



HATFIELD TOWN COUNCIL HERTFORDSHIRE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Committee held on Tuesday 28th April 2020 via Zoom at 6.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillor M Eames-Petersen (Chairman)
Councillor Jackie Brennan
Councillor Richard Brisbin
Councillor Hazel Laming

OFFICER: Carrie Lloyd (Town Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from John Percival.

2. QUESTION TIME

There were no questions

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations.

4. WELWYN HATFIELD LOCAL PLAN

Members considered the draft response. The Town Clerk cautioned against including any proposal at Birchwood Leisure Centre as it could be considered by the community as pre-determination on a matter where Members had not yet been out to consultation with the public. Cllr Eames-Petersen advised that she would ask for advice from Sue Tiley in the Planning Department. It was agreed to look further into the Allotment site at College Lane and include some of Ellenbrook Area Residents' Association's views. The Town Clerk undertook to find out information on NPPF 2020 relating to developments adjacent to rail stations and details of the University Estates Plan 2020 for the Chairman.

RESOLVED that the draft attached at Appendix A be submitted to the Council for consideration.

(Action: Town Clerk)

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be 7.30pm on 12th May 2020.

CLOSED 8pm

Chairman _____

**Hatfield Town Council's response to WHBC Consultation on the Inspector's
Local Plan Round-up Session on March 12th 2020, and comment on WHBC
Local Plan for Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need (FOAHN) for May 1st
2020**

A) Introduction to Hatfield Housing

The population of Hatfield in 2020 is now estimated to be approx. 43,000. Census data between 2001 and 2011 shows that it rose from 29,616 to 39,201 – from a base of 30% of the WHBC population Hatfield contributed three quarters of the increase in population of the entire Borough.

1) Inequalities in Welhat borough

In short Hatfield has taken the major share of housing expansion for the whole borough in the last 20 years, but this has not been matched with sustainable services and infrastructure promised in s106 agreements of 2000 by de Havilland, and WHBC. This current Local Plan besides addressing the FOAHN, should also address how this situation can be rectified, rather than adding to inequalities in service and provision between WGC and Hatfield. Housing without community facilities is bad planning, and we need any new housing to be alongside the necessary amenities to build community.

The 2011 Census recorded Hatfield population as 39,201, but with new houses and flats built in Aviation avenue, and student halls of residence, and flats on both the De Havilland Campus and on the College Lane campus, the student residential population has substantially increased, as has the working population of the business park. The population of Hatfield has increased by approximately 4,000 in the last 10 years. Meanwhile Welwyn Garden City (WGC) is recorded as having a population of 48,380 in 2011 (and was estimated to be 51,180 in 2018, and is likely to be approximately 52,000 in 2020) but it has not had such an astronomical increase in population in the last 20 years, as Hatfield. The differentials in service, infrastructure and amenities between Hatfield and WGC must be discussed and addressed in this Local Plan, when planning for the next 20 years.

A population of 23,000 students attend the University of Hertfordshire. Many of them live in Hatfield close to the de Havilland campus in Mosquito way, and residential streets of Salisbury village or close to the College Lane campus in Bishop's Rise, Hazel Grove or roads nearby. Some commute.

Hatfield is planned to contribute an extra 2,572 dwellings (in build or planned) to the WHBC Local plan since 2016, as shown in the attached excel spread sheet, and HAT1 would be another large development very close to Hatfield Garden Village.

2) Attention to Road Infrastructure in N.W. Hatfield

The road structure needs serious attention in this area (North West Hatfield) and an arm off the A1(M) Westwards at Junction 4 (Tesco /Oldlings Corner), which has been missing for 40 years is recommended, alongside the Stanbroughbury new village. This could connect the west end of Hatfield Avenue on the Business Park, via Cooper's Green Lane to the A1(M), on a bypass. This would deter Lorries (and cars in rush hour) polluting Central Hatfield, and residential housing at the end of Wellfield Rd, Birchwood Ave, and

Comet way, as they do at the moment. This would bypass the use of Green Lanes, and Comet way, and divert Lorries, which use Lemsford village as a rat run to the A1(M). These are all residential roads with three primary schools on them, and at rush hour the traffic is congested, dangerous to children and unsuitable for these roads. Air pollution now exceeds the World Health Organisation limits for PM2.5 and Nitrous Oxide limits on Birchwood roundabout, at the end of Wellfield road, which also houses the vents for the exhaust fumes from the A1(M) Galleria tunnel .

3) Hatfield has contributed more than its fair share of housing to the borough

The 2,572 new dwellings, planned for Hatfield since 2016, are over and above the extra 5,000 extra homes, flats or students residences which were built on the ex British Aerospace (BAe) Aerodrome field-in Salisbury village and Hatfield new Garden Village to the West of the A1(M) in the last 20 years. Sadly these houses have been built without the promised amenities documented in the s106 agreement of 2000 being built. eg the GP practice, post-office, shops and a large community hall are missing,

4) Hatfield now desperately needs community amenities on the West side of the A1(M) for the extra population. There are expensive private sports facilities eg David Lloyd centre, UH Sport village both with swimming pools, 5 fast car outlets, and a private (underused) hospital located in the business park but there is no NHS health centre, no post office, no church or pharmacy or community centre for people to mix and build community together. A large proportion of Salisbury village is rented to students or affordable housing.

Hatfield urgently needs a **new Primary school, Boys' secondary school, and a new GP practice, for the new population to the West of the A1(M).** There is Bishops Hatfield Girls' school in Woods Avenue, and Onslow St Audrey's mixed secondary school in Rectory lane. These are currently the only secondary schools in Hatfield, and there are already insufficient places for all the boys currently living in Hatfield. Many boys have to travel to St Albans, WGC and Potters Bar to find a local secondary school. This is bad sustainability. The new village of Stanboroughbury will also require a new primary school. The three GP practices in central Hatfield are currently oversubscribed. It is difficult to gain an appointments with a GP, and they are not located close to the expanding population west of the A1(M).

B) The sites proposed in Hatfield in the current Local Plan

C)

The Stanboroughbury development (HAT1) with 1,750 extra dwellings, has with it the promise to build the missing infrastructure needed in N.W. Hatfield together with the extra housing. This is now 20 years overdue including the secondary school, GP practice, shops and community hall. A primary school and church is also promised. Whilst there have been "Save the Greenbelt" campaigns in old Hatfield Garden village five years ago, this settlement if tastefully designed with its ration of affordable housing, could make the whole area more sustainable. It is essential to plan for the bus route to reach the new village from Hatfield (currently it services Hatfield Garden village) and then to for

residents to have transport to WGC and to connect with both railway stations. Charging points for shared electric vehicles and buses should also be planned..

If these services are agreed this would become a settlement which could be a real asset to Hatfield. There is also a cycle path with a bridge over the A1(M) and two underpasses to connect Stanbroughbury to Hatfield station from Green lanes, via Wellfield Rd and French Horn lane. We welcome this and we must hold WHBC and developers to keeping this promise, to actually build these amenities this time for the sake of Hatfield community. This settlement would then be sustainable with public transport, or bicycle for residents to have easy access to the railway station to be able reach London, Stevenage, or Cambridge and the North, without a car.

Sites in Hatfield, currently in the plan, to which HTC object:

a) Symondshyde: Hatfield Town Council (HTC) is pleased to see that Symondshyde may be removed from the plan. HTC does not support the proposed new housing development at Symondshyde (1,100 houses). It would be an eye-sore on a hill and an “island of housing” without easy infrastructure, shops or public transport in the middle of an exceptionally beautiful greenbelt. It would be next to ancient woodland, with sites of wild animal and plant habitats within the wood, which are likely to be disrupted and spoilt by the building site. As it is separate from the urban area these houses are not included in the 2,572 total.

There are no good reasons to build on this special greenbelt land, when there are other sites available within WHBC, which are much more suitable and sustainable for human dwellings eg The land west of the 4 platform, mainline railway station to London **at Brookman’s Park.**

Brookman’s Park is a natural commuter settlement with a very useful station and regular train service walking distance away from **HS22, BrP5, BrP6 and BrP 12** These sites would allow residents to work in Potters Bar or London, with fast connections to Finsbury Park or Kings Cross, or northwards to Stevenage, Cambridge or Peterborough. The village of Brookman’s Park already has well developed amenities with a pub, restaurant, Chinese take-away, hairdresser, florist, useful food shops, and village hall, all walking distance from the proposed sites with a bridge over the railway to reach the village. It already has the infrastructure to support more housing, and with a suitable bus service it is sustainable.

A reasonable amount of housing proposed in Brookmans Park is more sustainable than Symondshyde, it would share the burden of housing more fairly across the borough, and comply with the new NPPF guidelines for sustainability. The total amount of new housing (suggested below) ,to be built in Brookmans Park would amount to **1,409** extra dwellings, and would cover the removal of Symondshyde from the plan.

This Plan could include the following sites in Brookmans Park: BrP5 (**165**) and HS22 (**450**)- next to the railway line ; BrP12a (Care home **80**); BrP 12 (**125**) near the railway ; BrP1 Bell Bar Farm (**104**); BrP6 (**210**) near the railway and BrP34 (**275**) planned for after

2025 following demolition of the transmitter, when TV and Radio complete the digital transfer.

This would cover the removal of **Symondshyde (1,100)** , **South Way (HAT11) (120)** and **College Lane (HSW94) (115)** a total of **1,335** dwellings, from the Hatfield allocation in the plan at present

Other sites in Hatfield

In the list of sites proposed for Hatfield – there are problems with **losing Greenbelt as an important boundary or gap between major settlements in two locations**

b) HAT2, which is in Ellenbrook Park . HTC welcomes the observation **that HAT2 appears to have been removed from the current version of the Local Plan.** However the Inspectors comment on March 12th deserves reply. This is only free public park available to the population of Hatfield. It is well used, by residents, dog walkers and students with the local Parkrun held there every Sat (300 + people attending) - important to public health. This important green space, north of the St Alban's Rd, west of Salisbury village, and South of Coopers Green lane , was promised to the residents of Salisbury village, Ellenbrook, and Hatfield new Garden Village in the S106 agreement of 2000 by Arlington (the previous BAe land owners) as their recreational space. Ellenbrook Park Preservation Trust lease document was drawn up by Arlington in 2000, within the S106 agreement, but has not yet been signed by Arlington. HTC, Colney heath and St.Albans City Council feel very strongly that this document, which should have been signed 20 years ago, as promised by Arlington, needs to be signed now. It is a contract with WHBC and 4 other councils to ensure that this land is preserved as a green space for the next 125 years for the people of Hatfield.

Many of the houses in Salisbury village have very small back gardens on the understanding that this shared space would be available to them for recreation. It is also the important Greenbelt divide **marking the boundary between Hatfield and St Albans, forming part of the “fragile gap”**. This land should not have houses built on it.

There is carcinogenic bromate pollution underground in the chalk aquifer (9-15m underground) under HAT2. The bromate concentration is 100x the WHO recommended level for drinking water. This plume of bromate has leaked from a chemical works in Sandridge and should not be disrupted. It was the subject of a Public Inquiry (conducted in 2008) which set up a for remediation. The Environment Agency has recently (2019) required further remediation of the plume to be conducted, to protect Hertfordshire's drinking water supplies. One of the prime sites suggested for remediation has been HAT2 but this would be incompatible with housing.

c) **HAT11 (Southway)** -115 dwellings. This is also an important Greenbelt divide, marking the **boundary between Hatfield and Welham Green** so that the two settlements do not coalesce. It was discussed in stage 3 Greenbelt assessment of sites in the Local Plan and was allocated a high harm rating regarding removing it from Greenbelt. We agree with this.

It is also located right next to the cemetery in South Way, which is being developed in the next year to become a Public crematorium, with a new chapel, accessible from Southway. It is important for relatives grieving, funeral services and those visiting graves that the quiet and serenity of this location is preserved.

Southway marks the Southerly boundary of Hatfield, and the location of this settlement is quite isolated from any other housing, community, shops or other infrastructure. No other housing is located on Southway. With possible air pollution from the crematorium, and the other factors above, HTC objects to this site in the Local plan, as unsuitable.

d) HSW94-(College lane allotments) 115 dwellings

This is not a healthy place to build houses next to the A1(M), with harmful PM2.5 and Nitrous oxide from traffic exhaust, polluting the air. The plot of land is small and narrow. We fear these may be planned as student flats, which is surplus to the current need for accommodation.

Meanwhile the allotments are a valued green space for families living in flats in Hatfield. Giving children and parents without gardens the chance to grow their own vegetables, and to learn about gardening for exercise. The plant photosynthesis helps to digest the CO₂ from the traffic fumes and produce more oxygen

The total number of dwellings in Hatfield, which we ask to be removed from the plan is 1,335 –to be replaced by more sustainable sites in Brookman’s Park – totalling 1,409 dwellings .

In Summary

- 1) North west Hatfield (HAT1)-**Stanboroughbury (1,750)** – with 100 extra houses added since 2019 (YES) .
 - 2) Highview Flats (HW100) **146** – single, double and triple flats (YES)
 - 3) Southway? (HAT11) -**120** houses -Greenbelt divide issue (NO)
 - 4) College Lane North-allotments (HSW94) -115 Houses- next to A1(M)- bad air pollution, cramped unsuitable (NO)
 - 5) Onslow St Audreys school playing fields (HE80)-86 houses (YES)
 - 6) Link drive car park (HE17) (Demolishing skateboard park) -80 flats next to Goldings House (YES but Save the skate board park)
 - 7) 1A Town Centre (HC100b)- demolish car-park and shops-71 flats (not enough car parking for shoppers, plus residents)
 - 8) Wellfield Rd (Kahn factory site) (HE23) next door to Wrafton House Surgery (62 flats) (YES)
 - 9) Minster Close (HSW92) -49 extra flats (but Sheltered housing demolished total 99 flats YES)
 - 10) Filbert Close -off Hazel Grove (HS91)- 37 new houses (YES) .
 - 11) Lemsford Rd car park (HC08) 32 new flats, next door to the swimming pool (not enough parking)
 - 12) Hollyfield garage demolition (HS31) 13 houses/flats (YES)
 - 13) Meridian House (HC11) 11 extra units added to student accommodation (YES) .
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- 14) NB An extra 60 flats could be built in Birchwood on HTC land in the next 5 years , alongside modernisation of Birchwood Sport centre