

Meeting: Planning and Development Committee **Agenda Item:**

Date: 12 February 2026

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Application No : 25/00814/FPH

Location : 1 Oakfields Close Stevenage

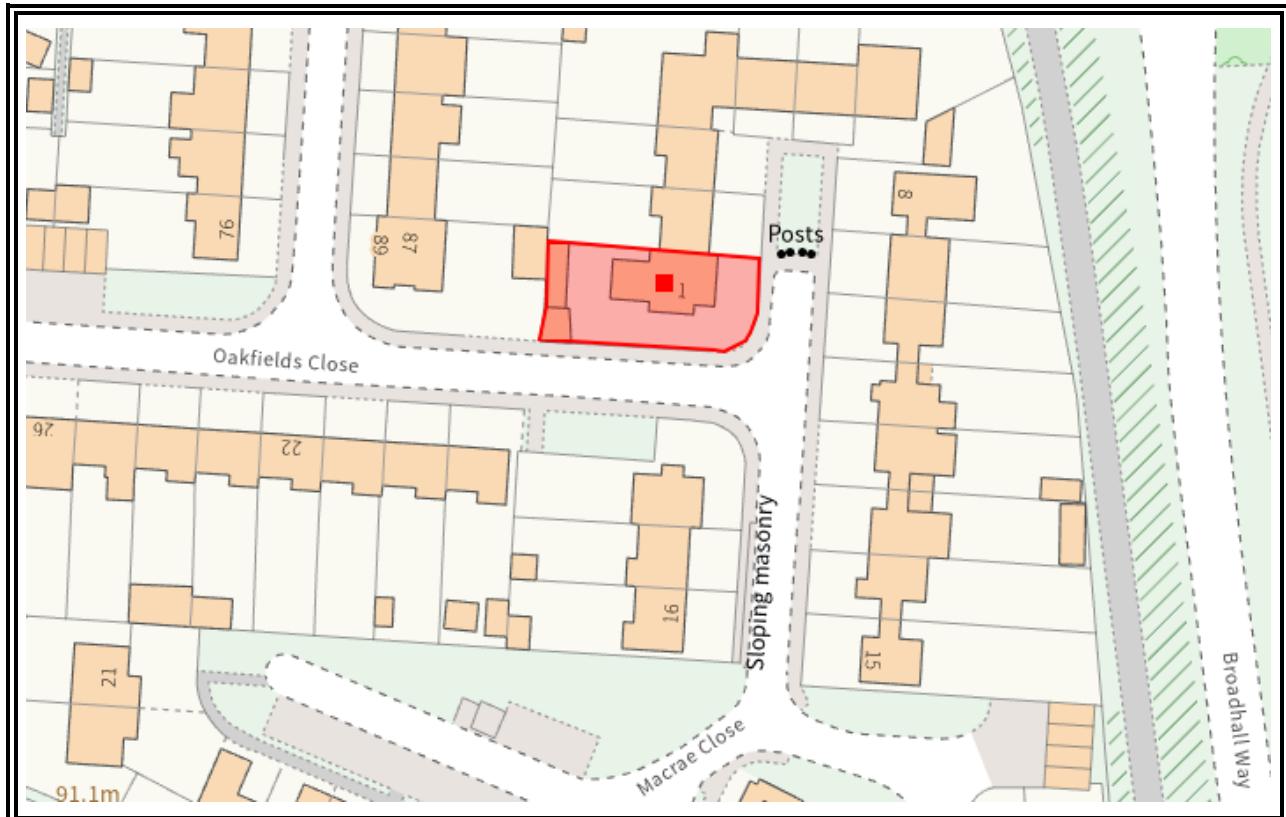
Proposal : Erection of single storey front extension
Drawing Nos.: Site Location Plan; 25/36/01;

Applicant : Mr and Mrs Prieto

Agent: Mr Richard Chambers

Date Valid: 10 November 2025

Recommendation: GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION



1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises an end-of-terrace dwelling located on the northern side of Oakfields Close. It is situated close to the junction with Longfields to the north.
- 1.2 The property is constructed with brown brick externally, with a gable, tiled roof. The prevailing character in this area is primarily brown bricked terraced or semi-detached dwellings of a somewhat uniform size and design.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 Planning application 12/00185/FP sought planning permission for a “single storey rear extension”. This had been granted in June 2012.
- 2.2 Planning application 12/00580/NMA sought a non material amendment to the previously approved application reference number 12/00185/FP for alterations to the fenestration (doors). This was agreed to in March 2013.

3. THE CURRENT APPLICATION

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for the erection of single storey front extension.
- 3.2 The extension is proposed to measure approximately 2.8 metres wide, and 1.9 metres deep. The height to the eaves is proposed to be approximately 2.2 metres, with a maximum height of 3.4 metres. It will replace the existing porch structure.
- 3.3 This application comes before the Planning and Development Committee because the applicant is related to employees of Stevenage Borough Council. Therefore, in line with the Council's constitution, this application is being referred to the aforementioned committee for its decision.

4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 Following notification of the application via letters, no public representations have been received.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1. No consultations have been made as a result of this application.

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 6.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans can provide for housing and other development in a sustainable manner. The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2024 (with further minor amendments in February 2025).

6.1.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

6.1.3 The NPPF should be read as a whole (including its footnotes and annexes). It should also be read in conjunction with the government's planning policy for traveller sites, and its planning policy for waste.

6.2 The Development Plan

6.2.1 For Stevenage, the development plan comprises the following documents:

- Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031
- Waste Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD 2011-2026
- Waste Site Allocations DPD 2011-2026
- Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016

6.3 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 (Adopted 2019)

6.3.1 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in 2019, well before the publication of the latest version of the NPPF. However, the policies in the plan should not be considered out-of-date for this reason alone. Instead, weight must be given to them according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan align to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.3.2 However, the council is required to treat its housing policies as out of date because its latest Housing Delivery Test result indicates that the delivery of housing in the borough has been less than 75% of the housing requirement over the past three years. This means that permission should be granted for applications involving the provision of housing except in the particular circumstances set out under paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF.

6.3.3 There are also some other limited areas of inconsistency between the policies in the local plan and the NPPF. Where relevant, these are explained later in this report.

6.3.4 The policies in the adopted plan most relevant to determining the current application are as follows:

Policy SP8: Good design;

Policy IT5: Parking and access;

Policy GD1: High quality design.

6.4 Local Plan Review and Update (2024)

Local Plan Partial Review and Update

6.4.1 The council concluded a full review of the plan in 2024, as required by regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

6.4.2 In response to the review, the Council has produced a partial update of the local plan. Weight must be given to the emerging policies in the partial update according to:

1. the stage of preparation of the emerging plan;
2. the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the policies; and
3. the degree of consistency between the policies and the most recent revision of the NPPF.

6.4.3 At the time of writing, the partial update is at the stage of having been submitted to the secretary of state for examination. The examination hearings are scheduled to take place in December 2025.

6.4.4 Given that the examination has yet to conclude, there remain unresolved objections to a number of emerging policies. The partial update is nonetheless at an advanced stage of preparation and the council considers the emerging policies within it to have a high degree of consistency with the NPPF. Where relevant, the weight to be given to emerging policies will be set out in the assessment section of this report.

6.5 Other Material Considerations

6.5.1 In determining planning applications, regard must also be had to other material consideration. This may include, but is not limited to:

- The Planning Practice Guidance
- The National Design Guide
- Written ministerial statements and directions
- Guidance published by Hertfordshire County Council
- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Stevenage Borough Council supplementary planning documents

6.5.2 Planning decisions must also reflect relevant internal obligations and statutory requirements.

6.6 Community Infrastructure Levy

6.6.1 Stevenage Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL") Charging Schedule in 2020. This allows the Council to collect a levy to fund infrastructure projects based on the type, location, and floor space of a development.

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues in the assessment of the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance on the dwellinghouse and the surrounding area, the impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, and the car parking provision.

7.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2 Design and visual impact

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

7.2.1 Chapter 12. (Achieving well-designed places) of the NPPF (2024) stipulates that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process. Where development is not well designed, permission should be refused.

7.2.2 The National Design Guide 2021, which was published by the Government, is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It states that buildings are an important component of places and proposals for built development are a focus of the development management system. However, good design involves careful attention to other important components of places. These include:

- the context for places and buildings;
- hard and soft landscape;
- technical infrastructure – transport, utilities, services such as drainage; and

- social infrastructure – social, commercial, leisure uses and activities.

7.2.3 A well-designed place is unlikely to be achieved by focusing only on the appearance, materials and detailing of buildings. It comes about through making the right choices at all levels, including:

- the layout;
- the form and scale of buildings;
- their appearance;
- landscape;
- materials; and
- their detailing.

Development Plan

7.2.4 Policy SP8 of the Local Plan Partial Review (2024), generally reflects the requirements of the NPPF in that it requires new development to achieve the highest standards of design and sustainability. In addition, Policy GD1 generally requires all forms of development to meet a high standard of design which includes form of built development, elevational treatment, and materials along with how the development would integrate with the urban fabric, its relationship between buildings, landscape design and relevant aspects of sustainable design.

7.2.5 In the emerging local plan partial review and update, criterion (e) is updated to refer to “unacceptable” adverse impacts. The intention behind the change is to make clear that in some circumstances, an adverse impact might still fall within acceptable bounds and that this is a matter of judgement for the decision maker. Policy GD2 is a new policy emerging from the local plan partial review and update. It states that proposals which demonstrate they have been designed to achieve a rating of excellent or higher against a relevant BREEAM standard and/or to achieve the BRE Home Quality Mark will be strongly supported, although this is not mandatory.

Supplementary Planning Document

7.2.6 The Council's Design Guide SPD (2025) sets out that an understanding and analysis of the original New Town design concepts identified some key issues. These have been used as key themes, which run throughout the entirety of the Design Guide. Considering these concepts at all stages of the development process provides a good basis for the creation of a successful place; based on the recognised principles of urban design, but also building on the existing fabric of the town without taking away from Stevenage's history as Britain's first Mark One New Town. The themes have been identified as follows:

- Sustainability – incorporate principles of sustainable development from a town-wide perspective to measures incorporated into an individual property;
- Increasing densities – encourage high densities in accessible locations;
- Respecting existing characteristics – respect local characteristics and preserve and enhance existing features, where appropriate;
- Legibility – provide landmark developments at nodal points;
- Design innovation – showcase Stevenage as an example of high-quality design, creating safer places through urban design techniques.

7.2.7 The proposal seeks to replace the existing flat-roofed porch with a new lean-to, single-storey structure measuring at approximately 2.3 metres to the eaves, with a maximum height of 3.5 metres. It will be approximately 2.8 metres wide, and protrude 1.9 metres from the main dwellinghouse.

7.2.8 The wall, roof tiles, window and door materials are outlined as per the proposed plans and the application form to match the existing. The proposed extension appears subordinate to the original property and maintains the architectural integrity of the existing dwellinghouse in accordance with the Design Guide SPD (Principle HD7: Porches and front extensions). It will also be in-keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with porches of various designs being an existing feature along Oakfields Close.

7.2.9 Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed development would be of a high quality and suitably respectful of its surroundings.

7.3 Impact on Neighbouring residential amenity

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

7.3.1 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2024) sets out that planning decision should ensure create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future residents. Paragraph 124 of the National Design Guide states that “*Good design promotes quality of life for the occupants and users of buildings. This includes function – buildings should be easy to use. It also includes comfort, safety, security, amenity, privacy, accessibility and adaptability*”. Paragraph 126 of the National Design Guide also emphasises that “*well-designed homes and communal areas within buildings provide a good standard and quality of internal space. This includes room sizes, floor-to-ceiling heights, internal and external storage, sunlight, daylight and ventilation. The quality of internal space needs careful consideration in higher density developments, particularly for family accommodation, where access, privacy, daylight and external amenity space are also important*”.

7.3.2 When comparing the relationship between the existing dwelling with the proposed porch with regards to neighbouring amenities, it is considered there will be a limited impact. The depth of the proposed front extension is similar to that of the existing, and there are no overbearing or dominance concerns. It is acknowledged that Principle HD7 as per the Design Guide SPD states that a porch/front extension should not project more than 1.5 metres where it abuts the boundary of another property. Here, whilst the extension will protrude 1.9 metres, the porch will not abut the boundary of another property, given the spacious nature of the application site. Furthermore, as aforementioned, the depth is similar to the existing porch structure and the proposal is not considered to exacerbate any matters.

7.3.3 The porch is single storey and therefore is unlikely to impact outlook of a habitable room or affect privacy. It also passes the relevant 45-degree tests.

7.4 Car Parking and Cycle Provision

National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance

7.4.1 Chapter 9. (Promoting Sustainable Transport) of the NPPF (2024) sets out a requirement to consider transport issues, which includes parking, at the earliest stages of a development proposal. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF (2024) states “*Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.*”. Taking this into consideration, paragraph 117 of the NPPF (2024) stipulates that applications for development should:

- give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
- address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
- allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and

- e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

Development Plan

7.4.2 Policy IT5 of the Local Plan Partial Review (2024), which carries significant weight, requires development proposals to comply with the parking standards set out in the Stevenage Borough Council Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD 2020.

7.4.3 Considering the context of the site, and that the protrusion of the proposed extension is to be similar to the existing porch, it is not considered that the proposal will have any impact on the existing parking situation. The extension will not trigger any additional spaces post development as no additional bedrooms are being created, and the increase in the width of the porch structure by approximately 0.4 metres is not considered to have an impact on existing parking provision.

7.5 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

- 7.5.1 Consideration has been given to Articles 1 and 8 of the First Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights. It is not considered that the decision would result in a violation of any person's rights under the Convention.
- 7.5.2 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 7.5.3 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the Council's obligations under the Public Sector Equalities Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 7.5.4 The Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.5.5 In this case, the development would not have any harmful impact on persons with characteristics protected by the Act. Likewise, it would not conflict with the council's Equality Policy or Equality Objectives. It is therefore considered that the Public Sector Equality Duty has been discharged in this case.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 The development is considered to be acceptable in all respects, including its impact on the character and appearance of the area, and on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.
- 8.1.2 The development is in accordance with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no other material considerations which warrant a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That planning permission be GRANTED.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS/REASONS:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
Site Location Plan; 25/36/01;
REASON:- For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
REASON:- To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

- 3 The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match the materials used in the construction of the original building to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
REASON:- To ensure the development has an acceptable appearance.

The Council has acted Pro-Actively for the following reason:-

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

INFORMATIVE

1 Public Information on Planning Applications

Warning: all information provided on your planning application is now publicly available. Individuals and organisations offering their services may contact you. The Council does not endorse or approve any builders, surveyors, trades persons or other supplier, and advises householders to obtain quotes/references, and check the legitimacy of any contractor who contacts them before making payment.

2 Community Infrastructure Levy

Stevenage Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule at Full Council on 27 January 2020 and started implementing CIL on 01 April 2020.

This application may be liable for CIL payments and you are advised to contact the CIL Team for clarification with regard to this. If your development is CIL liable, even if you are granted an exemption from the levy, please be advised that it is a requirement under Regulation 67 of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) that CIL Form 6 (Commencement Notice) must be completed, returned and acknowledged by Stevenage Borough Council before building works start. Failure to do so will mean you risk losing the right to payment by instalments and a surcharge will be imposed. NB, please note that a Commencement Notice is not required for residential extensions if relief has been granted.

Stevenage's adopted CIL Charging Schedule and further details of CIL can be found on the Council's webpages at www.stevenage.gov.uk/CIL or by contacting the Council's CIL Team at CIL@Stevenage.gov.uk.

3 Building Regulations

To obtain advice regarding current Building Regulations please contact Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd. by emailing us at building.control@hertfordshirebc.co.uk or phoning us on 01438 879990.

To make a building regulations application please apply through our website portal at <https://www.hertfordshirebc.co.uk/contact-us/> payment can be made online or by phoning the above number after the application has been uploaded. Please phone Hertfordshire Building Control for fees guidance on 01438 879990.

Hertfordshire Building Control can also be contacted by post at Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd, Campus East, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6AE.

Once a building regulations application has been deposited with relevant drawings and fee building work may commence. You will be advised in their acknowledgement letter of the work stages we need to inspect but in most instances these are usually:

- Excavation for foundations
- Damp proof course
- Concrete oversite
- Insulation
- Drains (when laid or tested)
- Floor and Roof construction
- Work relating to fire safety
- Work affecting access and facilities for disabled people
- Completion

Please phone Hertfordshire Building Control on 01438 879990 before 10.00am to ensure a same day inspection (Mon - Fri).

4 Party Wall etc. Act 1996

Any work that affects a party wall, including foundations dug within 3.0m of a neighbouring building, may be controllable under the Act and may require approval from the adjoining owner(s). Party Wall Act matters are always civil matters and it is neither Stevenage Borough Council's nor Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd's remit to control or enforce Party Wall act matters. Please refer to the Government's explanatory booklet The Party Wall etc. Act 1996, a copy of which is available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-party-wall-etc-act-1996-revised-explanatory-booklet>

5 Biodiversity Net Gain

Applications where Biodiversity Net Gain is not required as application is for householder permission.

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition") that development may not begin unless:

- a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Stevenage Borough Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not apply.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because the following statutory exemption or transitional arrangement is considered to apply.

1. Development which is subject of a householder application within the meaning of article 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. A "householder application" means an application for planning permission for development for an existing dwellinghouse, or development within the curtilage of such a dwellinghouse for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse which is not an application for change of use or an application to change the number of dwellings in a building.

Where the local planning authority considers that the permission falls within paragraph 19 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the permission which has been granted has the effect of requiring or permitting the development to proceed in phases. The modifications in respect of the biodiversity gain condition which are set out in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 apply.

Biodiversity gain plans are required to be submitted to, and approved by, the planning authority before development may be begun, and, if subject to phased development, before each phase of development may be begun.

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans. The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat. The planning authority can only approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.

More information can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item.
2. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents – Parking Provision adopted February 2025, Stevenage Design Guide adopted February 2025, Stevenage Borough Council Developer Contributions adopted February 2025.
3. Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 adopted 2019.
4. Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 adopted May 2019.
5. Responses to consultations with statutory undertakers and other interested parties referred to in this report.
6. Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework December 2024 and Planning Practice Guidance.