

Growing Baldock

Environmental Statement Volume 2: Figures & Appendices

Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual

Appendix 7.3 Planning Policy and Guidance

TECHNICAL APPENDIX 7.3: LVIA PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 7.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ sets out the Government's planning policies for England and provides a framework within which the appropriate local council can produce local and neighbourhood plans; the NPPF is material consideration in making planning decisions. Those paragraphs of the NPPF of relevant to this LVIA are listed below:

Chapter 2 Achieving sustainable development

- 7.1.2 In paragraph 7, the objective of sustainable development is summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 7.1.3 Achieving sustainable development is provided through the following three overarching objectives: economic; social; and, environmental. Of relevance to landscape and visual effects are (amongst others):

- b) **a social objective** – *to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- c) **an environmental objective** – *to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*

Chapter 3 Plan-making strategic policies

- 7.1.4 In paragraph 20, the NPPF requires local planning policies to set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of the development, and make sufficient provision for (amongst others):
- d) *"conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation".*

Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities

- 7.1.5 In paragraph 96, the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:
- a) *"promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (February 2025). *National Planning Policy Framework*

- b) *are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and*
- c) *enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling”.*

Chapter 11 Making effective use of land

- 7.1.6 In paragraph 124, it states that “*planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions*”.

Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

- 7.1.7 In paragraph 131, it states that “*the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process*”.
- 7.1.8 In paragraph 135, it states that the “*planning policies and decisions should ensure that development:*
- a) *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
 - b) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
 - c) *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
 - d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
 - e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*

- f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.*

7.1.9 In paragraph 137, the NPPF states that *“design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should, where applicable, provide sufficient information to demonstrate how their proposals will meet the design expectations set out in local and national policy, and should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot”.*

Chapter 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

7.1.10 Paragraph 164 of the NPPF states that *“new development should be planned for in ways that:*

- a) *avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems”.*

Chapter 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

7.1.11 In paragraph 187, it states that *“planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- a) *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) *maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*
- e) *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local*

environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate”.*

7.1.12 Paragraph 188, states that *“plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework⁶⁵; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries”.*

7.1.13 Paragraph 198, states that *“planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development”.*

Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

7.1.14 Paragraph 203, states that *“plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:*

- d) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- e) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- f) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and*
- g) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place”.*

7.1.15 Paragraph 210, states that in *“determining an application, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness”.*

7.2 Current Local Planning Policies

- 7.2.1 The Site is located within North Herts Council (NHC). The current Local Plan for the area is the North Herts Council Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted Tuesday 8th November 2022).
- 7.2.2 The Site is allocated for housing and employment within the North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031 and the Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version: January 2021).
- 7.2.3 The adopted North Herts Local Plan allocates land to the north and east of Baldock as a sustainable extension to accommodate up to 3,300 homes, employment, local centres, schools and community facilities, sustainable transport connections and green infrastructure. The Local Plan identifies the site as a sustainable extension made up of a series of allocations: BA1 (North of Baldock) for 2,800 homes; BA2 (Land southwest of Clothall Road) for 200 homes; and BA3 (Land south of Clothall Common) for 245 homes.
- 7.2.4 The Local Plan policies of relevance are as follows.

Policy SP1 – Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire

- 7.2.5 When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council will look to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy SP3 – Employment

- 7.2.6 The land to the north of Royston Road, allocated BA10 of the Local Plan, is designated an Employment site, which will support the proposed increase in residential development as part of SP8. Policy SP3 highlights, in relation to the BA10 area, how the allocation Site benefits from proximity to existing employment uses as well as existing and planned residential development and it has access to the strategic road network via the A505 Baldock Bypass.

Policy SP5 – Countryside and Green Belt

- 7.2.7 Most land in North Hertfordshire is rural in nature. National policy allows for Green Belt boundaries to be altered through the preparation of local plans where 'exceptional circumstances' exist. This policy sets out how Green Belt boundaries have been reviewed, primarily around all main towns, and land removed from the Green Belt to enable strategic development.
- 7.2.8 The majority of the Site is allocated for housing and employment as part of the Baldock Strategic Sustainable Extension and has been removed from the Green Belt, with the exception of two areas, land to the west of North Road adjacent to Baldock allotments and a strip of land between BA2 and the A505 Baldock bypass.

Policy SP8 – Housing

- 7.2.9 The policy outlines how housing growth will be supported across the District, through the release of sufficient land to deliver at least 11,600 new homes for North Hertfordshire.
- 7.2.10 The Site includes the following strategic housing areas:

- BA1 Land North of Baldock (Policy SP14) where there is an identified allowance for 2,800 homes.
- BA2 Land south-west of Clothall Road – 200 homes
- BA3 Land south of Clothall Common – 245 homes

Policy SP9 – Design and sustainability

- 7.2.11 The policy highlights how the Council considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development and will support new developments where it is *“well designed and located and responds positively to its local context”*.

Policy SP10 – Healthy communities

- 7.2.12 The policy outlines how the Council will provide and maintain healthy, inclusive communities for residents by protecting, enhancing and creating new physical and green infrastructure to foster healthy lifestyles.

Policy SP12 – Green Infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity

- 7.2.13 The policy states how the Council will accommodate significant growth during the plan period whilst ensuring the natural environment is protected and enhanced:
- *Protect, identify, manage and where possible enhance a strategic multi-functional network of green infrastructure;*
 - *Consider and respect landscape character, scenic beauty and locally sensitive features, particularly in relation to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;*
 - *Protect, enhance and manage designated sites in accordance with the following hierarchy of designations and features:*
 - *Internationally designated sites*
 - *Nationally designated sites*
 - *Locally designated sites;*
 - *Non-designated sites that include important habitats and species*
 - *Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity networks including wildlife corridors, ancient woodlands and hedgerows, wetland and riverine habitats, Local Geological Sites, protected species, priority species and habitats, and non-designated sites of ecological value and ensure measurable net gains for biodiversity; and*
 - *Protect other open spaces and support provision of new and improved open space.*

Policy SP13 – Historic Environment

- 7.2.14 The Site is located circa 100m from Baldock Conservation Area, adjacent to Ivel Springs scheduled monument and the Site itself features a scheduled monument in the form of a Romano-British Small Town and Late Iron Age Settlement (also referred to as Walls Field). The

policy highlights how the Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

Policy SP14 – Site BA1 – North of Baldock

7.2.15 The policy relates to the northern part of the Site which is allocated as a Strategic Housing Site for a residential-led development with site specific requirements including:

- *structural planting to create a sense of place, integration into surrounding landscape and to reinforce a long-term, defensible Green Belt boundary to the north and east;*
- *address existing surface water flood risk issues, particularly to the south of Ashwell Road, through SuDS or other appropriate solution;*
- *appropriate mitigation, compensation and / or enhancement of key features of biodiversity including Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve and Bygrave Road local wildlife site and identified protected species and priority habitats; and*
- *sensitive treatment of heritage assets and their settings including retaining framed views of St Mary's Church from within and beyond the site and Ivel Springs scheduled monument.*

Policy CGB5 – Urban Open Land

7.2.16 The land off Clothall Road between strategic housing areas BA2 and BA3 is allocated on the Proposals Map as an 'Urban Open Land' where planning permission will be granted where the development would provide land or limited ancillary built facilities for:

- *outdoor sport, outdoor recreation or cemeteries;*
- *rural land uses;*
- *landscaping or earthworks associated with the development;*
- *is low intensity in nature; and*
- *would maintain openness and respect the transition from the urban area to the rural area beyond.*

Policy D1 – Sustainable Design

7.2.17 The policy outlines how planning permission will be granted where a development proposal:

- *create or enhance public realm;*
- *optimise the potential of the site by incorporating Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);*
- *reduce energy consumption and waste;*
- *retain existing vegetation and propose appropriate new planting;*
- *maximise accessibility, legibility and physical and social connectivity both internally and with neighbouring areas;*
- *future proof for changes in technology and lifestyle;*
- *design-out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour; and*

- *minimise the visual impact of street furniture and parking provision;*

Policy NE1 – Strategic Green Infrastructure

7.2.18 The policy states “*planning permission will be granted provided that development*”:

- *protects, conserves and where possible enhances the strategic green infrastructure network;*
- *avoids the loss, fragmentation, severance or negative impact on the function of the strategic green infrastructure network;*
- *creates new strategic green infrastructure where appropriate and is accompanied by a plan for its long-term maintenance and management; and*
- *has suitable mitigation measures or appropriate replacement to satisfactorily address adverse impacts on the strategic green infrastructure network.*

Policy NE2 – Landscape

7.2.19 The policy states “*planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:*”

- *respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and have regard to the guidelines identified for built development and landscape management;*
- *do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the landscape character area in which the site is located, taking account of any suitable mitigation measures necessary to achieve this;*
- *are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features; and*
- *have considered the long-term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping.*

Policy NE5 – Protecting Open Space

7.2.20 The policy states “*planning permission will only be granted for any proposed loss of open space provided that:*”

- *It can be demonstrated that the open space is surplus to requirements and justified on the basis of:*
 - *the quality and accessibility of the open space;*
 - *the extent to which the open space is serving its purpose;*
 - *the quality and accessibility of alternative public open space.*
- *It is mitigated against by:*
 - *re-provision of an appropriate open space taking into account quality and accessibility; and/or*
 - *financial contributions towards new or existing open space where:*
 - *the required provision cannot reasonably be delivered onsite; or*
 - *the required provision cannot be provided on site in full; and*

- *the proposal has over-riding planning benefits.*

Policy NE6 – New and Improved Open Space

- 7.2.21 Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that make provision for new and/or improved open space which:
- *Meets the needs arising from the development having regard to the Council's open space standards and other relevant guidance;*
 - *Contributes towards improving the provision, quality and accessibility of open space; and*
 - *Incorporate any necessary open space buffer(s) for landscape, visual, ecological or air quality reasons.*
- 7.2.22 Any on-site provision must include a long-term maintenance and management plan, and where required phasing plans, to demonstrate delivery. Any built facilities within new or existing open space must be ancillary to the primary use and of an appropriate scale and design. Measures should be taken to integrate such facilities into the landscape. Proposals for new open spaces which meet identified needs will be encouraged in suitable locations, served by a choice of sustainable travel options. Financial contributions towards the provision of open space will be considered only where it can be demonstrated that the requirements of policy NE5 part (b)(ii) are met. Where a development is phased, or a site is either divided into separate parts or otherwise regarded as part of a larger development, it will be considered as a whole for the purposes of open space provision.

Policy NE8 – Sustainable Drainage Systems

- 7.2.23 The policy states “planning permission for development will be granted” where:
- *The most appropriate sustainable drainage solution is used taking into account technical, viability and design issues to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, enhance biodiversity, water quality and provide amenity benefits;*
 - *It aims to mimic the natural drainage patterns and processes as far as possible; and*
 - *Drainage solutions follow the SuDS hierarchy.*

Policy HE1: Designated Heritage Assets

- 7.2.24 As stated within the Local Plan, Planning applications relating to Designated heritage Assets or their setting shall be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment/Justification Statement that:
- Assesses the significance of heritage assets, including their setting;*
 - Justifies and details the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage asset(s); and*
 - Informs any necessary measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms.*
- 7.2.25 Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they (as applicable):

- a) *Enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance;*
- b) *Incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and*
- c) *Will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including securing the asset's optimum viable use.*

7.2.26 Where substantial harm to, or loss of significance, of a designated heritage asset is proposed the Council shall refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

Strategic Housing Allocations and Site-Specific Criteria

7.2.27 The 'communities' chapter of the Local Plan sets out criteria for all the NHC housing allocations, refer to **Policy SP14** for specific requirements for the Site.

7.2.28 Site specific criteria relevant to the individual strategic housing allocations and of relevance to the Site include:

BA2 land to south west of Clothall Road and north east of the Baldock Park Homes (Hillside Park) site and Weston Hills Local Nature Reserve;

- *creation of appropriate, defensible Green Belt boundary along south-eastern perimeter; and*
- *consider and mitigate against potential adverse impacts upon Weston Hills LWS.*

BA3: land to the south of Royston Road and north west of the A505, wrapping around the eastern edges of existing housing at Clothall Common;

- *incorporate alignment of former Wallington Road and bridleway Clothall 027 as green corridor along northern perimeter of site.*

Baldock, Bygrave and Clothall Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version: January 2021)

Policy G2 – Strategic Green Space

7.2.29 The policy highlights the importance of the 'Urban Open Land' area of the Site, to the north of Clothall Road and states:

- *"to conserve an important green lung at the heart of Baldock, applications for development should maintain the predominantly open character of the land lying between Hartfields School and the A505 Baldock bypass"; and*
- *"proposals that would improve the visual or recreational value of this land will be supported, particularly if they form part of a comprehensive strategy for improved public access and the conservation and interpretation of the scheduled area".*

Policy E2 – Green Infrastructure and Outdoor Recreation

7.2.30 The policy highlights applications to develop sites BA1, BA2, BA3 and BA10 (collectively forming a large proportion of the Site) should provide an appropriate amount and range of publicly

accessible open space and green infrastructure which complies with the needs of, or exceeds, North Hertfordshire Council's standards and address the following principles:

- *create an integrated network of open spaces and semi-natural areas that provides benefits for both people and nature, reflects the wider landscape character of the area, improves tree cover and connects with existing green corridors and public rights of way within and beyond the sites;*
- *ensure that sustainable drainage features such as attenuation basins and swales are designed as an integral part of the overall landscaping scheme;*
- *incorporate street trees to enhance the environmental quality of the developments and provide shade;*
- *take a strategic approach to locating land for sport and informal recreation, so that the most appropriate sites for each purpose are used*
- *reflect the most up-to-date evidence available about local needs for pitches and other formal sports provision;*
- *design new school sports facilities to allow for appropriate community use, supported by community use agreements;*
- *ensure that new areas for play and recreation are overlooked where this will promote the safety of children and other users; and*
- *demonstrate how new green infrastructure will be delivered and managed during both the development phase and beyond.*

Policy E5 – Development north of the railway

7.2.31 The policy outlines a series of recommendations in relation to site BA1, which can be summarised as follows:

- *maintain a clear visual and physical gap between the expanded edge of Baldock and Lower Bygrave, of sufficient size to integrate development into the surrounding landscape and ensure a sympathetic transition towards Lower Bygrave, advising a gap of at least 170m between the built edge of site BA1 and the nearest property in Lower Bygrave;*
- *incorporate appropriate planting at the periphery of the new development;*
- *minimise adverse visual impacts on longer-distance views towards Baldock from Bygrave31, by giving careful consideration to the positioning and height of development, as well as to appropriate screening;*
- *relate sensitively to the edges of existing residential areas where the site abuts them, reflecting section 3.3 in the accompanying Design Guidelines;*
- *retain and incorporate existing landscape and built features that contribute to the site's history and character, including Bygrave Road/Ashwell Road and trees and hedgerows (while safeguarding the habitat value of the Bygrave Road local wildlife site); and*

- *make provision for improved pedestrian and cycle access between Bygrave and Baldock, through a new footpath and cycleway using the route of Bygrave Road/Ashwell Road, designed in a way that maintains as much as possible of its rural character and habitat value.*

Policy E6 – Royston Road

7.2.32 The policy outlines a series of recommendations in relation to sites BA3, BA4 and BA10 proposed in the new North Hertfordshire Local Plan which can be summarised as follows:

- *create a high quality and distinctive entrance to the town along Royston Road, using well-designed buildings and a consistent approach to landscaping and lighting;*
- *relate sensitively to the existing houses fronting onto Royston Road through the scale, massing and landscaping of the new development;*
- *incorporate a landscape buffer between development on site BA10 and the railway line, and use building materials and colours that will help to soften the visual impact of the development in both near and long-distance views (which could include the use of green roofs); and*
- *make the corridor a focus for sustainable travel and provide for an improved footpath and cycleway along Royston Road.*

Policy E7 – Cambrai Farm and south of Clothall Common

7.2.33 The policy outlines a series of recommendations in relation to sites BA2 and BA3 proposed in the new North Hertfordshire Local Plan which can be summarised as follows:

- *incorporate a landscape buffer between the edge of the developments and the Baldock bypass, using an appropriate mix of native species, to provide visual screening, an enhanced green corridor and noise attenuation;*
- *avoid new buildings on the part of BA3 that comprises raised land to the east of the existing properties on Aleyn Way and Merchants Walk, and to the south of Royston Road, which should be retained and enhanced as space for informal outdoor recreation; and*
- *reinforce the planting between Hillside Park mobile home site and new residential development on site BA2, to provide a stronger green margin and additional screening, using an appropriate mix of native species.*

7.3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Guidance

7.3.1 Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) build upon and provide additional guidance to help in interpretation of the Local Plan policies. The following SPDs are of relevance to this LVIA.

Sustainability Supporting Planning Document (SPD) September 2024

7.3.2 The Sustainability SPD provides information regarding sustainability expectations for development in North Hertfordshire and offers good practice guidance to developers when developing proposals and submitting planning applications.

7.3.3 The SPD covers numerous sustainability topics broadly split into the following eight themes:

- *Optimising Passive Design & Fabric Performance*
- *Achieving Low Carbon Energy*
- *Minimising Carbon Footprint*
- *Healthy Placemaking*
- *Promoting Biodiversity*
- *Sustainable Travel*
- *Conserving Water*
- *Incorporating Sustainable Drainage*

7.3.4 The following themes and associated checklist criteria are of relevance to this LVIA:

Section 4 - Healthy Placemaking

- *Ensure compliance with Policy requirements and open space standards*
- *Green Infrastructure design should follow Natural England's Green Infrastructure Principles*
- *Ensure all schemes embed key aspects of healthy placemaking as outlined in the NHS Putting Health into Place guidance*
- *Ensure all schemes propose play, community amenity and food production opportunities. Fields in Trust distances should be followed for play spaces and locations mapped with walking isochrones*
- *Ensure the development scheme includes community allotments.*

Section 5 – Promoting Biodiversity

- *Submit a plan showing that habitat proposals achieve at least 10% BNG*
- *Ensure the scheme includes a 12m buffer adjacent to LWS and species rich hedgerows*
- *Ensure the scheme includes enhancements to national and/or local sites and other habitats seeking to limit impacts of development and positively contribute to existing habitats*

Other Guidance

Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (2023)

- 7.3.5 Natural England, the Government's adviser for the natural environment, released in January 2023 the final version of its Green Infrastructure Framework, which serves to support the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.
- 7.3.6 The Framework is underpinned by 15 principles, which have been used as a basis for planning and designing green and blue infrastructure at Baldock. The Green Infrastructure Principles (Natural England, 2023) identify five key principles for what good quality GI should be, these are:

- **Multifunctional;** *GI should deliver a range of benefits for people, nature and places and address specific issues to meet the needs in the local area and sub-region as a whole.*
- **Varied;** *GI should feature a wide range of diverse types of green and blue spaces and environmental features.*
- **Connected;** *GI should operate and link as a living network for people and wildlife and nature as well as strengthening ecological networks and improving ecosystem services.*
- **Accessible;** *GI should allow people to experience and connect with nature. It should provide everyone, with access to high-quality green spaces that are inclusive, safe, well-managed, and accessible.*
- **Character;** *GI should be designed and managed to reflect the area's character in such a way that it helps landscape conservation, enhancement, and/or restoration.*

7.3.7 The Green infrastructure Framework is a voluntary framework that supports the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which stipulates that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising the impact on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.

7.3.8 The Green infrastructure Framework will complement mandatory mechanisms such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), which form part of the requirements of the Environment Act.