

New Wycombe Local Plan Briefing Note – Infrastructure Delivery

Introduction

Everybody knows the importance of new and improved infrastructure to support new development. This has been reinforced by the many comments we have received to the draft Local Plan that show one of the most important priorities is to make sure that local infrastructure and services can cope with the growth outlined in the Plan.

Infrastructure planning and funding is often complex with various agencies responsible for the provision and operation of infrastructure.

The Council has published a draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to support the proposals set out in the new Local Plan which is available at <https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/uploads/public/documents/Planning/New-local-plan/Local-plan-draft-infrastructure-delivery-plan.pdf>. This note provides a summary of the various mechanisms and funding avenues used to deliver infrastructure.

What do we mean by infrastructure?

The facilities, services, and installations needed to support our communities and to enable the local economy to thrive. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- Transportation: roads, bus routes, rail network;
- Education facilities: schools, colleges, universities, adult learning centres;
- Utilities: water, power grids, sewers;
- Community facilities: libraries, sports and leisure facilities, community centres;
- Health care: hospitals, local GP surgeries and other facilities;
- Emergency & essential services: fire, police and ambulance facilities;
- Green spaces: playing fields and sport pitches, wildlife areas; and
- Communications systems: digital telecommunications.

Who provides infrastructure?

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

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

- **Developers:** responsible for ensuring essential infrastructure is available within their development.

Infrastructure and the Local Plan

To support the Local Plan the Council and our partners have undertaken a range of technical studies that inform the infrastructure planning process. These documents and studies include transport modelling and assessment of the demands on school places from new development. The requirements are set out and summarised in the [Draft IDP](#) and more detailed studies are available on the new Local Plan [supporting evidence page](#).

Funding of Infrastructure

The wide variety of necessary infrastructure requires funding from a range of sources. Some examples of how infrastructure is funded are described below:

Site enabling infrastructure is the basic infrastructure needed to allow a development to be useable. For example, this may include but is not limited to site roads, drainage, parking, footpaths, landscaping and amenity space within the site. These works are usually secured through the planning permission or with planning conditions and the cost should be met by the developer.

Section 106 planning obligations are legal agreements which place obligations on developers to deliver infrastructure such as formal open space direct on site or to pay financial contributions to public sector agencies to deliver infrastructure off-site such as additional school places. Planning obligations must be:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- Directly related to the development
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development

Section 278 Agreements are legal agreements between developers and the Highway Authority to deliver alterations and improvements to the public highway.

The **Community Infrastructure Levy** is a standard levy on new development charged per square metre. The funds are collected by Wycombe District Council and then reinvested in infrastructure necessary to support growth in the area.

Both Wycombe District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council's **Capital Programmes** identify and allocate funding to certain infrastructure such as schools, road maintenance and refurbishment of play areas.

Statutory undertakers such as Thames Water and BT Openreach fund and deliver various infrastructure improvements such as new reservoirs, sewage treatment works and laying new fibre optic broadband cabling. Funding is not usually secured through S106 Agreements for statutory undertakers as they fund works for example for additional sewage treatment capacity on a predictive basis and funded through the providers.

Central Government fund new and improved infrastructure through general taxation and delivered through various agencies including:

- Highways England for improvement to the Strategic Road Network.
- Buckinghamshire County Council through the targeted Basic Needs Programme for areas experiencing pressure on school places.
- The Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership distributes funding for measures to grow the Buckinghamshire economy including for transport and town centre regeneration measures.
- The NHS Estates and Technology Transformation Fund is a multi-million pound investment programme to accelerate the development of infrastructure to enable the improvement of GP practices.

Conclusion

Wycombe District Council is committed to delivering new homes and jobs in a sustainable and timely manner. The Council will seek to ensure that the infrastructure provided through new development, secured through the funding sources identified meets the needs of local communities. The Plan will allocate sites for new schools and open spaces, set out the various transport requirements that developers will have to deliver or contribute to, as well as the other infrastructure requirements such as improvements to GP provision that will be taken forward.