

# ASH PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2024 - 2045

PRE-SUBMISSION VERSION: JUNE 2025



## IMPORTANT CONSULTATION DETAILS

*The Pre-Submission Ash NP is published for statutory consultation under Regulation 14 of the Regulations. Comments on the proposals and content of the plan and its other published documents are welcomed from everyone living and working in Ash as well as local organisations and landowners.*

*They must be made either by email to [office@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk](mailto:office@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk)  
or by post to Ash Parish Council  
Ash Centre  
Ash Hill Road, Ash  
Surrey, GU12 5DP*

*By 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025 at the latest.*

*Any comments made after that deadline may not be considered by APC. Anyone submitting comments to APC must provide an email or postal address and contact name. APC will keep this information confidential. However, it must forward information to Guildford BC in due course for the sole purpose of notifying all those that have submitted comments that it has received a final version of the plan for examination.*

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## List of Land Use Policies

ASH1	Spatial Strategy
ASH2	Design Principles in Ash
ASH3	Design Principles in Ash Vale
ASH4	Design Principles in Ash Green
ASH5	Local Centres and Dispersed local shops.
ASH6	Employment Locations
ASH7	Replacement Dwellings
ASH8	Housing Mix, Type and Tenure
ASH9	Existing and New Local Community Assets
ASH10	Green and Blue Infrastructure
ASH11	Local Green Spaces
ASH12	Thames Basin Heath SPA
ASH13	Active Travel



# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ash Parish Council has prepared a Neighbourhood Plan for the area designated by the local planning authority Guildford Borough Council (GBC), on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024, under the provisions of the Localism Act of 2011, and of the Neighbourhood Planning General Regulations 2012. The designated area coincides with the Parish boundary, shown in Plan A below.

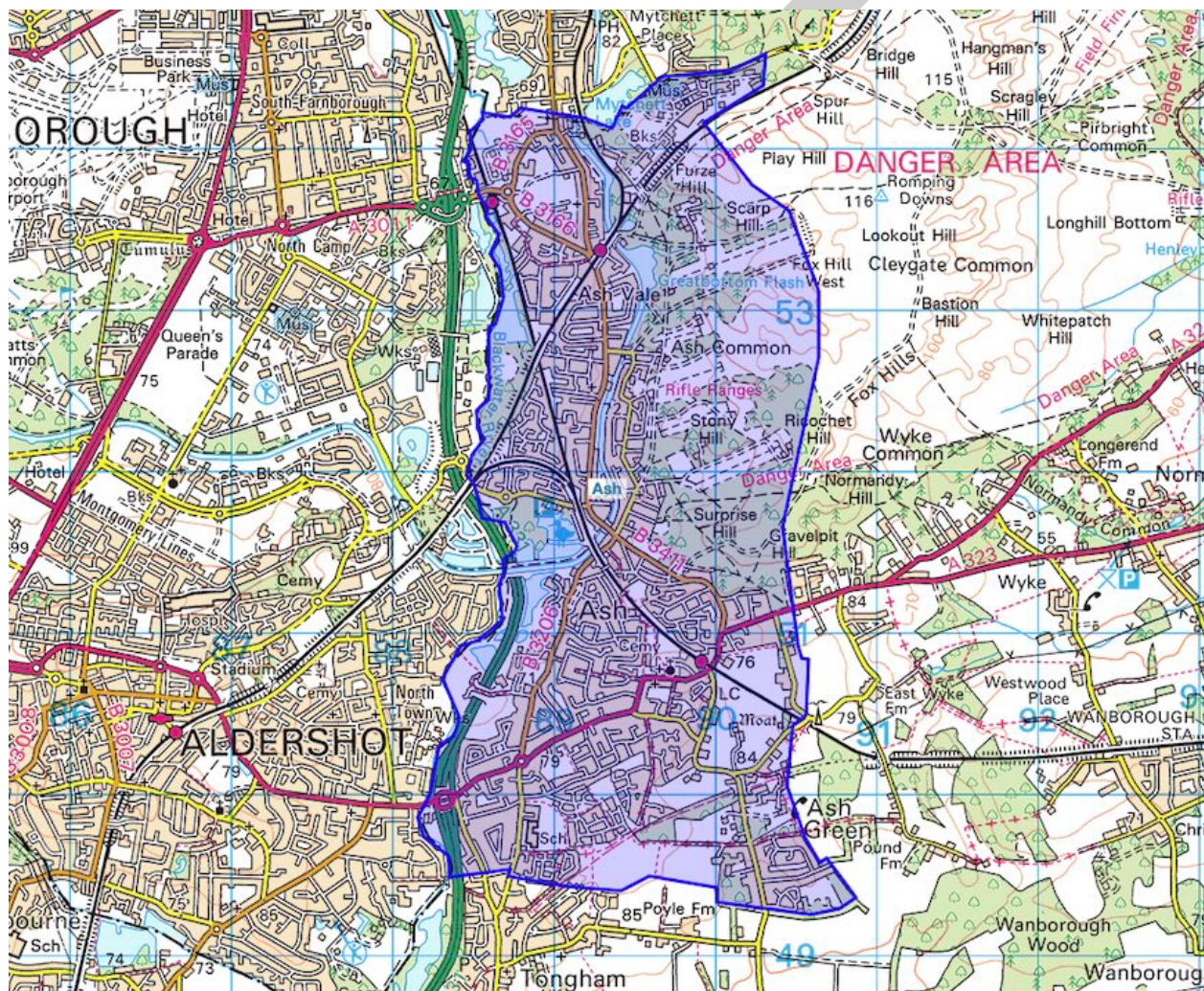


Figure 1 – Ash Neighbourhood Plan Area

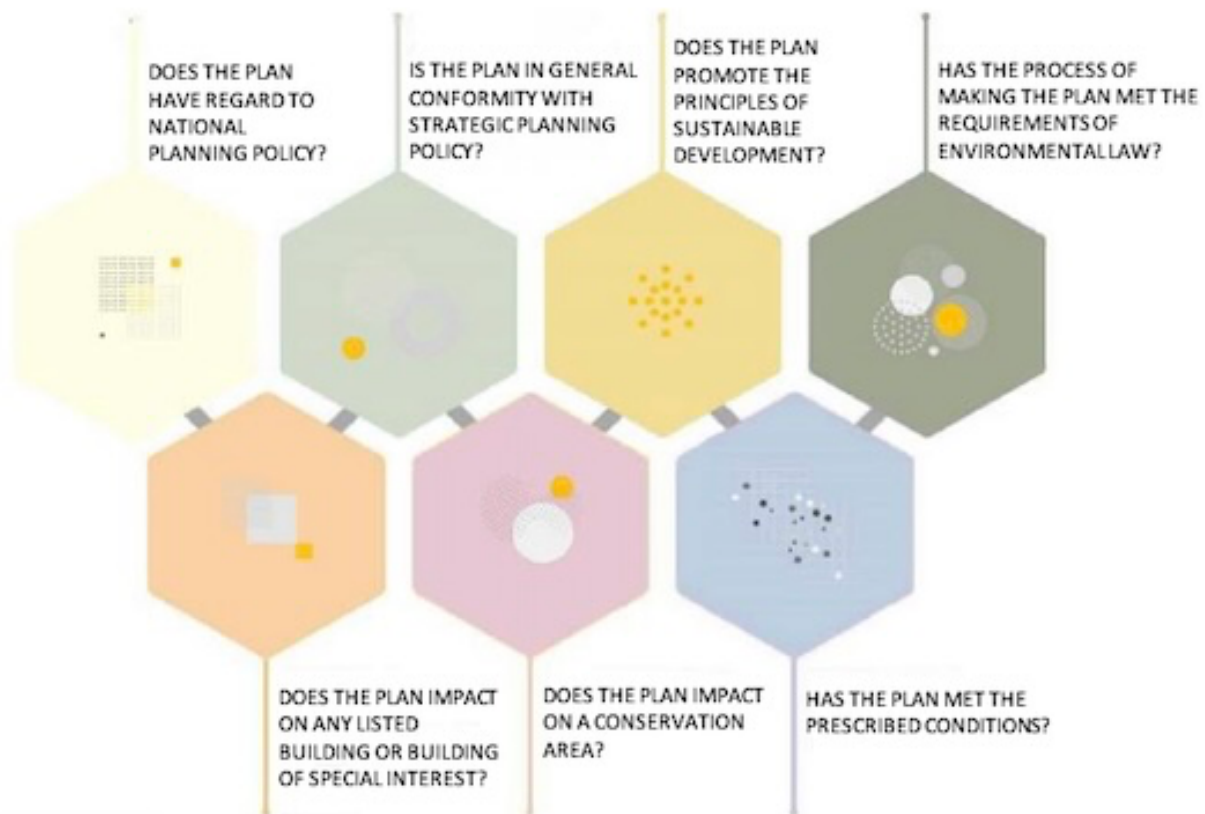
1.2 The purpose of the plan is to set out local planning policies that can be used to help determine planning applications in the area covered by the plan. Its policies will encourage development proposals for the benefit of the local community and will aim to protect the special character of the settlements within Ash, including the village of Ash Green.

1.3 Neighbourhood plans provide local communities with the chance to shape the future development of their areas. Upon passing through examination following by referendum, the Plan will be 'made' and become a statutory part of the development plan for the area. As such, it will carry significant weight in how planning applications are decided. Plans can



therefore only contain land use planning policies that can be used for this purpose. This often means that there are more important issues of interest to the local community that cannot be addressed in a plan if they are not directly relating to planning.

1.4 Although there is considerable scope for the local community to decide on its planning policies, neighbourhood plans must meet a number of ‘basic conditions’. These are:



1.5 In addition, the Parish Council will need to demonstrate to an Independent Examiner that it has successfully engaged with the local community and stakeholders in preparing the Plan.

### The Pre-Submission Plan

1.6 This is the opportunity for the Parish Council to formally consult on the proposed vision, objectives and policies of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan (the Pre-Submission Plan). The Parish Council has reviewed the relevant national and local planning policies and assessed how they affect this area. It has also gathered its own evidence and its reports are published in the appendices and separately in the evidence base.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment & Habitat Regulations Assessment

1.7 Once the proposed scope of the Neighbourhood Plan Review had been agreed, GBC indicated that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA, under the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004) would be required. It formalised this view in its 'screening opinion' of December 2024, having consulted the statutory bodies, as required. The SEA is published as a separate document.

1.8 That same document also screened for the potential of the Plan to have any significant effect on a European-designated nature site, in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ('the habitats directive'). GBC and Natural England concluded that a Habitats Regulations Assessment under the directive would be necessary, and this will be published as a separate document at the submission stage.

1.9 This version contains draft policies for determining planning applications for the use and development of land within Ash during the Neighbourhood Plan period. In doing so it operates alongside other policies of the GBC development plans that relate to Ash

1.10 The Pre-Submission ANP is published for statutory consultation under Regulation 14 of the Regulations along with the draft modification statement. Comments on these are welcomed from everyone living and working in Ash as well as local organisations and landowners. They must be made either by email to to [office@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk](mailto:office@ashpcsurrey.gov.uk) or by post to Ash Parish Council, Ash Centre, Ash Hill Road, Ash, Surrey, GU12 5DP, clearly marked Neighbourhood Plan, by 31st July 2025 at the latest. Any comments made after that deadline may not be considered by APC.

1.11 Anyone submitting comments to APC must provide an email or postal address and contact name. APC will keep this information confidential. However, it must forward information to GBC in due course for the sole purpose of notifying all those that have submitted comments that it has received a final version of the plan for examination.

1.12 Once this consultation is complete, the Parish Council will review the comments made, assess where amendments are required, and prepare a final version of the Plan. This will be submitted to GBC for a further consultation and to arrange for its examination by an independent examiner.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### History

2.1 The parish of Ash lies between Aldershot and Guildford. Immediately to the west of the built-up area is the natural boundary of the Blackwater Valley. The A331 Blackwater Valley Relief road connecting Ash Vale to Ash runs north south more or less in parallel with the Basingstoke Canal.

2.2 The place name Ash is derived from 'Aesc' which meant 'At the Ash tree', given by its Saxon owners to the Monks of Chertsey Abbey and grew from a rural village on the road between Guildford and Aldershot. The village of Ash grew up along Ash Street between the cross-roads (now the Greyhound roundabout) and the Moated Manor House which looked out over Ash Green towards the Hog's Back. By the 18th century Ash and Ash Vale and Ash Green to the south were still small rural villages. St Peter's Church at Ash is the original village church, which has early medieval origins. Another early building in Ash village is Hartshorn Cottage dating to 1350.

2.3 The Basingstoke Canal was opened in 1796 to connect Basingstoke to the Wey at Byfleet, as a way of supporting agriculture in the area by connecting the area of North East Hampshire with the London markets. The canal runs in a north-south direction, parallel to the River Blackwater, before turning west to cross the Blackwater valley on an aqueduct and embankment.

2.4 In the 19th century a shingle spire was added to St Peter's Church and this now forms a prominent landmark. Ash remained a farming community until the mid-19th century, with meadow and pasture alongside the Blackwater River and along the various streams leading to it. A number of the farmhouses have survived until today as residential properties or pubs.

2.5 The village grew rapidly after 1849 when the railways arrived with Ash Station opening in August of that year, followed by Ash Green Station two months later. The Army established a camp in Aldershot just over the border in Hampshire in 1853 and enclosed most of the Ash Common to use for training and rifle ranges. North Camp Station opened in 1858 with Ash Vale Station opening in 1870. Ash Vale quickly developed as people moved into the area, local businesses flourished and houses were built to accommodate retired Army officers. The arrival of the railway resulted in a reduction in the use of the Basingstoke Canal.

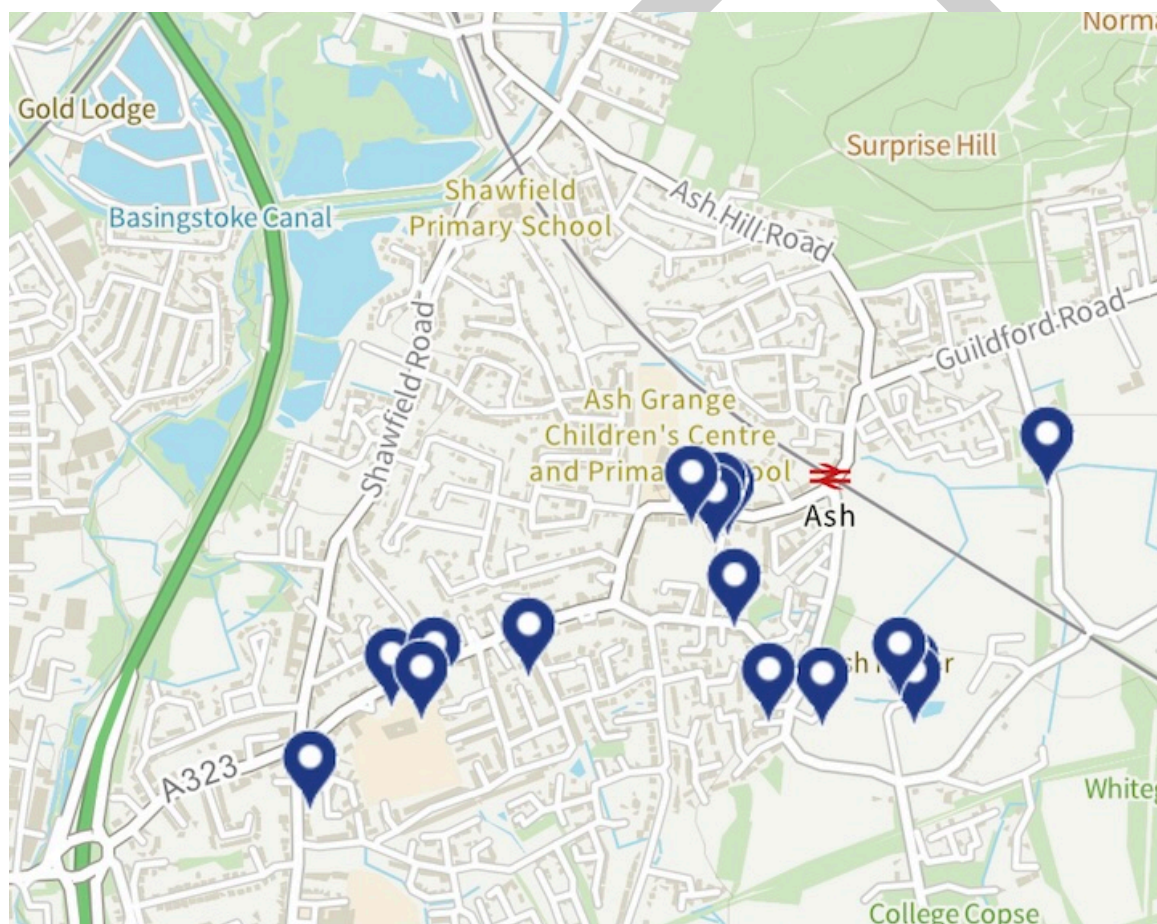
2.6 The new stations formed a focus for new settlement and houses were built along the main approaches to the stations in a linear formation. These linear developments are still visible in the townscape today, although they have been subject to infill with more modern housing. These 'Victorian/Edwardian Villages' have landmark buildings such as Ash Common National School, opened in 1860, St Paul's Church in Tongham, built 1866, and Victoria Hall on Ash Hill Road, built in 1897 to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. Ash Vale became a boat centre in the late 1890s when A. J. Harmsworth, working as a carpenter for the canal company, built a boathouse at Ash Vale. It became a major barge building and repair centre from 1923 until 1947. After this time the canal suffered a



number of setbacks and changes in ownership. After a period of disuse the Canal was rescued and officially re-opened in 1991 and is one of the most pleasant leisure features of Ash which meanders through the parish on its way from Basingstoke to join the River Wey Navigation near Byfleet, Surrey, linking it with the inland water network.

2.7 The population of the area continued to rise with the building of inter-war and post-war estates and in the early 1950s Ash's village green was turned into an asphalted roundabout. By 1981 the population of Ash had grown to 15,748 (601 in 1801, and 3,074 in 1901)

2.8 Ash has 16 Listed buildings, all Grade II with Ash Manor and Old Manor Cottage and the Church of St Peter being Grade II\*. All of the buildings are located within the southern half of the parish. There are also a notable number of [Locally Listed Buildings](#). The Basingstoke Canal is designated as a Conservation Area.



## Profile

2.8 The Ash vision has an overarching ambition to preserve the parish as a group of distinct individual settlements, retaining and enhancing the character of each. Unusually for a parish of its size, there is no “town” centre within the parish which provides the opportunity for the villages to retain elements of their own identity. However, to be resilient and sustainable, the parish recognises that large scale development in the parish over the

past few decades has eroded the individuality of some areas and as such, to thrive going forward, each area needs to provide its respective settlements with the facilities and services to help reinforce and strengthen the sense of community cohesion in each.

## Ash Surrey

### Population

2022

**18,700**

people

57,112,500 people in England

Rounded to the nearest 100 people

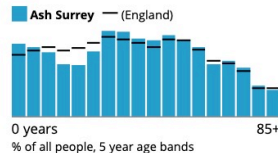
Source: Office for National Statistics - Mid Year

Population Estimates

Small area: Output area

### Age profile

2022



% of all people, 5 year age bands

Source: Office for National Statistics - Mid Year

Population Estimates

Small area: Output area

### Household size

2021

Ash Surrey (England)

1 person in household **27.3%** (30.1%)

2 people in household **37.1%** (34.0%)

3 people in household **16.7%** (16.0%)

4 or more people in household **18.9%** (19.9%)

% of all households

Source: Office for National Statistics - Census

2021

Small area: Output area

### Energy efficiency of housing

Financial year ending 2024

Ash Surrey (England)

Band A **1.2%** (0.3%)

Band B **23.1%** (15.3%)

Band C **32.9%** (33.1%)

Band D **33.2%** (37.0%)

Band E **8.5%** (11.7%)

Band F **0.9%** (2.0%)

Band G **0.1%** (0.6%)

% of all assessed properties

Source: ONS analysis of Energy Performance

Certificates

Small area: Lower layer super output area

### Number of cars or vans

2021

Ash Surrey (England)

No cars or vans in household **9.7%** (23.5%)

1 car or van in household **38.9%** (41.3%)

2 cars or vans in household **37.1%** (26.1%)

3 or more cars or vans in household **14.4%** (9.1%)

% of all households

Source: Office for National Statistics - Census

2021

Small area: Output area

### Number of bedrooms

2021

Ash Surrey (England)

1 bedroom **10.3%** (11.6%)

2 bedrooms **27.2%** (27.3%)

3 bedrooms **40.6%** (40.0%)

4 or more bedrooms **21.9%** (21.1%)

% of all households

Source: Office for National Statistics - Census

2021

Small area: Output area

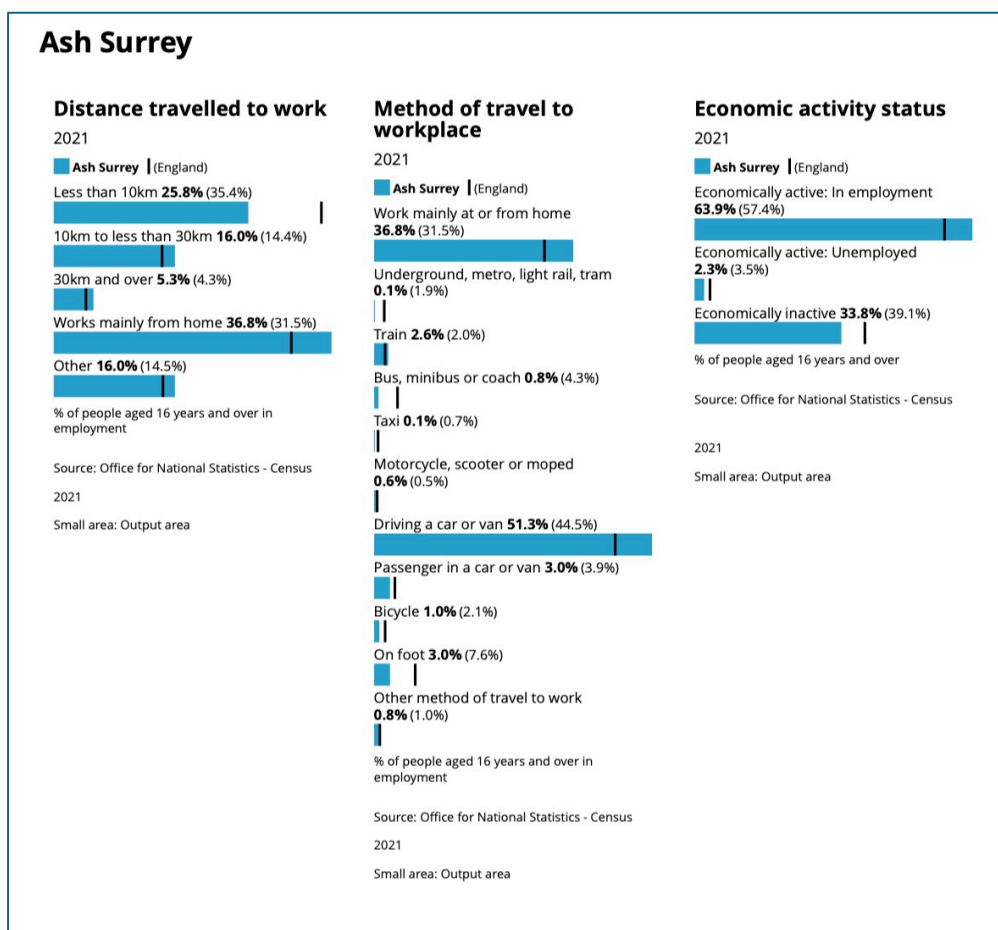


Figure 2 Ash Census Profile 2021 – Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021 Crown Copyright used under open government licence OGL.

2.8 The Census parish profile illustrates that due to its excellent access to larger towns including Aldershot, Farnborough, Farnham and Guildford, the national road network including the A331 which links to the M3 and A31 to A3 and the three railway stations, the parish returns a higher than average percentage of economically active residents, the majority of whom drive to work, if they are not working from home. The data shows the population of the parish containing more working age residents in the 30 – 60 age groups and slightly lower than average in the younger and older demographics. The amount of new build properties over recent years may explain the parish returning a higher-than-average energy efficiency of homes.



## Strategic Planning Policy

2.9 The ANP has been prepared to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the GBC [Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2015 - 2034 \(part 1\) adopted in 2019](#) and the [Local Plan: Development Management Policies \(part 2\) adopted in 2023](#).

2.10 In February 2024 GB announced a review of the Local Plan Strategy and Sites for a new plan period up to 2045. It may also include local DM policies where justified and consistent with the suite of National Development Management Policies to be published and replace the residual policies in the Local Plan 2003.

2.11 A fuller explanation will be set out in the Basic Conditions Statement as part of the submission but the key policies affecting Ash are:

### [Local Plan 2003](#)

R7 Built Facilities for Recreational Use.

### [Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2015 - 2034 \(part 1\) adopted in 2019](#) ( D2 updated 2023)

S1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

S2: Planning for the borough – our spatial development strategy

H1: Homes for all

E8: – E9: District centres, local centres, neighbourhood parades and isolated retail units

E3: Maintaining employment capacity

D1:- D3: Place shaping, Sustainable design and Historic environment

ID3:Sustainable transport for new developments.

ID4: Green and blue infrastructure

A31: Ash and Tongham Strategic Site

### [Local Plan: Development Management Policies \(part 2\) adopted in 2023](#).

P6 & P7: Biodiversity and Protecting important habitats and species.

D4: Design and Local Distinctiveness

D8: Residential infill development

D15: Climate Change Adaptation

ID5 to ID8: Protection of open spaces, community facilities, and public houses.

P5: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

2.12 The GBC [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#) was adopted in August 2024 and updates local plan policy ID9 as the primary framework (ID9 clause 5) for cycling and walking in the Borough.

2.13 The [Surrey Local Transport Plan](#) LTP4 adopted in July 2022, includes a number of policies that are relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan.

## National Planning Policy

2.13 The ANP has also has regard for national planning policy and guidance as set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#). The Basic Conditions Statement contains further details but the key policies are:

- §30 - neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area, which can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions
- §74- giving consideration to allocating small and medium sized sites suitable for housing in the area.
- §98a – planning should provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship)
- §98c/d – planning should also guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs and should ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community
- §105 – protect and enhance public rights of way, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities by adding links to existing rights of way networks.
- §109e- identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.

2.14 The ANP must demonstrate how its policies contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and how they will not cause any harm to important ecological areas (in respect of the Habitats Regulations). A Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment have been prepared to accompany the modified ANP. These matters are also addressed in the Basic Conditions Statement.

## Project Progress

2.15 Following the decision to prepare a NP for Ash in February 2024, a NPC was formed and a visioning and scoping exercise undertaken. This identified a number of key areas which it felt were of concern to the community, principally the concern over loss of community identity resulting from continued growth of the parish and loss of physical features which defined each settlement within the parish. There was a desire to focus the plan on protecting local assets, both physical and environmental and ensuring that the spaces in between residential areas such as the open spaces, the walking routes, the shops and local facilities and the social infrastructure we protected and enhanced to strengthen the sense of living locally rather than as part of a wider, less defined parish. The plan also sought to respond to climate change, place more emphasis on green and blue infrastructure and safeguarding smaller industrial employment sites and local shops.

2.16 This was tested with the community in autumn 2024. Research and evidence gathering was then carried out over the next 6 months including the commissioning of two technical support packages, a Housing Needs Assessment and Design Guidance and

Codes for Ash. An informal engagement exercise was carried out in early April 2025 on the proposed policy intents and the Design Code.

2.17 The results of the engagement exercise can be found on the website and in the consultation statement which APC will publish as part of the submission documents that will summarise the nature and outcome of the informal engagement and statutory consultation activities and how they have informed the ANP.

### 3. VISION, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

3.1 The vision of Ash in 2045 is for the Parish to maintain its strong identity on Surrey's western border. The Parish of Ash is made up of three areas, Ash Vale to the north, Ash in the centre and Ash Green in the southeast. Over the next twenty years of this document's life span, the intention is for the Parish of Ash to remain a vibrant, sustainable community featuring housing, employment, retail and leisure facilities, and improved infrastructure for its residents and the residents of the neighbouring towns and villages. The vision also seeks to retain Ash Green's identity as an independent village, separate from the Ash and Tongham built-up area that contains Ash and Ash Vale.

These steps will be done by protecting the existing green spaces and recreational facilities, identifying land for new community facilities to be created and focus on a development policy that targets balanced redevelopment over new constructions on greenfield land. The intention of the Neighbourhood Plan is to both protect and guide Ash in that manner as it continues to develop towards 2045.

3.2 To achieve this vision, the following plan objectives have been agreed:

- To retain and enhance the individual identity of each settlement in the parish and prevent coalescence between Ash Green and Ash
- To protect and enhance the natural environment,
- To increase the number of commuting trips by rail, bus, cycling and walking
- To increase the capacity of social infrastructure, protect local facilities, promote local employment opportunities, shops and services.
- To increase the health and wellbeing of residents through provision of more recreational activities and making it easier to get around the parish on foot and by cycle.

3.3 The proposed Neighbourhood Plan contains thirteen policies, each of which is intended to contribute to one or more of these objectives. Each policy has a code number and title and the policy wording is in **Bold** text. Below this, supporting text explains the intent of the policy and how it should be understood by applicants and applied by GBC to planning applications. The justification of each policy will be contained in the Basic Conditions Statement. Where a policy applies to specific land or sites in Ash this is shown on the Policies Map.



## Policy ASH1: SPATIAL STRATEGY

The Neighbourhood Plan directs all significant residential, employment, commercial and cultural development to the built-up areas of Ash and Ash Vale with a focus on reusing brownfield land to reinforce and sustain the two communities and support local facilities, shops and services to continue to meet the day-to-day needs of the local community in line with 'walkable neighbourhood' principles. New residential development may only be located outside of the 400m SPA buffer zone.

Ash Green as shown on the Policies Map, is suitable for small scale, infill development as opportunities arise.

Development outside of these areas, as shown on the Policies Map, will only be supported if it accords with the development plan policies relating to the countryside, with a focus on enhancing the natural environment, or the Green Belt, as relevant.

This policy establishes the essential spatial principles for development across the designated Neighbourhood Area, which comprises three distinct parts:

- Ash and Ash Vale (Urban areas)
- Ash Green (Small Village)
- the countryside areas located along the western side of Ash Vale and Ash, to the west and north of Ash Green and along the eastern side of the parish which lies in the Green Belt.

In doing so, it provides a policy bridge between the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and all its other policies.

As the second largest settlement in the District, Ash has undergone a significant period of expansion in recent years including delivery of the strategic allocation to the south and east of Ash in the current Local Plan (Policy A31 for a total of 1,750 new homes of which 1,481 homes are completed or with planning permission (as at April 2024) leaving an outstanding capacity figure of 269 homes expected to be delivered within the next 10 – 15 years. As a result, there is very little opportunity for further outward development. The environmental constraints of the Thames Basin Heath SPA and 400m exclusion zone, also limit future residential densification to the north and east of the parish.

Ash Green is a distinct community lying to the south of the parish and has a population of just under 1,000 residents. It is not considered a sustainable location with few opportunities for anything other than infill schemes and is defined in the settlement hierarchy as a small village.

The countryside area to the north and west of Ash Green lies and running along the western boundary of the parish area only suited to the types of countryside development that are consistent these countryside locations, specifically focusing on improving access and enjoyment of the countryside and away from the SPA. The remaining area to the east of the parish comprises mostly Ash Ranges and the Thames Basin Heath SPA, which lie in the Green Belt and therefore subject to national Green Belt constraints.

## Policy ASH2: DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN ASH

- A. All development should achieve high quality design that contributes positively to local distinctiveness, quality of life and enhances the character of Ash. To achieve this development proposals are required to have full regard the Ash Design Guidance and Codes attached as Appendix A, as relevant to their location, scale and nature.
- B. Where a proposal does not seek to follow the requirements of the Code then the applicant will be obliged to justify why an exception should be made.

The purpose of the design policies in ASH2, ASH3 and ASH4 is to ensure that development creates pleasant, healthy and sustainable places to live.

There are distinctive features of the respective settlements within Ash that shapes its character. The Design Guidance and Codes is an integral part of the policy but is extensive and the document is therefore attached as an Appendix for representational purposes only. It carries the full weight of the development plan in decision making and is not subordinate or supplementary guidance carrying lesser weight.

The Neighbourhood Plan requires high quality in design of all new development that contributes positively to the private and public realm (including streets and open spaces), protects and enhances heritage assets, and creates accessible and healthy environments rich in biodiversity. It also takes the opportunity to continue to encourage housing typologies suited to a wider demographic and how new development should be as energy efficient as possible.

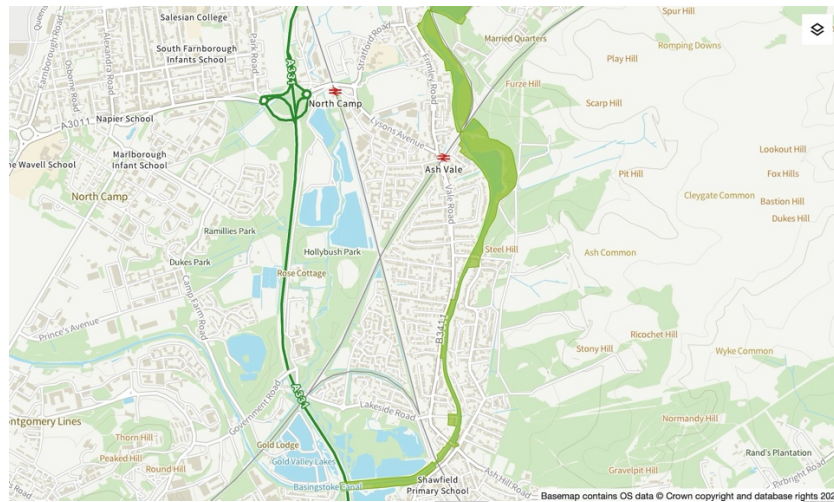
This policy defines the essential characteristics of the Ash Character area which is distinctive from the other settlements within the parish. It is the historic core of the parish and comprises some of the oldest surviving buildings in the parish. The area is defined by swathes of 20th century suburban housing estates that were built during the post-war expansion of the parish. In the recent decades, Ash has experienced significant expansion in the southern and eastern parts of the area.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that developers acknowledge and understand the characteristics which define Ash in determining their design proposals. It does not require a slavish adherence to every single characteristic in every design proposal, but it does require developers to explain why they have chosen not to follow a characteristic.

## Policy ASH3: DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN ASH VALE

- A. All development should achieve high quality design that contributes positively to local distinctiveness, quality of life and enhances the character of Ash Vale. To achieve this development proposals are required to have full regard the Ash Design Guidance and Codes attached as Appendix A, as relevant to their location, scale and nature.
- B. Where a proposal does not seek to follow the requirements of the Code then the applicant will be obliged to justify why an exception should be made.

- C. Proposals within the Conservation Area or its setting which demonstrate that they preserve or enhance the special historic interest of the Area, complying with the Ash Design Guidance and Codes as relevant to location, nature and scale of the scheme, will be supported.



Ash Conservation Area

Located to the north of the parish, Ash Vale is defined by a tight-knit residential development pattern with most of its housing stock built during the late 20th century urban expansion to the area. The area is served by a cluster of retail and services around Ash Vale Station which acts as a local centre to the neighbourhood. Ash Vale is also a key employment hub for parish, with a number of light industrial services clustering around Lyons Avenue. The Basingstoke Canal conservation area traverses Ash Vale and is integral to the setting of Ash Vale. The canal is designated as a SSSI with significant ecological value and serves as an attractive green corridor for recreation and leisure uses.

New development within the setting of the conservation area should be carefully managed as it has the potential to detract from its character and special interest. There are a number of key positive characteristics of the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area:

- The Basingstoke Canal represents one of the inland waterways constructed in England in the late 18th century representing an engineering achievement of great historic significance and a significant example of human impact on the environment;
- The canal's construction contributed towards the development of the Aldershot Military Garrison;
- The Canal provides an attractive green corridor and is designated as such in the Ash Neighbourhood Plan
- The Canalside including the tow path is used for leisure and recreation as a route for cycling, walking, pleasure boats, canoeing and angling, providing an attractive green route avoiding busy roads;
- The Canal has considerable value to the ecology of the borough and has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

## Policy ASH4: DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN ASH GREEN

All development should achieve high quality design that contributes positively to local distinctiveness, quality of life and enhances the character of Ash Green. To achieve this



development proposals are required to have full regard the Ash Design Guidance and Codes attached as Appendix A, as relevant to their location, scale and nature.

B. In addition, development proposals should have full regard to:

Demonstrating sensitive design where site boundaries affect the setting of the adjacent complex of listed buildings at Ash Manor. Views to and from this heritage asset, including their approach from White Lane, must be protected.

Ensuring that any development as a whole will not be of a size and scale that would detract from the character of the rural landscape. This must include the provision of a green buffer that maintains separation between any proposed new development and the properties fronting onto Ash Green Road. This will also help soften the edges of the strategic development location and provide a transition between the built up area and the countryside beyond.

Ensuring links to the active travel network are safe and accessible, improving identified routes principally to Ash Station and to local services and facilities as well as public footpaths and bridleways that lead to the wider countryside.

Creating opportunities to enhance the character of the urban edge, for example new woodland planting or the creation of new 'greens' and 'commons'.

Conserving and enhancing the hedgerow network and hedgerow trees, particularly in proximity to the urban edge where hedgerows can provide a strong landscape pattern and framework.

Where a proposal does not seek to follow the requirements of the Code then the applicant will be obliged to justify why an exception should be made.

C. The Neighbourhood Plan defines a Local Gap between Ash and Ash Green as shown on the Proposals Map for the purpose of preventing the coalescence of the settlements. No development will be permitted in this area which would result in the joining of the two settlements, or where it would erode their separate identities by virtue of their closer proximity.

The village of Ash Green is a smaller community, with its core area lying to the south of the parish. The area is nestled within open fields and countryside hinterlands with the old disused railway line cutting through the parish forming a popular walking route in the area towards Wanborough, a part of the Christmas Pie Trail.

Ash Green is characterised by a series of dispersed properties and farmhouses. The main built-up area of Ash comprises of detached houses and bungalows built around the mid-late 20th century. Older housing can be found along Ash Green Road with long narrow plots. There are currently no local services or facilities in Ash Green, residents have to rely on services in the main settlement of Ash or other nearby centres.

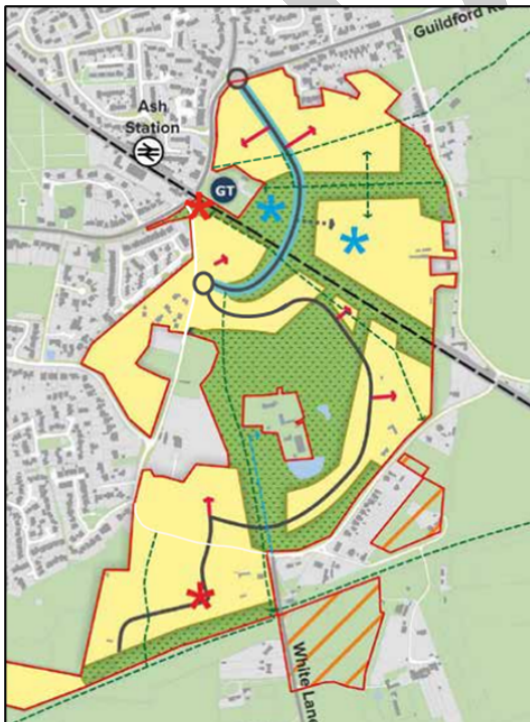
An Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) runs below the village of Ash Green. A 22 hectare SANG is located to the south of the disused railway line.

To the north of the disused railway line is the Local Plan Strategic Site Allocations (A29, A30 and A31). Just under 1,500 homes have already been consented out of a total allocation of up to 1,750. Part of the remaining land is considered necessary to support the buffer zone between Ash Green and Ash/Tongham urban areas as well as to protect the setting of the grade II\* Listed buildings at Ash Manor.

Local Plan Policy A31 requires a green buffer to maintain “*separation between any proposed new development and the properties fronting onto Ash Green Road*”, however there is no clear definition as to what is meant by a buffer in terms of its size and composition, although it is assumed from the SPD parameter plan that no development takes place within the buffer and so it forms a defensible boundary between two areas.

Due to the uncertainty that the “green buffer” provides, the Neighbourhood Plans seeks to define a Local Gap. It is clear that such a gap cannot be used as a way to restrict development of sites already allocated within the Local Plan and as such this policy does not intent to do this but uses the policy to define and strength the “green buffers” to prevent future coalescence between the built-up areas Ash Green and Ash through ensuring the defined 'gap' function is maintained.

It therefore does not conflict with the principle of development which has been established through the allocation of strategic site A31, which is partially located within the proposed gap (principally between Ash Manor and Ash Green Road and to the west of White Lane) However, it seeks to ensure than any development within the defined area is appropriate, responds to the purpose of the gap and uses its design, scale and layout to prevent visual or physical coalescence between settlements.



Illustrative concept plan of site A31 taken from the GBC Strategic Development Framework SPD.  
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There is also evidence from appeal decisions which illustrates the complexities of developing within this area from both a landscape impact perspective and in consideration of the setting of local heritage. Most recently in 2022, APP/Y3615/W/21/3273305 (Land at Ash Manor, Ash Green Road, Ash) describes *“the sense of rurality and isolation that can still be experienced when approaching the Ash Manor complex [within the proposed gap] from White Lane”*. Policy A31(8) also requires that views to and from the Ash Manor complex, including their approach from White Lane, must be protected, to prevent erosion of the rural setting of the grade II\* listed buildings. The overall rural setting of the proposed gap is therefore intrinsic to the character of Ash Green.

There is a clear change in the landscape character on the fringe between Ash Green to Ash from pastoral to urban. The former is defined by the GBC Landscape Character Assessment with field patterns and woodland, with the latter being an urban townscape. The entrances to Ash Green are all bounded by fields on both sides of the approach to the village, emphasising the rural nature of its setting.

Ash Green is formed predominately by detached houses, mostly chalet style bungalows along White Lane and Ash Green Lane, with the occasional two storey dwelling. The Old Cross Tree Way estate has its own identity of chalet style house and bungalows, with pitched roofs, white cladding and open frontages. Ash Green Road forms the older part of the village with villa style houses dating from the 1890s/1900s, all of which have long narrow gardens at the rear with smaller frontages to the road.

## **Policy ASH5: LOCAL CENTRES AND DISPERSED LOCAL SHOPS**

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following local shopping centres and dispersed local shops as shown on the Policies Map as follows:

Ash Street/Star Lane Local Centre,  
Longfield Road Local Shop  
Aldershot Road Local Shop,  
Guildford Road Local Shops  
Oxenden Road Local Shop,

The Neighbourhood Plan also identifies the broad location around Foreman Road, Ash Green Road, Harpers Road and White Lane, as shown on the Policies Map, as walkable communities that are primarily residential areas lying more than 800m walk from the defined District Centre or Local Centre.

- A. In each identified location, proposals comprising of Class E, or any other everyday community need, will be supported in principle where it complies with §97 of the NPPF.
- B. Proposals defined in Clause A may be delivered as ground floor units in a scheme with housing on upper floors if designed to manage any potential for conflicts in amenity between those uses.
- C. Proposals that comprise one or more uses defined in Clauses A must demonstrate that the site is located and accessible by walking, cycling and/or public transport

from established residential areas in a walkable community area in safe, convenient and pleasant ways.

- D. Proposals that will result in the partial or total loss of a local centre or dispersed local shop will be resisted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:
- i. all reasonable efforts have been made to market the premises for its existing use and no other potential occupier can be found;
  - ii. all reasonable efforts have been made to improve the operation and management of the business or facility;
  - iii the land is no longer a suitable location for a retail uses and suitable alternative shops exist to meet the needs of the local community

This policy is intended to protect the essential local shopping and service facilities, across the parish. The ANP has identified that there are a number of existing local shops around the parish which play a vital role in providing the local communities with convenience and local services that reduce their dependence on travelling further afield, being within walking distance for many parts of the parish. As such, this policy will seek to safeguard these local shops from change of use where planning permission is required by identifying the importance of their existing use (Class E and/or community uses) to prevent their loss to other uses.

The GBC Local Plan identifies the cluster of retail uses around Wharf Road as the Ash District Centre. It also defines the cluster around Ash Vale Station as a Local Centre.

No other areas with retail uses are identified within the Local Plan. Given the levels of development towards the south of the parish which is where historically the main retail functions were situated, along Ash Street, the ANP has identified the area around the junction of Star Lane as a local centre.

Given the responses to early engagement indicated that a number of residents have a convenience shop located within walking distance of their home, this policy seeks not only to protect individual local shops in the parish, given the function they serve, promoting walkable neighbourhoods but to encourage the creation of new convenience shops and services in those parts of the parish that lie beyond an 800m walk from the defined District and Local centres.

Such proposals would need to demonstrate that the site is located and accessible by walking, cycling and/or public transport to provide local residents with a choice to access them without having to drive. For this policy the definition of 'convenience shops and local services' would comprise only uses Class E(a) convenience food retail for up to a total of 280 sq.m. floorspace; Class E(b) café; and/or a Class F2 local community use.

It is recognised that some changes of use do not now require planning permission and new permitted development rights has enabled changes of use from what are now Class E uses to residential uses. The Parish Council will monitor the loss of such uses to residential uses in partnership with GBC. Should monitoring indicate that such uses are being lost to residential uses at a rate that harms the ability of the local communities' day-to-day needs being met the Parish Council will discuss the opportunity of GBC initiating an Article 4



Direction application with the Secretary of State. An Article 4 Direction can remove permitted development rights, enabling such changes to remain in planning control.

In relation to Clause A, in accordance with §97 of the National Planning Policy Framework Local planning authorities should refuse applications for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets within walking distance of within walking distance of schools and other places where children and young people congregate or in locations where there is evidence that a concentration of such uses is having an adverse impact on local health, pollution or anti-social-behaviour.

## Policy ASH6: EMPLOYMENT LOCATIONS

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the Strategic Employment Location at North and South of Lysons Avenue and designates a Locally Important Employment Location at Land at Ash Station as shown on the Policies Map.

These industrial complexes are of economic value to the parish and fundamental to the maintenance of a well-balanced mix of land uses which should include opportunities for locally owned and managed small businesses serving the local community.

- A. Proposals for the intensification of employment uses on, or to extend the Strategic or Locally Important Employment Location for new Class E(g) and B2 uses, will be supported, provided they will not cause significant harm to the amenity of adjoining residential areas.
- B. Where planning permission is required for the change of use of land or premises on the Locally Important Employment Location, to a non-Class B2 use including a residential led proposal, will only be supported where schemes comprise a mix of uses retaining commercial units within the site proposals, to prevent the net loss of employment opportunities.

The long-term future of Ash as a modern, vibrant and sustainable parish serving an economically active population depends on it sustaining its economic base to prevent it becoming a dormitory community. Its proximity to larger centres of population and businesses in Aldershot, Farnborough and Guildford and its high-quality connections to the national road network make it an attractive location for business.

In maintaining a vibrant local economy it is important that we seek to retain smaller, locally important employment locations to encourage local smaller businesses alongside the larger strategic employment spaces to provide a variety of job opportunities in a wide, which provide a range of industries including self-employment options. These sites support a number of locally owned and run small and medium sized manufacturing and “cottage industries”.

This policy therefore identifies these established employment locations in the parish , designating the land at Ash Station as locally important to protect it from a change of use to non-employment uses, a protection already afforded to the strategic site, as well as to support the intensification of both strategic and locally important employment sites.

Whilst supporting the brownfield approach to development, this policy shows how not all brownfield sites are suitable for redevelopment to residential by protecting local employment land in the right places.

The Local Plan Policy E3 identifies North and south of Lysons Avenue, Ash Vale as a strategic employment site for industrial uses (B1c, B2 and B8) As such it will be protected for use in line with their designation, with employment floorspace loss strongly resisted, but does not go further than that in supporting intensification of use on such sites or repurposing to provide a wider range of unit sizes including additional opportunities to provide incubation/smaller spaces for start-up businesses.

In respect of locally important employment sites, the Local Plan defines these as sites in excess of 1.5ha. Whilst the site at Ash Station is smaller than this at 0.72ha with around 986sqm of employment floorspace, it is the only industrial estate in Ash ( the strategic site being located within Ash Vale) and given the significant and on-going residential development to the South of Ash Station, it is important that the location at Ash Station is included within this definition to retain local employment opportunities in this accessible location.

## Policy ASH7: REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS

- A. Development proposals for replacement dwellings should have full regard to the provisions of the Ash Design Guidance and Codes (May 2025) and evidence the following criteria:
- i. they maintain, or where possible enhance, the prevailing character and appearance of buildings in the immediate area;
  - ii. they have due regard to the scale, mass, design and layout of existing residential dwellings in the surrounding area;
  - iii. they safeguard the amenities of adjacent residential dwellings and their curtilages;
  - iv. any loss of biodiversity value on the site will be fully mitigated, and measures to create a net gain in biodiversity through habitat creation and enhancement are incorporated as part of the proposal.
- B. Replacement dwellings should be 'zero carbon ready' by design to minimise the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings through landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping. Consideration should be given to resource efficiency at the outset and applications should evidence whether existing buildings can be re-used as part of the scheme to capture their embodied carbon.
- C. Replacement dwellings proposed to be certified to a Passivhaus or equivalent standard with a space heating demand of less than 15KWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year will not be subject to the provisions of Clause C. Where schemes that maximise their potential to meet this standard by proposing the use of terraced and/or apartment building forms of plot size, plot coverage and layout that are different to those of the character area within which the proposal is located, this will be supported, provided it can be demonstrated that the scheme will not have a significant harmful effect on the character area.

D. All planning permissions granted for replacement buildings should demonstrate that they have been tested to ensure the buildings will perform as predicted and will include a planning condition to require the provision of a Post Occupancy Evaluation report to the local planning authority within a specified period, unless exempted by Clause C. Where the report identifies poor energy performance and makes recommendations for reasonable corrective action, the applicant must demonstrate that those actions have been implemented before the condition will be discharged.

E. All planning applications for major development are also required to be accompanied by a full Lifecycle Carbon Analysis (LCA), using a recognised methodology, to demonstrate actions taken to reduce embodied carbon resulting from the construction and use of the building over its entire life.

F. A Climate Change Statement will be submitted to demonstrate compliance with the policy. The statement will include a passive design capacity assessment to demonstrate how opportunities to reduce the energy use intensity (EUI) of the building(s) over the plan period have been maximised in accordance with the energy hierarchy. Designers shall evaluate the operational energy use using realistic information on the intended use, occupancy and operation of the building to minimise any performance gap.

Ash has a very few brownfield redevelopment opportunities for residential development, principally due to existing policy constraints in terms of land designations and very few underused or vacant commercial sites in areas suitable for a change of use ( i.e outside of the SPA 400m buffer zone). However, there has been an increase in the number of replacement dwelling applications (knock down and rebuild). These applications can be popular for self-build opportunities and can seek to maximise the efficient use of land where there is a net increase in the number of dwellings resulting from the development, resulting in a social sustainability benefit by providing new homes.

Such applications should evidence how they have responded to the Ash Design Guidance and Codes in ensuring they respond positively to the existing character and setting of the local area in their proposals.

Replacement building proposals also provide the opportunity to reduce both operational and embodied carbon emissions, seeking to achieve high levels of sustainability to mitigate for the demolition of the original building which will have a sustainability impact. As such, alternative options such as refurbishment, retrofitting, extending or conversion must be fully explored and evidenced prior to pursuing a knock down and rebuild proposal as these options may enable a building to achieve the same level of building performance and energy efficiency as a replacement dwelling but with a lower waste and embodied carbon impact. If a building is structurally unsound, then demolition and replacement may be the only way to bring the previously developed site back into use and as such this should also be evidenced.

Where an application includes a demolition, the resulting building should achieve high levels of sustainability (e.g. low embodied carbon in the build, low operational energy use, strong site waste reduction measures etc) in order to overcome the sustainability deficit and “pay back” the disbenefits of demolition.

Where there is a net increase in the number of dwellings resulting from the demolition and rebuild approach, this can weigh against the environmental harm of demolition and construction.

Clause B of the policy requires developers to ensure they address the Government's climate change targets and energy performance at the very initial stages of design. 'Zero Carbon Ready' by design means making spatial decisions on layout and orientation of buildings at the outset to maximise the passive design benefits ('free heat') of a site and avoids leaving this to technical choices and assessment at the Building Regulation stage, by which time the opportunity may have been lost. Applicants are directed to the Net-Zero Carbon Toolkit created by Cotswold District Council and two partner councils, WODC and Forest of Dean District Council. The toolkit is available as a resource for private and public sector organisations to use and adopt ([link](#)).

There is a growing evidence base to suggest that buildings do not perform as well as anticipated at design stage. Findings demonstrate that actual energy consumption in buildings will usually be twice as much as predicted. This passes on expensive running and retrofitting costs to future occupants. Clause D of the policy therefore requires that every building in a consented development scheme of any size is subject to Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) including actual metered energy use, and to submit the report to the local planning authority. It will be implemented by attaching a planning condition, which will only be discharged once the report has been submitted and any recommended actions to rectify any performance gap with the design stage assessment are carried out by the developer. There is no current adopted development plan policy which seeks to deal with the performance gap. In the absence of supplementary guidance from GBC on POE, guidance has been included in Appendix D. Passivhaus certified schemes will not fail in this way and they are therefore exempted from this policy requirement. PassivHaus is the most common and rigorous design approach, although the build cost is slightly higher than normal, the ongoing energy cost to occupiers is a fraction of the cost now (so avoiding fuel poverty).

To further incentivise the use of Passivhaus, or equivalent standard, Clause C of the policy acknowledges that there may sometimes be a trade-off between its objectives and local design policy. Although meeting these objectives ought not to compromise a scheme fitting in with the character of a local area, on occasions this may be the case. It therefore allows for some degree of flexibility in meeting local design guidance, especially in terms of prevalent building orientation and density.

Proposals seeking to apply the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) must be able to demonstrate that the Passivhaus standard can be achieved. Prior to commencement a 'pre-construction compliance check' completed by a Passivhaus Designer accredited by the Passive House Institute (PHI) will be required and secured by condition. Upon completion a Quality Approved Passivhaus certificate for each building will be required prior to occupation, again secured by condition.

Clause E requires all development proposals that are not householder applications to be accompanied by a full Lifecycle Carbon Analysis (LCA). The assessment will enable the design team to understand and respond to the lifetime consequences of their design decisions and to design for adaptability, longevity and disassembly; contributing to resource



efficiency and contributing to the 'circular economy'. LCAs can also be used to demonstrate how a renovation would compare against demolition and replacement. This requirement will be added to the GBC Council Validation Checklist for outline and full planning applications applying to proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan area until such a time that there is a district-wide requirement.

Clause F requires the Climate Change Statement for applications already required to be submitted to cover the following:

- o an assessment of the proposal to minimise regulated and unregulated emissions, the embodied emissions and the emissions associated with maintenance, repair and replacement of the new building(s), as well as its dismantling, demolition and eventual material disposal
- o a calculation of the energy and carbon emissions covered by the Future Homes Standard and Building Regulations and, separately, the energy demand and carbon emissions from any other part of the development that are not covered by the Future Homes Standard or Building Regulations
- o the proposal to reduce carbon emissions beyond the Future Homes Standard and Building Regulations through the energy efficient design of the site, buildings and services
- o the proposal to further reduce carbon emissions through the use of zero or low emission decentralised energy where feasible
- o the proposal to further reduce carbon emissions by maximising opportunities to produce and use renewable energy on-site, utilising storage technologies where appropriate
- o the proposal for a demand-side response, specifically through installation of smart meters, minimising peak energy demand and promoting short-term energy storage
- o an analysis of the expected cost to occupants associated with the proposed energy strategy

## Policy ASH8: HOUSING MIX, TYPE AND TENURE

Proposals for all residential development should seek to include in their housing mix a type and tenure suitable for first time buyers, those looking to rent their first home and downsizers.

- A. Housing development of 11 or more dwellings, must deliver 40% affordable housing on site.
- B. Affordable housing must be delivered in the form of:
  - 40% affordable home ownership
  - 60% affordable rent and social rent, with the mix to be determined on a site-by-site basis at the planning application stage
- C. Proposals for residential development will be expected to provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to address the nature of local needs and contribute to the objective of creating a mixed and balanced community. To achieve this objective, provision should be made for 2 & 3 bedroom dwellings which should comprise 70% or more of the total in schemes of five or more dwellings.

- D. All Development proposals should be delivered as accessible and adaptable dwellings in accordance with Building Regulations M4(2), unless evidence can be provided to demonstrate that such provision would be impracticable or render the scheme unviable. The provision of homes constructed to Building Regulations Part M4(3) for wheelchair accessible homes will also be supported.

This policy supports the Local Plan Policy H2 in seeking to require 40% affordable homes where over 10 homes are proposed on a site but provides local definition to the tenure mix, resulting from the 2025 Housing Needs Assessment for Ash. This recognises that Ash is to continue the role of providing more smaller and mid-sized homes than the surrounding villages and countryside which provide a higher percentage of larger properties, then the housing future mix needs to continue to increase the delivery of 2–3-bedroom dwellings and limit the delivery of larger 4+ bedroom dwellings.

This policy also recognises that with an aging population, residential development should address the need to provide accessible and adaptable dwellings to reduce the need for age restricted housing. By encouraging developers to build to at least M4(2) standard this ensures new builds provide options for buyers to remain in their home in later years, rather than moving out into care facilities, helping to maintain a balanced mix of demographics within any given neighbourhood.

## Policy ASH9: EXISTING AND NEW COMMUNITY ASSETS

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies existing community facilities on the Policies Map and listed in Appendix B.
- i) Proposals that will result in either the loss of, or cause significant harm to, a defined facility will be resisted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the operation of the facility is no longer financially viable.
  - ii) Proposals to sustain or extend the viable use of existing community facilities and the development of new facilities, to ensure local residents have sufficient good quality social infrastructure will be supported.
- B. Proposals to extend, diversify, improve and introduce new school place capacity, day nursery or other early years settings will be supported provided:
- i. the scale of the buildings and structures minimise the effect of the scheme on local residential amenity by way of traffic, on-street car parking and outdoor noise and lighting pollution; and
  - ii. there is adequate provision to encourage walking and/or cycling to and from the facility.
- C. The Neighbourhood Plan designates 0.27 ha of land at Ash Lodge Drive, as shown on the Policies Maps for Local Community Uses (Class F2) Proposals in this location for the creation of community facilities to serve the parish for social, recreational, cultural or health and wellbeing purposes will be supported.

Clause B reflects the Surrey County Council [School Organisation Plan](#) which identifies changing trends in demand for education over the coming decade. As such, ASH9 takes a flexible approach to enabling educational facilities to adapt, diversify and extend, where needed in order to respond to local need and ensure they remain viable and able to meet the needs of the parish, whilst ensuring that any proposals take account of the impact on local traffic and households in the vicinity and they are managed effectively.

Clause C identifies a specific piece of land which was previously safeguarded as part of the Ash Lodge Drive development, intended for use as a medical facility, but with an alternative use as community use land, should no provider be secured to develop out a medical facility. Despite best endeavours, a provider was unable to be secured and the S106 agreement “timed out” before the LPA could invoke the agreement for the fall-back community use of the land. As such, given the social infrastructure community benefit which was intended for the land, the parish are keen to ensure the site is safeguarded for community use, ideally transferred to Ash Parish Council to develop to serve local residents.

Class F2 comprises recreational uses such as outdoor sports facilities and community halls. It can also include shops under 280 square metres selling essential goods which are over 1km from another similar shop.

## Policy ASH10: GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a Green and Blue Infrastructure Network, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purpose of increasing biodiversity, promoting ecological connectivity, providing outdoor recreation, sustainable movement through the town and into its surrounding countryside, and helping mitigate and adapt to climate change. The Network comprises assets of high nature conservation value including rare and threatened heathland habitats, wildflower-rich meadows, ancient semi-natural and secondary woodland, trees, hedgerows and water bodies - all assets of high biodiversity value. Also included are those areas of recreation and amenity value including children's play areas, allotments, recreational playing fields, and off-street footways, cycleways, and bridleways in and around Ash. In most cases assets have multi-functional, nature conservation, recreational and amenity value.

A. Development proposals that lie within or adjoining the Network are required to have full regard to creating, maintaining and improving the functionality of the Network in the design of their layouts, landscaping schemes and public open space provisions. Proposals that will harm the functionality or connectivity of the Network, will not be supported.

B Proposals for new development requiring the provision of on-site open space will be supported where the design of open space is integral to the scheme and is effectively connected to any adjoining green infrastructure assets. Proposals for smaller infill schemes should also create opportunities to connect their landscape schemes with adjoining green infrastructure assets. Where appropriate, developers will be expected to enter into a planning obligation to secure satisfactory arrangements for the long-term management of this open space.

C New development will also be required to retain trees and hedgerows and to secure opportunities to create connected habitats suitable for species adaptation to climate change. Where they are unavoidably lost, replacement trees and hedgerows using indigenous species must be planted (two trees must be planted for every one lost). All proposals for development in the Plan area must ensure that any potential impacts upon rare and threatened species are fully assessed, and that, where necessary, mitigation measures are incorporated to safeguard and protect those species.

D. Save for householder applications, development proposals on sites of 0.5ha or above, are required as a minimum to achieve a future canopy cover of 20% of the site area principally through the retention of existing trees and the planting of new trees. Where it can be demonstrated that this is impracticable, the use of other green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs and walls) can be used where they are capable of offering similar benefits to trees.

D. Development proposals on sites below 0.5 Ha, are required to maximise the opportunities available for canopy cover, including tree retention and planting or the provision of other green infrastructure (e.g. green roofs, walls and rain gardens).

The network has been mapped using publicly available data, primarily that produced by Natural England.

Green Infrastructure is a term that covers a wide range of ecological and often biodiverse features. These include our natural and semi-natural habitats (woodland and species-rich grassland for example), water bodies, streams, hedgerows, mature trees, lines of street trees, parks, footpaths, bridleways, allotments etc., that combine to create a network of habitats.

Ash is blessed with a number of key biodiversity assets. The extensive area of open dry heathland owned by the MoD at Ash Ranges is a haven for numerous rare heathland plant, invertebrate and reptile species such as sundews and the green tiger beetle. It is also home to the rare sand lizard, smooth snake and heath tiger beetle which are only found on a handful of heathland sites in the UK. The Basingstoke Canal is also a notable wildlife habitat. The alkaline water from the chalk springs at Greywell and the acid water content eastward where the canal passes through heathland, has given rise to one of the largest varieties of aquatic plants and invertebrates along the length of a single UK waterway. As many as 25 of Britain's 39 species of dragonflies and damselflies inhabit the canal. Recognising the unique ecological importance of the canal, English Nature (now Natural England) designated the entire waterway, as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1995.

Several protected species can be found in the area, including breeding Red Kites, Buzzards, Barn Owls and Tawny Owls. Further, starlings and house sparrows are present, all of which are on the Birds of Conservation Concern Red List. Sparrowhawk, wren, song thrush, redwings, grey wagtails and bullfinches (BoCC Amberlist) are all present. Hedgehogs and dormice (listed as "vulnerable" on the Red List for Britain's Mammals) are also present, as are slow worms and adders. Deer, foxes and badgers are also found in the area. A variety of bats roost or forage in the area including the endangered Barbastelle bat. There are also rare fungi in the trees around Ash Manor. The pond at Ash Manor also has an



abundance of wildlife including toads, great crested newts, duck and geese, including Egyptian geese.

In areas such as Ash, mapping this rich ecological value, does not just illustrate where they are currently located, but also to point to where the network may be improved to be better connected if or when land is developed or redeveloped. It also requires new development to maximise the opportunities available for tree canopy cover including tree retention and planting or the provision of other Green Infrastructure (e.g. green roofs, walls, rain gardens, ponds, inter-connected wildflower strips and hedgerows).

Canopy cover is the layer of leaves, branches and tree stems that cover the ground. Trees help mitigate the environmental and social challenges our built-up areas, face in a quantifiable way. This is supported by the Government's NetZero Strategy: Build Back Greener October 2021 which recognises the role of green and blue infrastructure, including trees, in providing an opportunity to benefit local economies and bring about long-term improvements in people's health and wellbeing.

The policy therefore draws inspiration from others, like Wycombe District Council and Cornwall Council who are operating planning policies which require new development (excluding householder applications) to achieve a quantifiable future canopy cover, with many others in the process of developing this type of policy. The London Plan operates a similar approach with its Urban Greening Factor.

In implementing the policy, a wide range of benefits are expected including storing carbon, reducing the urban heat island effect and improving air quality. The policy has been designed to be applied in a flexible way. In specific terms it acknowledges that issues such as commercial viability, site layouts and design may make the expectations of the policy impracticable on a site by-site basis.

This will be a matter for GBC to consider based in the evidence provided with each development proposal. In addition, matters such as site layout and commercial viability may also be affected where development proposals also need to provide open space and landscaping to meet other policies.

As GBC does not currently have guidance for applicants to calculate canopy cover, the adopted Wycombe Tree Canopy Cover Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides a Canopy Cover calculator, developed in partnership with Treeconomics Forest Research and Wycombe District Council ([link](#)). This guidance will assist applicants in calculating how their proposed scheme should seek to meet the requirements of the policy, until such a time that GBC adopts its own guidance.

## Policy ASH11: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The Neighbourhood Plan designates Local Green Spaces in the following locations, as shown on the Policies Map and listed below.

Ash Vale

1) Carrington Recreation Ground

- 2) Snaky Lane Local Nature Reserve
- 3) Lakeside Nature Reserve Play Area
- 4) Cody Close Playground and Vickers Road Open Space
- 5) Sopwith Close Playground and Open Space
- 6) Keogh Barracks Playing Fields
- 7) Avondale Playground
- 8) Old Farm Place Play Area.
- 9) Shackleton Close Playground and Open Space

#### Ash

- 10) Ash Common Recreation Ground
- 11) Coronation Gardens
- 12) Coronation Extension Gardens
- 13) Harpers Recreation Ground
- 14) Open space adjacent to Ash United Football Club (Shawfield Rec)
- 15) Open space off Old School Close (formerly Heathcote School Field)
- 16) Heathcote Play Area (Parson's Nose)
- 17) Rowan Field
- 18) Harpers Road Allotments
- 19) Shawfield Road Allotments

#### Ash South

- 20) Open space off Collins Gardens
- 21) Ash Green Meadows
- 22) The Briars Playground and open space east of South Lane and Dan's Meadow
- 23) Ashley Park Play Area (Blackwater Close)
- 24) Parish Close Play Area and open space
- 25) Hop Garden Way Play Area
- 26) Hop Garden Way Sports Court Playground and Open Space
- 27) Minleys Close Playground
- 28) Holme Close Play Area
- 29) Yalden Gardens Play Area
- 30) Alden Copse Play Area
- 31) Parsons Way Play Area
- 32) Wanborough Way Playground
- 33) Compass Rose Road Play Area
- 34) Green Space South of Hazel Road
- 35) Green Spaces West of White Lane

**New development will not be permitted on land designated as Local Green Space except in very special circumstances or where it is ancillary to the use of the land for public recreational purposes.**

The green and blue infrastructure network includes some land that qualifies as a Local Green Space. These spaces are particularly special and cherished by the local community. They would be especially missed if they were to be lost to development. The policy designates Local Green Spaces in the area, Once designated these sites are afforded a high level of protection from development. Full details of each location are set out in Appendix C describe why it is special.

The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land. (NPPF §106)

## Policy ASH12: THAMES BASIN HEATH SPA

Residential schemes will be required to include proposals for mitigating their effects on the ecological integrity of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area. This could be through on-site provision or off-site financial contributions in accordance with the requirements of the development plan, including compliance with the principles set out in adopted Development Plan policies in the Local Plan and with Guildford Borough Council's Thames Basin Heath SPA SPD

Natural England designated the SPA on 9 March 2005. The SPA is a protected area of lowland heath and woodland that is home to three rare and internationally protected bird species that nest on or near the ground, the woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler. These birds nest on or near the ground and, as a result, are very susceptible to predation by cats, rats and crows, and to disturbance from informal recreational use, especially walking and dog walking.

The SPA is protected from adverse effects under European and UK law. New residential development within the vicinity of the SPA increases visitor pressure which has negative impacts on the bird populations and habitats.

The GBC Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance Strategy SPD 2017 sets out an approach that enables GBC to grant permission for residential developments that would otherwise conflict with legislation and regional and local planning policies that protect the SPA habitats and birds. Recreational impacts on the bird populations are avoided or mitigated through the provision of Where net new residential development is proposed within the zone of influence, avoidance measures must be provided in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

Residential development of over 50 net new dwellings that falls between five and seven kilometres from the SPA may be required to provide avoidance and mitigation measures, assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) has concluded that the Ash Neighbourhood Plan will not affect the integrity of European sites in relation to recreational pressure.

The ANP notes the land allocated for new allotments to be delivered at Ash Lodge Park, will shortly be subject to a change of use application to create additional SANG land for the Parish including potentially a secure dog walking facility as the land is unsuitable for allotments given its location and access issues.

## Policy ASH13: ACTIVE TRAVEL.

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a walking and cycling network, as shown on the Policies Map with the purpose of supporting healthy and safe active travel opportunities.

Proposals which create opportunities to improve this network, including new walking and cycling routes to connect the existing and new residential areas of the parish with the Town Centre will be supported.

Development proposals requiring the preparation and agreement of travel plans as planning conditions or obligations, are required to prioritise in their travel interventions the making of financial contributions to footpath and cycleway improvement projects connecting their schemes local services and facilities, including strategic allocations in the GBC Local Plan (2016 – 2036 or subsequent version)

Development proposals that will result on the unnecessary loss or obstruction of a section of cycleway or footway, that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated, will be resisted.

APC identified active travel as a key area of focus to improve accessibility across the parish (ie how easy it is for people to move around.) Improving how residents and visitors move through the area and in particular access facilities and services, requires understanding the options and opportunities for active travel. This policy has therefore mapped the existing active travel network (walking, cycling, bus routes, train routes) to draw to the attention of developers where this network is so that they can take it into account in designing their proposals, and especially how their schemes are accessed if they are located next to the network.

At a minimum future development should not harm the functioning of the walking and cycling network but should, where practicable, enhance the functionality of the network through layout, means of access and landscape treatments.

Early engagement indicated that the old railway track, Ash Green Meadows, Rowan Field and the canal towpath are all very popular for leisure walking and cycling. Ash Ranges is also popular but as part of the Thames Basin Heath SPA, new development should seek to provide connections to Lakeside Nature Reserve SANG and Ash Lodge Drive SANG for dog walking in particular.

Identified areas for improvement include:

- 1) Foreman Road and Harpers Road which currently have no footpaths and should be upgraded.
- 2) The disused railway track flood every year to a depth of at least 2 feet. It is unlit and frequently overgrown. This route is the recommended route for travel to and from Ash Manor school for the developments in Ash South and Ash Green. Development should enhance this route to make it a safe and attractive route.
- 3) Sustainable travel connections from the eastern parts of Ash and Ash Green to the wider bus and rail transport network and the Wharf Road District Centre. Either through the promotion of a new bus route or expanded Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) service to the rest of the Parish.



Developers and those involved in improving and enhancing active travel routes are directed to use the [Healthy Streets Indicators Assessment](#) tool to ensure that the whole community are able to access and enjoy the network. The tool includes planning safe routes which avoid severance including the removal physical barriers wherever possible, making crossings easy and considering the appropriate placement of new street furniture as well as providing adequate spaces to rest or shelter.

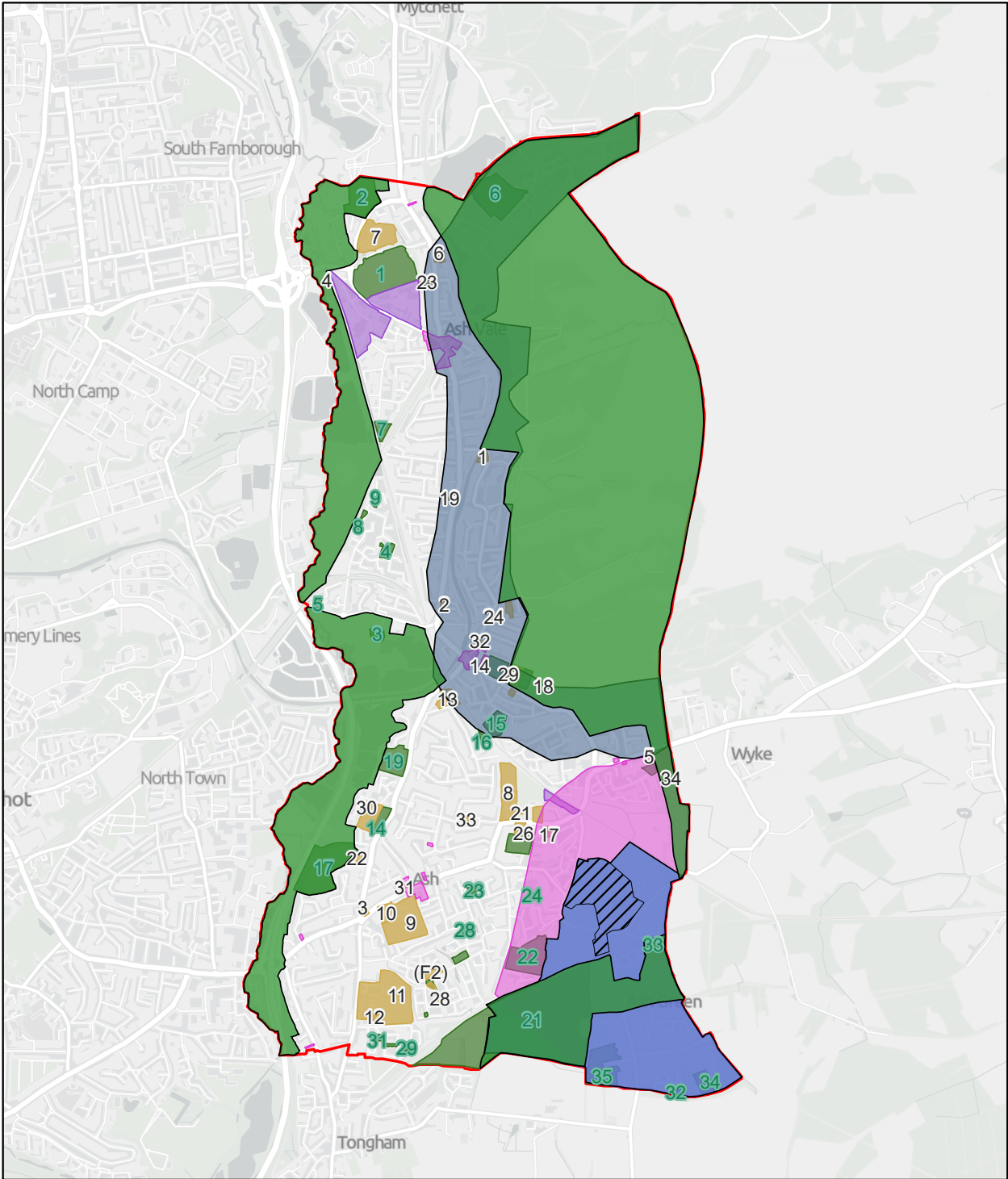


Figure 3 Healthy Street Indicators.

## ASH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES MAP

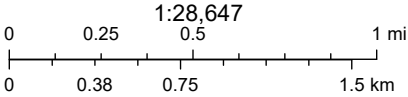
Below are the Policies Maps for the Ash Neighbourhood Plan. For ease of reading, the Green and Blue Infrastructure and Active Travel mapping layers are reproduced separately. For an interactive higher resolution version containing all mapping layers with the ability to turn layers off and on please [click here](#)

# Ash Policies Map



6/10/2025

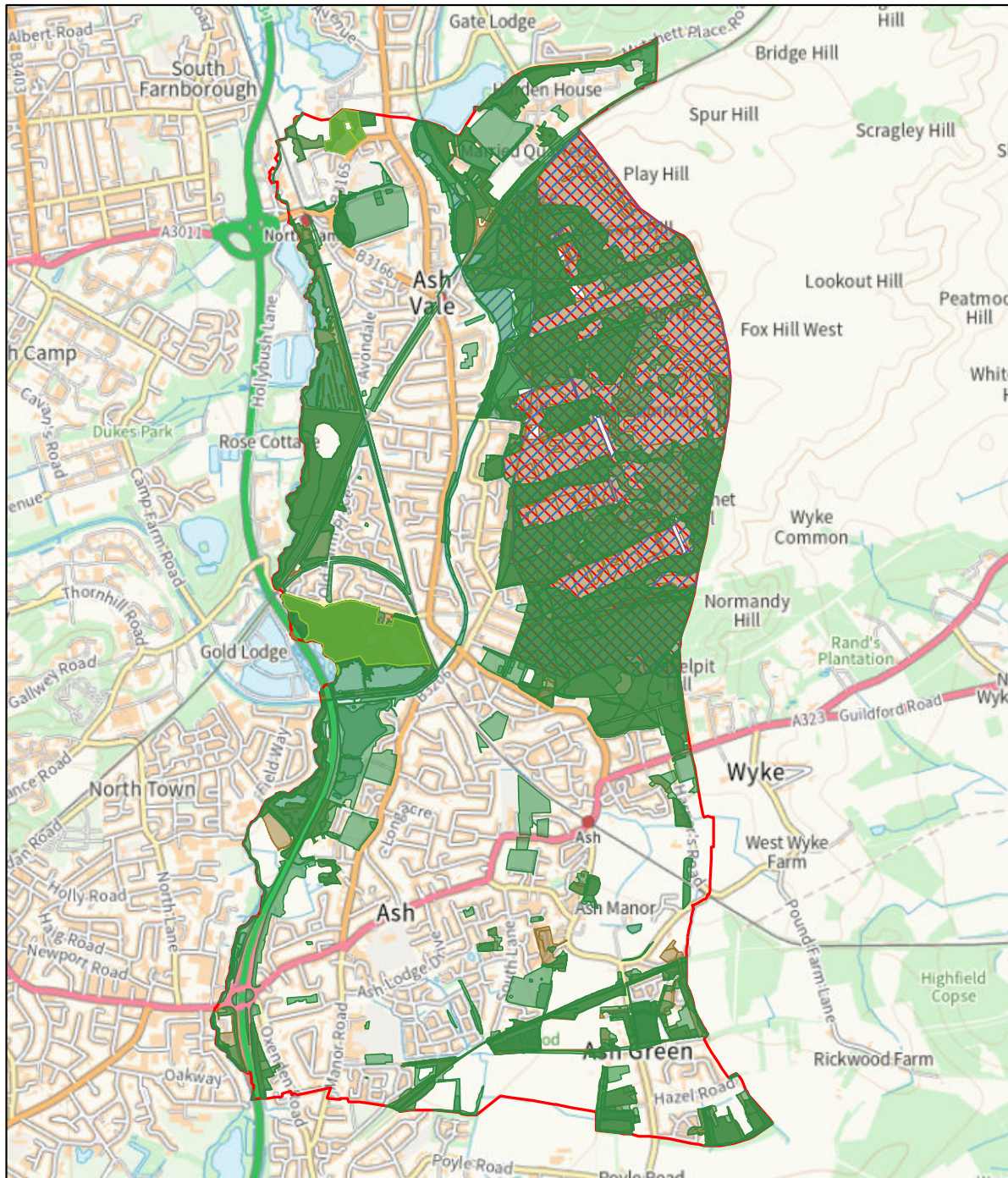
- ASH1 The Countryside
- ASH4 Proposed Local Gap
- ASH1 Ash Green Boundary
- ASH1 SPA 0 to 400m Buffer GBC
- ASH5 Local Centres and Dispersed Local Shops
- ASH6 Employment Locations
- ASH9 Existing and New Community Assets
- ASH11 Local Green Spaces
- Ash Parish Boundary



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Contains data from OS Zoomstack

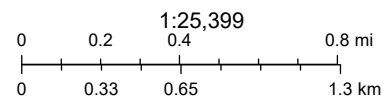


## Ash Policies Map - ASH10 Green and Blue Infrastructure



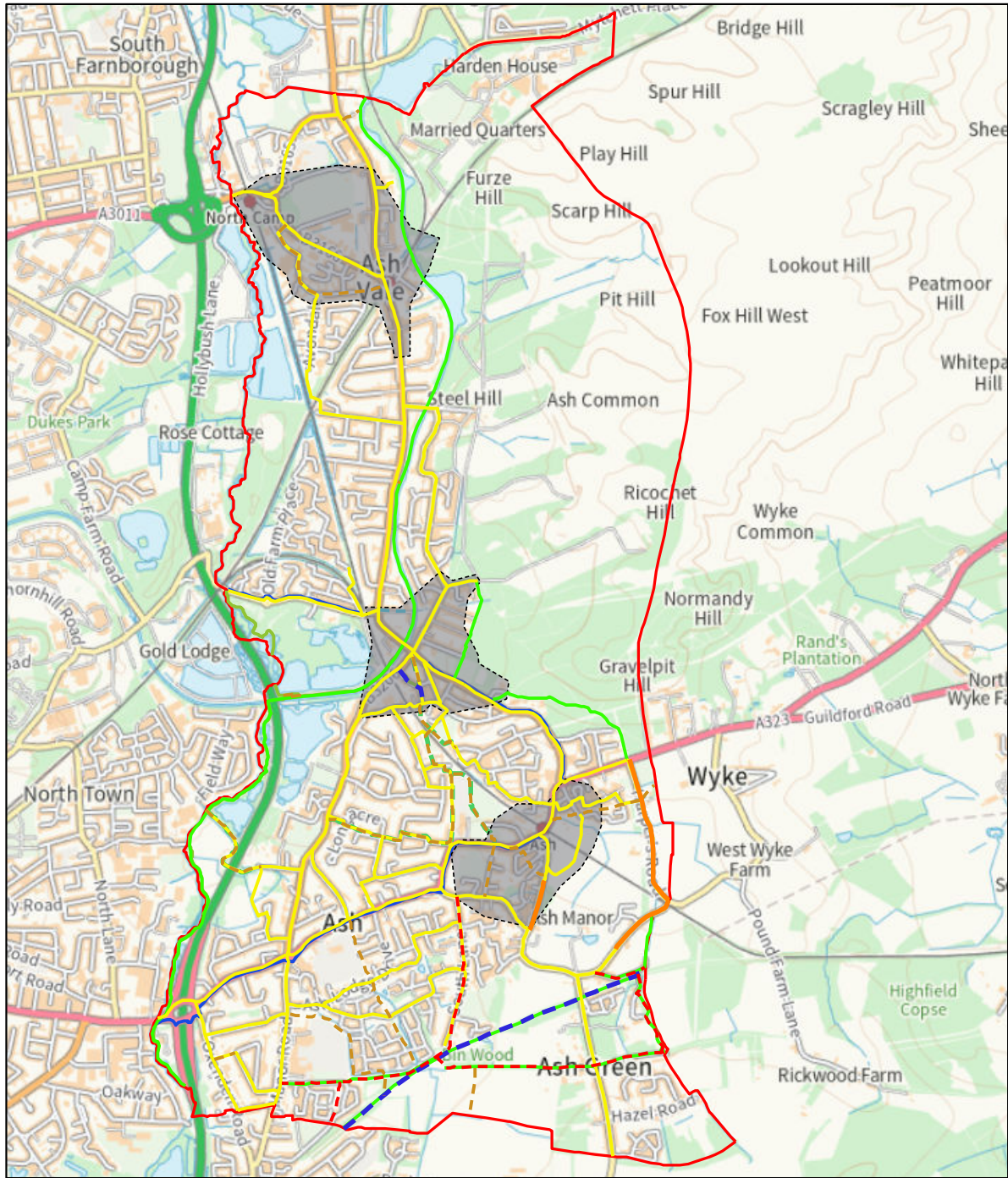
5/14/2025

- ASH10 Local Nature Reserves
- ASH10 Green and Blue Infrastructure
- ASH10 SSSI
- ASH10 SAC
- ASH10 Priority Habitats
- Ash Parish Boundary



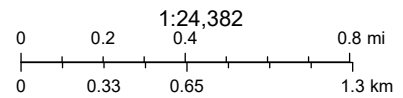


## Ash Policies Map - ASH13 Active Travel.



5/14/2025

- ASH13 Opportunity Routes
- ASH13 PRoW Footpath
- ASH13 PRoW Byway
- ASH13 PRoW Bridleway
- ASH13 Walking Routes
- ASH13 Off-Road Walking Routes
- ASH13 LCWIP Core Walking Zone
- ASH13 LCWIP Existing Footpath
- ASH13 LCWIP Shared Use Path Off Carriageway
- ASH13 LCWIP Shared Use Paths
- ASH13 LCWIP Existing Cycle Infrastructure/Bridleway
- Ash Parish Boundary



## 4. INFORMATION

4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented through Guildford Borough Council through its consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the parish. The Parish Council will monitor the effectiveness of the policies through the development management process and through steering public and private investment into infrastructure improvements contained in the Plan. In addition, Guildford Borough Council will monitor the implementation of Neighbourhood Plan policies, once adopted, through the Authority Monitoring Report which is published annually. This report is prepared in consultation with relevant parish council each year.

4.2 The Parish Council will use a combination of the Local Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan policies to inform and determine its planning application decisions. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made in the parish and it will be made aware of any future planning applications or alterations to those applications by the planning authorities. It will seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified and applied correctly by applicants and by officers in their decision reports.

4.3 Opportunities may arise through S106 agreements or through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to secure financial contributions to invest in improving local infrastructure. Once the Neighbourhood Plan is “made” the Parish Council will be able to determine how and where 25% of the CIL collected from schemes in the Parish is spent in accordance with the CIL Regulations.

4.4 The Parish will prioritise the following in spending planning gain (S106/CIL) funds:

- a) Facilities and Resources for the Ash Youth Club, and/or young people in the Parish
- b) Additional Sporting and Leisure Facilities at various green spaces (including but not limited to Carrington Recreation Ground, Harpers Recreation Ground or Coronation Gardens)
- c) Active Travel improvements as detailed in ASH13

4.5 APC kindly acknowledges the help of the following in the production of the ANP:

- Ash Neighbourhood Plan Committee
- Guildford Borough Council
- [Locality](#)
- [ONH Planning for Good](#)

## 5. APPENDICES

5.1 APC has referred to the following documents as its evidence to support the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Appendix A – Ash Design Code (provided separately due to size)
- Appendix B – Existing Community Facilities.
- Appendix C – Local Green Spaces
- Appendix D – Post Occupancy Evaluation



## Appendix B: Existing Community Facilities (Policy ASH9)

### Pubs

- 1) The Swan Public House
- 2) The Admiral Public House
- 3) The Greyhound Public House
- 4) The Old Ford Public House
- 5) The Lion Brewery Public House

### Schools

- 6) Cherryvale Nursery
- 7) Holly Lodge County Primary School
- 8) Ash Grange Children's Centre and Primary School
- 9) Walsh Memorial C of E Junior School
- 10) Walsh Memorial C of E Infant School
- 11) Ash Manor Secondary School & Sports Centre
- 12) Friends Forest Nursery
- 13) Shawfield County Primary School and Jack & Jill Nursery Group

### Community Buildings

- 14) Ash Centre
- 15) Ash Vale Health Centre
- 16) Victoria Hall
- 17) St Peter's Centre
- 18) Ash Youth and Community Centre.
- 19) St Mary's Church and Community Centre
- 20) Ash Library
- 21) Ash Museum
- 22) Shawfield Day Centre
- 23) Nepali Christian Church
- 24) The Chapel, Ash Vale
- 25) St Peters Church, Ash and Little Fishes Preschool
- 26) Holy Angels Church

### Other

- 27) Ash Tennis Club
- 28) Designated Community Use Space
- 29) Ash Skatepark.
- 30) Shawfield Stadium
- 31) Tiny Tots Daycare
- 32) Pippa's House Nursery
- 33) Primrose Hall and Happy Days Preschool
- 34) Harpers Scout Hut and Totterdown Preschool

## Appendix C: Local Green Spaces (Policy ASH11)

The green and blue infrastructure network includes some land that qualifies as a Local Green Space. These spaces are particularly special and cherished by the local community. They would be especially missed if they were to be lost to development. The following areas are identified as Local Green Spaces under Policy ASH11:

### Ash Vale

#### Carrington Recreation Ground



Carrington Recreation Ground sits towards the north of Ash Parish, placed in between Holly Lodge Primary School, the employment centres off Lysons Avenue and homes on Frimley Road and Carrington Lane. It is a large area, a mix of open and wooded space, providing recreational value in the form of playing fields, a playground, tennis and basketball courts.

#### Snaky Lane Nature Reserve



Snaky Lane Nature Reserve is a community wildlife area, situated at the far north of the Parish, on the border with Mytchett. It provides value to the community due to its beauty and the number of habitats provided to a large amount of wildlife that live there.

#### Lakeside Nature Reserve Play Area



The play area situated right at the entrance to the Lakeside Nature Reserve, just off the car park from Lakeside Road, meets our list due to the recreational value it provides to younger aged visitors to both the wider Country Park and local residents.



### **Cody Close Playground and Vickers Road Open Space**



Situated in the new development off Old Farm Place, the playground and wider open spaces in the Wyvern Close, Cody Close, Vickers Road and Hakwer Road areas are listed due to the recreational value given to the residents of various ages of the surrounding homes.

### **Sopwith Close Open Space**



A small open space between Sopwith Close and Buttermere Court, provides recreational value to the residents here.

### **Keogh Barracks Playing Fields**



Keogh Barracks Playing Fields is a large open space featuring playing fields, set in the British Army barracks site from where it takes its name. This land provides a valuable recreational area for the soldiers currently posted there and their families. This is the only open space available in this area of Ash Vale.

### **Avondale Playground**



Playing area and open space situated at the south of the Avondale estate in Ash Vale, right in the triangle of land where two train lines cross. This area provides recreational facilities for

those that live in the area, facilitating play for younger age groups all the way through to adults.

#### **Play Area in Old Farm Place**



Playground on Old Farm Place, sat in the clearing of a number of trees and opposite homes. Provides recreational facilities for children that live in the area.

#### **Shackleton Close Playground and Open Space**



Playground and open spaces sat between Beaufort Road and Shackleton Close. Providing recreational facilities to children resident in the area.

### **Ash South**

#### **Open Space off Collins Gardens**



Large, maintained open space and playing fields located next to Collins Gardens and Church Lane, and behind Holy Angels Catholic Church. Featuring a small car park, the green space provides a valuable recreational facility to the residents nearby.

#### **Ash Green Meadows**



Created as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) as part of new developments in the area to avoid increased recreational pressure on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Incorporating the ancient semi-natural wooded space of Bin Wood, Cardinal Meadows, a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) home to a range of



damp grassland species, and some other former agricultural fields. Ash Green Meadows is located off the disused Ash – Tongham railway line, which now makes up part of the Christmas Pie trail.

### **The Briars Playground and open space, east of South Lane and Dan's Meadow**



Green, open space regularly utilised for recreational purposes. Also features a playground on the top of the hill, recently upgraded on behalf of Guildford Borough Council.

### **Ashley Park Play Area (Blackwater Close)**



A small playground on Blackwater Close, sat within a green space, providing play facilities for children in the local area.

### **Parish Close Play Area and open space**



A small playground on Parish Close, sat within a green space in the centre of the development, providing play facilities for those in the local area.

### **Hop Garden Way Play Area**



A small play area on Hop Garden Way, providing recreational and play facilities for children in the area.

### **Hop Garden Way Sports Court Playground and Open Space**





A larger mixed play development, located on Hammersley Drive. Featuring green space to the east, that also acts as a pathway to Headley Way, a multi-sports court, with facilities and line markings for basketball, football, hockey and tennis, and an adventure playground. Providing recreational facilities for those of all ages.

#### **Minleys Close Playground**



A small play area on Minleys Close, providing play facilities for younger aged children close to the homes it serves.

#### **Holme Close Play Area**



A small play area on Holme Close, providing play facilities for children close to the homes it serves.

#### **Yalden Gardens Play Area**



A resident-only play area providing a variety of play facilities for children living in the immediate area.

#### **Alden Copse Play Area**



A small playground on Alden Copse, providing local play facilities for children living in the area.

#### **Parsons Way Play Area**



A playground situated in a moderately sized open space. Providing recreational facilities for those living in the area.

#### **Wanborough Way Playground**



A modern playground development in a new development in Ash Green, providing play facilities for children in an area of the Parish sorely lacking for these.

#### **Compass Rose Road Play Area**



Play area and open space designed to fit in with the wider rural area of the development's setting. Providing recreational facilities.

#### **Green Space South of Hazel Road**



Private green space in the south of Ash Green, providing a tranquil landscape for wildlife to thrive.

#### **Green Spaces West of White Lane**

(no photo)

Private green space on the west of Ash Green, providing a tranquil landscape for wildlife to thrive.

## Appendix D: Post Occupancy Evaluation (Policy ASH7)

This guidance note sets out how Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) should be undertaken and is derived from published guidance and best practice.

1. Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) is the method of obtaining feedback on a building's energy performance 'in use', to ensure it measures up to the commitments made by the team that designed and built it. It offers significant potential to address the performance gap and occupant satisfaction.
2. Where a monitoring regime to ensure the 'as designed' building performance targets are achieved in practice for all new and refurbished buildings is required, it is important that data is collected robustly, following good practice POE principles. It is therefore recommended that for residential development the POE methodology in section 11.4 of the Home Quality Mark ONE: Technical Manual: England, Scotland & Wales SD239 (2018)<sup>58</sup>, or as updated, is used as a guide for meeting this requirement. For non-residential buildings the BSRIA Soft Landings and Design for Performance framework (BG 76/2019), or as updated, may be used.
3. Applicants are required to set out in their Energy Statement how their monitoring regime, based on the HQM, BSRIA or similar methodology, will work in practice and be independently verified by a third party. The Energy Statement to be submitted with the planning application.
4. As each new or refurbished building comes into use, the developer must ensure performance monitoring and data collection for all relevant parameters for one whole year is carried out once the building is substantially occupied, in line with good POE practice for residential or non-residential uses. This verification process should entail, after appropriate commissioning has taken place, comparison of the 'as designed' parameters (energy, carbon, air quality and overheating risk) to monitoring data under the same categories, to assess and compare actual performance.
5. In order to account for seasonality, a minimum of 12 months monitoring data is required. On the other hand, to account for actual weather, the modelling results can be adjusted with degree days for the relevant year. A 'performance gap metric', which will compare designed and actual performance (e.g. a percentage difference) for each of the 4 required parameters (energy, carbon, air quality and overheating risk) should be issued at POE stage. This needs to be issued for both the 'central' scenario and the 'lowest acceptable performance /reasonable worst-case scenario' as a minimum, with multiple scenarios considered if at all possible. The process and reporting methodology used for the POE will need to be repeatable, so that performance can be monitored for at least 2 annual space heating cycles.
6. A report will then be required to be submitted to both building owners/occupiers and to Council, which states the performance gap metric and identifies any reasons for deviation from predicted energy usage, carbon emissions, indoor air quality and overheating performance, as well as recommendations for reasonable corrective action that will be taken to reduce or eliminate the performance gap.
7. The submission of the monitoring report to owners/occupiers and the council must be secured by planning condition, to be determined at the time of application based on case-specific factors.

The applicant must demonstrate that the reasonable corrective actions committed to in the monitoring report and subsequently agreed by Guildford Borough Council have been implemented through another annual heat cycle before the condition will **be discharged**.

DRAFT