Joint Examination of the WHLP and EHDP

Birchall Garden Suburb/East of Welwyn Garden City.

Response of Inspectors Matters and Issues from Dr Jonathan Fisher (Environmental Economist) and Dr FB Goldsmith (Ecologist and SUSTRANS Ranger) on behalf of the Green Corridor Group.

Matter 6 – Sustainable location and movement.

1. We do not support the intention of creating a string of residential developments along the edges and across the Green Corridor and do not believe that this pattern is sustainable.
2. Similarly, we believe that the proposals to provide improved and segregated movement facilities are inadequate.
3. We believe that facilities for travel and low intensity recreation within the Corridor are inadequate and their design is unimaginative. There is only one SUSTRANS route (Route 61) and that runs from north to south whilst the main long- distance desire lines for flows which are from Hertford to WGC and Hertford to Hatfield are not catered for. Walkers and cyclists require routes that are quiet, away from the sound of traffic and vehicle pollution. These are not provided but could be at low cost and to the benefit of the environment as well as people's health and enjoyment. (We understand that Tarmac held a meeting at Mill Ggreen where similar views were aired by participants).
4. Birchall Garden Suburb will be remote from the Centre of WGC and is unlikely to have regular and frequent public transport services. If it were closer, and in keeping with the original intention of the Garden City Plan, it would be possible for residents to have easy access to jobs, jops and social activities.
5. It is not desirable for walkers, cyclists or horse riders to have to travel close to the A414 which is a heavily used, polluted and noisy road – the last place where one would wish to walk or cycle.
6. Housing development in the area of the Green Corridor would necessitate transport by private car and would increase traffic on the A414 trunk road which is already extremely busy at peak times, leading to chronic congestion in Hertford on Gascoyne Way and at town centre roundabouts and junctions.
7. SUSTRANS Route 61 across the Green Corridor is narrow, tightly fenced on both sides and lacking lateral junctions. It should be part of a network providing access to settlements and recreational opportunities on both sides and in all directions. Access into Panshanger Park needs provision, signing, appropriate surfacing and be close to people's desire lines.
8. Clearly, for these reasons none of what has been proposed is either acceptable or sustainable.