

**FULL COUNCIL
16 JUNE 2025**

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: GROWING BALDOCK STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN

REPORT OF: NIGEL SMITH, INTERIM DIRECTOR: PLACE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: CLLR DONNA WRIGHT – EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLACE

COUNCIL PRIORITIES: THRIVING COMMUNITIES / RESPONSIBLE GROWTH / SUSTAINABILITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report asks Full Council to approve and adopt the Strategic Masterplan for land around Baldock as a material planning consideration. This masterplan covers a number of sites allocated for development in the Council's adopted Local Plan (Sites BA1, BA2, BA3 and BA10), along with other ancillary land, for housing, employment and supporting infrastructure. Taken together, these represent the single, largest development project in the Local Plan.

The policies of the Local Plan require the preparation of a masterplan for these sites. A masterplan has been produced by the landowner and applicant team working with Council officers and advisors. This has followed approved guidance and procedures. The draft masterplan was subject to public consultation and informed by independent design review. The masterplan provides an appropriate framework for the future planning and development of this strategic site.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The Growing Baldock Strategic Masterplan attached at Appendix A, is approved and adopted as a material planning consideration for relevant planning decisions relating to the site.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To set an agreed design framework for the delivery of a strategic site within the Council's adopted Local Plan. To provide a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of multiple planned sites around Baldock. To accord with policy requirements of the Local Plan.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. The Growing Baldock Strategic Masterplan (hereafter 'masterplan') has, in officers' view, been appropriately prepared in accordance with national and local policies, guidance and advice. It has been prepared under the Council's preferred approach; the Local Plan and associated guidance encourage the preparation of masterplans for strategic sites in advance of and separate to any planning applications or decisions. The Council is currently behind schedule in delivering the homes required by the Local Plan. It is important that the strategic sites progress expediently through the planning system.
- 4.2. The alternative is to not approve the masterplan. This is not recommended for the same reasons as above. There would be planning, financial and reputational risks if Full Council decided not to proceed. These are explored in Section 11 of this report.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. The Council's internal, informal Strategic Planning Project Board has overseen preparation of this masterplan. This includes cross-party representation from all political groups recognising that the implementation of strategic sites are long-term projects which may span administrations of the Council. The Executive Member for Planning & Transport chairs the Project Board. Local ward members have been invited to participate in relevant meetings of the Board.
- 5.2. During its preparation, the Growing Baldock project was presented to and / or considered by the Project Board at its meetings of March 2022, February 2023, March 2023, September 2023, October 2023 and December 2024
- 5.3. Urban & Civic (U&C) presented to the Project Board in February 2023 in advance of a first round of public engagement. The Preferred Option masterplan was presented to the Project Board at its meeting of 30 October 2023 in advance of a second round of public consultation held in November 2023.
- 5.4. These more formal stages of consultation have been accompanied by a rolling programme of engagement with local communities and stakeholders. This has included frequently appearing at the Baldock Area Forum / Area Committee, establishing a U&C-led community forum, meeting with surrounding Parish Councils and focussed events for those who might be directly impacted by the proposals including direct neighbours of the sites, residents of the Icknield Way / Football Close area and the existing GP practice.
- 5.5. All Councillors were invited to a briefing and 'Q&A' session on the Local Plan and the general principles of masterplanning and design on 8 July 2024.
- 5.6. In August 2024, Project Board advised upon amendments to the Project Board Terms of Reference. These included recommendations for the future reporting of masterplans to Councillors. The updated Terms of Reference were endorsed by Cabinet in September 2024 and have been followed in preparing and presenting this item. This includes additional Councillor representation on the Board and seeking Board feedback on any views from their wider groups and preparation of a summary document, which is attached as Appendix B.

- 5.7. The final masterplan was presented to and considered by the Project Board at its meeting of 24 February 2025. The Board requested further, detailed amendments on secondary education options. These have been updated, and the Board supported the masterplan progressing to Cabinet at a reconvened meeting on 4 March 2025.
- 5.8. On 18 March 2025 Cabinet agreed to refer the masterplan to Full Council for approval. The masterplan was not presented to Full Council at its April 2025 meeting as this took place during the pre-election period for the Hertfordshire County Council elections held on 1 May.
- 5.9. All Councillors were invited to a briefing session in advance of this meeting. This took place on 6 June 2025.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key Executive decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on 5 January 2024.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. The Council's Local Plan (the Plan) was adopted by Full Council in November 2022. It forms part of both the Council's adopted Policy Framework and the statutory Development Plan for the District.
- 7.2. The Plan sets out the Council's strategy for meeting the development needs of North Hertfordshire over the period to 2031. The Plan makes provision for at least 13,000 new homes. A significant proportion of the District's overall housing target are to be delivered on six Strategic Housing Sites – defined as sites of more than 500 homes – around the main towns in and adjoining the District. These are supplemented by a range of Local Housing Allocations which range in size up to approximately 300 homes within and around the District's towns and villages.
- 7.3. The Inspector examining the Local Plan was clear that deciding where and how housing needs should be met was an extremely complex issue. The arguments for, and the potential benefits of, new development were extensively scrutinised and carefully balanced against the inevitable harm that will arise from the release of this land.
- 7.4. All the Strategic Housing Sites are greenfield locations. They contain agricultural land, leisure routes and Public Rights of Way enjoyed by residents as well as habitats of importance for flora and fauna. However, the examination concluded that the imperative to boost housing supply – in terms of both local evidence of acute housing need and national policy directions – meant these developments should proceed. Key paragraphs from the Inspector's conclusions are shown below for context:

487. Without impinging on the Green Belt, the consequences for sustainable development would be significant. This would involve either building new homes in considerably less sustainable locations – in all probability away from the areas where they are most needed – or not delivering them at all. The former would most likely lead to a significantly greater increase in use of the private car and could lead to the creation of communities that would be relatively isolated, particularly in terms of access to shops and services. The latter would deny many the opportunity to live in their own home close to their family, friends and work, and could stifle the local economy. To my mind, neither proposition would best, or even adequately, serve the achievement of sustainable development, particularly in respect of its economic and social dimensions.

...

492. On the one hand, it is clear to me that the development of most of the housing allocations proposed in this Plan would cause significant or moderate harm to the Green Belt, even with mitigation. That is a highly regrettable outcome and a very important factor. Indeed, I give substantial weight to it.

493. On the other hand, however, the need for housing both in North Hertfordshire and in Luton is acute. The proposed allocations would ensure that those needs are met where they arise in the most sustainable locations that are deliverable/developable. Rejecting these sites would delay meeting the pressing need for housing further, and not impinging on the Green Belt would mean accepting that those needs would not be met where they arise. Both would choke the local housing market. The home-making aspirations of many people, particularly those requiring affordable homes, would be shattered and the local economy would most likely suffer negative consequences. These too are matters of substantial weight.

494. In my judgement, on balance, the latter considerations outweigh the harm that would be caused to the Green Belt. Consequently, I consider that the exceptional circumstances necessary to alter the Green Belt boundaries to facilitate the allocation of the housing sites concerned do exist both in principle and in each individual case. This aspect, therefore, should not stand in the way of their allocation.

[North Hertfordshire Local Plan Inspector's Report, September 2022](#)

- 7.5. The Strategic Housing Sites are of a greater size and complexity than any developments that have taken place in the District over the last twenty years. They are critical to the overall strategy of the Plan. Their delivery is essential to increase the number of homes being built above historic averages and address the acute need for housing.
- 7.6. Policy SP9 of the Local Plan sets out the Council's approach to Design and Sustainability. This states the Council will require the production of Strategic Masterplans for Strategic Housing Sites and other significant development. Significant development generally comprises development of 100 homes or more. The policy states that masterplans may be required to consider the cumulative impact of more than one site to support a co-ordinated and integrated approach to place-making and design.

- 7.7. Policy SP9 also sets out a series of design principles to be followed in masterplans and applications for development meeting these thresholds. It contains documentation requirements and sets out the approaches to approval. The Local Plan encourages the submission of masterplans for agreement before the submission of a planning application. Where applications have already been submitted, the Policy also allows for masterplans to be agreed with the Council prior to their determination.
- 7.8. Masterplans are a recognised 'good practice' tool as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Government Planning Practice Guidance explains a masterplan as follows:

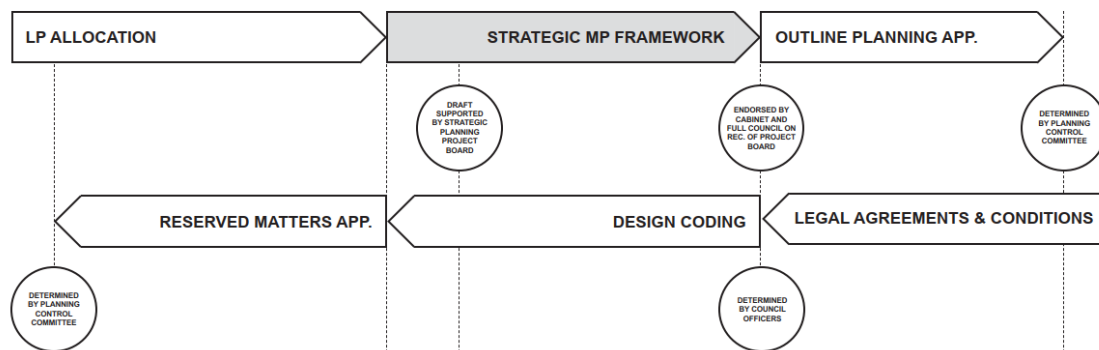
What are masterplans?

Masterplans set the vision and implementation strategy for a development. They are distinct from local design guides by focusing on site specific proposals such as the scale and layout of development, mix of uses, transport and green infrastructure. Depending on the level of detail, the masterplan may indicate the intended arrangement of buildings, streets and the public realm. More specific parameters for the site's development may be set out in a [design code](#), which can accompany the overall masterplan.

A range of other plans and technical reports may be needed alongside a masterplan, to provide supporting evidence and set out related proposals, such as a local character study, landscape assessment, transport assessment and proposals for securing biodiversity net gain. An implementation strategy could also be included, especially where development is expected to be brought forward in a number of phases.

- 7.9. To support the Council's masterplanning approach, Cabinet agreed in March 2021 to establish an informal, internal Project Board to provide corporate oversight and strategic direction. This is not a formal committee or decision-making body. Through Project Board a range of associated procedural guidance has been produced and subsequently endorsed by Cabinet (see links in Section 18).
- 7.10. These say masterplans produced and approved before the submission of a planning application or prior to the determination of a planning application will follow the final approval process below (subject to a positive outcome at each step):
- Project Board recommendation to Service Director
 - Service Director recommendation to Cabinet
 - Cabinet recommendation to Full Council
 - Adoption by Full Council as a material consideration in the determination of any relevant planning applications

- 7.11. Consideration of the masterplan does not necessitate any further debate upon the general principles of whether the development should take place in the first instance. Neither should it lead to debate on the fact that, at a strategic level, the development will result in some harm to the local area or may lead to more congestion or delay on local roads. These matters have been considered through examination and adoption of the Local Plan. Some adverse impacts are 'priced in' as the cost of ensuring the needs of existing and future residents are appropriately met. Relevant policies in the Local Plan identify site-specific and general measures that should be included to mitigate the impacts of development. These matters will be subject to further technical consideration through detailed assessments at the formal planning stages.
- 7.12. In this context, officers are not asking Councillors to confer any greater or lesser weight to the idea of development on this site than already exists; the masterplan provides a high-level design framework against which any future planning applications for the site can be considered. The level of design detail will increase as proposals move through the planning process.
- 7.13. The masterplan is the second stage in a (broadly) six-step approach to securing the planning, regulation and delivery of a site through a combination of statutory and discretionary measures. This process should be viewed holistically as a means of collectively securing design quality, setting out the vision, community engagement, on-site infrastructure and off-site contributions for the successful planning and delivery of the project.



- 7.14. Formal regulatory approval(s) for the development will be secured through any subsequent planning permission(s). However, the masterplan has been guided by, and considered against, the key requirements of relevant policies in the Local Plan. Similarly, although it is not a formal planning decision, any concerns or objections to any masterplan should generally be framed against relevant policies and considerations or made on valid planning grounds.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

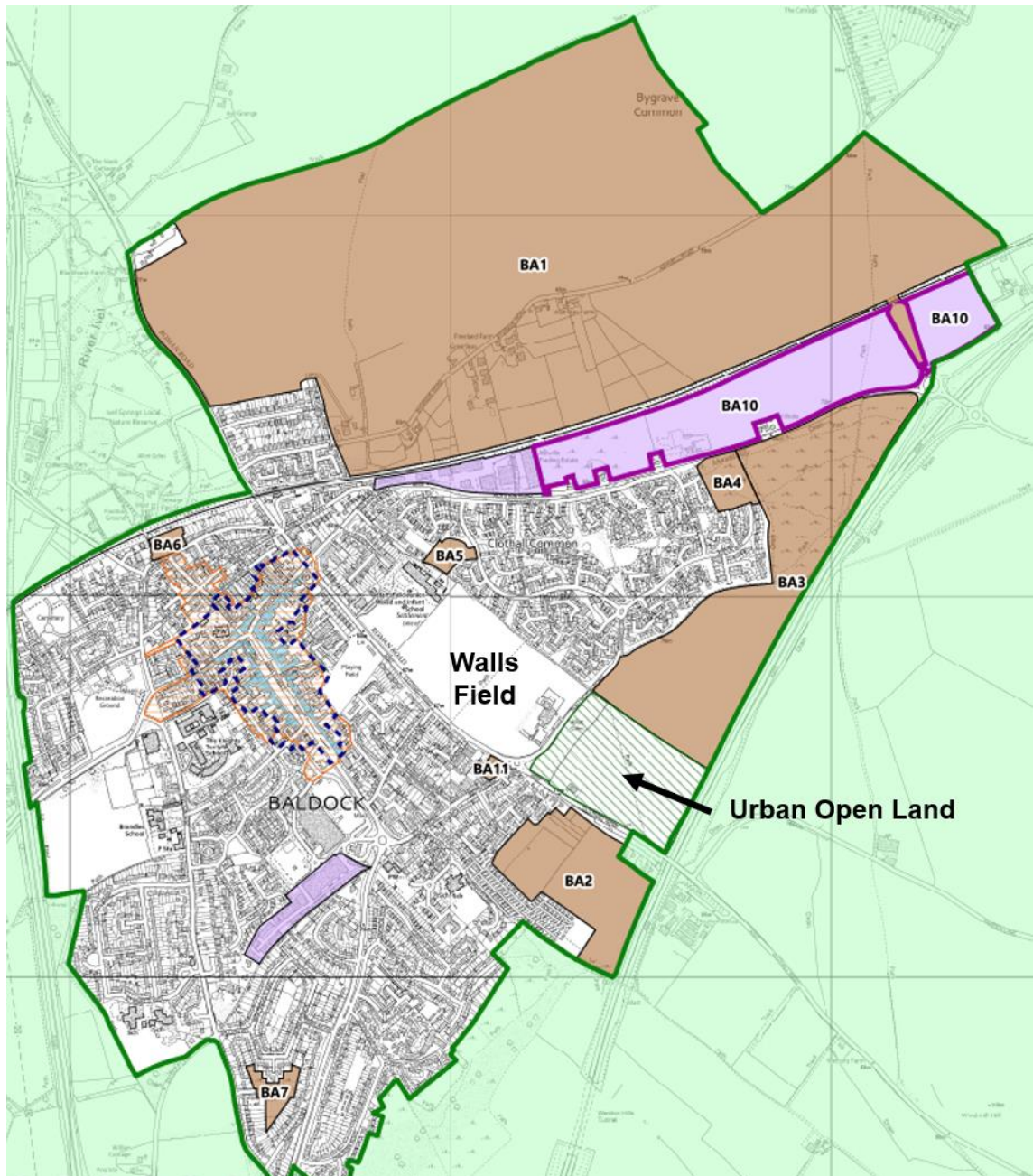
8.1. The Local Plan allocates several sites around the north, east and south-east of Baldock for development. These are identified in the Local Plan as:

- Site **BA1**, which consists of approximately 142 hectares of predominantly agricultural land to the north of Baldock within Bygrave parish. The south-west of the site adjoins existing residential properties on Salisbury Road and Bygrave Road. Bygrave Road continues through the site becoming Ashwell Road, linking Baldock with the villages of the same name. There are a small number of existing properties along Bygrave Road which do not form part of the development agreement between Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and U&C but which are included within the Local Plan allocation. Site BA1 is allocated by Policy SP14 of the Local Plan for a strategic-scale development of approximately 2,800 homes with supporting infrastructure including a new, mixed-use local centre, a community hall and GP surgery, up to 6 forms of entry (FE)¹ of additional primary-aged education provision and up to 8FE of additional secondary-age education provision.
- Site **BA2**, which consists of approximately nine hectares of agricultural land to the south-east of Baldock, and south-west of the A507 within Clothall parish. The north-west of the site adjoins existing residential properties on Walnut Avenue and Laxton Gardens. Baldock Park Homes, an extensive mobile home site, lies to the south-west. The south-east of the site is bounded by the A505 Baldock bypass with a small number of residential properties and the A507 to the north east. Site BA2 is identified as a Local Housing Allocation under Policy HS1 of the Local Plan. Policy BA2 identifies detailed, site-specific criteria and a dwelling estimate of approximately 200 homes..
- Site **BA3**, which consists of approximately twenty-five hectares of land to the south-east of Baldock lying between the Clothall Common development and the A505 Baldock bypass. The north-eastern area of the site contains an informal area of habitat and walking routes on a man-made bund resulting from excavation and earthworks associated with the construction of the bypass. The south-west of the site is in agricultural use. Site BA3 is a Local Housing Allocation under Policy HS1 of the Local plan. Policy BA3 identifies detailed, site-specific criteria which include making clear that no housing is to be permitted on the bund and a dwelling estimate of approximately 245 homes; and
- Site **BA10**, which consists of approximately twenty hectares of land to the east of Baldock lying between the B656 Royston Road and the railway in predominantly agricultural use. The west of the site adjoins the existing employment area at the Ashville Trading Estate. There are a number of existing properties along Royston Road which do not form part of the development agreement between HCC and U&C and which are excluded from any Local Plan designation (though the site occupied by Watts Roofing Supplies is included). Site BA10 is an employment land allocation under Policy SP3 of the Local Plan. Policy ETC1 states that employment allocations

¹ A form of entry is a class of 30 pupils across each year group. An 8FE secondary school would, once fully implemented, have 1,200 pupils aged 11-16 across school Years 7 to 11 (8 classes x 30 x 5 years).

should provide office, research & development, industrial processes, industrial and / or storages & distribution uses. Policy BA10 identifies detailed, site-specific criteria which include a requirement for a masterplan prior to the approval of any detailed matters.

- 8.2. The annotated extract from the Local Plan Policies Map on the following page shows the allocations. The Baldock, Bygrave & Clothall Neighbourhood Plan (BBCNP, 2021) also applies to this area. The Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan for its area alongside the Local Plan. The BBCNP contains relevant policies, including specific requirements in relation to sites BA1, BA2, BA3 and BA10. Some requirements broadly mirror Local Plan policies. Neighbourhood plan policies are referred to where relevant through this report.
- 8.3. These sites, as well as further, surrounding land are all owned by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). In March 2022, HCC selected Urban & Civic as its development partner for these proposed new neighbourhoods. Urban & Civic are a 'master developer' specialising in the delivery of large-scale sites.
- 8.4. A master developer typically brings a large site through several stages of the planning process including the masterplanning, outline application, legal agreement, design coding and certain detailed matters. The master developer will often deliver site-wide infrastructure such as key roads, green spaces, schools and utilities. They will then sell smaller, discrete parcels of land within the development to a range of housebuilders who then bring forward detailed reserved matters applications and build the homes along with (where applicable) neighbourhood streets, small-scale play facilities and open spaces. The overall coherence of the site is secured through (as applicable) masterplans, design codes, contractual obligations between the housebuilders and master developer and appropriate, long-term management and stewardship arrangements.



- 8.5. The sites were subject of previous planning applications, submitted in 2017 by HCC to help secure the allocations in the Local Plan. These were subsequently withdrawn.

8.6. As set out above (see Paragraph 7.6), the Local Plan says that masterplans may need to consider the cumulative impact of multiple sites. Following the appointment of U&C, officers worked to identify the most appropriate boundaries for the masterplan. The Growing Baldock masterplan covers the four local plan allocations above. It also includes:

- Land to the south of BA3 between the site and the A507 / Clothall Road. This is approximately ten hectares in size. There are allotments along the western boundary with Wallington Road with the remainder in agricultural use, bisected by a Public Right of Way. This land is Urban Open Land under Policy CBG5 of the Local Plan. This places restrictions on its use that aim to broadly maintain its openness and visual connection with the surrounding countryside. Policy G2 of the BBCNP identifies this area, along with adjoining Walls Field, as a Strategic Green Space and similarly aims to maintain its predominantly open character;
- Walls Field – approximately eleven hectares of undeveloped land lying between the A507 / Clothall Road and the Clothall Common development. Hartsfield School lies to the north-west and Tapps Garden Centre to the south-east. This area is not subject to any designation or allocation in the Local Plan but is nationally protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is the site of a Roman small town and Late Iron Age settlement. As above, Policy G2 of the BBCNP applies to both the Urban Open Land and Walls Field; and
- Approximately 1.5 hectares of undeveloped land to the east of the A507 North Road and opposite Salisbury Road. This is adjacent to, but outside of, the Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve within the Green Belt.

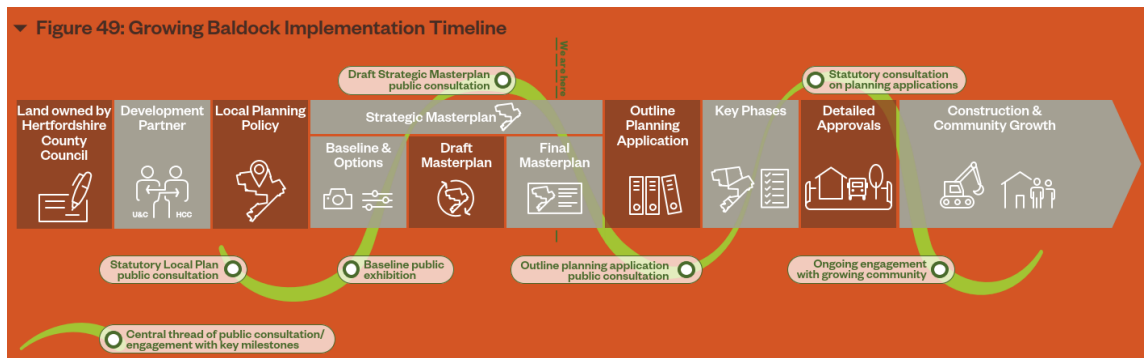
8.7. Urban & Civic have produced the masterplan. In developing the masterplan, U&C have collectively referred to the masterplan area and this project as 'Growing Baldock'. Where appropriate, the Growing Baldock masterplan also identifies or refers to (potential) interventions beyond this boundary.

8.8. Production of the masterplan has followed the key stages set out in the Council's approved masterplanning guidance. This included:

- Establishing an officer group with representatives from the District Council and HCC supported by external capacity and expertise on key issues;
- Agreement of a masterplan brief for the site setting out key issues;
- Preparation of a multi-disciplinary evidence base on matters such as ecology, landscape, heritage and transport & access to inform proposals;
- Consideration and / or testing of key spatial options for the masterplan, informed by a bespoke workshop facilitated by Hyas Associates. This included (but was not limited to) options for the location, nature and / or alignment of:
 - i. The main road access to BA1 and the connection to the B656 / A505 at the east of the site
 - ii. The second, active travel crossing of the railway
 - iii. Secondary school provision;
- Design review;

- Presentation to the Council's Project Board at preferred option masterplan stage;
 - Public consultation; and
 - Refinement of proposals in response to the steps above to produce the final masterplan.
- 8.9. The landowner team have worked with officers from the District and County Council (and their representatives) under a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) since September 2022 to develop the masterplan.
- 8.10. Emerging material from the masterplan framework was previously subject to formal Design Review in July 2023 using the Council's preferred partner Design South-East using their bespoke North Hertfordshire panel of experts.
- 8.11. The preferred option masterplan was presented to the Council Project Board in October 2023. The Project Board endorsed the work undertaken to that date as an appropriate basis for public consultation recognising that further refinement of the proposals would be required. In particular, and at that stage, the Project Board made clear that the final masterplan would need to resolve the options around secondary education to present a single solution.
- 8.12. Public consultations took place in March and November 2023 and invites were sent to local councillors, stakeholders and residents. U&C held in-person public events at Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre. The consultation was accompanied by a website (www.growingbaldock.co.uk) which has been maintained and updated throughout the process and remains 'live'.
- 8.13. Following the November 2023 consultation, extensive additional work was undertaken to explore the feasibility of the potential solutions for secondary education (discussed in detail below), reported to the Project Board in December 2024. The Council's officer project team provided detailed feedback on a full draft of the Masterplan document in February 2025.
- 8.14. Following Design Review and the public consultations, and through the process more generally, the developers/landowners and the Council have worked together to refine the masterplan and address issues raised. Key changes and refinements to the masterplan, include:
- Realignment of the primary route through BA1 as a low-speed route through the site (rather than a 'bypass') and, following archaeological investigation, connecting to the existing roundabout junction at eastern end of the Baldock bypass;
 - Rationalising the spatial options for secondary school provision so that it is made either at the existing Knights Templar site or on BA3;
 - Making Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school provision on BA3;
 - Introducing greater flexibility over the nature of the second, active travel crossing of the railway between Clothall Common and BA1 to allow further investigation of providing an underpass rather than an overbridge; and

- Redistributing potential primary school provision within BA1 to provide one school to the west of the proposed local centre and one to the east, both located in close proximity to the primary route and the Bygrave Road corridor.
- 8.15. The size of the project, the nature of Urban & Civic's delivery model and the need to ensure flexibility on matters which cannot be resolved now have shaped the masterplan. The overall aim has been to establish key principles and objectives which can form a framework for the assessment of future, more detailed proposals.
- 8.16. The masterplan includes framework plans but these are strategic in scale. This masterplan does not set out, for example, a detailed street network for the site. This should be borne in mind when considering the masterplan and the level of detail it contains; it is not an 'absolute fix' of the proposals. This is recognised within the masterplan document which shows how the design process will continue and evolve through to implementation in the diagram below (see pp.91-93 of the masterplan document). A summary document highlighting key plans and concepts from the masterplan document has been prepared by officers to aid Councillors' consideration and is attached to this report



- 8.17. The masterplan has focussed upon and provides:
- A written vision, key objectives and thematic design principles for the site. These provide a clear basis for testing future proposals as they continue to evolve and work their way through the planning process;
 - High level spatial frameworks for key layers such as land use and transport; and
 - More detailed illustrative material and written concepts for those parts of the site where there is a greater level of certainty. This includes key areas of green infrastructure and the 'BA2' site south of Clothall Road which is expected to be the first phase of development with detailed plans to be brought forward in advance of other areas of the site.
- 8.18. The key plans in the masterplan are:
- Land Use (Fig.17, p.37) – identifying the areas of the site to be used for residential, open space and sports provision, primary schools, reserve land for secondary education, SEND provision, employment uses and a local centre.
 - Green infrastructure (Fig.21, p.45) – identifying a series of key spaces in and around the sites and town with associated open space typologies, precedent images, concept plans and strategic water and drainage strategy which aims, as a key principle, to recharge the existing aquifer feeding the River Ivel.

- Biodiversity (Fig.29, p.57) – identifying key habitat assets that will be provided, retained and enhanced. These include significant new areas of grassland habitat at the north of BA1 and at Walls Field and providing connectivity with the Local Nature Reserves at Ivel Springs and Weston Hills and the wider countryside.
- Movement (Fig.31, p.61) – A framework plan showing transport connectivity within component plans detailing proposals for active travel, public transport and vehicular access along with key principles for parking provision and a range of proposed off-site interventions to be implemented across the wider town including alterations to the Whitehorse Street junction in the centre of Baldock.
- Urban Design Framework (Fig.37, p.71) – identifying a strategic, site wide urban design framework setting out a structure for key frontages onto streets and green spaces, landmark buildings, prominent corners and landscaped edges. This forms the basis of a development structure and sets key design principles and an approach to establishing character which appropriately responds to the architectural qualities of Baldock. Detailed design principles are set to inform plans for the first phase of development on BA2.
- Composite Framework Plan (Fig.44, p.83) which combines the parameters and concepts in the layers above to provide a development framework.
- Indicative Phasing Strategy (Figs 45-48, pp.88-89) – splitting the site into four key phases starting with BA2. Phase B covers the green infrastructure proposals for Walls Field and ‘Baldock Mound’, the western third of BA1 and the eastern and western edges of the BA10 site. Phase C brings forward the central cores of BA1 and BA10 including full implementation of the primary route through BA1 connecting the A507 to the A505. Phase D implements the eastern area of BA1 and finalises proposals for BA3 and the adjoining Urban Open Land.

- 8.19. A summary assessment of the masterplan against the requirements of the relevant site-specific policy is set out later. However, in advance of this, it is equally informative to identify those key areas where the masterplan does not (fully) conform with the expectations of the Local Plan and set out the justification for this. These matters are set out separately but an overall decision on the masterplan should be made ‘in the round’.
- 8.20. Formal assessment of any schemes’ compliance with relevant policies will be through any subsequent planning application(s).

Secondary education

- 8.21. Delivering an appropriate solution for secondary education is critical to the scheme. Baldock and the surrounding villages are currently served by one secondary school. The Knights Templar School (KTS) is a 7FE Academy on the east side of the town. The adopted Local Plan requires up to 8FE of additional secondary education provision on land north of the railway (Site BA1). This was the identified solution at the time of the Local Plan’s preparation and examination, guided by and agreed with Hertfordshire County Council.

- 8.22. Through the masterplan process, member engagement and public consultation a clear preference for a 'One Baldock' approach emerged. This includes seeking a solution that delivers a single secondary school for the expanded town and surrounding villages. This approach was explained in the public consultation in November 2023.

One secondary school, one Knights Templar

Providing the right schools at the right times is fundamental to achieving the 'One Baldock' principle.

This is a question that is really important for the future of Baldock and how it grows, and it is one where we haven't got a fixed view, although we know what we think the right answer might be.

Key principles

- Initially a new site for the new development would require two secondary schools to serve the expanded town and surrounding villages. We now believe that one secondary school, Knights Templar – either expanded on its existing site, or relocated within the site – is the best solution for Baldock and the villages in the priority catchment area.
- To work with the local primary schools to manage their current capacity and to influence the timing of new primary schools coming forward. This means being school spaces at existing schools for new homes south of the railway before we expand any of the existing schools and building new schools for the new homes to the north of the railway.
- To work with the schools and Hertfordshire County Council to keep numbers and capacity under review.
- To encourage the community use of new school sports facilities at the secondary school where possible.
- To work with nursery providers to support the existing capacity within the town and plan in new provision within new schools and the new local centre at the appropriate time.

Nursery

There will be early years facilities as part of the new primary schools, coordinating with the existing provision in Baldock, including St Martin's Nursery School.

Primary

The local primary schools require that two new primary schools be built as part of the development. These will be located north of the railway line. We are working with the education authority and the local schools to understand the timing and phasing of when new primary schools should come forward. We have been talking to existing schools and we assure that some currently have capacity for more pupils. It is important for us to coordinate our approach with the current planning and ensure that the delivery of new schools is timed so it doesn't affect existing schools in Baldock and its surrounding villages.

Secondary

We are working with the local education authority Hertfordshire County Council, the planning authority North Herts Council and Knights Templar school to find the best solution for secondary education in Baldock and its priority catchment area which includes some of the surrounding villages. All the partners believe that one comprehensive secondary school will serve local families better than two smaller secondary schools competing within the town.

Secondary school options

The options for the three secondary school locations may change from people and vehicles move around Baldock. For all options, we expect the number of pupils walking, cycling and using public transport to go to school to increase as a result of the measures we will put in place to make Baldock a more pleasant place to get around on foot or by bike.

1 Expansion of Knights Templar on current site

- no changes to routes to school for existing Baldock residents and walking and cycling on these routes will improve.
- increase in number of pupils arriving and departing at the existing Knights Templar site.
- pupils from new development can use existing of routes to school including North Road, the new pedestrian/cycle path crossing of the railway and improved pedestrian connections from BA2 via the town centre.

2 Relocation of Knights Templar to BA1

- changes to routes to school for existing communities who will need to travel north to the new school.
- improvement around the existing Knights Templar will reduce.
- increased movement through town for communities east of Station Road / Church Road.
- residents of Clothall Common and new homes at BA2/BA3 (to east of Baldock) will access school via new pedestrian/cycle path crossing of the railway.

3 Relocation of Knights Templar to BA3

- changes to routes to school for the existing communities.

Extract from November 2023 consultation material

- 8.23. This consultation identified three potential solutions for secondary education:
- Expand KTS on its current site
 - Relocate an expanded KTS north of the railway (site BA1)
 - Relocate an expanded KTS south of Clothall Common (site BA3)
- 8.24. The clear feedback of the Project Board at this time, supported by local ward Councillors, was that any final masterplan needed to narrow these choices to a single, preferred solution. This was to provide certainty to the project and the local community. There was a clear preference that the development should facilitate the relocation of KTS to new facilities on the BA3 site.
- 8.25. Extensive additional work was conducted during 2024 to explore this request, better understand the factors influencing future demand and further understand the feasibility of various options.
- 8.26. The option of providing a single school for the enlarged town within BA1 has now been discounted. This is primarily because of the substantial land-take that a school of this size would require. Within BA1 this would need to be wholly accommodated within land that might otherwise deliver housing, significantly impacting the number of new homes that might be accommodated by the project. Removing secondary education provision entirely to the north of the railway and away from the existing town would also have significant implications for and impacts on existing communities.

- 8.27. It is important to make clear that there is agreement between officers and representatives of all parties that one, larger secondary school for Baldock is the preferred option. This builds on the existing strengths of KTS and the 'One Baldock' approach. It allows secondary provision to grow in phases in line with demand and avoids the operational challenges of an additional, smaller secondary school that operated 'in competition' with KTS. The preferred option from HCC, local Councillors and the current school leadership is the relocation of the existing KTS into the Growing Baldock scheme at BA3. This preference is made clear in the masterplan. Land at BA3 is reserved solely for education while all reasonable efforts are made to deliver this. However, a range of factors prevent this from being identified as the sole solution at this point in the process.
- 8.28. The current intake at KTS includes an inflow of around 2FE of pupils from Letchworth. There is currently spare capacity in the secondary school estate in Letchworth and admission rules gives priority at KTS to children from Baldock and the surrounding villages. In the early stages of any development, prospective Year 7 children from the Growing Baldock scheme would be prioritised over any applicants from Letchworth. This would reduce the spare capacity available to prospective students from Letchworth who would be 'pushed back' towards Fearnhill, Highfield or other schools identified under parental choice with sufficient capacity.
- 8.29. Because of this, 2FE of the existing provision at KTS is considered 'available' to serve the Growing Baldock scheme. Under planning rules, U&C cannot be charged for the costs of (re-)providing this in any scheme. It also cannot be charged for the costs of (re-)providing the remaining 5FE of existing provision that presently serves the current population of Baldock and the surrounding villages.
- 8.30. This leaves a significant funding gap for the delivery of a relocated school for which there is currently no solution. There is no reasonable prospect at this time of that gap being filled by central government funding; relevant budgets are presently wholly directed to permanently removing RAAC (aerated concrete) from affected schools.
- 8.31. Since adoption of the Local Plan, there have been significant changes in underlying demographics. Birth rates and primary school roll numbers are falling on both a local and national basis. This will see a fall in demand feed through into the secondary school system over time and could further impact on the figures outlined above.
- 8.32. HCC have a statutory obligation to ensure that every child can be offered a school place. Their modelling of pupil numbers shows a requirement to plan for up to 12FE of secondary education provision across the Baldock and the surrounding villages. However, it is recognised there is also uncertainty surrounding this figure and the actual number of pupils may ultimately be lower.
- 8.33. The project has explored opportunities for the existing KTS in detail. Expansion is technically feasible and deliverable up to 10FE. This is within the range of possible outcomes but does not achieve the upper end of HCC's planning parameters which must be safeguarded unless and until such time as it can be clearly shown that this level of provision will not be required. There are also significant challenges associated with expanding a school in a 'live' education environment. KTS is an Academy outside the direct control of HCC as Local Education Authority and therefore cannot be compelled to expand against its wishes.

- 8.34. There are potential costs associated with the maintenance and repair of existing buildings on the KTS site to allow their continued use in the long-term. These maintenance costs are beyond the responsibility of the Growing Baldock scheme and would require funding. HCC, U&C and local ward members have all advised officers that KTS is currently resistant to the idea of expanding in-situ.
- 8.35. The only fully deliverable option at the current time is therefore a new, second secondary school. This could be fully funded by U&C on land within their control to meet the surplus demand created by the Growing Baldock Scheme. However, this school would almost certainly be smaller than HCC's operational preference for new secondary schools to be at least 6FE in size to deliver a full breadth of curriculum and economies of scale. There would also be challenges around the long-term sustainability of this model. This approach would not reflect the clear feedback of community consultation.
- 8.36. The *potential* number of pupils could be estimated and recalculated endlessly. However, the *actual* amount of education places that will be needed can only be definitively known once new homes start to be delivered and occupied by real families. And placed against the demand arising from the existing population, influenced by the wider demographic factors above. There will be clear, advanced warning of the requirements as pupils work through the pre-school and primary school system that will allow a final decision to be made in good time; it is well-recognised that new developments generally attract younger and newly-forming families with the peak demand for secondary education trailing some time behind the peak demand for primary education.
- 8.37. The masterplan therefore includes a flexible approach. It is framed in a way that any of the three options above could be accommodated, namely:
- The expansion of KTS in-situ;
 - The relocation of KTS to BA3; and
 - A second, small secondary school on BA3
- 8.38. The masterplan makes clear that the relocation of an expanded KTS to BA3 is the preferred outcome. Sufficient land is reserved unless and until it is conclusively proven that this scheme is not deliverable and / or not required. A final decision will be made later in the development process involving the district and county councils in consultation with local, elected representatives.
- 8.39. A detailed presentation and Q&A session was held with the Project Board and local ward members in December 2024. At this meeting, the Board recognised the complexities of the situation and agreed that the masterplan could progress for consideration with this flexible approach subject to the position in 8.38 above. This was reiterated at the February and March 2025 meetings.
- 8.40. Any outline application would currently need to include the flexible approach to ensure a deliverable permission could be issued. Any future s106 legal agreement will contain appropriate review mechanisms, requirements for governance and oversight and triggers that allow a decision to be made and implemented. In the meantime, all parties have agreed to continue to work together and with other key stakeholders including the local MP and DfE to provide the best possible opportunity to implement the preferred solution.

8.41. The table below shows the key implications of the three options. This assessment was prepared by U&C and HCC as part of the options assessment:

Option	Housing Impact on BA3	Transport	Comments	Deliverability
Option 1 - Expansion of Knights Templar School on existing site	Housing delivered on BA3	Greatest impacts on the Icknield Way > Norton Road > Weston Way corridor	Supports a 'One Baldock' approach Feasibility studies have shown potential for expansion to 10fe Limited future additional capacity within Baldock if other housing comes forward S106 – financial contribution to expansion of the existing school	For this option to be delivered, KTS need to consent to expansion on their school site.
Option 2 - Relocation and expansion of KTS onto a new site in BA3	No housing delivered on BA3	Most significant impact on South Road and Wallington Road, and the junction of Clothall Road / South Road and Wallington Road	Supports a 'One Baldock' approach Provides new high-quality buildings Provides potential for up to 12fe S106 – financial contribution to new school (cannot be wholly funded by development)	For this option to be delivered, significant additional funding needs to be secured.
Option 3 - Establish a new second secondary school on BA3	Some housing delivered on BA3	Lower-level impacts than Option 2 so no additional interventions beyond those recommended for Option 2 are required.	This option does not support a 'One Baldock' approach Second smaller secondary school is difficult to operate particularly if standalone. S106 – land and funds to deliver a new school.	Deliverable – land and s106 contributions will be reserved as part of the application.

8.42. Each of these three options will involve a departure from the policy requirements of the Local Plan:

- None of the options would deliver a secondary school on BA1, contrary to Policy SP14(i);

- Two of the three options would see at least part of site BA3 used for education, contrary to Policies HS1 and BA3 which identify this land for housing.
- 8.43. However, as shown above, this approach has been subject to rigorous exploration and assessment including consideration of new and additional information that was not available at the point the Local Plan was examined.
- 8.44. Notwithstanding the specific requirements above, both the Local Plan and national planning policies place considerable emphasis on (i) the delivery of new homes, (ii) the provision of appropriate infrastructure to support this and (iii) the provision of sufficient school places. Policy SP14 additionally requires that any masterplan for BA1 is “deliverable”.
- 8.45. Without a flexible approach, the Growing Baldock project would stall. It is already more than two years since adoption of the Local Plan and it is imperative that the Council can demonstrate tangible progress in its implementation. The approach to secondary education is the most appropriate that can be achieved at this point in time. Officers therefore fully support the approach in the masterplan.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) school

- 8.46. The masterplan includes a commitment to provide a two-hectare site for a SEND school. This is shown on BA3, co-located with the potential secondary school.
- 8.47. There is not a policy requirement in any of the relevant Local Plan allocations to include a SEND school. The Growing Baldock scheme will not generate sufficient demand for additional SEND school places to justify requesting the entirety of the land and full build costs of a SEND school from U&C as a negotiated developer contribution.
- 8.48. In recognition of this, HCC have provided additional information and justification to support this land-use element of the proposal. In summary this recognises or includes:
- The County Council’s duty to secure provisions for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities;
 - The current significant shortfall in places in the sector, and within specific forms of SEND provision. This is forecast to continue rising and has informed inspection findings by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission;
 - Adopted HCC strategy which seeks to deliver 300 additional places across the county including 100 spaces in the north of Hertfordshire in response to the geographical spread of forecast demand and requiring planning authorities to take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement;
 - The support within Policies SP10 and HC1 of the Local Plan for community facilities including education in appropriate and accessible locations;
 - The geographical spread of demand for SEND provision. This includes a recognition that existing needs for the intended form of provision from the three towns at the centre of North Herts - Hitchin, Letchworth and Baldock - are currently met in Stevenage;
 - Consideration of potential alternate locations for SEND provision within the District. This includes a review of all new primary school sites requested and required through the site allocations in the Local Plan and re-confirmation they remain required for this purpose;

- The operational and co-location benefits of providing SEND alongside mainstream education schools; and
- National planning policy which emphasises the importance of ensuring there is a sufficient choice of school places

8.49. This has been carefully considered as part of the masterplan process. There is a clear and pressing need for additional SEND provision. This is a sector where need has grown rapidly in recent years. This means, in North Herts case, it came after policy and land-use decisions made in the current Local Plan. However, in the absence of specifically allocated sites for SEND that have been factored into the plan-making process, this also means any provision within Baldock comes at the (further) expense of potential housing provision in a scheme that is already balancing numerous demands.

8.50. Having regard to the factors above and the absence of alternative, deliverable sites within the District, the inclusion of land for SEND provision within the masterplan is supported by your officers. The case for SEND provision will continue to be explored and interrogated through the planning application, including any further detail on the consideration of potential alternate sites. The impact on housing numbers is discussed further below but forms part of this consideration.

Health provision within the employment land

8.51. Policy BA14(g) requires the provision of a GP surgery within BA1. The masterplan document recognises that:

Baldock will need new health facilities as it grows as the existing medical centre is nearing full capacity. The development will work with health authorities to provide a new 'health hub' with GP and other health facilities, to serve the Baldock community.

8.52. The developer team have held extensive discussions with the existing GP practice at Baldock surgery and the local Integrated Care Board (ICB). These are continuing and no definitive decisions have been made yet. The masterplan presently shows health provision at the western end of BA10, noting:

A health 'hub' could be incorporated at the western end of the employment parcel, adjacent to the active travel crossing. This could include new GP services alongside a wider health offering, potentially combined with small community / retail uses that would connect the employment area to Baldock and create an active and vibrant community facility in this location

8.53. This is an appropriate location. It would be between, and able to serve, both existing and new communities if required. It is a better location for any facility serving the existing town than BA1. The policies of the Local Plan allow for alternate uses within employment areas provided they bring comparable benefits in terms of employment generation.

- 8.54. It is also important to note that the employment land allocation at site BA10 was largely justified by the fact that it was making good an anticipated shortfall of employment provision in neighbouring Stevenage. The amount of employment development that has subsequently been delivered in Stevenage has significantly exceeded previous expectations. This includes the delivery of substantial developments associated with the research and development sector and bioscience catalyst on the GlaxoSmithKline site at the south of the town.
- 8.55. It is not necessary to make a formal planning determination on these matters. It is also not possible to do so until there is further clarity on the scale and nature of the uses that are proposed. These will follow through the planning process. However, in masterplan terms, there is sufficient flexibility in relevant policies and consideration of the wider circumstances for some alternate uses of the nature suggested to prove acceptable in BA10.
- 8.56. The significant majority of BA10 remains identified for employment uses in the masterplan. This includes the proposed waste uses at the eastern end of site adjoining the A505 junction.

Southern link road

- 8.57. Policy BA3 includes a requirement to deliver a southern link road connecting the B656 Royston Road to Wallington Road or the A507 Clothall Road within the southern [A505] bypass. This was in response to transport modelling conducted at the time. The approach to transport interventions in the Local Plan was predicated on a 'predict and provide' approach to car- and capacity-based interventions.
- 8.58. National and local policies now place far greater emphasis on active and sustainable travel. HCC's Local Transport Plan 4 introduced a user hierarchy prioritising these modes over private car.
- 8.59. The option-testing and Design Review phases of the masterplan explored different approaches to transport infrastructure in 2023. This included consideration of strategic links and all-mode roads. The baseline evidence work revealed there were only limited trips that would benefit from a direct link around the south of the town. Providing a link road as originally envisaged would be likely to induce additional car journeys with a detrimental impact upon conditions on Wallington Road and South Road as well as within BA3 itself. This approach was ruled out at this stage of the masterplan development and has not been pursued.



The options-testing phase considered potential link routes through BA3

- 8.60. The masterplan document includes bus-only access from Royston Road into and through Clothall Common as well as new active travel crossings of this road. This will allow for sustainable and active travel connectivity between Royston Road, BA3 and Wallington Road. This was also set out in the public consultation held in November 2023. The proposed bus access may provide the opportunity to double as an emergency vehicular access into Clothall Common in the event the existing access from Wallington Road is unavailable. This will be explored as detailed design proposals are developed.
- 8.61. The proposed approach is in line with broader Local Plan, Local Transport Plan and national policies that prioritise active and sustainable travel. Taking the Local Plan and these wider priorities as a whole, the approach is considered appropriate.

Overall housing numbers

- 8.62. The Local Plan estimated that 3,245 homes would be provided across sites BA1, BA2 and BA3. The masterplan estimates “around 3,000”, approximately 7.5% fewer.
- 8.63. The Local Plan is clear that its numbers are either estimates or approximate figures. The Council has already granted planning permissions on many sites allocated in the Local Plan where the number of homes differs from the Local Plan figure – both above and below the initial estimates. Variations on permitted schemes have broadly fallen within a ‘tolerance’ of +/-20% of the original Local Plan estimate. The level of variance at Baldock is, in percentage terms, nothing out of the ordinary. However, given the size of the project this does potentially amount to a relatively significant shortfall in numerical terms.

- 8.64. The Local Plan figures were not based on detailed analyses of the sites or a worked-up scheme. Through the baseline evidence process it became clear that the figures for the Baldock sites would be difficult to achieve given the level of constraints on the site, particularly on BA1 in relation to archaeology and surface water flooding and drainage.
- 8.65. There also remains considerable uncertainty in relation to the long-term solution for secondary school provision. As above, this could see a large area of site BA3 given over to this use. That said, school provision on BA3 would be a more efficient option, in terms of housing delivery, than making the same provision within BA1. This is because it would be possible to provide elements of the school playing fields within the adjoining Urban Open Land without conflicting with the relevant policy. As above (see paragraph 8.26), a large secondary school in BA1 would be wholly on land which otherwise would be used for housing. It would additionally be in an area of the site that might support relatively higher densities than BA3.
- 8.66. As above, the relocated school remains the preferred outcome. But should it ultimately prove possible and preferable to accommodate future secondary needs at the existing Knights Templar site, this land could be 'released' and used for housing as originally envisaged by the Local Plan.
- 8.67. Officers will continue to work with U&C to optimise the housing capacity of the site, whilst still achieving appropriately high levels of design quality. This will be progressed through the Design Code and Key Phases, by exploring the potential for innovative forms of development within BA1 in particular.
- 8.68. The currently estimated housing numbers are ultimately an output of the associated decisions on other matters explained above, and which officers consider to be justified considering the evidence that has been brought forward through the masterplan process. It follows that officers do not consider the shortfall in housing numbers to be a barrier to the progress of the masterplan.

Assessment against policy requirements

- 8.69. This masterplan is different from those previously presented as it includes the cumulative consideration of multiple sites. It is also the first masterplan where there is also a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan. Relevant policy requirements from the BBCNP are also included and shown in italics.
- 8.70. The assessments below work in a clockwise direction through the masterplan area. The land north of the railway is identified as Site BA1, a Strategic Housing Site under Policy SP14 of the Local Plan. This sets out a range of policy requirements. As with other masterplans previously considered by Cabinet and Full Council, a high-level assessment of the masterplan's compliance with this policy is set out. The relevant policies for sites BA2, BA3, BA10, the Urban Open Land and Walls Field contain detailed criteria for consideration later in the planning process. The elements that are considered most relevant to the masterplan are highlighted.

8.71. The policy commentary below relates to site BA1 and relevant parts of the masterplan:

- **A comprehensive and deliverable Strategic Masterplan for the entire allocation is to be prepared and agreed between the landowner/developer and the Council (where applications have already been submitted to the Council a Strategic Masterplan should be agreed prior to the or as part of the grant of planning permission)**

The masterplan is being presented to this meeting for consideration. The approach to secondary education is explained above. This, and the other matters discussed in this report, ensure the masterplan is deliverable.

- **A new mixed-use local centre/s to provide for a range of day-to-day local needs including additional along with additional neighbourhood level provision of around 500m2 (net) convenience retail provision and 1,400m2 (net) of comparison retail and food and beverage floorspace**
- ***Make provision within the site for indoor community facilities suitable for meetings of local groups, and for additional indoor recreation facilities to serve the expanded town, with sufficient capacity to meet the additional needs generated by the development [BBCNP]***

There have been significant changes in the retail environment since the Local Plan was prepared, not least during and since the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council's own evidence supporting the forthcoming Town Centre Strategy identifies a substantial drop in future retail floorspace requirements compared to the figures underpinning the Local Plan. However, it also recognises that strategic developments which do not have ready access to existing facilities should still make provision.

The masterplan includes a Local Centre at the heart of the BA1 development. This is shown on the Land Use Framework as a broad location to incorporate mixed use, retail and community use.

The supporting text of the masterplan identifies the Local Centre will meet the day-to-day needs of residents in the new development without competing with the vibrancy and success of the High Street. This complementarity is identified as one of the 'Ten Big Moves' that underpin the masterplan.

The masterplan does not fix floorspace parameters for the Local Centre. The planning process will continue to explore the exact size, nature and mix of uses.

- **Structural planting to create a sense of place, integration into the surrounding landscape and to reinforce a long-term, defensible Green Belt boundary to the north and east;**
- ***Maintain a clear visual and physical gap between the expanded edge of Baldock and Lower Bygrave, of sufficient size to integrate development into the surrounding landscape and ensure a sympathetic transition towards Lower Bygrave [BBCNP]***
- ***Incorporate appropriate planting at the periphery of the new development (using a suitable variety of native species, with the mix and density of planting being varied to create a natural appearance) [BBCNP]***
- ***Minimise adverse visual impacts on longer-distance views towards Baldock from Bygrave, by giving careful consideration to the positioning and height of***

development, as well as to appropriate screening [BBCNP]

Green Infrastructure forms a key element of the masterplan. This includes extensive provision in the north areas of BA1, proposed as Bygrave Common². These includes scrub and wooded copse planting along the small ridge that marks the highest part of the site. This will also demarcate between more formal forms of open space provision to be contained to the inside of this and natural meadow and wildflower grasslands that will form a natural habitat corridor to the northern boundary where it will meet the agricultural land beyond.

Planting is also proposed along the north-eastern boundary. The plan extract below shows these key design principles.



▲ Figure 23: Bygrave Common Key Design Principles

Further planting is planned on the eastern boundary to the south of Bygrave Road to the railway. A more continuous and substantive woodland belt is shown here. The masterplan identifies this will “*create sheltered movement corridors and foraging routes for wildlife as well as visual mitigation / screening from Lower Bygrave*”.

This open space, proposed as the Heritage Park, also helps secure compliance with relevant BBCNP policies on physical and visual separation from Lower Bygrave. These advise a gap of at least 170m between the built edge of site BA1 and the nearest property in Lower Bygrave, with a recognition a 250m gap would be more effective. Recognising the broad, illustrative nature of the framework plans, a separation of approximately 220m is shown between the edges of the closest residential block and the first property in Lower Bygrave.

Details of planting species will follow through the planning process.

² Any ‘names’ given to open spaces in the masterplan are working titles.



▲ Figure 26: Heritage Park Key Design Principles

- A new link road connecting the A507 North Road to the A505 Baldock bypass including a new bridge across the railway
- ***Minimise the potential for increased traffic flows through Lower and Upper Bygrave, by providing for an appropriate package of measures such as: suitable access arrangements (including restrictions on heavy vehicles); physical features such as gateways and appropriate road surfaces; speed limits and signage) [BBCNP]***

A connection between the A507 and A505 is shown within the masterplan as the primary route through the BA1 development. The masterplan process extensively considered the nature and alignment of this route.

The primary route is envisaged as a low-speed access road into the development, fronted by buildings, high quality footways and a separate cycle path. It will be designed to prioritise active and sustainable travel movement across it, to ensure connectivity between development parcels and open space to the north.

It is proposed that the primary route links directly into the roundabout at the junction between the A505 and B656 at the eastern end of the Baldock bypass. This follows option testing and archaeological investigation.

The primary route routes to the south of the existing Bygrave Road at the east of the site. The nature and detailed design of the junction where this intersects with the (connection to) Bygrave Road will be resolved through more detailed planning. This will include consideration of the detailed points in the BBCNP policy.



- **Sustainable transport measures to include:**
 - i. a secondary rail crossing for pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity of Ashville Way;
 - ii. safe access routes to / from, and upgrades to, Baldock station;
 - iii. sensitive integration of Bridleway Baldock 034 / Bygrave 002 as a north-south route through the development;
 - iv. the use of Bygrave Road / Ashwell Road from the south-western edge of the allocated site to the link road as a sustainable transport corridor; and
 - v. comprehensive integration into the existing pedestrian and cycle, public transport and road networks
- ***Retain and incorporate existing landscape and built features that contribute to the site's history and character, including Bygrave Road/Ashwell Road and trees and hedgerows (while safeguarding the habitat value of the Bygrave Road local wildlife site) [BBCNP]***
- ***Make provision for improved pedestrian and cycle access between Bygrave and Baldock, through a new footpath and cycleway using the route of Bygrave Road/Ashwell Road, designed in a way that maintains as much as possible of its rural character and habitat value [BBCNP]***

The Active Travel plan details key routes. This shows the secondary rail crossing point joining BA1 to BA10 with onward connections southwards into, and through, Clothall Common to BA3 and northwards to the proposed Local Centre. The nature and design of this crossing is being explored. An overbridge in this location would need to be a substantial structure to achieve clearance over the railway and power lines which are embanked. An underpass is being explored with HCC and Network Rail.

The masterplan identifies a key development gateway at the south-west of BA1. This will create a new northern access to the station along with improvements to the station itself.

The Bridleway north from Bygrave Road will be maintained on its current alignment within the proposed Winterbourne Corridor. However, as it ascends the ridge, this is likely to require a diversion to align it with the proposed green infrastructure and development parcels which, in this part of the site, will align with a key vantage point / view corridor to St Mary's Church. Notwithstanding the proposed diversion, this Right of Way will maintain its function as a north-south corridor for active travel across the site to Bygrave Common and the countryside beyond.



The entirety of Bygrave Road through the site is identified as a key pedestrian and cycle connection with the potential to form a key utility route connecting the station access, the primary schools and local centre with residential areas. The masterplan also recognises the potential of this road as public transport route. (The appropriateness of) vehicular access, including to existing properties within the Strategic Masterplan boundary, will be further considered through design coding and detailed proposals. This will also consider the ecological value and function of Bygrave Road.

Bygrave Road extends for approximately 1.6km (one mile) through the site. It is unlikely that the design approach for this corridor will be 'one-size-fits-all'. The treatment and character is expected to vary and / or accommodate different modes. This will be explored further through the detailed design process.

The planning application process will identify further, detailed mitigations and connections to / on the wider network and secure these through legal obligations. The masterplan identifies a range of interventions recognising these remain subject to ongoing discussions and evaluation with HCC.

- **At least 28 serviced plots for self-build development**
- **Provision of an appropriate site for a care home for older people in Use Class C2 in accordance with the locational criteria in Policy HS4**

The masterplan identifies these policy requirements. No specific locations are identified at this stage given the strategic scale of the plans. This will be further explored and secured through the planning process and associated legal agreement(s) as required.

- **A community hall and GP surgery**

The masterplan identifies that the Local Centre will accommodate community uses with proposals to be developed. The masterplan identifies health provision within the BA10 employment land. The justification for this is discussed above but is considered acceptable in principle.

- **Up to 6 forms of entry (FE) of additional primary-age education provision**

Two locations for primary schools are identified on the Land Use framework, to the east and west of the Local Centre respectively. These would allow for up to two new primary schools of up to 3FE each satisfying the policy requirements.

The exact nature and size of the primary schools will be determined as the scheme progresses having regard to the wider demographic factors discussed above and capacity in existing schools in Baldock.

- **Up to 8 forms of entry (FE) of additional secondary-age education provision...**

This is discussed extensively above. No secondary education provision is now proposed in BA1. This is considered a justified position and approach for the masterplan.

- **Address existing surface water flood risk issues, particularly to the south of Ashwell Road, through SUDs or other appropriate solution**

The masterplan includes a high-level proposed approach to SUDs and drainage.

The baseline evidence recognised that some of the surface water flood risk issues to the south of Ashwell Road arise from existing field boundary features. Removal of these would alleviate (the risk of) flooding in this area. The historic and archaeological investigations also recognise this area lying on the alignment of a historic watercourse.

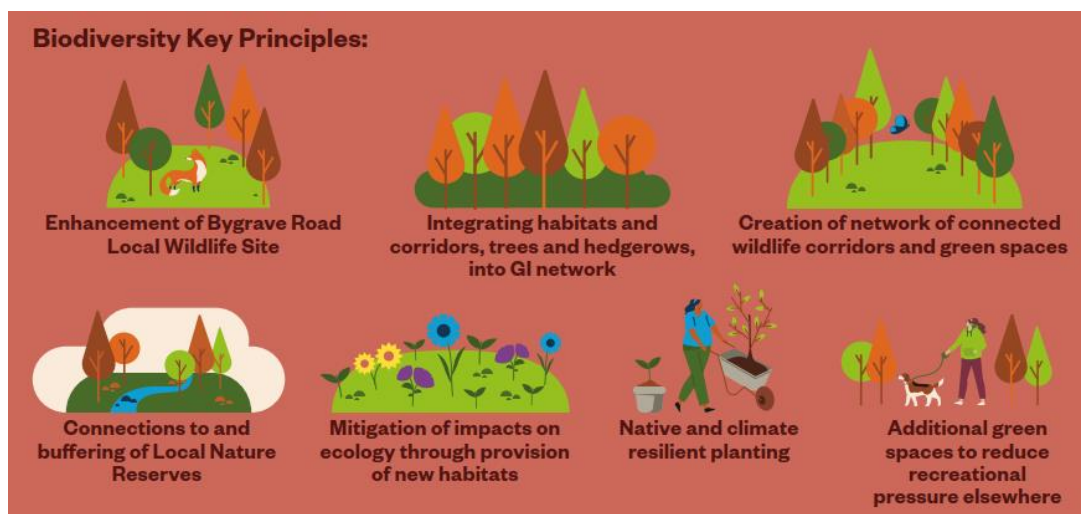
The Green Infrastructure proposals include the proposed Winterbourne Corridor which will incorporate SUDs features potentially leading to a wetland area between Bygrave Road and North Road that will assist in recharging the aquifer that feeds the River Ivel.



▲ Figure 27: Winterbourne Way Key Design Principles

- **Appropriate mitigation, compensation and / or enhancement of key features of biodiversity as informed by detailed assessments including:**
 - Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve;**
 - Bygrave Road local wildlife site; and**
 - identified protected species and priority habitats**

There will be an extensive green infrastructure network on-site including strategic provision of new assets such as Bygrave Common and the proposed Baldock Greenway. The masterplan recognises that an explicit purpose of these is to alleviate pressure on the town's nature reserves and provide connective habitat.



As above, the focus of Bygrave Road will most likely shift towards active and sustainable travel to allow enhancement of the Local Wildlife Site. The proposed grasslands on the northern part of Bygrave Common will provide appropriate habitat for the local Corn Bunting population.

Any future planning applications will be accompanied by detailed surveys and impact assessments to inform any further measures that are required.

- **Built development contained to the south and south-west of the ridgeline that generally extends eastwards from the A507 south of Blackhorse Farm and southwards from Ashwell Road;**

The masterplan complies with this requirement. The footprint of the proposed development areas are contained within the ridgeline and further buffered by formal open space provision.

- **Sensitive treatment of heritage assets and their settings including:**
 - i. **an access solution from the A507 North Road which satisfactorily addresses potential impacts;**
 - ii. **retaining framed views of St Mary's Church from within and beyond the site;**
 - iii. **using the location of areas of archaeological significance to inform a site-wide green infrastructure strategy.**
 - iv. **Ivel Springs Scheduled Ancient Monument**

The nature of the primary route, and the access point from North Road were informed in part by consideration of nearby listed buildings. An alignment to the outside of the development would have resulted in the access lying much closer to these. Further consideration will be given to this in the detailed design phases.

Key views to and from St Mary's Church are identified on the masterplan and inform the location of key vantage points and the green infrastructure corridor for the proposed realignment of the Bridleway Bygrave 002.

Extensive archaeological investigations have taken place in liaison with HCC experts. These have notably influenced the location and design principles for the proposed Winterbourne Way. Various options were considered for the location of the primary route and railway bridge to the east of the site. However, detailed trial trenching did not unearth any significant finds in this area that might have required a response in the layout of the site.

More broadly, the masterplan commits to the creation of a heritage trail with signage and interpretation boards linking key assets and celebrating the area's history.

- ***Relate sensitively to the edges of existing residential areas where the site abuts them, reflecting section 3.3 in the accompanying Design Guidelines [BBCNP]***

The Urban Design Framework recognises this and includes "Integrating the new neighbourhoods with Baldock through the considered design of connections and transitions between old and new" as a key principle. Edge treatments will be explored and set through the Design Code for that part of BA1 adjoining Salisbury Road and Bygrave Road.

8.72. The commentary below relates to site BA10 and relevant parts of the masterplan:

- **A masterplan to be secured prior to the approval of any detailed matters;**
The masterplan being presented to this meeting for consideration includes BA10.
- ***Make the [B656] corridor a focus for sustainable travel and provide for an improved footpath and cycleway along Royston Road***
A range of sustainable transport interventions are proposed along Royston Road. This includes bus-only access into Clothall Common in combination with an active travel crossing and a second active travel crossing point aligned with second rail crossing
- **Address existing surface water flood risk issues, including any run-off through SUDs or other appropriate solution;**
- **Landscaping to enhance the ecological value of the railway corridor and reinforce a defensible Green Belt boundary to the east;**
- ***Incorporate a landscape buffer between development on site BA10 and the railway line...[BBCNP]***

The Green Infrastructure framework shows a planted edge to the employment area along the railway. More substantial planting is shown at the western end and to the A505 slip roads where the outer edges of the site form the revised inner boundary of the Green Belt around Baldock. A sustainable drainage feature is also shown.



- **Retaining framed views of St Mary's Church from within and beyond the site;**

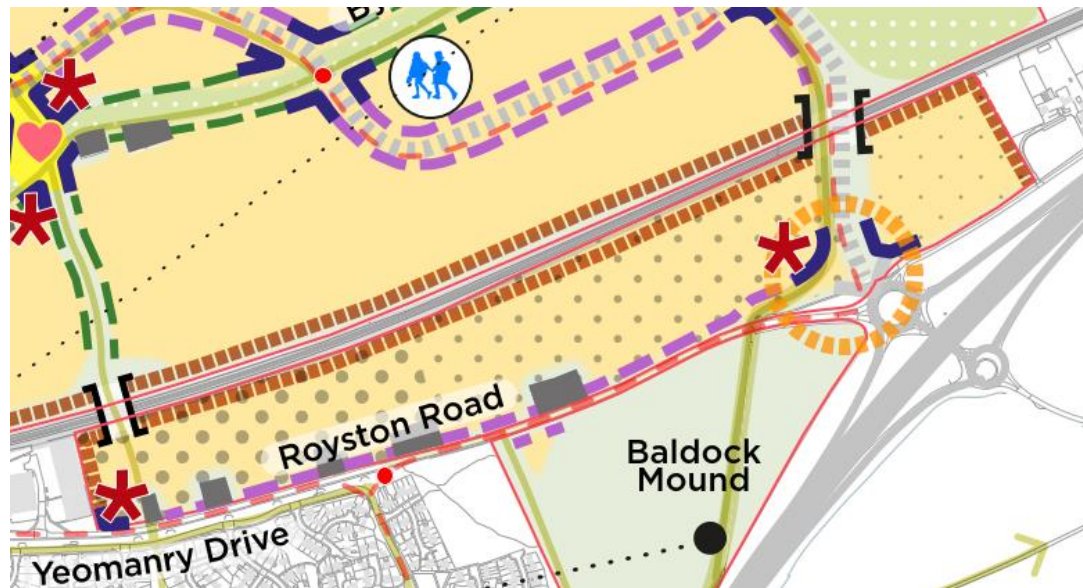
There are only glimpsed views of the top of the church spire from the eastern end of Royston Road as it rises towards the A505 junction. No specific view corridor is denoted in the masterplan but this can be managed as appropriate through future design coding or detailed plans.

- ***Create a high quality and distinctive entrance to the town along Royston Road, using well-designed buildings and a consistent approach to landscaping and lighting [BBCNP];***

- ***Relate sensitively to the existing houses fronting onto Royston Road through the scale, massing and landscaping of the new development [BBCNP];***

The Urban Design Framework sets high-level principles for the built form of the employment area. Landmark buildings will address the key corners of the site with frontages along Royston Road.

The intensity of development (or grain) within the employment area will decrease from east to west. Larger formats of development will be concentrated around the A505 junction with an increasingly finer grain towards the town. Existing properties are generally concentrated towards the west of BA10 within the 'medium grain' and 'finer grain' areas denoted by the dots.



8.73. The commentary below relates to site BA3 and relevant parts of the masterplan. These requirements were set in relation to a Local Plan allocation which envisages the use of the whole site for residential development with no accompanying infrastructure. At masterplan stage, a flexible approach to land use is proposed for BA3 to potentially accommodate education uses. This could result in all, some or none of BA3 being used for housing. The commentary should be viewed in this context:

- **Deliver a southern link road connecting the B656 Royston Road to Wallington Road or the A507 Clothall Road within the southern bypass;**
- **Provision of suitable vehicle, cycle and pedestrian links to ensure integration with adjoining site BA4;**
- **Consideration of the most appropriate routes and movements for all modes between the allocation site, the existing Clothall Common estate and the wider transport network**

The southern link road is not provided by the masterplan. This is explained above (see paragraphs 8.57 to 8.61).

The Active Travel proposals include a pedestrian and cycle connection connecting south from Royston Road along the inner boundary of BA3. This adjoins the BA4 site and allows for connectivity into it.

As discussed above, the masterplan proposals now include bus access through Clothall Common to the south-western boundary of BA3. Further active travel links are envisaged north-south through Clothall Common along existing green infrastructure links joining BA3 to the proposed health hub and rail crossing into BA1. Indicative vehicular access is shown from Wallington Road.



- **Appropriate solution for short- and long-term education requirements having regard to up-to-date assessments of need**

See earlier discussion of education matters.

- **Appropriate mitigation measures for noise associated with the A505 to include... maintaining or limited re-profiling of the existing bunding towards the east of the site with no housing permitted on or beyond its (revised) alignment;**
- ***Avoid new buildings on that part of BA3 that comprises raised land to the east of the existing properties on Aleyn Way and Merchants Walk, and to the south of Royston Road (illustrated in Figure 7, including the slopes rising up to the raised land), which should be retained and enhanced as space for informal outdoor recreation [BBCNP]***
- ***Incorporate a landscape buffer between the edge of the developments and the Baldock bypass, using an appropriate mix of native species, to provide visual screening, an enhanced green corridor and noise attenuation [BBCNP]***

The masterplan retains Baldock Mound as a key area of largely natural habitat with no development proposed. The habitat will be enhanced and consideration given to providing surfaced pathways.

This will link into a buffer containing planting and the proposed Baldock Greenway with any development offset from the A505 to the inside of this.

Detailed planting strategies will follow later in the planning process.



- 8.74. The commentary below relates to the Urban Open Land and Walls Field and relevant parts of the masterplan:

The masterplan proposals are consistent with Policy CGB5 of the Local Plan which sets policies for the Urban Open Land. This restricts the area to low-intensity uses including outdoor sport and recreation and landscaping associated with adjoining allocated sites that maintain openness. As shown on the extract above, the Urban Open Land is proposed as 'Cambrai Field' incorporating sport, allotment provision, play and the Greenway as well as views into the town and out to the wider countryside.

The detailed proposals for this area are intrinsically linked to the outcomes of decisions on education provision. However, the high-level work and land budgets identified to date show it is theoretically possible to accommodate the education proposals within the parameters of the Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies. Any future departure from these would be assessed through the planning process.

Policy G2 of the BBCNP supports, in principle, proposals that would improve the visual and recreational value of both the Urban Open Land and the adjoining Walls Field. As part of the masterplan proposals, Walls Field will be taken out of agricultural use to provide publicly accessible meadow grassland. The masterplan sets key design principles for this area.



• Figure 25: Walls Field Key Design Principles

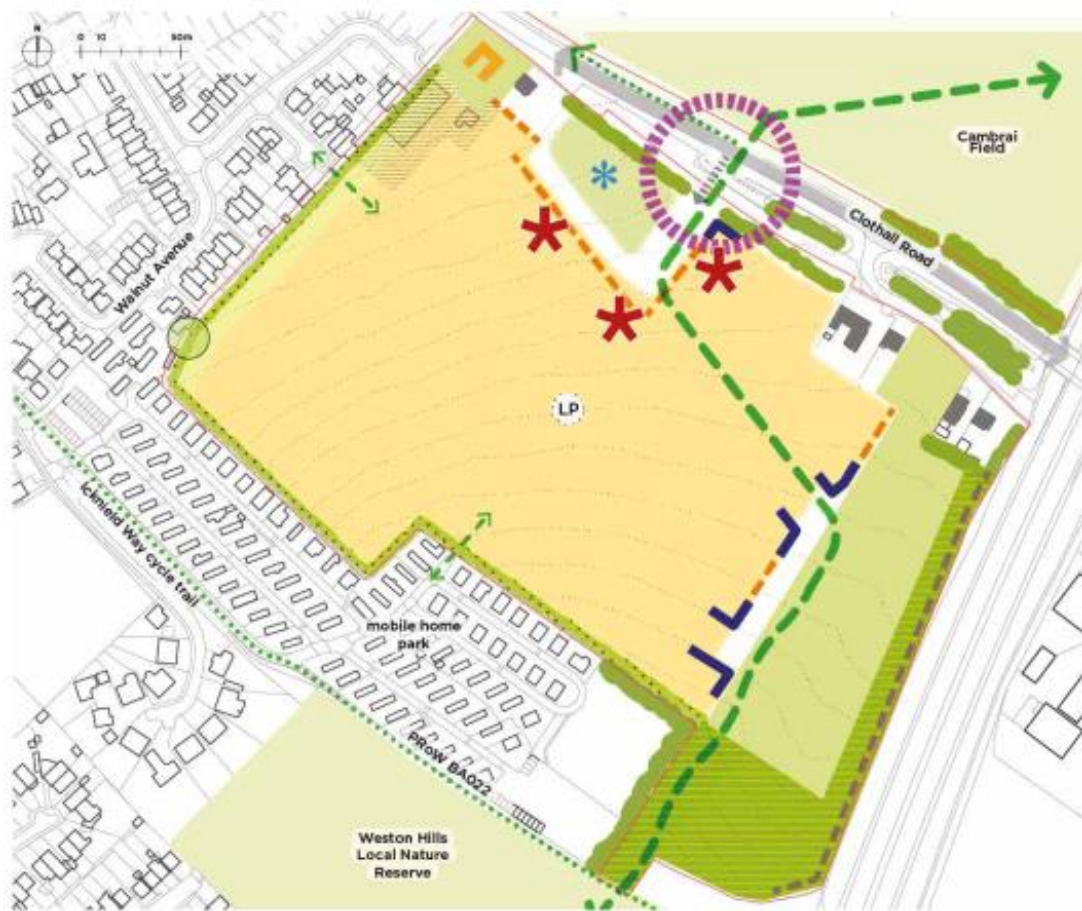
8.75. The commentary below relates to site BA2 and relevant parts of the masterplan. The masterplan includes a greater level of design detail for BA2 than other parts of the site. BA2 is expected to be the first phase of development with detailed plans brought forward ahead of other areas:

- **Creation of appropriate, defensible Green Belt boundary along the south-eastern perimeter of the site**
- **Consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts upon Weston Hills Local Wildlife Site**
- ***Incorporate a landscape buffer between the edge of the developments and the Baldock bypass, using an appropriate mix of native species, to provide visual screening, an enhanced green corridor and noise attenuation [BBCNP]***

This is shown in the masterplan. A landscape buffer including any necessary noise-attenuation measures is shown along the boundary with the A505 with development inset from this edge by approximately 50-70 metres.

This isn't all proposed for planting; a substantial area of semi-natural green space will face the development edge. This will also incorporate the planned Baldock Greenway.

The provision of this on-site open space, along with connections to other key areas of green infrastructure in the south of the scheme including Walls Field and the Cambrai Field, will help manage potential recreational impacts on the Local Nature Reserve while also providing connecting habitats for species.



▲ Figure 40: BA2 Phase 1 Urban Design Framework

- ***Reinforce the planting between Hillside Park mobile home site and new residential development on site BA2, to provide a stronger green margin and additional screening, using an appropriate mix of native species [BBCNP]***

The masterplan shows a landscape buffer to existing properties alongside the boundary with Hillside Park.

Sustainability

- 8.76. In September 2024, Cabinet approved the Council's Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which supports the local plan. This identifies a series of standards against key sustainability themes.
- 8.77. U&C have carried out an initial-self assessment of the aspirations of the Growing Baldock project and masterplan against the categories and levels in the Sustainability SPD. There is not yet enough detail or information to make definitive judgements. However, they presently anticipate achieving 'gold' against three themes, 'silver' against three themes and 'bronze' against two.
- 8.78. These will be developed, tested and assessed further through the planning process.

Sustainability measure	Growing Baldock interventions	Score
Optimising passive design & fabric performance	All homes and buildings will be constructed to a high standard of fabric efficiency and airtightness;	
Achieving low carbon energy	Homes and buildings will be highly energy efficient and utilise renewable heat and electricity generating technologies such as Air Source Heat Pumps, and Solar P V. Potential for stand-alone renewable energy infrastructure, such as battery technology, on land at the eastern end of the employment area	
Minimising carbon footprint	Baldock Net Zero – development will be all electric, all buildings to be Net Zero in operational emissions, delivery of Carbon offset fund	
Healthy placemaking	Publicly accessible green space and community facilities to support health and wellbeing, as well as providing passive heating and cooling.	
Promoting biodiversity	Committed to deliver in excess of 10% BNG, provision of wildlife corridors and safeguarding ecologically sensitive areas e.g. Baldock Mound.	
Sustainable travel	Designed to be a place where half of all trips are made on foot, bicycle or by public transport. Town wide improvements to encourage sustainable and active travel.	
Conserving water	Development will help as far as possible to resolve issues facing River Ivel chalk stream – SUDs will allow water to infiltrate and recharge the aquifer, once recharged sufficiently later phases will re-use surface water to reduce overall demand.	
Incorporating sustainable drainage	Sustainable drainage features will be used to either prevent flooding or be located in areas that are known to flood currently	

U&C self-assessment against the Sustainability SPD

Next steps

- 8.79. Subject to Full Council approval, the masterplan will be adopted as a material consideration for any future planning decisions relating to the site. Any existing or future applications will be assessed to ensure they broadly conform to and / or facilitate the implementation of the parameters and principles set out in this document. Any substantive deviation from the masterplan will need to be justified, for example if new information comes to light that isn't available at this stage in the process.
- 8.80. Through the joint work on the masterplan a series of actions and issues have been identified that will need to be addressed as the scheme progresses towards delivery through the formal planning process. A number of matters are identified in this report. The masterplan provides appropriate 'hooks' to accommodate these matters.
- 8.81. Subject to relevant approvals, U&C currently expect to formally submit an outline planning application(s) for the development later in 2025. This will be preceded by further public events that will publicise this and outline the proposals which are to be submitted.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Under paragraph 5.7.18 of the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet may exercise the Council's functions as Local Planning Authority and receive reports on strategic planning matters (except to the extent that those functions are by law the responsibility of the Council or delegated to the Director: Place).
- 9.2. Section 4.8.2(g) of the Constitution contains a general power for Full Council to receive and debate reports from Cabinet.

- 9.3. There is no statutory definition of 'masterplan'. Unlike, for example, the Local Plan or any Supplementary Planning Documents, they are not formally defined or regulated through relevant planning acts or associated regulations – either in terms of content or process. This means there is discretion as to how, when and whether they are produced and / or approved on the part of both the applicant and the Council.
- 9.4. Policy SP9 of the Local Plan provides a clear policy definition within the Council's statutory Development Plan of what is expected within a masterplan and the design outcomes that should be achieved.
- 9.5. Terms of Reference for the Project Board and guidance on the approval processes for masterplans have been presented to and endorsed by Cabinet, most recently in September 2024 and published on the Council website.
- 9.6. These set out that Masterplans will be subject to formal approval by Cabinet and Full Council where a masterplan is to be adopted as a material consideration in advance of the determination of the relevant planning application(s).
- 9.7. Government Planning Practice Guidance states that a material planning consideration is one which is relevant to making the planning decision in question (e.g., whether to grant or refuse an application for planning permission).
- 9.8. Formal, regulatory approval for any development of the site will be secured through any subsequent planning permission(s). These will be considered through established processes and legislation including presentation to Planning Control Committee.
- 9.9. Any approval of the Strategic Masterplan is without prejudice to the consideration and determination of any future planning application(s).
- 9.10. PPAs are made pursuant to Part 1 of Chapter 1 of the Localism Act 2011, Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 and under associated planning legislation and guidance, including but not limited to the Planning Act 2008. Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 allows local planning authorities to charge for providing discretionary services and the legislation is clear that, where charges are made, they must not exceed the cost of providing the service.
- 9.11. At its meeting on 16 March 2021, Cabinet resolved (item 109) as part of the Local Plan Implementation report to approve the North Hertfordshire Masterplanning Principles. Within this document paragraph 2.11 states: The Council would normally expect a PPA to be used to support the preparation of Strategic Masterplans and significant development planning applications.
- 9.12. Under the Council's constitution, paragraph 14.6.4 (ii) authorises the Directors for the respective service areas to enter into contracts for the supply of services, in this case the use of consultants to act on the Council's behalf. 14.6.4 (viii) authorises the setting of fees and charges, in this case to seek to recover these costs from the Developer.
- 9.13. The PPA states that *"Nothing in the [agreement] will restrict or inhibit HCC or NHDC from exercising their statutory functions and views about the development and nothing in this agreement shall predetermine the outcome of any planning application"*.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. The Council resources for masterplanning and implementation work are drawn from existing staff, with additional support from specialist consultants as required. The PPA seeks to recover the costs of undertaking this work. The costs will be monitored to ensure on-going cost recovery.
- 10.2. For any activities that cannot be charged through the PPA, a ring-fenced Masterplanning reserve and / or approved budgets will be used.
- 10.3. The principle of setting of fees and charges for Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) was agreed by the (then) Service Director: Regulatory in consultation with the Service Director: Resources and the Executive Member for Planning & Transport in January 2022.
- 10.4. Funding was secured through a PPA to support the Council's input to this masterplan including the recovery of external consultancy costs. Additional resource was funded through the use of approximately £40,000 of Government grant specifically ringfenced for the delivery of sites of at least 2,000 homes. This included funding for Hyas Associates, who specialise in supporting local authorities on large site delivery, and who facilitated the masterplan options workshop.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.
- 11.2. The Council previously monitored a specific Masterplanning risk. However, this was not carried forward in the 2024/25 Council Delivery Plan; progress is dependent on third parties and council activities are considered business-as-usual. Strategic oversight continues via the Project Board and reports to Cabinet and Full Council.
- 11.3. Notwithstanding, the key risks that were identified remain pertinent to consideration of individual reports and masterplans:
 - Risk of poor scheme outcomes that do not appropriately respond to local character and context
 - Risk that strategic sites do not maximise contribution to corporate objectives and priorities of climate change, environment, economy and place
 - Risk of delay to delivery of strategic sites if masterplan process is delayed or stalled or provides insufficient information to guide subsequent planning applications
 - Failure to secure funding to resource the process
 - Reduction in pre-application income and delay to income from planning applications
 - Failure to retain/recruit sufficiently experienced officers
 - Risk of adverse appeal findings on other/non-Local Plan sites if delivery is delayed or stalled

- 11.4. Positive decisions on officer and / or Project Board-supported masterplans mitigate against many of these factors by maintaining tangible progress on key sites that are essential to delivery of the Local Plan and securing an appropriate design framework against which future planning proposals can be assessed. Adverse decisions are likely to reduce developer confidence in the process, including negative reputational outcomes for the Council, and an increase in schemes which seek to meet the requirements of Policy SP9 directly through the Development Management process.
- 11.5. The Council cannot presently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (5YHLS). This is a key requirement of national policy set out in the most recent NPPF. Where there is no 5YHLS Councils can be required, subject to exceptions, to consider applications for development more favourably, including on sites not allocated in their local plans. To be included within the 5YHLS, a site must be considered “deliverable”. Recent appeal decisions show that Inspectors can remove any allowances made within the 5YHLS from allocated Local Plan sites where they do not consider sufficient progress is being made. This can exacerbate the shortfall and / or increase the weight which might be given to alternate proposals.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2. The site which is subject to this masterplan was allocated for development through the Council’s adopted Local Plan. An Equality Impact Assessment was produced in 2017 assessing the plan’s compliance with relevant legislation and requirements and submitted to Government as part of the plan’s examination.
- 12.3. No issues with the Equality Impact Assessment were raised by the Inspector throughout the examination report. Paragraph 11 of their report on the plan, issued in 2022, concluded:

I [the Inspector] have had due regard to the aims expressed in S149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This has included my consideration of several matters during the examination including the provision of traveller sites to meet need and accessible and adaptable housing.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. The allocation of the site in the Local Plan (and the Local Plan in general) was informed by a statutory Sustainability Appraisal which considered the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of the Plan. This informed the mitigation measures contained in Policy SP9, the site-specific policy for the site and general policies on matters such as biodiversity and transport.

- 14.2 Any future outline planning application(s) for this site will be accompanied by a statutory Environmental Statement and impact assessments. These will inform the detailed mitigation measures that will be required as part of the scheme and will be secured through any permission(s) and associated legal agreement(s).

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 None

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix A – Growing Baldock Strategic Masterplan
16.2 Appendix B – Growing Baldock Strategic Masterplan Summary Document

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 [Local Plan Implementation - report to Cabinet, March 2021](#) [including masterplanning principles and establishment of Project Board]
- 18.2 [Local Plan adoption – report to Cabinet and Full Council, November 2022](#)
- 18.3 [Strategic Planning Matters – report to Cabinet, September 2024](#) [including endorsement of current Project Board Terms of Reference]
- 18.4 [Growing Baldock Strategic Masterplan – report to Cabinet, March 2025](#)

18.5 [Council Website – Masterplanning pages](#)