

## North Herts District Council Local Plan EIP Statement

### Statement from Graveley Parish Council

#### Matter 16-Transport and infrastructure (Policies SP6, SP7, T1 and T2)

#### Statement by Jack Rigg, Chair, Graveley Parish Council

##### ***16.1 Is Policy SP6 justified, effective and consistent with national policy?***

**Not Justified.** Please refer to our comments in Matter 6, point 1 Road Infrastructure.

Improvements to the Strategic road network cannot compensate for the constrained nature of the local road network. Policies to encourage more sustainable transport modes are to be welcomed but they take time to bed in and are unlikely to be as effective as planners would like. Hertfordshire is a rural county, some 61% of residents work outside NHDC (ED14 3.52), which coupled with the volume of traffic passing through the district (Stevenage is a major destination (ED14 3.54)) will further restrict the effectiveness of the proposed strategy. In the meantime thousands of NHDC residents will have to endure slow moving traffic / congestion either as drivers or as residents (or both). This is contrary to SP7 “avoid placing unreasonable additional burdens on the existing community or existing infrastructure”. As a standalone policy the Mobility Strategy is **not effective**.

Indeed given the constrained nature of the local road network, planners have had to propose the new Mobility Strategy to justify the proposed level of development in light of the growing problem of traffic congestion both within NHDC, particularly for those neighbouring communities on Stevenage’s administrative boundaries and Stevenage itself.

The AECOM Report dated August 2016, **Stevenage Town Centre Model S-Paramics Model Forecasting Report** (Stevenage ED 109) provides an assessment of the impact of development based on the existing traffic policy, which predicted under both Do Nothing and Do Minimum scenarios that traffic would at a minimum be very congested or blocked (10.3.5 (page71) and Table 10.1 Network Performance for each scenario (page 72)).

Please note that as per 10.4.2, that “2021 scenarios do not include the new developments that are included in 2031 in the north area of Stevenage. The absence of these developments reduces the traffic issues in this area when compared to 2031 scenarios.”

Pending clarification from Stevenage on how its new Mobility Policy will impact existing road configurations and traffic sites identified as requiring improvement it is not possible to assess the impact on traffic flows and road congestion in North Herts.

ED14, 6.17 notes that as a result of adopting the new Mobility Strategy, that most of the highway mitigations tested for the Plan in and around Stevenage may not be implemented, and they will be replaced by other measures.

Further as noted in ED14, 4.3 “it is likely that some highway capacity would need to be reallocated for use by pedestrians, cyclists and bus users”. Comments at the Stevenage examination indicate that part of the current B197 adjacent to NS1 and HO3 would be constrained in pursuit of the new policy is likely to significantly increase existing traffic congestion in Graveley. This is particularly concerning as the B197 through Graveley between Letchworth and Stevenage is used already used to avoid delays on congested routes (ED14, 3.44).

Bus Services are provided are on a commercial basis, if they are not economic they will be reduced / cut once any funding / subsidies end. HCC has over the last few years reduced subsidies for bus services, which has affected rural areas in particular. It is therefore uncertain overtime what increased contribution this form of transport will be able to make given the rural nature of Hertfordshire and volume of travellers / distances travelled. The 2011 census revealed 7.8% of people used the bus to travel to work compared to 69% by car (ED 14, Table 3.5, page 41).

### **Graveley Parish Council, October 2017.**

#### Attachments:

Matter 16: AECOM Report dated August 2016, **Stevenage Town Centre Model S-Paramics Model Forecasting Report** (Stevenage ED 109), dated August 2016. Please see Matter 6 : Appendix 1