We can make published information available in different languages. Braille and large print upon request. We also have interpreting facilities for people who do not speak English. Telephone 01438 242242 or Textphone 01438 242555 for information.

我们也可以应要求，以不同语言提供出版信息。我们还为不懂英语的人士提供口译服务。请致电01438 242242或拨打文本电话01438 242555以获取相关信息。

環境保護

Translation Facilities

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Tell us what you think

This document has been prepared for consultation purposes and is available for public comment from Monday 19th June 2006 for six weeks.

Any comments you wish to make on this document should be sent to the Planning Policy team at Stevenage Borough Council by **5pm on Friday 28th July 2006.**

To assist in submitting comments, a response form is available as a separate sheet. Where possible, we would greatly appreciate comments to be submitted on-line using the Council’s website (www.stevenage.gov.uk).

Comments can be sent, faxed or emailed to:

**On-line**  
www.stevenage.gov.uk

**By mail**  
Planning Policy  
Stevenage Borough Council  
Daneshill House  
Danestrete  
Stevenage  
SG1 1HN

**By fax**  
01438 242922

**By textphone**  
01438 242555

**By email**  
planningpolicy@stevenage.gov.uk

All responses will be considered and used to prepare a Preferred Options document in 2007 which you will have another opportunity to comment on.

If you have any questions regarding this document, please contact a member of the Council’s Planning Policy team on telephone 01438 242823.
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Appendix 2: Evidential studies commissioned by other organisations
Appendix 3: Glossary
Introduction

What is a Core Strategy?

1. The Core Strategy sets out the broad vision for the future of Stevenage Borough to 2021. It is based on the provisions contained in the emerging East of England Plan (December 2004) and the social, economic and environmental objectives of the agreed Stevenage Community Strategy (July 2004).

2. The Core Strategy forms the policy framework for the whole of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Stevenage. All subsequent Development Plan Documents (DPDs) must be in conformity with the Core Strategy.

3. The Core Strategy therefore sets out the spatial implications for the future development of Stevenage across all land uses and the broad-brush policies that the Council will use to determine planning applications.

What are Generic Development Control Policies?

4. Generic development control policies are non site-specific and town-wide policies that the Council will use to determine planning applications to 2021. Most generic development control policies state the circumstances under which planning permission will or will not be granted for particular forms of development (subject to certain caveats). Non site-specific policies tend to be the most used development control policies and the ones against which most domestic or householder planning applications are determined.

5. Development control policies with a site-specific element are set out in the Site Specific Policies DPD which is also out to public consultation and can be viewed at www.stevenage.gov.uk.

What is a Key Issues and Alternative Options consultation document?

6. A Key Issues and Alternative Options document is a report that the Council is required to produce by central Government as part of the evolution of new planning proposals for the Borough. We are now setting out the planning strategy and policy framework against which planning applications will be determined through until 2021, in line with the policy requirements of the draft East of England Plan. It sets out, in very broad terms, what the Borough Council believes are the key issues that will help to shape the long-term planning future of Stevenage to 2021. Following on from those key issues, it also sets out potential alternative ways in which we might tackle the issues that we have identified as being important.

7. In identifying the key issues and alternative options, we have assumed that:

- All necessary infrastructure (such as roads, water supply, drainage, electricity, gas, telecommunications, etc) will be delivered to support the level of development set out in the East of England Plan.
All significant environmental assets in Stevenage (such as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest, wildlife sites, ancient lanes, floodplains, areas of archaeological interest, etc) will continue to be protected

All legislation and planning policies established by the European Union, the UK Government and the East of England Plan will be met

8. The Key Issues and Alternative Options consultation stage is the first in a series of ever more detailed consultations that we will carry out on each of our planning documents (formally called Development Plan Documents, or DPDs, although we will call them simply ‘plans’ in the remainder of this document). At this stage in the evolutionary process we are simply trying to identify what the broad scope of the plan should be, so this document does not attempt to identify all of the issues or all of the possible options for tackling those issues that it does identify.

9. Throughout this consultation document, we refer to reports or studies that have informed our judgement. A summary of each evidential study we have commissioned is in Appendix 1. A full version of each study is available on our website (www.stevenage.gov.uk) and can be viewed or purchased at our Danestrete office.

10. A list of studies prepared by other organisations that have also informed our judgement are in Appendix 2.

Haven’t you already made your choices?

11. No. The Key Issues and Alternative Options document is used to consult you to help inform the preparation of the next – preferred options stage – document. There is no commitment on our part at this stage to pursue any of the actions, options or sites proposed in this document. The options are offered for comment and consideration without any preference being expressed. Once this consultation exercise is completed we will use the results of the exercise – together with other material – to determine which of the options (if any) is the preferred way forward.

What is the East of England Plan and why is it important?

12. The East of England Plan is the planning document for the region as a whole (or Regional Spatial Strategy as it is formally known). It covers the counties of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk.

13. The Plan has been developed over more than three years by a voluntary body formed by representatives of the local authorities, industry, commerce, academia and the voluntary sector (called the East of England Regional Assembly or EERA) but it will now become the responsibility of the Government. It was recently the subject to an examination by an independent panel of inspectors who will report their views to the Government prior to adoption in early 2007. The plan is available to download at www.eera.gov.uk.

14. The East of England Plan sets out a strategy to guide the pattern of development across the whole region to 2021. It includes policies on housing, economic development, retailing, the environment, transport, sport and recreation, waste, minerals and much more.

15. Policy SV1 sets out an exciting and challenging future for Stevenage as an employment and housing growth area and a strong centre allied to physical, social and economic
16. Our plans (or DPDs) are required by Government to be ‘in conformity’ with the East of England Plan, which means that our policies and priorities must reflect those of the Plan.

What role does the Stevenage Community Strategy play?

17. The Stevenage Community Strategy (Stevenage 2021 Our Vision – Our Future) is the outcome of a comprehensive process to develop a shared vision for the future of Stevenage. The Strategy was written by the local strategic partnership (the Stevenage Partnership) which comprises numerous public sector agencies and their partners in the voluntary and private sectors.

18. All partnership members are signed up to the themes and priorities for action required to successfully deliver the vision for Stevenage. These include:

- Creating a prosperous town that attracts and supports businesses and encourages local enterprise
- Making Stevenage a place with a strong sense of community identity where everyone is valued, and ensuring the Stevenage people have a say in decisions that affect their lives
- Creating a town that is good to live in by providing affordable homes in clean, green and safe neighbourhoods with excellent transport links
- Revitalising the town centre and neighbourhood centres
- Ensuring that there is good education and life-long education learning opportunities for everyone who lives and works in Stevenage
- Improving the health of Stevenage people and ensuring that everyone has equal access to health advice and quality health care
- Ensuring that Stevenage remains a safe town

19. The LDF is the principal mechanism for delivering the land use and spatial elements of the Community Strategy’s objectives.
How does the new Planning System work?

20. In September 2004, the Government passed new legislation (the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act) to simplify and speed up the production of planning documents and ensure community involvement is at the heart of the planning system.

21. All local authorities (including Stevenage Borough Council) are required to replace their local plan with a Local Development Framework consisting of the following set of shorter, separate documents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Strategy</td>
<td>This contains the vision and broad spatial strategy for the area. Non-site specific policies against whist planning applications can be decided are also included. All of the other plans below must conform to the vision set out here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Specific Policies</td>
<td>This contains specific policy requirements for individual sites, which may include conservation and protection policies as well as policies for new development. It will not include policies for any area covered by an AAP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Action Plans</td>
<td>These contain specific policies for the future use and development of particular areas. If an area is covered by an AAP there will be no coverage of that area in the site-specific policies document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals Map</td>
<td>This identifies all site-specific policies contained in the plan on an Ordnance Survey base map of the area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. The new planning system also requires DPDs and SPDs to go through a process called a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The purpose of SEA is to assess the effects of the plan’s proposals on the environment.

23. A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been prepared to accompany this consultation document and is available to view at www.stevenage.gov.uk.

How does the Core Strategy fit in the wider plans for Stevenage?

24. Stevenage Borough Council is in the initial stages of preparing its Local Development Framework. Full details of the LDF process are set out in the Local Development Scheme.

25. The proposed appearance of the Stevenage LDF is shown overleaf. Those documents in red text are currently out to public consultation; those in blue text have already been produced and those in black will be produced in the future.

26. In addition to this document, your views are being simultaneously sought on the Site Specific Policies DPD, the Gunnels Wood AAP and the Old Town AAP.
Behind each of these documents lie background evidential base studies, Acts of Parliament, Statutory Instruments, Government guidance notes, case law and a variety of other source materials. Copies of all locally-produced documents upon which reliance has been placed are available from:

- The Council’s website – www.stevenage.gov.uk
- The Council’s main office – Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage
- The Council’s Planning Policy team – telephone 01438 242823 (9am to 5pm)
28. In preparing plans (or DPDs) we have to do the following work at the following stages:

**Stage 1**
Development of Evidence Base

This stage involves us establishing an up-to-date information base on a range of social, economic and environmental matters. We spent 2005 on this stage.

**CURRENT STAGE**
Key Issues and Alternative Options Consultation

The results of Stage 1 will be used to identify issues that the plan needs to address and the options available to deal with each issue. A 'Key Issues and Alternative Options' report will be prepared and available for public consultation for 6 weeks.

**Stage 3**
Preferred Options Consultation

Comments received during Stage 2 will be used to prepare a 'Preferred Options' version of the plan, setting out our preferred approach and providing a summary of the other options that were rejected. A 'Preferred Options' plan will be available for consultation for 6 weeks. This will include an appraisal of the plan’s social, economic and environmental implications.

**Stage 4**
Preparation of DPD

This stage involves us further developing and refining our preferred options and the precise drafting of policy wording for inclusion in the ‘submission’ plan.

**Stage 5**
Submission DPD Consultation

The plan is sent to Government in the final form that we prefer, at which point a further 6 week consultation period will start. There will be a second appraisal of the plan’s social, economic and environmental implications.

**Stage 6**
Alternative Sites Consultation

This stage means that we have to consult on any ‘alternative sites’ put forward by other people in response to the Stage 5 consultation exercise. This stage does not apply to the Core Strategy.

**Stage 7**
Examination

An Inspector appointed by the Government will carry out an independent examination of the ‘soundness’ of the plan. This process allows those dissatisfied with the plan to make further written comments and, if they wish, to appear in front of the inspector in person.

**Stage 8**
Receipt of Inspector’s Report and Adoption

The inspector goes away and writes a summary report of the examination and decides what changes (if any) are necessary. Once we receive the inspector’s report we have to publish it. Then we have to accept the amended plan with the inspector’s changes and publish this final version of the plan.
How will you involve the community?

29. There are at least three stages of public consultation on every plan that Government requires us to undertake. These stages are fully set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and are shown in the table on page 11. A variety of methods will be used at these various stages to enable the community to be involved, including:

- Plans being available for you to look at in our offices, local libraries and on our website
- Plans being made available for you to buy and study at your leisure
- Letters to groups, stakeholders and any individuals that have already told us that they want to be involved (almost 500 people and organisations so far) inviting comments
- Press releases and adverts on/in local papers, radio stations and in the Council’s regular magazine to householders
- Sending out leaflets, flyers and brochures
- Setting up public exhibitions, displays and roadshows
- Holding one-to-one meetings with individuals and representatives of groups and organisations
- Giving presentations to groups, organisations and stakeholders
- Holding interactive workshops such as ‘enquiry by design’

30. Our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) provides further information on how we will involve the community in the preparation, alteration and review of local planning policies and planning applications. The Statement has been through the required statutory process – including extensive public consultation - and is currently awaiting independent examination before being adopted. The Statement is available at www.stevenage.gov.uk.

How have you decided which matters to consult upon?

31. As the Statement of Community Involvement makes clear, we will only consult you on those matters that are genuinely open to debate and change. There is little more frustrating for consultees than to find that their views can have no influence because the decisions have already been made. It is therefore a matter of principle that we should only consult you on those matters where no choice has yet been made (although that is not to say that we may not have already expressed an opinion about some of these matters) and where we have the power to make the decision through preparing these plans.

32. Some topics are not open to public consultation at this stage for a variety of reasons. These matters fall broadly into two categories: those that are already settled and those to be determined in other plans at some point in the future.

33. Certain matters are already settled, for instance those settled in higher level planning strategies or documents (such as the East of England Plan). These matters include such things such as the level of housing numbers to be built in the Borough to 2021; the need for new neighbourhoods (or urban extensions as the Plan calls them); the directions of growth of
those new neighbourhoods – all of which are settled in the emerging East of England Plan and have already been open to public consultation and independent examination.

34. Also falling into this category are matters settled by the Government, such as the preferred types of locations (the sequential tests) for new homes, offices, warehouses, shops and leisure developments; and the need to promote the use of buses, trains, cycles and walking; and to restrain car parking. A third sub-category of things not open to consultation, by reason of them already having been fixed, includes projects already decided in the adopted Stevenage District Plan Second Review (2004), many of which are now underway. This would include matters such as the town centre regeneration scheme and many of the housing allocations.

What do I need to comment upon?

35. It is important that you should concentrate on the broad principles that shape policy choices. It is the broad choices at this stage that will help to inform and shape the selection of the more detailed policies at later stages. Once we reach the next stage – preferred options stage – you will have the opportunity to see and comment upon the policy choices that we have made that have fallen out from the broad ‘direction of travel’ choices made now.

36. At this early stage in the evolution of these plans, our ideas are not fully formed and, therefore, it is neither possible nor necessary to consult on every issue that may influence the shape of the final plans. There are at least two further stages of public consultation on each of these plans and a public examination in front of an independent inspector. What is important at this stage is to gauge reaction to possible ‘directions of travel’ for those elements of the spatial strategy that yet remain to be settled.

Do I need to be a planning expert to respond?

37. No. Whilst the town planning system, like many professions, has its own technical terms and professional shorthand, the Council supports the use of plain English, especially in consultation documents that are designed to appeal to a wide audience, including non-planning people.

38. We have tried to use plain English in this document, including explaining or cutting down on the use of technical language and acronyms, simplifying issues into lay terms and keeping the document to a reasonable length. However, if you find any terms in this document which you are not familiar with, you may find them explained in the glossary in Appendix 3 at the back of this document.

39. In some cases, the use of plain English in this document has caused a simplification of sometimes complex technical issues and language. We believe that those professionals used to dealing with the planning system will appreciate the complex issues and inter-relationships that lie behind these necessary simplifications. However, if you would like a fuller explanation of the issues and inter-relationships that lie behind the possible policy choices offered as alternatives please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to explain matters more fully to you.
How should I respond?

40. The subsequent pages of this document are made up of the issues upon which we want your comments. Each page will consist of an issue (in the form of a question), a short description of the context surrounding the issue and then a number of options, for which we would like you to select what is, in your view, the most appropriate option.

41. When responding to this document you may find that your preferred option is not included. If this is the case, please feel free to let us know your preferred option(s) if at all possible by e-mail or by e-mail attachments (or write any additional issues/options on additional sheets).

42. A response form is available on our website or in hard copy format if necessary. Wherever possible, please use this form. If you have additional comments to make, please use additional sheets and be sure to state the total number of additional sheets that you have used, so that we know if material has gone astray in the post.

43. It would greatly assist us if, when you submit comments, you do so electronically on-line on the Council’s website (www.stevenage.gov.uk). If you are unable to respond on-line you may send us written comments by e-mail, post or by textphone. We will not accept oral comments.

On-line  www.stevenage.gov.uk

By mail
Planning Policy
Stevenage Borough Council
Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
SG1 1HN

By fax  01438 242922

By textphone  01438 242555

By email  planningpolicy@stevenage.gov.uk
44. You may also find it helpful to keep a copy of the comments that you send us.

45. Please be aware that all comments will be made publicly available for anyone to see upon request: we cannot accept confidential comments nor keep any material that you send us secret under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

46. If you are proposing additional or alternative sites for development or conservation you must send us at least one A4 sized Ordnance Survey map clearly showing the site at a scale of at least 1:2500 so that the boundaries of the site – and its location – are clear. We will not accept any such proposals where we cannot clearly identify either the location or the detailed boundaries of the site.

47. All comments should reach us by **5pm on Friday 28th July 2006**. Comments received after this time will not be considered. Comments on non-planning matters will not be accepted as part of this consultation exercise and may be returned to you. We will not accept any comments that contain obscene, racist or other illegal, unlawful or objectionable material of any nature: we may pass any such material directly on to the Police for further investigation and legal action.

48. All relevant responses will be considered and used to prepare a Preferred Options document in 2007, which you will have another opportunity to comment on.

**What will you do with any written comments I send you?**

49. All relevant written comments we receive by the end of the consultation period will be acknowledged in writing. We will not accept oral comments. At the end of the consultation period we will read and analyse all responses and prepare a summary report that will be sent to all those organisations and individuals who made comments. A copy of the report will also be available at our Danestrete office and on our website.

50. We will then prepare a report to the Council’s Executive (those Members charged with leading the Council) that outlines the main issues raised and makes recommendations for future action. Where we consider it appropriate, in the light of all the factors concerned, the substance of your comments will be reflected in subsequent versions of our plans.
51. Stevenage was designated as England’s first New Town in 1946 to provide homes, work and recreation for residents within a self-contained community. It is now home to some 80,000 people.

52. Stevenage is divided into distinct land uses. Employment land primarily is mostly to the west at Gunnels Wood and to the north-east at Pin Green. The town centre, the Old Town and Stevenage railway station are centrally located. Residential neighbourhoods to the north, east and south contain around 33,000 homes. These are also ten large neighbourhood centres providing local shopping and community facilities plus open spaces and play areas, all linked by wide roads and a network of pedestrian and cycle routes.
53. However, there are many issues facing Stevenage which need to be addressed:

- In employment terms, the original manufacturing base has experienced decline and has not been sufficiently replaced by new – more profitable – industries. Very few businesses are choosing to rent offices in the town. New business registrations are significantly lower than Hertfordshire, the region and Great Britain average. Businesses struggle to recruit and retain highly skilled workers. It is predicted that the town’s economy will barely grow over the next 20 years.

- In financial terms, Stevenage residents earn £114 less per week than other Hertfordshire residents. People who commute into Stevenage each morning are more qualified, more senior and higher earners who either choose not to live here or cannot find a suitable home here.

- In skills and employment terms, residents are less well qualified than the Hertfordshire and national average. Only 15% have a degree or higher qualification. Few have the qualifications to occupy senior or managerial positions. Education is greatly under-valued and this perpetuates a trend of low aspirations, with poor GCSE results and most students leaving school at 16. There are limited chances locally for higher education.

- In housing terms, Stevenage mostly offers thee-bed terraced dwellings aimed at blue-collar families. Only 12% are detached, compared with 22% in the rest of Hertfordshire. There is a serious lack of both affordable and aspirational housing. There are 3,800 people on our housing waiting list. Such conditions are undermining future economic potential and adversely affecting quality of life.

- In retail terms, the pedestrianised town centre needs investment. Its fabric is dated, decaying and needs regenerating. The town no longer performs its role as a sub-regional shopping centre. There is considerable loss of spending to surrounding areas.

- In health terms, the number of still-births and child deaths exceed the national average. Death from all cancers is high for women and deaths related to smoking are high for both sexes. Teenage pregnancy is twice the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire average.

- In deprivation terms, Stevenage has many of the problems associated with larger urban areas. There are pockets of serious deprivation. Stevenage is the most deprived district in Hertfordshire and contains some of the county’s most deprived areas.

54. Overall, Stevenage is less prosperous, less successful and is regarded as less desirable than other Hertfordshire towns.
Overall vision

55. We believe that we need to work hard to address this range of issues and have already begun to build consensus on a way forward. This shared vision is reflected in the Stevenage Community Strategy to transform the town by 2021 through regeneration and growth that will make Stevenage a place where people want to live, work, do business and enjoy their leisure time.

56. The overall draft vision for Stevenage to 2021 is:

“Stevenage will grow by 2021 into an emerging regional city that is prosperous, healthy, clean, green and safe.

It will have a strong sense of purpose and will be a place in which people are proud to live, work, visit and do business.

Stevenage will be an employment and housing growth area of regional significance where growth and regeneration are complimentary.”

57. The vision comprises:

- Employment and housing growth alongside physical, social and economic regeneration
- Rolling-back of the Green Belt to permit sustainable new neighbourhoods
- Attracting new growth sectors to encourage inward investment and to develop existing clusters of advanced technology industries
- Delivering a significant regeneration and reshaping of Gunnels Wood and Pin Green
- Developing new strategic employment site(s)
- Developing 14,400 dwellings phased in accordance with employment growth, of which 6,400 will be within our administrative area
- Delivering an integrated mix of homes to support a range of household sizes with particular emphasis on addressing housing market imbalances, including affordable and key worker homes
- Revitalising education provision to raise aspirations and attainment levels and to create a workforce with skills appropriate to make the best use of new job opportunities
- Town centre regeneration to improve the range of retail and community facilities, increase the residential element and improve environmental and urban design features
- Improving strategic transport infrastructure and local passenger transport services
- A network of multi-functional green space
- Making residents proud of the growing town and able to share in its prosperity
- Redressing socio-economic disparity and the existing jobs-homes imbalance
- Attracting new residents and businesses capable of driving forward change
- Improving the reality and perception of Stevenage as a desirable place to live, work, invest, shop and visit
- Eroding the relationship between low education, poor health and deprivation
- Protecting the best of our historic built and valued natural environment

58. In setting a vision for Stevenage it must be recognised that this document can only cover the administrative area of Stevenage Borough. It has no power or ability to commit North Hertfordshire District Council (in whose administrative area about 8,000 of the new homes will be built in new neighbourhoods) to any particular course of action or vision.
CS1) Do you agree with the overall vision for Stevenage?

59. Paragraphs 51 to 58 set out the issues currently facing Stevenage and the vision for the future as a prosperous regional city where people want to live, work, do business and enjoy their leisure time.

Stevenage: a place where people want to live, work, do business and enjoy leisure time

60. Do you:

A. Agree with all of the issues and support the vision

B. Agree with some of the issues and support some elements of the vision. If so, which issues and elements of the vision do you disagree with?

C. Disagree with all of the issues and the vision. If so, what is your vision for the future?
CS2) How can we ensure that people have the best possible quality of life?

61. The list of issues facing Stevenage set out in paragraph 53 makes clear that many Stevenage residents have a lower quality of life than other Hertfordshire residents and that some experience particularly severe inequalities. In delivering our vision of a prosperous regional city, we want every resident to experience the best quality of life possible.

62. The purpose of this question is to gain a better understanding of what we can do to improve people’s quality of life and to reduce the inequalities that affect them. This understanding will help us to prepare better planning policies.

63. Please prioritise (by numbering up to 1-17 where 1 is the most important and 17 is the least important) those issues which most affect quality of life and/or cause the greatest inequality:

A. Age
B. Sex or gender
C. Ethnicity or nationality
D. Religion or belief
E. Sexual orientation
F. Disability
G. Housing
H. Education
I. Health
J. Environmental quality
K. Employment opportunities
L. Wages
M. Standards of policing
N. Open space provision
O. Lack of community facilities
P. Lack of access to a private vehicle
Q. Lack of access to public transport
64. Please prioritise (by numbering up to 1-14 where 1 is the most important and 14 is the least important) those issues which you think can improve quality of life and/or reduce the occurrences of inequality:

A. More cheap and rented housing  
B. More market housing  
C. More aspirational housing  
D. Better education provision  
E. Better health care provision  
F. Better quality of environment  
G. More jobs  
H. Better paid jobs  
I. Better policing  
J. More open space  
K. More community facilities  
L. More facilities for disabled people  
M. Access to a car  
N. Access to public transport
CS3) Should Stevenage become a more self-contained community?

65. Stevenage was designated as England’s first New Town in 1946 to provide homes, work and recreation for residents within a self-contained community. However, there have been significant changes in terms of family composition, lifestyle and car ownership since the post-war period. Stevenage is no longer the self-contained community it was intended to be.

66. The 2001 Census reveals that 22,800 people both live and work in Stevenage; that 16,700 people live in Stevenage but work elsewhere; whilst 18,900 people work in Stevenage but live elsewhere. This equates to net in-commuting of 2,200 people.

67. It also equates to a self-containment rate of 58% (i.e. the percentage of employed residents who work in Stevenage). This is comparable to Hemel Hempstead, which is also a New Town, and is higher than all other towns in Hertfordshire.

68. Most of the people who live in Stevenage and work elsewhere travel to towns in North Hertfordshire, Welwyn Garden City and Greater London. Most of the people who work in Stevenage and live elsewhere travel from towns in North Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. There is a general trend of out-commuting to the south and in-commuting from the north. These levels of commuting go against the New Town principle of self-containment and Government transport objectives to reduce the need to travel, the length of journeys and the impacts of climate change.

69. Stevenage could become a more self-contained community by aligning jobs and homes so that employment opportunities match housing growth. If all the employed residents of 14,400 new homes choose to, or are able to, work in Stevenage, we predict that this would bring about a self-containment rate of around 70%.

70. Stevenage could become a less self-contained or more “dormitory” community if jobs are provided elsewhere and out-commuting increases. If all the employed residents of 14,400 new homes choose not to work in Stevenage, the self-containment rate would fall to around 44%.
new homes choose not to, or are unable to, work in Stevenage, we predict that this could reduce the self-containment rate to around 40%.

71. The options are:

A. Yes – Stevenage should become a more self-contained community

B. No – do not seek to achieve self-containment
CS4) How many new jobs should there be in Stevenage?

72. The East of England Plan makes provision for “substantial employment growth” in the wider Stevenage area but does not set a job growth target. EERA has said that it will work with relevant stakeholders to prepare district-level jobs targets. Any comments you make will therefore help to inform an appropriate target for Stevenage.

73. Work undertaken by Bone Wells Associates (2002) for EEDA suggests that Stevenage will experience job growth of 1,300 in the period to 2021. Concerns that this figure would result in economic stagnation encouraged us to commission a Skills and Employment Study (DTZ Pieda, 2005) which modelled job growth scenarios for Stevenage:

- Medium growth assumes Stevenage will perform 20-30% above the regional average
- High growth assumes that Stevenage will perform 40-60% above the regional average
- The Sustainable Communities scenario aligns homes and jobs by assuming that the existing ratio of 1.16 workers-per-household will remain constant to 2021. Hence, 14,400 new homes equates to 16,700 jobs

How many new jobs should we provide?

74. Given that 14,400 new homes are already planned in Stevenage, the number of jobs provided will fundamentally affect commuting levels. A low job target will enable more people to live in Stevenage but not to work here. This would increase out-commuting to adjacent settlements and London. A high job target will provide more opportunities for people to live and work in Stevenage but would require market intervention.

75. How many new jobs should we seek to provide:

A. Accept projected low growth to 2021 (1,300 jobs)
B. Plan for medium growth (8,200 jobs)
C. Plan for high growth (10,900 jobs)
D. Plan for alignment and temper to reflect net in-commuting (14,500 jobs)
E. Plan for alignment without taking account of net in-commuting (16,700 jobs)

Please note, at the Examination in Public for the East of England Plan, we promoted Option D for a job growth target that was aligned with housing growth and tempered to reflect net in-commuting. However, this is not a binding decision.
CS5) How can education provision be transformed?

76. Improving the provision of education is a fundamental element of our vision for the future of Stevenage. At present, Stevenage has the lowest education attainment levels in Hertfordshire. If we want Stevenage to become a prosperous regional city with a skilled workforce capable of attracting inward investment, we need a vision to improve education provision for both children and adults. High quality provision will mean residents have better qualifications, better skills, higher aspirations and lower deprivation. Poor provision will reinforce a downward pattern of poor qualifications, poor skills, low aspirations, poverty, ill health and deprivation.

77. The Education Study (DTZ Pieda, 2005) we commissioned makes three important observations. Firstly, that low aspirations are passed from one generation to another. Secondly, that performance needs to be improved across-the-board. Thirdly, that poor attainment at primary school has a knock-on effect at secondary school.

78. Our vision for regeneration and growth provides a valuable chance to transform education provision. Improving provision across-the-board will break the transfer of low aspirations. School children will experience the value of better quality education and how it allows them to access better employment opportunities. Their achievements will passed down and reflected in the aspirations for their own children.

79. Achieving this transformation requires the involvement of many different stakeholders and organisations. The Education Study concludes that a new programme of school building; allocating resources; recruiting, retaining and investing in staff and headteachers; mentoring; links between schools and colleges; parental involvement; and summer schools are all important ways of engaging pupils and raising participation rates.

80. We also need to understand how transformation can be achieved in spatial planning terms. At present, there are 21 primary schools in Stevenage, of which 16 fail to meet average regional standards. Likewise, 6 of our 8 mainstream secondary schools fail to achieve average Hertfordshire GCSE standards. Few adult residents are unqualified, but even fewer have a degree level qualification and higher education participation rates are very low.
81. In considering alternative options for spatial education provision, questions include:

- which is better – smaller and more local facilities offering a traditional curriculum or fewer and larger facilities offering a wider curriculum?

- do large or small class sizes offer a better learning environment?

- what are the best ways of providing higher, further, vocational and adult education?

82. It is also important to consider provision in the context of a growing population. The Education Study concludes that 14,400 new homes could create an under-supply of secondary school provision and notes that new neighbourhoods will influence the pattern of provision for all age groups. Improved education provision will be critical in attracting new residents to Stevenage.

83. At present, the County Council are preparing proposals to rationalise secondary school provision to offer larger and more viable sixth forms with wider subject choice. In contrast, North Hertfordshire College advocate centralised sixth form provision in one location in response to the low number of pupils studying for A level or equivalent qualifications at mainstream schools.

84. The options for transforming education provision are (please tick as many as you wish from A, F and G, plus one from B or C and one from D or E):

A. More nursery and pre-school provision

B. Retain the existing pattern of smaller primary schools or

C. Fewer and larger primary schools

D. Retain the existing pattern of smaller secondary schools or

E. Fewer and larger secondary schools

F. More adult learning provision

G. A new sixth form college
How can residents gain the benefit of “substantial employment growth” and the rise in prosperity?

85. It is important to ensure that residents benefit from regeneration and growth. This means developing the right skills and aspirations so that residents can occupy highly skilled and highly paid jobs.

86. The Skills and Employment Study (DTZ Pieda, 2005) we commissioned observes that poor economic performance is a consequence of the strong manufacturing presence offering blue-collar jobs. Despite a large pool of labour, Stevenage has few managers, senior officials and professional staff and too many residents in elementary occupations, construction and personal services (i.e. caring). At present, many highly paid and highly skilled jobs in Stevenage are filled by in-commuters.

87. The study recommends that job growth should be pursued in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, computing and service sectors such as health, social work and retail. It concludes that there will be increased demand for managers, professional and administrative staff and for higher level qualifications such as A Levels and degrees.

88. Providing jobs that meet the existing skills profile would probably limit the prosperity of Stevenage’s local workforce. Providing jobs that meet a higher skills profile could raise Stevenage’s prosperity by improving wages. It would require residents to learn new skills, either by re-skilling the existing workforce or by raising the skills of young people (i.e. the future workforce).

89. The options include:

A. Provide jobs that meet the existing skills profile

B. Provide jobs that meet a higher skills profile and seek to raise the skills of local people

C. Concentrate on re-skilling the existing resident workforce

D. Concentrate on raising the skills of young people (i.e. the future workforce)
What should happen to our existing areas of employment?

90. The Employment Land Survey (DTZ Pieda, 2005) we commissioned observes that Stevenage's employment floorspace is almost entirely concentrated in Gunnels Wood and Pin Green, the town centre and the Old Town.

91. Gunnels Wood and Pin Green accommodate 24,000 employees, mostly in offices although key occupiers also undertake research and development. Other uses include distribution, storage and light industry.

92. The survey criticises Gunnels Wood for its lack of modern premises for small businesses and the high-technology sector. It recommends that existing premises should be refurbished to suit evolving needs. It also highlights that the lack of communal services, high-profile occupiers and high-quality buildings undermine the image of both Gunnels Wood and Pin Green.

93. The Gunnels Wood Area Action Plan, which is also out to public consultation, recognises that Gunnels Wood no longer offers the types of premises or physical environment sought by potential occupiers. It struggles to compete with business parks elsewhere in the region which cater for footloose companies (i.e. companies not tied to a particular location in the UK or the world) by offering high quality environments and communal services.

94. The town centre and the Old Town accommodate 7,000 employees in office, retail, service and leisure jobs. The survey notes that the mix of new and converted premises in the Old Town provide a good quality environment but identifies high levels of office vacancy in the town centre. Most are of poor or average condition and many are vacant as they have limited appeal to potential occupiers. It suggests that many offices could be redeveloped or their use changed to provide higher quality provision which is currently sought by the market. DTZ Pieda have told us in the Skills and Employment Study that the office stock is characterised by ageing and under-used properties which, despite a minor recovery, continue to under-perform. They identify significant development opportunities around the town centre and the train station.

95. If offices could play a larger role in the town centre they would achieve the three fundamental objectives of Government transport policy: to promote more sustainable travel choices; to
promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services; and to reduce the need to travel, especially by car. They would ensure that the town centre remains the public transport, economic and commercial hub of Stevenage.

96. In terms of alternative options, enhancing the image of Gunnels Wood and Pin Green would enable such areas to retain and attract occupiers who might otherwise move elsewhere. Focusing office development in the town centre would accord with Government objectives to locate uses which employ lots of people and generate lots of travel close to bus and train stations. Encouraging mixed land uses could reduce the need to travel and the length of journeys by locating jobs and homes in close proximity. A review of employment land would determine whether existing areas serve their original purpose or whether an alternative land use might be more appropriate.

97. The options for existing areas of employment are:

A. Continue efforts to revitalise Gunnels Wood
B. Enhance the image of Pin Green
C. Focus office development in the town centre
D. Encourage mixed land uses (employment, retail, residential) in all areas of employment
E. Review whether employment land could be redeveloped for alternative uses

Please note that more detailed questions about the future of Gunnels Wood are set out in the Gunnels Wood Area Action Plan which is also out for public consultation.
CS8) Do we need new employment land?

98. The East of England Plan makes provision for “substantial employment growth” in the wider Stevenage area. It provides scope to develop at least one strategic employment site. Work undertaken by Chestertons (2001) for EERA recommends that a strategic employment site should be capable of accommodating a user requiring a plot of 10 hectares or more and should be available now or within 24 months.

99. We envisage that a strategic employment site should be around 25 hectares in size. To put this in perspective, Pin Green covers 35 hectares and contains 5,000 employees. Such a site could attract potential occupiers by offering a high quality environment and communal services. This would enable it to compete with business parks elsewhere in the region.

100. An alternative to new employment land might be to make better use of existing brownfield sites. This would minimise the need to allocate greenfield sites. However, given that there is no available land that is particularly close to the railway (which would enable freight access), we believe that any new employment land should be close to the A1(M) as this would avoid the need for heavy vehicles to traverse the town and our residential areas.

101. The options for new employment land are:

A. No – Employment land should be concentrated on brownfield sites
B. Yes – one strategic employment site should be designated
C. Yes – two strategic employment sites should be designated

Please note that more detailed options for the location of any strategic employment sites will be set out in the forthcoming Urban Extension Area Action Plan.
CS9) Should we designate any employment Simplified Planning Zones?

102. The Government describe a Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) as a weapon in a planning authority's armoury to help secure development or redevelopment. An SPZ effectively grants planning permission for specific types of development, subject to any conditions or limitations.

103. SPZs have many benefits for both ourselves and developers. For developers, they can provide greater certainty, reduce planning application delays, create development value and make project funding more certain. For us, they can generate private investment and can also be a useful promotional tool.

104. Under the new planning system, the need for a SPZ must be identified in the East of England Plan before it can be designated in our plans. Your comments will therefore help inform us whether an employment SPZ is appropriate for Stevenage.

105. The options are:

A. No – we should not designate a SPZ
B. Yes – on Gunnels Wood
C. Yes – on Pin Green
D. Yes – a new strategic employment site
CS10) What type of town centre do we want for the benefit of the growing town?

106. Stevenage's pedestrianised town centre was built in the 1950s and 1960s to provide shops, offices, leisure and community facilities flanked by the ring road and car parks. However, its fabric is now dated, decaying and in need of regeneration.

107. The Stevenage Town Centre Retail Assessment (Cushman, Wakefield & Healey and Baker, 2005) commissioned by Stanhope/ING demonstrates that there is a lack of shopping in the town centre and that new development is required to meet the needs of current and future residents. It concludes that Stevenage's location plus a growing population and a national trend of increased consumer expenditure warrants comprehensive redevelopment of the town centre. A regeneration strategy already exists and the Borough Council, English Partnerships and our preferred developers Stanhope/ING are currently preparing a redevelopment scheme. Once completed, this scheme will result in a considerable increase in the number of shops, new cultural facilities and a transport interchange, all linked by better quality spaces and streets.

108. Whilst this regeneration scheme will help revitalise the town centre, it is not planned to cope with housing growth to 2021. By this time, there is likely to be little or no room to expand retail, office or other provision within the area contained by the ring road. Such expansion will be vital to meet the needs of future residents and to compete with surrounding retail centres, many of which are expanding their own shopping centres.

109. By contrast, the Conservation Area Review (Beams, 2004) we commissioned recommends that the whole town centre should be designated as a conservation area and preserved. At present, only the Town Square has conservation area status.
110. The options are:

A. The whole town centre should be designated as a conservation area and preserved

B. Parts of the town centre should be designated as a conservation area and preserved and the remainder should be redeveloped. If so, which parts should be designated as a conservation area?

C. The town centre should be redeveloped

D. The town centre should be redeveloped and expanded

An artist’s impression of the town centre redevelopment scheme
CS11) What should the balance of housing types be?

111. Government objectives seek to create mixed communities that meet the diverse needs of all people. In addition, the East of England Plan states that a minimum of 30% of new homes should be affordable and at least 40% where high housing costs warrants it. This means that between 4,320 and 5,760 of the 14,400 new homes in Stevenage should be affordable.

112. The Housing Needs Survey (David Couttie Associates, 2003) we commissioned identifies a clear affordability problem for low-income households. It suggests that we need to build 470 affordable units per year until 2011 to resolve affordable housing needs. In reality, there have only been 121 affordable homes built in Stevenage since 2001: less than 25 per year.

113. Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry has raised concerns about the lack of a range of suitable housing in Stevenage, particular affordable and “executive” homes. They predict that a shortage of skilled employees will result in local businesses experiencing increasing recruitment and retention difficulties. We envisage that the provision of aspirational housing should be similar to the provision of affordable housing.

114. In considering the housing balance it is useful to understand the composition of existing households. The Housing Needs Survey reveals that our existing housing stock comprises 52% terraces, 18% flats, 18% semi-detached and 12% detached housing. There are significantly more terraced and significantly fewer semi-detached and detached properties than in the rest of Hertfordshire.

115. The 2001 Census reveals that 63% of Stevenage residents are owner-occupiers, that 28% rent from the Council and that 9% rent privately or from housing associations. By comparison, 72% of Hertfordshire residents are owner-occupiers and only 14% rent from the Council. The Census also reveals that Stevenage comprises 29% one-person households, 34% two-person households, 16% three-person households and 21% four or more person households. There is currently an average of 2.4 people per household, although this is expected to decline over the next 20 years as more people choose to live on their own.

116. Not making any decisions about the types of new housing in Stevenage would effectively enable developers to dictate the housing balance. Setting targets would enable us to influence the balance of housing and to redress the deficit of affordable and aspirational housing.

117. For the purposes of this issue, we have assumed that:

- ‘rented from the council’ and ‘cheap’ housing are affordable homes sold or rented at below market cost
• ‘market’ housing is normally priced Stevenage homes (approximately £145,000)

• ‘aspirational’ housing is a combination of high-quality detached and semi-detached homes in new neighbourhoods and high-quality flats in the town centre for higher income households

118. Unlike other issues, we would like your thoughts on the percentages of each type of housing that should be planned for. Please use the tables below to provide your answers:

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<th>What percentage of new homes should be:</th>
<th>Rented</th>
<th>Cheap</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Aspirational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>.......%</td>
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<td>Market should be 20-60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aspirational should be 20-40%</td>
<td>.......%</td>
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<td><strong>This row to total 100%</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Of these, what percentage should be:</th>
<th>Rented</th>
<th>Cheap</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Aspirational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flats</td>
<td>.......%</td>
<td>.......%</td>
<td>.......%</td>
<td>.......%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes</td>
<td>.......%</td>
<td>.......%</td>
<td>.......%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4, 5 and 6 bedroom homes</td>
<td>.......%</td>
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<td><strong>This column to total 100%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CS12) What is the best affordable housing threshold?

119. We currently require developers to build affordable homes on sites of 25 or more dwellings or greater than 1 hectare. However, in the period April 2004 to March 2005, only one site in Stevenage was developed for more than 25 dwellings. All other affordable homes were built on sites owned by us or a housing association.

120. Because it is a New Town which has been built in a planned and comprehensive manner over the last 50 years, Stevenage contains few brownfield sites of more than 1 hectare or sites that are capable of accommodating more than 25 dwellings. Given these circumstances, the current threshold fails to deliver sufficient affordable housing.

121. Current Government proposals recommend a new minimum threshold of 15 dwellings and advise that site-size thresholds should be based on the level of affordable housing sought, the viability of the site and the wider affects of housing provision.

122. A low threshold would mean that we can seek affordable homes on smaller sites. In the period April 2004 to March 2005, three sites were developed for more than 15 dwellings. Although a low threshold could increase the number of affordable homes that are built, it may also reduce the development viability of some sites. This could mean that the site does not come forward for any type of housing. A high threshold would limit the number of occasions when affordable homes could be sought.

123. The threshold options are:

A. 25 or more dwellings or 1 hectare

B. 15 or more dwellings. In this case, what should the site-size threshold be?

C. A different dwelling and site-size threshold. If so, please state what these thresholds should be.
CS13) What are appropriate housing density ranges?

124. Government housing objectives seek to avoid the inefficient use of land. This is because low densities are unable to sustain local services or public transport and will ultimately add to social exclusion. Guidance states that the inefficient use of land (i.e. under 30 dwellings per hectare) should be avoided; that efficient use of land (i.e. 30-50 dwellings per hectare) should be encouraged; and that greater intensity (i.e. over 50 dwellings per hectare) should be sought in places with good public transport accessibility such as town centres or alongside good quality transport corridors.

125. Most of Stevenage's existing residential areas are built at around 25-30 dwellings per hectare (dph), although some medium and high-density housing areas also exist. These low densities are largely a consequence of wide roads, grass verges and amenity greenspaces. In recent years however, average densities have increased as developments have mostly been for flats.

126. Current Government proposals recommend refining density standards to:

- 35-55 dph in suburban locations
- 40-75 dph in urban locations
- over 70 dph in city centres

127. The Government expect us to work with relevant stakeholders to set density ranges for Stevenage. Consequently, what are appropriate housing density ranges for the following locations:

A. Higher or lower than 70 dph in the town centre
B. Higher or lower than 40-75 in the Old Town
C. Higher or lower than 35-55 in residential neighbourhoods
D. Higher or lower than 35-55 in new neighbourhoods
CS14) Should we meet the identified need for gypsy and traveller accommodation?

128. In 2004, the Government changed the guidance associated with gypsy and traveller accommodation needs. The aim of the legislative change is to redress the previous situation where the accommodation needs of the gypsy and travelling communities were not routinely part of the process by which local councils assessed people’s housing needs. The introduction of the new planning system provides for an evidence-based, strategic and regional system, in which the needs of gypsies and travellers for suitable accommodation can be considered and met, equally and fairly, alongside other sectors of the community.

129. Sadly, the East of England Plan fails to provide the regional level assessment expected by the legislation. Nonetheless, mindful of their statutory obligations, six Hertfordshire local authorities – including ourselves – jointly commissioned a strategic assessment of the accommodation needs of gypsies and the traveller community in 2005/6.

130. Amongst other things, it identifies that the community within the study area will need 30 net additional caravan pitches (in addition to the 170 already in place) on permanent sites between now and 2021, largely to accommodate the needs of the current population. No need was identified for bricks and mortar accommodation, nor was any need identified for permanent accommodation to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers from outside the study area. There was, however, identified a need for a transit caravan site to accommodate those travelling through the area or staying for short periods to attend family or community events, such as weddings.

Should we extend the Dyes Lane gypsy site?

131. Within the Borough, the County Council operates a gypsy caravan site at Dyes Lane to the west of the A1(M). This offers 14 pitches for 28 caravans and was found to have 4 additional caravans on it at the time of the survey. The survey results are not site-specific, in order to maintain the confidentiality of individual survey respondents. Nonetheless, the gypsy and traveller respondents uniformly identified that any new caravan pitches were not tied to any one particular location (i.e. that they would be equally welcome wherever they were provided within the study area). Against this background, it is appropriate to ask whether we should play a role in helping to meet the identified need for new caravan pitches.
132. On the one hand, it could be argued that in recognition of the fact that the Borough already contains space for 28 caravans on the Dyes Lane site and that it is the second smallest local authority (in terms of area) in the East of England region, we should make no further provision to 2021. This would place reliance on the other authorities that were partners in the study to meet the identified accommodation needs within their plans. This would be the consequence of following the ‘equity’ argument proposed in the study, which argues that the larger authorities, by reason of being larger, are better able to physically accommodate additional pitches and that, as the travelling community expressed no locational preference across the study area, the sites will be equally acceptable to the gypsy and traveller community wherever they are provided.

133. A counter-argument is that we should make a contribution towards meeting the identified need. This may be particularly pertinent because gypsies and travellers tend – and this is a generalisation – to live in extended family groups and to have strong family ties. This would suggest that keeping the community at Dyes Lane together, or close by, would be preferable to relying on other local authorities to provide the necessary additional pitches, possibly some distance away from Dyes Lane.

134. In turn, this raises the question of whether – if additional pitches are to be provided within the Borough – it would be better to extend the existing site at Dyes Lane or whether we should search for an additional site. The former option would be more likely to allow the community to retain the strong family ties that it prizes so highly; whilst the latter may be felt to allow greater independence amongst family members.

135. Extending the Dyes Lane site could be done in two alternative ways. Firstly, to create a modest number of existing pitches (the equivalent - for the settled community - of building new houses). Secondly, to enlarge the existing pitches so that each can accommodate more caravans for younger or older members of the family (the equivalent of extending a house).

136. Another option would be to seek a completely new, free-standing site somewhere within the Borough to meet gypsy and traveller needs through to 2021. This could have the potential to accommodate gypsies and travellers from other sites, rather than just Dyes Lane, and thus be, perhaps, of an equivalent size to Dyes Lane. There is a linked question in the Site Specific Policies DPD suggesting ‘areas of search’ for possible new sites, if this is the preferred option.

A. Make no additional provision for gypsies and travellers (i.e. rely on other local authorities)
B. Extend the Dyes Lane site by creating more caravan pitches
C. Extend the Dyes Lane site by enlarging the existing pitches to accommodate more caravans
D. Identify an additional site

Please note that Option D is considered in more detail in Question SP2 on page 19 of the Site Specific Policies DPD which is also out to public consultation.
What is the future of neighbourhood centres?

137. Stevenage was designated as England’s first post-war New Town in 1946 with a masterplan that included neighbourhood centres providing day-to-day shopping, leisure and amenity facilities for residential areas.

138. There is currently a network of 10 large and 12 small neighbourhood centres in Stevenage. However, the adopted District Plan observes that trends such as car ownership, fridge-freezers and supermarkets have significantly altered shopping patterns over the last 30 years and have consequently affected the commercial viability of neighbourhood centres. In many cases, food shops such as bakeries, butchers and greengrocers have been replaced by financial services, take-aways and fast food shops.

139. It is now appropriate to consider whether neighbourhood centres continue to perform the role they were created for, whether the roles they now perform are still appropriate and what roles they might perform in the future.

140. If it is considered that neighbourhood centres no longer perform the role they were created for, consolidation would result in fewer centres each serving a wider catchment. This would enable the redevelopment of surplus centres for alternative uses. Redefining the role of centres would mean considering what types of day-to-day shopping and other facilities people want to have locally (such as newsagents, pharmacies or cafés). Developing "specialist" centres might focus on small-scale industries such as repair workshops or services such as restaurants or hobby shops. Such a role is more viable than it might initially sound given the lack of secondary retail frontages in the town centre where such specialisms would normally locate.

141. Do you think Stevenage should:

A. Do nothing

B. Consolidate current network and redevelop some neighbourhood centres
C. Try to redefine neighbourhood centres to provide more local day-to-day services

D. Develop “specialist” neighbourhood centres that provide particular service(s). If so, what specialisms might be appropriate?

Please note that more detailed options for neighbourhood centres are set out in Question SP1 on page 17 of the Site Specific Policies DPD which is also out to public consultation.

142. In addition to the options above, we would welcome your thoughts on whether you think the principal function of neighbourhood centres should continue to be shopping?
CS16) What facilities should be provided in new neighbourhoods?

143. The original masterplan for Stevenage included neighbourhood centres which provided local facilities for residential areas. Many of the town’s 22 neighbourhood centres are now supplemented by schools, places of worship, doctors’ surgeries and community centres and are linked to one another, and the town centre, by a network of pedestrian and cycle routes.

144. We envisage that new neighbourhoods will incorporate similar facilities in order to provide local day-to-day services and to help create strong local communities. Most of our existing neighbourhood centres offer day-to-day facilities such as food shops and service shops such as laundrettes, dry cleaners and building societies. However, it may be appropriate to include a wider range of facilities in new neighbourhoods such as small start-up business premises and offices to encourage mixed use communities.

145. What facilities should be provided in new neighbourhoods (please tick those facilities you think should be provided):

- A. Food shops
- B. Service and amenity shops
- C. Restaurants and take-aways
- D. Start-up business premises
- E. Offices
- F. Primary schools
- G. Secondary schools
- H. Places of worship
- I. Health services
- J. Community centres
- K. Bus services
- L. Pedestrian and cycle networks
- M. Open spaces and play areas
- N. Pubs
- O. Crèches and childcare facilities
- H. Places of worship
CS17) How can we protect existing heritage and deliver regeneration and growth? What implications does this have?

146. Stevenage has five conservation areas, over 150 listed buildings and many highly valued ancient lanes, woodlands, hedgerows and field boundaries. We believe that these features, and our heritage as a comprehensively planned New Town, deserve to be protected.

147. The Open Space Study (PMP, 2006) we commissioned calculates that Stevenage has over 200 hectares of natural and semi-natural open space, including parks, formal gardens, woodlands, grasslands, water meadows and nature reserves. These features greatly enhance environmental quality and, together with the green links between them, provide recreational opportunities and essential habitats for wildlife.

148. In most cases, new neighbourhoods will complement the existing heritage, although conflict may arise where regeneration and redevelopment occurs within the existing urban area.

149. In some cases protecting existing heritage may mean that regeneration or redevelopment schemes occur on less comprehensive and more piecemeal basis, that housing and employment growth may be constrained and that our wider social ambitions may take longer to achieve. In other cases, prioritising regeneration and growth may mean that existing heritage is adversely affected, that the setting of such heritage may also be affected and that wildlife habitats may need to be replaced.

150. The options for both protecting existing heritage and delivering regeneration and growth are:

A. Give absolute priority to protecting and enhancing the existing built and natural environment; make only the minimum necessary provision for new development

B. Give priority to protecting and enhancing the existing built and natural environment; make only limited provision for new development

C. Take a balanced approach: retain and enhance the existing built and natural environment and permit new development where any harm can be mitigated

D. Give priority to new development; retain and enhance only the best of the existing built and natural environment

E. Give absolute priority to new development; retain and enhance only the very best of the existing built and natural environment
151. Biodiversity is defined as the variety of life in all its form. Government guidance seeks to ensure that biodiversity is conserved and enhanced by sustaining and improving the quality and extent of natural habitats. In general terms, wildlife habitats are protected according to their international, national, regional or local importance.

152. The East of England Plan defines priority habitats in Stevenage as semi-natural woodlands and hedges. It promotes the restoration and re-establishment of such habitats. The Plan also seeks to manage and expand wildlife corridors that are important for the migration and dispersal of wildlife. Please note that options for new Green Links are considered in more detail in the Site Specific Policies DPD also out for public consultation.

153. The adopted District Plan identifies that Stevenage has 37 wildlife sites and Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) totalling over 100 hectares. It advises that planning controls will be applied in circumstances where development proposals have an adverse impact on the habitats of endangered species.

154. The draft Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) (April 2006) prepared by Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust identifies key features of biodiversity importance. In summary, the five key habitats in the Borough are: woodlands, grasslands, wetlands, hedgerows and urban/artificial landscapes. The BAP specifically identifies oak and hornbeam ancient woodland as internationally important under the EU Habitats Directive; Brook Marsh for its rare plant species; Ridlins Mire peat bog for its rare flora and invertebrate species; Shackledell grassland for its cricket colony; and Monks Wood for its orchids. It also notes that the Wildlife and Conservation Act protects bluebells found in many of Stevenage’s broadleaf woodlands.

155. The habitats listed in the BAP support a wide variety of species, including:

- Mammals – such as bats, foxes, rabbits, badgers and Muntjac deer
- Birds – such as song thrushes and sparrows
- Reptiles and invertebrates – such as frogs, toads, grass snakes, lizards, slow-worms and Great Crested Newts

- Other species – such as butterflies, lacewings, spiders, nationally scarce solitary bees, locally rare snails and Great Green Bush crickets

156. The BAP lists objectives for conserving these species and their habitats. Habitat Action Plans are intended to conserve habitats and to benefit the species living in them and Species Action Plans are for rare or distinctive species that warrant special attention.

157. In conserving and enhancing biodiversity and natural habitats, we could rely on Government guidance and the Stevenage BAP. Alternatively, we could adopt a reactive stance (where reliance is placed on existing biodiversity guidance), an opportunistic policy (where policies are established to guide development control decisions) or a proactive policy (where sites of biodiversity importance are identified and protected).

158. The options are:

A. Do nothing (i.e. rely on the most up-to-date Government biodiversity guidance and the Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan)

B. Establish policies which support the restoration, creation or re-establishment of habitats (i.e. policies to be used in response to planning applications)

C. Identify areas or sites for the restoration, creation or re-establishment of habitats (i.e. proactively protect sites of biodiversity importance)
CS19) Should we create a list of locally important buildings?

159. There are a number of buildings in Stevenage which are “listed” by the Government because of their special architecture or historic interest. Unlike normal buildings, listed buildings are subject to strict planning controls regarding their demolition or changes to their appearance or use. Such changes require listed building consent from the Borough Council.

160. All buildings built before 1700 are listed, as are most built between 1700 and 1840. Buildings of less than 30 years old are rarely listed unless they are of outstanding quality. At present, Stevenage contains two Grade I listed buildings which are of exceptional interest, 114 Grade II listed buildings of more than special interest and ten Grade II* listed buildings of special interest which warrant every effort to preserve them. Up until 1970, the Government also had a Grade III listing for buildings which did not qualify for the statutory list but were nevertheless considered to be of some importance.

161. The Stevenage Conservation Area Review (Beams, 2005) we commissioned identifies 92 key buildings within the town’s five conservation areas that could be regarded as locally important but do not have listed building status. Examples include Oakfield Farmhouse, the Granby public house, Stevenage Methodist Church in the Old Town, the Crooked Billet public house and various pieces of public art in the town centre. Many of the buildings listed in the review could have qualified for Grade III status prior to 1970.

162. Creating a list of locally important buildings would provide such buildings with additional significance which could raise their profile within the community. However, such buildings would have no statutory protection and would not require listed building consent if their demolition or changes to their appearance or use were proposed.

163. As many non-listed buildings within conservation areas already have a level of protection (they will not be demolished unless the replacement development positively contributes to the street scene) it is also worth considering whether there are any buildings outside conservation areas which are worthy of being locally listed.

164. The options are:

   A. Yes – a list of locally important buildings should be created. If so, which buildings might be worthy of such status?

   B. No – a list of locally important buildings should not be created
CS20) How should renewable energy and energy efficiency be provided?

165. Government energy objectives support energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy resources. The overall purpose is to cut carbon dioxide emissions, to maintain reliable and competitive energy supplies and to reduce the impacts of climate change.

166. The East of England Plan sets a regional renewable energy target of 17% by 2020. It requires all plans to contain energy efficiency and renewable energy policies to help meet this target. It also requires developers to submit energy statements for proposals over 1,000 sq.m. or 50 dwellings to demonstrate that at least 10% of the development’s energy requirement can be derived from renewable energy sources. The Plan notes that growth areas such as Stevenage have the maximum potential for new technologies.

167. The Hertfordshire Renewable Energy Study (Entec, 2005) commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council identifies that potential in Stevenage exists for:

- individual wind turbines, particularly at sites with high electricity consumption
- biomass facilities
- so-called ‘embedded’ technologies (such as solar panels, solar thermal water heating, passive solar design, ground source heat pumps and rooftop wind turbines) which can be installed in commercial and domestic properties

168. It concludes that the greatest opportunity comes from community heating schemes in new developments where annual carbon emissions could be reduced by 12%.

169. The options are:

A. Promote renewable energy and energy efficiency measures in existing buildings
B. Require renewable energy and energy efficiency measures in new development
C. Actively support large-scale renewable energy technologies (i.e. wind turbines)
D. Actively support ‘embedded’ and community level renewable energy technologies
170. In addition, we would appreciate your thoughts as to whether we should set a higher renewable energy target for Stevenage:

A. Yes – set a renewable energy target higher than 17% and set an energy statement threshold lower than 1,000 sq.m. or 50 dwellings

B. No – retain a renewable energy target of 17% and retain an energy statement threshold of 1,000 sq.m. or 50 dwellings
CS21) Should we develop principles of sustainable development for new and existing buildings?

171. It is reckoned that almost 50% of the UK’s energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions are produced by the everyday functioning of the built environment. An environmentally sound approach towards the design, construction and management of buildings can significantly reduce this burden. Government guidance encourages all local authorities to insert principles of sustainable development into their planning documents.

172. The Building Research Establishment’s Environmental Assessment Methodology (known as BREEAM) assesses the environmental performance of buildings in terms of their construction, building materials, energy use, pollution, transport, land use and ecology. Buildings are rated on a scale of pass, good, very good or excellent. The assessment covers factories, shops, offices and schools. Homes fall under a similar EcoHomes assessment.

173. Developers who achieve BREEAM standards can promote their environmental credentials to investors and purchasers and a BREEAM certificate guarantees reduced maintenance and running costs for owners and tenants. Although design and building costs are usually higher for energy efficient buildings compared with ‘normally designed’ buildings, such costs are made up for by the lower operational costs plus the health benefits and comfort of occupants.

174. It is anticipated that all commercial buildings in Stevenage West will be built to BREEAM standards and that the town centre redevelopment scheme will achieve an excellent rating. An alternative is to incorporate detailed design techniques into planning policy. This could include requiring developments to have regard to passive solar design, building insulation, cladding, section lighting within buildings, water saving systems and the use of sustainable construction materials.

175. In considering the options to develop principles of sustainable development, the options are:

   A. Re-assert generic guidance contained in the District Plan (i.e. encourage developers to implement design techniques to reduce energy use, use recyclable materials and renewable energy resources)
   
   B. Encourage, at minimum, a BREEAM rating for “very good” for all developments
   
   C. Incorporate detailed sustainable development design techniques into the Core Strategy
CS22) Should we encourage more Home Zones?

176. Home Zones are individual streets or groups of streets where physical alterations make motorists drive with greater care and at slower speeds. They help to make roads safer and more peaceful places where everyone – motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and residents – can use them.

177. As well as making streets safer, Home Zones can make an area more attractive by introducing flower beds, trees and benches. They can help create a sense of community and they may also increase the value of nearby homes.

178. However, chicanes and speed humps can cause tailbacks and could delay emergency services. They may also make it difficult for people to park directly outside their homes and could encourage children to play in the road, including those without Home Zone status.

179. Home Zones can be encouraged in existing streets and built into new neighbourhoods. For example, there is already a Home Zone in Longcroft Road in the Old Town.

180. The options are:

A. Yes – we should encourage more Home Zones in existing streets
B. No – we should not allow Home Zones in existing streets
C. Yes – we should encourage more Home Zones in new neighbourhoods
D. No – we should not allow Home Zones in new neighbourhoods
How can we encourage more sustainable transport?

181. Government transport objectives encourage public transport, walking and cycling to reduce the need to travel, the length of journeys and the impacts of climate change.

182. The Stevenage Community Strategy suggests that many local journeys are of less than four miles and could be undertaken by sustainable transport modes rather than by car. The Transport and Utilities Capacity Study (ARUP, 2005) we commissioned observes that 85% of employees in Stevenage travel to work using a car. It recommends that a shift to sustainable modes is necessary to ensure that our existing road network has sufficient capacity to accommodate additional traffic generated by 14,400 new homes.

183. In terms of options available, park and ride facilities are an increasingly common solution to town centre congestion as they transfer car users onto buses. Green Travel Plans are prepared by businesses to reduce the reliance on private motorised transport, encourage alternative means of transport and make such alternatives more attractive and feasible for employees.

184. What measures could encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable transport?

A. Park and ride facilities to serve the town centre
B. Park and ride facilities to serve Gunnels Wood and/or Pin Green
C. More frequent buses on more routes
D. Extend and enhance the pedestrian and cycle network
E. Encourage more businesses to prepare Green Travel Plans
F. More facilities for cyclists (such as secure storage, shower facilities at work)
G. Safer pedestrian routes (i.e. lighting and surveillance, avoid subways and underpasses)
CS24) What open space, leisure and recreation facilities should we provide for the growing population?

185. As a comprehensively planned New Town, Stevenage's original masterplan incorporated abundant open spaces, leisure and recreation facilities. The Open Space Study (PMP, 2006) commissioned by the Borough Council has undertaken a detailed audit of existing open spaces. It identifies over 550 hectares, including:

- Parkland (such as Fairlands Valley park)
- Formal gardens (such as the town centre gardens)
- Natural and semi-natural open space (such as woodlands, grassland and nature reserves)
- Amenity greenspace (such as small recreation areas and greenspace close to homes and work)
- Provision for children and young people (such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters)
- Sports facilities (such as surfaces for team sports, athletics, bowls and golf)
- Green corridors (for walking, cycling and horse riding)
- Allotments

186. A growing population is likely to place pressure on existing open spaces and leisure and recreation facilities. It may also create additional demand for new open spaces, cultural facilities such as places of worship, community centres, theatres, libraries, art galleries and museums. Such facilities play an important role in improving people's sense of well being, encouraging health living and preventing illness.
187. Please prioritise (by numbering up to 1-7 where 1 is the most important and 7 is the least important) the open space which you think is most important:

A. Urban parks
B. Country parks
C. Formal gardens
D. Natural and semi-natural open space

E. Small local greenspace
F. Allotments
G. Green corridors

188. Please prioritise (by numbering up to 1-8 where 1 is the most important and 8 is the least important) the recreation opportunities which you think are most important:

H. Equipped play areas for young children
I. Unequipped play areas for young children
J. Ball courts and kickabout areas
K. Skateboard areas

L. Teenage shelters
M. Facilities for team sports
N. Swimming pools
O. Bowls greens

189. Please prioritise (by numbering up to 1-6 where 1 is the most important and 6 is the least important) the leisure facilities which you think are most important:

P. Places of worship
Q. Community centres
R. Theatres

S. Libraries
T. Museums
U. Art galleries

Where should new sports and leisure facilities be located?

190. In addition, please feel free to let us know a) how many of each facility you think we should provide, b) where they might best be located and c) whether any other new facilities are needed.
CS25) What type of cemetery does Stevenage need?

191. The Open Space Study (PMP, 2006) we commissioned concludes that there will be a shortage of burial space in Stevenage by 2018. A growing population is likely to exacerbate this shortage.

192. In considering alternative options, there are now a variety of types of burial space with different spatial requirements. For example, green cemeteries are an increasingly popular option, where graves are marked by a tree rather than a headstone. However, they require more space than traditional cemeteries as trees need room to grow.

Weston Road Cemetery

193. The options are:

A. No extra provision should be made
B. Continue solely with traditional cemeteries
C. Create a new “green” cemetery

Please note that more detailed options about cemeteries are set out in Question SP3 on page 21 of the Site Specific Policies DPD which is also out to public consultation.
What planning obligations should we ask for and how should they be secured?

194. Planning obligations (also known as Section 106 agreements) are agreements between ourselves and developers to provide financial or other contributions for services and facilities associated with a development. They are intended to make development acceptable in planning terms by prescribing its nature, by compensating for loss or damage or by mitigating any negative impacts.

195. Government guidance states that planning obligations must be:

- relevant to planning
- necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms
- directly related to the proposed development
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development

196. Recent examples of planning obligations in Stevenage include the provision of affordable housing and public transport measures and financial contributions towards education, libraries and community safety.

Planning obligations sought from developers must be based on planning policies. They are generally agreed using a formula approach for small-scale applications and by negotiation for major applications. However, the Government wishes to make planning obligations more transparent. This means considering what are the most important facilities that should be provided in connection with new development and the best way of seeking such obligations.
198. Please prioritise (by numbering up to 1-14 where 1 is the most important and 14 is the least important) the facilities that you think we should seek from developers:

A. Education   H. Outdoor sports facilities
B. Childcare and youth facilities I. Social and community facilities
C. Libraries J. Allotments
D. Affordable housing K. Environmental and planting schemes
E. Community safety measures L. Pedestrian and cycle path improvements
F. Open space M. Public transport
G. Play space N. Highway improvements and parking controls

199. How do you think Stevenage should seek planning obligations in the future?

A. Do nothing (i.e. maintain existing situation)
B. Calculate and keep up-to-date the costs or requirements of most standard planning obligations (i.e. affordable housing, open space, education contributions)
C. Specify what planning obligations are needed in forthcoming plans with as much detail as possible and on a site specific basis
D. Prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to set out the general requirements and principles for planning obligations
E. Introduce a flat-rate “roof tax” on all development (i.e. a standard charge that applies to all new homes or business premises)
Appendix 1

Evidential studies commissioned by the Borough Council

This appendix contains a summary of each evidential study commissioned by the Borough Council. Please note that these are summaries and therefore do not contain the same level of detail or the precise wording that appears in the original study.

- Conservation Area Review (Beams, 2005)
- Education Study (DTZ Pieda, 2006)
- Employment Land Survey Evidence Base (DTZ Pieda, 2005)
- Gunnels Wood Focus on the Future (Stevenage Borough Council, 2004)
- Gunnels Wood Masterplan (Buro Happold, 2005)
- Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (Halcrow, 2005)
- North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment (Babtie, 2005)
- North East Hertfordshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (ORS, 2006)
- Open Space Study (PMP, 2006)
- Population Forecasts (DTZ Pieda, 2006)
- Skills and Employment Study (DTZ Pieda, 2005)
- Draft Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan (Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, April 2006)
- Stevenage Town Centre Retail Assessment (Cushman & Wakefield Healy & Baker, 2005)
- Transport and Utilities Capacity Study Phase 1 (ARUP, 2005)
- Transport and Utilities Capacity Study Phase 2 Additional Development Areas (ARUP, 2006)

In addition, the following study was not commissioned by the Borough Council, but has been summarised for the benefit of this consultation document.

- Historic Character of Stevenage Borough (Hertfordshire County Council, 2005)
Conservation Area Review (Beams, October 2005)

Aim: To review the Borough’s five existing conservation areas, identify new areas that would benefit from conservation area designation and to make recommendations on how they can be best managed.

Findings: The study was undertaken using site visits, desk top studies and consultation in accordance with English Heritage’s Conservation Area Appraisal methodology. The following findings were made with regard to existing conservation areas:

**Old Town:** No boundary changes are recommended. However, the traffic system around the Bowling Green at the north of the High Street is found to impact substantially on the character of the area. Recommendations include resolving this transport issue, retaining open spaces and introducing planning powers to control the appropriate use of replacement windows.

**Rectory Lane:** existing boundaries should be extended to include some agricultural land to the north of conservation area. Recommendations include developing design guidelines in conjunction with the Highways Authority for signage, markings and lighting.

**Symonds Green:** Blakeney Road area should be removed from the conservation area. Recommendations include avoiding further development on open space and maintaining ditches, hedges and trees.

**Shephall Green:** the conservation area should be expanded to incorporate Heathcote and Barnwell school playing fields

**Town Centre:** It is recommended that the town centre conservation area be expanded to incorporate the whole of the area inside and ring road and the town centre gardens

Recommendations: The study identified the following areas for possible future designation as a conservation area: Caxton Way, Orchard Road, Norton Green, Marymead and Broadwater. It also proposed conservation area appraisals and review of development control practice, enforcement action on plastic windows installed in listed buildings and recommended compiling a list of locally important buildings. There should be efforts to see conservation areas as high quality environments and to raise the consciousness of Stevenage as an important New Town.
Education Study (DTZ Pieda, March 2006)

**Aim:** To provide an audit of current education provision, to assess future education opportunities and to make recommendations for future education provision in Stevenage.

**Findings:** Stevenage performs poorly relative to Hertfordshire. Exam performance is notably adrift of the county average. Few residents are unqualified, but even fewer have a degree qualification. Lack of aspiration is a trans-generational issue.

**Primary schools:** 16 out of 21 failed to meet average regional standards. Such failure requires remedial action at secondary schools to raise pupil standards. There are more primary school pupils (8,150) than places (7,650).

**Secondary schools:** 6 out of 8 fall below LEA key stage 3 standards. This has knock-on effects at key stage 4 (GCSE). There is a need to improve performance across-the-board to reverse established patterns. 6 out of 7 schools are in the county’s top 20 for priority action. There are more secondary school places (8,050) than pupils (7,650). HCC are considering rationalisation and amalgamation to create larger secondary schools to create more viable sixth forms with subject choice.

**Condition:** 2 schools are below average building condition with most built 1950-1970 and in need of improvement. There are 31 mobile classrooms with 18 built prior to 1980.

**Proposals:** 3 primary & 1 secondary schools (750 places) are proposed at Stevenage West. Collenswood secondary school is proposed for closure (1,017 places).

**Scenarios:** for secondary schools to 2021 are based on DTZ assumptions of 21 primary and 18 secondary pupils per 100 households:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New dwellings</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary, with Collenswood open</th>
<th>Secondary, with Collenswood closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7,379 No improvements</td>
<td>1,669 oversupply</td>
<td>1,670 oversupply</td>
<td>1,210 oversupply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14,400 No improvements</td>
<td>77 oversupply</td>
<td>790 oversupply</td>
<td>230 undersupply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14,400 Stay-on rates same as Herts</td>
<td>77 oversupply</td>
<td>610 oversupply</td>
<td>400 undersupply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scenario 1 is not considered an option. Scenario 2 would impact on pupil performance. Trends could worsen and there would be capacity issues if Collenswood closes. Improved staying-on rates would create additional demand under Scenario 3 and lead to under-supply. Scenarios 4, 5 and 6 test different urban extension options. Although the results would are the same as Scenario 3, the spatial implications differ.

**Recommendations:** There is clear evidence to support major educational transformation initiative. Needs to be strategic, ambitious and holistic and involve all education partners to strengthen leadership, raise aspirations, develop early years intervention, encourage curriculum diversity, improve post-16 participation, support special education needs and plan for overall growth and investment.
Employment Land Survey Evidence Base (DTZ Pieda, March 2005)

**Aim:** To research employment land and premises across Stevenage, to establish a robust baseline of evidence to inform emerging employment planning policy and to identify ways to improve the quality of the employment land stock.

**Findings:** Stevenage has 42,000 jobs and 2,600 businesses. The local economy is fairly typical of New Towns, with a high proportion of manufacturing and advanced manufacturing and many ‘footloose’ international firms.

In economic terms, Stevenage has performed at or around national averages, but significantly below Hertfordshire and East of England rates. This under-performance is due to the high representation of slow or negative growth sectors (e.g. manufacturing) and low representation of growth sectors (e.g. business services).

Job growth across Hertfordshire is likely to be in business and professional services, computing and retailing. The delivery of high levels of employment growth in Stevenage will depend on the ability to attract such sectors and to diversify the economic base.

The office market has falling take-up and high vacancy levels. This is accentuated by distance from London and the poor quality and profile of Stevenage town centre.

Employment land at Gunnels Wood, Pin Green, the old town and the town centre totals 1,060,000 sq.m. and 31,000 employees.

On Gunnels Wood in particular, there is a lack of modern premises for small business and high-tech sectors. Premises need refurbishment to suit evolving needs. New offices situated amongst older industrial and sui generis uses reduces coherent identity and appeal to potential occupiers. There are limited bus services, peak time congestion and heavy car reliance.

Both Gunnels Wood and Pin Green lack communal services/amenities for employees, high profile occupiers and high quality buildings to present strong image.

**Recommendations:** Stevenage should aspire to Hatfield Business Park or Cambridge Science Park standards. Key lessons include links to university or higher education, high specification premises, attractive surroundings, common management facilities, flexible leasing arrangements and associated leisure and retail facilities.

Improvements to Gunnels Wood should include gateways, the environment and public realm, town centre linkages and a more cohesive layout. Opportunities for new premises include Arlington Business Park, the former ABB site and the former Kodak site.

Longer-term opportunities include the rationalisation of old industries and workshops, vacant and underused sites, low density sites and parking, service and storage areas.

Transport opportunities include integrating Gunnels Wood in the bus network, improving pedestrian and cycle routes to the town centre and applying parking standards.
Gunnels Wood Focus on the Future (Stevenage Borough Council, August 2004)

**Aim:** To set out a strategy for the future of Stevenage’s Gunnels Wood over the next 10 years.

**Findings:** The Strategy identifies a number of challenges and issues facing Gunnels Wood and groups them under five broad categories, being: image and identity, development; transport; environment; and economic development.

**Image and Identity:** Gunnels Wood has until recently been known as an industrial area, but this does not reflect the range of activities that now take place within it. A more modern image needs to be expressed which reflects the aspirations of existing and future stakeholders.

**Development:** Gunnels Wood needs to provide opportunities for the development of employment uses, through accommodating companies that wish to start-up, expand or relocate in Stevenage area. At the moment there are limited opportunities for such development to occur.

**Transport:** Sustainable methods of transport are poorly used, despite the opportunity due to good infrastructure servicing the area. There is also a high dependency on private car use.

**Environment:** The mature age, use and previous use of the area has resulted in a tired visual amenity. Should this be left unchecked it may result in a cycle of decline, which has the potential to deter new investment, hinder staff recruitment and cause existing occupiers to move elsewhere.

**Economic Development:** Programmes addressing the on-going support of existing business, the support of businesses during their establishment period and the attraction of inward investment will need to be undertaken to facilitate a sustainable economy.

**Recommendations:** The following recommendations are a summary that relates to all categories:

- Remove ‘industrial area’ from the Gunnels Wood name
- Provide new signage at key junctions to mark entry into the area
- Improve the quality of the physical environment
- Prepare supplementary planning guidance to guide new development in the areas of acceptable uses, design, public realm improvements, transport and developer contributions
- New developments should principally comprise of offices, industrial and warehousing
- Improve pedestrian and cycle access between the train station and business area
- Encourage developments that propose better integration of transport infrastructure for alternative modes of transport
- Introduce design guidelines that promote good quality design in new developments
- Encourage the developments of facilities that improve the quality of the working environment
- Encourage new development to incorporate sustainable development design principles
- Secure additional business accommodation suitable for new and small businesses as part of any major development or redevelopment
- Enhance support facilities and services available to Gunnels Wood businesses
Gunnels Wood Masterplan (Buro Happold, September 2005)

**Aim:** To develop a Masterplan which will achieve a high quality urban environment characterised by sustainable development principles.

**Transport:** There are good strategic transport connections, it is close to the town centre and railway station and extensive pedestrian and cycle network coverage. However, there are limited bus services, convoluted pedestrian and cycle routes, a poor environment, poor signage and peak-time congestion.

Recommendations include creating a safe and comprehensive pedestrian and cycle network, improving town centre connectivity, establish permeable street patterns and enhance legibility through signage.

**Built form:** There are a few high quality buildings and capacity to accommodate higher density. However, some buildings are badly located with inconsistent styles, poorly defined frontages, run-down appearances and are disproportionate to road widths.

Recommendations include keeping appropriate scales, densities and massing to reflect character, install consistent boundaries to define public/private space and renovate and redevelop poor quality buildings.

**Land use:** There is a good mix of employment uses, including high-profile companies, prime potential development sites and refurbishment and cluster opportunities. There is also a lack of amenities, poor small and medium enterprise premises, contrasting land uses, low densities, low demand and areas of long-term vacancy.

Recommendations include intensifying low density areas, clustering to define uses and create identity, provide ancillary services, rationalise parking and address vacancies.

**Public realm:** There are pockets of high quality landscape and mature vegetation but a lack of usable or tranquil public open space, poor pedestrian permeability, no discernible identity or distinguishable gateways, inconsistent landscaping, poor signage and traffic noise.

Recommendations include developing consistent landscaping and street scenes, introducing usable public open space and enhancing wildlife habitats.

**Consultees:** described Gunnels Wood as lacking presence with inadequate ancillary services, unattractive settings, poor navigation and signage, low bus provision and traffic congestion.

**Recommendations:** Improve pedestrian and cycle connections, particular to/from the railway station, better public transport, enhanced legibility with signage and gateways, mixed use around the railway station, ancillary services, higher quality public realm, landscaping, a stronger east-west route and high density with stronger frontages.
Housing Needs Survey (David Couttie Associates, 2003)

**Aim:** To gather evidence on the level and type of housing need in Stevenage over the next five years and indicate likely future change up to 2011. To create affordable housing targets to assist affordable housing provision negotiations.

**Findings:** 2,244 questionnaires and 500 interviews were conducted (more than double the ODPM guidance figure of 1,250). This is equivalent to 8.3% of Stevenage households.

The average house price in 2003 was £152,300 with terraced and semi-detached houses accounting for 60% of sales. Prices are the lowest in Hertfordshire, although they vary significantly across the town. An income of £38,000 is required to access the lowest quartile of owner occupation housing. This means many key workers cannot afford to owner occupy in Stevenage (as high as 59% for health staff).

There is a clear affordability problem for low-income households. Ownership is beyond the reach of 90% of concealed households. Private sector rented housing makes little contribution to improving access. Low mortgage interest rates imply that those unable to enter the market under these conditions may never be able to do so.

64% of homes are in owner occupation and 27% are rented from the Council. 14% of households described their accommodation as inadequate, mainly for repair reasons.

26% of households are seeking to move within the next five years, with 72% describing their current dwelling as too small. Over 3,500 plan to leave Stevenage due to a lack of affordable housing, for better access to work and for better employment opportunities.

Although incomes are above the national average, so too are the number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit.

93% of concealed households are people under 30, of which 60% require a flat or maisonette, 57% need one bedroom and 55% would prefer to rent from the Council. Only 30% are registered on a housing waiting list. In addition, there is a requirement for special needs supported or adapted housing and 1,400 sheltered accommodation units over the next five years.

Chelmer population projections imply notable increases in the 20-29 and 65+ age group. Between 30% and 40% of future households will require affordable housing.

The affordable housing shortfall is calculated to be 467 units per annum. This scale of supply cannot be achieved given average supply of 32 units per annum in previous years. This will result in growing levels of unmet need. Significant new development would provide opportunities for households to remain in the Borough.

**Recommendations:** Registered Social Landlords should build small units, especially flats. An older persons’ housing strategy should be prepared. Disabled adaptations should continue to be promoted. Planners should negotiate with developers to achieve 40% subsidised affordable housing.
Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (Halcrow, January 2006)

**Aim:** To undertake landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment to help inform decisions about the future extent and directions of residential and employment growth around Stevenage. To propose a robust framework for landscape mitigation measures.

**Methodology:** The area around Stevenage was categorised into 35 units. Landscape capacity was defined as high, medium or low based on visual and sensitivity assessment of condition, natural, cultural and aesthetic factors, visibility and mitigation potential.

**Findings:** There is potential for urban extensions without unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape for 8,100 dwellings at 30 dph, 10,800 dwellings at 40 dph and 13,500 dwellings at 50 dph, together with 28 ha of employment land. Potential residential development areas are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Hectares at 30 dph</th>
<th>Hectares at 40 dph</th>
<th>Hectares at 50 dph</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Stevenage</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>2,625</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Wymondley &amp; Todds Green</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>1,440</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Stevenage</td>
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<td>1,540</td>
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<td>1,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Stevenage</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Stevenage</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>915</td>
<td>1,220</td>
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</table>

Achievement of 50 dph need not mean very visually conspicuous high-rise development or compromise on ensuring a high standard of urban and landscape design. All assumptions assume landscape mitigation and enhancement measures, i.e. greenspace framework and structural planting.

There are extensive areas around Stevenage with high sensitivity and low landscape capacity for urban extensions and employment growth. Development could fundamentally alter their unspoilt rural character, their views and their tranquillity.

**Conclusions:** “It has been possible, particularly around the immediate urban fringe to identify a number of potential development areas where, assuming the essential mitigation measures are implemented effectively, it should be possible to accommodate both urban extensions and employment growth of the scale envisaged in the regional plan without unacceptable adverse landscape impacts.”

**Recommendations:** Relevant policies should incorporate essential mitigation measures if potential development areas are to be taken forward as allocations in LDFs. A comprehensive greenspace framework strategy should be prepared containing detailed guidance on design, engendering public involvement and funding mechanisms. A landscape led approach should be adopted in future masterplans.
Aim: To undertake a gypsy and traveller needs assessment in Broxbourne, East Herts, North Herts, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield to assess whether more provision is required on existing sites or whether extra sites are needed.

Findings: North East Hertfordshire has a relatively low gypsy and traveller population with around 170 caravans identified in January 2005. It is presumed that high land prices and the limited availability of casual work discourages gypsies and travellers from living in the area.

However, adjoining areas such as Bedfordshire and southern Hertfordshire have higher gypsy and traveller populations. How such authorities deal with illegal encampments may affect the population in North East Hertfordshire.

North East Hertfordshire has capacity for 150 caravans on 3 council sites and 8 private authorised sites. There is little history of recent unauthorised encampments.

A survey of gypsies and travellers revealed that few have every lived in bricks and mortar housing, that a significant proportion are under 16 years old and that many have health problems. Most gypsies and travellers have lived in the North East Hertfordshire area for over 5 years and the majority are satisfied with their site.

Recommendations: North East Hertfordshire needs to accommodate an additional 45 pitches plus transit provision to meet future gypsy and traveller need.

NB: The results and recommendations of this draft version have not been finalised may differ from the final version expected later in 2006.
North Herts and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment (Babtie, April 2004)

**Aim:** To undertake a landscape character assessment of North Herts and rural parts of Stevenage. The information will be used for development control, policy, landscape planning, countryside conservation, recreation projects and to support grant applications.

**Findings:** The study provides an overview of the area’s geology (lower cretaceous chalk, comprising quaternary deposits of sand and gravel, clay with flints, boulder clay and glacial drift deposits), soil (permeable chalky clay soils and loamy or silty soils over clay exist), topography, history, buildings, settlements and transport.

Desk-based studies, site appraisals and stakeholder input have produced 34 character areas. Those character areas relevant to Stevenage are summarised below:

Area 37 (East of A1(M) and South of Stevenage) comprises arable farmland and a golf course. No ecological information. Condition = moderate. Robustness = strong. Guidelines = conserve and restore.

Area 208 (Knebworth) comprises mature woodland, parklands and gardens. It contains Watery Grove SSSI and species-rich heath grassland. Condition = moderate. Robustness = strong. Guideline = should conserve and restore.

Area 209 (West of Stevenage) comprises undulating arable fields, hedgerows and deciduous woodland. There are some low key detracting features such as landfill and gypsy site. Condition = poor. Robustness = Moderate. Guideline = improve and restore.

Area 214 (Langley Valley) comprises arable and grazing land with scattered settlements and farmsteads. Notable detracting features include an airfield and scrapyard. Condition = poor. Robustness = weak. Guideline = reconstruct.

Area 215 (NW of Stevenage) comprises historic landscape, winding lanes and scattered farmsteads. It is predominately arable with some grazing land. Notable detracting features include Wymondley transformer station and pylons. Condition = moderate. Robustness = Moderate. Guidelines = improve and conserve.

Area 216 (North of Stevenage) comprises arable landscape with scattered plantations and copses. There are few ecologically interesting sites. Condition = moderate. Robustness = moderate. Guidelines = improve and conserve.

Area 219 (North of Stevenage) comprises steeply sloping chalk scarp. It is predominately arable land with occasional pasture land. Condition = good. Robustness = weak. Guidelines = strengthen and reinforce.

Area 220 (Weston Park) comprises gentle sloping chalk plateau. It is predominately arable land with occasional grazing. Weston Park comprises ancient deciduous woodland. There are important wildlife sites and a species-rich meadow with SSSI potential. Condition = moderate. Robustness = moderate. Guidelines = improve and conserve.
Open Space, Recreation and Sports Study (PMP, February 2006)

**Aim:** To assess open space, sport and recreational facilities in Stevenage. To audit existing facilities, including level of use, accessibility and opportunities for new provision. To set quantitative, qualitative and accessibility standards for facility provision. To provide recommendations on addressing identified needs, deficiencies and problems.

Problems for all open space include graffiti, vandalism, litter, dog fouling, lighting and anti-social behaviour.

**Parks and gardens** (4 parks, 66 ha) are very well used and regarded as highly important. Qualities include cleanliness, toilets, cut grass, flora and seating. Recommended standard = 0.73 ha per 1,000 population = 15 min drive to Fairlands Valley or 10 min walk.

**Natural and semi-natural open space** (72 areas, 142 ha) includes woodland, grassland, nature reserves and water. Such spaces are primarily used for wildlife conservation and biodiversity. Recommended standard = 1.78 ha per 1,000 population = 5 min walk.

**Amenity greenspace** (393 areas, 87 ha) includes informal recreation space in and around housing. There is support to retain such provision. Recommended standard = 1.1 ha per 1,000 population = 5 min walk.

**Provision for children and young people** (108 play areas) is considered important but insufficient. More toilets and lighting are required. Current provision of 1.35 areas per 1,000 population is severely clustered and unsustainable in management and maintenance terms. A rationalisation programme is being undertaken. Recommended standard = 0.8 play areas per 1,000 population = 5 min walk.

**Sports facilities** (52 sites, 233 ha) comprise football, tennis, bowls, cricket, rugby and hockey. Golf courses comprise 57 ha. There is a shortfall of sports halls and swimming pools but an over-supply of fitness stations. People are satisfied with quality by dissatisfied with toilet and shelter provision. Recommended outdoor standard = 2.2 ha per 1,000 population (excluding golf courses) = 10 min drive or 10 min walk for tennis.

**Allotments and community gardens** (669 plots at 15 sites, 14 ha). Current demand is for 420 plots. Recommended standard = 0.09 ha per 1,000 population = 15 min walk.

**Cemeteries and churchyards** comprise public and private churches and burial grounds. They are a minor resource in Stevenage used for quiet contemplation and wildlife conservation. 35 plots are needed per annum. There are no recommended standards.

**Green corridors** comprise footpaths, cycleways etc for walking, cycling, horse riding and wildlife migration. Levels of maintenance satisfaction are high but litter is a problem. There are no recommended standards.

**Recommendations:** Standards can be used to establish formulae or negotiate planning contributions. A total of 32 keys issues and actions are identified for resolution through planning policy, open space strategies, fiscal measures and other delivery mechanisms.
Population Forecasts (DTZ Pieda, October 2005)

Aim: To determine what impacts an additional 14,400 dwelling envisaged by the draft East of England Plan will have on Stevenage’s demographic profile.

Findings: The Chamber of Commerce complains about local skills shortages and a deficit of good quality executive homes being barriers to recruitment and retention. This leads to unsustainable, long distance commuting. Census 2001 confirms that Stevenage experiences net in-commuting.

Chelmer (July 2005) projects dwelling growth of between 6,000 and 7,000 in Stevenage by 2021. This equates to a total population of 86,000 under short-run migration and 83,600 under RSS scenario.

The most significant variable of these projections are residents per dwelling. DTZ regard employment prospects, commuting and skills shortages as potential signals for workers and their families to move into Stevenage to meet excess labour demand. They assume residents per dwelling will be 5 to 7% higher than Chelmer by 2021. This equates to a total population of 88,500 under short-run migration and 86,000 under RSS scenario.

Urban extensions are anticipated to have a different demographic profile to existing Stevenage residents, with people in managerial and professional roles occupying a higher proportion of new dwellings.

The Labour Force Survey (2005) indicates that households headed by higher and lower managerial and professional occupations are respectively 15% and 7% larger than average. DTZ assume that households headed by such occupations will each account for 25% of new households in urban extensions. The remaining 50% will reflect the existing demographic structure of Stevenage.

Applied to Chelmer (July 2005) population projections these assumptions equate to 103,800 under short-run migration and 103,300 under RSS scenario by 2021. Applied to DTZ population projections they equate to 104,700 under short-run migration and 104,300 under RSS scenario.

The single greatest proportional increase is projected in the 85+ age cohort. Increases are also projected in 25 to 34 and 50 to 74 age cohorts. The greatest proportional declines are in 10 to 19 and 35 to 49 age cohorts.

Conclusions: An additional 14,400 dwellings in Stevenage, comprising 50% executive and other homes for managerial and professional occupations, equates to a total population of approximately 104,700 by 2021.
Skills and Employment Study (DTZ Pieda, October 2005)

**Aim:** To examine what level of employment Stevenage can expect to deliver in light of regional growth scenarios. To identify which sectors offer the greatest opportunity for employment growth and the requirements and implications in terms of skills and education, land use and broader policy.

**Findings:** DTZ have modelled four growth scenarios for the period to 2021: a baseline scenario that follows growth patterns forecast for the wider economy, two scenarios that out-perform the wider economy and a Sustainable Communities scenario where employment levels match the development of 14,400 new dwellings.

To achieve growth, Stevenage needs to reflect the national economy by pursuing growth in service sectors and seeking a shift towards advanced manufacturing. Computing, health, social work and retail are forecast to offer most employment growth. Land and premises implications are for substantial growth in B1 office uses and substantial decline in B2 industrial uses. Floorspace requirements total 18 hectares or 144,300 sq.m. for the Sustainable Communities scenario.

Occupational demand would be for managers/senior officials, professional occupations, associated professional and technical, administrative and secretarial. Skills demand would be for NVQ4 (degree) and NVQ3 (A Level). This has important links with current concerns regarding low aspiration, basic skills deficiencies, low earnings, high in-commuting and indigenous employment growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2001-2021</th>
<th>Job Growth</th>
<th>Job Sector Growth *</th>
<th>Occupation Growth **</th>
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<th>Skills (NVQ4+)</th>
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<td>5,760</td>
<td>3,740</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>2,100</td>
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<td>Mid Growth</td>
<td>8,150</td>
<td>7,160</td>
<td>5,470</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>3,070</td>
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<td>10,850</td>
<td>8,670</td>
<td>6,700</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>4,080</td>
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<td>Sustainable Communities</td>
<td>16,700</td>
<td>11,530</td>
<td>10,910</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6,100</td>
</tr>
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</table>

* Computing, health and social work, retail, other business activities  
** Managers/senior officials, professional, associate professional & technical, administrative & secretarial  

DTZ assume 1.16 workers per household. By maintaining this balance 14,400 dwellings equates to 16,700 workers/jobs.

**Recommendations:** Potential economic drivers include encouraging growth in key sectors, promoting inward investment, supporting entrepreneurship and encouraging innovation, knowledge transfer and chain-supply. There should be a sites and premises strategy and the delivery of modern offices, town centre redevelopment, aspirational housing and public transport improvements. Efforts should be made to raise Stevenage’s image and profile.

Potential workforce drivers include establishing a higher and further education presence, better post 14/16 learning programmes and improving primary and secondary education. Efforts should be made to raise attitudes and aspirations.
Draft Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan (Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, April 2006)

Aim: To identify and explain the key features of biodiversity importance in Stevenage. To concentrate available resources and expertise to secure greater nature conservation benefits.

Geology: Stevenage comprises cretaceous chalk; an important underground aquifer.

Woodland: There is 132 ha of woodland/parkland habitat, of which 54 ha is ancient woodland. Oak and Hornbean woodland should be retained given its EU Habitats Directive status as internationally important.

Grassland: There is 447 ha of grassland, of which 355 ha has been improved for agricultural or amenity use. Ecologically important grassland is scarce. Brook Marsh supports some rare plant species, but could degrade without appropriate management.

Wetland: Ridlins Mire is a rare example of peat bog in Hertfordshire supporting rare flora and invertebrates. Fairlands Valley lake could be improved: the uniform bank and mowing regime limit habitation. Remaining aquatic resources should be conserved and enhanced.

Hedgerows: Old hedgerows support a variety of fauna.

Urban / artificial: Not surveyed, although gardens and buildings are known to support song thrush, sparrows, great crested newts and bats.

Birds: Woodlands are particularly valuable in supporting a wide range of species, although numbers are declining.

Mammals: Include various bat species, foxes, rabbits, muntjac deer and badgers.

Plants: Remaining natural habitats support interesting and scarce species. Monks Wood and Whomerley Wood support various orchids. Bluebells – protected under the Wildlife and Conservation Act – are found in many broadleaf woodlands.

Reptiles / amphibians: Habitats support frogs, toads, grass snakes, lizards, slow-worms and various newt species. Great crested newts are protected under EU law.

Other groups: Include butterflies, lacewing, spiders, nationally scarce solitary bees and locally rare snails. Shackledell grassland supports Hertfordshire’s only great green bush cricket colony.

Recommendations: BAPs should focus on UK priority habitats and species within the local area and alongside considering additional local priorities. Habitat Action Plans will be prepared for grassland, woodland, wetland, hedgerow, urban will help to conserve and enhance places where wildlife is found. In addition, Species Action Plans are warranted for special cases: for badgers, pipistrelle bats, great crested newts, reptiles, house sparrows, great green bush crickets and bluebells.

NB: The results and recommendations of this draft version have not been finalised may differ from the final version.
Town Centre Retail Assessment (Cushman & Wakefield Healy & Baker, March 2005)

**Aim:** Commissioned by Stanhope/ING, the Borough Council’s preferred development partners, to quantify the level of town centre retail growth that may be appropriate for Stevenage having regard to population growth and consumer goods expenditure.

**Findings:** Non-food retail expenditure is predicted to increase considerably at the national level and regional expenditure is projected to double in the next 20 years. This creates opportunities for enhanced retail provision, particularly in larger town centres where accessibility and strong retail prospects benefit from new investment, where retailers seek larger spaced units and retailing pattern security and where national policy supports retail development.

Shoppers enjoy large centres for a “day out” experience. Range, quality and choice are central to this trend. Environmental quality, location and accessibility are also important.

Stevenage town centre currently provides 29,100 sq.m. of comparison and 9,100 sq.m. of convenience retail floorspace. Despite signs of vitality and viability, the town centre displays serious shortcomings in terms of environmental quality and a limited retail offer, including the lack of department store. There is a lack of eating and drinking facilities.

Key strengths include Stevenage’s location on the A1(M) corridor, relative affluence, its strong north-south links with little local competition and good public transport accessibility. There is a reasonable range of lower-middle and middle market retailers comprising 150 A1 (shops, warehouses, etc), 27 A2 (banks, building societies, professional services) and 11 A3 (restaurants, cafes).

Weaknesses exist in terms of existing retail provision, layout and townscape. Development has been incremental and opportunity-driven. There is a lack of cohesion. Circulation patterns are not obvious. Servicing bays detract from the street scene. The centre’s influence reduces quickly with distance from the town with competition increasing with Harlow and Luton. Out-of-centre retailing dominates shopping patterns. The low quantum of A3 cannot sustain vitality beyond normal shopping hours into the evening.

Overall, the town centre is highly under-used but population growth allied to increase consumer expenditure underpin the prospect for retail-led development.

**Recommendations:** There is potential to enhance Stevenage’s market share by £270 million by 2012 based on shopping patterns and catchment areas. This represents one-third of total available expenditure in the area. This equates to 40,000 sq.m. of net comparison floorspace and 75,000 sq.m. of gross comparison and convenience floorspace.

Any adjustments to housing growth and hence population will lead to more development potential. Failure to respond will lead to an imbalance of retail provision. This can be an important influence on where people live and work.
Transport and Infrastructure Capacity Study: Phase 1 (ARUP, November 2005)

Aim: To undertake a baseline assessment of existing transport and utilities infrastructure and provide an overview of the likely quantum of infrastructure to support strategic growth.

Findings: The dual two-lane A1(M) between junctions 6 and 8 suffers peak congestion. The A602 to Ware suffers safety and capacity problems. The urban road network is dual-carriageway standard and operates well during off-peak periods. There are localised and short-lived queues during peak hours. Congestion spreads rapidly onto local roads during A1(M) disruption. Roundabout junctions provide route choice flexibility. Freight movement problems are minimised by Gunnels Wood’s proximity to the A1(M).

By 2021, traffic increases of 40-50% are estimated on internal and external roads. There will be added pressure on critical junctions. A1(M) congestion will be more frequent.

The bus network provides higher than average services between residential areas and key destinations such as the town centre, railway station and Lister hospital. Gunnels Wood is less well served. Concessions comprise a high proportion of patronage. The network operates close to capacity in peak hours and is similarly affected by A1(M) disruption.

The rail network provides services to London and the north. Around 1,900 passengers board southbound trains between 7–10am of which 55% arrive in London between 8–9am. Returns between 4–7am are more evenly balanced. Crowding is a key factor.

In terms of utilities, overhead electricity lines would impact upon, but not prevent, westward urban extension. New electricity substations are required. Water pipes and sewers may pose some restrictions. The sewer pipe to Rye Meads (30km from Stevenage) may need to be widened.

Recommendations: Stevenage is well placed to accommodate strategic development. Retail and employment centres and rail and bus stations are close to urban extension. An integrated transport approach, underpinned by public transport enhancements, is required.

There are no Highway Agency plans to widen the A1(M). However, widening between junctions 6 and 7 should be prioritised, plus extra entry lanes, signalling and roundabout improvements to increase capacity and maintain long distance north-south flows. New routes under the A1(M) would avoid critical junctions.

Critical urban junctions should be enhanced, including bus priority measures. Accessibility and parking management could enhance public transport competitiveness. Modern interchange facilities will improve reliability and attractiveness. The current bus interchange design should be reviewed. Personalised rapid transit should be considered.

Rail crowding caused by long distance commuting could be alleviated by additional and/or longer trains and infrastructure improvements.
Transport and Infrastructure Capacity Study: Phase 2 – Additional Development Areas (ARUP, January 2006)

**Aim:** To assess transport implications arising from additional development areas to the east and south of Stevenage.

**Findings:** Halcrow Study concludes that land east and south of Stevenage has capacity for 3,710 dwellings. ARUP scenarios assume development will occur beyond 2011.

Additional development areas are predicted to reduce out-commuting and discourage in-commuting. This is attributed to more employment opportunities taken by local residents.

Land to the east would be accessed via Gresley Way using existing junctions. Six Hill Way is well served by buses.

Land to the south would be more difficult to accommodate. Highway access is restricted. The A602 already experiences congestion at several points and would be exacerbated without mitigation measures (i.e. new junctions, bus priority).

In both cases, there would be further congestion on the A1(M), demand increases on principal roads and more east-west trips to Gunnels Wood employment area. Extended, re-routed and increased frequency bus services could be provided. Rail demand would increase. Extensions can link into the cycling and pedestrian network. New connections, north-south routes to Pin Green and links under the railway line will improve access.

**Recommendations:** Development to the east would be easier to accommodate.
Historic Character of Stevenage Borough (Hertfordshire County Council / Isobel Thompson, 2005)

Aim: To provide a framework for the conservation of Stevenage’s historic environment. To inform future development and other land use within the Borough.

Findings: Stevenage comprises 22 character zones. Many are New Town neighbourhoods built in 1950s onwards. They generally contain few listed buildings or buildings of interest and have limited archaeological interest. Zones of more interest are summarised below.

Old Town: A conservation area covers the medieval market town. Surviving features include the planned triangular marketplace layout, plot boundaries. Many listed buildings dating from 15th – 20th C plus buildings of interest. Little archaeology has taken place.

New Town: The first pedestrianised shopping precinct. The Joyride statue, clock tower and pool and Andrew/George church are listed buildings. Archaeological finds include the Six Hills ancient burial mounds, the Great North Road, Roman coins and 19th C windmill.

Letchmore Road: Part conservation area distinguished by 19th – 20th C housing types. Listed buildings include Barclay School and Henry Moore sculpture in grounds. Archaeological interested expected in open areas.

The Parish Church & The Bury: Partially covered by conservation area, dominated by pre-19th C church. Includes two areas of late 20th C housing, the parish church, Old Bury on Rectory Lane and Rooks Nest House. Potential archaeological sites include the medieval rectory.

Railway: Split by the medieval core of Lytton Way, but contains no listed buildings, which is surprising along Orchard Road. Prehistoric stone tools have been found.

Industrial: Laid out as the industrial area in 20th C. Listed buildings include Broomin Green farmhouse and the John Lewis warehouse. Archaeological potential is anticipated.

Corey’s Mill: Just catches conservation area but dominated by Lister hospital. A1(M) runs partially along the Baldock-Hitchin Roman road. Listed buildings include Corey’s Cottage plus various other structures of interest. Good archaeological potential.

Fairlands Valley: High amenity value as landscaped park but no built environment. Some archaeological finds to the south and further potential throughout.

Shephall Church: Medieval church surrounded by 20th C development. Mostly conservation area. Listed buildings include church and Old Rectory plus buildings of local importance. Medieval pottery found and later archaeology assumed.

Bedwell, Shephall, Broadwater, Chells, Pin Green, Lob’s Hole, Symond’s Green, Rook’s Nest farmland, St Nicholas, Chells Manor, Poplars, Bragbury End and West of A1(M) character zones not summarised.
# Evidential Study Order Form

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Total cost (inc p&p): £

Please enclose a cheque payable to ‘Stevenage Borough Council’

Planning Policy Team, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, SG1 1HN
planningpolicy@stevenage.gov.uk     Tel: 01438 242823     Fax: 01438 242922

All evidential studies are freely available at www.stevenage.gov.uk
Appendix 2

Evidential studies commissioned by other organisations

The following is a list of studies referred to in the document that have been commissioned by other organisations.

- 2001 Census (available at www.hertsdirect.org.uk)
- 2001 Census Profile of Stevenage (available at www.eastofenglandobservatory.org.uk)
- Historic Character of Stevenage Borough (I Thompson, 2005) commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council (available at www.stevenage.gov.uk)
- Study of Strategic and Sub-Regional Employment Sites (Chesterton, 2001) commissioned by EEDA (available at www.eera.gov.uk)
- Sub-Regional Studies (Bone Wells Associates, 2002) commissioned by EEDA (available at www.eera.gov.uk)
Appendix 3

Glossary

The following is a glossary of words used within the Stevenage LDF. You may find these useful to help understand some of the terms and names used in this and other planning documents.

**Acronym:** An acronym is a shortened form of a longer word or title, thus East of England Regional Assembly becomes EERA and Local Development Framework becomes LDF.

**Annual Monitoring Report (AMR):** This measures how the council is progressing with the timetable set out in the LDS. It also assesses the effectiveness of the various policies contained in the other Local Development Documents and monitors key indicators, such as house-building, employment land take-up, etc. This is a statutory document.

**Area Action Plan (AAP):** These provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed or anticipated. These plans will have Ordnance Survey based maps, which will act as insets to the main proposals map. These are voluntary Development Plan Documents that, if written, are statutory documents.

**Biodiversity:** The variety of life in all its forms.

**Brownfield (previously developed) land:** Land previously developed for another purpose and occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure. Term is commonly used in connection with urban capacity studies (cf) where Government states that brownfield development shall take precedence over greenfield development (cf). A full definition of what constitutes brownfield land can be found in Annex C to PPG3.

**Comparison retail floorspace:** Comparison retailing is the form of shopping provision that is made up of items not usually purchased on a frequent basis. It includes items such as clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods. For a fuller description of comparison retailing see Table 3 of Annex A to PPS6.

**Community Strategy:** Community Strategies are the products of Local Strategic Partnerships (cf). They are documents produced by a variety of partners to set out a shared vision for a locality (commonly a county or a district), designed to advance the social, economic and environmental well-being of the community. The Stevenage Community Strategy was produced in 2004 and is called ‘Stevenage 2021: Our Town, Our Future’.

**Conformity:** Government requires that the Core Strategy (cf) of each LDF (cf) be in conformity with the RSS and that every other DPD (cf) in the LDF should be in conformity with the Core Strategy. In the case of the Core Strategy’s conformity with the RSS, the test is of ‘general conformity’, which means where an inconsistency or omission from the DPD would cause significant harm to the implementation of the RSS. The issue of conformity is tested at the submission stage (cf) of the DPD.

**Conservation Area:** Any area that meets the standards for designation can be designated by a local authority as a Conservation Area. Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historical interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. There are currently five such areas in the borough, including the Old Town High Street.
Convenience retail floorspace: Convenience retailing is the provision of everyday essential items, essentially foodstuffs, drinks, newspapers/magazines and confectionery. For a fuller description of comparison retailing see Table 3 of Annex A to PPS6.

Core Strategy: The DPD (cf) that sets out the key elements of the planning framework for the area of the Local Planning Authority (cf). It comprises a spatial (cf) vision and strategic objectives for the area; a spatial strategy; core policies; and a monitoring and implementation framework with clear objectives for achieving delivery. Once adopted, all of the other DPDs must be in conformity (cf) with it.

Daneshill House: Headquarters of the Council. Located on Danestrete in the heart of Stevenage town centre, directly opposite the bus station and a few minutes walk from the train station.

Development Plan Documents (DPD): These are the documents that must be taken into account in determining planning applications. Planning permission must be granted in accordance with these documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Development Plan Documents must be subjected to independent examination (cf) before being adopted.

District Plan (SDP2R): See ‘Local Plan’.

East of England Development Agency (EEDA): Established in April 1999, EEDA is the Government sponsored regional economic development agency for the East of England region. Charged with the responsibility of ensuring economic prosperity across the region, its wide-ranging remit includes working in the following areas:

- Economic development and social & physical regeneration
- Business support, investment and competitiveness
- Skills and employment
- Sustainable development and high-quality environment
- Creating a public profile for the region

EEDA promotes the benefits of investing in the East of England and acts as a powerful lobbying and influencing voice. It also brings together the work of partners and businesses at a regional level, enabling the spread of best practice.


East of England Regional Assembly (EERA): Established in 2001, EERA is the Government sponsored voluntary regional chamber charged as the Regional Planning Body responsible for producing the Regional Spatial Strategy (cf). EERA comprises representatives of all 54 county, unitary and district/borough councils in the region (the counties of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk) together with a wide range of other public and private sector stakeholders. For further information about EERA’s composition and constitution visit: www.eera.gov.uk.

English Partnerships (EP): The Government’s national regeneration agency. Responsible for securing major regeneration schemes across England, either on their own or in public and/or private sector partnerships. Stevenage West and Stevenage town centre feature among the agency’s top national priorities.

Examination: All DPDs (and the SCI) must be submitted to Government for independent examination, whether or not any representations are received, as the purpose of the examination is to consider whether a DPD is sound (cf). An inspector will be appointed by Government to conduct the examination, who will consider all of the written representations made (which may be supplemented through oral evidence presented to the inspector). The presumption will be that a
DPD is sound unless it is shown to be otherwise as a result of evidence considered at the examination. Further information on examinations of DPDs can be found in Annex D of PPS12.

**FAQs:** Frequently Asked Questions i.e. the most useful information for readers.

**Government (role of, in development plans):** The role of the Government in local planning is to establish the national legislative and statutory framework within which Local Planning Authorities (cf) work, to set out national policy and guidance, to require local authorities to produce various documents (such as the LDS, DPDs, the AMR, etc), to monitor performance against nationally-set targets (Best Value indicators), to provide guidance, comment and encouragement, to set the regional planning framework (through the RSS), to intervene (if necessary) and to stop plans that are unsatisfactory. Government is, arguably, the principal customer of the development planning system.

**Green Belt:** Although widely held by the press and public to be any open countryside area outside towns, Green Belts are – in fact - not widespread across the UK, although almost all major UK cities and conurbations now have Green Belts surrounding them. A Green Belt is a planning designation designed to prevent urban sprawl and coalescence between towns, cities and villages. The most important attribute of any Green Belt is its openness. There are five purposes set out by Government for designating Green Belts and, once designated, the land contained within them has a positive role to play in meeting six objectives. For more details on Green Belts see PPG2. Stevenage is, for the most part, fairly tightly constrained by the Metropolitan Green Belt, which is designed to prevent the sprawl of Greater London.

**Greenfield development:** Any development on a piece of land upon which there has not been any previous development (i.e. the antithesis of brownfield land (cf)). In contexts, such as around Stevenage, where the countryside (which is inherently greenfield) is also designated as Green Belt, the two terms can become effectively coterminous.

**Highway Authority:** The county council are the Highway Authority for Hertfordshire. They are charged with the statutory responsibility of adopting, maintaining, designing, making safe and constructing all roads, footways and public rights of way other than trunk roads and motorways (which are looked after by the Government’s Highways Agency).

**Housing Needs Survey:** Specialist surveys designed to examine the housing requirements (needs, aspirations and demands) of the community and households of the survey area. The surveys are designed to gather up to date evidence of the level and type of housing needs based on existing households along with an indication of likely future changes. Such surveys are designed to assist the commissioning Council in negotiating the provision of affordable housing and in making more informed decisions about the targeting of housing resources and helping to frame housing policies and strategies.

**Key Issues stage of DPD:** To inform the preferred options stage DPDs (cf) Authorities are required to consult with the community and stakeholders after, or whilst, they are creating their evidence base. At this early stage in the evolution of DPDs, ideas are not fully formed. Therefore, it is neither possible nor necessary to consult on every issue that may influence the shape of the final plans. It is important to concentrate on the broad principles that shape policy choices. It is the broad choices at this stage that will help to inform and shape the selection of the more detailed policies at later stages. The next stage in the evolution of a DPD is preferred options stage (cf).

**Listed Building:** The Government designates and maintains lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Once a building is listed, consent is required from the Local Planning Authority for its demolition, in whole or in part, and for any works of alteration or extension which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. It is a criminal offence to carry out such works without consent. Controls apply to all works, both external
and internal, that would affect a building's special interest, whether or not the particular feature concerned is specifically mentioned in the list description. The criteria for the listing of such buildings is set out in PPG25.

**Local Development Documents (LDD):** These documents can be Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), both of which are used to guide development and by the council in the determination of planning applications. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is also an LDD.

**Local Development Framework (LDF):** This statutory document, prepared by LPAs (cf), comprises a number of different types of document - Local Development Scheme, Annual Monitoring Report, Statement of Community Involvement, Local Development Documents, Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS):** This document sets out which documents are part of the Local Development Framework and the timetable for their review and the preparation of new documents. It is essentially a programme management document (cf). This is a statutory document, although not a Local Development Document (LDD).

**Local Plan:** A document produced under the old planning system that set out all the council's policies on the development and change of use of land and buildings. The existing local plan – called the Stevenage District Plan Second Review (SDP2R) - will be automatically ‘saved’ for three years from its adoption in December 2004. This means that its policies and provisions continue to have statutory force during that three years period. If the council wishes to save its local plan policies beyond this period it must seek the permission of the Government.

**Local Planning Authority (LPA):** A local authority charged by central Government with the statutory duty to prepare development plan documents and undertake other duties under the Town and Country Planning Acts (and other, ancillary legislation). District Councils, sometimes styled as Borough Councils, have planning powers for all development in their administrative areas with the exceptions of minerals and waste. County Councils have planning powers for minerals and waste within their administrative areas. Unitary authorities (i.e. where there is no county council) have all the planning powers of both county and district councils within their own administrative areas. There are no unitary authorities in Hertfordshire.

**Local Strategic Partnership (LSP):** A local partnership of businesses, voluntary organisations, community groups and public organisations charged by central Government with the statutory duty to prepare a community strategy (cf) for a particular locality. The LSP for Stevenage Borough is the Stevenage Partnership which comprises over 30 bodies of different types.

**National Land Use Database (NLUD):** A statutory register compiled by Government, with the assistance of local authorities, of all derelict, vacant and underused (brownfield) land and buildings over 1 hectare in size.

**Neighbourhood Centre:** A neighbourhood centre is a collection of shops, often containing at least one supermarket or food store. It may also contain a range of non-retail services, such as banks or restaurants as well as local public facilities such as a library, surgery or community hall. Almost all neighbourhood centres within the New Town are owned by the Borough Council. The Old Town is the largest of the neighbourhood centres and is not owned by the Council.

**Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs):** Old-style statements of Government planning policy and best practice produced prior to the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Now being superseded by PPSs.

Preferred options plan: The preferred options stage is the third stage in the evolution of a DPD (following evidence gathering and key issues stage consultation) and the second stage at which public consultation is statutorily carried out. Preferred options need to be presented clearly and in sufficient detail that meaningful consultation can be carried out. Detailed policy wording need not be defined at this stage. At this stage, for the first time, sustainability appraisal (cf) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (cf) are carried out. The next stage in the evolution of a DPD is the preparation of the submission stage plan (cf).

Previously developed land: See ‘brownfield land’.

Project/programme management: Project management is the discipline of defining and achieving targets while optimising the use of resources (time, money, people, materials, energy, space, etc…) over the course of a project. In contrast to on-going (or process-orientated) work, a project is a ‘temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product or service’. The duration of the project – the time taken from its start to its completion – can take days, weeks, months or – in the case of each of the DPDs – years.

Programme management provides a layer above project management. It is the process of managing a portfolio of multiple on-going inter-dependent projects. Programme management also reflects the emphasis on co-ordinating and prioritising resources across individual projects, departments and Authorities to ensure that competition for scarce and valuable resources is managed from an over-arching focus. The LDS (cf) is a programme management tool.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS): This is the successor to both the non-statutory Regional Planning Guidance and to the statutory Structure Plan (cf). It will set the strategic context for development across the region, including setting the level of new housing to be accommodated. The RSS for the east of England region is the East of England Plan, which was prepared by the East of England Regional Assembly (cf). The Plan went through examination (cf) during late 2005/early 2006.

Soundness (tests of): There are nine prescribed sets of soundness established by Government which every DPD (cf) must satisfy when it passes through examination (cf). The nine tests of soundness fall into three categories – procedural, conformity and coherence/consistency/effectiveness. The tests are set out in full in PPS12.

Spatial planning: The new remit for the town planning system since the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Broader than land-use planning. LDFs should not just be concerned with the physical aspects of location and land use but also economic, social and environmental matters. The LDF (cf) should include policies which can impact on land-use but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the grant of planning permission and which may, therefore, be implemented by other means.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): This sets out the Council's policy on involving the community in policy-making and major planning applications. It is a Local Development Document (cf).

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): Required under the terms of the European directive 2001/42/EC for "environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use". Undertaken in conjunction with the Sustainability Appraisal (cf).
**Structure Plan:** Document produced by Hertfordshire County Council under the old planning system (pre-2004) considering strategic issues. Now effectively superseded by Regional Spatial Strategy (cf).

**Submission plan:** The version of a DPD (cf) sent to the Government for independent examination in the final form that the preparing local authority prefers, with fully detailed policy wording and reasoned justification for those policies. There will be a second SEA and SA (cf).

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):** There is no legal requirement to take these documents into account in determining planning applications, so their nature is to provide guidance to applicants wishing to develop land. The community will be involved in their preparation, but there is no independent examination of the document.

**Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG):** Same as SPD (cf), but as produced under the old planning system, with fewer regulations governing their preparation.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA):** An assessment of the impact the proposals contained within a Local Development Document would have on the environment, economy and society. SA is an iterative process; it should be used to improve the sustainability of subsequent versions of the document. It is to be carried out in conjunction with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (cf).

**Sustainable development:** An over-arching concept that encompasses any form of development that allows the best of today’s environment to be retained for the use of the future population. Sustainable development can also mean fostering types, forms and patterns of development that allow the aims of the concept to be met. One of the Government’s key aims for the town planning process is that it should encourage sustainable development.

**Typologies (open space):** Typologies are sub-categories of matters, such as retailing or open space. The Borough Council’s open spaces study uses a number of grouping or typologies of open space types to assist in both analysis and policy formulation. See the Open Space Study for further details.

**Urban Capacity Study:** A detailed search for brownfield land or buildings (cf) that can act as a source of potential housing development that all Local Planning Authorities (cf) are required by Government to undertake. A detailed methodology is set down as good practice by the Government. The Borough Council had its first urban capacity study in 2000/1, undertaken by consultants Chestertons, which has been replaced by an in-house study conducted during 2005/6.

**Urban Characterisation study:** An appraisal of an urban area designed to provide a framework for the conservation of the historic environment. Essentially a mapping study, an urban area is divided into zones exhibiting a distinct range of generic development character types.

**Urban extension:** An urban extension is the next most sustainable option (according to the Government’s PPG3) for providing additional housing after building on appropriate sites within urban areas. These planned extensions will be particularly appropriate where it is possible to utilise existing physical and social infrastructure and there is good access to public transport, jobs, schools, shopping and leisure facilities. Some planned urban extensions can be so large that they make their own provision for the facilities listed above. Stevenage West is an urban extension.

**Use Classes Order:** A national planning tool that groups certain types of development together into similar classes of development. Changes of use within use classes (and sometimes between classes) do not require planning permission. There are currently 5 categories of A use classes (retail and similar uses); three categories of B type uses (associated with industry and offices); three categories of C type uses (residential type uses); and two types of D uses (non-residential institutions). Further details of the Use Classes Order are available on the ODPM website.