

## Ashtead Neighbourhood Development Plan

### A History of Community Engagement – Timeline: Summer 2012 to March 2016

<http://ashteadcommunityvision.org.uk/news-and-events/press-publicity/>

#### 2012

##### Summer 2012:

Ashtead Community Vision (ACV) was founded with the aim of recruiting a Neighbourhood Development Forum (Forum) and contact made with Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) Planning Department. Recruitment campaign started which included letters and articles in local newspapers and magazines, making contact with major businesses and addressing local organisations. Website established and some funding raised.

##### 4 October 2012

Leatherhead Advertiser published letter from Andy Ellis who has set up ACV and encourages the Ashtead community to set up a Forum [1]

##### 8 October 2012

AE attended Ashtead Residents' Association (ARA) Autumn Meeting held at Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall (APMH) so as to publicise Neighbourhood Planning and the role of ACV/Forum. Poster [2] and leaflet produced.

##### 1 November 2012

Leatherhead Advertiser published article focusing on Andy Elis and ACV – encouraging local community to set up a Forum [3]

##### 3 November 2012

St Michael's Church newsletter covered the forthcoming public meeting to form a Forum. [4]

Email to St Peter's Catholic Primary School parents publicising the meeting [5]

Leaflet prepared for public meeting [6]

##### 8 November 2012:

AE attended Transition Ashtead's monthly meeting at APMH to promote and recruit for the Forum

##### 27 November 2012

Letter to ExxonMobil seeking support for the work of the Forum [7]

December ACV members attended 3 school fairs and Ashtead Christmas Fair in the Street so as to publicise the Forum

#### 2013

##### January 2013

Preparation for public meeting: posters, a Newsletter was delivered to every address in Ashtead and media relations activity. [8] [9] [10] [11]

Coverage in The Ashtead & Leatherhead Local (The Local) magazine – What will Ashtead Look Like in 20 years? And also in the Challenger newsletter {Art2}

**10 January 2013:**

Coverage in Leatherhead Advertiser: carried an article about the reason for a public meeting in Ashtead to publicise the issues surrounding local planning.

**12 January 2013**

Notice in St Michael's Parish newsletter of a Drop-In Meeting at APMH organised by the Forum, to discuss the Localism Act.

**15 January 2013**

Public meeting at APMH. This was publicised through posters, a Newsletter which was delivered to every address in Ashtead, and newspaper articles.

**January 2013**

Coverage in Surrey Advertiser concerning the setting up of the Forum {Art4}

**24 January 2013**

Coverage in Leatherhead Advertiser concerning the meeting at APMH. The meeting was held to inform residents about the work to be done. {Art3}

**9 February 2013:**

ASHTEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT FORUM ESTABLISHED - 48 members volunteered from across the community:

- Responsible for agreeing the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for consultation with the community and submission to the MVDC for independent examination
- Oversees and gives direction to a "working group" in order to create an NDP. The working group formed around the original 'core' ACV volunteers.
- Meets four times per year – first meeting held February 2013
- Constitution adopted

**NOTES on activities in 2013**

*As a first step, the Forum/ACV conducted a Housing and Green Belt survey of Ashtead residents to learn their views on housing, their reasons for choosing to live in Ashtead and their opinions on how and whether the areas of Ashtead's Green Belt met the criteria of Merging, Encroachment and Setting & Character. ACV's initial work was focused on housing but later in the year MVDC was keen to engage the Forum in conducting the full Green Belt Boundary Review (GBBR) as its role was seen to be central to the review of the Green Belt. The consultation exercise and the effort that went into it reflected this position*

**14 February 2013**

Ashtead independent magazine: coverage of the new Forum group.

**14 February 2013**

Leatherhead Advertiser posted an article about the first meeting of the Forum {Art5}

Also published articles on Effingham NDP and comments from Andy Ellis on the Housing and Green Belt survey. {Art6}

**March 2013**

Online Housing and Green Belt survey went live - other survey activity was agreed and implemented over the following four months.

**Easter 2013 (31 March)**

St. George's Church magazine: published outline of the objectives of the Forum and the work of its working group ACV.

**Easter 2013 (31 March)**

ARA magazine: article concerning the setting up of the Forum.

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### **April 2013**

The Forum applied to MVDC to be “designated”. Documents submitted to MVDC. [12] [13] [14] [15] [16]. These included details of the consultation exercise so far undertaken by ACV [17] [18] [18b]. The Forum’s constitution [19] and the physical boundaries of Ashted [20].

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### **27 April 2013:**

THE FORUM HOLDS DROP IN MEETING AT APMH.

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### **May-June 2013**

MVDC undertook a public consultation on the Forum and its proposed members and in July the council formally designated the Forum

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### **1 May 2013**

Leatherhead Advertiser carried an article calling for local residents to get involved through the survey, newsletters and ACV itself.

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### **8 May to 19 June 2013:**

Consultation on setting up of the Forum. [23<sup>rd</sup> of May: Leatherhead Advertiser: news that ACV applies for Forum designation.]

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### **29 May 2013**

Leatherhead Advertiser carried an article about the ACV submission to MVDC for formal recognition as the organisation collating views on planning policy.

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### **Summer 2013**

SUMMER NEWSLETTER: 609 people responded to the Housing and Green Belt survey. (The story has a breakdown of the respondents in a local article).

Newsletter distributed to all homes in Ashted.

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### **April/May 2013**

Housing & Green Belt survey initial analysis. ACV took the view that while the results were impressive it was noted that the age profile was skewed towards older residents (despite being an on-line survey). ACV therefore decided to undertake additional work by targeting younger residents at Ashted Village Day on 8<sup>th</sup> June with questions on dwelling type preferences & views on the Green Belt.

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### **8 June 2013;**

ASHTED VILLAGE DAY: CONSULTATION SURVEY Housing & GBBR – face-to-face / paper based survey targeted at the 18-34 age group on housing and the Green Belt held at Village Day.

Summer Newsletter also distributed at Village Day.

June 2013

Housing survey of Ashted’s Estate Agents to obtain information on the dwelling types being sought by clients and their reason/s for living in/moving to Ashted.

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### **13 June 2013**

Drop-in day at the APMH. Laptops provided to encourage completion of the Housing and Green Belt survey.

July 30 check that this is in The Local article about Green Belt.

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### **July 2013**

Results of the Housing and Green Belt survey collated and a presentation of the results produced for consideration by the Forum

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31 July 2013

Forum formally designated by MVDC

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### **July/August**

SURVEY of Ashted Hospital workers to determine their housing preferences

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**10 August 2013**

FORUM MEETING: (JM chaired it). The Forum was not quorate given the summer holidays, however, initial discussions ensued about the Housing and Green Belt survey results. No formal decisions made.

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**22 August**

Leatherhead Advertiser. A report called for young people to join the Forum as their low representation was seen as an issue by ACV.

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**August 2013:**

The Local article. Young families priced out of Ashtead.

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**September 2013**

The Local article: covered the designation of the Forum by MVDC. Described the process for assessing the Green Belt around Ashtead. It also announced that the Forum had received a £5000 grant from the Government.

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**Autumn 2013**

ARA publication Ashtead Village News: Newsletter reported that 700 people responded to the Housing and Green Belt survey. It also reported that ACV undertook a survey of younger residents at Ashtead Village Day.

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**October 2013:**

The Local: talked about the population pressures driving the need for ever more housing.

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**NOTES on activities: November 2013**

*MVDC had decided to write its HTSP and asked the Forum to contribute given that site assessments could potentially be included in the Ashtead NDP. The Forum agreed to undertake site assessment work of those sites that had been identified by MVDC and any further ones that came forward for assessment as part of the HTSP work. ACV started undertaking the Site Assessment work at the end of 2013. AVC met MVDC on 29<sup>th</sup> November to discuss the Housing Needs Report. Also, Government clarified the position of Neighbourhood Development Forums in the context of changes to Green Belt boundaries. Hitherto, DCLG had advised MVDC that a GBBR could be incorporated in an NDP. However, the NPPF stated that Green Belt boundaries could only be changed as part of a Local Plan. Following extensive correspondence between MVDC and DCLG it was resolved that responsibility for the GBBR would revert to MVDC, as part of the HTSP. However, the Forum would carry out the analysis and public consultation on a GBBR for the Ashtead Neighbourhood Area and submit the results to MVDC for consideration. . Work on the Site Assessments followed the GBBR and was completed by April 2014 for inclusion in MVDC's Housing and Traveller Sites Plan (HTSP*

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**November 2013**

FORUM MEETING:

- GBBR Report discussed, amended and then approved at the Forum meeting
  - GBBR report published online and an online feedback questionnaire commenced
  - Forum decided to oppose Barnett Wood allotments being moved from Leatherhead to Ashtead in order to accommodate development in Leatherhead.
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**November 2013:**

The Local: Focus on the consultation exercise - described the Bronze Age features of Ashtead identified during the assessment of the Green Belt.

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**28 November 2013**

Leatherhead Advertiser: announced Green Belt planning delay. It said that following Government clarification MVDC remained the primary authority for deciding changes to the Green Belt rather than the Neighbourhood Development Forums.

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## **5 December 2013**

The Epsom Guardian reported that the change by Government of its policy towards allowing NDPs to change Green Belts was being reversed in favour of that power being retained by the local district planning authority ie MVDC.

## **December 2013**

WINTER NEWSLETTER: Delivered to all homes in Ashtead.

- Reported on the work that the Forum had undertaken for the GBBR.
- It also reported about the U-turn by government concerning who has the primary say over Green Belt policy at local level.
- The Newsletter also discussed the issue of the redevelopment of allotments that are situated within the Green Belt up against the M25 motorway.
- The Newsletter reported that ACV and the Forum were against the development of housing in that area because it contravened the sanctity of the Green Belt.

## **December 2013**

The Local reported the November Forum meeting and focused on opposition to allotments being relocated from Leatherhead to Ashtead in order to facilitate development in Leatherhead.

## **2014**

### **January 2014**

Poster published concerning the 18<sup>th</sup> January open morning at the APMH where the focus was on the GBBR. (By this time the Forum was aware that it was conducting the boundary review for MVDC to take forward rather than taking a decision-making role.)

### **14 January 2014:**

The Local reported that ACV was assessing up to 10 sites that had been put forward by developers to MVDC, to assess their development potential and possible inclusion in MVDC's HTSP. This was the first public mention of ACV's involvement in the HTSP.

### **18 January 2014**

OPEN MORNING FOR RESIDENTS AT APMH – Public Consultation on the GBBR.

440 respondents to the questionnaire provided 1500 comments on the GBBR.

The Forum concluded that boundary changes could be considered to 2 of the 10 Areas of Green Belt in Ashtead

Opportunity for community to provide further feedback

### **23 January 2014:**

Epsom Guardian reported that a campaign to oppose redevelopment on the Green Belt had been launched. It reported that the Ashtead Forum had suggested changes to the Green Belt to enable housing development to take place.

### **February 2014**

FORUM MEETING: discussed the GBBR, the results of the Public Consultation and proposed final changes to the GBBR as a result of comments made.

### **13 February 2014**

GBBR submitted to MVDC along with all comments received from the public during the consultation.

### **24 February to 6 April 2014**

The Forum ran a consultation on the assessment of ten sites in Ashtead. Each of the sites had been put forward by their respective owners to MVDC for consideration as potential sites for housing development.

### **February 2014**

The Local: the article asked where will Ashtead's new housing go? It discussed the targets that had been established by MVDC in its Local Plan.

**27 February 2014**

Leatherhead Advertiser: reported that ACV had identified 10 sites for potential development from those that have been put forward by local developers.

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**March 2014**

The Local article: reported that there had been 1,500 replies to the GBBR consultation. It said that this had been achieved across two surveys and two supplementary surveys undertaken by ACV. The report mentioned the support the Forum had received from ARA and SAVE. The report also mentioned that the Forum's views on the GBBR had gone to MVDC.

The article also raises the issue of the HTSP and the Forum's role in it.

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**Spring 2014:**

SPRING NEWSLETTER: The Newsletter reported on the land assessment work being undertaken by ACV and the Forum. It also mentioned that the Forum's views on the GBBR had gone to MVDC.

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**Spring 2014:**

ARA NEWSLETTER: also mentioned the work of the Forum.

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**13<sup>th</sup> March:**

Epsom Guardian news report: newspaper reported about the land assessments work that had been undertaken in Ashted by ACV on behalf of the Forum.

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**29 March 2014:**

OPEN MORNING FOR RESIDENTS AT APMH

Focus on the 10 sites being assessed by ACV. Feedback sought through online and paper questionnaire.

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**April 2014:**

The Local reported about the consultation exercise for the site assessments that was being undertaken by ACV.

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**May 2014:**

The Local article: suggested that thousand visitors had been to the ACV website: it reports that there been 150 submissions and 500 comments concerning the site assessments and regarding particular individual sites. It noted the opposition to developing Green Belt land particularly in the Farm Lane area.

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**17 May 2014**

Deadline for submitting work on the site assessments.

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**19 May 2014**

FORUM MEETING

The Forum considered the consultation exercise on the assessment of ten sites in Ashted. The Forum reviewed and agreed the assessments for submission, together with all comments received, to MVDC. A number of changes requested by the Forum were incorporated.

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**30 May 2014**

Site assessment documentation sent by the Forum to MVDC.

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**NOTES on activities: June 2014**

*Having submitted reports on both the GBBR and Site Assessments as part of MVDC's HTSP the Forum and ACV started to turn its attention to the development of its NDP almost two years after Andy Ellis and other colleagues from ACV proposed that Ashted should engage in the NDP process. The work began in the knowledge that MVDC had not yet assessed the related work that it had encouraged the Forum to undertake.*

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**June 2014:**

The Local article: time to start the NDP. It was at this point that the ACV began to focus on the development of the NDP being no longer covered by work on the GBBR or on site assessments for the HTSP.

**Summer NEWSLETTER:**

The work begins. The Newsletter aimed to kickstart the NDP process the number of articles about the nature of NDPs and the role of the local community in developing them.

**July 2014:**

The Local article: The Local reported delays at MVDC concerning the HTSP which had run into difficulties. The article also mentioned that ACV had developed a vision for Ashtead.

**August 2014:**

FORUM MEETING: Adopted the 'vision'

**August: 2014:**

The Local reported about work that ACV had done on the local environment and in particular on local historic and ancient sites of interest.

**September 2014**

The Local: the article focused heavily on the Vision for Ashtead.

**October 2014**

The Local: the article focused on Ashtead's own domesday book and was an attempt to highlight the work that was being undertaken by the subgroups of ACV who were gathering data on the village.

**November 2014**

The Local: planning and the art of the possible highlighted what a neighbourhood development plan could cover and what it could not cover in planning terms.

**NOTES on activities: December 2014**

***On 9 December 2014, MVDC terminated preparation of the HTSP, along with the GBBR which formed part of that Plan. MVDC did not publish its conclusions on the work carried out by the Forum or on the development potential of the sites covered by the Site Assessments but suggested that the work would make a contribution to a new Local Plan being developed by MVDC. The decision to develop a new Local Plan was in response to failure of a number of other Local Plans based on Regional Spatial Strategy figures and statements from Government indicating that Green Belt constraints would continue to outweigh other considerations relating to housing land supply.***

**December 2014**

The Local: keep calm and carry on – focused on the MVDC decision to scrap the HTSP.

**2015****January -- Winter NEWSLETTER:**

The Newsletter highlighted that the NDP would be drafted during 2015. Newsletter also covered the outcome of the social media activity that ACV had undertaken up until that point. In particular it covered the success or otherwise of social media versus more traditional online media as well as traditional print media. The Newsletter also covered the fact that the HTSP had been scrapped by MVDC. And that MVDC would go ahead with a new Local Plan.

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### **January – June 2015**

#### **NDP - CONSULTATION: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH ORGANISATIONS LAUNCHED**

Ashtead-based organizations, interest and activity groups, schools, churches, political groups, charities, clubs and businesses were contacted and invited to participate in providing thoughts and ideas in respect of the preparation of Ashtead's NDP.

In broad terms, the following were contacted:

- 11 community groups
- 8 charities
- 4 churches
- 23 interest/activity groups
- 8 sports clubs/groups
- 8 schools
- 4 nurseries/playgroups
- 7 children's groups/organizations
- 3 local environment/open spaces organizations
- 9 businesses/representative groups
- 6 political groups/organizations

Three questions were asked:

- What do you most appreciate about Ashtead?
- What one thing would you like to see improved within Ashtead?
- What one facility or development would you like to see in Ashtead in the future?

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### **January 2015**

The Local: this article focused on a new consultation exercise that was being undertaken by ACV. The exercise aimed to get directly in touch by telephone and/or email with all local sporting and other social groups within Ashtead. The ideals forced them how they saw the future of Ashtead and whether they would like to make some sort contribution to the development of the NDP.

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### **January 2015**

The Local: the article also focused on the consultation exercise undertaken by two ACV members who are calling local groups and societies and sports providers asking them about the future of Ashtead and their contribution towards the NDP.

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### **8 January 2015**

Leatherhead Advertiser article??

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Story covered the consultation exercise being undertaken with local groups. The article promoted feedback mechanism that ACV had put in place for those seeking to help their support .

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**February 2015**

The Local: the article highlighted the fact that traditional online communication i.e. websites and email is actually outperforming social media intensive feedback from Ashtead residents.

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**March 2015**

The Local: The Local article focused on the publication of the housing sub-group's plans and what they saw as the issues for the future development in Ashtead. It also highlighted the so-called crises facing Ashtead residents.

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**April 2015**

The Local: a further report on the housing subcommittee report headlined no room for complacency. The article also covered spike in visits to the ACV website.

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**May 2015**

The Local: no room for you in Ashtead? The article questioned and sought feedback from local groups as to whether they could find enough meeting space for their activities within the existing facilities within Ashtead. The article also covered the findings of ACV's consultation exercise with local groups.

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**June 2015**

The Local changed business premises sports facilities to be enlarged. This article focused on the business sub-committee report.

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**July 2015**

The Local: 'order order keep the housing mix'. This was a report on the desire of the Forum to ensure that the mix of housing within Ashtead was retained into the future. Report also on the meeting of the most recent Forum.

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## **Spring NEWSLETTER 2015**

Spring Newsletter focused on a number of issues including shortage of sports facilities in Ashtead highlighting the fact that the local football club had to travel elsewhere to train because there was not enough space for them within Ashtead. The Newsletter also reported on the economy report from its subcommittee here and discussed care facilities. The Newsletter also covered the publication of the Transport sub-group.

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### **August**

The Local: Focus on the Government's statements on the issue of Brownfield sites and 'previously developed land'. Article discussed the lack of development opportunities in Ashtead and what was likely to be included in the NDP.

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### **September**

The Local: Article focused on MVDC's inability to get the housing mix right given that there had been an inexorable rise in the percentage of large houses being built at the expense of smaller homes. The article also highlighted the fact that home extensions were reducing the availability of smaller homes for young starter families and the elderly. The article highlighted the disagreements among the forum regarding what was described as a proscriptive approach trying to control the size of homes being built in future. The article highlighted a lively debate and laid out two opposing views—one which described a more planned approach to the nature of future housing stock and one which was described as being more laissez-faire in its approach.

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### **October**

The Local: the article highlighted a daily Telegraph article about 'assets community value'. In particular, the article was about the Anglers Rest public house in Bamford in the Peak District where the local community had bought their local pub. The article then went on to question whether there were assets community value in Ashtead and that ACV was looking at the issue with a view to its relevance for the NDP.

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### **November**

The Local: the community infrastructure levy (CIL) was the focus of the November local article. The article highlighted the role of the CIL and its introduction into the discussions regarding the NDP. The article, once again, encouraged residents to engage in the NDP process essentially suggesting that the community could get financial assistance should work on the CIL be undertaken and included into the NDP process.

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### **December**

The Local: The December edition of the Local highlighted the fact that the Ashtead neighbourhood development forum have now received the first draft of the NDP as appropriate to the public engagement exercise which subsequently began in January 2016. The article was an opportunity to remind residents about the NDP process and it highlighted the 'calendar of events' from that point through to a Referendum which it predicted, could be held in May 2017.

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## **WINTER NEWSLETTER 2016**

The Winter newsletter aimed to highlight the policies contained within the draft NDP so it was an opportunity, not only to highlight the start of the public consultation exercise, but also to mention that on 6 February residents were invited to attend an open morning at the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall where they could ask questions about the Forum's proposals. The second front page article in the newsletter focused on the one issue that appeared to exercise residents more than any other and that was the proposals to seek a balanced mix of new housing. So the second article went into some detail about this draft policy given it was the one issue that seemed to stimulate most debate amongst the forum members as well as residents.

Other articles covered the economic side of the NDP as well as environmental matters, primary care, foot paths and community facilities. The overriding objective, therefore, was to ensure that the newsletter covered all of the policies in the draft NDP.

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With the publication of the draft NDP, the newsletter and the local article 4 February, the communications issued by ACV covered those residents who were extremely interested in the NDP initiative, those who had some interest - and were happy to read a 1,500 word newsletter put through their door - and those who had a passing interest but who could read The Local article as a 'snapshot' of what the Ashtead neighbourhood development forum was planning.

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### **January**

The Local: the January article is particularly important because it attempted to highlight all the policies contained in the draft NDP. It was the first opportunity, to present to the local community the actual detail contained within the draft NDP albeit in 500 words. In effect then, the local article was a shorter version of the NDP story than the newsletter which went into more detail.

Posters: number of posters were put up around the village highlighting the open morning at the APMH on 6 February. This included public areas such as local library.

Press Release: Press articles appeared in local papers concerning the public consultation exercise **(INSERT DETAILS HERE)**

### **Public consultation starts 18<sup>TH</sup> January.**

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### **February:**

The Local: the February article was headlined "Demolishing Suburbia". The eye-catching headline and the tone of the article was aimed at stimulating interest in the public consultation exercise which had just been launched. The article talked about "knocking down" properties, developers, loft conversions, extensions, and the fact that a person's property was probably one of the greatest assets. These mild 'shock tactics' were devised, simply to encourage local residents to engage in the consultation exercise (which ran from 18 January through to the end of February). Importantly, it also highlighted the fact that on 6<sup>th</sup> February the Ashtead Neighbourhood Development Forum was to hold an open morning at the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall so that those who did not wish to use the Internet to provide feedback on the report could come along and do so on paper. The article once again reiterated where on the Internet residents could respond to the draft NDP and, highlighted the fact that there would be 17 questions they were being asked to answer.

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### **March**

The Local: March article, which was published in February, gives an early feedback about the public consultation exercise. It said that around 60 people had filled in the online questionnaire and that around hundred had visited the APMH on 6 February. The article discussed how the Ashtead Neighbourhood development forum could measure success. It highlighted the difference between the green belt consultation exercise when around 600 Ashtead Street residents voiced their opposition to any suggestion of development on the green belt and the early response to the NDP which was considerably lower. While the article gave no clues to why response rates were lower for the end draft NDP it simply said that the two exercises were quite different. The article also pointed out that if any resident had missed the opportunity to comment then they should remember that a further consultation exercise would be launched in the relatively near future by mole Valley district Council.

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### **NOTES ON ACTIVITIES:**

***All residents had access to the full NDP via the Internet, whose address every publication over the preceding two years had highlighted. Furthermore, every resident in the village would have received the newsletters that were distributed by volunteers from the Ashtead Neighbourhood Development Forum directly to their homes. And, as this Timeline indicates, every home in the Ashtead area also received each month, a copy of The Local magazine which sought to maintain a level of interest in the NDP process culminating in articles which focused on the draft NDP itself and the consultation exercise which would allow residents to have their say on what the Ashtead neighbourhood development forum was proposing.***

**ENDS**