

Neighbourhood Planning
Officer
Horsham Council
Parkside
Chart Way
North Street
Horsham
RH12 1RL

12 August 2020
Ref: BD/Let/P1385

Dear Sir/Madam,

Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031: Submission Stage (Regulation 16) Consultation Version (April 2020)

Land West of Ashington School (Policy ASH11)

We are writing to you on behalf of the landowners who jointly control Land West of Ashington School (Policy ASH11 area) and known as Sites 5 and 6, regarding the above consultation.

We would like to confirm our support for the inclusion of Land West of Ashington School as a Site Allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan, as well as our wider support for the Neighbourhood Plan moving forward.

These representations are submitted alongside the indicative 'Concept Masterplan' for the site dated 10 February 2020 which has been prepared to reflect the needs, priorities and aspirations of the Ashington community and the Submission Neighbourhood Plan that has identified Land West of Ashington School as central to meeting the housing, social, community, sporting and recreational needs of residents for the next 20 years and beyond.

We emphasise that the attached Concept Masterplan is indicative at this stage based on our current understanding of site constraints. Accordingly, the plan within the Neighbourhood Plan should not be fixed, but the overall layout should be informed by detailed on-site assessment.

We would also like to take this opportunity to re-emphasise the numerous benefits this allocation can help deliver for the village including:

- Provision of land and CIL monies for an all-weather, full size, Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)
- Provision of a grass football pitch for junior and adult multi-use
- Provision of land and CIL monies for a sports pavilion and youth club
- New allotments

- Provision of land for parking (including overspill) spaces and access
- New homes to meet community needs (including affordable homes, elderly homes, and mixed/family homes)
- Significant areas of new public open space, recreation areas on land that is not currently publicly accessible
- Over 2km of new safe and accessible footpaths, cycleways and bridle ways
- Retention of existing Forest School area and safe footpath access
- CIL monies for a range of community infrastructure within the 'community cluster'.

The location of the site, in the heart of the village, provides development in the most sustainable location within Ashington and helps to deliver the spatial strategy of the Plan. To this end, the landowners are working collaboratively to enable the comprehensive delivery of the proposed site allocation and community infrastructure.

Another benefit of Land West of Ashington School, in addition to its location, is the size of the site and wider land ownership which, more so than any other site in Ashington, enables the provision of a significant amount of community infrastructure.

The accompanying Masterplan submitted with this letter demonstrates how any development proposal will meet the requirements of Policy ASH11 as well as ASH8: Ashington Community Cluster. To summarise, comments have been made against the various relevant sections of policy ASH11 as follows:

POLICY ASH11: LAND WEST OF ASHINGTON SCHOOL

Land west of Ashington School (approximately 18.5 hectares as identified on the Policies Map and in Figure 8.2) is allocated for a minimum of 150 dwellings and development proposals will be supported subject to the following criteria:

Housing and Design:

- i. it provides a mix of dwelling sizes in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan;***
- ii. as part of that mix, at least 25% of units are designed to meet the needs of older people;***
- iii. affordable housing is provided to meet the requirements of the relevant policies in the development plan;***
- iv. the design of the dwellings reflects the character of the surrounding area.***

Comments: A mix of high-quality dwellings would be provided, incorporating affordable housing, mixed/family homes, smaller homes for first time buyers as well as housing for elderly people. The site would accommodate 35% affordable housing as required by the Horsham District Planning Framework and provide an appropriate mix of rental and shared ownership dwellings. The Parish Housing Needs Survey also identified a requirement for elderly housing and this would be provided in varying forms i.e. provision of flatted units and/or 2 bed dwellings and bungalow provision meeting Building Regulations M4(2) Category 2 standards.

In terms of character and design the Masterplan has sought to address the semi-rural character of the area through low to medium density development with landscaped streets to create rural 'lanes' which have views onto the well landscaped site boundaries. The proposed development will seek to achieve a materiality, scale and appearance that will emulate and reflect the Ashington context and contribute positively to it.

Layout:

- v. ***built development is restricted to the eastern part of the site as shown on Figure 8.2;***
- vi. ***open space in the west and south of the site is available for public access, accompanied by a suitable management plan.***

Comments: As set out in the Masterplan, built development will be restricted to the eastern part of the site. There are significant areas of new open space, recreation areas, woodland walks, retention of Forest School, over 2km of new safe and accessible footpaths on land that is currently private and not publicly accessible. The land west of the site will accommodate new grass and all-weather football pitches, a sports pavilion and youth club.

Accessibility:

- vii. ***the provision of appropriate vehicle access into the site from Church Close;***
- viii. ***the provision of appropriate pedestrian access which provides direct and safe linkages into the Walkway Routes identified in Policy ASH2;***
- ix. ***where it is within or adjacent to the site, the upgrading of Public Right of Way FP2607 so that it is capable of everyday use all year-round and has suitable lighting for use after dark;***
- x. ***upgrading of Public Right of Way FP2611 to a high quality shared footpath and cyclepath which links up to Malthouse Lane;***
- xi. ***retention of Forest School activities on the western part of the site, along with safe footpath access, for use by the school, from Ashington Primary School to this area and to the Forest School activity area to the south-west of the site.***

Comments: A Transport Technical Note has previously been submitted to the Parish Council which assessed the most appropriate and safest way to access both Land West Of Ashington School and Land at Church Farm House. Access would be provided via Church Close and would seek to merge the existing single track with the adjacent access serving the existing residential dwelling (Church Farm House). This would allow for an adequate road width as well as a 1.8m wide footway to serve both allocations. The shared access route has been the subject of an independent Road Safety Audit (RSA) that demonstrates that the appropriate vehicular access is deliverable.

Through suitable design, paving and landscaping, this improved access can be provided in a sensitive, rural aesthetic, appropriate to the setting of the adjacent listed Church and this landscaped, edge of settlement character of this part of Church Close. A Heritage Assessment has been undertaken which concludes that the new access and associated works could have a potentially beneficial impact by improving the relationship between the listed Church and the listed farmhouse, partly through the removal of the large coniferous hedge.

As stated previously in this letter, new development on the Site will provide over 2km of new safe and accessible footpaths. It is also proposed to retain the Forest School area and ensure safe footpath access to it via Ashington School and linking to the wider footpath provision.

New footpath links are proposed to the north east of the site to link to the existing footpath 2607 and also new footpath access to the north west of the site, both onto Rectory Lane. New footpaths are also proposed to the south west of the site to allow greater access towards Storrington. Throughout the site new pedestrian, cycle and where necessary, vehicular access routes will be created in safe and accessible forms.

As shown on the Masterplan, vehicular and pedestrian routes will link with the Chanctonbury Nursery allocation to the north to help create permeable and safe access and therefore deliver the spatial strategy of the Plan.

Employment and community infrastructure:

- xii. the provision of commercial floorspace (Use Class B1) on flexible terms, subject to meeting the requirements of Policy ASH9 (Small Scale and 'Move on' Employment Development) – this could be as part of a multi-user community facility at the Ashington Community Cluster;***
- xiii. the provision of full-sized (11-a-side) grass football pitches for community use;***
- xiv. land and contributions towards the provision of a full-sized (11-a-side), floodlit Multi-Use Games Area primarily for football use;***
- xv. land and contributions towards the provision of a sports pavilion, changing rooms and equipment storage facility;***

- xvi. the provision of allotments on site and the retention of allotment facilities immediately adjacent to Ashington School specifically for school use;**
- xvii. contributions towards the delivery of other community infrastructure identified in Policy ASH8D (Ashington Community Cluster) where it is not delivered on the site.**

Comments: In terms of flexible commercial floorspace the Land West of Ashington is well placed to provide this either within the development area or alternatively via small, low impact barn style units to the north west of the site. It is noted that the Parish may seek to deliver such uses within the community cluster.

The landowners do need to raise what appears to be an anomaly at **critterion xiii** however as the policy now refers to **grass football pitches** (plural). As set out above, the site will provide a single full-sized (11-a-side) grass football pitch and land to facilitate a MUGA for community use (junior and adult multi-use) and suitable parking provision. It is requested that this is amended or clarified in the final policy wording.

A large area to the north of the site is designated for provision of new allotments for the community with appropriate parking provision. Furthermore, the land immediately west of Ashington School is intended for continued allotment growing by Ashington School.

As shown on the Site 6 Masterplan the site is best placed to provide land for many of the community facilities identified in Policy ASH8D including a new all-weather, full size, Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), sports pavilion, sports equipment storage and a youth club. The development will also contribute to the provision of these facilities via CIL.

Flooding:

- xviii. provision for flood mitigation works to address flood issues at Mill Lane.**

Comments: On site flood mitigation works will be provided to ensure surface water run-off is not increased and to help improve flood issues at Mill Lane.

Heritage:

- xix. the setting of the listed buildings, Church Farm House and St Peter and St Paul's Church, is protected;**
- xx. in order to protect the setting of the scheduled monument and archaeological remains in the south of the site, no built development occurs in this area;**
- xxi. views to and from Church Farm House and St Peter and St Paul's Church are retained.**

Comments: An archaeology and heritage assessment has been produced and previously sent to the Parish Council. These assessments have not raised any significant issues in respect of the proposed development area for this site and demonstrates that a suitable access to the site can be achieved without any harmful impacts on the adjacent Grade II* Listed Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul.

Where important archaeological/heritage features have been identified such as the below ground remains associated with roman activity, such areas have been kept free from any proposed development. Based on current non-invasive investigations, these areas are proposed for public open space, but further detailed ground investigation will be required to fully understand the below ground archaeology to inform the detailed layout of the overall allocation. The landowners will continue to work with heritage consultants throughout the design development process to ensure the development meets the requirements of the policy.

Other principles:

xxii. mature trees are retained on the site;

xxiii. enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park, including through the provision of an appropriate landscape buffer in line with the requirements of Policy ASH5 (Landscaping and Countryside Access);

xxiv. the submission of a minerals resource assessment to ensure the viable mineral resources are not permanently sterilised by development;

xxv. occupation of the development is phased to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, in liaison with the service provider;

xxvi. the layout is planned to ensure future access to existing sewerage infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.

Comments: In line with Policy ASH5, the Masterplan has considered the existing landscape context and outlines how the site could create a landscape buffer to the open countryside to the western edges of the site and present a soft landscaped edge to the village, utilising existing trees and hedgerows and providing enhancement wherever possible. The plan utilises existing features such as drainage ditches, ponds to focus sustainable drainage work around and also open or wooded areas to focus new recreation space around; thereby making best use of the site resource to create suitable buffers between development and the countryside.

The location of development and character areas identified have sought to minimise the visual impact of the proposals on the natural setting. Opportunities to enhance and retain trees and hedgerows will be taken throughout and form part of the key considerations for the Masterplan. Furthermore, creation of biodiversity enhancements throughout the wider site, to existing hedgerows and landscape boundaries are to be maximised.

As above, the proposal will provide new safe and accessible footpaths, cycleways and bridleways. It is also proposed to retain the Forest School area and ensure safe footpath access to it via Ashington School and linking to the wider footpath provision.

New footpath links are proposed to the north east of the site to link to the existing footpath 2607 and also new footpath access to the north west of the site, both onto Rectory Lane. New footpaths are also proposed to the south west of the site to allow greater access towards Storrington. Throughout the site new pedestrian, cycle and where necessary, vehicular access routes will be created in safe and accessible forms.

All development will be phased to align with the necessary infrastructure required to serve it.

We look forward to continuing to work with both the Parish Council Steering Group on the delivery of the Plan to ensure that the Site meets the aspirations of the residents of Ashington, and delivers significant community benefits in line with policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. We would therefore like to attend any potential hearing on the Neighbourhood Plan to support the allocation and the wider Plan.

Yours sincerely

The Landowners and Developers
(Sites 5 and 6)