

Introduction

This was the first of a series of three workshops following on the village questionnaire carried out in the summer 2016 and the Vision and Objective setting workshop held on 11 November 2016. The meeting aimed to identify and discuss issues and options relating to future housing in Ash in particular to address the favoured Vision (still to be fine-tuned) and emerging from the workshop on 11th November:

We envision a rural community with green spaces, safe spaces, adequate medical services, the right kind of housing in the right place and bio-diversity! [Also] community pub, church and school.

At the November workshop five themes were identified to achieve the Vision:

This workshop was to focus on Objective 4:

To enhance quality of life in the village small houses with rural design due to compassionate planning giving an improved visual impact leading to an enhanced quality of life with less traffic, more use of local facilities and less pollution.

Setting the scene – building the evidence base

The workshop started with an introduction by the chair of the Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group Jeffrey Loffman, recapping on the progress so far and relating the vision and objective that the afternoon's workshop was to focus on. This was followed by a presentation from Kevin Ellis reminding everyone of the results from the household survey with a particular focus on housing issues (see attached appendix A).

Tessa O'Sullivan, Rural Housing Enabler for Action for Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) had also been invited to the event to speak about community led housing in particular affordable housing to meet local needs. Tessa recapped on the Housing Needs Survey undertaken in Ash in 2010 (see attached appendix B) which assessed the need for affordable (not met by the market) housing then. Overleaf is reproduced the Executive Summary of that report. Tessa also gave an overview of how changes in legislation and government policy in particular extending the right to buy to housing association tenants had impacted on rural affordable housing.

Jim Boot, Community Planner advising the ANDPG then gave a presentation on the statistical evidence relating to housing underpinning the plan based on the Census 2011 results for Ash and the Rural Place Profile that the Parish Council commissioned from Action for Communities in Rural England that takes a range of data available and applies it at a parish level (see Appendix C). Even seven years ago, as the executive summary states:

'The assessment of need shows that for a first time buyer to be able to afford entry level market housing, an income of over £25,000 would be needed to buy a small 2 bedroom apartment in Ash. An income of over £35,000 would be needed to buy a 2 bedroom terraced house. A deposit of at least 10% would also be required in order to obtain a mortgage. To rent a 2 bedroom terraced house an income of over £30,000 would be required.'

ACRK's analysis also identified that:

- ***50% of those needing affordable housing were families with children***

- 8 of the households include people over 60 years old (4 single people, 3 couples and 1 family)
 - The majority of respondents (31%) were in the age group 21-30
 - The majority of respondents would prefer to rent from a Housing Association
- Overall, a need for up to 22 affordable homes, for the following local households was identified:
- 6 single people
 - 5 couples without children
 - 11 families.

Issues

Having described for the participants a range of information available about Ash, the participants were then asked to identify the key housing challenges relevant to the emerging NDP that they felt faced Ash through a brain-storming exercise. Afterwards, everyone was given 2 sticky dots or stars and asked to choose the two most important issues in their opinion. The results were as follows:

Housing Challenges	Dots
1. Allocating additional sites	6
2. Sites outside the village confines	1
3. More houses = more parking problems	2
4. Pressures on all services – Doctors [surgery]	4
5. Pressure on school places	3
6. Sewerage – at capacity or over	3
7. Pressure from developers – 5 years' housing supply	6
8. Housing to meet local needs	15
9. Traffic linked to new houses	3
10. Keeping the rural feel	1
11. Influenceing new development	
12. Challenging Dover District Council (DDC)'s housing numbers	2
13. Protecting wildlife habitats	
14. Respecting the Localism Act	
15. Power to appeal [planning applications] of developers	
16. Employment	

Three issues (highlighted in the table) were then picked for further discussion at the table top workshop session that followed. **Housing to meet local need** was clearly important to those present (15 dots/stars), followed by **Pressure on services including drainage and sewage**, followed by **Allocating additional sites** which it was felt was linked to 7.

Options

In November the Ash NPG Steering Group held a training session on Sustainability Appraisal. At the workshop, as well as learning how to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal as part of the NDP process, they learnt about the Sustainability Objectives that Dover District Council used in its own SA (see Appendix D) of its Local Plan and considered whether in developing their own SA, further Ash appropriate objectives might be required. The following additional objectives were identified (they are number 15-17 as there are 14 DDC SA Objectives):

15. To protect and enhance the biodiversity of the parish;
16. To enable those with identified local housing needs to have the opportunity to live in an affordable home within the parish;
17. To maintain and enhance employment opportunity and provision within the parish.

For the workshop a sub-set of housing objectives were selected and the issue/challenge then scored considering three 'reasonable alternatives' with supporting evidence/justification. The results were as follows:

Issue: Pressure on services (200 houses)	Reasonable alternative 1:	Reasonable alternative 2:	Reasonable alternative 3:	Evidence/ justification
SA Objectives	No improvements	Limited improvements	Major changes	
1. To protect and enhance the biodiversity of the parish;	-2	0	-2	Existing system at over capacity already. Victorian system
2. To enable those with identified local housing needs to have the opportunity to live in an affordable home within the parish;	-2	-1	+2	(Number dependent) Southern Water objection on-line to current planning applications.
3. To maintain and enhance employment opportunity and provision within the parish.	n/a	n/a	n/a	30+ years proven issues with drainage.
4. To help ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home	-2	-1	+2	As 2.
5. To reduce poverty and social exclusion and close the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest	-2	-2	+2	Important local archaeological sites – any sewerage building will affect/destroy the historical sites.
6. To create a high quality built environment	-2	-2	+2	Current Archaeology Officer objections to buildings on-line.

Issue: Pressure on services (200 houses)	Reasonable alternative 1:	Reasonable alternative 2:	Reasonable alternative 3:	Evidence/ justification
SA Objectives	No improvements	Limited improvements	Major changes	
7. To promote sustainable forms of development and sustainable use of natural resources	-2	-2	+1	Obtain evidenc: photos, insurance claims, press reports, diary, Chequer Lane issues?

Issue: Housing to meet local needs	Reasonable alternative 1:	Reasonable alternative 2:	Reasonable alternative 3:	Evidence/ justification
SA Objectives	Exception site	Community land trust	Market housing with 30% affordable	
1. To protect and enhance the biodiversity of the parish;	+2	+2	-1	Larger estate – bigger xxx not necessary for developers profit. Not a concern (3).
2. To enable those with identified local housing needs to have the opportunity to live in an affordable home within the parish;	+1	+1	+2	Exception site policy only allows for locals (1&2). Too expensive (3).
3. To maintain and enhance employment opportunity and provision within the parish.	+1	+1	+1	All will provide in proportion. More population means increased need for services.
4. To help ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home	+1	+2	-2	1&2 We have more control over site and specification. 1 Locals are preferred. 3. We have no control.
5. To reduce poverty and social exclusion and close the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest	+1	+1	0	1&2 as they will provide affordable housing. 3. Sole profit motive.

Issue: Housing to meet local needs	Reasonable alternative 1:	Reasonable alternative 2:	Reasonable alternative 3:	Evidence/ justification
SA Objectives	Exception site	Community land trust	Market housing with 30% affordable	
6. To create a high quality built environment	+1	+1	0	All must obey building regulations.
7. To promote sustainable forms of development and sustainable use of natural resources	+2	0/1	-1	1&2 will go further in that aim. 3. Will do what they have to.

Issue: Allocating additional sites/Pressure from developers over 5 year housing supply	Reasonable alternative 1:	Reasonable alternative 2:	Reasonable alternative 3:	Evidence/ justification
SA Objectives	1 or 2 small sites	Medium size site 20-50 houses	Larger sites 100 houses	
1. To protect and enhance the biodiversity of the parish;	0	-2	-2	Habitat surveys Protected species Hedgerows and ancient woodlands, orchards.
2. To enable those with identified local housing needs to have the opportunity to live in an affordable home within the parish;	+2	+2	0	Housing Need Survey to meet Local need.
3. To maintain and enhance employment opportunity and provision within the parish.	+1	+1	-2	Farmland built on so no jobs for farm workers etc. Or fruit pickers. No work in competing areas.
4. To help ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent, sustainably constructed and affordable home	0	+1	+2	Not overpopulating the villages, lack of amenities, traffic problems, doctors, schools, services.

Issue: Allocating additional sites/Pressure from developers over 5 year housing supply	Reasonable alternative 1:	Reasonable alternative 2:	Reasonable alternative 3:	Evidence/ justification
SA Objectives	1 or 2 small sites	Medium size site 20-50 houses	Larger sites 100 houses	
5. To reduce poverty and social exclusion and close the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest	0	0	0	Housing not affordable.
6. To create a high quality built environment	+2	-2	-2	Not affordable for local villagers.
7. To promote sustainable forms of development and sustainable use of natural resources	-2	-2	-2	Keep the rural feel.

Feedback

Each table was then asked to feedback three key points from their discussions:

Issue 1: Housing to meet local needs

1. Exception sites and CLTs are positive way forward.
2. Really makes you think very carefully about what can and can't be done. There are other alternatives.
3. Definition of terms open to interpretation and impacts on scoring.

Issue 2: Allocating additional sites

1. Positively – made us think in a different way.
2. Negatively – found the scoring complicated and would be used in a negative way.
3. We need better description and understanding of the terminology.
4. Concerned it won't reflect our actual views.
5. We will need more training and explanation in future.

Issue 3: Pressure on services drainage and sewerage

1. Positively adequate analysis and evidence that ne4w development would be detrimental – supported by Southern Water.