11th December 2014

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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 The study area</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Planning policy context</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 New Local Plan development and consultation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Background information</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Historic development and conservation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Archaeology</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Geology, topography, landform and drainage</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Flood risk</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Key views and landscape setting</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Access, Movement and Transport</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 The Community and Existing facilities</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 Ecology</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9 Infrastructure and utilities</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10 Summary opportunities and constraints</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Summary of meeting with Town Council</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1: Relevant local planning policies</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3: Ecological Scoping Survey</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4: Engineering studies</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5: Report on the future of Princes Risborough</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Public Consultation Event 19-20th September 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design have been appointed by Wycombe District Council to undertake a study exploring the potential expansion of the market town of Princes Risborough. Princes Risborough lies to the south of Aylesbury and to the north west of High Wycombe in the northern half of the district. It lies at the foot of the Chiltern Hills and is adjacent to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It has a population of 8,000 and approximately 3,500 homes at present.

The study area lies to the west of the existing town and is separated by the existing train line. The study area was selected as a potential area for expansion as part of the development of the new Local Plan. Much of the district is highly restricted in terms of available land for development due to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that covers much of the district and Green Belt policy that also protects large areas of land. The land to the west of the Princes Risborough is one of the few areas not covered by these designations and as such is being explored as an area with potential to provide new homes.

The intention is for the study to inform the development of the emerging Local Plan and present a cohesive vision for the future development and growth of Princes Risborough. A number of prospective planning applications have been made within this area and part of the role of this study is to look at a comprehensive strategy for the growth of the town, ensuring that new development brings the maximum benefits for the town. The study will also look at the infrastructure required to meet the needs of the existing town and potential new development.

This background report has been prepared to summarise the background technical and physical information about the study area. It includes background information covering the following topics:

- Planning policy context;
- Historic development and constraints;
- Archaeology;
- Geology, topography, landform and drainage;
- Flood risk;
- Drainage and flooding;
- Key views and landscape;
- Access, movement and transport;
- The communities and existing facilities;
- Ecology;
- Infrastructure and utilities.

The next stage in the study will be to define a number of development principles for how the town could accommodate up to 2,500 homes up to 2031. The study will ultimately include an urban design framework based on a preferred growth scenario arising from these principles.

There have been a number of previous technical studies undertaken of the study area and this study has reviewed the existing information available and provided new information to further inform the study.

Alongside the production of the background studies and the preparation of the new Local Plan, a number of workshops and consultation events have taken place. The results of these events have provided useful background and feedback about the aspirations for the future development of Princes Risborough. Further consultation events will take place as part of this study that will build on the information gathered at the early stages and inform the final outcome.
### 1.1 The study area

The study area lies to the west of the town and consists of some 141 hectares. It is separated from the main built up area of the town by the railway line and is made up of a series of linked fields that are bisected by existing vehicular routes and pathways. Within the study area there are four ‘key sites’ that formed the basis for some of the options that were developed as part of the earlier Local Plan consultation work. These can be broadly split into four areas, Park Mill Farm to the south west of the study area, the Longwick Road employment area also known as the Hypnos site, the land north of Longwick Road and Mill Lane to the north east. The study area for this project has been expanded to include all of the land leading up to Lower Icknield Way.

New development could bring a number of opportunities for the existing town and part of the purpose of this study is to ensure that the maximum and most appropriate benefit for the town can be achieved.
1.2 Planning policy context

Princes Risborough is located within the northern part of Wycombe District. The current planning policy framework for Princes Risborough is made up of the following documents which form the Development Plan for Wycombe as whole:

- **Wycombe District Local Plan (2004):** This document was adopted in January 2004 and (combined with its extension in 2007) provides land use policies and proposals that were used to guide development up to 2011. Following the adoption of the Core Strategy (2008) and the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (2013) a number of the policies within the Local Plan were replaced by policies within these documents. A number of policies within the Local Plan are ‘saved’ to be used in the interim period before the new Local Plan is adopted.

- **Adopted Core Strategy (2008):** This document sets out the vision and spatial strategy for the district up to 2026.

- **Adopted Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (2013):** This document contains a mixture of development management and site specific policies which cover a number of topics. It aims to deliver important aspects of the strategy contained within the adopted Core Strategy.

- **Buckinghamshire Mineral and Waste Local Plans to 2016 (part retained) and Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy:** Work is currently underway to update the Mineral and Waste Local Plan which will provide more detail on minerals and waste planning matters for the district.

Key relevant policies for Princes Risborough from these documents are contained within Appendix 1 of this document. The key themes and principles for each document are summarised below and the site specific policies are shown on the adjacent plan.

**Saved Local Plan Policies (2004)**

The existing Local Plan for Wycombe is a consolidated version of the policy document that includes the policies that have been ‘saved’. A number of the Local Plan policies have been replaced by policies within the adopted Core Strategy.
Fig 1.2.1: Plan indicating the main relevant planning policy designations for the area
and the adopted Delivery and Site Allocations Plan. The intention is for the new Local Plan to supersede this policy document.

**Adopted Core Strategy (2008)**

The Core Strategy sets out key strategic policies and a vision for the future of Princes Risborough (and the district as a whole).

It contains a number of site specific policies for Princes Risborough. Policy CS6 states that Princes Risborough will be strengthened as a vibrant market town at the heart of a network of sustainable communities. Key themes for the policy include:

- Community
- Economy
- Transport and access
- Tourism
- Town centre
- Environment

**Adopted Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (2013)**

The Delivery and Site Allocations Plan seeks to:

- promote new development opportunities and change in the main town centres to support their continued economic vitality and viability and their vibrancy as places;

- secure more sustainable forms of development across the district through a number of specific development management policies.

The document identifies two specific site development opportunities for Princes Risborough, namely:

- Land fronting New Road - for small scale mixed-use development
- Land South of Horns Lane - providing an opportunity for mixed-use development providing the existing level of car parking can be retained.

**1.3 New Local Plan development and consultation**

A new Local Plan is currently being prepared by Wycombe District Council. This will set the housing numbers that will become the target for the district. It will also address other strategic issues including housing and mixed use allocations and policies for the protection and provision of employment land. It will review and as appropriate replace all remaining saved policies from the current Wycombe District Local Plan.

The new Local Plan has already been through a number of stages in its production. A number of background studies and research into particular topics has taken place to inform the development of the document. A series of strategic options based on identified issues and the outcomes of the research have been developed and were consulted on in January 2014. Three main options for Princes Risborough were explored that included the following:

- Low growth - 600 homes;
- Medium growth - 1000 homes; and
- Very major expansion - 2000-2500 homes.

**Consultation**

As part of the development of the new Local Plan the three options were consulted on in early 2014. The very major expansion option was the focus of the consultation event and the following is a summary of the feedback received from that event:

General comments that were supportive of growth at Princes Risborough included the following statements:

- Consultees observed that Princes Risborough can and should accommodate more people, and that the town, particularly the High Street, would benefit from growth.
- Growth at Princes Risborough was seen by some as a sensible option – there was some local support for the development of Park Mill Farm only as a proportionate increase for the town.
- Housing growth at Princes Risborough would be able to take advantage of planned improvements to rail services, making Princes Risborough more attractive to business
investment. Significant expansion would be needed at the railway station.

Overall need / Location

- There were strong opinions expressed that Princes Risborough does not need more housing.
- Many representations suggested that growth could go elsewhere: not only in the vicinity of Princes Risborough, like Terrick, Kimble and Lacey Green, but also in the rest of the district. It is better to locate homes in places with good job opportunities or transport links and so growth should be focused in the south of the district.
- There was a strong opinion that only brownfield land should be developed, or developed first – possibly to higher densities to relieve pressure on greenfield. Many felt that brownfield possibilities had not been fully explored.

Social

- There was an overwhelming concern that major growth at Princes Risborough would change the nature of the town permanently and adversely, and that it would be out of scale for this market town.
- Concern was expressed at the social impacts of fast growth – that new residents would fail to assimilate; that a large share of social housing would lead to an influx of ‘undesirables’ and accompanying social problems. Doubt was expressed that affordable housing would be for locals.
- More moderately, some views were keen to see the right social mix for the town.
- Some people felt that Princes Risborough was not a suitable place for development because of the higher proportion of elderly people in the population.

Economy

- There was very significant concern that Princes Risborough would not be able to attract the right number of jobs for the number of homes created, leading to Princes Risborough becoming a dormitory town and increased pressure on transport links.
- By contrast, it was suggested by some that a proactive approach to job creation could be pursued, after the manner of Thame.

Infrastructure

- There was very significant concern that infrastructure and services would not keep pace with development.
- There was concern that schools, doctor’s surgeries and other services were already at, or over, capacity and that future needs for these had been inadequately estimated. There was a lack of confidence that it would be delivered – either at all or at the right time. There was a strong desire to see infrastructure in place ahead of development.
- There was also a concern that sewage and drainage facilities would need to be upgraded.
- Not all types of infrastructure were listed in the Council’s material, so concern was expressed that these would be overlooked: such as pre-schools, nurseries and recreation for young people.

Integration and sprawl

- There was a strong view that development should not breach the railway line. Many felt that once this had been breached, there would be no natural limit to the town and a new strong perimeter would need to be identified. Many were concerned that Princes Risborough would sprawl and coalesce with neighbouring settlements like Longwick, the Kimbles, Monks Risborough and even Aylesbury.
- There was a concern that the Local Plan proposals would ‘not be the end of it’ – leading to a free-for-all on building.
- There was significant doubt that new development across the railway line could be successfully integrated with the existing town; it was felt that there was a risk that new infrastructure located in the new development would intensify separation, though at the same time new development would need to have good access to services so as to minimise dependence on the car.

Transport

- There was very significant concern that the local road network would not accommodate the increase in traffic.
associated with growth, particularly if commuter traffic increases because there aren’t enough local jobs for the new residents. The A4010 and A4129 were a particular concern, and the A4010 ‘blue-light’ route between the two hospitals was felt to be a particular risk.

There was a strong concern that growth at Princes Risborough would contribute to wider strategic transport problems, for example in Wycombe and on accessing the M40 in general; on the B4009 and the road network in Oxfordshire.

There was a lot of comment on the proposed relief route:
- Doubt was expressed that it would function properly, or that it could not be delivered, because of constraints like the railway bridges.
- Concern about impacts on the AONB, biodiversity and tranquillity, and on the Horsenden Conservation Area, together with some preference for constructing a wider bypass in the open countryside.
- There were safety concerns with the route via Summerleys Road; a need to recognise safe crossings for pedestrians and horses; and a need for footways on Shootacre Lane.
- People wanted more clarity on the form and function of the road – some wanting a full dual carriageway.
- Some were concerned that the relief road would have an adverse impact on town centre vitality, by diverting passing traffic.
- It was suggested that there would be heritage impacts, because parts of the proposed route are on pre-Roman roads.
- Even without the expansion of Princes Risborough, some felt the relief road was needed anyway because of growth at Milton Keynes and Thame.
- The upgrading of the B4009 would put inappropriate pressure on this route to the M40.
- Some felt the relief route would make it harder to access the railway station.
- There was concern that building a relief road would encourage infill development.
- Some concern was expressed that the relief road would lead to knock-on rat-running between Mill Lane and the B4009; and between Church Lane and Bridge St at Kimble.

Rail capacity was a moderately strong concern – that present commuter services from Princes Risborough are over-subscribed, and that there would be a need to expand car parking at the railway station.

There was overall moderately strong concern about pressure on parking, particularly in the town centre.

The impact of construction traffic due to development was a concern, particularly compounded by the threat of construction traffic related to HS2.

Some respondents were keen that development should support sustainable travel.

Retail

There was strong concern that the growth of Princes Risborough would have unfavourable impacts on the shopping offer.

Doubt was expressed that residents of the new development would use the High Street.

Citing the parade in Monks Risborough, there was concern that new retail might not work well.

Some were sceptical that the High Street could be saved because of changed shopping habits.

Some recognised the need for new shops but did not want to see retail chains.

Environment

There was a moderately strong concern that development would worsen flood impacts in general, partly through the loss of agricultural land but also through the introduction of new impermeable surfaces.

A more strategic concern emerged regarding the wider impact on the Thame river basin.

The impact on the setting of the Chilterns AONB should be minimised, especially visual impact.

Some felt that development would have an adverse impact on tourism by making the area less attractive to visitors and walkers.
There was concern at the loss of agricultural land with regard to capacity for food production.

There was some concern at overall impacts on wildlife.

There was a minor concern about the impact of light pollution from new development.

**Design Quality**

- Respondents were keen to see a high quality of design / high quality of development, with good space standards and allocation of green space.

- A ‘concentrated village concept’ should be developed, rather than a garden city approach, which is wasteful of space.

- Care should be taken in the treatment of any new urban edges.

- Key principles should be developed for design, including the use of locally distinctive and appropriate building materials. The character and quality of the existing town should be respected.

**Development / housing Mix**

- Development at Princes Risborough should be mixed-use, to promote containment and minimise reliance on the car.

- The settlement should be self-contained and integrated with the appropriate services, infrastructure and employment.

- There should be a good mix of housing, including housing for local people.

**Heritage**

- The Alscot Conservation Area should be protected by a buffer on all sides.

**Ongoing stakeholder involvement**

The intention is that this study will explore the technical and urban design issues concerned with the expansion of Princes Risborough in more detail and inform the development of the new Local Plan.

Further consultation will take place with key stakeholders. It is important that the new Local Plan reflects residents’ views and aspirations for their town.
2 Background information

2.1 Historic development and conservation

Historic development

There is evidence of settlement at Princes Risborough dating back to the Domesday survey of 1086, where it was known as Risborough and was a royal manor held by the King.

In the thirteenth century the King granted the manor to his eldest son, Edward Prince of Wales (known as the Black Prince). It was during this time that the town became known as Princes Risborough. The Black Prince’s manor house was located where the Mount car park is currently situated, believed to be to the north of the current car park and St Mary’s Church. There was also a royal hunting park to the west, partly occupied now by Manor Park Avenue. The Manor House or palace was demolished by 1750 and should not be confused with the present Manor House in Church Lane.

The town remained within the Royal Family until King Charles I sold it to the City of London in 1628 to in part satisfy the large debts of the Crown. It was at this point that the Manor’s long connection with the Crown of England finally came to an end.

The railway arrived in 1862 with Princes Risborough forming the junction for trains from London to Aylesbury and Oxford, followed later by the Watlington Branch, this led to development and expansion of the town nearby. The Great Central Railway arrived in the 1890’s linking Princes Risborough to Marylebone Station in London.

The Parish did not expand largely beyond its 18th century limits until the post WW2 period when the town expanded substantially. The historic mapping on the opposite page shows the evolution and growth of the town.

Fig 2.1.1: St Mary’s Church located close to the site of the original Manor House

Fig 2.1.2: St Dunstan’s Church, located towards Monks Risborough

Fig 2.1.3: St Teresa’s Church built in the 1930’s
**Heritage and Conservation**

Princes Risborough has a number of conservation areas located within the town and study area. These are shown on the adjacent plan and listed below.

- Alscot Conservation Area
- Askett Conservation Area
- Monks Risborough Conservation Area
- Whiteleaf Conservation Area
- Princes Risborough Conservation Area
- Horsenden Conservation Area

**Alscot Conservation Area**

The most relevant conservation area (CA) that is within the study area is the Alscot conservation area. The small hamlet of Alscot lies to the north west of the town and is accessed off the Longwick Road. The Alscot conservation area Character Survey (1997) outlines the following key characteristics for the CA:

- The area has a degree of containment or enclosure from the surrounding countryside due to the restricted views out from the hamlet;
- Flint walling with red brick dressing features prominently, most notably along the roadside as you approach the hamlet but also featured at various points throughout the area;
- There is a simplicity in form of the buildings, the rustic nature of the buildings and the use of vernacular materials. There is little adornment to buildings which are simple in style and form.
- A small stream runs to the north-west of Alscot Lodge, this contributes to the setting of the buildings in the hamlet and adds to the rural character of the area.

![Fig 2.1.8: Alscot Hamlet - Flint walling with red brick dressing are prominent throughout the hamlet](image-url)
Fig 2.1.9: Plan indicating the main heritage assets within the study area

Note: The Strategic Area of Search reflects the extent of our study area, not the extent of future development.
The town centre and Princes Risborough Conservation Area

The town centre is the historic heart of Princes Risborough and is a focal point for many of the town’s activities and facilities. It has retained much of its historic character through the various phases of expansion and development that the town has seen. It is seen by many to be representative of the character of the town as a whole. It is therefore key that any expansion of Princes Risborough will need to ensure that the town centre remains at the heart of the settlement and that its historic character is retained.

The town centre is busy and popular both with residents of Princes Risborough and also the smaller settlements nearby. This is in line with its policy classification of a ‘Tier 2’ town, which means that it serves the town itself and also its wider rural catchment area. Taking due consideration of its characteristics and what makes it unique and special are therefore essential when thinking about a potential expansion to the town.

The town centre is close to the study area and is linked via the Longwick Road. New development could potentially influence and change the nature of the town centre through increased use, footfall and pressure on existing facilities such as parking. New development can also help to support the town centre and ensure that it remains an active and thriving centre.

Princes Risborough Conservation Area

The town centre is within the Princes Risborough Conservation Area, the Conservation Area naturally falls into two parts, the more dense town centre and a more open north part focused on the parish church and the Manor House. The following key characteristics are noted within the Princes Risborough Conservation Area Character Survey:

The town centre

- The town centre is typified by almost continuous frontages that come to the back of the pavement edge;

- Streets radiate from the central area around Market Square;
The town has a classic market town layout with a wide high street leading into the triangular market square;

The predominant typology is Georgian, Victorian and early 19th Century buildings in brick with a few rendered or painted fronts and occasional evidence of the timber framed nature of the earlier town;

The historic burgage plots are still in evidence in parts of the town centre, some have been blurred through plot consolidation. These are an attractive feature of the town centre that add to its character and should be retained where possible.

Parish Church and Manor House

Much more open in character than the town centre and focused around three different areas:

- The area around Longwick Road roundabout which focuses on the 1930s Roman Catholic church and presbytery;
- the area around the 17th century red-brick Manor House set in generous grounds and the parish church of St Mary set within its churchyard.
- The scattered group of buildings to the south side of Church Street which includes church hall and the cottages on each side of the footpath to the west. These were the first buildings of the town.
2.2 Archaeology

An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of the study area has been undertaken by CgMS. The full report is included as Appendix 2 of this document and the main findings are summarised below.

The study area does not lie within an Archaeological Notification Area as identified by Wycombe District Council and there are no scheduled monuments, historic wrecks or historic battlefields that lie within the study site or its immediate vicinity. The hamlet of Alscot is within the study area and comprises a Conservation Area containing a total of six listed buildings. The bulk of the study area has remained largely undeveloped throughout its documented history, save for the industrial complex at the Hypnos Site off Longwick Road, Alscot Hamlet and the Kingsmead residential area. The Hypnos Site was first developed in the twentieth century and has been developed several times since, as such further archaeological investigation into this site is not required.

Previous archaeological survey work at Park Mill Farm has shown the presence of Iron Age settlement which will require archaeological excavation prior to development (Fig 2.2.1). Given the results from this site and the undeveloped nature of much of the study area it is reasonable to assume that similar phases of archaeological investigation will be required for the remainder of the area. A summary of heritage designations and findspots across the study area can be found on Fig.2.2.2.

The report recommends a number of mitigation measures in relation to understanding the development potential of the sites prior to submitting a planning application which are as follows:

- A geophysical survey across the study area;
- An archaeological trial trench evaluation of the study area depending on the results of the geophysical survey;
- Potential further excavation works within the study area informed by the results of the geophysical evaluation;
- Further archaeological excavation fieldwork relating to the Iron Age settlement activity identified towards the southwestern area of the Park Mill Farm.
Fig 2.2.2: Summary of cultural heritage designations (data from Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record)
2.3 Geology, topography, landform and drainage

Preliminary geotechnical and geoenvironmental risk assessments of the study area have been undertaken by Campbell Reith as part of this study to explore the constraints that the land form and geology of the study area present to development. The full reports are included as Appendix 4 of this document, and the following section summarises their findings.

Geotechnical and geoenvironmental constraints summary

The study area is located on the northern limb of the London Basin syncline. This lends the site to a complex and variable geology made up of a mixture of chalk based soils. There are two unnamed watercourses which traverse the study area and flow west to meet a third watercourse outside of the study area. The offsite watercourse has been known to flood, meaning that this area of the site is prone to shallow groundwater, particularly near the watercourses. The formation of foundations and the feasibility of soakaways may be impacted by this. It is recommended that these areas (which are likely to coincide with the surface water features) are avoided where possible to avoid incurring expensive development costs.

The Hypnos site is located on a historic land fill from the 1970’s which will likely present some constraint to residential development. The extent of landfilling can be seen on Fig 2.3.2. Ideally residential dwellings should be a minimum of 50m from an actively (or historic) gassing landfill, though it is possible to develop closer to landfill if sufficient ground investigation data is obtained. In order to develop the site, further investigative work would be required to ensure there is sufficient understanding of the landfill’s engineering characteristics, material composition and any necessary gas protection measures. For the purposes of this study it is assumed that in order to accommodate residential development within this area further investigation and remediation works would be required. A remediation strategy would require consultation and approval by the Environment Agency in order to ensure that the area is suitable for residential development.

If the site received waste as an un-engineered landfill this may have led to groundwater contamination from landfill leachate and ground gas generation. Both have potentially significant development costs, but are currently unknown. Further investigation would be required prior to submitting a planning application.

The site was also a sewage works and is still currently industrial in nature so it is likely that soil quality and groundwater quality in this site will generally be poor and may require remediating to meet human health criteria for residential dwellings with gardens.

Fig 2.3.1: Plan indicating the topography, LiDAR and overland flow paths for the study area

The study area is considered to have a high sensitivity in respect to hydrogeology. This sensitivity is based on the presence of an unconfined principal aquifer within the study area of intermediate vulnerability.

In summary there are a number of geotechnical hazards that could have significant impacts on the cost of design and construction. It is likely that conventional shallow foundations may be acceptable for 2-3 storey buildings across the study area. However, it is likely that appropriate
measures would need to be adopted to accommodate the shrink/swell behaviour of the soils and shallow groundwater. It is not recommended that any structures are founded on Made Ground or Alluvium. For further information refer to Appendix 4: Technical Note G1.

**Topography and landform**

The main part of the town is located at the base of the Chiltern Hills escarpment. The hills provide a backdrop to the town and offer significant views across the town and out into the wider countryside. The study area forms part of the undulating low-lying landscape of the Longwick Vale. The town itself is relatively flat with some small level changes as you move through the town.

In order to assess the suitability of the study area for development, LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data has been obtained and used to extract the one metre contours shown on the adjacent topography drawing. LiDAR is an optical remote sensing technology that can measure distance through laser technology.

The study area is relatively flat, gentle undulations appear towards Alscot, the stream that runs through the area and the area near Longwick Road. The flat topography of part of the study area means it will be able to accommodate development without too much constraint. The areas of greater undulation and openness are more sensitive to development due to their greater visibility from the Chilterns AONB.
2.4 Flood risk

The study area is situated just to the north of the Chilterns which are the northern outcrop of the London Basin syncline as shown in figure 2.4.1 below. As a result of the dramatic topography, groundwater emerges from geological strata which overlay the Gault and Upper Greens and Formations resulting in a high risk of surface water in the streams covering the area. In extreme weather conditions, emerging surface water flows across the study area seeking the lowest level in its travel towards the nearest stream. The nature of these flows is a result of a complex geology which is set out in the accompanying Technical Note G1 in Appendix 4 of this report.

There are two watercourses which traverse the study area and there are also a number of overland flow routes shown in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). These are shown in figure 2.3.1 on page 18. It is important to reflect on the comment in the SFRA that these overland flow routes are not definitive or precise because they can be easily impacted by local features which cause floodwaters to seek alternative routes. Development of the study area would need to take into account the streams and their associated Flood Risk Zones as well as the potential for overland flows and the need to attenuate rainfall falling on the area itself. This will make the study area more constrained than normal and this is likely to lead to some loss of development area to allow for mitigation and could also result in increased development costs.

During the 2013/14 winter a period of heavy and prolonged rainfall was experienced throughout the region which resulted in surface water and groundwater flooding in various locations with Princes Risborough. Four flooding incidents were recorded in Princes Risborough and a further three incidents in Monks Risborough. Surface water flooding also occurred on Crowbrook Road, Kingsmead, Longwick Road, Lower Icknield Way and Mill Lane. None of these events were recorded within either Flood Zone 2 or 3 (see figure 2.4.2 flood risk zone map overleaf) and were remote from any watercourses.

As noted above there are interrelated drainage issues within the study area which would require developers to develop technical solutions in accordance with the EA’s requirements and following some or all of the following development principles:

- Sustainable drainage principles must be followed in accordance with best practice restricting flows and delivering better water quality. It is unlikely that infiltration will be suitable or practicable due to ground conditions so developers would need to attenuate flows on site and apply source control techniques to restrict flows off site.

- There are a variety of attenuation techniques but due to high groundwater it is likely that storage ponds will be widely used. It will be important to design these in tandem with landscape design as a blue green network so that additional flooding can occur in extreme events in landscape areas rather than housing areas.

- Consideration will need to be given to passage of overland flows through the study area and the inter-relationship of these flows with the attenuated storage. Typically this is likely to lead to lower density developments than normal as more land will need to be allocated to water storage and flood routing.

- Some areas of the site may need to be raised to ensure that built development is protected to an adequate amount from impact or overland flows. Typically this might be 200mm to 300mm.

Reference has been made to the Environment Agency Flood Mapping for the Princes Risborough area and also the Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment published in May 2014. The Environment Agency (EA) flood records and mapping show that the majority of the potential development land is not affected by fluvial flooding. However the Environment Agency Flood Zone map shows there are two small areas of the study area that are within Flood Zone 3. These areas are located in the southern most corner of the land and in the vicinity of Alscot Lane and Longwick Road. In both cases the flooding is associated with local watercourses.
Fig 2.4.1: The London Basin syncline

River Ouse  Newport  Pagnell  Dunstable  St Albans  River Colne  Watford  River Thames  Westminster  Croydon

Vertical exaggeration approx x40

QUATERNARY
PALAEOGENE and NEOGENE
Chalk Group
Upper Greensand Formation
Gault formation
Lower Greensand Formation
Wealden Group

Portlans and Purbeck formations / groups
Ancholme and Corallian groups
Interior and Great Oolite Groups
Liss Group
TRIASSIC
PALAEOZOIC rocks of London Platform
Fault
Fig 2.4.2: Plan indicating the extent of the flood risk zones 2 and 3, and areas of flooding.
2.5 Key views and landscape setting

Landscape setting

The study area forms part of the undulating low-lying landscape of the Longwick Vale. The area is an attractive relatively enclosed landscape consisting of medium-large mostly arable fields and small areas of pasture/paddock on flat ground. The boundaries are mostly vegetated with hedges, trees and scrub. The railway embankments are vegetated and provide a significant amount of screening between the study area and the existing built up area of Princes Risborough. Expansive views to and from the Chilterns escarpment are a characteristic feature of the area.

Within the view from the escarpment there are a number of things that soften the prospect of the existing town in the landscape.

- The topography and the irregular nature of the built edge to the south of the town breaks up this side of the town;
- There are some mature areas of planting along this edge that provide a planted screen to housing; and
- There are localised areas of planting within the town that soften the hard nature of the more built up areas.

The existing stream and the landscape associated with this is a prominent feature in this view. Land that is between this landscape feature and the existing town is less sensitive in views from the AONB due to it being contained by this feature and because this area of land is seen in the context of the town rather than within the rural backdrop. The area to the north east of the stream is more sensitive in views as the ground is at a higher level in this location.

A ‘Landscape Assessment of Strategic Sites’ (2014) was produced as part of the evidence base to support the development of options for the new Local Plan. Three sites that are within the study area were assessed as part of this report:

- Longwick Road
- Mill Lane
- Park Mill Farm

The key findings for each of these sites are summarised below:

Land at Longwick Road - overall site sensitivity is moderate. Some of the characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from development. Although the landscape may have some ability to absorb development, it is likely to cause some adverse change in landscape character.

Structural vegetation is confined to the boundaries of the fields. The robust hedgerows and trees along the field boundaries are characteristic landscape elements and sensitive to development. The site provides an important gap between Alscot and Princes Risborough also making it sensitive to development.
Guidelines and mitigation for development:

- conserve and enhance the structural vegetation of trees and hedgerows along field boundaries and stream respectively;
- retain the setting of the Alscot Conservation Area by providing an appropriate gap between the hamlet and any potential development;
- conserve and enhance Alscot stream by improving stream habitats and retaining appropriate buffers to the watercourse in the northern parts of the site;
- carefully consider the impact of roofscapes, design and development density on views down from the Chiltern escarpment;
- retain footpath links across the site;
- retain views to the escarpment and historic features of the town such as the spire of St Mary's Church;
- ensure that any potential development is of a scale and character that reflects the site's location and is sympathetic to its surroundings.

Land north of Mill Lane - overall sensitivity is moderate - low. Few of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from development. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate development with only minor adverse change to the landscape character. The greater openness of the northern part of the site means that this area is more sensitive to development.

Landscape guidelines for development:

- carefully consider the impact of roofscapes, design and development density on views down from the Chiltern escarpment.
- Ensure that any potential development is of a scale and character that reflects the site's location and is sympathetic to its surroundings;
- retain footpath link across the site;
- retain views to the escarpment;
- retain existing boundary vegetation, in particular mature trees along the southern boundary and the northern boundary hedgerows;
- concentrate built-form towards the southern and eastern end of the site.

**Park Mill Farm** - overall sensitivity of the site is moderate-low. Few of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from development. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate development with only minor adverse change in landscape character.

Landscape guidelines:

- restrict development to the larger, less sensitive, southern part of the site;
- conserve and enhance structural vegetation of trees and hedgerows along the stream and field boundaries;
- carefully consider the impact of roofscape, design and development on views down from the Chiltern escarpment;
- retain views to the church spire and the Chiltern escarpment;
- apply appropriate buffers around the sewage works and builders yard to minimise impact from detracting land uses;
- ensure that any potential development is of a scale and character that reflects the site’s location and is sympathetic to its surroundings;
- retain footpath links across the site with views to the escarpment and historic features of the town such as the church spire.

**Views from the AONB**

The AONB is based on the chalk escarpment to the northwest of Greater London. There is a steep ‘scarp’ face that overlooks the Vale of Aylesbury. Princes Risborough sits at the bottom of this scarp face. The characteristic landscape of this area consists of steep-sided mostly dry valleys that are separated by ridges and plateau areas.

Due to its location at the bottom of the scarp face there are dramatic views from the AONB over the town to the countryside beyond from the higher areas of land to the south east of the town. A key location is from the area of higher land at Whiteleaf where there are views out over the town to the countryside beyond.

**Local views**

There are also a number of more local views that are of significance both from within the town and also as you approach it from nearby roads. The town can be seen as you approach from Longwick and the edge of development that would appear in this view should be designed sensitively. The study area has the potential to form a new gateway to the town as you approach from the north west and this should be considered in the detailed design of the buildings in this location.

Within the town there are a number of other pleasant views along key streets and spaces. Development in the study area is unlikely to impact on these views because of the distance and the railway line.

**Mitigation measures required for new development**

Parts of the study area where the land is more open and less enclosed will need to be carefully considered for their impact on the views from the AONB. Particular consideration should be given to retaining existing structural planting and incorporating new areas of planting to soften views from the Chiltern escarpment. The roofscape of new development would need to be carefully considered particularly in the more visible parts of the study area.

New development should ensure that it retains existing mature planting along field boundaries and streams to soften the impact of new development in views.
Fig 2.5.4: Diagram showing key views both of the town from the surrounding area and local views within the town.

Note: The Strategic Area of Search reflects the extent of our study area, not the extent of future development.
2.6 Access, Movement and Transport

A technical review of existing transport infrastructure has been undertaken by Campbell Reith Consulting Engineers. This includes a review of the Princes Risborough Area Transport Study produced by Jacobs in January 2014.

Vehicular routes and access

The primary destinations around Princes Risborough include Aylesbury and Leighton Buzzard to the north, Thame and Oxford to the west, High Wycombe and the Thames Valley to the south, and Amersham to the east.

Princes Risborough lies on Wycombe Road (A4010) which is the primary north-south route between Aylesbury and High Wycombe. It is strategically important as a ‘blue light’ route between Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville Hospitals. The A4010 meets the Longwick Road (A4129) at the Tesco roundabout in the town centre. This roundabout and the A4010 are perceived as being congested and overly busy by local people. The A4129 provides access to and from the north-west. Lower Icknield Way (B4009) connects with Longwick Road (A4129) at Longwick Roundabout to the north-west of the town centre. Mill Lane, Cadsdon Road and Summerleys Road (B4444) provide east/west connections between Wycombe Road (A4010) and Lower Icknield Way (B4009).

The M40 can be accessed from Junction 4 at High Wycombe via the A4010. The M40 can also be accessed from Junction 6 at Lewknor via the B4009.

Bus Network

The Jacobs report lists a number of bus services operating within the Princes Risborough area. The most frequent service is Route 300 which runs between High Wycombe and Aylesbury through the town centre. This runs two to three times each hour on weekdays. The 120/121 bus service linking the town to Thame and Longwick runs twice daily. In addition to these there is a local community bus service run by volunteers. This operates six routes which run at various times of the week. The most frequent services (Monks Risborough Loop and the Longwick Loop) link to the railway stations.

Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) have plans to upgrade existing bus stops with real time passenger information and other improvements across the district.

Railway connections

The strategic area of search is in the vicinity of Princes Risborough and Monks Risborough railway stations. Princes Risborough, located to the south of the search area is the main station. Monks Risborough Station, located to the north of the search area is a rail halt and offers less frequent services.
A large proportion of the working population of Princes Risborough work outside of the town and need to travel to work with many residents using rail services to travel to employment. The Chiltern Railways line passes through Princes Risborough just south of a point where the track diverges to form a line continuing north-east to Aylesbury, a line continuing north-west towards Bicester, Warwick and Birmingham and a steam line to Chinnor. The line that diverges to the north-east passes through stations at Monks Risborough and Little Kimble. The Birmingham line operates with an approximately half hourly service frequency, with the Aylesbury line approximately hourly in each direction.

Potential for significant journey time and accessibility benefits for the Princes Risborough area are expected to be offered through the Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 and East West Rail projects.

East West Rail is currently being built between Oxford and London Marylebone. The project will also see the re-establishment of long lost rail links, such as between High Wycombe and Oxford. In order to achieve this, a new ¾ mile line will be built at Bicester to link London Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street line with the existing route between Bicester town and Oxford. The £130m investment will result in Chiltern Railways running services between London Marylebone and a new station, Oxford Parkway from summer 2015, with services continuing to Oxford in 2016.

In addition to the ‘core’ scheme proposed by the East West Rail Consortium, further substantial enhancements have been proposed by the Department for Transport to increase capacity and reliability of services, making the line fit for purpose for at least the next 25 years taking into consideration anticipated future demand. These potential ‘incremental’ requirements of the line are currently being reviewed by Network Rail and may result in further additional work being required on the line between Aylesbury and Princes Risborough. The junction layouts and single track along the railway line constrain the potential of the existing infrastructure to handle the amount of traffic proposed. Reconstruction of the East West Rail line must also take into consideration the proposed alignment of HS2 near Terrick.

East West Rail awarded a design contract to Parsons Brinckerhoff in September 2014. The work will involve timetable modelling, the design and alignment of track, civil engineering works to bridges and embankments, geotechnical investigation and survey works, studies on how the railway will impact on level crossings, station design, consents, ecology and environmental works.

Plans are currently being drawn up, and modelling work will be undertaken over the next 12-18 months to determine the capacity and improvements required to implement the proposed core and incremental services. The proposals for the section of line through Monks Risborough and the relative land take therefore remain unknown. Track widening, if proposed, would require structures to be modified along the route and may provide opportunities to improve access across the railway line for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Any increase in line speed would have an impact on the operation of the existing level crossings.

Until the East West Rail proposals are defined in more detail, it will not be possible to determine which areas of land and points of access under or over the railway may be affected in the short and long term. Until then development should focus on improving access to Princes Risborough station as the better rail services are from this station. It is difficult to predict the impact that East-West Rail will have on Monks Risborough station as part of the potential improvements to the line.

Any reduction in services at Monks Risborough will strengthen the need for the local bus service to connect with Princes Risborough station.

**Cycle Network**

There are three cycle routes traversing the Princes Risborough area, most of which are on-road rather than traffic free routes. These routes include National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 57 between Oxford and Thame. Part of this is the Phoenix Trail which is dotted with artwork along its length and provides outstanding views to the Chiltern countryside.

**Pedestrian movement and access**

The town has good facilities for walking and cycling, being relatively flat in the most part and compact in nature. The town centre has wide pavements and provides a pleasant pedestrian environment.
Princes Risborough Background Report

DECEMBER 2014

Connecting roads
Busy roads
Railway
Steam railway
Cycle paths
Public rights of way
Road/pedestrian crossings
Poor quality pedestrian crossings
Rail station
Strategic area of search
A.O.N.B

Note: The Strategic Area of Search reflects the extent of our study area, not the extent of future development.

Fig 2.6.3: Diagram summarising key transport facilities
There are a number of crossing points across the railway into the study area that are challenging both in terms of health and safety and also in terms of being accessible for all. There is an aspiration from Network Rail to close these crossing points in the future. Further opportunities for pedestrian crossing points will be explored as part of the next phases of this study.

Pedestrian access under the railway line is provided at Mill Lane and Longwick Road. However, the pavements are narrow and only run along the northern edge of the carriageway. This should be improved as part of the development proposals.

**Impact of future development on the road network**

Jacobs were commissioned by Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) and Wycombe District Council (WDC) in January 2014 to undertake a study to provide:

- an assessment of the impact of additional housing and employment-related land use in and around the Princes Risborough urban area;
- a comparative assessment of the forecast traffic and transportation implications of locating new land use development in particular areas; and
- the potential of new strategic transport infrastructure to mitigate against additional traffic generated by new development.

**Traffic Volumes**

The report found that in 2013 the A4010 Wycombe Road/ Aylesbury Road experiences the highest traffic volumes. Southbound is busiest in the morning and correspondingly the northbound direction is busiest in the afternoon peak. Lower Icknield Way (B4009) experiences similar patterns of movement although with lower traffic volumes. The Jacobs study also found that up to 40% of traffic using the A4010 in the town centre is through traffic. The New Road/ Longwick Road/ Aylesbury Road roundabout - the ‘Tesco’s roundabout’ - is a key junction within the town centre and was found to be heavily congested at peak times, and close to capacity.

The report states that the connecting routes between the A4010 and B4009, namely Summerleys Road, Longwick Road, Mill Lane and Cadsdean Road accommodate markedly less traffic volumes than the two main corridors. They consider Longwick Road to be the most heavily used and retains both a local and a strategic function with the other predominantly used by local traffic only.

The Jacobs Study also looked at the likely increase in traffic levels by 2031 alongside potential transport improvements that would be in place by then. This ‘do minimum’ scenario - without the expansion of the town - studied the roads without adding any additional improvements to the network, and forecast a rise of nearly 21% more traffic at peak times, whereby key junctions and roads become over capacity. These would be the Longwick Road/ Lower Icknield Way, Lower Icknield Way/Summerleys Road, and New Road /...
Longwick Road/Aylesbury Road junctions, as well as the Little Kimble Station Road junction. The worst effected streets overall would be in the town centre - New Road and Bell Street.

**Land Use Scenarios**

The Jacobs report considers three land use development scenarios for the land to the west of Princes Risborough. The location of the land use development sites are as follows:

- **Scenario A** – 400 homes – An area just north-west of the railway line to Aylesbury, south-west of Longwick Road;
- **Scenario B** – 1000 homes – An area that extends from Summerleys Road, continuing to an area just north of Monks Risborough railway station, just north of the railway line to Aylesbury; and
- **Scenario C** – 2500 homes – An extensive area to the north-west of Princes Risborough from Summerleys Road north of the railway line to an area just north of Monks Risborough station with a buffer area separating the site from Lower Icknield Way and Longwick.

**Traffic generation**

The traffic generation for the three scenarios considered in the Jacobs report are summarised in the table below using updated trip rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Arrivals (08:00-09:00)</th>
<th>Departures (08:00-09:00)</th>
<th>Arrivals (17:00-18:00)</th>
<th>Departures (17:00-18:00)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - 400 homes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - 1000 homes</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - 2500 homes</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>465</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Information obtained from the latest version of the TRICS database (7.1.2), the UK and Ireland’s national system of trip generation analysis.

This comparison shows that the traffic generation in the AM peak hour is slightly higher than assumed in the Jacobs report, but slightly lower in the PM peak hour.

**Traffic distribution**

The Jacobs report uses census journey to work data (2001) to distribute the traffic from the new developments onto the local road network. This is summarised as:

- A4010 (north) - 35%
- A4010 (south) - 43%
- B4009 (south-west) - 18%
- A4129 (west) - 4%

This distribution may not fully reflect the number of trips by car from Princes Risborough to the south via the A4010. A review of the Census 2011 information reveals high numbers of trips by car from Princes Risborough to High Wycombe. The results of journey to work car driver trips from Super Output Area Wycombe 001 (Princes Risborough) to local authority districts where 10 or more car driver trips were recorded were assigned via the quickest highway routes. This gives the following distribution:

- A4010 (north) - 26%
- A4010 (south) - 55%
- A4129 / B4009 (west) - 13%
- Local roads (east) - 6%

If extra traffic assigns to the south to that assumed in the Jacobs report there will be additional demand on the road links and junctions on this route. This may require further assessment to check capacity assumptions.

**Transport Mitigation Packages**

The Jacobs report includes a new highway route Western Relief Road (WRR) serving the new areas of land use connecting with Summerleys Road and continuing south to join Wycombe Road (A4010) via Picts Lane and Shootacre Lane.
For the 1000 homes scenario they suggest an upgrade to the Thame Road / Lower Icknield Way / Longwick Road roundabout along with extended local bus services and urban realm improvements as well as an upgraded crossing of the railway line between Longwick Road and Mill Lane.

For the 2500 homes scenario the Jacobs report suggests that the WRR be extended to the north across Longwick Road to a new junction with Mill Lane / Lower Icknield Way. The route would continue to the north via an upgraded junction at the A4010 / Grove Lane which was assumed to include the replacement of the railway bridge at this location. An additional inter-urban bus service is also suggested along with an upgrade to the Mill Lane railway bridge to support walking and cycling links.

As noted in the Jacobs report, Policy DM2 of the Delivery and Site Allocations Development Plan (DSA) sets out a range of measures that new land use development would be expected to provide. These measures comprise:

- Access to a high quality, fully accessible, attractive public transport service;
- Walking and cycling routes providing safe, direct, attractive and convenient connections;
- Travel Plans in line with BCC guidance; and
- Car clubs and car sharing schemes.

The analyses in the Jacobs report show that the town centre continues to see junctions operating at or over-capacity for the 1000 and 2500 homes scenario when no redistribution of traffic is assumed. The report contains an assessment of ‘Scenario C2’ where a proportion of through-traffic has been assumed to redistribute to use the WRR rather than use the route through the town centre. The proportion was calculated by:

- Identifying the percentage of observed through trips from north to south from the ANPR data;
- Taking half of this percentage to represent half of the traffic movements that could possibly transfer to the new route; and
- And applying this percentage to the forecast Do Minimum flow at the decision points in the network.

The analysis of the 2500 homes option suggests that it would be likely to mitigate its significant impacts on the indicators considered, and may provide some additional benefits to the operation of some junctions in the town centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crossing name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No. of pedestrians / cyclists per day</th>
<th>Risk letter</th>
<th>Risk number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mount Way No.2</td>
<td>Vicinity of site PR2</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Path No.41</td>
<td>Vicinity of site PR5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off West Mead</td>
<td>Vicinity of site PR3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.6.2: Number of existing pedestrian and cycle crossings at current locations. Note: The current line speed for this section of track is 40mph with approximately 60 trains per day.

The analysis of the 2500 homes option suggests that it would be likely to mitigate its significant impacts on the indicators considered, and may provide some additional benefits to the operation of some junctions in the town centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Risk</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>599</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>572</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>260</td>
<td>210</td>
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<td>453</td>
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<td>509</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>5388</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 2.6.3: Table demonstrating collective risk of existing pedestrian crossing points.
Review of access to development sites

Pedestrian access

Three footpaths cross the railway line in the immediate vicinity of the development sites; two to the south-west of Longwick Road and one to the north-east of Longwick Road. The current line speed for this section of track is 40mph with approximately 60 trains per day.

Network Rail assesses level crossings by risk categories based on ‘individual risk’ and ‘collective risk’. Crossings with the highest risk scores and highest benefit-to-cost ratios are prioritised for improvement measures.

Figure 2.6.3 shows the risk ratings for crossings by risk category as of April 2014.

The individual risk letter applies only to crossing users. The score is presented as a letter ranging from A to M where A is the highest value and M is the lowest value. Collective risk considers the risk for all people who use the crossing, including: pedestrians, road vehicle drivers, train staff and passengers. The score is presented as a number ranging from 1 to 13 where 1 is the highest risk value and 13 is the lowest risk value. This ‘collective risk’ score is the most important part when prioritising crossings.

One way that Network Rail aims to achieve risk mitigation is through level crossing closures. The Office of Rail Regulation set Network Rail an initial target to close 150 of more than 7,500 level crossings in Control Period 4 (April 2009 to March 2014). By the end of CP4 over 800 level crossings were legally closed.

The new development will increase the number of pedestrians walking between the town centre and the study area and will therefore require mitigation measures. Efforts should be made to provide footbridge crossings and/or divert existing rights of way to enable safer and more accessible crossing. The proposed improvement to the East-West Rail plans potentially presents an opportunity to improve the existing crossing points and/or provide new crossing points. These could take the form of bridges over the tracks or underpasses below the railway. Some of the existing crossing points, such as the one off West Mead, may not be able to be made safe as the proximity to existing dwellings would limit options to accommodate infrastructure such as bridges. In such cases existing crossings may have to be replaced or closed.

Cycle access

In conjunction with improved pedestrian linkages, it is suggested that routes along Mill Lane, Longwick Road and Summerleys Road are upgraded to support walking and cycling. These connections should be supported by links through the development study area to provide a comprehensive network of routes.

Vehicular access

As noted in the Jacobs Transport Study of the Princes Risborough Area, the development proposals would add additional traffic to the road network. Without a Western Relief Road (WRR) the network performance worsens, particularly around the town centre. The WRR contributes to mitigating the impacts of land use development and has the potential to provide significant benefits for vehicular traffic as part of a wider package of measures.

It is predicted that over half of development traffic would travel to and from the south. It is therefore important that the proposed development has good connections to the WRR to reduce the impact on the town centre. Similarly, approximately a quarter of development traffic is anticipated to travel to and from the north. Therefore, connections with Lower Icknield Way are highly beneficial. The construction of a WRR would require junction improvements at its connection with Lower Icknield Way, Longwick Road and Summerleys Road. A range of other junction improvements as described in the Jacobs report would also be required to mitigate the increase and redistribution of traffic.

Public transport access

The study area is in the vicinity of Princes Risborough and Monks Risborough railway stations and convenient routes between these stations and the development areas should form part of the development proposals. Access to high quality bus route(s) should also be included in the proposals.
2.7 The Community and Existing facilities

Princes Risborough has a well established community and there are a number of existing facilities that serve the town and the various groups within it.

As the town grows more pressure would be put on existing facilities, and new development would also bring the opportunity to provide new facilities or improve existing facilities.

Community facilities

Other likely requirements arising from new development would include contributions towards community activities and public open space. There are a number of existing facilities within the town such as a community centre, sports facilities and various open spaces.

A development of 2,500 homes, with an assumed occupancy rate of 2.3 people per dwelling would be expected to generate a new population of around 5,750 new residents once completed. This would be the maximum level of growth expected and the following section sets out the requirements that this level of growth would trigger. These figures would need to be adjusted in relation to the final number of homes proposed.

The requirements for new community facilities based on current Wycombe District Council policy are as follows:

- Strategic open space (parks, sports grounds, allotments and strategic play) @ 3.3 hectares per 1000 new residents = 18.98 hectares.
- Local open space (local equipped play and informal amenity space) @ 1.5 hectares per 1000 new residents = 8.63 hectares.
- Community provision @ 0.14sqm per person = 805sqm

This amount equates to at least one larger new facility or potentially two smaller facilities. Proposals for these facilities should be discussed with the Town Council and consulted on with the local community to ensure they are appropriate and complement the existing facilities.

Education

Within Princes Risborough there are two primary schools and one secondary school. There are also a number of private schools that operate within the town. Buckinghamshire County Council is the Local Education Authority (LEA) for Wycombe District. The LEA responded to the initial Local Plan consultation setting out the likely school place requirements arising from the possible housing growth in the district. In 2014 the County Council published the Buckinghamshire Early Years and School Place Plans which included the High Wycombe primary planning area. The plans provide information on the current and projected school place needs and highlight particular issues and areas where action is needed to manage changing local school and early years populations.

Primary

New development in Princes Risborough would trigger the need for new school places at the rate of 30.4 primary school places per 100 dwellings. This would mean that a potential expansion of 2500 homes would generate 760 primary school places to be required.

The following information on current pupil numbers has been obtained from Buckinghamshire County Council’s future planning team.

Table 2.7.1 lists the schools, their Planned Admission Numbers, capacity, number on roll in May 2014 and any on-site Early Years provision available. With table 2.7.2 showing the current level of surplus or deficit of places across Princes Risborough primary schools.

These tables show that across the area there are currently 192 or 12% surplus places which is outside the DfE recommended range of 5% to 10%. However, the overall surplus does not reflect that the majority of surplus places are concentrated in Key Stage 2 (i.e. 18%) with only 4% surplus places at Key Stage 1.

Projected Pupil Numbers

The projections in this section take account of the following:

- Numbers of pre-school aged children living in Princes Risborough – to estimate the number of pupils seeking admission to schools;
- Cohort survival rates – in order to age existing pupils onwards each year; and
- Planned housing growth – to estimate the number of additional children that might be generated.

The projections for Princes Risborough indicate a 4% surplus which is below the Department for Education recommended level of surplus required to allow for year on year volatility in pupil demand.

The projections for future years show that there is likely to be pressure on school places in the future. While the Local Authority may be able to meet the peaks in demand through a reduction in the number of pupils from High Wycombe (as the increase in population appears to be concentrated in the Naphill and Walter’s Ash catchment), there is little spare capacity to allow for any volatility in parental choice or population migration. However, the projections based on
Table 2.7.1: Schools within the Princes Risborough area, their capacity and number on roll in May 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Infant</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bledlow Ridge</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Kimble CE</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longwick CE Combined</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monks Risborough CE Primary</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naphill &amp; Walters Ash</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>3+(E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princes Risborough Primary</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>4+ &amp; PVI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John's CE Combined</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>VA (CE)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>241</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>1689</td>
<td>1493</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.7.2: Surplus / deficit of primary school places across Princes Risborough primary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Infant</th>
<th>Junior</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>4+ to 6+</th>
<th>7+ to 10+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Princes Risborough</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>1689</td>
<td>1493</td>
<td>26 (4%)</td>
<td>170 (18%)</td>
<td>196 (12%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Strategic Area of Search reflects the extent of our study area, not the extent of future development.
current planned housing levels suggest that the increased demand for places will not be sufficient to justify the provision of an additional class.

The projections include estimated children from new housing based on housing trajectory data provided by the District Council to meet their long term housing targets which allows for approximately 150 homes in addition to current permissions over the period to 2021. Further consultation with Buckinghamshire County Council will need to take place during the Local Plan development but it is considered likely that development of up to 2,500 new homes in Princes Risborough would trigger the need for at minimum a new single form entry primary school and at most the need for two new forms of primary entry.

Secondary
At secondary level the requirement for school places is understood to be able to be met by existing capacity at schools in Princes Risborough and Aylesbury.

Retail and Employment areas
A Wycombe Town Centres and Retail Study was undertaken by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners on behalf of Wycombe District Council as part of the evidence base for the production of the new Local Plan in February 2014. Its findings are summarised below.

Retail
Princes Risborough is classified as a ‘Tier 2’ centre meaning that it plays an important role in serving Princes Risborough and its rural catchment area rather than the wider district. It provides the following key roles:

- **Convenience shopping:** Tesco and Marks & Spencer Simply Food provide the main convenience provision within the centre for both main food and top up shopping. These are supported by a small range of other convenience retailers including a baker, a butcher and a delicatessen.

- **Comparison shopping:** the centre predominantly comprises independent retailers located along the High Street and Duke Street.

- **Services:** Princes Risborough provides a good range and choice of services including high street banks, estate agents, hairdressers, cafes, restaurants and takeaways.

- **Entertainment:** three public houses are located in Princes Risborough and two are located in Whiteleaf and Askett

- **Community Facilities:** There are medical centres, library, social club and a tourist information centre.

Princes Risborough has a total of 89 retail / service units and the vacancy rates for the town centre are very low (4.5%) in comparison to the national average (13.7%). The Market Square is an attractive feature of the town centre and enhances the overall environmental quality of the town centre. It hosts a weekly market of around 20 stalls selling a selection of food and comparison products.

There is limited scope to accommodate growth in the existing town centre. However, polices PR3 and PR4 in the Adopted Delivery and Site Allocations Plan allocate 2 small mixed use sites within the centre at New Road and Horns Lane. These could accommodate some new facilities. Additionally, retail (A1) and food and drink (A3) uses within the primary and secondary shopping frontages in the town centre have a level of protection from change of use as detailed in Policies PR1 and PR2 of the Adopted Delivery and Site Allocations Plan. There should therefore be no loss of existing space.

The Class A1 floorspace projection for the period to 2031 Princes Risborough is about 1,500sq.m. Some of this will be able to be accommodated within the town centre. However, if additional housing development is accommodated then new local shopping facilities will also be required within the new development area in order to ensure that residents have access to day to day shops and services. There could be potential for a large food store in Princes Risborough after 2021, in the event of a major population growth in the town.

Development Management Policies 1-19 clearly aim to protect and enhance town centres and preserve their role as the focal point for each settlement. They aim to ensure by ensuring they are accessible, vibrant and attractive. Therefore new retail development should be well connected to the town centre and / or well related to new / existing residential areas.
Employment areas

In order to assess the need and provision of employment land in Wycombe District over the new Local Plan period, a second ‘Wycombe Economy Study and Employment Land Review study (2013) was undertaken based on an analysis of the district’s economy. The relevant parts of this document for Princes Risborough are summarised below.

Offices

Princes Risborough is relatively remote from major commercial and population centres and as such the occupier demand for office space is principally generated by local small and medium occupiers who sell goods and services to the area’s residents and businesses. The existing office stock comprises two elements:

- converted stock dotted around the town centre; and
- a grade A office park at Regent Park on the Princes Estate on Summerleys Road which was constructed in 2008.

Regent Park provides a mixture of office space and industrial space of which eight units are offices. The development has attracted a mixture of occupiers including some small insurance firms. At the time of the report (2013) 50% of the office space at Regent Park was vacant. Agents say that it is difficult to let due to insufficient car parking and the remote nature of the location from other major centres.

The conclusion of the report is that generally speaking new office development in Princes Risborough is not viable even in an improved market. This position remains the same even if the largest expansion of the town at 2,500 homes is taken into consideration.

Industry

At present the industrial stock across the district is generally well occupied and in demand. The shortage of space across the district means that some occupiers take poor quality space in less than ideal locations.

The industrial part of Regent Park is fully occupied despite the economic downturn. Other industrial accommodation in the Princes Risborough area is generally well occupied. The report identifies that there may not be great potential for further growth in the industrial land provision. Princes Risborough may attract overspill demand from the High Wycombe area but this would be modest in scale. The demand for new industrial space in Princes Risborough is likely to come from existing local occupiers, this demand may be met by the existing spaces within the town. Therefore provision of new speculative industrial space would be risky and the market may be unlikely to deliver it.

However the report does recognise that older, fit-for purpose buildings can provide valuable space for lower-profile occupiers including SMEs and start-ups. If the industrial areas are not safeguarded, these lower value businesses will suffer the consequences.

The Hypnos site

The Hypnos site is located within the study area and was originally purpose built for two large occupiers. The site is fronted by furniture manufacturer Hypnos, with an office block frontage and industrial / distribution space behind. Another section, at the centre of the site, comprises office, laboratories and distribution space formerly occupied by LEO Pharma, who have relocated. A third section of the site comprises warehouse / industrial units on the south-eastern side, separate from Leo and Hypnos.

The viability analysis of the site has found that a free-standing industrial redevelopment is not viable and is unlikely to become viable in the foreseeable future, even if the market improves. Moreover such a development would compete directly with the remaining HCA land at Princes Estate.

However a limited amount of new employment space may be viable as part of a mixed-use scheme, especially if it comes forward after the HCA land at Princes Estate is developed. This could replace at least some of the floorspace that would be lost, with the benefit of cross-subsidy from residential development. Site-specific market testing would be needed to show whether an employment element is in demand and viable, and how large this element might be.

Potential retention of employment land

The Wycombe Economy and Employment Land Review studies were undertaken before East-West Rail’s announcement detailing the potential for new services to Princes Risborough. This could potentially improve the economic potential of the town. It therefore could be advisable to retain long term flexible employment and mixed use land space to allow local business to stay and grow in the area. These could be reviewed over time as decisions are made regarding the rail service and any other influencing factors.
Housing Market and Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The housing strategy for the district is set out in the Wycombe Housing Strategy 2009-2014. This sets out a clear aspiration to deliver significant numbers of new homes within the district to meet demand and to increase choices in the type and form of housing that is available, including high quality private rental sector provision. It also sets out issues related to affordability and the need for social rented housing.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Buckinghamshire (including Wycombe DC) is from 2008. This sets out background data about the housing market within the County and District. The area has a higher than national provision of owner occupiers (77%) and lower proportion of private renters (9%) and social rented homes (14%). Princes Risborough is within some of the most expensive parts of the County in terms of house prices (using 2007/8 data). There is a strong house price gap in terms of affordability, as is the case with most of the South-East of England. The area also has a large ageing population with significant growth in the proportions of older people forecast for the period 2008-2026.

The report states that “The location of the county, within easy commuting distance of London, and its generally high quality of both countryside and urban character mean that its overall market provide is a strong one, and one that is unlikely to be much weakened.”

A Consultation Draft of a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Wycombe District was published in early 2014. This examined the objectively assessed need for housing in Wycombe, considering a range of scenarios of 10,000 to 14,000 dwellings over the next 20 years. It concluded that 550-600 dwellings annually was the best estimate based on the information available at the time. This study was completed before the latest practice guidance was published. The proportion of this need that is required to support the specific needs of an ageing population is significant.

Housing requirements are heavily focussed on the need for 3 bedroom plus properties with predominantly smaller dwelling sizes required in the affordable housing sectors.

Health

There are currently two health centres/doctors surgeries within Princes Risborough. Both are currently open to new patients.

- The Wellington House Practice is located in Stratton Road to the west of the town centre and reasonably close to the study area, particularly if a new access can be provided over the railway line.

- The Cross Keys Practice is located on the High Street within about 500m walk of the study area, and also has a secondary location.

The new development would need to ensure that suitable adequate local health provision is in place to serve the residents. The two existing GP practices are currently accepting new patients however, this is understood to be only a few hundred new patients. Aylesbury Vale Clinical Commissioning Group has confirmed that additional GP provision would be required for a ‘substantial number of new homes’. The full detail of this provision can only be provided to the Local Planning Authority from the Thames Valley Local Area Team on written request once the likely number of new homes is known.

A general principal to follow is that a new GP is required for a population increase of 1500. This would mean if 1000 new homes were developed (equating to an increase in population of 2500-3000) up to 2 new GPs would be required to adequately serve the population. This level of growth may be able to be accommodated through the expansion of existing health centres in the town. New development of up to 2500 homes would mean a more significant growth in population (6000-8000 people) and would require a new 4-6 GP surgery. This could either be provided through a new facility within the growth area or may also be able to be accommodated through the expansion of existing facilities within the town.

A new 4-6 GP surgery would typically cost between £1M and £2M to construct, assuming the land is made available from the developer/landowner and depending on the size and mix of health related uses that are required.
2.8 Ecology

Ecology

An ecological scoping survey has been carried out by the Ecology Consultancy to assess the potential ecological impact of new development and any recommendations for mitigation in relation to the expansion of Princes Risborough (Appendix 3). The report describes any ecological constraints, further assessments and surveys required, mitigation to be implemented to either avoid or minimise significant impacts on legally protected species and recommendations for habitat enhancements. The full report is included as Appendix 3 of this report. The following were the main conclusions of the report:

- The habitats present within the survey area include improved grassland associated with grazing, arable fields, semi-improved grassland, amenity grassland, standing and running water, scrub, woodland, buildings and hedgerows.
- The survey area is located within 2km of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. As such, a Habitat Regulations Assessment will be required prior to development commencing within any part of the study area.
- Two non-statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are present within the Park Mill Farm site. These are the Longwick Bog Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and the Kingsmead Meadow LWS and Pond Biological Notification Site (BNS).
- The survey area has the potential to support badger, roosting, foraging and commuting bats, breeding birds, dormouse, great crested newts, reptiles, otter and water vole. Full details for each land parcel can be found in Tables 3-6 in section 3 of the full report which is included as Appendix 2 of this report.
- An active badger sett was recorded within land parcel Park Mill Farm during the walkover survey. An adult grass snake was also recorded within this land parcel during the walkover survey.

Further assessment required prior to construction

The report has identified a number of further studies and surveys that would be required prior to submitting a planning application or commencing construction. These are as follows:

Badgers: An active badger sett was found within the study area and therefore it is advised to undertake a presence/absence survey of these land parcels and land within 30m of the site boundary in order to identify if any additional badger setts are present in the vicinity and whether they could be impacted by the proposed development works.

Bats: Numerous buildings and four trees with the potential to support bats were identified within the study area. As such, further surveys for this species group must be carried out before any works to these buildings or trees is undertaken. The surveys are required to inform appropriate mitigation and proportional enhancement for the development and, where required, in order to avoid harm or disturbance to any bats that may be present.

The study area contains numerous hedgerows that could be utilised by foraging and/or commuting bats as a flight path. As such, it is recommended that bat activity transect surveys are undertaken of the area. The purpose of these surveys is to assess the each land parcel’s value for foraging and commuting bats, to obtain baseline data on bat use of the site and identify the potential significance of the proposals on bats.

Dormice: Hedgerows with the potential to support dormice are present across the study area. As such, it is recommended that a habitat suitability index assessment must be undertaken prior to the commencement of works. This survey will inform the need for dormouse presence/likely absence surveys.

Great crested newts: A pond is located within the Hypnos site and the remaining areas are located within 250m of a pond or watercourse. As all four land parcels contain terrestrial habitat with the potential to support great crested newts a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment must be undertaken of the water bodies on site and any other suitable water bodies within 500m of the boundary to determine the value of the site for great crested newts.
**Reptiles:** All four land parcels contained habitat with the potential to support widespread reptile species and an adult grass snake was recorded within Park Mill Farm during the walkover visit. As such, reptile presence / absence surveys must be carried out prior to any works commencing.

**Otter and water vole:** The water course within Park Mill Farm and the land to the north of Longwick Road / Mill Lane has the potential to support water vole and otter. As such a presence/ likely absence survey must be carried out prior to any works commencing.

**Mitigation measures proposed**

The report suggests a number of mitigation measures in relation to the different parts of the study area. These will have varying impacts on the final layout and design of the proposed expansion. The proposed mitigation measures are outlined below:

**Non designated sites:** The Longwick Bog LWS and the Kingsmead Meadow and Pond BNS are located within the study area. Any development proposals for this land parcel must include the retention of these sites. In addition a landscape corridor should either be retained or created between the two sites to improve the biodiversity value of the area.

**Badger:** An active badger is present within Park Mill Farm. If works are proposed within 30m of the sett, or any other found during the recommended badger survey, the sett may have to be closed. This can only be carried out under a Badger and Development Licence from Natural England.

**Wildlife corridors:** The woodland, hedgerow and water courses within the study area should be retained and protected during the course of any proposed works as far as possible to maintain wildlife corridors across the four land parcels in order to provide a foraging and commuting resource for any species utilising the area.

**Water pollution:** Water courses were present within Park Mill Farm and also in the land to the north of Longwick Road / Mill Lane. Mitigation for potential impacts to wetland features and water courses should follow the Environment Agency’s Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPGs).
Potential ecological enhancement

The report proposes a number of ways in which the ecological standing of the study area can be improved through sensitive design; these are broadly summarised below:

**Planting:** The use of native and non-native planting in any landscape scheme has been recommended to both compensate for any loss of habitat and to provide enhancements for wildlife.

**Trees / deadwood:** The retention of standing deadwood in-situ within any retained and/or created woodland habitats is recommended so as to provide habitat for fungi, bats, invertebrates and hole nesting birds. Standing deadwood should be retained as long as it poses no risk to public safety.

**Grassland:** Any areas of retained and/or created grassland should be enhanced through the addition of a wildflower seed mix in order to increase the plant and insect diversity. Wildflower seed mixtures are beneficial for a variety of invertebrates and enhance site biodiversity.

**Sustainable drainage:** Sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) that employ techniques such as permeable paving and rainwater harvesting should be considered within proposals for development. It is recommended that such systems are incorporated in new developments as they provide a more sustainable approach to soft / hard landscaping and managing water. Areas within the new development proposed as hard surfacing should incorporate permeable or porous materials to facilitate storm water drainage. These areas would need to be carefully designed due to the geological make up of the soil and the high water table.

**Hedgehogs:** The provision of gaps in fencing / brickwork at ground level should be incorporated in the design of any gardens within development proposals, in order to provide access across the development for foraging hedgehogs.
Fig 2.8.3: Ecological constraints - part 3
### 2.9 Infrastructure and utilities

#### Utilities Infrastructure

A high level engineering and infrastructure assessment has been undertaken of the study area in order to identify any constraints that would impinge upon its ability to accommodate between 1000 and 2500 residential units. Reference has been made to information provided by the various utility companies, the Environment Agency and the Local Authority.

#### Water Supply

Princes Risborough lies within Thames Water’s Slough, Wycombe and Aylesbury Water Resource Zone. Within the Water Resource Zone, Thames Water has indicated that their overall assessment shows a positive supply and demand balance up to 2040 and do not anticipate any significant issues that would critically undermine the viability or deliverability of the study area for residential development.

However, although Thames Water has confirmed that there will be a positive supply and demand balance within the Water Resource Zone, there will be a requirement to upgrade the supply network in the vicinity and provide a water booster station in order to maintain a satisfactory water pressure. The details and exact scale of the upgrade works would be determined once the quantum and timing of the development were confirmed. Thames Water requires developers to fund detailed capacity and flow studies. Thames Water has not yet provided a cost for any work required.

#### Sewage Network and Treatment

Thames Water has stated that there are some constraints to the waste water network within Wycombe District and within the vicinity of the study area. In addition there have been incidents of sewer flooding and also the potential for sewage seepage into watercourses which is of major concern to the Environment Agency. Upgrades to the foul sewers or the provision of a new sewer to the Princes Risborough Sewage Treatment Works will be required.

The Princes Risborough Sewage Treatment Works is located immediately to the west of the study area. At the end of 2013, Thames Water undertook investigations into the performance of the Princes Risborough Treatment Works. These investigations highlighted that the inlets to the works had not been performing to the level that was expected of them and that modifications and operational modification would be required. These works were undertaken early in 2014.

With these modification and improvements now in place, Thames Water does not foresee the need for any significant upgrades at the current time, however, once the development proposal for the site are progressed detailed capacity assessments will need to be undertaken. The results from these assessments may indicate that further upgrade works may be required.

Should specific upgrades be required, then Thames Water is working with both the developer and the Council to ensure the timely delivery of the infrastructure upgrades. A cost for these upgrades have yet to be calculated.

There is no statutory guidance that sets a requirement for a buffer to residential development from a sewage treatment works; it would be determined once the quantum and timing of the development were confirmed. Thames Water requires developers to fund detailed capacity and flow studies. Thames Water has not yet provided a cost for any work required.

#### Gas and Electricity

National Grid and UK Power networks have confirmed that the development of 1000 to 2500 residential units would unlikely to have any significant impact upon the gas and electricity transmission networks, and that the existing networks should be capable of being able to accommodate the additional demands.

#### Telecommunications

British Telecom has confirmed that there would be no problem in serving the potential development area and providing fibre optic internet access.
2.10 Summary opportunities and constraints

This study has drawn upon information in reports produced to support the emerging Local Plan as well as new research and studies. These are summarised into the main constraints and opportunities diagrams. The key points are summarised below.

**Constraints**

- The railway line is a significant barrier to integrating new development with the existing town.
- The A4010 is congested, particularly around the town centre.
- The main railway station and town centre are not close together which makes effective public transport routes more difficult.
- Existing roads are not felt to be safe for cycling, placing higher reliance on the use of the private car.
- The area is at the foot of the Chiltern escarpment, with views over the area being very important.
- Flooding and drainage, including ground and surface water flooding, means that some areas are less appropriate for development, or need mitigation to deal with the issue.
- Surrounding villages do not want to become subsumed by the expanded town, and Monks Risborough wants to retain its distinct identity.
- Alscot Conservation Area lies in the heart of the search area. There is a statutory duty to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of this built environment.
- There are two designated wildlife sites, and other potential wildlife interests to be protected.
- Former unlicensed landfill on the Hypnos site means that further investigations will be required to establish whether this land is suitable for residential development.
- The sewage works alongside the railway may constrain the type and location of development nearby. A 150 metre buffer from the relevant parts of the study area is assumed at this stage.

In addition – but not able to be shown on the diagram – attracting new employment (‘inward investment’) to the town will be difficult because of its size and location relative to the M40.
Fig 2.10.1: Constraints plan

- Local wildlife sites
- Buffer around wildlife sites (50m)
- Conservation Area (nominal extent)
- Remains of Iron Age fort
- Area of existing woodland
- Potential badger habitat
- Notional extent of buffer to protect from coalescence with Longwick
- Strategic views from Chilterns A.O.N.B from Whiteleaf Cross viewpoint
- Existing hedgerow
- Area most sensitive to strategic views
- Main area of congestion in town centre
- Strategic area of search

Note: The Strategic Area of Search reflects the extent of our study area, not the extent of future development.
Opportunities

- Use new roads necessary to service the new development to reduce the traffic on the A4010, and identify opportunities for a better town centre.

- Improve links under / over railway to make a connected town, so new residents support the town centre and other town facilities.

- The relatively flat topography provides an opportunity for cycling to be a convenient travel choice by improving routes in the existing town and making new routes.

- The Crowbrook provides an opportunity to improve biodiversity, and a leisure use, as a linear park.

- The hedgerows, rights of way, potential views to local landmarks, and the character of the area can provide a structure to the masterplan for the area.

- To use landscape design as the driving force behind the masterplan, to acknowledge the AONB setting.

- To provide new community facilities such as schools and open space, to meet the needs of new residents, and for the use of the wider town.

- To establish a country park to maintain the gap between Longwick and Princes Risborough.
Fig 2.10.2: Opportunities plan

- Existing pedestrian rights of way improved
- Longwick Road could be improved
- Enhance local wildlife sites
- Retain and enhance existing woodland
- Preserve and enhance Conservation Area
- Use hedgerows to structure new development
- 10 minute (800m) walking distance from train station to the study area
- Extent of development within 10 minute (800m) walk of Princes Risborough Station (frequent rail services)
- Extent of development within 10 minute (800m) walk of Monks Risborough Station (slow, infrequent rail services)
- Local landmarks - links to these could be improved
- 800m walking distance from town centre
- Crowbrook watercourse - Enhanced biodiversity and leisure

- Strategic area of search within about 10 minutes walk (800m) of the town centre
- Town centre
- Longwick
- Employment allocation (the Hypnos site)
- Area of least sensitivity to long distance views
- Existing strategic bus route and bus stops
- Potential new strategic bus route - indicative
- Existing bus route
- Improve links across the railway
- Cycle route
- Strategic views from Chilterns A.O.N.B from Whiteleaf Cross viewpoint
- Strategic area of search

Note: The Strategic Area of Search reflects the extent of our study area, not the extent of future development.
3 Summary of meeting with Town Council

As part of the initial stages of the project, a workshop with Princes Risborough Town Council was held so that their knowledge of the existing town could be used to feed into the study and also to ensure that their aspirations for the future of the Town could be understood by the project team.

A workshop was held on 5th August with the Town Council.

Who attended?
Will Streule - Princes Risborough Town Council
Gary Hall - Princes Risborough Town Council
John Coombs - Princes Risborough Town Council
Mark Lowe - Princes Risborough Town Council
Iain McLauchlan - Princes Risborough Town Council
Matt Walsh - Princes Risborough Town Council
Sue Griffiths - Princes Risborough Town Council
Alan Turner - Princes Risborough Town Council
Rosie Brake - Wycombe District Council
Louise Thomas - Wycombe District Council
Lizzie Cowan - Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design
Laura Hart - Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design

Workshop purpose and structure

The purpose of this workshop was to gather information from the Town Council that would inform our analysis and increase our understanding of the site. The workshop was structured around two sessions. These were:

- Session 1 – What makes Princes Risborough Special?
- Session 2 – A Vision for Princes Risborough.

These sessions were designed to be interactive and designed to provoke discussion between the project team and the Town Council.

Summary of Session 1-What Makes Princes Risborough Special?

In the first session, attendees were split into two groups. Each were given a number of topics and asked to map them. The emphasis was on identifying the features that make Princes Risborough special. A member(s) of the project team facilitated each group and recorded information.

The exercise revealed the following:

Landscape, views and open spaces

- The group identified sports facilities including: the Bowls and Tennis Club, the sports field at Peters Lane and Aylesbury Road the 9 Hole Golf Course at Whiteleaf, Sports Facilities associated with Princes Risborough School at Upper Icknield Way, the Football Field at Kophill, Sports Field at Horsenden Lane.
- In addition to the above the group mentioned the sports facilities that previously existed at Molins Ground. The owner of this site wishes to re-develop this site as housing and has recently demolished the facility. This was a great loss for the community and they would like to see them replaced.
- The Town Council stated that they owned and operated the sports centre at Church Street and facilities at Aylesbury Road and St Dunstans.
- The group identified all of the parks and play areas in the town and stated that it owned and maintained them.
- The group identified open green space at the field at end of Salisbury Close, the Churchyard at Dixons Field (owned by church) and the new burial ground at Long Hide.
- The group identified key long distance views from Brush Hill/ White Hill towards the town and local views from the Football Field at Kophill and to St.Mary’s Church.
- The group identified mature vegetation and the undulating topography as a key landscape feature of the town.
- ‘Green Streets’ at Manor Park Avenue, Upper Icknield Way and at New Road were identified as positive
examples of street design within the town. They integrated mature trees into the streetscape.

**Ecology and Environment**

- The group identified streams and springs including the Pyrtle Spring off Wycombe Road, the stream running through study area and streams around Horsenden. They also identified a water feature in the study area to the south of the sewage works between Summerleys Road and the Railway.
- The group identified the Ragpit Ecological Area at Upper Icknield Way.

**Movement**

- The A4010 was identified as being extremely busy. It brings heavy traffic through the town with particularly busy and congested junctions at New Road/Horns Lane and another at the Tesco Store. The road was seen as a negative feature of the town. The group agreed that any new development must not further aggravate this situation.
- Junction of the B4444 and Wycombe Road was identified as slow and has been made worse in recent years by the introduction of a traffic light system.
- A4129 and B4444 are also busy but do not have as negative an impact as the A4010.
- The main rail station is Princes Risborough. Monks Risborough Station is a rail halt, doesn’t have as many services as the main station.
- There is a steam railway which runs to the north of Princes Risborough Station, with the potential to extend this to Princes Risborough station. This would bring tourists and commuters to mainline rail services.
- There is a general north/south movement of people through Princes Risborough. People move south in the morning for work and come north returning at night.
- Parking issues were identified around the station, town centre and schools. It was stated that this was aggravated by the cost of parking at the station that currently stands at £7 per day.
- The group identified the Phoenix Cycle Trail. This is very popular with both residents and visitors.
- The group identified an important pedestrian route through the town from Mill Lane, Wellington Avenue, through the town centre, through Manor Park Avenue to the Station.

**Facilities and community space**

The group identified community facilities/spaces:

- Four schools: Monks Risborough Church of England Primary, Princes Risborough Nursery and Primary, St Teresa’s Catholic School (independent) and Princes Risborough School.
- Fire Station on New Road/Horns Lane – potential to relocate.
- Library on Bell Street.
- Sports Centre, Community Centre and GP surgery located on Stratton Road.
- The main shopping area was identified in the town centre. The group stated that it has good variety of independent shops and has a high level of occupation.
- The group identified only 3 shopping secondary shopping. These were a small row of shops at Summerleys Road near the station, a single shop on Station Road and a small row at Place Farm Way.
- The group identified a number of pubs outside the town centre. These were The Bird in Hand on Station Road/Fairway, Three Crowns on Cadsden Road in and the Red Lion on Upper Icknield Way near the 9 hole golf course.
- The Princes Centre (also the workshop venue) was identified as a very important resource for older people.
- 2 scout halls, one at Courtmoor Close and one at Longwick Road.
- Police Station on Longwick Road.

**Character**

- Group One identified character areas at Alscot, Manor Park Avenue, 19th c cottages between Wycombe Road
Fig 3.1.1: Images of mapping produced during the Town Council meeting
and Poppy Road, the town centre Conservation Area, Horsenden, the local authority estates ‘Tree Estate’ and ‘Fields Estate’, area around St Dunstans and Mill Lane, Whiteleaf, Monks Risborough. There is a distinction between the north of the town which is mainly bungalows and 60’s development and the station area in the south which is older and has a larger variety of housing. Longwick also has its own character.

Group Two identified additional character areas at Alscot Lane, large houses between Upper Icknield Way and Princes Place, the area with large buildings including the Esso garage, post office and flats on Bell Street and other distinctive pockets at Kings Oak Close and new development on Mill Lane.

Summary of Session 2 – A vision for Princes Risborough

This session focused on establishing what the Town Council’s ‘Vision’ for Princes Risborough is. As Session 1, the exercise was carried out in two groups with discussion facilitated by a member of the project team. Essentially, it was a brainstorming exercise. The Town Council were asked to provide responses to a set of questions related to the town past present and future. These will help to establish priorities and aims for any new development. The questions posed and answers received are listed below.

A Vision for Princes Risborough

What could new development deliver that would benefit the town?
- Bolster existing services such as the library and rail.
- Encourage a better retail offer including things like chain restaurants.
- Provide more sports facilities such as a rugby pitch, and club house.
- Development could possibly help provide improved community and health centres.
- Community bus is well used it could be extended and made more frequent by the new community.
- Town would greatly benefit from a hotel – great potential to exploit tourism from walkers and cyclists.

How could new development address existing issues in the town?
- Improve and resolve road and traffic issues, delivering a new bypass would be extremely beneficial for the town.
- Provide a wide range of housing types and prices suitable to all residents.
- Provide facilities for the aging population whilst encouraging younger residents to move to the town.
- The increased population could positively inform future proposals for sites to the back of the High Street (designated PR3 and PR4). Good development here would regenerate the town centre.
- Bringing more business into the town centre could help to improve the first floor level of the high street which is in poor condition. Potential to rethink the high street design, shared surfaces etc. to calm traffic and potential development around the back of properties between New Road and the High Street.
- Provide more activities for teenagers aged 15-18 as there are currently very few activities for people of this age group.

Are there other places nearby that Princes Risborough could learn from?
- Thame – the construction of a bypass at Thame reduced traffic issues in the town without impacting on the commercial success of the high street. Thame has a ‘buzzing atmosphere’ that Princes Risborough could replicate.
- Similarly Wendover and Andover are good examples of successful market towns that Princes Risborough could emulate.
- It should not become like Chesham or Hemel Hempsted.
- The extent of new development should be constrained so that the town doesn’t get too big (No bigger than Thame or Marlow).
Shopping needs to be improved – not that many national retailers. Some nationals would be good, however high quality independent shops should be main type of business in the High Street.

**Princes Risborough: past, present and future.**

When was Princes Risborough at its best and most thriving?

- Princes Risborough was at its best between 1965 and 1975, there were no empty shops and the town was busy. This was largely due to the presence of large-scale local employers most of which have now disappeared.

**What is the best thing about Princes Risborough now?**

- Community spirit, good transport connections, the open space and landscape.

**What will Princes Risborough be like in 50 years time?**

- The town could be described as a pleasant, safe, English market town. This description should continue into the future.
- Princes Risborough should grow in the future.
- It should not become a dormitory town.
- It should retain upmarket feel.
- Any new development should deliver a variety of styles and characters.
- Any new development should deliver a spectrum of sizes and affordability.
- Landscape is very important and any new development should deliver new trees, maintain, existing mature trees and work sensitively with the topography.

**Conclusion**

The group were largely supportive of new development and the potential expansion of Princes Risborough. There was a great deal of pride in the town and a belief that it is a pleasant and safe place to live. The group identified a wide range of facilities and characteristics attached to the town and conveyed a general level of satisfaction with their standard of living. There was also recognition that new development could bring benefits to the town and address some of the current problems facing Princes Risborough. The group had an equitable attitude to new development stating that it must provide for a range of people and levels of affordability. Furthermore, they considered that new development must not create a large area of a single character, and must provide a range of sensitively designed dwellings that will create an interesting and varied new quarter.

The character of the landscape came across clearly as something that was very important to the Town Council. The impact of the town expansion on the settlement and vice versa will have to be carefully considered. This is especially relevant around the village of Longwick. A further concern was the impact on the movement network, especially along the A4010. The impact on the station was also considered, especially with regard increased parking. This is already an issue for the town and must not be aggravated.

Overall, this workshop provided a great starting point to the project. It has informed the Project Teams analysis that will shape and inform expansion proposals.