



**WELWYN
HATFIELD**

Michael Gallimore
Hogan Lovells International LLP
Atlantic House
Holborn Viaduct
London
EC1A 2FG

Colin Haigh
Head of Planning

Reply to: address as below
Date: 1 August 2016
Direct Tel: 01707 357239
Email: c.haigh@welhat.gov.uk

Dear Mr Gallimore

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan – Site BrP12

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the Local Plan and the above site.

In summary, your letter dated 25 July 2016 asserts that local plans must have regard to national policies and guidance, seek to meet the objectively assessed need for housing and be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. It explains that you have commissioned an education report for Brookmans Park and BrP12 which reaches a different conclusion to that advised to us by Herts County Council as education authority; namely that a 2FE primary school would support 500+ new homes without pushing back pupils from outside the village. You consider that the sole reason for not allocating BrP12 was due to a perceived lack of primary school capacity in Brookmans Park, based on the more generic pupil yield forecast used by Herts County Council. As a result you assert that your evidence should have been reported to CHPP on 13 June 2016 and 20 July 2016, that Herts County Council should be instructed to assess that evidence and that BrP12 should be allocated in the Proposed Submission Local Plan.

Your latest letter dated 27 July 2016 asserts that Cabinet should be informed of your expert report and that BrP12 should be allocated in the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The previous correspondence you also refer to dated 11 July 2016 and 20 July 2016 make similar points about the results of your education report and a request that it be highlighted to CHPP. The email of 20 July also queries whether a meeting took place with a consortium of Welham Green landowners to explore the options for a new primary school for the village.

My summation of the situation is that officers presented site evidence to CHPP on 13 June 2016 so that Members could make a final decision about which sites they wanted to appear in the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The selection and rejection of sites took account of a range of evidence, including that provided by Herts County Council as the education authority. It is important to point out however that the selection and rejection of sites took account of much more than just primary school capacity however.

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL8 6AE
DX 30075, Welwyn Garden City 1

Tel: 01707 357000
www.welhat.gov.uk



The report and presentation to CHPP on that night highlighted that previous rounds of consultation have raised particular concerns about the amount of development being directed to villages in the borough and the desire to limit growth targets to be broadly proportionate to the existing housing stock in order to protect the character and identity of those communities. The Housing Background Paper also took account of a wide range of other evidence such as flooding, green belt purposes, green belt boundaries and infrastructure capacity to inform the selection/rejection of sites. On that night Members of CHPP ultimately took the view that a target of 12,100 new homes struck the right balance between meeting objectively assessed needs and the significant and demonstrably adverse impacts of a higher target when assessed against NPPF policies.

Officers were given a clear instruction by Members of CHPP on 13 June to prepare the Proposed Submission Local Plan to include the sites that had been selected and to exclude the sites that had been rejected. It was understood by Members that the Proposed Submission Local Plan would be presented to CHPP on 20 July and Cabinet on 2 August to be agreed for public consultation. It was not intended nor agreed that the selection/rejection of sites or the evidence that informed those decisions would be subject to public consultation or detailed review between these dates. Parties who have approached the Council since CHPP on 13 June have been consistently advised that any comments on the selection/rejection of sites should be made as part of the public consultation period. Your letter acknowledges that I made this point as part of my presentation to CHPP on 20 July.

I can confirm that officers from this Council and Herts County Council education team have had individual meetings with landowners of sites in Welham Green, subsequent to CHPP on 13 June and at their request, to discuss options for the provision of a new primary school. We have also sought to put individual landowners in contact with one another, again at their request, but we have not hosted any consortium meetings. All engagement with these landowners has been on the basis that they will be making representations to the Proposed Submission Local Plan. Like you, they disagree with the evidence presented to CHPP on 13 June and the selection/rejection of sites and have asked that new evidence be reported to CHPP on 20 July. I have taken the same stance with them, that such evidence should be submitted as part of their representation and will be considered by officers and reported to CHPP in due course, rather than at this stage.

As a result I would invite you to submit representations and your education report as part of the public consultation period, so that it can be considered by officers, debated with Herts County Council as education authority, reported to Members of CHPP and ultimately used to decide whether to make any changes to the Local Plan prior to submission. I consider that this is the formal and appropriate opportunity to make representations about the soundness of the plan as currently prepared.

Please note that I have informed the Executive Member for Planning of your latest assertions that Cabinet should be informed of your expert education report and that BrP12 should be allocated in the Proposed Submission Local Plan, as it is her role to propose the plan for public consultation at that meeting, rather than me as Head of Planning. She has agreed that she will highlight your views as part of her presentation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHaigh', written in a cursive style.

Colin Haigh
Head of Planning

