

Councillor Vijaiya Poopalasingham
c/o NHC Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth Garden City
SG6 3JF
2nd July 2025

From: Councillor Vijaiya Poopalasingham

Re: Objections Planning Application 24/02889/FP GA1 Roundwood

I am writing to object to planning application **24/02889/FP 281 dwellings at Roundwood**.

While I do not oppose the principle of building new homes, the lack of effective engagement and constructive recognition of the very real practical concerns of the Great Ashby community collectively leaves little room but to object.

Three primary grounds of objection:

- 1) Access Road and Transport
 - a. Mendip Way
 - b. Calder Way
- 2) Infrastructure
- 3) Impact on existing local community

I will address each in turn below.

1a. Access and Parking: Mendip Way

At every meeting and planning consultation opportunity both Councillor Williams and I have requested clarification on traffic management during building phase, which must cover both GA1 and GA2 since they will built and inconvenience the same residents in the same time frame potentially. Councillor Williams has also requested a parking mitigation plan. Neither of these have been presented.

The 600 existing houses along Mendip Way area will be severely impacted during the building phase and after building is complete, due to the inadequate size of what will become the access road.

Parking is already a huge problem, and it will be severely exacerbated by this development

I refer as part of this objection to the Transport Technical Note dated 2/6/25 provided on behalf of the applicant by Transport Planning Associates.

The proposed 'monitor & manage' is a post impact determined approach predicated on the assumption that any impact can be managed after it manifests.

This precludes the fact that Great Ashby already provides clear demonstration of the impact of development lacking in effective parking space and access provision.

On 21st Nov 2024, Croudace stated at the Great Ashby Community Council that the modelling conducted ahead of building Mendip Way has proved incorrect, with the “level of car usage now at a level unanticipated 20 yrs ago”.

The technical note recognises at para 2.5 - 2.7 envisages a traffic regulation order in order to clear Mendip Way / Haybluff Drive to facilitate construction traffic and a new SB12 Bus Route. It also highlights at para 2.7 that any traffic regulation order along Mendip Way / Haybluff Drive would displace vehicles presently parked onto surrounding streets but without consideration of whether there is actual real time available space.

Any resident of Great Ashby would immediately be able to comment on the chronic lack of parking capacity across Great Ashby.

As a resident of 20 odd years, the residents of the Croudace built development of 20 yrs ago are about to be penalised for previous plannings’ failure to future proof the existing and potential future development.

This is not hyperbole, but lived reality that can be seen by any individual who spends any time on Mendip Way / Haybluff Drive.

As Councillor Williams has noted in her objection to the planning application

“While active transport ambitions are to be applauded, Great Ashby has minimal facilities and is a dormitory. People need cars, especially in the absence of a reliable bus service. to access employment, doctors, secondary education, supermarkets. The piecemeal fashion in which the land is being released and developed is exacerbating the situation. Nothing wrong with dormitories, but let’s not pretend Great Ashby is either urban i.e. a true 15 minute city, or rural i.e. a village with all the pubs and local amenities one would expect”.

The proposed plan to use parking surveys to evaluate impact illustrated at fig 2.1 also looks to present an incomplete picture given its boundary as outlined takes no account of half of Mendip Way. However more to the point, it potentially presents an incorrect metric of evaluation. I note the intention to evaluate parking capacity along Great Ashby Way as indicated in Fig 2.1. Unless it is the applicant’s contention that residents should park along Great Ashby Way as a practical mitigation, using it to demonstrate either capacity or lack of impact would be artificial at best. Misleading at worst.

Misleading as this will take no account of impact of proposals for GA2 which are also on the horizon.

It is a problematic aspect of the planning process which developers are able to make use of that proposals can be segmented into specific frames without consideration of the whole. Given that proposals for GA2 are predicated on access from the other side of Mendip Way, the part not covered by the planned parking surveys and traffic evaluations, one can only conclude that it has been designed as such to not address the combined issues which will arise. The applicant effectively accedes to this very point at para 3.8 and 3.9.

The applicant accepts at para 3.4 that post development, access to the dwellings would be relied upon via Haybluff Drive.

The net impact is to the detriment of residents on Mendip Way, Haybluff Drive, Merrick Close, Benbroke Place, Cotswold Drive, Snowdonia Way, Nevis Road and Cheviot along with the eventual residents of any new development.

1b. Access and Parking: Calder Way

The proposal to use Calder Way as the primary access to the developments is beyond questionable and the basis on which Hertfordshire County Council Highways Team finds it acceptable is not clear.

The Transport Technical note outlines quite clearly the nature of Calder Way at para 3.1

It is a single lane track, 4 m wide (at best) with hedgerows on either side. There are also a number of residential homes along Calder Way presently.

It is along this stretch that the applicant proposes at the moment the access for 281 homes. At a minimal assumption that is 281 vehicles but realistically, double that. As noted at para 3.3, the road is 'constrained'. Further limitations of Calder Way are recognised at para 3.18.

As indicated above, the Technical Note is deliberately presented to exclude any and all considerations of impacts except that of the 281 homes. See para 3.7 – 3.9.

Para 3.18 – 3.21 recognise and reflect the comments from Great Ashby resident re traffic delays and inability of Calder Way to act as main through route of access. Queues along the Calder Way / Orwell Avenue are daily occurrence at peak times. That is before it is the main route of access for 281 homes.

The result of the access issues goes back to the points re Mendip Way / Haybluff Drive, they will become the default routes of access for the new development.

The survey numbers relied upon in the report are out of date (2022 data) and do not reflect present traffic flows.

The expectation of modal shift to mitigate the increase of vehicle use, while laudable are not supported by practical real time data. As indicated above, the lack of amenities and infrastructure necessitate access to Stevenage generally. Even the most committed of cyclists or walkers would be considering the time it would take to reach the train station or shopping provisions in Stevenage in the Winter months.

Proposed bus route is welcome but again takes no account of the impact of exiting residents along Mendip Way.

2. Lack of Infrastructure

This scale of development adds hundreds of residents (prior to additions from GA2) yet no new school, medical, or dentist capacity is confirmed. The SB7 bus service is now infrequent and poorly connected, making the sustainability case questionable but also access to service provision within Stevenage not as clear cut as the proposals would indicate.

However, the note from the NHS Integrated Care Board for this area does offer some welcome comments.

The Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board note 17/4/25 outlines the current existing patient numbers for Stevenage North Primary Care Network at 49,770 as of January 1 2025.

They indicate that both Stevenage North PCN and Stevenage South are without capacity and could not absorb the increase in demand from the new development proposed let alone any additional.

They accept at page 4 that new on-site provision will be needed in order to facilitate the new developments.

I welcome that acceptance and any such provision overall.

However, the proposal is to locate that site within the North of Stevenage development in Gravelly.

This serves to reinforce the lack of provision for Great Ashby specifically but also the need to address the transport / parking questions ahead of development.

Given that GA2 will further feed into this evaluation of the ICB, it would seem reasonable to question the recommendation of on-site provision away from Great Ashby given the benefits of a medical practice for Great Ashby residents overall.

3.Impact on existing Great Ashby Community

It may not be required of the applicant to consider the existing community and the ability to segment comments and proposal exclusively to the proposed development in isolation affords them such latitude.

However, there are real and wide-ranging impacts on the existing residents of Great Ashby, not just along the proposed access routes but for all of Great Ashby.

As alluded to above, the comments in objection to the proposals are not toward the principle of new home provision but the result of admitted failures of the development team during construction of Great Ashby originally.

Without consideration of those issues now manifest ahead of new developments, it will be a repeat of those very same issues except now, when they do manifest, they will serve to compound and exacerbate the present concerns residents and both Councillor Williams and I have outlined.

I therefore cannot at present support proposals which have such widespread detrimental impact on our existing residents and on those future potential residents as well.

Faithfully,

V. Poopalasingham

Councillor Vijaiya Poopalasingham

Great Ashby