

Stevenage Borough Local Plan

Public Examination

Matter 21 Statement

February 2017

Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 - Public Examination

Statement by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC)

Matter 21 – Delivery and Monitoring

NB: SBC responses set out in blue font

1. Overall, does the Plan deal adequately with uncertainty? Is sufficient consideration given to monitoring and triggers for review?

- 1.1 SBC has sought to allow the SBLP sufficient flexibility to deal with any unforeseen elements or uncertainty that may arise over the Plan period.
- 1.2 With regard to housing numbers, the Plan has made allowance for a buffer within its figures and also the housing trajectory takes a conservative approach in its estimates of the 5yr housing land supply to avoid over-estimations. This allows for the non-implementation of some sites and spreads delivery (based on the circumstances of that site) if a more specific timescale is unknown.
- 1.3 The town centre policies strike an appropriate balance between the need for certainty and flexibility to allow for the unforeseen.
- 1.4 Employment opportunities have been maximised across the Borough to make provision for our identified need. In addition, SBC have two viable options for employment provision outside the Borough in North Herts and Central Bedfordshire.
- 1.5 Consideration of the monitoring and trigger reviews is set out under our answers to questions 2 and 3.

2. What are the intended mechanisms and timescales for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the policies and proposals in the Plan?

3. Is it sufficiently clear how the Plan will be monitored? If not, how could it be made clearer?

- 2.1 As set out in Chapter 15 of the SBLP, the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) is the intended mechanism for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the policies and proposals in the Plan. The AMR is produced on an annual basis, at the end of each financial year (31 March).
- 2.2 A monitoring framework has been drawn up for the SBLP and is set out on pages 180-182 of the Plan. This clearly sets out how the policies in the plan will be monitored to ensure they are meeting the Plan's overarching objectives.
- 2.3 The framework objectives relate directly to each chapter of the SBLP, which themselves have been taken from the NPPF. The framework then identifies the intention of the policies within each objective. It goes on to set targets for the SBLP e.g. complete at least 7,600 new homes between 2011 – 2031. Finally, the framework then identifies indicators against which SBC will quantitatively assess and monitor the performance of the SBLP to determine how well the policies are working and to clearly see whether the targets are being met.
- 2.4 The types of indicators used to monitor the SBLP differ depending on what we are trying to monitor and some indicators can fall into more than one category. The different types of indicators are set out below:
- **Contextual indicators** give background information. The SBLP policies will only have an indirect influence on these indicators. This is because other things will also decide how the results change. An example is that we can influence the number and type of jobs in Stevenage through our employment policies. However, other factors that we do not control will also have an effect. This might include the state of the economy or decisions made overseas. Because of this we do not set targets for contextual indicators.
 - **Output indicators** measure changes that are as a direct result of our planning policies. They include important information such as the amount of employment floorspace or number of new homes that have been built.
 - **Significant effects indicators** say what the social, environmental and economic impacts of our planning policies will be. These indicators help us to monitor the environmental assessments of our plans that we have to carry out by law.
- 2.5 One of the key elements of our monitoring work is an extensive survey of residential and commercial developments, to identify completion rates across the Borough. We also produce a SLAA each year to update the supply of land that is available to meet the targets of our Plan.
- 2.6 If there is insufficient supply of land, or other policy targets are not being met, it may be necessary to carry out a review or partial review of the Local Plan.

2.7 SBC will also assess the wider effects of the SBLP through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The SA considers indicators against which we can measure the social, environment and economic impacts of the SBLP. There is, inherently, an overlap of some indicators between the SA and the monitoring framework for the SBLP.