

Chapter 11

East of Welwyn Garden City

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11.1 Introduction

- 11.1.1** The area is well located in relation to Welwyn Garden City, and is only a short distance from Hertford. It is largely screened from the wider landscape by the surrounding areas of woodland, which along with the surrounding roads, help to define the structure of the area. Panshanger Lane to the east of the site could provide a clear Green Belt boundary, beyond which is an area of high quality landscape around the Mimram Valley. Welwyn Garden City is well known for its Garden City (after Letchworth) design principles and this should provide a strong framework for consideration of development in this location.
- 11.1.2** The main components of the development strategy for East of Welwyn Garden City are as follows:
- 11.1.3** **Housing:** Land East of Welwyn Garden City is required for development in order to address unmet housing needs from villages in the west of the East Herts area, as well as from nearby Hertford. Approximately 1,700 new homes could be accommodated in the area north and south of the B195 Birchall lane, on land within East Herts District. There is the potential for additional housing development nearby on land within Welwyn Hatfield Borough.
- 11.1.4** **Education:** the site is large enough to accommodate a new secondary school as well as a primary school. This will meet the educational needs of the development as well as providing additional capacity to address wider needs.
- 11.1.5** **Transport:** whilst well located next to the A414 for easy access, and with potential for bus access to Hertford and Welwyn Garden City, further consideration will need to be given to the cumulative impact of development on the pinch-points on the A414 through Hertford, and also the cumulative impact on junction 4 of the A1(M). In terms of sustainable transport, bus routes along the B195 will connect the area with Hertford and Welwyn Garden City. The strategy will also promote usage of National Cycle Route 61 (a disused railway line known as the Cole Green Way), which provides connections between the southern edge of the site and Hertford and offers the potential for leisure and commuter cycling trips to and from the development.
- 11.1.6** **Other Infrastructure:** waste water will drain to Rye Meads, and there is capacity in the sewer serving the area.
- 11.1.7** **Employment and Retail:** the area is well located for easy access to Hatfield Business Park and the employment opportunities within Welwyn Garden City and Hertford. It is therefore proposed that an employment area within the development will be local in character. There are also likely to be employment opportunities within a neighbourhood centre provided as part of the development. There are underlying mineral deposits which will need to be extracted prior to the commencement of development, and if possible should be used locally in the construction phase.











- 11.1.8 Character:** Garden City design principles should be extended to this development area. Design principles should be secured through design codes to ensure the highest quality design and layout and a comprehensive and unified approach to the whole development, albeit reflecting different character areas across the site. The Panshanger Country Park will form a robust barrier to coalescence between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City, but will be easily accessed on foot or by bicycle from either location. The Country Park will be opened up to full public access as a new area of strategic Green Infrastructure.

11.2 Development East of Welwyn Garden City

11.2.1 The main features of the policy approach to development East of Welwyn Garden City are shown on Figure 11.1 below:

Figure 11.1 Key Diagram for Land East of Welwyn Garden City



- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|
|  | Site allocations
(including local green infrastructure) |  | New employment area |
|  | Broad location for development |  | New district centre |
| DPD | Development Plan Document |  | Railway station |
|  | New secondary school(s) required |  | District/County boundary |
|  | New primary school(s) required |  | Existing built up areas |
| | |  | Green Belt |

11.2.2 Given the complexity of the transport issues in particular, a subsequent Development Plan Document will be necessary to assess the feasibility of the proposal as well as the strategy and supporting infrastructure for the area. Given the location of the area adjacent to Welwyn Garden City, the approach to this site will be prepared with input from a broad range of stakeholders including Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

- 11.2.3** It is estimated that around 1,700 homes could be provided on land in East Herts including a new secondary school, small employment area and neighbourhood centre. However, given the need for prior mineral extraction, it is estimated that only 450 homes would be completed prior to 2031.
- 11.2.4** The approach could be extended to include potential development sites within Welwyn Hatfield Borough, including at the adjacent Panshanger aerodrome and to the south-east of Welwyn Garden City, should Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council wish to see development brought forward in these areas. A comprehensive approach to masterplanning for the whole area should be pursued.
- 11.2.5** Technical work to support the Development Plan Document will be expected to be part-funded by the relevant landowners/developers for and with the direct involvement of East Herts Council (potentially with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council), Hertingfordbury Parish Council, Hertfordshire County Council as transport authority and Local Authority with responsibility for education and minerals, and other public and regulatory bodies as appropriate.

EWEL1 Land East of Welwyn Garden City

I. To meet long-term housing needs Land East of Welwyn Garden City is identified as a Broad Location for Development. East Herts Council will test through a Development Plan Document (DPD) the feasibility of Land East of Welwyn Garden City to accommodate around 1,700 new homes and supporting infrastructure in accordance with Policy DPS4 (Broad Locations for Development). Development shall not proceed until the adoption of the DPD.

II. The DPD shall be prepared by the Council (potentially jointly with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council), working with key stakeholders including, Hertingfordbury Parish Council, Hertfordshire County Council, landowners/developers and other stakeholders as necessary.

III. Depending on the scale and form of development opportunities that are identified, in addition to the requirements of Policy DPS4 (Broad Locations for Development), the Development Plan Document and site wide masterplan is expected to address the following provisions and issues:

- (a) the quantum and distribution of development within this location;
- (b) key design and layout principles to guide subsequent site specific design codes in order to ensure high quality design;
- (c) a range of dwelling type and mix, in accordance with the full provisions of Policy HOU1 (Type and Mix of Housing);
- (d) Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy HOU3 (Affordable Housing)

(e) quality local green infrastructure through the site including opportunities for preserving and enhancing on-site assets, maximising opportunities to link into existing assets, and enhancing biodiversity;

(f) necessary new utilities infrastructure;

(g) a decentralised or District Heating system, or other low carbon heating system for residential and commercial use throughout the development, using locally sourced fuel and with appropriate long-term management arrangements;

(h) sustainable drainage and provision for flood mitigation;

(i) social infrastructure including: primary school/s to serve the development and appropriate surrounding catchment area/s; a secondary school to serve the development and the wider area; health services and facilities; community facilities; public amenity green space and play areas;

(j) landscaping;

(k) treatment of the Cole Green Way;

(l) access arrangements and wider strategic and local highways mitigation measures, including impacts along the A414 in Hertford and the A1(M);

(m) sustainable transport measures including the encouragement of walking and cycling, enhanced passenger transport and providing linkages with Hertford and Welwyn Garden City;

(n) appropriate levels of local retail and employment opportunities to promote self containment and sustainability, including provision for home-working;

(o) encouraging successful and active communities, including innovative approaches to create the conditions for local resident participation, governance and stewardship of their new communities;

(p) the relationship between the Broad Location and Welwyn Garden City;

(q) Green Belt boundaries;

(r) financial viability and the delivery of all necessary infrastructure;

(s) planning obligations including on and off-site developer contributions; and

(t) other policy provisions of the District Plan and relevant matters, as appropriate.

IV. Land to the East of Welwyn Garden City will remain within the Green Belt until such time as it may be brought forward for development through the adoption of the Development Plan Document by East Herts Council.

V. A new Country Park shall be provided at the Panshanger Estate as a condition of development of Land East of Welwyn Garden City, comprising the following features:

- (a) open access to the park as a multi-functional green space for members of the public and for wildlife;
- (b) pedestrian and cycle routes through the park between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City;
- (c) natural sustainable drainage measures;
- (d) enhancement of biodiversity and local habitats;
- (e) suitable financial and other arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of the Country Park.

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