



Ashington Parish Council

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5th March 2020 at 8:15p.m.
in Ashington School, Foster Lane.**

Present: Councillors: N. Spiers, P. Kerrey, J. Stillwell, M. Woolley, J. Morris, T. Kearney, P. Linehan, S. Ball, T. Watson & T. Moss

Also present:

Clerk – Karen Dare

District Cllr – J Blackall

County Cllr - P Marshall

Neighbourhood Wardens – Bryony Sparks & Christina Arnold plus Warden Supervisor Darren Worsfold

Youth Worker – Nick Taylor & 5 young people

28 Members of the Public

The Chairman reminded members of the public the requirement that they limit their participation to the Public Adjournment sections of the meeting. If Members of the Public have questions for Police/Wardens & District/County Councillors, then the Clerk will pass these on if these individuals have left the meeting.

Members of the Public are reminded that Standing Orders allow for 5 minutes maximum participation.

052/20 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and approved from: Cllr G. MacPherson

District Councillors: P Circus & J Saheid

053/20 Declaration of Interests and notification of change of interest

None. The Chairman reminded councillors that previous declarations still stand (as defined under the Localism Act 2011). Cllr Woolley declared an interest in items 059/20, 068/20 and 071/20 and would leave the room for these discussion items.

054/20 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6th February 2020

The minutes of the meeting dated 6th February 2020 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Kerrey, seconded by Cllr Stillwell and agreed by all.

055/20 Neighbourhood Wardens Report (Appendix 1)

Darren Worsfold introduced himself as the new Warden Supervisor at HDC. He explained that he has recently retired from Sussex Police and knows Ashington & Horsham very well.

The Wardens gave an overview of their report for the purposes of those present. They explained that, in addition to the report, they have also run some anti-bullying sessions at Youth Club. They are also working closely with Ashington Neighbourhood Watch.

Cllr Stillwell reported that Steering Group meetings are now quarterly, not monthly, but reports will be sent monthly.

The Chair invited questions from Members of the Public: None

056/20 Youth Worker Report (Appendix 2)

The Youth Worker gave an annual report (summary) – numbers attending are up, as are volunteer numbers. The club has good links with PC, Wardens & ACCT and is enjoying a more collaborative working approach. The Committee has appointed a 'repair team' to manage repairs to the old building. The Club engaged with the Community at Village Halls Open Day, Ashington Festival and the Wardens Xmas Party and enjoy contributing to the community and village life in general. Activities this year include: Go-Karting, Scalextric, DJ Workshop, Drama, Bowling, LazerQuest, Drug/alcohol talks, cooking, Dragons Den (winning team organised a village litter-pick), milkshakes, pumpkin carving, First Aid course for older youths. The Club now opens on Monday & Thursday 3-5pm for after-school drop-in as well as both evenings. The computer room was refurbished and can now be used for homework, games etc Fundraising activities raised @£2k which was match-funded by both the PC and the Church. They are looking at working with an organisation called Relational Hub which is a charity working with Clubs to get them better services/facilities. They also help with fundraising.

The youngsters said that they enjoy club because: it is a safe place, Nick is a great help, it's a place to meet friends, fun activities, good environment, volunteers are nice.

Nick introduced Jack who is undertaking a Youth Ministry degree in London and who works with Nick for 8 hours per week (Thursdays).

The Chair invited questions from Members of the Public:

1. Will Youth Club be having a float at the Carnival this year? Possibly, the Youth Worker will talk to Festival Committee

The Chairman thanked Nick and the youngsters for attending and said that it's great to hear that the Club is going so well. They left the meeting.

057/20 Report from District and County Councillors

District Councillor Blackall reported: Congratulated the PC for supporting the Youth Club and all of its activities. It is a Model Scheme that other villages could learn from and is a credit to all involved. He also congratulated the PC on the Warden Scheme which the village has had for a long time. It is evolving as the needs of the village change and links with Sussex Police have improved.

Questions were invited from Councillors: None

Questions from Members of the Public: None

County Councillor Paul Marshall reported: None – dealt with in the Annual Assembly

Questions were invited from Councillors: None

Questions from Members of the Public: None

058/20 Young Persons Adjournment – none

Cllr Woolley left the room

059/20 HDC Local Plan Review & Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk & Cllr Ball attended an HDC Parish Workshops session on 12th February (summary Appendix 5). Cllrs Spiers, MacPherson, Linehan & the Clerk attended an HDC meeting on 19th February.

Summary of Key Points raised:

1. Local Plan Review (LPR) threatens the Neighbourhood Plan work and, in places, contradicts the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan site assessments are much more detailed than HDC's.
2. Why is Ashington targeted for more than its 'fair share'. Larger settlements with employment, better services/facilities and good transport links are having fewer homes.
3. LPR has not been subject to extensive community consultation, Neighbourhood Plan has
4. How does HDC think Ashington is sustainable? Very little employment, limited services/facilities and lack of sustainable transport choices.
5. Why does HDC think Ashington has Healthcare facilities/Health Centre? It is mentioned many times in the Sustainability Appraisal as a positive reason for additional homes in Ashington but it doesn't exist.

HDC responses:

1. Ashington can have higher numbers of homes because other settlements are more constrained
2. The Neighbourhood Plan should be progressed to completion as it sets a future strategy for Ashington, delivers community facilities as well as homes and allows the Parish some small element of control in the future, plus the Parish receives 25% of new homes CIL money not 15% given to Parishes without a Neighbourhood Plan. This can be worth huge sums of money to the Parish to enable more community facilities to be built.
3. If the Neighbourhood Plan passes a Planning Inspector but is rejected at a residents' referendum, then HDC will meet with the Parish Council to discuss whether to allocate the sites anyway.
4. Use the consultation to feedback any errors in the documents
5. HDC will use information from the Neighbourhood Plan to amend/correct their own site assessments
6. Sites north of Rectory Lane have offered to build a new school
7. HDC are challenging the Govt. on housing numbers
8. Sites north of Rectory Lane could be allocated as a whole or as individual sites
9. Without the Local Plan then ALL sites across the District become potential development sites.

HDC Drop-in session 20th February – many residents (@167) had attended but there were no display boards showing Ashington proposals. The only map of Ashington was a paper one that an Officer had in a pocket. Feedback to Parish Councillors was very negative about this issue. Residents were told to look at the documents online, which are numerous, long and the HDC website is difficult to navigate. Many residents have no online access.

Considering the lack of information at the HDC Drop-in session the Parish Council has arranged a residents Q&A session for Friday 20th March, 7pm at Ashington Community Centre. Councillors agreed by email the cost of printing postcards (@£50-70) to be hand-delivered to homes in the village advertising the event.

Councillors & the Clerk have read the LPR documents online and the Clerk has prepared a summary of the key points. These have been discussed with the Council's Planning Consultant and he is in the process of preparing a consultation response.

The Chairman asked Councillors the following Questions:

1. Should the PC continue with the NHPlan? Agreed by all.
2. Should the PC engage with residents to discuss the issues an additional 400 homes as outlined in the HDC Local Plan Review would raise? Agreed by all.

Questions/comments from Councillors (summary):

1. Cllr Linehan explained that the HDC Local Plan Review sites are not a 'done deal' and that the PC and residents should respond to the Consultation in a fact-based approach.
2. Cllr Moss wondered how a document could be produced by HDC with such fundamental errors. Such errors do lead to a loss of trust and credibility in HDC.

3. District Cllr Blackall re-iterated that residents should seek to correct HDC's mistakes. The timetable for producing the Local Plan Review is very tight so HDC did not have spare time to do the due diligence that they would have liked. It is important that mistakes, discrepancies and incorrect assumptions are challenged and corrected and not taken forward in the Plan.
4. Why is HDC only giving the statutory minimum 6-week consultation period, with one week being in half term? The Local Plan Review needs to be fully completed by October/November 2020 otherwise HDC can't demonstrate a 5-year Housing Land Supply and ALL sites across the District will be vulnerable to planning applications. This is the Regulation 18 consultation, there will be a Regulation 19 consultation after the finalised draft Plan is published later this year.
5. Why are HDC looking to build homes on golf courses when neighbouring Districts are protecting theirs as green space. The Duty to Co-operate needs to be challenged in cases like this.
6. How can we be confident that the Officers who read the consultation comments actually understand them and will be objective/independent. Will this work be done with better due diligence? District Councillor Blackall stated that Officers are suitably qualified and he has no concerns over their competence.
7. Why is the HDC website so difficult to navigate? Documents don't appear until you Register, disappear when you try to comment, Background Evidence documents are in a different location to other documents. It's not easy to navigate through the consultation.
8. What % of homes will be affordable? @30%, HDC is setting up its own building company to build 'Council Housing'.
9. The homes will still not be affordable to young people in this area.
10. There was some discussion about housing numbers, 2014 targets, over-delivery not being taken into consideration, outstanding planning permissions, landbanking to increase the value of a company etc. All of which had been minuted in the February meeting.

Questions/comments from Members of the Public:

1. A resident pointed out that they cannot access a Doctors Surgery on the bus at all, nor can residents go many places by public transport. Residents are very heavily reliant upon their cars.
2. Will the PC be sharing its concerns with residents? Yes, at the meeting on 20th March. The Clerk & Councillors had read the documents and would share these.
3. Is HDC using the Neighbourhood Plan against Ashington to deliver more homes? Possibly.
4. There is huge mistrust of HDC now. Can residents lobby District Councillors, WSCC & MP's? Yes, our local MP has stated recently that he is against over-development in the south-east.
5. New houses in Billingshurst are not selling so Developers have stopped building.
6. Lots of Developers are land-banking – gaining planning permission, not building the homes. Planning permissions increase the value of land and increase the value of the Housing Development companies.
7. HDC website & documents are difficult to understand, will the PC be explaining things in layman's terms at the meeting on 20th? Yes, that is the purpose of the meeting – to explain everything to residents in simple language.

The Chairman thanked residents for their questions/comments and for their attendance. He closed the public adjournment session.

Neighbourhood Plan update – Historic England are preparing their response to the Archaeological Assessment.

Cllr Woolley returned to the meeting.

060/20 Public Adjournment

Items NOT relating to the HDC Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan:

1. Margaret Alford of ACCT explained that they will be holding a Street Party for village children & their families on Saturday 9th May to celebrate VE Day. This will be Free of Charge and is being funded by ACCT. There will be a concert in the evening in the Community Centre with

a Roll of Honour for Ashington's fallen soldiers, a Big Band, Singer and raffle and all proceeds split between Help for Heroes and Royal British Legion.

061/20 Action List Update (CFWD = carry forward to next meeting, D = delete)

- a. There but Not There Armed Forces Covenant grant – unfortunately the grant bid was unsuccessful. However, the PC will be installing the memorial bench & silhouette in a new 'memorial garden' shortly.
- b. Defibrillator Working Party – 3 cabinets are available and 3 sites have been agreed (Red Lion, Blakiston Close, Old Barn Nurseries) and will be installed @14th March. These will be registered with SECAMB and advertised around the village in due course. The group is still looking to deliver First Aid training to residents.

062/20 Correspondence received for Action

- a. Kite & Thomas (Ashington Autos) have given notice on 1st January 2020 to quit 'green shed' but wish to retain the compound area on lease. The Clerk has checked the terms of the lease and 6 months' notice is required (unless the Council can find a new tenant). Given that the 'green shed' is in poor condition a new tenant is unlikely. Actions that need to be taken by 1st July or sooner:
 - a. Amend the lease and consider a new rental value for the compound only
 - b. The Valuation Office Agency (Business Rates) have advised that an Empty Property rate can be applied once the shed is fully vacated but until the shed is removed completely then the Empty Rate will be applied. Once demolished then no rates will be due. The Council can also apply for Small Business Rate Relief. The shed has been emptied and the Clerk is trying to get the Valuation Office to split the shed & compound into two separate entities so that the Council can apply for rate relief on the shed.
 - c. Decide what to do with the green shed long term
 - d. Financial implications – there will be a reduction in rental income and the Council may need to pay some Business Rates until rate relief is granted and/or the shed is demolished plus pay for the shed to be removed. No budget was set for this, but it was identified as a financial risk to the Council and other cost-saving measures were implemented in advance.

Councillors to consider options, discussion at next meeting.

CFWD

063/20 Correspondence received for Information

- a. HDC Community Safety/Sussex Police Joint Action Group details of meetings. The Clerk has submitted information about the 'drifting' problems to the JAG for consideration. The response is – Police will use ANPR in the area, bid for unmarked vehicles & proactive officers and the problem will be added to the task list for Police Teams.
- b. HDC – copy of slides from recent Councillor Conduct Training Session. Cllr Stillwell provided a report on the meeting that she attended:
 - a. Very well attended – 150+ maybe
 - b. Not just Parish Councillors, but District and possibly County Councillors
 - c. Facilitators spoke to the slides and sadly were not good at aiming their voices directly into the microphone making it difficult to hear.
 - d. Almost impossible to hear questions from the floor, of which there were many.
 - e. Reference was made to the Code of Conduct adopted by all Councils
 - f. Reference to the 7 Nolan Principles which need to be adhered to when a Councillor is representing the council outside the Council Meeting. Obviously these relate only to Councillors "on duty" so to speak, not in their personal lives.
 - g. Discussions regarding disclosure of interests – whether pecuniary or not
 - h. Reminder that the Chairman is there to facilitate the meeting and keep order, he must not use his powers for improper purposes. He must act entirely neutrally, allowing different opinions to be fully and fairly presented and debated. He must not act as a dictator.
 - i. Following that there was a bit about Confidential sessions.

As I said at the previous meeting, there was nothing new here, it was a bit like being taught to suck eggs.

- c. HDC – Invitation to information session on hate crime & radicalisation 20th April.
- d. AiRS – national village halls survey
- e. Age UK Horsham District has agreed to work closely with Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove, with a view to potentially merging in the future
- f. SSALC - a summary of the Agriculture Bill introduced to Parliament on 16th January.
- g. Discover Gatwick – dates of next meetings
- h. HDC – changed Parish contact process at HopOast Depot
- i. WSCC – recent PROW clearance works in Ashington Parish
- j. A 2 day Playground Inspection training course is taking place in Cranleigh – any need to send delegate(s)
- k. WSCC Permit Scheme report
- l. UK Power networks Roadshow
- m. HALC Update including letter to HDC challenging housing numbers

064/20 Meetings attended by Councillors

Cllr Stillwell & Cllr Morris attended a Warden Partnership meeting on 2nd March 2020.

Cllr Spiers attended a Youth Partnership meeting on 2nd March 2020

Cllrs Moss attended an ACCT meeting.

The Clerk & Cllr Ball attended an HDC Parish Workshop on the Local Plan Review on 12th February (notes in Appendix 5)

Cllrs Spiers, MacPherson, Linehan & the Clerk attended an HDC meeting to discuss the Local Plan Review on 19th February 2020.

Cllr Watson had attended a Youth Club meeting on 4th March and a Level 2 Safeguarding training course.

065/20 Matters raised by Councillors

From Cllr Kerrey: February was an interesting month which involved much juggling of volunteer availability to coincide with rain free days. However, we did manage to maintain a presence in Billingshurst Road and an occasional visit to London Road. Traffic volumes have remained much the same as previous months, and the percentage of speeding drivers averaged 12%. 143 letters were issued, 2 to repeat offenders. With the arrival of Spring, longer daylight hours and continuing enthusiasm of the volunteers we are hoping to increase the number of sessions per week with earlier and later time slots being used. Could I finish by thanking the volunteers for their help and determination they show to try and get the speeding message across.

066/20 Chairman's Announcements

Youth Club had asked if the Parish Council would allow them to use the @£1200 'match-funding' that the PC had given them for items other than 'activities for the children' eg items needed to run the Youth Club. After some discussion it was agreed that the wording should remain as it is the PC's intention that the money is used for putting on activities and not building repair/maintenance, running costs, capital costs. The PC understands that Youth Club has other funds that can be used for running costs.

PLANNING

067/20 Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 19th February 2020

Minutes of the planning meeting had been distributed to Councillors. Agreed by all.

Cllr Woolley left the room

068/20 Planning Correspondence –

- a. Email from Devine Homes (Site 4) – “As the Parish Council is aware, Horsham District Council have identified Land North of Rectory Lane, Ashington, in their Regulation 18 consultation as a potential development for 400 dwellings. The land identified by Horsham District Council is under the control of Devine Home Plc, Taylor Wimpey, and the Diocese of Chichester.

I understand that this has come as a surprise to the Parish following the Neighbourhood Plan progress to date.

Whilst the site is not a formal allocation yet, it is identified at this stage as having the potential to accommodate development. The three parties mentioned above are keen to ensure that if any allocation comes forward there is an on-going dialogue between us and the Parish Council; we are also keen to understand the concerns of both the parish and wider village. With the above in mind, we would like to offer an initial meeting between either the Parish Council, or a few members of the Parish Council, and site promoters.” The Clerk had responded promptly to say that the PC is currently focusing resources on its Local Plan Review response as there is a short deadline for submissions. Advice from the Planning Consultant is that it is premature to meet at this stage as HDC have not yet allocated the sites. It would be appropriate to meet after the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is published and if the ‘Ashington Cluster’ is allocated. Clerk to respond.

Clerk D

069/20 Neighbourhood Planning Update

See 059/20. No further update.

070/20 New Enforcement Allegations –

HDC Planning Compliance report on the alleged: Erection of high close boarded fence at the front of property:

‘Checked planning history to see if there are any restriction on fences, walls or gates forward of the principal elevation and there are none. The fence that has been erected is a standard fence no more than 2m in height and it is not adjacent to a highway (the other side of the fence is access to 2 properties only – not a highway). The last fence panel is far enough back from the edge of the pavement for it not be affect visibility. No breach of planning control has been identified.’

071/20 Planning Applications

DC/19/1788 (Amendment to layout) Erection of 7no dwellings comprising a mixture of detached and semi-detached properties, with associated parking and landscaping works - Lodge Farm Malthouse Lane

It was noted that the application is incomplete and that various reports that should have been submitted are not available. Councillors agreed that the Council’s previous Objection should still stand.

DC/20/0310 Demolition of existing building and erection of 4-bed dwelling - Woolvens Farm, Billingshurst Road

Councillors agreed that its response to the previous application should still stand.
Cllr Woolley returned to the meeting.

072/20 Horsham District Council Decisions

Approvals –

DC/19/2338 Erection of a two storey side extension - Triggles House Hole Street

DC/19/2499 Retrospective application for the creation of new access and earth works onto Park Lane - Land To The East of Park Lane Park Lane Ashington

Refusals - none

Withdrawals – none

Appeals – none

FINANCE

073/20 **Correspondence** – none

074/20 **Income** – none

075/20 Expenditure (Appendix 3)

It was resolved that the schedule of invoices for payment totalling £3,538.61 for March 2020 be approved. Agreed by all.

076/20 Date of Next meetings

The next Planning Committee meeting is at **7:30pm on Wednesday 18th March 2020** in Committee Room 2, Ashington Community Centre. **These are NOT Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meetings.**

The next Parish Council will be held at **7:45pm on Thursday 2nd April 2020** at Ashington School, Foster Lane.

Members of the public were then asked to leave the meeting as Councillors needed to discuss confidential matters: None

Meeting closed at 9.50pm

Signed: **Dated:**

Members of the public should be aware that being present at a meeting of the Council or one of its Committees will be deemed as the person having given consent to being recorded (photograph, film or audio recording) at the meeting, by any person present.

Warden Monthly Report

February 2020 – Ashington

Patrol hours TOTAL:		ASB incidents TOTAL:	
Foot (high visibility)	14	Noise	
Vehicle	33	Neighbours	1
Notices/warnings TOTAL:		Driving/vehicles	
Fixed Penalty Notice		Bikes	
Yellow card warning	1	Alcohol/drugs	
Community Protection Warning/Notice		Public order	
Parking alert	1	Clear up/disposal reports TOTAL:	
Police reports TOTAL:		Fly tipping / flyposting	3
Phone (including 101 and 999)	1	Graffiti	
Email	2	Dog fouling	
Intelligence report	1	Litter	1
E-CINS (multi-agency reporting)		Drug litter	
Verbal	1	Hazards	
Admin	32.5	Community events attended	4
Visits to vulnerable people (all ages)	6	School contact/engagement	
Signposting	1	Reports to DVLA	1
Safeguarding referral	2	Reports to Operation Crackdown	1

ASB/crime/criminal damage

This month we issued a yellow card warning for anti-social driving around the village. If this individual is caught again then they will be issued with a fixed penalty notice for this behaviour.

Parking/vehicles

We received a complaint from a resident about a van parking and blocking the footpath, we found this van and issued a parking alert and since then it appears to be parking appropriately.

We reported a vehicle for having no Tax and a different vehicle for no MOT we would like to remind all residents that anyone is able to check vehicles for valid tax and MOT's online at the following website <https://vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk/>

Fly tipping/littering/graffiti

We have reported two incidents of fly tipping in Ashington one on Old London road and the other on Park lane. This second incident was reported to us by a couple who litter pick along there.

A request was put in to Horsham District Council for a Litter pick along old London road particularly around the BP garage and this was completed.

Community engagement/events/meetings

We have been working very closely this month with the youth club on partnership working and community welfare, we attended the Safeguard training which they organised which was very informative and well received by everyone that attended the course.

Our Warden drop in sessions started this month. We received positive feedback and community suggestions from those who attended. Our next one at the community centre is Monday 11th May, although following public requests we are looking at a couple of weekend/evening drop ins as well.

Patrols (foot/visible and car)

We have been somewhat restricted this month getting out on patrol due to various reasons. We have however still covered the whole village on foot and in the car at different times of the day.

Elderly and youth

This month we have been working very closely with a vulnerable young person in Ashington. We have spent a lot of time on this working with other agencies.

We have visited a number of elderly and vulnerable across the month.

Licensing

Nothing to report.

Dog related issues

We have received numerous reports this month about the amount of dog mess around the village, we have tried to target this issue when out on foot patrol and have placed new posters around reminding people to pick up after their dogs. We have also put new stickers on public rubbish bins alerting dog owners that if they bag the poo they can use any bin. We will continue to make a focused effort in combatting this issue and anyone caught by us not picking up after their dog will receive a fixed penalty notice

Cycling

Nothing to report.

Parish specific/other

We are going to be delivering a session at youth club focusing around bullying and being kind alongside Nick. We are also going to work with Nick on a session around looking after the local community which we are really looking forward to.

We have made contact with the Scout group to look at how we can work with them.

Appendix 2 – Youth Worker Report

Senior Youth Worker's Report

FEBRUARY 2020

February Activities

- I borrowed a Virtual Reality headset from the Diocese of Chichester and the youth absolutely

LOVED it! I was proud as they all were brave amongst fear, as they walked along a plank suspended from a tall skyscraper!

- We made pancake art with coloured pancake batter - the young people had a good go at trying to make some fun shapes and write their initials - to varying effect! But they learnt cooking skills, and practiced safety around a hot frying pan.

- We ran a tournament using our new Nintendo Switch game which the young people seemed to enjoy, and the winner was a lad who is often quite down so I was pleased for him.

Other

- We have had significant pastoral/safeguarding issues - which are being dealt with by the appropriate authorities.

- We have had to close the computer suite due to flooding which has dampened the spirits of the young people (pun intended). New and the building team continue to do excellent work to help get it sorted.

- We set up a Go Fund Me page to facilitate further fund raising.

- We have planned an Open Day for Sat 11th April.

- I met with the youth officer for Horsham Council - who is really keen to help us in many different ways such as fund raising, volunteering, activity ideas etc.

Numbers

- Average year 6-7 numbers on a Monday night are 28

- Average year 8-10 numbers on a Thursday night are 8

Nick Taylor - Senior Youth Worker - nick@ashingtonyouth.co.uk - 07966 985921

Appendix 3 – Expenditure

Karen Dare	Home office (February)	£20.00
	Travel HDC meeting 12th February (at Billingshurst, 17.2 miles)	£7.74
Mark Adsett	Landscape Gardening (February)	£533.75
Ashington PCC	Invoice YW-2020-02 (February)	£1,083.33
WSCC	Salaries and Costs (February 2020)	£1,452.51
G. MacPherson	Travel & Parking HDC meeting 19th February	£14.10
HDC	Litter & dog bin emptying	£427.18
		£3,538.61

All to be paid by Bank Transfer

Appendix 4

Funds held by the Parish Council on behalf of others (as at 31st December 2019):

Ashington Rangers £724.01

Ashington Residents Association £615.85

Appendix 5

Notes of meeting 12th February:

The purpose of the meeting was to get local views & concerns on the proposals at an early stage in the Local Plan Review process. Catherine Howe stated that HDC are not going to need all of the sites that they are consulting upon but need local information on them all.

Interestingly there are 2 settlements that are proposed to move 'up' the hierarchy:

1. Partridge Green - moves from a 'medium village' to 'large village/small town'

2. Thakeham - moves from 'small' to 'medium' village.

It is likely that both settlements will be challenging this with HDC...

It is interesting that Partridge Green may be moving up the Settlement Hierarchy from Medium village to Large village and yet are proposed to only have 200 new homes. PG currently have more retail options than Ashington plus they have 2 employment sites (industrial estates) in the village centre. My research shows that they have a population of 2039 (according to Census 2011) whereas Ashington was 2526 people in Census 2011. PG even has a doctors surgery. They also have the Downslink route that provides a sustainable transport route north/south. More comparison research may be useful here...it definitely feels like they are targeting Ashington for high numbers but may have limited grounds to do so....

HDC's housing target hasn't been fixed yet but could be:

965 homes pa - for its own needs

1200 - HDC plus Crawley needs

1300 - HDC + Crawley + south coast.

Duty to co-operate means the higher numbers are likely...but not yet fixed.

Actual Local Plan documents won't be online until 17th Feb. Other documents will also be put online eg a basic 'Infrastructure Delivery Plan' has been written & will be online.

HDC are holding drop-in sessions in communities that are most affected by the draft proposals. I did raise the issue that they are in half term and I was told that it can't be helped, residents can attend any session and the consultation period can't be extended just because it is running through a school holiday....

Norman Kwan (Neighbourhood Plan Officer) stated that homes should be distributed through all major settlements - this doesn't fit with targeting Ashington with high numbers..

When asked what the future of Neighbourhood Plans is, HDC had no answer. HDC need a 5 year Housing Land supply and the best way to ensure this is through their own allocations and not Neighbourhood Plans as they take too long and aren't necessarily delivering enough homes...

What if the Neighbourhood Plan doesn't get finished/adopted - HDC will discuss the options with individual Parishes and it may be that they allocate the land anyway..

We then looked at the Ashington proposals & pointed out that HDC had included ALL land on Sites 5&6 as being allocated for development under the Neighbourhood Plan and this simply isn't the case but they said that as the whole land had been submitted for consideration they couldn't /wouldn't amend their maps. This actually shows the Neighbourhood Plan land to be larger in area than the sites north of Rectory Lane. Misleading...

Then we pointed out some of the concerns with Ashington north of Rectory Lane sites: highways (access, Billingshurst Road speed, Rectory Lane width), infrastructure lack (school, medical facilities, retail, employment), transport (no bus service to Brighton nor really anywhere else especially not to doctors, lack of walking/cycling opportunities to retail/employment/school etc). We were sat with Thakeham & Storrington representatives and all confirmed that we use Storrington as a 'hub' for facilities that villages don't have and how all of the additional homes in the villages would have a cumulative impact on Storrington and its AQMA.

We should also point out to HDC that WSCC has recently allocated soft sand sites at Ham Farm and an extension of Chantry Lane, Storrington site so more lorries on the A283/A24 and congestion at the Washington roundabout with inevitable rat-running of cars through Wiston & Warminghurst.

Brief discussion about the benefits of strategic sites especially the ability to build correct infrastructure. Using greenfields as add-on developments to villages is the same as using greenfields for strategic sites...probably best that HDC achieve the right housing numbers using a mix of new and add-on developments.

Suggested to HDC that they should conduct a proper audit of infrastructure to identify deficits as well as spare capacity so that new developments can be planned properly instead of added onto settlements with insufficient infrastructure.

Residents should be encouraged to Register with HDC & submit comments online as this makes it easier for HDC to collate comments. They will accept normal representations.

Karen Dare