



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

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Housing and Communities*
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London SW1P 4DF

Ka Ng
Chief Executive
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Council Offices
Campus East
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6AE

Your reference:
Our reference:

18 October 2022

Dear Ka Ng,

Re. Modification of Article 4 Direction in relation to Class ZA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 for sites within the borough of Welwyn Hatfield

Background

As you are aware, with effect from 31st August 2020 Class ZA was inserted into Part 20 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 ("the General Permitted Development Order").

Class ZA permits development consisting of the demolition of a detached building which was in use as an office, research and development or light industrial use, or any combination of these uses, on 12 March 2020, and its replacement with a purpose built detached block of flats or a purpose built detached dwellinghouse, with a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

On 1st February 2021 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council made a direction under Article 4(1) of the General Permitted Development Order disapplying Class ZA for various sites within the borough of Welwyn Hatfield ("the Article 4 direction"). The Article 4 direction was confirmed on 26th January 2022 and came into force on 1st February 2022.

Consideration and Reasons

In considering the Article 4 direction, the Secretary of State has had regard to national policy on Article 4 directions. Paragraph 53 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides that-

The use of Article 4 directions to remove national permitted development rights should:

- where they relate to change from non-residential use to residential use, be limited to situations where an Article 4 direction is necessary to avoid wholly unacceptable adverse impacts (this could include the loss of the essential core of a primary shopping area which would seriously undermine its vitality and viability, but would be very unlikely to extend to the whole of a town centre);*
- in other cases, be limited to situations where an Article 4 direction is necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of the area (this could include the use of Article 4 directions to require planning permission for the demolition of local facilities);*
- in all cases, be based on robust evidence, and apply to the smallest geographical area possible.*

Paragraph 050 of the Planning Practice Guidance provides that the Secretary of State will only intervene in Article 4 Directions where there are clear reasons for doing so. The Secretary of State considers that there are clear reasons justifying intervention in the Article 4 Direction.

The Class ZA permitted development right provides new opportunities for the demolition and replacement of vacant, detached buildings used as offices, for research and development or in light industrial use, with purpose built flats or a dwellinghouse, to support housing delivery and economic recovery. The permitted development right includes a number of national safeguards: all new residential units delivered through the permitted development right must meet nationally described space standards; the rights do not apply where the footprint of the building to be demolished exceeds 1,000 square metres or the building is higher than 18 metres; the building must have been vacant for at least 6 months; and, there are prior approvals for, amongst other things, the design and external appearance of the new building.

The Article 4 direction, as made, does not take a sufficiently targeted approach in the assessment of the wholly unacceptable adverse impacts of the permitted development right in each location. Such an approach is necessary to ensure that the Article 4 direction applies only to the smallest geographical area possible. The Secretary of State is therefore of the view that the boundary must now be modified in accordance with the notice attached to this letter.

This will ensure that the Article 4 Direction is focused on protecting the most significant office, research and development and light industrial locations within the borough of Welwyn Hatfield where the permitted development right would have a wholly unacceptable adverse impact. It covers the whole, or parts of, Welwyn Garden City Employment Area, Hatfield Business Park, Beaconsfield Road (Hatfield), Great North Road (Hatfield) and Sopers Road, Cuffley.

These modifications will ensure that the Article 4 Direction boundary for areas within the borough of Welwyn Hatfield are justified by robust evidence and comply with national planning policy.

Decision

The Secretary of State has decided to modify the Article 4 direction to restrict the Article 4 direction to the areas shown on the attached maps and I attach a direction to that effect.

Procedural issues

For the purposes of paragraph 1(13) and (16) of Schedule 3 of the General Permitted Development Order I hereby notify you of the modification of the Article 4 direction.

Under paragraph 1(17) of Schedule 3, you must give notice of the attached direction in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 1(1) to (3) of Schedule 3 of the General Permitted Development Order. You are required to give notice of this direction as soon as reasonably practicable after receipt of this letter. Although it is a matter for you, it is suggested that you give notice of the direction in the same manner as for the original form of the direction. In due course, please confirm when and where the notice is published or served so we know the date the direction comes into force.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Joanna Averley', written in black ink on a white background.

Joanna Averley
Chief Planner

DIRECTION UNDER THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015

Modification of the Article 4 direction made by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council on 1st February 2021 in relation to development consisting of Class ZA demolition of buildings and construction of new dwellinghouses in their place

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in exercise of the powers conferred by paragraph 1(13) of Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) and of all other powers enabling him in that behalf, makes the following direction:

Interpretation

1. In this Direction-

" General Permitted Development Order" means the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended); and

"Article 4 direction" means the Direction made by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order on 1st February 2021 in respect of development consisting of the demolition of a building comprising premises in a use falling within offices, or research and development of products and processes or light industrial appropriate in a residential area or any combination of those uses, and its replacement with a purpose built block of flats or a purpose built detached dwellinghouse, namely development which is permitted by Class ZA as inserted into Part 20 of Schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order. The Article 4 direction relates to sites in the borough of Welwyn Hatfield.

Direction

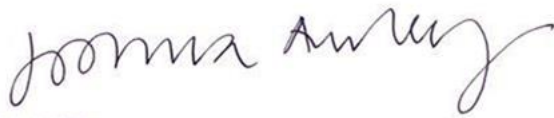
2. The Secretary of State hereby directs that the Article 4 direction is modified as follows:
3. Instead of the Article 4 direction applying to land described in the Second Schedule to that direction, comprising sites within the borough of Welwyn Hatfield, it shall apply only to the land specified in this Direction.
4. The specified land is the areas outlined on the attached maps being:
 - Map 1: Locations in Welwyn Garden City Employment Area
 - Map 2: Locations in Hatfield Business Park, Beaconsfield Road and Great North Road, Hatfield
 - Map 3: Sopers Road, Cuffley
5. For the avoidance of doubt, this Article 4 Direction does not apply to any land outside the areas outlined.

Entry into force

6. This Direction comes into force in accordance with paragraph 18 of Schedule 3 of the General Permitted Development Order.

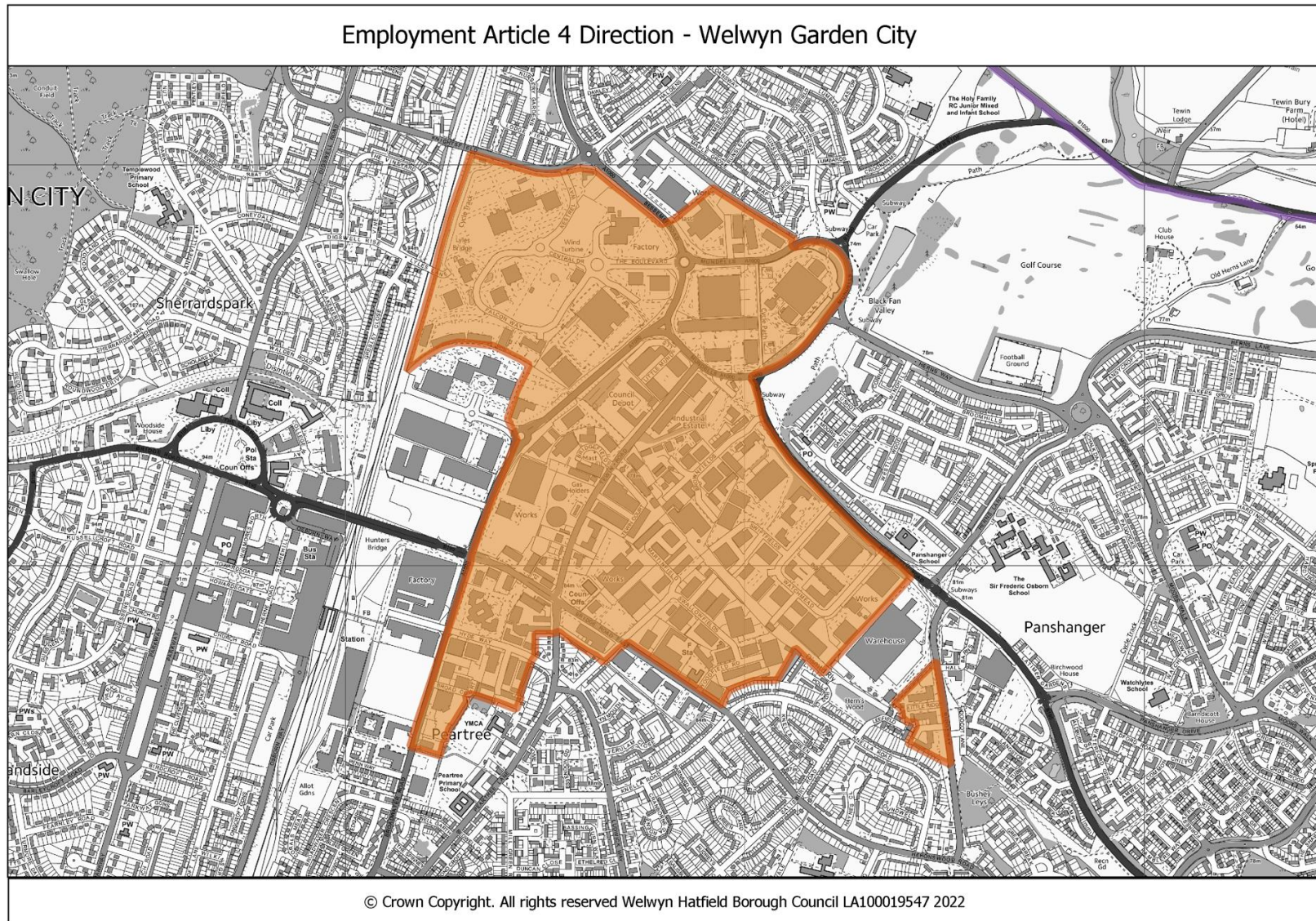
Signed for and on behalf of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

On: 18 October 2022

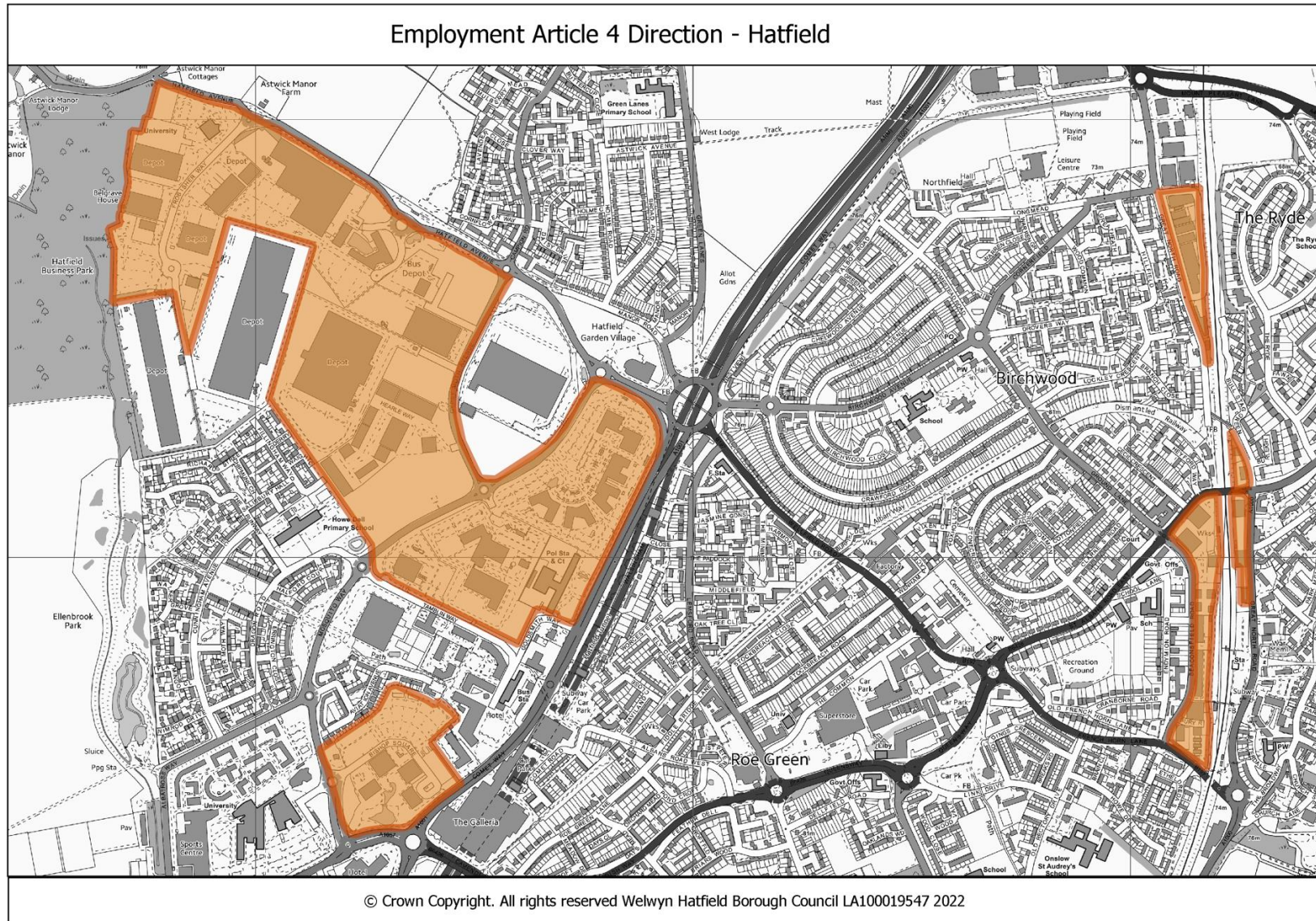
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joanna Averley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'y'.

Joanna Averley
Chief Planner

Map 1: Locations in Welwyn Garden City Employment Area



Map 2: Locations in Hatfield Business Park, Beaconsfield Road and Great North Road, Hatfield



Map 3: Sopers Road, Cuffley

