

ASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL CONSULTATION COMMENTS

TO:	Horsham District Council – Planning Dept
SITE ADDRESS:	Land East of Mousdell Close, Rectory Lane, Ashington, RH20 3GS
PROPOSAL:	Erection of 74 dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping.
REFERENCE:	DC/25/1327
RECOMMENDATION:	OBJECTION
SUMMARY OF COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATION: Please find below, a consultation response from Ashington Parish Council following discussion at the Full Council meeting on 9th October 2025	
ANY RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS: N/A	
NAME:	Lee English, Clerk to Ashington Parish Council
DATE:	10th October 2025

MAIN COMMENTS:



Ashington Parish Council

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10th October 2025

F.A.O. Horsham District Council Planning Department

Ref: Planning application -

DC/25/1327 - Land East of Mousdell Close, Rectory Lane, RH20 3GS

Dear Sir/Madam,

This planning application was discussed at the Full Council meeting of Ashington Parish Council on Thursday 9th October 2025 –

Ashington Parish Council OBJECT to the application

Ashington Neighbourhood Plan (ANP)

This site is not allocated in the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan

Ashington Parish Council have a “made” Neighbourhood Plan, that was adopted by Horsham District Council in June 2021. We consider that the information, objectives, strategies and policies contained within it should be considered current and therefore be adhered to by any prospective developers and Horsham District Council (HDC).

The proposed application gives no consideration to the policies as set out in the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan.

The ANP was developed after significant community consultation and extensive investment of both time and expenditure by Ashington Parish Council. As noted in the Gov.Uk document “Guidance - Neighbourhood Planning”¹

Neighbourhood planning provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they want their community to develop over the next 10, 15, 20 years in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people. They can put in place planning policies that will help deliver that vision or grant planning permission for the development they want to see.

Therefore, to override the made Ashington Neighbourhood Plan, fundamentally erodes the ethos of empowering communities to ensure the right development is delivered in the right place in the village - a key aspect of the Localism Act 2011.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - December 2024

The NPPF confirms the “weight” carried by the made ANP

We understand the “presumption in favour of sustainable development” but highlight the paragraphs as noted in the NPPF² -

12. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted.
13. In situations where the presumption ... applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided the following apply:
 - a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and
 - b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement ...

The ANP is at this time less than 5 years old and contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement.

Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) and the ANP

The ANP was compiled in accordance with HDC’s Local Plan - the HDPF

As documented in the ANP, Ashington Parish Council noted the expectation that the HDPF would provide for at least 1,500 new dwellings on non-strategic sites across the district over the plan period to 2031, although that figure was not broken down further across the non-strategic sites³.

Ashington Parish Council commissioned a local Housing Needs Survey to identify what would represent an appropriate contribution towards the district wide requirement. This Survey recommended between 123 and 200 for Ashington village over the period 2017 to 2031.

The parish council agreed the upper figure in the range, because of an historic under delivery in Ashington, and then added 15-20% additional homes to allow for any uplift in government targets during the time it took to produce the ANP. This means that the ANP is already at the upper level for appropriate housing numbers as identified in HDC’s current Local Plan.

The ANP allocated 225 dwellings across 2 sites -
75 - Chanctonbury Nurseries DC/22/0372
150 - Land West of Ashington School DC/23/0406

² [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) - December 2024](#)

³ [Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031 - 4.1, 4.3 Overall Spatial Strategy](#)

With the 74 permitted under DC/22/0372 and 152 with an application in progress for DC/23/0406, proposed housing numbers have been achieved in accordance with ANP numbers and satisfy the local housing need until 2031.

Whilst it is accepted that Horsham District Council have no “current” Local Plan, and are required to demonstrate a housing supply, Ashington through its made Neighbourhood Plan is already demonstrating this.

Emerging Local Plan

Site proposed in the emerging Local Plan

It is acknowledged that HDC promoted this site in the emerging Local Plan, although this plan has currently been paused, and the HDPF is the “current” plan. It is noted that the HDC - Planning Policy Department have given “in-principle” support to this site, but it should also be noted that Ashington Parish Council submitted a consultee response⁴ at the Regulation 19 stage citing concerns about issues such as increased traffic, limited public transport, inadequate infrastructure, school expansion etc. Concerns were also raised about the Local Plan preparation process and other issues were highlighted.

Built-Up Area Boundary (BUAB)

This site sits outside the BUAB

Development outside the 2 site allocations is only expected to come forward on windfall sites within the built-up area boundary of Ashington village or small-scale expansion of existing commercial facilities⁵. It should be noted that there has already been a handful of new houses on windfall sites in addition to the 2 sites allocated.

Provision of education

WSCC - Education have responded as consultees that they do not have any concerns as they would seek CIL funds to provide the necessary education mitigation. It should be noted that expansion of the existing school can only be on land that was proposed to be provided under the ANP policy ASH11; however, this land has not been submitted by the developers of site ASH11 and therefore the land cannot currently be guaranteed for school expansion.

Highways and transport

WSCC - Highways Authority have focused primarily on the site access and failed to acknowledge the wider transport network. Rectory Lane, once past the Meiros Way junction, significantly narrows and is already acknowledged as problematic with

⁴ [APC consultee response to HDC Local Plan Regulation 19](#)

⁵ [Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2033 - 4.4 Overall Spatial Strategy](#)

regards to narrowness and the volume of traffic, as well as a 60mph speed limit on a country lane.

Proposals for adequate on-site access does not mitigate the narrow access roads in the vicinity, as highlighted by recent incidents of a large vehicle becoming stuck for some hours blocking the only access route (the other route was closed for roadworks), and one incident resulting in the delay of an emergency vehicle on a call out, due to queuing site traffic blocking the narrow road. To suggest this already inadequate country lane provides sustainable transport access for the site and a 'safe' cycle/walking route to the centre the village, some 800m - 1.2km away is certainly not sustainable.

Site accessibility

WSCC - Highways Authority note all services within the village being "within reasonable walking and cycling distance" - what is considered "reasonable"?

The walking distance to the nearest bus stop is greater than the recommended 400 metres - it is actually 800 metres. It is stated "*the greater distance isn't necessarily an issue: ultimately if residents need to use the bus, the walking distance will be factored in to their journey*". This is an unrealistic statement and does not give due consideration to those with mobility issues, with children, carrying shopping etc. Given the stated higher than average reliance on cars as noted in the ANP, use of public transport from this site could be considered likely to be low and most likely only for pupils attending local secondary schools.

Although new bus shelters would be welcomed, it should be noted there are actually 2 bus stops at this end of London Road, there is not adequate room for the proposed cycle stands and the proposed upgrade to Real Time Information boards was actually carried out in early 2024. The bus services offered are limited both in terms of frequency and hours of operation (operating on a frequency of between 1 and 2 hours between 7:30am and 8:00pm) to mainly north - south travel and do not offer direct links to the 2 local villages of Storrington and Steyning where the local doctors and dentists surgeries are located.

Transport Assessment.

The transport assessment is unreliable as the data it is based upon was collected during a period when the road was closed / partially closed and therefore baseline traffic information is unreliable.

Furthermore, there has been no consideration of the cumulative impact of traffic generated from DC/22/0372 (74 houses) which is currently in development and will share the access route.

To suggest a development of 74 properties which creates parking provision on site for an anticipated 148 vehicles plus 23 visitors (171 in total), and located beyond reasonable walking distance of the village amenities will only generate 35 vehicle movements during peak periods is highly questionable.

The proposal does not meet the requirements of Horsham District Council's Planning Framework (2015-2031) in that it -

- Does not maintain and improve the existing transport system
- Is not integrated within wider networks of routes including cycle ways
- Does not provide safe and suitable access for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, public transport and delivery of goods.

It also does not comply with West Sussex County Council's Transport plan (2022-2036) in that it -

- Does not increase use of sustainable transport due to inadequate transport links for other types of road users
- Does not improve network efficiency, air quality or travel times
- Does not improve road safety
- Does not improve active travel facilities within existing communities and between towns

There is also no evidence that it addresses the requirements of the NPPF in that -

- sustainable transport is not prioritised - no provision is made for improved walking / cycling access to community facilities which are currently poor or non-existent.
- Whilst the site access junction may be considered safe, little consideration has been given to wider site access - the footpath along Rectory lane is narrow, poorly surfaced, uneven, unlit and often overgrown making it unsuitable for elderly and reduced mobility users, or users with pushchairs as the principal pedestrian access to village amenities

Community Engagement

The Statement of Community involvement fails to address the concerns raised by the community. No consultation or discussions have taken place with the Parish Council and many of the community concerns raised have not been addressed.

The consultation community newsletter was distributed to less than 50% of the village. Despite only 44 people attending the consultation event, 42 of these objected to the proposal.

Ashington Parish Council wish it to be noted that there has been restricted access to developer documents and other consultee responses during this time and this has affected the council's and the public's ability to view relevant documents and comment on the application.

Ashington Parish Council OBJECT to the application