

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: 3

Issues: Sustainability

Question Numbers: Q149-155



Little Heath - Policy SADM32 – Sites HS24 (BrP7) and HS25 (LHe1)

Question 149: Are the sites in a sustainable location for development?

Welwyn Hatfield Response:

- a) Yes, Little Heath is considered to be a sustainable location for a limited amount of new development which is compatible with its scale and character
- b) Little Heath is categorised in the fourth tier within Policy SP3: Settlement Hierarchy as a Small Excluded Village and Settlement and is described as forming a northern extension to Potters Bar. There is a primary school, a parish hall and a pub in Little Heath; however it is well served by facilities in Potters Bar such as shops, a railway station and secondary schools. Little Heath is served by good bus services and accessibility to the main road network Both sites proposed at Little Heath are within 400m of five bus stops on Hawkshead Road and two bus stops on Swanley Bar Lane and Hatfield Road which provide a six day a week service.
- c) In identifying possible development locations, the Council clearly has to consider a range of factors, including any constraints or potential impact on the Green Belt. Overall, the Council is aiming to achieve a balance between identifying locations that are as sustainable for development as possible, but also seeking to minimise any impact on Green Belt. On this basis, some locations that may potentially be more sustainable, are not recommended for development because they would lead to greater harm to the Green Belt.

Question 150: How far is it to Potters Bar railway station and its town centre from a median location on both sites?

Welwyn Hatfield Response:

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

Distance to Potters Bar Railway Station:

HS24 (BrP7) - 1286m

HS25 (LHe1) - 1480m

Distance to Darkes Lane retail centre:

HS24 (BrP7) - 1124m

HS25 (LHe1) - 1311m

Question 151: Are these acceptable walking distances for commuters travelling by train?

Welwyn Hatfield Response:

- a) All sites proposed in Little Heath are within the maximum commuting walking distance of Potters Bar Railway Station as shown by **Table 1**. Both sites have a direct walking route to the station via Heath Road and Darkes Lane. It is worth mentioning that all sites proposed are well within the 'acceptable' distances for cycling. This is based on a 2,400m average acceptable 10 minute journey time for cycling¹.

Question 152: Are these acceptable walking distances to shops and other facilities?

Welwyn Hatfield Response:

- a) All sites proposed at Little Heath exceed the guidance for the maximum walking distance for town centre as shown by **Table 1**, but as mentioned in Welwyn Hatfield's response to Question 151, all sites are well within an acceptable cycling distance of shops and other facilities in the town centre, based on 2400m average acceptable 10 minute journey time².
- b) It is worth noting that within 1,400m of HS24 and HS25 there is: Coopers Road playing field, Little Heath Nursery Playgroup, Little Heath Primary School and Queenswood School, Little Heath Playing Field, Gobions wood open space play area and Little Heath play area, all accessible by walking or cycling.
- c) It is also important to consider that the Council must balance a range of planning factors, for example, seeking to minimise impact on the Green Belt, whilst supporting as sustainable pattern of development that is consistent with the Settlement Hierarchy as possible. On this basis, the level of development proposed at Little Heath is less than for the relatively more sustainable larger villages and is consistent with Policy SP3. Overall, the Council considers that the proposed scale of development is justified.

¹ University of Lancaster 2011. Understanding Walking and Cycling.

² University of Lancaster 2011. Understanding Walking and Cycling.

Table 1: Desirable, acceptable and maximum walking distances as advocated by the Institution of Highways and Transportation³.

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

Question 153: How far is the nearest local convenience store from either site?

Welwyn Hatfield Response:

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

HS24 (BrP7) – 965m

HS25 (LHe1) – 1275m

Question 154: Are these acceptable walking distances for persons visiting local shops?

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) Please refer to Question 152.

Question 155: Have these sites been appropriately assessed in the sustainability appraisal?

Welwyn Hatfield Response:

- a) Yes, the sites have been appropriately assessed in the Sustainability Appraisal. The full assessment of these sites can be found in Annex 1 of the 2016 SA Report (SUB/3), pages 476 to 490. The appraisal was carried out in a way that was consistent with all other site assessments, in line with the SA Framework and assumptions used for all site assessments (Table 4.1 (pages 29 to 33) and Appendix

³ Institution of Highways and Transportation (2000). Providing for Journeys on Foot.

2 of the 2016 SA Report). An assessment of Policy SADM 32, which allocates this site, is presented in paragraphs 6.377 to 6.389 of the 2016 SA Report.