



**Wycombe District Local Plan (Regulation 19) Publication version**

**Topic Paper 5: Infrastructure**

**October 2017**

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This topic paper is one in a series, the subject of this topic paper is how we have developed the key infrastructure strategy within Wycombe District Local Plan (Regulation 19) Publication Version (October 2017). Each topic paper will look at the relevant national and local guidance that informs the Publication Draft Local Plan. Topic papers explain how the strategy has developed and the information, evidence and feedback that has informed the choices made in formulating the policies and also sets out what we foresee as the key issues and how these have been resolved.

1.2 The main issues covered by this topic paper are:

- Details regarding types of infrastructure assessed and the main infrastructure providers
- How we have engaged with infrastructure and service providers
- How this engagement has informed Local Plan policies and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- How it will be monitored, updating the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and further assessment required over the Plan period to firm up infrastructure requirements.

### **Types of infrastructure assessed and the main infrastructure providers**

1.3 Infrastructure is the facilities, services, and installations needed to support our communities and to enable the local economy to thrive.

This includes but is not limited to the following:

- Transportation: roads, bus routes, rail network;
- Education facilities: schools, colleges, universities, adult learning centres;
- Utilities: water, power grids, sewers;

- Community facilities: Sports and leisure facilities, community centres;
- Health care: hospitals, local GP surgeries and other facilities;
- Emergency & essential services: fire, police and ambulance facilities;
- Green spaces: playing fields and sport pitches, wildlife areas; and
- Communications systems: digital telecommunications.

1.4 There are various agencies responsible for building, maintaining and operating the different types of infrastructure. Wycombe District Council works with each of these agencies through the Local Plan process and when assessing individual planning applications. Some of the main infrastructure providers are:

- Highways England: responsible for the M40 and the A404(M).
- Network Rail: owns and operates the rail network with the train operators such as Chiltern Rail and Great Western Railway.
- Buckinghamshire County Council: responsible for the local highway network, school place planning and libraries.
- Wycombe District Council: responsible for waste collection, leisure facilities and open spaces as well as being responsible producing the Local Plan and assessing planning applications.
- Utility companies: private companies responsible for public energy, water and telecoms supplies.
- NHS: responsible for health services including hospitals and GP surgeries.
- Developers: responsible for ensuring essential infrastructure is available within their development.

## 2.0 Policy context

- 2.1 Paragraph 157 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that local plans should “plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in an area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this Framework”.
- 2.2 Paragraph 162 of the NPPF requires us to work with other authorities and providers to ‘assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure for transport, water supply, wastewater and its treatment, energy, telecommunications, utilities, waste, health, social care, education and flood risk and coastal change management, and its ability to meet forecast demands.’ It further requires that local authorities “take account of the need for strategic infrastructure including nationally significant infrastructure within their area”.
- 2.3 The Council has worked extensively with the various infrastructure and service providers over the last number of years to assess the infrastructure requirements to support the growth outlined in the Council’s plans so that it can be delivered sustainably.
- 2.4 At the regional/county level, key documents and strategies that have informed the Plan and accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) are the Bucks Strategic Economic Plan led by the Bucks Thames Valley Local Enterprise partnership and Local Transport Plan 4. Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) are currently leading on the production of a Buckinghamshire Strategic Infrastructure Plan that will summarise the main infrastructure requirements to support growth across the county.
- 2.5 There are key national and regional rail projects that may have knock on effects in Wycombe district including HS2 which cuts through the very northern tip of the district but with construction routes potentially through High Wycombe and Princes Risborough; East West rail which will improve rail links from Princes Risborough to Aylesbury and will provide a new direct connection to Milton Keynes; and Crossrail which

will improve connections to central London from Maidenhead which has branch connections to Bourne End and Marlow.

- 2.6 At the local level, a key priority of the 2015 – 2019 Wycombe District Council Corporate Plan is regeneration and infrastructure with the key outcome to “ensure a sustainable balance between homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure so we can accommodate required growth without compromising the quality of our valued natural environment and rural areas”.
- 2.7 An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been published alongside the Publication Draft Local Plan which identifies the infrastructure requirements necessary to support the anticipated development and growth across the district.
- 2.8 The Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in 2012 which was supported by a previous version of the IDP which was used to demonstrate the need for a CIL. CIL is charged on a square metre basis on the additional floorspace created in new residential and retail developments and the funding can be used to support infrastructure improvements in the district. Decisions on how CIL is spent is made annually by the Cabinet of Wycombe District Council.
- 2.9 Section 14 of the IDP sets out the other funding and delivery mechanisms that will be used to deliver the necessary infrastructure. This includes the site enabling infrastructure to allow a development to be useable such as roads and drainage, planning conditions, planning obligations secured through Section 106 legal agreements, WDC and Buckinghamshire County Council capital funding and various Government grant funding avenues.
- 2.10 The Council are required to demonstrate that the viability of development to come forward is not threatened by the scale of requirements or obligations that are set. We have published a Whole Plan Viability Assessment, which includes assessment of key infrastructure requirements for large sites proposed for allocation in the

plan. A separate more detailed viability assessment for the Princes Risborough Expansion Area has also been undertaken. These assessments demonstrate that development in the Council's area can come forward with the levels of affordable housing required, CIL and other policy requirements such as open space standards and proposed policies for technical housing standards.

## 3.0 Evidence base

- 3.1 To support the Local Plan the Council and our partners have undertaken a range of technical studies that inform the specific site allocations and the infrastructure planning process. These technical documents and assessments as well as the significant consultation and ongoing liaison with internal and external stakeholders over the past number of years have informed the policies in the Plan and the production of the IDP.
- 3.2 Policy CP7 Delivering the infrastructure to support growth sets out the key infrastructure requirements over the Plan period and that where justified development will be required to provide or contribute towards delivering the necessary infrastructure. Site policies set out specific infrastructure requirements particularly for strategic sites.
- 3.3 A summary of the technical studies and specific assessment work undertaken by infrastructure topic is as follows:

### Transport

- 3.4 Significant modelling and assessment work including mitigation packages put forward undertaken at the County and local level with Bucks County Council and other Bucks Districts. Background evidence documents include:
  - Jacobs (2016) High Wycombe Reserve Sites Transport Framework

- Buckinghamshire County Council (2016) Buckinghamshire Local Transport Plan 4
- Jacobs (2016) Countywide Local Plan Modelling Phase 1 Forecast Modelling Report
- Jacobs (2017) Countywide Local Plan Modelling Phase 2 Forecast Modelling Report
- Jacobs (2017) Countywide Local Plan Modelling Phase 3 Technical Note
- Jacobs (2017) Wycombe Local Plan Sites Traffic Modelling

3.5 The Transport Topic Paper provides further detail on the studies and modelling including the housing scenarios tested. These studies as well as site specific assessments have informed the policies in the Plan and the range of transport interventions highlighted in the IDP.

## Utilities

3.6 Significant engagement has been undertaken with Thames Water and Affinity Water who carried out assessments of the waste water and water network requirements of individual site allocations. Prospective developers of sites will also work with the utility providers to confirm what the necessary water network and wastewater reinforcement required for sites to come forward.

3.7 During the production of the Plan since 2013 Thames Water carried out assessments on the capacity of the sewage works at Princes Risborough and Little Marlow based on the growth scenarios the Council were testing.

3.8 WDC commissioned an evidence report undertaken to assess the environmental capacity of the STW's receiving watercourses, the Thames and the River Wye (return flow) and ensure that the growth will not result in a significant deterioration in water quality.

- 3.9 Engagement has also taken place with National Grid who have confirmed that the housing growth in Wycombe district will not have a significant effect upon their infrastructure and that the existing network will cope with additional demands.

## Education

- 3.10 The assessment of education needs has been informed by BCC responses to potential growth levels. The assessments were based on the local School Place Area Plans, which set out the areas of the district that are projected to be in a deficit of school places. The assessments were also based on BCC's Education planning obligations guidance document<sup>1</sup> which sets out the pupil generation rates from new housing developments and the costs of provision.

## Health

- 3.11 Assessments have been made to ensure that health supporting infrastructure is included particularly on new strategic site allocations. In terms of primary health, significant engagement has been undertaken with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups who have set out the extra primary healthcare provision required to meet extra demand created by development. There is a general standard of provision of 1 GP per 1,800 patients and the CCGs have set out where new and improved provision is needed to meet the growth outlined in the Plan.

## Community facilities and indoor sport

- 3.12 Assessment of community facilities and indoor sport has been informed by WDC's Community Services led Community Facilities Strategy where there are known current and projected deficiencies based on a standard of provision.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidance on Planning Obligations for Education Provision, BCC, 2010

## Green infrastructure, open space and outdoor sport

3.13 Assessment of green infrastructure, open space and outdoor sport has been informed by existing policy requirements outlined in DM16 of the adopted Delivery and Site Allocations Plan, the Council's Sports Facility Strategy and the Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan, 2013.

## 4.0 Consultation

3.14 The Council began work on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan in 2010 to support the development of the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan and this was updated in 2012 to set out the high level infrastructure requirements for the delivery of the Core Strategy and to support the introduction of the CIL.

3.15 The Council consulted on an options document for the new Wycombe Local Plan in February 2014. Prior to this and building on the significant consultation undertaken for the previous version of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, service providers were contacted in October 2013 with a consultation pack setting out possible district wide growth options including the reserve sites.

3.16 A report of the initial feedback from infrastructure providers was published in January 2014 alongside the new Wycombe Local Plan Growth Options consultation. This report is available to view on the Council's website<sup>2</sup>.

3.17 In March 2016 further consultation was undertaken with the service providers on the overall levels of growth and allocations proposed for the new Local Plan for Wycombe District. Services were asked to consider:

- If their service can meet potential increased demand with no upgrades to existing infrastructure capacity; or

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<sup>2</sup>Infrastructure Initial Feedback Report (Jan 2014)

- Whether the levels of growth will have an impact on their service and upgrades are required.
- 3.18 Service providers were asked to provide as much detail as possible on the nature, scale and costs of the identified upgrades including identifying projects that could be added to an Infrastructure Delivery Schedule.
- 3.19 A draft IDP was published in June 2016 alongside a consultation draft of the new Wycombe Local Plan. A large number of comments were received on the draft Local Plan consultation which highlighted infrastructure capacity, particularly traffic congestion, school places, GP capacity, as a concern in areas where new housing is proposed.
- 3.20 In December 2016 service and infrastructure providers were asked to provide any further updates on necessary infrastructure to support the growth outlined taking account of updated housing figures.
- 3.21 In April 2017 specific service providers such as Bucks County Council, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Thames Water were contacted to agree with the strategic infrastructure issues highlight in the Plan and IDP and commit to ongoing working in line with the Duty to Co-operate.

## 5.0 Key issues and how these have been resolved or further work required

### Overall

- 3.22 A recurring theme expressed by members of the public throughout the consultation stages on the plan has been pressure on existing infrastructure be it roads, schools, GP's, or sewage treatment infrastructure from the proposed development. The Council has continuously engaged with infrastructure providers to ensure that the pressures created by new development are identified. Where possible we have also identified what is required to mitigate any impact and the costs. Where appropriate specific requirements have been identified in site specific policies or development management policies, otherwise

detail has been provided of the provision that infrastructure will be included in their longer term plans.

## Transport

3.23 The Transport Topic Paper sets out the challenges and the range of mitigation measures proposed in the Plan and IDP.

## Utilities

3.24 During the preparation of the Plan, Thames Water confirmed that the Plan did not need to allocate sites for new sewage treatment works. However they confirmed that the sewage treatment works at Little Marlow and Princes Risborough would need extra capacity and that these upgrades will likely be included in their next Asset Management Period (2020-2025). Thames Water have confirmed that considering the type of upgrades required, the physical footprint of the sites would be able to accommodate any upgrade.

3.25 In terms of water supply Thames Water has confirmed there will be sufficient potable water to serve the additional population by the end of the plan period. However the south east is a water stressed region and Thames Water are implementing various resource options as outline in para 7.9 of the IDP. Thames Water had previously requested that a policy be included in the Plan to safeguard land partly in Wycombe district for a new Upper Thames reservoir near Chinnor. However this has now been discounted as an option for a new reservoir.

3.26 Para 7.11 of the IDP sets out a number of the strategic sites where Thames Water will be requiring developers to provide a water supply strategy to provide necessary upgrades as the water network capacity in the immediate area will be unlikely to support the demand anticipated. Para 7.17 of the IDP also sets out where upgrades are required to the local sewage network to support demand from new development sites.

## Education

3.27 BCC the Local Education Authority (LEA) have identified that the growth set out in the plan will generate the need for 10 forms of entry of primary school places and approx. 8 forms of entry for secondary schools (a form of entry is an additional class per year group). A key issue for the provision of additional school places is that Government rules mean the LEA cannot force or require a school to expand to meet local needs – the school have the option not to expand if they do not wish to do so.

3.28 However the LEA have been successful in gaining agreement from the majority of primary schools in the vicinity/catchments affected to expand. In addition to expansions of existing schools, the Council is proposing that due to the size of the allocations and projected local school place deficits, new schools be provided alongside the following site allocations:

- Princes Risborough Expansion Area (PREA) (PR7);
- Gomm Valley and Ashwells (HW6); and
- Hollands Farm (BE2).

3.29 The IDP identifies a number of secondary school expansion projects that are ongoing or planned. To meet the demand for secondary school places over the Plan period BCC will need to consider further expansion of existing secondary schools over those being currently expanded or planned. This will be kept under review in line with housing delivery and population trends.

## Health

3.30 The growth outlined in the Plan suggests a need for a further 9 full time equivalent GPs. Whilst the capacity and quality of practice buildings across the district is important the key issue in primary healthcare is the recruitment and retention of GPs. Shortage of GPs is a national issue as fewer doctors choose general practice over working in a hospital setting. However it can be exacerbated in Buckinghamshire because of

the high house prices, cost of 'buying in' to existing practices and the number of outpatient visits that are required. These recruitment issues are likely to continue in the short to medium term with a large number of GPs approaching retirement age, seven day and extended opening becoming a requirement, and increased numbers of complex housebound patients or those living in care homes.

- 3.31 Para 9.8 of the IDP sets out measures and principles that the CCG are adopting to alleviate the impact of some of these issues to ensure that practices are resilient and sustainable. In addition some practices are employing specialist paramedics and community pharmacists as well as additional nursing staff so that patient needs are dealt with by the appropriate clinician as not all patients need to see the doctor. In busy periods in some practices waiting times for routine appointments can be over a week. However most practices operate a rapid access clinic so that all urgent appointments are seen on the day.
- 3.32 The IDP sets out a number of potential projects to expand or reconfigure existing surgeries to provide extra clinical space. The CCG also have ambitions, subject to funding and land availability, to create health hubs in High Wycombe and Bourne End. These would house a number of existing GP practices thus providing resilience and increased access to services.
- 3.33 In Princes Risborough, an alternative location for a new GP centre for the town is identified on the proposed expansion area. Wellington House Practice have indicated their willingness to explore re-locating their entire practice to a new facility within the new development where a site has been identified (although this will be dependent on many factors including agreement around premises build costs, on-going reimbursement costs and transition arrangements). Policy PR7 facilitates the delivery of this infrastructure when required.

## Community facilities

3.34 The IDP sets out a number of projects that are underway or planned to improve community facilities in the District. These schemes will meet the current deficiencies in a number of wards. Apart from the Princes Risborough expansion area there is no requirement for additional new community centres on the strategic allocations in the Plan. There is however, a need generated across the District which will be met through the use of developer contributions or CIL as appropriate.

## Green infrastructure, open space and outdoor sport

3.35 The IDP sets out the primary green infrastructure, open space and play requirements across key sites. A key issue has been how the open space standards as required by the adopted Delivery and Site Allocations Policy DM16 and the requirements as set out in the Council's Sports Facility Strategy (SFS) are delivered on strategic sites. For example the SFS identifies projected deficiencies in youth football pitches rather than adult football pitches. Therefore the recommendations for the type of outdoor sport facilities on strategic sites such as the Princes Risborough Expansion Area, Abbey Barn South (HW5) and Terriers Farm (HW7) is for youth football pitches. Reflecting the needs identified in the SFS, locations for synthetic turf pitches and a rugby pitch have also been identified.

3.36 A key issue moving forward is the need for more fine grained assessments of the specific open space requirements on other strategic sites, such as Land at Tralee Farm and Hollands Farm e.g. what size of playing pitches are required for the local need. These requirements will be confirmed through development brief processes and further assessments by the Council's Community Services and Planning departments.

3.37 Sport England objected to the draft plan in 2016 on the grounds that it was not based on up to date evidence, and that the approach applied – i.e. the use of standards in the DSA policy DM16 was unsound. The

Councils approach to this is that the DSA policy remained extant and was not being replaced in the new Local Plan and as such it was appropriate to use this policy as a basis for outdoor sports needs.

- 3.38 In terms of strategic green infrastructure one of the key challenges for the Local Plan is the need to minimise recreational impacts on Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation. Little Marlow Gravel Pits has been designated as a Country Park and Policies BE1 and BE2 of the Plan require contributions from developments to improve the facilities and access to the new Country Park so that there is less of an impact on Burnham Beeches from new development.
- 3.39 Other key issues in terms of green infrastructure are the fact that there will be large areas of undeveloped land on key strategic sites such as Gomm Valley & Ashwells (HW6) and Abbey Barn South (HW5). Further discussion and agreement are required with developers and local stakeholders on the mechanisms for the ongoing management and financing of major new open spaces and green infrastructure such as the undeveloped area of the Gomm Valley and the new public park at the woodland ride on Abbey Barn South.

## Conclusions

- 3.40 Infrastructure projects can potentially consist of a number of funding streams and can be delivered directly by developers or utility companies or by the relevant public sector agencies. Chapter 7 of the Plan and Section 14 of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan set out how the proposals in the Plan and the necessary infrastructure will be delivered.
- 3.41 Wycombe District Council is committed to delivering new homes and jobs in a sustainable and timely manner. The Plan allocates sites for new schools and open spaces, sets out the various transport requirements that developers will have to deliver or contribute to, as well as the other infrastructure requirements such as improvements to GP provision that will be taken forward.

3.42 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan published alongside the Plan is a 'living' document and will be updated as appropriate when projects are delivered, when more accurate information on timing delivery is known and funding is secured.