

Foreword

This Plan sets out the long term vision for the District identifying where new homes, jobs and infrastructure (e.g. transport, schools, open spaces) will be created and how we will protect our special environment. We need to make a fair contribution to the critical need for housing, providing land for our changing economy and we need to protect our wonderful countryside from harmful development. It is not easy but we believe we have struck the right balance and have met the challenge.

In 2014 we consulted you on these big challenges that we faced in preparing our new Local Plan and in 2016 we produced two draft plans, one for Princes Risborough, and one for the rest of the District. These draft Plans are brought together into this Local Plan.

We had a good response from the consultations, including lots of feedback from many residents, with a common concern that the level of development in particular locations will undermine the quality of life that is currently enjoyed. We understand that the proposed development will bring changes, and we have ensured that infrastructure to support the new development will be provided, and that the character of new development will respond to its context. In terms of the overall amount of housing, nationally we need to build houses. We have not been building enough for roughly the last 30 years. And Wycombe District needs to provide its fair share. This plan sets out how we will do that.

We now know how many homes are ‘needed’ by Wycombe District to 2033 – about 13,200. In this Plan, we propose to accommodate most of that need (10,925) with the remainder being provided by Aylesbury Vale District Council. This nonetheless means that we need to build about 550 a year – up from our old target of 400. Most of this development will be in Wycombe, Princes Risborough, and Bourne End with about 15% being in the rural areas to help foster their economic and social wellbeing.

Half of the homes to be built in Wycombe District will be on brownfield land. In finding green field sites, we believe we have achieved a sustainable balance across the District, by releasing the five Reserve Sites in 2014, proposing the expansion of

Princes Risborough, development in the villages of Longwick, and the Kimbles, and some carefully selected site allocations in the Green Belt and/or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Green Belt sites perform weakly in terms of their Green Belt purposes. Indeed, this has been ascertained only through a detailed and very thorough review of Green Belt across the whole County. Two of these are particularly large sites for housing in Hazelmere and Bourne End. It is also proposed that Wycombe Air Park is also taken out of the Green Belt, for employment purposes. However, in total, we are proposing to release less than 1% of the Green Belt - roughly the same amount that we put into the Green Belt in 2008. For many, this may not be a perfect solution but we believe it is a fair one given the different competing pressures.

It goes without saying that this Plan involves many difficult choices. However, we believe that this plan represents the most sustainable choice to shape the immediate future of our District, and provides the homes that we need in a way that respects our beautiful countryside.



Councillor David Johncock

Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainability



Councillor Katrina Wood

Leader of the Council

Executive Summary

The plan is in 7 parts:

1. Introduction which explains the national context within which the plan is prepared.
2. The challenges that the plan has to address
3. The Vision for the District, and the Strategic Objectives to meet the challenges
4. The overall strategy that directs development to certain places, and why
5. The sites that have been identified for development in each of the towns, and in the rural areas.
6. The policies that will be used to make decisions on planning applications.
7. How the plan will be monitored.

There are also a number of appendices with more technical information. Throughout the plan references are made to supporting documents, which contain evidence on which the plan is based. All these documents are available on the Council's website.

Introduction (Section 1 of the draft Plan)

The Council is required to prepare a plan by the Government, in co-operation with surrounding local authorities. For Wycombe District we have been working closely with the other authorities in Buckinghamshire – Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern and South Bucks, and the County Council. This is because we are within the same 'functional economic and housing area' – in other words the area in which people are likely to live and work.

Together we have worked out how many homes need to be built, and how many jobs will be created, and have agreed, in broad terms, how much of the development should go in each District, up to 2033. During this time, using the Government methodology, about 45,000 homes are needed in the County. Just over 13,000 (13,200) of these are to meet the needs of Wycombe District. However, as Wycombe has large areas in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt, we propose to accommodate just under 11,000 (10,925) homes, with Aylesbury Vale accommodating the rest.

This draft plan sets out where the homes will be built, and where new business will be located. It identifies specific sites for development, including how they can be developed to achieve high quality.

The plan also contains policies which are used to direct development to those locations, and to be the ‘rule book’ by which decisions on planning applications are made.

When it is adopted this plan will replace two older plans – the Core Strategy (2008) and the previous Local Plan (2004). The Council has another plan, adopted in 2013, the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (DSA), which has policies on town centres, and some policies to be used in making decisions on planning applications (Development Management). That plan is still up to date, and so it will be read alongside this draft plan when it is finalised.

The Challenges (Section 2 of the draft Plan)

Wycombe District stretches from just south of Aylesbury in the north, to the Thames in the South. Henley is just outside of the District to the west, and to the east the District goes to the edge of Beaconsfield. 71% of the District falls within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which has the same status as a National Park, in terms of protecting the landscape. 48% of the District falls within the Metropolitan Green Belt, which runs all the way round London. We can change Green Belt boundaries – but only in exceptional circumstances. The boundary of the AONB is set by Government.

The big challenge, therefore, is delivering sustainable development at the same time as delivering new homes, land for jobs, and the infrastructure to support these. It is also important that our town centres remain vibrant, and that the new development, and the changes we make to existing places, all value our location in the Chiltern Hills, giving us a sense of identity from the places we live in.

Our Vision and Strategic objectives (Section 3 of the draft Plan)

Wycombe District Council has a long standing vision:

“Wycombe District: economically strong and the place to live, work and visit”.

Looking at the challenges, and how to deliver that vision, the plan sets out eight strategic objectives to guide and shape the plan.

1. Cherish the Chilterns

Cherish the Chilterns by conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape of the Chiltern Hills.

2. Strengthen the Sense of Place

Strengthen the sense of place throughout Wycombe District by:

- *protecting and enhancing the District’s natural and built environment, including landscape, biodiversity, green and blue infrastructure, historic and cultural assets;*
- *maintaining place identity by using Green Belt to keep main settlements separate;*
- *securing high quality, bespoke responses in the design of new development*

3. Foster economic growth

Foster the economic strength of the M40/A404 location and that of the rural economy.

4. Improve strategic connectivity

Improve strategic transport connectivity within Buckinghamshire by road and rail; this includes strategic connectivity between the South East Midlands, Aylesbury, Princes Risborough, High Wycombe, London as well as the Thames Valley.

5. Facilitate local infrastructure

Facilitate timely improvements to local infrastructure by focused investment and by securing appropriate benefits from new development.

6. Deliver housing

Contribute our fair share towards tackling the need for more housing including for affordable housing and other specific housing needs of the community, including catering for a growing aging population.

7. Champion town centres

Champion thriving town and business centres to provide the focus of our social and economic activity

8. Mitigating Climate Change

Reduce CO2 emissions by reducing the need for travel by private car, and aid public transport viability, through intensifying existing urban areas by re-use of brownfield sites, locating development in settlements with the widest range of services and facilities, and by clustering development to achieve high quality walking, cycling and public transport provision.

The Strategy (Section 4 of the draft Plan)

There are twelve policies in this section of the plan. They explain where development will go, and why.

In terms of housing, the plan does not release large areas of land from the Green Belt for housing. It also does not propose large sites within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Some sites that perform weakly on Green Belt purposes are proposed to be released, and some sites that have least impact on the countryside have been selected in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Most of the homes – roughly 85% of the 11,000 homes to be accommodated in the District – are in the main towns: the High Wycombe area (including the surrounding villages such as Hazlemere), Princes Risborough, and Bourne End and Wooburn. Marlow also has less development than the other towns because it is constrained by Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Thames flood plain. About 15% of the homes will be in villages to help the rural economy, with Longwick and Kimble taking about a third of that development. The plan also encourages ‘rural

exception sites’ – where housing is allowed in villages where development is not usually allowed, so long as it provides affordable housing for local people.

The Plan includes for the significant expansion of Princes Risborough. Over 2,600 homes are planned for. Of these, about 2000 are expected to be built to 2033, including on some sites in the existing town, leaving about 600 homes for later years.

In terms of business, the plan proposes to take an area of land out of the Green Belt at the Airpark, to allow for more business development. The Airpark would remain, with some changes to how it operates. Some small areas for business are also identified at Stokenchurch and at Princes Risborough.

The plan also protects areas that are currently used by businesses, and encourages the two main business parks in the District, Globe Park in Marlow and Cressex Business Park in High Wycombe, to be regenerated and improved, including improving access to them, to ensure they remain good business places to locate.

Long term, there are issues of strategic connectivity – both by rail and road – to be addressed. However, the work is not ready to feed into this plan, and a revision to this plan will need to be made later to take that into account. That includes the work being done by the National Infrastructure Commission on the Oxford To Cambridge Expressway, and with Highways England on ‘Access to Wycombe’, which is considering a range of options to improve access from the M40, including radical alterations to J4.

This section of the plan also has policies to secure vibrant and high quality town centres; new infrastructure; high quality development that leaves a strong sense of identity – ‘sense of place’ – and to protect the Green Belt.

What is Proposed in Specific Areas? (Section 5 of the draft Plan)

This section looks at the sites that are being proposed to accommodate the development. It is set out by the main towns in the District, and for the Rural Area. At the beginning of each section, principles are set out that will help to shape each place.

High Wycombe

Many of the homes to be built in High Wycombe are already in the pipeline, or on sites identified in previous plans. This plan identifies some more sites for housing:

- Reserve Sites: 4 sites were released for development in 2014: Gomm Valley, Terriers Farm and Terriers House, and Abbey Barn North and South. On all of these sites large areas will be retained for open space, and the detailed policies set out where this should be, along with the infrastructure required, and what is needed to ensure the development is high quality. Development briefs are being brought forward for these sites: some have been adopted.
- Tralee Farm, off the A404 at Hazlemere: this is a new site identified in this plan, as a result of the review of the Green Belt. The plan shows a diagram of how development might take place, protecting the existing orchard and woodland areas.
- Smaller sites including land to the rear of Hughenden Road, at Glynswood, Green Hill, at Horns Lane, Booker, and at the former Bassetsbury Allotments.
- Leigh Street, in the Desborough Area, is identified for housing-led mixed use, keeping the former factory building, Birch House.

For new land for business, the focus is on the Airpark – but the Airpark remains operational. Land is identified for:

- More intensive use on the area of the existing buildings at the Airpark
- New employment uses on the triangle of land to the south of the Airpark
- A small area of land for low density employment uses is also proposed to be taken out of the Green Belt along with High Heavens, the household recycling centre, which is near the Airpark.

For existing businesses, the plan is keen to see improvements to Cressex Business Park, and to protect existing business uses.

In the town centre, the plan clarifies the policies to be applied to White Hart Street and Church Street.

The plan also identifies a site for a future cemetery, known as Queensway, at Hazlemere.

Marlow

New housing sites are limited at Marlow, because of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Green Belt and the Thames floodplain. The only new site identified is a small site off Seymour Court Road.

For business, the success of Globe Park is important, and the plan includes a policy to support its continued success.

Princes Risborough

The plan includes the proposed expansion of Princes Risborough by 2,650 homes, this expansion is to be supported by new primary schools, a new road, strategic and local open space and a new local centre. About 2000 of these homes are expected in the plan period (to 2033), about 1700 in the main expansion area (about 100 already have planning permission), about 100 on other allocations in the expansion area, and about 180 on other sites elsewhere in the town, some of which have planning permission. This leaves 600 in the expansion area after 2033. There are policies covering a range of issues including detailed principles for the expansion area, the delivery of a new road which will take traffic out of the town centre and detailed development requirements for planning applications.

There are the following new employment sites:

- Princes Estate Expansion
- Land North of Lower Icknield Way

There are mixed use proposals for the following sites:

- Land Fronting New Road (Back Lane)
- Land South of Horns Lane
- Land at Princes Risborough Station

This Plan also contains a proposal for the release of land to the rear of Poppy Road from the Green Belt for housing. The Plan protects the former Molins Sports Ground, at Monks Risborough, for sports uses.

Bourne End and Wooburn

There are two sites identified here for housing:

- Slate Meadow, which is one of the reserve sites released for development in 2014. A detailed policy is proposed in this plan for that site, and a development brief is being brought forward.
- Hollands Farm – a new site identified in this plan as the result of the Green Belt review. This site should provide a primary school and a link road from the Cores End Roundabout to Ferry Lane, to relieve traffic pressure in the village centre.

Rural areas

Lane End: three housing sites are proposed, at Finings Road, on the Marlow Road near Chalky Field, and off Simmons Way. It is also proposed to take the land next to Sidney House, next to the M40, out of the Green Belt.

Little Marlow: the area of the former gravel pits and the land between Abbotsbrook and the A404 is identified for a country park.

Longwick: the Plan requires that 300 new homes are provided in Longwick. Sites are not identified in this plan, because the Parish Council is in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. The detailed sites will be in the Neighbourhood Plan. Most of these sites already have planning permission.

Kimble: the Plan requires that 160 new homes are provided in Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh Parish. No sites are identified in this plan because the Parish Council is in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. The detailed sites will be in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Naphill: it is proposed to take land off Clappins Lane at Naphill out of the Green Belt, and to allocate it for housing.

Saunderton: in 2017 the Council adopted the Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Neighbourhood Plan, which includes policies on the former Molins factory at Saunderton. This Local Plan does not, therefore, contain any policies, as they are in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Stokenchurch: a housing site is identified to the south of the M40 at Stokenchurch, off Mill Lane; and an area for business development is identified to the rear of Stokenchurch Business Park alongside the M40.

Four Ashes – Uplands Conference Centre: the conference centre on this site was listed by the Secretary of State as being of architectural and historic interest, and a policy for the redevelopment of the site is included in this draft Plan, that retains the buildings.

Delivering the Strategy, Managing Development (Section 6 of the draft Plan)

This section contains detailed policies that will be used to make decisions on planning applications. Other policies that will be used in making decisions on planning applications are contained in the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan. This was a plan adopted in 2013, and all but two of those policies remain up to date and will continue to be used alongside those new policies in this draft Plan. Those new policies include:

- Housing, including housing mix, affordable housing and houses in multiple occupation, provision for Travellers, and a policy to facilitate small amounts of affordable housing in rural areas called a ‘rural exceptions policy’.
- Other uses such as businesses, including in the rural areas, and community uses
- The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, green infrastructure, flood risk
- Place making and design quality and parking
- Residential extensions including in the Green Belt

Implementation and Delivery (Section 7 of the draft Plan)

This section sets out how the Council will assist in the delivery of the Plan, and how the Plan will be monitored, to be sure it is achieving its objectives.