

# Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

## Council's Statement - Stage 8 Hearing session

### Southern Settlements

Settlement: **Cuffley**

Policy Number: **SADM33**

Site References: **HS26 (No02), HS27 (Cuf1),  
HS28 (Cuf6), HS29 (Cuf12), HS30 (Cuf7),  
HS31 (No10)**

Matter number: **3**

Issues: **Sustainability**

Question Numbers: **Q193-197**



**WELWYN  
HATFIELD**

## Matter 3 – Sustainability

### Question 193: Are the sites in a sustainable location for development?

#### Welwyn Hatfield Response:

- a) Yes, the Council considers that Cuffley and the location of the sites are sustainable locations for development.
- b) Cuffley 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. Cuffley has a large village centre with a good range of shops and other facilities and also has an allocated employment area and a primary school.
- c) The village is one of six locations in the borough that benefits from a railway station served by the Hertford Loop Line which goes north via Hertford to Stevenage and south via Enfield into London, which also offers further employment and education facilities. The Planning Inspector's Supplementary Note dated 30<sup>th</sup> 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 on to 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 NPPF, before land that is not well served by public transport is assessed'. This reference is drawn from the 2019 version of the NPPF.
- d) In identifying possible development locations, the Council clearly has to consider a range of factors, including any constraints or potential impact on the Green Belt. Overall, the Council is aiming to achieve a balance between identifying locations that are as sustainable for development as possible, but also seeking to minimise any impact on Green Belt. On this basis, some locations that may potentially be more sustainable, are not recommended for development because they would lead to greater harm to the Green Belt.
- e) Whilst some of the proposed development locations are nearer the edges of Cuffley, the relative sustainability should also be considered if more development were directed to the lower tier settlements, where access to services and facilities would be more limited that is to villages without any railway station, fewer buses and fewer services.

**Question 194: How far is it to Cuffley railway station and its village centre from a median location on each site?**

**Welwyn Hatfield Response:**

- a) All distances measured are straight line “as the crow flies” from a median location on each site:

**Distance to Cuffley Railway Station:**

HS26 (No02) – 1330m

HS27 (Cuf1) – 563m

HS28 (Cuf6) – 738m

HS29 (Cuf12) – 861m

HS30 (Cuf7) – 1061m

HS31 (No10) – 445m

**Distance to nearest convenience store:**

HS26 (No02) – 1207m

HS27 (Cuf1) – 616m

HS28 (Cuf6) – 608m

HS29 (Cuf12) – 690m

HS30 (Cuf7) – 860m

HS31 (No10) – 254m

**Question 195: Are these acceptable walking distances for commuters travelling by train?**

**Welwyn Hatfield Response:**

- a) All sites proposed in Cuffley are within the maximum commuting walking distance of Cuffley Railway Station, with four out of six sites located within the acceptable walking distance of 1000m as shown by **Table 1**. It is worth mentioning that all sites proposed are well within the ‘acceptable’ distances for cycling. This is based on a 2400m average acceptable 10 minute journey time for cycling<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Lancaster 2011. Understanding Walking and Cycling.

**Question 196: Are these acceptable walking distances to local shops and other facilities?**

**Welwyn Hatfield Response:**

- a) Four out of six sites proposed in Cuffley are within the maximum walking distance of a centre and/or convenience store as shown by **Table 1**. The two exceptions to this are sites HS29 (Cuf7), which only exceeds the guidance by 60m and HS31 (No02) which is situated 1,207m away from the nearest convenience store. However, HS31 is located within an existing urban area so would therefore be no less sustainable than the surrounding existing development. However, As mentioned in Welwyn Hatfield's response to Question 195, all sites are well within an acceptable cycling distance of shops and other facilities in the centre, based on 2,400m average acceptable 10 minute journey time<sup>2</sup>.
- b) As referred to in the Council's response to Question 193, the relative sustainability of different locations also needs to be weighed in the planning balance. There may be, for example, more sustainable locations that could be made available for development that would lead to greater Green Belt impact. Furthermore, the alternative to locating development at the relatively more sustainable locations like Cuffley, would be to locate a higher proportion of development at the relatively less sustainable smaller settlements where access to services and facilities may be more difficult than at Cuffley. On this basis, the Council's proposals for development at Cuffley are considered to be justified.

**Table 1: Desirable, acceptable and maximum walking distances as advocated by the Institution of Highways and Transportation<sup>3</sup>.**

Category	Town Centres	Commuting/ School	Elsewhere
	Distance (m)		
Desirable	200	500	400
Acceptable	400	1000	800
Maximum	800	2000	1200

<sup>2</sup> University of Lancaster 2011. Understanding Walking and Cycling.

<sup>3</sup> Institution of Highways and Transportation (2000). Providing for Journeys on Foot.

**Question 197: Have these sites been appropriately assessed in the sustainability appraisal?**

**Welwyn Hatfield Response:**

- a) Yes, the sites have been appropriately assessed in the Sustainability Appraisal. The full assessment of these sites can be found in Annex 1 of the 2016 SA Report (SUB/3), pages 491 to 532. 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 33, which allocates this site, is presented in paragraphs 6.777 to 6.389 of the 2016 SA Report.