**ASH-CUM-RIDLEY PARISH COUNCIL**
**PLANNING APPLICATIONS WORKING GROUP**

Notes of the meeting of the Planning Applications Working Group held on 10 October 2025 in the Viewing Gallery of Ash Green Sports Centre, and via Teams, commencing at 2.30pm

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| Present: | Cllr S Fishenden (Chairman)<br>Cllr M Aspinall<br>Cllr J Clucas<br>Cllr M Manley (via Teams)<br>Mrs L Horner<br>Mrs L Bowles<br>Mr P Tasker |
| In attendance: | Alison de Jager - Clerk<br>Megan Hodges – Assistant Clerk<br>1 Member of the public |

## 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs C Clark, C Gorton, S Hobbs, P Kirtley, I MacLeod and V Ngwenya

## 2. Proposed Sites

The map reflecting sites proposed for consideration in the Parish were NOTED:

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| • NAG1 The Forge, Ash | 10 units |
| • NAG2 The Royal Oak car park | 9 units |
| • NAG3 New Ash Green Village Centre | 70 units |
| • NAG4 Heaver Trading Estate | 80 units |
| • NAG5 Grosvenor, Church Road, Hartley | 5 units |
| • NAG6 Land west of New Ash Green | 280 units |
| • NAG7 Land at Slides Farm, North Ash Road | 150 units |
| • NAG8 Melsetta, Church Road, Hartley | 5 units |
| • NAG9 Land south of Redhill Road | 580 units |
| **TOTAL** | **1,189 UNITS** |

The sites should be considered as those to reject and the reasons for rejection and those that may work as an extension of New Ash Green. An example is Seven Acres, this neighbourhood became part of New Ash Green as it needed to be connected to a service (sewer or utility) and needed to access VA land. The VA stated that this could not be progressed unless Seven Acres joined the covenant system and so officially became part of New Ash Green. NAG7 could have a potential hook to join the VA system.

All objections must be confined to planning considerations only.

A suggestion was made to have New Ash Green designated as a Conservation Area. SDC previously reviewed this request (around 2017–2018) and concluded that New Ash Green did not meet the statutory tests for Conservation Area designation.

The introduction of a Parish Design Guide in place of a Neighbourhood Plan was mentioned.

## 3. Green Belt/Grey Belt

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 143: Green Belt serves five purposes:

a. To check the unrestricted sprawl of Large built-up areas
b. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into on another
c. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
d. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
e. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

It was NOTED that the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance have the same status. Information in these documents that relate to Towns, do not necessarily apply to villages. New Ash Green is identified as a Local Service Centre in the District's Settlement Hierarchy (2022)
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In amending Green Belt designation to Grey Belt, it cannot be amended if:

a. the openness is compromised
b. the impact on the remaining Green Belt
c. Sustainability (particularly transport) – it remains Green Belt if not sustainable.
d. Not appropriate if it conforms to Golden Rules:
    - Affordable housing – 50% (no viability)
    - Necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure
    - The provision of new, or improvements to existing green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality greenspaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

Most of Sevenoaks District falls within the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and as such SDC will look at areas outside this designation for development e.g. Edenbridge, Swanley, and New Ash Green. The Government has proposed a new concept of 'Grey Belt' in consultation, but it has not been adopted, and SDC continues to treat land around New Ash Green as Green Belt.
It was suggested that the Parish Council talks to other parish councils in neighbouring districts and boundaries such as Meopham. SDC's previous plan failed on the Duty to Co-operate and in this plan Gravesham have advised that they cannot accommodate any of SDC housing. Dartford have a small allocation that they could take from SDC. There is not sufficient evidence of co-operation with Tandridge, Tonbridge & Malling and Wealdon.

With respect to sustainability, public transport adds weight and currently New Ash Green is under-served with only two bus routes with limited service on both. It is impossible to attend further education centres by bus or some Darent Valley Hospital appointments, depending on the time. This results in the elderly and young adults being economically disadvantaged by unsustainable development.

Under the Settlement Hierarchy, New Ash Green is defined as a Village and Primary Service Settlement. The information held by SDC does not correspond with the information submitted to SDC by the Parish Council and these differences are under query.

The 'Golden Rules' are Government consultation proposals, to try and counteract the dislike of additional development and redress that.

- Affordable housing – rental and sale at discount. 50% of development in former Green Belt must be affordable housing. SDC's previous requirement was 35% affordable housing. Viability including services, doctors, schools and roads in addition to green infrastructure is very important.

- Improvement to national infrastructure is required for development. This, however, does not relate to New Ash Green. An example would be a road between Oxford and Cambridge.

4. **Letter received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government –** Cllr S Fishenden PROPOSED that a recommendation is put to the October Parish Council meeting to write a letter to Tom Tugendhat MP seeking his support in challenging the MHCLG's use of discretionary powers in relation to the EIA screening request and to ask how such decisions are determined. SECONDED: Cllr J Clucas and AGREED.

The meeting closed at 4.45pm