

# **Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031**



**Referendum Version**

**March 2021**



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (ANP) represents one part of the development plan for the parish over the period 2019 to 2031, the other part being the Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF). The ANP is required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the HDPF.
- 1.2 Horsham District Council, as the local planning authority, designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of Ashington parish in February 2014 to enable Ashington Parish Council to prepare the ANP. The ANP has been prepared by the community through the ANP Steering Group, comprised of three Parish Council members and six members of the public. All members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) are from Ashington.
- 1.3 The ANP is being prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. The NPSG has prepared the plan to establish a vision for the future of the parish and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period 2019 to 2031.
- 1.4 The map in Figure 1.1 shows the boundary of the ANP area, which is contiguous with the boundary of Ashington parish.
- 1.5 The purpose of the ANP is to guide development within the parish and provide guidance to any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within the parish. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Ashington, its residents, businesses and community groups.
- 1.6 Each section of the plan covers a different topic. Under each heading there is the justification for the policies presented which provides the necessary understanding of the policy and what it is seeking to achieve. The policies themselves are presented in the blue boxes. It is these policies against which planning applications will be assessed. It is advisable that, in order to understand the full context for any individual policy, it is read in conjunction with the supporting text.

## National Policy

- 1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:

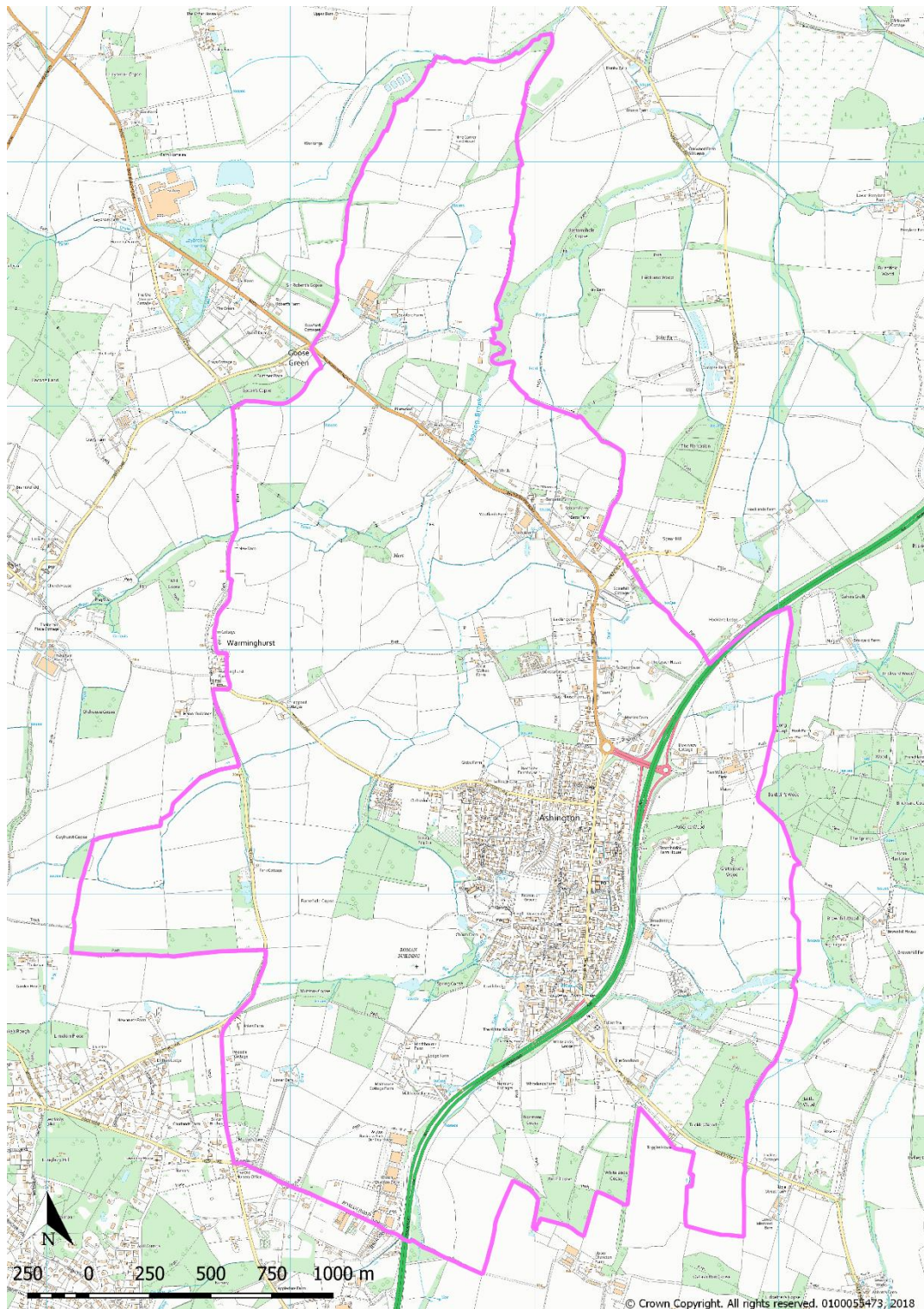
*"Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies (para 29).*

*Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently (para 30).*

*Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development (para.125).".*



**Figure 1.1: Ashington Neighbourhood Plan Area**



- 1.8 The Local Plan for Horsham District consists of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015), the West Sussex Waste Local Plan (2014) and the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (2018). These are up-to-date plans and therefore provide the strategic framework for growth in Ashington. It should be noted that the Horsham District Planning Framework is at an early stage of review.

- 1.9 The HDPF covers the period to 2031. In its settlement hierarchy, the HDPF identifies Ashington as a 'Medium Village', having a moderate level of services and facilities but, outside of some day-to-day needs, relies on larger nearby settlements to meet some of its needs (see HDPF Policy 3 – Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy). It is expected to make a contribution towards growth in line with its role in the settlement hierarchy. It is one of the roles of the ANP to provide a spatial framework for the delivery of this growth.

### **Consultation**

- 1.10 The process of preparing and seeking final adoption of ANP is in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2015 (as amended) and has been agreed by Ashington Parish Council. Details of the approach taken towards consultation are included in the published Consultation Statement (May 2020).
- 1.11 Ashington Parish Council approved the preparation of the ANP in October 2013 and, after some initial groundwork, rearranged its resources and appointed a neighbourhood plan lead in October 2015 to provide the necessary administrative/management skills to move it through the steps to completion.
- 1.12 The ANP Steering Group has developed the ANP through extensive engagement with the community. The Steering Group provided opportunity for everyone in the NP designated area to be involved, even those who were unable or unwilling to attend meetings or events.
- 1.13 The Ashington Community Action Plan 2010 was reviewed by the Steering Group and, although quite dated, contained some useful information under the following themes:
- A Better Place to Live
  - Opportunities for All
  - Better Health for All
  - Staying and Feeling Safe.
- 1.14 This information was used to inform the Steering Group consultation activities.
- 1.15 As part of the process of consulting with residents over the development of the ANP, the Steering Group developed and undertook a number of surveys between May 2016 and March 2017 in order to gather opinions and views on the issues that the document should prioritise. A summary of the key findings is included in the Ashington State of the Parish report.
- 1.16 Surveys included a business survey conducted in December 2016, sent to 22 businesses with 12 completing a response (a rate of 54%). Responses were received from retail units, horticulture nurseries, motor trades, hairdressers, estate agents and animal welfare units. Of the responses gathered, a large proportion had operated for long periods of time (over 11 years). Most employees at these businesses were local residents. Businesses identified improvements to infrastructure, including parking, public transport and better broadband, as things that would most benefit their businesses. Whilst many considered their current premises suitable, there were some businesses looking to improve their premises or move to new locations (of which most wished to move within Ashington).
- 1.17 A Young Persons Survey was undertaken in March 2017. 31 young people aged 11-21 provided responses; 20 of these respondents were aged 11-14. The survey found that most youngsters would live in Ashington in the future, but that a notable minority voiced concerns about being able to afford to do so. Most liked Ashington's friendly and safe environment, were satisfied with broadband speed and mobile coverage, and found the footpaths, cycle paths and bridleway routes

to other villages well supported. The Youth Club, gaming/gadgets, music, sports and the skatepark were the top activities for youths, but some reported a lack of things to do and issues like gangs, drugs and the condition of the Youth Club. There was a mixed response to questions about the bus services in Ashington and to nearby locations.



***Festival stall, Summer 2016***



***Focus groups, September 2016***

- 1.18 A Residents Detailed Village Survey was conducted in March 2017. 1,090 surveys were delivered to households within Ashington Parish and 328 responses were received, a return rate of 30%. When asked about their feelings towards the village, respondents reported liking Ashington's size, links to the countryside, rural setting, accessibility and friendliness. These qualities were felt to be important to retain over the lifetime of the plan and beyond. Residents also identified that benefits of new development could include infrastructure like shops & services, facilities/services for the elderly, facilities/services for young people, leisure facilities, improved movement links and funding for village projects. Potential problems associated with new development primarily concerned the lack of infrastructure provision, overstretched local amenities, pressure on childcare and school places, overloaded drains, the threat of change to the rural nature of the parish and damage to the countryside and green spaces.
- 1.19 Various ANP Focus Groups have provided contributions to the issues facing Ashington as it informed the vision and objectives of its neighbourhood plan. These included focus groups for: community facilities; economy and business; environment, heritage and local issues; transport and accessibility; and planning and infrastructure.



## 2 LOCAL CONTEXT

### History of Ashington

- 2.1 The Parish of Ashington is located in the southern part of Horsham district in West Sussex. To the south is the South Downs National Parks, with the land rising up to the south providing panoramic views across the parish. The only settlement in the parish is Ashington village, bounded to the east by the A24 road which connects it to Worthing on the south coast and to Horsham in the north.
- 2.2 Archaeological evidence proved that there was activity in Ashington around 900 BC in the late Bronze Age. To the south of the village runs the 'Green Sand Way' which is a Roman road. Just over half a mile to the north of the road is a Roman villa site.
- 2.3 Ashington is also mentioned in the Domesday Book under the name Essingetune where it proudly boasts two house-holders and six labourers. Most of Ashington's history revolves around agriculture.



***Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul***

- 2.4 In 1801 the population was 173 with 28 houses. Some twenty years later, this had grown to 41 houses. In 1802 a toll road was put across the common and a regular stagecoach service from London to Worthing and back, stopped at Ashington. This finally faded out in about 1848 when the Southern railway opened and it was easier to get to and from London and Worthing by train. The main Enclosure Act in 1816 meant houses could be built up to the road's edge, which had formerly been part of the common.
- 2.5 By 1939 an Ashington bypass was spoken of but it was not until 1995 that the bypass was completed. A new school (opened in 2000), a new community centre (opened in 2003) and approximately 700 new houses have recently been built in the village since the bypass was completed.

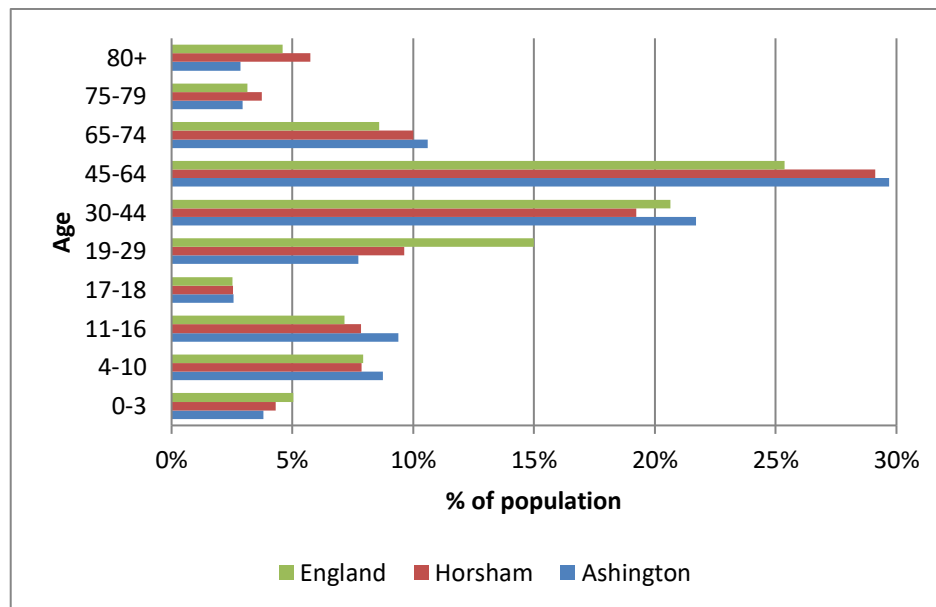
## Profile of Ashington today

2.6 Unless stated otherwise, the profile of the community has come from the 2011 Census.

### Population

2.7 In 2011, the population of the parish was 2,526. Ashington has a higher proportion of people aged 30-74 compared to that of Horsham and England, and substantially lesser people aged 19-29 (see Figure 2.1).

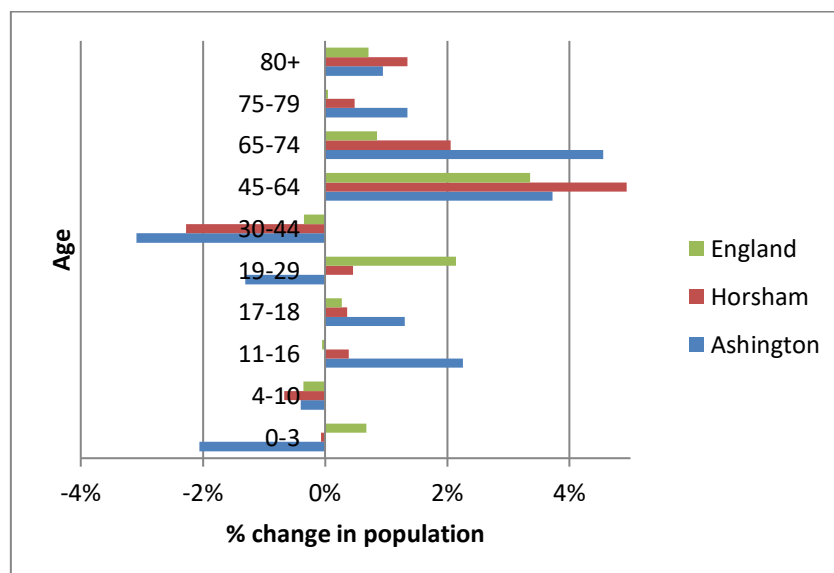
**Figure 2.1: Population Profile, 2011**



Source: 2011 Census

2.8 Since 2001, the population of the parish has grown by 184 persons, representing a 7% growth. This is in line with the growth in population in Horsham and England.

**Figure 2.2: Change in population, 2001-2011**



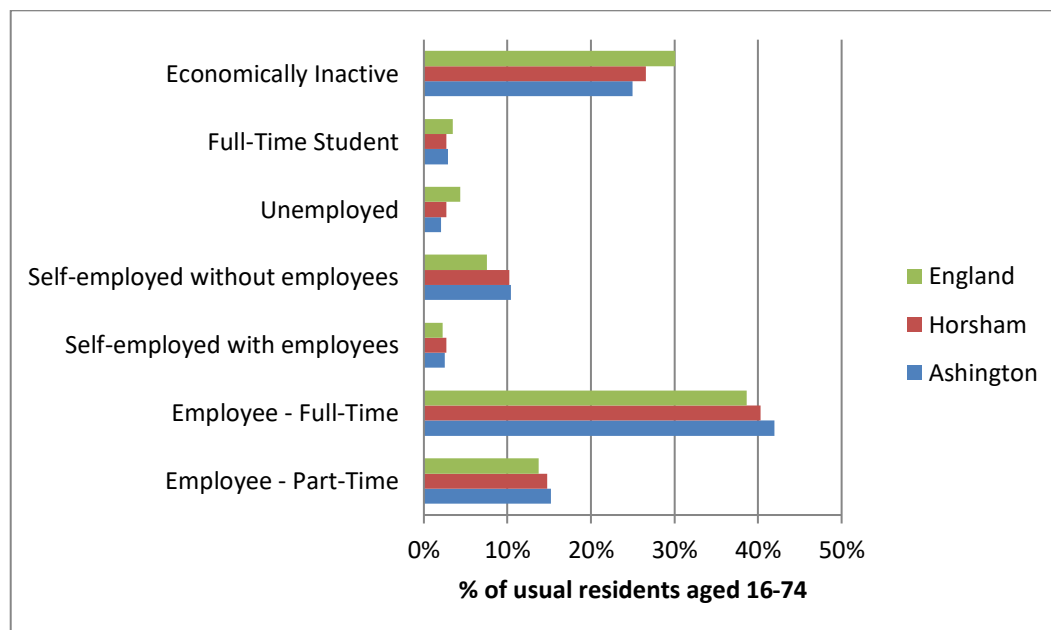
Source: 2011 Census

- 2.9 Ashington has seen a decline in the number of very young children aged 0-3 years, and in the age group 19-44; this together shows a decline in young families, whereas the same age groups for Horsham district and England show considerable growth. However, Ashington has seen a very strong growth in the population of younger people (aged 11-18), this being well above that of Horsham and England. Ashington has also seen significant growth in those of retirement age (65+). This is shown in Figure 2.2.

## Work

- 2.10 The proportion Ashington's population of working age (16 to 74) in full-time employment is high, at 42%, compared to 40% in Horsham district and 39% across England.
- 2.11 Unemployment is low in Ashington at 2%, less than the proportion of those unemployed in Horsham district and in England.
- 2.12 At 25%, the economically inactive proportion of Ashington's population at is also comparatively low to that of Horsham and of England. This is shown in Figure 2.3.

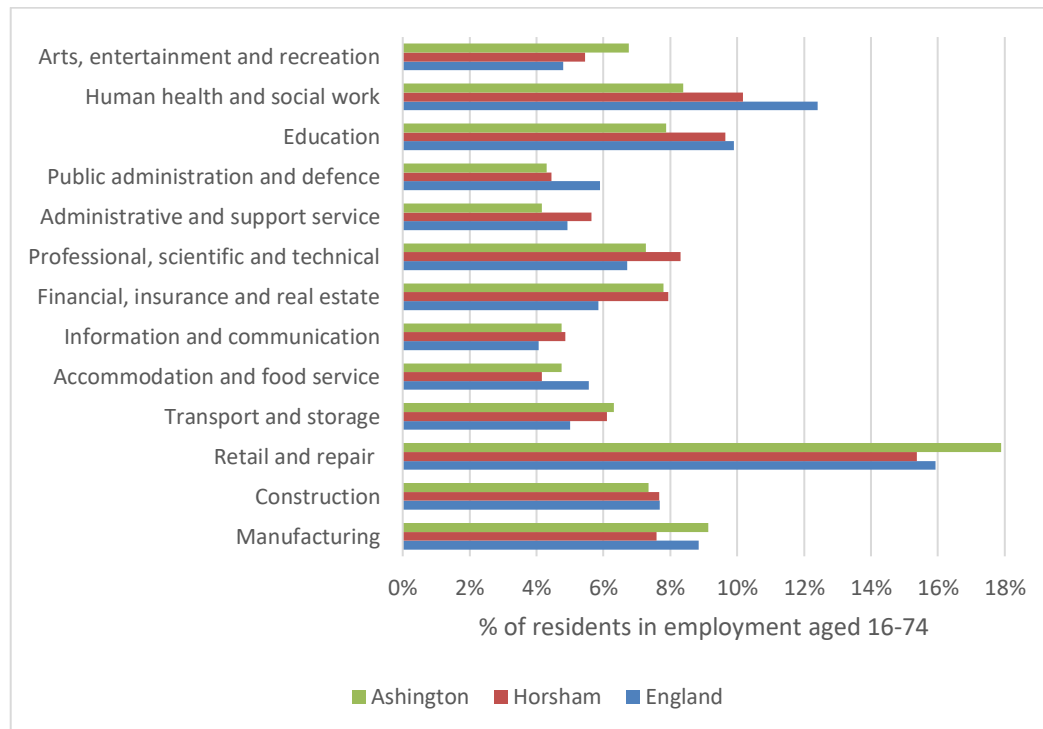
**Figure 2.3: Economic activity, 2011**



Source: 2011 Census

- 2.13 Ashington is strongly represented by workers in the retail and repair sector, despite not having a major retail centre. It is also well represented in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector and in manufacturing. This is shown in Figure 2.4.

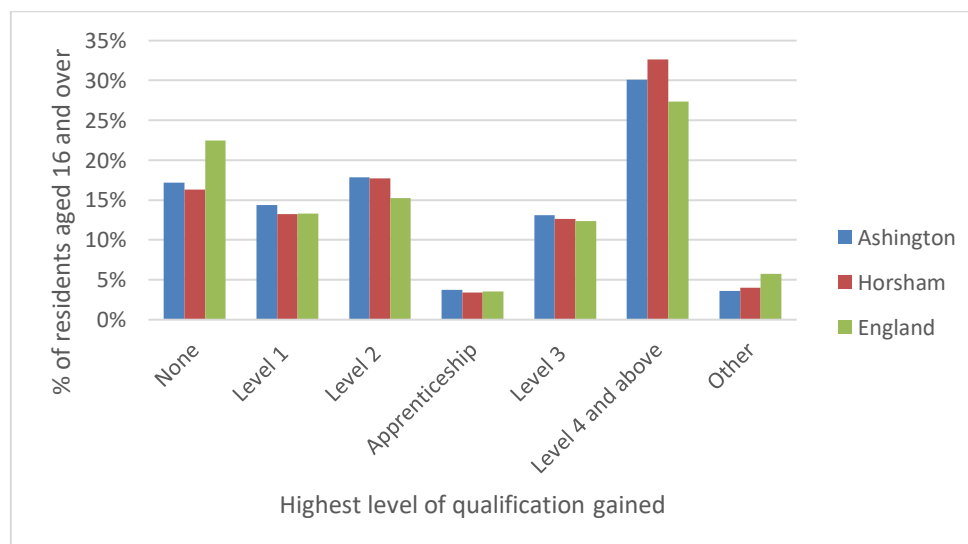
**Figure 2.4: Type of industry, 2011**



Source: 2011 Census

- 2.14 Figure 2.5 shows that the qualifications of Ashington residents are broadly in line with the district and national averages.

**Figure 2.5: Qualifications of residents**

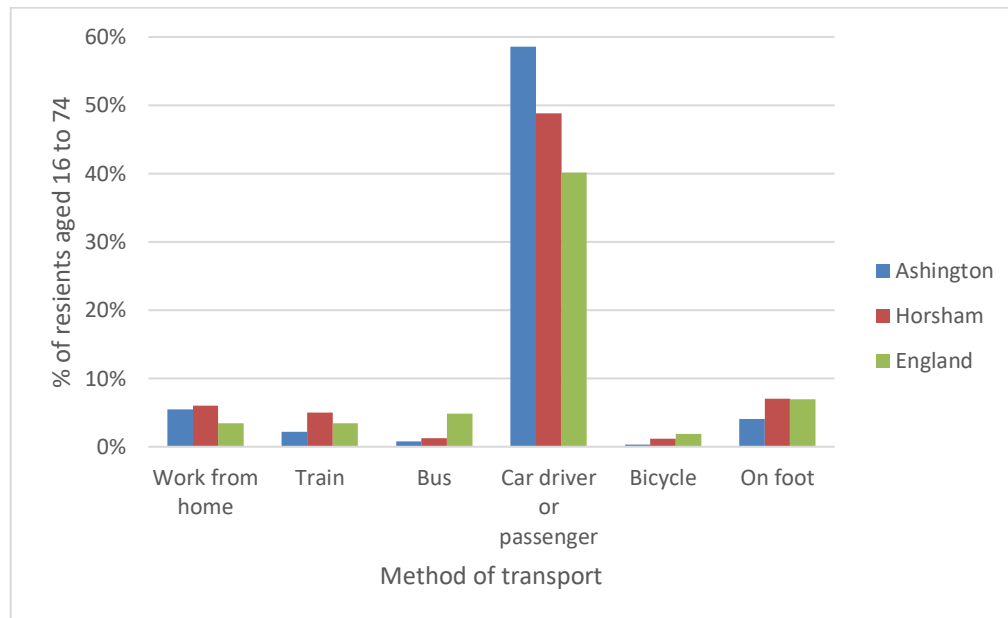


Source: 2011 Census

- 2.15 The large majority of those who travel to work do so by car. Figure 2.6 shows that nearly 60% of commuters go by car, well above the district and national averages. The lack of train services and limited bus services mean these modes are hardly used.



**Figure 2.6: Mode of transport to work**



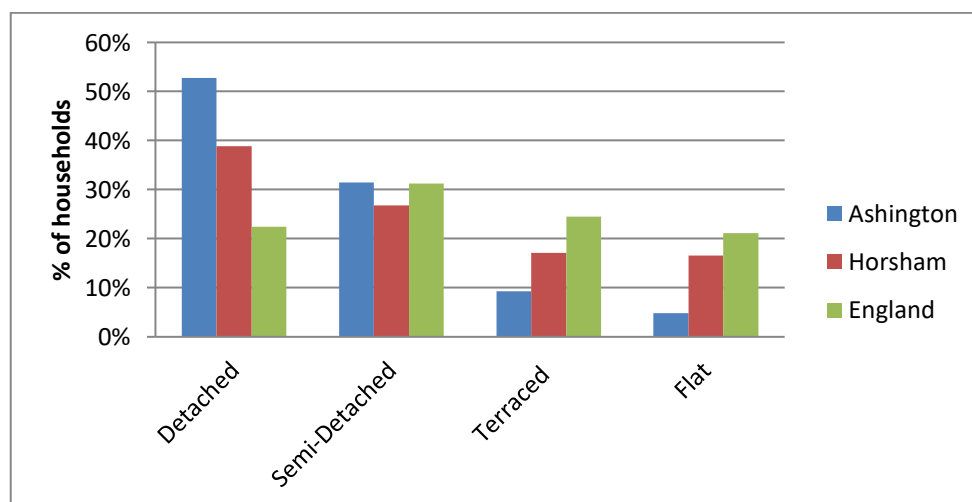
Source: 2011 Census

- 2.16 This is supported by the figures on households with access to a car. On an average, each Ashington household has access to 1.91 cars. This compares to 1.56 cars per household in Horsham district. When compared with the average across England of 1.16 cars per household, this represents very high levels of car ownership.

## Housing

- 2.17 Housing in Ashington is dominated by detached housing, representing 53% of the housing stock. This is much higher than in Horsham and England, at 39% and 22% respectively. The proportion of semi-detached housing is similar in Ashington to that of Horsham and England.
- 2.18 Ashington has a very low proportion of terraced houses (9%) and flats (5%). This is shown in Figure 2.7.

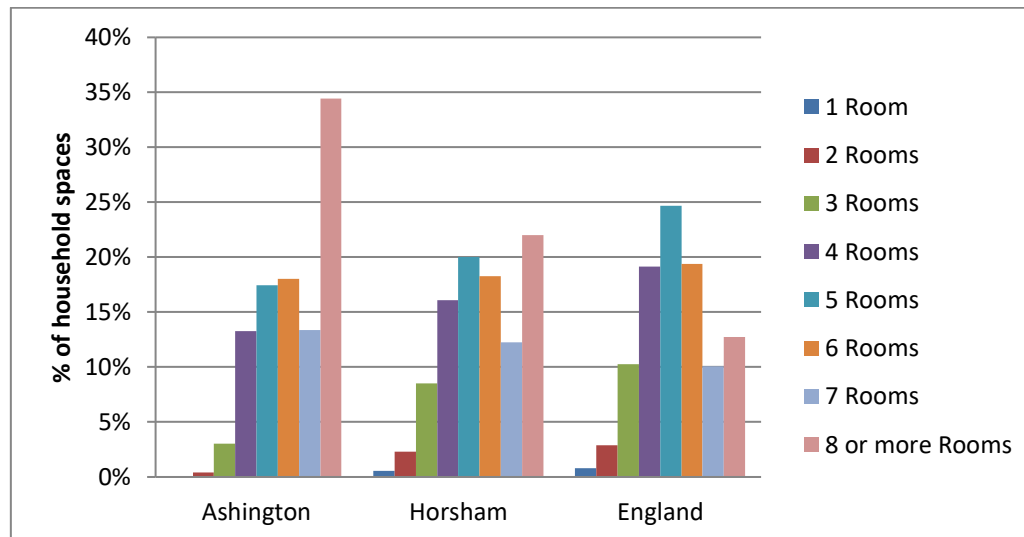
**Figure 2.7: Type of dwelling**



Source: 2011 Census

- 2.19 This is supported when looking at the number of rooms that properties in Ashington have. Figure 2.8 shows that it has a higher proportion of properties with 8 rooms or more.

**Figure 2.8: Number of rooms**



Source: 2011 Census

## Local infrastructure

- 2.20 Reflecting its role as a 'Medium Village' in the HDPF settlement hierarchy, Ashington lacks some infrastructure provided by larger towns nearby. There is one primary school (which, as of 2017, had no spare places) but no secondary school or medical centre and limited shopping facilities which are located at various points along London Road. West Sussex County Council, as education authority, has confirmed that land for the extension of the Primary School should be safeguarded.



***Shopping centre, Turnpike Way***



***Petrol filling station and convenience store, London Road***

- 2.21 Major centres of employment such as Horsham (10 miles to the north) and Worthing (10 miles to the south) are both within easy commuting distance by road. These locations are also centres for additional shops and services. Within the parish, there are a number of significant employers

located on business park sites, most notably along the A24. These businesses are able to take advantage of the strategic road links but are not particularly well related to the community of Ashington centred in the village.

- 2.22 Rail connections to London and the south coast are provided via the nearby towns of Pulborough and Billingshurst, although parking at these stations is difficult and they are not served by convenient public transport from Ashington. Public transport within and beyond the parish is extremely limited.
- 2.23 Sustainable transport networks (i.e. public footpaths and bridleways) do exist in the parish but are often disjointed, with the A24 forming a barrier to their greater use. Pavements are also in general disrepair and there is a high reliance on the private car for transport, often for short journeys within Ashington village.



***Horse riders using Rectory Lane***

- 2.24 Some local services are vulnerable due to the wider provision in nearby larger towns; for instance, the lack of medical centre in Ashington combined with the in-house pharmacies in nearby Storrington and Steyning are seen as posing a risk to the local pharmacy.





### ***Ashington Pharmacy***

- 2.25 Residents responding to surveys identified a need for various kinds of infrastructure, including medical care and facilities, care facilities and services for the elderly and increased transport links. New development was identified to potentially cause parking problems and overstretched local amenities. Respondents to the Residents Detailed Village Survey (March 2017) identified the top 5 'poorest' aspects of infrastructure and indicated a desire for dedicated money to be spent on roads, pavements, sewerage/drainage, broadband and mobile phone coverage.



***Community Centre***



***Scout Hall***

- 2.26 Most respondents to this survey also reported driving as their primary means of transport and indicated the need for new development to increase parking provision; however, a notable proportion of respondents wished to use the bus more and would like to see improved frequency, schedules and destinations (including to London via the installation of a National Express stop). Use of a train station was also identified as an important mode of transport with a significant proportion mentioning that they would travel this way. A very notable proportion also expressed desire to the ANP to support the creation of better bridleways and public footpaths to nearby locations like Storrington, Thakeham, Spear Hill and Steyning.

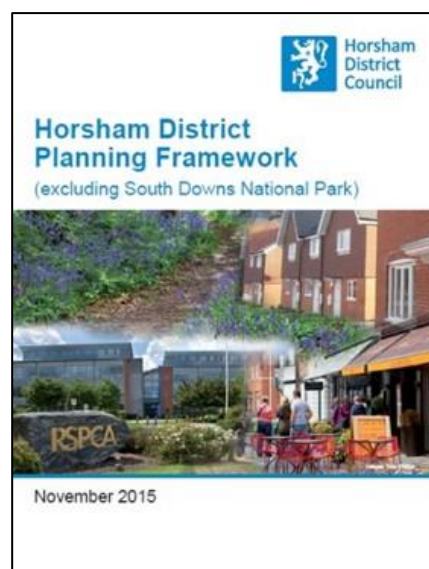


### ***Skatepark and Multi-Use Games Area***

- 2.27 Many of these respondents said that the ANP should support the provision of better healthcare facilities as a part of new developments, as the current transport options to medical facilities are limited. A large majority of respondents to the Residents Detailed Village Survey visit either Steyning or Storrington for the Doctors and typically do so by car. Overall, community facilities in Ashington (such as The Community Centre, Parish Church, Millennium Garden, Social Club and Recreation Ground) are well-used and not in need of improvement. There are a few facilities which are well-used which do require improvement (primarily the Youth Club, Sports Pavilion and Scout Hall).
- 2.28 A clear trend is the need to review, improve and possibly provide new sports facilities in Ashington. Residents voted for a number of community projects that had been identified in the parish, including a cycle route to Storrington; the adaptation of the existing multi-sports court; the creation of all-weather courts for tennis, netball and basketball; and the provision of outdoor exercise equipment.

### **Local Plan Policy**

- 2.29 The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) was adopted in November 2015.
- 2.30 The ANP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the HDPF.
- 2.31 The HPDF seeks to deliver 16,000 dwellings over the period to 2031, an average of 800 homes per annum. The bulk of growth is directed to strategic sites around Horsham, Southwater and Billingshurst. However, Policy 15 also requires the provision of at least 1,500 homes through neighbourhood plan allocations. This is not split down any further but the policy directs the proportion to be in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.
- 2.32 The HPDF identifies a need for an appropriate housing mix in the district including affordable housing (Policy 16). In addition, there is a general need for accommodation and facilities for the elderly and specialist care (Policy 18).
- 2.33 Sustainable transport and the delivery of appropriate infrastructure is another theme in the HPDF, particularly as this will need to be provided in accordance with expected growth (Policy 40). This also recognises the need for the retention and further delivery of community sites (Policy 43).
- 2.34 The plan also includes policies protecting the environment in the face of the growth due to take place in the district (Policy 24). This is recognised as important to the overall landscape character, countryside, and green infrastructure of the district (Policies 25, 26 and 31), particularly in relation to the South Downs National Park (Policy 30).
- 2.35 The adopted Horsham District Planning Framework is currently under review<sup>1</sup>. Although the review is at an early stage of preparation there is the possibility that in the future, housing allocations within the Parish may increase. If that were to be the case it may be necessary to undertake a review of this Neighbourhood Plan.



<sup>1</sup> See: [www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/local-plan](http://www.horsham.gov.uk/planning/local-plan)

### **3 OBJECTIVES OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

#### **Challenges for Ashington**

- 3.1 The ANP seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges and opportunities that face the community of Ashington. In summary the identified challenges are:
- Reliance on the private car and a lack of adequate parking provision.
  - The limited network for sustainable movement, particularly walking and cycling.
  - The need for the improvement and integration of existing community infrastructure such as sports and youth facilities, as well as adequate education and highways provision to serve new development.
  - The lack of a village 'centre', with a limited choice of retail provision being scattered along London Road.
  - Underutilised local sites for employment and a lack of space for new businesses, adding to the issue of the parish being a 'commuter village'.
  - The effect new development may have on the surrounding countryside, green spaces, and natural features of the village.
  - The general lack of recognition of the parish's heritage, with the need to protect existing assets and acknowledge the importance of others.
  - Flooding at Mill Lane.
  - The need to provide affordable homes for young people as well as to provide retirement properties and opportunities to downsize for an ageing population.

## **Ashington Neighbourhood Plan Objectives**

- 3.2 The objectives of the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:

### **Transport and movement**

- Reduce reliance on private car by enhancing sustainable transport options, particularly walking and community buses.
- To improve parking for cars in order to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

### **Environment**

- Conserve and enhance heritage assets.
- Protect the green and rural nature of the parish and its links to the countryside.
- Ensure that all new development is designed to protect and enhance the landscape, reduce or minimise flood risk, promote biodiversity and positively enhance the parish wherever opportunities exist.

### **Community and economy**

- Improve the range of community facilities and focus them in a new 'heart of the community' in Ashington village.
- Create new commercial space and premises that provides for the needs of new and existing businesses.

### **Housing needs**

- Contribute to the HDPF requirement for new homes by providing housing that meets the current and future needs of the parish, maximising opportunities for development of sustainable sites.



## 4 OVERALL SPATIAL STRATEGY

- 4.1 Ashington's growth over the plan period needs to be informed by a number of key principles and issues. The Horsham Development Planning Framework (HDPF) is expected to provide for at least 800 new dwellings per year over the plan period to 2031. This includes at least 1,500 new dwellings on non-strategic sites across the district. This requirement is not split further but Policy 15 of the HDPF directs that this should be allocated through neighbourhood plans in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.
- 4.2 Ashington is classed in the settlement hierarchy as a 'medium village' which means it is expected to provide predominantly for its own changing housing and community needs but also recognise the contribution it must make to the wider growth of Horsham district, both for housing and employment.



***London Road***



***Ashington Primary School***

- 4.3 To inform what represents an appropriate contribution towards this district-wide requirement of at least 1,500 dwellings by 2031, Ashington Parish Council commissioned a local Housing Needs Survey<sup>2</sup> which recommended that between 123 and 200 new dwellings should be planned for over the period 2017 to 2031. In order to fully address these needs and to ensure that the community infrastructure priorities can be delivered in full, the Plan allocates approximately 225 dwellings on two sites identified in Section 8. These sites are expected to deliver housing along with a range of specific infrastructure and community facilities. More generally, these allocations and other developments are expected to provide high quality schemes which generally enhance the public realm and improve accessibility for pedestrians through improvements to road safety and movement routes.
- 4.4 Development outside the site allocations is only expected to come forward on windfall sites within the built-up area boundary of Ashington village or through small-scale expansion of existing commercial facilities, subject to the impact on the wider environment. The area outside the built-up area boundary – which includes the parts of these allocations which are expected to be kept free from development - are defined as countryside where development proposals must be for appropriate countryside activities.

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<sup>2</sup> Navigus Planning (2017) *Ashington Housing Needs Assessment*, for Ashington Parish Council

- 4.5 A key aspect of the ANP is to define a 'Community Cluster' where a range of community facilities are to be located (building on the existing cluster of many of these facilities). The intention is that this will become a heart of the village which Ashington currently lacks. The Plan proposes a range of improvements and provision of new community provision addressed identified needs across a range of different activities and it is expected that such provision will be focused within the Community Cluster.

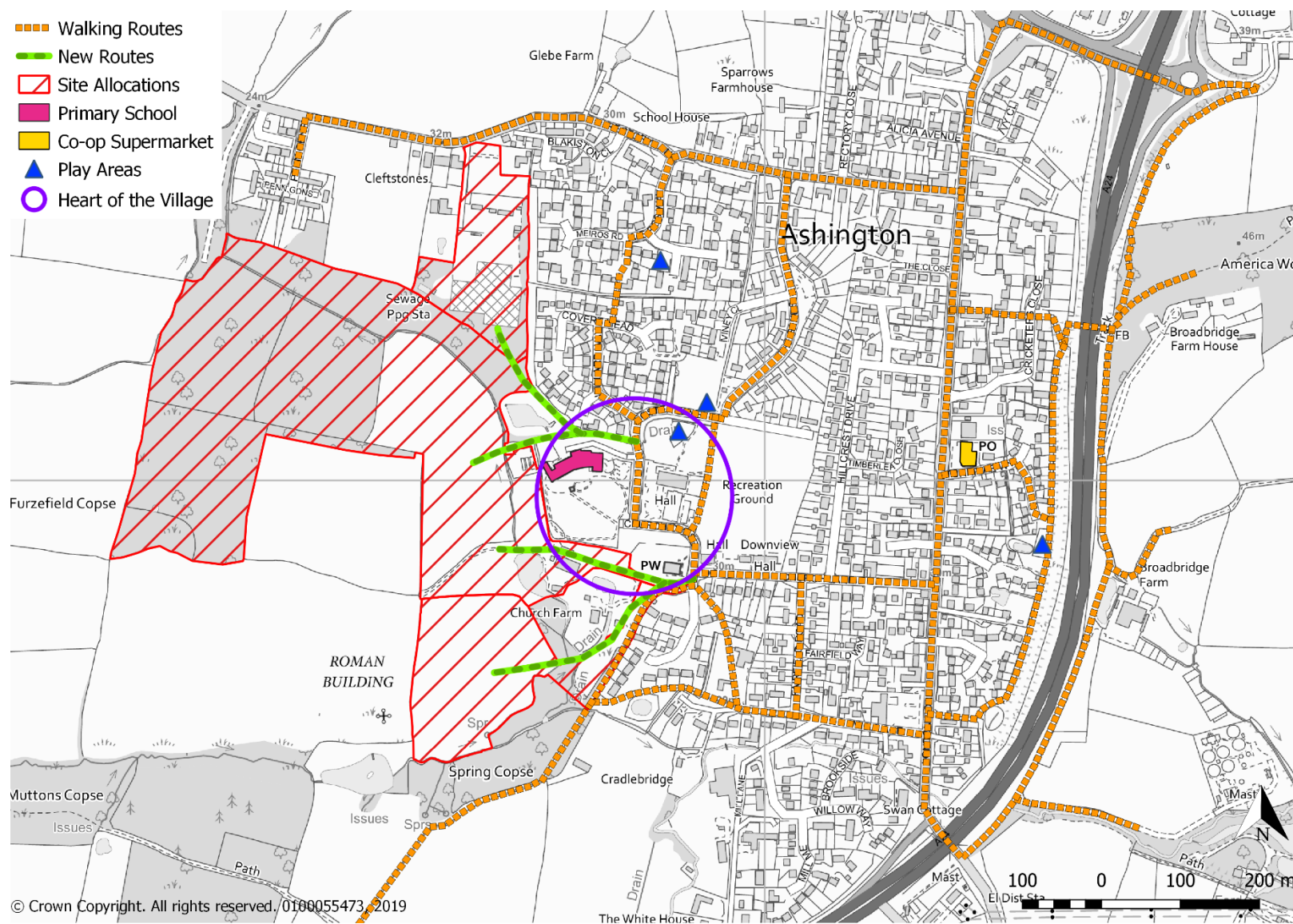
**POLICY ASH1: OVERALL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR ASHINGTON**

- A. New development in Ashington parish shall be focused within the built-up area boundary of Ashington village as identified on the Policies Map.**
- B. The Plan provides for a minimum of 225 dwellings to be built in the period 2019 to 2031 and the following sites are allocated for development:**
- i. Chanctonbury Nursery (approximately 75 dwellings)**
  - ii. Land west of Ashington School (approximately 150 dwellings)**
- C. Development of community facilities will be focused in the 'Community Cluster' identified on the Policies Map. This shall be the location where development of a range of community facilities will be delivered, unless there is a clear justification as to why provision should be made in an alternative location.**
- D. Development proposals outside the built-up area boundary and the site allocations will not be permitted unless:**
- i. they represent appropriate uses in the countryside, such as agriculture, forestry, horticulture, fishing and equestrian activities, tourism, essential utilities infrastructure and energy generation;**
  - ii. they are on previously developed land and accord with local and national policy for such development;**
  - iii. they relate to the retention of existing and appropriate provision of new commercial businesses.**

## 5 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

- 5.1 The community of Ashington is heavily reliant on the private car. The absence of a railway station and limited bus services mean that, for many services and activities, residents have to travel by car. Anecdotal evidence through engagement with the community also suggests that a number of very short journeys (less than one mile) within Ashington village are undertaken by car.
- 5.2 The local environment for pedestrians in Ashington village needs improvement in order to encourage more local trips to be made on foot. Such improvements will have a range of benefits including:
- providing a genuine alternative to the private car as a means of accessing shops and community facilities;
  - providing health benefits through increased walking and reduced air pollution from vehicles;
  - reducing climate change impacts caused by traffic congestion;
  - facilitating less congestion at busy times by encouraging children walking to and from school and shops rather than 'jumping in the car' for a short journey;
  - providing a safer environment for the community of Ashington, including for vulnerable users.
- 5.3 Access on foot into the proposed new 'heart of the village' where many community facilities will be clustered and to the existing shops requires improvement to existing walkways as well as the provision of some new walkways and pedestrian crossing points in order to encourage increases in usage.
- 5.4 A number of Walkway Routes have been identified that will enable access on foot to these key facilities. These are shown in Figure 5.1. It is vital that these Walkway Routes are improved and that access to them from the new housing developments can be provided.
- 5.5 One issue raised by the community was the amount of 'pavement parking', with pavements often blocked by parked cars or cars being parked on grass verges. A focus on improving walkway routes should not only widen pavements to make them more usable by those with a disability or with pushchairs but should also be designed to reduce parking adjacent to these routes.
- 5.6 Another specific issue is bridleway access, particularly across the A24. A footbridge for horses is not considered to be an appropriate solution and the existing underpass does not provide a suitable linkage with the existing bridleways. Whilst it is recognised that such a solution to navigate across the A24 may require a strategic solution, any possible solution brought forward as part of development identified in the ANP will be welcomed.

**Figure 5.1: Walkway Routes**



## **POLICY ASH2: INCREASING WALKING IN ASHINGTON**

- A. New development in Ashington is expected to maximise the potential for sustainable movement. Support will be given to improving appropriate sustainable accessibility for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.**
- B. To ensure that residents can walk safely to Ashington Primary School, the Ashington Community Cluster ('the heart of the village'), shops and other important facilities serving Ashington village, all new developments should ensure safe pedestrian access to link up with existing footways that, in turn, directly serve the Walkway Routes shown on the Policies Map.**
- C. Proposals to enhance the identified Walkway Routes will be encouraged. Where these are public rights of way (PROWs), their upgrading to highway network standard so they are capable of year-round use, accompanied by non-intrusive lighting, will be supported.**
- D. Development will be expected to not have an unacceptable impact on Walkway Routes and provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on the safety and flow of pedestrian access. In particular this should focus on design solutions to reduce vehicular parking where this is likely to obstruct pedestrian access by all users.**
- E. Sustainable development which creates or facilitates new linkages between PROWs and bridleways, including across the A24, will be supported.**

## **Parking**

- 5.7 An issue raised by the community is the limited parking available at key locations such as the shops and the community facilities including the Ashington Community Centre and the local shops on London Road. Particularly for convenience shopping, people like to drive and park outside a shop in order to quickly pick up a small number of items. Whilst this is understandable, the provision of improved parking for all means that this could dilute the potential to make Ashington a more 'walkable' village where more people choose to undertake more of these short distance journeys within the village on foot. Policy ASH2 seeks to enhance the quality of facilities for walking and a reduction in the reliance on and use of motor vehicles, particularly for short journeys. Proposals for new public car parking provision should be carefully located and full justification will be required for the need and the proposed location.
- 5.8 With car ownership in Ashington very high compared with district and national averages (reflecting the rural nature of the parish coupled with the limited public transport), it does need to be recognised that households will own significant numbers of cars and these need to be parked somewhere. It is vital that new development is designed to effectively minimise the impact of car parking on the public realm. In particular, high levels of on-street parking increase safety issues for pedestrians but they also have a detrimental impact on the overall feel of a place. In particular, streets with lots of cars parked along them reduce the feeling of space; in a rural village such as Ashington, this is an important concern of the community.





***Car ports***

*Source: Gardner Stewart Architects*



***A well-designed rear parking court***

*Source: Institute of Highway Engineers*

- 5.9 New residential development is therefore expected to ensure that genuine options for off-street parking are provided. Whilst garages are commonly provided, these are commonly not used for parking. Alternatives could be car ports – which can still retain storage above the parking areas – and parking courts, provided they are laid out to reduce the likelihood of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 5.10 The required levels of off-street parking to support development set out in the West Sussex Parking Standards<sup>3</sup> should be regarded as a maximum standard and should not be exceeded.

### **POLICY ASH3: PARKING PROVISION**

- A. Development proposals that generate an increased need for vehicle parking must provide suitable off-street parking in order to minimise obstruction of the local road network in the interests of the safety of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.**
- B. For all new residential developments the maximum number of car parking spaces to be provided will be in accordance with the West Sussex Residential Parking Demand Calculator, unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that an alternative approach to provision would be appropriate on a specific site.**
- C. If off-street provision is demonstrated to be unfeasible, on-street parking provision will be permitted where it does not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. In such circumstances, proposals are expected to minimise the visual impact of parking and be laid out so that obstruction of the road and footways is minimised.**

<sup>3</sup> West Sussex County Council Guidance for Car Parking in New Residential Developments, September 2010

## Community transport

- 5.11 Public transport serving Ashington is limited and, with key centres such as Horsham and Worthing relatively distant, it does not represent an attractive alternative to car use. However, there are many residents who rely on public transport to access key services, particular medical services given the lack of a GP surgery in the village. It is important that alternatives to the private car as a way of accessing facilities outside Ashington are strengthened.



*Community minibus*

- 5.12 Public bus services are run by private companies and are heavily reliant on subsidy to support the routes. Whilst contributions from development in the form of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) could be used to supplement the subsidy, it is likely that such contributions would be insufficient to significantly improve services and would only be a short term assistance. The potential however to use CIL to expand the existing community-run services is significantly greater, hence the specific identification of this as a spending priority in the green box below. At present there is a minibus service in the village provided by the West Sussex Community Minibus Association. An improved service (currently it is very limited with few volunteers) would be better able to serve the specific locations that local residents wish to travel to. There is also the Storrington Dial-a-Ride service which can be used by Ashington residents but is more expensive because of the distance drivers have to come. Contributions could be used to set up an Ashington Dial-a-Ride service.

### **SPENDING PRIORITY: COMMUNITY TRANSPORT**

As a priority for the spending of CIL money, the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan identifies the need to expand the coverage and capacity of existing community transport services, including the Community Minibus and Dial-a-Ride.



## 6 ENVIRONMENT

6.1 Ashington is characterised by its rural nature and the high quality of its surrounding countryside. In particular, the South Downs to the south provides a landscape of the highest values and long distance views of Ashington village from a number of vantage points. The ANP seeks to address environmental issues facing the parish including:

- The conservation and enhancement of the village's local heritage assets and rural setting.
- The protection of the green and rural nature of the Parish and its links to the countryside, including mitigating noise impacts from the A24.
- Ensuring that all new development is designed to protect and enhance the landscape and minimise flood risk.

### Local heritage assets

6.2 The Plan area contains 24 Grade II listed buildings. The Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul is Grade II\* listed and forms a central point of the village. There is one Grade I listed building, located on the far western boundary of the parish. There are also two scheduled monuments<sup>4</sup>, one of which lies close to the allocated housing site Policy ASH11.

6.3 National planning policy and the HDPF provides a strong framework of protection for these national heritage assets. However, Ashington has a number of unlisted buildings which are considered to be of heritage value. These are therefore considered to be Local Heritage Assets and are therefore 'locally listed'. Development which could affect their setting must address the requirements of Policy ASH4.

6.4 The Residents Detailed Village Survey March 2017 identified the following 'community interest' buildings as being worthy of designation as Local Heritage Assets:

- Methodist Church
- The Old School and Old School House, Rectory Lane

#### ***Methodist Church***



<sup>4</sup> <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/Ashington-horsham-west-sussex#.XJkRouj7RhH>

### ***Methodist Church – today and in 1894***

- 6.5 In 1887, several Ashington people approached the Rev. Charles William Andrews, a junior Methodist minister on the Worthing Circuit, when he was conducting a service in Steyning. He was invited to preach to people in Ashington.
- 6.6 Being no chapel at that time he preached in the open air in the summer and either a barn or cottage in the winter. Such was the interest in Ashington that it was decided to build a chapel.
- 6.7 Mrs. Caroline Horner had recently moved from London and bought the cottage now known as Quaker Cottage which had a large piece of land attached. She willingly donated the land where the chapel now stands.
- 6.8 In 1890 an 'iron' chapel was erected but it was soon discovered that it was too hot in summer and very noisy when it rained. This chapel seated about 120 people. An appeal was made around the Methodist circuit and £300 was raised to replace the building with a brick construction. On 14<sup>th</sup> June 1894 the foundation stones were laid. The stones are still visible around the building. On the southern side a number of bricks were laid bearing the initials on the donors.
- 6.9 In 1912 the foundations of the Sunday School building were laid at the cost of £275 - this was the hall at the back of the Chapel. The plaque high up on the west side of the Chapel still can be seen. When it was built it stated that the Chapel was a Wesleyan Chapel. This was changed some years later when certain branches of Methodism united under just the Methodist banner. The plaque is still there today.
- 6.10 The Sunday School building was used for many things. Mostly during the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was used for what we would term a farmers market. People came from miles around to buy local produce. A men's club, women's sewing circle and at one time in the 1890s, a soup kitchen was established here. It was the very hub of activity.
- 6.11 Unfortunately the congregation dwindled and it was felt that the church was no longer a viable proposition. It was then taken over by a children's nursery. Perhaps this was fitting as the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, always believed in the education of children which he spread through the teachings of literacy in his Sunday Schools.

### ***The Old School and Old School House***



### ***The Old School House – today and in 1872***

- 6.12 The 1870 Education Act required children from the age of 4/5 to the age of 12 be compulsorily educated. Up to this time no school is recorded in Ashington. The first official school was duly opened on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1872. A total of 52 children were entered on the register – whilst this register is no longer in existence, one from 1889 is.
- 6.13 When the attendance fell off around the beginning of August each year, Miss Lawrence the headmistress closed the school so that the children could help with the harvest. As Ashington was basically an agricultural village all hands were needed.
- 6.14 Subjects at the beginning were just what would be termed the 'three Rs'. Most people were illiterate at this time. Some men could sign their names but this did not mean that they could write or indeed read. Today we think that reading and writing go together but in the past these were two very distinct subjects. It was noted by Miss Lawrence that Geography and Grammar were added to the curriculum. When the Rev. Heurtley became Rector in 1878 he insisted on giving scripture lessons.
- 6.15 Today the two parts of the former school are separate, with one (the Old School) used as a children's nursery and the other (the Old School House) a private residential property.

#### **POLICY ASH4: LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS**

**Development proposals affecting local heritage assets, either directly or indirectly, should respect the significance of the local context of the asset as well as the positive contribution that the heritage asset makes to local character and distinctiveness. It should be demonstrated how proposals will contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the heritage asset and its setting. In particular the following buildings are considered to represent local heritage assets:**

- i. The Methodist Church**
- ii. The Old School and Old School House, Rectory Lane**

### **Landscaping and links into the countryside**

- 6.16 New development, particularly that which is located on the edge of the existing village, needs to be well landscaped to avoid creating a 'hard edge' to the village. With such high quality views into the village from the high points on the edge of the South Downs National Park to the south, it becomes even more important that the design of the development provides an appropriate transition between urban edge and the wide open countryside.
- 6.17 In addition, these developments on the edge of the village will often cross land which either currently links the village with the open countryside or provides the potential to create a better link. The community of Ashington identified access to the countryside as an important issue and, whilst there is a good public rights of way (PROW) network, there are some places where it does not link up as well as it could. Certain site allocations are specifically required to provide particular PROW linkages but all sites should, where possible, seek to link up to the PROW network or at least ensure that linkages can be made at a later date.



***Ashington village from Chanctonbury Ring on the South Downs***

**POLICY ASH5: LANDSCAPING AND COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS**

- A. Development which abuts open countryside must not create a hard edge and should provide an appropriate landscape buffer. This could include the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), formal open space or play space.**
- B. Proposals must demonstrate how the visual impact of buildings on the site has been minimised through their layout, heights and landscaping. In particular, the retention and planting of trees, hedges and vegetation is encouraged to soften the impact to development, retain and improve the street scene, keep the rural village feel of Ashington and, where possible, enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park. Proposals must demonstrate how the development is sympathetic to the landscape setting and the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.**
- C. Development which abuts open countryside adjacent to an existing public right of way should ensure that effective footpath access is created to the public right of way directly from the development. Equally, development which is close to an existing right of way should ensure that an access route from the site is provided which enables the extension or realignment of the public right of way so that it is directly accessible from the site.**
- D. The provision of improved bridleway access for horse riders is encouraged.**

## Noise

- 6.18 As Ashington village has extended to the east, this has coincided with the increase in traffic using the A24 road. As a result, many residents living near the A24 road report noise disturbance being an issue for them. It is important that any future development which is sufficiently close to the A24 road such that the road noise could impact on quality of life, should ensure that proper mitigation of these noise impacts is provided. This not only includes the design of properties to minimise the indoor effects of noise, e.g. window glazing, but measures to ensure that people's enjoyment of time in their gardens is not impacted. This was an issue raised by a number of local residents. Measures such as tree and shrub planting can help to minimise noise impacts and are therefore encouraged and it is important that applications clearly follow national Planning Practice Guidance<sup>5</sup> and DEFRA's Noise Policy Statement for England<sup>6</sup> as well as the Professional Practice Guidance on Planning and Noise (ProPG)<sup>7</sup>.

### **POLICY ASH6: NOISE IMPACTS**

**Development which, by virtue of its proximity to the A24 road, could experience detrimental health impacts in terms of noise levels, must demonstrate that all such impacts can be adequately mitigated. This includes noise impacts in both indoor and outdoor locations.**

## Flooding

- 6.19 Ashington has a particularly localised flooding issue around the Mill Lane area. In recent years, surface water flooding caused by heavy rainfall has resulted in a number of properties in the area being flooded and the road and footway being impassable. This has meant that a number of residents in the area have been unable to leave Mill Lane so have effectively been cut off.
- 6.20 A flood study of the Mill Lane area has been undertaken by West Sussex County Council (WSCC)<sup>8</sup>, the flood authority. This looked at various solutions to address the flood issue in this location and WSCC has reaffirmed a commitment to delivering improvements, subject to funding. The report identified that a solution is required that will either increase capacity of the culverted watercourse at Mill Lane, or divert the water. This could include land under the control of the owners of the land west of Ashington School (Policy ASH11) which would enable exceedance flows to be taken northwards and west of Church Farm House. This would require a link to be made through the northern part of the site allocation to then take the flows up to Rectory Lane. It will be important that the relevant parties work together.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/noise--2>

<sup>6</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69533/pb13750-noise-policy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69533/pb13750-noise-policy.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ioa.org.uk/sites/default/files/14720%20ProPG%20Main%20Document.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Opus (2017) *Flood Study Report for Mill Lane, Ashington*, for West Sussex County Council





***Mill Lane in flood, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012***

- 6.21 As part of the delivery of these two sites, appropriate mitigation measures are expected to be delivered. Further feasibility work will be required to identify a more specific costed scheme. This will also include further investigative work to design a scheme which ensures no flooding of the listed Church Farm House.

**POLICY ASH7: ADDRESSING FLOODING IN MILL LANE**

**Appropriate development which is in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan and which satisfactorily addresses or contributes towards mitigating localised flooding issues in the Mill Lane area will be supported.**

## 7 COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY

- 7.1 Ashington village has a small but significant number of community facilities. These are predominantly located around the Recreation Ground area and include a play area, skate park, multi-sports court, football pitches (adult and junior), sports pavilion, youth club (in the old village hall building), scout hall and community centre. However, over time there has been little improvement of many of these facilities, either in terms of their quality or their ability to support the growing population. Figure 7.1 shows their location and state of repair.
- 7.2 The ANP offers the opportunity to ensure that the provision of community facilities serving Ashington are modern and properly reflect the needs of the growing community. In addition, this creates a related opportunity to create a 'Community Cluster' around the Recreation Ground area where all these facilities can be provided and the community can congregate when using them. At present, Ashington lacks a physical heart to the village and the community has stated this is to its detriment, so the Community Cluster provides the opportunity to address this and create a central point where many of the village's activities will occur.

### The Ashington Community Cluster

- 7.3 Based on engagement with the community, the development of an Audit of Community Assets<sup>9</sup> and review of the evidence base on sports and leisure needs developed by Horsham District Council, a range of needs have been identified. The delivery of facilities to address these needs in a single location creates the opportunity to develop the Ashington Community Cluster.

### Play and youth facilities

- 7.4 In early 2018, the Parish Council took forward a programme of improvements to replace the existing play equipment with new, modern play facilities on the play areas at Warminghurst Close and Posthorses. These are smaller play facilities suited to the needs of young children. The existing play facilities need improvement and expansion, reflecting the growing population and the identification, in 2014, of a general shortage of quality play space in Ashington<sup>10</sup> which has not been addressed. Improvements to the facilities provided at the current multi-sports court would result in to being upgraded to a formal multi-use games area (MUGA).



***Skate park and MUGA***



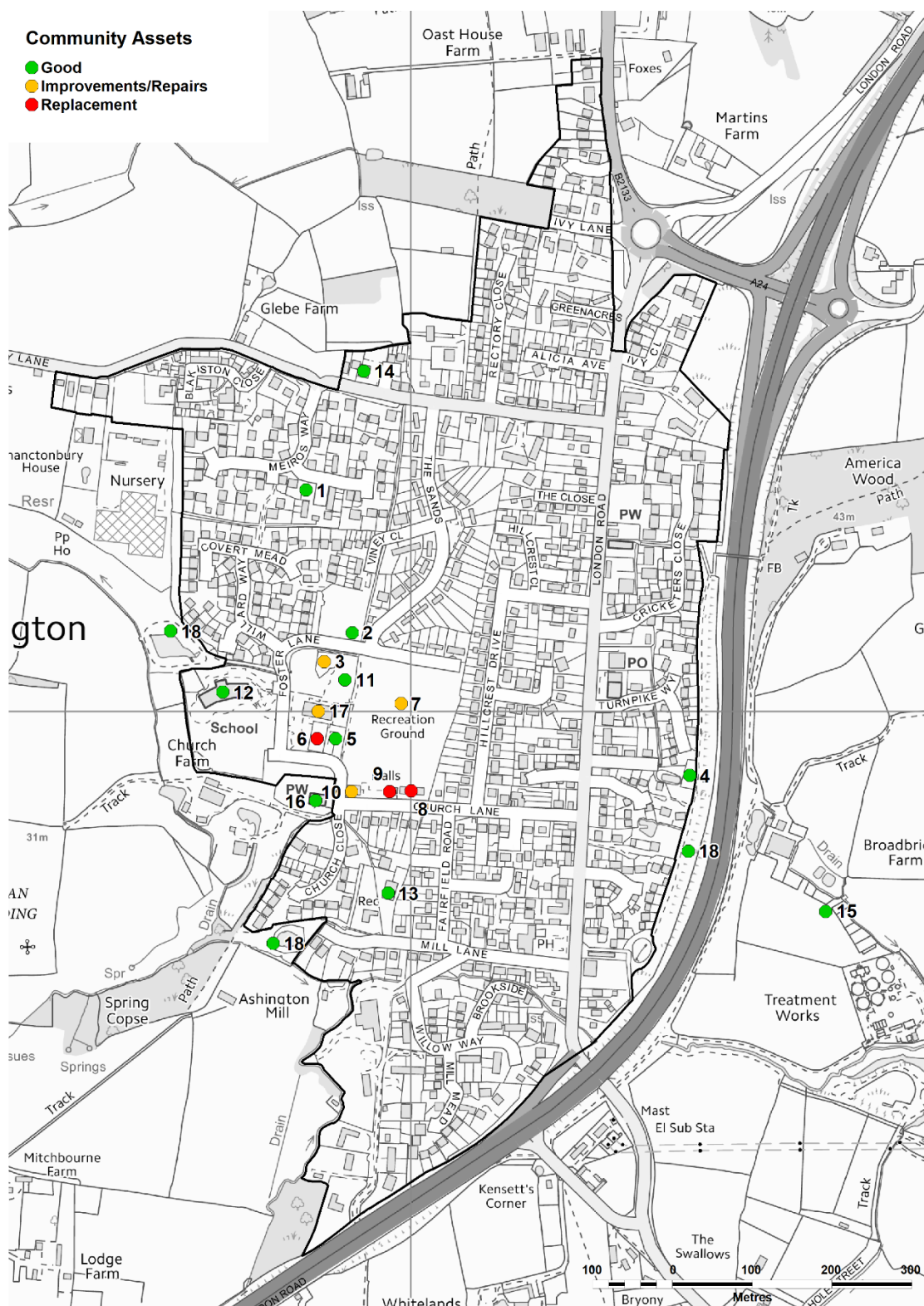
***Community centre play area***

<sup>9</sup> Community Needs, May 2018, A Summary of Evidence

<sup>10</sup> Kit Campbell Associates (2014) *The Horsham District Sport, Open Space and Recreation Assessment: February 2014*, for Horsham District Council



### Figure 7.1: Location and quality of community facilities in Ashington



Key:

1 – Warminghurst Close Play Area, 2 – Foster Lane Over 12s Play Area, 3 – Foster Lane Under 12s Play Area, 4 – Posthorses Play Area, 5 – Skatepark, 6 – multisports court, 7 – Recreation Ground, 8 – Youth Club (Old Village Hall), 9 – Sport Pavilion, 10 – Scout Hall, 11 – Millennium Garden, 12 – Primary School, 13 – Social Club, 14 – Chanctonbury Playschool (Old Village School), 15 – allotments (private), 16 – Parish Church, 17 – Community Centre, 18 – balancing ponds (Parish Council owned)

## **Sports facilities**

- 7.5 The current football pitches at the Recreation Ground need improved drainage. Ashington Cougars Football Club lacks facilities for training and for equipment storage. Current changing facilities are also poor. The development of a floodlit MUGA dedicated to sports uses (and large enough for football use) would create a winter training facility and a new sports pavilion could provide modern changing rooms and storage space.



***Recreation ground***



***Sports pavilion and open space***

- 7.6 In addition, Ashington Cougars Football Club requires access to more grass pitches so it can play all its home matches locally. All the above sports needs can be accommodated on the allocation of the land west of Ashington School (Policy ASH11).
- 7.7 Older people in the community expressed a wish for equipment that would enable them to exercise in an outdoor space. In addition to this, the only gym equipment for younger people is provided at the youth club and only to members one evening a week. The provision of outdoor gym equipment for all ages is therefore sought within the Community Cluster. This is to be delivered on public green space to be provided by the land at Chanctonbury Nursery (Policy ASH10).

## **Other community facilities**

- 7.8 The range of community groups which require indoor space is broad, with space currently divided between the Community Centre, scout hall and youth club. The development of the Community Cluster creates an opportunity to develop a modern facility which is sufficiently flexible to be used by a wide range of different users. Moreover, it could create the opportunity to provide an office for the Parish Council and commercial uses such as a creche or meeting spaces for small businesses or to be hired out for events.



***Youth club***



***Scout hall***

- 7.9 It will be important that all development on site allocations in the ANP contribute towards delivering the community infrastructure requirements of the Community Cluster. Further funding is likely to be needed but these contributions will help to lever in funds from other sources.
- 7.10 A further wider benefit of the allocation of the land west of Ashington School (Policy ASH11) is the provision of allotments, currently lacking in Ashington.

### **Footpath links**

- 7.11 All allocations are required to improve and enhance existing footpath/public right of way linkages to the countryside (see Policy ASH2). This is particularly relevant for the land at Chanctonbury Nursery (Policy ASH10) which creates the opportunity to provide an improved footpath along the eastern edge of the site to link up Rectory Lane with the Community Cluster.
- 7.12 The land west of Ashington School (Policy ASH11) creates the opportunity to upgrade footpath FP2611 to a shared foot/cycle path through to Malthouse Lane. This will improve access for walkers and cyclists into the South Downs.
- 7.13 This allocation includes a permissive footpath link for Ashington Primary School to access woodland used for Forest School activities. It is vitally important that such access is retained and is a requirement of the allocation of this site. In addition, the site also has other existing footpath linkages which should be maintained and enhanced, even if this requires some limited diversion.

**POLICY ASH8: ASHINGTON COMMUNITY CLUSTER**

- A. The 'Community Cluster' identified on the Policies Map is expected to be the focus of new and improved community facilities to serve the needs of the community of Ashington.**
- B. The provision of new and improved community facilities will be secured and delivered as summarised in Table 7.1.**
- C. As part of any new community facilities, the provision of flexible commercial office/workspace (Use Class B1) and/or meeting rooms for private hire is encouraged.**

**Table 7.1: Provision of community facilities**

<b>Infrastructure facility</b>	<b>Land west of Ashington School (Policy ASH11)</b>	<b>Chanctonbury Nursery (Policy ASH10)</b>	<b>Other sites</b>
<b>New provision on Chanctonbury Nursery (Policy ASH10)</b>			
A range of outdoor gym equipment for all ages		Direct provision on site	
<b>New provision on land west of Ashington School (Policy ASH11)</b>			
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
<b>Ashington Community Cluster</b>			
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



## Ashington's economy

- 7.14 Ashington has a small economy. Within the village there are a few small employers, mostly providing retail and services located around London Road. There are some other small business areas which provide space for businesses but these are not in ideal locations and have little potential to expand or are difficult to access, e.g. Mill Lane and Lodge Farm. Over time the village has seen the loss of other businesses such as at Chanctonbury Nurseries. Outside the village to the south there are some larger employers in industrial units located adjacent to the A24.
- 7.15 Generally therefore, Ashington's workforce commutes out of the parish to access job opportunities. Whilst this is unlikely to change – and there are no strategic employment areas identified in the HDPF in Ashington where large employers would be likely to locate – it is important that the potential for small scale employment is supported. Some local businesses have reported the need for larger premises to allow expansion and a wish to stay in the area, but there being no suitable sites. There is clearly therefore a need for more 'move-on' space to retain the existing business base. This space needs to be medium-sized units that are sufficiently flexible to address the needs of a range of different types of business, i.e. both office-based and light industrial businesses.



### *Small businesses in Ashington using available properties flexibly*

- 7.16 As shown in Section 2, Ashington in 2011 had a high proportion of people in self-employment and also one-third of its workforce were educated at least to degree level. This profile mirrors the wider growth in levels of self-employment and creation of small-scale businesses since this time. What this creates is a growing need for flexible workspace and meeting space, particularly in locations where the profile of the workforce suggests a strong propensity to work in this way. Many self-employed people would rather take workspace than work from home but even if they don't, then the opportunity to access meeting space can be an important consideration for their business.
- 7.17 At present there is no space of this type in Ashington and little in the wider area. Any provision needs to offer desk space and small office space on flexible terms (for example, the inclusion of an automatic break clause within the first 3 or 6 months or guaranteed rental rates for the first two years), coupled with meeting rooms that are easy to hire when needed. Such provision may be suitable as part of the development of the Ashington Community Cluster but it may equally be appropriate to be delivered as part of the land west of Ashington School (Policy ASH11).



- 7.18 This supports the requirements of Policy 7 of the HDPF which encourages sustainable local employment growth through neighbourhood plans and Policy 9 which supports the provision of small start-up and move-on business units.

**POLICY ASH9: SMALL-SCALE AND 'MOVE-ON' EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT**

- A. Development proposals to provide small-scale office/workspace and meeting rooms for private hire on flexible terms that supports the creation of employment opportunities are encouraged. Such provision should be focused in the following locations:**
- i. Existing employment areas**
  - ii. The Ashington Community Cluster**
  - iii. On land west of Ashington School (Policy ASH11).**
- B. Provision of small-scale offices/workspace in other locations is encouraged where it is not possible to secure provision in the locations identified above on flexible terms that would encourage the creation and growth of start-up and micro-businesses.**
- C. The provision of 'move-on' employment space to serve the needs of existing and growing businesses in Ashington is encouraged on existing employment sites, provided this does not result in the loss of a viable existing business.**
- D. Such development proposals should maximise the potential for accessibility by sustainable transport options, e.g. walking and cycling.**

## **8 SITE ALLOCATIONS**

- 8.1 The ANP seeks to allocate sites in order to deliver the appropriate housing in line with the needs of the district in a manner that considers the setting of the Parish. As identified in Section 4, the overall assessed housing need for Ashington over the plan period is approximately 200 dwellings. The two site allocations are expected to deliver a minimum of 225 dwellings. The higher figure allows a buffer to reflect changing needs and also enables the delivery of a number of wider community benefits that will help address the objectives of the Plan.

### **Housing needs**

- 8.2 The ANP recognises the need to contribute to the HDPF requirement for new homes by providing housing that meets the current and future needs of the Parish, principally through the development of sustainable site allocations.
- 8.3 HDPF Policy 16 states that development should provide a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of the district's communities as evidenced in the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The HDPF summarises that there is a considerable need to meet the housing requirements of an increasing elderly population which typically requires smaller homes that are designed with the needs of older people in mind. This is supported by the evidence in the Ashington Housing Needs Assessment 2017 and reflects feedback from the community of Ashington which stated a desire for some elderly households to downsize. The community also identified that this lack of smaller, appropriate housing for older people had the effect of contributing towards a lack of available housing for young people and families in Ashington.
- 8.4 The HDPF encourages neighbourhood plans to identify sites for new elderly downsizing accommodation. It is particularly important that such provision is close to the shops, services and other community facilities in Ashington.

### **Design principles**

- 8.5 The sites allocated in the Plan reflect sustainable locations adjacent to the existing boundary of Ashington village. However, all these sites are on open land and therefore could have a detrimental visual impact on the landscape if poorly planned, designed and laid out. Given the topography of Ashington, development can easily be very visible – particularly to the south - which is unlikely to sit well in the wider landscape of the South Downs National Park. To achieve good design, it is important that proposals recognise the character of Ashington in terms of its building design and layout and the relationship of the built edge of the village with the surrounding countryside. Trees, hedges and vegetation generally can soften the impact to development, improve the street scene and keep the rural village feel of the area. This links in with Policy ASH5 ('Landscaping and Countryside Access').

### **Minerals**

- 8.6 Policy M9 of the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan 2018 safeguards minerals. The two allocations are underlain by the safeguarded clay resource. A mineral resource assessment will be required, at planning application stage, on each of these sites to ensure that viable mineral resources are not permanently sterilised by development.

## Chanctonbury Nursery

- 8.7 The former Chanctonbury Nursery site is 2.4 hectares. It is no longer in its previous nursery use and is well located to access the heart of the village. Given the nature of the former use, it will be important to consider whether there is any ground contamination (from nitrates and pesticides).
- 8.8 The site is allocated to deliver approximately 75 dwellings which is considered to be the upper end of the site's capacity but reflects the expectation that the site will deliver a mix of housing, including smaller housing (which serves to reduce the overall density of development on the site). It is important that proposals adequately reflect these considerations.

**Figure 8.1: Key principles for development of Chanctonbury Nursery**



- 8.9 There is an existing PROW (FP2607) running along the eastern edge of the site which links up Rectory Lane with the heart of the village (enabling safer access to public rights of way into the countryside). However, particularly in winter months this route is not conducive to everyday use. In order to facilitate better day-to-day pedestrian access to Rectory Lane, any development proposals are expected to upgrade this public footpath using materials that enable year-round use and making sure it is appropriately lit. Such lighting must be designed to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties.

- 8.10 In order to enhance the range of provision of community leisure facilities easily accessible from the heart of the village, development proposals must also deliver public open space at the southern end of the site and, as part of this provision, must include outdoor gym equipment for public use.
- 8.11 Vehicular access into the site would be expected to be from Rectory Lane.

#### **POLICY ASH10: CHANCTONBURY NURSERY**

**Land at Chanctonbury Nursery (approximately 2.4 hectares as identified on the Policies Map and in Figure 8.1) is allocated for approximately 75 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. at least 25% of all units are designed to meet the needs of older people, with an appropriate split of the provision based on the mix of market and affordable properties;
- 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.

##### **Accessibility:**

- v. 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. Such lighting must be designed to protect the amenity of neighbouring residents;
- vi. the provision of appropriate vehicle access into the site from Rectory Lane;
- vii. the provision of appropriate pedestrian access which provides direct and safe linkages into the Walkway Routes identified in Policy ASH2.

##### **Community infrastructure:**

- viii. the provision of high quality public open space which incorporates a range of outdoor gym equipment for all ages;
- ix. contributions towards the delivery of the community infrastructure identified in Policy ASH8 (Ashington Community Cluster).

##### **Other principles:**

- x. enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park, including through the provision or enhancement of an appropriate landscape buffer in line with the requirements of Policy ASH5 (Landscaping and Countryside Access);
- xi. the submission of an environmental report which considers issues relating to ground contamination;
- xii. the submission of a minerals resource assessment to ensure the viable mineral resources are not permanently sterilised by development;
- xiii. occupation of the development is phased to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, in liaison with the service provider;
- xiv. the layout is planned to ensure future access to existing sewerage infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.

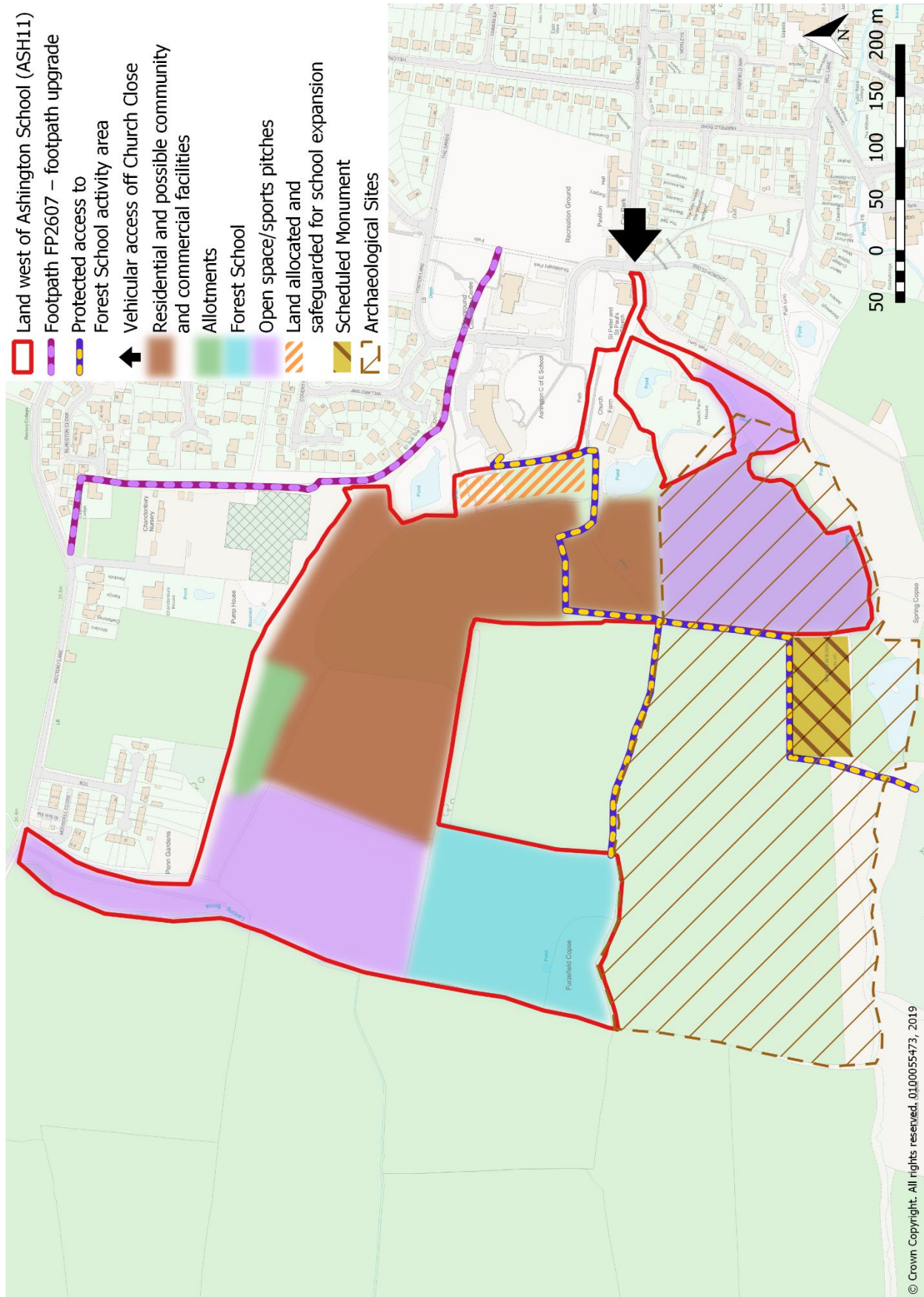
## **Land west of Ashington School**

- 8.12 The land west of Ashington School is 18.5 hectares. It is located immediately adjacent to the existing built-up area of the village and also to the Community Cluster. It is a large site, reflecting the opportunity to provide housing and other community uses but also to provide public open space in the west of the village. The site is allocated to deliver approximately 150 dwellings and it is vital that built development is restricted to the eastern part of the site closest to the existing built-up area. It is not considered acceptable for development to encroach into the existing wooded areas on the west of the site or the open countryside areas on the south of the site, both of which should be retained for public open space. It must be well landscaped in order to avoid a hard edge to the site.
- 8.13 Development of the site creates the opportunity to deliver significant community benefits in the form of a range of improved community facilities as identified in Policy ASH8. As explained in Section 7, these could be delivered using contributions from development either at the Community Cluster if improvements or new provision is appropriate in this location or on land set aside for these uses on the eastern part of the site, immediately adjacent to the existing Community Cluster.
- 8.14 Development proposals would be expected to deliver allotments and publicly accessible green open space on site. The allotments would be most appropriately located in the north of the site with the green open space in the west. In addition, the Primary School currently has an allotment immediately adjacent to the school which it uses for teaching purposes. This should be retained.
- 8.15 The growth of Ashington requires additional educational provision, including primary school provision. West Sussex County Council (WSCC), as education authority, has advised that a minimum of 0.1 hectares of land adjoining the Ashington Primary School site, closest to the existing school buildings, is required to support the growth of the school by 0.5 forms of entry. However, this scale of growth would not represent the optimal operations requirement for school expansion. Additional land may therefore be required in order to provide further forms of entry depending on the requirements of the school. It is considered prudent and necessary, in order to retain primary education provision in its current location in the heart of the village adjacent to the Community Cluster, to safeguard land for potential school expansion. WSCC has advised that a further 0.44 hectares of safeguarded land, adjoining the existing school site, could enable future expansion if required (a total of 0.54 hectares).
- 8.16 Access on foot to the public open space from the eastern part of the site will be important. As part of this, the west of the site is used by Ashington Primary School for Forest School activities. The availability of this space for such activities must be retained, along with safe access on foot from the school. In addition, the School uses another area for Forest School activities to the south-west. Footpath access runs through the site so it is important that this is retained.
- 8.17 Development of the site creates the opportunity to upgrade Public Right of Way FP2611 to a high quality footpath and cycle route which creates access to Malthouse Lane. At present this is not of sufficient quality to enable easy access by a range of users seeking access to the South Downs. Much of the PROW is outside the site but is under the control of the landowner of the southern part of the site.
- 8.18 Vehicular access to the site must be via Church Close. The design of this vehicular access must protect the setting of the listed Church and Church Farm House. As part of this, both have views which should be retained, as well as the longer distance views of St Peter and St Paul's Church from the south-west.



- 8.19 In addition, this part of the site includes a scheduled monument (Roman building north west of Spring Copse) and Roman remains. Built development is therefore excluded from this part of the site which is expected to be given over to public open space, accompanied by a suitable management plan.
- 8.20 As explained in Section 6, in order to address flooding issues at Mill Lane, it may be necessary to design a scheme which diverts water northwards through the site. It will be important that such matters have demonstrably been addressed and that development proposals properly allow for such works to be undertaken on the site. Any scheme of flood relief must demonstrate that it has the agreement of all parties to a solution that can be delivered comprehensively.

**Figure 8.2: Key principles for development of land west of Ashington School**



## **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 approximately 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. at least 25% of all units are designed to meet the needs of older people, with an appropriate split of the provision based on the mix of market and affordable properties;
- 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.

### **Layout:**

- v. built development is confined to the central 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 to be agreed by the local planning authority.

### **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.

### **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 a full-sized (11-a-side) grass football pitch 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 ASH8 (Ashington Community Cluster) where it is not delivered on the site.
- xviii. contributions for education as well as the allocation of 0.1 hectares of land adjoining the Ashington Primary School site, closest to the existing school buildings, to enable school expansion to mitigate allocated development;

- xix. safeguarding of a further 0.44 hectares of land adjoining the existing school site for further school expansion if required.**

**Flooding:**

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

**Heritage:**

- xxi. the setting of the listed buildings, Church Farm House and St Peter and St Paul's Church, is protected;**
- xxii. 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;**
- xxiii. views to and from Church Farm House and St Peter and St Paul's Church are retained.**

**Other principles:**

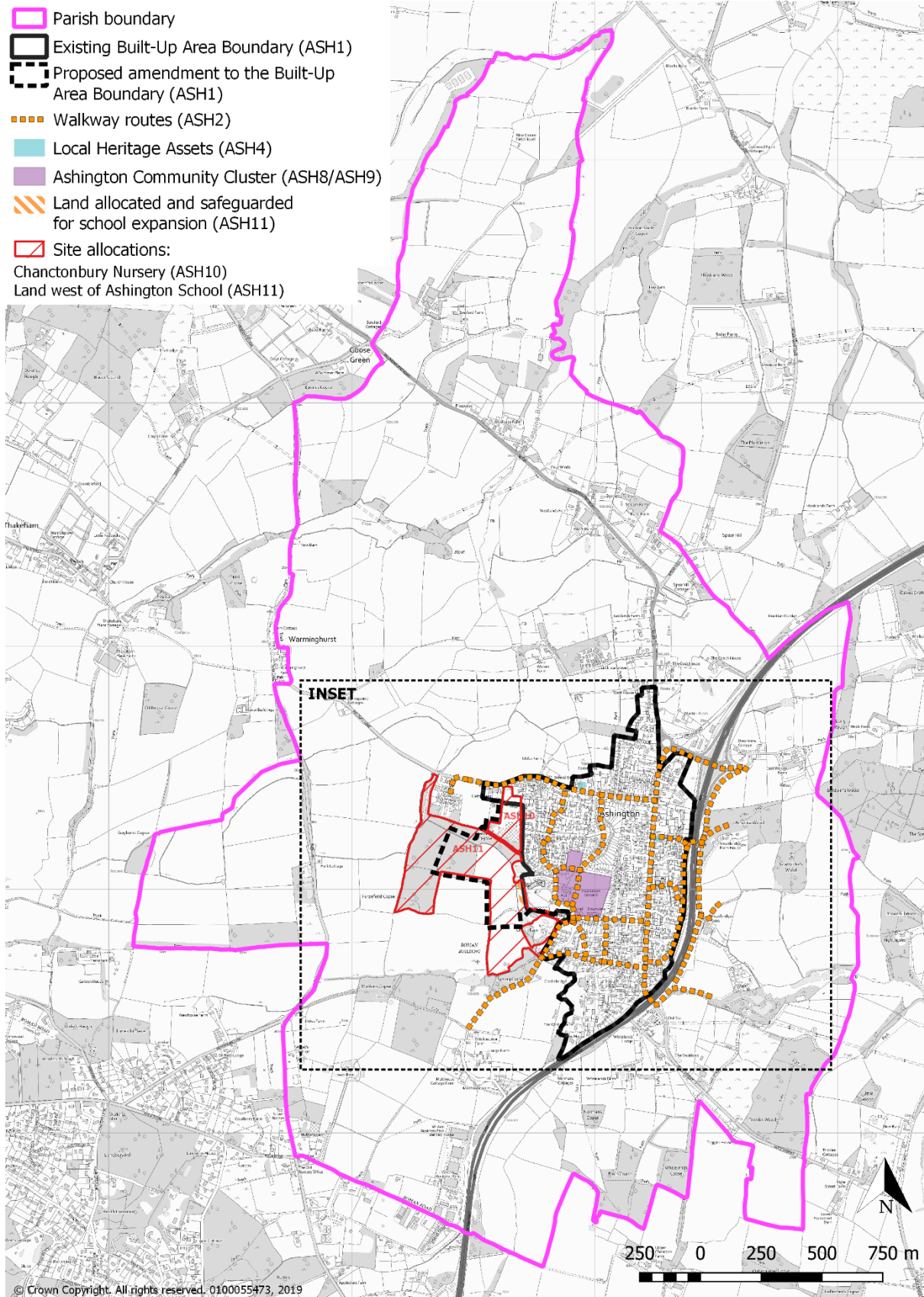
- xxiv. mature trees are retained on the site;**
- xxv. enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park, including through the provision of an appropriate landscape buffer in line with the requirements of Policy ASH5 (Landscaping and Countryside Access);**
- xxvi. the submission of a minerals resource assessment to ensure the viable mineral resources are not permanently sterilised by development;**
- xxvii. occupation of the development is phased to align with the delivery of sewerage infrastructure, in liaison with the service provider;**
- xxviii. the layout is planned to ensure future access to existing sewerage infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

## **9 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 9.1 Ashington Parish Council (working with Horsham District Council) commits to undertaking annual monitoring of the Neighbourhood Plan with a view to then undertaking a review of the Plan if any policies are either (i) resulting in outcomes detrimental to the achievement of the Plan's objectives; or (ii) clearly out of date. This monitoring will take into account any emerging development plan document being prepared by Horsham District Council and the stage it has reached in its preparation (and therefore the weight that could be afforded to it).



## 10 POLICIES MAPS





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