

INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE

ASH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

EXAMINER: Jill Kingaby BSc (Econ) MSc MRTPI

Examination Ref: 02/JK/ANP

Ali Watmore
Clerk to Ash Parish Council

Dan Knowles
Guildford Borough Council

Via email

8 June 2026

Dear Ms Watmore and Mr Knowles

Following my site visit to the Ash Neighbourhood Plan Area, I have some additional points of clarification I wish to put to Ash Parish and Guildford Borough Council to which I would like to receive a written response by **Monday 22 June 2026**.

Local Green Spaces

At my site visit on 2 June 2026, I visited the sites proposed as Local Green Space (LGS) by the Parish Council. In respect of the 3 sites below, I would appreciate it if the Parish Council and/or Borough Council (as appropriate) could answer my further questions.

Keogh Barracks Playing Fields

Question 1: Access to Keogh Barracks Playing Fields, LGS no. 6, is clearly restricted to military personnel and their families. Members of the wider community of Ash Vale are not permitted access. Where there is no public access, national guidance advises that the green area's value may be derived, for example, through its wildlife, historic significance and/or beauty.¹ As the proposed LGS site is part of the British Army barracks owned by the Ministry of Defence, I consider that its designation as an LGS may be unjustified. It is already subject to significant protection which will rule out new development except in very special circumstances. It was also extremely difficult to find an unobstructed view of the proposed LGS from outside the Barracks.

Please would the Parish Council comment. May I also have further details of what direct liaison has taken place with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).²

Ash Green Meadows

Question 2: LGS no. 21 is a relatively large area of land. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that LGSs should not be designated where the green area concerned is an extensive tract of land.³ Appendix C of the ANP informs that LGS no. 21 has been created as a Suitable Alternative Nature Greenspace (SANG) to avoid pressure on the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA) from increased recreational use. Part of the site is already locally designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI).

¹ Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Reference ID: 37-017-20140306.

² In this respect, see the advice in PPG Reference ID: 37-019-20140306.

³ Paragraph 107 c).

In the light of existing protective designations and the relatively large size of the site, it would be helpful if the Parish Council could provide further clarification as to how this site addresses the national policy requirements⁴ for LGS designation and has regard to the relevant advice in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).⁵

Green Spaces West of White Lane

Question 3: LGS no. 35, Green Spaces West of White Lane, is described in Appendix C of the ANP as “private green spaces” to the west of Ash Green. On my site visit, it seemed difficult for people, other than those with houses backing onto the site, to gain access (or even view the site because of the tall trees and hedges alongside roads and footpaths). LGS no. 35 almost adjoins Ash Green Meadows (LGS no. 21), and the two proposed LGSs arguably comprise an extensive tract of land.

Again, It would be helpful to have clarification as to how the Parish Council consider this site addresses the national policy requirements for LGS designation and has regard to the relevant advice in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

New housing provision in Guildford Borough Council

Currently, the Guildford Local Plan comprises the Local Plan Strategy and Sites (LPSS) 2019, and the Local Plan Development Management Policies (LPDMP) 2023. A new Local Plan is being prepared, but timetables indicate that it may not be adopted until April 2029. The LPSS planned for 562 new homes per year to be built, upgraded to 743 dwellings per year under the Government’s Old Standard Method, and now at 1,170 under the New Standard Method. I have read that Guildford does not currently have a 5 year housing supply.

Question 4: the Ash Neighbourhood Plan’s approach to new housing development as described in Policy ASH1 consistent with latest national and local strategic planning policy?

In the interests of transparency, may I prevail upon you to ensure that a copy of this letter and any subsequent response is placed on Ash Parish Council and Guildford Borough Council websites.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Jill Kingaby

Examiner

⁴ NPPF, Paragraphs 106 and 107.

⁵ See section titled ‘Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space’, PPG Reference IDs: 37-005-20140306 to 37-022-20140306.