

Meeting Cabinet
Portfolio Area Environment and Regeneration
Date 5 June 2024



LOCAL PLAN REVIEW AND REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight to Members the next steps in the planning process with the Local Plan Review (Appendix A and B), Local Development Scheme (Appendix C) and Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix D).
- 1.2 It is important to note that the Local Plan Review, at this stage, consists of a Partial Review and Update of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, adopted May 2019.
- 1.3 As such, the scope of the review to policies and supporting text is limited to factual and necessary changes only, related to key drivers of change since the Plan was adopted in 2019. Other wider changes will be considered for the next stage of the Local Plan Review, a Full Review of the Plan, from 2025.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the progress with and content of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update.
- 2.2 Approve the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update for public consultation in June 2024, for not less than 6 weeks.
- 2.3 Approve a revised Local Development Scheme and note the timescales for a Local Plan Review.
- 2.4 Approve a revised Statement of Community Involvement.
- 2.5 Note that the comments of the Planning & Development Committee and the Environment & Economy Select Committee will be sought and considered on the content of this Cabinet Report.
- 2.6 Note that delegated authority will be given to the Assistant Director: Planning & Regulation in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, to make changes to the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, prior to going out to public consultation.
- 2.7 Note that informal engagement with key stakeholders will continue, ahead of and during public consultation on the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update.

3 BACKGROUND

Stevenage Borough Local Plan

- 3.1 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan [BD1] was adopted on 22 May 2019. The Plan sets out a spatial vision for the town to 2031 and contains detailed land use policies for the Borough. The Plan superseded the District Plan Second Review (adopted 2004) as the statutory Local Plan for the Borough and is used to determine applications for planning permission.
- 3.2 The preparation of Local Plans is subject to an extensive legal framework, as set out in relevant acts and regulations and interpreted through case law. This is supplemented by national planning policies and guidance which set out the clear principles and expectations of the planning system.
- 3.3 The Plan was adopted following a lengthy Holding Direction process, following Examination in Public of the Plan by the Secretary of State which concluded in October 2017.
- 3.4 The Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG, now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities or DLUHC) issued a temporary Holding Direction to prevent the Council from adopting the Plan, so that he could consider representations from the local MP largely relating to town centre regeneration and green belt issues.
- 3.5 The Holding Direction was lifted on 25 March 2019 by the Secretary of State, providing a resolution to the issue. The letter from the Secretary of State [BD2] withdrew the direction on the understanding that the Council commit to the following actions:
 - Update the Local Development Scheme (to be adopted before or at the same time as the Local Plan is adopted) to include the preparation of an Area Action

Plan (AAP) for the Stevenage 'Station Gateway' area (Site TC4 in the Local Plan). The AAP should be timetabled for adoption in December 2020 or sooner.

- Provide monthly updates to MHCLG on preparation of the Area Action Plan;
- 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.
- Remove references in the Local Plan to a new train station before adoption.

3.6 At the Cabinet (as Executive) meeting on 30 April 2019 [BD3], it was resolved:

- That the outcomes of the Main Modifications (and associated Sustainability Appraisal) consultation be noted;
- That the content of the Inspector's Report be noted;
- That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be informed that the Cabinet (as Executive)'s initial proposal is to recommend to Council to accept the Inspector's recommendation to adopt the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, incorporating main and minor modifications, and associated Proposals Map, and also to revoke the District Plan Second Review 2004.

3.7 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan was subsequently adopted on 22 May 2019, subject to a 6-week legal challenge period.

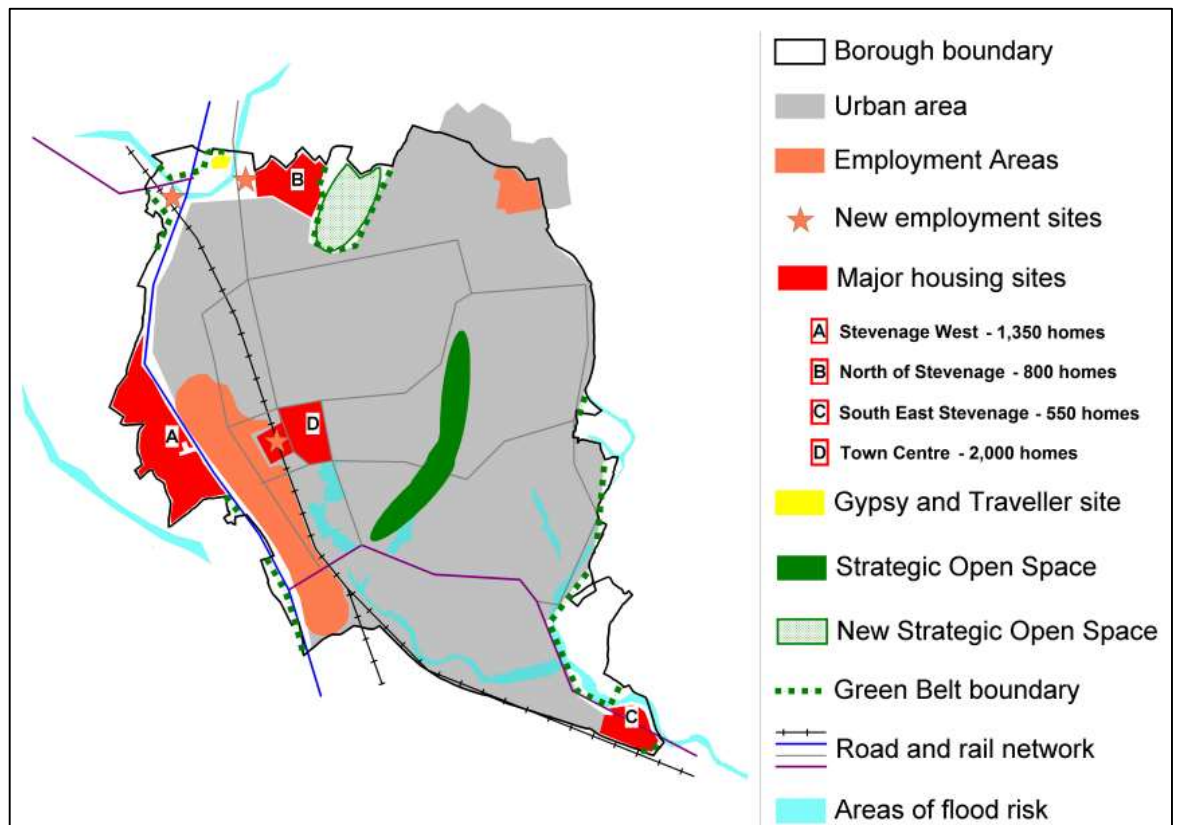
3.8 The plan contains three main sections:

- Part I: Introduction and context – This section explains how the planning system works and why the Local Plan is important. It provides background information about Stevenage and the wider area. It sets a vision for the future of the town.
- Part II: Strategic policies – These provide guidance on the main issues that the plan addresses. It sets out our overall approach to topics such as housing and employment. It sets the key targets that the plan will meet. These are the policies that any neighbourhood plans will need to follow.
- Part III: Detailed policies and delivery – These are the detailed requirements that we will apply to individual planning applications to make sure that our vision and strategic policies can be achieved.

3.9 The 2019 Local Plan contains 13 Strategic Policies, covering the areas of sustainable development, economy, a vital Town Centre, infrastructure and transport, high quality homes, good design, healthy communities, Green Belt, climate change, flooding and pollution, and the natural and historic environment. Policies are as follows:

SP1: *Presumption in favour of sustainable development*
 SP2: *Sustainable development in Stevenage*
 SP3: *A strong, competitive economy*
 SP4: *A vital Town Centre*
 SP5: *Infrastructure*
 SP6: *Sustainable transport*
 SP7: *High quality homes*
 SP8: *Good design*
 SP9: *Healthy communities*
 SP10: *Green Belt*
 SP11: *Climate change, flooding and pollution*
 SP12: *Green infrastructure and the natural environment*
 SP13: *The historic environment*

- 3.10 The “Detailed Policies” section of the 2019 Local Plan then contains 10 chapters, broadly expanding on the themes within the 13 strategic policies in Part 2 of the Local Plan and a total of 73 policies on a wide range of planning policy topics, relevant to Stevenage.
- 3.11 The Local Plan Policies Map [BD4] complements the detailed policies in the Local Plan and is the spatial representation of our spatial development strategy.
- 3.12 This is supplemented by the Local Plan Key Diagram, which summarises our strategic approach to planning the town to 2031:



3.13 Through previous evidence gathering, monitoring and environmental assessments a series of key challenges were identified, that the 2019 Local Plan should address. These included:

- Geography and population: Stevenage Borough is 'under bounded' and surrounded by Green Belt. The urban area already extends beyond the local authority boundary. There are not the types or amount of brownfield land to build on that you might find in other areas. This is because most of the town was built in the last 50 years. Stevenage is the most deprived local authority area in Hertfordshire. There are some areas of serious deprivation, particularly in the Bedwell neighbourhood.
- Housing: There is a lack of affordable homes. Entry-level housing costs seven times more than salaries. Affordable housing completions barely keep pace with sales through Right to Buy. The Development Corporation mainly built homes for 'blue collar' working families. More than half of our housing stock is terraced homes. Only one in every eight homes are detached. There is a lack of more expensive homes to attract higher earners.
- Employment and retail: People living in Stevenage earn less than people living elsewhere in Hertfordshire and are employed in lower grade jobs. There is a lack of high-quality office space in or around the town centre while our employment areas face competition from other land uses. The town centre needs investment. It struggles to compete with surrounding towns and must adapt to meet the needs of the 21st Century. The amount of shopping floorspace outside of the town centre is larger than the amount inside. There is pressure to allow traditional 'high street' retailers to move out of centre. Many neighbourhood centres require regeneration and renewal.
- Design: Some development designs and layouts that were innovative and exciting in the 1950s are now criticised for encouraging crime, anti-social behaviour and other problems. Many people opposed the creation of a New Town at Stevenage. This negative perception of the town still persists among parts of the population today. Most of the buildings in the town were built between the 1950s and 1970s and are coming to the end of their useful life.
- Health, education and skills: Life expectancy is lower than the Hertfordshire average. There are higher than average levels of smoking, obesity, physical inactivity and premature deaths from heart disease and cancer. Stevenage residents have fewer qualifications than the Hertfordshire average. Less than one in every four Stevenage residents is qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above. This compares to one in three across the rest of Hertfordshire. There is a mismatch between skills and jobs. Residents earn less than people who work in the town. Higher paid jobs are held by people who commute in from elsewhere. Aspirations are low. Many pupils leave school at 16. There are low levels of progression into higher education or higher earning jobs.
- Environment and transport: There are many open spaces in the town but some urban spaces are of poor quality and are not well used by the public. Many of our designated parks are in fact recreation or sports grounds. There is a Site of Special Scientific Interest immediately adjacent to the Borough boundary at Knebworth Woods. The A1(M) narrows to two lanes between junctions 6 and 8. There are frequent peak hour tailbacks. Trains are full at peak times while the cycle and pedestrian network is underused.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Recommendation 2.1: That Cabinet note the progress with and content of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update.

- 4.1 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan [BD1] was adopted in May 2019. As referred to earlier in this Report (paragraph 3.5), adoption of the Local Plan was realised after a long process in which the Plan was placed under a Holding Direction from the Secretary of State at the time. One of the conditions for lifting this Holding Direction, and therefore releasing the Local Plan for adoption, was that an Area Action Plan for the Station area be developed.

Developments since Local Plan Adoption in 2019 – National

- 4.2 Steps are being taken to maximise the number of authorities who can make use of policy changes around plan-making, intended to be introduced by the Government's suggested National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revisions in Spring 2023, before the revised plan-making system set out in the Government's Levelling Up Bill is introduced in late 2024 [BD5].
- 4.3 The Government's Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) was passed and became law on 26 October 2023 [BD6].
- 4.4 The LURA is designed to speed up the planning system, hold developers to account, cut bureaucracy, and encourage more councils to put in place plans to enable the building of new homes.
- 4.5 The measures in the Government's LURA will:
- Put local people at the heart of development – making it easier to put local plans in place and requiring design codes that set out where homes will be built and how they will look. These plans will deliver more homes in a way that works for communities.
 - Boost local services – requiring developers to deliver vital infrastructure. This will put an end to lifeless edge-of-town developments with no community assets and ensure developers deliver the schools, doctors' surgeries and public services communities need and expect.
 - Rebalance the housing and land markets – giving local councils the power to increase council tax on empty homes and reforming compensation for compulsory purchase orders by removing 'hope value' where justified.
 - Encourage developers to get building – giving communities updates on the progress of development and giving councils the chance to consider slow build-out rates when approving planning.
 - Bring high streets back to life – giving councils the powers to work directly with landlords to bring empty buildings back in to use by local businesses and community groups through high street rental auctions. It will also make it faster for local authorities to give hospitality businesses permission to use outdoor seating.
- 4.6 The NPPF was last updated on 20 December 2023 [BD7]. Key suggestions by Government for plan-making in the future for Stevenage Borough Council to consider, include:
- Plan-makers will have until 30 June 2025 to submit their local plans, neighbourhood plans, minerals and waste plans, and spatial development strategies for independent examination under the existing legal framework. The government is also proposing that, to be examined under existing legislation, all independent examinations of local plans, minerals and waste plans and spatial

development strategies must be concluded, with plans adopted by 31 December 2026.

- Authorities that do not meet the 30 June 2025 submission deadline for 'old-style' plans will need to prepare plans under the new plan-making system.
- Authorities will be required to start work on new plans by, at the latest, five years after adoption of their previous plan, and to adopt that new plan within 30 months. Plans that will become more than five years old during the first 30 months of the new system will continue to be considered 'up-to-date' for decision-making purposes for 30 months after the new system starts.
- Authorities will no longer be able to prepare supplementary planning documents (SPDs) in the revised planning system. Instead, they will be able to prepare Supplementary Plans, which will be afforded the same weight as a local plan or minerals and waste plan. The government proposes that, when the new system comes into force (expected late 2024), existing SPDs will remain in force for a time-bound period; until the local planning authority is required to adopt a new-style plan. Current SPDs will automatically cease to have effect at the point at which authorities are required to have a new-style plan in place.
- The Government ran a consultation in 2023 [BD5] on how National Development Management Policies (NDMPs) will be implemented. This covered planning considerations to apply regularly in decision-making across England, such as general policies for conserving heritage assets, and preventing inappropriate development in the Green Belt and areas of high flood risk. Before any NDMP was designated by the Secretary of State, there would be a public consultation.

4.7 The wide-ranging changes to the Use Classes Order (1 September 2020) will have a large impact on our Town Centre and retail policies as well as other policies in the current Local Plan [BD8].

4.8 There are a wide range of emerging national level policies and guidance that will have a potential bearing on revised policies in the Stevenage Local Plan Review. These include:

- Government's Environmental Improvement Plan – contains goals regarding water, waste, pesticides etc.
- Natural England have launched their Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework – this has GI principles, advisory standards, planning and design guide and a process journey. Digital data is available to all.
- National Design Code supporting the climate change agenda.
- Further guidance on energy production, distribution and use.

Developments since Local Plan Adoption in 2019 – Regional and Sub-Regional

4.9 Stevenage Borough Council is one of ten local authorities within the county of Hertfordshire. A strong governance structure exists for planning in the county and as such a number of regional and sub-regional strategies exist which will have a bearing on a Local Plan Review for Stevenage. These include:

- Hertfordshire County Council strategies including Local Transport Plan 4, Local Transport Plan 5 (emerging), Electric Vehicle Strategy, Health Impact Assessments
- Emerging North East Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan – for five authorities in Hertfordshire (Stevenage, North Hertfordshire, East Hertfordshire, Welwyn Hatfield and Broxbourne) – planning a sub-regional strategy to 2050.
- Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) – relates to climate change adaptation and resilience action plans and projects.

<https://www.hccsp.org.uk/hertfordshire-climate-change-and-sustainability-partnership.aspx>

- Hertfordshire Minerals & Waste Plan – authorities liaise with Hertfordshire County Council under the Duty to Co-Operate and have a Statement of Common Ground in place with Hertfordshire County Council on Minerals and Waste matters. <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/planning-in-hertfordshire/minerals-and-waste-planning/local-plan.aspx>
- Education planning – extensive dialogue with Hertfordshire County Council as the education authority.

Developments since Local Plan Adoption in 2019 – Local

4.10 The key challenges identified in the Local Plan in 2019 (paragraph 3.13 of this Report) still remain; officers in the Planning Policy team, in their work since adoption of the Local Plan in 2019, have experienced a series of developments in development practice, policy application and general changes that are relevant to an initial review of the Local Plan. These include, but are not limited to:

- Climate Change agenda.
- 5-Year Housing Land Supply.
- Economic and employment changes.
- Town Centre Regeneration.
- Viability of Local Plan sites and wider viability testing of planning policies.
- Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan.
- Sustainable and Active Travel.
- Health and Wellbeing.
- Progress with Local Plan Strategic Site Allocations.
- Changes to Use Classes Order.
- General application of planning policies when determining planning applications.
- Recent work and forthcoming evidence updates, including Article 4 Directions, Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), Sports & Playing Pitch Strategy Refresh, wide range of other potential evidence updates that are being considered.

4.11 Since the adoption of the Local Plan in 2019, a number of positive and substantial developments have been achieved or are in progress, that have helped to raise the profile of the town. These include, but are not limited to:

- Major strategic developments including SG1, North Stevenage, employment sites.
- GSK and Sycamore House schemes on Gunnels Wood Road.
- Series of Regeneration-led projects including Stevenage Interchange, Autolus building, underpass murals and new Multi-Storey Car Park on Lytton Way.
- Series of Housing-led neighbourhood renewal projects including Kenilworth Close and the Oval.
- Cycle Hire Scheme.

- 4.12 Since the adoption of the Local Plan, a series of plans and strategies have been produced that have built upon and developed core Local Plan objectives and principles. These include, but are not limited to:
- Supplementary Planning Documents regarding Developer Contributions, Biodiversity, Parking and Sustainable Transport and Design.
 - Stevenage is among the first wave of Sustainable Travel Towns, seeking to promote active travel solutions and implement behaviour change across the town.
 - Future Town Future Transport Strategy, including short, medium and long term projects to improve connectivity and mobility.
 - Working protocol between Planning Policy and Stevenage Works to promote local construction skills in development schemes.

Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan

- 4.13 In the time that has passed since the adoption of the Local Plan in May 2019, two productive stages of public consultation have been held on the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan. This has formed a comprehensive and robust evidence base that supports Policy TC4 of the Local Plan.
- 4.14 After reviewing Stevenage's Local Plan during the Hold Direction, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) asked Stevenage Borough Council to prepare an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Stevenage Station Gateway Area to support Policy TC4: Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area. This is a limited area within the wider Stevenage Central area.
- 4.15 An Area Action Plan (AAP) is an optional development plan document which provides specific planning policy and guidance for a particular location or area of significant change. The key stages of the AAP are summarised below: The key stages of the AAP follow a similar process to that of a Local Plan:
- Publication of Issues and Options, which seek the views of stakeholders on Issues and Options for the future development of the area. (*Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report, produced for Stevenage Borough Council by David Lock Associates. Consultation: July to September 2021*) [BD9]
 - Publication of Preferred Options, to set out the Council's preferred way forward for the area. (*Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report. Consultation: January to March 2023*) [BD10]
 - Submission Document to be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State.
 - Independent Examination of the submitted document. The purpose of this is to consider the soundness of the AAP and representations.
 - The Planning Inspector will produce a binding report that sets out the final version of the AAP. This will then be adopted by the Council and incorporated into the wider development plan.
- 4.16 There are a range of high-level policy objectives which align with the Local Plan and national policy direction for the AAP to respond to. These include:
- A new gateway and arrival experience;
 - Creating an exemplar, low carbon "urban village";
 - Sustainable travel considered throughout;
 - Mixed-use development to unlock economic opportunity;
 - Green infrastructure in the public realm;

- Climate change consideration in all development decisions;
 - Design of the highest architectural standards;
 - Celebrating the heritage of the town;
 - Making the most of digital connectivity and high-speed broadband.
- 4.17 To build on the AAP objectives, key design principles and core enhancements, the AAP set out 4 “high-level” options or scenarios for the area adjacent to Stevenage Railway Station incorporating the section of Lytton Way, between Swingate and Danesgate:
- Option 0 – Do nothing.
 - Option 1 – All traffic modes: reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway suitable for all modes of traffic.
 - Option 2 – Bus and Taxi only: reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway and restricts movement to buses and taxis only.
 - Option 3 – Pedestrianised Plaza: removes regular vehicle movement from the front of the station and Lytton Way ceases to be a through-route. An access through-route is retained for emergency vehicles needing to access and egress the station and immediate environs.
- 4.18 There were two cycle path options proposed as well as a range of other potential core enhancements for the area, including development parcels, temporary uses and phasing developments.
- 4.19 The high level, strategic options proposed for the area included within the AAP will be strongly influenced by the masterplan for the SG1 development which lies to the east and within the town centre. Connections to this development and connections through into the town square and central area will form the emerging physical context within which the AAP sits.
- 4.20 Alongside the high-level objectives, a series of key design principles have been developed for the emerging framework of the AAP. These principles include providing people-friendly spaces, improving links from the rail station to the bus station, improving step-free and disabled access, future-proofing the area for a rail station upgrade, consolidating surface car parking to enable development and to ensure good access for all travel modes, and including high quality cycling facilities.
- 4.21 The Preferred Options AAP presented the preferred approach to take Option 2 forward, but with flexibility to progress to Option 1 or Option 3 as and when circumstances developed. Potential Layout 1 for the cycle path option (an additional cycle lane alongside Lytton Way) was taken forward in the Preferred Options AAP, as the preferred cycle layout. Ultimately, any proposed scenarios and policy approach would need to conform to the objectives, key design principles and core enhancements as detailed in the Preferred Options AAP.
- 4.22 Officers have considered their options to progress the AAP, in light of the need to review the Local Plan:
- Continue (as per the current Local Development Scheme but with revised timescales) to produce the final version of the AAP, consult and then submit to the Planning Inspectorate ahead of Examination in Public and anticipated adoption of the AAP, separate to the Local Plan Review.

- Combine the work already undertaken on the AAP with the emerging Local Plan Review and incorporate into one combined process up to Examination in Public and anticipated adoption of the revised Local Plan (including an updated Policy TC4 and / or new section on Opportunity Areas / Station Gateway Area).

4.23 It is important to note that the policy wording in TC4, as a result of the two rounds of public consultation, will not change significantly. It is proposed to be strengthened to highlight the potential the Station Gateway area has in creating an exemplar low carbon development, as well as flexibility in land uses while providing a vibrant environment and active public realm opportunities.

4.24 There is a strong degree of fluidity within the policy TC4, to allow the area to be triggered by major infrastructure and development in the medium to long term. The policy does not suggest immediate changes in this area of opportunity for Stevenage.

Options for a Local Plan Review

4.25 Since early 2023, the Planning Policy team have been scoping out a review of the Local Plan. Officers sought legal advice on the scope of a potential review. The current Local Plan period runs to 2031. The strategic housing and employment sites designated in the current Local Plan are still to be fully realised. The Council maintains a healthy housing land supply.

4.26 In February 2023, officers met with Simon Bird KC (Head of Chambers, Francis Taylor Building, specialising in Planning, Environment, Compulsory Purchase and Compensation and Major Infrastructure Projects) to:

- Provide professional legal advice on the scope of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan Review;
- Advise on a preferred option for the scope of the Local Plan Review;
- Agree a framework and timescales to provide ongoing legal advice and guidance for the duration of a Local Plan Review, from inception through to Examination in Public and eventual adoption.

4.27 The advice sought aimed to consider the detail of current Local Plan and associated documents, national, regional and local level policy environment and including the two stages of consultation on the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan.

4.28 Normal practice for the review of a Local Plan is to commence a partial review and update of a Local Plan, 5 years post adoption. It would be appropriate to incorporate the emerging Area Action Plan into this partial review. This approach would also provide opportunity for the review to bring the Local Plan up to date with wider drivers for change such as climate change, sustainable travel, health and wellbeing and digital engagement.

4.29 This would save significant time and costs in combining an Examination in Public for the AAP and Local Plan.

4.30 This approach to review of the Stevenage Local Plan would be beneficial in meeting Government requirements to undertake a review by 2025, updating strategic elements.

- 4.31 Following adoption of a revised Stevenage Local Plan, the Council would be in a good position to consider continuing emerging and early-stage work with county partners to look at long term needs out to 2050, through work on a North East Central Hertfordshire Joint Spatial Plan / Spatial Development Strategy. It must be noted that this work has not yet been formally agreed.
- 4.32 It was agreed with Simon Bird KC that there should be a two-stage process to reviewing the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, given the position the local authority finds itself regarding the age of the current Local Plan being 5 years since adoption:

Stage 1: Local Plan – Partial Review and Update

Stage 2: Local Plan – Full Review

- 4.33 This approach was presented to the Cabinet (as Executive) on 14 July 2023 [BD11].
- 4.34 The Cabinet (as Executive) agreed in July 2023 that officers could progress with undertaking a partial review and update of the Local Plan, which will incorporate the evidence gathered from the two rounds of consultation on the AAP. This will allow the evidence base already gathered through the two rounds of consultation to form an updated and much clearer policy direction for Policy TC4 of the Local Plan as well as potential other policies of the plan, in accordance with wider strategic updates and objectives, including the continued requirement to tackle the Climate Change agenda and promoting sustainable and active travel across the Borough.
- 4.35 Officers sought confirmation from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) that this approach was acceptable as it is proposing a revised approach to that agreed when the Holding Direction was lifted in 2019, allowing adoption of the current Local Plan. This approach was broadly accepted by DLUHC [BD12].

Local Plan Review – Partial Review and Update

- 4.36 The initial tasks in approaching the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update were undertaken from Autumn 2023 and ran to March 2024. This involved applying a Red–Amber–Green or “RAG” review of the current Local Plan, whereby:

Red = proposed changes, only to be considered for the Full Review of the Local Plan.

Amber = proposed changes, still under discussion whether to include in Partial Review and Update or Full Review.

Green = proposed changes and proposed new policies, to be applied to the Local Plan Review – Partial Review and Update.

- 4.37 A series of internal consultation discussions on the RAG version of the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update were then held with officers from the Development Management and Climate Change teams.

- 4.38 Following this initial categorisation of which policies to change at the appropriate stages, a track changes version of the Local Plan Review – Partial Review and Update (Appendix A) was developed. This was accompanied by a table of justifications (Appendix B) which provides robust reasons for any changes made.
- 4.39 Officers met with Simon Bird KC (Francis Taylor Building) again in April 2024, to:
- Seek agreement on the general approach to the Local Plan Review, the suite of documents proposed and proposed timescales ahead;
 - Discuss the revised draft policies and supporting text in detail to ensure robust revisions and justifications for those revisions and proposed new policies, only where deemed necessary.
- 4.40 Once the first draft of the track changes Local Plan – Partial Review and Update was prepared, it was shared for internal consultation with colleagues from Development Management, Climate Change, Housing, Stevenage Direct Services, Engineers, Regeneration, Economic Development, Environmental Policy and Development, Environmental Health and Culture, Estates, Wellbeing and Leisure teams. A series of comments and suggestions were incorporated into the final version to be presented to, and approved by, the Cabinet.
- 4.41 The key amendments to the 2019 Local Plan, as reflected in the draft Local Plan Review – Partial Review and Update, can be summarised below:
- **Climate Change policies will be placed at the top of our Strategic Planning Policies. We are seeking to get the right balance of new low carbon homes and investment in retrofitting existing homes, alongside new jobs, infrastructure while protecting our green and cultural assets, echoing the TCPA Garden City principles that the original new town was founded on.**
 - Deletion of existing *Policy SP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development* and replacement with new *Policy SP1: Climate change* to reflect the changed priority for the Local Plan to address climate change issues and challenges.
 - *Policy SP11: Climate change, flooding and pollution* revised to consider flooding and pollution only i.e. *Policy SP11: Flooding and pollution*.
 - New chapter of detailed Climate Change policies, including:
 - *Policy CC1: Energy efficiency* to set CO₂ emissions targets for new development and contributions to a Carbon Offset Fund where these cannot be met on-site;
 - *Policy CC2: Heating and cooling* to prevent overheating and limit the use of energy-dependent cooling systems;
 - *Policy CC3: Water efficiency* to set water use targets for new development;
 - *Policy CC4: Energy infrastructure* to encourage new ultra-low and zero carbon energy infrastructure;
 - *Policy CC5: Carbon sinks* to protect existing carbon sinks and encourage net gains in carbon sequestration;
 - *Policy CC6: Green roofs and walls* to encourage new green roofs and green walls;

- *Policy CC7: Digital connectivity* to encourage the installation to high-speed digital infrastructure; and
 - *Policy CC8: The green economy* to support of the principles of a circular economy and encourage the creation of local green jobs.
- Deletion of existing *Policy FP1: Climate Change* and replacement with new *Policy FP1: Sustainable Drainage* to reflect change in Plan structure and to ensure that:
 - major and minor developments utilise sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) wherever possible;
 - surface water run-off is not increased;
 - developments incorporate green, surface-level features (e.g. ponds and swales) wherever possible; and
 - underground attenuation features and impervious hard surfaces are only used where unavoidable.
- Deletion of existing *Policy FP2: Flood risk in Flood Zone 1* and *Policy FP3: Flood risk in Flood Zones 2 and 3* and replacement with new comprehensive *Policy FP2: Flood risk management* to emphasise:
 - the protection and re-naturalisation of watercourses;
 - the protection and potential future enhancement of flood defences; and
 - the presence of other potential sources of flooding e.g. surface water and groundwater.
- Revision of existing *Policy NH5: Trees and woodland* to provide:
 - a strong presumption against the loss or deterioration of trees and woodland;
 - a new tree replacement standard to apply to all losses of individual trees regardless of their health, ranging from 2 to 21 replacement trees for each tree felled;
 - woodland replacement in accordance with statutory biodiversity net gain (BNG);
 - long-term management of any replacement woodland; and
 - financial contributions where tree or woodland replacement cannot be provided on-site.
- New *Policy NH5b: Tree-lined streets* to reflect national planning policy emphasis on new streets being lined with trees.
- Borough-wide Climate change retrofit contribution.
- Amended Policy for TC4: Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area – changing allocation from zero carbon / low carbon Employment office space and public realm improvements and to reflect the two rounds of public consultation held on the Area Action Plan.
- Potential new Policy to explore the possible facilitation of Fairlands Valley Farmhouse.
- New *Policy HO14: Houses in multiple occupation* to clarify that proposals for new Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) must have regard to relevant SPDs e.g. the *Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD 2020*.

- Policies and supporting text revised throughout to reflect the amended Use Classes Order.
- A new glossary to define various terms for the purposes of the Plan.
- Few other minor changes including change of textual references to Use Class Orders since 2020 and updates based on practice with application of planning policies in determining planning applications since 2019.

4.42 The key amendments to the accompanying Policies Map include:

- Possible amendments to the boundaries of the Town Centre and High Street Shopping Areas;
- Possible amendments to the boundaries of district, local and neighbourhood centres;
- Correction of various errors in the existing Policies Map, such as the southern boundary of the Old Town High Street Conservation Area and the Town Centre Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages.
- Possible improvements to Station Gateway boundary for Policy TC4.
- Producing higher quality maps compared to the current Policies Map. Work on this is ongoing as part of steps to make the Local Plan live and digitally accessible in the future. This will be a smarter, leaner way to work and help the public find out which planning policies affect them.

4.43 The amendments will be supported by an updated evidence base, which is being developed at different stages up to submission and will include:

- a whole-plan viability study, to ensure that development proposals within the Borough remain financially viable with the proposed planning policy changes;
- an employment technical paper, to ensure that we retain sufficient land to accommodate changes in office, industrial and warehouse demand;
- a retail study, to ensure that our retail policies remain effective in delivering a vibrant town centre and protecting the lower order centres; and
- a housing technical paper, to ensure that we retain sufficient land to meet housing need and deliver choice in terms of housing tenures, types and sizes, including affordable housing.

4.44 It is important to remember that the Local Plan Review, at this stage, consists of a Partial Review and Update of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, adopted May 2019. As such, the scope of the review to policies and supporting text is limited to necessary changes only, related to key drivers of change since the Plan was adopted in 2019. Other wider changes will be considered for the next stage of the Local Plan Review, a Full Review of the Plan, from 2025 onwards.

Recommendation 2.2: That Cabinet approve the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update for public consultation in June 2024, for not less than 6 weeks.

Consultation Process

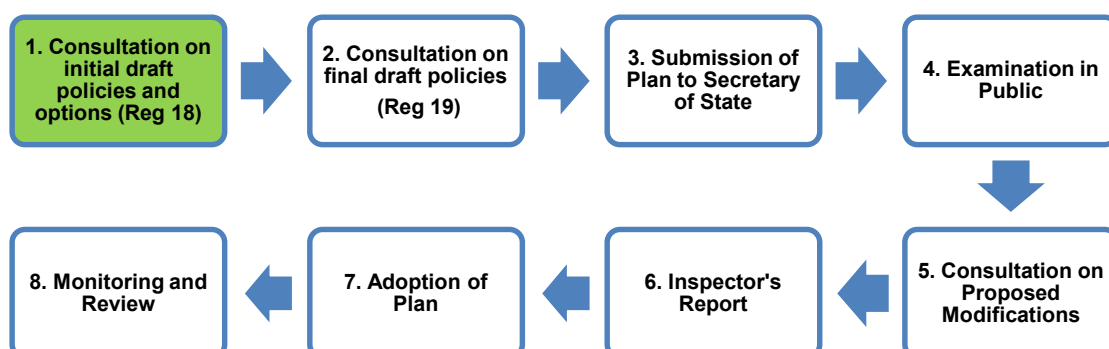
- 4.45 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 stipulate that for a development plan, public consultation must be held for a minimum of 6 weeks [BD13].
- 4.46 Consultation on the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update is proposed to be held between 17 June 2024 and 28 July 2024, meeting the requirements stipulated for DPD consultations in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 4.47 Consultation methods will include:
- Notification, via e-mail and post where necessary, to all statutory consultees and those on our consultation database.
 - A series of dedicated meetings with a range of key stakeholders.
 - Publicity via the Stevenage Borough Council website and social media platforms (including the Council's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages).
 - A link to the Council's consultation interface, where the public will be able to download the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, Local Development Scheme, Statement of Community Involvement, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping and Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening document, and be able to submit their observations and representations.
 - The consultation interface could include a series of "consultation questions", designed to cover the different aspects of the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update and to generate comments on certain sections of the document.
 - A press release and articles in the Comet newspaper relating to the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update public consultation.
 - Notification of the consultation in neighbourhood newsletters, and similar local journals or circulars.
 - Distribution of material publicising the public consultation. This includes distribution at Stevenage Central Library, Daneshill House Reception and other locations if necessary.
 - Frequently asked questions or "FAQs".
- 4.48 This list is certainly not exhaustive; officers are open to further methods of consultation, if preferred and suggested by the Cabinet.
- 4.49 Officers are preparing a set of documents, termed as "Memoranda of Understanding" or "MoU" in order for the Council to present its position and work programme regarding the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update.
- 4.50 As part of each MoU, agreement will be sought on the proposed scope of our Local Plan – Partial Review and Update as well as highlighting any areas of discussion or possibly contention, to be recorded and discussed prior to eventual Submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State (DLUHC).
- 4.51 Officers will be working with a series of stakeholders, to develop these MoUs. Stakeholders will include:
- North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - East Herts Council.

- Other neighbouring local authorities in Hertfordshire that share strategic interests (including St. Albans & City District Council, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council).
 - Other neighbouring local authorities outside Hertfordshire that share strategic interests (including Central Bedfordshire Council, Luton Borough Council).
 - National Health Service (Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board or ICB).
 - Hertfordshire County Council (Growth & Infrastructure Unit, Spatial Planning Unit, Highways Department, Minerals & Waste team, other relevant units).
 - Other stakeholders as identified.
- 4.52 Discussions to develop the MoUs will be ongoing with the various parties before, during and after the upcoming public consultation through the stages of Local Plan preparation, up to Submission.
- 4.53 Officers will take all comments and views into account, in a conscientious manner. This will help to inform and shape the future position being reported to Cabinet.

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping

- 4.54 Sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment are tools used at the plan-making stage to assess the likely effects of the plan when judged against reasonable alternatives. A sustainability appraisal should be prepared for any of the documents that can form part of a local plan, including core strategies, site allocation documents and area action plans.
- 4.55 For the public consultation on the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, planned for June 2024, Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening (SEA) Screening Report, including Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping, will be necessary. This is because we are making amendments to the current adopted Stevenage Borough Local Plan that will have environmental impacts.
- 4.56 The SEA Screening Report will be consulted upon alongside the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update. This will include contacting the statutory consultees to a SEA (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency).

Recommendation 2.3: That the Cabinet approve a revised Local Development Scheme and note the timescales for a Local Plan Review.



- 4.57 We are at the first stage of development of the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update. This forms the “consultation on initial draft policies and options” stage under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 [BD13].
- 4.58 The next stage “consultation on final draft policies” forms the second stage of the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 4.59 Following the Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 rounds of consultation, both to be scheduled for a minimum of 6 weeks, the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update will then be submitted to the Secretary of State (DLUHC), ahead of an independent Examination in Public by an appointed Planning Inspector.
- 4.60 A final consultation on any modifications proposed by the Inspector to the Plan is then held prior to the Inspector’s Report, which would confirm whether the Plan can proceed to formal adoption. Monitoring and review of the Plan would then be required for a period of time after the Plan has been adopted.
- 4.61 It is important to note that following the proposed June 2024 public consultation on the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, there will be multiple further opportunities for the public to comment on proposed changes and updates to policies and supporting text, which will be duly considered by the Planning Policy team.
- 4.62 We will report back to Cabinet at each stage of the process, these being:
- Regulation 18 consultation – approval to go out to consultation on first stage consultation.
 - Regulation 19 consultation – first stage consultation feedback and approval to go out to consultation on second stage.
 - Submission version prior to going to the Secretary of State – second stage consultation feedback and approval of the final version of the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update to be submitted.
 - Adoption, incorporating outcomes of the Examination in Public, consultation on proposed final modifications and the final Inspector’s Report.

Local Development Scheme

- 4.63 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) [BD14] was last approved by the Council's Cabinet (as Executive) on 6 October 2020; it sets out a clear and timetabled programme for the production of the local development plan. The LDS sets out timescales to completion for the following Development Plan Documents:
- Stevenage Borough Local Plan (including Policies Map): Adoption May 2019 (achieved)
 - Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Adoption January 2022 (has undergone two rounds of consultation by March 2023)
 - Stevenage Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule: Adoption April 2020 (achieved)
 - Stevenage Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): Adoption November 2018 (achieved)
 - Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD: Adoption October 2020 (achieved)
 - Biodiversity SPD: Adoption March 2021 (achieved)
 - Developer Contributions SPD: Adoption March 2021 (achieved)
 - Design Guidance SPD: Adoption December 2021 (adopted January 2023)
- 4.64 A draft revised skeleton Local Development Scheme [BD15] was presented to the Cabinet (as Executive) at their meeting of 14 July 2023 and was approved in principle, subject to likely changes to timescales ahead.
- 4.65 The Ishikawa diagram (Appendix E) explains the two broad stages to the review of the Local Plan. Essentially this is in two stages:
- Local Plan – Partial Review and Update (green section)
 - Local Plan – Full Review (orange section)
- 4.66 The revised draft LDS (Appendix C) has since been updated to reflect the latest timescales relating to the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update and can be summarised below:

Local Development Document	Timescale for Review	Comments
North East Central Hertfordshire Joint Spatial Plan (JSP)	Likely completion 2025/26.	Will form the basis for a wider Local Plan Review from Summer / Autumn 2025.
Local Plan	Commence review September / October 2023 First Consultation June – July 2024 Second Consultation Autumn 2024, subject to change Submission to Secretary of State Spring 2025, subject to change	Based on the option to undertake a Partial Review of the Local Plan which will also incorporate the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan. Each stage will be subject to Cabinet approval.
Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan	Incorporation of AAP into Local Plan (see timescales above)	May be scope for a wider evidence document based on information gathered during two rounds of consultation.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	Commenced review Early 2024	Viability Study work Spring / Summer 2024 will need to consider Local Plan viability aswell, so important this work is carried out at the early stages. Completion of this July 2024. Annual update on Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will also feed into CIL Review Summer 2024. Consultation on CIL Review Autumn 2024, subject to Cabinet approval.
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Commence review Spring 2024	Will run alongside Local Plan – Partial Review and Update consultation in June 2024.
Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD	Minor revisions Summer / Autumn 2024	Consultation planned early Autumn 2024. Adoption early 2025, before Submission of Local Plan – Partial Review and Update. Possible change of status to Supplementary Plans or wider incorporation into Local Plan Policies; to be determined after Partial Review and Update.

The Impact of Development on Biodiversity SPD	Initial revision of SPD with assistance from Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust in Autumn 2023.	Consultation planned early Autumn 2024. Adoption early 2025, before Submission of Local Plan – Partial Review and Update. Possible change of status to Supplementary Plans or wider incorporation into Local Plan Policies; to be determined after Partial Review and Update.
Developer Contributions SPD	Minor revisions Summer / Autumn 2024	Consultation planned early Autumn 2024. Adoption early 2025, before Submission of Local Plan – Partial Review and Update. Possible change of status to Supplementary Plans or wider incorporation into Local Plan Policies; to be determined after Partial Review and Update.
Design Guidance SPD	Minor revisions Summer / Autumn 2024	Consultation planned early Autumn 2024. Adoption early 2025, before Submission of Local Plan – Partial Review and Update. Possible change of status to Supplementary Plans or wider incorporation into Local Plan Policies; to be determined after Partial Review and Update.
Other SPDs	As required	As identified and required but no more anticipated at the present time.

- 4.67 All four Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) require differing levels of revision, based on the interpretation of policies and SPDs in determining applications since their respective adoption; as well as evolving national guidance, in particular biodiversity net gain and development design.
- 4.68 All four SPDs when revised, will be reported back to Cabinet for approval to go out to public consultation for 4 to 6 weeks, with a further Cabinet Report feeding back on consultation outcomes and seeking approval for the adoption of the four revised SPDs.
- 4.69 The revised SPDs will need to be adopted prior to Submission of the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, currently scheduled for Spring 2025. The Local Plan – Partial Review and Update must be submitted to the Secretary of State prior to 30 June 2025 in order to avoid falling under the new regulations suggested by the Government in the revised NPPF, as explained in paragraph 4.6 of this Report.

- 4.70 It is these revised regulations under the latest NPPF that a Full Review of the Local Plan will then operate within. Officers are working in the background on the Full Review of the Local Plan, which will look to a much wider time horizon than 2031 and be influenced in part by future national policy and guidance changes, local circumstances and the emerging North East Central Hertfordshire Joint Spatial Plan.
- 4.71 The work already progressed on the “Red–Amber–Green” Review of the current Local Plan, as well as anticipated public consultation responses on the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, will also influence the work that goes into the Full Review of the Local Plan. The Cabinet will be updated at all stages of the process of the Local Plan Full Review in due course.
- 4.72 At this stage, the Cabinet are recommended to approve the draft Local Plan – Partial Review and Update and if so, the draft timescales that would operate for the associated new proposed Local Development Scheme.

Recommendation 2.4: That the Cabinet approve a revised Statement of Community Involvement.

- 4.73 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a statutory document and sets out how Stevenage Borough Council will involve the community and other stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and review of local planning policy and decisions on planning applications. The Council recognises the importance of community engagement in the planning process and to make the best-informed decisions, we need to hear from those in the communities who will feel the impact of development.
- 4.74 Whilst some requirements for consultation and engagement are set out in national legislation, the Council is committed to going beyond these statutory requirements and aims to get as many people involved in the plan preparation process as possible. The SCI aims to frontload this process by ensuring that the community is involved at an early stage. The document sets out:
- Why consultation is important;
 - What will be consulted on;
 - Who will be consulted;
 - When consultation and engagement will take place;
 - How your views will be considered.
- 4.75 The Council's last SCI was adopted on 21 November 2018 [BD16]. Regularly reviewing the SCI allows for its effectiveness to be monitored and for amendments to be made to incorporate any policy changes, and to increase levels of public involvement, where possible.
- 4.76 Since the 2018 SCI, the way we interact with communities has changed. New technologies have emerged, such as online engagement tools and social media channels, which can help us reach out to more people. During and after the Covid-19 pandemic we implemented new digital ways of involving people in the planning process, which we want to build on for future engagement with our communities, in addition to traditional consultation methods.
- 4.77 It is important that we hear directly from our communities so that they can tell us the best way to engage with them. Feedback during recent consultations highlighted

that planning documents can be too technical with an overwhelming amount of information. Some feedback included:

- they heard things too late in the process, often when the scheme is already in the planning application stage.
- sometimes planning is not visible and could be promoted wider using newsletters and printed media beyond email notifications.
- the planning system is very complex, and it can be hard to understand without providing visuals and presenting the information in the correct way.
- young people do not hear about planning.

- 4.78 The updated draft SCI (Appendix D), if approved by Cabinet, will highlight the use of technology in consultation and consider the need to improve the way we engage with our communities in the planning process.

Recommendation 2.5: That the Cabinet note that the comments of the Planning & Development Committee and the Environment & Economy Select Committee will be sought and considered on the content of this Cabinet Report.

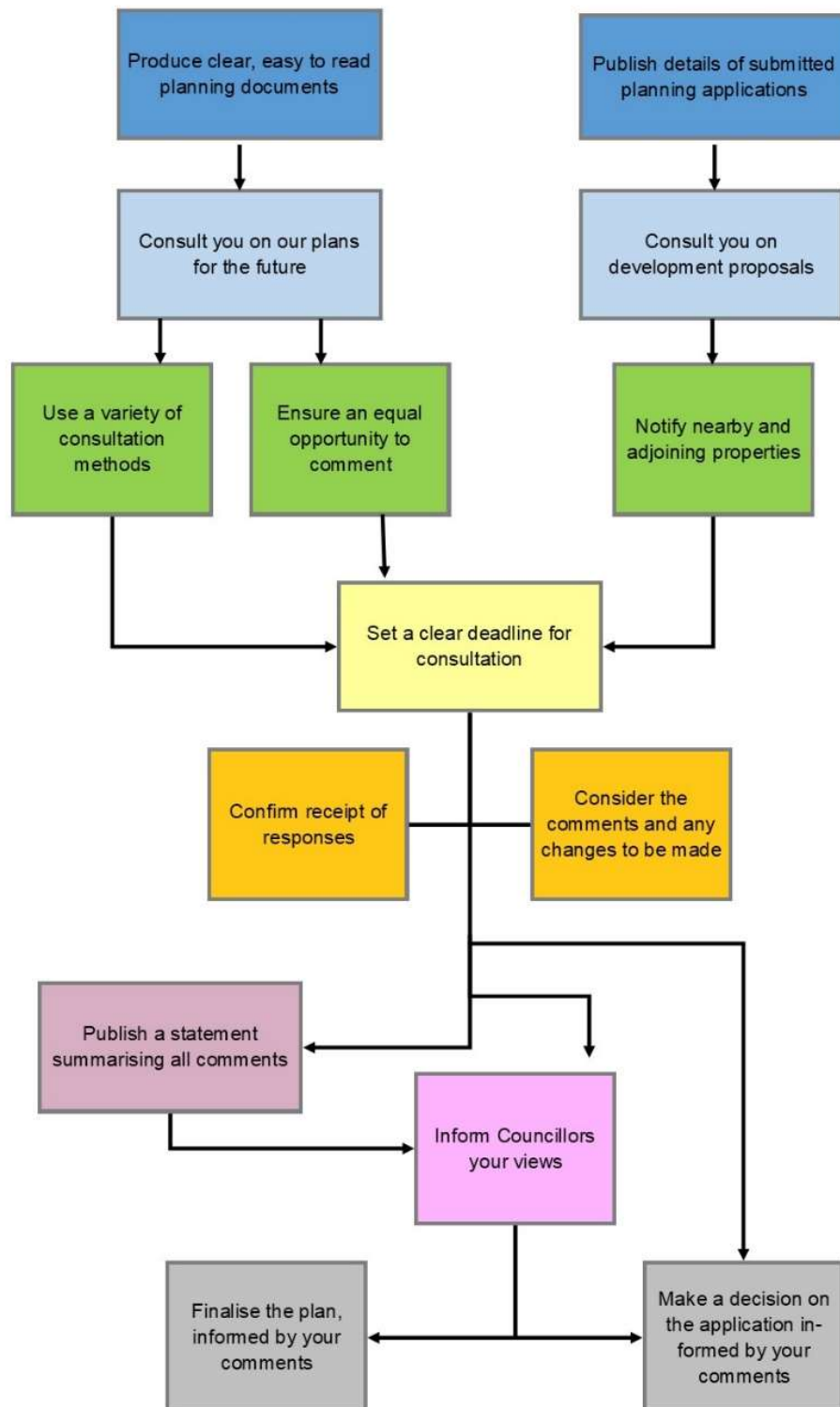
- 4.79 The Planning & Development Committee were presented an update on the Local Plan Review – Partial Review and Update, Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement at their meeting on 23 May 2024. Prior to this, all new Planning & Development Committee Members were given an introductory briefing on the same day, 23 May 2024.
- 4.80 The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration, Portfolio Holder for Economy & Transport, Planning & Development Committee and Vice Chairs were all briefed on 23 May 2024.
- 4.81 The Environment & Economy Select Committee Chair was briefed on 30 May 2024. This Committee will be presented an update on the Local Plan Review – Partial Review an Update at their meeting in July 2024, during the public consultation period. Their views and comments will be incorporated into any consultation responses made during the public consultation.
- 4.82 This Report went to print in advance of the Cabinet meeting before the meetings of 23 May 2024; therefore, comments and suggestions made at the various meetings highlighted above, will be reported orally to the Cabinet on 5 June 2024.
- 4.83 The views of the Planning & Development Committee and Environment & Economy Select Committee Members are of significant value in shaping the future direction the Local Plan Review takes, as future Committee decisions will be based on revised and possibly new Local Plan policies.

Recommendation 2.6: That the Cabinet note that delegated authority will be given to the Assistant Director: Planning & Regulation in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, to make changes to the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, prior to going out to public consultation.

- 4.84 The draft Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update (track changes version) is appended to this report (Appendix A) with a supporting table of justifications (Appendix B).
- 4.85 If the Cabinet approve the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update to be released for public consultation on 17 June 2024 (Recommendation 2.2), it will be necessary to prepare the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update following this Cabinet meeting. This will include potential rewording of policies, supporting text, ordering of sections, imagery, graphics and any factual changes.

Recommendation 2.7: That the Cabinet note that informal engagement with key stakeholders will continue, ahead of and during public consultation on the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update.

- 4.86 There may be scope for further engagement, with other key stakeholders to inform them of progress on the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update and listen to any comments they may wish to make.
- 4.87 Engagement with wider stakeholders, as identified in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in the diagram overleaf, has already begun and will be a fluid process throughout the consultation stages of the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, up to the time of Submission to the Secretary of State.



5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 The costs associated with producing and consulting on the draft Local Plan – Partial Review and Update were met from the agreed departmental budget. Funding was made available for producing the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update and work is being produced within the limitations of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and relevant associated budgets.
- 5.2 Officers have sought and will continue to seek legal advice regarding the potential scope of the Local Plan Review.
- 5.3 Depending on the extent of public consultation methods to be utilised for a Local Plan Review, there could be further cost / budget implications and resourcing impacts on the Planning Policy team.
- 5.4 Any potential future schemes or plans that are referenced in the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update and subsequently developed would need to be subject to a business case and / or will require developer or potentially Council funding.

Legal Implications

- 5.5 Officers have sought legal advice regarding the scope of a Local Plan Review and will seek further advice once the Local Development Scheme has been agreed and produced, through the Local Plan's statutory rounds of public consultation and up to submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State.

Risk Implications

- 5.6 There is the potential risk arising from changes to Government power in the near future. A different Government may decide to amend or even revoke sections of the NPPF, resulting in significant changes to planning policies and their interpretation.
- 5.7 Officers are fully aware of the changing nature of Government and the implications that this may have on the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update.

Policy Implications

- 5.8 The Local Plan – Partial Review and Update is proposed to revise, develop and update policies in the adopted Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2019).
- 5.9 The Local Plan – Partial Review and Update will align with other corporate Council documents such as the Climate Change Strategy (adopted September 2020), Action Plan and Charter as well as Stevenage's Future Town Future Transport Strategy.
- 5.10 The Local Plan – Partial Review and Update will ensure that the Council's Future Town, Future Council Corporate Plan key policies and objectives are reflected as far as possible. Officers will work with the Corporate Policy team to ensure the relevant links and references are made.

Planning Implications

- 5.11 The Local Plan – Partial Review and Update is proposed to revise and update the adopted Stevenage Local Plan (2019).
- 5.12 The document will therefore develop the Development Plan for Stevenage. It will be a material consideration for planning applications.
- 5.13 The Local Plan – Partial Review and Update and wider Local Development Scheme will provide revised, updated and, in some cases, new policies in the Local Plan for

Stevenage. Future proposals will need to be in accordance with revised and new policies in the Local Plan as it progresses through the process to adoption.

Environmental Implications

- 5.14 The Local Plan – Partial Review and Update includes updates to policies relating to environmental protection and management in the borough. This has been informed by internal consultation by officers with officers in the Green Spaces and Environmental Policy and Development team, to ensure the relevant updates have been incorporated.
- 5.15 A Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report has been prepared, relating to the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update. This is because the proposed amendments to policies and proposed new policies in the Plan are likely to have environmental impacts.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.16 The Local Plan – Partial Review and Update includes a comprehensive update to policies relating to Climate Change in the borough. Policies will be significantly strengthened. This supports the aims and objectives of the Stevenage Climate Change Strategy (September 2020) [BD17] and contribute to the overall climate change aspirations of the Council.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.17 There are no significant equalities and diversity risks associated with producing the draft Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement.

Community Safety Implications

- 5.18 There are no significant community safety implications associated with producing the draft Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement.

Other Implications

- 5.19 There could be economic implications from future work arising from the draft Local Plan – Partial Review and Update.
- 5.20 The incorporation of the work produced from public consultation on the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan (AAP) into the partial review and update of the Local Plan will mean that the evidence gathered from two rounds of consultation on the AAP will not just provide an update to Policy TC4 of the Local Plan; it is highly likely that a wide range of other policies in the Local Plan will require an update from the evidence gathered on the AAP.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- BD1 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011–2031 (May 2019)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/stevenage-borough-local-plan/stevenage-borough-local-plan.pdf>
- BD2 Letter from Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to Stevenage Borough Council: Stevenage Borough Council's Local Plan (March 2019)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/holding-direction/the-secretary-of-states-letter.pdf>
- BD3 Meeting of the Stevenage Borough Council Executive, Item 5: Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report for Public Consultation (30 April 2019)
<https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s19497/Item%204%20-%20SB%20Local%20Plan%20Exec%20Report%20-%20adoption.pdf>
- BD4 Stevenage Local Plan: Policies Map (May 2019)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/stevenage-borough-local-plan/policies-map.pdf>
- BD5 Government Consultation: Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill – Reforms to National Planning Policy (March 2023)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy>
- BD6 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-laws-to-speed-up-planning-build-homes-and-level-up>
- BD7 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- BD8 Changes to Use Classes Order (September 2020)
<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/change-of-use/use-classes>
- BD9 Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report (July 2021)
- BD10 Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report – Executive Summary (January 2023)
- BD11 Meeting of the Stevenage Borough Council Executive, Item 4: Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report Public Consultation Feedback (July 2023)
<https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s34718/Stevenage%20Gateway%20AAP%20report.pdf>
- BD12 E-mail dialogue between Stevenage Borough Council and PINS / DLUHC (2023 / 2024)
- BD13 Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/pdfs/uksi_20120767_en.pdf
- BD14 Stevenage Borough Local Development Scheme (October 2020)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/local-development-scheme/local-development-scheme-october-2020.pdf>

- BD15 Draft Revised Stevenage Local Development Scheme (July 2023)
<https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s34719/SG%20AAP%20-%20Appendix%20D%20-%20Draft%20Local%20Development%20Scheme%202023.pdf>
- BD16 Stevenage Statement of Community Involvement (November 2018)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/draft-statement-of-community-involvement/statement-of-community-involvement-2018.pdf>
- BD17 Stevenage Climate Change Strategy (September 2020)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/about-the-council/climate-change-strategy/climate-change-strategy-september-2020.pdf>

APPENDICES

- A Stevenage Draft Local Plan – Partial Review and Update (Track Changes Version) (May 2024)
- B Stevenage Draft Local Plan – Partial Review and Update (Table of Justifications) (May 2024)
- C Stevenage Draft Local Development Scheme (May 2024)
- D Stevenage Draft Statement of Community Involvement (May 2024)
- E Local Plan Review Ishikawa Diagram (May 2024)