Section 106' agreements on new-build development sites above a certain size. Due to the acute need for affordable housing, the Council has given weight to the threshold in the newly adopted Local Plan since the Stage 3 hearing session on this topic in 2018. Policy SP7 sets out a requirement that affordable housing should be sought on proposals for 10 or more dwellings, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proportion of affordable sought in Policy SP7 varies by location at between 25% - 35%.

Indicator HO8	Contextual Indicator
New affordable housing	

5.22 During the year, 150 new affordable homes were completed. New build affordable housing completions recorded during the year include:

- 91 homes at Minster House in Hatfield. The overall net total at this site was 50 dwellings, however the loss of the existing 41 flats took place in 2020/21 when the demolition work took place.
- 38 homes at the 1-9 Town Centre development in Hatfield.
- 11 homes at the former Ratcliff Tail Lift site in Welwyn Garden City.
- 10 homes at the Onslow St Audrey's site in Hatfield.

Table 20 – Affordable Completions as a Proportion of Total Completions

Year		Net C3 Dwelling Completions	Net Affordable - New Build Completions	% affordable
Plan Period	2016/17	347	56	16.1%
	2017/18	238	36	15.1%
	2018/19	456	64	14.0%
	2019/20	671	69	2.0%
	2020/21	352	7*	13.6%
	2021/22	258	37	14.3%
	2022/23	442	261	59.0%
	2023/24	298	150	50.0%
Plan period avg.		383	85	22.2%
Plan period total		3,062	680	22.2%

*This figure has been revised to account for the loss at Minster House of 41 dwellings, which took place in 2020/21. This site resulted in an overall net gain of 50 dwellings. The site completed in 2023/24.

- 5.23 It should be noted that the data reported in table 20 reflects new build dwellings that were recorded as affordable through planning permissions. In some instances, new build homes are granted planning permission as market housing, however, are subsequently converted to affordable tenure (e.g. by private registered housing providers following grant funding from Homes England). These affordable completions would not necessarily be included in these figures. The affordable housing supply statistics published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities indicate a higher number of affordable housing completions for Welwyn Hatfield between 2016-24 of 1,365 homes (although this does not take into account losses such as through demolitions and sales).
- 5.24 The Local Plan estimated that the proportion of all housing completions that will be affordable homes will be around 20% over the whole plan period. Total delivery to date is currently slightly above this at 22%. To monitor whether sites which are required to provide affordable housing are meeting the thresholds specified in the Council's affordable housing policy SP7, the proportion of affordable homes secured when the permission is granted is a more useful indicator.
- 5.25 The table below shows the number of sites granted planning permission that triggered the policy threshold requiring the provision of affordable housing, and the number of these sites which met the affordable housing requirement. Sites which have been granted permission through the prior approval process are not included as this does not allow the Council to secure affordable housing. In 2023/24, only two sites were granted permission which were over the policy threshold for affordable housing (10+ dwellings), with one securing onsite affordable housing. The site which did not, is for 12 dwellings and secured a commuted sum towards affordable housing provision instead. In total, 12 affordable dwellings were granted planning permission during the year.
- 5.26 However, at the 1st April 2024 there were 759 affordable homes in the housing supply with planning permission.

Table 21 – Percentage of sites/dwellings granted permission meeting affordable housing policy

Year Granted	Sites			Dwellings		
	No. of sites for 10+ dwellings granted permission	No. of these sites meeting the affordable requirement	% of sites meeting the affordable requirement	Total dwellings granted permission (at sites of 10+ dwellings)	No. of affordable dwellings (at sites of 10+ dwellings)	% affordable dwellings
2016/17	1*	1	100%*	279	90	32%
2017/18	4*	2	50%*	141	26	18%
2018/19	6	4	67%	1,674	497	30%
2019/20	8	4	50%	900	242	27%
2020/21	5	5	100%	339	123	36%
2021/22	4	4	100%	401	215	54%
2022/23	7	6	86%	594	141	24%
2023/24	2	1	50%	49	12	24%
2016-24	37	76	73%	4,377	1,346	31%

*Note figures for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are for sites of 25+ dwellings which were granted permission - this is the threshold for affordable housing in the District Plan Policy, which was used at this time.

- 5.27 Affordable housing is also provided through the open market purchase of existing 'non-affordable' properties for use as affordable housing, or on a voluntary basis in new schemes by housing associations and the Council. In addition to new build affordable completions,

there were also 2 open market purchases (buy backs) by the Council in 2023/24, made using Right to Buy receipts, as part of the Affordable Housing Programme. In terms of Right to Buy sales, there were 13 sales during the year. The Local Planning Authority has no jurisdiction over open market purchases or Right to Buy sales, but this data provides a picture of the wider dynamics.

Indicator HO9	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP7)
<i>New specialist needs housing</i>	
Target:	Delivery of at least 200 new care home bedrooms throughout the plan period
Achieved to date:	292 care home bedrooms completed since 2016/17

- 5.28 Policy SP2 sets a target for a net increase of around 200 new bed-spaces for specialist (Use Class C2), residential or nursing care between 2016 and 2036.
- 5.29 There were 64 net care home bedspaces completed during the year, with 292 bedspaces now completed since the beginning of the plan period. The loss of the care home at Hyde Valley House in Hatfield was recorded this year as the site was redeveloped for housing. The care home had closed some years earlier and was re-provided in 2017/18. Completions in 2023/24 included a 104-bed care home in Welwyn Garden City and an additional 6 bedspaces to an existing care home in Hatfield.
- 5.30 The Local Plan also includes targets for the proportions of new homes designed to cater for the needs of older people and also to meet accessible and adaptable dwellings standards. The plan supports the provision of around 620 dwellings to help meet the varied housing needs of an ageing population as part of the overall housing target. During the year, the affordable sheltered housing scheme at Minster House in Hatfield was completed which provided a net total of 50 homes.

Indicator HO10	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP7)
<i>Number of people on the self-build register</i>	
Target:	To provide sufficient self-build plots for the number of people on the register
Achieved to date:	62 individuals on the self-build register, 21 plots granted permission

- 5.31 The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 requires local authorities to maintain a register of people and groups who would like to acquire a serviced plot of land to build their own home in the local authority area. This is to provide evidence of the scale of demand for self-build plots, which local authorities are then required to plan to meet in the same way as for other types of housing. Monitoring of the self-build register is carried out over 'base periods' prescribed by the government. In order to help the council better manage the register and measure demand for plots of land within Welwyn Hatfield for self-build, the Council introduced additional eligibility criteria and a fee to enter or remain on the register from 31st October 2018.
- 5.32 During base period 9 (31 Oct 23– 30 Oct 24), there were 6 individuals added to the register and at the end of the year on 30 Oct 24, there were a total of 62 individuals remaining on the self-build register. A total of 21 plots have now been granted permission. In the most recent base period, 7 plots were secured by planning condition at Local Plan site allocation HS2 (Creswick in WGC). Policy SP7 of the adopted Local Plan requires sites of 100 dwellings or

more to make provision for 2% of serviced dwelling plots, so more self/custom build plots are expected as allocated (or other) sites of this scale come forward.

Table 22 – Self-build Registrations and Permissions by Base Period

Base Period	No. Individuals Registered in Year	Date to Grant Permissions by	Number of Permissions (Plots)
BY1: 1 Apr 16 - 30 Oct 16	142	Oct 2019	0
BY2: 31 Oct 16 - 30 Oct 17	102	Oct 2020	0
BY3: 31 Oct 17 – 30 Oct 18	68	Oct 2021	0
BY4: 31 Oct 18 – 30 Oct 19	17 ⁴	Oct 2022	0
BY5: 31 Oct 19 – 30 Oct 20	21	Oct 2023	6
BY6: 31 Oct 20 – 30 Oct 21	29	Oct 2024	0
BY7: 31 Oct 21 – 30 Oct 22	12	Oct 2025	0
BY8: 31 Oct 22 – 30 Oct 23	6	Oct 2026	8
BY9: 31 Oct 23 – 30 Oct 24	6	Oct 2027	7

Table 23 – Total number of Individuals on the Self-build Register by Area – as at 30/10/2024

	Looking in Welwyn Hatfield only	Looking in Welwyn Hatfield and elsewhere	Total
Live in Welwyn Hatfield	10	13	23
Live elsewhere	7	32	39
All people on register	17	45	62

Indicator HO11 **Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP7 and HMO SPD)**
Numbers of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

Target: The Local Plan contains no specific target for this indicator

5.33 For the purposes of planning, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are defined as properties with shared communal facilities which are occupied by unrelated individuals. Depending on size they either fall into Use Class C4 (up to 6 bedrooms) or are *sui generis* (7 or more bedrooms). They are popular with students, and most of the borough's HMOs are located close to the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield. In January 2012 the [Hatfield Article 4 Direction](#) came into force, removing permitted development rights and meaning that Use Class C3 dwellings in Hatfield need planning permission to change to C4 (the change to a large *sui generis* HMO has always needed consent). The [HMO Supplementary Planning Document](#) (SPD) was introduced in February 2012 and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for HMOs alongside Policy SP7 of the Local Plan.

Table 24 - Applications for HMOs in 2023/24

Application type	Change of use	Approved	Refused	Withdrawn	Total
Full planning (<i>New HMOs proposed</i>)	C3 > C4 or <i>Sui generis</i>	1	0	0	1
	C4 > <i>Sui generis</i>	0	0	1	1
Certificate of lawfulness (<i>For existing HMOs</i>)	C3 > C4 or <i>Sui generis</i>	4	0	0	4
	C4 > <i>Sui generis</i>	0	0	0	0
Total		5	0	1	6

5.34 During the monitoring year, six applications for HMOs have been determined; two for planning permission for a change of use (although one of these was withdrawn), and four for

⁴ Note this has been revised from the figure of 39 reported in the 2018/19 AMR, which was for the total number on the register rather than new registrations during the year.

certificates of lawfulness to demonstrate that an existing HMO does not require planning permission. All five of the applications determined were approved.

- 5.35 This year saw a small decline in the number of ‘all student’ HMOs recorded in the borough and the number of student HMOs remains well below historic levels. Student accommodation at the University of Hertfordshire completed in recent years, could be a factor behind the fluctuations in recent years.

Table 25 - ‘All student’ Council Tax HMOs

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Hatfield Article 4	1,157	1,043	1,255	855	661	673	656	809	721
Whole borough	1,258	1,130	1,331	941	793	826	792	991	988
Annual change	-6.7%	-10.2%	+17.8%	-29.3%	-15.7%	4.2%	-4.1%	+25.1%	-0.3%

Indicator HO12 <i>New homes for the Gypsy and Traveller Community</i>	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP7)
Target: Delivery of 61 new pitches within the plan period Achieved to date: None this year, none to date within plan period	

- 5.36 In order to meet the need identified in the [2016 Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment](#), Policy SP7 of the Local Plan proposes a target of 61 new Gypsy and Traveller pitches across the borough over the 16 year period from 2016 to 2032. Anticipated locations for delivery are set out in Table 6 of the Local Plan. The majority of new pitches for the plan period need to be delivered in association with the Strategic Development Sites (some allocated sites are unconnected to Strategic Development Sites). An outline application at Local Plan site SDS1 was granted in February 2020 which includes the provision of six pitches, with a further six pitches approved subject to S106 agreement in July 2023. Planning applications have been submitted for a number of other sites within the borough.

- 5.37 In light of the definition of ‘deliverable’, the table below currently demonstrates no five-year supply of pitches. This is expected to improve once sites achieve planning permission.

Table 26 – Five Year Land Supply of Pitches (2024/25 – 2028/29)

A	Annual Gypsy & Traveller pitch target to 2031/32 (61 divided by 16 years)	3.813
B	Completions to date (2016/17 - 2023/24)	0
C	Target completions to current year (8 years x 3.8)	30.5
D	Resultant shortfall in completions against target (C –B)	30.5
E	Pitch requirement for next five years 24/25-28/29 (A x 5) + D	49.6
F	Projected supply of sites (24/25 - 28/29)	0
	Number of years supply (F divided by E x 5 years)	0 years

Indicator HO13 <i>Unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments</i>	Contextual Indicator
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- 5.38 The Council works with a range of service providers to monitor cases where Gypsy and Traveller encampments take place without planning permission, and without the permission of the landowner. The 2023/24 monitoring year saw 3 unauthorised encampments reported.

6. The Economy

This chapter sets out nine indicators on the state of the borough's economy, covering changes to floorspace and land in employment uses, and information on the numbers of companies and jobs in the borough.

Employment land and floorspace

Indicator EC1	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP2)
<i>New employment floorspace and progress against employment floorspace target</i>	
Target:	Delivery of 55,000m ² new employment floorspace over plan period to 2036
Achieved to date:	Net gain of +1,162m ² in 2023/24, net gain of +7,400m ² since 2016/17

6.1 This indicator monitors changes in employment floorspace during the year and over the plan period. From 1st September 2020, amendments to the planning use classes came into place, and a new class E use - covering Commercial, Business and Services, was introduced. The new class E use incorporates the previous B1 use class as well as some former retail and service uses – which are covered in Chapter 4. The former use classes B1a, B1b and B1c have been replaced by Eg(i) Offices carrying out operational or administrative functions, Eg(ii) Research and Development of products or Processes and Eg(iii) Industrial processes. The B2 (General Industry) and B8 (Storage & Distribution) use classes remain valid. Planning permissions which allow a mix of employment uses on a site without specifying the amount of floorspace in each continue to be shown below as 'B Mix'.

Table 27 – Net Floorspace Change (m²)

		Use Classes						Total
		Eg(i)/ (B1a)	Eg(ii)/ (B1b)	Eg(iii)/ (B1c)	B2	B8	'B Mix'	
2016/17	Net change	-17,252	-	-88	614	-451	4,754	-12,423
2017/18	Net change	-5,969	-	0	160	753	1,475	-3,581
2018/19	Net change	-5,930	-	0	79	3,940	-600	-2,511
2019/20	Net change	-2,861	-	-126	-8,394	3,879	1,599	-5,903
2020/21	Net change	-2,073	-	-2,792	284	-1,322	3,629	-2,274
2021/22	Net change	-416	-	-	-	10,918	-	+10,502
2022/23	Net change	-103	-	-	7,760	14,121	639	+22,417
2023/24	<i>Floorspace gain</i>	37	-	589	-	857	-	1,483
	<i>Floorspace loss</i>	-	-	-	-	-321	-	-321
	Net change	+37	-	+589	-	+536	-	+1,162
Plan period net change		-34,567	-	-2,417	+503	+32,374	11,496	+7,389

6.2 The borough saw a net gain in employment floorspace this year. A site in Welwyn Garden City, which changed use from a car dealership to B8/E(g)(iii), resulted in a gain in employment floorspace.

6.3 Overall, since the start of the plan period in 2016, there has now been a net gain in employment floorspace of +7,389 m². In the years prior to 2021/22, a net loss in employment floorspace had been recorded, largely resulting from office to residential conversions benefitting from permitted development rights. Last year the completion of four industrial units at Cole Green Lane on the eastern edge of WGC resulted in a net gain of B8 use of just under 11,000m². This site is allocated as part of a new employment area in the Local Plan

(EA11). In 2022/23 there was also a significant net gain, resulting from a number of sites completing, including a plot at Hatfield Business Park. Although this was for a car franchise (sui generis use), there were associated business uses at the site which resulted in gains in Eg(i), B2 and B8 floorspace. Two further sites completed in 2022/23 in Welwyn Garden City at Black Fan Road and Bridgefields which resulted in considerable gains in B1 and B8 employment floorspace.

Indicator EC2	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP1)
<i>Proportion of new employment floorspace on previously developed land (PDL)</i>	
Target:	For 60% of gross new employment floorspace to be on PDL across the plan period
Achieved to date:	100% of floorspace on PDL for the plan period

6.4 The effective reuse of previously developed land (PDL) is a key component of national planning policy. Welwyn Hatfield has always taken a ‘brownfield first’ approach when identifying land for development, and this has continued to be the case during the preparation of the Local Plan. During the Local Plan examination, it was accepted that there is expected to be a shortfall in employment floorspace against the identified need, however without release of land from greenfield sites this would be much greater. All of the gross new employment floorspace completed since the start of the plan period to date has been on PDL.

Indicator EC3	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP8)
<i>Employment areas lost to non-employment uses</i>	
Target:	No target until the new Local Plan is adopted (Target of no further loss thereafter)
Achieved to date:	No loss this year, total net loss of 10.9ha since plan period start

6.5 The newly adopted Local Plan identifies 286.8 hectares of designated employment land for Class E(g), B2, B8 and associated uses. In total, since the start of the plan period, 3.8% of designated employment land has been lost.

Table 28 - Employment Land Lost to Non-Employment Uses

Year	Sites lost to other uses	Of which in designated Employment Areas	Employment land loss	% of total designated employment land lost
2016/17	15	5	4.68 hectares	1.6%
2017/18	5	2	2.03 hectares	0.7%
2018/19	6	3	1.21 hectares	0.4%
2019/20	9	4	2.50 hectares	0.9%
2020/21	9	5	0.39 hectares	0.1%
2021/22	4	2	0.13 hectares	0.0%
2022/23	1	0	0 hectares	0.0%
2023/24	0	0	0 hectares	0.0%
Plan total	48	21	10.94 hectares	3.8%

6.6 The losses to date have been largely the result of schemes to convert office buildings to residential use through permitted development (i.e. not requiring planning permission). Since the introduction of these permitted development rights in May 2013 just over 34,000sqm of office space has been lost within the borough, with further commitments of losses of 500sqm of office floorspace. Further losses have also taken place where, whilst the principle of development was established through permitted development rights, they were then superseded by full planning applications. The losses have had a particularly notable effect

around the western edge of Welwyn Garden City Employment Area and have led to the Council introducing an Article 4 Direction (see paragraphs 3.6 - 3.10).

Indicator EC4

Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP2)

Future employment floorspace supply

Target: Maintain sufficient supply of employment floorspace to meet the target in *EC1*
Achieved to date: Employment floorspace supply of 51,000m²

6.7 The borough now has three sources of future employment floorspace supply: planning permissions, vacant sites, and allocated sites. The future supply of employment floorspace is dependent on economic circumstances and the existence of prospective occupiers, making it difficult to anticipate an exact year in which new floorspace will be delivered. The table below provides a plan period summary of employment floorspace supply at 31st March 2024.

Table 29 – Employment Floorspace Supply (m²)

Use Class	Completions 2016/17 – 2023/24	Sites with planning permission	Vacant sites in employment areas	Local Plan site allocations	Estimated further office floorspace loss-to-residential	Overall total
B1/E(g)	-36,984	8,972	-	51,678	-11,340	12,326
B2	503	-1,678	520	-4,410	-	-5,065
B8	32,374	-1,100	-	-9,500	-	21,774
B/E(g) Mix	11,496	10,461	-	-	-	21,957
Total	7,389	16,655	520	37,768	-11,340	50,992

Businesses, Jobs and Skills

Indicator EC5

Contextual Indicator

Number of enterprises

Table 30 – Number of Enterprises in Welwyn Hatfield

Type of count	Welwyn Hatfield								East Change 2022-23	National change 2023-24
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change 2022-23		
Number of enterprises	5,015	5,090	5,230	5,330	5,160	5,160	4,995	-165 (-3.2%)	-3,120 (-1.1%)	-41,090 (-1.5%)
Number of 'local units'	5,850	5,935	6,090	6,205	6,045	6,030	5,855	-175 (-2.9%)	-3,845 (-1.2%)	-44,675 (-1.4%)

Data source: Inter-Departmental Business Register (ONS) via NOMIS
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157231/report.aspx>

6.8 The number of enterprises in an area can be broken down in two ways: the actual number of enterprises operating in an area, and the number of 'local units' – individual business premises of registered enterprises within an area. Tesco for example would only appear once in the number of enterprises but would appear several times in the number of local units to account for its Welwyn Garden City headquarters, Hatfield superstore, and Welwyn, Woolmer Green, Cuffley and Panshanger express-format stores.

6.9 The number of enterprises and local units in the borough fell in 2023. It should be noted that these figures do not include very small businesses (those with turnover below the tax threshold and without employees).

Indicator EC6 **Contextual Indicator**
Jobs and job density

6.10 The data presented on the number of jobs in Welwyn Hatfield is from the Office for National Statistics Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES). The most recent figures available are for 2022 which indicate a fall in the total number of jobs in Welwyn Hatfield, to 87,000 from 96,000 in 2021. This resulted in a decrease in the figure for jobs density (the ratio of jobs to the working age population) to 1.11 from 1.23. There are some potential concerns with this dataset when segmented at this geographic level. The figures for Welwyn Hatfield have shown large fluctuations in recent years, with the data indicating an increase in the number of jobs by +25,000 between 2015 and 2019. This 32% increase in the four years compared with an increase of 10% in Hertfordshire and 5.8% nationally.

6.11 It is understood that jobs which have no fixed location are included under the location of the business headquarters, potentially resulting in higher figures than would otherwise be recorded for an area. It is believed that the large increase these figures between 2015 and 2017 is likely to be from the restructure of a large retailer headquartered within the borough with a number of these jobs being based outside Welwyn Hatfield. In view of this, jobs data at this geographical level should be interpreted cautiously.

Table 31 – Jobs and Job Density

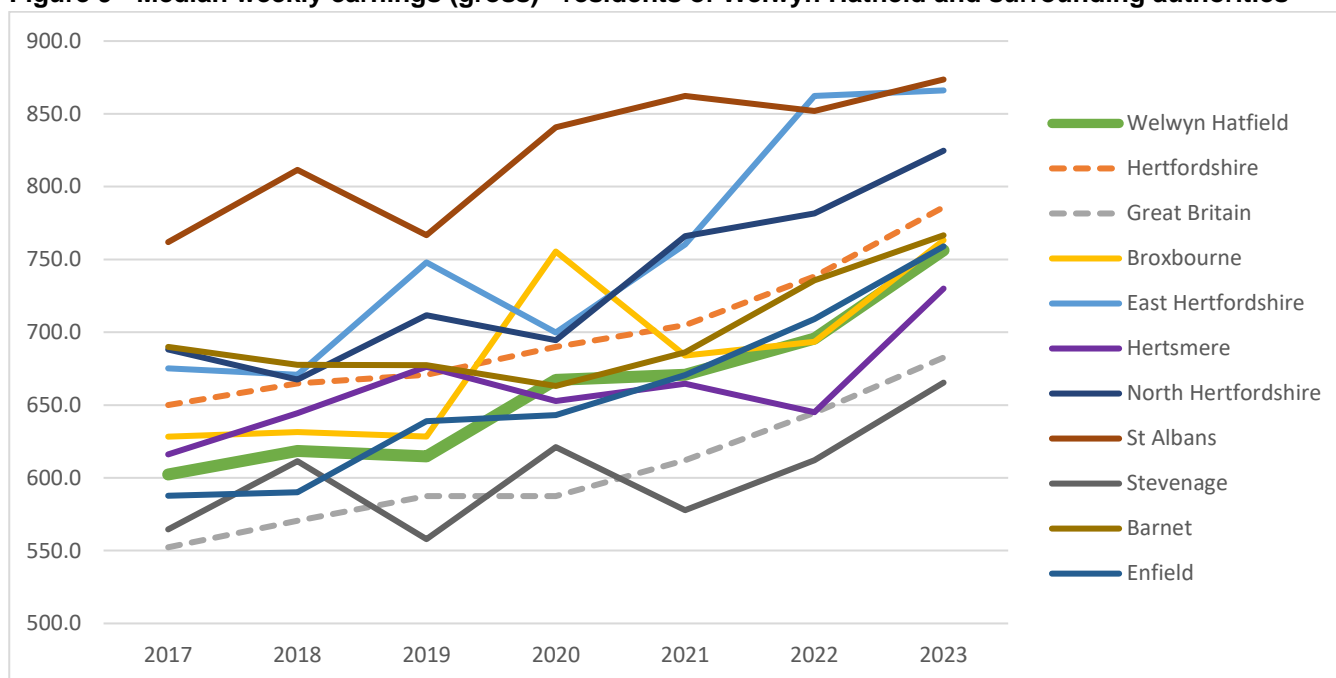
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 2021-22
Welwyn Hatfield	Jobs Total	100,000	101,000	104,000	94,000	96,000	87,000	-9.4%
	Job Density	1.24	1.25	1.29	1.15	1.23	1.11	-9.8%
Hertford- shire	Jobs Total	724,000	734,000	738,000	729,000	753,000	720,000	-4.4%
	Job Density	0.98	0.99	1.00	0.98	1.00	0.95	-5.0%

Data Source: Office for National Statistics jobs density via NOMIS
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157231/report.aspx>

Indicator EC7 **Contextual Indicator**
Average earnings

6.12 Figure 9 on the next page shows that, for full-time workers, the median earnings of Welwyn Hatfield residents in 2023 was £756.30 per week which was a 9% increase from 2022 (£695.60). Average earnings in the borough were £73.70 per week above the national average, although remain below the Hertfordshire average by £29.60 per week. However, these figures should be treated with a degree of caution given the relatively low sample sizes used in the annual ONS survey and tendency for earnings to fluctuate slightly from year to year.

Figure 9 - Median weekly earnings (gross) - residents of Welwyn Hatfield and surrounding authorities



Source: ONS annual survey of hours and earnings via NOMIS – <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>

6.13 The average earnings of full-time workers employed in the borough in 2023 (regardless of where they lived) was £741.70 per week. This was a 2.1% increase from the 2022 figure (£726.70) and means that employee earnings are now slightly below resident earnings. Again, it is important to be cautious given that these figures are also from a small sample.

Indicator EC8 **Contextual Indicator**
Unemployment

6.14 The level of unemployment in an area is one of the most closely followed indicators of economic health and can be measured in several ways. The most literal measure of unemployment comes from the ONS annual population survey (via NOMIS). This indicates that the percentage of people of working age who are not currently in employment, except where they are economically inactive (for example because they look after family at home or are retired). By this measure the 2023 (Jan-Dec) official unemployment rate in Welwyn Hatfield was 3.6%, unchanged from the revised 3.6% for 2022.

6.15 Numbers of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit (UC) claimants are another means of monitoring unemployment. JSA and UC are intended to address the financial hardship of unemployment and not all unemployed people are eligible to claim – for example, the income of an unemployed person’s spouse may put their household’s income above the required threshold. Unemployed people may also choose not to claim JSA/UC for a variety of reasons. JSA/UC claimant rates are therefore a better indicator of actual deprivation caused by unemployment. As JSA/UC figures indicate the precise number of claimants, they are also more reliable than overall unemployment figures.

6.16 The rate of JSA/UC claimants within Welwyn Hatfield had been steadily declining since peaking at 4.7% between Feb-Apr 2021. In March 2024, the rate of claimants was 2.6%, still above the rate recorded prior to the pandemic in early 2020 (of 1.9%). Table 32 shows the breakdown across the borough.

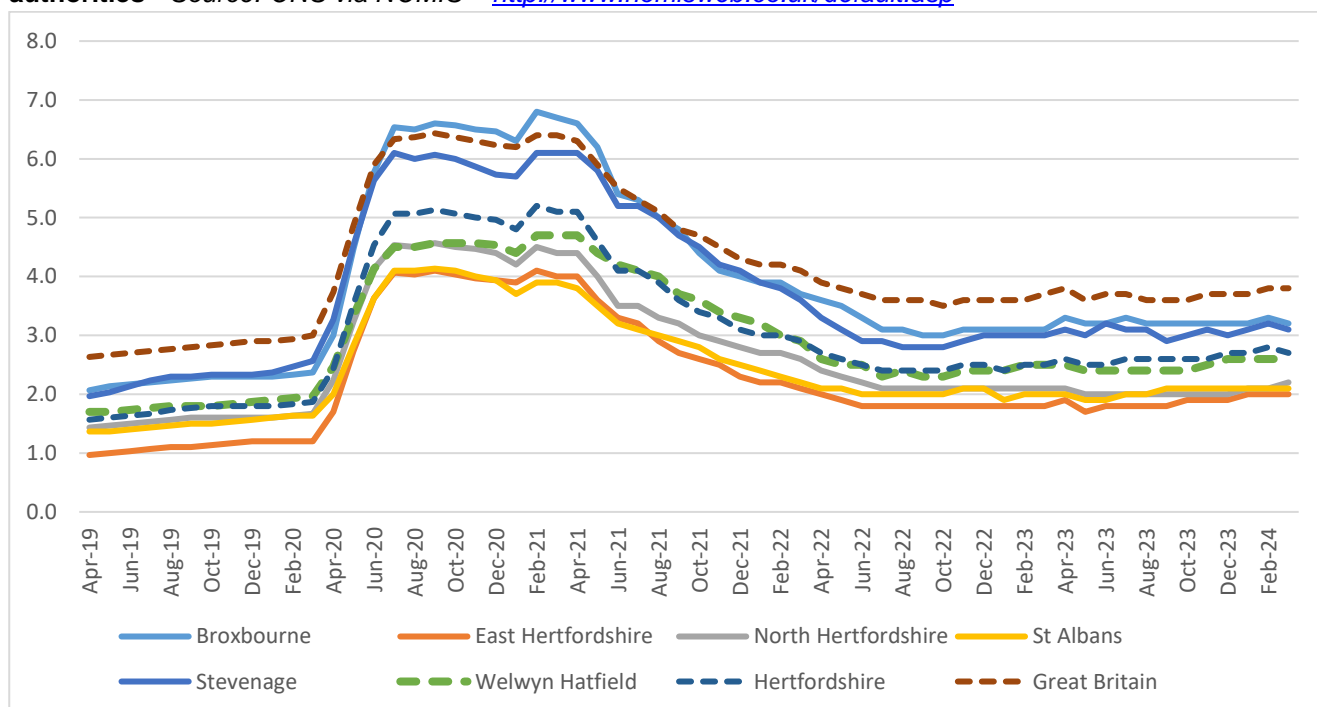
Table 32- Percentage of residents aged 16-64 in each ward claiming JSA/UC

Ward	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024	Change Mar 24 vs Mar 2023
Brookmans Park & Little Heath	0.8%	3.3%	1.4%	1.3%	1.4%	0.1%
Haldens	2.8%	6.2%	3.8%	2.5%	3.0%	0.5%
Handside	1.8%	3.5%	2.1%	1.5%	1.9%	0.4%
Hatfield Central	2.7%	6.0%	4.3%	3.3%	4.1%	0.8%
Hatfield East	2.5%	5.5%	3.5%	2.7%	3.1%	0.4%
Hatfield South	1.8%	4.9%	3.1%	2.9%	2.9%	0.0%
Hatfield Villages	1.1%	3.5%	2.0%	1.7%	2.3%	0.6%
Hatfield West	1.4%	3.6%	2.2%	1.7%	2.0%	0.3%
Hollybush	2.5%	5.5%	3.0%	3.1%	3.1%	0.0%
Howlands	2.4%	5.3%	3.3%	2.8%	2.6%	-0.2%
Northaw and Cuffley	0.9%	3.2%	1.2%	1.4%	1.2%	-0.2%
Panshanger	1.6%	3.9%	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%	-0.1%
Pear tree	4.5%	8.4%	5.2%	4.8%	4.5%	-0.3%
Sherrards	1.7%	3.8%	2.1%	2.0%	2.1%	0.1%
Welham Green	1.3%	5.0%	2.9%	2.7%	2.1%	-0.6%
Welwyn East	0.7%	2.5%	1.0%	1.1%	0.9%	-0.2%
Welwyn West	1.5%	4.0%	2.4%	1.6%	1.4%	-0.2%

Source: ONS via NOMIS - <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>

6.17 Figure 10 shows how JSA/UC claimant rates for the borough relate to surrounding districts, as well as the Hertfordshire and Great Britain averages. The sharp increase between April and August 2020 shows the impact that COVID-19 had on claimant rates across all areas. Rates had been steadily declining since around March 2021, however, have since seen a slight increase in all areas. Comparing March 2024 with March 2023, the increase for Welwyn Hatfield (+0.1%) was in line with the national average (+0.1%), and slightly less than Hertfordshire (+0.2%).

Figure 10 - Percentage of working-age residents claiming JSA for Welwyn Hatfield and surrounding authorities - Source: ONS via NOMIS – <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>



- 6.18 According to the 2021 Census, 37.3% of residents in Welwyn Hatfield hold qualifications at NVQ level 4 and above (first degrees or degree equivalents). This is slightly higher than the average for England and Wales (33.8%) and higher than the East of England (31.6%), although below the Hertfordshire average (39.4%).
- 6.19 In terms of educational performance, the AMR reports on 'Attainment 8' scores as well as performance in the core subjects of English and Maths in terms of the percentage of grades 5-9 achieved. Data for 2023 showed that the borough's schools continued to score below the Hertfordshire average on both metrics, though above the national average.

Table 33 – Educational Performance

Location	2019		2021		2022		2023	
	'Attainment 8' Score	% Grade 5-9 in English and Maths	'Attainment 8' Score	% Grade 5-9 in English and Maths	'Attainment 8' Score	% Grade 5-9 in English and Maths	'Attainment 8' Score	% Grade 5-9 in English and Maths
Wel Hatfield	48.8	44.2%	50.5	50%	49.2	49.0%	49.3	49.0%
Hertfordshire	51.0	51.4%	53.3	57%	53.3	57.4%	51.0	55%
England	44.5	39.8%	48.7	50%	48.9	50.0%	46.3	45%

Data source: Department for Education – <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4> No data was available in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic most national curriculum assessments were cancelled.

7. Environmental Assets

This chapter contains indicators covering the borough’s environment and the sustainability of new development; across a range of topics including the historic environment, wildlife, open space, green belt, energy, and transport.

The Natural and Historic Environment

Indicator EN1	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SADM15)
<i>Changes to protected historic assets</i>	
Targets:	No loss of protected heritage assets.
Achieved to date:	No change to the number of protected assets. 3 heritage assets listed as ‘at risk’.

7.1 Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register continues to show three listed structures in the borough at risk. The Grade II* Paine Bridge at Brocket Hall in Lemsford, which has been listed as at risk for some time, is now graded as Priority A, meaning it is at risk of further deterioration. No solution has yet been agreed, although discussions to determine the scope of the repair works are ongoing. Two further heritage assets at Brocket Hall – the Temple and the gates, lodges and screen wall at the South-East entrance were added to the heritage assets at risk register last year, both also at risk of further rapid deterioration or loss, with no solution yet agreed.

7.2 In July 2023, the Lemsford area was designated as a conservation area (‘areas of special architectural or historic interest which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’). There are now 10 conservation areas in Welwyn Hatfield including Welwyn Garden City town centre and residential areas to the West, the Beehive area in WGC, Ayot Green historic core, Ayot St Lawrence historic core, Welwyn village historic core, Essendon historic core, Old Hatfield historic core, Northaw historic core, Peartree and Lemsford.

Table 34 – Protected Historic Assets

Type	2022/23		2023/24		Change
	No. of sites	Area	No. of sites	Area	
Listed Buildings	431	n/a	431	n/a	No change
<i>Of which Grade I</i>	6	n/a	6	n/a	No change
<i>Of which Grade II*</i>	25	n/a	25	n/a	No change
<i>Of which Grade II</i>	400	n/a	400	n/a	No change
Conservation Areas	9	374ha	10	405ha	+1
Areas of Archaeological Significance	73	1,071ha	73	1,071ha	No change
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	4	n/a	4	n/a	No change
Registered Historic Parks/Gardens	5	1,005ha	5	1,005ha	No change
Heritage assets at risk	3	n/a	3	n/a	No change

Source: National Heritage List for England, Historic England – <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>, Heritage at Risk Register, Historic England – <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk>, Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record via Heritage Gateway – <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>

Indicator EN2**Local Plan Indicator (Policy SADM16)****Changes to protected natural assets**

Targets: No loss of protected natural assets, or worsening in their condition

Achieved to date: +3 new wildlife sites in 2023

- 7.3 In 2023/24, there were three new Local Wildlife Sites designated all on the River Mimram (at Mimram Valley Marsh, Sherradswood School, Singlers Marsh). The three sites total 1.68 ha and are included under the designation of flowing water (rivers and streams). Two of the sites fall within both Welwyn Hatfield and North Herts. The total area of Wildlife Sites in Welwyn Hatfield was recorded at 1,665.48 in 2023 compared with 1,664.46 ha in 2022.
- 7.4 The main indicator on the condition of protected natural assets relates to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Two of the borough's SSSIs Sherrardspark Wood and Northaw Great Wood and have improved from 'unfavourable recovering' to 'favourable' when last surveyed by Natural England in 2022 and 2024 respectively. Sherrardspark Wood and Northaw Great Wood are also Council-managed Local Nature Reserves with Woodland Management Plans adopted in 2015 and new ten-year management plans currently being prepared.

Table 35 – Protected Natural Assets

Type	2022/23		2023/24		Change
	No. of sites	Area	No. of sites	Area	
Wildlife Sites	195	1,664ha	198	1,665.5ha	+3 sites
Local Nature Reserves	9	350ha	9	350ha	No change
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	5	329ha	5	329ha	No change
Special Areas of Conservation	1	6ha	1	6ha	No change

DEFRA/Natural England MAGIC mapping service – <http://magic.defra.gov.uk>

Herts Environmental Records Centre – <http://www.hercinfo.org.uk/>

Indicator EN3**Contextual Indicator****New development in the Green Belt**

- 7.5 The Local Plan removed 312.1ha of land from the Green Belt to accommodate future development needs. The total area of land designated as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt is now 9,937.3ha (76.7%). Development is otherwise restricted in the Green Belt, although it is not necessarily precluded where it accords with the National Planning Policy Framework, and/or the required 'very special circumstances' can be demonstrated.

Table 36 – New Development in the Green Belt

Type of development	Gross Completions	Losses	Net completions	% of completions in Green Belt to total net completions
Residential development	15 dwellings	1 dwelling	14 dwellings	3.9%
Commercial development	0m ²	0m ²	0m ²	N/A

- 7.6 In terms of residential development, there was a net gain of 14 dwellings in the Green Belt during the monitoring year, accounting for 3.9% of total net completions. This included nine dwellings as part the redevelopment of the Grade II listed Green Man Pub at Mill Green Lane. This development restored the listed pub, which had been empty and unused for some time. There were also a number of small sites for one or two dwellings - the majority of which were on previously developed sites. In terms of new commercial development, no completions were recorded in the Green Belt during the year.

Indicator EN4**Local Plan Indicator (Policy SADM17)*****Amount of Urban Open Land*****Target:** No development on designated Urban Open Land**Achieved to date:** No change since the start of the plan period

- 7.7 The borough now has around 380 hectares of designated Urban Open Land (UOL), equating to approximately 2.9% of the borough. This is an increase compared with the District Plan in which 1.9% of the borough was designated as Urban Open Land. UOL is protected by Policy SADM17 of the Local Plan, which broadly restricts development within areas of UOL unless the development in question would enhance it. During the year no new applications have been granted for conflicting uses on areas of designated UOL. One application was granted at a site (Ludwick Green) for residential development, however only the bin store of the proposed development fell within the designation. This was not considered to be of a scale which would compromise the value of the UOL and its function as an essential open area was not considered to be detrimentally affected by the proposals.

Indicator EN5**Contextual Indicator*****Changes to the public rights of way network***

- 7.8 Data on public rights of way is taken from Hertfordshire County Council's Definitive Map; which includes all bridleways, footpaths and other rights of way which are not a part of the public highway. The length of public rights of way within the borough is 196.2km.

Indicator EN6**Contextual Indicator*****Open space with a Green Flag Award***

- 7.9 The [Green Flag Award Scheme](#) is managed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, and recognises and rewards the best green spaces in the country. In 2024, the area of open space in the borough with a Green Flag Award totalled 73 hectares. The 52ha Stanborough Park and 6ha King George V Playing Fields in Welwyn Garden City and the 5ha Hatfield Lawn Cemetery all hold the award in recognition of their quality and standard of management.

The sustainability of new development**Indicator EN7****Local Plan Indicator (Policy SADM13)*****Sustainable design and construction*****Target:** No specific targets until after the new Local Plan is adopted.**Achieved to date:** N/A

- 7.10 The amount of new renewable energy capacity being completed is an important indicator, given the general need to reduce carbon emissions. Most small-scale schemes for renewable energy generation (such as solar photovoltaic or thermal panels on houses) do not require planning permission. It is therefore only possible to monitor the large-scale or standalone schemes which do, as well as renewable energy provision in new development. During the monitoring year, four schemes incorporating renewable energy generation were completed. However, for small scale generating schemes it is not known what the overall energy generating capacity is likely to be as this is not always provided by the applicant.

Table 37 – Renewable Energy Completions 2023/24

Energy source	Wind		Solar PV		Solar thermal		Air Source Heat Pump		CHP		Other	
	N°	Capacity	N°	Capacity	N°	Capacity	N°	Capacity	N°	Capacity	N°	Capacity
Committed (In supply)	0	N/A	32	Not Known	0	N/A	14	N/A	1	Not known	7	Not Known
Completed 2023/24	0	N/A	2	Not Known	0	N/A	2	Not Known	0	N/A	0	N/A

Indicator EN8 **Contextual Indicator**
CO₂ emissions per capita

- 7.11 Table 38 lists emissions in kilotons (Kt) over time for both Welwyn Hatfield and Hertfordshire, across three categories of carbon emitters (the most recent figures available are for 2022).
- 7.12 It can be seen that CO₂ emissions have generally been decreasing in recent years. This was initially driven by falls in commercial and domestic emissions, however the data shows transport emissions have also now been declining over the last few years. Welwyn Hatfield’s emissions per capita have historically been slightly above the Hertfordshire average. Following a more significant fall in 2020, likely a result of covid-restrictions, reported emissions increased in 2021 across all sectors, however fell again in 2022.

Table 38 – CO₂ Emissions

CO ₂ Emissions		Commercial (Kt CO ₂)	Domestic (Kt CO ₂)	Transport (Kt CO ₂)	Grand Total (Kt CO ₂)	Per Capita (Tons CO ₂)
Welwyn Hatfield	2017	191.3	169.1	271.9	622.1	5.3
	2018	197.6	168	261.4	616.6	5.2
	2019	183.3	160.5	253.9	586.9	5.0
	2020	167.6	159.4	207.2	523.3	4.4
	2021	185.8	163.7	218.6	557.8	4.7
	2022	177	142.8	215.5	525	4.4
CO ₂ Emissions		Commercial (Kt CO ₂)	Domestic (Kt CO ₂)	Transport (Kt CO ₂)	Grand Total (Kt CO ₂)	Per Capita (Tons CO ₂)
Herts	2017	1377.1	1,787.8	2,935.6	6,012.5	5.1
	2018	1406.1	1,770.5	2,978.6	5,957.8	5.0
	2019	1280.3	1,693.7	2,788.7	5,642.5	4.7
	2020	1185.4	1,680.2	2,693	5,107.6	4.2
	2021	1289.3	1,718.9	2,820.2	5,315.6	4.4
	2022	1228.5	1,505.7	2,565	5,079.1	4.2

Data source: Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Sector - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics-2005-to-2022>

Indicator EN9 **Contextual Indicator**
Amount of the borough within Flood Zones 2&3

- 7.13 Welwyn Hatfield is generally at a relatively low risk of flooding from rivers by virtue of most of its towns and villages being in elevated locations away from rivers and watercourses, although a number of properties are located within Flood Zone 2 (land with a medium probability of flooding) with some also in Flood Zone 3 (high risk of flooding). New

development and other changes within the built environment, as well as improvements in flood risk modelling, mean that flood zones are subject to change over time. Given that the frequency of flood events is likely to increase in the future as a result of climate change, the amount of the borough within Flood Zones 2 and 3 will be important to monitor.

Table 39 – Area of Welwyn Hatfield in Flood Zones 2 & 3

Area in Flood Zone 2 (Medium probability)	Area in Flood Zone 3 (High probability)	Total area in medium or high flood probability
4.45km ²	3.05km ²	7.50km ²

7.14 In 2015, Environment Agency Modelling put 7.5km² of land within Flood Zones 2 and 3 – this equates to 5.8% of the borough. Whilst this is a large amount of land in absolute terms, the vast majority of it is undeveloped. The risk of river flooding to homes is almost entirely limited to a small number of properties in the heart of the borough’s historic riverside villages – for example alongside the River Mimram in Welwyn, alongside the River Lee in Lemsford, and alongside the Mimmshall Brook in Water End.

Indicator EN10 **Contextual Indicator**
Number of Flood Events

7.15 It has not been possible to source complete data on recorded flood events in the borough. However, the lead local flood authority records flood incidents that are reported to their flood risk management team and investigates and reports flooding incidents that meet their assessment criteria.

Indicator EN11 **Contextual Indicator**
Planning applications granted contrary to Environment Agency advice

7.16 The Environment Agency (EA) issues advice on planning applications which raise potential issues relating to flood risk, water quality and contamination. During the monitoring year, EA data (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-agency-objections-to-planning-on-the-basis-of-flood-risk>) indicates that they objected to nine planning applications, of which five were determined during the year with two refused, two withdrawn and one granted after the objection was overcome following the proposed works being redesigned. Therefore, no applications were granted contrary to EA advice during the monitoring year.

Indicator EN12 **Local Plan Indicator (Policy SADM12/Parking Standards SPG)**
New development complying with parking standards
Target: This indicator has no specific target.
Achieved in year: 68% of completions within +/-33% of target (67% for residential schemes)

7.17 The figures below show the compliance of both residential and non-residential completions in the monitoring year against the Council’s 2004 Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Guidance and 2014 Interim Policy for Car Parking Standards. Because the Council treats its parking standards as ‘guidelines’ rather than ‘maximums’, the AMR monitors the number of developments within a tolerance of 33% more or less than the standards.

7.18 Of the 36 sites reported, 25 were within 33% more or less than the standards. Of the 8 residential sites which did not meet within +/-33% of the parking standards, 5 of these sites

were below the guidelines, whilst 3 sites provided more parking than specified in the guidelines.

Table 40 – Compliance of New Development with Parking Standards

Use Class	2023/24 sites completed*	Number within +/- 33% of guidelines	% within +/-33%
A (Retail etc)	0	0	N/A
B (Employment etc)	4	1	25%
C (Residential institutions etc)	2	1	50%
D (Leisure, community etc)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Residential sites	31	23	74%
Total	37	25	68%

*Only includes sites where sufficient information was available to make an assessment

Indicator EN13

Contextual Indicator

New development accessibility by public transport

7.19 The table below shows the accessibility of new homes built to key facilities. The majority of new homes built were within 30 minutes (by public transport or walking) of key facilities.

Table 41 – New homes within 30 minutes by public transport (or walking) of key facilities

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
GP surgery	100%	98%	99%	100%	98%	98.3%	98.6%	93.6%
Hospital	89%	93%	93%	97%	93%	90.4%	99.2%	99.8%
Primary school	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	99.3%	99.4%	93.4%
Secondary school	99%	96%	97%	100%	96%	96.9%	98.2%	99.8%
Employment area	92%	96%	98%	98%	97%	99.0%	99.8%	100%
Major retail centre	97%	97%	94%	95%	93%	97.6%	96.1%	95.1%

Data source: TRACC accessibility software, via Hertfordshire County Council

8. Infrastructure and Movement

This chapter covers the development of the borough's infrastructure, including its future infrastructure needs. The chapter includes an indicator on the amount of 'Section 106' funding held and collected during the year.

- 8.1 Ensuring that development has infrastructure to support it is a key part of making Welwyn Hatfield a pleasant and convenient place to live and work. To do this the Council works closely with other public authorities such as Hertfordshire County Council in respect of education and the Environment Agency in respect of flood risk.

Indicator IN1 Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP13 and Planning Obligations SPD) *Section 106 funds collected and held*

Target: There is no specific target for this indicator
Achieved to date: £1 million received (WHBC); £4.5 million received (HCC) in 2023/24

- 8.2 Section 106 (S106) legal agreements are a key mechanism by which infrastructure, occurring as a direct result of development, can be funded. It is also a means by which funding for other policy requirements can be secured (such as off-site affordable housing where this has been robustly justified); as well as a means to secure other non-financial measures (such as requiring a developer to provide affordable housing within a development site). In the future, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will supplement S106 contributions as means to fund infrastructure provision. [The Council's proposed CIL Draft Charging Schedule](#) has now been submitted for public examination following recent consultations.
- 8.3 S106 agreements are secured in accordance with the Council's adopted [Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance](#). Many S106 agreements require contributions for county-provided services such as education and highways. Although these contributions are requested by the County Council, borough and district councils are responsible for negotiating and collecting contributions from applicants.
- 8.4 During the monitoring year, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council received just under £1m in S106 funding for projects within its own remit. Contributions received were from eleven implemented developments, including:
- The largest sum received was £439,564 from the Land to the northeast of King George V Playing Fields development towards sports, green space, King George V Playing fields Hub and play facilities.
 - £233,425 was received from site 73 Bridge Road East towards healthcare, sports, open space, play area and for the waste and recycling provision.
 - £69,377 was received from Land of south-west of Filbert Close development towards greenspace, sports and play contributions. This includes onsite recycling and waste provisions.
 - £51,179 was received from Roundhouse Farm for indoor sports and green space.
 - £48,998 was received from Hilltop Neighbourhood Centre in High View towards sports and onsite waste and recycling provision.
 - Varying smaller sums were received towards biodiversity and parking service contributions.

- 8.5 Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for higher level services and infrastructure provision. During the year the County Council received just under £4.5 million in S106 funding from developments in the borough towards a range of schemes including:
- Around £650,000 towards transport and travel plans from five separate developments;
 - Just under £3.8 million towards nursery, primary and secondary education, as well as library and youth contributions, from five separate developments.

Indicator IN2	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP13 and IDP)
<i>Delivery of new infrastructure – Section 106 funds spent</i>	
Target:	There is no specific target for this indicator
Achieved to date:	£495,000 spent (WHBC); £530,000 spent (HCC) in 2023/24

- 8.6 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council spent just under £495,000 in S106 funding for projects within its own remit, including:
- £211,109 towards the extension at Burvill House Surgery, Hatfield
 - £62,795 towards refurbishments at Birchwood Leisure Centre Health Suite
 - £62,000 towards refurbishments of diving area at Hatfield Swim Centre
 - £30,000 support for Hatfield Swimming club at Hatfield Leisure Centre
 - £23,361 towards replanting new Poplar trees at Lyles Lane, Welwyn Garden City
 - £16,535 towards replanting and maintenance of Wigmores South flower beds
 - £9,221 towards improvements of accessibility at Hatfield Bowls Club
 - £4,002 towards replacing the wall and fencing at the artificial grass pitches in Break Manor Community Centre
 - £3,158 towards planting of trees at Danesbury Nature Reserve
 - £3,050 towards biodiversity improvements at Alban Way, Hatfield
 - £728 towards improving the woodland edge and upgrading the entrance to Hazel Grove Woodland in Hatfield
 - £49,423 towards providing on site waste and recycling bins to four new residential developments
- 8.7 During the year Hertfordshire County Council spent around £530,000 in S106 money within the borough on a range of projects including education and library contributions, improvements to bus services and footpaths, travel plan monitoring, town centre improvements and highway works.
- 8.8 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which supports the adopted Local Plan is maintained and monitored with the benefit of updates from infrastructure providers including the County Council. A new IDP will be prepared to support the delivery of the next Local Plan which is due to be submitted by October 2026 and will be published when completed.

9. Site Specific Monitoring

This chapter monitors the development and implementation progress on the Mixed-Use Sites and Strategic Development Sites allocated in the Local Plan

- 9.1 There are a total of eight areas allocated in the Local Plan which will be subject to site-specific monitoring, and for each site the respective site allocations policy in the plan sets out a number of targets (these are also listed in Table 19 of the Local Plan).

Welwyn Garden City Town Centre North – Mixed-Use Site (HS7)

- 9.2 The Local Plan maintains the 2005 District Plan allocation of this site for a mixed-use development, and the [Town Centre North SPD](#) was adopted in 2015 following public consultation. 6,000m² of new retail floorspace and 100 new homes are envisaged, and the SPD provides detailed guidance to ensure that development is sympathetic to its conservation area location, whilst also maximising opportunities to deliver the town centre’s development needs. To date, there is no development progress to report on this site.

1-9 Town Centre, Hatfield – Mixed-Use Site (HS36)

- 9.3 The Local Plan includes the allocation of this site to provide new ground floor retail floorspace and new homes above. A planning application was approved in February 2021, work commenced in March 2022 and the site completed in September 2023.

Site-Specific Local Plan Target	Performance to date
1,200sqm (net) new retail floorspace	Total of 1,110 sqm of flexible commercial use floorspace completed, existing retail floorspace lost 730 sqm, net increase of +382 sqm.
At least 66 (net) new homes	71 new homes completed following the end of the monitoring year in September 2023
Improvements to the public realm and accessibility of the eastern end of Hatfield Town Centre	The development included a public space between two of the blocks. The materials and design are the same as those used elsewhere in the town centre, therefore helping to integrate the development with the rest of the town.
A design which ensures a neutral impact on the historic character of Old Hatfield, Hatfield House and Hatfield Historic Park and Garden to the east.	Whilst it was noted that the proposed development may be partially visible from certain viewpoints, this would be filtered by existing trees and buildings and become part of the wider landscape.

High View Neighbourhood Centre, Hatfield – Mixed-Use Site (HS37)

- 9.4 The Local Plan proposes the comprehensive redevelopment of High View to provide more modern retail and community provision as well as new homes. The High View SPD was adopted in April 2011 in order to help to drive the development of this site forward, but because of the condition of the property market since it had been challenging to bring the scheme forward. However, a commercial developer partner was appointed and a planning application was granted in July 2020 for 146 new dwellings, 18 retail units, a doctor’s surgery as well as new public open space. Works have since commenced with 120 of the 146 dwellings completed.

Site-Specific Local Plan Target	Performance to date
The re-provision of at least an equivalent amount of retail floorspace to that which currently exists within the centre.	The planning permission includes 1,081sqm of A1 floorspace, 154 sqm of A5 floorspace and 254 sqm of SG floorspace.
At least 87 (net) new homes	140 (net) new homes in planning permission. 120 of these were recorded as completed in 2022/23.
The delivery of a new health centre, combining existing local GP surgery, dentist and pharmacy provision.	New doctors' surgery and dentist in planning permission.
A design that improves the visibility of the shops and facilities at High View, better integrating them into the surrounding area	The new commercial units will be provided at the ground floor of the apartment blocks that front Bishops Rise, High View and the new cross street (which crosses the centre of the site from East to West linking High View with Bishops Rise).
Improved public realm, including new play area adjacent to St Johns Church	Planning permission includes two new areas of public open space including play area and new public square.

North East Welwyn Garden City (Panshanger Airfield) – Strategic Development Site SDS1

- 9.5 The Draft Local Plan submission proposed the allocation of this site as part of a major urban extension, with a target provision of 650 new homes supported by infrastructure including a new school. During the hearing sessions in June 2018 the inspector observed that the council could consider bringing forward a larger area for residential development and the capacity at this site was increased to 872 dwellings. An outline planning application was granted permission in February 2020 for 650 dwellings, while a further outline application for an additional 210 dwellings was approved subject to s106 agreement in July 2023.

South East Welwyn Garden City (Birchall Garden Suburb) – Strategic Development Site SDS2

- 9.6 The Draft Local Plan submission proposed the allocation of this site as part of a major urban extension, with a target provision of 1,200 new homes supported by infrastructure including a new school, neighbourhood centre, and new parkland. However, concerns were raised in the Inspector's Interim report regarding the Southern part of the site and the impact on openness of the wider Green Belt. Therefore, a reduced site area and capacity of 600 dwellings was proposed through main modifications. The site extends into East Herts District, where a further 1,350 new homes and additional supporting infrastructure are proposed. A masterplan for the site has also now been agreed by the Council to guide the development of the site allocated in the adopted Local Plan. An outline planning application was submitted in July 2022 for a total of 2,650 dwellings, this includes a higher number of dwellings in Welwyn Hatfield (1,300 dwellings) than allocated in the Local Plan. The application is currently awaiting determination.

Broadwater Road West, Welwyn Garden City – Strategic Development Site SDS3

- 9.7 This 16.2 hectare site is situated immediately east of Welwyn Garden City Town Centre across the East Coast Main Line, and comprises four main areas along with some highway and railway land:
- 3.0ha (once the factory and offices of Roche Pharmaceuticals) on which 209 homes were completed between 2012-2014;
 - **Broadwater Road West (N), Pea02b:** 9.1ha (once a factory for Shredded Wheat), which is proposed for allocation in the Local Plan and forms part of site SDS3. A planning application was granted in February 2019 for 1,340 dwellings, as well as 114 care home bedrooms, office floorspace and a number of other uses and supporting infrastructure.

Work has now started on the Southern side of the site and the first 208 homes were delivered during the monitoring year 2022/23. Subsequent planning applications, which would see a higher number of dwellings at this site have been received and are currently awaiting determination;

- **Broadwater Road West (SW) Pall Mall, Pea02c:** 2.1ha (currently occupied by a warehouse and distribution centre), which is proposed for allocation in the Local Plan and forms part of SDS3 and has an estimated target provision of 170 new homes and 11,350m² of new office floorspace;
- **BioPark, Pea102:** 1.1ha (former BioPark research and development complex). This site had planning permission granted in August 2022 for 289 dwellings.

9.8 The [Broadwater Road West SPD](#) was adopted in December 2008. It sets out the Council’s vision and a masterplan to help shape the mixed-use redevelopment of this key site. Whilst the progress of development on the site has been somewhat slower than anticipated, the majority of the land envisaged for redevelopment now has planning permission in place. This will secure the reuse of the most important heritage assets on the site, notably including the landmark Grade II listed silos formerly used to store grain.

Site-Specific Local Plan Target	Performance to date
1,863 new homes across the three sites (Broadwater Road West (N) - Pea02b, BioPark - Pea102, Broadwater Road West (SW) Pall Mall – Pea02c)	First 208 completed at Broadwater Road West (N) in 22/23, further 1,484 with planning permission at this site and the BioPark. Remaining 171 dwellings is expected to come forward later in plan period.
5,800m ² E(g) employment floorspace	None completed to date. Forms part of planning permission for site Pea02b
Provision for community uses, fitness / leisure, retail (about 570m ²), cafés / restaurants / bars and a hotel	None completed to date. Forms part of planning permission for site Pea02b and Pea102
0.8ha new urban space per 1,000 residents	None completed to date. Forms part of planning permission for site Pea02b and Pea102
No loss or harm to protected heritage assets	Some loss as authorised by planning permission/listed building consent.
10% of site energy need from renewable sources	Forms part of planning permission for site Pea02b and Pea102
Introduce traffic calming along Broadwater Road	Forms part of planning permission for site Pea02b
Improvements to the footbridge to the town centre	Forms part of planning permission for site Pea02b
Delivery of new primary school capacity (offsite)	Forms part of planning permission for site Pea02b

North West Hatfield – Strategic Site SDS5

9.9 This site is allocated in the Local Plan as part of a major urban extension, with a target provision of 1,750 new homes supported by infrastructure including a new school and neighbourhood centre. The landowner has carried out pre-application public consultation and the Council is continuing to work with them to secure a successful scheme for the site. This site was examined at the stage 4 hearing sessions in June 2018. The masterplanning process for this site is now underway.

Marshmoor, Welham Green – Strategic Site SDS7

9.10 This site is allocated in the Local Plan as part of an urban extension, with a target provision of over 40,000m² of new employment floorspace in addition to 100 new homes. The landowner has carried out pre-application public consultation and the Council is continuing to work with them to secure a successful scheme for the site.

Appendix 1 – Housing Site Monitoring (at 31/03/2024)

The table below provides an updated summary of the housing supply for the plan period 2016-36.

At 31/03/2024	Completions 2016-24		Under construction		Permission Granted		Local Plan allocations (without permission)	Total
	Windfall	Allocations	Windfall	Allocations	Windfall	Allocations		
Brookmans Park	69	0	1	0	4	0	452	526
Cuffley	56	-1	2	6	26	121	208	418
Digswell	30	0	9	0	1	0	0	40
Hatfield	948	291	145	183	56	0	2,090	3713
Little Heath	6	0	0	0	0	96	0	102
Oaklands & MH	29	0	1	0	1	0	31	62
Welham Green	12	0	0	0	9	0	316	337
Welwyn	192	0	-1	0	1	36	39	267
Welwyn Garden City	1,462	331	2	0	253	2,163	1,853	6064
Woolmer Green	76	0	0	0	0	0	184	260
Rural Areas	77	0	74	0	69	0	4	224
Sub-Total	2,957	621	233	189	420	2,416	5,177	12,013
Windfall Allowance (9 years at 139 per annum)								1,251
Local Plan Small Sites Allowance (less than 10 dwellings)								13
Total								13,277

Appendix 2 – Five-year Housing Supply Sites

This table includes all sites contributing to the five-year housing land supply set out in Indicator HO6 which are considered to be deliverable within the five-year period. It does not include dwellings which have been completed, or sites where all dwellings are expected to be completed beyond 2028/29 (i.e. outside the five-year period).

Site Status	UC	Site with planning permission, under construction
	PG	Site with planning permission, not yet under construction
	RG	Resolution to grant

Site	Permission Ref	Status	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total 5 year supply
Small Sites x 4 - Under construction		UC	4					4
Small Sites x 3 - Permission Granted		PG	-4	5				1
Total Brookmans Park			0	5	0	0	0	5
Land south of Northaw Road East, Cuffley (HS28)	6/2022/1774/RM	UC	60	61				121
Land at The Meadway, Cuffley (HS27)	6/2024/0105/MAJ	RG				36	37	73
Cuffley Motor Company, 71 Station Road	6/2021/0456/MAJ	PG		12				12
1 Maynard Place, Cuffley	6/2021/0773/FULL	PG		6				6
36 The Ridgeway, Cuffley (HS26)	6/2018/2863/FULL	UC	6					6
Small Sites x 2 - Under construction		UC	2					2
Small Sites x 6 - Permission Granted		PG	0	5	3			8
Total Cuffley			68	84	3	36	37	228
59 New Road, Digswell	6/2023/0907/FULL	PG	-1	9				8
Small Sites x 1 - Under construction		UC	1					1
Small Sites x 1 - Permission Granted		PG		1				1
Total Digswell			0	10	0	0	0	10
Land at Southway, Hatfield (HS11)	6/2023/1532/OUTLINE	RG				60	60	120
Former VW Van Centre Comet Way, Hatfield	6/2020/3222/MAJ	UC	118					118
Link Drive, Hatfield (HS39)	6/2019/2431/MAJ	UC	80					80
Land at Onslow St Audrey's School, Hatfield (HS9)	6/2017/1641/MAJ	UC	44					44
Land south of Filbert Close, Hatfield (HS13)	6/2022/0356/RM	UC	39					39
High view (Hilltop) SPD Site, Hatfield (HS37)	6/2019/1067/MAJ	UC	20					20
Sylvia Adams House, 24 The Common, Hatfield	6/2020/3226/PN32	UC	10					10
1 Burfield Close, Hatfield	6/2020/3257/MAJ	PG		10				10
22 The Common, Hatfield	6/2022/0289/FULL	UC	8					8
Car Park north of Salisbury Square, Hatfield	6/2021/3422/MAJ	UC	8					8
Andre House 19-25, Salisbury Square, Hatfield	6/2021/1244/PN11	PG		8				8
12 Harpsfield Broadway, Hatfield	6/2022/1444/FULL	PG	-2	8				6
41-43 Town Centre, Hatfield, Hatfield	6/2021/1805/FULL	PG		6				6
Haseldine Meadows, Hatfield	6/2022/0012/FULL	PG		6				6
59 Lockley Crescent, Hatfield	6/2022/0010/FULL	PG		5				5
Small Sites x 1 - Under construction		UC	1					1
Small Sites x 13 - Permission Granted		PG	-1	15				14
Total Hatfield			325	58	0	60	60	503

Five-year Housing Supply Sites (continued)

Site	Permission Ref	Status	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total 5 year supply
Videne/Studlands, Hawkshead Road, Little Heath (HS47)	6/2022/2317/MAJ	PG		-2	63			61
Land north of Hawkshead Road, Little Heath (HS24)	6/2021/3304/MAJ	PG		34				34
Total Little Heath			0	32	63	0	0	95
Small Sites x 1 - Under construction		UC	1					1
Small Sites x 1 - Permission Granted		PG		1				1
Total Oaklands & Mardley Heath			1	1	0	0	0	2
Small Sites x 1 - Permission Granted		PG		1				1
Total Welham Green			0	16	0	0	0	16
Sandyhurst, The Bypass, Welwyn (HS19)	6/2020/3418/MAJ	PG		36				36
Small Sites x 1 - Under construction		UC	-1					-1
Small Sites x 1 - Permission Granted		PG		1				1
Total Welwyn			-1	37	0	0	0	36
Broadwater Road West SPD Site, WGC (SDS3)	6/2018/0171/MAJ	UC				200	200	400
Bio-Park, Broadwater Road, WGC (SDS3)	6/2020/3420/MAJ	PG			144	145		289
B&Q, Swallowfields, WGC	6/2021/1277/OUTLINE	PG				75	76	151
North east of Welwyn Garden City (SDS1)	6/2018/0873/OUTLINE	PG				75	75	150
29 Broadwater Road, WGC	6/2019/3024/MAJ	PG		128				128
73 Bridge Road East, WGC	6/2020/2268/MAJ	PG			111			111
Creswick, WGC (HS2)	6/2022/1375/MAJ	PG				48	49	97
YMCA, 90 Peartree Lane, WGC (HS31)	6/2019/2714/OUTLINE	PG		-14	43			29
Ludwick Green, Ludwick Way, WGC	6/2021/3367/MAJ	PG	-8	14				6
Small Sites x 2 - Under construction		UC	5					5
Small Sites x 4 - Permission Granted		PG		8				8
Total Welwyn Garden City			-3	136	298	543	400	1,374
London Road, Woolmer Green (HS15)	6/2023/2552/OUTLINE	RG				75	75	150
Total Woolmer Green			0	0	0	75	75	150
Roundhouse Farm, Land off Bullens Green Lane	6/2022/0824/RM	UC	10	45				55
Colesdale Farm, Northaw Road West	6/2019/2760/OUTLINE 6/2023/2455/OUTLINE	PG RG				44		44
Northaw House, Coopers Lane	6/2019/0217/MAJ	UC	9					9
Small Sites 8 x - Under construction		UC	10					10
Small Sites 22 x - Permission Granted		PG	-1	28	7			34
Total Rural areas			28	73	7	44	0	152
Total			418	452	371	758	572	2,571



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