

APPENDIX A: Indicative Housing Figure

4.1 The NPPF (§70) states that: *“Where it is not possible to provide a requirement figure for a neighbourhood area, the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure ... (and) should take into account factors such as the latest evidence of local housing need, the population of the neighbourhood area and the most recently available planning strategy of the local planning authority.”*

4.2 The Local Planning Authority has been unwilling to provide such figures for Neighbourhood Plans in its area in advance of the publication of its draft Local Plan. However, it has advised qualifying bodies that they may use a 10% increase in their housing stock as a starting point to inform any housing supply policies, even in locations in its Green Belt.

4.3 At Ashley Green a 10% increase in its housing stock of 160 homes (based on Census 2021) would require 1.6 dwellings per annum, i.e. 16 homes over the 10 year plan period.

4.4 At Whelpley Hill, where there is a housing stock of 150 homes (based on Census 2021), a 10% increase this would result in a total figure of 1.5 per annum, i.e. 15 homes over the plan period. This is because its effective population includes homes in the village that lie outside its defined Local Plan Policy GB4 areas, most notably at Whelpley Hill Park. This is considered a more appropriate basis for determining the sustainability credentials of the village and its housing supply position.

4.5 There is no common practice yet for evidencing why and to what extent a departure from that number can be justified, but it seems sensible to take account of:

- the current (or planned) status of the settlement in the hierarchy of the planning authority area – there is no adopted settlement hierarchy policy in the development plan although both villages are identified as two of many washed over villages covered by Policy GB4 where limited infilling is appropriate, rather than being inset per the main towns or being too small to warrant being covered by Policy GB4;
- the relative scale of the settlements - here, both villages are among the smallest covered by Policy GB4 with fewer services than many others, e.g. a community centre, pub and church but no local shop or school;
- the PC acknowledges the inclusion of an updated settlement hierarchy in Part B of the Local Plan Regulation 18 publication by BC. Notably, Ashley Green has been classified as a "Tier 5 Medium/Small Village." Based on the available information, it appears that Whelpley Hill has been incorporated as part of Ashley Green. The document further suggests that the BC's spatial approach to meeting housing targets does not heavily rely on small villages. Instead, the emphasis will be on more developed areas with existing infrastructure. The approach taken towards the AGNP remains consistent with that of BC;

- the location of the settlement in respect of proximity to higher order settlements, which are far more suited to accommodating housing growth – the villages are close to the towns of Chesham and Berkhamstead (and the large village of Bovingdon immediately to the east of Whelpley Hill); whilst this means they have reasonable public transport services connecting to both towns, those towns and Bovingdon offer significantly more sustainable opportunities for growth based on their existing social, commercial and transport infrastructure; and
- the nature and scale of landscape and heritage factors that shape the essential character of the settlement and their sensitivity to growth – Ashley Green village lies within the wider setting of the Chilterns National Landscape to its south and west but also has a cherished landscape setting to its north (in long views to Hockeridge and Pancake Woods) and to the east (views across the sweeping countryside to White Hill); neither are visible from Whelpley Hill.

4.6 On this basis, it has been concluded that a suitable indicative housing figure should be 16 homes at Ashley Green, and 15 homes at Whelpley Hill.

