



**Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government**

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Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP
*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities
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Dear Sharon

Stevenage Borough Council's Local Plan

A request was received from Mr Stephen McPartland MP to intervene in the Stevenage Local Plan (the "Plan"). The request raised a number of issues including Plan policies and supporting text covering the regeneration of Stevenage train station and town centre.

On the 13 November 2017, Stevenage Borough Council (the "Council"), pursuant to the powers in section 21A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, was directed not to take any step in connection with the adoption of the Plan, while the issues identified above were considered further.

I have now had the opportunity to consider the issues and your Council's representations. In light of recent assurances from your Council on the provision of additional clarity and certainty on matters including community and wider stakeholder engagement, accountability and governance, I have decided to withdraw the holding direction on the Stevenage Local Plan, on the understanding that, your Council will:

- Timetable the preparation a statutory Area Action Plan for the Stevenage 'Station Gateway' area (identified in the Local Plan as site TC4). The timetable will be published in your Local Development Scheme document before or at the same time as the Local Plan is adopted, and the should specify the adoption of the Area Action Plan in December 2020 or sooner.
- Publish for public consultation a Master Plan for the regeneration of the Stevenage Town Centre sites identified in the Local Plan as TC5 and TC2.
- Designate a lead Councillor and lead official to be responsible for progressing the preparation and implementation of the Area Action Plan, and for the implementation of the Local Plan itself,
- Provide monthly updates to MHCLG on preparation of the Area Action Plan,
- Remove references in the Local Plan to a new train station before adoption.

I am committed to supporting Stevenage achieve its full potential and will ensure my department offers you the advice and support needed to facilitate tangible delivery on the ground. I am happy to ask Homes England to provide support, advice and delivery capability to ensure that the regeneration proceeds effectively. And you will have seen the announcement on the Stronger Towns Fund. My officials stand ready to discuss how Stevenage could potentially benefit from this, and what the department can do more broadly to assist Stevenage.

Separate to the above issues, I remain keen to see progress on the regeneration of the town centre. You have agreed that the Council will work with the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and other stakeholders to create a new, independent, unincorporated partnership body to oversee the town centre regeneration. This partnership will have an independent Chair and will replace Stevenage First. To ensure robust scrutiny, local businesses, the local Member of Parliament, and for a limited period a senior MHCLG official, will be invited to join the partnership's board.

Finally, when your Council review its Local Plan, which should be done in line with paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework, I would take this opportunity to encourage you to bring forward higher density developments on previously developed land within Stevenage's existing built up area.

My officials will be in touch with your officers shortly to discuss next steps.



RT HON JAMES BROKENSHIRE