

Planning Application Ref 25/03080/HYA Hybrid application for a residential-led development

Mr T J & Mrs S L Wright, 9 Wensum Road, Great Ashby, Stevenage, Herts SG1 3XX
(Objects)

We firmly object to the above Planning Application for the following reasons:

Infrastructure - The wider picture is that GA1 & GA2 are two of six Strategic Housing Sites allocated in the Local Plan (Policy SP18). Collectively this will amount to 7,700 new homes. This was not mentioned in any Consultation with ICENI/ Picture Estates Ltd, and existing residents of Great Ashby are not aware of this.

This Planning application is beyond the scope of works shown in the 2011-2031 Local Plan, with an increase of housing from 600 to 640, and some areas shown on the maps included remain in Green Belt which is protected land. Therefore, some of the boundary lines in this application are both misleading and inaccurate.

This large expansion will remove the feel of the neighbourhood in Great Ashby.

Working on the documented rationale that each new household will have 2.4 vehicles, that is a potential 18,480 vehicles using narrow lanes with very few pass areas. This is likely to increase the already disruptive congestion on through roads and will significantly increase dirt, dust and air pollution. There is also the potential for new homes to use delivery vans and fast-food deliveries, all using the same congested infrastructure in Great Ashby.

Both GA1 and GA2 Planning Applications underestimate the situation when the A1M is congested or closed, which has happened on a number of occasions in the last 12 months. In these situations, traffic from Letchworth, Baldock and beyond divert via Calder Way and through Weston, which creates serious congestion.

Calder Lane & Back Lane – The average Construction vehicle weighs approx. 44 tonnes when loaded. The limit for Back Lane and Calder Way is 5T with limited width in many areas and sharp bends. Back Lane and Calder Way are both unsuitable roads and will suffer from excessive damage to the road structure by overloading.

Lack of Health provision - Waiting times for appointments to see a doctor are likely to increase. The waiting time is often as long as 6 weeks and this will not reduce if the population using their services increases. Hospital referrals are currently over 12 months and will be impacted. NHS Dentists cannot take on new patients. This is currently the case for the dental practice at Exeter Close that is mentioned in the Planning Application. These resources are already over stretched, and provisions are not provided to increase these resources. This must be addressed should the Planning Application go through.

Travel - With increased pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle activity, the risk to safety will increase along Mendip Way and adjacent roads. This application fails to safeguard these activities adequately in an already congested area. Therefore, it becomes a safety risk for all pedestrians and cyclists, but particularly for any elderly and disabled pedestrians and cyclists who are forced to use these crossing points. There are no provisions for a zebra crossing on the plan and with Mendip Way being so congested this should be taken into consideration.

Double Yellow lines will displace many vehicles from Mendip Way and adjacent roads. The existing residents of Great Ashby will be at an unfair disadvantage from a new community that would accommodate its own parking on demand. This Planning Application suggests that displaced vehicles would be able to use the parking spaces available at flats, however, as the flats around Great Ashby are leasehold properties and pay Service Charge for the maintenance of these areas, it is inappropriate for non-residents of the flats to use these parking spaces. This will leave many displaced vehicles with nowhere to park.

Monitor and Manage – Mentioned in both GA1 and GA2 Planning Applications. However, there is no evidence of how this is proposed to be managed. This is unacceptable for the existing residents of Great Ashby. More so for those residents who live close to Calder Way and Mendip Way who will experience firsthand the increased congestion, noise, surface dirt and air pollution.

A Crossing Patrol Officer is in place at peak times at the Mendip Way/Whitehorse Lane/Great Ashby junction for Round Diamond School. Making Mendip Way a priority travel road will further intensify an already congested area and pose a safety risk for those using Great Ashby Way attempting to cross at the junction of Whitehorse Lane. This Planning Application fails to address this already congested area, and the continued use of a Crossing Patrol Officer will be needed to ensure a safe crossing along Great Ashby Way.

Bus travel - GA1 and GA2 sit on the outskirts of Stevenage, and the proposed new bus service will not cover Senior schools in the town, the Lister Hospital, the extended Health Service in the Leisure Park or the Corys Mill supermarket. During rush hour the current bus service can take upwards of 20 minutes to get outside the area of Great Ashby, making it more likely for a journey of any distance to take in excess of 30min to 1 hour, in contradiction of what is stated in the Planning Application. It is unrealistic to expect a working family with two children, potentially at different schools, to either take a bus or cycle when a car journey would likely take 15-20 minutes.

The travel data and documentation associated with the GA1 and GA2 Application is aged and quite simply out of date. As are the roadway and TA surveys, which fail to include traffic from the Hazel Park (618 house) or Forster Country (800 house) developments. Both these areas have an impact accessing and leaving the Great Ashby estate and upon its resources. There have been accidents on the Great Ashby roads which do not show up in the presented data. Furthermore, the National Highways response to this application dated 18/2/26 recommends that Planning permission is not granted as it does not include the significant flows of travel beyond the TA submitted.

Cycling in Back Lane and the small lanes around Great Ashby is a safety concern, as there is often insufficient room for vehicles to pass. There are also various deficiencies on several existing walking and cycling routes in the proposed plan that give way for further safety concerns. The existing residents of Great Ashby currently have bus shelters across cycle/pathways preventing cyclists and disabled people from having access.

Hours of Construction work - The proposed-on site working hours of 8am to 6pm Weekdays and 8am to 1pm on Saturday. This will increase congestion, noise and air pollution in an area that already has issues. Weekend working will have an impact on the rights for residents to have privacy and family life in their open space (Human Rights Act).

The GA2 Strategic Plan - recommends that private transport to the site should park off site. However, as there will be many displaced resident vehicles with nowhere to park, it is not made clear where these additional site visitors will be able to park.

Air Quality - The Hertfordshire's Air Quality Strategy document clearly gives a vision for creating a healthier air for all under the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines. With 6 years of proposed HGV vehicles, dirt, dust and air pollution, this Planning application fails to meet these guidelines for the existing residents in Great Ashby.

Schools - NH Policy SP18 states this Planning Application should provide for 2 FE Primary age and 4 FE Secondary age schools. This application does not meet this requirement with provision for only 1 FE Primary school. There also is no access point for van deliveries into the school, or staff at the school, which makes for a further congested and unsafe area for children and families. With no drop off points, parent will be forced to use those roads close by, potentially subjecting their children to unnecessary danger and causing further congestion.

Flooding - SP18 states there are existing surface water/flood risks through SUDS running south-east from Dell Spring to Newberry Grove. Inadequate provision has been made to cover this.

Affordability - The NH Local Plan of 2011-2031 clearly states that NHC is to provide more affordable homes for young people to live in. The majority of the new built homes are priced at a level that is unaffordable price for young people, with many being forced to rent privately or move into HMO's. If these are to be affordable homes, they should be priced accordingly and not at the level these the majority of new houses are now being priced.

Wildlife & Old Woodland and Ancient buildings - Much of the current woodland is defined in the national policy as an irreplaceable habitat. The woodland supports badger setts, herds of deer, foxes and other protected species. There is an array of different birds and butterflies. The Environment and Growth Exec Dir for Herts confirmed in his response that the proposed development will have a negative impact on the heritage assets with archaeological interest. The Planning Application will cause significant, unmitigated damage to important archaeological remains with tarmac dust, dirt and dust and wildlife will be forcibly displaced.

The NH Council Plan 2022-27 sets out the councils Vision and Corporate objectives. It claims as a priority 'People first', 'A Brighter Future Together' and 'We put people at the heart of everything we do'. The GA1 and GA2 Planning Applications falls very short of these objectives as it does not consider the increased congestion, safety, health and wellbeing of the existing community in Great Ashby and fails to fully meet the objectives for the proposed communities in GA1 and GA2.