

## Leaflet to be Read in Conjunction with Pre-application Advice for Householders

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council encourages all applicants to seek pre-application advice at the earliest possible opportunity prior to the submission of a planning application.

Open and constructive pre-application discussions provide an opportunity for members of the public, agents, and developers to work with the local planning authority to achieve the most appropriate form of development for the local area and their property. Pre-application advice can help to:

- save time and frustration by highlighting relevant planning issues at an early stage in the planning process;
- avoid wasted resources on unsuccessful planning schemes and costs of planning appeals;
- gain community confidence from the initial stages of a development scheme;
- support an end-to end management of the delivery chain to sustainable development; and
- deliver high quality development on the ground

Advice will be provided in writing to help you submit your planning application. For larger or more complex schemes, meetings are encouraged, after which the written advice will be provided. Pre-application advice is given in good faith and will represent the case officer's professional view. The advice provided will be as accurate as possible, but it will be based only on the information available at the time of the enquiry, Feedback provided in pre-application discussions does not automatically mean that a planning application will be granted or refused permission.

This leaflet may be read in conjunction with any written pre-application advice provided or as an independent document in order to assist you with the preparation and submission of your planning application.

Where written pre-application advice has been issued by the Council, the relevant areas for you to read have been annotated on the following pages.

[www.welhat.gov.uk](http://www.welhat.gov.uk)

**WELWYN  
HATFIELD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



## **Planning Policy**

The following comprise the plans and policies against which planning applications submitted to the council will be determined:

### **National:**

National Planning Policy Framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-the-planning-system-work-more-efficiently-and-effectively/supporting-pages/national-planning-policy-framework>

### **Development Plan for Welwyn Hatfield:**

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

<http://www.welhat.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=463>

### **Supplementary Planning Documents:**

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

<http://www.welhat.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1076&p=0>

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Review, Supplementary Planning Guidance Parking Standards, Adopted January 2004

<http://www.welhat.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1075&p=0>

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Planning Obligations, Supplementary Planning Document, February 2012 <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3970>

### **Local guidance:**

Digswell Character Appraisal, January 2004

<http://www.welhat.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1077&p=0>

Welwyn Garden City Guide to shopfront and advertisement design, September 2013 <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7089&p=0>

Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal, September 2007

<http://www.welhat.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1794&p=0>

Interim Car Parking and Garage Policy, August 2014

<http://www.welhat.gov.uk/developmentplan>

## The Local Plan

The Local Plan will set out the Council's vision, objectives, delivery strategy, site allocations [housing] and development management policies for new development in the borough to at least 2030 and will eventually replace the saved policies in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. Included on the Council's website is the timetable, evidence base and sustainability appraisal. The documents are all available on the Council's website <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=455>

If you would like to be involved or notified as the Local Plan progresses please register at <http://consult.welhat.gov.uk/common/register.jsp>

## Statement of Community Involvement

The Statement of Community Involvement, adopted 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013 <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=459> provides guidance on the level and type of consultations we would expect to be carried out by developers for different types of application.

For all applications, developers might it helpful to discuss the proposal with the local town or parish council before submitting the application as they are consulted on planning applications. Their contact details may be found on the Council's website <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1152>.

Householders are advised to speak to neighbours before submitting an application.

For large scale applications, as well as holding a public consultation event, developers may also wish to consider presenting their draft scheme to Members of the Borough Council through a 'Development Consultation Forum' ([www.welhat.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3910](http://www.welhat.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3910)) before finalising and submitting any planning application. These Development Consultation Forums are also useful for potentially controversial schemes. Please speak to the officer dealing with your enquiry if you would like to arrange a Development Consultation Forum. Further information on Development Consultation Forum's is provided below.

## Environment Agency

The Environment Agency provides site-specific pre-application advice and would like to hear from you if your proposed development site is:

- in flood zones 2 or 3;
- close to a watercourse;
- on potentially contaminated land;
- handling waste or hazardous substances, or;
- one hectare or more.

The Environment Agency (EA) will highlight any issues as part of a free 'preliminary opinion'. The preliminary opinion will inform you of the site constraints within our remit;

any documents that you will need to submit at the planning application stage; plus any further assessments, licenses or consents that you will require from the EA. As a minimum the Environment Agency will require a site plan and a brief description of the proposed use.

Any additional technical advice (including pre-application or post-permission) provided outside of the preliminary opinion - such as site visits, meetings or document reviews are now chargeable. Further details are available on the Environment Agency website: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33580.aspx>.

For sites within Welwyn and Hatfield please send your enquiry to [SPHatfield@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:SPHatfield@environment-agency.gov.uk).

### The Environment Agency's role in development and how they can help

Combining their expertise with Natural England and the Forestry Commission, the Environment Agency has produced guidance that explains their roles in new developments. '[Building a Better Environment](#)' provides initial information to help you make the most of new development for people and the environment, and how they can help you through the process. The EA will also signpost to more technical advice, including consents and permits you might need.

### What's in your backyard?

The Environment Agency offers a range of detailed maps – '[What's in your backyard?](#)' <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/37793.aspx> – to show various environmental constraints that may affect your development. Maps include:

- groundwater aquifers;
- groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs);
- flood maps –including new flood risk maps and surface water flooding maps;
- river quality;
- historic landfill sites.

### Protected Species

The presence of protected species is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework, Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (section 40), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as well as Circular 06/05.

Protected species such as great crested newts, otters, dormice and bats benefit from the strictest legal protection. These species are known as European Protected Species ('EPS') and the protection afforded to them derives from the EU Habitats Directive, in addition to the above legislation. Water voles, badgers, reptiles, all wild birds, invertebrates and certain rare plants are protected to a lesser extent under UK domestic law (NERC Act and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981).

Where there is a likelihood of protected species being present on a site, we will require a phase 1 ecological survey to be undertaken to establish if there are any protected species present or not. If species are found, further surveys may be required. This will

depend upon whether the species would be affected as a result of the development. Further information on the considerations may be found on the Council's website <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4055> .

## **Heritage Assets**

Heritage assets include listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeology. In proposing a development that might affect such an asset, consideration should be given to:

- the significance of the architectural and historical interest and character of the building , structure, or designated area;
- the principles of and justification for the proposed works; and
- The impact of the proposal on the special interest of the listed building or structure, its setting and the setting of adjacent listed buildings, or on the designated area.

Information should be supplied with the application which explains:

- the sources that you have considered;
- the expertise that you have consulted; and
- The steps that have been taken to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts on the significance of the building or designated area.

The type and amount of detail required will vary according to the particular circumstances of each application. You can provide this information in the design and access statement, where one is required, as part of the explanation of the design concept. If you are not required to submit a design and access statement then you should provide this information in a separate written statement. Consideration of any application will be in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework, Chapter 12, in addition to other local or national guidance.

It is recommended that expert advice is sought from a professional historic advisor, for example through the Institute of Historic Building and Conservation.

## **Sustainable Development**

Sustainability is at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework. District plan policies SD1 (Sustainable Development) and R3 (Renewable Energy) are also applicable. Advice and guidance on how developments might be improved to enhance their sustainable design may be found on the Building Futures Website <http://www.hertslink.org/buildingfutures/> .

## **Validation Checklist**

The Council has adopted Local Planning Application Validation Checklists in August 2013. This details the information that is required to be submitted in order to provide a valid application. The lists are divided into different development categories – householder, commercial and residential development, advertisements and signs, listed building consent and works to trees. If you have sought pre-application advice, the case officer will have provided you with a checklist of the information that is required to be submitted.

All applications are subject to the national requirements.

## **Contact Us**

Should you have queries regarding the contents of any of this leaflet, then please either contact the Planning Officer who provided you with the pre-application advice; or, if you have obtained a copy of this leaflet direct from the Council's website, please call the duty planning officer on 01707 357573 between 9am and 1pm.

**Putting people first.**