

Examination of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan

Council's Statement - Stage 8 Hearing session

Northern Settlements

Settlement: Oaklands and Mardley Heath

Policy Number: SADM28

**Site References: HS16 (OMH8) and
HS17(OMH5)**

Matter number: N/A

Issues: Air/Noise

Question Numbers: Q47



Policy SADM 28 - Sites HS16 (OMH8) and HS17 (OMH5) Land west of Great North Road

- 47) Have the ramifications of air and noise pollution from the adjacent motorway on the potential living conditions at these sites been fully considered in the context of the potential of these sites to provide for residential development and their viability?

Welwyn Hatfield Response

- a) Both sites have been assessed as suitable for residential development in the HELAA 2016 (**HOU/19**). The HELAA notes the potential for noise and air pollution, due to the proximity of the A1(M). The Council's Environmental Health team provided advice as part of the plan making process and this was used to inform the assessment of site suitability. Environmental Health raised no in principle objections to the allocation of these sites.
- b) For both sites, the estimated dwelling capacity was moderated in the HELAA to allow for woodland areas to be retained along the northern edges of the sites, creating a buffer zone between any new development and the A1(M). For OMH8, this resulted in a relatively modest density estimate of 30dph (5 dwellings). OMH5 is an irregular shaped site with sloping topography. Taking into account the relationship with surrounding properties (as well as the need to create a buffer to the A1(M) and retain trees), the site's constraints resulted in a more modest density estimate of 20dph (20 dwellings).
- c) **Noise:** On such sites, at planning application stage, Environmental Health would typically require a noise survey and report (based on up to date readings) with details of the noise levels to which all facades would be exposed, details of the protected outdoor amenity space, window and ventilation specifications and construction details in terms of sound insulation. Any planning application is likely to be conditioned, so that appropriate measures can be approved prior to commencement of the development.
- d) It may be necessary to require mechanical ventilation on the most exposed elevations to ensure that habitable rooms do not exceed relevant (BS) standards. Careful design will also be required to ensure that external amenity space can be provided within the relevant (WHO) noise levels.
- e) The relevant standards should, as far as possible, be achievable by careful design. In practice, this means the design, configuration and orientation of buildings within the site and the use of appropriate barriers (or shields) to ensure that the fewest possible rooms need mechanical ventilation and outdoor amenity space standards can be complied with.
- f) It is considered that implications of noise impact has been appropriately considered at the plan-making stage and this will be considered further at the planning application stage in light of detailed proposals pertaining at that time.

- g) **Table 12** (which follows policy SADM28) of the Draft Plan identifies the need to retain trees in the northern parts of the sites and to mitigate pollution from the A1(M).
- h) **Air:** The proximity of the A1(M) is noted in the HELAA. However, Environmental Health has raised no in principle objection to allocation of these sites in terms of air quality at this plan-making stage. The planning authority is not aware of any material evidence to suggest that the site is unsuitable (in principle) for residential development.
- i) However, in order that more detailed consideration can be given to this issue, the HELAA notes the requirement for an air quality survey and report to be submitted at the planning application stage (for each site).
- j) **Table 12** (which follows policy SADM28) of the Draft Plan identifies the need air quality to be taken into account (at planning application stage).
- k) In practice, and at the planning application stage, an air quality assessment will need to consider pollutant levels (Nitrogen Dioxide, PM10 and PM2.5) and take account of any nearby monitoring undertaken by the Council. If the assessment report demonstrates that levels could affect future residents, then Environmental Health will require mitigation measures to be incorporated into the development. Such measures would be similar to those for noise mitigation measures but could also include the provision of electric vehicle charging points, secure cycle parking and good accessibility to bus services to help encourage a modal shift away from more polluting forms of transport.
- l) **Viability:** There is no evidence to suggest that any of the above surveys and mitigation measures would adversely affect the viability of either site so as to render either unachievable within the plan period.