

Keep New Ash **Green**

Do you want to see this ...



or this ...



The draft Local Plan for Sevenoaks District is nearly ready to go to the Government Inspector for its public examination. The final draft states the Council's intention to protect the Green Belt from development that is not suitable for the countryside. It agrees with Government policy that Green Belt land should only be considered for inappropriate development where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified. So, although many sites have been suggested by developers for house-building, only a very small number, and none of the large undeveloped sites close to Ash, New Ash Green or Hartley, have been included in the draft Plan – there were no proven 'exceptional circumstances'.

This will not prevent developers arguing their case directly with the Inspector and we can expect them to do so – there is too much at stake. Already we know that the Berkeley Group has proposed a huge extension to New Ash Green on **Ash Place Farm** between New Ash Green and Ash. They want to build around 580 houses – that's like another seven New Ash Green neighbourhoods – and they justify it by offering to build a new primary school, a community centre and to extend the burial ground next to Ash Church.

This new proposal will not be in the draft Local Plan – there is no evidence of existing need for the suggested 'exceptional circumstances' to support it. But Sevenoaks Council must prove that case to the Inspector if the Berkeley Group ask for their suggested development to be added to the Local Plan. The Council is therefore asking, separately from the Local Plan, for views on the Ash Place Farm proposals.

So we need to do two things before 3rd February 2019:

Respond to the final consultation on the submission draft of the Sevenoaks Local Plan to support the Council's commitment to protect the Green Belt in line with Government policy – even though it means there will be less available land within the District than would be required to meet the need for housing calculated by the Government.

Comment on the Berkeley Group proposals for Ash Place Farm to say why the claimed 'exceptional circumstances' do not justify the loss of Green Belt land around New Ash Green.

Use your own words to say what you think, but the Village Association suggests you include some or all of the following points as well as your own thoughts.

- The land is Green Belt, an attractive, open countryside location in productive agricultural use
- The draft Local Plan says it is a strongly performing part of the Green Belt
- This area protects the special landscape character of the village of Ash and its countryside
- We must preserve the setting of Ash church and manor house
- This part of the Green Belt ensures that Ash village remains a separate community from New Ash Green
- The existing Green Belt boundary safeguards the countryside from encroachment
- New Ash Green's edge is defined by a thick tree belt, partly ancient woodland
- Protect the concept of New Ash Green as a sustainable, self-contained 'village in the countryside' as envisaged by its architect, Eric Lyons
- Preserve the setting and special character of New Ash Green
- New Ash Green residents would pay for the upkeep of amenities that would be enjoyed by the new residents
- No significant exceptional circumstances or social and community benefits to justify release of Green Belt are demonstrated
- 5 community buildings are $\frac{3}{4}$ mile or less from the site – there is no need for another
- There is no evidence of need for another primary school
- The Parish Council has money for a cemetery extension if land is available
- A single road into the site would lead to problems within the development and on Ash Road; Kent County Council require two accesses for a development of over 300 homes
- Local roads are already unsuitable for the present-day traffic
- GPs in New Ash Green and Longfield are overloaded so cannot take more patients
- Darent Valley Hospital is under pressure which will be made worse by further house building in North Kent
- Problems of drainage in the Fawkham Valley, Hartley Bottom and Longfield
- Evidence exists of significant Romano-British and older Stone Age archaeology on the site

The consultation will be open from 18th December until 3rd February 2019. After that date there will be no further opportunity to influence the Local Plan. Only the Inspector will have the final word.

This is your last chance!

Make your views known before 3rd February at:

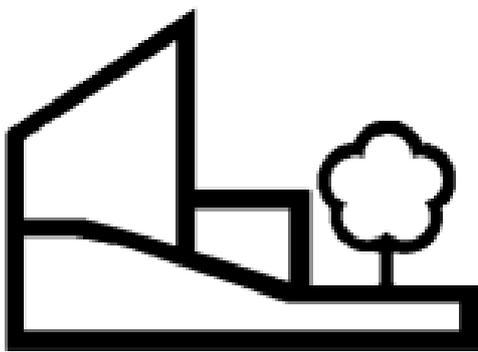
www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/draftlocalplan

or write to Richard Morris, Chief Officer – Planning,
Sevenoaks District Council, Argyle Rd, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG.

If you can, come to the information drop-in at New Ash Green Primary School, 5pm – 8pm on Thursday 10th January.

The Inspector has discretion to allow people to speak at the public examination. If you want to do so, register your interest before the consultation closes on 3rd February.

New Ash Green is a unique example of town planning. The Berkeley Group proposals will turn the area into just another unrestrained urban sprawl.



Published by

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