

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to view this public exhibition concerning the Development Brief for the former St. Felix Middle School, Newmarket which is proposed for residential development within the adopted West Suffolk Local Plan. This exhibition has been prepared on behalf of the landowner (Suffolk County Council) in consultation with West Suffolk Council.

This consultation is seeking your views on our draft Development Brief. The Development Brief contains high-level information regarding the background, constraints and opportunities, and potential development options concerning the future development of the site. It is the intention of these presentation boards to provide you with a summary of this information, with more detailed guidance contained within the Frequently Asked Questions section of our Website. Once you have reviewed this material, we would encourage you to complete our questionnaire which can be located here. [\[Redacted\]](#)

We are providing you with as many ways to view this presentation and provide feedback as possible. Full information on the ways to do so can be found on the next steps and feedback pages of this website.

The purpose of this consultation is to give you the opportunity to share your views on our initial proposals for the allocated site. We will consider feedback from this consultation when working up the final Development Brief, which will then be submitted to the local planning authority (West Suffolk Council) for approval in the Winter of 2021.



Photographs of the site in its current state



DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

A Development Brief is a document that provides a number of principles and objectives, such as conceptual layout options, which will guide any future residential development on the site. This is informed by site constraints and opportunities and must comply with planning policy requirements as set out in the Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan and Adopted Local Plan. Once approved by West Suffolk Council, any future planning application submitted on the site will be required to demonstrate its compliance with the principles and guidance established within the adopted Development Brief.

It is important to understand, therefore, that a Development Brief does not itself grant planning permission. Instead, it is simply a template upon which future planning applications will be based.

Whilst we would welcome feedback on all aspects in relation to the proposed Development Brief, Table 1 outlines the type of feedback that can help shape the final Development Brief as well as those planning matters which the document cannot provide or amend.

Feedback that can influence the final Development Brief	Feedback that cannot influence the final Development Brief
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The overall vision and objectives for the site• The opportunities and technical constraints that the proposal presents• The design principles proposed, such as massing and style• The landscape, movement and open space framework• The options concerning the layout of the proposed land uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The principle of residential development on the site• The overall number of dwellings proposed• The precise housing mix for the site• The exact design and materials proposed

Table 1



DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

Although there has no planning policy expectation to produce a Development Brief on this site, the document has been prepared on a voluntary basis in agreement with West Suffolk Council. This is advantageous since the site-specific planning guidance contained within the document will be the product of a collaborative process between the landowner, general public and local planning authority. As a result, the Development Brief will act to comprehensively inform any future planning application submitted on the site as to raise the standard of development.

Following initial engagement with West Suffolk Council and other stakeholders, a clear set of objectives have been identified to achieve the delivery of housing on the site. These core objectives (COs) are set out in the table below:

CO1: To prioritise the delivery of an optimum number of new homes. in accordance with policy objectives

CO2: To produce a design framework that reinforces local distinctiveness through sensitive architecture, public realm and materials

CO3: To create a new network of accessible public open space integrated with George Lambton Playing fields

CO4: To protect the horse racing industry and reduce carbon emissions by prioritising sustainable transport options that will reduce the impact of additional vehicular activity

CO5: To enable proposals that respond to climate change through sustainable design that reduces carbon emissions

Table 2



THE APPROVAL PROCESS

The delivery of residential development on the former St. Felix Middle School site consists of an extensive process that ranges from its allocation within the Adopted Local Plan to the eventual implementation of an approved planning permission. Table 3 below has been prepared below to help you understand this multi-stage approach and the position of this current consultation within it.

STAGE 1 Background Work	STAGE 2 Development Brief Preparation	STAGE 3 Planning Application Submission	STAGE 4 Delivery of Development
<p>The Applicant put forward the site to WSC to assess its development potential. Based upon subsequent evidence that was gathered, the site was assessed by WSC to be suitable for housing. Therefore, it was allocated for residential development within the Adopted Local Plan.</p>	<p>Upon further background study and discussions with relevant stakeholders, a draft Development Brief has been prepared. It is this document that is currently subject to public consultation. Once it has been finalised, it will be submitted to WSC for endorsement as a material planning consideration.</p>	<p>Appropriate plans will be prepared by the project team. A planning application will then be submitted to WSC for approval of the residential development. It will need to reflect the high-level principles within the adopted Development Brief.</p>	<p>Upon approval, a number of planning conditions will need to be discharged and financial contributions will need to be paid. Once the relevant matters have been satisfied, construction works will be able to commence on site.</p>

Table 3



THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS



The application site is outlined in red on the site location plan to the left. The site is situated inside the settlement boundary of Newmarket, approximately 300 metres south of the Fordham Road roundabout. It was previously used to educate middle school aged students, but closed in the Summer of 2012 – the land is now derelict.

To the north of the site is an extensive area of playing fields referred to as the George Lambton Playing Fields. Open countryside is situated to its east, and its south and west comprises of modern estate-style residential development. Newmarket town centre is positioned approximately 1.5 km to its south.

The site connects to a green corridor network to the west, known as the Yellow Brick Road Linear Park (YBRLP), which provides a byway and public rights of way between the town centre and Studlands Park.



Fig. 1 Red Line Boundary Plan



Adopted West Suffolk Local Plan

The current Local Plan for West Suffolk identifies the site within the settlement boundary of Newmarket. In this respect, the Local Plan (Core Strategy Policy CS1) recognises Newmarket as a suitable location for new development due to the wide range of services and facilities available alongside its good transport links.

The Site Allocations Local Plan (2019) allocates the site for residential development of up to 50 dwellings (under Policy SA6(d)). The policy details that any development proposal must comply with a range of site-specific criteria, including providing open space for public use and ensuring connectivity from the George Lambton playing fields.

The Applicant has decided to produce a Development Brief to guide any future planning application on the site to ensure a high-quality form of development. This will comply with the necessary requirements within Policy DM4 (Development Briefs of the Joint Development Policies Document 2015).

More information is provided in respect of these and other policies is detailed within the accompanying Development Brief.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The revised NPPF, which was published in July 2021, sets out the priorities and principles of development established by the central government. One of its key aims is to “significantly boost the supply of new homes”. This is so that a sufficient amount and variety of new land can come forward to help address the current shortfall of housing.

In particular, it states that significant weight should be given to the value of using previously developed (or brownfield) land within settlement boundaries – that is currently underutilised - for new homes.

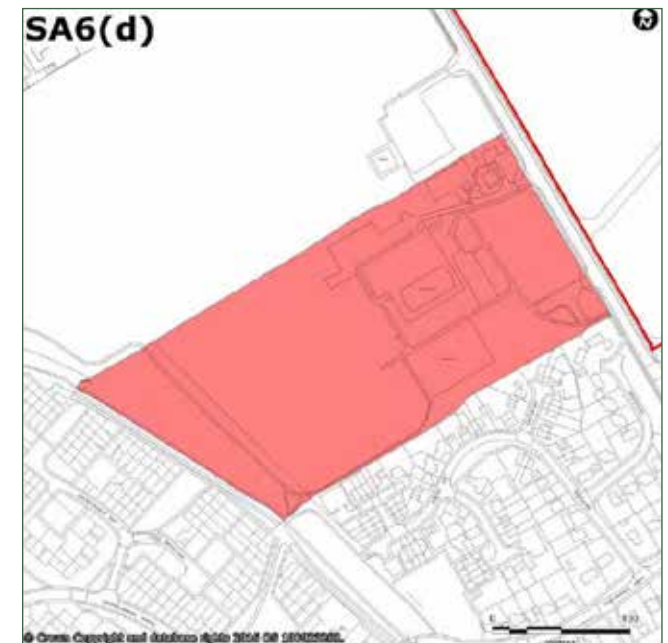


Fig. 2 Allocation Plan



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan (NNP) is a statutory development plan document that has been adopted by West Suffolk Council.

This means that the material consideration is given weight in the decision-making process for any planning application submitted in the parish of Newmarket.

The key policies are summarised below:

Policy NKT19 requires that development proposals provide a varied housing mix to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse Newmarket community.

Policy NK20 sets out that affordable housing on the application site should be dispersed into small clusters of no more than 15 dwellings.

Policy KT22 establishes that development proposals which will generate significant levels of traffic movement will only be supported where it is shown that it will not adversely impact the capacity and safety of the local highway network. Any Transport Assessment must, in part, consider equestrian users.

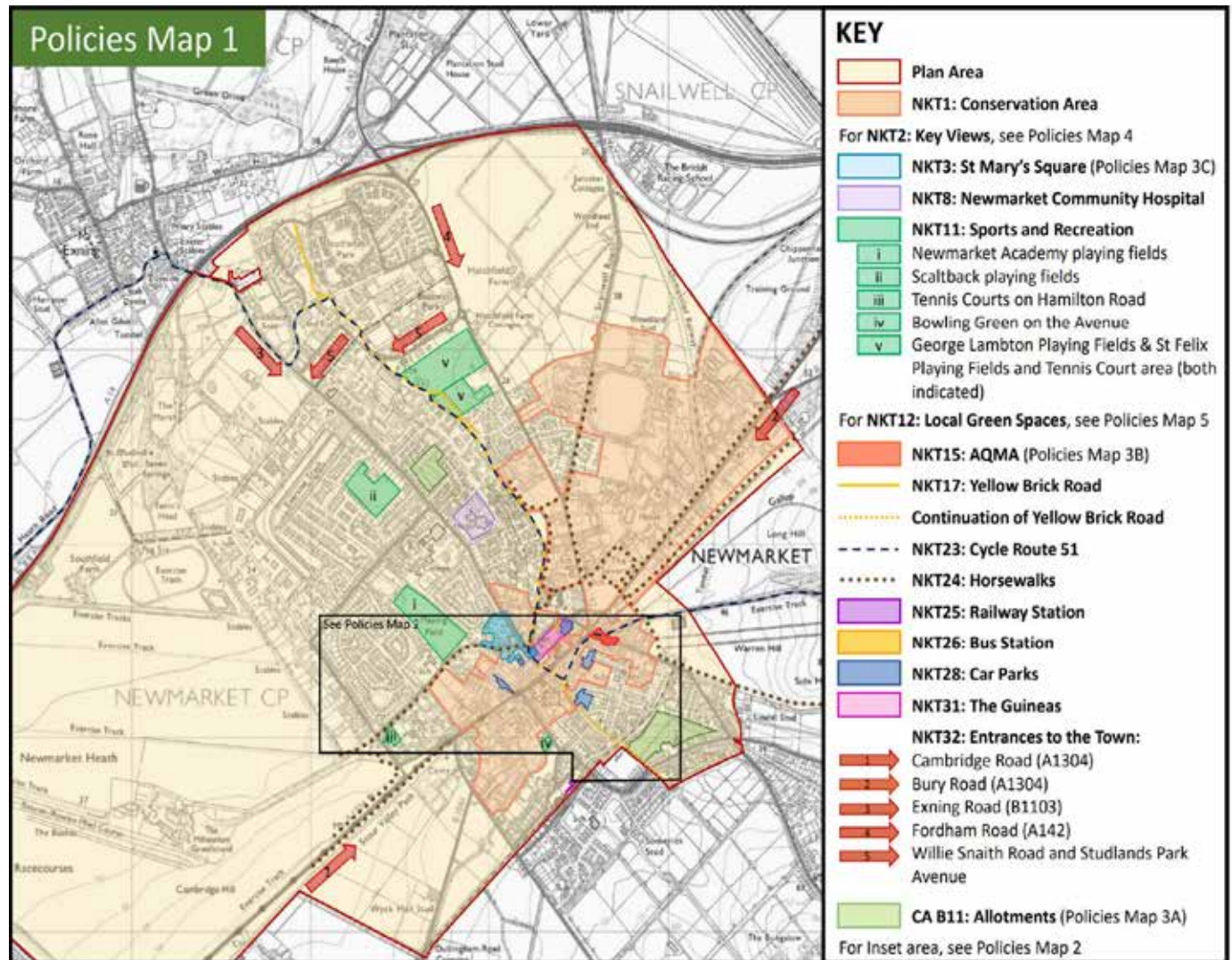


Fig. 3 Policies Map



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

The principle of residential development on the site has already been established under Policy SA6(d) of the Site Allocations Local Plan (2019) for 50 dwellings. The Development Brief is therefore intended to provide high-level guidance as to how this level of development can be accommodated across the 4.5-hectare site. In consideration of these requirements, the project team carefully considered two different scenarios as to how the residential development could be accommodated across the site during the design development stage. These scenarios were as follows:



Fig. 4 Scenario 1



Fig. 5 Scenario 2

Scenario 1 - Policy Arrangement Plan (left) considered that the residential development be accommodated predominantly in the built envelope of the site, with the existing tennis courts retained in the same location and the remainder consisting of public open space.

Scenario 2 - Proposed Arrangement Plan (right) considered that the tennis courts could be relocated to another part of the site.



PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT

Having analysed the relative merits of the two development options presented in the previous slide, the Development Brief ultimately discounted Scenario 1 due to the lack on integration with the adjoining George Lambton playing field and concern of potential conflict between the residential development and sport use associated with the tennis courts given their close proximity.

As such, the Development Brief identifies Scenario 2 as the proposed arrangement for how development across the site should be laid out. The 'Proposed Arrangement Plan' proposes that the residential development be constructed in developed area of the site, with the tennis courts relocated.

It should be recognised that this drawing is only illustrative - matters such as the final appearance, layout, scale and landscaping will be formally considered in a future planning application and not at this stage.



Fig. 6 Illustrative Layout based on the Proposed Arrangement Plan



DENSITY AND DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

Whilst the proposed density and design arrangements is reserved for future consideration as part the detailed planning application stage, the Development Brief nevertheless has carried out a range of feasibility studies to demonstrate how the proposed development could be delivered in respect to these matters.

Beginning with the first consideration, several different levels of density have been assessed from an analysis of a sample of surrounding residential estates. The sample areas and their densities are useful to illustrate what may be an appropriate density for the site. For example, low density, such as at Fordham Road, would be 13 units on the site. Medium density, as at Murless Drive would be 34 units and high density at Exning Road would be 60 units.



Fordham Road - 7 dph



Paget Place - 12 dph



Noel Murless Drive - 18 dph



Exning Road - 32 dph

It is the objective of the Development Brief to produce a design framework that reinforces local distinctiveness through sensitive architecture, public realm and materials. This includes ensuring the built form reflects the locality in terms of scale and form, creating attractive spaces that prioritises non-vehicular modes of transportation, and including materials that are characteristic of Newmarket.

Further information on both considerations is provided on pages 64 and 65 respectively.



PROTECTING THE HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Newmarket is a centre of the British Horse Racing Industry (HRI) which plays a pivotal economic and cultural role to the town. This is reflected in the presence of over 3,000 race horses, 89 licensed trainers, 62 stud farms, 1,133 hectares of training grounds and hundreds of stable staff within and around the town. It also has the largest racehorse training centre in Britain and a key global centre for horse health.

Given its renowned national and international status, it is a core objective of the Development Brief to safeguard existing horse movements within the local area and wider town – which are key to the HRI – by reducing the impact of additional vehicular traffic. This will be achieved by ensuring that the site is well connected to existing footpaths; for instance, the site access will incorporate pedestrian connections to link with existing facilities on Fordham Road whilst an improved connection will be made via the south western boundary of the site to link with the Yellow Brick Road corridor to its west. These new or improved connections will encourage journeys by sustainable modes of transportation for a wide range of services/facilities within Newmarket which are within a short walking or cycling distance. Please refer to page 50 for further information about these measures.

Moreover, a Transport Assessment that will accompany any future development proposal will be required to assess the impact of the development proposal upon the surrounding area – with specific attention to be given to the impact upon the horse racing industry and existing movements. If any adverse impacts are identified, appropriate measures will be incorporated to mitigate the development impact.

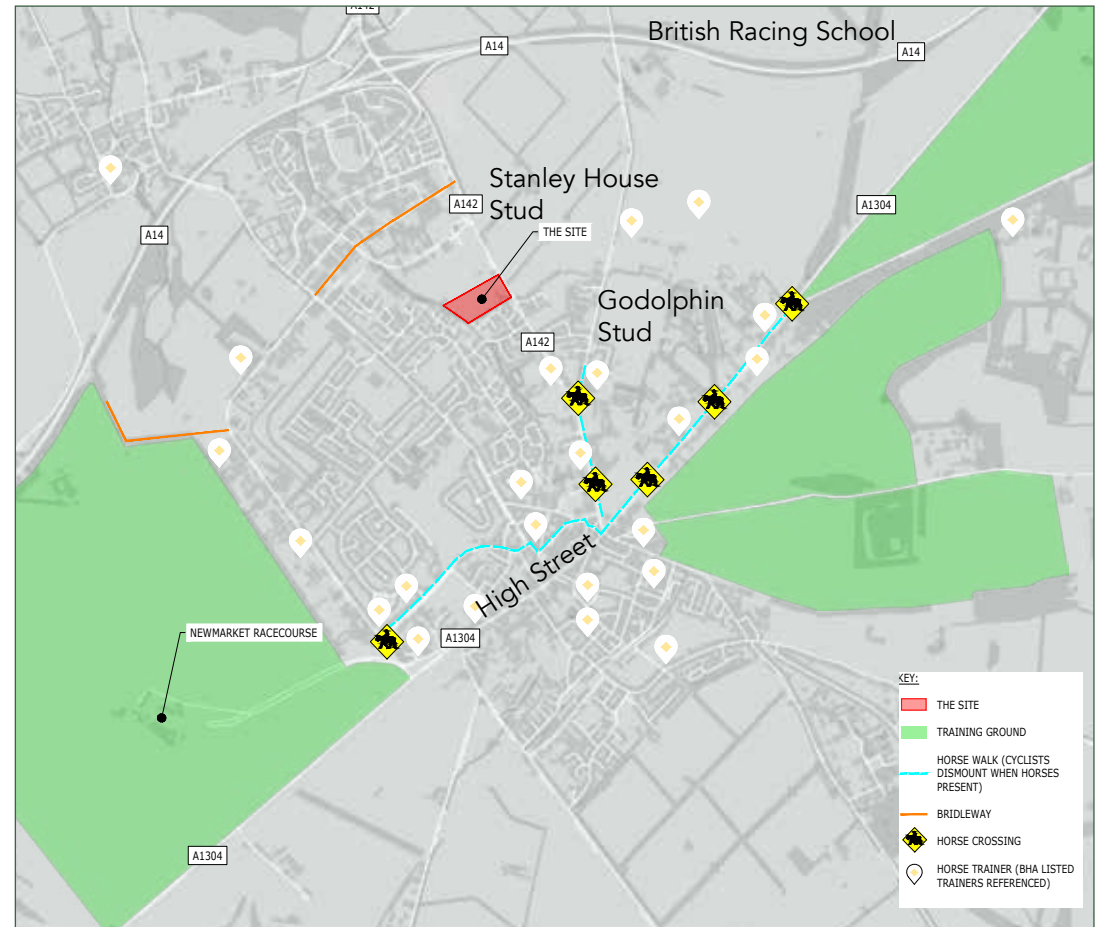


Fig. 7 Map showing Routes around Newmarket



BENEFITS TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The introduction of a residential development on the application site presents a variety of opportunities to preserve the setting of the site as well as providing new or improved assets for the wider community – as detailed on page 54. The main opportunities can be summarised as follows:

- Existing trees on the site will be preserved wherever possible to preserve the character of the local area
- The site will become integrated with the existing public rights of way network as to enhance pedestrian and cycle links around Newmarket
- Private secure space will be unlocked for public use, which can be integrated with the adjoining George Lambton playing fields to facilitate the creation of a Recreation Hub.
- The existing tennis courts will become available for public use. If The Proposed Arrangement Plan is granted planning permission, this sport facility will be relocated and upgraded.



Fig. 8 Opportunities Plan



Future Opportunities for Sport

To enable the expansion of indoor sporting facilities within the town by reserving land for the future provision.

Releasing the tennis courts to an alternative location, as shown within the Illustrative Layout on board 9, would present the optimum location to invest in further shared facilities alongside any further expansion of sporting facilities on the site to serve Newmarket, should the need arise.

This opportunity is indicatively illustrated as a potential indoor sporting facility. The co-location supports shared parking, changing rooms and lighting which can be accommodated in combination with the relocated tennis courts shown in the Proposed Arrangement. The Development Brief only indicates the potential space for a Sports Hall; provision of the facility is not being formally submitted at this time.

The shared parking would be accessible parking for blue badge holders as well as cycle parking. The remainder of the parking would be on the existing George Lambton car park and accessed via the network of footpaths into and within the site.

The illustrative layout on the facing page shows how this could be set out on the site. This shows the potential location of the sports hall to the north of the potential location for the tennis courts, so that the sports hall could become a shared facility for activities on the George Lambton Playing field.



Fig. 9 Illustrative Layout based on the Proposed Arrangement Plan with potential sports facility

This is a different arrangement from the Illustrative layout in Part 1 of this document (where the tennis courts are shown nearer to the northern boundary of the site) because that layout is showing the proposed design in the event that the sports hall does not come forward.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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Thank you for taking the time to review this exhibition of Suffolk County Council's consultation concerning the production of a Development Brief for this site. We hope that you have found these boards informative and helpful.

Before the Development Brief is finalised and submitted to West Suffolk Council for adoption, we are inviting members of the public to have their say about the plans. All comments that are received from this public consultation event will be actively considered by the project team and will inform the development of this Development Brief.

Therefore, if you would like to provide feedback, there are several ways to do this:

Online - The easiest way to provide feedback directly is to do so by completing our online questionnaire on this website: www.phase2planning.co.uk/planning-consultations-StFelix.html.

Email – We accept feedback by emailing our team on: office@phase2planning.co.uk

Freephone – Call our freephone hotline on [0800 464 7596](tel:08004647596) to provide feedback to Phase 2 Planning.

Letter – If you decide to submit comments by post, please submit this to our planning consultants at;

[Phase 2 Planning and Development Ltd, Skyline 120, 270 Avenue West, Great Notley, Braintree, Essex, CM77 7AA](#)

The commencement date of the public consultation is **11am 22nd February**.

Please note that the deadline for comment submission is **4pm 5th April**. Please note that comments after this date may still be taken into consideration.

