

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Housing Sites Selection Background Paper 2016

June 2016



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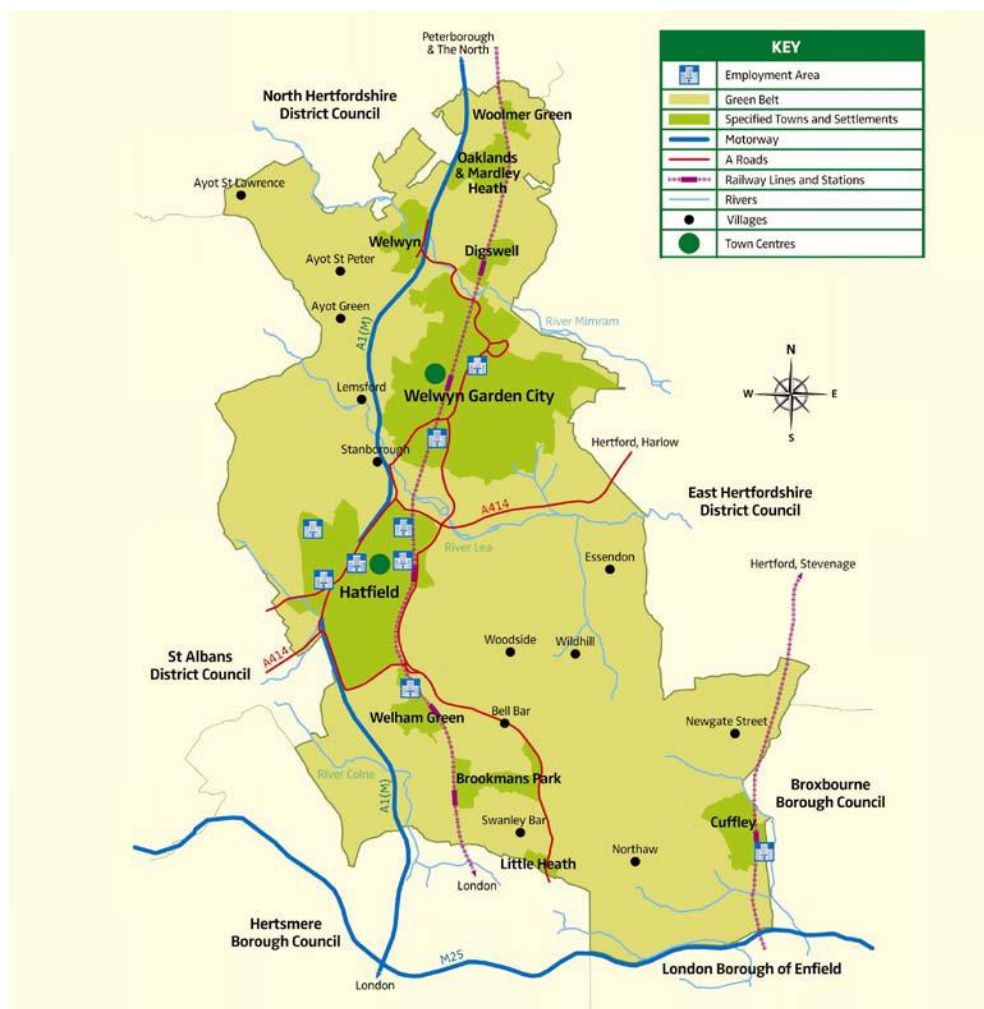
1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Local Plan must seek to deliver sustainable development and be based on a sound evidence base.
- 1.2 The primary aim of this Housing Sites Selection - Background Paper is to bring together in a single document, key conclusions arising from the following strands of evidence and appraisals:
 - The Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA);
 - The Green Belt Study Review (Parts 1 and 2)
 - An appraisal of Green Belt boundaries
 - The Sustainability Appraisal
 - Flood Risk – Sequential Test; and
 - An appraisal of strategic advantages or disadvantages.
- 1.3 The Housing Sites Selection - Background Paper balances the key findings from the above and considers whether sites should be considered for allocation in the Local Plan.
- 1.4 In doing so, consideration is given, where relevant, to any cumulative effects or common circumstances, which may affect whether or not a site, or a group of sites, should go forward to allocation.
- 1.5 Consideration is also given to the key policy implications that would arise if a site were to be allocated.
- 1.6 Site level findings are also weighed against any known infrastructure constraints on a settlement basis.
- 1.7 The potential capacity of sites is reflected against the Objectively Assessed Need for Housing.
- 1.8 It is important to note that the content of this Housing Sites Selection - Background Paper is proportionate to the task of informing the allocation of sites in a Local Plan. This means that whilst many issues have been considered, the Background Paper does not go to the level of detail expected with a planning application.
- 1.9 This Background Paper will be used to inform the Council's decisions on the most suitable sites to be allocated in the Local Plan.
- 1.10 It should also be noted that this Background Paper reflects circumstances as they are understood at this particular point in time. Going forward, it is possible that new information may become available that would lead the Council to a different understanding of the development potential of a site or group of sites.

2. Spatial Context

- 2.1 Welwyn Hatfield borough is located centrally within Hertfordshire and covers an area of approximately 130 square kms. It is bordered by Hertsmere to the southwest, St Albans to the west, North Hertfordshire to the north and East Hertfordshire and Broxbourne to the east. The south of the borough borders the London Borough of Enfield. The borough has two main towns, Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield. Both are new towns and Welwyn Garden City is one of two Garden Cities in the UK. There are also a number of smaller settlements, which are excluded from the Green Belt - Brookmans Park, Cuffley, Digswell, Little Heath, Oaklands and Mardley Heath, Welham Green, Welwyn and Woolmer Green. The borough also contains a number of small villages, hamlets and areas of sporadic or ribbon development, which are all located in the Green Belt.
- 2.2 The borough has good rail and road links, with the A1(M) passing through the borough, connecting with the M25 to the south. The east coast mainline railway runs through the borough with stations on this line at Brookmans Park, Welham Green, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City and Welwyn North (located in the village of Digswell). Cuffley also has a station on the Hertford Loop Line, which runs from London to Stevenage via Hertford North.

Figure 1: Map of Welwyn Hatfield Borough



3. National Policy Context

- 3.1 To boost the supply of housing, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to meet their objectively assessed need for housing, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole or, specific policies in the NPPF which indicate development should be restricted. Such policies include land designated as Green Belt. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.

4. Objectively Assessed Need for Housing (OAN)

- 4.1 The 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) concluded that an appropriate objective assessed need (OAN) for housing in Welwyn Hatfield would be in the region of 625 dwellings per annum (p.a.) over the plan period.
- 4.2 A Partial Update to the SHMA was carried out in 2015 to take account, amongst other things, of the 2012 based sub-national household projections. Matters such as market signals (and a positive adjustment to headship rates for younger households) and affordable housing need led to a conclusion that the objectively assessed need for Welwyn Hatfield fell within a range of 664 to 707 dwellings per annum.
- 4.3 Over a 19 year [plan period (2013-2032)], this would represent an OAN range of 12,616 to 13,433 additional dwellings.
- 4.4 The range represents an uplift of 16% to 23% from the baseline demographic 'starting point'; i.e. the 2012 based sub-national household projections.
- 4.5 An Economy Study SHMA Addendum to the 2015 SHMA Partial Update was carried out in 2016 and follows the publication of the Welwyn Hatfield Economy Study Update, which was published in December 2015. The 2016 Addendum takes account of forecasts of likely employment growth in light of the latest economic evidence. The analysis carried out continues to support the use of the OAN range set out in the 2015 SHMA Partial Update, representing an uplift of between 16% and 23% from the demographic 'starting point'.

5. Indicative distribution of the Objectively Assessed Need

- 5.1 On the basis that the whole borough is affected by demographic and economic change, the following table illustrates, for indicative purposes only, how much growth each part of the borough would need to accommodate if the OAN range was distributed on a proportionate basis¹.

Table 1: Proportionate distribution of the Objectively Assessed Need for housing

| Sub-area | Proportion of households (2011 based) | Disaggregation of OAN 664 p.a | Disaggregation of OAN 707 p.a. |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Welwyn Garden City | 44.80% | 5652 | 6018 |
| Hatfield | 30.56% | 3855 | 4105 |
| Woolmer Green | 1.28% | 161 | 172 |
| Oaklands & Mardley Heath | 2.72% | 343 | 365 |
| Welwyn | 3.36% | 424 | 451 |
| Digswell | 1.44% | 182 | 193 |
| Welham Green | 2.88% | 363 | 387 |
| Brookmans Park | 3.04% | 384 | 408 |
| Little Heath | 1.12% | 141 | 150 |
| Cuffley | 4.00% | 505 | 537 |
| Rural Areas (North/South) | 4.80% | 606 | 645 |
| Welwyn Hatfield | 100.00% | 12,616 | 13,433 |

- 5.2 However, it should be noted that this is simply a mathematical starting point and not necessarily the distribution of growth that would be taken forward in the Local Plan. This is because the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and plans must respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas.
- 5.3 Consistent with the NPPF, the planning system must perform three roles; an economic, social and environmental role. The pursuit of sustainable development includes making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages, moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains in the future, replacing poor design with better design, improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and widening the choice of high quality homes. These roles must not be taken in isolation because they are mutually dependent.
- 5.4 It is highly unlikely, given the availability of suitable sites in different locations, the different characteristics of parts of the borough, e.g. the presence of critical assets in some parts and not others, the capacity of infrastructure to accommodate growth in certain settlements; that a mathematical

¹ Proportionate distribution by households referenced from table 9.3 of the SHMA 2014. Note there may be small variations in percentages due to rounding.

proportionate split will be achievable or represent the most appropriate distribution pattern.

- 5.5 Nevertheless, it is helpful to understand what level of growth could reasonably be associated with each part of the borough and to then explore to what extent such growth could be addressed.

6. Local Policy Context

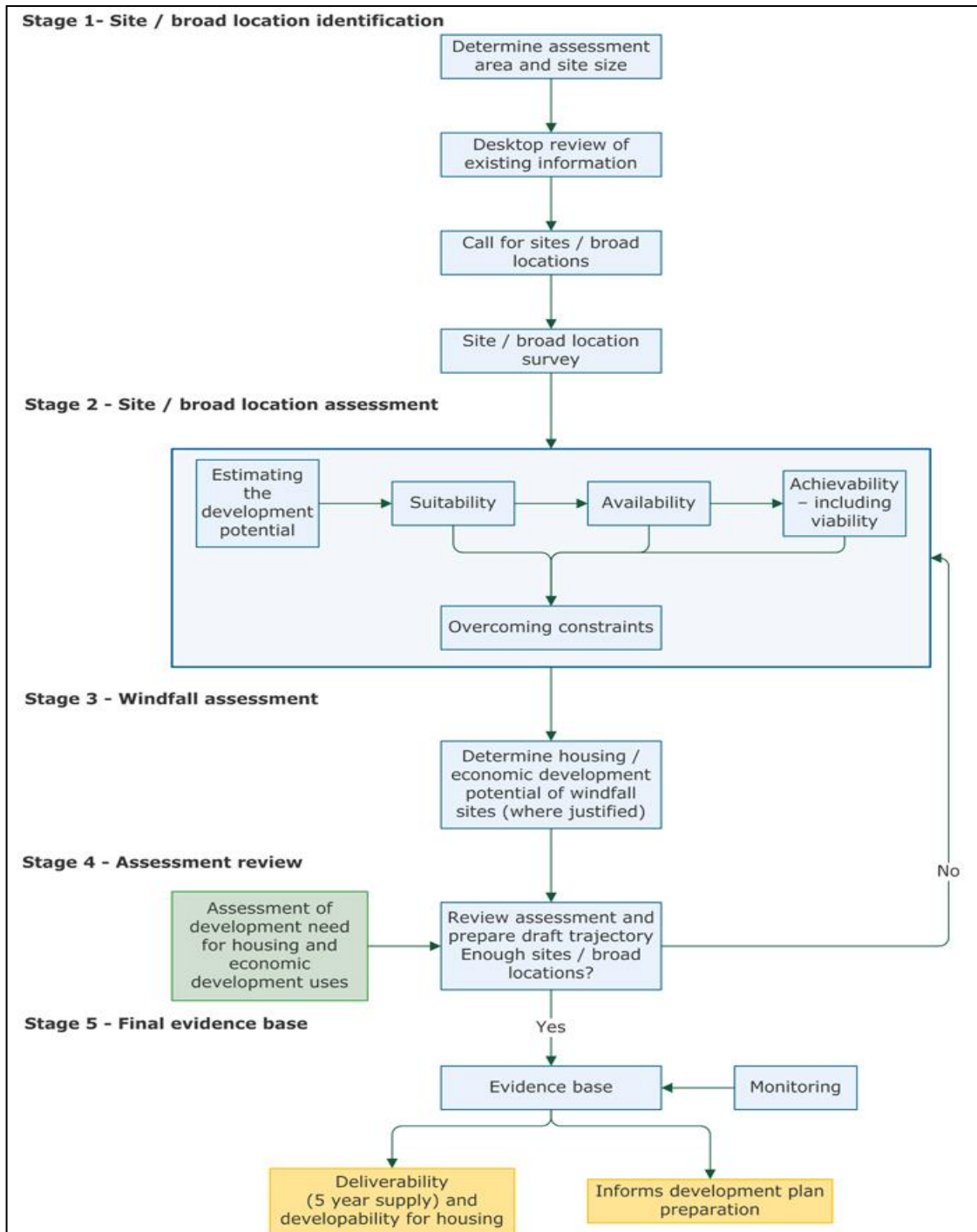
- 6.1 The Council is currently updating its local planning policy. From 12th November 2012 to 31st January 2013, the Council consulted on its Emerging Core Strategy at the same time as the Land for Housing Outside Urban Areas document, which identified potential sites around Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield.
- 6.2 The Emerging Core Strategy 2012 set out the Plan's emerging strategic policies. A key strategic policy of the Local Plan will be to deliver sustainable pattern of development; applying a set of overarching principles including planning positively for growth in a manner which minimises the need to travel by directing growth towards those areas with good transport networks and which are well served by jobs, services and facilities; protecting areas of highest environmental value and avoiding areas of high flood risk.
- 6.3 In April 2014 the Council decided to move away from the production of a series of separate development plan documents (Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Development Management policies) in favour of producing a combined Local Plan. A draft of the Local Plan was published for consultation in early 2015, which identified sites around all the borough's excluded settlements (towns and villages).
- 6.4 A number of new or amended sites were submitted too late to be included within the Local Plan Consultation 2015 or, were submitted in response to that consultation, or were submitted subsequently up until August 2015, and these have been assessed in the HELAA 2016. Two events were held on 20th October and 11th November 2015 to publicise the promotion of these new sites.
- 6.5 This Housing Sites Selection - Background Paper will inform the production of the Local Plan Proposed Submission 2016.

7. Methodology

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 7.1 Guidance on Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments is set out in national PPG. The Welwyn Hatfield Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment 2016 (HELAA) reports on stages 1 to 3 of the methodology as set out in the flow chart below.

Figure 2: Methodology flowchart – extract from national Planning Practice Guidance on Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments



- 7.2 The HELAA also forms part of stage 4 (Assessment Review). However, at this stage, and in order to inform the Council's decision on what sites could be selected for allocation in the Local Plan, the Council has also considered other strands of evidence or appraisals.
- 7.3 These additional strands are:
- The Green Belt Study Review (Parts 1 and 2);
 - An appraisal of Green Belt boundaries;
 - The Sustainability Appraisal;
 - Flood Risk – Sequential Test; and
 - An appraisal of strategic advantages or disadvantages.
- 7.4 It should be noted that Green Belt and other considerations such as Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity and infrastructure constraints, were previously set out in the 2014 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) but the Council received a number of representations in response to the Local Plan Consultation 2015 that greater clarity would be welcomed in explaining why sites were considered more favourable than others.
- 7.5 Responding to such comments, matters such as the contribution that sites make to the purposes of the Green Belt and Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity (which is dealt with in the Sustainability Appraisal) have been removed from the HELAA 2016 (the updated version of the 2014 SHLAA) and included in this Housing Sites Selection – Background Paper.
- 7.6 This Background Paper sets out how the key findings from all the above have been weighted and balanced on a site by site basis and indicates whether sites should be considered for allocation.
- 7.7 Consideration is also given, where relevant, to any cumulative impacts or reasons, which may affect whether or not a site, or a group of sites, goes forward to allocation.
- 7.8 Site level findings are also weighed against any known strategic infrastructure constraints on a settlement basis.
- 7.9 Consideration is given to the key policy implications that would arise if a site were to be allocated.
- 7.10 The potential capacity of sites is reflected against the Objectively Assessed Need for Housing.
- 7.11 Findings are presented on a settlement by settlement basis (or rural areas as appropriate) within the main body of this Paper. Appendices set out templates for the sites considered at this stage.

8. Strands of Evidence and Appraisals

Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

- 8.1 The Welwyn Hatfield HELAA 2016 considers a large number of sites that have put forward for development at various stages of the plan making process. This includes sites that were:
- Previously put forward (but not allocated) as part of the District Plan Public Inquiry which was held in 2003;
 - Within potential Broad Locations identified in the Core Strategy Issues and Options 2009 document; or as more defined in the Emerging Core Strategy and Land for Housing Outside Urban Areas consultation in 2012;
 - Promoted through the original call for sites in 2007 or as suggested by the Council's consultants at that time; or
 - Subsequently promoted either through a consultation event such as the Local Plan Consultation 2015 or direct to the Council at any time until August 2015
- 8.2 The HELAA 2016 can be found on the website².
- 8.3 The Council has published various versions of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA): SHLAA Phase 1 (Urban Capacity) 2009; SHLAA Phase 2 (Sites Outside Urban Areas) 2012; SHLAA Phase 3 (Potential for Windfall Development) 2012. A review of the Phase 1 SHLAA (Urban Capacity) was published in December 2013 and a further review of the Phase 1 SHLAA was published in November 2014, reflecting the continuing submission of additional sites. An update of the Stage 3 SHLAA (Windfall) was published in November 2014 and an update of the Stage 2 SHLAA (Sites outside Urban Areas) was published in December 2014. In 2016, the Council brought together all three strands of the SHLAA (urban sites, land outside urban areas and windfall potential) into one comprehensive document; the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) 2016.
- 8.4 A sieving process is used in the HELAA to decide whether or not a site is considered unsuitable for allocation. Sites are considered unsuitable at the first Stage of sieving because (in summary) they are subject to a key policy or environmental constraint (such as a wildlife or heritage asset), because all of a site is located within flood zone 3, or because there is a significant physical barrier to development (e.g. no suitable access). The HELAA 2016 explains this in greater detail.
- 8.5 Sites that are not contiguous with an urban settlement boundary or where the opportunity does not exist to redefine Green Belt boundaries are also sieved out at the first Stage of the HELAA assessment as they would not direct growth to the most sustainable locations within the borough consistent with the objectives of the NPPF. This means that sites located within remote rural areas, or in villages that are washed over by the Green Belt are not carried forward to the second stage of assessment in the HELAA.

² HELAA 2016: <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/article/5501/Housing>

- 8.6 The exception to this is if sites are large enough to create a sustainable new village or, in the case of Gypsy and Traveller sites, as national planning policy allows such sites to be inset within the Green Belt and these do not necessarily need to adjoin an existing urban boundary in order to be considered suitable for allocation.
- 8.7 The second Stage of the HELAA assessment considers whether sites are suitable, available and achievable. There are 78 sites that have been assessed as suitable, available and achievable in the HELAA. Only sites that would involve 5 or more dwellings in the excluded villages or 10 or more dwellings in the towns, are considered further in this Sites Selection Background Paper. This means that 10 sites are not considered further in this Paper because they are too small to be allocated in the Local Plan.
- 8.8 68 sites are considered in this Housing Sites Selection Background Paper; noting that for 3 of these sites (BrP12, Hat11 and WGC4/7), alternative scenarios are considered (either in this Housing Background Paper, or in the Employment Background Paper, or in both Papers where mixed use development is promoted).
- 8.9 It should also be noted that some sites have been promoted as sub-parts of larger sites, e.g. Cuf10 is a smaller parcel of Cuf4, and Cuf12 is a smaller parcel of Cuf5. These all have separate site references; whereas the scenarios mentioned above share the same site references.

The Green Belt Review (Stage 1)

- 8.10 The Stage 1 Green Belt Review (November 2013) is a Strategic Review of the Green Belt, jointly commissioned by Welwyn Hatfield, St Albans and Dacorum Borough and District councils. It provides an assessment of how land in the Green Belt in these local authority areas, contribute to national and local purposes of including land within the Green Belt. It classifies settlements into three tiers; Primary settlements/towns are defined as 1st tier, secondary settlements/large villages are categorised as 2nd tier, and other settlements/small villages within the Green Belt are categorised as 3rd tier.
- 8.11 For Welwyn Hatfield, 1st tier settlements are Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, 2nd tier settlements are the eight excluded villages (Brookmans Park, Cuffley, Digswell, Little Heath, Oaklands and Mardley Heath, Welham Green, Welwyn and Woolmer Green). 3rd tier settlements include the smaller Green belt villages of Essendon, Lemsford, Newgate Street and Northaw as well as the smaller hamlets and areas of ribbon development which are all located within the Green Belt.
- 8.12 The Review considered four of the national purposes of including land within the Green Belt as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
- 8.13 The fifth purpose (to assist urban regeneration) was screened out as it was already apparent at the time the Green Belt Review was carried out that there

was a limited supply of available or unallocated brownfield land in the three local authority areas and that hitherto, the Green Belt had served a successful purpose in assisting urban regeneration. All parcels of land within the Green Belt Review were therefore considered to perform equally well against this purpose and any attempt to differentiate between sites was considered to be meaningless.

- 8.14 In addition to preventing towns merging (one of the NPPF purposes), the Green Belt has also been successful in maintaining the existing settlement pattern within Hertfordshire by providing a range of spaces and gaps between villages and towns and between villages, preventing them from merging into one another.
- 8.15 The Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991-2011 (paragraph 118) established a strategy that sought to broadly maintain the general settlement pattern in Hertfordshire, concentrating development within the main urban areas which were listed in Policy 6.
- 8.16 *To maintain the existing settlement pattern* is still considered relevant and the Green Belt Study Stage 1 also assesses the contribution that land makes to this Local Purpose.
- 8.17 For the purposes of the Green Belt Stage 1 Review (November 2013), the Green Belt was subdivided into 66 strategic parcels of land. All parcels were then assessed against each of the four national Green Belt purposes and the local Green Belt purpose. The assessment classified the contribution that each parcel makes as either: a significant contribution; a partial contribution; or limited or no contribution.
- 8.18 Assessments also considered at a strategic level the existing level of built development in the Green belt, visual openness and countryside character.
- 8.19 The Stage 1 Green Belt Review 2013 can be found on the website³. Parcels GB34, 35, 36, 41, 42, 43A, 43B, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59 and 60 are the parcels assessed in Annex 1.3 for Welwyn Hatfield.

Green Belt Review Stage 2

- 8.20 The Stage 2 Green Belt Review (October 2014) brought together key findings of the Stage 1 Green Belt Review with site level assessments of sites identified in the SHLAA and the Gypsy and Traveller Land Availability Assessment. It considered the contribution that each site makes towards the four national Green Belt purposes and one local Green Belt purpose. A similar classification was used to the Stage 1 assessment; so that levels of contribution a site makes to the purposes of the Green Belt have been classified as either 'significant', 'partial' or 'limited or no'.
- 8.21 An initial assessment was also made of site boundaries. However, a comparison with the strength of the existing Green Belt boundary was not considered and the Stage 2 Review acknowledged that a more detailed

³ Green Belt Review Stage 1 November 2013: <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/article/5488/Green-Belt-Review>

boundary assessment would need to be undertaken. The Stage 2 Green Belt Review (October 2014) can be found on the website⁴

Green Belt Boundaries

8.22 As part of the Site Selection process, an appraisal was made of Green Belt boundaries comparing, on a site by site basis, the relative strength of existing and proposed boundaries. The strength of each boundary was considered on the following basis:

Table 2: Strength of Green Belt boundaries

| Strong (prominent physical features) | Moderate (less physical features) | Weak (no definable or weak boundary on the ground) |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads (Motorways/A & B roads) • Railways • Buildings/urban edge • Extensive/Ancient Woodland • Rivers (Lea and Mimram) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor roads (C roads and unclassified) • ROW: Public footpaths, bridleways, cycle ways • Property boundaries • Small woodland • Streams/brooks (all other watercourses except the Lea and Mimram) • Established tree belt/hedgerow (continuous or with minor gaps) • Distinctive topography, e.g. ridgeline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental designation • Pylons/towers supporting overhead lines • Fragmented hedgerow • Ditches • Individual or small clusters of trees • Fragmented tree belt/hedgerow • Farm track (not a ROW) • No definable boundary |

8.23 The Site Selection process also considered if a site falls within a fragile gap of around 1km between settlements (towns to towns, villages to villages or villages to towns) and if so, whether a site would have a marginal or significant effect on such a fragile gap.

The Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

8.24 The Council is required to consider wider social, environmental and economic effects when preparing plans and it is a legal requirement for local plans to be subject to SA and SEA throughout their preparation. The Council has commissioned specialist consultants to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of its Local Plan. An SA Report has informed each stage of Local Plan preparation, setting out the potential sustainability effects of sites and policies for inclusion in the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan. (The SA Report also reports on the summary conclusions of the HRA).

8.25 The SA methodology appraises sites and policy intentions against 6 long-term SA objectives (health improvement; safe communities; good citizenship; improving the environment; decent housing; and a thriving economy) and a set of 22 associated sub-objectives. Scores are attributed in the SA to each of the sub-objectives indicating the likely sustainability effects as follows:

⁴ Stage 2 Green Belt Review (October 2014): <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/greenbeltreviewstage2>

Table 3: Sustainability Appraisal scoring

| Score | Description |
|-------|--|
| ++ | Significant positive effect likely |
| + | Minor positive effect likely |
| 0 | Negligible effect likely |
| - | Minor negative effect likely |
| -- | Significant negative effect likely |
| +/- | Mixed effect likely |
| ? | Likely effect uncertain |
| N/A | Policy is not relevant to SA objective |

- 8.26 Sites that have been referred to in earlier stages of consultation have already been subject to sustainability appraisal. A number of new or amended sites were submitted too late to be included within, in response to, or subsequent to the Local Plan Consultation 2015.
- 8.27 These have been assessed in the HELAA 2016 and where sites have passed the Stage 1 sieving process and are then considered in the HELAA to be suitable, available and achievable, and involve 5 or more dwellings for the excluded villages and 10 or more dwellings for the towns; these sites have also been subject to SA.
- 8.28 The SA will however, need to be reviewed to consider policies in the Local Plan Proposed Submission version. As a result, some SA scores may need to be reviewed and amended as appropriate. Therefore the reference to the SA in this Sites Selection Background Paper should be viewed as an interim position as part of the iterative process of carrying out the SA.

Flood Risk

- 8.29 As part of the preparation of the Local Plan, the Council commissioned Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 1 and Level 2. Published in December 2015 (and amended in May 2016), this updates and replaces the 2009 SFRA. The 2015 study assesses flood risk from all types of flooding in the borough, taking into account climate change, in line with current national policy and guidance. The Level 2 SFRA assesses flood risk associated with a number of specified sites in more detail.
- 8.30 The SFRA can be found on the website⁵.

⁵ SFRA December 2015: <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/article/5503/Environment-and-Climate-Change>

8.31 Where part of a site falls within Flood Zones 2, 3a or 3b, and a sequential approach to layout that restricts development to Flood Zone 1 within a site is feasible, the site passes the Sequential Test and an Exception Test does not need to be applied.

8.32 All sites in this Housing Sites Selection Background Paper pass the Sequential Test.

Strategic Advantages or Disadvantages

8.33 Consideration is also given to whether there are any strategic advantages or disadvantages that may set a particular site apart from other sites, e.g. the on-site or associated off-site provision (or loss) of community or other infrastructure that would not otherwise be provided on other sites.

Strategic infrastructure and cumulative impacts

8.34 Where strategic infrastructure constraints are known to exist, these are set out on a settlement by settlement basis as is the potential for constraints or impacts that may affect the consideration of a group of sites.

Indicative site capacities

8.35 Indicative site capacities are based on evidence that is proportionate to a strategic level assessment carried out as part of the plan making process.

8.36 A relatively cautious approach has generally been applied in light of known constraints and whilst the approach taken is considered to have resulted in a robust measure, these are not intended to be definitive. Once planning applications are received, it should be noted that the indicative capacities may vary slightly (either upwards or downwards).

9. Weighting

- 9.1 A set of tables can be found in the Appendices containing an assessment of each of the sites considered in this Housing Sites Selection Background Paper. Each site is considered in light of:
- The HELAA;
 - The Green Belt Review Stages 1 and 2;
 - An appraisal of Green Belt boundaries;
 - The Sustainability Appraisal (significant positive and negative effects);
 - Flood Risk; and
 - Strategic Advantages and Disadvantages.
- 9.2 Where relevant, weighting is applied to each of part of the assessment and a summary conclusion is provided at the end of each assessment table together with any policy implications should the site be allocated.
- 9.3 The following sections describe how weightings have been applied. Variations may be applicable on a site by site basis, where the circumstances of a particular site vary slightly from the general weighting definitions. These should therefore be viewed as a set of guidelines for weighting purposes to aid decision making and not definitive in description.

Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

- 9.4 The HELAA involves a thorough strategic level assessment of whether a site is considered suitable, available and achievable during the plan period. Only sites that are considered suitable in the HELAA have been included in this Site Selection Background Paper (if they are considered unsuitable, then the HELAA sets out the reasons why this conclusion has been reached).
- 9.5 Many sites have a number of constraints that need to be overcome before development can proceed. The HELAA considers whether such constraints can be overcome, whether constraints may reduce or limit the quantum of development in any way, whether any further assessments may need to be carried out either before or in association with a planning application and whether such constraints may affect achievability.
- 9.6 Having considered all of this, the HELAA concludes whether or not, even with the acknowledged constraints, development is considered to be achievable and if so, at what point in the plan period are sites likely to be delivered. So, if for example there are infrastructure constraints which require a lead-in time in advance of development taking place, this is taken into account in the HELAA.
- 9.7 The delivery estimate is therefore a key conclusion as it takes into account known constraints. All sites where there is a reasonable prospect of delivery within the plan period have a positive weight afforded to them. Sites that have greater certainty, and are expected to be delivered in the early to mid-parts of the plan period are given a more favourable weighting than sites that carry a degree of uncertainty (due to the need to overcome noted constraints) and are not expected to come forward until the later part of the plan period or beyond the plan period.

Table 4: HELAA weighting

| Delivery timeframe (from adoption of plan) | Weighting |
|---|-----------------------|
| 0-5 years | Significant in favour |
| 0-10 years | Moderate in favour |
| 6-10 years | Moderate in favour |
| 11-15 years | Minor in Favour |
| 16 + years | Minor against |

Green Belt Study Review Stages 1 and 2

- 9.8 Greater weight is afforded to the contribution a site makes to national Green Belt purposes in recognition of the importance afforded to them by the NPPF. However, recognition is also given to the local Green Belt purpose where a site makes a significant or partial contribution to maintaining settlement pattern; providing gaps between smaller settlements and preventing coalescence.

Table 5: Contribution to Green Belt purposes weighting

| Contribution to Green Belt purposes | Weighting |
|---|-----------------------|
| 2 significant national purposes | Significant against |
| 1 significant national purpose | Moderate against |
| 2 partial national purposes and/or a significant local purposes | Minor against |
| 1 partial national purpose and a partial local purpose | Minor in favour |
| Limited or no national or local purposes | Moderate in favour |
| Urban sites | Significant in favour |

Green Belt Boundaries

- 9.9 Consistent with the NPPF, account has been taken of the need to define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent. A comparison has also been made with the strength of the existing Green Belt boundary. The weighting applied is as follows.

Table 6: Green Belt boundary weighting

| Strength of boundaries | Weighting |
|--|-----------------------|
| New boundary would be stronger overall or in part than existing boundary and is clearly defined | Significant in favour |
| New boundary would be similar in strength to the existing boundary and is clearly defined | Moderate in favour |
| New boundary would be partially weaker than the existing boundary but is clearly defined | Minor in favour |
| New boundary would be partially weaker than the existing boundary and is not clearly defined | Minor against |
| New boundary would be predominantly weaker than the existing boundary but would be clearly defined | Moderate against |
| New boundary would be predominantly weaker than the existing boundary and would not be clearly defined | Significant against |

- 9.10 Some sites also fall within an existing fragile gap (considered in this Site Selection Background Paper as being a gap between towns or towns and villages or villages to villages of less than 1km). In these instances the impact on the reduction in the gap as a result of a site forming a new Green Belt boundary has also been considered.
- 9.11 Greater weight has been given to the impact on a fragile gap between 1st tier settlements (towns to towns) than to the impact on a fragile gap between villages and villages or villages to towns, reflecting the importance afforded by the NPPF to preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another.
- 9.12 Where sites fall within a fragile gap, weighting has been applied as follows.

Table 7: Green Belt boundary weighting where sites fall within a fragile gap

| Fragile gap | Weighting |
|---|---------------------|
| Site would marginally reduce an existing fragile gap between towns and villages (1 st tier to 2 nd or 3 rd tier settlements) or villages to villages (2 nd or 3 rd tier settlements) | Minor against |
| Site would marginally reduce an existing fragile gap between towns (1 st tier settlements), or significantly reduce an existing fragile gap between towns and villages (1 st tier to 2 nd or 3 rd tier settlements) or villages to villages (2 nd or 3 rd tier settlements) | Moderate against |
| Site would significantly reduce an existing fragile gap between 1 st tier settlements (towns to towns) | Significant against |

Sustainability Appraisal

- 9.13 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) attributes scores to a set of 22 sub-objectives, such as avoiding or reducing air pollution (4.3), protecting and enhancing open space and landscape character, retaining local distinctiveness (4.4) etc. The SA indicates the likely sustainability effects on each sub-objective and whether any mitigation may be required.
- 9.14 It is not the place of the Site Selection process to revisit any of those scores but the Site Selection process does take the balance of scores into account.
- 9.15 For the purposes of Site Selection, weight has been given to the relative balance between the significant positive and significant negative effects associated with the SA assessment of each site. The SA of course identifies a wide range of other potential effects, minor positive/negative etc but it is the most significant effects that are considered in this paper.

Table 8: Sustainability Appraisal weighting significant positive and negative effects

| Sustainability Appraisal | Weighting |
|---|-----------------------|
| More than 3 times double positives (++) than double negatives (--) (e.g. 7:1 or 8:2) | Significant in favour |
| 2 to 3 times more double positives (++) than double negatives (--) (e.g. 6:2 or 7:3) | Moderate in favour |
| Less than twice as many double positives (++) than double negatives (--), e.g. 5:3 or 6:4 | Minor in favour |

Flood Risk

- 9.16 Development potential has been excluded from areas Flood Zones 2 and 3. All of the sites in this Background Paper pass the Sequential Test, and as a result no weighting is given in the Site Selection process to any one site over another as they are all equal in this respect.
- 9.17 However, note may be made on a site by site basis where certain measures or further assessments may be considered appropriate.

Strategic Advantages or Disadvantages

- 9.18 This section considers whether a site is likely to result in any strategic advantages that would not normally be delivered on other (e.g. smaller) sites.
- 9.19 For example, a site may present the opportunity to deliver important community infrastructure such as a secondary or primary school, strategic Green Infrastructure that forms part of a strategic planned network of sites, or a large or small neighbourhood centre, which can only be delivered in association with a significant level of growth. Without such sites, essential community infrastructure is unlikely to be delivered alongside growth in the borough and this is considered important to take into account. Alternatively, a site may provide an opportunity to deliver employment floor space to contribute towards the borough's economic growth strategy or make a direct contribution towards regeneration priorities.
- 9.20 A site may also provide an opportunity to provide enhanced facilities for an adjoining community use. However, whilst these may be viewed as a wider community benefit (beyond what is absolutely necessary for a development to be considered suitable in principle), they are unlikely to be essential to the overall delivery of growth in the borough and are afforded less weight than the need to deliver strategic infrastructure alongside growth in the interests of sustainable development.
- 9.21 Conversely, this part of the Site Selection process notes if the development of certain sites may result in any strategic disadvantages, such as the loss of existing community or other infrastructure, with or without an opportunity for replacement during the plan period.
- 9.22 The greater the strategic advantage or disadvantage, the greater the weight is afforded along the following lines.

Table 9: Strategic advantages or disadvantages weighting

| Strategic Advantages or Disadvantages | Weighting |
|---|-----------------------|
| Large scale infrastructure provision, such as a secondary school, a large neighbourhood centre or large parcel of strategic Green Infrastructure (GI), opportunity to make significant provision for employment land. | Significant in favour |
| Primary school, provision, small neighbourhood centre, moderate contribution to strategic GI, moderate contribution to employment land supply. | Moderate in favour |
| Other new community infrastructure which would serve new and existing communities / enhancement to existing community facilities | Minor in favour |
| Loss of a small community facility but with a reasonable prospect of replacement within the plan period | Minor against |
| Loss of a small community facility but with no reasonable prospect of replacement within the plan period. | Moderate against |
| Loss or significant reduction in a strategic community facility or other infrastructure with no reasonable prospect of replacement within the plan period. Significantly inconsistent with settlement strategy. | Significant against |

10. Settlement conclusions - Welwyn Garden City

- 10.1 For indicative purposes, a proportionate approach to distributing growth to the borough's towns, excluded villages and rural areas suggests that Welwyn Garden City would need to **accommodate between 5,652 and 6,018 additional dwellings** between 2013 and 2032.

Table 10: Welwyn Garden City: supply and shortfall against the OAN

| Completions 2013-2016 | Urban Capacity – sites with planning permission | Sub-total | Shortfall against OAN |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| 359 | 806 | 1,165 | 4,487-4,853 |

Key Infrastructure issues

- 10.2 **Secondary Schools:** Hertfordshire County Council as the education authority advise that it would be prudent to plan for an additional yield of approximately 12.5 FE to accommodate combined growth associated with Welwyn Garden City, Woolmer Green, Oaklands and Mardley Heath, Welwyn and Digswell. In addition, a further 1 FE will be required to deal with the needs of an adjoining out of borough village (Codicote). Taking into account the likelihood of push-back (re-direction) of students attending schools out of the borough, a total of 14.5 FE additional secondary school capacity is required.
- 10.3 The education authority has assumed that the three existing secondary schools in Welwyn Garden City could each increase by 1 FE. To meet the shortfall of up to 11.5FE, two new secondary school sites need to be identified, each with 6FE and with the potential to expand to 8FE. One of those sites is already identified within an area known as Birchall Garden Suburb, to the east of Welwyn Garden City but within the administrative area of East Herts. This leaves a shortfall of between 3.5 and 5.5FE depending on the capacity of the school at Birchall Garden Suburb. The education authority considers that an additional 6FE secondary school would address the shortfall.
- 10.4 Hertfordshire County Council has commenced a *Search for Sites*, which will consider the suitability of possible sites within both urban and Green Belt areas. This work is progressing at the same time as the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan is being prepared.
- 10.5 At this stage in plan production, the options would be to either reduce the level of growth in Welwyn Garden City and the northern villages whilst the result of the *Search for Sites* is awaited or, to include a criteria based policy in the Local Plan to guide the determination of a planning application once a site has been identified.
- 10.6 A criteria based policy would prevent an unreasonable delay in plan production and the Plan would still be positively prepared.

- 10.7 **Primary School:** Hertfordshire County Council as the education authority advises that it would be prudent to plan for an additional yield of approximately 11.5 FE. Three new primary schools are proposed at WGC4 (Panshanger), WGC5 (Birchall Garden Suburb) and on land within East Herts. An existing school within Welwyn Garden City could be expanded by 2 FE and there is some limited expansion potential at other existing primary schools.
- 10.8 An additional 2 FE primary school is likely to be required to serve the needs arising from Welwyn Garden City. This may form part of the outcome of the search for a secondary school site (as above) as an all-through school. Alternatively, an additional site to be identified within the borough to accommodate increased primary school capacity.
- 10.9 Further options would be to either reduce the level of growth in Welwyn Garden City or, to include a criteria based policy in the Local Plan to guide the determination of a planning application once a site has been identified.
- 10.10 A criteria based policy would prevent an unreasonable delay in plan production and would still be positively prepared.

Site by Site Conclusions

- 10.11 Conclusions for individual sites in Welwyn Garden City are set out in a table at Appendix A. These are in addition to individual site assessments contained in the HELAA.

Urban sites

- 10.12 The following urban sites in Welwyn Garden City are considered suitable for allocation.

Table 11: Welwyn Garden City: urban sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|--|---------------------|
| Hal02 | Land at Waterside | 20 |
| Hal03 | Ratcliff Tail Lift Site, Bessemer Road | 110 |
| Han40 | Welwyn Garden City Town Centre North SPD Site | 100 |
| Han91 | Land at Gosling Sports Park, Stanborough Road | 250 |
| Hol19 | Hyde Valley House, Hyde Valley | 17 |
| Pan01b | Land at Bericot Way (North) | 28 |
| Pea02b | Broadwater Road West SPD Site (North) ⁶ | 850 |
| Pea02c | Broadwater Road West SPD Site (West) ⁷ | 171 |
| Pea08 | 80 Bridge Road East | 32 |
| Pea24 | St Michaels House, Holwell Road | 22 |
| Small Sites | | 17 |
| Total | | 1,617 |

⁶ Also refer to Employment Sites Selection – Background Paper 2016

⁷ Also refer to Employment Sites Selection – Background Paper 2016

10.13 The following urban site in Welwyn Garden City is not considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan for the summary reasons set out below.

Table 12: Welwyn Garden City: urban sites not considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Reason for not allocating in the Local Plan | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| How92 | Woodside Centre, The Commons | Whilst there are no fundamental reasons why the site is not suitable for development, the loss of community facilities would be contrary to policy objectives unless a suitable replacement can be provided. There is therefore significant uncertainty around the deliverability of this site given the importance of and need for the relocation of existing occupiers on the site. | 22 |
| Total | | | 22 |

Green Belt sites and Area of Special Restraint (ASR)

10.14 The following sites around Welwyn Garden City, which are either currently designated as Green Belt, or as an Area of Special Restraint, are considered suitable for allocation.

Table 13: Welwyn Garden City: Area of Special Restraint considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|---------------|--|---------------------|
| WGC4 (& WGC7) | Panshanger (Area of Special Restraint) | 650 |
| Total | | 650 |

Table 14: Welwyn Garden City: Green Belt sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| WGC1 | Creswick | 290 |
| WGC4 (& WGC7) | Panshanger (Green Belt) | 75 |
| WGC5 | South east of Welwyn Garden City | 1200 |
| Total | | 1,565 |

10.15 There are no Green Belt/ Area of Special Restraint sites around Welwyn Garden City that were found suitable, available and achievable in the HELAA that are not considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Settlement Conclusion

10.16 Total potential capacity from urban and Green Belt/Area of Special Restraint sites is **3,832**.

10.17 This is below the shortfall indicated against the proportionate distribution of the OAN.

10.18 The full dwelling potential will need to be planned for and supported by the appropriate level of additional secondary and primary school capacity.

11. Settlement conclusions - Hatfield

- 11.1 For indicative purposes, a proportionate approach to distributing growth to the borough's towns, excluded villages and rural areas suggests that Hatfield would need to accommodate **between 3,855 and 4,105 additional dwellings** between 2013 and 2032.

Table 15 Hatfield: supply and shortfall against the OAN

| Completions 2013-2016 | Urban Capacity – sites with planning permission | Sub-total | Shortfall against OAN |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| 481 | 339 | 820 | 3,035-3,285 |

Key Infrastructure issues

- 11.2 **Secondary Schools:** Hertfordshire County Council as the education authority advise that it would be prudent to plan for an additional yield of approximately 7.7FE within the plan period through the provision of one secondary. This could be delivered at Hat1. Further capacity may be required to address possible push-back (re-direction) from students attending schools out of the borough. An existing school could increase capacity. But this may still leave a shortfall which could be addressed at Hat1 (potentially up to 10 FE).
- 11.3 **Primary Schools:** Hertfordshire County Council advise that it would be prudent to plan for an additional yield of approximately 7.7FE within the plan period. Having allowed for a new primary school at the new village at Symondshyde, a shortfall of 5.38 FE has been identified. The education authority considers that 2 FE expansion across two existing sites within Hatfield (1 FE expansion at each school) may be feasible, leaving a shortfall of 3.38 FE. This shortfall could be delivered at Hat1 through the provision of either two x 2FE or, one x 3 FE primary school. The education authority has raised no objection on primary school provision.
- 11.4 Highways A high level growth scenario within the plan period, including Strategic Development Sites Hat1, Hat2 and Hat15 indicates that there will be impacts such as increased queuing at Junction 4 of the A1(M), and nearby junctions. However, Hertfordshire County Council as the highways authority advises that whilst forecast congestion at Junction 4 of the A1(M) would not be classed as a *'showstopper'* at this stage, further work will need to be carried out to define mitigation schemes. At present, it is clear that housing from the Hat1, Hat2 and Hat15 sites would add additional pressure on the road network and whilst congestion could be eased to an extent with mitigation, it would be worse than at present. It is too early to say without further modelling if the residual impact of all three sites with appropriate mitigation would be acceptable but if there were other planning reasons for delivering one of the sites (most likely Hat2) later in the plan period (or beyond), this would provide additional time to consider the constraints in this location further and to drive a modal shift agenda.
- 11.5 **Utilities:** There are no known major constraints for utilities infrastructure with the exception of the possible need to deliver a new 33KV sub-station north of Hatfield or to seek contributions to an upgrade at an existing electricity sub-station site.

Site Conclusions

- 11.6 Conclusions for sites in Hatfield are set out in a table at Appendix B. These are in addition to individual site assessments contained in the HELAA.

Urban sites

- 11.7 The following urban sites are considered suitable for allocation.

Table 16: Hatfield: urban sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| HC94 | Hatfield Fire Station, Wellfield Road | 33 |
| HC100b | 1-9 Town Centre | 66 |
| HE23 | L Kahn Manufacturing, Wellfield Road | 62 |
| HE80 | Onslow St Audrey School, Howe Dell | 61 |
| HS31 | Garages at Hollyfield | 14 |
| HS91 | Land south of Filbert Close | 37 |
| HW100 | High View (Hilltop), SPD site | 87 |
| Small sites | | 9 |
| Total | | 369 |

- 11.8 There are no urban sites in Hatfield that were found suitable, available and achievable in the HELAA that are not considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Green Belt sites

- 11.9 The following sites around Hatfield, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Table 17: Hatfield: Green Belt sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|--|---|---------------------|
| Hat1/Hat13) | North-west of Hatfield (incorporating Astwick Manor Farm) | 1,650 |
| Hat2 | West of Hatfield (beyond the plan period) | 1,130 |
| Total capacity | | 2,780 |
| Total capacity within plan period | | 1,650 |

- 11.10 The following sites around Hatfield, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are not considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Table 18: Hatfield: Green Belt sites not considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Reason for not allocating in the Local Plan | Indicative capacity |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---------------------|
| Hat11 Scenario 1: 6 ha site | Land at Southway (Housing scenario) | The site is located within a fragile gap between Hatfield and Welham Green although the gap is already partly compromised by the presence of existing development. The site provides a strong visual and physical barrier between the two settlements and development of this site would significantly reduce the gap between settlements. On balance this, alongside the adverse impacts upon the purposes of the Green Belt, are considered to outweigh the benefits of the site. | 120 |
| Hat11 Scenario 3: 12.5ha site | Land at Southway (Mixed use scenario) | The site is located within a fragile gap between Hatfield and Welham Green although the gap is already partly compromised by the presence of existing development. The site provides a strong visual and physical barrier between the two settlements and development of this site would significantly reduce the gap between settlements. On balance this, alongside the adverse impacts upon the purposes of the Green Belt, are considered to outweigh the benefits of the site. | 300 |
| Hat5 | North of Roehyde | On balance, the site's minor benefits do not outweigh the adverse impact on Green Belt purposes or the creation of an irregular Green Belt boundary | 140 |
| Hat19 | Land west of Bramble Road | On balance, the site's benefits are not considered to outweigh the adverse impacts upon the purposes of the Green Belt and narrowing of the gap between 1 st tier settlements. | 20 |
| Total | | | 280-460 |

Settlement Conclusion

- 11.11 Total potential capacity from urban and Green Belt sites is 3,149. However, a potential capacity of 1,130 from a large Green Belt site is not considered suitable for allocation within the plan period.
- 11.12 This leaves a residual capacity for Hatfield of **2,019** within the plan period.
- 11.13 This is below the shortfall indicated against the proportionate distribution of the OAN.

12. Settlement conclusions - Woolmer Green

- 12.1 For indicative purposes, a proportionate approach to distributing growth to the borough's towns, excluded villages and rural areas suggests that Woolmer Green would need to accommodate **between 161 and 172 additional dwellings** between 2013 and 2032.

Table 19: Woolmer Green: supply and shortfall against the OAN

| Completions 2013-2016 | Urban Capacity – sites with planning permission | Sub-total | Shortfall against OAN |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| 0 | 4 | 4 | 157-168 |

Key Infrastructure issues

- 12.2 **Secondary Schools:** Hertfordshire County Council as the education authority advise that it would be prudent to plan for an additional yield of approximately 12.5 FE to accommodate combined growth associated with Welwyn Garden City, Woolmer Green, Oaklands and Mardley Heath, Welwyn and Digswell. In addition, a further 1 FE will be required to deal with the needs of an adjoining out of borough village (Codicote). Taking into account the likelihood of push-back (re-direction) of students attending schools out of the borough, a total of 14.5 FE additional secondary school capacity is required.
- 12.3 The education authority has assumed that the three existing secondary schools in Welwyn Garden City could increase by 1 FE. To meet the shortfall of up to 11.5FE, two new secondary school sites need to be identified, each with 6FE and with the potential to expand to 8FE. One of those sites is already identified within an area known as Birchall Garden Suburb, to the east of Welwyn Garden City but within the administrative area of East Herts. This leaves a shortfall of between 3.5 and 5.5FE depending on the capacity of the school at Birchall Garden Suburb. The education authority considers that an additional 6FE secondary school would address the shortfall.
- 12.4 Hertfordshire County Council has commenced a search for sites, which will consider the suitability of possible sites within the urban area and within the Green Belt. This work is progressing at the same time as the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan is being prepared.
- 12.5 **Primary schools:** Primary school provision is planned for across Woolmer Green, Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Welwyn. Each settlement has its own school. A growth scenario, comprising up to 540 dwellings across all three areas, being a combination of existing planning permissions and a limited amount of additional growth would generate a need for an additional 1FE capacity. The education authority considers that the existing schools have capacity to support such a scenario without the need to permanently expand existing schools.
- 12.6 For Woolmer Green, this means that limited growth of around 150 dwellings could be supported when considered alongside limited growth at Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Welwyn.

Site Conclusions

12.7 Conclusions for sites in Woolmer Green are set out at Appendix C.

Urban sites

12.8 There are no urban sites considered suitable or not suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Green Belt sites

12.9 The following site around Woolmer Green, which is currently designated as Green Belt, is considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Table 20: Woolmer Green: Green Belt sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| WGr1 | East of Great North Road | 150 |
| Total | | 150 |

12.10 The following sites around Woolmer Green, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are not considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Table 21: Woolmer Green: Green Belt sites not considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Reason for not allocating in the Local Plan | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| WGr3 | Adj. 52 London Road | A new Green Belt boundary would be weaker than the existing boundary and the development of the site would significantly reduce an existing fragile Green Belt gap between villages. Together with WGr2, the gap between villages would be completely eroded. | 40 |
| Total | | | 40 |

Settlement Conclusion

12.11 Total potential capacity from Green Belt sites is **150**.

12.12 This is broadly in line with the shortfall indicated against the proportionate distribution of the OAN.

13. Settlement conclusions - Oaklands and Mardley Heath

- 13.1 For indicative purposes, a proportionate approach to distributing growth to the borough's towns, excluded villages and rural areas suggests that Oaklands and Mardley Heath would need to accommodate **between 343 and 365 additional dwellings** between 2013 and 2032.

Table 22: Oaklands and Mardley Heath: supply and shortfall against the OAN

| Completions 2013-2016 | Urban Capacity – sites with planning permission | Sub-total | Shortfall against OAN |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| 9 | 15 | 24 | 319-341 |

Key Infrastructure issues

- 13.2 **Secondary Schools:** Hertfordshire County Council as the education authority advises that it would be prudent to plan for an additional yield of approximately 12.5 FE to accommodate combined growth associated with Welwyn Garden City, Woolmer Green, Oaklands and Mardley Heath, Welwyn and Digswell. In addition, a further 1 FE will be required to deal with the needs of an adjoining out of borough village (Codicote). Taking into account the likelihood of pus-back (re-direction) of students attending schools out of the borough, a total of 14.5 FE additional secondary school capacity is required.
- 13.3 The education authority has assumed that the three existing secondary schools in Welwyn Garden City could increase by 1 FE. To meet the shortfall of up to 11.5FE, two new secondary school sites need to be identified, each with 6FE and with the potential to expand to 8FE. One of those sites is already identified within an area known as Birchall Garden Suburb, to the east of Welwyn Garden City but within the administrative area of East Herts. This leaves a shortfall of between 3.5 and 5.5FE depending on the capacity of the school at Birchall Garden Suburb. The education authority considers that an additional 6FE secondary school would address the shortfall.
- 13.4 Hertfordshire County Council has commenced a search for sites, which will consider the suitability of possible sites within the urban area and within the Green Belt. This work is progressing at the same time as the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan is being prepared. Until such time as a suitable site has been identified, the education authority would be likely to object to growth which would not be supported by sufficient secondary school capacity.
- 13.5 **Primary schools:** Primary school provision is planned for across Woolmer Green, Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Welwyn. Each settlement has its own school. A growth scenario, comprising up to 540 dwellings across all three areas, being a combination of existing planning permissions and a limited amount of additional growth would generate a need for an additional 1FE capacity. The education authority considers that the existing schools have capacity to support such a scenario without the need to permanently expand existing schools.
- 13.6 For Oaklands and Mardley Heath, this means that limited growth of around 50-60 dwellings could be supported alongside limited growth at Welwyn and Woolmer Green.

Site Conclusions

- 13.7 Conclusions for sites in Oaklands and Mardley Heath are set out at Appendix D.

Urban sites

- 13.8 There are no urban sites considered suitable or not suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Green Belt sites

- 13.9 The following sites around Oaklands and Mardley Heath, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Table 23: Oaklands and Mardley Heath: Green Belt sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| OMH5 | 2a-12 Great North Road | 20 |
| OMH8 | 2 Great North Road | 5 |
| GTLAA04 | Four Oaks, Great North Road | 6 |
| Total | | 31 |

- 13.10 The following site around Oaklands and Mardley Heath, which is currently designated as Green Belt, is not considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Table 24: Oaklands and Mardley Heath: Green Belt sites not considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Reason for not allocating in the Local Plan | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|---------------|---|---------------------|
| OMH7 | 22 The Avenue | The A1(M) currently forms a strong Green Belt boundary and the inability to create clearly defined and defensible Green Belt boundaries beyond the A1(M) outweighs the notable benefits of allocating the site. | 12 |
| Total | | | 12 |

Settlement Conclusion

- 13.11 Total potential capacity from Green Belt sites is **31**.
- 13.12 This is significantly below the shortfall indicated against the proportionate distribution of the OAN.

14. Settlement conclusions - Welwyn

- 14.1 For indicative purposes, a proportionate approach to distributing growth to the borough's towns, excluded villages and rural areas suggests that Welwyn would need to accommodate **between 424 and 451 additional dwellings** between 2013 and 2032.

Table 25: Welwyn: supply and shortfall against the OAN

| Completions 2013-2016 | Urban Capacity – sites with planning permission | Sub-total | Shortfall against OAN |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| 133 | 153 | 286 | 138-165 |

Key Infrastructure issues

- 14.2 **Secondary Schools:** Hertfordshire County Council as the education authority advise that it would be prudent to plan for an additional yield of approximately 12.5 FE to accommodate combined growth associated with Welwyn Garden City, Woolmer Green, Oaklands and Mardley Heath, Welwyn and Digswell. In addition, a further 1 FE will be required to deal with the needs of an adjoining out of borough village (Codicote). Taking into account the likelihood of push-back (re-direction) of students attending schools out of the borough, a total of 14.5 FE additional secondary school capacity is required.
- 14.3 The education authority has assumed that the three existing secondary schools in Welwyn Garden City could increase by 1 FE. To meet the shortfall of up to 11.5FE, two new secondary school sites need to be identified, each with 6FE and with the potential to expand to 8FE. One of those sites is already identified within an area known as Birchall Garden Suburb, to the east of Welwyn Garden City but within the administrative area of East Herts. This leaves a shortfall of between 3.5 and 5.5FE depending on the capacity of the school at Birchall Garden Suburb. The education authority considers that an additional 6FE secondary school would address the shortfall.
- 14.4 Hertfordshire County Council has commenced a search for sites, which will consider the suitability of possible sites within the urban area and within the Green Belt. This work is progressing at the same time as the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan is being prepared.
- 14.5 **Primary schools:** Primary school provision is planned for across Woolmer Green, Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Welwyn. Each settlement has its own school. A growth scenario, comprising up to 540 dwellings across all three areas, being a combination of existing planning permissions and a limited amount of additional growth would generate a need for an additional 1FE capacity. The education authority considers that the existing schools have capacity to support such a scenario without the need to permanently expand existing schools.
- 14.6 For Welwyn, one large site is already under construction (at The Frythe) and another has recently completed (at the former Clock Hotel site). This means that, when considered alongside limited growth at Woolmer Green and Oaklands and Mardley Heath, only a limited amount of additional growth could

be supported at Welwyn without the need to permanently expand existing schools.

- 14.7 Whilst St Mary's VA C of E Primary School in Welwyn may have the potential to be expanded, it is a listed building and the education authority advises that this may limit expansion potential. In addition, a detached playing field and or multi-use games area (MUGA) may then be required to mitigate loss of playing fields and further feasibility work would be required.
- 14.8 There is therefore a degree of uncertainty as to whether additional permanent primary school capacity could be created in Welwyn and it would be prudent to plan for only limited growth at Welwyn (in addition to recent planning permissions) alongside limited growth at Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Woolmer Green.

Site Conclusions

- 14.9 Conclusions for sites in Welwyn are set out at Appendix E.

Urban sites

- 14.10 There are no urban sites considered suitable or not suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Green Belt sites

- 14.11 The following sites around Welwyn, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Table 26: Welwyn: Green Belt sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Wel3 | School Lane | 7 |
| Wel4 | Sandyhurst | 30 |
| Wel11 | The Vineyards | 30 |
| Total | | 67 |

- 14.12 The following sites around Welwyn, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are not considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Table 27: Welwyn: Green Belt sites not considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Reason for not allocating in the Local Plan | Indicative capacity |
|----------|----------------------|--|---------------------|
| Wel1 | Land at Kimpton Road | Needs to be considered collectively with other sites and overcome a considerable number of constraints. Achievability is plausible within plan period but uncertain. Would erode an important gap between Welwyn and Codicote, resulting in continuous ribbon development. | 178 |

Table 27 continued: **Welwyn: Green Belt sites not considered suitable for allocation**

| Site Ref | Site name | Reason for not allocating in the Local Plan | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Wel2 | Land adjoining Welwyn Cemetery | Does not adjoin existing urban boundary. Needs to be considered collectively with other sites and overcome a considerable number of constraints. Achievability is plausible within plan period but uncertain. Would erode an important gap between Welwyn and Codicote, resulting in continuous ribbon development. | 40 |
| Wel15 | Fulling Mill Lane (south) | Site makes a significant contribution to two national Green Belt purposes. Achievability is dependent upon other sites. Heritage constraints would limit area for development and site (with others) would need to overcome a considerable number of other constraints. Collectively, these sites would erode an important gap between Welwyn and Codicote, resulting in continuous ribbon development. Achievability is plausible but uncertain. | 14 |
| Total | | | 232 |

Settlement Conclusion

- 14.13 Total potential capacity from Green Belt sites is **67**.
- 14.14 Limited primary school capacity serving Welwyn, Oaklands and Mardley Heath and Woolmer Green and uncertainty around whether or not a listed primary school would be feasible to expand, would also weigh against further growth at Welwyn at the current time.
- 14.15 There would however be a shortfall against the proportionate distribution of the OAN.

15. Settlement conclusions - Digswell

- 15.1 For indicative purposes, a proportionate approach to distributing growth to the borough's towns, excluded villages and rural areas suggests that Digswell would need to accommodate **between 182 and 193 additional dwellings** between 2013 and 2032.

Table 28: Digswell: supply and shortfall against the OAN

| Completions 2013-2016 | Urban Capacity – sites with planning permission | Sub-total | Shortfall against OAN |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| 3 | 12 | 15 | 167-178 |

Site Conclusions

- 15.2 There are no sites assessed in the HELAA as suitable, available and achievable. Therefore there are no sites tables in Appendix F of this Sites Selection Background Paper, but for reference purposes, the HELAA map is included at Appendix F.
- 15.3 There will therefore be a significant shortfall against the proportionate distribution of the OAN for Digswell.

16. Settlement conclusions - Welham Green

- 16.1 For indicative purposes, a proportionate approach to distributing growth to the borough's towns, excluded villages and rural areas suggests that Welham Green would need to accommodate **between 363 and 387 additional dwellings** between 2013 and 2032.

Table 29: Welham Green: supply and shortfall against the OAN

| Completions 2013-2016 | Urban Capacity – sites with planning permission | Sub-total | Shortfall against OAN |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| 23 | 4 | 27 | 336-360 |

Key Infrastructure issues

- 16.2 **Secondary Schools** Children from Welham Green, Brookmans Park and Little Heath predominantly seek secondary school places in the Potters Bar planning area, mainly at Chancellors (in Brookmans Park). The education authority advises that feasibility is underway to review expansion potential and whilst assessment work has yet to conclude, it is expected to show that there is expansion potential at existing secondary schools in Potters Bar.
- 16.3 However, if Potters Bar schools cannot accommodate additional yield from these settlements, it may be necessary for Hatfield to accommodate further school capacity.
- 16.4 **Primary Schools:** There is one primary school in Welham Green which is a small 1 FE school and there is no opportunity to physically expand the school.
- 16.5 Limited growth of around 80 dwellings at Welham Green (in addition to GTLAA01) could be accommodated within existing schools.
- 16.6 Beyond this, additional primary school capacity will be required to address housing growth at Welham Green. The development potential on sites assessed as suitable, available and achievable in the HELAA would generate the need for around a further 1FE of primary school capacity.
- 16.7 Hertfordshire County Council as the education authority would not object to a new 2 FE primary school in Welham Green (replacing the existing primary school and increasing capacity by 1 FE) if a suitable site could be identified and delivered alongside housing growth.
- 16.8 No site has been identified in Welham Green and limited primary school capacity in Welham Green is currently a restraint on further housing growth.
- 16.9 **Highways:** The Highway Authority has identified the Dixons Hill Road/A1000 roundabout junction as a current congestion point. Capacity enhancements will be needed at this junction to enable development to take place and this is already being explored in connection with site WeG4b.
- 16.10 **Site conclusions**
- 16.11 Conclusions for sites in Welham Green are set out at Appendix G.

Urban sites

16.12 There are no urban sites considered suitable or not suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Green Belt sites

16.13 The following sites around Welham Green, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan. WeG4b offers an advantage when compared to other sites being promoted for Welham Green, of delivering much needed employment land to support jobs growth in the borough alongside a limited amount of housing growth. The education authority considers that capacity exists in existing primary schools to accommodate the additional pupil yield arising from limited housing growth on WeG4b. The Foxes Lane site is already occupied (in part without planning permission) but the education authority considers that primary school need is already accommodated.

Table 30: Welham Green: Green Belt sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|---|---------------------|
| WeG4b | Land at Marshmoor (mixed use, housing/employment). Includes WeG4a, referenced as area 5) ⁸ | 80 |
| GTLAA01 | Foxes Lane | 12 |
| Total | | 92 |

16.14 There are a number of sites around Welham Green, which are currently designated as Green Belt, which are not considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan. The table below summarises the reasons why.

Table 31: Welham Green: Green Belt sites not considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Reason for not allocating in the Local Plan | Indicative capacity |
|----------|-------------------------|--|---------------------|
| WeG1 | Units 1-3, Welham Manor | Whilst the site itself is suitable for development, the site does not present any strategic advantages and the lack of primary school capacity in Welham Green is currently a barrier to growth, with no site identified to resolve lack of capacity. | 10 |
| WeG3 | South of Welham Manor | Whilst the site itself is suitable for development, the site does not present any strategic advantages and the lack of primary school capacity in Welham Green is currently a barrier to growth, with no site identified to resolve lack of capacity. If primary school capacity could be addressed, the opportunity to secure access via WeG15 should be explored to limit impact on Welham Manor. This may then allow for a slightly higher dwelling capacity on WeG3. | 45 |

⁸ Also refer to Employment Sites Selection – Background Paper 2016

Table 31 continued: **Welham Green: Green Belt sites not considered suitable for allocation**

| Site Ref | Site name | Reason for not allocating in the Local Plan | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|-------------------|---|---------------------|
| WeG4a | Land at Marshmoor | The limited amount of residential development (80 dwellings) does not by itself either justify the site being inset within the Green Belt creating weaker boundaries than existing or a significantly wider release of land from the Green Belt. A wider release is however considered as part of WeG4b. No indicative capacity is included within this table to avoid double counting. | 0 |
| WeG6 | Skimpans Farm | Whilst the site itself is suitable for development, the site does not present any strategic advantages and the lack of primary school capacity in Welham Green is currently a barrier to growth, with no site identified to resolve lack of capacity. | 73 |
| WeG10 | Dixons Hill Road | Whilst the site itself is suitable for development, the site does not present any strategic advantages and the lack of primary school capacity in Welham Green is currently a barrier to growth, with no site identified to resolve lack of capacity. | 120 |
| WeG12 | Pooleys Lane | Whilst the site itself is suitable for development, the site does not present any strategic advantages and the lack of primary school capacity in Welham Green is currently a barrier to growth, with no site identified to resolve lack of capacity. | 59 |
| WeG15 | Potterells Farm | Whilst the site itself is suitable for development, the site does not present any strategic advantages and the lack of primary school capacity in Welham Green is currently a barrier to growth, with no site identified to resolve lack of capacity. If primary school capacity could be addressed, the opportunity to deliver WeG15 alongside WeG3 should be explored. This may then allow for a slightly higher dwelling capacity on WeG3. | 140 |
| Total | | | 447 |

Settlement Conclusion

- 16.15 Total potential capacity from Green Belt sites is **92**.
- 16.16 This is significantly below the shortfall indicated against the proportionate distribution of the OAN.
- 16.17 Whilst others sites are, in principle, suitable for development, limited primary school capacity within Welham Green and no alternative site identified to deliver an expanded school is currently a restraint on further growth.

17. Settlement conclusions - Brookmans Park

- 17.1 For indicative purposes, a proportionate approach to distributing growth to the borough's towns, excluded villages and rural areas suggests that Brookmans Park would need to accommodate **between 384 and 408 additional dwellings** between 2013 and 2032.

Table 32: Brookmans Park: supply and shortfall against the OAN

| Completions 2013-2016 | Urban Capacity – sites with planning permission | Sub-total | Shortfall against OAN |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| 6 | 40 | 46 | 338-362 |

Key Infrastructure issues

- 17.2 **Secondary Schools:** Children from Welham Green, Brookmans Park and Little Heath predominantly seek secondary school places in the Potters Bar planning area, mainly at Chancellors (in Brookmans Park). The education authority advises that feasibility is underway to review expansion potential and whilst assessment work has yet to conclude, it is expected to show that there is expansion potential at existing secondary schools in Potters Bar.
- 17.3 However, if Potters Bar schools cannot accommodate additional yield from these settlements, it may be necessary for Hatfield to accommodate further school capacity.
- 17.4 **Primary schools:** There is one existing primary school in Brookmans Park, with 1.5 FE. In addition to children from Brookmans Park, there is an in-flow of children from Welham Green and Potters Bar.
- 17.5 Should additional development result in a need for an additional 0.5 FE capacity, Hertfordshire County Council as the education authority advise that its preferred strategy would be to support an increase of 0.5 FE to the existing school FE rather than supporting a new 2 FE school on an alternative site.
- 17.6 This would accommodate growth of around 250 new dwellings.
- 17.7 HCC would not support a strategy requiring the existing 1.5FE school to be expanded by 1 FE to a 2.5FE school.
- 17.8 However, a new 3FE school (increasing capacity in Brookmans Park by 1.5 FE) would be supported by the education authority on an alternative site although pupil yield under this scenario would be equivalent to around an additional 750 dwellings.
- 17.9 **Highways:** The two Priority junctions of Georges Wood Road (which is a private road)/A1000 (The Great North Road) and Swanley Bar Lane /A1000 have been identified by the Highway Authority as having current congestion issues in peak hours. Improvement measures such as a right turn lane may be required.

Site Conclusions

- 17.10 Conclusions for sites in Brookmans Park are set out at Appendix H.

Urban sites

17.11 There are no urban sites considered suitable or not suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Green Belt sites

17.12 The following sites around Brookmans Park, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are considered suitable for allocation.

Table 33: Brookmans Park: Green Belt sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| BrP4 | Land west of Brookmans Park | 300 |
| BrP12 | Peplins Wood | 110 |
| BrP13 | West of Golf Club Road | 14 |
| BRP14 | East of Golf Club Road | 10 |
| Total | | 434 |

17.13 The following sites around Brookmans Park, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are not considered suitable for allocation.

Table 34: Brookmans Park: Green Belt sites not considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Reason for not allocating in the Local Plan | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------|
| BrP1 | Upper Bell Lane Farm | The site is close to but does not adjoin the existing urban boundary, with properties in Bell Lane separating the site from Brookmans Park. Either the site would need to be inset or a larger area of land removed from the Green Belt. On balance, the site's benefits do not outweigh the fact that development of the site would be inconsistent with the settlement strategy resulting in a disproportionate expansion of a small Green belt settlement that is not generally suitable for further development. Development would result in complete coalescence between a 2 nd and 3 rd tier settlement. | 100 |
| BrP6 | Land at Bluebridge Road | Development of the site would significantly physically and visually shorten the fragile gap between Brookmans Park and Potters Bar. On balance, the significant adverse impact on the purposes of the Green Belt is considered to outweigh the benefits of the site. | 234 |
| Total | | | 334 |

Settlement Conclusion

17.14 Total potential capacity from Green Belt sites is **434**.

- 17.15 This is above the shortfall indicated against the proportionate distribution of the OAN. However, primary school capacity in Brookmans Park and the options for alternative provision in line with the advice of the education authority effectively limits growth at Brookmans Park to around 250 with the provision of a 0.5FE extension to the existing school. Alternatively, a new 3 FE school would need to be provided, replacing the existing primary school and increasing capacity by 1.5FE, equivalent to 750 dwellings.
- 17.16 Two sites have been found unsuitable for allocation (BrP1 and BrP6). There is not therefore capacity for 750 dwellings on suitable sites at Brookmans Park and a 3FE school to serve the needs of Brookmans Park is not justified.
- 17.17 The remaining sites, BrP4, BrP12, BrP13 and BrP14 have a combined dwelling capacity of 434. This is equivalent to just under a 0.9FE. However, this would result in a 2.5FE primary school (increasing the existing 1.5FE primary school by 1FE), which the County Council does not support.
- 17.18 In order to get closer to the 0.5FE expansion option for the existing primary school site, capacity would need to be reviewed on the suitable sites.
- 17.19 BrP13 and BrP14 are relatively small sites, with the potential to come forward in the early part of the plan period with a combined dwelling capacity of 24.
- 17.20 Site BrP12 offers the potential to deliver a 2FE primary school within the site but the County Council's preferred strategy is to deliver a 0.5FE expansion on the existing primary school site and not the delivery of a new 2FE school on an alternative site. Together with BrP13 and BrP14, BrP12 would have a dwelling capacity of 134 which would generate the need for 0.27FE, which is not large enough to justify a 0.5FE expansion to the existing primary school or the provision of a new 2FE primary school.
- 17.21 BrP4 also provides the opportunity to deliver a primary school within the site, but as above, the County Council's preferred strategy is to deliver a 0.5FE expansion to the existing primary school site. Together with BrP13 and BrP14, BrP4 would have a dwelling capacity of 324, generating the need for 0.65FE, which is over capacity for a 0.5FE expansion to the existing primary school. BrP4 needs to deliver a new footbridge and highway upgrades but it may be possible to reduce capacity at BrP4 to around 250 dwellings without comprising achievability. On this basis, and taken together with BrP13 and BrP14, this would result in a dwelling capacity of 274, which would generate the need for around 0.55FE increase in primary school capacity.

Table 35: Brookmans Park: Green Belt sites suitable for allocation in light of primary school capacity

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| BrP4 | Land west of Brookmans Park | 250 |
| BrP13 | West of Golf Club Road | 14 |
| BRP14 | East of Golf Club Road | 10 |
| Total | | 274 |

18. Settlement conclusions - Little Heath

- 18.1 For indicative purposes, a proportionate approach to distributing growth to the borough's towns, excluded villages and rural areas suggests that Little Heath would need to accommodate **between 141 and 150 additional dwellings** between 2013 and 2032.

Table 36: Little Heath: supply and shortfall against the OAN

| Completions 2013-2016 | Urban Capacity – sites with planning permission | Sub-total | Shortfall against OAN |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 5 | 6 | 135-144 |

Key Infrastructure issues

- 18.2 **Secondary Schools:** Children from Little Heath, Welham Green and Brookmans Park predominantly seek secondary school places in the Potters Bar planning area, mainly at Chancellors (in Brookmans Park). The education authority advises that feasibility is underway to review expansion potential and whilst assessment work has yet to conclude, it is expected to show that there is expansion potential at existing secondary schools in Potters Bar. However, if Potters Bar schools cannot accommodate additional yield from these settlements, it may be necessary for Hatfield to accommodate further school capacity.
- 18.3 **Primary schools:** Growth of around 140 dwellings in Little Heath would generate a need for 0.28 FE. The education authority advises that this level of growth could be accommodated at Little Heath Primary without expansion.
- 18.4 **Highways:** The Highway Authority has identified the Hawkshead Road/A1000 junction as a current congestion point. However, it is content that scope exists for localised widening to accommodate junction improvements.

Site Conclusions

- 18.5 Conclusions for sites in Little Heath are set out at Appendix I.

Urban sites

- 18.6 There are no urban sites considered suitable or not suitable for allocation in the Local Plan.

Green Belt sites

- 18.7 The following sites around Little Heath, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are considered suitable for allocation.

Table 37: Little Heath: Green Belt sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|---|---------------------|
| BrP7 | Hawkshead Road (on a reduced site area) | 100 |
| LHe1 | Land north of Hawkshead Road | 35 |
| Total | | 135 |

18.8 There are no Green Belt sites around Little Heath that were found suitable, available and achievable in the HELAA that are not considered suitable for allocation in the Local Plan

Settlement Conclusion

18.9 Total potential capacity from Green Belt sites around Little Heath is **135**.

18.10 This is broadly in line with the shortfall indicated against the proportionate distribution of the OAN.

19. Settlement conclusions - Cuffley

- 19.1 For indicative purposes, a proportionate approach to distributing growth to the borough's towns, excluded villages and rural areas suggests that Cuffley would need to accommodate **between 505 and 537 additional dwellings** between 2013 and 2032.

Table 38: Cuffley: supply and shortfall against the OAN

| Completions 2013-2016 | Urban Capacity – sites with planning permission | Sub-total | Shortfall against OAN |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|-----------------------|
| 32 | 85 | 117 | 388-420 |

Key Infrastructure issues

- 19.2 **Secondary Schools:** There is no secondary school in Cuffley. The nearest secondary schools are located in Goffs Oak / Cheshunt although places may be sought further afield, e.g. in Potters Bar or Enfield. Hertfordshire County Council as the education authority has raised no concerns about a limited amount of growth in Cuffley in terms of secondary school provision.
- 19.3 **Primary schools:** Cuffley Primary School (2FE) is the only school in the village and is well sized to meet the needs of the existing community it serves. The existing school site is tightly constrained and the education authority advises that additional land would be required to facilitate school expansion.
- 19.4 Primary school capacity for Cuffley needs to be considered in the context of the neighbouring settlement of Goffs Oak and the education authority advises that a limited amount of growth at Cuffley (around 400 dwellings including sites with planning permission) could be accommodated through the expansion of Woodside primary school in Goffs Oak, which lies within the local authority area of Broxbourne.
- 19.5 **Highways:** Junctions in Cuffley have been tested by the Highway Authority in the context of two scenarios; one assuming a lower level of growth involving around 365 dwellings (including recent planning permissions) and the other assuming a higher level of growth at just under 900 new dwellings.
- 19.6 The Highway Authority advises that there are two junctions of particular concern: the Plough Hill/Station Road/Northaw Road East junction and the Northaw Road/Cattlegate Road junction. These are identified as congested junctions and adding development traffic will exacerbate these problems.
- 19.7 For the lower scenario, the junctions could all operate within capacity, subject to junction reconfiguration resulting in changes to priority. However, under the higher scenario, the Plough Hill/Station Road/Northaw Road junction is predicted to remain over capacity even with a change in priority.
- 19.8 There are also implications in the wider area with impacts predicted under the higher scenario on other currently congested junctions at the A1000/Shepherds Way and the A10/ Lieutenant Ellis Way junction.
- 19.9 This indicates that the potential for development at Cuffley will need to be managed to within the manageable limits of certain junctions where congestion is predicted to cause concern.

Site Conclusions

19.10 Conclusions for sites in Cuffley are set out at Appendix J.

Urban sites

19.11 The following urban sites are considered suitable for allocation.

Table 39: Cuffley: urban sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| No02 | 36 The Ridgeway and land to the rear | 8 |
| No10 | Land w of St Martin de Porres Church | 5 |
| Total | | 13 |

Green Belt sites

19.12 The following sites around Cuffley, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are considered suitable for allocation.

Table 40: Cuffley: Green Belt sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Indicative capacity |
|----------|--|---------------------|
| Cuf1 | The Meadway | 30 |
| Cuf6 | Land at Northaw Road East | 108 |
| Cuf7 | Wells Farm | 75 |
| Cuf12 | Land at Northaw Road East (based on a reduced site area) | 73 |
| | | 286 |

19.13 The following sites around Cuffley, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are not considered suitable for allocation.

Table 41: Cuffley: Green Belt sites not considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name | Reason for not allocating in the Local Plan | Indicative capacity |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Cuf4 | Cuffley Hills Farm | The site has high levels of physical and visual openness, and is a prominent landform in the landscape. On balance, the adverse impact on the Green Belt outweighs the benefits of the site. | 220 |
| Cuf5 | Land at Northaw Road East | The site has high levels of physical and visual openness, and is a prominent landform in the landscape. On balance, the adverse impact on the Green Belt outweighs the benefits of the site. | 440 |
| Cuf10 | North west of Cuffley Hills House | On balance, the harm to the Green Belt, together with weaker Green Belt boundaries outweighs the benefits of the site | 33 |
| Total | | | 693 |

Settlement Conclusion

- 19.14 Total potential capacity from Urban and Green Belt sites is **299**.
- 19.15 This is below the shortfall indicated against the proportionate distribution of the OAN.
- 19.16 It should be noted that the 660 dwellings associated with alternative sites Cuf4 and Cuf5, which would need to come forward together to form a logical Green Belt boundary; when considered alongside other sites that have been assessed as suitable for allocation (299 on urban and Green Belt sites); together with completions since 2013 (32); and urban sites with planning permission (85) would amount to growth of 1,076 dwellings. This would be an increase of around 57% in the number of dwellings in Cuffley⁹. This is considered to represent a significantly disproportionate level of growth to an excluded village and would be contrary to the settlement strategy.
- 19.17 In addition, when the potential for overall housing growth at both Cuf4 and Cuf5 is considered alongside other more suitable sites around Cuffley, the highway authority has indicated that the operation of the Plough Hill/Station Road/Northaw Road junction is a possible area for concern, with the potential for this junction to be over capacity even with a change in priority.

⁹ Estimated number of dwellings - 2011 Census (1,868).

20. Settlement conclusions - Rural Areas

19.18 For indicative purposes, a proportionate approach to distributing growth to the borough's towns, excluded villages and rural areas suggests that the borough's rural areas (assuming Green Belt policy is 'off') would need to accommodate **between 606 and 645 additional dwellings** between 2013 and 2032.

Table 42: Rural Areas: supply and shortfall against the OAN

| Completions 2013-2016 | Urban Capacity – sites with planning permission | Sub-total | Shortfall against OAN |
|-----------------------|---|-----------|-----------------------|
| 10 | 20 | 30 | 576-615 |

Key Infrastructure issues

19.19 **Secondary Schools:** Given the spatial relationship between Symondshyde and other housing growth around Hatfield, secondary school provision for housing growth within the rural areas would be expected to be accommodated as part of new secondary school provision at Hatfield (at Hat1).

19.20 **Primary schools:** The new village at Symondshyde is estimated to have the potential to deliver a total of 1,130 dwellings generating a pupil yield of 2.26FE. There is an expectation that children will be able to attend a local school and the education authority is seeking further details from the landowner on dwelling mix and projected build out rates in order to confirm that the level of development can be supported by a new single 2FE primary school which would be provided within the Symondshyde site (Hat15).

Site Conclusions

19.21 Conclusions for sites in the Rural Areas are set out at Appendix K.

Green Belt sites

19.22 The following sites within the Rural Areas, which are currently designated as Green Belt, are as an exception to the general approach taken elsewhere in other Rural Areas of the borough, considered suitable for allocation.

Table 43: Rural Areas: Green Belt sites considered suitable for allocation

| Site Ref | Site name/Reason for exception | Indicative capacity |
|----------|---|--------------------------------|
| Hat15 | Symondshyde – new village - Reason: Opportunity to deliver a free-standing village and make a significant contribution to the need for housing alongside community infrastructure. | 1130 |
| GTLAA08 | Barbaaville - Reason: The limited availability of suitable sites and the need to make provision for the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites allows for sites to be inset. | 4 |
| GTLAA09 | Coopers Green Lane - Reason: The limited availability of suitable sites and the need to make provision for the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in connection with Strategic Development Sites. PPTS allows for sites to be inset. | 10 (site capacity up to 15) |
| Total | | 1,144 |

Rural Areas Conclusion

19.23 Total potential capacity is **1,144**.

19.24 This is above the shortfall indicated against the proportionate distribution of the OAN.

19.25 However, Hat15 provides the opportunity to deliver a new free-standing village and is considered to be a suitable site for allocation.