

## **25/02547/FP, Land off Station Road, Ashwell: s106 claim**

### **Response to developer questions**

Ashwell Parish Council has been asked by Anne McDonald of NHDC to respond to points raised in an email to her from Stuart Booth of JWPC Ltd, who is acting for the developer, Beck Homes (UK) Ltd, on 25 March 2026, seeking clarification/justification of the amount sought in Ashwell Parish's request for a s106 contribution.

The Parish Council submitted its s106 request to North Herts Council in its document named '25\_02547\_FP\_S106\_Claim260226\_01\_.pdf'.

Mr Booth has made a comparison with the contribution within the draft s.106 agreement for a 14 dwelling application at Hunts Ridge, Ashwell Street and asked why a pro-rata amount has not been sought for the subject application.

### **CIL regulations and policy**

The way in which the CIL Regulations 2010 No. 948, 122(2) (as amended) apply to this application is explained in the submitted document on page 1 and references to the NPPF and Local Plan policies (including the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan) are on page 2, so we will not repeat them again here.

### **Calculation**

Pages 2 and 3 of the s.106 request document explain why a contribution is necessary. In brief it is because current facilities have reached their sustainable limits for the population and increasing the number of dwellings creates a need for more.

A contribution is also necessary to deliver cultural, leisure, sport and recreation facilities in order to comply with NPPF and Local Plan policies (including the Ashwell Neighbourhood Plan), see CIL regulations and policy, above.

The calculation method considered the most appropriate begins by looking at the existing level of provision for residents which, taking into account the level of demand, is currently at capacity. As a starting point it is reasonable to expect new residents to enjoy a similar level of new provision.

Available facilities have an asset value. The assets for general public use include:

- The Village Hall
- Parish Church
- Parish Church Room
- United Reformed Church and hall
- Recreation Ground
- Recreation Ground Pavilion
- Small Gains playing field and pavilion
- The Cottage Garden
- Ashwell Springs.

Their value (after making reduction for religious use where relevant) is conservatively estimated to be £4m at Dec 2025 prices - at the very least.

The following elements of the calculation recognise that village facilities are at capacity and that the increased number of residents, their family circumstances, age profile and expectations also drive the need for new facilities.

- *Number:* existing assets serve a population estimated by ONS to be 1,901 in 2020. Building 36 dwellings, mostly for family use, would add a conservative estimate of 92 people to the population, or 4.8%.

Therefore, the calculation starts with a need for a 4.8% increase in asset availability. However, the other driving factors justify a higher level and better quality of availability owing to the nature of the proposed development, rather than one based on population increase alone

- *Family circumstances:* the proposed dwellings are likely to have higher levels of occupancy than the village average owing to the presence of children, including the increasingly common stay-at-home adult children. This is not fully reflected in the 4.8% population increase calculation because that percentage is based on the existing occupancy level in the village. The ONS identifies it as being lower than average owing to the presence of older residents in single or dual occupation.
- *Age:* the proposed development would appeal to occupants with families who are 'trading up' and those who are 'healthy older' They tend to present a higher demand in the areas of need covered by this claim. Occupants would be more likely to engage in active pursuits that need more space, changing facilities and storage of equipment than an older cohort who engage in activities such as yoga, pilates or art.
- *Expectations:* the Station Road development would attract facility users tending to be from a higher income group and with families. In contrast to existing users accustomed to present standards they would have different – higher – expectations. This would have to be reflected in the quality, range, flexibility and finish of any new provision
- *Existing facilities:* because these are at capacity and not able to accommodate further demand, a population increase would create a step change involving the major renewal of an important village asset or assets. This would be more costly than simple adaptations to current assets to extend their capacity.

We believe that a modest increase of 20% to the number purely calculated from a pro-rata population increase is justified to reflect the above.

In summary:

Existing asset value	4,000,000
Additional assets required (pro-rata population increase)	192,000
Additional assets required (likely occupants' profile, scale and nature of the development and capacity of existing assets)	38,400
Total s106 request	230,400

### Comparison with the Hunts Close request

The developer's agent makes a comparison with the Hunts Close approval that incorporates a s106 agreement including a Parish contribution. The two developments are different and so a simple pro-rata calculation of a sum based on bedrooms at Hunts Close and the Station Road site is inappropriate.

First, the Hunts Close s.106 agreement included the obligation to provide amenity land making up what we estimate to be circa 40% of the development site in addition to the monetary contributions. At Station Road there is a request to make available and preserve amenity land but we have estimated this to be for a significantly smaller proportion of the site: approximately 30%. The amenity land in both cases has a value to the community, arguably more so in a more central location at Hunts Close.

Second, the scale and nature of Hunts Close is less likely to attract families and more likely to attract older downsizers. The size of Hunts Close dwellings and their proximity to the centre of the village makes them particularly attractive to this group. Consequently, there is no requirement to add to the request on the grounds of the scale and nature of Hunts Close because the occupancy and need profile is likely to be the same as the rest of the village.

Taking both of these factors into consideration accounts for the difference between the current s106 request and a simple pro-rata calculation based on bedrooms.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, Ashwell Parish Council's s106 request reflects a clear and evidenced need arising from the Station Road development. Existing community, cultural, leisure, and recreational facilities are already operating at or near capacity, meaning that additional population growth will require not only more space but also qualitative improvements to maintain an appropriate standard of provision. This need is rooted in both the calculated population uplift of approximately 4.8% and the specific characteristics of the likely new residents, who are expected to place disproportionately higher demands on local assets due to family size, age profile and activity levels.

The assessment recognises that Ashwell's community assets have a substantial existing value - estimated at £4 million - and that extending provision in line with both population growth and development-driven demand produces a total justified contribution of £230,400. This figure also reflects the fact that present facilities cannot simply absorb incremental increases in use: meaningful renewal or expansion will be required to deliver the necessary capacity and quality uplift.

Finally, comparisons with the Hunts Close development demonstrate that a pro rata approach based solely on bedroom numbers would be inappropriate. Hunts Close differs materially in both its built form and its expected occupier profile, and it also delivered substantially greater amenity land directly as part of its s106 obligations in a central location. For these reasons, the Parish Council's request is proportionate, justified, and consistent with policy expectations, ensuring that essential village infrastructure can continue to meet the needs of both existing and new residents