

Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

Statement of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Property Development Services on behalf of HCC Services

Matter 11 – The housing allocations and the settlement boundaries: the Category A Villages: Graveley (including North of Stevenage)

11.21 Are all of the proposed housing allocations deliverable? In particular, are they:

c) deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?

1. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) considers that the housing allocations are not deliverable because insufficient land (up to four hectares) has been proposed in the Local Plan in Great Ashby (at site GA2) to meet the need for secondary school places arising from both the existing population and the proposed residential developments to the north of Stevenage. An 8 Form of Entry (FE) secondary school site is required.
2. In addition, a primary school is required to meet the demand for places that will arise from the proposed 900 dwellings at site NS1. Based on a one form of entry (FE) yield per 500 dwellings 1.8FE of school places will be required to meet the demand arising from this development.
3. Site NS1 abuts site allocation HO3 in the Stevenage Local Plan. 800 homes are proposed on site HO3, along with a 2FE primary school site to serve this and other sites in the locality allocated in the Stevenage Local Plan. Policy SP16 (b) requires:

‘Integration with adjoining development in Stevenage Borough including site- wide solutions for access, education, retail and other necessary social infrastructure.’
4. There will be no provision within site HO3 to meet the demand for the primary school places from NS1. Site NS1 therefore should include a 2FE primary school site.
5. Failure to provide a new primary school would result in insufficient primary school places being available for the north of Stevenage. HCC considers that without a primary school at NS1, the Local Plan is unsound as it has not been positively prepared to meet infrastructure requirements.
6. Furthermore, the County Council contends that the proposed allocations are not deliverable as a site of sufficient size for an 8FE secondary school needs to be allocated to the north of Stevenage to provide a sustainable pattern of secondary provision across the area and meet the demand for places. Please refer to HCC’s matters statement for Stevenage (Great Ashby) for justification.

11.22 Are all of the proposed housing allocations justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of the development?

7. HCC considers that the housing allocations are not justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impact upon the demand for both primary and secondary school places.

11.23 Are all of the proposed allocations the most appropriate option given the reasonable alternatives?

8. The proposed allocations are not the most appropriate options because a site of sufficient size for an 8 form of entry secondary school needs to be allocated to the north of Stevenage to meet the demand for places. In addition a site for a 2FE primary school is required within site NS1.

11.24(f) Are the proposed Green Belt boundaries consistent with the Plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development?

9. No. The identified requirements include the necessary education infrastructure provision (see Policy SP10(e)). Those education requirements entail the provision of a 2FE primary school. HCC does not understand how the allocation is large enough to accommodate the required education provision together with the planned 900 dwellings. Unless the scale of residential development is reduced, it will be necessary to increase the size of the allocation. This will require a further adjustment to the proposed Green Belt boundaries to ensure that the allocation includes sufficient land to allow for all of the identified requirements to be provided.

Changes required to make the Plan 'sound'

10. Policy SP16 could only be made 'sound' if it was amended to ensure that item (b) provides:
'At least 2FE of primary-age education provision to ensure the needs arising from this allocation can be met within the site'
11. Consequential adjustments would be needed to the site allocation boundary and to the Green Belt boundary as shown on the Proposals Map (i.e. the submission policies map).