

Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY
SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 8 JANUARY 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Waddington – Chair
Councillor Dr Barton – Vice Chair

Councillor Bajaj
Councillor Osman
Councillor Singh Sangha

Councillor Batool
Councillor Rae Bhatia

In Attendance

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Cutkelvin
Assistant City Mayor Councillor Whittle

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112. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Porter.

It was noted that Councillor Rae Bhatia would need to join the meeting later in the proceedings.

113. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

There were no declarations of interest.

114. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

With regard to the record of the meeting held to discuss the Market Place, it was requested that points made about avoiding obstruction of sightlines of locally and nationally listed heritage assets be included in the recommendations and observations.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission held on 6 November 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

115. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

116. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The following question was presented to the Commission by Mr Nick Wynd:

Plans for the marketplace seem to be getting smaller than the original proposal. It seems no proposition was ever put forward to include all the traders. When the market moved it was downsized and when it moves back to its original site it will be even smaller. It seems the council are not listening to the public who want a bigger market. As it stands the proposal makes our market the size of Grantham's and they are trying to develop theirs whereas we seem not to want one.

In response to the question and a supplementary question, the Head of Economic Development noted that:

- The Market Scheme was generating lots of interest.
- A public consultation had been undertaken. This had closed on 9th December 2024 and had received over 1600 responses with a range of views. The findings from the consultation were currently being analysed. The main comments of the questioner had also been submitted as part of the consultation.
- In terms of the size of the market, the temporary market on Green Dragon Square had the equivalent number of stalls as those occupied in the old market. The old market had a number of empty stalls, with around 250 stalls occupied across the week and the equivalent number of stalls were occupied in Green Dragon Square. The proposed market offers slightly more stalls than at present, and would allow for 288 stalls to be occupied across the week, 48 every day.
- In terms of accommodating all traders, the original scheme was still an option on the table for consideration and no final decision had yet been made.
- The precise configuration of the stalls had not yet been finalised as the scheme would first need to be confirmed, although it was thought that in the proposal with 48 stalls, these would be divided into groups of four.
- There had not yet been a detailed conversation with traders about the size of the stalls in the current scheme being considered, but traders would be consulted in due course.
- In response to the points raised about Grantham market, it was noted that Grantham market only opened on a Saturday, with 30 traders each

Saturday. They were currently developing their market at a cost of £1.8m. In comparison, Leicester City Council was proposing to invest £8-10m on the new Leicester market. It was also noted that Grantham were also looking to create a flexible market space that could also host events and activities, which mirrors the proposed option for Leicester.

- As it was flexible space the proposed scheme would allow for speciality markets and temporary stalls in the adjacent space.
- The current proposal being considered was for 48 covered stalls with flexible space for other markets.

The Chair thanked Mr Wynd for the question and Officers for the response.

Councillor Rae Bhatia joined the meeting during the consideration of this item.

117. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

118. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26 AND DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26

As the reports on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme were related, they were taken as one item.

The Director of Finance submitted a report detailing the proposed Revenue Budget for 2025/26.

The Head of Finance (City Development & Neighbourhoods) gave an overview of the report, key points to note were as follows:

- The medium-term outlook was the most severe ever experienced. The Local Authority, along with many other authorities, would face increasing difficulties with budget balancing.
- The aim of the strategy was to balance budgets up to and including 2027/28.
- Some local authorities had already issued a Section 114 notice and, if successful, the budget strategy would avoid the same outcome for the next three years.
- The decade of austerity up to 2020 was an influencing factor, during this period services other than Social Care had to be reduced by 53%. This had substantially reduced the scope to make further cuts.
- More recent cost pressures included Social Care and Homelessness, which were not matched by an increase in income.
- The Local Authority used one off monies to support budgets for this and last year.

- It was anticipated that there would be a new round of financial constraint following the Chancellor's Budget of October 2024. Central Government understood the position for local authorities and some funding for deprived localities was anticipated. However, funding for protected services, local authorities usually fall within this category, was expected to be cut in the period to 2028/29.
- There were five strands to the strategy:

Strand 1: To release one off monies of £110m to buy time. This included £20m from earmarked reserves and £90m previously set aside to fund the current Capital Programme. This left a gap in funding for already approved schemes. Borrowing would be required which would cost the local authority £5m pounds in interest and debt repayments annually.

Strand 2: Included proposed reductions of £13m in the approved Capital Programme to reduce the amount of borrowing required. The areas covered by this commission would include £1.3m reduction from not proceeding with the planned Malcom Arcade refurbishment. A £3.2m reduction by not committing to any further city centre improvement schemes under Connecting Leicester. A £5.9m reduction from policy provisions including strategic acquisitions and Highways & transport infrastructure.

Strand 3: Included the proposed sale of properties to secure an additional £60m. To use this for the budgets, permission is required from The Secretary of State.

Strand 4: Was to constrain growth in statutory services that are under Demand-led pressure. Much work on this had already been done, cost growth had been reduced by estimates of £99m per year.

Strand 5: Was to make ongoing savings to revenue budget of £20m per year.

- There was a saving target of £4m in the Planning, Development & Transportation Division and a savings target of £2.3m for Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment.
- Those savings would still leave an estimated gap of £90m in year 2027/28.
- The strategy did contain risk, for example if it was difficult to predict what new pressures might occur within the Social Care system and with the housing crises.

The Director of Finance submitted a report detailing the proposed Capital Programme for 2025/26.

The Head of Finance (City Development & Neighbourhoods) presented the

report.

Key points included:

- £3.26m was provided for the Highway Capital Maintenance Programme.
- £2.56m was provided for the Transport Improvement Programme.
- £0.40m was provided for Local Environmental Works in wards.
- £0.30m was provided for the Flood & Drainage scheme.
- £0.20m was provided for Front Walls Replacement.
- £0.08m was provided for the Historic Building Grant Programme.
- £0.06m was provided for Southgates Underpass Lighting under the Invest to Save programme.
- Approximately £5m had been allocated to facilitate Capital Assets disposal.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments. Key Points included:

- The draft Local Government Finance Settlement had been received at the end of 2024. Indications were that this is slightly better than anticipated but that it did not fundamentally affect the strategy or the need for savings. A report would go to the Overview Select Committee with further details of the Settlement.
- Pressures mentioned in the previous budget report would have alluded primarily to Social Care and Homelessness, similarly to the current pressures faced.
- Pressures surrounding adult and children's social care were due primarily to the numbers presenting and levels of needs which required meeting. There were generally increasing numbers of people requiring support, with higher cost packages of care.
- In terms of Planning Development and Transportation, there would be a £4m budget reduction.
- There would be a budget reduction of £2.3m for Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment.
- Officers and the Executive were working through savings proposals across the board. These include opportunities to generate additional income alongside ways to be more efficient.
- In response to a query regarding Capital monies that had previously been allocated to the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LEEP), it was clarified that this money had been part of the Growing Places Fund, and whilst it is ring-fenced for economic development and prosperity, there had not yet been any agreement on how this money would be spent. The Council was the accountable body for this money in terms of how it was to be spent across the functional economic area.
- In terms of asset disposal, these would be assets that were underperforming or were surplus to requirements, not assets used in the

delivery of service. When considering assets for disposal, there was consideration of whether income was being generated, and the strategic potential for sites. This included land that may have been held historically but were no longer required. Existing established decision-making processes were in place for asset disposal, and these include assets above £500k being subject to public scrutiny through Executive decisions.

- It was requested that a list of assets under consideration be produced.

The Chair asked that the any points relevant be raised at the Overview Select Committee.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That officers keep members informed on budget ceilings.
- 4) That the need for transparency on asset disposal be noted.
- 5) That the report be brought to Overview Select Committee prior to Full Council.

119. ASHTON GREEN DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Director of Planning Development and Transportation submitted a report to provide an update on the Ashton Green Development.

The Programme Manager for Planning Development and Transportation presented an overview of the report using the slides attached. Key points to note were:

- Outline Planning Permission was held for 130 hectares of land. This would enable the creation of up to three thousand homes.
- Local Plan examination was considering an eastern expansion along with plans for a secondary school.
- The latest phase of the plan consolidated the previous 15 smaller developments parcelled into 6 or 7 broader developments.
- Regarding timescales, Morris Homes had completed 100 in late 2020 and Phase B, Tilia Homes would have completed 162 of 307 homes.
- The Morris and Tilia Homes would include 30% affordable housing.
- Morris Homes was the selected developer for Phase C. The proposal was for 440 homes. Planning Permission was hoped to be secured this year so that work could commence on site.
- Land had recently been taken to the market and there had been a positive response. This would be reported back at a later date.
- On the western side, Phase F had scope for around 915 homes.
- The high-level land use plan includes housing and large scale employment land.

- Green infrastructure including open space and sustainable drainage areas would be managed by the site wide open space Management company, Meadfleet Limited.
- Service payments would be taken from residents, this would pay towards managing the green spaces.
- The site wide masterplan had been updated bringing everything up to date and highlighting development already achieved.
- A significant amount of highway infrastructure had been delivered, about £25m since 2013. External funding of £10m had been secured from Homes England to open up land for 1,000 homes.
- £5m had been secured from National Highways towards the £10m Anstey/ A46 improvement scheme.
- Traffic calming measures, cycling and walking improvements had been put into place as part of this.
- In Phase A, Morris Homes had created an ecology area and landscaping area.
- There was some small-scale work with volunteers.
- Morris Homes hoped to be on site for November 2025 to commence Phase C. This would create 440 dwellings, of which 132 were allocated affordable housing units.
- In addition to the homes, substantial highway improvements were planned.
- It was acknowledged that overall timescales had seen delays. COVID had impacted significantly amongst other factors.
- Developer bids for Phases D and E had seen a good response and it was anticipated that partners could be announced by Easter 2025. This will enable the creation of about 525 dwellings.
- In 2013, land had been sold to Samworth Brothers who rapidly expanded the site. Around 750 new jobs being created as a result. The Local Authority had played a part in this by building a road extension to the site. It was hoped that similarly, there would be increased employment with future phases of large scale employment land to be released.
- The new Ashton Green Design Guide brought everything up to date and included the development strategies, quality standards information and highway design aspirations.
- Future Phases C2 and C3 will be a mixed-use village centre with shops and commercial buildings. But a critical mass of new homes was necessary before retailers would come on board. Significant ongoing discussion with internal stakeholders was required.

Members were invited to comment and ask questions, Responses were as follows:

- Regarding bus services, it was hoped that provision could be balanced with housing numbers and testing would need to be done. Outline planning permission was to come. The Local Authority was looking at

bus subsidies across the city so Ashton Green could come into these considerations.

- Highway capacity had been considered jointly by both Leicester City and Leicestershire County Councils at the start of the project. Discussions had included the potential for connecting with the A46 but the National Agency had opposed this. There were substantial improvements made to Anstey Lane down to the A46 which would benefit the surrounding network.
- Discussions could take place with the bus companies about extending existing bus services, but again this would depend on capacity of dwellings.
- To date, the focus had been on building housing in line with the set government timescales. Large developers tended to offer speed of delivery but future opportunities could be looked at for smaller developers. This however could present challenges in terms of infrastructure. Local apprenticeships were a consideration particularly on smaller developments.
- An update on ESOL Skills Bootcamps would be coming to scrutiny in March 2025. It would be possible to look at opportunities for local construction workers at that point.
- Regarding questions from Climate Action Leicester it was noted that:
 - The original 2011 planning consent required all homes to be delivered to the former level 4 code Staple Homes Standard. Currently progress fell in line with the Future Homes Standard emissions target for 2050.
 - There was a functioning cycle route in place connecting the development to Beaumont Leys Shopping Centre. Wider cycle routes were embodied in the programme to consider cycle connectivity within and outside of the development.
 - Cycle routes connecting to the new secondary school were in consideration.
- A County Council development (Broadnook) was in close proximity to Ashton Green and communications were in place between the authorities and District Council to consider cumulative impacts. Large sites tended to come with considerable green space which created buffers and major conservation opportunities.
- Discussions on the secondary school included placement and road access.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.

- 3) For continued liaisons with local Councillors regarding issues impacting on local and future residents.
- 4) Formal responses to be shared back regarding questions from Climate Action.
- 5) Climate Action points to be taken into consideration.

120. EXAMINING BUS LANE OPERATING HOURS - INFORMAL SCRUTINY

The Chair submitted a report providing an overview of the Commission's examination of the policy regarding the operating hours of bus lanes in Leicester.

The Chair thanked the officers, members and stakeholders who had been involved in the review.

It was noted that once the report had come through the Commission, it would be presented to the Executive. There would then be a timeframe for the Executive to respond.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the report be presented to the Executive and the response from the Executive be brought back to the Commission.

121. WORK PROGRAMME

Members of the Commission were invited to consider content of the work programme and were invited to make suggestions for additions as appropriate to be brought to future meetings.

In response to a point raised about post-LLEP arrangements, it was clarified that other business support programmes were available. It was requested that information be sent to all members so that it was known where support could be found.

The work programme was noted.

122. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 19:06.

Ashton Green development update



EDTCE Scrutiny Commission – 8 January 2025

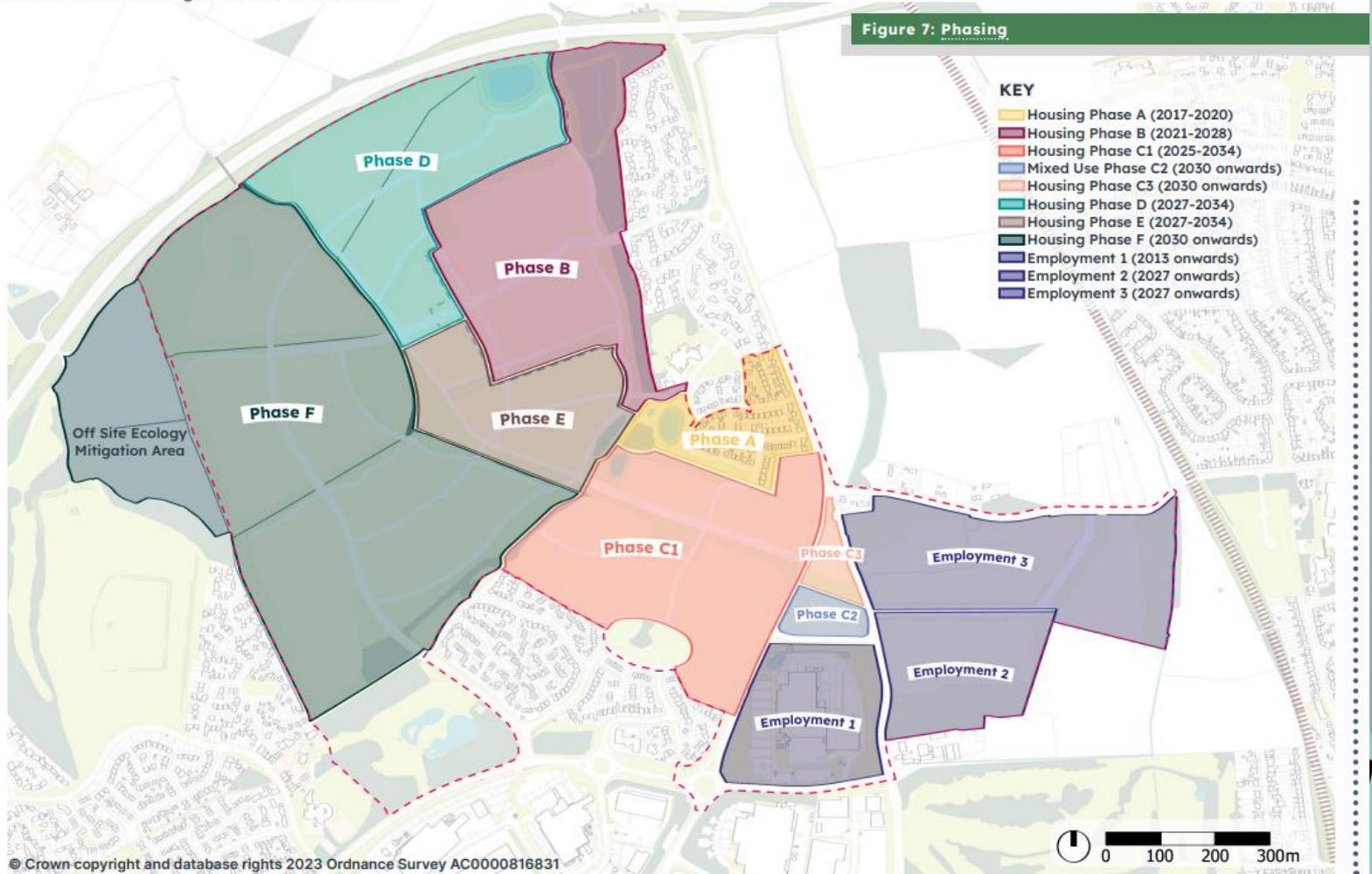
Ashton Green site plan including the proposed eastern expansion



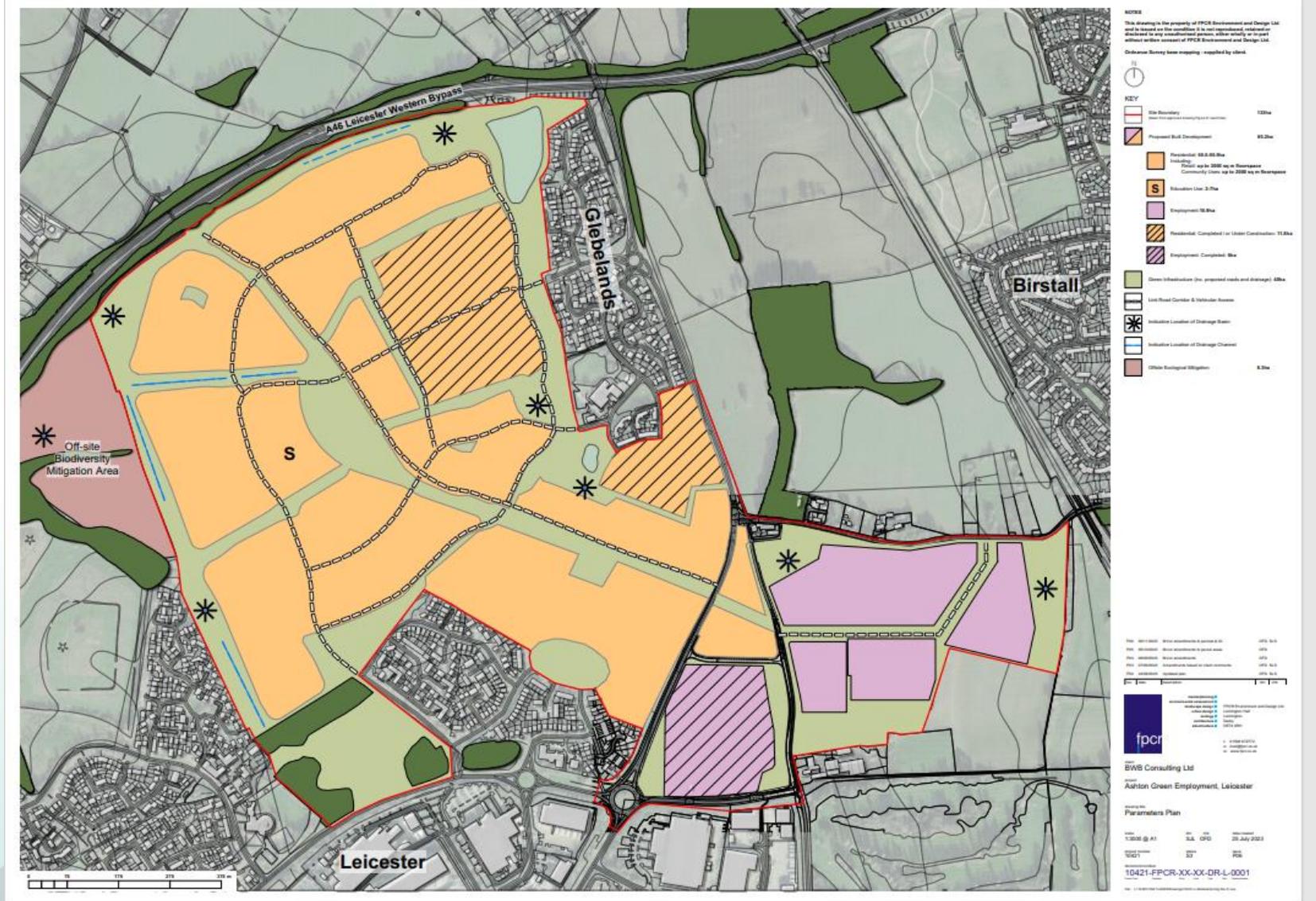
Location map showing Land east of Ashton Green and the Ashton Green development

Ashton Green phasing plan 2024

Ashton Green Design Guide | LCC | 2024



Land use plan 2024



Indicative Masterplan 2024



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- KEY**
- Site Boundary
 - Proposed development
 - Existing settlement / constructed development
 - Existing roads / proposed primary & secondary streets
 - Existing retained woodland / trees / planting (indicative)
 - Existing hedgerows
 - Native structure buffer planting
 - Amenity grass / grassland
 - SuDs



Phase A, Morris Homes, Glebelands Park

All 100 dwellings completed by late 2020



Phase B, Tilia Homes, Verdant Rise

162 of 307 dwellings completed to date



Phase B additional photos



Phase B additional photos



Enabling Infrastructure Since 2013

- Major internal spine roads to access housing Phases C, D & E and highway improvements to the eastern employment land.
- A46/Anstey Lane off-site highway works.
- Bennion Road extension (Employment Land Phase E1).
- Cycling, walking, traffic calming and bus interchange improvements
- Phase A enabling works.
- **Circa £25m to date (£16m external funding)**

Main spine roads for Phases C, D & E



A46 / Anstey Lane off-site highway works



Cycling, walking, public transport improvements and other enabling works



Phase C, Morris Homes

440 dwellings on-site from 2025



Phase C, Morris Homes draft landscaping plan Oct 2024



Phase C, Morris Homes street scenes examples, Oct 2024



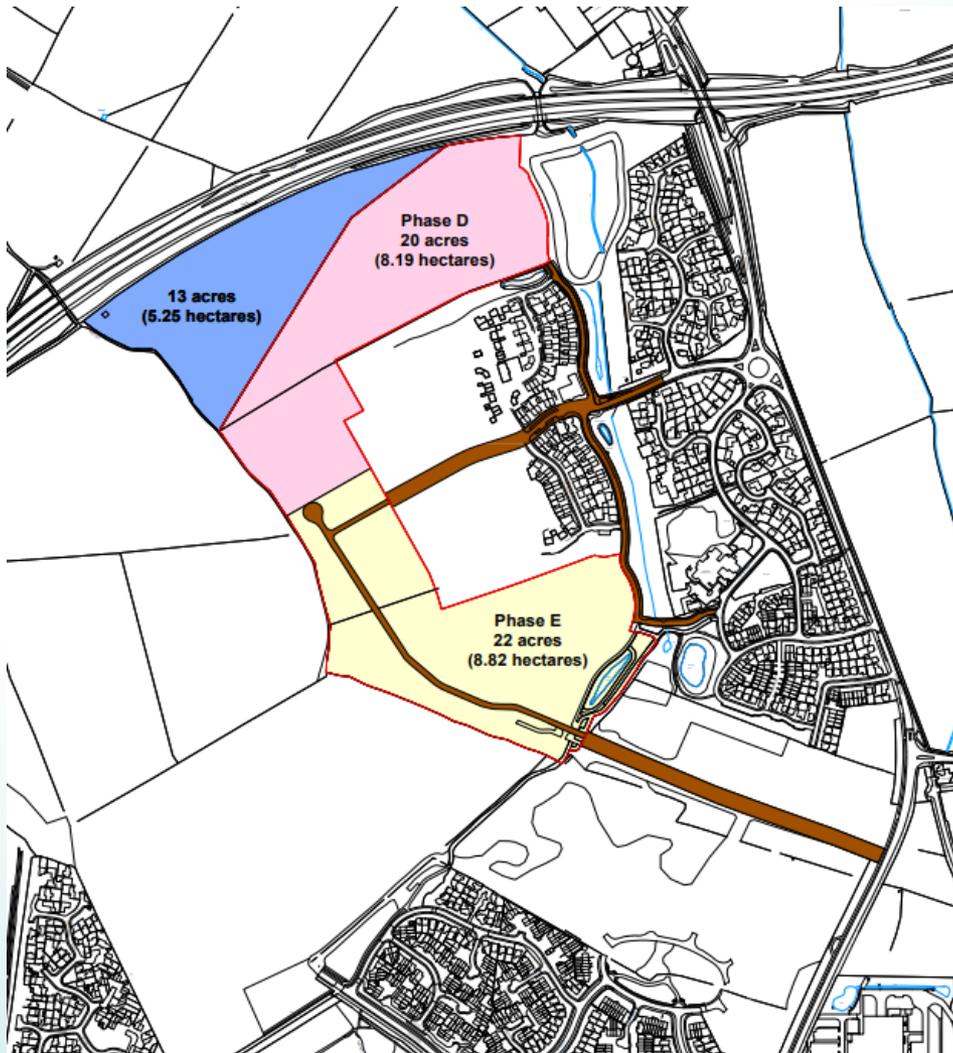
SECTION A - A



SECTION A - A CONTINUED

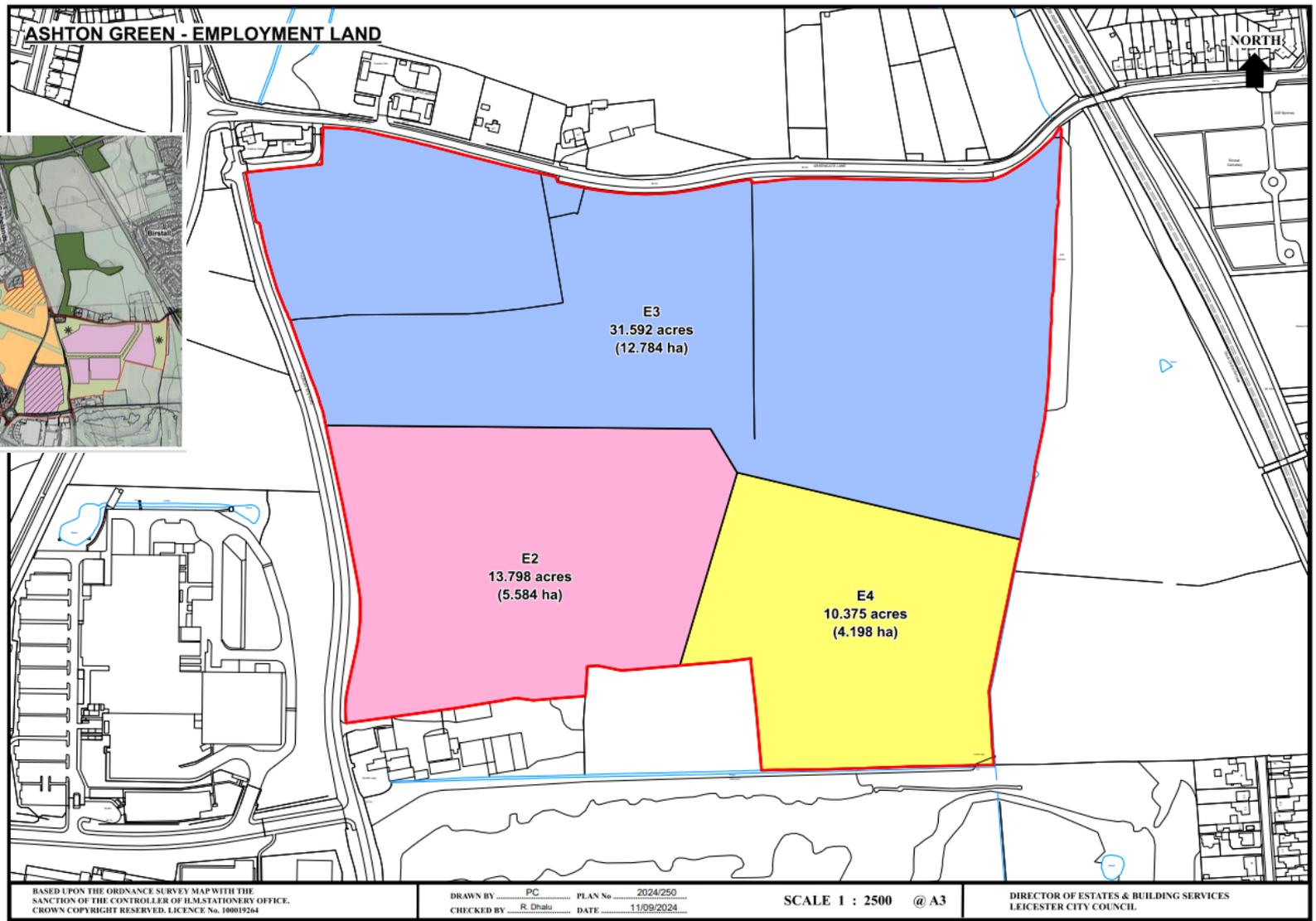


Phases D & E – developer bids Dec 2024

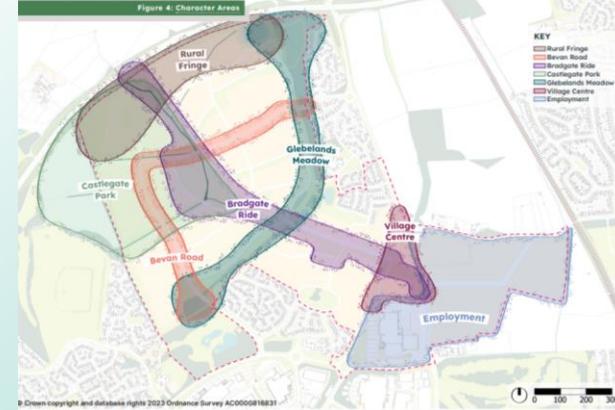
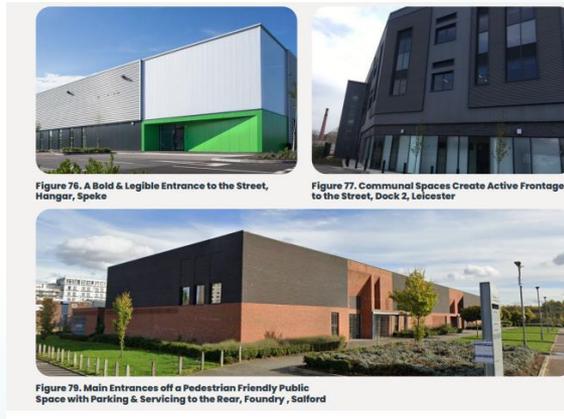


- 22.3 ha gross (55 acres)
- 13.95 ha net (34.5 acres)
- c.525 dwellings (37.6 dph)
- 30% affordable housing

Large scale employment land opportunities



Ashton Green Design Guide 2024



Code J employment main boulevard

Make sure that the scheme:

- Materials:** L18 Asphalt, x100+ Asphalt (SMA) Leicester Red 'white line' delineation 0.5m off kerb line, Asphalt (SMA) Leicester Red 'white line' delineation 0.5m off kerb line, Concrete kerbside block, Asphalt.
- Threshold:** Consistent building line, 3m-5m from back of footway.
- Boundary Treatment:** To north building line provides boundary. To south low level palette fencing, higher adjacent to building line.
- Tree Planting:** Street tree planting to north to create tree-lined building line.
- SuDS:** Street designed to provide surface water drainage into SuDS / street side soak.

5.3.8. employment

KEY

- Existing Houses & Buildings
- Proposed Development
- Active Frontage
- Defensible Building Line
- Gateway Space
- Civic Space
- Play & Sports Provision
- Sensitive Interface - Employment
- Pedestrian Access (employment)
- Vehicle Access (employment, commercial, Ashton Green village centre)
- Feature Junction
- Primary & Secondary Streets
- Tertiary Streets
- HGV Movement (employment)
- HGV Emergency Access (employment)
- Segregated Cycle Route
- Recreational Cycle Route
- Landscape Green Infrastructure
- Green Edge/ Buffer
- Sensitive Hedgerow & Biodiversity Value
- Wildlife Corridor Biodiversity Value
- Community Orchard/ Garden
- Existing & Potential SuDS Feature
- Future SuDS Feature/ Rain Garden

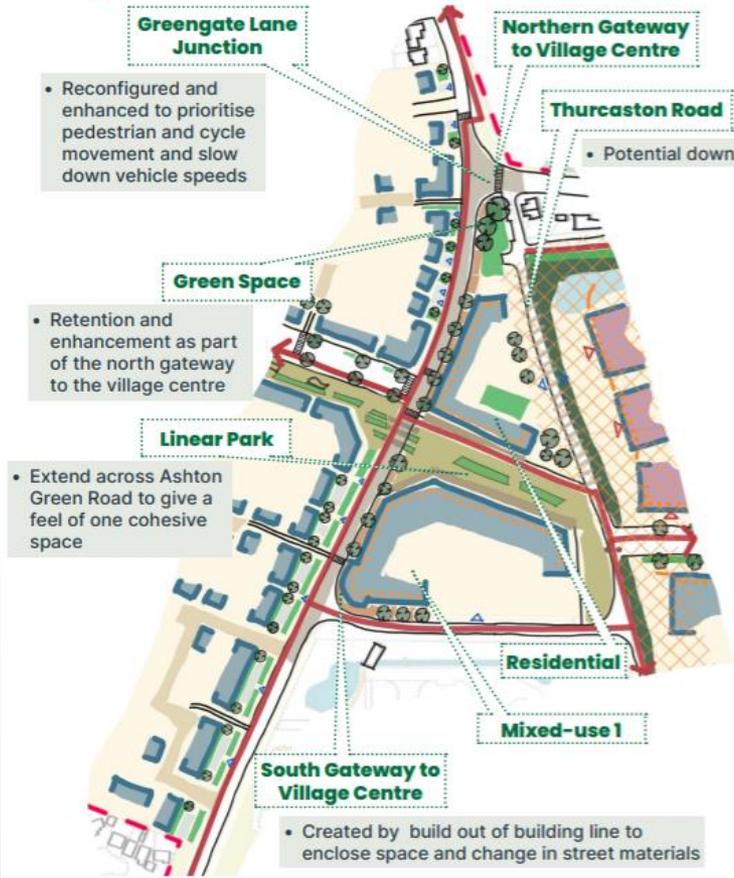
Ashton Green Design Guide | LCC | 2023

Key design objectives will be to create a legible, tree-lined and well-defined central boulevard ensuring new buildings strongly front the street with a consistent building line. Both vehicle and pedestrian access to the buildings will be taken off a building line with dual frontage access where needed to provide pedestrian access off both the boulevard and the rear car parking. Public-facing uses within employment buildings, for example, offices and commercial spaces will be required to front the boulevard to maintain active and distinctive street frontage and animation to the street. The buildings themselves should provide a defensible building line to avoid boundary treatments interrupting the streetscape and to enable the boulevard to provide a sense of enclosure rather than sitting back into the plot. Street trees to the north of the boulevard will also provide enclosure complemented by a planted landscape strip to the south.

All car parking and services should sit to the rear of the boulevard to maintain a strong 'fringe strip' free from visual impact. The mature hedgerows to the west of the employment area will be retained and enhanced and generous landscaped green buffers providing SuDS and biodiversity value will be provided to abut against the rural fringe context. Buildings to the west of the employment area will have a smaller footprint and scale to respond to the sensitive interface of the rural and commercial village centre and provide a transition of smaller, more fine-grained layout of buildings.

Phases C2 & C3 – future mixed-use commercial village centre

5.3.4. village centre



- ✓ **Tree Planting to Front Gardens** - Create a sense of enclosure and slow down vehicle speeds.
- ✓ **Junctions & Crossings** - Prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement.
- ✓ **Generous Thresholds to Mixed-Use & Commercial** - Provide activity and vitality to the linear park.
- ✓ **Features Within & Along Ashton Green Road** - Create a place, prioritise pedestrians and cyclists and reduce vehicle speeds.
- ✓ **Servicing, Access & Parking** - Located to rear, maximise active frontages along Ashton Green Road and Linear Park.
- ✓ **Shared Space for Cyclists & Pedestrians** - Designs to avoid conflict using signage and cycle parking.
- ✓ **Tree Planting & SuDS Features to East of Ashton Green** - Located as close to carriageway as possible with large tree species to provide street enclosure and assist place-making.
- ✓ **Fully Designed Landscape Scheme** - Incorporate innovative solutions for planting and SuDS features within the easement to the Ashton Green Road frontage.
- ✓ **Crossing Points** - Connecting to adjacent residential development and direct.



- Primary & Secondary Streets
- Tertiary Streets
- HGV Movement (employment)
- HGV Emergency Access (employment)
- Segregated Cycle Route
- Recreational Cycle & Horse Riding Route
- Landscape Green Infrastructure
- Green Edge/ Buffer
- Sensitive Hedgerow & Biodiversity Value
- Wildlife Corridor Biodiversity Value
- Community Orchard/ Garden
- Existing & Potential SuDS Feature
- Future SuDS Feature/ Rain Garden

Land East of Ashton Green

