

## **Urban Design Statement**

The applicant has worked collaboratively with NHDC officers over a two year period to develop proposals for the site. Both the Design and Access Statement and Strategic Masterplan Report sets out the structure and layout of the development securing the access, development parcels and balance of developable area to open space.

Due to the delivery strategy of this site (which is likely to be sold to a housebuilder with Outline Planning Permission), officers have taken a view that the Strategic Masterplan Report is 'light' on detail, leaving those discussions for the Design Code and Reserved Matters Application process as a change in design team is likely.

The Design and Access Statement sets out clear guiding principles for the development organised around housing, access and movement, social infrastructure and environment. Key principles to be developed are included below:

- Deliver a mix of housing, offering 1-5 bedroom properties comprising a range of house types, from terraces and linked mews cottages to detached properties.
- Create a series of characterful streets
- Car parking to be located so as to not dominate or detract from the street scene
- High quality built and landscape design that incorporates best practice design principles (detailed in Manual for Streets and Buildings for a Healthy Life)
- Creation of feature spaces at key locations within the residential area (through setbacks of buildings and tree planting)
- Create a development which addresses the street with active frontages
- Establish a legible environment with a choice of interconnecting, attractive streets and pedestrian routes
- Create a hierarchy of higher and lower order streets
- Streets designed principally for people, with priority for pedestrians and cyclists
- Incorporating the use of public spaces at key intersections to reinforce legibility and provide places to meet
- Equipped children's play areas that are accessible, overlooked and integrated with existing and proposed green infrastructure
- To conserve the existing landscape and habitat features to deliver an immediate mature landscape setting
- Encourage use of sustainable materials and techniques including measures to deliver energy efficiency and water conservation

The suite of Parameter and Framework Plans spatially illustrate how these principles are likely to be accommodated on site. For example, the Green Infrastructure Framework Plan, sets up a series of open space types, Watton Park East, Eastern Greenway, etc which seek to identify distinct landscape areas which will have unique functions and character to aid legibility.

Design officers have worked hard on the Parameter and Framework Plans to ensure there is an appropriate balance of safeguarding for non-negotiable elements such as pedestrians links, open space quantum, etc and flexibility for items that need further development such as the secondary/tertiary road network, plot layout, open space design, etc.

The Design Code will be crucial in securing high quality development on this site and developing on the work already done on the Strategic Masterplan Framework, Design and Access Statement and Parameter/Framework Plans.

The design code condition focusses on three key areas:

- Open Space and Landscape Design – to ensure the landscape-led vision is delivered and green spaces have distinctive character.
- Streets – to ensure streets feel like places, encourage walking and draw the landscape character into the residential neighbourhood.
- Built Form – to ensure homes are subservient to the landscape, aid in wayfinding, reflect the unique and characterful built form of Knebworth and sensitively negotiate the transition from urban to rural.