



# ASHWELL PARISH COUNCIL

*Office at Bear Farm, 6A Back Street, Ashwell, Baldock, Herts, SG7 5PE*

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Mr Berkeley (Inspector)  
c/o Louise St John Howe Programme Officer  
PO Box 10965,  
Sudbury,  
Suffolk CO10 3BF

13<sup>th</sup> September 2018

**BY EMAIL**

Dear Mr Berkeley (Inspector)

## **Re: Claybush Road, Ashwell (Site AS1 in NHDC Local Plan)**

Ashwell Parish Council apologises for contacting you again after the official submission period, but we have realised that the enclosed information could be important for you prior to determining the suitability of Site AS1 (Ashwell).

In summary it is clear that the data used by NHDC in 2014/15 when assessing whether to re-classify Site AS1 from a Category 3 (non-strategic) site to a ‘Preferred Option’ site was inaccurate to a significant degree. Distances between the site and village amenities were almost all significantly under-stated.

These errors would materially change the scoring of the land from ‘neutral’ to ‘negative’ which should have influenced the outcome of the site’s status. The enclosed graph shows actual distances (both minimum and centred) compared with the distances used by NHDC. For example NHDC assessed the nearest medical facility at 298 metres when the GP Surgery is in fact 625 metres (more than double) at its nearest point. Our distances have been prepared using a mapping wheel. We also enclose copies of the original assessment documents produced by NHDC.

The significance of the understated distances and the need for vehicle use to access many of the village facilities has a clear implication on the sustainability of the site and makes the site inconsistent with NHDC policies [SP1: Sustainable Development, pages 31-32 and D1: Design and Sustainability, page 45] and relevant NPPF policy.

We would also bring to your attention failures to take account of relevant evidence that have led to errors or inconsistencies in NHDC’s Supporting Summary:

- Ashwell Primary School now has no capacity to accept additional children in certain age classes.
- Ashwell Surgery has no spare capacity to take additional patients. Non-urgent appointments now have a waiting list of 4-5 weeks.
- Heritage Assessment Ashwell (June 2016) to assess the impact on Arbury Banks Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade 1 Listed St Mary’s Church was conducted by Amec Foster Wheeler for NHDC. It is the only independent assessment carried out by NHDC; two alternative reports used by NHDC to justify the development were sponsored by the developer and so are not independent. The proposals for AS1 fail to follow its recommendations, ie restricting building to the North West of the site and for maximum building heights of 1½ storeys, and therefore fail to comply with relevant NHDC policy [HE1: Designated Heritage Assets, page 127] and relevant NPPF policy.

We trust that this information can be considered in your final evaluation of Site AS1.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Porter (Mrs) Clerk to the Council  
Enc. x2