

ASH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT

November 2025

Published by Ash Parish Council under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations
2012 (as amended)

ASH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT

NOVEMBER 2025

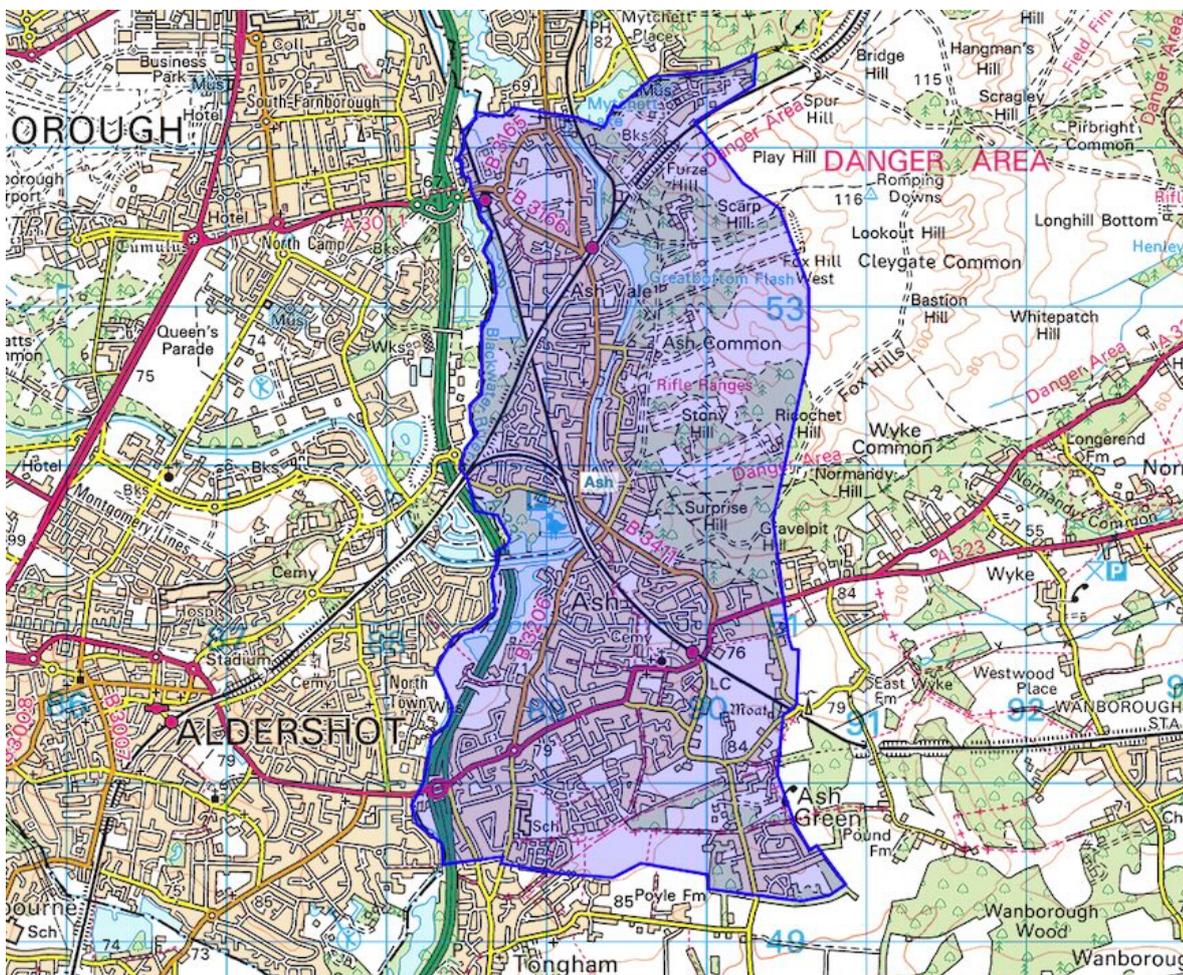
CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. BACKGROUND	5
3. CONDITION (A): NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY	6
4. CONDITION (D): ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	13
5. CONDITION (E): THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	17
6. CONDITION (F): EU-DERIVED OBLIGATIONS	26
7. SUMMARY	27

1. INTRODUCTION

The Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by ONH on behalf of Ash Parish Council (“the Parish Council”) to accompany its submission of the Ash Neighbourhood Plan (“the Neighbourhood Plan”) to the local planning authority, Guildford Borough Council, (“the Borough Council”), under Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (“the Regulations”).
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the Parish Council, the ‘Qualifying Body’, for the Neighbourhood Area (“the Area”), which coincides with the boundary of the Parish of Ash as shown on Plan A below. The Borough Council designated the Area on 30th April 2024.
- 1.3 ONH has provided the professional planning advice and support to the Parish Council throughout the project, alongside occasional help from officers of the Borough Council.



Plan A: Ash Designated Neighbourhood Area

- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan contains 14 land use policies, which are defined on the Policies Map where they apply to a specific part of the Area. The policies described in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the development and use of land in the designated Area. They do not relate to 'excluded development', as defined by the Regulations. The plan period of the Neighbourhood Plan is from 2025 - 2045, which corresponds with the estimated plan period of the Guildford Local Plan.
- 1.5 The Plan has deliberately avoided containing policies that duplicate saved or forthcoming development plan policies or national policies that are already or will be used to determine planning applications. The policies are therefore a combination of site-specific proposals and of development management matters that seek to refine and/or update existing policies.

The Basic Conditions

- 1.6 The statement addresses each of the four 'Basic Conditions', which are relevant to this plan, required of the Regulations and explains how the submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act.
- 1.7 The Regulations state that a Neighbourhood Plan will be considered to have met the Conditions if:
 - A. Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Neighbourhood Development Plan;
 - D. The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - E. The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area); and
 - F. The making of the Neighbourhood Development Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with retained EU obligations.
- 1.8 It is noted that the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023 has made provision for Condition E to be amended by replacing the current requirement with a narrower condition in respect of not undermining the housing site allocation provisions in an adopted Local Plan. However, at the time of the expected examination of the Neighbourhood Plan, the regulations enabling that part of the Act have not been made.

2.BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The decision to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan was made by Ash Parish Council in February 2024. The key driver of this decision was a sense of wanting to plan positively for the future of the Parish, with the encouragement of the Borough Council to local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. The parish is one of the most heavily populated within the Borough of Guildford, with a population close to 18,000 and a number of services, employment, retail and leisure facilities concentrated within the defined “urban areas” of Ash and Ash Vale. The Parish Council considered having a Plan would improve the way in which future development proposals are managed.
- 2.2 A Neighbourhood Plan Committee was formed comprising Parish Council representatives and open to resident non-members to attend and participate in meetings. The group has been delegated authority by the Parish Council to make day-to-day decisions on the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, as the qualifying body, the Parish Council approved the publication of the Pre-Submission plan on 9th June 2025 and the Submission Plan now.
- 2.3 The Parish Council has consulted local communities extensively over the duration of the project. It has also worked closely with officers of the Borough Council since the start of the project to collate and examine the evidence base, to design and iterate policy proposals and to define the proper relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan and the Guildford Local Plan.

3. CONDITION (A): REGARD TO NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with full regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is mindful of the PPG in respect of formulating Neighbourhood Plans. In overall terms, there are four NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, to which the Neighbourhood Plan has directly responded:

General Paragraphs

3.2 The Parish Council believes the Neighbourhood Plan “support(s) the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans ... and ... shape(s) and direct(s) development that is outside of these strategic policies” (§13). It considers the Neighbourhood Plan contains only non-strategic policy proposals or proposals that refine strategic policy to fit the circumstances of the Area without undermining the purpose and intent of those strategic policies (§18). It considers that the Neighbourhood Plan sets out more “detailed policies for specific areas” including “the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies” (§29).

3.3 The Parish Council considers that its Neighbourhood Plan has provided its community the power to develop a shared vision for the Area that will shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, albeit in a modest way, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. The Neighbourhood Plan contains no site allocation proposals nor any other policies that will result in less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area (§30). In this regard, the NPPF provisions of meeting local housing needs (as per §69/§70) are therefore not relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan is underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This is considered to be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned (§32).

Specific Paragraphs

3.4 Each policy engages one or more specific paragraphs of the NPPF. Those that are considered to be of the most relevance and substance are identified in Table A below.

Table A: Neighbourhood Plan & NPPF Conformity Summary		
Policy No.	Policy Title	Commentary
ASH1	Spatial Strategy	Sustainable Development: The policy aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by promoting sustainable development through the reuse of brownfield land and supporting local

		<p>facilities, which is consistent with NPPF's emphasis on sustainable growth (§11). The policy also will not result in “less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area” (as proposed in the Local Plan Review) (§30).</p> <p>Walkable Neighbourhoods: The focus on walkable neighbourhoods aligns with NPPF's promotion of healthy and inclusive communities (§92), “layouts that encourage walking and cycling” (§96) and “Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land” (§124) it also focuses on “improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport” (§89)</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH1, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It supports sustainable development and aligns with local strategic policies, reflecting national planning priorities and guidance.</p>
ASH2	Design Principles in Ash	<p>High-Quality Design and Local Character: The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on achieving high-quality design. The NPPF recognises that “Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development”, the policy uses Design Guidance and Codes that bring “clarity about design expectations” (§132), within Ash, tailored to the local character and design preference. (§133)</p> <p>Design and Decision Making: By producing a Design Guidance and Code, this policy fulfils NPPF §135 requirements for planning policy that ensures development “will function well and add to the overall quality of the area”. Producing a Design Guidance and Code gives a suitable framework for planning decision making in relation to design (§139).</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH2, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It promotes high-quality design and local distinctiveness, aligning with national planning priorities and guidance.</p>
ASH3	Design Principles in Ash Vale	<p>High-Quality Design and Local Character: The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on achieving high-quality design. The NPPF recognises that “Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development”, the policy uses Design Guidance and Codes that bring “clarity about design expectations” (§132), within Ash Vale, tailored to the local character and design preference. (§133)</p> <p>Design and Decision Making: By producing a Design Guidance and Code, this policy fulfils NPPF</p>

		<p>§135 requirements for planning policy that ensures development “will function well and add to the overall quality of the area”. Producing a Design Guidance and Code gives a suitable framework for planning decision making in relation to design (§139).</p> <p>Conservation Area: the policy takes the opportunity to ensure that the plan “look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas... [to] enhance or better reveal their significance.” (§219).</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH3, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It promotes high-quality design and local distinctiveness, aligning with national planning priorities and guidance.</p>
ASH4	Design Principles in Ash Green	<p>High-Quality Design and Local Character: The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on achieving high-quality design. The NPPF recognises that “Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development”, the policy uses Design Guidance and Codes that bring “clarity about design expectations” (§132), within Ash Green, tailored to the local character and design preference. (§133)</p> <p>Design and Decision Making: By producing a Design Guidance and Code, this policy fulfils NPPF §135 requirements for planning policy that ensures development “will function well and add to the overall quality of the area”. Producing a Design Guidance and Code gives a suitable framework for planning decision making in relation to design (§139).</p> <p>Listed Buildings Views: the policy seeks to prevent harm to designated heritage assets with clear instruction in relation to assessing the “effect of an application” in relation to the complex of listed buildings at Ash Manor (§213 & 216).</p> <p>Green Infrastructure: The emphasis on green buffers and native planting aligns with the NPPF's support for green infrastructure and biodiversity (§96c), and “taking a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure” (§188).</p> <p>Active Travel: the policy defines opportunities to improve walking and cycling routes to Ash Station, local services and facilities “improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport” (§89) and that lead to the wider countryside (§125a)</p> <p>Local Gap: The policy prevents coalescence and protects significant views. This is consistent with</p>

		<p>§29, which recognises the role of non-strategic policies in setting out more detailed approaches to conserving the natural environment. It also reflects §187, which requires planning to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH4, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It promotes high-quality design, local distinctiveness, and green infrastructure, aligning with national planning priorities and guidance.</p>
ASH5	District and Local Centres and Dispersed Local Shops	<p>Community Facilities: The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on planning positively for community facilities and guarding against the unnecessary loss of valued services (§98), where this complies with NPPF §97.</p> <p>Sequential Test: The policy requires a sequential test for partial or total loss of local centre or dispersed local shops, aligning with the NPPF's guidance to “retain... accessible local services... such as local shops.” (§88c) and is consistent with §29, which recognises the role of non-strategic policies in setting out more detailed approaches to the provision of infrastructure at a local level and other development management policies.</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH5, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It supports community facilities, applies the sequential test appropriately, and aligns with national planning priorities and guidance.</p>
ASH6	Employment Locations	<p>Economic Growth: The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on building a strong, competitive economy by supporting business growth and adapting to changing economic needs, creating conditions in which businesses can “invest, expand and adapt.” (§85) and ensuring that residents have “sufficient access to services and employment opportunities within the development itself” (§77b)</p> <p>Protection of Employment Land: By safeguarding employment sites, the policy supports the NPPF's guidance on ensuring sufficient land is available to support economic growth and innovation, and that this is flexible enough to accommodate needs not currently anticipated (§86).</p> <p>Sequential Test: The policy requires a sequential test for redevelopment or change of use to a non-employment use aligning with the NPPF's guidance to enable “sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas.” (§88a). and is consistent with §29, which recognises the role of non-strategic policies in setting out more detailed approaches to the provision of infrastructure at a local level and other development management policies.</p>

		<p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH6, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It supports economic growth, protects employment land, and aligns with national planning priorities and guidance.</p>
ASH7	Replacement Dwellings	<p>Sustainable Development: The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on sustainable development by encouraging refurbishment and retrofitting, rather than demolition, which can reduce carbon emissions and resource use (§161)</p> <p>Design Quality: By requiring adherence to design codes and enhancing local character, the policy supports the NPPF's focus on high-quality design (§132).</p> <p>Biodiversity: The policy's requirement for ecological net gain aligns with the NPPF's aim to conserve and enhance the natural environment and create net gain for biodiversity (§187).</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH7, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It promotes sustainable development, high-quality design, and ecological enhancement, aligning with national planning priorities and guidance.</p>
ASH8	Energy Efficiency	<p>Sustainable Development: The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on sustainable development by promoting energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions (§161). By encouraging high standards like Passivhaus, the policy supports the NPPF's focus on high-quality design that contributes to sustainability.</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH8, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It promotes energy efficiency, sustainable development, and high-quality design, aligning with national planning priorities and guidance.</p>
ASH9	Housing Mix, Type and Tenure	<p>Housing Mix: By addressing local needs and providing a mix of dwelling types, the policy supports the NPPF's guidance on meeting the housing needs of different groups in the community (§63).</p> <p>Affordable Housing: The policy aligns with the NPPF's requirement to provide affordable housing on-site and to create mixed and balanced communities (§64).</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH9, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It supports affordable housing, addresses local needs, and promotes accessibility, aligning with national planning priorities and guidance.</p>

ASH10	Existing and new Local Community Assets	<p>Community Facilities: The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on planning positively for community facilities and guarding against the unnecessary loss of valued services (§88). This is consistent with §29, which recognises the role of non-strategic policies in setting out more detailed approaches to the provision of infrastructure and community facilities.</p> <p>Social Infrastructure: By supporting the new development and expansion of community facilities, the policy complies with the NPPF's guidance on ensuring that social, recreational, and cultural facilities are provided to meet community needs (§98).</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH10, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It supports community facilities, aligns with national planning priorities, and reflects local needs and aspirations.</p>
ASH11	Green and Blue Infrastructure	<p>Biodiversity and Ecosystems: The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on conserving and enhancing the natural environment, promoting biodiversity, and supporting ecosystem services (§187 & §192).</p> <p>Green Infrastructure: By enhancing green and blue infrastructure, the policy supports the NPPF's guidance on providing networks of accessible high-quality open spaces and opportunities for recreation (§88).</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH11, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It supports biodiversity, enhances green infrastructure, and aligns with national planning priorities and guidance.</p>
ASH12	Local Green Spaces	<p>Local Green Space Designation: The policy designates Local Green Spaces in accordance with §106-108, having demonstrated each space meets the criteria in §107. The policy resists all development proposals that will undermine the essential character of designated areas, unless there are very special circumstances as set out in §153, to justify why consent should be granted.</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH12, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It supports the protection of valued green spaces, aligns with national planning priorities, and reflects local community needs.</p>
ASH13	Thames Basin Heath SPA	<p>Biodiversity Protection: The policy aligns with the NPPF's emphasis on conserving and enhancing the natural environment, particularly in protecting biodiversity and designated sites (§187).</p> <p>Mitigation Measures: By requiring mitigation measures for developments affecting the SPA, the policy supports the NPPF's guidance on avoiding and mitigating harm to biodiversity (§192-193).</p>

		There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH13, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It supports biodiversity protection and aligns with national planning priorities and guidance.
ASH14	Active Travel	<p>Promoting Sustainable Transport: The policy requires that transport issues are considered from the earliest stages of development proposals so that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued (§109).</p> <p>Health and Well-being: By supporting active travel, the policy contributes to the NPPF's objective of promoting healthy communities (NPPF, para. 96c).</p> <p>There is no conflict with the NPPF in Policy ASH14, which has regard to the NPPF overall. It supports sustainable transport, promotes health and well-being, and aligns with national planning priorities and guidance.</p>

4. CONDITION (D): CONTRIBUTING TO ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 A screening request was submitted to Guildford Borough Council to inform its ‘screening opinion’ on the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) under the European Directive 2001/42/EC and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended). A final screening opinion (‘Determination’) was issued in November 2024 by GBC following a consultation period with the statutory bodies, as per those Regulations. The Determination statement concluded that an SEA is required.
- 4.2 A separate SEA Report sets out the environmental effects of the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. There is no legal requirement for Neighbourhood Plans to have a sustainability appraisal, however the ‘basic conditions’ require a qualifying body to demonstrate how its plan will contribute to the achievements of sustainable development in a systematic way. In terms of environmental effects, the SEA Report concluded:

“The ANP is anticipated to result in beneficial effects across all SEA themes, with significant beneficial effects anticipated for Biodiversity, Community Wellbeing, Historic Environment, Landscape, and Transportation. These benefits are supported by a combination of spatial planning, design-led policies, protection of local assets, and promotion of sustainable travel and infrastructure. No significant adverse effects are anticipated from policies in the ANP.”

- 4.3 The draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was prepared by AECOM and published by the qualifying body along with the Pre-Submission for the Regulation 14 consultation. AECOM was unable complete the final Report due to the ending of the Government’s Neighbourhood Plan Support Programme, which funded the production of the draft Report. It is confirmed that there have been no material policy modifications made to the ANP for submission following the consultation period, principally as the production of the SEA was informed by the draft SEA work. Its findings at the draft stage are thus unaltered and in effect are the final version.
- 4.4 A wider view of the sustainability performance of the policies is set out in Table B below by identifying the potential of each policy to lead to positive (green), neutral (yellow) or negative (red) effects, taking into account the proposed mitigation measures:

Table B: Neighbourhood Plan & Sustainable Development

Policy No.	Policy Title	Social	Economic	Environmental	Commentary
ASH1	Spatial Strategy				<p>Social Impact: Positive: enhances community cohesion by focusing development in existing, walkable, neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Neutral: Concentrates economic activity in established areas. Negative: Restricts some development outside boundary.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Positive: Protects Green Belt and encourages brownfield use. Neutral: Potential pressure on urban green spaces.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH2	Design Principles in Ash				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Ensures high-quality, accessible, and healthy living environments. Preserves local character and heritage.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Supports local economy, including property value, by enhancing attractiveness. Neutral: Possible higher initial investment required.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Positive: Promotes sustainable design, energy efficiency, natural drainage solutions, and landscape protection.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH3	Design Principles in Ash Vale				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Ensures high-quality, accessible, and healthy living environments. Preserves local character and heritage.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Supports local economy, including property value, by enhancing attractiveness. Neutral: Possible higher initial investment required.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Positive: Promotes sustainable design, energy efficiency, natural drainage solutions, and landscape protection.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH4	Design Principles in Ash Green				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Ensures high-quality, accessible, and healthy living environments. Maintains village identity and prevents coalescence with Ash. Preserves local character and heritage and supports community cohesion.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Supports local economy, including property value,</p>

					<p>by enhancing attractiveness. Protects rural setting, which can support local business. Neutral: Possible higher initial investment required. Negative: May limit some development opportunities.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Positive: Promotes sustainable design, energy efficiency, natural drainage solutions, and landscape protection. Protects habitats, green infrastructure and visual separation.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH5	District and Local Centres and Dispersed Local Shops				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Supports and retains local shops and employment, services and community interaction.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Boosts local economy by preserving retail spaces and employment. Neutral: Restricts large commercial developments.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Positive: Encourages walkable communities, reduced car use and emissions.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH6	Employment Locations				<p>Social Impact: Positive. Encourages a well-balanced community with local employment opportunities for residents.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Protects and enhances employment sites. Neutral: Some restriction of diversification of economic activities for a limited time.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Neutral: Limited new environmental initiatives.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH7	Replacement Dwellings				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Supports adaptable housing for diverse needs.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Encourages investment in existing properties. Negative: Possible higher costs for sustainable practices.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Positive: Promotes sustainable building practices. Neutral: Potential resource use in redevelopment to be balanced against long term reductions in energy use.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH8	Energy Efficiency				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Enhances health through improved living conditions.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Long-term savings on energy costs. Negative: Higher upfront investment required.</p>

					<p>Environmental Impact: Positive: Reduces carbon footprint. Neutral: Potential resource use in development to be balanced against long term energy efficiency.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH9	Housing Mix, Type and Tenure				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Provides diverse housing options including affordable and accessible housing. Supports social inclusion.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Supports affordable housing initiatives, attracts a diverse population, supports local economy and workforce.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Neutral: Encourages efficient land use.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH10	Existing and new Local Community Assets				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Enhances social infrastructure, community cohesion and access to services.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Supports local economy through community services.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Neutral: Limited environmental focus.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH11	Green and Blue Infrastructure				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Enhances access to open and recreational spaces. Supports health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Supports recreation and tourism. Negative: Potential land use restrictions.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Positive: Retains and enhances habitats, trees and hedgerows, supports biodiversity net gain, natural drainage solutions, and climate adaptation.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH12	Local Green Spaces				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Protects community spaces. Enhances access to open and recreational spaces. Supports health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Neutral: Limited economic impact.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Positive: Preserves natural areas, retaining habitats and opportunities for biodiversity net gain and natural drainage solutions.</p>

					Overall rating: positive
ASH13	Thames Basin Heath SPA				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Protects community health by preserving natural areas. Limits development near SPA and protects the Habitat.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Supports recreation and tourism. Neutral: Limited direct economic impact. Negative: Restrictions on nearby development.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Positive: Retains and enhances habitats, supports biodiversity net gain and climate adaptation.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>
ASH14	Active Travel				<p>Social Impact: Positive: Improves pedestrian and cycle safety, supports active travel. Promotes health and social interaction.</p> <p>Economic Impact: Positive: Supports local economy through improved access.</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Positive: Reduces car use and carbon emissions, supports sustainable transport, improves air quality.</p> <p>Overall rating: positive</p>

5. CONDITION (E): GENERAL CONFORMITY WITH THE STRATEGIC POLICIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to ensure its general conformity with the development plan for the Borough, that is the Guildford Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2015 – 2034) and The Local Plan: Development Management Policies (adopted March 2023), which Guildford Borough considers to be of a strategic nature (as per Planning Practice Guidance (§41-076)).

5.2 In accordance with Planning Practice Guidance (§ 41-009), this Statement does not seek to demonstrate general conformity with the policies of any emerging Development Plan Documents, i.e. the emerging Guildford Local Plan which is in the early stages of development. However, it is noted that the evidence base for emerging Development Plan Documents is important to informing the Neighbourhood Plan and conformity with emerging policies is crucial for the long-term success of the Neighbourhood Plan given that in the event of any future conflict the most recent policy will take precedent.

5.2 The Guildford Local Plan Settlement Hierarchy Study (2014) defines Ash and Ash Vale as an Urban Area and Ash Green as a Small Village in the settlement hierarchy of the Borough. The defined built up areas of Ash, Ash Vale and Ash Green (within the strategic Local Plan site A31) are considered sustainable for development. Outside of these areas are considered to be countryside, 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. The Local Plan strategic development site (A31) is currently being built.

5.3 The Neighbourhood Plan has sought to fit its policies with the vision and grain of Guildford Local Plan in a complementary way.

5.4 An assessment of the general conformity of each policy, and its relationship with emerging policy where relevant, is contained in Table C below.

Table C: Neighbourhood Plan & Development Plan Conformity Summary

No.	Policy Title & Refs	Commentary
ASH1	Spatial Strategy	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) As per PPG §074, the Parish Council considers that the policy offers a local approach that does not undermine and upholds the general principle of Policy S1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development and Policy S2: Spatial Development Strategy and the allocated sites in these policies; Policy ASH1 directs new developments towards the most sustainable locations, including brownfield and there is a strong rationale and evidence base to justify this approach.</p> <p>The Parish Council also considers that the used of the 400m Buffer around the Thames Basin Heath SPA upholds the general principle of Policy ID4: Green and Blue Infrastructure and offers a locally distinctive approach. Policy ASH1's focus on enhancing the natural environment outside built-up areas has strong rationale and does not undermine policy ID4.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH1 is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Guildford Local Plan. It aligns with the focus on sustainable development, urban area enhancement, and protection of the natural environment.</p>
ASH2	Design Principles in Ash	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) The policy upholds the general principle of high quality design that contributes positively to local distinctiveness, quality of life and sustainability. Enhancing the character, identity and sustainability of the locality forms part of the Borough Council's approach to design as per its Local Plan Policies Policy D1: Place Shaping and Policy D2: Climate Change, Sustainable Design, Construction and Energy. The policy seeks to ensure that the Ash Design Guidance and Codes leads to better design outcomes, has strong rationale and does not undermine policy D1 or D2</p> <p>Guildford Local Plan Development Management Policies (March 2023) The policy upholds the general principle of sustainable development that respects the character of the area. Delivering sustainable, locally distinctive design forms part of the Borough Council's approach to design as per its Policy D4: Design and Local Distinctiveness and Policy D8: Residential Infill Development. Policy ASH2's emphasis on enhancing local character and distinctiveness directly aligns with and does not undermine policy</p>

		<p>D4 and D8.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH2 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on high-quality design, sustainability, and local distinctiveness.</p>
ASH3	Design Principles in Ash Vale	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) The policy upholds the general principle of high-quality design that contributes positively to local distinctiveness, quality of life and sustainability. Enhancing the character, identity and sustainability of the locality forms part of the Borough Council's approach to design as per its Local Plan Policies Policy D1: Place Shaping and Policy D2: Climate Change, Sustainable Design, Construction and Energy. The policy seeks to ensure that the Ash Design Guidance and Codes leads to better design outcomes, has strong rationale and does not undermine policy D1 or D2</p> <p>Guildford Local Plan Development Management Policies (March 2023) The policy upholds the general principle of sustainable development that respects the character of the area. Delivering sustainable, locally distinctive design, appropriate to the Conservation Area setting where relevant, forms part of the Borough Council's approach to design as per its Policy D4: Design and Local Distinctiveness, Policy D8: Residential Infill Development and D20: Conversation Areas. Policy ASH2's emphasis on enhancing local character and distinctiveness, and preserving or enhancing the special historic interest of the Conservation Area directly aligns with and does not undermine policy D4, D8 and D20.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH3 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on high-quality design, sustainability, and local distinctiveness.</p>
ASH4	Design Principles in Ash Green	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) The policy upholds the general principle of high quality design that contributes positively to local distinctiveness, quality of life and sustainability. Enhancing the character, identity and sustainability of the locality forms part of the Borough Council's approach to design as per its Local Plan Policies Policy D1: Place Shaping and Policy D2: Climate Change, Sustainable Design, Construction and Energy. The policy seeks to ensure that the Ash Design Guidance and Codes leads to better design outcomes, has strong rationale and does not undermine policy D1 or D2</p>

		<p>The Parish Council also considers that the green buffer; green, tree and hedgerow networks and local gap upholds the general principle of Policy ID4: Green and Blue Infrastructure and offers a locally distinctive approach. Policy ASH4's focus on enhancing the natural environment outside built-up areas and at the edge of urban areas has strong rationale and does not undermine policy ID4.</p> <p>Guildford Local Plan Development Management Policies (March 2023) The policy upholds the general principle of sustainable development that respects the character of the area. Delivering sustainable, locally distinctive design, appropriate to the setting of Listed Buildings where relevant, forms part of the Borough Council's approach to design as per its Policy D4: Design and Local Distinctiveness, Policy D8: Residential Infill Development and D19: Listed Buildings. Policy ASH4's emphasis on enhancing local character and distinctiveness and preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their settings directly aligns with and does not undermine policy D4, D8 and D19.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH4 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on high-quality design, sustainability, and local distinctiveness.</p>
ASH5	District and Local Centres and Dispersed Local Shops	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) The Parish Council considers that the policy offers a distinct local approach that does not undermine and upholds the general principle of Policy E8: District Centres, Local Centres, Neighbourhood Parades and Isolated Retail Units and Policy S2: Planning for the Borough – Our Spatial Development Strategy; Policy ASH5 supports the vitality and viability of local centres in sustainable, walkable locations and there is a strong rationale and evidence base to justify this approach.</p> <p>Guildford Local Plan Development Management Policies (March 2023) The Parish Council considers that the policy offers a distinct local approach that does not undermine and upholds the general principle of Policy ID7: Community Facilities: ASH5 encourages the retention and enhancement of local retail, consistent with ID7 paragraph 5.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH5 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on supporting local centres and maintaining their vitality.</p>
ASH6	Employment Locations	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034)</p>

		<p>The Parish Council considers that the policy offers a distinct local approach that does not undermine and upholds the general principle of Policy E1: Meeting Employment Needs and Policy E3: Maintaining Employment Capacity: ASH6 strongly encourages the retention and enhancement of local employment locations, and recognizes new locally important employment locations, consistent with E1 and E3.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH6 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on supporting and maintaining employment locations.</p>
ASH7	Replacement Dwellings	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) The policy upholds the general principle of high quality design that contributes positively to local character and appearance. Maintaining the character of the locality forms part of the Borough Council's approach to design as per its Local Plan Policies Policy D1: Place Shaping and Policy D2: Climate Change, Sustainable Design, Construction and Energy. The policy has a strong rationale and does not undermine policy D1 or D2</p> <p>Guildford Local Plan Development Management Policies (March 2023) The Parish Council considers that the policy offers a distinct local approach that does not undermine and upholds the general principle of Policy H4: Housing Extensions and Alterations including Annexes, D4: Design and Local Distinctiveness and P7: Biodiversity in New Developments. ASH7 encourages high quality design principles and supports biodiversity net gain measures in regard to replacement dwellings, consistent with H4, D4 and P7.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH7 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on maintaining character, high-quality design, and ecological enhancements.</p>
ASH8	Energy Efficiency	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) The policy upholds the general principle of support for zero carbon high quality design that contributes positively to the reduction of climate change. Strong support for zero carbon development forms part of the Borough Council's approach to design as per its Local Plan Policies Policy D2: Climate Change, Sustainable Design, Construction and Energy. The policy has a strong rationale and does not undermine policy D2.</p> <p>Guildford Local Plan Development Management Policies (March 2023) The policy upholds the general principle of support for zero carbon high quality design that contributes</p>

		<p>positively to the reduction of carbon emissions. Strong support for zero carbon development forms part of the Borough Council's approach to design as per its Local Plan Policies Policy D14: Sustainable and Low Impact Development and Policy D16: Carbon Emissions from Buildings. The policy has a strong rationale and does not undermine policy D14 and D16.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH8 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on energy efficiency, carbon reduction, and sustainable design.</p>
ASH9	Housing Mix, Type and Tenure	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) The policy upholds the general principle of support for a mix of housing types and tenures and requires 40% affordable housing on larger sites. Strong support for a mix of housing types and tenures forms part of the Borough Council's approach to housing as per its Local Plan Policies Policy Policy H1: Homes for All and Policy H2: Affordable Housing. The policy does not undermine policy H1 and H2.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH9 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on providing a mix of housing types and ensuring affordable housing.</p>
ASH10	Existing and new Local Community Assets	<p>Guildford Local Plan Development Management Policies (March 2023) The policy upholds the general principle of retention of community assets. Strong support for the principle that the provision of community facilities is integral to achieving healthy, inclusive and safe communities forms part of the Borough Council's approach to community facilities as per its Local Plan Policy ID7: Community Facilities. The policy does not undermine policy ID7.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH10 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on supporting and enhancing community facilities and infrastructure.</p>
ASH11	Green and Blue Infrastructure	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) The Parish Council considers that creating, maintaining and improving the functionality of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network through the policy upholds the general principle of Policy ID4: Green and Blue Infrastructure and offers a locally distinctive approach. Policy ASH11's focus on enhancing the natural</p>

		<p>environment in new and existing development has strong rationale and does not undermine policy ID4.</p> <p>Guildford Local Plan Development Management Policies (March 2023) The policy upholds the general principle of support for biodiversity enhancement. Strong support for biodiversity enhancement forms part of the Borough Council's approach to development as per its Local Plan Policies Policy P6: Protecting Important Habitats and Species and Policy P7: Biodiversity in New Developments. The policy does not undermine policy P6 and P7.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH11 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on enhancing green and blue infrastructure and supporting biodiversity.</p>
ASH12	Local Green Spaces	<p>Guildford Local Plan Development Management Policies (March 2023) The Parish Council considers that creating and preserving Local Green Spaces through the policy upholds the general principle of Policy ID5: Protecting Open Space and Policy D4: Design and Local Distinctiveness and offers a locally distinctive approach. Policy ASH12's focus on enhancing the natural environment in new and existing development has strong rationale and does not undermine policy ID4 or D4.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH12 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on protecting and enhancing local green spaces and community assets.</p>
ASH13	Thames Basin Heath SPA	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) The Parish Council considers that creating, maintaining and improving the functionality of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Network and the SPA through the policy upholds the general principle of Policy ID4: Green and Blue Infrastructure and offers a locally distinctive approach. Policy ASH11's has strong rationale and does not undermine policy ID4.</p> <p>Guildford Local Plan Development Management Policies (March 2023) The policy upholds the general principle of support for biodiversity enhancement in the Thames Basin Heath SPA. Strong support for biodiversity enhancement forms part of the Borough Council's approach to development as per its Local Plan Policies Policy P6: Protecting Important Habitats and Species and Policy P7: Biodiversity in New Developments. The policy does not undermine policy P6 and P7.</p>

		<p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH13 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on protecting important habitats and enhancing biodiversity.</p>
ASH14	Active Travel	<p>Guildford Local Plan Strategy and Sites (2015-2034) The policy upholds the general principle of support for sustainable active travel infrastructure network. Strong support for active travel forms part of the Borough Council's approach to development as per its Local Plan Policies Policy S2: Planning for the Borough – Our Spatial Development Strategy and Policy ID3: Sustainable Transport for New Developments. The policy does not undermine policy S2 and ID3.</p> <p>Conformity Assessment General Conformity: Policy ASH14 is in general conformity with the Guildford Local Plan's strategic and development management policies. It aligns with the focus on enhancing active travel networks and supporting sustainable transport.</p>

6. CONDITION (F): COMPATABILITY WITH EU-DERIVED OBLIGATIONS

- 6.1 The Borough Council provided a screening opinion in November 2024 that has determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment, in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Environmental Assessments of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended), is required, following consultation with statutory bodies as per those Regulations. A copy of the final screening opinion is published separately.
- 6.2 As set out in Section 4 the Parish Council has met its obligations in relation to the EU Directive 2001/42 in respect of assessing the potential for significant environmental effects of the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Final SEA Report is published as a separate document for submission and examination.
- 6.3 The Parish Council has also met its obligations in relation to the habitats provisions of EU Directive 92/43/EEC (and the associated Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)). In this regard, the Parish Council provided the Borough Council with all the necessary information it required for the purposes of determining whether an Appropriate Assessment was required or to carry out the Appropriate Assessment if one was required. The Borough Council's Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment concludes that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the 2017 Regulations) either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The Final Habitats Regulations Assessment is published as a separate document.
- 6.4 The Parish Council has been mindful of the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights in process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan and considers that it complies with the Human Rights Act. The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to extensive engagement with those people local to the area who could be affected by its policies and their views have been taken into account in finalising the Plan.
- 6.5 In respect of Directive 2008/98/EC – the Waste Framework Directive – the Neighbourhood Plan does not include any policies in relation to the management of waste, nor does the area include a waste management site. On that basis, this Directive is not considered relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan and therefore could not be breached.
- 6.6 In respect of Directive 2008/50/EC – the Air Quality Directive – the Neighbourhood Plan includes some policies relevant to Air Quality. These policies are tested in accordance with national policy and guidance relevant to their content. The policies are not considered to breach the requirements of the Air Quality Directive as they comprise small-scale interventions and do not negate from the framework for measurement and improvement of air quality set in the Directive.

7. SUMMARY

7.1 In Section 3 it is considered that each of the policies have had full regard to national policy, with no incidence of two or more national policies being in tension, nor of the Parish Council having to strike a balance between them. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan, as a whole, meets Condition (a).

7.2 In Section 4 it is considered that each of the policies either contributes to the achievement of sustainable development or is neutral in its impact on one of more of the three sustainability themes. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan, as a whole, meets Condition (d).

7.3 In Section 5 it is considered that all of the policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted and emerging development plan, with no incidence of two or more strategic policies being in tension, nor of the Parish Council having to strike a balance between them. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan, as a whole, meets Condition (e).

7.4 In Section 6 it is considered the making of the Neighbourhood Plan accords with all EU-derived environmental and other obligations. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan, as a whole, meets Condition (f).