



Gladman Developments Ltd

North Hertfordshire Local Plan Examination

Matter 11 – The housing allocations and the settlement boundaries: the Category A Villages

Knebworth – All answers relate to allocation KB4

Qu11.37 Are all of the proposed housing allocations deliverable? In particular, are they:

a) Confirmed by all of the landowners involved as being available for the proposed use?

b) Supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided?

c) Deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?

- 1 Gladman can confirm that the land included within allocation KB4 is available for development. Gladman have taken over the promotion of the site, and are working to prepare the range of studies needed to take the site forward from allocation to planning application. Gladman anticipate being able to submit a planning application immediately following the plan being found sound.
- 2 Gladman have appointed Stirling Maynard to consider the transport implications of delivering the scale of development envisaged in allocation KB4. A briefing note from Stirling Maynard is attached as Appendix 1 to this hearing statement, Gladman can provide further more detailed transport information if required by the Inspector. In short the note confirms that safe access can be achieved via Watton Road and that there are a number of options for additional secondary, emergency and pedestrian access. These will be explored through a detailed transport assessment to support the planning application. The note also confirms that the site is highly accessible to a range of services through modes of transport other than the private car.

- 3 With regard to the deliverability of the site Gladman can confirm that the site is both viable and deliverable with the requested infrastructure as currently listed in policy KB4. It is the intention of Gladman that the planning application submitted for the site will match the requirements of the policy. The submitted planning application will be accompanied by detailed reports on, amongst other things, transport, ecology, flood risk, landscape and utility connections. At present work on a number of these studies has been initiated and no show stopping issues have been identified. Whilst it is entirely possible there will be a need to mitigate some issues this is not uncommon in the design and delivery of residential and associated development. Gladman do not consider there to be any infrastructure or environmental issue which would prevent the site from being delivered in the immediate years following the adoption of the plan. It should be noted that these documents build on the work submitted at the submission stage of the Local Plan by Sworders on behalf of the land owners, which have already demonstrated site delivery. The additional work being prepared by Gladman is the additional level of detail which is expected to support a planning application.

- 4 Turley, on behalf of Gladman, have identified a potential shortfall in primary education places in the early part of the plan period until either the new primary school proposed for KB2 is completed or the existing primary school is expanded into site KB4. Gladman consider that such an issue would not be a show stopper in terms of site delivery, a range of potential solutions can be explored during any planning application for KB4 which will allow detailed consideration of the timescales for the delivery of KB2 or an expanded primary school to be considered. One possibility should the shortfall of primary school places be present when site KB4 comes forward would be the inclusion of temporary accommodation on the existing primary school site.

Qu11.38 Are all of the proposed housing allocations justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of the development?

- 5 In relation to KB4, yes. Gladman explore issues related to the landscape and Green Belt impacts of the development of the site in response to the various parts of question 11.40 below, and in the comprehensive report prepared by Pegasus submitted as Appendix 2 to this representation.

- 6 There are not considered to be any other impacts be they heritage, transport, ecology, flooding or utilities which would prevent the site from being developed for the uses outlined in policy KB4. The work undertaken so far indicates no show stopping constraints or potential development impacts which would prevent the development outlined being delivered. Any impacts which do occur can be mitigated through the design of any submitted scheme.

Qu11.39 Are all of the proposed allocations the most appropriate option given the reasonable alternatives?

- 7 Gladman have identified through responses to other matters in this examination the scale of housing need that exists in North Hertfordshire, and the role to which settlements such as Knebworth need to play in sustainably accommodating housing needs. Sustainable settlements such as Knebworth require housing growth to retain their vitality. The Council have, to their credit, proactively planned to grow Knebworth in a sustainable way by identifying a reasonable level of housing growth for the settlement and identifying the current and future infrastructure needs of the settlement. In that context it is important to note that KB4 will provide land for both residential growth and provide space for educational infrastructure.
- 8 Given the nature of the settlement all options for development in Knebworth would require Green Belt release, when considered alongside the identified level of housing need and infrastructure it is considered that the proposed allocations are appropriate in the context of providing the housing growth necessary for Knebworth. Detailed assessments of the impacts of the development of KB4 on the Green Belt are discussed below in relation to question 11.40.

Qu11.40 Sites KB1, KB2 and KB4 compromise of land in the Green Belt. For each:

a) Do exceptional circumstances exist to warrant the allocation of the site for new housing in the Green Belt? If so, what are they?

- 9 Yes. Gladman consider that there are two contributing factors to making the exceptional circumstances case for removing site KB4 from the Green Belt. Firstly, there is a pressing need to deliver more housing in North Hertfordshire. The government has made apparent through both the Housing White Paper: Fixing Our Broken Housing Market and the more recent consultation on Planning for the right homes in the right places that there is an urgent need to deliver more housing. In particular the more recent consultation seeks to address areas where there is high demand for housing and areas in which there are extreme levels of unaffordability. North Hertfordshire has a current median house price to earnings ratio of 10.52, clearly there is an extreme need to tackle this level of unaffordability – the provision of new housing in sustainable settlements such as Knebworth is clearly a key part of helping tackle this problem.
- 10 Knebworth is a category A village in the emerging Local Plan settlement hierarchy, but clearly it offers much more in terms of services than would ordinarily be found in a village. It has a supermarket, range of shops, library, GP surgery, primary school and a range of community facilities. It also has excellent public transport routes (both bus and rail) to higher order settlements. The settlement itself is entirely surrounded by Green Belt. However, given the pressing need for housing and the sustainability of the settlement, the Green Belt should not automatically be a reason to prevent the necessary growth of Knebworth. Subject to the of robust assessment required to justify the release of parcels of Green Belt in terms of the contributions those parcels make to the function of the Green Belt.

- 11 The second part of the exceptional circumstance case relates to the ability of the site to provide land for additional education infrastructure which can serve both Knebworth, and potentially the surrounding settlements, both inside and outside North Hertfordshire. Gladman have instructed Turley Economics to look in detail at the education provision in Hertfordshire and to outline the way in which education provision on site KB4 is a vital part of providing for the future education needs of the area. Given the well documented difficulty that Hertfordshire County Council have had in securing a viable site for the delivery of secondary education provision, given the future needs of Knebworth and given the lack of other suitable sites (for a variety of access and deliverability reasons) it is considered that the provision of educational space is a key component of the exceptional circumstance test.
- 12 The Turley report (Appendix 3) finds that secondary aged pupils residing in Knebworth are currently in a less secure and sustainable position than their Great Ashby counterparts and concludes that additional provision in Knebworth is needed. The analysis found the following:
- Current trends show that Knebworth pupils travel further to attend secondary school in comparison to Great Ashby pupils. This is due, in part, to the school admissions process. Great Ashby is a Priority Area only for schools in the Stevenage School Planning Area, whereas the Knebworth area is a Priority Area for schools in Stevenage as well as further away.
 - The Priority Area mechanism means that pupils residing in the Priority Area will be admitted to school before pupils residing outside of the Priority Area will be considered. Currently, Knebworth pupils attend 7 schools, 3 of which Knebworth is not a Priority Area. Should the number of pupils increase within the Priority Area, Knebworth pupils may no longer be allocated places. Given that there is forecast to be a deficit in places in the school planning areas attended by Knebworth pupils this is likely to become a reality.
 - There are 6 secondary schools within the Stevenage School Planning Area, for which Great Ashby is a Priority Area. Of these 6 schools, pupils residing in Great Ashby currently attend 5. All 5 are within a 3 mile walking distance from Great Ashby. A walking distance of 3 miles is the statutory maximum distance that a child over the age of 8 is expected to walk to school as stated in the Education Act, 1996.
 - There is only 1 secondary school within a 3 mile walking distance of Knebworth – Barnwell School. This school is expected to be at capacity in the forecast data to 2020/21.

- HCC's 'Healthier, Safer, Greener Journeys to School: Hertfordshire's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) For School and Colleges 2017/18' strategy document aims to reduce travel to school for sustainability reasons, in terms of reducing traffic and pollution.

- Mapping of housing allocations demonstrates that new housing is evenly spread across Stevenage and surrounding areas, and does not indicate the need for a larger school in Great Ashby. Rather, two schools that serve different areas of housing development would better suit the sustainability aims of HCC in terms of reducing car journeys, and the subsequent traffic and pollution that arises from travelling long distances to schools.

13 In conclusion, Knebworth pupils only have access to one secondary school within a 3 mile walking distance, and this school is expected to be at capacity in 2020/21, compared to Great Ashby pupils who already attend 5 schools within a 3 mile walking distance. Housing allocations in Great Ashby will not generate demand for an 8FE school, and forecast data shows that there will be less deficit at schools attended by Great Ashby pupils than those attended by Knebworth pupils. Due to distance, Knebworth pupils cannot be expected to benefit from a new school located in Great Ashby. Nor will provision of a new secondary school in Great Ashby free up places at other schools already attended by Knebworth pupils given that they only attend one school in common (Hitchin Girl's School).

14 Hertfordshire County Council's basis for an 8FE school is not clear; and there is no policy basis for a school of this size. Demand arising from new housing indicates a need for education provision in the south of Stevenage as well as to the north.

15 Therefore the combination of housing needs, including the governments clear desire to see housebuilding boosted in areas of extreme market pressure such as North Hertfordshire and the opportunity to provide space for a significant new educational facility are considered to make the exceptional circumstance case for releasing site KB4 from the Green Belt. We discuss in relation to the other questions how the harm to the Green Belt from the sites release will be addressed and how the development proposals will provide for a robust and defensible boundary to be created, which will endure beyond the plan period.

b) What is the nature and extent of the harm to the Green Belt of removing the site from it?

16 Gladman have commissioned Pegasus to prepare a supporting landscape and greenbelt statement to answer the questions set out by the Inspector. The report prepared is included in full as Appendix 2 of this hearing statement. The report contains detailed assessment and photo

montages indicating how the development of site KB4 will be undertaken, and how with structural planting the development proposal would appear at the end of the plan period.

- 17 The North Hertfordshire Green Belt Review considers that Parcel A and B (of KB4) make significant contributions to the Green Belt, and that Parcels C and D make moderate contributions. There is commonality of professional opinion that Parcels A and B make greater contributions than Parcels C and D. All four parcels are already substantially influenced by the adjoining settlement edge of Knebworth and have a clear 'urban-edge' feel to them, with the presence of apparently well-used informal/unofficial access routes (particularly around some of the field boundaries) and the extensive presence of litter on road verges. Built form on or near to the edge of Knebworth is also already clearly visible in many views from the east, including the electricity substation/telecoms mast and residential property at the south-east corner of Parcel A, the pumping station on the northern edge of Parcel B, and Swangley's Farm on the north-east edge of Parcel D.
- 18 Development on any or all of the four parcels would not reduce the narrowest separation distance between the respective developed edges of Knebworth and Stevenage as, at approximately 550m, this occurs adjacent to the existing development edge to the north of Parcel A. Furthermore, the southward expansion of Stevenage is restricted by the presence of the Hertford railway line along its southern edge. Thus, development on the Site would not result in coalescence between Knebworth and Stevenage.
- 19 In this context, the online Oxford Dictionary defines 'sprawl' as "the disorganized and unattractive expansion of an urban or industrial area into the adjoining countryside." In this instance, the marginal expansion into the countryside adjacent to Knebworth would be neither disorganized nor unattractive, being a carefully considered design in keeping with the local settlement pattern and with extensive green infrastructure. Indeed, the proposed planted buffer along the eastern edge of the Site would in fact soften views towards the existing urban edge of Knebworth. Development on the Site would not therefore result in "unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas".
- 20 The Indicative Landscape Masterplan for the Site shows that development could be accommodated in line with the decreasing (north to south) contribution to Green Belt functions. Built development would generally be at lower densities in the northern parcel, where the contribution to Green Belt purposes is considered (in the Green Belt Review) to be greatest, and the gap between Knebworth and Stevenage is at its narrowest (though it should be noted that development on the Site would not result in the narrowest width of this gap being reduced). Further to the south where the contribution of the Site to Green Belt purposes is lower and the separation between Knebworth and Stevenage greater, the density of

development would be higher. The Indicative Landscape Masterplan and the Indicative Photomontages (at Appendix 2, Figure 4) also demonstrate how structural buffer planting on the eastern boundary of the Site would both form a strong and permanent boundary between Knebworth and the remaining Green Belt, and help to minimise the extent of visual intrusion into the surrounding Green Belt landscape to the east and south-east. The openness and permanence of the remaining Green Belt between Knebworth and Stevenage would be maintained.

- 21 In landscape and visual terms, the effects of development on the Site on the Green Belt would be limited to some slight encroachment into the countryside to the east of Knebworth. It is important to note however that there is already some existing built form within the Green Belt in the immediate vicinity of the Site: the electricity sub-station, telecoms mast and adjacent residential property on the south-east boundary of Parcel A (approximately 215m from the edge of Knebworth), the pumping station on Watton Road on the northern edge of Parcel B (approximately 50m from the edge of Knebworth), and Swangley's Farm on the northern edge of Parcel D (approximately 60m from the edge of Knebworth). The presence of built form within this part of the Green Belt would not therefore be an entirely new feature, though the scale and density of development within the Site would be greater than at present. There is also commonality of professional opinion that none of the parcels contribute to the setting of an historic town due to the separation distance between the parcels and the Knebworth Conservation Area.

c) To what extent would the consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt be ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonable practicable extent?

d) If this site were to be developed as proposed, would the adjacent Green Belt continue to serve at least one of the five purposes of Green Belts, or would the Green Belt function be undermined by the site's allocation?

- 22 In developing site KB4 the Green Belt would continue to form an important function, in fact the function of the Green Belt would be strengthened through the provision of an enhanced boundary to the east of Knebworth. The boundary would strengthen the definition of the edge of the settlement and ensure that no future coalescence takes place between Knebworth and Stevenage.

- 23 Key features of the Indicative Landscape Masterplan (see Appendix 2 Figure 3) are the extensive areas of green infrastructure within the Site and the substantial planted landscape buffer along the eastern boundary of the Site. An indication of the appearance of this landscaped buffer, as perceived from within the adjacent remaining parts of the Green Belt, is provided by the Indicative Photomontages at Appendix 2 Figure 4.

- 24 Development on the Site would result in a slight expansion of the developed edge of Knebworth into the adjoining countryside. However, as noted above there is already some built form within the Green Belt, and on the edge of the Site (the pumping station, Swangley's Farm, and the electricity substation/telecoms mast and adjoining detached residential property), and development on some parts of the Site, particularly Parcel D, should therefore be considered as infill.
- 25 Development on the Site would clearly lead to the character of the Site changing from arable farmland to high quality residential and educational development and green infrastructure, but such direct effects would be limited to the Site itself. Once established and maturing, the proposed landscape buffer, combined with the extensive areas of green infrastructure within the Site, would result in only limited perceptual effects on the character of the remaining Green Belt outside of the Site. Indeed, the proposed landscape buffer would soften the appearance of the existing built form on the eastern edge of Knebworth when compared to current views from the east, albeit the landscape buffer would be closer to any such receptors.
- 26 Furthermore, the indicative landscape masterplan for the Site would be entirely in line with the development guidelines published as part of the North Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, particularly:
- development on the Site would result in the creation of new footpaths and green infrastructure;
 - development on the Site would make use of new woodland planting to screen the development and provide ecological diversity; and
 - development on the Site would not result in coalescence between Stevenage and Knebworth.
- 27 Effects on visual amenity as experienced from within the adjoining Green Belt to the east and south-east of the Site would be very limited, with the appearance of the developed edge of Knebworth changing from clearly visible built form as at present, to a planted landscape buffer which would provide an effect transitional zone between the open countryside and the built form of Knebworth. Development on the Site is unlikely to be discernible from elsewhere in the Green Belt.
- 28 In summary, development on the Site would result in limited expansion into the countryside, but would not impact upon the other purposes of the remaining Green Belt on the adjoining land, such as controlling the unrestricted sprawl from large built-up areas (Knebworth is not considered to be a large built-up area), preventing coalescence of adjoining towns

(development on the Site would retain the minimum separation distance of approximately 550m of farmland between Knebworth and Stevenage), and preserving the setting and character of historic towns. Development on the Site would not result in notable change to the openness and permanence of the remaining Green Belt.

e) Will the Green Belt boundary proposed need to be altered at the end of the plan period, or is it capable of enduring beyond then?

29 No. Gladman consider that in developing site KB4 it will be possible to create a strong defined Green Belt boundary, which can endure beyond the plan period. In order to demonstrate how such a boundary may look Gladman have instructed Pegasus to consider the issue in detail, the photo montages and landscape work prepared is included in full as Appendix 2 to this representation.

30 By the end of the plan period, the proposed planted landscape buffer which would form the eastern boundary of any development on the Site would have become a substantial landscape feature in its own right, as demonstrated by the indicative photomontages at Appendix 2 Figure 4. As such it would provide a strong, enduring and defensible boundary between Knebworth and the adjoining Green Belt.

31 Furthermore, being formed from an appropriate mix of native tree and shrub species (including both field layer and larger/taller canopy layer tree species), the eventual size and longevity of this planted landscape buffer would result in a substantial, recognisable and permanent boundary.

f) Are the proposed Green Belt boundaries consistent with the Plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development?

32 Yes. As previously stated Knebworth is a highly sustainable settlement which functions well above its currently identified role as a category A village. It is well positioned to meet identified development needs on sustainable sites adjacent to the existing built up boundary of the settlement. Gladman have already outlined the reasoning behind the exceptional circumstances for the release of sites from the Green Belt and considered the impact on the Green Belt which would be had in releasing KB4 for development. When these are factored in alongside the sustainability of the settlement it is clear that site KB4 is consistent with the plans strategy for meeting its identified needs for sustainable development.

g) Has the Green Belt boundary around the site been defined clearly, using physical features that are readily and recognisable and likely to be permanent? Does it avoid including land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open?

- 33 Gladman outline within Appendix 2 the full explanation as to how the Green Belt boundary will be clearly defined. The indicative landscape masterplan clearly shows the way in which a 15m native tree belt will be used to create a natural, permanent, strong, physical boundary to the site. The proposed native tree boundaries are further detailed in the wire frame photo montages also contained within Appendix 2. From the photo montages it is clear to see how the new planting will create a boundary which strengthens the Green Belt edge and provides a more definable and rural edge to the settlement than currently exists.

Qu11.41 Is the proposed settlement boundary:

a) consistent with the methodology for identifying the settlement boundaries?

b) appropriate and justified

- 34 Yes. As discussed above site KB4 will contribute towards the creation of an appropriate and justified settlement boundary for Knebworth which is capable of enduring beyond the plan period. The boundary in the case of site KB4 has been carefully considered to ensure that the development needs of Knebworth can be met, whilst providing substantial new infrastructure, and allowing the creation of a strong defensible boundary to the settlement.

Appendix 1

KB4 Transport Overview

KB4 – WATTON ROAD, KNEBWORTH

TRANSPORT OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This development site has the potential to deliver up to 200 residential units with land also allocated for potential primary or secondary education uses. Current plans indicate the residential units to the south of Watton Road with the education use to the north. Although at this stage a full Transport Assessment has not been completed, sufficient initial feasibility work has been undertaken to confirm that there are no material or severe transportation impacts which would prevent the development coming forward. In particular:

Access

The main access to the site would be via Watton Road. Between London Road and Bell Close this is typically over 6 metres wide so is of sufficient standard to accommodate anticipated traffic flows. There is some traffic calming along its length to reduce speeds. The actual access junction would likely be a roundabout with arms into the site to the north and south of Watton Road.

Several additional local roads can provide secondary access to the site (for example Oakfields Road could provide a minor access to the school for example for staff parking) but the standards of some of these roads is variable. A full access strategy for the site will determine which roads might be suitable for secondary/emergency access, which might provide pedestrian/cycle access and which might not actually provide access to the site at all. Some local improvements might also be possible.

Accessibility

The site is well located to allow travel to a full range of local facilities by walking or cycling. Knebworth town centre with a range of shops is just a short distance to the west, there will be a Primary or Secondary School on site and there are a range of local employment opportunities. In addition Knebworth has a Doctors Surgery, Public Houses and a range of other leisure activities.

In addition Stevenage, with a full range of strategic facilities, is located approximately five kilometres to the north and there is a regular bus service throughout the day with a typical journey time of about 20 minutes. To the south buses run to Hatfield and Hemel Hempstead. The nearest bus stops are on Stevenage Road a short walk from the site.

Finally Knebworth has its own railway station within walking distance of the site. It is on the East Coast Main Line with half-hourly services to Kings Cross and hour services to Peterborough and Cambridge.

Traffic Impact

The main traffic movements from the site will be via Watton Road and the B187. Watton Road meets the B187 at a roundabout junction and initial analysis confirms sufficient capacity should be available for the predicted level of flow. By observation there is some low key congestion on the High Street, mainly caused by the on-street parking bays, but there is also the potential for some local improvements.

Overall therefore the traffic impacts of the development proposals should not be material or “severe”.

CONCLUSIONS

This is a development site located in a large village with a good range of local facilities. It is well located to encourage travel by the more sustainable modes of transport and there should be sufficient capacity on the local road network, perhaps with some local improvement, to accommodate the additional traffic generated. Therefore in transportation terms, there would appear to be no reason for the site not to come forward.

Appendix 2

Supporting Landscape and Green Belt Statement - Pegasus

EXAMINATION OF NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN 2011- 2031

SUPPORTING LANDSCAPE AND GREENBELT STATEMENT: KNEBWORTH SITE KB4

ON BEHALF OF GLADMAN DEVELOPMENTS

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

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APPENDIX 2:	EXTRACTS FROM NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE GREEN BELT REVIEW
APPENDIX 3:	EXTRACT FROM NORTH HERTS LANDSCAPE STUDY (CHARACTER, SENSITIVITY AND CAPACITY)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Landscape Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Gladman Developments in respect of a parcel of land to the east of Knebworth, **Hertfordshire referred to as "Knebworth Site KB4" in the draft North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 ('the Site')**.

1.2 In the context of the Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (**'the Examination'**), this Landscape Statement provides supporting technical evidence on landscape and visual matters in relation to the proposed removal of the Site from the Metropolitan Green Belt and its allocation in the Local Plan for residential development.

1.3 The main objective of this Landscape Statement is to review the contribution of the existing site towards the purposes (in relation to landscape and visual matters) of the Green Belt, as stated in Paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In particular, this Landscape Statement considers the specific questions that are of relevance to landscape and visual matters as raised by the Planning Inspector in Paragraph 11.40 of **the "Schedule of Matters and Issues for Examination"** for the Examination – see Appendix 1.

1.4 An initial desk top study was carried out to review a range of published information concerning the Site, including planning policy of relevance to landscape and visual matters, published landscape character assessments, landscape designations and recent publications from North Hertfordshire District Council. The original Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for potential development on the Site that was submitted in 2016, as set out within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Proposed Submission, was also reviewed. A visit to the Site and the surrounding area was carried out in December 2017 to verify the findings of the desk-based review and to confirm the extent of the visual influence of the Site.

1.5 The following illustrative and other material supports this Statement:

- Figure 1: Landscape Designations and Photomontage Locations (P17-2776_03);
- Figure 2: Capacity Plan Proposal (7521-L-11H);
- Figure 3: Indicative Landscape Masterplan (P17-2776_01 Rev A);

- Figure 4: Indicative Wireline Photomontages to illustrate the likely effects of the landscape buffer proposed for the eastern edge of the Site (P17-2776_02);
- Appendix 1: Extract from Schedule of Matters and Issues for the Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031;
- Appendix 2: Extracts from North Hertfordshire Green Belt Review; and
- Appendix 3: Extract from North Herts Landscape Study (Character, Sensitivity and Capacity).

2. RELEVANT POLICY AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies a presumption in favour of **sustainable development**, which is defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Development should be in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan, as well as policies set out in the NPPF.

2.2 The NPPF states that **“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development”** and that there are **“three dimensions** to sustainable development: economic, social and **environmental”**. The environmental role is described as **“contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use of natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy”**.

2.3 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF defines the five purposes of Green Belts as:

- “to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.”

2.4 With regard to defined Green Belts, Paragraph 81 of the NPPF provides advice to local planning authorities to plan positively to:

“...enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity....”

2.5 Paragraph 87 of the NPPF reinforces that development within the Green Belt should be appropriate, stating:

"As with previous Green Belt Policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances."

- 2.6 Paragraph 88 provides additional emphasis, stating that when considering planning applications:

"Local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

- 2.7 Paragraph 83 considers the potential for alterations of Green Belt boundaries, stating:

"Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period."

- 2.8 Paragraph 85 supports this aim and states that, with regard to defining boundaries, that local planning authorities should **"satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period"** and to **"define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent"**.

- 2.9 With regard to the effect of existing villages on the openness of the Green Belt, Paragraph 86 states:

"If it is necessary to prevent development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt.

If, however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded **from the Green Belt."**

- 2.10 NPPF Paragraphs 109 - 125 of Section 11 focus on conserving and enhancing the local and natural environment. The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by **"protecting and**

enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils”
and **“minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in**
biodiversity where **possible”**.

2.11 NPPF Paragraph 114 notes that local planning authorities should:

“set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green **infrastructure.”**

North Hertfordshire Green Belt Review

2.12 The North Hertfordshire Green Belt Review (**‘the Review’**) was published in July 2016, based on an original review undertaken in 2013/14 and incorporating amendments made following consultations. The Review forms part of the evidence base in support of the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan. Part 1 of the Review is considered relevant to this Landscape Statement, being **“a strategic level review of the current Green Belt and a more detailed assessment of potential development sites”**. The Site is one of the potential development sites which are considered in the Review.

2.13 It is important to note that for the purposes of the Review, the settlement of Knebworth is considered to be a town, based on its population and facilities, including a railway station.

2.14 The Site lies within Parcel 8 Knebworth (see p. 20 of the Review), and within the eastern parts of Sectors 8b and 8c (see pp. 42-43 of the Review). Specifically, the Site comprises sites 55, 57, 58 and 336 (see pp. 115-116 of the Review). Extracts of the Review which relate to the Site are provided at Appendix 2. It is important to note that the Site, being made up of the four sites considered in the Review, is considerably smaller than Sectors 8b and 8c as described in the Review.

North Hertfordshire Landscape Study (Character, Sensitivity & Capacity)

2.15 The Site lies within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes – see Appendix 3.

2.16 The Landscape Study considers the LCA to be of overall moderate condition and strong robustness.

2.17 The inherent landscape character sensitivities are described as:

“Overall Datchworth Settled Slopes is considered to be of low sensitivity. The largely open Character Area is heavily influenced by the settlements of Stevenage and Knebworth, as well as the major transport corridors.”

2.18 The inherent visual sensitivities are described as:

“In visual terms, Datchworth Settled Slopes is considered to be of moderate sensitivity. Views within the Character Area are relatively open. However, areas of settlement and transport corridors have impinged on views into the Character Area, including the close proximity of Stevenage.”

2.19 The local landscape is considered to be of low value, described thus:

“Overall Datchworth Settled Slopes is considered to be of low landscape value. The area is heavily influenced by human activity, the landform is not particularly memorable and little remains of any semi-natural vegetation or habitats.”

2.20 The landscape character assessment includes an assessment of the LCA’s capacity to accommodate development of different types and scales. The Site would fall into the **“large urban extensions and new settlements (>5ha)”** development type, and the capacity to accommodate such development is described thus:

“This type of development would not be entirely appropriate within this Character Area, as it could cause coalescence of the settlements of Stevenage and Knebworth. Visual impacts could also be high, due to the openness of Datchworth Settled Slopes. Increased housing development would be likely to affect the existing narrow lanes that remain in the Character Area, which could remove aspects of the remaining character of the landscape. Any development that does proceed should be well contained by vegetation to minimise the extent of visual intrusion into the Datchworth Settled Slopes.

The landscape capacity for major urban extensions or new settlements is considered to be moderate to low.”

2.21 The landscape character assessment also provides guidelines for both landscape and built development. The guidelines for landscape management are:

- “Encourage restoration of historic hedgerows and management of relic hedges;
- Consider the possibilities of creating footpath routes in the area; and

- Consider opportunities for woodland planting.”

2.22 The built development guidelines relevant to the Site are given as:

- “Encourage the use of woodland planting to screen new development and to provide ecological diversity;
- Ensure that new development does not lead to coalescence of the settlements of Stevenage and Knebworth;
- Ensure that new development does not necessitate the removal of existing woodland blocks or hedgerows;
- Ensure that lighting associated with new development does not create additional urbanising influences on the Character Area;
- Encourage the integration of transport corridors into the Character Area through carefully designed earthworks and planting schemes; and
- Use the opportunity of any new developments to create new accessible green infrastructure for the local population.”

2.23 The potential opportunities and constraints raised are addressed later in this Landscape Statement.

Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study for Edge of Settlement in North Hertfordshire (November 2006, updated 2011)

[Extracted from originally submitted 2016 LVIA]

“This study provides an assessment of the landscape peripheral to the four towns of Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock and Royston and the village of Knebworth as to its potential to accommodate housing and associated development.

It should be taken into consideration that the 2011 Landscape Character Assessment provides a more recent assessment of landscape capacity and sensitivity, albeit at a larger scale.

According to this study, Parcel A has a moderate sensitivity and moderate-high capacity. Parcel B has a high sensitivity, but the area between the existing settlement and pumping station has a low sensitivity. The capacity of Parcel B is given as moderate, with the northwest corner having a high

capacity. Parcel C has a high sensitivity and low capacity, while Parcel D has a moderate sensitivity and capacity.

This would suggest that the sensitivity and capacity varies considerably across the site, and that the northern and southern extents of the site have the greatest capacity to accommodate change, with Parcel C having the greatest sensitivity.”

3. SITE CONTEXT

3.1 As previously noted, a comprehensive landscape and visual impact assessment was submitted in November 2016 in support of potential development on the Site, as set out within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Proposed Submission. It is not therefore considered necessary to repeat that detailed assessment of the landscape and visual baseline or the effects of potential development on the Site. A summary description of the Site and its environs is provided below.

Site Description

3.2 The Site lies immediately to the east of the settlement of Knebworth, within the south-east part of North Hertfordshire District – refer to Figure 1: Landscape Designations and Photomontage Locations. The northernmost part of the Site lies approximately 550m to the south-west of Stevenage at its closest, with the edge of Stevenage marked by the Hertford railway line.

3.3 The Site is divided into four land parcels, together comprising two arable fields and parts of two other arable fields. For the sake of clarity, and as per the previously submitted LVIA, the four parcels are referred to in this Landscape Statement as Parcels A-D (running from north to south). These relate to the parcels considered in the Green Belt Review (pp. 115-116) as follows:

- Parcel A – Site 58;
- Parcel B – Site 55;
- Parcel C – Site 336; and
- Parcel D – Site 57.

3.4 The Site benefits from strong visual and physical containment to the west, provided by existing residential development within Knebworth. Parcel D is further contained **by the farmstead buildings of Swangley's Farm** on its north-east boundary, while Plot B surrounds an existing (water) pumping station to the south of Watton Road – see Figure 2: Capacity Plan Proposal. An electricity sub-station and telecoms mast, together with an adjoining detached residential property, lie at the south-east corner of Parcel A (to the north of Watton Road and approximately 215m from the edge of Knebworth). Both the pumping station and the sub-station/residential property have substantial tree cover around them. Powerlines, mounted on twin timber poles, run north-west from the sub-station, marking the north-east

boundary of Parcel A, while the existing Knebworth recreation ground, including avenues of pollarded lime trees, lies adjacent to west edge of the parcel.

Site Context

- 3.5 The topography of the Site and its environs is very gently undulating, rising gently to the south/south-east (Datchworth and Woolmer Green) and falling gently to the north/north-east.
- 3.6 Tree cover and field boundary vegetation is variable – more limited to the east and north until the Hertford railway line, stronger to the west (including within Knebworth itself and at Knebworth Park). A small woodland to the east of the residential property known as Longdene is a local landscape feature, and tree cover increases to the south around Datchworth/Datchworth Green and Oaklands.
- 3.7 Public Bridleway Knebworth 001 runs from Oaklands Road north-east towards Stevenage, just within the north-west boundary of the Site. There are no other Public Rights of Way within or in the immediate vicinity of the Site. At the time of the field survey, a number of informal access routes appeared to be in regular use, particularly around the perimeter of some of the arable fields. The land parcels are also separated and bounded by minor roads.
- 3.8 There are no water features identified within the Site or its immediate vicinity.
- 3.9 **As previously noted, the 'new town' of Stevenage lies approximately 550m to the north-east of Parcel A at its closest, while Knebworth lies immediately to the west of the Site. The village of Woolmer Green lies approximately 850m to the south of Parcel D, with Datchworth approximately 1.3km to the east-south-east.**

Designations

- 3.10 The Site does not lie within any landscape designations, either national/statutory or local/non-statutory. As previously noted, the Site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt in its current extents.
- 3.11 Knebworth Park, approximately 1.8km to the north-east at its closest, is a Registered Park, while the Knebworth Conservation Area lies approximately 325m to the west at its closest. Both are visually separated from the Site.

Summary Description of the Site and its Surroundings

- 3.12 The Site comprises an area of very gently undulating and generally open arable farmland on the eastern edge of the settlement of Knebworth. An electricity substation and telecoms mast, together with an adjoining detached residential property, lie at the south-east corner of Parcel A, and a (water) pumping station lies on Watton Road, part way along the northern boundary of Parcel B. Both these utility structures have substantial tree cover around them. **Swangley's Farm lies on the north-east boundary of Parcel D.**
- 3.13 The Site does not fall within any landscape designations, but lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- 3.14 The Site lies within the Datchworth Settled Slopes LCA, which is considered to of low landscape character sensitivity, moderate visual sensitivity, and low landscape value.

4. INDICATIVE DETAILS OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE SITE

- 4.1 The detail of any potential development on the Site is not yet finalised. However, an indicative landscape masterplan for the Site, indicating possible areas of built form and green infrastructure is provided at Figure 3.
- 4.2 In particular, the indicative landscape masterplan provides details of the proposed planted landscape buffer that would form the strong eastern boundary of any potential development on the Site, adding landscape character as well as biodiversity benefits to the boundary between the Site the remaining Green Belt land. The indicative management prescriptions for the landscape buffer shown on the masterplan demonstrate how the planting could be managed for long-term benefits.
- 4.3 The landscape masterplan also shows details of the proposed new public footpaths within the Site and along the proposed landscape buffer.

5. PUBLISHED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

National Character Area

5.1 The Site lies within the National Character Area (NCA) 111: Northern Thames Basin, and also close to the boundaries of NCA110: Chilterns, and NCA86: South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands – see Landscape Character Plan within originally submitted LVIA. Full details of all three NCAs were provided within the previously submitted LVIA, but the key characteristics of NCA111 are described as:

- **“The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the ‘Bagshot Hills’ are notable to** the north-west and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.
- Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.
- Areas capped by glacial sands and gravels have resulted in nutrient-poor, free-draining soils which support remnant lowland heathlands, although these are now small. Areas that have alluvial deposits present are well drained and fertile.
- The water bearing underlying Chalk beds are a main source of recharge for the principal London Basin Chalk aquifer.
- A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area.
- The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present.
- The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting historical activity. Informal patterns of 18th-century or earlier enclosure

reflect medieval colonisation of the heaths. Regular planned enclosures dating from the Romano-British period are a subtle but nationally important feature on the flat land to the south-east of the area. In the Essex heathlands 18th- and 19th-century enclosure of heathlands and commons followed by extensive 20th-century field enlargement is dominant.

- Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands. Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.
- The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.
- Rich archaeology including sites related to Roman occupation, with the Roman capital at Colchester and City of St Albans (Verulamium) and links to London. Landscape parklands surrounding 16th- and 17th-century rural estates and country houses built for London merchants are a particular feature in Hertfordshire.
- The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements, with the creation of new settlements such as the pioneering garden city at Welwyn and the planned town at Basildon.
- Brick-built dwellings are characteristic from the late 17th century onwards. Prior to this dwellings and farm buildings tended to be timber built with weatherboarding, now mainly painted white but **traditionally black or tarred, and whitewashed plaster walls.** "

5.2 Although close to the boundaries of NCA110 and NCA86, the Site is (visually) separated from these NCAs by Knebworth and Stevenage/the Hertford railway respectively. Any effects on these neighbouring NCAs would be perceptual or experiential only, and would be very limited in extent.

District Landscape Character

5.3 As previously noted, the Site lies within LCA 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes. Key characteristics are described as:

- “Large scale open arable farmland;
- Parkland in the north;
- Edges of Knebworth settlement;
- Prominent in the landscape.”

5.4 Distinctive features include:

- “Crossed by A1 (M);
- Crossed by mainline railway;
- Telecommunication towers and water pumping stations.”

5.5 The landscape character is described thus:

“Gently undulating landform enclosing the settlement of Knebworth. Open and mainly arable farmland. Parkland to the north given over to use as golf course. Character Area abuts the railway in the north which encloses the southern end of Stevenage. Open views to edges of Knebworth settlement.”

5.6 Condition, robustness, sensitivity/capacity and development guidelines are described in Section 2 above.

5.7 Detailed consideration of landscape character and the potential effects of the development on the landscape character of the Site and its environs were provided in the original LVIA. The assessed potential effects on landscape character are summarised thus:

“The overall landscape effect of the proposals has been assessed as negligible upon the large-scale National **Character Area ‘Northern Thames Basin’, within which the Site sits.**

There will be a low magnitude of change to the district level **landscape character area ‘Datchworth Settled Slopes’, and an overall minor adverse effect.**

During construction, adverse effects on landscape character will occur due to construction of roads, buildings and attenuation features. This level of effect is judged to be no worse than the effect upon completion.

On completion, the effect of the proposed development upon the landscape character of the Site and its immediate context will be moderate adverse, as open arable farmland will be replaced by dwellings and educational development, however the established framework of surrounding trees and hedgerows will be retained and reinforced where feasible, limiting the extent of the effects.

10 years after planting, there will be localised long-term landscape benefits as a result of proposed planting, open space, drainage features, sports fields, and the provision of wide, linear green corridors. A network of paths will provide public access through the development, and good connectivity to the countryside beyond. This comprehensive green infrastructure, and mitigating planting, will reduce the overall effect on the landscape character of the Site and its immediate context to minor-moderate adverse.”

6. VISUAL APPRAISAL

6.1 A full appraisal of the likely effects on local visual amenity that might arise as a result of development on the Site was provided in the original LVIA. The summary of this visual appraisal is provided below:

“During construction, adverse effects on visual amenity will occur due to construction of roads, houses and attenuation features. This level of effect is judged to be no worse than the effect upon completion.

Only residents of dwellings immediately adjacent to the Site would experience noticeable change to views. These include **residents of Watton Road, Old Lane, Swangley’s Lane and Haygarth**. Initial effects on visual amenity range from moderate-major adverse to minor adverse. Intervening trees and built features help to filter views towards the Site.

Users of the adjacent Public Right of Way network will experience varying levels of effects on views, depending on the proximity to the Site and direction of view. Initial effects on visual amenity of footpath users ranges from minor adverse to negligible.

Users of the Watton Road, Old Lane and Swangley’s Road would experience change to views looking towards the Site. Initial effects on visual amenity are predicted to be moderate adverse at worst, reducing over time and with increased distance from the built development.

10 years after completion, effects on visual amenity will reduce, as a result of proposed planting and significant areas of green infrastructure, helping the built development assimilate more readily with its surroundings, and filtering views from nearby receptors.”

6.2 Following the field survey undertaken in December 2017 for this Landscape Statement, it is considered that this summary from the 2016 LVIA provides an accurate assessment of likely effects on local visual amenity, with views towards the Site being restricted by the Hertford railway line to the north/north-east, the gently undulating topography and sunken nature of many of the minor roads to the east and south-east, and by the existing built form of Knebworth to the west. It should also be noted that many of the residential properties on the eastern edge of Knebworth are orientated such that their main aspects do face directly towards the Site.

6.3 The effectiveness (in terms of reducing adverse effects on visual amenity) of the proposed landscaped buffer along the eastern edge of the Site is illustrated in the Indicative Wireline Photomontages at Figure 4.

7. GREEN BELT REVIEW

Overview

- 7.1 The Site is identified within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Proposed Submission October 2016 as suitable for residential (and educational) development, complete with extensive areas of green infrastructure. In order for the Site to be developed, the boundary of the Green Belt would need to be altered to exclude the Site from the Green Belt.
- 7.2 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of Green Belts are "their openness and their permanence" (Paragraph 79). In defining new boundaries to the Green Belt, it must be ensured that these characteristics are not diminished for the areas remaining within the Green Belt designation as a direct result of development on the identified sites.
- 7.3 Set out below are detailed responses to the specific questions raised by the **Planning Inspector in the "Schedule of Matters and Issues for Examination" for the Examination**, as set out at Appendix 1, where these relate to landscape and visual matters. Matters not relating to landscape and visual matters as considered elsewhere in the submissions by Gladman Developments.

Detailed Response to Inspector's Questions

Paragraph 11.40, Question (b)

What is the nature and extent of the harm to the Green Belt of removing the site from it?

- 7.4 The Indicative Landscape Masterplan (see Figure 3) shows how development on the Site would respond to the sensitivities of both the Green Belt edge and the existing settlement of Knebworth.
- 7.5 The North Hertfordshire Green Belt Review considers that Parcel A and B make significant contributions to the Green Belt, and that Parcels C and D make moderate contributions. Whilst there is commonality of professional opinion that Parcels A and B make greater contributions than Parcels C and D, I do not however consider that Parcels A and B make significant contributions. All four parcels are already substantially influenced by the adjoining settlement edge of Knebworth and have a **clear 'urban-edge' feel to them, with the presence of** apparently well-used informal/unofficial access routes (particularly around some of the field boundaries) and the extensive presence of litter on road verges. Built form on or near to the

edge of Knebworth is also already clearly visible in many views from the east, including the electricity substation/telecoms mast and residential property at the south-east corner of Parcel A, the pumping station on the northern edge of Parcel **B**, and **Swangley's Farm** on the north-east edge of Parcel D.

- 7.6 Development on any or all of the four parcels would not reduce the narrowest separation distance between the respective developed edges of Knebworth and Stevenage as, at approximately 550m, this occurs adjacent to the existing development edge to the north of Parcel A. Furthermore, the southward expansion of Stevenage is restricted by the presence of the Hertford railway line along its southern edge. Thus, development on the Site would not result in coalescence between Knebworth and Stevenage.
- 7.7 In this context, the online Oxford Dictionary defines 'sprawl' as **"the disorganized and unattractive expansion of an urban or industrial area into the adjoining countryside."** In this instance, the marginal expansion into the countryside adjacent to Knebworth would be neither disorganized or unattractive, being a carefully considered design in keeping with the local settlement pattern and with extensive green infrastructure. Indeed, the proposed planted buffer along the eastern edge of the Site would in fact soften views towards the existing urban edge of Knebworth. Development on the Site would not therefore result in **"unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas"**.
- 7.8 The Indicative Landscape Masterplan for the Site shows that development could be accommodated in line with the decreasing (north to south) contribution to Green Belt functions. Built development would generally be at lower densities in the northern parcel, where the contribution to Green Belt purposes is considered (in the Green Belt Review) to be greatest, and the gap between Knebworth and Stevenage is at its narrowest (though it should be noted that development on the Site would not result in the narrowest width of this gap being reduced). Further to the south where the contribution of the Site to Green Belt purposes is lower and the separation between Knebworth and Stevenage greater, the density of development would be higher. The Indicative Landscape Masterplan and the Indicative Wireline Photomontages (at Figure 4) also demonstrate how structural buffer planting on the eastern boundary of the Site would both form a strong and permanent boundary between Knebworth and the remaining Green Belt, and help to minimise the extent of visual intrusion into the surrounding Green Belt landscape

to the east and south-east. The openness and permanence of the remaining Green Belt between Knebworth and Stevenage would be maintained.

- 7.9 In landscape and visual terms, the effects of development on the Site on the Green Belt would be limited to some slight encroachment into the countryside to the east of Knebworth. It is important to note however that there is already some existing built form within the Green Belt in the immediate vicinity of the Site: the electricity sub-station, telecoms mast and adjacent residential property on the south-east boundary of Parcel A (approximately 215m from the edge of Knebworth), the pumping station on Watton Road on the northern edge of Parcel B (approximately 50m from the edge of Knebworth), and **Swangley's Farm** on the northern edge of Parcel D (approximately 60m from the edge of Knebworth). The presence of built form within this part of the Green Belt would not therefore be an entirely new feature, though the scale and density of development within the Site would be greater than at present.
- 7.10 There is also commonality of professional opinion that none of the parcels contribute to the setting of an historic town due to the separation distance between the parcels and the Knebworth Conservation Area.

Paragraph 11.40, Questions (c) and (d)

To what extent would the consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt be ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable extent?

*If this site were to be developed as proposed, would the adjacent Green Belt continue to serve at least one of the five purposes of Green Belts, or would the Green Belt function be undermined by **the site's allocation**?*

- 7.11 Key features of the Indicative Landscape Masterplan (see Figure 3) are the extensive areas of green infrastructure within the Site and the substantial planted landscape buffer along the eastern boundary of the Site. An indication of the appearance of this landscaped buffer, as perceived from within the adjacent remaining parts of the Green Belt, is provided by the Indicative Wireline Photomontages at Figure 4.
- 7.12 Development on the Site would result in a slight expansion of the developed edge of Knebworth into the adjoining countryside. However, as noted above there is already some built form within the Green Belt, and on the edge of the Site (the pumping station, **Swangley's Farm**, and the electricity substation/telecoms mast

and adjoining detached residential property), and development on some parts of the Site, particularly Parcel D, should therefore be considered as infill.

7.13 Development on the Site would clearly lead to the character of the Site changing from arable farmland to high quality residential and educational development and green infrastructure, but such direct effects would be limited to the Site itself. Once established and maturing, the proposed landscape buffer, combined with the extensive areas of green infrastructure within the Site, would result in only limited perceptual effects on the character of the remaining Green Belt outside of the Site. Indeed, the proposed landscape buffer would soften the appearance of the existing built form on the eastern edge of Knebworth when compared to current views from the east, albeit the landscape buffer would be closer to any such receptors.

7.14 Furthermore, the indicative landscape masterplan for the Site would be entirely in line with the development guidelines published as part of the North Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, particularly:

- development on the Site would result in the creation of new footpaths and green infrastructure;
- development on the Site would make use of new woodland planting to screen the development and provide ecological diversity; and
- development on the Site would not result in coalescence between Stevenage and Knebworth.

7.15 Effects on visual amenity as experienced from within the adjoining Green Belt to the east and south-east of the Site would be very limited, with the appearance of the developed edge of Knebworth changing from clearly visible built form as at present, to a planted landscape buffer which would provide an effect transitional zone between the open countryside and the built form of Knebworth. Development on the Site is unlikely to be discernible from elsewhere in the Green Belt.

7.16 In summary, development on the Site would result in limited expansion into the countryside, but would not impact upon the other purposes of the remaining Green Belt on the adjoining land, such as controlling the unrestricted sprawl from large built-up areas (Knebworth is not considered to be a large built-up area), preventing coalescence of adjoining towns (development on the Site would retain the minimum separation distance of approximately 550m of farmland between Knebworth and Stevenage), and preserving the setting and character of historic towns.

Development on the Site would not result in notable change to the openness and permanence of the remaining Green Belt.

Paragraph 11.40, Questions (e) and (g)

Will the Green Belt boundary proposed need to be altered at the end of the plan period, or is it capable of enduring beyond then?

Has the Green Belt boundary around the site been defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?

- 7.17 By the end of the plan period, the proposed planted landscape buffer which would form the eastern boundary of any development on the Site would have become a substantial landscape feature in its own right, as demonstrated by the Indicative Wireline Photomontages at Figure 4. As such it would provide a strong, enduring and defensible boundary between Knebworth and the adjoining Green Belt.
- 7.18 Furthermore, being formed from an appropriate mix of native tree and shrub species (including both field layer and larger/taller canopy layer tree species), the eventual size and longevity of this planted landscape buffer would result in a substantial, recognisable and permanent boundary.

Summary

- 7.19 In summary, the Site makes limited contributions to the five purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the NPPF, making very limited or no contribution to four of the five defined purposes.
- 7.20 With regard to safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment, there would be a technical change from the current land use of arable farmland, to one of high quality residential and educational development with a substantial landscape buffer adjoining the remaining Green Belt and substantial areas of green infrastructure. Development on the Site would therefore result in some limited encroachment into the countryside. However, the land is already subject to the urbanising influence of the adjoining housing within Knebworth, as noted in the published landscape character assessment. Furthermore, development on the Site would not reduce the minimum gap between Knebworth and Stevenage as the narrowest part of the gap is already beyond and to the north of the Site, and the southward expansion of Stevenage is already restricted by the Hertford railway line.

7.21 Development on the Site would have no direct effects on landscape character of the remaining Green Belt, including its openness and permanence, while perceptual effects on visual amenity would be limited to receptors to the east and south-east and generally within a few hundred metres of the site boundary. The scale of any effects on visual amenity would be further reduced by the strong planted landscape buffer proposed for the eastern boundary of the Site, as illustrated by the Indicative Wireline Photomontages. The proposed landscape buffer, being entirely consistent with the development guidelines in the published landscape character assessment, would also help to meet the Green Belt aims of Paragraph 81 of the NPPF, namely **“to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity”**.

8. CONCLUSIONS

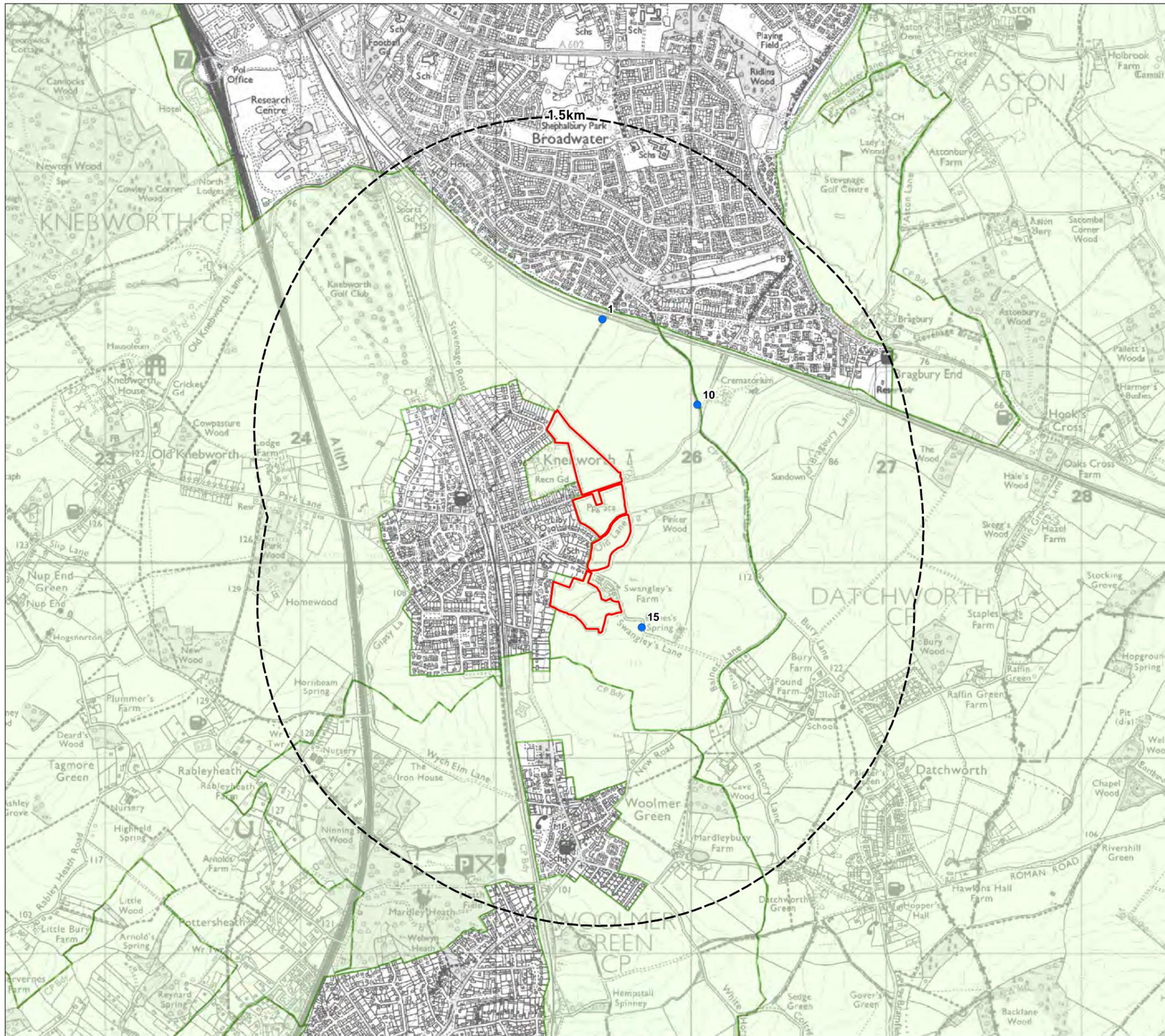
- 8.1 The Site comprises very gently undulating arable farmland on the eastern edge of Knebworth, with existing built form and the Knebworth Recreation Ground forming the western boundary to the Site. There are a number of areas of built form to the east of the main urban edge of Knebworth, including an electricity sub-station, telecoms mast and adjacent residential property at the south-east corner of the northern Parcel of the Site (Parcel A), approximately 215m from the edge of Knebworth; a (water) pumping station on the south side of Watton Road on the northern edge of Parcel B; and **Swangley's Farm on the north-east** boundary of Parcel D, approximately 60m from the edge of Knebworth.
- 8.2 To the north, east and south-east is further arable farmland, extending as far as the Hertford railway line on the south-west edge of Stevenage. The separation between the Site and Stevenage is at least 550m at its narrowest, increasing to the south.
- 8.3 The Site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt, but is proposed for removal from the Green Belt in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 Proposed Submission October 2016. The Site is outside of any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.
- 8.4 The Site lies within the Datchworth Settled Slopes landscape character area (LCA37), which is considered to of low landscape character sensitivity, moderate visual sensitivity, and low landscape value. The development guidelines for the LCA encourage the creation of new footpaths and green infrastructure, and the use of new woodland planting to help integrate new development into the landscape and enhance biodiversity, and highlight the importance of preventing coalescence between Knebworth and Stevenage.
- 8.5 A full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was submitted for the Site as part of the development process for the Local Plan. The LVIA concluded that development on the Site would result in a negligible effect upon the large-scale Northern Thames Basin National Character Area, and an overall minor adverse effect on the Datchworth Settled Slopes LCA. The LVIA considered that the effect of development on the Site on the landscape character of the Site itself and its immediate environs would be moderate adverse, as open arable farmland will be replaced by high quality residential and educational development complete with substantial areas of green infrastructure and a strong landscape buffer on the

eastern boundary of the Site. Over time, the LVIA considered that the maturing green infrastructure and landscape buffer would reduce the overall effect on the landscape character of the Site and its immediate environs to minor-moderate adverse.

- 8.6 Effects on visual amenity would be experienced by occupiers of the residential properties on the eastern edge of Knebworth, by users of the public rights of way network to the east of the Site and users of the recreation ground, and by road users on **Watton Road, Old Lane and Swangley's Lane**. The LVIA considered that effects on visual amenity would be at worst moderate-major (experienced only by occupiers of residential properties immediately adjacent to the Site), reducing with distance from the Site and over time.
- 8.7 The Site provides a limited contribution to the five purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the NPPF. It makes very limited or no contribution to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas; preventing nearby towns from merging; the setting of historic towns; or assisting with urban regeneration.
- 8.8 With regard to safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment, there would be a technical change from the current land use of arable farmland, to one of high quality residential and educational development with a substantial landscape buffer adjoining the remaining Green Belt and substantial areas of green infrastructure. Development on the Site would therefore result in some limited encroachment into the countryside. However, the land is already subject to the urbanising influence of the adjoining housing within Knebworth, as noted in the published landscape character assessment. Furthermore, development on the Site would not reduce the minimum gap between Knebworth and Stevenage as the narrowest part of the gap is already beyond and to the north of the Site, and the southward expansion of Stevenage is already restricted by the Hertford railway line.
- 8.9 Development on the Site would have no direct effects on landscape character of the remaining Green Belt, including its openness and permanence, while perceptual effects on visual amenity would be limited to receptors to the immediate east and south-east and generally within a few hundred metres of the site boundary. The scale of any effects on visual amenity would be further reduced by the strong planted landscape buffer proposed for the eastern boundary of the Site. The proposed landscape buffer, being entirely consistent with the development guidelines in the published landscape character assessment, would also help to

meet the Green Belt aims of Paragraph 81 of the NPPF, namely **“to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity”**.

- 8.10 In summary, removal of the Site from the Green Belt and its use for residential and educational development together with substantial areas of green infrastructure (including new public access routes) and a strong planted landscape buffer on the eastern boundary, would result in only very limited effects on one of the five purposes of the Green Belt. Considered design within the Site, including new public access routes and a strong and permanent landscaped boundary between the Site and the remaining parts of the Green Belt, would mean that the openness and permanence of the remaining Green Belt would not be adversely affected.



KEY

- Site Boundary
- Viewpoint Location (Wireline Views)
- Green Belt

No landscape designations are present in the study area

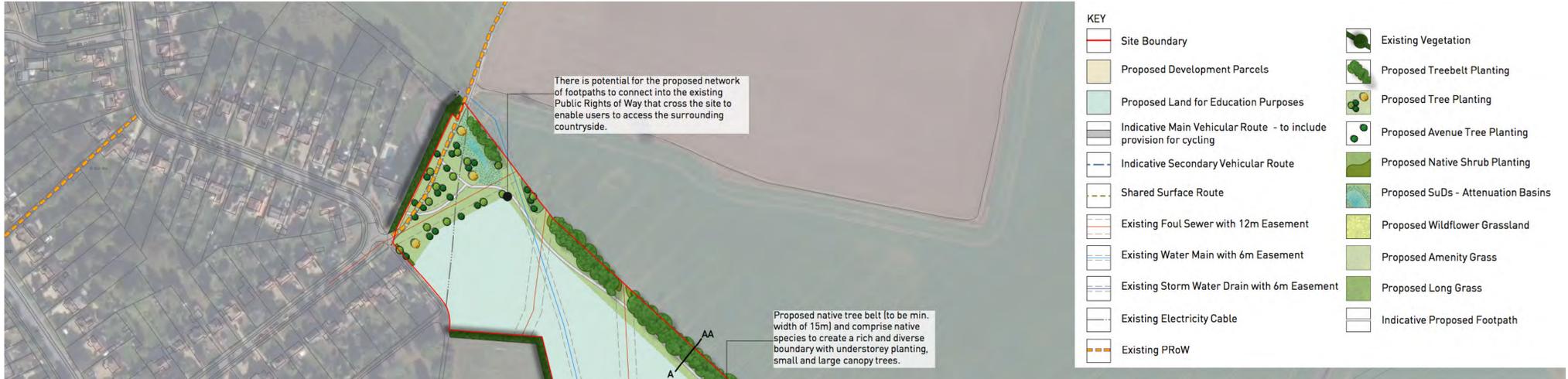
Revisions:
First Issue- 11/01/2018 JS

Landscape Designations and Viewpoint Locations

Land at Knebworth

Client: Gladmann Developments Ltd
 DRWG No: **P17-2776_03** Sheet No: - REV: -
 Drawn by: JS Approved by: RP
 Date: 11/01/2018
 Scale: 1:20,000 @ A3





② Gateway Meadow - To mark the entrance to the development there is the potential to create a gateway space naturalistic in character with large swathes of wildflower meadow with scattered trees. This would contribute to the biodiversity improvements across the site and would be accessible to users with footpaths and cycleways which would link into the wider movement network.



① Eastern Boundary Treebelt - The proposed tree belt would help to enclose the site and provide a strong visual and physical boundary along the site's eastern edge whilst providing a green corridor of public open space for users. The treebelt would comprise native species and be a minimum of 15m in width. Pockets of native shrub planting would further enhance the tree belt and provide habitat opportunities as well as providing an additional landscape element within the public open space which has a footpath to provide access through the site for users.

Indicative Species and Management of the Treebelt
 The proposed treebelt along the eastern boundary of the site would be managed appropriately in accordance with best practice guidance in order to ensure successful establishment and function as a species diverse treebelt with a varied structure. The treebelt would comprise understorey native shrub planting and field and larger canopy species. Field species could include *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn), *Malus sylvestris* (Crab Apple) and *Prunus avium* (Wild Cherry) with larger canopy species such as *Acer campestre* (Field Maple), *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam), *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech) and *Quercus robur* (Oak) with a scattering of evergreen species such as *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots pine). The native shrub understorey species would include *Corylus avellana* (Common Hazel), *Euonymus europaeus* (Spindle), *Ligustrum vulgare* (Privet), *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly) and *Viburnum opulus* (Guelder Rose). Refer to the indicative planting list below for suggested planting sizes.

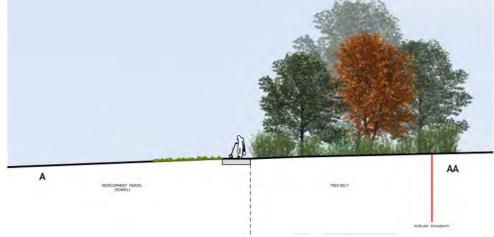
The management aims and objectives for the treebelt would aim to create a natural uneven aged structure whilst aiming to protect and enhance biodiversity. Management tasks would include formative pruning, selective thinning (on a 5-7 year rotation), tree works to ensure safety of the environment. Where appropriate understorey species such as *Corylus avellana* (Common Hazel) would be coppiced after approx. 4 years of growth on a 7 year rotational regime this would encourage diversity of ground flora and fauna.

Species	% Mix	Form	Birth cm	Height cm	Root condition	Planting Density
<i>Acer campestre</i> (Field Maple)	25	Transplant	n/a	45-90	BR	
<i>Acer campestre</i> (Field Maple)	5	Heavy Standard	12-14	350-425	RB	
<i>Carpinus betulus</i> (Hornbeam)	10	Transplant	n/a	45-90	BR	
<i>Carpinus betulus</i> (Hornbeam)	5	Heavy Standard	12-14	350-425	RB	
<i>Malus sylvestris</i> (Crab Apple)	2.5	Leader with laterals	n/a	200-250	RB	
<i>Malus sylvestris</i> (Crab Apple)	2.5	Select Standard	10-12	300-350	RB	
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i> (Scots Pine)	7.5	Leader with laterals	n/a	20-60	BR	Rows @ 2m c/c
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i> (Scots Pine)	2.5	Leader with laterals	n/a	40-90	BR	2.5m staggered c/c along rows
<i>Prunus avium</i> (Wild Cherry)	2.5	Transplant	n/a	45-90	BR	
<i>Prunus avium</i> (Wild Cherry)	2.5	Select Standard	10-12	300-350	RB	
<i>Quercus robur</i> (Common Oak)	20	Transplant	n/a	45-90	BR	
<i>Quercus robur</i> (Common Oak)	5	Heavy Standard	12-14	350-425	RB	
<i>Tilia cordata</i> (Lime)	7.5	Transplant	n/a	45-90	BR	
<i>Tilia cordata</i> (Lime)	2.5	Heavy Standard	12-14	350-425	RB	

Species	% Mix	Form	Age + Times Transplanted	Height cm	Root Condition	Planting Density
<i>Corylus avellana</i> (Hazel)	40	Branched	1+2	60-90	BR	
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i> (Dogwood)	10	Branched	1+2	60-90	BR	
<i>Euonymus europaeus</i> (Spindle)	10	Branched	1+1	60-90	BR	
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> (Holly)	15	Leader with laterals	n/a	30-40	CG - 2L	Rows @ 2m c/c
<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> (Privet)	10	Branched	1+1	60-90	BR	2.5m staggered c/c along rows
<i>Phytolacca sp.</i> (Blackberry)	10	Branched	1+1	60-90	BR	
<i>Viburnum opulus</i> (Guelder Rose)	5	Branched	1+1	60-90	BR	

Note: All planting to follow sinusous rows (not straight lines or grids) and planted in same species groups of 3-5.

Refer to the indicative sections below for how the treebelt will define the eastern boundary of the site.



Revisions:
 First Issue - 08/01/2018 RVF
 A - 11/01/2018 RVF Minor changes to comments

Indicative Landscape Masterplan
Land at Knebworth

Client: Gladman Developments Ltd
 DRWG No: **P17-2776_01** Sheet No: REV: A
 Drawn by: RVF Approved by: RP/HD
 Date: 11/01/2018
 Scale: 1:2000@A1
Pegasus Design



Existing View



Wireline View - Year 10



Camera make and model: Canon EOS 5D with a fixed 50mm lens.
 Date & time of photography : 30.12.17 @ 10:25
 OS reference : 525549, 221251
 Viewpoint height : 87m
 Recommended Viewing distance : 30cm
 Angle of view : 75°
 Camera height set at 1.5m
 Document dimensions (420mm x 297mm)



Key:

- Proposed Residential Development Areas (Shown at +9.5m agl)
- Proposed Education Development Area (Shown at +12m agl)
- Proposed Woodland Planting (Shown at +5m agl)

Note:

- Wirelines accurate to within a tolerance of +/- 60cm based upon NextMap 2m contours.

VIEWPOINT 1

Land at Knebworth

Client: Gladman Developments Ltd
 DRWG No: **P17-2776_02** Sheet No: **1 of 6**
 Drawn by: CS Approved by: HD
 Date: 08/01/2018 REV:





Wireline View - Year 20



Camera make and model: Canon EOS 5D with a fixed 50mm lens.
 Date & time of photography : 30.12.17 @ 10:25
 OS reference : 525549, 221251
 Viewpoint height : 87m
 Recommended Viewing distance : 30cm
 Angle of view : 75°
 Camera height set at 1.5m
 Document dimensions (420mm x 297mm)

Key:

- Proposed Residential Development Areas (Shown at +9.5m agl)
- Proposed Education Development Area (Shown at +12m agl)
- Proposed Woodland Planting (Shown at +9m agl)

Note:

- Wirelines accurate to within a tolerance of +/- 60cm based upon NextMap 2m contours.

VIEWPOINT 1

Land at Knebworth

Client: Gladman Developments Ltd
 DRWG No: **P17-2776_02** Sheet No: **2 of 6**
 Drawn by: CS Approved by: HD
 Date: 08/01/2018 REV:





Existing View



Wireline View - Year 10



Camera make and model: Canon EOS 5D with a fixed 50mm lens.
 Date & time of photography : 30.12.17 @ 11:34
 OS reference : 526036, 220814
 Viewpoint height : 90m
 Recommended Viewing distance : 30cm
 Angle of view : 75°
 Camera height set at 1.5m
 Document dimensions (420mm x 297mm)

- Key:
- Proposed Residential Development Areas (Shown at +9.5m agl)
 - Proposed Education Development Area (Shown at +12m agl)
 - Proposed Woodland Planting (Shown at +5m agl)
- Note:
- Wirelines accurate to within a tolerance of +/- 60cm based upon NextMap 2m contours.

VIEWPOINT 10

Land at Knebworth

Client: Gladman Developments Ltd
 DRWG No: **P17-2776_02** Sheet No: **3 of 6**
 Drawn by: CS Approved by: HD
 Date: 08/01/2018 REV:





Wireline View - Year 20



Camera make and model: Canon EOS 5D with a fixed 50mm lens.
 Date & time of photography : 30.12.17 @ 11:34
 OS reference : 526036, 220814
 Viewpoint height : 90m
 Recommended Viewing distance : 30cm
 Angle of view : 75°
 Camera height set at 1.5m
 Document dimensions (420mm x 297mm)

- Key:
- Proposed Residential Development Areas (Shown at +9.5m agl)
 - Proposed Education Development Area (Shown at +12m agl)
 - Proposed Woodland Planting (Shown at +9m agl)
- Note:
- Wirelines accurate to within a tolerance of +/- 60cm based upon NextMap 2m contours.

VIEWPOINT 10

Land at Knebworth

Client: Gladman Developments Ltd
 DRWG No: **P17-2776_02** Sheet No: **4 of 6**
 Drawn by: CS Approved by: HD
 Date: 08/01/2018 REV:





Existing View



Wireline View - Year 10



Camera make and model: Canon EOS 5D with a fixed 50mm lens.
 Date & time of photography : 30.12.17 @ 12:23
 OS reference : 525751, 219674
 Viewpoint height : 114m
 Recommended Viewing distance : 30cm
 Angle of view : 75°
 Camera height set at 1.5m
 Document dimensions (420mm x 297mm)

Key:

- Proposed Residential Development Areas (Shown at +9.5m agl)
- Proposed Education Development Area (Shown at +12m agl)
- Proposed Woodland Planting (Shown at +5m agl)

Note:

- Wirelines accurate to within a tolerance of +/- 60cm based upon NextMap 2m contours.

VIEWPOINT 15

Land at Knebworth

Client: Gladman Developments Ltd
 DRWG No: **P17-2776_02** Sheet No: **5 of 6**
 Drawn by: CS Approved by: HD
 Date: 08/01/2018 REV:





Wireline View - Year 20



Camera make and model: Canon EOS 5D with a fixed 50mm lens.
 Date & time of photography : 30.12.17 @ 12:23
 OS reference : 525751, 219674
 Viewpoint height : 114m
 Recommended Viewing distance : 30cm
 Angle of view : 75°
 Camera height set at 1.5m
 Document dimensions (420mm x 297mm)



Key:

- Proposed Residential Development Areas (Shown at +9.5m agl)
- Proposed Education Development Area (Shown at +12m agl)
- Proposed Woodland Planting (Shown at +9m agl)

Note:

- Wirelines accurate to within a tolerance of +/- 60cm based upon NextMap 2m contours.

VIEWPOINT 15

Land at Knebworth

Client: Gladman Developments Ltd
 DRWG No: **P17-2776_02** Sheet No: **6 of 6**
 Drawn by: CS Approved by: HD
 Date: 08/01/2018 REV:



APPENDIX 1

Extract from Schedule of Matters and Issues for the Examination
of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

11.36 Is the proposed settlement boundary:

- a) consistent with the methodology for identifying the settlement boundaries?
- b) appropriate and justified?

Knebworth

At the hearings, I will consider each site in reference number order

11.37 Are all of the proposed housing allocations deliverable? In particular, are they:

- a) confirmed by all of the landowners involved as being available for the use proposed?
- b) supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided?
- c) deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?

11.38 Are all of the proposed housing allocations justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of the development?

11.39 Are all of the proposed allocations the most appropriate option given the reasonable alternatives?

11.40 Sites KB1, KB2 and KB4 comprise of land in the Green Belt. For each:

- a) Do exceptional circumstances exist to warrant the allocation of the site for new housing in the Green Belt? If so, what are they?
- b) What is the nature and extent of the harm to the Green Belt of removing the site from it?
- c) To what extent would the consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt be ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable extent?
- d) If this site were to be developed as proposed, would the adjacent Green Belt continue to serve at least one of the five purposes of Green Belts, or would the Green Belt function be undermined by the site's allocation?
- e) Will the Green Belt boundary proposed need to be altered at the end of the plan period, or is it capable of enduring beyond then?
- f) Are the proposed Green Belt boundaries consistent with the Plan's strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development?
- g) Has the Green Belt boundary around the site been defined clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent? Does it avoid including land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open?

11.41 Is the proposed settlement boundary:

- a) consistent with the methodology for identifying the settlement boundaries?
- b) appropriate and justified?

Little Wymondley

11.42 Is the proposed housing allocation deliverable? In particular, is it:

- a) confirmed by all of the landowners involved as being available for the use proposed?
- b) supported by evidence to demonstrate that safe and appropriate access for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided?
- c) deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services, and any environmental or other constraints?

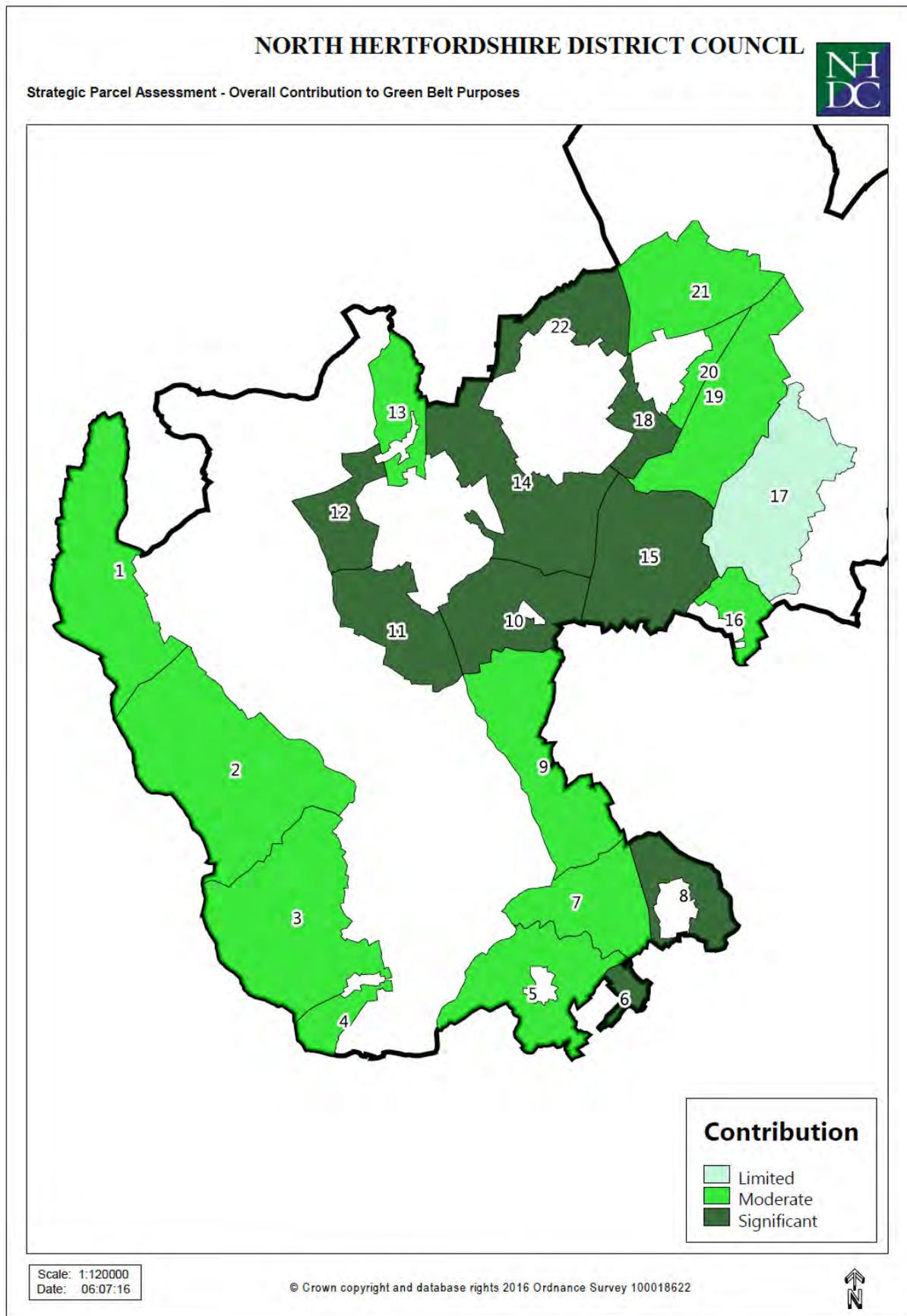
11.43 Is the proposed housing allocation justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of the development?

APPENDIX 2

Extracts from North Herts Green Belt Review

Parcel	Check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Prevent merging of neighbouring towns	Safeguard countryside from encroachment	Preserve setting and special character of historic towns	Overall evaluation and contribution to Green Belt purposes
6 Pottersheath	3 - Restricts the growth of Oaklands.	3 - Ensures separation of neighbouring settlements of Welwyn, Oaklands and Pottersheath.	3 - Plays important role in safeguarding the countryside, with evidence of urbanisation.	1 - No historic towns in this area.	<p>Performs an important function separating the urban areas of Welwyn, Oaklands and Pottersheath.</p> <p>Overall makes a significant contribution to Green Belt purposes, preventing sprawl, encroachment and separating settlements.</p>
7 Old Knebworth	1 - Limited contribution to restricting the sprawl of Stevenage.	1 - Limited contribution given location to the west of the A1(M).	2 - Protects accessible countryside from encroachment and maintains rural setting of Old Knebworth and parkland.	1 - No historic towns in this area.	<p>This is part of the accessible wider countryside to the west of the A1(M) and includes Knebworth House parkland and gardens.</p> <p>Overall makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes, helping to prevent encroachment into open countryside.</p>
8 Knebworth	3 - Plays an important role in preventing sprawl along the A1(M) corridor to south of Stevenage.	3 - Plays an important role in preventing merging of Stevenage, Knebworth and Welwyn Garden City and the small settlements in between.	3 - Provides a link with the wider countryside to the east and west.	1 - Provides a setting for Knebworth but not to any historic towns.	<p>There are some visual links to Stevenage in the north and the land is part of the green wedge between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage.</p> <p>Overall makes a significant contribution to Green Belt purposes, helping to prevent sprawl, merger and encroachment.</p>

Figure 2.8: Overall contribution to Green Belt purposes

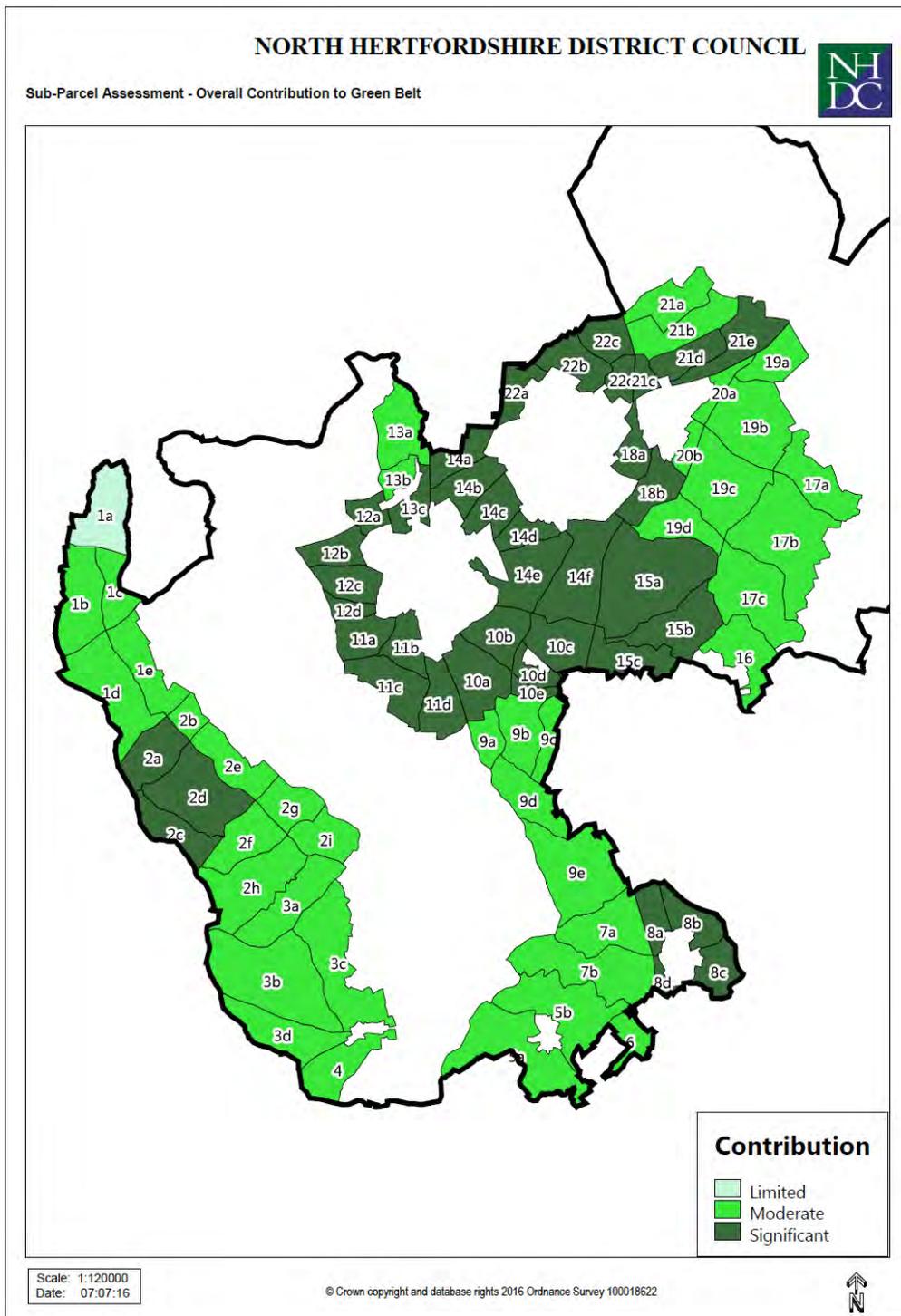


Sector	Check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Prevent merging of neighbouring towns	Safeguard countryside from encroachment	Preserve setting and special character of historic towns	Overall evaluation and contribution to Green Belt purposes
Lane/ Hitchin Road to south.	but adjoins parcel 8a which plays a significant role.				Moderate Contribution
7b Land to west of A1(M) bounded by Park Lane/ Hitchin Road to north, Three Houses Lane to west and Drivers End Lane/Sally Deards Lane to the south .	1 – Plays no role in restricting sprawl of Stevenage.	1 – No role in this location.	2 – Protects accessible countryside from encroachment.	1 – No relationship with historic towns.	Includes The Node. Links into the wider Metropolitan Green Belt covering adjoining districts. Protects accessible countryside from encroachment. Moderate Contribution
8 Knebworth	3 - Plays an important role in preventing sprawl along the A1(M) corridor to south of Stevenage.	3 - Plays an important role in preventing merging of Stevenage, Knebworth and Welwyn Garden City and the small settlements in between.	3 - Provides a link with the wider countryside to the east and west.	1 - Provides a setting for Knebworth but not to any historic towns.	There are some visual links to Stevenage in the north and the land is part of the green wedge between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage. Overall makes a significant contribution to Green Belt purposes, helping to prevent sprawl, merger and encroachment.
8a Land between A1(M) and ECML railway abuts northern edge of Knebworth and research centre to north.	3 - Plays an important role in preventing sprawl along the A1(M) corridor to south of Stevenage.	3 - Plays an important role in preventing merging of Stevenage with Knebworth.	3 – Part of the arc of open countryside to the south west of Stevenage.	1 – No relationship with historic towns.	Together with parcel 8b performs separation function between Stevenage and Knebworth. Setting to Knebworth, influenced by proximity to busy trunk road A1(M) and the east coast mainline railway. Contains Knebworth golf course. Significant Contribution

Sector	Check unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Prevent merging of neighbouring towns	Safeguard countryside from encroachment	Preserve setting and special character of historic towns	Overall evaluation and contribution to Green Belt purposes
8b land between ECML and local railway line and Watton Road abuts north-east edge of Knebworth.	3 - Plays an important role in preventing sprawl of Stevenage southwards.	3 - Plays an important role in preventing merging of Stevenage with Knebworth.	3 – Protects countryside between Knebworth and Stevenage.	1 – No relationship with historic towns.	Together with parcel 8a performs separation function between Stevenage and Knebworth. Setting to Knebworth bounded by east coast mainline railway to west and suburban railway line to east. Links into the wider Metropolitan Green Belt covering adjoining districts. Significant Contribution
8c Land lying between eastern edge of Knebworth and the district boundary, south of Watton Road	2 – Parcel plays no role in restricting sprawl of Stevenage but lies adjacent to parcel 8b which plays a significant role.	3 – Plays a significant role in preventing Knebworth merging with Woolmer Green and forms part of wider Green Belt separating Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City.	3 – Protects countryside between Knebworth and Welwyn Garden City.	1 – No relationship with historic towns.	Setting to Knebworth. Elevated position creates a sense of openness. Links into the wider Metropolitan Green Belt covering adjoining districts. Significant Contribution
8d Land between A1(M) and western edge of Knebworth bounded by Park Lane to north and district boundary to the south.	2 – Parcel plays no role in restricting sprawl of Stevenage but lies adjacent to parcel 8a which plays a significant role.	3 – Plays a significant role in preventing Knebworth merging with Oaklands and forms part of wider Green Belt separating Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City.	3 – Protects countryside between Knebworth and Oaklands.	1 – No relationship with historic towns.	Land influenced by presence of busy trunk road A1(M). Links into the wider Metropolitan Green Belt covering adjoining districts. Significant Contribution

53. The overall judgement of the contribution of the sub-parcels to Green Belt purposes is illustrated in Figure 3.6. The sub-parcels considered to make the most significant contribution are those around the periphery of and between the existing settlements of Hitchin, Letchworth and Baldock, those in south of the district around Stevenage, Knebworth and Welwyn, and those on the eastern fringes of Luton. This conclusion is not surprising given that these are the principal urban areas of the district. An additional factor in this judgement is the historic nature of the three North Hertfordshire towns located within the Green Belt and their proximity to one another resulting in increased sensitivity to development within those Green Belt areas. A similar relationship occurs in the comparatively narrow area of Green Belt between Knebworth and Stevenage.

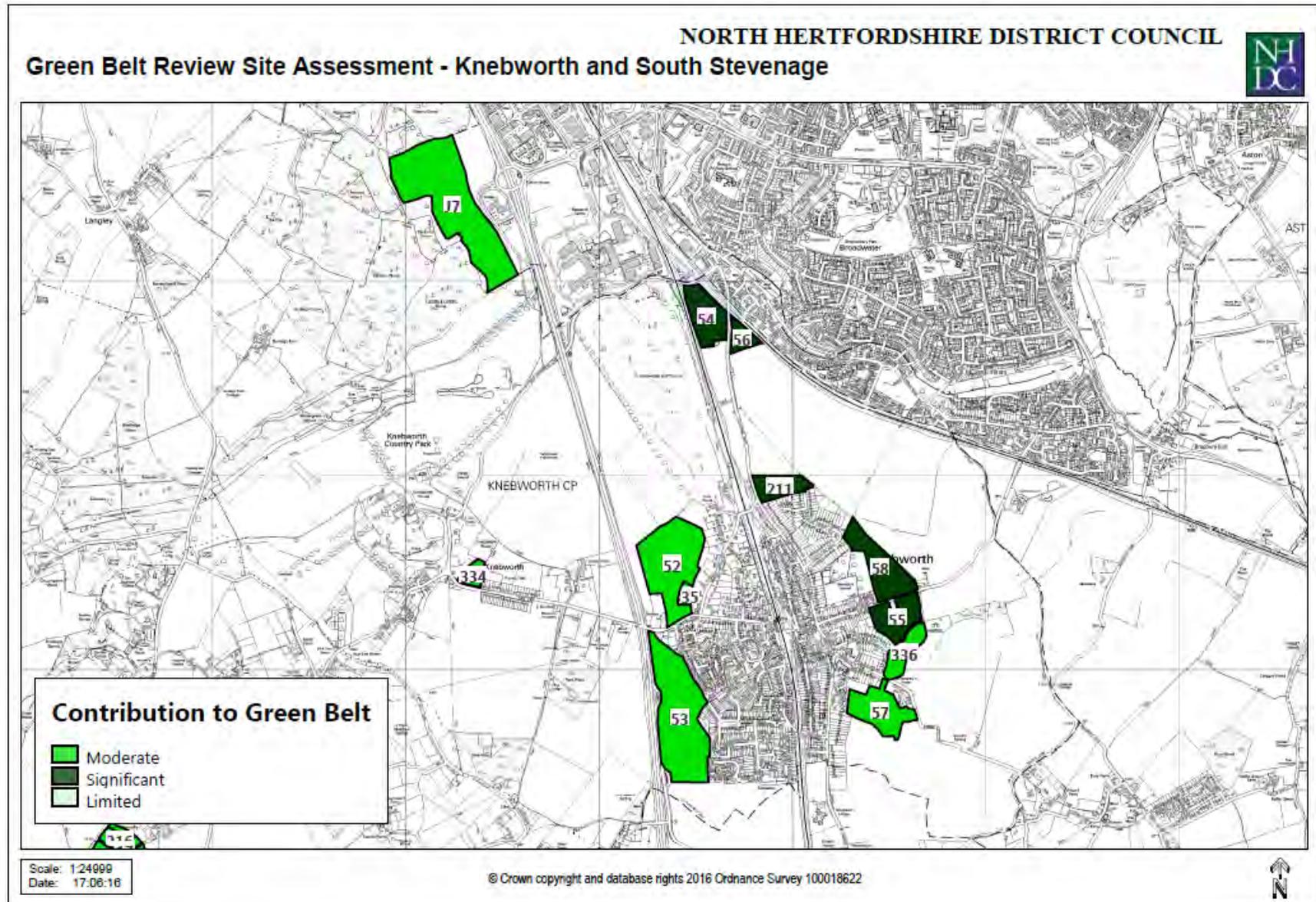
Figure 3.6: Overall Contribution to Green Belt purposes



Property description				Attributes		Green Belt Assessment				Contribution to Greenbelt	Boundary Detail
Ref	Address	Street	Settlement or parish	Urban / rural	Primary proposed use	Sprawl	Towns merging	Safeguarding countryside	Preserve setting of historic towns		
53	Land at	Gypsy Lane	Knebworth	rural	residential	3 - development on one side, but A1(M) on adjacent side	2 - Less than 2km to Old Knebworth	3 - outside settlement boundary	1 - adjacent to conservation area of a historic town	The site makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt. The site is outside settlement boundaries and adjoins development on one side as well as being bounded by the A1(M) Old Knebworth is located less than 2km to the east, however as it is a village this is not significant in Green Belt terms. No impact on Historic towns although adjacent to Knebworth conservation area.	A1 makes a strong boundary to the West. Settlement edge provides strong boundary to the East. Open boundary to the South would need to be enhanced.
54	Odyssey Health Centre	Old Knebworth Lane	Knebworth	rural	other	3 - Development on one side, but road and rail on 2 other sides	3 - less than 2km to Knebworth	3 - outside settlement boundary	1 - Site not within or affecting setting of a conservation area of a historic town	Site makes a significant contribution to Green Belt. The site is well bounded but only has development on one side. It is within close proximity to Knebworth and outside the settlement boundary. The site is bringing Stevenage and Knebworth closer together. There is no impact on historic towns.	Hedge to the south of the site, but not definitive.
55	Land north of	Old Lane	Knebworth	rural	residential	3 - development on one side	3 - less than 2km to Knebworth	3 - outside settlement boundary	1 - Site not within or affecting setting of a conservation area of a historic town	Site makes a significant contribution to Green Belt. The site only has development on one side. It is within close proximity to Stevenage and outside the settlement boundary. The site is bringing Stevenage and Knebworth closer together. There is no impact on historic towns.	Boundaries in the form of roads and hedges on all sides.
56	Land east of	Stevenage Road	Knebworth	rural	residential	3 - development on one side	3 - less than 2km to Knebworth	3 - outside settlement boundary	1 - Site not within or affecting setting of a conservation area of a historic town	Site makes a significant contribution to Green Belt. The site has development on one side. It is within close proximity to Stevenage and outside the settlement boundary. The site is bringing Stevenage and Knebworth closer together. Stevenage is well contained at this point, this site would break the boundary. There is no impact on historic towns.	Hedge to the south of the site, but not dense. Road and railway line provide other boundaries.
57	Land south of	Swangley's Lane	Knebworth	rural	residential	3 - development on one side	2 - Less than 2km to Datchworth	3 - outside settlement boundary	1 - Site not within or affecting setting of a conservation area of a historic town	Site makes a Moderate contribution to Green Belt. The site has development on one side. This site is less than 2km to Datchwood, but as this is a village it isn't significant in Green Belt terms. The site is well contained, with a strong boundary around it. The slope faces towards the village. There is no impact on historic towns.	Hedge boundary surrounds the site. Adjoins residential development to the west.
58	Land north of	Watton Road	Knebworth	rural	residential	3 - development on one side	3 - Less than 2km to Stevenage	3 - outside settlement boundary	1 - Site not within or affecting setting of a conservation area of a historic town	Site makes a significant contribution to Green Belt. The site has development on one side. It is within close proximity to Stevenage and outside the settlement boundary. The site is bringing Knebworth and Stevenage closer together. The site is not that well contained although slightly rising in landscape terms.	No real boundaries currently. Other than recreation ground and small amounts of residential. Very open to the east.

Property description				Attributes		Green Belt Assessment				Contribution to Greenbelt	Boundary Detail
Ref	Address	Street	Settlement or parish	Urban / rural	Primary proposed use	Sprawl	Towns merging	Safeguarding countryside	Preserve setting of historic towns		
211	Land north of	Oakfield Avenue	Knebworth	rural	residential	3 - development on one side	3 - less than 2km to Stevenage	3 - outside settlement boundary	1 - Site not within or affecting setting of a conservation area of a historic town	Site makes a significant contribution to Green Belt. The site has development on one side. It is within close proximity to Stevenage and outside the settlement boundary. The site is bringing Knebworth and Stevenage closer together. The site is not well contained.	No boundary to the North and East. Existing residential area to the south. B197 road boundary to the West
NE W	Junction 7	A1(M)	Knebworth	urban	employment	3 - some development on one site	2 - Less than 2km to Old Knebworth	3 - outside settlement boundary	1 - Site not within or affecting setting of a conservation area of a historic town	Site makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt. The site has development on one side. This site is less than 2km to Old Knebworth, but as this is a village it isn't significant in Green Belt terms. The site is well contained, with a strong boundary around it in the form of woodland.	A1 (m) to the east (in Stevenage) western and northern boundaries contained by Knebworth Woods.
334	Cnebba's Field, Old Knebworth		Knebworth	Rural	Residential	3 – development on one side.	2 – less than 2km to nearest village.	3 – No existing village boundary.	1 – Site is entirely within a conservation area but not that of a historic town.	Site makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt. The site has development on one side. This site is less than 2km to Knebworth but as Old Knebworth is a village it isn't significant in Green Belt terms. Site fairly open. No impact on historic towns.	Park Lane forms strong boundary to the south. Wooded area to north, other boundaries are open.
335	Land rear of Redwood, Deards End Lane		Knebworth	Rural	Residential	3 – development on one side	2 – less than 2km to nearest village.	3 – Outside existing settlement boundary.	1 – adjacent to a conservation area but not that of a historic town.	Site makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt. The site has development on one side. This site is less than 2km to Old Knebworth but as this is a village it isn't significant in Green Belt terms. Site will adjoin Site 52. No impact on historic towns.	Rear gardens to the east. Remaining boundaries are open. It is noted that the site would adjoin site KB1 in preferred options.
336	Land east of Old Lane		Knebworth	Rural	Residential	3 – development on one side	2 – less than 2km to nearest village (Datchworth).	3 – Outside existing settlement boundary.	1 – Not within or adjoin a conservation area of a historic town.	Site makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt. The site has development on one side. This site is less than 2km to Datchwood, but as this is a village it isn't significant in Green Belt terms. The site is open although there is a slope that faces towards the village. There is no impact on historic towns.	Swangleys Lane forms strong boundary to the south. Old Lane forms strong boundary to the north and west. No boundary to the east.
RG	Rush Green		Langley	rural	residential	3 - no development on any side of the site	2 - within 1km of Stevenage	3 - outside settlement boundary	1 - not within or adjacent to a conservation area of a historic town	Site makes a moderate contribution to Green Belt. The site is a potential free standing settlement and so doesn't adjoin any development on any side. The site has poor boundaries, however the landscape rises to the east, being within a river valley. There is no impact on historic towns.	Poor boundaries, open to the North, some planting on Eastern and Western boundaries Southern road boundary is defensible.

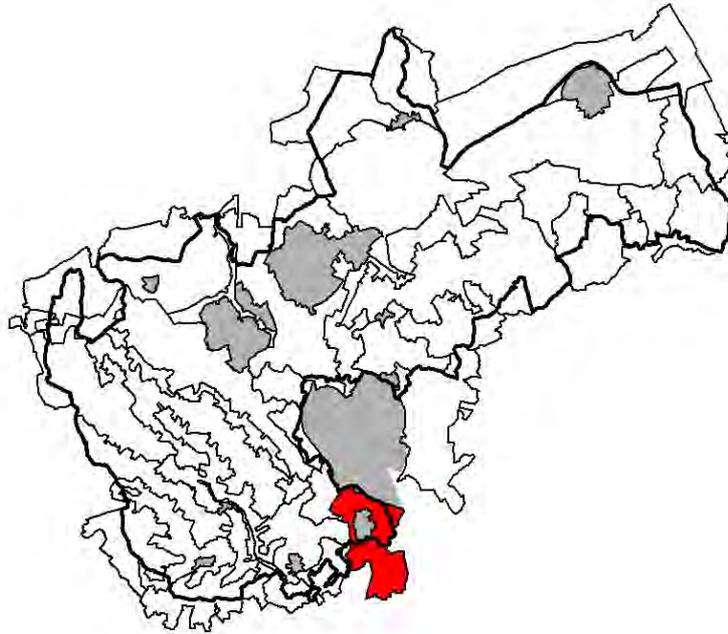
Knebworth and South Stevenage



APPENDIX 3

North Hertfordshire Landscape Study 2011: Area 37 Datchworth Settled Slopes

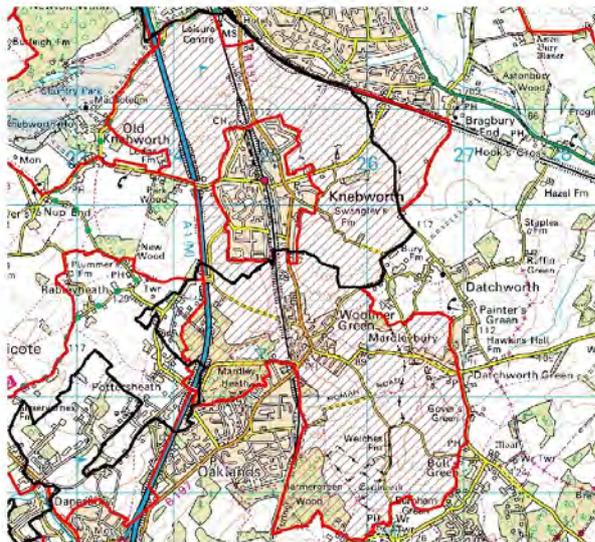
LOCATION



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

The Character Area lies to the east of the A1(M) and south of Stevenage. Half lies outside of the District. The main area of interest is that surrounding the settlement of Knebworth with a smaller triangle of this land lying to the west of the motorway.



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently undulating landform enclosing the settlement of Knebworth. Open and mainly arable farmland. Parkland to the north given over to use as golf course. Character Area abuts the railway in the north which encloses the southern end of Stevenage. Open views to edges of Knebworth settlement.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Large scale open arable farmland
- Parkland in the north
- Edges of Knebworth settlement
- Prominent in the landscape

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Crossed by A1(M)
- Crossed by mainline railway
- Telecommunication towers and water pumping stations

ASSESSMENT

PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology & soils

Deep fine loam and clay over slowly permeable clay subsoils, over plateau drift (Hornbeam 3 series). Superficial deposits of Clay-with-flints at Woolmer Green.

Topography

Undulating west-facing slope with local variations - slight valley formation running north-south and now containing a railway, often in tunnel.

Degree of slope

1 in 50.

Altitude range

85m to 120m.

Hydrology

There is little water in this Character Area; one ditch drains westwards to Hempstall Spinney but the local topography discourages any northwards drainage into Stevenage Brook. There are some springs. Mardleybury Pond is one of the few waterbodies in this area.

Land cover and land use

Open arable farmland and woodland.

Vegetation and wildlife

No ecological information was available for this Character Area, but it would be anticipated to show some characteristic acidic communities such as those found within the Knebworth Character Area.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The Scheduled Monument of Deards End Bridge, over the railway, lies north of Knebworth.

Field Pattern

The historic agricultural landscape is composed of a mixture of prairie fields with relict elements within 18th century and later enclosure, ancient woodland, pre 18th century 'irregular' enclosure, 19th - 20th century plantation, post-1950s enclosure and prairie fields with post-1950s boundary loss. A small pocket of commons with an open margin lies to the south and pre 18th century 'irregular sinuous' enclosure lies to the west.

Transport Pattern

There is a strong network of winding lanes linking the villages to the larger plateau settlements. The B197 runs parallel to the railway on the western edge between Mardley Heath and Knebworth, through Woolmer Green. The Roman road between Welwyn and Watton has dwindled here to a lane and a footpath.

Settlements and Built Form

There are several buildings of note in the vicinity of Knebworth designed by Lutyens including the red brick church of St. Martin, the Golf Club House (1908) and Homewood (1900).

EVALUATION

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The part within the District is comparatively open in character. The rolling landform helps to create enclosure and separation. The Character Area is crossed and enclosed by transport corridors adding to the general development pressure on the Character Area.

Rarity & distinctiveness

No distinctive features but Park Wood ancient woodland (hornbeam coppice) abuts southwest boundary.

VISUAL IMPACT

Urban impact of Stevenage and Knebworth. The motorway and railway corridors contribute to the sense of encroachment.

ACCESSIBILITY

Roads radiate out from Knebworth, crossing the area. Little footpath provision. Bridleway connection between Knebworth and Stevenage.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor's responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

LC1	Landscape Conservation Area
SAM HT81	Deards End Bridge over railway: Knebworth

EVALUATION

CONDITION

Land cover change:	Localised
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Declining
Impact of built development:	High
Impact of land-use change:	Low

Matrix Score: Moderate

ROBUSTNESS

Impact of landform:	Prominent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Insignificant
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Unusual

Matrix Score: Strong

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
		ROBUSTNESS		

EVALUATION**INHERENT LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY****Landscape Character Sensitivities**

- The Character Area as a whole has a gently undulating landform, although the fringes of Stevenage within North Hertfordshire are slightly flatter
- Hedgerow removal has created large arable fields in parts of the Character Area and left hedge banks without their hedges. The landscape is sensitive to further removal of hedges
- Individual trees are present in a few locations along roads and field boundaries. These are often over mature and would be vulnerable to loss and lack of a replacement programme
- Large woodland blocks are present within the wider Character Area. Within North Hertfordshire there are a limited number of relatively small woodland blocks which would be sensitive to encroachment of development or removal
- Within the Character Area there is a strong network of winding lanes, which are often cut into the landscape. These routes would be vulnerable to 'improvement' schemes and removal of the banks that remain from former hedge banks
- The A1(M) and the railway lines have disturbed and fragmented the parts of the Character Area within North Hertfordshire, particularly where the elevated sections create physical barriers to the rest of the Character Area. These elements require more careful integration.
- A number of incongruous elements have been introduced into the Character Area, including telecommunication masts, which currently act as detractors

Overall Datchworth Settled Slopes is considered to be of **low sensitivity**. The largely open Character Area is heavily influenced by the settlements of Stevenage and Knebworth, as well as the major transport corridors.

Visual Sensitivities

- Views across the Character Area are generally open and expansive due to a lack of hedgerows and vegetation
- Skylines when looking out of Datchworth Settled Slopes are generally wooded, with the woodland located outside the Character Area. Built development in Stevenage or Knebworth occasionally breaks these skylines
- The settlements of Stevenage and Knebworth look out over the Character Area
- Elevated views from railway lines and the A1(M) where they are on embankment.
- Roads throughout the Character Area are generally open, allowing views across the Character Area.

In visual terms, Datchworth Settled Slopes is considered to be of **moderate sensitivity**. Views within the Character Area are relatively open. However, areas of settlement and transport corridors have impinged on views into the Character Area, including the close proximity of Stevenage.

LANDSCAPE VALUE

Overall Datchworth Settled Slopes is considered to be of **low landscape value**. The area is heavily influenced by human activity, the landform is not particularly memorable and little remains of any semi-natural vegetation or habitats.

EVALUATION**CAPACITY TO ACCOMMODATE DEVELOPMENT****Large urban extensions and new settlements (>5ha)**

This type of development would not be entirely appropriate within this Character Area, as it could cause coalescence of the settlements of Stevenage and Knebworth. Visual impacts could also be high, due to the openness of Datchworth Settled Slopes. Increased housing development would be likely to affect the existing narrow lanes that remain in the Character Area, which could remove aspects of the remaining character of the landscape. Any development that does proceed should be well contained by vegetation to minimise the extent of visual intrusion into the Datchworth Settled Slopes.

The landscape capacity for major urban extensions or new settlements is considered to be moderate to low.

Smaller urban extensions (<5ha)

This type of development would not be entirely appropriate within this Character Area, due to the possibility of coalescence of the settlements of Stevenage and Knebworth. There may be some scope for small scale expansion of Stevenage and Knebworth, carefully designed and in keeping with the existing character. However, expansion of Stevenage would extend beyond the natural boundary of the railway. Mitigation planting would also need to be given careful consideration, to ensure that there is not visual intrusion into the wider Character Area.

The landscape capacity for small urban extensions is considered to be moderate.

Major transport developments/improvements

This type of development could be relatively appropriate within this Character Area, due to the presence of both the A1(M) and the railway lines at present. Improvements to these transport links could present the opportunity to improve their fit within the landscape and soften their appearance and the effect on the setting of Stevenage and Knebworth.

The landscape capacity for major transport developments/improvements is considered to be moderate.

Commercial/warehouse estates

This type of large scale development could be in keeping with the existing land uses adjacent to some parts of this character area, including larger settlements. Careful consideration of the landscape treatment to the edges of any consented development would be required, to ensure that there is not visual intrusion into the wider Character Area.

The landscape capacity for commercial/warehouse estates is considered to be moderate to low.

Individual large/bulky buildings

There may be some limited capacity for sympathetically located and designed individual large buildings, particularly if they were of an agricultural or vernacular form. However, large buildings, if not carefully located, would visually intrude on the largely open Datchworth Settled Slopes.

The landscape capacity for individual large/bulky buildings is considered to be moderate.

Large scale open storage

The openness of much of the Datchworth Settled Slopes would make it difficult to accommodate large scale 'open' uses without significant visual impacts. Careful consideration of the landscape treatment to the edges of any consented development would be required, to ensure that there is not visual intrusion into the wider Character Area.

The landscape capacity for large scale 'open' uses is considered to be low to moderate.

EVALUATION

Mineral extraction/waste disposal

Mineral extraction is unlikely to be appropriate in Datchworth Settled Slopes due to the close proximity to built up areas and existing open aspects.

The landscape capacity for mineral extraction is considered to be low. Waste disposal would be a problem in all character areas due to the presence of aquifers.

Incremental small scale development

There is likely to be some capacity for carefully located and designed small scale developments within the Character Area, particularly if they were of an agricultural nature and in keeping with the rural character. However, due to the existing open nature any proposals would need clear justification or carefully designed mitigation to avoid visual intrusion into the Datchworth Settled Slopes.

The landscape capacity for incremental small scale developments is considered to be low to moderate.

Utilities developments e.g. masts, pylons, wind turbines

There are currently a number of detractors in the area. These include existing telecommunications masts, which are visible throughout the Character Area. Further utilities developments or elements such as masts or wind turbines are likely to have a major impact on the open character of Datchworth Settled Slopes. Large scale tall elements such as these would be highly visible within the Character Area, as well as in surrounding Character Areas and from Knebworth and Stevenage.

The landscape capacity for utilities developments is considered to be low to moderate.

GUIDELINES

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE

Strategy: Conserve and Restore

NB. Guidelines apply only to land within North Hertfordshire.

Landscape management guidelines

- Encourage restoration of historic hedgerows and management of relic hedges
- Consider the possibilities of creating footpath routes in the area
- Consider opportunities for woodland planting

Built development guidelines

- Strict control of development around the setting of Old Knebworth and Knebworth Park is a priority
- Encourage the use of woodland planting to screen new development and to provide ecological diversity
- Encourage diverse woodland planting along the A1(M) corridor
- Ensure that any new development on the edge of Stevenage is well contained by vegetation to improve the extent of visual intrusion from the major urban area into the Character Area
- Ensure that new development does not lead to coalescence of the settlements of Stevenage and Knebworth
- Ensure that new development does not necessitate the removal of existing woodland blocks or hedgerows
- Ensure that lighting associated with new development does not create additional urbanising influences on the Character Area
- Encourage the integration of transport corridors into the Character Area through carefully designed earthworks and planting schemes
- Use the opportunity of any new developments to create new accessible green infrastructure for the local population

Appendix 3

Assessment of Secondary Education Supply and Demand in Hertfordshire in Relation to Provision in and Around Stevenage School Planning Area - Turley

**Assessment of Secondary
Education Supply and Demand in
Hertfordshire in Relation to
Provision in and Around Stevenage
School Planning Area**

Watton Road, Knebworth

January 2018

Turley

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Our reference: GLAP 3039

January 2018

1. Introduction

Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report has been commissioned by Gladman Developments Ltd to provide analysis of the secondary education position across the wider geography surrounding Stevenage. It specifically considers pupil movements, secondary school provision and the impact of housing growth on supply and demand of places in relation to Knebworth and Great Ashby given these locations are subject to consideration around new secondary school provision. The purpose is to assess whether provision of a single new secondary school in Great Ashby would enable the needs of pupils in Knebworth to be met.
- 1.2 This report has been prepared to inform inputs into the North Hertfordshire Local Plan Examination in Public (EiP) for which hearing sessions commence on 13th November 2017 and continue into early 2018. It specifically relates to Matters 10/11 covering Stevenage, Gravely and Knebworth.

Background Context

- 1.3 Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), as the Local Education Authority, has a duty to provide education provision across Hertfordshire.
- 1.4 In assessing future secondary education need, HCC's preferred option is to provide an 8FE school in Great Ashby. North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) instead proposes two 4FE schools, one located in Great Ashby and one located in Knebworth in its Draft Local Plan, 2011- 2031, Proposed Submission October 2016.
- 1.5 At this time, HCC has not undertaken a full assessment to consider the demand arising from planned housing growth across the county, school place provision and pupil movements. However, it acknowledges that these relationships are interlinked:

"The County Council works with the ten District Councils within its area in their role as Local Planning Authorities to ensure sufficient education infrastructure is planned for the longer term in line with Local Plan strategic housing growth proposals¹."
- 1.6 Whilst a full assessment of the larger Hertfordshire geography has not been undertaken due to timescales and information availability², this report considers the wider geography in and surrounding Knebworth and Great Ashby, and by doing so attempts to address gaps in the current analysis already undertaken by other parties to inform the EiP.

¹HCC (June 2017) HCC Response to 'North Hertfordshire Education Study Final Report by Regeneris Consulting', p.2

²Turley has made contact via email to HCC to request information on pupil movements on 3rd January 2018, but no response has been received.

Data and information considered

The following sources have been used in this report:

- North Hertfordshire Draft Local Plan, submission October 2016
- East Hertfordshire Draft Local Plan, publication 2016
- Stevenage Borough Local Plan, publication draft January 2016
- Welwyn Hatfield Draft Borough Plan, publication 2016
- In the absence of data on cross catchments requested from HCC³, Schools Guide Heat Maps have been used to assess where pupils live that attend secondary schools across Hertfordshire
- Hertfordshire County Council's (HCC) policy on Priority Areas
- HCC, Healthier, Safer, Greener Journeys to School: Hertfordshire's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) For School and Colleges 2017/18
- HCC 'Property Representations to NHDC on behalf of HCC Services – Regulation 19 Local Plan Consultation' (page 25-26)
- Vincent + Corbidge, North Hertfordshire Local Plan Examination in Public, Statement in respect of Matter 1: Duty to Co-operate, October 2017, page 15
- PSE, 'A Report for North Hertfordshire District Council', July to September 2017.

Overview of Report Findings

1.7 The findings of the report are presented according to five themes as follows:

- Travel distances – Knebworth pupils only attend one school within the statutory maximum 3 mile walking distance⁴, compared to Great Ashby pupils who attend 5 within a 3 mile walking distance.
- Priority areas – Knebworth pupils are disadvantaged by attending 3 schools for which they are not within the Priority Area catchment. This means that should demand for these schools increase within the Priority Area Knebworth pupils will not be given priority admission.
- Forecast deficit capacity – Knebworth pupils travel to five School Planning Areas – three of which will have deficit capacity totalling 845 places in 2020/21. In comparison, Great Ashby pupils currently travel to two School Planning Areas, one of which will have deficit capacity totally 39 places in 2020/21.
- Housing growth – Housing growth is not concentrated on Great Ashby and there is no clear indication of why a new school is required in this location above Knebworth.
- Impact of providing a single secondary school in Great Ashby – Great Ashby is too far distanced from Knebworth to have a direct benefit on Knebworth pupils through provision of a new school. Given Knebworth and Great Ashby pupils only

³ Turley requested HCC to provide relevant data on 3rd January 2018, no response was received

⁴ This is the statutory maximum distance that children over the age of 8 are expected to travel to attend school, as stated in the Education Act, 1996

attend one school in common (Hitchin Girl's School) provision of a new school at Great Ashby will not free up spaces at the majority of schools attended by Knebworth pupils.

- 1.8 We conclude that Knebworth pupils are in a precarious position with regards to their current secondary school attendance trends due to Priority Areas and forecast deficit. The provision of a new school in Great Ashby will not resolve these issues. Provision of a new school in Knebworth will respond to these issues and will also reflect school travel sustainability aims of the Local Authority.

2. Travel Distances

Knebworth pupils currently travel further to attend school, as compared to Great Ashby pupils

- 2.1 In order to attend secondary school, pupils residing in Knebworth currently travel further than secondary aged pupils residing in Great Ashby.
- 2.2 Whereas Knebworth pupils attend 7 secondary schools located across 6 School Planning Areas; Great Ashby pupils attend a total of 6 secondary schools which span 2 School Planning Areas in Hertfordshire.
- 2.3 The Education Act of 1996 states that it is unreasonable to expect children to travel to school further than 3 miles measured in walking distance⁵. Of the 7 secondary schools that Knebworth pupils attend, 6 are further than 3 miles. Of the 6 secondary schools that Great Ashby pupils attend, only 1 is further than 3 miles.
- 2.4 These trends are shown the following tables.

Table 2.1: Current schools attended by Knebworth pupils

School Name	District	School Planning Area	Walking distance from centre of Knebworth	Further than 3 miles?
Hitchin Boys' School	North Herts	Hitchin	8.3 miles	✓
Hitchin Girls' School			7.7 miles	✓
Presdales School	East Herts	Hartford and Ware	10.2 miles	✓
Richard Hale School			7.7. miles	✓
Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School	Welwyn Hatfield	Hatfield	9.0 miles	✓
Monk's Walk School		Welwyn Garden City	4.1 miles	✓
Barnwell School	Stevenage	Stevenage	2.5 miles	x

Source: Turley analysis of Schools Guide website for all secondary schools in Hertfordshire, HCC's allocation of school places according to Priority Area, and data from freemaptools.com

⁵ The statutory walking distance is 2 miles for children under the age of 8 and 3 miles for children over the age of 8, as stated in the Education Act, 1996

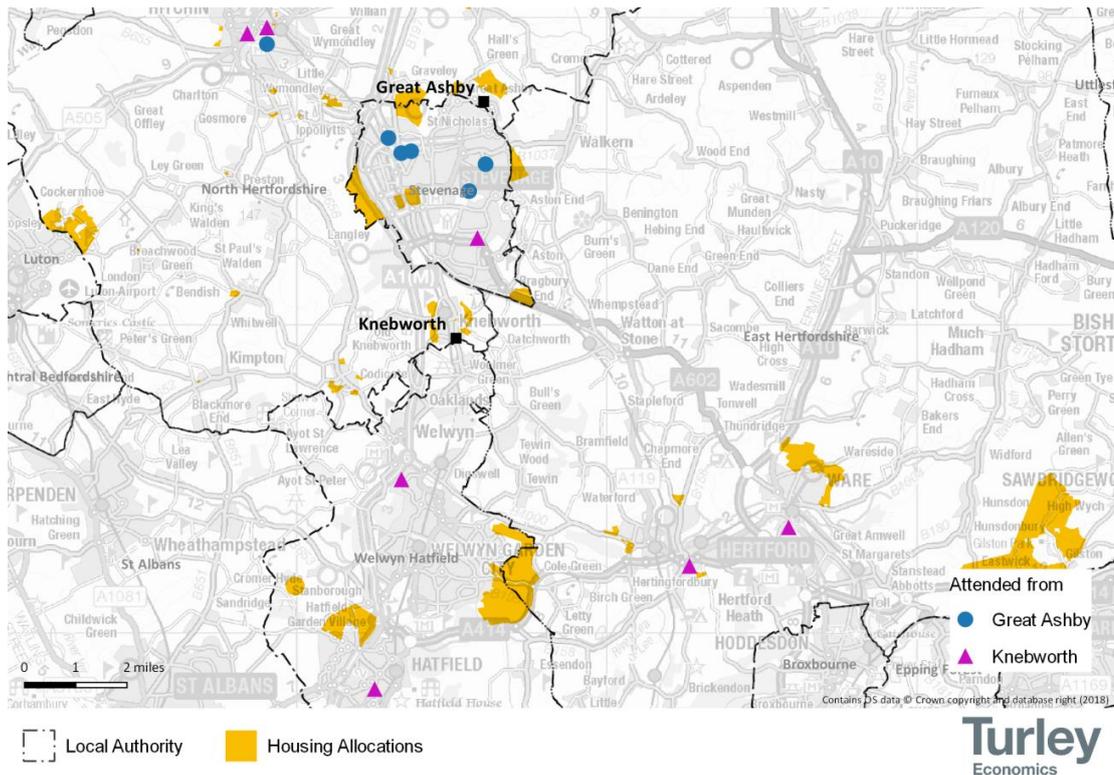
Table 2.2: Schools attended by pupils residing in Great Ashby

School Name	District	School Planning Area	Walking distance from centre of Great Ashby	Further than 3 miles?
Hitchin Girls' School	North Herts	Hitchin	6.2 miles	✓
The Barclay School	Stevenage	Stevenage	2.4 miles	x
The John Henry Newman School			2.8 miles	x
Marriotts School			2.4 miles	x
The Nobel School			1.8 miles	x
The Thomas Alleyne Academy			2.5 miles	x

Source: Turley analysis of Schools Guide website for all secondary schools in Hertfordshire, HCC's allocation of school places according to Priority Area, and data from freemaptools.com

2.5 As the following map demonstrates, secondary pupils residing in Knebworth currently travel further afield to school, as compared to their Great Ashby counterparts.

Figure 2.1: Secondary Schools Attended by Knebworth and Great Ashby Pupils



Source: Turley analysis of Schools Guide heat maps; QGIS mapping software

3. Priority Areas

Of the seven secondary schools that Knebworth pupils currently attend, Knebworth is considered a Priority Area for only four of those schools. Increases to pupils in the Priority Area of the other three schools will decrease the number of admissions of Knebworth pupils.

- 3.1 In allocating school places, HCC considers Priority Areas⁶. Pupils in Great Ashby are prioritised for nearby schools, whereas Knebworth pupils are also prioritised at schools further away.
- 3.2 Knebworth pupils currently attend seven secondary schools. The Knebworth area is considered a 'Priority Area' for four of these schools: Hitchin Boys' School, Hitchin Girls' School, Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School and Barnwell School.
- 3.3 Knebworth pupils currently attend three secondary schools for which Knebworth is not considered a priority area: Presdales School, Richard Hale School and Monk's Walk School. This is shown in the following table.

Table 3.1: Secondary schools currently attended by Knebworth pupils and priority status

School Name	District	School Planning Area	Is Knebworth a priority area for this school?
Hitchin Boys'	North Herts	Hitchin	✓
Hitchin Girls'			✓
Presdales School	East Herts	Hartford and Ware	x
Richard Hale School			x
Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School	Welwyn Hatfield	Hatfield	✓
Monk's Walk School		Welwyn Garden City	x
Barnwell	Stevenage	Stevenage	✓

Source: Turley analysis of Schools Guide website for all secondary schools in Hertfordshire and HCC's allocation of school places according to Priority Area.

⁶ Hertfordshire County Council allocates schools places, in part, according to 'Priority Area'. A full list of Priority Areas is included in Appendix 1.

See: https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-admissions/secondary-and-upper-schools/admission-rules-secondary-and-upper-schools/priority-areas-secondary-and-upper-schools.aspx#DynamicJumpMenuManager_3_Anchor_1

- 3.4 Pupils living inside Priority Areas are considered for school places before considering pupils living outside Priority Areas⁷. Should demand for school places rise within the Priority Areas for Presdales School, Richard Hale School and Monk’s Walk School, Knebworth pupils may no longer be able to attend these three schools.
- 3.5 Great Ashby pupils, however, only attend one school – Hitchin Girls’ School – for which Great Ashby is not a Priority Area. This is shown in the following table. Should there be increased demand from pupils residing in the Priority Area for Hitchin Girls’ School; Great Ashby pupils may no longer be allocated places at this school.

Table 3.2: Secondary schools currently attended by Great Ashby pupils and priority status

School Name	District	School Planning Area	Is Great Ashby a priority area for this school?
Hitchin Girls	North Herts	Hitchin	x
Barclay School	Stevenage	Stevenage	✓
John Henry Newman			✓
Marriotts			✓
The Nobel			✓
Thomas Alleyne			✓

Source: Turley analysis of Schools Guide website for all secondary schools in Hertfordshire and HCC’s allocation of school places according to Priority Area.

- 3.6 Therefore, Great Ashby pupils are comparatively in a more secure position, in that they are prioritised for admission at all but one of the schools that they attend.

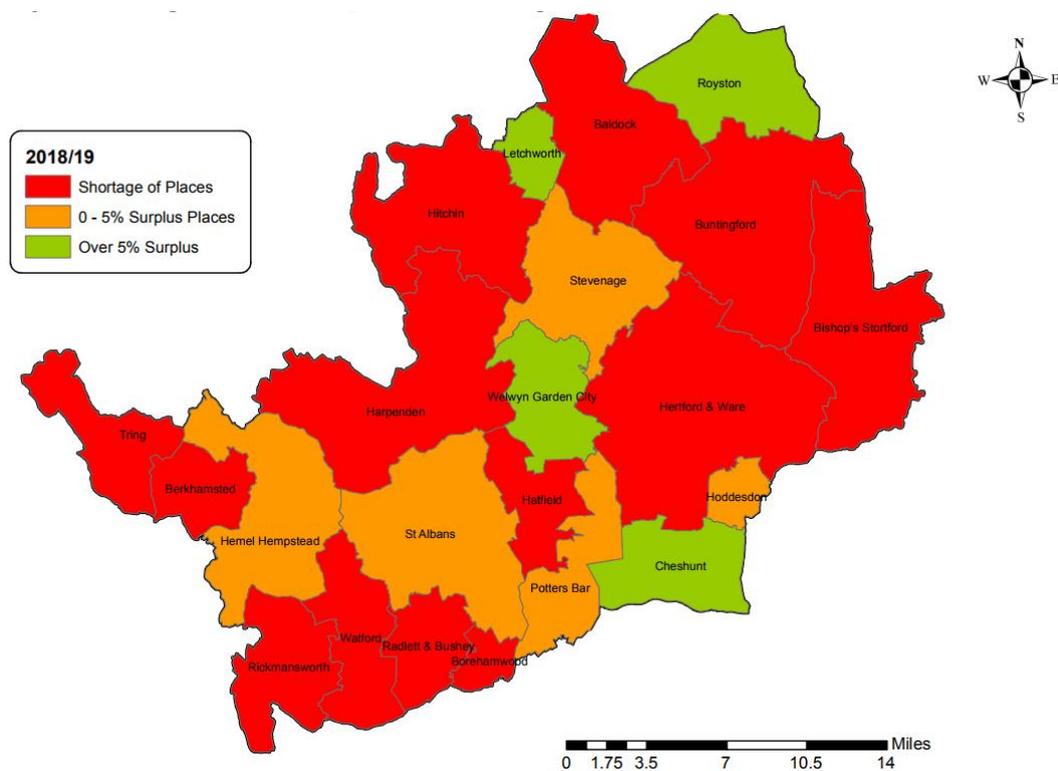
⁷ Hertfordshire County Council, Schools and Education website, Priority Areas

4. Forecast Deficit Capacity

Forecast data shows that there will be more deficit capacity in School Planning Areas where Knebworth pupils currently attend, as compared to the areas where Great Ashby pupils attend

- 4.1 HCC's forecast data shows that there will be deficit capacity in six of the nine relevant School Planning Areas in and surrounding Stevenage. These are: Stevenage; Letchworth; Hitchin⁸; Harpenden; Welwyn Garden City; Hatfield; Hertford and Ware; Buntingford and Baldock. This wider picture demonstrates a need for increased secondary provision across Hertfordshire.

Figure 4.1: Secondary School Planning Areas, Surplus and Shortage for 2018/19



Source: HCC, *Meeting the Demand for School Places: Summer 2016/17*

- 4.2 Current trends show that Knebworth pupils travel to five School Planning Areas⁹ – three of which will have deficit capacity totalling 845 places in 2020/21. In comparison, Great Ashby pupils currently travel to two School Planning Areas, one of which will have deficit capacity totally 39 places in 2020/21. This is shown in the following table.

⁸ Although the Hitchin School Planning Area does not share a boundary with Stevenage, it is included in this assessment as pupils from Knebworth attend school in this area.

⁹ The Schools Guide website produces heat maps which show where pupils live on an individual school basis. This analysis has been carried out across all secondary schools in Hertfordshire to understand which schools pupils who reside in Knebworth and in Great Ashby attend.

Table 4.1: School Planning Areas with Forecast Deficit, 2020/21

School Planning Area	Spare Places in 2020/21	Currently attended by Knebworth pupils?	Currently attended by Great Ashby pupils?
Hitchin	- 39	✓	✓
Hertford and Ware	- 370	✓	x
Hatfield	- 467	✓	x

Source: HCC forecast data, Secondary provision

- 4.3 The School Planning Areas in which Knebworth pupils currently attend school are projected to have far worse deficits in secondary provision as compared to the School Planning Areas where Great Ashby pupils currently attend school. Therefore, Knebworth pupils are at a disadvantage compared to Great Ashby counterparts. This is particularly important given the previous chapter which identified that Knebworth pupils are not in the Priority Area of three out of the four schools they attend. When these schools are oversubscribed, pupils from Priority Areas will be given priority in admissions.
- 4.4 There will be no capacity available at the only secondary school located within a 3 mile walking distance on Knebworth in 2020/21 – Barnwell School.. This school is currently attended by pupils residing in Knebworth and is located approximately 2.5 miles from the centre of Knebworth. This school was recently expanded by 1FE but this additional capacity will be taken up in 2020/21 according to a report undertaken by Vincent + Gorbings¹⁰. However, Great Ashby pupils currently attend 5 secondary schools which are all located within a 3 mile walking distance. HCC's forecast data indicates that there will be surplus capacity within the Stevenage School Planning Area, in which these schools are located¹¹.

¹⁰ Vincent + Gorbings, North Hertfordshire Local Plan Examination in Public, Statement in respect of Matter 1: Duty to Co-operate, October 2017, page 15

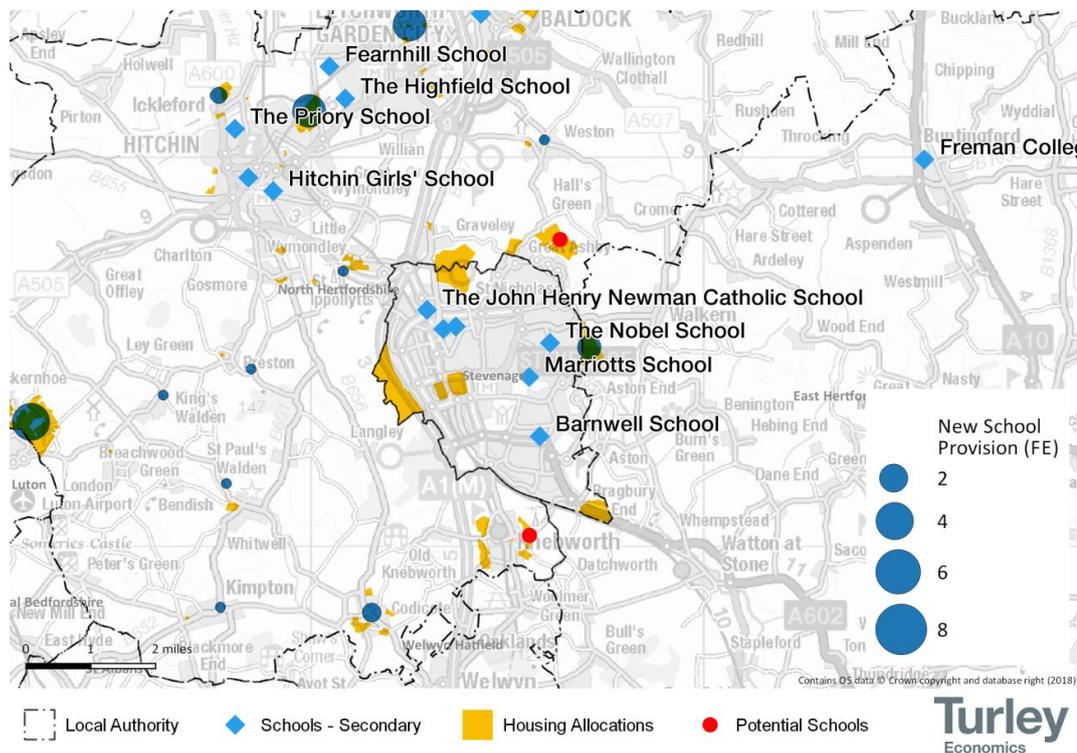
¹¹ It is noted that Barnwell School is also located within the Stevenage School Planning Area. As the report by Vincent + Gorbings was published more recently than HCC's forecast data, this report has been used to understand the forecast position at Barnwell School.

5. Housing Growth

Mapping of housing allocations across Hertfordshire shows a need for secondary provision across Stevenage, not just in Great Ashby

- 5.1 Analysis of Local Plan housing allocations and school projects across North Hertfordshire, East Hertfordshire, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield shows that there are pockets in and around Stevenage where demand arising from housing allocations is not yet mitigated by supply in terms of new schools or expansion projects.
- 5.2 While HCC's preferred option is for an 8FE school in Great Ashby, NHDC proposes two 4FE schools in its draft Local Plan; one located in Great Ashby and one located in Knebworth. The indicative sites of these potential school projects are shown as red dots on the following map. Further indicative sites for potential new schools are shown as the smaller blue dots. These indicate areas where a need for additional provision is identified within the Local Plan but a school project is not specified.
- 5.3 Housing allocations in and surrounding Stevenage are shown in the following map. This shows that:
- The spatial distribution of new housing is relatively even across the geography. Great Ashby is not forecast to have the majority of housing growth.
 - New school provision is planned in a number of locations, particularly to the north of Stevenage.
 - There is an existing gap in secondary school provision around Knebworth which will not be addressed by future school provision other than that proposed at KB4.

Figure 5.1: Map showing housing allocations across the wider geography surround Stevenage¹²



Source: Turley analysis of Local Plan allocations in North Hertfordshire, East Hertfordshire, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield and QGIS mapping software

- 5.4 Forecast data indicates that Stevenage will have surplus capacity in 2020/21 of 174 places¹³.
- 5.5 Housing allocations in Great Ashby will generate 930 new dwellings. Applying the ratio of 1 FE required for every 500 homes, this results in 1.9 FE required by the housing allocation, equivalent to 285 places.
- 5.6 Current trends as explained in Section 1 and 2 show that the majority of secondary schools in the Stevenage School Planning Area are attended by Great Ashby pupils rather than Knebworth pupils. Great Ashby is prioritised for Stevenage schools within HCCs Priority Areas, whereas Knebworth is prioritised for Stevenage as well as other School Planning Areas. There is no indication that these Priority Areas are to be changed or altered. Therefore, a continuation of current trends would indicate that the majority of demand generated by housing allocations in Great Ashby can be accommodated in Stevenage, where there are 6 schools all within a 3 mile walking distance.

¹² Draft Local Plans for North Hertfordshire, East Hertfordshire, Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield have been used to assess future housing growth. Information on new school projects contained in Local Plans is not always specific, therefore where there has been an identified need for a new school project, HCC's ratio of 1FE per 500 homes is used to estimate the size of the school project in terms of FE. This is why there are several smaller school sites on the map which represent 0.5 or 1 FE; it is more likely that a school site would be located between these sites that would be for example 4FE.

¹³ HCC forecast data

- 5.7 The gap in demand would need to be accommodated by additional school provision, but this analysis demonstrates that a new school of 8FE (1,200 places) is not necessary in this geography.
- 5.8 Conversely, Knebworth has a current void of secondary school provision which will not be addressed by secondary school projects other than that proposed at KB4. Housing allocations in Knebworth will generate 598 new dwellings. Applying the ratio of 1 FE required for every 500 homes, this results in 1.2 FE, equivalent to approximately 180 secondary places. The only school within a 3 mile walking distance to Knebworth – Barnwell School – is reported to have no spare capacity in 2020/21.

6. Impact of Providing a Single New Secondary at Great Ashby

School Size

HCC has stated a preference for larger secondary schools. This is however not policy, only preference.

- 6.1 HCC has stated a preference for larger secondary schools¹⁴:

“Secondary schools have five year groups, from Year 7 through to Year 11. With few exceptions (such as Cheshunt School), the secondary schools within Hertfordshire operate sixth forms, providing lower and upper years groups at Years 12 and 13. HCC has a preference for secondary schools of 6 to 10FE as this offers improved opportunities for the delivery of a broad education curriculum. A 6FE school will have 5 year groups of 180 pupils (1080 in total) plus a Sixth Form”¹⁵.

- 6.2 HCC has explained the reasoning behind a preference for a larger school, to be located in Great Ashby, as stated in the Statement in Respect of Matter 1 submitted by HCC and written by Vincent + Goring¹⁶:

“HCC would not support the establishment of 4FE secondary schools and for a host of educational and sustainability reasons, seeks larger schools”¹⁷.

- 6.3 Whilst the clear implication of the above statement is that HCC has a preference for larger sized schools, this preference does not have grounding in adopted policy¹⁸. A report undertaken by PSE Consulting Limited for NHCD, undertaken between July and September 2017, found that there is no evidence to show that schools smaller than 4FE cannot be run efficiently in terms of finance and in the delivery of educational outcomes¹⁹.

¹⁴ Secondary schools in Hertfordshire typically include sixth form provision.

¹⁵ HCC 'Property Representations to NHDC on behalf of HCC Services – Regulation 19 Local Plan Consultation' (page 25-26)

¹⁶ Vincent + Goring, North Hertfordshire Local Plan Examination in Public, Statement in respect of Matter 1: Duty to Co-operate, October 2017

¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁸ In 'HCC Property Representations to NHDC on behalf of HCC Services – Regulation 19 Local Plan Consultation', pages 25- 26, HCC states the Council's preference for larger schools, but no information on a policy basis is included.

¹⁹ PSE, 'A Report for North Hertfordshire District Council', July to September 2017.

Sustainable Travel

HCC's Sustainable School Travel Strategy aims to reduce car journeys, traffic and pollution, however a new school in Great Ashby would do little to solve these problems in Knebworth due to distance

6.4 HCC's focus on sustainability appears to contradict its own School Travel Policy. Within this policy document, sustainability is cited as a key factor in the consideration of location of schools²⁰.

6.5 HCC's '*Healthier, Safer, Greener Journeys to School: Hertfordshire's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) For School and Colleges 2017/18*' strategy document outlines HCC's aims and objectives in terms of travel to schools. The overall vision of the document is to:

"Increase opportunities for children and young people to travel to, from and between schools and colleges by sustainable modes".

6.6 The aims of HCC's '*Healthier, Safer, Greener Journeys to School: Hertfordshire's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) For School and Colleges 2017/18*' strategy are as follows:

- *"Reduce the use of the car for journeys to, from and between educational establishments;*
- *Improve accessibility to, from and between educational establishments;*
- *Improve child road safety;*
- *Improve child health through active travel and therefore reduce congestion and pollution around schools;*
- *Improve the quality of the local environment by reducing traffic in and around school sites*²¹.

6.7 Therefore, locating schools nearby to pupils is a key consideration for HCC, with the purpose to reduce the dependence on cars and improve accessibility to schools.

6.8 NHDC's Draft Local Plan (2016) states that the majority of secondary aged pupils residing in Knebworth currently access school via private motor vehicles.

6.9 Within NHDC's Draft Local Plan, Policy SP10 aims to maintain and create 'healthy communities'. Within this policy, point E relates specifically to education provision and states that NHDC aims to:

*"Work with Hertfordshire County Council and education providers to ensure the planning system contributes to the provision of sufficient school places and facilitates the provision of new or expanded schools in appropriate and accessible locations*²²".

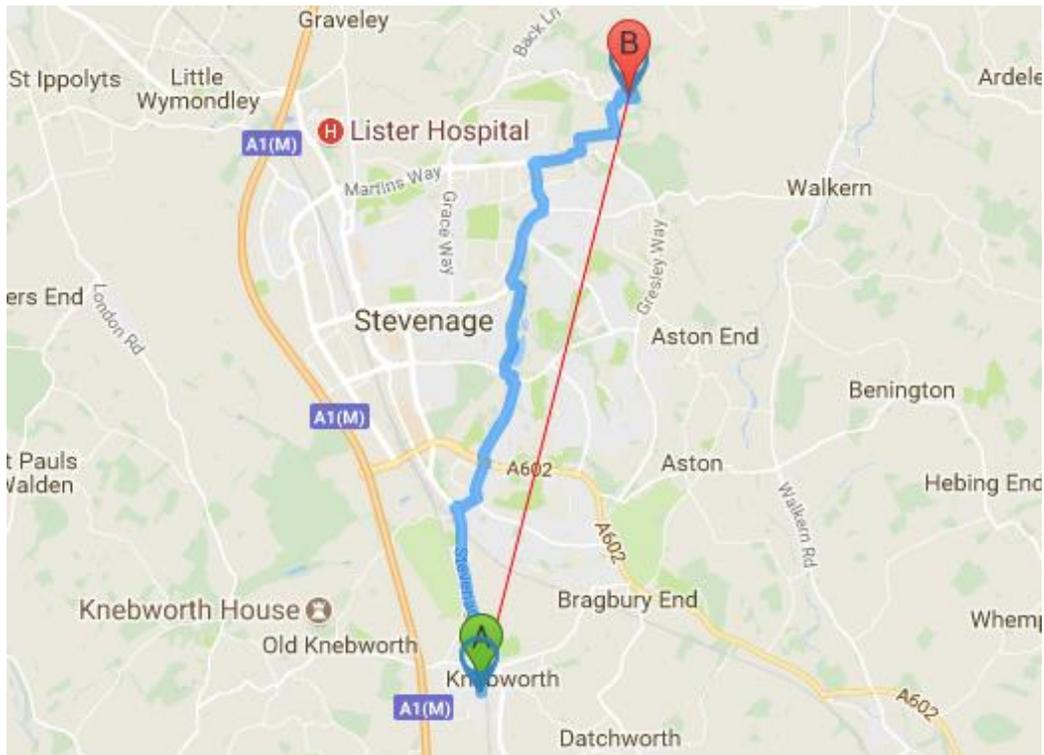
²⁰ HCC, *Healthier, Safer, Greener Journeys to School: Hertfordshire's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) For School and Colleges 2017/18*

²¹ HCC, *Healthier, Safer, Greener Journeys to School: Hertfordshire's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) For School and Colleges 2017/18*

²² North Hertfordshire District Council, Draft Local Plan, SP10, page 53

- 6.10 However, the location of a new secondary school located in Great Ashby would not address any of the current problems Knebworth pupils experience in terms of accessing secondary schools in a nearby location.
- 6.11 Figure 6.1 shows that the walking distance between the centre of Knebworth and Great Ashby is approximately 5.7 miles; the straight line distance is approximately 4.5 miles. Therefore, a new school located in Great Ashby would be beyond the 3 mile walking distance as outlined as the maximum distance a child over the age of 8 is expected to walk to school in the Education Act, 1996.

Figure 6.1: Walking distance between centre of Knebworth and centre of Great Ashby



Source: *Freemaptools website using Google maps data*

- 6.12 It would, therefore, be unreasonable to consider that pupils residing in Knebworth would be able to travel sustainably to attend school in Great Ashby.

Relationship with Knebworth Pupils

Provision of a new school in Great Ashby will not free up places for Knebworth pupils as there is little cross over in the schools currently attended by residents of the two settlements

- 6.13 Pupils resident in Knebworth and Great Ashby only share one school where pupils of both attend – Hitchin Girls'. Therefore new school provision in Great Ashby will not free up space at the majority of schools attended by Knebworth pupils. As referenced previously, the forecast deficit in the planning areas attended by Knebworth pupils is greater than that of those attended by Great Ashby pupils.

- 6.14 The addition of a new school in Great Ashby is unlikely to free up space at schools attended by Knebworth pupils as current patterns show no cross over between the schools attended by residents of these geographies. The provision of a new school in Great Ashby would not address any of the current problems faced by Knebworth pupils in being able to access school provision within a suitable distance.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This report finds that secondary aged pupils residing in Knebworth are currently in a less secure and sustainable position than their Great Ashby counterparts and concludes that additional provision in Knebworth is needed.
- 7.2 The analysis found the following:
- Current trends show that Knebworth pupils travel further to attend secondary school in comparison to Great Ashby pupils. This is due, in part, to the school admissions process. Great Ashby is a Priority Area only for schools in the Stevenage School Planning Area, whereas the Knebworth area is a Priority Area for schools in Stevenage as well as further away.
 - The Priority Area mechanism means that pupils residing in the Priority Area will be admitted to school before pupils residing outside of the Priority Area will be considered. Currently, Knebworth pupils attend 7 schools, 3 of which Knebworth is not a Priority Area. Should the number of pupils increase within the Priority Area, Knebworth pupils may no longer be allocated places. Given that there is forecast to be a deficit in places in the school planning areas attended by Knebworth pupils this is likely to become a reality.
 - There are 6 secondary schools within the Stevenage School Planning Area, for which Great Ashby is a Priority Area. Of these 6 schools, pupils residing in Great Ashby currently attend 5. All 5 are within a 3 mile walking distance from Great Ashby. A walking distance of 3 miles is the statutory maximum distance that a child over the age of 8 is expected to walk to school as stated in the Education Act, 1996.
 - There is only 1 secondary school within a 3 mile walking distance of Knebworth – Barnwell School. This school is expected to be at capacity in the forecast data to 2020/21.
 - HCC's '*Healthier, Safer, Greener Journeys to School: Hertfordshire's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMoTS) For School and Colleges 2017/18*' strategy document aims to reduce travel to school for sustainability reasons, in terms of reducing traffic and pollution.
 - Mapping of housing allocations demonstrates that new housing is evenly spread across Stevenage and surrounding areas, and does not indicate the need for a larger school in Great Ashby. Rather, two schools that serve different areas of housing development would better suit the sustainability aims of HCC in terms of reducing car journeys, and the subsequent traffic and pollution that arises from travelling long distances to schools.
- 7.3 In conclusion, Knebworth pupils only have access to one secondary school within a 3 mile walking distance, and this school is expected to be at capacity in 2020/21, compared to Great Ashby pupils who already attend 5 schools within a 3 mile walking distance. Housing allocations in Great Ashby will not generate demand for an 8FE

school, and forecast data shows that there will be less deficit at schools attended by Great Ashby pupils than those attended by Knebworth pupils. Due to distance, Knebworth pupils cannot be expected to benefit from a new school located in Great Ashby. Nor will provision of a new secondary school in Great Ashby free up places at other schools already attended by Knebworth pupils given that they only attend one school in common (Hitchin Girl's School).

- 7.4 HCC's basis for an 8FE school is not clear; and there is no policy basis for a school of this size. Demand arising from new housing indicates a need for education provision in the south of Stevenage as well as to the north.

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