Handy Hints - The Draft Local Plan for Ashford 2030
This is an important opportunity for residents to influence the future building plans and development policies for the borough.

The Council are consulting on their future plans till
**Wednesday the 10th August 2016 at 5pm.**

We strongly urge you to go to Ashford Borough Council’s website and consultation link: [www.ashford.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/consultations) to view the future plans for our area.

In July 2008 Ashford Borough Council adopted their new Core Strategy, identifying land where development could take place adjoining the urban area of Ashford.

In that plan, the site at Sevington (U19) was identified and adopted for warehouse development. Further confirmed in a development plan 2012.

Were you consulted? Did you know that we were going to have enormous warehouses on your doorstep? Were you able to object? Probably not.

**But, today we are now being consulted on the next Plan – The Local Plan for Ashford 2030**

We now have a renewed opportunity to influence future plans for Ashford and the surrounding rural area.

**Please comment on this new Local Plan to 2030, via the consultation site.**

**We have included page nos and policy nos to assist in selecting the relevant page where you can add your comments after scrolling down that particular page or section.**

**The Introduction p5 Policy 2.3 states . . .**

“To be clear, this Local Plan supersedes the following:

Ashford Core Strategy 2008
The Urban Sites and Infrastructure Development Plan Document 2012”

**P7 Priority 4 states . . .**

“Attractive Ashford: countryside and townscape, tourism and heritage: To achieve an environment that creates higher standards of public space design, alongside improved standards of presentation of key green spaces. To safeguard and conserve our local heritage and areas of outstanding landscape quality to ensure the very best attractive environment with thriving and vibrant town centres.”

We can try to protect Mersham for our children.

Ashford Borough Council has not included WE15 – the land between Highfield Lane and Blind Lane – in their Draft Local Plan, but Axa/Aviva, developers of U19, own the land. **We know they want to duplicate U19.** They plan to extend the warehouses East of Highfield Lane and we have seen their plans. (See plan below).

*There is nothing to stop the developer applying for planning permission for this separately from this plan, except, if we can establish a ‘Green Buffer’ first.*
A ‘Green Buffer/Strategic Gap’
If you believe, as we do, that the historic village of Mersham is worth protecting from the encroaching industrial development, please go to ABC’s consultation website for “The Draft Local Plan for Ashford to 2030” and . . .

Demand that Mersham is protected by a ‘Green Buffer/Strategic Gap’ to the East of Highfield Lane and Cheeseman’s Green Lane.
You only have until the deadline date of August 10th to do this.

*Let’s not make the same mistake as we did in 2008.*

P11 The Vision 3.5 states . . .

“The identity and attractive character of the Borough’s rural area, with its range of attractive settlements, wealth of heritage assets and its expansive countryside, including the Kent Downs AONB to the north and the High Weald AONB to the south, will be protected and enhanced.”

Surely we should be pressing for ‘Green Buffer/Strategic Gap’ policy to be written into the plan where there is an obvious infringement of a village environment by a proposed nearby industrial or large scale retail/ housing development proposal?

Would this not apply to the outline application currently going forward for Sevington Park (U19)?
Sevington Park (U19)
This warehouse development of approx. 157,000sq m of floorspace with some possible building heights of 16m, includes the relocation of Kent Wool Growers from the town centre. These buildings and the commercial operations of their tenants will have a hugely detrimental effect on the villages of Sevington and Mersham.

p292 Appendix 1 Schedule of superseded or deleted adopted policies includes U19.

p26 policy 3.109 Sevington states . . .
“A masterplan has been produced showing how the quantum of development can be accommodated on the site whilst limiting the impact on the setting of Sevington church and the wider area. The masterplan includes substantial strategic planting to help reduce the impact of the large buildings proposed – this will be complemented by the planting proposed as part of the junction 10A scheme. This planting will obviously need to mature to deliver the full benefits – long term arrangements will be needed to make sure these areas are managed and protected, including the potential use of group Tree Preservation Orders.”

p27 policy 3.110 Sevington states . . .
“It is likely that the phased development of this site will take some years to be completed. The planning permission given sets thresholds beyond which development cannot proceed before improved highways access arrangements are in place.”

We have concerns that the outline plan being approved would not meet a number of policy statements contained within this plan and have an adverse effect on the villages of Willesborough, Mersham and Sevington.

Can we assume therefore that any policies approved within this plan should pertain to U19 this development?

Require the council and planners to assess the impact of NOT using these policies on current developments.

NOTE – It may be helpful in understanding the overall impact of the proposed developments by looking at the Appendices and Maps at the end of the draft plan. The names of the plots proposed for development, the areas that are protected and other environmental considerations are on these pages.

If you do not understand any of the terms being used – go to p284 - p287 where you may find an explanation.

Traffic Concerns - See next page
Traffic Concerns – HGVs – Junction 10a – Air Quality and Light Pollution

The proposal in this plan to extend the Waterbrook lorry park by 300 to 600 lorries, and the recent planning application for the large Sevington Warehouse Park when combined with the plans for M20 Junction 10a currently being submitted by Highways England raise real traffic concerns - particularly for the villages of Willesborough, Sevington and Mersham.

The HGV and van traffic that will be generated by these developments should be of concern to all local residents and businesses. We know from experience the chaos when an unexpected traffic holdup occurs.

Additionally . . . The Local Plan proposes a high proportion of housing development around Kingsnorth and Sevington (a total of 2,210 new builds). The draft Local Plan allows for 1-3 suburban parking spaces per household (dependent on size p218/9) Averaging that - that’s adding a further 4,420 vehicles to an already overstretched road system. We are all aware of the current number of new developments that have been built East of Ashford, such as housing at Park Farm East, Bridgefield and Finberry. Combined with the proposals in this Plan, this would bring a staggering amount of traffic using the road network to the East and South East of Ashford via the A2070 and the proposed new Jct10a.

How does the Local Plan address these concerns?

HGVs – p224 section 5.284 policy TRA9 of the Local Plan states . . .
“the size and layout of the site is sufficient to accommodate HGV movements and parking in a way that does not lead to the public highway being used for either purpose;”

“HGV movements are limited to appropriate times of operation given the context of the site.”

Questions have been raised re both the above statements in relation to the Sevington Park Development.

These have currently been ignored by Ashford Borough Council.
Are the authorities condoning parked HGVs on local roads?
Are they happy to have the lives of local residents ruined by lorry traffic 24/7 – sleep broken by reversing noise?

Will this also be the case for Waterbrook Lorry Park?

Junction 10A – Awaiting the Development Consent Order being given on the final Highways England Plan p211 policy 5.222 and 5.226 state . . .
“it is accepted that the delivery of new junction capacity is fundamental to the realisation of the Council’s growth strategy as set out in this Local Plan.”

“Once a Development Consent Order is granted, . . . . . the Council considers that the risk of the junction scheme not progressing significantly reduces and should allow a limited amount of additional development to be brought forward.”
The Village Alliance has continually expressed concern over the lack of communication between ABC and HE particularly in relation to the number of projects within the Borough that are traffic generating.

The Local Plan details all the likely developments where access routes are linked into the A2070 and onwards to Jcts 10 and 10a.

It is good news that access for both the Waterbrook and Finberry developments will be into the A2070 with no access to Cheesemans Green Lane, but this is just one of several links into the A2070. There is a provision for a Link Road South of Ashford from Chilmington Green and new roads to developments around Kingsnorth, Park Farm East etc. Within the Sevington Park application, the initial access point will be the A2070 until a new link and Jct10a is ready.

This directs a huge number of traffic movements into the A2070

Our concerns are that HE’s Jct10A scheme takes no account of the true likely traffic.  Is this the longterm traffic solution for Ashford?

The council are correct in aiming to control growth to stay within the road network capacity as stated in this plan.

But will pressure for growth be more important?

Air Quality and Light Pollution

Air Quality – p248 section 5.395 ENV12 states . . .

“Development proposals that might lead to a significant deterioration in air quality or national air quality objectives being exceeded, . . . . will require the submission of an Air Quality Assessment to be carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance.”

“Proposals which will result in National Air Quality Objectives being exceeded will not be permitted.”

Already the Air Quality measured at The William Harvey Hospital site suffers from unacceptable levels of carbon dioxide. Currently Willesborough’s proximity to Jct 10 creates a CO2 air quality problem. Will Sevington and Mersham’s proximity to the future Jct 10a create similar problems? Sevington Park Warehousing, Waterbrook lorry park and the additional traffic on the A2070 will add to the problem, creating a decrease in air quality. Diesel vehicle emissions can damage lungs, heart and brains.

It is essential to monitor the current status and to plan for future improvement and avoid further damage to our air quality.

Light pollution - P233 policy 5.316 states . . .

“planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity”

The Council will allow 24/7 lorry movements arising from the 600 vehicle Waterbrook lorry park and the large scale warehouse operation at Sevington Park.

What will the mitigation measures be for the residents of Willesborough, Sevington, Finberry and Mersham?
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[www.ashford.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/consultations)

These documents can be viewed and commented on online through ABC’s consultation portal. There may be other areas on which you might wish to comment.

Comments can also be made in writing using the relevant representation form.

If you have any questions or requests for forms please contact **01233 330229**
Ashford Borough Council – Planning Policy Team who will be happy to assist.
Or Email: [planningpolicy@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@ashford.gov.uk)

**How to comment online . . .**
[www.ashford.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/consultations)

Click the list of consultations on the “Have your say page”
Click the second item “Local Plan to 2030 regulation 19 – Publication June 2016”

The Publication page provides a link to the draft plan online or to download the pdf.

If you do not wish to do this online, further down the page there is a link to the “Representation Form” which can be printed and, when completed, sent to Planning Policy Team at Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL

**To respond – you need to register**

Register (or sign in if already registered)  
Note: you can go straight to register or sign in if you have read the draft already.

Once you activate from an email sent to you, you can activate the registration from “My Consultations” – “current ”
or if opens in “Open Consultations”

“Open Consultations” Click on **The Draft Local Plan**

Scroll down to Guidance notes and the Link to “Respond to this document”

The document then opens page after page – scroll down to bottom of each “Add a comment” on that page

(See page nos and policy nos in our hints- we have included them to help)

Follow “next” page etc through out plan

Complete and Sign out  
*(It's not as difficult as it appears – just add your comments - you may wish you had one day)*

Further information may be found on our website Please contact us if you encounter any problems

**The Village Alliance**  
[www.thevillagealliance.co.uk](http://www.thevillagealliance.co.uk)  
info@thevillagealliance.co.uk