

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Little Heath Action Group Comments 25/1/18

Transport & Travel

Welwyn and Hatfield is serviced by the Great Northern/Thameslink rail franchise. In 2017 the National Rail Passenger Survey assessed 75 rail services across the country. When scored on "Level of Crowding" (with 1st being the least crowded) the Great Northern/Thameslink route through Welwyn Hatfield was way down the list in 56th place.

On Punctuality/Reliability the route came in at 59th place. On overall customer satisfaction for the Journey the Thameslink route came out in 67th place, again out of 75.

It is clear under the current circumstances the rail route is hardly fit for purpose. Parking at rail stations is also, in many cases at capacity.

Yet there are no real objectives or outcomes to make proper provision for the increase in demand. There is even less under the legal requirement for Duty to Cooperate.

Type and Mix of Housing

The evidence base for the OAN numbers suggest starter homes and retirement properties which may be downsized into are driving a large part of the requirement. In WH, it suggests around 50% should be affordable. In neighbouring Hertsmere OAN figures suggest 70% should be affordable. What mechanisms are in place to stop developers building 4/5 bed detached properties?

Flood Risk

Whilst some studies have been carried out on an individual site basis, very little work has been undertaken on a combined effect basis. Anything more than short or light rain causes flooding on Hawkshead close to HS24 (BrP7), Swanley Bar Lane and on the Great North Road running down from the land of HS25 (LHe1)

New Schools SP14

We are still surprised to understand there is still no concrete plans to provide appropriate schooling for the proposed developments across the borough.

Increasing pressure on both Primary and Secondary education places is especially problematic in the south of the borough. Welwyn Hatfield residents must rely on the provision from Potters Bar Education Planning Area.

It should be noted Hertsmere are now going through their own Local Plan process and significant development will be required in the Potters Bar EPA.

We note that possible development of HS22 (BrP4) Brookmans Park site is subject to “necessary additional primary school capacity to support this level of growth has been demonstrated and secured” *SADM31*. No agreed position has been met with HCC under the requirements of Duty to Cooperate; yet HS22 still forms part of the Local Plan?

Where is Welwyn Hatfield’s agreed final solution with Hertsmere and Hertfordshire County Council?

CIL

At the Welwyn Hatfield Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel (CHPP) 16 March 2017 the CHPP voted to approve the Local Plan for submission. Within this meeting CIL discussions also took place. Some are minuted as follows:

“4.43 Hertsmere Borough Council consider growth proposals in Little Heath are likely to impact on infrastructure in Potters Bar and have therefore asked that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 6 Planning Contributions should be directed towards the facilities in Potters Bar”

Welwyn Hatfield Cabinet Housing & Planning Panel Report 9/2/17

“4.49 North Mymms Parish Council has expressed concern that insufficient provision is being made in the south of the borough for school places and have drawn attention to lack of capacity at the doctor’s surgery. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) must be directed to the community it is intended to benefit and must not be reallocated”

Welwyn Hatfield Cabinet Housing & Planning Panel Report 9/2/17

Members discussed that CIL rates appeared to be less than neighbouring boroughs. Comparative information had not been provided. Officers seemed more concerned with viability for developers! Further research and consultation was to follow.

WH CIL Draft Charging Schedule May 2017 - Shortfall of £155.6m

A late paper from Hertfordshire CC now suggests £50,000 per household will be required. Why did WHBC NOT cooperate on this prior to submitting the plan??

It seems Welwyn Hatfield have put developer’s viability far ahead of any requirements for residents. The S106 / CIL are not of sufficient level to sustain the councils existing level of around 12,500 dwellings let alone the increase to 16,000 or 20,000.