



Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Annual Monitoring Report 2021/22



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Annual Monitoring Report 2021/22

Covering 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

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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 2021 and 31 March 2022.

The borough and its people

- The 2021 Census results show the population of Welwyn Hatfield to be 119,900 persons at the time of the Census in March 2021. This was an 8.5% increase compared with the last Census in 2011, when the population of Welwyn Hatfield was 110,535 persons. This increase was higher than for England, which saw a 6.6% increase, as well as countywide growth for Hertfordshire (+7.4%).
- The Index of Multiple Deprivation is published every 5 years and was released in 2019 by MHCLG, it showed that the borough has one area among the most 20% deprived in England, as the area that had moved out of the most deprived 20% in 2015 moved back.
- Incidents of crime in the borough increased slightly to 69 per 1,000 residents in 2021/22 from 67 in 2020/21. This rate is slightly higher than the Hertfordshire average of 63 incidents per 1,000 residents.
- 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 four indicators.

Planning for the future

- The Draft Local Plan was submitted for examination in May 2017 and hearing sessions of the Examination in Public commenced in September 2017.
- Throughout the examination, further technical work has been requested and modifications have been proposed. The Inspector indicated a need for modifications to increase the housing target in order to meet the previous objectively assessed need for housing of 16,000 dwellings.
- A Call for Sites was undertaken in January 2019, and consultation on the promoted sites in May-June 2019. Following the release of the 2018-based household projections, the Council commissioned a review of its OAN.
- An interim report was issued by the Inspector in October 2020 and June 2021, in which it was concluded that that the new projections represented a meaningful change to the OAN, justifying a reduction in the target to 15,200 dwellings.
- In December 2022 the Council agreed to progress to main modifications consultation based on a strategy of 9,209 dwellings over the first ten years following adoption, with an early review to consider any remaining need. The consultation will take place in January/February 2023.

Monitoring of Local Plan Policies

- The proportion of appeals allowed increased this year at 32%, compared with 19% in 2020/21. This was also higher than the national average of 25%.

Centres, Services and Facilities

- There was a net loss in retail floorspace of around 3,800m² in 2021/22. Overall since the start of the plan period in 2016/17 there has been a net increase of 646m².
- Community facilities saw a reasonable net increase in floorspace of just under 3,000m² during the year.
- Vacancy rates declined in four centres (including Hatfield Town Centre) and increased in three. In Welwyn Garden City Town Centre, vacant frontage length increased further to

12.7% in 2022 from 9.9% in 2021. In the years prior to 2020, vacancy had fluctuated around 3-4%. In Hatfield Town Centre vacancy *decreased* to 13.3% from 21.7% in the 2021 survey. The decline in vacancy was largely due to one larger unit being filled (the new Poundstretcher store). Part of the vacancy in Hatfield is due to the redevelopment at 1-9 Town Centre.

Housing

- There were 292 gross housing completions and 34 losses resulting in a net total of 258 new housing units completed in 2021/22.
- A total of 37 new affordable homes were completed during the year, accounting for 14.3% of total net dwelling completions. Meanwhile 217 affordable dwellings were granted planning permission.
- Against the standard methodology of 888 dwellings per annum, the borough has a housing land supply of 3.2 years. Whilst this is below the national 5-year requirement, until the Local Plan is adopted the borough is unlikely to be able to meet this requirement.
- The average house price in Welwyn Hatfield was £419,407 across the 12 months April 2021 – March 2022. This was 4.6% higher than the same period the previous year.
- Lower quartile house prices were 13.14 times the lower quartile income, which continues to be above the Hertfordshire average of 12.88.

The Economy

- The borough saw a net *gain* in employment floorspace this year (+10,502m²), as a result of the completion of four industrial units (B8 use) at Cole Green Lane, on the eastern edge of Welwyn Garden City. However, overall there has been a net *loss* in employment floorspace since the start of the plan period in 2016/17 of -16,190m².
- Data from the ONS on the number of claimants of Job Seekers Allowance/Universal Credit shows that the rate of claimants in Welwyn Hatfield has been steadily declining since peaking at 4.7% between Feb-Apr 2021. In March 2022, the rate of claimants was 2.8%, still above the rate recorded prior to the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020 (of 1.9%).

Environmental Assets

- There was one new Local Wildlife Site designated by the Wildlife Trust in 2021/22, the River Mimram (Codicote Bottom to Pumping Station). The 0.27ha site is included under the designation of flowing water (rivers and streams), which was a new criteria for 2021. The total area of Wildlife Sites in the borough was recorded at 1,664.46ha in 2021.

Infrastructure and Movement

- During the year, the Council received £580,000 in Section 106 funds secured from new development, committed to a range of Borough Council projects;
- Hertfordshire County Council received £252,000 in Section 106 funds from new development during the year, funding schemes related to education and transport.
- Phase 1 of the improvement works to Welwyn Garden City town centre commenced in July 2021 and had completed by the start of 2022. This first phase upgraded the area in and around Stonehills, including the reconfiguration of parking bays as well as a new public space being provided. The next phase includes a dedicated space for cycling on Bridge Road (Hunters Bridge), Wigmores North and Fretherne Road, which commenced following the end of the monitoring year in late Summer 2022.

Introduction to the AMR

What is the AMR?

This Annual Monitoring Report, produced by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, covers the period between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 (referred to throughout as ‘the year’).

AMRs serve a number of purposes:

- To act as a record of the amount of development which has taken place in the borough during the year and of how the borough’s population and places are performing;
- To assess how that development meets the Council’s aspirations across a number of indicators, and compares to the progress made in previous years;
- To set out projections and expectations for future development in the borough, as well as acting as a feedback mechanism for policies and approaches which may need to change;
- To set out the Council’s progress against its ‘Local Development Scheme’, a high-level project plan for the production of new planning documents and policies;
- To report on the Council’s efforts under its ‘duty to cooperate’ with other public authorities.

Chapters and contents

The main contents of the AMR are set out across 9 chapters, and follow the structure of the new Local Plan. Most contain a number of specific indicators (see below) 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 three Mixed Use Sites and seven Strategic Development Sites proposed to be allocated in the Draft Local Plan.

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 36 Local Plan indicators each specifically relate to at least one policy in the Draft Local Plan. Now that it has been submitted for examination, the majority of indicators monitor progress against a specific target or threshold set out in the Plan in order to understand if objectives are being delivered effectively. During the December 2019 hearing sessions the Council agreed that the start date of the plan should move to 2016 and the end date to 2036. As a result, indicators which include figures for the plan period to date have been revised to start from 2016/17 rather than 2013/14, as was presented in some earlier AMRs. The contextual indicators do not specifically relate to Local Plan policies, but are just as crucial in indicating how the borough’s people and places are performing. They are also an essential part of the Sustainability Appraisal process taking place alongside the Local Plan, in helping to identify cases where an unexpected significant adverse environmental impact might occur. As these indicators are contextual and relate to issues outside the Council’s direct control, it is not appropriate for them to have targets.



1. The Borough and its People

This chapter introduces the borough and its context, and contains four 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. Around 79% of the borough is currently designated as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt – this is a relatively high proportion, reflecting the borough's extensive countryside in such 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 46,600 at the 2011 Census – around 42% of the borough's total population. The other main town is Hatfield, only slightly smaller with an estimated population of 37,200 in 2011 – 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 College is also located within the borough, south of Brookmans Park.
- 1.3 The remaining 24% of the borough's population lives in a number of smaller settlements and in rural areas. The larger 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 small part of the town of Potters Bar, largely in Hertsmere, but which extends beyond the border. 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

Borough population

Contextual Indicator

- 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, not as high as some surrounding areas, such as Watford (+13.3%) and East Herts (+9.0%).

Table 1: Usual Resident Population - Local Area Comparison

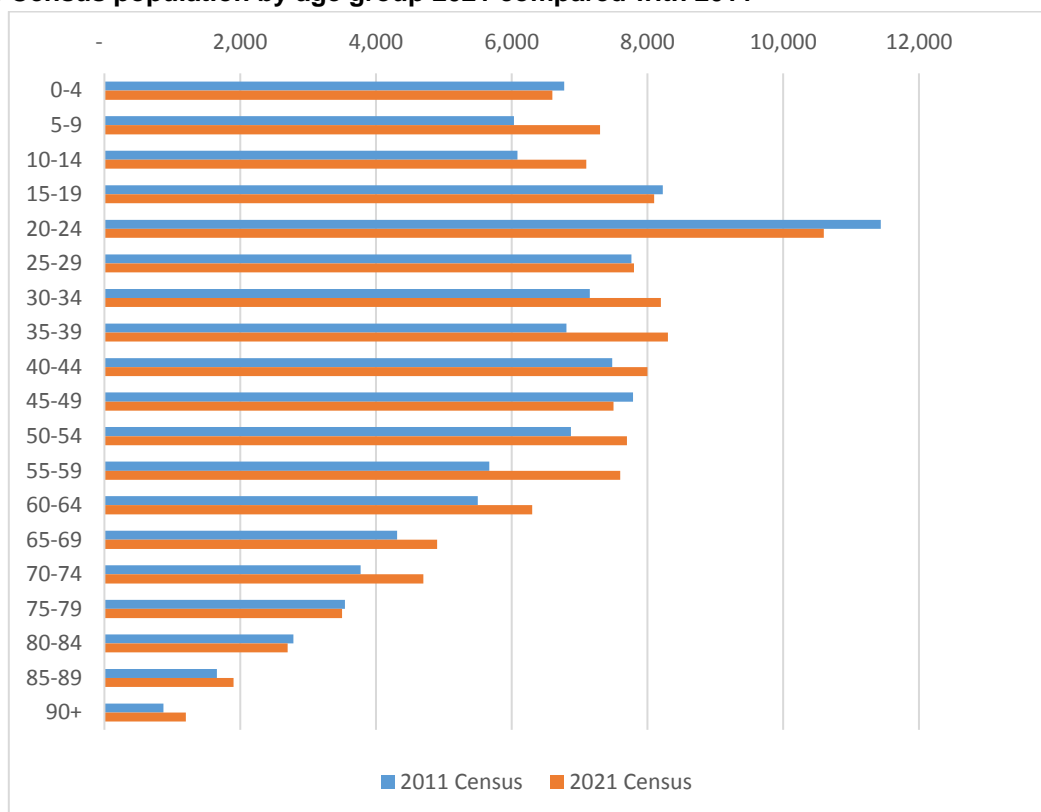
	Population 2011 Census	Population 2021 Census	Change (persons)	% Change 2021 compared with 2011
Broxbourne	93,609	99,000	+5,391	5.8%
Dacorum	144,847	155,100	+10,253	7.1%
East Hertfordshire	137,687	150,100	+12,413	9.0%
Hertsmere	100,031	107,800	+7,769	7.8%
North Hertfordshire	127,114	133,200	+6,086	4.8%
St Albans	140,664	148,200	+7,536	5.4%
Stevenage	83,957	89,500	+5,543	6.6%
Three Rivers	87,317	93,800	+6,483	7.4%
Watford	90,301	102,300	+11,999	13.3%
Welwyn Hatfield	110,535	119,900	+9,365	8.5%
Barnet (London)	356,386	389,300	+32,914	9.2%
Enfield (London)	312,466	330,000	+17,534	5.6%
Hertfordshire (county)	1,116,062	1,198,800	+82,738	7.4%
East (region)	5,846,965	6,334,500	+487,535	8.3%
England	53,012,456	56,489,800	+3,477,344	6.6%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021 First Results

- 1.7 The 2021 population for Welwyn Hatfield of 119,900 was around 4,000 persons fewer than the last ONS mid-year estimate for 2020 of 123,893 persons, indicating that the ONS mid-year estimates may have been overestimating Welwyn Hatfield's population. The population projections for 2021 also appear to have over-estimated Welwyn Hatfield's population, by around 5,000 persons in the 2018-based principle projections and 7,000 persons in the 2018-based alternative internal migration projections.
- 1.8 The timing of the Census on 21st March 2021 means that the coronavirus pandemic may have had some impact on where people lived at the time of the Census - particularly relevant for Welwyn Hatfield given the large student population. However, it is unlikely that such a large difference in numbers can be entirely due to the effects of the pandemic. This overestimation could also potentially point towards the previous issues around estimating international migration, as well as emigration of students after they complete their studies (this was discussed in the 2015/16 AMR). However, without further detailed data it is difficult to draw such conclusions at this stage.
- 1.9 The chart on the next page shows the 2021 Census population split by five-year age group, compared with 2011. The 20-24 age group continues to make up the largest proportion of Welwyn Hatfield's population, which is unsurprising given the student population. However, the total number of 20-24 year olds living in the borough has fallen by around 800 persons

compared with 2011. This group now make up 8.8% of the total population compared with 10.3% in 2011. Meanwhile, the number of 55-59 year olds living in the borough saw reasonable increase of just under 2,000 persons, now making up 6.3% of the population compared with 5.1% in 2011.

Figure 2: Census population by age group 2021 compared with 2011



Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021 First Results

1.10 The first 2021 Census results 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 – again likely reflecting the student population of the borough.

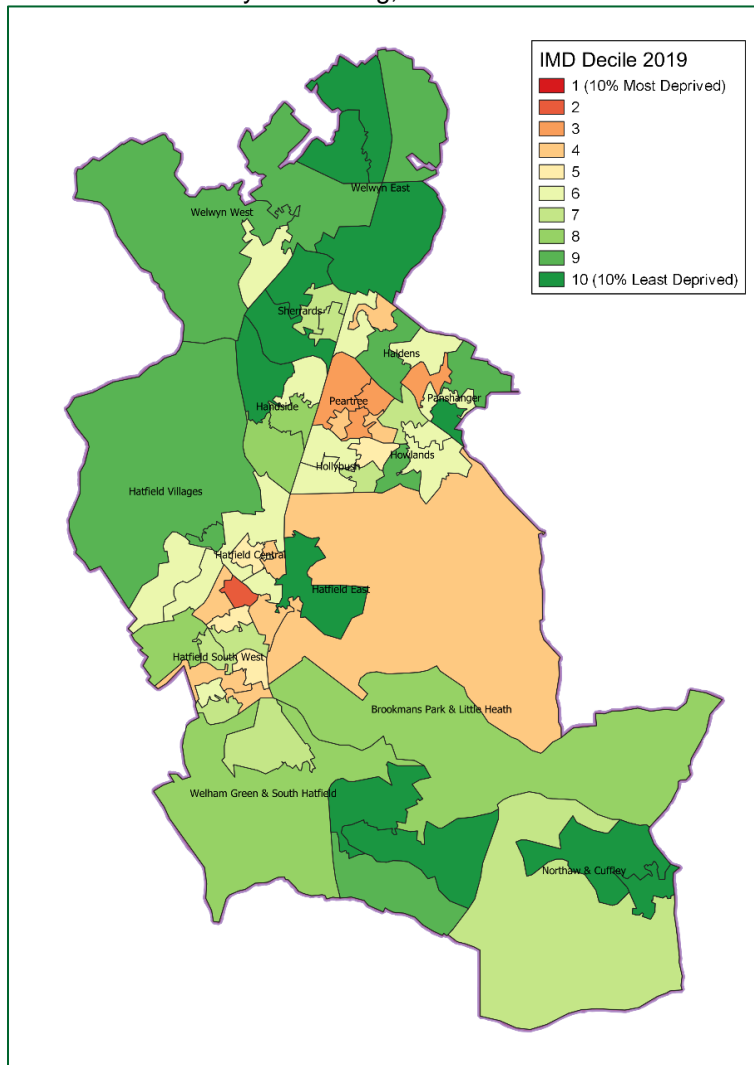
Health and social well-being

Indicator BP2 Contextual Indicator Number of deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)

1.8 ‘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.

- 1.9 The IMD is published roughly every five years with the most recent published in September 2019 – 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.
- 1.10 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 3 – 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**

1.11 Following a reasonable decline in 2020/21, recorded incidences of crime in Welwyn Hatfield increased slightly during the year to 8,520 from 8,275 in 2020/21 (+3%). This increase was slightly less than for Hertfordshire which saw a 5% increase in recorded incidences to 74,930 in 2021/22 from 71,367 in 2020/21. Table 2 below presents recorded incidences per 1,000 of the population, Welwyn Hatfield continued to record a slightly higher number of reported crimes compared with Hertfordshire.

Table 2 - Recorded Incidences of Crime

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Recorded offences per 1,000 population in Welwyn Hatfield	77	67	69
Recorded offences per 1,000 population in Hertfordshire	71	60	63

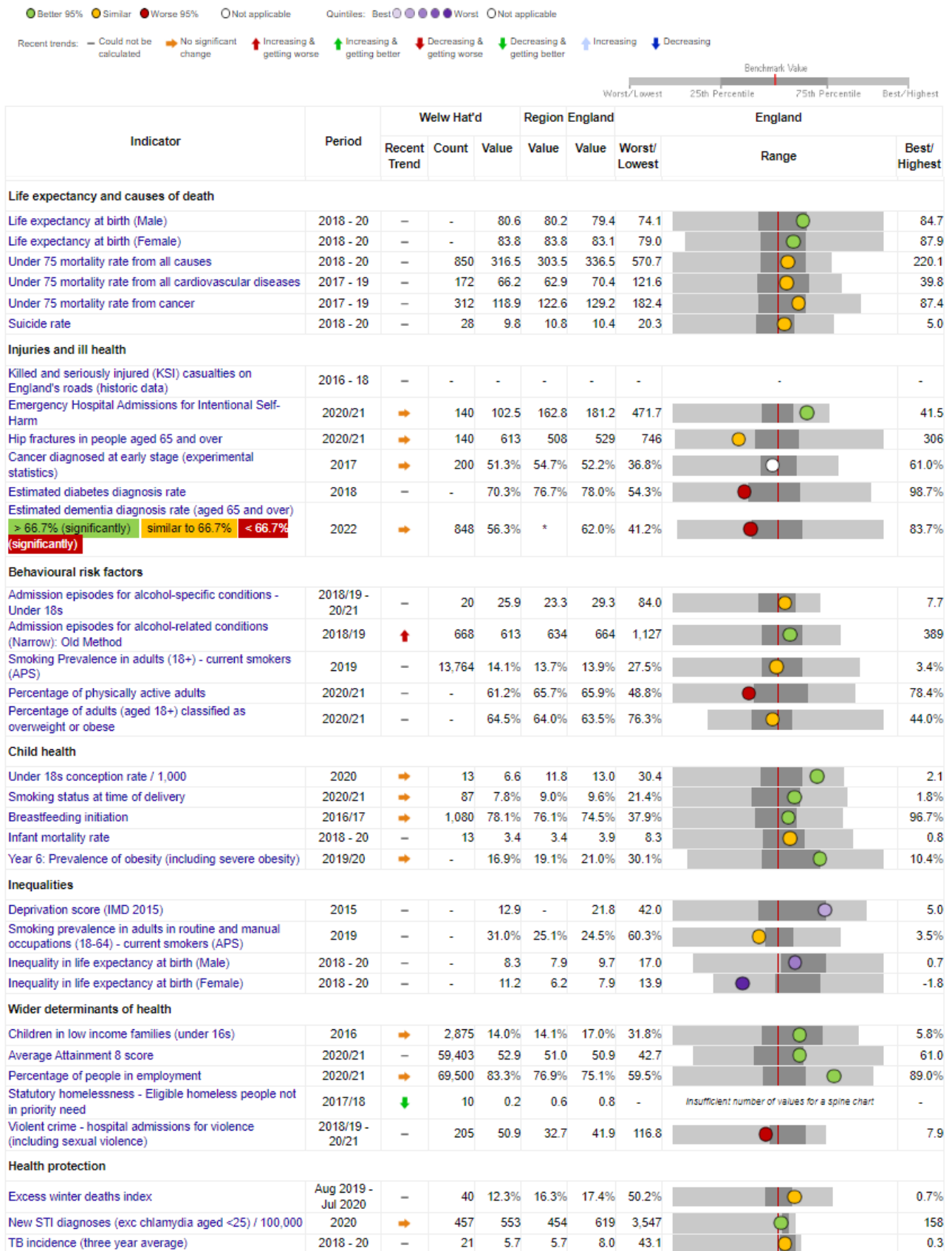
Source: Home Office, [Police recorded crime open data tables by Community Safety Partnership](#)

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

1.12 The latest figures covering 2018-20 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, 1.2 years above the national average, and for women 83.8 years, 0.7 years above average. This is a very slight decline compared with figures for 2017-19, when the average was 80.9 years for men and 84.2 years for women.

1.13 Welwyn Hatfield scored better than the national average for 12 indicators and worse than the national average for 4 indicators in Public Health England's Public Health Profiles. Last year the borough performed better than average for 14 indicators and worse than average in 3 indicators. 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. The average estimated diabetes diagnosis rate for 2018 was 70.3% compared with 78% nationally. Welwyn Hatfield also continued to score below average in terms of dementia diagnosis in the latest data for 2022 (56.3% compared with 62.0% nationally). Hospital admissions for violence also remained worse than the national average. The percentage of physically active adults also scored below average in the most recent data (2020/21) at 61.2% for Welwyn Hatfield compared with 65.9% nationally. The borough performs better than the national average in a number of indicators, including life expectancy.

Figure 3 - Welwyn Hatfield 2021 Public Health Profile Indicators



Source: Public Health England. Public Health Profiles. <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk> © Crown Copyright 2022



2. Planning for the future

This chapter summarises the progress made on the preparation of the borough's emerging 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 dictate otherwise. As the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan is under examination (see paragraph 2.6), the policies can be given a limited amount of weight in determining planning applications¹, however the saved policies in the [2005 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan](#) currently remain the adopted Local Plan for the borough.
- 2.2 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 together work carried out to form a single Minerals and Waste Local Plan, having undertaken consultation on a Draft version of this following the end of the monitoring year in July-Oct 2022.
- 2.3 The Council produces a number of supplementary plans and guidance, which expand on policies in the District Plan or cover specific areas of the borough. No new supplementary plans or guidance have been published during the year, partly because of the continued focus on the Draft Local Plan examination. However, new supplementary plans and guidance will be produced once the Local Plan has been adopted, and will assist in its implementation (particularly for the strategic development sites in Chapter 9).
- 2.4 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](#)
 - [Digswell Character Appraisal](#)

¹ In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 48.

Planning for the future of Welwyn Hatfield

2.5 [The Local Development Scheme](#) (LDS) is the means by which the Council formally sets out the proposed programme for the preparation of the Local Plan, as well as other key planning documents such as the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule. It is a procedural requirement that Local Plans are prepared in accordance with an adopted LDS. The LDS is currently being reviewed to bring in line with the examination programme.

2.6 Welwyn Hatfield's Draft Local Plan is currently under examination and once adopted will replace the 2005 District Plan. Following consultation on the Draft Local Plan in 2016/17, a list of minor modifications were recommended by the Council in spring 2017. The Draft Local Plan was subsequently submitted for examination on 15th May 2017. The submitted Draft Local Plan covered the period from 2013 to 2032, however, during the examination the council agreed that the start date of the plan should move to 2016 and the end date of the plan to 2036. During the examination the soundness and legal compliance of the plan is considered. The process includes a number of [hearing sessions](#) of the Examination in Public (EIP), these sessions commenced in September 2017 and concluded in March 2021:

- Stage 1 - Legal soundness and duty to co-operate (21st - 22nd September 2017);
- Stage 2 - Objectively assessed needs, Green Belt, spatial vision and targets and housing land availability (24th - 27th October 2017);
- Joint Session with EHDC - Birchall Garden Suburb (30th January 2018);
- Stage 3 - Topic specific and development management policies, including: community services, transport, retail, housing, the local economy, infrastructure and new schools (20th – 22nd February 2018);
- Stage 4 - Sites in Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield (28th – 29th June 2018);
- Stage 5 - Green Belt Study (6 - 7th November 2018);
- Stage 6 - Birchall Garden Suburb, Housing need forecasts, Employment land need (16th – 18th December 2019);
- Stage 7 - Birchall Garden Suburb (Southern Section) and Symondshyde (10th - 12th March 2020);
- Stage 8 – Covering the villages – Oaklands & Mardley Heath, Welwyn, Woolmer Green, Brookmans Park, Little Heath, Cuffley, Welham Green, as well as Development Management Policies SP7, SP8, SP17 and SP21 (28th - 30th July 2020, 18th - 19th August 2020, 25th-26th August 2020).
- Stage 9 – Green Belt Boundaries, Objectively Assessed Need, Windfall (22nd-24th February 2021), Further settlement sessions (March 2021).

2.7 Throughout the examination, further technical work has been requested by the examining Inspector and a number of modifications have been proposed. This included further work in relation to the Green Belt and consequently the [Stage 3 Green Belt Study](#) was commissioned, published and subsequently examined at the stage 5 hearing session in November 2018.

2.8 During the examination, the Inspector indicated a need for modifications to the plan to increase the housing target in order to meet the objectively assessed need for housing (OAN), which at that point was acknowledged to be around 16,000 homes. A Call for Sites was undertaken in January 2019 and [consultation on sites promoted through the Call for Sites](#) took place in May/June 2019. An update to the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), which was published in January 2020, assessed the suitability,

availability and achievability of these promoted sites for development, while the Site Selection Background Paper considered different options for the selection of sites and was presented to Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel (CPPP) on 23rd and 29th January 2020.

- 2.9 Following the release of the 2018-household projections in June 2020, the Council commissioned a review on the implications of the updated projections on its Objectively Assessed Need for housing which was published in September 2020. This was subject to consultation which was carried out by the Inspector and consequently examined at a Hearing session in February 2021. In a series of reports issued in June 2021, the examining Inspector concluded that the new projections represented a meaningful change to the OAN, justifying a reduction in the target from 16,000 (800 dwellings per annum) to 15,200 (760 dwellings per annum), over the 2016-36 plan period.
- 2.10 At a meeting of the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel (CPPP) on 13th January 2022, members agreed that a strategy to meet an OAN of 15,200 could not be supported. Following a further review of the sites available, the Council then agreed - in July 2022 - to a strategy which would provide 12,775 dwellings over the plan period 2016-2036, of which 8,517 of these dwellings would deliver over the first ten years following adoption (assumed to be in 2023/24). An early review would then consider opportunities to meet the remaining need, which would be undertaken in the context of housing need and national policy at the time of the review. Following this, the Council received a response from the Inspector in September 2022 which indicated that a supply of 9,200 dwellings over the first ten years could be found sound. However, this would require the inclusion of three sites that were in the submitted Draft Local Plan, however were not in the strategy agreed by the Council in July 2022. At a meeting of Full Council in December 2022, the Council agreed to progress to main modifications consultation based on a strategy which includes the three sites and amounts to 9,209 dwellings over the first ten years and 13,392 dwellings over the plan period, with an early review to consider any remaining need. The Local Plan Main Modifications Consultation will run from 4th January 2023 to 15th February 2023.
- 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 from 15th May 2017 to 26th June 2017. The consultation informed the production of the Draft Charging Schedule (DCS), which was subject to an eight week public consultation running from 30th September 2020 to 25th November 2020. Given the links between the Local Plan and CIL, further advancement has been difficult without greater certainty on the likely adoption date of the Local Plan. However, CIL will be progressed further as soon as is possible.

The Duty to Cooperate

- 2.12 The 'duty to cooperate' requirement was introduced via the 2011 Localism Act. Whilst planning authorities and other public bodies have clearly always aimed to cooperate, it was included in paragraph 178 of the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and has continued to feature in revised versions. Paragraphs 24-27 of the July 2021 NPPF 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.

- 2.13 Liaison has taken place with a number of duty to cooperate bodies throughout plan preparation in order to identify what the specific priorities with cross-boundary implications involving Welwyn Hatfield are, so that these matters are properly addressed in the Local Plan:
- Joint working with East Herts District Council on proposals for Birchall Garden Suburb, which overlaps the administrative boundary between the two authorities. This has culminated in jointly-agreed policy wording and strategy diagrams being included in each authority's submitted Local Plan, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding. Birchall Garden Suburb was examined through a joint hearing session with East Herts in January 2018;
 - Similarly a statement of common ground was produced between the council, East Herts District Council and Historic England regarding the site South East of Welwyn Garden City. The land spans across the two authorities and has been proposed for allocation in both local plans;
 - In the lead-up to the Local Plan's examination hearings, the Council agreed Memoranda of Understanding with a number of Duty to Cooperate bodies, including Hertfordshire authorities – Broxbourne, Stevenage, East Herts, Hertsmere and North Herts, as well as Hertfordshire County Council, Historic England and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership;
 - The Council has submitted significant amounts of evidence relating to its Duty to Cooperate activities as part of the Local Plan's examination. This notably includes Examination Documents EX04 and EX12, which are available at: <http://welhat.gov.uk/article/6938/Examination-Documents>;
 - The Council has also engaged with DTC bodies and infrastructure providers in relation to the addition of sites into the Local Plan.
- 2.14 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.

Community Engagement

- 2.15 All members of the community who wish to do so should be able to engage in plan-making. The Welwyn Hatfield Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the means by which the Council aims to facilitate this, and ensure that the borough's diversity is recognised and the potential needs of all aspects of the community are considered. The [current SCI](#) was adopted in December 2013; and identifies young people, ethnic minorities, the borough's rural communities and those living in less well-off parts of the borough as under-represented, or 'hard-to-reach'. It sets out ways in which the Council will aim to consult on the Local Plan, for example by holding consultation events at a variety of times of day, at accessible venues and by making proposals as easy to understand as possible. The Council will look to review the SCI in light of any necessary changes resulting from coronavirus restrictions and reforms to the planning system.

- 2.16 The various stages of consultation that have been undertaken during the plan-making process include:
- Pre-Issues and Options Consultation (2007/08)
 - Core Strategy Issues and Options (2009)
 - Community Representatives - Neighbourhood Workshops (2010)
 - Housing Targets Consultation (2011)
 - How Many New Homes – Housing Targets (2011)
 - Emerging Core Strategy and Land for Housing Outside Urban Areas (2012/13)
 - Draft Local Plan Consultation (2016)
 - Consultation on Sites Promoted through the Call for Sites (2019)
 - Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Submitted Draft Local Plan 2016 - Site Allocations (2020).

2.17 In 2016/17, public consultation was undertaken on the publication of the Draft Local Plan and accompanying policies maps prior to its submission for examination. The consultation took place in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012, and was held between 30th August and 24th October 2016. The [Statement of Consultation \(Regulation 22\)](#) was published in 2017. The Council also simultaneously consulted on three supporting documents – a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the proposals in the Draft Local Plan, and a revised Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

- 2.18 The Local Plan Main Modifications Consultation will run from 4th January 2023 to 15th February 2023. The response to this will be covered in more detail in the 2022/23 Annual Monitoring Report. As with previous consultations, a variety of consultation methods will be used to raise awareness of the consultation and engage with key stakeholders, interest groups and the wider community, including:
- Advertisements in the local press;
 - Direct contact with those on the Council's Local Plan database via email or letter;
 - The consultation document being made available to view online and at the Council's offices. The document will also be distributed and available to view at the usual public inspection points across the borough (libraries and town/parish council offices);
 - The consultation will be publicised prominently on the Council's website and social media channels;
 - Efforts will be made to ensure that all relevant town/parish councils and residents groups have been consulted.



3. Monitoring of current planning policies

This chapter contains two indicators on the use of policies in the 2005 District Plan, including where decisions are appealed. It also examines the impact of permitted development rights which are contrary to those policies.

Current planning policy effectiveness

Indicator LP1 <i>Policies used in planning application refusals</i>	Contextual Indicator
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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. If a policy can confidently be used to refuse a proposal – knowing that it may be challenged on appeal – it indicates that it continues to be robust. However, it should be noted that some District Plan 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.

Table 3 – District Plan Policies mentioned in Planning Application Refusals

Rank 2021/22	District Plan Policy Number	Description	Times mentioned 2021/22
1	NPPF	The National Planning Policy Framework	216
2	D1	Quality and Design	178
3	D2	Character and Context	166
4	SDG	Supplementary Design Guidance	153
5	M14	Parking Standards for New Development	32
6	GBSP2	Towns and Specified Settlements	21
7	GBSP1	Definition of the Green Belt	20
8	RA3	Extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt	20
9	D8	Landscaping	8
10	RA10	Landscape Regions and Character Areas	7

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has continued to be used to supplement District Plan 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 and D2 continue to be the most frequently used policies in the refusal of applications by a reasonable margin. Policy M14, alongside the Interim Policy for Car Parking Standards supplementary guidance, was frequently used where proposals provided insufficient parking. Policies GBSP1, GBSP2 and RA3 are also frequently used against inappropriate proposals in the Green Belt. Policies within the Draft Local Plan have also been mentioned in refusals, where weight can be given in accordance with the NPPF.

- 3.3 During the 2021/22 monitoring year, 69 of the council's decisions were appealed. This was the same as in 2020/21, and lower than in 2019/20 when 90 decisions were appealed. The extent to which Inspectors for appealed applications agree with District Plan policies is another indicator of their effectiveness. However, as the Council no longer has a five year housing land supply and District Plan policies used for determining housing led schemes are now considered out-of-date, the Council's policies are therefore likely to be less effective. This was evident in the decisions of some more recent appeals, including the Roundhouse Farm site in Colney Heath, for which the inquiry took place in April/May 2021.
- 3.4 Paragraph 11d of the NPPF explains that where plan policies are out of date presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply, meaning planning permission should be granted unless the policies in the NPPF that "protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed" or the "adverse impacts of doing so would significantly outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the framework as a whole"².

Table 4 – Planning Application Appeals

Decision	2020/21		2021/22	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Allowed	13	19%	22	32%
Dismissed	55	80%	40	58%
Other (Split Decisions or Withdrawn)	1	1%	7	10%
Total	69	100%	69	100%

- 3.5 In 2021/22, the proportion of appeals allowed was higher at 32% compared with 19% in 2020/21. The local proportion of appeals allowed was higher than the national average of 25% this year ([Planning Inspectorate Statistics Table 2.4](#)). Where appeals were allowed, design policies D1 and D2 - which relate to the quality of design and the character and context 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.

Changes to permitted development rights

- 3.6 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. This has the effect of meaning that some types of development which may be contrary to existing policies in the District Plan are now able to take place, with only minimal involvement for the Council.
- 3.7 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. These permitted development rights have since been extended to enable B1(c) light

² National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021, paragraph 11d

industrial and B8 distribution to be converted to residential. However, the significant loss of office floor space that has arisen through PD rights has 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 will again be required for change of use from B1 office to C3 residential.

- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 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 now already in place for office to residential conversions, this will cover 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 again be required for demolition of commercial buildings for replacement with residential.
- 3.10 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 considered as part of the Hatfield Heritage Assessment Area. 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 Hatfield House and Park, 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 seven 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.

Indicator CS1

Local Plan Indicator (Policies SP2 & SP5)

Changes in retail floorspace

Targets:	- Delivery of 12,500m ² new retail floorspace by 2025/26 - 15-20% of new town centre comparison floorspace to be in Class A3 to A5 uses
Achieved to date:	Net increase of 646m ² since plan period start (2016/17)

- 4.1 This indicator covers changes in the amount of retail floorspace in the Borough. From the 1st September 2020, changes to planning use classes were introduced with the new Employment - Class E use replacing the previous retail use classes A1 (Shops), A2 (Financial/Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes). The new Class E use also includes the former B1 (Business) class and some uses within former D1 (Non-residential institutions) and D2 (Assembly and leisure) classes. The former retail use classes A4 (Pubs and Bars) and A5 (Hot Food Takeaways) now fall under sui generis (SG). The new use classes that will be 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 do not.

Table 5 – Floorspace Change by Use Class in 2021/22

	E(a) / A1	E(b) / A3	E(c) / A2	SG	Total
Welwyn Garden City Town Centre	-3,718m ²	+570m ²	0m ²	0m ²	-3,148m²
Hatfield Town Centre	-727m ²	0m ²	0m ²	0m ²	-727m²
Village & Neighbourhood Centres	0m ²	+62m ²	0m ²	0m ²	+62m²
Out-of-centre	0m ²	0m ²	0m ²	0m ²	0m²
Borough Totals	-4,445m²	632m²	0m²	0m²	-3,813m²

- 4.2 The loss in retail floorspace in 2021/22 was largely a result of the conversion of the first and second floor of the former Debenhams store at Stonehills in Welwyn Garden City to residential use. The retail loss at 1-9 Town Centre in Hatfield was also recorded this year, although there will be some new A1/A2/A3 space re-provided, this will be recorded when complete. Overall since the start of the plan period in 2016/17 there has been a net increase of 646m² of retail floorspace. The opening of a bulky goods retail warehouse and builders merchant just outside Welwyn Garden City Town Centre in 2017/18 resulted in large gains

in A1 and SG retail floorspace. In addition, the Aldi retail food store, also just outside Welwyn Garden City Town Centre, resulted in a large gain in A1 floor space in 2018/19.

Indicator CS2		Local Plan Indicator (Policy SADM5)
<i>New retail floorspace outside designated centres</i>		
Target:	No target until the new Local Plan is adopted (Target of no further gain thereafter)	
Performance:	N/A	

4.3 Policy SADM5 of the Draft Local Plan proposes a threshold for new out-of-centre retail floorspace of 280m² (the limit at which Sunday Trading laws apply), above which proposals will be resisted. The application for the Broadwater Road West site in Welwyn Garden City, approved in 2018/19, includes around 450m² of A1 retail floorspace. There were no approvals above the 280m² threshold this year.

Indicator CS3		Local Plan Indicator (Policy SADM4)
<i>Proportion of A1 shops by centre</i>		
Target:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retention of at least 70% A1 frontage in town centre primary frontages - Retention of at least 30% A1 frontage in town centre secondary frontages - Retention of at least 50% A1 frontage in large neighbourhood and village centres 	
Performance:	Meeting or exceeding target in 16 of 36 frontages (44%)	

Table 6 – Proportion of A1 Shop Frontage

Town Centre Primary Frontages (Target: 70% A1 Frontage – by length)				Town Centre Secondary Frontages (Target: 30% A1 Frontage – by length)			
		2021	2022			2021	2022
WGC	Howard Centre Gd. Floor	74.1%	54.1%	WGC	3-5 (Od.) Stonehills	88.3%	88.3%
	Howard Centre 1 st Floor	65.4%	55.8%		1-19 (Ev.) Howardsgate	6.1%	6.1%
	7-13 (Od.) Stonehills	12.7%	12.7%		4-24 (Ev.) Howardsgate	46.4%	46.4%
	21-33 (Od.) Stonehills	40.6%	40.6%		30-50 (Ev.) Howardsgate	38.9%	38.9%
	26-36 (Ev.) Stonehills	5.3%	5.3%		2-46 (Ev.) Fretherne Rd	35.2%	35.2%
	31-49 (Od.) Howardsgate	42.9%	42.9%		8-22 (Ev.) Church Road	82.1%	82.1%
	51-63 (Od.) Howardsgate	85.6%	85.6%		4-17 Wigmores South	33.6%	33.6%
	52-66 (Ev.) Howardsgate	69.0%	69.0%		11-17 (Od.) Town Centre	0.0%	31.5%
37-51 (Od.) Fretherne Rd	57.8%	57.8%	10-36 (Ev.) White Lion Sq	6.6%	69.2%		
Hatfield	19-47 (Od.) Town Centre	51.5%	51.2%	38-66 (Ev.) White Lion Sq	46.4%	46.4%	
	68-96 (Od.) Town Centre	75.8%	75.8%	Market Place Gd. Floor	48.3%	49.7%	
	1-21 (Od.) The Arcade	37.9%	42.4%	Market Place 1 st Floor	20.8%	20.8%	
	2-14 (Ev.) The Arcade	55.8%	55.8%	38-54 (Ev.) The Common	23.4%	23.4%	

Large Neighbourhood & Village Centres (Target: 50% A1 Frontage – by units)			
		2021	2022
Neighbourhood Centres	Haldens	57.1%	57.1%
	Moors Walk	76.9%	76.9%
	Woodhall	60.0%	60.0%
	Parkhouse Court	30.8%	30.8%
	Old Hatfield	22.2%	19.2%
	High View	47.6%	47.6%
Villages	Welwyn	47.6%	44.7%
	Welham Green	58.8%	58.8%
	Brookmans Park	40.5%	42.9%
	Cuffley	38.5%	35.9%

- 4.4 The Draft 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 a Class A1 shop can be considered. It also allows for a level of flexibility where a lack of demand for A1 retail use can be demonstrated. This is an evolution of the approach currently used in the 2005 District Plan, which sets targets of 70% for primary frontages, 50% for secondary frontages and 60% for neighbourhood and village centre frontages. Following the changes to the Use Classes Order in 2020, there will be modifications to the Draft Local Plan which reflect the new use classes, therefore future AMRs will monitor the proportion of E(a) class frontage rather than A1 measured here.
- 4.5 The figures in table 6 on the previous page show the proportion of A1 shops by centre in the most recent (October/November 2022) Retail Frontage Survey. Just under half of frontages (16 out of 36) are meeting or exceeding targets in terms of the proportion of A1 shops, which was the same as in 2021. This indicator will continue to be monitored in future years to ensure that the policy remains relevant as the nature of the retail and leisure industry changes.
- 4.6 The proportion of Class A1 shops at The Galleria Shopping Centre and Oldings Corner Retail Park, both in Hatfield, are also reported. These centres are not designated within the borough’s retail hierarchy and therefore have no target level of provision, but nevertheless do draw significant amounts of trade. In 2022, 100% of the units at Oldings Corner were A1, whereas the proportion at The Galleria was 53%. Of these, 80% were branded as ‘outlet’-type stores, the remaining 20% performed a more general retail function.

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

Table 7 – Proportion of Vacant Retail Floorspace

Town/Village	Retail Centre	Vacancy Rate					Change 2021-22
		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Designated Town Centres (% of vacant frontage by length)							
Welwyn Garden City Town Centre		4.3%	4.1%	8.6%	9.9%	12.7%	↑
Hatfield Town Centre		10.7%	13.8%	16.5%	21.7%	13.3%	↓
Designated Large Neighbourhood Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)							
Welwyn Garden City	Haldens	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	↔
	Moors Walk (Panshanger)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Woodhall	4.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
Hatfield	High View (South Hatfield)	0.0%	13.6%	13.6%	9.5%	9.5%	↔
	Parkhouse Court	4.0%	8.0%	4.0%	4.0%	0.0%	↔
	Old Hatfield	44.4%	40.7%	40.7%	40.7%	30.8%	↔
Designated Small Neighbourhood Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)							
Welwyn Garden City	Shoplands	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Peartree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Handside	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	↔
	Hollybush	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Hall Grove	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%	↔
Hatfield	Manor Parade	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	↑
	Birchwood	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Crawford Road	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%	↓
	St Albans Road East	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
	Roe Green	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	25.0%	0.0%	↓

Retail Centre	Vacancy Rate					Change 2020-21
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Designated Large Village Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)						
Brookmans Park Village Centre	2.4%	2.4%	0.0%	4.8%	2.4%	↓
Cuffley Village Centre	5.1%	7.7%	5.1%	5.1%	7.7%	↑
Welham Green Village Centre	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
Welwyn Village Centre	5.3%	7.9%	7.9%	7.9%	7.9%	↔
Designated Small Village Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)						
Digswell Village Centre	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	↔
Oaklands & Mardley Heath Village Centre	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
Woolmer Green Village Centre	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔
Undesignated Centres (% of vacant frontage by number of units)						
The Galleria, Hatfield	7.1%	13.3%	24.4%	28.2%	28.2%	↔
Oldings Corner, Hatfield	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	↔

- 4.7 Table 7 sets out vacancy statistics, also from the most recent (October/November 2022) Retail Frontage Survey. Vacancy rates declined in four of the centres – including Hatfield Town Centre and increased in three. Vacancy in the Town Centres is presented in terms of frontage length. In Welwyn Garden City Town Centre, vacant frontage length increased further to 12.7% in 2022 from 9.9% in 2021. Although a larger previously vacant unit was filled (the former Halfords store at Howardsgate), more became newly vacant this year (with the loss of both Marks & Spencer and Next in the Howards Centre), resulting in an overall increase. Overall at the Howards Centre vacant frontage length rose to 30%. In terms of the *number* of vacant units in Welwyn Garden City Town Centre, this increased by two during the year to 14 vacant units (8.3%). In Hatfield Town Centre vacancy decreased to 13.3% from 21.7% in the 2021 survey. The decline in vacancy was largely due to one larger unit being filled (the new Poundstretcher store) as well as three smaller units. In terms of the number of vacant units, this fell to 15 units (or 12.4%) from 18 units in 2021. The regeneration of the Town Centre is still ongoing (expected to complete in 2023), with retail units at 1-9 Town Centre remaining vacant for redevelopment. Figures from the Local Data Company showed the average vacancy for 650 towns/cities across the country was 13.9% in the third quarter of 2022, while for shopping centres average vacancy was somewhat higher at 18.8%.
- 4.8 Vacancy at the out-of-town centre, the Galleria, remained at 28.2% in 2022, as some units were filled some became newly vacant. On the lower floor vacancy was at 37%, while on the upper floor 18% of units were vacant. At the neighbourhood centres in Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield four centres saw vacancy decline while two saw vacancy increase, with 10 of the 16 centres fully occupied. The regeneration of High View in Hatfield is now underway and will include 18 new commercial units for current tenants and new businesses. Vacancy remained unchanged in the borough's Northern villages; in Welwyn Village whilst one unit became vacant during the year one was newly occupied resulting in an unchanged vacancy rate of 7.9%. Meanwhile in the borough's Southern villages one unit was filled in Brookmans Park resulting in a fall in the vacancy rate to 2.4% (one vacant unit). As one unit became vacant in Cuffley vacancy increased slightly to 7.7%. All units in Welham Green remained occupied, with vacancy at 0%.
- 4.9 In Old Hatfield vacancy fell to 30.8% from 40.7% in 2021. The vacancy is largely concentrated within the 1970s precinct of Salisbury Square. The Square had been struggling for some time, and Gascoyne Cecil Estates has developed a regeneration scheme for the area in partnership with the Council. The refurbishment of one side of the square recently completed and the decline in vacancy was a result of these newly refurbished units being occupied.

Table 8 – Number of Evening Economy Premises

Centre	Total premises 2021	Number of premises 2022			Total 2022	Change 2021-22
		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	16	13	2	2	17	+1
The Galleria, Hatfield	9	8	0	1	9	↔
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	1	1	0	0	1	↔

- 4.10 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. Whereas the regeneration of Hatfield has historically been focussed around efforts to revitalise the town centre, 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. Work on replacing the shop fronts and first floor facades in White Lion Square and refurbishment of the public realm completed in September 2019. The new 420 space multi-storey car park at The Common opened in March 2021; this consolidates 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 is expected to complete in June 2023.

Outside the Town Centre at High View in South Hatfield work continued during the year. The scheme will re-provide 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. The development will complete in three phases.

Indicator CS6**Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP6)****Changes in leisure and community facility floorspace**

Target: Net gain in community and leisure facility floorspace

Achieved to date: 12,628m² gain since 1 April 2016 (plan period start)

Table 9 – Floorspace Change 2021/22

Floorspace change	Community Uses (Former D1 use class)	Leisure Uses (Former D2 use class)
Floorspace gain	+3,135m ²	0m ²
Floorspace loss	-209 m ²	-17m ²
Net change	+2,926m²	-17m²

4.11 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 new Employment class E(e-f), 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. This year saw a reasonable net gain in community floorspace in the borough, which was as a result of the completion of the new sports facilities at Onslow St Audreys School in Hatfield.

Welwyn Garden City Town Centre Update

Welwyn Garden City Town Centre is the main shopping and service centre for the borough. In October 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, have developed a scheme to enhance the area around Welwyn Garden City Town Centre. In 2017/2018, HCC undertook a consultation on schemes to improve the pedestrian environment and traffic circulation around Stonehills and Howardsgate. A new system was trialled in May and June 2018 and based on the outcome of the trial and the feedback received during consultation, the scheme layout and associated traffic regulation order was updated to address concerns raised. The project is being delivered in two phases, with phase 1 having commenced in July 2021 and completed by the end of the year. This first phase 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 includes a dedicated space for cycling on Bridge Road (Hunters Bridge), Wigmores North and Fretherne Road. There will also be improvements to crossing points on Osborn Way and Howardsgate, as well as a town centre wide 20mph zone. Works commenced on Bridge Road in late summer 2022.

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

Following the end of the 2021/22 monitoring year in April 2022, the Campus West Car Park closed in order for works to begin – this will be the first step of the wider regeneration plans for WGC Town Centre.



5. Housing

This chapter sets out housing progress in the borough across thirteen 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)

New dwellings and progress against housing target

Target: 878 for 2021/22 under the standard methodology/760 Draft Local Plan
Achieved to date: 258 net new homes this year, 2,731 net since the plan period start (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. In the absence of an up to date target the default position is the figure derived from the standard methodology. This is calculated each year and takes national household growth projections over a ten-year period as a baseline, then applies an affordability adjustment using the median workplace-based affordability ratio (see paragraph 5.17 for further detail). This results in a target for Welwyn Hatfield for 2021/22 of 878 dwellings. The target will increase to 888 dwellings for 2022/23.
- 5.2 Following the release of the 2018-based household projections a review of the Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need (FOAHN) was undertaken, and the Local Plan Inspector confirmed (in examination document EX274) that the projections represented a meaningful change, justifying a reduction in the previous FOAHN from 16,000 dwellings (800 dwellings per annum) to 15,200 dwellings (760 dwellings per annum) for the plan period of 2016-36. The Local Plan main modifications propose that the target would be set at 738 dpa for the first 17 years of the plan to 2032/33, which is in line with the identified supply for this period. The target for the last three years to 2036 would be 885 dpa, although this will be the subject of an early review, which will be undertaken in the context of housing need and national policy at the time. However, until the Local Plan is adopted the housing target continues to be calculated using the standard methodology.
- 5.3 During the 2021/22 monitoring year, there were 292 gross completions and 34 losses resulting in **258 net new homes completed**. Total completions were significantly below the standard methodology target of 878 dwellings. Completions are expected to be somewhat higher over the next couple of years based on the current supply of sites currently under construction, however are still not expected to meet the target under the standard methodology.

Table 10 – Annual Housing Completions

Year		Gross Completions (includes C2 dwelling equivalents)	Losses	Net C3 Dwelling Completions	Net C2 Dwelling Equivalents	Total Net Completions
Pre Plan Period	2012/13	168	20	N/A	N/A	148
	2013/14	357	41	272	44	316
	2014/15	634	243	317	74	391
	2015/16	747	240	317	190	507
Plan Period	2016/17	693	22	347	324	671
	2017/18	343	28	238	77	315
	2018/19	500	38	456	6	462
	2019/20	694	21	671	2	673
	2020/21	421	69	352	0	352
	2021/22	292	34	258	0	258
10 year avg.		485	76	N/A	N/A	409
Plan period avg.		491	35	387	68	455
Plan period total		2,943	212	2,322	409	2,731

Historically a 5:1 ratio was used for student bedroom completions and no allowance was made for care home completions. Following the publication of MHCLG's guidance on the allowance for communal accommodation, past figures for the years 2013/14 to 2016/17 were revised from those published in earlier AMR reports in order to reflect the published ratios for these types of accommodation.

5.4 Table 11 sets out a breakdown of new dwellings built in 2021/22 by settlement, as well as the plan period total. Over half of completions in 2021/22 were in Welwyn Garden City and 19% in Hatfield. The high proportion of completions in Woolmer Green was due to the completion of the Entech House site. Over the plan period to date, Welwyn Garden City has delivered around half of total housing completions, while Hatfield just over 30% of completions. Welwyn village and Woolmer Green make up the highest numbers outside the two towns.

Table 11 - Housing Completions by Settlement

Settlement	Net Completions by year			
	This year 2021/22	% of total	Plan period 2016/17 – 2021/22	% of total
Hatfield	49	19%	854	31.3%
Welwyn Garden City	134	52%	1,423	52.1%
Welwyn	6	2%	176	6.4%
Cuffley	6	2%	50	1.8%
Brookmans Park	2	1%	53	1.9%
Welham Green	1	0%	11	0.4%
Rural Areas	11	4%	43	1.6%
Oaklands & Mardley Heath	4	2%	27	1.0%
Woolmer Green	47	18%	76	2.8%
Digswell	-2	-1%	12	0.4%
Little Heath	0	0%	6	0.2%
Total	258	100%	2,731	100%

5.6 The sites with the largest number of completions in 2021/22 (dwelling numbers in brackets) included:

- Office conversion & extension at Accord House, Bridge Road East, WGC (51 dwellings)
- Former Ratcliff Tail Lifts Site, WGC - Draft Local Plan site HS4 (50 dwellings)
- Former Entech House employment site, Woolmer Green (47 dwellings)

- Conversion of first and second floors at 26 Stonehills, WGC (27 dwellings)
- Conversion and extension at 87 Great North Road, Hatfield (20 dwellings)
- Conversion of offices at 36 Salisbury Square, Hatfield (16 dwellings).

Indicator HO2	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SADM1)
<i>Proportion of dwellings on allocated sites</i>	
Target:	<i>No target until adoption.</i>
Achieved to date:	<i>N/A for new Local Plan.</i>

- 5.7 Within a ‘plan-led’ system, it is generally expected that the majority of new homes will come forward on sites which are either allocated in a development plan or identified through processes such as the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. However, it is inevitable that as circumstances change 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.
- 5.8 The last allocated site to come forward from the District Plan was in 2016/17, therefore windfall has accounted for almost all completions since. However some Draft Local Plan sites have now started to deliver. Last year Draft Local Plan site HS1 - Land at Bericot Way in Welwyn Garden City was completed (21 dwellings). The site HS4 – Ratcliff Tail Lifts saw 50 completions recorded in 2021/22, accounting for 17% of total gross completions. The windfall proportion for 2021/22 was therefore 83%. As a number of sites identified within the Draft Local Plan have now been granted planning permission the proportion of dwellings on allocated sites will start to increase in future years.

Indicator HO3	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP1)
<i>Proportion of new dwellings on previously developed land (PDL)</i>	
Target:	<i>85% on PDL until the Local Plan is adopted, 45% on PDL for the whole plan period</i>
Achieved to date:	<i>99% on PDL in 21/22, 95% on PDL for the plan period to date</i>

- 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 12 indicate the proportion of new dwellings which have been built on PDL since the start of the plan period – which shows the vast majority (95%) of completions since 2016/17 have been on previously developed land. This year almost all completions (99%) were on PDL. Three of the four dwellings which were not built on PDL were previously garden land.

Table 12 – Proportion of Completions on PDL

Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Plan period avg.	Plan period total
Gross Completions	693	343	500	694	421	292	491	2,943
Of which PDL	671 (97%)	322 (94%)	474 (95%)	688 (99%)	351 (83%)	288 (99%)	466 (95%)	2,794 (95%)

- 5.10 In 2017 the Government introduced requirements for each local authority to produce a Brownfield Land Register at least once each year, listing all PDL sites in their area which are considered to be suitable for development. The Council's Brownfield Land Register is available to view at www.welhat.gov.uk/brownfieldland, although it has not resulted in the identification of any significant new dwelling capacity on PDL. Since the first register was introduced in 2017, 54 sites included on previous versions of the register have since completed amounting to 1,378 dwellings.

Indicator HO4

Contextual Indicator

Size and type of new dwellings

- 5.11 Policy SP7 of the Draft Local Plan, once adopted, will require 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. Because 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 the 292 gross new C3 dwellings completed in 2021/22 are shown in the chart on the next page. Flats accounted for just under three quarters (71%) of completions in 2021/22.
- 5.12 The 2017 Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (SHMA) identified the implied size and type of housing required based on projected household change and existing tendencies of household types to occupy different sizes of housing. This has been updated based on a similar analysis using the 2018-based projections and to reflect the 2016-36 plan period. The chart on the next page shows the number of new dwellings delivered in the first five years of the plan period split by size against the borough's implied need - in order to provide a basis for comparison this has been presented against an OAN of 15,200. It can be seen 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 (the number delivered so far is still well below this at just under 2,000), however they have made up the greatest proportion of delivery to date. The implied need for larger properties (3 and 4+ beds) is higher at 62%, although so far these property sizes have made up a lower proportion of the housing delivered. However, it is important to note that, as highlighted in the 2017 SHMA, the implied need is: "an illustrative interpretation of available historic evidence to estimate the size of housing which may be required in Welwyn Hatfield over the plan period...It is recommended that policies are not overly prescriptive in directly basing requirements for individual sites on the illustrative mix".³

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

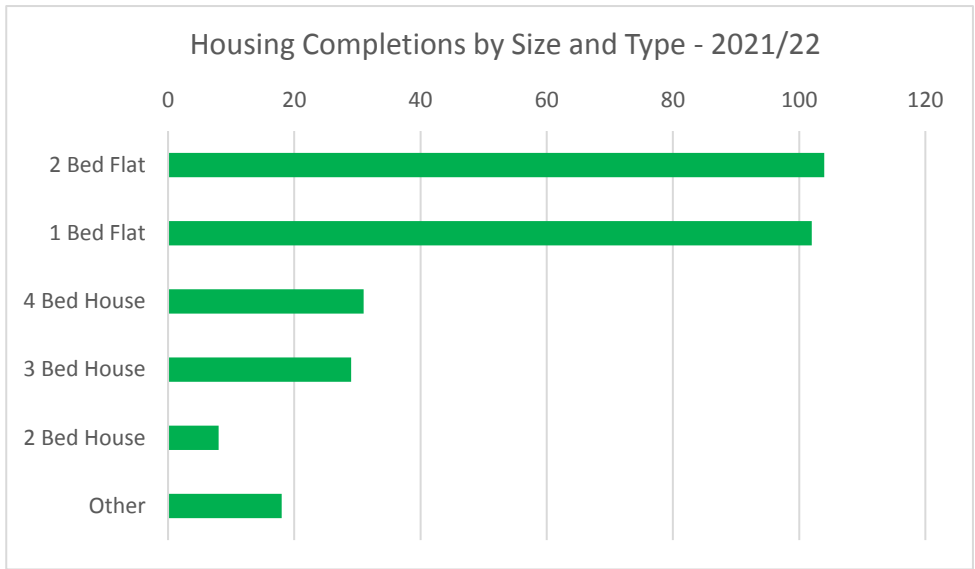
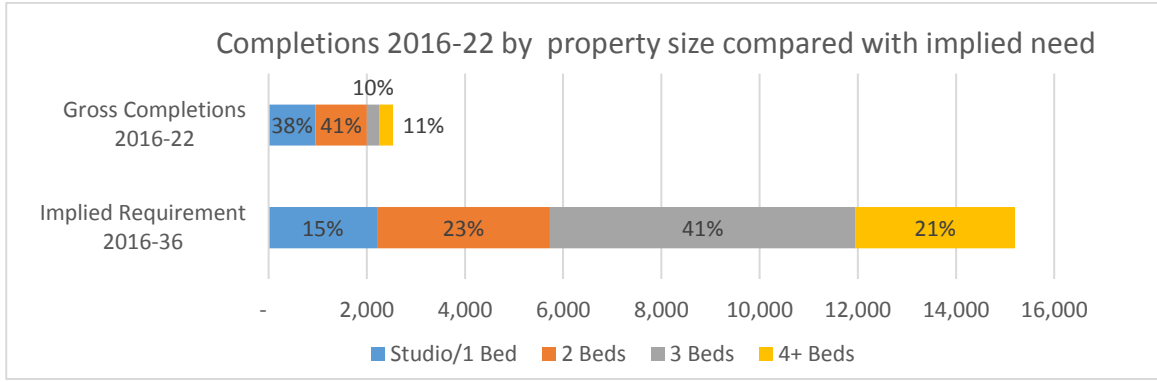


Figure 4: (Left) - Gross new C3 dwelling completions in 2021/22 by bedroom count and dwelling type (left).

(Below) - Gross completions 2016-2022 split by property size, compared to the borough's implied housing requirement based on an OAN of 15,200.



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

Target: The Local Plan contains no specific target for this indicator
Achieved to date: 33.2dph average density this year

5.13 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 2021/22 of 33.2 dwellings per hectare (dph). This is lower than the average recorded for new dwellings in 2020/21 of 43.50dph and since 2017/18. Two sites (Former Ratcliff Tail Lift (HS5) in WGC and Entech House in Woolmer Green) accounted for a large proportion of the completions in 2021/22 and both had densities between 30-50 dph, which brought the average down slightly this year compared with recent years.

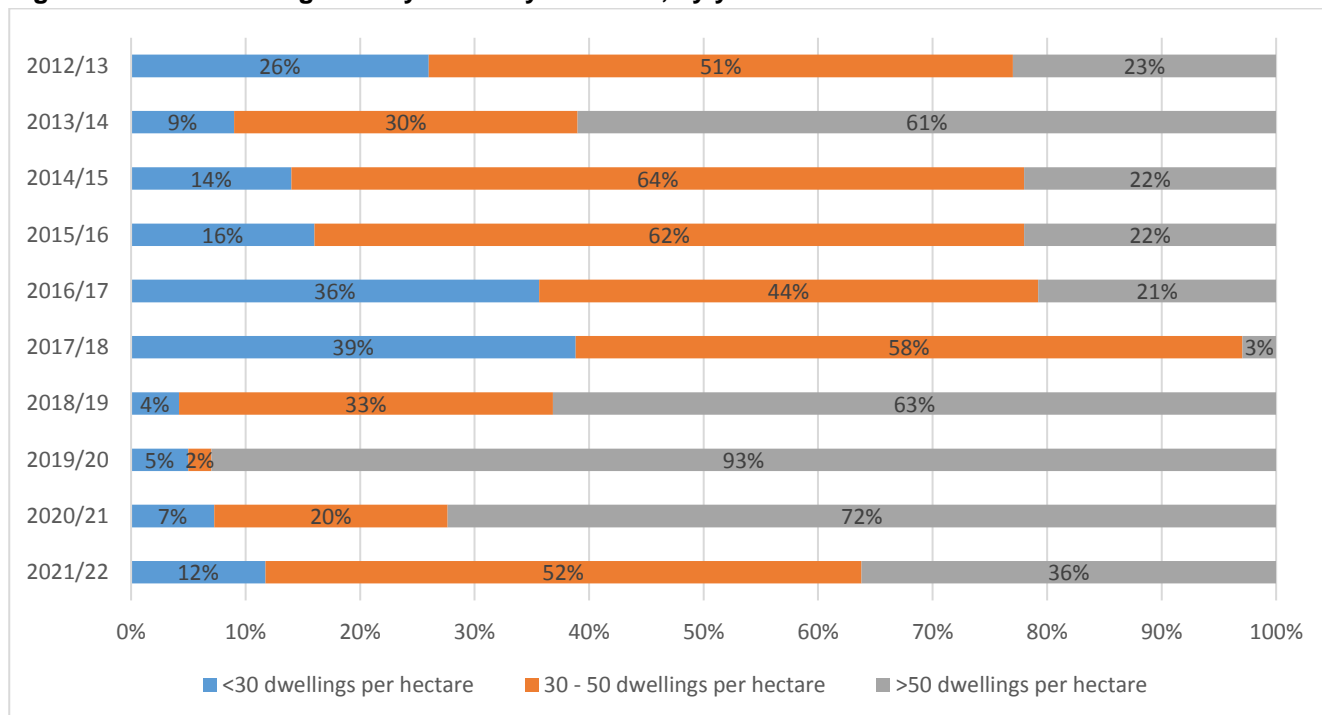
Table 13 – New dwelling density 2021/22

Gross completions (Without conversions)	Total development area	Average density	<30dph		30-50dph		>50dph	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
196	5.9 hectares	33.2dph	2	12%	102	52%	71	36%

5.14 Figure 5 shows dwelling density over the last ten years. The proportion of completions at above 50dph were somewhat lower this year at 36%. 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 The Frythe in Welwyn contributed to a lower average density and a high proportion of completions at under 30dph (the parkland setting and large size of the site resulted in a net density of less than 5dph).

Figure 5 – New Dwelling Density in Welwyn Hatfield, by year



Future Housing Land Supply

Indicator HO6	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP2)
<i>Housing trajectory and 5 year housing land supply</i>	
Target:	Maintain a 5 year housing land supply
Achieved to date:	3.2 years supply

5.16 The borough’s future housing land supply is one of the key reporting requirements for the AMR. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out (paragraph 74) that planning authorities should at all times be able to identify sites sufficient to provide a five year supply of housing land against their housing target.

5.17 National Planning Practice Guidance states that the ‘number of homes required’ for the calculation of the five year housing land supply is the housing requirement in Local Plans. However, as the borough’s new Local Plan is still under examination and the most recent adopted housing requirement figure is more than five years old, the minimum annual local housing need figure should be used. This is calculated using the [Standard Methodology](#), which takes national household growth projections over a ten-year period as a baseline, then applies an affordability adjustment using the median workplace-based affordability ratio. Any increase from this adjustment is capped at 40% of the projected household growth. Policy guidance released in February 2019, states that the 2014-based household projections should be used as the baseline for the standard method⁴.

⁴ Housing and Economic Needs Assessment Guidance, MHCLG, Paragraph 5, February 2019.

5.18 Using the standard methodology, the minimum local housing need figure for Welwyn Hatfield for 2022/23 is 888 dwellings per annum (this is slightly higher than for 2021/22 when the need was 878 dwellings).

5.19 Against this requirement, the borough has a **housing land supply of 3.2 years**. Whilst the housing supply is below the national 5-year requirement, until a new Local Plan is adopted, the borough is unlikely to be able to meet this requirement. The supply is largely made up of full planning permissions, although a small number of sites with outline permission are included where they either have progressing reserved matters applications or are included on the Brownfield Register. Further detail on sites included in the Five Year Housing Land Supply is presented in Appendix 2.

Table 14 – Housing land supply calculation against local housing need (standard methodology) Figures frozen as at 30/09/2022

A	Housing target 2022/23 – 2026/27 (888 x 5)	4,440
B	NPPF 20% buffer adjustment ¹ (A x 0.20)	888
C	Housing requirement for 5-year period (A+B)	5,328
D	Projected supply of sites in 5-year period (2022/23 – 2026/27) in Appendix 2	3,124
E	Windfall assumption ²	278
F	Non-implementation rate ³	-30
G	Actual projected five year supply (D+E+F)	3,372
Number of years supply (G divided by C, multiplied by 5 years)		3.2 years

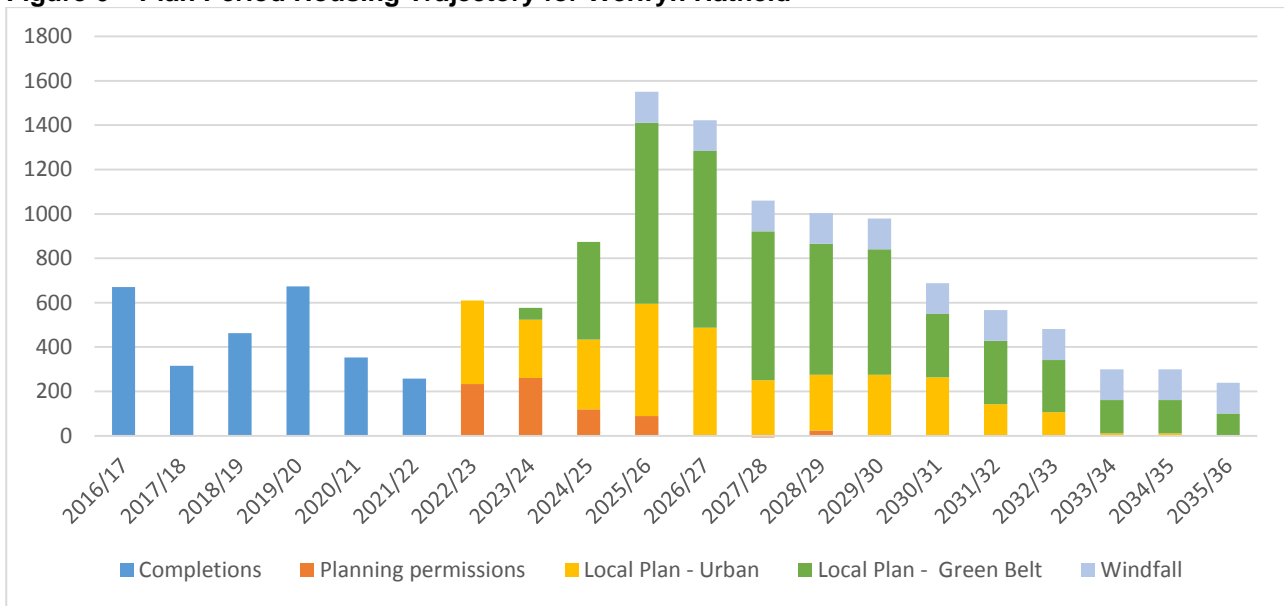
¹ The NPPF requires either a 5% or 20% buffer to be added depending on whether an area has seen 'significant under-delivery of housing over the previous three years'. This is measured against the Housing Delivery Test, where delivery is below 85% of the housing requirement. As Welwyn Hatfield's completions over the past three years only met 66% of the requirement, a 20% buffer has been applied.

² A windfall allowance of 139 dwellings per annum has been made from 2024/25 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.

³ The historic proportion of dwellings granted permission but never built is 3.0%. This is applied to sites which have not yet commenced construction.

5.20 Figure 6 (on the next page) sets out the housing trajectory for the plan period. Delivery on sites proposed for allocation in the Local Plan is expected to accelerate from 2025. Infrastructure and other constraints on some of the larger strategic sites are likely to affect lead-in times and delivery in the earlier years of the plan period. An allowance for windfall of 139 dwellings per annum is made from 2025/26 for future planning permissions not yet known about. This is based on historic levels of windfall, further detail on the calculation of which can be found in Examination documents EX221 and EX276.

Figure 6 – Plan Period Housing Trajectory for Welwyn Hatfield

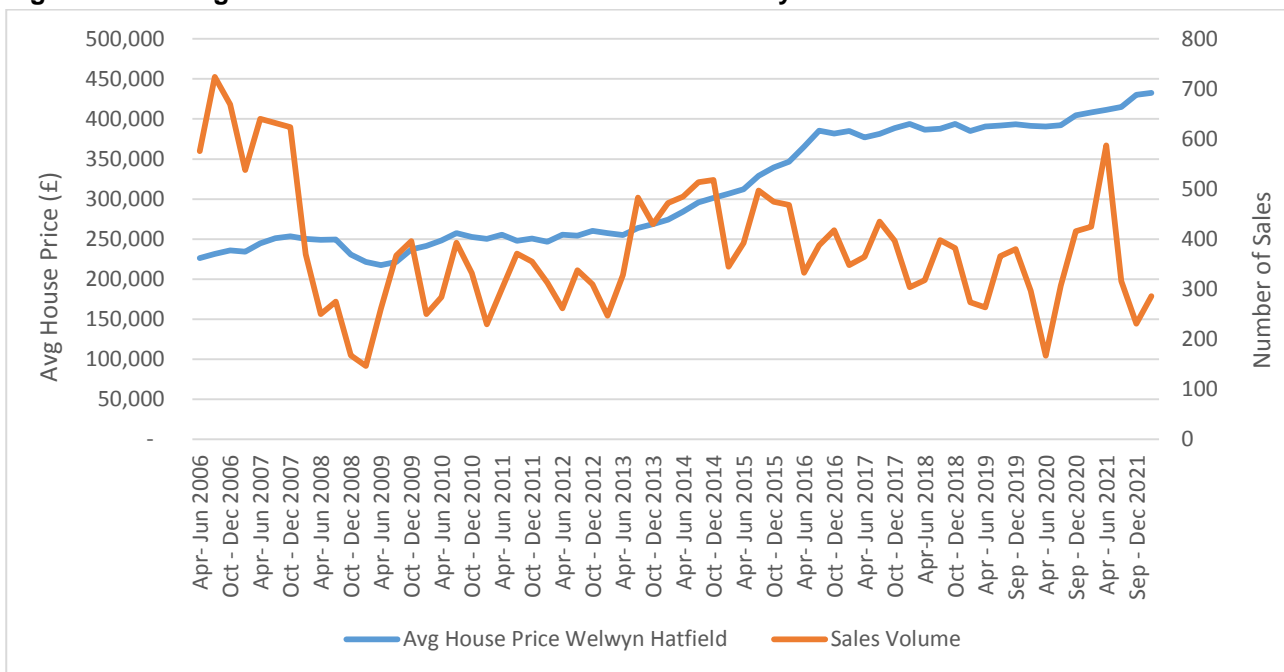


Homes for all

Indicator HO7 Contextual Indicator House prices and housing affordability

5.21 Figure 7 below and table 15 show Land Registry’s House Price Index. The average house price in Welwyn Hatfield between April 2021 and March 2022 was £419,407, an increase of 4.6% from the same period the previous year. This increase was slightly below the average for Hertfordshire (5.6%) as well as for the region (7.7%) and nationally (8.2%). A reduction in rates of Stamp Duty applied from July 2020 and was phased out in the Summer of 2021 (there was a peak in the number of sales coinciding with the end of the rate reduction in June 2021). Table 16 shows the median price paid in Jan-Dec 2021 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 15 – Average House Prices

	Apr 20 - Mar 2021	Apr 21 – Mar 2022	% Change
Welwyn Hatfield	£401,000	£419,407	4.6%
Hertfordshire	£407,967	£430,797	5.6%
East of England	£302,245	£325,548	7.7%
UK	£244,839	£264,923	8.2%

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

Table 16 – Median Price Paid by Property Type, Year End Dec 2021

	Detached	Semi-detached	Terraced	Flat
Welwyn Hatfield	£759,050	£475,000	£380,000	£245,000

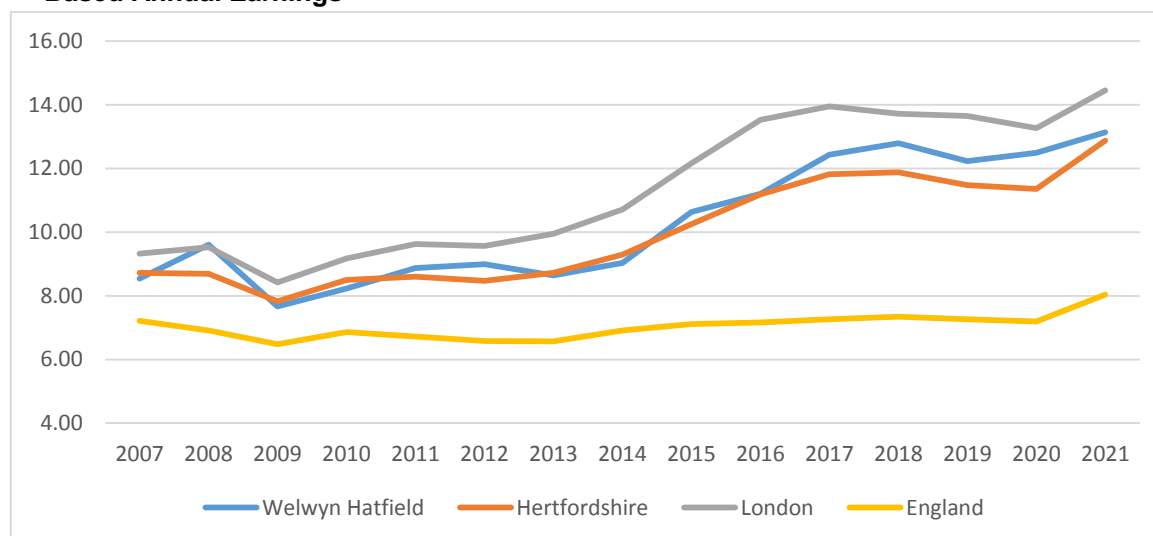
Source: Office for National Statistics –

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/medianhousepricefornationalandubnationalgeographiesquarterlyrollingyearhpssadataset09>

5.22 House prices alone are only one component of change in the housing market – the relationship between prices and income allows a further understanding of housing affordability. Figure 8 below tracks changes over time in the ratio between lower quartile incomes (i.e. people on the lowest 25% of earnings from whom affordability is most likely to be an issue), and lower quartile house prices. The data is based on residence based earnings, using the lower quartile income of those who live in Welwyn Hatfield regardless of where they work. The figures are provided for Welwyn Hatfield against the England ratio and Hertfordshire ratio, as well as for London as it is well established that outward ‘push’ factors are a key dynamic of the borough’s housing market.

5.23 Houses continue to be much less affordable in Welwyn Hatfield, Hertfordshire and London than the national average. The lower quartile figures for 2021 show affordability in Welwyn Hatfield worsened during the year, with lower quartile house prices now 13.14 times the lower quartile residence based income. The increase in the lower quartile ratio for Welwyn Hatfield was at a lower rate than Hertfordshire, London and nationally. Lower quartile earnings for those living in the borough saw an average increase of 5%, this is in contrast to the median figure which fell (see paragraph 5.24). However, lower quartile house prices still rose at a faster rate than earnings at 10%, which meant overall affordability worsened.

Figure 8 – Housing Affordability: Ratio of Lower Quartile House Prices to Lower Quartile Residence Based Annual Earnings



Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 17 - Ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile annual residence based earnings

Area	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change 2020-2021
Welwyn Hatfield	9.03	10.65	11.21	12.43	12.79	12.23	12.49	13.14	0.65
Hertfordshire	9.30	10.25	11.19	11.82	11.88	11.48	11.36	12.88	1.52
London	10.71	12.16	13.53	13.95	13.72	13.65	13.27	14.45	1.18
England	6.91	7.11	7.16	7.26	7.34	7.26	7.19	8.04	0.85

Source: Office for National Statistics -

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

5.24 As explained in paragraph 5.17, where the most recent adopted housing requirement is more than five years old, the [Standard Methodology](#) for calculating housing need is used. This calculation uses an affordability adjustment of the ratio of median house prices to median annual workplace based earnings (presented below in table 18). Workplace based earnings are used rather than residence based earnings, demonstrating the level of affordability for those finding accommodation in the area in which they work. The median workplace based ratio for Welwyn Hatfield saw a sharp increase in 2021 (the 18th highest increase of all 330 Local Authorities), meaning worsening affordability for those working in the borough. This was a result of a widening gap between house prices and earnings, as median house prices saw a reasonable increase of +11%, median workplace based earnings *fell* by -8%. Median house prices are now 12.37 times annual workplace based earnings.

Table 18 - Ratio of median house prices to median annual workplace based earnings

Area	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change 2020-2021
Welwyn Hatfield	8.81	9.74	11.08	11.23	10.98	10.69	10.28	12.37	2.09
Hertfordshire	9.55	10.65	11.46	12.18	12.10	11.82	12.02	12.86	0.84
London	10.08	11.05	12.03	12.38	12.26	12.05	11.83	12.97	1.14
England	7.09	7.52	7.72	7.91	8.04	7.88	7.86	9.05	1.19

Source: Office for National Statistics -

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

Indicator HO8

New affordable housing

Contextual Indicator

5.25 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. The current development plan policy, set out in the adopted 2005 District Plan, requires affordable housing to be sought on sites of 25 dwellings or more, at a minimum of 30% of the dwellings proposed being affordable. However, because of the acute need for affordable housing, the Council has given weight to the threshold in the submitted Draft Local Plan since the Stage 3 hearing session on this topic in 2018. Policy SP7 in the submitted plan sets out a requirement that affordable housing should be sought on proposals for 11 or more new dwellings. Although, a modification has since been proposed to revise this to proposals of 10 or more dwellings, in line with the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proportion of affordable sought in Policy SP7 varies by location at between 25% - 35%.

5.26 During the year, 37 new affordable homes were completed, equivalent to 14.3% of total new C3 dwelling completions. This proportion is slightly above the average for the plan period to date, for which the proportion of affordable completions is 13.4%. However, the data reported here only reflects affordable dwellings that are recorded through planning permissions. There are other mechanisms for providing affordable housing (e.g. through private registered providers). The local authority level figures published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities indicate a substantially higher number of affordable housing additions for Welwyn Hatfield of 136 homes for 2021/22.

Table 19 – Affordable Completions as a Proportion of Total Completions

	Year	Net C3 Dwelling Completions*	Affordable Completions	% affordable
Plan Period	2016/17	347	56	16.1%
	2017/18	238	36	15.1%
	2018/19	456	64	14.0%
	2019/20	671	69	10.3%
	2020/21	352	48	13.6%
	2021/22	258	37	14.3%
Plan period avg.		387	52	13.4%
Plan period total		2,322	310	13.4%

*These figures are for Use Class C3 only.

- 5.27 New build affordable housing completions recorded during the year included:
- 22 flats at the Entech House development in Woolmer Green;
 - 15 shared ownership flats at the Ratcliff Tail Lifts site in WGC (Draft Local Plan Site HS4).
- 5.28 The table on the next page shows the number of eligible sites granted planning permission 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. All four sites for 10+ dwellings which were granted permission in 2021/22 met or exceeded the Draft Local Plan requirement (Policy SP7) for affordable housing provision, with 215 affordable dwellings added to the commitments. A further two affordable dwellings were also granted at smaller Council owned sites. Therefore in total, 217 affordable dwellings were granted permission during the year. The applicant for one of the developments granted permission was a Housing Association, and all 128 dwellings will be affordable housing. This resulted in a high proportion of new build affordable permissions granted in 2021/21 at 54%, compared with the Draft Local Plan requirement of 25-35% (depending on location).

Table 20 – Percentage of sites/dwellings granted permission meeting affordable housing policy

Year Granted	Sites			Dwellings		
	Total eligible sites granted permission (10+ dwellings)	No. of sites meeting affordable requirement	% of sites meeting affordable requirement	Total dwellings granted at eligible sites	Affordable dwellings granted at eligible sites	% affordable at eligible sites
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%

*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.

5.29 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 affordable completions, there were also 14 open market purchases by the Council in 2021/22, made using Right to Buy receipts, as part of the Affordable Housing Programme. In terms of Right to Buy sales, there were 65 sales during the year.

Indicator HO9	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP7)
<i>New specialist needs housing</i>	
Target:	Delivery of at least 201 new care home bedrooms throughout the plan period
Achieved to date:	151 care home bedrooms completed since 2016/17, further 269 bedrooms in supply

5.30 The 2017 SHMA established a need for 340 new care home bedrooms for residential or nursing care, to meet the specific needs of older people who are no longer able to live independently over the plan period 2013-32. However, this has since been updated to take account of the 2018-based population projections and reflect the need over the updated plan period 2016-36. Examination document EX203A indicates a need for 201 new care home bedrooms, under the 2018-based alternative migration variant projections.

5.31 There were no care home bedspaces completed during the year. However, 151 bedspaces have been completed since the beginning of the plan period and a further 269 are expected to be delivered over the next five years. The Draft 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, but these will not be monitored until the plan is adopted. There are also other forms of specialist needs housing which form an important component of the borough’s housing provision, such as children’s homes or homes which provide adult disability care.

Indicator HO10	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP7)
<i>Number of people on the self-build register</i>	
Target:	To provide sufficient self-build plots for the number of people on the register
Achieved to date:	50 individuals on the self-build register, 6 plots granted permission

5.32 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.

5.33 During base period 7 (31 Oct 2021– 30 Oct 22), there were 12 individuals added to the register and at the end of the year on 30 Oct 22, there were a total of 50 individuals remaining on the self-build register. In terms of permissions granted, in February 2020 - base period 5, an outline application for the Draft Local Plan site SDS1 was granted permission which included 6 plots for self-build housing. Another outline application was granted at appeal in June 2021, which includes the provision of 10 self-build plots. However, the site falls within both Welwyn Hatfield and St Albans. It is understood from the subsequent reserved matters application (granted in November 2022) that 5 of the self-build plots will be located within Welwyn Hatfield. The Council is seeking, through the Local Plan, to adopt a policy which will ensure that future developments over a certain size make provision for self-build plots.

Table 21 – Self-build Registrations and Permissions by Base Period

	No. Individuals Registered in Year	Date to Grant Permissions by	Number of Permissions (Plots)
BY1: 1 Apr 16 -30 Oct 2016	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 ⁵	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

5.34 A report to the Council's Cabinet Planning & Parking Panel in October 2017 considered the initial levels of interest in self-build in Welwyn Hatfield, noting that the majority of those people entering onto the register had also indicated an interest in self-build in a wide array of other local authority areas. An emerging theme in analysis is therefore the extent to which double-counting is occurring, and to which the level of demand for self-build might therefore be overstated by the register. Following consultation in 2018, the Council introduced additional eligibility criteria and a fee to enter or remain on the register from 31st October 2018, in order to help the council better manage the register and measure demand for plots of land within Welwyn Hatfield for self-build.

Table 22 – Total number of Individuals on the Self-build Register by Area – as at 30/10/2022

	Looking in Welwyn Hatfield only	Looking in Welwyn Hatfield and elsewhere	Total
Live in Welwyn Hatfield	11	9	20
Live elsewhere	6	24	30
All people on register	17	33	50

⁵ 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.

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**Achieved to date:** No gain through the planning system

5.35 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 Draft Local Plan.

Table 23 - Applications for HMOs in 2021/22

Application type	Change of use	Approved	Refused	Withdrawn	Total
Full planning (New HMOs proposed)	C3 > C4 or <i>Sui generis</i>	0	5	1	6
	C4 > <i>Sui generis</i>	0	0	0	0
Certificate of lawfulness (For existing HMOs)	C3 > C4 or <i>Sui generis</i>	5	0	1	6
	C4 > <i>Sui generis</i>	0	0	0	0
Total		5	5	2	12

5.36 During the monitoring year, 12 applications for HMOs have been determined; 6 for planning permission for a change of use, and 6 for certificates of lawfulness to demonstrate that an existing HMO does not require planning permission. Of the 10 determined, 6 were approved and 6 were refused. A further 2 applications were withdrawn. There were also 2 applications relating to change from C4 (HMO) use and conversion to C3 flats, one of which was approved and one refused.

5.37 This year saw a small decrease in the number of 'all student' HMOs in the borough, as can be seen in table 24 below, however the number of student HMOs remains well below historic levels. New student accommodation at the University of Hertfordshire completed in recent years, could be a factor behind the fluctuations in recent years.

Table 24 - 'All student' Council Tax HMOs

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Hatfield Article 4	1,385	1,249	1,157	1,043	1,255	855	661	673	656
Whole borough	1,504	1,349	1,258	1,130	1,331	941	793	826	792
Annual change	-2.7%	-10.3%	-6.7%	-10.2%	+17.8%	-29.3%	-15.7%	4.2%	-4.1%

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

5.38 In order to meet the need identified in the [2016 Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment](#), Policy SP7 of the Draft Local Plan proposes a target of 61 new Gypsy and Traveller pitches on 7 sites across the borough, over the 16 year period from 2016 to 2032. No permanent new pitches have been completed to date, however there are 22 pitches (across 3 sites) within the five year land supply of pitches. These sites all have planning permission granted or applications submitted and are expected to be delivered over the five years to 2026/27. The table below demonstrates that this does not result in the required five year supply of pitches (representing a shortfall of 20 pitches), largely because the majority of new pitches for the plan period need to be delivered in association with the Strategic Development Sites – although the Council will explore options to speed-up the delivery through masterplanning. There are a further 3 sites amounting to an additional 18 pitches which are expected to come forward by 2027. However, as they do not yet have planning applications submitted, they have not been included in the supply here. The low frequency of windfall applications make this difficult to forecast, so no allowance has been made for windfall pitches in the five year supply. However, it might be expected for one windfall pitch to arise, which would slightly improve the supply position.

5.39 An outline application at the Draft Local Plan site SDS1 was granted in February 2020 which includes the provision of six pitches. To help offset the deficit in the short term, the council granted a temporary permission for a site in Stanborough in 2016 and an application for an extension to this is still currently under consideration. The County Council managed transit site at South Mimms also remains available to meet transit needs in Hertfordshire on a short-term tenancy basis.

Table 25 – Five Year Land Supply of Pitches (2022/23 – 2026/27)

A	Annual Gypsy & Traveller pitch target to 2031/32 (<i>61 divided by 16 years x 5</i>)	3.8
B	Completions to date (2016/17 – 2021/22)	0
C	Target completions to current year (<i>6 x 3.8</i>)	22.8
D	Resultant shortfall in completions against target (<i>C-B</i>)	22.8
E	Pitch requirement for next five years 2022/23 to 2026/27 (<i>A x 5</i>)+ D	41.9
F	Projected supply of sites (2022/23 – 2026/27)	22.0
	Number of years supply (F divided by E x 5 years)	2.6 years

Indicator HO13**Contextual Indicator*****Unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments***

5.40 The Council works with a range of service providers to monitor cases where Gypsy and Traveller encampments are established without planning permission, and without the permission of the landowner. The 2021/22 monitoring year saw 8 unauthorised encampments, compared with 12 last reported in 2019/20. At the time of the bi-annual caravan ‘census’ in January 2022, three of the borough’s five established Gypsy and Traveller sites were in excess of their capacity, although not all sites were able to be surveyed. This demonstrates the continuing scale of need for permanent provision, which the Local Plan will help to provide.



6. The Economy

This chapter sets out nine indicators on the state of the borough's economy, covering changes to floorspace and land in employment uses, and information on the numbers of companies and jobs in the borough.

Employment land and floorspace

Indicator EC1

Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP2)

New employment floorspace and progress against employment floorspace target

Target: Delivery of 59,000m² new employment floorspace over plan period to 2036

Achieved to date: Net gain of +10,502m² in 2021/22, net loss of -16,190m² since 2016/17

- 6.1 This indicator monitors changes in employment floorspace during the year and over the plan period. From 1st September 2020, amendments to the planning use classes came into place, and a new class E use - covering Commercial, Business and Services, was introduced. The new class E use incorporates the previous B1 use class as well as some former retail and service uses – which are covered in Chapter 4. The former use classes B1a, B1b and B1c have been replaced by Eg(i) Offices carrying out operational or administrative functions, Eg(ii) Research and Development of products or Processes and Eg(iii) Industrial processes. The B2 (General Industry) and B8 (Storage & Distribution) use classes remain valid. Planning permissions which allow a mix of employment uses on a site without specifying the amount of floorspace in each continue to be shown below as 'B Mix'.

Table 26 – Net Floorspace Change (m²)

		Use Classes						Total
		Eg(i)/ (B1a)	Eg(ii)/ (B1b)	Eg(iii)/ (B1c)	B2	B8	'B Mix'	
2016/17	Net change	-17,252	-	-88	614	-451	4,754	-12,423
2017/18	Net change	-5,969	-	0	160	753	1,475	-3,581
2018/19	Net change	-5,930	-	0	79	3,940	-600	-2,511
2019/20	Net change	-2,861	-	-126	-8,394	3,879	1,599	-5,903
2020/21		-2,073	-	-2,792	284	-1,322	3,629	-2,274
2021/22	<i>Floorspace gain</i>	1,719	-	-	-	10,918	-	12,637
	<i>Floorspace loss</i>	-2,135	-	-	-	-	-	-2,135
	Net change	-416	-	-	-	10,918	-	+10,502
Plan period net change		34,501	0	-3,006		17,717	10,857	-16,190

- 6.2 The borough saw a reasonable net gain in employment floorspace this year. This was as a result of the completion of four industrial units at Cole Green Lane, on the eastern edge of Welwyn Garden City, which resulted in a net gain of just under 11,000m² of B8 use. This site was proposed to be allocated as part of a new employment area in the Draft Local Plan. There were a number of office to residential conversions completed which resulted in losses

of Eg(i)/(B1a) uses, however these were partially offset by an extension at a site in Sopers Road in Cuffley for office floorspace.

6.3 Overall, since the start of the plan period, the net loss in employment floorspace now amounts to -16,190 m². The majority of this loss has been from offices converted to residential. The significant loss in B2 floorspace in 2019/20 was largely a result of the residential redevelopment of the former Ratcliff Tail Lift site in Welwyn Garden City (a Draft Local Plan allocation), as well as the redevelopment of Entech House.

Indicator EC2	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP1)
<i>Proportion of new employment floorspace on previously developed land (PDL)</i>	
Target:	For 60% of gross new employment floorspace to be on PDL across the plan period
Achieved to date:	100% of floorspace on PDL for the plan period

6.4 The effective reuse of previously developed land (PDL) is a key component of national planning policy. Welwyn Hatfield has always taken a ‘brownfield first’ approach when identifying land for development, and this has continued to be the case during the preparation of the Draft Local Plan. During the Local Plan examination it has been 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.

6.5 However, all of the gross new employment floorspace completed since the start of the plan period has been on PDL. This largely reflects the fact that the new Local Plan is still progressing through examination, and the borough’s Green Belt boundaries have not yet changed. Until this takes place, the proportion of new employment floorspace on PDL will remain high.

Indicator EC3	Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP8)
<i>Employment areas lost to non-employment uses</i>	
Target:	No target until the new Local Plan is adopted (Target of no further loss thereafter)
Achieved to date:	Net loss of 0.1ha this year, total net loss of 10.9ha since plan period start

6.6 The submitted Draft Local Plan identifies 294.1 hectares of designated employment land for Class B and associated uses, however this has since been revised to 286.8 hectares through modifications. During the 2021/22 monitoring year, 4 sites changed from employment use to a non-employment use. Of these, 2 lie within designated employment land and amount to a total area of 0.13 hectares. In total, since the start of the plan period, 3.8% of designated employment land has been lost.

Table 27 - 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%
Plan total	48	21	10.94 hectares	3.8%

- 6.7 The losses to date are largely the result of schemes to convert office buildings to residential use through permitted development (i.e. not requiring planning permission). Between the introduction of these permitted development rights in May 2013 and the end of the 2021/22 monitoring year, 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).
- 6.8 The government’s intention in introducing these permitted development rights was to create much-needed homes from empty offices, and there are some office-to-residential sites in the borough where offices were indeed underused. However, there are also examples of much more prime office spaces being lost. One such example is the former Xerox headquarters in Welwyn Garden City has meant the loss of a 4 hectare office campus, on a prime location, right in the centre of an employment area. In addition to the impacts upon employment land supply, some of these sites are also by their nature some way from other residential communities and facilities such as schools and shops.

Indicator EC4		Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP2)
<i>Future employment floorspace supply</i>		
Target:	Maintain sufficient supply of employment floorspace to meet the target in <i>EC1</i>	
Achieved to date:	Forecast deficit of around 6,000m ² against 59,000m ² target	

- 6.9 Whilst the delivery of sites will still depend on its adoption, the publication of the new Local Plan means that the borough now has three sources of future employment floorspace supply: planning permissions, vacant sites, and allocated sites. Unlike future housing supply the future supply of employment floorspace is more dependent on economic circumstances and the existence of prospective occupiers, making it generally much more difficult to anticipate an exact year in which new floorspace will be delivered. The table below provides a plan period summary of employment floorspace supply at 31st March 2022.

Table 29 – Employment Floorspace Supply (m²)

Use Class	Completions 2016/17 – 2021/22	Sites with planning permission	Vacant sites in employment areas	Local Plan site allocations	Estimated further office-to-residential loss	Overall total
B1	-37,507	9,295	9,200	54,579	-15,120	20,447
B2	-7,257	5,296	520	-4,410	-	-5,851
B8	17,717	9,306	-	-9,500	-	17,523
B Mix	10,857	10,044	-	-	-	20,901
Total	-16,190	33,941	9,720	40,669	-15,120	53,020

- 6.10 The submitted Draft Local Plan planned for 116,400m² of employment floorspace. However, since submitting the Local Plan, it has become clear that extensive losses of floorspace through Permitted Development rights would make it difficult to deliver significant net additional floorspace. Furthermore, whilst the evidence base suggested that the Council should plan for significant employment growth, such an approach could result in an increase in the current level of in-commuting into the borough, which would be inherently

unsustainable. The target has been reviewed and over the plan period provision will be made for 59,000m² of employment floorspace. The current supply is slightly below target with a forecast shortfall of around 6,000m².

Businesses, Jobs and Skills

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

Table 29 – Number of Enterprises in Welwyn Hatfield

Type of count	Welwyn Hatfield							East Change 2020-21	National change 2020-21
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change 2020-21		
Number of enterprises	4,775	5,015	5,090	5,230	5,330	5,160	-170 (-3.2%)	-155 (-0.1%)	+13,930 (+0.5%)
Number of 'local units'	5,585	5,850	5,935	6,090	6,205	6,045	-160 (-2.6%)	-365 (-0.1%)	+8,195 (+0.3%)

Data source: Inter-Departmental Business Register (ONS) via NOMIS

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157231/report.aspx>

6.11 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, Cuffley and Panshanger express-format stores.

6.12 The number of enterprises and local units in the borough both decreased in 2021, with the rate of change below both the regional level and the national level (which saw an increase during the year). 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
<i>Jobs and job density</i>	

6.13 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 2020 which indicate a reasonable decline in the total number of jobs in Welwyn Hatfield, which fell to 94,000 from 104,000 in 2019. This resulted in a fall in the figure for jobs density (the ratio of jobs to the working age population) from 1.29 to 1.15. 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. However, there are some potential concerns with this dataset when segmented at this geographic level.

6.14 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 30 – Jobs and Job Density

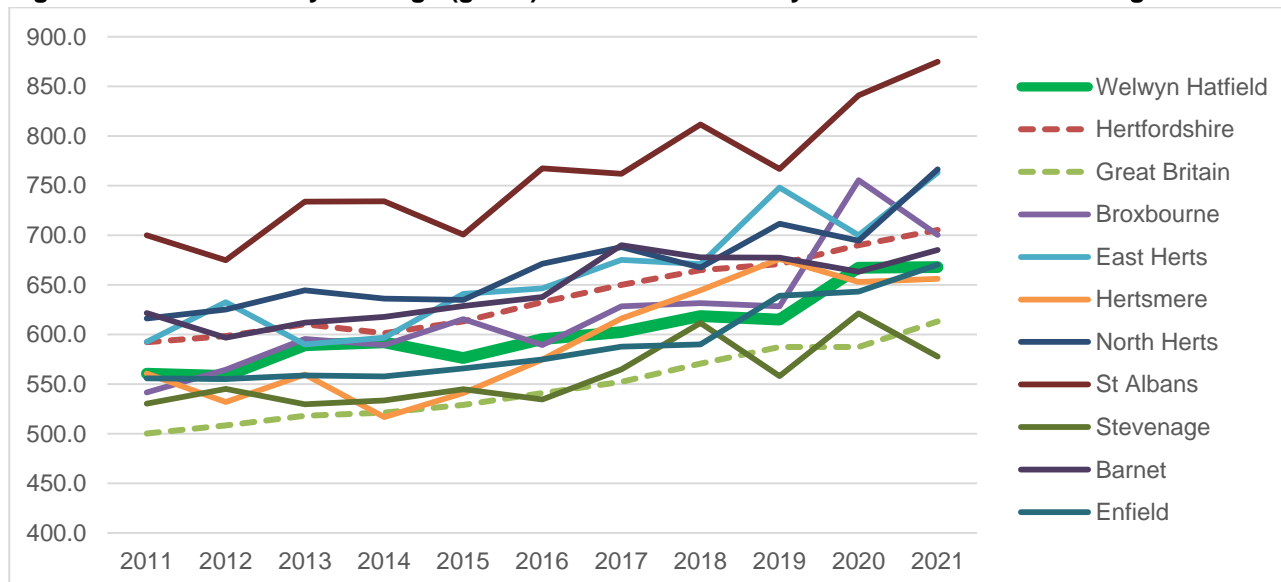
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% Change 2019-20
Welwyn Hatfield	Jobs Total	79,000	87,000	100,000	101,000	104,000	94,000	-9.6%
	Job Density	1.03	1.09	1.24	1.25	1.29	1.15	-10.9%
Hertford- shire	Jobs Total	670,000	698,000	724,000	734,000	738,000	727,000	-1.5%
	Job Density	0.91	0.94	0.98	0.99	1.00	0.98	-2.0%

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

6.14 Figure 9 below shows that, for full-time workers, the median earnings of Welwyn Hatfield residents in 2021 was £667.70 per week which remained almost unchanged from 2020 (£667.20). Average earnings in the borough were £54.60 per week above the national average, although remain slightly below the below the Hertfordshire average by £37.50 per week. Looking however at the data for the lower quartile (people on the lowest 25% of earnings), Welwyn Hatfield residents saw an increase in average lower quartile earnings during the year (which increased to £498.3 per week from £459.1 per week in 2020). These figures should again 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>

6.15 The average earnings of full-time workers employed in the borough in 2021 (regardless of where they lived) was £682.40 per week. This was a slight increase from the 2020 figure (£678.20) and means that employee earnings remain slightly above resident earnings – if this were to continue over a long period of time, it could conceivably alter the borough’s

commuting dynamic. Again, it is important to be cautious given that these figures are also from a small sample.

Indicator EC8
Unemployment

Contextual Indicator

- 6.17 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 2021 (Jan-Dec) official unemployment rate in Welwyn Hatfield was 3.2%, almost unchanged from 3.3% in 2020.
- 6.18 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.
- 6.19 The rate of JSA/UC claimants within Welwyn Hatfield has been steadily declining since peaking at 4.7% between Feb-Apr 2021. In March 2022, the rate of claimants was 2.8%, still above the rate recorded prior to the pandemic in early 2020 (of 1.9%). Table 31 shows the breakdown across the borough, with the rate of claimants falling back across all wards in March 2022 compared with March 2021, although all areas remaining at above rates recorded in March 2020.

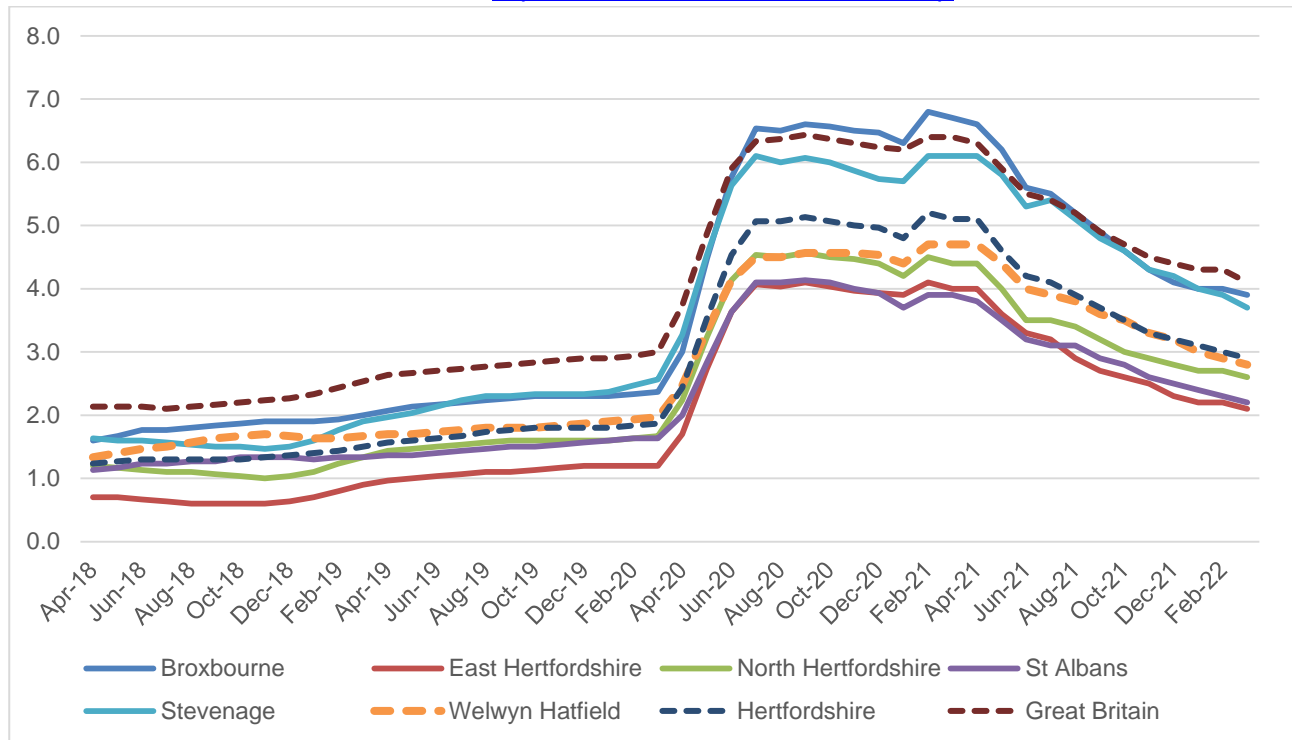
Table 31 - Percentage of residents aged 16-64 in each ward claiming JSA/UC

Ward	March 2020	March 2021	March 2022	Change Mar 22 vs Mar 2021
Brookmans Park & Little Heath	0.8%	3.3%	1.4%	-1.9%
Haldens	2.7%	6.2%	3.8%	-2.4%
Handside	1.8%	3.5%	2.1%	-1.4%
Hatfield Central	2.8%	6.0%	4.3%	-1.7%
Hatfield East	2.8%	5.6%	3.6%	-2.0%
Hatfield South	1.9%	4.9%	3.1%	-1.8%
Hatfield Villages	1.1%	3.5%	2.0%	-1.5%
Hatfield West	1.4%	3.6%	2.2%	-1.4%
Hollybush	2.5%	5.5%	3.0%	-2.5%
Howlands	2.4%	5.3%	3.3%	-2.0%
Northaw and Cuffley	0.9%	3.2%	1.2%	-2.1%
Panshanger	1.6%	3.9%	2.3%	-1.6%
Peartree	4.5%	8.4%	5.2%	-3.2%
Sherrards	1.7%	3.8%	2.1%	-1.7%
Welham Green	1.3%	5.0%	2.9%	-2.1%
Welwyn East	0.7%	2.5%	1.0%	-1.5%
Welwyn West	1.5%	4.0%	2.4%	-1.6%

Source: ONS via NOMIS - <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>

6.19 Figure 11 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, which have since been steadily declining since around March 2021. Comparing March 2022 with March 2021, the fall in claimant rate in Welwyn Hatfield (-1.9%) was slightly less than for Hertfordshire (-2.2%) and the national average (-2.3%).

Figure 11 - Percentage of working-age residents claiming JSA for Welwyn Hatfield and surrounding authorities - Source: ONS via NOMIS – <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>



Indicator EC9	Contextual Indicator
Educational attainment and skills	

6.20 According to the ONS population survey via NOMIS (Jan - Dec 2021), 45.9% of working age 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 Great Britain (43.6%) and higher than the East of England (39.6%), although below the Hertfordshire average (49%).

6.21 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. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic most national curriculum assessments were cancelled in 2019/20 and 2020/21, therefore data is not presented for these years. Data for 2021/22 showed that the borough's schools continued to score below the Hertfordshire average on both metrics, though slightly above the national average in terms of attainment 8 score and in line with the national average for % of grades 5-9 in English and Maths.

Table 32 – Educational Performance

Location	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20 20/21		2021/22	
	'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	46.5	42.6%	48.8	44.2%	N/A	N/A	50.5	50%
Hertfordshire	51.4	52.9%	51.0	51.4%	N/A	N/A	53.2	57%
England	44.5	40.2%	44.5	39.8%	N/A	N/A	48.7	50%

Data source: Department for Education – <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-gcses-key-stage-4> and http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/geo/pconE14001027_all.html



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)

Changes to protected historic assets

Targets: No loss of protected heritage assets, or increase in the number ‘at risk’
Achieved to date: No change to the number of protected assets. Still 1 asset ‘at risk’.

7.1 There have been no changes to the number of protected heritage assets in the borough during the year. Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register continues to show that one listed structure in the borough is at risk – the Grade II* Paine Bridge at Brocket Hall in Lemsford. Whilst the bridge is not in any structural danger, stonework cladding on it is slowly decaying – no solution to address the decay has yet been agreed.

Table 33 – Protected Historic Assets

Type	2020/21		2021/22		Change
	N° of sites	Area	N° of sites	Area	
Listed Buildings	431	n/a	431	n/a	No change
<i>Of which Grade I</i>	6	n/a	6	n/a	No change
<i>Of which Grade II*</i>	25	n/a	25	n/a	No change
<i>Of which Grade II</i>	400	n/a	400	n/a	No change
Conservation Areas	8	374ha	8	374ha	No change
Areas of Archaeological Significance	73	1,071ha	73	1,071ha	No change
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	4	n/a	4	n/a	No change
Registered Historic Parks/Gardens	5	1,005ha	5	1,005ha	No change
Heritage assets at risk	1	n/a	1	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: 1 new wildlife sites in 2021

7.2 There was one new Local Wildlife Site designated in 2021/22, the River Mimram (Codicote Bottom to Pumping Station). The 0.27ha site is included under the designation of flowing water (rivers and streams), which is a new criteria for 2021. The site falls within both Welwyn Hatfield and North Herts. Last year whilst one new site was added at Whitehill Wildflower Meadow (0.94ha), the Dismantled Railway East of Sherrardspark Wood (2.94 ha) was de-

selected as it no longer meets the criteria. The total area of Wildlife Sites in Welwyn Hatfield was recorded at 1,664.46 ha in 2021.

7.3 The main indicator on the condition of protected natural assets relates to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). In 2017, Sherrardspark Wood SSSI was graded as being in a partly favourable and partly unfavourable but a recovering position, whereas Wormley-Hoddesdonpark Woods South SSSI was graded as favourable. Other sites have not been resurveyed by Natural England for several years. Two of the borough's SSSIs (Northaw Great Wood and Sherrardspark Wood) are also Council-managed Local Nature Reserves with [Woodland Management Plans](#) adopted in 2015.

Table 34 – Protected Natural Assets

Type	2020/21		2021/22		Change
	Number of sites	Area	Number of sites	Area	
Wildlife Sites	194	1,664ha	195	1,664ha	+1 new site
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
<i>New development in the Green Belt</i>	

7.4 The amount of designated Green Belt in the borough remains the same, although the new Local Plan is proposing to remove some land from the Green Belt in order to accommodate future development needs. 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 35 – 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	19 dwellings	8 dwellings	11 dwellings	4.3%
Commercial development	10,918m ²	0m ²	10,918m ²	N/A

7.5 In terms of residential development, there has been a net gain of 11 dwellings in the Green Belt during the monitoring year. This accounted for 4.3% of total net completions. This proportion was lower than in 2020/21, when 8.0% of net completions were in the Green Belt and also slightly less than in 2019/20 when 4.9% of net completions were in the Green Belt. As well as a small number of single replacement dwellings, there was one site outside of specified towns and settlements for 8 dwellings which completed. However, this site was previously developed, with coverage by buildings of some form, which were demolished to accommodate the redevelopment for housing. In terms of commercial development, the large amount of new floorspace relates to the site at Cole Green Lane on the eastern edge of WGC, which completed this year. Whilst this site is within the Green Belt, it is proposed to be allocated as part of a new employment area in the Draft Local Plan. The land had previously been used for landfill.

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 publication of the Local Plan

- 7.6 The borough currently has around 241 hectares of designated Urban Open Land (UOL). This land is protected by Policy OS1 of the 2005 District 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. In 2020/21, outline planning permission for 39 dwellings was granted at the Land South of Filbert Close in Hatfield. The 0.92ha site was designated as Urban Open Land in the 2005 District Plan due to its function as a school playing field. However, it has not been used as such for 12 years (since the school closed). The site is allocated for housing in the 2016 Draft Local Plan, with the site designation as UOL proposed to be deleted.
- 7.7 In 2018, planning permission was granted at Onslow St Audrey's School which also covers an area of Urban Open Land; however, the proposal results in a very small loss of 205m² of this land (0.4% of total UOL at this site). The new building was considered to support and maintain the function of the UOL as playing fields and therefore was considered to be in accordance with policy OS1. The new Local Plan also proposes substantial increases in the amount of the borough protected by a UOL designation, and these will be reported in the AMR once the Local Plan is adopted.

Indicator EN5**Contextual Indicator*****Changes to the public rights of way network***

- 7.8 This indicator assists in monitoring green infrastructure proposals and the monitoring of Sustainability Appraisal objectives around accessibility. 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 2022, the area of open space in the borough with a Green Flag Award totalled 68 hectares. The 52ha Stanborough Park and 16ha King George V Playing Fields in Welwyn Garden City both 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.

Table 36 – Renewable Energy Completions 2021/22

Energy source	Wind		Solar PV		Solar thermal		Air Source Heat Pump		CHP		Other	
	Nº	Capacity	Nº	Capacity	Nº	Capacity	Nº	Capacity	Nº	Capacity	Nº	Capacity
Committed (In supply)	0	N/A	18	Not Known	0	N/A	8	N/A	1	Not known	5	Not Known
Completed 2021/22	0	N/A	1	56kW	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	1	Not Known

7.11 During the monitoring year, two schemes incorporating renewable energy generation were completed. However, it is not known what the overall energy generating capacity of these schemes are as this is not always provided by the applicant. The Council was awarded grant funding for three decarbonisation projects to replace gas fired boilers with combined air source heat pumps and water source heat pumps. Permissions were granted at three Council sites – Campus East, West and Hatfield Swim Centre - for the installation of air source heat pumps.

7.12 Once the new Local Plan is adopted, the AMR will also report on the sustainability of new construction itself. This will include the amount of non-residential development which meets BREEAM ‘excellent’ standards, and the levels of estimated water consumption in new homes. These feature within Policy SADM13 of the Draft Local Plan, which also sets out target levels of provision for each.

Indicator EN8

Contextual Indicator

CO₂ emissions per capita

7.13 The general need to reduce carbon emissions is enshrined in both national and local policy. Table 37 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 2020).

7.14 It can be seen that CO₂ emissions have generally been decreasing in recent years. This was initially driven by falls in commercial and domestic emissions, however the data shows transport emissions have also now been declining over the last few years. Welwyn Hatfield’s emissions per capita have historically been slightly above the Hertfordshire average, however this gap has declined and emissions for 2020 were at 4.2 tons of CO₂ per capita for both Welwyn Hatfield and Hertfordshire.

Table 37 – CO₂ Emissions

CO ₂ Emissions	Commercial (Kt CO ₂)	Domestic (Kt CO ₂)	Transport (Kt CO ₂)	Grand Total (Kt CO ₂)	Per Capita (Tons CO ₂)	
Welwyn Hatfield	2015	250	184	266	687	5.8
	2016	214	175	272	648	5.4
	2017	206	164	269	627	5.1
	2018	206	164	259	616	5.0
	2019	188	158	254	590	4.8
	2020	168	157	208	523	4.2

CO ₂ Emissions		Commercial (Kt CO ₂)	Domestic (Kt CO ₂)	Transport (Kt CO ₂)	Grand Total (Kt CO ₂)	Per Capita (Tons CO ₂)
Herts	2015	1742	1976	2772	6405	5.5
	2016	1528	1879	2826	6148	5.2
	2017	1401	1753	2813	5882	5.0
	2018	1392	1752	2751	5804	4.9
	2019	1232	1668	2734	5590	4.7
	2020	1138	1656	2307	5058	4.2

Data source: Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Sector -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>

Indicator EN9

Contextual Indicator

Amount of the borough within Flood Zones 2&3

7.15 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 38 – Area of Welwyn Hatfield in Flood Zones 2 & 3

Year	Area in Flood Zone 2 (Medium probability)	Area in Flood Zone 3 (High probability)	Total area in medium or high flood probability
2015	4.45km ²	3.05km ²	7.50km ²

7.16 In 2015, Environment Agency Modelling put 7.5km² of land within Flood Zones 2 and 3 – this equates to 5.8% of the borough. Whilst this is a large amount of land in absolute terms, the vast majority of it is undeveloped. The risk of river flooding to homes is almost entirely limited to a small number of properties in the heart of the borough's historic riverside villages – for example alongside the River Mimram in Welwyn, alongside the River Lee in Lemsford, and alongside the Mimmshall Brook in Water End.

Indicator EN10

Contextual Indicator

Number of Flood Events

7.17 This indicator has been removed as it has not been possible to source complete data on recorded flood events in the borough.

Indicator EN11

Contextual Indicator

Planning applications granted contrary to Environment Agency advice

7.18 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 two planning applications, however both applications were subsequently withdrawn during the year and resubmitted. Since the

end of the 2021/22 monitoring year, one of these has again been withdrawn, while the EA objection was removed on the other application following the submission of further information which demonstrated that there would be no negative impact to the main river culvert. However, the EA recommended a planning condition which was included and the permission was granted. 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: 46% of completions within +/-33% of target (54% for residential schemes)

7.19 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.

7.20 The overall proportion of sites within 33% more or less than the standards was just under half (46%) of sites. This was slightly lower compared with last year when compliance was 53%. Of the 20 residential sites which did not meet within +/-33% of the parking standards, 13 of these sites were below the guidelines, whilst 7 sites provided more parking than specified in the guidelines.

Table 39 – Compliance of New Development with Parking Standards

Use Class	2021/22 sites completed*	Number within +/-33% of guidelines	% within +/-33%
A (Retail etc)	2	0	0%
B (Employment etc)	4	2	50%
C (Residential institutions etc)	0	N/A	N/A
D (Leisure, community etc)	2	0	0%
Residential sites	46	25	54%
Total	56	26	46%

*Only includes sites where sufficient information was available to make an assessment

Indicator EN13 Contextual Indicator
New development accessibility by public transport

7.21 Table 39 below shows the accessibility of new homes built to key facilities. Data was not yet available for 2021/22 at the time of publication therefore will be reported on in the 2022/23 AMR. The completion of some small out of settlement developments in 2020/21 meant that the figures were slightly lower than the previous year in terms of accessibility to facilities. However, all new homes were still within 30 minutes (by public transport or walking) of a primary school, 96% were also within this level of accessibility to a secondary school. In terms of accessibility to hospitals, 93% were within half an hour (walk or public transport), although none were within this level of accessibility to hospitals providing A&E. Meanwhile 97% were within 30 minutes of an Employment area and 93% within 30 minutes of a major retail centre.

Table 40 – New homes within 30 minutes by public transport (or walking) of key facilities

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
GP surgery	100%	98%	99%	100%	98%
Hospital	89%	93%	93%	97%	93%
Primary school	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Secondary school	99%	96%	97%	100%	96%
Employment area	92%	96%	98%	98%	97%
Major retail centre	97%	97%	94%	95%	93%

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, as well as private sector service providers such as bus operators and utility companies.

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: £580,000 received (WHBC); £252,000 received (HCC) in 2021/22

- 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 projects can be secured (such as offsite affordable housing); 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](#) was published in spring 2017 and consultation took place between May and June 2017. The Council updated its evidence on CIL viability in a report published in July 2020 and further consultation took place from 30th September – 25th November 2020.
- 8.3 S106 agreements are secured in accordance with the Council's adopted [Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance](#). Many also fall under Hertfordshire County Council's Planning Obligations Toolkit, which covers 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 a total of just over £580,000 in S106 funding for projects within its own remit. Contributions received were from implemented developments, including:
- £167,000 towards offsite affordable housing provision;
 - £114,000 towards community facilities;
 - £50,000 and £39,000 from two separate developments towards GP surgeries within the vicinity of the developments;

- £28,000 towards the provision of outdoor gym equipment at St Albans Road East in Hatfield;
- Numerous smaller sums were received totalling £147,000, towards healthcare, local open spaces and sports facilities;
- £34,000 towards waste and recycling provision at specific developments.

8.5 Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for higher level services and infrastructure provision. During the year the County Council received £252,000 in S106 funding towards a range of schemes including:

- £109,000 towards transport and travel plans from three separate developments;
- £142,000 towards nurse, primary and secondary education, as well as library and youth contributions, from three separate developments.

Indicator IN2

Local Plan Indicator (Policy SP13 and IDP)

Delivery of new infrastructure – Section 106 funds spent

Target: There is no specific target for this indicator

Achieved to date: £68,000 spent (WHBC); £1,485,600 spent (HCC) in 2021/22

8.6 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council spent £68,000 in S106 funding for projects within its own remit, including:

- £40,000 towards outdoor gym equipment at Roe Hill Hall and recreation area in Hatfield;
- £17,000 towards refurbishment of the diving boards at Hatfield Swim Centre;
- £11,000 for providing waste and recycling bins to 7 new residential developments.

8.7 During the year Hertfordshire County Council spent £1,485,600 in S106 money within the borough, the majority of this was towards secondary education.

8.8 Notable infrastructure developments have included:

- Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), in partnership with the council, have developed a scheme to enhance the area around Welwyn Garden City Town Centre. In 2017/2018, HCC undertook a consultation on schemes to improve the pedestrian environment and traffic circulation around Stonehills and Howardsgate. A new system was trialled in May and June 2018 and based on the outcome of the trial and the feedback received during consultation, the scheme layout and associated traffic regulation order was updated to address concerns raised. The project is being delivered in two phases, with phase 1 having commenced in July 2021 and completed by the end of the year. This first phase 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 includes a dedicated space for cycling on Bridge Road (Hunters Bridge), Wigmores North and Fretherne Road. There will also be improvements to crossing points on Osborn Way and Howardsgate, as well as a town centre wide 20mph zone. Works commenced on Bridge Road following the end of the monitoring year in late summer/Autumn 2022.

8.9 To deliver the larger number of smaller scale infrastructure improvements needed to support the growth proposed in the Local Plan, a revised Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IPD) has been published alongside its submission. Throughout the examination of the Local Plan, and as part of the work carried out on additional submitted sites, updates to infrastructure

requirements have been carried out and once the Local Plan is adopted a new IDP will be published. In addition to the more typically thought of 'physical' infrastructure (such as transport and utilities), the IDP identifies requirements for social infrastructure (such as schools and community facilities) and green infrastructure (such as open spaces). The IDP will facilitate further dialogue with service providers and developers, and will be a 'living' document that continues to evolve. It will be able to influence spending priorities for public bodies and service providers, and form the basis of the Council's emerging CIL Charging Schedule.



9. Site-Specific Monitoring

This chapter monitors the development and implementation progress on the Mixed-Use Sites and Strategic Development Sites proposed for allocation in the Draft Local Plan

- 9.1 The AMR has historically included a section monitoring the implementation of development on sites with adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). SPDs set out additional detail to plan policies in certain topics or areas, and are used in the determination of planning applications. More importantly, they also assist both the Council in articulating its development aspirations and developers in preparing their development proposals. As none of the three SPD sites (WGC Town Centre North, High View and Broadwater Road West) have yet been completed, all are also proposed for allocation in the Draft Local Plan – one as a Strategic Development Site (in two parts, reflecting its significant size and complexity), and two as Mixed-Use Sites.
- 9.2 This results in a total of nine areas proposed for allocation in the Draft 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 Draft Local Plan). Once development on a site commences the AMR will itself list all of the site-specific targets in order for them to be monitored.

Welwyn Garden City Town Centre North – Mixed-Use Site MUS1

- 9.3 The Draft Local Plan maintains the 2005 District Plan allocation of this site for a mixed-use development, and the [Town Centre North SPD](#) was adopted in 2015 following public consultation. 6,000m² of new retail floorspace and 100 new homes are envisaged, and the SPD provides detailed guidance to ensure that development is sympathetic to its conservation area location, whilst also maximising opportunities to deliver the town centre's development needs. To date, there is no development progress to report on this site although the Council is in the process of developing proposals.

1-9 Town Centre, Hatfield – Mixed-Use Site MUS2

- 9.4 The Local Plan proposes the allocation of this site to provide new ground floor retail floorspace and new homes above. A planning application was approved in February 2021, with work commencing in March 2022 and completion expected in June 2023.

Site-Specific Draft Local Plan Target	Performance to date
1,200sqm (net) new retail floorspace	The planning permission includes 1,100sqm of retail floorspace.
At least 66 (net) new homes	The planning permission includes 71 new homes.
Improvements to the public realm and accessibility of the eastern end of Hatfield Town Centre	The planning permission includes a public space between two of the blocks. The materials and design proposed 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 MUS3

9.5 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 now commenced and the development is expected to complete in up to four phases by 2023.

High View SPD

Site-Specific Draft 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
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

9.6 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. The Local Plan also proposes that any masterplan for the site allows the opportunity for a realigned grass runway to the north of the site. Until the adoption of the Local Plan the site remains a designated Area of Special Restraint. During the hearing sessions in June 2018 the inspector observed that the council could consider bringing forward a larger area for residential development. An outline planning application was granted permission in February 2020 for 650 dwellings, while a further outline application

was submitted in November 2021 in relation to the wider area and is currently under consideration.

South East Welwyn Garden City (Birchall Garden Suburb) – Strategic Development Site SDS2

9.7 The Draft Local Plan 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. A reduced site area and capacity of 600 dwellings has been proposed. This site extends into East Herts District, where a further 1,350 new homes and additional supporting infrastructure are proposed. The East Herts District Plan was adopted in October 2018. However, until the adoption of the Local Plan the Welwyn Hatfield part of the site remains within the Green Belt. An outline planning application was submitted in July 2022 for 1,300 dwellings within Welwyn Hatfield and 1,350 within East Herts.

Broadwater Road West, Welwyn Garden City – Strategic Development Sites SDS3 (North) and SDS4 (West)

9.8 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;
- 9.1ha (once a factory for Shredded Wheat), which is proposed for allocation in the Local Plan as Strategic Development 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. Demolition works have now started on the Southern side of the site. Subsequent planning applications, which would see a higher number of dwellings at this site have been received and are currently awaiting determination.
- 2.1ha (currently occupied by a warehouse and distribution centre), which is proposed for allocation in the Local Plan as Strategic Development Site SDS4 and has a target provision of 170 new homes and 11,350m² of new office floorspace;
- 1.1ha former BioPark research and development complex, which had planning permission granted for 289 dwellings in August 2022.

9.9 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, 85% 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.

9.10 Because development of these sites has commenced, the targets set out in the Local Plan can now be monitored against. It can be seen that meeting the targets is heavily dependent on provision on site SDS3 (as well as SDS4 in the future).

Broadwater Road West SPD Performance

Site-Specific Local Plan Target	Performance to date
1,230 new dwellings across three areas	209 completed, remainder in proposed allocations
17,650m ² new B1 employment floorspace	None completed, remainder in proposed allocations
Maximum 600m ² A1 convenience retail floorspace	572m ² in planning permission for site SDS3
Provision of a new hotel	Forms part of planning permission for site SDS3
Provision of a new healthcare facility	Forms part of planning permission for site SDS3
Provision of new community facility floorspace	Forms part of planning permission for site SDS3
0.8ha new urban space per 1,000 residents	1.16ha per 1,000 residents achieved to date
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	10.1% to date
Introduce traffic calming along Broadwater Road	Forms part of planning permission for site SDS3
Improvements to bus services serving the site	Funding received, but scheme not yet implemented
Improvements to the footbridge to the town centre	Forms part of planning permission for site SDS3
Delivery of new primary school capacity (offsite)	Forms part of planning permission for site SDS3

North West Hatfield – Strategic Site SDS5

9.11 The Draft Local Plan proposes the allocation of this site as part of a major urban extension, with a target provision of 1,650 new homes supported by infrastructure including a new school and neighbourhood centre. Until the adoption of the Local Plan the site remains within the Green Belt, and there is no development progress to report on the site – although 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.

Symondshyde New Village – Strategic Site SDS6

9.12 The Draft Local Plan proposed the allocation of this site, north of Hatfield, to create a new village. Hearing sessions on the allocation took place on 11th March 2020 and the site was subsequently found unsound by the Local Plan Inspector. Full Council agreed the removal of this site from the Local Plan in November 2020 and again in January 2022.

Marshmoor, Welham Green – Strategic Site SDS7

9.13 The Draft Local Plan proposes the allocation of this site as part of an urban extension, with a target provision of over 40,000m² of new employment floorspace in addition to 100 new homes. Until the adoption of the Local Plan the site remains within the Green Belt, and there is no development progress to report on the site – although 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 8 hearing session on 30th July 2020.

Appendix 1 – Housing Site Monitoring

Sites with at least some prospect of delivering 5 or more dwellings within the plan period are subject to ongoing monitoring on their status. A large number of monitored sites remain at early stages of the development process, however there are already more sites completed than proposed allocations. A number of urban sites proposed or allocation in the Local Plan have now been granted permission and are either awaiting construction start or are under construction.

Site statuses as of 31/03/2022		Completed (2016/17 – 2019/20)	Planning permission granted – Under construction	Planning permission granted – Awaiting construction start	Proposed allocation or HELAA site	Planning permission or HELAA site – Unavailable or Unachievable within plan period	Totals
Settlement							
Brookmans Park	5	1	-	3	1	10	
Cuffley	3	1	1	4	2	11	
Digswell	2	-	2	-	-	4	
Hatfield	21	5	5	9	2	42	
Little Heath	-	-	-	2	-	2	
Oaklands & MH	1	-	-	3	-	4	
Welham Green	2	-	-	5	-	7	
Welwyn	4	1	-	3	-	8	
Welwyn Garden City	29	6	3	15	4	57	
Woolmer Green	1	0	-	2	-	3	
Rural Areas	4	2	2	1	2	11	
Borough total	72	16	13	47	11	159	

Appendix 2 – Housing trajectory summary table to 2026/27

This table includes all sites contributing to the five year housing land supply set out in Indicator HO6. It does not include dwellings which have been completed, or sites where all dwellings are expected to be completed beyond 2025/26 (i.e. outside the five year period). Figures updated as at 30 Sep 2022.

Site Status	UC	Site with planning permission, under construction
	PG	Site with planning permission, not yet under construction
	BLR	Site identified on the Brownfield Land Register
	RG	Resolution to grant

Site	Planning Permission Reference	Status	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	Total 5YHLS
75 Oaklands Avenue	6/2020/0456/FULL	UC	9					9
101 Brookmans Avenue	6/2019/2313/FULL	UC	6					6
11 Brookmans Ave	6/2021/3314/FULL	PG	-4					-4
Small Sites x 2 - Under Construction		UC	2	0	0	0	0	2
Small Sites x 6 - Permission Granted		PG	-2	9	0	0	0	7
Total Brookmans Park			11	9	0	0	0	20
36 The Ridgeway and land to the rear	6/2018/2863/FULL	UC	6					6
Small Sites x 4 - Under Construction		UC	4	0	0	0	0	4
Small Sites x 6 - Permission Granted		PG	-1	6	0	0	0	5
Total Cuffley			9	6	0	0	0	15
61 New Road	6/2020/2818/FULL	PG	-1	9				8
63-65 New Road	6/2019/1569/FULL	UC	9					9
Small Sites x 2 - Under Construction		UC	2	0	0	0	0	2
Small Sites x 1 - Permission Granted		PG	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total Digswell			10	10	0	0	0	20
High view (Hilltop) SPD Site	6/2019/1067/MAJ	UC	36	36	42	26		140
Former VW Centre, Comet Way	6/2020/3222/MAJ	PG			118			118
Minster House, Minster Close	6/2019/2086/FULL	UC	91					91
Land at Onslow St Audrey's	6/2017/1641/MAJ	UC	6	37	43			86
Link Drive	6/2019/2431/MAJ	PG			80			80
1-9 Town Centre	6/2019/2430/MAJ	UC		71				71
Plot 6000, Hatfield Business Park	6/2018/2994/VAR	UC	45					45
South of Filbert Close	6/2019/2162/OUTLINE	PG		39				39
1 Burfield Close	6/2020/3257/MAJ	PG			10			10
24 The Common	6/2020/3226/PN32	PG		10				10
Garages at Hollyfield	6/2021/2492/FULL	PG		8				8
22 The Common	6/2022/0289/FULL	PG		8				8
Andre House, 19-25 Salisbury Square	6/2021/1244/PN11	PG		8				8
41-43 Town Centre	6/2021/1805/FULL	PG		6				6
Haseldine Meadows	6/2022/0012/FULL	PG		6				6
59 Lockley Crescent	6/2022/0010/FULL	PG		5				5
14-16 Bishops Rise	6/2018/1883/FULL	PG		5				5
36 Salisbury Square	6/2017/1902/FULL	UC	5					5
Small Sites x 4 - Under Construction		UC	4	0	0	0	0	4
Small Sites x 13 - Permission Granted		PG	-2	14	0	0	0	11
Total Hatfield			185	252	293	26	0	756

Continued on the next page

Appendix 2 – Housing trajectory summary table to 2026/27 continued

Site	Planning Permission Reference	Status	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	Total 5YHLS
Osbourne House Farm, Hawkshead Road	6/2021/3304/MAJ	RG			17	17		34
Total Little Heath			0	0	17	17	0	34
Small Sites x 5 - Under Construction		UC	7	0	0	0	0	7
Total Oaklands & Mardley Heath			7	0	0	0	0	7
Small Sites x 1 - Under construction		UC	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total Welham Green			1	0	0	0	0	1
Small Sites x 5 - Under Construction		UC	10	0	0	0	0	10
Small Sites x 2 - Permission Granted		PG	0	4	4	0	0	8
Total Welwyn			10	4	4	0	0	18
Broadwater Road West SPD Site	6/2018/0171/MAJ	UC	208		100	226	226	760
North East of WGC - Panshanger	6/2018/0873/OUTLINE	PG			150	150	162	462
BioPark, Broadwater Road	6/2020/3420/MAJ	PG			144	145		289
29 Broadwater Road	6/2019/3024/MAJ	PG		128				128
73 Bridge Road East	6/2020/2268/MAJ	PG			111			111
Ratcliff Tail Lift Site, WGC	6/2018/3110/MAJ	UC	30	29				59
Land adjacent to 45 Broadwater Road	6/2018/3292/MAJ	UC	58					58
YMCA, 90 Peartree Lane	6/2019/2714/OUTLINE	PG		29				29
37 Broadwater Road	6/2018/2387/MAJ	UC	24					24
Hyde Valley House	6/2021/1388/RM	PG		-26	13			-13
Units 1,1a, 3 Swallow End	6/2018/0231/PN11	UC		10				10
Units 1,1a, 3 Swallow End	6/2019/1172/FULL	UC		8				8
Ludwick Way, Ludwick Green	6/2021/3367/MAJ	PG		6				6
Land behind 140 Ludwick Way	6/2019/1616/FULL	UC	6					6
Small Sites x 6 - Under Construction		UC	15	0	0	0	0	15
Small Sites x 2- Permission Granted		PG	-1	6	0	0	0	5
Total Welwyn Garden City			340	190	518	521	388	1,957
Land south of Northaw Road East	S6/2015/1342/PP				35	46	40	121
Roundhouse Farm, Land off Bullens Green Lane	6/2020/2248/OUTLINE	PG				55		55
Colesdale Farm, Northaw Road West	6/2019/2760/OUTLINE	PG				34		34
Northaw House, Coopers Lane, Northaw	6/2019/0217/MAJ	UC	11	12				23
Mill Green Mill, Green Lane	6/2018/0717/MAJ	UC	9					9
St Andrews Care Home	6/2020/1249/FULL	PG		7				7
Small Sites x 15 - Under Construction		UC	20	2	0	0	0	22
Small Sites x 12- Permission Granted		PG	-2	23	4	0	0	25
Total Rural Areas			38	44	39	135	40	296
Total Welwyn Hatfield			611	515	871	699	428	3,124



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