



## Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

*Group members: David Short (Group leader), Greg Campbell, Will Fletcher, John Hare, Paul Harrison, Mel Hodson, Graham Lee, Madeleine Legg, Dave Linsley, Jill Powell, Marcia Taylor, Margaret Budgen, John Humphries*

**Notes of the meeting held on Wednesday 16 December 2015  
7.30pm 59 High Street, Ashwell.**

### **Present**

David Short (Chair), Graham Lee, John Hare, Margaret Budgen, Clare Skeels (NHDC)

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Greg Campbell, Will Fletcher, Paul Harrison, Mel Hodson, Madeleine Legg, Dave Linsley, Marcia Taylor, John Humphries

#### **2. Discussion:**

- Status of NHDC Local Plan
  - CS advised that Cabinet had approved a new timetable for the draft Local Plan:
    - July 2016 - Submission / presentation to Public
    - Aug - Oct 2016 - Public consultation
    - Spring 2017 - Submission to Secretary of State
  - The target number of dwellings to be built over the 2011 - 2031 period has increased by 2200 to 14,400 units, plus a N Herts allowance for Luton.
  - New sites are being investigated to accommodate the extra 2200 units.
  - A general 'multiplier' of 20 dwellings per hectare is applied to sites, with no attempt to allocate housing types to any particular site.
  - The NHDC land to the West of Stevenage was provisionally reserved for development post 2031, but this may be re-considered for inclusion within the planning period.
- Progress of Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan
  - CS felt that the initial survey and survey report were acceptable and useful in the format carried out. Resident responses echoed the general opinions expressed in submissions from residents about the first Local Plan draft.
  - In order for NHDC to incorporate any revisions to the Local Plan based on input from Ashwell NP Group or Parish Council they would need to receive submissions by the end of May 2016.
  - CS advised that in principle the Ashwell NP could be written & submitted for acceptance by the Inspector prior to the NHDC Local Plan being accepted as long as it took account of all relevant policies and strategies.
  - CS suggested further references for examples of Neighbourhood Plans or their preparation:
    - Planning Aid England site.
    - Herefordshire County Council site which has c. 40 guides covering aspects of writing NPs.
- Consideration of Development Sites
  - CS volunteered that the Claybush Road site is far from perfect.
  - CS advised that we were unique as a Group in actively identifying potential alternative sites and contacting landowners to gauge their willingness to offer them for development.

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- CS advised that to be considered these sites would need to be 'available, suitable/desirable, and achievable' with written evidence to confirm their availability. They should have no physical constraints (e.g. risk of flooding).
- CS advised that the alternative sites would need to provide the additional units (using the multiplier formula) to bring the built + future build total up to a minimum 69 units (i.e. equivalent to the previous target which consisted of 36 built plus 33 potential units on Claybush Rd).
- CS advised that if we could do this in time then NHDC would be prepared to replace the Claybush Road site in the Local Plan.
- CS also indicated that any alternative site(s) would not be taken as an addition to the total target of dwellings for Ashwell.
- JH handed CS a letter & map outlining his research into potential alternative sites. JH and NP Group to progress further discussions with landowners.
- CS encouraged the Group to ascertain where Ashwell residents would approve of new developments in Ashwell. This information should go into the final draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- Ashwell Development Boundary
  - CS advised that NHDC would consider new proposals from Ashwell Parish Council for a re-drawn Village Development Boundary (to replace the most recent NHDC re-drawn boundary proposal) prior to issuing their draft Local Plan.
- Funding of Neighbourhood Plan
  - CS advised that a Grant of up to £8000 over 3 years was available for each Parish from DCLG (Department of Communities & Local Government) under their 'Locality' scheme. Their website is called something else but a Google search for 'Locality' usually finds it.
- 3. AOB
  - 3.1 CS encouraged the NP Group to maintain close contact with her, as that was more likely to achieve an outcome that meets with the objectives of both NHDC and Ashwell residents.

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