

Stevenage Borough Local Plan

# Public Examination

Matter 3 Statement

December 2016



# **Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 - Public Examination**

## **Statement by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC)**

### **Matter 3 – Strategic Transport**

#### **NB: SBC responses set out in blue font**

#### **1. What responses have been received from Highways England in relation to the most recent transport modelling work (S-Paramics Model Forecasting Report – Aug 2016)?**

- 1.1 Stevenage Borough Council has yet to receive the final response from Highways England in relation to the most recent transport modelling work (ED109) however, it understands that there are no issues of principle and an MOU to this effect will be signed.
- 1.2 Stevenage Borough Council understands that Highways England met with Hertfordshire County Council in October 2016. An outcome of that meeting was that Highways England would commission a peer review of the Hertfordshire County Council modelling work.
- 1.3 The Highways England peer review of the transport modelling work is ongoing and Stevenage Borough Council understands that this is due to be completed on 16 December 2016.
- 1.4 A further meeting took place on 9 November 2016 between Highways England, Hertfordshire County Council, Stevenage Borough Council and North Hertfordshire District Council. At that meeting it was established that when the results of the Highways England peer review of the Hertfordshire County Council transport modelling work have been received, Highways England and Stevenage Borough Council will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding which will state that there is no issue of principle in relation to the Local Plan proposals.

#### **2 The transport modelling report at paragraphs 1.1.25 and 1.1.26 identifies some significant congestion issues both in the 2021 model scenarios and the 2031 scenarios. Of particular concern is the 2031 model which shows a gridlock situation. Have the Council considered the mitigation measures necessary to prevent such a situation occurring?**

- 2.1 Yes. Further assessment work which includes transport modelling has been undertaken. Following publication of the Hertfordshire County Council transport modelling report in August 2016 (ED109), Stevenage Borough Council commissioned transport modelling work to inform the Stevenage Local Plan (ED126) and, independently Vectos to advise on the required mitigation package likely to be required in practice. The Transport Technical Paper (ED127) sets out the approach to transport in Stevenage, including how the model outputs have informed the mitigation strategy. This work will inform a review of the IDP in relation to the highways and transportation proposals. The review will prioritise

active travel (walking and cycling), public transport and other sustainable modes of travel to be more consistent with government policy.

**3      *Was this modelling based on the same timescales for delivery of individual projects as those set out in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) [CD TI1]?***

- 3.1      The transport modelling (TI5, ED109 and ED126) is based on the same time period as the Stevenage Infrastructure Delivery Plan which runs to 2031.
- 3.2      The timescales for the projects identified in the Stevenage Borough Council Preferred Option Housing Assessment – Transport Modelling Report 2014 (TI5) are at 2031 and this is the same timescale identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IT1).
- 3.3      The timescales for the delivery of individual projects in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan were provided by Hertfordshire County Council who also commissioned the transport modelling work (TI5).
- 3.4      Since the Stevenage Borough Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 21 July, Hertfordshire County Council published the Stevenage Town Centre Model S Paramics (ED109) and Stevenage Borough Council has commissioned modelling work (also to the same timescales) and also reviewed the approach to transport and the mitigation measures needed. Further detail is set out in the Transport Technical Paper (ED127).

**4      *Have the costs of upgrading the strategic transport infrastructure that the modelling is predicated on and other likely infrastructure been identified in the IDP and has the necessary funding been secured? If not, why not and what are the implications for the delivery of the Plan?***

- 4.1      The costs of upgrading the strategic transport infrastructure and other infrastructure as set out in the IDP have all been identified and the Council is satisfied that it is all fundable. However, the Council is reviewing the Infrastructure Delivery Plan in light of the transport modelling and transport technical paper. This will reappraise the need for transport improvements, taking an approach which is more consistent with government policy to prioritise improvements. The approach will be to prioritise active travel (walking and cycling), public transport and other sustainable modes of travel. The priority will be on measures which are more effective at accommodating likely travel demand and at mitigating the effects of development growth. The measures are also expected to be capable of delivery at less cost.
- 4.2      The Stevenage Infrastructure Delivery Plan, July 2016 (TI1) includes the schemes identified for the Stevenage area in the Stevenage Borough Council Preferred Option Housing Assessment – Transport Modelling Report 2014 (TI5).

- 4.3 These transport infrastructure schemes and other likely infrastructure are included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The AECOM Infrastructure Funding Strategy (IT2) which reviewed the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and developed an infrastructure funding strategy, found that there is sufficient funding available to cover the cost of delivering the infrastructure needed for the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (paragraph 4.6.1).

**5     *The Council in their response to my initial questions indicated that funding is available to cover the costs of delivering critical and essential infrastructure. Is that still the case and if so can the Council provide an updated appendix 1 to the Council's IDP, so that it is clear how individual transport related projects will be funded, including the public transport projects.***

- 5.1 Yes but a revised appendix is now required in order to address the revised mitigation priorities. The Council will produce an updated appendix 1 to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and this will be available on Friday 13 January 2017.

**6     *The indicative delivery date in the IDP for A1(M) Junctions 7 and 8 slip roads work is shown as 2021 to 2031. Can a more precise date be provided? If these works are not carried out until 2031 will this have an effect on the ability to deliver the allocated sites?***

- 6.1 The initial design work for the A1(M) SMART motorway junctions 6 to junction 8 is currently underway and is due to be completed in March 2017. The detailed design work will then follow. Construction is estimated to take 12 to 30 months, commencing in 2019 to 2021. The A1(M) junction 7 and slip roads work will be included in the main scheme. The indicative delivery date for this has been updated to 2019 to 2021, rather than 2021 to 2031 as stated on page 91 of the Stevenage Infrastructure Delivery Plan (TI1).

- 6.2 In relation to the A1(M) junction 8 slip roads, this will be included in the initial design work which is currently underway. There is less certainty about whether this will be delivered in advance of the indicative delivery date of 2021 to 2031 as stated on page 91 of the Stevenage Infrastructure Delivery Plan (TI1). Stevenage Borough Council is not aware that any of the allocated sites require delivery of this slip road. Stevenage Borough Council is keeping in close contact with both Highways England and Hertfordshire County Council and will update the inspector if further information about the delivery date becomes available.