

Local Plan Partial Update
Proposed Addendum Pre-Submission
June 2025

Background

The Stevenage Local Plan – Review and Partial Update has gone through two rounds of consultation, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012:

- Regulation 18 draft policies preparation: 5 July to 15 August 2024
- Regulation 19 final policies publication: 21 November 2024 to 14 February 2025

The next step in the process is to submit the Plan to the Secretary of State (MHCLG), ahead of an independent Examination in Public by an appointed Planning Inspector.

Recent publication dates of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are:

- Previous version: 20 December 2023
- Current version: 12 December 2024

Given that the Local Plan Partial Update was at Regulation 19 stage prior to 12 March 2025 and the draft housing requirement meets in excess of 80% of local housing need, under the transitional arrangements outlined as part of the NPPF 2024, this means that the Local Plan – Review and Partial Update will be submitted and examined under the previous NPPF 2023 and not NPPF 2024. This provides more certainty with regard to the need to update the Plan, which is now over 5 years old and as such progressing the revised Plan to adoption at an earlier stage would mean that policies carry greater weight in decision making.

Position at Regulation 19 Consultation

When we went out to consultation on the Local Plan – Review and Partial Update in November 2024, this was prior to the current NPPF 2024 being published. At the time, we prepared a “Housing Technical Paper” to support Local Plan policies as part of the Partial Update. This included an update for Policy SP7: High Quality Homes to reflect that as part of the overall Local Plan 2011–2031 target of 7,600 homes, 3,290 were to be delivered for the remaining portion of the Plan period (2024–2031).

At the time, the Housing Technical Paper concluded “*the Stevenage Local Plan is now over 5 years old. The Local Plan Partial Review and Update will be assessed against a new target of 3,290 homes up to the end of the Local Plan period 2031*”.

This approach was based on the “standard methodology” used to calculate local housing need over a plan period, rather than assessing what has been delivered so far and local housing need consisting of what is left to deliver (known as the “residual” figure).

The NPPF 2023 standard methodology for Stevenage results in 470 homes required per year. The 3,290 figure is derived from the Local Housing Need figure of 470 x 7 remaining years of the Plan period.

At Regulation 19 stage, Policy SP7 of the Plan and supporting text was amended to reflect that 3,290 homes were required for the remaining Plan period, 2024–2031 but that this was within the overall Local Plan 2011–2031 target of 7,600 homes – essentially the overall Local Plan housing target has not changed.

This approach was also acknowledged by an independent Planning Inspector during an Advisory Visit on 7 January 2025 and his subsequent note of our meeting:

“the plan’s housing requirement is unchanged; it is not a draft housing requirement. The plan’s housing requirement for the whole plan period meets more than 80% of local housing need over that same period when adjusted for the new LHN.”

Proposed Addendum prior to Submission

The Regulation 19 plan proposed change to Policy SP7 to a requirement for the plan period of 3,290 dwellings reflecting the NPPF 2023 Standard Methodology figure over the remaining 7 years of the plan period. However, it was not the Council’s intention that the plan period or the dwelling requirement to be met within that period should be altered.

In responding to a consultation response at the Regulation 18 stage, the Council revised SP7 with the single aim of reflecting the 2023 standard methodology figure within the policy for the remainder of the plan period. On reflection, that was unnecessary. The residual requirement for the plan period far exceeds the LHN and does not need revision.

The only revision to Policy SP7 which the Council has now decided would be helpful is to identify the residual dwelling requirement to be met within the remaining 7 years of the plan period allowing for completions to date i.e. 4,956 dwellings.

The use of this figure ensures that the plan period and the dwelling requirement for the plan period remain unchanged and this also ensures alignment with the assessments undertaken within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2023.

The 4,956 dwelling figure will be used for the purposes of assessing the five year land supply which is permitted by the NPPF 2023 (and the NPPF 2024) because the Local Plan requirement has been reviewed in the light of the Standard Methodology figures and does not need updating. A proposed Addendum to this effect is being consulted upon prior to submission of the Plan.

The proposed addendum to the Local Plan Partial Update is detailed in the supporting document to this note, “Schedule of Changes from Regulation 19 to Pre-Submission”. The key sections to note include:

- Paragraph 4.6
- Policy SP7
- Paragraph 5.68
- Paragraph 5.71
- Paragraph 9.2A
- Paragraph 15.10

The addendum will be supported by the latest version of the Housing Technical Paper, to clarify our approach.

The key point of note is that the existing overall housing need figure of 7,600 for the whole plan period (2011–2031) is not changing. The Local Plan Partial Update is providing clarity on what is left as a target to deliver, for the remaining period (2024–2031).

Some other minor suggested addenda to policies and supporting text have been included for completeness.