

**Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan:
Regulation 16 Consultation Representations**

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STATUTORY REPRESENTATIONS



5th May 2022

Spatial Planning
Essex County Council
County Hall
Market Road
Chelmsford
CM1 1QH

[Redacted]

By email:

[Redacted]

Uttlesford District Council Email -

[Redacted]

Dear Uttlesford District Council ,

RE: Regulation 16 - The Ashdon Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020 - 2036

Thank you for consulting Essex County Council (ECC) on the Submission Draft Plan for the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2036 (the Plan). ECC is a key infrastructure provider and delivers and commissions a wide range of strategic and local public infrastructure and services, covering but not limited to highways and transportation, education, early years and childcare, minerals, waste, surface water management, passenger transport, adult social care, and Public Health. The impacts of growth from the allocation of development sites in neighbourhood plans (over and above those identified in a Local Plan) will need to be assessed, including infrastructure requirements, any mitigation, and how they will be funded and delivered.

ECC submitted to comments to the Parish Council at the Regulation 14 consultation in the Autumn of 2021. It is noted that very few of the comments have been included within this next iteration of the Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 16), which is disappointing. This response similarly to our previous views outlines where changes need to be made to ensure ECC can deliver its statutory responsibilities and recommends other changes for your consideration. ECC welcomes any discussions with UDC or Parish Council to provide further clarity and assist understanding of our views.

Essex County Council's Neighbourhood Planning Guide (September 2019)

To assist in the drafting of Neighbourhood Plans, ECC prepared an Information Guide that explains the main ECC services that may need to be considered when developing a neighbourhood plan. The Guide can be viewed through this [weblink](#).

The Guide provides weblinks to relevant ECC policy guidance and the following information on each theme:

- The relevant service or function within ECC, and their responsibilities;
- Relevance to neighbourhood planning; and
- The key documents produced by ECC to be considered when a Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared, and weblinks to those documents.

Thematic Overarching Summary of the ECC Views

This section of the ECC response sets out a summary of the strategic thematic matters.

- **Highways and Transportation** – Further consideration should be given to the evidence that supports some of the issues and matters highlighted within Ashdon. It is also recommended that the Parish Council acknowledges the role of the Local Highways Panel.
- **Education** – It is acknowledged that the primary school is referred to throughout the Plan. There is a need to promote safe walking and cycling routes to and from the school and minimise car use.
- **Green Infrastructure** – It is recommended that the Plan clearly appreciates the importance of Green Infrastructure (GI). It plays an important role in connecting people and places and should be referred to throughout the plan and specific policies.
- **Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)** – It is recommended that the Plan includes a specific policy on Flood Risk and Surface Water Management and ECC recommends proposed policy wording.
- **Renewable Energy** – It is recommended that a clear stance on renewable energy for domestic and commercial developments is set out within the Plan and ECC recommends proposed policy wording.

Section 2 – Past and Present

ECC notes that Section 2 sets the context for the Plan, providing an appreciation of some of the facilities, services and infrastructure available within the village and surrounding locality. Whilst ECC find this part of the Plan helpful and valuable, it is important that statements are fully evidenced and justified, this was a matter raised in ECC's response to the Regulation 14 draft plan, and remains valid.

ECC notes that the Plan continues to state that "Ashdon is relatively rurally isolated with a virtually non-existent bus service" (paragraph 2.19). It should be noted that that the village of Ashdon has journey options available to Haverhill, Saffron Walden and Audley End six days per week. While this is more than some parishes of a comparable size, it is acknowledged that this level of service is unlikely to serve regular community needs. ECC acknowledges that paragraph 11.17 of the Plan highlights possible enablers for passenger transport that they have investigated through public engagement. It is recommended that this information is shared with ECC and the Local Highways Panel to assist in identifying possible public transportation solutions that may be viable within Ashdon.

ECC notes that paragraph 2.19 continues to state that "Ashdon is suffering from the increase in magnitude and speed of traffic in recent years". ECC welcome the data to evidence this statement, as it is important if mitigation is being sought that there is the information to substantiate any traffic measures that may be suitable within the locality.

Section 3 – Key Issues

ECC continues to welcome that the Plan sets out the strategic context and highlights some of the key issues and matters for the community. It is noted that these issues have been developed through a combination of public engagement and the analysis of quantitative and qualitative evidence. ECC also notes that the key issues form the themes and the basis of the policies in the Plan.

Natural and Historic Environment

ECC notes that within the Natural and Historic Environment section, the protection of the environment is a common theme running throughout the Plan. ECC continues to recommend that the Parish Council reviews the Plan and ensures that the importance of Green Infrastructure (GI) is elevated. As stated in our last response to assist the Parish Council, ECC has provided

this is a perception/experiential view, the evidence demonstrates that there has been no Personal Injury Accidents reported in last 5 years.

Bullet 5 states “even where pavements are in place some are in poor repair due to traffic mounting the pavement to pass traffic coming in the opposite direction” (page 16). ECC considers that there are many reasons for the deterioration in pavements. It is recommended that the Parish Council is open to the range of factors attributing to any deterioration in pavements within the local community.

Bullet 6 highlights that parking is a ‘major’ issue outside of the school. As outlined in our last response, ECC has a Sustainable Travel Planning team that work directly with schools to reduce travel by car and assist with innovative approaches to promote sustainable modes of travel to and from school. In reviewing the data from the current pupils at the school it is understood that many live within the village of Ashdon, therefore there may be opportunities to enhance the uptake of walking and cycling from home to school.

Bullet 9 states “very limited bus service to or from the village making it effectively 100% car dependent for access to facilities” (page 16). ECC notes that the bus operator Stephensons run the route 59 between Haverhill and Audley End station, approximately every two hourly, but not at times that would enable commuter journeys.

Bullet 10 states “a cycle path to Saffron Walden was suggested as a possible means of reducing the carbon footprint, although a suitable route would need to be found and this may be problematic” (page 16). ECC considers that it should be noted Harcamlow Way connects Ashdon to Saffron Walden and it is a pedestrian cross-country route that predominately follows field boundaries. ECC notes that later in the Plan (paragraph 11.20) it states that “Harcamlow Way may be a possible route for such a cycle route in the future, but a lot of work will be needed to bring such a route to fruition. In particular, the views of local landowners need to be gathered and considered as well as those of potential users”. The Parish Council has identified an opportunity at this site and further work will be required to determine whether this route may be enhanced for cyclists, whether the landowners are supportive of the scheme and whether there is opportunities to finance the proposed scheme. If the Parish Council then determines there is opportunity in delivering such a scheme, it should be supported within a policy in the emerging Plan.

ECC also appreciates that the landscape within Ashdon is hilly, and therefore ECC continues to welcome consideration as to whether E-bikes may be promoted to increase the number of people cycling.

Bullet 11 highlights that a key issue is that “the provision of more local employment opportunities could help to reduce the carbon footprint of the residents, although due to the rural nature of Ashdon Parish, this would not have a significant impact” (page 16). ECC recommends that the Plan seeks to highlight some of the opportunities that may enhance local employment and ensure that residents can work from home effectively. It is noted within section 5 of the Plan that broadband speeds are good, with a superfast upgrade planned. This provides an opportunity for local employment; however, it is also noted that mobile phone signal within parts of the village is poor.

Section 4 – Context from National and Local Planning Policy

National Policy

ECC wished to reiterate that the national policy section should include reference to the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan and the [Environment Act \(2021\)](#). The Act places significant importance on protecting and enhancing GI, its accessibility and mandatory provisions for biodiversity net gain.

Local Policy

ECC notes and welcomes that the Plan now acknowledges that the Development Plan includes the Uttlesford Local Plan and also comprises the Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014 (MLP) and the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan 2017 (WLP). ECC considers that it is clear that when determining a planning application, decision makers must consider the policies within these two plans, as relevant.

ECC continues to recommend that the local policy section includes reference to the [Essex GI Strategy](#). The purpose of this strategy is to take a positive approach to enhance, protect and create an inclusive and integrated network of high-quality multi-functional GI in Greater Essex. This will help to create a county-wide understanding of GI, its functions and values, and to identify opportunities for delivering green infrastructure. The supporting maps to the strategy are available to view at the Green Essex Story Map, where all types of GI assets (accessible and non-accessible) can be viewed for Ashdon -<https://www.placeservices.co.uk/green-essex/>. This can be cross referenced with the National GI Mapping - <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Map.aspx>

Section 5 – Ashdon Future

ECC notes that page 22 of the Plan continues to set out opportunities for the Plan. It is welcomed that the opportunities identified include ‘address challenges through planting and sustainable carbon neutral buildings. ECC reiterates that consideration be given to the use of bio-solar roofs on new developments, these can provide multiple benefits such as managing flood risk.

ECC notes and welcomes that the Plan includes a vision and objectives. It is noted that the vision and eleven objectives seek to address the key issues facing Ashdon Parish which are outlined in section 3 of the Plan.

Within the ECC response to the Regulation 14 draft Plan, ECC suggested wording changes for the objectives within paragraph 5.3 of the Plan. ECC notes that the objectives remain unchanged and therefore the views that ECC highlighted in our previous response are reiterated -

- Objective 6 – “The NP will plan to maintain and promote local ecosystems to protect wildlife, trees and hedgerows.” ECC recommends that this is amended to specifically refer to GI and the amended objective should read - “The NP will plan to maintain, promote and enhance the Ashdon GI network as well as the local ecosystems to protect wildlife, trees and hedgerows.”
 - Objective 9 – “Promote health and wellbeing of the community by protecting and improving opportunities for outdoor recreational activities.”
 - ECC recommends that this objective includes reference to multifunctionality and multiple purpose uses of spaces (including outdoor sport facilities), and it be amended to read - “Promote health and wellbeing of the community by protecting and improving opportunities for outdoor recreational activities through the provision of multi-functional green spaces that are accessible to all and through the use of walkways and cycle paths.”

ECC also notes that the Climate Change and Biodiversity Objectives do not refer to transport. ECC recommends that the third which currently states “the NP will aim for new development to have a low carbon footprint (covering energy demand, building materials, construction process etc) and support innovative solutions” should also include reference to transport. ECC acknowledges that transport has a role to play in seeking to lower the carbon footprint. It is also important that later in the Plan within section 9 that the connection between reducing the carbon footprint and transport is clearly articulated.

Section 7 – Housing

ECC acknowledges and welcomes that there is a theme running throughout the Plan and in particular the Housing section, seeking to make Ashdon a desirable place to live. ECC continues to recommend that the Plan provides greater consideration to GI as it can assist in the delivery of developments that are more desirable for people to live and add aesthetic and financial value to property.

ECC continues to recommend that the Plan considers matters relating independent living and requires that all new dwellings be built to the Building Regulations Approved Document Part M4¹(2) standard. Future development proposals should be built to conform with the Part M4(3) standard. ECC considers that this is justified as it will allow people to reside in their homes for longer and providing them with greater independence. This in turn raises their quality of life and reduces the care burden on the public sector.

Section 8 – Parish Character – Natural Landscape and Built Environment

ECC reiterates that objective 2 on page 33 be amended from, “Any new development will deliver high quality design and be appropriate and sensitive to neighbouring buildings and landscape setting”, to read “Any new development will deliver high quality green infrastructure and design in order to be appropriate and sensitive to neighbouring buildings and landscape settings”. This will ensure that GI is referenced throughout the Plan and given the prominence within local level policy required for its delivery.

ECC welcomes that policy ASH 4 – Protecting Ashdon’s Landscape Character has been amended to reflect the suggested wording outlined by ECC at the last Regulation 14 consultation.

ECC continues to note and welcome that Policy ASH 7 entitled Design Considerations includes reference to bicycle storage. The lack of storage is often cited as a barrier for bicycle ownership. Ensuring the delivery of adequate storage will therefore enhance the uptake and use of bicycles within the community. It is also noted and welcomed that proposal (b) has been amended to reflect ECC's proposed wording at the Regulation 14 consultation. In reviewing the policy wording it is acknowledged that proposal from the Regulation 14 policy, is no longer included in the wording. ECC recommends that the following be inserted into this policy "any water run-off would not add-to or create surface water flooding and this should be managed through the use of green infrastructure and above ground sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) features wherever possible".

As outlined throughout the response, ECC is seeking to strengthen reference to GI. It is again recommended that an additional bullet be included in the policy referring to the importance of GI as being integral to new development, and its role in improving accessibility across the neighbourhood. Furthermore, ECC reiterates that there is a need for this policy to include a further bullet that refers to biodiversity net gain in line with provisions outlined in the Environment Act.

ECC appreciates that point (j) of the policy now includes reference to street trees, it is welcomed that the policy is seeking to delivery improved green space and amenity. However, ECC continues to insist that consideration be given to the installation of street furniture to be dual purpose i.e. bench and planter, bike parking areas with planters, bus shelter with green roof etc.

ECC continues to recommend that ASH7 includes reference to energy efficiency, biodiversity gains, low carbon technology, water efficiency, energy conservation and efficiency, and flood resilience. It is recommended that the Policy is amended to include reference to promoting waste reduction, re-use and recycling, sustainable building design and the use of sustainable materials, including in relation to their procurement, in the construction of new development or redevelopment.

Within Section 8 of the Plan, ECC continues to consider the need for reference to assessing the sustainability performance of buildings through an accreditation scheme known as 'Building with Nature'. This seeks to incorporate green infrastructure into development. This approach is a voluntary approach, and the standards are free to use providing industry with a benchmark, that enables developers to create places that really deliver for people and wildlife. It brings together guidance and good practice to recognise high quality green infrastructure at all stages of the development process including policy, planning, design, delivery, and long-term management and maintenance. Developers can then apply for a Building with Nature Award to provide the development with formal recognition of meeting the these Standards and an external verification of quality.

There are two levels of accreditation –

- Design Award is used to accredit projects at an early stage of design, for example an outline planning application in larger schemes.
- Full Award is used to accredit projects at a more detailed stage of design and includes a post-construction check.

The Building with Nature Standards has been developed by practitioners and policy makers, academic experts and end-users, and has been tried and tested in multiple schemes from Cornwall to Scotland and is endorsed by Natural England, who is reviewing the current national green infrastructure standards. For more information, please visit here <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/about>.

Section 9 – Climate Change and Biodiversity

ECC as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) notes and welcomes that SuDS are referred to in policy ASH9 - Flood Risk. However, ECC aims to ensure the policy wording is strengthened and continues to recommend that the policy states that SuDS need to be considered within building design and early engagement with ECC undertaken. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021), paragraph 159, 160, 161 163, 164 sets out the criteria to be considered for the location of major developments in relation to avoiding flood risk. Paragraph 169 provides further policy guidance regarding the provision of SuDS in major development and paragraph 167 regarding flood mitigation.

ECC, as LLFA, continues to consider that reference to surface water management within the Plan should be strengthened. The NPPF, requires a developer to undertake a site-specific flood risk assessment, where appropriate, to ensure new development would not cause flood risk elsewhere, and that major developments should incorporate SuDS. In addition, all new developments should be directed away from the areas considered to be in a high risk of flooding. The policy should be revised to ensure that it incorporates the following matters:

- The provision of SuDS measures should be multi-functional and deliver benefits for the built, natural and historic environment.
- The provision of innovative SuDS solutions to deliver flood resilient schemes.
- Surface water discharge from the development should accord with the SuDS hierarchy, ground investigation should be undertaken to provide evidence of onsite infiltration, if this is not possible, surface water could be discharged into watercourse, or if it is not feasible a sewer, with appropriate attenuation and treatment to mitigate any risks of flood and pollution.
- Preference should be given to above ground features such as basins, ponds and swales, green roofs, rain gardens and should consider the use of multi-functional space to promote biodiversity and amenity values and the management of surface water runoff generated from heavy rainfall events and minimize the risk of surface water flooding. The underground storage tanks are the least favourable option and should only be used as last resort.
- Surface water conveyance and onsite storage using non-traditional drainage measures to achieve water quality.
- New developments should consider alternative ways to design SuDS through rainwater harvesting or grey water recycling.
- All future developments should incorporate SuDS schemes which will be in accordance with the Essex SuDS Design Guide (2020).
- Any proposed developments should consider the use of the Environment Agency (EA) up-dated climate change allowance and the potential increased risk of surface water flooding, so that the necessary measures to reduce any risk of flooding to properties, residents and wildlife.

ECC has published updated guidance in the [SuDS Design Guide 2020](#). It is recommended that the Parish Council review this guidance and ensure that emerging policies are consistent with the advice set out in the Guide. This Guide should be referenced in any new Flood Risk and Surface Water Management overarching policy.

ECC considers that it is important that the Parish Council is aware that the majority of old building sewer systems are supported by combined sewers. ECC does not recommend that new development surface water runoff be connected to combined sewers. ECC have

concerns with the additional demand and cost associated to treat surface water from combined sewers.

ECC also continues to recommend that Policy Ash 10 - Biodiversity and Habitats, should make specific reference to GI as outlined earlier in this response, and ensure it is consistent with provisions set out in the Essex GI Strategy. It is recommended that a Plan policy:

- emphasises the importance of connectivity and access to green spaces to improve social equity and well-being in the neighbourhood;
- refers to utilising multifunctionality to create multiple benefits of open and green spaces (ECC acknowledges that it is important that any multifunctionality does not create conflict and damage to ecosystems and wildlife);
- seeks the protection of green and wildlife corridors as they are important for the local community and for the Plan to deliver and the local level; and
- includes provisions for where vegetation loss such as trees might be unavoidable - in these circumstances replacement planting (proportion or higher value to the loss) should be incorporated within the development (or off site) to ensure over time the development shall result in an overall environmental net gain.
- Biodiversity Net Gain improvements of 20% are achieved.

Section 10 – Community Facilities

ECC recommends that Policy Ash 13 - Local Green Spaces includes reference to protecting school green space. Studies have found that connecting children with nature and green spaces benefits their intellectual, emotional, social and physical development, giving them the best possible start in life and improving employability. ECC notes that the policy includes reference to children's play area equipment, green space and picnic area and amenity space. However, there remains no reference to school green space and therefore ECC comments remain valid and are restated.

ECC notes that Map 15 remains in the Plan and refers to 'accident black spots', ECC again welcomes the data that demonstrates these locations on the map are accident black spots. It is noted that Church End has no footpaths, which may make pedestrian movements more challenging.

ECC notes that map 15 continues to highlight traffic speeds of 20 miles per hour (mph) and 30 mph. It is noted that there are road traffic signage that indicate to the driver if they are exceeding or maintaining within the speed limit. ECC also seeks to clarify that there is a maximum speed of 20 mph on approaches to the Church End bend.

Section 11 – Highways, Transport and Connectivity

ECC continues to recommend that the objective set out on page 58 which currently states “Promote a vibrant community in which it is easier to get around - both within the community and in and out of the village”, be amended to read “Promote a vibrant community in which it is easier to get around by walking, cycling and public transport - both within the community and in and out of the village”. This will ensure that the Plan seeks to promote sustainable modes of travel in line with the NPPF and the Essex Local Transport Plan.

ECC notes that the public engagement exercise highlighted the following issue “traffic around the school at school drop off and pick up is problematic due to lack of parking facilities at the school” (paragraph 11.2). ECC considers that this is seeking to enhance parking at the school, rather than implement measures to encourage Active Travel. ECC reiterates that the Plan sets out policies that seek to promote safe walking and cycling routes to the school, and consideration should be given to whether there may be funds available to deliver an improved road layout in front of the school to make it safer and less car dominated.

The public engagement exercise also asked a question on specific areas needing a pavement. The results following the public engagement highlighted that “95.1% of respondents were in favour of a path that connects Church End and Church Hill avoiding the dangerous bend by the All Saints Church (the provision of such a pavement would improve the connectivity of the Churchfields and All Saints development to the Ashdon village core including the school)” (paragraph 11.4). In reviewing this location, ECC continues to highlight to the Parish Council that there is little or no highway land available alongside the carriageway, and to fulfil this aspiration would require third party land/agreement. It should also be noted that there are footpaths away from the carriageway, and consideration should be given to whether there is the potential to improve surfacing/lighting along some of these, to enhance their use and provide a safer pedestrian environment.

Section 11 also contains ‘Community Aspiration 12’ - Traffic and Movement Around the Village. This section indicates how the Parish Council will work with ECC. ECC again welcomes that the Parish is clear about future aspirations for the village of Ashdon. Within the Regulation 14 Draft Plan ECC response, we highlighted the role of the Local Highways Panel (LHP). ECC recommends that the Plan sets out how the Parish Council will work with the LHP.

ECC notes that paragraph 11.17 continues to set out seven issues that are cited as barriers to the use of current services. ECC wishes to clarify or make the following observations.

- Bullet 2 – states that the bus services should “cover the commuting hours to Saffron Walden, Audley End and Cambridge” (page 62). It should be appreciated that all of these destinations would require services at different times. It is unlikely that an hourly service to Ashdon at present would be viable. It is recommended that the community considers the bus service locations and options that would be welcomed and work with ECC to understand how such services may be delivered.
- Bullet 4 – states that “affordability needs to be improved” (page 62). ECC considers that it is important to note that bus fares are subsidised for persons of state pension age (the eligibility for an Older Persons Bus Pass is set by the Department for Work and Pensions). ECC will be reviewing the fares and ticketing schemes as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan. An ECC Cabinet Paper covering enhanced partnerships /Bus Back Better and Bus Service Improvement Plan is available [here](#).
- Bullet 5 – states “more bus stops” (page 62). There are seven pairs of bus stops served by the existing bus service. ECC would welcome working with the Parish Council to identify where additional bus stops may be beneficial. It is recommended that the Parish

Council email - IPTU.Infrastructure@essex.gov.uk and outline their aspirations, these can then be assessed by ECC and relevant partners.

- Bullet 6 – states “better timetable” (page 62). ECC would welcome further information from the Parish Council regarding the nature of the services they would require, the destinations, times and an appreciation of the issues with the current timetable. The above email address can be used.

Other - Renewables

ECC continues to recommend that the Plan clearly articulate a stance on renewable energy for domestic and commercial developments, such as solar panels, wind turbines, battery pods and community renewable heat initiative. ECC recommends incorporating a specific renewable policy into the Plan, an example of a policy is set out below -

Proposed Renewable Energy Policy

The Neighbourhood Plan wishes to encourage community led renewable energy schemes and will support community-based groups working with local energy users in seeking funding to establish the technical, financial and legal feasibility of appropriate schemes within the neighbourhood area.

Proposals for community owned or led renewable energy schemes (including micro-hydro, photovoltaic or bio-mass projects) will be supported subject to the following criteria for the proposed development:

- *The siting and scale are appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape;*
- *It does not give rise to unacceptable landscape or visual impact, either in isolation or cumulatively with other development;*
- *It does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents; and*
- *It does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance.*

Other - Developer Contributions

ECC continues to recommend a new policy is inserted into the Plan on developer contributions with which any development would need to comply. Outlined below is a series of links to other Neighbourhood Plans that have policies, which could be considered.

Cressing Parish Neighbourhood Plan, 2017 – 2033, Policy 11 – Developer Contributions, page 74. [crossing-adopted-version-february-2020 \(braintree.gov.uk\)](https://www.braintree.gov.uk/cressing-adopted-version-february-2020)

Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Plan Document, 2015 – 2033, Policy F15 – Developer Contributions, page 50. [Hatfield Peverel Neighbourhood Plan](#)

Bradwell with Pattiswick Parish Neighbourhood Plan, 2017 – 2033, Policy 11 – Developer Contributions, page 51. [Bradwell with Pattiswick Neighbourhood Plan](#)

Other - Glossary

In reviewing the Plan, consideration should be given to the inclusion of a glossary of terms. ECC continues to recommend that within the Glossary the following definition of infrastructure be used –

Infrastructure means any structure, building, system facility and/or provision required by an area for its social and/or economic function and/or well-being including (but not exclusively): footways, cycleways and highways; public transport; drainage and flood protection; waste

recycling facilities; education and childcare; healthcare; sports, leisure and recreation facilities; community and social facilities; cultural facilities, including public art; emergency services; green infrastructure; open space; affordable housing; live/work units and lifetime homes; ultrafast high-speed broadband; and facilities for specific sections of the community such as youth or the elderly.

The Glossary also needs to clarify the term 'development' within the Plan, which must exclude the County Matters of minerals and waste. Such matters are the responsibility of ECC as the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority.

Concluding Remarks

In reviewing the Regulation 14 ECC response that was submitted to the Parish Council on (include date), ECC is disappointed at the lack of consideration given to our previous views. Very few of our recommendations have been adopted within the Plan and need reconsideration the County Council's statutory roles. ECC hopes that the next iteration of the plan will consider more of our comments and it is shaped to reflect our views. As always if you have any queries or concerns about the information outlined in the response ECC will happily assist.

Yours sincerely


Principal Planning Officer (Spatial Planning)


REPRESENTATION 2: NATURAL ENGLAND

Date: 16 May 2022
Our ref: 390044
Your ref: Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan

Uttlesford District Council
planningpolicy@uttlesford.gov.uk

BY EMAIL ONLY



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Dear Sir or Madam

Notification of Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan Development Neighbourhood Plan Submission Consultation (Regulation 16)

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 13 April 2022 .

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England is a statutory consultee in neighbourhood planning and must be consulted on draft neighbourhood development plans by the Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums where they consider our interests would be affected by the proposals made.

Natural England does not have any specific comments on this neighbourhood plan.

However, we refer you to the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

For any further consultations on your plan, please contact: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours faithfully


Consultations Team

Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

Natural environment information sources

The [Magic](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/)¹ website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: Agricultural Land Classification, Ancient Woodland, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks (England), National Trails, Priority Habitat Inventory, public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones). Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available [here](#)².

Priority habitats are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)³. Most of these will be mapped either as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, on the Magic website or as Local Wildlife Sites. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

National Character Areas (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here](#)⁴.

There may also be a local landscape character assessment covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on soil types and Agricultural Land Classification is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic](http://magic.defra.gov.uk/)⁵ website and also from the [LandIS website](http://www.landis.org.uk/)⁶, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

Natural environment issues to consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#)⁷ sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](#)⁸ sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

¹ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

² <http://www.nbn-nfbr.org.uk/nfbr.php>

³ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

⁵ <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

⁶ <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807247/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf

⁸ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>



Landscape

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here](#)⁹), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)¹⁰. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here](#)¹¹) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice [here](#)¹² to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality in line with National Planning Policy Framework para 171. For more information, see our publication [Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land](#)¹³.

Improving your natural environment

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment. If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development. Examples might include:

- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.
- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to encourage wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.

⁹<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹⁰<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

¹¹<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140711133551/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx>

¹²<https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

¹³<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012>



You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision.
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance on this](#)¹⁴).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).



¹⁴ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/local-green-space-designation/>

REPRESENTATION 3: HGHWAYS ENGLAND

Thu 12/05/2022 09:11

[REDACTED] highwaysengland.co.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for consulting Highways England on the above Neighbourhood Plan.

Highways England is a strategic highway company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015 and is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the Strategic Road Network (SRN). In respect to this Neighbourhood Plan, the nearest trunk road is A11 and M11.

We have reviewed the plan and note the area and location that is covered is remote from the Strategic Road Network . Consequently the draft policies set out are unlikely to have an impact on the operation of the trunk road and we offer **No Comment**.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Spatial Planner

Network Operations

National Highways | Woodlands | Manton Lane | Bedford | MK41 7LW

[REDACTED]

Web: <http://www.highways.gov.uk>

[REDACTED]

REPRESENTATION 4: SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Please accept the following as our formal response to the **Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan** Consultation as agreed at our planning committee meeting held on 28/04/2022.

Committee agreed to support the plan, in particular the references to cycle and pedestrian provision.

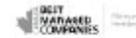
Kind Regards



Committee Clerk & Office Administrator

Saffron Walden Town Council
The Town Hall
Market Street
Saffron Walden
CB10 1HZ
Tel: 01799-516501
www.saffronwalden.gov.uk

Our Ref: MV/ 15B901605



26 May 2022

Uttlesford District Council
planningpolicy@uttlesford.gov.uk
| via email only

Dear Sir / Madam
Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation
April – May 2022
Representations on behalf of National Grid

National Grid has appointed Avison Young to review and respond to Neighbourhood Plan consultations on its behalf. We are instructed by our client to submit the following representation with regard to the current consultation on the above document.

About National Grid

National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET) owns and maintains the electricity transmission system in England and Wales. The energy is then distributed to the electricity distribution network operators across England, Wales and Scotland.

National Grid Gas plc (NGG) owns and operates the high-pressure gas transmission system across the UK. In the UK, gas leaves the transmission system and enters the UK's four gas distribution networks where pressure is reduced for public use.

National Grid Ventures (NGV) is separate from National Grid's core regulated businesses. NGV develop, operate and invest in energy projects, technologies, and partnerships to help accelerate the development of a clean energy future for consumers across the UK, Europe and the United States.

Proposed development sites crossed or in close proximity to National Grid assets:

An assessment has been carried out with respect to National Grid's electricity and gas transmission assets which include high voltage electricity assets and high-pressure gas pipelines.

National Grid has identified that no assets are currently affected by proposed allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

National Grid provides information in relation to its assets at the website below.

- www2.nationalgrid.com/uk/services/land-and-development/planning-authority/shape-files/

Please also see attached information outlining guidance on development close to National Grid infrastructure.



Distribution Networks

Information regarding the electricity distribution network is available at the website below:
www.energynetworks.org.uk

Information regarding the gas distribution network is available by contacting:
plantprotection@cadentgas.com

Further Advice

Please remember to consult National Grid on any Neighbourhood Plan Documents or site-specific proposals that could affect our assets. We would be grateful if you could add our details shown below to your consultation database, if not already included:

[Redacted]

nationalgrid.uk@avisonyoung.com

Avison Young
Central Square South
Orchard Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 3AZ

[Redacted]

box.landandacquisitions@nationalgrid.com

National Grid
National Grid House
Warwick Technology Park
Gallows Hill
Warwick, CV34 6DA

If you require any further information in respect of this letter, then please contact us.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted]
Director

[Redacted]
For and on behalf of Avison Young

National Grid is able to provide advice and guidance to the Council concerning their networks and encourages high quality and well-planned development in the vicinity of its assets.

Electricity assets

Developers of sites crossed or in close proximity to National Grid assets should be aware that it is National Grid policy to retain existing overhead lines in-situ, though it recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances that would justify the request where, for example, the proposal is of regional or national importance.

National Grid's '*Guidelines for Development near pylons and high voltage overhead power lines*' promote the successful development of sites crossed by existing overhead lines and the creation of well-designed places. The guidelines demonstrate that a creative design approach can minimise the impact of overhead lines whilst promoting a quality environment. The guidelines can be downloaded here: <https://www.nationalgridet.com/document/130626/download>

The statutory safety clearances between overhead lines, the ground, and built structures must not be infringed. Where changes are proposed to ground levels beneath an existing line then it is important that changes in ground levels do not result in safety clearances being infringed. National Grid can, on request, provide to developers detailed line profile drawings that detail the height of conductors, above ordnance datum, at a specific site.

National Grid's statutory safety clearances are detailed in their '*Guidelines when working near National Grid Electricity Transmission assets*', which can be downloaded here: www.nationalgridet.com/network-and-assets/working-near-our-assets

Gas assets

High-Pressure Gas Pipelines form an essential part of the national gas transmission system and National Grid's approach is always to seek to leave their existing transmission pipelines in situ. Contact should be made with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in respect of sites affected by High-Pressure Gas Pipelines.

National Grid have land rights for each asset which prevents the erection of permanent/ temporary buildings, or structures, changes to existing ground levels, storage of materials etc. Additionally, written permission will be required before any works commence within the National Grid's 12.2m building proximity distance, and a deed of consent is required for any crossing of the easement.

National Grid's '*Guidelines when working near National Grid Gas assets*' can be downloaded here: www.nationalgridgas.com/land-and-assets/working-near-our-assets

How to contact National Grid

If you require any further information in relation to the above and/or if you would like to check if National Grid's transmission networks may be affected by a proposed development, please visit the website: <https://lsbud.co.uk/>

For local planning policy queries, please contact: nationalgrid.uk@avisonyoung.com

Avison Young (UK) Limited registered in England and Wales number 6382509.
Registered office, 3 Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2JB. Regulated by RICS

REPRESENTATION 6: UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER
Telephone (01799) 510510
Textphone Users 18001
Email uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk Website www.uttlesford.gov.uk

Ashdon NP Steering Group
Clerk to Ashdon Parish Council
Mallards
Midsummer
Ashdon
CB10 2LZ

27 May 2022

Your ref:

Our ref:

Please ask for Demetria Macdonald on 01799 510518
email: [REDACTED]

Dear Sir,

Ashdon Neighbourhood Development Plan Regulation 16 Consultation

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Submission Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan. We have reviewed the Submission Draft Plan and can now provide the following officer response.

The plan is considered comprehensive, and it has recognised the need for housing development which meets the identified local housing need whilst being sympathetic to the existing landscape and heritage of the village and the surrounding area.

We support the draft Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan and commend your incorporation of amendments to reflect our comments provided during plan preparation and prior to and post Regulation 14 Consultation. We also commend your hard work in the production of a plan within record time.

We welcome the Ashdon Design Code which the first in the District.

Uttlesford District Council Comments

Ashdon NP Page 37 Policy ASH4 – Protecting Ashdon’s Landscape Character
UDC supports this policy, however, policy is about views and not landscape and a more appropriate title for the policy should be Protecting Ashdon’s Views.

Ashdon NP Page 37 – Map 13 should be source referenced.

Ashdon NP Page 45: Policy ASH7 – Design Considerations – Second sentence of Policy starting with, “Planning applications should demonstrate how they” needs rewording because not all applications will need to demonstrate adherence to the Design Code. Clarity should be provided by stating the types of development required to reflect design considerations.

ACHIEVEMENT
AWARDS 2019
FINALISTS **MJ**



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER
Telephone (01799) 510510
Textphone Users 18001
Email uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk Website www.uttlesford.gov.uk

Ashdon NP Page 57 – Policy Ash13 – Local Green Spaces

It is noted that the landowner of LGS 6 Donkey Field/Bidwells Meadows does not support the proposed LGS designation and considers that the designation is contrary to his Countryside Agreement. What are the implications on the LGS designation should the landowner decide not to continue his Countryside Agreement after 1st January 2026? Would the attributes of the LGS partially attributable to the Countryside Agreement endure up to 2036 if the landowner decides not to renew his Countryside Agreement?

Ashdon NP Page 60 – Policy Ash14 – Public Rights of Way

Policy Ash14 requires mitigation if a view from a PROW is adversely impacted. However, without clarity on what criteria to consider in the appearance of a proposal, to be considered unacceptable, this policy will be difficult to be applied consistently by a decision maker.

Ashdon NP Page 62 – Cycle Routes – We support an off -road cycle route to Saffron Walden as there is concern about safety when cycling along the pavements.

Ashdon NP Page 63 – Policy ASH16 – Farm Diversification - The objective of the employment chapter is to promote and enhance local employment and opportunities, however the policy is titled 'Farm diversification' which appears to exclude other forms of rural based employment..

Farm diversification may be one aspect of 'promoting and enhancing local employment'. It would be useful to understand what employment opportunities are in Ashdon (other than the nursery and pub) and what kinds of businesses (trying to be as open as possible) may be suitable to the rural area/village e.g. size and scale.

In a future review, potential allocation of employment land should be a consideration to encourage local employment opportunities.

We hope that the above comments will assist in consideration of the Neighbourhood Plan at Examination.

Yours Sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

Planning Policy Officer

Cc: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]

REPRESENTATION 7: HISTORIC ENGLAND



Ms Demetria Macdonald

Direct Dial: [REDACTED]

Uttlesford District Council

Council Offices

Our ref: PL00757022

London Road

Saffron Walden

Essex

CB11 4ER

30 May 2022

Dear Ms Macdonald

Ref: Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation

Thank you for inviting Historic England to comment on the Regulation 16 Submission version of this Neighbourhood Plan.

We do not consider it necessary for Historic England to provide further comments at this time. We would refer you if appropriate to any previous comments submitted at Regulation 14 stage, and for any further information to our detailed advice on successfully incorporating historic environment considerations into a neighbourhood plan, which can be found here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-your-neighbourhood/>

We would be grateful if you would notify us on eastplanningpolicy@historicengland.org.uk <mailto:eastplanningpolicy@historicengland.org.uk> if and when the Neighbourhood Plan is made by the council. To avoid any doubt, this letter does not reflect our obligation to provide further advice on or, potentially, object to specific proposals which may subsequently arise as a result of the proposed plan, where we consider these



24 BROOKLANDS AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, CB2 8BU
Telephone 01223 582749
HistoricEngland.org.uk



Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.



would have an adverse effect on the historic environment.

Please do contact me, either via email or the number above, if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted]

Historic Places Advisor, East of England

[Redacted]

cc:



24 BROOKLANDS AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, CB2 8BU

Telephone 01223 582749
HistoricEngland.org.uk



Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.

OTHER CONSULTEE REPRESENTATION

REPRESENTATION 8: BIDWELL & SON

Planning Policy/Ashdon NP,
Uttlesford District Council,
Council Offices,
London Road,
Saffron Walden,
Essex
CB11 4ER

[REDACTED]

Essex

[REDACTED]

27th April 2022

For the attention of Demetria Macdonald

Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan Development Consultation (Regulation 16)

I wish to record my opposition to the designation of the meadow described as 'Bidwell's Meadow' to a Local Green Space. This meadow has been in the ownership of my family for generations and is part of the farmland belonging to [REDACTED] Farm, Ashdon.

At present this meadow forms part of a Countryside Agreement introduced on Hill Farm beginning 1st January 2020 and finishes 1st January 2026 under the auspices of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

This agreement lays down various terms and conditions to encourage environmental features, conserve and maintain wildlife aspects on the farm. Under the terms the meadow remains undisturbed with no fertilizer or pesticide applications with allowance of limited livestock grazing and hay making. Further environmental schemes will be taken up as they are formulated by DEFRA in due course. As the meadow is protected by the Countryside Agreement I believe no additional benefit would be gained by designation to a Local Green Space. Also as a footpath crosses the meadow there is no need to designate these public corridors as a Local Green Space simply to protect rights of way which are already protected under other legislation.

This meadow is private land and as such does not support any form of recreational activities nor has any historic significance. The meadow is neither a village green, recreation ground, or common land.

As owner of Hill Farm I would like to request that the proposal to designate this meadow to a Local Green Space by Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group be withdrawn for the reasons I have outlined above.

Would you kindly acknowledge receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

REPRESENTATION 9: ESSEX BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION (EBA)

Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan Submission Consultation (Regulation 16) – EBA Response

EBA previously submitted comments in October 2021 as part of the Draft Plan Consultation process. We would like to reiterate the following points as part of the Reg 16 Consultation Process.

Page 60 – Public Rights of Way: we note the extensive network of PROWs and that they are widely used. Proposed Policy ASH14 states that *‘enhancements or extensions to the network, for example through improving accessibility or connectivity, will be supported...’* This we fully support; however, we would prefer to see an aspiration in the Plan to promote better accessibility to the network for ALL users, including equestrians. Whilst there is a good network of bridleways already, with the increase in traffic and rat running through the lanes (as previously mentioned within the Plan) it would make sense to aim to upgrade existing footpaths to bridleway status where practical (and with landowner consent). It is important to note that a bridleway allows use by both equestrians and cyclists as cyclists are not allowed on footpaths and upgrading them will benefit all vulnerable road users - which should be the aim in this Plan.

Page 62 Highways, Transport and Connectivity: we note in paragraph 11.19 that off-road cycle routes were cited as being important to residents, with the bulk of the use of these likely to be for either recreation or fitness. If this is progressed, we ask that any new off-road route is created as a bridleway so that equestrians are not left out of the scheme; after all the lanes are becoming more trafficked and dangerous – as already mentioned in the Plan – and ALL vulnerable road users should be catered for rather than just singling out cyclists for such benefits.

P63 Tourism: we note in paragraph 12.5 acknowledgement of the extensive network of footpaths and bridleways across the Parish and the extent to which they encourage an increasing number of walkers/riders/tourists into the Parish. It is clear therefore that the existence of Bridleways has a social and economic benefit upon the Parish and therefore the maintenance and development of the existing Bridleway network within the Plan should be an important objective. We would request that the neighbourhood plan includes a provision for all future s106 Agreements to set aside funds for maintenance of rights of way, especially since more houses inevitably means increased usage and rights of way clearly make a very important contribution to Ashdon’s charm and character.


28.04.22