

Ash Neighbourhood Plan Examination

Decision Statement (Regulation 18)

11 September 2026

1. Background

- 1.1. Guildford Borough Council (the Council) formally designated the Ash Neighbourhood Area on 26 April 2024, following an application by Ash Parish Council in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) (**'the Regulations'**). The Neighbourhood Area covers the same area as the parish of Ash. The designation allowed Ash Parish Council to become a 'qualifying body' for the area, with the power to produce a neighbourhood plan.
- 1.2. Ash Parish Council submitted the draft Ash Neighbourhood Plan (ANP) to the Council on 18 December 2025. The Council arranged for a consultation and independent examination in accordance with the Regulations.
- 1.3. The Council publicised the Plan and invited representations during the Regulation 16 consultation period, which was held between 20 January and 9 March 2026.
- 1.4. In February 2026, the Council appointed an independent examiner, Ms Jill Kingaby, to examine the Plan and recommend whether it should proceed to referendum and whether it should be modified before doing so.
- 1.5. The examination took place between March and September 2026 and was held by means of written representations. The Council received the examiner's final report on 27 September 2026. The report recommended that specific modifications should be made to the plan and that the modified plan be progressed to a referendum. It also recommended that the boundary of the referendum area should follow the boundary of the neighbourhood area (Ash parish). The examination report and this Decision Statement are available at <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/27109/Neighbourhood-planning-in-Ash>.
- 1.6. Regulations 17A and 18 of the Regulations require the Council to decide whether to reject the ANP or progress it to a referendum, what action to take in response to the examiner's recommendations, what modifications (if any) to make to the ANP, and whether to extend the referendum area beyond Ash Parish. The decisions must be set out in a "decision statement" (this document).

2. The Council's decision

- 2.1. The Council agrees with the recommendations made by the examiner. It has therefore decided to modify the plan in accordance with the examiner's recommended modifications, as well as to make additional minor modifications¹.
- 2.2. The Council has also decided to progress the modified plan to a referendum of eligible registered voters within the Ash Neighbourhood Area, as recommended in the examination report, as the Council agrees that this is the most appropriate area for the referendum and there are no reasons to extend the referendum area.
- 2.3. This decision was made by the Joint Director of Planning on 02 September 2026 through powers delegated by the Council's constitution dated 29 May 2026.
- 2.4. A list of the examiner's recommended modifications and the Council's actions in response to each recommendation is included in the first schedule at the end of this statement, as well as in the examination report. A list of other minor changes made is included in the second schedule.

3. Documents

- 3.1 This Decision Statement and the examiner's report are on the Council's website at <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/27109/Neighbourhood-planning-in-Ash>.
- 3.2 Both documents are available for inspection at the Guildford Borough Council offices at Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 4BB during usual opening hours.

¹ These modifications were made in accordance with paragraph 12(6) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Schedule of examiner's proposed modifications to the Ash Neighbourhood Plan and the actions in response

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no.	Modification	Action taken in response	Reason for the action
PM1	Page 5	Paragraph 1.4. Amend Fig. 2 by deleting: "Is the Plan in general conformity with strategic planning policy?" Replace with: <i>"Is it the case that the Plan does not prevent development from taking place which – (i) is proposed in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area), and (ii) if it took place, would provide housing?"</i>	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner's report
PM2	Pages 13 and 34	Policy ASH1 Append an A3 sized version of the Policies Map to the Plan. Add a footnote to Pages 13 and 35: <i>"The Ash Policy Map layers are to be hosted on the Guildford Borough Council or successor authority's planning policies map."</i>	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner's report
PM3	Page 40	Amend first sentence of para 4.2 to read: "The Parish Council will useto inform and determine its- <i>to inform and comment on planning applications decisions."</i>	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner's report
PM4	Page 13	In paragraph 3.7, insert an a new (additional) sentence after the first sentence to read: <i>"Local Plan Policies A29 (Warren Farm, White Lane) and A30 (Land to the east of White Lane) propose approximately 58 new homes and 62 new homes respectively."</i> Delete text in paragraph 3.9 and replace with: <i>"Outside of the defined built-up areas, the remaining undeveloped land is designated as countryside in the Local Plan. It is therefore only suited to the types of development that are consistent in countryside locations. The eastern boundary of the Parish, comprising mostly Ash Ranges and the Thames Basin Heath SPA, lies in the Green Belt, and is therefore subject to national planning policy constraints."</i>	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner's report

		Add a new sentence at the end of paragraph 3.9: <i>“Policy P5 of the Local Plan protects the ecological integrity of Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). It explains that there is an “exclusion zone” set at 400m linear distance from the SPA boundary where permission for development resulting in a net increase in residential units will not be permitted.”</i>		
PM5	Pages 14-17	Policy ASH2/ASH3/ASH4 Clauses A Modify the second sentence in each of these three policies as follows: “To achieve this, development proposals are required to have full regard for the Ash Design Guidance and Codes...”. Policy ASH4 Delete the first sentence in Clause B, and replace with: <i>“Developments within Ash Green are expected to conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the significance of its heritage assets and their settings.”</i> Retain i) to iv) and then delete as follows: v) illustrates how views White Lane, are protected. Development will only be supported with national policy. Replace with: <i>“Any residual harm must be clearly and convincingly justified in accordance with national policy. For designated heritage assets, harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal; for non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be applied. Views to and from the Ash Manor complex should be safeguarded where they contribute to the significance of the listed buildings, with any important views identified, evidenced and assessed.”</i> Amend Clause E as follows: “E. Development proposals impact of traffic and noise, and air quality. Proposals which fail ...”.	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner’s report
PM6	Page 49	Appendix A: Ash Design Guidance and Codes Delete Figure 39.	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner’s

				report
PM7	Page 18	Figure 6 Delete the 2 maps and replace with new map: Policy A31 with ASH4 Local Gap overlay, as attached to Ash Parish Council's letter of 20 April 2026 to the Examiner.² Paragraphs 3.25 and 3.26 Delete text and replace with: <i>"Figure 6 shows the location of the Local Gap, south and east of the main built-up area of Ash, and north of Ash Green, and its relationship to the sites allocated for new development in Policy A31 of the Local Plan."</i>	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner's report
PM8	Pages 19 and 20	Policy ASH5 Modify Clause A to read: "In each identified location <i>In the identified district and local centres</i>, proposals". Modify Clause C to read: "Proposals that will result in the total loss of a local centre or dispersed local shop <i>shops within it</i> will be resisted". Add a new sentence at the end of Clause C to read: <i>"Dispersed local shops at Longfield Road, Aldershot Road, Guildford Road and Oxenden Road seeking closure are also encouraged to follow the above process (beginning with a minimum 12 month marketing period)."</i> Paragraph 3.38 Delete: "or identified dispersed local shops".	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner's report
PM9	Pages 21 and 22	Policy ASH6 Modify Clause A: "Proposals for the intensification amenity of <i>existing</i> adjoining residential areas."	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner's

² View at: [https://www.guildford.gov.uk/media/37770/APC-External-Examiner-Additional-Questions-June-2026/doc/APC External Examiner Additional Questions June 2026.docx?m=1782116875977](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/media/37770/APC-External-Examiner-Additional-Questions-June-2026/doc/APC%20External%20Examiner%20Additional%20Questions%20June%202026.docx?m=1782116875977)

		Paragraph 3.42 Inset the following text before the first sentence: <i>“Town centres and strategic employment sites are defined in Policy E2 of the Guildford Local Plan as the focus for new employment. Ash station is not so designated. Policy E2, restricting expansion of existing offices outside town centres and strategic employment sites to 25% of existing office and Research & Development floorspace, therefore applies to the station site in Policy ASH6.”</i> The first sentence (which now becomes the fourth sentence) should be modified to read: <i>“Policy ASH6 identifies the established employment location This policy therefore identifies these established employment locations in the parish, designating the land at Ash Station as locally important ...”</i>. Paragraph 3.44 Delete the second half of the second sentence so that it ends: “....with employment floorspace loss strongly resisted.”		report
PM10	Pages 23 -25	Policy ASH8 Amend the second sentence of Clause B as follows: “Where Schemes that maximise their potential..... forms of <i>with</i> plot size, plot coverage.....proposal is located, this will be supported, provided” Amend Clause C as follows: “All planning permissions granted <i>applications</i> for <i>new and</i> replacement buildings should demonstrate that that they will be have been tested to ensure the buildings will perform as predicted, <i>Submission of test results will be secured through appropriate</i> including planning conditions.” Delete the remainder of this sentence and the final sentence. Paragraph 3.55 Modify the fourth sentence to read: “Clause C of the policy therefore requires ... new or replacement dwellings <i>enables maximum energy efficiency.</i>” Delete the final sentence. Delete paragraphs 3.56 to 3.58. Delete Appendix D: Post Occupancy Evaluation (Policy ASH8)	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner’s report

PM11	Page 26	Policy ASH9 Remove the policy and its supporting text to a new Appendix, with modified wording so that it no longer constitutes a policy but is a source of locally relevant information for users of the Plan.	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner's report
PM12	Page 27	Policy ASH10 Amend Clause A: "A.(i) Proposals that will result clearly demonstrated that <i>either</i> the operation of the facility viable, <i>or adequate alternative provision exists or a replacement facility of an equivalent or better standard is to be provided in a location equally or more accessible to the facility's catchment area.</i>" A.(ii) Proposals to sustain will be supported, <i>provided the location of the site is in accordance with the sequential test outlined in the NPPF for main town centre uses (where applicable).</i>" Amend Clause C: "C. The Neighbourhood Plan designates 0.27 ha of landDevelopment proposals in this location must <i>should where possible</i> include the creation". Paragraphs 3.67-3.72 Add new supporting text: <i>"Where healthcare facilities are formally declared surplus to the operational healthcare requirements of the NHS, or identified as surplus as part of a published estates strategy or service transformation plan, this will be considered to meet the requirement under Part A(i) of Policy ASH10.</i> <i>Where provision of a Class 2 use on land at Ash Lodge Drive with ancillary F2 local community uses is demonstrated to be financially unviable, the need for care homes could make a Class 2 only development acceptable."</i>	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner's report
PM13	Pages 28 - 30	Policy ASH11 Amend the 2nd sentence of Clause D: "Where they are unavoidably lost, must be planted (two trees must <i>should</i> be planted for every one lost, <i>where possible</i>)". Paragraphs 3.72-3.83	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner's report

		Add new supporting text: <i>“Developers of large sites are advised to engage with Thames Water at the earliest opportunity to establish :</i> <i>• The development’s demand for water supply infrastructure;</i> <i>• The development’s demand for sewage/wastewater treatment and network infrastructure; and</i> <i>• The surface water drainage requirements and any flood risk on or off the site.</i> <i>Thames Water provides a pre-planning service at:</i> <i>https://developers.thameswater.co.uk/Developing-a-large-site”.</i>		
PM14	Page 31	Policy ASH12 Delete 6) Keogh Barracks Playing Fields and 21) Ash Green meadows from the list in the policy and from Appendix C.	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner’s report
PM15	Page 32	Delete paragraph 3.89.	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner’s report
PM16	Page 33	Policy ASH14 Amend Clause C: “Development proposals conditions or obligations, are required to prioritise in their travel interventions should prioritise the making ofLocal Plan (Strategy and Sites”. Amend Clause D: “Development proposals that will result on in the unnecessary” Paragraph 3.93 Amend last line of paragraph: “man means of access”. Paragraph 3.96 Amend second line: “use the Healthy Streets Indicators Assessment...”.	ANP modified in accordance with recommendation	As set out in the examiner’s report

Schedule of other amendments

Page or reference	Amendment
Throughout	Corrected minor typographical errors and formatting issues to improve clarity and accesibility
Throughout	Renumbered policies and paragraphs where deletions caused these to go out of sequence to improve legibility
Throughout	Maps were replaced with versions that do not show the deleted Local Green Spaces and reference the renumbered policies as a factual update
Cover page	Amended the text on the cover from "SUBMISSION VERSION: FINAL" to "REFERENDUM VERSION" as a factual update
Page 3	Updated the list of land use policies to reflect changes to the policy numbering and deletion of Policy ASH9 as a factual update
1.8	The following factual update was made: This version of the plan is submitted to GBC for further statutory consultation under Regulation 16 of the Regulations and to arrange for its examination by an independent examiner <u>the final, referendum version that incorporates the changes recommended by the neighbourhood plan examiner and agreed by GBC.</u>
Figure 6	Caption was amended to reflect the change to figure 6 as a factual update related to modification PM7
3.41	A typographical error was corrected: ... to provide a variety of job opportunities in a wide <u>area</u> ...
3.44	A typographical error was corrected: As such it will be protected for use in line with their <u>its</u> designation...
3.48	A typographical error was corrected: ... it is expected that in the proposals should...
3.66	Th new paragraph recommended by the examiner contained a typographical error which was corrected as follows: Where provision of a Class <u>C2</u> use on land...
3.77	A typographical error was corrected: ...does not just illustrate where they are <u>it is</u> currently located, but also to <u>points</u> to...
Page 34	Added a paragraph number to the only paragraph in the section and added new sentence at the end as a factual update as per the examiner's report at 4.32: " <u>An A3 version of the map can be seen in Appendix F.</u> "