

# Wycombe District Council

## Report of initial feedback from infrastructure providers on Local Plan growth options January 2014



people place pounds  
*getting our priorities right*



## Contents

Introduction.....	1
1. Utilities Services .....	3
2. Education.....	5
3. Health .....	7
4. Emergency Services .....	8
5. Open Space and Green Infrastructure.....	9
6. Social Infrastructure .....	10
7. Flood Defences.....	11
How the infrastructure improvements may be delivered.....	11

## Introduction

The Council's current Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), May 2012 sets out the infrastructure requirements necessary to deliver the current Wycombe Development Framework. These infrastructure requirements will need to be updated to reflect the new Wycombe Local Plan which will include different growth requirements and include new allocated sites.

Paragraph 162 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that "local planning authorities should work with other authorities and providers to:

- Assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for transport, water supply, wastewater and its treatment, energy (including (heat), telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education, flood risk..., and its ability to meet forecast demands; and
- Take account of the need for strategic infrastructure including nationally significant infrastructure within their areas".

As a first step, in October 2013 the Council contacted key service providers<sup>1</sup>, sending them a consultation pack setting out possible district wide growth options<sup>2</sup> including the possible expansion of Princes Risborough and broad locations of development in case the Council undertakes a Green Belt review. For each of these options the Council asked providers to consider whether:

- The service could meet potential increased demand with no upgrades to existing infrastructure capacity;
- The service would be able to deal with the growth scenarios set out with some upgrades to existing infrastructure; or
- The service would not be able to meet the scales of growth without very major investment in infrastructure.

The Council also asked for initial details of the nature, scale and costs of any infrastructure upgrade.

Meetings were held with the Local Education Authority, Thames Water, the County Council's Adult Social Care team, Wycombe District Council's Community Services and NHS England. Meetings are on-going with the Transport Authority and their consultants Jacobs.

The information received in response to the October 2013 consultation was used to inform specific principles for the key sites already identified (i.e. to be provided directly by developers), and will be fed into on-going viability assessments to work out whether the development can deliver the infrastructure that will be needed.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for list of key service providers contacted

<sup>2</sup> These growth options are set out in the new Local Plan Options Consultation document

This initial work shows in principle there is scope for infrastructure to be able to be provided to meet needs arising from growth. The more significant growth options may require specific extra provision or expansion of facilities. These include, but are not limited to:

- Schools: up to 10 additional forms of entry across the district which would require new school provision in addition to expansion of existing schools;
- Health: an additional 9 to 13 GPs;
- Water supply and treatment: network upgrades will likely be needed at all of the strategic development sites and developers will need to provide capacity studies, while major growth at Princes Risborough may exceed current capacity and will require further investigation.

Information was also received for emergency services, adult social care and community and leisure facilities. Work to refine infrastructure needs will continue through on-going dialogue with service providers.

Jacobs, the County Council's term consultants, have been jointly commissioned by both councils to study the transport impacts of growth in the district<sup>3</sup>. The study provides an assessment of the possible traffic impact of additional housing and employment-related land use and considers the impact and performance of potential new transport infrastructure and more localised transport network improvements.

Further information on on-going work in assessing transport impacts is outlined in the Local Plan Options Consultation Report and related studies.

Initial work to assess the landscape<sup>4</sup> and ecology<sup>5</sup> of the reserve sites and some other key sites shows that there are valuable features which should be preserved. Some sites show sensitive areas of important grassland and woodland habitat, or have significant landscape value. This work has informed the approach to site development by:

- Identifying potential development areas
- Informing the amount of development the site can sustain
- Shaping potential development principles

As a consequence, it is unlikely that the whole of the land in each site will be built on in order to protect the special features of the site.

Work is also commencing on an updated strategic flood risk assessment to provide an up to date picture of the areas at greatest risk of flooding.

---

<sup>3</sup> Jacobs Forecasting and Assessment Report

<sup>4</sup> Landscape study

<sup>5</sup> Ecology study

The following sections provide a summary of the responses from service and infrastructure providers regards the potential infrastructure requirements from the possible district wide growth options. As noted above there are a series of separate background reports on transport work and hence transport issues are not addressed in this report. As outlined above, as the Local Plan progresses, further work will be undertaken to firm up the requirements, costs, timing of delivery and funding sources.

## **1. Utilities Services**

### **Water**

Thames Water does not anticipate that the levels of growth options set out will create any significant issues which could critically undermine the viability or deliverability of sites.

They do consider network upgrades are likely at all of the potential strategic development sites and will require developers to fund capacity studies before submission of any planning applications.

### **Water Supply**

Thames Water supply area is divided into six Water Resource Zones (WRZ). Wycombe district is primarily within the Slough, Wycombe and Aylesbury WRZ. Their overall assessment shows a positive supply/demand balance up to 2040 for this WRZ but with an anticipated large deficit of supply in London.

As stated above, although there will be a positive supply and demand balance taking account of anticipated population growth, Thames Water have indicated that specific upgrades would likely be required at all of the major sites identified for development in the district to 2031. For example on some sites it is likely that water booster stations would be required to maintain water pressure.

The exact scale of these upgrades will be determined when further information on scale and timing of development is known. Developers will be required to fund studies (e.g. to test flow and pressure) in order to demonstrate that there is adequate capacity both on and off site to serve the development and that their development would not lead to problems for existing users.

### **Sewage Network**

Thames Water state that there are wastewater network constraints in Wycombe District. Sewer flooding is a particular issue of concern for residents and the potential of raw sewage seeping into watercourses is also a major concern for the Environment Agency.

Thames Water will require potential developers to fund studies to understand the impact of development on the sewage network. These studies can take up to 24 weeks to complete and may include comprehensive modelling and flow monitors.

### **Sewage Treatment**

The Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works which serves High Wycombe, Marlow and surrounding areas was designed for a population equivalent of circa 178,000. Current forecasts indicate that the works are serving circa. 167,000. This is forecast to increase to circa 171,000 by 2026 and therefore as the works are still operating within design capacity Thames Water do not foresee any need to upgrade the capacity of the Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works in the short to medium term.

In early 2013 there were a number of problems at the Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works which led to a number of pollution incidents, caused by high flows entering the works, equipment failure and power outages. These issues are separate from the overall capacity of the works. As at January 2014 Thames Water is continuing an extensive refurbishment programme to overcome these performance issues. This includes:

- Cleaning and refurbishing the treatment tanks and equipment which increases capacity to treat sewage after heavy rainfall and improves quality of water returned to the River Thames
- Strengthening of the screens at the treatment works which stops debris entering the works and blocking pipes and pumps
- Refurbishment of pumps and installation of back-up pumps to ensure disruption to works is kept to a minimum during power outages

Thames Water are working with the Environment Agency to establish the cause and effects of the 2013 pollution incidents and specialists have been instructed to carry out surveys of both the River Thames and the stream to the north of the works , to understand the general health of the river. In November 2013 the Environment Agency reported that 'Thames Water continues to improve their management of the site and operations at Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works are under better control'.

Investigations in December 2013 of the performance of the Princes Risborough Sewage Treatment Works highlighted that inlet works had not been performing as well as they should. Modifications have been undertaken to correct this with future operational adjustments being undertaken in early 2014. The improvements will be monitored in the early part of 2014 to determine whether they have addressed the operational constraints identified on site.

However, with these improvements in place, Thames Water does not foresee the need for any significant upgrade of Princes Risborough sewage treatment works at

the current time. However, should new information arise, particularly as a result of the investigations outlined above, further upgrades at the works may be required to accommodate the potential levels of growth in the new Wycombe Local Plan.

If specific upgrades are required, Thames Water would seek to work with the Council and developers to ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure upgrades and the inclusion of appropriate worded phasing conditions on any relevant planning permissions.

The Environment Agency comment that it is essential that for all growth scenarios proposed, that water supply and disposal infrastructure within the District can cope, without increasing the risk of environmental impacts, such as the deterioration of water quality. The requirements of the Water Framework Directive also need considering.

### **Electricity and Gas**

National Grid confirm that specific development proposals within the district are unlikely to have a significant effect upon National Grid's gas and electricity transmission infrastructure, with the existing networks being able to cope with additional demands.

Prospective developers should contact the specific distribution companies (UK Power Networks for electricity; and National Grid for gas) for further information regarding constraints and opportunities that the distribution networks may have on specific sites in the area. Similarly where Scottish and Southern Energy or EDF Energy are the suppliers these should be contacted regarding specific sites.

## **2. Education**

Bucks County Council is the Local Education Authority (LEA) for Wycombe district. They have a statutory duty under Section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006 to ensure that there is sufficient free early year's provision and a duty under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that there are sufficient school places in the area and to promote parental choice through increasing the diversity of provision.

The LEA responded to the infrastructure provider consultation in autumn 2013 setting out the likely school place needs arising from the possible housing growth options. In January 2014 the LEA started to publish the Bucks Early Years and School Place Plans which included the High Wycombe primary planning area. The plans provide information on 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. The remaining primary and secondary plans will be published over the first half of 2014.

### **Primary Schools**

The LEA predict a 5% surplus of primary school places across the district by 2016/17 if current plans to provide an additional 495 places across three High Wycombe schools (Disraeli; Castlefield; Chepping View) are realised. This is in line with Department for Education recommendations that local authorities should plan for a 95% occupancy rate in schools to allow for year on year fluctuations in population cohort sizes/volatility in preferences from one year to the next (i.e. it is generally accepted that schools should not operate at 100% of their capacity).

For the low constraints led growth option of 7,000 to 7,500 dwellings over the plan period, the Education Authority predict that an additional 6 forms of primary school entry would be required post 2017 assuming that future births from within the existing population remain constant. The development at the former RAF Daws Hill site which is due to commence in 2014, subject to planning permission, will include a new 1 form entry primary school with an attached nursery – which will be future proofed to allow expansion to a 2 form entry school should the Abbey Barn South development proceed.

The more significant growth options may require up to a further 10 additional forms of entry across the district which would require new school/nursery provision in addition to expansion of existing schools – the actual amount of additional school provision will depend on whether the existing population's birth rates remain constant which will need on-going monitoring.

Any greenfield development in Princes Risborough will require the expansion of Princes Risborough Primary School and a major expansion of Princes Risborough would require new primary schools/nursery provision ideally located within the new developments.

### **Secondary Schools**

Current County Council projections to 2023 show a deficit of 5 forms of entry for secondary school places – although demand does fluctuate due to year on year differences in population cohort sizes. To meet this demand the County Council are exploring options to expand existing schools across the district.

The increase in housing proposed across the growth scenarios would require an additional 4 to 6 additional forms of entry in addition to the above assuming future birth rates within the existing population remain constant. This scale of expansion is likely to require the provision of a new school due to existing school site constraints.

Bucks County Council would seek to expand the existing secondary school in Princes Risborough to accommodate any major expansion of Princes Risborough.

As the Local Plan moves forward, further work will be undertaken with the LEA to ascertain which schools should and can be expanded to cater for the preferred growth options, as well as the timing and funding of these.

### **3. Health**

#### **Primary Health**

NHS England state that in Wycombe district, there is only limited spare capacity within existing primary care premises to accommodate new patients with the majority of premises currently operating at optimum capacity. It is estimated that an additional 9 to 13 GPs would be required to accommodate the proposed levels of growth (based on a standard of 1GP per 1,850 patients).

There is likely to be a need to extend/alter/adapt existing premises, rather than developing new premises. NHS England has identified specific practices that may need to be expanded if and when certain sites go forward. Information on which practices may require expansion to cope with development at strategic sites is included within the Development Principles of the relevant sites in the main consultation report.

As the Local Plan moves forward, further work will be undertaken with NHS England to ascertain which GP surgeries should and can be expanded to cater for the preferred growth options, as well as the timing and funding of these.

#### **Acute Health Care**

Wycombe district is within the Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust. The Trust includes Wycombe General Hospital and hospitals at Stoke Mandeville (Aylesbury) and Amersham.

The “Better Healthcare in Bucks” (BHiB) reconfiguration was completed in November 2012 with the specialist respiratory, diabetes and gastroenterology units established at Stoke Mandeville and the specialist cardiology/cardiovascular unit consolidated at Wycombe. These changes also saw the consolidation of emergency services at Stoke Mandeville Hospital and the opening of a Minor Injuries Illness Unit managed by Bucks Urgent Care at Wycombe Hospital.

#### **Mental Health**

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust provides mental health care provision throughout Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

No information has been received to date setting out whether the potential growth options in the new Wycombe Local Plan will have any infrastructure impacts on the Trust and further engagement will be necessary as the Local Plan moves forward.

## **4. Emergency Services**

### **Fire**

The Bucks and Milton Keynes Fire Authority state that the overall development on the scale proposed has the potential to place an increased demand on their services. Therefore anything that can be done to mitigate this, through planned and engineered preventative solutions at the development stages would ultimately reduce any potential increase in risk.

One of the methods of reducing any potential demand on the Fire Authority and ultimately making the communities of Wycombe safer would be to consider introducing a requirement to install sprinkler fire suppression systems into certain premises. The Fire Authority also requests that developers are required to ensure the supply of the appropriate number of fire hydrants in large developments.

Another critical issue is securing efficient and effective vehicular access, through the likes of providing adequate off-street parking thereby avoiding the issues the Fire Authority have with some existing developments within the County, where inconsiderate parking can compromise emergency response.

There is an aspiration set out in the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan to relocate the High Wycombe fire station to an alternative site within the town from its current town centre location.

### **Police**

Thames Valley Police have provided information setting out the impact of the various growth options on their resources. They anticipate that infrastructure requirements such as automatic number plate recognition cameras would be required.

A major expansion in Princes Risborough may require a neighbourhood office or expanded Police Station at Princes Risborough depending on the precise nature, scale and delivery of the development.

### **Ambulance**

South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust is the responsible authority within Wycombe district. Its three main functions are:

- the accident and emergency service to respond to 999 calls
- the 111 service for when medical service is needed fast but not a 999 emergency

- the patient transport service

A Rapid Response Amenity Point, which is normally made up of a small office able to house two staff to rest while waiting for a task, plus space to park an ambulance vehicle safely and the facilities to charge the vehicle, was installed at Hazlemere Golf Club in 2012. The SCAS has identified the need for further provision of amenity points across the district.

Potential areas for amenity points within Wycombe district include West Wycombe area, a location between High Wycombe and Princes Risborough and the Cressex area.

## **5. Open Space and Green Infrastructure**

Policy DM16 of the adopted Delivery and Site Allocations (DSA) Plan and the 2010 Open Spaces Framework (OSF) set out open space standards for new developments. The OSF demonstrates deficiencies across the District in open space provision. An action plan for addressing these deficiencies in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility is set out.

Based on these standards, an assessment of the open space requirements across the district in line with the potential growth options (Table 1 of main consultation report) has been carried out. A total of 71 hectares of new open space provision would be required to meet the need generated by the low trend growth option rising to 104 hectares for the high trend growth option.

An assessment of the likely open space requirements for strategic sites has been carried out including assessing what the most appropriate types of open space that should be provided on-site given issues such as topography and access. The requirements and opportunities to co-locate formal sport pitches where possible is also being investigated.

Policies DM11 – DM14 of the DSA set out the principles and policy requirements for the protection, enhancement and provision of green infrastructure and biodiversity across the district. The Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan was adopted in 2013 providing a detailed context for delivering and funding strategic green infrastructure in Bucks, focusing on strategic proposals for a number of specific proposals. It also provides a framework for green infrastructure masterplanning and design as development schemes come forward.

Key opportunity areas identified to date within Wycombe district include the River Wye corridor from Desborough through to Bourne End; creation of pedestrian/cycle route with habitat enhancements on the disused High Wycombe to Bourne End rail corridor; and 'greening the town' initiatives in urban areas to alleviate flood risk,

combat urban heating and improve green links by increasing tree cover and by taking opportunities through new developments (e.g. green roofs). These schemes will be delivered in partnership with stakeholders such as Bucks County Council, the Environment Agency, parish and town councils and developers.

## **6. Social Infrastructure**

### **Adult Social Care**

Bucks County Council is responsible for the provision of adult social care provision within Wycombe district. The provision is based upon revenue support packages, within private sector care facilities, people's own homes or accommodation developed by Registered Providers.

BCC predict that an additional 8 – 12 supported living units for working age adults with severe learning disabilities will need to be developed across Buckinghamshire annually to 2035, with 12 units being required every three years in Wycombe district.

As the Local Plan moves forward the District Council will be working with the County Council to establish mechanisms to include such housing within specific developments as part of the general needs affordable housing element of provision.

### **Community centres**

Wycombe District Council's Community Facilities Strategy (2011) identifies current levels of community facility provision within the district and identifies existing areas of deficiency in relation to accessibility of facilities by ward.

There may be opportunities on strategic sites, particular those that are located in existing areas of deficiency, to provide community buildings on site.

The adopted Community Facilities SPD sets out that any loss of existing community facilities should be properly mitigated through replacement facilities or through a financial contribution to enable their replacement.

### **Sports centres**

There are currently three sports centres serving the district. The redevelopment of Wycombe Sports Centre and the proposed extension of Risborough Springs Sports Centre (subject to planning permission) will meet the current demand and go some way towards meeting future demand.

There is an identified need for additional indoor sport provision in Marlow which will be a priority for the District Council in the coming years.

## **7. Flood Defences**

Bucks County Council has identified, through the Surface Water Management Plan for Chesham and High Wycombe (Jacobs, November 2011) an action plan to mitigate flood risk within High Wycombe. Further work and development of these schemes is on-going and further information will be sought from the County Council regarding the funding availability and timing of any schemes.

Planning permission was granted in 2010 with delivery programmed for 2014/15 of a flood alleviation scheme in Marlow. The project comprises of three separate elements – Pound Lane which will protect 115 properties; Firview/Gossmore project protecting 172 properties and a compensatory storage area in Lower Pound Lane.

Work is also commencing on an updated strategic flood risk assessment to provide an up to date picture of the areas at greatest risk of flooding.

### **How the infrastructure improvements may be delivered**

Section 5 of the main Local Plan Options Consultation report sets out some of the key sites that are being considered for development over the plan period. Key development principles are set out that any development of these sites should follow. These include requirements for key infrastructure. These have been informed by an initial review of the design principles; the emerging results of transport, landscape and ecology work; and initial feedback from infrastructure providers.

Over and above the key sites being considered for development, any new development in Wycombe district has the potential to put pressure on infrastructure such as our roads, schools and utility services. The Council will expect all developments, where necessary, to contribute to site related and wider infrastructure improvements through one or more of the following mechanisms:

- Planning conditions
- Planning obligations (contained within s106 agreements and unilateral undertakings)
- Section 278 Agreements for highway improvements
- Wycombe Community Infrastructure Levy

As the new Local Plan progresses, the Council will continue to work closely with a wide range of infrastructure providers and potential developers to assess the potential infrastructure requirements from new development, costs, funding sources and timing of delivery.

**Appendix A**  
**Infrastructure Providers contacted in autumn 2013**

Transport & Accessibility – Bucks County Council; Highways Agency

Education – Bucks County Council; Bucks New University

Health – NHS England

Emergency Services – Thames Valley Police; Bucks and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Social Infrastructure – WDC Community Services; Bucks County Council Adults & Family Wellbeing

Green Infrastructure – WDC Community Services; WDC Spatial Planning; Bucks County Council Green Infrastructure; Environment Agency

Utilities Services – Thames Water; Veolia Water; British Gas

Flood Defences – Environment Agency