



# Ashington Parish Council Planning Committee Meeting

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**Minutes of Ashington Parish Council Planning Committee Meeting held on Thursday 22nd February 2024 at 7.30pm at Ashington CE School, Foster Lane.**

**Present:**

**Councillors:** N. Carter, J. Morris, G. MacPherson, N. Spiers, B. Wallace

**Apologies for absence:** T. Kearney, M. Woolley

**Parish Clerk:** Lee English

**Members of the public:** None

**Declarations of Interest:** None

1. **Public Adjournment** – no public in attendance

2. **Planning Applications** – none

3. **Horsham District Council Local Plan review**

HDC has published its proposed submission Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 under regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Representations on the Local Plan can be made until 1st March 2024.

Discussions were had regarding the plan in relation to Ashington. It was noted that an additional site for 75 houses was proposed for “Land East of Mousdell Close”. This site was originally put forward for the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (ANP), but too late in the process to be included. It fits the “spatial strategy” for the ANP and fits in as an infill site.

It was discussed that it could be considered prudent to accept the additional 75 houses, given that the plan is to take us up to 2040 for housing allocation and this could then be included as part of an ANP review, which the council would be required to carry out in the next year. It was noted that if this site is added to the ANP that we must reinforce the requirement for supporting infrastructure.

With regards to the total figures of 300 houses proposed in the Local Plan, it was discussed that already the figure is potentially at 330 as Bellway Homes have applied for 180 homes instead of the 150 allocated for that site in the ANP – ASH 11. Therefore, we want assurances from HDC that the total would be 300 and no more than that. This figure is supported by HDC’s own evidence base documents (January 2024 Housing Trajectory – 300 houses).

It was noted that this additional site would increase the traffic along Rectory Close, along with the already permitted Chanctonbury Nurseries application. As neither Church Lane nor Rectory Lane have been reviewed with respect to being upgraded (despite all previous significant new housing developments in the village), and as other developments (Chanctonbury Nurseries and Land West of Ashington School) are not required to look at the wider highways environment in their plans, we must ensure that the cumulative impact is considered for the various proposed developments.

Traffic volume was discussed and the impact that this has not only on the village, but on the wider area and affecting the neighbouring parishes – and also that their proposed developments will affect Ashington parish. As there are some major local routes such as the A24, B2133 and the A283, it was noted that any incidents / accidents on these routes divert traffic to unsuitable country roads due to lack of adequate alternative routes. The nearby village of Storrington is in an Air Quality Management Area due to traffic pollution.

Capacity at the school was discussed and the fact that WSCC had previously noted (re Ashington Neighbourhood Plan) that there was no need to extend the school due to there being space for pupils. In fact, this meant there was capacity in the area and that pupils would need to be transported to other villages, which is considered unacceptable and therefore Ashington CE School would need to expand at some point, considering the 300 new houses proposed. It was noted that the consultation response from the Education Authority with regards to the Bellway Homes development noted that land should be set aside for school expansion as they stated “the school is currently at capacity” and therefore they are seeking CIL contributions towards education, which would indicate they are not planning to use the money to expand (build) the school, but rather to ring fence the land for expansion in the future. This must include outside space for children, additional parking for staff as well as inside school space.

Clerk to collate information and submit a response to HDC before 1st March 2024.

4. **Thakeham Parish Council planning application DC/24/0021** – Thakeham Mushrooms Site  
A draft response had been passed to Cllrs for review, fully supporting Thakeham’s objection to the application and raising points relevant to Ashington particularly the cumulative impact of the development on local traffic, GP access, school places etc.

It was noted that Thakeham Parish Council had commissioned a transport survey and that this may be something that Ashington consider in the future, although it was also noted that it would depend on the scope of any survey as to its relevance and effectiveness.

The Cllrs agreed to submit a response **strongly objecting** to the application.

5. **Neighbourhood Plan – Chanctonbury Nurseries ASH10**  
No update currently.
6. **Neighbourhood Plan – Land West of Ashington School ASH11**  
Cllr MacPherson gave an update regarding his dialogue (obo the council) with WSCC Highways. It was acknowledged that Highways are prepared to look at issues where the parish council consider further mitigation is required to address access issues.

**Foster Lane/Church Lane junction** – regarding the issue of the transport assessment only considering the junction at the entrance/exit to the proposed development and not including the nearby junction of Foster Lane and Church Lane, and also the issue of the impact of traffic on the wider road network. Highways believe that there is no evidence to consider the access to the site is unsafe or would cause Highways safety issues. It was noted that only the immediate access to the site was considered and not the traffic flow between the 2 junctions.

**Footpaths** – Highways considered the existing local footpaths to be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. The PC noted –

- Surface levels are irregular along the length of the road.
- The path is narrow in places due to existing hedges.

- It was noted there are examples of vehicles parked at the London Road end of Church Lane that due to the camber of the road, leaned into the footpath and reduced the useable width of the path.

**Local Highways Scheme** – the council considered that it would be beneficial to discuss further what a Local Highways Scheme in Ashington would look like and look at traffic issues with a holistic approach. County Cllr Paul Marshall and Highways Area Manager are due to meet the clerk in April and the matter can be discussed further then.

**West Sussex Lead Local Flood Authority response** – it was noted that a recently uploaded document showed continued objection to the application and comment that their previous response had not been adequately addressed. Areas of concern include surface water flooding and that the projections used do not consider the extra 30 houses proposed.

**Application timeframe** – It was raised that HDC should give some indication as to when this application is going to the next stage. Dates seem to change and at times the process has changed from “Consultation” to “Recommendation and/or Committee” and back again.

**Communication with Bellway Homes** – further to their attendance at the full council meeting on 11th January 2024, Michael Birch (Bellway Homes) had made contact with regards to having further dialogue with the council regarding matters raised at the meeting and in correspondence. It was agreed by Cllrs at the 8th February PC meeting to create a Neighbourhood Development Working Group with 3 Cllrs (MacPherson, Spiers, Wallace) to have an overview of this site as well as the Chanctonbury Nurseries application and the site proposed in the draft HDC Local Plan (Land East of Mousdell Close).

Some dates were proposed by the working group – clerk to make contact to arrange a face-to-face meeting with Bellway Homes and resulting dialogue from the meeting to be reported at the next full council meeting.

**Overview to County and District Councillors / local MP** – It was considered appropriate to send copies of our responses to HDC, to County and District Councillors. An brief overview document to accompany the 3 responses sent so far.

Separate correspondence to be sent to MP Andrew Griffith to highlight issues of non-compliance of developers with made Neighbourhood Plans, and not addressing policies.

The Planning Committee meeting closed at 9:05 pm

Signed..... Date.....