

Topics to consider /examples of issues	Where is it mentioned in the Local Plan?	What does the NPPF say about it?	How does the issue challenge the soundness of the plan?	
Roads and traffic	<p>What are the plans for reducing the impact of Blackhorse Farm site on the Whitehorse Street Junction? How could it work? What about the Railway bridge - can it take any more cars/pedestrians? Consider the new pedestrian/cyclist railway bridge at Ashville Road.</p> <p>The town has been described as an hourglass, with the crossroads of A505 and A507 at its centre and the listed buildings at the junction make finding a solution challenging. There are already tailbacks at this junction during morning and evening peak times and the flow may increase by up to 7000 cars and lorries.</p>	<p>There is section on transport policy SP6 "Sustainable transport". A new link road and some sustainable transport suggestions are made in the SP14 policy for the Blackhorse Farm site. The plan mentions that the site is big enough to support a new link road, including an additional bridge over the railway so that not all traffic has to use the Station Road bridge and Whitehorse crossing. However the sustainability assessment does not assess what is needed.</p> <p>The transport assessment does not consider N of Baldock, only Baldock WITH Letchworth in traffic modelling. Local Plan Model Testing 60271338 says in para 2 Baldock and Letchworth have not been tested to date.</p> <p>A miniroundabout and phased lights planned for A505/507 traffic lights has been suggested.</p> <p>SP14 4.180 says safe access needed to N of Baldock but doesn't say how.</p> <p>There is also mention of Southern link road in B3 and B4 but no details are given.</p>	<p>Section 4 "Promoting sustainable transport".</p> <p>Paragraph 32 states that "All developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement"</p>	<p>The Plan is not effective as it cannot be delivered in the plan period.</p> <p>It also fails the consistency with national policy test as it does not properly assess the transport improvements that would be needed for the BA1 site to work.</p> <p>The miniroundabout is the only cost included in the plan for Baldock in spite of the clear need for major transport projects, such as a new crossing with the railway and major roadways that would be required to divert at least some of the extra traffic away from the Whitehorse Street junction.</p>
Railway	<p>Is there enough capacity for the railway to take a potential doubling of passengers? How will commuters get to the station? Will the railway station itself be enhanced? Govia are conducting their own consultation about changes to timetabling and new services starting in 2018. There had been no communication up until November 2016 between NHDC and Govia about the proposed Local plan.</p>	<p>The plan makes no significant points other than the convenience of Baldock's location next to a station.</p> <p>It is interesting to note that NHDC had not consulted with Govia the train provider during the course of the preparation of this local plan. Currently Govia are planning to reduce the service to Baldock at off-peak times.</p>	<p>See above. paragraph 32 goes on to state that "development decisions should take account of whether improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit significant impacts of development. "</p>	<p>The Plan is not effective as it cannot be delivered in the plan period.</p> <p>It also fails the consistency with national policy test as it does not properly assess the transport improvements that would be needed for the BA1 site to work.</p>
Infrastructure	<p>Will there be enough Schools, Doctor surgeries, recreational facilities? When will they be provided? Are the school facilities adequate?</p>	<p>SP14 states that a masterplan must be produced prior to any other detailed matters. No detailed plans have been given. There is an Infrastructure development plan included in the evidence base (added in September 2016) but it does not give detailed plans.</p>	<p>Paragraph 177 states that it is equally important that planned infrastructure is deliverable in a timely fashion. To facilitate this, it is important that local planning authorities understand district-wide development costs at the time Local Plans are drawn up. For this reason, infrastructure and development policies should be planned at the same time, in the Local Plan.</p>	<p>This is not consistent with national policy as it has not assessed the costs of providing the necessary infrastructure and assumes that costs will be met by developers.</p>
Air Pollution	<p>Baldock is located in a bowl, where pollution can nest. Has any assessment been made on the pollution impact of the extra traffic through the town?</p>	<p>Read John Gingell's Comet article on SRB website. Also, particulates from tyres and brakes cause pollution making roundabouts particularly bad.</p> <p>In paragraph 9.28, the plan notes that air quality standards are already close to being exceeded in Whitehorse Street/Hitchin Street. The Housing and Green Belt Background paper notes that former site 209E (Prioroy fields in Hitchin) was considered unsuitable for the same reason.</p>	<p>Paragraph 124 states that "Planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants...".</p>	<p>This plan cannot be justified as being the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives (Priory Fields) and fails the criteria 4 i.e. it is not consistent with national policy on account of the likelihood of exceeding air quality limits.</p>

Town Centre, Landscape and Open Spaces

Will the historic town centre and the cultural aspects of Baldock be respected?

Some people fear that it is likely to become two towns and no integration.

Level nature reserve, is it being protected enough?

Sustainability appraisal notes identifies BA1 to have moderate to high landscape sensitivity.

Paragraph 4.38 states that "The District contains a range of retail and service centres, from medium sized towns to small village and neighbourhood centres. Each one performs a particular role to meet the needs of its catchment population, and is part of a network of centres within the District. The Council is committed to protect the vitality and viability of all centres."

Paragraph 4.44 "The growth of the District will require additional centres to be provided to serve the largest developments at Baldock..."

Paragraph 69 states that "Local planning authorities should create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see. To support this local planning authorities should aim to involve all sections of the community in the development of Local Plans and in planning decisions, and should facilitate neighbourhood planning"

Green Belt

Is it right to remove the Green Belt from around Baldock? Much of the Green Belt around Baldock is Prime agricultural land. Has enough consideration been given to use of brownfield sites before building on Green Belt?

There is a separate document that covers the reassessment of the Green Belt. Housing and Green Belt background paper para 3.14 states that BA1 site makes a significant contribution to Green Belt purposes. In the same document, para 5.52 justifies removing BA1 from the Green Belt on the basis that it can contribute to meeting housing requirements "in the first five years following adoption of the plan". This is contradicted in the Plan itself as the site will only be developed after smaller sites across the town. Policy SP8 makes provision for land in Stevenage West to be safeguarded for future needs outside of this Local Plan allocation, for up to 3,100 homes, to be used after 2026.

See Chapter 9 on the Green Belt (paragraphs 79-92)

This plan **cannot be justified as being the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives.** West of Stevenage should be reconsidered. It may also fail the **criteria 4 i.e. it is not consistent with national policy** with regard to the Green Belt

Local Work opportunities

Where will these new residents work? How will the land designated for industrial development be used? Few new work opportunities here so most will commute out of Baldock. Heavy impact on roads and railways as mentioned elsewhere. Could these houses be built closer to centres of employment such as West of Stevenage?

Policy SP3 describes the additional employment provision of 19.6ha of land East of Baldock. It also states that the council will "promote and support the expansion of the knowledge based economy in the District". Paragraph 4.23 states that "Many higher skilled residents commute out of the District for employment. "

Paragraph 34 states that "plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movements are located where the need to travel will be minimised "

This plan cannot be **justified as being the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives.** West of Stevenage should be reconsidered. It also fails the **criteria 4 i.e. it is not consistent with national policy** as West of Stevenage has not been properly considered.

Flooding

Consider the impact of road and house building on the ability to run off water. There is already frequent flooding in Baldock.

The river level dries out 6 months of the year.