



**WELWYN
HATFIELD**

**Joint Examination of the
Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2013-2032
and the
East Herts District Plan 2011-2033**

Birchall Garden Suburb/East of Welwyn Garden

Examination Hearing Statements

Matters and Issues

Matter 2 - Green Corridor

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Paragraph 114 of the NPPF requires Local Plans to take a strategic approach for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of green infrastructure. The establishment of a Green Corridor is promoted running between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield but with onward linkages into East Hertfordshire to the east. It is intended to connect existing green infrastructure and ecological assets by movement routes and at the same time maintain a sense of space/separation between urban developments, consistent with a Green Belt Function.

Issues

6) How is this concept of green links to be achieved within Birchall Garden Suburb?

Response

- a) Policies SP19 and EWEL1 contain a number of provisions to support the delivery of a continuous green corridor through Birchall Garden Suburb. This green corridor will form part of a larger strategic green infrastructure corridor in Welwyn Hatfield running east to west across the borough between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield (see Policy SP12 and Figure 8 of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan). The corridor has been designed to connect to green infrastructure in both St Albans District and East Herts.
- b) The proposed route of the green corridor through Birchall Garden Suburb is shown on the Birchall Garden Suburb Strategy Diagram. Existing wildlife sites and woodland areas are proposed to be retained in full and connected by the corridor with development buffered such that these ecological resources are fully protected. The delivery of a new country park at the heart of the development will allow the opportunity for a continuous corridor to be delivered which connects The Commons with Holwell Park Wood, Greater Captain's Wood, Birchall Wood and Henry Wood to provide a continuous green link through the development, all of which are designated Local Wildlife Sites. The corridor will provide a comprehensive network of functional and linked spaces for the benefit of wildlife, biodiversity and the community.
- c) The precise form of the corridor and delivery and management arrangements will be decided through the preparation of the Green Corridor SPD. The masterplanning of Birchall Garden Suburb will be required to take account of the Green Corridor SPD. The masterplan for Birchall Garden Suburb will include a site specific green infrastructure framework and strategy and will be prepared in consultation with key stakeholders having regard to a full range of evidence including detailed ecological studies.

7) Would the notional route shown on Figure 8 of the WHLP and figure 13.2 of the EHDP be likely to achieve the Green Corridor Policy objectives at Birchall Garden Suburb? If not, why not?

Response

- a) The Authorities consider that the route shown on the strategy diagrams in their respective plans will enable the delivery of the green corridor policy objectives at Birchall Garden Suburb. The proposed route forms a continuous green corridor through the site which connects The Commons Local Nature Reserve to the south west of the site with Panshanger Park to the north east. The route protects all of the key ecological assets across the site and links these together as part of a comprehensive network of functional and linked spaces for the benefit of wildlife, biodiversity and the community.
- b) Further guidance regarding the corridor will be set out in a masterplan for the site. The finalised masterplan will include a site specific green infrastructure framework and strategy and will answer key questions such as how wide the corridor should be in particular locations to support the movement of wildlife and what enhancements will be required to support biodiversity and encourage it as a key route through the site for pedestrians and cyclists.

8) Is the proposal in accordance with the overarching objective of providing a meaningful and coherent Green Corridor?

Response

- a) The Authorities consider that the proposals accords fully with the overarching objective of providing a meaningful and coherent green corridor. The proposal will secure a continuous green corridor through Birchall Garden Suburb providing a comprehensive network of functional and linked spaces for the benefit of wildlife, biodiversity and the community. The proposal will integrate into a wider strategic green infrastructure corridor spanning from Heartwood Forest in the west to Panshanger Park in the east as set out in Figure 8 of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan.
- b) To help ensure that the green corridor indicated at Birchall Garden Suburb will deliver the Authorities' objectives a requirement of the masterplan for the site will be the preparation of a site specific green infrastructure framework and strategy which will need to take account of the Green Corridor SPD. This will be prepared in consultation with key stakeholders having regard to a full range of evidence including detailed ecological studies.