

# Ashfield District Local Plan Examination

## Matter 10 Hearing Statement

On behalf of Harworth Group.

Date: 11 December 2024 | Pegasus Ref: P23-2712

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of our client Harworth Group in response to the Matters, Issues and Questions set out by the Inspectors for the Ashfield District Local Plan Examination in relation to Harworth's interests north of Sutton-in-Ashfield.
- 1.2. The site is being promoted by Harworth Group plc, who will act as single promoter and master developer. Harworth has an excellent track record of delivering high quality new schemes across the North of England and the Midlands including in Gedling and at Thoresby Vale in Newark and Sherwood.
- 1.3. This is a development proposal which was not submitted in response to the Call for Sites consultation and can deliver approximately 1,000 homes with a local centre and a new primary school. The site is shown in Appendix A and a document setting out the vision for the site is included at Appendix B.

## 2. Matter 10 – Site Allocations

### Issue 1

#### **Whether the proposed site allocations are justified and deliverable/ developable at the point envisaged?**

Relevant policies– H1, S6a and S6b

#### **Site Allocations Overall**

#### 2.1. **How were the site allocations chosen? What factors were considered? Is the approach justified? Is it evidence-based?**

The approach to site selection is not justified or evidence led.

The significant failings in the process of identifying the preferred dispersed strategy were set out in earlier hearing statements and sessions and are not repeated here in detail, but the 500 dwelling threshold is unjustified and demonstrates that the site selection process is flawed.

It is apparent from the Sustainability Appraisal (SDO3) Table 5.5 that large sites in sustainable locations were discounted as they did not align with the preferred strategy and the arbitrary 500 dwelling threshold set.

The reason set out for rejecting the options with an urban extension to Sutton, despite scoring well against the sustainability criteria, is as follows:

The urban extension is located in the countryside on the Main Urban Area fringe. The site has been proposed for allocation in a number of draft Local Plans. It has encountered substantial local opposition. (page 86-88). (emphasis added)

The reason for rejecting an urban extension to Sutton in Ashfield is not sound or justifiable.

The Haworth site, north of Sutton-in-Ashfield, is not within Green Belt and is sustainably located. The site would contribute to meeting the Council's stated objectives of locating new development adjacent to the Main Urban Areas to reduce the carbon footprint of the community, with less need to travel for jobs, services, and facilities. The Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan notes that the growth of the towns will serve to attract inward investment into these areas, assisting in regeneration and improving the opportunities and the lives of people living there. There are opportunities for walking and cycling which this site would benefit from and contribute to, providing new walking and cycling routes which provide access to the town and the Mansfield Railway Station.

This site would meet all the aims of the preferred strategy, it avoids over development of the Named Settlements and isolated dispersed development by providing homes in the Main Urban Area.

#### 2.2. **In deciding whether to allocate sites for development, how did the Council take into account the effects of development on:**

- **Landscape character;**
- **The availability of best and most versatile agricultural land;**
- **The local and strategic road network;**
- **The need for new and improved infrastructure (including community facilities);**
- **Heritage assets; and**
- **Nature conservation**

This is for the Council to answer, but we reserve our right to comment on the Council's response.

There is no clear justification to pass over sites not located in Green Belt in favour of Green Belt release when, at different scales, there are available sites that are not located in the Green Belt that can meet the aims of the preferred strategy by avoiding over development of the 'Named Settlements' and isolated development and can be delivered without significant impacts on heritage, landscape or wildlife.

- 2.3. **How did the Council take into account flood risk? Has the Plan applied a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development, taking into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property as required by paragraph 161 of the Framework?**

No comments.

- 2.4. **Do the Plan's policies provide sufficient specificity of the requirements expected of the larger site allocations (i.e. those of 100 dwellings and above), particularly for sites where there is no planning permission in place?**

No comments.

- 2.5. **Do the Plan's policies relating to the site allocations contain sufficient requirements to ensure that sites, particularly those comprised of multiple parcels of land, will be developed in a comprehensive manner?**

No comments.

- 2.6. **What is the justification for the proposed restriction on development within 400m of the Sherwood Forest Possible Potential Special Protection Area (ppSPA)? Overall, will it be effective?**

No comments.

#### **Changes to the Green Belt boundary**

- 2.7. **Why has the Green Belt Assessment not considered sites against the Green Belt purpose of 'assisting with urban regeneration' as set out at paragraph 138(e) of the Framework? Is this justified?**



No comments.

- 2.8. **Taking each site proposed to be released from the Green Belt in turn, what would be the extent of the harm to the Green Belt if the boundaries were changed in the locations as proposed? Are there any ways in which harms could be minimised or mitigated?**

No comments.

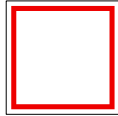
- 2.9. **Taking each proposed change to the Green Belt boundary as set out in document ADC.02a in turn, has it been clearly defined, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent as required by paragraph 143 of the Framework?**

No comments.



## **Appendix A: Site Location Land North of Sutton-in-Ashfield**

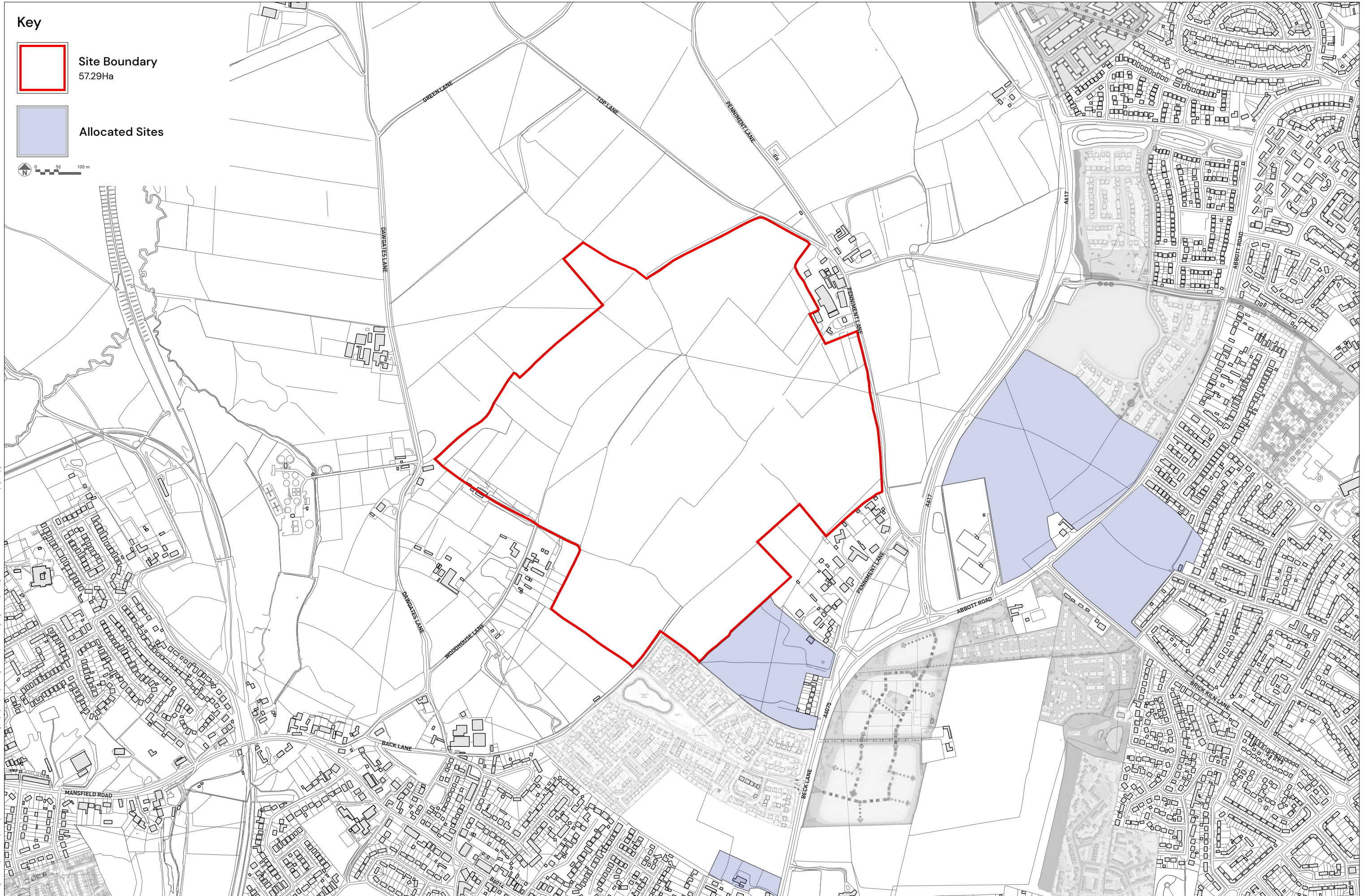
Key



Site Boundary  
57.29Ha



Allocated Sites



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Land off Penniment Lane, Sutton-in-Ashfield - Site Location Plan

| Drawn by: JF/KC | Approved by: JF | Date: 12/01/24 | Scale: 1:7500 @ A3 | DRG: P23-2712\_001 Sheet No: 01 Rev: A | Client: Harworth Group |







## **Appendix B: Land North of Sutton-in-Ashfield Vision Document**

# ASHFIELD NORTH

A SUSTAINABLE URBAN  
EDGE EXTENSION FOR ASHFIELD

January 2024



# Harworth

Transform Regenerate Revitalise



HARWORTH'S WAVERLEY DEVELOPMENT  
IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE, 2023

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ashfield North is a brand new residential development opportunity that has all the credentials to directly support the council's ambition of improving the district's quality of place.

With Ashfield District Council requiring a robust 17-year land supply to meet the ambitions of its draft Local Plan – its first for over two decades - high quality sustainable urban edge extensions that aren't in the greenbelt are required to fulfil this pipeline. **Ashfield North directly helps to meet this requirement whilst also providing the sustainable and quality development that the Council and its stakeholders expect to deliver its ambitious policy agenda, including the Council's Corporate Plan.**

This document explains the basis of Ashfield North's proposed future development. It reflects:

- The justification for development;
- The principles that will govern its build-out;
- The proposed types of development that will be brought forward;
- Its relationship with other nearby settlements and sites;
- The significant benefits that development will bring;
- Its relationship with nearby sites; and
- An indicative timetable for development.

Crucially, the site is being brought forward by Harworth Group plc, who will act as single promoter and master developer for the scheme. Harworth is a highly experienced development company with the finances and expertise to deliver the site in full, building on its excellent track record of delivering high quality new schemes across the North of England and the Midlands.

The plans reflect the desire to create a vibrant new community on the north eastern side of the district involving the creation of new homes and robust community infrastructure within well-founded sustainable development principles – helping to deliver a number of economic and social outcomes beyond those in the draft Local Plan.

Ashfield North will ultimately be a high quality development that local people will be proud of, delivering significant benefits to the area over the next two decades.





The proposed development at Ashfield North will deliver:

### DIRECT BENEFITS

**Over 1,000 homes**

ranging from 1 to 4 bedroom homes, across a range of tenure types

**Over £1.5m**

estimated annual increase in Council Tax revenue once fully developed



### WIDER BENEFITS

**Range of new community infrastructure**

including Local Centre and new primary school

**47% of site retained as green space**

for uses including adult sports provision and allotments

**Green Corridor**

across centre of site to accommodate enhanced link to the existing public right of way network



**£16.8m**

Annual expenditure on convenience and comparison goods...

**£1.6m**

...of which is estimated to be retained within Ashfield



# WHY SHOULD ASHFIELD NORTH BE DEVELOPED?

There are three key reasons why Ashfield North should be developed to create a new residential-led sustainable new community.



## 1. There is a clear need for new homes in sustainable locations not designated as green belt to support the delivery of Ashfield's new Local Plan

**Ashfield North will provide a comprehensive settlement extension to the North of Ashfield, supporting the Council's ambition to provide a robust long-term residential land supply to 2040 through its upcoming Local Plan.**

Ashfield's current Local Plan was adopted over two decades ago in 2002 and there is an urgent need for a new document to provide a time-relevant and reliable land supply that meets the following challenge:

*'Planning is about getting the right things built in the right places, about the spaces around buildings, and about other issues too, such as job creation, social justice, regeneration, and climate change.'*

(How Planning Works - Local Government Group/PAS)

The Council's Regulation 19 pre-Submission draft<sup>1</sup> of its intended Local Plan largely addresses this challenge – but we feel there is a need to further strengthen its land supply within the 2030s. The current draft proposes that 7,582 dwellings are delivered through the plan period at a rate 446 homes per annum; at this rate however it only identifies sufficient housing land for 13 years rather than the 17 years required.

**Other sites will be needed to meet this shortfall.**

Ashfield North can directly meet this shortfall, providing c. 1,000 houses towards the latter end of the plan period. The site meets the challenge of being in the 'right place' – non-greenbelt land that is accessible directly off the Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR) with sufficient land available to provide the supporting infrastructure and services required to create a genuinely sustainable settlement. David Wilson Homes has already established land north of Ashfield as an appropriate housing extension area through its successful Hawthorns development<sup>2</sup>.

The Council's previous Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) highlighted that there are insufficient brownfield sites to accommodate future housing need and that the Council may have to go into the greenbelt for future residential land supply. Whilst previous potentially large sites elsewhere in Ashfield have been rejected for inclusion owing to their greenbelt status and comparatively poor locations, our proposal provides a robust sustainable non-greenbelt solution to delivering what the Council requires.

<sup>1</sup> As per [www.ashfield.gov.uk/planning-building-control/local-plan/emerging-local-plan/](http://www.ashfield.gov.uk/planning-building-control/local-plan/emerging-local-plan/)

<sup>2</sup> As per [www.dwh.co.uk/new-homes/dev-002605-the-hawthorns/](http://www.dwh.co.uk/new-homes/dev-002605-the-hawthorns/)



## 2. It will be a thoughtfully considered scheme with few site constraints that will provide significant public benefit

The Council's draft Local Plan makes clear that 'all new housing development within the area must deliver high quality, sustainable design as required by Policy SD2 and site-specific design policies in the Neighbourhood Plan where relevant'<sup>3</sup>; it also makes clear that the Council 'will support schemes which bring forward a mix of house sizes appropriate to deliver mixed and balanced communities.' Good design must sit at the heart of what we plan at Ashfield North.

The site's current form also supports high quality new development being brought forward. The majority of the land comprises open, relatively flat farming fields, bounded by a number of housing developments to the south of the site. Critically it benefits from very few site constraints which allows significant flexibility in what can be delivered, including no overhead cables; it is also not an area at risk of flooding, being Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's maps.

Accounting for the wishes of the Council and the flexibility of the Ashfield North site, we have designed a carefully considered masterplan that is governed by five key principles, explained in detail on the following page:

- Housing that is both accessible and affordable;
- Exemplar placemaking that accounts for 20-minute neighbourhood principles;
- A landscape-led scheme;
- The provision of biodiversity net gain; and
- Sustainability being central to what is delivered on-site.

Our proposed masterplan, shown on page 9, would take around 15 to 20 years from now to build out in full. Alongside providing a major new source of new homes, it will also deliver a significant number of economic and social benefits to Ashfield, as shown on page 5.

<sup>3</sup>Page 55 of current draft Ashfield Local Plan (November 2023)

## 3. It will be delivered by a highly experienced master developer with the finances to ensure quality development

**Crucially, the proposed site is being brought forward by Harworth Group plc ("Harworth"), a leading master developer with the experience and finances to deliver quality development, backed by a proud track record of delivering sustainable communities where people want to live and work over the past decade.**

Harworth has brought all landowners within the proposed redline boundary together within a single land agreement to control what comes forward. Its master developer role means that it takes responsibility for all development activity all the way through to site completion, directly supporting the site being sensitively developed and to the right quality.

This role ultimately means that Harworth will specify, engineer and market residential land in a way that infrastructure and supporting uses – such as roads, utilities, schools, parks and so on, are properly brought forward alongside it. Making sure that development phases 'talk to each other' is also an essential element of creating twenty minute neighbourhoods for those living at the proposed development, as explained within this document.

Harworth also has the in-house technical experience and financial position to bring forward a site of this scale, with a proud track record of delivering quality regeneration schemes across the North and the Midlands. This is explored in further detail from page 24.



## WHY SHOULD ASHFIELD NORTH BE DEVELOPED?



## THE KEY PRINCIPLES THAT WILL GOVERN DEVELOPMENT

The site's present form and location close to the strategic highway network and employment opportunities within Sutton-in-Ashfield and Mansfield, alongside the policy growth ambitions of Ashfield District Council, creates an excellent opportunity to create a well connected extension to Ashfield, providing a new housing offer that is supported by its own community infrastructure.

We have established five core development principles that act as the guide for the site's future.



### 1. Landscape-led scheme

Our proposed scheme incorporates a collaborative design approach, placing landscape at the forefront and with a large proportion of the site being retained as green space.



### 2. Exemplar placemaking

We want to create a vibrant, sustainable and mixed-use new community based on 20 minute neighbourhood principles. This is explained in further detail in the next section on our Masterplan.



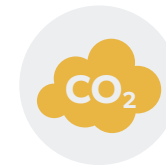
### 3. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The existing landscape will be enhanced to increase the range of biodiversity across the site, explained in further detail within A landscape-led scheme on page 20.



### 4. Affordable & accessible

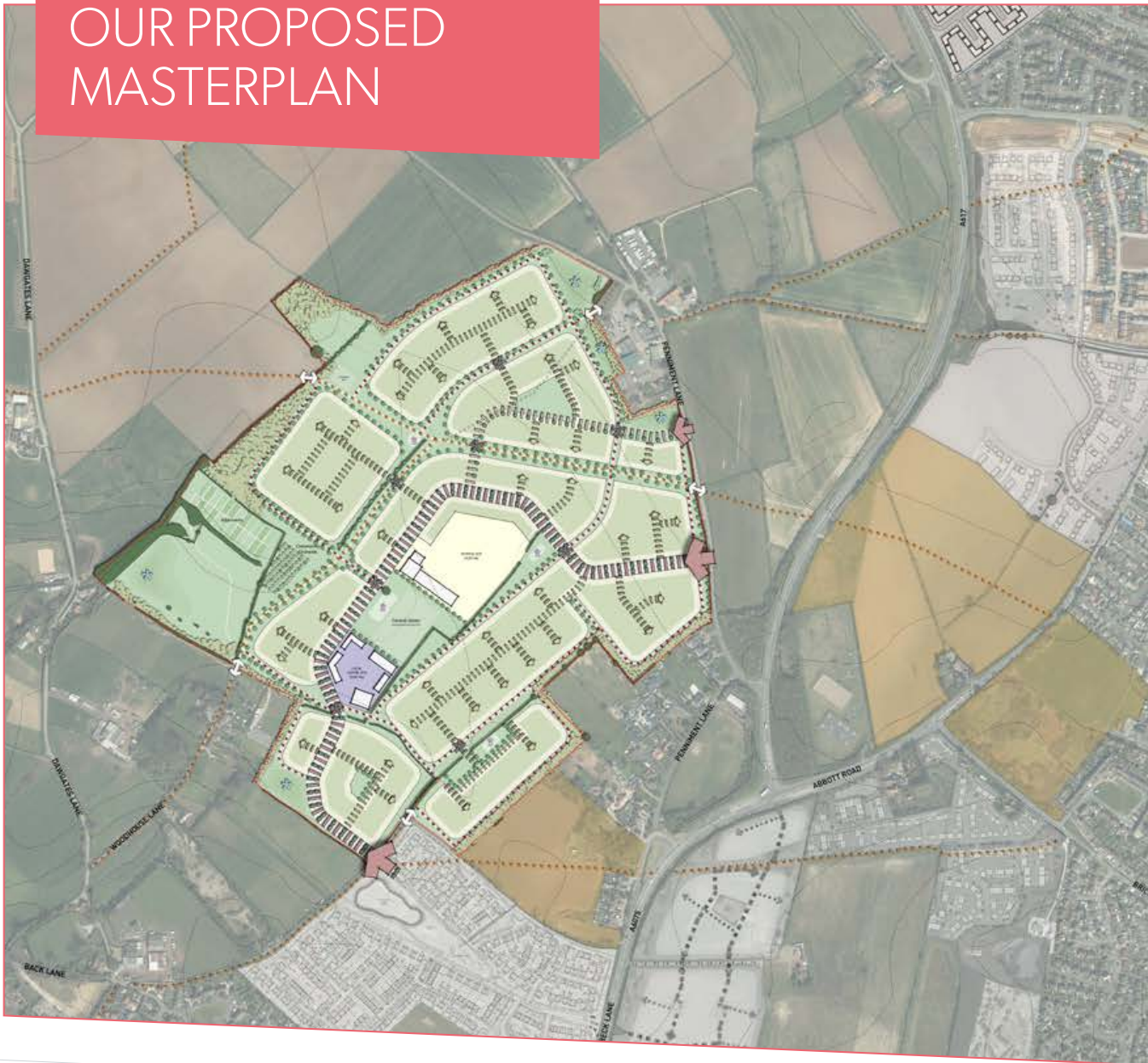
The development will provide quality new homes for local people, including affordable homes (see page 12), alongside sustainable and accessible transport connections to employment sites and to the local public right of way network (as explained on page 18).



### 5. Net zero carbon

Sustainability is at the core of what will be built onsite, alongside our movement and utility strategies. This is explained in further detail on page 19.

## OUR PROPOSED MASTERPLAN



Our proposed masterplan for Ashfield North is residential-led, with the ability to deliver c.1,000 homes close to key existing infrastructure and major employment sites to support well planned growth. Crucially it has also been carefully designed to provide the supporting uses, infrastructure, green space and active travel links for it to be genuinely described as sustainable.

We have considered how a major new development should fit with what has already been built locally (including David Wilson Homes' Hawthorns development at the site's south western flank), alongside due consideration of the site's current landform, new infrastructure required and the key public policy commitments made by Ashfield District Council within both its recently adopted Corporate Plan (2023-2027) and within the consultation version of its draft Local Plan (currently out for public consultation until the end of January 2024).

### **This has resulted in a proposed masterplan which includes:**

- Circa 1,000 new homes across a range of tenure types with an emphasis on good design and affordability, as explained on page 12;
- A range of community uses including a local centre, primary school, allotments and community orchards and a series of play areas as explained on page 15;
- Highways and access work to properly support the new development alongside the provision of quality cycleways and walkways to reduce car dependency, as explained on page 18; and
- Providing a landscape-led scheme, with nearly half the site retained as green space to support Biodiversity Net Gain and better drainage through SUDS, in addition to the retention of existing trees and hedgerows to act as a buffer to the site as explained on page 20.

## Creating sustainable neighbourhoods

Our concept plan has been influenced by the '20 minute neighbourhoods' concept.

20 minute neighbourhoods are an opportunity to rethink how housing, services, city, town or village centres can support new ways of working, home-working and community hubs, reducing demand for motorised travel and getting more people walking and cycling.

Whilst there is no formula or rigid set of requirements, there are certain characteristics that help embed the 20 minute neighbourhood approach within masterplans. We have accommodated these characteristics within our proposed masterplan, as shown on page 9.





A safe, accessible, and well connected movement network for pedestrians and cyclists



High quality public spaces, streets and open space



Good access to services that support local living



A variety of housing types, of different sizes, levels of affordability and tenure, that supports diversity, the ability to age in place, and housing densities and that can support local services



Inclusive and easy access to public transport that caters for different needs, connecting people to jobs and other services further afield



High quality green spaces for people to enjoy and opportunities for local food production



Thriving local economies with employment and opportunities for community wealth building



Good digital connectivity to enable flexible working, business opportunities, and remote access to public services



Formal and informal play spaces for children



Community participation and local engagement opportunities



# DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY, ENERGY EFFICIENT & AFFORDABLE NEW HOMES

As single site promoter and master developer of Ashfield North, we can control the type and quality of new homes that is delivered over the next two decades to meet the needs of local people.

Whilst the site has the capacity to deliver approximately 1,000 new homes, we're clear that we need to avoid developing bland, identikit estates that offer little lasting value or civic pride. Moreover, any homes built on site need to meet key energy efficiency standards, whilst being at a price that local people, including those working at nearby employment sites, can afford.

**With this in mind, we're clear that the development's housing phases will offer:**

- A range of sizes, from 1-4 bed homes;
- A range of types, including terraced, semi-detached and detached homes;
- The inclusion of rental properties as well as those to purchase on the open market; and
- Specific house types that reflect our changing world, including senior living properties, self and customer builds and zero carbon homes (including passivhaus technology).

**Our emphasis throughout will be on two specific factors: quality design and efficiency; and affordability for local people.**

## An emphasis on affordability

New housing at Ashfield North be affordable for local workers. With this in mind, we have analysed the expected salary levels of jobs within a 5 mile radius of the site.

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Business Register and Employment Survey show that within the Ashfield district (providing a c. 5 mile radius around the site), jobs within the Human Health And Social Work, Wholesale and retail trade and Manufacturing sectors account for the current highest proportion of employment at 24.6%, 14% and 12.3% respectively. Combined, these sectors account for over half of all total employment within 5 miles of the site and support around 29,000 jobs. Local jobs in manufacturing are also likely to significantly increase in the medium-term, given the progress being made for both an advanced distribution and manufacturing centre (ADMC) and the Ashfield Innovation and Technology Park (AITP) on land close to Sutton Parkway station.

**Table 1: Top three sectors in terms of employment within 5 miles of Ashfield North**

| SECTOR                       | Number of jobs supported | Proportion of total employment |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Human Health And Social Work | 14,000                   | 24.6%                          |
| Manufacturing                | 8,000                    | 14%                            |
| Motor vehicle/cycle repair   | 7,000                    | 12.3%                          |

Source: ONS, Business Register & Employment Survey (2022)

## Median Annual Salaries in Ashfield and the link to housing affordability

Data from the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) shows that the gross median weekly salary for jobs across the district is £582.70, equivalent to **£30,300 per annum**. We have assumed for the purposes of this document that a couple moving to the area - who both work within one of the key three sectors close to the site - could have a combined annual income of **over £60,000**. We have forecast that a typical mortgage for the site would be 4.5-5 times annual income based on current earnings, making buying a home within the area relatively affordable.

This is particularly relevant, given the need to grow the local workforce to support Ashfield's desire 'to be ambitious for economic growth and productivity'<sup>1</sup>. The Council's own documents recognise that 'Accessibility to labour....will (also) be important' in delivering the kind of quality jobs and growth that the district wants to realise through its future Local Plan.

<sup>1</sup>As emphasised within the Council document 'Background Paper No 3 Economy & Employment Land' (August 2021)



## An emphasis on good design and efficiency

With Harworth acting as long-term master developer of Ashfield North, the end design, build quality and energy efficiency of new homes can be strictly policed alongside the placemaking that surrounds them.

We recognise that good design matters in creating a great place to live; similarly, there is a pressing need for new homes to be far more energy efficient than their predecessors to support the decarbonisation of the global economy. With this in mind, we would look to agree a design code for the development with Ashfield District Council as part of the evolving masterplan approval work and any eventual planning application.

**As the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) recognises:**

**A good design code can drive up the standards of new developments.**

**Design codes can be incorporated into local and neighbourhood plans and provide specific detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. They make it clear to potential developers and local residents the sort of things which are expected from those looking to build in an area.**

Source: RIBA, 'Design Matters: Promoting Good Design', 2019a

**This view is supported by the Government, declaring within its National Model Design Code (2023) that:**

**Design codes are important because they provide a framework for creating healthy, greener, environmentally responsive, sustainable and distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design.**

**This can provide greater certainty for communities about the design of development and bring conversations about design to the start of the planning process, rather than the end. Creating more beautiful places requires a greener approach, with more energy efficient buildings, integrating with the natural environment and contributing positively to the net zero carbon target by 2050.**

**Any design code for Ashfield North is therefore likely to cover:**

- The layout of new development, including street pattern;
- How landscaping should be approached including the importance of streets being tree-lined;
- The factors to be considered when determining whether façades of buildings are of sufficiently high quality;
- The environmental performance of place and buildings ensuring they contribute to net zero targets; and
- That developments should clearly take account of local vernacular and heritage, architecture and materials.

Harworth has significant experience in working up and agreeing design codes with local authorities to guide high quality development. Likely influences on any site specific Design Code can be found on the following page.



# National Design Guide

Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places



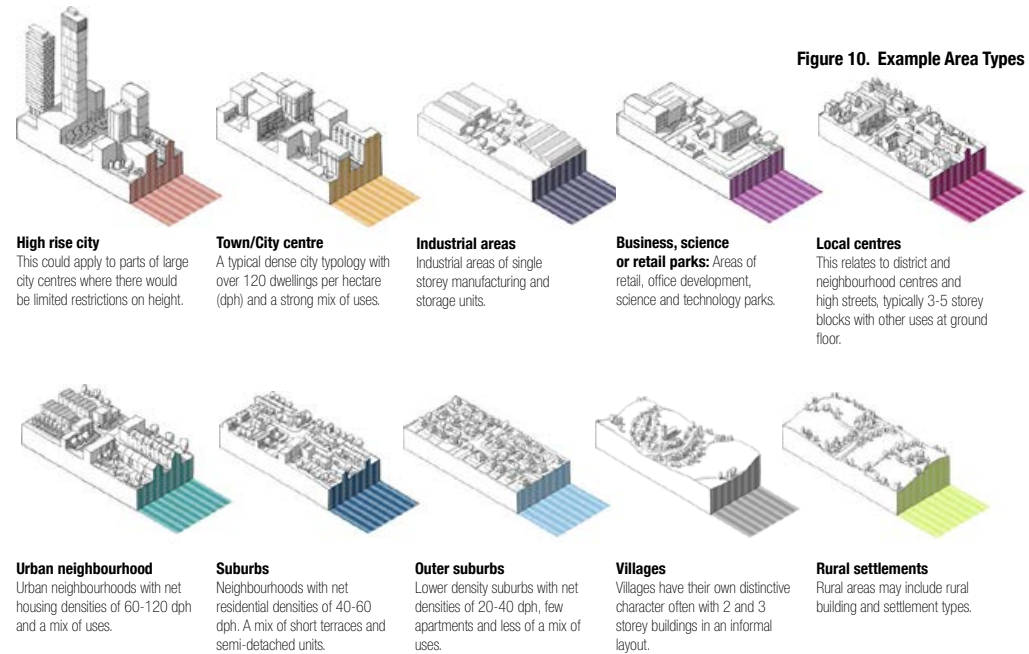
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

## National Model Design Code

### Part 1 The Coding Process



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government



# COMMUNITY USES

A new village of approximately 1,000 homes must be supported by quality local facilities to create a proper 'heart of the community', whilst offering space for play and to connect with nature. This is exactly what we'll provide at Ashfield North.



## Supporting a vibrant new community

The delivery of a wide range of local facilities within walking distance of residents at Ashfield North is an essential part of creating a sustainable community and is a core requirement of creating twenty minute neighbourhoods.

Our proposed masterplan has incorporated a number of key supporting community and commercial uses, including:

- **A dedicated 'heart of the community'**. This space will act as the main local centre to provide the supporting infrastructure that the new community requires;
- **A new primary school** to support families moving to the area;
- **Play areas across the site** to directly support active and healthy lifestyles;
- **Allotments** to support residents to grow their own produce; and
- **Improved useable green spaces, including** footpaths and cycle paths to the Public Right of Way Network.



COMMUNITY USES



# HIGHWAYS & SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

The efficient movement of people and goods to deliver good quality development and to support wider economic and social outcomes sits at the heart of our plan for Ashfield North.

## The site is properly linked to the strategic highway network

Crucially, Ashfield North is directly linked to two of Ashfield's principal roads – the A617 Mansfield and Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR), as well as the A6075. These links provide a direct principal road connection to both Sutton-in-Ashfield and Mansfield as the two key local towns close to the site, in addition to linking the site to key local employers including Amazon (the EMA2 unit is less than a five minute drive from Ashfield North on Sherwood Way South) and King's Mill Hospital. This road network also provides excellent access to both Junctions 28 and 29 of the M1.



### Proposed points of access

We have calculated that there is sufficient land available, within both Ashfield North’s redline boundary and within the highway to facilitate a new signal controlled junction from the MARR with two new highway connections into the site from a widened Penniment Lane as well as utilisation of the existing access point from Beck Lane, providing multiple points of vehicle access. These are shown in detail on the right-hand side.

### Upgrading and linking to the Public Right of Way network

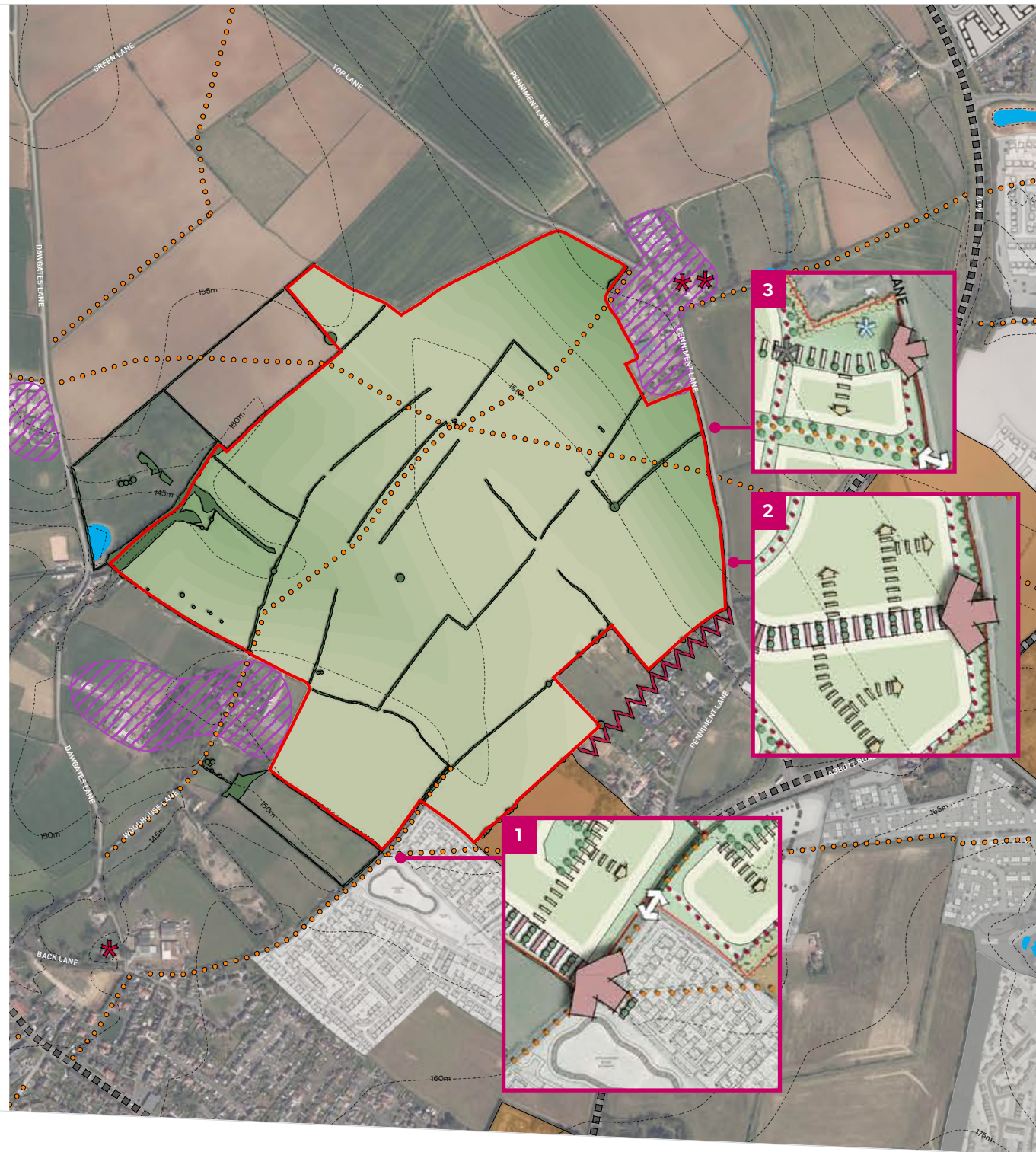
The site benefits from a number of existing public footpath and Public Right of Way (PROW) connections and these will be enhanced to facilitate improved walking and cycling opportunities. The site benefits from good existing public footpath connectivity to the wider walking and cycling network including along the Skegby trail and to key landmarks and local places to visit. This in turn supports a number of wider social outcomes, as explained within ‘A landscape-led scheme’.

### Public Transport

We also believe that there are options to extend current bus services into the site which we would be pleased to have further discussions with both Nottinghamshire County Council and local bus operators. There are also options for two additional pedestrian and cyclist connection points via Mansfield Lane and Woodhouse Lane to the west, connecting back toward the services at Skegby.

### Travel Planning

In addition, we also plan to develop Travel Plans for both the local centres and residential parts of the site, incorporating measures and incentives to encourage sustainable travel with a target of reducing single occupancy car journeys. This approach also includes providing ‘travel welcome packs’ for all new residents and employees to promote the benefits of walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing to reduce single occupancy car dependency.



# KEY SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Sustainable development is good development – leading to measurable social progress, environmental protection, the conservation of natural resources and manageable growth.

The site's existing form, including its existing pathways, links to the public right of way network, water courses and green infrastructure also requires proper assessment in order to create a masterplan for development that can be considered 'sustainable'.

We have therefore embedded key sustainability principles throughout the site's design and in what we plan to build to make a development that local people will be proud of for years to come.

## HARWORTH'S APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Harworth's core skill is planning and building the right development in the right areas, whilst delivering it in an environmentally and sustainable way. Our plans for developing Ashfield North entirely fits within this purpose.

### The right uses for the site: economic & social benefits

A key part of our approach is making sure we bring forward end uses that meet the key needs of a local area. This is the case at for this site; as we've previously explained, there is a clear need for a range of good quality and affordable new homes – providing a mix of housing types, sizes and models of ownership – that are connected via the A617 to a number of Nottinghamshire's key employment sites.

This is also matched by a commitment to construct new homes to high environmental standards, as explained in the following section.

### Sensitively developing sites & putting the right supporting infrastructure in place

One of the biggest challenges in development is sensitively developing sites – responsibly removing and treating any unsuitable material that arises whilst minimising any imported materials in the creation of land platforms to build on.

We also work with key regulators and utility organisations, including electricity Distribution Network Operators (DNOs), to make sure that our proposed infrastructure is properly designed and fits within existing utilities within and close to our proposed developments.

As we've stated in the previous section, we've also been careful in designing a development that provides Highways upgrades that properly ease traffic flow on the local highway network. These measures are also balanced against a number of active travel routes that tie to existing networks to support healthier lifestyles and journeys away from the car.



Our approach to sustainability in our developments is encapsulated in **'The Harworth Way'** creating sustainable new places that support the regeneration of the North of England and the Midlands. Read more on the Harworth Way, including our 2023 Net Zero Carbon Pathway Report, here:

[harworthgroup.com/theharworthway](https://harworthgroup.com/theharworthway)

## Housebuilding sustainability principles

Ensuring that any housing built at Ashfield North is energy efficient is a key part of providing sustainable development, given the built environment's significant contribution towards carbon emissions.

As master developer, we directly control which housebuilders we sell serviced land to. This means that we can set the parameters that housebuilders at Ashfield North will need to follow relating to energy, space, design and materials. Harworth already incorporates energy reducing design and renewable energy considerations in its sales packs to assure long-term emissions reductions.

At our Ironbridge and Isley Woodhouse sites for example, we specified that no gas infrastructure would be provided for heating as part of the development. This one decision ensures that efficient and entirely electrically powered heating solutions will be used for all buildings across the development, enabling housebuilders to address their operational emissions from the outset.

## A Landscape-led scheme

We've also carefully evaluated the ways of minimising the impact of the development, given its location on the settlement edge of Sutton-in-Ashfield. The development presents opportunities to soften the urban edge and improve the landscape setting north of the district. The location of new development has been planned to be contained within the landform and new planting, ensuring that the current sharp edge of the urban area is replaced with a gentler landscape.

These considerations have also included determining the likely percentage split between green space and the developed area, as well as working in opportunities for sport and recreation, a new Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) and ensuring strong links to the existing Public Right of Way (PROW) network to the west, east and south of the site.

### The masterplan also accounts for:

- c.27 hectares of the overall 57-hectare site (over 47%) will be retained as green space.
- A series of useable green spaces across the entire site to encourage recreation and improve social outcomes – including a central green corridor, new allotments, upgraded paths connecting the local Public Right of Way network and a number of multi-use games areas across the site.
- Hedgerows and mature trees exist to field boundaries and will be retained where possible. Tree planting within the main body of the development will create a sensitive transition between the open countryside to the north and the site and surroundings.
- A number of attenuation basins have been incorporated at the edge of the site to provide the development's Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS).
- Finally, the development will provide 10% (fully policy compliant) Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).



Whilst there are no Nationally Designated Natural Assets or Heritage Assets on or adjacent to Ashfield North, we are also acutely aware that:

- Teversal Pastures SSSI lies a few hundred metres to the west of the site, as are two local wildlife sites (Skegby Grassland III and Skegby to Pleasley railway) and the aforementioned Pleasley local nature reserve. Ensuring strong connections to all these sites is a central element of our proposed plan; and
- The area was assessed in the Hardwick Hall Setting Study (National Trust, 2016) which concluded that the area plays a limited role in the landscape setting of Hardwick Hall, but does serve as a buffer between the urban form of Mansfield and Hardwick. The landscape led masterplan ensures this buffer remains in place.

### Drainage improvements

An attenuation system is proposed to manage and store surface water drainage run off effectively across the development.

A sustainable drainage system (SUDS) would provide both a positive solution to the storage and treatment of surface water as well as providing landscape, biodiversity and amenity value through the provision of retention measures, balancing ponds, wetlands and lagoons within the development. Harworth has significant experience in designing and implementing SUDS schemes across its portfolio, including the example on the bottom left at Waverley.

### Contributing to wider outcomes

Our sustainability work will directly deliver a number of the ambitions of Ashfield’s Corporate Plan to ensure good growth and environmental performance go hand in hand. Our plans for useable green spaces, new public amenities, the retention of trees and hedgerows and Biodiversity Net Gain all supports the following aim of the Council’s plan:

A nice environment, clean streets and well-maintained parks and open spaces matters to our residents. We are therefore continuing to focus on having green spaces to be proud of. With improved quality and access, and have an ongoing commitment to maintaining high standards and continued improvement in green spaces.

Our work at Ashfield North will also actively contribute to ten of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as set out below:



# THE BENEFITS OF THE SITE

Based upon our proposed masterplan, we've been able to quantify the full economic and social benefits of the Ashfield North development over the next two decades.

The delivery of 1,000 new homes across a range of types will generate a significant source of revenue to the District Council through additional Council tax receipts. The positive effect on local businesses is also significant, with an estimated £16.8m spend from the site on convenience and comparison goods.

Local residents and businesses can also take confidence in Harworth Group's long-term track record of delivering quality economic regeneration schemes in the North of England and the Midlands over the past two decades – details of which are provided later in this document.

The proposed development at Ashfield North will deliver:

## DIRECT BENEFITS

**Over 1,000 homes**

ranging from 1 to 4 bedroom homes, across a range of tenures



**Over £1.5m**

estimated annual increase in Council Tax revenue once fully developed



## WIDER BENEFITS

**Range of new community infrastructure**

including Local Centre and new school



**47% of site retained as green space**

for uses including adult sports provision and allotments



**Green Corridor**

across centre of site to accommodate enhanced link to Public Right of Way network



**£16.8m**

Annual expenditure on convenience and comparison goods...



**£1.6m**

...of which is estimated to be retained within Ashfield

# DELIVERING THE SITE OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS

## How we will approach the site's development

Given the scale of the Ashfield North site and its role in the robust delivery of Ashfield's Local Plan, its development needs to be carefully planned and properly delivered.

Our planned timetable begins with this document – agreeing a shared understanding with the Council over what could and should be delivered on-site within the context of its future Local Plan. We will fully engage with all stages of the Local Plan process to ensure the site's adoption, ahead of any major site milestones being delivered.

The adoption of the Local Plan will then be followed by detailed design considerations and site work ahead of an initial public consultation on a draft outline scheme. This is an essential process ahead of any planning application being made. Based on our experience elsewhere, the Council would need between 12 to 18 months to properly consider and then determine.

Future development across all phases of the site will be the subject of 'reserved matters applications', giving local people and businesses a further chance to scrutinise and comment on any applications prior to their formal consideration by Ashfield District Council. Only when these applications are determined will work on new development begin, which we believe will be built out in full by 2040 – supporting Ashfield's sustainable growth well into the future.

Harworth has a superb track record in bringing forward major development sites across the North of England and the Midlands which should give local people confidence that the right developer is delivering the right scheme. This track record is explored in the following section.

## AN INDICATIVE TIMETABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT

### ASSUMED ASHFIELD LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE

|                 |  | DATES                                |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <b>PLANNING</b> | Public consultation on Reg 19 Local Plan draft       | <b>December 2023 to January 2024</b> |
|                 | Submission of draft Local Plan to Secretary of State | <b>May 2024</b>                      |
|                 | Examination in Public                                | <b>Autumn 2024 to Winter 2025</b>    |
|                 | Receipt of Inspector's Report                        | <b>Spring 2025</b>                   |
|                 | Adoption of Local Plan                               | <b>Summer 2025</b>                   |

### ASHFIELD NORTH PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT TIMETABLE

|                    |   |                                   |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>DEVELOPMENT</b> | Submission of this document and representations to inform draft Ashfield Local Plan   | <b>By 29 January 2024</b>         |
|                    | Harworth continues to undertake site technical work, alongside regular engagement with Ashfield Council and Nottinghamshire County Council  | <b>Spring &amp; Summer 2024</b>   |
|                    | Harworth to appear at Examination in Public, in line with its wish for Ashfield North to be considered as a potential Reserve Site to meet housing demand later in the Ashfield Local Plan period | <b>Autumn 2024 to Winter 2025</b> |
|                    | Initial pre-planning application, followed by public consultation on initial plans  | <b>Spring 2025</b>                |
|                    | Further site technical work   | <b>Spring 2025</b>                |
|                    | Submission of Outline Planning application  | <b>Spring 2026</b>                |
|                    | Submission of Reserved Matters application for first phase of development   | <b>2027</b>                       |
|                    | Start on site   | <b>2028</b>                       |
|                    | Further phases to be brought forward at an assumed rate of 80 dwellings per annum   | <b>2029 to 2040</b>               |
|                    | Development complete  | <b>2040</b>                       |



# OUR TRACK RECORD IN DELIVERING GREAT PLACES

Harworth Group plc has the required experience and finances required to bring forward a major residential-led schemes, with a proud track record of creating sustainable new communities across the Midlands and the North of England.

## About Harworth Group plc

Harworth Group is one of the leading land and property regeneration companies in the UK, owning and managing approximately 13,000 acres across around 100 sites in the Midlands and the North of England. Our purpose is to invest to transform land and property into sustainable places where people want to live and work, supporting new homes, jobs and communities, and delivering long-term value for everyone involved in and with the company.

With a focus on placemaking and long-term value creation, Harworth has an established track record of transforming sites into sustainable new communities. We are uniquely positioned as a specialist regenerator of large, complex sites, with an extensive pipeline focused on the high growth industrial & logistics and residential markets.

This includes regenerating some of the UK's largest new regeneration schemes which have had a long-term positive impact on local people, as the following two case studies show.



## WAVERLEY, ROTHERHAM

Harworth's success as a regeneration company has been founded on the quality of its flagship development – Waverley – by transforming the former Orgreave coal mining site into Yorkshire's largest ever mixed-use development that also includes the iconic Advanced Manufacturing Park.

Located just two minutes from Junction 33 of the M1 and at the heart of the Sheffield City Region, Harworth has transformed this 740 acre site into a new sustainable community that will eventually comprise up to 3,890 homes, shops, restaurants, a primary school, and leisure and community facilities, including 310 acres of green open space. The neighbouring Advanced Manufacturing Park (AMP) will also deliver 2.1m sq ft of commercial space once fully developed.

Following closure of the mining site in 1990, permission to remediate and restore the land was granted in 1995. The transformation of the site has been extremely challenging, taking a decade to remove all the coal, with full remediation completed six years later in 2011 – the same year that Harworth received outline planning permission to build out the development.

Harworth, as the master developer for Waverley, is the custodian of the vision and masterplan and deliver all key infrastructure to provide serviced land parcels for housebuilders. Harworth also works with its development partners to take a leading role in the establishment of wider community facilities.

Harworth's vision for Waverley is to provide a sustainable, mixed-use development that is expected to contribute £1 billion to the local economy as it is built out by 2030. It is already home to over 2,000 homes and 1.5m sq. ft of world-class commercial development space, with key employers at the AMP including Boeing, Rolls-Royce, McLaren Automotive and the UK Atomic Energy Authority.



## THORESBY VALE, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Located within walking distance of Edwinstowe and within easy commuting distance of Sheffield, Nottingham and mainline stations at Doncaster, Newark and Retford, Thoresby Vale is a residential-led scheme situated amongst some of the region's most popular woodlands, forests and leisure attractions, including the Sherwood Forest, that represents the best of former Colliery redevelopment.

Following the closure of Thoresby Colliery in July 2015 following nine decades of deep mining, Harworth put together a masterplan for the careful restoration and redevelopment of the 450-acre site, transforming it into a residential-led community with a clear emphasis on active travel and enhancing key local natural assets and habitats.

After receiving outline planning consent in October 2017, the scheme received full planning permission in 2019 to deliver up to 800 new homes, alongside a new primary school and 250,000 sq ft of new commercial and leisure space.

### An emphasis on Sustainability

Thoresby Vale benefits from two key natural assets: the topography of the former Spoil Heap that offers panoramic views of the Sherwood Forest; and the site's adjacency to the Forest itself. This is a key element of the development that requires protection; with this in mind, we have created multiple new ecological habitats and significant areas of green infrastructure, in turn providing an interconnected landscape to integrate the development seamlessly into the local environment and enhance biodiversity.

This site is a remnant of the historic Sherwood Forest and contains the best remaining examples of oak-birch woodland in Nottinghamshire, together with tracts of acid grassland and heath. The new woodland plantations are an important contribution to achieving decarbonisation targets, with the restoration of the peripheral broadleaved plantation woodland encouraging native species to re-establish, resulting in more natural woodlands that extend, connect and buffer existing woodlands, including the SSSI.

We are providing opportunities for wildlife species, as a result of our Woodland Management works 14 rare birds including protected species not previously recorded since monitoring commenced have been recorded living onsite such as the Welsh Clearwing Moth.

As a further commitment to enhancing the ecology of the local landscape, Harworth has also recently partnered with Nottinghamshire County Council to provide inclusive cycle trails and enhanced walking and cycling connectivity for residents and visitors.



# THE TEAM THAT WILL DELIVER ASHFIELD NORTH

## Harworth



**TIM LOVE**  
Strategic Land Director



**STUART ASHTON**  
Head of Planning



**ED CATCHPOLE**  
Joint Regional Director  
(Yorkshire & Central)



# ASHFIELD NORTH

A SUSTAINABLE URBAN  
EDGE EXTENSION FOR ASHFIELD

January 2024



# Harworth

Transform Regenerate Revitalise

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)  
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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