

Ascot Rejuvenation

Public Consultation events on the Consortium's Development Brief proposals will take place this month.

The Ascot Consortium, representing land owners around Ascot Centre, has announced their proposals for the Rejuvenation of Ascot. These are set out in a development brief, which can be downloaded on their website:

<http://www.ascotcentreconsultation.co.uk>.

They will be holding 2 public Consultation events:

- Drop in Day: Tuesday 22nd May from 2pm to 8pm, at Ascot Racecourse
- Panel discussion and Q&A: Tuesday 29th May, starting at 7pm at Ascot Racecourse

The proposals represent a major change to Ascot, and we urge you to attend these meetings and to let the Ascot Consortium know your views.

Background:

The concepts for the Ascot Rejuvenation evolved during the preparation of the Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan. The NP steering group engaged the Prince's Foundation to work with the community to define a framework for the rejuvenation, and the results are presented in the Prince's Foundation Report and Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

The NP requires the preparation of a Development Brief, and the developer consortium has been preparing this with support from a Stakeholder Group. Our Parish Council is represented on this group by Cllrs P Deason and B Hilton.

The Stakeholder group agreed the vision that is presented on page 2 of the Brief. This vision requires the brief is to "deliver the aspirations of local people as presented in the work of the Prince's Foundation".

The development Brief (DB) must also comply with housing proforma HA10 of the emerging BLP, and this is presented in the DB.

The Stakeholder Group's involvement has resulted in a number of important changes to the DB, but the Consultation version of the brief, issued on the 2nd May 2018, still includes aspects of concern to our parish council.

In the following section we summarise our ongoing concerns, with reasons. We hope you will find these useful when attending the consultation meetings and making your own representations on the draft Development Brief.

We would welcome your thoughts on the Illustrative masterplan and associated figures, and on our concerns, whether you agree with them or not.

This will help us to ensure that our submission to the consortium is soundly based.

Parish Council concerns.

1. Illustrative Masterplan (Section 5.1)

We recommend an additional requirement that the principles set out in the masterplan, together with those established in the following figures, will be followed unless sound reasons are presented for any changes

- Fig 6.5 page 34: Mix of uses and residential types in the masterplan.
- Fig 6.6 page 35: Illustrative building heights and 6.7,.
- Fig 6.7 page 36: Typical Building heights for different kinds of building in the masterplan.
- Fig 6.8 page 37: Location of non-residential uses.

2. Housing:

- a. The consortium's proposal for 300 homes isn't in accordance with the agreed vision or housing proforma HA10 of the emerging BLP.**
These two documents suggest that the housing numbers should be between 170 and 180 dwellings
- b. The housing mix delivers too many flats and not enough small family houses.**
 - *Although the DB doesn't include full details of the mix, figure 6.5 provides some guidance, and only shows 39 small family houses across the development.*
 - *Ascot Green West has 66 flats and this represents 2/3rds of the total housing in this area*
 - *We have seen a proposed mix, which shows a high number of flats throughout.*
- c. We propose a new requirement that the housing in Ascot Green (excluding the mixed use buildings by the square) is accordance with the Townscape Assessment category 'Villas in a Woodland Setting'**

3. Retail Development

The table on page 33 of the DB shows 2440 sq.m GEA of retail floorspace and 900 sq.m. of office floorspace.

- a. We consider the proposed floorspace excessive in relation to the existing retail offering in Ascot, and likely to be unsustainable.**
 - *The proposed new retail represents an increase of 54% of floorspace.*
 - *The borough retail report for the emerging BLP says there isn't much potential for retail growth in Ascot (ref: 9.10.5 of the emerging BLP).*
 - *The retail demand is determined by 3 factors. We cannot find the basis for their market share factor, which seem very high, and throws doubt on the demand figures.*
 - *We are concerned that Ascot may attract market share from Sunninghill and Sunningdale, as the report suggests it will.*
- b. We don't support the retail provision as presented in Requirement 7, section 6.3 of the DB**

- The emerging BLP doesn't support units of greater than 500 sq.m GEA.
- Even 500 sq m is adequate for a small supermarket (Tesco Express is 331 sq.m GEA and Budgens 1194 sq m, GEA).
- Both the Prince's Foundation Report and HA10 place the retail emphasis on units for small independents, yet there is no requirement that defines the minimum floorspace that must be suitable for small independents.

4. Mixed Use Development.

- a. **The intensity of development in in the northern half of Ascot Green West is excessive, and both the retail and housing provision should be reduced.**

This could be achieved by:

- Reducing the extent of the mixed-use building down Station Hill.
 - Not continuing the mixed-use building to the south of the community hall beyond the southern edge of the square.
 - Omitting the flats that are squeezed in between the fire station and public open space.
- b. **A mixed-use building, suited to small independent shops and offices, is proposed on the High Street frontage of Ascot Village. The location isn't ideal for small independents as it is outwith the main footfall.**
- c. **Figure 6.8 identifies the possibility of retail units on the ground floor of the flats at the entrance to Ascot Green East. If provided they could reduce congestion around the square and extend the retail footfall further to the east.**

5. High Street and Public Realm (section 6.2)

- a. **The St Georges Lane access should be addressed alongside the upgraded Winkfield Road roundabout**

6. Access and Movement (section 6.6).

- a. **Since the last draft, some important access and movement requirements have been removed.**

This is easily rectified by making replacing the introduction to the requirements by a new Requirement 1: "The planning application is to deliver the proposed connectivity as illustrated in figures 6.19 and 6.21".

- b. **Requirements 6. And 7 re the non-residential parking are unclear.**

The requirement should say that the parking proposals will retain the existing visitor and business parking provision and provide adequate additional parking to meet the needs of the new development, together with 30 spaces over and beyond these requirements.

- c. We are advised that 106 visitor parking bays in the courtyard behind the retail to the west of the square, and 30 to the east side of the community centre.

We question whether these areas are able to accommodate this number of visitor spaces owing to other demands on the space.