

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan  
**Regulation 18**

Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan  
**Regulation 18**

**Consultation**

**Consultation**

**Document**

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# SECTION 1

# Introduction

## SECTION 1 5

### What is a Local Plan?

The Local Plan is the statutory framework that guides how land is used and developed across Welwyn Hatfield Borough. It sets out the strategy, policies and proposals for delivering homes, jobs, infrastructure, and environmental protection over the plan period to 2043. The Local Plan ensures that development takes place in the right locations, supports sustainable communities, and responds to the needs of current and future residents.

Once adopted, the Local Plan forms the basis for determining planning applications and directing investment. It must be consistent with national planning policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and is shaped by public consultation, engagement with stakeholders, and a robust evidence base. The Plan must also meet the legal requirements for plan-making, including the Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring authorities and prescribed bodies.

The Local Plan is subject to Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment), which assesses the social, economic and environmental effects

of the Plan and its reasonable alternatives. This helps ensure that the Plan promotes sustainable development and minimises adverse impacts.

The Local Plan must be kept up to date and reviewed at least every five years.

#### What is Regulation 18?

This consultation is being carried out under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 18 is the first formal stage in preparing a new Local Plan. At this stage, the Council is seeking views on:

- **the issues the Plan should address**
- **the emerging vision and strategic objectives**
- **the proposed policy approaches**
- **potential site allocations and reasonable alternatives**

Feedback received at Regulation 18 will help shape the next version of the Plan, which will be published for further consultation under Regulation 19 later on in 2026 before being submitted for independent examination.

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### What is the Development Plan?

The Development Plan is a collection of planning documents that together form the legal basis for

determining planning applications. In Welwyn Hatfield, this includes:

- **The Local Plan (prepared by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council)**
- **Neighbourhood Plans (prepared by Parish Councils, or local community groups, where**

applicable)

- **The Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan (prepared by Hertfordshire County Council)**
- **The Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan (prepared by Hertfordshire County Council)**

Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

## Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by parish or town councils and designated community groups. Once adopted, they form part of the

Development Plan and carry statutory weight in decision-making. Neighbourhood Plans can set out local policies on the use and development of land, including identifying sites for housing, protecting local green spaces, and supporting community facilities.

In Welwyn Hatfield, designated neighbourhood planning areas include Northaw and Cuffley and Welwyn. The Local Plan provides the strategic framework within which Neighbourhood Plans must operate.

## Waste and Minerals Local Plan

Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for planning for waste and minerals. The Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan and Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan set out policies for managing waste, safeguarding mineral resources, and identifying suitable locations for related development. The Local Plan for Welwyn Hatfield must be consistent with these plans, and planning decisions must take their policies into account where relevant.

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## SECTION 1

# Have Your Say

### SECTION 1 8

## How to Navigate this Plan and Comment

This Local Plan is structured into three main sections:

Section 1 – Introduction, Vision and

## Strategic Objectives

This section explains what the Local Plan is, how it is prepared, and how you can comment. It also sets out the draft Vision for the Borough to 2043 and the strategic objectives that will guide the Plan. We are seeking your views on the Vision and objectives.

## Section 2 – Strategic and Development Management Policies

This section contains the policies that will guide growth and development across the Borough. These cover a wide range of topics including housing, employment, town centres, climate change, transport, infrastructure, heritage, and the natural environment. These policies are supported by a comprehensive evidence base published alongside the Plan. We welcome your comments on all policies.

## Section 3 – Site Allocations

This section identifies the sites the Council

## Stages of Local Plan Preparation

When the Local Plan is being prepared, it goes through several stages from its inception, pulling together evidence to support decision making, through to the adoption of the Local Plan, at which point the policies can be applied to manage change effectively (Fig. 1.1). The consultation at regulation 18 stage involves members of the public, the development industry, infrastructure organisations and other stakeholders that have an interest in the area.

place.is considers suitable for new development to meet housing and employment needs to 2043. It includes existing allocations that remain developable, new potential allocations, and a schedule of reasonable alternative sites. We are seeking your views on these sites and any alternatives.

Full details of how to respond, including the consultation period and methods for

## How to Comment

You can comment on any part of the Local Plan. Comments must be received by the 26th March 2026 and can be emailed to

[localplanconsultation@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:localplanconsultation@welhat.gov.uk), or submitted via our Common Place engagement portal – [welwynhatfieldlocalplan.commonplace.is](http://welwynhatfieldlocalplan.commonplace.is)

submitting comments, are provided on the Council's website and in the consultation

through several stages from its inception, pulling together evidence to support decision making, through to the adoption of the Local Plan, at which point the policies can be applied to manage change effectively (Fig. 1.1). The consultation at regulation 18 stage involves members of the public, the development industry, infrastructure organisations and other stakeholders that have an interest in the area.

### Early Engagement

We are here in the process

### Consultation on initial draft policies and options (Reg 18)

### Consultation on proposed draft Local Plan (Reg 19)

### Submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State (Reg 22)

### Consultation of Proposed Modifications (Reg 24)

### Inspector's Report (Reg 25)

### Monitoring and Review

### Examination in Public (Reg 23 and Reg 24)

materials.

A Local Plan must be kept up to date and reviewed at least every five years.

## Picture of the Borough

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Brief picture of Welwyn Hatfield

Welwyn Hatfield is located centrally within

Hertfordshire and covers an area of approximately 130 square kilometres. The borough is bordered by Hertsmere to the south, St Albans to the west, North Hertfordshire to the north, and East Hertfordshire and Broxbourne to the east. The borough also has a short border with the London Borough of Enfield to the south. Around three-quarters of the borough is designated as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

The borough has two main towns — Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield — as well as a number of large and small villages providing a mix of urban, suburban and rural areas. Both towns have a wide range of retail and services serving both the towns themselves and the wider local area, as well as employment areas with some large businesses and national headquarters. Hatfield is also home to the two main campuses of the University of Hertfordshire, giving the town a notable student population and character. The main campus of the Royal Veterinary College is also located within the borough, south of Brookmans Park and Oaklands College has a campus in Welwyn Garden City.

The population of Welwyn Hatfield at the 2021 Census was 119,900 persons and there are approximately 48,600 homes in the borough<sup>1</sup>. House prices are 10.9 times median annual earnings<sup>2</sup> which is above both the national and regional averages and means that home ownership is unreachably for many households.

The borough's location on radial routes out of London means that it is highly accessible by rail and road. The East Coast Main Line has stations at Welwyn North (in Digswell), Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield, Welham Green and Brookmans Park, with services south into London and north towards Stevenage, Peterborough and Cambridge. Cuffley, in the east of the borough, is served by trains south into London and north towards Hertford. The A1(M) passes north-south through the

<sup>1</sup> 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics (ONS).  
borough, linking London to Peterborough, the East Midlands and beyond, as well as connecting with the

M25 just south of the borough boundary. In addition, the A414 passes east-west through Welwyn Hatfield and is a key cross county route connecting with other districts within Hertfordshire.

Despite having a strong local economy, the borough's good transport links mean that there are high levels of both inward and outward commuting and Welwyn Hatfield is a key workplace destination for residents of neighbouring districts (notably Stevenage, St Albans, East Herts, North Herts, Luton and Central Bedfordshire). This results in strong economic market and housing market linkages with neighbouring districts and means that the borough is an attractive place in which to live.

The borough's physical geography is defined by a number of watercourses, predominantly running across the borough from north-west to south-east. The River Lea and River Mimram are the most significant, running towards the Thames in East London. With the exception of Welwyn, most settlements in the borough are on higher ground. The Cuffley Brook and its tributaries form another relatively deep valley between Cuffley and Goffs Oak within Broxbourne to the east, and meet the Lea in Enfield. The Mimmshall Brook and River Colne drain the south-west corner of the borough and run south west through Watford to Staines upon-Thames in Surrey.

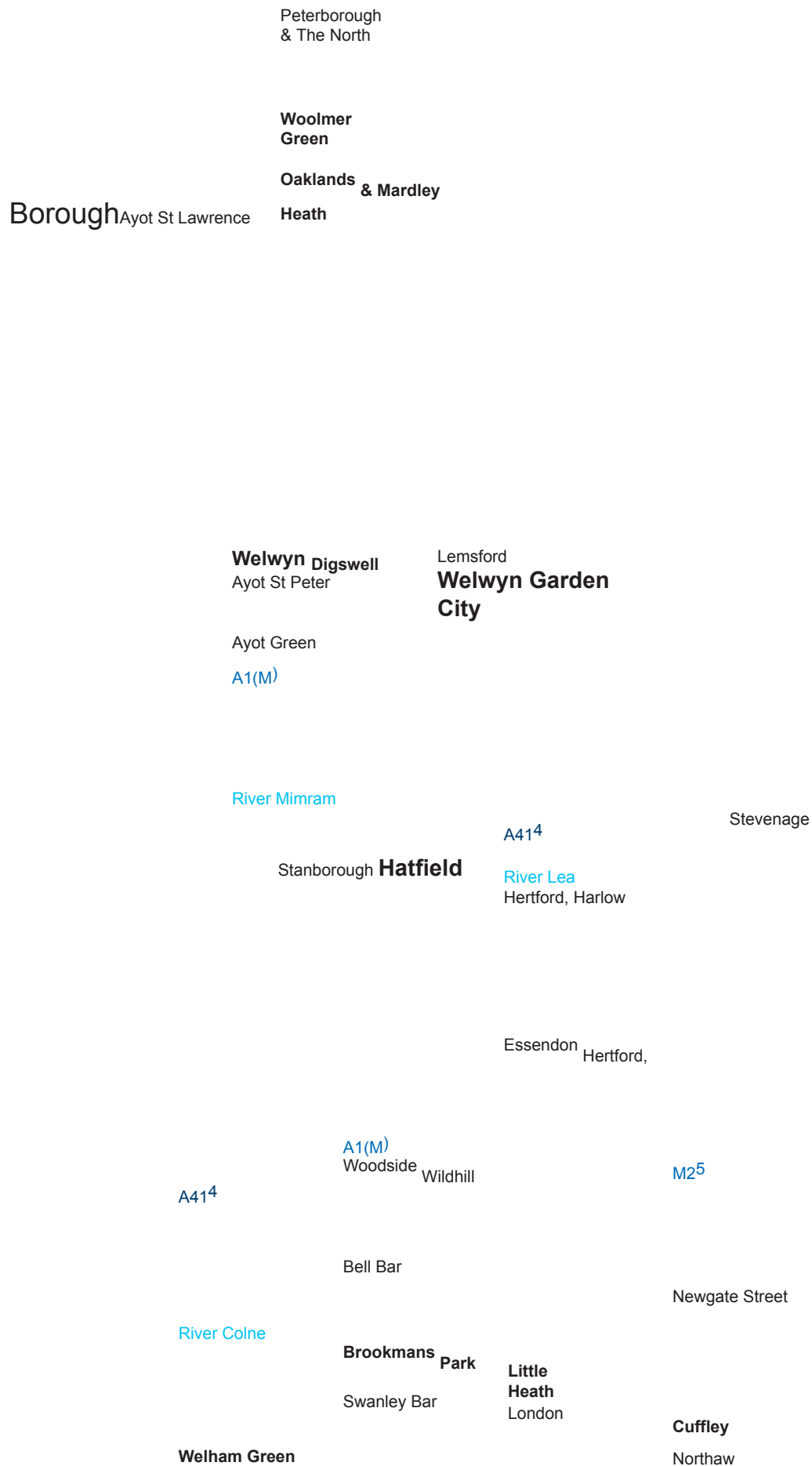
Welwyn Hatfield has a diverse range of green infrastructure and environmental assets including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Wildlife Sites, protected trees and woodlands, extensive areas of agricultural land, minerals reserves, rivers, floodplains, and a comprehensive network of open space.

Both Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City are of historical importance as New Towns and Welwyn Garden City is also historically important as the world's second Garden City. The borough has a number of historical assets, including listed buildings, conservation areas, ancient monuments and registered parks & gardens, and areas of archaeological interest.

<sup>2</sup> Ratio of median house price to median gross annual workplace-based earnings, five year average 2020-2024, Office for National Statistics (ONS).

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# Welwyn Hatfield



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# SECTION 1 Challenges and Opportunities

## SECTION 1 12

### Key Challenges and Opportunities for Welwyn Hatfield

Our Local Plan looks ahead over a 19 year period to 2043 (15 from anticipated adoption by 2028), during which Welwyn Hatfield will experience significant change. While there are challenges to address, there are also important opportunities arising from new development, investment, and the transition towards Net Zero. The following themes highlight the key considerations that will shape the Borough's future.

#### Living

- Welwyn Hatfield's population has risen in recent decades with growth outpacing most other areas within Hertfordshire. This growth is expected to continue over the plan period with the population projected to reach just under 139,800 persons by 2043, an increase of 9.7% from the start of the plan in 2024<sup>3</sup>. This will place increasing pressure on housing, services and infrastructure.
- House prices are well above national and regional averages and housing affordability is a continuing issue. With house prices 10.9 times median annual earnings<sup>4</sup> home ownership is inaccessible for many households and there is a need for more affordable housing.
- Housing delivery will need to meet the recognised

needs of all groups in the community and ensure that the right types of homes are provided in the right locations. With the 75+ age groups expected to grow the fastest, sufficient provision of suitable homes and care facilities will be needed.

Sufficient family sized housing to meet the identified need will also need to be planned for, with one and two bed flats having accounted for the majority of new homes built in recent years.

- New homes and neighbourhoods must be of high quality, minimise environmental impact, and be designed to adapt to climate change, including extreme weather, overheating, and flood risk.
  - Improving physical and mental health is a key element of quality of life. The most deprived communities are more likely to experience poorer health than those in more affluent areas. Promoting active and healthy lifestyles and providing access to the natural environment and green spaces for all the community will help improve health and well-being.
  - Cultural and community facilities play a vital role in supporting healthy, inclusive and connected communities. Libraries, community centres, youth facilities, sports venues, arts and cultural spaces all contribute to wellbeing, social cohesion and local identity. As the population grows, there will be a need to protect, enhance and, where necessary, expand these facilities to ensure that all residents have access to the services and opportunities they

need. New development should contribute to the provision of community infrastructure and help create places where people can meet, participate and thrive.

## Working

- Encouraging inward investment will be important to support growth in the local economy and jobs for an increasing population. Ensuring that employment land is available, attractive and fit for modern business needs will be a key challenge.
- Welwyn Hatfield is home to several major employers and national headquarters, as well as higher education institutions including the University of Hertfordshire. Strengthening collaboration between education providers and employers can help develop a skilled workforce, support innovation, and retain graduates within the Borough.
- Welwyn Hatfield has high levels of both in and out commuting, though overall there is a net inflow of workers<sup>5</sup> and the borough is a key workplace destination for residents of neighbouring districts (notably Stevenage, St Albans, East Herts, North Herts, Luton and Central Bedfordshire). This creates opportunities for economic growth but also places pressure on transport networks and local services.

<sup>3</sup> 2022-based subnational population projections, Office for National Statistics (ONS).

<sup>4</sup> Ratio of median house price to median gross annual workplace-based earnings, five-year average 2020-2024, Office for National Statistics (ONS).

<sup>5</sup> 2021 Census, ONS via NOMIS, Origin-destination Workplace data.

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- The Borough has significant potential to support innovation and high value economic growth. The presence of the University of Hertfordshire, major employers and research intensive sectors provides a strong foundation for developing knowledge based industries, supporting start ups and fostering collaboration between academia and business. There is an opportunity to strengthen the Borough's role as a centre for research, innovation and advanced technologies, helping to raise productivity, attract investment and create high skilled jobs. Ensuring that employment land, digital infrastructure and transport connections support these sectors will be critical to realising this potential.
- Whilst below the national average, retail vacancy in Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield town centres has increased in recent years and the role of the town centres is changing - with an increasing shift towards leisure and recreation. Supporting diversification, improving the public realm, and encouraging mixed-use development will be

important to ensure that town centres remain vibrant and resilient.

## Environment

- The Council's Transition to Net Zero Strategy sets out a pathway to reduce emissions. New development will need to support this transition by integrating renewable and low carbon energy solutions, reducing energy demand, and being resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- The Borough's towns and villages are tightly constrained by the Green Belt, and opportunities for development within existing urban areas are limited. Meeting identified housing and employment needs will require careful consideration of sustainable locations with good access to services, facilities and public transport, helping to reduce the need to travel and supporting the move towards Net Zero.
- Welwyn Hatfield is within an area of serious water

stress<sup>6</sup> (with demand for water exceeding the amount available). Where water resources are being or are likely to be exploited to a degree which may result in pressure on the environment or water supplies both now and in future this will need to be managed through water efficiency, infrastructure investment and partnership working with water companies and the Environment Agency.

- Managing flood risk is a growing challenge as the impacts of climate change become more pronounced. Parts of the Borough are vulnerable to surface water flooding, river flooding and sewer capacity constraints. New development will need to incorporate sustainable drainage systems, avoid areas at highest risk, and contribute to wider flood resilience measures.
- Water quality is also a key consideration. Growth will increase pressure on wastewater treatment infrastructure and could affect sensitive river catchments.
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity is a key priority. The Borough contains a rich network of habitats, including Sites of Special Scientific

Interest, Local Nature Reserves, Wildlife Sites, woodlands, rivers and open spaces. The Council manages over 30,000 trees as well as allotments, micro orchards and other green assets. New development should contribute to biodiversity net gain and strengthen ecological networks.

## Movement and Infrastructure

- Growth will need to be supported by timely and coordinated investment in infrastructure, including education, healthcare, utilities, transport, digital connectivity and green infrastructure. The Council works closely with infrastructure providers to ensure that new development is supported by the facilities and services it requires. Developers will be expected to contribute to the provision and enhancement of infrastructure arising from their proposal
- Transport is the largest source of emissions in Welwyn Hatfield<sup>7</sup>. Reducing car dependency and encouraging a shift towards public transport, walking and cycling will be essential to support Net Zero ambitions,

<sup>6</sup>Water Stressed Areas – 2021 Classification, Environment Agency. <sup>7</sup> UK Local Authority and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, 2022, DESNZ.

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reduce congestion and improve air quality. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan identifies opportunities to improve safety, accessibility and connectivity for active travel.

- High quality digital infrastructure is increasingly essential for economic growth, education, and everyday life. The Borough's businesses, institutions and residents rely on fast, reliable broadband and mobile connectivity to support home working, online services, digital learning and modern business operations. Ensuring that new development is supported by high speed broadband and 5G coverage will be important to maintain competitiveness, attract investment and enable flexible working patterns. Improving digital connectivity in rural areas and smaller settlements will also help reduce inequalities and support inclusive growth.

## Meeting the Borough's Housing Needs

A central role of the new Local Plan is to plan

positively for the borough's future housing needs. Using the Government's standard method, the minimum housing need for the area is calculated as 840 homes per year. Across the proposed plan period (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2043), this equates to a requirement for 15,960 new homes. Existing planning permissions and unbuilt allocations are expected to deliver around 10,000 of these homes.

### A Ten Year Approach to Allocations

National policy requires Local Plans to set out a strategy for meeting development needs over at least 15 years. However, it does not require councils to allocate specific sites for the entire period where this cannot be justified or shown to be deliverable. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) instead expects plans to identify:

- **specific, deliverable sites for years 1–5**
- **developable sites or broad locations for years 6–10**
- **and, where possible, for years 11–15**

Reflecting this guidance, the Draft Local Plan proposes to allocate sites for the first 10 years of the plan period, supported by broad indications of how longer term needs could be met.

This approach is shaped by several key considerations.

### Ensuring Deliverability and Soundness

Focusing allocations on the first ten years allows the plan to be grounded in robust, up to date evidence. It ensures that only sites which are genuinely deliverable or developable – taking account of viability, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints and landowner intentions—are relied upon. This avoids dependence on speculative long term sites.

### Responding to Governance Changes

The Government has indicated its intention to create a new unitary authority in Hertfordshire by April 2028. This would bring strategic planning responsibilities

together across a wider geography. National Local Government Association guidance confirms that new unitary authorities are expected to prepare a Local Plan covering their whole area. In parallel, the North East and Central Hertfordshire Growth Study provides a shared strategic evidence base that will inform future cross boundary planning.

### Planning for Longer Term Growth

In light of these anticipated governance changes, it is appropriate for strategic growth beyond year ten of the plan period to be considered at the scale of the future unitary authority. This will enable long term development to be planned in a coordinated way, aligned with infrastructure delivery, environmental considerations and wider regional priorities.

## SECTION 1 15

# SECTION 1 Visions and

# Objectives

## SECTION 1 16

### Vision for Welwyn Hatfield to 2043

**Our draft vision sets out the Council's aspirations for how Welwyn Hatfield will grow and change between now and 2043. It responds to the outcomes of early community engagement, key local challenges, opportunities, and national planning policy.**

#### A strong local economy

To achieve a thriving, prosperous borough and promote wellbeing, we will support job creation and protect and enhance employment areas, attracting new investment opportunities, including in innovation and green industries. We will support local living by strengthening links between housing, jobs and skills. Growth will be complemented by digital, social, physical infrastructure that reduces inequalities and creates opportunities for all.

#### Distinctive and vibrant centres

Welwyn Garden City will continue to evolve as a modern garden city, offering a diversified retail and cultural experience, while Hatfield will grow as a dynamic university town and innovation hub, with a vibrant community feel. These centres will drive economic vitality and opportunity, supporting the borough's ambition to be thriving and inclusive.

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#### Climate resilience and environmental stewardship

We will lead the transition to a net zero borough by 2050, delivering energy-efficient development, renewable energy, and nature-recovery. Our growth will be climate-resilient, with investment in green and blue infrastructure, sustainable transport, and flood mitigation. We will protect and enhance our chalk streams, woodlands and valued biodiversity.

#### Healthy, walkable

#### and connected neighbourhoods

New development will be carefully managed to provide a desirable homes, exemplifying sustainable place making and making best use of brownfield land whilst protecting the Green belt from inappropriate development. New development will be well designed and respect and respond to the distinctive character of our towns and villages. Places will be created with an identity which reflects healthy living, inclusivity, cohesion, and resilience.

#### Sustainable and well-designed growth

Neighbourhoods will be green, walkable, and well-connected, promoting active lifestyles and social interaction. High-quality homes, community facilities, and access to nature, culture and services will underpin health and wellbeing, ensuring that every resident benefits from inclusive growth.

# Strategic objectives

**Our strategic objectives set out how we will deliver the vision for Welwyn Hatfield to 2043. They guide the direction of the Local Plan, ensuring that development is**

## SECTION 1 18

**sustainable, inclusive, and supported by the right infrastructure at the right time. These objectives respond to the council's Corporate Plan priorities, delivering homes to be proud of, enabling an economy that works for all, taking action on climate change, and creating opportunities for our diverse communities.**

# People and places

## Homes for all

**AIM:** To meet the borough's housing needs through a balanced mix of high-quality, affordable and sustainable homes. To do this we will:

- **Deliver a range of housing types and tenures, including affordable, social, specialist and student housing.**
- **Support self- and custom-build opportunities and innovative, well designed housing models to meet demand.**
- **Ensure all homes are well-designed, energy**

**efficient, and adaptable to changing needs.**

- **Focus housing delivery in well-connected, sustainable locations, including brownfield and strategic sites.**

These objectives help deliver on our **Homes to be proud of** priority by delivering high-quality, affordable and adaptable housing, and will ensure the right mix of homes to meet local needs. Community engagement highlighted the need for a wide range of housing, from first-time buyer homes and student accommodation to family housing and homes for older people. There was strong support for affordable and council housing, with high standards of design and energy efficiency. These objectives reflect the NPPF's core aim of delivering a sufficient supply of homes.

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## Distribution of growth and the Green Belt

**AIM:** To make efficient use of land whilst safeguarding the borough's Green Belt from inappropriate development, ensuring growth is directed to the most sustainable locations. To achieve this, we will:

- **Direct development in order of priority to:**
  - **Previously developed land in urban and accessible locations.**
  - **Previously developed Grey Belt land in sustainable locations that no longer serves Green Belt purposes.**
  - **Sustainable locations at the edge of existing settlements identified as Grey Belt land that no longer serves Green Belt purposes.**
  - **Other sustainable locations within the Green Belt where exception circumstances have been demonstrated.**
- **Optimise site capacity through good design and appropriate density.**
  - **Enhance the Green Belt through biodiversity, landscape and recreational improvements.**

These objectives focus on balancing growth whilst also protecting our Green Belt. Growth will be carefully managed, directed first to brownfield land and sustainable locations. They respond to the challenges raised during engagement, including protecting the Green Belt, reusing brownfield land, and conserving the borough's distinctive character. They also respond directly to the NPPF's requirement to promote sustainable patterns of development and protect the Green Belt, where it is not identified as Grey Belt.

## Healthy, liveable places

**AIM:** To create inclusive, well-designed neighbourhoods that support health, wellbeing and community life. To do this we will:

- **Deliver new communities that exemplify placemaking and sustainable living including walkable access to shops, services and green space.**
  - **Promote higher-density development in appropriate locations to support local services and sustainable transport.**
- **Protect and enhance the valued character of towns, villages and designated historic assets.**
- **Design places that are well connected, inclusive and safe to use for all, designing out crime, and that support mental and physical wellbeing.**
  - **Support an increase in access to green space, recreation, sport and leisure opportunities.**
- **Improve air quality and reduce pollution across the borough.**

These objectives are about creating places where communities can flourish, and will realise well-designed, safe and inclusive neighbourhoods that support healthier lives. Community engagement emphasised the value of safe, inclusive neighbourhoods that promote health and wellbeing, access to green spaces, good air quality, and reduced pollution. The objectives also respond to the NPPF's aim of delivering well-designed, beautiful and safe places and promoting healthy and inclusive communities. Taken together, they place people and placemaking at the heart of sustainable growth.

## Economy and infrastructure

### Infrastructure that keeps pace with growth

**AIM:** To ensure timely delivery of infrastructure to support new and existing communities. To do this we will:

- **Work with providers to deliver new and improved transport, education, healthcare and utilities.**
- **Plan for long-term investment in physical, digital and social infrastructure across the borough.**
- **Deliver green and blue infrastructure that supports climate resilience, health and biodiversity.**
- **Support renewable energy generation in appropriate locations.**

These objectives will ensure that essential infrastructure, schools, healthcare, utilities and transport keep pace with growth and helps deliver on our **Run an effective council** priority by planning and investing wisely in infrastructure. Community engagement highlighted the importance of ensuring that infrastructure is in place before new housing is delivered, including medical facilities, schools, transport and utilities.

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These objectives also deliver on NPPF requirements to ensure the timely provision of infrastructure.

### Strong local economy

**AIM:** To support sustainable economic growth, job creation and lifelong learning. To do this we will:

- **Protect and enhance key employment areas and attract new investment, including in the green economy.**
- **Provide space for innovation, enterprise and key sectors such as life sciences, logistics and creative industries.**
- **Strengthen links between housing, jobs and skills to support local living and opportunities for all.**
- **Expand education, training and skills opportunities in partnership with providers and employers.**

These objectives will help us build a thriving economy, and by enabling investment in jobs, skills and infrastructure, we are delivering on our **Enable an economy that delivers for everyone** priority by supporting local businesses, jobs and skill creation. Community engagement highlighted support for sustaining and promoting employment opportunities by protecting key employment areas, supporting local businesses and start-ups, and linking employers with education providers to build skills and create opportunities for all. These objectives deliver on NPPF requirements to build a strong, competitive economy.

## SECTION 1 21

## Better connections

**AIM:** To improve sustainable transport and digital access. To do this we will:

- Provide inclusive travel choices through walking, cycling and public transport.
- Connect new and existing neighbourhoods to jobs, services and town centres.
- Support sustainable freight and logistics solutions.
- Expand digital infrastructure for business, education and community use, including in rural areas.

These objectives focus on ensuring we improve digital and transport connections, and will aid in our **Action on Climate Change** priority by promoting sustainable transport and renewable energy. Community engagement highlighted a need for better transport connections, prioritising public transport and active travel to reduce congestion and car dependency, alongside safe parking and movement. These objectives also deliver on NPPF requirements to support high-quality communication infrastructure and sustainable transport modes, ensuring new development is supported by effective connections and services. This approach helps to create the conditions for long-term prosperity and resilience in Welwyn Hatfield.

## Environment and climate

### Climate and environment

**AIM:** To conserve and enhance Welwyn Hatfield's environment and work towards achieving net zero by 2050. To achieve this we will:

- Deliver low-carbon, energy-efficient development

and support renewable energy generation.

- Strengthen and expand green and blue infrastructure, including delivering nature recovery.
- Protect and improve rivers and chalk streams, and promote sustainable water use.
- Enable infrastructure for EV charging, sustainable drainage and climate adaptation.
- Promote active and sustainable transport to reduce car dependency.
  - Design resilient places that adapt to climate impacts, prioritising nature based solutions.
- Support circular economy principles, resource efficiency, retrofitting and waste reduction.

These objectives will help protect and enhance our countryside and natural environment, while tackling climate change and planning for a net zero future. This supports our **Action on Climate Change** priority by committing to reduce emissions and adapt to climate impacts, and our **Together** priority by safeguarding and enhancing the environment for current and future communities. Community engagement told us about the importance of protecting wildlife and supporting nature recovery, enhancing biodiversity, greening the urban environment, and improving access to the natural environment. Addressing climate change was seen as essential, with support for sustainable homes including adaptation to overheating, renewable energy, and flood resilience. These local views reinforce the borough's commitment to sustainability and resilience.

They also reflect national policy to conserve and enhance the natural environment, heritage and biodiversity and to support the transition to a low-carbon future. Together, they ensure that growth in Welwyn Hatfield is planned in line with the national commitment to sustainable development and climate resilience.

## SECTION 2

# Introduction

### SECTION 2 23

## Foreword

This section sets out the Council's proposed strategic and development management policies, which together provide the framework for guiding growth, shaping places, and ensuring that development across the borough is delivered in a sustainable and well managed way. The policies are presented in draft form for the purposes of Regulation 18 consultation, and we are seeking views on their clarity, effectiveness, and overall approach. All feedback received during the consultation will be carefully considered, and the policies will be refined and amended as appropriate before the next stage of the Local Plan.

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PETER & MARDLEY

AYOT

AYOT ST  
LAWRENCE

GREEN

HEATH

AYOT ST

WELWYN  
WOOLMER  
GREEN

OAKLAND DIGSWELL  
S

H

HATFIEL

LEMSFORD

STANBOROUGH

D GARDEN CITY

WELWYN

ESSENDON

NEWGATE STREET

WELHAM GREEN  
BELL BAR

CUFFLEY  
NORTHAW

BROOKMANS  
PARK

SWANLEY BAR

LITTLE  
HEATH

SECTION  
N 2

# Spatial Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy and the Green Belt

## SECTION 2 25

### Chapter 1: Sustainable Development, Spatial Strategy and Neighbourhood Planning

#### Sustainable Development

The planning system plays a central role in shaping places that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. National Policy and Guidance establish a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development, recognising it as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Embedding this principle within the Local Plan is essential to ensuring that growth in Welwyn Hatfield is well designed, inclusive, resilient and aligned with the long term interests of the borough and its communities.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that sustainable development is fully integrated into both the strategic direction of the Local Plan and the future determination of planning applications. It provides a framework through which proposals can demonstrate how they contribute positively to the Local Plan vision, the strategic objectives for good growth, and the wider priorities that support a thriving, healthy and environmentally responsible borough. By applying this policy, the Council will take a proactive and constructive approach to decision making, enabling development that delivers high quality homes, supports economic vitality, enhances the natural and historic environment, and responds effectively to the challenges of climate change.

#### SP 1: Sustainable Development

A. The Council will take a positive

approach to the determination of planning applications that help deliver on the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan vision and objectives and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in National Policy and Guidance.

### Welwyn Hatfield Objectives for good growth:

- People and Places: To make efficient use of land to create inclusive, healthy, well-designed neighbourhoods, whilst safeguarding the borough's Green Belt from inappropriate development, ensuring growth is directed to the most sustainable locations
  - Economy and Infrastructure: To revitalise our town centres and local shopping hubs, for retail, culture and leisure; enable job creation and opportunities for businesses to grow; and provide the necessary supporting infrastructure for growth
  - Environment and Climate: To conserve and enhance Welwyn Hatfield's historic and natural environment and work towards achieving net zero.
- B.** Development proposals should demonstrate through their Planning Statement how they

help contribute to the delivery of the objectives for good growth and the following relevant priorities to deliver on the Local Plan vision and objectives:

- a) Deliver high quality and sustainable homes to meet the needs of all our communities, that are affordable, safe and well designed
- b) Create environments that support healthy, active and inclusive lifestyles.
- c) Improve accessibility across the borough and beyond, reducing car dependency and supporting digital inclusion.
- d) Revitalise Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield as thriving, mixed-use centres, and support the vitality of neighbourhood and village centres.
- e) Support sustainable economic growth, job creation and lifelong learning.
- f) Ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure needed for new and existing communities.
- g) Contribute towards achieving net zero and ensure development is

## SECTION 2 26

resilient to the impacts of climate change.

- h) Protect and enhance the borough's valued landscapes, biodiversity and historic environment.

**C.** Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, then the Council will

grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account:

- a) The strategic objectives and priorities for good growth of this plan,
- b) Whether there are specific policies in National Policy and Guidance that protect areas or assets of particular importance<sup>1</sup>, which provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- c) Whether there are any adverse impacts of granting permission which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits,

when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy and Guidance when taken as a whole.

## Supporting Text

Sustainable development is the guiding principle of the planning system and underpins the approach taken throughout the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan. National Policy and Guidance require local planning authorities to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, ensuring that decisions proactively support growth that is socially inclusive, environmentally responsible and economically productive. This policy provides the mechanism through which that presumption is applied locally, ensuring that development proposals contribute positively to the borough's long term vision.

Welwyn Hatfield faces a number of strategic challenges, including the need to deliver high quality homes, support a diverse and resilient economy, enhance the borough's natural and historic environment, and respond effectively to the climate emergency. The Local Plan sets

<sup>1</sup> As specified in the NPPF.

out clear objectives for good growth that reflect these challenges and articulate the outcomes the Council seeks to achieve. Embedding these objectives within the decision making process ensures that development proposals are assessed not only on their individual merits but also on their contribution to the wider spatial strategy.

This policy therefore requires applicants to demonstrate, through their Planning Statement, how their proposals support the delivery of the Local Plan vision and the objectives for good growth. This includes showing how development will make efficient use of land, promote healthy and inclusive communities, improve accessibility and connectivity, support economic vitality, and contribute to the borough's transition to net zero. By doing so, the policy ensures that growth is directed to the most sustainable locations, that the character and quality of the borough's environment is protected and enhanced, and that new development is resilient to the impacts of climate change.

The policy also clarifies how decisions will be made

where relevant policies are absent or out of date. In such circumstances, the Council will apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development, granting permission unless the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or where specific national policies indicate that development should be restricted. This approach provides clarity and consistency for applicants while ensuring that development continues to support the borough's strategic objectives.

## Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy

The spatial strategy seeks to promote a sustainable pattern of development, meeting the housing, economic and other development needs of the borough by directing growth and investment towards the borough's most sustainable locations, enabling people to live and work in locations where they have good opportunities to access local job opportunities, shops, healthcare, sport and leisure activities, and other services and facilities, by a genuine choice of travel modes.

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The settlement hierarchy places all the boroughs settlements into tiers, reflecting their relative levels of sustainability and propensity to accommodate future growth.

The Council is seeking views on this approach as part of the Regulation 18 consultation.

## SP2: Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy

A. The main focus for future housing and economic growth and key service provision will be channelled towards the most sustainable locations in the borough which are considered to be Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements, or where locations can be made sustainable, limiting the need to travel by providing good accessibility to a range of homes, job opportunities, key services and facilities, by a genuine choice of travel modes including by walking, cycling, and public transport.

B. Consistent with the settlement hierarchy:

### Tier One – Urban Areas

- Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield will be the primary focus for housing, economic growth and service provision in the borough, reinforcing their roles as the borough's main centres for economic activity, encouraging investment and regeneration, especially in town centre locations that are well served by passenger transport and where active travel is most likely to occur.

### Tier Two – Urban Areas

- The large villages of Brookmans Park, Cuffley, Welham Green and Welwyn plus Little Heath will be the secondary focus for housing, economic growth and service provision in the borough, reinforcing their roles as mainly residential areas with more limited economic activity, good access

to day-to-day local services and facilities,

and a choice of travel modes.

### Tier Three – Urban Areas

- For Digswell, Oaklands and Mardley Heath, and Woolmer Green, levels of growth should be compatible with the more limited range of job opportunities, local shops, services and other facilities, and choice of travel modes in these locations.

### Tier Four – Green Belt

- Within the borough's Green Belt villages of Essendon, Lemsford, Newgate Street and Northaw limited levels of growth will take place where this is compatible with Green Belt policy. Any new minor housing or economic development<sup>2</sup> should help maintain or enhance the vitality of these rural communities, especially where this will support local services and facilities and be located within the existing built-up area of the relevant village.

### Tier Five – Green Belt

- Settlements and other rural areas which are all located within the Green Belt, are not generally considered to be sustainable locations, and only minor housing or economic development<sup>2</sup> will take place where this is compatible with Green Belt policy.
- C. Provision will be made for at least 15,960 homes new homes by 2043 through a mix of site allocations, commitments, windfall sites, and supporting other residential led schemes in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. The focus will be on providing the right mix of homes to meet the needs of the population, with a strategic aim of between 25-50% affordable homes.
- D. New homes and commercial development will be supported by the co-ordinated and timely provision of physical, social, green and digital infrastructure.

<sup>2</sup> Minor housing or economic development, as defined in the Glossary.

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- E. Existing and new infrastructure will be optimised by taking opportunities to cluster services locally, providing flexible space, and improving inclusive access and use to better meet the needs of the population
- F. Welwyn Hatfield urban open land and valuable natural habitats will be safeguarded and enhanced, optimising their inclusive use and enjoyment for all.
- G. The strategic demand for employment uses will be met through the safeguarding, intensification and renewal of designated industrial and employment land, and the allocation of additional sites for employment uses.
- H. The Council will monitor the implementation of the Spatial Strategy through its Authority Monitoring Report and will review the strategy if delivery falls significantly below expectations or if new evidence indicates a need for change.

### Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield

Description and role:

Towns with large populations. Both have town centres, a network of neighbourhood centres, and other retail destinations. The borough's primary locations for housing, business units, large supermarkets and comparison retailing, secondary, further / higher education, healthcare, sport and leisure, entertainment and other facilities. As well as serving the populations of each town, they act as service centres for other smaller settlements. Both towns have good accessibility to the primary route network and are served by regular rail and bus services.

Tier Two – Urban Areas:

Brookmans Park, Cuffley, Welham Green, Welwyn, Little Heath

Description and role: Large villages with significantly smaller populations than the towns. Secondary locations for housing and business units in the borough. Each has a village centre catering for the day-to-day convenience needs of local communities. Each has at least primary school provision and is served by a range of local services and facilities. These villages have good accessibility to the road network and are

## Settlement Hierarchy

Tier One – Urban Areas:

served by rail and/ or regular bus services.

Tier Three – Urban Areas:

Digswell, Oaklands and Mardley Heath,  
Woolmer Green

Description and role: Smaller villages with (generally) smaller populations and less business units than the tier two villages. Each village has a primary school, but local communities are served by a more limited range of services and facilities than the tier two villages. Digswell is served by a rail station, and the other three villages have regular bus services.

Tier Four – Green Belt:

Essendon, Lemsford, Newgate Street and Northaw

Description and role: These small Green Belt villages are typically residential in character, with small populations. Each is served by a primary school, but otherwise, local

communities are served by a very limited range of local services and facilities. None are directly served by rail services. Bus services are generally infrequent with most journeys being car based.

Tier Five – Green Belt:

Ayot St Lawrence, Ayot St Peter, Ayot Green, Bell Bar, Burnham Green (part of), Bullens Green, Mill Green, Stanborough, Swanley Bar, Water End, Wild Hill, Woodside.

Description and role: These small settlements are located within the Green Belt. No or limited services and facilities within the settlements. Local populations look towards larger settlements for their day-to-day and wider service needs. Some are located closer to other villages or towns than others. None are directly served by rail services. Bus services are generally either non-existent or infrequent with most journeys being car-based.

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### Supporting Text

The Spatial Strategy sets out how growth will be planned and managed across Welwyn Hatfield over the plan period, ensuring that development is delivered in a coordinated, sustainable and locally responsive way. A key component of the strategy is meeting the borough's identified housing need. Provision will be made for at least 15,960 new homes by 2043 through a balanced mix of site allocations, existing commitments, windfall development, and a positive plan led approach to permitting residential led schemes that accord with the settlement hierarchy. This approach ensures that growth is directed to the most sustainable locations while maintaining flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. The strategy places strong emphasis on delivering the right mix of homes to meet the needs of current and future residents, including a strategic aim of securing between 25–50% affordable housing across the plan period.

The emerging spatial strategy aims to:

- Direct growth to locations with the greatest access to jobs, services, public transport and active travel networks.
  - Reduce the need to travel and support a shift towards sustainable modes of transport.
- Strengthen the role of existing centres by focusing development where it can support local shops, services and community facilities.
- Make best use of existing infrastructure and planned investment.
- Protect the borough's rural character and Green

Belt by ensuring development is proportionate to the role and function of each settlement.

This approach reflects national planning policy, which encourages sustainable patterns of development and the efficient use of land.

New homes and commercial development must be supported by the timely and coordinated delivery of the infrastructure required to create healthy, well-connected and resilient communities. This includes physical infrastructure such as transport and utilities, social infrastructure such as schools and healthcare, green infrastructure including open spaces and nature networks, and digital infrastructure that supports modern living and working. The strategy promotes an integrated approach to infrastructure planning to ensure that growth is properly supported and that impacts are managed effectively.

To make best use of existing assets, the strategy encourages the optimisation of both new and existing infrastructure. This includes taking opportunities to cluster services locally, designing flexible and adaptable spaces, and improving inclusive access so that facilities can be used effectively by all parts of the community. This approach supports more efficient service delivery, reduces the need to travel, and helps create vibrant, accessible neighbourhoods.

Welwyn Hatfield's urban open land, green spaces and valuable natural habitats form an essential part of the borough's character and environmental quality. The Spatial Strategy safeguards these assets and seeks opportunities for enhancement, ensuring they continue

to provide ecological, recreational and health benefits. The inclusive use and enjoyment of these spaces is a key priority, supporting wellbeing and contributing to the borough's wider green and blue infrastructure network.

Meeting the borough's economic needs is also central to the Spatial Strategy. Strategic demand for employment uses will be met through the safeguarding, intensification and renewal of designated industrial and employment land, alongside the allocation of additional sites where required. This ensures that Welwyn Hatfield can continue to support a diverse and resilient economy, provide high quality jobs, and respond to changing business needs over the plan period.

## The Settlement Hierarchy

The settlement hierarchy categorises settlements according to their size, accessibility, and the range of

services and facilities they provide. It forms the basis for determining the most appropriate scale and distribution of future development.

The hierarchy is structured into five tiers, with Tier One representing the most sustainable locations for growth and Tier Five representing the least sustainable.

### Tier One: Urban Areas – Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield

Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield are the borough's largest and most accessible settlements. They contain the widest range of employment opportunities, retail destinations, education and health facilities, and leisure provision. Both towns benefit from strong public transport connections, including rail services to

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London and north to Letchworth and Stevenage, and have good access to the strategic road network.

At this stage, the Council considers that these towns should continue to be the primary focus for future housing, economic development and service provision. Concentrating growth here can:

- Support town centre regeneration.
- Enable higher density development in accessible locations.
- Reduce reliance on the private car.
- Strengthen their role as service centres for surrounding communities.

The Council welcomes views on the scale and form of growth appropriate for these locations.

### Tier Two: Urban Areas – Large Villages

Brookmans Park, Cuffley, Welham Green, Welwyn and Little Heath function as secondary service centres. They provide a good range of day-to-day services, including primary schools, local shops, community facilities and public transport connections. These towns and villages are predominantly residential but have the capacity to support modest levels of growth that reinforce their vitality.

The Council is proposing to reclassify Little Heath from a Tier Three to a Tier Two settlement, reflecting its functional relationship with Potters Bar and its accessibility to a wider range of services and facilities.

Growth in Tier Two settlements is expected to:

- Support the viability of local centres.
- Provide a mix

of housing to meet local needs.

- Maintain and enhance sustainable travel opportunities.

The Council is seeking feedback on the proposed reclassification and the level of growth appropriate for these villages.

### Tier Three: Urban Areas – Smaller Villages

Digswell, Oaklands and Mardley Heath, and Woolmer Green have more limited services and facilities than Tier Two villages. While they can accommodate some development, this should be proportionate to their smaller size and more constrained accessibility.

Development in these locations should:

- Support local facilities where appropriate.

- Reflect their more limited employment and service base.
- Avoid generating unsustainable travel patterns.
- Respect the character and setting of the villages.

The Council invites comments on the scale of development that may be suitable in these settlements.

### Tier Four: Green Belt Villages

Essendon, Lemsford, Newgate Street and Northaw are small rural villages washed over by the Green Belt. They have very limited services and facilities and are not well served by public transport. Development opportunities are therefore tightly

constrained.

Only limited infill or small scale development compatible with Green Belt policy is likely to be appropriate, particularly where it:

- Helps maintain the vitality of the rural community.
- Supports local services such as primary schools or village halls.
- Is located within the existing built up area.

The Council is seeking views on how best to support the long term sustainability of these rural communities.

### Tier Five: Small Green Belt Settlements

The smallest settlements—such as Ayot St Lawrence, Ayot St Peter, Bell Bar, Mill Green, Water End and

others—have little or no local services and are heavily dependent on larger settlements for day-to-day needs. Public transport provision is minimal or absent, and most journeys are car based.

These locations are not considered sustainable for significant growth. Only minor development consistent with Green Belt policy is likely to be appropriate, typically relating to:

- Rural enterprise.
- Re use of existing buildings.
- Very small scale infill where appropriate.

The Council welcomes views on the role of these settlements and how best to manage change within them.

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# Welwyn Hatfield Green Corridor

Green Infrastructure is vital for nature recovery, environmental resilience and delivery of access and recreational opportunities to support the health and wellbeing of communities. The creation of a 'Green Corridor' running east to west across the borough will help deliver the Plan's spatial vision by helping to sustainably enable the amount of development proposed within the Plan. It will help delivery of the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), improve access to green space and recreation in line with national standards<sup>3</sup> and help maintain a sense of separation between urban locations.

## SP 3: Welwyn Hatfield Green Corridor

**A.** The Council will work with partners, developers, and adjoining authorities to deliver a strategic Green Corridor running east–west across the borough between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield (see Map 1 on the following page) that:

- a) Connects and enhances existing green infrastructure, ecological assets, and public rights of way to create a multifunctional community resource;
- b) Maintains a sense of separation between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, consistent with the Green Belt's purpose of preventing

coalescence;

- c) Improves access to open space and green/blue infrastructure in line with national standards and contributes to health and wellbeing;
- d) Provides new and enhanced green spaces, wildlife habitats, circular leisure routes, play and sport facilities, and off-road active travel connections;
- e) Secures and provides restoration and enhancement of mineral extraction sites for biodiversity and recreation following extraction;
- f) Supports biodiversity net gain, climate resilience, nature-based solutions to improve water management and the objectives of the Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) or any successor strategy; and
- g) Protects and enhances the landscape character and cultural heritage of the area.

**B.** Proposals for the development and delivery of the Green Corridor are outlined in the Green Corridor Study and will be detailed in the emerging Green Corridor Supplementary Planning Document and should be incorporated into the masterplanning of strategic sites. Development within or adjacent to the Green Corridor must:

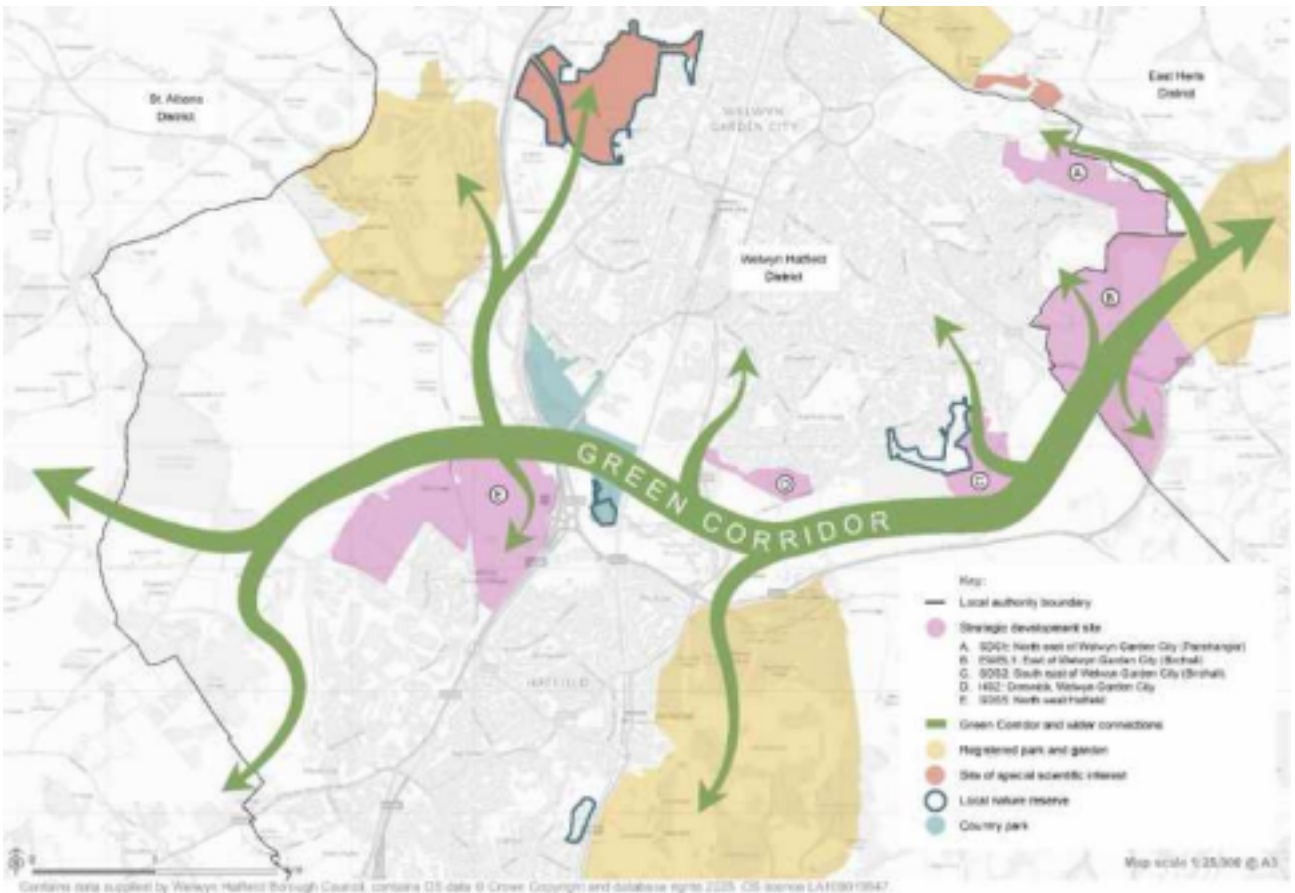
- a) Enhance connectivity and avoid harm to existing ecological assets, green or blue infrastructure, and public rights of way;

- b) Facilitate and support the delivery of opportunities and projects identified in the Green Corridor SPD;
- c) Ensure the long-term management and maintenance of green/blue infrastructure

- and other projects delivered within the Green Corridor;
- C. Development that would jeopardise the delivery of the Green Corridor will not be permitted.

<sup>3</sup>Natural England Green Infrastructure Standards for England 2023 and Natural England's Accessible Green Space Standard 2024 Accessible Greenspace Standard – <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/AccessibleGreenspaceStandard.aspx> – or any subsequent standards.

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Map 1 Welwyn Hatfield Green Corridor

## Supporting Text

In line with the proposals detailed in map 1 the

Green Corridor will provide new strategic connections to Ellenbrook Country Park, Symondshyde Great Wood and Heartwood Forest in the West, through Stanborough Park, the Commons Wood Nature Reserve, and Moneyhole Lane Park, and connect to Panshanger Park, the River Mimram and Lea Valley in the east.

Part of the Green Corridor is subject to an application for minerals extraction. Subject to the granting of planning permission, the Council will work with Hertfordshire County Council (as mineral planning authority), St Albans District Council, and the Ellenbrook Trust to maintain safe public access to Ellenbrook Country Park during any mineral extraction and to secure its restoration and enhancement for biodiversity and recreation following any extraction.

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be produced to guide delivery of the Green Corridor, which all applications for development within or adjoining the Corridor must have regard to.

Neighbourhood planning is a distinct tier of the planning system designed to empower communities to influence the development and growth of their local areas. Under the Localism Act 2011, local parish and town councils have been given the authority to lead neighbourhood planning initiatives within their communities. In areas where no parish or town council exists, a neighbourhood forum may be established to take on this role. Additionally, in predominantly commercial areas, neighbourhood planning can be led by a business neighbourhood forum, enabling local businesses to shape the future of their environment.

## Neighbourhood Plans

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#### SP 4: Neighbourhood Plans

- A. The Council will support Neighbourhood Plans where they demonstrate that they:
  - a) Contribute positively to the delivery of the Local Plan's Vision, Objectives, and Spatial Strategy; and
  - b) Are in general conformity with the Strategic Policies of this Plan.
- B. Neighbourhood Plans must be underpinned by proportionate, robust, and locally relevant evidence. Qualifying bodies are encouraged to use existing evidence prepared by the Council and other relevant sources. The Council will support neighbourhood planning groups by sharing relevant data and technical information.
- C. Neighbourhood Plans should reflect the aspirations of the local community and promote high-quality, locally distinctive development. Plans should demonstrate inclusive engagement and respond to the character, heritage, and environmental assets of the area.
- D. The Council will support qualifying bodies throughout the neighbourhood planning process, including:
  - a) Providing guidance on policy conformity and evidence requirements;

- b) Sharing relevant data and mapping resources;
- c) Facilitating engagement with statutory consultees;
- d) Supporting plan preparation, examination, and referendum stages.

#### Supporting Text

Neighbourhood plans are not intended to prevent development; rather, they provide a proactive framework for shaping the future of an area. These plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan, be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and be underpinned by robust evidence. They must demonstrate how they contribute to sustainable development. The preparation of a Sustainability Appraisal can support this by illustrating how the plan promotes environmental, social, and economic sustainability. In certain cases—depending on the scale and nature of the proposals—a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) may also be required.

Before a neighbourhood plan can be formally “made,” it must undergo independent examination and be approved through a local referendum, ensuring it reflects the aspirations of the wider community.

A neighbourhood plan can establish a vision for an area, include general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood, and allocate sites for development. Neighbourhood Plans should focus on local rather than strategic planning matters.

Once “made”, Neighbourhood Plans form part of the development plan and are used in determining planning applications.

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# Chapter 2: The Green Belt

## Introduction

Welwyn Hatfield is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The borough’s two towns of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, and the eight smaller urban settlements of Brookmans Park, Cuffley, Welham Green, Welwyn, Digswell, Little Heath, Oaklands and Mardley Heath, and Woolmer Green are all ‘inset’ within (excluded from) the Green Belt. The inner boundaries of the Green Belt around these settlements are defined on the Policies Map. Located within the Green Belt are a number of smaller villages and settlements, as well as large areas of countryside.

## SP 5: The Green Belt

- A.** The borough’s Green Belt boundaries are defined on the Policies Map and will only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified through the review and update of the Local Plan having regard to their intended permanence in the long term and the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.
- B.** Opportunities to enhance the beneficial use of land in the Green Belt to provide access, for outdoor sport

and recreation, to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity, or to improve damaged and derelict land will be supported in principle, where proposals are otherwise consistent with Green Belt policy.

## Supporting Text

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The five purposes of Green Belt policy are to:

<sup>4</sup>The National Planning Policy Framework.

- a) check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- b) prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- d) preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Once established, Green Belt boundaries will only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully

evidenced and justified through the preparation or updating of the plan.

The Government attaches great importance to the protection of the Green Belt. Within the Green Belt inappropriate development will only be permitted in 'very special circumstances' where the substantial harm to the Green Belt and its openness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

There are a number of exceptions to inappropriate development set out in national planning policy<sup>4</sup>, including development of some 'grey belt' land where it meets the relevant definition and criteria.

## DMP 1: Development

associated criteria set out in national planning policy and guidance, including the golden rules; or

c) Demonstrates that very special circumstances exist and the harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

### Openness

C. Where an assessment of the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is required, the following factors will be taken into account (but are not limited to):

- a) The visual impact of the proposal, including views into and out of the site;
- b) The spatial impact of the proposal (volume, height, footprint);
- c) The duration of the development and its remediability; and
- d) The degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.

### Purposes

D. Where an assessment of the impact on the purposes of the Green Belt is required, the following factors will be taken into account:

- a) Whether the site lies within a parcel of land which makes a strong,

## in the Green Belt

- A. Planning applications for development within the Green Belt as defined on the Policies Map, will be determined in line with prevailing national planning policy and guidance.
- B. Development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless the proposal:
  - a) Falls within one of exceptions listed in national planning policy to inappropriate development;
  - b) Demonstrates that it meets the definition of grey belt and the

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moderate or weak/no contribution to one or more purposes of the Green Belt; and

- b) Whether the scale, form or use of development or activity would compromise that/those purpose(s).

### Grey Belt

E. Where land is identified as grey belt land, proposals will be determined in accordance with national planning policy and guidance on grey belt, including:

- a) If the site is previously developed and/or does not strongly contribute to purposes (a), (b), or (d) of the Green Belt;
  - b) If the development would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt;
- c) There is a demonstrable unmet need for the proposed development.
- d) The site is in a sustainable location; and
- e) The proposal meets the Golden Rules, including enhanced affordable housing, green space and infrastructure provision.

## DMP 2: Exceptions to Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

A. Where a proposal is being considered as an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt as defined by national planning policy and guidance, the following considerations will apply.

### Extensions or Alterations to

### Buildings

1. To demonstrate that an extension or alteration is not a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building, applicants must provide:
  - a) A quantitative assessment including (but not limited to) the increase in the footprint, floorspace, volume and/or above ground external dimensions (height/width); and
  - b) A qualitative assessment of the design elements including (but not limited to) the scale, bulk, height and massing with regards to the relationship to the original building and the elevation to which it relates.

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- The original building is as defined in the Glossary of this Plan<sup>5</sup>.
- The cumulative impact of any existing or approved additions will be included in the above assessment.
- The volume and footprint of any existing authorised buildings to be demolished within the site may be offset against increases in volume and footprint taking into account their size, permanence, design and proximity to the building to be extended.

### Replacement Buildings

2. To demonstrate that a building (in the same use) is not materially larger than the one it replaces, applicants must provide:
  - a) A quantitative assessment including (but not limited to) the footprint, floorspace, volume and/or above ground external dimensions (height/width) of the existing and proposed buildings;
  - b) A qualitative assessment of the design elements including (but not limited to) the scale, bulk, height and massing; and
  - c) The siting of the replacement building.
    - Conditions to remove permitted development rights<sup>6</sup> may be imposed where it is considered

necessary to protect the openness of the Green Belt.

### Limited infilling in villages

3. Limited infill development, will be permitted in villages within the Green Belt provided:
  - a) It does not extend the existing 'built up' area of the village into the open countryside; and
  - b) It is minor development<sup>7</sup>.
  - Limited infilling in villages does not include the extension or alteration of buildings.

### Re-use of buildings and material changes in the use of land

4. In assessing the re-use of buildings in the Green Belt:
  - a) A full structural survey will be required to demonstrate that buildings are capable of conversion without major alterations or rebuilding.
  - Any new curtilages resulting from the re-use of buildings or material changes in the use of the land should be clearly defined and limited in size to preserve the openness of the Green Belt.
    - Conditions to remove permitted development rights<sup>8</sup> may be imposed where it is considered necessary to protect the openness of the Green Belt.

## Supporting Text

DMP1: Development in the Green Belt outlines the general approach to development within the Green Belt. DMP2: Exceptions to Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt sets out

supplementary criteria for considering the exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

When reviewing remediability, any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness will be taken into account.

<sup>5</sup> A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally. <sup>6</sup> Set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). <sup>7</sup> As defined in the Glossary of this Plan, minor development is the provision of dwellinghouses where (a) the number of dwellinghouses to be provided is less than 10; or (b) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of less than 0.5 hectares and it is not known whether the development falls within (a). The provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is less than 1,000 square metres, or development carried out on a site having an area of less than 1 hectare.

<sup>8</sup> Set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

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In determining what would constitute a disproportionate extension to a building, a quantitative and qualitative assessment will be undertaken. In quantitative terms, proposals that would result in an increase in excess of 50% of the original building will generally be refused. However, each case will be assessed on its own merits as there may be circumstances in which a particular proposal for an extension in excess of 50% may be proportionate and acceptable. Conversely circumstances may dictate that an extension would need to be significantly less than 50% greater than the original dwelling in order to be considered proportionate and acceptable in planning terms.

The National Planning Policy Framework and national Planning Practice Guidance on the Green Belt (or any relevant successors) will be a material consideration in decision making.

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SECTION 2

# Climate Change and Flood Risk

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## Chapter 3: Climate Change and Flood Risk

### Introduction

Human activity of burning fossil fuels is the main cause of climate change, and it is the unprecedented speed of change that is most alarming. The speed of change is increased due to positive feedback loops, which amplify the effects of climate change. For instance, permafrost is melting at faster rates due to the rising global temperature, which is releasing large stores of methane (an even more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide) into the atmosphere which further exacerbates global temperature rise.

To slow down this speed of change, we need to reduce emissions to limit the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and enhance the natural environment (to capture and store carbon dioxide). The planning system plays an important role in reducing carbon emissions, delivering sustainable communities and helping ensure that communities are as ready as possible for the impacts of climate change.

We also need to start adapting to the changing climate, because firstly, at a more local level we are already experiencing impacts of climate change in the form of wildfires, flooding, heatwaves and droughts and secondly, because the effects of climate change will be experienced for many years to come due to the time lag between what we do and when we feel it and the long lifespan of greenhouse gases. Building resilience and adapting to the impacts of climate change will play a crucial role in planning decisions, to ensure a sustainable future for our community.

### SP 6: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

A. In line with the Council's aim to be a net

zero borough by 2050, the policies in this chapter recognise and contribute to the importance of mitigating and

adapting to climate change, and seek to reduce carbon emissions as far as possible. Proposals that incorporate climate change reduction, mitigation and adaptation principles in their design and proposed implementation will be supported (subject to all other policies of the plan), most notably through the following:

#### Mitigating the effects of climate change

- a) Prioritising the location of new development on previously developed land;
  - b) Locating development in areas which minimises the need to travel and maximises the ability to make journeys by sustainable modes of transport;
- c) Minimising greenhouse gas and particulate emissions throughout the lifetime of the development, including construction, embodied and operational emissions;
- d) Improving on Target Emission Rates to reduce CO2 emissions;
- e) Maximising opportunities from energy and heat generation from low and zero carbon technologies;
  - f) Designing buildings to encourage positive passive solar gain, cooling and ventilation whilst mitigating overheating to reduce energy demand; and
  - g) Supporting retrofitting schemes to existing building stock to improve energy and water efficiency

#### Adapting to the impacts of climate change

- h) Recognising the plan area's changing climate over the plan period and ensuring new development has considered, and can adapt to, climate change;
- i) Utilising green and blue infrastructure to tackle urban heat island effects, reduce

overheating and flood risk, and improve air quality;

j) Assessing flood risk appropriately by taking

into account the effects of a changing climate; and

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k) Utilising water efficiency, capture and recycling measures to reduce the potential for drought and water shortages.

### Sustainability Statement

B. To demonstrate how development proposals have incorporated the above principles, all planning applications for major development will be required to submit a Sustainability Statement. Applications will also be required to demonstrate how they have conformed with Development Management policies relating to Climate Change and Sustainability.

### Supporting Text

Consistent with national planning policy and guidance, this plan takes a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change by supporting appropriate measures to ensure the future health and resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.

In July 2019, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council declared a climate emergency and set itself the target of being net zero by 2030<sup>9</sup>. The Council has also committed to supporting, encouraging and engaging with residents, communities, businesses and other partners to reduce carbon emissions with the aim to be Net Zero as a borough by 2050. In 2024, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council also adopted a Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which sought to encourage developers to produce more sustainable and lower carbon developments. This Local Plan puts those measures onto an even stronger footing and requires development to do more to mitigate the threat of climate change.

## DMP 3: Energy Efficiency and Net Zero Design

A. All development proposals are expected to reduce energy demand and carbon emissions through their design by implementing the following energy hierarchy:

a) Using less energy by considering the building fabric and design, site orientation and layout, soft landscaping and energy efficient lighting;

b) Supplying and using energy efficiently by maximising energy efficient ventilation and heating systems, and using local energy resources (including secondary heat) where appropriate; and

c) Using renewable and low carbon energy.

B. Development proposals should plan for the following passive design measures demonstrate how energy demand and carbon emissions have been minimised as far as possible:

a) The layout and orientation of the site;

b) The massing of buildings and structures;

c) The location of surrounding buildings and objects, including the planting of trees and vegetation for shading;

d) The use of materials;

e) The location and design of fenestration;

f) Internal room layout;

g) Roof/eaves overhang; and

h) The use of internal and external shutters

C. Development involving the creation of new dwellings and/or commercial

<sup>9</sup> [one.welhat.gov.uk/environment/climate-change/2](https://one.welhat.gov.uk/environment/climate-change/2)

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floorspace should improve on the relevant Target Emission Rate (TER) for the building's proposed use(s) in terms of a percentage uplift.

- D. Proposals that involve the reuse of existing buildings should seek to reduce energy demand and carbon emissions. Improvements made to the existing building in an energy efficiency context should be done in accordance with the energy hierarchy, and should be demonstrated by providing an improvement on a pre retrofit baseline.
- E. All non-residential development with a floorspace of 1,000 square metres or more will be required to meet at least BREEAM 'Excellent' unless it is demonstrated that it is not technically feasible or viable to do so, in which case such proposals will be required to demonstrate a 'Very Good' rating.

### Supporting Text

Consistent with national planning policy, the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change should be considered in preparing and assessing planning applications, taking into account the full range of potential climate change impacts.

Significant weight will be given in decision taking to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non domestic, and to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and a proposal's contribution to a net zero future.

This will be achieved by seeking to reduce the energy consumption and emissions of a building from an early stage of design, taking into account a new and/or existing building's construction and design, heating systems, energy generation systems, passive design principles.

## DMP 4: Construction Waste and Whole Life

## Cycle

### Construction Waste

- A. To help minimise the impact of new development on the environment, the Council will seek to ensure that development reduces waste through the construction process and reduce embodied carbon emissions throughout the whole life cycle of a development.
- B. Major development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they reduce construction waste through the re-use and recycling of materials, and how any practices utilised reflect the national waste hierarchy:
  - Prevention
  - Preparing for re-use
  - Recycling
  - Recovery
  - Disposal
- C. As part of an application, applicants should also set out how their proposals are in accordance with the adopted Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan (or any successor development plan document).

### Whole Life Cycle

- D. Major development proposals and proposals involving the demolition of an existing building(s) of 100sqm or more will be required to submit a whole life cycle carbon assessment, submitted as part of the Sustainability Statement, using an industry recognised whole life carbon assessment methodology. The assessment should also demonstrate actions taken to reduce whole life cycle carbon.
- E. Proposals which demonstrate the use of low embodied carbon materials will be supported where it is appropriate and consistent with national and local planning policies.

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F. Major development proposals should achieve the following embodied carbon targets for building life cycle stages A1-A5:

a) Major residential proposals – 500kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup>

b) Major non-residential proposals – 600kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/m<sup>2</sup>

G. Where it is not viable to meet these embodied carbon targets, proposals will be required to provide justification within the Sustainability Statement.

### Supporting Text

The issue of climate change has meant that the built environment industry has sought to further reduce operational emissions through design and construction. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have implemented higher standards for energy efficiency and emissions through Building Regulations, with further improved energy efficiency standards to be introduced in the future. Other voluntary standards also exist in the built environment to recognise and promote sustainability, which has a high focus on reducing operational emissions.

However, it is important to recognise that whilst reducing operational emissions in the built environment is vital, there is a significant amount of emissions associated through the whole lifespan of a building. Crucially, there are also practices and standards which allows the built environment to assess and reduce the amount of whole life cycle emissions.

There are also emissions associated with construction waste and 'beyond the life' stages of a

building. The construction industry is notorious for sending waste to landfill and not reusing or reutilising materials well, and in some cases building materials going straight to waste without ever being used.

This policy is focused solely on the waste produced by construction and the emissions produced by the whole life cycle of development.

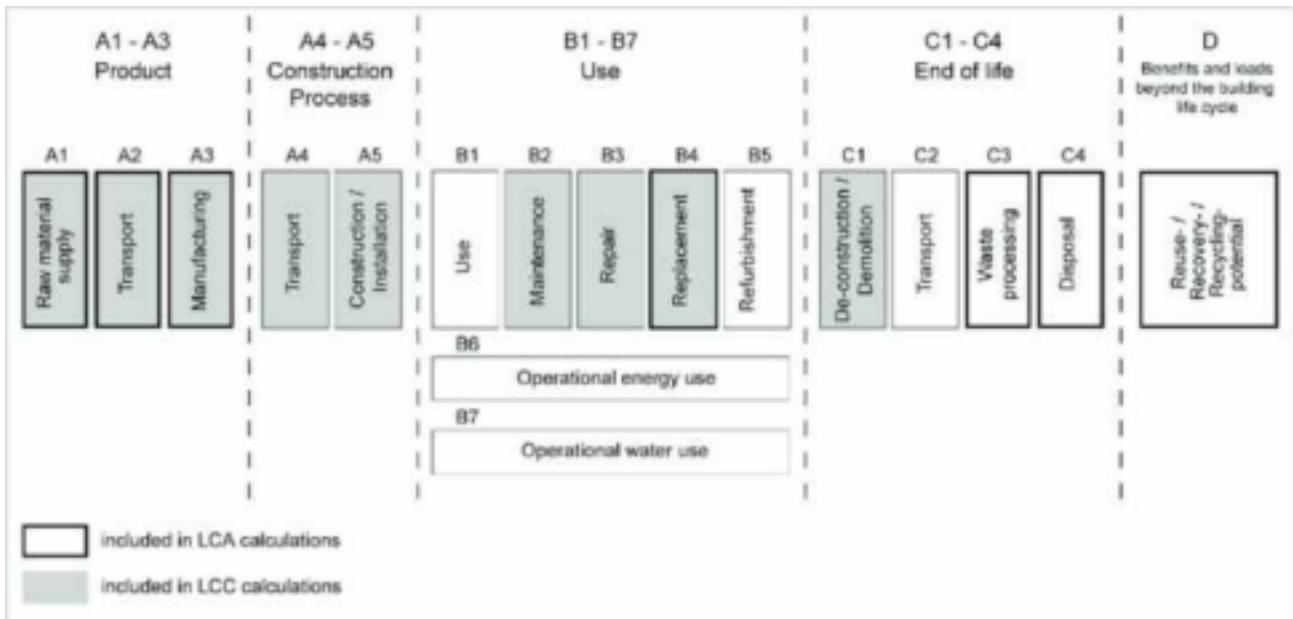
There is no standard definition of "embodied carbon" in planning legislation or national planning policy. However, it is generally understood to mean the carbon emissions associated with constructing a building, as opposed to the operational carbon associated with using the building which is the carbon emissions associated with a development during use. The embodied carbon and operational carbon together form part of the building's whole of life carbon emissions. Depending on the scope of the assessment, emissions can also be considered for emissions associated with taking a building down at the end of its life.

### Embodied Carbon Targets

The embodied carbon targets mentioned in the draft policy are derived from the LETI Embodied Carbon Primer document. The targets are listed as a '2020 target', which is a 40% reduction over baseline. The baseline is derived from the RICS professional statement 'whole life carbon assessment for the built environment', which details the baseline specifications of embodied carbon for materials used in construction and for what purpose they are used in construction.

A1-A5 comes from BS EN 15978:2011, which states life cycle stages in construction. A1-A5 relates to the product and construction processes, in this context meaning the carbon emitted from every aspect of these processes.

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## DMP 5: Water Efficiency in New Developments

### Water Consumption

A. All newly constructed dwellings are required to achieve an estimated water consumption not exceeding 110 litres per person per day (p/p/d). This requirement will be secured

through the use of a planning condition.

- B. Positive weight will be given to proposals that demonstrate an estimated water consumption of lower than 110 litres p/p/d.
- C. Non-residential development with a floorspace of 1,000 square metres that incorporate water conservation measures to help meet the DMP target of BREEAM 'Excellent' will be supported, where they comply with the other policies in this plan.

- D. Proposals for major development will be required to set out the estimated water consumption in the Sustainability Statement.

### Water Capture and Reuse

- E. Positive weight will also be given to proposals that incorporate rainwater harvesting and water reuse through greywater harvesting for non-potable uses to reduce demand on mains water supply. The inclusion of such measures within proposals should be set out in the Sustainability Statement.

## Supporting Text

The Environment Agency undertakes a water stress assessment for each water company area, having regard to current and future water usage and climate change scenarios<sup>10</sup>. Areas of serious water stress are where water resources are being, or are likely to be, exploited to a degree which may result in pressure on the environment or water supplies both now and in future. Welwyn Hatfield is located within a water company area of serious water stress.

The policy requirement not to exceed 110 litres per person per day is equivalent to the Building Regulations Part G optional requirement, which must be secured by a planning condition in order to be complied with through the Building Regulations.

<sup>10</sup> Environment Agency - Water stressed areas – final classification 2021 (1 July 2021)

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### DMP 6: Managing Air Quality

- A. Prevailing air quality, including any Air Quality Management Areas, and potential impacts upon air quality arising from airborne emissions, dust and odour associated with the construction and operation of a proposal (including vehicular traffic) will be considered when determining planning applications.
- B. Proposals that would result in or be subject to unacceptable risk to human health and the natural environment from air pollution, or would prejudice compliance with national air quality objectives, will be refused.
- C. An Air Quality Assessment that demonstrates how prevailing air quality and potential impacts have been considered and how air quality will be kept to an acceptable standard through avoidance and mitigation will be required for any development proposals which are:
- Likely, due to the nature of the proposal, to give rise to significant air pollution,
  - Within an Air Quality Management Area,
  - Within 50 metres of a major road or heavily trafficked route;
  - Within proximity to a source of air pollution which could present a

significant risk to human health, and/or

- Particularly sensitive to air pollution due to their nature, such as schools, health care establishments or housing for older people.
- D. The potential impact of proposals upon odour levels, or their sensitivity to prevailing sources and levels of odour, should be considered and addressed. Where appropriate, the Council will require an Odour Impact Assessment to be provided, including an Odour Management Plan where necessary.

### Supporting Text

National policy requires that development should not contribute to, or be put at unacceptable risk from, pollution in its various forms, and that it should where possible help to improve local environmental conditions. In addition, national policy requires that planning should help to achieve healthy places. As such it is important that potential environmental impacts, both from proposed development and to future occupiers, are properly considered as part of the planning process to ensure that future development provides as healthy and safe an environment as possible.

Issues to be considered include air quality, pollution from light and noise, contaminated land and land instability, including the effects of historic chalk mining in some areas of the borough.

### DMP 7: Renewable and

# Low Carbon Energy

## Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

A. In order to reduce carbon emissions, applicants will be expected to consider and maximise opportunities for the use of renewable and low carbon technologies. Through the submission of the Sustainability Statement, major development proposals should demonstrate how the following matters have been addressed as part of their development proposals:

a) Energy supply – how the proposal has

sought to utilise on-site and/or local renewable and low carbon energy generation;

b) Energy demand – how the proposal has sought to utilise on-site and/or local low carbon technologies for heating and, where applicable, ventilation; and

c) Energy response – how the proposal has sought to relieve peak energy demand through energy supply, storage and management, including battery energy storage systems and smart meters

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B. All new dwellings will be expected to have solar PV panels installed as a functional requirement on flat roofs and pitched roofs with a southerly, south-easterly, south-westerly, easterly or westerly aspect.

C. New construction dwellings are required to use no fossil fuels onsite for the dwelling's space heating and hot water demands. All heating and hot water demand is expected to be provided by low carbon alternatives such as heat pumps or direct electric heating.

## Renewable Energy and Energy Storage Developments

D. Proposals for renewable energy sites and associated infrastructure including battery energy storage systems (BESS) will be supported where the impact is, or can be made, acceptable. Proposals will be assessed against the following factors, and local & national planning policy, to determine whether they are suitable and whether any impacts can be mitigated and sufficiently outweighed by the benefits associated with the proposed development:

a) Current grid capacity;

b) Proximity to existing grid connections (for proposals connecting to existing grid infrastructure)

c) Proximity to end users (for localised energy proposals)

E. Ground-mounted solar farms utilising

previously developed land will be encouraged, especially if it can be demonstrated that the subject land is unsuitable for uses where there is an identified need for in the plan area.

F. Planning conditions will be used to ensure that installations at ground mounted solar farms are removed when no longer in use to ensure the land is restored to its previous use.

## Supporting Text

Renewable energy – at any scale – is seen as a positive way of contributing towards meeting energy demands, whilst ensuring energy is also produced cleanly compared to traditional methods of energy generation using fossil fuels, therefore reducing greenhouse gas emissions and slowing down climate change. The cost of many renewable energy technologies has also fallen in recent years, promoting their attractiveness and viability.

The scale of renewable energy varies greatly. There are options to install solar panels domestically (either on existing buildings or standalone) and commercially, such as on larger commercial buildings which have larger areas to mount renewable energy technology. Larger scale renewable energy projects – such as solar farms – are also increasing in popularity, and can make significant contributions to energy production in their location (depending on size).

Whilst Local Plans are not required to deliver a quota of renewable energy development, Local Planning Authorities are responsible for renewable and low carbon energy development of 50 megawatts or less installed capacity. National Planning Policy and Guidance also states that to help increase the use and supply of renewable energy, plans should provide a positive strategy for these energy sources

that maximises potential suitable development while addressing adverse impacts.

The policy aims to guide development proposals for both on existing buildings and solar farms, contributing to renewable energy generation in the borough throughout the plan period and therefore helping to tackle climate change. The second part of this policy is not to designate specific areas within the plan area for renewable energy development, but instead list criteria to be adhered to which promotes renewable

energy development in appropriate locations, taking into account the requirements of the technology and cumulative impacts.

The Future Homes Standard, due to come into effect in 2025, has previously been consulted on by the government in 2019 and 2020, with a consultation on detailed specification in late 2023/early 2024. The latter consultation sought views on whether to require solar panels for new homes. The new 2024 government stated in

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October 2024 that they want solar panels on as many new homes as possible<sup>11</sup>. Additionally, one expected result of the Future Homes Standard is for all new homes built with no fossil fuel boilers.

To achieve the Strategic Policy of this Chapter and the Council's ambition to be net-zero carbon by 2050, and to align with the likelihood of solar panels being required in new homes in the future, this DM Policy expects newly built dwellings to have solar photovoltaic panels installed as a functional requirement. The expected future requirement for new homes to be fossil fuel free will also result in the vast majority of dwellings will be utilising electricity for space heating and hot water rather than gas, which means that producing electricity on-site will reduce the dependency on grid electricity which may be exacerbated by all electricity fuelled dwellings.

It is widely acknowledged that the azimuth (orientation) and tilt of the PV panel have a direct impact on the level of energy generation a solar PV panel creates. The energy generation also varies more due to these factors depending on the time of year; a north facing solar PV panel (180 azimuth) are around 55% as efficient as south facing ones (0 azimuth), however they can be even less efficient in winter months. Therefore, solar PV panels should be installed within a west south-east orientation to improve electricity generation.

## DMP 8: Managing the Impacts of Development

A. Development proposals must be designed to protect the amenity of occupiers, both current and those in the future including in new developments. In line with "agent of change" principles, new development should not curtail or limit the activities of legitimate and established users in the area.

### Noise and Vibration

#### B. A Noise and Vibration Impact

Assessment will be required for proposals with the potential to cause disturbance to people or the natural environment due to noise and/or vibration or for proposals that are considered to be sensitive to, or may be subject to, noise and/or vibration. Proposals that would result in or be subject to noise pollution and/or vibration will be assessed against the following:

- a) Noise that results in a significant adverse impact on human health or the natural environment will not be permitted.
- b) Noise that results in an adverse impact on human health or the natural environment will be refused unless the need for, and benefits of, the development significantly outweigh the harm and all feasible solutions to avoid and mitigate that harm have been fully implemented.
- c) Noise that is intrusive and would have an adverse effect on the quality of life or the natural environment will be resisted unless all feasible solutions to reduce to a minimum and mitigate that harm have been fully implemented including the use of planning conditions, and the benefits of the development outweigh the harm.
- d) Good acoustic design principles should be integrated into all developments where noise is a factor. Façade noise mitigation should not be solely relied upon.
- e) The requirement of specific noise mitigation is likely to require verification testing via condition prior to first occupation or first commercial use.

f) Developments subjected to noise from commercial operations that are already

established, and that are likely to give rise to adverse noise

<sup>11</sup> <https://mhclgmedia.blog.gov.uk/2024/10/24/reporting-on-the-future-homes-standard-and-solar-panels/>

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impacts, should not solely rely upon closed windows and façade noise mitigation.

### Light Pollution

- C. Proposals that include external lighting schemes, including floodlighting, will be approved where it can be demonstrated through a Lighting Assessment that all of the following criteria can be satisfied:
- a) The lighting scheme is the minimum required for security and operational purposes;
  - b) Glare and light spillage are minimised;
  - c) The amenity of residential areas is not adversely affected;
  - d) Assessment will require the submission of vertical and horizontal lux diagrams to show light spill and coverage.
  - e) The visual character of historic buildings and conservation areas are not adversely affected;
  - f) There would be no dazzling or distraction of drivers or other highway users using the highway network including the active travel network;
  - g) There would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the character or openness of the countryside and the green belt; and
  - h) There would be no unacceptable adverse effects on species, habitats or the wider natural environment.
- D. Proposals for developments which may be affected by existing light installations will need to demonstrate that the proposed development will not be unacceptably affected by the existing installations. When this scenario occurs, mitigation verification will be required prior to development occupation via use of planning conditions. If any such impacts cannot be mitigated to

an appropriate level, the proposal should be refused.

### Contaminated Land

- E. Planning applications for proposals on land formerly used for industrial, commercial or utilities purposes, or land which is considered to be contaminated or potentially contaminated, must be accompanied by a preliminary Contaminated Land Risk Assessment. Proposals which, by their nature, risk contributing to soil and water pollution will be required to demonstrate how this risk will be avoided or mitigated to an acceptable level.

### Land Instability

- F. Planning applications for proposals on land which may be subject to, or at risk of, land instability must be accompanied by an appropriate assessment and any risks must be minimised or mitigated to an acceptable level. A site risk assessment and site investigation will be required which include the following:
- a) A preliminary risk assessment and desktop study to establish all previous site uses and potential contamination risks.
  - b) A site investigation and appraisal assessing risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site. This should include an assessment of the potential risks to: human health, property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, pests, woodland and service lines and pipes, adjoining land, ground waters and surface waters, ecological systems, archaeological sites and ancient monuments.
  - c) A remediation strategy detailing all options and measures that will be taken to remediate the site.
  - d) Once remediation is implemented, a verification report to demonstrate the effectiveness of the remediation measures and works undertaken prior to first occupation.

## Overhead Power Cables

G. Any proposals for built development

underneath or immediately adjacent

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to such cables must provide an appropriate buffer, though some uses such as landscaping may be appropriate in these locations. For any development within 50m of such cables, or 200m in the case of wind turbines, blasting, tunnelling or minerals extraction, the infrastructure provider should be consulted.

### Supporting Text

National policy requires that development should not contribute to, or be put at unacceptable risk from, pollution in its various forms, and that it should where possible help to improve local environmental conditions. In addition, national policy requires that planning should help to achieve healthy places. As such it is important that potential environmental impacts, both from proposed development and to future occupiers, are properly considered as part of the planning process to ensure that future development provides as healthy and safe an environment as possible.

Where there is potential for development to cause, or be affected by, particular impacts, these should be properly assessed through the planning process and mitigated where necessary. As a result, developers and applicants should be fully aware of potential risks from or to their proposed developments

Issues to be considered include air quality, pollution from light and noise, contaminated land and land instability, including the effects of historic chalk mining in some areas of the borough. The presence of overhead power cables can present an impact on amenity of a local area and a safety risk to users in their vicinity. Appropriate buffer zones must be maintained.

### DMP 9a: Heat Risk and Mitigation

A. In order to minimise the risk of adverse health impacts and achieve thermal comfort, proposals should reduce the risk of excessive heat generation / overheating, as far as possible by:

- a) minimising internal heat generation through energy efficient design;
  - b) reducing the amount of unwanted heat and solar gain entering a building through orientation, shading, fenestration, insulation and green roofs and walls;
  - c) considering the layout and aspect of internal spaces to promote greater thermal comfort;
  - d) selecting appropriate materials to reduce heat entering the building and cooling where possible; and
  - e) appropriate natural ventilation, minimising the need for mechanical ventilation for cooling purposes where possible.
- B. Major development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how heat risk and overheating has been taken into account via the Sustainability Statement.

### Supporting Text

Climate Change and the rising temperatures present a risk of excessive heat and over heating. Very high temperatures can result in a range of health impacts, not just affecting more vulnerable people or those with existing health conditions, including heat related illnesses, hospital admissions or even death. Whilst air conditioning can create cooler and more comfortable environments, it further contributes to energy demand and emissions.

The internal layout of a house can have a significant impact on the likelihood of heat gains causing a drop in thermal comfort. Rooms should be located around a building to minimise the effect of heat gains on the occupants. For example, locating bedrooms in cooler parts of the property such as the north and east sides of a house where over shading tends to be greatest offer the best locations for achieving minimum solar gains. In addition, rooms which typically produce more heat due to their usage i.e. kitchens should be considered, as these rooms often have long periods of occupancy and heat generating appliances. The ground floor also tends to be cooler than upper floors as ground temperatures underneath are more stable

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than air temperature, heat naturally rising, and upper floors tend to be less shaded by other buildings and trees.

It is important that this risk is properly considered at the design stage of a development project, and that design and mitigation measures are used to minimise and mitigate this issue as far as possible. This policy takes a proactive approach consistent with the aims of national planning policy.

### DMP 9b: Carbon Offsetting

- A. Major development proposals will be expected to offset the increased carbon production if they do not meet the policy requirements for Target Emissions Rates, solar panels on new dwellings and embodied carbon targets. This should be done in the following order:
- a) By delivering measures that achieve or reduce the residual requirement off-site and within the borough;
  - b) If the energy efficiency and carbon reduction requirements cannot be met by on-site and/or off-site, a contribution to the Council's Carbon Offset Fund will be required to be made.
- B. Any carbon offsets will be secured by legal agreements.

### Supporting Text

Carbon offsetting contribution is often expressed as a price of carbon multiplied by the carbon gap (in this case, the carbon gap is the expected  $\text{kgCO}_2/\text{m}^2$  minus the provided) multiplied by a predefined period of time.

It is easier to understand and set targets for DER/BER in policy as the TER is already set in terms of  $\text{kgCO}_2/\text{m}^2$  per year. Embodied carbon figures are similarly expressed as  $\text{kgCO}_2\text{e}/\text{m}^2$ , meaning a target can be understood and set. However, the solar PV requirement is not expressed as  $\text{kgCO}_2/\text{m}^2$  but rather a requirement to provide such technology.

Solar PV generation is also considered in the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) calculations to determine the Dwelling Emissions Rate or Building Emissions Rate i.e. any electricity generation is set as an offset of energy used/fuel cost/ $\text{CO}_2$  emissions due to the electricity generated rather than used.

Therefore, to better understand the carbon gap between policy requirement and what is proposed to be delivered on development schemes, the carbon offsetting policy considers the policy requirements for Target Emissions Rates and embodied carbon targets.

Whilst energy efficiency standards are typically governed by Building Regulations, the Plan's Climate Change policies set requirements which seek to further reduce carbon emissions across the lifetime of the development and better mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. However, there may be circumstances where these requirements cannot be met. In these instances, a development will be required to provide compensation to offset the expected carbon emission reductions that are not met on-site.

The carbon offsetting contributions will be based on a monetary value per tonne of carbon dioxide emitted.

### DMP 10: Flood Risk and Mitigation

- A. Flood Risk Assessments will be required in line with national policy and guidance and should be prepared in accordance with the requirements and advice set out in the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. In addition, proposals that require a site specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required to:
- a) Protect and enhance the flood risk management function of existing overland flow routes, watercourses and flood plains/storage areas to ensure there is no net loss of flood storage, flows are not impeded, and opportunities to make space for water are taken.
  - b) Maintain an appropriate development free corridor

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along watercourses and take opportunities to naturalise watercourses to improve their ecological status, biodiversity and habitat connectivity be met by on site and/or off-site, a contribution to the Council's Carbon Offset Fund will be required to be made.

- B. All major development proposals, and all proposals in areas identified as being at risk of surface water flooding, will be required to manage surface water runoff and surface water flood risk via the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems that:
- a) Have been incorporated into the layout and design of proposals at the earliest stage of scheme design;
  - b) Are designed in accordance with the national non-statutory technical standards (or their successor) as well as guidance and advice provided by the relevant flood risk management bodies;
  - c) Wherever feasible improve upon peak greenfield runoff rates, particularly in locations identified as experiencing surface water flooding problems, in order to help reduce overall flood risk in the wider area;
  - d) Use management and control measures that aid multi-functionality of space, enhance visual amenity, support biodiversity and allow for safe interaction with the water environment, as opposed to hard engineered and/or sub-surface features which will be resisted;
    - e) Protect water quality by using an appropriate number of treatment stages before discharging to the ground or a surface water body;
    - f) Avoid discharging to a combined sewer particularly in locations where the existing sewer network is identified as having constrained capacity; and
  - g) Enable maintenance of individual measures and the system as a whole to be undertaken in a financially sustainable way and without significant disruption to occupiers and users of development.
- C. Sustainable Drainage Systems that include

measures for managing surface water runoff beyond the individual building or plot-level will be required to demonstrate how the long term maintenance of the system will be secured.

- D. All development proposals should seek to incorporate suitable source control measures at the building and plot level. The loss of permeable surfaces and other features which help reduce and manage surface water flood risk without suitable compensatory provision will be resisted.

## Supporting Text

National policy (the NPPF) requires local planning authorities to ensure that development is directed away from areas at highest flood risk and that it does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Climate change projections indicate rising peak river flows, more intense rainfall events, and increased surface water flooding. Local Plans must therefore adopt a proactive, precautionary approach to managing flood risk.

The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) identifies areas vulnerable to fluvial, surface water, groundwater, and sewer flooding. It also highlights the importance of safeguarding natural floodplains, overland flow routes, and watercourses as critical infrastructure for managing flood risk. Policy DMP10 translates these findings into development management requirements.

Requiring Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs) ensures that development proposals fully understand site specific risks and incorporate appropriate mitigation. This aligns with the NPPF, which mandates FRAs for development in Flood Zones 2 and 3, sites over 1 hectare, and locations with critical drainage problems.

Natural floodplains and flow paths provide essential flood storage and conveyance. Their loss or obstruction can increase flood risk both on site and downstream. The SFRA identifies several areas where historic development has constricted flow routes, exacerbating flood events. Maintaining and enhancing these features ensures no net loss of flood storage,

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supports natural flood management, and reduces reliance on engineered solutions.

Surface water flooding is a major risk identified in the SFRA, particularly due to impermeable surfaces and intense rainfall. SuDS function best when integrated into site layout from the outset, allowing multifunctional spaces such as swales, basins, and green corridors to be incorporated efficiently. The national non statutory technical standards ensure SuDS are designed to manage peak flows, volumes, and water quality effectively. Aligning with these standards ensures consistency and technical robustness.

Where feasible, reducing runoff below greenfield rates helps alleviate cumulative downstream flooding, especially in areas already experiencing surface water issues.

Multiple treatment stages (e.g., filter strips, wetlands, permeable paving) reduce pollutants entering watercourses or groundwater, supporting Water Framework Directive objectives.

Combined sewer systems are often at or near capacity. Reducing inflows helps prevent sewer flooding and pollution incidents.

Where SuDS extend beyond individual plots – such as communal basins, swales, or green corridors — clear arrangements for long term maintenance are essential. Without this, systems can degrade, leading to increased flood risk and costly remediation. Requiring developers to demonstrate maintenance arrangements ensures resilience and reduces future burdens on the Council or residents.

Source control measures (e.g., rain gardens, water butts, permeable paving) reduce runoff at the point of rainfall, lowering pressure on downstream drainage systems. The cumulative loss of permeable surfaces across urban areas is a major contributor to surface water flooding. Resisting their removal without compensatory measures helps maintain local flood resilience.

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SECTION 2  
A Healthy  
Community

# Chapter 4: A Healthy Community

## Introduction

Health can be defined as ‘a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’<sup>12</sup>. The environment and conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age can act as a wider determinant of health, playing a part in influencing our health and wellbeing, as shown in the diagram below<sup>13</sup>. This influence can have either a positive or negative impact on health, and can sometimes result in health inequalities, which are ‘avoidable, unfair and systematic differences in health between different groups of people’<sup>14</sup>.



The Council will ensure that all development contributes to creating healthy, inclusive, safe and sustainable environments. Development proposals must demonstrate how they support improved health outcomes, reduce health inequalities, and embed the Healthy Placemaking Principles set out in the Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework.

## SP 7: Healthy Environments

- A. Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it:
- a) Prioritises walking, wheeling and cycling through safe, direct, attractive and accessible routes.
  - b) Integrates effectively with public transport networks and reduces reliance on private vehicles.
  - c) Creates well designed, distinctive and connected neighbourhoods where everyday needs are within walking distance.
  - d) Provides inclusive, welcoming and safe public spaces that encourage social interaction and community cohesion.
  - e) Ensures timely and equitable access to health, education, cultural, social care and community facilities proportionate to the scale and type of development.
  - f) Delivers high quality, multifunctional green and blue infrastructure that promotes physical activity, mental wellbeing, biodiversity and climate resilience.
  - g) Maximises urban greening, tree canopy cover and nature based solutions.
  - h) Provides homes that are safe, secure, well ventilated, energy efficient, adaptable, and designed to minimise risks from noise, pollution, damp, cold and overheating or other environmental hazards.
  - i) Supports access to good quality employment, training and skills development opportunities.
  - j) Incorporates Secured by Design principles to reduce crime and the fear of crime.

<sup>12</sup> World Health Organization (2026). Frequently Asked Questions. Retrieved February 4, 2026, from [www.who.int/about/who-we-are/frequently-asked-questions](http://www.who.int/about/who-we-are/frequently-asked-questions)

<sup>13</sup> Barton, H., & Grant, M. (2006). A health map for the local human habitat. *The Journal for the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, 126(6), 252-253; developed from a concept by Whitehead and Dahlgren (1991). <sup>14</sup> The King's Fund (2025). What are Health Inequalities?. Retrieved February 4, 2026, from [www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/long-reads/what-are-health-inequalities](http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/long-reads/what-are-health-inequalities).

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k) Supports local food growing,

including community gardens, allotments and edible landscapes.

## Health Impact Assessments

- B. All relevant development proposals must undertake a Health Impact Assessment in accordance with DMP 12: Health Impact Assessments.

## Partnership Working

- C. The Council will work proactively with developers, health partners, community organisations, infrastructure providers and the Hertfordshire Strategic Authority to ensure that health promoting features are viable, deliverable and aligned with long term service planning.

## Design Codes and Masterplans

- D. Design Codes, Masterplans and Spatial Frameworks must embed the Healthy Placemaking Principles from the outset and demonstrate how health, wellbeing, safety and inclusivity have informed the development vision, structure, layout and design.

## Supporting Text

National planning policy<sup>15</sup> sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the delivery of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development includes pursuing a social objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and to support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

Health outcomes are shaped far more by the places people live, work and spend time in than by healthcare services alone. National evidence shows that social, economic and environmental conditions account for around 60% of health outcomes. Poor-quality housing, car-dependent neighbourhoods, lack of green space, air pollution, and limited access to services all contribute to preventable illness. Planning therefore plays a critical role in creating the conditions for good health.

<sup>15</sup>Based on NPPF 2024; para 8b).

The Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework identifies seven Healthy Placemaking Principles and three cross-cutting themes (Health Equity, Inclusivity and Sustainability). This policy embeds these principles into the Local Plan to ensure a consistent, evidence-based approach across Hertfordshire.

The Framework also identifies Health Action Areas where health inequalities are most acute. Requiring HIAs in these locations ensures development responds to local needs and contributes to reducing disparities.

HIAs are a key tool for ensuring that health considerations are embedded early in the planning process. They help identify both positive and negative health impacts and ensure that mitigation and enhancement measures are integrated into the design and delivery of development.

Embedding health principles at the earliest stages of design ensures that development is shaped around walkability, access to services, green infrastructure and community cohesion. This approach supports the creation of distinctive, inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods.

Delivering healthy places requires collaboration between planning authorities, health providers, developers, community organisations and infrastructure partners. This policy supports a coordinated approach to ensure that health-promoting features are viable, deliverable and aligned with long-term service planning.

This policy seeks to embed health and wellbeing into the spatial planning of the borough, reduce health inequalities, and ensure that all communities have access to environments that support healthy lifestyles. It will be delivered through the application of relevant policies in this Plan, supported by Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) where appropriate, and monitored through indicators set out in the Authority Monitoring Report.

- A. The Council will make sure that communities can easily access a range of community services and facilities. To support the long term sustainability and vitality of our communities, we will:
- a) Plan positively for the provision of community services and facilities in line with national policy (NPPF), local infrastructure delivery plans, and community strategies.
  - b) Refuse the loss of valued community facilities, recognising their role in supporting social cohesion and wellbeing. Detailed criteria for assessing proposals involving loss or change of use are set out in the Development Management Policy: 11 Provision and Loss of Community Services and Facilities.
  - c) Promote strategic and accessible locations for facilities that serve wider catchments, such as town centres and transport hubs.
    - d) Support the enhancement and modernisation of existing facilities to meet changing community needs and ensure continued viability.
  - e) Encourage multifunctional use of buildings and co-location of services, particularly in education, health and community centres, to maximise efficiency and accessibility. Where appropriate, shared use arrangements should be formalised through Community Use Agreements, as referenced in the DMP.
  - f) Require new development to contribute to the provision of community services and facilities, either on-site or through enhancement of nearby facilities, in

accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and relevant planning obligations mechanisms (e.g. Section 106, CIL). For major developments, provision should be made early in the implementation process.

- B. Additionally, the Council will work collaboratively with developers, service providers, the voluntary sector and statutory organisations to:
- a) Identify areas of need and opportunities for provision or enhancement of facilities.
    - b) Facilitate the delivery of new or upgraded facilities in accessible locations.
    - c) Explore opportunities to open up private or restricted-access facilities for wider community use.
  - d) Support the development of sports and leisure hubs that serve borough-wide or sub-regional needs.

## Supporting Text

To meet both existing and future community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision of social, recreational and cultural facilities and services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being; guard against the loss of valued facilities and services; ensure existing facilities and services are able to develop and modernise; and ensure an integrated approach to the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services<sup>16</sup>.

Community services and facilities form part of the social infrastructure that supports the needs of the population. They can help to improve the quality of life of residents, promote integration and minimise social exclusion, support healthy lifestyles and wellbeing, and improve the sustainability of towns, neighbourhoods and villages as places to live.

<sup>16</sup> NPPF 2024, para 98.

They include a range of public, private, community and voluntary services and need to be appropriate to people's needs, affordable and accessible. Public halls, local shops, public houses, post offices, doctors' surgeries, dentists and places of worship are all examples of facilities which are often an essential part of the social and economic life of communities.

Some facilities serving day-to-day needs should be provided close by, at neighbourhood or village level, whereas others, such as art galleries and theatres, may be more appropriate at local level or borough wide level, or in strategic locations such as town centres.

They can also form important social spaces, providing a place to meet, hold social, cultural and educational activities for all ages and a place for people to get involved in community life revolving around shared interests.

This can be especially important for young children, the elderly and disabled people and the accessibility of these facilities is of vast importance for those who do not have easy access to private or public transport. They can provide, particularly in villages, important local services and be at the centre of many group activities and facilitate social interactions. The loss of facilities and services can therefore profoundly damage the character of a community.

The importance of community services and facilities is reflected in national planning policy which requires that strategic policies set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure)<sup>17</sup>.

Where appropriate, some buildings and space can also support multi-functional use, for example, education facilities, community centres or places of worship can be used for a range of community/social activities outside their usual hours of operation.

Community services and facilities include the following (although this is not necessarily an exhaustive list):

## Public Services

Community centres and village halls

Healthcare facilities; including hospitals, doctors' surgeries and dentists

Educational facilities; including early years, post-16 and adult education

Pharmacies

Post offices

Recycling centres

Cemeteries and crematoriums

Places of worship

Emergency services

Criminal justice facilities

## Leisure and Culture

Private health and fitness clubs

Libraries

Allotments

Parks and playgrounds

Sport and recreational facilities

Cultural facilities; including arts provision, museums, concert venues and theatres

Commercial leisure; including cinemas, pubs and restaurants

Spaces for informal activity; including places to hang out

<sup>17</sup> NPPF 2024, para 20 c).

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# DMP 11: Provision and Loss of Community Services and Facilities

## Provision of Community Facilities

- A. The Council will support the provision of new community services and facilities in accordance with appropriate standards<sup>18</sup> where:
- a) They are located in accessible and sustainable locations which are convenient to the communities they serve and accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes, including walking, cycling and public transport.
  - b) They are designed to be inclusive, accessible, flexible and sited to maximise shared use of the facility.
  - c) They meet identified need and are in accordance with relevant infrastructure delivery plans or community strategies.
- B. Where developments result in additional need for community services or facilities, contributions will be required towards enhancing existing facilities or providing or contributing towards new facilities either on site or off site, in accordance with the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- C. The Council will encourage the use of community facilities/buildings by multiple users and Community Use Agreements will be sought where appropriate.

## Loss or Change of Use of Community Facilities

- D. Planning permission will only be granted for proposals involving the loss or change of use of community services or facilities where:
- a) It can be clearly demonstrated through robust evidence, that there is no reasonable prospect of continued or alternative recreational, leisure or community use and no current or future demand arising within a realistic timescale<sup>19</sup>;
  - b) It can be clearly demonstrated that an acceptable alternative means of meeting any such demand is, or will become, available before the loss of the existing facility in a suitable, accessible location; or
  - c) The new development consists of, incorporates, or provides an appropriate alternative recreational or community service or facility, either on site or within the vicinity, of equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location accessible to the local community.
- E. Demand should be assessed according to:
- The nature and function of the existing community service or facility;
  - Local demographic and community needs;
  - Consultation with relevant service providers, community groups, and Parish Councils.

- F. Proposals involving the loss of facilities must comply with the Marketing requirements set out in the Appendix B to this Plan.

Most of the settlements and neighbourhoods of Welwyn Hatfield have a reasonably good provision of community services and facilities. This is partly a reflection of the New Town legacy wherein Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City were planned to have neighbourhoods that contained community facilities and services that met day-to-day needs.

## Supporting Text

<sup>18</sup> Depending on the community service or facility, appropriate standards include but are not limited to national standards, standards recommended by statutory consultees or other relevant bodies, and local standards including the Planning Obligations SPD.

<sup>19</sup> Timescales will be dependent on the community service or facility (see Appendix).

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Where there are existing services and facilities, as far as possible, the policy aims for these to be retained and where possible enhanced. For new developments, provision of community services and facilities is to be included either on site or by enhancing existing facilities in nearby neighbourhoods or town centres at an early stage in the implementation process.

provisions of this DM policy will apply to ensure that, as far as possible, there is no loss to the local community.

<sup>20</sup> A definition is included in the Glossary of this Plan.

Community services and facilities can play an important part in enhancing the sustainability of places and improving the health, social and cultural well-being of communities. This policy sets out the criteria for assessing planning applications relating to new provision and seeks to protect against the loss of valued community services and facilities.

Standards for the provision of community services and facilities are mostly contained in the Council's evidence base (which will be updated from time to time), but there may be instances where only national standards, or no standards, apply. Some community services and facilities are considered main town centre uses<sup>20</sup> as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. For such uses, the Council will use the sequential approach as part of the assessment of whether or not the proposed location for a new facility is appropriate.

Where there is a proposal for a facility to be lost and not replaced, it will be necessary for the applicant to demonstrate that there is no prospect of demand for that facility arising within a reasonable timescale. The length of that timescale will depend upon the type of facility but would generally be a minimum of three years.

Some buildings and spaces such as education facilities, community centres or places of worship can support multi-functional use. For example, schools often have sports facilities and halls that are used by the community out of hours. As such they can be important providers of community facilities and are especially suited to multiple use. These multiple uses can be set out through a Community Use Agreement. If a proposal concerns the loss of a building or space that provides these community facilities, the

## DMP 12: Health Impact Assessments

A. All development proposals should maximise health benefits and reduce health inequalities by identifying and addressing potential impacts on health and wellbeing. A proportionate Health Impact Assessment (HIA) will be required in the following circumstances to demonstrate that health considerations have been fully integrated into the design, delivery and use of the development:

- a) All major development located within identified Health Action Areas<sup>21</sup> or areas of health inequality;
- b) Proposals for 100 or more dwellings;
- c) Developments subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)<sup>22</sup>;
- d) Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP); or
- e) Development that is likely to have significant levels of public use such as education, leisure, and health and social care facilities.

B. Screening for a HIA may be requested by the Local Planning Authority for other development proposals which have the potential to have a significant impact on health and wellbeing, including cumulative impacts or impacts on vulnerable groups.

C. Health Impact Assessments and screening should be carried out in accordance with

the methodology set out in the Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework, or its subsequent replacement. All HIAs must:

a) Respond to local health needs

identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA);

b) Identify the potential positive, neutral and negative impacts on

<sup>21</sup> As identified in the Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework or its subsequent replacement <sup>22</sup> As set out in The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended), or its subsequent replacement.

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health and wellbeing on the local population and consider these impacts on different population groups; and

c) Demonstrate how the scheme has responded to the impacts identified in the HIA by maximising any positive impacts or avoiding and/or suitably mitigating any negative impacts.

D. Where proposals would have an unacceptable impact on health or wellbeing, planning permission will be refused.

Assessments (HIA) which sets out when an HIA should be undertaken, whether a rapid assessment (for simpler proposals) or in-depth assessment (for larger or more complex proposals) should be carried out, and includes

<sup>23</sup> World Health Organisation, Definitions of HIA, 2018. links to guidance documents/toolkits to ensure an appropriate method is used.

To help achieve the strategic aims for health within the plan area and mitigate against any adverse impacts on health, a HIA should be carried out in the circumstances identified in this policy and the results used to inform and shape development proposals.

## Supporting Text

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is defined as 'A combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, programme or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population'<sup>23</sup>.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (as required under the EIA Regulations 2017<sup>24</sup>) is a process by which the environmental impacts of a project are considered and assessed. This includes some consideration of the environmental impacts on human health, such as environmental hazards or air and water quality.

A Health Impact Assessment allows for consideration of the impacts of a project on a broader definition of health and wellbeing, including the wider determinants of health and the impact on existing health inequalities.

Impacts on health can be positive or negative. Undertaking a HIA early in the development process can identify these health impacts, which can then be used to help shape the project to optimise health benefits and avoid adverse impacts on health being identified later in the planning process.

Hertfordshire County Council has produced a position statement on Health Impact

## DMP 13: Hot Food Takeaways

A. Proposals for a hot food takeaway will only be supported where:

a) It is not located within 400m of a school entrance unless the location is within a designated town, village or neighbourhood centre as shown on the draft policies map; and

b) It would not result in more than two hot food takeaway units being located immediately opposite or adjacent to each other, by maintaining a separation between them of at least two non-hot food takeaway units; and

c) It would not cause harm to the character and amenity of the area; and

d) It would not replace the last convenience shop or public house in a village, or the last convenience shop in a neighbourhood centre.

B. Details must be provided setting out what measures will be taken to reduce litter

associated with such uses and conditions may be imposed to manage this.

- C. Applications for food and drink uses where home delivery of food is proposed must include a Delivery and Servicing Plan to demonstrate adequate

provision and providing details of the scale of operation, delivery collection points, locations for parking of delivery vehicles/bikes and hours of operation, and provision of waiting and/or comfort facilities for associated delivery drivers.

<sup>24</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended).

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### Supporting Text

Applications for hot food takeaways must be accompanied with sufficient information to assess the potential impacts arising from the proposed use including managing litter and any associated anti-social behaviour. To ensure there is no unacceptable impact from litter on the amenity of the area conditions may be imposed to require installation of litter bins, commitments to undertake litter picking and advisory signage. This approach is supported through National Planning Policy Guidance on Healthy and Safe Communities.

The over concentration of certain uses can have harmful impacts on the vitality of town centres and high streets, the amenity of residents and communities, and the health and well-being of the local population.

Restrictions are necessary due to the adverse impacts on health and wellbeing, and vitality and viability of centres that these uses can cause.

unless in accordance with Policy (DMP 11: Provision and Loss of Community Services and Facilities); or

- d) Be educational development associated with the evidenced need for additional school places or facilities where it can be demonstrated that:
  - i. the impact on the Urban Open Land has been reduced to the minimum possible
  - ii. the provisions of criterion c) of the policy have been met.
- B. New areas of open space created during the plan period must meet Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework Accessible Greenspace Standards<sup>25</sup> and will be given the same level of protection as land designated as Urban Open Land on the Draft Policies Map.

## DMP 14: Open Spaces and Urban Open Land

- A. Areas of Urban Open Land are designated on the Draft Policies Map. Proposals for development within designated Urban Open Land will only be granted where they would:
  - a) Assist or enhance in the maintenance or reinforcement of their function as essential open areas;
  - b) Be of a scale and nature which would not compromise the value of the Urban Open Land or use of the open space as defined in terms of the designation criteria;
  - c) Not result in the loss or net reduction in size of any playing pitches or community recreation facilities,

### Supporting Text

The provision of open space is a key concept of Garden City masterplanning which was incorporated into the design of New Towns and is characteristic of both Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield. One of the types of designated open space in the plan area is Urban Open Land.

Areas designated as Urban Open Land<sup>26</sup> are shown on the Policies Map. These are areas of open land in urban areas which are considered to be of such significance that they are not to be developed other than for minor ancillary facilities. These areas perform a key built environment function in addition to any recreational, ecological, landscape or other amenity they provide, and are also part of the borough's green infrastructure.

To be designated as UOL, one or more of the following criteria has been met:

- i. The land is vital to the form and character of the built-up area;
- ii. The land, in whole or part, provides an important visual and physical break within the built-up

area;

- iii. The land contributes, in whole or part, to a wider green chain or open corridor;

<sup>25</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/AccessibleGreenspaceStandard.aspx>, or any subsequent standards.

<sup>26</sup> As defined in the Glossary.

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- iv. The land is important or could in future be important, in whole or in part as a local amenity, in terms of its landscape qualities, its wildlife or ecological value, or its use as an informal space for passive or active recreation;
- v. The land, in whole or part, is of notable wildlife significance;
- vi. The land is already identified by the County Council as Common Land;
- vii. The land is used as a formal space for active recreation.

Existing areas of UOL are to be protected, and not developed other than for minor ancillary facilities. New areas of open space created during the plan period that meet the criteria in this policy will be afforded the same level of protection as land designated as Urban Open Land on the Draft Policies Map.

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SECTION 2

# Sustainable Travel

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## Chapter 5: Sustainable Travel

### Introduction

The Local Plan seeks to achieve a sustainable pattern of development within the borough that minimises the need to travel by directing growth to those areas with good transport networks and which are well served by jobs, services and facilities. It also seeks to address climate change through, among other things, putting in place improved opportunities for travelling by public transport, walking and cycling.

### SP 9: Sustainable Transport

- A. The Council will work collaboratively with the County Council as the local highway authority, National Highways, Active Travel England, public transport operators, developers, and other relevant bodies to deliver a transport system that supports sustainable development, reduces carbon emissions, and improves accessibility and equity.
- B. Development will be directed to locations that are, or can be made, sustainable through compact, mixed use patterns that reduce the need to travel and support a genuine choice of transport modes. The Council will prioritise investment in active travel and public transport infrastructure in line with the transport user hierarchy set out in the Local Transport Plan, which places walking, wheeling, and cycling at the top.
- C. All major development proposals must:
- a) Demonstrate how they contribute to reducing car dependency

and increasing active and public transport mode share.

- b) Provide safe, inclusive, and accessible infrastructure for all users, including children, older people, and those with disabilities.
- c) Integrate transport planning with land use to minimise journey lengths and support local centres.
- d) Include appropriate infrastructure to support electric vehicles and mobility hubs where relevant.
- e) Be assessed using the Active Travel England Planning Toolkit and contribute to Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

### Supporting Text

Transport is a key contributor to the UK's carbon emissions. According to Government data, transport was responsible for 24% of total UK emissions in 2022. Of that figure, road transport was responsible for 89% of the total emissions from transport, and passenger cars and taxis for 53% of that<sup>27</sup>. In Welwyn Hatfield, the proportion was even higher with transport being responsible for 36% of total emissions in 2022.

Whilst electric vehicles (EV's) will reduce, and eventually replace, the use of petrol and diesel powered vehicles, with potential benefits for air quality, there will continue to be significant numbers of vehicles on the roads, and simply replacing one fuel source with another will not reduce congestion, and EV's still have emissions of particulates.

Without careful planning, there is a danger that new developments can be dominated by the use of the private car to make most journeys. Poor design, which fails to plan for the needs of all users, including a lack of provision for walking and cycling and poor connectivity to key trip attractors can combine to make using means of travel by modes other than the car more difficult than they need be.

Making provision for the appropriate

infrastructure to enable active and sustainable travel choices will enable people to travel by means other

than the private car and assist those without a car to more easily access a full range of

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-and-environment-statistics-2024/greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-transport-in-2022>

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services and facilities such as work, education and shopping.

Policy 1 of Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) sets out a Transport User Hierarchy, which encourages greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes. It places the highest priority on reducing travel demand and the need to travel, followed by the transport needs of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists, then passenger transport user needs.

## SP 10: Future Sustainable Transport Routes

- A. The Council will support the delivery of new active and sustainable transport schemes and the retention and improvement of existing transport infrastructure and networks.
- B. The Council will work in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, Active Travel England, transport providers, developers and other stakeholders facilitate the implementation of active and sustainable transport schemes that deliver maximum benefit for the Borough.
- C. Development proposals will be supported where they:
  - a) Contribute to the delivery of active and sustainable transport infrastructure;
  - b) Safeguard land required for future transport schemes;
  - c) Do not prejudice the implementation of identified transport improvements;
  - d) Enhance connectivity, particularly in areas currently underserved by public transport.
- D. In principle, the Council supports the delivery of active and sustainable transport schemes which include the following:

- a) Improvements to Walking and Cycle Infrastructure, particularly

those schemes identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP);

- b) A network of Mobility Hubs, providing integrated transport options and facilities;

- c) Transport schemes identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP);

- d) Enhanced access to and from railway stations, enhanced facilities at railway stations and improved service provision from train operators; and

- e) Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit Scheme (HERT) including potential links to Welwyn Garden City.

- E. The Council will seek developer contributions, where appropriate, to support the delivery of these schemes and support developments which help deliver, or contribute towards these schemes or aid their implementation.

## Supporting Text

Parts of the Borough are currently well connected to the transport network, by road, rail and public transport and it is important that this continue. However, other parts of the borough are less well-connected, particularly in relation to public transport.

Transport provision is likely to change over the plan period with improvements to the active and sustainable transport network and investment in transport hubs.

The South Central Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan (GTP) has been developed as a supporting document to the Local Transport Plan. This is a strategic spatial transport plan developed by Hertfordshire County Council in partnership with key stakeholders, including the District/Borough councils, looking ahead at transport improvements required.

Hertfordshire County Council has an aspiration for the Hertfordshire Essex Rapid Transit network, a rapid transit link between Hemel Hempstead and

Harlow which would serve Hatfield, potentially with a spur or link to Welwyn Garden City. Investment in

these routes and the sustainable transport network will be supported in principle.

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### DMP 15: Impacts on the Highway Network and Safety

- A. Development which will potentially generate significant movement and travel demand must be assessed comprehensively in terms of its impact on the transport network. Such proposals must be accompanied by either a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement as appropriate in accordance with the criteria in the Hertfordshire County Council Highway Design Guidance or any successor document.
- B. Transport Assessments or Statements should demonstrate journeys generated for different modes of travel and whether existing infrastructure and services can accommodate this demand. They should also propose measures to reduce the need to travel, minimise vehicular movements by encouraging and facilitating journeys by more active and sustainable modes, and maximise the safety of all users in line with Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the Transport User Hierarchy the strategy sets out.
- C. All necessary infrastructure works and traffic management measures should be identified in line with the requirements of the above documents or any successor documents.
- D. Development proposals will be permitted provided:
  - a) There would be no severe residual cumulative impacts on the local and / or strategic transport network once any cost-effective and achievable mitigation measures have been taken into account;
  - b) Proposals prioritise connectivity through active and sustainable modes of transport.
  - c) There would be no negative impacts on highway safety for all users;
    - d) They are designed to allow safe and

suitable means of access to and from the site for all users; and

- e) They provide satisfactory and suitable levels of parking, in accordance with the Council's parking standards, and taking into account the opportunities for public transport, cycling and walking.

### Supporting Text

Developments will lead to increased demand for transport and movement. Whilst active and sustainable modes of transport should be prioritised, it is acknowledged that there will likely be some impact on the highways network, even if this can be minimised or mitigated. It is important that these impacts are properly assessed and understood when proposals are being considered, and that any severe impacts are avoided, and development proposals should be accompanied by an appropriate level of evidence on this issue.

### DMP 16: Creating Attractive and Well Designed Active and Sustainable Transport Networks

- A. New developments will be expected to encourage and facilitate active and sustainable travel through the provision of suitable accessible facilities for all users including safe cycle and walking routes, parking for cycles and provision for users with disabilities.
- B. New routes should be designed in line with national or local design requirements and link with existing or proposed cycle paths and walking networks.
- C. Secure waterproof storage and changing/shower facilities should be provided within developments where

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appropriate. These details should be provided within the application and on plan, as appropriate.

- D. The Council may provide further guidance on requirements for active and sustainable transport provision in a separate document.
- E. Where appropriate, new developments will be expected to maintain, protect and enhance the Public Right of Way (PRoW) network. Opportunities to extend the network would be welcomed in principle and should be discussed and agreed with Hertfordshire County Council's Rights of Way team.
- F. Subject to discussions with Hertfordshire County Council, new developments will also be expected to make provision for public transport use. The details of this will be subject to discussions with Hertfordshire County Council, transport operators or others, but may include new secure and sheltered bus stop provision, Real Time Passenger Information or assistance to secure services.
- G. New developments will be expected to make suitable provision for access and manoeuvring for both servicing and emergency vehicles.

### Supporting Text

It is important that as well as being as sustainable as possible, transport networks are also attractive as this will encourage usage, improve perceptions - including of safety – and help our communities function more effectively. In line with national policy, ensuring that transport is incorporated into proposals at as early a stage of the development process as possible will mean that it is an integral part of the proposals, and that residents and users of the development have opportunities to use a transport system designed with them in mind. It is important that both active and public transport needs are included into designs and that opportunities are taken to build on and connect to existing networks wherever possible.

## DMP 17: Parking

## Standards

### Car Parking Standards

- A. A minimum of 10% of all parking spaces for leisure, commercial and flatted developments without allocated parking bays must be accessible, disabled bays.
- B. Within town centres and within 800m of a train station with frequent services, minimal parking or car free developments will be supported where the needs for disabled spaces have been met on site.
- C. The Council will support the maximum provision of electric charging points, with a minimum of 1 per three spaces in communal car parks
- D. Provision of electric charging points should be incorporated into the design of all residential housing to meet the needs of the maximum parking spaces provided
- E. The following maximum standards should apply for residential developments:
  - a. 1 bed dwellings – up to 1 space
  - b. 2 bed dwellings – up to 2 spaces
  - c. 3+ bed dwellings – up to 3 spaces
  - d. HMO (C4 Use Class) – 0.5 spaces per tenancy unit
- F. The following maximum standards should apply for Class E (commercial, business and services) developments:
  - a. Up to 500m<sup>2</sup> floorspace – 1 space per 30m<sup>2</sup> (GIA)
  - b. Over 500m<sup>2</sup> – 1 space per 15m<sup>2</sup> (GIA)
- G. The following maximum standards should apply for Class B2 (General Industry) and B8 (Storage and Distribution) developments:
  - a. 1 car space per 50m<sup>2</sup> for B2, and 1 space per 75m<sup>2</sup> for B8 (GIA)
  - b. 1 lorry space per 500m<sup>2</sup> for B2 or as otherwise agreed with HCC Highways (GIA)
  - c. 1 lorry space per 75m<sup>2</sup> for B8 or as otherwise agreed with HCC Highways (GIA)

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- H.** Residential Institutions (Use Class C2/ C2a) developments:
- a.** Residential home / hostel with care staff working on premises (includes elderly persons homes and nursing homes) – 1 space per 5 bedspaces
  - b.** Student halls of residence – minimal parking to meet disabled requirements where the site is in an accessible location, with a maximum elsewhere of 1 space per 10 students
- I.** For other uses including leisure, hotels and visitor accommodation, and larger scale event venues, car parking spaces and space for coaches must be justified through a transport assessment
- a.** Office: 1 space per 100sqm for workers, and 1 space per 500sqm for visitors (GIA)
  - b.** Retail: 1 space per 500sqm for workers, and 1 space per 125sqm for visitors (GIA)
  - c.** Food and Drink: 1 space per 500sqm for workers, and 1 space per 125sqm for visitors d(GIA)
  - d.** Industrial and Warehousing: 1 space per 500sqm for workers and 1 space per 1,000sqm for visitors
  - e.** Education: Primary schools 1 per 10 staff and 1 per 20 pupils, Secondary Schools 1 per 10 staff and 1 per 8 pupils, Higher Education 1 per 10 staff and 1 per 4 pupils
  - f.** Health facilities: 1 per 10 staff and 11 per 20sqm of public floor area

### Cycle Parking Standards

- A.** All cycle parking for residents or employees (excluding storage within private residential houses) the cycle parking must be:
- a.** Covered, secure, lit and accessible **b.** Have step free access
  - b.** Be Sheffield stands or two-tier racks meeting LTN 1/20
  - d.** Have at least 20% cargo bike friendly spaces
  - e.** Have provision for electric charging (Passive at minimum)
- B.** All cycle parking for visitors must be: **a.** Located close to main entrances and be well lit and overlooked
- b.** Sheffield stands
  - c.** Weather protected
  - d.** Not obstruct pedestrian desire lines
- C.** The following minimum cycle parking requirements must be met for residential developments:
- a.** Flatted schemes– 1 space per bedroom, plus 1 space per 40 dwellings for visitor cycle parking **b.** Houses – space for 2 bikes per dwelling not within the front garden unless in a secure, well designed cycle storage shed
- D.** The following minimum cycle parking requirements must be met for commercial developments

### Supporting Text

Appropriate car parking provision plays a role in supporting inclusive access, and ensuring that development contributes to the Council's wider objectives for sustainable transport, climate change mitigation, and high-quality place making. The National Planning Policy Framework encourages local planning authorities to set parking standards that reflect local circumstances, including accessibility by public transport, the type and mix of development, and the need to promote walking, cycling and public transport.

The Council's approach is based on a shift from minimum to maximum parking standards, reflecting the need to reduce reliance on the private car, support modal shift, and ensure that land is used efficiently. Maximum standards also help to avoid over-provision of parking, which can undermine the viability of sustainable transport modes and contribute to congestion and carbon emissions.

In highly accessible locations, including town centres and areas within walking distance of railway stations with frequent services, the Council will support car-free or low-car developments, provided that essential disabled parking is delivered on site. This reflects the strong availability of sustainable transport options and the opportunity to reduce unnecessary car trips.

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Provision for disabled users is a key priority. A minimum of 10% accessible parking ensures that new development meets the needs of all users and aligns with inclusive design principles and the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty.

The transition to electric vehicles is a central component of national and local decarbonisation strategies. The Council therefore requires the integration of electric vehicle charging infrastructure into all new development, with a particular emphasis on communal parking areas and residential schemes. This ensures that new development is future-proofed and supports the shift to low emission transport.

The parking standards for residential, commercial, industrial and institutional uses have been informed by local evidence on car ownership, and the operational needs of different land uses. They provide a clear and consistent framework for applicants while allowing flexibility where justified through a Transport Assessment or Travel Plan.

For uses with highly variable parking demand— such as leisure, hotels, visitor accommodation and large-scale event venues—parking provision must be justified on a case-by-case basis. This ensures that provision is tailored to the specific operational characteristics of the proposal and avoids unnecessary land take.

Cycle parking plays a vital role in enabling more journeys to be made by bicycle and in supporting a shift toward sustainable and active travel. Providing safe, secure and convenient cycle parking at both residential and non residential developments helps reduce reliance on the private car, supports healthier lifestyles, and contributes to wider objectives around decarbonisation, air quality and place making.

National policy emphasises the need to promote walking, cycling and public transport as genuine alternatives to the car. The National Planning Policy Framework highlights the importance of planning for high quality cycling infrastructure, while Local Transport Notes such as LTN 1/20<sup>28</sup> set out clear expectations for accessible, inclusive and attractive cycle provision. Ensuring that new development includes appropriate levels of cycle parking is a fundamental component of this approach.

These standards provide a framework for the level of

cycle parking required across different types of development. They reflect the Council's wider transport and climate objectives. The standards are designed to be ambitious enough to support long term mode shift, while remaining proportionate and deliverable across a range of development types and densities.

Cycle parking must be designed and located so that it is easy and attractive to use. Long stay parking for residents, staff and regular users should be secure, covered, well lit and step free, with sufficient space for non standard cycles such as cargo bikes, adapted cycles and tricycles. Short stay parking for visitors should be located close to main entrances, be clearly visible, and provide convenient access without obstructing pedestrian movement. All cycle parking should be designed in accordance with LTN 1/20 or any successor guidance.

The Council may require higher levels of provision where justified by local circumstances, such as proximity to high quality cycle routes, public transport interchanges, schools, or town centres. Travel plans, transport assessments and site specific design considerations may also indicate the need for additional cycle parking beyond the minimum standards.

## DMP 18: Car Clubs

- A. The Council will positively consider proposals where a car club scheme is promoted as part of a development, in order to reduce the need for car parking spaces or to help meet sustainable travel objectives.
- B. Where provided, dedicated car club parking spaces should be in an accessible and visible location within the development, clearly labelled as such, and will be expected to include electric vehicle charging points.
- C. The Council may secure any such obligations through a legal agreement and will monitor this to ensure that obligations continue to be delivered over time.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

## Supporting Text

Car clubs provide an opportunity for residents and others to have access to a car without the cost and practical issues associated with owning one. The Council will, in principle, be supportive of car clubs in new developments, particularly in larger developments in areas where they may also be attractive to existing residents. They may also provide an opportunity for high density development in certain locations as few dedicated parking spaces need to be provided. However, it is important that if such schemes are proposed or set up that they are properly planned and managed, and that vehicles are in a location which is accessible for residents.

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### Chapter 6: Homes

#### Introduction

Providing new homes to meet housing need is a fundamental role of the Local Plan. The policies in this chapter seek to ensure that a range of housing options are provided, including in terms of tenure, size, type, and to meet the needs of groups in the community with specific housing requirements including (but not limited to) older people, people with disabilities, students, travellers and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

#### SP 11: Housing Requirements and Delivery

- A. To meet housing need, at least 15,960 net additional homes will be delivered in Welwyn Hatfield between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2043 (equivalent to 840 per year).
- B. Proposals for residential development that contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs will be supported where they accord with the policies in this Local Plan and are consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

C. Site allocations for housing are set out in the site allocations chapter and the Policies map.

D. In order to deliver a choice of homes and help create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, provision will be made for a range of housing to support the needs and requirements of different households.

E. In addition to the overall housing target, a net increase of around 324 bedspaces to assist in meeting the accommodation needs of those who need specialist (Use Class C2) nursing care will be supported in the borough's towns and excluded villages.

#### Supporting Text

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that:

***'To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning practice guidance'.***

The Council's Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2026) sets out local housing need for Welwyn Hatfield of 840 dwellings per annum (dpa). Applying this to the plan period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2043, total minimum housing need amounts to 15,960 homes over the 19 years. The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment also provides an assessment of the type and mix of housing required over the plan period.

Sources of housing supply will include:

- Site allocations (including allocations which have been carried forward from the Welwyn Hatfield 2016-36 Local Plan and new proposed allocations);
- Completions since the start of the plan period at 1 April 2024 and existing commitments (sites with outstanding planning permission);
- A windfall allowance – as it is not possible to identify all housing sites which will come forward over the plan period an allowance for windfall will be made, having regard to the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends.

In addition to the housing target, the Council will also

support an increase in specialist nursing care provision to help meet the specific accommodation needs of those who are not able to live independently.

## SP12: Affordable Housing Requirements

A. To help create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, a proportion of all new homes built within the plan-area should contribute towards meeting the need for affordable housing.

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B. The provision of affordable housing will be sought on major residential, including major mixed-use with residential, development proposals involving 10 or more dwellings (gross), or where the number of dwellings is not yet known, on sites of 0.5 hectares or more.

C. Subject to viability, the level of affordable housing required<sup>29</sup> is applied as a percentage of the overall level of housing proposed within any relevant development proposal. The number of dwellings will be rounded to the nearest whole number<sup>30</sup>.

- Hatfield (urban area) – affordable housing requirement of 25%
- Welwyn Garden City (urban area) – affordable housing requirement of 30%
- Brookmans Park, Cuffley, Digswell, Little Heath, Oaklands and Mardley Heath Welham Green, Welwyn, Woolmer Green (urban area) – affordable housing requirement of 35%.

D. Where development takes place on land situated in the Green Belt, (or has been released from the Green Belt through this Local Plan), the 'Golden Rules' set out in national planning policy<sup>31</sup> and practice guidance apply<sup>32</sup>, and at least 50% of all new homes should be affordable.

E. At least 50% of the affordable housing should be provided for Social Rent, with the remaining 50% being split between Affordable Rent (30%) and affordable routes to home

ownership (20%), or as otherwise varied and agreed with the local planning authority.

F. To help meet the varied needs of different household groups and household sizes, proposals will be expected to provide a mix of dwelling sizes and types. Development proposals should not generally involve a single size or type of dwelling.

G. Any variation from the level of affordable housing requirements set out in this policy, must be robustly justified by evidence that demonstrates that an alternative approach is required to ensure that a development is viable.

H. The affordable housing requirement will be expected to be met on site unless exceptionally, off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu (and of a broadly equivalent value), can be robustly justified and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.

I. These policy requirements apply to all Use Class C3 housing developments, including sheltered or extra care schemes where these are considered to meet the definition of Use Class C3.

## Supporting Text

Affordable housing, as defined in national planning policy, means housing for sale or rent for those

whose needs are not met by the market, including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership, (such as shared ownership). Consistent with national planning policy, where a need is identified, strategic policies should make sufficient provision for affordable housing, including the levels and types of affordable housing required.

<sup>29</sup> The affordable requirement as it relates to Build to Rent is set out in a separate policy.

<sup>30</sup> For example, 25.5 will be round up to 26, whereas 25.4 will be rounded down to 25.

<sup>31</sup> National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 (or its successor/s).

<sup>32</sup> Viability – GOV.UK (or its successor/s). Site specific viability assessment should not be undertaken or taken into account for the purpose of reducing developer contributions, including affordable housing where the Golden Rules apply.

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### The need for affordable housing

There is a significant need for affordable housing within the plan-area over the plan-period. To help address this significant need through the Local Plan, the affordable housing policy requirements are applied in the context of likely delivery, (as a proportion of mixed market and affordable housing developments, considering the probable percentage of affordable housing to be delivered by viable market-led developments). The policy includes a spatial variation in affordable housing requirements.

### Affordable housing need by tenure

Evidence indicates that there is a pressing need for Social Rented and Affordable Rented housing. In addition, affordable routes to home ownership, (Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy products), have been identified as having a role locally to assist some households with an affordable housing need.

Shared Ownership is likely to be suitable for households with more marginal affordability as it has the advantage of a lower deposit and subsidised rent. Lower-than-market 'Buy-to-Rent' is aimed at supporting households to save for a deposit for an eventual shared ownership or market property. The need for these products has been balanced against the acute need for Social and Affordable Rented housing

The evidence indicates that provision at the higher Social Rent level (50%) would enable more households to afford their own housing costs. Where 50% Social Rent is provided, the remaining tenure split is indicated at 30% for Affordable Rent and 20% for affordable routes to home ownership (Shared Ownership / Rent to Buy).

At a lower Social Rent level of 20%, households would likely require financial assistance towards their housing costs, and the remaining 30%

tenure requirement is subject to viability, and would not preclude schemes that are mainly, or entirely, for Social Rent from coming forward.

### The size and type of affordable dwelling

There is also a need for a mix of affordable dwellings to be provided to help meet the varied housing needs of different groups and different household sizes.

A high proportion of households in Welwyn Hatfield have dependent children, and high levels of growth are forecast in households of an age at which they are more likely to have children. There is some evidence of over crowding, and notwithstanding the housing needs of single person households, e.g. arising due to homelessness, one-bedroom properties offer limited flexibility to changing household circumstances over time. In terms the most acute needs, there is an affordable housing requirement for larger homes and a substantial need for family sized housing, particularly families with two children. Two-bedroom homes are likely to help meet the housing needs of some smaller families, particularly lone parents.

The following tables provide an indication of the affordable housing need by size of dwelling, by number of bedrooms.

Flexibility will be applied depending on the overall size of a scheme and its ability to viably deliver a mix of dwelling sizes, and where over the course of the plan period updated evidence suggests a different mix may be indicated.

Table: Affordable housing by size of dwelling/ number of bedrooms (Social and Affordable Rent)

<b>Age under 65</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>35%</b>
	<b>30%</b>	<b>10%</b>

tenure split is indicated at 60% for Affordable Rent and 20% for affordable routes to home ownership (Shared Ownership / Rent to Buy).

**Age 65 + 40% 60% 0% 0%**

Flexibility may be required depending on site specific circumstances, but wherever possible, proposals will be expected to provide a proportion of affordable housing at the higher Rented tenure level (50%). This Social Rent

Table: Affordable housing by size of dwelling/ number of bedrooms (affordable routes to home ownership)

Mix	15%	30%
	45%	10%

<sup>33</sup> Welwyn Hatfield Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (2026). <sup>34</sup> Welwyn Hatfield Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (2026).

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To contribute towards creating mixed, sustainable communities and help meet the varied housing needs of different groups and household sizes, including households with dependent children and older people, a mix of affordable housing sizes (by number of bedrooms), and types, (houses, flats, and / or bungalows), should be provided.

Proposals should not generally seek to simply deliver a single type or size of affordable dwelling, unless otherwise justified and should demonstrate how the mix proposed has had regard to the Council's latest evidence.

### Viability and other relevant matters to the application of policy

Where a development proposal does not seek to meet the policy requirements for the relevant level of affordable housing provision, the type of tenure, or the mix of dwelling sizes to be provided, the Council will require the applicant to submit an 'open book' viability assessment, showing clear workings which objectively test the ability of a development project to meet its costs (including the cost of any planning obligations), while ensuring an appropriate and competitive return. The Council will appoint an independent valuer to review viability appraisals submitted as part of a planning application. All initial appraisals and any subsequent reappraisals will be undertaken at the applicant's expense.

For the purposes of policy application, where a smaller site forms part of a larger overall scheme which is capable of being developed, the affordable housing requirements will be applied on a cumulative basis.

For clarification, the policy requirements apply to Use Class C3 housing developments only. They do not apply to Use Class C2 developments where the primary use is the provision of residential accommodation for people in need of care (other than a use within C3), or a nursing home.

To support the re-use of brownfield land, where

vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, the affordable housing requirement due may be reduced by a proportionate amount. Affordable housing contributions may however be required for any increase in floorspace. This

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-obligations> does not apply to vacant buildings which have been abandoned, or to major development on land within or released from the Green Belt, for which the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in national policy should apply. The process for determining if and how a Vacant Building Credit applies is set out in national planning policy and practice guidance<sup>25</sup>.

## DMP 19: Affordable Housing – S106 review mechanism

- A. Where a viability assessment submitted at the planning stage undertaken in accordance with national planning policy and practice guidance demonstrates particular circumstances that justify non-compliance with the local plan's strategic affordable housing policy requirements, a review mechanism will be required to reassess viability over the lifetime of the delivery of the project in order to determine if the strategic affordable housing contributions could be delivered in compliance with, or more in compliance with, the full policy requirement.
- B. The trigger point/s for review will be set at appropriate stages of development linked to implementation and/or occupation.
- C. The review mechanism will be secured and

set out in a planning obligation.

## Supporting Text

The Local Plan's strategic affordable housing policy sets out the affordable housing contributions expected from development.

It is for an applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the planning application stage<sup>36</sup>. All viability assessments should reflect the recommended approach in national planning policy and practice guidance, including standardised inputs, and should be

<sup>36</sup> Examples of such circumstances are set out in Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 10-007-20190509. Revision date: 09 05 2019, of national Planning Practice Guidance on Viability: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/viability>

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made publicly available. The weight given to such an assessment is a matter for the decision-making authority, taking into account all relevant material considerations.

Where the local planning authority agrees that particular circumstances have been demonstrated, which mean that the strategic affordable housing policy requirements cannot be met at the planning application stage, a review mechanism to reassess viability over the lifetime of the delivery of the project will be required to ensure compliance with the strategic policy and optimal public benefits through economic cycles.

The trigger points for such a review will be agreed between the applicant and the local planning authority in light of the circumstances of the scheme. On very large schemes where delivery is likely to take place over a considerable number of years, more than one trigger point for review may be appropriate.

## Supporting Text

**DMP 20: Mix by Type Housing**  
**Mix by Size and Type**  
**Mix 5%**

- A. To help create and support sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, development proposals should ensure that the proposed mix of dwelling sizes and types contributes towards meeting the varied housing needs of different households.
- B. Proposals should demonstrate how the proposed mix has had regard to the Council's most up to date evidence and should generally not seek to deliver a single type or size of dwelling, unless otherwise justified and considered appropriate by the planning authority due to the overall size of the scheme, the nature of the site and character of the area.

It is important that a range of housing sizes and types are made available to meet the varying housing needs and market demands of different groups, including single persons, couples, families with children, and older people.

Local evidence<sup>37</sup> provides the basis for a recommended mix of dwellings by size, with analysis also suggesting how the provision of 2-bedroom homes could be split between flats and houses (including bungalows), and by tenure.

The following table provides an indication of the recommended mix by size of dwelling for market housing, (the indicated mix by dwelling size for affordable housing is set out alongside the affordable housing policy).

Table: Market housing by size of dwelling/number of bedrooms

	<b>30%</b>	<b>25%</b>
	<b>40%</b>	

- C. Applications should include a schedule which lists the proposed dwelling units by size (the number of bedrooms), type (e.g. flats/house/ bungalows). New development will be expected to provide for a range of dwelling sizes and types. Matters such as the overall size of a scheme, the nature of a site and the character of the area, will be taken into account in applying this policy, together with any updated evidence over the course of the plan period that suggests a different mix may be indicated.

## DMP 21: Protecting the Existing Housing Stock

- A. Proposals resulting in a loss of dwellings including self-contained houses or flats, permanent dwellings located on mobile home parks, and houses in

multiple occupation will be refused unless the home/s proposed to be lost would be replaced with new self

<sup>37</sup> Welwyn Hatfield Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (2026).

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contained homes at an equivalent or higher density with the re-provision of at least the equivalent level of overall floorspace, or where one of the following criteria are met:

- a) The site is no longer suitable for residential use due to being adversely affected by significant environmental conditions (such as noise pollution or air quality) and there is no reasonable prospect that the impacts can be adequately mitigated against to create a healthy living environment;
- b) The development will enable existing sub-standard units to be enlarged or improved to meet minimum space<sup>38</sup> and amenity standards, or
- c) The social, economic or environmental benefits of the proposal would significantly outweigh a net loss to the borough's housing stock.

<sup>38</sup> As set out in Nationally Described Space Standards.

## DMP 22: Specialist Housing for Older and Vulnerable People

- A. Proposals for new specialist housing, such as sheltered or extra care, to help meet the varied needs of older and vulnerable people that allow people to live as independently as possible, will be supported where:
  - a) There is an identified need for the specific type of housing proposed, as set out in Council's latest Housing Needs Assessment<sup>39</sup>;
  - b) The proposed development is located in an accessible location, close to local services and facilities, where residents have access to a genuine choice of transport modes including by public transport, and being located on a safe and level route;
  - c) It can be demonstrated that the scheme will provide high-quality accommodation consistent with relevant best practice guidance<sup>40</sup> as appropriate; and
  - d) The proposed accommodation has considered the needs of the intended occupiers and the type of facilities proposed, the level of independence promoted and the amount of management, supervision, support and/or care proposed is appropriate for the intended occupiers.

## Supporting Text

Losses to the borough's housing stock can lead to additional development pressures elsewhere in the borough, even where losses occur on a piecemeal basis.

In order to make best use of the borough's existing resources and continue to meet the housing needs of the community, there will be a presumption against the loss of existing dwellings, subject to the exceptions set out in policy. The policy applies to all self-contained dwellings including houses and flats, permanent dwellings located on mobile home parks, as well as houses in multiple occupation.

B. In order to assist in meeting the identified need for housing for older and vulnerable people, large major site

allocations will be expected to deliver a proportion of housing as specialist housing for older people.

<sup>39</sup> Applying the Extra care focus scenario (Housing and Economic Needs Assessment 2026, or as subsequently updated)

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.housinglin.org.uk/\\_assets/Resources/Housing/Support\\_materials/Factsheets/Design-Principles-For-Extra-Care-Housing-3rdEdition.pdf](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Factsheets/Design-Principles-For-Extra-Care-Housing-3rdEdition.pdf) (or any relevant successor document / other up to date appropriate best practice design guidance).

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C. Where specialist housing is assessed as falling within Use Class C3, (dwelling houses – where the accommodation comprises self-contained homes), then the affordable housing policies of the plan will apply.

active marketing at a realistic price and other evidence, that the accommodation is no longer needed for the particular group or other relevant groups in need.

### Specialist Nursing care home accommodation

D. In addition to the overall housing target, a net increase of around 324 nursing home bed spaces will be supported in the borough's towns and excluded villages and on major development sites, to help meet the accommodation needs of those requiring specialist nursing care (falling within Use Class C2), where:

- a) The proposed development is located in an accessible location, close to local services and facilities, where residents have access to a genuine choice of transport modes including by public transport, and being located on a safe and level route; and
- b) It can be demonstrated that the scheme will provide high-quality accommodation designed to be consistent with relevant best practice guidance<sup>41</sup> as appropriate.

E. Existing nursing home accommodation for older and vulnerable people will be protected. The Council will resist proposals involving the loss of such accommodation unless:

- a) Adequate replacement accommodation is provided that results in improved standards and quality and meets the criteria in Part A of this policy; or
- b) It can be robustly demonstrated, through at least 12 months of

### Supporting Text

National policy requires local planning authorities to plan for the housing needs of groups within the community, including older people and people with disabilities. Whilst many people will live in general housing that may be adapted to meet their specific needs, some will require more specialist housing, including with access to care.

Over the next 20 years, the population aged 75+ is expected to grow faster than any other age group<sup>42</sup>. Therefore, there is a need to provide sufficient suitable accommodation which enables older people to live independently, with the appropriate care and support available. Specialist housing options include a range of accommodation types to suit the varied and changing needs of older people, including:

- Age-restricted general market housing
- Retirement living or sheltered housing
- Extra care housing or housing-with-care.

A more specialist care environment may be required for people who are unable to live independently, including residential and nursing care which usually falls within Use Class C2 (residential institutions).

Other people including young people, people with physical disabilities or sensory needs, people with learning difficulties and other vulnerable people may also require specialist accommodation.

It should also be recognised that many people with specialist housing needs may wish to stay or move to general housing that is already suitable, such as bungalows, or homes which can be adapted to meet a change in their needs.

<sup>41</sup> [https://www.housinglin.org.uk/\\_assets/Resources/Housing/Support\\_materials/Factsheets/Design-Principles-For-Extra-Care-Housing-3rdEdition.pdf](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Factsheets/Design-Principles-For-Extra-Care-Housing-3rdEdition.pdf) (or any relevant successor document / other up to date appropriate best practice design guidance).

<sup>42</sup> ONS 2022-based subnational population projections (June 2025).

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### Annexes

The County Council's supported accommodation strategy<sup>43</sup> aims to help more people maintain independence, with a shift towards increased provision for housing with care as an alternative to residential care. The strategy also includes accelerated growth in nursing care homes, including those providing dementia care.

The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2026) outlined<sup>44</sup> a clear need for additional specialist housing for older people, highlighting a particular need relative to supply for housing with care, in line with the county strategy. Over the plan period to 2043, and as part of the overall housing target, a need for 1,224 housing with support dwellings e.g. sheltered housing for general market (not affordable), and a need for 854 extra care dwellings was identified, across market and affordable tenures.

The assessment also sets out a need for 324 additional nursing care home bedspaces over the plan period. This target is in addition to the overall housing target, however provision of Use Class C2 accommodation can be counted towards the overall housing supply based on the amount of accommodation released in the housing market in line with planning practice guidance.

Where developments provide self-contained homes for occupation by individual households, these are more likely to fall within Use Class C3 rather than Use Class C2. However, some extra care and housing-with-care developments may fall within Use Class C2 depending on factors such as the level of care and scale of communal facilities provided. The precise nature of a proposal will need to be considered on a scheme-by-scheme basis. The affordable housing policies of the plan will apply to schemes where the dwellings proposed are assessed as falling within Use Class C3.

Proposals for new specialist housing should be located in accessible locations, offering a genuine choice of transport modes including access to public transport as well as other services and facilities, including health services.

- A. Applications for residential annexes will only be permitted where it has been clearly demonstrated that the extension to an existing dwelling is modest in size and subordinate in scale to the main dwelling.
- B. The annex should be designed in such a way that it can function as an integrated part of the main dwelling, sharing a main entrance door and having access to shared facilities within the principal dwelling. Vehicular access and garden areas should be shared with no boundary demarcation or sub division of garden areas that imply a functional separation.

### Supporting Text

Residential annexes are a form of ancillary residential accommodation, which can offer people a degree of independence whilst remaining connected to a principal household, e.g. for elderly relatives or those with care or support needs, including those with disabilities.

Annexes should be designed, both functionally and physically, to be ancillary to the main dwelling. Occupants of an annex should share a main entrance door with the principal dwelling and have access to shared facilities, such as a living room and / or kitchen.

To prevent the creation of independent self contained dwellings through severance or subdivision, a planning condition may be imposed at the grant of planning permission restricting occupancy and ensuring the annex remains ancillary to the main dwelling at all times.

## DMP 23: Residential

<sup>43</sup> HCC Ten Year Supported Accommodation Strategy 2017-2027 <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/data-and-information/acs/accommodation-strategy-2017-27-nov-2018-final-for-publication.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> Applying the Extra care focus scenario.

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### DMP 24: Purpose Built Student Accommodation

- A. Proposals for purpose-built student accommodation with shared facilities and student support / care to assist students in their daily lives will be supported where the development meets all the following criteria:
- a) Is located in an area with good access to a range of facilities and services including shops by walking and public transport;
  - b) Is of an acceptable quality meeting the needs of its occupants, including good sized rooms with adequate daylight, sunlight and functional living space;
  - c) Provides high quality external amenity space, integrated communal facilities and services to meet the needs of the intended number of occupiers, with suitable arrangements for student support / care;
  - d) A proportion of all student rooms proposed should be designed and built for independent use by wheelchair users. The remainder should include facilities that make them suitable for people who do not use a wheelchair, but may have mobility, sensory, dexterity or learning difficulties;
  - e) Includes a management plan which demonstrates that the accommodation will be managed and maintained to ensure acceptable levels of amenity and access to facilities for its occupiers, and that the development will not unacceptably impact on neighbour amenity; and
  - f) Will not lead to an over-concentration of single person accommodation within

local communities or result in significant adverse impacts on the character of the local area.

- B. Where provision is made on-campus, this should be in accordance with a masterplan that has been approved by the planning authority.
- C. The loss of student accommodation will be permitted where it is demonstrated that the accommodation no longer caters to current or future student needs, and is replaced with alternative residential accommodation typologies that meet other standards and requirements in this Plan.

### Supporting Text

The University of Hertfordshire, the Royal Veterinary College and Oaklands College all are located within the plan-area and purpose built student accommodation helps to meet an important housing need for the borough's student population.

Whilst some on campus provision is made both the University of Hertfordshire and the Royal Veterinary College, off-campus provision may also be delivered by private providers.

The provision of PBSA directly impacts the wider housing market as without it more students would be living in the general housing stock. Whilst there is significant demand for student accommodation within the plan area, the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment does not indicate a current need for additional purpose-built student accommodation serving the University of Hertfordshire but does recognise a need to serve the Royal Veterinary Collage site. Additional PBSA in the borough could also have a role in reducing reliance on HMOs and the private market housing stock.

It is important that all student accommodation is accessible to the institution it serves by walking, cycling or public transport and that the facilities are properly managed to ensure a good quality offering to students and to successfully integrate such development within the wider community.

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