

Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Council's Statement - Stage 8 Hearing session

Southern Settlements

Settlement: Little Heath

Policy Number: SADM32

Site References: HS24 (BrP7), HS25 (LHe1)

Matter number: 2

Issue: Infrastructure

Question Numbers: Q139-148



Little Heath

Policy SADM 32 Sites HS24 (BRP7) Land south of Hawkshead Road

Policy SADM 32 Sites HS25 (LHe1) Land north of Hawkshead Road

Matter 2 – Infrastructure

Significant concern has been raised by representors concerning the provision of the infrastructure necessary to develop this site particularly in the context of that required to provide for the needs of its residents but also because of the need for off-site mitigation in particular but not exclusively in relation to the highway network to the east of the sites and in Potters Bar more generally.

139) Has the impact of the proposal on local infrastructure been effectively considered?

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) Yes, the impact of infrastructure, at both a local and more strategic scale, have been effectively considered.
- b) The Council has engaged on an ongoing basis with a wide range of statutory consultees and infrastructure providers including Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), as Education and Highway Authority, and a wide range of other stakeholders including utility providers.

140) If so what are the outcomes?

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) The outcomes concerning education, health care, highways and viability are addressed in relation to Questions 141 to 148. In relation to utilities, and in particular for sewerage infrastructure, Thames Water has advised the Council that some upgrades to the sewer network and treatment plants is required, It is understood these will be deliverable within 1.5 to 3 years from the point at which planning permission is granted And this has been reflected in the housing trajectory.

141) Is there sufficient capacity within the local schools to provide places for the children likely to be generated by the developments?

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) The Council's Site Selection Background Paper 2016 considers the likely impact of development on a range of infrastructure considering both the 2016 site proposals and the updated 2019 Site Selection Background Paper updates this to take account of the most recently identified sites, that would be necessary to meet the borough's Objectively Assessed Need.
- b) HCC have confirmed that there is sufficient expansion capacity at the existing Primary Schools in the catchment to accommodate this growth.
- c) In terms of Secondary School provision, the Council working with HCC have identified that two new secondary schools would be required across the borough to accommodate the housing target set out in the submitted Local Plan and three to meet the Objectively Assessed Need. The new schools will complement existing provision, and in some instances facilitate some pupils currently travelling further afield to be able to attend new schools thus freeing up capacity at existing schools. It is envisaged that the new secondary schools would be provided at Birchall Garden Suburb, in neighbouring East Herts District, at the North West Hatfield Site (**SDS5 – Hat1**) and should a third school be required at the New Barnfield site at Welham Green. Existing schools include an expanded Chancellors at Brookman's Park as well as schools in Potters Bar.

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

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) Please refer to the Council's response to Question 141. There is no need for additional primary school capacity in Little Heath. Additional secondary school capacity is required across the borough as a whole to meet the increased development overall.

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

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) Health provision is a matter for the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and partner NHS organisations. Typically, provision associated with new development would be provided through a combination of expanding capacity at local GP surgeries and through longer-term strategic planning for local health centres. Increasingly however, the preferred approach to providing for health care is through more strategic hubs that serve a wider catchment than traditional surgeries as they provide a more cost effective approach to delivering health care and provide synergy and critical mass to enable provision of more specialist facilities in the community, thus reducing pressure on hospitals. It is understood that the CCG and partner organisations are keen to align their own planning with the Local Plan process in the future.
- b) The CCG has not raised any issues associated with the proposed level of growth per se, although they have made it clear that any development would need to make a pro-rata contribution towards delivering an appropriate increase in services.

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

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) Please refer to the Council's response to Question 143.

145) What are the off-site highway ramifications of these proposals?

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) The Council has undertaken transport modelling working in partnership with consultants Aecom and Hertfordshire County Council in their capacity as Highways Authority. The modelling work has been used to assess any increases in congestion and waiting times at key junctions that may be likely to arise from the development proposals in the emerging Local Plan as a whole.
- b) In relation to Little Heath, the junction of Hawkshead Road with the A1000 Great North Road has been identified as a potential concern, although any impact is not severe. However, a new right turn lane at this junction should be considered as appropriate mitigation to address the cumulative impact of growth in this area.

146) Without improvements, would there be unacceptable harm to highway safety and/or the free flow of traffic?

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) No, the Council does not consider that there would be 'unacceptable' or 'severe' harm in accordance with Paragraph 32 of the NPPF (2012). Please also refer to the Council's response to Question 145.

147) Are the sites' overall viabilities sufficient to be able to support any required highway improvements as well as any other required improvements to infrastructure and facilities?

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) Yes, the Council has undertaken viability modelling of the Local Plan sites to test development viability and ensure identified infrastructure can be delivered in accordance with Paragraph 173 of the NPPF (2012). Contributions towards any junction upgrades would of course be sought from any developments impacting the Hawkshead Road and A1000 Great North Road junction.

148) If not what other options have been considered to try to achieve viable development sites?

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) N/A. Please refer to the Council's response to Question 147.