



# **GA2 GREAT ASHBY**

## Strategic Masterplan Briefing

This report has been prepared by the Strategic Policy Urban Design Team as a summary of the GA2 Strategic Masterplan Report. Circulation is intended for North Herts Councillors. The full report (prepared by the applicant Picture Estates Ltd) is appended to the Cabinet Report.

## KEY INFORMATION

LP Allocation	GA2
Total Site Area	53ha
Open Space	18ha (excluding existing woodland)
No. of Homes	circa. 600 homes
Density	circa. 32-35 dph
Non-Resi Uses	4.2ha (2.1ha 2FE Primary School + 1.9ha Reserve Education Land + 0.2ha Community Hub)

LP Allocation	Yes
Strategic Masterplan Framework	Project Board approval to progress to committees for consideration
Outline Planning Application	Anticipated early 2024 - PPA ongoing with 4/6 workshops completed.
Legal Agreements and Conditions	To be considered as part of OPA
Design Coding	To take place once developer/development partner known
Reserved Matters Applications	None

The masterplan sets out how the development will seek to champion sustainability, organised around the themes in the Sustainability SPD. It is important to note that the following are targets and subject to more detailed design and viability. Ranges are also used where there are multiple components to certain themes.

Optimising Passive Design and Fabric Performance	Silver
Achieving Low Carbon Energy	Silver
Minimising Carbon Footprint	Silver
Healthy Placemaking	Gold
Promoting Biodiversity	Bronze to Gold
Sustainable Travel	Gold
Conserving Water	Bronze
Sustainable Urban Drainage	Silver



## DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

The draft strategic masterplan for GA2 was reviewed with Design South East in May 2024. Key amendments to the design following the session include:

1. Proposed allotments moved from south-eastern edge to centre of the site, replacing a housing block.
2. Relocation of emergency access away from Dell Spring.
3. Additional set back and landscape buffer around Tile Kiln Farm.
4. Housing south of Nine Acre Spring removed.
5. Rationalising highway infrastructure in access corridor and separating cycle and walking infrastructure.
6. Reserving design and technical specification of the bus loop through north of the site.
7. Reserving design and technical specification of site street structure in development blocks.



Land Use Framework Plan, GA2 Strategic Masterplan Report.





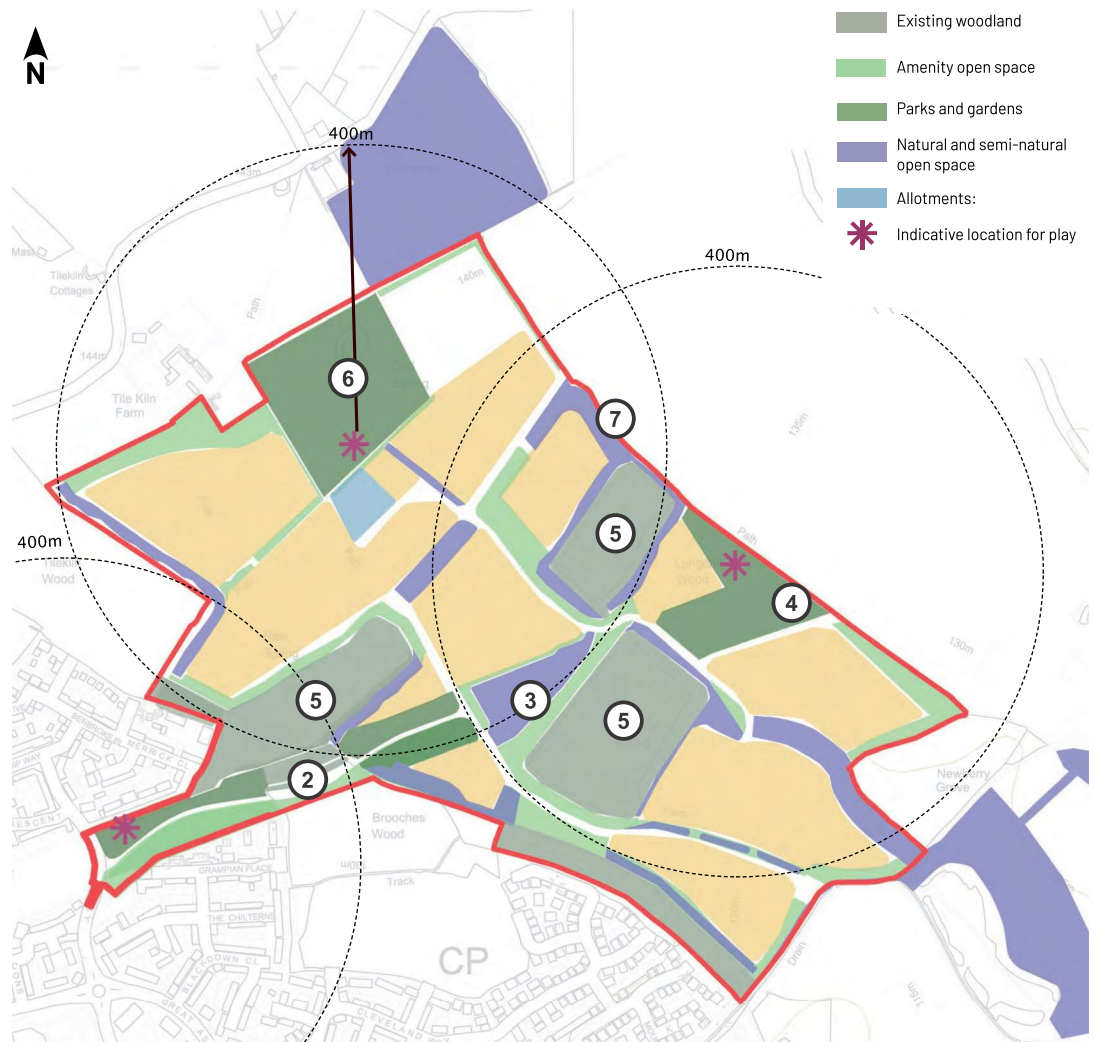
## SETTLEMENT STRUCTURE AND LAYOUT

1. The development will be a woodland neighbourhood shaped and informed by the extensive green infrastructure on the site.
2. Block and plot structures have been shaped around the existing woodland blocks and field boundaries.
3. Non-residential uses have been placed on the flattest and most contained part of the site.
4. The north-western area is expected to be more formal and urban in structure, activated by the community hub, school, allotments, play and Dell Spring open space.
5. Plots in this area will have a residential density of 35-45dph with lower densities and building heights towards sensitive edges (close to Tile Kiln Farm).
6. The south-east of the site will be of a lower density responding to the topography and more open views over the landscape. Densities will be between 30-25dph lowering to 20-30dph on the rural edges.
7. A central linear park stretches through the site from Mendip Way to the new country-side edge.



## NATURE, OPEN SPACE AND ECOLOGY

1. The linear park connects the existing community through GA2 to the countryside along the alignment of the existing pylon corridor. The park is characterised by three distinct areas.
2. At the western end, it is shared with the main access corridor where pedestrian and cycle access will be separated from the road through a landscaped parkland.
3. The centre of the park will have a semi-natural character with the first of the two drainage basins.
4. The outer section of the park will transition into the countryside, including the second basin that will incorporate play.
5. The existing woodland areas are incorporated with buffers of at least 15m of complimentary habitat.
6. Dell Spring will be retained as an open area characterised by the existing natural grassland. Land further to the north will be utilised for habitat creation.
7. Additional planting is proposed along much of the new Green Belt boundary with some breaks to maintain inter-visibility and connections to the ROW network.
8. The development is on target to exceed 10% biodiversity net gain in both habitat and hedgerow units - an ambitious target given the rich existing GI.
9. The illustrative drainage strategy is informed by the existing overland flows on the site which broadly follows the topography from north-west to south-east.
10. Play is distributed across the site to ensure easy access for both new and existing residents. They are located in or near open spaces to activate these focal points.



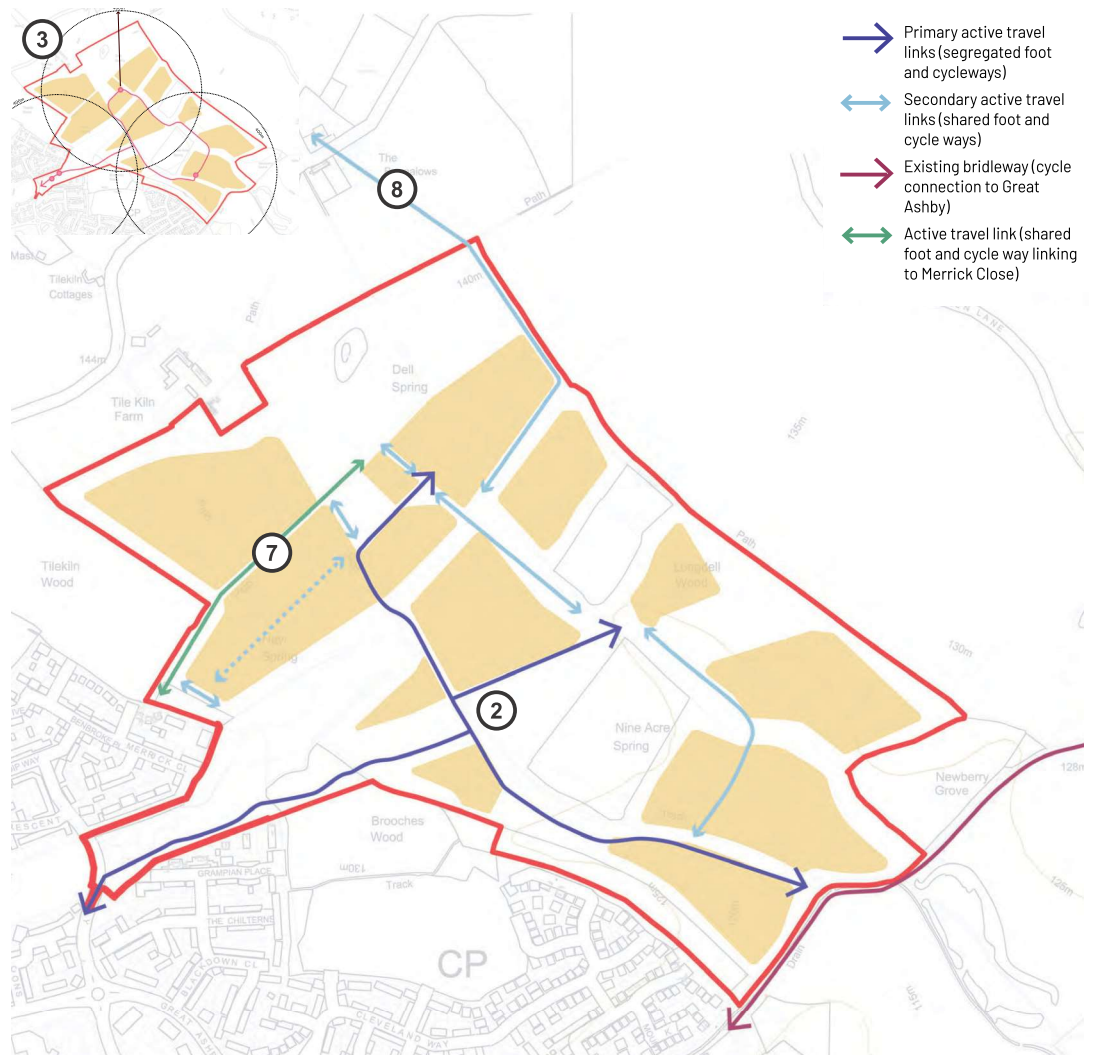


## MOVEMENT, ACCESS AND PARKING

1. The proposal incorporates a complex network of public footpaths and ecologically sensitive areas to create a legible network of movement.
2. For Active Travel, a 'three-pronged' approach has been utilised to connect users from the access off Mendip Way to the three important parts of the site - community hub, countryside and eastern residential parcels.
3. The bus route through the site runs in a loop from Mendip Way, past the school and community hub into the south-western area of the site.
4. Road layout and hierarchy is fixed only for the access corridor and key connections (to maintain flexibility).
5. Detailed design will explore a car-free area around the school and use of bus gates.
6. The masterplan secures the principles of a continuous edge lane network to ensure permeability for pedestrians and cyclists.
7. A key active travel route (distinct from the three prongs) is the connection from the hub to Merrick Close - this will be the main route for GA1 residents to the school.
8. The emergency access will also be an active travel route - providing connections onto Back Lane and beyond to Weston.



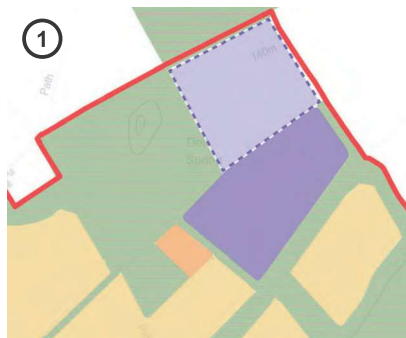
Leisure Routes Framework Plan, GA2 Strategic Masterplan Report.



## SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND COHESION

The sketch opposite illustrates the emerging proposals for the hub around Dell Spring. It does not form part of the Strategic Masterplan Report and has been taken from OPA Pre-application discussions.

1. Social infrastructure, community facilities and education have been co-located at the north of the site to provide a heart to the new development.
2. This location makes use of the existing Dell Springs as a landscape marker and character, is the flattest part of the site and is in close proximity to GA1 (for access to the school).
3. The requirement to provide reserve education land suits this position as the plot is placed on the periphery of the development - a central location could result in a vacant site in the middle of the development.
4. The eastern-most property will be 800m (as the crow flies) from the hub.
5. The front entrance to the school opens out onto a civic square that has the potential to be car-free.
6. The community hub building and allotments are co-located in the same plot, defining the civic square and sharing servicing and parking.
7. Play could be located within Dell Springs to draw people into this space.



Land Use Framework Plan, GA2 Strategic Masterplan Report.









# DELIVERY, MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

1. An indicative phasing strategy has been included in the Strategic Masterplan Framework. Phase 1 envisages opening up works from Mendip Way, provision of the school site, linear park, habitat and residential development in the centre of the site.
2. The second phase will flank the edges of the first phase to support the success of the community hub and bus route.
3. The third phase completes the development with lower intensity blocks in the south-east of the site.
4. This strategy will be developed further in the next stages through certainty of the delivery model.
5. Special consideration will be given to when the school and bus routes will be delivered through engagement with HCC.
6. The council has expressed that adoption of key spaces would be preferable. How this will work with BNG and the 30-year maintenance requirement needs to be further developed (across the district).
7. The masterplan provides an overview of engagement with key utilities providers and potential off-site contributions to deliver upgrades to routes connecting GA2 to local assets (secondary school, Stevenage town centre and train station).

