

Amended agenda  
Question added to matter 11 relating to policy HC3

**STEVENAGE LOCAL PLAN  
STAGE 2 EXAMINATION HEARINGS**

AGENDA – DAY 1 (afternoon)

Tuesday 21 February 2017 at 2pm

Venue: The Ibis Forum, Danestrete, Stevenage,  
Hertfordshire, SG1 1EJ

MATTER 7 – Affordable Housing

MATTER 11 – Community Facilities

MATTER 14 – Neighbourhood Plans

Please note:

- All participants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the hearing statements (and any additional evidence) produced by the Council and other parties in respect of the matters addressed at this session. These are available on the examination website.
- Most references to questions refer to those posed by the Inspector in her Schedule of Matters, Issues and Questions (already circulated).
- This session will not consider detailed site-specific representations.
- The hearing will run until 5pm with a mid-afternoon break.

1. Inspector's Opening
2. Questions/procedural or programming matters
3. Council's opening statement

Matter 7 - Affordable Housing

4. Is it proposed that the Council will build affordable housing on some of the allocated sites, or different ones?

5. Is Policy HO8 sufficiently clear about whether units will be for social rent or affordable rent?
6. Has the Council considered having a Starter Homes exception site policy in the Plan, as set out in Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 55-001-20150318), as a way of addressing some of the affordability issues in the borough? If not why not?
7. There appears to be a discrepancy between the affordable housing targets in Policies SP7 and HO7, with SP7 seeking 40% affordable housing, but policy HO7 applying targets of 25% and 30% (depending on whether the site is previously developed). Can the Council please advise how this will be remedied.
8. How have these targets been arrived at and are they likely to affect viability?
9. Should the tenure mix be more prescriptive?
10. Policies SP7 and HO7 seek affordable housing as part of all residential development. The Court of Appeal judgement of 11 May 2016 (SS v W Berks DC and Reading BC) concerned national policy on thresholds for planning obligations for affordable housing and tariff style contributions. The effect of the judgement is that the policies in the Written Ministerial Statement of 28 Nov 2014 are once again national policy. The WMS states that affordable housing and tariff style contributions should not be sought for sites of 10 units or less (or 5 in designated rural areas). I note from the Council's response to my initial questions that they are seeking to retain this policy despite its divergence from national policy. Since this approach is a departure from national planning policy the Council will need to demonstrate the exceptional circumstances that exist in Stevenage to warrant this. This could be a combination of factors, but they must be clearly set out and evidenced for me to be able to take them into account when deciding whether the Council's approach to affordable housing represents a soundness issue.
11. What would the likely level of affordable homes be if the policies in the Plan reflected national policy in terms of the affordable housing threshold?
12. What additional level of affordable housing would be likely to come forward as a result of the Council's divergence from Government policy in this regard, on an annual basis i.e. how many additional affordable homes would be delivered each year?

## Matter 11 – Community facilities

13. Is policy HC3 justified and effective?
14. What consideration has been given to the increase in demand for medical facilities as a result of the increase in population during the Plan period?
15. What new facilities are proposed and what is the justification for them?
16. How will they be funded and is any of the funding in doubt or subject to viability testing?
17. Is there a need for any additional faith/spiritual facilities?
18. Is the relocation of the Arts and Leisure centre justified?
19. What consideration has been given to the increase in demand for educational provision as a result in the increase in new homes and increased population during the Plan period and what increase in places is planned?
20. Is the proposed provision justified and based on a sound evidence base?
21. Should the Plan make provision for a hospice as suggested by some representors?

## Matter 14 – Neighbourhood Plans

22. Are there any adopted or emerging Neighbourhood Plans? If so are they in accordance with the strategy and policies in this Plan?
23. Close