
WYCOMBE DISTRICT

LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

MATTER 2: THE PLAN'S STRATEGY

For JSN Property Developments Ltd
(Response ID Number: 0948)

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Matter 2 – The Plan’s Strategy

- 5. Has the Settlement Strategy (Policy CP3) been positively prepared, justified and will it be effective in delivering sustainable growth?**
- a) How has the settlement hierarchy been defined and what level of growth is proposed for each tier?**
- 5.1 Policy CP3 (Settlement Strategy) is informed by the Council’s Settlement Hierarchy Study (September 2017). Marlow Bottom is identified as a Tier 3 Settlement, alongside amongst others, Lane End and Stokenchurch. We believe that the Council’s Settlement Hierarchy Study under-values the proximity of Marlow Bottom to Marlow.
- 5.2 The detailed Settlement Audit for Marlow Bottom confirms that the nearest higher tier settlement is Marlow, accessible in 10 minutes by bus. However, this fails to recognise the investment made in a shared footpath and cycle-way that links Marlow Bottom and Marlow, with a large number of school children from Marlow Bottom walking or cycling to Great Marlow Secondary School. Adjacent to Great Marlow Secondary School is the Redgrave Sports Centre, an indoor sports facility, with full size sports hall and gym, and outdoor sports facilities shared with Great Marlow School.
- 5.3 The Education Authority advises that for secondary school children, a secondary school is within walking distance at under 3 miles. All of Marlow Bottom is within 3 miles walking distance of Great Marlow Secondary School. Proposed allocations within Lane End and Stockenchurch are not within 3 miles walking distance of a secondary school.
- 5.4 We would further suggest that over and above the facilities explicitly considered in the Settlement Hierarchy Study, Marlow Bottom benefits from a range of additional services and facilities, including a restaurant, vet, hair dresser and beauty salon, a day nursery and take-away. These facilities and services further add to Marlow Bottom’s sustainability credentials.
- 5.5 The larger Tier 3 Settlements of Lane End and Stokenchurch do not benefit from the same level of accessibility to a Tier 1 or Tier 2 Settlement, and on this basis, are therefore less sustainable locations for accommodating development than Marlow Bottom.
- 8. Is the Spatial Strategy sufficiently flexible and can it respond effectively to changing circumstances?**
- 8.1 The Spatial Strategy is not sufficiently flexible to respond effectively to changing circumstances. No new reserve sites have been identified, and the District Council recognises that in assessing the capacity of potential development sites, it has already pushed assumed development densities.

- 8.2 The Council is seeking to rely upon unmet housing needs being accommodated in Aylesbury Vale district – effectively as a flexible pressure-valve.
- 8.3 We do not believe this provides sufficient or effective flexibility. There is significant uncertainty over whether Aylesbury Vale district is able to accommodate the currently forecast level of unmet need from Wycombe District (in combination with unmet need from other local planning authority areas). Further, there is certainly no evidence that there is scope for Aylesbury Vale district to significantly increase housing delivery above its current assumptions, if for example there are delays with delivery of some of the sites in Wycombe District, site capacities in Wycombe district reduce following more technical work (at the planning application stage) or the overall housing requirement increases.
- 8.4 Wycombe District Council should be releasing more Green Belt land now to provide greater flexibility. Such an approach would provide more scope to use Aylesbury Vale district as an effective pressure-valve, and would also help reduce the pressure to release more Green Belt land for development in any early Local Plan review.