

Chapter 12

East of Stevenage

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12.1 Introduction

- 12.1.1** Stevenage is a Mark I New Town designated in 1946 as part of the Abercrombie plan for the establishment of settlements around London. The town has grown in several stages, shaped originally around six distinct neighbourhoods, each with a neighbourhood centre and local schools. The town is bordered to the west by the A1(M), which facilitated the growth of an extensive employment corridor at Gunnels Wood. As such, Stevenage is home to many large corporations and a wide variety of small to medium sized employers, making the town a key destination and employment centre.
- 12.1.2** A site of approximately 37 hectares of land to the east of Gresley Way, Stevenage is therefore allocated for development in the East Herts District Plan, to deliver at least 600 homes within the first six years of the Plan period. The site will be referred to as Gresley Park.
- 12.1.3** As the development abuts the edge of Stevenage, the site will need to be planned in collaboration with Stevenage Borough Council. However, as the site is wholly within the administrative boundary of East Herts District, East Herts Council is the relevant Local Planning Authority. Nonetheless, the Council will work with Stevenage Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council (in its capacity as education and highways authority), landowners and other key stakeholders to produce a masterplan for Gresley Park.

12.2 Development East of Stevenage

- 12.2.1** The main components of the development strategy for land to the east of Stevenage at Gresley Park are as follows:
- 12.2.2 Housing:** Stevenage is home to many large employers and is a key employment destination for residents in East Herts. As such, housing to the east of Stevenage is well located in relation to the services and employment in the town and would contribute towards meeting the East Herts District housing needs. The site will provide a new neighbourhood comprising a mixture of house sizes and tenure, including affordable homes, a care home and homes for older people. Stevenage Borough Council's regeneration ambitions would be supported by dwellings which are attractive to workers who would otherwise look outside the town for their housing needs. The site will also provide for the accommodation needs of Travelling Showpeople and make provision for self-build and/or custom-build opportunities.
- 12.2.3 Education:** the site will provide a two form entry primary school with Early Years Education facilities. This will meet the educational needs arising from the development as well as providing additional capacity to address wider needs. Secondary education will be provided within the wider Stevenage Education Planning Area, towards which the development will contribute financially.

- 12.2.4 Transport:** the site is well located for access in to Stevenage and beyond via Gresley Way and the A602. The site is also well located in terms of connecting to existing bus services to the town centre and station. A route running through the site for bus uses will ensure that all residents are within easy walking distance of bus stops. The establishment of a bus route through the site at the start of occupation will encourage use of the network. Cycle and foot links will be provided to connect with the existing network in Stevenage and to the wider countryside.
- 12.2.5** Mitigation will be required on the highway network, including improvements to the Gresley Way/A602 junction and other local roads as necessary. The development will need to ensure that existing Bridleways (Aston 004 and Aston 021) are maintained and new routes are provided to connect the site to Stevenage to the west and to the wider countryside to the east.
- 12.2.6 Other Infrastructure:** waste water will drain to Rye Meads, and new waste water services will be created as part of the development to ensure that the efficiency of the network is maintained and there are no adverse effects on surrounding watercourses. Sustainable drainage features will also be required on the site. In addition, a serviced area of land will be required to accommodate a site for Travelling Showpeople. If required, a healthcare facility can be provided within the neighbourhood centre.
- 12.2.7 Employment and Retail:** The site is well located in terms of access to the Pin Green Industrial Estate to the east of the town and Gunnels Wood to the west via the A602. Gresley Way is well connected to the town centre via Martins Way. There will also be employment and retail opportunities within the neighbourhood centre, school and care home provided as part of the development.
- 12.2.8 Character and design:** The site is well screened from the wider landscape by the surrounding woodland belts and a ridgeline to the east of the site will shield the site from within and opposite the Beane Valley. The site's gentle undulations and existing tree belts and hedgerows will help to define the character of areas within the site. Further planting to define open spaces and outer boundaries would be incorporated into the development.
- 12.2.9** A collaboratively prepared Masterplan will form an important part of the delivery of this site allocation. The Masterplan will provide a strong framework for the development, which may also embody the use of design codes. The Masterplan will set out a hierarchy of roads differentiating between the central tree-lined avenue, secondary streets and estate roads. The Masterplanned approach will be landscape-led to ensure good quality place-making and the highest quality design and layout across the development resulting in a distinctive character. An attractive network of connecting paths and cycleways which connect in to the existing Stevenage cycle network will be integral to the character of Gresley Park along with visible and physical connections that provide access to the Beane Valley without prejudicing the strength of the outer boundaries of the site. This will also enable a

range of journeys to be made by foot and cycle providing opportunities for health and leisure activities. The Masterplan will accord with the provisions of Policy DES1 (Masterplanning).

12.2.10 The main features of the policy approach to development East of Stevenage are shown in Figure 12.1 below.

Figure 12.1: Key Diagram for East of Stevenage

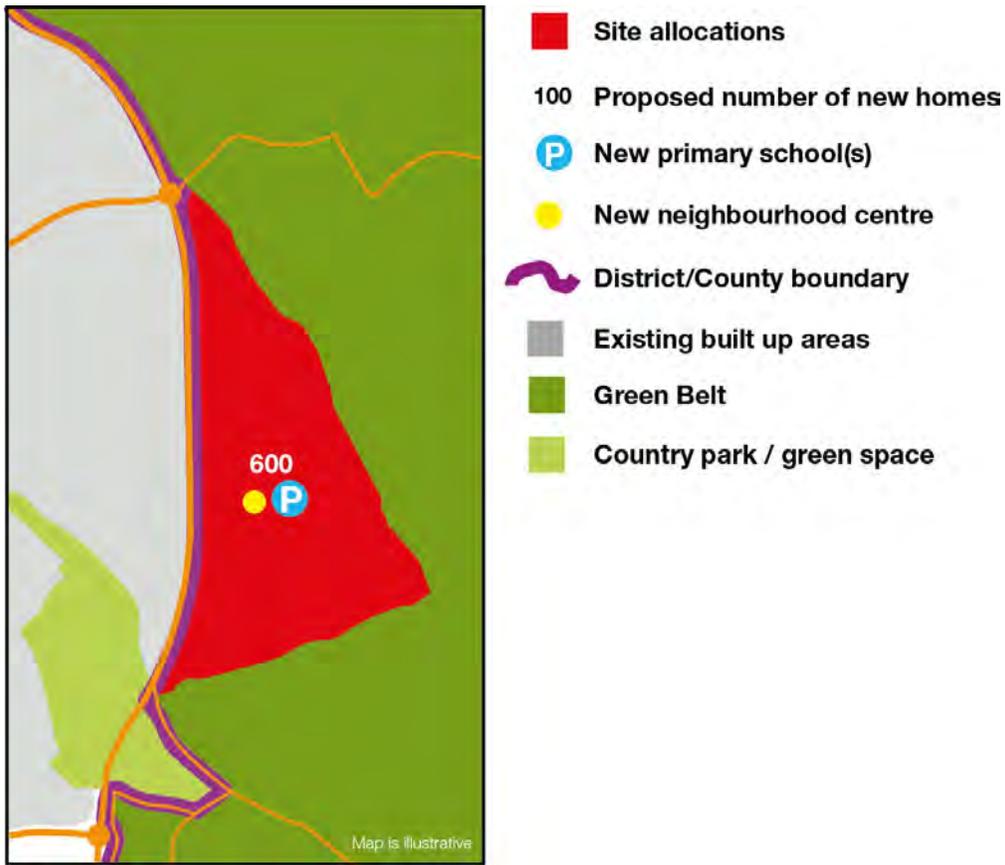
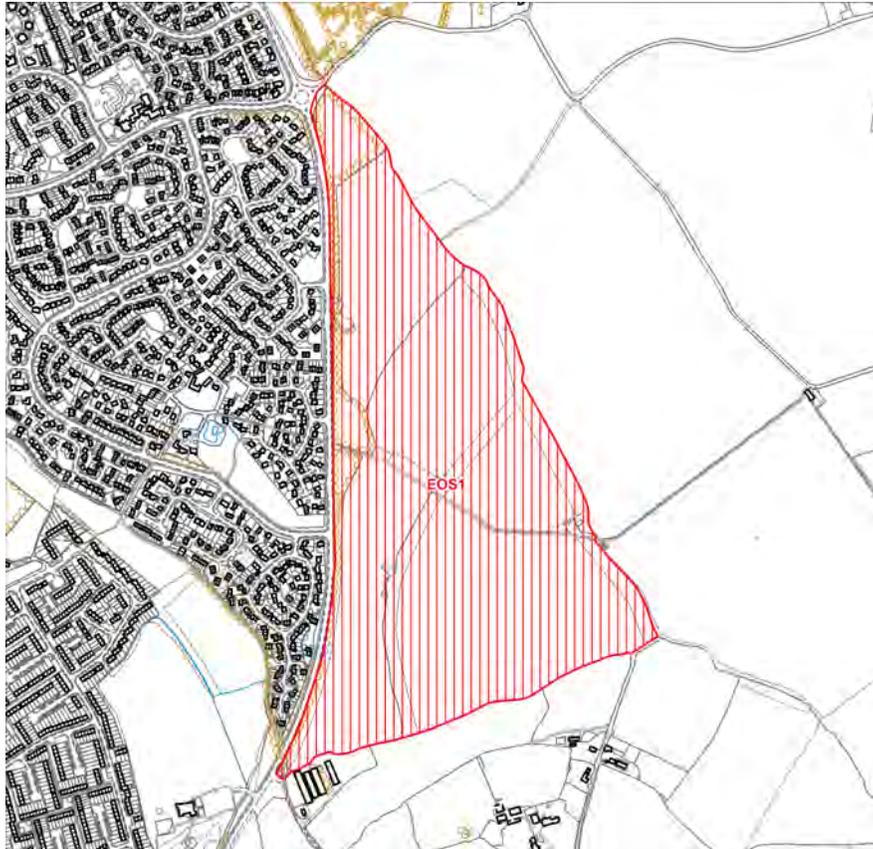


Figure 12.2 Site Location: East of Stevenage

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Policy EOS1 Land East of Stevenage

I. Land at Gresley Park is allocated for development to accommodate around 600 new homes by 2023.

II. A landscape-led Masterplan setting out the quantum and distribution of land uses; access; sustainable high quality design and layout principles; necessary infrastructure; the relationship between the site and other nearby settlements; landscape and heritage assets; and other relevant matters, will be collaboratively prepared, involving site promoters, landowners, East Herts Council, Stevenage Borough Council, parish councils and key stakeholders. This document will further be informed by public participation in the process.

III. The development is expected to address the following provisions and issues:

- (a) a range of dwelling type and mix, in accordance with the provisions of Policy HOU1 (Type and Mix of Housing);
- (b) Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy HOU3 (Affordable Housing);

(c) a care home/ flexi-care or sheltered properties in accordance with the provisions of Policy HOU6 (Specialist Housing for Older and Vulnerable People);

(d) Self-Build and Custom Build Housing in accordance with Policy HOU8 (Self-Build and Custom Build Housing);

(e) provision of a serviced site for Travelling Showpeople which should deliver five plots (each of sufficient size to allow for the provision of accommodation and equipment plus storage/maintenance) in accordance with Policy HOU9 (Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople);

(f) education facilities, including land for a two-form entry primary school with an Early Years facility and financial contribution towards secondary education within the Stevenage Education Planning Area;

(g) a neighbourhood centre in an accessible location, providing local retail and community uses including a healthcare facility;

(h) access arrangements and highways and wider strategic mitigation measures, including improvements to the A602/Gresley Way junction and other local roads as necessary, taking account of the Stevenage Mobility Strategy;

(i) sustainable transport measures which encourage walking and cycling through the site, including:

- the provision of cycleways and footways that provide links into Stevenage including existing cycle networks and the provision of a high quality cycle route along Gresley Way between Six Hills Way and Fairlands Way, with links to Six Hills Way;
- enhancement of existing bridleways and footpaths connecting the site to the Beane Valley to the east of the site;
- enhanced passenger transport services including the creation of a sustainable transport route through the site;

(j) responds to the existing landform to define individual character areas, incorporating existing landscaping within the new streets, paths and spaces, enhances the outer boundary of the site; retains and enhances, where required, the existing hedgerows within and around the site, punctuating where access into the site is required; and creates a net gain to biodiversity through additional planting;

(k) incorporates sustainable drainage and provision for flood mitigation;

(l) a variety of public open spaces across the site, including the provision of play areas and opportunities for outdoor health and fitness activities, as well as space for wildlife;

(m) necessary utilities, including integrated communications infrastructure to facilitate home-working, and upgrades to the localised sewerage network;

(n) the delivery of all other necessary on-site and appropriate off-site infrastructure;

(o) other policy provisions of the District Plan and relevant matters, as appropriate.

IV. In order to ensure that the site is planned and delivered comprehensively, any application for development on part of the site will be assessed against its contribution to the masterplan, and will ensure that such development would not prejudice the implementation of the site allocation as a whole.

12.2.11 Figure 12.3 is an illustrative strategy diagram which will be used as a basis for masterplanning and will also help inform decisions on planning applications.

Figure 12.3: Strategy Diagram for East of Stevenage

