Great Ashby
community council

Examination of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

Great Ashby Community Council Statement for submission for the hearing on March 24th 2020

On behalf of the Great Ashby Community Council I wish to draw your attention to the following matters raised in previous statements

Great Ashby is being subjected to coalescence from the south-west, north-west and the east. In the south-west the community will be impacted by Stevenage's approved development of Forster Country, the north-west includes GA1 and GA2 within NHDC's Local Plan and the east incorporates EHDC's approved development off of Gresley Way.

It would be extremely helpful to understand why planning authorities and Planning Inspectors appear to operate in isolation, without apparent regard to adjacent developments.

The planning decisions/approvals noted above will have enormous implications on the infrastructure of Great Ashby and Stevenage.

Specifically regarding Matter 25 - **The proposal to add land to the GA2 site to include an access route from Mendip Way** - will not support the existing roads in Great Ashby to accommodate the additional traffic generated by the new houses contrary to NPPF SP6 (Sustainable Transport)

Great Ashby Community Council is opposed to GA1 & GA2 because the existing infrastructure is so lacking. Despite a population of 5,700 there is no doctors' surgery or any other medical facility, except for a veterinary practice. The primary school is consistently over-subscribed and local shops cover just basic needs. The existing roads have been built to minimum widths and, as a consequence, parking is insufficient. Unlike the rest of Stevenage, the cycleways are ad hoc and not co-ordinated with the excellent facilities which Stevenage has to offer. Public transport is lacking with an inefficient circular route, and access roads from Great Ashby Way into Stevenage, Lister Hospital, the A602 and the A1(M) are frequently jammed to capacity.

The current and proposed access routes for both GA1 and GA2 are both inadequate for new provision and detrimental to existing housing. Travel to access education, health facilities, leisure facilities and major road and rail routes is already problematic with additional cars on the road, it will be much worse. Proposed access routes are unsuitable for large vehicles like buses and emergency vehicles.

Each and every one of the developments noted above are going to have a serious detrimental effect on infrastructure which is currently at capacity and beyond, and do not yet provide sufficient solutions.

It appears that Planners might be somewhat blinkered in their approach, if they simply investigate and ultimately approve applications, without, possibly having due regard to what's happening in adjacent authorities.

The Community Council therefore urges you to rethink your approval of GA1 and GA2, before Great Ashby and the rest of Stevenage and beyond become unfixably congested.

Regarding Matter 23.2 – The Green Belt Review work and site selection process.

The land designated for GA2 now has an overall 'significant' contribution (to Green Belt) instead of 'moderate', therefore should only be used in exceptional circumstances with support of the local community, the challenge is that the circumstances are not exceptional and questions the support of the local community.

If GA1 and GA2 are approved with the resultant loss of beautiful Green Belt countryside the Community Council would welcome a statement to the effect that the Housing Allocation borders noted in MM382 will not be extended into adjacent countryside.

Additionally further to our previous representation, the Community Council has recently conducted a residents survey to identify priorities for the local area.

On the basis of this, in the event that GA2 goes ahead, we would like to strongly emphasise the need for a secondary school, GP surgery and premises for a family pub/restaurant, as Great Ashby currently does not have these facilities. This is in addition to the road infrastructure concerns outlined above.

END