

THE FRIENDS OF THE FORSTER COUNTRY



'To preserve for all time the open green space north of Stevenage known as the Forster Country'

CONGESTION ON B197

DOCUMENT NUMBER FoFC 2016 PL / CO / 001 Rev 01

CONSIDERATION OF CONGESTION IN NORTH ROAD (B197)

REFERENCE
STEVENAGE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN 2011 to 2031
PUBLICATION DRAFT JANUARY 2016

REV	DATE	BY	CHKD	APPRD	MODIFICATIONS	STATUS
01	15/12/2016	J SPIERS		JCS		For Issue
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SUMMARY OF CHANGES	SECTION NUMBER	REVISIONS					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive summary, 1.1 b "the Plan does not IN deliver	1.1b	01					
Link contained too many characters – corrected	3.8	01					
Filename in footer corrected	Footer	01					

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Précis of main issues

- a) The Plan is unsound in respect of sustainability.
- b) The Plan does not deliver Policy SPC on Sustainable Transport.
- c) The B197 North Road is already the most congested and slowest in Stevenage.
- d) Building on the North Stevenage site will considerably exacerbate existing congestion problems.
- e) Numbers have been tabulated indicating the current worsening traffic flow situation on the B197 even before any building takes place on the North Stevenage site.
- f) Pictorial figures drawn from HCC reports show the current bad situation graphically.
- g) There is no mention of cycle paths within the North Stevenage

1.2 Conclusions

It is concluded that the North Stevenage site does not fulfil the SBC objectives relating to sustainability.

1.3 Recommendations

- a) It is recommended that the plans to build dwellings on the North Stevenage site be withdrawn.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Representations to SBC

In February 2016 the Friends of the Forster Country (FoFC) made representations to SBC on the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2031 – Publication draft – January 2016. This report states that the Local Plan is unsound as it will not be effective in delivering this Policy SPC on Sustainable Transport. This clauses in the Local Plan to which this report refers are 2.16, 3.34, 3.39, 4.3, 4.23, 4.30, 5.46 and 8.

2.2 Support for representation

This report seeks to state the reasons for the statement that the work done in producing the SBC Plan is incorrect and that the Plan is unsound.

3.0 NORTH ROAD CONGESTION

3.1 FoFC do not agree that the Plan is sound as it will not be effective in delivering this Policy SPC on Sustainable Transport.

3.2 North Road Stevenage already struggles to cope with traffic demands. If this Plan is implemented, it is likely that North Herts DC will also build just over the boundary on its site NS1. The Plan has not mentioned this extra load on road networks. The B197 North Road, Stevenage is the busiest in Stevenage at peak times according to HCC. This data on speeds and flows is considered below. It is also a major approach to Lister Hospital serving the whole of North Herts, Stevenage and many more distant areas. It is difficult to see how the road can be improved as there is no space to widen it to a dual carriageway. Nor is there room for a separate cycle track to connect the new houses to the existing network.

3.3 It is also the approach to a junction acknowledged to have congestion problems already, the junction with A602, more easily recognised as the north end of the Old Town High Street and part of a one-way system. There are some ideas within SBC documents in the Inquiry Library for improving this junction which may ease the tailbacks at present traffic levels but it is dubious if it will be sufficient to compensate for any extra traffic resulting from HO3 and North Herts DC site NS1. It is also frustratingly, a variation of a layout removed in living memory, reportedly on safety grounds. The statistics are given in http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/northherts-cms/files/transport_modelling_report_december_2014_o.pdf and also in documents in the Inquiry Library.

3.4 All these problems will be worsened by the traffic from hundreds of houses with the only exits from HO3 & North Herts DC's NS1 being onto this road. We do not advocate other exit points as they will cause similar problems be they towards Great Ashby or Graveley.

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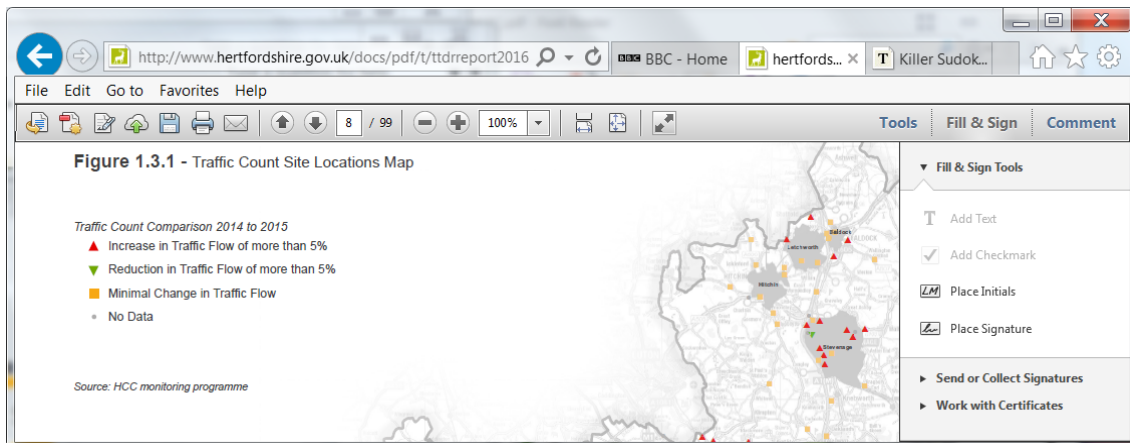
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3.5 Considering traffic flows. HCC say that annual average weekday traffic flow for the years 2005 to 2014 on North Road, Site 366 as below with the dip in 2012 assumed to be the result of the economic downturn.

2005:	9560	2010:	9778
2006:	8950	2011:	9895
2007:	9383	2012:	8563
2008:	9456	2013:	10947
2009:	9419	2014:	9477

The figure for 2015 has been given as 10760 and from experience we expect the figure for 2016 to be higher.

3.6 The same report Fig 1.3.1 shows the traffic has increased >5% in from 2014 to 2015, though the figure above is +13%



3.10 This is worrying as the road is deemed to be the Stevenage road with greatest congestion. This is also shown by reports on traffic speeds. The HCC report for 2016 at <http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/docs/pdf/t/ttdrreport2016.pdf> shows Congestion Indicators. The slowest roads with morning inbound speeds below 15mph are shown in black. This is the Stevenage section with North Road is in black – see below.

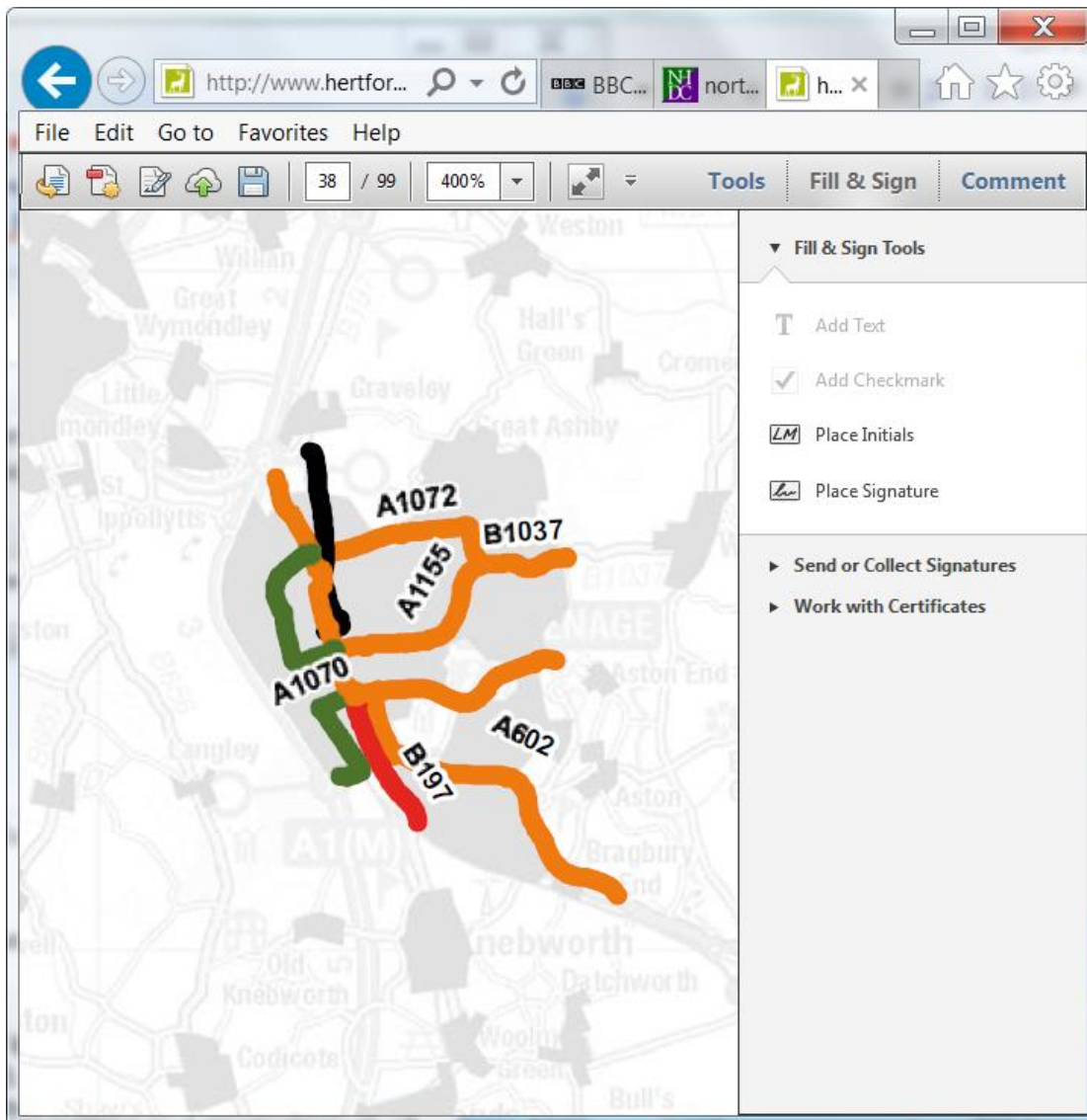
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3.8 A similar report also shows B197 as the slowest road in Stevenage during the morning peak. <http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/docs/pdf/tansfactsheet16.pdf> where red indicates speeds <15mph – see below.

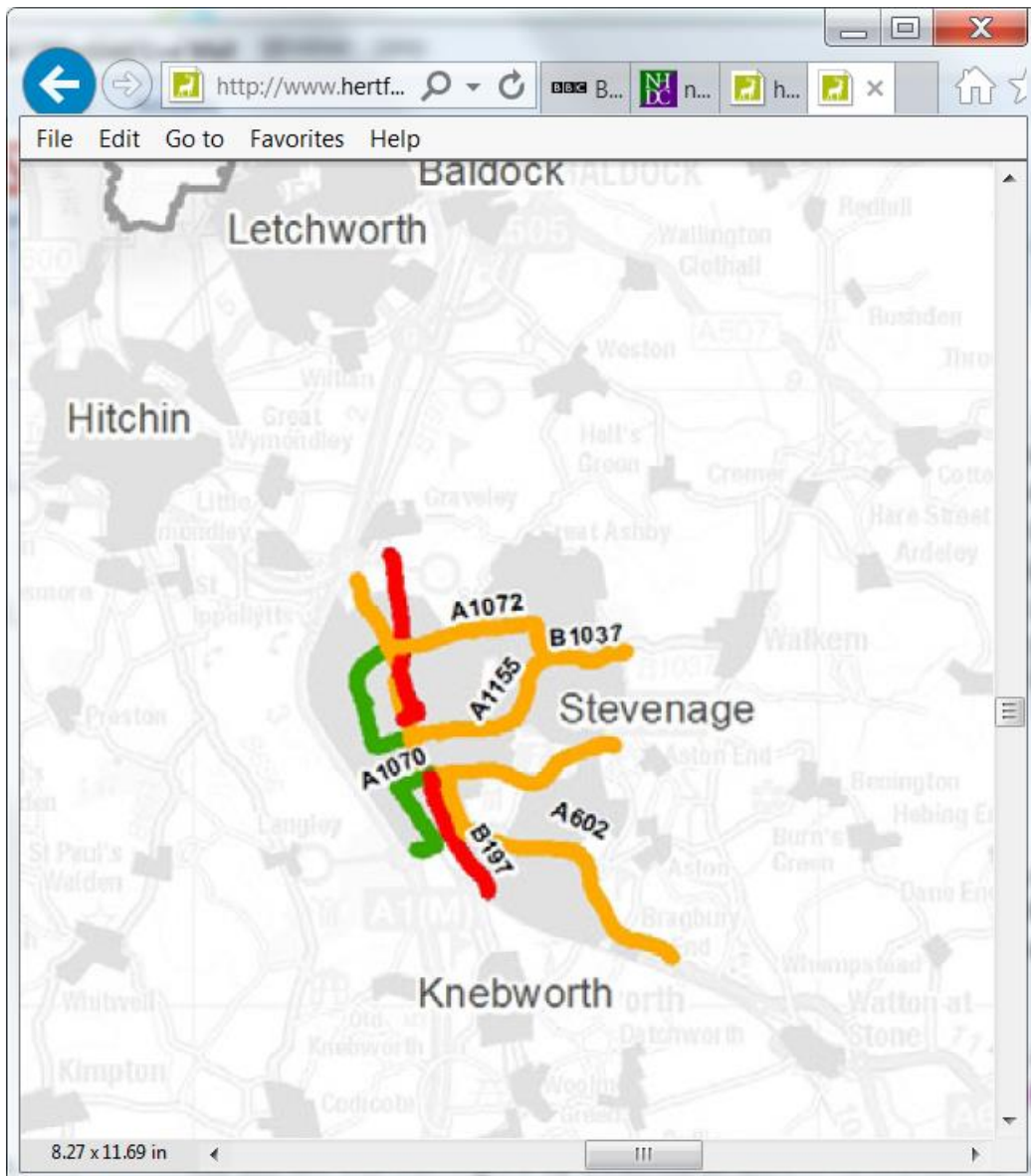
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3.9 Although there are plenty of mentions of cycling in the Local Plan we see no mention of cycle paths within the site or how to connect any with the provision within Stevenage. This is not surprising as there is no provision either side of the B197 north of Coreys Mill Lane (Lister Hospital) where the Stevenage cycle track system starts though with good approach to the main employment area but an awkward route into Stevenage Old & New Towns.