

**EXAMINATION OF THE WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL  
PLAN**

**STATEMENT OF HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PROPERTY  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ON BEHALF OF HCC SERVICES**

**REPRESENTOR ID 904332**

**TOPIC SPECIFIC POLICIES  
HEARING SESSION 12 POLICY SP14 NEW SCHOOLS**



## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This statement updates the position of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) from a property and service provision perspective in relation to objections made in connection with Policy SP14 of the Plan regarding;

- The provision of sufficient secondary school capacity to cater for the education requirements arising out of the Draft Local Plan Proposed Submission (DLPPS). (HCC was identifying a need for a new school of 8fe with expansion potential to 10fe in Hatfield in paragraph 11.14 of its Regulation 19 representations).
- Consequently, HCC was identifying that the quantum of secondary school capacity in Policy SP14 of the Plan was insufficient to address secondary education needs.
- The provision of sufficient primary school capacity to serve South Hatfield, where HCC identified a shortfall of 2 forms of entry (fe) in provision in its regulation 19 representations. (See 11.35 and 11.36 of the HCC Regulation 19 representations).

## **2.0 The Inspector's Question Relevant to Policy SP14 New Schools**

2.1 The Inspector has posed the question, in relation to policy SP14:

*(138) Does the plan make adequate provision for the increased education capacity required to service the additional school population generated by the proposed development?*

2.2 Aside from the three bullet points identified at 1.1 above, HCC were satisfied that the DLPPS as submitted makes appropriate provision to mitigate education impacts.

2.3 The HCC objection in relation to the soundness of the plan in terms of the adequacy of secondary school provision being made has been overcome. A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been agreed with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) and Gascoyne Cecil Estates (document EX23), which confirms that the strategic site north of Hatfield (SDS5 or Hat 1) will provide an 8fe secondary school with residual land for expansion to 10fe. As part of that SoCG, WHBC and HCC have agreed that the need for the additional 2fe expansion land will be reviewed in the event that housing numbers increase and a third secondary school site is required in order to support delivery of additional housing through the Plan.

2.4 The approach in EX23 therefore addresses the concern identified in the first two bullet points set out in 1.1 above.

2.5 HCC raised concerns regarding primary school capacity, (third bullet at 1.1 above), and specifically the failure of the DLPPS to identify 2fe of new primary capacity to address education needs in Hatfield.

2.6 A SoCG has been agreed between WHBC, the landowners/ promoters of Housing Site HS 11, and HCC. It has recently been submitted by the LPA to

the Programme Officer. This commits to the delivery of a 2fe primary school site as part of site HS 11. This provision overcomes HCC's concerns in relation to primary school provision associated with the submitted DLPPS.

- 2.7 In addition to the SoCG relating to Housing Site HS 11 and in order to provide further clarity WHBC have identified proposed amended wording to Policy SP14. This amended wording would ensure that explicit reference is made to the fact that:

*“a new primary school site is identified within housing site HS11”*

- 2.8 The proposed rewording of Policy SP14 is the subject of a separate Statement of Common Ground which has been agreed between WHBC and HCC. It has recently been submitted by the LPA to the Programme Officer.
- 2.9 In addition, the SoCG relating to Policy SP14, which has been agreed between WHBC and HCC, anticipates the requirement that additional housing sites may need to be factored in to the Plan. Paragraph 2.3 of the SP14 SoCG contains the Planning Authority's identification of the fact that the views expressed by the Inspector at the examination suggest that there is a strong likelihood that additional housing sites will need to be included in order to make the plan sound.
- 2.10 Paragraph 5.2 of the SP14 SoCG which has been agreed with WHBC acknowledges that:

*“Additional identified housing growth, however, may lead to the requirement for further primary education capacity”*

- 2.11 And para 5.3 continues that

*“In the event that the 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”.*

- 2.12 At the Local Plan Examination session with the Council on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2017, the Inspector explicitly asked whether a third secondary school could be provided. Paragraph 2.3 of the SP14 SoCG agreed between WHBC and HCC, acknowledges the fact that the views expressed by the Inspector at the Local Plan examination to date, suggest that there is a strong likelihood that additional housing sites, over and above those in the submitted document will need to be included by WHBC in order to make the DLPPS sound. It again suggests that if this were to be the case then a third new secondary school is likely to be required.
- 2.13 HCC can confirm that if additional housing is proposed, 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.

- 2.14 In summary, since HCC's original Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 representations, significant progress has been made in resolving education issues with WHBC and the relevant landowners/promoters. In the event that additional housing is proposed to make the plan sound then HCC and WHBC remain committed to working together to mitigate education impacts and collaboratively and constructively plan for additional school places. In so doing HCC and WHBC are positively embracing and putting into practice the advice contained at paragraph 162, first bullet, of the NPPF.
- 2.15 Taking into account the SoCG and proposed modifications referred to in this Hearing Statement, the plan is clearly making appropriate and adequate provision for the additional school population generated by the DLPPS, and clearly signals the joint approach which will be adopted if additional housing sites need to be considered in order to make the plan sound.

Matt Wood 25/01/18