

## **Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan**

### **Decision Statement**

#### **Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)**

##### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this Decision Statement is to set out Ashford Borough Council's (the Council's) decision in relation to the Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2030 (the Plan). The Decision Statement outlines the Council's decision in respect of:

- The actions to be taken in response to recommendations made by the Examiner in the Examiner's Report
- What modifications are to be made to the Plan
- Whether the Plan meets the basic conditions, and would not breach or be incompatible with any EU obligation or Convention rights
- The area in which the referendum will take place

##### **2. Examination and Examiner's Report**

The Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan was submitted for Examination in February 2024. The Council appointed Derek Stebbing BA(Hons), DipEP, MRTPI to independently examine the Plan. The Examiner examined the Plan by written representation and undertook an unaccompanied site visit of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The Council received the Examiner's report on 20 June 2024. The Examiner's report recommended that the Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements and that the Plan, subject to a number of modifications, meets the Basic Conditions and should proceed to referendum.

##### **3. Decision and Reasons**

The Council must consider each of the recommendations made in the Examiner's report and decide what action to take in response. The Examiner's proposed modifications, and the Council's response and reasons to each of these are set out in **Appendix 1**.

The Council is satisfied that subject to the modifications being made, that the Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions and other legal requirements and can proceed to referendum.

#### **4. Referendum Area**

In recommending that the modified Plan go forward to referendum, the Examiner considered whether or not the referendum area should extend beyond the designated Neighbourhood Area. The Examiner recommended that there is no need to extend the referendum area.

The Council agrees with this recommendation and concludes that the referendum area will not be extended and will be applied only to the designated Neighbourhood Area.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan can proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum. The referendum is due to be held on **Thursday 15 August 2024**. The Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Area shall define the extent of the referendum area.

Date of Decision Statement: **28 June 2024**

*This Decision Statement and the Examiner's Report will be made available on the [Council's Aldington & Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan website](#), at the Ashford Gateway (Church Road, Ashford, TN23 1AS) and at the Council Offices (Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, TN23 1PL).*

**Appendix 1 – Examiner’s recommendations for proposed modifications, Council’s response and reasons.**

<b>Proposed modification number (PM)</b>	<b>Page no./ other reference</b>	<b>Examiner’s Recommended Modification</b>	<b>Council’s Response</b>	<b>Council’s Reasons</b>
PM1	Page 15	<p><u>Section 2 – About Aldington &amp; Bonnington</u></p> <p>Paragraph 2.7 – delete existing text in full, and replace with the following text:</p> <p><b>“2.7 Important routes run through Aldington, north-west to Ashford and west-east along the hills flanking the north of Romney Marsh, giving the area a very long history that development over the years has variously exposed. A collection of Mesolithic flints (c. 10,000 – 4,000 BC) including scrapers, blades and points is known from Knoll Farm. Prehistoric pits and a hearth were also found at HMP Aldington in 2000. Several examples of Bronze Age and Iron Age metalwork have been found and it is almost certain that other prehistoric sites lie undiscovered in the area. There have been numerous Roman discoveries in the area as Aldington lies close Portus Lemanis, the Roman fort and port at Lympne, and was on the main route connecting the area with the iron producing areas of the Weald but also the Roman road connecting Portus Lemanis with north Kent. The original Roman road itself may have been detected in excavation in</b></p>	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner’s recommendation.	For accuracy and to provide clarity for the benefit of the users of the Plan.

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		<p>2005 during cabling works close to Cobb's Hall. The most important Roman site is perhaps the probable Roman burial barrow at Aldington Knoll. This Scheduled Monument consisted of an earthen barrow that contained at least one burial. A probable mixed inhumation/cremation Roman cemetery was found at Postling Green in 1914 and Roman flue tiles and bricks were found in April 1935 and 1936 during construction of a tennis court at New Haytors. Fragments of brick, Romano-British in date, were found at Marwood Farm in the 1960s. Finally, cropmarks of possible Roman walled cemetery have been seen from Forge Hill, Aldington. Taken together, these sites show the importance of the area in the Roman period and the considerable potential for further discoveries. For more recent periods, there is of course much more information. The area contains almost 30 historic buildings dating to the medieval period including Grade I listed buildings at St Martin's and St Rumwold's churches. Other buildings include farms and barns, high status buildings and cottages. Archaeological sites include the former site of St Leonard's church, the church at Hurst, ruined apparently by fire since 1530. The most imposing monument from the post medieval period is the Royal Military Canal, constructed between 1804 and 1809, a scheduled</p>		

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		monument and still a highly visible marker in the landscape.”		
PM2	Page 21	<p><u>Policy AB1 – Green and Blue Infrastructure and Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain</u></p> <p>Delete Clauses A and B in full, and replace with:</p> <p><b>“A. Proposals should be designed to create, conserve, enhance and manage green and blue spaces. They should connect chains of green and blue infrastructure, as identified on the Policies Maps, with the aim of delivering a measurable biodiversity net gain of 20%, where possible, but at a minimum, a net gain of at least 10%. The measurable Biodiversity Net Gain must be demonstrated by utilising the current Defra biodiversity metric. Where this is not demonstrated, permission for planning or for change should be refused unless other material planning considerations demonstrate the need for development.”</b></p> <p>Clause C – delete the first sentence of text and replace with:</p> <p><b>“B. Measures to secure Biodiversity Net Gain will be approved by the Borough Council, in consultation with the Parish Council and other consultees, and will include arrangements for the monitoring of</b></p>	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	To meet the basic conditions and to provide clarity for the benefit of the users of the Plan.

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		<p><b>post-development habitat management for a minimum of 30 years, in accordance with the Environment Act 2021."</b></p> <p>Clause C – replace the word “biodiversity” in the last line of text with “<b>Biodiversity Net Gain</b>”.</p> <p>Clause D to become <b>Clause C</b>.</p>		
PM3	Page 30	<p><u>Policy AB2 – Managing the Environmental Impact of Development</u></p> <p>Clause B – amend the words “regarding Stodmarsh Special Area Conservation/ Special Protection Area” to read “<b>regarding the Stodmarsh Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Special Protection Area (SPA)</b>”.</p>	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	For accuracy and to provide clarity for the benefit of the users of the Plan.
PM4	Pages 34, 35, 37, 108, 118, 119 and 125.	<p><u>Policy AB3 – Local Green Space</u></p> <p>Amend Policy title to read “<b>Local Green Spaces</b>”.</p> <p>Amend Policy text to read “<b>eight green spaces</b>” in the first line of text.</p> <p>Delete the Site 5 – Calleywell Field from the list of sites within the Policy text, from paragraph 4.38 (at Page 35), from Figure 7 (at Page 37) and from Appendix A (at Pages 108, 118 and 119).</p> <p>Delete the second paragraph of Policy text in full and replace with:</p>	Agree to modify the text and maps as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	To ensure general conformity with national policy and guidance to meet the basic conditions.

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		<p><b>“Development proposals in the eight designated Local Green Spaces listed above and defined on Figure 7 will be managed in accordance with national policy for Green Belts.”</b></p> <p>Delete the Location map at the foot of Page 125 in Appendix A.</p>		
PM5	Page 44	<p><u>Policy AB5 – Dark Skies</u></p> <p>Criterion i) – delete the word “absolutely”.</p> <p>Criterion v) – replace the word “or” in the first line of text with <b>“and”</b>.</p>	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	To meet the basic conditions and to provide clarity.
PM6	Pages 50 and 54	<p><u>Policy AB6 – Residential Windfall Development</u></p> <p>Clause B i) – delete the existing text in full and replace with <b>“it is a site no larger than 1.0 hectare in size, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 70;”</b>.</p> <p>Clause B ii)- delete the existing text in full and replace with <b>“it is located within easy walking distance of services and facilities within Aldington village, including local bus stops, as shown on Figure 13; and”</b>.</p> <p>Clause B iv) – delete the words “in physical and/or visual coalescence and loss of” and replace with <b>“the loss of character and”</b>.</p>	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	To ensure general conformity with the Ashford Local Plan 2030, national policy and guidance to meet the basic conditions.

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		<p><u>Figure 13</u></p> <p>1. Delete 800 metre "dotted circle", and reference to it within the notation panel.</p> <p>Add location of all bus stops within Aldington village and on the roads leading to/from the village served by bus service 125, as shown in the Parish Council's response dated 20 March 2024.</p>		
PM7	Page 56	<p><u>Policy AB7 – Meeting Local Housing Needs</u></p> <p>Clause A i) – Delete the third and fourth sentences of text and replace with "<b>The provision, mix and tenures of affordable housing to be provided within the Plan area should reflect the requirements set out in Policy HOU1 in the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030, including the provision of First Homes in accordance with national policy;</b>"</p>	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	To ensure general conformity with the Ashford Local Plan 2030 (specifically Policy HOU1 'Affordable Housing') to meet the basic conditions.
PM8	Page 79	<p><u>Policy AB12 – Sustainable Travel</u></p> <p>1. Amend the reference to Figure 20 in Clause B of the Policy text to read "<b>Figure 19</b>".</p> <p>2. Clause C – replace the word "or" in the first line of text with "<b>and/or</b>".</p>	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	To provide clarity for the benefit of the users of the Plan.



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		3. Clause E – amend the word "bike" to read " <b>bicycle</b> " in the first line of text.		
PM9	Pages 83-86	<u>Policy AB13 – Public Car Parking</u> Clause B – delete the words “, as shown in Figures 20 and 21,” Page 84 – delete paragraphs 7.22 and 7.23. Pages 85 and 86 – delete Figures 20 and 21 and amend the listing on Page 5 accordingly.	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	To meet the basic conditions and to provide clarity for users of the Plan.
PM10	Page 93	<u>Policy AB17 – Supporting Flexible Workspaces and Working from Home</u> Clause B – 3 <sup>rd</sup> line of text - amend the words “where in conformity with other policies within the Local Plan.” to read “ <b>where such proposals conform with other relevant policies in this Plan and in the adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030, or its successor Plan.</b> ”	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	To provide clarity for the benefit of the users of the Plan.
PM11	Page 95	<u>Section 9 – Implementation and Plan Review</u> Paragraph 9.4 - add new fourth sentence of text to read as follows: <b>“The emerging review of the Ashford Local Plan will cover the period from 2030 up to 2041, and any future review of this Plan will need to take into account the policies and proposals within the new</b>	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	To provide clarity for the benefit of the users of the Plan.

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		<p><b>Local Plan, which is expected to be adopted in 2026.”</b></p> <p>Existing fourth sentence of text will become the fifth sentence of text.</p>		
PM12	Page 9	<p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p>Add beneath Figure 3 a note as follows:</p> <p><b>“A number of the Policies in the Plan have specific policy-related notations on the Policies Maps which indicates that the policies should be read alongside the Policies Maps.”</b></p>	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	To provide clarity for the benefit of the users of the Plan
PM13	Throughout the document	Refer to the December 2023 version of the NPPF and update paragraph references where they have changed.	Agree to modify the text as indicated to comply with the examiner's recommendation.	For accuracy and to provide clarity for the benefit of the users of the Plan.