

Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum

Published by Ashtead Community Vision

Web: www.ashteadcommunityvision.org.uk

Email: ashteadcommunityvision@gmail.com

600 RESPOND TO GREEN BELT SURVEY – MORE NEEDED

Over 600 Ashtead residents took part in the Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum's Green Belt Boundary Review Survey.

The on-line Survey was designed to get Ashtead's resident views on the use of Green Belt for future development – primarily housing.

Though more than 600 took part in the survey the Forum's working group is now focusing its efforts to get the views of younger members of the Ashtead community given a more representative sample of this sector of the community is needed to provide MVDC with a more balanced picture of views across the local community.

So while the on-line survey is now closed the working group is encouraging those who have not taken part to do so by emailing their views to the above email address or to speak to the ACV at the Ashtead Village Day where members will be with their clipboards canvassing younger families.

Key findings from the survey show:

- Nearly 67% "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that there should be no building in the Green Belt.
- Around 89% "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that development should be mainly within existing boundaries.
- 80% "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that existing green belt boundaries should be adjusted to accommodate most development.
- While nearly 67% "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that the Green Belt should definitely be adjusted to allow development, "as it is important to protect Ashtead's houses and street scenes".

So as far as the survey is concerned it's clear that on balance those residents who responded to the survey do not favour building on the Green Belt land but feel there could be some development - mainly within existing boundaries.

Survey highlights residents' worst fears for green belt development

The Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum's Green Belt Boundary review also highlighted residents' concerns about those parts of the green belt which they saw as being the most sensitive to the three planning criteria of 'merging', 'encroachment' and 'setting & character'.

The most sensitive area which residents believe is susceptible to all three is Ashtead Common to the north of the village. However, when it comes to individual criteria then different areas are highlighted. For example, Ashtead Common and the area between lower Ashtead and the M25 were seen as the most important part of the Green Belt for stopping 'merging' with Leatherhead.

When it came to preserving the 'setting and character' of Ashtead then the area that was regarded as most important was Ashtead



M25's Green Belt - least attractive option

Common closely followed by Ashtead Park. Those areas which most assisted in safeguarding the open countryside from Encroachment was, once again, Ashtead Common, closely followed by the open countryside to the south of the village roughly between Stag Leys and Farm Lane.



VILLAGE DAY

If you are a younger Ashtead resident and are visiting the Village Day on Saturday 8th June, then please talk to ACV representatives who will be keen to hear your views concerning future development in the area.

FORUM SUB GROUPS

Did you know that the Forum's working group is divided into four sub groups? Their names, email contact details and those dealing with your enquires are below:-

Environment, Transport & Infrastructure sub group:

ETI@ashteadcommunityvision.org.uk

- Di Stirling
- Mary Cooper

Housing sub group

housing@ashteadcommunityvision.org.uk

- Andy Ellis
- David Harper

Promotion & Survey

PS@ashteadcommunityvision.org.uk

- Caroline Cardew-Smith
- John Morgan
- David Harper

Business & Economy

BE@ashteadcommunityvision.org.uk

- Tony Tuley
- Jackie Quinn

DID YOU KNOW?

The Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum will be given a remit to provide a locally approved view of future land use planning, which will be adopted by the local council only after a referendum of local residents.

NEXT FORUM MEETING?

Saturday 10th August 2013 at the Ralli Room, Peace Memorial Hall.

Sign up to get your regular newsletter here:-
www.ashteadcommunityvision.org.uk

Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum - Designation

Consultation on formal designation for the proposed Ashtead Neighbourhood Area and Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum is underway. Residents are being invited to comment by MVDC by Wednesday 19th June 2013. Further details are available on the Mole Valley District Council website at www.molevalley.gov.uk. Using the search tool at the top of the page type in 'ACV' and follow the links to view the consultation information. Alternatively, email planning.policy@molevalley.gov.uk or call 01306 879144.

ASHTEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM - WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?

A simple guide to the formation of Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum and some background as to why it was formed...

The big picture:

In 2011 - Government introduced the Localism Act

- It gives local communities around the UK the opportunity to influence the future of the places where they live by establishing 'Neighbourhood Forums
- Forums have the right to draw up a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- Ashtead residents formed Ashtead Community Vision (ACV) with a view to setting up a Forum of local residents

In 2012 the Government introduced the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) because:

- It felt that sometimes planning decisions were taking too long
- It felt planning prevented people from building new homes, creating new places and bringing disused or neglected land and building back into productive use.
- It wanted to stop planning rules or "poorly maintained" planning processes to not unnecessarily prevent or delay development.

Housing:

- NPPF aimed to achieve sustainable development, ensuring "better lives for future generations".
- And the Government made it clear that every plan and decision had to have a presumption in favour of sustainable development:
 - Particularly in favour of building on "previously developed land".
 - Interestingly, this excluded gardens, allotments, and parks.

Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) – its role in planning

Even before the current Government introduced NPPF previous governments had set out the UK's priorities for building new homes "above currently planned rates to meet increases in population, smaller households and increased prosperity."

MVDC had to make sure there was enough land. Its policies earmarked:

- 3,760 new homes to be built between 2006 and 2026
- of which 1,660 have already been built
- and a further 700 have been granted planning permission.
- This leaves a gap of 1,400 new homes which have to be built somewhere in the Mole Valley district.
- But where Neighbourhood Forums exist, then they can have their say.

The most controversial aspect of the whole process is where those 1,400 new homes should go?

- MVDC expects that some 500 new homes will be created in existing built up areas
- So space is needed for 900 more homes.
- However, the question remains as land is in short supply 'where should they go'?
- And so attention turns to the Green Belt.

As a result, MVDC initiated a Green Belt Boundary Review to see whether there is any scope for development in the district. However, under the Localism Act Ashtead MVDC has to seek the views of the local Neighbourhood Forums which have been launched in Bookham and more recently, Ashtead.



The Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum

The Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum has 50 volunteer members volunteer from across the community. It is responsible for agreeing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for consultation with the community and submission to the Council for independent examination.

The Forum meets four times per year – the first meeting was held February 2013

The Forum oversees and gives directions to a "working group" in order to create the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Having encouraged the setting up of a Neighbourhood Forum in the first place, the Forum members asked Ashtead Community Vision (ACV) to become its working group. ACV consists of a number of individuals, including some of who had the foresight last year to set out to stimulate local interest in the Localism Act and who went on to launch Ashtead Community Vision.

ACV now consists of around 20 members, all of who are members of the Forum.

The working group then established four sub groups whose contact details can be seen on the front page of this newsletter.

Is there an alternative to having a Neighbourhood Forum for Ashtead?

Ashtead doesn't have to have a Forum – Leatherhead doesn't have one – Bookham does. However, it's generally felt that if there's pressure on Green Belt for development then the Forum is a more direct way of capturing local opinion and that, of course, is what the Localism act was meant to encourage. If Ashtead had decided not to have a Forum, or if the Forum is not in due course accepted by MVDC, then the job of saying where development goes falls to MVDC and councillors from all over the district. It will then be down to them to decide what can and cannot be built in Ashtead - a prospect which has driven many to join the Ashtead Forum which was formed earlier this year.

From a developers' perspective if no Neighbourhood Development Plan is forthcoming from residents, then they will apply to the council for planning permission and if turned down, will be at liberty to appeal to the central government appeals process. On the other hand, with a Local Neighbourhood Development Plan in place, then developers will know from outset the planning preferences of the local community.

First drop in Session for local residents pulls in the crowds



Over 200 people visited the APMH on Saturday 27th April for the Forum's first major public event. We took over both the Ralli and Marshall rooms for the displays, and served much needed refreshments as there was a lot to take in. Many people were worried about the green belt and possible development but looking at the maps and displays and information there was an appreciation that Ashtead did need more housing and there is very little brownfield or other sites available.

