# SILFIELD GARDEN VILLAGE

**DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTUS** 

## FOREWORD

On behalf of Orbit Homes and Bowbridge Strategic Land, this Prospectus is submitted to the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) in respect of Silfield Garden Village, a potential new community on land north and south of the A11 adjacent to Wymondham in South Norfolk.

The Prospectus sets out the following:

- Summary Case
- Strategic Context
- An Area-wide Approach to Growth
- The Garden Village Model at Silfield
- The Proposition
- Shaping an Emerging Development Concept
- Building a Community
- Enabling Delivery at Silfield
- Our Credentials

In addition to this document a suite of technical topic papers will also be submitted to the GNDP as part of the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation process, detailing the following aspects of the Silfield Garden Village proposal:

- Economic Strategy
- Connectivity Strategy
- Energy and Utilities Strategy
- Heritage / Historic Environment
- Policy Options for allocating New Garden Villages
- Outline Viability





## SUMMARY CASE FOR SILFIELD GARDEN VILLAGE

### Strategic Context and Locational Advantage

Silfield Garden Village sits at a key point within the Cambridge - Norwich Tech Corridor. The Corridor is already a recognised growth pole within the region, but to enable it to flourish and reach its potential, economic and housing growth must be aligned. Silfield Garden Village has the potential to support the Corridor's economic growth objectives and reinforce the local area as a key destination within the Corridor by creating an economic and innovation hub aligned with the agri-tech and energy sectors as well as helping to meet the long term housing needs of the Greater Norwich area.

Within the Corridor, Silfield Garden Village is located on an unconstrained site benefiting from excellent strategic transport connections, situated adjacent to the A11 providing direct links to Norwich and Cambridge and directly accessible to Wymondham rail station and the rail connections thereby provided. It lies to the south of Wymondham, one of the larger settlements in the Greater Norwich area, where good links to existing local amenities and employment opportunities can be supported in addition to the provision of a full range of facilities and services within the Garden Village itself.

. M. W.

### An Area-Wide Approach to Growth

The scale and location of the Garden Village must align with the local planning objectives of the GNDP, but at Silfield we consider that strategic growth must also deliver benefits within the local area and for those local communities affected.

A growth strategy which includes a Garden Village at Silfield would enable growth within the Wymondham area to be refocused to the south of the town, supporting a policy position which resists further dispersed housing growth elsewhere around the town, especially to the north and east where the separation of Wymondham with other settlements, such as Hethersett, is being eroded. We take a townwide approach to planning for social and community infrastructure so that existing gaps in local provision – such as a new secondary school - can be delivered as part of the Garden Village, and its new facilities, shops and services will perform a complementary rather than competing role with those of the wider area.

### The Garden Village Model at Silfield

The site is under the control of J Alston and Sons Ltd, a single landowner with a long term interest in the land and its future. J Alston has entered into a joint venture with promoters Bowbridge Strategic Land and Orbit Homes and the team are adopting a master developer approach and 'patient capital' delivery model. Therefore, rather than being dependent on early land sales to third party housebuilders, Orbit Homes and Bowbridge will build infrastructure and homes directly under the joint venture arrangement, which will be maintained for the lifetime of the development period by the Orbit Group. This model also helps eliminate the viability risks associated with large sites which can inhibit on-site mobilisation and dilute the level of investment in quality place-making.

With a long history of farming in the Wymondham area, J Alston and Sons is also committed to creating a legacy for both the land and the local area and has a stated aim of retaining a long-term involvement in the promotion, delivery and governance of the Garden Village.

2.23

#### Development Site and Components

Land for the Garden Village extends to around 420 hectares and has minimal environmental, heritage or utilities constraints which affect its capacity to accommodate growth at scale. Its predominantly flat topography and existing vegetation offers good enclosure and containment, meaning the land is not highly visible in the wider landscape.

A new community of around 6,500 homes is envisaged; a level of growth that will support the provision of new on-site primary and secondary schools as well as support local employment and local centre opportunities. The scale of the new community will also unlock meaningful improvements to local transport infrastructure – such as a new junction on the A11; improved public transport links with the town centre, key local destinations and into Norwich; and accessibility improvements at Wymondham rail station.

As well as building a large proportion of the market and affordable homes ourselves, we will broaden conventional markets to include modern methods of construction (MMC), self and custom-build homes, and specialist homes for the elderly. The proposals will seek to meet 'net zero' carbon targets, realising the potential to generate renewable energy locally from a new solar farm delivered alongside the Garden Village. The scale of the landholding at Silfield also means that as part of the Garden Village proposition improved green infrastructure networks and biodiversity improvements can be made in the surrounding local area.

#### Building a Community -Our Track Record

The creation of Silfield Garden Village is about much more than bricks and mortar. Building a new community where none currently exists requires a holistic approach to placemaking, ensuring that at each stage of the planning and construction period the requisite physical, social and environmental infrastructure is in place to support the incoming population.

The delivery model adopted by Orbit and Bowbridge will ensure that this happens. As one of the UK's top 10 developing Registered Providers, Orbit has availability of finance for delivering infrastructure up front and the structures of the JV allows this to happen. As well as a proven track record of delivery, as a Registered Provider Orbit both builds and manages its properties, estates and ancillary uses, and therefore is invested in the creation and long term success of the Garden Village.

Bowbridge Strategic Land has a depth of experience and a significant track record in delivering development on large scale projects both assembly, infrastructure delivery and development finance, Bowbridge has a particular expertise in unlocking large scale stalled sites when cashflow or viability issues arise through the introduction of innovative JV structures and finance arrangements. Moreover, as a Strategic Partner of Homes England, Orbit has access to a level of public funds beyond that normally available to the development industry. Even taking into account its identified strategic infrastructure costs, Silfield Garden Village would not be inhibited by funding constraints.

### STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR A GARDEN VILLAGE

The Greater Norwich plan-making authorities have already made a significant and commendable decision to work together through the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GDNP) and embark on a Joint Plan. This will enable them to collectively identify the best possible strategy to deliver the growth needs of the area.

The Greater Norwich area is growing at a fast pace. In order to harness its future success, it is paramount that the Local Plan provides for a long term growth and development strategy that secures the job, homes and infrastructure in the right place, at the right time. The GNDP wishes to take a longterm view on growth, looking to 2036 and even beyond. This signals that new settlement-scale growth – which could include one or more Garden Villages – will be a vital component of the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

In terms of locational criteria for new settlements or Garden Villages, the Local Plan Regulation 18 Stage 1 Consultation recognised that growth should be located to make best use of existing transport corridors and community facilities. Specifically recognising the characteristics of the GNDP area and the growth options already considered by GNDP, any new settlement or Garden Village proposition should be located to align with a main transport corridor and should support the Cambridge - Norwich Tech Corridor.

Land at Silfield benefits from a prime location on the A11, a central point within the Cambridge -Norwich Tech Corridor. This Tech Corridor is aligned with the nationally significant Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford arc and due to its close proximity to Cambridge is also well related to the London - Stansted -Cambridge M11 corridor and the Greater Cambridge economic area.

Together, the A11 and the Norwich-Cambridge rail line form the spine of the Tech Corridor and provide the fundamental physical infrastructure supporting the important economic axis between Cambridge University and the University of East Anglia and Norwich Research Park. There is a substantial opportunity for growth along this spine that would complement the success of both Norwich and Cambridge as knowledge-based hubs.

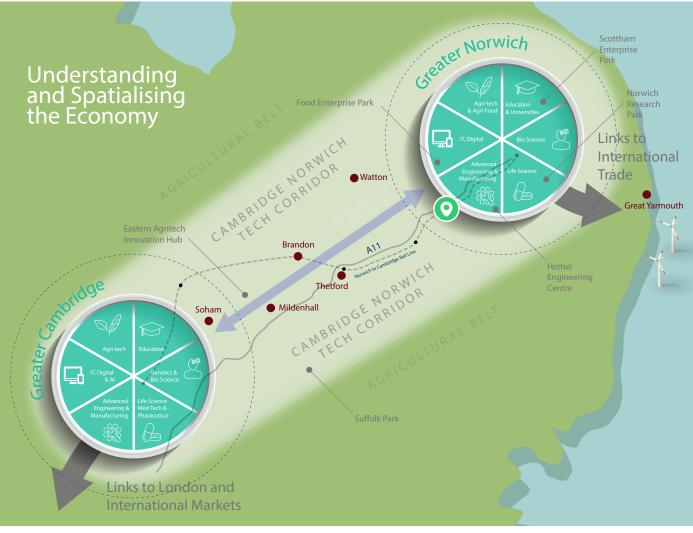
The Cambridge - Norwich Tech Corridor is a recognised public-private initiative. It is supported and partnered by the Local Enterprise Partnership and Local Authorities as well as other key stakeholders.

A step change in the approach to planning for growth in the Tech Corridor is essential to enable the Greater Norwich Area to harness its opportunity to compete on the national economic platform. To realise the full potential of Cambridge - Norwich Tech Corridor housing delivery must keep pace with - and stimulate economic growth now and into the future. We suggest that this requires a proactive and ambitious stance to be taken in respect of strategic growth in this part of the GNDP area, looking beyond successive rounds of minimum housing targets to plan for and manage a robust and holistic long term growth proposition.

This stance also aligns with the growth options already considered by the GNDP in its emerging plan-making. A new Garden Village at Silfield would respond positively to and support three of the six options:

- Option (1) Transport Corridors;
- Option (2) Supporting the Cambridge - Norwich Tech Corridor; and
- Option (3) Dispersal plus New Settlement.

Given this context, our emerging thinking for Silfield Garden Village has responded positively to both the emerging local planning context and the opportunity to plan at scale for integrated economic and housing growth as a way of achieving both the GNDP objectives and the sustainable development of this part of the GNDP area. Silfield is set apart from other potential growth locations within the GNDP area due to its central position within the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor, its location on the A11 and with immediate access to it, and its proximity to Wymondham railway station.



### AN AREA-WIDE APPROACH TO LONG TERM GROWTH

#### Benefits of Strategic Scale Growth for the Local Area

The economic and housing growth ambitions within the Tech Corridor must align with the local planning objectives of the GNDP, but we consider that they must also deliver benefits within the local area and for those local communities affected by this growth.

Planned comprehensive growth is a long-term response to housing and economic need, not just in the current plan-period but in successive plans, recognising that new homes and jobs are required in perpetuity. Good planning is not time-limited and should not be constrained by Local Plan horizons. Rather, it should proactively consider growth pressure beyond the plan period and ensure that a longterm growth strategy is pursued which secures all necessary infrastructure to support future growth.

Planning for the long-term growth of an area requires this type of comprehensive approach. The certainty secured through making a strategic allocation such as a Garden Village means that a full package of infrastructure can be guaranteed, which in turn is only made viable by the scale of the development proposed. Multiple smaller allocations in and around a settlement (in the same or successive Plan periods) will not achieve the same infrastructure provision or certainty regarding the future growth of the area, nor the benefits accruing to it.

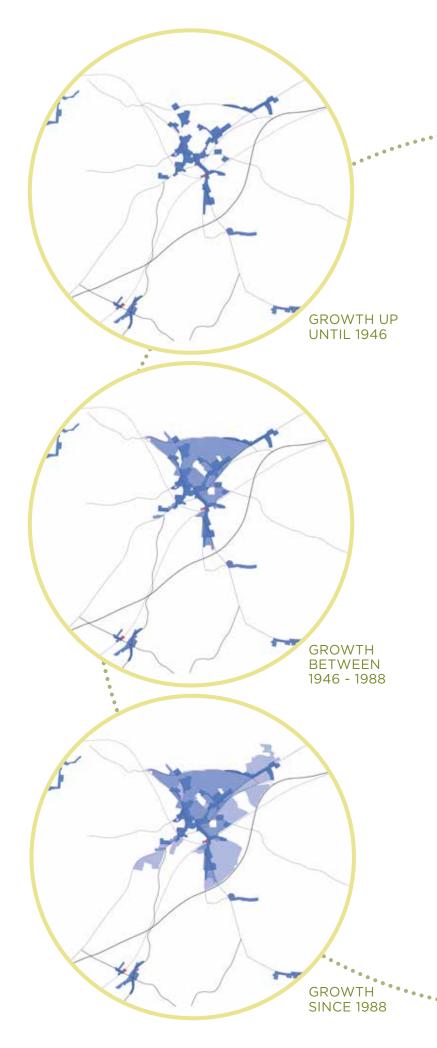
Garden Villages, by virtue of their well-designed form, are intended to be delivered organically over time, and must create successful places at each stage of their construction, not just at completion. Their growth is steady and will span multiple plan periods and economic cycles, but having a holistic vision, long term policy position and comprehensive framework for development will ensure infrastructure and design quality is delivered throughout the course of the development. But it is acknowledged that Garden Villages cannot – and should not – exist in isolation. All but the largest of new communities – such as New Towns – depend on their position within a wider geography for jobs, services and access to modes of travel. And any Garden Village of the scale suggested within the GNDP area will need to develop a positive relationship with its surrounding settlements as well as the landscape within which it sits.

Silfield Garden Village does not sit remote from other places. It is located to the south of Wymondham, a major centre in the local settlement hierarchy and an established sustainable growth location owing to its geography, scale and level of facilities, services and employment. But rather than being seen as a negative aspect of its location, this can have key advantages both for the new community and for the existing town.

Over recent years, Wymondham has consistently been a focus for new development. Even if a Garden Village is allocated elsewhere within the GNDP area, it is likely that local plan policy will continue to reflect national planning policy in directing other housing growth to larger settlements such as Wymondham.

Conversely, a growth strategy which includes a Garden Village at Silfield would enable growth within the Wymondham area to be refocused to the south of the town, supporting a policy position which could resist further growth to the north and east where the separation of Wymondham with other settlements, such as Hethersett, is being eroded.

The geography of Wymondham and the wider economic dynamic of the growth corridor mean that the town will continue to experience growth pressure in this and successive local plans.



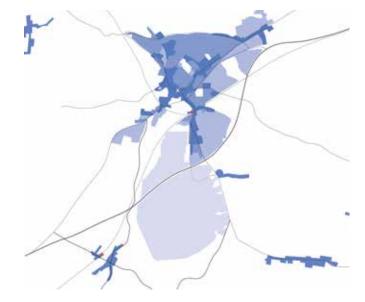
#### Relationship with Wymondham

Wymondham has grown extensively during the 20th Century with development built alongside the existing road network and extending along key transport corridors. It is understood that successive local plans in recent years have added to this growth by a series of separate housing allocations which although providing homes for the local area, have not been able to deliver the level of infrastructure and local facilities which are needed to keep pace with the town's population growth. New townwide infrastructure - including a new secondary school - is already needed for the current and planned Wymondham residents but is not being delivered through current housing allocations.

We suggest an alternative growth strategy might now be necessary to enable the Wymondham area to continue to flourish and grow successfully and sustainably whilst maintaining its identity, to ensure growth is managed in an effective manner and that strategic infrastructure is secured alongside new homes and jobs.

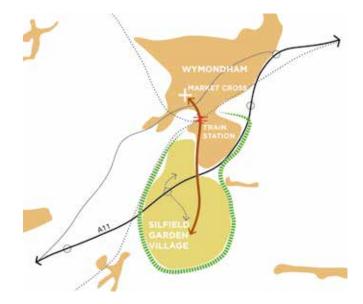
Creating a new Garden Village at Silfield could for the first time enable a well-planned, comprehensive strategy to be put in place to secure a sustainable future for the Wymondham area which provides benefits to existing as well as new residents as well as preventing future unacceptable piecemeal growth. It is important to us that the Garden Village is set positively within this context and, in its design, unlocks wider benefits for the local area. The following approach indicates how designing a Garden Village in a 'whole-town' context could achieve a number of benefits for the wider local area:

**Re-balanced growth** - past growth has focused on the north and east of the town, utilising existing road infrastructure. There is an opportunity to coordinate future growth and rebalance development to the south, placing the railway and town centre at the heart of Wymondham and creating a positive interface with the A11 rather than treating it as a barrier to growth.



**Connectivity** - the scale of development will require a holistic approach to transport infrastructure and will secure a package of strategic transport improvements for the Garden Village and wider area including:

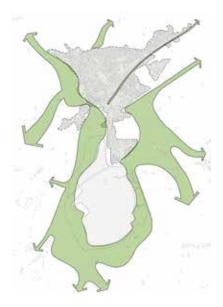
- A new junction on the A11 not only providing access to the site and mitigating unacceptable impact on the existing local network, but also creating the opportunity to reinforce Wymondham as a destination on the A11 corridor;
- New and improved public transport including bus services and walking and cycling connections to the railway station.



**Green Infrastructure** - the Garden Village can be embedded into the wider green infrastructure network not only providing landscape and biodiversity enhancement, but also the opportunity to improve strategic green infrastructure in and around the wider town. Having a Garden Village to the south of Wymondham would also support a stronger local plan policy stance to designate strategic gaps between settlements currently under pressure of coalescence. This will help manage the growth of the town in a sustainable and environmentally-sound manner.

Community Infrastructure - at this scale the proposals can take a holistic approach to infrastructure investment, identifying existing constraints and capacity issues to ensure the town can grow sustainably. Following Garden Village principles, the development will provide a good level of local facilities, with strong self-containment in terms of day to day needs whilst also providing a catchment population to support higher-order and town centre services in Wymondham and elsewhere. Taking a town-wide approach to determining community infrastructure will mean existing gaps in provision - such as a new secondary school - can be delivered as part of the Garden Village and its new facilities, shops and services perform a complementary rather than competing role with those of the wider area.

**Economic Hub** - recent growth in Wymondham has been primarily residential-led. With a new junction on the A11, Silfield Garden Village has the potential to include an element of new employment growth, supporting the existing economic assets in the area whilst providing space for start-ups and innovation in the local area. This will help reinforce Wymondham's position as a key destination in the Cambridge -Norwich Tech Corridor and ensure that housing and employment growth are well aligned which is integral to sustainable and successful growth.





Silfield Garden Village provides the opportunity for a comprehensive growth strategy which secures the long term future of the local area, not just the immediate housing need.

## THE SILFIELD GARDEN VILLAGE MODEL

Strategic development sites including garden villages - are key to tackling the housing crisis, and are considered appropriate for the GNDP area, but strategic does not have to mean slow.

It is widely acknowledged at national level that strategic and comprehensive development is key to overcoming the housing crisis, and that planning comprehensively over time will deliver the necessary infrastructure and facilities that communities need. There is often, however, a perception that comprehensive development is impeded by costly physical infrastructure and that social infrastructure or design quality suffers as a result. This is not the case for Silfield Garden Village.

We understand the apprehension around relying on strategic scale sites to deliver required growth and we can overcome the habitual risks associated with comprehensive development. Our aim is for Silfield Garden Village to be an exemplar precedent for delivering high quality housing at scale and without the delays that all too often have hindered the ability to address the housing crisis thus far.

> Committed delivery of around 60% of market and affordable homes by the Orbit Group and Bowbridge Strategic Land.

Orbit Homes and Bowbridge Strategic Land are in an unrivalled position to deliver a new community at Silfield. We do not see the Garden Village simply as a 'development opportunity' but a genuine prospect for us to deliver homes, amenities and infrastructure within a tangible timeframe.

As well as demonstrating that we can deliver, we recognise that to build a Garden Village requires consistency and commitment. A long term approach to both the financing and design quality of development is central to our delivery model, which we consider sets Silfield Garden Village apart from other strategic development proposals. Our model has four key elements:

#### 1. Funding

As one of the UK's top 10 developing Registered Providers, Orbit has availability of finance for delivering infrastructure up front. As well as a proven track record of delivery, as a Registered Provider we not only build but manage our properties and estate and therefore meeting the needs of our customers and achieving consistently high design standards is paramount.

Moreover, as a Strategic Partner of Homes England, Orbit has access to a level of public funds beyond that normally available to the development industry. Even taking into account identified strategic infrastructure costs the Garden Village would not be inhibited by funding constraints.

We are committed to a 'patient capital' approach to investment. Although patient capital can be considered a traditional investment instrument, it has gained new life with the rise in environmentally and socially responsible enterprises. In the context of a master developer model for new communities, patient capital is characterised by a willingness to forgo maximum financial returns for social impact and an unwillingness to sacrifice the interests of the end customer for the sake of shareholders; a greater tolerance for risk than traditional investment capital; and longer time horizons for return of capital.

This, coupled with the funding that can be secured by Orbit to invest in upfront strategic infrastructure, means that the proposed new community is not dependent on third party funding and development can be unlocked expeditiously. Together Orbit and Bowbridge are committed to building around 60% of the housing (100% of the affordable and around 50% of the market), therefore greatly reducing our reliance on volume housebuilders and guaranteeing the construction of a considerable proportion of the homes.

Our long-term approach means we have a vested interest in securing a high standard of design and creating a legacy over the long term which creates wider benefits for both existing and new local communities.

#### 2. Homes and Infrastructure

Orbit and Bowbridge will fulfil a master developer role and therefore will be directly responsible for strategic infrastructure provision. This includes social infrastructure such as schools, community and medical centres as well as physical infrastructure such as roads and utilities. We will also construct a large proportion of affordable and market homes ourselves, hence will not be dependent on volume housebuilders. We can also broaden the housing market on site to include a wider variety of housing tenures as well as modern methods of construction (MMC), self and custom-build homes, and specialist homes for the elderly.

Our master developer approach can also draw in other key stakeholders to ensure the delivery of co-ordinated infrastructure to meet wider aspirations. For example, as part of the Silfield Garden Village proposal land around the rail station could be made available to support the delivery of the proposed southern station platform improvements.

#### 3. Land Ownership, Governance and Stewardship

Orbit and Bowbridge are in a joint venture with the landowner J Alston and Sons Ltd who has sole control of the entire site, as well as additional land adjacent and in close proximity to the proposed site. With a long history of farming in the Wymondham area, J Alston and Sons is committed to creating a legacy for both the land and the local area, and has a stated aim of retaining a long-term involvement in the promotion, delivery and governance of the Garden Village. This means that rather than being dependent on early land sales to third parties, Orbit and Bowbridge will build infrastructure and homes directly under the joint venture arrangement, which will be maintained for the lifetime of the development period. This model also helps eliminate the viability risks associated with large sites which can inhibit on-site mobilisation and dilute the level of investment in quality placemaking.

The master developer model directly delivers strategic infrastructure, public realm and local facilities as well as delivering a large proportion of the market and affordable housing. As part of this model, the freehold ownership allows us to put in place enduring stewardship and governance arrangements for the Garden Village well beyond conventional construction and delivery periods, such as a Community Trust or similar equivalent model to secure the management (and help fund ongoing maintenance) of community facilities and open space in perpetuity.

#### 4. Technical Capability, Track Record and Trust

Together Orbit and Bowbridge have finance, experience and a recognised track record for delivery. We have access to an experienced professional and developer team with local knowledge, experience and expertise in working at scale, who are ready to mobilise and can accelerate delivery through the use of effective planning and design processes as well as wellmanaged implementation .

Our team are committed to building and maintaining strong relationships with stakeholders from the outset and understand the importance of collaborative working, delivering on promises and earning trust. With a background in providing housing to those in most need and ensuring that they commit to improving the quality of life to their customers, Orbit understands the importance of delivering on its promises and securing trust within the community. Having a joint venture partnership that actually builds houses and delivers infrastructure, we can retain much more control over quality and timescales.

> Single landowner with freehold interest in land.

## THE PROPOSITION

Silfield Garden Village forms an integral component of a positive and proactive growth strategy for the GNDP Area and is a key development location to meet the long-term housing needs of the Greater Norwich area and support wider GNDP economic objectives whilst securing a well-planned future for the Wymondham area.

Built upon the foundations of long term commitment, mutual trust and creation of a legacy, the Garden Village is an innovative and exciting place which reaffirms the Wymondham area as one of the key destinations within the Cambridge - Norwich Tech Corridor.

The new community complements and benefit the area as a whole, but does this in a way which addresses the challenges associated with growth head on, ensuring both the Garden Village and the wider area are equipped to grow sustainably and successfully.

The Garden Village provides a variety of high quality affordable and market homes with a wide range of house types and tenures, meeting the needs of the whole community. These are delivered alongside proper supporting infrastructure, employment and education opportunities which help meet the needs of the wider town too, to create a sustainable and vibrant growing local community.

Environmental sustainability is at the core of the proposals and permeates every level of the development. A new solar farm forms part of a wider energy strategy for the Garden Village, with prospects for other technologies embedded into the proposals which will contribute towards achieving the country's commitment to 'net zero' carbon. The Garden Village draws upon its urban and rural assets, ensuring it is fully integrated within its landscape context. Existing site features are retained as part of an integrated network of open space which contributes to the wider green infrastructure network and improves access to greenspace for the surrounding area. Silfield Garden Village has the critical mass to secure key strategic infrastructure. For example, rather than adding to existing capacity pressures, the number of homes proposed will support onsite secondary school provision at an early stage; an outcome not achievable with the allocation of multiple smaller housing sites.

Each component of the proposition set out below demonstrates the reasoning underpinning our assertion that Silfield Garden Village is best placed to deliver a new community for the Greater Norwich Plan Area.

#### The A11 as a 'connector' not a 'barrier'

The immediate positioning of the Garden Village on the A11 is a catalyst for its growth at a key destination on a regionally-significant economic corridor. However, to deliver a comprehensivelyplanned new community, the gateway of which is designed around a new junction, the A11 will become a structuring feature of the design of development, not a 'hard barrier' to the town. The proposals include a positive design response to this key route, creating a fulcrum of activity around the new junction on the strategic highway network, creating an attractive gateway into the Garden Village and maintaining physical and visual connections across the route.

#### A truly Sustainable Garden Village

The Garden Village will create a new community with high levels of self-containment that delivers social, education, community and recreation infrastructure that meets the day to day needs of its resident provision and integration of a range of facilities that complement those provided at Wymondham. Incorporating high standards of resource efficiency and pursuing innovative renewable energy measures as integral design elements will help meet 'net zero' targets.

> Orbit and Bowbridge take a 'patient capital' approach and provide significant investment up front to mobilise a start on site and stimulate early delivery of key infrastructure.

#### Fostering a Thriving and Healthy Community

Delivering a range of homes and a wider mix of tenure types is important to support a diverse resident population and meet all housing needs of the local community both now and into the future. Fostering early links with existing social, educational and community activities in the town will help integrate new residents into the area and minimise the risk of social isolation in the new community. Designing in a priority for active forms of movement locally and into the wider area will help keep the community physically healthy.

### An Attractive Place with a Valued Environment

The design of the Garden Village will ensure that the new community is carefully integrated within the Norfolk landscape and retains existing site features as part of a cohesive framework of open spaces and watercourses that include landscape, habitat and recreation areas. High design standards and a sense of place will prevail throughout all phases of the new community.

#### A Connected Place

The Garden Village will enjoy strong connections with the wider area with a particular focus on establishing good pedestrian, cycle and public transport links to Wymondham town centre and railway station, encouraging sustainable transport choices and supporting the town's role as a sustainable transport hub. The proposals will explore opportunities to relieve pressure on the existing network and encourage a genuine modal shift, maximising the use of public transport net zero connections to Norwich and the wider area. Silfield Garden Village is located within one of the most dynamic and productive economic areas of the UK; the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor. The Garden Village benefits from exceptional accessibility to the A11 and a mainline rail connection, which provides access to the thriving economies of Norwich, in under 15 minutes, and Cambridge, in an hour. Silfield Garden Village is 'plugged in' to the wider Tech Corridor, its labour force and business supply chains by virtue of its accessibility and strategic location.

Silfield Garden Village is distinguished from its competitors by a concept that integrates a dedicated on-site source of renewable energy generated through the proposed solar farm with a Tech Hub centred around the A11 junction. Available to businesses and residents, the renewable energy generated by the solar farm and the availability of employment space within the Garden Village provides unique opportunities for socially and environmentallyminded businesses looking to make the transition to net zero carbon, as well as businesses focused on developing and implementing clean energy and clean growth technology solutions to address the challenges of the 21st century. The creation of a new community at Silfield Garden Village, including infrastructure, homes, green spaces and community facilities also provides opportunities for the trialling and proving of 'clean tech' products and services - with the Garden Village being a 'living lab' for businesses operating in these sectors.

Businesses locating at the Tech Hub will be able to benefit from a healthy landscaped environment, collaboration space, access to a dedicated renewable energy source, opportunities for employees to live and work locally in the Garden Village and access to the R&D and business supply chains operating within the wider Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor. There will also be cost advantages for businesses locating within the Tech Hub linked to energy supply, property rental costs and business rates.

Our ambition is that Silfield Garden Village will be highly soughtafter as a competitive and well-connected business location within the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor, helping to draw businesses out of the overheated Cambridge economy towards Norwich, creating a destination at Silfield for clean growth technology businesses.

Whilst we have a clear vision for Silfield Garden Village we are committed to opening an early dialogue about the precise form of the Garden Village proposal and its development components. We want to engage with the GNDP and key stakeholders regarding the potential of this site and how it best supports both Greater Norwich and the local area in terms of the scope and disposition of uses including the level, location and selfcontainment of community facilities and the extent of the economic offer at the Garden Village to ensure it complements the wider GNDP economy, supports economic growth priorities in the GDNP area and helps realise the potential of the Cambridge - Norwich Tech Corridor.

## SHAPING AN EMERGING DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

#### This section provides a summary of the baseline information that has helped understand the site context and has informed initial concept masterplanning.

#### Site extent and land ownership

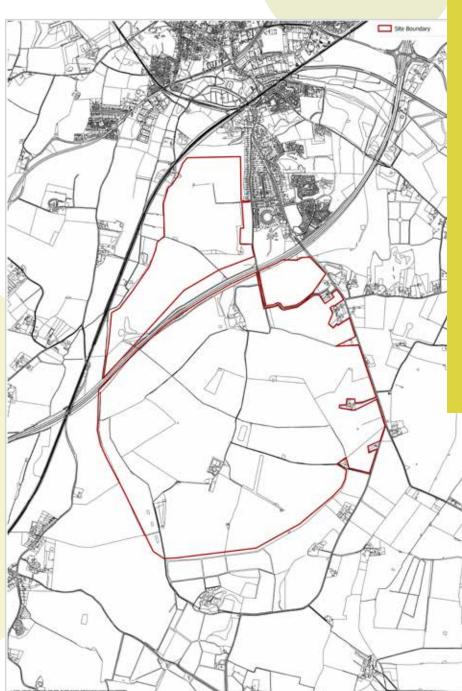
The site extends to c. 418 hectares and is under the control of a single local landowner, enabling the new community to be comprehensively planned and delivered without any financial or timing constraints associated with land acquisition. The only other land required for the delivery of the Garden Village is land in the control of the highway authorities adjacent to the proposed A11 junction and other points of access onto the local network.

The site occupies land immediately north and south of the A11, adjacent to the existing urban area of Wymondham and to the west of the existing settlement of Silfield. The northern part of the site is positioned adjacent to the recent residential development at South Wymondham currently being built out by a number of housebuilders. The southern boundary is formed by strong field boundaries and hedge lines but is reflective of the curvilinear alignment of Wattlefield Lane to the south of the site. The settlement of Wattlefield and the Grade II listed Wattlefield Hall are also located to the south. To the south west of the site is the village of Spooner Row and the settlement of Ashwellthorpe lies to the east.

The site comprises mainly agricultural fields punctuated with small copses and areas of woodland and hedgerows. The vegetation provides good levels of visual containment. The Bays River runs along the north western boundary and through the south western component of the site.

Two clusters of buildings are situated in the site boundary, associated with Park Farm and Lower Park Farm.



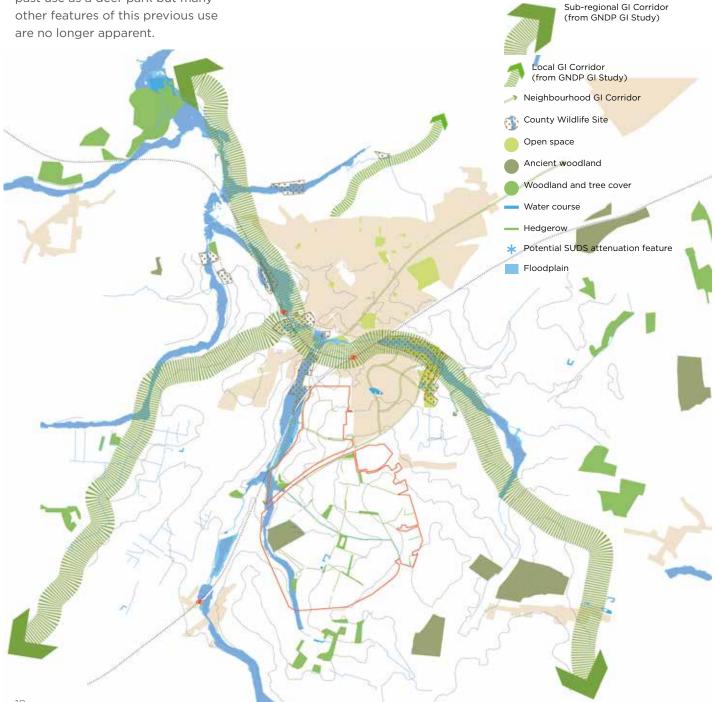


#### Wider landholdings

J Alston and Sons also control significant tracts of land adjacent and in close proximity to the site and can make additional land available for wider green infrastructure and renewable energy uses associated with the Garden Village. The landowner and promoters are committed to creating a legacy and taking a holistic approach in arriving at the most appropriate form of development for Silfield Garden Village. Complementary supporting infrastructure and environmental and community assets could be delivered alongside or as part of the Garden Village proposition. This includes the potential for a solar farm, wider economic and innovation prospects to showcase new technologies in the agri-tech and energy sectors, ecological areas and enhamcement of the wider green infrastructure network.

#### Landscape, Topography and Flood Risk

The landscape of the site is characterised by its primarily arable agricultural use. The topography of the site and much of the surrounding land is predominantly flat although the strong presence of woodland clusters and plantations and boundary hedgerows help contain views and give a sense of enclosure. The landscape pattern in terms of outer boundary hedgerows are reflective of its past use as a deer park but many other features of this previous use are no longer apparent. The site is unconstrained in terms of statutory landscape or ecological designations; the closest Site of Special Scientific Interest is located at Ashwellthorpe Lower Wood to the east of the site. The Lizard County Wildlife Site is located to the north east of the site and there is the potential to reduce the pressure on this important local site through the creation of new recreational and ecological open space as part of the Garden Village. The site lies predominantly in Flood Zone 1. There are minimal areas within Flood Zones 2 and 3 associated with the Bays River running through the site and along its north western boundary, although these would remain outside of any future development area. A network of minor drains and watercourses traverse the site which are associated with hedgerows and will be incorporated into the design of the Garden Village as part of the surface water drainage proposals.



#### Utilities

A number of existing utilities traverse the site. These are not considered to present a constraint to development as they will either be diverted, under-grounded or appropriate easements incorporated into the design of the Garden Village.

UK Power Networks (UKPN) records show existing overhead high voltage (HV) lines within the eastern site boundary running from the north of the site adjacent to Park Lane to Park Farm Cottages within the site to the south of the A11. This joins a further overhead HV that crosses the extent of the site from east to west, exiting the site on Silfield Road to the south of Verdon's Lane.

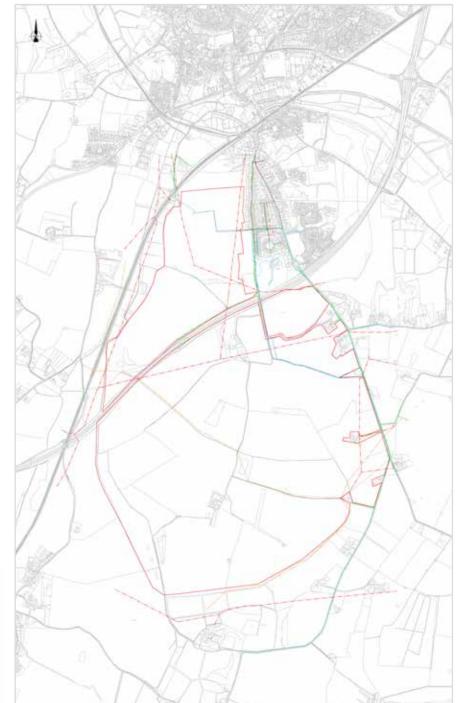
UKPN's EPN (Eastern Power Networks) Long Term **Development Statement indicates** the predicted demand and overall capacity available at Primary substations. The substations closest to the site all appear to show a large amount of spare capacity going forward. UKPN's **EPN Development Proposals** also state that Long Road 33kV network is scheduled for reinforcement in 2019/20. No significant electricity capacity issues are anticipated for serving the Garden Village.

> SITE BOUNDARY EXISTING ELECTRICITY (HV) EXISTING ELECTRICITY (LV) EXISTING OVERHEAD ELECTRICITY (HV)

EXISTING GAS (HP) EXISTING GAS (LP) EXISTING WATER EXISTING BT OPENREACH EXISTING OVERHEAD BT OPENREACH EXISTING FOUL SEWER ABANDONED SERVICE

11 10 100

Records show a high pressure (HP) gas main crossing the site. The main connects to a further HP main just within the southeastern site boundary. There is a low pressure (LP) network shown within the footways of Park Lane and Silfield Road to the north-east of the site that serves the existing developments. Further enquiries will be made regarding potential diversions and necessary easements but these are not considered to constrain the Garden Village. The service providers have advised that a main with capacity to serve the site is located less than 500m from the proposed Garden Village.



19

#### Connectivity

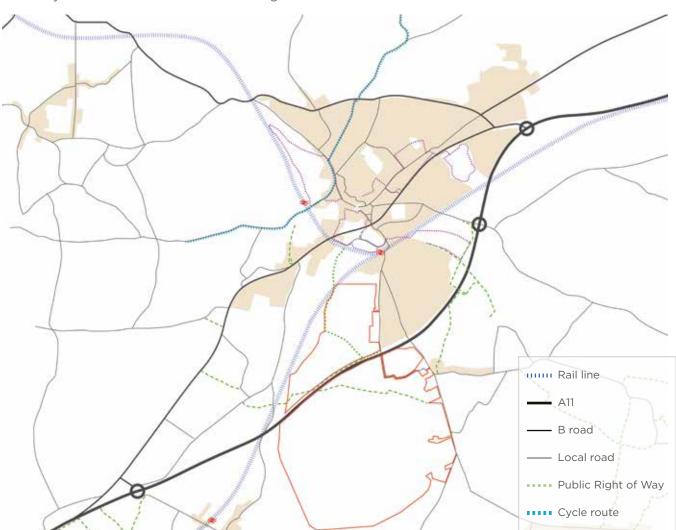
The site is immediately adjacent to the A11 and a new junction will provide direct access to the site. Existing junctions onto the A11 are approximately 1 mile from the edge of the site both to the east and west and provide the current points of access to and from Wymondham. Initial discussions with Highways England about a new junction within the site have been positive and the principle of a new junction on the A11 within the site is supported.

The site has access from Silfield Road. A number of low order lanes including Park Lane and Verdon's Lane as well as Strayground Lane and Wattlefield Road also provide current access into the site. A Public Right of Way crosses the site providing access to the Silfield and across the A11 to Suton, and a number of farm tracks also cross the site.

Wymondham Railway Station is located approximately a half mile from the northern part of the site. Access to the station is currently achieved from Silfield Road which at its closest point to the site is approximately 1 mile. Wymondham Station is well served by services on the Norwich - Cambridge line with an hourly service to Norwich and a journey time of 15 minutes and an hourly service to Cambridge with a journey time of just over an hour. Spooner Row railway station is located to the west of the site but this is a halt station with few stopping services.

The Norwich to Cambridge line is a key commuter route and one which is being subject to considerable upgrades including new trains which have been brought into passenger service in August 2019. Wymondham is an important hub on this network and there is the potential for improvements to be made to the station including improved platform accessibility as part of a package of transport works for the Garden Village.

Wymondham town centre is approximately 1.5 miles from the northern part of the site and provides a good selection of local facilities. The town is well served by a comprehensive bus network which provides local services to surrounding towns and villages and express services to Norwich, Attleborough, Thetford and London.



The closest bus stop to the site is situated on Park Lane. These services offer a convenient level of service to nearby destinations, including local destinations and major employment centres. With services running in such close proximity to the site and with the quantum of growth proposed, these routes could be diverted into the site to service it directly.

The Garden Village would also benefit from access the Bus Rapid Transit network currently proposed within the Norwich Local Transport Plan Policy area which extends to Wymondham.

#### Heritage and existing built form

There are no designated heritage assets within the Silfield Garden Village and archaeological records demonstrate a long history of human activity on the land. The most extensive archaeological record is for a medieval deer park which is contiguous with much of the Silfield Garden Village site.

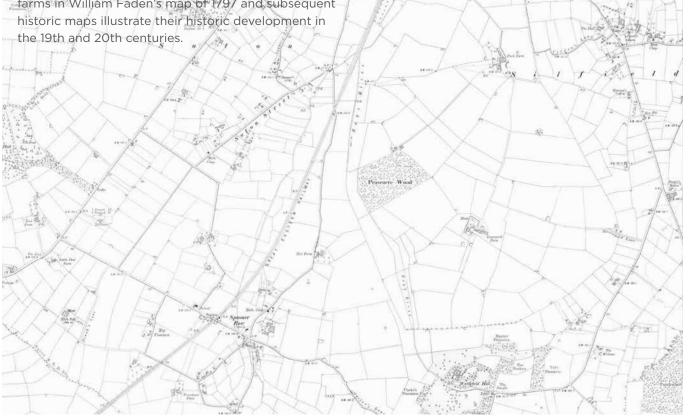
A historic moated site is also present at Lowerpark Farm and was potentially part of the medieval deer park. This moated site will be sensitively incorporated into the Garden Village and provide a focal point for the new community, ensuring it is enhanced and preserved in perpetuity.

Two group of buildings fall within the site, Park Farm and Lowerpark Farm. Buildings are shown on both farms in William Faden's map of 1797 and subsequent historic maps illustrate their historic development in the 19th and 20th centuries.



Evidence from historic maps and more recent aerial photographs indicate that parts of the buildings have been maintained with some sensitive refurbishment to avoid them falling into disrepair.

The emerging concept for Silfield Garden Village recognises the importance of its agricultural heritage and will incorporate heritage features into the scheme design. The closest listed building outside of Silfield Garden Village is Silfield Old Hall. This is under the control of the Alston family and the setting of this will also be respected within the Garden Village.



## THE EMERGING CONCEPT

The overarching principles which have underpinned the emerging development concept for Silfield Garden Village are:

- Creating a new Garden Village which, whilst meeting its own needs in terms of facilities and site infrastructure, is designed to complement and support Wymondham and provide benefits for both existing and new residents
- Designing a place which is distinctive, creates a prominent point of arrival from the A11 to help anchor the new community and support a 'Tech Hub' and provides strong connectivity to Wymondham
- Respecting and enhancing the landscape and heritage context, including improved visual and physical connections with the wider natural and historic environment

The emerging development concept has been informed by a careful consideration of the site factors. The concept illustrates how the Garden Village might be structured and the spatial disposition of land uses. This is not fixed in stone but is intended to stimulate discussion and effective dialogue with stakeholders, most notably around two key elements:

#### Α.

The extent and location of new and/or expanded community facilities and services in the context of those in Wymondham and the level of self-containment that should be achieved at Silfield GV; and

#### Β.

The potential economic role that Silfield Garden Village may play in the wider area and the type and level of onsite employment growth this may support.



The key components of the emerging Development Concept as illustrated would achieve the following:

**All Gateway** A new junction will be provided and will create a gateway for the Garden Village, facilitating connections across and onto the All. As well as providing direct access for new homes, the junction will support a new employment destination along the central spine of the Tech Corridor, acting as a catalyst for capturing inward investment eastwards from Cambridge. Local facilities A range of retail and employment uses, co-located with community and health provision to meet the needs of the resident population, will be focussed in a number of local centres each served by public transport. Landscape A multi-functional landscape and open space network, comprising formal sports pitches & play spaces, allotments and informal recreation areas will provide a leisure, drainage and biodiversity function. The existing tree and hedgerow network, including woodland copse and plantations will be integrated and a strategic green corridor along the Bay River valley will be created, facilitating public access to the countryside.

#### Education Land for primary and secondary education provision on site. The scale of the Garden Village will generate the need for a new secondary school, delivered in a location well related to the existing urban area of Wymondham so as to also meet current local secondary educational needs.

### **Active Travel**

Prioritising walking and cycling through direct and efficient routes connecting to Wymondham town centre and Wymondham Station where the potential for enhanced accessibility and improvements will further promote sustainable travel.

**Homes** Around 6,500 new homes incorporating a wide mix of house types and tenures to meet local need within the Greater Norwich area and more locally within Wymondham. The mix will be robust and adaptable over the long-term delivery of the Garden Village.

#### Net Zero Carbon Tech Hub

**Business needs** will be met in a range of distinct spaces and business environments within the Garden Village including a Tech Hub for small-scale employment uses focused around the creation of a new gateway on the A11. This will provide commercial space for growing businesses and act as an 'Innovation/Tech Hub for Clean Energy'.

#### Heritage Enhancement Sensitive renovation of the historic moated feature as a focal point and destination for community facilities.

**Solar Power** The potential for a solar farm to provide renewable energy for the Garden Village and Tech Hub

#### Landscape Framework

The emerging Development Concept offers the opportunity to provide a substantial multifunctional landscape and ecological enhancement. The green infrastructure network will provide for recreation, biodiversity, drainage and create an attractive setting for development.

The landscape framework has been informed by a number of key principles:

- A landscape of family legacy

   a visionary approach that creates an interpretation of the landscape heritage and while looking forward to its future stewardship
- A productive landscape to support the new community and incorporating innovative technologies for food production and environmental management and stewardship
- **Connectivity** symbiotic relationship with Wymondham, to create a joined-up network of open space promoting active travel and links to the countryside
- Retaining and reinforcing the strong structure of woodland blocks
- Integration of hydrology throughout the site and at all scales to perform drainage function and give amenity, character, biodiversity benefits
- Transition from urban to rural creating a permanent parkland edge to Wymondham
- **Biodiversity and sustainability** as integral component of the new community to achieve biodiversity net gain and net zero carbon

Garden square

Woodland / Tree belt

Recreational active travel connections

### Green corridor

On-site open space

Contextual open space / farmland

> Potential to create new ecological areas and divert pressure from the Lizard

Comprehensive network of linked open spaces throughout the heart of the development

including new sports pitches and play areas

Creation of the Bays River Park - an opportunity to improve access to the countryside and create a biodiverse green corridor that will provide a landscape buffer to Spooner Row and retain and enhance Peaseacre Wood. Significant open space and new woodland planting to the south and east to create a permanent parkland edge and buffer to Silfield and Ashwellthorpe.

#### **Connectivity Framework**

Silfield Garden Village will maximise the existing investment in the A11 corridor and build upon transport priorities in the Greater Norwich area, whilst at the local level minimising impact on the local network and prioritising sustainable modes of travel.

The following connectivity principles will help deliver opportunities to relieve pressure on the existing network and encourage a genuine modal shift, whilst maximising public transport connections:

- A well-connected and adaptable place with easy-to-use integrated transport systems that will have the ability to meet future transport challenges and opportunities
- An efficient and legible place Considering the appropriate hierarchy of priority for public transport, walking, cycling and the private car. Making the network legible for all people, with better environmental quality and smart mobility
- Creating a walkable and cycle friendly place Putting the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at the heart of the design. Ensuring that residents are well connected to local facilities and employment opportunities.

#### Public Transport

- Silfield Garden Village has the opportunity to facilitate genuine and significant modal shift towards public transport creating strong walking, cycling and bus links towards Wymondham Railway Station and further afield
- The Garden Village will support the area's currentlyplanned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network which could be extended into the site from Wymondham, providing high quality bus travel that will bring faster, more frequent and reliable services.
- Priority will be given to buses travelling through the site, utilising Silfield Road to provide efficient access to Wymondham Railway Station.
- Improvements to Wymondham Station could be provided as a package of sustainable travel measures including platform enhancements.
- An integrated public transport system will ensure bus connections will align with the new increased frequency of Greater Anglia rail services.

#### The A11

- The scale of the Garden Village can support a new junction without negative impact on viability or on the wider delivery of community infrastructure. The detailed design of the junction will ensure it means local and strategic requirements in terms of site access and improving the local network.
- The emerging Development Concept proposes an 'all moves grade separated junction' that will serve Silfield Garden Village and help mitigate unacceptable impact on the existing network.

#### Walking and Cycling

- Silfield Garden Village will be designed as a walkable neighbourhood with a comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycling routes connecting all destinations and amenities within the development.
- Park Lane will provide a direct pedestrian and cycle route connecting the Garden Village to Wymondham Station where potential enhancements can be made to improve accessibility.
- Locating employment and retail facilities in prominent, accessible points throughout the site, connected by direct and dedicated pedestrian and cycle routes.

# BUILDING A COMMUNITY

#### Placemaking

Garden Villages were traditionally based on a strong foundation of industry and employment, with their developers focused on creating well designed, healthy places and affordable homes. Good practice recommends that the same principles are applied to Garden Villages today to create vibrant, diverse and affordable communities. The TCPA states that "without providing the right employment, community facilities and range of housing, new garden villages risk becoming dormitory commuter suburbs – the antithesis of the Garden City idea" <sup>1</sup>.

The creation of a Garden Village is about much more than bricks and mortar. Building a new community where none currently exists requires a holistic approach to placemaking, ensuring that at each stage of the planning and construction period the requisite physical, social and environmental infrastructure is in place to support the incoming population.

The delivery model adopted by Orbit and Bowbridge will ensure that this happens, putting the 'creation of place' at the heart of the design and delivery of the Garden Village.

<sup>1</sup> Understanding Garden Villages: An Introductory Guide, TCPA January 2018

#### **Embedded Sustainability**

As landowner and promoters, we are committed to embedding sustainability into each aspect of Silfield Garden Village. The proposals will seek to meet 'net zero' carbon targets, realising the potential to generate renewable energy locally from a new solar farm delivered alongside the new community. The Garden Village will be integrated into the landscape, securing environmental and ecological enhancements and delivering net biodiversity gain as well as improving access to new and existing open space. Sustainable transport options – including active travel for all ages - will also be embedded within the Garden Village design, as well as improved access to public transport connections in the wider area.

Importantly, the highly skilled and experienced delivery team at Orbit will ensure that the sustainability credentials envisaged at the outset can be carried through into the detailed design and construction of new homes, schools and workplaces, and that information and learning make it easy for the new community to make use of the new technologies in their day to day activities.

### A journey through the Garden Village

Silfield Garden Village will see the transition from the more urban form of Wymondham to the rural character of the surrounding countryside, improving access for all to a rich parkland environment. The main street will act as a seamless spine connecting new and existing communities, linking key destinations and providing new community facilities on the route for all to enjoy.

The Garden Village will be knitted into the landscape and will reinvigorate its historic assets with sensitive refurbishment of the moated site as a focal meeting place within the community. A gallery and heritage centre and community space in the renovated barn will be situated within an attractive landscape setting and will be a fulcrum for activity, providing an opportunity for education on the history of the agricultural landscape.

A short walk up the street will be one of the new primary schools, co-located with the central park, an intimate but well-used village park with informal open space and children's play. Continuing up the central spine, a gentle transition to a slightly more urban form and high street environment will provide for a small number of local shops and amenities alongside new homes.

Regular open spaces will punctuate the residential areas, allowing the character of the countryside to permeate through the Garden Village, providing opportunities for recreation, sports and relaxation.

As the central spine continues north, the street will be characterised by the priority given to walking and cycling connections, providing an efficient and uninterrupted route to existing urban area of Wymondham and onward to the town's railway station. A secondary school will be prominently positioned on this route, well related to both existing and new residents and will provide an opportunity for further small-scale community facilities.



CENTRAL PARK

A journey through the urban events



# ENABLING DELIVERY AT SILFIELD

### A Supportive Policy Framework for the Garden Village

We recognise that the case for allocating a Garden Village as a spatial development solution to meeting the needs of the GNDP Area to 2036 is not yet universally supported and would need to be evidenced and tested through the development plan process. There will be those that argue that a dispersed pattern of smaller scale housing sites is more deliverable and spreads the adverse impact of development more equitably throughout the Plan area.



Our proven track record in the promotion and implementation of new communities at the garden village scale does not support this view. Nevertheless, in order to progress plans for a Garden Village with confidence, providing some certainty through an emerging local plan over the preferred location and scale of the new Garden Village is necessary, even if it is recognised that the Garden Village may make a contribution to, rather than accommodate 100% of, the Area's needs over the plan period.

We are therefore seeking a strategic allocation in the GNDP plan for a Garden Village at Silfield of the scale proposed in this document; a scale sufficient to allow the submission of a planning application for the new community in its entirety. This is to ensure the delivery of the necessary strategic infrastructure, such as the A11 junction and new primary and secondary school, can be funded and met in a timely manner.

Should the GNLP determine that based on the current housing need for the area, there is insufficient justification for a site allocation for a Garden Village to be made to accommodate growth to 2036, then we suggest that it would be prudent to include a preferred area of search and criteria-based policy in the Plan against which any long term strategic development proposals can respond positively, and subsequent Garden Village proposals can be judged.

### Proposed Development Capacity and Trajectory

The land currently identified for the Garden Village extends to 418 ha, with additional land within the ownership of J Alston and Sons available for offsite green infrastructure, biodiversity net gain and a renewable energy facility to support the new community and embed net zero carbon objectives.

Based on best practice design for new communities, it is anticipated that between 50% and 60% of the core site will be built development, with the balance providing green infrastructure, a landscape setting and open land for community/education and sporting facilities. With a proportion of the built development accommodating employment, school buildings, local centres and other built facilities, the site has an indicative residential capacity of c 6,500 new homes.

The allocation of strategic sites can perform a significant role in a local authority's housing land supply; if they adopt the master developer model, they can facilitate effective delivery of homes by way of opening up multiple development fronts with different development 'offers' (in terms of a wide mix of house types, styles, densities etc which appeal to different sectors of the market, and attract maximum housebuilder/developer activity at any one time). Notwithstanding the importance of securing policy recognition for the Garden Village in its entirety for the reasons set out above, the scale of Silfield Garden Village would deliver within and beyond the Plan period. Assuming an early commitment to a Garden Village allocation at Silfield in the current plan, the delivery trajectory for the residential element of the new community is set out below. This suggests that the Garden Village could provide up to 3,100 units in the emerging GNLP plan period (up to 2036).

We would welcome the opportunity to engage further with the GNDP and key stakeholders in their exploration of spatial options for development as part of the local plan progression.

	Delivery Year	Yr 1 (2025)	Yr 2 2026	Yr 3 2027	Yr 4 2028	Yr 5 2029	Yr 6 2030	Yr 7 2031	Yr 8 2032	Yr 9 2033	Yr 10 2034	Yr 11 2035	Yr 12 2036	Yr 13 2037
co	Annual ompletions	50	100	250	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300
C	Cumulative	50	150	400	700	1000	1300	1600	1900	2200	2500	2800	3100	3400

Delivery Year	Yr 14 2038	Yr 15 2039	Yr 16 2040	Yr 17 2041	Yr 18 2042	Yr 19 2043	Yr 20 2044	Yr 21 2045	Yr 22 2046	Yr 23 2047	Yr24 2048	Yr25 2049
Annual completions	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	150	150	100
Cumulative	3700	4000	4300	4600	4900	5200	5500	5800	6100	6250	6400	6500

Within GNLP Plan Period 。

## OUR CREDENTIALS

32



<image><image><image><image><image><image><image><image><image><image><image><image><image><image><text><text><text><text>

We would welcome the opportunity to engage further with the GNDP and key stakeholders in their exploration of spatial options for development as part of the local plan progression.

For further information, please contact:

Heather Pugh David Lock Associates Email: hpugh@davidlock.com

Julian Seymore Cratus Email: jseymour@cratus.co.uk

SEPTEMBER 2019





SEPTEMBER 2019