

# **Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan**

## **Council's Statement - Stage 8 Hearing session**

### **Northern Settlements**

**Settlement: Woolmer Green**

**Policy Number: SADM27**

**Site Reference: HS15 (WGr1)**

**Matter number: 3**

**Issues: Infrastructure**

**Question Numbers: Q16-26**



## **Policy SADM 27 - Site HS15 (WGr1), Land east of London Road**

**The Framework in Section 8 seeks to create healthy, inclusive communities through the planning system and to deliver the recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs through a proactive and positive approach. In Section 9 it promotes sustainable transport and the provision of viable infrastructure, necessary to support sustainable development.**

**16) Has the proposal's impact on local infrastructure been effectively considered?**

**Welwyn Hatfield response:**

a) Yes, the proposals impact on local infrastructure has been effectively considered. The Council's Housing Site Selection Background Paper 2016 (**HOU/20**) and the regularly reviewed Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2017 (**INF/20**) considers any known infrastructure constraints on a settlement basis and the impact site allocations will have on infrastructure needs and delivery.

**17) Would the cumulative impact of the traffic generated by the development have an unacceptable impact on highway safety without mitigation?**

**18) Would the cumulative impact of the traffic generated by the development have a severe impact on the road network without mitigation?**

**19) If so what would this mitigation involve and is the site's overall viability sufficient to be able to financially support any necessary highway improvements?**

**Welwyn Hatfield response:**

a) A combined response is provided to questions 17 – 19.

b) No, The County Council as highway authority has not identified a 'severe' or 'unacceptable' impact on highway safety and has not objected to the development on highway grounds relating to the cumulative impact of this development.

c) The County Council advised during the assessment of the sites suitability that the main access to the site from the B197, via a new point of access north of the existing employment uses, is preferable to access from New Road to the east, and this is acceptable in principle, subject to suitable visibility splays and access for emergency service vehicles.

d) In line with paragraph 32 of the NPPF 2012, the site promoters submitted a Transport Appraisal (Regulation 19 representation, **dlpps582**), this appraisal identified potential solutions to the need for appropriate visibility splays from the site to achieve suitable access.

- e) Hertfordshire County Council as local highway authority commented under the Regulation 19 consultation on the likely effects on the highway of bringing forward this Local Plan site. Their comments (**dlpps2020**) dated 21st October 2016 include the following information:

*'There could be increased pressure on the B197 and potentially impacts upon the operation of the Clock Roundabout where mitigation measures identified do not fully alleviate the problems. Mitigation measures will also need to be included to ensure that safe vehicle access will be provided and that improved sustainable transport options implemented.'*

- f) The potential traffic impacts of the proposed development in the Local Plan have been modelled through the WHaSH modelling work. The results of this work are presented in documents **INF/12**, **INF/13** and **INF/15**. Through this work, indicative local mitigation measures have been developed for a number of key links and junctions in the Plan area. The conclusions of the WHaSH modelling for the A1(M) Junction 6/Clock Roundabout indicated that a number of mitigation measures could be implemented to improve the function of the junction and roundabout as part of a wider transport improvement strategy across the borough.
- g) Hertfordshire County Council are currently developing Growth & Transport Plans and strategies to help direct and plan transport improvements and investment in Hertfordshire, this work is being developed in line with forecasted development to 2031. The Strategy includes improvement to sustainable transport infrastructure and the development of a cycling route along the B197 corridor.
- h) It is not considered that there are any significant highways improvement necessary to for this site to come forward for development and the site is considered viably achievable.

**20) Is there sufficient capacity within local schools to provide places for the children likely to be generated by the development?**

**21) If not, what extra capacity is required and where would it be located?**

**Welwyn Hatfield Response:**

- a) A combined response is provided to questions 20 and 21.
- b) Extensive work had been undertaken with Hertfordshire County Council as education authority throughout the preparation of the emerging Local Plan and corresponding Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- c) The County Council Regulation 19 representation (**dlpps 2156**) from October 2016 outlines the position of primary school education capacity for Woolmer Green:

*'The Borough Council's approach to development in Woolmer Green as outlined in Policy SADM27 is noted. Woolmer Green is within the Welwyn Primary Planning*

*Area (PPA). Across the Welwyn PPA there is considered to be some limited existing capacity which could support the growth across Woolmer Green, Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Welwyn without the need to permanently expand existing schools. In the event that the yield could not be met in the existing schools there is assumed to be 1fe expansion potential at Welwyn St Mary's VA C of E Primary.'*

- d) In January 2017 HCC also provided a Supplementary Education Statement (**TPA/5 Appendix 3**) to confirming their position as above.
- e) The County Council raise no concerns or objections to housing development in Woolmer Green on education grounds. They accept that the limited growth of around 150 dwellings at Woolmer Green could be supported when considered alongside limited growth at Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Welwyn.
- f) The requirements for additional secondary school places arising from the growth planned in the emerging Local Plan has been informed by discussions with HCC. It is considered that approximately 1 form of entry (FE) at both primary and secondary schools is required per 500 dwellings. It has been identified that there is a need for additional secondary schools across the plan period in the borough.
- g) Woolmer Green is included in the Secondary Education Planning Area of Welwyn Garden City alongside the villages of Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Welwyn. The Education Planning Area is currently served by 3 secondary schools: Monks Walk, Stanborough and Ridgeway Academy (formerly Sir Frederic Osborn). The development proposed at WGr1 was included in the forecasting for additional secondary school places in the WGC planning area and it is considered that provision would be made alongside the planned growth around Welwyn Garden City, to include the potential for expansion of 3.5fe at existing schools in Welwyn Garden City and the provision of a new secondary school at Birchall Garden Suburb (EWEL1 in East Herts District).

**22) Is there sufficient capacity within local health services to meet the primary health care needs of the persons who would reside in the development?**

**23) If not, what extra capacity is required and where would it be located?**

**Welwyn Hatfield Response:**

- a) A combined response is provided to questions 22 and 23.
- b) Existing health care provision for residents at Woolmer Green is located outside of the settlement at larger villages which support healthcare facilities for the wider area. It is likely that residents in Woolmer Green look to either Welwyn or Knebworth for the provision of GPs, Dentists and pharmacies.

- c) The IDP (2017), Examination Library document **INF/20**, explains that when planning for the delivery of health services, it is expected that the development of new housing in the borough will take place over the whole plan period, and the timing and phasing of such developments will need to be discussed with health providers as they are planned to agree the best way of ensuring that there are appropriate local primary health care resources in place to cope with the increased demand and in accordance with Clinical Strategies. This additional capacity can be delivered in a number of ways and this will be taken forward in dialogue with health providers.
- d) As stated in the Council's Hearing Statement submitted in response to the Inspector's Issues and Questions for the Stage 3 hearing session (February, 2018) it is understood that both NHS England and the local Clinical Commissioning Group are aware of the likely pressure which services in the borough will face, but have yet to commit to a premises strategy or other spatial strategy for addressing them. Therefore, no well-defined health service projects can be identified for inclusion in the IDP or Local Plan.
- e) In line with Section 8 of the NPPF (2012), Policy **SP13** of the Draft Local Plan states that the Council will continue to work with its partners to address existing deficiencies and secure appropriate levels of funding for necessary infrastructure.

**24) Is a local convenience store being provided at the approved Entech House development?**

**Welwyn Hatfield Response:**

- a) Yes, the Appeal Statement of Case presented on behalf of Taylor Wimpey North Thames for appeal ref: APP/C1950/W/17/3190821 (LPA application 6/2017/0848/MAJ) states that the proposed scheme would provide a local convenience store to the south east of the site, along the London Road frontage.

- 25) Would there be a requirement for additional or improved retail or community facilities within Woolmer Green if this development was implemented?**
- 26) If so what would these additional facilities involve and where would they be located?**

**Welwyn Hatfield Response**

- a) No, the Council do not consider that there would be any requirement for additional or improved retail or community facilities within Woolmer Green if this development is implemented.
- b) Woolmer Green, as a small excluded village, is served by a limited number of local community facilities and village shops. The site was promoted with the potential to provide a small shop (farm/convenience shop) and ancillary café which would have helped improve the range of facilities available in Woolmer Green and would have improved the sustainability of the village. The consideration of the viability of the shop to be provided would be assessed at planning application stage if this site was to be allocated. It should be noted that the provision of this shop on site was not a requirement to make the development suitable.
- c) However, as acknowledged above, the development at the Entech site has been approved which would include a proposed convenience shop and so it would need to be considered whether both shops could be accommodated in Woolmer Green.