

Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (2011-2031)
Examination hearing sessions
Statement of North Hertfordshire District Council

**Matter 25 – new land proposed for allocation through the main modifications
MM382 – Site GA2 – Land off Mendip Way, Great Ashby**

Question 25.1 For each of the new areas of land proposed through the main modifications:

a) Is the inclusion of the new area of land for allocation necessary for soundness

1. Yes, for the reasons set out against MM075 and in paragraphs 7 to 10 of the Council's November 2019 'Paper E' on additional land ([ED175](#)). This additional land covers the proposed access corridor linking the remainder of Site GA2 to the existing highway network at Mendip Way.
2. Notwithstanding the omission of this land from the submission Policies Map, it has always been the intention of the Council and the site promoter that access to GA2 would be taken across this land. Proposed site GA2 has been considered on this basis with Policy SP18 (as proposed to be amended) similarly drafted. The original hearing session on Monday 26 February 2018 considered this matter in the same context.

b) Is the new area of land proposed deliverable? In particular, is it

i) confirmed by all of the landowners involved as being available for the use proposed?

3. The ownership of this additional land was discussed at the original hearing session on Monday 26 February 2018. Whilst the ownership of this additional land is fragmented and not presently controlled by the owner or promoter of the remainder of GA2, the owners were all identified at that hearing and their willingness to make the land available was not disputed¹.
4. There was and has been no suggestion since then of any change to that position.

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

¹ An audio recording of this discussion is available through the link below, starting at 11:00 minutes:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEzUOICTH4g&t=0s&index=15&list=PLUAgARWM598TAIAhbEyNBS-rbT2KICCYB>

5. Yes, for the reasons set out in paragraphs 3 to 8 of the Council's [Matter 10 \(Great Ashby\) Statement](#).

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

6. Yes, for the reasons set out in Paragraphs 9 to 11 of the Council's Matter 10 (Great Ashby) Statement. The additional land is to ensure the entirety of the site and its associated access are shown as allocated on the policies map. The additional land does not alter the dwelling estimates or any of the infrastructure requirements. The additional land does not result in the identification of any additional constraints beyond those already considered for the remainder of this site

c) Is the inclusion of the new area of land justified and appropriate in terms of the likely impacts of the development

7. Yes, for the reasons set out in Paragraphs 21 to 23 and 35 to 46 of the Council's Matter 10 (Great Ashby) statement. Further information on the assessment and proposed treatment of potential planning constraints has previously been set out in the Statement of Common Ground between the Council and the site promoter ([ED106](#), see *particularly* Paragraphs 26 to 34 and Paragraphs 38 to 43).

Question 25.2 If / where the new area of land proposed for allocation is currently in the Green Belt:

8. The proposed additional land lies partly within the Green Belt. The current Green Belt boundary runs broadly between the rear of the properties on Merrick Close and Grampian Place. The land to the west of this divide is already excluded from the Green Belt. The land to the east of this divide is currently within the Green Belt (see Appendix B of NHDC Matter 10 (Great Ashby) statement).

a) Do exceptional circumstances exist to warrant its allocation? If so, what are they?

9. Yes, for the reasons already set out in Paragraphs 50 to 53 and 55 of the Council's Matter 10 (Great Ashby) statement and Paragraph 34 of the Council's November 2019 'Paper B' on Green Belt ([ED172](#)).
10. Paragraph 90 of the NPPF identifies that certain forms of development, including engineering operations and local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location need not be *inappropriate development*. This additional land is to provide access to the site and already contains an electricity pylon

corridor with substantial built structures. A proposed access corridor in this location might be appropriate development within the Green Belt in any event.

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

11. Notwithstanding the above, this land is best considered holistically as part of site GA2. The Green Belt Review Update ([ED161](#)) identifies that this site makes an increased, significant contribution to Green Belt purposes. It would therefore result in significant harm to the Green Belt if removed.

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?*

12. Measures are identified in Paragraphs 62 and 63 of the Council's Matter 10 (Great Ashby) statement to ensure this.

If / where relevant

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?*

13. Yes, for the reasons set out in paragraphs 64 to 66 of the Council's Matter 10 (Great Ashby) Statement.

14. The proposed additional land does not alter the extent of land which has previously been proposed for removal from the Green Belt. In the submission version of the Policies Map, this additional land (insofar as it presently lies within the Green Belt) was shown as 'white land' to be removed from the Green Belt and contained within the proposed settlement boundary of Stevenage.

15. MM382 does not alter the proposed outward limits of the GA2 allocation and the associated proposed Green Belt boundary which have already been subject to examination.

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?*

16. This additional land does not alter the case presented in paragraphs 67 to 71 of the Council's Matter 10 (Great Ashby) Statement

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

17. Yes, for the reasons set out in paragraphs 72 and 73 of the Council's Matter 10 (Great Ashby) statement.

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?*

18. Yes, for the reasons set out in Paragraphs 74 to 76 and 78 to 81 of the Council's Matter 10 (Great Ashby) statement. MM382 does not alter the proposed outward limits of the GA2 allocation and the associated proposed Green Belt boundary which have already been subject to examination.