

**Policy SP18: Site GA2 – Land off Mendip Way, Great Ashby**

Land to the north-east of Great Ashby within Weston parish, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for a new neighbourhood of approximately 600 homes.

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.

Any application on part of the site will be assessed against its contribution to the Strategic Masterplan and must not prejudice the implementation of the site as a whole.

Development proposals should provide the following planning and masterplanning requirements:

- a) Neighbourhood-level facilities providing approximately 500m<sup>2</sup> (net) of retail and food and beverage floorspace and other necessary medical and social infrastructure;
- b) Four hectares of land at the north of the allocation site, broadly bounded by Footpaths Weston 044 and Weston 027 and Dell Spring reserved for education use to accommodate 2FE of primary-age provision and 4FE of secondary age provision;
- c) Principal access from Mendip Way with:
  - i. provision for sustainable modes of transport having regard to the Stevenage Mobility Strategy; and
  - ii. comprehensive integration into the existing pedestrian and cycle, public transport and road networks;
- d) Transport Assessment to identify and secure measures to manage traffic flows arising from the development along Back Lane;
- e) A detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery;
- f) At least 6 serviced plots for self-build development;
- g) Structural planting along site boundaries as informed by detailed landscape assessments to reinforce the revised Green Belt boundary and mitigate landscape impacts;
- h) Address existing surface water flood risk issues, particularly running south-east from Dell Spring to Newberry Grove, through SUDs or other appropriate solution;
- i) Appropriate mitigation, compensation and / or enhancement of key features of biodiversity including:

- i. local wildlife sites at Tilekiln Wood, Parsonsgreen Wood, New Spring Wood, Brooches Wood and Claypithills Spring Wood;
- ii. identified protected species and priority habitats; and
- iii. retention of green infrastructure connectivity and corridors to the wider countryside;
- j) Integration of existing public rights of way within and adjoining the site to provide routes to the wider countryside including
  - i. Footpaths Weston 027 and Weston 044 and Bridleway Weston 033 as features which help define the perimeters of the site; and
  - ii. Footpath Weston 029 as a potential green corridor through the site;
- k) Provision of a green infrastructure corridor beneath the current alignment of the pylon lines to respect statutory safety clearance requirements for residential development; and
- l) Lower intensity development and / or green infrastructure provision to the north of the site to minimise harm to the setting of listed buildings.

4.237 Great Ashby is a relatively new parish, representing the residential area adjoining Stevenage that has been substantially completed since the turn of the century. For the purposes of our settlement hierarchy it is considered to be a town.

4.238 Land to the north-east of the existing settlement limits is identified for the development of approximately 600 homes within the parish of Weston.

4.239 Although this site will not generate a requirement for a local centre which forms part of the formal retail hierarchy, it will be necessary to provide neighbourhood-level shops and facilities to ensure that the new development is sustainable. Our evidence identifies that the three housing allocations to the north of Stevenage within the District will generate a requirement for two additional GPs. The most appropriate location and format for this provision will be determined in consultation with health service providers also having regard to existing and proposed patterns of provision within Stevenage.

4.240 Great Ashby's existing primary school is significantly oversubscribed. As a consequence, it draws its intake from a very tight catchment area. There is also no local secondary school and Hertfordshire County Council has identified future pressures on secondary-age provision in the Stevenage area as a key concern.

4.241 Development of this site provides the opportunity to address these issues. Reserving sufficient land within this site to deliver 2FE of primary-age and 4FE of secondary-age provision will meet the requirements arising from the

site itself and also help alleviate pressures arising from existing and planned development in Great Ashby. Together these will help to create a more sustainable residential neighbourhood at the north-east of Stevenage enabling more short-distance journeys to school.

- 4.242 It is currently anticipated that the secondary element of a new school will not be required before the late 2020s at the earliest. To ensure an appropriately sized site, additional school playing fields would be required on land beyond the allocation boundary to the south-west of Footpath Weston 027 and Warrensgreen Wood towards Warrens Green Lane. This land is retained within the Green Belt to ensure appropriate control over any built structures.
- 4.243 The Stevenage Mobility Strategy aims to significantly increase the proportion of journeys undertaken on foot, by bike and by public transport over the plan period. Sites on the edge of Stevenage will need to make appropriate provision for sustainable modes of transport, and appropriate contributions to relevant sustainable travel schemes across the town, to ensure that they meet these aims.
- 4.244 There are local concerns that Back Lane, a narrow minor road which leads to Church Lane in Graveley, could be used by increased numbers of vehicles leaving the site, and that junctions in Graveley itself will suffer from congestion as a result of increased flows. This issue should be specifically addressed in the Transport Assessment for the site as part of the consideration of likely development impacts upon the wider highway network.
- 4.245 These measures, along with wider transport and mobility proposals arising from development of the site, will be developed in consultation with Hertfordshire County Council and Stevenage Borough Council.
- 4.246 Much of the revised Green Belt boundary has been drawn along the routes of public rights of way. Although clearly defined features, parts of their alignments cut across more open land. Structural planting will reinforce the new boundary as well as providing visual containment of the development.
- 4.247 Distinct areas of woodland lie between the site and the existing development at Great Ashby. These should be sensitively incorporated into the development having regard to their status as local wildlife sites. These woods, and the connections from them to the wider countryside, will be integral to the green infrastructure of the site. This will also include incorporation of key rights of way.
- 4.248 A green infrastructure corridor currently runs through Great Ashby following the alignment of the overhead power lines. This should additionally be carried through the new development to provide a continuous link through the neighbourhood to the wider countryside. The width of the corridor will be informed by the health and safety clearance requirements imposed by National Grid (or any other relevant body).

- 4.249 The site adjoins a number of Grade II listed buildings at Tile Kiln Farm and care should be taken in the detailed design of any scheme to ensure this area retains an appropriate setting.

**Policy SP19: Sites EL1, EL2 & EL3 – East of Luton**

Land to the east of Luton, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for a new neighbourhood of approximately 2,100 homes.

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.

Any application on part of the site will be assessed against its contribution to the Strategic Masterplan and must not prejudice the implementation of the site as a whole.

Development proposals should provide the following planning and masterplanning requirements

- a) A new mixed-use local centre/s to provide for a range of day-to-day local needs including additional neighbourhood-level provision of around 250m<sup>2</sup> (net) convenience retail provision and 850 m<sup>2</sup> of comparison retail and food and beverage floorspace and other necessary social infrastructure;
- b) 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 east and mitigate landscape impacts;
- c) Principal access to be taken from Luton Road and integrated into Luton's existing highway network via Crawley Green Road with:
  - i. provision for sustainable modes of transport;
  - ii. comprehensive integration into the existing pedestrian and cycle, public transport and road networks; and
  - iii. appropriate transport mitigation measures secured to address impacts on Luton;
- d) 4FE of primary-age and 4FE of secondary-age education provision to ensure the needs arising from this allocation can be met within the site with any secondary education solution designed so as not to preclude the potential for future expansion;
- e) Appropriate mechanism(s) to ensure that all the affordable housing derived from the 1,950 homes for Luton's unmet needs address affordable housing needs from Luton Borough;
- f) Built development contained within the Breachwood Ridge and avoiding adverse impacts on the wider landscape of the Lilley Valley