

Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031

Proposals for 2026-2031 with regards to Community Facilities

Background

After extensive community consultation, research and preparation, the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031 (ANP) was submitted for referendum, received majority support and was “Made” in June 2021.

The plan sets out the development vision for the parish until 2031 and is aligned to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It represents one part of the development plan for the area, the other being the Horsham District Council’s (HDC) Local Plan. Unfortunately, HDC’s Local Plan has not been approved by the government Planning Inspectorate, and this plan sets the strategic context for the neighbourhood plan.

The plan will be 5 years old in 2026, and although this means that the protections against speculative development afforded in section 14 of the NPPF will cease after that time, the council agreed in January 2026 to delay a review of the ANP until the situation is clearer with regards to HDC’s Local Plan. It is noted the NPPF is also currently under review.

Local government devolution will also impact with the creation of a Mayoral authority in Sussex in 2028 and the restructuring of District and County Council functions into a unitary authority.

Whilst in theory the neighbourhood plan provides a development plan until 2031, it is recognised that this may need to be reviewed in light of the changing local and national context.

This document is intended to provide an overview of the current situation and propose prioritisation and sequencing of works moving forward to deliver the policy objectives of the neighbourhood plan, whilst also recognising these may need to be reviewed or amended in light of the changes outlined above.

Despite these changes, some of the proposed plans are heavily dependent on coordinating with village organisations to determine the final scope of works for the provision of those facilities as defined in Table 7.1 of the ANP (Appendix 1) and may well require further consultation with the community to ensure these needs remain valid.

It is acknowledged that some of the evidence base used to determine the ANP will have changed in the time since it was made, and in particular with relation to the current provision of community facilities.

Relevant ANP policies to be considered

ASH 1 - Development of community facilities will be focussed on the 'Community Cluster' identified in the policies map unless there is a clear justification as to why provision should be made elsewhere.

ASH 2 - Increase walking in Ashington and enhance walking routes.

ASH 3 - Parking and Travel. This policy identifies as a spending priority of CIL money, the ANP identifies the need to expand the coverage and capacity of existing community transport services including the community minibus

ASH 4 - The following buildings are considered local heritage assets

- Methodist Church
- Old School and Old School House

ASH 5 - Landscape and countryside access

ASH 6 - Noise impacts

ASH 7 - Addressing flooding in Mill Lane

ASH 8 - Ashington Community Cluster. The community cluster is expected to be the focus of new and improved community facilities to serve the needs of the community as summarised in Table 7.1 (Appendix 1). The provision of flexible commercial office /workspace (Class B1) and or meeting rooms for private hire is encouraged. A review of the existing community facilities and their state of repair (Appendix 2) was used to inform the policy. Since its inception, a number of the identified community facilities have changed use and others are in the ownership of other village organisations requiring co-operation to enable development.

ASH 9 - Small Scale Employment. Provision of small-scale offices / workspace in other locations is encouraged where this is not possible in existing employment areas, the community cluster or on the Land West of Ashington School site. Such developments should maximise the potential for access by sustainable transport.

ASH 10 - provisions related specifically to the Chanctonbury Nursery site.

ASH 11 - provision relating directly to the Land West of Ashington School site.

Site Allocations

Sites allocated in ANP

The ANP allocated 2 sites for development providing for 225 dwellings to be built between 2019 and 2031. Both have now become permitted developments for a total of 226 dwellings.

ANP Policy ASH10:

- Chanctonbury Nursery, DC/22/0372, 74 dwellings

ANP Policy ASH11:

- Land west of Ashington School, DC/23/0406, 152 dwellings

Additional sites not allocated in ANP

Additional development currently at application stage - This site is not included within the ANP and Ashington Parish Council objects to this development. Identified in draft HDC Local Plan¹ as a potential site. No site-specific policies apply to the site.

- Land east of Mousdell Close: DC/25/1327, 74 dwellings

Provision of Community Facilities

Table 7.1 of the ANP (Appendix 1) sets out how community facilities identified in the plan would be delivered with some to be provided by the developers on the sites as “direct provision” (DP), some for the land to be provided by the developer, and some from financial contributions (FC) – or a combination of these. The table below illustrates the actual facilities agreed in the planning applications and how these differ from the ANP.

New provision on Chanctonbury Nursery (Policy ASH10)

Proposed in ANP		Delivery expected		Remarks
High quality public open space incorporating outdoor gym equipment for all ages.	DP	Range of outdoor gym equipment	DP	Provision as expected in ANP. What provision is made in s106 agreement for ownership / maintenance? S106 agreement makes no mention of this.
Upgrade of PRoW FP2607 capable of all year use with suitable lighting.	DP	Upgrade of footpath and provision of lighting.	DP	s106 agreement in place
Contributions towards the delivery of community infrastructure in policy ASH 8 (Ashington Community Cluster)	FC	CIL contributions of £65,383	FC	3 instalments received to date, final instalment due April 2026.

New provision on Land West of Ashington School (Policy ASH11)

Proposed in ANP		Delivery expected		Remarks
Land and contributions towards a full size MUGA with lighting.	Land and FC	1 x full size 3G pitch with associated lighting.	DP	No provision of grass pitch, however the direct provision of a full size 3G pitch with floodlights is deemed to be of equivalent or greater benefit by HDC. No s106 contributions are provided for ongoing maintenance due to perceived over provision.
Provision of a full size grass pitch.	DP	Nil		Not provided.

¹ [Site Assessment Report Part C: 3.02 Sites with potential for allocation for housing development](#)

Land and contributions towards a sports pavilion, changing facilities and storage.	Land and FC	Sports pavilion, changing rooms and equipment storage facility. 40 parking spaces.	DP to shell and core only	Provision is deemed to be of equivalent or greater benefit by HDC however there will be a requirement to fund final finishing. No s106 contributions are provided for ongoing maintenance due to perceived over provision.
Provision of allotments and retention of existing allotments adjacent to school.	DP	12 allotments, 18 associated parking spaces and allotment shed.	DP	Provision as expected in ANP. Ownership to transfer to APC along with a s106 contribution of £68,437 for long term maintenance. School allotments subject to separate agreement.
Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)			DP	Not requested; provision is in addition to ANP policies. S106 agreement proposes transfer of asset to APC with associated s106 contributions of £37,413 towards long term maintenance.
Local Area of Play (LAP)			DP	Not requested, provision is in addition to ANP policies. S106 agreement proposes ownership and management of this facility be retained by the development management company.
Open Space		Managed land	DP	Open Space amenity land, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to be managed the by development management company.
Upgrade of PRow FP2611 to high grade shared footpath / cycleway	DP		DP	
Retention of Forest School				Subject to separate legal agreement.
Provision of commercial floorspace (class B1)	DP	Not provided		
Contributions towards other community infrastructure	FC	CIL contributions estimated to be £650,000		
Provision of flood works to address Mill Lane flood issues.		Not provided		Not provided due to changes of the land parcel boundary – development has no control over Mill Lane watercourse / drainage.

Financial Contributions / Community Infrastructure Levy

The financial benefits derived from these developments consist of two allocations:

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

CIL contributions are calculated by HDC based on the land developed. By having a ‘Made’ neighbourhood plan APC is entitled to 25% of the CIL derived from the development. The remaining 75% is retained by upper tier local authorities. These funds are paid in instalments during the development process. APC expect to receive circa **£715,000** in CIL from the 2 ANP sites (subject to final CIL settlements with HDC).

Section 106 Funds

The section 106 agreements associated with these developments grant a further **£105,850** for the long-term management of assets. It is proposed these funds, when received, are allocated to existing or new asset Earmarked Reserves (EMRs). These funds become available in line with the s106 agreement.

Other funding

CIL and s106 funds are not intended to cover the entire cost of a project / initiative and should be combined with other funding sources to deliver best effect. As not all the community assets are in the control of APC it will be necessary to work in partnership with other community organisations to deliver the ANP policy objectives.

Ashington Community Cluster

The ANP highlighted the need for an improved range of facilities and for them to be ideally located in the “heart of the community”. It was identified there was the opportunity to create a “Community Cluster” of facilities around the Recreation Ground area by preference, but the use of alternative sites is permissible where this cannot be achieved.

Appendix 2 – ANP Figure 7.1 Location and quality of community facilities in Ashington

Ashington Community Cluster (Policy ASH 8)				
Proposed in ANP		Delivery expected by development		Remarks
Improved / expanded play provision for all ages.	FC	Existing u12s play area owned by ACCT. Required upgrade / replacement	DP and FC	Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) and Local Area of Play (LAP) to be provided on ASH11. ACTIONS 1. Ascertain what provisions ACCT have made to lifecycle this community asset and what plans exist for replacement at end of life.

				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Considering the new facilities being delivered as part of ASH 11 what is the current need to improve / expand play provision across all play areas in the village? 3. Investigate upgrade costs and identify funding 4. Ensure any project for new provision includes sufficient funding for through life maintenance and replacement and ensures the upkeep of existing facilities.
Improvements to existing Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)	FC	Improvements to existing Multi-Use Games Area owned by ACCT		<p>ACTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ascertain what provisions ACCT have made to lifecycle this community asset and what plans exist for replacement at end of life. 2. Considering the new facilities being delivered as part of ASH 11 what is the current need to improve / expand play provision in the village? 3. Investigate upgrade costs and identify funding 4. Ensure any project for new provision includes sufficient funding for through life maintenance and replacement 5. Ensure through agreement with ACCT there is continued community use of this facility and it meets community needs.
Improvements to drainage of the existing grass sports pitches.	FC	Improvements to drainage of the existing grass sports pitches		<p>ACTIONS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand what the current strategies / plans are for the development of the existing pitches. 2. Ascertain what the future needs are like to be and whether these will be affected by the provision of a 3G facility. 3. Investigate costs and funding.

				4. Ensure project is sustainable with through life maintenance.
A community building providing for the following needs: a. Hall and meeting facilities to serve the needs of the Scouts, local youth club and other local community groups. b. A parish council office	FC	A community building providing for the following needs: a. Hall and meeting facilities to serve the needs of the scouts, local youth club and other local community groups. b. A Parish Council office		<p>ACTIONS</p> <p>Since the ANP was written, the facilities available for community use have changed.</p> <p>A number of commercial leases have been granted and therefore a review of available provision is required, taking into account likely future use of the sports pavilion delivered as part of ASH 11.</p> <p>Groups identified in the ANP no longer operate in the village (e.g. Scouts) but should provision seek to attract replacements?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand ACCT strategy for the use of existing community facilities and options to develop these to meet the identified needs 2. Ascertain to what degree these can be provided in the community cluster 3. Explore other options within the village.

Options

CIL funding is provided as a contribution towards the cost of delivering the community benefits identified in the neighbourhood plan. It is unlikely that all of the aspirations in the plan can be funded through the available allocations and therefore the parish council must decide how it wishes to prioritise the projects that will deliver the facilities and seek to work with other village organisations to deliver the improvement.

CIL funding is provided to support the delivery of all policies within the ANP (not just the provision of community facilities) and in allocating CIL funds, the council needs to be mindful of the wider policy objectives of the ANP.

ASH 8 identifies 4 distinct projects, however it is clear that the situation has changed since the policies were set in 2017. It is also clear that the council needs to consider how CIL will be apportioned.

Recommendations and next steps

In light of the above, it is recommended the parish council agree the following priorities for the allocation of CIL funds:

1. Ensure adequate funds (CIL or other) to enable the completion of the Sports Pavilion provided under ASH 11 (supplied to “shell and core”).

- a. Confirm final specifications as part of s106 negotiations
- b. Identify costs once specification has been agreed.
- c. Identify additional sources of funding available to support build.

2. Provision of a parish office / community building (either as part of an existing community facility in the village cluster, the new pavilion or as a separate facility).

There is a pressing need to progress this urgently in light of the needs of parish council staff / Neighbourhood Wardens.

- a. Conclude discussions with ACCT to exhaust options to utilise existing facilities. These have been ongoing for 18 months with slow progress to date. In order to move forward we need to conclude definitively whether or not ACCT are able to/ willing to accommodate these needs on their assets.
- b. Assess feasibility of use of new sports pavilion.
- c. Consider other options in the village including the development of the Parish Yard.
- d. Identify likely costs.
- e. Identify the additional use requirements that can be built into this proposal i.e. flexible office / commercial space

3. Upgrade/ improve existing facilities.

Having resourced 1 and 2, above consider adequate provision is made for through life maintenance.

4. Review the ANP if / when the HDC Local Plan is approved

Make provision for a review of the plan and update the policies in light of findings above e.g. is the aspiration of delivering a “community cluster” achievable as originally planned?

Appendix 1

Table 7.1: Provision of community facilities

Infrastructure facility	Land west of Ashington School (Policy ASH11)	Chanctonbury Nursery (Policy ASH10)	Other sites
New provision on Chanctonbury Nursery (Policy ASH10)			
A range of outdoor gym equipment for all ages		Direct provision on site	
New provision on land west of Ashington School (Policy ASH11)			
A full-sized (11-a-side) grass football pitch for community use	Direct provision on site		
New allotments, as well as retaining allotment facilities immediately adjacent to Ashington School specifically for school use	Direct provision on site		
A full-sized (11-a-side), floodlit Multi-Use Games Area primarily for football use	Provision of land on site and financial contributions	Financial contributions	Financial contributions
A sports pavilion, changing rooms and equipment storage facility	Provision of land on site and financial contributions	Financial contributions	Financial contributions
Ashington Community Cluster			
Improved and expanded play provision to fully address the needs of children of all ages	Financial contributions	Financial contributions	Financial contributions
Improvements to the existing Multi-Use Games Area	Financial contributions	Financial contributions	Financial contributions
Improvements to the drainage of the existing grass sports pitches	Financial contributions	Financial contributions	Financial contributions
A community building providing for the following needs: a. Hall and meeting facilities to serve the needs of the scouts, local youth club and other local community groups b. A Parish Council office	Financial contributions	Financial contributions	Financial contributions

Appendix 2

Figure 7.1: Location and quality of community facilities in Ashington

