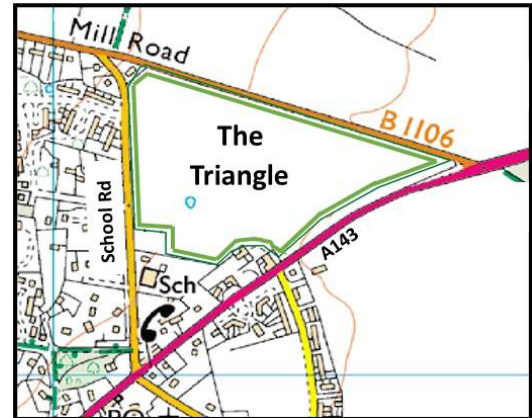


Development of the Triangle Site: 2010:2022

The Triangle is 12.4 hectares (ha) of arable land which has been allocated for residential and community development. This development area arose due to the approval of the NE strategic site (The Severals) in our Parish when the former St Edmundsbury Borough Council, SEBC (now West Suffolk District Council, WSC) approved the area as one of 5 strategic development sites for the town in its Core Strategy 2010. The Parish Council at that time were mindful to ensure the core of the village would not become subservient to The Severals development and promoted The Triangle area as it is reasonably central, is next to the pre and primary schools, and is close to village services. This site progressed into the "Rural Visions 2031" planning document with the detail referenced as Policy RV18.



Policy RV18 is detailed right in full, and forms the basis for any future planning processes. In 2010 the coalition government favoured local planning development through neighbourhood development plans, which attain statutory status to a planning document alongside other planning documents of the Local Planning Authority. This provided Great Barton the opportunity to have a say in how future housing growth was developed.

RURAL VISION 2031 POLICY RV18: GREAT BARTON

12.4 hectares of land is allocated for residential and community uses on the north eastern edge of Great Barton.

The total capacity of the site should be determined through a site Development Brief, with up to 40 dwellings permitted in the period to 2031.

The amount of land available for development, types and location of uses, access arrangements, design and landscaping will be informed by a Development Brief for the whole 12.4 ha site. The Development Brief should set out how the community uses on the site will be delivered. Applications for planning permission will only be determined once the development brief has been adopted by the local planning authority.

Access to the site will be from Mill Road (B1106).

Development on the site must make provision for the potential expansion needs of Great Barton Primary School.

Development on the site will need to respect and respond appropriately to issues of congestion, air quality and noise management.

The development area must provide enhanced footpath and cycleway access to the village centre and areas of public open space.

Strategic landscaping and open space must be provided to address the sites requirements and location.

In 2016 through to 2020 the Great Barton Neighbourhood Plan (GBNP) was developed and was a "made" planning document in June 2021 by WSC. The Neighbourhood Plan had regard for RV18 and consultations with residents in the preparation of the GBNP showed support for the delivery of additional homes only if it delivered further community facilities. With these factors, and in the absence of a development brief for The Triangle at the time of the Neighbourhood Plan, a "Concept Statement" was developed. The Concept Statement embraced the local site characteristics, the housing needs, and the services of AECOM planning consultants funded

through the Government's Neighbourhood Plans support package, who helped to identify the principles that should inform the nature and structure of the development.

As a result, the most up to date planning policy for The Triangle is GB3 as shown right. The Development Principles covering the topics of housing, landscaping, access and movement, non-residential uses and sustainable design can all be found on Page 34 of the GBNP.

Policy GB 3 - Land at School Road (The Triangle)

12.4 hectares of land at School Road, known as The Triangle and identified on the Policies Map, is allocated for the following development:

- i) up to 150 dwellings (including 30% affordable housing) or any higher number of dwellings included in any future adopted development brief for the site pursuant to Policy RV18 of the Rural Vision Local Plan Document;
- ii) community facilities that could include the uses identified in Policy GB7;
- iii) at least 1.1 hectares of land for the expansion of the primary school; and
- iv) recreational open space and children's play.

Development of the site should be undertaken in accordance with the Concept Diagram (Figure 12) and the Development Principles set out in this Plan or any future development brief for the site pursuant to Policy RV 18 of the Rural Vision 2031 Local Plan document.

Development proposals should incorporate measures to manage traffic safety and speeds on Mill Road and the provision of safe crossing points on School Road, Mill Road and the A143 (The Street) to enable safe and sustainable travel to the wider public rights of way network and village facilities.

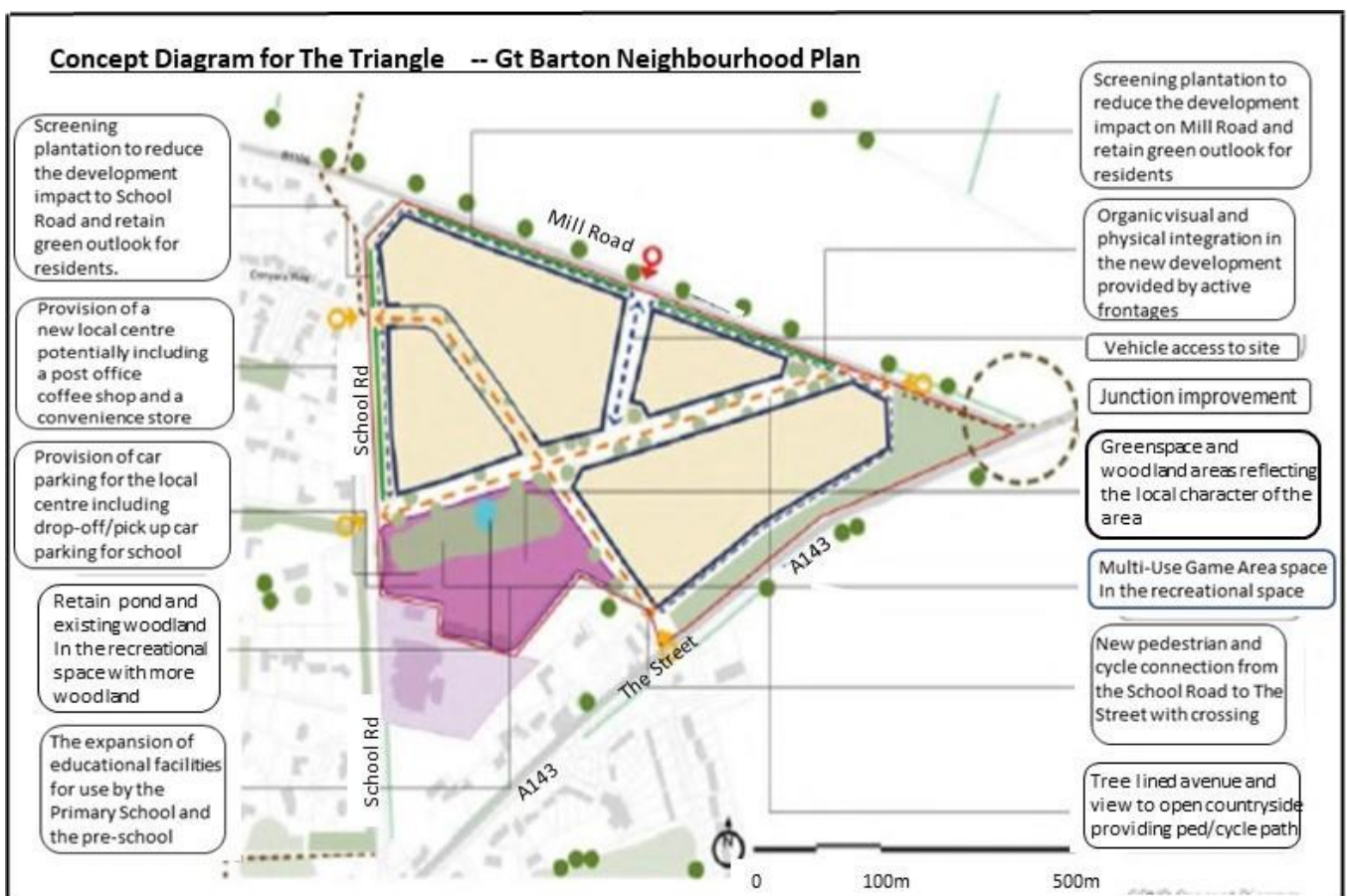
Housing proposals should provide a mix of sizes and types in accordance with the most up-to-date evidence on objectively-assessed housing needs.

The affordable housing provision should be designed so that it is 'tenure blind' (so that it is indistinguishable from open market housing), be distributed around the site and not concentrated in any one area.

Proposals that include an element of self-build housing will be supported.

The Concept Diagram below provides a guide for developers, e.g.

- Identifying the expansion area for the school with drop-off and parking facilities.
- Vehicular access off Mill Road only, and the ability for calming traffic speed on the B1106,
- The provision of convenient and attractive pedestrian and cycle links,
- Landscaping to screen the development and housing placed within a landscaped setting,
- Open space and recreation are provided in the vicinity of the school and the community facilities.

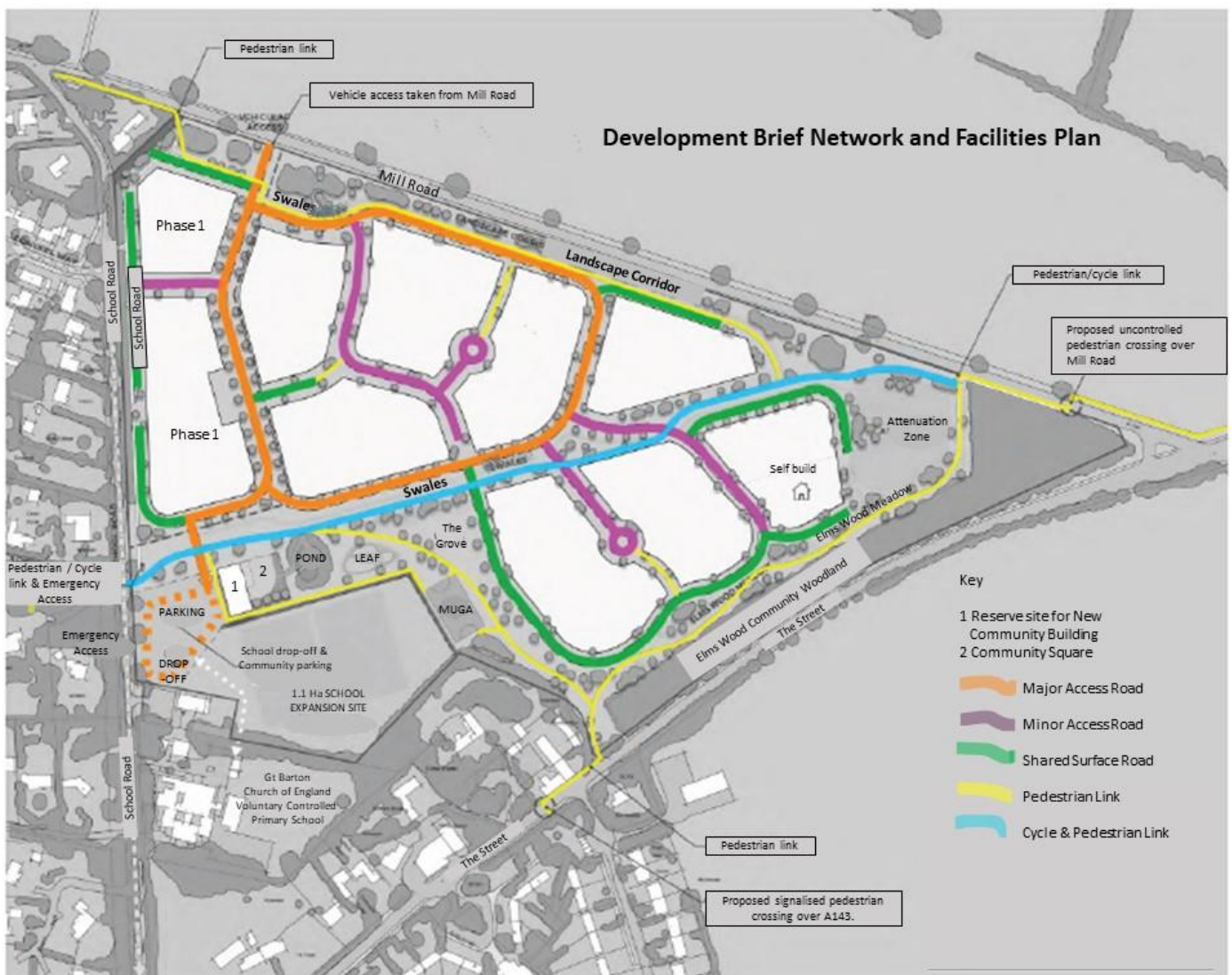


Development of The Triangle Site: 2022 –

The combined Councils of Suffolk County Council (SCC) as landowners of The Triangle, and the developer West Suffolk District Council/Barley Homes (WSC), have brought forward a Development Brief (DB) for The Triangle as required under RV18 of Rural Vision 2031. The DB proposal considers the whole site but more specifically an area of just under 2 ha of land adjacent to School Road for the erection of 40 dwellings, known as Phase 1.

To review the DB proposal in the detail required a Triangle Taskforce (TTF) was established in early December 2022 to work on behalf of the Parish Council. This is made up of interested residents, former members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, and Parish Councillors. The Taskforce will be able to call on the services of consultants and take forward any further work on The Triangle on behalf of the Parish Council.

The remainder of this article identifies the differences arising from the proposed DB and the adopted Concept Diagram and Development Principles of the Gt Barton Neighbourhood Plan. This is represented visually in the map below providing a comparison with the Concept Diagram, and the following points are the main extracts from the response document on the draft DB from the Triangle Taskforce to the consulting agents along with SCC and WSC.



- The proposal is for 185-191 dwellings compared to the 150 in the GBNP, a 25% increase. It is stated in the DB that the increase in numbers is for the financial viability of the site. It has taken a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to WSC for them to release the viability assessment to allow the data to be scrutinised. The investigation of that information is now with specialists to advise the Triangle Taskforce.
- Due to the required action in the point above, there is conflict of interest in the roles within WSC, which necessitates the need for greater transparency than that provided to date.

- There is a direct conflict of interest between West Suffolk Council's duty to minimise the extent of any increase in the capacity of the site relative to a “made” policy and the legal obligation imposed by the overage clause in its contract with Suffolk CC to maximise the value of the land.
- The technical reports that underpin the DB and are referred to in the DB should have been publicly available from the start of the Public Consultation, 14th November 2022. The full suite of technical reports were not available publicly until 18 January 2023.
- There is no “design philosophy” or principles that seek to shape and guide the form and functionality of the development. Given that the Brief will guide future development phases it would be expected that this would be a fundamental and an overarching requirement. Therefore:
 - The Development Design Checklist that forms Appendix 4 of the GBNP, and referenced in Policy GB12, should form the foundation for assessing the suitability of the development, both at this draft DB stage, at the final Development Brief, and at the planning application stages.
- The overall design does not reflect the character of Great Barton. It is housing dominated, not landscape dominated. The Urban form is inappropriate for our Rural Village.
- The DB states that the “density will decrease across the site from the west to the east.” The identified build area is 7.3ha and after deducting Phase 1 area (20 dwellings/Ha) the density on the remainder would be 28 dwellings/ha. This contradicts the DB statement, such densities are not present elsewhere in the village, and is not in accordance with the GBNP (Policy GB5).
- The proposals in Phase 1 do not reflect the character of the housing opposite on School Road.
- The DB does not deliver sufficient or preferred community facilities and does not set out how the community uses on the site will be delivered as required by Rural Vision 2031, Policy RV18.
- To secure the community facilities the site needs to be developed as a WHOLE. The revised DB must align community facilities with the build, and address the management and ongoing maintenance of the community facilities. In the DB Phase 1 provides no community facilities.
- The proposed access road off Mill Road does not support the complete Triangle Development and the location of this new access road is unacceptable on safety grounds.
- The DB shows an Emergency Access off School Road which conflicts with previous technical assessments.
- The road layout (Phase 1) does not provide an attractive, easy to get to, direct alternative access to the community facilities and the school drop-off point. The MUGA is too off centre.
- The provision of the school drop-off and parking areas should be a priority.
- The Primary School area and facilities should be better defined to future proof the school.
- The Cycle Route proposed along Muddy Lane, The Park then through Hall Park is unsuitable.
- The Transport Assessment is out of date and does not take into account local traffic data. This needs to be updated before the DB is approved.
- The perimeter internal roads run parallel to School Road, Mill Road and the A143 which is considered bizarre, consequently it would be better for back gardens to look over natural areas. Then frontal areas will have driveways, footpaths and roadways for connectivity and in conformity with the village character.
- Archaeological investigations should be undertaken before the DB is approved. It is not acceptable that the Archaeologist's recommendation for further investigation has been dismissed.
- The provision in the DB of a 12m landscape buffer along Mill Road and 15m buffer alongside Elms Wood are not supported in the Technical Reports and it is only the Ecological Report that mentions a 5m buffer alongside Elms Wood. The buffers mentioned are at the expense of green spaces within the build area, an identified characteristic in the GBNP. The Ecology report is silent on the 10% biodiversity gain.
- Garden space should be evaluated at this stage to ensure compliance with GB5 and GB12 of the Gt Barton Neighbourhood Plan.

The TTF will endeavour to maximise the concepts from the GBNP which was well supported at the referendum. I thank TTF members for their contributions towards the response document.

Philip Reeve, Chairman of the Triangle Taskforce.