

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Policy Position of the Reserve Sites**

The Reserve Sites are identified in the Council's adopted Core Strategy (2008) to help meet the District's development needs at a future date within the plan period, should other sites not be available. The Core Strategy therefore accepts the principle of development on the sites. The Core Strategy was not the first time that the sites were given this status. They have a long history of being reserved for future development, going back to when the Green Belt was first established in 1954. This means that for 60 years it has been anticipated that development would occur on these sites and the Council has managed to protect them in the meantime by allowing development in other locations and over the last decade or more in particular focusing over 90% of new housing development on brownfield (previously developed) sites. The current policy CS8 is given in full below, followed by more detail on the history of the sites.

### **Policy CS8 of the Wycombe Core Strategy (July 2008)**

#### **Policy CS 8 Reserve Locations for Future Development**

The following are identified on the Key Diagram (Appendix 1) as reserve locations for future development (not listed in priority order).

**Abbey Barn North, High Wycombe**

**Abbey Barn South, High Wycombe**

**Gomm Valley, High Wycombe**

**Slate Meadow, Bourne End**

**Terriers Farm, High Wycombe**

The Site Allocations DPD will consider the extent of any development needs that may require to be met at these locations, any local constraints to their development, the nature and timing of any allocations, the exact boundaries of any land to be developed, and the relative priorities between/phasing of the sites.

Before release of any land at these locations all necessary infrastructure will need to be provided, including solutions that deliver sustainable transport modes and minimise congestion.

## **Indicator**

Total areas of potentially developable land available at the reserve locations

## **Delivery**

Detailed identification of, proposals for, and prioritisation of reserve land in the Site Allocations DPD

Monitoring of development needs in Annual Monitoring Report with review of reserve locations through a review of the Site Allocations DPD

Areas of land around High Wycombe have long been excluded from the Green Belt and treated as land safeguarded to meet future development needs beyond the timescale of successive plans. While the main emphasis continues to be on development of previously developed land within urban boundaries, needs arising from the South East Plan to 2026 are likely to generate a requirement to draw upon some or all of these areas by that date. Some formerly safeguarded locations are no longer regarded as appropriate for future development and are being taken into the Green Belt (see Policy CS 9). However, the locations listed above are now to be treated as a pool of reserve land that may be allocated in whole or part through the forthcoming Site Allocations DPD, or future reviews of it. Work undertaken for the Site Allocations DPD will therefore need to consider the nature and timing of any needs to allocate these areas for development, any local constraints to their development, the exact boundaries of any land to be developed, and the relative priorities between (and the phasing of) any allocations at these locations.

Any proposed development at the reserve locations must provide for necessary accompanying infrastructure, especially that which supports communities and provides for sustainable transport solutions.

It should also be recognised that the reserve locations all have individual constraints on the amount of development which they can accommodate. At Abbey Barn North landscape and ecology considerations provide significant limits to the developable area. At Abbey Barn South, there are major issues of transport accessibility, and woodland places a substantial limit on the developable area. At Terriers Farm there is an important need to retain a green wedge through the site while at Slate Meadow there is a designated village green and parts of the area are within a higher risk zone for flooding. These and any other relevant constraints will need to be carefully taken into account in any future development of these areas.

## **Policy History to the Reserve Sites**

When the Green Belt was first established in 1954 as part of the metropolitan Green Belt around London, areas of “white land” were left undesignated between the edge of the towns and villages, and the boundary of the Green Belt. This white land was left out of the Green Belt to allow space for towns and villages to grow and to ensure that the Green Belt did not have to be amended on a regular basis to accommodate growth. Over time most of the white land has been developed.

All of the five Reserve Sites were white land when the Green Belt was established in 1954.

In 1972 further additions to the extent of the Green Belt were made. At this point in time Slate Meadow was added to the Green Belt but all the other Reserve Sites remained as white land.

In 1989 WDC approved the High Wycombe Area Local Plan. At this point in time all five Reserve Sites were designated as “Areas of Special Restraint” along with some other areas of land. This policy identified this as land to meet the long term development of the area but protected from development in the short term. Slate Meadow was removed from the Green Belt and designated as an Area of Special Restraint at this point to help meet long term development needs.

The Areas of Special Restraint were rolled forward into the Wycombe District Local Plan adopted in 1995.

In 2004 the review of the Local Plan was adopted. With the exception of the Terriers Farm site, this Plan identified the Reserve Sites as “Safeguarded Land” – this had the same status as Areas of Special Restraint but used different terminology to reflect the national policy guidance at the time. Two other areas of safeguarded land were included in the Plan – land at Grange Farm and Lane End Road. These had both previously been Areas of Special Restraint, but unlike the other Areas of Special Restraint, were also in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which was designated in 1965. The Terriers Farm site was allocated for housing to help meet housing needs after 2006 but a subsequent planning appeal decision in 2007 showed that it was not needed due to the availability of additional brownfield land at the time.

In 2008 the Core Strategy was adopted and the five sites included as ‘Reserve’ sites. The difference in policy terms between safeguarded land and the Reserve Sites is that the Reserve Sites should be made available for development when needed (not necessarily in the long term) whereas safeguarded land should only be released for development in the long term, i.e. beyond the end of the plan period.

At this time the Grange Farm and Lane End Road sites were added to the Green Belt. This is because it was considered they did not have scope for major new development, due to the fact that they are both also in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A proposal by the Council to also add Gomm Valley and Ashwells to the Green Belt was rejected by the Planning Inspector at the public examination who said that it should be retained to meet future development needs. The Gomm Valley and Ashwells site is not in the AONB.

#### Public Inquiries and Examinations

The history above shows that since the late 1980s, the Reserve Sites have been considered through four different local plan preparation processes:

The High Wycombe Area Local Plan (1989)

The Wycombe District Local Plan (1995)

The Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011 (2004)

The Core Strategy (2008).

Each of these plans was subject to consultation as part of their preparation process and each was subject to a public inquiry/examination undertaken by an independent Planning Inspector appointed by the Planning Inspectorate – a Government agency. The Reserve Sites have featured at each of these inquiries/examinations both with local objectors/groups seeking to add the sites to the Green Belt (or some other form of protection) and developers seeking to secure the allocation of the sites for development and released for development in the short term.

Despite often substantial local objection Inspectors have taken the line that the sites should be retained for future development needs rather than be added to the Green Belt. The exception to this was Grange Farm and Lane End Road sites whose development potential was seen to be severely constrained by the AONB.

During the 2000's and up to the present no Areas of Special Restraint/Safeguarded Land/Reserve Sites have been developed due to the Council's success in bringing forward development on brownfield sites.