

# **STEVENAGE LOCAL PLAN STAGE 2 EXAMINATION HEARINGS**

## **AGENDA – DAY 1 (morning)**

Tuesday 21 February 2017 at 10.00am

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

MATTER 4 – General Matters

MATTER 6 – General Housing Policies

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 1pm with a mid-morning break.

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

Matter 4 – General Matters

4. Is it clear from the Plan what supplementary planning documents are to be prepared? What are they, their status and purpose, and what is the programme for their preparation? Are important decisions that should be made in the Plan being delegated to these documents?
5. Where necessary, do policies make it clear that their geographic application is illustrated on the policies map?

6. Are there any policies in the Plan that do not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) or advice in Planning Practice Guidance?
7. Are there any gaps in policy coverage? Have other policies been considered and discounted?
8. Is the evidence base relating to such matters as housing, employment, retail, and flood risk up-to-date and relevant?
9. Does the Council have a programme for reviewing the key evidence base?
10. Overall, has the Plan being prepared with the objective of achieving sustainable development, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the Framework?

#### Matter 6 – General Housing Policies

11. Policies GD1 and SP8 both advise that the Council will implement the Governments optional Technical Standards (THS) and in the case of Policy GD1 reference is made to possible exceeding these standards. Planning Practice Guidance says 'Where a local planning authority (or qualifying body) wishes to require an internal space standard, they should only do so by reference in their Local Plan to the Nationally Described Space Standard' which is what is being done through these policies.

However the PPG goes on to say that '*where a need for internal space standards is identified, local planning authorities should provide justification for requiring internal space policies. Local planning authorities should take account of the following areas:*

- *need – evidence should be provided on the size and type of dwellings currently being built in the area, to ensure the impacts of adopting space standards can be properly assessed, for example, to consider any potential impact on meeting demand for starter homes.*
- *viability – the impact of adopting the space standard should be considered as part of a plan's viability assessment with account taken of the impact of potentially larger dwellings on land supply. Local planning authorities will also need to consider impacts on affordability where a space standard is to be adopted.*
- *timing – there may need to be a reasonable transitional period following adoption of a new policy on space standards to enable developers to factor the cost of space standards into future land acquisitions'.*

Can you provide evidence of this having been done. Also can you please provide the justification for the requirement in Policy GD1(j) to 'where possible, exceed the nationally described space standards'.

12. In May 2016 some notes were added to the table in the THS. Do the Council intend to add them to appendix c?
13. Have the space standards been taken into account in the viability assessment?
14. Has the impact on affordable homes been considered? Policy HO11 seeks to ensure that at least 50% of all new dwellings are Category 2: wheelchair accessible and adaptable. National Planning Practice Guidance advises that Local planning authorities should take account of evidence that demonstrates a clear need for housing for people with specific housing needs and plan to meet this need. Has the Council carried out a needs assessment? If so please provide the evidence to support this? Has the cost of providing it been included in viability testing?
15. Is there a need to restrict houses in multiple occupation in the borough?
16. What evidence is there for the need for self-build plots on some allocated housing sites, as required by paragraph 159 of the National Planning Policy Framework? Does the evidence correlate with the quantum being required?
17. Close