

Introduction

- 18.1 Ashurst Wood is located in the north eastern corner of the District, approximately 1½ miles southeast of East Grinstead and a similar distance northwest of Forest Row. The village has a particularly attractive setting, being located on a ridge which provides extensive views to the north, south and east across undulating countryside. The whole of the village and the surrounding countryside lie within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The area between Ashurst Wood and East Grinstead is also identified as a strategic gap in the Structure Plan, the boundary of which is defined on the Proposals Map accompanying this Local Plan.
- 18.2 Much of the village dates from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some large houses on the edge of the village have been converted to other uses such as flats, private schools or institutional uses. The built-up area remains relatively compact although there is some lower density development around Cansiron Lane to the east and alongside the A22 Lewes Road which passes the edge of the village to the southwest.
- 18.3 Ashurst Wood is served by a range of local facilities including shops and pubs in Maypole Road and Hammerwood Road; a primary school; a church, parish room and a community centre; recreation grounds and provision for football and tennis and equipped children's playspace areas.

Policies and Proposals

Built-up Area Boundary

- 18.4 A built-up area boundary is defined for Ashurst Wood. This seeks to preserve the rural setting of the village and to protect the surrounding countryside, which lies within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and, on the west side, the Strategic Gap. The boundary of the built-up area excludes the areas to the south west of the A22 Lewes Road, the eastern end of Hammerwood Road and Cansiron Lane, and the northern part of Maypole Road.

Strategic Gap

- 18.5 The area between Ashurst Wood and East Grinstead is defined as a Strategic Gap. The boundary runs along the northern edge of the built-up area of the village.

Areas of Townscape Character

- 18.6 The Council has identified two Areas of Townscape Character in Ashurst Wood in accordance with policy B16 of the Built Environment Chapter in this Local Plan. The first is centred on the northern part of Maypole Road and extends from the crossroads at the heart of the village northwards to the District boundary. The second is a small area centred on the junction of Hammerwood, Maypole and Wall Hill Roads on the southern edge of the village.
- 18.7 The Council will pay particular attention to any proposals for development or redevelopment in these areas, having regard to their special townscape character. It will seek to ensure that this character is protected and where possible enhanced by any new development proposals. These areas are identified on the Proposals Map.

AW1

Areas of Townscape Character have been designated at:

- **Maypole Road (north); and**
- **Junction of Maypole Road (south)/Hammerwood Road/Wall Hill Road.**

Employment**Ivy Dene Lane**

18.8 The former Ivy Dene Laundry site is located at the end of Ivy Dene Lane to the north of the village and outside the built-up area boundary. The buildings have been converted to small business units and have been used for a variety of light and general industrial and commercial purposes. The current level of activity is low, a number of the units are vacant and the site and some of the buildings are in poor condition.

18.9 The Council considers that this site should continue to be used for business purposes. Although not fully used at present, the existing units could be reoccupied without requiring planning permission and the level of activity would increase accordingly. However, while the uses at this site make a contribution to the local economy this must be balanced against the constraints affecting the site when considering its future development potential. It lies outside the built up area of the village and within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Strategic Gap. Vehicle access is via a narrow track which itself leads from Ivy Dene Lane, a residential area. Therefore while the Council may consider favourably proposals for new commercial development such proposals must have particular regard to these factors, and the amenity of neighbouring residents must be safeguarded. Therefore, while it is acknowledged that development may benefit visual amenity by improving the appearance and character of the site, the Council will only favourably consider proposals where there will be no increase in floorspace on the site, and where it is satisfied that there will be no detrimental impact on the amenities of the surrounding area in general and on neighbouring residents in particular. In order to maintain the site's particular contribution to the economy, as well as discouraging the use of larger commercial vehicles, the Council will require any new development to be in the form of small units. It will also require the site to be suitably landscaped.

AW2 Land north of Ivy Dene Lane is allocated for business (B1) and general industrial (B2) purposes. Proposals for redevelopment of the site will be permitted only if they comply with the following requirements:

- (a) there is no increase in the existing gross floorspace on the site;**
- (b) development takes the form of low rise small business units ranging from 50-300sq m gross floorspace each;**
- (c) the proposals include a comprehensive scheme for the physical enhancement of the site, including landscaping; and**
- (d) the amenities of neighbouring residential properties are safeguarded.**

Community/Recreation Use

18.10 The recreation ground in the centre of Ashurst Wood currently accommodates senior and junior football. The Mid Sussex District Council Playing Pitch Strategy has

identified a need for additional playing pitches in the area. The Council will continue to investigate ways of meeting this local need.

Allotments

- 18.11 There is also a need to identify a suitable site within the village for the provision of allotments to replace those previously lost to development elsewhere. So far it has not been possible to identify such a site but the Council will continue to investigate suitable options for their provision.

Transport

- 18.12 The Council considers that the junction of Hammerwood Road (the main route into and out of Ashurst Wood from the west) and Lewes Road (the A22) is inadequate and potentially hazardous. It will press the Highway Authority to examine the feasibility of improving this junction, together with the junction of Park Lane and Lewes Road, with a view to enhancing road safety and easing traffic movement into and out of the village.

