

Ashton Green, Leicester - New Education Strategy, v6 May 2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Leicester City Council (the Applicant) is the principal landowner and promoter of the Ashton Green development. The Applicant is the master developer and infrastructure enabler for this housing led mixed-use development of up to 3,000 homes.
- 1.2 The Applicant has submitted a s73 planning application to amend a number of conditions of the 2018 site wide outline planning consent to reflect changes in the phasing and delivery strategy, land use mix and the requirements of the Local Education Authority (LEA).
- 1.3 This document outlines the new Education Strategy and should also be read in conjunction with the New Site Wide Phasing Plan, March 2023, Appendix 1.

2. Background

- 2.1 The original site wide Education Strategy was a planning condition of the 2014 outline planning consent (Application No 20131597 Dated 10 January 2014). Planning condition No 27 stated;

Prior to the submission of the first reserved matters application for residential development, an Education Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Education Strategy shall include the following;

1) The funding, delivery and programme details for the provision of a three-form entry primary school.

2) The funding, delivery and programme details for the provision of a Secondary School.

The delivery details will identify a trigger point of the numbers of dwellings by which time the schools will be operational, and how they will be procured. (In order ensure a satisfactory form of development and education provision for future residents and in accordance with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy).

- 2.2 An Education Strategy was prepared by the Applicant in consultation with the LEA and was approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on 4 March 2016. (Application No 20160166, dated 27 January 2016).
- 2.3 The principles of the 2016 Education Strategy were driven by the specific requirements of the LEA at the time having regard to the assumptions of adopted Core Strategy (2014) and the expected delivery of the Ashton Green development.
- 2.4 The 2016 Education Strategy had more flexibility than the fixed housing delivery triggers of the first outline planning consent (2011) but the key assumption led by the LEA was that a new primary school would be needed within the delivery of the first 750 dwellings and would need to be planned for delivery within the proposed village centre of the development.
- 2.5 The secondary school requirements of the LEA at the time were far less certain and it was accepted that the Applicant and the LEA would work together to agree a future trigger point with land being reserved through the approved masterplan on the eastern edge of the development.

3. Changes to the Education Strategy

- 3.1 The LEA have reviewed their growth forecasting for pupil yields arising out of the Ashton Green development for both primary and secondary education. The LEA have also reviewed their pupil place yields in light of a reduced overall anticipated number of dwellings. The latest assessment is based upon a scenario of an assumed 2,300 dwellings within the consented development and a sensitivity test of up to 3,000 dwellings.
- 3.2 The LEA have provided two summary presentations to outline their calculations, Appendices 2 (primary) and 3 (secondary).

Primary school provision

- 3.3 Ashton Green including the proposed Land East of Ashton Green expansion is expected to generate a gross yield of 834 places over a 24 yr delivery period from 2016 to 2040. The gross primary yield to date, based on 120 dwellings completed is 34 pupils. The LEA have already extended the existing Glebelands Primary School provision from 40 to 45 PAN (Published Admission Number) generating an additional 35 places, thus new pupil yields to date have been accounted for in existing capacity plans.
- 3.4 There 9 existing primary schools within a 2 mile radius of the site and the LEA currently has 525 vacant places within the North planning area including 290 places within these 9 schools thus 55% of current vacant places are within a 2 miles radius.
- 3.5 The LEA is also advising that the vacant primary places are likely to increase to 1,437 by 2029/30 suggesting no projected shortfall for the foreseeable future. Notwithstanding, the LEA have a contingency plan to extend the Glebelands Primary School to 60 PAN with a further 105 places in total. Current pupil numbers do not warranty immediate expansion.
- 3.6 Forecasts beyond 2030 appear to be far less certain, however, the LEA wishes to retain some flexibility through the use of housing related review trigger points and safeguarding land within future phases of the existing masterplan. Suggested review points are 750 dwellings in 2027/28 and 1,500 dwellings by 2031/32.
- 3.7 It is proposed to retain a site of circa 2 ha within Phase F for education related land uses as illustrated in Appendix 1.
- 3.8 The LEA have requested that the existing s106 developer contributions of circa £2.4m are earmarked for the expansion in capacity of the existing Glebelands Primary School.

Secondary school provision

- 3.9 The anticipated secondary school yield over the delivery period 2016 to 2040 is 433 places.
- 3.10 The LEA have advised of a 30% rise in secondary pupil numbers across the city since 2013/14 with total demand expected to continue to rise until 2026/27.
- 3.11 There are 5 secondary schools within a 3 mile radius of the site and only 7 vacant places within the North planning area, thus virtually at maximum capacity. The LEA is currently using 614 temporary places as an interim measure until additional permanent places are built.
- 3.12 The LEA have advised that there is insufficient secondary places in the North planning area to meet existing demand and that Ashton Green will increase the pressure on an already

oversubscribed area. Furthermore, the emerging draft new Leicester Local Plan will bring forward other housing sites adding to the shortfall.

- 3.13 These latest gross pupil places projections clearly demonstrate that despite the lack of capacity in the wider North planning area, the Ashton Green development will not generate sufficient additional secondary school places to warrant to delivery of a new secondary school solely for the new residents.
- 3.14 The LEA have advised that there is now more certainty over the need to provide for additional secondary school places across the wider city over the next few years and there is a desire on the part of the LEA and DfE to bring forward a new Free School secondary academy at Ashton Green to serve the wider area initially before capturing the anticipated future demand from the new homes.
- 3.15 A new site of circa 5.96 ha has been identified on land owned by the Applicant, directly to the north/east of the land subject to the S.73 application but outside of the application boundary. This site is being promoted through a new draft Leicester Local Plan (LLP), referenced as site number 262b. The Regulation 19 public consultation stage of the LLP closed on 27 February 2023 and the LPA is anticipating an Examination in Public in the autumn of 2023.
- 3.16 The LEA and DfE are currently working towards a target date of opening the proposed Beauchamp City Free School by the autumn of 2026. However, as additional school places are required from autumn 2025, the DfE are also currently searching for a temporary site within the area.
- 3.17 The proposed new Site Wide Phasing Plan, March 2023 (Appendix 1) outlines a change of land use allocations to enable the release of circa 8.25ha of land identified in the approved masterplan for secondary school provision in favour of large-scale employment land uses.

4. Summary of the new Education Strategy

- 4.1 The proposed new Education Strategy acknowledges that the 'village centre primary school' is no longer required and that any increases in pupil yields will be accommodated through the expansion of the existing Glebelands primary school.
- 4.3 Land will continue to be reserved if required for an additional education land uses post 2030 and demand for primary school provision will be re-assessed alongside housing number triggers of 750 units (2027/28) and 1,500 units (post 2031).
- 4.4 The secondary school provision will be accommodated through the delivery of the proposed Beauchamp City Free School from 2026/27 subject to the adoption of the new Local Plan.
- 4.5 Section 106 developer financial contributions secured to date will contribute towards the provision of expanding the existing Glebelands primary school. No additional Section 106 contributions shall be sought from future developers until such time as additional primary school provision is proven.

Figure 7: Phasing

