

## **Major growth at Princes Risborough – response to questions**

### **Why is so much growth planned at Princes Risborough and very little for Marlow, which has better shopping and services?**

There is a separate note on the website ‘the background to growth at Princes Risborough in the context of the new Local Plan’ that deals with this question..

### **The proposed number of houses is too large for an area where there is little local employment.**

Ideally, the number of new homes at Princes Risborough should be matched by a comparable number of new jobs. This will be difficult to achieve at Princes Risborough because our studies show that businesses prefer to locate close to the motorway network. We need to show that we are ‘matching’ jobs and homes across what is known as the functional economic area, not on a settlement by settlement basis. The supply of homes is also seen as a national priority.

Having said that, the plan for Princes Risborough allocates new space for business at Regent Park which our studies indicate is the most favourable place for business in the town, and is exploring potential locations for Hypnos, should they chose to move in the future.

### **Most of the new residents will be travelling by road to work/shop/ hospitals etc. The A4010 cannot cope at the High Wycombe and Aylesbury ends.**

We accept that the A4010 is congested at both Aylesbury and High Wycombe. We, and the other Districts, are working closely with the County to look at the strategic impacts of the County’s growth on main roads such as the A4010. Even if the growth were to be at Aylesbury or High Wycombe, there would remain pressure on this route.

However, it is also worth noting that Princes Risborough has good rail connections to High Wycombe, Aylesbury, London and Birmingham. Limited direct services to Oxford were introduced in 2016. The East West Rail project will add connections through to Milton Keynes and the wider rail network from around 2020. The expansion will provide for direct access to the main railway station so that travel by rail is a practical choice for many journeys.

### **The proposed bypass is poorly planned; it will impact on too many local residents and not help.**

The expansion of the town will need a new road in some form. Transport modelling work shows that the final options being considered for the road will bring relief to the town centre network, including New Road and Poppy Road, as well as channelling the traffic from the new development away from the town centre. We tested a number of wider bypass-type options but they weren’t as effective. We’re continuing work on minimising the impacts to local residents and will share it as it develops.

In response to comments on the draft Town Plan, we are looking again at the southern route for the relief road. The draft District-wide new Local Plan asked for people's views on the release of land around Culverton Farm and to the rear of Poppy Road. Both these sites are in the Green Belt and Culverton Farm is also in the AONB. These are not firm proposals but could help to deliver an alternative southern section of the relief road which would reduce the impacts of the new road on residents of Shootacre Lane and Picts Lane. On issues like this we will need to make a judgment on whether the potential harm to the AONB carries greater weight than the potential harm to local residents.

**Insufficient consideration has been made to reducing car use and traffic flows on all local roads.**

Our studies are showing that providing a new road will bring relief to the existing road network in the town. The town is compact and the expansion area is mostly flat, which means that cycling and walking can also be real options for local journeys. In the Princes Risborough Town Plan we've aimed to show how these can be made direct, safe and attractive. We are also expecting the expansion to support a new shuttle bus service for the town which will link the new area with the town centre and railway station.

**WDC are failing to preserve and protect the green belt and the AONB.**

The expansion area is not within the green belt or AONB, but it will be seen from important views like Whiteleaf Cross. We have considered this important issue of setting, and included a strong landscape framework to the expansion area.

**How many homes are being proposed?**

Up to 2500 homes are being proposed in the expansion area. It will take between 10-20 years to build out. The detail about how many houses will be built when is still under review, but the general rule of thumb is that once construction starts, each housebuilders looks to build about 50 homes a year. There are currently three housebuilders: Halsbury Homes (Park Mill Farm); Persimmon (Oak Tree Farm); and Bloor Homes (a large part of the area between Longwick Road and Mill Lane). Infrastructure will need to be delivered 'in step' with the homes as they come forward.

There are other sites in Princes Risborough that are also already allocated for housing in previous local plans, or that have planning permission. This means that the total for the town as a whole is 2755 – although this figure will fluctuate a little as actual planning applications are considered, and 'windfall' developments come forward. (Windfall developments are those that take place on small sites that are not individually counted).

**A more considered plan with much more LOCAL consultation is the way forward.**

Local consultation has been at the heart of this project. The Council has a long standing track record of going well beyond the statutory minimum, and aiming to following 'best practice', in terms of community engagement on planning policy matters.

The Town Council was interested in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, but it would not have conformed to the adopted District policies, and so was not appropriate. Instead the District Council invited the Town Council to establish and chair a steering group – to be in effect the client for the project.

The first meeting of this group was in June 2015. The notes of the meetings are available on the WDC website here: <https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/pages/Planning-and-building-control/New-local-plan/Princes-Risborough-town-plan.aspx>.

The Steering Group has representatives from the main groups of the town, such as RARA, RAP and the business group. The membership of the group is a matter for the Steering Group to decide. It has met frequently, on a whole range of issues. Some of the meetings were wider workshops to which other key stakeholders – such as the County Council – were invited. In addition to the Steering Group, there have been wider public exhibitions and public meetings, which have always been well attended. The exhibition material and presentations from these events are all on the website (see link above). The events included:

- Drop-in event and public meeting during the January - March 2014 as part of the consultation on the District-wide new Local Plan Options consultation. This was the first time that significant expansion of the town was proposed.
- Exhibition and questionnaire sharing some potential scenarios in September 2014
- A public exhibition and town meeting in January 2015 – this was co-ordinated with Network Rail who held an exhibition on their proposals related to East West Rail at the same time.
- A public exhibition, and a market stall, in July 2015 sharing the draft master plan for the expansion area.
- In February-March 2016 we ran a major consultation exercise on the draft Town Plan for Princes Risborough, supported by a market stall on the High Street; a drop-in session and exhibition at the Community Centre; and held public meetings on two evenings. We wrote to every household in the plan area about this consultation. We received more than 360 responses to the consultation and are using these to improve the next version of the plan.

In terms of the statutory requirements, in November/December 2015, we invited written responses on the formal Regulation 18 stage for the Risborough Town Plan. The next statutory stage is consultation prior to submitting the plan for examination. This is likely to be in the summer of 2017, although a formal decision on the next stages has not yet been made.

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