

Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Council's Statement - Stage 8 Hearing session

Southern Settlements

Settlement: Brookmans Park

Policy Number: SADM31

Site Reference: HS22 (BrP4)

Matter number: 3

Issues: Sustainability

Question Numbers: Q99-100



Policy SADM 31, Site HS22 (BrP4), Land west of Brookmans Park Railway Station

Matter 3 – Sustainability

The Framework at paragraph 5 says that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Question 99: Is the site a sustainable location for development?

Welwyn Hatfield Response:

- a) Yes, the Council considers that Brookmans Park and the location of the site are sustainable locations for development.
- b) Brookmans Park is one of the more sustainable settlements in the borough, being identified in the third tier within the **Policy SP 3 – Settlement Strategy and Green Belt Boundaries** (Large Excluded Village) that have large service centres, but a more limited range of employment opportunities and that are the secondary focus for new development, where compatible with the scale and character of the village and the maintenance of Green Belt boundaries.
- c) The village is one of six locations in the borough that benefits from a railway station providing good connectivity to both Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield and to nearby Welham Green, which also offers further employment and education facilities. The Planning Inspectors Supplementary Note dated 30th January 2020 stated that: 'The Inspector is aware that there are four railway stations within the borough outside of the two main towns and that these locations are well served by public transport'. The note went onto state that locations within walking distance of these locations 'should be considered for release, in the context of Paragraph 138 of the National Planning Policy Framework, before land that is not well served by public transport is assessed'.
- d) The site in question at Brookmans Park is within walking distance of Brookmans Park Railway Station and within 400m of four bus stops. The nearby local centre offers a range of services, facilities and retail opportunities including a public library and convenience store. The site is also within accessible walking distance of the existing primary school.
- e) The site will enable the delivery of enhanced access to Brookmans Park from the west through highway upgrades and deliver affordable housing and make provision for accessible and adaptable dwellings, it is proposed to increase the capacity at the existing primary school at Brookmans Park by half a form of entry.
- f) Although the Council's approach to demonstrating 'exceptional circumstances' to justify Green Belt release is discussed elsewhere (Matter 4), the impact on the Green Belt at this site can be reduced to its lowest reasonable extent as advocated by the

Calverton Test and where there is opportunity for mitigation. On this basis, the opportunity to support highly sustainable development at one of the borough's most sustainable locations and settlements, are thought to justify the sites allocation for housing.

100) Has this site been appropriately assessed in the sustainability appraisal?

Welwyn Hatfield Response:

- a) Yes, the site has been appropriately assessed in the Sustainability Appraisal. The full assessment of this site can be found in Annex 1 of the 2016 SA Report (SUB/3), pages 454 to 458. The appraisal was carried out in a way that was consistent with all other site assessments, in line with the SA Framework and assumptions used for all site assessments (Table 4.1 (pages 29 to 33) and Appendix 2 of the 2016 SA Report). An assessment of Policy SADM 31, which allocates this site, is presented in paragraphs 6.377 to 6.389 of the 2016 SA Report.