

**Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield  
Local Plan**

**Council's Statement for the  
Stage 4 Hearing on  
Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

**Session 17**

**SP20  
Hatfield Town Centre Strategy**



## Policy SP20 – Hatfield Town Centre Strategy

- 36) Should the policy refer to the need to improve pedestrian and cycle links between the Town Centre and the rest of the town?
- 37) Should the policy refer to the need to improve public transport links to the Town Centre and the development of a strategy that encourages a greater use of public transport for journeys to and from the Town Centre?
- 38) Does the Policy adequately promote improvements to the connectivity of the Town Centre with the rest of Hatfield?
- 39) Should Figure 13 indicate proposed pedestrian and cycling routes into the Town Centre?
- 40) Does the strategy provide enough emphasis for the need to improve pedestrian and cycle accessibility within the Town Centre?

### Welwyn Hatfield Response

(Please note that Q's 36, 37, 38, 39 and 40 have been addressed together in this response)

- a) Hatfield was designated as a “Mark One” post war New Town in 1948 and saw significant growth in the 1950's and 1960's including the development of its town centre. Like many New Towns of that period, it was very successful at the time, but much of the town is now ageing at the same time. This gives a number of challenges, of which poor perception of its town centre is one, and consequently the town centre is in need of reinvestment. Policy SP20 gives an overall Local Plan strategy for Hatfield Town Centre.
- b) Improving the town centre's connectivity to adjoining areas is already specifically set out as an aspiration in the first paragraph of Policy SP20. Further to this, the fifth objective for the town centre in the policy is “improving access for pedestrians and cyclists within and to the town centre”, and the sixth is “enhancing and better integrating public transport within the town centre, and by developing sustainable transport links with The Galleria and the railway station”. Therefore no further changes are required in response to questions 35, 36 and 37.
- c) The final bullet point of paragraph 15.14, which explains the justification behind the policy, says that the strategy focusses on strengthening the town's role by “supporting other transport related improvements to improve the connectivity of the town centre to the wider area”.
- d) Significant regeneration work is already underway in Hatfield. This is underpinned by the Hatfield Renewal Framework (July 2016) **(WH/16)** commissioned by the Hatfield Renewal Partnership, which was based on significant public engagement and consultation, and an analysis of challenges and opportunities for the town.

- e) Transport and better connectivity are key areas identified in the Framework, and a key area of work for the partnership. The Framework sets out 25 projects in six different areas, the fourth of which is “Walking, cycling and transportation”, under which are set out five projects which should be addressed.
- f) This work was moved forward by the development of the Hatfield Transport Strategy in 2017 (**EX/54**). This was commissioned by the Partnership but its production was managed by the Borough Council, alongside Hertfordshire County Council as highways authority. The Transport Strategy, which had to “Establish strong and clear transport connections between different activity hubs across Hatfield” as one of its objectives, identified seven key corridors in the town which saw significant movement, five of which include the town centre, and set out how movement in these corridors could be improved, with significant focus on how more sustainable modes could be encouraged and facilitated.
- g) Hatfield is reasonably well provided with pedestrian and cycle routes. For example, the Alban Way runs from just north of Hatfield Railway Station to St Albans, and provides easy linkage with both the railway station and town centre. Equally, a number of the main routes in the town offer shared pedestrian / cycle paths alongside them.
- h) However, like most towns, the pedestrian and cycle network in the town could be improved, there are gaps in the network, and some of the routes are not of the quality which would be desirable. This is covered in some detail in the Hatfield Transport Strategy, largely through proposing specific detailed improvements to the walking and cycling network. The strategy identified the link between the town centre and railway station as the key priority, setting out eleven specific improvements which were required. The first of these – a new pedestrian crossing across a key road – has recently been completed, and it is hoped that the remaining stages can be completed in future years. This particular link will better integrate the town centre and public transport network.
- i) This key route, and others, are shown in Figure 13. This shows the primary pedestrian and cycle link between the town centre and railway station referred to above, along with the route to the West towards the Galleria, and a key route to the South. However, this plan could be improved, and could add links to the north of the town centre towards the Alban Way and this is proposed as a modification.
- j) Hertfordshire County Council see the Hatfield Transport Strategy as an important detailed evidence base to inform future work and future funding bids, and to inform works required as part of planning applications. In addition, the schemes detailed are being carried forward into the County Council’s South Central Growth and Transport Plan, which covers the southern part of the A1 corridor within Hertfordshire. This Plan, which is due to go to public consultation later in 2018, will focus on improving transport provision by identifying schemes and packages of measures which will support the aims of the County’s Local Transport Plan. Adopting a broader geographic coverage, linked to particular improvements identified by the County Council as highways authority, is the most appropriate strategy for encouraging greater uptake of public transport. However, the Council proposes to make a minor modification to paragraph 15.18 to highlight that the Council will use the opportunities

from development to improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between different areas of the town to and from the town centre.