



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

**Topic Paper 6: Princes Risborough**

**October 2017**

## Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>How did the strategy evolve?.....</b>	<b>2</b>
	Summer 2014 – Feb 2016 – exploring the options and developing the evidence with stakeholders	3
	Feb-Mar 16 – draft proposals .....	5
	Apr 16 – Sept 2017 - refining the proposals. ....	6
	The publication version of the Risborough proposals .....	8
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Compliance with national policy.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Compliance with Plan objectives.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Key issues, options and preferred solutions .....</b>	<b>14</b>
	Risborough’s place in the strategy – why Risborough? .....	14
	Constraints .....	21
	Creating a firm boundary to the expanded town and preventing sprawl .....	25
	Economy, jobs and commuting.....	26
	Cross-border impacts.....	27
	The road – justified .....	27
	Optioneering .....	33
	Context of Chilterns AONB.....	40
	Context of strategic road network.....	43
	Other infrastructure.....	45
	Why is the expansion proposed through the Local Plan rather than a Neighbourhood Development Plan?.....	52
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>52</b>
	Appendix A.....	54
	Appendix B Princes Risborough relief road – deliverability.....	56

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This topic paper is one in a series. The subject of this topic paper is how we have developed policy for the major expansion of Princes Risborough within the 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 version. Topic papers explain how the strategy has developed and the information, evidence and feedback that has informed the choices made in formulating the policies. It also sets out what we foresee as the key issues and how these have been resolved.

1.2 This topic paper covers the following matters:

- It sets out how the strategy evolved from the early options consultation and how it was shaped by engagement, the development of the evidence base and the policy context, to the form it takes today.
- It justifies the direction of growth of the town, its scale, form and boundary.
- It sets out how constraints have been considered and potential adverse impacts avoided or mitigated.
- It draws together the evidence for major new road infrastructure here, the process of developing options and how the preferred option has been identified.
- It sets out and justifies the requirements for creating a sustainable expansion of the town, including infrastructure requirements.
- It shows how the expansion is viable and deliverable.

## 2.0 How did the strategy evolve?

### 2014 Options Consultation

- 2.1 The option to expand the town significantly was first considered in the main Wycombe District Local Plan Options consultation in February 2014. The options consultation proposed three levels of growth for Princes Risborough: 500 homes; 1000 homes; or a major expansion of up to 2500 homes. During the time of the consultation key national test cases were resolved and it was becoming clear that it would be necessary to plan for a much higher level of housing growth in the District than had previously been required, and the need for the major expansion of the town became more likely.
- 2.2 To support the consultation, the Princes Risborough Area - Transport Study (Jacobs 2014) was completed, which demonstrated that new road infrastructure would be required in the context of major growth of the town. It drew up two concept options for a new road, set out indicative costs and conducted a preliminary environmental appraisal.
- 2.3 A high number of responses to this consultation drew out a range of issues over the expansion of the town which were carried into the next phase of work.
- 2.4 The Council has engaged with all the prescribed Duty to Cooperate bodies: those of principal note in respect of Princes Risborough are drawn out in the consideration of the evolution of the strategy below.

## **Summer 2014 – Feb 2016 – exploring the options and developing the evidence with stakeholders**

- 2.5 After the options consultation, the council commissioned further work in 2014 to assemble an overall evidence package which would set out the constraints and opportunities in the area of search – this is the Tibbalds background study. It was a helpful starting point from which further more detailed work sprang. Tibbalds also prepared an ‘Issues and Responses’ document which set out 12 key issues arising from the proposed expansion of the town, and a range of responses to these issues. Initial exhibitions/drop-in sessions took place in September 2014 to gather issues from the community and early feedback on proposals.
- 2.6 The Tibbalds reports were published in December 2014 and Wycombe District Council ran an exhibition and public meeting in January 2015 to explain these and respond to questions.
- 2.7 In March 2015 Wycombe District Council published a Local Development Scheme which confirmed the timetable and preparation of an Area Action Plan (AAP)<sup>1</sup> for the Princes Risborough expansion, to run in advance of the main Local Plan for the District.
- 2.8 In 2015, we commissioned TDRC Ltd to further develop the concept for the main expansion area. WDC and TDRC Ltd worked intensively with the community, stakeholders and land interests to refine the concept for the expansion area, setting out the different land uses, development densities and linking green and blue infrastructure. This work process is recorded in the Evolution of the Concept Plan document. The HCA and their ATLAS team have been invaluable in providing advice, extra capacity and critical friend advice as the proposals have developed.
- 2.9 The development of planning policy for Princes Risborough has been guided and informed through a number of engagement activities. Key to

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<sup>1</sup> This is also known as the Princes Risborough Town Plan and we refer to Town Plan rather than AAP in this topic paper

this was the establishment by WDC of the Princes Risborough Steering Group and a regular forum for agents and landowners in May 2015.

- 2.10 The forum for land agents and promoters met regularly through 2015 and 2016. We shared information on programme, viability assessment, developer contributions and delivery mechanisms, and the outcomes of technical work such as transport modelling and highway feasibility.
- 2.11 In July 2015 Wycombe District Council arranged an exhibition and public drop-in sessions to share the emerging development scenario for the major expansion of the town and gather ideas for town centre improvements.
- 2.12 During autumn 2015 Wycombe District Council held a series of intensive workshops on design and infrastructure issues with the steering group and agents' forum, culminating with a wider forum on 1 December 2015 which included the agents' forum, steering group and stakeholders from local authority service providers and utilities. The outputs from these workshops were incorporated into the draft town plan which was published for consultation in February to March 2016.
- 2.13 The 2014 tests by Jacobs had used a spreadsheet style model to forecast traffic flows. In 2015 the new countywide VISUM software model had been developed, and a section of it was refined for the Princes Risborough area to conduct the next stage of testing. WDC, together with the County Council and BTVLEP, jointly commissioned a Stage One Options Assessment Report (OAR). This would allow the County Council / LEP to take a preferred scheme forward for strategic fund bids if it were deemed a priority. It also happened to provide appropriate evidence for Local Plan testing, so WDC concurred with and contributed to the commission. The OAR was completed in early 2016 and the results are discussed below in the context of the development of the preferred road alignment. The OAR also generated Benefit: Cost Ratios (BCRs) for the shortlisted options: while these are an indicator of economic performance, they became of less importance as it became clear that the scheme would not attract strategic funds and

would require delivery by development alone. The OAR has also fed into the Sustainability Appraisal to assess the overall shortlisted options for the road.

- 2.14 At this time, the model was also used to generate more information about the capacity of the Tesco roundabout, to give an indication of how close the road network was to a tipping point for needing new infrastructure. This is the Tesco roundabout note.
- 2.15 Jacobs were also commissioned to prepare a feasibility study for the alignment most likely to become the preferred option, to include designs for replacement railway bridges. This work produced firmer and more detailed costs for this reference scheme than the earlier concept work.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.16 Public concern about parking capacity in the town and at the railway station prompted the commissioning of a parking study, which indicates the number of spaces that will be needed to support the growth of the town.

## **Feb-Mar 16 – draft proposals**

- 2.17 In February to March 2016, the Council consulted on a draft town plan document for Princes Risborough<sup>3</sup>. The draft town plan set out proposals based on the evidence work completed thus far and was informed by the intensive period of engagement during 2015.
- 2.18 The draft plan included a specific Vision and objectives for Princes Risborough which was developed by the Steering Group:

*“In 2033, Princes Risborough will be a modern, green and accessible market town - with a safe and vibrant community, that strongly reflects its historic roots, rich cultural heritage and special landscape setting within the Chiltern Hills.*

*Our town of the future will:*

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<sup>2</sup> Princes Risborough Western Relief Road Feasibility Study (Jacobs 2016)

<sup>3</sup> Princes Risborough Town Plan – Draft Plan consultation document (February 2016)

*Provide high quality, environmentally sensitive homes for local people, as well as those from further afield*

*Encourage our community to come together to enjoy the social and economic benefits of a thriving high street, and facilities for sports and recreation*

*Offer outstanding public services, including high-quality schools and healthcare*

*Have a well-developed network of roads, cycle routes and footpaths - enabling people easily to get to where they want to go*

*Encourage future generations to remain in the town through business investment, so that people can live and work in the local area.”*

- 2.19 The consultation was promoted through a number of means, including letters delivered to every household in the plan area. The Council held two public meetings and also engaged with the public through a market stall on the High Street and two indoor exhibition sessions. More than 300 responses were received. These responses indicated that further work would be required on the Plan, including a more refined assessment of the options for the southern alignment of the proposed relief road.

### **Apr 16 – Sept 2017 - refining the proposals.**

- 2.20 Feedback from the draft Town Plan consultation indicated that a review of the feasibility work would be required, to test the costings, refine the alignment, and develop three alternative options for the southern end of the route. WDC also commissioned an ecological survey of the area to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the impact of each option. The information from this work was fed back into the Sustainability Appraisal to help inform the decision on the preferred option here.
- 2.21 As the development and infrastructure scenarios became more fixed, a final development scenario was modelled (Princes Risborough Expansion, Jacobs 2016), together with traffic management measures on the existing A4010 through the town which would calm and civilise traffic.

- 2.22 Considerable work has been developed to demonstrate that a new road can be delivered at Princes Risborough in the context of development and planning obligations. Because there is so little capacity in the current road network, key parts of the new road will need to be in place before significant numbers of homes can be occupied, and enough value generated to fund the road. Consequently the next stage of transport modelling work has been to test a number of sequencing scenarios to explore how elements of the road can be delivered alongside homes and maintain the road network in a satisfactory state of operation.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.23 A Risborough-specific viability study has been prepared<sup>5</sup>. This uses the costs derived from the transport work and those gathered in the course of the preparation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to demonstrate that the expansion area generates enough value to fund all the requirements of the development. Other work has informed infrastructure costs, including a concept-level study for an underpass of the railway at Wades Park.<sup>6</sup>
- 2.24 Princes Risborough is served by a good interurban bus service, but relies on a volunteer bus for local trips around the town and to its hinterland. This only runs at off-peak times. WDC believe that the expansion of the town is an appropriate opportunity to establish a viable commercial service for local trips, linking the expansion area to the town centre and railway stations. It can also be extended to Longwick, which is also proposing higher levels of growth through its Neighbourhood Development Plan. A Bus Route Viability Study (Jacobs 2016) demonstrates that such a service is feasible and could be commercially viable after a period of subsidy.

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<sup>4</sup> Princes Risborough Masterplan: Preliminary Phasing Strategy Modelling (Jacobs 2017) and Phasing Tests (Jacobs 2017)

<sup>5</sup> Princes Risborough Expansion Viability Report (WDC / GVA Grimley 2017)

<sup>6</sup> Princes Risborough Wades Park Underpass Feasibility Study & Preliminary Design (DRF Consulting 2017)

- 2.25 The Council also commissioned work to determine whether the expansion of the sewage treatment works would compromise water quality (Princes Risborough and Little Marlow Wastewater Treatment Work Assessments, AMEC 2017).
- 2.26 The level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has also directed growth to avoid areas of higher flood risk, and where it cannot be avoided, to advise on appropriate mitigation.
- 2.27 The Wycombe Commercial Sites Assessment (Boyer, 2016) has indicated the economic potential of Princes Risborough as a location for inward investment, and informed the location and extent of new employment allocations.
- 2.28 A sustainable expansion of the town requires the provision of new shopping space. Our Wycombe Town Centres and Retail Study 2017 Addendum, Lichfields 2017) confirms the floorspace provision indicated in earlier work, to be distributed between the existing town centre, the new local centre and the regenerated station area.

### **The publication version of the Risborough proposals**

- 2.29 Since the draft Town Plan consultation, the Council has incorporated the proposals for Princes Risborough into the main Local Plan. Those proposals have been updated to reflect the further work undertaken since the draft Town Plan consultation. We arranged a series of information events in July 2017 to update people on progress with the plan and how it had responded to feedback from the draft Town Plan consultation. We staffed a stall at the town fair and were invited by Princes Risborough Town Council to present to an evening public meeting at the Community Centre. Attendance was oversubscribed so the meeting was repeated the following week.

## 3.0 Compliance with national policy

3.1 The Plan proposes the major expansion of Princes Risborough, nearly doubling the size of the town. Consequently many of the provisions of the NPPF that apply to plan-making are relevant to the proposals for Princes Risborough. At the heart of national policy in the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (14). For plan making this means:

- local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area
- Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:

any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, or;

specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted (footnote 9).

3.2 The proposals for Princes Risborough seek to sustain the Core planning principles set out in para 17, to deliver sustainable development (151, 152, 156), ensuring the vitality of the town centre (23), setting out principles for high quality development (58) and a choice of homes (50, 52).

3.3 Sustainable transport runs thematically through the Risborough proposals, giving people a real choice about how they travel, reducing congestion and proposing positive measures to avoid severe impacts on the road network (29, 30, and 32). It maximises the opportunities presented by the rail network in the town (34) and creates safe, direct and attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists (35). Land uses are mixed and balanced where possible to minimise journey lengths and internalise trips (37, 38). The plan protects land for future transport infrastructure such as the potential twin-tracking of the Aylesbury – Risborough railway line (41).

- 3.4 Proposals for Princes Risborough will promote healthy communities through good quality urban design (69), the provision of community facilities (70), new schools (72) and new open spaces and sports facilities (73). It will link pedestrian routes into existing rights of way and increase access to the Ridgway National Trail (75).
- 3.5 Climate change will be addressed through mitigation and adaptation measures:
- Supporting the delivery of low carbon / renewable energy (93, 97)
  - Taking full account of flood risk, avoiding zones of higher risk where possible by applying the Sequential test, and mitigating appropriately in the context of the Exception test (94, 100-102)
  - Creating green infrastructure as an adaptation measure (99)
- 3.6 The proposals protect and enhance the Natural Environment through the designation of green infrastructure and protected areas, and the commitment to secure a net gain in biodiversity through the creation of species-rich habitats (109, 117). It seeks to minimise the impact on the AONB and its setting through a landscape-scale approach to the expansion area, and sensitive treatment of the southern end of the new relief road (115). It has prepared a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study to inform the extent and form of the proposals (170).
- 3.7 Potential noise, air quality and light pollution impacts in the rural setting of the town and in the context of new road infrastructure are recognised and inform the preferred options and policy requirements (123-125).
- 3.8 The Council has reviewed the appraisals of the Horsenden and Alscot Conservation Areas (129, 169) and these have shaped the options and the plan's response to heritage issues (132, 134).
- 3.9 The Council has worked proactively and on an ongoing basis with local infrastructure and service providers to develop the infrastructure requirements for the growth of the town and ensure that the requirements are costed, affordable and deliverable (162, 173, 177).

- 3.10 Work on the Princes Risborough section of the plan has been guided by the Planning Practice Guidance and relevant transport assessment guidance. This is listed in Appendix A.

## 4.0 Compliance with Plan objectives

- 4.1 The vision for Wycombe District is: 'economically strong and the place to live, work and visit.' The proposals for Princes Risborough aim to deliver that vision through the overall plan and its policies, by delivering a high-quality, sustainable expansion of the town.
- 4.2 The overall local plan creates eight objectives for delivering Wycombe District's vision and the plan document sets out principles for Princes Risborough that align with these objectives, and the Steering Group's own Vision. The table on the following two pages summarises which policies for Princes Risborough deliver against these principles:

Table 1: Summary of Princes Risborough Policies against Plan Objectives

Objectives	Policies
1. Cherish the Chilterns:	
a) Create an overall townscape which fits well into the special landscape setting and respects important long-distance views.	PR4, PR5, PR6, PR7, PR9, PR10
2. Strengthen the Sense of Place	
a) Ensure existing surrounding settlements retain distinct identities.	PR5
b) Preserve and enhance historic assets and features of the historic landscape (such as hedgerows), including Alscot Conservation Area.	PR4, PR7
c) Create a clear green edge to development to prevent longer-term sprawl into the countryside.	PR4, PR5
d) Achieve high design standards through site layout, landscape and building design principles that are merited by the town's location in relation to the Chilterns AONB and existing verdant character, including substantial proposals for incorporating biodiversity into the built environment and the use of local materials and trees, allowing for structural as well as local planting.	PR4, PR6, PR7, PR11
3. Foster economic growth	
a) Maximise the potential for new employment uses, and make suitable provision for new businesses to start up and existing businesses to grow or relocate in the Princes Risborough area.	PR9, PR10
4. Improve strategic connectivity	
a) Safeguard land for the future twin-tracking of the Princes Risborough to Aylesbury railway line.	PR4, PR8
b) Deliver new railway structures with passive provision for future twin-tracking.	PR8, PR17
5. Facilitate local infrastructure	
a) Tackle existing and future traffic congestion and severance by delivering new highway infrastructure.	PR3, PR4, PR7, PR8, PR16, PR17
b) Deliver a comprehensively planned expansion, demonstrating overall viability, with development delivering supporting infrastructure at the right time and in the right places.	PR3, PR7, PR17
c) Deliver new community infrastructure including school(s), some shops, and community meeting facilities, health and sporting facilities and wildlife-rich open and green spaces. Upgrade and expand existing facilities where needed, e.g. secondary school provision.	PR3, PR4, PR7, PR15, PR16, PR17

d) Achieve an improved environment for walking and cycling, in both the existing town and the expanded town. Make direct connections to existing railway services, and significantly improve other public transport options.	PR6, PR7, PR12, PR13, PR14, PR16, PR17
e) Deliver new and enhanced green infrastructure as part of an ecosystem services approach to enhance the landscape, mitigate flood risk, achieve a net gain in biodiversity, and link to the wider green infrastructure network, including existing Rights of Way and the Chilterns AONB, incorporating opportunities presented by designated ecological sites and other habitats such as hedgerows.	PR3, PR4, PR6, PR7, PR11, PR16
f) Successfully avoid or mitigate flood risks through the location of new development and through strategic and local interventions which will manage run-off rates and maximise opportunities for retention or absorption where possible.	PR17
<b>6. Deliver housing</b>	
a) Meet the specific housing needs for the town to complement what is already there, as well as contributing to the wider housing needs for Wycombe District.	PR3, PR6, PR7, PR11, PR16
<b>7. Champion town centres</b>	
a) Support the existing town centre as the primary destination for shopping and leisure, with increased parking capacity and improvements to the public realm to rebalance the environment towards pedestrians and cyclists.	PR7, PR12, PR13, PR14
<b>8. Mitigate climate change</b>	
a) Create a unified and thriving settlement by integrating the expanded town with the existing town, through physical connections across the railway line and through the appropriate distribution of services and facilities in the existing and the expanded town, minimising the need to travel by private car.	PR6, PR7
b) Improve access to the main railway station, enhancing the approach, creating space for full bus access and supporting appropriate uses in the station area.	PR8, PR16
c) Integrate renewable technologies into the new development including potentially a district heating or energy system.	PR6, PR7

## 5.0 Key issues, options and preferred solutions

### Risborough's place in the strategy – why Risborough?

- 5.1 The Strategy Topic Paper and Housing Topic Paper explain why major growth is planned at Princes Risborough and how it fits within the overall development strategy for the District. The other Buckinghamshire Districts have been engaged in the course of meeting the Duty to Cooperate as part of wider considerations of the housing capacity of Wycombe District, and also as part of the Housing Delivery Study for Buckinghamshire<sup>7</sup> in which the Princes Risborough expansion proposals were considered.

### Direction of growth of the town

- 5.2 Expanding the town into the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Metropolitan Green Belt (GB) is not a reasonable option for the plan. Major development here would need to be justified by exceptional circumstances. With the exception of one small site to the rear of Poppy Road (PR11) the Green Belt review did not identify any exceptional circumstances for release of land from the Green Belt at Princes Risborough. In relation to the AONB, the Council considers that there are not exceptional circumstances for major development in the AONB, given that there is scope for development needs to be met outside of the AONB but within the housing market area.
- 5.3 Therefore the direction of growth explored is away from these areas, to the north-west of the current town. This area is bounded by the Princes Risborough – Aylesbury (PRA) railway line to the southeast, while the western extent of the area explored is bisected by the Birmingham line, running north-south, and the Chinnor heritage line, running to the west. All the railway lines converge into Princes Risborough railway station. A reasonable radius for an area of search takes into account the need for

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<sup>7</sup> Housing Delivery Study for Buckinghamshire prepared (Wessex Economics 2017)

the expansion to relate well to the existing town centre and the need to protect surrounding settlements from encroachment/coalescence.

- 5.4 The area of search begins immediately adjacent to the existing town, to the northwest of the Aylesbury railway line. Locating development adjacent to the existing town has overall sustainability benefits and it:
- Ensures the greatest benefit to Princes Risborough town centre
  - Facilitates ease of access between the new homes and existing services and employment opportunities in the town
  - Maximises the opportunity for joint public transport servicing of the existing and new housing areas, and to make a viable route to connect the new development to key destinations like the town centre and railway stations.

### Scale of growth

- 5.5 Various scales of growth to the north-west were explored. The Sustainability Appraisal<sup>8</sup> (pp IV-11 to IV-19) assesses a range of four growth scenarios from Low Growth (brownfield only plus the Park Mill Farm greenfield site) to High Growth, encompassing an area of land bounded to the north-east by Cadsdean Lane, almost to the B4009 Lower Icknield Way in the north-west, then following an arc from the Birmingham railway line across Summerleys Road and the Chinnor line to the edge of Horsenden down to the junction of Picts Lane with Shootacre Lane. The SEA/SA bodies, the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England have been engaged in the process of Sustainability Appraisal as part of the Duty to Cooperate.
- 5.6 As each scenario becomes more expansive, so the potential to deliver more homes increases, and increasing beneficial effects on economy and employment. The larger options also have potential to deliver greater improvements in community infrastructure, improved walking

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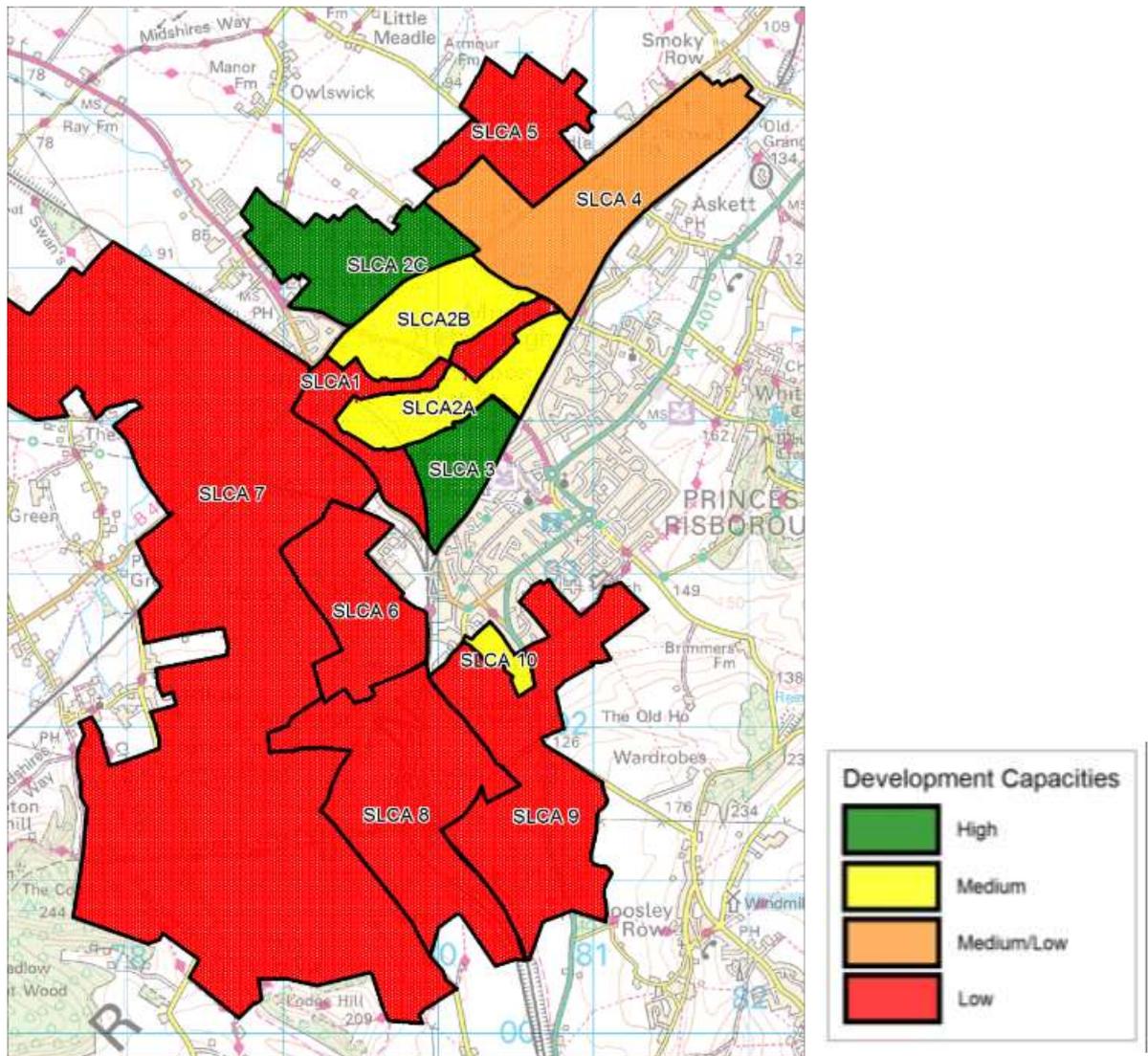
<sup>8</sup> Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Publication (Regulation 19) Draft of the Wycombe District Local Plan SA Report (WDC 2017)

and cycling routes and significant improvements to highways infrastructure. Balanced against this is the increasing potential adverse impact on environmental objectives, including a likely residual negative effect on the Alscot Conservation Area, which is encompassed by the larger options.

- 5.7 The Princes Risborough Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2017) analyses a wide area around the south, west and north of Princes Risborough for its potential to accommodate development. The larger options both include areas of low capacity for development, which may be partially or wholly mitigated by option 3; however option 4 extends further into areas of low and medium / low capacity for development and it is predicted to have potential for a residual major negative effect on landscape.
- 5.8 Option 4 has a greater landscape impact to the south-west of the Option 3 area and to some extent to the north. It also results in an expansion that is more poorly related to the town centre and its services and facilities, because of distance from the town centre and severance by the Birmingham main line. This would be an inappropriate response to Issue 3 identified by the Tibbalds Issues and Responses report: 'Integrate the town and support the town centre.' The area south-west of the Birmingham railway line also contains a greater proportion of land in Flood Zones 2 and 3. Overall, option 3 delivers a higher number of homes and is likely to have greater beneficial effects on employment and the economy. It is likely to deliver more infrastructure of various kinds. It may have some residual negative effect on the landscape but this is less than the highest growth option (number 4). Like option 4, it is likely to have a negative effect on the Alscot Conservation Area. The Plan therefore proposes a preferred growth scenario based on Option 3.
- 5.9 It should also be noted that the Housing Delivery Study for Buckinghamshire (August 2017) indicates that not all the housing relating to Option 3 would be delivered within the Plan period – potentially up to 600 dwellings would be delivered beyond the end of the

plan period. As a result it is likely that a significant proportion of the 4,000 homes in Option 4 will be delivered outside of the plan period up to 2033.

**Figure 1 Landscape area development capacities**



5.10 The extent and capacity of the main expansion area under option 3 is shaped by a number of factors including accessibility to local services and facilities in the town centre, avoiding coalescence with neighbouring settlements, and the visual impact of the expansion from the Chilterns AONB escarpment. Thus whilst in landscape terms, land to the northwest of the Lower Icknield Way (SLCA2C) has high capacity for

development, this raises significant issues of coalescence with Longwick and lack of proximity to the town centre.

### **Definition of the main expansion area and area of comprehensive development**

5.11 The plan defines an area of comprehensive development – it encompasses the whole of the new relief road, the main expansion area north of the PRA line and sites at the railway station (PR16) and to the rear of Poppy Road (PR11). This is what is required to deliver a comprehensive and sustainable expansion of the town.

### **Form of growth**

5.12 The overall form of growth of the development area is shaped by the constraints within and around it and responds to the potential adverse effects identified by the Sustainability Appraisal. The more detailed form of the main expansion area responds to principles of good place-making. An illustrative Concept Plan has been developed which indicates that a capacity of around 2500 homes can be delivered<sup>9</sup>. Sections 5.3.31 – 5.3.52 of the Plan set out the rationale for the concept plan in detail:

- The relief road runs through the development area from north-east to south-west;
- Green buffers, open spaces and other green infrastructure create a strong landscape structure in the setting of the AONB (see 5.87). This includes the Crowbrook green corridor which performs a number of functions including fluvial and surface water management, and the protection of wildlife sites and the Alscot Conservation Area;
- The retention and protection of watercourses and ponds;

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<sup>9</sup> An indicative land budget for the main expansion area is supplied in Appendix C

- The safeguarding of land north of the PRA line for potential future twin-tracking;
- Residential densities are highest closer to the town centre, with density decreasing with distance from the town. Density is 'feathered' towards sensitive areas such as the Alscot Conservation Area and the Crowbrook green corridor;
- Strategic employment land is located on the expanded Princes Estate so as to be clustered with existing businesses;
- Strategic and local open space is allocated to accommodate sports pitches, multi-use games areas, larger playgrounds, parkland and allotments. Larger areas for sports pitches are designated towards the edge of the main expansion area, while smaller spaces are distributed thorough residential areas for easy walkability to local play areas.



## Constraints

### Landscape / visual impact

5.13 The town of Princes Risborough lies at the foot of the Chiltern escarpment, just outside the boundary of the AONB. Key viewpoints from the Ridgeway National Trail on the escarpment at Whiteleaf Cross and Brush Hill provide expansive views over the town and into the Vale of Aylesbury. The main expansion area will be visible in these views, affecting the setting of the AONB and the National Trail. The Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity study has been used to inform the extent of the expansion area, and the location of uses within it. Figure 1 shows how the sub-landscape character areas have been used to inform:

- The extent of the expansion (areas of high or medium capacity, SLCA2A, SLCA2B and SLCA3)
- The Crowbrook stream corridor (area of low capacity SLCA1)
- The main built up areas (SLCA2A, SLCA2B and SLCA3)
- Areas of open space (SLCA2B and SLCA4)

5.14 SCLA2C, while it has a high capacity for development, lies too far away from the existing town to relate well to it.

5.15 Land north of Mill Lane (SLCA4) is assessed as having Medium/Low capacity for development. Consequently only a small amount of residential development is proposed north of Mill Lane and north of Kingsmead, with other land adjacent north of this being designated for outdoor sports. The proposed development here thus creates frontages on both sides of Mill Lane, to create an active place and change the context of Mill Lane from a rural lane to a residential street.

5.16 The plan does not propose development north of Mill Lane between Kingsmead and the railway line. In terms of sequential testing for flood risk, the land is least suitable as surface water overland paths converge across the land and it is also an area of groundwater emergence.

During the wet winter of 2013-14, the land was covered with standing water for several weeks (Mill Lane, Monks Risborough S19 Flood Investigation Report, BCC 2015).

- 5.17 Being retained as open countryside, this land ensures that the Crowbrook green corridor can extend out to the open countryside and provide the necessary green links.

### **Integration across the railway line**

- 5.18 The PRA railway line presents a potential barrier to integrating the expanded town with the existing town. It is worth reflecting that many towns are bisected by railway lines but are nonetheless successful. It is therefore important to preserve as many crossings of the railway line as possible, while creating a safe and attractive means of getting over or under the line, either on Public Rights of Way or on existing highways. The distribution of services and facilities will also be important in creating links between the new and the existing.
- 5.19 An underpass is proposed at a key link point on the Public Right of Way between the expansion and the town centre at Wades Park to replace the existing level crossing. A concept design has been developed, together with associated costs<sup>10</sup>, for delivering this underpass and it is being used to inform discussions with Network Rail to agree a Memorandum of Understanding with them on the delivery of changes to the railway asset. The requirement for a safe, grade-separated crossing here is underlined by appeal decisions in 2006, 2011 and 2016 for earlier proposals for development at Park Mill Farm. In each of these decisions, the lack of an appropriate crossing here was included in the reasons for dismissal.
- 5.20 The Plan also proposes to replace the PRow level crossing at Monks Risborough with a stepped footbridge. Longwick Road and Mill Lane, which are provided with footways, also cross the railway line by means

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<sup>10</sup> Princes Risborough Wades Park Underpass feasibility study and preliminary design (DRF consulting 2017)

of under-bridges today. Reorganising / reallocating carriageway space here could create more expansive provision for pedestrians and cyclist.

- 5.21 It would be ideal if two other pedestrian / level crossings<sup>11</sup> of the railway line at Princes Risborough could be preserved, however siting footbridges at these points would require the purchase of homes to secure enough land to accommodate the footbridges. There would also be issues of 'overlooking' from the bridges.

### **Flooding and drainage**

- 5.22 The proposals for Princes Risborough have been informed by the Level 1 and 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessments and the Sequential Test report<sup>12</sup>. Sites evaluated at Level 2 and by the Sequential test include:

- a) The main expansion area
- b) Princes Estate expansion
- c) Land at Princes Risborough railway station
- d) Land to the rear of Poppy Road
- e) Land north of Lower Icknield Way

- 5.23 With the exception of site (b), all sites have some areas falling within Flood Zone 3b, and sites (a), (c) and (d) are required to pass the Exception test.

- 5.24 The preferred alignment for major new road infrastructure crosses instances of Flood Zones 3a and 3b. As essential infrastructure<sup>13</sup>, the road should be designed and constructed to:

- Remain operational and safe for users in times of flood;
- Result in no net loss of floodplain storage; and

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<sup>11</sup> At Mount Way and Westmead

<sup>12</sup> Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 (Jacobs, November 2014), Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Jacobs, September 2017), Flood Risk Sequential Test Report (WDC, September 2017).

<sup>13</sup> Defined in Planning Practice Guidance para 067, Reference ID: 7-066-20140306

- Not impede water flows and not increase flood risk elsewhere.

5.25 This could require appropriate structures over the watercourse to be constructed to include a free span of the extent of Flood Zone 3 (plus an allowance for climate change) to ensure the road does not impede flows in the watercourse.

### **Areas of biodiversity including streams and hedgerows**

5.26 The main expansion area is crossed by a number of small watercourses which are incorporated into the concept together with appropriate ecological and hydrological buffer zones.

5.27 The layout of blocks responds to the rectilinear field pattern and significant hedgerows are protected by green margins.

5.28 The expansion area includes the Longwick Bog Local Wildlife Site and the Kingsmead Meadow Biodiversity Notification site, which are associated with the Crowbrook and protected by the designation of a green corridor.

### **Heritage assets**

5.29 The main expansion area encompasses the hamlet of Alscot, which is designated as a Conservation Area (CA). The CA was reviewed and extended in November 2016. The Crowbrook green corridor flows around the CA to help protect the setting; it is intended that the density of development should be 'feathered' towards the CA; and key views from the CA are recognised in the layout of the concept plan which is referenced by policy PR4.

### **Odour**

5.30 A sewage treatment works occupies part of the south-west edge of the main expansion area. Periodically the works are 'de-sludged' when solid waste is trucked off site. During these times there are offensive odour emissions. The spread of these emissions creates an area within which land uses are limited. This odour buffer is designated by a 2016 odour

contour baseline of 3.0 ouE/m<sup>3</sup> which was agreed as part of the proceedings of the 2017 appeal enquiry by Halsbury Homes at Park Mill Farm<sup>14</sup>. The major expansion of the town will require an upgrade in capacity to the sewage treatment works, but Thames Water have given a commitment to retain emissions within the 2016 baseline.

## **Creating a firm boundary to the expanded town and preventing sprawl**

- 5.31 Once the town has been expanded, future gaps will become critical to the protection of the countryside and surrounding settlements. With this in mind the Plan designates a settlement boundary for expanded town which is protected by a buffer zone<sup>15</sup> and defines the outward extent of built development.
- 5.32 At Princes Risborough the boundary and buffer zone will help to maintain separation between the town and surrounding villages and provide a firm basis for protecting the countryside from unnecessary encroachment.
- 5.33 This Plan identifies the expansion of Princes Risborough and the extent of that expansion has involved considering a range of factors and options to ensure that the most sustainable area has been identified. The need for housing has been a key driver in determining the large extent of the main expansion area, as well as a range of local considerations. It is essential therefore that a firm boundary to the town is now established and that further expansion of the town is strictly controlled.

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<sup>14</sup> APP/K0425/W/16/3146838

<sup>15</sup> Part of this buffer zone, between Longwick and the expansion area, is a fixed element in the Concept Plan. The recently allowed appeal at Ivy Farm (APP/K0425/W/17/3166948) compromises the integrity of this buffer. The Council is considering a range of responses to this issue, which may entail a change to the Plan document.

## Economy, jobs and commuting

- 5.34 The Local Plan aims to provide an appropriate balance of homes and jobs across the District as a whole. At Princes Risborough there is concern that local employment provision will not match the demand for jobs created by the residential expansion.
- 5.35 Evidence suggests<sup>16</sup> that there is some potential for new economic development in the town but the scope is limited for primarily strategic locational reasons and viability considerations. The Plan identifies land at Princes Estate for additional employment provision and the development of the expansion area should contribute to ensuring that this land is brought forward in a timely way to ensure housing growth is supported by employment growth. This could be through contributing to the servicing of new plots.
- 5.36 Some businesses have been lost from the town in recent years and it is important that remaining businesses are retained as well as opportunities to provide for more businesses created. There are existing businesses located within the expansion area and it is important that they are retained in the town. These businesses may prefer to relocate away from the new housing development. The Plan reserves land north of the Lower Icknield Way for relocation of existing businesses. In terms of the comprehensive planning of the expansion area and its necessary infrastructure, development in the expansion area will need to secure any such re-locations to ensure such businesses are retained and adequately provided for.
- 5.37 Currently nine per cent of working people in Princes Risborough travel to work by rail<sup>17</sup>. Maximising the proportion of people who can travel more sustainably to work can be encouraged by creating a direct access for all modes of transport, principally to the main railway station from the expansion area, but also to Monks Risborough station.

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<sup>16</sup> Wycombe commercial sites assessment (Boyer, 2016)

<sup>17</sup> 2011 census

## Cross-border impacts

5.38 We have engaged positively and on an ongoing basis with neighbouring authorities that may be affected by the Risborough proposals, namely South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council. WDC and SODC have signed a MoU which agrees to work together on any cross-border impacts arising from the growth of the town. The Risborough proposals have also been included in the Bucks countywide traffic modelling so impacts on Aylesbury Vale can be considered. No specific concerns have arisen or been raised in this respect.

## The road – justified

5.39 Proposing major housing growth at Princes Risborough created the opportunity to look at how the transport network should respond to this. The town sits at the junction of the A4010, a principal route which links Aylesbury to High Wycombe and junction 4 of the M40: and the A4129, a lesser route to Thame. The B4009 does not pass through the town but provides a connection between Wendover to the east and Chinnor to the west (and on to junction 6 of the M40). About 40% of traffic in the town at peak times is through-traffic making longer-distance journeys.

5.40 This traffic dominates the town centre and the A4010 creates severance in the town centre. The Bell Street and Tesco roundabouts are running close to capacity, and opportunities to expand their capacity are limited by available land within the highway boundary. The County Council, as Highway Authority, advises that growth in the town would have a severe impact on this part of the highway network. Only a small amount of growth would be possible in the town without having a severe impact. This was confirmed by the decision of the planning inspector to dismiss the appeal by Halsbury Homes in March 2017 (APP/K0425/W/16/3146838).

5.41 Large-scale highway intervention through the town centre would be incompatible with its Conservation Area status, the needs of town centre shoppers, and the ambitions of the townspeople to create a more

people-friendly town centre environment. Consequently, increasing the capacity of the A4010 through the town to respond to growth is not a reasonable option. Because of the greater proportion of longer-distance traffic, local interventions for active travel and public transport would be unlikely to fully address the issue.

- 5.42 Major new road infrastructure in the form of a relief road would be required in the context of any expansion of the town. Increasing capacity on the existing road network including the A4010 through the town is difficult, and not consistent with the vision for the town centre. This new road infrastructure will provide better access to the station, and provide the opportunity to access land to the rear of Poppy Road, which it is proposed is removed from the Green Belt.
- 5.43 Located north of the railway line, traffic from the main expansion area will need to distribute into the network in a way that does not overload existing junctions. Direct access is needed from the development area to the railway stations in order to facilitate travel by sustainable means. These factors lead to a requirement for new road infrastructure:
- to relieve the existing road through the town, as an alternative to the A4010;
  - to provide direct access to the main railway station; and
  - to allow effective distribution of traffic from the development area into the main road network.
- 5.44 New road infrastructure is required to alleviate congestion on the existing road network and the A4010 through the town. A complete highway route to increase highway capacity, serve the development and relieve traffic conditions in the town centre will be needed.

**Why not improve existing / make most of existing? Or improve in the interim, to accumulate cash for relief road?**

- 5.45 It may be argued that the expansion of Princes Risborough does not require new road infrastructure and that increasing the capacity of the

existing A4010 through the town is an appropriate response to growth. There are a number of traffic management issues within the town, which could be addressed to improve overall traffic flow:

- 5.46 There are two signal-controlled pedestrian crossings on Bell Street – one outside Marks and Spencer, the other near Park Street. Both these crossings are programmed to respond quickly to requests and give generous time for crossing. They are not ‘linked’ to optimise traffic flow. At peak times these cause long tailbacks of traffic to form. The crossing by Marks and Spencer is close to the nearby roundabout and causes traffic to back up into the circulatory area, so interfering with the efficient operation of the roundabout.
- 5.47 Access to the secondary school is achieved via Clifford Road which branches off the A4010 west of the town centre. At peak times, traffic queues to turn right into Clifford Road. As there is no right-turn pocket to wait in, the waiting right-turners hold other traffic back that intends to go straight on.
- 5.48 Both these issues could be improved: the signal timings could be adjusted and linked; there is a potential alternative access to the secondary school, or highway space might be found for the right-turn pocket.
- 5.49 However, these are not the fundamental issues of road capacity in the town. The Stage 1 Options Assessment Report (Jacobs 2016) identifies issues of capacity on multiple links and junctions through the town even under baseline conditions (Table 5.1, Network and junction capacity in Princes Risborough). Among these, and of principal interest, are the town-centre roundabouts (one near Tesco, the other by Marks and Spencer) which are close to, or at, capacity. Increasing the capacity of the roundabouts by introducing extra lanes on the arms and into the circulatory area would require land outside the highway boundary and create intrusive hard infrastructure, intensifying the issues of severance and hostility to pedestrians that exist today. Moreover, this sort of intensification, even on a temporary basis, would be detrimental to the

town centre Conservation Area, within which both roundabouts sit, and only partially address the problem. A more focused assessment of the capacity of the Tesco roundabout shows that the Longwick arm of the roundabout would be over capacity by 2021 even without development.<sup>18</sup> Fundamentally, improving the capacity of the roundabouts might release some development at Princes Risborough but would not enable the major expansion of the town. Investing in improvements here would detract from the delivery of the relief road.

- 5.50 Increasing highway infrastructure within the town is inconsistent with the vision for the town prepared by local stakeholders: they see the provision of a relief road as an opportunity to create a different, people-friendly environment in the town centre, by improving the public realm and releasing highway space for pedestrians, landscaping and parking.
- 5.51 It may also be argued that travel habits may change in response to technological innovation such as driverless cars and intelligent navigation systems. This could lead to traffic growing less than that forecast by the methodologies which are used by software models today (and currently mandated by the Department for Transport – see WebTAG<sup>19</sup>). It would be encouraging to see this happen on the town's roads, but at present these ideas are speculative and impossible to forecast with any reliability.

### **Could the promotion of other forms of transport bring down the forecasts?**

- 5.52 The Plan does not assume that all travel will be by private car. The town is served by a frequent, high-quality interurban bus service which links it to High Wycombe and Aylesbury. It is blessed with two railway stations with good services to Marylebone, Aylesbury and Birmingham, and links to Oxford. The East West Rail project will further link the town to Milton Keynes and increase rail capacity. As the town (and the expansion area) are relatively flat, cycling and walking should be real possibilities

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<sup>18</sup> Princes Risborough Transport Study: Tesco Roundabout Analysis (Jacobs 2016)

<sup>19</sup> Transport analysis guidance: WebTAG (DfT 2013 and updates)

for getting around locally. The Plan requires the expansion to deliver new cycling and walking facilities within the new development, and provide improved links to existing routes.

- 5.53 A new local bus service is also a requirement generated by the expansion. WDC commissioned work to examine the options for creating a bus service with a reasonable chance of long-term commercial viability, to serve the development. The work concluded that there was a viable option for a bus service with a level of frequency which would encourage habits of sustainable travel.<sup>20</sup>
- 5.54 Nevertheless, most people will still need to make many journeys by private car. This includes the people who travel through Princes Risborough at peak time on their way to various destinations, forming up to 44% of the peak time traffic<sup>21</sup>. By requiring provision of new road infrastructure, the Plan is making a practical and realistic proposal for accommodating the future needs of the expanded town.

### **Required road infrastructure in the context of dependent development**

- 5.55 Major development at Princes Risborough is dependent on the provision of new highway capacity and therefore a complete alternative route to the existing A4010 must be funded and secured through development.
- 5.56 The new highway capacity must cope with future traffic demand not only from the development but also from wider trends in traffic growth associated with changing transport behaviour and growth elsewhere in Buckinghamshire. The proposed new highway route lies within the area of comprehensive development and will need to be put in place to secure a complete alternative route to the A4010 away from the town centre which is of a sufficient standard and capacity to accommodate forecast traffic flows and all classes of vehicle safely and efficiently.

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<sup>20</sup> Bus Route Viability Study (Jacobs 2016)

<sup>21</sup> Stage 1 Option Assessment Report (Jacobs 2016)

## Better resilience

5.57 Creating an alternative to the current A4010 gives road users more choice of routes for their journeys. It increases resilience if there is a problem on part of the road network. This is important because the most appropriate route for ambulances travelling between the hospitals at High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville is via Princes Risborough.

## Safe and efficient operation

5.58 Concern has been expressed that routing the new road via the development area and the station will lead to conflict between traffic and other road users creating a safety issue. The new road will need to be designed both to move traffic efficiently and respond to the needs of place-making and safe use by pedestrians and cyclists.

5.59 For the purposes of plan-making, the feasibility design<sup>22</sup> for the route follows DMRB as this entails a more expansive geometry and so informs the maximum physical extent of the scheme. It has been assessed by a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit. At the feasibility stage, it already looks at reconciling these objectives by:

- Suggesting a broad cross-section through the development which incorporates footways, segregated cycle-ways, verges and tree-planting;
- Incorporating a median strip which can facilitate two-stage crossing and right-turn waiting;
- A signalised junction at the railway station which includes pedestrian crossing phases.

5.60 There is also potential for other formal crossings, particularly where National Cycle Network Route 57 crosses the road at Picts Lane, and

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<sup>22</sup> Princes Risborough Feasibility Review: Development of Southern Alternatives (DRF Consulting 2017)

where the Ridgeway National Trail would cross at the junction with the existing A4010.

- 5.61 Precedents already exist for this type of solution in new road designs at Ashford and Poynton. Manual for Streets guidance was introduced a decade ago (2007) and its companion document, Manual for Streets 2, in 2010. Manual for Streets 2 fills the gap in design advice that lies between 'Manual for streets' and the design standards for trunk roads as set out in the 'Design manual for roads and bridges' (DMRB). More detailed design phases will demonstrate the detail of safety and place-making features and may use concepts from this more flexible guidance.

## Optioneering

- 5.62 The 2014 studies for the expansion of Princes Risborough evaluated three expansion scenarios for the town of 500, 1000 and 2500 homes. They proposed broad transport mitigation packages for each of the scenarios and examined two options for major road infrastructure in the context of a 2500 home expansion at a high level.
- 5.63 An Options Assessment Report (Jacobs 2016) has been prepared which tests a number of options for this additional highway capacity. Objectives setting out how the new road should perform were agreed between Wycombe District Council, the County Council, the Steering Group and the BTVLEP. A long list of options was developed across the participating stakeholders and through public consultation. This long list was evaluated against the objectives to produce a short list of options 11a, 11b, 12, 13a, 13b, 15a, 15b, 16a, 16b, and 17. The recommended alignment is a development of options 11b and 15b. Figure 3 shows the shortlisted indicative route options which were tested through the Buckinghamshire County transport model. Based on their performance in the model, a final shortlist of options 11b, 12, 15b and 17 was further subject to business case assessment to determine their overall economic benefit.

5.64 Routes 11b and 15b are 'through-development' routes and only differ in that the portion of the route through the development is set at 40mph for 11b and at 30mph for 15b. Option 12 is a 'wider bypass' that runs through countryside west of Horsenden, avoiding the town and expansion area. Option 17 is a hybrid route that passes partially through the development area but then runs through open countryside east of Horsenden. Options 11b and 17 were shown to deliver good value for money in terms of a Benefit: Cost Ratio.

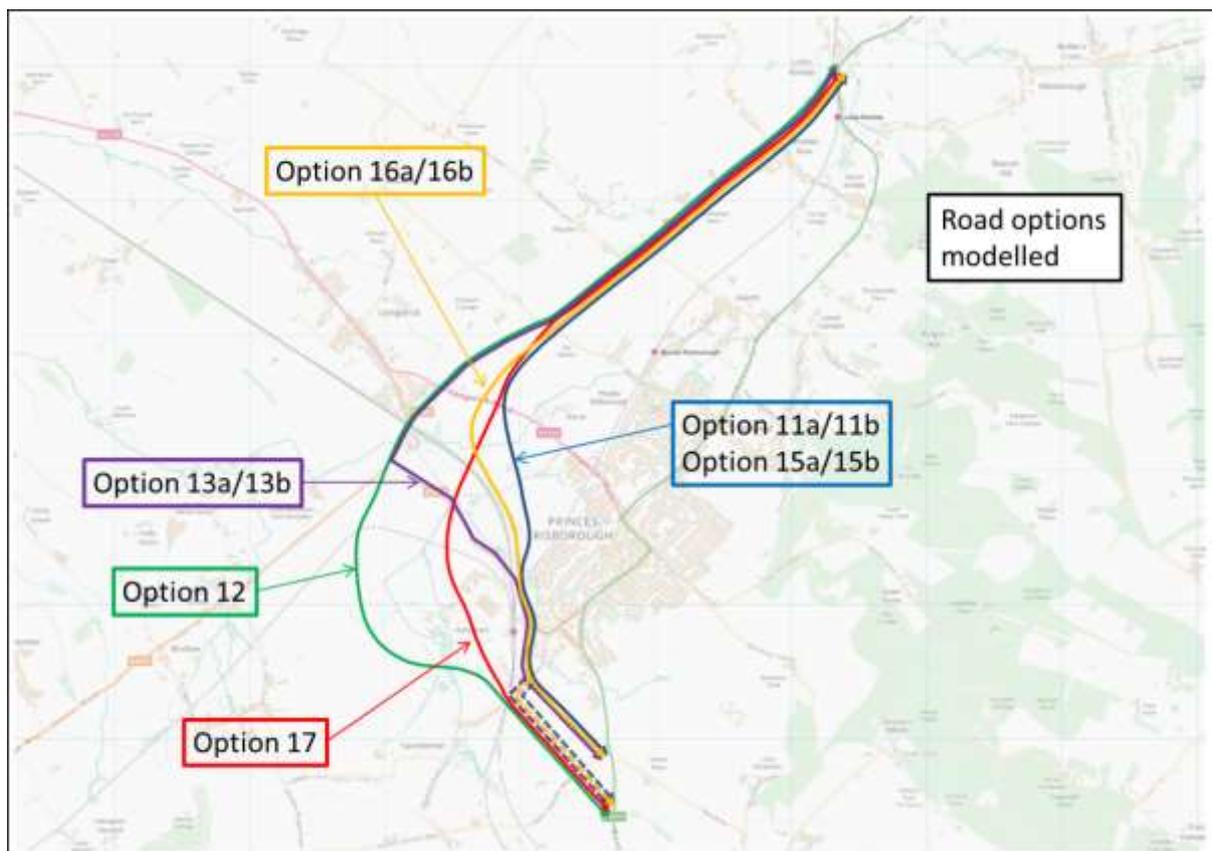


Figure 3 Shortlist of modelled road options

5.65 Table 2 below sets out a summary of the four shortlisted routes, 11b, 12, 15b and 17.

Table 2 Shortlisted routes, economic and risk indicators

Option number	Description	Indicative cost	Number of railway crossings	Different railway lines to cross	% of development traffic using road
11b	40 mph through-development route	£53M	2	Aylesbury	60%
15b	Route as 11b but 30 mph	£53M	2	Aylesbury	60%
12	Wider bypass route to west of Horsenden	£70M	4	Aylesbury Birmingham Chinnor	13%
17	Intermediate route passing to east of Horsenden	£78M	4	Aylesbury Birmingham Chinnor	45%

5.66 Table 3 shows an indicative assessment of the strategic impacts of each option:

Table 3 Strategic impacts of road options

Option number	Affordability	Deliverability	Performance	Environmental impact	Economic potential
11b	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow
15b	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
12	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red
17	Red	Red	Green	Red	Green

- 5.67 Options 11b and 17 perform best in delivering traffic benefits. Option 17 also has a clear economic benefit in providing alternative access to the expanded Princes Estate onto the main road network so potentially improving the estate's chances of attracting inward investment and retaining existing businesses.
- 5.68 Route options which fall outside the expansion area (12 and 17) have greater cumulative environmental impacts because of the greater land take required and increased impact on landscape areas with low capacity for development.
- 5.69 As reasonable options, the four shortlisted options have been evaluated as part of the process of Sustainability Appraisal. All options have potential for some negative effect on biodiversity, landscape and heritage objectives, with option 12 likely to have a more significant negative effect on landscape. Options 12 and 17 also are assessed as likely to have a more significant effect on the use of best and most versatile agricultural land, as they are longer routes. All options may have some negative effect on air quality and noise, particularly during construction, and this will need further assessment and mitigation as part of the environmental impact assessment of the preferred option. All options cross Flood Zone 3 so water quality monitoring will be a key consideration for construction and operation. All options are assessed as having a positive effect on transport and accessibility objectives.
- 5.70 All options are high cost, relative to the scale of the expansion. A significant proportion of costs is associated with the improvement of the railway crossings (over-bridges / under-bridges) since these are expensive civil engineering works and attract a 66% optimism bias, so the options with more railway crossings are much more expensive and carry greater risks (12 and 17). However, the transport work has demonstrated that major development at Princes Risborough is dependent on new road infrastructure being provided. Viability assessment shows that the costs of road infrastructure can be borne by the development, together with all the other requirements of the Plan.

- 5.71 All options show some risks in deliverability, the chief risk being in securing the possession of railway lines and permission from Network Rail / Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway to upgrade relevant bridges or install new ones, although options 12 and 17 involve more bridge crossings than options 11b and 15b. However, planned works for the HS2 project on the Aylesbury line present a significant opportunity to align the programme for under-bridge works on Grove Lane and Summerleys Road with this, which reduces the risks for options 11b and 15b. Should this opportunity be missed, the cost of securing possessions separately could be around £1M. This should not present an issue for the overall viability of the Risborough proposals as the viability report demonstrates a considerable headroom for the development.
- 5.72 The Concept Plan for the expansion shows a connecting road through the development which will be required in any case. Further additional improvements will be needed to deliver the whole alternative route for 11b.
- 5.73 Major new road infrastructure at Princes Risborough needs to perform well but crucially it must also have a reasonable prospect of delivery to meet the tests of soundness for the Local plan.

### **The final preferred route for the relief road**

- 5.74 In February – March 2016 the Council consulted on a draft town plan for Princes Risborough which showed the two final options for the relief road – 11b and 17.
- 5.75 The publication plan proposes that development is required to deliver a route based on option 11b in its entirety. The scheme is required in the context of the dependent development and for the proper planning of the area. Much of the route lies within the proposed expansion area which increases its deliverability. The viability study shows that there is substantial headroom of extra value generated by the expansion that

can afford this scheme alongside all the other requirements of the development.

- 5.76 The preferred route is effective against the objectives set; it is affordable; and it is deliverable through the planning process.
- 5.77 To deliver option 17 would require more land outside the expansion area and a further £29M. Buckinghamshire County Council and the LEP concluded that the scheme was not a strategic priority and so will not be bidding for funds for the difference. In the absence of strategic transport funding streams, the deliverability of Option 17 is questionable. The greater number of railway crossings that would be needed to deliver the route greatly increase the risk and cost associated with this route.

### **Why not a wider bypass?**

- 5.78 There is a strong local desire for a wider bypass route to divert traffic right away from the town. Historically, bypasses have been implemented at similar local towns to solve issues of town centre congestion, for example at Wendover and Thame. However these were envisaged as an element in an intention to make more significant regional or national route upgrades: the Thame bypass was intended to be part of a strategic route from Cambridge to Swindon that was never completed. That bypass now encloses land which has consequently become the focus of current allocations. There is no proposal for a strategic route relating to the A4010 or B4009 at Princes Risborough.
- 5.79 The work of the Stage 1 Options Assessment Report (OAR) thoroughly tested a bypass option (Option 12) for Princes Risborough, and a wider bypass option was also assessed as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (Northern Option 2).
- 5.80 The Sustainability Appraisal concluded that a bypass option would have a more significant effect on landscape and the countryside than other options, as it would pass through more open land; and consequently would result in the loss of more agricultural land.

- 5.81 The OAR concluded that while option 12 effectively relieved the town centre and improved journey times, it played very little part in distributing traffic from the main expansion area. The model also showed that the lowest volume of development traffic using any of the schemes was shown to be for option 12 at only 13%, and this only on the B4009. No development traffic was forecast to use the new section west of Horsenden, so it would appear to serve no purpose in the context of facilitating growth in housing and employment in this area. As a bypass route, it could not offer the opportunity to create better walking and cycling routes within the expansion or to existing parts of the town. Economic testing awarded option 12 a Benefit: Cost Ratio (BCR) of 0.6, which is rated as poor value for money.
- 5.82 Economic performance need not be the primary decisive factor, particularly if the scheme is not predicated on attracting strategic transport funding. From the planning point of view, a decisive factor is deliverability. As a considerable proportion of Option 12 falls outside the proposed development area, it would be much harder to secure the land to deliver the whole route; since it carries little development traffic it would be harder to secure funds for its implementation through planning obligations; and option 12 requires four crossings of three different railway lines (either upgraded crossings or completely new crossings). This greatly increases the cost and risk of delivery.

### **Responding to feedback – southern alternatives**

- 5.83 In 2016, the draft town plan for Princes Risborough showed the southern end of the road routing along Picts Lane and Shootacre Lane. In response to public feedback, the Council looked again at this section of the route and assessed alternatives<sup>23</sup> which took a more direct line back to the A4010 between Shootacre Lane and Culverton Farm. The Southern Options Feasibility review examined three options in more depth:

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<sup>23</sup> Princes Risborough Feasibility Review Development of Southern Alternatives (DRF Consulting 2017)

- The originally proposed route along Picts Lane and Shootacre Lane (the 'b' options proposed by the OAR)
- A shorter route across the field between Picts Lane and the Woodway junction of the A4010 (the 'a' options proposed by the OAR)
- A shorter route still across the field between Picts Lane and the A4010 just south of Culverton Farm (new option 'c')

5.84 The Sustainability Appraisal concludes that the 'b' option has the potential for the greatest adverse impact:

- In terms of biodiversity, since it results in the loss of more hedgerow;
- In terms of place-making, because of the likely loss of tranquillity along existing roads;
- And in terms of health, because there would be more households potentially affected by noise.

5.85 The 'a' option performs better than 'b', but is less efficient in terms of climate change mitigation and efficiency, because it is a longer route than option 'c'.

5.86 Consequently the preferred southern alignment of the road is Option c, though there will need to be mitigation of impacts on landscape and the countryside.

## **Context of Chilterns AONB**

### **Setting**

5.87 The expansion of the town falls within the setting of the Chilterns AONB. The impact on views from key points like Whiteleaf Cross and Brush Hill has informed a strong landscape structure for the expansion area, which includes:

- A green buffer retained south of the Lower Icknield Way as open countryside or strategic open space with limited land uses, continuing around Longwick Bog.
- Land to the north and northwest of Kingsmead designated as strategic open space.
- Land between Kingsmead and the railway line is least suitable for development because of groundwater and surface water flooding issues. It remains as open farmland, allowing the green corridor established along the Crowbrook stream to connect into the countryside, including the footpath over the railway line, to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The Crowbrook stream corridor retained for fluvial and surface water management as an ecological and wildlife corridor.
- A green corridor running north-south along the existing right of way from the proposed new underpass at the railway line.
- Another north-south green corridor mid-way between Longwick Road and Mill Lane, along the existing right of way from the railway line north to the Lower Icknield Way.
- A linear green space along the Aylesbury railway line from Summerleys Road to Mill Lane. New tree planting will break up the line between the existing and the expanded town in long views.

### **Relief road southern alternatives in the context of the AONB**

5.88 All three of the southern options fall within the Chilterns AONB and therefore all have potential for adverse impact. It has been suggested that the southern section of the new route could divert along Poppy Road to return to the A4010. This is not a reasonable alternative:

- The land within the highway boundary could not accommodate the standard carriageway width of 7.3 m required for the forecast flows of traffic and still provide adequate footways;
- It is a narrow residential road of mainly terraced or closely-set semi-detached homes, which would suffer increased impacts from noise and, potentially, air quality;
- The approaches to Poppy Road are via tight turns on Station Road which would not accommodate the swept path of long vehicles;
- The purchase of residential land to widen the road beyond the highway boundary would be difficult to justify and deliver.

5.89 The preferred option 'c' is unlikely to constitute major development in the AONB<sup>24</sup>, but even if it were considered to be major development, it has good grounds for passing the test of exceptional circumstances<sup>25</sup>. The reference scheme set out in the feasibility report<sup>26</sup> provides an alternative landscaped cross-section for the part of the route through the AONB, and discusses lighting regimes that can minimise light pollution and visual impact. The need for the scheme has been demonstrated, and given the routing of the existing A4010 into the AONB south of Risborough, there is no possible reasonable alternative that does not run through the AONB. More detailed design and planning stages will need to show that any detrimental effects on the environment and landscape can be successfully mitigated. Several factors that should be considered are:

- Landscape impact including views from the Icknield Way and Ridgeway Trails
- Impact on the chalk headwaters of the Pyrtle Spring

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<sup>24</sup> AONB site Assessment Report (WDC, 2017)

<sup>25</sup> NPPF para 116

<sup>26</sup> Princes Risborough Feasibility Review Development of Southern Alternatives (DRF Consulting 2017)

- Impact on the nearby habitats for the Duke of Burgundy butterfly
- Detailed design approach. Refer to Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Highways in the Chilterns.

## Context of strategic road network

- 5.90 Consultation feedback on the expansion of Princes Risborough and the provision of new road infrastructure has asked why the plan does not propose to address bottlenecks on the A4010 further afield from the town, for example on the approaches to High Wycombe, in a strategic approach to this corridor.
- 5.91 Buckinghamshire County Council's LTP4 identifies north/south connectivity issues as a major transport challenge, and includes an aspiration to improve north south road links. Whilst identifying the strategic issue and certain links where improvements could be made such as the A404 between High Wycombe and Maidenhead, and the A413 and A355, LTP4 does not set out any more detailed proposals for north/south road improvements in Bucks.
- 5.92 However, both WDC and the County Council agree that upgrading the A4010 may not be achievable or represent value for money/affordable given the current bottlenecks in and on the outskirts of High Wycombe. The work in relation to the housing expansion was therefore focused on providing necessary additional highway capacity to enable the new development.

## The road – effective (deliverable)<sup>27</sup>

- 5.93 Policy PR7 sets out that development in the main expansion area is required to provide a complete alternative route to the A4010. Policy PR8 sets out the detailed requirements for this route, while policy PR17 sets out how comprehensive delivery of infrastructure will be achieved, including use of compulsory purchase powers.

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<sup>27</sup> Further detail on the phasing, funding and delivery of the road is set out in Appendix B

- 5.94 The preferred relief road option requires the assembly of a number of land parcels outside the expansion area and it is intended that it is delivered as a series of elements of new and upgraded links, and improved railway under-bridges. Some of these elements will require forward-funding as the development accumulates value as it is built out. It is also desirable that the road network will continue to operate efficiently over the period that these elements are delivered.
- 5.95 More detailed traffic modelling is starting to show that careful sequencing of the road elements alongside the delivery of housing should be able to sustain the performance of the road network while the road is in the process of completion.<sup>28</sup>
- 5.96 The Concept Plan for the main expansion shows a connecting road through the development which will be required in any case. Further additional improvements will be needed to deliver the whole alternative route.
- 5.97 As the road is a large and expensive piece of infrastructure, how it is funded and delivered alongside the phasing of housing delivery is an important consideration. Appendix B of this topic paper sets out the Council's strategy for how this will happen in more detail. The sequencing of delivery was further developed in the appendix to a report to the Council's Cabinet in December 2016.

### **Rat-running**

- 5.98 There is local concern that some through traffic is routing inappropriately in and around Princes Risborough. The Plan policies require that this is addressed as part of the overall proposals for the town. Detailed work will follow on from the Plan.

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<sup>28</sup> Princes Risborough Masterplan: Preliminary Phasing Strategy Modelling (Jacobs 2017) and Phasing Tests (Jacobs 2017)

## Other infrastructure

5.99 Policy PR7 sets out the infrastructure requirements for the main expansion area, while the Infrastructure Delivery Plan provides more detail on costs and delivery.

5.100 Since 2014, the Council has engaged on an ongoing basis with service providers on the overall levels of growth and allocations proposed for the new Local Plan for Wycombe District, highlighting the major expansion at Princes Risborough. Services were asked to consider:

- If their service can meet potential increased demand with no upgrades to existing infrastructure capacity; or
- Whether the levels of growth will have an impact on their service and upgrades are required.

5.101 Services were asked to provide as much detail as possible on the nature, scale and costs of the identified upgrades including adding projects to an Infrastructure Delivery Schedule. Services included:

- Buckinghamshire County Council on matters relating to Highways, Education, Flood risk and drainage management, and Adult Social Care. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been agreed between WDC and BCC;
- The Aylesbury Vale Clinical Commissioning Group, in respect of GP services;
- Utility providers, including gas, electricity and water (including sewage treatment)
- Section 5 of the IDP provides detailed information on the justification and configuration of infrastructure for Princes Risborough, while Appendix B of the IDP sets out a summary delivery schedule for this infrastructure. It confirms that there are no show-stopping barriers to delivery.

## Social

- 5.102 Based on the pupil yields, the County Council assesses that an additional 2,500 homes in Princes Risborough would generate a need for 760 school places (i.e. 3.6 forms of entry). As there is limited capacity within existing schools, and any potential expansion to these has been exhausted by current permissions, to meet this scale of demand, the County Council would require the provision of two new primary schools each of two forms of entry. The County Council is also looking to expand the secondary school by up to two forms of entry.
- 5.103 There is a strong local feeling that the growth of Risborough should deliver extra GP capacity. An additional 2,500 dwellings in Princes Risborough would potentially mean an additional 6,250 patients which would broadly equate to 3.5 WTE (Whole time equivalent) GPs. The Aylesbury Vale Clinical Commissioning Group advise that the two existing GP surgery premises in Princes Risborough could accommodate extra capacity for additional population growth through modification of their existing premises. The practices have raised the issue of convenient parking close to the existing surgery premises and the need for public transport links with the proposed development area. Although neither practice is currently looking to co-locate into a single GP facility, 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 on Longwick Road opposite the current Hypnos factory (see Concept Plan).

## Avoiding flood risk and flood mitigation

- 5.104 Parts of the expansion area are vulnerable to surface water flooding. There is also a risk of groundwater flooding as the water table is close to the surface here. This creates the potential for large areas of standing water in periods of high rainfall as was the case during the winter of 2013-14. Extreme weather events are more likely in the future as a result of climate change.

5.105 Strategic development here creates the opportunity to reduce the risk of flooding and divert surface water and groundwater flooding through appropriate design and the introduction of effective sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). The green corridors along the Crowbrook stream and the Kingsey Cuttle Brook (within the Park Mill Farm area) introduce the potential to integrate flood management measures with green infrastructure provision and ecological enhancement. Further work will be required by development interests to understand the risk from surface and groundwater flooding, and identify appropriate mitigation measures.

### **Open space and sport**

5.106 Based on the Council's open space standards and policy DM16 of the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan an overall development in the region of 2,500 dwellings (6,250 population) in the expansion area would result in an overall strategic open space requirement of 20 hectares with an outdoor sport requirement of 7.5 ha.

5.107 To inform a viability assessment of the expansion, an indicative sports package has been developed for the Princes Risborough expansion area. This would be in the form of multi-sport 'hub'. The concept plan indicates that this can be accommodated on strategic open space SOS2, north of Mill Lane. Other sports will be accommodated on SOS1, south of Lower Icknield Way.

### **Green infrastructure**

5.108 Policy DM16 sets out a minimum open space standard for strategic development sites. The concept plan for Princes Risborough designates a range of other green spaces which are consistent with the need to mitigate the landscape impacts of the main expansion area and recognise other constraints and protections:

- The need to preserve the corridors of watercourses, ponds and their ecological buffer zones;

- The need to provide ecological and hydrological buffers to the local wildlife sites and significant hedgerows;
- The odour buffer around the sewage treatment works;
- The need to create open countryside buffers between the expansion area and surrounding settlements.

5.109 These spaces form a multi-functional network to provide wildlife corridors, new or improved species-rich habitat, and areas for flood mitigation to store or infiltrate water. Some spaces may be appropriate for informal amenity and recreation but others will need to be protected from too much human incursion.

### **Viability, s106 and CIL**

5.110 WDC commissioned a viability study for Princes Risborough<sup>29</sup> which tested the ability of the three main promoters of the expansion area (assuming certain landholdings) to finance the total planning obligations and infrastructure requirements as a worst case scenario. Contributions will also be required from a number of other developers / landowners.

5.111 To ensure a proportionate approach to contributions from different developers the infrastructure costs were split to ensure each developer achieved an equitable 'headroom' based on pounds per hectare. The assessment demonstrated a total project headroom of circa £70m, i.e. that the expansion area can sustain a further £70m in costs before the viability of the scheme becomes threatened.

5.112 The study assumed that most costs of development would be secured through s106 agreements but also recognised that WDC is a CIL authority. To avoid charges of 'double-dipping' it was assumed that the CIL yield from the expansion would contribute towards:

- Library capacity improvements

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<sup>29</sup> Princes Risborough Expansion Viability report (WDC/GVA Grimley 2017)

- Supporting the delivery of the secondary school places (with an expectation that a proportion of the funding would come from DfE);
- Emergency services;
- Art and Culture
- Town centre public realm improvements
- Off-site walking and cycling improvements

5.113 The study also assumed that the Town Council's portion of CIL would contribute towards:

- Improvements to community centre, Wades Park and burial ground
- Aspiration to relocate GP surgery
- Tourism initiatives such as signage, interpretation and support for local attractions
- Facilitation of Community Land Trusts and other long term stewardship of assets

### **The town centre and railway station**

5.114 The major expansion of the town creates a need and an opportunity to transform the town centre. Expansion of the town should not detract from, or compete with, the town centre offer but rather support its vitality and amenity, and the town centre should be reinforced as the historic, cultural and retail focus of the town, with capacity to meet the needs of the expanded population.

5.115 There will be a need for:

- Increased retail space and a diverse offer on and around the High Street;

- Up to 200 more parking spaces in the town centre. While opportunities for sustainable travel between the main expansion and the town centre will be maximised, there will still be a need for some people to use a private car, particularly for heavy or bulky purchases. More parking will be needed close to the leisure centre.

5.116 The town centre is well used, but currently suffers with the following issues:

- Roads in the town centre are dominated by traffic, including A4010 through traffic, which creates severance on New Road (Back Lane) and Horns Lane / Bell Street. The environment is hostile to pedestrians and cyclists, who come into conflict with traffic and parked cars;
- Since the introduction of controlled parking areas between the town centre and the station, on-street and off-street parking is regularly used to capacity today, including the Tesco car park which offers two hours' free parking;
- Inefficient organisation of land on the Horns Lane and New Road (Back Lane sites).
- Lack of high-quality public space along New Road (Back Lane).

5.117 The Princes Risborough Parking Review (Jacobs 2016) identifies a need for between 100 and 200 more parking spaces in the town centre to support the growth of the town. Opportunities to deliver these are presented by:

- The provisions of policies PR13 and PR14, off New Road and Horns Lane;
- The potential addition of a deck to the Mount car park. This would need to be a sensitive development, with appropriate materials, landscaping and planting, but it has the potential to enhance the

setting of the church and the town centre Conservation Area, in contrast with the unalleviated asphalt expanse presented by the car park today.

- On-street space released as a result of public realm improvements in the town centre.

5.118 The plan sets out proposals for increasing retail space and parking space in the town centre, solving traffic problems and creating a better town centre environment. The requirement for the new relief road at Princes Risborough creates the opportunity for a different approach to roads in the town centre.

5.119 The railway stations at Princes Risborough and Monks Risborough will have a vital role to play in establishing sustainable patterns of commuting for the new population of the town. Direct, safe and attractive access to the station for all modes of travel will be needed, and train services of sufficient capacity to meet peak demands.

5.120 The introduction of a direct highway connection from the station into the main expansion area via Summerleys Road and through the Picts Lane site will revitalise the station area and make it better connected to the expanded town. The provision of the route via the Picts Lane site also relieves traffic pressure on Poppy Road which is narrow and constrained by parked cars.

5.121 New pedestrian and cycle access is needed from the west of the railway line to the Princes Estate, and to Picts Lane via the car park area.

5.122 The Risborough Parking Study<sup>30</sup> confirms that the station car park is close to capacity today. Commuter parking on adjoining streets is causing a nuisance to local residents, leading the County Council to look at plans to introduce parking restrictions on these streets. Consequently the station car park is likely to become even more heavily used. Eight to nine per cent of the working population in the town travels

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<sup>30</sup> Princes Risborough Parking Review Report (Jacobs 2016)

to work by rail and it is expected that this trend will increase. With the increased population from the expansion, and the provision of new rail services, it is expected that demand for parking spaces at the station may double. These could be provided by decking the current space.

## **Why is the expansion proposed through the Local Plan rather than a Neighbourhood Development Plan?**

5.123 Early in the process, the option of Princes Risborough Town Council's undertaking a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Princes Risborough was explored, particularly as the Town Council is a proactive body which seeks the best outcomes for the town. This would have had the advantage of a swifter process than a development plan document. Wycombe District Council would have fully supported the Town Council in this approach. However, a neighbourhood plan promoting a major expansion of the town would have been in conflict with strategic policies in Wycombe District Council's adopted Core Strategy and Local Plan (which identify low levels of growth for the town), and so could not meet the Basic Conditions for an NDP. In recognition of the extraordinary contribution that the town will be making to the overall housing needs of the District, Wycombe District Council has agreed to grant 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) revenue from growth at Princes Risborough directly to the Town Council, as if it had been promoting an NDP. This will ensure that infrastructure required to support the development closely reflects local priorities.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 The preparation of proposals for Princes Risborough has been supported by a significant body of technical work and shaped by extensive and ongoing engagement with the community, key stakeholders and service providers, and Duty to Cooperate bodies.

- 6.2 The proposals set out in the plan document demonstrate sustainable development and the most appropriate strategy for the town. They conform to the NPPF and associated guidance; they are positive in setting out major growth; they are justified; and they are effective in that they set out appropriate solutions to the issues raised and are deliverable.

## Appendix A

The web-based Planning Practice Guidance has shaped the approach to the proposals for Princes Risborough. These include, but are not limited to:

Air Quality: 002

Climate Change: 001, 003-6

Historic Environment: 002, 025

Good Design: 001-4, 006-014, 015-022, 029, 030

Duty to Cooperate: 001, 013, 014

Town Centres: 001, 002, 008, 009

Flood Risk: 001-6, 050, 051, 079-81, 086, 054

Health and Wellbeing: 001-3, 005

Light Pollution: 001

Local Plans: 018

Natural Environment

Landscape: 001, 003, 004

Biodiversity: 007-10, 012, 013

Green Infrastructure: 028-031

Noise: 001-6, 008

Open Space etc.: 001, 002, 004

Planning Obligations: 001-4, 006, 007

Renewable and low carbon energy: 001, 003, 009

Self-build and custom-build: 001, 023, 025

SEA/SA: 001, 005-7, 013, 017, 018

Transport: 001-011

Viability: 001, 005-008, 009-115

Water Supply / Waste Water / Water Quality: 001, 002-005, 010-014

WebTAG transport analysis guidance provides information on the role of transport modelling and appraisal which may be applied to Local Plan assessment and the development of major road infrastructure options. It is not ideally aligned with plan-making methodology but the following guidance has been used in the preparation of technical evidence:

TAG Overview (DfT, Jan 2014)

TAG: the Transport Appraisal Process: Technical Project Manager (DfT, Jan 2014)

TAG: Guidance for the Senior Responsible Officer (DfT, Jan 2014)

TAG unit A1-1 cost-benefit analysis (DfT, Nov 2014)

TAG unit A2-3 transport appraisal in the context of dependent development (DfT, Jul 2016)

More detailed technical guidance from WebTAG has been referred to by the Council's consultants in the preparation of suitable transport models.

Highway feasibility studies have been guided principally by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) published by Highways England, though Manual for Streets (DCLG / DfT, 2007) and Manual for Streets 2 (CIHT 2010) are also relevant.

## Appendix B Princes Risborough relief road – deliverability

### 1. What are the dimensions of deliverability?

The plan needs to demonstrate a reasonable prospect of delivery to meet the test of effectiveness. Delivery is generally set out in some detail for years 1-5, moderate detail for years 6-10, and less detail for the remainder of the plan period.

To demonstrate that the road is deliverable, evidence must set out:

- That the land is available or can be secured
- Sources of adequate funds and cash flow to secure the land and construct the road
- A means of implementation
- That any other constraints can be overcome

The supporting text for PR17 (Princes Risborough Delivery of Infrastructure) includes a timetable which indicates delivery of the relief road starting during years 6-10 and completing during years 11-15.

### 2. Land

- a. The land required for the road, and the cost of that land, is set out in the Princes Risborough Feasibility Review (DRF Consulting, 2017).
- b. The road traverses the main expansion area and so on-site sections of the road are in the control of interests who wish to promote land in the expansion area.
- c. The road will require other land (from south to north):
  - i. Land forming part of Culverton Farm
  - ii. Railway station brownfield site
  - iii. Sumitomo
  - iv. Land off Grove Lane
  - v. Properties near the under-bridge on the B4009 connecting with the A4010
  - vi. Other small fragments of land.
- d. The Council has set out its intentions to purchase land under item (v)<sup>31</sup> by allocating £1.2 M budget to these.

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<sup>31</sup> Cabinet report, September 2017

- e. The Council has prepared a bid from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) which includes the purchase of land required at (ii) and (iii) and the construction of key sections of the scheme at the southern end.
- f. The Council has established contact with Culverton Farm (i). The preferred relief road alignment runs through this land but a reasonable temporary alternative is available in the event of difficulty securing this land.
- g. The promoters of land off Grove Lane (iv) have contacted the Council with a view to promoting it for residential development.
- h. Some land in this list may require CPO to secure. The Council's cabinet decision of December 2016 confirms its willingness to consider CPO to achieve planned growth. CPO of land to deliver the road may also be necessary should promoters of land in the expansion area not make appropriate provision for the road.

### 3. Construction cost

The project costs £49.4 M, on prices current at January 2017<sup>32</sup>. These costs include Optimism bias of 44% for the highway elements, 66% for the bridge structures, and a further 20% risk contingency, as is standard at this stage of project development.

### 4. Railway possession

The new road will require the improvement and / or relocation of two existing railway under bridges, which are under the control of Network Rail.

Third-party implementation of changes to the rail asset is facilitated by Network Rail through Asset Protection Agreements. Changes to the rail asset are progressed through the GRIP design process. Network Rail may negotiate for commuted sums for ongoing asset maintenance.

The Council has coordinated and are finalising a Memorandum of Understanding with Network Rail, Buckinghamshire County Council and Princes Risborough Town Council. This sets out processes and principles for delivery of rail infrastructure improvements at Princes Risborough and an appropriate approach to sharing land value. Building on this, an initial Delivery Programme has been produced by Network Rail Infrastructure Projects who, it is expected, would design and deliver the

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<sup>32</sup> Princes Risborough Feasibility Review (DRF Consulting, April 2017)

replacement rail under-bridges. Track possession associated with HS2 is scheduled for the end of 2020 which presents an opportunity to install at least the southern replacement under-bridge, so achieving savings in costs and disruption.

## 5. Funds

The plan is proposing that since the major expansion of the town is dependent on the provision of new road infrastructure, the entire route should be funded by development. It is required for the proper planning of the area and the route proposed is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Compared with other road schemes to unlock similar-sized expansions, it is high cost. Any option for a relief route here would be high cost, relative to the scale of the expansion but the proposed route option is the lowest cost of the shortlisted options. A significant proportion of costs is associated with the improvement of the railway crossings (over-bridges / under-bridges) since these are expensive civil engineering works and attract a 66% optimism bias. Princes Risborough lies at a nexus of railway lines and so growth in any sustainable direction would entail some interaction with the rail asset.

To deliver the road will require funds of £49.4 M plus £4.4 M for land, and potential part 1 Compensation Claims of £1.7 M. The viability study for Princes Risborough confirms that the development of the land assumed to be in the control of the three main developers delivers enough value to fund the road in its entirety along with other required infrastructure and a fair return to both landowner and developer. This presents a worst-case scenario as other smaller land interests will also be required to contribute to infrastructure. However, there will be issues of cash flow as key elements of the road will be needed before the development has generated that value.<sup>33</sup> Funds will be secured through planning obligations, s106 agreements and s278 agreements for highway improvements.

## 6. Cash flow, phasing and sequencing

Currently the Plan is showing delivery of the first sections of relief road during years 6-10 of Plan, and completion in years 11-15.

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<sup>33</sup> Princes Risborough Expansion Viability report (WDC, March 2017)

Delivery of the relief road will be as a series of elements which are sequenced and funded by successive phases of development. Table 1 sets out the various elements of the relief road, their costs and indicative sequencing. It is likely that some elements of the road will need to be delivered before the development has generated enough value to afford them. Forward funding will therefore be needed, which can be paid back as the development generates value. Sources of forward funding could include:

- Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)
- Public Works Loan Board (for local authorities)
- LEP growth funds (to be recycled)
- Community Infrastructure Levy – the Council is a CIL authority

**Table 1 Potential sequencing and delivery of road elements**

Sequence order	Road element	Delivery / phasing rationale	£
1	Access across Sumitomo site	HIF bid, later recouped from s106. To unlock housing delivery; provide direct access to station and options for initial bus routing.	1,047,966
1	Section across railway station site	HIF bid, later recouped from s106. To facilitate distribution of development traffic away from unsuitable roads such as Poppy Road.	1,916,231
1	Summerleys Road improvements, junction upgrade and bridge improvement	Principally HIF bid, later recouped from s106. To create capacity under the railway bridge for increased traffic flows; to create safe crossing to the station; to create safe pedestrian and cycle routes to the station.	10,236,532
2	Section from Sumitomo to Longwick Rd	Delivered on-site by developers. This could be in the form of unlinked stubs into the development until there is comfort that network performance will be satisfactory	10,859,808
2	Longwick Rd – Mill Lane	Delivered on-site by developer. This could be in the form of unlinked stubs into the development until there is comfort that network performance will be satisfactory.	5,450,406
2	Section across Culverton Farm	Funded by s106. Delivery could be by public authorities. To mitigate impacts on Poppy Road, Picts Lane and Shootacre Lane.	2,596,970

3	B4009 improvements	Funded by s106. Delivery could be by public authorities. To complete the northern part of the new route.	4,410,996
3	Grove Lane bridge and associated junctions	Funded by s106. To allow the A4010 to be assigned to the new route. Delivery could be by public authorities in association with Network Rail.	12,872,124

The Council has prepared a HIF bid to help deliver the first phases of the relief road (called the Southern Road Links or SRL), so as to accelerate housing delivery at Princes Risborough. It includes:

- Purchase of the Sumitomo land and construction of the road link across it;
- The junction of the new road with Summerleys Road;
- The replacement of the southern under-bridge to increase horizontal capacity (i.e. so that it can accommodate greater flows of traffic) as a minimum;
- Widening of Summerleys Road and improved pedestrian / cycling provision;
- Signalised junction of the new road with Summerleys Road, Station Road and Station approach;
- Purchase of land through the railway station site and construction of the road across it as far as the junction with Picts Lane in the south.

Through early provision of key elements of the relief road, delivery at Princes Risborough could be accelerated to more closely align with the more positive delivery trajectory (Scenario 1) developed in the Housing Delivery Study for Buckinghamshire prepared by Wessex Economics (2017). This could bring delivery of the first sections of the road forward into years 1-5 of the Plan. The intention is that this bid will be repaid in due course through planning obligations.

Transport modelling work by Jacobs<sup>34</sup> has considered phasing of development at Princes Risborough and the impact of development traffic on the network as phases progress. Two studies have tracked the performance of key junctions (the Tesco roundabout and the Grove Lane junction) through a series of staged delivery scenarios. This work does not provide a complete answer but shows the way for

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<sup>34</sup> Princes Risborough Expansion Princes Risborough Masterplan Preliminary Phasing Strategy Modelling (Jacobs 2017) and Princes Risborough Masterplan Princes Risborough Phasing Tests (Jacobs 2017)

further work and gives confidence that a detailed phasing programme for delivery can be developed. This further work is being taken forward to support the Capacity and Delivery Plan for the town.

The inclusion of the relief road through the main expansion area means that if development is sequenced appropriately it will be provided as an onsite infrastructure contribution and is to a large extent a normal development cost for the phases of development through which it runs.

It is important therefore to achieve an appropriate sequence of development. In practice this means starting the development of the main expansion area from the south where the site adjoins the Sumitomo land and which must be crossed to reach the B4444 Summerleys Road.

The Highway Authority has indicated that development of up to 660 homes at the southern end of the main expansion area and served by a single access road (to the south) with pedestrian and emergency vehicle access off Longwick Road could in principle be acceptable.

Once the route is complete, and supported by the town traffic management measures, a balancing of traffic flows across the network brings key junctions back to within capacity.

Further work is programmed in 2017/18 by the Council on phasing of housing delivery to identify equitable arrangements for housing delivery and contributions to infrastructure that avoid unacceptable impacts on local roads and ensure that necessary school places are available as the development of the main expansion area progresses. Initial work is set out in the December 2016 Cabinet Report.

## 7. CPO and ransom

As set out above, the Council has the power to use CPO for securing land as a fall-back position where other approaches have been unsuccessful. There are a number of sources of potential ransom (including Network Rail's shared value policy), which will seek a share of the surplus value in the development. The Capacity and Delivery Plan (above) will set out how these claims might be managed.

## 8. Implementation

On-site sections of the road will be delivered directly by the developers as the expansion is developed out. Requirements for safeguarding this route are set out in detail under Policy PR8 of the Local Plan. The Council also has the option to enter into Development Agreements or Land Transfer Agreements, using its powers to acquire the land and the developer effectively funds the process through an Indemnity Agreement.

It is proposed that the majority of works will be undertaken through s278 highway agreements by the developer.

Where necessary, elements of the road could be delivered by the public authorities. The Council has a sound track record of delivering built environment projects such as the Handy Cross Hub, the Hughenden quarter of High Wycombe, and the High Wycombe Town Centre Master Plan (jointly with Buckinghamshire County Council) – the last two of these involving delivery of significant new road infrastructure.

The Council's HIF bid proposes that a joint District and County Council delivery team under a joint Programme board will take the lead on the delivery of those southern sections of the road.

#### 9. Other constraints

The road cannot avoid crossing Flood Zones 2 and 3. Policy PR8 requires that the road will:

- a. be designed and constructed to remain operational and safe for users in time of flood;
- b. Result in no net loss of floodplain storage;
- c. Not impede water flows and not increase flood risk elsewhere.

The Level 2 SFRA<sup>35</sup> sets out more detail about how this could be achieved.

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<sup>35</sup> Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Jacobs 2017)

## Appendix C

### Indicative Land budget for Princes Risborough main expansion area

<b>1. Housing Parcels</b>	<b>Ha</b>	<b>Indicative number of homes</b>
High density parcels @ 38 dph*	30.4	1154
Medium density parcels @ 32 dph	25.7	821
Low density parcels @ 25 dph	15.3	382
Total housing parcels	71.3	2357
<b>2. Green infrastructure, including undeveloped areas and constraints</b>	<b>Ha</b>	<b>Function</b>
Hedge/footpath/stream buffers	7.4	Ecological protection, drainage management and structural landscaping
Odour Buffer	2.78	Land uses restricted to nature and informal amenity (limited exposure)
Park Mill ponds	1.2	For nature, flood risk mitigation and informal amenity
Crowbrook Stream West	13.0	Structural landscaping, flood risk mitigation, ecological / hydrological buffering, protection of Local Wildlife Site.
Crowbrook Stream - East	14.1	Structural landscaping, flood risk mitigation, ecological / hydrological buffering, protection of Biological Notification Site, protection of the setting of Alscot CA and key views out.
Twin Track linear park	3.8	Safeguarded for future twin-tracking of the railway, with a further strip allocated to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mitigate against noise and vibration;</li> <li>• provide structural landscaping;</li> <li>• create a walking/cycling link between crossings of the railway.</li> </ul>
Total undeveloped areas	42.28	

\*Densities are rounded to nearest whole number.

<b>3. Strategic Open Space</b>	<b>Ha</b>	<b>Function</b>
SOS 1, including area for allotments	2.9	Public outdoor sport and allotments
SOS 2	13.4	Public outdoor sport, MUGA and park
Neighbourhood Strategic Open Space, distributed through development area	4.8	Strategic play and park.
Total strategic open space	21.1	Minimum required by DM16 is 18.2 ha
<b>4. Other land uses</b>	<b>Ha</b>	
School 1 of 2FE	2	
School 2 of 2FE	2	
Local Centre	0.7	
Land for doctors' surgery	0.34	
Land for strategic road	4.38	
Total other land uses	9.42	

**Land uses excluded:**

	<b>Ha</b>	<b>Function</b>
Sewage treatment works	4.6	
Longwick Buffer	7.6	Open countryside to avoid coalescence
Lower Icknield Way Buffers	5.8	Open countryside to avoid coalescence
Bridge House Employment and nearby housing	2.3	Existing uses
Railway corridor	5.2	Actual railway holdings
Mill Lane housing	4.2	Existing homes on Mill Lane
Alscot	2.2	Conservation Area
Longwick Road/Mill Lane	1.8	Actual highway extents
Total excluded land uses	33.7	