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**WEST STEVENAGE CONSORTIUM STATEMENT ON SECRETARY OF STATE  
DECISION ON WEST STEVENAGE PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The West Stevenage Consortium is encouraged by the Secretary of State's announcement that he is 'minded to approve' the planning application for 3,600 homes on land West of Stevenage.

But the Consortium is disappointed that a separate application for 5,000 homes has been turned down on the grounds of prematurity in relation to emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS14) for the East of England, which will determine housing numbers for this area after 2011. It is, however, reassured that the opportunity for greater development at West Stevenage is still up for debate.

The Consortium will, as required by the Secretary of State, seek to work with local authorities in the area over the next three months to reformulate the planning obligation on the 3,600 homes application. This requires the delivery of community facilities and infrastructure to support the development, but the Consortium has warned that it cannot be expected to deliver infrastructure to support a 5,000 home scheme with approval for only 3,600 homes.

Both applications were the subject of a lengthy planning inquiry during 2004 and were supported by the Government's own regeneration agency, English Partnerships. In his report, also released today, the Planning Inspector recommended that permission should be granted for the 3,600 home application, but refused for the 5,000 home scheme.

Andrew Dutton, the Project Director for the West Stevenage Consortium, commented:

"This is an important step towards the delivery of much-needed new housing in Hertfordshire, including nearly 1,000 affordable homes. Our 5,000 homes scheme would have provided over £180m of privately funded infrastructure investment. We will need to look very carefully at what proportion of this investment can be delivered, and in what timescale, in relation to the 3,600 home application.

"Nonetheless, we are hopeful that we can address the outstanding issues that the Secretary of State has raised in today's decision notice and we will look again at what further reassurance we can give of our commitment to delivering the necessary infrastructure to support development at West Stevenage."

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Notes:

The West Stevenage Consortium is made up of Taylor Woodrow Plc, Persimmon Plc, and the Garden Village Partnership. English Partnerships, the Government's national regeneration agency, has an advisory role to the Consortium and owns part of the West Stevenage application site.

West Stevenage is designed to be a 'leading edge' mixed use urban extension to Britain's first planned New Town, meeting high standards of sustainability, urban design and affordability. West Stevenage will comprise three attractive and interlinked urban villages each with its own facilities and all set within a landscape framework that will minimise impact on the wider area.

The Consortium's website highlights West Stevenage's compliance with central Government policy, including:

- HOUSING DELIVERY - the ability of the site to deliver on the Government's commitment to a step-change in the delivery of new housing in the East of England through its Sustainable Communities Plan. The site's potential to deliver 1,375 affordable homes for people in housing need in the East of England, such as those on housing waiting lists, the elderly, those with special needs and key workers.
- SUSTAINABILITY - core sustainability objectives and targets that respond directly to the Sustainable Communities Plan.
- INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY – the West Stevenage plans will deliver the required infrastructure to support the development; transport and highways, community facilities and services.
- URBAN REGENERATION - the delivery of wider urban regeneration objectives for Stevenage town centre

The website can be viewed at [www.weststevenage.co.uk](http://www.weststevenage.co.uk).

For further information, please contact Charles St George or Emma Jordan on 020 7529 1733.