



The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

| | |
|--|-----|
| Abbreviations | 3 |
| 1 Introduction | 6 |
| 2 Approach to the SEA | 12 |
| 3 Presenting the SEA scoping information | 18 |
| 4 Biodiversity, flora and fauna | 24 |
| 5 Population and human health | 36 |
| 6 Water and soils | 44 |
| 7 Air Quality | 58 |
| 8 Climatic factors | 62 |
| 9 Material assets | 68 |
| 10 Cultural heritage | 72 |
| 11 Landscape | 78 |
| 12 Social Inclusiveness | 88 |
| 13 Economic Development | 100 |
| 14 Developing SEA/SA Objectives | 108 |
| 15 Next stages | 114 |
| Appendix 1 | ii |

Abbreviations

| | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------|--|
| AAA | Archaeological Alert Area | LDD | Local Development Documents |
| ALC | Agricultural Land Classification | LPA | Local Planning Authority |
| AONB | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty | NVQ | National Vocational Qualification |
| BAP | Biodiversity Action Plan | ONS | Office for National Statistics |
| CFMP | Catchment Flood Management Plan | RIGS | Regionally Important Geological Site |
| CROW | Countryside and Rights of Way | RSPB | Royal Society for the Protection of Birds |
| DECC | Department of Energy and Climate Change | SA | Sustainability Appraisal |
| DEFRA | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs | SAC | Special Area of Conservation |
| DPD | Development Plan Documents | SBC | Stevenage Borough Council |
| EA | Environment Agency | SEA | Strategic Environmental Assessment |
| EU | European Union | SOA | Super Output Area |
| GIS | Geographic Information System | SPA | Special Protection Area |
| HAP | Habitat Action Plan | SSSI | Site of Special Scientific Interest |
| HCC | Hertfordshire County Council | SUDs | Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems |
| HRA | Habitats Regulation Assessment | TVW | Three Valleys Water |
| IMD | Index of Multiple Deprivation | | |



1 . Introduction

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

1 Introduction

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

1.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a systematic process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed plans or programmes to ensure environmental issues are fully integrated and addressed at the earliest appropriate stage of decision making.

1.2 SEA was introduced to the UK through the EU Directive 2001/42/EC. In England, this Directive has been transposed via the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The Stevenage Local Plan has been screened as a plan that requires an SEA under the Directive.

1.3 This report comprises the first stage of SEA of the emerging local plan.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

1.4 Sustainability appraisal (SA) is a process undertaken during the preparation of a plan or strategy. Its role is to assess whether emerging policies and proposals will achieve the identified relevant environmental, social and economic objectives.

1.5 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, SA is mandatory for all Development Plan Documents (DPD).

1.6 This report comprises the first stage of SA of the emerging local plan.

Combining SEA and SA

1.7 The requirements of undertaking an SEA and SA are distinct. The objectives of an SEA focus on environmental effects, whereas an SA is concerned with the full range of environmental, social and economic matters.

1.8 It is possible to undertake the two assessments together through a single appraisal process. Government guidance encourages the two appraisals to be undertaken together.

1.9 This scoping report has been written to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive. Government guidance identifies the following key areas to ensure that both SEA and SA requirements are met:

- Collecting and presenting baseline information;
- Predicting the significant effects of the plan and addressing them during its preparation;
- Identifying reasonable plan options and their effects;
- Involving the public and authorities with social, environmental and economic responsibilities as part of the assessment process;
- Monitoring the actual effects of the plan during its implementation.

1.10 This scoping report (and the reports that will accompany it) uses an approach that addresses the requirements of both SEA and SA. It gives consideration to environmental issues whilst also addressing the range of socio-economic concerns.

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

1.11 Section 102 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) requires a Habitats Regulations Appraisal to be undertaken during the preparation of a local plan, if necessary.

1.12 The purpose of HRA is to assess the implications of a land use plan for European sites, in view of the sites' conservation objectives. Such sites are defined in Regulation 10 of the Habitats Regulations as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Ramsar sites are also considered within HRA as a matter of policy. HRA should ascertain whether the plan, on its own or in combination with other plans, is likely to adversely affect a site's integrity. If this is the case, or the Council is unable to ascertain that fact, it must examine alternative solutions which better respect the integrity of the site.

1.13 Stevenage's Local Plan may affect the Lee Valley SPA. We have identified this SPA because most of the sewage from Stevenage is treated near to the site.

1.14 A HRA process is being carried out for the local plan. Whilst the HRA will support the findings of the SEA, the HRA will be carried out independently of the SEA process and will be reported on separately.

Purpose of this report

1.15 This Scoping Report has been prepared as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Stevenage Local Plan for Stevenage Borough Council. The report has been published for consultation with the consultation bodies⁽¹⁾ as required by Regulation 12 (5) of the UK SEA Regulations 2004.

1.16 Scoping is the process of deciding the scope and level of detail of an SEA, including the relevant background and environmental issues, the assessment methods to be used, and the structure and contents of the Environmental Report. Documenting this process, this report sets out the scope of, and methodology for the SEA of the Stevenage Local Plan and summarises the tasks and outcomes of the first stage of the SEA/SA process.

1.17 This stage of the process falls in line with the pre-production stage of the local plan process. This forms part of the evidence gathering process for the local plan.

The Stevenage Local Plan

1.18 Stevenage Borough Council, as the local planning authority, is currently preparing a new local plan for Stevenage. This will replace the Stevenage District Plan 2nd Review, adopted in 2004, and the Interim Planning Statement, adopted in 2012.

1 Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency.

1.19 This is a preliminary stage for the local plan and as such it is anticipated that this Scoping Report will outline the current issues within the Borough. Future stages of the SEA/SA process will determine how the emerging objectives of the local plan will co-relate to the sustainability objectives of emerging SEA/SA objectives.

1.20 The lifespan of the local plan will be from 2011 to 2031.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Name of responsible authority | Stevenage Borough Council. |
| Title of plan | Stevenage Local Plan. |
| What prompted the plan | The plan will follow the Stevenage District Plan 2nd Review, which covered the period 1991 to 2011 and the Interim Planning Policy Statement. The plan is being developed following the implementation of the Localism Act (2011) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). |
| Subject | Planning - as part of the local Development Plan. |
| Period covered by the plan | From 2011 to 2031. |
| Frequency of updates | To be determined. |
| Area covered by the plan | Administrative area of Stevenage Borough Council. |
| Purpose and/or objectives of the plan | The Objectives of our plan are yet to be determined but we consider that they will include the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create healthier lifestyles; ● Develop affordable homes; ● Reduce fear of crime; ● Increase the range of employment opportunities; ● Regenerate the town centre and the neighbourhood centres; ● Create cleaner and greener communities; and ● Promote better transport. |
| Plan contact point | Planning Policy Team, Stevenage Borough Council, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, SG1 1HN. Telephone - 01438 242161 Email - planningpolicy@stevenage.gov.uk |

Table 1 Key facts relating to the new Stevenage Local Plan

An overview of the Stevenage area

1.21 Stevenage is in the county of Hertfordshire about 30 miles north of London. It is the third largest town in the county and covers an area of approximately 26km². Stevenage has a population of around 84,000 residents.

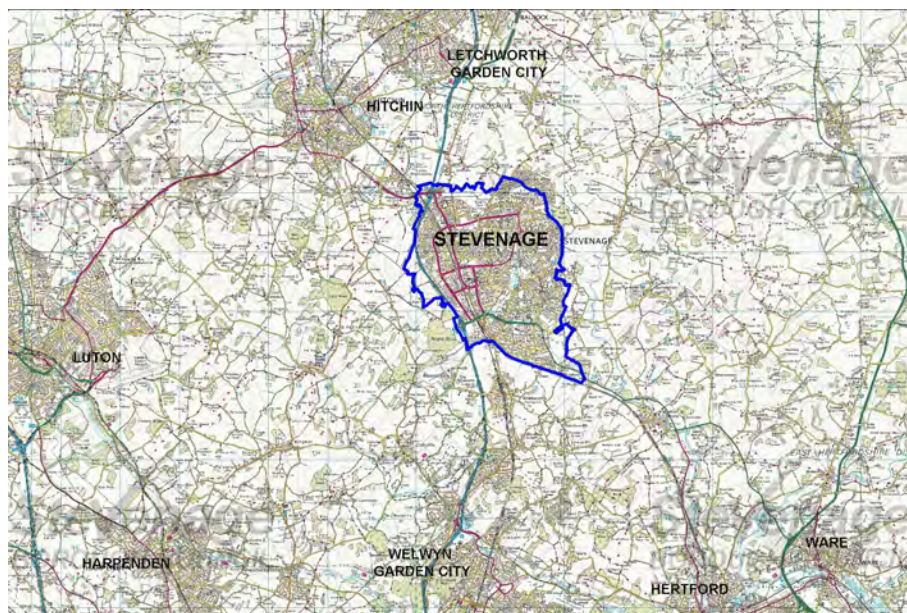


Figure 1 Location of Stevenage

1.22 Stevenage was the UK's first new town, designated in 1946, and continues to provide the benefits of its New Town status. It provides opportunities for housing, leisure, employment and retailing close to home to meet peoples needs. Originally, six planned neighbourhoods made up the urban area of Stevenage. The town has since expanded and the urban area now encompasses eleven neighbourhoods.

1.23 Stevenage has long been a growing district, with the pressures of urban expansion from London extending into Hertfordshire. Its location is desirable for commuters into London, with trains servicing the station providing links with London Kings Cross and London Moorgate via the East Coast Mainline and the Hertford Loop. The A1(M), via junctions 7 and 8, provides good access to the town. Links east and west from Stevenage are less developed with movement primarily focused upon the road network. A comprehensive bus service provides access within Stevenage and to the surrounding localities.



Figure 2 Stevenage Borough Council administrative area

1.24 Stevenage has an established employment sector providing a variety of employment opportunities, including the presence of a number of ‘footloose’ international companies. Stevenage also has an established town centre, which is currently the subject of regeneration work. The town centre provides a wide variety of retail services, though its physical appearance is tired. The redevelopment of the town centre will aim to address this concern, along with securing appropriate anchor companies to ensure the economic future of Stevenage.



2 . Approach to the SEA

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

2 Approach to the SEA

2.1 The Council, statutory consultees, other environmental bodies will be engaged in the SEA process at different times.

2.2 This chapter sets out the broad approach to the SEA process, the stages involved, and highlights where the relevant information can be found in this scoping report and future reports.

2.3 The approach for carrying out the SEA of the local plan is based on current best practice. Primarily the approach applied to this SEA process draws on guidance from:

- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005), *A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive*.

2.4 In terms of best practice and added value, the following guidance document has also influenced the approach to SEA/SA for the assessment of the Stevenage Local Plan:

- Planning Advisory Service (2009), *CLG Plan Making Manual: Sustainability Appraisal*.

2.5 In preparation for the Scoping Report, and in accordance with best practice, we have previously consulted with the statutory consultees in February/March 2012. The following tables explain how we have addressed each issue.

| Comment | Response |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Amendment to listing of Church in Table 22 to Grade II. | Noted, report amended accordingly. |
| Heritage at risk - two conservation areas are also 'at risk'. | Noted, report amended accordingly. |
| Additional key heritage issues considered relevant. | Noted, report amended accordingly. |
| Consider emphasis on townscape in Section 11. | Noted, report amended accordingly. |
| Require clarification on 'urban renaissance' in Section 13. | Noted, report amended accordingly. |
| Proposed amendment to Objective 7. | Noted, report amended accordingly. |
| Proposed additions to Appendix 1. | Noted, report amended where relevant. |

Table 2 - Consultation responses by English Heritage

| Comment | Response |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Recommend mention of Thames River Basin Management Plan in Section 4. | Noted, reference added to Appendix 1. |
| Propose minor amendments to wording in Section 6. | Noted, report amended where relevant. |
| Propose amendment to Objective 3 supporting text. | Noted, report amended accordingly. |
| Fully support Objective 4. | Noted. |

Table 3 - Consultation responses by Environment Agency

| Comment | Response |
|---|---|
| Recommend use of 'Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning'. | Noted. |
| Appraisals should consider potential cross-cutting issues. | To be addressed in next stage of SEA. |
| Welcome reference to the local BAP. | Noted. |
| Reference should be made to the local Green Infrastructure Strategy. | Noted, references to Green Space Strategy added. |
| Recommend reference to 'Standards for Accessible Natural Greenspace'. | Noted for future reference to Green Space Strategy. |
| Satisfied that report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the SEA Directive. | Noted. |

Table 4 - Consultation responses by Natural England

2.6 Since our last consultation, we have updated the data to the current period to correspond with our monitoring dataset. This Scoping Report will be published, alongside the Sustainability Appraisal, on the Council's website www.stevenage.gov.uk and sent to statutory consultees and other relevant stakeholders.

Stages of the SEA

2.7 Government guidance sets out five key stages of appraisal. Table 5 provides a summary of the key stages of the SEA process. Those shaded in grey indicate the stages covered in this scoping report. The second column indicates where information about each respective stage can be found in this document.

| Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding upon the scope | Location in report |
|--|--------------------------------|
| A1: Identify other relevant plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives | Chapters 4 to 13 & Appendix 1 |
| A2: Collecting baseline information | Chapters 4 to 13 |
| A3: Identifying environmental problems | Chapters 4 to 13 |
| A4: Developing SEA objectives | Chapter 14 |
| A5: Consulting on the scope of the SEA | Para. 2.1 |
| Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects | |
| B1: Testing the plan objectives against the SEA objectives | In future report as finalised. |
| B2: Developing strategic alternatives | See SA and future reports. |
| B3: Predicting the effects of the draft plan, including alternatives | See SA and future reports. |
| B4: Evaluating the effects of the draft plan, including alternatives | See SA and future reports. |

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects | See SA and future reports. |
| B6: Proposing measures to monitor the environmental effects of plan implementation | See SA and future reports. |
| Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report | |
| C1: Preparing the Environmental Report | Combination of SEA/SA process. |
| Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan and Environmental Report | |
| D1: Consultation on the draft plan and Environmental Report | See Chapter 2 and future reports. |
| D2: Assessing significant change | In future report. |
| D3: Decision making and providing information | In future report. |
| Stage E: Monitoring the implementation of the plan | |
| E1: Developing aims and methods for monitoring | In future report. |
| E2: Responding to adverse effects | In future report. |

Table 5 SEA stages, and stages covered in this scoping report

2.8 This scoping report is the main output of Stage A of the SEA process presented above. Chapter 15 discusses in more detail the subsequent stages and outputs of the SEA process that will be carried out following the conclusion of Stage A.

The Environmental Report

2.9 The SEA Directive requires the preparation of an ‘Environmental Report’, which sets out the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the draft plan. This is a key output in the SEA process. The scoping report and the subsequent sustainability appraisal report will together meet the requirement of an ‘Environmental Report’.

2.10 Table 6 illustrates how the requirements of the SEA Regulations have been met in this scoping report, or will be met in future documents.

| Stages of Environmental Report | Sections of this report |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan, and of its relationship (if any) with other relevant plans and programmes. | Chapters 4 to 13 & Appendix 1 |
| 2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. | In future report. |
| 3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. | Chapters 4 to 13 and future SEA/SA. |
| 4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and Directive 92/43/EEC on habitats. | Chapters 4 to 13 and future SEA/SA. |

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 5. The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation. | Chapters 4 to 13. |
| 6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including short, medium and long-term effects, permanent and temporary effects, positive and negative effects, and secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects, on issues including (a) biodiversity; (b) population; (c) human health; (d) fauna; (e) flora; (f) soil; (g) water; (h) air; (i) climatic factors; (j) material assets; (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage; (l) landscape; and (m) the inter-relationship between the issues referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (l). | See SA and future reports. |
| 7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan. | See SA and future reports. |
| 8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties encountered in compiling the required information. | See SA and future reports. |
| 9. A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with regulation 17. | In future report. |
| 10. A non-technical summary of the information provided under paragraphs 1 to 9. | See SA and future reports. |

Table 6 Environmental Report requirements



3 . Presenting the SEA scoping information

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

3 Presenting the SEA scoping information

Information themes

3.1 The policy and plan review, the baseline data, and the key environmental issues (Stages A1 to A3, see also Table 5) for the plan have been presented through a series of information themes.

3.2 The selected information themes incorporate the SEA ‘topics’ derived from Annex I(f) of the SEA Directive: biodiversity, flora, fauna, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage), landscape and the interrelationship between these factors.

3.3 Additionally, as this report provides the first stages of both SEA and SA, themes have been included which reflect the detailed social and economic assessments required as part of SA.

3.4 The environmental, social and economic information themes are presented in the table below:

| Theme included in this report | What is included in the theme? |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Biodiversity, flora and fauna | Habitats, species, nature conservation designations. |
| Population and human health | Population size, migration, density, age structure, ethnicity, life expectancy, access to health services, access to open space, crime rates. |
| Water and soils | Soil type and quality, water resources and availability, water quality, flooding, contamination sources. |
| Air | Air quality management, air pollution sources, air quality hotspots. |
| Climatic factors | Greenhouse gas emissions by source, greenhouse gas emission trends, climate change adaption, monitoring sites, energy use. |
| Material assets | Minerals, waste recycling, use of previously developed land, energy production. |
| Cultural heritage | Conservation areas, listed buildings, all heritage assets. |
| Landscape | Landscape character, townscape character, noise and light pollution, tranquillity, |
| Social inclusiveness | Housing, affordable housing, homelessness, housing prices, access to services, access to alternative modes of travel, deprivation. |
| Economic development | Education, training, employment and unemployment, investment, new business start ups, numbers of in-commuters for employment, earnings. |

Table 7 Information themes

3.5 It is anticipated that presenting the information through this approach will help enable the reader to easily locate the SEA/SA information representing their specific areas of interest.

3.6 We have presented some of the SEA topics together as they are best described in tandem. It is recognised that there are a number of important interrelationships between the themes we will assess. The table below illustrates just some of the key crossovers. Subsequent supporting information will consider in further detail how our decisions might affect a number of sustainability issues. We expect our sustainability appraisals to develop this further.

| Theme | Biodiversity/ Flora/ Fauna | Population/ Human Health | Water/ Soils | Air | Climatic factors | Material assets | Cultural heritage | Landscape | Social inclusiveness | Economic development |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Biodiversity/ Flora/ Fauna | | √ | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | | |
| Population/ Human Health | √ | | | √ | | | √ | | √ | √ |
| Water/ Soils | √ | | | | | √ | | √ | | |
| Air | √ | √ | | | √ | | | | | |
| Climatic factors | √ | | | √ | | | | | | |
| Material assets | | | √ | | | | | √ | | |
| Cultural heritage | | √ | | | | | | | √ | |
| Landscape | √ | | √ | | | √ | | | | |
| Social inclusiveness | | | | | | | √ | | | √ |
| Economic development | | √ | | | | | | | √ | |

Table 8 Key crossover links between themes

Presenting the policy and plan review, the baseline and the key issues

3.7 Chapters 4 to 13 introduce a summary of the policy and plan review and the baseline data to be utilised throughout the SEA process for each theme. They also present the key issues relevant to Stevenage for each theme. The following sections discuss the purpose of each of these tasks, how this information has been collected and summarised, and where additional information has been provided.

Policy and plan review

3.8 A policy, plan or programme may be influenced in various ways by other policies, plans or programmes, or by external sustainability objectives such as those laid down in policies or legislation. The SEA/SA process will take advantage of potential synergies between these and address any inconsistencies and constraints.

3.9 The main objectives of the policy documents reviewed were grouped by SEA/SA topic, together with an indication of how the local plan might address these objectives and requirements. The policy review was not exhaustive of all potentially relevant policy documents, but rather 'fit for purpose' to set out the policy context within which the local plan is being prepared and highlight the environmental, social and economic objectives that it needs to address.

3.10 The Council will continue to keep this policy framework under review. In particular, it will be necessary to monitor changes in relevant international and national legislation, policy and planning guidance, and other policy documents likely to emerge over the plan preparation period.

3.11 Appendix 1 represents a comprehensive, accurate and concise list and evaluation of the key policies, plans and programmes that are likely to be relevant to the local plan and its accompanying SEA/SA assessment process. Where higher level plans have been transposed into more localised plans, policies and programmes, the lower level plans have been assessed. They have been presented by the themes as discussed and assessed in relation to the main objectives and requirements of the policy, plan or programme, and how it affects, or is affected by the local plan in relation to the environmental, economic and social issues covered by the SEA/SA process.

3.12 A summary of the review is presented in the following chapters under each theme. These review summaries should be read alongside the more detailed information presented in Appendix 1.

Baseline data collection

3.13 Chapters 4 to 13 present a review of current environmental and socio-economic conditions affecting Stevenage by theme. The purpose of the baseline review is to help define the key issues for the local plan. This will enable the predicted effects of the plan to be effectively appraised.

3.14 The currency, resolution and presentation of data are crucial to an effective baseline. Information selected seeks to:

- inform the situation at the local level;
- be the most up to date; and
- be fit for purpose.

3.15 One of the purposes of consultation on the Scoping Report is to seek views on whether the data selected is appropriate. The baseline has been constructed utilising a wide range of data sources, with GIS (Geographic Information System) data proving to be an important information source where available. The data has been presented through tables, text and GIS mapping, and

all data sources have been referenced as appropriate. Meaningful data for the purposes of comparison and to address the themes being assessed as part of this process is not always available. Where appropriate, data gaps are therefore identified in the baseline.

3.16 Where relevant, data has been presented specifically at a local level. This enables more specific information to be included on the communities and areas most affected by possible issues to help identify areas most in need of change.

Key issues

3.17 In addition to presenting a summary of the policy, plan and programme review and a summary of the baseline data for Stevenage, the end of Chapters 4 to 13 set out a series of key issues for each theme. The identification of these issues will help the process focus on the key problems and opportunities which may be addressed through the local plan.

3.18 The key issues will inform the development of the SEA/SA Framework that will be utilised to assess the policies and proposals included in the local plan (Chapter 14).



4 . Biodiversity, flora and fauna

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

4 Biodiversity, flora and fauna



Figure 3 The Bluebell is dominant in the ground flora of woodland in Stevenage.

Summary of policy and plan review

4.1 The objectives of policies and plans at all levels focus on the conservation of biological diversity (including a reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss), the protection and monitoring of endangered and vulnerable species and habitats. Emphasis is also placed on the ecological importance of brownfield sites, geodiversity, and enhancing areas of woodland. The integration of biodiversity considerations into all environmental and socio-economic planning is strongly advocated.

4.2 At the local level, the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)⁽²⁾ and the Green Space Strategy seek to encourage species conservation, habitat protection and wildlife corridor creation. It lists objectives for the Council to meet in protecting and enhancing its biodiversity, along with ways of involving the community.

4.3 Appendix 1 presents a more detailed analysis of the policies, plans and programmes relevant to biodiversity, flora and fauna.

Baseline

4.4 This section sets out a summary of the baseline data for biodiversity, including flora and fauna, for Stevenage. Firstly we look at sites, habitats and species of local importance before we also consider European and national designations beyond the Borough boundary. The SEA/SA process will utilise the detailed information included in this document alongside other information as it becomes available.

2 Biodiversity Action Plan for Stevenage, Stevenage Borough Council and Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, 2010.

Habitats



Figure 4 Woodlands provide habitats for a variety of flora and fauna

4.5 The Stevenage BAP provides an in-depth overview of local habitats. Stevenage is urban in character but benefits from large expanses of public green open space. Nonetheless, remnants of older habitats and landscape features still survive as encapsulated countryside and it is these features that provide the majority of the Borough's wildlife interest. Old woodlands in particular are well represented with the majority retained within the new town development, although many have been structurally altered through replanting.

4.6 The main habitats throughout the Borough are as follows:

- Woodland
- Grassland
- Ancient hedgerows
- Wetland
- Neighbourhood nature

4.7 Woodland, grassland, hedgerows and wetland are Priority Habitats⁽³⁾. The UKBAP includes all extensive hedgerows in its hedgerow definition although, for Stevenage, ancient hedgerows are the most important and valuable habitat. They are the best examples of well maintained hedgerows and are afforded extra protection through local policy.

4.8 All rivers are also designated as Priority Habitats and the Stevenage Brook fits within the scope of the UKBAP Priority Habitat Description for Rivers.

4.9 The main habitats have been monitored and Table 9 illustrates the latest status and current trend for each type.

3 UKBAP, JNCC, 2008 update

| Habitat | Latest status | Latest trend |
|-------------------|--|--------------|
| Rivers | 4.6 km in length | Stable |
| Woodland | 131.5 ha and 5.06% of Borough area | Stable |
| Grassland | 446.9 ha and 17.20% of Borough area | Stable |
| Ancient hedgerows | 18 identified (1 key site designated as a Wildlife Site) | Stable |
| Wetland | 0.4 ha and 0.02% of Borough area | Stable |
| Wildlife sites | 39 designated | Stable |

Table 9 Habitats monitored for Stevenage (Data source: Stevenage BAP)

4.10 Neighbourhood nature is characterised as urban habitats within the built environment and, although currently not monitored, is now widely recognised to be of particular importance. This might include allotments, residential gardens and artificial habitats such as waste ground.

4.11 Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) are designed to provide a framework for action to conserve and enhance Stevenage's biodiversity. Five HAPs have been prepared for the main habitats throughout the Borough.

Species

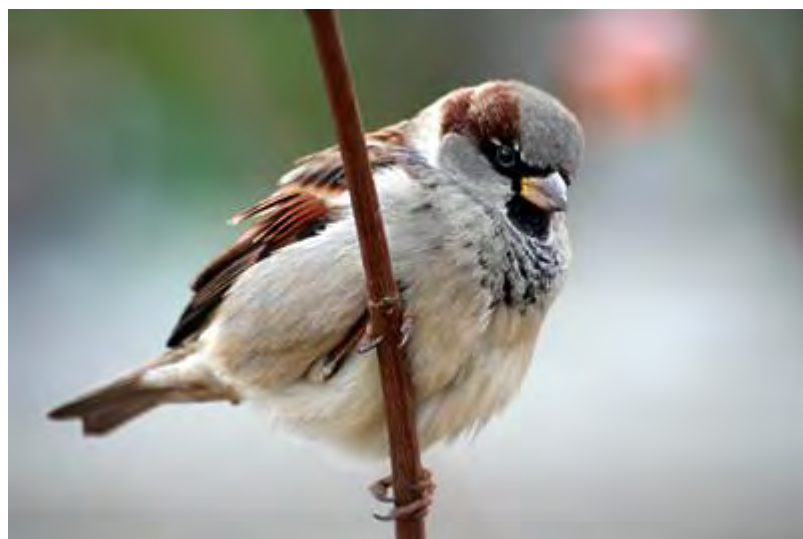


Figure 5 Stevenage provides valuable habitats for species such as the House Sparrow

4.12 The habitats within Stevenage support a diverse range of plants and animals. The following sections briefly discuss the various groups of flora and fauna found within the Borough, highlighting species of conservation importance.

4.13 Although no particularly rare birds are present regularly, a number of declining birds are found in the Borough. The woodland habitat is particularly valuable, with species such as Nuthatch, Treecreeper and Great Spotted Woodpecker all breeding locally. Winter visitors include Fieldfare, Redwing, and small numbers of Waxwing, the latter, a rare species in the county, occurring in most years, feeding on berries in residential areas of northern Stevenage.

4.14 The mosaic of woodland, grassland, farmland and hedgerows is also significant for many important species. In the reclassified Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) List of Birds of Conservation Concern (2002–2007), species including Bullfinch, Marsh Tit, Reed Bunting, House Sparrow, Starling, Linnet and Song Thrush were all deemed to be of top priorities for conservation. All of these species are found in the Borough.

4.15 Mammals that have increasingly become adapted to living alongside man such as Bats, Foxes, Rabbits and Muntjac Deer are all found within Stevenage. Badgers are also present, and are of particular conservation interest due to their legal protection.

4.16 The woodlands support various plant life such as various orchids and the Wood Anemone. Grassland habitats in Stevenage support interesting species, including Harebell, Meadow Saxifrage and Slender Trefoil.

4.17 Perhaps the most significant species within the Borough is the Bluebell. This species is still to be found in many of the broad-leaved woodland blocks within Stevenage, and is locally characteristic of our native woodlands.

4.18 The Borough of Stevenage supports a good range of British reptiles and amphibians. Along with Common Frog and Common Toad, Stevenage is known to support populations of Great Crested Newt, a species of European conservation concern and protected under EU law, for which Britain holds a significant population. Smooth Newt can also be found, and the third British newt species, the Palmate Newt, may also be present in Stevenage.

4.19 All three species of reptiles found in Hertfordshire are also present in Stevenage. These are Grass Snake, Common Lizard and Slow-worm, the latter of which often shares its habitat with man, favouring sites such as old allotments, waste ground and gardens.

4.20 Stevenage Borough is also known to support a range of locally scarce or rare invertebrates. Butterflies include species associated with woodland, such as Speckled Wood and Purple Hairstreak, grassland, including Small, Large and Essex Skippers, and scrub/hedgerows, such as Red Admiral, Peacock and Holly Blue.

4.21 Stevenage also supports rare species of some of the less well known invertebrate groups. The Hertfordshire Natural History Society County Recorders have reported several significant species. These include rare lacewings in Monks/Whomerley Woods, rare spiders at Ridlins Mire, nationally scarce solitary bees and locally rare snails at Martins Way.

4.22 The Shackledell Grassland supports Hertfordshire's only colony of the Great Green Bush Cricket. This striking creature is Britain's largest insect, excluding the larger dragonflies, and is of particular conservation significance at a local and county level.

4.23 Some species are afforded high levels of protection through legislation such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act and several species are considered to be particular priorities for conservation in Stevenage. The rarity of each species and trend of each is shown in the table below.

| Species | Rarity in Hertfordshire | Latest trend for Hertfordshire |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Pipistrelle Bat | Common | Declining |
| Badger | Common | Stable |
| Great Crested Newt | Common | Declining |
| Common Lizard | Data unavailable | Data unavailable |
| Slow Worm | Common | Data unavailable |
| Grass Snake | Common | Data unavailable |
| House Sparrow | Data unavailable | Data unavailable |
| Great Green Bush Cricket | Data unavailable | Data unavailable |
| Bluebell | Common | Stable |

Table 10 Species priorities for Stevenage (Data source: Hertfordshire BAP)

4.24 The ongoing work to maintain and enhance local habitats will provide an important basis for species protection.

4.25 In Hertfordshire, a site not qualifying as of national importance for the wildlife it contains but regarded to be of local importance for wildlife is known as a Wildlife Site. A number of Wildlife Sites have been identified within Stevenage and these are valuable locations for key species such as bats, Great Crested Newts, Badgers and scarce flora.

4.26 They support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife, and many sites contain habitats and species that are priorities under the BAP.

4.27 There are currently 40 Wildlife Sites in Stevenage and they are shown on Figure 6. The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust are re-assessing these sites in 2013.

Important sites beyond the Borough boundary

4.28 European sites provide ecological infrastructure for the protection of sites which are of exceptional importance in respect of rare, endangered or vulnerable natural habitats and species within the European Union. These sites consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)⁽⁴⁾ and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)⁽⁵⁾. Government policy recommends that Ramsar sites are treated as if they are fully-designated European sites for the purposes of considering development proposals that may affect them.

4 Designated under EC Directive 92/43/EEC - Habitats Directive

5 Designated under EC Directive 79/409/EEC - Birds Directive

4.29 There are no European sites within the Borough boundary or within 10km of the Borough. However, wastewater from Stevenage is treated at the Rye Meads Waste Water Treatment Works. This plant is located next to the Lee Valley SPA, 12 km from Stevenage.

4.30 The Lee Valley SPA is also designated as a Ramsar site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It covers more than 450 hectares of land, stretching from Great Amwell near Ware to Walthamstow in London. Figure 7 illustrates the location of the SPA. The habitats in the SPA include inland water, grassland, deciduous woodland and fens /marshes.

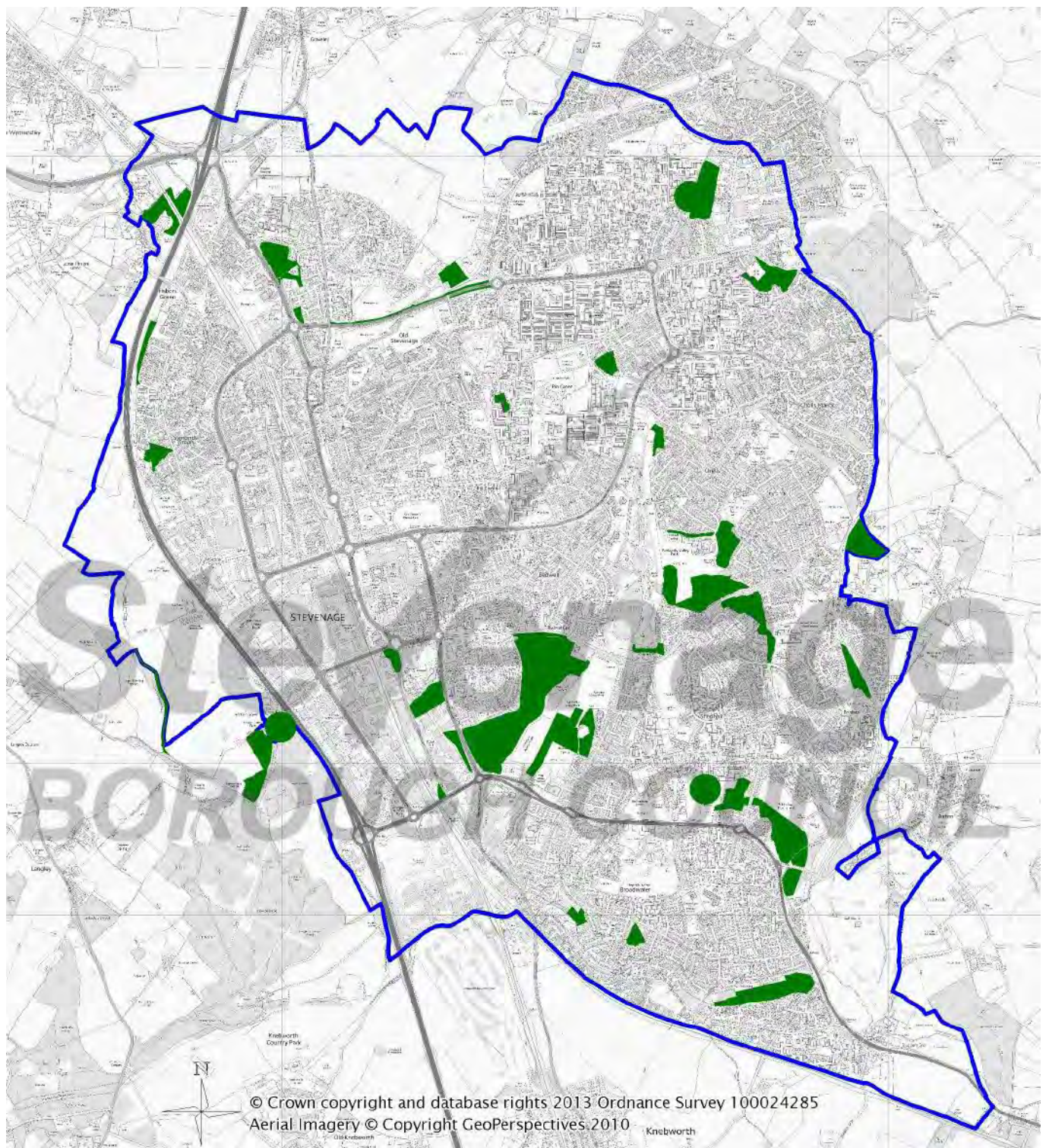


Figure 6 Stevenage Wildlife Sites

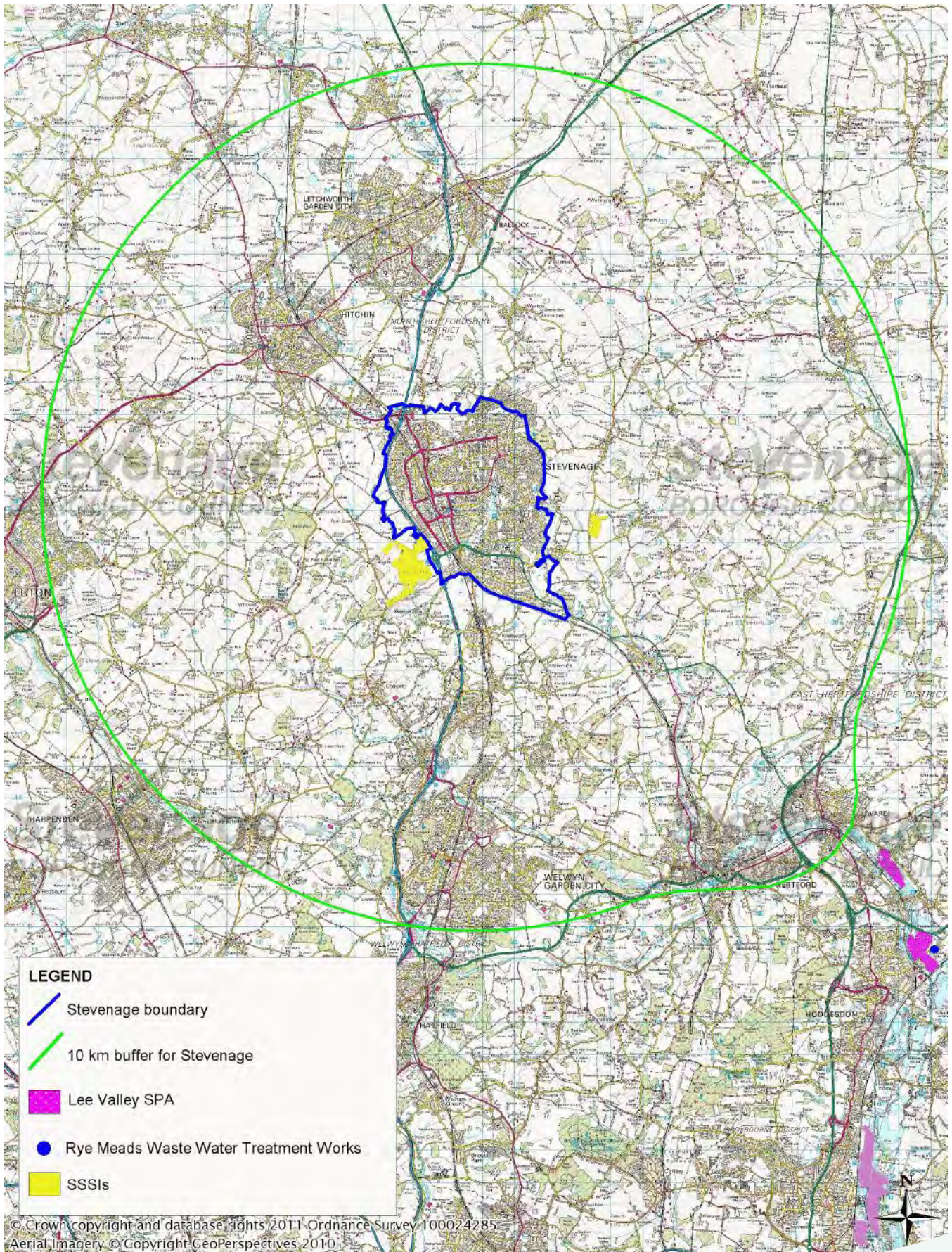


Figure 7 Stevenage, the SPA and two local SSSIs (Other SSSIs are located within the area shown)

4.31 The Lee Valley has been designated as an SPA because it is used by three protected bird species. These are Shoveler (whose Latin name is *Anas Clypeata*), Gadwall (*Anas strepera*) and Great Bittern (*Botarus sterllaris*). There are internationally-significant numbers of Shoveler and Gadwall found in the SPA. During the winter, the site is home to around 6% of all of Great Bittern in Great Britain.

4.32 Currently, there are no sites of national importance for wildlife in Stevenage although there are two SSSIs in the immediate vicinity. Knebworth Woods lies to the south west of the Borough and Benington High Wood lies to the east. Part of the Lee Valley SPA is also designated as the The Rye Meads SSSI. It is located 12 km from Stevenage. These locations are shown on Figure 7 and their current status⁽⁶⁾ is shown in the table below.

| Name of SSSI | % of area favourable | % of area unfavourable recovering |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Benington High Wood | 0% | 100% |
| Knebworth Woods | 1.86% | 98.14% |
| Rye Meads | 100% | 0% |

Table 11 SSSIs of relevance to Stevenage (Data source: Natural England)

4.33 Each of the SSSIs is meeting the Government target to have 95% of each SSSI area in favourable or recovering condition.

Geodiversity

4.34 Geodiversity is the collective term describing the geological variety of the Earth's rocks, fossils, minerals, soils and landscapes together with the natural processes which form and shape them. Geodiversity underpins biodiversity by providing the diversity of habitats and the ecosystem, with the soil being the link between them.

4.35 The key geological influence in Stevenage is lower cretaceous Chalk, an extensive strata which continues under the southeast of England. Various drift deposits comprising clay and tills overlie this upper chalk.

4.36 Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS), identified by locally developed criteria, are currently the most important places for geology and geomorphology outside statutorily protected land. There is one RIGS site in Stevenage located at Canterbury Way/St Martins Way, 40% of the site is also located within a Wildlife Site.

6 Natural England, October 2011

4.37 The chalk in this roadside cutting contains solution pipes ⁽⁷⁾filled with typical Woolwich/Reading Formation sediment, which proves that this formation once extended several kilometres north of its present main outcrop. The unworn flint nodules around the edges of the pipes were released by dissolution of the adjacent chalk as the pipes formed.

Data gaps

4.38 The following gaps have been identified in the baseline data:

- Populations of Priority Species and their underlying trends;
- Quality of local Wildlife Sites.

Key issues

4.39 Box 1 presents the key issues for the biodiversity theme in Stevenage.

Box 1: Key issues for biodiversity

- Demand for growth will place pressures on biodiversity in some areas of Stevenage.
- An internationally recognised SPA could be affected by an increase in development.
- Nationally designated sites lie adjacent to the Borough.
- A substantial number of locally designated sites are located throughout the Borough.
- Potential impacts from habitat fragmentation resulting from growth.
- A number of protected species are present in the area.
- Recreational pressures on wildlife sites.
- Effects on biodiversity from increased noise and light pollution resulting from increased development.
- Links between areas create important wildlife corridors and may come under threat as development sites are identified.
- Changing levels of surface water run off could affect the habitat of Stevenage Brook⁽⁸⁾.

7 Cylindrical, near-vertical pipes developed at a joint intersection in a karst environment caused by a local increase in the rate of carbonation resulting from enhanced drainage.

8 See also Chapter 6



5 . Population and human health

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

5 Population and human health



Summary of policy and plan review

5.1 Plans, policies and programmes on population include a range of different objectives including tackling social exclusion, improving public rights and public participation, improving health, reducing ill health and tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

5.2 Plans, policies and programmes on health focus on improving rates of infant mortality and life expectancy, reducing work related illness and accidents, significantly improving levels of sport and physical activity, particularly amongst disadvantaged groups; promoting healthier modes of travel; supporting the public to make healthier and more informed choices in regards to their health; improving accessibility to healthcare and leisure/recreational facilities; and reducing health inequalities, particularly for older people and children.

5.3 Reducing crime and the fear of crime is a major priority for the overall improvement of well-being for local people. Several national initiatives seek to reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. This subject is closely linked to improving deprivation which is discussed in Chapter 12.

5.4 All national policy advocates diverse, sustainable communities. Sustainable development ensures the well-being of residents by integrating social development, economic development, and environmental conservation and protection. By providing the amenities required to establish a good quality of life local communities can reduce the need for people to move out of an area.

5.5 At the local level, support for young people is a key aim. The following list illustrates the thematic list of priorities within the Stevenage Community Strategy:

- Children and young people
- Healthier communities and older people

- Safer stronger communities
- Economic development and the environment.

Baseline

5.6 This section sets out a summary of the baseline data for population and human health for Stevenage. The SEA/SA process will utilise the detailed information included in this document alongside other information as it becomes available.

Population

5.7 Stevenage is the third largest town in Hertfordshire. The 2011 Census shows that 84,000 people live in Stevenage. There are still 800 less children in Stevenage than there were in 2001, despite an increase in the overall population of the town.

5.8 The largest population gain since 2001, in absolute terms, has been in the 45 - 59 age band (popularly referred to as the "baby boomer" generation). In terms of percentage, the greatest next relative increase has been in the 75+ group; the number of our residents in this age category has increased by just over a quarter since 2001.

| Age range | 2001 | 2011 | Change 2001-2010 | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|------------|
| 0-14 | 16,800 | 16,000 | -800 | -5% |
| 15-29 | 15,200 | 17,100 | 1,900 | +13% |
| 30-44 | 20,100 | 17,700 | -2,400 | -12% |
| 45-59 | 13,400 | 17,100 | 3,700 | +28% |
| 60-74 | 9,600 | 10,200 | 600 | +6% |
| 75+ | 4,700 | 5,900 | 1,200 | +26% |
| Total | 79,800 | 84,000 | 4,200 | +5% |

Table 12 Stevenage population distribution (Data source: 2001 and 2011 Censuses)

5.9 Stevenage's age profile is similar to that of Hertfordshire, the East of England and England. However, in spite of a % increase since 2001 in our residents who are over 60 years of age, we still maintain a clear bias towards a younger population when compared with these wider areas.

5.10 Since 2001, life expectancy for our residents in Stevenage has risen steadily. The average life expectancy for female residents has remained broadly in line with the national average. However, unlike our female residents, the life expectancy of our male residents at birth has not improved at the same rate. Over the past ten years the national life expectancy rate has overtaken that of Stevenage males by 0.8 years. Figure 8 illustrates current local comparisons with the regional and national average.

Table 13 Life expectancy comparisons 2009/10 three year rolling average (Data source: ONS)

5.11 Since 2002, female life expectancy has increased broadly in line with the regional and national average. Male life expectancy has steadily increased at the regional and national level but decreased locally.

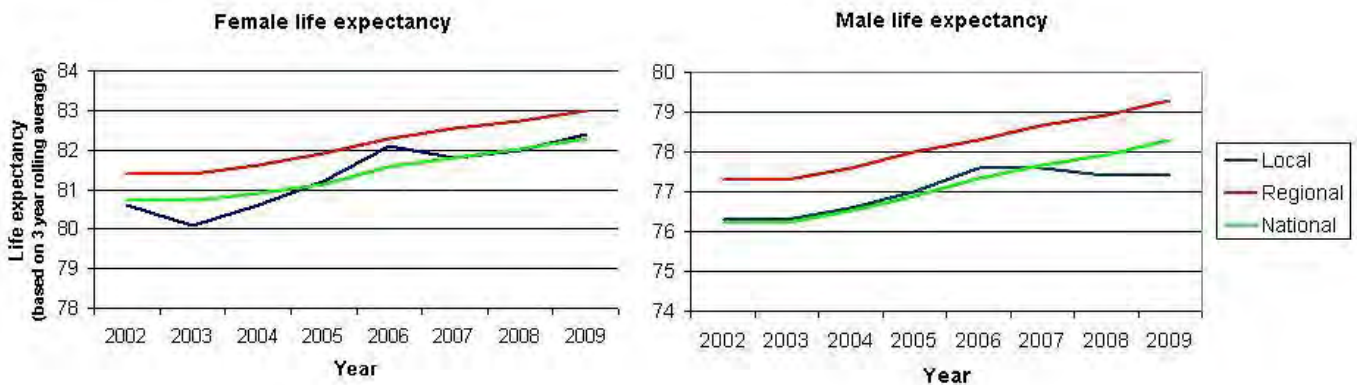


Figure 8 Life expectancy ~ based on 3 year rolling average (Data source: ONS)

Migration

5.12 Interregional migration data from ONS shows that, for Hertfordshire, most movement is within the east of England region. Figure 9 shows that of the 27% that leave Hertfordshire for other regional destinations, 36% migrate to Bedfordshire whilst 32% migrate to Essex. Interregional movement is greatest to the London area (22%) whilst a further 19% migrate to the south eastern region.



Figure 9 Interregional migration data year ending 2011 (Data source: ONS)

5.13 The largest migration numbers come from the 25-44 year age group.

5.14 Local level data also shows that for Stevenage, most migrating residents (57%) move within the eastern region. Of that total, 39% move to the neighbouring district of North Hertfordshire followed by 9% to East Hertfordshire and 7% to Welwyn-Hatfield. Movements outside of the area are largely to London (12%) and the south eastern region (9%), which is in-line with data for the whole of Hertfordshire.

Ethnicity and religion

5.15 Stevenage has a relatively low proportion of Black Minority Ethnic communities. There has been an increase in the number of migrants from Africa and the Middle East/Asia. The 2011 Census shows that just over half of the population state their religion to be Christian, a reduction since the 2001 Census. More than 30% state that they have no religion, with 2% listed as Muslim and 1.2% listed as Hindu. Other recorded religions equate to less than 2% of the total population.

Health

5.16 Health services are evenly spread throughout the Borough and there is one major hospital, The Lister as shown in figure. This is supplemented by a number of health centres and dental surgeries. See also further information in Chapter 12.

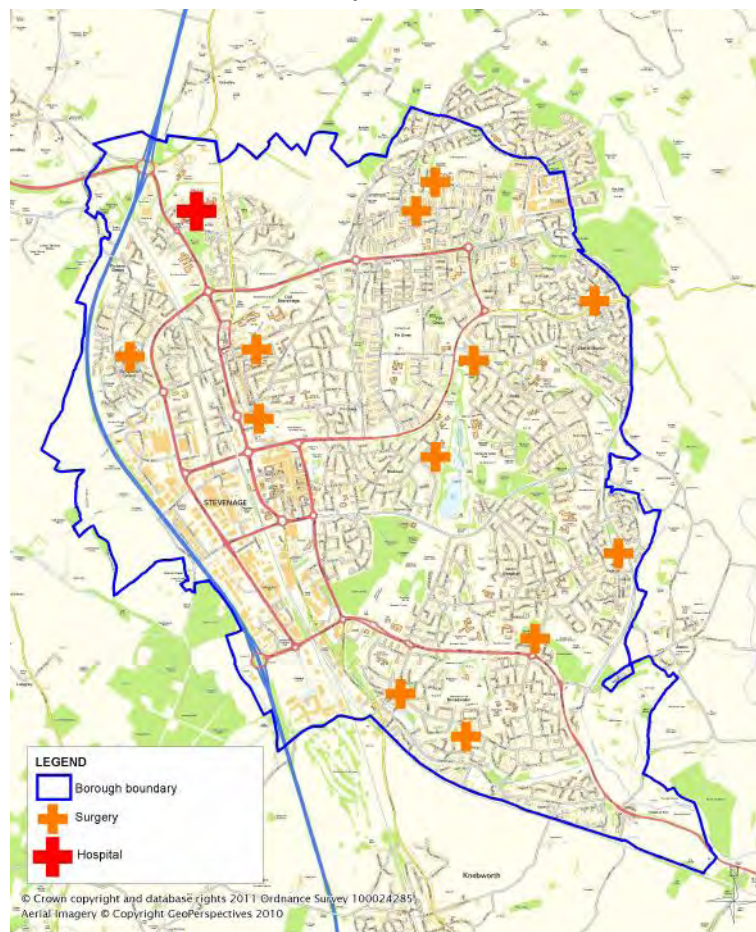


Figure 10 Stevenage Health Facilities (Data source: SBC)

5.17 The health of people in Stevenage is mixed when compared with the England average. Deprivation is lower than average, however about 3,600 children live in poverty and about 18.4% of Year 6 children are classified as obese.

5.18 The health summary below highlights the mixed nature of health in Stevenage.

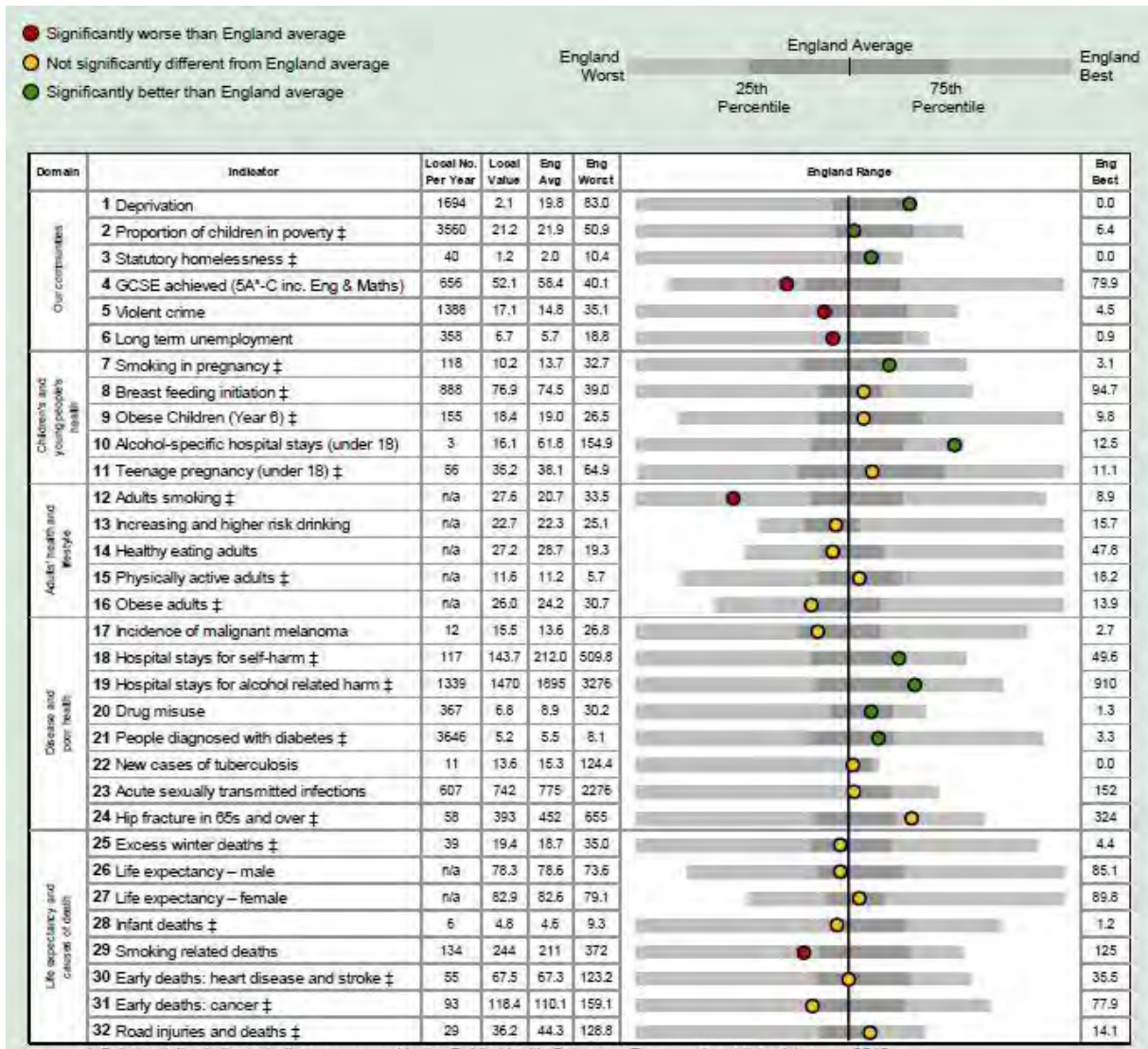


Figure 11 Health summary for Stevenage (Data source: Department of Health)

5.19 Figure 11 illustrates that the number of adults smoking is significantly worse for Stevenage when compared with the national average. This is also true for the number of smoking related deaths. However, smoking in pregnancy is significantly better than the England average. This is also true for alcohol related hospital stays, drug misuse and diabetes.

5.20 Priorities in Stevenage include continuing to reduce levels of smoking, increasing levels of physical activity and reducing levels of obesity, particularly among younger people and helping the growing older population maintain their health.

5.21 Providing an environment that encourages healthy living and promotes active lifestyles for Stevenage residents was a fundamental aim of the original planning of the New Town. This characteristic is still evident today, with a considerable proportion of open space per 1000 population. There is for example 0.73ha of parks and gardens per 1,000 population, 1.78ha natural and semi-natural open space and 1.09ha of amenity greenspace. Further information on this topic is included in Chapter 11.

5.22 Local studies have identified a number of areas where there are current deficiencies in access to open space and leisure provision. These are shown in Table 14.

| Open space or leisure provision | Total number of areas with deficiency |
|---|---|
| Parks and gardens | 3 potential areas (further investigation recommended) |
| Natural and semi natural open space | 3 key areas |
| Provision for children and young people | 4 key areas |
| Sports facilities | Tennis courts - 3 key areas MUGAs - 3 key areas Rugby facilities - 1 key area Hockey facilities - 1 key area Cricket facilities - 1 key area Town wide deficiencies: 5 badminton courts 2 swimming pools |
| Allotments | 2 key areas |

Table 14 Local open space and leisure deficiencies (Data source: PMP Study, SBC, 2006)

5.23 The sustainable provision of services in the future will need to take into consideration the identified population increase. The indicators presented in the sustainability framework will assist in monitoring the Council's progress in achieving sustainable outcomes whilst planning for an increase in population.

Crime and fear of crime

5.24 Over the last five years incidents of reported crime and, by extension, the crime rate per head of population have both fallen. Today, the crime rate is more than 30% lower than that recorded in the 2007/08 period.

| | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Overall crime rates per 1,000 population | 102.6 | 94.4 | 86.2 | 82.1 | 69.6 |

Table 15 Crime rates in Stevenage (Data source: Hertfordshire Constabulary)

5.25 It is more difficult to find consistent and robust data on fear of crime, not least because it is such a subjective matter. A survey for the local strategic partnership in 2007 revealed that:

...around half of Stevenage's residents (46%) are concerned about the likelihood of being burgled in the next 12 months. This concern is highest, again, among critics⁽⁹⁾ (58%), but it is also high among middle-aged people (53% of 35-54 year olds are concerned) and people who are less likely to be at home during the day (51% of full-time workers).

Data gaps

5.26 The following gaps have been identified in the baseline data:

- 2011 Census data on life expectancy (due 2013);
- Local data on fear of crime.

Key issues

5.27 Box 2 presents the key issues for the population and human health theme in Stevenage.

Box 2: Key issues for population and human health

- Lower than average male life expectancy.
- Stevenage, in common with many other areas, is experiencing an ageing population. This will have implications for health service provision and accessibility to other services, facilities and amenities.
- Reduce inter-regional migration from Stevenage to other areas. This will require an in-combination set of measures to improve opportunities for local people.
- Encourage ethnic diversity and ensure that everyone is given an equal opportunity to participate.
- Higher than average levels of adults smoking.
- Higher than average levels of smoking related deaths.
- Maintain access to open space and leisure services and seek to improve areas where deficiencies exist.
- Sustain the downward trend in reported crime and crime rates and ensure new development helps to reduce or alleviate the fear of crime.



6 . Water and soils

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

6 Water and soils



Figure 12 Fairlands Valley Sailing Lake

Summary of policy and plan review

6.1 Plans, policies and programmes on water and soil seek to:

- Improve quality;
- Protect and enhance supply;
- Prevent pollution;
- Reduce contamination.

6.2 For water, policies are driven by the aims of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), as translated into national law by the Water Framework Regulations 2003. Key objectives include improving the quality of rivers and other water bodies to 'good ecological status' by 2015; considering flood risk at all stages of the plan process; and incorporating water efficiency measures into new developments.

6.3 National and regional strategies also have a strong focus on maintaining and protecting the availability of water. The Water Resources Strategy Regional Action Plan for Thames Region⁽¹⁰⁾ delivers the national strategy⁽¹¹⁾ at the regional level. The Stevenage area is also covered by The Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan⁽¹²⁾.

6.4 For soil, there is a focus on protecting the quality of agricultural land, through reducing soil degradation, maintaining soil productivity, limiting compaction and a range of other approaches. The Soil Strategy for England⁽¹³⁾ focuses on four main themes:

10 Environment Agency, 2009

11 Water for People and the Environment, Environment Agency, 2009

12 Environment Agency, 2009

13 DEFRA, 2009

- the sustainable use of agricultural soils;
- the role of soils in mitigating and adapting to climate change;
- protecting soil functions during construction and development; and
- preventing pollution and dealing with historic contamination.

Baseline

6.5 This section sets out a summary of the baseline data for water and soils, for Stevenage. Firstly we look at water resources and flooding before we identify key data for soils. The SEA/SA process will utilise the detailed information included in this document alongside other information as it becomes available.

Rivers, streams and waterways



Figure 13 Watercourse at Roaring Meg

6.6 The river systems in the Stevenage locality suffer from low flow levels, particularly in summer months. Fairlands Valley Park, the main recreation and open space area in Stevenage contains an 11 acre artificial sailing lake. The primary use for the lake is to support recreation activities, however it is also an important place for the nurturing of biodiversity.

6.7 Figure 14 illustrates the main waterways in Stevenage as identified by the Environment Agency, the Aston End Brook and the Stevenage Brook. The River Beane is located immediately east of the Borough boundary. These are all located within the Upper Lee catchment.

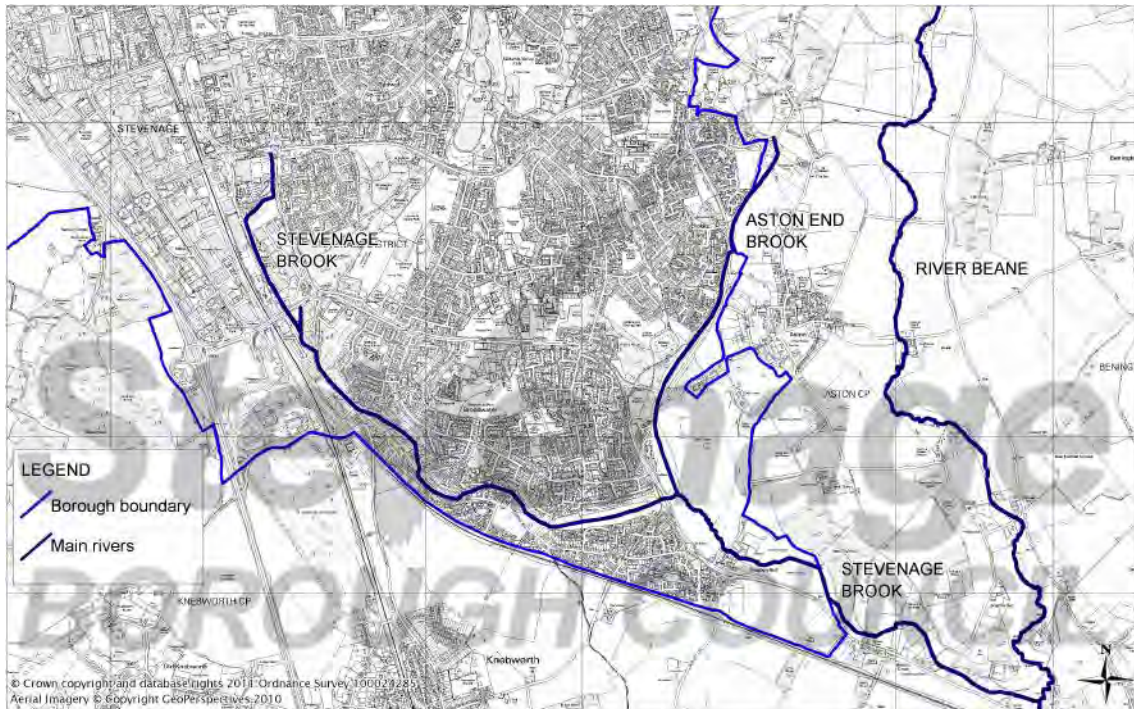


Figure 14 Stevenage main rivers (Data source: Environment Agency)

Water resources



Figure 15 Water resources must be secured to accommodate new development

6.8 The natural water cycle is the process by which water is transported through a region. The process commences with some sort of precipitation, such as rain. This is intercepted by the ground where it travels either overland to rivers and lakes or underground to water aquifers. An aquifer is a wet underground layer of water-bearing permeable rock or materials such as gravel, sand, or silt from which groundwater can be extracted.

6.9 Abstraction of water interacts with the cycle by reducing the amount of water that is naturally held within the aquifers. This water is transported via trunk mains and pipes to local households. Once used, the majority of wastewater is transported via the sewerage network to a wastewater treatment works. For Stevenage, this wastewater site is located 15km south-east of the Borough at Rye Meads.

6.10 Abstraction leads to low river flows locally as water is removed from the upper reaches of the catchment and discharged further down at the wastewater treatment works. The area of the Upper Lee is currently classified as over-abtracted⁽¹⁴⁾. Although this issue is not relevant to the Aston End Brook and Stevenage Brook, it is a significant problem for the River Beane.

6.11 Each person in the UK currently uses about 146 litres of water every day. This consumption level is not sustainable in the long-term. The impact of population growth, decreasing average household size and increasing per capita water use on domestic demand for water is unsustainable.

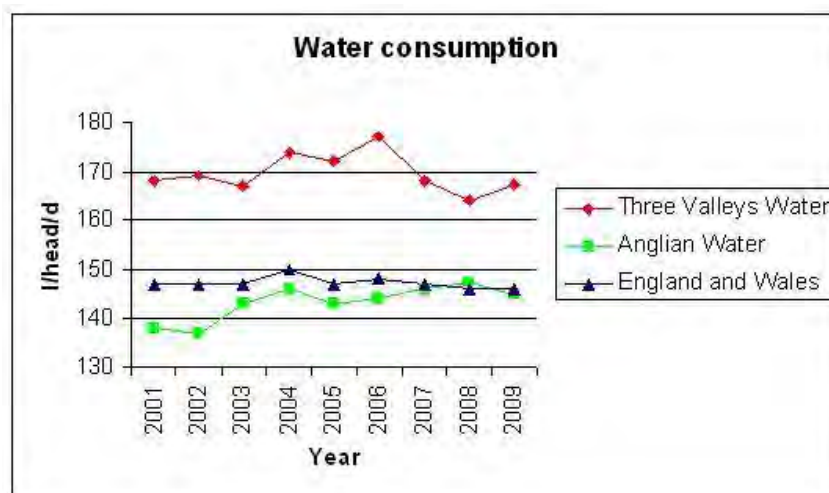


Figure 16 Water consumption (Data source: OFWAT 2009 - most recent data available)

6.12 Local water resources to households are supplied by Three Valleys Water (TVW), with a small percentage of homes by Anglian Water. Figure 16 illustrates the trend in usage for each company. At an average of 168 litres per household per day, usage in the TVW area is much higher than the England and Wales average. In 2009⁽¹⁵⁾, 34% of TVW customers had water meters in their homes. This is comparable to the England average as one third of households have water meters.

Water quality

6.13 The water levels within the local aquifer are crucial in sustaining the levels of rivers, streams, springs and flushlines. Any long-term lowering of water levels in any wetland, or reduced incidence or duration of flooding, can also cause severe losses in biodiversity and changes in community

14 Upper Lee Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy, Environment Agency.

15 Most recent data available

composition. Low flows or lowered water levels in ponds mean that pollution incidents are magnified because of a reduced dilution factor. Wetland habitats act as natural pollution filters, buffer the effects of flood and drought, and reduce soil erosion.

6.14 The aquifer is a major source of groundwater but is vulnerable to pollution. This can be determined by the physical, chemical and biological properties of the soil and rocks, which control the ease with which an unprotected hazard can affect groundwater. Groundwater Source Protection Zones indicate the risk to groundwater supplies from potentially polluting activities and accidental releases of pollutants. Designed to protect individual groundwater sources, these zones show the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution in the area. The Environment Agency has graded these zones into four groups. Figure 17 shows that a number of Groundwater Source Protection Zones exist within the Borough. Table 16 details the zoning categories.

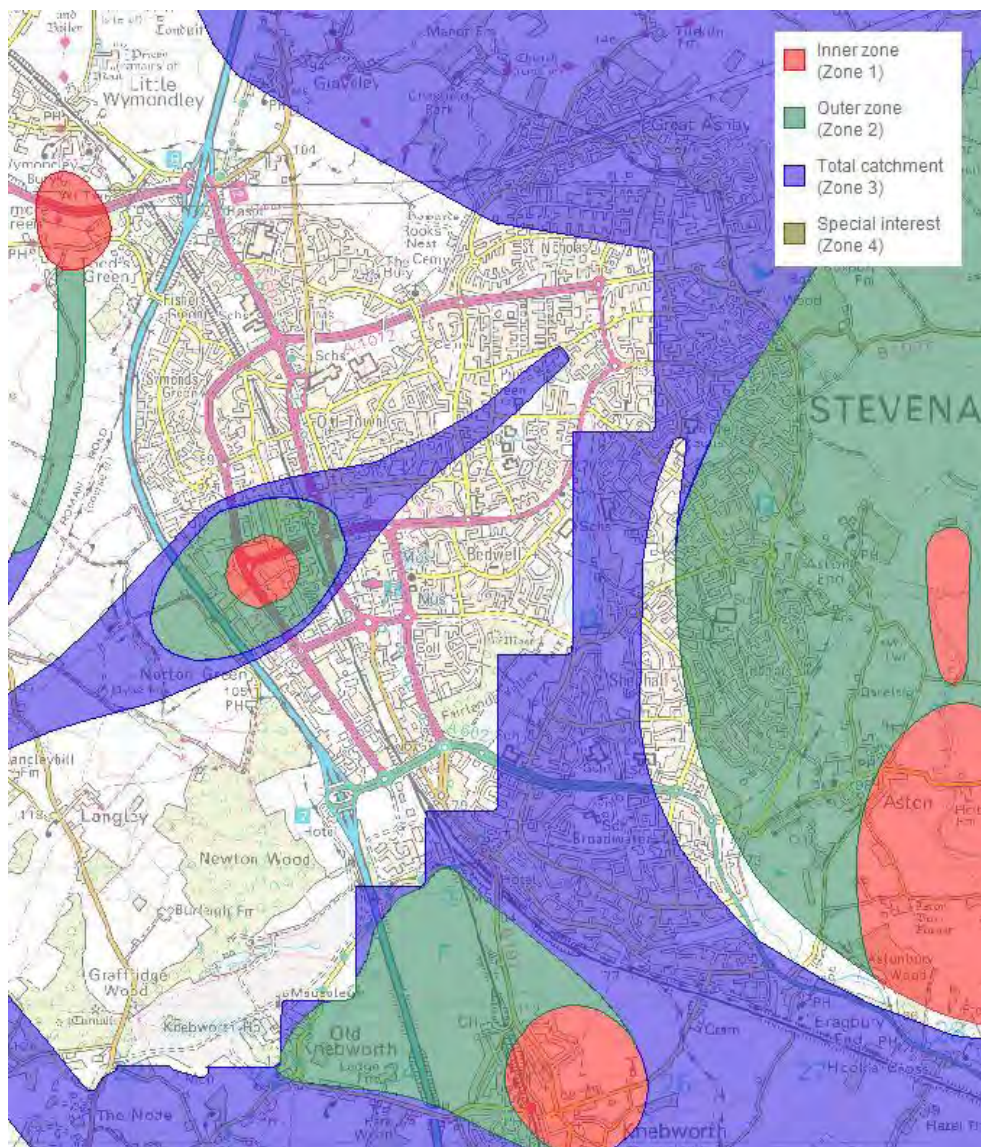


Figure 17 Groundwater Source Protection Zones (Data source: Environment Agency)

Zone 1 Inner Protection Zone ~ Any pollutant that can travel to the borehole within 50 days from any point within the zone. This applies at and below the water table. This zone has a minimum 50m protection radius around the borehole. These criteria are designed to protect against the transmission of toxic chemicals and water-borne disease.

Zone 2 Outer Protection Zone ~ The outer zone covers pollution that takes up to 400 days to travel to the borehole, or 25% of the total catchment area ~ whichever is the larger. The travel time is the minimum amount of time that has been established pollutants need to be diluted, reduced in strength or delayed by the time they reach the borehole.

Zone 3 Total catchment ~ The total catchment is the total area needed to support removal of water from the borehole, and to support any discharge from the borehole.

Zone 4 Of Special Interest ~ Where local conditions mean that industrial sites and other polluters could affect the groundwater source even though they are outside the normal catchment area.

Table 16 Categories of Groundwater Source Protection Zones (Source: Environment Agency)

6.15 Historical records show that biological river water quality in England has gradually improved over the past ten years. In Stevenage, records from 2001 to 2006 show that local biological river water quality remained consistent with 100% at the status 'fair'.

6.16 Chemical river water quality in England has significantly improved over the past ten years. In Stevenage, records from 2001 to 2006 show that local biological river water quality improved to 100% at the status 'good'.

6.17 These datasets have been discontinued in favour of methods more appropriate to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). Now based on river catchments and sections of waterways, current data defines the water quality over a three-year sampling window, presented as such to reduce the bias which might be caused by unusual weather conditions in any one year.

6.18 The aim is for each water body to achieve 'good' status by 2015. Table 17 illustrates the 2009⁽¹⁶⁾ dataset from the Environment Agency. Each local section sampled is currently highlighted by the Agency as 'at risk'.

| Waterway | Biological quality | Chemical quality | Hydromorphological quality | Pollutants quality | Predicted ecological quality by 2015 | Predicted chemical quality by 2015 | Overall risk |
|---|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| River Beane ~ from Roe Green to Stevenage Brook | Moderate | Good | Not high | High | Moderate | Not yet assessed | At risk |
| River Beane ~ Stevenage Brook to River Lee | Moderate | Good | Not high | High | Moderate | Does not require assessment | At risk |

16 At the time of writing, this is the most up to date data.

| Waterway | Biological quality | Chemical quality | Hydromorphological quality | Pollutants quality | Predicted ecological quality by 2015 | Predicted chemical quality by 2015 | Overall risk |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Stevenage Brook | Moderate | Moderate | Not high | High | Moderate | Does not require assessment | At risk |

Table 17 Stevenage water quality (Data source: Environment Agency, 2009)

Flooding



Figure 18 Flooding can cause damage, destruction and disruption

6.19 Fluvial flooding, or river flooding, occurs when river levels increase to the extent that they burst their banks. Flood risk of this nature exists in Stevenage as it falls within the floodplains of the River Hiz, Stevenage Brook and Aston End Brook.

6.20 Surface water flooding takes place when the ground, rivers and drainage systems cannot absorb heavy rainfall. Typically this type of flooding is localised and occurs quickly after heavy rain. This is a particular risk for urbanised areas such as Stevenage.

6.21 Surface water flood risk is an issue that can arise across the Borough, where appropriate drainage systems are not in place or the volume of rainfall exceeds the capacity of the drainage system. Surface water drainage systems should, where possible, mimic that of a natural system. Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs) techniques should be maximised on new developments in accordance with the SuDs hierarchy to ensure that all new development is safe and flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

6.22 Other identified flood risks have been identified along trunk sewers and at flood storage reservoirs but the risk is classified as 'residual'.

6.23 Government guidance provides a Sequential Test to enable planning authorities to apply a risk-based approach to site allocations within their authority boundary. The test classifies sites into one of four flood risk zones based on the annual probability of flooding. These zones are as follows:

| |
|---|
| Zone 1 Low probability ~ This zone comprises land assessed as having a less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding in any one year. |
|---|

| |
|---|
| Zone 2 Medium probability ~ This zone comprises land assessed as having between a 1 in 100 and a 1 in 1000 annual probability of river flooding or between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of sea flooding. |
|---|

| |
|--|
| Zone 3a High probability ~ This zone comprises land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual flooding probability of river flooding or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea. |
|--|

| |
|---|
| Zone 3b The functional floodplain ~ This zone comprises land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood. This is land assessed as having a 1 in 20 or greater annual probability of river flooding in any year or is designed to flood in an extreme flood, or at another probability to be agreed between the local planning authority and the Environment Agency. |
|---|

Table 18 Flood zones

6.24 The location of flood risk zones in Stevenage is shown in Figure 19.

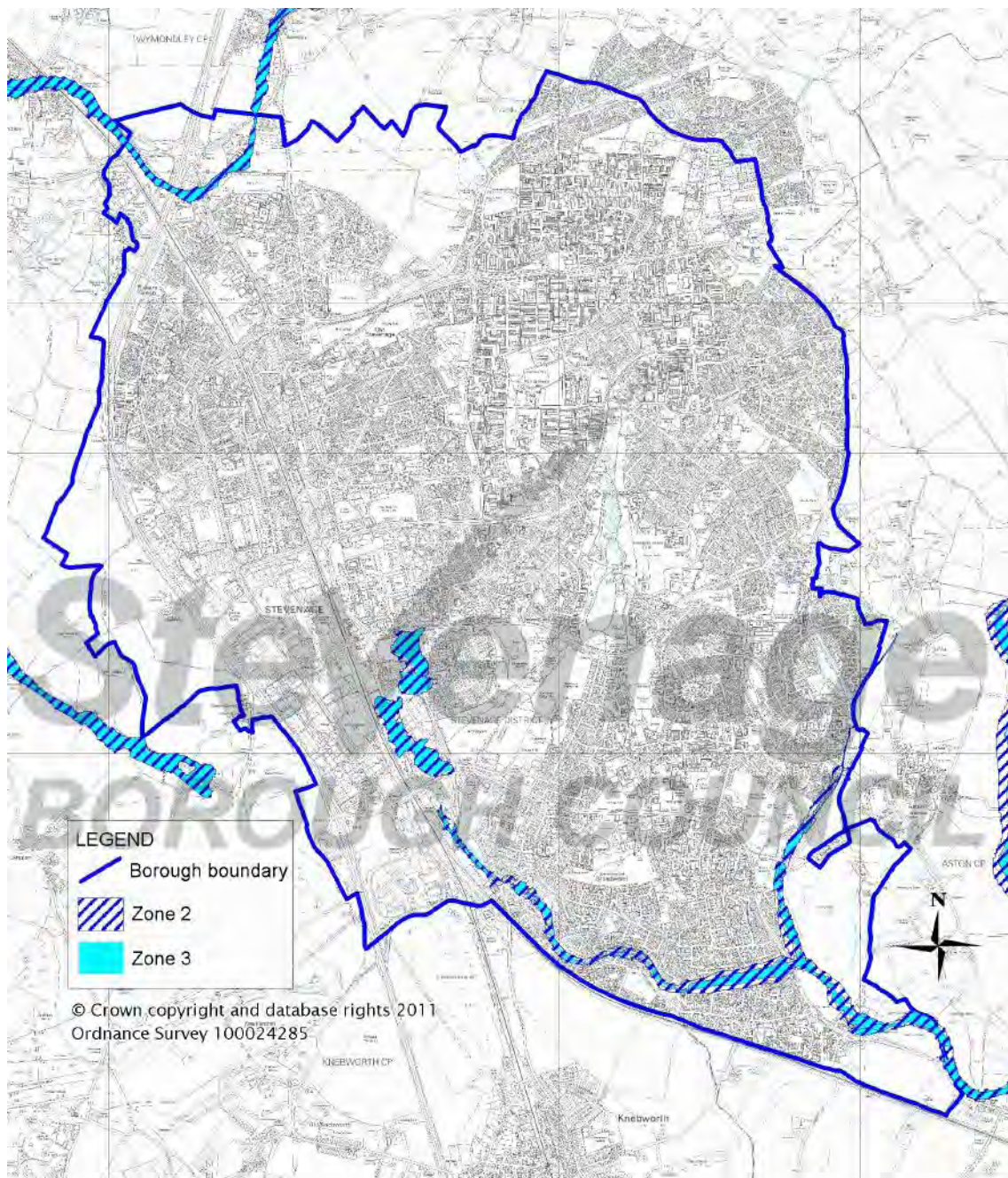


Figure 19 Flood risk zones 2 and 3 in Stevenage (Data source: Environment Agency)

6.25 The Environment Agency comment on planning applications relevant to flood risk. In the period 2011/12, the Environment Agency provided comment on 4 planning applications. The issues were resolved prior to the granting of planning permission.

Soil



Figure 20 Soil quality is important for many things including food, fuel, habitats and building foundations

6.26 Soil is a vital resource with a range of key functions including the support of food, fuel and fibre production and the support of habitats and biodiversity.

6.27 In Stevenage, the superficial deposits comprise Argyllic Brown Earths on Decalcified Boulder Clay for the majority of the Borough. Chalky and Gravelly Solifluction Deposits just impinge to the east and west, with Glacial and River Gravels being found in the southern tip of the Borough in association with the Stevenage and Aston End Brooks. More subtle variations still account for the variations in grassland type found within Stevenage, with grasslands to the far west, near Knebworth, displaying acidic characteristics and grasslands to the east exhibiting a calcareous influence in places.

6.28 Land quality varies from place to place. The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) provides a method for assessing the quality of farmland to enable informed choices to be made about its future use within the planning system. It helps underpin the principles of sustainable development.

6.29 Where significant development of agricultural land is unavoidable, poorer quality land should be used in preference to that of higher quality, except where this would be inconsistent with other sustainability considerations.

6.30 Soil quality has a strong influence on the quality of agricultural land. The ALC system classifies land into five grades, with Grade 3 subdivided into sub-grades 3a and 3b. The best and most versatile land is defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a. This is the land which is most flexible, productive and efficient in response to inputs and which can best deliver future crops for food and non food uses such as biomass, fibres and pharmaceuticals.

6.31 Figure 21 illustrates data from Natural England and Grade 3 is not subdivided. The majority of land within Stevenage (more than 75%) is classified as 'Urban' with the vast remainder being classified as Grade 3.

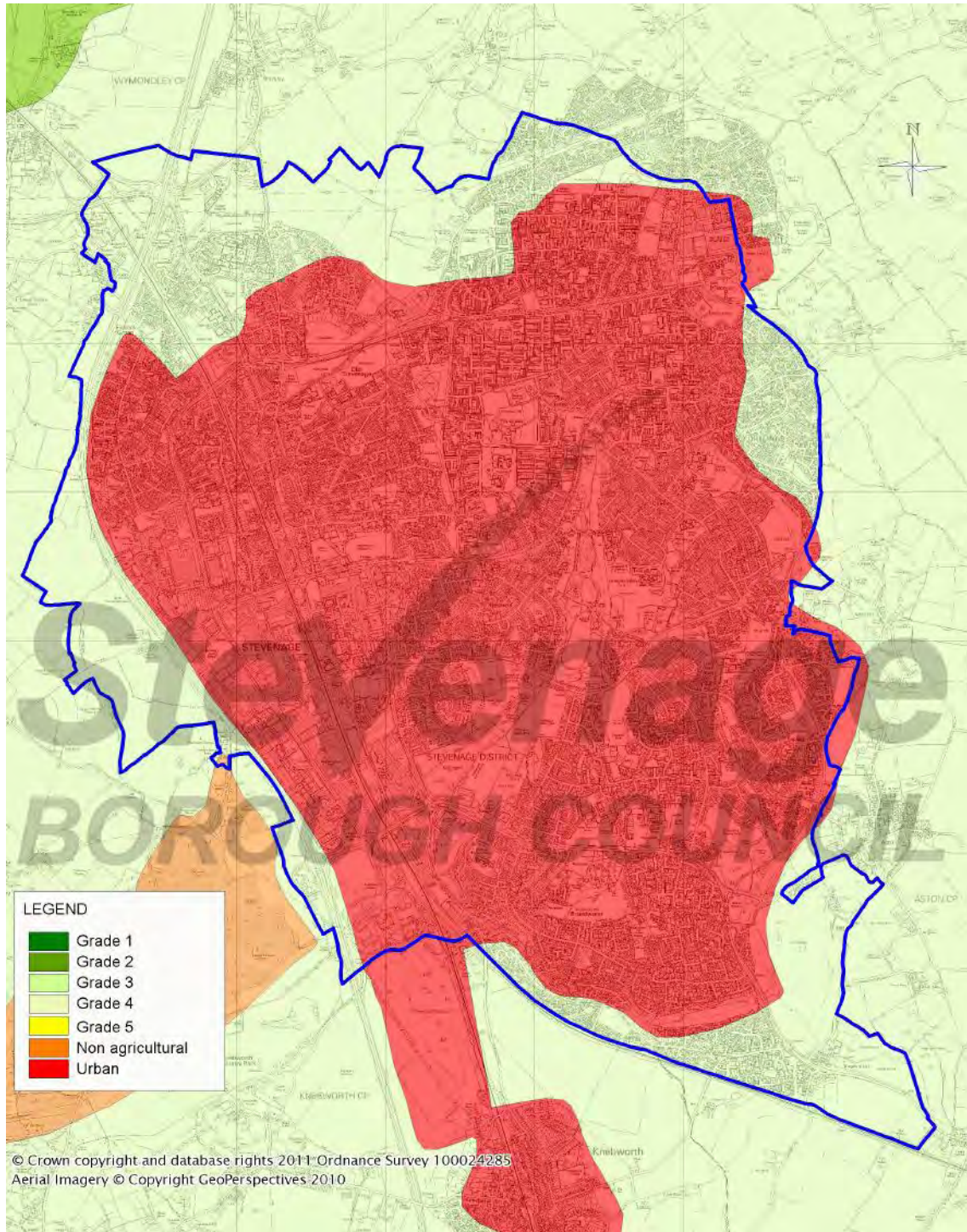


Figure 21 Stevenage Soil Classifications (Data source: Natural England)

Data gaps

6.32 The following gaps have been identified in the baseline data:

- Up to date data on water consumption;
- Localised incidents of surface water flooding;
- Subdivision of Grade 3 soil quality.

Key issues

6.33 Box 3 presents the key issues for the water and soils theme in Stevenage.

Box 3: Key issues for water and soils

- Stevenage Brook falls within scope of UKBAP Priority Habitat Description for Rivers.
- Low flow levels in local river systems.
- Local sections of waterways are classified as 'at risk'.
- Local aquifer is over-abstracted.
- Higher than average household water consumption.
- Groundwater vulnerable to pollution.
- Localised areas susceptible to fluvial flooding.
- Surface water flooding risk due to urbanised location.
- Areas susceptible to flooding should be avoided for development where more suitable alternatives exist.
- Better quality soils should be avoided for development where suitable lower grade alternatives exist.
- The urban nature of the Borough will provide a number of PDL sites. Land contamination at sites previously used for industrial purposes must be considered.



7 . Air Quality

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

7 Air Quality



Figure 22 The dominant local impact on air quality is from road traffic

Summary of policy and plan review

7.1 Plans, policies and programmes in relation to air quality have been established at both the European and the UK level. This includes the setting of targets for reducing emissions of specific pollutants to minimise the negative impacts on health and the environment.

7.2 Policies are driven by the aims of the EU Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC). The key objective is to improve the air quality for the betterment of human health and the environment. The directive sets guidance for thresholds to be adopted by member states.

7.3 National and local strategies also have a strong focus on improving air quality. The Air Quality Strategy for England⁽¹⁷⁾ sets out targets for specific pollutants. Local targets include a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions through Council owned landholdings and objectives to:

- To protect the air we breathe;
- Develop partnerships for air quality management; and
- Educate and provide information.

Baseline

7.4 This section sets out a summary of the baseline data for air quality in Stevenage. The SEA/SA process will utilise the detailed information included in this document alongside other information as it becomes available.

17 DEFRA, 2007

7.5 Air quality in Stevenage is generally very good. There is no major polluting source, the dominant local impact on air pollution comes from heavily trafficked roads such as the A1(M). Even so, roads will normally only significantly influence air quality close to them, with pollutant concentrations dropping off to background levels within tens of metres.



7.6 Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to periodically review and assess local air quality against the air quality objectives contained in the Air Quality Regulations. Local authorities are currently undertaking the fourth round of the review and assessment. The fourth round is undertaken in two stages. An Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) was undertaken in 2009. This assessment evaluated the local authorities areas and established any areas likely to exceed the air quality objectives. Where Detailed Assessments are not required as a result of the Updating and Screening Assessment, Annual Progress Reports are required to update on changes within the district.

7.7 Monitoring of nitrogen dioxide and PM₁₀⁽¹⁸⁾ was undertaken at the continuous monitoring site on Lytton Way. In addition, 22 nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes were placed at sites around the Borough. This monitoring did not identify any exceedences of the Air Quality Objectives where there was relevant exposure. One diffusion tube on Hitchin Road measured levels slightly exceeding the Air Quality Objective, however this was not representative of relevant exposure. Relevant exposure was measured on the façade of three properties along this road and all three measured annual mean concentrations below the Objective. Table 19 shows the data collected annually from 2007 to 2011.

| | Annual mean concentrations (µg/m ³) | | | | |
|------------------|---|------|------|------|------|
| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
| Nitrogen Dioxide | 32.1 | 28.7 | 29.6 | 30.5 | 29.0 |

18 The PM₁₀ (particles measuring 10µm or less) standard was designed to identify those particles likely to be inhaled by humans, and PM₁₀ has become the generally accepted measure of particulate material in the atmosphere in the UK and in Europe.

| | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| PM10 | 22.7 | 21.4 | 20.7 | 21.4 | 17.0 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|

Table 19 Monitoring Results for Stevenage (Data source: Stevenage Air Quality Progress Report)

7.8 Annual mean concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide and PM10 are less than the Air Quality Objective of 40(µg/m³). Sulphur Dioxide, Benzene and other pollutants are not measured in Stevenage.

7.9 Results obtained from the Stevenage Air Quality Report 2012 (monitoring 2011 data) do not suggest that there are any relevant exceedences of the Air Quality Objectives in Stevenage Borough.

7.10 No significant gaps have been identified in the baseline data.

Key issues

7.11 Box 4 presents the key issues for the air quality theme in Stevenage.

Box 4: Key issues for air quality

- Emissions from road traffic have the potential to be a continuing issue.
- New housing and employment development areas have the potential to lead to impacts on air quality from increased traffic flows.
- New business development has the potential to lead to negative air quality impacts.



8 . Climatic factors

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

8 Climatic factors



Figure 23 Drainage channels built into new developments are an example of a SUDs scheme. A flood adaption measure.

Summary of policy and plan review

8.1 Plans, policies and programmes in relation to climate change have been established from the international level (Kyoto Agreement) and carried through into European, national and local objectives. Reducing CO² levels in the atmosphere, and therefore having an impact upon climatic factors, is a national objective. A number of Council strategy documents identify sustainability principles relating to CO² emissions. The Council documents reflect the objectives of the Kyoto Agreement.

8.2 Policy development combines both demand management (reduced energy consumption and increased efficiency of use) and supply side measures (low carbon options including fuel mix and renewables). A number of plans, policies and programmes state specific targets to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. This is led at the national level by the Climate Change Act, which sets a legally binding target of at least a 34% reduction in UK emissions by 2020 and at least an 80% reduction by 2050 against a 1990 baseline.

8.3 Measures proposed to adapt to climate change include a presumption against development in areas at risk from flooding, appropriate design of new development to incorporate energy reduction technologies, the promotion of new infrastructure such as sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) and improved maintenance to help address the changes that are likely to occur as a result of climate change.

8.4 The Stevenage Climate Change Strategy seeks to achieve six key objectives through a supplementary Action Plan. This strategy promotes working partnerships to deliver a reduction in emissions and also a commitment to adapt to climate change. Further details are provided in Appendix 1.

Baseline

8.5 This section sets out a summary of the baseline data for climatic factors in Stevenage. The SEA/SA process will utilise the detailed information included in this document alongside other information as it becomes available.

8.6 Current average climate data from the Met Office is based on the period 1981 to 2010. Table 20 illustrates the current averages for East Anglia.

| Max temp | Min temp | Days of air frost | Sunshine | Rainfall | Days of rainfall |
|----------|----------|-------------------|----------------|------------|------------------|
| 13.7°C | 6.0°C | 48.2 (days) | 1585.3 (hours) | 712.3 (mm) | 118.5 (days) |

Table 20 Climate averages, East Anglia 1981-2010 (Data source: Met Office)

8.7 In June 2009 the findings of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released by the UK Climate Change Projections team under DEFRA. This team provides climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

8.8 As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the East of England by 2050 for a medium emissions scenario are likely to be as follows:

| Climate record | Estimate of increase | Most likely range | Range of uncertainty |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Winter mean temperature | 2.2°C | 1.1°C to 3.4°C | 0.9°C to 3.8°C |
| Summer mean temperature | 2.5°C | 1.2°C to 4.3°C | 1.0°C to 4.8°C |
| Summer mean daily maximum temperature | 3.4°C | 1.3°C to 6.0°C | 1.1°C to 6.8°C |
| Summer mean daily minimum temperature | 2.7°C | 1.2°C to 4.7°C | 1.1°C to 5.3°C |
| Annual mean precipitation | 0% | -5% to 5% | -5% to 6% |
| Winter mean precipitation | 14% | 3% to 31% | 1% to 35% |
| Summer mean precipitation | -17% | -38% to 6% | -40% to 14% |

Table 21 East of England Climate Predictions (Data source: DEFRA)

8.9 Stevenage has lower greenhouse gas emissions than national, regional or Hertfordshire averages. Per capita CO² emissions in Stevenage have fallen broadly in line with national and regional averages. This is illustrated in Table 22.

| | Stevenage | Hertfordshire | East of England | National (UK) |
|---------|-----------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 2006/07 | 6.9 | 6.7 | 7.4 | 7.4 |
| 2007/08 | 6.7 | 6.5 | 7.2 | 7.2 |
| 2008/09 | 6.5 | 6.3 | 7.0 | 7.0 |
| 2009/10 | 5.8 | 5.7 | 6.3 | 6.4 |
| 2010/11 | 6.0 | 5.9 | 6.6 | 6.6 |

Table 22 CO² emissions per capita 2005-2008 (Data source: Department of Energy and Climate Change - DECC)

8.10 As Table 23 highlights, in relation to CO² emissions by end user, the proportion of emissions from road transport is significantly lower than from domestic but particularly from industrial/commercial and sources. Trend data shows that all CO² emissions have reduced, with a slight elevation in the 2010/11 period. All plans should provide a positive framework for delivering a reduction in overall emissions.

| | Industry and commercial | Domestic | Road transport | Total |
|---------|-------------------------|----------|----------------|-------|
| 2007/08 | 263 | 175 | 138 | 576 |
| 2008/09 | 262 | 172 | 129 | 563 |
| 2009/10 | 230 | 155 | 124 | 509 |
| 2010/11 | 243 | 167 | 123 | 533 |

Table 23 CO² emissions for Stevenage by source 2007-2011 ⁽¹⁹⁾(Data source: DECC)

8.11 Less burning of fossil fuels means that we can achieve lower CO² emissions. Reducing levels of energy consumption will reduce the need for fossil fuels. At the local level, domestic energy consumption has decreased in-line with regional and national averages, as Figure 24 shows. Since 2007/08, consumption of electricity in Stevenage has reduced by 8% and gas consumption by 25%.

19 Land use change and forestry are also recorded but data = 0 for each given year.

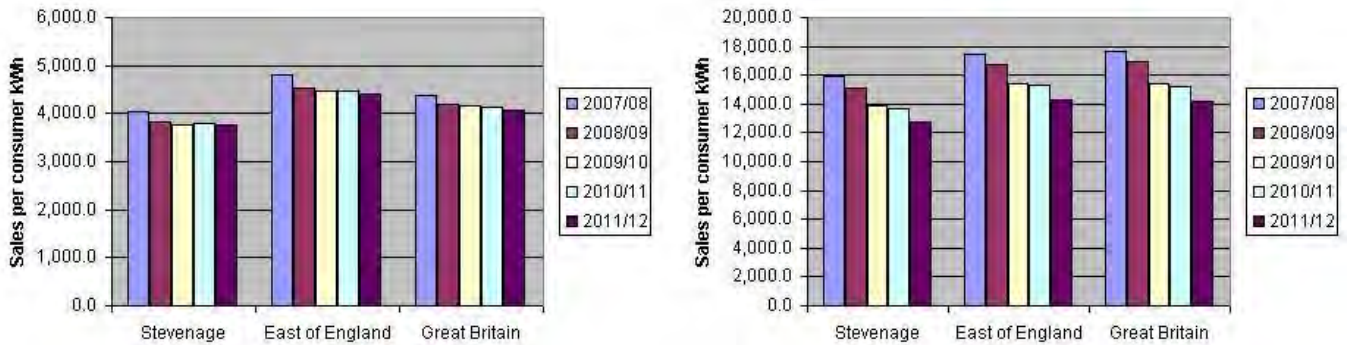


Figure 24 Domestic energy consumption, left: electricity, right: gas (Data source: DECC)

8.12 Commercial and industrial consumption is currently significantly higher in Stevenage when compared with regional and national averages. Electricity consumption for this sector in Stevenage is an average of 43% higher than regional and national averages, and on average, 18% higher for gas consumption. In the last five years, commercial gas consumption per consumer has fluctuated, as figure 26 shows, but overall has increased by 2% since 2007/08. Commercial electricity consumption (per consumer) has decreased by 7% over the same period.

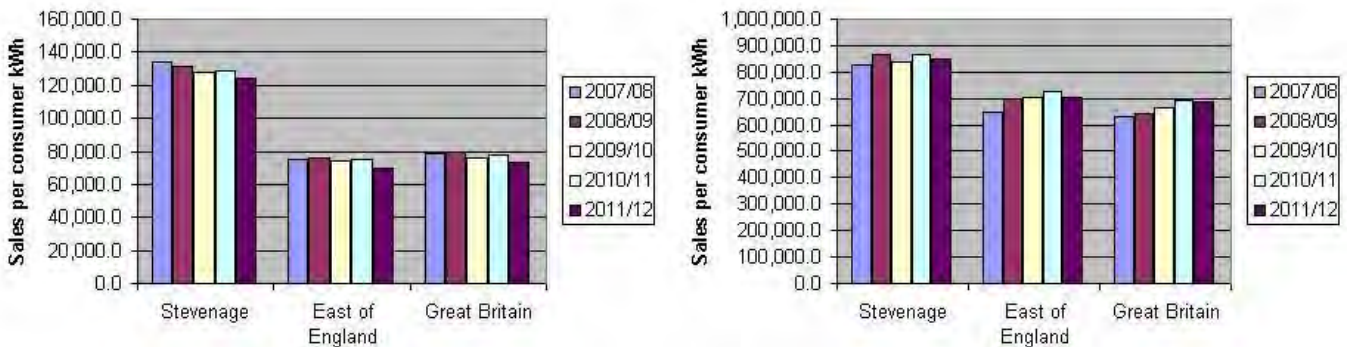


Figure 25 Commercial and industrial energy consumption, left: electricity, right: gas (Data source: DECC)

Data gaps

8.13 Up to date data is required for the following indicators:

- Climate averages;
- CO² emissions;
- Energy consumption.

Key issues

8.14 Box 5 presents the key issues for the climate change theme in Stevenage.

Box 5: Key issues for climatic factors

- Areas of the Borough are susceptible to fluvial flooding.
- As an urban Borough, areas are susceptible to surface water flooding.
- Increased incidence of drought as a result of climate change is likely to reduce water levels.
- High quality habitats have the potential to be affected by changes in rainfall and invasive species.
- CO² emissions have remained stable, there is a need to ensure that emissions are reduced.
- The growth of the town might increase greenhouse gas emissions.
- There is a need to improve sustainability and reduce the need to travel.
- Domestic energy consumption should continue to drop.
- Commercial and industrial energy consumption is significantly higher than regional and national averages.



9 . Material assets

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

9 Material assets



Figure 26 Recycling in Stevenage

Summary of policy and plan review

9.1 The material assets theme covers a range of policy areas, including waste management, minerals, energy production and previously developed land.

9.2 Plans, policies and programmes in relation to material assets seek to protect minerals resources and promote uses for site after mineral extractions are completed. A 'waste hierarchy' is promoted at all levels with reducing waste being the main priority. Further aims include the reuse and recycling of waste, energy recovery and waste disposal. At the local level, waste and minerals are planned for by Hertfordshire County Council although consideration of the issues associated with growth clearly needs to be addressed within the local plan.

9.3 Concentrating development on brownfield sites can help to make the best use of existing services such as transport and waste management. It can encourage more sustainable lifestyles by providing an opportunity to recycle land, clean up contaminated sites, and assist environmental, social and economic regeneration. It also reduces pressure to build on greenfield land and helps protect the countryside. The use of previously developed land (or brownfield land) is supported through various national policy.

9.4 An expansion of renewable energy production is strongly promoted by European and national plans, policies and programmes. The UK's recent Renewable Energy Strategy seeks to produce 15% of electricity from renewable sources by 2020.

Baseline data

9.5 This section sets out a summary of the baseline data for material assets in Stevenage. The SEA/SA process will utilise the detailed information included in this document alongside other information as it becomes available.

Minerals

9.6 The Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review (2002-2016) safeguards one site as an Aggregates Rail Depot at Langley Sidings. However, in the urbanised area of Stevenage there are no sites identified for existing or proposed mineral extraction.

Waste

9.7 In comparison with national, regional and county averages, recycling rates in Stevenage are unfavourable. Whilst 43% of municipal waste was recycled or composted in 2011/12 in the UK, only 40% was recycled in Stevenage. Local recycling rates also fall behind county (50%) and regional (50%) averages.

| Year | Kg of household waste collected per capita in Stevenage | % of household waste sent for recycling or composting |
|---------|---|---|
| 2008/09 | 412 | 28.8 |
| 2009/10 | 396 | 31.9 |
| 2010/11 | 383 | 39.1 |
| 2011/12 | 370 | 40.0 |

Table 24 Waste and recycling rates in Stevenage 2008-2011 (Data source: SBC)

9.8 There is one Household Waste Recycling Centre in Stevenage, located at Caxton Way. There are also 20 recycling banks across the Borough.

Previously developed land

9.9 In relation to the reuse of brownfield sites, completions of housing on previously developed land have been consistently high (as a percentage of total completions) in Stevenage. As shown in Table 25, over 40% of housing completions have taken place on previously developed land each year.

| Year | % of new homes built on previously developed land |
|---------|---|
| 2007/08 | 46% |
| 2008/09 | 100% |
| 2009/10 | 100% |
| 2010/11 | 92% |

| Year | % of new homes built on previously developed land |
|---------|---|
| 2011/12 | 83% |

Table 25 Brownfield land completions (Data source: SBC)

Renewable energy production

9.10 The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) provide estimates of total equivalent energy consumption of renewable technology and waste. There are no historic renewable energy consumptions recorded for Stevenage, although data is only available up to the period 2009/10.

9.11 By monitoring planning applications we are able to determine schemes which include renewables such as wind turbines. In 2011/12, 10 major developments were permitted. Of these, 5 incorporated on-site renewable or low carbon renewable energy sources into their plans. However, it should be noted that there are certain schemes which are permitted development, and as such do not require planning permission.

Data gaps

9.12 The following gap has been identified in the baseline data:

- Renewable energy production.

Key issues

9.13 Box 5 presents the key issues for the material assets theme in Stevenage.

Box 5: Key issues for material assets

- Recycling rates are less than national and county averages.
- Loss of greenfield land due to new development.
- Must maintain high percentage of completions on previously developed land.
- Requirement to determine local level methodology for monitoring of renewables.



10 . Cultural heritage

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

10 Cultural heritage



Figure 27 The Old Town High Street is the oldest conservation area designation in Stevenage

Summary of policy and plan review

10.1 Plans, policies and programmes in relation to heritage seek to preserve and enhance designated heritage assets and their settings. This includes listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.

10.2 Policies recognise the cultural aspects of landscape and establish mechanisms for their protection against inappropriate development. It is recognised that unknown and undesignated heritage assets are also of potential value.

Baseline data

10.3 This section sets out a summary of the baseline data for cultural heritage in Stevenage. The SEA/SA process will utilise the detailed information included in this document alongside other information as it becomes available.

10.4 The historic environment in Stevenage is defined both by its individual heritage assets, designated and non-designated, and the setting of these assets through the townscape of Stevenage.

10.5 The history of Stevenage dates back to the prehistoric period but its historic development has been influenced by a wide variety of factors, ranging from the importance of coaching trade along the Great North Road, the arrival of the railway in 1850 and the development of the New Town from 1946. The town has grown from a small hamlet to become one of the largest towns in Hertfordshire.

10.6 This rich history is reflected by the town's diverse cultural heritage resource which includes Bronze Age tumuli or Round Barrows, thatched cottages, medieval timber framed buildings, manor houses, twentieth century new town neighbourhoods and modern sculpture.

10.7 Many important features and areas of Stevenage are recognised through historic environment designations. These include listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and conservation areas. English Heritage is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for Scheduled Ancient Monument consent. The historic environment is protected through the planning system, via the conditions imposed on developers and other mechanisms.

10.8 All buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition are listed, as are most of those built between 1700 and 1840. The criteria become tighter with time, so that post-1945 buildings have to be exceptionally important to be listed. A building has normally to be over 30 years old to be eligible for listing.

10.9 There are a total of 126 listed buildings in Stevenage. Table 26 shows the data for local heritage assets since 2006. Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest, sometimes considered to be internationally important, Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest and Grade II buildings are nationally important and of special interest.

| Grade | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Grade I listed | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Grade II* listed | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Grade II listed | 112 | 112 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 114 |
| Churches | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - |
| Total | 125 | 125 | 126 | 126 | 126 | 126 |

From 2011 the church listing was amended to Grade II by English Heritage.

Table 26 Listed buildings in Stevenage (Data source: English Heritage)

10.10 There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Stevenage on the Sites and Monument Record held by English Heritage. These are sites of national importance and are protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. These sites are:

- The Old Malthouse and Kiln
- The Six Hills Roman Barrows
- Whomerley Wood moated site

10.11 Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local authorities have the power to designate as conservation areas any area of 'special architectural interest' whose character or appearance is worth protecting or enhancing. This is judged against local criteria, rather than

national importance as is the case with listing. Conservation area designation increases the local authority's control over demolition of buildings and over certain alterations to residential properties which would normally be classed as 'permitted development' and not require planning permission.

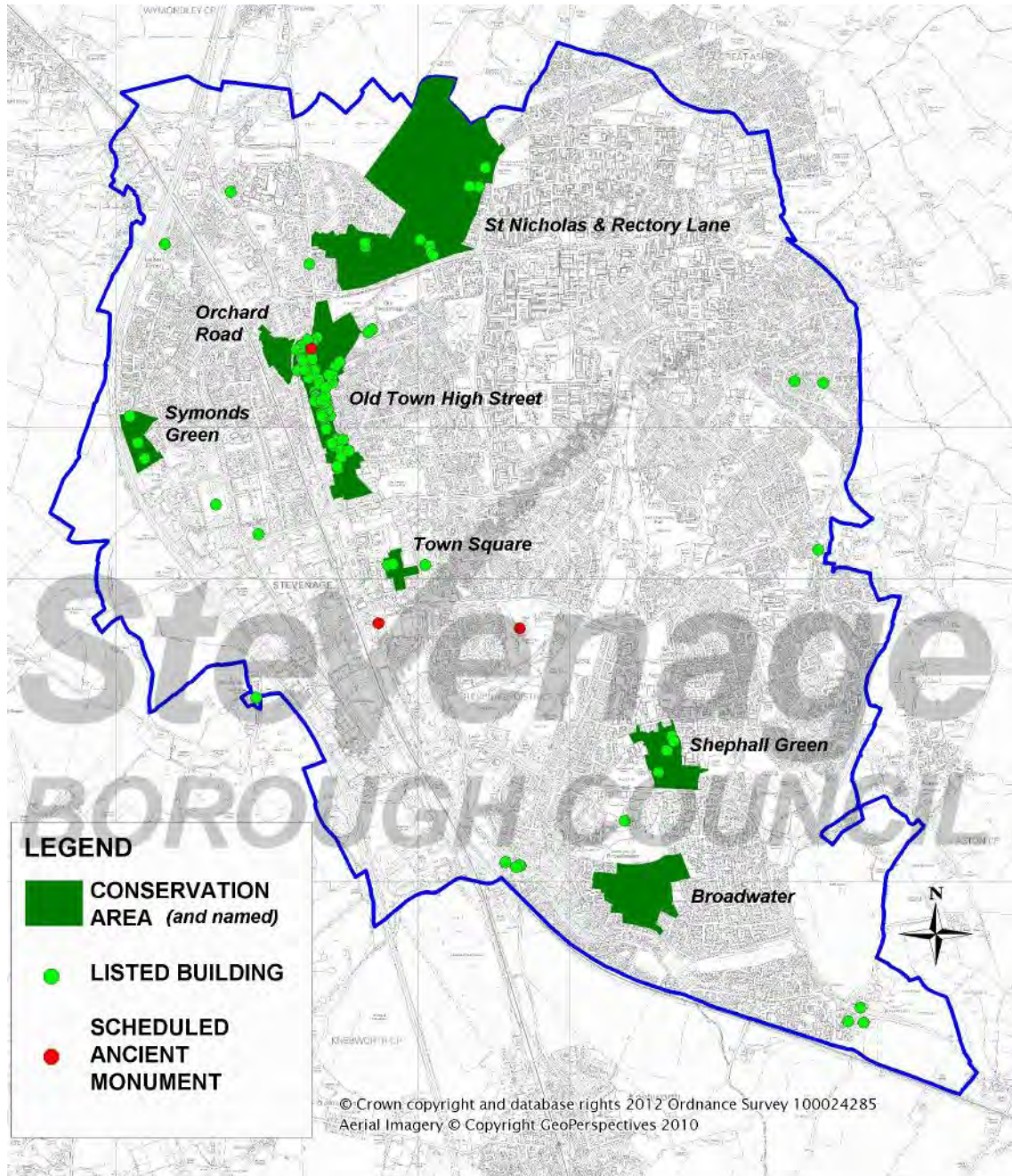


Figure 28 Stevenage designated heritage assets (Data source: SBC)

10.12 There are seven conservation areas in Stevenage, as listed in Table 27.

| Conservation Area | Date of designation | Date of amendment(s) |
|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Broadwater | December 2007 | - |
| Old Town High Street | March 1969 | September 1979 |
| Orchard Road | December 2007 | - |
| Shephall Green | October 1973 | December 2007 |
| St Nicholas/Rectory Lane | July 1982 | April 1984 & December 2007 |
| Symonds Green | June 1977 | December 2007 |
| Town Square | February 1988 | October 2010 |

Table 27 Stevenage Conservation Areas (Data source: SBC)

10.13 All of our conservation areas have published character appraisals and we are currently seeking to adopt conservation area management plans in summer 2012.

10.14 Archaeological Alert Areas (AAAs) are areas of land where there is particular potential for archaeological finds. These areas are designated by Hertfordshire County Council and there are seventeen AAAs in Stevenage. However, it is considered that the whole of the Borough has archaeological potential to varying degrees. A lack of records from the early stages of the New Town development has masked archaeological sites. Indeed, many of the important archaeological sites discovered within Stevenage in the past 20 years have not been within AAAs; a recent example being the important Roman and medieval remains discovered at Marriots School.

10.15 English Heritage publishes an annual Heritage at Risk Register. The Heritage at Risk Register highlights the Grade I and II* listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, wreck sites and registered parks and gardens in England deemed to be 'at risk'. Of all the heritage assets located within Stevenage, three assets are included on the Register. The Old Malthouse and Kiln is located in the Old Town High Street Conservation Area. It is Grade II listed and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Town Square Conservation Area is also considered at risk.

10.16 There are no gaps identified in the baseline data.

Key issues

10.17 Box 6 presents the key issues for the cultural heritage theme in Stevenage.

Box 6: Key issues for cultural heritage

- One listed building and scheduled ancient monument is at risk.
- Two conservation areas are at risk.
- Pressure for development in historic areas increases as the positive management of an area improves its attractiveness to businesses and developers.
- The impact of new development must be carefully managed as it can directly affect archaeological sites, monuments, buildings and areas.
- Archaeological remains, both seen and unseen, have the potential to be affected by new developments.
- The Borough has archaeological potential to varying degrees and is not confined by heritage designations.
- Inappropriate alterations and repairs can have a cumulative impact on the character of an area.
- Heritage assets are at risk of decay if the viability of the current use is put at risk.
- Conserving the commercial heritage of the Old Town and the New Town.
- Maintaining the local distinctiveness of the townscape character.



11 . Landscape

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

11 Landscape



Figure 29 Forster Country

Summary of policy and plan review

11.1 As well as the countryside, this topic also looks at townscape character, noise and light pollution and the issue of tranquillity.

11.2 Relevant plans and policies all emphasise the protection of important landscapes as these are an essential component of people's surroundings and sense of place. They seek to explain the different roles that landscape can play. This includes: local distinctiveness; the historic environment; natural resources; farming; educational, leisure and recreation opportunities; transport and infrastructure; settlements and nature conservation.

11.3 Policies advocate the provision of open space, green networks and woodland. As well as supporting wildlife (see *also* Biodiversity, flora and fauna), green infrastructure has an important role in providing opportunities for sport and recreation, creating healthier communities, reducing temperatures in built up areas in summer, reducing the impact of noise and air pollution and limiting the risk of flooding.

11.4 Enhancing the quality of design in urban areas is equally important and can have a similar role to play in terms of providing a sense of place and encouraging use of space.

11.5 Policies seek to avoid, reduce, or mitigate against the harmful effects of noise and light pollution.

Baseline data

11.6 This section sets out a summary of the baseline data for the landscape in Stevenage. The SEA/SA process will utilise the detailed information included in this document alongside other information as it becomes available.

Landscape character

11.7 Stevenage's landscape is defined by the urban nature of the settlement and the town is tightly bounded by Green Belt.

11.8 There are no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within Stevenage Borough. The edge of the Chilterns AONB is approximately 5.5km from the our boundary at it's nearest point.

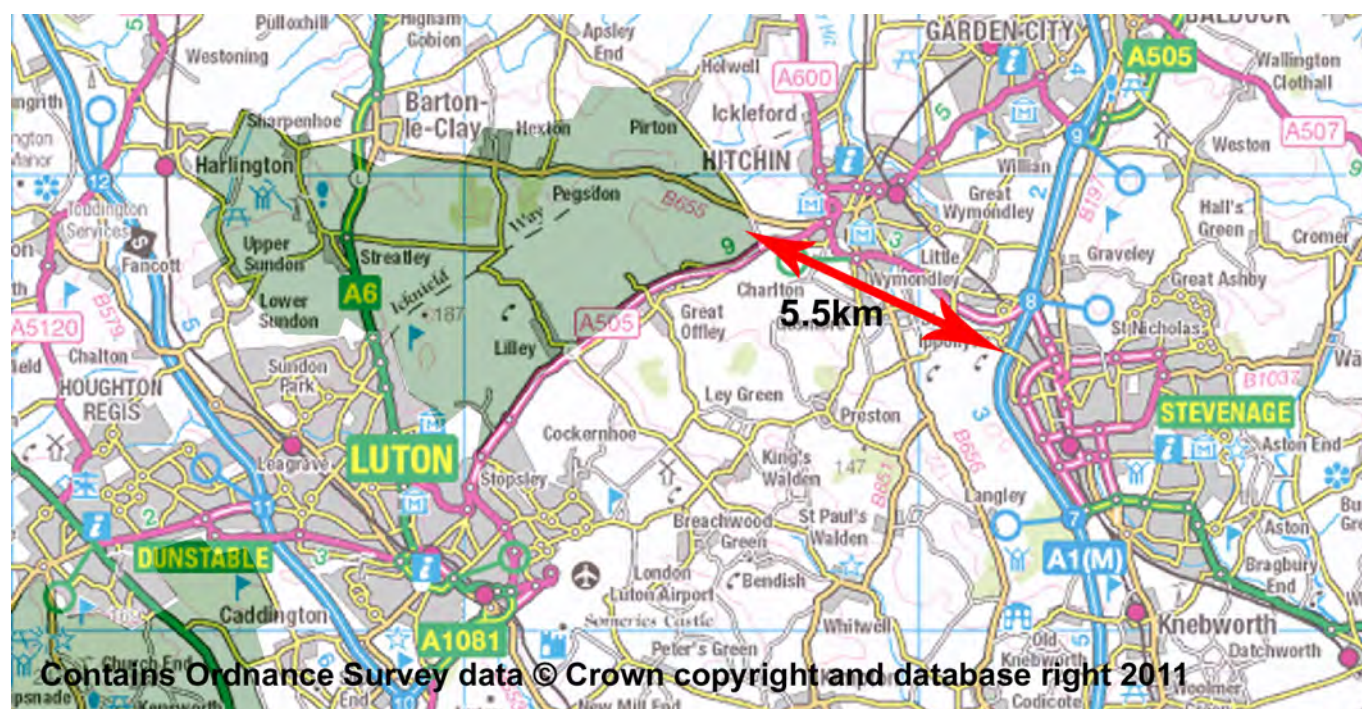


Figure 30 The Chilterns AONB (shown green) lies to the north-west of Stevenage

11.9 Due to the geographical relationship between the Borough and the AONB ~ outside our administrative boundary, predominantly in a different water catchment area and not in line with the prevailing west or south-west wind direction ~ it is considered that any impacts are likely to be limited though any increase in housing within the Borough may lead to increased recreational pressure.

11.10 A detailed [management plan](#) for the AONB is published each year. This contains 20 headline indicators that provide an insight into its environmental condition. We will monitor the management plan to identify any negative or unforeseen trends and to determine if the policies of our plans are likely to be contributing to these.

11.11 There are presently no formal landscape designations within the Borough. The 2004 District Plan did identify land to the south-east and north of the town as Landscape Conservation Areas. However, these were deleted in 2007 in line with national guidance.

11.12 Much of Hertfordshire is covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt. Although the Green Belt is not a landscape designation, they have been designated and authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use. This can include retaining and enhancing landscapes.

11.13 Over the last decade, the amount of Green Belt within the Borough has decreased by almost 30% from 362 hectares to 259 hectares. This is because land to the west of the A1(M) was removed to allow for a strategic housing allocation when the District Plan was adopted in 2004⁽²⁰⁾.



Figure 31 Land west of Stevenage and the A1(M)

11.14 However, Stevenage accounts for less than 0.5% of the Green Belt in Hertfordshire. The future of the Green Belt is a strategic issue and any changes will require the co-operation of a number of authorities. Because of the small size and urbanised nature of the Borough it is not possible to make compensatory extensions to the Green Belt within our administrative area if or when land is removed. Any additional provision would need to be made in neighbouring authority areas.

11.15 Monitoring at the county-level or higher will provide the best indication of whether the extent and coverage of the Metropolitan Green Belt is being successfully maintained. Currently there are approximately 260ha of Green Belt land within the Stevenage boundary and approximately 85,000ha within Hertfordshire.

11.16 Within the town, key features of the landscape are also protected. 'Green' assets are covered by a variety of designations including Wildlife Sites (see Biodiversity, flora and fauna), Green Links and Principal Open Spaces. Monitoring shows that we have maintained our protection of these assets. However, the remaining designations are slow-moving indicators in that they will

20 This reduction also includes the removal of a smaller area covering Norton Green following a successful legal challenge to the adoption of the District Plan in 2005

only be affected when a new plan reviews designations and determines whether areas need to be added or removed. The current range of protective policy designations is shown in the table below.

| Designation | Number of sites covered | Area / length | Date of last review |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Principal Open Spaces | 18 | 161 hectares | 2004 |
| Green Links | 8 | 280 hectares | 2004 |
| Ancient Lanes and associated hedgerows | 18 | 13.3 kilometres | 2004 |
| Wildlife sites | 39 | 110 hectares | 2010 |
| Regionally important geological site (RIGS) | 1 | 0.23 hectares | 2010 |

Table 28 Local policy designations protecting landscape features (Data source: SBC)



Figure 32 Important open space such as Shephall Green (l) and Chells Park (r) is protected by existing policies

Townscape character

11.17 Our principal means of maintaining and monitoring the most important assets of the urban fabric is presently through Listed Building and Conservation Area designations. These are discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

11.18 The character of the whole town contributes to local distinctiveness and sense of place. The development of the town provides a diverse range of urban character from the small agricultural hamlets, to industrial workers housing and onto the new town neighbourhoods.

11.19 The Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) is the national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. It aims to reduce our carbon emissions and create homes that are more sustainable.

11.20 The Code measures the sustainability of a new home against categories of sustainable design, rating the 'whole home' as a complete package using a 1 to 6 star rating system to communicate the overall sustainability performance of a new home.

11.21 Since April 2008, there has been a requirement for all new social housing to be built to a minimum of Level 3. The Code is still voluntary for privately built housing, although Building Regulations have required all new homes to reach the energy standards of Level 3 since 2010.

11.22 The Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) is a commonly used environmental certification scheme in the UK. For non-residential developments we encourage the use of the BREEAM standards.

11.23 Of the ten major applications determined during 2011/12, four were assessed under the CSH/BREEAM schemes.

Noise and tranquillity

11.24 The New Town generally separates housing and other noise-sensitive uses (such as schools and community facilities) from noise generating uses such as transport corridors and industry, thereby helping to limit noise disturbance.

11.25 Stevenage is however affected by some aircraft noise generated by operations at London Luton Airport. The Borough lies on flightpaths to and from the airport, most frequently experiencing inbound flights which broadly cross the centre of the town from east to west.

11.26 The airport's [annual monitoring reports](#) contain detailed analysis of noise issues. This includes analysis of noise contours, which detail the areas that are subject to certain levels of impact. The annual report explains that:

Since 1989, the preferred measure of aircraft noise has been the A-weighted equivalent noise level, Leq. This indicator takes account of all the noise energy that occurs over a particular time period and thus takes account of all the aircraft movements, both departures and arrivals, that occurred in that period.

In the UK, the noise impact of an airport is primarily described in terms of the LAeq averaged over the 16 hour period from 0700 – 2300 for an average day between the 16th June and 15th September. In addition, London Luton Airport also produces contours for the 8 hour night period between 2300 and 0700 for an average summer night in terms of the LAeq, 8h indicator.

The daytime contours show the LAeq, 16h values in 3 dB(A) steps from 57 dB(A) to 72 dB(A). The night contours show the LAeq, 8h values also in 3 dB(A) starting at 48 dB(A). These values relate to guidance provided in Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 – Planning & Noise.

Year on year changes in the noise impact are dependent on changes in the number and type of aircraft that used the airport and also the departure routes flown. In addition, changes in the size and shape of the contours can also depend on differences in the runway usage which in turn depends on the relative proportion of westerly and easterly modes of operation, known as the modal split, which is determined by the prevailing wind direction.

11.27 The latest monitoring report shows that the daytime contours stop some way short of the the Borough boundary. The 48dB nighttime contour did intrude into our administrative area (Figure 33).

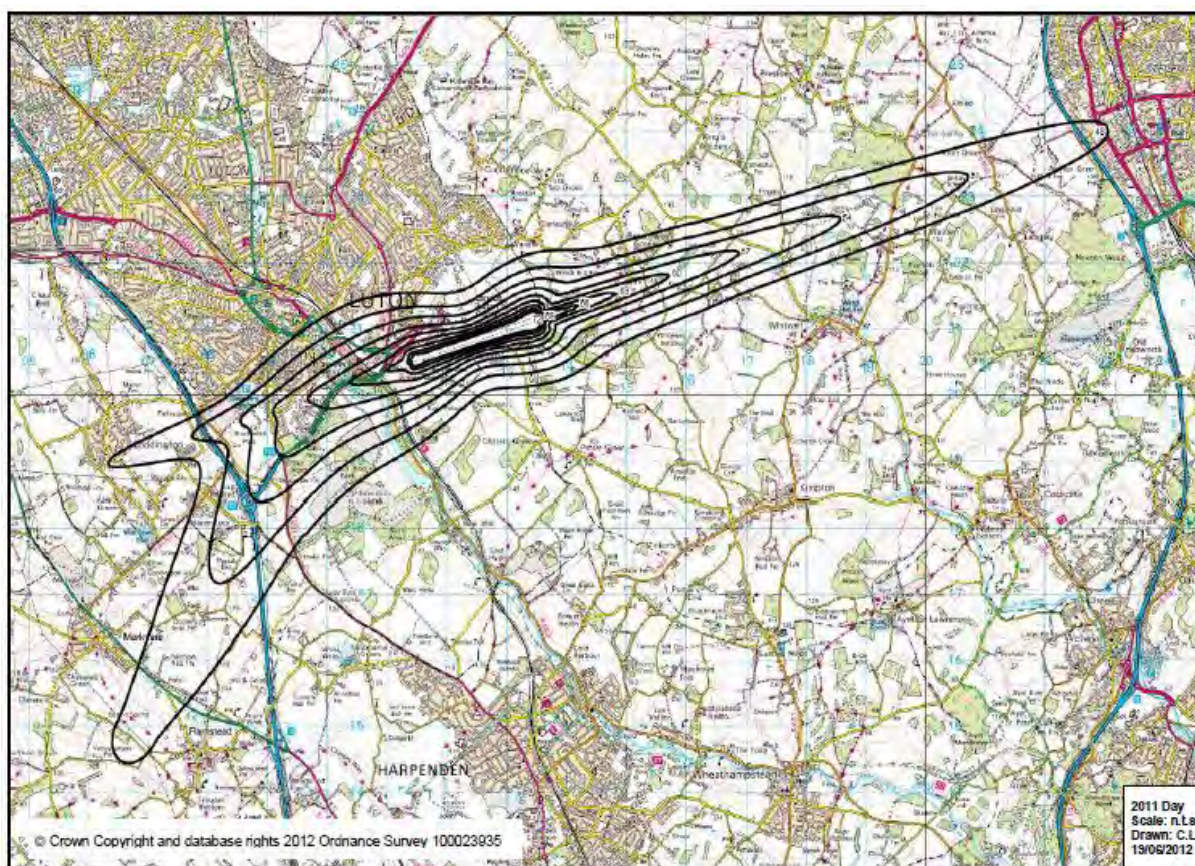


Figure 33 Annual Night Noise Contours (Data source: London Luton Airport, Annual Monitoring Report, 2011)

11.28 Presently, only one residential address point within the Borough ~ the Gypsy and Traveller site at Dyes Lane ~ falls within the area affected.

| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Daytime contours ($\geq 57\text{dB(A)}$) | - | - | - | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Night contours ($\geq 48\text{dB(A)}$) | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Table 29 Residential address points affected by noise from London Luton Airport (Data source: London Luton Airport, Annual Monitoring Reports)

11.29 The airport's annual monitoring reports also contain data on complaints. The number of complaints arising from Stevenage since 2005 are shown in the table below. This information should be treated with some caution as they may not relate solely to noise issues. However, it provides a useful context.

11.30 The number of events eliciting a complaint has fallen over the period shown.

| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Complaints | 21 | 9 | 13 | 7 | 15 | 10 |
| Events eliciting a complaint | 14 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Complainants | 15 | 8 | 13 | 7 | 15 | 8 |

Table 30 Complaints to London Luton Airport from addresses in Stevenage (Data source: London Luton Airport, Annual Monitoring Reports)

11.31 There are plans to increase capacity at the airport within the limits of the existing single runway. There have historically been proposals to make changes to flight paths which could also affect noise-sensitive uses in Stevenage.

11.32 Future decisions relating to the role and development of London Luton Airport lie outside the direct control of the Borough Council and the plan to which this scoping report relates.

11.33 However, spatial decisions made through the plan will need to consider this issue, particularly where this could lead to noise-sensitive uses being located in areas affected by aircraft noise. Decisions relating to the land within the Borough boundary to the west of the A1(M) are most likely to be affected.

11.34 There is no consistently collected dataset which can be used to establish a baseline with regards light pollution. The significant majority of the Borough is urbanised and, as such, there is an inevitable degree of 'skyglow' arising from the concentration of buildings and streetlighting⁽²¹⁾.

11.35 Qualitative analysis of recent development activity, such as the new football academy on Broadhall Way, shows that an evidence-based approach has been taken and existing policies have helped limit light levels to those required for operational purposes.

Data gaps

11.36 The following gaps have been identified in the baseline data:

- Townscape datasets;
- Monitoring of light pollution.

Key issues

11.37 Box 7 presents the key issues for the landscape theme in Stevenage.

21 The latter of which is a highway, rather than a planning, matter and outside the direct control of this plan

Box 7: Key issues for landscape

- Although direct impacts are unlikely, increased development could increase recreational pressure on the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- The amount of protected Green Belt land in Stevenage has decreased by 30% in the last decade, though this needs to be viewed in a broader context;
- Plans and policies need to ensure the continued protection of the most important structural green spaces within the urban area;
- Key elements of urban character are protected by Conservation Areas and Listed Building designations and should be preserved and enhanced;
- New development should strive for the highest levels of design quality;
- Choices made through the plan should aim to limit the amount of new development exposed to excess levels of noise.
- Ensure that policies or proposals do not allow for excessive levels of light pollution to the detriment of residential amenity.



12 . Social Inclusiveness

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

12 Social Inclusiveness



Figure 34 Affordable homes are a key output to improve social inclusiveness

Summary of policy and plan review

12.1 This topic looks at a range of issues including housing, deprivation and the accessibility of services.

12.2 The relevant plans and policies all place a strong emphasis on providing sufficient homes to meet local needs and to ensure that an appropriate range of housing types, tenures and sizes are provided to meet the needs of the whole community.

12.3 Policies advocate siting development, particularly where it is large in scale, in the most accessible locations to reduce the need to travel and allow linked trips to shops, facilities and places of work.

12.4 Given the nature of this topic, the baseline data available is varied and wide-ranging. This section reviews some of the key information and trends.

Housing

12.5 Despite recent falls in national house prices, the cost of buying a home remains a major issue in Stevenage. As figure 36 shows, although housing affordability has fluctuated over the past decade the ratio between average wages and house prices is now broadly similar to the ratio in the period 2002/03.

12.6 The house price/income ratio illustrates how many times more the home costs compared to the median wage. Based on an average semi detached home of £232,900, a purchaser would need to find 8.4 times the median yearly wage to be able to afford this.

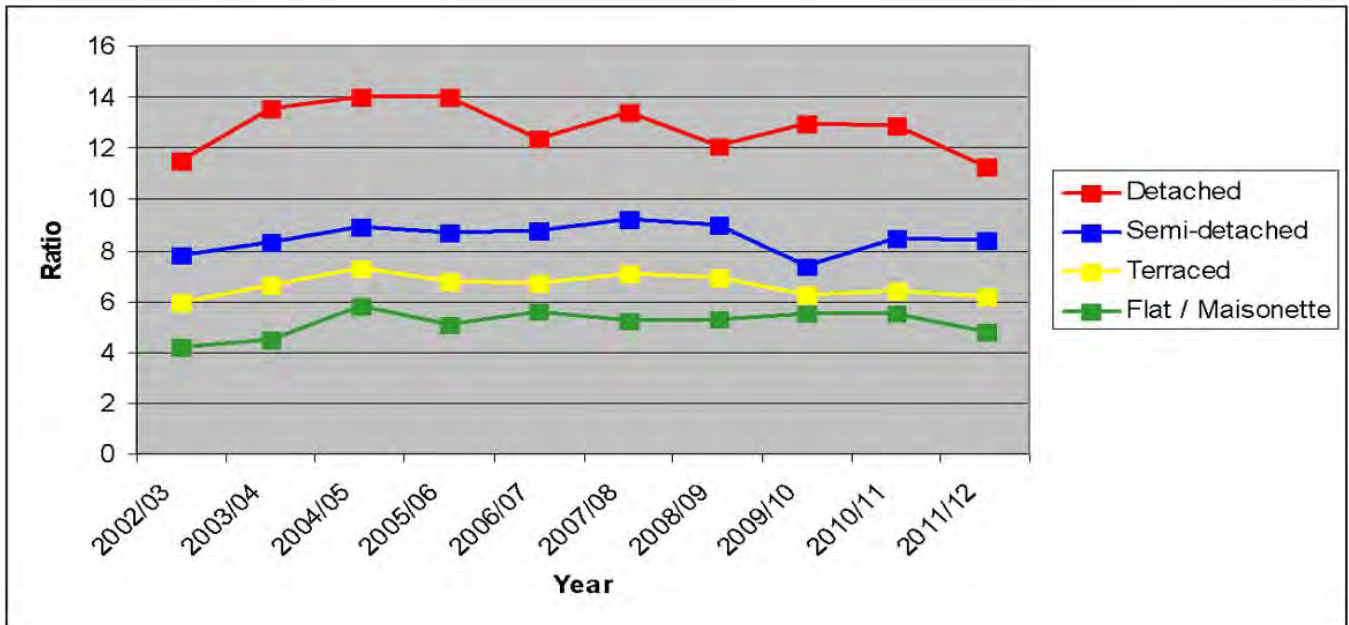


Figure 35 House price/income ratio by property type (Data source: Hertfordshire County Council & ONS)

12.7 This is partly an issue of supply. In the decade to April 2012, 2,453 new homes were built in the Borough. Just over 1,000 of these were affordable housing completions⁽²²⁾. However, these have been almost completely negated by the sale of an equivalent number of former social housing stock through the Right to Buy scheme.

12.8 Over the same period, the housing waiting list has more than trebled. As of 1 April 2012 there were 7,306 households waiting for accommodation. This can be attributed in part to the introduction of open waiting lists in 2003 which meant that UK residents could apply to go on any authority's waiting list.

12.9 These figures demonstrate the acute levels of housing need in the Borough. The pressure on housing services may increase in the future as the proposed introduction of a benefit cap along with changes in tenure rules could see people moving away from areas where rental accommodation is more expensive (such as London) into Hertfordshire.

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Housing completions | 180 | 112 | 37 | 168 | 128 | 353 | 386 | 368 | 233 | 300 | 190 |
| Affordable housing completions | 42 | 4 | 0 | 33 | 42 | 190 | 201 | 145 | 99 | 164 | 44 |
| Right-to-buy sales | 265 | 291 | 224 | 114 | 69 | 64 | 37 | 9 | 12 | 13 | 9 |

22 With definition from PPS3/NPPF

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Households on housing waiting list | 2,283 | 2,658 | 2,820 | 3,078 | 3,907 | 4,099 | 4,939 | 5,822 | 6,273 | 6,957 | 7,306 |

Table 31 Housing statistics 2002-2011 (Data source: SBC)



Figure 36 Affordable homes at Hepworth Court and Cotney Croft

12.10 However, examining trends in housing is not just limited to the issue of affordable homes provided by Councils or Registered Social Landlords. The review of plans and policies is clear that we should be planning for all sectors of the housing market ~ including for those that can afford to buy their own home on the housing market. This leads to the creation of balanced communities.

12.11 Evidence collected for our first draft Core Strategy showed that there are significant imbalances in our housing stock⁽²³⁾. The New Town was built to attract working families to the town. This is reflected in the significant amount of three-bed homes. The 2011 Census showed only seven authorities in England had a greater share of terraced homes than Stevenage.

12.12 There is a consequential shortage of both small units and large family homes in the town. The latter probably account for fewer than 10% of the total stock with only 1% in the highest Council Tax bands.



Figure 37 The Development Corporation focused on providing homes for working families

23 Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2008

12.13 Over the last five years, around 70% of housing completions have been one- and two-bed flats, making a positive contribution. However, new homes represent only a very small proportion of the housing stock ~ increasing it by around 0.5% per year on average ~ so progress in diversifying the stock will be a long-term measure.

12.14 The Housing Act (2004) requires local authorities to consider gypsy and traveller sites as part of their housing needs assessments. It is acknowledged that, while some gypsy and travellers have an actively itinerant lifestyle with a need for transit sites that meet their social and working patterns, these traditional patterns are changing and the community is generally becoming more settled. Stevenage Borough Council currently has 17 authorised pitches located at the Dyes Lane site, west of the A1(M).

12.15 Numbers for households registered as homeless have decreased significantly in the last five years, as Table 32 shows. Numbers of households recorded as homeless have decreased by 40% and numbers of households in temporary accommodation have decreased by almost 150%. This is, in part, connected to an increase in the number of interventions undertaken by agencies such as Stevenage Borough Council, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Herts Young Homeless Group to prevent evictions or provide alternative accommodation.

| | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of homeless households ⁽²⁴⁾ | 67 | 45 | 41 | 40 | 48 |
| Number of households in temporary accommodation | 143 | 96 | 54 | 46 | 59 |

Table 32 Homelessness in Stevenage (Data source: SBC)

Deprivation

12.16 Stevenage is the most deprived district in Hertfordshire. This is a statement that needs to be viewed relatively as Hertfordshire is itself one of the least deprived counties in the country.

12.17 The Government produces an Index of Multiple Deprivation every three years. This includes a range of measures for each Super Output Area (SOA) in the country⁽²⁵⁾. The most recent release was in 2010. When compared with national data, the Stevenage average ranks 158 of 326 local authorities, with 1 being the most deprived authority. However, there are some pockets of significant deprivation within the Borough.

12.18 One SOA in Stevenage is among the 20% most deprived in the country. This covers the town centre and parts of Bedwell including Silam Road and Cutty's Lane. The map below shows the overall level of deprivation recorded by the IMD in relation to the County. Stevenage has twice as many SOAs in the most-deprived quartile than might be expected if deprivation were experienced evenly across the county.

24 for whom SBC has accepted a homelessness duty

25 Super Output Areas are a statistical creation used to analyse small-area data on a consistent basis. They are made of subdivisions of electoral wards



Figure 38 The most deprived area of the Borough is within Bedwell; the least deprived in Chells Manor

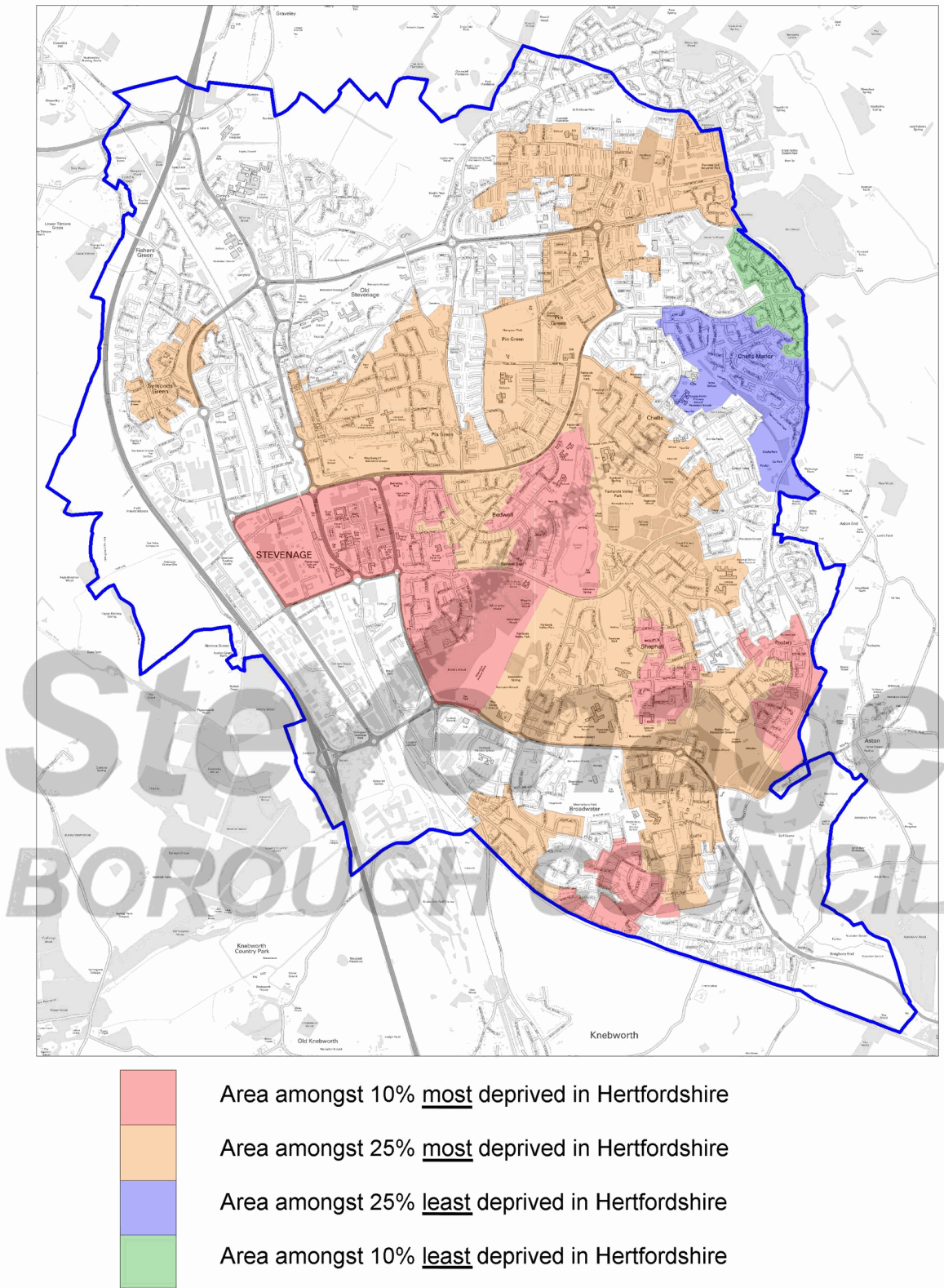
12.19 Analysis over time shows that Stevenage's performance in the IMD has been sliding. An improving area would generally expect to achieve higher (i.e. Less deprived) rankings. The table below shows the relative ranking of key Super Output Areas in Stevenage in 2004, 2007 and 2010.

12.20 The least deprived SOA in Stevenage ranked higher in 2010 than 2004, meaning it was relatively less deprived. However, all the other markers were ranked lower, indicating relatively higher levels of deprivation. It is important to note that the IMD is relative meaning that areas could achieve lower rankings than previously even if there has been an overall improvement in their score⁽²⁶⁾.

| | 2004 | 2007 | 2010 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Most deprived SOA in Stevenage | 15 | 12 | 13 |
| Lower quartile SOA in Stevenage | 45 | 43 | 41 |
| Median SOA in Stevenage | 55 | 50 | 52 |
| Upper quartile SOA in Stevenage | 66 | 64 | 61 |
| Least deprived SOA in Stevenage | 97 | 96 | 99 |

Table 33 National ranking (percentile) of Super Output Areas in Stevenage (Data source: IMD 2010)

26 This would occur if other areas improved their scores at a faster rate



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Figure 39 Areas of high and low deprivation in Stevenage (Data source: IMD, 2010)

Accessibility

12.21 Accessibility examines the ease with which people can get to important services such as health and education, shops and public transport.

12.22 Stevenage is a compact town and Borough. The idea of community neighbourhoods was central to the planning of the New Town. The original masterplan showed essential facilities such as shops, churches, pubs and community centres provided within half a mile of all homes. This is reflected in the network of large and small centres found across the town.

12.23 In the last five years, more than 80% of new homes have been built within 30 minutes public transport time of six key facilities:

- Hospital, GP surgery, primary school, secondary school, area of employment; and major retail centre.

| | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Hospital | 100% | 82% | 88% | 91% | 93% |
| GP surgery | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Primary school | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Secondary school | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Area of employment | 98% | 99% | 100% | 99% | 99% |
| Major retail centre | 84% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| All of the above | 82% | 82% | 88% | 90% | 93% |

Table 34 Percentage of net dwelling completions within 30 minutes public transport travel time of... (Data source: travelinesoutheast.org.uk)

12.24 Those homes that fail to meet the standard most frequently do so because they are outside the catchment time set for the Lister Hospital. Although it is very well served by local bus connections, this facility is located at the very north-western edge of the town

12.25 Stevenage is well serviced by public transport. The train station is sited to the west of the town centre. It lies on the East Coast Mainline. There are long-distance rail services between London and the north. Commuter services connect the town to Kings Cross, Cambridge and Peterborough. There are also services to London Moorgate and Hertford.

12.26 There is an extensive commercial bus network, shown in the map on the following page. Most homes are within 400 metres of a bus stop. It is a short walk from the bus station to the train station.



Figure 40 A segregated cycle and pedestrian network was a key feature of the New Town; the central bus station.

12.27 However, there are areas of relatively poor connectivity. Despite being the town's main employment area, Gunnels Wood is only served sparingly (routes shown blue on Figure 41).

12.28 93% of residential address points in the Borough are within 400m of a bus stop served by a least one route during the morning peak (0700-0900)⁽²⁷⁾. The coverage is shown by Figure 42. The majority of the unserved areas with the Borough relate to undeveloped land to the west, north and south-east of the town as well as Fairlands Valley Park in its centre. There are, however, some concentrations of existing residents outside this accessibility standard notably in the west of Chells and the eastern half of the Chancellors Road development.

12.29 As well as extensive public transport provision, the town is served by a comprehensive cycle and pedestrian network which was integrated into the construction of the New Town.

27 Measured as points within 300m straight line distance

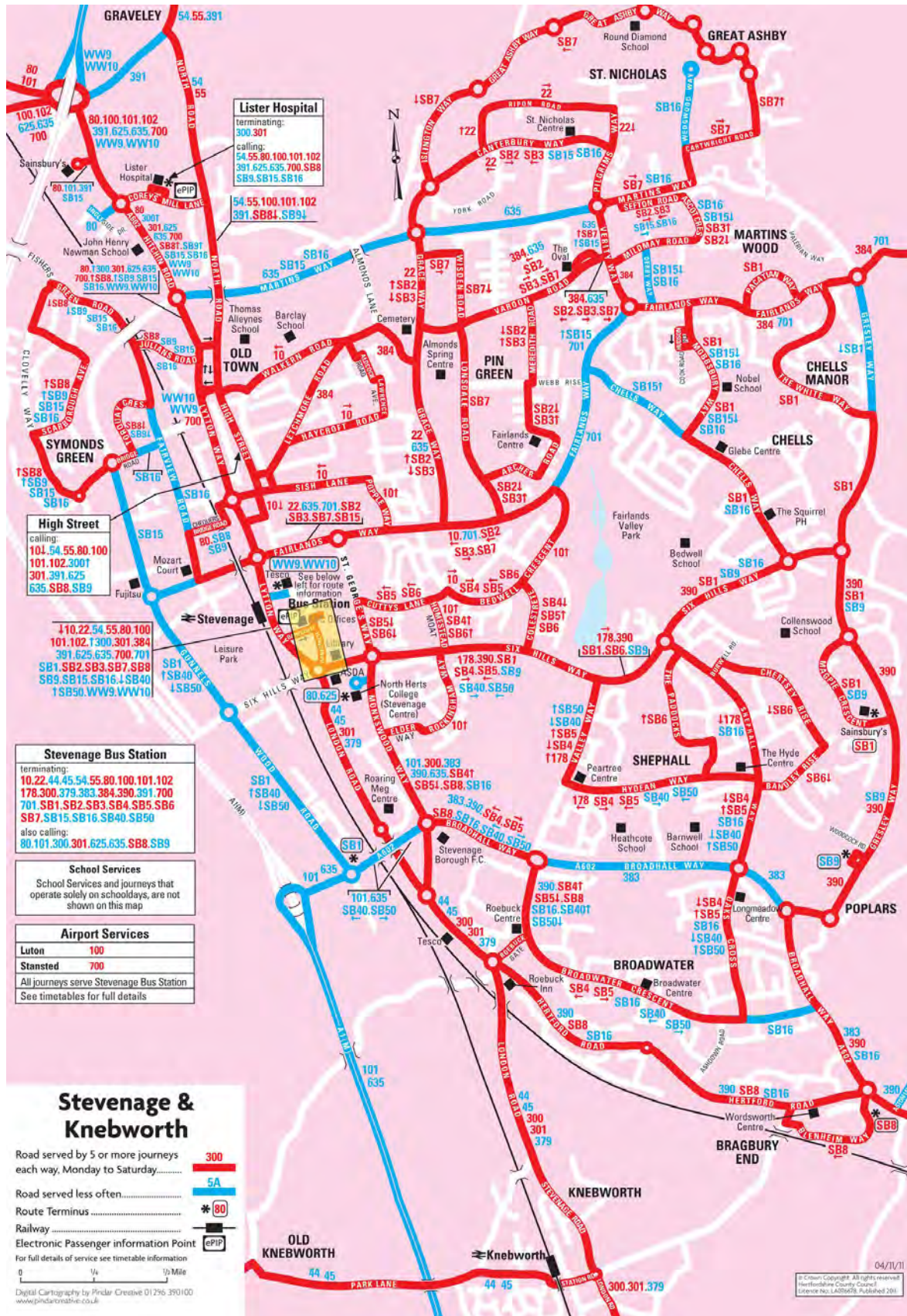


Figure 41 Stevenage bus map (Data source: Intalink)

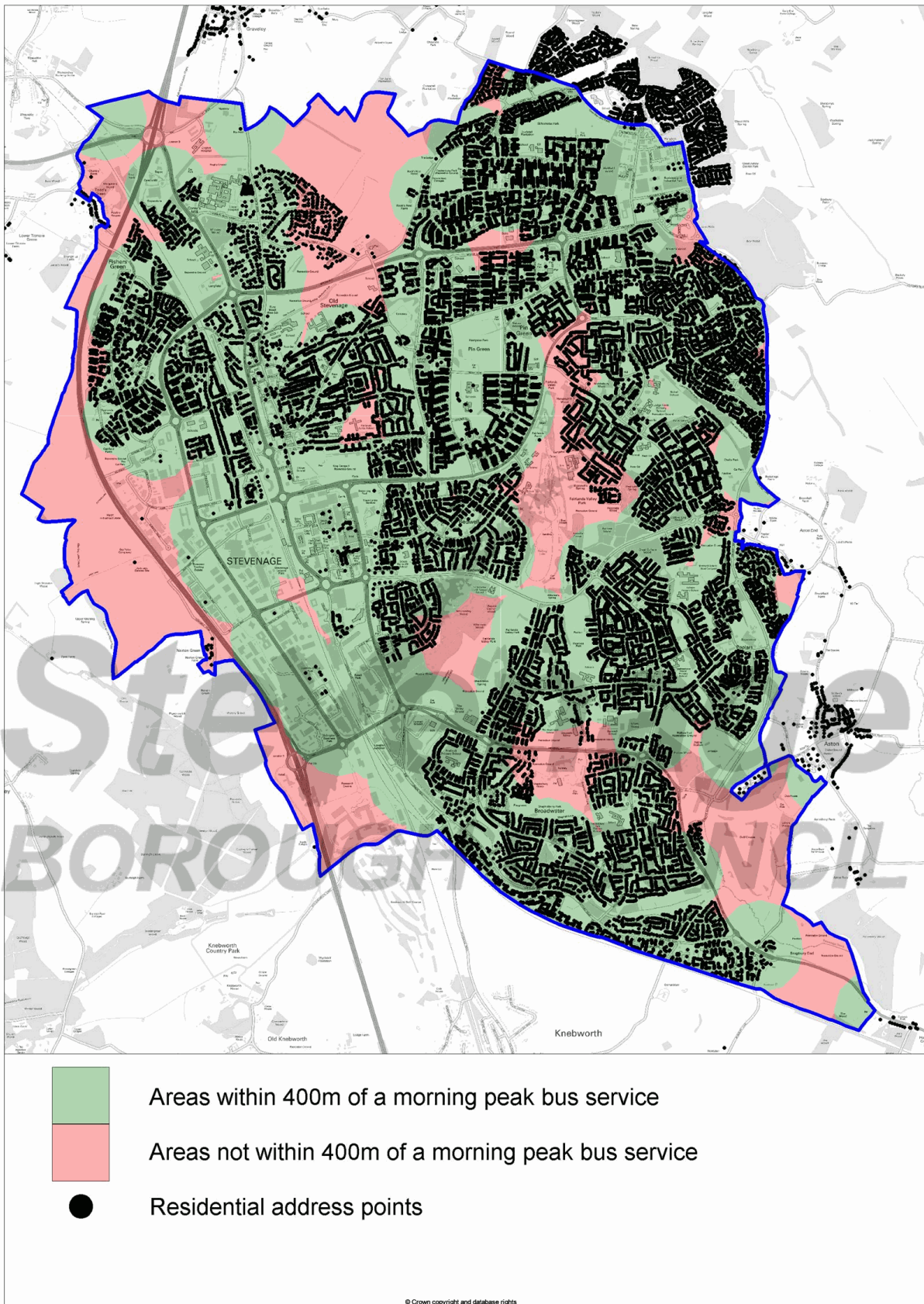


Figure 42 Areas with access to a bus service in the AM peak (Data source: SBC)

12.30 However, these levels of provision do not necessarily translate into patronage or usage. Data from the Census shows a steady decline in journeys to work by foot, bike and bus in favour of the private car. Results from the 2011 Census are due to be released later in 2013.

| | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2009* |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Train | 3% | 6% | 6% | 5% | 9% |
| Bus | 21% | 16% | 8% | 5% | 4% |
| Car | 46% | 56% | 66% | 69% | 74% |
| Cycle | 7% | 5% | 4% | 3% | 2% |
| Walk | 15% | 12% | 10% | 9% | 7% |
| Other / at home | 7% | 6% | 6% | 10% | 5% |

Data source: Census data (c) copyright except * Hertfordshire County Council

Table 35 Percentage of journeys to work by mode

Data gaps

12.31 The following gap has been identified in the baseline data:

- Patronage of public transport.

Key issues

12.32 Box 8 presents the key issues for the social inclusiveness theme in Stevenage.

Box 8: Key issues for social inclusiveness

- The affordability of housing is a key issue. The plan should seek to address acute levels of housing need and deliver affordable housing at a rate that is more than sufficient to replace Right-To-Buy losses over the long-term;
- There is a pressing need to diversify housing stock in both the private and social sectors ~ in particular through the provision of smaller (1- and 2-bed) and larger (4+ bed) homes to dilute the concentration of three-bed terraces which form the legacy of the Development Corporation;
- Tackle areas of significant deprivation, particularly around the Town Centre and parts of Bedwell which feature among the most deprived areas of the country;
- Ensure that new development has good accessibility to services thereby reducing the need to travel;
- Maintain and extend the existing coverage of the public transport, pedestrian and cycle networks to provide connections to new development;
- A new plan should encourage use of alternate modes of transport to the private car and attempt to arrest and then reverse decades of decline.



13 . Economic Development

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

13 Economic Development



Figure 43 Gunnels Wood is the primary employment area in Stevenage

Summary of policy and plan review

13.1 Relevant plans, programmes and policies aim to achieve strong, sustainable and balanced growth that is more evenly shared across the country and between industries.

13.2 They seek to build prosperous communities by improving the economic performance of cities, towns, regions, sub-regions and local areas, both urban and rural; reducing the gap in economic growth rates between areas; promoting regeneration; and tackling deprivation.

13.3 Reducing deprivation (see also Chapter 12) should ultimately raise educational attainment, facilitate life-long learning and provide tomorrow's workforce with the appropriate type and range of skills. These ambitions are all strongly advocated in other plans, policies and programmes.

13.4 The Stevenage Regeneration Strategy seeks to:

- Physically regenerate the town & neighbourhoods;
- Encourage growth in the area;
- Increase inward investment, business development & retention;
- Facilitate improved education and skills; and
- Improve image and place marketing.

Baseline data

13.5 This section sets out a summary of the baseline data for education, skills and economic development in Stevenage. The SEA/SA process will utilise the detailed information included in this document alongside other information as it becomes available.

Education and skills

13.6 There are 22 primary and 7 secondary schools in the Stevenage area. The latest data on educational attainment is shown in the table below. It can be seen that results in Stevenage are lower than those achieved elsewhere within the county.

| | 5+ A* to C grades | 5+ A* to C grades incl. English and maths | 5+ A* to G grades | 5+ A* to G grades incl. English and maths |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| Broxbourne | 91.0 | 60.7 | 98.2 | 97.4 |
| Dacorum | 80.5 | 60.1 | 95.9 | 95.3 |
| East Hertfordshire | 87.5 | 70.5 | 97.2 | 96.7 |
| Hertsmere | 84.1 | 65.5 | 97.0 | 96.5 |
| North Hertfordshire | 78.6 | 67.0 | 97.7 | 96.6 |
| St Albans | 86.3 | 71.3 | 97.1 | 96.2 |
| Stevenage | 76.6 | 49.1 | 94.1 | 93.1 |
| Three Rivers | 87.3 | 78.3 | 96.4 | 95.8 |
| Watford | 92.2 | 79.7 | 99.3 | 97.2 |
| Welwyn Hatfield | 88.0 | 56.8 | 96.2 | 95.2 |
| Data source: Department for Education | | | | |

Table 36 GCSE and equivalent results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 2011/12

13.7 However, qualification levels amongst working age residents have generally been rising, as shown in the table below. In 2011, the proportion of people qualified to at least each NVQ Level was higher than in 2005. Data for Hertfordshire shows that Stevenage performs below average at these levels too.

| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| NVQ Level 1 | 81 | 78 | 85 | 83 | 81 | 88 | 84 |
| NVQ Level 2 | 64 | 54 | 64 | 67 | 65 | 67 | 69 |
| NVQ Level 3 | 46 | 36 | 44 | 48 | 49 | 49 | 52 |

| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| NVQ Level 4 | 22 | 19 | 20 | 22 | 23 | 30 | 36 |

Table 37 % of Stevenage working age residents qualified to at least... (Data source: ONS)

13.8 Local companies have experienced problems recruiting local people with the necessary skills, particularly as there appears to be a move towards high tech industry. Data (from the ONS) shows that 52% of our resident workforce are qualified to NVQ Level 3 or above. This is less than the Hertfordshire figure of 57%. However, trend data shows that local residents have increased their higher level qualifications at a faster rate than for the county as a whole. The number of Stevenage residents with NVQ Level 3 or above has increased by 40% in the last five years, compared with a 17% a Hertfordshire average.

Economic development

Unemployment

13.9 Stevenage has a historically strong economy supporting a number of worldwide businesses. There is a considerable amount of work being done at the moment to encourage innovation, new businesses and support for existing ones.

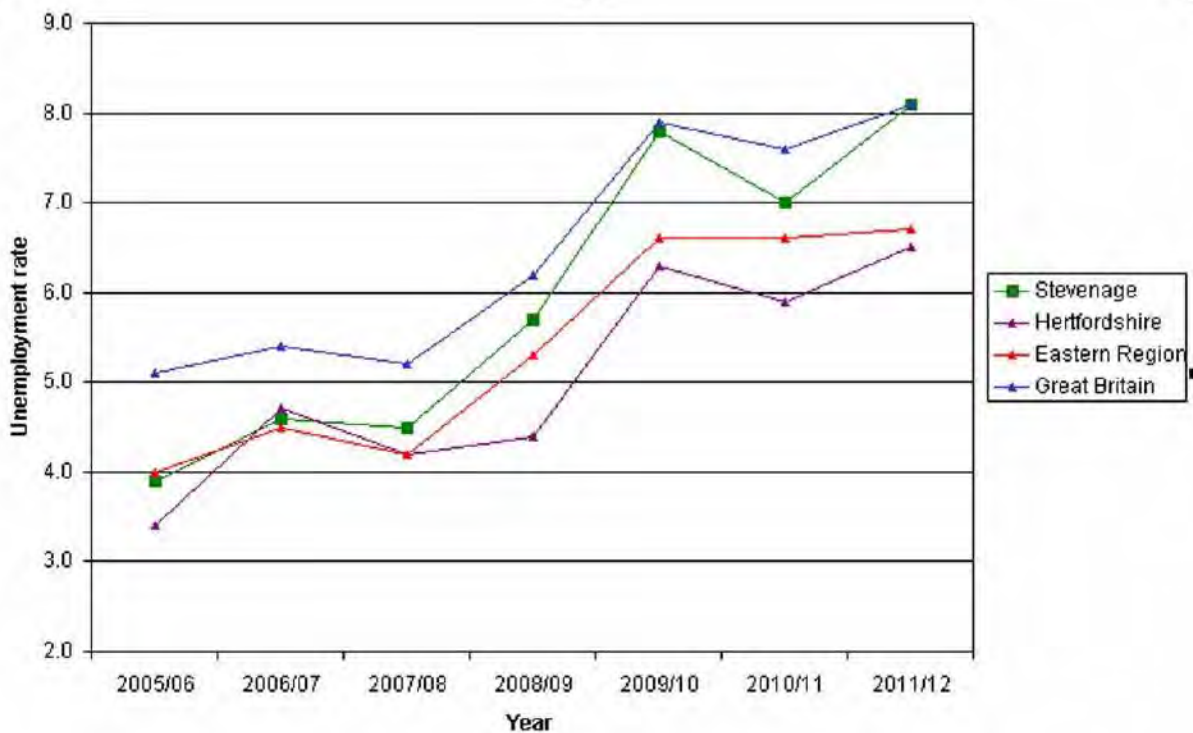


Figure 44 Model-based unemployment rates since 2004 (Data source: ONS)

13.10 The unemployment rate for Stevenage is now at its highest level for many years at 8.1%. As Figure 44 shows, rates of unemployment in Stevenage have generally been consistently higher than the Hertfordshire and regional average but lower than the national average. Figure 44 also shows that local rates have fluctuated in-line with the national average.

13.11 The claimant count data for Stevenage shows that there are currently 4.0% claimants, a figure higher than across Hertfordshire as a whole at 2.5%. Trend data shows that the claimant count rate is broadly comparable with the national average at 3.8%. The monthly rate has risen substantially in recent years and this is thought to reflect current economic conditions.

13.12 By the end of 2012, 1.2% of all Stevenage claimants have been unemployed for more than a year. This figure is higher than the regional (0.8%) and national totals (1.1%).

Jobs

13.13 Figure 45 illustrates the trend data for job density in Stevenage. This data shows the number of jobs in Stevenage done by local residents and people who commute into the area. The job density is the number of jobs per resident aged 16-64. The jobs density has fluctuated over the past ten years although the number of jobs available has increased by more than 6,000. Compared with the rest of Hertfordshire, Stevenage rates third in the number of jobs per resident behind Watford and Welwyn Hatfield.

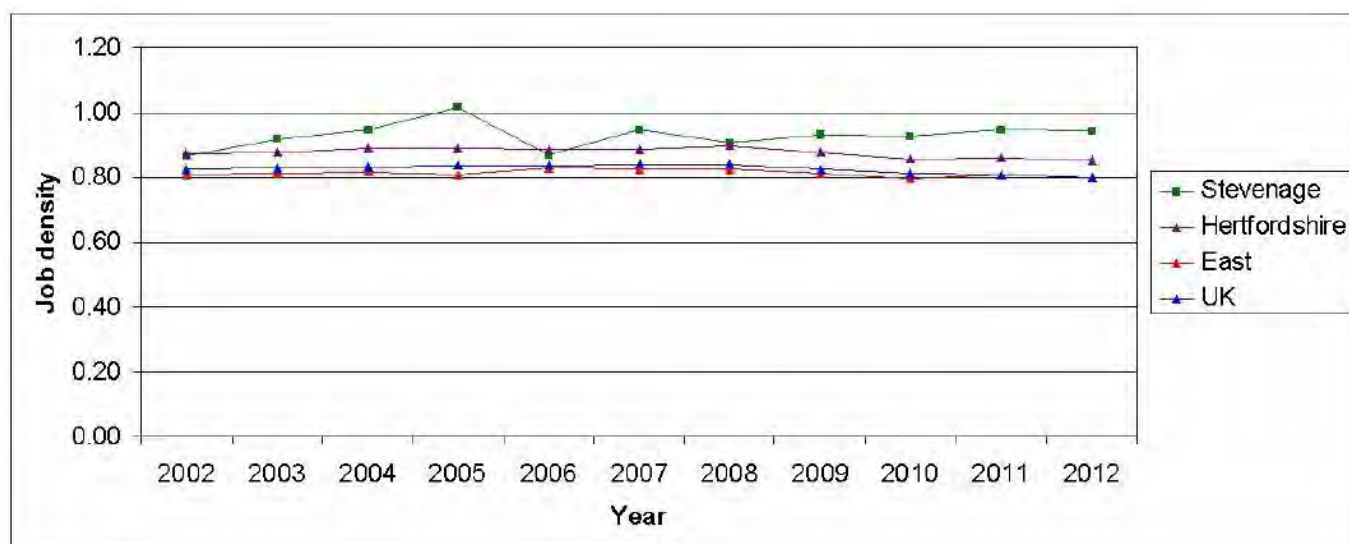


Figure 45 Job density (Data source: ONS)

13.14 New business start-ups accounted for 10.2% of active enterprises in the period 2011/12, slightly below the county equivalent as Table 38 shows.

| | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Stevenage - % of new business start-ups | 16.3% | 15.6% | 10.4% | 9.7% | 10.2% |
| Hertfordshire - % of new business start-ups | 12.7% | 12.6% | 10.4% | 10.6% | 11.5% |
| Stevenage - net gain/loss | 160 | 170 | -145 | -50 | -50 |

| | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Hertfordshire - net gain/loss | 1460 | 340 | -1630 | 90 | 925 |

Table 38 Number of new business start-ups (Data source: ONS)

13.15 Most local residents are currently employed in professional occupations (20.4%), closely followed by managers and senior officials (15.1%), skilled trades(12.5%) and caring. Leisure and other service occupations (12.5%).

In-commuting/out-commuting

13.16 Data from the 2001 census shows that 42% of local residents commute to other areas for work and 48% of the local workforce commute into Stevenage. This data will be updated from the 2011 census (due for publication in 2013) and we will assess trends in this data at that stage.

Earnings

13.17 In 2011/12 the median weekly earnings of people working in Stevenage (regardless of where they live) was £575.80, or £29,941.60 per year. This is significantly above the figures reported for Hertfordshire and the wider area and placed Stevenage second, behind Three Rivers (£593.80 per week or £30,878 p.a) for highest median earnings by workplace of the Hertfordshire local authorities.

13.18 Notwithstanding this, those who live in the Borough tend to be paid a lower average salary than those who work here. Stevenage residents have the lowest median wage of all of the other Hertfordshire authorities. The median weekly wage for a resident of Stevenage in 2011/12 was £531.20, or £27,622.40 a year (92% of the workforce median wage). In this period, Stevenage was the only local authority in Hertfordshire where resident earnings were less than the workplace earnings. This has been an ongoing trend in Stevenage for the past ten years.

13.19 The difference in earnings between those who work in Stevenage and those who live in Stevenage indicates that a larger proportion of higher paid positions in the town are occupied by people who commute in from elsewhere.

Retail

13.20 Stevenage's current retailing is a combination of the Old Town, out of centre retailing and Stevenage town centre consisting of comparison and convenience retailing.

13.21 Table 39 illustrates the current baseline for retail units in the town centre and the Old Town. Data shows that the percentage of vacant floorspace is much lower than the national average of 14.3%. These areas are the focus for A1 retailing in Stevenage as they are at the top of the retail hierarchy. Other retail destinations include the neighbourhood centres and retail parks although these areas offer a type of retail consistent with their location and function. The neighbourhood centres offer local shopping needs through small supermarkets, chemists and take-aways. The retail parks primarily offer bulky goods retailing.

| Area | Total no. of retail units | No. of vacant units | % of vacant floorspace |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Town centre | 216 | 27 | 6.3% |
| Old Town | 144 | 1 | 0.2% |

Table 39 Retail vacancies January 2013 (Data source: SBC)

13.22 Trend data shows that the two primary retail centres have performed consistently well against national averages. However, whilst the town centre shows signs of vitality and viability, there are serious shortcomings in the environmental quality of the centre and the limited nature of the retail offer. There has been limited growth in the total quantity of units available and existing units do not meet current retail needs.

13.23 Larger retail centres are generally experiencing growth with demand for development activity whilst the smaller centres serve a more localised function without the same demand for development opportunity. The Stevenage Town Centre Retail Assessment demonstrates that in retail terms Stevenage has fallen significantly behind other Hertfordshire centres such as Watford. It is therefore imperative that Stevenage and its town centre be enhanced to be in parallel to meet the requirements of the existing and growing population.

Data gaps

13.24 The following gaps have been identified in the baseline data:

- Further detail on local occupations;
- Further data on the skills gap;
- Up to date commuting for work data;
- Townscape analysis.

Key issues

- Seek to improve educational attainment in schools and sustain improvements in qualification levels amongst the working population.
- The sustainability of any future housing growth in Stevenage will develop strong links with the provision of employment. Employment levels will need to support the expected population growth whilst also having consideration level of skill likely to be required.
- There is a need to achieve a closer match between the demand and supply of labour by increasing the supply of affordable housing and introducing training and education measures that will improve local access.
- An urban renaissance is required that respects the New Town heritage status.
- Stevenage town centre and retail provision will need to significantly improve to maximise the regeneration of the town.
- Stevenage must be firmly established as a focal point for economic growth between London and Cambridge, by supporting key areas of economic development such as biotechnology and research and development.
- An adequate supply of high quality business land and premises that meet the needs of the town's diverse economy will need to be provided.



14 . Developing SEA/SA Objectives

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

14 Developing SEA/SA Objectives

Developing objectives

14.1 Chapters 4 to 13 highlight a number of issues within the current baseline. This has led to the formulation of a number of objectives for future iterations of the SEA/SA process. These objectives are intended to strengthen positive trends. They are also intended to enable the local plan process to provide further support to themes which negatively impact the local baseline.

Objective 1

To protect and enhance biodiversity in all areas and maintain and restore the full range of habitats and species to viable levels.

14.2 This objective is intended to protect all areas which promote biodiversity. Designated sites must be protected through policy at the local level but the importance of non-designated sites must also be considered. This may be of particular concern where areas for growth are identified.

Objective 2

To protect and enhance human health & wellbeing, meeting the needs of existing residents and encourage local population growth.

14.3 This objective is intended to ensure that the existing and growing population reach their full potential. Reducing crime, improving levels of physical activity and reducing areas of health concern are key issues to be achieved via this objective. Baseline data shows that an ageing population coupled with high levels of out-migration will require strategic objectives to meet the needs of local residents. The continued growth of the local population will further improve the sustainability of the town by providing a balance between population, homes and jobs.

Objective 3

To protect and enhance water quality, encourage water conservation and reduce flood risk.

14.4 This objective is intended to reduce pressure on local water resources and reduce flood risk where possible. Higher than average water consumption had led to the local aquifer being classified as over-abstracted. Policies should aim to encourage water conservation principles to increase local flows and improve water quality. The local plan process can also aim to reduce flood risk through the sequential testing of potential development sites.

Objective 4

To reduce land contamination and safeguard soil quality.

14.5 This objective is intended to ensure that the best quality agricultural land is retained for such use. Land contamination should be considered an issue where previously developed sites are identified for development.

Objective 5

To minimise waste and increase recycling.

14.6 This objective is intended to ensure that minimal household waste is transported for landfill with the maximum amount of waste sent for recycling. Local plan policies might achieve this through policies which require space for recycling facilities provided on new developments.

Objective 6

To maximise the quality of environmental conditions by limiting noise and air pollution, reducing greenhouse gas and carbon emissions and maximising the potential for renewable energy production.

14.7 This objective is intended to limit noise and air pollution from all sources and ensure that new developments do not negatively affect the monitored levels for nitrogen dioxide and PM10. Current data does not suggest that there are any relevant exceedences of the Air Quality Objectives in Stevenage and this objective seeks to maintain this trend. It is also intended to reduce energy consumption, and therefore carbon emissions, and improve access to renewable energy sources. This objective is closely linked to Objective 11.

Objective 7

To preserve and enhance heritage assets designated for their archaeological, architectural, artistic and/or historic interest and protect their settings.

14.8 This objective is intended to maintain the historic environment. Heritage assets are at risk from inappropriate development if sites and site allocations are not managed properly. The local plan process will be required to outline how Stevenage's heritage assets will be maintained.

Objective 8

To create places, spaces and buildings that work well, age well, look well and which enhance the diversity and distinctiveness of the local character and landscape.

14.9 This objective is intended to create places where people want to live, work and spend time. Buildings which are well designed and able to adapt to potential future needs should be encouraged through the local plan process.

Objective 9

To improve access to all services, taking into consideration inequalities relating to age, gender, disability, race and faith.

14.10 This objective is intended to ensure that all local residents can access all of the necessary services to provide an excellent quality of life. This might include healthcare, schools, community facilities, leisure facilities, open space, shops and employment services.

Objective 10

To address the causes of deprivation and ensure everyone has access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing.

14.11 This objective is intended to ensure that local people can afford to live locally. Affordability is a key issue and the local plan process will need to identify sufficient sites to deliver appropriate housing within appropriate timeframes.

Objective 11

To reduce the need to travel and increase the use of sustainable methods of transportation.

14.12 This objective is intended to reduce the need to travel, and therefore greenhouse gas emissions. Road transport is the main impact on air quality in Stevenage and this indicator seeks to ensure that these effects are further reduced through positive management of alternative methods of transport. This objective is also further linked to human health by promoting walking, cycling and other methods of transport.

Objective 12

To improve access to skills, knowledge and education to ensure that people can gain access to appropriate and satisfying work.

14.13 This objective is intended to balance local skills with local jobs. Ensuring working age residents have access to the necessary facilities to improve skills and education will improve the current imbalance. The local plan process will need to ensure that there is a suitable supply of land for employment and skills development.

Objective 13

To support and grow the local economy, increase investment in people, equipment, employment, infrastructure and other assets ensuring that economic and employment centres remain efficient and viable.

14.14 This objective is intended to ensure that a programme of regeneration for Stevenage is supported via the local plan process. The structure of the town centre and some of the neighbourhood centres will need to be moved through a process of renewal to ensure that investment is made at a suitable and the most appropriate location. This will be supported by local infrastructure provision which should also be supported through the local plan process. Main employment centres should also be highlighted as areas with further growth potential, capitalising on the prominent location of the town between London and Cambridge.

14.15 Table 40 illustrates the consistency between the proposed SEA/SA objectives.

| | 1 - Biodiversity | 2 - Health & population | 3 - Water | 4 - Soil | 5 - Waste & recycling | 6 - Environmental quality | 7 - Heritage | 8 - Good design | 9 - Access to services | 10 - Housing | 11 - Travel | 12 - Skills | 13 - Investment |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| ++ Probably compatible | / | + | ++ | ++ | + | ++ | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| + Potentially compatible | + | / | + | + | + | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | + |
| - No links | ++ | + | / | ++ | - | + | - | + | + | + | + | - | - |
| 1 To protect and enhance biodiversity in all areas and maintain and restore the full range of habitats and species to viable levels. | ++ | + | / | ++ | - | + | - | + | + | + | + | - | - |
| 2 To protect and enhance human health & wellbeing, meeting the needs of existing residents and encourage local population growth. | ++ | / | + | + | + | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | + |
| 3 To protect and enhance water quality, encourage water conservation and reduce flood risk. | ++ | + | / | ++ | - | + | - | + | + | + | + | - | - |
| 4 To reduce land contamination and safeguard soil quality. | ++ | + | ++ | / | ++ | - | - | + | + | + | + | - | + |
| 5 To minimise waste and increase recycling. | ++ | + | - | ++ | / | + | - | ++ | - | ++ | - | - | - |
| 6 To maximise the quality of environmental conditions by limiting noise and air pollution, reducing greenhouse gas and carbon emissions and maximising the potential for renewable energy production. | ++ | ++ | + | - | + | / | - | - | ++ | ++ | ++ | - | - |
| 7 To preserve and enhance areas and buildings designated for their historic and/or archaeological interest and protect their settings. | - | ++ | - | - | - | - | / | ++ | - | ++ | + | - | + |
| 8 To create places, spaces and buildings that work well, age well, look well and which enhance the diversity and distinctiveness of the local character and landscape. | + | ++ | + | - | ++ | - | ++ | / | + | + | - | - | - |
| 9 To improve access to all services, taking into consideration inequalities relating to age, gender, disability, race and faith. | - | ++ | + | - | - | ++ | - | + | / | ++ | ++ | ++ | + |
| 10 To address the causes of deprivation and ensure that everyone has access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing. | - | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | + | ++ | / | ++ | ++ | ++ |
| 11 To reduce the need to travel and increase the use of sustainable methods of transportation. | + | ++ | + | - | - | ++ | + | - | ++ | ++ | / | + | + |
| 12 To improve access to skills, knowledge and education to ensure that people can gain access to appropriate and satisfying work. | - | ++ | - | - | - | - | - | - | ++ | ++ | + | / | ++ |
| 13 To support and grow the local economy, increase investment in people, equipment, employment, infrastructure and other assets ensuring that economic and employment centres remain efficient and viable. | - | + | - | + | - | - | + | - | + | ++ | + | ++ | / |

Table 40 Consistency between objectives



15 . Next stages

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

15 Next stages

15.1 This chapter summarises the stages of, and approach to the SEA/SA process that will be carried out following consultation on this Scoping Report. This has been presented through the stages set out in Chapter 2. This section also illustrates how the SEA/SA process is interlinked with the DPD process.

Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects

15.2 This stage (and the following two stages) of the process falls in line with the production stages of the local plan process. This is the time when the detail of the plan is developed. The assessment of options (or alternatives) is an important requirement of the SEA Directive, which requires that the Environmental Report includes the following information about reasonable alternatives: “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information”.

15.3 An assessment of alternatives has already started with the first stage of the SA process. This is an iterative process as we consult on the plan during its preparation. As part of this process, a ‘do nothing’ option will be included. This is in order to demonstrate that the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme have been examined.

Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report

15.4 The preparation of the Environmental Report includes the assessment of all policy proposals within the local plan. Whilst assessment work has been undertaken in Stage B, the information that is prepared as part of the Environmental Report is generally more detailed.

15.5 In terms of the assessment methodology, detailed analysis of each policy of the local plan will be provided as they are developed. This introduces the application of Detailed Assessment Matrices. The purpose of Detailed Assessment Matrices are to provide an in-depth assessment of the different aspects of a particular policy to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive. We have started this process in the SA.

15.6 Detailed Assessment Matrices will include:

- A description of the predicted effect;
- The duration of the effect;
- The frequency of the effect;
- Whether the effect is temporary or permanent;
- The geographic significance;
- The magnitude of effect;
- The severity of significance; and
- Whether mitigation is required/possible to reduce the effect.

15.7 As required by the SEA Directive, cumulative, synergistic and indirect effects will also be identified and evaluated during the assessment. An explanation of these is as follows:

- Indirect effects are effects that are not a direct result of the plan, but occur away from the original effect or as a result of a complex pathway.
- Cumulative effects arise where several developments each have insignificant effects but together have a significant effect, or where several individual effects of the plan have a combined effect.
- Synergistic effects interact to produce a total effect greater than the sum of the individual effects.

15.8 The assessment of these effects will be presented in tabular format and show where the different effects arise when two or more draft policies operate together.

Environmental Report

15.9 The above process will lead to the preparation of a Draft Environmental Report. This version will not contain every last detail required by the SEA Directive. It will instead carry out a role as an internal document designed to provide sustainability feedback to the local plan makers during preparation.

15.10 The purpose of the Draft Environmental Report is to enable plan makers to take on board assessment findings, and proposed mitigation and monitoring whilst developing the plan. The combined presentation of these SEA/SA documents will form the Environmental Report.

Consultation of the Environmental Report

15.11 Once plan-makers have received and considered the Draft Environmental Report, any amendments which have been made to the local plan will then be re-appraised by the SEA process. The result of the appraisal at this stage in the process will be the finalised consultation version of the Environmental Report.

15.12 The Environmental Report will be written in a form suitable for public consultation and use by decision-makers. This version of the Environmental Report will be fully compliant with all aspects of the SEA Directive as set out in Annex 1 of the Directive. In line with the requirements of the SEA Directive, a Non-Technical Summary will be produced to accompany the finalised consultation version of the Environmental Report.

Stage D: Consultation and decision-making

15.13 The Environmental Report will be presented alongside the draft versions of the local plan. Each version of the local plan will require an updated version of the Environmental Report to illustrate the decision making process with regard to environmental, social and economic assessments.

15.14 Following each consultation period, all responses concerning the SEA/SA process will be analysed and reviewed. These will then be presented to plan-makers as part of the ongoing consultation process.

15.15 In accordance with the SEA procedures, a post-adoption statement will be produced at the very end of the process.

Stage E: Monitoring implementation of the plan or programme

15.16 Having completed the assessment of the local plan as adopted, the SEA process requires the plan making authority to monitor any aspect of the assessment findings that might be associated with significant effects in the future. To address this requirement a monitoring framework will be prepared to incorporate indicators which are related to the identified potential adverse effects.

15.17 Indicators will be chosen in terms of their ability to provide information at the earliest possible stage.



Appendix 1

The Stevenage Borough Local Plan Scoping Report

Appendix 1

| A review of relevant policies, plans and programmes | Key targets (where relevant) and implications for the local plan |
|---|---|
| <p>Key policies, plans and programmes - contents and main objectives</p> <p>General / Overarching</p> <p>Planning Act (2008)</p> <p>Introduces a new process for deciding planning permission for nationally significant infrastructure projects, and power for planning authorities to charge a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on most types of new development.</p> | <p>No targets identified.</p> <p>Consider whether charging a CIL could help achieve local plan objectives.</p> |
| <p>Localism Act (2008)</p> <p>Deletes legislation relating to preparing a Regional Spatial Strategy and introduces a duty to co-operate which will require 'constructive, active and on-going engagement' between Councils and other bodies in preparation of LDDs encompassing strategic matters.</p> <p>Introduces neighbourhood planning and the development of neighbourhood development plans and orders. Once adopted neighbourhood plans will form part of the statutory development plan.</p> | <p>No targets identified.</p> <p>The revocation of regional spatial strategies will require new targets based on local need. New evidential studies should seek to develop strategies which minimise the impact of growth on the environment whilst improving the socio-economic performance of the Borough.</p> <p>Neighbourhood plans will be subject to the sustainability appraisal process and should support or refine policies contained within the local plan.</p> |
| <p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) & Supporting Guidance</p> <p>The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.</p> <p>The document sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development with the following drivers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building a strong, competitive economy ● Ensuring the vitality of town centres ● Supporting a prosperous rural economy ● Promoting sustainable transport ● Supporting high quality communications infrastructure | <p>No targets identified.</p> <p>The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of the local plan and it is a material decision in the determination of planning applications. Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and should include strategic policies to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The homes and jobs needed in the area; ● The provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development; ● The provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes ● Requiring good design ● Promoting healthy communities ● Protecting Green Belt land ● Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change ● Conserving and enhancing the natural environment ● Conserving and enhancing the historic environment ● Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals. | <p>wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and ● Climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape. <p>Each planning authority must ensure that the local plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence. The NPPF lists particular requirements for evidential work which will need to be in place during the development of the plan.</p> |
| <p>Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010)</p> <p>Provides for the imposition of a CIL.</p> | <p>No targets identified.</p> <p>Planning policy team should consider whether and how to charge a CIL to help fund infrastructure in Stevenage.</p> |
| <p>Stevenage 2021: Our town, our future (2007)</p> <p>The Community Strategy is a long-term plan to ensure a better quality of life for everyone in Stevenage, now and for future generations to come. The Strategy contains the following objectives to achieve a quality of life for all:</p> <p>A town with strong communities and opportunities for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase community involvement in decision making ● Tackle inequalities and improve access to services ● Promote equality of opportunity ● Support local voluntary organisations and community groups <p>A town that's good to live in with affordable housing, sustainable transport and excellent transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide more affordable homes that meet a range of housing needs ● Provide social housing that meets the Government's Decent Homes Standard ● Provide clean streets and open spaces | <p>The Community Strategy identifies a range of performance indicators (including BVPIs) and measures of success across the full range of objectives.</p> <p>The plan is required to have regard to the policies and objectives of the strategy.</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote environmental sustainability ● Sustainable transport <p>A vibrant town centre and thriving neighbourhoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regenerate the town centre ● Preserve the character of the Old Town ● Regenerate the neighbourhood centres ● Develop new communities <p>A learning town that invests in young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve the educational achievement of children and young people ● Improve the health and welfare of children and young people ● Promote child development through play ● Promote life-long learning and break down barriers to learning <p>A healthy and caring town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Help people to live longer, healthier lives and tackle health inequalities ● Provide quality NHS treatment and care ● Support adults needing care, promoting quality of life and independent living <p>A safe town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce violent crime and assault in the community ● Reduce hate crime and domestic violence ● Reduce drug misuse and drug crime ● Tackle anti-social behaviour | <p>Biodiversity, flora and fauna</p> <p>Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979)</p> <p>The conservation of wildlife species and habitats. The landscape and economic importance of such conservation is recognised.</p> <p>Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (1979)</p> <p>The objective of the convention is to ensure the conservation of key migratory species.</p> |
| <p>Biodiversity, flora and fauna</p> | |
| | <p>No targets identified.</p> <p>Through the SEA/SA process the local plan will need to address whether a proposed policy is likely to have an impact upon the relevant biodiversity.</p> |

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| <p>Ramsar Convention (Ramsar Bureau 1971)</p> <p>Primarily relates to protection of wetlands. Supporting this objective are a number of benefits including improving water and soil quality, and the recognition of the ecological function of wetlands.</p> | <p>No targets identified.</p> <p>There are no Ramsar sites within Borough boundary but potential effect on Ramsar sites beyond the Borough will need to be assessed.</p> |
| <p>EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan (2002)</p> <p>This plan focuses on four priority areas for action including, climate change, biodiversity, environmental health and sustainable management of resources and waste. The key objectives follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To reduce greenhouse gases to a level that will not cause unnatural variations of the earth's climate. ● To protect and restore the structure and functioning of the natural systems and halt the loss of biodiversity. To protect soils against erosion and pollution. ● To achieve a quality of environment that does not give rise to significant impacts on, or risks to, human health. ● To ensure that the consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources does not exceed the carrying capacity of the environment. | <p>Few specific targets are included within the plan. They include; the EU is committed, under Kyoto Protocol, to achieving an 8% reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases by 2008-2012 compared to the 1990 level (in the longer term a global reduction of 20-40% will be needed); and reduce the quantity of water going to final disposal by 20% by 2010 and 50% by 5050.</p> <p>The local plan will need to include objectives and policies to minimise the impact of any proposed development and enhance.</p> |
| <p>EU Biodiversity Strategy (1998)</p> <p>Four themes are identified within the strategy. A range of objectives are contained within these themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. ● Sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources. ● Research, identification and monitoring of information; and ● Education, training and awareness. | <p>No targets identified.</p> <p>No direct implications, though the conservation and sustainable use of resources should be addressed within the policies.</p> |
| <p>EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) As amended by 97/62/EC.</p> <p>Includes objectives relating to the conservation and protection of species and habitats, providing appropriate levels of information and evaluation of achievements and research into appropriate levels and forms of protection etc.</p> | <p>No targets identified.</p> <p>European context, though to protection and conservation of habitats and protected species must be included as an important objective of the SEA/SA process.</p> |
| <p>EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) As Amended by 97/49/EC.</p> | <p>No targets identified.</p> |

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| <p>Objective to provide protection to species of birds naturally occurring in a wild state in the European territory, this includes their eggs, nests and habitats.</p> | <p>Mainly relevant at European scale, however general objectives to protect and enhance natural habitats should be addressed within the policies where relevant.</p> |
| <p>Conserving Biodiversity - The UK Approach, DEFRA (2007)</p> <p>This strategy identifies six priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protecting the best sites for wildlife; ● Targeting action on priority species and habitats; ● Embedding proper consideration of biodiversity and ecosystem services in all relevant sectors of policy and decision-making; ● Engaging people, and encouraging behaviour change; ● Developing and interpreting the evidence base; and ● Ensuring that the UK plays a proactive role in influencing the development of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and contributes fully to their domestic delivery. | <p>The UK Biodiversity Partnership have identified 1,149 species and 65 habitats. Targets have been set for these. For habitats, these include maintaining the extent or extending provision. For species targets include increasing the population and / or range.</p> <p>The local plan must ensure policies provide a positive framework for the protection, extension and enhancement of key habitats.</p> |
| <p>Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)</p> <p>The Act created Natural England to act as a powerful champion for the natural environment, and formally established a Commission for Rural Communities as a strong national rural adviser to tackle rural disadvantage.</p> <p>The Act was designed to help achieve a rich and diverse natural environment and thriving rural communities through modernised and simplified arrangements for delivering Government policy.</p> <p>Key relevant points for Stevenage are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions to address a small number of gaps and uncertainties which have been identified for SSSIs. • Provisions to make eight amendments to Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to improve wildlife protection, following a consultation exercise. • Extension of the CROW biodiversity duty to public bodies and statutory undertakers to ensure due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. • Provisions to amend the flood defence byelaw-making powers of the Environment Agency, Local Authority and Internal Drainage Board to allow them to take nature conservation into account when determining consent for flood defence works. | <p>No specific targets identified.</p> <p>As an urban authority, land within the administrative area of SBC will not be affected by the Act's intentions for rural communities. However, the importance of Natural England as a key advisor on the natural environment will play a significant part in the SEA/SA and local plan process.</p> <p>The key relevant points do not have any direct implications, though potential effects to SSSIs adjacent to the Borough boundary and other biodiversity measures should be addressed within the policies.</p> |

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| <p>Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)</p> <p>The act protects wildlife and their countryside habitats. Species listed in frequently updated schedules are protected from disturbance, injury, intentional killing or sale. The Act has since been amended by subsequent legislation, but still remains in use.</p> | <p>No targets identified.</p> <p>Different types of land use can have significant effects on wildlife and the countryside. The local plan should ensure that biodiversity is considered at an early stage.</p> |
| <p>East of England Woodland Strategy, Forestry Commission (2003)</p> <p>The strategy identifies the important characteristics of Hertfordshire including part of the Chilterns Beechwoods and is important for many species that depend on a long continuity of woodland cover. Density is greatest in Hertfordshire across the region. Stevenage is located within the green arc, which contains a mosaic of woodlands and other habitats.</p> | <p>No targets identified.</p> <p>The local plan will need to have regard for any woodland strategy contained in the Green Arc, where development at Stevenage may have a negative effect.</p> |
| <p>Hertfordshire Environmental Strategy, HCC (2006)</p> <p>The strategy identifies those habitats and species, which are a priority for conservation action, and provides a valuable source of information on the county's natural assets.</p> | <p>No targets identified.</p> <p>The local plan process will be required to indicate the likely sustainability impacts and implications of the plan on local habitats and species.</p> |
| <p>Stevenage BAP, SBC (2010)</p> <p>The plan provides a set of Action Plans for the most important habitats (Wildlife Sites) found within the Borough, these are linked with key indicator species where appropriate.</p> | <p>Grassland habitat - 13 key sites, 28 actions.</p> <p>Woodland habitat - 23 key sites, 12 actions.</p> <p>Ancient Hedgerow - 1 key site, 5 actions.</p> <p>Wetland habitat - 1 key site (28), 39 actions.</p> <p>Neighbourhood nature habitat - 1 key site, 11 actions.</p> <p>The local plan process will be required to indicate the likely sustainability impacts and implications of the plan on local habitats and species. Policies will be required to ensure that key local sites are protected.</p> |
| Population and human health | |
| <p>EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan (2002)</p> | |

19 pond sites also identified.

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| <p>See biodiversity, flora and fauna.</p> | <p>Healthy Lives: Healthy People White Paper (2010)</p> <p>Paper proposes to empower individuals to make healthy choices and gives communities the tools to address their own, particular needs.</p> | <p>No specific targets or indicators identified though paper aims to promote healthier lifestyle choices.</p> <p>The local plan should facilitate healthier living – both through the direct provision of land for facilities and (e.g.) protection of open spaces and routes which encourage healthy lifestyle choices.</p> |
| <p>Active Hertfordshire Sport Facilities Strategy, Strategic Leisure Ltd et al, 2008.</p> <p>Active Hertfordshire is the first of six County Sports Facility Strategies developed in the East of England; it sits underneath 'Creating Active Places', the Sports Facility Strategy for the East of England.</p> <p>The vision of the strategy is: "To develop a network of quality and accessible community and specialist sports facilities, with appropriate support services*, within Hertfordshire that will facilitate increased participation and achievement of potential, enhance quality of life and improve the health and well-being of local communities."</p> <p>Its main objectives are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PO1 - Demonstrate strategic need, both current and future, to inform need for facility provision ● PO2 - Increase participation Countywide by 1% per annum for those aged 16+ ● PO3 - Ensure provision of appropriate community resources for young people, physical education and school sport ● PO4 - Develop Countywide capacity of clubs, coaches and volunteers to facilitate participation at grass roots, and performance level ● PO5 - Improve health, and address social inclusion issues ● PO6 - Develop innovative partnerships for delivery which maximise available resources for investment and development of community and specialist sports facilities. | <p>2016 targets identified for Stevenage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2.2 sports halls (4 badminton court size) ● 2.4 swimming pools (4 lane x 25m). ● 34 fitness stations (accessible and affordable for community use). ● 1 x full size, floodlit ATP (3G). ● Increased Martial Arts provision, ideally a permanent dojo. ● Indoor archery facilities. ● Technical athletics facilities (Jumps and throws) and J Tracks to enable school club links on school sites. <p>The local plan will need to ensure that these targets are met through the allocation of new sites, as required, and the protection and/or enhancement of existing sites.</p> | <p>Stevenage is located within Area 4 of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. No specific targets are identified for the area. The plan outlines a broad list of core actions across the whole of Hertfordshire including such measures as reducing the number of physical barriers on the network and helping people to improve or maintain their health by developing a range of circular off road routes.</p> |
| <p>Rights of Way Improvement Plan, HCC (2011)</p> <p>The plan assesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public; | | |

| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the opportunities provided by local rights of way (and in particular by footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways) for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation together with the enjoyment of the local area; and the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted people and those with mobility problems. | <p>The local plan should protect public rights of way and ensure that policy reflects the importance of these routes in relation to human health.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| <p>Walking Strategy, HCC (2011)</p> <p>The strategy sets out the county council's intentions to achieve an increase in walking in the county. It is intended to increase walking as a mode of transport to both realise the health benefits for residents and reduce the reliance on the car contributing to reductions in congestion.</p> <p>The main objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage walking as a healthy and sustainable mode of transport for short journeys, as part of longer journeys incorporating public transport and for recreation enjoyment. Identify and promote networks of pedestrian priority routes within towns, as part of the integrated urban transport plans. Implement measures to increase the priority of pedestrians relative to motor vehicles, especially in town centres and other community areas. Provide improved pedestrian facilities along routes, and at key locations, where it would enable and encourage people to make journeys on foot. Support the implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. | <p>The strategy provides a broad list of schemes and initiatives to deliver the aims of the document. There are no specific targets identified.</p> <p>The local plan should maintain and enhance the Stevenage pedestrian network and provide policies which encourage the use of the network to improve human health.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Green Space Strategy, SBC, 2010-2020.</p> <p>The strategy outlines an individual vision for 8 different types of green space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks and gardens Natural and semi natural open space Amenity greenspace Provisions for children and young people Outdoor sports facilities Allotments and community gardens Cemeteries and churchyards Green corridors <p>Page 19 of the strategy should be referenced for further detail but in summary, they require the provision of clean, safe, easily accessed and well maintained open spaces.</p> | <p>The strategy provides a 70 point action plan and the following specific targets:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1059 293 1394 1039"> <thead> <tr> <th>Typology</th> <th>Quantity standard</th> <th>Accessibility standard</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Parks and gardens</td> <td>0.73ha per 100 popn.</td> <td>15 min drive to Fairlands Valley Park and 10 minutes walk for all remaining parks and gardens</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Natural & semi natural open space</td> <td>1.78ha per 1000 popn.</td> <td>5 minute walk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amenity greenspace</td> <td>1.1ha per 1000 popn.</td> <td>5 minute walk</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Typology | Quantity standard | Accessibility standard | Parks and gardens | 0.73ha per 100 popn. | 15 min drive to Fairlands Valley Park and 10 minutes walk for all remaining parks and gardens | Natural & semi natural open space | 1.78ha per 1000 popn. | 5 minute walk | Amenity greenspace | 1.1ha per 1000 popn. | 5 minute walk |
| Typology | Quantity standard | Accessibility standard | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Parks and gardens | 0.73ha per 100 popn. | 15 min drive to Fairlands Valley Park and 10 minutes walk for all remaining parks and gardens | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Natural & semi natural open space | 1.78ha per 1000 popn. | 5 minute walk | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Amenity greenspace | 1.1ha per 1000 popn. | 5 minute walk | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Typology | Quantity standard | Accessibility standard |
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| Provision for children and young people | 0.8 play areas per 1000 popn. | 5 minute walk |
| Outdoor sports provision | 2.2ha per 1000 popn. | 10 minute drive for bowling, hockey, football and rugby and 10 minute walk for MUGAs and tennis. |
| Playing pitches | 1.45ha per 1000 popn. | |
| Allotments | 0.25ha per 1000 popn. | 15 minute walk |

Table 42 - Appendix A of Strategy: Setting Standards

The local plan will need to ensure that these targets are met through the allocation of new sites, as required, and the protection and/or enhancement of existing sites.

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| <p>The strategy has 12 key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance and management - a 17 point objective which includes protection of green spaces from inappropriate development, the designation of green space typologies to better understand deficiencies and the provision of new green spaces where appropriate. Community safety - a 4 point objective which includes partnership working and ongoing assessment. Community engagement - a 6 point objective which includes consultation and monitoring. Wildlife conservation - a 4 point objective which includes the protection of sites, access and the delivery of the Stevenage BAP. Provision for children and young people - a 5 point objective which includes the provision of new high quality play areas within each main park and playing field. Outdoor sports - a 5 point objective which includes the provision of new facilities and a programme of improvements. Allotments - a 5 point objective which includes the protection of allotment land and a programme of investment. Cemeteries - a 3 point objective which includes securing new land. Green corridors - a 3 point objective which includes further research and management. Water - a 3 point objective partnership working and protection of water resources. Promotion - a 3 point objective which includes promotion through a range of events and activities. Health and safety - a 3 point objective which includes the development of spaces which meet current health and safety guidelines. | <p>Water and soils</p> <p>EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)</p> <p>The legislation has been designed to provide an integrated way in which water bodies are managed across Europe. The guidelines contained in the framework apply to large bodies of water.</p> <p>The main objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and enhance the ecosystems of aquatic and wetland systems. To contribute to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts (global warming). To promote the efficient use and consumption of water pollution. <p>The UK must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prevent deterioration in the status of aquatic ecosystems, protect them and improve the ecological condition of waters; aim to achieve at least good status for all water bodies by 2015. Where this is not possible and subject to the criteria set out in the Directive, aim to achieve good status by 2021 or 2027; meet the requirements of Water Framework Directive Protected Areas promote sustainable use of water as a natural resource; conserve habitats and species that depend directly on water; progressively reduce or phase out the release of individual pollutants or groups of pollutants that present a significant threat to the aquatic environment; |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● progressively reduce the pollution of groundwater and prevent or limit the entry of pollutants; ● contribute to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts. <p>The framework identifies that a River Basin Management Plan is produced for each defined River Basin District (See below). These documents will require provision for assessing and monitoring targets.</p> <p>Local plan policies should promote sustainable development and the appropriate use and protection of quantity and quality of water should be encouraged.</p> | |
| <p>As above.</p> | <p>Water Framework Regulations (2003)</p> <p>Transposes the above Directive into UK law.</p> |
| <p>A number of broad targets ensure that the water environment is managed in a co-ordinated way. It also places an emphasis on increasing water efficiency methods and technologies in existing and new homes.</p> <p>The following specific target has also been identified:</p> <p>In England, the average amount of water used per person in the home is reduced to 130 litres each day by 2030.</p> <p>Local plan policies should promote sustainable development and the appropriate use and protection of quantity and quality of water should be encouraged.</p> | <p>Water for People and the Environment, Environment Agency (2009)</p> <p>The strategy vision is as follows:</p> <p>“Management and use of water that is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, providing the right amount of water for people, agriculture, commerce and industry, and an improved water-related environment.”</p> <p>There are 4 main aims linked to climate change, the environment, management of resources and water efficiency. They are as follows:</p> <p>Adapting to and mitigating climate change - The Environment Agency is able to manage water resources and protect the water environment in the face of climate change.</p> <p>A better water environment - Species and habitats that depend on water are restored, protected, improved and valued.</p> <p>Sustainable planning and management of water resources - Good water management contributes to sustainable development by supporting people and the economy in an improved environment.</p> <p>Water and the water environment are valued - People value water and enjoy their water environment and understand how it contributes to their quality of life.</p> |

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| <p>Each aim is linked to numerous objectives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● enable habitats and species to adapt better to climate change. ● protect conservation sites that depend on water so they are sustainable in the long term, taking account of climate change impacts. ● support housing and associated development where the environment can cope with the additional demands placed on it. ● increase investment in technology for all types of use, including agriculture and industry. | |
| <p>Water for People and the Environment - Water Resources Strategy Regional Action Plan for Thames Region, Environment Agency (2009).</p> <p>The strategy has the same four aims as the national strategy - Water for People and the Environment, Environment Agency (2009).</p> <p>The plan aims to deliver the objectives at the regional level as outlined within the national strategy.</p> | <p>The plan aims to deliver broad partnership working agreements although no specific targets are identified.</p> <p>Local plan policies should promote sustainable development and the appropriate use and protection of quantity and quality of water should be encouraged.</p> |
| <p>Thames River Basin Management Plan (2009)</p> <p>This plan is about the pressures facing the water environment in this river basin district and the actions that will address them. It has been prepared under the Water Framework Directive, and is the first of a series of six-year planning cycles.</p> <p>The key issues include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● point source pollution from water industry sewage works; ● physical modification of water bodies; ● diffuse pollution from agricultural activities; ● abstraction; ● diffuse pollution from urban sources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By 2015, 22% of surface waters (rivers, lakes estuaries and coastal waters) are going to improve for at least one biological, chemical or physical element. ● 25% of surface waters will be at good or better ecological status and 17% of groundwater bodies will be at good overall status by 2015. ● At least 30 per cent of assessed surface waters will be at good or better biological quality by 2015. <p>The local plan should include policies which make provision for the development of required infrastructure in advance of growth that impacts negatively upon the river basin and network.</p> |

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| <p>Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP), Environment Agency (2009).</p> <p>The CFMP summarises how we need to manage future flood risk with four main messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flood defences cannot be built to protect everything. ● Climate change will be the major cause of increased flood risk in the future. ● The floodplain is our most important asset in managing flood risk. ● Development and urban regeneration provide a crucial opportunity to manage the risk. | <p>The plan splits the catchment area into 43 sub-areas. Stevenage lies within the Upper Lee sub-area as a chalk and downland catchment. There are no specific targets identified for this sub-area. The Environment Agency intend to keep their broad approach under review, looking for improvements and responding to new challenges or information as they emerge. This may include a review to manage flood defences and other flood risk management actions, to ensure that they are managing efficiently and take the best approach to managing flood risk in the longer term.</p> <p>Local plan policies should promote sustainable development and the appropriate use and protection of quantity and quality of water should be encouraged.</p> |
| <p>River Beane Catchment Plan, Beane and Mimram Rivers Partnership (2013).</p> <p>The main objectives of the plan are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To improve flow along the watercourse; ● To improve water quality, habitats and wildlife; ● Helping people appreciate and get the most out of the river; and ● Measuring the river's ecological status. | <p>The plan outlines specific projects for the Stevenage area including gully clearance, restoration of the Stevenage Brook and the promotion of SuDS, water efficiency measures and more generally promotion of goals through the local planning policy development.</p> <p>Local plan policies should promote SuDS and water efficiency measures.</p> |
| <p>Rye Meads Water Cycle Strategy, Hyder Consulting Ltd (2009).</p> <p>The strategy assesses the restrictions to development in the Rye Meads catchment and recommends suitable infrastructure provision that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.</p> <p>The strategy aims to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water resources ● Potable water supply infrastructure ● Sewerage network capacity ● Wastewater treatment ● Flood risk and mitigation ● Water quality ● Conservation and other environmental opportunities <p>J Sixth Environmental Action Plan (2002)</p> | <p>The strategy recognises that there are no overwhelming technical constraints to growth although post 2021 development will be constrained by the need for timely infrastructure development. This is based upon the Regional Spatial Strategy growth projections.</p> <p>The local plan should include policies which make provision for the development of required infrastructure in advance of growth that impacts negatively upon the sewerage network and the treatment of wastewater.</p> |

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| <p>See biodiversity, flora and fauna.</p> | |
| <p>The First Soil Action Plan for England: 2004-2006, DEFRA (2004)</p> <p>Contains 52 actions on soil related issues including soil management on farms, the planning system, biodiversity, contamination and the role of soils in conserving cultural heritage and landscape. The actions aim to ensure more sustainable soil use and protection.</p> <p>Soil Strategy for England, DEFRA (2009)</p> <p>The focus is on four main themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the sustainable use of agricultural soils; • the role of soils in mitigating and adapting to climate change; • protecting soil functions during construction and development; and • preventing pollution and dealing with historic contamination. | <p>No specific targets identified.</p> <p>The impact of policies on soil should be fully considered (e.g. loss of high grade agricultural land).</p> |
| Air | |
| <p>EU Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC)</p> <p>The key objective is to improve the air quality for the better of human health and the environment. The directive sets guidance for thresholds to be adopted by member states.</p> | <p>No specific targets identified.</p> <p>The development of policies should consider any effect they may have on the levels of air pollution.</p> |
| <p>The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, DEFRA (2007)</p> <p>The strategy sets out a way forward for work and planning on air quality issues, sets out the air quality standards and objectives to be achieved, introduces a new policy framework for tackling fine particles, and identifies potential new national policy measures which modelling indicates could give further health benefits and move closer towards meeting the strategy's objectives.</p> | <p>The following pollutants are covered in the strategy through the provision of relevant standards and targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Particulate Matter; ● Nitrogen Oxides; ● Ozone; ● Sulphur dioxide; ● Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons; ● Benzene; ● 1,3-butadiene; ● Carbon monoxide; |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead; and ● Ammonia. <p>The development of policies should consider any effect they may have on the levels of air pollution, particularly where they may exceed appropriate levels of air pollution.</p> |
| <p>Stevenage Air Quality Strategy, SBC (2005)</p> <p>This strategy describes the effects of pollution on air quality and health and the well-being of everyone living in Stevenage. The broad objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To protect the air we breathe; ● Partnerships working for air quality management; and ● Education and provision of information. | <p>The report includes targets and indicators for Stevenage Council. This includes reducing the carbon dioxide emissions by 25% through its own landholdings etc. No other targets are considered relevant.</p> <p>No specific implications exist for the LDF based on this study, though policies should generically be aware of protecting and improving air quality.</p> |
| Climatic factors | |
| <p>EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan (2002)</p> <p>See biodiversity, flora and fauna.</p> | |
| <p>Defra's Climate Change Plan (2010)</p> <p>Defra has 3 priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● securing the basics for human well-being. ● enhancing the resilience of ecosystems. ● building adaptive capacity. <p>Key actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● encouraging other Departments, public bodies and businesses to adapt to the effects of a changing climate through the Adapting to Climate Change Programme (ACC), which is run by Defra. ● reducing wastage through the Floods and Water Bill. ● investing in flood and coastal erosion risk management. ● gathering evidence on how we can protect as well as benefit from the services provided by our natural environment. | <p>Document includes a series of 'indicator pyramids' relating to DEFRA's core activities and responsibilities. Apex indicator measures absolute change in CO2 emissions since 1990 / previous year.</p> <p>The local plan should provide a positive framework for delivering a reduction in carbon emissions.</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● providing information to farmers and land managers about the threats and opportunities that climate change brings. ● encouraging greater use of green infrastructure to cool urban temperatures, reduce flood risk and connect wildlife habitats. ● embedding adaption in key business processes. ● developing leadership within the Dept. ● improving the way climate risks are identified, managed and scrutinised. ● enhancing Defra's research base. | |
| <p>Living with Climate Change in the East of England Summary Report, Sustainability East (2004)</p> <p>The strategy identifies the impacts that climate change is likely to have on the East of England. The report is divided into two sections. Section 1 examines the regional special level responses, whilst Section 2 looks at the guidance and adaptation measures for responding to climate change.</p> <p>The report indicates that there are potential increases in global temperature of 2.0c in relation to low emissions and 3.9c in relation to high emissions by 2080.</p> <p>The suggested response to climate changes should involve mitigation against the causes of climate change and adaptation against the impacts of climate change. The overriding aim being 'To work with climate change, rather than against it and manage the impacts for the benefits of future generations'. The report also identifies a key spatial principle - 'To reduce the risk by guiding new development to those locations least vulnerable to the potentially adverse impacts of climate change'. Whilst a number of documents provide guidance, the issues will be addressed at a local level - ie: the implementation of appropriate design and built form.</p> | <p>No specific indicators are identified.</p> <p>The issues contained within the report will need to be taken into consideration in the local plan. Of particular importance will be the need to look strategically at ways in minimising the impacts of climate change. It is important that both adaptation and mitigation are addressed in new policies.</p> |
| <p>Stevenage Climate Change Strategy, Stevenage Borough Council (2009)</p> <p>This strategy recognises that the response to climate change needs to be managed on two fronts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mitigation: This means taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. | <p>The strategy outlines a list of 34 targets split between the 6 objectives. Some of these targets commit to produce specific energy and emission targets but these are yet to be identified. Of particular relevance to the local plan will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporate the code for sustainable homes into the LDF. |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adaptation: This means making sure we are prepared for the changes in our climate. <p>The strategy outlined the following objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - Strategic partnership development and raising awareness. 2 - Manage and reduce direct emissions from our own activities and functions 3 - Planning and economic development through the development plan process. 4 - Housing - through retrofitting Council stock and through advice and incentives to the private sector. 5 - Reducing waste and increasing recycling. 6 - Increasing community engagement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporate policies in the LDF that require a percentage of energy in new developments to be delivered from renewable technologies. ● Incorporate policies in the LDF that take into account the impact that climate change will have on flood risk in the future. ● Reduce the emissions from transport by discouraging car use and ensuring that local amenities provide and support low emission transport methods. ● Investigate setting up a local offsetting contribution in new section 106 agreements. ● Implement a programme to mainstream climate change into the business community and through business incubation. |
| Material assets | |
| <p>EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan (2002)</p> <p>See biodiversity, flora and fauna.</p> | |
| <p>Government Review of Waste Policy in England (2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prioritise efforts to manage waste in line with the waste hierarchy and reduce the carbon impact of waste; ● Develop a range of measures to encourage waste prevention and reuse, supporting greater resource efficiency; ● Develop voluntary approaches to cutting waste, increase recycling, and improve the overall quality of recyclate material, working closely with business sectors and the waste and material resources industry; ● Consult on the case for higher packaging recovery targets for some key materials; ● Support energy from waste where appropriate, and for waste which cannot be recycled; ● Work to overcome the barriers to increasing the energy from waste which Anaerobic Digestion provides, as set out in the new AD strategy; ● Consult on restricting wood waste from landfill and review the case for restrictions on sending other materials to landfill. ● Support initiatives which reward and recognise people who do the right thing to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste; ● Work with councils to increase the frequency and quality of rubbish collections and make it easier to recycle; | <p>Reiteration of European targets which are focussing action in specific areas. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EU Landfill Directive targets on the diversion of biodegradable municipal waste from landfill in 2013 and 2020; ● Waste Framework Directive target that 50% of waste from households is recycled by 2020; ● Waste Framework Directive target to recover at least 70% of construction and demolition waste by 2020; and ● A range of minimum producer responsibility targets covering packaging, Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE), End of Life Vehicles (ELV) and batteries. <p>Headline indicators to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total raw materials used and waste produced; |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage councils to sign the new Recycling & Waste Services Commitment, setting out the principles they will follow in delivering local waste services; ● Protect civil liberties by stopping councils from criminalising householders for trivial bin offences, while ensuring that stronger powers exist to tackle those responsible for flytipping and serious waste crime; ● Support councils and the waste industry in improving the collection of waste from smaller businesses; ● Reduce the burden of regulation and enforcement on legitimate business, but target those who persistently break the law. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commercial, household and industrial waste per unit of Gross Value Added; ● Performance benchmarks for recycling including customer satisfaction; ● Cost of Local Authority waste management per household; ● GVA and employment in the repair, maintenance and recycling sectors. |
| <p>Herfordshire Waste Local Plan 1995-2005, HCC (1999)</p> <p><i>The Plan period has been extended to 2007.</i></p> <p>The following aims and objectives are contained within the Waste Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To facilitate the provision of sufficient waste management facilities in Hertfordshire to accommodate the equivalent of the County's own arising; ● To recognise that waste management generates employment and is part of the infrastructure which supports business in general; ● To locate waste recycling handling and reduction facilities as close as practicable to the origin of waste; ● To promote the development of waste management facilities which increase the proportion of waste managed further up the waste hierarchy; ● To minimise the traffic generating effects of waste management development; ● To mitigate against the possible effects of greenhouse gases; ● To reduce the overall demand for resources (including land); ● To involve the wider community in the waste management debate; ● To facilitate the increased use of recycled waste materials as aggregate in Hertfordshire; ● To facilitate a shift away from road transport as the principal means of transport waste; ● To minimise the impact of waste management development on the natural and built environment; ● To maximise the recovery of value (including energy) from waste, where this represents the Best Practicable Environmental Option; ● To adopt Best Practicable Environmental Option when considering alternative forms of waste management development. | <p>The plan does contain detailed targets. Indicators are not explicitly addressed but are implied within the targets.</p> |
| <p>Waste Core Strategy Submission, HCC (2008)</p> <p>The objectives of the plan are:</p> | <p>Document includes a monitoring plan with key indicators set out. This includes national core indicators on waste provision as well as locally derived indicators including:</p> |

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To promote the provision of facilities which drive waste management further up the waste hierarchy. 2. To encourage the implementation of the waste hierarchy in the design and construction of new development, i.e. reduce, reuse, recycle, with disposal of waste as a last resort. 3. To facilitate the provision of sufficient waste management facilities in appropriate locations within Hertfordshire, to accommodate the equivalent of the county's own waste arisings without harm to the environment and human health. 4. To recognise that waste management generates employment and is part of the infrastructure which supports business in general. 5. To locate waste recycling, handling and reduction facilities as close as practicable to the origin of waste. 6. To engage the wider community to take responsibility for their own waste, engage them in the waste management debate and delivery of this strategy. 7. To facilitate the increased use of recycled waste materials in Hertfordshire (for example as aggregate). 8. To facilitate a shift away from road transport as the principal means of transporting waste, to water and rail transport. 9. To minimise the impact of waste management development on the natural and built environment and human health. 10. To maximise the recovery of value (including energy) from waste. 11. To work with all partners in the county to encourage integrated spatial planning, which takes account of waste issues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of permissions having a negative impact on identified habitats ● Location of facilities in relation to built up areas ● Applications in the Green Belt <p>The policies are not overly relevant to the local plan. However there is the potential for the planning policies to affect the delivery of the waste strategy.</p> |
| <p>Waste Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal Report, HCC (2008)</p> <p>The objectives of the plan are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To protect and enhance the quality of the natural and historic environment. 2. To achieve and promote sustainable land use, construction, design and transport in Hertfordshire. | <p>The SA proposes a framework of 20 indicators.</p> |

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| <p>3. To reduce contributions to climate change.</p> <p>4. To provide for sustainable resource management.</p> <p>5. To maximise the potential economic benefits of waste management to a sustainable economy in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>6. To contribute to the improved health and amenity of local communities in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>7. To maximise community participation and access to services and facilities in Hertfordshire.</p> | |
| <p>Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016, HCC (2007)</p> <p>The plan has 5 key aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to encourage the efficient use of materials, particularly maximising the use of recycled and secondary aggregates and reducing the use of primary aggregates, thereby reducing reliance on land won sources of material. ● to identify and safeguard mineral resources to ensure that there are sufficient environmentally acceptable sources to maintain an appropriate level of current and future supply in accordance with Government guidance and to prevent the unnecessary sterilisation of mineral resources. ● to ensure that the adverse impacts on the environment and people caused by mineral operations and the transport of minerals are kept, as far as possible, to an acceptable minimum. ● to ensure sensitive working, reclamation and aftercare practices so as to preserve or enhance the overall quality of the environment and promote biodiversity where appropriate. ● to enable stakeholders to contribute to planning for minerals supply in Hertfordshire. <p>These are supported by 32 identified ways in which these will be achieved.</p> | <p>The policies are not overly relevant to the local plan. However there is the potential for the planning policies to affect the delivery of the plan's aims.</p> |
| <p>Cultural heritage</p> | |
| <p>Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)</p> | <p>Development affecting listed buildings and conservation areas is subject to separate legislation and a different consents regime to the local plan and planning permission.</p> |

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| <p>The main legislation for listed buildings and the designation of conservation areas. This Act enables buildings to be listed because they are judged to be of national architectural or historic interest</p> <p>At the local level, the Act enables local authorities to designate as a conservation area "an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".</p> | <p>Notwithstanding this, the act places a duty on the authority to ensure the preservation and enhancement of affected assets which should be reflected in the local plan and any consideration of its potential impacts.</p> |
| <p>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)</p> <p>An Act legislating to protect the archaeological heritage of Great Britain.</p> <p>The aim is to preserve our most important archaeological sites and monuments and ensure that, where archaeological evidence must be destroyed by essential development, an appropriate record is made. When excavation is required, professional archaeological organisations carry it out and archaeologists agree the project design as well as monitoring the work in progress.</p> | <p>The are no specific targets but the Act places a duty on the authority to ensure the preservation and enhancement of heritage assets which should be reflected in the local plan and any consideration of its potential impacts.</p> |
| <p>National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>see <i>General / overarching</i></p> | |
| <p>Stevenage 2021: Our town, our future</p> <p>see <i>General / overarching</i></p> | |
| <p>Individual Stevenage Conservation Area Management Plans for all 7 of the conservation areas:</p> <p>Broadwater Conservation Area Management Plan SPD: Old Town High Street Conservation Area Management Plan SPD: Orchard Road Conservation Area Management Plan SPD: Shephall Green Conservation Area Management Plan SPD: St Nicholas Conservation Area Management Plan SPD: Symonds Green Conservation Area Management Plan SPD: Town Square Conservation Area Management Plan SPD.</p> <p>These plans aim to provide guidance on appropriate repairs, maintenance and development principles across each conservation area. Each management plans aims to:</p> | <p>The management plans do not provide specific targets but outline general guidance for the future development and maintenance of each area.</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● establish and define the significance of the conservation area as a whole and of the individual elements which contribute to that significance, building on the character appraisal. ● assess and define the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the area and how these impact on the significance of the individual elements and of the conservation area as a whole. ● provide a benchmark for assessing and managing change. ● provide guidance to ensure that the character and appearance of the conservation area will be maintained through the effective management of change and that opportunities to enhance the character and appearance are maximised. | |
| Landscape | |
| <p>The European Landscape Convention (2004)</p> <p>Signed and ratified by the UK in 2006.</p> <p>The Convention (also known as the Florence Convention) introduced a Europe-wide concept centring on the quality of landscape protection, management and planning and covering the entire territory, not just outstanding landscapes. It complements the Council of Europe's and UNESCO's heritage conventions.</p> <p>The aims of this Convention are to promote landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues.</p> | <p>No specific targets are identified.</p> <p>Although this Directive does not impose requirements directly upon the Local Plan, it is important that it's policies seek to manage or reduce impacts on the landscape, whether specifically designated or not. The Convention outlines the need for joint working as landscapes do not hold the same administrative boundaries as local authorities.</p> |
| <p>EU Sixth Environmental Action Plan (2002)</p> <p>See <i>biodiversity, flora and fauna</i>.</p> | |
| <p>EU Sustainable Development Strategy (2006)</p> <p>The strategy identifies seven key priority challenges, many of which are predominantly environmental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Climate change and clean energy ● Sustainable transport ● Sustainable consumption & production ● Conservation and management of natural resources ● Public Health | <p>There are more than 100 indicators associated with the strategy, of which 11 have been chosen as headline indicators. Monitoring reports identify whether performance against these is resulting in favourable change and achievement of the target path.</p> <p>Indicators assess matters including greenhouse gas emissions, growth of GDP, abundance of key species, risk of poverty, life expectancy and changes in built up land.</p> <p>The local plan's policies should contribute towards the achievement of targets in this document.</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social inclusion, demography and migration ● Global poverty and sustainable development challenges | <p>No specific targets are identified.</p> <p>Although this Directive does not impose requirements directly upon the Local Plan, it is important that it's policies seek to manage or reduce noise pollution and its impacts.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The EU Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC) <p>The underlying principles of this directive are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitoring the environmental problem; by requiring competent authorities in Member States to draw up "strategic noise maps" for major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations, using harmonised noise indicators; ● Informing and consulting the public about noise exposure, its effects, and the measures considered to address noise, in line with the principles of the Aarhus Convention; ● Addressing local noise issues by requiring competent authorities to draw up action plans to reduce noise where necessary and maintain environmental noise quality where it is good; and ● Developing a long-term EU strategy, which includes objectives to reduce the number of people affected by noise in the longer term, and provides a framework for developing existing Community policy on noise reduction from source. <p>Draft National Planning Policy Framework</p> <p>See <i>General / overarching</i></p> <p>Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)</p> <p>See <i>Biodiversity, flora and fauna</i></p> <p>Securing the Future: The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)</p> <p>A strategy to ensure the aim of sustainable development through implementing guiding principles:</p> | <p>Key targets include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A 12.5% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels and ● move towards a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions below 1990 levels by 2010; |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Living within environmental limits – respecting the limits of the planet’s environment, resources and biodiversity. Improve the environment and ensure that resource levels are not impaired and remain for future generation. ● Ensuring a strong healthy and just society – meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities through the promotion of personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion, and equal opportunity for all. ● Achieving a sustainable economy – building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them and incentives are developed for efficient resource use. ● Promoting Good Governance – Actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society, engaging people’s creativity, energy and diversity. ● Using Sound Science Responsibly Ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific uncertainty as well as public attitudes and values. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reversing the long-term decline in the number of farmland birds by 2020, as measured annually against underlying trends; ● Achieve a better balance between housing availability and the demand for housing, including improving affordability, in all English regions while protecting valuable countryside around our towns, cities and in the green belt and the sustainability of towns and cities. ● Reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, and building confidence in the Criminal Justice System without compromising fairness. ● Halve the number of children in relative low-income households between 1998-99 and 2010-11, on the way to eradicating child poverty by 2020 ● Reduce health inequalities by 10% by 2010 as measured by infant mortality and life expectancy at birth ● By 2010, increase the use of public transport (bus and light rail) by more than 12% in England compared with 2000 levels, with growth in every region ● Lead the delivery of cleaner, safer and greener public spaces and improvement of the quality of the built environment in deprived areas and across the country, with measurable improvement by 2008 <p>The local plan’s policies and objectives should contribute towards the principles and targets contained in this document.</p> |
| <p>Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)</p> <p>The Act provides for public access on foot to certain types of land, amends the law relating to public rights of way, increases protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation, and provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).</p> | <p>No specific indicators or targets are identified.</p> <p>The local plan should ensure areas of value are appropriately protected and / or enhanced.</p> |
| <p>East of England Woodland Strategy, Forestry Commission (2003)</p> <p>See <i>Biodiversity, flora and fauna</i></p> | |

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| <p>Herfordshire 2021: A Brighter Future (2008)</p> <p>The community strategy for the county identifies a series of long-term objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the growth and retention of existing businesses and encourage high value inward investment; ● Ensure the skills of the workforce meet the demands of employers; ● Provide opportunities for everyone to share in our prosperity ● Encourage lifelong learning and an entrepreneurial culture ● Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods and town centres ● Reduce the fear of crime ● Develop cohesive communities ● Enable and support a vibrant voluntary and community sector and a range of diverse cultural activities which meets the needs of local people ● Encourage communities and individuals to have a greater voice and participate in local decision making ● Narrow the gaps between vulnerable children and all children in Herfordshire whilst improving outcomes for all ● All children and young people in Herfordshire remain safe in an everchanging world ● Ensure that children and young people are ready to succeed, particularly as they move into primary school, secondary school, further study and work ● Provide high quality information and support to parents ● Ensure all children and young people have access to high quality facilities and a range of positive activities to develop personal and social skills, promote wellbeing and reduce behaviour that puts them at risk; ● Ensure children and young people have a healthy weight ● Eradicate child poverty ● Significantly reduce the number of young offenders and young people who are victims of crime ● Focus on the prevention of illnesses ● Help older people maintain their independence ● Ensure older people have the opportunities to be active members of our communities ● Improve the health and wellbeing of all our residents in the 20% most deprived wards ● Reduce the mortality rate difference between deprived and non-deprived areas ● Improve life chances and access to healthcare for all, especially those in areas of deprivation and those with learning disabilities ● Ensure partners work together to understand housing needs and market demands in the county ● Ensure we have an appropriate mix of housing provision to support those needs and demands, especially relating to key workers, other key occupational groups, migrant workers and preventing homelessness | <p>The Strategy states that it will monitor the strategy by measuring the Herfordshire economy and using PSA and local performance indicators. No specific targets are set.</p> <p>The local plan will need to ensure that these wide-ranging objectives are taken into the account. The sustainability appraisal should ensure that these matters are taken into consideration in the assessment of policies.</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure a minimum of 35% new housing will be affordable and that this is sensibly integrated with private (i.e. full cost) housing ● Reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car ● Improve access to services, including education and health, no matter where you live ● Bring about a step change in the provision, quality and use of public transport in Hertfordshire ● Improve the reliability of journey times and improve East to West travel ● Improve access to the countryside, open spaces and cultural activities for recreation and health ● Ensure effective long term management and maintenance of the transport network ● Improve road safety ● Avoid coalescence between our communities by protecting our greenbelt wherever possible, and enhancing our urban fringe and open spaces ● Support the management of our land, particularly the historic built and natural landscape, as well as local agriculture, which protects our biodiversity, wildlife, and natural resources ● Enhance the quality and distinctiveness of our town centres and their range of local facilities and ensuring our villages remain vibrant ● Improve the efficiency, standard and connectivity of public services in Hertfordshire ● Secure more investment and funding into Hertfordshire for our public services ● Ensure sustainability principles are central to future planning and decision making in Hertfordshire ● Ensure the development of properly planned sustainable communities with the necessary social, economic, environmental and transportation infrastructure in place ● Meet all national and EU targets relating to waste and recycling, minimising waste volumes and ensuring the provision of a range of waste processing facilities to deal with the county's waste locally ● Meet the Government's targets for reducing Hertfordshire's carbon emissions. | |
| <p>Stevenage Green Space Strategy 2010-2020 (2010)</p> <p>See <i>Population and human health</i></p> | |
| <p>Social inclusiveness</p> | |
| <p>EU Sustainable Development Strategy (2001)</p> <p>See <i>Landscape</i></p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework (2012)</p> | |

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| See <i>General / overarching</i> | |
| Securing the Future: The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005) See <i>Landscape</i> | |
| Hertfordshire 2021 - A brighter future (2008) See <i>Landscape</i> | |
| Housing Act (2004) An Act to make provision about housing conditions; to regulate houses in multiple occupation and certain other residential accommodation; to make provision for home information packs in connection with the sale of residential properties; to make provision about secure tenants and the right to buy; to make provision about mobile homes and the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers; to make other provision about housing; and for connected purposes. | No specific targets are set, however the plan should make a positive contribution towards meeting the housing needs of all residents. |
| Affordable Housing Strategy (2007) The Council's Affordable Housing Strategy seeks to increase the number of affordable homes in the town and reduce the number of households on the waiting list. | No specific targets are set, however the plan should make a positive contribution towards meeting these goals. |
| Stevenage and North Herts Homelessness Strategy (2008) Six priorities are identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Prevention of homelessness● Tackling youth homelessness● Single people and vulnerable groups● Reducing the use of temporary accommodation● Partnership working● Continuous improvement | The strategy identifies 12 performance indicators. Those most relevant to this report are: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Temporary accommodation reduction; and● Number of affordable homes The plan should make a positive contribution towards these indicators. Good performance against the latter should lead to improved performance against the former. |
| Housing Strategy 2009-12 (2009) The strategy identifies four strategic priorities with | The strategy identifies the following indicators which will be used to measure performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● BV 212 The average time taken to re-let local authority housing (days) |

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| <p>seven associated objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand our housing market: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access and plan for housing needs across all tenures; ● Make best use of housing stock; ● Future homes and sustainable development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aim to provide good quality affordable homes in clean, green, safe and well maintained neighbourhoods ● Inclusive communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan and commission homelessness prevention and housing support services ● Ensure effective neighbourhood management through partnership working and community engagement ● Strengthen the private sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a strategic approach to private sector housing; ● Help tackle poor housing conditions in the private sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BV 66A Rent collection rates (percentage) ● BV72 Urgent repairs completed on time (percentage) ● NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) ● NI 156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation ● NI 158 The percentage of non-decent homes ● NI 160 Local authority tenants' satisfaction with landlord services (percentage) ● NI 187A Tackling fuel poverty – percentage of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a high energy rating. ● NI 187B Tackling fuel poverty – percentage of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy rating. ● Stevenage Homes 4 Number of homes (Council) made decent during the financial year ● Stevenage Homes 38 Increase in satisfaction with ASB case handling – mark out of 5 ● BV 213 Number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local authority's housing advice service(s) and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation. |
| <p>Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon ~ Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen: Local Transport White Paper (2011)</p> <p>The DfT's priority for local transport is to "encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport and cycling and walking more attractive and effective, promoting lower carbon transport and tackling local road congestion".</p> | <p>No specific targets or indicators identified though paper aims to incentivise use of non-car modes particularly for shorter journeys.</p> <p>Planning should aim to reduce the need to travel by co-locating complementary uses and facilitate improvements to walking, cycling and public transport.</p> |
| <p>Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 2011-31 (LTP3) (2011)</p> <p>The LTP identifies 13 key goals which the plan should address:</p> <p>1.1 Keep the county moving through efficient management of the road network to improve journey time, reliability and resilience and manage congestion to minimise its impact on the economy.</p> | <p>Document identifies 21 key performance indicators, a number of which are nationally set (NI):</p> <p>NI 167 Congestion</p> |

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| <p>1.2 Support economic growth and new housing development through delivery of transport improvements and where necessary enhancement of the network capacity.</p> <p>2.1 Improve accessibility for all and particularly for non car users and the disadvantaged (disabled, elderly, low income etc).</p> <p>2.2 Achieve behavioural change as regards choice of transport mode increasing awareness of the advantages of walking, cycling and passenger transport, and of information on facilities and services available.</p> <p>2.3 Achieve further improvements in the provision of passenger transport (bus and rail services) to improve accessibility, punctuality, reliability and transport information in order to provide a viable alternative for car users.</p> <p>3.1 Improve journey experience for transport users in terms of comfort, regularity and reliability of service, safety concerns, ability to park and other aspects to improve access.</p> <p>3.2 Improve the health of individuals by encouraging and enabling more physically active travel and access to recreational areas and through improving areas of poor air quality which can affect health.</p> <p>3.3 Maintain and enhance the natural, built and historic environment managing the streetscape and improving integration and connections of streets and neighbourhoods and minimising the adverse impacts of transport on the natural environment, heritage and landscape.</p> <p>3.4 Reduce the impact of transport noise especially in those areas where monitoring shows there to be specific problems for residents.</p> <p>4.1 Improve road safety in the county reducing the risk of death and injury due to collisions.</p> <p>4.2 Reduce crime and the fear of crime on the network to enable users of the network to travel safely and with minimum concern over safety so that accessibility is not compromised.</p> <p>5.1 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport in the county to meet government targets through the reduction in consumption of fossil fuels.</p> <p>5.2 Design new infrastructure and the maintenance of the existing network in the light of likely future constraints and threats from changing climate, including the increasing likelihood of periods of severe weather conditions.</p> | <p>NI 168 % local authority principal road networks where structural maintenance should be considered</p> <p>NI 169 % non-principal road network where structural maintenance should be considered</p> <p>% of Unclassified Road network where structural maintenance should be considered</p> <p>% of category 1, 1a and 2 Footway network where structural maintenance should be considered</p> <p>Accessibility of new developments – % of new developments within 30 minutes by passenger transport of key services</p> <p>NI 175 Accessibility - % of people who find it difficult to travel to key services</p> <p>% of all trips (under 1 mile) made by walking</p> <p>% of all trips (under 3 miles) made by cycling</p> <p>NI 177 Passenger transport (Bus and Tram) Patronage</p> <p>NI 178 Bus punctuality</p> <p>User satisfaction with local bus services</p> <p>User satisfaction with Passenger Transport Information</p> <p>NI 198 Mode share of sustainable school journeys (Aged 5-10 years)</p> <p>NI 198 Mode share of sustainable school journeys (Aged 11-16 years)</p> <p>% Rights of Way easy to use by public</p> <p>Air Quality – Annual mean Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide</p> |
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| <p>Speed limit compliance - % compliance with speed limits across the network</p> <p>NI 47 Total Killed and Seriously Injured</p> <p>NI 48 Children Killed and Seriously Injured</p> <p>Total crimes per 100,000 passenger journeys at rail stations in Hertfordshire</p> <p>Transport related CO2 emissions per capita (Government statistics)</p> | |
| <p>The UTP contains a detailed action plan of schemes and measures to be implemented split into short-, medium- and long-term priorities.</p> <p>Policies should reflect the findings of the transport plan and take advantage to encourage the implementation of proposals through development opportunities.</p> | <p>Stevenage Urban Transport Plan (2010)</p> <p>The UTP identifies key objectives in other related programmes (e.g. LTP) as well as identifying a number of key local problems under the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accessibility ● Walking ● Cycling ● Public Transport ● Congestion ● Highways ● Parking ● Sustainable travel ● Environment |
| Economic development | |
| <p>There are no specific targets identified within the Strategy.</p> | <p>The Plan for Growth, BIS (2011)</p> <p>The Government's economic policy objective is to achieve strong, sustainable and balanced growth that is more evenly shared across the country and between industries. The Plan for Growth contains four overarching ambitions that will ensure the progress is made towards achieving this economic objective. The ambitions are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to create the most competitive tax system in the G20; 2. to make the UK one of the best places in Europe to start, finance and grow a business; |

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| <p>3. to encourage investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy; and</p> <p>4. to create a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe.</p> | |
| <p>Herfordshire Economic Development Strategy 2006-2011 final draft (HP, 2006)</p> <p>Sets a vision “To create a strong vibrant economy, responsive to economic and social change, ready to grasp opportunities and offering opportunities for all”. Supported by eight goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A skills base that can support a world class economy ● Growing competitiveness, productivity and entrepreneurship ● Global leadership in developing and realising innovation in science, technology and research ● High quality places to live, work and visit ● Social inclusion and broad participation in the (regional) local economy ● Making the most from the development of international gateways and national and regional corridors ● A leading information society ● An exemplar in environmental technologies and the efficient use of resources ● Ensure that all Herfordshire residents, particularly those in disadvantaged communities can reach their potential and play a full part in the local economy through education and skills development and vocational training; ● Balance new economic and other development against the acknowledged need to protect Herfordshire’s environment; ● Take advantage of forthcoming economic opportunities such as the 2012 Olympics. | <p>The Strategy states that it will monitor the strategy by measuring the Herfordshire economy and using PSA and local performance indicators.</p> <p>Policies should make a positive contribution towards economic growth and development in the County.</p> |
| <p>Herfordshire: 2021 – A brighter future (HF, 2008)</p> <p>See <i>Landscape</i></p> | |
| <p>The Stevenage Regeneration Strategy 2010-2015, Stevenage Borough Council</p> <p>The Strategy includes 5 key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical Regeneration of the Town & Neighbourhoods 2. Growth of the Area 3. Inward Investment , Business Development & Retention | <p>There are no specific targets identified within the Strategy.</p> |

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| <p>4. Facilitation of Improved Education & Skills</p> <p>5. Image & Place Marketing</p> <p>The overall vision for the town is:</p> <p>“By 2015, Stevenage will be an emerging regional centre that is prosperous, healthy, clean, green and safe. It will be a place where people are proud to live, work, visit and do business.”</p> | <p>No specific targets or indicators are contained within the strategy.</p> <p>The strategy contains a number of recommendations relating to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Image and identity; ● Development; ● Transport; ● Environment; and ● Economic Development. <p>Many of these recommendations, such as requiring an SPD to be presented will need to be addressed within the local plan document.</p> |
| <p>Gunnels Wood, Focus on the Future, Stevenage Borough Council (2004)</p> <p>This strategy has been developed with public and private involvement to deliver the revitalisation of the Gunnels Wood area. The strategy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To facilitate the development of a modern area containing a diverse mix of predominately employment activities, with an emphasis on knowledge-based and innovative operations, but including modern office, manufacturing and warehousing activities; ● To encourage new and small enterprises to develop within the area alongside major companies; ● To maximise development opportunities in the area; ● To promote supporting facilities for companies and their employees where they improve the quality of the working environment; ● To provide a modern image that reflects the characteristics of the business area; ● To provide a high quality environment where people will want to work, invest and visit; ● To improve the quality of transportation and access to, from and within the area by all modes of travel; and ● To have a strong representative partnership organisation to help deliver the vision for the area. | |

Table 41 A review of relevant policies, plans and programmes