

Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum c/o
Mole Valley District Council
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Dorking
Surrey RH4 1SJ

Our ref: SL/2011/108850/OR-09/IS1

Your ref: Email

Date: 29 February 2016

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Ashtead's Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)-Pre-Submission Consultation

Thank you for consulting the Environment Agency on the above. We are pleased to note that the Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan covers many issues relevant to the local community. The environment section appears to concentrate on more formal recreation areas and gardens, with little mention of the semi-natural open spaces which are a valuable asset to the community. It would therefore be good to see such areas expanded upon, such as Ashtead Common which is designated as a National Nature Reserve as well as SSSI and is only mentioned on section 3.4. We would also like to see some reference to the Rye Brook included in the environment section. The extent of the Rye Brook on the northern edge of the built up area of Ashtead is subject to flooding and there are areas within flood zones 2 and 3.

We have reviewed the Draft SEA Screening Report and agree with the conclusion of the council that there are no significant environmental effects or only local effects which can be mitigated and therefore no need to carry out full Strategic Environmental Assessment.

For other most up to date and accurate environmental evidence we recommend using our Data Share service where you can access our environmental datasets and also datasets from Natural England, Forestry Commission and English Heritage.
<http://www.geostore.com/environment-agency/>

We have attached more detailed comments below for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss this further.

Yours faithfully,

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Flood Risk

We would like to see the Rye Brook which flows through Ashted Common included in the environment section. This is a historically straightened watercourse that has often been neglected and forgotten in places. The Draft SEA Screening Report acknowledges that the extent of the Rye Brook on the northern edge of the built up area of Ashted is subject to flooding and there are areas within flood zones 2 and 3.

Rye Brook has undergone some river restoration in recent years by local volunteers who value the brook and the surrounding land. An inclusion of the brook in the plan would therefore raise its profile and help to attract further funding through planning, to continue its restoration. Whilst the risk to property flooding in Ashted from the Rye Brook is low, there are opportunities to improve the river environment.

The Planning Practice Guidance *Neighbourhood Planning Paragraph: 061 Reference ID: 7-061-20140306* points out that the overall approach to flood risk management in [paragraph 100 of the National Planning Policy Framework](#) applies to [neighbourhood planning](#). In summary, the qualifying bodies involved in neighbourhood planning should:

- seek to ensure neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development/community right to build orders are informed by an appropriate assessment of flood risk;
- ensure policies steer development to areas of lower flood risk as far as possible;
- ensure that any development in an area at risk of flooding [would be safe](#), for its [lifetime](#) taking account of [climate change impacts](#);
- be able to demonstrate how flood risk to and from the plan area/ development site(s) will be managed, so that flood risk will not be increased overall, and that opportunities to reduce [flood risk](#), for example, through the use of sustainable drainage systems, are included in the plan/order

The Mole Valley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) should be the primary source of flood risk information in considering whether particular neighbourhood planning areas may be appropriate for development. As pointed out in the National Planning Policy Practice Guidance paragraph: 064 Reference ID: 7-064-20140306, where the neighbourhood planning area is in Flood Zone 2 or 3, or is in an area with critical drainage problems, advice on the scope of the flood risk assessment required should be sought from the Environment Agency. Where the area may be subject to other sources of flooding, it may be helpful to consult other bodies involved in flood risk management, as appropriate.

In all cases where new development is proposed, the sequential approach to locating development in areas of lower flood risk should still be applied within a neighbourhood planning area. The National Planning Policy Practice Guidance stipulates that Neighbourhood Development/Community Right to Build Orders that propose new development that would be;

- contrary to the flood risk vulnerability and flood zone compatibility table (Table 3), or;

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•within areas at risk of flooding where sequential testing shows there to be places at lower flood risk which are suitable and reasonably available for the development proposed, should not be considered appropriate, having regard to the national policies on development and flood risk.

In accordance with PPG Paragraph: 064 Reference ID: 7-064-20140306 the general approach and requirements for [site-specific flood risk assessments](#) should be applied to developments in areas at risk of flooding to be permitted by Neighbourhood Development/Community Right to Build Orders. A site-specific flood risk assessment should support the draft Order. The [flood risk assessment checklist](#) may be helpful in this respect

Any works in, under, over or within 8m of the top of the bank of a Main River (Rye Brook) requires prior written consent from the Environment Agency under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991 and Land Drainage Byelaws. It should be noted that we are unlikely to grant consent for any works that prevent access to the river for both maintenance and improvement works.

Surface water flooding

Surrey County Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) responsible for local flood risk such as surface runoff, groundwater and from ordinary watercourses. We strongly recommend Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) consult the LLFA to provide comments in terms of local flood risk. This is particularly important in the light of the flooding experienced during 2013/2014. As pointed out in our representation to the Ashtead Site Assessments consultation, sites such as AS05 (Ashtead Park Garden Centre, Pleasure Pit Road) and AS14 (Land at The Pines, Farm Lane) are at risk from surface water flooding according to the updated Flood Maps for Surface Water published in 2013.

Proposals for surface water management associated with new developments must aim to not increase, and where practicable reduce the rate of runoff from the site as a result of the development in accordance with sustainable drainage principles, SFRA and any guidance provided by the LLFA. Developments should utilise sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and ensure that surface water run-off is managed as close to its source as possible in line with the following drainage hierarchy:

- 1 store rainwater for later use
- 2 use infiltration techniques such as soakaways
- 3 attenuate rainwater in ponds or open water features for gradual release
- 4 attenuate rainwater by storing in tanks or sealed water features for gradual release
- 5 discharge rainwater direct to a watercourse
- 6 discharge rainwater to a surface water sewer/drain
- 7 discharge rainwater to the combined sewer

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The government has strengthened planning policy on the provision of sustainable drainage for 'major' planning applications which was introduced on 6 April 2015. Decisions about the suitability of sustainable drainage provision are made by LLFA. To support the new consultation arrangements, DCLG has changed the Planning Practice Guidance. The main changes are to these pages:

[Why are sustainable drainage systems important?](#)

[How the local planning authority should involve the lead local flood authority when determining planning applications and what advice should be given about local flood risks](#)

[Water supply, wastewater and water quality considerations in plan-making](#)

Climate Change allowances

Environment Agency has updated the guidance on how climate change could affect flood risk to new development - '[Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances](#)' was published on gov.uk on 19th February 2016. It has replaced previous guidance [Climate Change Allowances for Planners](#).

- It has been finalised in the last few months following user testing with practitioners in 2015.
- It has been updated in line with best available scientific evidence to help ensure new housing and other developments remain safe and resilient to flooding, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- We will update the advice should new scientific evidence become available through future work, such as the National Resilience Review, the next Climate Change Risk Assessment and the next UK climate projections.

The changes

The update is based on new scientific evidence. The main changes are to the peak river flow allowances:

- They are provided for each river basin district rather than a single national allowance.
- A range of allowances are provided based on different probabilities for each epoch, rather than a single allowance for each epoch.
- The allowances for the upper end of the range are significantly higher than previous single national allowance.

There is also a small change to peak rainfall allowances. Rather than a single allowance, a range of allowances is provided. The allowance at the upper end of the range is slightly higher than the current single allowance. As previously, the allowances are provided at a national scale.

Using the updated allowances and guidance

The guidance will come into immediate effect. However, where local plans or development proposals and associated flood risk assessments are well advanced, we would wish to avoid where possible significantly slowing down completion or adding to costs. We will therefore,

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other than for particularly vulnerable locations or sensitive developments, continue to base our advice on the existing allowances in the following circumstances:

- Where a local plan has been submitted for examination
- Where development proposals are well advanced or where a valid planning application has already been submitted to the local planning authority.

Other Environment Agency advice on climate change allowances

We are also updating the publication 'Adapting to Climate Change: Advice to Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authorities'. This document is used in the design and appraisal of flood risk management schemes and sets out a process to ensure that an economically credible appraisal, taking account of the uncertainties associated with climate change, can be made to support Government investment.

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