

# **Planning and Regulation**

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Dear Inspector Crosby,

## **Mobility Strategy for Stevenage**

Stevenage Borough Council is working to update the mobility information for Stevenage to provide further detail to inform the updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Stevenage. The work does not have any strategic implications for the plan and plan viability.

This letter provides an overview of the transport work and proposed mitigation.

## **Transport Vision for Stevenage**

The Transport Technical Paper (ED127) sets out the transport vision for Stevenage. The Strategy, in line with national planning policy, is based upon the assumption that as growth proceeds, the balance of mobility shifts away from driving cars and towards mobility through technology (virtual mobility), active travel (walking and cycling), public transport and car-pooling (sharing journeys).

The Stevenage Borough Council Strategy is to support and encourage increasing Mobility by sustainable and inclusive modes. It is to support a mode shift over time from car driver to more space efficient, socially inclusive and less polluting forms of Mobility, and not simply to supply extra road capacity for the benefit of car borne commuters in peak periods.

In this respect, Stevenage Borough Council fully embraces national planning policy and promotes a strategy that is consistent with the 'Hertfordshire Transport Vision' (ED128).

Stevenage is named as a 'Sustainable Travel Town' in this draft Local Transport Plan, where there is a focus on reducing the need to travel overall and increasing the proportion of journeys made by sustainable modes (on foot, by bicycle, by public transport, or via schemes such as cycle hire and car clubs). The initiatives include walking, cycling and shared mobility infrastructure enhancements, together with behaviour change schemes (see ED128, page 25).

The Hertfordshire Transport Vision expects a step change in uptake of sustainable modes in Stevenage. It also advises that some highway capacity will be reallocated for use by pedestrians, cyclists and bus users.

Stevenage Borough Council's strategy is to design for and prioritise Mobility as a whole. It is to create even more attractive choices for movement than already exists, committing funds to physical improvements to the high capacity cycle network [which can be seven times more effective in terms of unit road space compared with car use], invest in public transport and significantly influence behavioural change by enhanced funding of new measures to promote and use the mobility options that already exist and will be improved.

Section 4 of the Transport Technical Paper (ED127) provides more detail. The proposed strategy is to place a high priority on active travel (walking and cycling).

The existence of the extensive, segregated cycle infrastructure means that Stevenage is better equipped than many towns to facilitate safe and convenient cycling and encourage this change in emphasis. See enclosure 1, map of the Stevenage Cycle Route Network.

The strategy also incorporates public transport, to improve the bus-rail transfer, invest in a new bus interchange at the railway station and to radically improve Stevenage railway station. The Local Plan includes proposals to close the existing bus station and replace it with a new bus interchange at the railway station. The Local Plan also identified improvements to the railway station in Policy TC4 iv, including a fifth platform. These measures will help drive a shift in travel onto bus and rail.

The Council's car parking strategy for the town is currently being reviewed and will be updated to support the aims of the strategy set out in the Transport Technical Paper (ED127). The strategy also includes car-pooling, workplace travel planning and education travel planning.

For the highway network, the strategy is to prioritise delivery of the overall mobility network. In some cases, that might mean reallocation of road space between modes, and junction or road improvements. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the pinch points currently forecast by the traffic modelling exercise and assigns costs and priorities to those measures. This will be updated to reflect the new transport modelling work, as outlined further below.

## **Update on Transport Modelling**

**At the point of submission the Local Plan was supported by the following Transport evidence base:**

**TI5, Stevenage Borough Council Preferred Option Housing Assessment, AECOM,**  
Transport modelling which informed the submitted Stevenage Borough Local Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, July 2016 (TI1).

#### **TI6, Local Plan Model Testing, AECOM, May 2013**

Transport modelling which informed the early development of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan and is part of the evidence base.

More recently, the Council have commissioned both AECOM and Vectos to carry out further modelling to inform the Local Plan and its associated IDP. This resulted from the late production by Hertfordshire County Council of **ED109, Stevenage Town Centre S Paramics Model, AECOM, August 2016**. Neither the Council nor North Hertfordshire District Council were involved in the specification for the work, they were not invited to an inception meeting, and they were not privy to the draft results or draft reporting.

The modelling was published after the Stevenage Borough Local Plan had been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.

This late evidence published by Hertfordshire County Council [and submitted by Stevenage Borough Council to the Local Plan examination], has led to the proactive approach of Stevenage Borough Council in reappraising the need for transport improvements to ensure that the approach delivers the Mobility that Stevenage requires for this Plan period and in the future. The beginning of this process was the commissioning of AECOM to carry out further Paramics Modelling see **ED126, Stevenage Borough Council Initial Transport Modelling Evidence, AECOM, December 2016**. This modelling report is to be read in conjunction with the Traffic Modelling Overview at Appendix A of the Transport Technical Paper (ED127). This sets the model results, and the judgements stemming from those results, in context.

In order to provide comfort that the transport effects of the Local Plan can be adequately mitigated by designing and prioritising for Mobility as a whole, the Council commissioned **Stevenage Borough Local Plan Transport Modelling, Vectos Mircosim, January 2017**. This comprises further Paramics modelling to inform the Stevenage Borough Local Plan and its associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan and reflects the content of Annex A to the Transport Technical Paper (ED127). Hertfordshire County Council have seen the specification for this work and have attended an inception meeting. The conclusions of the transport modelling will be available prior to the transport hearing on Thursday 19 January 2017.

This Paramics modelling currently being undertaken enables us to make judgements about the performance of the road network in the context of the Local Plan and following on from that make judgements on the use and performance of the other mobility networks.

The transport modelling assists Stevenage Borough Council in reappraising the need for transport improvements, taking an approach which is more consistent with government policy to prioritise improvements. The approach will be to prioritise active travel (walking and cycling), public transport and other sustainable modes of travel. The priority will be on measures which are more effective at accommodating likely travel demand and at mitigating the effects of development growth. The measures are also expected to be capable of delivery at less cost than allowed for in the IDP.

### **Flow diagram**

The enclosed flow diagram summarises the progression of the transport modelling and the links between the models.

### **Map**

Outputs from the Saturn WHaSH model (TI5) have been extracted and input into the Stevenage Paramics model (ED109, ED126 and current modelling work). This map, enclosure 3, shows the extent of the Saturn Model referred to as WHaSH that has been input into the Stevenage Paramics model. It will be noted that the area covered by the Paramics model is a sub-area of the geographic extent covered by the Saturn WHaSH model.

### **Infrastructure Delivery Plan**

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan Appendix A will be updated to reflect the Stevenage Borough Local Plan transport vision (ED127) and the transport modelling. The conclusions of transport modelling will be available prior to the transport hearing on 19 January 2017 and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will then be updated to reflect this. It is anticipated that the changes will be a prioritisation of improvements to Mobility networks within the costs assumed by the existing IDP with less emphasis on the need for junction and road improvements. It is not anticipated that there will be any significant policy implications as the Mobility Strategy simply reflects the existing policies of the Local Plan.

### **Meetings**

#### **Highways England and Hertfordshire County Council**

Stevenage Borough Council, Highways England and Hertfordshire County Council have held a number of Duty to Co-operate meetings over the last five years. Details of these meetings are set out in our 'Duty to Co-operate Statement' July 2016. Since this time, a technical meeting to review transport modelling took place on 25 October 2016 between Highways England, Hertfordshire County Council and Stevenage Borough Council. In addition, a transport planning meeting took place on 9 November 2016 between Highways England, Hertfordshire County Council, Stevenage Borough Council and North Hertfordshire District Council. The results of Peer Review of the modelling are awaited by Highways England but they have at no stage raised an objection in principle to the proposals within the Local Plan.

#### **Hertfordshire County Council**

Stevenage Borough Council met Hertfordshire County Council on Tuesday 10 January 2017 for a transport modelling inception meeting and are meeting again on Wednesday 11 January 2017 to discuss Mobility in Stevenage and achieving a mode shift consistent with their draft Local Transport Plan.

I trust that this letter, the work that has been submitted, and the work that will shortly be submitted and the presentation planned for the morning of Thursday 19 January 2017, demonstrates that Stevenage Borough Council has been proactive and is committed to a Mobility Strategy which will enable good Mobility in Stevenage and facilitate successful economic and social growth in this Plan period and beyond.

Yours sincerely

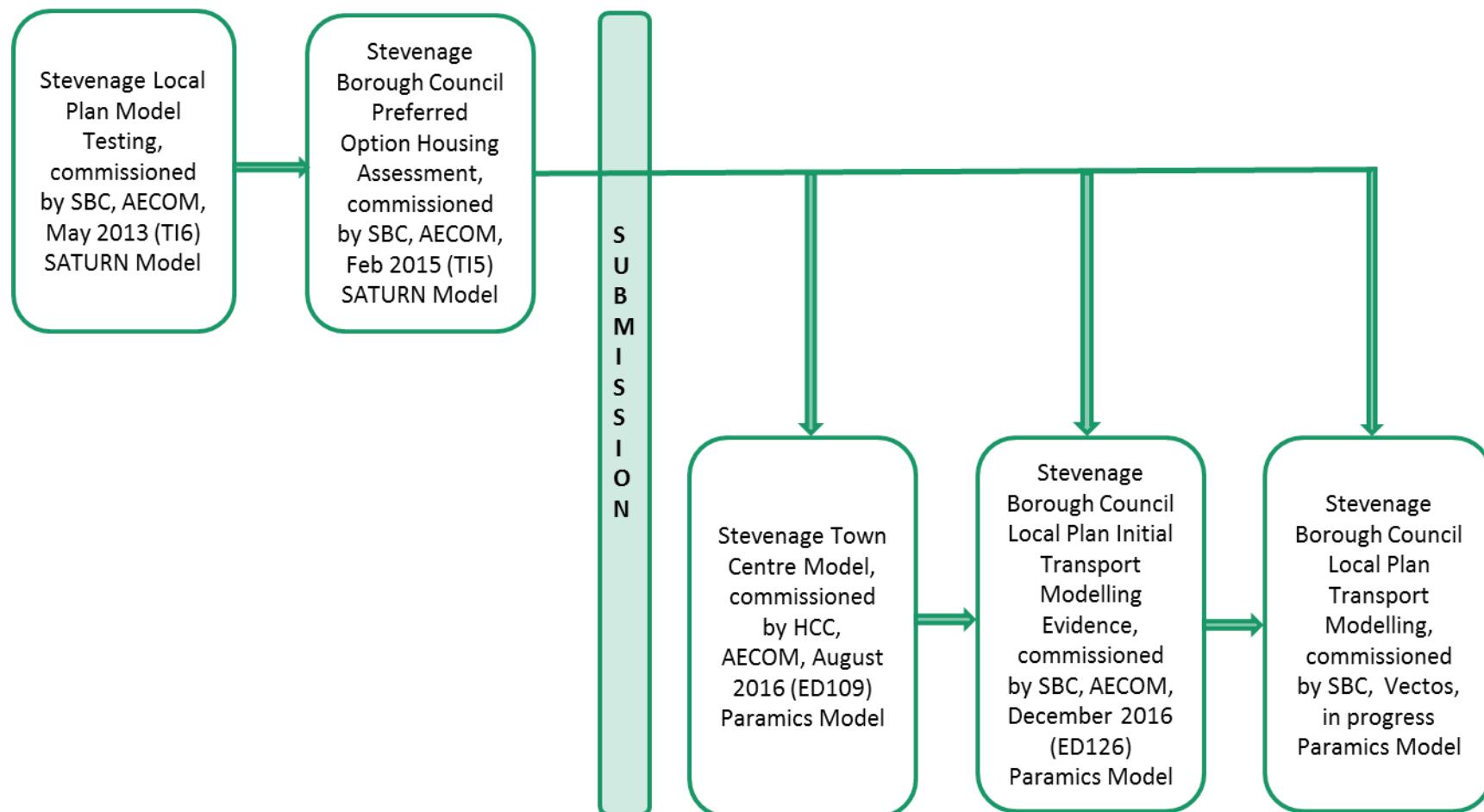


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Planning and Transport Policy Manager

Encs.

- 1 Stevenage Cycle Route Network, Appendix C of ED127
- 2 Flow diagram showing progression between transport models
- 3 Map of Traffic Model Coverage in Hertfordshire, May 2016

Enclosure 2: Flow diagram showing progression and links between transport models



# Traffic Model Coverage in Hertfordshire



## Legend

- Linsig, HCC
- Linsig Essex
- Transyt, HCC
- Paramics Model, HCC
- Paramics Model, Third Party
- Saturn Model, HCC
- Saturn, Essex (HSGTM)
- Saturn Model Broxbourne
- Vissum\_Model\_Essex
- COMET\_BY\_sim\_area
- Hertfordshire County

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