

Ashover Neighbourhood Plan Supporting Evidence – Housing Site Selection Framework

Introduction

The Ashover Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared by the Ashover Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group under the auspices of the Parish Council. One of the most important objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan is to shape and guide where new houses should be best built.

This background document sets out how the Ashover Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group identified the most suitable and sustainable sites for the allocation of land for housing development.

Stage 1 The first stage was to look for any possible sites with housing development potential

The start point was the sites that had been identified as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) prepared by North East Derbyshire District Council.

The SHLAA contains development sites suggested by landowners and developers in Ashover and the wider North East Derbyshire. Only suitable, available and achievable sites with development potential for 5 or more dwellings are included in the SHLAA. Unsuitable sites (e.g. those subject to flooding, site access, archaeology and ecology etc. problems) have been excluded.

In 2014 the SHLAA identified 5 potential housing sites in Ashover Parish. These were:

- Land to the rear of Ambervale, Moor Road, Ashover;
- Garden to the east of Lime Tree House, Church Street, Ashover;
- Land adjacent to Netherbeck, Hockley Lane, Ashover;
- Land at Moor Rd (Ash 1602); and
- Land adjoining Narrowleys Lane/Moor.

In January 2015 the District Council made a further call for SHLAA sites, the findings of which were not expected to be published until 2016.

As part of the development of the Ashover Parish Neighbourhood Plan a number of other potential housing sites came to the attention of the Steering Group. This included sites known to the community, and/or sites which had been put forward as part of the District Council's then on-going call for sites.

The Steering Group determined to consider all known potential housing sites. This included contacting all known developers/landowners with potential housing development proposals asking if they wished for any sites to be considered as part of

the development of the Neighbourhood Plan process. Known developers/landowners were also given the opportunity to discuss their proposals with the Steering Group.

This resulted in the identification of fourteen sites that could in principle accommodate five or more dwellings. This included all the sites contained in 2014 SHLAA bar the site Garden to the east of Lime Tree House, Church Street, Ashover as this could not accommodate five dwellings.

Stage 2 – Technical Assessment of the Proposed Housing Sites

These sites were then subject to a technical assessment the main aim of which was to give a technical indication of the suitability of the housing sites against relevant criteria. This technical assessment was based on a two stage approach.

The first stage included a screening process which discounts sites based on ‘show-stopper’ criteria such as flood risk, vehicular access and site availability, which would immediately mean that the site was unsuitable for development. All the sites passed this stage except for one. This was land to the rear of Ambervale, Moor Road, Ashover. This site was omitted as 2014 SHLAA stated “The site can only come forward if access is allowed over SHLAA site ASH/1602”. The landowner of site ASH/1062 had informed the Neighbourhood Plan Steering that such permission would not be granted.

The next stage was to assess each site against key criteria. Over 20 criteria relevant to the selection and allocation of sites for new housing were identified. This drew extensively on the framework used by North East Derbyshire DC as part of the SHLAA process.

A scoring system, based on RAG scores (i.e. Red, Amber, Green) was applied to each criterion for each site.

- Red was scored for a negative assessment; where there are significant impacts or constraints that are unlikely to be mitigated against;
- Amber was scored where there was possible and/or partial impact or constraints that may need to, and can be, mitigated and;
- Green was scored for a positive assessment where means this is no impact or minor impact which can be easily be mitigated

Evidence for the RAG scoring was largely based on the findings of the site assessment and local knowledge. Evidence from other authoritative sources, such as, national databases on Listed Buildings and findings from previous SHLAA were also applied where required. In addition, technical support was provided by *YourLocale*, the consultants appointed to assist the Parish Council in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

A pro-forma and matrix was developed to include the criteria and the RAG rating for each site.

Stage 3 – Identifying Housing Requirements

At the same time, the Steering Group looked at the level and spatial distribution of housing requirements that were necessary to meet the housing needs of the Parish. The District has a housing requirement of a minimum of 6,755 new homes between 2001 and 2031, which the Parish is required to contribute to in meeting. As there is no robust district-wide methodology to disaggregate this district wide housing target at the local level, it was determined that that Neighbourhood Plan would provide an objective assessment of the housing requirements for the Parish. This was assessed as 58 dwellings between 2014 and 2031, which would be met through sites allocated through the Plan and windfall sites.

The Steering Group also took into account that the District Council had developed a settlement hierarchy to help focus development in the most sustainable locations in the District, based on their size and the level of facilities they have. This had identified that the settlements of Ashover and to a lesser extent Alton, Fallgate, Kelstedge and Littlemoor, were suitable for some small scale development.

At this stage, it was clear that the potential housing capacity of the sites identified in Stages 1 and 2 was far greater than the minimum requirement to be identified through site allocations by the Plan and Windfall development.

Stage 4 - Community Consultation

At the outset the Steering Group determined that the findings of community consultation would be a key factor in determining where housing development should be located.

The community consultation, in particular the community questionnaire, showed a strong emphasis on smaller developments (especially 5 or fewer) and far less support for larger developments especially those of over 15 dwellings. This also showed support that new housing development should take place within, or adjacent to, existing settlements, and should not take place in the countryside

Stage 5 - Final Analysis

The final stage was for the Steering Group to evaluate the sites that could assist in the delivery of the plan with the emphasis on

- the findings from the technical site analysis;
- the findings from the community consultation;
- the relationship with the settlement hierarchy developed by NEDDC to help focus development in the most sustainable locations; and
- the need to ensure that sufficient sites have been identified to meet local need, in particular the minimum housing requirement of 58 dwellings to be met through allocations augmented by windfall sites between 2014 and 2031, as set out in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Conclusions

Based on this evaluation the Steering Group put forward a small of proposed housing sites as preferred options and to be the basis of further discussions and deliberations, with the focus on suitable small scale housing sites within or adjacent to the main settlements in the Parish.

YourLocale
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