

**DATED** \_\_\_\_\_ **14 August 2025**

**Memorandum of Understanding under the Duty to Co-operate**  
**between**  
**Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)**  
**on**

**The Review and Partial Update of Stevenage Borough Local Plan**

**Date of agreement: 14 August 2025**

**1.0 Scope of the Statement**

- 1.1 This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been prepared under the Duty to Co-operate requirements. It provides a position statement on the extent of co-operation and understanding in respect of the preparation of a Local Plan Partial Review and Update for SBC. The MOU is intended to set out the position of both signing authorities and be kept up to date as SBC as a local planning authority reaches key milestones in the preparation of their plan.
- 1.2 This MOU is intended to highlight the extent of agreement, or otherwise on strategic Stevenage and county wide matters. It is a shared objective of both HCC and SBC to facilitate the timely progression of sound local plans towards adoption in accordance with the required regulations.
- 1.3 On 12 December 2024, Government released the updated NPPF. For Local Plan making, there is a minimal transition period of three months from 12 December 2024 to 12 March 2025 whereby plans can proceed under the former NPPF (December 2023). However, the Local Plan must be at Regulation 19 pre-submission publication stage before 12 March 2025 and its draft housing requirement meets at least 80% of local housing need.
- 1.4 The Stevenage Local Plan Review is at Regulation 19 stage and the draft housing requirement meets in excess of 80% of local housing need as set out in the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2011-2031). Under the transitional arrangements outlined above, this means that the Local Plan Review and Update will be submitted and examined under the previous NPPF 2023 and not the current NPPF 2024.

## **2.0 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 Partial Review and Update**

- 2.1 This MOU has been prepared in the context of the publication version of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2011-31) Partial Review and Update which was first placed on public deposit for a six week period ending 15 August 2024. The MOU was prepared in October 2024 in the period leading up to the second public deposit ending 14 February 2025. Submission of the plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination is expected Spring 2025.

## **3.0 Matters agreed and outstanding**

- 3.1 Engagement between the two authorities has focussed primarily on:
- Sustainable transport / Active travel focus
  - Cohesion between delivery plans
  - Progress since last local plan
  - Funding and development contributions
  - Strategic Direction and Mitigation
  - Specific points detailed below
- 3.2 This MOU highlights how there is a shared and common objective to resolve the issues in a manner which encompasses joint technical working, continuing Member involvement and through to the timely adoption of the Local Plan Partial Review and Update. Set out in this memorandum are those matters of joint strategic interest to both groups as they are dealt with in the Stevenage Borough Local Plan Review and Partial Update, Submission Version, August 2025 (hereinafter 'the plan') in accordance with paragraph 24 – 27 of the National Planning Policy Framework, December 2023.

### **Discussions between HCC and SBC**

Discussions between HCC and SBC have embraced strategic boundary matters in relation to the scope of the Local Plan Partial Review and Update. Both HCC and SBC are content that an ongoing conversation has been maintained between authorities and ongoing liaison will ensure that both HCC and SBC will continue to maintain effective cooperation. It is the opinion of HCC that SBC's Local Plan 2011-2031 Partial Review and Update is sound and has been prepared with the responsibilities and interests of the County Council considered. Both HCC and SBC agree they will continue to work together to try find solutions to support the delivery of the plan.

Issue	HCC comment	SBC comment	Outcome
<b>Sustainable transport / Active travel focus</b>	<p>The plan does not provide adequate updates on the aspirations for sustainable transport, despite being a critical overarching principle in the original local plan.</p> <p>There is little or no mention of the latest transport plans and strategies, making it difficult to align the plan with current and future sustainable transport initiatives.</p> <p>Despite acknowledging the importance of climate change there is little additional focus on active travel or integrating sustainable transport initiatives. The plan should seek to increase its effectiveness by acknowledging and incorporating new strategies, guidance, and aspirations that have emerged since the original plan.</p> <p>The Sustainable Travel Town initiative, E-bike scheme, LCWIP refresh, BSIP Programme, and Station Gateway redevelopment should be more prominently featured and supported.</p>	<p>Our advice is that since this is a partial review and limited only to strictly necessary changes to ensure that the plan remains up to date, we do not need to provide updates on every area of change since the plan was adopted.</p> <p>However, we agree that the policies for sustainable transport should be strengthened. Changes are proposed to Policies SP1 and SP6 accordingly.</p>	<p>Acknowledged, Policies SP1 and SP6 have been updated and further changes can be discussed.</p>

<b>Cohesion between delivery plans</b>	There is a noticeable lack of cohesion between different delivery plans, such as the local plan and the IDP, leading to fragmented and unclear information and a lack of detail regarding the deliverability of schemes and infrastructure.	Our advice is that since this is a partial review and limited only to strictly necessary changes to ensure that the plan remains up to date.  For further discussion if required.	
<b>Developments since 2019 and scope of Local Plan Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing, acknowledging and justifying the amount of information in the review. HCC need to understand the background information. Justification for the story as to how Stevenage have got to where they have.</li> <li>Delivery documentation – could there be a document to be included to show what has been delivered.</li> <li>Make a reference to general changes since 2019 – Some organisations do not exist, so where do you stop on the update? Documentation from SBC could be created to show changes to bodies involved and other guidance updated.</li> </ul>	<p>We agree that a separate document (s) can be produced alongside the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update to show what has been delivered and a general guide to changes since 2019 (for example organisation changes and guidance updates, etc).</p> <p>On the narrative for progression of the Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, Stevenage are happy to share relevant information that justifies the approach taken.</p>	Refer to Local Plan RAG Review Document. Further documents will be shared prior to submission.
<b>Progress since last local plan</b>	<p>The partial review does not make it clear on what progress has been made since the last plan was adopted, particularly regarding securing funding contributions and the delivery of schemes and infrastructure projects.</p> <p>There is a risk that the absence of updates over the last five years could render some aspects of the plans policies ineffective or inapplicable.</p>	<p>It must be recognised that at this point in time, the only alternative to the partial review is that the plan remains wholly unchanged.</p> <p>Please refer to the key drivers of change which is set out in the two Cabinet reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Station Gateway Area Action; Preferred Options Report – Public Consultation Feedback 8 July 2023</li> <li>Local Plan Review And Revised Local Development Scheme – 5 June 2024</li> </ul>	No Change

		<p>A main driver of change for the Partial Review and Update has been to reflect evolving practice and experience of planning applications since the Local Plan was adopted in 2019. The Development Management team have been directly involved in the drafting of the Local Plan Partial Review and Update.</p> <p>For further discussion if required.</p>	
<b>Funding and development contributions</b>	<p>There is a lack of transparency regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions, the status of the CIL pot, and the nature in which these contributions are being sought and secured.</p> <p>HCC are concerned that there is a risk of opportunities being missed for funding contributions due to inadequate or unclear mitigation measures.</p> <p>More synergy is required in attributing contributions to specific corridors in a CIL-compliant manner.</p> <p>The mitigations and infrastructure requirements do not always align with the levels of expected growth. There is a danger that this disconnect could result in non-compliance with policy if appropriate contributions are not secured.</p>	<p>As highlighted in the forthcoming Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) 2024 the Councils governance arrangements of Strategic CIL expenditure which it intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by CIL will require bids from infrastructure providers to the Cabinet (for over £75k).</p> <p>Successful bids must demonstrate the how the allocation of CIL would provide for the infrastructure to support the delivery of the Plan.</p> <p>As Highways Authority HCC is able to bid for that funding if / when there is a suitable project that accords with the Local Plan / IDP.</p> <p>For smaller contributions, the Council has agreed that the approval of CIL expenditure below £75,000 will be delegated to the</p>	No Change

		<p>Assistant Director of Planning &amp; Regulation in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder.</p> <p>In regard to mitigations and infrastructure requirements, the Council continues to engage with its infrastructure providers in preparation of the IDP update each year. The County Council's expected costs are included in the Stevenage IDP 2024. The IDP also details a list of identified projects / schemes and their requirements along with the consideration of new potential developments on the edge of Stevenage.</p>	
<b>Strategic Direction and Mitigation</b>	<p>The plan is unclear on the strategic direction and mitigation measures needed to address the levels of development proposed. Given that all these interventions were required as part of the original local plan, it is essential to provide a clear plan for taking these interventions forward.</p>	<p>Given that the level of proposed development is not changing, we would expect that the mitigation measures would remain sound.</p> <p>For further discussion if required</p>	No change
<b>Specific Points</b>	<p>4.31 / 5.48 - Refers to Smart motorway - needs to be removed.</p> <p>4.33 / Policy SP6 / 5.58a / 7.39E / 7.44 / 8.39 - Bus station already relocated.</p> <p>5.47 - Refers to further road schemes identified to provide additional capacity on local roads predicted to come under stress. Includes junction improvements including motorway junctions - need to rephrase</p>	<p>Our advice is that since this is a partial review and limited only to strictly necessary changes to ensure that the plan remains up to date, we do not need to provide updates on every area of change since the plan was adopted. However, this will be considered as part of the Local Plan Full Review.</p> <p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p>	<p>No change</p> <p>No change</p> <p>5.47 amended to stress improvements for all users.</p>

	<p>improving for all users. Mentions retention of smaller Tesco and redevelopment of site into other uses.</p> <p>SP6 - Strengthen wording to make sustainable transport more essential.</p> <p>5.59 - Include proposals to remove town centre cycling ban and improve wayfinding.</p> <p>5.62 / 5.63 - Pro car wording – emphasise importance of reducing car usage. Reference importance of transitioning to Electric Vehicles.</p> <p>7.19 - Multi-storey already built. Surface level crossing already in.</p> <p>7.20 - Include proposals to remove the town centre cycling ban.</p> <p>Page 95 - TCI refers to Southgate being reopened as trafficked street with shared surface. Refers to widening of Danesgate for buses and removal of Tower Road - have HCC been consulted on these changes and do they align with sustainable transport aspirations?</p> <p>Support of proposals for centre west opp area (Leisure Park).</p>	<p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p> <p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p> <p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p> <p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p> <p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p> <p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p> <p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p>	<p>SP6 amended accordingly.</p> <p>No Change</p> <p>Updated to reflect importance of reducing car usage.</p> <p>No Change</p> <p>No Change</p> <p>There are no proposed changes here but they can be considered if required.</p> <p>No change</p>
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	7.33 / 8.36 - 5th platform already built.	Comments acknowledged and noted.	No change
	7.39C - Refers to flexibility to change from buses and taxis only back to option 1 - all traffic on single carriageway - this was not agreed.	Paragraph 7.39c states 'The proposed reconfiguration of Lytton Way is a bold idea but the options look to flexibility. The Preferred Options AAP presented the preferred approach as Option 2, but with flexibility to progress to Option 1 or Option 3 as and when circumstances developed'.  For further discussion if required.	No change
	Central core / Northgate - Refers to new MSCPs - provide locations.	Our advice is that since this is a partial review and limited only to strictly necessary changes to ensure that the plan remains up to date, we do not need to provide updates on every area of change since the plan was adopted. However, this will be considered as part of the Local Plan Full Review.	No Change
	Policy TC8 Pg 109 High St - Is this aligned with the High Street improvement consultation and proposals?	The only changes here are updated to the use classes. There is unlikely to be any conflict because the purpose of the policy is to protect the town centre as the borough's primary retail destination.  Please see the updated Retail Study 2024 which supports our approach. As part of the Local Plan Full Review, retail policy will be fully considered.  For further discussion if required.	No Change



	<p>IT1 - New vehicle accesses - needs to say new junctions need to consider needs of all users - including bus priority.</p>	<p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p>	<p>Amended accordingly.</p>
	<p>8.3 - No reference to North Road cycleway.</p>	<p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p>	<p>Updated to reflect comment.</p>
	<p>8.4 - Needs to be a sustainable link - not necessarily for vehicles.</p>	<p>North of Stevenage site already has permission and work is underway. The strategic employment site directly opposite is substantially complete.</p>	<p>No Change</p>
	<p>8.8 - Highlights the need for a SE roundabout, referencing the 2015 IDP – proposal out of date.</p>	<p>Our advice is that since this is a partial review and limited only to strictly necessary changes to ensure that the plan remains up to date, we do not need to provide updates on every area of change since the plan was adopted.</p> <p>For further discussion if required.</p>	<p>A change could be considered pending on progress with SE Stevenage site.</p>
	<p>8.9 - Do these proposals align with the proposals in the GTP and Lytton Way / Station Gateway proposals?</p>	<p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p> <p>For further discussion if required.</p>	<p>No Change</p>

	<p>8.10 - Needs to refer to sustainable access. Amended accordingly.</p>	<p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p>	<p>Updated to reflect comment.</p>
	<p>IT4 - Ensure alignment with HCC planning movement and design guide.</p>	<p>For further discussion if required.</p>	<p>No Change</p>
	<p>IT5 - Ensure alignment with HCC planning movement and design guide. Reference LTN1/20.</p>	<p>The policy requires compliance with the Parking SPD. The draft revised version of this document requires parking design to be in accordance with the movement and design guide. Is that sufficient and is reference to LTN1/20 required in addition?</p> <p>For further discussion if required.</p>	<p>No Change</p>
	<p>IT5 - Loss of off-street parking - Loss of parking can be mitigated by encouraging/facilitating sustainable modes of travel, particularly given that the current cycling network and public transport are underutilised.</p>	<p>Criterion (d) already accounts for loss of off-street parking i.e. on-street car parking will not be required if it can be ensured that sustainable transport modes are taken up</p>	<p>No Change</p>
	<p>8.30 / 8.33 and parking SPD (Supplementary Planning Document)- Ensure alignment with HCC planning movement and design guide. Agreed. Draft revised SPD will be shared.</p>	<p>Comments acknowledged and noted. SBC to share draft revised Supplementary Planning Document.</p> <p>SPD consultation was held from 14 October to 24 November 2024.</p>	<p>Comments received by HCC as part of the consultation process.</p>

	8.34 - Should be moved up in the section.	The general principle - i.e. prioritising sustainable transport - is agreed. We agree that the policies for sustainable transport should be strengthened. Changes are proposed to Policies SP1 and SP6 accordingly.	No Change
	IT6 page 121 - Needs updating. 5th platform already built along with bus station.	This is out of scope for the Partial Review and Update. Our advice is that since this is a partial review and limited only to strictly necessary changes to ensure that the plan remains up to date, we do not need to provide updates on every area of change since the plan was adopted.	No Change
	Presumption in favour of planning permissions - Sets very low bar - e.g., contribution towards bus services - no threshold set.	The bar is “reasonably contribute” and it is hard to be more specific. The onus is on SBC to justify the level of contribution that will be required in each case.	No Change
	No mention of CIL - Will contributions be pooled towards these priority schemes? These needs defining to ensure appropriate improvements/mitigations are clear and in place. See response re CIL under general points section.	As highlighted in the forthcoming Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) 2024 the Councils governance arrangements of Strategic CIL expenditure which it intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by CIL will require bids from infrastructure providers to the Cabinet (for over £75k).	No Change

		<p>Successful bids must demonstrate the how the allocation of CIL would provide for the infrastructure to support the delivery of the Plan.</p> <p>As Highways Authority HCC is able to bid for that funding if /when there is a suitable project that accords with the Local Plan / IDP.</p> <p>For smaller contributions, the Council has agreed that the approval of CIL expenditure below £75,000 will be delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning &amp; Regulation in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder.</p>	
	No mention of bus priority - Need to recognise recent improvements to bus frequency through BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan).	Comments acknowledged and noted.	No Change
	8.38 - EWR route now further north.	Comments acknowledged and noted.	No Change
	8.40 - Update to ITU.	Comments acknowledged and noted.	No Change
	Need to replace references to Hertfordshire LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) with Hertfordshire Futures.	Comments acknowledged and noted.	No Change
	IT7 / 8.45 - Do these routes align with what is included in the LCWIP or are they the basis for the development of new routes that could be included in an LCWIP	LCWIP updates will be conducted as part of a Full Local Plan Review. Comments noted on Town centre cycling prohibition.	No Change



	<p>HO3 - No secondary school - important to reference the importance of direct and safe active travel routes to nearest school..</p> <p>HO4 - No primary or secondary school - despite 550 units - where is nearest school - need to ensure hook is for direct active travel routes to the nearest facilities. Is the new roundabout providing the access an up-to-date proposal?</p> <p>No mention of STT.</p> <p>Part B - Needs updating suggest this is done as part of the STT work - Active travel strategy needs to specifically refer to the LCWIP and prioritised routes also bike hire scheme. Need to determine funding sources for maintenance of existing network.</p> <p>PT strategy - Needs updating as Thameslink timetable changes now made and 5th platform introduced.</p> <p>Car parking strategy - Has 2004 parking strategy been updated? - Have there been post MSCP parking surveys - needs to mention consolidation of parking.</p> <p>Car sharing - Need to give update on lift share schemes. Need for data update HCTS - Recognition of post-pandemic changes in working and travel patterns.</p>	<p>Development is well underway. Changes to the policy at this stage would be unreasonable.</p> <p>For discussion if required.</p> <p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p> <p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p> <p>Comments acknowledged and noted.</p> <p>Stevenage has revised its Parking SPD. For discussion if required.</p> <p>Comments acknowledged and noted. This is out of scope for the Local Plan Partial Review and Update.</p>	<p>No Change</p> <p>A change could be considered pending on progress with SE Stevenage site.</p> <p>No change</p> <p>No change</p> <p>No change</p> <p>No change</p> <p>No change</p>
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	Network management - We are not prioritising road capacity improvements at pinch points anymore. For discussion.	Comments acknowledged and noted.	No change
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**4.0 Commitment to future co-operation**

- 4.1 Both SBC and HCC remain committed to effective co-operation on all strategic matters. As such both SBC and HCC undertake to review and update this agreement as appropriate as key milestones are reached in plan preparation and any review.



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Sarah McLaughlin

Head of Growth and Infrastructure Unit

Signed on behalf of

Hertfordshire County Council



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Alex Robinson

Assistant Director for Planning and Regulation

Signed on behalf of

Stevenage Borough Council