



# *Gresley Park, Hertfordshire*

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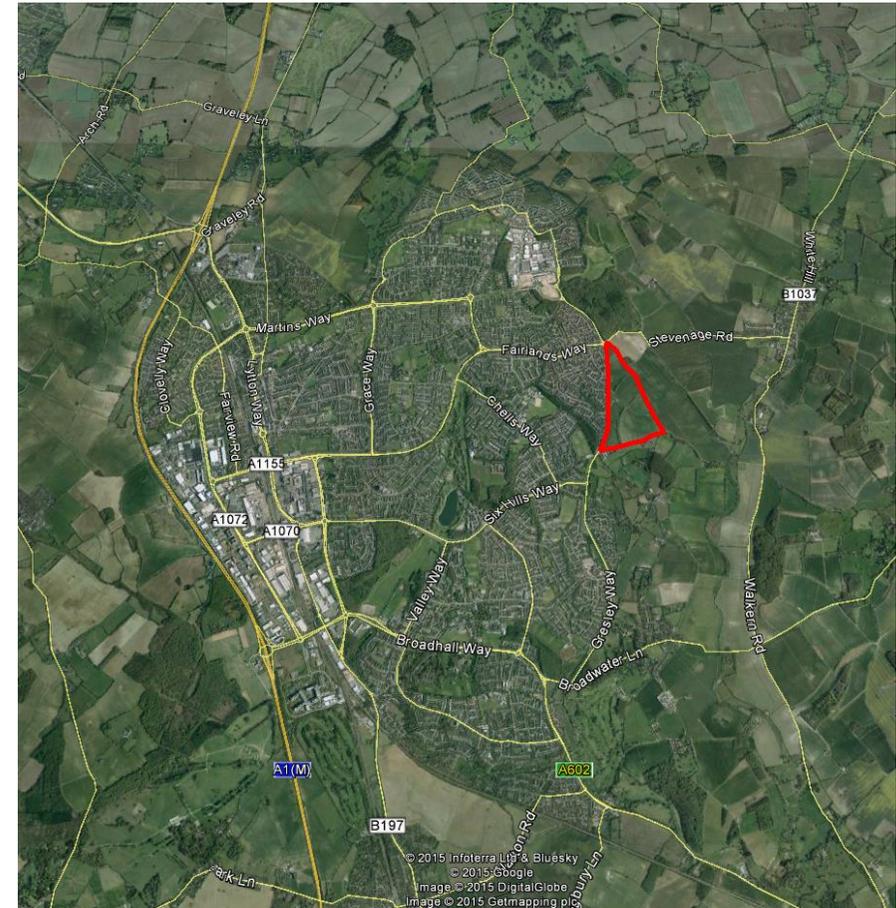
*Delivery Statement*

*January 2016*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Delivery Statement (the 'Statement') has been prepared by Pigeon Land Limited ('Pigeon') in support of a proposed new sustainable neighbourhood on land East of Gresley Way, Stevenage (the 'Site'). The Statement demonstrates that the Site is both sustainable and capable of delivering up to 600 new homes within the first five years of the District Plan period (2016 – 2021).

East Hertfordshire District Council has identified the need to provide 15,000 homes in East Hertfordshire during the period 2011 – 2031, and is required by national planning policy to identify a deliverable supply of housing during years 1 – 5 of the replacement Local Plan period.

Evidence produced by the Council demonstrates that the already identified growth locations will not deliver the required level of new homes during the first five years of the replacement Local Plan. It is therefore necessary to allocate land East of Gresley Way in the emerging District Plan to help meet the District's objectively assessed needs during the first five years of the Plan period.

The Concept Masterplan for the Site (see Appendix 1) has been formulated to create a new sustainable neighborhood on the edge of Stevenage and includes provision for:

- Up to 600 new homes (including up to 240 affordable dwellings)
- A new Primary School site including Pre-school provision
- Elderly care accommodation including a 60-bed care home and 25 'assisted living' homes
- A new local centre, including convenience retail, and a site for a community building and a new Primary Health Care Centre
- Public open space and strategic landscaping
- Provision for Travelling Showpeople

To be considered deliverable, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. This Statement sets out a strategy for the delivery of the Site during years 1 – 5 of the District Plan, demonstrating that land East of Gresley Way satisfies all of these criteria and will be deliverable.

The Concept Masterplan sets out a vision for how the Site will be developed and will form the basis for ongoing discussions with the District Council,

the County Council, the local community and key stakeholders as the scheme is developed. It provides a vision and design framework for the delivery of a new high quality sustainable neighbourhood on the edge of Stevenage.

The Statement and accompanying Concept Masterplan has been informed by a robust evidence base covering access, drainage and flood risk, landscape, ecology, utilities and heritage, which demonstrates that the Site has no known constraints to development. The proposed development will contribute to the three dimensions of sustainability through the provision of both market and affordable homes and a new community hub in a location that is well served by an existing foot and cycleway network and existing bus services, with excellent access to jobs, services and local facilities.

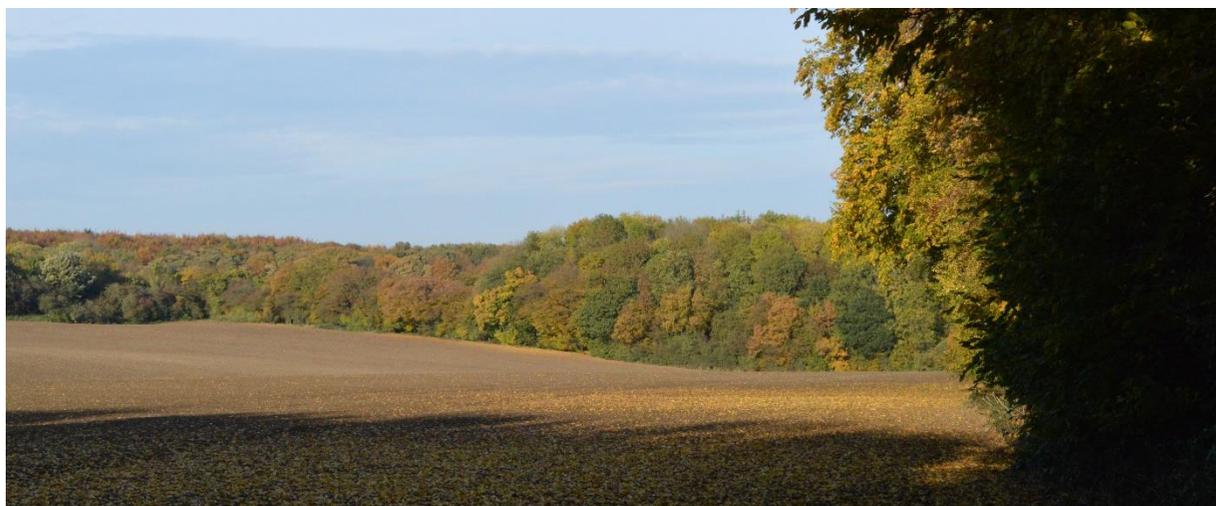
The substantial existing woodland belts that form the Site's boundaries mean that the Site has a very well defined landscape edge and effectively forms a self-contained development parcel between the Site and the open countryside that lies beyond its eastern boundaries. Therefore whilst the Site currently falls within the Green Belt, the presence of clearly defined physical landscape boundaries result in a high level of containment and physical separation between the Site and the wider Green Belt designation.

The Concept Masterplan that forms part of this Statement has been informed by a Landscape Assessment of the Site that has included a review of the landscape character area that it falls within and a review of the contribution that it makes to the Green Belt. The Assessment finds that the Site is distinct from the surrounding landscape and concludes that development can be accommodated without encroachment into the wider countryside and without giving rise to any perception of 'sprawl' as the Site is contained by logical and clearly defined woodland belts.

The existing woodland belts also present an opportunity to enhance the Site's ecological value and the Concept Masterplan illustrates how these would be retained and enhanced as part of the overall landscape and green space strategy for the Site.

The scheme also makes provision for a vibrant new community hub that will provide a high quality meeting place at the heart of the development, focussed around a new Primary School, community facilities and a central park.

In conclusion, the land East of Gresley Way presents the opportunity to create a new high quality residential neighbourhood on the edge of Stevenage that will be a great place to live, with a new community hub at its heart.



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Delivery Statement (the ‘Statement’) has been prepared by Pigeon Land Limited (‘Pigeon’) in support of a proposed new sustainable neighbourhood on land East of Gresley Way, Stevenage (the ‘Site’). The Statement demonstrates that the Site is both sustainable and capable of delivering up to 600 dwellings within the period 2016 – 2021.

This Delivery Statement is intended to assist East Hertfordshire District Council in its consideration of the Site through the District Plan preparation process. It has been prepared in the context of the need to provide 15,000 homes in East Hertfordshire during the period 2011 – 2031, and the requirement to identify a deliverable supply of housing during years 1 – 5 of the replacement Local Plan period.

Evidence produced by the Council demonstrates that the already identified growth locations will not deliver the required level of new homes during the first five years of the replacement Plan. It is therefore necessary to allocate land East of Gresley Way in the emerging District Plan to help meet the District’s objectively assessed needs during the first five years of the Plan period.

This Statement describes the Site’s characteristics in order to demonstrate that it is a viable development site with no known constraints and sets out how the Site is capable of delivering a new high quality sustainable neighbourhood within the next five years.

It also describes how the Site will contribute to the three dimensions of sustainability, economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The Statement is accompanied by a Concept Masterplan which portrays a thoroughly and comprehensively considered scheme comprising:

- Up to 600 homes (including up to 240 affordable dwellings)
- A new Primary School site including Pre-school provision
- Elderly care accommodation including a 60-bed care home and 25 ‘assisted living’ homes
- A new local centre, including convenience retail, and a site for a community building and a new Primary Health Care Centre
- Public open space and strategic landscaping
- Provision for Travelling Showpeople

This Statement, and accompanying Concept Masterplan, has been informed by a robust evidence base including:

- Access Strategy produced by Fairhurst
- Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy produced by Fairhurst
- Landscape Assessment undertaken by James Blake Associates
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey prepared by James Blake Associates
- Phase 2 Ecology Surveys prepared by James Blake Associates
- Utilities Assessment undertaken by Pigeon Technical Services
- Archaeology and Heritage Assessment undertaken by Archaeological Risk Management



## 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

East Hertfordshire District Council is currently working on a draft District Plan that, once adopted, will replace the 2007 Local Plan. The District Plan will set out the future housing requirements of the District up to 2031, allocating sites to meet its identified housing need during the full Plan period.

The most recent assessment of Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for both market and affordable housing in East Hertfordshire is set out in the West Essex and East Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), September 2015. The SHMA concludes that the OAN for housing over the period 2011 – 2033 is 16,400 dwellings (745/year) in East Hertfordshire.

In 2014 the Council published a Preferred Options District Plan which set out a draft development strategy for the District, including a requirement for at least 15,000 dwellings to be built between 2011 and 2031 (750 dwellings/year).

In order to meet this requirement the draft Plan identified a range of greenfield sites on the edge of the five towns (Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford, Hertford, Sawbridgeworth and Ware) that would provide at least 4,321 homes during the first five years of the Plan, together with Broad Locations for Development that would meet the District's housing needs during the period 2021 – 2031.

The Broad Locations for Development are identified as the Gilston Area, North and East of Ware, and East of Welwyn Garden City.

The Delivery Study presented to Members in October (Peter Brett Associates, Final Report September 2015) identified that there are potential questions surrounding the delivery of housing during the early years of the District Plan.

Given the potential delivery issues associated with the Broad Locations for Development, it is appropriate for the Council to reconsider its development strategy to ensure that sufficient land is available to meet identified needs, particularly within the first five years of the Plan period.

Land to the east of Gresley Way was previously considered by East Herts District Council as part of a much larger scheme but was discounted as an option for large scale development through the Council's sieving process. However, it is appropriate for the Council to reconsider this location as an opportunity to accommodate a smaller scale of development in a sustainable location in order to help meet the District's OAN during the first five years of the Plan period. The development would provide up to 600 homes complete with community facilities, designed in a way that does not harm the Green Belt or the surrounding landscape, all within the first five years of the District Plan period.

The 2007 Local Plan identifies the Site within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Government policy on Green Belt is set out in chapter 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). While it is intended that Green Belt has a degree of permanence, paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that the Local Plan preparation process is the appropriate time for a Local Authority to review its Green Belt. It is therefore wholly appropriate for the Council to consider redefining its Green Belt boundaries in order to meet local planning requirements, including the District's full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing (Paragraph 47).

The Council has already proposed amendments to the District's Green Belt boundaries in order to accommodate the already identified Broad Locations for Development, and releasing land east of Gresley Way in order to meet the Council's objectively assessed needs would be wholly consistent with this approach.

Furthermore, the Site has already been considered alongside the other growth locations as part of the Green Belt review that has been produced for the Council and forms part of the District Plan evidence base. A summary of the Green Belt review and consideration of the Green Belt Purposes, as set out at Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, is provided in Section 7.

### 3.0 DELIVERY

The Site is owned by Hythe Limited, a privately owned company, who has entered into a Promotion Agreement with Pigeon to promote the Site through the planning process. As such the Site can be considered to be 'available' as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework.

Pigeon has been selected by Hythe Limited for their expertise in bringing together teams of leading designers and specialist advisors to deliver high quality residential and mixed-use sustainable communities. Pigeon is a private company operated by five directors and a team of professionals from the built environment who each bring considerable experience of promoting and delivering high quality schemes within the East of England.

Pigeon is currently working with the Crown Estate on the delivery of a sustainable urban extension in Thetford that has planning approval for up to 5,000 homes, 20 hectares of employment land, Primary School provision, community facilities and public open space. To the east of Bury St Edmunds Pigeon has secured an allocation for an urban extension of up to 1,250 homes, including a Primary School, a new neighbourhood hub, community facilities and public open space. Pigeon has also secured a draft allocation for up to 1,000 homes, a Primary School, a new care home, and a country park extension at Wickford in Essex.

Pigeon's experience demonstrates that it has a proven track record of planning and delivering sustainable neighborhoods, such as the proposed allocation site at land East of Gresley Way.



**Kingsfleet Sustainable Urban Extension, Thetford.**



**Sustainable Urban Extension, Wickford**



**Sustainable Urban Extension, Bury East**

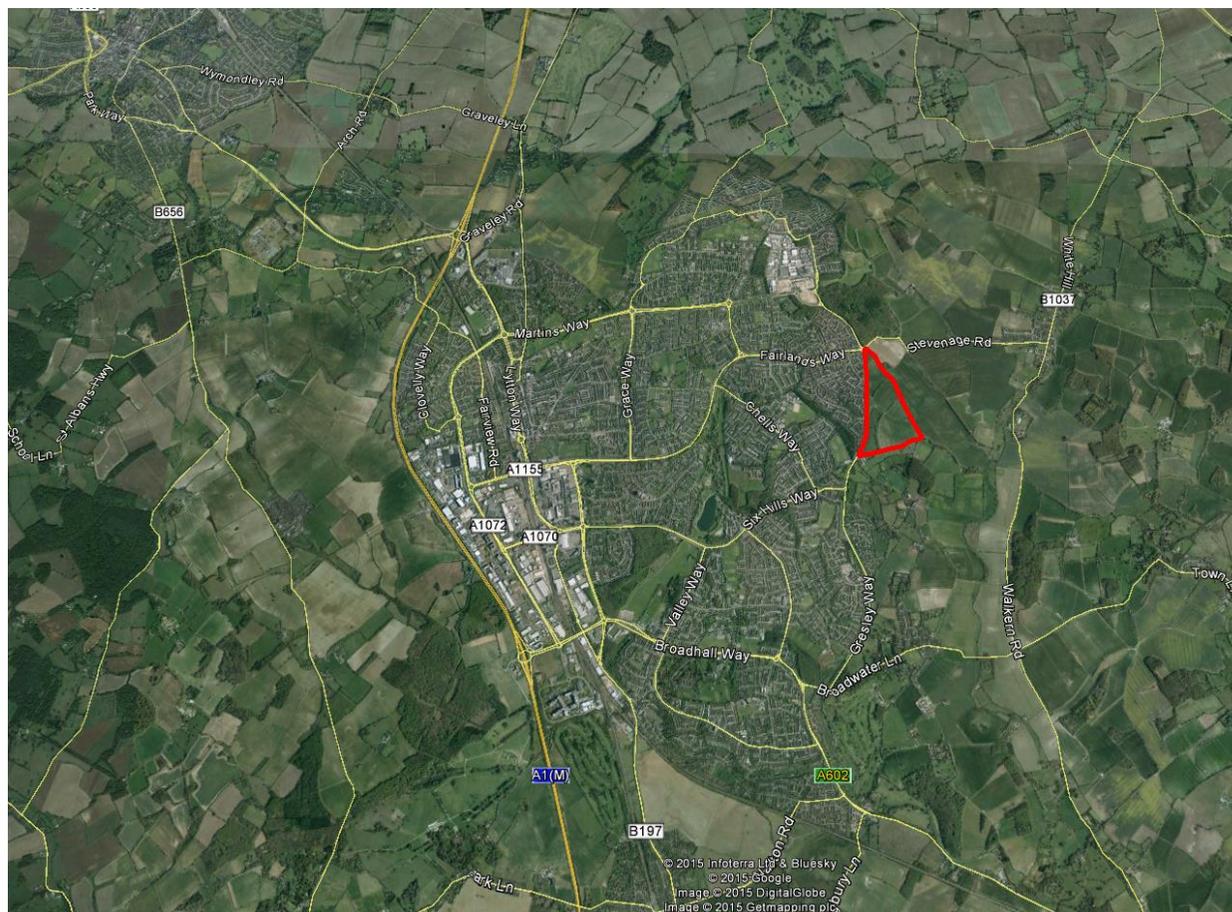
#### 4.0 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

The Site is approximately 37 hectares in size and is located to the east of Gresley Way on the eastern edge of Stevenage, immediately adjoining the built-up area of the town. The Site currently lies outside the settlement boundary of Stevenage and is shown in the current Local Plan as Green Belt.

The town of Stevenage lies to the east of the A1 (M) between Letchworth Garden City to the north and Welwyn Garden City to the south. The eastern parts of the settlement are characterised by Gresley Way and estate scale residential development typical of the late twentieth century, including the Chells Manor Neighbourhood, which was completed in 1996.

The NPPF (paragraph 85) states that Green Belt boundaries should be defined *'clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent'*. The Site's existing eastern boundaries clearly fulfil this requirement and would therefore provide an appropriate boundary for the Green Belt, regardless of the need to meet the District's objectively assessed needs.

The existing woodland belt that forms the Site's eastern boundary means that the Site has a very well defined landscape edge and effectively forms a self-contained development parcel with a



Land East of Gresley Way, Stevenage

clearly defined boundary between the Site and the open countryside that lies beyond its eastern boundary. Therefore whilst the Site currently falls within the Green Belt, the presence of a clearly

defined physical landscape boundary results in a high level of containment and physical separation between the Site and the wider Green Belt designation.



**Aerial photograph of Land East of Gresley Way, viewed from the east**

The Site is well connected by an existing footpath and cycle network and existing bus services. It therefore constitutes a sustainable location for development on the edge of Stevenage, close to jobs, services and local facilities. Stevenage's extensive cycleway network gives quiet or traffic-free cycle routes to all parts of the town and the Site is well placed to connect into these routes, including the radial cycleway along Fairlands Way and the designated scenic cycle routes along Chells Lane and Chells Park to the west of the Site, which provide convenient access to the town centre and local services and facilities.

The SB1 bus service operated by Arriva runs between the Poplars local centre and Stevenage town centre, with existing stops located on Gresley Way, adjacent to the Site, providing a service every 10 minutes during the working day.

Development of the Site would therefore deliver a new sustainable neighbourhood on the eastern edge of Stevenage, close to existing employment opportunities, services and facilities, and public transport links. It will also form a natural extension to Stevenage, within a discreet self-contained landscape parcel that will be in keeping with both the character of the immediate surrounding area and Stevenage as a whole.

## 5.0 CONCEPT MASTERPLAN

The Concept Masterplan that accompanies this Statement is based upon a detailed assessment of the Site's opportunities and constraints and illustrates how the Site can provide a new vibrant sustainable community to the east of Stevenage.

The Concept Masterplan includes provision for:

- Up to 600 homes (including up to 240 affordable dwellings)
- A new Primary School site including Pre-school provision
- Elderly care accommodation including a 60-bed care home and 25 'assisted living' homes
- A new local centre, including convenience retail, and a site for a community building and a new Primary Health Care Centre
- Public open space and strategic landscaping
- Provision for Travelling Showpeople

The mix of uses, and to take account of the sustainable location of the Site which is within walking and cycling distance of services and facilities within the town and the adjoining residential neighbourhood.

The key objectives that have informed the preparation of the Concept Masterplan can be

summarised as follows:

- To provide an attractive landscape led development that retains and enhances the Site's existing landscape features, semi-mature woodland belts, and topography.
- To provide a range of new homes to meet the District's housing requirements, including the provision of aspirational housing, which will include larger detached properties at lower density.
- To provide a new community hub that will create a vibrant focal point to the new development, helping to create a sense of place and identity.

- To encourage sustainable travel patterns and encourage cycling and walking through design and the provision of new cycle way and footpath links, and enhanced bus links.
- To provide a sustainable drainage strategy, including provision of swales, to ensure that surface water is attenuated to the greenfield rate.
- To integrate informal recreational space within the proposed layout, utilising the existing woodland belts, whilst providing opportunities for play and biodiversity enhancement.



## 5.1 HOUSING MIX

The Concept Masterplan includes provision for up to 600 homes. The scale of the houses will be predominantly 2 storeys, at an overall density of approximately 30 homes per hectare (12 per acre).

Although lower density development (approximately 25 homes per hectare, 10 per acre), and some single storey development will be provided to create character areas with some limited higher density development (approximately 35 – 40 homes per hectare, 14 – 16 per acre) located around the community hub and within the lower lying parts of the Site. It is envisaged that a mix of homes will be provided ranging from larger detached houses, to meet a requirement for aspirational housing, through to apartments that will provide lower cost housing and help to meet affordable housing need in the area. Single storey development will be focused within lower density character areas and the scheme will include the delivery of approximately 10% of the new homes as bungalows, helping to meet the needs of an ageing population and people wishing to downsize to smaller properties.

The development will provide affordable housing in accordance with adopted policy helping to meet affordable housing needs within the District. The affordable housing mix will comprise 1 bed – 35%, 2 bed – 40%, 3 bed

20%, 4 bed – 5% and will be provided in clusters of no more than 25 dwellings in accordance with the Council's supplementary guidance on affordable housing.

## 5.2 COMMUNITY HUB

The proposed development includes the provision of a new community hub, the design of which has been informed by discussions with Council Officers. The hub will form the heart of the new community and will help to create a vibrant focal point for the development, which will be centred on the new Primary School and local shops and services that will meet the day-to-day needs of the local population.

The hub is located in the central part of the Site around an area of central open space that has been designed to be easily accessible by cycle and foot. The community hub will include:

- 2.5 hectare Primary School site, including provision for Pre-School
- A 60 bed care home
- A 25 unit assisted living site
- A parade of local shops including convenience retail to meet day-to-day needs
- A site for a community building and provision for a new primary health care centre



Concept Masterplan

#### 5.4 EDUCATION

A key part of the community hub will be the provision of a new Primary School. The Concept Masterplan includes a 2.5 hectare site that can accommodate a new 2 form entry Primary School and Pre-school provision. The new Primary School will meet the Primary education requirements of the new community and also provide additional school capacity, should this be required. The proposed 2.5 hectare site meets the requirements of the Local Education Authority for a two form entry Primary School and its inclusion within the scheme has been informed by discussions with Hertfordshire County Council.

#### 5.5 HEALTH

Provision has been made within the community hub for a new primary health care centre of up to 600 sq.m together with associated parking. The inclusion of the health care facility within the community hub has been informed by discussions with NHS England (Hertfordshire).

#### 5.6 GYPSY AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE PROVISION

Government policy on planning for traveller sites (CLG, August 2015) states that Local Authorities should make their own assessment of need and seek to identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets. The Council has prepared evidence on the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and advised that, for Travelling Showpeople, there is a need for five plots to be provided throughout the Plan period, with one of those plots to be provided in the first five years.

The Concept Masterplan seeks to meet this need by making provision for Travelling Showpeople within the northern part of the development. The Travelling Showpeople provision would be integrated within the overall scheme thereby helping to achieve the objective of creating socially inclusive and integrated communities, as well as helping to meet the housing needs of Travelling Showpeople.

## 6.0 PHASING

The Concept Masterplan for the Site has been developed to provide three development parcels to facilitate the early delivery of new homes. Each parcel will have a separate access onto Gresley Way, together with drainage and utilities infrastructure to enable the Site to be developed by three separate home builders, thus ensuring that the Site is fully deliverable within the first five years of the District Plan period.

The table below illustrates the anticipated delivery of new homes, demonstrating that the Site could be fully built out within five years. Affordable housing can be delivered in accordance with the Council's supplementary guidance.

The community hub will be delivered alongside the proposed new homes to ensure that the incoming population will have access to an appropriate level of services and facilities that will help to make it a sustainable neighbourhood.

	Northern Parcel	Central Parcel	Southern Parcel
Year 1 (2016/17)	Discharge planning conditions and site set-up	Discharge planning conditions and site set-up	Discharge planning conditions and site set-up
Year 2 (2017/18)	50 completions (25 affordable, 25 market)	50 completions (25 affordable, 25 market)	50 completions (25 affordable, 25 market)
Year 3 (2018/19)	50 completions (20 affordable, 30 market)	50 completions (20 affordable, 30 market)	50 completions (20 affordable, 30 market)
Year 4 (2019/20)	50 completions (20 affordable, 30 market)	50 completions (20 affordable, 30 market)	50 completions (20 affordable, 30 market)
Year 5 (2020/2021)	50 completions (15 affordable, 35 market)	50 completions (15 affordable, 35 market)	50 completions (15 affordable, 35 market)
<b>Total</b>	<b>Circa 200</b>	<b>Circa 200</b>	<b>Circa 200</b>

**Table 1. Proposed illustrative phasing**

## 7.0 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

A Landscape Assessment has been undertaken by James Blake Associates, as part of the preparation of the Concept Masterplan and the proposed landscape strategy. The Landscape Assessment finds that there are wide belts of tree planting, which form well-defined boundaries to the Site and result in limited views into the Site from the surrounding landscape. These features also mean that the Site is clearly defined from the wider landscape setting beyond the Site boundaries and the Landscape Character Area that it is located within.

The Site is located within the Middle Beane Valley Landscape Character Area (as identified in EHDC Landscape Character Assessment 2007), which encompasses the whole area east of Stevenage, from Lamsden Common, north of Watton-at-Stone, and extends northwards along the valley towards Walkern up as far as Cromer.

**Key characteristics of this character area are described as follows:**

- strongly undulating west-facing slope
- sharp transition to ridge to east and to urban edge to west
- built edge of Stevenage generally well concealed and contained by mature and semi mature woodland.
- woods located to the tributary valley heads and on the upper slopes adjacent to Stevenage

- well-managed hornbeam coppice woodland
- large fields and arable cultivation
- few settlements#
- expansive views from the edges to the Beane Valley

It is clearly evident that the key features identified within the Middle Beane character area are not apparent within the Site due to the substantial belts of planting and neighbouring woodland blocks that form its boundaries.

The Landscape Character Assessment identifies opportunities to enhance the landscape and those which are relevant to the Site are as follows:

- Encourage landowners to safeguard existing hedges, increase hedged field boundaries, create permanent grass strips around field margins and prevent spray drift, using financial incentives as available, with a particular view to enhancing the quality of habitats adjacent to existing high-quality habitats in the Beane Valley
- Consider the possibilities of creating circular footpath routes in the area
- Focus hedging opportunities on internal field boundaries, not those along roads and footpaths which could interrupt views over this area

- Continue to manage both the established and young woodlands to the western boundary with Stevenage to minimise the visual impact of the settlement on the landscape to the east
- Encourage traditional woodland management measures including coppicing

The introduction of development within the Site provides an opportunity to enhance existing hedgerows, tree belts and wooded areas and also to extend the existing public rights of way routes so that the community can enjoy the extensive green infrastructure provided by the scheme. All of these features have been incorporated within the Concept Masterplan and proposed landscape strategy for the Site.

The Site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt, which covers the southern third of the District. However, as stated in the emerging District Plan, it would neither be realistic or sustainable to locate development exclusively outside of the Green Belt, and a review of the Green Belt has therefore been necessary in East Hertfordshire. A Green Belt review was therefore undertaken by Peter Brett Associates (PBA) on behalf of the Council in 2015.



**View of Woodland Belt along Eastern Boundary (south)**

The Green Belt review encompasses the Site and identifies it within 'Parcel 2', a much larger area than the proposed allocation site, which extends all the way to Walkern Road to the east and beyond Aston (Benington Road) to the south. The PBA assessment therefore refers to an area which extends far beyond the Site and includes the open countryside beyond the Site boundaries.

The Green Belt Study, which is structured in accordance with the Purposes of Green Belt (as described under Paragraph 80 of the NPPF), identifies that Parcel 2 has no importance in terms of Purpose 2 of the Green Belt (*to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another*) and Purpose 4 of the Green Belt (*to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns*) and the assessment carried out by James Blake Associates has therefore focussed upon Purpose 1 and Purpose 3 of the Green Belt.



**View of Woodland Belt within the Site**

In respect of Purpose 1 – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas – the PBA study states that 'where land is well contained it is more likely that development may be accommodated within it without giving rise to the perception of 'sprawl' as the land would be contained by logical and clearly identifiable physical and/or visual boundaries, reducing its influence upon the land beyond'.

Therefore whilst the PBA assessment concludes that strategic growth within the larger Parcel 2 would not accord with this Purpose, it is clear given the Site's well defined physical boundaries that this is not the case when the Site (rather than the much larger Parcel 2 area) is assessed against Purpose 1.



**View of Woodland Belt along Eastern Boundary (north)**

Similarly, the wider Parcel 2 area assists in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (Purpose 3) but when assessed against the proposed allocation site (rather than the much larger Parcel 2 area) it is apparent that development can be accommodated without encroachment into the wider countryside beyond the clearly defined landscape belt that surrounds the Site.

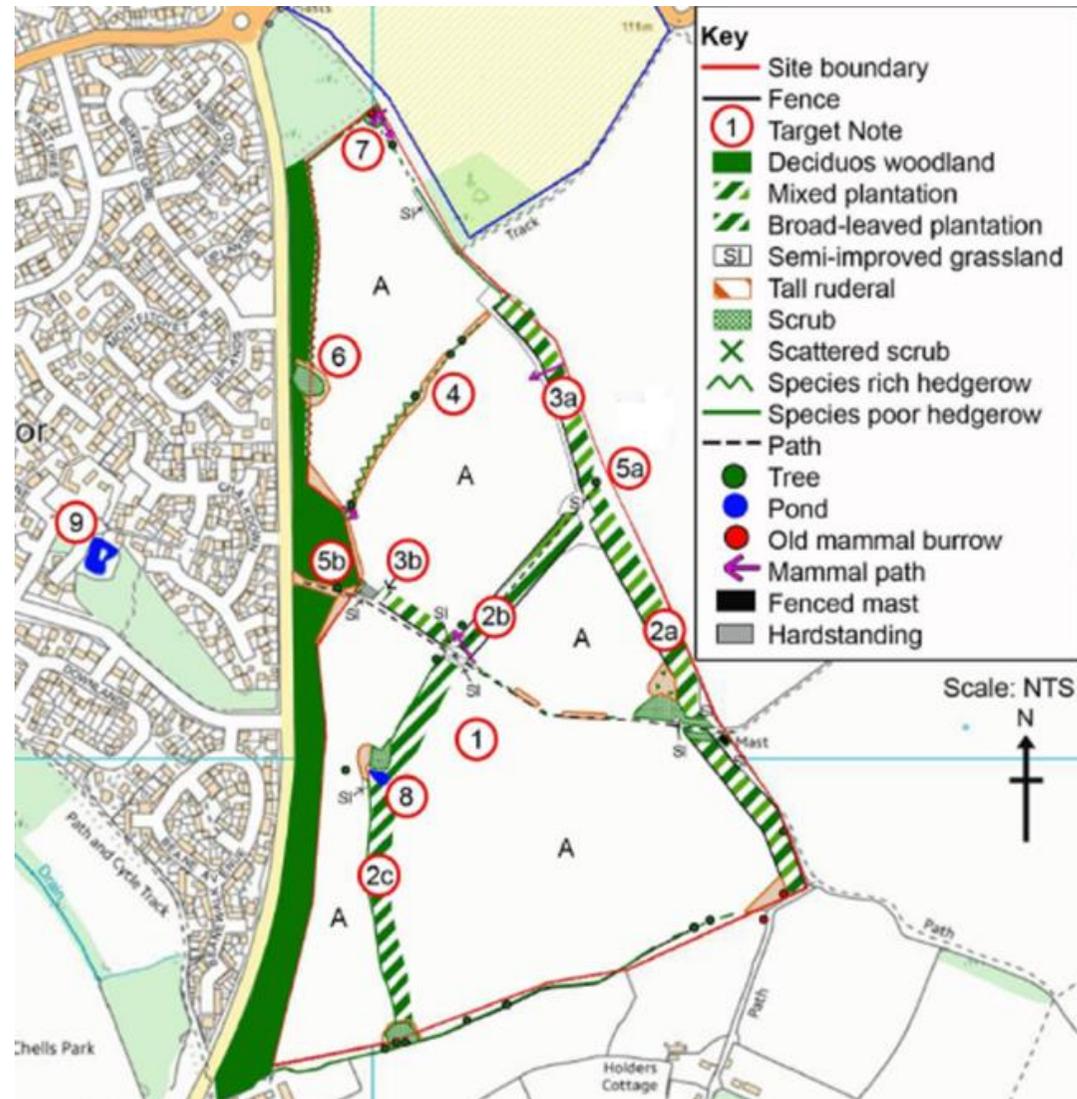
As a result the landscape strategy for the Site focusses upon retention and enhancement of the Site's well defined landscape and woodland belts and the creation of character areas within the Site's existing landscape framework. It also provides a clearly defined landscape character within the Site itself through the retention and enhancement of the existing woodland belts that are present within the Site and form a key part of the development concept.

## 8.0 ECOLOGY

An ecological assessment of the Site and its potential to support wildlife was undertaken by James Blake Associates in July 2014. There are no wildlife designations on the Site and the majority of the Site comprises arable farmland which has little ecological value. However, mixed plantation woodland belts and hedgerows along the Site boundaries and through the Site were found to have the potential to support reptiles, bats, birds, dormice and badgers. In addition a shallow pond within the Site was identified as providing suitable habitat for amphibians.

Phase 2 surveys for reptiles and Great Crested Newt were carried out in 2015 and the results of these further surveys were that reptiles and Great Crested Newt were not present on Site.

Notwithstanding, potential effects on bats, birds, dormice and badgers will be mitigated through the retention and positive management of the mixed plantation woodland belts present within the Site. In addition the existing landscape belts will be enhanced and new green infrastructure will be provided as part of the overall landscape strategy for the Site to encourage wildlife. Mature trees will be retained within the development and consideration has been given to minimising the impacts of development on movement corridors for wildlife as part of the design process.



Phase 1 Habitat Map

## 9.0 TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

The Site is well connected by an existing footpath and cycle network that links the Site with various local services and facilities. An access strategy has been prepared by Fairhurst which utilises these connections through the provision of three foot and cycleway access points that are reflected in the Concept Masterplan design.

The table below shows the result of distance and journey time measurements from the Site to various local amenities and illustrates that it is within good walking and cycle distance of local shops and schools, the town centre and the railway station.

The Preliminary Access Strategy plan indicates proposed crossing points where improvements will allow safer connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. The Site is well served by existing bus services and it is envisaged that existing bus services will be diverted via the Site to encourage the new community to use public transport alongside improvements to existing services.

Vehicular access is proposed via the upgrading of two existing access points and the creation of one new junction onto Gresley Way. The strategy that has been developed seeks to balance the existing movement of traffic along Gresley Way with the creation of adequate connectivity from east to west for pedestrians and cyclists to feel safe and comfortable to cross.

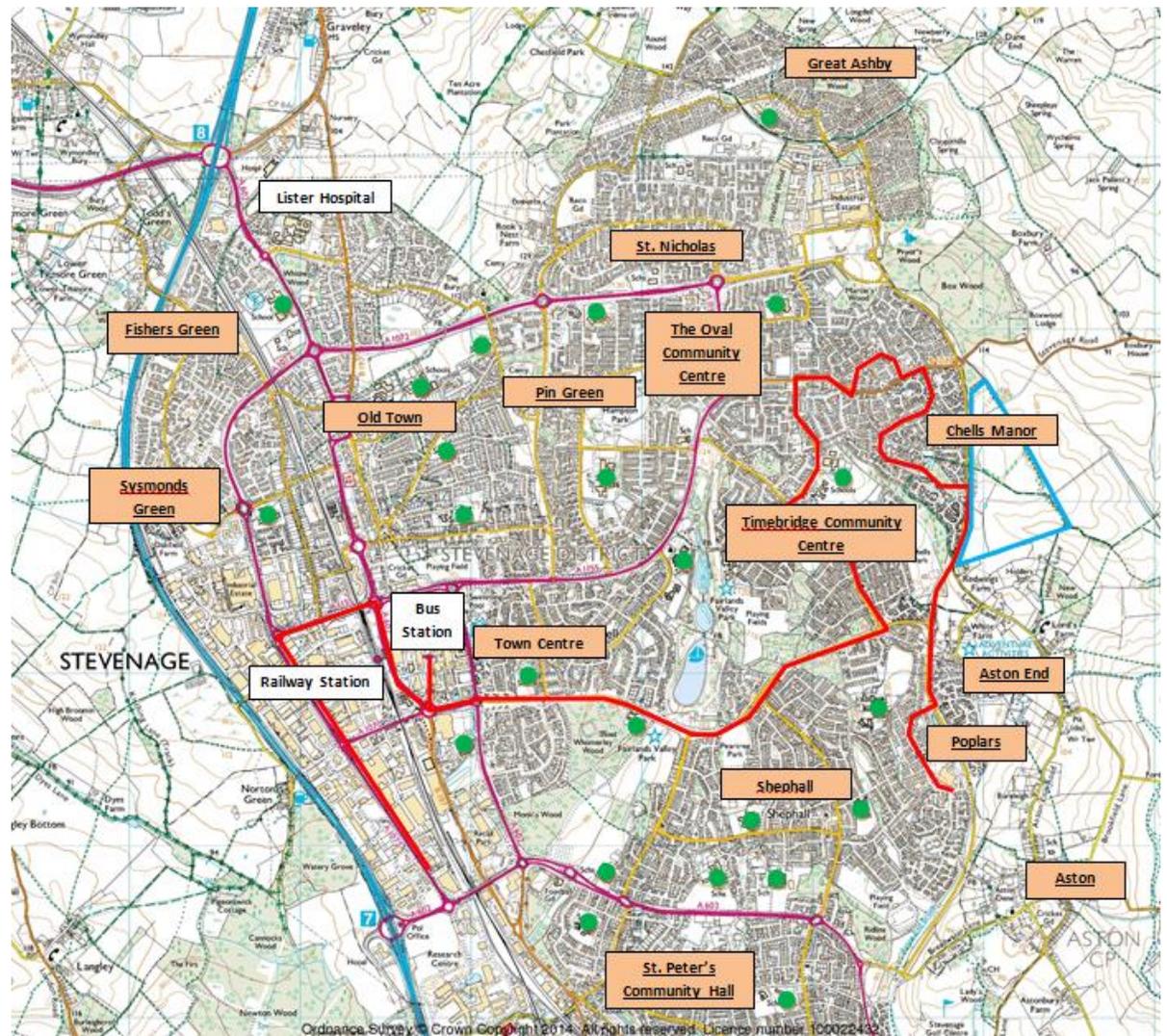
	On foot		Pedal Cycle	
	km	mins	km	mins
Chells Manor Centre (shops)	1.1	14	1.1	5
Camps Hill Primary School	1.2	15	-	-
Lodge Farm Primary School	1.6	20	-	-
Nobel Secondary School	1.4	18	1.5	5
Marriotts Secondary School	2.0	15	2.0	8
Pin Green Industrial Area	2.7	20	2.7	11
Stevenage Town Centre	4.3	54	4.3	21
Stevenage Bus Station	4.3	54	4.3	21
Stevenage Railway Station	4.6	60	5.2	23
West industrial area (centroid)	5.4	65	5.9	18

**Table 2. Distances and journey times from the Site by foot and cycle**

The scheme makes provision for three vehicular access points comprising upgrades of existing junctions at Uplands and White Way (to roundabouts), and a new roundabout junction to the south of White Way on Gresley Way, in order to assist in the delivery of the Site during the first five years of the Plan period. Whilst the Site could be served by two vehicular access points and still accommodate three different home builders, the provision of three vehicular access points will support delivery rates being maximised by providing each builder with a separate access and sales outlet.

Discussions with Hertfordshire County Council Highways have included consideration of access and the proposed access strategy is deemed appropriate to serve the Site, subject to the usual completion of detailed transport capacity modelling and Road Safety Audits.

Traffic modelling carried out by AECOM on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council demonstrates that Gresley Way is capable of accommodating the additional vehicle movements associated with development of the Site (approximately 310 – 320 new vehicle trips in the peak hour). The AECOM study identifies the need to upgrade the Gresley Way/A602 junction, which is close to capacity, and recommends an improvement scheme. The cost of this improvement has been estimated at £426,000 and could be fully funded by development of the Site and is not therefore prohibitive to its delivery.



Map of existing services and facilities in Stevenage

## 10.0 FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

The Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 (less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding) and the only water feature within the Site is a small existing pond located towards the eastern edge of the Site.

The northern part of the Site is underlain by chalk and has been assessed as being suitable for infiltration drainage. The scheme therefore includes provision for an infiltration pond within the northern part of the Site, whereas the southern part of the Site will be served by attenuation basins that will outfall to the existing surface water sewer in Gresley Way.

Each of the three development parcels will be served by separate surface water drainage infrastructure to ensure that each parcel can be developed independently thereby facilitating early Site delivery.

The Site falls within the catchment area of Rye Meads Waste Water Treatment Works and Thames Water has confirmed that there is sufficient capacity at Rye Meads to serve the scale of development proposed. There are existing foul water connection points within Gresley Way, which are capable of serving the Site and as per the strategy for surface water drainage, each development parcel would have a separate connection to facilitate early delivery of the Site.

## 11.0 UTILITIES

Utility company asset plans show that the Site benefits from its location adjacent to strategic infrastructure and that all the requisite services (potable water, gas, electricity, and telecommunications) are available. Initial assessment reveals that any upgrades that will be required to serve the Site can be achieved through reinforcement works typical of a scheme of this scale and do not present a constraint upon delivery.

The only utility services crossing the Site are existing overhead electricity cables that run through the Site and these will need to be undergrounded as part of the development of the Site. This would be incorporated within the Site road layout and through the creation of new wayleaves and does not present a constraint to development.

## 12.0 HERITAGE

A preliminary archaeological appraisal of the Site has been undertaken by Archaeological Risk Management. The appraisal concludes that there is no evidence of archaeological evidence within the Site, nor designated heritage assets within its vicinity, that would preclude development. The assessment does, however, reveal evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity within the surrounding area that gives rise to the need for more detailed archaeological Site assessment and evaluation prior to development. Further assessment and evaluation would therefore be carried out prior to development commencing and would be timed to ensure there would be no impact upon commencement.

### 13.0 CONCLUSION

This Statement has set out how a new sustainable neighbourhood, including up to 600 new homes, a new Primary School site and community facilities can be delivered on land East of Gresley Way, Stevenage. The Statement demonstrates that the Site is both sustainable and capable of delivering up to 600 dwellings to help meet the requirements of the East Herts District Plan within the first five years of the District Plan period (2016 – 2021).

East Hertfordshire District Council has identified the need to provide 15,000 homes in East Hertfordshire during the period 2011 – 2031, and is required by National planning policy to identify a deliverable supply of housing during years 1 – 5 of the replacement Local Plan period.

Evidence produced by the Council demonstrates that the already identified growth locations will not deliver the required level of new homes during the first five years of the replacement Plan. It is therefore necessary to allocate land East of Gresley Way in the emerging District Plan to help meet the District's objectively assessed needs during the first five years of the Plan period.

The Concept Masterplan has been formulated to create a new sustainable neighborhood on the edge of Stevenage and includes provision for:

- Up to 600 new homes (including up to 240 affordable dwellings)
- A new Primary School site including Pre-school provision
- Elderly care accommodation including a 60-bed care home and 25 'assisted living' homes
- A new local centre, including convenience retail, and a site for a community building and a new Primary Health Care Centre
- Public open space and strategic landscaping
- Provision for Travelling Show people

To be considered deliverable, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. This Statement has set out a strategy for the delivery of the Site during years 1 – 5 of the District Plan, demonstrating that land East of Gresley Way satisfies all of these criteria and will be deliverable.

The Concept Masterplan that accompanies this Statement sets out a vision for how the Site will be developed and will form the basis for discussions with the District Council, the County Council, the local community and key stakeholders as the

scheme is developed. It provides a vision and design framework for the delivery of a new high quality sustainable neighbourhood on the edge of Stevenage.

The Site has no known constraints to development and would contribute to the three dimensions of sustainability through the provision of both market and affordable homes and a new community hub in a location that is well served by an existing foot and cycleway network and existing bus services, with excellent access to jobs, services and local facilities.

The substantial existing woodland belts that form the Site's boundaries mean that the Site has a very well defined landscape edge and effectively forms a self-contained development parcel between the Site and the open countryside that lies beyond its eastern boundaries.

Therefore whilst the Site currently falls within the Green Belt, the presence of clearly defined physical landscape boundaries results in a high level of containment and physical separation between the Site and the wider Green Belt designation. The Concept Masterplan that forms part of this Statement has been informed by a Landscape Assessment of the Site that has included a review of the landscape character area that it falls within and a review of the contribution that it makes to the Green Belt.

The Assessment finds that the Site is distinct from the surrounding landscape and concludes that development can be accommodated without encroachment into the wider countryside and without giving rise to any perception of 'sprawl' as the Site is contained by logical and clearly defined woodland belts.

The existing woodland belts also present an opportunity to enhance the Site's ecological value and the Concept Masterplan illustrates how these would be retained and enhanced as part of the overall landscape and green space strategy for the Site.

The scheme also makes provision for a vibrant new community hub that will provide a high quality meeting place at the heart of the development, focused around a new Primary School, community facilities and a central park.

In conclusion, the land East of Gresley Way presents the opportunity to create a new high quality residential neighbourhood on the edge of Stevenage that will be a great place to live, with a new community hub at its heart.



## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Concept Masterplan