

Stevenage Borough Local Plan

Public Examination

Matter 20 Statement

February 2017



Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 - Public Examination

Statement by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC)

Matter 20 – Highway, transport and infrastructure matters

NB: SBC responses set out in blue font

1. *Are the parking standards set out in appendix B justified?*

- 1.1. The residential parking standards are taken from the Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document, adopted 17 January 2012 ([TI7](#)). The standards were revised in accordance with national guidance on parking provision.
- 1.2. To reflect the Mobility Strategy, the Council has suggested a modification to the Local Plan to include the cycle parking standards.

2. Is the closure of Lytton Way justified and has the effect on the surrounding road network been fully considered?

Justification for Lytton Way closure

2.1. The closure of Lytton Way is required to facilitate regeneration of the town centre. Stevenage Central Framework, June 2015 (ER2) explains that it is vital to the regeneration of Stevenage Central that it is better connected to those that live and work in the town. It states that the town centre currently operates largely in isolation from other key locations such as Gunnels Wood employment area, Roaring Meg Retail Park, the Old Town and to a lesser degree, the Leisure Park (para 2.1.11).

2.2. The Stevenage Central vision is supported by ten principles/ambitions, two of which are particularly relevant to the closure of Lytton Way:

*"7. To halt its unwelcome dominance, we will 'break' the Ring Road collar around the centre, **allowing east, surface-level pedestrian access east-west from Gunnels Wood to Bedwell**. Just inside the Ring Road, we will redevelop a number of our surface level car parks to provide for other purposes, whilst the remaining car parks will be intensified to ensure that there are adequate spaces to accommodate short-and long-stay parking need."*

and

*"8. There will be **clear public transport, cycle and walking links between the town centre and the complimentary 'offers' available in the High Street, the Leisure Park and the retail warehouse parks ...**"*

2.3. The closure of Lytton Way will create an east-west pedestrian and cycle link and provide land parcels to enable regeneration of the town centre. Appendix 1 is an extract from the Stevenage Central Framework which shows the links it will create. The importance of this is explained in the Stevenage Central Framework. Paragraph 2.2.4 sets out that:

"Many of the key streets and linkages in the existing town centre follow a north-south alignment. The Regeneration Plan shows how a new east-west route can connect the employment areas to the west with Stevenage Central via the station. This route will connect the Town Square to the station and beyond, moving through a sequence of public spaces."

2.4. Paragraph 2.2.5 emphasises that:

"Creating the new east-west pedestrian link is not enough. New sites must be created. The removal of Lytton Way is the only realistic way of providing land parcels of sufficient scale in the centre of the town. Without sites of this scale, regeneration will regress to piecemeal redevelopment and a major opportunity will be lost."

- 2.5. The justification for the closure of Lytton Way is outlined in the Local Plan at para 5.45. This states:
“The regeneration of Stevenage town centre is a key priority. This will require major infrastructure interventions, including the closure and removal of Lytton Way as a through route for traffic. This is critical to opening up the east-west axis between the Town Centre Gardens and the Leisure Park and releasing land for development.”
- 2.6. The Local Plan expands on the proposals in chapter 7 at para 7.20:
“The ring road collar around the town centre will be broken by radically altering the function of Lytton Way between Fairlands Way and Six Hills Way. This will enable a significantly regenerated and enlarged train station to be developed in close proximity to a replacement bus station, new office buildings to be provided, new multi-storey car parks to be built and new surface-level pedestrian connections to be made between the station and Town Square. This change will allow better connections to be made between the station and Town Square. The change will allow better connectivity for pedestrians within Stevenage Central and to the Gunnels Wood Employment Area.”
- 2.7. In summary, closure of Lytton Way is crucial to regeneration of the centre of Stevenage and enhancing walking and cycling and the use of buses and trains. It will provide a clear route from the Town Square, to the station and beyond.

Effect on the surrounding road network

- 2.8. Closure of Lytton Way has been included in transport modelling, namely Supplementary Paramics Modelling Overview, January 2017 (ED144). The Overview concludes that it is likely that when the Lytton Way closure is implemented, traffic demand will redistribute both geographically as well as temporally in a way that the Paramics model is not able to replicate (ED144, para 21).
- 2.9. Lytton Way closure was also been included in transport modelling Stevenage Local Plan Initial Transport Modelling, December 2016 (ED126) and Stevenage Town Centre Model S-Paramics Forecasting Model, August 2016 (ED109).
- 2.10. In addition, a Movement Plan is included in the Stevenage Central Framework, in relation to Lytton Way closure. This highlights that the approach will enable the use and promotion of more sustainable modes of travel in and around the town centre (ER2, para 2.4.18).
- 2.11. The Movement Plan includes the introduction of pedestrian priority routes as well as clear and convenient cycle routes/accesses to cycle hubs within the town centre (ER2, para 2.4.28).

3. Will the town centre proposals lead to a net loss in car parking for visitors to the town centre? If so, has the impact of this been assessed?

- 3.1. The Local Plan outlines that redevelopment of the town centre will require the rationalisation of existing car parking provision (para 8.47).
- 3.2. The Stevenage Central Framework (ER2) sets out that the space devoted to road carriageways and car parking is disproportionate (para 1.2.9) and that making more effective use of this land through redevelopment and re-provision of car parking is a key part of the Regeneration Plan (para 2.4.8).
- 3.3. The objective is to *“redevelop a number of our surface level car parks to provide for other purposes, whilst the remaining car parks will be intensified to ensure that there are adequate spaces to accommodate short-and long-stay parking need”* (ER2, principal 7).
- 3.4. The car parking proposals will see no net loss of existing car parking spaces. Future parking needs generated by new development in the town centre will be assessed in more detail as part of a future car parking strategy.

4. Are the preferred vehicular access points to strategic development set out in policy IT1 justified?

- 4.1. The preferred vehicular access points to strategic development set out in IT1 have been agreed in principle by Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority.
- 4.2. For site HO2: Stevenage West, the policy states the preferred access is via the existing road network at Bessemer Drive and Meadway. There are a limited number of access points into the site, of which these are the two best and link the site into the existing urban area of Stevenage, creating a sustainable form of development. The site promoter has developed proposals for the site using these access points. Policy HO2, criterion c builds on this, requiring improvements to the existing access routes across the A1(M), via Bessemer Drive and Meadway.
- 4.3. In relation to site HO3: North of Stevenage, the preferred access is from B197 North Road approximately 250 metres north of the junction with Granby Road. The site promoter has developed proposals for the site using this access point and a second access point onto the same road. The site requires two access points due to the number of dwellings and the B197 is the only suitable road for the accesses. Policy HO3, criterion b expands on this, requiring two access points to and from the site, which link effectively into the existing road, cycleway and pedestrian networks.
- 4.4. Site HO4: South East of Stevenage, the policy states the preferred access is from a new roundabout on the A602 approximately 200 metres east of the junction with Bragbury Lane. The site consists of two separate parcels and this is the only suitable access. This requirement is reflected in Policy HO4, criterion a, which requires a single point of access off the A602, in line with the Highways Authority requirements. As outlined in para 4.1, the roundabout has been agreed in principle with the Highways Authority.
- 4.5. For the town centre, the closure of Lytton Way has been agreed in principle with the Highways Authority and will involve the reconfiguration of junctions at Fairlands Way and Lytton Way to the north and Six Hills Way, Lytton Way and London Road to the south. The Fairlands Way and Lytton Way junction is covered by policies TC4 and TC6, as shown on the Inset Policies Map (LP6b). The Six Hills Way, Lytton Way and London Road junction is covered by policies TC4 and TC2. Policy TC4, principle i, requires the major reconfiguration of Lytton Way between Fairlands Way and Six Hill Way.

5. Is there a conflict between policy IT2 and Wymondley Neighbourhood Plan?

- 5.1. Policy IT2 states that *'The areas around Meadway and south of Todd's Green, as shown on the proposals map, are safeguarded.*

Planning permission will only be granted for any development proposals which would not physically inhibit or otherwise prejudice comprehensive development of land to the west of Stevenage within North Hertfordshire District in the period beyond 2026.'

- 5.2. The Wymondley designated Neighbourhood Plan area excludes an area in the south of the parish ([ORD4](#)), adjacent to the administrative boundary of Stevenage Borough. NHDC have designated this excluded area, and beyond, as 'safeguarded land' in line with their policy SP8:Housing e(ii) ([ORD1](#)).
- 5.3. The designated Wymondley Neighbourhood Plan area does not extend into this 'safeguarded' area.
- 5.4. Thus, there is no conflict between SBLP Policy IT2 and the Wymondley Neighbourhood Plan.

6. Are the 'west of Stevenage safeguarded corridors' (policy IT2) in the Green Belt and if so what are the implications of this? Is the land being 'safeguarded' or 'allocated'?

- 6.1. The areas around Meadway and south of Todd's Green in Policy IT2 are not in the Green Belt. The areas are safeguarded, rather than allocated, to enable the comprehensive development of land to the west of Stevenage within North Hertfordshire District.
- 6.2. This approach has been agreed with North Hertfordshire District Council as part of ongoing duty to co-operate discussions.
- 6.3. The supporting text for the Policy, at paragraph 8.11 explains that the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan safeguarded land to the west of Stevenage to meet the long-term needs of Stevenage.
- 6.4. This had been the agreement between both councils and was stated in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031, Preferred options, December 2014, para 12.255, available at <http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan-emerging-policy/draft-local-plan-2011-2031/local-plan-preferred>
- 6.5. Since Stevenage Borough Local Plan was submitted on 20 July 2016, North Hertfordshire published their Proposed Submission Local Plan 2011 - 2031, October 2016 ([ORD1](#)). Policy SP8 safeguards land to the west of the A1(M) at Stevenage, however it no longer states that this will be to meet the long-term needs of Stevenage.

7. In Policy IT3 is there a need to clarify what is meant by 'significant development'?

7.1. Yes, Stevenage Borough Council considers that Policy IT3 would benefit from clarification. The Council suggests replacing the reference to 'significant development proposals' with a reference to 'sites of 200 dwellings or more, including smaller sites being brought forward in phases that will cumulatively exceed this threshold'

7.2. The amended policy would read as follows:

"Planning permission for sites of 200 dwellings or more, including smaller sites being brought forward in phases that will cumulatively exceed this threshold, will be granted where applicants satisfactorily demonstrate how infrastructure needs arising from their proposals will be met.

This should be demonstrated through:

- a. An infrastructure assessment at outline application stage; and / or
- b. A detailed infrastructure phasing and delivery plan at reserves matters or full application stage.

Where appropriate, conditions, legal agreements or other mechanisms will be used to ensure that development is phased to coincide with the delivery of infrastructure."

7.3. This will provide clarification to the policy, in accordance with the supporting text at paragraph 8.17.

7.4. This suggested wording has been included in ED114, Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications.

8. *Should the Plan include a policy which secures electric charging points in connection with certain development?*

- 8.1. Yes, Stevenage Borough Council considers that this should be included as a requirement for the strategic sites HO2, HO3 and HO4. A criterion will be inserted into policies covering the strategic sites; HO2: Stevenage West; HO3: North of Stevenage; and HO4: South East of Stevenage. Suggested wording has been included in ED114, Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications.

Appendix 1: Extract from Stevenage Central Town Centre Framework, June 2015 (ER2)

