

# Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

## Council's Statement - Stage 8 Hearing session

### Northern Settlements

Settlement: **Welwyn**

Policy Number: **SADM29**

Site References: **HS18 (Wel11), HS19 (Wel4),  
HS20 (Wel3)**

Matter number: **N/A**

Issues: **Biodiversity (Wel11), Air/Noise (Wel4),  
Capacity (Wel1)**

Question Numbers: **Q54-56**



**WELWYN  
HATFIELD**

## Welwyn

### Policy SADM 29 Site HS 18 (Wel11) The Vineyards

- 54) **Have the biodiversity aspects of this site been appropriately considered and have the implications of any harm been fully assessed in the context of the site's suitability for residential development?**

**Welwyn Hatfield Response:**

- a) Yes, the biodiversity aspects of this site have been appropriately considered in the context of the suitability of this site for residential development at the plan-making stage, assessed by reference to the proportionate evidence base summarised below.
- b) The site has been assessed and considered suitable for residential development through the HELAA 2016 (**HOU/19**). During the early consultation stages of the Local Plan in 2015 Herts Ecology (**LPC 2256**) did not raise an objection to the allocation of the site. It considered the ecological sensitivity of the site to be 'moderate' and identified the need for a Phase 1 ecology survey, and potentially a reptile survey should the habitat be found suitable.
- c) The HELAA noted that there were no recognised ecology sites within the site. However, Danesbury Park Local Wildlife Site **WS14** (also Local Nature Reserve, LNR1) adjoins the site to the north and west. Singlers Marsh Local Wildlife Site **WS5 (and LNR5)** lies to the south of the B656. The potential for habitats for birds (and reptiles) and the opportunity for habitat creation and compensation (should any trees be lost to development) was also identified along with the need for a buffer to the Wildlife Site/LNR, a Phase 1 ecology study, and the possibility of a reptile study, consistent with the Herts Ecology response noted above.
- d) The HELAA recognised the (moderate) ecology sensitivity of the site (and other constraints, such as the sloping nature of the site) and adjusted the site's estimated density to a modest 25dph accordingly (as per the methodology) resulting in an estimated capacity of 30 dwellings to allow for design and mitigation measures, e.g. the retention of trees/compensatory planting.
- e) Table 13 of the Draft Plan notes the site specific consideration for this site and references the retention of trees or compensatory planting if trees are lost, a phase 1 ecological survey and (possibly) a reptile survey – which would be submitted and considered in further detail at the planning application stage.
- f) The biodiversity aspects of this site have been appropriately considered at this stage of plan preparation. There are no over-riding constraints in terms of site suitability but the estimated site capacity reflects a modest approach to density, which takes into account the proximity of adjacent sites with recognised biodiversity value.

## Policy SADM 29 Site HS 19, (Wel4) Sandyhurst

### 55) Have the ramifications of air and noise pollution from the adjacent motorway on the potential living conditions at this site been fully considered?

#### Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) Yes. The HELAA 2016 (**HOU/19**) notes the proximity of the A1(M) and the potential for noise pollution and air quality issues.
- b) **Noise:** A noise report was considered by Environmental Health as part of the assessment of site suitability and no in principle objection was raised to the suitability of the site for allocation in the Local Plan.
- c) At full planning application stage, Environmental Health would require a noise survey and report (based on more up to date readings) with details of the noise levels to which all facades would be exposed, details of the protected outdoor amenity space, window and ventilation specifications and construction details in terms of sound insulation. Any planning application is likely to be conditioned, so that appropriate measures can be approved prior to commencement of the development.
- d) On this site, it may be necessary to require mechanical ventilation on the most exposed elevations to ensure that habitable rooms do not exceed relevant (BS) standards. Careful design will also be required to ensure that external amenity space can be provided within the relevant (WHO) noise levels.
- e) The relevant standards should, as far as possible, be achievable by careful design. In practice, this means the design, configuration and orientation of buildings within the site and the use of appropriate barriers (or shields) to ensure that the fewest possible rooms need mechanical ventilation and outdoor amenity space standards can be complied with. From the modelling carried out at the time, it was considered that protected amenity space could be provided.
- f) It is considered that implications of noise impact has been appropriately considered at the plan-making stage and this will be considered further at the planning application stage in light of detailed proposals pertaining at that time.
- g) Table 13 (which follows policy **SADM29**) of the Draft Plan identifies the need for appropriate design, layout and mitigation measures to achieve satisfactory internal and external noise levels and healthy residential environments.
- h) **Air:** The proximity of the A1(M) is a material consideration. However, Environmental Health has raised no in principle objection to allocation of this site in terms of air quality at this plan-making stage. The planning authority is not aware of any material evidence to suggest that the site is unsuitable (in principle) for residential development.
- i) However, in order that more detailed consideration can be given to this issue, the HELAA notes the requirement for an air quality survey and report to be submitted at the planning application stage.
- j) Table 13 (which follows policy **SADM29**) of the Draft Plan identifies the need for an air quality survey and report to be submitted.

- k) In practice, and at the planning application stage, an air quality assessment will need to consider pollutant levels (Nitrogen Dioxide, PM10 and PM2.5) and take account of nearby monitoring undertaken by the Council. If the assessment report demonstrates that levels could affect future residents, then Environmental Health will require mitigation measures to be incorporated into the development.
- l) The promoter has been advancing proposal for the site and no air quality issues have been identified to date, that (it says) would affect the suitability of the site for residential development.
- m) It is considered that implications of air quality have been appropriately considered at the plan-making stage and this will be considered further at the planning application stage in light of detailed proposals, surveys and reports pertaining at that time.

### **Policy SADM 29 Site HS 20 (Wel3) School Lane**

#### **56) Has the site's capacity for residential development been objectively assessed?**

##### **Welwyn Hatfield Response**

- a) Yes, the site's capacity for residential development has been objectively assessed through the 2016 HELAA (**HOU/19**), which estimated a potential capacity of approximately 10 dwellings (gross), 7 (net – 3 dwellings already present on site) on the basis that the pumping station is retained, which hence reduces the developable area to approximately 1.2ha. The site capacity estimate also allowed for the retention of trees, which provide bordering features and a beneficial screen around the electricity sub-station to the south-west and help to mitigate the impact of development in the wider landscape (or compensatory planting for any potential loss).
- b) In 2019, a higher capacity of between 10-20 dwellings was promoted (depending on whether the pumping station was retained or removed in the future). In light of the shortfall between the housing target in the Draft Local Plan and the full OAN, it was considered appropriate to review this site (and others) in terms of potential capacity. The conclusion of this review (**Appendix 3 HELAA 2019**) was that a small net increase of 2 dwellings may be achievable, assuming the pumping station is retained. If the pumping station were to be removed, then an estimated capacity of 15 dwellings (gross)/12 (net) may be achievable.