

Wycombe District Council  
Planning & Sustainability  
Queen Victoria Road  
High Wycombe  
HP11 1BB

6<sup>th</sup> May 2015

**F.A.O. Rosie Brakes**

Dear Rosie

**LONGWICK NDP CAPACITY STUDY – HIGHWAYS DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION COMMENTS**

Thank you for consulting Highways Development Management on the Longwick NDP Capacity Study, which is to inform the Longwick Neighbourhood Plan and the development of between 85-140 homes.

Highways Development Management has concerns regarding the transport sustainability of the proposed level of development considered as part of the Longwick Capacity Study. Whilst Longwick contains a limited number of local facilities, including a community village hall, a small convenience store and a primary school, in reality residents will need to travel to Princes Risborough for the majority of their needs, some 1.6 miles south of the village.

**The Longwick Capacity Study highlights several issues in relation to transport, including:**

- Lack of public transport particularly at peak times for commuters travelling to the station, adding to congestion.
- Poor cycle infrastructure within both the village itself and connections to nearby towns.
- Congestion at peak times in the morning and evening as people leave to travel to work.
- Concerns regarding pedestrian, cycle safety taking into account lack of street lighting and nature of the surrounding roads.

A transport note has also been provided in support of the Longwick Capacity Study which reviews the suitability of the proposed sites based on accessibility to major facilities, access to the highway, access to the bus routes and permeability within the village. The note is very limited and has not taken into account the following:

- How facilities in Princes Risborough would be accessed by sustainable modes of transport.
- Frequency and suitability of bus services serving the existing bus stops.
- Pedestrian and cycle access both within and outside of Longwick.

**Walking/Cycling**

The 'Longwick Capacity Study' suggests that facilities in Princes Risborough are widely used by residents of Longwick and that the town is within reasonable distance for walking however is difficult due to the busy nature of the roads and the speed at which traffic travels along key routes. CIHIT guidance, 'Providing for Journeys on Foot', tables 'acceptable walking distances' for different journey purposes:

	Town Centres (m)	Commuting/School (m)	Elsewhere (m)
<b>Desirable</b>	200	500	400
<b>Acceptable</b>	400	1000	800
<b>Preferred Maximum</b>	800	2000	1200

Princes Risborough town centre is approximately 1.6 miles away from Longwick, exceeding the preferred maximum walking distances above. In addition DfT guidance 'Manual for Streets' states that neighbourhoods should be within 800 metre range (or 10 minute walking distance) of certain local facilities.

There are currently limited pedestrian and cycle facilities on both Thame Road and Longwick Road. Whilst there may be potential to improve pedestrian/cycle facilities on Longwick Road, it is unlikely that this would be an attractive alternative to the private car due to the distance to Princes Risborough and the nature of the road (lack of active frontages, limited street-lighting and high vehicle speeds), which could be perceived as a 'safety' issue for potential users.

It also suggests that 'bridleway 42' could be upgraded to provide good pedestrian and cycle access to Princes Risborough through the potential growth area. Whilst this may be a suitable 'leisure route', this would be unlikely to offer a realistic alternative to the private car and encourage a significant modal shift.

### **Passenger Transport:**

Policy DM2 requires access to high quality, fully accessible, attractive public transport service or a new/enhanced public transport service where the development is not already served by a high quality attractive train or bus service. Longwick is currently served by two low frequency routes:

1. The Local Princes Risborough Community Bus, which runs between 3 and 5 off peak journeys per day.
2. Service 120/1, which provides 2 journeys per day under contract to Oxfordshire County Council, which is currently under review by Oxfordshire County Council.

The nearest route that by-passes Longwick is Service 320. This is a peak only one way service under contract to Chiltern Railways and is a commuter rail station link from Chinnor to Princes Risborough Station. It does not provide regular journeys in both directions, nor does it serve Princes Risborough town centre. There are no existing routes that could be diverted to Longwick to provide a suitable level of service to facilitate the level of development being proposed.

An hourly service from 07:00-19:00 would be the minimum acceptable service level for the scale of development being considered, however this would not be sustainable as a new standalone route. Experience shows that a 15-20 minute frequency or better is needed to generate significant levels of modal shift. A significantly larger population base than that at Longwick would be needed to make any new bus route sustainable. 85-140 dwellings would not generate enough fares revenue to make a route viable without significant long term subsidy. Estimated cost to subsidise a new service using one bus would be around £110,000 p.a.

Our current subsidised bus services work to policy guidelines that focus on meeting existing transport needs while reducing the average subsidy cost per passenger journey. The council's medium term plan is reducing subsidy budget each year and no provision is made for taking on additional routes.

In addition there are no plans to introduce additional journeys between Princes Risborough to Thame in the future and we are not aware of any Buckinghamshire demand for this public transport link. Current need is met by the two off-peak journeys contracted by Oxfordshire. The existing much higher frequency service to Aylesbury and High Wycombe (service 300) provides access to any services not available within Princes Risborough itself.

Longwick Capacity Study recognises that in order to satisfy the requirements of the NPPF for sustainable development 'no large scale development can take place in the village until a frequent high quality bus service is available to nearby towns'. The only way this could be achieved, is if a bus route was fully funded and maintained by a developer in perpetuity.

The nearest train station to Longwick is Princes Risborough, approximately 2 miles away. The train station provides services to Aylesbury, Bicester, Birmingham and London Marylebone. As part of East West Rail proposals, there is potential for significant journey time and accessibility benefits. Due to the distance of the station from Longwick and the limited public transport provision, the only realistic way to access the train station for commuting purposes is via the private car.

In addition to the above comments, I refer you to Buckinghamshire County Council's 'General Principles for Public Transport in New Development'.

Yours Sincerely

**Christine Urry**

Acting Head of Highways Development Management  
***Transport Economy Environment***  
Tel: 01494 475355

