

LDF Update Note Rest of District Strategy

Introduction

The Local Development Framework (LDF) will incrementally replace the Local Plan. The best way of thinking about the LDF is as a folder or suite of documents that sit together to form the overall LDF, these documents are developed separately from each other over time, but the documents have to work together to form the LDF.

The Core Strategy is the first of these, with its job being to deal with the ‘big’ decisions first, before other documents in the LDF ‘folder’ progressively add detail. In effect it leads the process. This has changed from our original approach as the rules set out by government have enabled us to put more information in the Core Strategy. Taking this into account, for our LDF we have the following parts :

- Core Strategy – which deals with the big decisions
- Allocated Sites Document – which identifies the non strategic sites
- Supplementary Planning Documents – which provides even more detail on specific issues – for example developer contributions
- Development Management policies – the very detailed policies that are used in judging planning applications

Housing is perhaps the biggest issue that we deal with through the LDF. In terms of Aylesbury Vale, as part of a growth area, our numbers are set by the South East Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy). In July this year the government published its proposed modifications following an independent panel examination. This confirmed our housing numbers are follows:

- District Total - 26,800, made up of ;
- 16,800 homes around Aylesbury (unchanged from panel report)
- 5,390 homes to the South West of Milton Keynes (unchanged from panel report)
- 4,700 homes in the rest of the district (unchanged from panel report)

We anticipate that these figures will be stable for the next few years, however the South East Plan is starting a process of review, part of which will include testing higher housing figures. Should the housing requirement significantly increase this will trigger a review of the Core Strategy and a possible reconsideration of the approach set out below.

Role of Core Strategy

The core strategy deals with the very ‘big’ decisions for the district up to 2026. These are principally focused on where new homes and employment are provided and how these will be delivered.

In terms of housing growth the core strategy will only allocate (ie clearly identify where the growth should take place on the ground) major development – that is

developments over 2,000 homes. This means the growth around Aylesbury on greenfields will be identified, and so will the growth to be delivered to the south west of Milton Keynes but in our District. It will not allocate any other specific housing sites, eg those in the rest of the district.

However the Core Strategy does have to set out how the rest of the districts housing numbers will be apportioned (ie a broad split of delivery), this is explored in more detail below. The actual allocation (ie clearly identify sites where the growth should take place on the ground) for this apportioned growth will take place in a separate part of the LDF – called the Allocated Sites Document. This will be subject to much more detailed work and consultation, which is not due to commence until 2010.

How is the Core Strategy Developed

The core strategy goes through a number of formal and informal consultation stages. The last formal stage was the preferred option in Summer last year. This included a broad indication of housing split across the district, and identified a direction for housing growth at Aylesbury (southern growth arc) Since then there has been reconsideration about what direction of growth Aylesbury should take, and hence more consultation is ongoing about this particular issue at the moment. No other issues are addressed by this consultation as it was the only area of major dissent indicated by the consultation last summer. This level of response combined with deliverability concerns regarding the southern growth arc means that we can not proceed without additional consultation.

Turning back to the core strategy as a whole, the next formal opportunity to comment will be following the council deciding to agree the Core Strategy for examination by an independent inspector. The decision to submit will be taken in April 2009, and the time to comment will be May/July 2009. We expect that the examination will take place in Winter 2009/10 and adoption of the core strategy is likely in Spring 2010.

What Settlement Hierarchy are we considering for the Rest of the District

For clarification the rest of district means everything apart from Aylesbury and the growth in our district derived from Milton Keynes. As noted above, the housing figures for the district (and these areas) are set out by government, we only have the decision on where these should go – not how many.

The consultation on the core strategy last year set out our intended approach to use a settlement hierarchy on which to base our apportionment of growth. The hierarchy takes into account all the towns and villages that we have in the district and groups them by those that are the most sustainable (ie those with the most services or where services can be supported, as well as trying to minimise the need to travel).

The responses to the consultation last year broadly supported this approach, whilst saying that Buckingham should be treated as a different tier to the other smaller towns (ie Winslow Haddenham and Wendover). It is also suggested that the original list of

19 villages is reduced so as to ensure that areas such as Stoke Mandeville, Stone and Newton Longville do not get affected by both larger nearby growth proposals and smaller levels of growth from the “rest of the districts” figures.

A further suggestion is that the remaining original third tier settlements (now fourth tier) could be grouped into clusters to enable a more sustainable form of development, e.g. by concentrating services at main (fourth tier) settlements in each cluster. All these modifications to the original approach have been discussed at our Environment Scrutiny committee and were supported in principle.

This means that the settlement hierarchy in the emerging core strategy looks like :

Tier	Settlement	Description
First	Aylesbury	The main town in the district, and the focus for the majority of the district’s growth.
Second	Buckingham	The second largest town in the district that acts as a focus for many smaller settlements in the north of the district.
Third	Winslow Haddenham Wendover	The next largest villages in the district that act as focal points for smaller villages in the vicinity.
Fourth	Other sustainable settlements ¹ (see map)	Larger, more sustainable settlements in the district that have better access to services and facilities and public transport. Divided into clusters to enable the most effective provision of services.
Fifth	Other rural settlements (shown as white areas on the map)	The remainder of settlements that will accommodate only limited development (e.g. no specific allocations), however new limited housing will be permitted on a case by case basis (e.g. as existing practise now).

What Housing Apportionment are we considering for the Rest of the District

Having set the settlement hierarchy we then look at the principle of how we apportion potential growth between them. This is based on sustainability principles, which have been agreed in principle through the Environment Scrutiny committee.

The suggested apportionment of the rest of district figure is shown in the table below. It is important to note that the core strategy will only contain a percentage figure. This is because the actual process of finding sites where these houses may go on the ground is not done in the Core Strategy but the later Allocated Sites document – therefore the Core Strategy only sets the principle. We are doing a high level study of these areas and we are sure that these numbers can be accommodated (this is known as the SHLAA – Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment).

The percentage figure is also important as this will allow us to take into account new homes being built between now and when the allocated sites document is developed, and hence minimising the number of new homes we have to allocate.

¹ Brill, Cheddington, Edlesborough, Great Horwood, Grendon Underwood, Long Crendon, Padbury, Pitstone, Steeple Claydon, Waddesdon, Whitchurch, Wing, and Wingrave.

The figures in the below table are based on the current position and not those in the future, hence they are at the top end of the figures we would have to finally allocate. They are also only based on simple division (ie the number of towns or villages in a group). In reality the allocated sites document will undertake detailed work and consultation on the actual numbers and sites in each town/village, this is so that individual circumstances can be taken into account. The final allocated sites document will undoubtedly have different numbers (although not in percentage terms) for each group than those set out below, however they are provided for context.

The approach of identifying a percentage split rather than an absolute number is being taken as it is the only way we can, under new planning rules, take into account unplanned growth which we know will be inevitable in a district our size (ie windfall sites where new homes are built which were not originally planned for), which in turn helps significantly in reducing the amount of new homes on greenfields we have to allocate.

	% split of Rest of District Figure	New homes – If the calculation was done now on the tiers as a whole*	New homes - If the calculation was done now on a simple division basis*
Buckingham	60%	1260	1260
Wendover²	20%	420	50
Winslow	Provided together by the three towns		185
Haddenham			185
Cluster 1 (N)⁺	20%	420	97
Cluster 2 (M)⁺	Provided together by the named villages in the four clusters		97
Cluster 3 (SW)⁺			65
Cluster 4 (SE)⁺			161

* 2,100 dwellings need to be delivered in the rest of the district through the LDF in the period to 2026. This comes from the starting point of 4,700 set out in regional policy, minus the remaining unbuilt on Local Plan allocations and existing commitments (ie where permission has been granted but the homes not yet built).

+ see map for villages within the clusters

Summary

The approach that will be taken in the final core strategy is very close to what was consulted upon in the summer last year, however there have been a few changes that reflect what the consultation told us. We have applied a proportionate split for the allocations document to eventually apply to the rest of the district (excluding Aylesbury, its immediate surroundings and the area of growth to the North of Newton Longville). This is not subject to additional consultation as we are following the process set out by government; the only reason that additional consultation is being

² Following initial appraisals, it is assumed that Wendover only has current capacity for 50 dwellings on allocated sites due to the national constraints (Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) around the village.

undertaken around Aylesbury is due to the issues set out on page two of this note. Should these issue have not arisen there would have been no additional consultation on the direction of growth of Aylesbury either.

We appreciate that this does not provide absolute certainty to the number of homes which will eventually have to be found in the smaller towns, and villages in the district, however this uncertainty is balanced against being able to count future new windfall site homes that will come through the process, which in turn helps very significantly in reducing the amount of new homes on greenfields we have to allocate. It also has the advantage of setting out clearly the parameters for the allocations document to begin from in 2010.

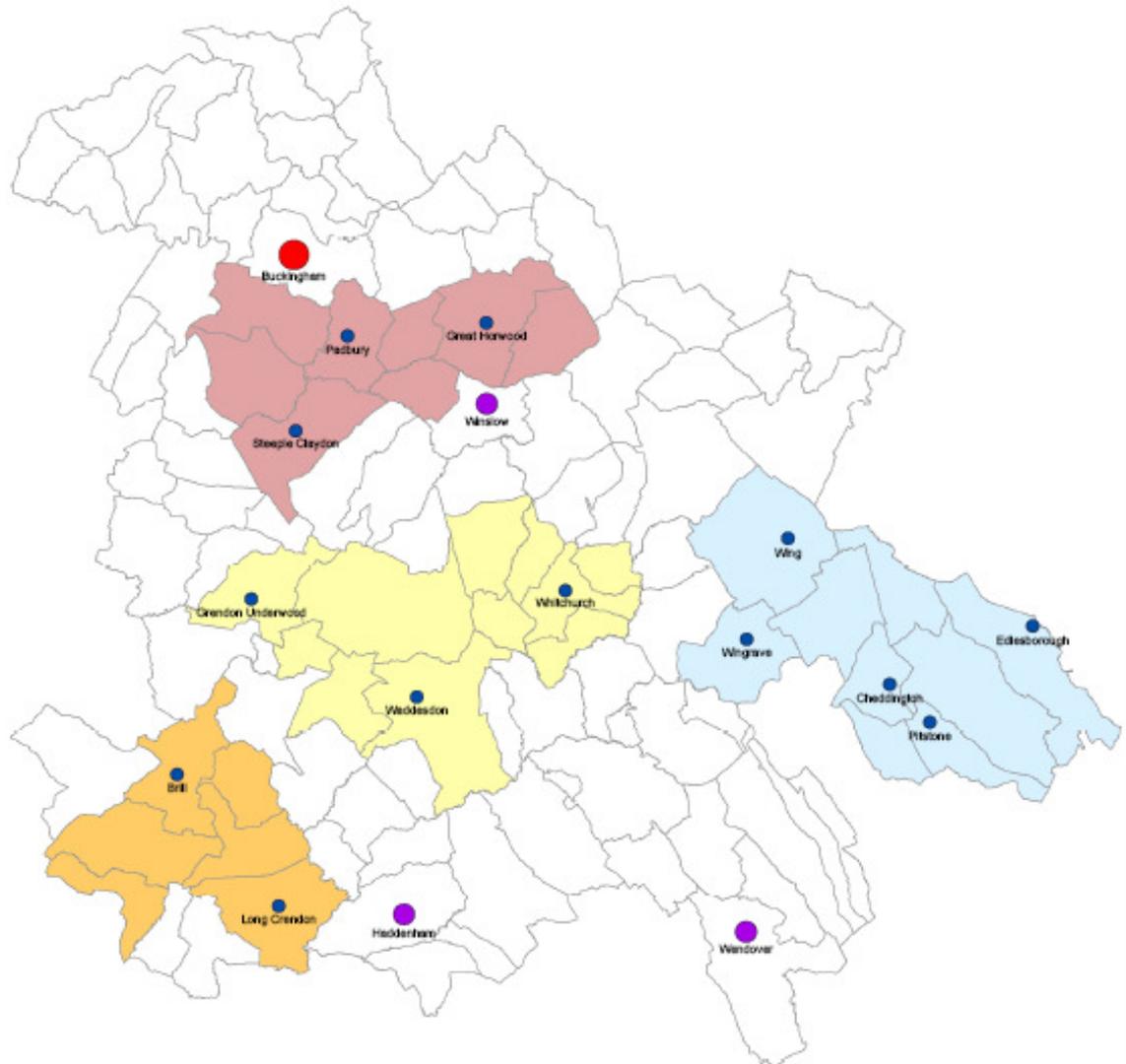
The process for approving the core strategy is set out below:

Cabinet – Direction of Growth of Aylesbury (10/3/09)
Environment Scrutiny – Core Strategy (24/3/09)
Cabinet – Core Strategy (21/04/09)
Council – Core Strategy (29/04/09)
Pre Examination Process - (May – July)
Examination - (late 2009 – Spring 2010)

If you have an queries or comments on the above please contact :

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Aylesbury Vale Potential Cluster Approach to Housing Distribution outside of Aylesbury



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