

AVETON GIFFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Evidence paper to support the choice of development sites included in the plan *To support submission of the plan at Regulation 15*

October 2019

Introduction

1. This paper accompanies the submitted Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan. It aims to explain the considerations that guided the choice of development sites for inclusion in the plan and how they can be sustainably delivered.

Local context

2. The neighbourhood plan process began in Aveton Gifford during 2016, with designation of the plan area and the formation of a steering group.
3. An **open day** to gather early views and opinions to help shape the plan took place in February 2016. Local opinion generally favoured some development to help sustain village life, to include some affordable homes and to enable provision of needed local facilities, particularly a new car park.
4. A **call for sites** was issued in late 2016 to help determine where development might take place in Aveton Gifford. A number of possible sites were put forward for consideration. Twelve of these were selected as suitable to be assessed in more detail and AECOM were commissioned to carry out an assessment of those sites. That report is available at <https://www.aveton-gifford.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Aveton-Gifford-NP-site-assessment.pdf>.
5. Published in March 2017, the **Sites Assessment Report** assesses the suitability of each site for development, ruling several out but concluding that 2 small sites are suitable and a further 5 sites are potentially suitable.
6. A second **open event** took place on 7th and 8th April 2017. This coincided with the consultation period for the pre-submission draft of the Local Plan for the wider area.

Strategic planning context

7. The Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (the JLP) is the local plan for the wider area. During the course of preparing the JLP the local planning authorities issued advice regarding expectations for development across a range of “sustainable villages”. The pre-submission draft JLP (March 2017) included an indicative figure that the village of Aveton Gifford should plan for a level of new housing of around 10 dwellings.
8. Work to progress the neighbourhood plan proceeded on that basis, as the local community began to engage with the likely scale of development which was anticipated in the village.
9. The adopted JLP (March 2019) no longer contains an indicative figure for housing in Aveton Gifford. Following the local plan inspectors' advice indicative development figures for villages in or adjoining the AONB have been removed from the plan, in acknowledgement of the great weight to be attached to conserving AONB landscapes. The plan instead states that neighbourhood plans for such places may wish to bring forward development sites to meet housing needs where justified by appropriate evidence.
10. In Aveton Gifford local opinion in general still supports suitable development in scale with the village to help sustain the community and meet local needs.

The choice of sites in Aveton Gifford

11. The neighbourhood plan recognises that the scale of Aveton Gifford village is such that it can well sustain some development. Indeed, suitable development can do the local community good, assisting its well-being, meeting housing needs, especially for affordable homes, and helping to address particular local needs for improved community infrastructure.
12. Suitable development sites for inclusion in the neighbourhood plan have therefore been selected not only with a view to their acceptability as determined in the Sites Assessment Report (March 2017) but also to their potential to help contribute towards meeting local needs, especially for a new car park.
13. The draft neighbourhood plan was initially published for Regulation 14 consultation in June 2018, including a range of possible development sites. As a result of issues raised and comments received some significant changes were made to the plan. In particular, it was amended to make clear what development sites were being proposed and a second round of consultation at Regulation 14 took place in May 2019.
14. It has been concluded that **two sites** will be most suitable and best able to bring forward development which will be in scale with the village and can address local needs and these are the sites proposed by the plan. One of them is a relatively small site adjoining Pulley's Close. The other is a larger site, at Millhaye and Church Field, consisting of several adjacent parcels of land which together can deliver a housing development and new village car park.
15. The **site adjoining Pulley's Close** had been recommended as one of the two most suitable by the Sites Assessment Report. It is proposed for development of 6 to 8 new houses with a contribution towards affordable housing. The site design must take full account of the nearby conservation area.
16. The **site at Millhaye and Church Field** is larger and is proposed for 20 new open market and 6 affordable homes (within which self build or senior living accommodation would be welcomed) together with space for a 30-50 space public car park. The development must take full account of the conservation area and nearby listed buildings, include safe pedestrian and vehicle access and suitable drainage and flood prevention measures. The policy also seeks that a masterplan be prepared for the site.
17. The site includes several adjoining parcels of land, and is deliberately proposed as a single site to be developed together in order to improve viability. Site owners have indicated their support for the plan's proposals and willingness to provide for the proposed car park.
18. It is anticipated that the car park will be located in the southern part of the site, closest to the village core, and that its construction will be facilitated by the use of spoil from other parts of the site. Development of the proposed housing will be able to avoid the narrow flood plain at the foot of the small valley, and the car park's design and construction must also take care not to create flooding issues.
19. Access to the site may be attained from more than one point, including the site's northern extremity (which should also be the point of access for construction traffic), its southern boundary (to provide suitable access to the car park) and its eastern extremity (to gain satisfactory access to that parcel of land).
20. The layout and design of development should aim to make a positive contribution to the locality, particularly the main street and that part of the site closest to the conservation area. Correspondence from Historic England (a letter dated 21st November 2018 to the

agent for the owner of the easternmost part of the site) helpfully describes how development might be laid out in order to reinforce the historic setting of the approach to the church and enhance the locality in general.

21. A masterplan for the site will be a suitable means to ensure that all the objectives for the site can be met and delivered.

Submission of the neighbourhood plan

22. The neighbourhood plan was submitted to the local planning authority in October 2019, accompanied by the associated documents required by the regulations and this evidence paper.