

# **Stevenage 2021 Vision and Priorities**



## **Introduction**

### **Stevenage: 2021 Our Town Our Future**

We are updating the priorities in our community strategy - *Stevenage: 2021 Our Town Our Future*. This sets out how we will achieve our vision of a town that is prosperous, healthy, clean, green and safe.

We need to keep checking that our actions are taking us closer to this vision. We need to make sure our strategy is focussed and user friendly.

### **What is the Stevenage Partnership?**

The government established Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in 2000 to promote the social, economic and environmental well being of communities.

Our LSP is called Stevenage Partnership. It is made up of public, private and voluntary organisations, working together to improve quality of life for Stevenage communities. (Partnership members are listed in Appendix 1)

### **What does the Partnership do?**

- Brings together local plans, partnerships and initiatives to provide a forum through which service providers work together to meet local needs and priorities
- Creates the community strategy for the area and carries out the actions
- Keeps track of progress and updates the strategy
- Develops and delivers the local neighbourhood renewal strategy
- Promote citizenship and local democracy.

### **What is the community strategy?**

It sets out our plans to improve local services so that quality of life for local residents is made better. It's divided into different themes (for example – Children and Young People) with three-year action plans and priorities for each.

### **Where are we with our strategy?**

*Stevenage: 2021 Our Town Our Future* was first published in September 2004 so our priorities are now due for review. We need to update the community strategy to take into account progress that has been made. We also need to consider national developments that need to be incorporated into the strategy, for example, Local Area Agreements (LAA).

The Local Area Agreement is a three year agreement with Central Government that sets out a number of priorities for Hertfordshire. We have aligned the Community Strategy priorities within the 4 LAA themes. This has resulted in a number of areas being merged. For example, priorities on Safer Communities, Housing issues, Cultural issues and Stronger communities all come under Safer Stronger Communities.

We continue to update our priorities every three years to ensure that they remain relevant and achievable. We need to make sure that the priorities are helping us reach our vision for the town. The Partnership will produce annual action plans to deliver the three year priorities.

### **What have we done so far?**

- Reviewed evidence and data, including the Census, surveys, public consultations and performance measures
- Reviewed our progress - what we have achieved to date
- Held Partnership workshops – getting members of the Partnership to talk about their successes and think about plans for the future.

This has resulted in a new set of 3-year priorities to help us reach the vision.

### **What are we asking you?**

- Are these priorities important to you?
- Will they make a difference?
- Which are the most important to you?

There will be lots of opportunities to take part in consultation:

Community sessions	During June
Stevenage Day marquee	Sunday 10 June
Council main debate	Wednesday 11 July
Chronicle magazine article	Monday 16 July

Consultation period will be between 30<sup>th</sup> May and 20<sup>th</sup> July

How will we know our Strategy is successful?

We will create robust and achievable targets and action plans linked closely to the priorities. As far as possible this will be through existing strategies, action plans, local and national indicators. We will work with the local community to deliver and monitor the success of the Strategy. Regular reports will be published and made accessible through Stevenage Partnership and their website.

## Stevenage in context

### Britain's first New Town

Stevenage was built as a 'New Town' to accommodate people moving out from London after the Second World War. The people who moved here in the early days were pioneers, eager to take advantage of the new opportunities on offer. The town offered first class facilities, homes, jobs and a pleasant environment.

The people that designed Stevenage had a powerful vision and the town is regarded as one of the most outstanding achievements in town planning and development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Stevenage is now starting to show signs of wear and tear like any town of its age. Plans for extensive regeneration have begun including the town centre, housing estates and the neighbourhood centres.

We need to look ahead now that Stevenage is no longer just a New Town and build on our New Town heritage.

### Stevenage's place in the region

The East of England Regional Assembly has produced a draft ***East of England Plan***. The plan provides a framework for local authorities to produce more detailed development plans and local transport plans for their areas.

It identifies Stevenage as a key centre for development and change in the Eastern Region. Stevenage is required to contribute a major proportion of the jobs growth of 18,000 allocated to Stevenage, North Herts and East Herts in the period up to 2021.

The draft plan says that by 2021 there should be 16,000 new homes in the area and an extension of the town west of the A1M will be required to deliver this level of growth.

### Developing Stevenage

Developing Stevenage will provide new housing opportunities and strengthen employment areas.

It will attract new residents and investment by widening the choice of housing, providing new employment land and enhancing the transport system. It will enable highly skilled and entrepreneurial people to live and work here.

It will create opportunities. For Example:

- A redeveloped town centre will encourage residents to shop and socialise locally and make the town a more attractive place to visit.

- Transformed school provision will attract families who value education and expect standards to be maintained
- Reviewed health facilities will offer better medical care and help prevent general ill health
- New housing will offer affordable homes that attract skilled and 'key workers' (such as teachers and doctors) to create a balanced community capable of supporting a wide range of services that everyone can access
- Regenerated employment sites will attract key businesses who will themselves be attracted by the presence of a skilled and educated workforce. New businesses will kick-start the local economy and all residents will benefit from better paid jobs
- A better transport system will allow people to travel between homes, jobs and services
- Environmental improvements and new open spaces will make the town more attractive for everyone

## Stevenage 2021 – Our Vision and Our Priorities

We set out our vision for Stevenage in 2004 as follows:

*Our vision is to create a town that is prosperous, healthy, clean, green and safe. We want Stevenage to be a town with a strong sense of community in which people are proud to live, work, visit and do business. We want Stevenage to grow in a sustainable way and to be an important regional centre looking ahead and building on its new town heritage.*

The Community Strategy is now shaped around 4 themes. Themes are linked to the Local Area Agreement and the priorities are based on evidence and initial consultation.

### **Children and Young People**

- Help children and young people achieve their potential at all ages
- Help children and young people have good things to do and places to go
- Involve children and young people in decision-making
- Reduce teenage pregnancy and improve sexual health
- Safeguard our children and young people and promote their health and well being

### **Healthier communities and older people**

- Create healthier lifestyles
- Create opportunities for older people
- Ensure access to quality health care services

### **Safer and stronger communities**

- Develop affordable homes
- Develop vibrant voluntary organisations
- Empower communities
- Increase community cohesion
- Make culture sport and leisure more accessible
- Reduce anti-social behaviour
- Reduce fear of crime
- Reduce hate crime and harassment
- Reduce violent crime

### **Economic development, enterprise and the environment**

- Create cleaner and greener communities
- Increase range of employment opportunities
- Make a town wide commitment to halt climate change
- Provide a better image for the town
- Provide better transport
- Regenerate the town centre and the neighbourhood centres

## Delivering our vision

This section sets out some of the issues that we will need to address up to 2021:

- Deliver the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme. The government is making £150 million available to Stevenage in 2008. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform education, learning and skills in our town.
- The standard of people's health varies considerably within Stevenage. We need to tackle these inequalities in health across the town.
- Stevenage has an ageing population. Life expectancy is increasing and we want older people in Stevenage to enjoy healthy lives and to continue to live independently in the community for as long as possible.
- One in four people will experience a mental health problem of some kind at some time in their lives. We need to ensure access to quality health care services
- The Primary Care Trust is currently consulting on whether the major hospital in the east and north of Hertfordshire should be located at Lister in Stevenage or at QEII hospital in Welwyn Garden City.
- Many Stevenage people have an unjustified fear of crime and disorder. We need to reassure them and increase public confidence in our response to crime and anti-social behaviour.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to provide affordable housing for the next generation. We need to develop an affordable housing strategy
- Satisfaction with local sports provision is in the top 25% nationally. However levels of participation in moderate levels of physical activity are in the bottom 25% nationally.
- Many local facilities such as the Arts and Leisure Centre and the Swimming Centre were built in the 1970's and they are showing their age.
- Hertfordshire residents produced more than half a million tonnes of household waste last year – 521kgs for every Stevenage resident. It cost £40 million to collect and dispose of it and 60% went to landfill sites.

## Delivering our vision – priorities for 2008 - 2011

This section sets out our short-term priorities up to 2011 to deliver the vision.

Under each theme we have an aim as well as the priorities.

### Symbols represent priorities that fit under more than one theme

- ☺ Children and Young People
- ♥ Healthier Communities and Older People
- 🔒 Safer Stronger Communities
- £ *Economic Development, Enterprise and the Environment*

## Children and Young People

In 2004 we said:

**“We aim to ensure that there is good education and life-long learning opportunities for everyone who lives and works in Stevenage.”**

**Suggested priorities:**

### **Help children and young people achieve their potential at all ages**

School performance in Stevenage is improving, yet the number of young people gaining qualifications and going into higher education is still below the rest of Hertfordshire. Stevenage has the highest rate in Hertfordshire of young people not in education, employment or training. We need to raise the aspirations of our young people and their families and enable them to achieve their full potential. Levels of education have improved since 2004 and we aim to close the gap between Stevenage and the rest of Hertfordshire by 2021.

### **Help children and young people have good things to do and places to go**

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Young people, their parents and communities all want more positive things to do and better places to go for young people. We want to put young people in control of the things they do and places to go in their area.

### **Involve children and young people in decision-making**

Children and young people are our future and we are committed to listening to their views and involving them in decision-making. We will make sure that young people receive feedback so that they can see the results - what we do in response to what they tell us.

### **Reduce teenage pregnancy and improve sexual health** ♥

The rate of teenage pregnancies has fallen since 2003 but Stevenage still has a higher rate than other Hertfordshire districts. Government analysis



demonstrates that as well as having the means to avoid early pregnancy – knowledge and skills in relation to sex and relationships, easy access to contraceptive and sexual health advice and support – some young people also need the motivation to pursue further learning or a career, rather than to choose or accept early parenthood.

**Safeguard our children and young people and promote their health and well being**



We will support children and young people in every aspect of their lives, from birth to adulthood. We will empower young people to make well-informed choices about their lifestyle and health. For example, offering support on healthy eating, teenage pregnancy, smoking, and drug and alcohol use. Healthy lifestyles in childhood lay the foundations for health and well being in later life.

## **Healthier communities and older people**

### **In 2004 we said:**

“We aim to improve the health of Stevenage people and ensure that everyone has equal access to health advice and quality health care.”

### **Suggested priorities:**

#### **Create healthier lifestyles**

We need to promote healthy lifestyles – sensible drinking, improved diet and nutrition and physical exercise. For example, being overweight increases the risk of disease, cancer and diabetes. More than half of the population are not active enough.

Smoking is the greatest cause of preventable disease and premature death. We need to discourage young people from starting to smoke in the first place and reduce the number of adults who smoke.

The standard of people’s health varies considerably within Stevenage. We need to tackle these inequalities in health.

#### **Create opportunities for older people**

We want people to enjoy active, healthy and fulfilling lives, as they get older. We want to give them independence, well being and choice. We will promote quality of life through things such as subsidised travel, access to sport and physical activity and access to leisure and learning. We are committed to involving older people in the planning of services so that they can exercise choice and control over services tailored to their needs.

#### **Ensure access to quality health care services**

We must ensure that everybody in Stevenage has access to quality health and social care services and specialist services for vulnerable groups such as people with mental health problems, disabilities and caring responsibilities.

Health services in the community will need to be developed and improved with more emphasis on provision of care outside of hospital.

## **Safer and stronger communities**

**In 2004 we said:**

**For 'Culture':** "We will develop opportunities in sport, arts and leisure as a means of bringing people from all age groups and all walks of life together in the community."

**For 'Housing':** "We aim to create a town that's good to live in by providing good quality, affordable homes in clean, green, safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods with excellent transport links."

**For 'Safer communities':** "We aim to ensure that Stevenage remains one of the safest towns in the country, to reduce anti-social behaviour and convince people that Stevenage is a safe place to live in, work in and to visit."

**For 'Stronger communities':** "We aim to improve the quality of life for the community as a whole and the life chances of people living in the more deprived parts of the town. We will ensure that Stevenage is a town where everyone is valued, regardless of race, religion, disability, age or gender. We will measure success by actively seeking to foster quality relationships between people. We want Stevenage people to have a real say in the decisions that affect their lives and to be proud of their town."

**Suggested priorities:**

### **Develop affordable homes**

The demand for affordable housing far exceeds supply. Up to 2011 there will be an annual shortfall of 435 affordable homes each year. Currently we develop affordable homes by acquiring national or regional funding or through planning gain (Planning gain is community facilities e.g. play areas, schools or transport links, we require developers to build when developing new areas). In addition to this we are promoting affordable housing through the regeneration of the town centre and supporting the development of Stevenage West.

Homelessness will continue to be a significant concern in Stevenage without significant investment in new affordable homes for rent for households in need. Family breakdown - parental evictions and broken relationships - are the most common causes of homelessness.

We will develop 16,000 new homes in accordance with employment growth.

### **Develop vibrant voluntary organisations**

Voluntary organisations, community groups and faith groups play a vital role in helping to address issues such as social exclusion, lifelong learning, community safety and healthy living. The Stevenage COMPACT has been

launched as a means of developing the partnership between local public organisations and voluntary organisations.

We are committed to supporting existing voluntary organisations and encouraging new ones to form to address needs.

We are encouraging local businesses to support volunteering through a number of initiatives

### **Empower communities**

Involving people and communities in local decision-making leads to better service provision and stronger, more confident communities. Engaging with local people means informing and consulting them and building their capacity to be involved in services. We believe that local people have the best understanding of local needs and priorities.

### **Increase community cohesion**

People from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures have moved to Stevenage in recent years. We want to put out a clear message that we appreciate and value the diversity of our town.

We have consulted with people from the black and minority ethnic communities and we want to make sure that their needs and aspirations are taken into account in local services.

We want to create a town that offers a high quality of life and opportunity for all, not just the few. In order to do this we need to tackle social exclusion (Reducing inequalities between the least advantaged groups and communities and the rest of society.) and eliminate the gaps between the more disadvantaged members of our community and the community as a whole – both within Stevenage and within the rest of Hertfordshire

### **Make culture sport and leisure more accessible** 😊 ❤️

Culture, sport and leisure can transform lives and communities. They can help individuals develop self-esteem by acquiring skills and improving physical and mental health. Many people think of the arts as being elitist and ‘not for me.’ We are committed to raising the profile of the arts in Stevenage with an emphasis on community-based projects.

### **Reduce anti-social behaviour** 😊

We will work together to build a community in which we can respect one another – where anti-social behaviour is rare and tackled effectively, and communities can live in peace together.

### **Reduce fear of crime**

Many Stevenage people have an unjustified fear of crime and disorder. We need to reassure them and increase public confidence in our response to crime and anti-social behaviour. Many people want a police presence in their local community and the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) will be increased.

### **Reduce hate crime and harassment**

Hate crime can have a very significant impact on victims and it is likely many instances go unreported.

### **Reduce violent crime**

There are 'hotspots' such as the town centre, Leisure Park and to a lesser extent the Old Town High Street, often fuelled by alcohol and drugs. Violent crimes such as assaults and wounding are a concern.

Domestic violence can go unreported because victims are reluctant to report offenders. We need to make it clear that it is unacceptable and that offenders can expect to be prosecuted.

## **Economic development, enterprise and the environment**

### **In 2004 we said:**

**For 'Economic development':** "We aim to create a prosperous town that attracts and supports businesses and encourages local enterprise. We believe that Stevenage needs to accommodate sustainable growth to meet the needs of its residents and businesses..."

We aim to revitalise the town centre and the neighbourhood centres and promote the Old Town whilst retaining its market town atmosphere."

**For 'Sustainable environment':** "We aim to create a town that's good to live in by providing good quality, affordable homes in clean, green, safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods with excellent transport links."

**For 'Transport':** "We aim to develop sustainable transport."

### **Suggested priorities:**

#### **Create cleaner and greener communities**

Whilst it is good to recycle, we need to reduce the amount of waste that we produce in the first place. We are running out of space, landfill harms the environment and the cost is increasing. We need to find other methods of disposal as an alternative to landfill that are safe, environmentally friendly and cost effective.

Keeping our streets clean, tackling litter, fly tipping and graffiti is very important to local people. Open spaces make an important contribution to our overall quality of life. We want to create safe open spaces, which can be enjoyed by the whole community. We will promote biodiversity (The variety of plants and animals and other living things in a particular area or region.) and the conservation and protection of species and habitats.

#### **Increase range of employment opportunities**

We want to create a dynamic economy by encouraging large companies to relocate in Stevenage, attract companies involved in growth areas of the economy and develop existing advanced technology industries. We will encourage and support small and medium sized companies in order to provide a broad base of employment, and deliver a significant regeneration of employment sites

#### **Make a town wide commitment to halt climate change**

Stevenage Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council have signed the Nottingham Declaration. This commits both councils to develop with

partners and local communities their plans over the next two years. These will address the causes of climate change and set out actions to reduce greenhouse emissions locally.

The Partnership will encourage all sectors to adapt to the impacts of climate change, reduce their own greenhouse emissions and publicise their commitment.

### **Provide a better image for the town**

Negative perceptions of Stevenage are unfair and often misinformed. Stevenage is one of the great successes of post-war Britain and we want to celebrate that success and tell people just how good Stevenage is.

### **Provide better transport**

Stevenage has an excellent transport network. Many local journeys are less than four miles and can use travel methods other than the car. We need to reduce reliance on the car by ensuring that there are plenty of alternative ways of travelling. For example, cycling and public transport, with road safety. We want to reduce car travel and improve alternative methods of travel.

We want to improve transport networks connecting Stevenage to other places. Stevenage is well placed to benefit from its closeness to London and major transport centres such as Stansted.

### **Regenerate the town centre and the neighbourhood centres** 🗝️

We have produced ambitious plans for the redevelopment of the town centre that will establish Stevenage as a place that can compete with other shopping, leisure, and cultural centres and encourage local people to spend their money in the town.

Investment in the town centre will create more confidence in the town and encourage companies to stay here and encourage others to locate in Stevenage.

We need to review the provision of neighbourhood centres and consider what role they might play in the future.

## **Future Priorities**

The Olympic and Paralympic Games offer a once in a lifetime opportunity to embed sport and culture in everyone's life. The Games will create employment and business opportunities, opportunities to improve our facilities and to promote a positive image of the town. We need to make sure that we build on the legacy that the Games will leave.

Consider the Future of Neighbourhood centres.



**Appendix 1**  
**List of references**

Across County

Building Schools for the Future  
Hertfordshire Children & Young People's Plan  
Hertfordshire Children's Fund Plan  
Hertfordshire Economic Development Strategy  
Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement (2006-2009)  
Hertfordshire Waste Strategy  
Investing in Communities  
Investing in your Health Review (2006)  
LCB Housing Strategy  
Local Transport Plan  
Northern & Eastern Herts Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment  
Supporting People Strategy  
Travelwise  
West Stevenage Plan

Across Stevenage

Affordable Housing Strategy  
Air Quality Strategy  
Community Safety -Crime, Disorder and Drugs Strategy 2005 -2008  
Community Strategy 2021 (current)  
Cultural Strategy  
Equality and Diversity Strategy (SBC).  
Green Travel Plans  
Health Improvement and Modernisation Programme (2006/07)  
Homelessness Strategy (SBC)  
Housing Strategy  
Local Development Framework (in progress).  
Open Spaces Strategy  
Play Strategy and Play Policy.  
Social Inclusion Position Statement.  
Stevenage Children and Young People's Plan  
SBC Environmental Audit / Environment Strategy  
Stevenage LA21 (Stevenage 2000+)  
Stevenage Transport Strategy

**2006 to 2007 Stevenage Partnership Board Members**

Age Concern  
Arts Guild  
Churches Together  
Citizens Advice Bureau  
Connexions Hertfordshire  
CTC  
East and North Herts NHS Trust  
Easy Stop  
FOSTA  
Friends of the Forster Country  
GlaxoSmithKlein  
Groundwork Hertfordshire  
Gunnels Wood Business Partnership  
HCC Fire and Rescue  
Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Hertfordshire Community Foundation  
Hertfordshire Constabulary  
Hertfordshire County Council  
Hertfordshire Police Authority  
Hertfordshire BIC  
Incredit  
Member of Parliament  
Microchip Computers  
Muslim Community Centre  
North Hertfordshire College  
Primary Care Trust (NHS)  
Ridgemoor Training  
SCARAF (Caribbean and African Association)  
SP Housing (Social Housing)  
Sport Stevenage  
Stevenage Borough Council  
Stevenage Business Initiative  
Stevenage CVS  
Stevenage Haven  
Stevenage Homes Limited  
Stevenage Leisure Limited  
Stevenage Neighbourhood Watch Forum  
Stevenage Schools  
Stevenage World Forum for Ethnic Communities  
Young Mums  
Youth Council

This is the list of 2006-2007 Board Members. The membership is subject to change at the Annual Forum where elections are held to determine new membership of both the board and the executive.