

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

### Statement of Stevenage Borough Council

#### **Matter 3 – The housing strategy: the objectively assessed need for housing and the housing requirement (Policy SP8)**

3.2. c) *Does Stevenage accept that its OAN is 7,600 homes, as HOU3 indicates, and has its Local Plan been based on that OAN figure?*

1. Paragraphs 1 to 8 of this answer have been jointly agreed by NHDC and Stevenage Borough Council (SBC).
2. The SBC plan was submitted for examination in July 2016 with hearing sessions held between January and March 2017. Main Modifications were consulted upon in June and July 2017. The Inspector's report (ED16) was issued in October 2017.
3. The evidence base for the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (SBLP) (ORD6) identified the OAN for Stevenage as 7,300 homes based on the findings of HOU4 and the 2012-based population and household projections. These were the most up-to-date Government population and household projections at the point of the SBLP's consultation and submission
4. The SBC Plan sets a housing target of 7,600 allowing for a 300 home uplift over this figure, to increase provision of much-needed affordable homes within the Borough.
5. Prior to the SBC hearing sessions, the 2014 revised household projections were released. HOU3 was prepared jointly by NHDC and Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) in August 2016 to investigate what the OAN would be taking into account these new projections<sup>1</sup>. As set out in the NHDC Plan, this work concluded that the OAN for Stevenage should be calculated as 7,600 if it was to be based on these updated figures (LP1, paragraph 2.39, p.16).
6. The recent Inspector's report into the SBLP concludes that
  - For the purposes of that plan, an OAN figure of 7,300 as set out in HOU4 is justified (ED16, paragraph 37, p.9);
  - That taking into account the findings of HOU3, the difference to Stevenage's housing requirement is "extremely limited, and in this context is not meaningful" and that

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<sup>1</sup> This joint work is also referenced in SOC1, p.10

this did not render HOU4 out of date for the purposes of that examination (ED16, paragraph 22, p.7); but

- That, in setting the housing target for the Plan, an uplift to 7,600 homes is justified in any instance (ED16, paragraph 38, p.9); and
- The plan includes a “sizeable” yet “sensible” buffer of sites and allocations over and above this target ensuring “greater flexibility in meeting the OAN” (ED16, paragraph 46, p.10).

7. In summary, SBC is providing sufficient homes to meet its full OAN under the findings of either HOU3 or HOU4 and is not asking NHDC to meet any of its needs.
8. The Memorandum of Understanding between NHDC and SBC agrees that the two authorities would both (at least) meet their own OAN based on the findings of HOU4 and that consequently there is no shortfall in provision within the ‘best fit’ HMA (MOU11, paragraph 4.8). This resolves the objection previously raised in SBC’s representations on this matter<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Representor reference 7993 in relation to Policy SP8 (within representation 5496)