

Frequently Asked Questions and Guidance on Responding

What is Welwyn Hatfield Council consulting on?

Welwyn Hatfield Council is consulting on its Publication Local Plan **under Regulation 19**.

What is a Regulation 19 Local Plan?

- Regulation 19 is the second of the two statutory stages in preparing a Local Plan.
- It is the stage when the Council publishes the Local Plan it intends to submit for examination to national government.
- The Local Plan reflects earlier consultation feedback, updated evidence and discussions with relevant organisations and stakeholders.

Why is the Council consulting?

Consultation at this stage is a statutory requirement. This will be your final opportunity to comment before the Local Plan is submitted for independent examination.

Where can I view the plans?

<https://www.welhat.gov.uk/ourlocalplan>

Hard copies of the Local Plan can be viewed at the Council Offices in Welwyn Garden City, Campus East, AL8 6AE, and at all Borough libraries during normal opening hours.

Important Information and Guidance

What should my representation focus on?

- Your comments must explain whether the Local Plan is **legally compliant** and **sound**.
- Please identify the **policy, site allocation or section** you are commenting on, and explain to us what you would like to modify.
- Please include supporting evidence where possible.

What does legally compliant mean?

Legal compliance means that the Local Plan has been prepared in line with the relevant laws and procedures. This includes whether it:

- follows the relevant planning legislation and regulations;
- is included in the Welwyn Hatfield Local Development Scheme;
- has been prepared in line with the Statement of Community Involvement; and
- is supported by the required evidence and assessments, including the Sustainability Appraisal.

What does “sound” mean?

The Plan must meet the four tests of soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

- Positively prepared: The Local Plan must meet the borough’s development needs and support sustainable development.
- Justified: it is based on proportionate evidence and considers reasonable alternatives.
- Effective: The Local Plan must be delivered during the plan period and addresses cross-boundary issues.
- Consistent with national policy: it is in line with national planning policy, including the NPPF (2024).

What if I think there is a Policy Omission?

If you think the content of the plan is not sound because it does not include a policy on a particular issue, you should go through the following steps before making representations:

- Is the issue with which you are concerned already covered specifically by national planning policy and guidance (e.g. National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy Guidance)?
- Is the issue with which you are concerned already covered by another policy in this plan?
- If the policy is not covered elsewhere, in what way is the plan unsound without the policy?

- If the plan is unsound without the policy, what should the policy say?

Site Allocation Matters

Why are there sites in the plan? How have they been assessed?

The Council ran two rounds of a “Call for Sites” where promoters, developers and landowners could submit sites which they felt were suitable for future development. All sites have been assessed in detail including input from a number of specialists such as the Highways authority, ecology, the lead local flood authority, Thames Water (for sewage), Affinity Water etc. This has enabled the Council to assess whether they are suitable for development, whether they are available in the plan period and whether development on them is achievable.

Can we see your assessment of the sites?

The assessment of all sites submitted, and the decision making process for determining which the Council considered to be most appropriate for development forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and can be found online.

When will all this happen?

This Plan covers the period to 2043, but the delivery of any sites allocated will depend on the specifics of the site, the developer etc., but the Local Plan we are consulting on includes a trajectory for when we anticipate sites being delivered.

Infrastructure Matters

What about infrastructure?

Infrastructure providers such as the highways authority, and the water and sewage providers have provided responses to the sites promoted and the site assessment included their comments. In addition, we have engaged with infrastructure providers of all kinds to produce an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which identifies what is needed to accommodate the growth proposed. As needs and demands change over time, this should be seen as capturing a moment in time, but will be kept up to date as a “live” document. In 2025, the Council implemented the Community Infrastructure Levy to be better at capturing contributions from developers to pay for infrastructure and to give greater flexibility in spending this money to meet local needs.

Next Steps

All of the consultation responses will be collated and analysed. The Local Plan, along with the accompanying documents and will be submitted to Government before the end of the year to be examined. This examination is expected to take place in 2027.

Submitting Representation

How do I give my views?

Please respond via our online portal, www.welwynhatfieldlocalplan.commonplace.is

Please note that as detailed above, comments on this should address whether the Plan is legally compliant and “sound.”

Representation must be received by 5 November 2026 at 6pm, otherwise we cannot take your comments forward.

What if I want to comment on more than one part of the Local Plan?

Please submit a separate representation for each policy or site allocation or section of the Local Plan. This will help us record and consider each point accurately.

Can I submit my comments without using Commonplace?

Yes. You can also send your comments by email at localplanconsultation@welhat.gov.uk or post at Welwyn Hatfield Council, Planning Policy, Campus East, AL8 6AE.

Please use the representation form available at:

<https://www.welhat.gov.uk/ourlocalplan>

Representation must be received by **5 November 2026 at 6pm**, otherwise we cannot take your comments forward.

Please allow enough time for delivery before this deadline.

We as a community want to submit a common response

Where groups or individuals share a common view on the plan, it would be very helpful if they would make a single representation which represents that view, rather than a large number of separate representations repeating the same points. In such cases the

group should indicate how many people it is representing and how the representation has been authorised

What if I miss the submission for comment deadline?

Unfortunately, representations received after the deadline cannot be accepted or considered by the Planning Policy team.

Representation must be received by **5 November 2026 at 6pm.**