

LUC Green Corridor Draft Report for Welwyn Hatfield Council (November 2019) EX 169.

Comments from the Gardens Trust/Hertfordshire Gardens Trust on heritage issues for the Central Herts Green Corridor Group, submitted by Kate Harwood.

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

The council's stated objectives are not included in this document in a form which is comprehensive although we do agree with the limited definitions in Paragraph 1.7 and aims in paragraph 1.10

Paragraph 1.1 is incorrect. The Green Corridor should be put in place first as defined by the constraints identified and any buffers need to protect heritage or other assets. Only then can planning of BGS be undertaken

We **do not agree** that the very limited cultural and heritage data contained within the document is sufficient to form a basis for evaluation of the assets, their settings and their significance.

There is very little about cultural heritage in section 1: a mention in 1.11 and a limited desk-top trawl through the Historic Environment Record (1.15) and the Historic Landscape Characterisation study (1.19) This does not constitute a robust description of the many heritage assets in the area or of the settings of heritage assets further afield. There are various studies such as the Wessex Archaeology report on the Black Fan fen and burnt mound, of which no mention is made, and records of the prehistoric finds in the area are missing as are details of the various moated sites across the whole Birchall Garden Suburb area. Many of these heritage assets contribute to the character of Welwyn Garden City, and are locally rare as earlier development since the 1920s did not either seek to investigate nor to record finds before building took place.

Some of the heritage assets at Holwell Hyde are mentioned but these do not include the ancient ditches and pollards from the medieval assart or the Deserted Medieval Village (or hamlet) around the lane junctions at Holwell Hyde. There is no consideration of the setting of heritage assets at Holwell Court, nor the setting of Hatfield House parkland, nor the heritage assets at Essendon, all of which would lose significance by the lack of protection of their settings. For the wider Green Corridor running across the whole of the proposed BGS site we would have expected some consideration of the setting of Panshanger Park and the remains of the 'Capability' Brown landscape which lie to the west of Panshanger Lane as well as within the Registered park.

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

The ecological, heritage and hydrological assets, as well as contamination issues to do with the landfill site should be all properly considered before any Green Corridor route is considered. The Central Herts Green Corridor Group has suggested one such route based on our more detailed knowledge of the site. This has been submitted on our behalf by Dr Jonathan Fisher. It does, however still leave the Essendon, Holwell Court and Hatfield Park views and settings at risk.

Which of the three, option, if any, you prefer and the reasons why. Your concerns about the appropriateness of the other options.

All options do not consider the extension of the Green Corridor beyond these tightly defined boundaries. Consideration of the setting of Panshanger Park and the views across the interfluvium and valley should form part of any assessment, as should migratory paths for wildlife, hydrological links and recreational routes. The links to Mill Green hamlet and museum to the west, to Hatfield House parkland and Stanborough should also be taken into consideration. The views across the landscape to the south, as far as Brookmans Park from the crest of the interfluvium and to Strattons Tower at Little Berkhamsted, and the views to the Green Corridor, forming not only part of the setting of heritage assets including Grade I Hatfield House park (as well as other designated and undesignated assets) but of the openness between settlements, also need to be considered.

For the above reasons we believe that the sound way to proceed would be accurately and comprehensively map the constraints (heritage, ecology, hydrology, contamination) before deciding on the placing of the Green Corridor, and CHGCG have proposed such a mapping.

To summarise: this study is disappointing in its scant treatment of the heritage issues, and lack of research into many assets not mentioned at all, let alone the historic views, settings and historic settlement pattern. The suggestion of options for the Green Corridor without due assessment of all the assets is deeply flawed and such options should follow a rigorous constraints analysis, not side-step it.