Appendix 3

Challock Parish Council
Planning Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose of this Policy

This policy sets out the role of Challock Parish Council ("the Parish Council") in relation to planning applications and explains how the Council will consider, discuss, and respond to planning consultations.

The Parish Council's role is to represent the views and interests of the local community by providing local knowledge, identifying relevant concerns, contributing constructively to the planning process, and ensuring that local issues are properly considered.

The Parish Council is a consultee in the planning process. It is notified of planning applications and amendments to applications within the parish and has the opportunity to submit comments to the Local Planning Authority, which is Ashford Borough Council.

The Parish Council does not determine planning applications. Decisions are made by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with planning legislation, national policy, the adopted Local Plan, and other relevant material considerations.

2. The Role of the Parish Council

The Parish Council will:

- Provide local knowledge and information relevant to planning applications.
- Identify and raise planning-related concerns affecting the parish.
- Consider applications objectively and provide informed comments.
- Add value to the planning process by highlighting local circumstances.
- Engage with Ward Councillors where appropriate.
- Seek the views of parish residents, particularly where an application is considered significant or controversial.

The Parish Council's comments represent the formally agreed view of the Council and must be based on relevant planning matters.

3. Consideration of Planning Applications

Prior to consideration at a Parish Council meeting, councillors will review the submitted plans, supporting documents, application details, and any relevant planning history.
Where appropriate, the Parish Council may consider information or advice from relevant statutory bodies, including (but not limited to):

- Historic England;
- Environment Agency;
- Highway Authority;
- Other relevant consultees.

The advice provided by statutory consultees will be considered as part of the overall planning assessment.
No individual councillor has authority to make decisions or representations on behalf of the Parish Council unless specifically authorised through a formally recorded Council resolution, an approved committee arrangement, or an adopted scheme of delegation.

4. Councillor Conduct and Authority

Individual councillors, including the Chair, Vice-Chair, or committee chairs, must not, unless expressly authorised by the Parish Council:

- Act independently on behalf of the Council regarding a planning application.
- State or imply that they represent the views of the Parish Council.
- Organise support for or opposition to an application on behalf of the Council.
- Draft, approve, amend, or submit planning representations on behalf of the Council.
- Instruct the Clerk to issue planning correspondence without Council authority.
- Contact applicants, agents, objectors, or Ashford Borough Council as representatives of the Parish Council.

Councillors may, however, listen to residents' views or make representations in a personal capacity. Where doing so, they must make it clear that they are not representing the Parish Council.
All official planning correspondence shall be issued by, or through, the Parish Clerk and shall reflect only the formally agreed position of the Parish Council.

5. Public Participation

Members of the public may comment on planning applications during the Open Forum section of a Parish Council meeting.
Residents may:

- Speak in support of an application;
- Raise concerns or objections;
- Provide local information relevant to the application.

Public comments must not interrupt the Council's later deliberations.
During deliberations, the Chair may invite members of the public to clarify factual information where necessary.
The Parish Council encourages residents who wish to comment on an application to submit their own individual representations directly to Ashford Borough Council.
Personal letters or emails setting out individual views are generally more effective than standardised or circulated objections.

6. Planning Applications Received Between Meetings

Where a planning application is received outside the normal Parish Council meeting cycle, the Parish Council will consider whether an extraordinary meeting is required.
An extraordinary meeting may be appropriate where:

- The application is controversial;
- There is significant public interest;
- The consultation deadline prevents consideration at the next scheduled meeting.

Where an extraordinary meeting is not considered necessary, councillors may submit their views to the Clerk by email. The Clerk will collate comments and submit them to Ashford Borough Council on behalf of the Parish Council.
Any such response will be reported to, and formally ratified by, the Parish Council at the next appropriate meeting.

7. Basis for Parish Council Comments

The Parish Council's comments must relate to genuine material planning considerations.
Relevant planning considerations include:

- Layout, scale, density, and design.
- The appearance of the development and the materials proposed.
- Impact on conservation areas, listed buildings, heritage assets, or other designated areas.
- Highway safety, access arrangements, and traffic generation.
- Parking provision.

- Flood risk and drainage.
- Pollution, contamination, noise, or odour impacts.
- Loss of privacy, overlooking, or unacceptable loss of daylight or sunlight.
- Landscape impact, loss of trees, and impact on the character of the area.
- Impact on local facilities and infrastructure.
- Cumulative impact of development.
- Relevant planning history and appeal decisions.
- National planning policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Policies contained within the adopted Ashford Local Plan and any relevant neighbourhood planning documents.

8. Matters Which Are Not Normally Material Planning Considerations

The following matters will not normally form the basis of Parish Council planning comments:

- The personal circumstances or history of an applicant.
- Loss of a private view.
- Impact on property values.
- Commercial competition.
- Private rights of way.
- Land ownership disputes.
- Restrictive covenants or deeds.
- Private neighbour disputes.
- Ownership of land.
- Damage to private property.
- Construction noise or disturbance (unless it relates to a relevant planning condition or control issue).

The number of objections or expressions of support alone is not a material planning consideration. However, the planning issues raised within those representations may be relevant.

9. Parish Council Responses

Where the Parish Council submits a response of **"No Objection"**, this means that, having considered the relevant planning matters, the Council has identified no valid planning reason to object to the proposal.

A "No Objection" response does not necessarily indicate unconditional support for an application.

The Parish Council may still make recommendations for planning conditions where it considers these appropriate.

Planning conditions should only be recommended where they are:

- Necessary;
- Relevant to planning and the development proposed;
- Enforceable;
- Precise; and
- Reasonable in all other respects.

10. Planning Decisions

The majority of planning applications are determined by planning officers under delegated authority.
Planning officers will assess applications and make recommendations in accordance with the Local Planning Authority's procedures. The final decision is not made until the formal decision notice has been issued.
Some applications may be referred to the Planning Committee where they meet the criteria set out in Ashford Borough Council's scheme of delegation. This may include applications involving:

- Major development;
- Significant public interest;
- Complex or contentious planning issues;
- Conflict with adopted planning policy;
- The Council acting as applicant;
- Other circumstances specified within the Local Planning Authority's procedures.

11. Requesting Committee Determination

Where appropriate, the Parish Council may request that an application is considered by the Planning Committee rather than being determined under delegated authority. Such requests must be based on relevant planning matters and submitted in accordance with Ashford Borough Council's procedures.
The Parish Council recognises that its comments are one of many considerations taken into account by the Local Planning Authority. The submission of an objection does not guarantee refusal, and a decision may differ from the views expressed by the Parish Council.

12. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains consistent with current planning legislation, government guidance, and local authority procedures.

Appendix 4

Challock Parish Council Response to Planning Application PA/2026/1226

Land Northwest of Woodcock Cottage, 9 Orchard Lane and Grouse Cottage, 10 Orchard Lane, Challock

Proposal: Erection of three residential dwellings with associated access, parking, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements

Challock Parish Council has carefully considered Planning Application PA/2026/1226 and objects to the proposal.
The Council recognises the importance of delivering housing where appropriate; however, this development is considered unsuitable due to its location, landscape impact, highway concerns, biodiversity loss and the increasing pressure on Challock's limited infrastructure.
The site is partly outside the adopted Village Confines and lies wholly within the Kent Downs National Landscape. It currently forms an important open meadow at the edge of the village, contributing to the rural character of Orchard Lane, the surrounding countryside and the adjoining public bridleway. The proposed development would introduce substantial residential development, access roads, parking areas and domestic infrastructure, resulting in the urbanisation of an important rural location.
The proposal conflicts with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant Ashford Local Plan policies, including those relating to settlement boundaries, countryside protection, landscape character, biodiversity and sustainable development.

Landscape and Biodiversity

The Council considers that the development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the Kent Downs National Landscape. The loss of an established wildflower meadow, together with the introduction of buildings, lighting, vehicles and domestic features, would permanently alter the rural setting of Challock.
The site provides ecological value as habitat and a wildlife corridor. Although the applicant's Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment identifies mitigation measures, these cannot replace the loss of an established habitat. Should permission be granted, all recommended biodiversity enhancements must be secured through appropriate planning conditions.

The Council also remains concerned about the impact of the proposed access on protected trees, including the Common Ash tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order.

Highway Safety and Access

The Parish Council has longstanding concerns regarding highway safety in Challock. Orchard Lane is a narrow rural road, and the surrounding highway network already experiences pressures from increased traffic associated with recent housing growth. Pedestrian facilities remain inadequate, with limited safe routes to village facilities and public transport. Further development will increase vehicle movements and place additional pressure on an already constrained highway network.

The proposed internal access arrangements also raise concerns. Although each dwelling has four parking spaces, together with visitor parking, parked vehicles may restrict access for refuse vehicles, emergency services and deliveries. Environmental Services have already identified concerns regarding access for larger vehicles. The Council is not satisfied that safe and unrestricted access has been demonstrated.

Sustainability and Infrastructure

The Council does not consider the proposal represents sustainable development. Residents of Challock are heavily reliant on private cars due to limited public transport and the distance to essential services.
The village has experienced significant housing growth since 2015, with over 120 additional dwellings completed or approved, but without equivalent improvements to infrastructure.
Existing concerns include:

- recurring water supply interruptions;
- electricity supply failures;
- pressure on local services, schools and community facilities;
- limited public transport provision.

The cumulative impact of continued small-scale developments is placing increasing pressure on the village and should be given significant weight in determining this application.

The Council supports the principle that future development should contribute towards infrastructure improvements through appropriate mechanisms, including developer contributions where available.

Residential Amenity

The proposed dwellings would be located close to existing properties, including single-storey neighbouring homes. The Council considers that the scale and position of the development could result in overlooking, loss of privacy, increased noise, lighting impacts and an unacceptable change to the rural character currently experienced by neighbouring residents.

Planning Balance

The Parish Council acknowledges that housing delivery is an important planning objective. However, the limited benefit of three additional market dwellings must be balanced against the significant harm identified, including:

- development beyond the adopted Village Confines;
- harm to the Kent Downs National Landscape;
- loss of ecological habitat;
- unresolved access and highway safety concerns;
- pressure on already constrained infrastructure;
- impacts on neighbouring residential amenity.

The Parish Council considers that these adverse impacts significantly outweigh the limited benefits of the proposal.

Challock Parish Council therefore respectfully recommends that Ashford Borough Council refuses planning permission for Application PA/2026/1226.

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