

**Meeting** EXECUTIVE  
**Portfolio Area** ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION  
**Date** 14 May 2019



## STEVENAGE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN: PRE-ADOPTION DRAFT

### KEY DECISION

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### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Members of the outcomes of consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the initial proposals set out in the 30 April Executive Report.
- 1.2 To seek agreement to recommend to Council that the Local Plan, incorporating main and minor modifications, is adopted, and that the District Plan Second Review 2004 is subsequently revoked.

### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the outcomes following consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.
- 2.2 That Executive inform Council that its firm proposal is that Council accept the Inspector's recommendation to adopt the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, incorporating main and minor modifications (attached as Appendix B), and

associated Policies Map and that Council be asked to revoke the District Plan Second Review 2004 (BD1 to the Executive report on 30 April 2019).

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The detailed background is set out in the report to Executive on 30 April 2019, a copy of which is at Appendix A.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 30 April 2019 Executive resolved:
1. That the outcomes of the Main Modifications (and associated Sustainability Appraisal) consultation be noted.
  2. That the content of the Inspector's Report be noted.
  3. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be informed that the Executive's initial proposal is to recommend to Council to accept the Inspector's recommendation to adopt the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, incorporating main and minor modifications, and associated Proposals Map, and also to revoke the District Plan Second Review 2004.
- 3.3 In accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework rules in the Council's Constitution, the Executive's initial proposals were submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consultation on 30 April 2019. This report is to inform Executive of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's responses to the consultation and recommend firm proposals to be submitted to Council. The timetable is set out below:

Date	Meeting	Report
30 April	Executive	Draft proposals
30 April	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Draft proposals
14 May	Executive	Finalised proposals (taking into account feedback from Overview and Scrutiny)
16 May	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Finalised proposals
22 May	Council	Adoption of the Local Plan

## **4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS**

### **Recommendation 2.1:**

That the outcomes following consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the 30 April Executive Report at their meeting on 30 April.
- 1.2 Questions were raised in relation to a number of different issues. A summary of the key issues raised and officer responses is below:

#### **Reference to 'new' railway station**

Members questioned the significance of the removal of references to a 'new' railway station (in line with the Secretary of State's letter lifting the holding direction) and whether this would impact delivery of improvements. Officers explained this was of no major significance to the draft Local Plan. Both amendments requested by the Secretary of State were minor modifications and it had always been the intention of the Council to press for an improved and regenerated Station, as supported by residents and local businesses.

#### **Affordable housing**

Members questioned the origins of the removal of the words 'at least' in Main Modification 57 (MM57), in relation to the 30% affordable housing provision requirement of Policy HO3. Officers clarified that this modification was put forward by the Planning Inspector. In her view, Policy HO3 (Land North of Stevenage) should not be seeking an affordable housing level above those rates set out in Policy HO7 (Affordable housing targets). The Council will still be able to allow and encourage a greater proportion of affordable housing, but will not be able to insist upon it.

Members were concerned that the delay in adopting the Local Plan may have caused the Council to lose potential affordable housing, as it could not successfully negotiate on viability. Officers explained that the Council has been using the draft Local Plan as a material consideration in determining planning applications, despite it not being adopted. Officers undertook to provide Members of the Committee with details of any potential loss of affordable housing provision in the Borough as a result of the prolonged imposition of the Holding Direction

#### **Development not set out in the Local Plan**

Members questioned whether development not set out in the Local Plan could still come forward once the plan was adopted. Officers explained that the Plan

sets out a strategy defining the use of various sites across the town, but the details of each development would be matters for consideration by the Planning and Development Committee. However, all major site allocations would be subject to the production of Master Plans. The Plan takes a positive approach to development and would not preclude planning applications to be considered by the Planning and Development Committee for sites and matters not contained within it.

### **Financial implications**

Members questioned how much money the Holding Direction has cost the Council since it was put in place. Officers confirmed that the Council would be seeking to reclaim its legal costs associated with work on the Council's Judicial Review application, and undertook to provide Members of the Committee with figures relating to these legal costs, together with an estimate of officer time spent over the past 18 months on matters relating to attempts made to obtain a lifting of the Holding Direction. Officers indicated that legal costs could be made publically available.

### **General comments**

A Member commented that he was pleased we can move ahead with the word 'regenerated' replacing 'new' in relation to the station, and that regeneration of the station was much needed.

A Member commended and thanked the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration, other relevant Members and officers for their determination and perseverance over the past few years which had finally led to current position.

- 1.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had no other comments on the Executive's initial proposal to recommend to Council to accept the Inspector's recommendation to adopt the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, incorporating main and minor modifications (attached as Appendix C to the Executive report) and associated Proposals map, and also to revoke the District Plan Second Review 2004.
- 1.4 Members are requested to note the outcomes following consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **Recommendation 2.2:**

That Executive inform Council that its firm proposal is that Council accept the Inspector's recommendation to adopt the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, incorporating main and minor modifications (attached as Appendix B), and associated Policies Map and that Council be asked to revoke the District Plan Second Review 2004 (BD1 to the Executive report on 30 April 2019).

- 1.5 Upon receipt of the Inspector's Report, the Council can either adopt the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, with the recommendations proposed, or it must withdraw the Plan completely.
- 1.6 Having regard to the responses from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Executive is recommended to inform Council that its firm proposal is that Council adopt the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, incorporating main and minor modifications as set out at Appendix B and revoke the District Plan Second Review 2004.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The Financial implications are as set out in the report to Executive on 30 April 2019

### **Legal Implications**

- 5.2 The Legal Implications are as set out in the report to Executive on 30 April 2019.
- 5.3 Executive must, in drawing up firm proposals to recommend to Council, have regard to the responses Overview and Scrutiny Committee has made to the initial proposals put forward by the Executive,

### **Risk Implications**

- 5.4 The risk implications are as set out in the report to Executive on 30 April 2019.

### **Policy Implications**

- 5.5 The policy implications are as set out in the report to Executive on 30 April 2019.

## **Planning Implications**

The planning implications are as set out in the report to Executive on 30 April 2019 Environmental Implications

## **Environmental Implications**

The environmental implications are as set out in the report to Executive on 30 April 2019

## **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 5.6 The equality and diversity implications are as set out in the report to Executive on 30 April 2019.

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

BD1 Draft Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Meeting of 30 April 2019.

## **APPENDICES**

- A Report to Executive on 30 April 2019 (previously circulated).
- B Draft Stevenage Borough Local Plan – incorporating major and minor modifications (previously circulated).