



### **Summary of Feedback from the Public Exhibition 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2019**

A total of 267 people signed the Attendance sheet. There were a small number who attended but did not 'sign in'. The posters were put on display at the Lunch Club on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> February and a further 8 people signed the attendance sheets. Steering Group members & Clerk were on-hand for all sessions to discuss the plans and explain the Neighbourhood Plan process and decisions.

Feedback forms were made available at the Exhibition. The Exhibition materials were put on the PC website early on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> February and there was Facebook & website publicity to state that comments could be submitted by email until 8<sup>th</sup> February. It was a conscious decision not to put the materials online before the Exhibition as it was felt that this could reduce numbers attending and thus reduce the engagement opportunity with residents.

Feedback was free-form rather than tick-box so comments have been grouped into themes rather than scored.

#### Summary of Comments:

There were many compliments and positive comments about the clarity of materials and the thought process behind the site selection. Residents liked the strategy of centring facilities around an identified 'community heart'. Many residents offered words of praise for the Plan and the effort that the team behind it had put in. Residents complimented the selection of adjoining sites as a co-ordinating opportunity for development. Many residents understood that new houses were coming and that the Neighbourhood Plan was seeking to get the best for the Parish by planning for the new homes.

Understandably residents had some concerns. The lack of any detail about housing numbers, site design, highways, access, landscaping, heritage assets etc contributed to these concerns but residents were reassured that all of this detail would come at pre-application and application stage.

The biggest concern was regarding Highways – increased traffic on Rectory Lane, Church Lane and London Road. Highways safety at junctions, safety of children along routes to school, parked cars, speed humps. Full Highways assessments, designs, safety will be considered in the pre-application and planning application process.

A small number of residents were concerned about why there were no plans for a larger school, doctors' surgery and more shops. The Steering Group explained to

residents that in order to attract these facilities then Ashington would need to increase in size way beyond the 225 proposed homes and would potentially lose its village feel. Retention of village feel is an important priority for the majority of residents as evidenced from the community consultations. Many residents verbally expressed concerns that they did not want Ashington to become as large as Southwater.

Some residents asked why there were no plans for more parking at the Turnpike Way shopping centre (London Road) as the additional homes would generate more traffic at the shopping centre. It is difficult to solve this issue as there is currently no land available for an expansion of the shopping centre car park, although the Neighbourhood Plan is seeking to encourage use of more sustainable transport options from the new homes.

Some residents were concerned about the landscaping around the proposed sites being sufficient to mitigate against a detrimental effect on their own property. Others were keen to see existing woodland, hedgerows and countryside protected as much as possible. Landscaping of the new homes sites will be the subject of the pre-application and planning application process. Good design is key to integrating the new homes into the Parish.

One resident asked that the Parish Council ensure that the infrastructure proposed is actually delivered and ideally before the homes were built. There was some cynicism at the exhibition that Developers would default on any 'promises' that they had made.

A couple of residents comments and formal comments from Ashington School state that Ashington School should secure the land on site 6 that is currently leased to them for an allotment and secure access and facilities on Site 6 currently used for Forest Schools. Now that Site 6 has been shortlisted for development Ashington School and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group should enter into discussions with the landowner as well as engage in the planning application process. Safety of schoolchildren during any construction works must also be taken into consideration.

Protection of heritage assets (listed buildings and roman ruins) was important to some. The protection of heritage assets on, adjacent to or affected by the new homes sites will be the subject of the pre-application and planning application process.

Some residents were concerned about the high water table in Ashington and sewage/drainage problems. Flooding/drainage and sewage of new homes sites will be the subject of the pre-application and planning application process.

Some residents asked why there were no commercial premises proposed. The Neighbourhood Plan has identified London Road as the 'retail heart' of the Parish and Wiston/Rock Business Parks as locally accessible employment spaces. This

information was not on display at the Exhibition but was explained to those that were interested.

A number of residents were pleased to see that the Recreation Ground, old village hall and other community owned land was not being sold for housing, a shopping centre or any other commercial use.