

1. Summary Position

I am submitting this response in my capacity as a ward councillor representing Great Ashby residents. I wish to make clear at the outset that my objection is not to the principle of new housing development, nor to the allocation of the GA2 site within the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

My objection relates specifically to the proposed highways arrangements associated with the development, in particular the rerouting of Mendip Way to provide access to the new development, and the absence of credible, evidence-based assurance that the existing local road network can safely and effectively accommodate the cumulative impact of GA1 and GA2.

In its current form, the proposal fails to demonstrate that the transport impacts have been adequately assessed or mitigated, and therefore does not provide confidence that the development is sustainable in planning terms.

2. Cumulative Highways Impact and Infrastructure Capacity

Great Ashby already experiences significant congestion, parking pressures, and road safety concerns, particularly at peak times and around key junctions including those near Round Diamond School.

The GA2 proposals must be considered alongside:

- the existing traffic conditions within Great Ashby,
- the impacts of the adjoining GA1 development at Roundwood, and
- the cumulative effect of additional vehicle movements on a network that already operates close to capacity at peak hours.

To date, there has been insufficient evidence presented that the existing road infrastructure can accommodate this cumulative impact without materially worsening congestion, safety, and accessibility for existing residents.

Residents' lived experience of the original Great Ashby development demonstrates that theoretical modelling has not always reflected operational reality. Planning decisions must therefore be grounded in robust and transparent evidence rather than assumptions.

3. Rerouting of Mendip Way

The proposed rerouting of Mendip Way represents the most significant concern. According to Iceni (21 Nov 2025), there are currently 180 cars/hour during peak time (8-9am) going down Mendip, which will now need to give way to a projected 800 cars coming out of the new development. The proposal would materially change the function of an established residential route by introducing additional traffic movements associated with the new development. This risks:

- increasing congestion at key access points,
- altering established traffic priority arrangements to the detriment of existing residents,
- increasing peak-time queuing and associated safety risks, and
- reducing network resilience during school and commuter peak periods.

The application does not sufficiently demonstrate that these impacts have been mitigated or that alternative access arrangements have been properly evaluated.

Given the scale of development proposed, infrastructure changes of this nature should only proceed where there is clear, demonstrable evidence that they will not create unacceptable impacts on existing communities. It should also be noted that the proposed Active Transport route has been disrupted just outside of the development site, on Great Ashby Way, by a bus stop which was recently moved into a dual use pavement, effectively preventing bikes from using this safe route.

4. Lack of Meaningful Engagement from the Highways Authority

A significant concern throughout both GA1 and GA2 has been the limited engagement from Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority with ward councillors and residents.

During previous planning processes, reliance has been placed on modelling assumptions without sufficient engagement regarding local operational realities. This has undermined confidence that concerns relating to congestion, safety and network performance have been properly understood.

Effective planning requires transparent engagement and evidence-led decision-making. At present, this confidence has not been established.

5. Reliance on “Monitor and Manage”

The continued reliance on a “monitor and manage” approach to congestion and parking pressures is not adequate mitigation for development of this scale.

Monitoring problems after they arise does not prevent harm; it merely records it. Infrastructure must be planned and delivered upfront where impacts are foreseeable.

The assumption within the application of a significant modal shift towards walking, cycling and public transport is also insufficiently evidenced, particularly given current public transport provision and existing travel patterns within Great Ashby.

6. Planning Balance and Conclusion

I recognise that the site allocation within the Local Plan establishes the principle of development. However, the detailed planning application must still demonstrate that:

- transport impacts are acceptable,
- infrastructure is sufficient to support the development, and
- existing communities are not placed at disproportionate disadvantage.

In its current form, the application does not meet that test.

Until the Highways Authority provides clear, evidence-based assurance that the rerouting of Mendip Way and associated access arrangements can operate safely and effectively in practice, I must object to the proposal. I strongly encourage further engagement with residents and ward councillors, and a reassessment of the highways strategy before any permission is granted.

Regards,

Laura Williams

Cllr for Great Ashby Ward