

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council – Stage 1 Examination

Statement of Mr Neil Bedford

Has the Plan been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme?

No.

The local plan has been delayed by the Council at every opportunity. The LDS programme has become irrelevant. The Council just keeps moving back the date for submission and adoption.

Action: The only way to progress this local plan is through the Examination. The Council must not be given any further opportunity to delay the local plan.

Is the DPD in general accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and its public consultation requirements?

No.

Public consultation has been carefully controlled by the Council to omit suitable housing sites from allocation. The public has not been consulted on numerous sites which are suitable and sustainable.

Action: Further public consultation will be required when suitable and sustainable sites are allocated through the Examination process.

Has the DPD been subjected to Sustainability Appraisal? Are its conclusions sound and have they been taken into account in the DPD?

No.

The sustainability appraisal is not objective. It has been controlled by the Council to obstruct the allocation of suitable and sustainable sites.

Action: The sustainability appraisal will require amendment and further public consultation when the local plan is made sound.

Has the DPD been prepared in full accordance with the relevant parts of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the T&CP (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended?

No.

The Council is fully aware that its submission local plan is not sound. The Council will not allocate sufficient sites to meet its housing need unless the government forces it to do so. The “blame” will then be with the government, not the local Council.

Action: Require the Council to meet its housing need by allocating sites which are in suitable and sustainable locations.

Has the DPD had regard to appropriate national policy?

No.

The Council has been negative and stubborn in its entire approach to the local plan.

The Council has delayed the local plan at every opportunity.

The Council has no desire or intention to boost significantly the supply of housing, or to meet its housing need.

The Council has no desire or intention to meet its five-year housing land supply.

The Council has searched for reasons, no matter how weak, to resist site allocations particularly in the sustainable villages and has allocated sites, which are wholly and clearly unsuitable and/or undeliverable, in preference to sites which are suitable and sustainable.

The Council's strategy is not positive, justified, effective or consistent with national policy.

Action: The Council should allocate sites which are suitable and sustainable and should seek to meet its five year housing requirement and its full housing need in the local plan.