

AM 703/25

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY MEETING – 23 JANUARY 2025

ASHURST & COLBURY VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT SPD - ADOPTION

Report by: David Illsley, Policy & Conservation Manager

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The first Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement was drawn up in 2013 by a group of local residents and parish councillors. The Village Design Statement was formally adopted by the New Forest National Park Authority as a supplementary planning document in June 2013 following a statutory period of public consultation.
- 1.2 In the years since the adoption of the Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement there have been significant changes in both national and local policy and design guidance. Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council is keen to update their Village Design Statement to ensure it is still afforded weight in planning decision-making as a supplementary planning document; as well as responding to current design-related issues in the parish. This requires the revised document to be subject to public consultation, the consideration of comments received, and a formal decision of the full Authority.
- 1.3 The revised Village Design Statement does not attempt to summarise the wealth of national design policy and guidance. Instead it has been prepared to engage local residents and property owners. The introduction (page 2) states, "...identifying what makes Ashurst and Colbury special and distinctive supports the concept that changes to individual buildings, groups of buildings or the village as a whole, should be based on an understanding of the past and present character of the village. This would enable new development to make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness of the parish." The revised draft Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement was approved for the purposes of public consultation at the October 2024 Planning Committee meeting.

2. Consultation on the revised draft Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement

- 2.1 Following approval at the October 2024 Planning Committee meeting, the 6-week public consultation on the revised draft Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement ran from 25 October – 6 December 2024 in accordance with the Authority's Statement of Community Involvement and the relevant national planning regulations.
- 2.2 Further detail on the consultation undertaken between October and December 2024 are set out in the 'Consultation Statement' that forms Annex 2 to this report. The consultation included:
 - Over 200 statutory and general consultees were directly notified of the start of the consultation. This included neighbouring town and parish councils, local stakeholder groups, statutory consultees (e.g. Historic England) and local planning agents.
 - The revised draft Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement was made available on the Authority's website and for inspection at Lymington Town Hall.

- A press release was issued to local media outlets, summarising the role of the draft Village Design Statement, the consultation period, how comments could be made and where the document could be viewed. A formal press notice was also issued.
- The consultation was actively promoted through the Authority’s social media channels, including Facebook (49,000 followers) and X (16,500 followers).
- The revised Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement consultation was highlighted in the November 2024 edition of the Village Magazine, which is delivered to every dwelling in the parish.

3. Summary of the main issues raised and how they have been addressed

- 3.1 During the consultation period on the revised Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement responses were submitted by 3 consultees – Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape, Historic England and Southern Water. The level of response is low, but perhaps not overly surprising given the tight geographical focus of the Village Design Statement on the parish of Ashurst & Colbury (circa 2,500 residents). With every household in the parish having been directly notified of the 6-week consultation, it is clear that there was an opportunity to respond.
- 3.2 The Consultation Statement (Annex 2) provides more detail on the main points raised in the responses and how they have been addressed in the document now presented for adoption. It should be noted that the Authority is not required to list and address every single point raised during the consultation, only the main issues raised.

Summary of the main issues raised and subsequent amendments

- The Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape advise that in the interests of reducing light pollution and the negative impacts of modern lighting on the character of the parish, consideration could be given to additional wording on the sources of further information and good practice on lighting. This feedback has been agreed and further wording has been added on ‘Light Pollution and External Lighting’ in section 6.6 of the revised Village Design Statement (Annex 1).
- Historic England recommend that the revised Village Design Statement is clear from the outset that Ashurst and Colbury is within the New Forest National Park. While this may be taken as read, it may help those unfamiliar with the area to make this explicit from the start. This feedback is accepted and additional wording has been added in paragraph 1.1 of the revised Village Design Statement (Annex 1). It is helpful to receive feedback from Historic England given their remit.
- Southern Water are the statutory wastewater and water service provider for the parish. Their consultation response supports references within the revised Statement to the infrastructure in the parish; the ditches that run along the A35 and Whartons Lane; and the maintenance of road-side grass verges. In response to the information shared in Southern Water’s response a new paragraph has been inserted at 7.7.1 to support effective rainwater management, which is key to reducing the risk of surface flooding, sewer flooding, and storm overflow releases.

4. Adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document

- 4.1 The formal adoption of the revised Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement as a supplementary planning document is a decision for the full National Park Authority. As set in section 3 of this report and the accompanying Consultation Statement (Appendix 2), although the level of responses to the draft Village Design Statement was low, the comments received have helped to improve the document now presented for adoption.
- 4.2 The document at Annex 1 has been updated in response to the consultation responses received and follows liaison between National Park Authority officers and Ashurst & Colbury parish councillors who are content with the revisions. Members are therefore asked to formally adopt the revised Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement (Annex 1) as a supplementary planning document and bring it into immediate effect as a material consideration in the delivery of our statutory planning functions in the parish of Ashurst & Colbury.
- 4.3 Part 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out the legal requirements that must be fulfilled on the adoption of a supplementary planning document. These include making copies of the document and 'Adoption Statement' available as soon as reasonably practicable; and sending a copy of the Adoption Statement to any person who has asked to be notified. Planning policy officers will ensure that these legal requirements are met.

Recommendations:

Members:

- (i) Formally adopted the revised Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement (Annex 1) and bring it into immediate effect from 23 January 2025 as material consideration in planning decision-making; and**
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Executive Director (Strategy & Planning) to make any final, minor amendments to the design and formatting of the SPD prior to publication.**

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Papers: **AM 703/25** – cover paper
Annex 1 – Revised Ashurst & Colbury Village Design Statement SPD for adoption
Annex 2 – Consultation Statement

Equality Impact Assessment: No impacts have been identified.