

Stevenage Borough Local Plan

Public Examination

Matter 4 Statement

January 2017

Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 - Public Examination

Statement by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC)

Matter 4 - General matters

NB: SBC responses set out in blue font

1. ***Is it clear from the Plan what supplementary planning documents (SPD's) 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?***
 - 1.1 SBC has not prepared any additional SPD's to those that currently sit alongside the [Adopted Local Plan 2004](#). The current SPD guidance that SBC use covers:
 - [Parking Provision](#);
 - [Stevenage Design guide](#); and
 - 7 Conservation Area Management Plans covering:
 - [Broadwater](#)
 - [Old Town](#)
 - [Orchard Road](#)
 - [Shephall Green](#)
 - [St Nicholas](#)
 - [Symonds Green](#)
 - [Town Square](#)
 - 1.2 The SPD documents are for guidance only, important decisions that should be made in the plan are not being delegated to these documents.
 - 1.3 However, the residential parking standards that are set out in the Parking Provision SPD are also set out in Appendix B of the Local Plan for completeness and it is proposed to add the non-residential car parking standards as discussed in the Strategic Highways hearing session.
 - 1.4 The LDS does not identify the preparation of any new pieces of SPD. Any future SPD will follow national guidance and will not seek to make important decisions that should be made in the local plan.

2. Where necessary, do policies make it clear that their geographic application is illustrated on the policies map?

2.1 Policies that refer to a geographic area on the Proposals Map, or the Stevenage Central and Old Town Inset maps, make it clear in writing in the Policy and are set out in the table below.

Geographic application	Policy	Illustrated on
Allocated Sites for Employment Development	EC1	Proposals Map
Gunnels Wood Employment Area and Edge-of-Centre Zone	EC2	Proposals Map
Gunnels Wood Industrial Zones	EC3	Proposals Map
Pin Green Employment Area	EC6	Proposals Map
Town Centre	TC1	Stevenage Central Inset Map
Southgate Park MOA	TC2	Stevenage Central Inset map
Central West MOA	TC3	Stevenage Central Inset map
Station Gateway MOA	TC4	Stevenage Central Inset map
Central Core MOA	TC5	Stevenage Central Inset map
Northgate MOA	TC6	Stevenage Central Inset map
Marshgate MOA	TC7	Stevenage Central Inset map
Town Centre Shopping Areas	TC8	Stevenage Central Inset map
High Street Shopping Area	TC9	Old Town Inset map
High Street Primary and Secondary Frontages	TC10	Old Town Inset map
New Convenience Retail Provision	TC11	Proposals Map
Strategic Development Access Points	IT1	Proposals Map

Geographic application	Policy	Illustrated on
West of Stevenage Safeguarded Corridors	IT2	Proposals Map
Housing Allocations	HO1	Proposals Map
Stevenage West	HO2	Proposals Map
North of Stevenage	HO3	Proposals Map
South East of Stevenage	HO4	Proposals Map
Gypsy and Traveller Provision	HO12	Proposals Map
District, Local and Neighbourhood Centres	HC1	Proposals Map
The Health Campus	HC3	Proposals Map
New Health, Social and Community Facility	HC5	Proposals Map
Former Barnwell East Secondary School	HC9	Proposals Map
Green Belt	GB1	Proposals Map
Flood Storage Reservoirs and Functional Flooplain	FP4	Proposals Map
Principal Open Spaces	NH1	Proposals Map
Wildlife Sites	NH2	Proposals Map
Green Corridors	NH3	Proposals Map
Green Links	NH4	Proposals Map
Areas of Archaeological Significance	NH9	Proposals Map
Conservation Areas	NH10	Proposals Map

3. 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?

- 3.1 Our affordable housing policy does not accord with the [House of commons: Written Statement \(HCWS50\)](#). This issue is covered in more detail in our answer to Question 7 in our Matter 7 Statement.

4. Are there any gaps in policy coverage? Have other policies been considered and discounted?

- 4.1 SBC does not consider there to be any gaps in policy coverage in the SBLP.
- 4.2 Some other policies have been discounted in the development of the SBLP that were policy in the Adopted Local Plan 2004. These policies are set out in Appendix A – Superseded policies, in the SBLP
- 4.3 The SBLP makes no provision for the following policies as they are now either not appropriate or national policy deals with the issue sufficiently:

District Local Plan Second Review Policy	Reasons for being discounted in the SBLP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Rural Areas 	<p>Change of policy:</p> <p>The SBLP identifies one previous Local Rural Area site for housing, employment and healthcare facility development. The other Local Rural Area site is designated under Policy NH4:Green Link and NH2: Wildlife sites</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail and leisure proposals in employment areas 	<p>Change of policy:</p> <p>The SBLP does not permit alternative uses in the identified employment areas</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rail freight provision 	<p>Change of policy:</p> <p>Following a change in government approach, the SBLP does not specifically seek to make provision for rail freight</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of office accommodation 	<p>Change of policy:</p> <p>The Government has extended Permitted Development Rights for office to residential conversions</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement residential accommodation 	<p>Change of approach:</p> <p>This policy applied to residential accommodation in the town centre</p> <p>The SBLP pro-actively seeks a substantial increase in residential units in the town centre</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New free standing shops 	<p>Change of approach:</p> <p>The previous policy (TR15) was under-utilised and is no longer considered appropriate for the SBLP</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural habitats in adjoining local authorities 	<p>Covered by national policy</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other sites of nature conservation importance 	<p>Covered by national policy</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunications equipment developments 	<p>Change of approach:</p> <p>Applications will be determined under GD1</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play centres 	<p>Change of approach:</p> <p>The SBLP considers neighbourhood facilities and their provision in Chapter 11:Healthy Communities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of allotments 	<p>Change of approach:</p> <p>The SBLP considers allotments as part of its open space strategy. They are subject to a separate regime which provides adequate protection</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse and pony route 	<p>Change of policy:</p> <p>These routes are considered to be adequately covered by the policies that refer to Principal Open Spaces (NH1) and Green Links (NH4)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest houses 	<p>Change of policy:</p> <p>This is a designated Town Centre use in NPPF, Such proposals would be subject to the sequential test</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cemetery extension at Weston Road 	<p>Development completed:</p> <p>The cemetery extension has been completed and is not required in the SBLP</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisements 	<p>Change of approach:</p> <p>Applications will be determined under GD1</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service accesses onto Primett Road and Church Lane 	<p>Change of policy:</p> <p>The problems that the policy sought</p>

	to address have not arisen.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of employment land 	<p>Policy superfluous:</p> <p>Identified areas for employment land (Policy EC1) are shown on the SBLP Proposals Map</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cemetery provision 	<p>Policy superfluous:</p> <p>No need has been identified for provision of another cemetery in the Borough</p>

4.4 SBC considers that the policy coverage in the SBLP is comprehensive to the issues and needs identified as pertinent to the Borough.

5. *Is the evidence base relating to such matters as housing, employment, retail, and flood risk up-to-date and relevant?*

- 5.1 The SBLP evidence base is up to date on matters such as housing, employment, retail and flood risk.
- 5.2 The dates of our evidence studies are set out in our [Examination Library](#) and also in our [Examination Documents](#).
- 5.3 SBC has worked consistently, following the submission of the SBLP, to ensure that the evidence base has remained up to date and proportionate.

6. Does the Council have a programme for reviewing the key evidence base?

- 6.1 SBC intends to review the LDS once the SBLP has been adopted. The updated LDS will then programme in the review of the key evidence base of the SBLP.

7. 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?

- 7.1 SBC can confirm that the SBLP has been prepared with the objective of achieving sustainable development and we accept that planning must be a creative exercise in finding new and different ways to enhance and improve the places in which we live our lives.
- 7.2 The SBLP takes account of the NPPF and its objectives.
- 7.3 The golden thread of a presumption in favour of sustainable development is evident in the Strategic Policies, particularly SP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development, and SP2: Sustainable development in Stevenage.
- 7.4 This golden thread is continued in the detailed policies such as IT6: Sustainable transport, HO2 – HO4: Urban extensions, FP2 – FP4: Flood Zones and Functional Floodplain etc.
- 7.5 Taken as a whole, the SBLP has been prepared with the golden thread of sustainable development running through it and seeks to deliver the most sustainable form of development for Stevenage.