

Ashington Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 – WSCC Services Officer Level Comments – August 2020

In general, the County Council looks for Neighbourhood Plans to be in conformity with the District and Borough Councils' latest draft or adopted development plans. The County Council supports the District and Borough Councils in preparing the evidence base for these plans and aligns its own infrastructure plans with them. The County Council encourages Parish Councils to make use of this information which includes transport studies examining the impacts of proposed development allocations. Where available this information will be published on its website or that of the relevant Local Planning Authority.

In relation to its own statutory functions, the County Council expects all Neighbourhood Plans to take due account of its policy documents and their supporting Sustainability Appraisals, where applicable. These documents include the West Sussex Waste Local Plan, Minerals Local Plan, West Sussex Transport Plan and the West Sussex Lead Local Flood Authority Policy for the Management of Surface Water. It is also recommended that published County Council service plans, for example Planning School Places and West Sussex Rights of Way Improvement Plan, are also taken into account.

Strategic Transport Assessment

The Strategic Transport Assessment of the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF), adopted November 2015, tested the cumulative impact of strategic development proposed within the Horsham District in the HDPF. The study identified the additional travel demand as a result of planned development, over and above development already committed plus background growth. The County Council worked collaboratively with Horsham District Council to inform the Strategic Transport Assessment and on the basis of continuous review of the work carried out, supports its conclusions.

The Strategic Transport Assessment identified that the major impacts of the strategic development sites will be to the main junctions on the A24 and A264 around Horsham and that these impacts could be successfully mitigated by a combination of deliverable highway improvements and sustainable transport measures. Further work to develop these improvements will take place as development comes forward.

The purpose of the Strategic Transport Assessment was to undertake an assessment of the transport implications of development proposed by the HDPF on the highway network, identify the impacts and appropriate and feasible mitigation. Mitigation measures have then been included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that accompanies the HDPF. The Strategic Transport Assessment took account of the sites allocated in the HDPF and included a forecast estimate of background traffic growth.

In considering the Neighbourhood Plan for Ashington, the size and location of proposed site allocations have been taken into account when considering if further transport evidence is required at this stage.

It is considered that due to the scale and location of the proposed site allocation in the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan, the level of growth proposed is not in accordance with the background level growth assumptions in the Strategic Transport Assessment. However, it is considered that further work is not required at this stage, as the impacts on the local highways and transport network would be unlikely to be severe. A full transport assessment will continue to be required to support any planning application.

The Strategic Transport Assessment indicates that over the plan period, traffic conditions in some locations are likely to worsen due to the effects of traffic growth. If not addressed through improvements to the highway network and to sustainable travel choices, this could exacerbate existing congestion issues, or lead to congestion in previously uncongested locations. Therefore, as development takes place there will be a need for improvements and / or financial contributions to be secured towards the delivery of these improvements. We recommend that any Transport Assessment submitted as part of a planning application for the proposed allocations within the Plan includes a sustainable transport section that sets out solutions that are deliverable and commercially viable to reduce dependency on car travel.

The County Council currently operates a scheme of charging for highways and transport pre-application advice to enable this service to be provided to a consistent and high standard. Please find further information on our charging procedure through the following link:

http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisure/getting_around_west_sussex/roads_and_pathways/plans_and_projects/development_control_for_roads/pre-application_charging_guide.aspx

Minerals and Waste

Para 8.9 it may be useful to add reference to the updated [Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Guidance](#) here for further details on thresholds and exceptions for consultation and for what the developer should consider in a resource assessment.

Public Rights of Way

Comments from Reg 14 are reiterated; there is reference to walking routes but there should be a greater accessibility to sustainable transport options which could be achieved by focussing more on routes suitable for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, i.e. Bridleways rather than Footpaths. This is important to consider as part of new development and possible upgrades of footpaths would provide more options to residents wishing to use sustainable modes of transport.

Specific Comments

Policy ASH11: Land West of Ashington School

Since the previous Reg 14 consultation in July 2019, updated pupil projections indicate that there is now insufficient capacity in the area to accommodate the additional primary aged children that would result from the level of development proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan. The planned level of development in the neighbourhood plan will require the existing school to expand by 0.5 Forms of Entry (FE). We require the neighbourhood plan to allocate a minimum 0.1Ha of adjoining accessible land to enable the school to expand by 0.5FE. In addition, the Education Authority request that a further 0.44Ha of adjoining accessible land is safeguarded for educational use if required. Expansion of the school would be subject to consultation.