

Stevenage Amended Article 4 Directions: Consultation 22 January – 18 February 2025
Summary of Consultation Comments and Council Responses

ID	Name	Responses
1	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>Support for the revised Article 4 Directions.</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>Support noted.</i></p>
2	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Whilst I agree that empty buildings could be converted to residential and indeed some plots have stood empty for years waiting for an 'ideal' business to move in what this change does is to remove employment opportunities in the town for businesses looking to locate to Stevenage. The net result will be more housing but less work.</p> </div> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>The Article 4 Direction is not a ban on changes of use to residential; it is a requirement that such changes of use must have planning permission from the Council.</i></p> <p><i>The Council fully appreciates the demand for housing and has allowed for significant levels of housing growth to meet objectively assessed housing need, in the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011–2031 as well as the Housing Land Supply Position Statement and Housing Delivery Test Action Plan, all available on the Council website.</i></p> <p><i>The Stevenage Borough Local Plan already identifies sufficient sites to meet the Borough's housing needs within the plan period, in sites it considers are suitable and sustainable for residential. As such, allowing these unrestricted changes of use to take place could upset the balance between homes and jobs.</i></p>

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		<p><i>The Local Plan also identifies the Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas as significant employment areas in the town and where offices and light industrial uses, for example, as well as important industries to the town and wider region, are clustered. Residential uses are still permitted in this area, outside of the designated protected sites, as long as they confirm with policies of the Local Plan.</i></p> <p><i>If we were to leave our existing Article 4 Directions to expire and therefore cease to exist, the consequences for Stevenage would potentially include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• A risk of creating towns that lack in local shops, facilities and services;</i> <i>• An increased need for longer journeys, contrary to the objectives of sustainable development and the aspirations of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan; and</i> <i>• Large scale units such as supermarkets or office blocks could be converted to residential use, without securing Section 106 contributions and therefore more affordable homes. This would mean the Local Plan targets for affordable housing not being met as well as loss of important revenue to reinvest in Stevenage.</i>
3	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>Gunnels Wood Road and the Pin Green employment areas are the towns designated industrial areas , they do not have the infrastructure that would allow industrial units to be converted to residential so I support SBC Article 4 (as amended) to remove permitted development rights</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>Support noted and welcomed.</i></p>

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4	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>This industrial area has a lot of HGV vehicles and other vehicles so would not be the environment or area for residential dwellings. This area also offers employment to Stevenage and surrounding area so could cause companies to move further afield resulting in job losses.</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>Comments noted. By protecting key office and light industrial sites in the town, this will aim to attract new businesses seeking to locate in the area of wider region and therefore further employment opportunities ahead.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Plan identifies the Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas as significant employment areas in the town and where offices and light industrial uses, for example, as well as important industries to the town and wider region, are clustered and the benefits of clustering and agglomeration can be enjoyed, in line with the wider regeneration plan for the Town Centre.</i></p> <p><i>The amenity of residents of these new homes would likely be affected by the issues that arise from employment uses such as noise, lighting, HGV access and adverse visual impacts. Complaints could lead to businesses being subject to tighter environmental or operational, thus making the Employment Areas a less attractive option for existing and new occupiers, potentially resulting in a domino effect of businesses vacating the area.</i></p> <p><i>If we were to leave our existing Article 4 Directions to expire and therefore cease to exist, the consequences for Stevenage would potentially include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• A risk of creating towns that lack in local shops, facilities and services;</i> <i>• An increased need for longer journeys, contrary to the objectives of sustainable development and the aspirations of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan; and</i> <i>• Large scale units such as supermarkets or office blocks could be converted to residential use, without securing Section 106 contributions and therefore more affordable homes. This would mean the Local Plan targets for affordable housing not being met as well as loss of important revenue to reinvest in Stevenage.</i>

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5	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>Increased traffic which is already excessive in the area.</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>Comments noted.</i></p>
6	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>I strongly support restricting permitted development by use of the Article 4 Direction across all of Stevenage, to ensure that any change of use of property has to be subject to strict Planning Approval, to prevent uncontrolled and inappropriate development.</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>Support noted and welcomed.</i></p>
7	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>Support due to potential implications on infrastructure which should be considered.</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>Support noted and welcomed.</i></p>

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8	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>Support due to potential implications on infrastructure which should be considered.</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>Support noted and welcomed.</i></p>
9	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>As a freehold owner on the estate, it is important that owners remain able to sell their property to developers should circumstances change on the estate. For example, if businesses close down and are not replaced, then demand (driven by traffic flow into the estate) will reduce further meaning it becomes unsustainable to run a business in the area. With the current demand for new homes to be built, this seems unjust on the business/freehold owners and also goes against the government's direction regarding the building of new homes. This seems a short-sighted change.</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>Comments noted. By protecting key office and light industrial sites in the town, this will aim to attract new businesses seeking to locate in the area of wider region and therefore further employment opportunities ahead.</i></p> <p><i>The Article 4 Direction is not a ban on changes of use to residential; it is a requirement that such changes of use must have planning permission from the Council.</i></p> <p><i>The Stevenage Borough Local Plan already identifies sufficient sites to meet the Borough's housing needs within the plan period, in sites it considers are suitable and sustainable for residential. As such, allowing these unrestricted changes of use to take place could upset the balance between homes and jobs.</i></p>

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		<p><i>The Local Plan identifies the Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas as significant employment areas in the town and where offices and light industrial uses, for example, as well as important industries to the town and wider region, are clustered and the benefits of clustering and agglomeration can be enjoyed, in line with the wider regeneration plan for the Town Centre.</i></p> <p><i>The amenity of residents of these new homes would likely be affected by the issues that arise from employment uses such as noise, lighting, HGV access and adverse visual impacts. Complaints could lead to businesses being subject to tighter environmental or operational, thus making the Employment Areas a less attractive option for existing and new occupiers, potentially resulting in a domino effect of businesses vacating the area.</i></p> <p><i>If we were to leave our existing Article 4 Directions to expire and therefore cease to exist, the consequences for Stevenage would potentially include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• A risk of creating towns that lack in local shops, facilities and services;</i> <i>• An increased need for longer journeys, contrary to the objectives of sustainable development and the aspirations of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan; and</i> <p><i>Large scale units such as supermarkets or office blocks could be converted to residential use, without securing Section 106 contributions and therefore more affordable homes. This would mean the Local Plan targets for affordable housing not being met as well as loss of important revenue to reinvest in Stevenage.</i></p>
10	Hertfordshire County Council	<p>Comment:</p> <p>HCC have no comments to make in regards to this consultation.</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>Representation noted.</i></p>