

## **Statement of Consultation - Appendix 4**

**Wycombe District Local Plan  
Community Conversations Report  
(August 2013)**



## Wycombe District Local Plan

Play your part in the plan



## Community Conversations Report

August 2013





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## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1. In June / July 2013 Wycombe District Council engaged in a dialogue with local communities on the new Wycombe District Local Plan. Five events were held in various locations of the district, led by parishes and town councils. These events allowed local stakeholders to gather and discuss their local issues and form the second phase of a series of public and stakeholder engagement on the development of the New Wycombe District Local Plan. These community conversations focused on local issues across the District, and potential solutions.
- 1.2. This report sets out the how the Community Conversations were undertaken and summarises the comments made during this stage of the process, both through the meetings and written comments.
- 1.3. Over 110 people attended the community conversations sessions. Participants included ward members, representatives from parish and town councils, members of local amenity groups and residents.
- 1.4. Following the revocation of the South East Plan, the Government's growth agenda and the need for further assessment of housing requirements and land supply, a great part of the discussions focussed on the impacts of future housing on local communities and infrastructure capacity. Other key areas of discussion and comments included plan making and engagement, the principle of development, affordable housing, town centre vitalities and rural economy, parking and transport. Comments were also received on specific sites within the district mainly in Princes Risborough and Marlow.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. The Council began work on the **Wycombe District Local Plan** in late 2012. The new Local Plan will set out strategic policies and proposals to address local needs in terms of housing, employment and infrastructure and a range of other issues.
- 2.2. It will replace, as appropriate, remaining saved policies in our current Local Plan and Core Strategy policies, and sit alongside the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan which was adopted on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013.
- 2.3. The Council is committed to engaging with communities in the preparation of its plans. The Wycombe Revised Statement of Community Involvement (2012)<sup>1</sup> sets out the general principles for involvement in plan making. There are a number of stages when the community will be able to get involved in the preparation of the new Local Plan (see section 3.).

## 3. Opportunities for engagement

- 3.1. Work first started on preparing the new Wycombe District Local Plan (WDLP) Development Plan Document (DPD) in October 2012. Initial consultation work was undertaken over the winter 2012 on the issues the plan should address and means of doing so: we received a range of responses from across the District. A report is available on our New Local Plan webpage [www.wycombe.gov.uk/newlocalplan](http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/newlocalplan).
- 3.2. The purpose of the Community Conversation stage was to target dialogue with communities, in particular key stakeholders such as Parish and Town Councils, Community and Amenity groups and local ward members. The document will allocate main development sites within the district for housing, employment, retail, leisure and mixed use developments. The document will

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/council-services/planning-and-buildings/planning-policy/wycombe-development-framework/community-involvement.aspx>

set out new or revised land use designations and related policies and set out key infrastructure requirements to support these developments.

3.3. The stages in the production of the plan are set out below in Figure 1. We are currently moving to stage 2.

**Figure 1. Developing the new Wycombe District Local Plan – Main stages**

<b>Stage 1 The Issues</b>	⇒ Establishing and understanding the issues ⇒ Early engagement with key stakeholders/ community on issues ⇒ Developing technical evidence base to identify the full range of issues.	<b>Oct 2012 – Jul 2013</b>
<b>Stage 2 The Options</b>	⇒ Developing the options for addressing the issues and consulting on them ⇒ Main full consultation on options – e.g. on targets/ requirements, sites, and policy approaches. ⇒ Testing of the options through technical work to inform the consultation.	<b>Jul 2013 – Feb 2014</b>
<b>Stage 3 The Plan</b>	⇒ Reviewing feedback, agreeing preferred options and finalising the Plan ⇒ Ongoing engagement with stakeholders on emerging preferences. ⇒ Additional technical work in response to consultation feedback.	<b>Mar 2014 – Oct 2014</b>
<b>Stage 4 Examining the Plan</b>	⇒ Publishing the Plan for final consultation ⇒ Submitting the plan for examination ⇒ Examination / Inspector’s report	<b>Nov 2014 – Oct 2015</b>
<b>Stage 5 Adoption</b>	⇒ Adopt the Plan	<b>Dec 2015</b>

#### 4. The Community Conversations Process

4.1. Five events were organised across the District, during June / July 2013. They consisted of a series of presentations from Wycombe District Council Planning Officers and from local stakeholders, followed by a workshop session, where the attendees formed smaller discussion groups around tables. They were hosted and organised by town and parish councils, and the District Council wishes to thank all those who were involved in making these events happen.

4.2. The geographical areas for the different meetings were defined, broadly following Bucks County Council Local Community Area boundaries. For the purposes of this stage, the towns of Marlow and Princes Risborough were considered separately from their original Local Community Area.

4.3. To assist in an understanding of local issues, a concise Area Profile<sup>2</sup> was created for each sub-area. Each area profile provided a range of data, including on demographic and economic trends, key environmental assets and constraints and comparisons with the rest of the District. This included up-to-date data from the 2011 Census.

4.4. These area profiles were also used to assist in the round table discussions, where possible they were made available in advance of any meetings. Hard copies of the profiles were made available on the day of each event and electronic copies were made available on the website at the close of the community conversations series at [www.wycombe.gov.uk/newlocalplan](http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/newlocalplan).

#### ***Community conversations schedule***

Sub-area	Parish Council / Town Council / Town Committee	Event held	Led by
1. High	High Wycombe Town	Monday 17 <sup>th</sup>	High

<sup>2</sup> These profiles were meant to be succinct and give key statistics. Further local statistics can be obtained from [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)

Wycombe	Committee	June 2013 7pm-9pm Oak Room, Town Hall, High Wycombe	Wycombe Town Committee + High Wycombe Society
2. Marlow	Marlow Town Council	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2013 7pm-9pm Court Gardens, Marlow	Marlow Town Council
3. Chepping Wye Valley	Chepping Wycombe Parish Council	Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2013 7.30pm- 9.30pm  Abbotsbrook Hall, Well End	Little Marlow Parish Council
	Hazlemere Parish Council		
	Hedsor Parish Meeting		
	Little Marlow Parish Council		
	Wooburn and Bourne End Parish Council		
4. South West Chiltern	Fawley Parish Meeting	Tuesday 4th June 2013 7pm-9pm  Longburrow Hall, Stokenchurch	Stokenchurch Parish Council
	Great Marlow Parish Council		
	Hambleden Parish Council		
	Ibstone Parish Council		
	Lane End Parish Council		
	Marlow Bottom Parish Council		
	Medmenham Parish Council		
	Piddington and Wheeler End Parish Council		

	Radnage Parish Council		
	Stokenchurch Parish Council		
	Turville Parish Council		
	West Wycombe Parish Council		
5. Princes Risborough	Princes Risborough Town Council	Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2013 7pm-9pm  Princes Centre, Princes Risborough	Princes Risborough Town Council
6. North West Chiltern	Bledlow-cum-Saunderton Parish Council	No event was held	
	Bradenham Parish Council		
	Downley Parish Council		
	Ellesborough Parish Council		
	Great and Little Hampden Parish Council		
	Great and Little Kimble cum Marsh Parish Council		
	Hughenden Parish Council		
	Lacey Green Parish Council		
	Longwick-cum-Illmer Parish Council		

4.5. Additionally, a “sweep up” event was organised by Wycombe District Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013, for those who had not had a chance to attend one of the workshops. This included some attendees from North West Chilterns area.

4.6. A meeting with the Wycombe Youth Council was also held during the same period, as the Council wanted to engage with young people separately (see also section 8 and appendix 9).

## **5. Notification of the events**

5.1. Parish and town councils, community and amenity groups and local ward members were seen as important links for the dissemination of information regarding the events to local stakeholders.

5.2. The Community Conversations were led by Parish / Town Councils, with the help of Wycombe District Council. In the case of High Wycombe, the event was jointly led by High Wycombe Town Committee and the High Wycombe Society.

5.3. Prior to the events, advanced warning of the consultation had been given to Ward Members<sup>3</sup>.

5.4. Parish and town councils and community and amenity groups were notified in writing of the events reasonably in advance of their start. These organisations were also sent leaflets advertising the consultation to display in their communities.

5.5. The Sweep Up event was promoted via Weekly Planning Bulletin and by email.

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<sup>3</sup> In the case of the North West Chiltern area where no event was organised, local ward members, parish councils and local amenity groups were informed of the Sweep up event as an opportunity for input.

## **6. Community Conversations Programme**

- 6.1. Five events were organised across the District. There were approximately between 15 and 40 attendees at each session .A District Councillor was present to chair each session.
- 6.2. Each briefing session began with context setting presentations given by WDC planning officers outlining the issues brought about by the new local plan, and the challenges arising from the need to set our own housing targets in line with the government growth agenda. There were also introductory presentations about local issues in the area, which were given by WDC planning officers and, at some events, also by local stakeholders. These were then followed by a Question and Answer session.
- 6.3. During the second part of the session, attendees gathered around workshop tables, facilitated by WDC planning officers<sup>4</sup>, to discuss in smaller groups the issues in their specific areas. Attendees were also asked to think about potential planning / development solutions to those issues. The area profiles were made available on each table, as well as detailed maps of the area.
- 6.4. Feedback was then given to the room on the key points of discussion. A WDC officer then explained the next step for getting involved, and the chairman concluded the session.

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<sup>4</sup> At the High Wycombe events, facilitators also included members of the High Wycombe Society, due to higher numbers than expected.

## 7. Feedback on the events

7.1. Feedback forms were available on the day to make comments on the organisation of the event itself, the quality of presentations, materials available, and usefulness of such event.

7.2. We received 78 feedback forms. The general feedback was very positive, with overall satisfaction (excellent or good) of **74.79%**.

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Left blank
How satisfied were you with the content of the meeting?	14 17.95%	38 48.72%	18 23.08%	5 6.41%	3 3.85%
How satisfied were you with the quality of the presentation and handouts?	18 23.08%	45 57.69%	8 10.26%	2 2.56%	5 6.41%
How satisfied were you with the organisation of the event?	23 29.49%	37 47.44%	8 10.26%	4 5.13%	6 7.69%

7.3. Some participants suggested means of making this type of events even more meaningful / efficient. The Council will be taking these detailed comments on board for future engagement exercises.

## **8. Summary of Community Conversations Sessions**

8.1. The following section summarises the key issues raised during the Community Conversations sessions. A more detailed record of the feedback received at each session is set out in Appendices 1 to 8. It should be noted that a few written comments were received after the Community Conversation events and the main issues raised have been incorporated into the record set out in the Appendices.

### **South West Chilterns**

8.2.

The event was held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at Longburrow Hall in Stokenchurch. 24 participants attended the events, representing Great Marlow Parish Council, Hambleden Parish Council, Ibstone Parish Council, Lane End Parish Council, Marlow Bottom Parish Council, Medmenham Parish Council, Piddington and Wheeler End Parish Council, Radnage Parish Council, Stokenchurch Parish Council, Turville Parish Council, Downley Parish Council, Stokenchurch Community Action Forum, the Chilterns Society and the Chilterns AONB Management Board and Wycombe District Council.

8.3. The paragraphs below summarise the comments made.

#### **Principle of development**

8.4. Some development may be acceptable provided it is balanced and linked with adequate infrastructure. When sites are identified, they must be brought forward much more rapidly (e.g. Sydney House).

#### **Housing/ affordable housing**

8.5. It was felt that small scale development for housing could be delivered in some areas. However few opportunities were identified due to environmental

constraints. Rural exceptions schemes could successfully provide some affordable housing, notably for local young people.

### **Economy**

8.6. Participants discussed the government's growth agenda and its application in rural areas. It was noted that greater flexibility in terms of employment uses should be encouraged.

### **Rural Transport / Infrastructure**

8.7. Careful design of roads must accompany any new development. Concerns were raised over the negative impact of new development on the road network and overall capacity. Parking issues burden small rural services and businesses – further support is sought, and parking standards should be revised, especially if development occurs. Communities should look at 'on-demand' transport provision. The current lack of social infrastructure and potential use of CIL for broadband, mobile phone, gas / utilities deficiencies was raised.

### **Lane End**

8.8. The community has to step forward and embrace planning issues, to strengthen community cohesion. There is a need for specialist housing (for elderly population) and affordable housing (for young people). New housing must reflect the character of existing built up area. Primary schools in the local area have further capacity. Concerns were expressed at the reduction of bus services in rural areas. Participants discussed the potential extension of business activity at Wycombe Air Park and additional housing, and whether or not to keep the air park activity. Any redevelopment will have impacts on the local infrastructure which will need to be assessed.

### **Stokenchurch**

8.9. A modest amount of new housing can be provided at Stokenchurch and some infill could be deemed acceptable (e.g. school site) provided it is in keeping with the area (no solar panels). It was suggested that a care home or retirement village could be built at the Wycliffe centre. The need to embrace

housing in order to keep a strong economy is recognised – but it is often a viability issue that prevents a development happening (e.g. Stockwell). The loss of pubs across the area was also raised as an issue.

### **Piddington**

8.10. Participants recognised that a mix of affordable and market housing should be sought. Smaller units/affordable housing should be planned for and delivered in the area to reflect people's preferences. An option could be a rural exception scheme. Concerns were raised over impacts of development on local infrastructure (parking). It was highlighted that the parish council could use CIL money for infrastructure improvement, such as broadband.

### **Wheeler End**

8.11. It was felt that very few opportunities for development existed in this small rural village surrounded by farmland.

### **Marlow Bottom**

8.12. Any new development should be mindful of the village's topography and favour "backland" development. As pointed out by participants "local people want to keep a nice balance"

### **Radnage, Ibstone, Hambleden Valley**

8.13. Location of development will depend on employment areas and local infrastructure. Public transport (bus) was highlighted as one of the key issue in this area. It was suggested that communities could use CIL money or other planning mechanisms to ensure delivery

## Princes Risborough

- 8.14. The event was held on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at the Princes Centre in Princes Risborough and was intended by 15 people.
- 8.15. Participants included representatives from Princes Risborough Town Council, Risborough Area Residents Association, Risborough Neighbourhood Action Group, Risborough Heritage Society, Buckinghamshire County Council, and Wycombe District Council. Local residents also attended.
- 8.16. Prior to the event a community meeting had taken place to consider the issues prior to the Community Conversation. A note of this pre-meeting was helpfully made available for the Community Conversation and this helped shape the discussion. A copy of this note is included at Appendix 8.
- 8.17. The paragraphs below summarise the comments made.

### **Plan making and Engagement**

- 8.18. The importance of getting a plan adopted to avoid “planning by appeal” was recognised. The challenge of setting our housing targets in the context of the dissolution of the South East Plan and the Vale of Aylesbury plan own targets was discussed amongst participants, including the Duty to cooperate. It was felt that a meaningful input from communities was essential. This generated further discussions around neighbourhood planning.

### **The Principle of development**

- 8.19. Participants highlighted the fact that they were not opposed to growth, but that the market town character of the town should be maintained. There were diverging views on whether or not to develop on the east side of the railway line, including the development of the Park Mill Farm site. It was pointed out that any proposed development should be “digestible” for the local communities and local infrastructure. Some participants felt that, in line with the previous South East

Plan which recognised Princes Risborough as rural part of the District, any housing requirement should be in the more urban areas, such as High Wycombe.

## **Housing**

8.20. The former Hypnos site was identified as the favourite option for housing development; however diverging points of view emerged regarding its use (solely residential or mixed use development). Whether the site would be sufficient to accommodate the town's housing needs was also debated. Park Mill Farm is recognised as a difficult site to integrate with the existing town and past development proposals have provoked local opposition,. Various development locations were suggested around the High Street area as well as around Askett and Longwick Road. Residential intensification was also discussed.

## **Population**

8.21. Concerns were expressed over the lack of affordable homes in the town, especially for young people. Attracting and retaining young families was seen as a key way of encouraging the vitality of the town. This however results in the need for more affordable homes, and impacts on local infrastructure. It was pointed out that schools are nearly at capacity. In parallel, the impacts of an ageing population are yet to be measured: to what extent is downsizing a reality or possibility?

## **Transport**

8.22. Housing growth must go hand in hand with infrastructure improvement. Any major development would impact on the traffic flow through town. There was a divergence of opinions on a bypass solution as some felt it would only move people away from town, whilst others expressed concerns at further potential traffic congestion. The deliverability of such expensive project was also questioned. Concerns were also raised regarding the current infrastructure (A4010 in particular) and how it could integrate more users. Further major development would aggravate the situation. Traffic should be diverted to other roads, including the A413. A greater accessibility to Princes

Risborough (bypass, but also East / West rail for example) would contribute to reinforce the relationships between Milton Keynes > Aylesbury > High Wycombe; this could have positive and negative impacts as it would potentially take working / spending population away from Princes Risborough.

### **Business / Economy**

8.23. The decline of town centres is a national trend, but is particularly apparent in Princes Risborough. Participants felt that car parking costs in the town centre deterred people from spending time and money on the high street. It was recognised that the location of housing in empty shops or above shops resolved some housing needs but did not help with vitality of town centres. The location of future retail outlets was also of concern, as out of centre locations would not be sustainable. In terms of land for business, it was thought that the town should see the retention (Aircom site) or expansion of its employment land (Princes Estate, Longwick Road, SEEDA land).

### **Leisure / Community facilities**

8.24. Some participants felt that specific needs could be addressed notably a new sports facility, but deemed the general level of community facilities adequate. Others pointed out the lack of a community centre for large groups such as U3A (pensioners group; 500++ people) – currently the biggest hall can contain 200 people. The type of facilities coming forward will depend on the future size of the town.

## Chepping Wye Valley

- 8.25. The event was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at Abbots Brook Hall, Well End and was attended by 20 people.
- 8.26. Participants included representatives from Little Marlow Parish Council, Chepping Wycombe Parish Council, Wooburn and Bourne End Parish Council, Hazlemere Parish Council, Little Marlow residents association, Flackwell Heath residents association, Friends of Our Village (Bourne End), Coldmoorholm Residents Association, Daws Hill Group and Wycombe District Council. Some residents from Little Marlow also attended.
- 8.27. The paragraphs below summarise the comments made.

### **Plan Making and Engagement**

- 8.28. The absence of BCC representatives was regretted by participants. The extent to which the potential sites considered would be “real” options was questioned by some. A point was made for the need of a 5 year land supply to resist appeals.

### **Principle of development**

- 8.29. Participants felt that future developments should fit in with local character of each area, in particular in conservation areas. A key issue for many participants was to ensure that the plan maintains the separation between villages, in particular between Flackwell Heath and High Wycombe. The villages’ identities should be preserved. Another key issue raised was the opposition to major development in the green belt and in the AONB. There was debate over the meaning of sustainable growth, many participants putting forward the need to balance the quality of life against overdevelopment.

### **Housing and Employment**

8.30. The lack of small housing/starter homes and affordable housing was highlighted by many. There was some general discussion around which type of housing would be most appropriate for the area and in which locations. The impact of an older working population on the housing market and on transport requirements was also discussed. An update was given on the management of Gypsy and Travellers sites.

### **Transport and Infrastructure**

8.31. Participants agreed that an increase in population in the local area would result in general pressure on all existing infrastructure and that therefore future development must go in hand with adequate infrastructure, especially transport and utilities, which are already at capacity

### **Areas**

#### **Bourne End and Flackwell Heath**

8.32. Concerns were raised over the poor road infrastructure, road safety issues and inappropriate through traffic volumes through the area. The lack of cycle routes was regretted; some participants felt that the disused Bourne End to High Wycombe Railway line should be re-opened for light rail usage. In terms of development, many participants felt that Slate Meadow should not be developed and that alternatives should be sought. Others however highlighted the fact that the Green Belt should not be developed. Other points raised included issues around open space deficiency in Bourne End, empty offices and loss of small shops.

#### **Well End, Little Marlow, Hedsor, Hazlemere**

8.33. It was felt that any new housing should be coupled with adequate employment to ensure that it is sustainable. The meaning of “affordable housing” was discussed amongst participants who questioned who would access it. “Affordable” was perceived by one participant as social housing (“for people on benefits”) rather than starter homes for local young people (“housing for our kids”) A variety of views were expressed as to the real extent of affordable housing need and how it is delivered in practice.

Participants for Little Marlow felt that there was a lack of affordable housing in their area, despite such need not being picked up by studies. Another key issue raised was the need for a better and greater provision of transport infrastructure (bus regularity, connectivity improvements). Participants expressed concerns over new development and its detrimental impact on the local road network. Further to this, other infrastructure issues were also highlighted, notably the sewage treatment works and general utilities infrastructure provision. Participants were concerned that the current infrastructure is at capacity and that new development would put further pressure on the system. Broadband issues were also discussed. The future of the Gravel Pits site was discussed, as participants questioned the means of securing benefits (S106 / CIL) from any local development towards the redevelopment of the country park; particular concerns were voiced regarding the extent of the benefits brought by the athletics track to the local community. Finally, climate change, the importance of the natural environment and natural beauty of the environment, flood risk and the impact of future development on the environment were further discussed.

## High Wycombe

8.34. The event was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013 in the Oak Room, Town Hall, in High Wycombe and was attended by over 40 people.

8.35. Participants included representatives from High Wycombe Town Committee, High Wycombe Society, Chiltern Society, Wycombe Friends of the Earth, Brands Hill Residents Association, FSFRA, Daws Hill Group, Wycombe Environment Centre, Bucks University, East of Amersham Hill residents association, Buckinghamshire County Council and Wycombe District Council. In addition to presentations from District Council officers, a presentation was also given by Chris Watson of the High Wycombe Society.

8.36. The paragraphs below summarise the comments made.

### **Plan Making and Engagement**

8.37. Some participants questioned the way the Council is embracing the Localism agenda, in particular in the context of neighbourhood planning. A point was made that the plan making process required local democracy; to that extent, the rationale behind key findings, trajectories and decisions should be shared with local communities to inform the consultation process. Additionally it was felt that a good relationship between BCC/WDC on key issues was crucial.

### **The Principle of Development**

8.38. There was some debate over the meaning of “growth” and over the balance needed between physical (houses and people) and economic growth (need for jobs and concerns at jobs losses). As to where development should go, many felt that it should be in less constrained / built up parts of the District (Princes Risborough, Saunderton) whilst acknowledging the finite amount of land.

### **Housing**

8.39. Various opinions regarding housing needs and housing locations were expressed by participants. Some felt that some housing sites could be identified in High Wycombe (e.g. Compair, De la Rue, around Abbey Barn South), whilst others suggested that villages extensions, supported by adequate facilities, would provide a better way of sharing the burden. Some suggested that housing intensification and the use of car parking land could also provide some more homes. The location of homes near railway stations was highlighted as a more sustainable solution. Many recognised the need for more affordable homes for local people as well as specialist housing for an elderly population in High Wycombe. It was highlighted that not meeting our needs in full may lead to the plan being rejected by a planning inspector with much expense for Council tax-payers.

## **Town Centre Economic Vitality and Employment**

8.40. Many participants agreed on the need to retain employment land, in particular the industrial heartland of the town (Cressex, Sands). But others argued that the regeneration of the town may result in the need for greater flexibility in land uses on brownfield sites. All felt that the town should provide a sustainable balance of jobs and houses to prevent out commuting and High Wycombe to become a dormitory town. Another issue discussed was the extent of parking charges as a key attractor (or detractor) to the town centre. Participants debated also over the type of jobs the town ought to provide. The existence of high quality / specialised businesses was noted, and some argued that such uses should be promoted, but others expressed concerns over the decline of the manufacturing industry and the dichotomy between a low qualified workforce and future “higher tech end” jobs. Unemployment problems could be lessened by the provision of some large providers of manual jobs in the District. It was pointed that to retain and attract new companies, in particular warehousing/retail/manufacturing, there should be an appealing infrastructure in place. Some suggested that small business incubators – start up units such as Basepoint (Cressex) – should be encouraged, as well as a strong relationship between BNU and local businesses.

## **Transport and Infrastructure**

8.41. All participants highlighted current capacity issues around the existing infrastructure, notably schools, leisure facilities, transport network, and expressed concerns over further pressure points arising from any new development. Road capacity issues in particular raised concerns amongst participants, who felt that further improvements were necessary, in particular around industrial areas, as well as around the southern quadrant area and the A40. Some participants suggested that the plan should encourage light rail options to improve connections between High Wycombe, Bourne End and Maidenhead, as travel patterns are shifting from London to the Thames Valley. The need for better public transport (buses) and better links between bus routes and facilities was also highlighted. Incentives towards smart choices travel options were

encouraged. It was noted that there is a good use of the Park and Ride facilities, which should be further encourage. Leisure facilities were also discussed: a deficiency in terms of access to leisure centres was identified, so was the need for improvements in terms of schools (number of places, locations, additional schools). Many participants agreed that additional community infrastructure will need to be planned for to cope with new developments.

### **Environment**

8.42. It was highlighted that the need for housing and growth must be balanced with protecting the environment. Improvements are sought regarding cycleways and pavements quality. Traffic congestion, noise and air pollution are also important issues within the town that need to be addressed,

### **Cressex Business Park**

8.43. Some participants highlighted accessibility issues, recommending for the site to become less transport intensive. This could be achieved by changing the makeup of the site.

### **Handy Cross**

8.44. According to participants, improved accessibility is sought; this could be achieved by creating extra exits, taking traffic off the roundabout and at a larger scale, a possible additional junction on Motorway could help with traffic flows. Impacts on neighbouring areas would need to be assessed.

## **Marlow**

8.45. The event was held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 in Court Gardens, in Marlow and was attended by 24 people.

8.46. Participants included representatives from Marlow Town Council, the Marlow Society, Marlow Group, Marlow Museum, Marlow Chamber of Trade and Commerce and Wycombe District Council. Several local residents also attended.

8.47. The paragraphs below summarise the comments made.

### **Plan Making and Engagement**

8.48. Concerns were raised about the plan making process for the local plan, and the meaningfulness of public involvement. Concerns were voiced about the process of the Portlands Link Road change in the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan. A participant suggested the need for a Community Plan for Marlow. The Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring authorities on planning issues was discussed, divergence on acceptable housing numbers emerged. All felt that consulting the communities and sharing key decisions was essential to the democratic process.

### **Principles for development**

8.49. Concerns were raised over the amount of traffic generated by future development. Concerns were also raised on the impact of further population on school classes. Many participants felt that the welfare needs of the local population should be taken into consideration when planning for future housing and that quality of life should be part of the debate. Some concerns were expressed over the changes to the permitted development regime and how it would affect the town in the future.

### **Housing**

8.50. The need for more affordable housing was acknowledged by participants, Diverging points emerged as to which locations should be preferred. . Beyond affordable housing, the need for smaller homes was also highlighted, as some households move from outer London to High Wycombe and Marlow. Suggested areas for residential development included the current Football ground, a green space along Little Marlow road, the current Comland site at the brewery site, some land around the station and land at

Globe Park. It was suggested that jobs could be provided in High Wycombe and Globe Park used solely for housing. Questions were also raised around the quantum of land available for housing

### **Parking and Transport**

8.51. Parking in Marlow was highlighted by participants as a key issue, both in terms of capacity (not enough spaces) and location and type of provision (e.g. on street, multi storey, disabled). Parking charges were discussed, with some people suggesting that free parking could help the town centre economy (workers, shoppers). It was also felt that current parking standards were inadequate for new residential development, and that any revision should refer to the 1999/2000 Parking and Transport Study. Recommendation for a parking / transport strategy based on a town wide survey was made. In terms of transport, participants highlighted the inadequacy of the current infrastructure, with congestion hotspots issues, a lack of buses and taxis, and a limited uptake of public transport. Solutions proposed included ensuring greater control over delivery times to alleviate some congestion and encouraging a greater use of the Park and Ride at Handy Cross should be made, considering the lack of Park and Ride facility in Marlow.

### **Infrastructure**

8.52. All participants highlighted current capacity issues around the existing infrastructure, notably the sewage treatment works, power supplies, schools, hospital, and transport network and expressed concerns over further pressure points arising from any new development.

### **River Thames**

The need for a policy for the River and its usage was discussed.

## Sweep Up event

8.53. The sweep up event was held on 2nd July 2013 at the District Council's Main Offices (committee Room 1) from 6.pm to 7.30pm. Members of the Rural Forum attended the event, as well as representatives of various parishes in the North West Chiltern area and other residents.

8.54. The session began with a context setting presentation given by a WDC planning officer, outlining the issues brought about by the new local plan. This was then followed by a Question and Answer session.

8.55. A record of the questions raised during the Q&A session can be found in appendix 6 of this document.

8.56. The discussion revolved around the following themes:

- Methodology around population projections / household projections and implications of findings in terms of housing targets
- Location of housing (e.g. built up areas rather than GB/ AONB)
- Implications of population growth on existing infrastructure and assessment of impacts (WDC/ BCC relationship)
- Diversification of rural economy and vitality of rural areas
- Areas specific questions (Lacey Green, Bourne End)

8.57. Alongside the community conversations events, the Council decided to engage with young people separately. A meeting was held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2013 with the Youth Council at the Wycombe Youth Action offices in High Wycombe. A detailed note of the meeting can be found in appendix 9.

8.58. After a short presentation from WDC officers on the work of the planning policy team and on local plans, the participants discussed where in the future they want to live and work, the sort of job they want, and where do they currently go for their leisure activities.

8.59. The main conclusions were as follow:

- All agreed that High Wycombe lacked of a strong identity and cohesive communities, one participant saying that the town had no redeeming qualities.
- Many said they would not want to stay in High Wycombe, as other places in the UK offer a “better living package”. Affordability issues, lack of independent shops, extent of study choices, and sense of community were discussed amongst the group.
- A series of youth specific needs were also identified, notably in terms of leisure (e.g. nightlife), transport accessibility (e.g. access to sports facilities on top of Marlow Hill), and employment (e.g. apprenticeship for school leavers).

## **9. Next steps**

9.1. The Council will be considering all responses and issues raised during the Community Conversation meetings as we develop options for the Wycombe District Local Plan (New Local Plan), as set out in section 1 of this report.

9.2. Through the autumn, WDC officers will work on further technical work, aiming to have an Options document for consultation agreed by Cabinet by the end of 2013. In January and February 2014, the main full consultation on Options will take place.

## Appendices

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N.B. Appendix 1 – 6 are a summary of the comments recorded during the events. Where responses highlighted similar issues these have been consolidated within the summaries.

## **Appendix 1 – Summary of feedback from South West Chiltern Community Conversations event**

### **Topics**

#### **Principle of development**

- Participants are not against all development
- Development must be balanced and linked with infrastructure
- When sites are identified, they must be brought forward much more rapidly. The NPPF principles may speed up the process
- Migration must be taken into account when assessing housing requirements.

#### **Housing/ affordable housing**

- Maintain mix/type of housing matched to need.
- Rural housing need is questioned in some areas
- Some view that we should only consume our own growth / we cannot build as much as “needed” due to environmental constraints.
- Young people in the local area have difficulties accessing housing
- There is a need for a fast track system for social housing
- The current housing crisis is a reflection of pure economic problems
- An ageing population does not necessarily mean that people will release their houses, as people do not tend to downsize but to stay in their homes.
- Identifying empty homes/properties proves to be a challenge.
- Rural exceptions affordable housing schemes have worked well in the past, but there are difficulties in identifying sites for those.
- A retirement village/community is sought after.
- Housing mix – conversion of older – new larger units.
- Green belt control of extensions/increase.
- Small amounts of land to move to housing – small scale delivery
- Regarding Gypsies and travellers, it was recognised that more sites and opportunities for sites should be recognised as there is an existing need for such sites.

- But the participants felt that their parish were restricted due to lack of sites.

### **Economy**

- Questions were raised over the government's growth agenda
- Retail – need to look at current shopping patterns – shopping migration to Bicester North, High Wycombe, and Oxford
- The policy on Badly sited users must be redeveloped
- Spaces above shops and empty offices should be used for redevelopment
- General difficulty in identifying employment sites / opportunities

### **Rural Transport / Infrastructure**

- Concerns were raised over the impact of recent developments in communities, in terms of infrastructure constraints.
- Any development will have an impact on the existing road network
- Careful design of roads must accompany any new development.
- Some participants questioned whether or not the overall transport capacity of an area could cope with more development
- With development would come more vehicles – parking standards are deemed not appropriate and must be revised.
- Parking problems burden small rural services and businesses – further support is sought
- Communities should look at 'on-demand' transport provision.
- Working at home or partly working at home – greater use of local roads – impact on roads – not built for volume of traffic
- Broadband, mobile, gas / utilities deficiencies may use CIL to fund improvements
- The current lack of social infrastructure is to be addressed

### **Gypsies and travellers**

- It was recognised that more sites and opportunities for sites should be recognised as there is an existing need for such sites.
- But the participants felt that their parish were restricted due to lack of sites

### **Areas**

## **Lane End**

- Any new housing must reflect the character of the existing villages
- Sydney House should be unlocked for housing and not been delayed further.
- The T&L Woks site is to become a surgery/care home – details to be sorted.
- On the Elgar site, construction has started. Respondents mentioned that a care home would have been preferred to business units
- The former Culver Graphics should be allocated for housing, and would need to fit with the village
- Primary schools in the local area have further capacity (Cadmore End is not full)
- Concerns were expressed at the reduction of bus service, especially to outlying areas; they remain an issue
- Social housing should be built for local young people
- Suggestion of uniting the villages in the parish – make lane end bits stitch all together
- “New Meaning” – workshops
- More accommodation for the elderly is sought
- The redevelopment of Wycombe Air Park for business units will have an impact on the local infrastructure. This will need to be assessed.
- The question was raised over Wycombe Air Park regarding the potential extension of business activity and additional housing, and whether or not we need to keep the air park activity.
- The community has to step forward and embrace these planning issues.

## **Stokenchurch**

- Need to embrace housing if we want to keep the economy – but it is often a viability issue that prevents a development to happen
- School site – now sold – has planning permission.
- a modest amount of new housing can be provided at Stokenchurch and some infill could be deemed acceptable
- Stockwell has highways constraints and is deemed not viable; Other uses can be considered, although the Parish council would like the site to be allocated for business

- The loss of pubs should be prevented
- It was suggested that a care home or retirement village could be built at the Wycliffe centre?
- Concerns were expressed over the use of solar panels on roofs

### **Piddington**

- A mix of affordable and market housing is sought
- Infill happens naturally
- One area of development was identified around Princess Street – field at end of street would potentially have limited adverse impact but is currently designated as Green Belt land. This would need the support of the Parish Council.
- Smaller units/affordable housing should be planned for and delivered in the area to reflect people’s preferences.
- An option could be a rural exception scheme managed by a specialist housing association
- Parking issues linked to greater number of houses
- Utilities issues were raised regarding the lack of broadband or gas and limited mobile signal. It was highlighted that the parish council could use CIL money for broadband improvement.

### **Wheeler End**

- The village is very small and there are few opportunities for development
- Suggested area were on farmland and common , and Dashwood Estate

### **Marlow Bottom**

- The village topography makes it difficult for development
- Backland development is being suggested
- Local people want to keep a “nice balance”

### **Radnage, Ibstone, Hambleden Valley**

- Public transport (bus) was highlighted as one of the key issue in this area
- The link between employment areas and demand for housing was highlighted
- Location of development will also depend on utilities providers

- It was suggested that communities could use CIL money or other planning mechanisms to ensure delivery

## **Appendix 2 – Summary of feedback from Princes Risborough Community Conversations event**

### **Plan making and Engagement**

- Recognition of the importance of getting a plan adopted. This will weigh heavily on planning applications that go to appeal.
- Setting housing targets is a key part of the new local plan
- Input from communities is essential.
- Further work/discussion are welcomed
- Interest was expressed over Neighbourhood planning.
- Comparison with Thame neighbourhood plan – 700 something homes imposed by the LPA at strategic level; but the neighbourhood forum will decide where they go and how it happens.
- A question was raised regarding Aylesbury Duty to cooperate, the current position towards the Vale of Aylesbury Plan

### **The Principle of development**

- The community is not opposed to all development
- Retain the market town character of the town.
- No development should be sought on the east side of the railway line
- PR residents are not opposed to growth, provided that it is digestible – Park Mill was too big! Smaller developments could be “marvellous add on” to the town, such as the Hypnos site.
- The old Hypnos site is an eyesore to all, according to many participants: various views coexist as to whether it should be redeveloped as housing or mixed use site.
- Concerns were raised over the potential resurgence of Park Mill Farm and the potential risk of domino effect (1500 homes? 3000?)
- A participant raised the question of the Vale of Aylesbury Plan implications for housing figures. The density in Aylesbury is of 1.9 compared to 5.9 in Wycombe District. Continuing to take on more housing seems unfair.
- In the South east plan, Princes Risborough had a target of 25 dwellings per year

- There must be recognition that Princes Risborough is in the rural part of the district and that concomitantly the housing need is in High Wycombe
- There is a great feeling of animosity towards people from High Wycombe coming to live in PR.
- Any development should be in keeping with the rural character of the area

### **The location of development / housing**

- Various development locations were suggested:
  - Potential of development in Askett?
  - Intensification on large plots?
  - Paddocks near Aylesbury road?
  - Road towards Longwick?
  - Car park
  - New town (back)
  - Bell street (more part of town)
- Hypnos is the community's favourite option but it was pointed out that this is a question of scale as we may be looking at much bigger than what the Hypnos site can accommodate. Hypnos site already "in the bag" in terms of sites considered.
- Park Mill Farm, notwithstanding the fact that it provoked a local outcry, is a difficult site to integrate with the existing town
- Retirement communities : must be in sustainable locations

### **Population**

- Ageing population implications:
  - By having more houses: rebalancing the age pyramid
  - The health of town centre depends on the future growth of the town
  - Princes Risborough is not affordable especially for young people , which resulted in the past in young people moving elsewhere
- Need for young families – if we build a lot of houses, this will attract younger families.

- However, it was mentioned that local schools are nearly at capacity. One is being knocked down. Any population growth will impact on existing local infrastructure
- The impacts of downsizing are yet to be measured. What sort of homes will be sought? The example, of Windsor lodge was given by participants.

### **Transport**

- Housing growth must go in hand with infrastructure improvement
- Any major development would impact on the traffic flow through town. A bypass would only move people away from town.
- Concerns were raised regarding the current infrastructure (A4010 in particular) and how it could integrate more users. Currently, heavy through traffic from Milton Keynes, Stoke Mandeville etc. pass through Princes Risborough. Further major development would aggravate the situation. Traffic should be diverted to other roads, including the A403.
- Concerns were raised in regards to the Vale of Aylesbury Plan housing targets and what it means in terms of flow of traffic from Aylesbury to Wycombe.
- A princes Risborough bypass is thought to be an expensive solution – participants question the deliverability of such project, which – to be viable - would require over 1500+ homes
- East / west rail will contribute to reinforce the relationships between Milton Keynes > Aylesbury > High Wycombe but this accessibility has double edges as it will potentially take working / spending population away from the town

### **Business / Economy**

- The decline of town centres is a national trend, but is particularly vivid in Princes Risborough
- Issues of car parking across the town: the cost of it deters people from spending time, and money, on the high street / in the town
- The location of future retail outlets is of concern, as out of centre locations would not be sustainable.

- The location of housing in empty shops or above shops resolves some housing needs but does not help with vitality of town centres
- In terms of land for business, it is thought that the town should see:
  - The development of SEEDA land
  - The expansion of Princes Estate to the West
  - The improvement of the existing Princes Estate (fully occupied with offices and light businesses) in terms of connectivity and its retention for employment use.
  - The expansion of Longwick Road – but it is more difficult to expand this employment area
  - The retention of the Aircom site as an employment site

### **Leisure / Community facilities**

- The type of development will depend on the size of the town : as pointed out, the town is currently too small for a cinema or theatre)
- There are currently no community centre for large groups such as U3A (pensioners group; 500++ people) – currently the biggest hall can contain 200 people
- Some participants felt that specific needs could be addressed notably a new sports facility, but deemed the general level of community facilities adequate

## **Appendix 3 – Summary of feedback from Chepping Wye Valley Community Conversations event**

### **Topics**

#### **Plan Making and Engagement**

- Absence of BCC representatives regretted
- Exploration of potential sites = is it only a matter of interest or are they real options?
- What happens if you don't have 5 year land supply? Needs to be solid 5 years to resist at appeals

#### **Principle of development**

- Not against development per se – inappropriate development is issue
- Development should fit in with local character, in particular in conservation areas – Little Marlow – Flackwell Heath
- Maintain separation between Flackwell Heath and High Wycombe in terms of J3a and Abbey Barn.
- Village identity should be preserved – Bourne End, Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow are distinct communities.
- There should be no major development in the green belt and in the AONB
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development means exactly that= the need to sustain our level of dev.
- What are the options for sustainable growth?
- Balance the quality of life against overdevelopment
- What density of development is sought?
- Future development should be in sustainable locations

#### **Housing and Employment**

- Need good mix of people – including young people
- There should be a mix of housing, including affordable
- There is a lack of small housing/starter homes and affordable housing

- Discussion around which type of housing would be most appropriate for the area: rural housing scheme? Sheltered housing?
- Should we encourage rural exception schemes? Edge of villages; all affordable?
- The case of McCarthy and Stone in Bourne End was given by respondent as an example of satisfactory development
- Affordable housing – tends to be clumped together; it should be spread through development
- Population in employment is higher, due to older people still working. What impact will this have on housing and transport?
- The management of Gypsy and Travellers sites was also discussed

### **Transport and Infrastructure**

- An increase in population in the local area will result in general pressure on all existing infrastructure – development must go in hand with adequate infrastructure, especially transport + utilities
- The current transport infrastructure does not support the existing population. Moreover car parking standards are deemed inadequate
- Infrastructure pressures are felt to become particularly acute on:
  - existing community facilities [e.g.](#) GP's etc
  - schools in relation to immigration and demographic
  - transport
  - local hospitals
- Developments should provide local travel plans
- Public transport improvements could be funded by CIL
- Concern relating to capacity of utilities (sewerage, water, etc): additional burden of proposed new housing needs to be taken into account

## **Areas**

### **Bourne End and Flackwell Heath**

- Concerns were raised over the state of the Highways, and the road infrastructure in general. the impact of the M40 (HGV) was also criticised in terms of safety and through traffic volume
- The poor safety levels on the A4155 were criticised.
- The lack of cycle routes was regretted
- Some participants felt that the disused Bourne End to High Wycombe Railway line should be reopened for light rail usage.
- Any new development must consider wider traffic implications.
- There is an open space deficiency in Bourne End
- There are also empty offices which must be made better use of
- In community to take up jobs
- Slate Meadow – make use of village green – separates BE and Wooburn
- Slate Meadow = in? Out? What are the alternatives?
- The Green Belt at Cores End should not be developed
- Shopping provision – loss of small shops and inc larger retailer.

### **Well End, Little Marlow, Hedsor, Hazlemere**

- According to participants, there is not enough affordable housing in Little Marlow
- However, housing studies identified no requirement for affordable housing in Little Marlow so rural exceptions scheme could not progress
- The meaning of “affordable housing” was discussed amongst participants who questioned who would access it. “Affordable” was perceived by one participant as social housing for people on benefits rather than starter homes for local young people (“housing for our kids”)
- With an ageing population in the area, there is a greater need for sheltered housing
- In Hazlemere, a variety of views were expressed as to the real extent of affordable housing need (want / need) and how it is delivered in practice.
- There should be better and greater provision of transport and community infrastructure – including sewerage infrastructure.

- Any new housing should be coupled with adequate employment to ensure that it is sustainable.
- Broadband connectivity is also an issue in the area (Little Marlow, Well End)
- A participant asked what would be any ideal population number, to be sustainable and avoid negative environmental impacts.
- Climate change, flood risk and the impact of future development on the environment was further discussed. A participant highlighted a case of flooding in Abbotsbrook in the past
- It was felt that flood plain should be an absolute constraint to development
- In terms of transport issues, participants expressed concerns over the regularity of buses and connectivity improvements
- Road infrastructure, including potholes, were also of concern – in particular the impact of new traffic on roads resulting from new development
- Any development should be preceded by adequate infrastructure; a participant highlighted the current issue of low water pressure as a counter example
- Participants raised the issue of the Little Marlow sewage treatment works, saying that it is inadequate. The system's capacity is questioned
- Question was raised over the means of securing benefits (S106 / CIL) from any new development to secure the country park; this being in the context of Lafarge potential 3 year extension of the lease
- Concerns were raised about the real benefits brought by the athletics track to the local community
- Importance of the natural environment and natural beauty of the environment was also highlighted during the discussion.

## **Appendix 4 – Summary of feedback from High Wycombe Community Conversations event**

### **Topics**

#### **Plan Making and Engagement**

- The plan making process should be about localism, local democracy and local voice
- Some concerns were expressed at what is deemed as a lack of embracing of the localism agenda by the Council. Will the Council be encouraging residents to form Neighbourhood Fora?
- Accountability/responsibility of WDC in the plan making process was highlighted.
- A good relationship between BCC/WDC on key issues is crucial.
- There should be more sharing of the rationale behind development when proposed, e.g. hotels/retail at Handy Cross / Southern Quadrant.
- ORS numbers should be shared with the community; without them, the discussion is flawed.

#### **The Principle of Development**

- How you define growth?
  - Physical growth? - Houses and people
  - Economic growth – need for jobs and concern at job losses
- Need to look at what point to build south of that mythical line (the M40). The answer is to build northbound and look at Saunderton and northwards towards Princes Risborough. This will mean Greenfield development.
- There is a finite amount of land; the plan should acknowledge this point.
- Development options – towards West of Wycombe – Saunderton?

#### **Housing**

- Not meeting our needs in full may lead to the plan being rejected by a planning inspector with much expense for Council tax-payers
- There are opportunities outside of town and some inside.

- Misuse of housing land should be avoided
- New housing developments should be local homes for local people
- There is a need for affordable housing within the town
- The quality of housing stock, in particular affordable housing, should be raised
- More housing should be allocated in Princes Risborough
- There should be more housing at railway stations for people to commute in
- An eco village at the Molins site is suggested
- Participants felt that specific housing should be more local
- There should be more homes in villages, with adequate support facilities
- It was suggested that a target of 50 houses per village could bring more homes across the district and would be a way to share the burden
- These village homes should be in proportion with the existing homes
- More generally, houses should be in character / sympathetic of their surroundings.
- A new village could be created for example by extending Saunderton
- Sites suggested in High Wycombe for housing were:
  - .1. Compare
  - .2. De La Rue
  - .3. Land between Abbey Barn and Amersham & Wycombe College
  - .4. J3A
  - .5. Rail co Site
  - .6. Pedestal area
  - .7. Air Park
- Underground usage was suggested regarding car parking, refuse etc.
- Some suggested that housing intensification and the use of car parking land could also provide some more homes.

### **Town Centre Economic Vitality and Employment**

- The new government rules on change of use in town centre means less ability for plan making and more is “up to the market”
- The state of the town centre is of concern and regeneration efforts are needed
- The plan should protect industrial heartland and homes should be located outside of town

- Sands and Cressex industrial estates should be retained
- Employment land should be protected.
- Sites for manufacturing should be retained.
- Industrial areas should be regenerated.
- Parking charges are a key attractor (or detractor) to the town centre
- There should be more housing in town centre – brownfield sites
- The location of jobs outside High Wycombe means that a lot of people commute.
- There should be more jobs within the town to prevent High Wycombe to become a dormitory town
- Jobs do exist locally; there are in particular high quality/specialised businesses. Such “higher tech end” businesses should be encouraged. Sites should be protected for that use and promoted.
- All the jobs we are seeking to create in the future are for positions which unemployed people in the District are not qualified for. These have been made unemployed from the factories and cannot fulfil these roles. To that extent, it will not tackle the unemployment problem – there is a need for a couple of large providers of manual jobs in the District.
- If jobs are provided elsewhere across the District, this will disadvantage former manual workers (travel costs implications, commuting habits)
- To retain and attract warehousing/retail/manufacturing, there should be an appealing infrastructure.
- For the town to be sustainable, work should be provided locally
- How to attract new companies? What attracts them? Housing, healthcare, schools, transport
- It was suggested that small business incubators – start up units e.g. Basepoint (Cressex) – should be encouraged.
- BNU should work with businesses

### **Transport and Infrastructure**

- Topics are inter-linked – housing works best as part of mixed communities
- Infrastructure capacity is the key issue in terms of new housing e.g. transport, schools, leisure facilities.

- The transport infrastructure is not coping with the current levels of flows; if the housing levels increase, this will increase traffic on the A40 and rest of network.
- Infrastructure – poor infrastructure to serve industrial areas
- Southern Quadrant strategy– not sufficient to deal with transport problems in area and grid lock on the roads
- Transport improvements also necessary, to address road capacity issues and improved connections between High Wycombe, Bourne End and Maidenhead.
- The plan should encourage light rail options, as recent studies have highlighted how it can stimulate economic development. Also the government is set to announce a £30 billion package of funding support for light rail schemes.
- There are more people travelling to the Thames Valley than to London.
- There has been an increase in train travel.
- Housing development and impact on infrastructure are the key issues. Also topography and traffic problems. Whenever the issue comes up, there seems to be buck-passing between WDC and BCC.
- Bus services need improving
- Bus fares are too high which results to empty buses
- Better links between bus routes and facilities (e.g. station, schools, hospital) are required
- Deficiency in terms of access to leisure centres.
- There is a good use of Park and Ride facilities, which should be further encouraged
- Improve leisure facilities improve school – places – primary schools – locations.
- There should be incentives towards smart choices travel options such as car sharing, bus incentives etc. Driving to school should be discouraged.
- There should be traffic slowing measures
- Additional schools will be required to support development; the current schools cannot accommodate the current population of the town. This needs to be planned for and so does other community infrastructure

## **Environment**

- If we have a need for housing and growth, do we still put environment at the top of list – how do you address the balance

- People's perception of the environment affects their behaviour towards development
- Improvements are sought regarding cycleways, pavements
- Noise and air pollution are also important issues within the town.

## **Areas**

### **Cressex Business Park**

- Access to site/transport accessibility is an issue. The site should be less transport intensive
- Different make up is sought : the site could be used for warehousing/distribution, or for more manufacturing

### **Handy Cross**

- A solution is needed
- A rethink of the area in terms of accessibility is sought: extra exits, traffic taken off roundabout could contribute to it
- At a larger scale, a possible additional junction on Motorway could help with traffic flows
- What impact would this have on Booker?

## **Appendix 5 – Summary of feedback from Marlow Community Conversations event**

### **Plan Making and Engagement**

- Concerns were raised about the plan making process for the local plan, and whether the public will be listened to
- Concerns were voiced about the process of the Portlands Link Road change in the DSA. It was outlined that residents of the Brewery Estate effectively paid for the first half of the link road, which now not being safeguarded.
- A participant felt that the current consultation process is not adequate, bearing in mind the Statement of Community Involvement and the corporate Engagement Toolkit. The Council must engage more efficiently and effectively with grassroots communities.
- Marlow Chamber of Trade felt that there was a lack of meaningful consultation – Portlands Alley is key - the largest site in the town and will provide housing up to 2031. But concerned about the process that this plan will go through. Not many people at this meeting so starting from a very poor base.
- There should be a Community Plan for Marlow.
- A participant asked if the discussions were about planning for Marlow or planning for Wycombe District as a whole
- Duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities on these planning issues, for example Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- Potential controversy over housing numbers: a participant feared that if sites for 50 houses were to be found, planners would come back and say that it is insufficient and that further sites for much greater numbers need to be found. Sharing when these key decisions are to be made will be crucial.
- A full consultation on proposals is essential.

### **Principles for development**

- Concerns were raised over the amount of traffic generated by future development
- Concerns were also raised on the impact of further population on school classes.
- Everything being planned will make the town more crowded. Is the 'quality of life' going to be one of the key issues?

- Beyond housing needs, what are the other needs in the town and impact on population and area of Marlow?
- What about the welfare needs of residents?
- What about changes to the permitted development regime? How will that affect the overall situation?
- Existing Green Spaces should not be allocated for development.
- The Green Belt and AONB should be protected at all costs. The land East of Marlow and the land to the North West of Marlow, near Bovingdon Green should never be developed.

### **Housing**

- The plan should provide some affordable housing, but this should not be located on edge of town.
- The football club is still identified as a potential housing site. The last application had a too high number of dwellings. An access issue remains.
- There is a need for smaller houses
- People moving from outer London to Marlow and High Wycombe
- Possible areas for residential included a green space along Little Marlow road, the current Comland brewery site , some land around the station and at Globe Park
- It was suggested that jobs should be moved to High Wycombe and Glove Park should be developed solely as housing?
- Questions were raised around how much land is available for housing, and how much is being land banked at the moment?

### **Parking and Transport**

- There are parking issues in Marlow
  - .1. Capacity: not enough parking spaces
  - .2. Provision: on street / multi storey
- There should be more town car parking multi-storey – free
- On street parking issue/free displaced parking
- Parking charges – there should be cheap long term parking for workers especially in the town centre

- Residential parking is inadequate
- There is inadequate provision of disabled car parking
- In terms of parking standards, there are not enough parking spaces with new development; planners should refer to the 1999/2000 P&T Study
- There should be a parking or transport strategy for Marlow, and a parking town wide survey should be conducted.
- The current road infrastructure is inadequate; there are congestion hotspots on Little Marlow Road, around High Street / Spittal Street, around Glade Road and Harwood/ Westwood/ Prestwood
- There should be more control over delivery times
- A greater use of the Park and Ride at Handy Cross should be made, considering the lack of Park and Ride facility in Marlow.
- There are not enough buses and taxis within the town
- The use of public transport should be encouraged

### **Infrastructure**

- There are issues around the existing infrastructure, notably:
  - Sewage treatment works
  - Power Supplies
  - Education/Schools
  - Health (lack of provision of an A&E unit in High Wycombe)
  - Transport impacts of new development
- Concerns were raised in particular over the provision of water infrastructure and other utilities, in the context of Thames Water abandoning plans to build a new reservoir in Abingdon.

### **Economy**

- The Thames Industrial Estate, provided much needed improvements, could be a great site for major firms setting up in Marlow.

### **River Thames**

There should be a policy for the River and its usage, and RBWM should be consulted on that matter.

## Appendix 6 - Summary of feedback from the “Sweep Up” event

*The following is a record of the questions / comments submitted during the session.*

### Topics

#### **Population**

- Up to 2031 is a short planning period, why is the plan not looking further into the future?
- Housing target – double it or at least go for higher level to account for changes
- What accounts for the projected growth in population, migration, what are underlying causes?
- Where have the additional residents been housed since 2007, if there has been step increase in population?
- How is population increase translated into households and dwellings?
- How do we allow for the inaccuracy of projections, demographic change and changing household sizes?

#### **Housing**

- Should maintain SEP housing targets for District until new target is adopted.
- Will we need to build in the Greenbelt?
- Growth focus should be on areas not in the AONB or Greenbelt.
- Plan needs to be flexible with housing in 5 year phases.
- What is the definition of affordable housing?
- What types and size of dwellings are we planning for?
- What space standards are going to be used in planning for new dwellings?
- Can we plan houses to match the changing demography and encourage/allow for downsizing.

- What is the formula for deriving the housing target? This should also factor in infrastructure issues and consideration of where housing should go.
- We should plan for more starter homes/more smaller units including smaller units for elderly.
- Can static caravans be used to meet housing needs?
- What are the economic and jobs needs?
- Housing should be built on brownfield sites first, but green field sites may be necessary.
- If there is a need to develop in the Green Belt, it should be in the lower quality areas of Green Belt.

### **Infrastructure**

- Need to assess impact on Infrastructure of growing population.
- WDC has significant infrastructure issues in terms of :
  - Transport
  - Education
  - Health
  - Social housing
  - Welfare housing
  - Sewage treatment and pipe work
- Concerns about work done to assess impact and solutions to date e.g. Southern Quadrant Transport Strategy
- Concerns were raised over the impact of new development on infrastructure and the relationship between WDC and BCC and the ability to assess impacts and deliver improvements.
- Little Marlow sewage treatment works is at capacity – major concern.

### **Rural**

- Need to allow rural areas to adapt to changing circumstances, allow farmers to continue to act as custodians of the countryside and prevent sub-division of farmland.

- We should support diversification of existing rural businesses e.g. allowing pubs to extend to also offer B & B accommodation.
- Traffic problems on rural roads affecting diversification applications
- Declining number of farms, farms becoming either large scale commercial ventures or small hobby/lifestyle farmers, farmhouses no longer used for agriculture.
- Concern about loss of pubs – planning should be flexible to allow pubs to adapt to survive
- A countryside policy should allow the countryside to adapt and remain viable and sustainable.

## **Areas**

### **Lacey Green**

- Smaller properties are bought and then extended, remove opportunities for either downsizing or smaller households to move to the area
- Lack of support from WDC in resisting applications to extend
- Expressed interest in neighbourhood plan to provide housing and jobs, but concerned at costs

### **Bourne End**

- There are major traffic congestion problems in Bourne End but nothing is being done about them.
- The policies for Hawks Hill and Harvest Hill should be reviewed.

## **Other**

- Presumption in favour policy (NPPF) is wrong policy, local authority needs to temper the market and not allow developers to dictate what happens.

## **Appendix 7- Summary of sites suggested**

The following sites were suggested during the course of the community Conversation events. It is important to note that these are ideas suggested during the course of conversations in the workshop sessions – their inclusion in the list below does not imply there was general agreement/support for them

### **South West Chiltern**

#### **Sites suggested**

- Stockwell Timber Yard, Ibstone Road, Stokenchurch (employment)
- Wycliffe Centre, Horsleys Green (residential)
- Sydney House, Lane End (residential)
- T&L Works, East of Edmonds Road, Lane End (redevelopment)
- Former Culver Graphics site, south of Finnings road, Lane End (residential)
- Wycombe Air Park (mixed use –business led)

### **Princes Risborough**

#### **Site suggested:**

- Askett Nurseries (residential)
- North of Mill Lane (west side) (residential or sports field swap)
- Molins sports ground (residential or sports field swap)
- Site south of Longwick road and West of Cannon Place (development)
- Park Mill Farm (various sites) (residential / employment / open space)
- Princes Risborough Hospital, north of Queens Road (residential)
- Land between High Street and New Road (mixed use)
- Land around High Street (employment)
- Fire Station at the corner of Bell Street and New Road
- Land at Merton Road near school (development)
- Land at Princes Place (residential)
- Land south of Poppy Road
- Land east of Picts Lane near Flint Cottage

- Picts Lane –south of Summerleys road and west of Picts Lane (residential or part residential part business)
- Land east of Saunderton lane (open space)
- Princes Estate – West (employment)
- Princes Estate – East (employment)
- Land north of Summerleys Road (employment)

## Chepping Wye Valley

### **Sites suggested**

- Gravel Pits, Little Marlow (development)
- East of Globe Park Little Marlow(employment)
- Land at Crown Plaza (development)

## Marlow

### **Sites suggested**

- Marlow Rugby Club / Little Marlow Cricket club (redevelopment)
- Land between Wiltshire Road and A404 (residential)
- Bencombe Farm, north of Marlow Bottom road and west of Wycombe road
- Land at Fourth avenue (development)
- Land east of Fieldhouse Lane (development)
- Land at Fieldhouse way, station approach (development)
- Portlands Gardens (residential)
- Marlow Football ground (residential)
- Land at station road(development)
- Allotments gardens, back of New Field Road (development)
- Allotments gardens, back of Prospect road (development)
- Green space and land adjacent to Little Marlow Road (development)
- Land between Marlow and Bovingdon Green (development)(development)
- Marlow Garden Centre, Wye Vale
- Water research Centre, Medmenham

## Appendix 8 – Planning Ideas for Princes Risborough

*The following note of a pre-Community Conversation meeting is being made public with the consent of Princes Risborough Town Council.*

### **Planning ideas for Princes Risborough**

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013, Princes Risborough Town Council held a community planning evening at which representatives from local organisations and community groups and from adjoining Parish Councils discussed various aspects of the emerging WDC Local Plan.

Four main themes were considered and discussed; Housing needs and sites, Business needs and sites, Community facilities and Infrastructure.

Attendees split into 5 groups to discuss these themes and generated ideas were 'posted' and shared.

Following are full lists of the generated ideas, split into the 4 main themes:

#### **Housing:**

- Keep close to town (x2)
- Maximise housing on Station Approach, Picts Lane
- Picts Lane/Hypnos – all housing (200 dwellings)
- Develop Hypnos site only if infrastructure catered for (i.e. schools)
- Infill where possible
- Several small developments (e.g. 100 dwellings each)
- No large developments (500+)
- On current Brownfield sites only
- Brownfield sites such as Old Council Yard, Longwick Road, Land behind Station Approach (behind derelict Car Park)

- Behind Windmill Hill/Parkfield Rise/Princes Place with access through Culverton Hill
- From top of Clifford Road to back of Windmill Hill
- North facing slope of field at top of Clifford Road (behind Culverton Hill/Parkfield Rise)
- Not on AONB
- Avoid High Ground
- Develop Monks Risborough CofE school and use land behind for housing.
- On Aylesbury Road/Peters Lane junction.
- Back of Poppy Road
- Mill lane (next to Kingsmead)
- Molins site (if not possible for community use as long as equivalent size site can become available for community/sport use)
- Split off 50% Princes Industrial estate for Housing
- Define the boundary of PR and work within it
- No enclosed footpaths (the Crescent/Woodfield Rd) that attract anti-social behaviour.
- New build parking allocation must be at least 2 per house. (Current allocation insufficient (visitors etc.))

### **Business (Industry, Commercial, Retail)**

- No more chains
- No more charity shops (x2)
- No more Hairdressers, cafes, Estate agents, Indian restaurants
- New shops for niche market/specialist (e.g. Sallys Sewing Box, Chocolat)
- More Community shops (for basics for the elderly)
- Food outlets such as specialist Delicatessen, Bistros, traditional cafes but no chains (especially not fast food chain outlets such as McDonalds, Pizza Hut etc.).
- Retail such as Sports, cycle, lingerie
- Retail businesses such as CEX, a Toy shop, Menswear, Bike shop, Car accessories, Book shop, Fruiterers

- Night time economy (Cinema, Restaurant chain (ASK, Frankie and Bennys, TGI's etc)
- High Class English Restaurant
- Night Cafe
- Hotel – only 2 BandB's – need more rooms available to support tourism
- Improve Retail frontage to Bell St (especially on the North/Bell pub side) will give a more integrated feel to the connected retail area.
- Bell Street to be re-established as part of Town Centre
- Re-development of High Street side of New Road (with access to High Street)
- New shopping/commercial area on frontage of New Road (back of The George)
- Dedicated parking and possible market extension between High Street and New Road
- Office development should be encouraged behind retail
- New shops to be included on Station approach as part of Hypnos development. Also good place to include some small office development
- Retail units by Station.
- All retailers complain about Business Rates (set by govt!) Rates is the issue not rent
- Affordable light commercial for one-man-band businesses (such as original Princes Estate)
- Expand Princes estate – extend railway bridge for access
- Expand business behind existing businesses on Longwick Road (current Hypnos site)
- Enough Light industry sites and office
- Free Parking to encourage visitors
- Address parking charges in Car Parks as PR disadvantaged compared to Wendover etc.

### **Community Facilities**

- Proper Full size Sports Hall
- New Sports Hall for Upper school and community
- Community Sports and social (joint WDC/Private)

- Poor sports facilities in Monks Ris (combine with housing Peters Lane)
- Sports facilities to include Squash courts etc.
- Home for Risborough Rugby Club
- BMX track (skate park too small for bikes)
- Ten Pin bowling
- Expand Windsor Playing Fields (possibly in field opposite (not in PR parish))
- Sport/recreation area at Station end of town.
- Town museum in Market House (or at Garage in New Road)
- Develop Museum and heritage facilities (Market House to become museum)
- Market House; a museum (offer to Heritage soc. to run)
- A new primary school (PR only has space for a few more. If town grows schools need to)
- Hotel
- Cinema – night time economy
- MR – retain Whitecross Hall if possible and make it more accessible to all to hire (too many restrictions)

### **Infrastructure**

- Bus service from Thame to Risborough
- Bus service from Wendover/Gt. Miss to Risborough
- Investigate route requirements through survey (subsidise if not profitable)
- Publicise/maximise Black Prince heritage
- A4010 reaching full capacity (?Bypass – where!! – impact on High St retail)
- Move 30mph speed limit on Wycombe Rd to original place
- Move traffic light outside M&S to outside library (allowing easier exit from High St)
- Open up School approach Road from New Rd (to reduce traffic on Clifford Rd)
- Better integration of Station with town to encourage tourism (extra buses etc.)
- Cycle routes improved (e.g. station to town centre)
- Open up Park St to access Mount Car Park/Sports centre
- Address street parking issues (e.g. residents permits)

- More parking (free)
- Free car parking for 1<sup>st</sup> hour (to encourage retail footfall)
- Increased parking at Horns Lane
- Horns Lane parking (M&S) – use Fire station area to expand Car Park (if fire station is to go)
- Improve access to Station from A4010 (Shootacre Lane) to avoid narrow residential roads (Poppy etc)

## **Appendix 9 Wycombe Youth Action – 04.07.13 Meeting notes**

Chris Schmidt-Reid (CSR), Principal Policy Officer, and Aude Pantel (AP), Planning Policy Assistant, attended a meeting of the Wycombe Youth Council, at the Wycombe Youth Action facilities in High Wycombe.

After a short introduction (CSR), AP presented briefly what planning entails and what we are working on in the planning policy team. AP gave the example of the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan, soon to be adopted<sup>5</sup>, as well as the work on the emerging new Local Plan.

The presentation also highlighted the Census results (population increase) and what it means for the local economy, housing, the infrastructure etc.

The discussion session was prompted by 4 questions, addressed to the young people around the table:

- Where do you want to live?
- Where do you want to work?
- What sort of job do you want?
- Where do you go for your leisure activities?

The main points raised are summarised below.

- High Wycombe is seen as “Wycombe of 2 towns”
- There is a lack of cycle routes – other cities do far better
- Facilities on the top of Marlow Hill need to be made more accessible by public transport; they need to be linked with the bottom of the valley.
- Eden shopping centre is cut from rest of town.
- Concerns were raised regarding the impact of the DSA proposals re. the flyover and how it would affect traffic. CSR explained our consultants’ modelling work.
- Some young people said they would not want to live in Wycombe, for various reasons.
- One of the reasons mentioned is the lack of an A&E service in the District, and the overload of Stoke Mandeville Hospital services. The participants said they felt strongly worried about this.

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<sup>5</sup> Since the meeting, the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan has been adopted by the Council

- Some participants said they would not stay here as their choice of studies cannot be met in the District / the university is not favourably regarded.
- Some participants said they would potentially study and work in London, but live here. However they highlighted the fact that this would be the case considering the convenient aspect of affordability i.e. paying less rent than in London, rather than being a preferred choice.
- Some people however said that the cost of living in High Wycombe is too high and they would want to move away. The town is seen as being on a slow downward spiral. Some other places are deemed to offer a better living package.
- It was highlighted that for the town to be attractive again, a livened up high street is necessary. The town and Eden should be more joined up.
- The discussion continued on the idea of unity and of community. The town centre should have cooperatives/ community run shops, and not just Tesco etc. Farnham was mentioned as best practice. One participant also suggested that an Enterprise Zone could be set up (*at this point, CSR highlighted the LDO initiative*)
- The cost of living, lack of independent shops and the closure of community places (such as pubs) is considered as detrimental to the town experience.
- Wycombe is less and less a community. People don't refer themselves to as Wycombers.
- One participant said that Wycombe doesn't have an identity – it used to be the chair making – but now the town has no redeeming qualities.
- Another young person said the town should be buzzing. There are lots of young people but nothing seems to happen. “Do something!” is the motto.
- Participants strongly agree that the town needs to have more identity. This could come from a simple signage, designating which quarter of the town accomplishes which function.
- A series of youth specific needs were identified as improvements to living in Wycombe; these were: a new skate park in Micklefield (bigger, more interesting), shops for age range, higher qualities nightlife opportunities and in particular opportunities for the under 18 age group, as well as greater opportunities for school leavers – including apprenticeship / placements.
- Other points were raised, including the need to make the space around Frogmoor / the Chilterns shopping centre more attractive, as well as better broadband provision.

