

Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031
Statement of Stevenage Borough Council

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

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? Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031

11.44 Is the proposed allocation the most appropriate option given the reasonable alternatives?

11.45 Site WY1 comprises of land in the Green Belt.

- 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?*

11.46 Is the proposed settlement boundary:

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

1. The NHDC Local Plan allocates a large housing site in Little Wymondley, WY1 for 300 dwellings. Whilst Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) does not object to the allocation in principle, our previous representations did raise some concerns with regard to undue reliance being placed on a single point of access to, and egress from the site at Stevenage

Road; which also acts as a conduit for flood water from the Ash Brook during flood events (the most recent flood event to have been recorded and documented with evidence and accounts occurred in February 2014; previous events occurred in Dec 2013; 2000/2001; 1993; 1968 and 1926 – 1956).

Flood Risk

2. The Ash Brook is an ordinary watercourse that flows from Green End, north of Graveley, through Graveley southwards through the north west corner of Stevenage Borough and then north-westerly through Little Wymondley, largely in culvert under the Stevenage Road and steep narrow channels. The Ash Brook receives highway and field drainage along its path and also receives another unknown watercourse just before Priory Lane, Little Wymondley. The culverts vary in diameter and condition throughout its course in Little Wymondley.
3. SBC are proposing development adjacent to the Ash Brook within the Borough boundary, however, such development will be subject to further Flood Risk Assessments as part of the site specific planning applications and the deculverting of the watercourse where appropriate. Development in Stevenage will not increase the risk of flooding further downstream in Little Wymondley.

WY1 Allocation

4. The allocation of WY1, shown on the NHDC Policy Map, indicates that access/egress to/from the site is via the main thoroughfare through the village, Stevenage Road. SBC also understands that there may be a narrow emergency access/egress track from the site on to Blakemore End Road to the east of the site (Appendix A), however NHDC have been unable to confirm the nature of this during discussions between us.
5. Access/egress to/from the site is not clearly defined in WY1 or its supporting text.
6. **SBC would recommend that wording is added to make clear the access/egress arrangements for the site.**
7. During a flood event, the culvert beneath Stevenage Road is unable to cope with the volume of water in the catchment. This is made clear in the HCC document '[Flood Investigation Report, Little Wymondley, Hertfordshire](#)' which considers the February 2014 flood event. Table 3.5.1 in the document identifies that 'there are culverts which have been identified by the LLFA as too small for the capacity of the channel which cause water to back up if overwhelmed and cause water to flow outside of the channel'

8. In the event of a flood, access/egress to the site may be severely hindered or made impossible for residents of the site due to the amount of flood water that would be present during this time.
9. **SBC would recommend wording is added to make clear that as a requirement of any scheme, the developer will need to address flooding, from all sources, prior to development, in order to provide safe access/egress to/from the site.**

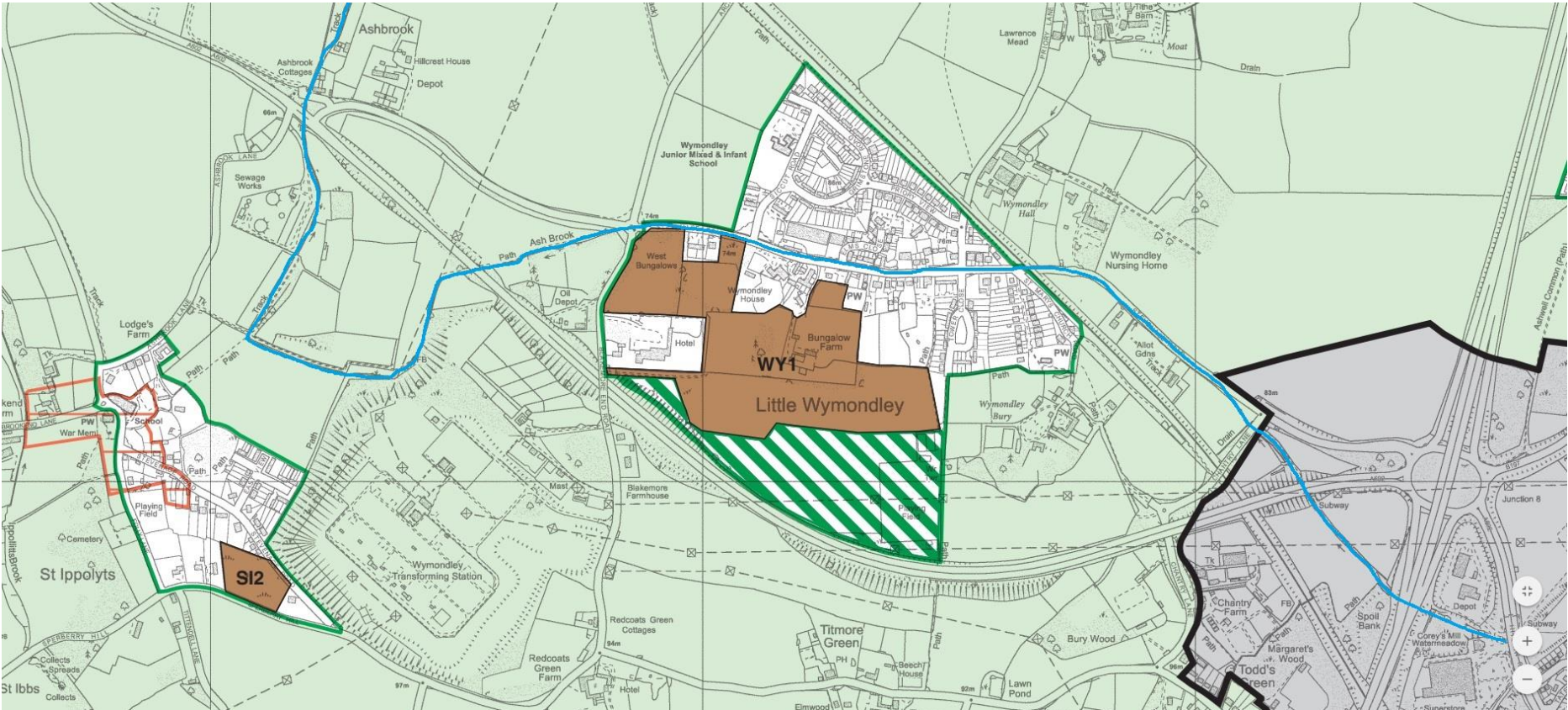
WY1 – Land south of Little Wymondley

- ...
- **Address existing surface water and ~~river~~ fluvial flood risk issues, particularly along Stevenage Road, through SuDS or other appropriate solution. The developer, in partnership with HCC (Hertfordshire County Council) as LLFA (Lead Local Flood Authority), should investigate the culverts beneath Stevenage Road and carry out work, as appropriate, in line with the recommendations made in the HCC Little Wymondley Flood Investigation Report, to ensure that safe access and egress to/from the WY1 site and Stevenage Road is achieved;**
- ...

13.358 There are known flooding issues in Wymondley from both surface water and ~~river~~ fluvial flooding. The key flood route broadly follows the alignment of Stevenage Road with an additional surface water flood route along Priory Lane. The HCC Little Wymondley Flood Investigation Report, November 2014, makes recommendations to reduce the risk of flooding along Stevenage Road. These recommendations need to be fulfilled in order for a flood solution for WY1 to be achieved and the site deemed viable for development.

10. Should the issue of flooding not be addressed as part of the development of the site, and Stevenage Road remain impassable due to flood water, SBC is concerned that the site is not viable and also that the volume of traffic leaving the site, via any proposed emergency access/egress, if one is proposed, turning south on to Blakemore End Road and then east towards Stevenage along Stevenage Road, Titmore Green, will add to the already considerable amounts of traffic in Stevenage.
11. Overall, this site has not been properly considered in terms of its impacts on the surrounding area in terms of safe access/egress or traffic, and an alternative solution to address these concerns has not been provided. Without appropriate consideration of these issues, SBC would object to the allocation of this site.

Appendix A – NHDC WY1 allocation and indicative route of the Ash Brook



Appendix B – Flood extent of Ash Brook, NHDC SFRA

