

Site

BioPark

Broadwater Road

Welwyn Garden City

Hertfordshire

AL7 3AX

PINS Reference:

APP/C1950/W/22/3294860

Housing Mix and Five Year Housing Land Supply
Statement of Common Ground

HG Group and Welwyn Hatfield Borough
Council (Revision A)

24th June 2022

1. Housing Mix

Context

The Council's decision notice gave three reasons for refusal, the first of which related to housing mix in stating that the proposed development would fail to meet the objectively assessed need for housing in Welwyn Hatfield and in contrary to Policy SP7 in the emerging local plan:

The proposed housing tenures and mix (including affordable housing) would fail to meet the objectively assessed need for housing in the borough and would not contribute to creating a sustainable, inclusive and mixed community. As such, the application is contrary to Policy SP 7 of the emerging local plan.

Matters in Agreement

The submission draft version of the relevant text of Policy SP 7 is:

Type and Mix of Housing

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.

Housing mix: *Proposals for 11 or more new dwellings should demonstrate how the mix of tenure, type and size of housing proposed on sites will reflect the council's latest evidence of housing need and market demand and contribute towards meeting the varied needs of different households including single person households, couples, families with children, older people, people with disabilities and people wishing to build their own homes. For larger sites, there should be a greater opportunity to deliver a broader mix.*

The most recent draft of the relevant text of Policy SP 7 is that set out in the Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications - January 2020 (Examination Document EX235) which was produced to capture likely modifications following the Hearing sessions. No public consultation on these modifications has taken place:

Housing Mix

Proposals for 10 or more new dwellings should demonstrate how the mix of tenure, type and size of housing proposed on sites will reflect has had regard to the council's latest evidence of housing need and market demand and contribute towards meeting the varied needs of different households including single person households, couples, families with children, older people, people with disabilities and people wishing to build their own homes. For larger sites, there should be a greater opportunity to deliver a broader mix.

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The evidence base that informs the mix of dwellings set out in Policy SP 7 is the 2017 SHMA update. Table 10 of the 2017 SHMA, sets out the implied size of housing required between 2013 and 2032, for all tenures.

Table 1: 2017 SHMA Implied Mix

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed	Total
Size of Housing Required (SHMA 2017) 2013 - 2032	13%	22%	41%	23%	100%
SHMA Identified Housing Need (800dpa) (2013-2032)	1,560	2,640	4,920	2,760	12,000

Paragraph 5.20 of section 5, of the 2017 SHMA states that:

The analysis presented above should therefore only be used for guidance in its translation into policy and for the monitoring of future development. While this evidence provides a valuable overall indication of the broad mix of housing which may be required, it is recommended that policies are not overly prescriptive in directly basing requirements for individual sites on the illustrative mix presented above. The individual mix of housing provided on a site-by-site basis will need to take account of local market evidence and viability considerations, which will have an important influence on the appropriate mix.

Paragraph 5.12 and Figure 4 of the 20/21 AMR, provides an update to the 2017 SHMA derived implied mix by property size/type, using the adjusted 2018-based projections and a 2016-36 plan period. This has not yet been published as part of the Local Plan review or included as a modification to the draft plan at this stage. The figure comes from Local Plan Inspector's conclusion in his note¹ dated June 2021 that the OAN figure of 15,200 is an appropriate basis for planning for housing.

¹ Reconsideration of the Plan's Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need in the context of the 2018-based household projections (June 2021). Examination Library ref: EX274.

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The implied housing requirement based on this, broken down by the size of the homes required, is set out in the table below.

Table 2: Plan period 2016-36 – Implied Housing Requirement based on OAN of 15,200

	Implied Housing Requirement (%)	Implied Housing Requirement Based on OAN 15,200
Studio/1 Bed	15%	2,208
2 Beds	23%	3,521
3 Beds	41%	6,224
4+ Beds	21%	3,247
Total	100%	15,200

For context the 2019 Technical OAN Paper, which utilised a 2016-based project, contained the following implied housing mix.

Table 3: 2019 Technical OAN Paper Implied Mix

	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4+ beds
2016-based	14%	23%	41%	22%

In summary, the 3 SHMA / Technical papers the Council has published which contain an implied housing mix, have the following recommendations

Table 4: Summary of Implied Mixes

	1 bed	2 bed	3 beds	4+ beds
2017 SHMA	13%	22%	41%	23%
2019 Technical Paper	14%	23%	41%	22%
AMR 2020/21	15%	23%	41%	21%

The Council monitor housing delivery on an annual basis and publish housing completions and break this down by bedroom size. The assessment period for the SHMA covers 2013 to 2023. The AMRs prior to 2015/16 do not provide exact figures on housing delivered by size.

Table 5: The housing completion rates in the Borough from 2013 – 2021 AMR Extract

	2013/ 14	2014/ 15	2015/ 16	2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	Total % 2013/ 14 - 2020/ 21
1 bedroom studio	1	29	0	34	8	43	246	5	11%
1 bedroom flat	47	29	56	77	41	101	143	142	20%
2 bedroom flat	90	88	139	119	63	233	254	162	35%
2 bedroom house	26	40	43	12	18	22	9	14	6%
3 bedroom house	42	73	36	61	61	43	15	19	11%
4 bedroom house	30	61	31	36	42	30	4	51	9%
Other	18	36	33	31	81	33	26	28	9%

Note the high number of studio flats completed in 2019/20 was as a result of student accommodation completing - as these were self-contained flats rather than communal accommodation they were included in the reported figures.

The 2017 SHMA update utilises the 2014-based SNPP, then making upward adjustments for improved household formation rates for younger people and a response to market signals. This is then rounded up to 800 dwellings per annum. The SHMA calculates need from 2013 to 2032.

Section 5 of the 2017 SHMA – Housing Type and Mix, explores how a changing demographic profile may generate a need for housing of different sizes over the plan period. The analysis does not seek to estimate how market factors, such as changes to house prices, incomes and household preferences will impact upon the propensity of households to occupy different sizes of property.

The Local Housing Need (LHN) for Welwyn Hatfield is 878 dwellings per year (dpa), as calculated by the Standard Methodology. These figures are included in the latest Annual Monitoring Report (2020/21), dated February 2022.

The LHN is the appropriate housing need figure to be used in the determination of this application for decision making.

Applying the Standard Methodology, utilising a later demographic starting point of 2022 and the most recent affordability ratio results in a higher figure of 888 dpa for the period 22/23-26/27. This is not reflected in the latest AMR 5YHLS assessment.

The LHN is the appropriate housing requirement figure to be used for calculating the 5YHLS and decision making, in the determination of this appeal.

The housing requirement as set out by the Inspector conducting the examination of the Local Plan, and the indicative mix associated with this are also material considerations. The weight to be afforded to these factors is for the decision-maker.

The Inspector undertaking the Examination of the draft Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan has concluded that the 2018-based household projections represent a meaningful change to the context. They consider that the housing requirement figures for the plan period 2016-36, set out in Plan Policy SP 2, should be amended to 15,200 dwellings (an average of 760 dwellings per annum). This figure has provided the basis for calculating the implied need for different types of housing within the latest AMR. An explanatory note describing how this has been calculated has now been prepared by the Council. This was previously unavailable for the Local Plan Examination (This will be a Core Document for the Inquiry).

2. Housing Land Supply

Matters in Agreement and areas in dispute

The table below provides a summary of the parties' respective positions on the matter of 5 Year Housing Land Supply. The Council and the Appellant agree that the housing land supply position is between 1.75 and 2.46 years. The Council base their position on the information in the latest Annual Monitoring Report, the Appellant's position will be set out in detail within their Proof of Evidence.

It is common ground between both parties that the agreed range is a sufficient level of detail for the purposes of this appeal and that the inquiry need not test evidence to establish an exact figure within this range.

Table 6: 5YHLS Summary of Positions

Matters in Agreement	
Housing Need	
1.1	Standard Method for Welwyn Hatfield
	The standard method calculation (as presented in 2020/21 AMR) is 4,390 or 878 per year The standard method calculated using 2022 demographic base date and latest affordability ratio is 888 per year
1.2	Housing Delivery Test
	In the Housing Delivery Test 2021 Measurement the Council delivered 66% of its housing requirement over the assessment period. An action plan is required by the Council
1.3	Buffer
	As per the outcome of the Housing Delivery Test – a 20% buffer is applied in the 5YHLS calculation.
1.4	Backlog
	The use of the standard method means the assessment of need is reset and there is no backlog included in the five year housing land supply calculation, including that accrued since the base date of the submission draft local plan.
Housing Supply	
1.5	Assessment Period
	2021/22 to 2025/26
1.6	Council's Supply and summary position utilising the housing requirement from the AMR
	2.46 years.
1.7	Appellant's Supply and summary position utilising the housing requirement from the AMR
	1.75 years

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Matters in Agreement			
Housing Need			
1.8	Areas of Dispute between both parties		
		Council	Appellant
	Windfall Allowance	278	164
	Broadwater Road West SPD Site -	616	428
	Link Drive	80	0
	Garages at Hollyfield	13	0
	29 Broadwater Road	128	0
	Norton Building, Bridge Road East	122	0

This Statement of Common/Uncommon Ground has been agreed by:

Lambert Smith Hampton on behalf of the Appellant HG Group

Signed



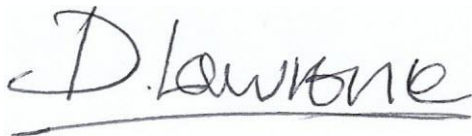
Name

Alex Roberts – Director – Planning, Regeneration + Infrastructure

Dated

24 June 2022

Signed



Name

Derek Lawrence - Development Management Services Manager on behalf of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Dated

24 June 2022