

**Meeting** Executive  
**Portfolio Area** Environment and Regeneration  
**Date** 18 July 2023



## STEVENAGE STATION GATEWAY AREA ACTION PLAN: PREFERRED OPTIONS REPORT PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

### KEY DECISION

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### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with an overview of the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan (AAP) Preferred Options Report public consultation (Appendix A).
- 1.2 To remind Members of the range of high-level policy objectives which align with the Local Plan and national policy direction for the AAP to respond to, and to highlight to Members the comprehensive response to the Preferred Options Report public consultation, compared to the Issues and Options public consultation in 2021.
- 1.3 Stevenage Station Gateway is a vital location in the heart of the town, providing a number of connections across the town centre, north-south and east-west routes, at the heart of the sustainable transport network and a vital front door for the economy. A series of key design principles have been developed for the emerging framework of the AAP. These principles include providing people-friendly spaces, improving links from the rail station to the bus station, improving step-free and disabled access, future-proofing the area for a rail station upgrade, consolidating surface car

parking to enable development and to ensure good access for all travel modes, and including high quality cycling facilities.

- 1.4 It is important to note that the options proposed are high level, strategic options and scenarios to develop an improved environment, maximise density of space and economic opportunities around Stevenage Railway Station, in order to enable development in the long-term.
- 1.5 To highlight to Members the next steps in the planning process with the AAP and Local Plan Review.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Executive:

- 2.1 Note the content of the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan (AAP) Preferred Options Report Consultation Statement (Appendix A).
- 2.2 Note the content of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Highways comments on the Preferred Options Report.
- 2.3 Approve the next steps for the AAP Preferred Options Report and Local Plan Review set out in the report, including agreeing to consult on Option 2 as the Preferred Option within the Local Plan Review in 2024.
- 2.4 Approve a revised Local Development Scheme and note the timescales for a Local Plan Review (Appendix D).
- 2.5 Note that the comments of the Planning & Development Committee will be sought and considered on both the Consultation Statement and the content of this Executive Report.
- 2.6 Note that informal engagement with key stakeholders will continue, ahead of incorporating the AAP into the Local Plan Review.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

*Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan*

- 3.1 An Area Action Plan (AAP) is a type of Development Plan Document (DPD) providing a planning framework for a specific area of opportunity, change or conservation. AAPs give a geographic or spatial dimension and focus for the implementation of policies for that area. AAPs can create new policy over and above the Local Plan, within the designated AAP area.
- 3.2 The AAP will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to engage and shape this area. It also acts as a catalyst for developers interested in supporting this key part of the Local Plan.
- 3.3 Stevenage Borough Local Plan [BD1] Policy TC4 (“Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area”) states:

*Within the Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area, as defined on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted for:*

- a. An extended and regenerated train station;*
- b. New bus station;*
- c. High-density Use Class C3 residential units;*
- d. New multi-storey or basement car parking;*
- e. New Use Class B1 office premises;*

- f. A new Use Class C1 hotel; and*
- g. New Use Class A1 and Use Class A3 restaurant and cafe uses.*

*Applications should address the following design and land use principles:*

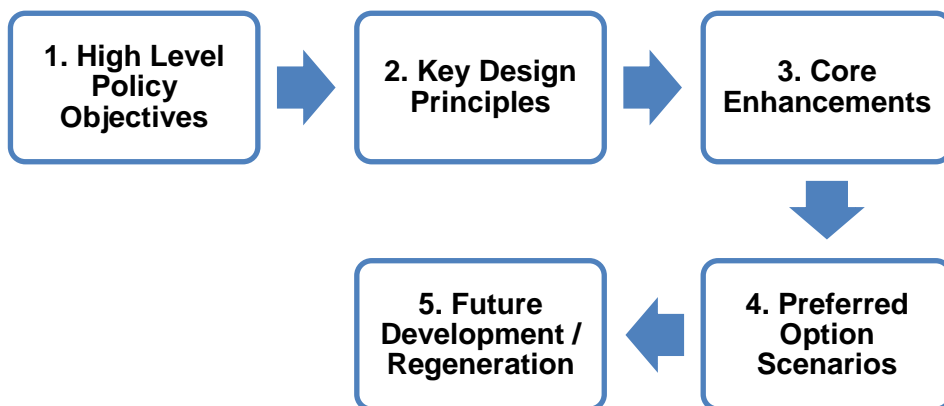
- i. Major reconfiguration of Lytton Way between Fairlands Way and Six Hills Way;*
- ii. Demolition of the Arts & Leisure Centre to facilitate better east-west integration and create new development sites in the environs of the train station*
- iii. The provision of replacement sports and theatre facilities elsewhere within Stevenage Central*
- iv. A significantly regenerated and enlarged dual frontage train station of high quality, with associated facilities*
- v. New public squares on the eastern and western frontages of the train station*
- vi. High quality office buildings within a short walking distance of the train station*
- vii. At least one multi-storey car park and cycle parking plus drop-off space*
- viii. Establishment of an attractive east – west pedestrian route across the East Coast Main Line*
- ix. High quality landmark gateway environment to create a positive image of Stevenage for all rail visitors*

- 3.4 The requirement to produce the Stevenage Station Gateway AAP (site area TC4 as identified in the Local Plan) resulted from a letter from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in March 2019 [BD2]. This lifted the Holding Direction placed on the Stevenage Borough Local Plan in 2017.
- 3.5 The Council provides regular updates to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on progress with the AAP as one of the conditions set in the Secretary of State's letter to the Council in March 2019.
- 3.6 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) of Stevenage Borough has included the intention to prepare an AAP for this part of Stevenage since 2019 when the Local Plan was adopted. A review of the current Stevenage Borough LDS will continue to include the AAP and consider how this will be included in a Local Plan Review.
- 3.7 The AAP was previously referred to as the Area Action Plan – Railway Station in the LDS; then subsequently renamed for the Issues and Options consultation in 2021 as the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan. However, in order to reflect the more comprehensive vision being envisaged for the area, and the need to integrate development proposals in the area, the plan was renamed the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan for the Preferred Options consultation in 2023.
- 3.8 Preparation of the AAP commenced in 2020. The consultation feedback on the Issues and Options Report (consulted on in Summer 2021) was reported to Council in early 2022. The Preferred Options Report had been redrafted to reflect the previous consultation and responses.
- 3.9 In September 2022, the Executive approved the publication of the Stevenage Station Gateway AAP: Preferred Options Report for consultation [BD6]. The document was consulted upon between 30 January 2023 and 18 March 2023.

*Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report*

3.10 Following the first stage of public consultation on the “Issues and Options” draft, work led to produce a Preferred Options report. This included the Council's preferred approach to the policies and proposals to be contained in the Plan.

3.11 The report outlines the core issues that are present within the station area as well as the background policy issues and wider context that affects its development.



*High Level Policy Objectives*

3.12 There are a range of high-level policy objectives which align with the Local Plan and national policy direction for the AAP to respond to. These include:

- A new gateway and arrival experience;
- Creating an exemplar, low carbon “urban village”;
- Sustainable travel considered throughout;
- Mixed-use development to unlock economic opportunity;
- Green infrastructure in the public realm;
- Climate change consideration in all development decisions;
- Design of the highest architectural standards;
- Celebrating the heritage of the town;
- Making the most of digital connectivity and high-speed broadband.

3.13 Climate change is one of the most important objectives for the AAP to respond to. The Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019 and reconfirmed a commitment to tackling climate change and its impacts by setting a target to ensure that Stevenage has net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Added to this, the Government has strategic targets to have net zero emissions by 2050. The Council has been proactive in producing a Climate Change Strategy [BD4] and outlined a Climate Change Action Plan. Both the Strategy and Action Plan are being updated to ensure that the Council’s commitment to battling climate change is kept at the top of its priorities.

3.14 The high level, strategic options proposed for the area included within the AAP will be strongly influenced by the masterplan for the SG1 development which lies to the east and within the town centre. Connections to this development and connections through into the town square and central area will form the emerging physical context within which the AAP sits.

3.15 The Station Gateway area of Stevenage is a key location for economic competitiveness. Other locations which are a similar time distance away from London terminals are seeing considerable commercial growth, for example Reading, Slough, Milton Keynes and Croydon. Stevenage is perfectly placed in terms of mobility, and already hosts major international companies in the Gunnel Wood

Industrial Area as well as GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) to the south, a major pharmaceutical company.

- 3.16 The Stevenage Development Board, in its Town Deal submission to Government, identified the Station Gateway area an area for key regeneration opportunities in Stevenage. Through the allocation of £37.5m Town Deal funding, the Government acknowledged the significant regeneration opportunities in Stevenage, the opportunity for the growth of vital STEM sectors including life sciences. This investment is designed to be clustered around the central parts of the town, and the Government-funded Town Deal funding includes a £500,000 allocation to enable masterplanning of the Station Gateway area going forward.
- 3.17 Creating an attractive, healthy, memorable and enjoyable place in the Station Gateway area will provide the seeds for high quality mixed-use development to come forward and make the most of the station area and contribute widely across the town.

#### *Key Design Principles*

- 3.18 Alongside the high-level objectives in paragraph 3.12, a series of key design principles have been developed for the emerging framework of the AAP. These principles include providing people-friendly spaces, improving links from the rail station to the bus station, improving step-free and disabled access, future-proofing the area for a rail station upgrade, consolidating surface car parking to enable development and to ensure good access for all travel modes, and including high quality cycling facilities.
- 3.19 The AAP is being prepared in full knowledge and recognition that a wider masterplan is developing for the Station Gateway area of Stevenage. The recent completion of the new bus interchange in June 2022, and multi-storey car park (MSCP) to the North of the site, in April 2023, is ensuring work is ongoing, as well as deep engagement with a variety of stakeholders.

#### *Core Enhancements*

- 3.20 All proposed high-level scenarios for the reconfiguration of Lytton Way have a set of core enhancements, primarily in the North and South zones of the AAP area, north of Swingate and south of Danesgate. These apply to all potential options and include:
- Reduction in width of Lytton Way to be reallocated to pedestrian or cycle movement with associated green infrastructure.
  - An additional segregated cycleway adjacent to Lytton Way, away from the railway tracks.
  - Improved access to the Police Station.
  - A large public square, future-proofed for a new railway station or enhanced station entrance.
  - An east-west “boulevard”, running from the west of the railway line to the town centre and would cross the station and public square.
  - Development plots made available by the consolidation of surface car parking into the Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP).

### *Preferred Options*

- 3.21 To build on the AAP objectives, key design principles and core enhancements, the AAP has set out 4 “high-level” options or scenarios for the area adjacent to Stevenage Railway Station incorporating the section of Lytton Way, between Swingate and Danesgate:
- Option 0 – Do nothing.
  - Option 1 – All traffic modes: reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway suitable for all modes of traffic.
  - Option 2 – Bus and Taxi only: reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway and restricts movement to buses and taxis only.
  - Option 3 – Pedestrianised Plaza: removes regular vehicle movement from the front of the station and Lytton Way ceases to be a through-route. An access through-route is retained for emergency vehicles needing to access and egress the station and immediate environs.
- 3.22 There were two cycle path options proposed as well as a range of other potential core enhancements for the area, including development parcels, temporary uses and phasing developments.
- 3.23 Any proposals that do come forward in the Station Gateway area will be duly considered by the Planning & Development Committee in accordance with Local Plan Policy TC4, the AAP and any relevant policies under review, at the appropriate time.

### *Formal public consultation period (30 January to 18 March 2023)*

- 3.24 The Preferred Options AAP developed from responses to the Issues and Options AAP consultation, which was held from July to September 2021.
- 3.25 The varied response the Council received to the Issues and Options AAP consultation, not just on the Options for the central section of Lytton Way, showed that in developing the Preferred Options AAP and taking the AAP through to its final stages, the aspirations in the vision and objectives for the AAP are of prime importance. This is to ensure that the Station Gateway area of opportunity is brought to life and delivered in the appropriate manner in accordance with other related measures. This was fully reflected in the Preferred Options AAP.
- 3.26 The key changes from the Issues and Options consultation, that were reflected in the Preferred Options AAP, were to Chapter 6 “Emerging Framework”. These included:
- Including reference at the beginning of Section 6 to reinforce the key principles of the AAP, that will be recognised through any final option the AAP recommends. All potential changes and scenarios proposed will promote movement and improve access to and from the Railway Station to the Town Centre and enhance the sense of arrival to Stevenage, providing the gateway to improved opportunities for the area.
  - Regarding the central section of Lytton Way, a focus on moving forward with Option 2 as a preferred option, with flexibility to convert to elements of other Lytton Way Options in the future and further work to consider how this land can best enable movement and the delivery of the AAP vision.
  - Importance of flexibility to incorporate elements of other Options in the final version of the AAP. Flexibility in land use terms, to move from Option 2 (preferred option) to Option 3 in accordance with active travel aspirations and

the overall opportunity the area presents, to bring about the best possible sense of arrival and gateway to the regenerated town – in accordance with the vision and aspirations of the Area Action Plan / Local Plan Policy TC4: Station Gateway.

- Focus on moving ahead with “Potential Layout 1” for a likely Cycle Path Option.
- Retention of objectives, key design principles and core enhancement sections, incorporating comments raised during the Issues and Options AAP consultation.
- Retention of phasing, temporary uses and development parcels sections, again incorporating any Issues and Options AAP consultation comments.
- Option 2: reduce the central section of Lytton Way to one lane both ways, for buses and taxis only, has emerged as a preferred option. However, Option 3: reduce the central section of Lytton Way to zero lanes to be a pedestrianised plaza, was also very popular. Some elements of this option will be reflected or future proofed as much as possible into the final preferred option, in order to match the aspirations of active travel and the regeneration plans for the town centre (SG1).
- While Option 1 is less supportive of active travel aspirations, it was also popular among respondents, therefore demonstrating a clear overall desire for some form of positive change involving Lytton Way. Option 0 “do nothing” received significantly less support than Options 1, 2 and 3.
- There was a clear preference for “Potential Layout 1” relating to the cycle path options – this is reflected in the Preferred Options document. This layout retains the existing cycle route, running alongside the railway line and at the extreme western edge of the AAP site boundary.
- Integration of current and recent developments in the vicinity of the Railway Station, including:
  - Town Investment Plan and Towns Fund Projects / Business Cases, some of which have a strong linkage to the Station Gateway area of Stevenage, as outlined in the Executive Report in February 2022 [BD5].
  - Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP), Station North, completion April 2023;
  - New Bus Interchange (opened 26 June 2022) and associated at-grade crossing on Lytton Way.

3.27 The Preferred Options AAP therefore presented the preferred approach to take Option 2 forward, but with flexibility to progress to Option 1 or Option 3 as an when circumstances developed. Potential Layout 1 for the cycle path option was taken forward in the Preferred Options AAP, as the preferred cycle layout.

3.28 While the vast majority of changes to text and references were made in Chapter 6: Emerging Framework, the broad message made to the public and stakeholders for the Preferred Options consultation was that the emerging framework presented a series of high-level scenarios for the area and subject to various stages of masterplanning, pre-application, planning application, design processes before they would be realised. The AAP’s objectives and key design principles to positively transform the Railway Station and surrounding area, were highlighted throughout as a focus for the Preferred Options consultation.

3.29 During the first consultation for the Station Gateway AAP (Issues and Options) held in 2021, the council utilised a consultation platform called Objective, which presented a number of limitations including user interface, ability to view documentation and limited ability for the public to make clear representations on the AAP.

3.30 For the Preferred Options consultation, research was conducted on several consultation platforms to establish a suitable replacement. After an assessment of providers, Commonplace was chosen as the web platform to host the Station

Gateway AAP consultation. It was considered appropriate because it was suitable for mobile phones as well as desktop users. The design of the site was tailored to hold detailed planning documents, allow consultees to visually analyse the area through maps and assist with breaking down complex planning matters. The platform could engage residents, businesses and different demographics and separated topic areas to assist with understanding.

3.31 A link to the Stevenage Station Gateway AAP Preferred Options Report consultation platform was sent to all individuals who had signed up to the Council's planning consultee register. The register mainly consists of individuals who have responded to previous Local Plan consultations or specific planning applications, and also contains all statutory consultees and Duty to Co-operate bodies, as required by Regulations. Approximately 200 letters were also sent to individuals who had not provided an e-mail address. The letters advised recipients how they would be able to view the document (both electronically and physically) and the process for responding to the consultation.

3.32 The formal consultation consisted of:

- Publicity via the Stevenage Borough Council website and social media platforms (including the Council's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages).
- A link to the Council's consultation interface, where the public were able to download the AAP and submit their observations and representations.
- The consultation interface included a series of "consultation questions" and "frequently asked questions", designed to cover the varying aspects of the AAP and to generate comments on certain sections of the document, for example the cycle path options or general views on Railway Station and surrounding area. This was primarily to ensure that the Council received responses on the document as a whole and not just, for example on the proposed options for Lytton Way. The questions proved useful in understanding public opinion across the consultation period and subsequent representations made.
- The interface included a specialist "youth survey", designed to gauge the views of the next generation of Stevenage residents, workers and visitors, which proved successful.
- A series of more formal "key stakeholder meetings" were held virtually and in person at Daneshill House.
- A press release and articles in the Comet newspaper and Axis magazines, relating to the AAP public consultation.
- Continuation of distribution of leaflets and posters publicising the public consultation. This included distribution at Stevenage Central Library, Daneshill House Reception, the Bus Interchange and Stevenage Railway Station.
- Continuation of engagement with the wider public via consultation stalls at the Railway Station, the Bus Interchange and Stevenage Indoor Market.

3.33 The Planning Policy team were assisted by the Communities & Neighbourhoods team and in particular, neighbourhood wardens, in promoting the Area Action Plan consultation across Stevenage to ensure a wide a response as possible.



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

### Recommendation 2.1: That Executive note the content of the Stevenage Station Gateway AAP: Preferred Options Consultation Statement.

- 4.1 Appendix A provides full detail of the public consultation exercise for the Stevenage Station Gateway AAP. A summary of the consultation is given in the following paragraphs.
- 4.2 Documents which formed the public consultation included:
- Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report, January 2023 [BD3] and an Executive Summary in Appendix B;
  - A summary of consultation questions, related to the content of the AAP (Appendix C).
- 4.3 Consultation on the Stevenage Station Gateway AAP Preferred Options was held between 30 January 2023 and 18 March 2023, meeting the requirements stipulated for DPD consultations in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 4.4 A total of 950 representations were received from consultees as well as internal teams and committees. This compared to only 301 representations received at the previous Issues and Options AAP consultation in 2021.
- 4.5 Responses were received from, in terms of external bodies and individuals:
- Hertfordshire County Council
  - Historic England
  - Govia Thameslink Railway
  - Sport England
  - Hertfordshire Constabulary
  - Thames Water
  - Cycle UK Stevenage
  - Members of the public
- 4.6 A full summary of responses is provided in Appendix A as well as an overview of any recommendations to be taken forward for consideration when drafting the next stage of the AAP.
- 4.7 A wide range of themes emerged arising from consultation comments, including some of those highlighted below:

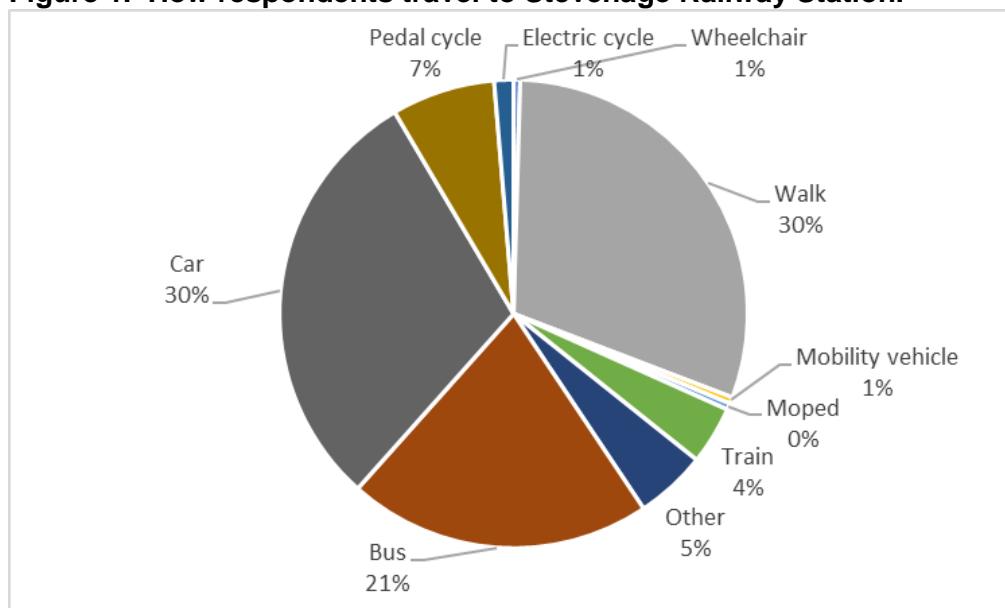
| Theme   | Comments   |
|---|--|
| Traffic / congestion                              | Traffic flow around the immediate area may suffer. Currently no alternatives to using other modes of transport. Bus services are too infrequent or finish too early. |
| Connectivity between different modes of transport | Good to have the train and bus station closer together. The new level crossing has made it more accessible on foot.  |

| Theme   | Comments   |
|---|--|
| Traffic / congestion  | Traffic flow around the immediate area may suffer. Currently no alternatives to using other modes of transport. Bus services are too infrequent or finish too early.   |
| Accessibility for all   | Lifts not always operational at night. Lifts have improved accessibility on to platforms. Ground floor access would make it feel more inviting. Ground level pedestrian crossings have made it more accessible especially to bus station.            |
| Signage / wayfinding  | Confusing signage around station and beyond for both pedestrians and cyclists. No clear way to walk or cycle to destinations in the town.  |
| Car Parking / drop off and pick up areas  | Better drop off and pick up points needed. Car parking needs to be priced correctly. Car parks still required due to lack of alternative travel methods.   |
| Facilities and land use (retail / cultural / leisure units / places to eat and drink) | More places to meet and wait would be a positive for the station. The Gordon Craig theatre is a community asset in the town and needs to stay in the area. Theatre works well next to train and bus station as a transport hub.                      |
| Safety  | Cycle paths and footpaths feel isolated early evening and at night. Lighting needs to be improved. No natural surveillance from footfall or slow traffic. Cold and exposed areas fuel fear of safety. Simplify layout to address safety in the area. |
| Active Travel   | Good cycle racks needed. Alternatives to the car needs to be improved, in order to encourage other forms of active travel.   |
| The environment and public realm (planting / green space / seating)                   | Hostile environment; barriers with high-speed road network. No space to sit down. No green space, aggressive traffic and noise pollution. Air pollution is a concern.  |
| Visually Attractive   | Either stairs or the back of buildings currently greets those who travel by train. The brutalist architecture of the town needs to be celebrated but also modernised. More attention is needed for the environment with more greenery.               |

4.8 The consultation provided a wide range of further analysis, which can be viewed in full in Appendix A. Highlights of the analysis included:

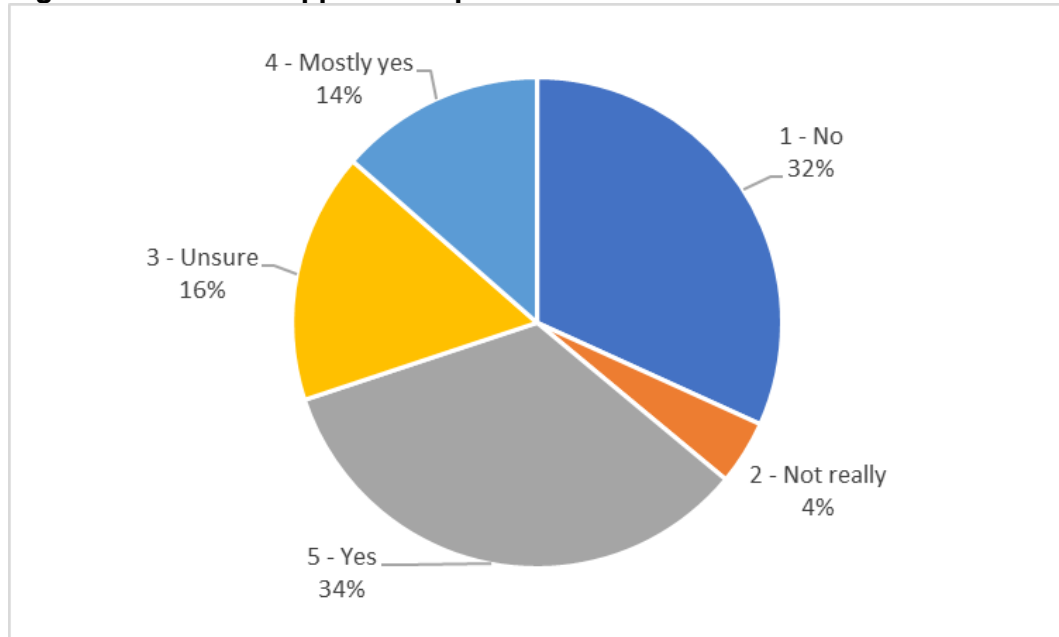
- Walking and travelling by car were the most popular forms of travel to the station with 30% (see Figure 1);
- A positive arrival experience should include easy access (12%), clear signage (11%), feeling safe (11%), toilets (10%) and to be visually attractive (8%).
- The land uses preferred include cultural facilities (19%), car parks (14%), retail (11%), green space (11%), transport hub (11%) and leisure facilities (10%).
- The word cloud (Figure 2) draws out the main words used in the responses. Some of the main issues which are highlighted include access, transport, and connectivity.
- Regarding Option 2, on a scale of 1–5, respondents could reflect their sentiment on how much they supported the proposal. 30% completely supported and 20% agreed with a mostly yes, providing a total of 50% of respondents. A total of 37% did not support the option (Figure 3).
- Regarding Option 3, on a scale of 1–5 (1 = No and 5 = Yes), respondents could reflect their sentiment on how much they supported the proposal. From the results, 34% completely supported and 14% agreed with a mostly yes, providing a total of 48% of respondents. A total of 36% did not support the option. There was a higher proportion of respondents which opted for the Unsure/Neutral decision, in comparison to Option 2 (Figure 4).

**Figure 1. How respondents travel to Stevenage Railway Station.**





**Figure 4. Level of support for Option 3.**



- 4.9 In summary, regarding proposed high-level scenarios for the central section of Lytton Way, the approach taken to promote Option 2 with flexibility to convert to Option 1 or Option 3 if required, was broadly supported alongside Potential Layout 1 relating to the cycle path options. Ultimately, any proposed scenarios would need to conform to the objectives, key design principles and core enhancements as detailed in the Preferred Options AAP.
- 4.10 A total of 7 meetings were held with the key stakeholder groups identified through the early engagement process when the AAP was first drafted and developed. These were as follows:
- Cycling UK Stevenage: 13 March 2023
  - Hertfordshire County Council: 6 March 2023
  - Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP): 21 February 2023
  - Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR): 16 March 2023
  - Mace: 6 March 2023
  - Stevenage Bus Users Group: 13 March 2023
  - Sustrans: 23 February 2023
- 4.11 At each meeting, officers presented a set of PowerPoint slides to the stakeholder group detailing the Area Action Plan, key issues and next steps. The stakeholder group were then invited to comment on the content of the AAP from their perspective and comments recorded as part of the overall consultation response.
- 4.12 Full details of the key stakeholder meetings are provided in the Consultation Statement (Appendix A). Key issues arising from these meetings included:

| Theme                        | Comments   |
|------------------------------|--|
| Vision & Objectives          | Generally supported to provide much needed transformation of this part of the town and to support activities at and around the Railway Station.  |
| Access                       | <p>Regarding the road bridge, there are key issues in terms of future access. Ramps down to the town and leisure park may not conform to modern standards.</p> <p>Disabled, elderly, young children can struggle with the station and surrounding area.</p>  |
| Destination & Sense of Place | A destination to meet and eat would be beneficial to the town. Attract business into the town.   |
| Connectivity                 | Further movement analysis could potentially be used to support any future options. Another round of transport modelling could be useful to assess any changes in the last few years. Changes to work patterns have changed how the network operates on certain days of the week.   |
| Cycling                      | <p>Consideration needed for cycling past or through the Station, not just to and from it. People use the cycle route to commute and travel to places other than the Railway Station.</p> <p>Signage would be beneficial and clear signage is a must.</p> <p>Option 3 would need to be described differently to accommodate not only pedestrians, but also other forms of travel such as a bicycle.</p> |
| Active Travel                | Behaviour changes and sustainable travel aspirations are required to assist with any changes in the area.  |
| Economy                      | The AAP would assist with R&D and long-standing industries in the area. Promote and draw in new companies to the area.   |
| Railway Station              | <p>Access to the station will need to be considered for maintenance, deliveries, and staff parking.</p> <p>There is pressure on future possibilities for a new Station. This should consider how long this would take and the costs of intervention.</p>   |
| Lytton Way Options           | Option 2 would provide flexibility in design and access. Option 3 would provide a Destination for Stevenage.   |
| Bus Station                  | Access for buses is required North and South of Lytton Way for bus routes.   |

- 4.13 Officers have taken all comments and views into account, in a conscientious manner. This has helped to inform and shape the position being reported to Executive.

*Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening*

- 4.14 Sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment are tools used at the plan-making stage to assess the likely effects of the plan when judged against reasonable alternatives. A sustainability appraisal should be prepared for any of the documents that can form part of a local plan, including core strategies, site allocation documents and area action plans.
- 4.15 During preparation of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, officers concluded that Policy TC4 (Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area) had no significant environmental impact. The statutory consultees for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening have been contacted to confirm they are content with this position.
- 4.16 There is potential to include stronger wording in the AAP referring to environmental effects of the development. This should reflect the position taken in the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal, noting the environmental benefits that the preferred option works would provide such as reduction in air pollution and contribution to net zero carbon targets.
- 4.17 The SEA was consulted upon alongside the AAP; no comments were received on the content of the SEA. This included contacting the statutory consultees to a SEA (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency), all of whom had no objections or substantive comments to the amendments made to the AAP at Preferred Options stage.

**Recommendation 2.2: That Executive note the content of Hertfordshire County Council (Highways) comments on the AAP Preferred Options Report.**

*Hertfordshire County Council Highways Consultation Response*

- 4.18 Hertfordshire County Council Highways have generally welcomed the opportunity to work together to develop a plan that contributes to the overall vision for Hertfordshire. Their representations are highlighted in the table below.

| Theme   | Comments   |
|---|--|
| <p>Preferred Options for Lytton Way:</p> <p>Option 2 - Bus and Taxi access only to Lytton Way – Preferred Option #1</p> | <p>Option 2, is HCC's preferred option as it addresses a number of objectives and principles of the AAP, removing the majority of vehicles from in front of the station helping reduce severance with the town centre. This option will make it easier for the area outside the station to operate more like a town square with a lower volume of vehicles passing through it.</p> <p>Other areas which need to be considered with</p> |

| Theme   | Comments   |
|---|--|
|   | <p>this option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforcement and monitoring of traffic</li> <li>• In the information provided there is a failure to demonstrate direct pedestrian connectivity between Train Station, MSCP and Southern car park.</li> <li>• Provision of clearly signed vehicle drop off / pick up facilities in these car parks will also be important to discourage inappropriate stopping / waiting behaviour on adjacent roads (e.g. Swingate, Danesgate)</li> <li>• Confirmation is sought on the two-vehicle access / egress points to the west from the new Swingate roundabout and north of the roundabout.</li> <li>• Option 2 will necessitate changes to the recently installed bus priority measures</li> </ul> <p>Option 2 mitigation measures are detailed in the consultation statement and HCC / WSP modelling report.</p> <p>The HCC expects that the identified mitigation measures should address the possible traffic impacts at junction of Fairlands Way / Gunnels Wood Road in the west, at the junction of Fairlands Way and St. George's Way in the east, at the junction of St. George's Way / Six Hills Way and at the junction of Gunnels Wood Road / Six Hills Way and that there needs to be inclusion of a wider package of measures to enable the development of this AAP option.</p> |
| <p>Preferred Options for Lytton Way:</p> <p>Option 3 – pedestrianised plaza – Preferred Option #2</p> | <p>Option 3: As previously commented, the HCC would have preference Option 2 over Option 3 to avoid bus routes diversions and longer time to access by buses from the north.</p> <p>As with Option 2 removal of traffic from Lytton Way will lead to the diversion of traffic to other routes around the town centre and would need to be accompanied by a wider package of mitigation measures to address the possible traffic impacts at junction of Fairlands Way / Gunnels Wood Road in the west, at the junction of Fairlands Way and St. George's Way in the east, at the junction of St. George's Way / Six Hills Way and at the junction of Gunnels Wood Road / Six Hills Way. Also, it fails to outline how to manage rail replacement bus service.</p> <p>Option 3 Mitigation measures are detailed in the consultation statement and HCC / WSP modelling</p>  |



| Theme                       | Comments  |
|-----------------------------|---|
|                             | report.   |
| Cycle Path Options          | <p>Cycle Path Potential layout 1 Preferred Option #1<br/>Cycle Path Potential layout 2 Preferred Option #2</p> <p>Removing the existing cycleway would be a retrograde step. HCC expects that SBC discusses cycling provision options with HCC Officers in more detail and include the Highway Authority in the design process to ensure a route is developed to encourage sustainable/direct and safe access.</p> <p>Cycling provision in any of the options needs to be considered in line with LTN 1/20 guidance. The new cycle path needs to have dedicated crossing facilities across the side road accesses to the MSCP and police station. In this instance, HCC would welcome continues footway crossings in the context of LTN1/20.</p>  |
| East–West Connectivity      | <p>In terms of the principles in the North Central Growth &amp; Transport Plan, we suggest that the permeable east west links between the Town Centre Gardens and the Leisure Park to reduce severance and re-classification of A602 / Glaxo roundabout in order to improve multi-modal access between the rail station, Gunnels Wood Road employment.</p> <p>A principle of the AAP is to future proof for possible station upgrade, replacement of the Leisure Centre and improved links and development west of the rail station. On a wider point on access to sustainable transport, whilst it is recognised that there are redevelopment and placemaking opportunities from moving the Leisure Centre (Gordon Craig theatre) away from its location next to the railway station and relocated bus station, this would make it more difficult for users to access it via public transport and any new location would need to consider the access needs of non-car users.</p> |
| Bus Station and Bus Service | <p>The objectives around enhanced movement and access for all modes, ensuring effective interchange with the relocated bus station is key.</p> <p>The retention of Stop N is important for bus services traveling north, including to the Lister</p>  |

| Theme                            | Comments  |
|----------------------------------|---|
|                                  | Hospital. As well as operational convenience, the stop is easier to access than the bus station for passengers arriving by train and wishing to continue northwards by bus.   |
| Retention of existing footbridge | Currently there is direct access from the station to the town centre via the footbridge over Lytton Way. This is a key well used pedestrian route and it is reassuring to see the statement that “any final option would ensure that the existing footbridge is retained, until any redevelopment of the station and wider area takes place”. It is essential that a safe pedestrian route to the town centre is retained throughout any redevelopment process. |
| Train Station                    | It would aid access between the bus station and the railway station if a south facing set of steps was installed to the footbridge on the Leisure Centre side of Lytton Way, although it is noted that the new bus stop may create difficulties in achieving this.<br><br>It is not clear if any thought has been given to where rail replacement buses will stop to access the station. The retention of Stop N would aid the operation of these buses.        |

*Hertfordshire County Council Highways Modelling Report*

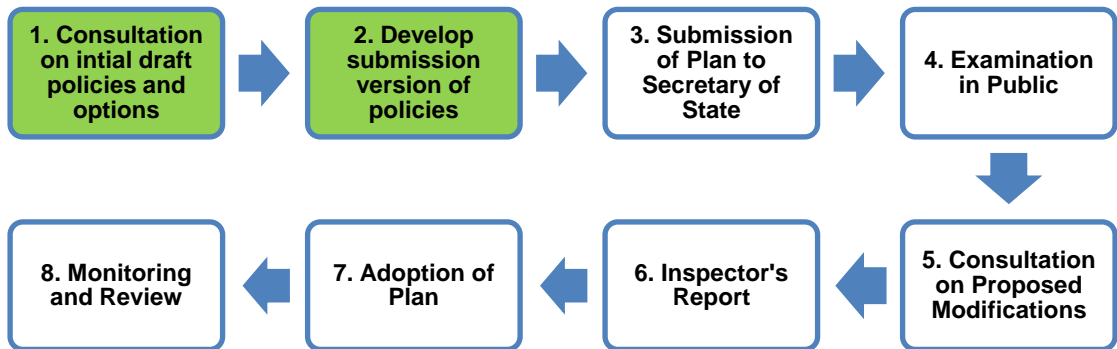
- 4.19 The Hertfordshire County Council response to the first “Issues and Options” consultation specified an order of Preferred Options for the central section of Lytton Way:

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> choice: Option 2 |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> choice: Option 3 |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> choice: Option 1 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> choice: Option 0 |

- 4.20 This was maintained in their consultation response to the Preferred Options AAP.
- 4.21 Hertfordshire County Council Highways department produced a report that assessed the impacts of each of the Lytton Way options on the highway network around Stevenage, as well as offer potential mitigation measures [BD8]. The modelling work undertaken is based on a baseline year of 2021, with scenarios based on traffic flows in 2025 and 2031, with and without the A1(M) SMART motorway in operation.

- 4.22 While the Highways Modelling report suggests that Option 1 would have the least impact on traffic flows (particularly at peak hours) around Stevenage, the Hertfordshire County Council AAP consultation response has highlighted Option 2 as the most preferred option which aligns with both theirs and our aspirations to improve active travel.
- 4.23 Hertfordshire County Council, through their response to the consultation and through the Highways Modelling Report, is in broad agreement with Stevenage Borough Council on the desired direction of travel to take forward in the AAP. This aligns with the position taken in preparing Policy TC4 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan and which had been modelled as part of Local Plan preparation, tested through Examination in Public and subsequently adopted in 2019. The Local Plan includes provision for “major reconfiguration of Lytton Way between Fairlands Way and Six Hills Way” (Policy TC4 (i)).
- 4.24 While the model results make it difficult to recommend Options 2 or 3 from a highway capacity viewpoint, there are other considerations that officers may need to use when assessing which scheme is most appropriate. Both Option 2 or 3 could work in highway capacity terms if residents of Stevenage and users of the town centre accepted a much higher level of mode shift than would be required for Option 1. The level of ambition in the Stevenage Sustainable Travel Town may make the level of mode shift achievable – however without major behaviour change and modal shift, there are potential risks of causing significant congestion.
- 4.25 The Council's objectives to reach net zero carbon by 2030 also need careful consideration in this regard. The Council, as well as ensuring that the AAP final options consider the net zero ambitions, will be carefully considering how to realise climate change and net zero objectives in the forthcoming Local Plan Review.
- 4.26 Effectively, the roadworks associated with the new bus station have already demonstrated that Option 1 is likely to work. This means that one option could be to test the success or otherwise of Options 2 and 3 by temporarily restricting through traffic on Lytton Way to identify if the reality of this situation is the same as predicted in the model.
- 4.27 The modelling report does touch on some potential mitigation measures, for further investigation, to alleviate the traffic flow impact, including:
- Removal of the bypass lane from Danestrete to Six Hills Way;
  - Additional Right Turn Lane from Fairlands Way to St Georges Way;
  - Amendments to eastbound carriageway on Fairlands Way at St. Georges Way roundabout;
  - Signalisation of north bound Gunnels Wood Road approach to Fairlands Way roundabout;
  - It is also recommended that bus priority measures should be considered to help buses traverse the congested network.

**Recommendation 2.3: That the Executive approve the next steps for the AAP Preferred Options Report and Local Plan Review, including agreeing to consult on Option 2 as the Preferred Option within the Local Plan Review in 2024.**



- 4.28 We have completed the first two stages of development for an Area Action Plan. The “consultation on initial draft policies and options” stage was the first stage for public consultation. The “Issues and Options” draft of the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan formed this first stage.
- 4.29 The next stage “develop submission version of policies” formed the second stage of the Area Action Plan, the “Preferred Options” report which went out to public consultation from January to March 2023 and has been summarised in the paragraphs above.
- 4.30 The original plan was to then follow the process leading to submission of the AAP to the Secretary of State, ahead of an independent Examination in Public by an appointed Planning Inspector. A final consultation on any modifications proposed by the Inspector to the Plan would have been held prior to the Inspector’s Report, which would confirm whether the Plan can proceed to formal adoption. Monitoring and review of the Plan would then be required for a period of time after the Plan has been adopted.

*Local Plan Review*

- 4.31 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan [BD1] was adopted in May 2019. As referred to earlier in this Report (paragraph 3.4), adoption of the Local Plan was realised after a long process in which the Plan was placed under a Holding Direction from the Secretary of State at the time. One of the conditions for lifting this Holding Direction, and therefore releasing the Local Plan for adoption, was that an Area Action Plan for the Station area be developed.
- 4.32 In the time that has passed since May 2019, two productive stages of public consultation have been held on the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan. This has formed a comprehensive and robust evidence base that supports Policy TC4 of the Local Plan.
- 4.33 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) underwent a round of Government consultation in early 2023. This proposed a number of significant changes to the planning system and in particular, policy and plan-making.

- 4.34 Steps are being taken to maximise the number of authorities who can make use of policy changes around plan-making intended to be introduced by the NPPF revisions in 2023, before the revised plan-making system set out in the Levelling Up Bill is intended to be introduced in late 2024. Key considerations for plan-making in the future for Stevenage Borough Council to consider, includes:
- Plan-makers will have until 30 June 2025 to submit their local plans, neighbourhood plans, minerals and waste plans, and spatial development strategies for independent examination under the existing legal framework. The government is also proposing that, to be examined under existing legislation, all independent examinations of local plans, minerals and waste plans and spatial development strategies must be concluded, with plans adopted by 31 December 2026.
  - Authorities that do not meet the 30 June 2025 submission deadline for 'old-style' plans will need to prepare plans under the new plan-making system.
  - Authorities will be required to start work on new plans by, at the latest, five years after adoption of their previous plan, and to adopt that new plan within 30 months. Plans that will become more than five years old during the first 30 months of the new system will continue to be considered 'up-to-date' for decision-making purposes for 30 months after the new system starts.
  - Authorities will no longer be able to prepare supplementary planning documents (SPDs) in the revised planning system. Instead, they will be able to prepare Supplementary Plans, which will be afforded the same weight as a local plan or minerals and waste plan. The government proposes that, when the new system comes into force (expected late 2024), existing SPDs will remain in force for a time-bound period; until the local planning authority is required to adopt a new-style plan. Current SPDs will automatically cease to have effect at the point at which authorities are required to have a new-style plan in place.
- 4.35 The Planning Policy team are beginning to scope out work, regarding a review of the Local Plan. As an early part of this, officers sought legal advice on the scope of a potential review. The current Local Plan period runs to 2031 and the strategic housing and employment sites, for example, in the current Local Plan are still to be fully realised and the Council maintains a healthy housing land supply.
- 4.36 Officers met with Simon Bird KC (Francis Taylor Building) in February 2023, to:
- provide professional legal advice on the scope of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan Review;
  - advise on a preferred option for the scope of the Local Plan Review;
  - agree a framework and timescales to provide ongoing legal advice and guidance for the duration of a Local Plan Review, from inception through to Examination in Public and eventual adoption.
- 4.37 The advice sought aimed to consider the detail of current Local Plan and associated documents, national, regional and local level policy environment an including the two stages of consultation on the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan.
- 4.38 Normal practice for the review of a Local Plan is to commence a partial review and update of a Local Plan, 5 years post adoption. It would be appropriate to incorporate the emerging Area Action Plan into this partial review. This approach would also provide opportunity for the review to bring the Local Plan

up to date with wider drivers for change such as climate change, sustainable travel, health and wellbeing and digital engagement.

- 4.39 This would save significant time and costs in combining an Examination in Public for the AAP and Local Plan.
- 4.40 This approach to review of the Stevenage Local Plan would be beneficial in meeting Government requirements to undertake a review by 2025, updating strategic elements.
- 4.41 Following adoption of a revised Stevenage Local Plan, the Council would be in a good position to consider to continue emerging and early-stage work with regional partners to look at long term needs out to 2050, through work on a North East Central Hertfordshire Joint Spatial Plan (JSP).
- 4.42 If the Executive agree, officers will progress with undertaking a partial review and update of the Local Plan, which will incorporate the evidence gathered from the two rounds of consultation on the AAP. This will allow the evidence base already gathered through the two rounds of consultation to form an updated and much clearer policy direction for Policy TC4 of the Local Plan as well as potential other policies of the plan, in accordance with wider strategic updates and objectives, including the continued requirement to tackle the Climate Change agenda and promoting sustainable and active travel across the Borough.
- 4.43 If the Executive agree the approach to the Local Plan Review, officers will seek confirmation from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) that this approach is acceptable as it is proposing a revised approach to that agreed when the Holding Direction was lifted in 2019, allowing adoption of the current Local Plan.

**Recommendation 2.4: That the Executive approve a revised Local Development Scheme and note the timescales for a Local Plan Review.**

- 4.44 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) [BD7] was approved by the Council's Executive on 6 October 2020; it sets out a clear and timetabled programme for the production of the local development plan. The LDS sets out timescales to completion for the following Development Plan Documents:
- Stevenage Borough Local Plan (including Policies Map): Adoption May 2019 (achieved)
  - Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Adoption January 2022 (has undergone two rounds of consultation by March 2023)
  - Stevenage Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule: Adoption April 2020 (achieved)
  - Stevenage Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): Adoption November 2018 (achieved)
  - Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD: Adoption October 2020 (achieved)
  - Biodiversity SPD: Adoption March 2021 (achieved)
  - Developer Contributions SPD: Adoption March 2021 (achieved)
  - Design Guidance SPD: Adoption December 2021 (adopted December 2022)

4.45 A draft revised Local Development Scheme (Appendix D), subject to Executive approval for the Local Plan Review approach, would comprise of the following broad timescales:

| Local Development Document                                | Timescale for Review   | Comments   |
|---|--|--|
| North East Central Hertfordshire Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) | Likely completion 2024/25.   | Will form the basis for a wider Local Plan Review from 2025.   |
| Local Plan  | Commence review September / October 2023<br>First Consultation early 2024, subject to change<br>Second Consultation Summer / Autumn 2024, subject to change<br>Submission to Secretary of State end 2024 / early 2025, subject to change | Based on the option to undertake a Partial Review of the Local Plan which will also incorporate the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan.<br>Each stage will be subject to Executive approval.   |
| Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan                | Incorporation of AAP into Local Plan (see timescales above)  | May be scope for a wider evidence document based on information gathered during two rounds of consultation.  |
| Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)                       | Commence review Summer 2023  | Viability Study work Summer / Autumn 2023 will need to consider Local Plan viability aswell, so important this work is carried out at the early stages.<br>Annual update on Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will also feed into CIL Review Summer 2023.<br>Consultation on CIL Review Autumn 2023, subject to Executive approval. |
| Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)                  | Commence review Autumn 2023  | Will need to be reviewed with Local Plan Review as part of first stages of work.   |
| Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD           | No plans to review.  | Possible change of status to Supplementary Plans or wider incorporation into Local Plan Policies; to be determined.  |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| The Impact of Development on Biodiversity SPD | Initial revision of SPD with assistance from Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust in Autumn 2023. | Revised SPD will be reported to Executive and Council late 2023 / early 2024.<br><br>Possible change of status to Supplementary Plans or wider incorporation into Local Plan Policies; to be determined. |
| Developer Contributions SPD                   | No plans to review.   | Possible change of status to Supplementary Plans or wider incorporation into Local Plan Policies; to be determined.  |
| Design Guidance SPD                           | No plans to review.   | Possible change of status to Supplementary Plans or wider incorporation into Local Plan Policies; to be determined.  |
| Other SPDs                                    | As required   | As identified and required.  |

4.46 At this stage, The Executive are recommended to approve the option taken for the scope of a Local Plan Review and if so, the draft timescales that would eventually for a new Local Development Scheme.

4.47 If the Executive agree this in principle, the Local Plan Review and Local Development Scheme will be brought back to a future Executive meeting for further scrutiny and agreement.

**Recommendation 2.5: That the Executive note that the comments of the Planning & Development Committee will be sought and considered on both the Consultation Statement and the content of this Executive Report.**

4.48 The Planning & Development Committee Chair and Vice Chair were presented an update on the AAP, Local Plan Review and Local Development Scheme on 4 July 2022. Comments included:

- The wide range of engagement at Preferred Options stage of consultation was strongly supported, with a suggestion to continue and improve engagement with hard-to-reach groups in future consultation exercises, at every stage of the process.
- There was broad support for the preferred approach taken in the AAP. The need for positive change regarding the Railway Station and surrounding area is needed to reflect the ongoing regeneration of the Town Centre.
- There was support for the approach to incorporate the evidence gathered from the two rounds of consultation on the AAP, into updated and revised policies as part of a Local Plan Review.

4.49 The views of the Planning & Development Committee Members are of significant value in shaping the future direction the Stevenage Station Gateway AAP and Local



Plan Review takes, as future Committee decisions will be based on revised and possibly new Local Plan policies.

- 4.50 Key concerns expressed previously include the need for wide engagement; potential future changes to Lytton Way; and connectivity between the Railway Station and the town centre, as it progresses through several stages of regeneration.

**Recommendation 2.6: That the Executive note that informal engagement with key stakeholders will continue, ahead of incorporating the AAP into the Local Plan Review.**

- 4.51 There may be scope for further engagement, with other key stakeholders to inform them of progress on the AAP and Local Plan Review and listen to any comments they may wish to make.
- 4.52 Given the role of the Stevenage Development Board in securing funding for masterplanning the future of the Station Gateway area, it is important that the AAP and Local Plan Review is shaped by continued close working with the Stevenage Development Board on masterplanning activity. This is in order to explore the options, scenarios and ideas for development in the area and beyond, in greater depth and to ensure the right outcomes are achieved in time.
- 4.53 The Stevenage Development Board have provided broad support for the AAP throughout the process, as have the key stakeholders who have liaised constructively with officers at meetings and through general dialogue.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The costs associated with producing and consulting on the draft Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report were met from the agreed departmental budget.
- 5.2 A budget of £7,000 was allocated to procuring the digital engagement platform with the providers, Commonplace. This included access to the webpages, training on the consultation platform and continued support and assistance from the Commonplace team to ensure a positive, engaging consultation platform was released to the public and key stakeholders.
- 5.3 Officers sought legal advice regarding the potential scope of the Local Plan Review. This was produced at a cost of £7,500.
- 5.4 It is possible that further consultancy assistance will be required to progress the Local Plan Review, for which the AAP is proposed to be incorporated into.
- 5.5 The Hertfordshire County Council / WSP Highways Modelling Report work, to supplement the Issues & Options Consultation and Preferred Options report drafting, required a budget of c. £30,000.
- 5.6 Potential further Highways Modelling work could be utilised, for example to test the success or otherwise of the Preferred Lytton Way Options by temporarily restricting through traffic on Lytton Way to identify if the reality of this situation is the same as predicted in the model. This could have further budget implications.

- 5.7 Depending on the extent of public consultation methods to be utilised for a Local Plan Review, there could be further cost / budget implications and resourcing impacts on the Planning Policy team.
- 5.8 Any potential future schemes or plans that are referenced in the AAP and subsequently developed will need to be subject to a business case and / or will require developer or potentially Council funding.

### **Legal Implications**

- 5.9 Officers sought legal advice regarding the scope of a Local Plan Review and will seek further advice once the Local Development Scheme has been agreed and produced, through the Local Plan's statutory rounds of public consultation and up to submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State.

### **Risk Implications**

- 5.10 There were no significant risks associated with producing the draft Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report and scoping for the Local Plan Review and wider Local Development Scheme.

### **Policy Implications**

- 5.11 The Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report accords with and is being produced to supplement policies in the adopted Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2019). As it is a Development Plan Document it may also develop policies over and above the Local Plan for the Stevenage Station Gateway area of opportunity.
- 5.12 The Preferred Options Report will align with other corporate Council documents such as the Climate Change Strategy (adopted September 2020), Action Plan and Charter as well as Stevenage's Future Town Future Transport Strategy.
- 5.13 The Local Plan Review will ensure that the Council's Future Town, Future Council Corporate Plan key policies and objectives are reflected as far as possible. Officers will work with the Corporate Policy team to ensure the relevant links and references are made.

### **Planning Implications**

- 5.14 The Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report supplements the adopted Stevenage Local Plan (2019).
- 5.15 The document will add to and complement the Development Plan for Stevenage. It will be a material consideration for planning applications.
- 5.16 The Local Plan Review and wider Local Development Scheme will provide revised, updated and, in some cases, new policies in the Local Plan for Stevenage. Future proposals will need to be in accordance with revised and new policies in the Local Plan as it progresses through the process to adoption.

### **Environmental Implications**

- 5.17 During preparation of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, officers concluded that Policy TC4 (Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area) had no significant environmental impact. There is potential to include stronger wording in the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan Preferred Options referring to environmental effects of the development.

### **Climate Change Implications**

- 5.18 The Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report seeks to provide sustainable travel solutions and promote active modes of transport. This will be strengthened in the Partial Review of the Local Plan. This supports the aims and objectives of the Stevenage Climate Change Strategy (September 2020) [BD4] and contribute to the overall climate change aspirations of the Council.

### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 5.19 The Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report seeks to improve disabled and step-free access to Stevenage railway station; therefore, offering further opportunities and benefits for all accessing the railway station and more widely, connecting to the regenerated town centre in future.

### **Community Safety Implications**

- 5.20 Whilst the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report is unlikely to have any direct community safety implications itself, when implementing any of the proposals the delivery body will need to consider the potential impacts on community safety.

### **Other Implications**

- 5.21 There will be significant economic implications from future work arising from the Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan.
- 5.22 For example, the AAP could help to maximise opportunity for provision of high-quality facilities for the growing local research and development industry as well as the expanding cell and gene therapy catalyst industry that is seeking future accommodation in the town and wider area.
- 5.23 The incorporation into the partial review and update of the Local Plan will mean that the evidence gathered from two rounds of consultation on the AAP will not just provide an update to Policy TC4 of the Local Plan; it is highly likely that a wide range of other policies in the Local Plan will require an update from the evidence gathered on the AAP.

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- BD1 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011–2031 (May 2019)  
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/stevenage-borough-local-plan/stevenage-borough-local-plan.pdf>
- BD2 Letter from Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to Stevenage Borough Council: Stevenage Borough Council's Local Plan (March 2019)  
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/holding-direction/the-secretary-of-states-letter.pdf>
- BD3 Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report (January 2023)  
<https://res.cloudinary.com/commonplace-digital-limited/image/upload/v1674580985/projects/63c67f1b270b6cf88a07f7bf/media-upload/Stevenage%20Station%20Gateway%20AAP%20Preferred%20Options%20Report.pdf/lipkbl2emqe2i4rlnhq4.pdf>
- BD4 Stevenage Climate Change Strategy (September 2020)  
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/about-the-council/climate-change-strategy/climate-change-strategy-september-2020.pdf>
- BD5 Meeting of the Stevenage Borough Council Executive, Item 8: Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report Public Consultation Feedback (February 2022)  
<https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s30618/Station%20Gateway%20AAP%20-%20Exec%20Report.pdf>
- BD6 Meeting of the Stevenage Borough Council Executive, Item 5: Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report for Public Consultation (September 2022)  
<https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s32496/Station%20Gateway%20AAP%20-%20Exec%20Report.pdf>
- BD7 Stevenage Borough Local Development Scheme (October 2020)  
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/local-development-scheme/local-development-scheme-october-2020.pdf>
- BD8 Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan – Summary of Paramics Model Findings (Hertfordshire County Council & WSP, December 2021)  
<https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s30623/SG%20AAP%20-%20Appendix%20E%20-%20Model%20Summary%20Technical%20Note%20-%20WSP.pdf>

## **APPENDICES**

- A Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Consultation Statement (June 2023)
- B Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report (Executive Summary, January 2023)
- C Stevenage Station Gateway Area Action Plan: Consultation Questions (January 2023)
- D Stevenage Draft Local Development Scheme (July 2023)