

## Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

### Statement of Stevenage Borough Council (SBC)

#### Matter 10 - The housing allocations and the settlement boundaries: the Towns

##### Stevenage (Great Ashby) GA1 and GA2

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

a) confirmed by all of the landowners involved as being available for the use proposed?

1. No comments.

b) supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided?

2. As outlined in our Matter 16 – Transport and infrastructure policies statement, the volume of housing identified in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (NHLP) to the north of Stevenage, including GA1 (330 dwellings) and GA2 (600 dwellings), is significant.

3. Sites GA1 and GA2 functionally attach to the urban area of Stevenage and require a joint approach to masterplanning and mobility between Stevenage Borough Council (SBC), North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). It is therefore crucial that the sites are designed in accordance with the Stevenage Mobility Strategy (ORD7).

4. Given the significance of sites GA1 and GA2 to Stevenage, the policies that allocate these sites should be updated to refer directly to the Transport Strategy and the Stevenage Mobility Strategy.

##### GA1

5. The following amendment is requested to the Local Housing Allocations and site specific criteria [page 156]:

“GA1 Land at Roundwood (Graveley Parish) 330 homes

- Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery;

- **Designed in line with the Transport Strategy and the Stevenage Mobility Strategy;**
  - Sensitive integration into existing settlement.....”
6. The supporting text will benefit from updating to reference the importance of the new Transport Strategy and Stevenage Mobility Strategy in informing the approach to sites. We propose the following new paragraph to capture this and suggests it is inserted after para 13.99:
- “Sites in Great Ashby will be designed in line with the Transport Strategy and Stevenage Mobility Strategy, placing a high priority on active travel (walking and cycling).”**
7. **Paragraph 13.95, following the policy, has a minor typographical error, referring to Appendix 4 rather than Appendix 3. This should also be corrected.**

GA2

8. The Borough Council requests the amendment of Policy SP18 [page 69] as follows:  
 “Land to the north-east of Great Ashby within Weston parish, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for approximately 600 homes. Planning permission for residential development will be granted where the following site-specific requirements are met:
- a. A site masterplan to be approved prior to the submission of any detailed matters;
  - b. **The site is designed in line with the Transport Strategy and the Stevenage Mobility Strategy;**
  - c. Neighbourhood-level retail facilities providing approximately .... to m.
- c) deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?

**Transport and access**

9. At the time of preparing this statement, whilst the new Transport Strategy, October 2017, is available (ED14), there is no updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan to reflect the new Transport Strategy. It is not clear from the Transport Strategy what approach will be taken to mitigation for sites that impact on Stevenage.
10. From the information currently available, it is not clear how the delivery of sites GA1 and GA2 will be approached to ensure that the sites are delivered in way that accords with the new Transport Strategy (ED14) and the Stevenage Mobility Strategy (ORD7).

11. Particularly for sites that adjoin or are close to the existing urban area of Stevenage such as GA1 and GA2, it is important that necessary infrastructure for mobility is delivered in conjunction with SBC. The expectation of SBC is that these sites will place a high emphasis on active travel (cycling and walking) in line with the Transport Strategy and Stevenage Mobility Strategy, that the sites will provide appropriate contributions for active travel (cycling and walking) to improve the existing active travel networks in Stevenage and to support achieving behaviour change in Stevenage, and that a formal mechanism will be put in place for NHDC, SBC and HCC to work together to agree the approach to mobility. SBC propose the following supporting text to provide a framework for this:

**“Sites in Great Ashby will be designed in line with the Transport Strategy and Stevenage Mobility Strategy, placing a high priority on active travel (walking and cycling). The approach will be agreed in conjunction with Stevenage Borough Council and the highway authority.**

Our transport modelling does not identify any specific mitigation scheme requirements ...”

#### Design principles

12. The allocations of sites GA1 and GA2 are extensions to the urban area of Stevenage. Despite this, the policies contain no requirement for development to take into account the design principles of Stevenage.
13. As Britain’s first New Town, Stevenage was specifically designed around the principle of self-containment, incorporating a series of distinct neighbourhood areas, each with their own neighbourhood centre comprising community facilities and services. This is a key feature of the town and something SBC feels strongly should be continued and reflected in all major development around the edge of the town.
14. Whilst NHDC recognises the Garden City design principles should be followed in a policy allocating a site on the edge of Letchworth (Policy SP15), no similar requirement is made within Policy SP18 (GA2) and when allocating site GA1.
15. SBC would request that an additional criterion is added to both SP18 and GA1 to require the Stevenage design principles to be considered and reflected in any development scheme, as follows:  
**...”Integration with adjoining development in Stevenage Borough, including consideration of the Stevenage New Town design principles for neighbourhood centres and self-contained communities;”**

### Neighbourhood centre facilities

16. In line with the above comments on design principles, SBC makes specific objection to the lack of healthcare facilities being required on-site.
17. The IDP suggests a requirement for an additional 2.2 GP surgeries to meet the needs of the proposed sites on the edge of Stevenage. Paragraph 4.123 of the NHLP also suggests that healthcare facilities will be required on larger sites. However, we cannot see any policy requirement within the NHLP that ensures this provision will be made. None of the policies allocating housing around the edge of Stevenage (NS1, GA1 or GA2) make any mention of this provision.
18. **SBC request that a specific criterion is added to SP18 (GA2) to make the provision of a GP surgery a requirement of this development scheme, subject to demand at the time of development.** Without this, the policy cannot be considered sound as it does not meet the identified needs of the development.
19. **NHDC should be required to demonstrate this this level of provision could also meet the needs of site GA1. If they cannot, then healthcare provision should also be considered on site GA1.**

### Education – GA2

16. NHDC identify 4ha of land within GA2 for 'educational purposes'. It is not made clear (either within the plan or within any supporting evidence) the quantum of secondary school provision this would provide and whether this, alongside the Knebworth allocation, equates to the 8FE secondary school requirement. It seems doubtful that this would be a large enough site area to meet secondary school needs and to provide at least 2FE primary-age provision. **SBC would request that the level of provision, for both primary and secondary education, is made explicitly clear within this policy, and is expressed in terms of FE** (to ensure consistency with the evidence of need being relied upon).
17. SBC understand that since the Local Plan was submitted, additional land has been identified at GA2 which could enable a 4FE secondary school to be provided on this site. **SBC would welcome a modification, in principle, to expand the site area for educational use, to enable this to be achieved.**

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

18. No comments.

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

19. No comments.

10.23 Sites GA1 and GA2 comprise of land in the Green Belt. For each:

10.24 Is the proposed settlement boundary:

a) consistent with the methodology for identifying the settlement boundaries?

b) appropriate and justified?

20. No comments.