



Examination of Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Birchall Garden Suburb Green Corridor December 2019

Historic England is the principal Government adviser on the historic environment, advising it on planning and listed building consent applications, appeals and other matters generally affecting the historic environment. Historic England is consulted on Local Development Plans under the provisions of the duty to co-operate and provides advice to ensure that legislation and national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework are thereby reflected in local planning policy and practice.

The tests of soundness require that Local Development Plans should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Historic England's representations on the Publication Draft Local Plan are made in the context of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") in relation to the historic environment as a component of sustainable development.

Birchall Garden Suburb – Green Corridor

- 1 In November 2019 Welwyn Hatfield Council has asked a number of questions in relation to the Green Corridor for Birchall Garden Suburb. Historic England's considered responses to those questions are set out below.

Whether you agree with the council's stated objectives for this part of the Green Corridor and, if not, why not

- 2 The Council state that the Green Corridor is a linear network of green infrastructure which aids the movement of wildlife and people and should also function as a buffer to sensitive assets which may be of cultural or natural heritage important.
- 3 Historic England broadly agree with these stated aims. However, there is also a need for some additional Green Infrastructure to act as a buffer to roads and provide visual screening through planting and bunding.
- 4 We welcome the Council's intention to protect heritage assets including Panshanger Registered Park and Garden, Birchall Farm and Holwell Hyde Farmhouse as set out in paragraphs 1.14 – 1.20. However, the Land Use Consultants (LUC) report makes no mention of other nearby heritage assets including Essendon Conservation Area across the valley or Hatfield House and its Registered Park and Garden (both listed at grade I). This is an important omission given our concerns in relation to these assets which had been clearly expressed in our representations, hearing statements and Statement of Common Ground.

Whether you feel that there are other, sufficiently distinct, options that the examination should consider

- 5 It is Historic England's view that some combination of options 1 and 3 would be appropriate, providing a green corridor through the site protecting heritage assets and a green buffer around the edge of the site including Birchall Farm, breaking up views across the valley from Essendon CA and Hatfield House and its RPG as well as Panshanger RPG. The green/heritage buffer in the north eastern part of the site (around Panshanger between Birchall Farm and Henry Wood and Panshanger Lane) should be very substantial (see figure 12 on page 5).
- 6 The concept diagram negotiated through the SOCG between Historic England, Welwyn Hatfield and East Herts in November 2017 included a green corridor across the centre of the site (similar to option 1) and a green buffer along the south edge of the site adjacent to the A414 (similar to option 3) as well as a heritage buffer for Panshanger Park to the north east of the site and

open space for the schools to the north of the built development for the primary and secondary schools. We are concerned that it now appears to be a choice between the three green corridor options presented within the consultation document rather than having green infrastructure both within and along the edge of the site and substantial buffer to the north east for heritage.

- 7 The LVIA analysis produced by David Jarvis Associates for Tarmac was based on a green corridor through the centre of the site and a substantial green buffer including landscaping and bunding along the road. This mitigation was one of the factors behind our acceptance of the principle development on this site. Without such mitigation for heritage, we would have greater concern regarding development at this site.
- 8 In our view, there needs to be a 4th option which includes a green corridor through the centre of the site connecting Henry Wood, Birchall Farm, through to the Commons SSSI as well as a green buffer around the edge of the site protecting Panshanger RPG, and views from the A414, Essendon CA and the edge of Hatfield House RPG and help protect the rural setting and approach along the A414, as had been agreed through our SOCG with the Council's. This is essentially a hybrid of options 1 and 3 with the addition of a substantial heritage buffer near Panshanger RPG and careful siting of built development and playing fields in relation to the schools. We attach a copy of this diagram figure 12.
- 9 We would comment that the East Herts Local Plan has now been adopted. That Local Plan includes the strategy diagram (figure 12) below. The corridor options within the LUC report should more accurately reflect that which has already been agreed and adopted for the land within East Herts, including the heritage buffer and playing field in the north easts of the site. It is not appropriate at this stage to seek to change the proposals for green infrastructure for land within an adjoining authority where the Plan has already been adopted.

**Which of the three options, if any, you prefer and the reasons why
Your concerns about the appropriateness of the other options
If you are promoting an alternate option, why you feel that your option is to be preferred when assessed against the stated objectives for the Green Corridor**

- 10 We have set out our response to the above questions in table form.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4 (Preferred by Historic England - See Figure 12 below)
Advans	<p>Links through from Panshanger RPG, through Henry Wood and extends to south of wood where former woodland historically occurred.</p> <p>Protects setting of Birchall Farm (listed buildings)</p> <p>Provides some protection for Holwellhyde Farm and its setting (listed building)</p>	<p>Links through from Panshanger RPG, through Henry Wood and extends to south of wood where former woodland historically occurred.</p> <p>Protects setting of Birchall Farm (listed buildings)</p>	<p>Green buffer along southern and eastern edge of the site to protect Panshanger RPG and views from Hatfield House and RPG and Essendon CA and the valley in general.</p>	<p>Links through from Panshanger RPG, through Henry Wood and extends to south of wood where former woodland historically occurred.</p> <p>Protects setting of Birchall Farm (listed buildings)</p> <p>Provides some protection for Holwellhyde Farm and its setting</p> <p>Green buffer along southern and eastern edge of the site to protect setting of Panshanger RPG and setting of and views from Hatfield House and RPG and Essendon CA and the valley in general. This includes a generous heritage buffer near Panshanger RPG and playing fields to the north of the schools.</p> <p>This was the basis for the LVIA.</p> <p>This was agreed in our SOCG with WelHat and East Herts.</p>
Disadvans	<p>Green corridor close to Holwellhyde Farm could be further to the west to protect the listed Holwellhyde Farm.</p> <p>No green buffer or heritage buffer or playing field open space to north eastern part of site to protect setting of Panshanger RPG.</p> <p>No green buffer along southern edge of the site to protect setting of and views from Hatfield House and RPG and Essendon CA and the valley in general.</p>	<p>No protection for Holwellhyde Farm and its setting (listed building).</p> <p>No green buffer or heritage buffer or playing field open space to north eastern part of site to protect setting of Panshanger RPG.</p> <p>No green buffer along southern edge of the site to protect setting of views from Hatfield House and RPG and Essendon CA and the valley in general.</p>	<p>Does not link through to Henry Wood.</p> <p>Does not provide protection for Birchall Farm and its setting.</p> <p>Does not provide protection for Holwellhyde Farm</p> <p>No green buffer or heritage buffer or playing field open space to north eastern part of site to protect Panshanger RPG.</p>	
Summary	No	No	No	Yes

Concept diagram agreed within the SOCG between Historic England, Welwyn Hatfield and East Herts in Nov 2017. This diagram is also included within the adopted East Herts Local Plan 2018.

Appendix 1

Figure 12 Birchall Garden Suburb

