

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

Between

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council in relation to Policy SP 14 New Schools

1. Scope of this Statement

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared to confirm the extent of co-operation and understanding between Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).
- 1.2 This SoCG confirms the shared and common objective between the above parties of delivery of new school infrastructure within Welwyn Hatfield throughout the plan period and in particular of the commitment to provision of additional education capacity as set out in Policy SP 14 of the Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission (DLPPS).

2. The Need for Secondary Education Provision

- 2.1 This SoCG has been prepared in response to WHBC's DLPPS, which will cover the period up to 2032 or 2033. As drafted Policy SP14 of the Plan states that there is "*a requirement for additional secondary education capacity equivalent to three new secondary schools*" to cater for the housing growth planned in the Borough (part i of Policy SP14), and suggests that a sequential approach will be applied to identifying further school capacity required as a result of any additional housing growth, (part ii of Policy SP14).
- 2.2 Part i of Policy SP14 in the DLPPS is open to the misinterpretation that three new secondary schools are required to cater for the growth identified in the DLPPS, whereas in fact new capacity for 18 forms of entry (fe) is required, and a strategy agreed between WHBC and HCC exists for providing this capacity in two new secondary schools (see also the Statement of Common Ground at Examination Document EX23).
- 2.3 The views expressed by the Inspector at the Local Plan examination to date, suggest that there is a strong likelihood that additional housing sites will need to be included to make the plan sound, over and above those in the DLPPS. If this were to be the case, then a third new secondary school would be likely to be required.

3. The Need for Primary Education Provision

- 3.1 All parties agree that it is necessary to meet education needs to support growth in the Local Plan. At paragraph 11.34 to 11.36 of its Regulation 19 consultation response, HCC objected to the soundness of the DLPPS. This was because;
 - i) Paragraph 11.34 and 11.35 identified that there was a 2fe primary shortfall identified in Hatfield and a new 2fe primary is required to serve the south of the town;

- ii) Paragraph 11.36 indicated that in HCC's view the approach to provision of additional primary capacity was considered unsound as it would not ensure that additional school capacity would be provided in locations well-related to the communities in which they are needed.

4. Detailed Statement

- 4.1 The issue of additional primary school capacity to serve South Hatfield (3.1 i) above) has been resolved in the separate Statement of Common Ground agreed between WHBC, HCC, Mrs C Horton 1974 Discretionary Settlement and Ptarmigan Land in connection with Housing Site HS11. In relation to the issue of planning additional education capacity to meet needs arising from further additional housing growth over and above that set out in the plan (3.1 ii) above), WHBC and HCC are committed to further ongoing proactive, collaborative joint working to ensure that new school places are provided in locations well-related to any additional housing growth that is proposed in the plan. The successful resolution of all other outstanding Duty to Co-operate and soundness issues between WHBC and HCC provides ample evidence that the two authorities will work co-operatively to ensure this is the case.
- 4.2 Policy SP14 will be amended to reflect the fact that the reference to three secondary schools actually means 18 forms of entry (fe) of additional secondary school capacity to meet the needs arising from the DLPPS. The second criterion will be amended to acknowledge that further housing growth will lead to the requirement for further primary as well as secondary education capacity. WHBC and HCC will work together to ensure that appropriate additional school places are provided alongside additional housing growth.

5. Changes to Submission Plan (DLPPS)

- 5.1 Policy SP14 sub-paragraph i. will be modified so that the first sentence reads: "*The Council's housing target for the plan period leads to a requirement for additional secondary education capacity equivalent to 18 forms of entry.*"
- 5.2 Policy SP14 sub-paragraph ii. Will be modified to add a new sentence before the penultimate sentence, as follows: "*A new primary school site is also identified within housing site HS11*" also so that the penultimate sentence reads: "*Additional identified housing growth, however, may lead to the requirement for further primary education capacity.*"
- 5.3 In the event that Council subsequently proposes changes to the housing target in the DLPPS through modifications, for example to include additional housing sites, then further modifications may need to be made to Policy SP14 to reflect a revised strategy for providing new education capacity.

6. Future Co-operation

- 6.1 WHBC and HCC agree to continue to work together to ensure that the impacts on requirements for education are factored in to the identification of any additional housing allocations in the Local Plan.
- 6.2 If additional housing is proposed (as per 5.3 above), the County Council would make the New Barnfield site available for a secondary school and as and when it does so it would ensure that capacity of adjacent lands to contribute to the future needs of the District is not prejudiced. In the event that this becomes necessary WHBC and HCC would work together to consider appropriate revision to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to set out the approach to funding/planning obligations and/or CIL.

Signed on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council

Date: January 2018

Name: Trevor Mose

Position: Assistant Director Resources (Property)

Signed on behalf of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Date: January 2018

Name: Councillor Mandy Perkins

Position: Executive Member for Planning, Housing and Community