



# Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

## Annual Monitoring Report

### 2023/24



# Annual Monitoring Report 2023/24

Covering 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

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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 -695m<sup>2</sup> in 2023/24. Overall, since the start of the plan period in 2016/17 there has been a net increase of just under 230m<sup>2</sup>.
- 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 +1,162m<sup>2</sup>. Overall, since the start of the plan period in 2016, there has now been a net gain in employment floorspace of just under +7,400m<sup>2</sup>.
- 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 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Welwyn Hatfield 2016-36 Local Plan was adopted<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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

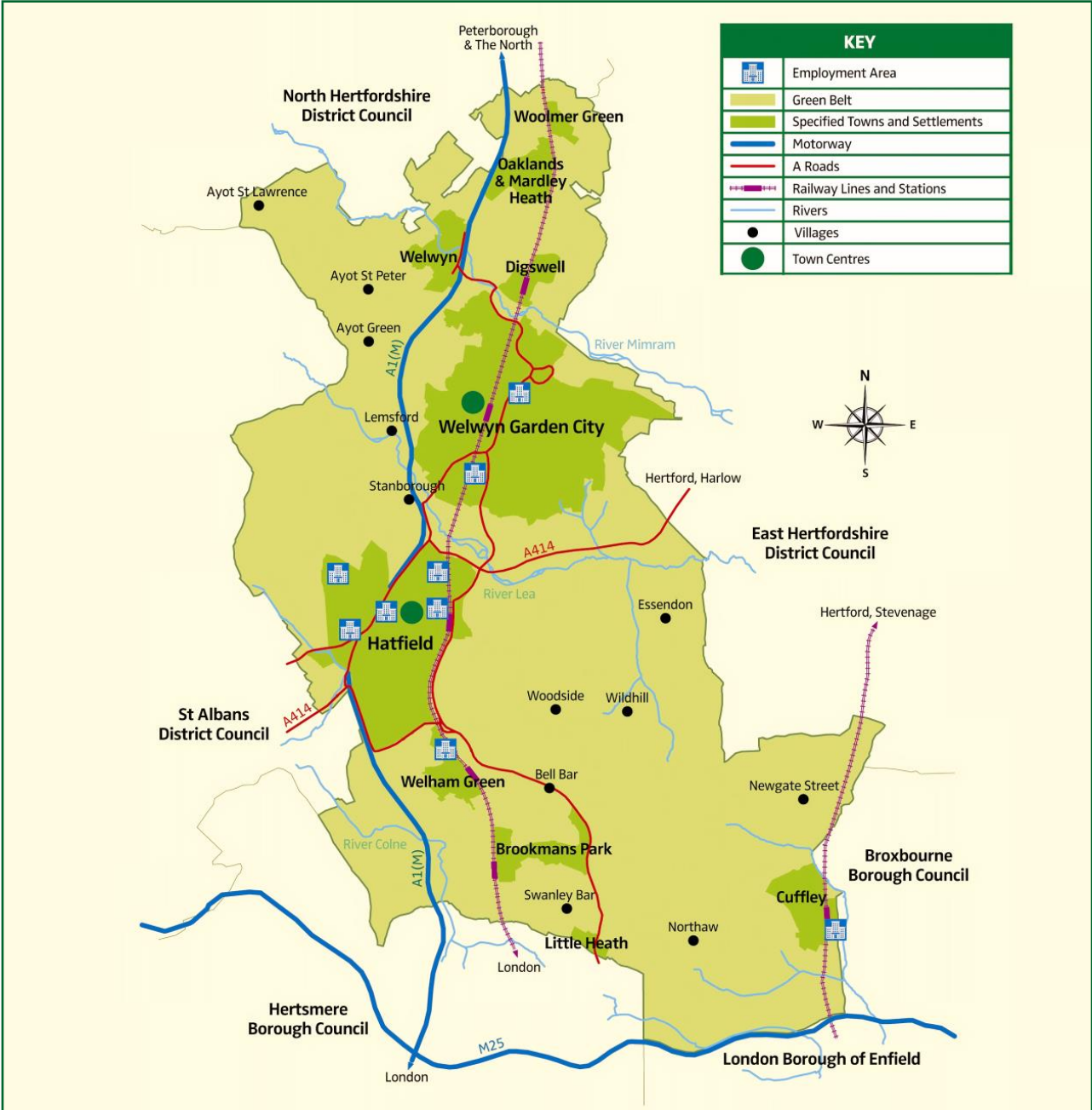
This chapter introduces the borough and its context and contains indicators covering the borough's population and socio-economic state.

## 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**

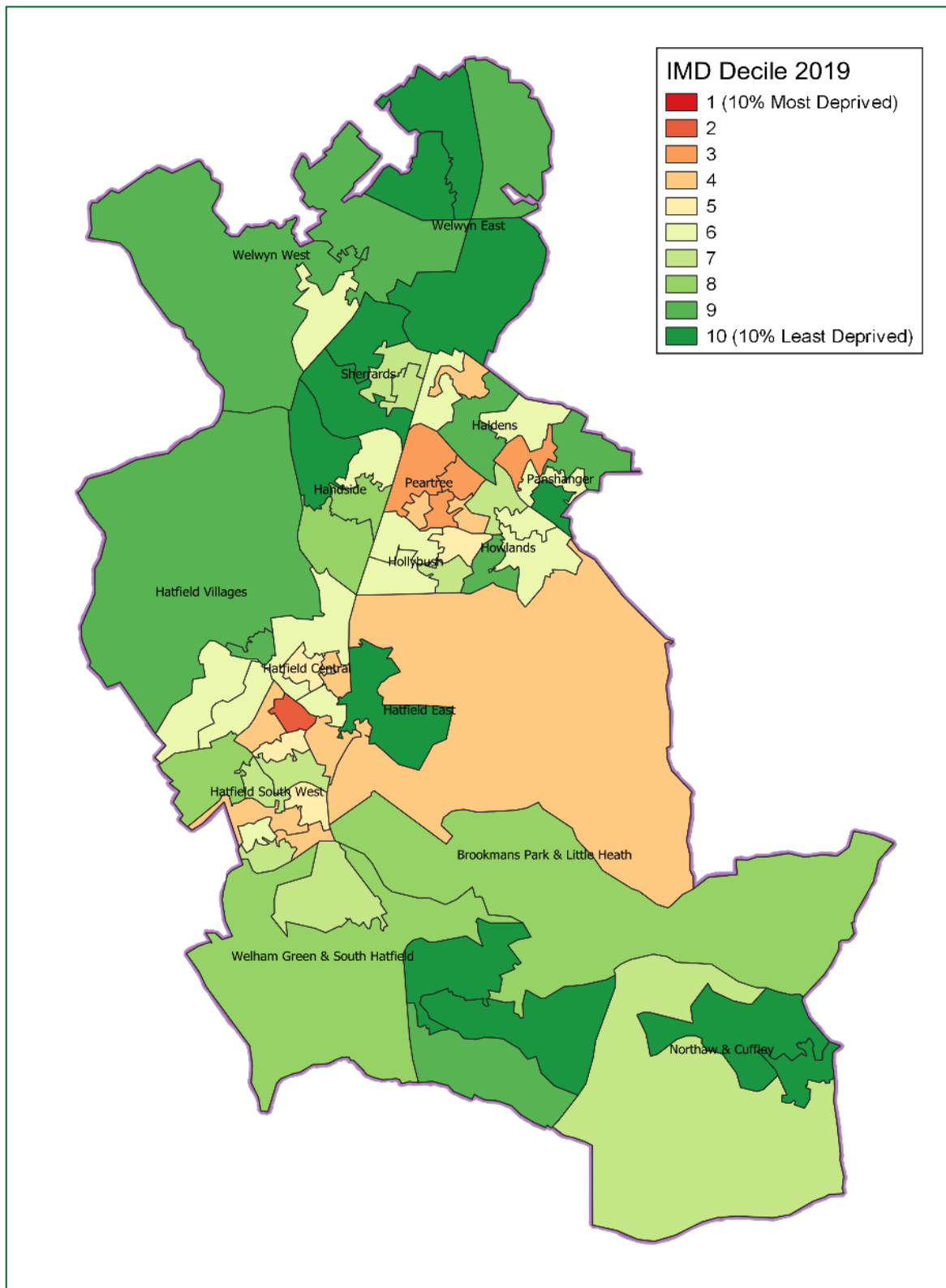
Surrounding Authorities	Mid-2022 Estimate	Natural Change	Internal Migration	International Migration	Other	Mid-2023 Estimate	Annual % change
St Albans	148,524	145	-903	987	2	148,755	0.2%
Hertsmere	108,311	130	31	504	17	108,993	0.6%
Broxbourne	98,999	254	193	586	10	100,042	1.1%
Stevenage	89,616	180	-941	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%
<b>Welwyn Hatfield</b>	<b>120,420</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>-1,532</b>	<b>2,682</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>121,749</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

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 25<sup>th</sup> 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**

<b>Plan-making stage</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
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 2<sup>nd</sup> August – 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

<b>Indicator LP1</b>	<b>Contextual Indicator</b>
<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
<b>NPPF</b>	The National Planning Policy Framework	146
<b>SP9 (LP)</b>	Place making and high-quality design	110
<b>SDG</b>	Supplementary Design Guidance	102
<b>D1 (DP)</b>	Quality and Design	75
<b>D2 (DP)</b>	Character and Context	67
<b>SP1 (LP)</b>	Delivering sustainable development	62
<b>SADM11 (LP)</b>	Amenity and Layout	46
<b>SADM15 (LP)</b>	Heritage	37
<b>GBSP2 (DP)</b>	Towns and Specified Settlements	26
<b>SADM2 (LP)</b>	Highway Network & Safety	24
<b>SADM34 (LP)</b>	Development in the Green Belt	23
<b>M14 (DP)</b>	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.

<b>Indicator LP2</b>	<b>Contextual Indicator</b>
<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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

4.1 This indicator covers changes in the amount of retail floorspace in the Borough. From the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	<b>-630m<sup>2</sup></b>
Out-of-centre	-	-65m <sup>2</sup>	-	-	<b>-65m<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Borough Totals</b>	<b>-630m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>-65m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>-695m<sup>2</sup></b>

4.2 This year there was a net loss in retail floorspace of -695m<sup>2</sup>, this largely resulted from the redevelopment at Salisbury Square in Old Hatfield, with the loss of the seven retail units (630m<sup>2</sup> 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 (246m<sup>2</sup>) 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 229m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace in the borough. Whilst the Local Plan identifies a target of 12,500m<sup>2</sup> 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 280m<sup>2</sup>, 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 280m<sup>2</sup> 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 <sup>st</sup> 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 <sup>st</sup> 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	
<b>Designated Town Centres (% of vacant frontage by length)</b>								
<b>Welwyn Garden City Town Centre</b>		4.1%	8.6%	9.9%	12.7%	9.1%	11.7%	↑
<b>Hatfield Town Centre*</b>		7.4%	10.2%	15.9%	5.9%*	5.9%*	4.6%*	↓
<b>Designated Large Neighbourhood Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)</b>								
<b>Welwyn Garden City</b>	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%	↔
<b>Hatfield</b>	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
<b>Designated Small Neighbourhood Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)</b>								
<b>Welwyn Garden City</b>	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%	↔
<b>Hatfield</b>	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%	↑
<b>Designated Large Village Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)</b>								
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%	↓
<b>Designated Small Village Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)</b>								
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%	↔
<b>Undesignated Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)</b>								
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

*Number of evening economy premises*

## Contextual Indicator

**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.

<b>Indicator CS7</b>	<b>Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP6)</b>
<i>Changes in leisure and community facility floorspace</i>	
<b>Target:</b>	Net gain in community and leisure facility floorspace
<b>Achieved to date:</b>	13,010m <sup>2</sup> 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 <sup>2</sup>	0m <sup>2</sup>
Floorspace loss	0m <sup>2</sup>	0m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Net change</b>	<b>+382m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>No change</b>

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 +382m<sup>2</sup> 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	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP2)
<i>New dwellings and progress against housing target</i>	
<b>Target:</b>	Local Plan target of 760 dwellings per annum
<b>Achieved to date:</b>	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)<sup>2</sup>. 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	<b>671</b>
2017/18	343	28	238	77	<b>315</b>
2018/19	500	38	456	6	<b>462</b>
2019/20	694	21	671	2	<b>673</b>
2020/21	421	69	352	0	<b>352</b>
2021/22	292	34	258	0	<b>258</b>
2022/23	509	22	442	45	<b>487</b>
<b>2023/24</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>Plan period avg.</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>447</b>
<b>Plan period total</b>	<b>3,856</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>3,088</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>3,577</b>

- 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,577</b>	<b>100%</b>

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>	
<b>Target:</b>	<i>No target until 2026/27</i>
<b>Achieved to date:</b>	N/A. 56% of dwelling completions in 2023/24 at allocated sites

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%

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

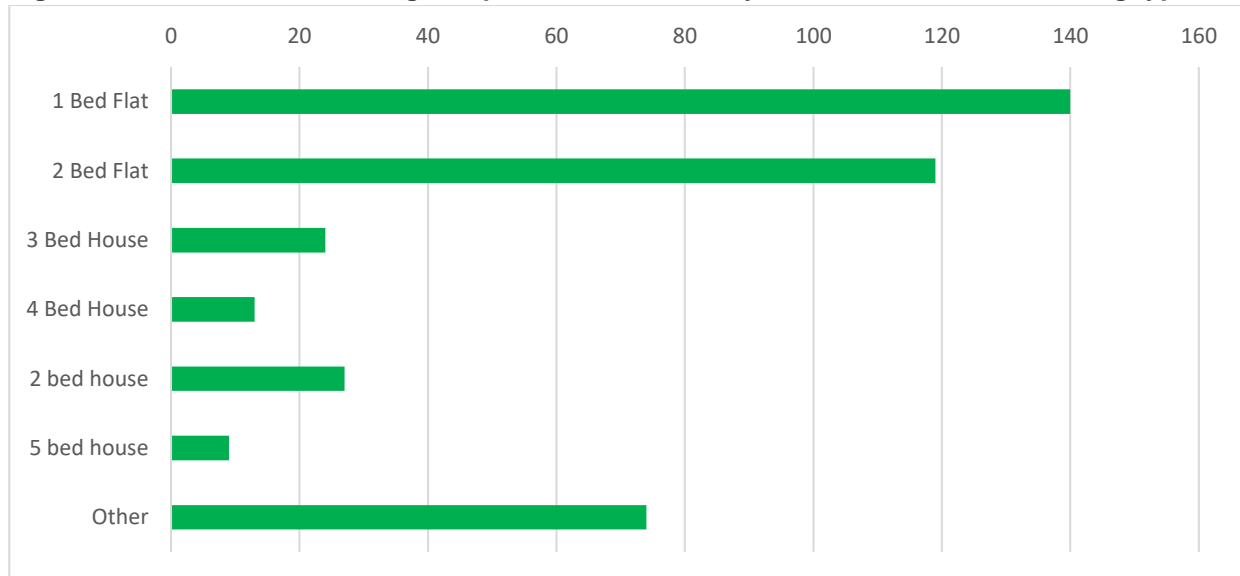
Year	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total
<b>Gross Completions</b>	693	343	500	694	421	292	509	404	3,856
<b>Of which PDL</b>	671 (97%)	322 (94%)	474 (95%)	688 (99%)	351 (83%)	288 (99%)	498 (98%)	388 (96%)	3,680 (95%)

- 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](http://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).

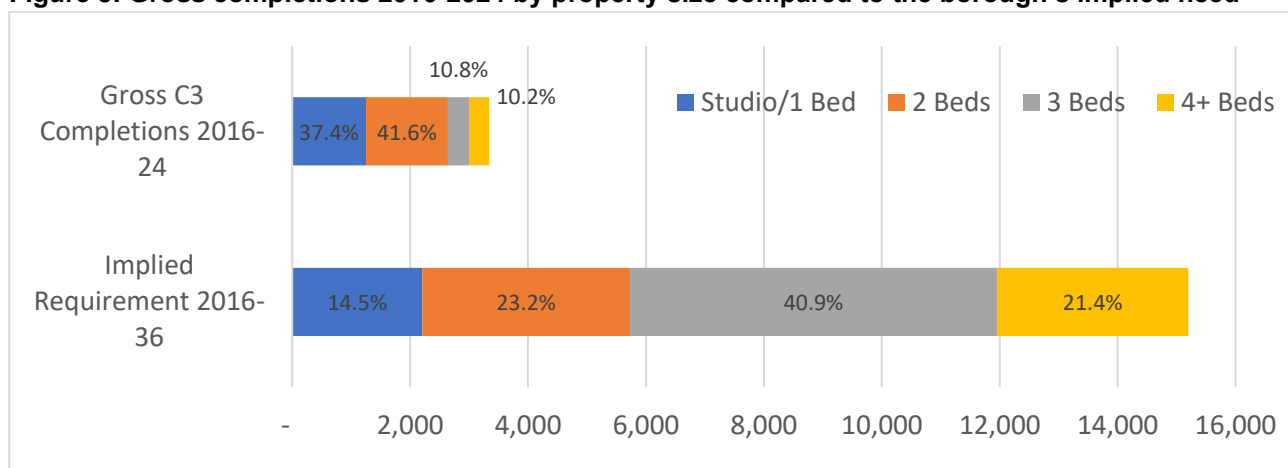
**Figure 4: Gross new C3 dwelling completions in 2023/24 by bedroom count and dwelling type**



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".<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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

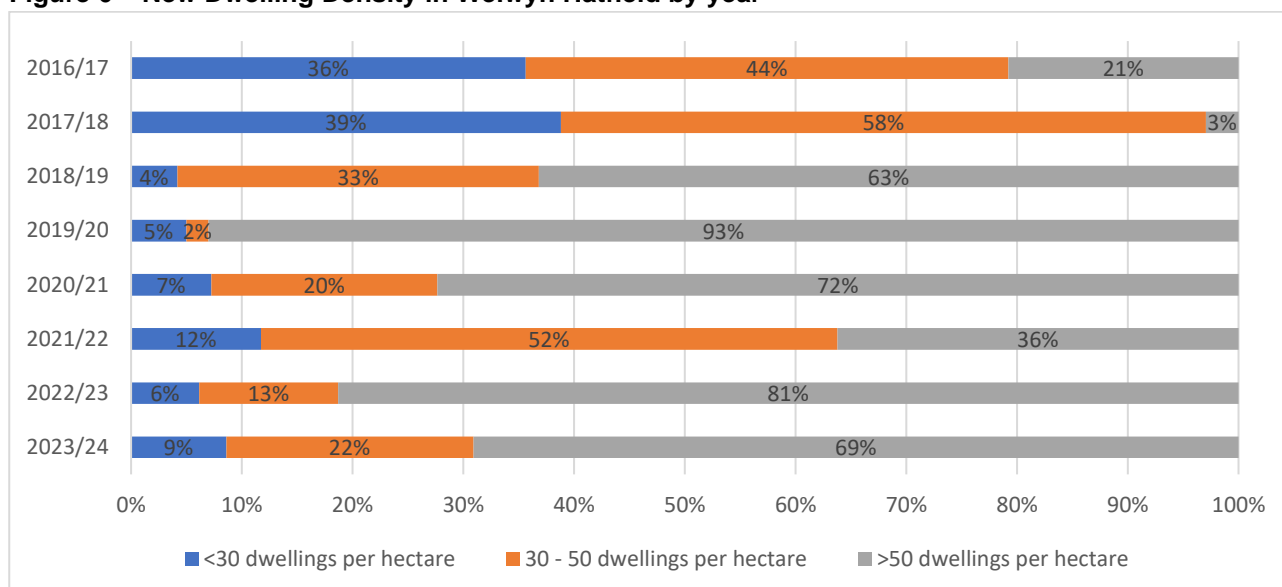
5.13 For the purposes of the AMR, the density of new development is calculated by dividing the number of gross completions during the monitoring year (excluding conversions) by the total development area of all sites. This gives an average density for new dwellings completed in 2023/24 of 55.7 dwellings 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**

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

<sup>1</sup>The 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.

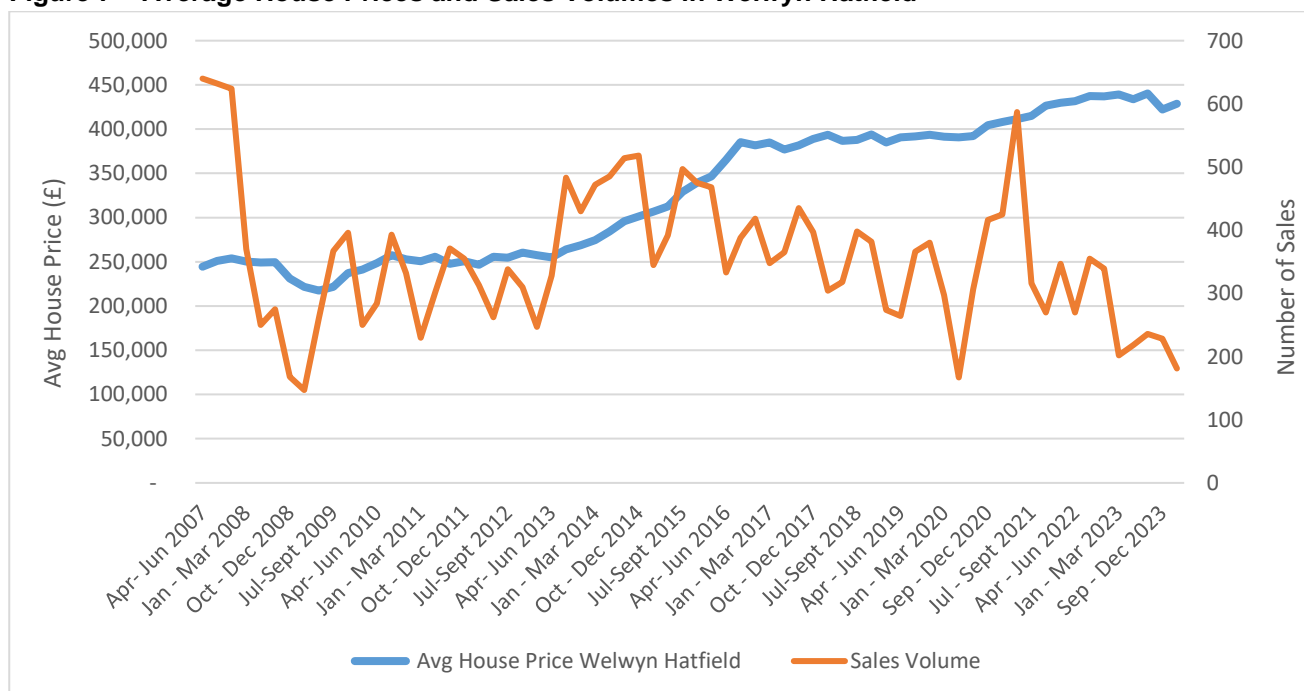
<sup>2</sup>A windfall allowance of 139 dwellings per annum has been made from 2027/28 for completions from future planning permissions not yet known about. Further information on the calculation of the windfall allowance is presented in Examination Documents EX221 and EX276.

## 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
<b>Welwyn Hatfield</b>	£436,201	£431,393	-1.1%
<b>Hertfordshire</b>	£457,117	£441,372	-3.4%
<b>East of England</b>	£351,065	£335,524	-4.4%
<b>UK</b>	£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**

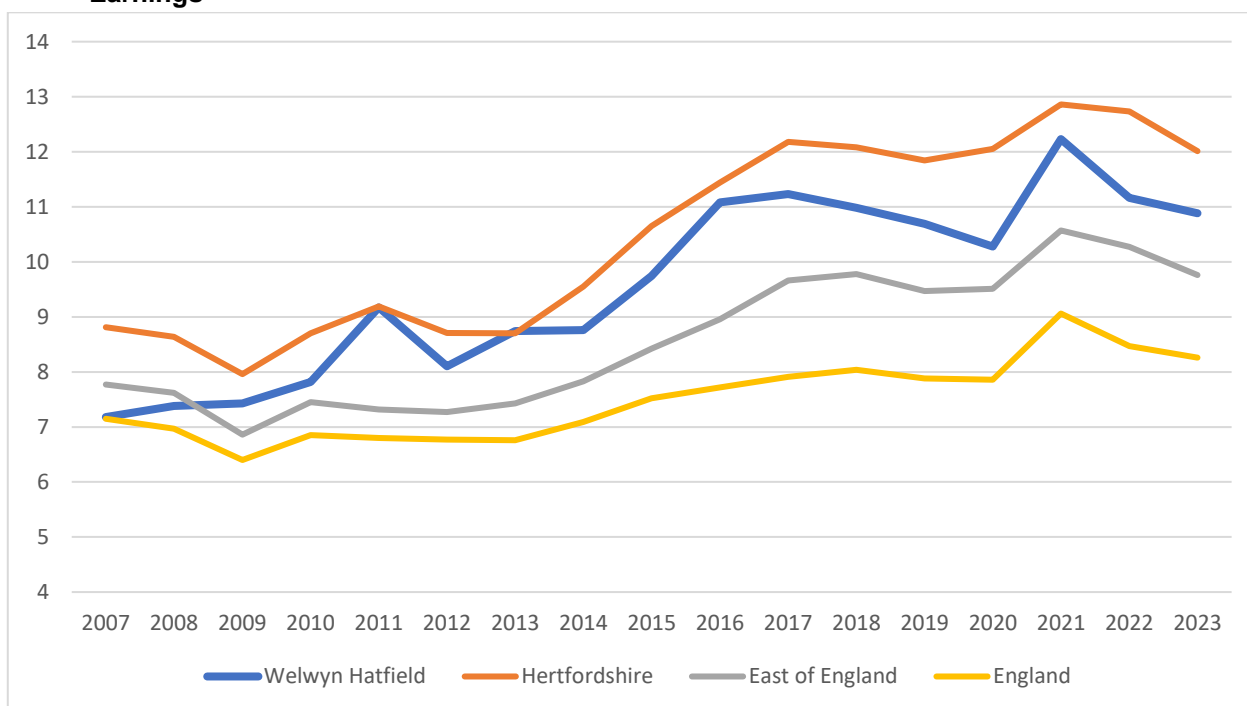
	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flat
<b>Welwyn Hatfield</b>	£922,217	£516,267	£391,187	£245,767

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
<b>Welwyn Hatfield</b>	11.08	11.23	10.98	10.69	10.28	12.23	11.16	10.88	-2.5%
<b>Hertfordshire</b>	11.44	12.18	12.08	11.84	12.05	12.86	12.73	12.01	-5.7%
<b>London</b>	12.03	12.38	12.26	12.05	11.83	12.9	12.5	11.95	-4.4%
<b>England</b>	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%.

<b>Indicator HO8</b>	<b>Contextual Indicator</b>
<i>New affordable housing</i>	

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
<b>Plan Period</b>	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%
	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>50.0%</b>
<b>Plan period avg.</b>		<b>383</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>22.2%</b>
<b>Plan period total</b>		<b>3,062</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>22.2%</b>

\*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 1<sup>st</sup> 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%
<b>2016-24</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>4,377</b>	<b>1,346</b>	<b>31%</b>

\*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.

<b>Indicator HO9</b>	<b>Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP7)</b>
<i>New specialist needs housing</i>	
<b>Target:</b>	Delivery of at least 200 new care home bedrooms throughout the plan period
<b>Achieved to date:</b>	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.

<b>Indicator HO10</b>	<b>Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP7)</b>
<i>Number of people on the self-build register</i>	
<b>Target:</b>	To provide sufficient self-build plots for the number of people on the register
<b>Achieved to date:</b>	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 <sup>4</sup>	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	<b>23</b>
Live elsewhere	7	32	<b>39</b>
<b>All people on register</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>62</b>

**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	<b>1</b>
	C4 > <i>Sui generis</i>	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
Certificate of lawfulness ( <i>For existing HMOs</i> )	C3 > C4 or <i>Sui generis</i>	4	0	0	<b>4</b>
	C4 > <i>Sui generis</i>	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

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

<sup>4</sup> 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

## Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP7)

### *New homes for the Gypsy and Traveller Community*

**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)	<b>0 years</b>

## Indicator HO13

## Contextual Indicator

### *Unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments*

- 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

<b>Indicator EC1</b>	<b>Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP2)</b>
<b><i>New employment floorspace and progress against employment floorspace target</i></b>	
<b>Target:</b>	Delivery of 55,000m <sup>2</sup> new employment floorspace over plan period to 2036
<b>Achieved to date:</b>	Net gain of +1,162m <sup>2</sup> in 2023/24, net gain of +7,400m <sup>2</sup> since 2016/17

6.1 This indicator monitors changes in employment floorspace during the year and over the plan period. From 1<sup>st</sup> 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 (m<sup>2</sup>)**

		Use Classes						
		Eg(i)/ (B1a)	Eg(ii)/ (B1b)	Eg(iii)/ (B1c)	B2	B8	'B Mix'	Total
<b>2016/17</b>	Net change	-17,252	-	-88	614	-451	4,754	-12,423
<b>2017/18</b>	Net change	-5,969	-	0	160	753	1,475	-3,581
<b>2018/19</b>	Net change	-5,930	-	0	79	3,940	-600	-2,511
<b>2019/20</b>	Net change	-2,861	-	-126	-8,394	3,879	1,599	-5,903
<b>2020/21</b>	Net change	-2,073	-	-2,792	284	-1,322	3,629	-2,274
<b>2021/22</b>	Net change	-416	-	-	-	10,918	-	+10,502
<b>2022/23</b>	Net change	-103	-	-	7,760	14,121	639	+22,417
<b>2023/24</b>	<i>Floorspace gain</i>	37	-	589	-	857	-	1,483
	<i>Floorspace loss</i>	-	-	-	-	-321	-	-321
	<b>Net change</b>	<b>+37</b>	-	<b>+589</b>	-	<b>+536</b>	-	<b>+1,162</b>
<b>Plan period net change</b>		<b>-34,567</b>	-	<b>-2,417</b>	<b>+503</b>	<b>+32,374</b>	<b>11,496</b>	<b>+7,389</b>

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 m<sup>2</sup>. 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 11,000m<sup>2</sup>. 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)

#### *Proportion of new employment floorspace on previously developed land (PDL)*

**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)

#### *Employment areas lost to non-employment uses*

**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%
<b>Plan total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>10.94 hectares</b>	<b>3.8%</b>

- 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).

<b>Indicator EC4</b>	<b>Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP2)</b>
<i>Future employment floorspace supply</i>	
<b>Target:</b>	Maintain sufficient supply of employment floorspace to meet the target in <i>EC1</i>
<b>Achieved to date:</b>	Employment floorspace supply of 51,000m <sup>2</sup>

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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

**Table 29 – Employment Floorspace Supply (m<sup>2</sup>)**

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
<b>B1/E(g)</b>	-36,984	8,972	-	51,678	-11,340	<b>12,326</b>
<b>B2</b>	503	-1,678	520	-4,410	-	<b>-5,065</b>
<b>B8</b>	32,374	-1,100	-	-9,500	-	<b>21,774</b>
<b>B/E(g) Mix</b>	11,496	10,461	-	-	-	<b>21,957</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,389</b>	<b>16,655</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>37,768</b>	<b>-11,340</b>	<b>50,992</b>

## Businesses, Jobs and Skills

<b>Indicator EC5</b>	<b>Contextual Indicator</b>
<i>Number of enterprises</i>	

**Table 30 – Number of Enterprises in Welwyn Hatfield**

Type of count	Welwyn Hatfield							Change 2022-23	East Change 2022-23	National change 2023-24
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023			
<b>Number of enterprises</b>	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%)
<b>Number of 'local units'</b>	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**

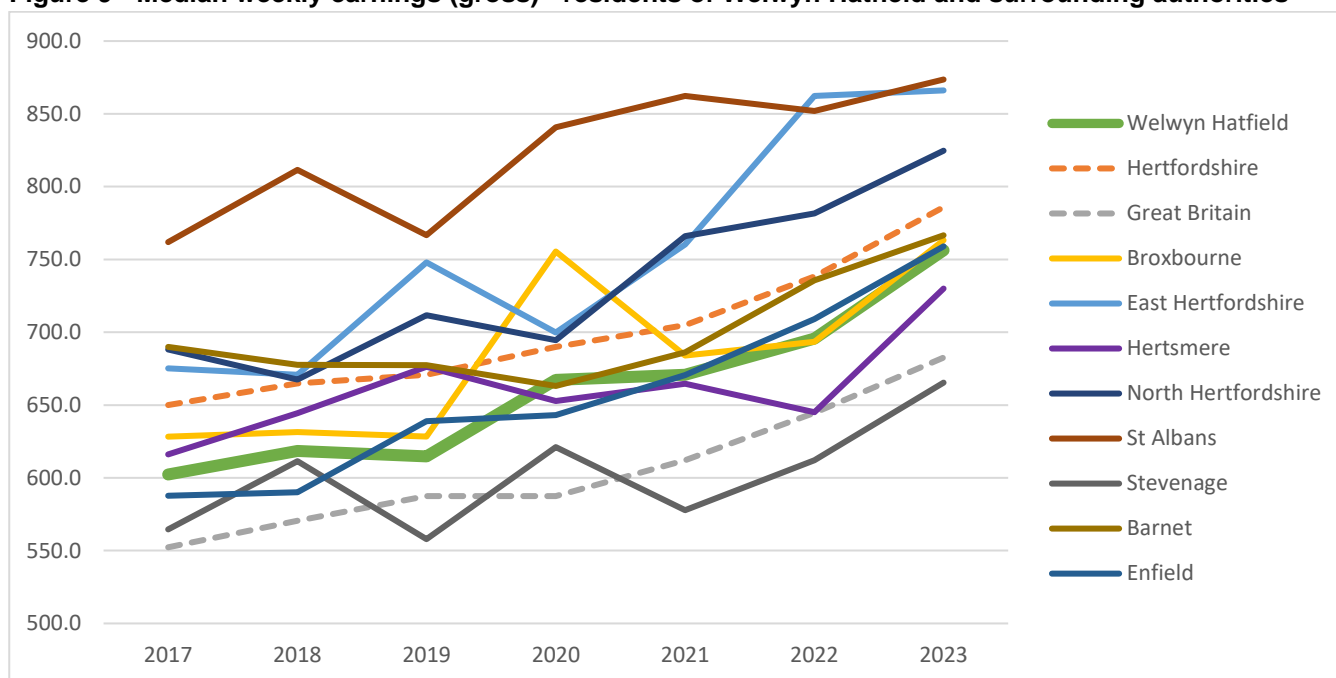
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 2021-22
<b>Welwyn Hatfield</b>	Jobs Total	100,000	101,000	104,000	94,000	96,000	87,000	-9.4%
	Job Density	1.24	1.25	1.29	1.15	1.23	1.11	-9.8%
<b>Hertford- shire</b>	Jobs Total	724,000	734,000	738,000	729,000	753,000	720,000	-4.4%
	Job Density	0.98	0.99	1.00	0.98	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.



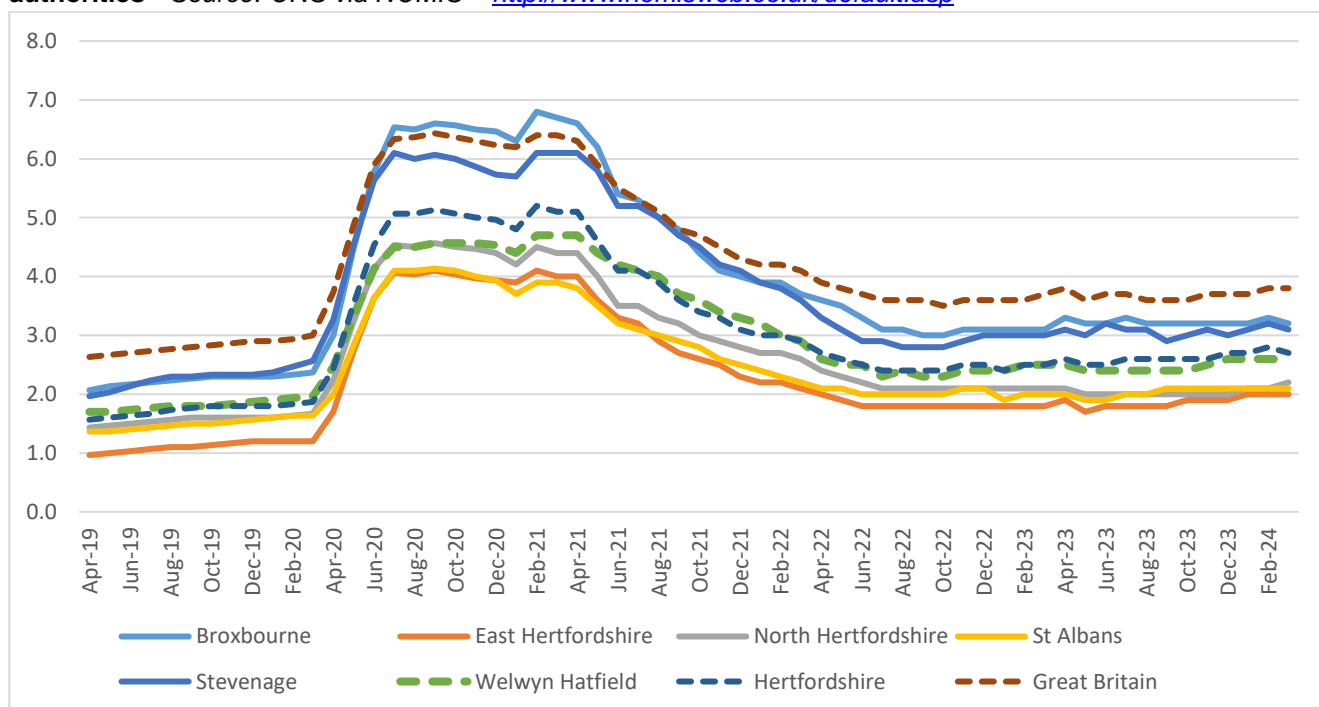
**Table 32- Percentage of residents aged 16-64 in each ward claiming JSA/UC**

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>	
<b>Targets:</b>	No loss of protected heritage assets.
<b>Achieved to date:</b>	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	
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	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
<b>Conservation Areas</b>	9	374ha	10	405ha	+1
<b>Areas of Archaeological Significance</b>	73	1,071ha	73	1,071ha	No change
<b>Scheduled Ancient Monuments</b>	4	n/a	4	n/a	No change
<b>Registered Historic Parks/Gardens</b>	5	1,005ha	5	1,005ha	No change
<b>Heritage assets at risk</b>	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 <sup>2</sup>	0m <sup>2</sup>	0m <sup>2</sup>	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
<b>Committed (In supply)</b>	0	N/A	32	Not Known	0	N/A	14	N/A	1	Not known	7	Not Known
<b>Completed 2023/24</b>	0	N/A	2	Not Known	0	N/A	2	Not Known	0	N/A	0	N/A

**Indicator EN8** **Contextual Indicator**  
**CO<sub>2</sub> 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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 – CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions**

CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions		Commercial (Kt CO <sub>2</sub> )	Domestic (Kt CO <sub>2</sub> )	Transport (Kt CO <sub>2</sub> )	Grand Total (Kt CO <sub>2</sub> )	Per Capita (Tons CO <sub>2</sub> )
Welwyn Hatfield	<b>2017</b>	191.3	169.1	271.9	622.1	5.3
	<b>2018</b>	197.6	168	261.4	616.6	5.2
	<b>2019</b>	183.3	160.5	253.9	586.9	5.0
	<b>2020</b>	167.6	159.4	207.2	523.3	4.4
	<b>2021</b>	185.8	163.7	218.6	557.8	4.7
	<b>2022</b>	177	142.8	215.5	525	4.4
CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions		Commercial (Kt CO <sub>2</sub> )	Domestic (Kt CO <sub>2</sub> )	Transport (Kt CO <sub>2</sub> )	Grand Total (Kt CO <sub>2</sub> )	Per Capita (Tons CO <sub>2</sub> )
Herts	<b>2017</b>	1377.1	1,787.8	2,935.6	6,012.5	5.1
	<b>2018</b>	1406.1	1,770.5	2,978.6	5,957.8	5.0
	<b>2019</b>	1280.3	1,693.7	2,788.7	5,642.5	4.7
	<b>2020</b>	1185.4	1,680.2	2,693	5,107.6	4.2
	<b>2021</b>	1289.3	1,718.9	2,820.2	5,315.6	4.4
	<b>2022</b>	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 <sup>2</sup>	3.05km <sup>2</sup>	7.50km <sup>2</sup>

7.14 In 2015, Environment Agency Modelling put 7.5km<sup>2</sup> 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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>68%</b>

\*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
<b>GP surgery</b>	100%	98%	99%	100%	98%	98.3%	98.6%	93.6%
<b>Hospital</b>	89%	93%	93%	97%	93%	90.4%	99.2%	99.8%
<b>Primary school</b>	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	99.3%	99.4%	93.4%
<b>Secondary school</b>	99%	96%	97%	100%	96%	96.9%	98.2%	99.8%
<b>Employment area</b>	92%	96%	98%	98%	97%	99.0%	99.8%	100%
<b>Major retail centre</b>	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.

<b>Indicator IN2</b>	<b>Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP13 and IDP)</b>
<i>Delivery of new infrastructure – Section 106 funds spent</i>	
<b>Target:</b>	There is no specific target for this indicator
<b>Achieved to date:</b>	£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. 6,000m<sup>2</sup> 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 11,350m<sup>2</sup> 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 <sup>2</sup> 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 <sup>2</sup> ), 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 40,000m<sup>2</sup> 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	<b>526</b>
Cuffley	56	-1	2	6	26	121	208	<b>418</b>
Digswell	30	0	9	0	1	0	0	<b>40</b>
Hatfield	948	291	145	183	56	0	2,090	<b>3713</b>
Little Heath	6	0	0	0	0	96	0	<b>102</b>
Oaklands & MH	29	0	1	0	1	0	31	<b>62</b>
Welham Green	12	0	0	0	9	0	316	<b>337</b>
Welwyn	192	0	-1	0	1	36	39	<b>267</b>
Welwyn Garden City	1,462	331	2	0	253	2,163	1,853	<b>6064</b>
Woolmer Green	76	0	0	0	0	0	184	<b>260</b>
Rural Areas	77	0	74	0	69	0	4	<b>224</b>
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>2,957</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>2,416</b>	<b>5,177</b>	<b>12,013</b>
Windfall Allowance (9 years at 139 per annum)								1,251
Local Plan Small Sites Allowance (less than 10 dwellings)								13
<b>Total</b>								<b>13,277</b>

## 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).

<b>Site Status</b>	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
<b>Total Brookmans Park</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>
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
<b>Total Cuffley</b>			<b>68</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>228</b>
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
<b>Total Digswell</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>
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
<b>Total Hatfield</b>			<b>325</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>503</b>

## 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
<b>Total Little Heath</b>			0	32	63	0	0	95
Small Sites x 1 - Under construction		UC	1					1
Small Sites x 1 - Permission Granted		PG		1				1
<b>Total Oaklands &amp; Mardley Heath</b>			1	1	0	0	0	2
Small Sites x 1 - Permission Granted		PG		1				1
<b>Total Welham Green</b>			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
<b>Total Welwyn</b>			-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
<b>Total Welwyn Garden City</b>			-3	136	298	543	400	1,374
London Road, Woolmer Green (HS15)	6/2023/2552/OUTLINE	RG				75	75	150
<b>Total Woolmer Green</b>			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
<b>Total Rural areas</b>			28	73	7	44	0	152
<b>Total</b>			418	452	371	758	572	2,571





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**Planning Policy**

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