



Cabinet agenda

Date: Tuesday 10 October 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF

Membership:

M Tett (Leader), Cllr A Macpherson (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing), G Williams (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment), S Broadbent (Cabinet Member for Transport), J Chilver (Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources), A Cranmer (Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services), C Harriss (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure), A Hussain (Cabinet Member for Communities), P Strachan (Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration) and M Winn (Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services)

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Cabinet minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 12 September 2023 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 10.00 am and concluding at 11.25 am.

Members present

M Tett, Cllr A Macpherson, G Williams, S Broadbent, J Chilver, A Cranmer, C Harriss, A Hussain, R Matthews and M Winn

Others in attendance

D Blamires, A Bond, P Martin, J Ng, R Stuchbury and J Ward

Agenda Item

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr P Strachan. Cllr R Matthews attended in his place as Deputy Cabinet Member (Town Centre Regeneration).

2 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Hot Topics

The following hot topics were reported:-

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member reported that there had been a good response to the consultation on the Autism Strategy. The consultation ended on 24 September 2023.

<https://familyinfo.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/news/the-autism-strategy-consultation-is-live/>

Reference was made to the launch of the transfer of care hub which would help people get out of hospital as soon as they were medically ready and would, wherever possible, return them home or to an appropriate setting. Anybody requiring ongoing care would be able to access the right care, in the right place, at the right time. This should help manage patient flow for those fit for discharge. The

Leader welcomed this initiative and commented that it was important to get patients out of hospital as soon as possible to stop them becoming 'deconditioned' to independent living.

Cabinet Member for Education and Childrens Services

Buckinghamshire Council was aware that three schools within the county were on the Department for Education RAAC list that had been published this week. The Council had been supporting these schools which were academies, meaning the Council did not have responsibility for maintaining and managing their sites. All settings were able to continue face to face learning for all students with no disruption to usual teaching.

Of the three Buckinghamshire schools on the DfE list:

Waddesdon School, Waddesdon (academy) - the school has had a structural survey this week and RAAC had only been identified as being present in the restaurant area. It meant all teaching blocks were open and the school was returning to full face to face learning as always planned at the start of the new academic year for all year groups

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Chalfont St Peter (academy) - the school had already undertaken remediation works and was fully open with no disruption to normal teaching arrangements

St Michael's Catholic School, High Wycombe (academy) - the school had informed the Council that RAAC was previously identified on site and remedial works were underway with arrangements already in place to teach students in temporary blocks on site as required, so there was no disruption to normal teaching arrangements.

The Cabinet Member reported that all maintained schools had completed their surveys, but academies were still completing theirs. The Leader reported that this was good news that schools did not have to return to remote learning and thanked the Cabinet and Local Members for their support in this area.

Cabinet Member for Transport

The Cabinet Member referred to pupils going back to school and commented that Buckinghamshire was top of the national league table with 60 schools having well used travel plans which impacted on 25,000 pupils and reported that home to school transport at the beginning of the school year had started well including the support of school crossing patrollers.

The Cabinet Member also paid tribute to the teams working on the road network with 20,000 potholes fixed and also work was well underway on the larger, capital intensive carriageway re-surfacing programme which had continued apace over the summer. 66 surfacing schemes were fully complete out of the 216 that have been planned during the year, with another 51 schemes already fully designed and programmed to start and over 90 more being developed for later in the year. He would provide a further update at the Council meeting. The Leader congratulated

him on the new contract arrangements which were delivering well. He commented that he and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment had visited the control hub for Buckinghamshire highways and had been impressed with the information that was provided real time.

Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services

An investigation carried out by Buckinghamshire Council into illegal dog breeding and animal cruelty had led to the prosecution and conviction of two individuals.

Hammad Javaid of Charmfield Road, Aylesbury and Louise Lane of Upland Avenue, Chesham, were sentenced in relation to a number of offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, having previously pleaded guilty.

After receiving information from the RSPCA and concerned members of the public indicating that illegal dog breeding was taking place at a property on Charmfield Road in Aylesbury, licensing officers from Buckinghamshire Council obtained warrants to search the property and another property on Bateman Drive in Aylesbury.

On 1 September 2021, a search of the property at Bateman Drive found 24 bull breed dogs kept in squalid conditions within the house and kennels in the back garden. Under veterinary advice, nine dogs, two of which were pregnant, were taken into possession by the council. On 6 September 2021, the RSPCA returned to Bateman Drive after receiving reports that the remaining dogs had been fighting in the garden. Officers found that the dogs had been left loose and unattended in the garden. The dogs had started to fight with each other, sadly resulting in the death of two dogs. The remaining 13 dogs were removed by the RSPCA.

Evidence obtained during the council's searches, including forensic analysis of digital devices seized at the properties, revealed Ms Lane's involvement in the illegal activity. Evidence also showed that dogs had been intensively bred, in several cases having had two litters in less than a year and had been subjected to repeated caesarean sections.

Mr Javaid pleaded guilty to charges of unlicensed dog breeding, tail docking, three charges of causing unnecessary suffering and one charge of failing to ensure animal welfare, brought by Buckinghamshire Council. In addition, he pleaded guilty to two further charges of causing unnecessary suffering brought by the RSPCA. Ms Lane pleaded guilty to charges of unlicensed dog breeding, two charges of causing unnecessary suffering and one charge of failing to ensure animal welfare, brought by Buckinghamshire Council.

Both defendants were sentenced at Amersham Law Courts on 11 September 2023. Hammad Javaid received a total sentence of 20 months imprisonment. Louise Lane was sentenced to a total of 6 months imprisonment, suspended for 12 months, together with 100 hours community service and 25 Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR) days. She was also required to pay £500 towards the Council's costs in bringing the case. Both defendants were banned by the Court from keeping

dogs in the future.

The dogs removed from Bateman Drive, and the puppies that were subsequently born, were cared for by the RSPCA and Appledown Rescue and Rehoming Kennels. With assistance from these charities, all the dogs have now been successfully rehomed.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/business/business-licences-and-permits/animal-licences/report-an-unlicensed-animal-business/>

Leader

The Leader reported that the Government was withdrawing funding for the Local Enterprise Partnership business support network and a decision was awaited on how economic development would be delivered in the future. Once the policy was clear a future report would be brought back to Cabinet.

5 Question Time

Question from Councillor Robin Stuchbury to Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

“Buckingham Town Council recently wrote to six of its local Buckinghamshire Councillors to ask how they could be more involved in the early stages of Section 106 agreements. This could include involvement in such issues as an automatic inclusion of the right to adopt, limiting the necessity for management companies as so to reduce the economic tariffs on new developments to the bare minimum, and looking at economic considerations so that agreements match the aspirations in Buckinghamshire Council’s Parish Charter.

Could the Cabinet Member please explain what steps Buckinghamshire Council is willing and able to take to work and engage earlier with Buckingham Town Council on future developments and infrastructure projects?”

RESPONSE from Councillor Matthews

Local Ward Members and Parish/Town Councils are consulted on planning applications and can provide comments on all aspects of the proposal. It is during the application process, prior to a determination that Members and Town/Parish Councils have an opportunity to identify and request mitigation proposals. It should be noted that identifying and requesting mitigation if the planning application is to proceed, does not prejudice or undermine your overall position. Any mitigation requests must be considered by officers in relation to the tests of lawfulness detailed within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the associated guidance (PPG) and within the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regulations. Paragraph 002 of the PPG details that planning obligations can assist in mitigating the impact of unacceptable development to make it acceptable in planning terms.

As set out within the NPPF (para 57) to meet the tests obligations must be:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
- directly related to the development; and

- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

At the stage of drafting and finalising an S106 agreement, we are working to approved Heads of Terms. The S106 agreement is simply the legal mechanism that secures the obligations as set out in the recommendation to approve (either by the officer or planning committee). We do however publish S106 drafts 10 working days prior to completion albeit this is not a formal consultation. The Council also publishes an Infrastructure Funding Statement in relation to developer contributions secured and spent.

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan sets out the following under Policy I1 Green Infrastructure:

"Green infrastructure being provided must have a long-term management and maintenance strategy to be agreed by the council with assets managed for at least 30 years after completion and during this time secure a mechanism to manage sites into perpetuity. The management and maintenance strategy shall set out details of the owner, the responsible body and how the strategy can be implemented by contractors"

Long term stewardship of the public realm is important to ensure that open space provided from development is maintained to high standards. We are supportive of Town and Parish Council's taking on the ownership and maintenance of Open Space, however, as it stands this is ultimately at the discretion of the developer. The wording of the S106 Agreements, therefore, offers flexibility for the developer to look at both options of Parish and Town Council adoption or establishing a residential management company. This also reflects that not all Town and Parish Councils have the desire to take on all responsibilities. The important part in planning terms, is that the open space is delivered and maintained to mitigate the impacts of the development. We encourage Town and Parish Councils who have interest in taking on new Open Space to actively engage in dialogue with developers and the Council as sites come forward through the planning process.

The commuted sum is required for Parishes and Town Councils to adopt as – understandably – such a process comes with a burden of ongoing additional public costs. Residents when purchasing properties on a site where a management company is in place are accepting the costs and associated obligations resulting from this. Nevertheless, the standard and quantum of Open Space will meet the required obligations of the S106, regardless of which ongoing maintenance mechanism is brought into effect.

Question from Councillor Thomas Hogg to Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration

You requested that I lead on the Design Code in June 2022. Since then I have worked with the Planning Officer team on the Code, but have not made the progress that I had anticipated on this issue. I have developed an optional Design Guide which has been proposed as a first step towards better urban design. It has no legal weight, which means it cannot be enforced, but the document is not meant to be. It focuses on showing property developers the merits of evidence-based urban design and how

to follow the NPPF.

Could the Cabinet Member and his team re-consider the proposals contained within the Design Guide that would provide many benefits to our Buckinghamshire Communities which has such strong support within our scientific community, as evidenced by many surveys and research papers?

RESPONSE from Councillor Matthews

Thank you for your question and indeed the time you have put into support the development of the Council's Design Code. As you will be aware, the development of design codes is an important part of how the Council can ensure that new developments are of a high standard. Codes need to secure the delivery of high quality design, but in a way which allows for the varied and locally specific vernacular which occurs across Buckinghamshire. While the academic research you cite may have some influence on the content of the design code, it needs to be balanced with best practice as set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code. It also needs to draw lessons from and support the character and qualities of the existing communities of Buckinghamshire.

I know this is a topic which you are passionate about and hence asking for you to be involved in the work to develop our design code. However, for the Buckinghamshire Design Code to have the impact required, it must be prepared in accordance with the process set out in the National Model Design Code, and must be adopted so that it has legal weight and is enforceable. Otherwise, it will do little to change design practice. This in turn means that we must ensure that such codes are aligned with national and local policies and are defensible as part of the planning process, including at appeal. So, though I deeply appreciate your commitment to the topic, the Council's focus will continue to be on bringing forward a design code that has been prepared in accordance with the guidance. I do hope that as our thinking on design develops further, particularly in the production of 'B' codes, that we may be able to incorporate some of the thinking that you have been developing.

6 Forward Plan (28 Day Notice)

The Leader introduced the Forward Plan and commended it to all Members of the Council and the public, as a document that gave forewarning of what reports would be discussing at forthcoming meetings.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

7 Select Committee Work Programme

The Leader introduced the Select Committee Work Programme and commended it to all Members of the Council and the public, as a document that gave forewarning of what Select Committees would be discussing at forthcoming meetings.

RESOLVED – That the Select Committee Work Programme be noted.

8 Response to petition "Stop Investing in Fossil Fuels"

A 'Stop investing in fossil fuels' ePetition had been considered at the full Council meeting on 12 July 2023, at which the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources requested it be referred to Cabinet for further consideration. The ePetition was detailed at Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report.

Cabinet considered a report that set out the concerns raised in the petition and the approach that Buckinghamshire Pension Fund in partnership with the Brunel Pension Partnership was taking towards carbon reduction and meeting its target of net zero by 2050. The Partnership covered nine local authorities covering a geographical area from Buckinghamshire to Cornwall as well as the Environment Agency and held the Buckinghamshire Pension Fund as pooled funds. This Partnership had delivered increased returns and savings of £34 million per year to the organisations involved ahead of its initial target of £28 million by 2025. The Brunel Partnership made investment decisions on behalf of the Pension Fund although the Council maintained an investment allocation strategy. The Chairman Cllr Tim Butcher attended the oversight board together with the participating authorities.

Brunel shared the Council's target of a net zero impact by 2050 and had already achieved a reduction of 35% on their 2019 carbon emissions baseline. Brunel have retained their status as a signatory to the stewardship code and their 2023 responsible investment and outcomes report which could be viewed on their website provided a wealth of information and how they met its requirements. The Brunel approach was one of engagement rather than divestment as they believed it delivered a greater impact. With £35 billion of investment assets of which Buckinghamshire held £4 billion the Partnership could exercise a significant influence. The Pension Fund Committee and its Chairman were fully supportive of this approach. In addition to concerns about pension fund investments in fossil fuels there had also been concerns about the Council's current banking partner; the current contract with Barclays ran until 2027 and was purely for the provision of banking services with no investment activity. Barclays had also committed to a net zero strategy and in view of this there was no proposal to move the Council's bank account. A Leader asked about the signatories on the petition and it was noted that local residents could be identified through a tick box although their address could not be verified.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the approach being taken by the Buckinghamshire Pension Fund and the Brunel Pension Partnership in reducing overall carbon intensity in its investment portfolios be ENDORSED.**
- (2) That the situation with the Council's banking contract be NOTED.**

9 Pathways for Children with SEND - Children's and Education Select Committee Report

The Children's and Education Select Committee had agreed to set up a rapid review in November 2022 with the aim of investigating the pathways to finding information for children and young people with SEND when first trying to access services and support. This involved:

- (a) assessing views from different sources with regards to the availability and accessibility of information required by parents to gain support from services for their children, and
- (b) gaining understanding on information for services specifically relating to gaining help for children with autism, ADHD and anxiety/depression.

The group took part in a range of evidence gathering sessions from November 2022 to March 2023 with a wide range of council officers, through visits to primary, secondary, grammar and special schools, with lead professionals from related organisations and by interviewing parents with SEND children.

The final stage of evidence gathering with individual meetings with parents provided a crucial insight into the first-hand experiences of parents in accessing the system of services potentially available to them when concerned about gaining help for their child. This process highlighted a range of issues such as difficulties in knowing where to go for assistance, how to gain diagnoses, and symptoms being recognised and supported.

The review was chaired by Councillor Diana Blamires and comprised Councillors Sarah James, Sophie Kayani, Paul Turner and Julie Ward. Following the evidence gathering meetings the review group then met to discuss and agree its key findings and recommendations, which were presented in the report found at Appendix 1.

Cabinet was asked to consider the recommendations of the Select Committee Review.

The Chairman, Councillor Diana Blamires presented the report. Councillor Julie Ward was also in attendance who was Chairman of the Children and Education Select Committee. 90% of parents who flag that they believe that their child had autism, ADHD, anxiety or depression turned out to be right. It was therefore imperative that they get the advice and information they need when they raise the alarm. Following the Council's OFSTED report one of the priorities was to provide better guidance for parents and this Review Group was set up to see what support parents could be given. Visits were undertaken to primary, secondary, grammar and special schools. Separately there were 15 meetings with the Council, voluntary groups and other organisations. The Group spoke to parents and looked at best practice from other Councils particularly with information on their websites. She gave some examples of the experiences of parents in obtaining the right support. As well as providing better information to parents from the start of their journey it was recognised that there needed to be improving training of SENCO's, teaching and nursery staff. They needed to be more aware of behaviours associated with autism, ADHD, anxiety and depression. A parent had flagged an issue at primary school. However because it was only recognised at secondary school level the needs of that child had become more complex. Early intervention was vital and it was important for parents to be supported at the outset. Parents often turned to the internet for help and advice and the term 'local offer' on the Council's website was confusing for parents. Some other Councils used simpler language or videos to help direct parents to the right

support. There was also a need for more educational psychologists and trainees. Some parents had to wait years for medication and diagnosis. It would also be helpful for pupils or former pupils to talk about their symptoms and what it felt like, to help other pupils. These recommendations would help parents to get the support they need when they first express their concerns, so they felt validated, empowered and confident.

During discussion the following points were raised:-

- The report was welcomed including the need for simple language which reflected the voice of the users. It fed into the work of the Integrated Care Partnership across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West. Another area was the Autism Strategy which was now emerging specifically recommendations 4 and 5 which related to resource packs being developed. Timeliness of diagnosis was key which needed to be address with partners.
- A Member also commented that the terminology local offer was misleading; however this was a national term. Some key trigger words needed to be included which would be easily recognised by parents. There would also be an issue of stigma for young people when they first realise there could be a neurodiversity issue. Talks in schools would be particularly useful for girls as only one in four girls were diagnosed as they were good at masking their behaviour. He referred to a community of parents who were home schooling their children and the importance of providing support to them and easily accessible materials. The Chairman of the review said that information should be available to all and should be publicised in key areas such as GP surgeries.
- Another Member welcomed the report and sharing the neurodiversity resource pack with councillors to improve their understanding of the issues. Simple clear language should be applied across the whole Council website. A question was asked about key priorities and the Chairman of the review commented that length of wait was key but parents should have the information at an early stage so they could be as proactive as possible whilst waiting for a diagnosis.
- A question was asked about whether this information would be provided in different languages and also reference was made to support being required to those parents who did not want to recognise that their child had special needs. The Chairman of the review said a suggestion was made to use more you tube videos to help with languages. The Leader suggested it would be helpful to have further work undertaken on this area which was endorsed by the Cabinet Member for Communities to understand how some ethnic communities would engage with the process and also concerns about stigma. Teachers could also play a key part in this area as they would have a better relationship with parents.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education welcomed the report and said that enquiries on SEND were escalating, nationally and locally and it was really important that parents had the right information before them. These

recommendations would be included in the transformation work being carried out. The Cabinet Member referred to the comment about working with local communities and language needs and she commented that local members often helped their residents on these issues but sometimes were not aware of the pathways themselves. Neurodiversity awareness was important as all brains did not develop in the same way. All of the recommendations had been accepted by the Cabinet Member with the exception of recommendation 2 as the local offer terminology was from legislation but some clarity could be provided around this terminology. The Leader also made reference to the need to look at language and cultural issues. The Cabinet Member reported that it would also be helpful to provide training for local members on pathways.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Pathways for Children with SEND Review Group, as well as the supporting officers, be thanked for their work and subsequent recommendations.**
- 2. That Cabinet's responses to the Pathways for Children with SEND Review report and recommendations, as set out and circulated to Members, be agreed.**

Note: a complete breakdown of the scrutiny recommendations and Cabinet's responses can be found [here](#).

10 Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023/24

The Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-2024 provided details of progress made against agreed outcomes for Children and Young People. It outlined priorities, alongside potential future challenges for the partnership over the coming year. It also highlighted the partnership arrangements and budget position for the Youth Offending Service Partnership.

The Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2023-2024 was produced in consultation with strategic partners. This was done through a series of focus groups which were held with representatives from the police, probation, magistrates, health, and Buckinghamshire Council services, including Children's Social Care, Education and Community Safety, as well as representatives from voluntary organisations such as Barnardo's and 'SAFE!'. The plan was produced in line with guidance published by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) and must be submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales and published in accordance with the directions of the Secretary of State.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education reported that providing the Strategic Plan was a legislative requirement. The purpose of the report was to show the work, and the results of previous work of the Youth Offending Service, which was a multi-agency partnership which included Thames Valley Police, Council, Health Services, Community Safety, Voluntary Sector and Probation. The Youth Justice Board oversaw the work of the Partnership. The ages that were covered were

10-18 and the numbers were small approximately 100. The data in the Plan showed the number of people who entered the Justice System for the first time and also tracked re-offending. HMI Probation provided a report in January 2023 and Buckinghamshire received a rating of good. Some areas for improvement had been identified such as Restoration, Repatriation and helping people to get on the right path was the first aim. The second aim related to ethnic disproportionality which needed to be addressed looking at areas of deprivation. The third aim was a Government initiative called Child First, having greater involvement with young people and engaging them in questions about how life was for them and understanding the reasons for their life choices.

The Leader reported that it was concerning to see the rise in the re-offending rate which had risen to 30% since January 2021. The Corporate Director explained that whilst a large proportion reoffended (9 youth as compared to 6 the year before), there was a smaller cohort who offended at all (30 compared to 37). Therefore, the small numbers involved and the reduction in the overall cohort that offended, made the reoffending figure appear significant in percentage terms. The Corporate Director reported that all the recommendations from the Inspection had been incorporated into the Plan which included out of court disposals, which was prevention work. This year as the Partnership Board was in a stronger place a sponsor had been assigned to each of the recommendations. The funding for this was £1.7 million and as a Council funding was provided of £726,000 which was a significant amount.

Another Cabinet Member commented that prevention was key and asked about the overlap between this cohort and Looked After Children and if this had been brought to the attention of the Corporate Parenting Panel. Also whether Opportunity Bucks was involved for those areas of deprivation. The Corporate Director commented that there were some Looked After Children in the Youth Justice System but as he was unable to provide the number at this meeting he would provide the information later, however there was alignment between the services and they worked in parallel around the child and the family. There was reference to Opportunity Bucks in the report and work was being undertaken to provide enhanced education and employment opportunities as part of this initiative. The last Board meeting included a full discussion about engagement in education and employment with an action plan. The Cabinet Member reported that it was not raised regularly at the Corporate Parenting Panel but this was something they would look at. Once a young person had offended they would go through an interview process with the Youth Offending Team and then they would have other challenging interviews. The young person must accept responsibility for an offence to be eligible for a court dispersal which would allow them to be outside of the court system and they could voluntarily have counselling or support from one of the organisations. The Cabinet Member reported that sometimes it might be difficult for them to volunteer if they did not have the support from their families.

A Cabinet Member referred to data on page 15 of the report and asked why it only covered three months whereas the other graphs covered one year. The data also

was two years out of date and he asked about recent data which could provide information on current trends including reasons for current re-offending. The Corporate Director described how the reporting periods in the Plan were dictated at national level by the Ministry of Justice who collated all the data across the Country and provided the statistics that were used within each area's Youth Justice Plan. Current data was reported to every Youth Justice Board on a quarterly basis which was analysed for performance trends and also looked at in detail for each child.

A Deputy Cabinet Member referred to the mentoring which took place from Year 6 to 7 and the transition to secondary school and asked whether there was an opportunity for mentoring to continue over a longer period of time if necessary. The Corporate Director confirmed that mentoring was continued depending on the needs of the individual. Youth workers in schools undertook diversionary and preventative work and supported intervention. Another Member commented that mentoring was important in local communities and particularly referred to ethnic disproportionality. He commented that he had mentored a young person.

A Cabinet Member who also had 3 Opportunity Bucks wards under his Community Board area commented that he would like to work with the Service as the report referred to creating new projects which shared the objectives of the Opportunity Bucks Programme. The Cabinet Member reported that it was important to understand why people were offending in the first place and then re-offending. It was important to liaise with various communities and organisations to understand this, particularly schools. The Corporate Director could link the Cabinet Member with the relevant contacts for Opportunity Bucks.

RESOLVED –

That the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2023-24 be endorsed, and it be forwarded to Council who be recommended to adopt it.

12 Confidential Minutes

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 11 July were agreed as a correct record.

13 Date of next meeting

10 October 2023



Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet/Leader forward plan

The local authorities (executive arrangements) (meetings and access to information) (England) regulations 2012

This is a notice of an intention to make a key decision on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council (regulation 9) and an intention to meet in private to consider those items marked as 'private reports' (regulation 5).

A further notice (the 'agenda') will be published no less than five working days before the date of the decision meeting and will be available via the Buckinghamshire Council website ([Cabinet agendas](#) / [Leader decisions](#)).

All reports will be open unless specified otherwise.

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Cabinet 10 October 2023				
Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and Place Based Regeneration Strategies To approve and adopt the Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and the place based town centre strategies as a key corporate documents of Buckinghamshire Council	All Wards	Councillor Peter Strachan Richard Ambrose		7/9/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Devolution Update For Cabinet to discuss and agree revisions to the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy		Councillor Arif Hussain Roger Goodes		31/5/23
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan - Mixed Use Housing Allocation D-AGT1 - Supplementary Planning Document This Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance for the development of the D-AGT1 allocation within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.	Aston Clinton & Bierton; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville	Councillor Peter Strachan Charlotte Morris		15/2/23
Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee Review of Streetworks & Statutory Undertakers For Cabinet to discuss the recommendations within the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee's review report into Streetworks		Councillor Bill Chapple OBE Chris Ward		29/8/23
Cabinet 24 October 2023				
Future Buckinghamshire Economic Development Organisation In the context of Government announcements about the future of LEPs, to consider arrangements for carrying out economic development functions in Buckinghamshire		Councillor Martin Tett Rachael Shimmin		2/10/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Cabinet 14 November 2023				
<p>Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy - Annual Progress Report 2022/23 A report detailing progress against actions from the Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy Progress Report for the 2022/23 reporting period.</p>		<p>Councillor Gareth Williams Steve Bambrick</p>		2/10/23
<p>Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023-2024: Mental Health To endorse the Director of Public Health Annual Report (DPHAR) 2023-2024 which addresses Mental Health in Buckinghamshire</p>		<p>Councillor Angela Macpherson Dr Jane O'Grady</p>		31/5/23
<p>High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) To approve the High Wycombe 2050 Transport Strategy and High Wycombe Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The plans provide a long-term strategic approach to future transport investment in the High Wycombe.</p>	<p>Abbey; Booker, Cressex & Castlefield; Downley; Ryemead & Micklefield; Terriers & Amersham Hill; Totteridge & Bowerdean; Tylers Green & Loudwater; West Wycombe</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Hannah Joyce</p>		8/8/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Opportunity Bucks – Progress Update Progress update		Councillor Martin Tett Matthew Everitt		2/10/23
Q2 Budget adjustments to the Capital programme 2023-24 Quarterly report		Cabinet Member Accessible Housing and Resources Dave Skinner		8/8/23
Q2 Budget Monitoring Report 2023-24 Quarterly report		Cabinet Member Accessible Housing and Resources Dave Skinner		8/8/23
Q2 Performance Report 2023-24 Quarterly report		Cabinet Member Accessible Housing and Resources Matthew Everitt		8/8/23
Cabinet 12 December 2023				
All-age Autism Strategy To agree the All-age Autism strategy for Buckinghamshire		Councillor Angela Macpherson Simon Brauner-Cave		13/7/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Buckinghamshire Serious Violence Response Strategy 2023-2026 This sets out the strategy for tackling serious violence in Buckinghamshire, including the drivers of serious violence.</p>		<p>Councillor Arif Hussain Dr Jane O'Grady</p>		31/5/23
<p>Fly-Tipping Enforcement Policy and FPN Increase Review To agree the revised Fly tipping Enforcement Policy to address the recent Government change to increase the upper limits of Fixed Penalty Notices for Fly-tipping and Failure in Household Duty of Care and review future delegation route.</p>		<p>Councillor Gareth Williams Martin Dickman</p>		7/9/23
<p>Leisure services management contract To award a new leisure management contract for the following facilities: Aqua Vale, Swan pool & Leisure Centre, Beacon Sports Centre & Theatre, the Evreham Centre, the Little Marlow Athletics Track.</p>		<p>Councillor Clive Harriss Sophie Payne</p>	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	6/7/23
<p>Leisure Strategy To provide an assessment of indoor sports and leisure facilities, considering future opportunities and demand around this provision.</p>		<p>Councillor Clive Harriss Sophie Payne</p>		26/1/23
<p>Littering Enforcement Strategy - Options Strategy on how to take litter enforcement forward - options paper.</p>		<p>Councillor Gareth Williams Martin Dickman</p>	Part exempt <i>(para 3)</i>	7/9/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Strategic Asset Management Plan A new Strategic Asset Management Plan (2023-2028) to ensure the framework and management of the property portfolio is in line with our requirements now and in the future.</p>		<p>Councillor John Chilver John Reed</p>		29/8/23
Cabinet 4 January 2024				
<p>Buckinghamshire Healthy Ageing Strategy 2023-28 To approve the Council's Healthy Ageing Strategy 2023-2028. The Healthy Ageing Strategy sets out how the Council and its partners will work to make Buckinghamshire more age friendly, which is a priority in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This will support Buckinghamshire residents to live healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives for as long as possible, to 'age well'.</p>		<p>Councillor Angela Macpherson Dr Jane O'Grady</p>		23/12/22
<p>Six Monthly Adult Social Care Update to Cabinet To provide Cabinet with an update on the national and local issues relating to adult social care in Buckinghamshire.</p>		<p>Councillor Angela Macpherson Craig McArdle</p>		7/9/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Cabinet 13 February 2024				
Chilterns Beechwoods Mitigation Strategy Report to consider the recreational disturbance mitigation strategy for Ashridge Commons and Woods	Amersham & Chesham Bois; Aylesbury South East; Chesham; Chess Valley; Chiltern Ridges; Great Missenden; Ivinghoe; Little Chalfont & Amersham Common; Penn Wood & Old Amersham	Councillor Peter Strachan Charlotte Morris		
October 2023 Leader Decisions				
Adult Social Care Travel Assistance Policy To agree the travel assistance policy for Adult Social Care		Councillor Angela Macpherson Tracey Ironmonger		22/9/22
Ashley Drive, Tylers Green Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation.	Tylers Green & Loudwater	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		29/6/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Aylesbury Grid Reinforcement - Update An update on the way forward for the Aylesbury Grid Reinforcement Project.</p>	<p>Aylesbury South East; Bernwood; Ridgeway East; Stone & Waddesdon; The Risboroughs; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville</p>	<p>Councillor Martin Tett David Johnson</p>	<p>Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)</p>	<p>23/2/23</p>
<p>Aylesbury Junction Protection and School Entrance Restrictions Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation</p>	<p>Aylesbury East; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury South East; Aylesbury South West; Aylesbury West</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas</p>		<p>29/6/23</p>
<p>Bierton Traffic Calming Public consultation is to be carried out on a traffic calming scheme along the A418 through Bierton. The proposals include; narrowings, chicanes, build-outs, and pedestrian, cycle, and bus stop improvements. Public consultation and the delivery of a traffic calming scheme was secured as a s106 obligation of the nearby Kingsbrook development.</p>	<p>Aston Clinton & Bierton</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Christine Urry</p>		<p>25/5/22</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Disabled Bay Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation</p>	<p>Abbey; Aylesbury East; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury South West; Chalfont St Giles; Chess Valley; Chiltern Ridges; Cliveden; Denham; Farnham Common & Burnham Beeches; Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South East; Great Brickhill; Little Chalfont & Amersham Common; Marlow; The Risboroughs; The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor; Totteridge & Bowerdean; West Wycombe; Winslow</p>	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas</p>		<p>13/7/23</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Fleet Trading Account Budget To confirm details of the 2023/24 Fleet Trading Account budget, which is a zero balanced budget and therefore can't be included in the full council decision taken in February for other revenue budgets.</p>		<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Lindsey Vallis</p>		7/3/23
<p>Greyhound Lane Winslow Parking Review 2023 Report details the results of the public consultation on proposed restrictions to prevent inappropriate parking.</p>	Winslow	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas</p>		23/5/23
<p>Harmonisation of Pest Control Fees The harmonisation of policy and fees regarding which residents are able to access subsidised pest control treatment.</p>		<p>Councillor Mark Winn Jacqui Bromilow</p>		30/8/22
<p>High Street Iver Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation</p>	Iver	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas</p>		29/6/23
<p>Horseshoe Crescent, Beaconsfield Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation</p>	Beaconsfield	<p>Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas</p>		13/7/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Juniper Hill School Opening of a new SEMH Unit and Closure of existing ARP Proposal to open a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Unit and close the Additional Resource Provision (ARP) at Juniper Hill School, Flackwell Heath.</p>	Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South East	Councillor Anita Cranmer Paula Campbell-Balcombe		8/6/23
<p>Missenden Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation</p>	Great Missenden	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		13/7/23
<p>Non-Registered Alternative Education Provision and Therapy Provision Dynamic Purchasing Vehicle (DPV) Establishment of a Dynamic Purchasing Vehicle (DPV) for the purchasing of Non-Registered Alternative Education Provision and Therapy provision for children and young people (CYP) with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Buckinghamshire with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).</p>		Councillor Anita Cranmer Marie-Claire Mickiewicz, Gemma Workman		11/5/23
<p>Physical Activity Strategy 2024 - 2029 To approve the Councils physical activity strategy for 2024-29. The physical activity strategy sets out how the Council and its partners will improve the levels of physical activity and opportunities for Buckinghamshire residents.</p>		Councillor Angela Macpherson Dr Jane O'Grady		19/4/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Procurement of care services within a Care Home and Extra-Care setting Proposal for direct award of contract following an unsuccessful competitive tender process.</p>		Councillor Angela Macpherson Tracey Ironmonger	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	8/8/23
<p>Procurement of residential Care home capacity This paper seeks a decision on undertaking a competitive tender for residential care home capacity.</p>		Councillor Angela Macpherson Tracey Ironmonger	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	29/8/23
<p>Property acquisition in High Wycombe Property purchase of former Residential Care Home, currently vacant</p>	Booker, Cressex & Castlefield	Councillor John Chilver Lisa Michelson, John Reed	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	14/8/23
<p>Proposed Traffic calming on High Street, Edlesborough Installation of 'build-out' feature within the carriageway to effectively narrow the road to one lane of traffic with northbound traffic giving way. This scheme is to be constructed and paid for by the developer to land north of Good Intent.</p>	Ivinghoe	Councillor Steve Broadbent Joe Bates		23/5/23
<p>Proposed Traffic calming on Stratford Drive, Bourne End Proposed raised table covering a staggered junction on Stratford Drive to serve (newly created) junction into new residential development and the existing school access.</p>	The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor	Councillor Steve Broadbent Joe Bates		23/5/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
RAF Halton Supplementary Planning Document Decision to agree the draft RAF Halton Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation.	Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville	Councillor Peter Strachan Charlotte Morris		28/7/23
School Competitions Recommendation of Preferred Sponsors Recommendation of proposed Academy Sponsors for three new primary schools: Kingsbrook Primary 2 Hampden Fields Primary School South West Milton Keynes Primary School		Councillor Anita Cranmer Paula Campbell-Balcombe		19/4/23
Seer Green Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation	Chalfont St Giles	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		29/6/23
South West Chiltern Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation	Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South East; Marlow; The Wooburns, Bourne End & Hedsor	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		13/7/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>The Common, Flackwell Heath Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation</p>	Flackwell Heath, Little Marlow & Marlow South East	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		13/7/23
<p>The Courtyard, High Wycombe Disposal options for surplus land in High Wycombe.</p>	Abbey	Councillor John Chilver John Reed	Part exempt (<i>para 3</i>)	10/11/22
<p>Thornbridge Road, Iver Heath Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation</p>	Iver	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		29/6/23
<p>Tylers Green Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation</p>	Tylers Green & Loudwater	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		29/6/23
<p>Wattleton Road, Beaconsfield Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation</p>	Beaconsfield	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		13/7/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
Wethered Road Marlow Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation	Marlow	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		29/6/23
Whaddon Parking Review 2023 Report details the officer recommendations following a public consultation	Winslow	Councillor Steve Broadbent Ian Thomas		29/6/23
November 2023 Leader Decisions				
Furze Down School Relocation of Sixth Form Proposal to relocate Furze Down School's Sixth form to the short breaks day service building in Buckingham	Buckingham East; Buckingham West; Winslow	Councillor Anita Cranmer Paula Campbell-Balcombe		29/6/23
Scrap metal licensing policy To agree final version of the scrap metal licensing policy.		Councillor Mark Winn Lindsey Vallis		8/8/23

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
<p>Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan - Affordable Housing - Supplementary Planning Document</p> <p>This Supplementary Planning Document provides affordable housing guidance to the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Policies H1, H2, H6a, H6c, BE2.</p>	<p>Aston Clinton & Bierton; Aylesbury East; Aylesbury North; Aylesbury North West; Aylesbury South East; Aylesbury South West; Aylesbury West; Bernwood; Buckingham East; Buckingham West; Great Brickhill; Grendon Underwood; Ivinghoe; Stone & Waddesdon; Wendover, Halton & Stoke Mandeville; Wing; Winslow</p>	<p>Councillor Peter Strachan Charlotte Morris</p>		<p>15/2/23</p>

Item and description	Wards affected	Councillor(s) / contact officer	Private report? (relevant para)	Date notified
December 2023 Leader Decisions				
Buckinghamshire Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy for 2024 – 2029 To approve the Buckinghamshire Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy for 2024 – 2029		Councillor Angela Macpherson Dr Jane O'Grady		29/8/23
February 2024 Leader Decisions				
Cottesloe School Expansion Proposal to expand Cottesloe School in Wing	Wing	Councillor Anita Cranmer Paula Campbell-Balcombe		7/9/23
March 2024 Leader Decisions				
Buckinghamshire Tobacco Control Strategy 2024-29 To approve the Councils Buckinghamshire Tobacco Control Strategy 2024-29, which sets out how the Council and its partners aim to save lives and improve the health of thousands of people in Buckinghamshire by minimising their exposure to tobacco.		Councillor Angela Macpherson Dr Jane O'Grady		6/7/23

Individual Leader decisions (in consultation with the Cabinet Member) are not discussed at meetings – a report is presented to the Cabinet Member and the Leader will decide whether to sign the decision.

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this forward plan, please get in touch with the contact officer. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team in good time ahead of the decision deadline date. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk. You can view decisions to be made and decisions taken on the council's website.

The council's definition of a 'key decision' can be seen in part 1 of the council's [constitution](#).

Each item considered will have a report; appendices will be included (as appropriate). Regulation 9(1g) allows that other documents relevant to the item may be submitted to the decision maker. Subject to prohibition or restriction on their disclosure, this information will be published on the website usually five working days before the date of the meeting. Paper copies may be requested using the contact details below.

*The public can be excluded for an item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt (private) information as defined in part I of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972. The relevant paragraph numbers and descriptions are as follows:

Paragraph 1 - Information relating to any individual

Paragraph 2 - Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual

Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Paragraph 4 - Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority

Paragraph 5 - Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings

Paragraph 6 - Information which reveals that the authority proposes:

(a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or

(b) to make an order or direction under any enactment

Paragraph 7 - Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

Part II of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that information falling into paragraphs 1 - 7 above is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Nothing in the regulations authorises or requires a local authority to disclose to the public or make available for public inspection any document or part of a document if, in the opinion of the proper officer, that document or part of a document contains or may contain confidential information. Should you wish to make any representations in relation to any of the items being considered in private, you can do so – in writing – using the contact details below.

Democratic services, Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP19 8FF 01296 382343
democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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Select Committee Work Programmes 2023/24

Children’s and Education Select Committee (Chairman: Cllr Julie Ward, Scrutiny officer: Katie Dover)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
2 nd November	Bucks Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report	This edition of the Safeguarding Children Partnership’s Annual Report covers the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. It highlights the progress made during the last year against the BSCP’s priorities as well as setting out future plans	Walter Mcculloch Joanne Stephenson	
	SEND Improvement Programme follow up paper	To update the Committee on progress made	John Macilwraith Caroline Marriott	
	Children’s Services Transformation	To update the Committee on progress made	John Macilwraith Errol Albert	
25 th January	Education Standards Paper	To share with the committee the latest educational outcomes achieved by the children and young people of Buckinghamshire.	John Macilwraith Gareth Drawmer	
	Youth Offending Team	Progress update one year on from YOS inspection	Richard Nash Aman Sekhon-Gill	
	New attendance duties	To provide the committee with an update on the new attendance duties and the implications for Buckinghamshire.	John Macilwraith Gareth Drawmer	
7 th March	Pathways to SEND services	To provide a 6 month update on the progress against the recommendations within the Pathways to SEND review group report	John Macilwraith Gareth Drawmer	
	TBC			

Communities and Localism Select Committee (Chairman: Cllr Steve Bowles, Scrutiny officer: Kelly Sutherland)

Date	Topic	Description and Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
4 October 2023	12-month Community Board review update	Following the Committee’s Community Board review which was presented to Cabinet in May 2022, Members will receive a further update on the implementation of their recommendations.	Roger Goodes/Wendy Morgan Brown	Cllr Arif Hussain, Roger Goodes, Wendy Morgan-Brown
	CCTV – Update on development of a CCTV Strategy	Further to Budget Scrutiny highlighting the need for a strategic approach to further capital investment in CCTV in Buckinghamshire, the Committee will receive an update on the next steps in terms of the development of a CCTV strategy.	Gideon Springer	Cllr Arif Hussain, Gideon Springer
	Serious Violence Strategy	The Committee will receive an overview of the Council’s proposed Serious Violence Strategy before it is presented for agreement at Cabinet.	Gideon Springer	Cllr Arif Hussain, Gideon Springer
22 November 2023	Cost of Living	An opportunity for members to hear from Council officers and partners on the support that has been available to Buckinghamshire residents to assist them during the cost of living crisis.	Matt Everitt	Cllr Arif Hussain, Matt Everitt, TBC
	Opportunity Bucks Update	The Committee will receive an update on Opportunity Bucks – the local ‘levelling up’ initiative which is supporting residents in ten specific wards in Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe.	Matt Everitt	Cllr Arif Hussain, Matt Everitt
	Devolution	The Committee will receive an update on the Council’s approach to devolution of services and assets.	Roger Goodes	Cllr Arif Hussain, Roger Goodes
28 February 2024	Leisure Strategy	The Committee will consider the key elements of the proposed Leisure Strategy ahead of it being presented to Cabinet for agreement.	Sophie Payne	Cllr Clive Harriss, Sophie Payne Sue Drummond
	Country Parks	An overview of the Country Parks and their work programme.	Sophie Payne	Cllr Clive Harriss, Sophie Payne, Andrew Fowler

10 April 2024	Town and Parish Charter	The Committee will receive an annual update on work that has been ongoing in support of the Town and Parish Charter.	Simon Garwood	Cllr Arif Hussain, Roger Goodes, Simon Garwood
	Asylum and Migration Strategy	The Committee will receive an update on the implementation of the Council's Asylum and Migration Strategy.	Matt Everitt	Cllr Arif Hussain, Matt Everitt

Finance and Resources Select Committee (Chairman: Ralph Bagge, Scrutiny officer: Chris Ward)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
5 October 2023	Budget Inquiry 2023 Recommendations: 6-month review	To receive an update on the progress of the budget scrutiny recommendations made in January 2023.	David Skinner	Martin Tett
	Energy from Waste Income	During Budget Scrutiny in January 2023, Members noted the importance of the EfW income to the budget and requested a report to include projected income, budgetary assumptions and budgetary impact on price fluctuation. (Item in confidential)	Martin Dickman Roger Seed	Gareth Williams John Chilver
30 November 2023	Budget Performance Monitoring Q2	To review the Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report	David Skinner	John Chilver
	Estates Programme	To receive a progress update on the Estates Strategy including plans for inherited assets and oversight on tenants/lessees' changes to council premises which require planning permission.	Sarah Murphy-Brookman John Reed	John Chilver
	IT ONE Programme	To consider an update report on the IT ONE Programme including an update on SAP.	Sarah Murphy-Brookman Tony Ellis	John Chilver Tim Butcher
	Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Group Scoping Paper	The Committee will consider the budget scrutiny inquiry group proposals.	Chris Ward	Ralph Bagge Martin Tett
8 – 12 January 2024	Budget Scrutiny Week		All Corporate and Finance Directors	Cabinet Members, Deputies, Corporate and Finance Directors
22 February 2024	Budget Inquiry 2023 Recommendations: 12-month review	To receive an update on the process of the budget scrutiny recommendations made in January 2023.	David Skinner	Martin Tett
	Budget Performance Monitoring Q3	To review the Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring Report	David Skinner	John Chilver

	External Property Companies	Report on the performance and business plans of the Council's companies: AVE, Consilio, London Road Management Company and Buckinghamshire Advantage. (Item in confidential)	John Reed Mark Preston (AVE & London Road) David Pearce (Consilio) Richard Harrington & Lisa Michelson (BA)	John Chilver
18 April 2024	Customer First	To consider a report following the year's activity on the Customer First programme.	Sarah Murphy-Brookman Lloyd Jefferies Andy Hallsworth	John Chilver Tm Butcher

Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee (Chairman: David Carroll, Scrutiny officer: Tom Fowler)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
23 rd November 2023	Planning Performance	Including determination of applications (delegated and committee), extension of time and appeal numbers/decisions (including committee)	Steve Bambrick/Darran Eggleton	Peter Strachan
	Regeneration Framework & Strategies	To review the Bucks Regeneration Framework, as well as the Aylesbury, Wycombe and Chesham Regeneration Strategies.	Richard Ambrose	Martin Tett
	Housing Strategy	To review the Housing Strategy.	Lisa Michelson	Mark Winn
15 th February 2024	Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Model Update	Review the implementation and functioning of the new Growth Board and its 4 sub-boards.	Richard Ambrose/Steve Bambrick	Martin Tett
	CIL/106 update & Planning Committee performance	CIL/106 update & Planning Committee performance - including numbers of applications, type of applications, over-turns, appeals and cost awards	Steve Bambrick/Darran Eggleton	Peter Strachan
18 th April 2024	NPPF Update	<i>To update the committee on changes made to the National Planning Policy Framework</i>	Steve Bambrick/Darran Eggleton	Peter Strachan
	Local Plan Update	<i>To update the committee on the progress of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan</i>	Darran Eggleton/John Cheston	Peter Strachan

Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (Chairman: Jane MacBean, Scrutiny officer: Liz Wheaton)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Presenters	Contributors
12 October 2023	System Winter Plan	For Members to hear from key health and care colleagues about the system winter plan, to include a review of what will be different this year to help mitigate the system pressures	Caroline Capell, Director of Urgent and Emergency Care	<p>Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member, Health & Wellbeing</p> <p>Craig McArdle, Corporate Director, Adults and Health</p> <p>Sara Turnbull, Service Director, ASC Operations</p> <p>Philippa Baker, Place Director</p> <p>Dr George Gavriel, Director for Bucks General Practice Providers Alliance (GPPA)</p>
	Patient Transport Services	For Members to receive an update on how the county's Patient Transport Services are operating, including a discussion around the key priorities and challenges facing this service.	TBC	TBC

	South Central Ambulance Service	This item is an opportunity for Members to meet the newly appointed Chief Executive for SCAS and to review the progress in implementing the actions from the improvement plan, following the CQC report in August 2022.	TBC	TBC
30 November 2023	Primary Care Network Inquiry – 12 month update	Following the Committee’s inquiry into the development of primary care networks, which was discussed at Cabinet in November, this item is a 12 month review of progress in implementing the recommendations which were agreed by Cabinet and health partners.	Philippa Baker, Place Director Simon Kearey, Head of PCN Development & Delivery Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member, Health & Wellbeing	Dr George Gavriel, Director for Bucks General Practice Providers Alliance (GPPA) Others - TBC
	Director of Public Health Annual Report	An opportunity for the Director of Public Health to present the annual report.	Jane O’Grady, Director of Public Health	
	Community Pharmacists	Item to be developed	TBC	TBC

29 February 2024	Dementia Rapid Review – 6 month update	Following the Committee’s rapid review into dementia support services, this is an opportunity to review the progress in implementing the agreed recommendations at 6 months.	TBC	TBC
	Carers Strategy	For the Committee to review the proposed carers strategy.	Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member, Health & Wellbeing	Craig McArdle, Corporate Director, Adults & Health Others - TBC
	Adult Social Care Transformation update	For the Committee to evaluate the progress in implementing the workstreams aligned to deliver the ASC transformation programme.	Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member, Health & Wellbeing	Craig McArdle, Corporate Director, Adults & Health Others - TBC
11 April 2024	Items to be scheduled			

Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee (Chairman: Bill Chapple OBE, Scrutiny officer: Chris Ward)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
9 November 2023	School Transport	To receive an update on the service including SEND transport and personal transport budgets (PTBs).	Richard Barker Lindsey Vallis	Steve Broadbent
	Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams: 12-month progress update	The Select Committee will review the progress of work on implementing the 10 recommendations made in the Pollution in Buckinghamshire's Rivers and Chalk Streams review which was presented to Cabinet on 15 November 2022.	Chris Ward	Robert Carington
1 February 2024	East West Rail	To receive an update on the project.	Dr Laura Leech Susan Browning	Steve Broadbent Peter Martin EWR Reps
	Climate Change & Air Quality Strategy: Annual Review	The Committee will annually review the strategy following its adoption on 19 October 2021.	Steve Bambrick Ed Barlow Alexander Beckett David Johnson	Gareth Williams
	Buckinghamshire Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan	The Buckinghamshire LCWIP will identify and develop a strategic network for walking, wheeling and cycling (active travel) between and through settlements across the County. Active Travel will also be featured in the report.	Steve Bambrick Hannah Joyce Jonathan Fuller	Steve Broadbent
	Buckinghamshire Highways Service Transition	To consider a six-month update on the transition of the Highways contract following go-live on 1 April 2023	Richard Barker Kevin Goad	Steve Broadbent
28 March 2024	HS2	To receive an update on the project	Dr Laura Leech	Steve Broadbent Peter Martin HS2 Reps



Report to Cabinet

Date: 10 October 2023

Title: **Streetworks & Statutory Undertakers - Select Committee Report**

Relevant councillor(s) Councillor Bill Chapple OBE, Chairman of the Review Group

Author and/or contact officer: Chris Ward, Senior Scrutiny Officer
chris.ward@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: *Not ward specific*

Recommendations:

Recommendations made by the Transport, Environment & Climate Select Committee to Cabinet are that:

- 1) The dedicated funds available within the Department be directed towards measures that increase service proactivity and efficiency, for instance by maximizing recruitment ‘at ground level’ and offering staff training opportunities and accreditation.
- 2) Plans for core testing reinstatements are piloted as soon as practicable.
- 3) Consideration be given to extending working hours to provide cover for sites to be inspected during evening and weekends.
- 4) The Cabinet Member for Transport seriously considers pursuing court action against Statutory Undertakers that breach road traffic conditions rather than issuing a fixed penalty notice due to it being more cost effective for companies to pay the fine rather than comply with conditions.
- 5) The use of smart temporary or intelligent traffic lights be incentivized across the network for traffic management where possible.
- 6) A target be set for all temporary traffic lights and other traffic management be removed within four hours following completion of works and explore penalization measures for non-compliance.

- 7) **The Council promotes itself as a neutral third party when requesting work programmes from the fibre companies.**
- 8) **The use and benefits of one.network be actively promoted to the public, Parishes and Councillors.**
- 9) **The Streetworks team work with the Statutory Undertakers to engage with local Community Boards regarding planned upcoming works, particularly those that may be disruptive.**
- 10) **The Cabinet Member for Transport urgently lobby the Department for Transport to:
 - a) **Significantly increase Fixed Term Penalty Notice fines for conditions being breached and/or operating without permit to ensure that fines are a true deterrent;**
 - b) **Increase Section 74 fines to Statutory Undertakers and for them to be applicable on non-working days.****

Reason for decision: For Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee agreed to set up a rapid review into Streetworks & Statutory Undertakers at its meeting on 30 March 2023. The TECC Chairman advised he would chair the review group and five other councillors volunteered to participate.
- 1.2 It was agreed that the review would not commence until May 2023 to allow the service to settle following the change in Highways contract to Balfour Beatty.
- 1.3 In June and July 2023, the review group collected evidence through meetings both in person and on Teams. The review group then met to discuss and agree its key findings and recommendations which are presented in the report found at Appendix 1.
- 1.4 A series of questions on Streetworks and Statutory Undertakers were also included as part of a Town and Parish Council survey on Buckinghamshire Council services which ran from 22 May to 13 August 2023 – see Appendix 2.
- 1.5 The report was presented to the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee on 14 September 2023.

2. Other options considered

- 2.1 Appendix 1 provides further context to the Select Committee's recommendations. Cabinet is asked to consider these recommendations and provide a response.

3. Legal and financial implications

- 3.1 These will be considered as part of the Cabinet's response.

4. Corporate implications

- 5.1 These will be considered as part of the Cabinet's response.

5. Next steps and review

- 5.1 As noted above, Cabinet will provide a response to the Select Committee recommendations at its meeting on 10 October 2023. The Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee will then receive an update after 6 months and 12 months to monitor the implementation of these recommendations.

6. Background papers

- 6.1 Agenda and Minutes of the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee meeting 30 March 2023:
<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=343&MId=17617&Ver=4>

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**Transport, Environment &
Climate Change Select Committee –
Streetworks and Statutory
Undertakers Rapid Review**

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Introduction

Through my work as Chairman of the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee, I have been acutely aware of the increase in Streetwork permit applications that the Council has received, increasing from 22,000 requests in the financial year 2019/20 to around 65,000 permit requests in 2022/23. A significant contributor towards these numbers are the two large-scale infrastructure projects taking place in Buckinghamshire, HS2 and East-West Rail, as well as the numerous fibre broadband providers that have increased operations in Buckinghamshire in the past couple of years. These permits and subsequent streetworks of Statutory Undertakers on the Council's Highways network has an impact on all residents, businesses, communities, and parishes across the county.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the utility companies that attended our meeting in-person as part of our evidence gathering process as well as the two neighbouring Local Authorities we spoke with on Teams. I would also like to thank my fellow members of the review group (pictured below), Councillor Steven Broadbent (Cabinet Member for Transport), Derek Carpenter (Network Management Streetworks Manager) and Chris Ward (Senior Scrutiny Officer).

Cllr Bill Chapple OBE, September 2023



Cllr Bill Chapple OBE
Aston Clinton & Bierton



Cllr Peter Brazier
Ivinghoe



Cllr Mick Caffrey
Stone & Waddesdon



Cllr Robert Carington
Ridgeway West



Cllr Caroline Cornell
Buckingham West



Cllr Andrew Wood
Gerrards Cross

Aim of the Rapid Review

Buckinghamshire Council, Highways England, private developers, and utility companies all carry out road works and streetworks on highways in the county. The Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee understand the impact that works on Highways can have on residents and businesses in Buckinghamshire and wanted to focus on streetworks which is essentially any works carried out to build or repair utilities (gas, electricity, water and broadband) that run alongside or underneath the road.

The Select Committee was concerned that the amount of streetworks had been increasing in Buckinghamshire which was negatively impacting residents travelling on or living alongside the Highways network. With this in mind the overarching aim of the rapid review was to understand the extent of the current situation in Buckinghamshire and explore possibilities for improvement.

Methodology

The review group gathered evidence as follows:

9 May 2023 – Opening discussion with Members to hear experience in their wards and examples from casework.

22 May - 13 August 2023 – A series of questions on Streetworks and Statutory Undertakers were included as part of a Town & Parish Council survey on Buckinghamshire Council services.

30 June 2023 – Discussion with Council officers from the Streetworks Team.

4 July 2023 - In person meeting with a sample of Statutory Undertakers that carry out work on the network:

- Cadent Gas
- Fibre & Wireless
- Gigaclear
- Openreach
- Swish Fibre
- Thames Water
- Affinity Water (could not attend but submitted a written statement)

11 July 2023 – MS Teams meeting with representatives from other Local Authorities (Milton Keynes City Council and Cambridge County Council) to consider best practice elsewhere.

25 July 2023 – Review Group meeting to discuss and consider all evidence gathered to date and to identify areas of recommendation.



Context

A Highway Authority has a formal Network Management Duty to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic throughout the network and to co-ordinate works in a fair manner, balancing Statutory Undertakers' rights and the needs of all highway users. A Highway Authority cannot prevent works from occurring but can use legislation, Codes of Practice and negotiation to mitigate its impacts.

Statutory Undertakers (e.g. Network Rail, utility and broadband providers) have a legal right to carry out work on the highway subject to a permit being granted as they have an obligation to provide and maintain a supply or service to customers. They also have a statutory duty to co-operate with the Highway Authority. In emergencies, works may commence prior to applying for a permit – genuine emergencies cannot be refused by Highway Authorities however conditions can be imposed. Emergency works require a retrospective application to be submitted to the Highways Authority. Statutory Undertakers must reinstate the highway to a safe and clean position, as outlined in the Code of Practice for reinstatement, with a guarantee of 2 or 3 years (subject to depth of excavation).

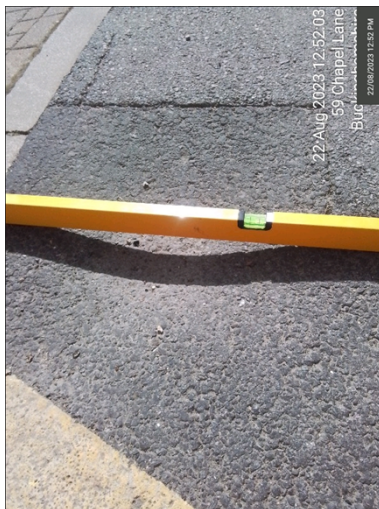
Highway Authorities' Streetworks teams work under two main Acts of Parliament:

- New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA) 1991¹
- Traffic Management Act (TMA) 2004²

Buckinghamshire Council is the Highway Authority in the county and the Streetworks team administers and enforces the Buckinghamshire Streetworks Permit Scheme (BuPS)³ which covers around 2,000 miles of highway (including carriageway, adjacent footways and verges). As the Highway Authority, the Council has a statutory duty to maintain the safety and usability of the roads which needs to be balanced against Statutory Undertakers' rights to carry out streetworks to maintain their services.

The Council received around 65,000 permit requests in 2022/23 which has increased significantly from 22,000 requests in the financial year 2019/20. Duration lengths vary from two days to over six months for major projects (e.g. HS2 & EWR). 43 Statutory Undertakers are currently being co-ordinated, of which 15 are broadband fibre companies, along with the Council's own works and private licenses.

The service is on track to deliver £5m of income to the Council in 2022/23, of which £1.5m is ringfenced to the Permit Scheme, an overall increase from £2m in 2019/20. Permit fees must only be spent on the Permit Scheme and related activities.



¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/22/contents>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/18/contents>

³ <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/highway-licences-and-permits/permit-scheme-for-road-works-and-street-works/>

Summary of Recommendations

The Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee Rapid Review group recommend that:

Streetworks Team

- 1) The dedicated funds available within the Department be directed towards measures that increase service proactivity and efficiency, for instance by maximizing recruitment 'at ground level' and offering staff training opportunities and accreditation.
- 2) Plans for core testing reinstatements are piloted as soon as practicable.
- 3) Consideration be given to extending working hours to provide cover for sites to be inspected during evening and weekends.

Statutory Undertakers

- 4) The Cabinet Member for Transport seriously considers pursuing court action against Statutory Undertakers that breach road traffic conditions rather than issuing a fixed penalty notice due to it being more cost effective for companies to pay the fine rather than comply with conditions (See Recommendation 10).
- 5) The use of smart temporary or intelligent traffic lights be incentivized across the network for traffic management where possible.
- 6) A target be set for all temporary traffic lights and other traffic management be removed within four hours following completion of works and explore penalization measures for non-compliance.
- 7) The Council promotes itself as a neutral third party when requesting work programmes from the fibre companies.

Communication

- 8) The use and benefits of one.network be actively promoted to the public, Parishes and Councillors.
- 9) The Streetworks team work with the Statutory Undertakers to engage with local Community Boards regarding planned upcoming works, particularly those that may be disruptive.

Lobbying

- 10) The Cabinet Member for Transport urgently lobby the Department for Transport to:
 - a. Significantly increase Fixed Term Penalty Notice fines for conditions being breached and/or operating without permit to ensure that fines are a true deterrent;
 - b. Increase Section 74 fines to Statutory Undertakers and for them to be applicable on non-working days.

Please read on to understand more fully the reasoning and evidence behind the recommendations.

Key Findings & Recommendations

After carefully considering the evidence we collected across a number of meetings, four key themes emerged, and the review group wish to report on our observations and key findings as follows:

Streetworks Team

- The service had previously been delivered by Ringway Jacobs, however staff have been transferred inhouse to the Council in April 2023 following the new Highways contract with Balfour Beatty. Following TUPE, all job roles had been re-evaluated to better reflect their duties and responsibilities and this was reflected in their salaries, which should aid in future recruitment and retention in a competitive market.
- The service structure allows for 10 inspectors however we heard that there are currently only 6 due to 4 vacancies which were to be advertised shortly. The inquiry group understand that the service has found it challenging to be fully staffed and this was attributed to the lack of resources made available by Ringway Jacobs. The imminent move of staff across to Buckinghamshire Council also likely contributed towards the lack of resource allocation.
- Of particular note is that permit applications have increased from 22,000 in 2019/20 to 65,000 in 2022/23 therefore the workload has trebled for an already stretched service. By comparison, the group heard that Hertfordshire County Council has 17 staff (a mix of inhouse and Ringway) that receive 75,000 permit applications per year and has capacity to temporarily increase staff during peak periods.

The group fully acknowledge and appreciate the work that the team carries out however increased demand and officers covering responsibilities for vacant posts can lead to increased pressures, reduced team morale, burnout, and a reactive stance.

- The group heard that the service is self-funded due to two forms of income:
 - The permit fees scheme. The permit fees vary in amount due to the works required:
 - Emergency water repairs: £45.
 - 10+ days or has temporary traffic regulation order: £245.
 - The Council is exempt from paying these fees when working on the network but is required to apply for a permit.
 - Administering Fixed Term Penalty Notices (FPN).
 - Sites are inspected for compliance and their quarterly performance impacts the percentage of sites that are visited (i.e. poor compliance = more inspections).
 - The FPN amount varies depending on the situation but is set by Government:
 - Working without permit: £300 (rising to £500 if not paid within 29 days).
 - A site not displaying company information (e.g. permit number & contact details) or not having temporary traffic lights in place: £80 (rising to £120 if not paid within 29 days).
 - The Council issued around 2,500 FPNs last year.
- The service brings in approximately £1.5m annually for the Permit Scheme and currently have surplus funds of around £1m available. Crucially, these funds are ringfenced within the Streetworks service by legislation and cannot be re-allocated elsewhere within Highways (e.g. pothole repairs). It was noted that these funds are reported to the Department for Transport and that continual surplus could lead to the Council being instructed to reduce permit fees or reimburse funds to Statutory Undertakers.
- The group heard from other Local Authorities on their approach to surplus funds and, although there were some differences, officer training, accreditation and equipment appear to be common areas where income is spent. The service may also want to consider methods to increase capacity in busy periods.
- Ringway Jacobs had not prioritised the training and accreditation of officers so the Council now offering this may improve the service's recruitment and retention package. Moreover, the offer of training and accreditation may assist officers to develop their skills and knowledge when managing Statutory

Undertakers and considering complex legislation, regulations, and Codes of Practice.

- The group believe that these dedicated funds offer an opportunity for the service to become more proactive, enhance the Council’s reputation and better meet Buckinghamshire residents’ expectations.

Recommendation 1 – The dedicated funds available within the Department be directed towards measures that increase service proactivity and efficiency, for instance by maximizing recruitment ‘at ground level’ and offering staff training opportunities and accreditation.

- Whilst Statutory Undertakers can work on the Highways to install and maintain their supplies, they have a duty imposed on them to reinstate pavements and roads upon completion of their works to a required industry standard. Reinstatements are guaranteed for two or three years depending on their depth as set out in the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways⁴.
- This responsibility lies with the Statutory Undertaker despite the work likely being carried out by their approved subcontractors. The group heard that, generally speaking, the established utility providers (gas, electricity and water) are more compliant due to their experience whereas the newer broadband fibre providers are less so. In particular, City Fibre have been required to repeat reinstatement works on over 150 roads in Buckinghamshire and had been given a RED warning in Milton Keynes in 2019⁵.
- In addition to checks carried out by the Council, each of the six companies the group spoke with carry out their own sample checks on reinstatement works with accompanying processes:
 - Openreach and Thames Water outsource their testing to PJ Keary. Additionally, Thames Water require each reinstatement to be certified by the contractor with pictures and measurements.
 - Cadent Gas carry out sample checks with contractors required to return to fix non-compliance.
 - Swish and Fibre & Wireless monitor sites, particularly those that have experienced issues. At the meeting, Swish Fibre acknowledged that they had initially expanded operations too quickly and had positively engaged with the Streetworks team to rectify their performance.
 - Gigaclear require photos of layers and depth during reinstatement and check around 50% of sites after 15-18 months. Gigaclear aim to improve contractor performance rather than remove them from the network initially so that they are not re-hired by another Statutory Undertaker.

The group acknowledge the collaborative efforts of the Streetworks team and Swish Fibre in being a ‘success story’ by improving Swish Fibre’s performance over the past year and would encourage other companies to engage with Buckinghamshire Streetworks to achieve the same.

- The Council can test reinstatement works by taking a core sample of trenches – if they fail then the Statutory Undertaker is required to return and re-do the reinstatement at their cost.⁶ The Council is also able to charge for core testing on failed reinstatements, but the amount must be cost-neutral and not generate revenue.⁷



An example of poor & unfinished reinstatement work along a duct trench near Mentmore in 2015.

⁴ [Department for Transport - Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways \(May 2020\)](#)

⁵ <https://www.ispreview.co.uk/index.php/2019/12/red-warning-given-to-cityfibres-ftth-build-in-milton-keynes.html>

⁶ [Department for Transport - Code of practice for street works \(March 2023\)](#)

⁷ [The Street Works \(Recovery of Costs\) \(England\) Regulations 2002](#)

- Despite requests by the Streetworks Manager, core testing did not always take place under Ringway Jacobs due to resources. However, following the restructure, the group heard that plans for a three-month trial period of core sampling is being considered, the results of which will determine any potential long-term plans.
- The group considered the experience of core testing by neighbouring Local Authorities:
 - Milton Keynes City Council felt that its viability was subject to expected failure rates.
 - Hertfordshire County Council have a 2019 – 2024 coring programme and test around 1,200 cores annually. The programme had been a useful deterrent for failed reinstatement works when it was introduced and allowed for targeted testing at poor performing Statutory Undertaker sites. However, it was noted that proving failure liability can be challenging and it was unclear how the programme would look beyond 2024.
- The group feel that, on balance, carrying out core testing is important so that:
 - a) It demonstrates that the Council takes the quality and longevity of reinstatement works seriously in Buckinghamshire.
 - b) Organisations that recurrently fail core test sampling can be targeted for further investigatory works on reinstatements at other sites, held to account and engaged by the service for improvement.
- For persistent issues, the service may even want to consider using Balfour Beatty to achieve a high-quality reinstatement and re-charging the Statutory Undertaker.
- This will not require any additional revenue budget as the dedicated funds are already available (See Recommendation 1).

Recommendation 2 – Plans for core testing reinstatements are piloted as soon as practicable.

- The group felt that key issues to be considered were:
 - Traffic management remaining in place on site over the weekend with no apparent work taking place and removed on a Monday despite works and reinstatement being completed on a Friday.
 - Emergency works appearing over evenings and/or weekends.
- Both instances impact residents and may cause reputational harm to the Council due to the perception of not being aware of activities taking place on its own network outside working hours.
- The group heard that the service’s original Ringway Jacobs contracts were for standard working day hours but understand that following the role re-evaluations, there is scope to expand this to evenings and weekends.
- Having heard that Milton Keynes Council conduct out-of-hours inspections and have, in fact, cleared unnecessary temporary traffic management and recharged to the relevant Statutory Undertaker, the group feel this is an opportunity for Buckinghamshire Council’s Streetworks team to explore.

Recommendation 3 – Consideration be given to extending working hours to provide cover for sites to be inspected during evening and weekends.



Statutory Undertakers

- Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to Statutory Undertakers that do not comply with permit conditions is one of the enforcement actions that the Streetworks team can carry out. As previously mentioned, the amounts vary depending on the breach and are set by national Government.
- The Council can also issue charges to Statutory Undertakers for works that overstay on its network – these are referred to as Section 74 as outlined in the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991.⁸
- The group heard that a Statutory Undertaker not complying with a condition to have manually controlled traffic lights can lead to a FPN of £90 being issued. To comply with the condition, the Statutory Undertaker would have to hire a traffic light operator which has a day rate of around £300. Various testimonies from members of the inquiry group and Local Authorities indicate that some Statutory Undertakers chose to risk not complying with permit conditions in some instances because paying the FPN was simply more commercially viable.
- Highway Authorities do have the power to take legal action against Statutory Undertakers rather than issue a FPN and these can carry an unlimited fine. To date, Buckinghamshire Council has not attempted prosecution however best practice is being sought from other Councils such as Barnet who regularly issue court summons.
- The group heard that this legal process is complex, and that other Local Authorities are increasingly considering this option given the lack of deterrent the FPNs provide (see Recommendation 10). Hertfordshire County Council has taken an organisation to court within the last ten years and caution that pursuing this option is not without risk.
- Members feel that whilst a balance does need to be struck to work collaboratively and reasonably with Statutory Undertakers, the Council must consider the disruptive impact of condition non-compliance on residents and the Highways network. Issuing a court summons in the right circumstances would be a significant step forward for the Council and benchmark how seriously the Council views its own permit conditions. This is particularly important given the increased activity by fibre companies in the past couple of years that will continue in Buckinghamshire for the foreseeable future.
- Members appreciate that any court action would require liaison with the Resources portfolio regarding the allocation of appropriate Legal resource and note that monies from the existing dedicated Streetworks fund may be allocated towards court costs.

Recommendation 4 – The Cabinet Member for Transport seriously considers pursuing court action against Statutory Undertakers that breach road traffic conditions rather than issuing a fixed penalty notice due to it being more cost effective for companies to pay the fine rather than comply with conditions.

- When meeting with the Statutory Undertakers, the group heard of ‘smart’ temporary traffic lights that are designed to increase traffic flow and reduce pollution by adjusting the signals based on the volume of traffic. These had initially been trialled by Kent County Council in 2019 as part of its lane rental scheme.⁹
- A number of the Statutory Undertakers had used these and noted the following benefits:
 - Removed the need for a manual operator and thereby reduce this cost and health and safety concern.
 - A longer battery life.
 - Remote monitoring.
- The group also heard testimony of instances of traffic being caused at sites due to a failure of the manual traffic light operator, for example through a lack of care, attention, network understanding or training.
- Hertfordshire County Council have noted the success of ‘smart’ temporary traffic lights by Affinity Water and Cadent Gas and is liaising with UK Power Networks regarding their utilisation. Milton Keynes is also pushing for their increased usage.
- Despite the technology being currently limited to only two-way traffic management, the group believe

⁸ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/22/section/74>

⁹ <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/kent-business/county-news/smart-traffic-lights-trialled-on-countys-roads-204117/>

that the Streetworks team should incentivize their usage where appropriate to alleviate traffic flow.

Recommendation 5 – The use of smart temporary or intelligent traffic lights be incentivized across the network for traffic management where possible.

- After robust questioning of the Statutory Undertakers at the meeting, members were advised that traffic management may remain in place over the weekend with no apparent working taking place for various reasons including reinstatements curing, contract service level agreements with traffic management suppliers and further or different works commencing on Monday. The group note that whilst there may be legitimate reasons for traffic management remaining in place, this does frustrate the public and must be clearly explained on site through signage to residents and the passing public.
- The group note that a number of organisations, such as Cadent Gas, Thames Water and Affinity Water, have 4-hour service level agreements with traffic management companies to remove temporary traffic lights upon reported completion of reinstatement works. In Cadent's case, they check this by requiring their traffic management company to submit timestamped pictures of the site being clear within the 4-hour agreement timeframe.
- Cadent Gas's traffic management removal agreement is seven days a week however this is not the case for all Statutory Undertakers.
- Although the Council cannot control the service level agreements of Statutory Undertakers, it can seek to impose permit conditions that target the removal of temporary traffic lights within four hours so that disruption on the network is kept at a minimum.
- The group note that the implementation of this recommendation is subject to enforcement by the Streetworks team and may require out-of-hours inspections for compliance (see Recommendation 3).

Recommendation 6 – A target be set for all temporary traffic lights and other traffic management be removed within four hours following completion of works and explore penalization measures for non-compliance.

- The Council meets quarterly with all 43 Statutory Undertakers that operate in Buckinghamshire to encourage the co-ordination of works through the sharing of their work programmes (i.e. their upcoming projects and timescales that will impact the Highways network). Monthly coordination and performance meetings also take place with individual Statutory Undertakers.
- Of these 43 organisations, 15 are broadband fibre companies. The service has found that the fibre companies are less inclined to share their work programmes with the Council due to commercial sensitivities, as the companies are in competition with each other. The group heard that this has led to frustrating instances of 5 or 6 fibre companies working on the same street within short succession with limited coordination. The Parish survey revealed a recurring theme of improving coordination of Statutory Undertaker works with one example being multiple fibre companies recently operating in Great Missenden.
- The groundworks of the fibre companies vary; if they are able to operate within the existing Openreach ducting network this is light whereas the installation of new ductwork is more invasive.
- Fibre & Wireless and Swish Fibre informed the group that it is challenging to collaborate with other fibre companies in Buckinghamshire however there has been positive joint working between Swish Fibre and Gigaclear in Oxfordshire and Berkshire. The group hope this can be replicated in the county.
- The Local Authorities the group met with aim to have an initial meeting with new fibre companies operating within the area to discuss forward plans and understand their planned footprint but do find that communication does curtail thereafter. Members note that there are powers available to put restrictions in place to improve poor performance of fibre companies and that the Council can 'contain' areas of operation to ensure the Highways network is protected from rapid expansion and poor coordination.
- By contrast, the traditional Statutory Undertakers are more forthcoming to the Council with their work programmes. This may be due to a combination of a lack of competition and being more established. In

particular, Cadent Gas advised the group that they have been improving on coordination with increased Council liaison and have commenced collaboration with other utility companies.

- Members acknowledge the need for commercial sensitivity, but a balance needs to be struck between the interests of fibre companies and residents.

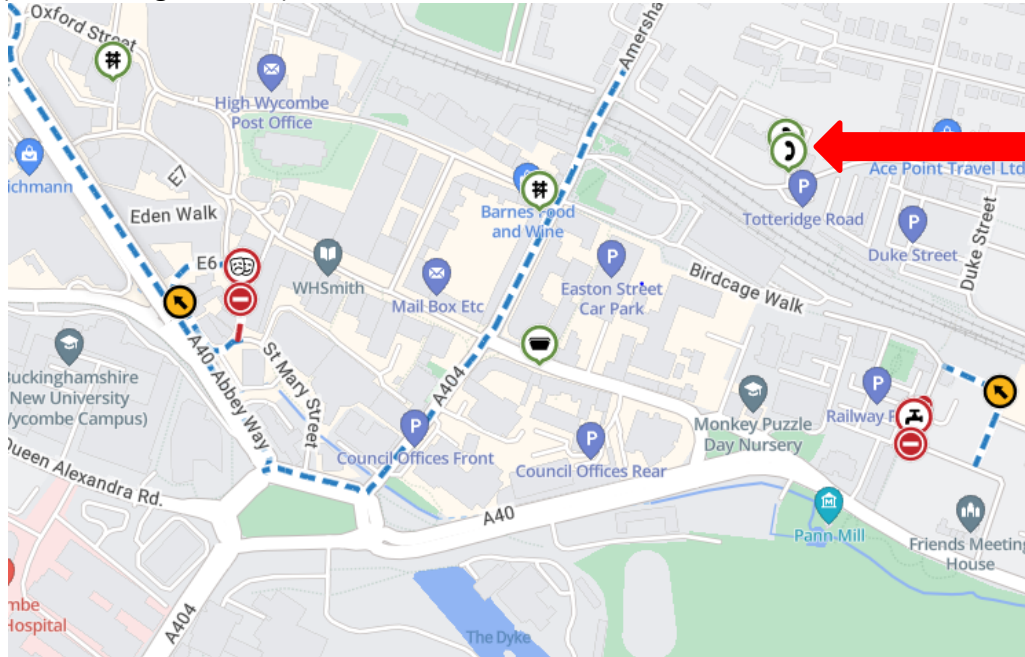
The inquiry group suggest that the fibre companies cause their industry reputational harm by not being more forthcoming with their work programmes to the Council, as the Council is best placed to coordinate Streetworks and minimise disruption to residents and businesses on the Highways network.

Recommendation 7 – The Council promotes itself as a neutral third party when requesting work programmes from the fibre companies.



Communication


- Buckinghamshire Council uses [one.network](#) to clearly show works being carried out on the Highways by Statutory Undertakers and the Council. This tool enables members of the public to self-serve via the website and look up all ongoing and future planned roadworks, streetworks, road closures, diversion routes, events, skips and scaffolding etc. Users are able to see the permit reference number, event duration, and the responsible organisation.
- In the example below, a user can see an overview of a number of works scheduled to take place in High Wycombe (as of 21 August 2023):



- Clicking on one of the telephone icons brings up more information about the works:

Work zones, delays unlikely ✕

📅 Aug 21, 8:00 AM – Aug 23, 11:59 PM

Virgin Media 

Information for Road Users

Location
Totteridge Road

Traffic management
No carriageway incursion

Date
Aug 21, 8:00 AM – Aug 23, 11:59 PM

Information for Operational Teams

Road: [Buckinghamshire Council](#)

Agency:

Permit ID: N7152J907-297045-PGN_AC

Permit ref: N7152J907-297045-PGN_AC-01

Current status: Work in progress

Activity type: Utility Asset Works

Footway closure: Provide Alternative Route

Early start: Yes

Event info: 9:09 AM

last updated:

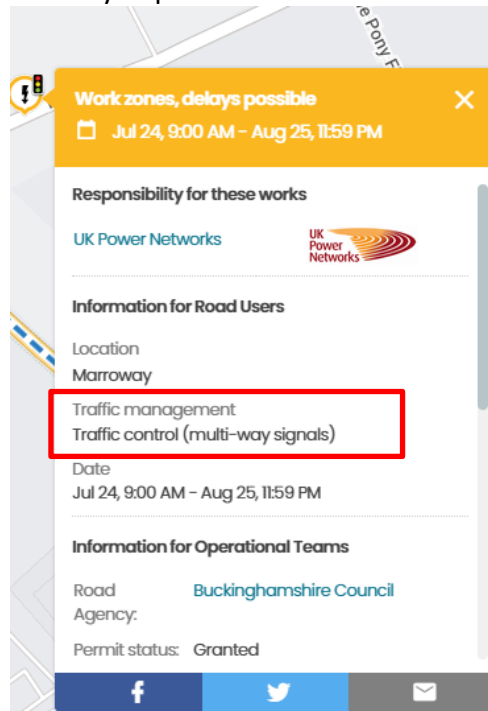
Last updated on one.network: 9:09 AM

[f](#) [t](#) [e](#)

- The above example indicates the permit has no incursion onto the carriageway. This is important for

users to know as they would be able to report any incursions to the Streetworks team for investigation.

- The example below is on the A413 between Weston Turville and Stoke Mandeville indicating likely disruption to the network, particularly in peak hours:



- The group heard that Milton Keynes has had success in promoting one.network to its councillors and has significantly reduced the overall number of incoming queries thereby allowing resource to be focused elsewhere. Hertfordshire County Council reported similar and also publicises one.network on its streetwork communications and social media.
- The use of one.network amongst members may be sporadic however some members utilise it fully by setting up alerts within their wards and relaying these to impacted businesses and Parishes. Members also report using one.network to check for streetworks that may overrun in their ward and notice that some sites remain in place until the end of their permit date despite the works seemingly being completed.
- Additionally, Parishes themselves would benefit from signing up to one.network streetworks alerts within their areas as receiving advanced communication was revealed to be their overall #1 priority in the Parish Survey. This notice is, of course, subject to how far in advance the permit is applied for by Statutory Undertakers.
- The review group believe that the resources used to promote one.network to parishes and councillors would likely be offset by a significant reduction in enquiries received by the call centre and the Streetworks team regarding works being carried out on the Highways network.

Recommendation 8 - The use and benefits of one.network be actively promoted to the public, Parishes and Councillors.

- Members heard examples of different communication efforts that Statutory Undertakers carry out:
 - Cadent ranks likely disruption by Gold/Silver/Bronze. A recent Gold incident in Stanley Hill, Amersham, involved letters to over 3,000 residents, drop-in sessions and signage, as well as discussion with the Council's communications team and local press.¹⁰
 - Fibre & Wireless tend not to engage with local residents, however if significant streetworks are required then letters would be sent.
 - Gigaclear have attended parish meetings and do letter drops.
 - Social media is often used although some communities engage more effectively with different

¹⁰ <https://cadentgas.com/news-media/news/june-2023/fbd987e3-e63d-41eb-bbbf-0e304b849e80>

mediums e.g. Facebook or Nextdoor.

- Members suggested that engagement with Community Boards would be an additional way to effectively communicate on local works and distribute information via the dedicated Board Managers. This would have the benefit of reaching a wider audience rather than a single parish meeting. Companies could also attend the meetings to answer questions on ongoing projects involving streetworks.
- Engagement with Community Boards could also address the high priority parishes place on being given advanced notice of works, as well as direct feedback from the community on recent streetworks e.g. condition of reinstatements and/or appropriateness of road diversions.

Recommendation 9 - The Streetworks team work with the Statutory Undertakers to engage with local Community Boards regarding planned upcoming works, particularly those that may be disruptive.



Lobbying

- The Council has the power to issue FPNs to Statutory Undertakers when permit conditions are breached on site. The Council can also issue a Section 74 FPN, which is when streetworks have overrun their permit, however these charges can only apply to working days despite overrun works causing disruption on non-working days too.
- As referenced in Recommendation 1, FPN amounts vary depending on the breach but are set by national Government and have remained static for 20 years.
- As referenced in Recommendation 4, the group heard that it can be commercially viable for Statutory Undertakers to risk non-compliance and pay FPNs rather than comply with permit conditions. One example the group heard was a £90 FPN charge vs a traffic light operator day rate of around £300.
- The Statutory Undertaker is liable to pay the FPN charge to the Council however in practice these charges are then passed on to the subcontractor that falls foul of the site's permit conditions.
- Buckinghamshire is not alone in this as the group heard of similar experiences from Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire. The group also understand that the Local Government Association is gathering representations from all Local Authorities with the intention of presenting to the Department for Transport on this specific topic.
- As FPNs are not acting as a strong deterrent, Councils may need to consider other action such as legal proceedings (see Recommendation 4) to protect their interests.

The group strongly believe that the values assigned to FPNs are outdated and not fit for purpose to act as a true deterrent. They must be increased to change the behaviour and improve the standards and compliance of Statutory Undertakers and their subcontractors. With this in mind, the group would ask the Cabinet Member for Transport to add his voice to the calls for an increase in fines as set out in our final recommendation below.

Recommendation 10 - The Cabinet Member for Transport urgently lobby the Department for Transport to:

- a. Significantly increase Fixed Term Penalty Notice fines for conditions being breached and/or operating without permit to ensure that fines are a true deterrent;**
- b. Increase Section 74 fines to Statutory Undertakers and for them to be applicable on non-working days.**



Report to Cabinet

Date:	10 October 2023 Cabinet
Title:	Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and Place Based Strategies
Relevant councillor(s):	Portfolio Holders: Peter Strachan and Rachael Matthews
Author and/or contact officer:	Richard Ambrose
Ward(s) affected:	All and town centre wards for Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe
Recommendations:	Adopt the Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and the town centre regeneration strategies for Aylesbury, High Wycombe and for Chesham as key corporate documents of Buckinghamshire Council
Reason for decision:	Adoption of these four documents will set out the emerging Council approach and ambitions for our places, in particular regeneration in Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe, that will provide opportunities for growth and meaningful regeneration projects.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework and a series of town centre strategies have been developed to set out a coherent approach to regeneration across the whole of the county.
- 1.2 The Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework provides the framework for how communities can organise themselves to determine their local ambitions and set out the regeneration vision for their local area. Three town centre regeneration strategies provide the local vision and place-based ambitions for Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe.

2. Summary of the regeneration framework and strategies

- 2.1 Buckinghamshire is not dominated by a single town/city but is instead made up of a thriving network of large and medium sized towns, and large villages. Regeneration in these important towns and villages is essential to ensure long-term survival and prosperity as well as to achieve the economic ambitions for Buckinghamshire.
- 2.2 The Council is supporting communities to develop ambitions for their place and set out local strategies to stimulate and coordinate regeneration investment. Regeneration in Buckinghamshire is community led and delivered through partnerships. Working with key public and private sector partners, the Council provides local leadership and clarity for practical, long-term vision which is essential to achieve consensus for strategic and local regeneration.
- 2.3 Working across Buckinghamshire partners, the Council plays a key role in spotting opportunities for investment and building momentum for that through a compelling narrative for communities.
- 2.4 The Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework 'Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future' (appendix a) provides a framework for action including a vision and a set of principles for how communities can organise themselves to determine their local ambitions and set out the regeneration aspirations for their local area.
- 2.5 Regeneration Bucks also sets out two guiding aims for regeneration activities for our towns to consider:
 - a) To create vibrant and characterful town centres which celebrate local culture and heritage and offer high quality inclusive public realm where people will want to live, work, visit, shop and relax.
 - b) To create fertile conditions for enterprise and skills to support the launch of new businesses and create the conditions for them to succeed.
- 2.6 Following on from the Framework, the largest towns of Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe have been developing their own town centre regeneration strategies which articulate the growth potential and set out the vision and ambition of these towns. This includes the Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy (appendix b), Chesham Regeneration Strategy (Appendix c) and the High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy (Appendix d).
- 2.7 **Aylesbury**
- 2.8 The Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy sets out new town centre ambitions as well as following through with the good work that has already been achieved through its Garden Town programme.

- 2.9 Aylesbury is seeing significant population growth leading to the Local Plan ambitions for 16,027 new homes to be built by 2033 as well as significant new employment space.
- 2.10 Although the town centre faces competition from larger nearby towns such as Milton Keynes and Bicester, it is well placed to provide a more distinct, specific proposition as a modern market town centre with vibrant independent shops.
- 2.11 The Aylesbury Strategy supports the town centre in becoming a thriving community with greener streets, more outdoor spaces, improved accessibility and greater biodiversity. It aims for a place where people want to live, work and visit.
- 2.12 The Aylesbury Garden Town Board Strategic Oversight Board and its partners have informed the Aylesbury Regeneration strategy and will continue to support the delivery of regeneration activities within the town centre.
- 2.13 **Chesham**
- 2.14 Chesham is an ambitious town. It is already recognised as a strong creative and community town, represented by many artists, musicians and other creatives. This strategy looks to capture this momentum and explore opportunities to see how culture and the creative sectors can be leveraged to drive regeneration forward.
- 2.15 The town has several vibrant independent retailers and hospitality businesses, bringing the best of urban/rural living together with the countryside on its doorstep. Excellent rail connection to London's underground network provides lots of potential and opportunities to Chesham including expanding its tourism capability and expanding its economic activity.
- 2.16 The strategy seeks to build upon, learn from and progress work already undertaken by local partners, including Chesham Town Council, the Chesham Community Board and local community groups. Together with the Chesham Regeneration Group, these stakeholders will continue to play a key role in bringing this strategy to life and realising the anticipated regeneration.
- 2.17 **High Wycombe**
- 2.18 High Wycombe has been a firm pillar of the Buckinghamshire economy, generating inward investment and leading in research and development. However, despite its many strengths, High Wycombe has challenges it must look to respond to in order to remain successful, including supporting business growth, improving public realm and planning for increased demand for urban living. This Strategy acknowledges these challenges and seeks to ensure the town centre adapts to ensure it remains relevant, lively and a vibrant place that is well used and delivers for local people and businesses.

- 2.19 The council has a strong track record of delivery in High Wycombe. Success with the multimillion pound Future High Street Fund demonstrates this is a place that can deliver regeneration and heritage led developments.
- 2.20 High Wycombe benefits from strong existing partnerships. The Council, through the High Wycombe Regeneration Group, will continue to build on these relationships, including the High Wycombe Town Committee, High Wycombe BidCo, Cressex BID, the High Wycombe Community Board and other active groups in the town to take proposals forward to deliver this strategy.
- 2.21 The ‘town centre’ focus of the High Wycombe strategy has been widened to encompass the Cressex Business Park, given its economic significance to Buckinghamshire.

3. Other Options considered

- 3.1 The council has the option to not have any town centre strategies – however, without a clear articulation or vision, future partnership working would be more challenging and could hinder any future external funding opportunities.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 There are no direct legal and financial implications in the adoption of this Framework and its strategies. Any future potential schemes that require Council funding will require a key decision in line with financial procedures.

4a. Director of Legal & Democratic Services comment

- 4.2 Monitoring Officer has been consulted and had no further comment

4b. Section 151 officer comment

- 4.3 Section 151 officer has been consulted and had no further comment

5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 These documents also directly support the Council’s Corporate Plan priorities:

- 5.2 *Increasing prosperity*** – The Regeneration Framework and its strategies will encourage sustainable economic growth, working with our partners to maximise opportunities and boost productivity. It will continue to attract high quality jobs and investment in skills, innovation and connectivity. It will support growth to benefit communities, preserving the character of our environment while delivering everything we need to prosper.

Improving our environment – The Framework and strategies support our town centres in being more accessible to shoppers and pedestrians, they ensure spaces are flood resilient by encouraging more greenery, trees and sustainable drainage schemes and in general, buildings that are environmentally friendly as well as protecting key conservation spaces within the town.

Protecting the vulnerable – town centre regeneration will focus on public realm improvements that contribute to designing out crime and antisocial behaviour so that our town centres can be places where people feel safe and want to spend time in to stay connected to the community and enjoy their High Streets.

Strengthening our communities – Regeneration supports the delivery of more town centre living, including the provision of affordable housing for our communities.

5.3 Further implications:

a) Property Implications – No immediate property implications have been identified at this stage. The Council has significant assets and land ownership within the strategy areas. This strategy may provide regeneration opportunities to acquire, develop and dispose of assets. Each asset will be looked at individually at appropriate times.

(b) Climate Change and Sustainability – Regeneration will seek to create and ensure our town centres are healthy and resilient. It will take measures to protect our natural environment and promote biodiverse environments

(c) Equality and Diversity Issues, Equality Act 2010 – The Regeneration Framework and its strategies are overarching, seeking to help create and enable inclusive and diverse public places and buildings with increased access to transport, but does not have any direct impact upon protected groups itself. Proposals and initiatives which seek to introduce or implement regeneration results will be formulated considering equalities impacts where appropriate and relevant Equalities Impact Assessments will be prepared at the beginning of any proposals or initiatives.

(d) Data – It is not anticipated that a data protection impact assessment is required, however, if any personal data is collected or used in connection with the Regeneration Framework in the future - this will be reviewed.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

6.1 Local stakeholder engagement takes place through the various groups at the town centre level including High Wycombe Regeneration Group to support the development of the High Wycombe Strategy. In Chesham, the Chesham Regeneration Group supported the development of the Chesham Strategy. For Aylesbury, the Aylesbury Garden Town Board Strategic Oversight Board informed the development of the Aylesbury Strategy.

6.2 The Board's membership includes elected Members, the Town and Parish Councils and other local community groups/business interests.

6.3 Following engagement and agreement of these documents at Cabinet, engagement activities will expand out to a wider group of local members and stakeholders as well as the relevant Community Boards for the Town Strategies.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

7.2 Initial engagement has taken place with internal and external stakeholders. This will continue with details of any individual schemes and projects coming out of the strategy work shared regularly.

8. Next steps and review

8.1 The current proposed programme going forward is as follows: Once the strategies have been adopted by Cabinet, the intention is to share and engage strategies with the wider stakeholders in the three key town centres as well as across the County such as Buckinghamshire Business First. Furthermore, specific forums and opportunities will be identified to share these strategies as 'prospectus' type documents to funding bodies and developers.

9. Background papers

9.1 Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework with its associated strategy for Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email to democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.



REGENERATION BUCKS - TRANSFORMING FOR THE FUTURE

Succeeding in our town centres and high streets

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE REGENERATION FRAMEWORK

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Appendix

FOREWORD

An ambitious framework for place-based growth across Buckinghamshire

The powerful partnership forged between the Buckinghamshire Growth Board and collaborators across Buckinghamshire provides the platform from which to pursue our ambitious place-based approach to growth across the county.

This exciting regeneration framework highlights the potential of our three larger towns - High Wycombe, Aylesbury, and Chesham, and offers practical guidance to help our other towns and villages realise their potential. It recognises the numerous strengths Buckinghamshire already has as a network of towns and places, in a prime location with extraordinary natural and cultural assets.

It sets out a shared vision, highlighting how our communities and businesses will benefit from 'Regeneration Bucks' and describes our priorities for creating vibrant, distinctive, healthy, and resilient social centres with rich conditions for enterprise and skills.

It is a framework to unify partners around common goals, identifying what is meaningful for our places and it outlines our principles for achieving change. These include planning for a greener and more climate-friendly future, improving our existing places, as well as investing in new, well-designed spaces and enhancing connections within and between them.

It is the 'jumping off point' for a series of 'place' strategies that will advance how we leverage each place's distinct identity to achieve long lasting change. It paves the way, sets the tone, and attracts the right investments for culture, education, leisure, visitor, and the night-time economy and begins to prioritise and locate interventions to catalyse physical change.

Buckinghamshire stands ready to work, hand in hand with government and with partners at all levels to deliver change and shape ideas going forward into the future.



Cllr Martin Tett
Leader of
Buckinghamshire Council



Cllr Rachael Matthews
Deputy Cabinet Member for
Town Centre Regeneration

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PURPOSE OF 'REGENERATION BUCKS – TRANSFORMING FOR THE FUTURE'

Buckinghamshire Council is driving forward a clear place-based regeneration ambition for its social centres - our towns and high streets – so that all our places succeed, as set out in the Strategic Vision for 2050.

Regeneration looks at all the interlinked ways we use our public spaces and buildings and reimagines how these complex social, business, and residential areas can be revitalised to create thriving, prosperous places that attract commercial and economic investment and opportunity. It provides a holistic view of development and placemaking and illustrates the gains to be made for people where they live, work, and relax. This contrasts with redevelopment which tends to focus solely on the demolition of old or redundant physical infrastructure to make way for new construction.

Through this framework – **Regeneration Bucks – Transforming for the Future** – the Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Board sets out a shared understanding of the role people and places can play in achieving transformation and growth within our county, building on our reputation as a great place to live and work. By promoting conversations about each community's vision for its future, the aim is to identify real improvements for our market towns and high streets, helping to articulate local identity, support sustainable development and promote economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being.

The 'Regeneration Bucks' Framework

- Sets out our vision for place-based regeneration and the priorities that will underpin delivery of our ambitions for Buckinghamshire.
- Establishes a regeneration approach, guides investment, and focuses action as a non-statutory document. It does not make land-use allocations decisions or determine funding for projects.
- Enables effective local partnership working, encouraging collaborative approaches to addressing local challenges and sharing best practice.
- Provides a basis to develop strong cases for investment for local initiatives and supports the pursuit of external funding opportunities.

As an overarching framework and practical support document, this publication is for residents, businesses, public sector partners and private investors who want to get involved in transforming Buckinghamshire and enabling it to be the best place it can be. This framework is complemented by 'place-specific' strategies for Aylesbury, High Wycombe, and Chesham.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Buckinghamshire has a vital role to play in delivering the Government's Levelling Up agenda. We can build upon our history of being a productive, creative and entrepreneurial economy, and continue to be a net contributor to the UK exchequer, delivering £18.4 billion per year to national output.

National priorities for Levelling Up are to grow the economy in the places that need it most, regenerate towns and cities, improve the planning system to give communities a louder voice and ensure developments are beautiful, green and accompanied by new infrastructure and affordable housing.

In recent years as a country, the UK has experienced a significant decline in its town centres. The migration to online retail, combined with the development of out-of-town shopping malls, and the impact of high business rates and wages have all combined to result in the closure of some of the most familiar high street retailers over recent years. Between 2013 and 2019, 1 in 12 high street stores closed their doors. Over this period the biggest loss of stores was in clothing, phone, gift and bookstores, with 750 clothes stores lost from UK town centres between 2013 and 2019. Some sectors did grow, particularly hair and beauty, which added an extra 1,000 stores over this period.



The pandemic accelerated increasing trends of online sales overnight in summer 2020, and online shopping remains important in how businesses operate on high streets. Physical retail has been in steady decline for some time and although most recently the British Retail Consortium reported that high street footfall has gone up by 8.6% compared to March 2022, it is still 12% down on 2019.

Our town centres have traditionally been a central focus for interaction in our communities, providing a physical, social experience of togetherness. They have also been drivers of economic growth, jobs and innovation, with 4.4 million people employed in high street businesses in Britain (2018, latest data) of which only one quarter was retail. 16% of people in Britain live on or around a high street (2018). Widespread closures in retail, hospitality and commercial spaces have collectively made a significant impact on the feel of our town centres as well as the wellbeing, safety and prosperity of our communities.

Nationally, there is a recognition of the need to shift our town centres from shared workspaces dominated by office space to more experiential uses and activities. In Buckinghamshire, we need to give our spaces a new lease of life as vibrant community centres of economic and social activity. Through collaboration and creative thinking, there are real opportunities to develop innovative mixed use social spaces that reflect local character, culture and heritage and help our communities to thrive, boosting local productivity and restoring a sense of local pride and identity.

The aim of the Government's Future High Streets Fund is to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that drives growth, improves experience, and ensures future sustainability. Delivering high quality design and beautiful places, and protecting heritage, are fundamental aspects of the Government's Levelling Up and Regeneration agenda.

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE CONTEXT

Buckinghamshire is a richly diverse, enterprising, and attractive county located in the heart of a growing and innovative region. With a population of over half a million people, the county is one of the traditional Home Counties, bringing with it great connections into central London and ready access to international gateways at Heathrow and London Luton Airports. From quintessential rural villages and a backdrop of beautiful countryside to urban based living in our network of attractive and diverse towns, Buckinghamshire is a sought-after location.

Buckinghamshire's major town centres are supported by the surrounding large and small villages, each providing their own characters, heritage, and local centres, which form the county's network of liveable places. Our towns and villages play a critical role in achieving Buckinghamshire's ambitions for future investment and place distinctiveness.

Even though we are a thriving county and many of our communities can enjoy some of the best outcomes in the UK, regeneration in Buckinghamshire must respond to a range of issues which shape our places and key centres of growth. As we see our population continue to grow, we will also see challenges around job opportunities, skills and qualifications, and supporting business growth, as well providing a range of housing to meet the needs of our diverse demographics and communities. Resilience is an ever-growing issue as we move

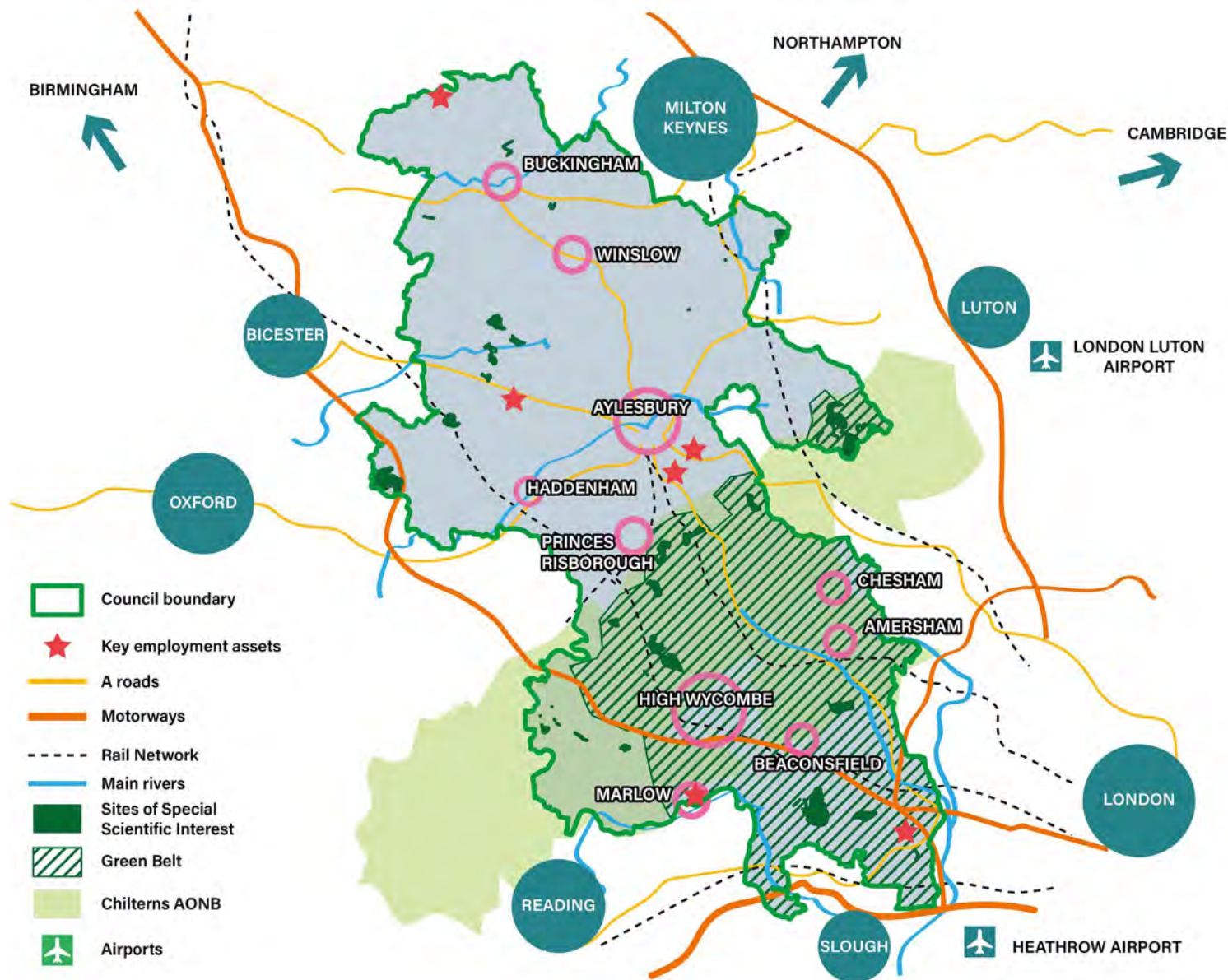
towards carbon neutrality, with a growing imperative to create places that put sustainability and health and wellbeing at the heart of people's lives.

Levelling up, high quality-places, and successful high streets are all inter-linked and require a strong spatial dimension. Across Buckinghamshire, the socio-economic dynamics of places vary, and different places may have different capacities for transforming their localities and responding to environmental and social challenges and opportunities.

Across Buckinghamshire, our towns have been impacted in different ways by the changing retail landscape, and in some cases that is down to place identity. For example, in our major towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe we are seeing a vast number of shop closures and the loss of variety in terms of the high street offer, whereas Marlow is managing to thrive with its strong mix of independent retail.

Our individual market towns and villages will need to play to their distinctive strengths and capitalise on local opportunities, building on the important role they hold in providing experiences, rather than focusing on commercial and retail. As community leaders, we need to lead the future of our town centres by developing an overall vision and working collaboratively with other stakeholders to make that a reality.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE TOWNS



Buckinghamshire has a network of great towns and high streets, and the framework sets out an overview of our 10 largest towns and villages (by population).



Aylesbury

As the county town of Buckinghamshire, Aylesbury provides the largest regeneration opportunity. Through the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, Aylesbury is identified as playing a substantial and critical role in delivering growth for Buckinghamshire, especially after being awarded Garden Town status in 2017. The identification of Aylesbury as a Garden Town recognises Aylesbury's role as the county town for Buckinghamshire and its central location in the 'brain belt' between Oxford and Cambridge.



Amersham

With its new and old town, Amersham offers both a pastime and modern feel to its high streets and surrounding areas. The town is also uniquely connected to the Metropolitan railway, whilst also being on the doorstep of the River Misbourne and Chesham Bois Wood.



Beaconsfield

Beaconsfield is a charming town with a well-kept and gracious main street with a varied range of shops and pubs, whilst also being highly accessible from both London and Birmingham via the M25 and the Chiltern Railway line.



Buckingham

A former medieval market town, Buckingham is now a charming town with an abundance of green spaces. Buckingham is home to the University of Buckingham and is neighbouring many attractions such as Stowe Landscape Gardens and Silverstone Racetrack.



Chesham

Chesham is a market town that is rich in culture, acting as a hub for creative start-ups. Along with Amersham, Chesham is directly connected to the London underground and this is something that is unique regarding the two towns.



Haddenham

Haddenham is a large village that is considered highly sustainable due to its good transport links to Aylesbury, Oxfordshire and London. Haddenham also has a range of shops, public houses and other services, including a range of employment opportunities at Haddenham Business Park.



High Wycombe

A vibrant market town with a thriving town centre and high street. High Wycombe is easily accessible from both London and Birmingham via the M40, along with direct trains offered by Chiltern Railways. The town lies along the River Wye and is at the edge of the Chiltern Hills.



Marlow

A historic market town on the River Thames, Marlow's town centre is made up of historic streets with small-listed buildings and a rich mix of high-quality shops, restaurants, wine bars and pubs that all add to its charm as a destination and support its thriving High Street to ensure good levels of footfall and low vacancy rates. The town benefits from plenty of events through the year, including the Marlow Town Regatta and the annual 'Swan Upping' which attract visitors to the town.



Princes Risborough

A small market town built on the spring line at the foot of the Chiltern Hills. The town is within the setting of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the boundary of which hugs the town on the southern and eastern side. The majority of businesses in Princes Risborough are very small. The main employment areas are the Princes Estate and on Longwick Road, with the former showing most potential for business expansion. New floor space is likely to cater for local companies requiring smaller, but high-quality, premises that are not dependent on direct motorway access.



Winslow

A historic market town which has managed to retain its original layout created in the 13th century with its beautiful half-timbered buildings along its High Street. It has a mix of pubs and restaurants with interesting independent shops and antique centre. The A412 links Winslow to Buckingham and Aylesbury, and as part of future East West Rail ambitions, the town will be served by the new railway line with a new station under construction just outside the town.

KEY STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Our approach to place-based regeneration creates the opportunity to build on our strengths and work together to tackle our challenges.

Strengths:

- Our identity as a great place to live within a network of attractive and diverse market towns with easy access to green spaces, the AONB and countryside.
- The rich culture and heritage that underpins the attractiveness of our places and makes them well placed for character-based regeneration.
- Our strong SME economy.
- Our location at the heart of a growing and innovative region, benefitting from east west movement, inward investment opportunities and superb London and international connections.
- Emerging centres of education excellence clustering in popular towns like High Wycombe and Aylesbury, attracting youth, diversity and growth opportunities adding to the already highly educated and mobile, population.

Challenges:

- The changing retail environment and its implications for our town centres.
- Nurturing our SMEs and specialist sectors to develop our business economy after a period of subdued growth.
- Impact of high inflation levels on businesses and residents.
- Traffic congestion in and between our town centres.
- Local labour and skills shortages, particularly in our key growth sectors.
- Employment opportunities for residents with few or no qualifications, and those claiming out of work benefits.
- Addressing deprivation in our Local Levelling Up through the Opportunity Bucks targeted wards.

KEY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR TOWNS

Our vision for regeneration in Buckinghamshire is to create places where people want to be, driving local revitalisation and creating vibrant spaces to live and work – and this exciting process has already begun.

To ensure we focus our resources on achieving maximum impact, the immediate focus of 'Regeneration Bucks' will centre on our three larger towns – Aylesbury, High Wycombe, and Chesham, which provide the key opportunities for development and investment. Additionally, where applicable, initiatives will extend outside of town centres to areas of need, for example in Cressex and Micklefield in High Wycombe.

Regeneration and investment in our major towns will be supported by Buckinghamshire's strong existing partnerships with delivery partners. Buckinghamshire and its partners are supporting the drive forward for regeneration in our major towns through opportunities such as land ownership, facilitation of strategic discussions with investors and communities and the brand of Buckinghamshire through our Strategic Vision for 2050.



AYLESBURY

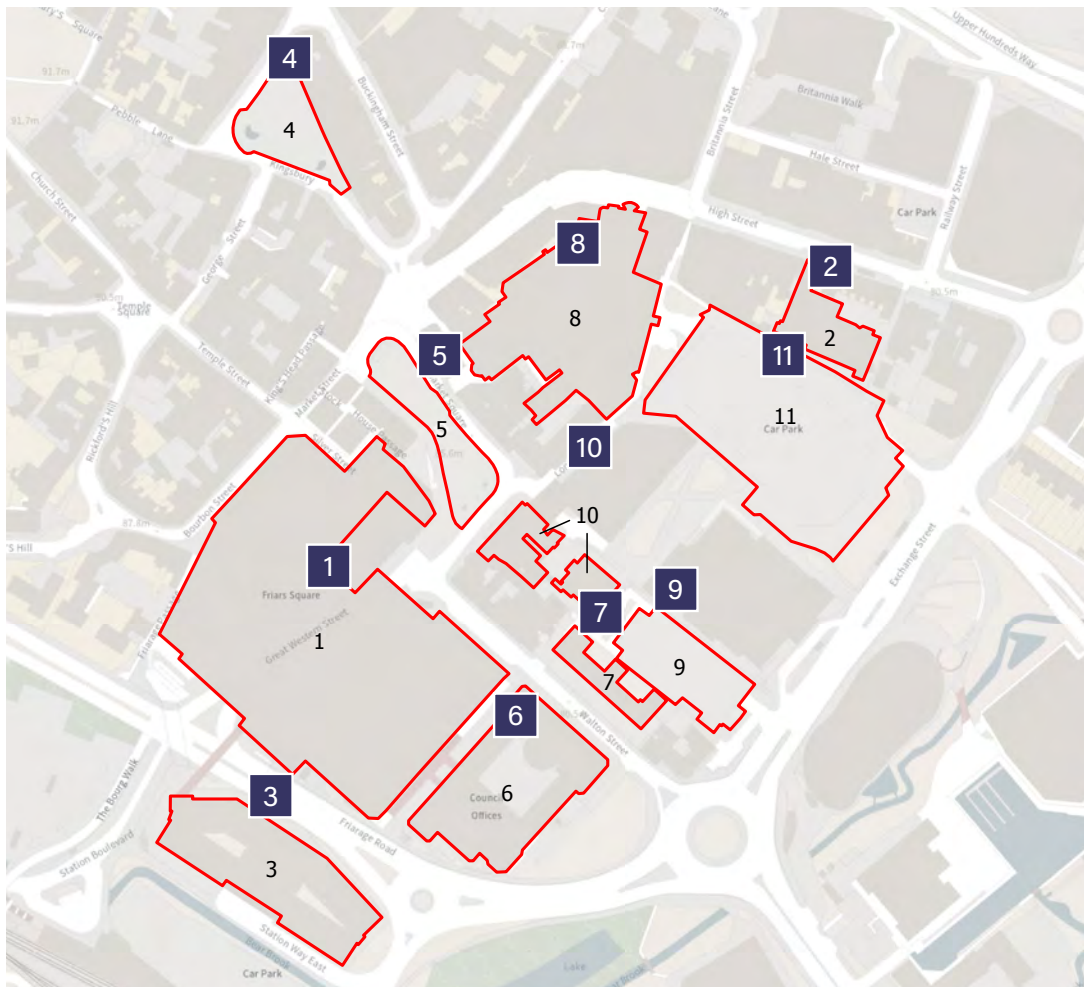
In our county town of **Aylesbury**, we are embarking on a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the historic centre, evolving our ideas to meet the demands of a modern market town centre and bringing forward homes and jobs for the growing number of new and existing residents.

There is a desire to preserve and enhance historic buildings and for a sensitively designed connection between the old and new parts of the town to overcome current challenges of coherence across the town centre. We want Aylesbury town centre to be a thriving community that combines retail, urban living, social interaction, community and economic activity.

With the recent adoption of the Garden Town Masterplan, working with local partners, we have ambitious plans for a number of projects to create a vibrant town centre. This is supported by potential significant investment facilitated by the Council as a major landowner across the county, including the recent acquisition of Friars Square Shopping Centre and capital investment in Aylesbury's public realm.



INVESTING IN AYLESBURY



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Friars Square Shopping Centre | 7 Old County Offices |
| 2 Former Gala Bingo Hall | 8 Hale Leys Shopping Centre |
| 3 Friars Square Multistorey Car Park | 9 Waterside North Car Park |
| 4 Kingsbury Square | 10 Old Courts Building & Judges Lodgings |
| 5 Market Square | 11 Exchange Street Car Park |
| 6 New County Offices | |

- Given the planned housing growth for Aylesbury, there is an urgent need to ensure that the town centre delivers what a growing and changing town needs. Aylesbury has the key components of a great town but needs support to elevate its offer.
- Buckinghamshire Council and its partners have already proven their commitment to investing in Aylesbury through their track record of delivery which has seen the completion of projects such as the Waterside Theatre and the recent full occupation of the Exchange.
- Aylesbury has an appetite to be a testbed, try new things and is open to exciting new ideas for the future, particularly to improve accessibility and inclusion.
- Aylesbury is ideally located with excellent road and rail connections to London, Oxford, Birmingham and High Wycombe.

HIGH WYCOMBE

As home to Buckinghamshire New University and our largest market town, High Wycombe, has a diverse social fabric that is rich in character and architectural diversity. The town is a gateway to the surrounding Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and located to the south of the county town of Aylesbury and northwest of London, it is well served by the strategic road network and rail line.

Future regeneration ambitions for the town seek to transform the area into a thriving, resilient town with a strong identity and a hotbed of talent. Higher education partners in High Wycombe have ambitious plans for developing their urban campuses, pulling a higher number of students to the town centre, which brings vibrancy and activity. Through recent investment from the Future High Street grant funding, the Council is enabling redevelopment projects on the high street to improve the retail and food and beverage on offer.

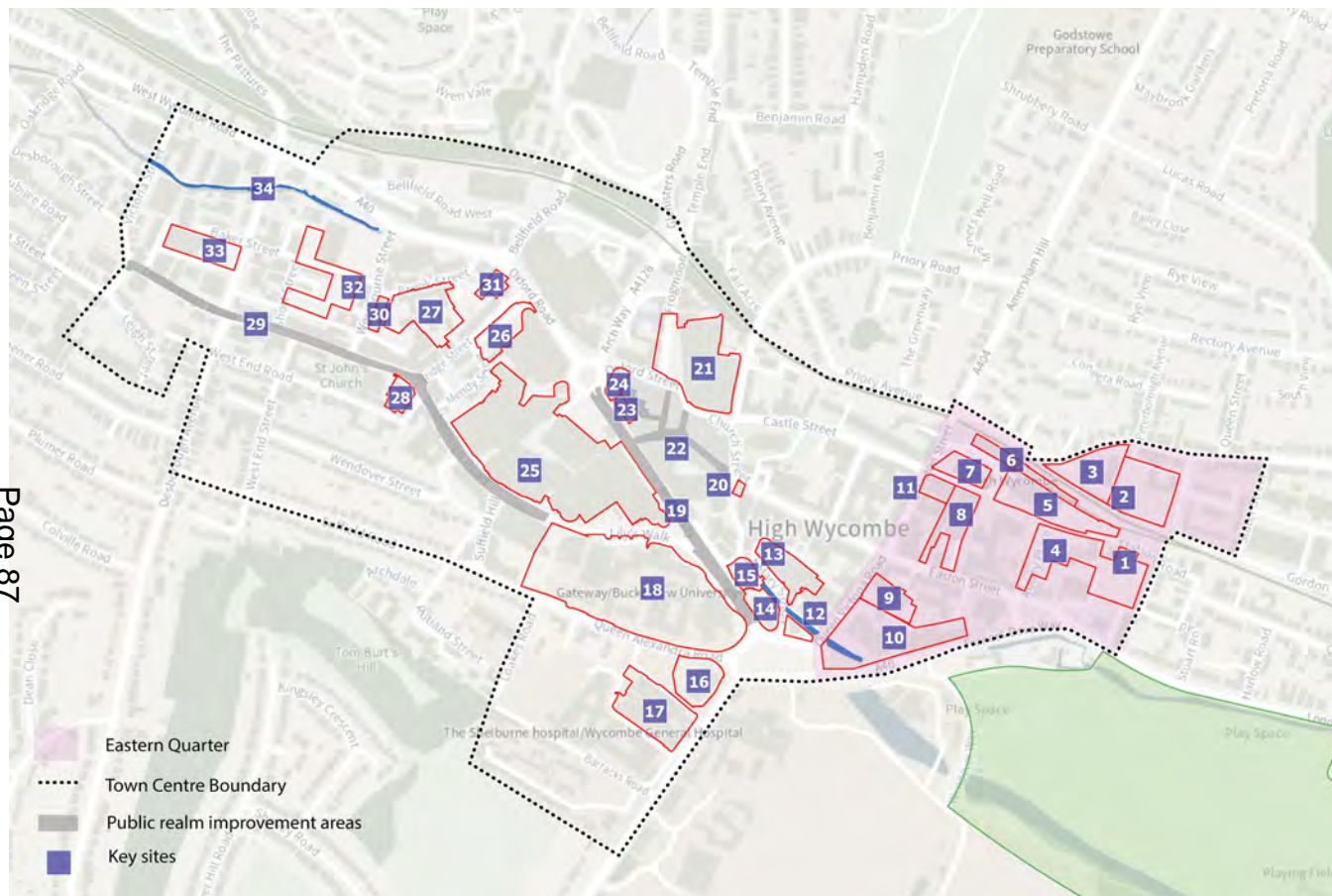
The Council is also investing capital funding for key public realm improvements in the town centre through the White Hart Street project. This includes lush new planting and trees, lighting, and sustainable urban drainage.

Regeneration in High Wycombe also includes supporting Cressex Business Park, which became a new Business Improvement District in 2022.



INVESTING IN HIGH WYCOMBE

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- High Wycombe will create a sustainable well-connected business support structure where businesses will be able to start, grow, adapt and support a highly skilled workforce.
- Buckinghamshire Council and partners are committed to ensuring investment opportunities in the public realm, local environment, heritage, retail and cultural offering.

1	Railway Place Car Park	10	Council Offices	19	Abbey Way Flyover	28	Bridge Court
2	Duke Street	11	Prospect House	20	Guildhall	29	Desborough Road
3	Sword House	12	High Wycombe Social Club	21	Chilterns Shopping Centre & Frogmoor	30	Vernon Building
4	Abbey Place	13	Swan Theatre	22	White Hart Street & Bull Lane	31	Buckinghamshire College Group
5	Station Car Park	14	Fire Station	23	Travelodge	32	Desborough Car Parks
6	Train Station	15	Riverside Social Club	24	The Curve	33	Lidl and Car Park
7	Brunel Engine Shed	16	Office Outlet	25	Eden Shopping Centre	34	River Wye
8	Easton Street Car Park	17	Wycombe General Hospital	26	Bus Station		
9	Post Office	18	Buckinghamshire New University	27	BNE Brook Street		

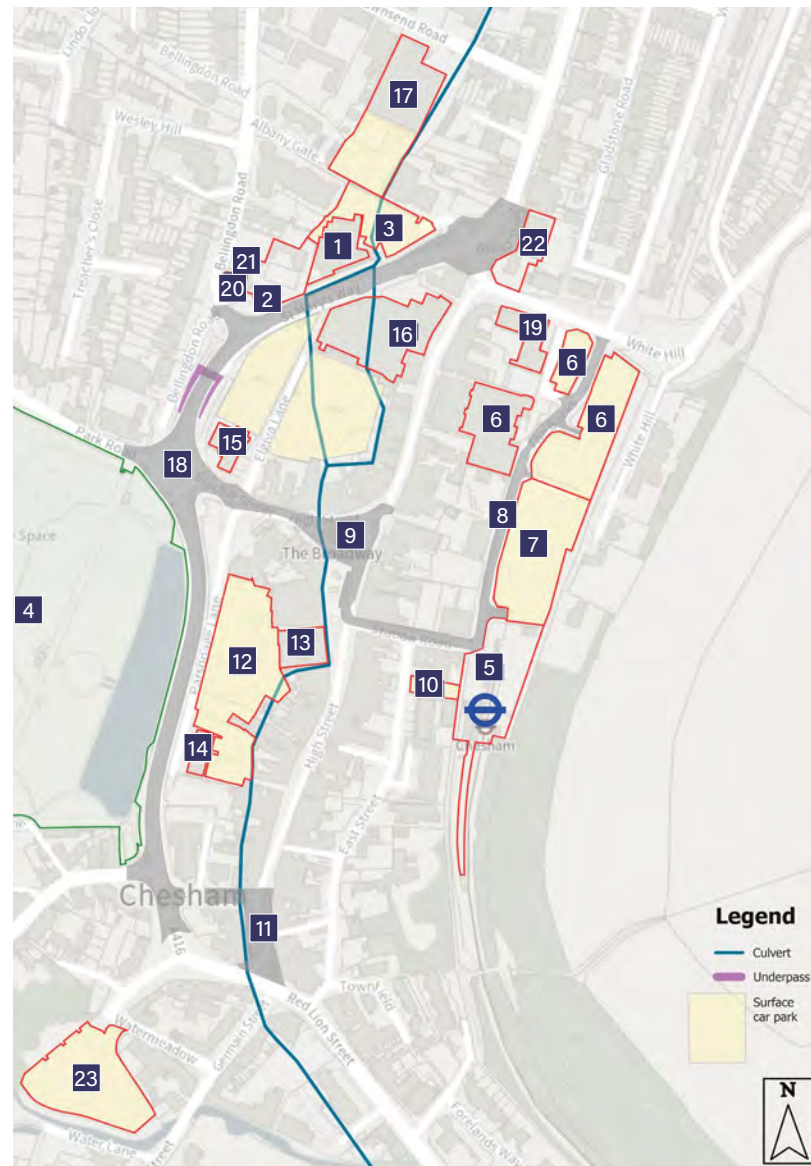
CHESHAM

The market town of Chesham is located to the south-east of the county town of Aylesbury and north-west of central London and sits at the end of the London Underground Metropolitan Line. Chesham has a rich heritage whilst providing an important commercial, civic, leisure and community function to its residents and those in neighbouring villages. In many ways, Chesham is Buckinghamshire's arts and creative town, with the potential to be the launch pad for aspiring creative start-ups to grow and expand its night-time economy.



INVESTING IN CHESHAM

- 1 Elgiva theatre
- 2 Chesham Youth Centre
- 3 Albany Place Car Park
- 4 Lowndes Park Skottow's Pond
- 5 Train Station
- 6 Waitrose & Car Parks
- 7 Transport for London Station Car Park
- 8 The Backs
- 9 The Broadway and Station Road
- 10 East Street Car Park
- 11 Market Square
- 12 Star Yard/Catlings Car Park
- 13 M&Co
- 14 Chesham Town Hall
- 15 Chesham Library
- 16 Sainsbury's Car Park
- 17 Wickes
- 18 St Mary's Way
- 19 UK House
- 20 Quaker's Buildings
- 21 All Spring Media
- 22 Broad Street Gateway
- 23 Water Meadow Car Park



- A strong partnership is already in place between Buckinghamshire Council and Chesham Town Council to deliver future aspirations for the town. The Town Council is developing a comprehensive Neighbourhood Plan which aligns to the regeneration strategy for Chesham.

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Regeneration in Buckinghamshire will vary from place to place – each place is unique and so we will never seek standardisation as one size will not fit all. Through the Framework Principles (see page 26), we set out an over-arching approach to regeneration in Buckinghamshire. Drawing on a consistent approach and a collective understanding of themes and aims will enable small or large market towns to reimagine their place while supporting Buckinghamshire as a whole county to become ‘more than the sum of its parts.’

Many areas in Buckinghamshire are already well developed in their ambitions for regeneration and improvement and this framework works alongside community strategies and plans to ensure local priorities align. Community Boards, Town/Parish Councils, and community and voluntary sector groups will be consulted as part of the local application of this framework.

‘Regeneration Bucks’ is informed by and aligns with existing and future place-specific strategies, plans and policies that protect and support Buckinghamshire. These include the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy, Local Transport 4, the emerging Local Transport Plan 5, the Council’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Buckinghamshire’s Culture Strategy, as well as regional and national strategies and the Government’s 25-year Environment Plan.



The Regeneration Framework will also help to inform the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan and neighbourhood plans by setting out strategic regeneration aims for Buckinghamshire and key placemaking principles. It also provides a guiding approach for partnerships and local people to consider their own specific regeneration ambitions and the considerations they must factor in based on the challenges facing their local place.

Additionally, the framework underpins the delivery of existing funding grants, such as the Future High Street Fund in High Wycombe, The Aylesbury Garden Town initiative, as well as providing the basis to secure future funding opportunities.

In the context of limited resources, the Council, as well as partners, must ensure capacity is targeted for maximum impact. We will, therefore, have a particular focus on the regeneration plans for Aylesbury, Wycombe and Chesham. This links to the ambitions set out in 'Opportunity Bucks', our local initiative on Levelling Up that recognises the need for targeted action in these communities to tackle inequalities and improve outcomes for all. Successful town centres in these areas will be key to supporting the development of these communities and so local regeneration strategies will be developed in each of these three towns in 2023/24.

This framework recognises that other areas in the county will have local regeneration priorities that need to be progressed. In these areas, where there is greater local capacity to drive regeneration, this Framework provides a toolkit to enable areas to develop and progress their own plans for renewal.



PLACEMAKING AND KEY AREAS FOR LOCAL DISCUSSION IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

A place-based approach means understanding the most important local components and possible opportunities for a successful place and working with people in those communities to have the biggest impact within that area. The approach set out in this framework and its toolkit welcomes input and ideas from a broad spectrum of key stakeholders. There is an expectation for local approaches to consult widely so that the views of the communities are reflected in future proposals. Successful regeneration happens through effective consultation and engagement with residents and businesses.

Taking this localised approach provides the scope to identify, understand and collectively address the most important issues and opportunities, drawing on and valuing everyone's contribution and perspective, resulting in a lasting impact, and creating sustainable change.

Regeneration activities need to be the right fit for the scale and needs of each community. Using this framework will help target activities towards local opportunities and constraints to identify which placemaking principles and actions are most appropriate. Each of our communities, with their own assets and ambitions, will have distinctively local priorities for what might be needed for place-based regeneration.



For places that are considering exploring regeneration initiatives, a first step is to consider how well developed the three key areas for local discussion and action are. Each of our places will have some combination of these in place locally and regeneration discussions will explore how to develop them further:

1

LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL VISION

- How clear are the local ambitions currently being expressed?
- Have the local stakeholders come together to think about the future vision for their place?
- How well developed is the case for regeneration involvement?
- Is an existing group well placed to drive this forward or is there a need to pull the right local stakeholders together?
- Who will be responsible, drive forward, co-ordinate and advocate the place of interest?
- How can existing education, health and workforce skills and distinct heritage be deployed to support ambitions of regeneration/society and/or how can these be improved?

2

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- What are the existing assets and how can those be maximised?
- These can include natural landscape including green and blue infrastructure, heritage assets such as historic buildings, and other public realm amenities like open spaces and key connectivity corridors. What protections and improvements would contribute to achieving place ambitions?
- Can these assets be enhanced and/or expanded?

3

ECONOMIC CAPITAL

- What are the commercial activities that are taking place; are these fulfilling the local needs?
- What are the economic strengths and opportunities to increase footfall and spending for local businesses?
- Where there is a commercial case underpinning regeneration aspiration, how can financial investment play a role in achieving place ambitions?

SPOTLIGHT ON... WINSLOW

Winslow is a smaller market town situated in the north of the county and has good road connections to Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire. For Winslow, there are opportunities to consider future vitality and viability of the town as a retail and commercial hub, particularly considering the impact of future strategic transport connections in the area such as East West Rail. Through local community groups such as the Winslow and Villages Community Board, the town and its communities are well placed to drive forward their own ambitions for future regeneration plans to deliver on local needs.



OUR VISION

The regeneration of our towns will celebrate local identity, create prosperity, and achieve our ambitions for communities and local businesses in Buckinghamshire.



FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE CHANGE ACROSS BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

There are two guiding aims for regeneration activities:

- To create vibrant and characterful town centres which celebrate local culture and heritage and offer high quality inclusive public realm where people will want to live, work, visit, shop and relax.
- To create fertile conditions for enterprise and skills to support the launch of new businesses and create the conditions for them to succeed.

The framework sets out ten guiding principles which we would expect our partners and communities to consider for the delivery of future place-based regeneration. These principles are specifically related to our town centres and high streets and are linked to a number of cross-cutting strategies for connectivity, environment, culture, the economy, and local levelling up.



PRINCIPLE ONE:

To ensure the creation of a strong network of towns in Buckinghamshire

- Provide a greater and broader overall Buckinghamshire economic, cultural, and social offer and play to the strengths of the groups of our market towns.
- Consider the relationships between local centres of activity and what connections need to be enhanced to encourage appropriate investment opportunities.
- Create communities (rather than commercial districts) through local engagement and community discussion on local priorities and needs with a good range of community facilities that provide spaces for everyone to engage with culture at a local level.
- Ensure that initiatives are based on an agreed understanding of the area identity and function and seek to enhance amenity and character areas, and culture and heritage.

PRINCIPLE TWO:

To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally

- Provide the right mix of residential housing to meet the needs of place and stimulate opportunities for town centre living, as well as a range of flexible working spaces, attractive and accessible green spaces, play spaces, markets, street entertainment and other leisure attractions so that workers are not required to commute far from the workplace.
- Develop partnership approaches to promote mixed use development opportunities, including strong retail functions in town centres and schemes that support flexible uses to reduce spending leakage and encourage town centres growth.

PRINCIPLE THREE:

To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs

- Particularly small and medium sized businesses, whilst enabling interaction with the larger high-tech sectors.
- Provide economic development support for businesses to encourage town centre occupation and work with existing business support networks to continue Buckinghamshire's role in leading the way on transitioning businesses to net zero.
- Consider opportunities to work with businesses that support the tourism and rural economy.

PRINCIPLE FOUR:

To create a network of high quality, well planned road networks with attractive streets and spaces, and cycling routes that are safe to use, well connected and accessible

- Ensure attractive and well-connected sustainable travel opportunities through our towns to promote active and healthy modes of movement.
- Consider options for harmonising different modes of transport particularly in our larger towns of Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham, to provide a diverse choice of travel for residents and visitors.
- Ensure our urban streets are safe and accessible to help create a network of high-quality spaces for both walking and cycling.

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PRINCIPLE FIVE:

To maximise the county's natural capital through its network of waterways and green spaces

- Open up access to natural environments such as rivers and canals, and green spaces to introduce urban greening whilst enhancing health and wellbeing outcomes and wildlife.
- Plan for a greener and carbon neutral future by identifying opportunities to mitigate against the changing climate and more extremes of weather.

PRINCIPLE SIX:

To provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and managed environment

- Deliver enhanced public realm opportunities that complement the existing character, form, and heritage assets.
- Ensure the consideration of the character and form of the existing buildings when exploring public realm enhancements and delivering the form of new buildings. Heights, materials and use will all need to factor into the overall placemaking ambitions of the town.
- Consider the importance of local architecture that complements the local heritage, and which are sensitive to existing buildings, and the relationship between new and old.

PRINCIPLE SEVEN:

To enhance strategic connectivity opportunities

- Maximise the opportunities of strategic links to places like London and Birmingham - particularly M4, M1, M40, rail, underground, and opportunities linked to East West Rail.
- Transform connectivity across places and to residential catchments and green infrastructure.
- Enable better digital connections across the county, particularly for those in the rural community where reach can be limited.

PRINCIPLE EIGHT:

To ensure a greener and more carbon neutral future

- Protect our natural environment through the promotion of new technologies, which will help to ensure our built and biodiverse environments are aligned with our climate change priorities.
- Provide diverse travel choices with a focus on promoting active and healthy sustainable modes. In our larger towns such as Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham we should consider supporting multi-modal transport hub opportunities.
- Improve traffic congestion issues and associated pollution to improve overall vibrancy and pride of place.

PRINCIPLE NINE:

To prioritise skills and development opportunities

- Use and work collaboratively with our high-quality educational facilities to understand a range of partnership needs that are focussed on creating the right environments for skills training and attaining employment in Buckinghamshire.
- Consider accessibility of skills training and employment opportunities when collaborating with educational organisations and local businesses.

PRINCIPLE TEN:

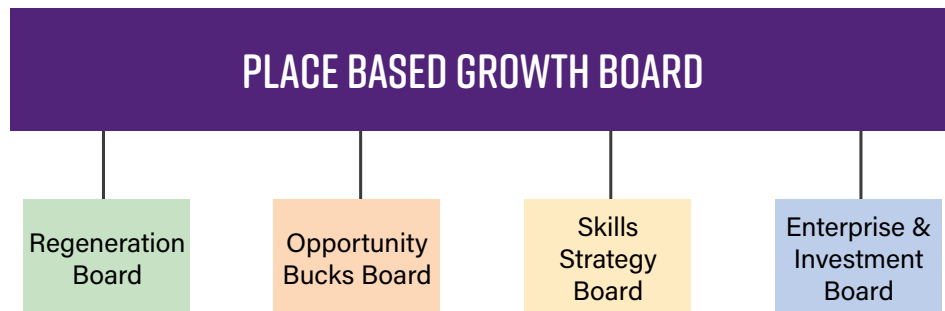
To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities

- Showcase the unique selling points of each place's heritage/culture/visitor economy opportunities as well as establish Buckinghamshire's cultural and creative economy such as the screen industries and film production.
- Increase the visibility of the local cultural and creative industries sector to other parts of the economy - to increase opportunities to 'buy local'.
- Celebrate the unique heritage of each place and its community and promote community focused cultural programmes and activities.
- Support residents of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, to engage in culture at a local level through innovative programming and new models of delivery.

WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE CHANGE

Working closely among partners informs the way Buckinghamshire operates. The Buckinghamshire Place Based Growth Board and partnership groups meet regularly to review strategies and deliver plans for regeneration. There are also bespoke local partnership groups in place for Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham to support the regeneration of these towns.

To support further collaborative working, Buckinghamshire Council, alongside partners on the Growth Board, will play an important role in actively brokering connections to bring in and introduce the right partners for our places.



TOOLKIT FOR ACTION - REGENERATION BUCKS

For our three biggest towns Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham, we have place-based strategies with a number of regeneration programmes in place. For our other areas interested in regeneration, we have provided a toolkit approach that sets out what our places can do to achieve successful local action and change. Using the Regeneration Bucks vision, aims and principles will be important in developing local place visions and objectives.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NEXT TO ACHIEVE SUCCESSFUL REGENERATION FOR YOUR PLACE AND DELIVER LOCAL ACTION

Consider the Framework for Action Key Areas for Local Discussion on page 22.

1. Leadership and Local Vision
2. Physical Environment
3. Economic Capital



You can also contact the Council's Regeneration Team if you need further support and advice on developing your action plan.

1. Understanding the local context

Take the Buckinghamshire Context as a starting point and respond the following questions:

- What is applicable, relevant to the place?
- Update data as appropriate and understand changes/trends in local characteristics.

Establish the role and function of the place

- What is the key purpose, USP of the place?
- What are the key relationships with other places?

Understand key local challenges and opportunities

- Assess key metrics of town centre performance (e.g. vacancy rate, footfall, new businesses, key anchors, user satisfaction, diversity of economy, etc.).
- Understand the catchment area of the town centre.
- How is the town centre meeting the needs of the catchment area population?
- How have the functions of the town centre changed post-pandemic and what opportunities does that afford the town centre?

2. Developing a local place vision

Take the Regeneration Bucks Vision as a starting point

- Assess how this applies locally and what else needs to be considered.
- Review other existing plans and undertake stakeholder mapping.

Take a collaborative approach – build not just produce a vision

- Who needs to be involved to build consensus?

Engage the local community

- This develops new and strengthens existing relationships between public, private sector, voluntary and community partners, including Community Boards. Review other existing plans and undertake stakeholder mapping. This increases resilience and supports more effective long-term planning and delivery.

Assess the place against the Regeneration Bucks three key areas for discussion and guiding aims

Define the local place offer priorities using the 10 Framework Principles

3. Set the long-term agenda for transformational change

Being realistic about priorities, timescales and potential challenges will help to plan projects from a programme and financial perspective, whilst helping manage expectations of stakeholders and communities.



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AYLESBURY REGENERATION STRATEGY



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FOREWORD

As Leader of Buckinghamshire Council and Deputy Cabinet member for Town Centre Regeneration, we are delighted to introduce our strategy for regenerating Aylesbury town centre. It is one of a suite of documents that follows ***Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future***, our Buckinghamshire-wide Regeneration Strategy.

Working closely among partners informs the way Buckinghamshire operates. The Buckinghamshire Growth Board and partnership groups meet regularly to review strategies and deliver plans for regeneration. There are also bespoke local partnership groups in place for Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham to support the regeneration of these towns. This strategy provides the detail of how this is taken forward in Aylesbury and showcases all the exciting and dynamic opportunities for investment in the town.

Since Aylesbury received its Garden Town status in 2017, lots of exciting plans have been developed and changes are afoot to build on the town's existing great offer for residents and businesses.

Aylesbury's population is growing, and now stands at over 90,000. With partners already committed to delivering 16,000 new homes by 2033, steps are already being taken to position Aylesbury as a great place to work and live. Such an ambitious target means our partners and their priorities are strongly aligned with the overarching ***Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future***, helping to make Aylesbury the market town of the future.

As the County Town of Buckinghamshire, Aylesbury benefits from excellent connections by road and rail to London, Milton Keynes and beyond. The county's economy is worth £17.4 billion and is home to over 34,000 businesses. Thanks to Aylesbury's location in the middle of Buckinghamshire, opportunities for growth, regeneration, and redevelopment are plentiful.

Aylesbury is relatively affordable, with house prices around half the Buckinghamshire average. With more housing planned and the adoption of the Garden Town Masterplan, the Council alongside local partners, is already making big plans to deliver on Aylesbury town centre's potential. The Council has committed £5.5 million in the current capital programme for public realm and regeneration in the town centre. When combined with the Council's existing assets in the town centre, (totalling 11 acres of land), we can deliver transformational investment and change to deliver a vibrant town centre as well as provide opportunities for an excellent test bed for other projects.

For the first time, Aylesbury town centre has a single, comprehensive strategy, shaped by the community, owned and governed by local stakeholders via the Aylesbury Garden Town Board.

This publication is for residents, businesses, public sector partners and private investors who want to get involved in transforming Aylesbury and enabling it to be the best place it can be. Our county town has a vibrant and unique offer and by joining with potential partners, a bright future is on the horizon. We are proud of our town and its openness to do business and are excited to make Aylesbury the market town of the future. Now is the time to invest in Aylesbury.



Cllr Martin Tett
Leader of
Buckinghamshire Council



Cllr Rachael Matthews
Deputy Cabinet Member for
Town Centre Regeneration

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



ECONOMY

worth **£17.4 billion**



BUSINESSES

home to **31,355 businesses**



CONNECTIVITY

fully integrated with the London tube network and rail, hosting two underground stations at Chesham and Amersham



EDUCATION

76% of schools are rated **“Good”** or **“Outstanding”** by OFSTED



REGENERATION BUCKS

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future is our Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework. It introduces an ambitious agenda for our town centres and high streets and articulates the role people and places can play in achieving the Buckinghamshire vision for growth.

Regeneration vision for Buckinghamshire

The regeneration of our towns will celebrate local identity, create prosperity, and achieve our ambitions for communities and local businesses in Buckinghamshire.

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future identifies two interdependent guiding aims for regeneration activities:

- To create vibrant and characterful town centres which celebrate local culture and heritage and offer high quality inclusive public realm where people will want to live, work, visit, shop and relax.
- To create fertile conditions for enterprise and skills to support the launch of new businesses and create the conditions for them to succeed.

Whilst the two priorities underpin town centre regeneration, how the priorities will be delivered, areas of focus and the actions and interventions required will vary by place.

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future also identifies ten principles to guide change:

1. To ensure the creation of a strong network of towns in Buckinghamshire.
2. To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally.
3. To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs.
4. To create a network of high quality, well planned road networks with attractive streets and spaces, and cycling routes that are safe to use, well connected and accessible.
5. To maximise the county's natural capital through its network of waterways and green spaces.
6. To provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and managed environment.
7. To enhance strategic connectivity opportunities.
8. To ensure a greener and more carbon neutral future.
9. To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities.
10. To prioritise skills and development opportunities.

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future sets the tone for our 'place' strategies and paves the way for leveraging Aylesbury's distinct identity. The Aylesbury Regeneration Strategy has been developed in accordance with this county-wide framework so that we can achieve place-based growth and long-lasting change in the best way possible.

AYLESBURY



WELL CONNECTED BY ROAD

accessible by the A41 from Bicester and Hemel Hempstead; the A418 from Oxford; the A413 from High Wycombe and Amersham and the A418 from Milton Keynes and Luton



HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

two university campuses in Buckinghamshire New University, Aylesbury Campus and the University of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire Campus and the Buckinghamshire College Campus



WELL CONNECTED BY RAIL

one hour direct train to London Marylebone; direct connections to Birmingham, High Wycombe and Oxford



PEOPLE

90,540 population (Built-Up Area)



HOMES

average house prices slightly more than half the Buckinghamshire average

16,207 new homes proposed to be built by 2033



SCHOOLS

a range of educational establishments including three OFSTED **“outstanding”** rated state-funded Grammar Schools

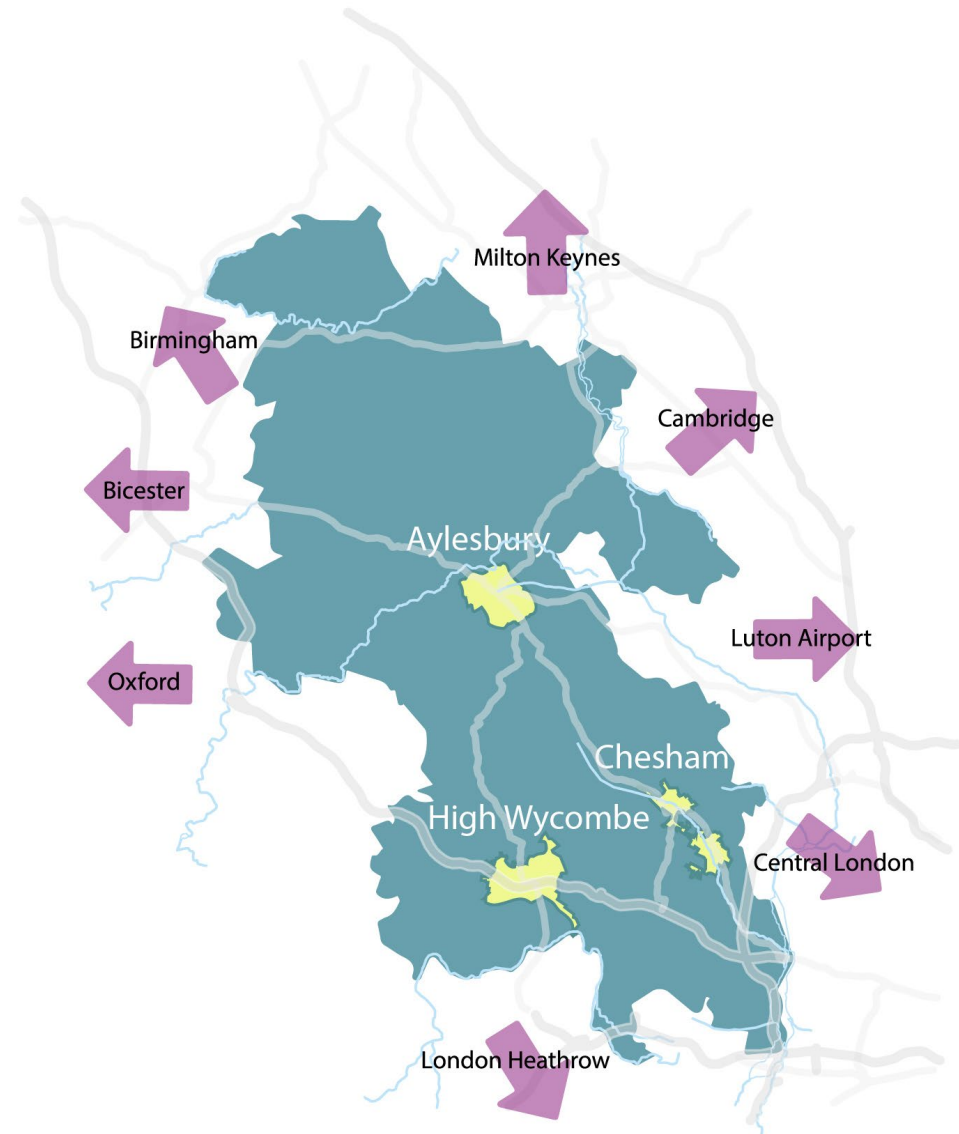
WHY AYLESBURY?

Buckinghamshire's County Town has a young resident population with 63.9% of population in Aylesbury aged 44 or under compared to national average of 55.6% and a large working-age population. The town has seen large growth over recent years; the Aylesbury Built-Up Area population now stands at 90,540.

We have a range of educational establishments on offer; three OFSTED "outstanding" rated state-funded Grammar Schools and higher education institutions; Buckinghamshire New University, Aylesbury Campus and the University of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire Campus. The Buckinghamshire College Campus in the town also now provides further education and higher education opportunities, including apprenticeships and specialist workshops for learning.

We are excellently located both by road and by rail. In just one hour, you can reach central London by direct train, and we also have direct connections to Birmingham, and High Wycombe. Aylesbury's excellent road connections also enable you to access Oxford, Luton, Milton Keynes, Bicester and Hemel Hempstead all in under one hour.

AYLESBURY LOCATION MAP



Aylesbury forms part of the thriving Buckinghamshire economy, worth an estimated £17.4 billion and home to more than 31,000 businesses.

Despite this, Aylesbury's house prices are still half those of the County's average and, with a commitment of 16,000 new homes by 2033, the town's profile makes for an excellent investment potential.

The Birthplace of the Paralympic Movement, Aylesbury is rich with culture and heritage too. Aylesbury's music lovers can enjoy a wide-ranging offering from live shows at Queen's Park Arts Centre and Waterside Theatre, to classical and jazz at St Mary's or 'Proms in the Park' in Vale Park.

The town contains three conservation areas and numerous listed buildings with many concentrated in the historic core. The town has a growing nightlife and cultural scene and is the home to the Discover Bucks Museum, Waterside Theatre and Friars Square Shopping Centre. It also continues to hold popular weekly markets in its Market Square.

Our award of Garden Town status in 2017 also means exciting plans are already underway to make Aylesbury greener and healthier, better connected and community focused. Investing in Aylesbury will mean playing a part in delivering our vision for a new era.



WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

Regeneration is already underway in Aylesbury with plans to make our county town an exemplar in inclusivity and accessibility. Including 11 acres of council-owned assets, rich with green space, the town will host the Gardenway project, an 18km orbital park around Aylesbury connecting existing walking and cycling routes and providing a green corridor to surrounding villages and the local countryside.

Our town is supported by surrounding large and small villages, each providing its own character, heritage and local centre forming a network of liveable localities.

You are never far from the great outdoors in Aylesbury. Taking time out to explore the Chiltern Hills or visiting nearby stately homes, we offer an excellent collection of leisure opportunities.

While only an hour by train from the centre of London, our town centre has a vibrant offer of social opportunities, ranging from new restaurants and cocktail bars to a cinema and the Waterside Theatre meaning our residents have everything they need on the doorstep.

Alongside this rich offer for our residents, is an even richer offer for businesses. Significant additional employment space is in the pipeline for Aylesbury focused mostly around a number of large allocated sites in the town centre area, offering exciting investment opportunities for businesses.



Servicing this space will also be a new link road extending around the southern and eastern edge of the town, providing access to the new housing area, business spaces and reducing through traffic in the town centre.

Our vision already plans to provide a flourishing natural environment across our vibrant town centre, making it greener, more accessible and increasing biodiversity to ensure a focus on sustainability in our county town.

This focus on sustainability also means a continued commitment to providing active travel options for Aylesbury residents. A more connected cycling network, the introduction of urban greening initiatives and improved public transport interconnectivity will make our County Town an exciting town fit for the future.

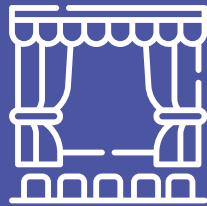
The regeneration of our town centre will generate an additional:



1,400
new homes



18,000_{m2}
business space



5,000_{m2}
leisure/community space



WHY NOW?

In establishing a framework for the regeneration of Buckinghamshire, we have made a clear commitment to transforming our county, which starts with advancing our strategies for our three larger towns, including Aylesbury.

Strong partnerships already exist in Aylesbury and across Buckinghamshire, these partnerships are supporting Aylesbury's continued growth as a Garden Town.

Home to further and higher education institutions, Aylesbury is already working closely through aligned curriculums and seamless pathways into jobs for its students.

Buckinghamshire is also an 'aligned county', with a shared geography between the Council, Healthcare NHS Trust, Buckinghamshire Business First and a place-based partnership for Buckinghamshire with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership.

These strong partnerships mean Buckinghamshire has an excellent track record of delivery as well as strong, aligned leadership turning ambition into action. The Waterside Theatre and Exchange Street are just two examples of how we have delivered on our ambitions in Aylesbury in recent years. Our Garden Town board is helping to drive forward this ambition with high quality and sustainability at its core.

Right: Aylesbury celebrates its strong musical legacy.



Work is already underway for the regeneration of Aylesbury with £5.5 million of capital funding investment committed to help improve Aylesbury's public realm, building a more attractive and enticing public space for our residents and visitors.

With land assembly already underway, we have undertaken other large investments with a view to improving Aylesbury's experiential offer, such as the £12 million purchase of Friars Square, a 285,000 sq ft shopping centre which, when combined with the Council's surrounding assets, will offer 11 acres of opportunity for the redesign of Aylesbury's vibrant town centre and an environment fit for the existing population as well as future residents.

This strategy will work alongside *Opportunity Bucks - Succeeding for All*, our approach to creating equality of opportunity for all residents and communities, With a focus on 10 of the most deprived wards in Buckinghamshire, some of which are in Aylesbury, it identifies five key themes: education and skills, jobs and career opportunities, quality of public realm, standard of living, and health and wellbeing. The delivery of these themes will enable the town centre to support the needs of a range of individuals and communities.



INVESTING IN AYLESBURY

Track record

We have a strong track record of delivery in Aylesbury which has seen the completion of recent projects such as the Waterside Theatre and the Exchange.

Strong partnerships

Aylesbury and Buckinghamshire benefit from strong existing partnerships between delivery partnerships, building on initiatives such as the Aylesbury Garden Town.

Opportunity to create a testbed

We have an appetite to try new things and are open to exciting new ideas for the future, particularly to improve accessibility and inclusion.

Existing ambition and commitments

Buckinghamshire Council and its partners have already proven their commitment to investing in Aylesbury.

Ideally located

Aylesbury has excellent road and rail connections to London, Oxford, Birmingham and High Wycombe.



MARKET TOWN OF THE FUTURE

The award of Garden Town status has given impetus to a more joined-up, collaborative approach to planning and place-making between the community, public and private sectors.

Population growth is already underway but so too is our planning for the future. 16,207 new homes will be built by 2033 as well as significant new employment space. The majority of this will be delivered across six large allocated sites around the town and a new link road extending around the south and east of the town.

Aylesbury's historic town centre faces retail competition from nearby larger towns such as Milton Keynes, Oxford and Bicester village, but rather than competing we are well placed to provide a more distinct, specific proposition as a modern market town centre with vibrant independent shops.

Central to this vision are greener streets, more outdoor spaces, improved accessibility and greater biodiversity – plans which all join up with the Government's shared focus on health and wellbeing.

We want Aylesbury Town Centre to be a thriving community and a place to live, work and visit. Building on a historic legacy, Aylesbury town centre's future as a centre for retail, urban living, social interaction, community and economic activity and sustainability makes for an exciting testbed for investment.



LOCAL ECONOMY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

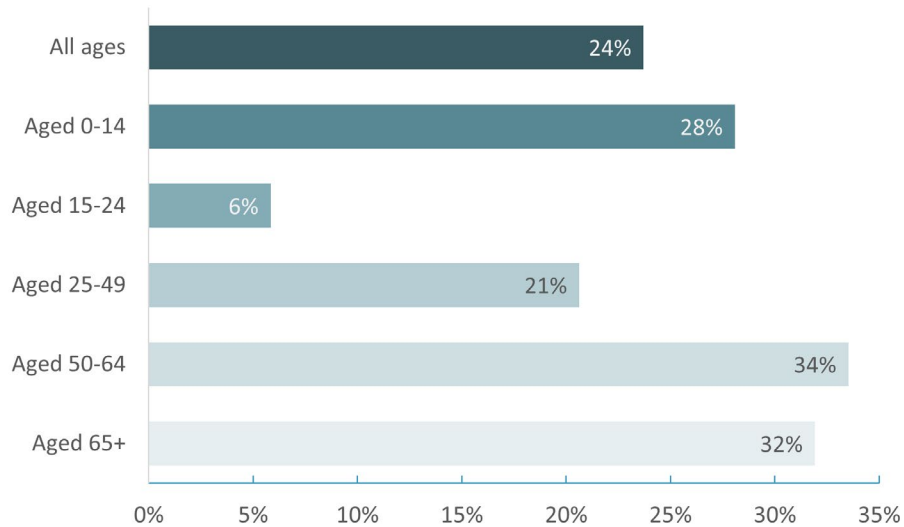
According to the ONS, the Aylesbury Built Up Area has a population of 90,540 – an increase of nearly 17,369 since 2011.

Compared with Buckinghamshire and the national average, Aylesbury has 21.19% of children (0-15) and 38.88% of people aged 25-49 – highlighting the attraction of the town for families. Aylesbury also has a very small population of 12.37% aged 65+ at present compared to the national average.

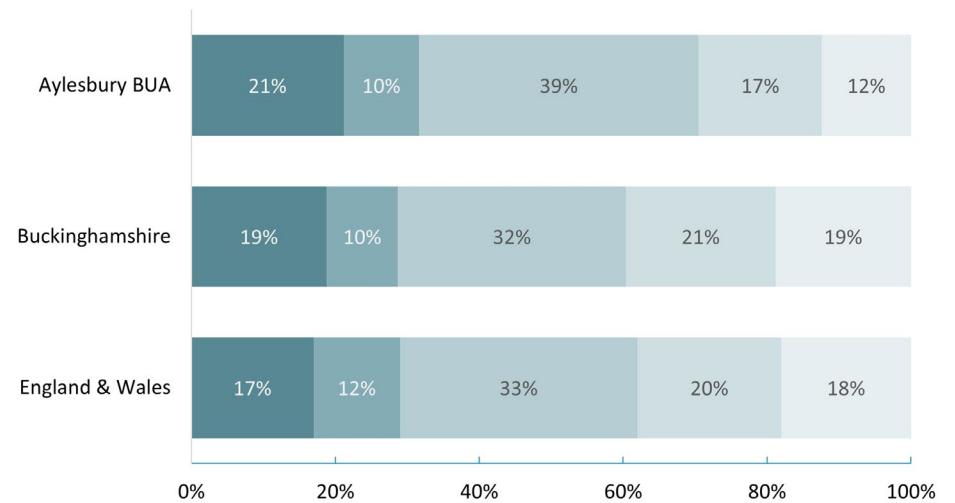
The Aylesbury population is 49.7% male and 50.3% female.

According to the 2011 Census, 81.4% of the Aylesbury population is part of the 'White' ethnic group, with the largest minority ethnic groups being 'Asian' (11.2%) and 'Black' (3.4%). This is broadly similar to the national average.

In terms of religion, 56% of the Aylesbury population classified themselves as 'Christian.' 26.7% responded as having 'No Religion' and 6.8% did not state a religion at all. The next highest religious group in Aylesbury is 'Muslim,' which comprised 8% of the population.



Population growth rates in Aylesbury Built-Up Area (BUA) by age group 2011-2021 Census - Source: NOMIS



Population age profile comparison, 2021 Census - Source: NOMIS

RETAIL CATCHMENT AND HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE

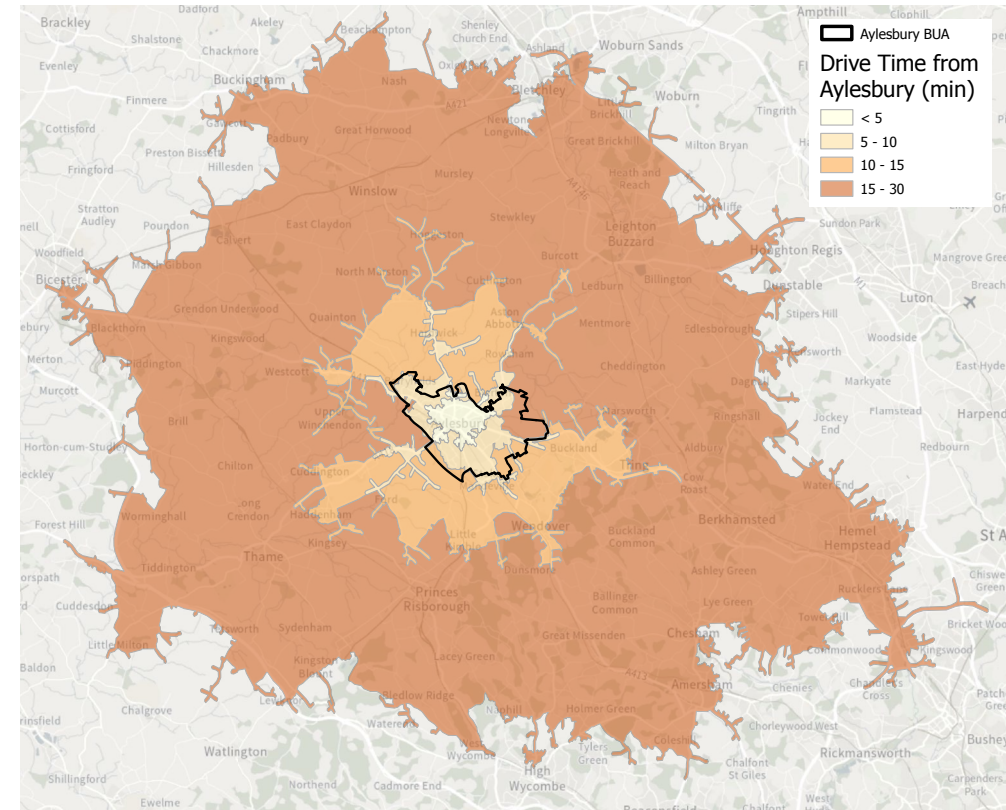
Aylesbury's catchment area has a resident population of 259,000, with around 90% of shoppers surveyed for living within this area. The same study identified 75% of Aylesbury's catchment area as being within the more affluent 'Acorn' groups, compared with 59% nationally. Studies identify Aylesbury as having the 22nd most affluent catchment nationally.

With some disparities still existing between the town of Aylesbury and its wider catchment, regeneration of the town centre could help to reduce these gaps.

While competition from online shopping and nearby Milton Keynes and London has been strong, Aylesbury has an excellent opportunity to attract more spend from shoppers in the wider catchment by creating vibrant and independent retailers.

Data shows that the highest spend levels in Q2 of 2022 were in grocery stores and supermarkets, followed by restaurants and takeaways with an Average Transaction Value of £19.89.

Footfall data for Aylesbury town centre shows an average of 246,000 visits a week which is approaching pre-covid figures once more. The busiest days are Saturday, Friday, and Thursday (with Tuesday not far



*Aylesbury retail catchment area
- Source: Buckinghamshire Council/CACI*

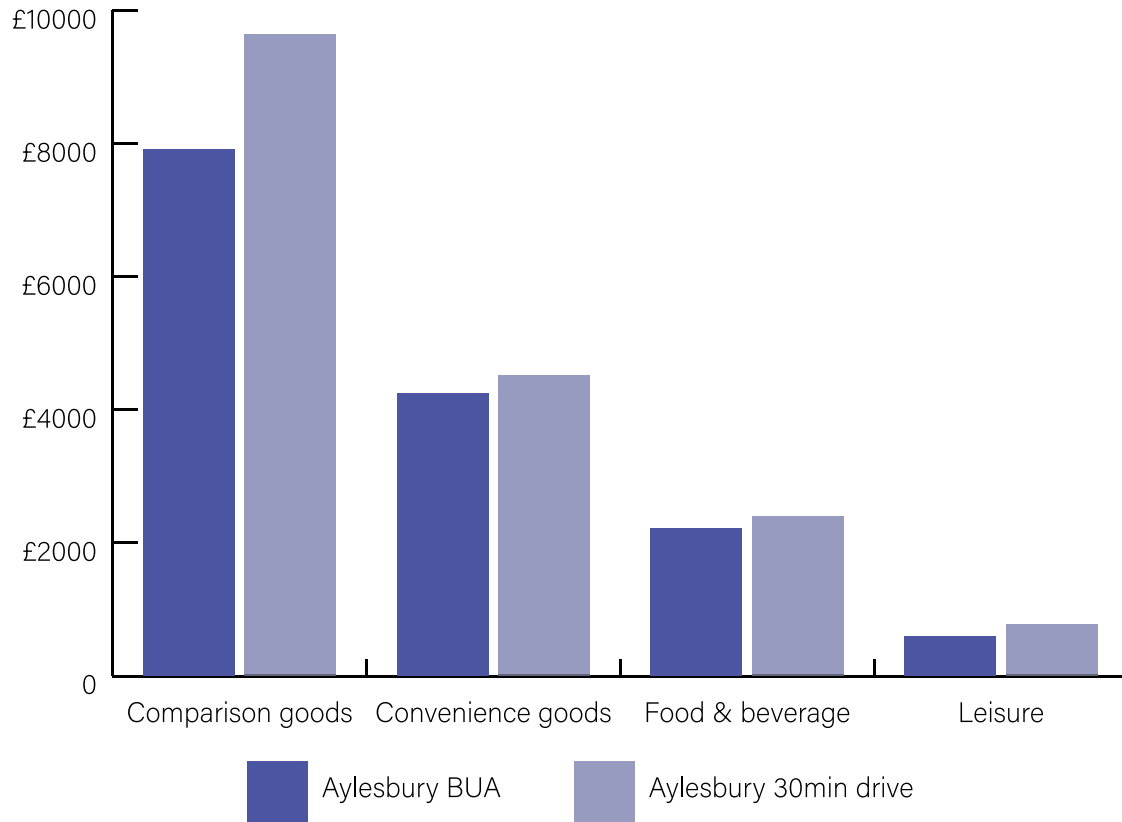
behind) with an average of 33,600 to 40,500 visits a day. The busiest period is between 9am to 4pm. 80% of visits are over 20 minutes with 31% of visits having the longest monitored dwell time of 60 to 90 minutes.

Aylesbury presents some exciting development opportunities and with land assembly already underway, up to 11 acres of land could be considered for regeneration to deliver a vibrant town centre and an exciting testbed for your future projects.

With the £12 million purchase of Friars Square Shopping Centre, Buckinghamshire Council has underlined its commitment to delivering on the ambition of being the Market Town of the Future.

The following pages give you an indication of the potential for the redesign of a number of the sites listed here. We aim to celebrate the heritage and architectural style of the town whilst inspiring creativity and imagination for progressive design ideas for these regeneration opportunities, sites and development opportunities.





*Spend per household - Aylesbury Built-Up Area (BUA) vs 30min drive time
- Source: Aspinal & Aspinal*

	Aylesbury BUA	Aylesbury 30min drive
Comparison goods	£252m	£2.3bn
Convenience goods	£136m	£1.1bn
Food and beverage	£71m	£0.7bn
Leisure	£17m	£0.2bn
TOTAL	£476m	£4.2bn

*Estimated total residential spending power (2020)
- Source: Aspinal & Aspinal*



THE LABOUR MARKET

Aylesbury and Buckinghamshire in general has a highly educated and strong labour market, highlighted by the table below. Resident earnings are slightly higher than workplace earnings in both Aylesbury Vale and Buckinghamshire. Resident earnings in Aylesbury Vale remain above national averages for England and the UK as a whole.

Nearly half of Aylesbury jobs are filled by residents of the town, with a further 25% drawn from the rest of the former Aylesbury Vale District. Former Wycombe District accounts for the next largest share, followed by Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and Dacorum.

In terms of outward commuting, around 6% of employed Aylesbury residents work in former Wycombe District, with a further 3% working in the former Chiltern District. As of 2011, 2% of employed Aylesbury residents commuted into Central London.



Source - 2021 Census	Aylesbury BUA	Buckinghamshire	England and Wales
Economically Active (inc. full time students) - In Employment	67%	62%	57%
Economically Active (inc. full time students) - Unemployed	3%	3%	3%
Economically Inactive	30%	36%	39%
Occupations			
Managers, Professionals, Associate Professionals & Technical Occupations	46%	56%	46%
Administrative, Secretarial and Skilled Trade Occupations	20%	19%	20%
Caring, Leisure, Service and Sales Occupations	18%	14%	17%
Process, Plant and Machine Operatives and other Elementary Occupations	16%	11%	17%
Qualifications			
Degree or equivalent qualifications or above	34%	41%	34%
No qualifications	16%	14%	18%

Aylesbury's labour market - Source: ONS

2022	Aylesbury*	Buckinghamshire	England	UK
Resident earnings (£/Yr)	£34,310	£37,300	£33,582	£33,280
Workplace earnings (£/Yr)	£32,942	£35,927	£33,571	£33,280
Difference (£/Yr)	£1,368	£1,373	£11	£0

*Aylesbury Parliamentary constituency

Median annual earnings for Aylesbury residents - Source: ONS

Place of residence	Aylesbury workers	% of total Aylesbury workers
Aylesbury	11,448	47%
Rest of Aylesbury Vale	5,966	25%
Wycombe	1,131	5%
Central Bedfordshire	734	3%
Milton Keynes	670	3%
Dacorum	642	3%
Chiltern	603	2%
South Oxfordshire	488	2%
Cherwell	312	1%
Other	2,160	9%

Aylesbury workforce by place of residence (2020) - Source: ONS

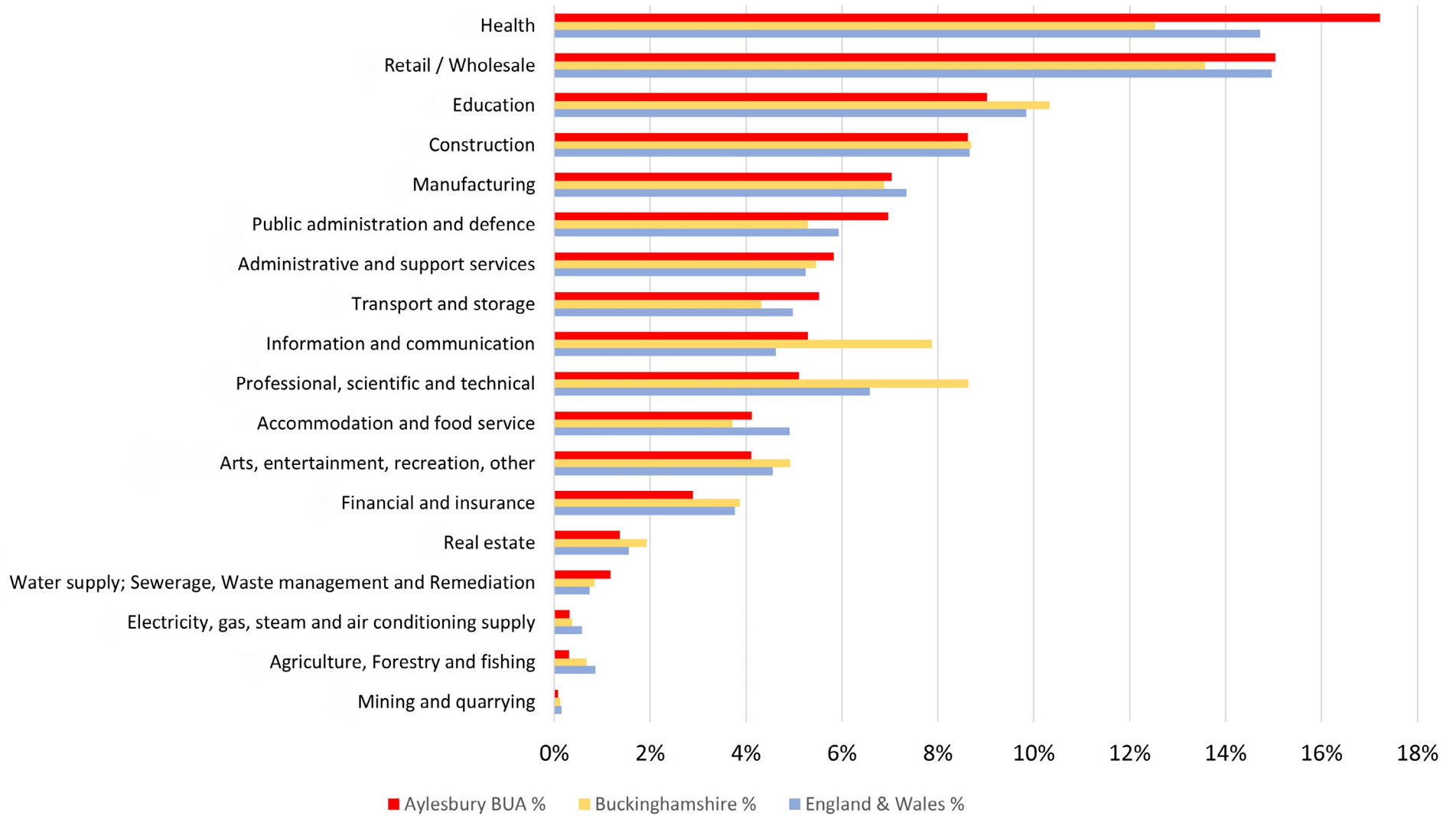


INDUSTRY SECTORS

There are approximately 37,000 jobs held in Aylesbury and 249,000 in the county of Buckinghamshire. The table below highlights the sectors providing the largest number of jobs in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire and England. The most significant sectors are 'Health', 'Business Administration & Support Services', 'Public Administration & Defence' and 'Education'.

As of 2021, Aylesbury has an estimated 2,585 businesses. Whilst the vast majority are classified as small or micro (less than 50 employees), there are 75 medium sized (50 to 249 employees) and 15 large enterprises in the town. In annual turnover terms, most businesses in Aylesbury have turnover of less than £1 million, however, there are 135 businesses with annual turnover between £1 million and £10 million, 15 businesses with between £10 million and £50 million, and five with annual turnover exceeding £50 million.





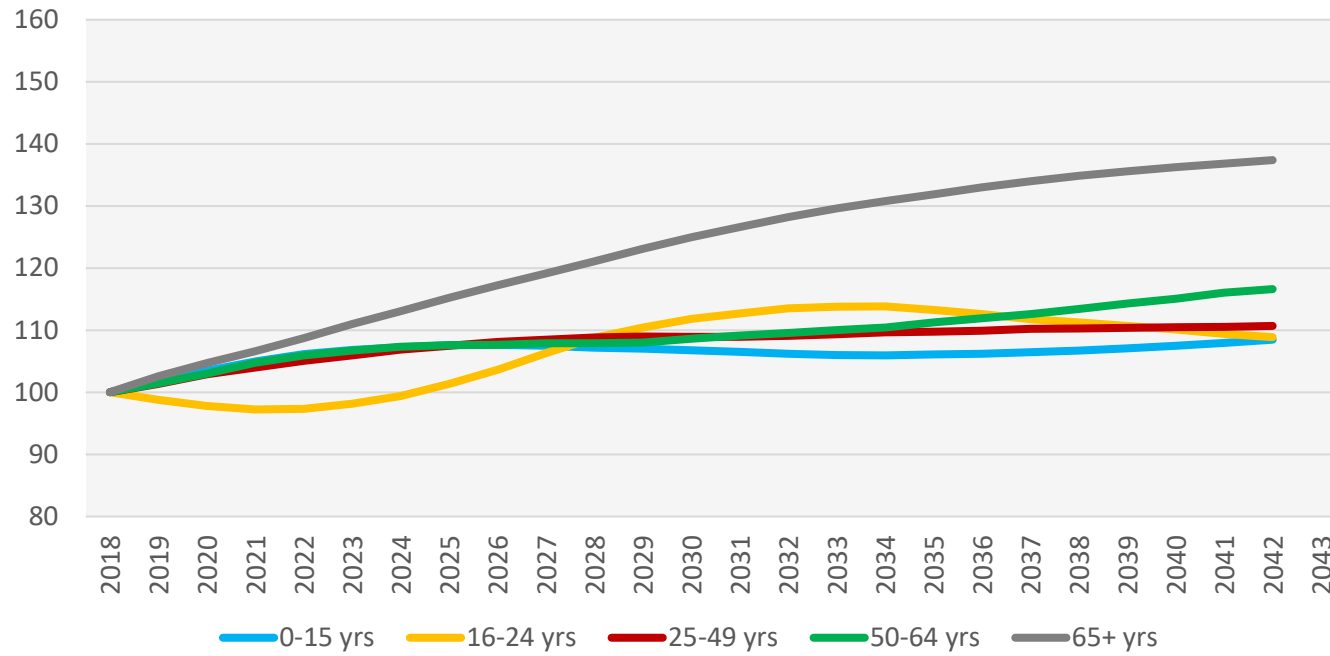
Employment by industry sector 2020 (descending order of % of town centre jobs) - Source: ONS

FUTURE GROWTH POTENTIAL

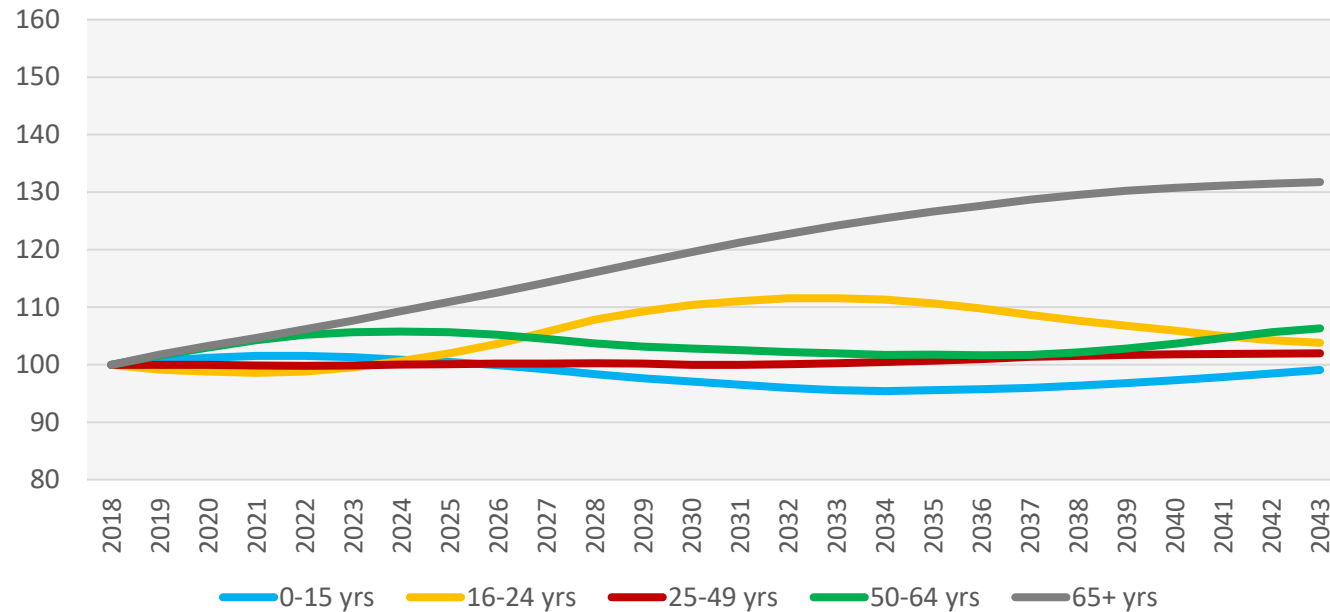
Aylesbury has enjoyed considerable population growth over recent years, growing by 25% between 2011 and 2021. The most recent ONS population projections estimate that this trend is likely to continue (albeit more slowly), with possible growth of 10.2% forecast between 2020 and 2030.

This figure is based on past trends only and does not take into account projects such as the construction of 16,000 new homes through the Garden Town programme. This will result in significant increases in the local population and job growth.





Aylesbury Vale population change 2018-2043 (2018 Pop = 100)
 - Source: ONS



England population change 2018-2043 (2018 Pop = 100)
 - Source: ONS

LAND USES

Aylesbury's historic town centre has a multitude of different uses. There is a desire for a sensitively designed connection between the old and new parts of the town to overcome current challenges of coherence across the town centre.

The retail experience in Aylesbury is centred around the town's two shopping centres Friars Square and Hale Leys as well as its High Street. A network of smaller streets provide a secondary and specialist independent shopping offer. The two shopping centres are located to either side of Market Square and its 'high street' covers primarily the northern edge of the Hale Leys Shopping Centre and extends eastwards to the ring road.

There are three supermarkets in the centre, Sainsbury's on Buckingham Street in the Old Town and a Morrisons and Waitrose to the south and east of the Ring Road. There are also a number of retail parks on the northern edge of the centre offering easy access by road.

There are a number of office buildings with the area, notably the Buckinghamshire Council offices on Walton Street and the Lloyds Campus further to the east. Some others have been recently converted to residential use through permitted development rights. There are also a number of smaller scale historic office buildings in the old town providing space for smaller businesses and services.



There are a number of cultural attractions in the town centre including the Waterside Theatre, Queen's Park Arts Centre and Limelight Theatre, Discover Bucks Museum, the ODEON Luxe cinema, the Roald Dahl Children's Gallery and Aylesbury Library.

There are also an increasing number of cafes, bars and restaurants opening in the town centre with a concentration around Kingsbury Square, Buckingham Street and Exchange Square, which offer exciting new food and drink opportunities close to the cinema and Waterside Theatre.

There is lots of potential for better connection of the town's cultural and leisure offers through walking routes between spaces such as the Kingsbury Square and the Waterside Theatre. Developments such as these could greatly improve the night-time economy offer in Aylesbury.

Beyond the town centre, Aylesbury is largely residential with relatively few currently living centrally despite its potential. While most of the buildings in the town centre are single use and non-residential, improvements to the walking and cycling network, through the Aylesbury Garden Town project, could increase the town's catchment population and greatly improve the vitality of the town centre.



PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE CHANGE

Building on the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan and its objectives, partners and stakeholders identified several opportunities and challenges for Aylesbury. To capitalise on the opportunities and address the challenges, a number of overarching principles of *Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future* will be deployed to guide change in the historic town centre. These principles mean we and our partners are already aligned in our vision for our Market Town of the Future and are committed to its delivery.

To ensure the creation of a strong network of towns in Buckinghamshire

The Aylesbury Regeneration strategy will set out an Action Plan for change; delivering a programme to include small and immediate changes as well as larger projects over longer periods. Encouraging community initiatives and activities that bring greater pride in the town.

To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally

Aylesbury will reimagine the Friars as a vibrant new mixed use quarter, creating a better experience, shifting from single use towards a more vibrant environment. It will focus on the quality of the visitor experience, building our evening economy offer and drawing on Aylesbury's cultural heritage and unique distinctive independent offer. Aylesbury town centre will also support the need for more attractive urban living, delivering new homes within a highly accessible location. Delivering a range of housing types and tenures and ensuring that appropriate infrastructure is provided to meet future needs.

To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs

Aylesbury town centre will embrace change and provide space that meets the modern working needs. It will offer a range of accommodation options to meet future working needs, including space for start-ups and office hubs.

To create a network of high-quality, well-planned road networks with attractive streets and spaces, and cycling routes that are safe to use, well connected and accessible

The town centre will create a better environment for walking and cycling, establishing a network of attractive and safe walking and cycling routes through and to the town centre. It will also create a network of high quality and attractive streets and spaces that are safe to use, creating a people-focused town centre with strong connection and coherence between the old town and new town. It will increase its attractiveness through a unified public realm and design approach, enhancing existing open spaces and delivering new ones as part of a connected network across the centre.

To maximise the county's natural capital through its network of waterways and green spaces

Aylesbury centre will maximise the town's natural capital through a network of green spaces and opening up access to Aylesbury's watercourses, including the Grand Union Canal and Bear Brook. Stronger links to the natural environment and introducing urban greening to increase biodiversity and enhance wellbeing will be created.

To enhance strategic connectivity opportunities

This principle supports Aylesbury's ambition to improve the arrival experience for all travel modes, by creating a welcoming environment for all people arriving into the town centre and transforming the environment at transport interchanges.

To ensure a greener and more carbon neutral future

The town centre will plan for a greener, carbon neutral future, encouraging a modal shift to sustainable modes of transport, enhancing air quality through urban greening and encouraging sustainable building design.

To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities

Aylesbury will be a place that supports inclusivity and diversity, celebrates opportunity and is accessible to everybody, ensuring all parts of the town centre are accessible to everybody. This builds on Aylesbury's paralympic legacy to deliver opportunities for all and break-down barriers of discrimination.



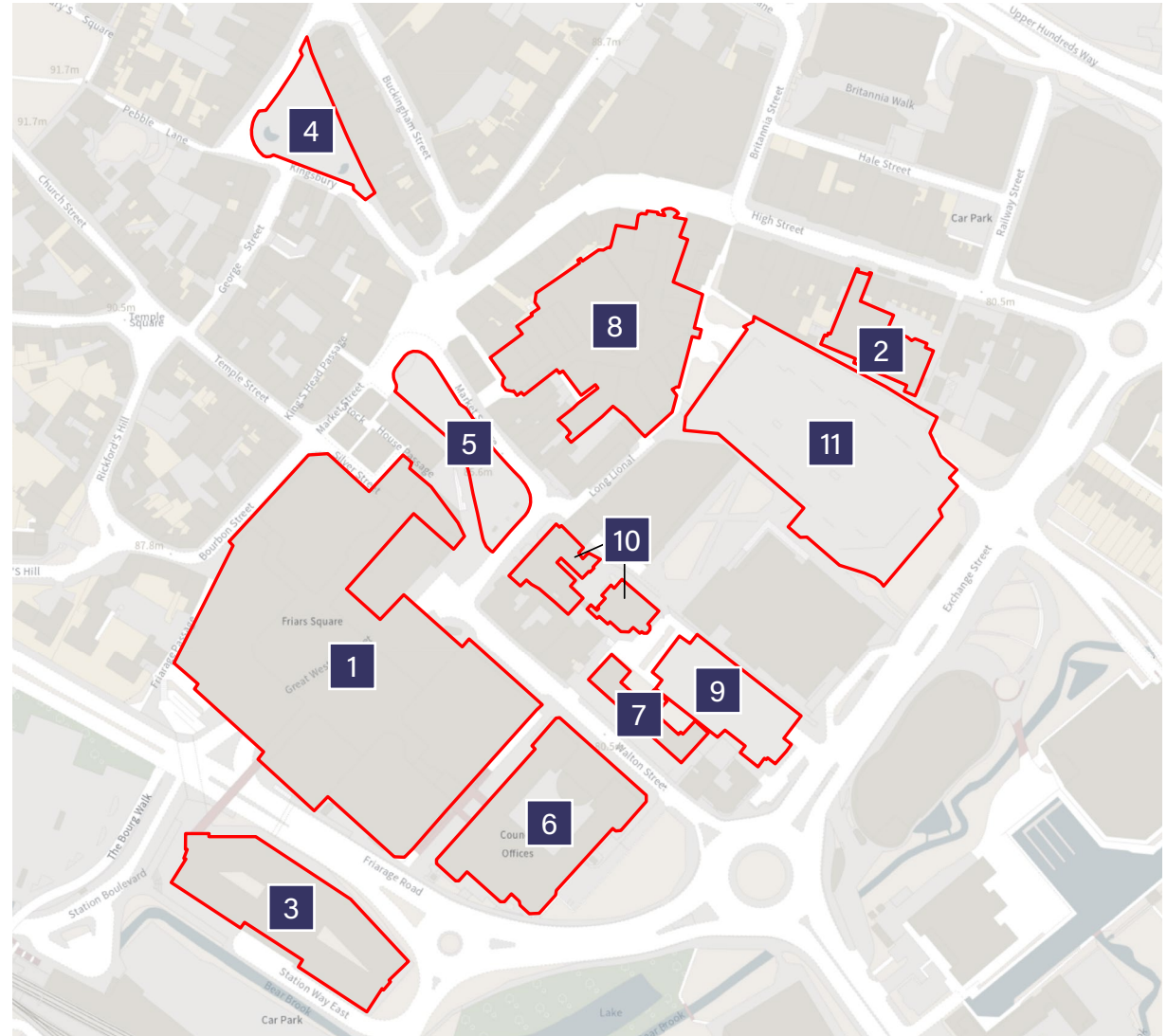
SITES AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Aylesbury presents some exciting development opportunities and with land assembly already underway, up to 11 acres of land could be considered for redevelopment to deliver a vibrant town centre and an exciting testbed for your future projects.

With the £12 million purchase of Friar's Square Shopping Centre, Buckinghamshire Council has underlined its commitment to delivering on the ambition of being the Market Town of the Future.

The plan on this page highlights the various sites already under its ownership. Working in partnership with you, these sites provide an excellent opportunity to reimagine Aylesbury's historic town centre.

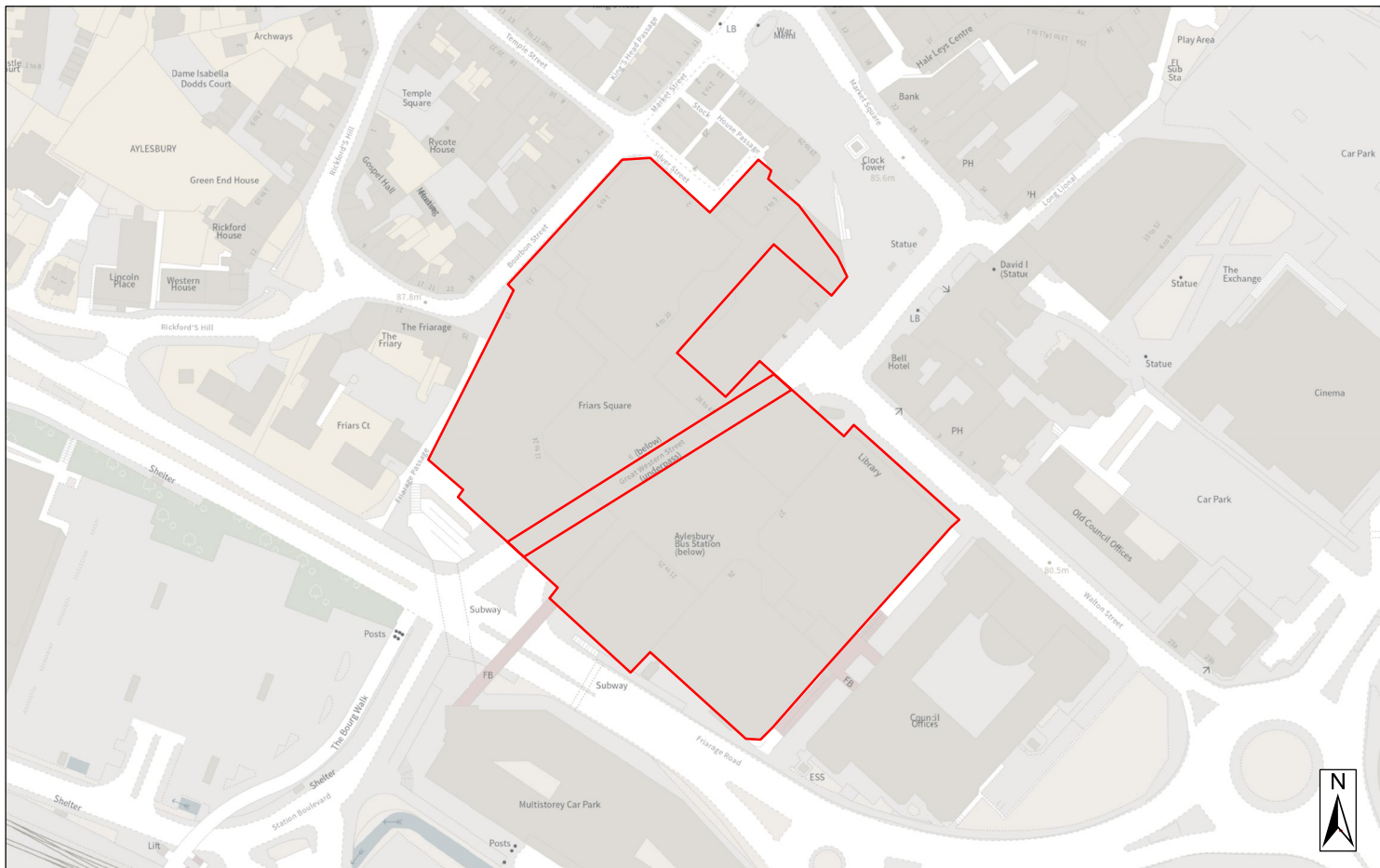
The following pages give you an indication of the potential for the redesign of a number of the sites listed here. We aim to celebrate the heritage and architectural style of the town whilst inspiring creativity and imagination for progressive design ideas for these regeneration opportunities.



- | | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| 1 | Friars Square Shopping Centre | 7 | Old County Offices |
| 2 | Former Gala Bingo Hall | 8 | Hale Leys Shopping Centre |
| 3 | Friars Square Multistorey Car Park | 9 | Waterside North Car Park |
| 4 | Kingsbury Square | 10 | Old Courts Building and Judges Lodgings |
| 5 | Market Square | 11 | Exchange Street Car Park |
| 6 | New County Offices | | |

SITE I: FRIARS SQUARE SHOPPING CENTRE

Currently one of Aylesbury's main shopping centres, the Friars Square site was recently purchased by the Council for £12 million. The site is a stone's throw from Aylesbury's bus and train stations and would offer 4.2 hectares (GIA) with the possibility of developing over 200 apartments and 50 units of senior living accommodation. Development could range from five and six storeys.



- 4.2 hectares site.
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Potential for residential, retirement apartments, retail, hotel, office and library.

SITE 2: FORMER GALA BINGO HALL

The former Gala Bingo, provides circa 0.11 hectares for potential mixed use development close to the Hale Leys site. The site already boasts an archway, which could be retained as a gateway to the site in the future, providing a connection between the Exchange and the High Street, which enables regeneration of the High Street.



- Ca. 0.11 hectares site.
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Opportunity to create connectivity and wider regeneration of the high street.
- Potential for leisure, residential, food and beverage.

SITE 3*: FRIARS SQUARE MULTISTOREY CAR PARK

Adjacent to the Friars Square site stands the Friars Square car park, which would offer circa 1.7 hectares.



- Ca. 1.7 hectares site.
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Potential for residential, retail and travel interchange.

* Sites 4 and 5, shown on page 31, are open spaces and not building assets.

SITE 6: NEW COUNTY OFFICES

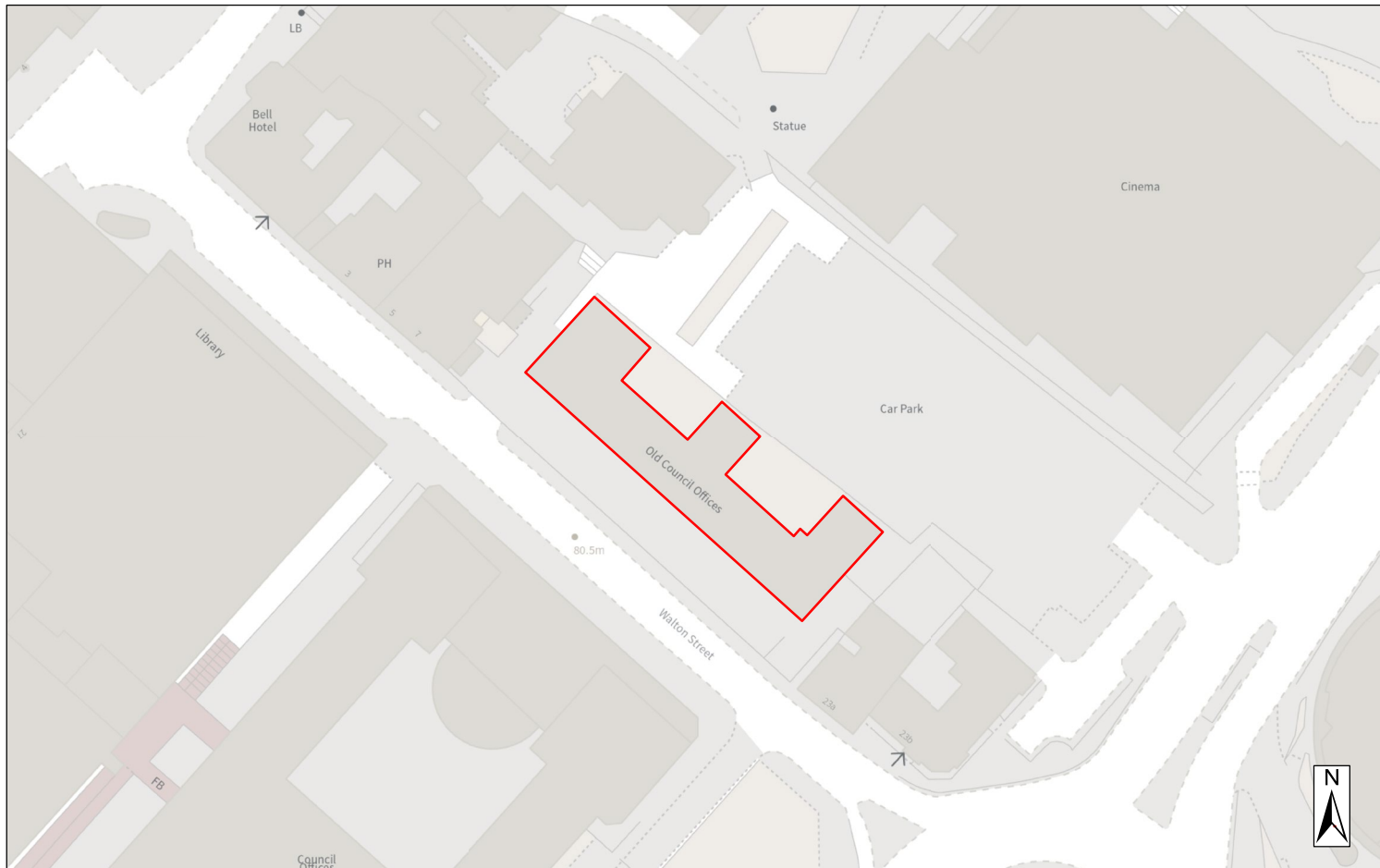
The New County Offices (NCO) site sits on the edge of the town centre a very short distance from the historic Market Square, the Waterside Theatre and the Exchange, providing a strong food and drink and night-time economy offer. The site would offer circa 1.7 hectares of residential and retail space. This site has potential for five and six storeys fronting onto Friarage Road with heights stepping down towards Walton Road to the north.



- Ca. 1.7 hectares site.
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Potential for residential, retail and office space.

SITE 7: OLD COUNTY OFFICES

Former County Council offices, currently vacant situated on provides circa 1500 sq m (building only) for potential residential. The site benefits from an existing outline planning permission for 46 residential units, which was granted in August 2021.



- Ca 1500 sq m (building only).
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Potential for residential, leisure and community space.
- Outline planning permission granted for 46 apartments.

SITE 8: HALE LEYS SHOPPING CENTRE

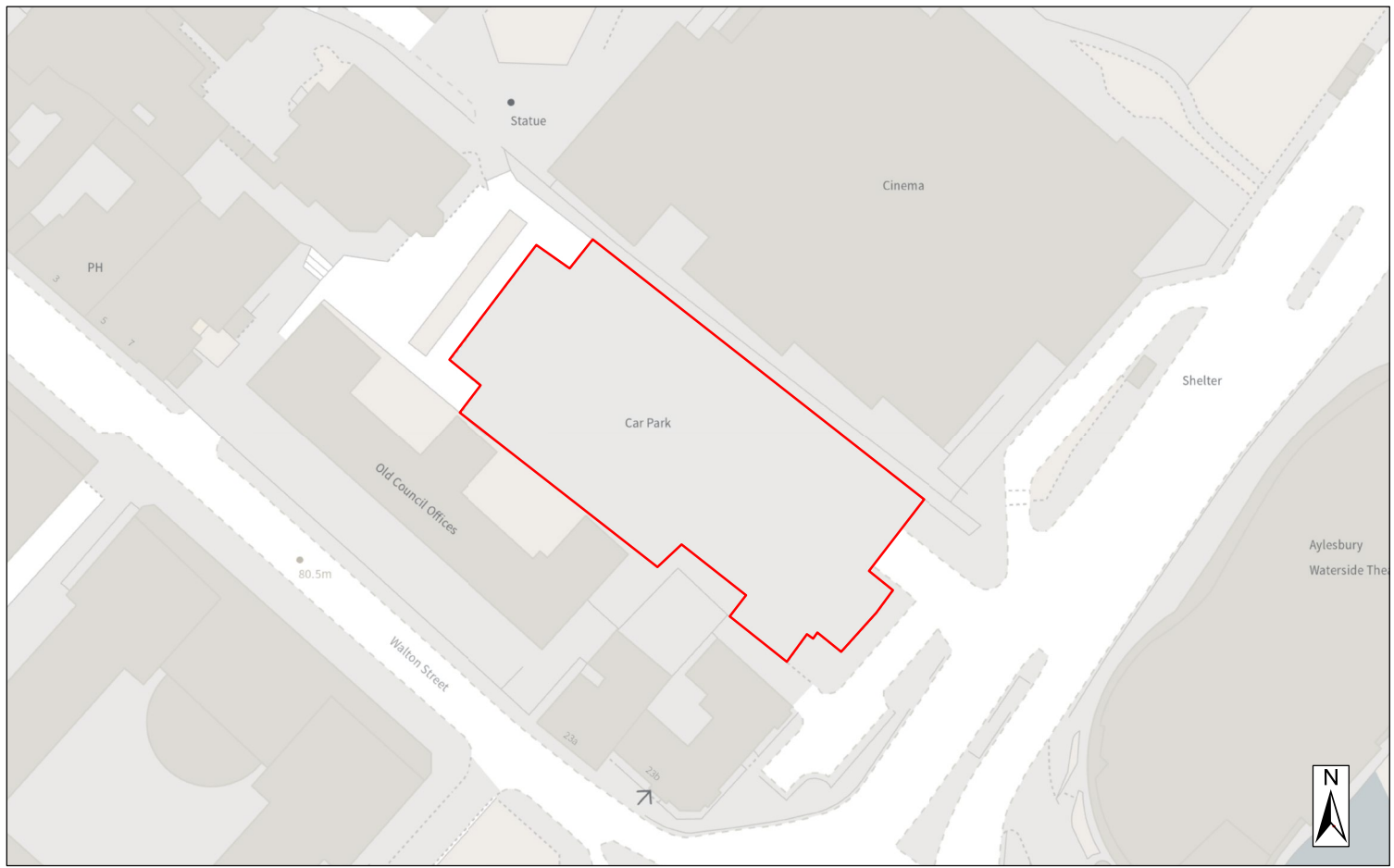
Hale Leys is the current plot of one of Aylesbury's two main shopping centres allowing it an excellent central location to retail and leisure facilities. Development has the potential for three to four storeys with residential apartments above commercial units on the ground floor. This site will be key in animating our town centre.



- Ca. 1.5 hectare site.
- Key town centre location.
- Opportunities for residential and retail space.

SITE 9: WATERSIDE NORTH

Currently utilised as a car park, the site sits between The Exchange and Waterside Theatre, and boasts circa 0.5 hectares in a prime town centre location next to exciting retail and leisure developments.



- Ca. 0.5 hectares site.
- Buckinghamshire Council owned.
- Potential for residential.

SITE 10: OLD COURTS AND JUDGES LODGINGS

Key Heritage asset, former Court house and Judges Lodgings, Grade Two Listed, prime town centre location. Boasts circa 0.08ha (Court House) and 0.05ha (Judges Lodgings).



- Old Courts - Ca 0.08ha AND Judges Lodgings - Ca 0.05ha
- Buckinghamshire Council Owned
- Heritage Asset
- Potential for community/leisure use

SITE II: EXCHANGE STREET CAR PARK

Currently utilised as a park car adjacent to cinema complex. Potential for mixed use development, site boasts circa 0.82ha.



- Ca. 0.82ha
- Buckinghamshire Council owned
- Potential for mixed use development

NEXT STEPS: TAKING THE STRATEGY FORWARD AS A PARTNERSHIP

The next stage seeks to build on opportunities and to develop a programme of works. Some projects will require additional assessments and further analysis before regeneration activities can be delivered. Other projects are ready to be delivered and can form quick wins for the town centre.

The key priorities for the Aylesbury regeneration programme in the short term will focus on public realm improvement project delivery in the town centre as well as the delivery of redevelopment on the council owned 'Gala Bingo' site and Old County Offices. We'll continue to align council town centre investment with the plans coming forward from our key partners. For the longer term, we are undertaking work now to explore potential options for a new transport interchange in Aylesbury.

Establishing and delivering the regeneration programme for Aylesbury requires a collaborative, partnership approach. Buckinghamshire Council will continue to build on the relationships developed with key local stakeholders and will work with partners including the town council, the Aylesbury Community Board, the local business community, and other active groups to take forward proposals. The Aylesbury Garden Town Board, made of up of the council alongside key local stakeholders is the strategic steering group for delivering this strategy and the regeneration programme for Aylesbury. It forms part of the wider Place Based Growth Board governance and reports into the Regeneration Sub-Board.





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AYLESBURY – THE MARKET TOWN OF THE FUTURE



CHESHAM REGENERATION STRATEGY



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FOREWORD

As Leader of Buckinghamshire Council and Deputy Cabinet Member for Town Centre Regeneration, we are delighted to introduce our strategy for regenerating Chesham town centre. This strategy is one of a suite of documents that follows **Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future**, our Buckinghamshire-wide regeneration framework.

We are clear on our ambitious plans for growth in Buckinghamshire, including fostering a collaborative 'place-based' approach. With place-specific strategies for our three priority towns of Aylesbury, Chesham, and High Wycombe, we are now driving forward our plans, determined to support vibrant, diverse, and thriving towns.

Working closely among partners informs the way Buckinghamshire operates. The Buckinghamshire Growth Board and partnership groups meet regularly to review strategies and deliver plans for regeneration. There are also bespoke local partnership groups in place for Aylesbury, High Wycombe, and Chesham to support the regeneration of these towns. This strategy provides the detail of how regeneration will be taken forward in Chesham and showcases all the exciting and dynamic opportunities for investment in the town.

This strategy will enable us to build on the town's rich culture and heritage, position Chesham as a home for creative industries, and support community events and innovation. Our regeneration programme in Chesham will ensure that Chesham continues to be a town centre people want to spend time in, be this as a resident, visitor or business.

The enthusiasm and engagement with which stakeholders and the community have approached the development of this regeneration strategy demonstrates a commitment to improve the town and to capitalise on what makes Chesham special. In working with our partners in Chesham we have a rich insight into the opportunities and challenges we face.

These are exciting times for Chesham. This new strategy, which has been shaped by key local stakeholders via the Chesham Regeneration Group, sets a clear way forward for realising our ambitions in Chesham together. This publication is for residents, businesses, public sector partners, and private investors who want to get involved in transforming Chesham and enabling it to be the best place it can be. By working together, we can ensure that Chesham can realise its full potential.



Cllr Martin Tett
Leader of
Buckinghamshire Council



Cllr Rachael Matthews
Deputy Cabinet Member for
Town Centre Regeneration

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



ECONOMY

worth **£17.4 billion**



BUSINESSES

home to **31,355 businesses**



CONNECTIVITY

fully integrated with the London tube network and rail, hosting two underground stations at Chesham and Amersham



EDUCATION

76% of schools are rated **“Good”** or **“Outstanding”** by OFSTED



REGENERATION BUCKS

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future is our Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework. It introduces an ambitious agenda for our town centres and high streets and articulates the role people and places can play in achieving the Buckinghamshire vision for growth.

Regeneration vision for Buckinghamshire

The regeneration of our towns will celebrate local identity, create prosperity, and achieve our ambitions for communities and local businesses in Buckinghamshire.

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future identifies two interdependent guiding aims for regeneration activities:

- To create vibrant and characterful town centres which celebrate local culture and heritage and offer high quality inclusive public realm where people will want to live, work, visit, shop and relax.
- To create fertile conditions for enterprise and skills to support the launch of new businesses and create the conditions for them to succeed.

Whilst the two priorities underpin town centre regeneration, how the priorities will be delivered, areas of focus and the actions and interventions required will vary by place.

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future also identifies ten principles to guide change:

1. To ensure the creation of a strong network of towns in Buckinghamshire.
2. To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally.
3. To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs.
4. To create a network of high quality, well planned road networks with attractive streets and spaces, and cycling routes that are safe to use, well connected and accessible.
5. To maximise the county's natural capital through its network of waterways and green spaces.
6. To provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and managed environment.
7. To enhance strategic connectivity opportunities.
8. To ensure a greener and more carbon neutral future.
9. To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities.
10. To prioritise skills and development opportunities.

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future sets the tone for our 'place' strategies and paves the way for leveraging Chesham's distinct identity. The Chesham Regeneration Strategy has been developed in accordance with this county-wide framework so that we can achieve place-based growth and long-lasting change in the best way possible.

CHESHAM



WELL CONNECTED BY ROAD

good connections to the neighbouring towns of Amersham, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead via the A416. It is also well placed to access the M25 and M40 motorways



HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

Buckinghamshire New University is located within nearby High Wycombe and is well placed to serve the educational needs of Chesham and other Buckinghamshire towns



PEOPLE

23,689 population (2021)



URBAN MEETS RURAL

Chesham provides the best of urban living, nestled in beautiful accessible woodlands, the River Chess and beautiful AONB countryside



WELL CONNECTED BY LONDON UNDERGROUND

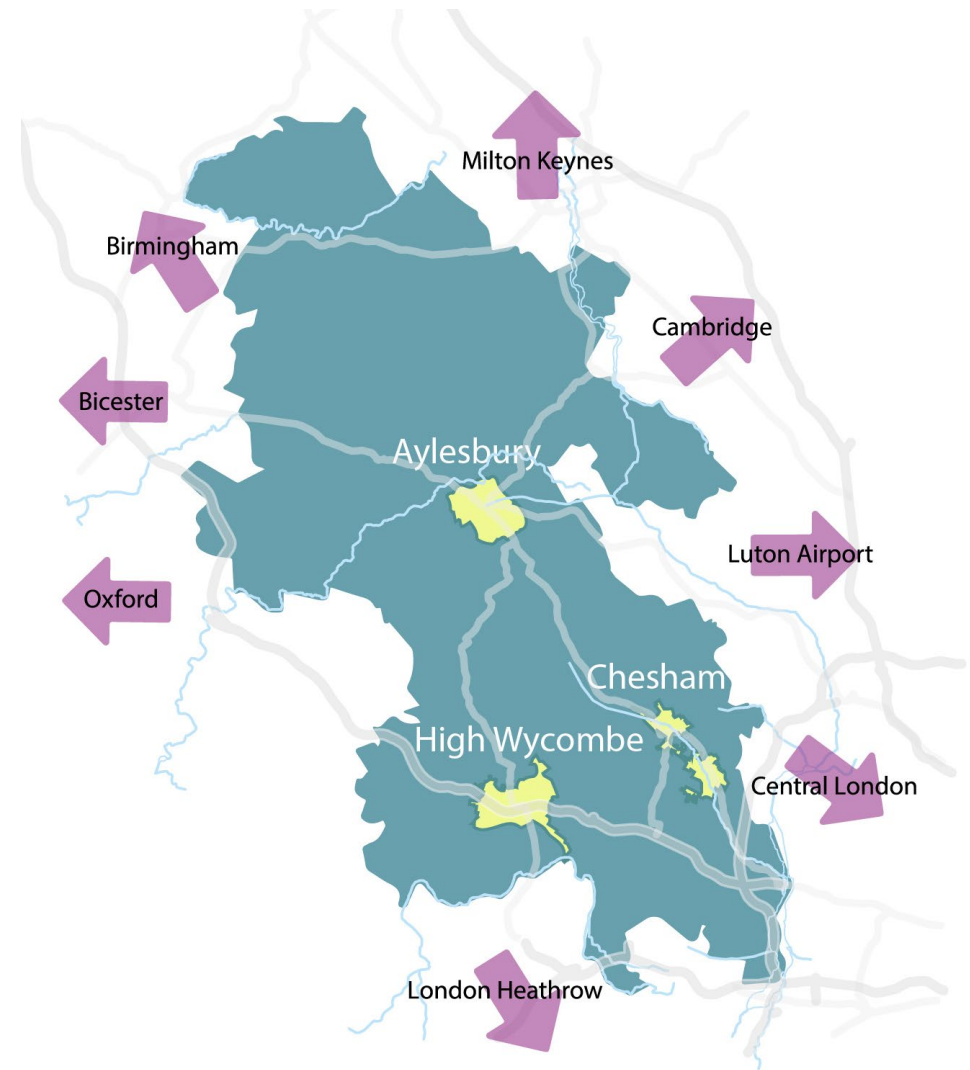
direct links from London on the Metropolitan line. Trains in Chesham connect to stations such as Kings Cross and Baker Street around every 30 minutes

WHY CHESHAM?

Chesham, the third largest town in Buckinghamshire, sits within the Chess Valley – an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Situated within the London commuter belt, it benefits from easy direct access on the London Underground. Chesham provides an important regional centre for its residents and surrounding rural villages, with a good offer of commercial, leisure, and community opportunities. The town has a number of vibrant independent retailers and hospitality businesses, bringing the best of urban/rural living together with the countryside on its doorstep.

The town offers something for families and those of all ages, with excellent schools (a number rated outstanding by Ofsted), active community groups and a range of cultural and historic amenities. The Elgiva Theatre is a key cultural asset with the potential to support the regeneration of the town by providing a focal point for cultural activity and stimulating the night-time economy. The theatre was the winner of three industry awards in 2022, and hosts both local and national shows. The town centre also includes the Chesham Museum which offers various activities to raise awareness and celebrate the town's heritage.

CHESHAM LOCATION MAP



Map 1

West of the town centre, Lowndes Park provides a welcoming green space with the potential for further improvement and additional facilities.

Chesham has an array of greenery around the town with several streams from the River Chess and also boasts England's only spring fed lido at the Gym and Swim. It also has direct links to a variety of Chiltern walks and ancient woodlands

The town is home to over 1,200 businesses, collectively supporting over 6,500 jobs. Creative industries are a growing sector, with many local creatives and artists setting up businesses. House prices are above the Buckinghamshire and national averages; the town centre has seen some recent residential development.

Events and festivals are popular in Chesham, including the annual Chesham Carnival, The Hats Off Festival, Peace in the Park, and Christmas in Chesham.



WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

Regeneration activities in Chesham are vital to support the town to grow and to realise its potential. The growth trends in town centre living provide the basis to rethink Chesham from an urban living perspective. Redevelopment of brownfield sites in the town centre reduces pressures to meet housing needs through greenfield site development.

We want Chesham to be a thriving community and a great place to live, work and visit. Building on a historical legacy, Chesham's potential as a local hub for independent and creative retail, urban living, social interaction, community and economic activity makes for an exciting future for the town centre. Chesham has beautiful surroundings which means it is a popular location for visitors and tourists who want to enjoy the scenic countryside, culture, and heritage of the place. Chesham has the potential to be a multi-use town, expanding its tourism capability, embracing opportunities to become an overnight destination.

One of the greatest opportunities for Chesham is its rail connection to London's underground network. It lends itself well for those who want to visit or relocate their businesses outside of central London as well as residents who wish to work or visit London.

This strategy seeks to build upon, learn from, and progress work already undertaken by local partners, including Chesham Town Council, Chesham Community Board, and local community groups. The Town Council in its development of the Neighbourhood Plan, has been instrumental in progressing the future planning and setting an exciting vision for the whole of Chesham.



WHY NOW?

In establishing a framework for the regeneration of Buckinghamshire, we have made a clear commitment to transforming our county, which starts with advancing our strategies for our three larger towns, including Chesham.

Strong partnerships already exist in Chesham and across Buckinghamshire. These partnerships support Chesham's continued growth as a key market town and creative hub. Local Chesham stakeholders have well-developed partnerships in place. The Town Council plays a leading role in setting the vision for the future of Chesham and other local businesses and residents are actively engaged through groups like the Chesham Chamber of Commerce and others.

Buckinghamshire is also an 'aligned county', with a shared geography between the Council, Healthcare NHS Trust, Buckinghamshire Business First and a place-based partnership for Buckinghamshire with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership.

These strong partnerships mean Buckinghamshire has an excellent track record of delivery as well as strong, aligned leadership turning ambition into action.



Chesham is an ambitious town. It is already recognised as a strong creative and community town, represented by many, artists, musicians, and other creatives, many of whom come together through events for arts, culture and celebration. This strategy looks to capture this momentum and explore opportunities to see how culture and the creative sectors can be leveraged to drive regeneration forward.

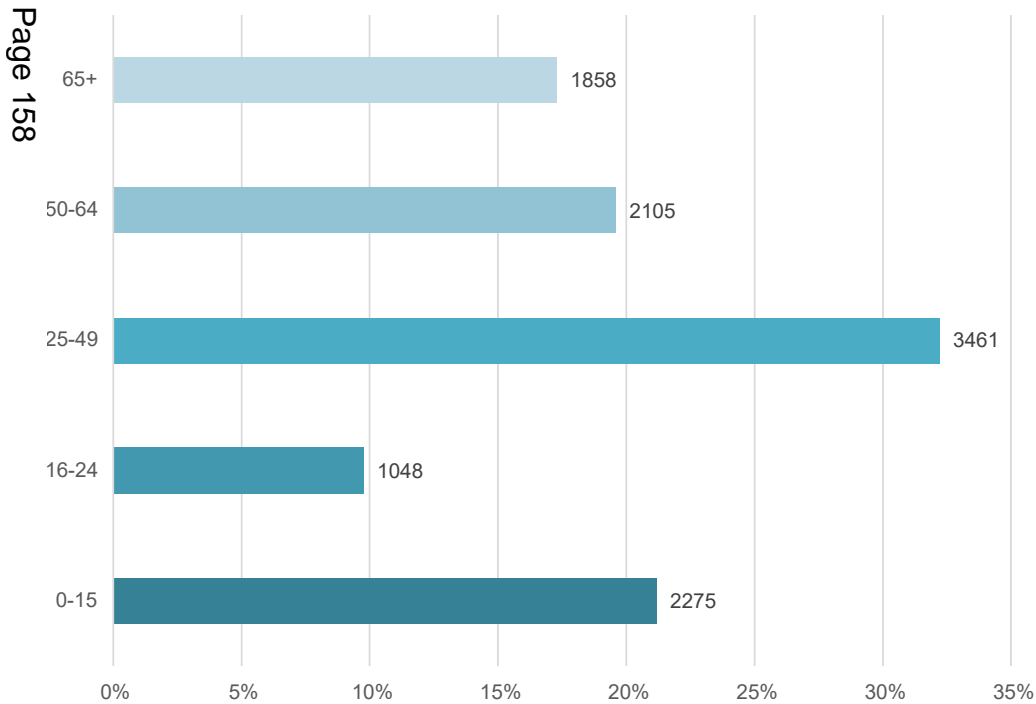
This strategy sits alongside the *Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All Framework*, which outlines an approach to creating equality of opportunity for all residents and communities. The focus is upon the ten most deprived wards, of which Chesham is one. The Opportunity Bucks framework identifies five key themes - education and youth engagement; jobs, careers and skills; quality of our public realm; standard of living; and health and wellbeing. The delivery of these themes will enable the town centre to support the needs of a range of individuals and communities.



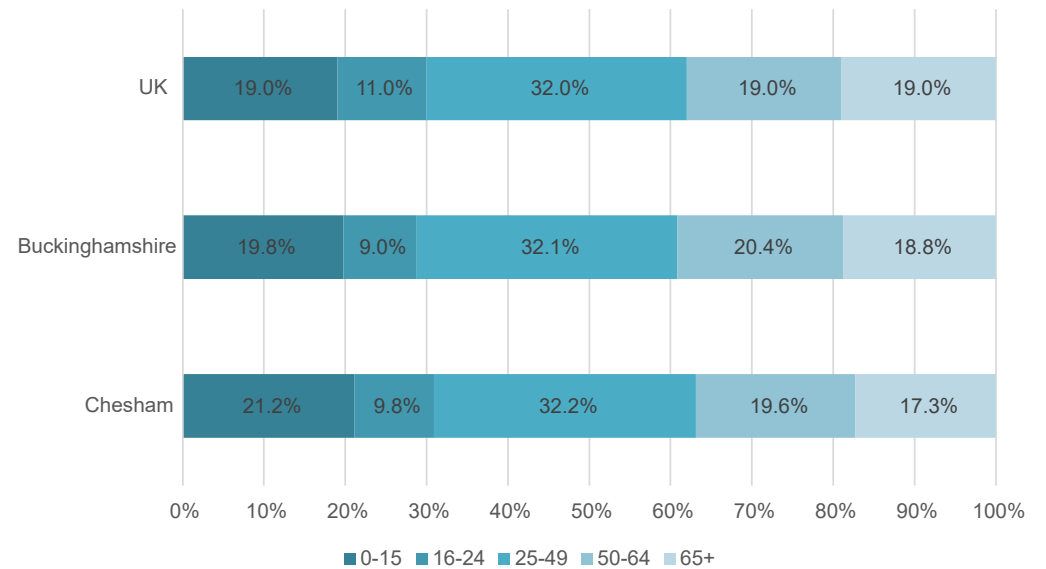
LOCAL ECONOMY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the national census, Chesham had an estimated population of 23,056 in 2020, an increase of 7.1% over the decade. This compares to an increase of 7.4% for Buckinghamshire. The Chesham population then increased as per the 2021 census data to 23,689, a further increase of 2.8%.

Graph 1 breaks down the population into various age bands with Graph 2 showing that Chesham has a younger population 0-15 at 20.4%, comparatively with Buckinghamshire and the rest of England but with high numbers in age the age population group 25-49 at 34.1%.



Graph 1: Percentage of age groups in Chesham - Source: ONS 2021



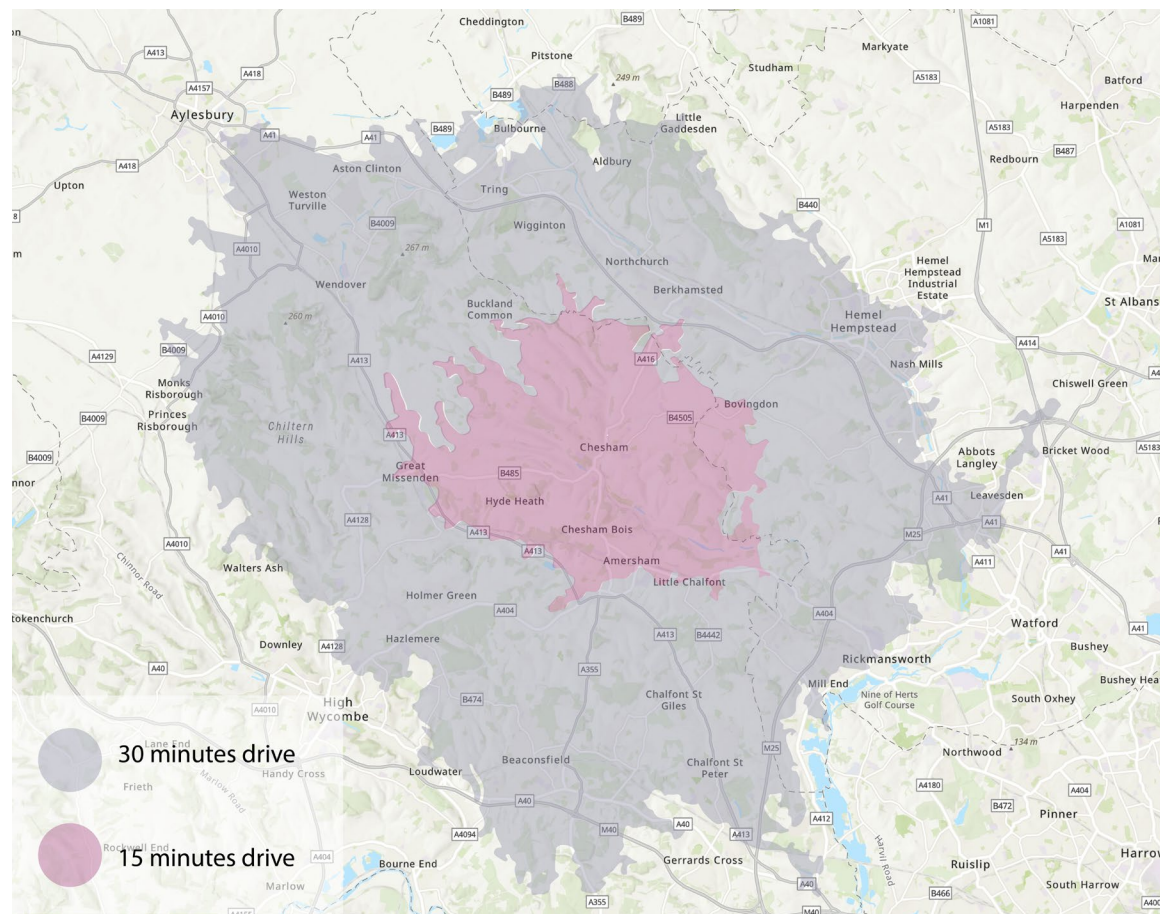
Graph 2: Age groups percentages compared - Source: ONS 2021

RETAIL CATCHMENT AND HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE

Retail is the dominant sector in Chesham town centre with 44% of the units being used in this manner. The two largest units in the centre are supermarkets – Sainsbury’s and Waitrose.

While offerings from nearby Amersham, Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Watford may be strong, Chesham, with its growing independent retailers, offers something different to other market towns in the area.

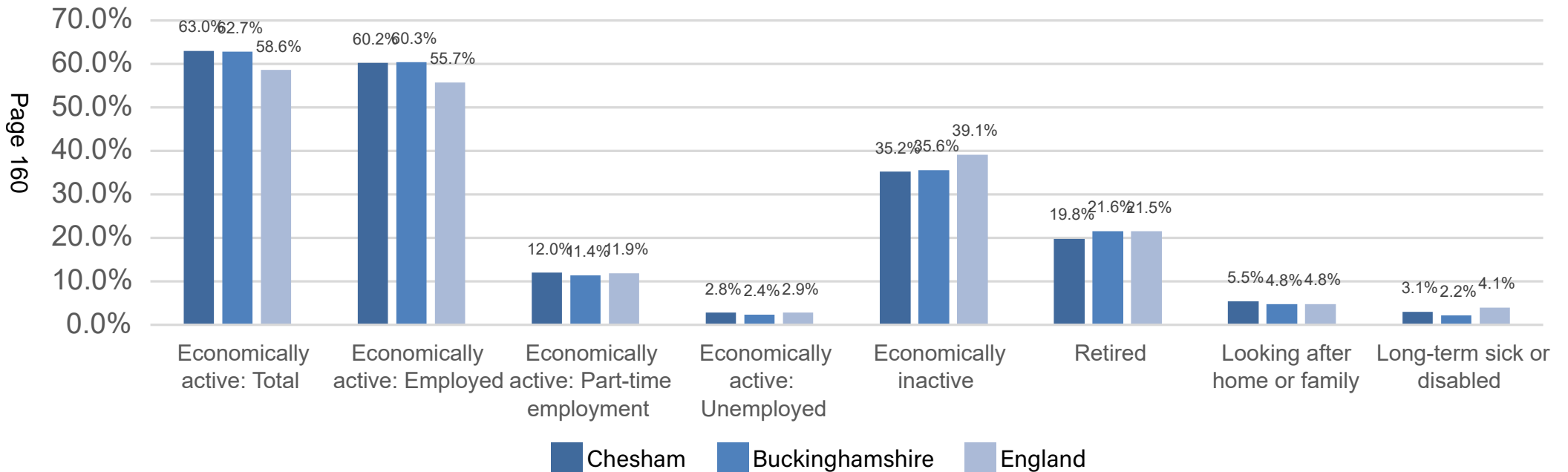
Footfall data for Chesham town centre shows an average of 51,700 visits a week which is above pre-Covid levels. The busiest days are Saturday, Friday, and Wednesday (with Thursday not far behind) with an average of 7,750 to 8,600 visits a day. The busiest period is between 9am to 5pm. 74% of visits are over 20 minutes with 29% of visits having a dwell time of 20 to 40 minutes. Longer visits and visits as part of the night-time economy are areas of opportunity to explore.



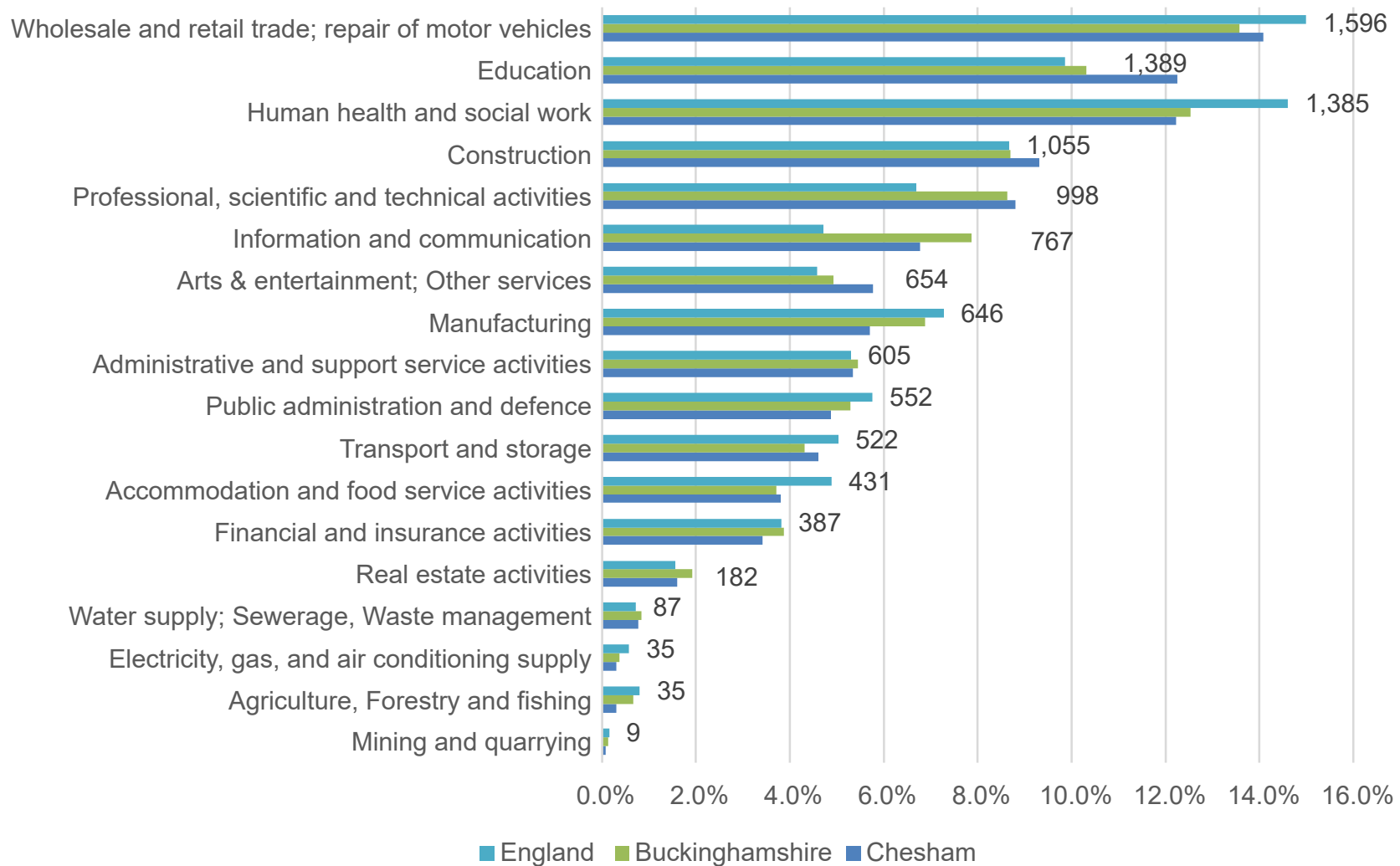
Map 2: Chesham retail catchment area

THE LABOUR MARKET

Chesham has a highly educated and strong labour market, which is demonstrated within Graph 3 below. Chesham's education rates are slightly higher than the national average.

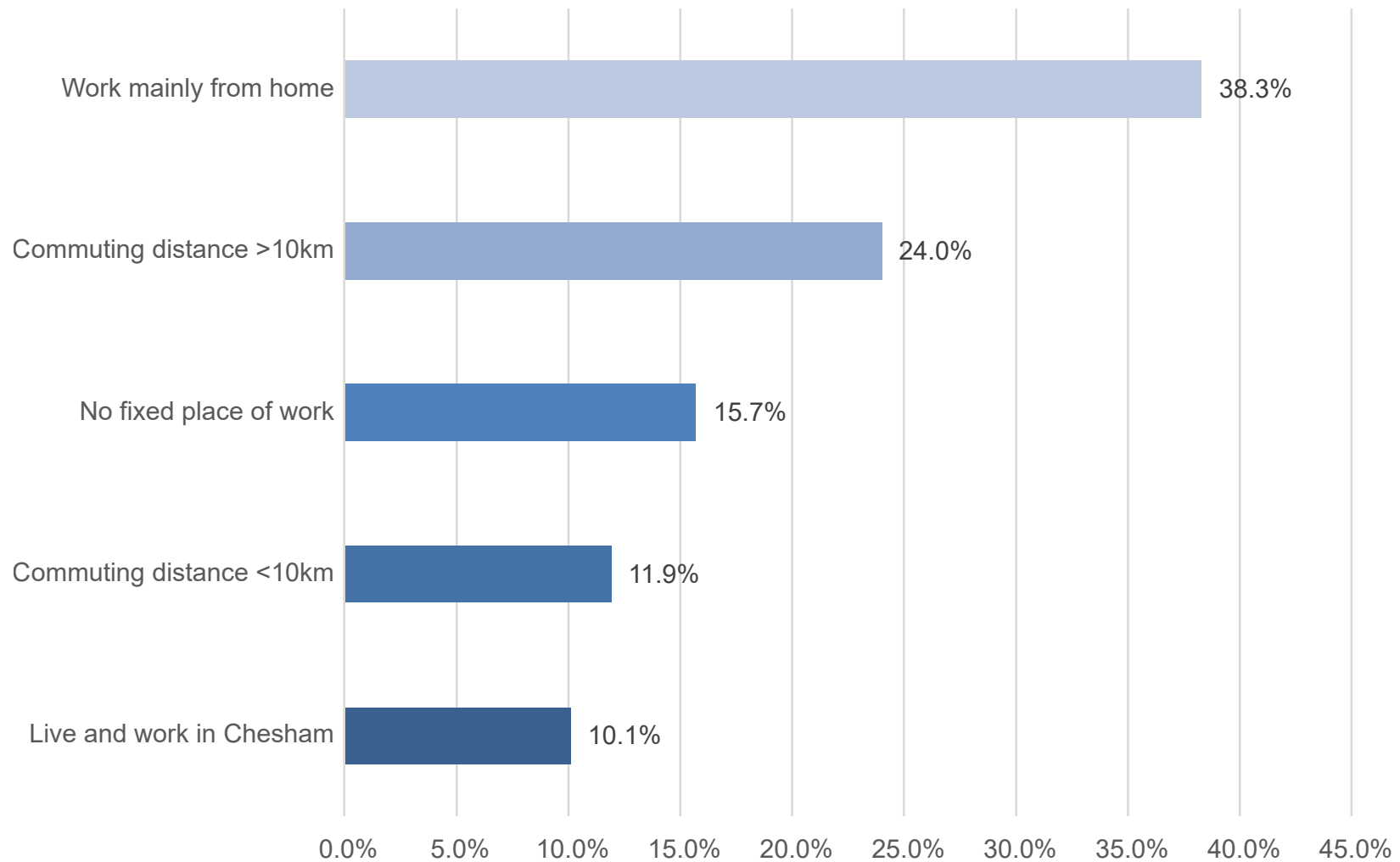


Graph 3 - Source: ONS 2021



Graph 4 - Source: ONS 2021

Graph 4 shows the percentage of employed residents by industry, for Chesham, Buckinghamshire, and England. Absolute figures of employed residents in Chesham are shown for each sector. Chesham has a notably higher number of residents employed in the education sector, and within the creative industries when compared to national figures. Source: ONS 2021.



Graph 5 - Source: ONS 2021

Graph 5 shows the working patterns of Chesham residents. The proportion of people working from home has significantly increased following COVID-19. Around a quarter of residents are commuting out of the area (over 10km) for work. A similar proportion live and work in the town or nearby. Source: ONS 2021.

LAND USES

Over the last five to 10 years, Chesham has seen a shift towards a higher level of town centre residential land use.

In terms of retail space, as well as the national supermarket providers, the high street has several national chains including Boots, Savers, and Waterstones. There are also a broad mix of independent providers, particularly within the café, food and beverage.

There are a number of different car parking sites in Chesham including several surface level car parks which are owned and managed by Buckinghamshire Council. These are Water Meadow, Albany Place, Star Yard, and East Street.

There are a few gaps for land uses in the town centre including an absence of a central hotel offering on or near the high street. Chesham also lacks sufficient civic, arts, and community space. While the Elgiva Theatre is an important local venue, there are no other comparable sized options or larger venues in town. The Chesham Museum does not have a permanent location.

Different parts of the town centre are sometimes not well connected. For example, the High Street and station in Chesham sit on the opposite side of St Mary's Way to Lowndes Park. This severance inhibits the flow of pedestrians and reduces access to the greenspace from the high street. St Mary's Way also creates a separation between the Elgiva Theatre and the rest of the town centre.



PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE CHANGE

REGENERATION PRINCIPLES FOR CHESHAM

Foundational work and stakeholder and community engagement identified several opportunities and challenges for Chesham. To capitalise on the opportunities and address the challenges, a number of relevant principles from the *Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future* framework will be deployed in Chesham to support a thriving and successful town centre:



To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally

For Chesham, this means improving the food, beverage and accommodation offer and increasing demand for the night-time economy. Options that explore new events and pop-up street food vendors will be developed.

For the retail sector on the High Street, there will be a focus on exploring ways to encourage and expand the independent offer. This includes identifying ways to utilise the Chesham Market and market traders to nurture and support new businesses.

Chesham has also seen a recent trend towards residential growth in the town centre and this is likely to continue. New housing development in the High Street will be most successful if it comes forward as mixed-use commercial proposals that keep the street level active.

We will monitor the collective offer of the businesses on the High Street and in times of turnover, proactively use those opportunities to play a role in brokering the best replacement tenants/owners.

To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs

For Chesham, this means that development in the town centre supports existing businesses so that they can grow and evolve as well as provides the premises needed to attract new business investment. Exploring options for further development of business incubator

models like business hubs, subsidised empty shop-front initiatives, and links with the Chesham Market is a priority, particularly where this can be targeted to creative sectors.

To provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and managed environment

In Chesham, there is a need to address some areas of poor-quality public realm. For example, the entrance to the town from the railway/tube station is an underwhelming experience, with little indication to a visitor how nearby the High Street is located. Options for improving wayfinding, hygiene, and improved 'coherence' to the look and feel of the town centre should be explored.

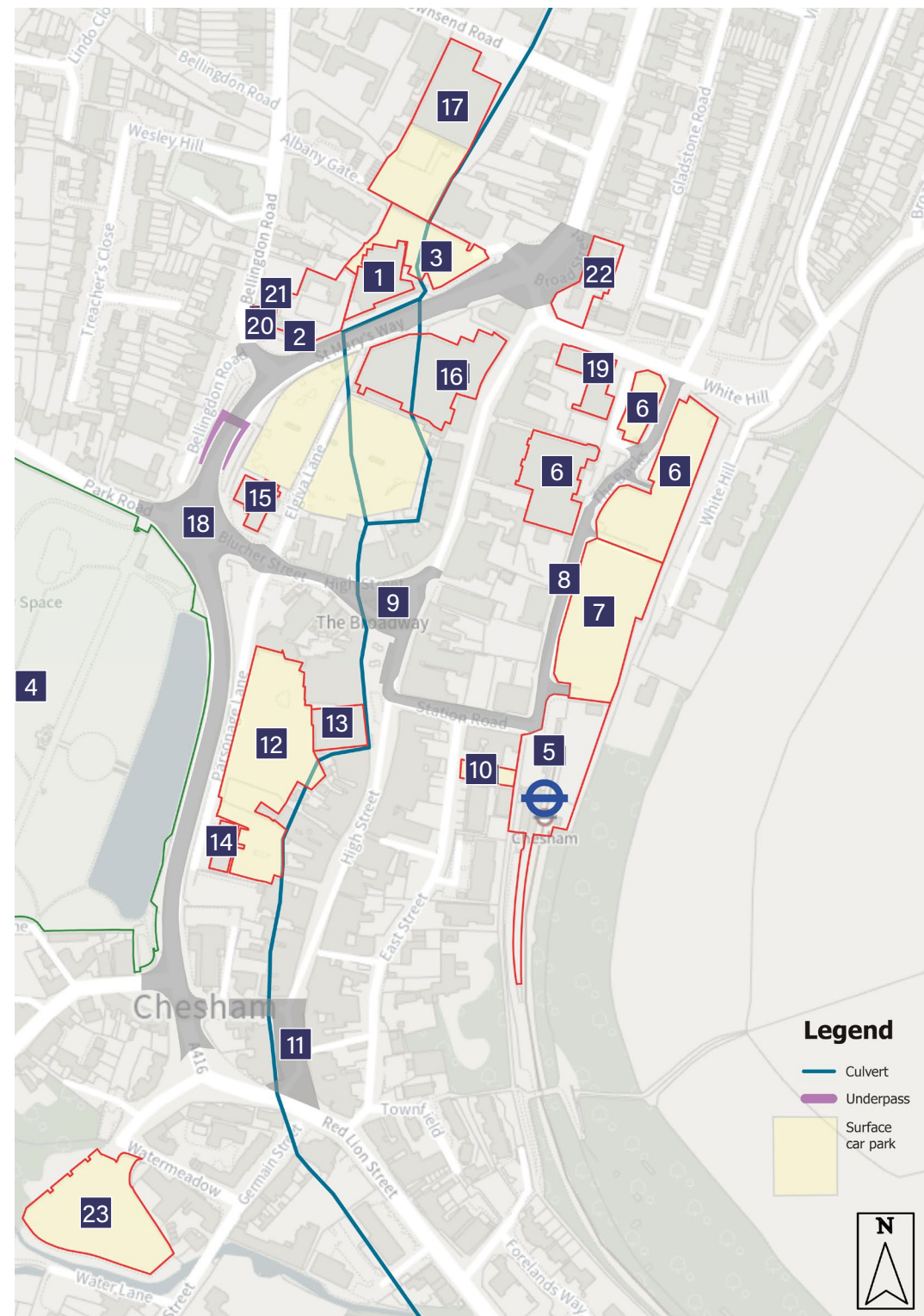
Enhancements to the natural environment through more tree planting, sustainable planting and improving bio-diversity in the town centre will be prioritised where possible.

To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities

Chesham has rich local heritage, a number of important cultural partners, and an active arts community which should be supported and developed in line with any regeneration programme. Developing the 'cultural offer' in Chesham can provide a catalyst for investment and delivery.

SITES

1	Elgiva Theatre - 991.5 sqm
2	Chesham Youth Centre - 264.3 sqm
3	Albany Place Car Park - 1,822.8 sqm
4	Lowndes Park and Skottow's Pond - 134,110 sqm
5	Train Station - 797 sqm
6	Waitrose and Car Parks - 4,102.9 sqm
7	Transport for London Station Car Park - 4,102.9 sqm
8	The Backs - 1,887.8 sqm
9	The Broadway and Station Road - 2,041.8 sqm
10	East Street Car Park - 636.2 sqm
11	Market Square - 267.3 sqm
12	Star Yard/Catlings Car Park - 5,405.3 sqm
13	M&Co - 128.2 sqm
14	Chesham Town Hall - 338.7 sqm
15	Chesham Library - 535.6 sqm
16	Sainsbury's Car Park - 3,276 sqm
17	Wickes - 2,052.2 sqm
18	St. Mary's Way - 9,657.3 sqm
19	UK House - 857.9 sqm
20	Quaker's Buildings - 113.7 sqm
21	All Spring Media - 128 sqm
22	Broad Street Gateway - 1,088 sqm
23	Water Meadow Car Park - 3,992.9 sqm



Map 3 - Site reference map

CHESHAM 'CLUSTERS'

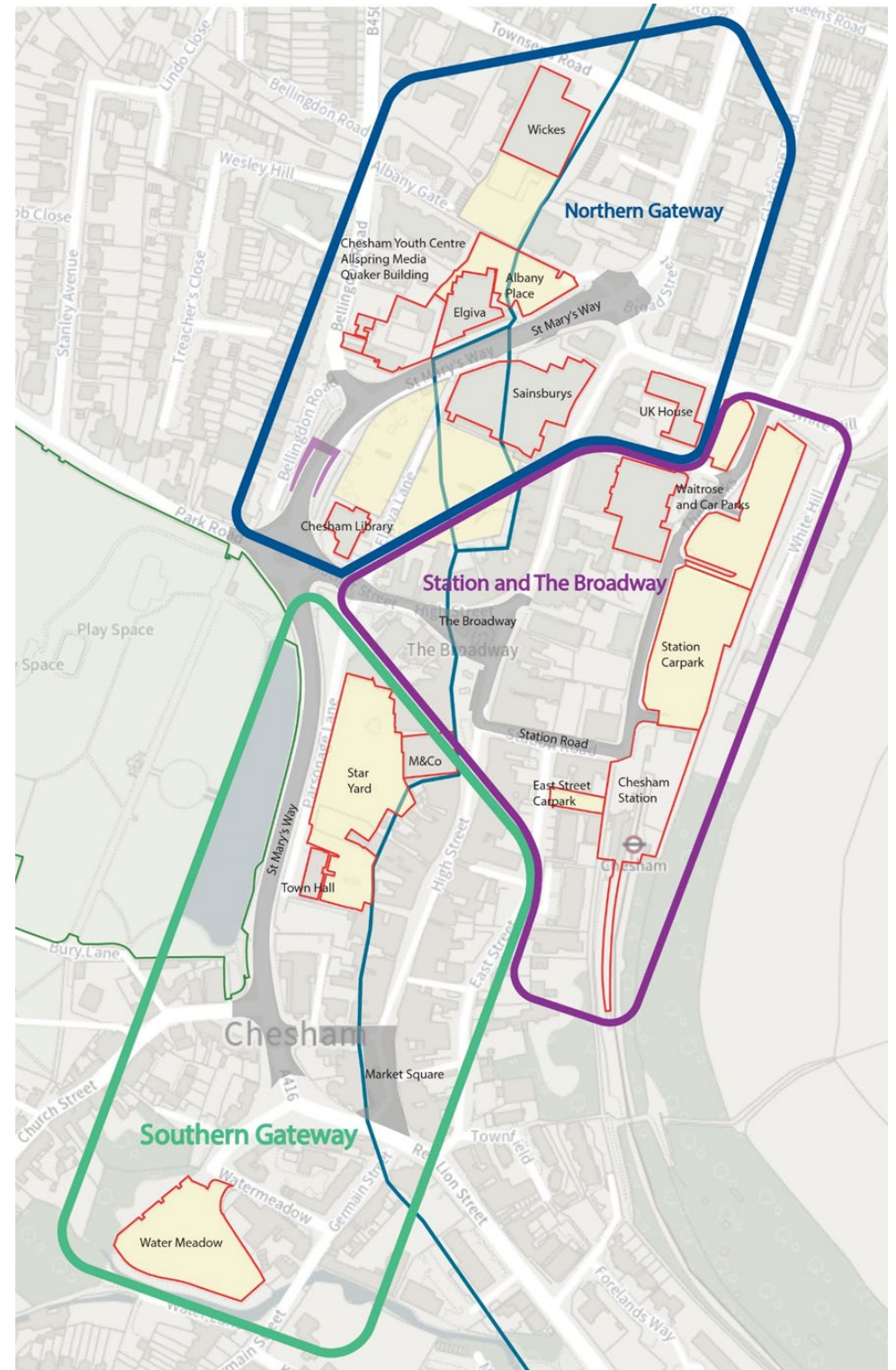
The town centre can be considered as having three 'clusters' each with its own strengths and challenges that need to guide and shape potential interventions. Whilst activity in each cluster will support delivery of this strategy, how this is delivered, and the type of interventions will vary based upon need, funding, and appraisals.

The Northern Gateway

Starting at the northern end of the town centre is the 'Northern Gateway', the location of the Elgiva Theatre and the cultural heart of Chesham. This area includes the north end of the High Street, which is home to the weekly town market. The Northern Gateway cluster touches the north-eastern corner of Lowndes Park and also includes the Chesham Library.

This cluster can feel disconnected to the rest of the town centre and far from the station even though the distance from the theatre is five minutes on foot. St Mary's Way is a busy road, which contributes to this feeling of severance as a pedestrian.

There are a few sites in this cluster that have long been discussed as development opportunities and in taking these forward there is a need to ensure plans support the cultural offer in the area.



Map 4 - Site clusters

The Station and The Broadway

This cluster is the central part of the town centre. Within it are the tube station and main drop off points for buses, taxis, and private transport, which serve as an important entrance point for the high street. 'The Broadway' is the central point between the northern and southern sections of the High Street where the street widens and creates a small public realm area.

Behind the northern section of the High Street is an access road called 'The Backs' which connects the supermarkets, a few car parks, and the station. Opportunities to invest in and improve this area should be explored.

The Southern Gateway

This cluster is an important location for Chesham's night-time economy. The pedestrianised Market Square provides a space for outdoor dining and for events, including a monthly themed market. It is home to several independent retail and hospitality businesses, which already collaborate and work together.

Recent new painting and other public art additions have improved the attractiveness of routes into the town centre and have created new focal points promoting some businesses to introduce new outdoor seating areas.

The regeneration activities for this cluster should prioritise initiatives which generate footfall and support the night-time economy.



NEXT STEPS: TAKING THE STRATEGY FORWARD AS A PARTNERSHIP

Town centre regeneration is a top priority for the Buckinghamshire Growth Board, which has established a sub-board for Regeneration as part of its governance. A local Chesham Regeneration Group is in place to drive this strategy forward and feed up into the Regeneration sub-board of the Growth Board.

The key priorities for the Chesham regeneration programme in the short term will focus on pedestrianised spaces by clarifying access, improving wayfinding (including improvements initially on Station Road), and other options to introduce more public art. The programme will also include exploring options to increase high street activity through additional events, specialty markets, and street-food pop-ups. Active monitoring is in place to pursue opportunities that may emerge to broker the right type of occupancy turnover on the high street. Work is underway and will progress in exploring options for the redevelopment of council owned sites such as the ones in the 'Northern Gateway' cluster, including the Library (enhancing the offer and improving access), sites adjacent to the Elgiva Theatre and the East Street Car Park near the Tube station in the 'Station and Broadway' cluster. The council will work with the Chesham Town Council in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Establishing and delivering the regeneration programme for Chesham requires a collaborative, partnership approach. Buckinghamshire Council will continue to build on the relationships developed with key local stakeholders and will work with partners including Chesham Town Council and the active business community, and residents, to take forward proposals. The Chesham Regeneration Group, made of up of the council alongside key local stakeholders is the strategic steering group for delivering this strategy and the regeneration programme for Chesham. It forms part of the wider Place Based Growth Board governance and reports into the Regeneration Sub-Board.







HIGH WYCOMBE REGENERATION STRATEGY

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FOREWORD

As Leader of Buckinghamshire Council and Deputy Cabinet Member for Town Centre Regeneration, we are delighted to introduce our strategy for regenerating High Wycombe. It is one of a suite of documents that follows ***Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future***, our Buckinghamshire-wide Regeneration Framework.

Working closely among partners informs the way Buckinghamshire operates. The Buckinghamshire Growth Board and partnership groups meet regularly to review strategies and deliver plans for regeneration. There are also bespoke local partnership groups in place for Aylesbury, High Wycombe, and Chesham to support the regeneration of these towns. This strategy provides the detail of how this is taken forward in High Wycombe and showcases all the exciting and dynamic opportunities for investment in the town.

High Wycombe has been a firm pillar of the Buckinghamshire economy, generating inward investment, leading in research and development, and holding firm against national and local challenges over time.

However, despite its many strengths, High Wycombe has challenges it must look to respond to in order to remain successful, including supporting business growth, improving the public realm and planning for an increased demand for urban living especially from young professionals, students, and keyworkers. We understand that our town centre must continually adapt to ensure that it remains relevant, lively, and a vibrant place that is well used and delivers for local people and businesses.

High Wycombe has modern creative, digital, and high-tech businesses sitting alongside nationally important heritage sites and a vibrant culture. It is a popular place to live with first class public and private educational institutions making it a popular town for families.

This strategy sets out key regeneration objectives for the town, in line with the **Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future** Framework. This strategy has been shaped by key local stakeholders via the High Wycombe Regeneration Group. This collaboration with other key stakeholders such as the Town Committee and Community Board will continue and will aid the strategy's realisation.

This publication is for residents, businesses, public sector partners and private investors who want to get involved in transforming High Wycombe and enabling it to be the best place it can be.

It forms the basis of many emerging regeneration opportunities that will take the town from strength to strength, and by working together, we can ensure High Wycombe continues to be a place people want to spend time in, be this as a resident, visitor, or business.

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Cllr Martin Tett
Leader of
Buckinghamshire Council



Cllr Rachael Matthews
Deputy Cabinet Member for
Town Centre Regeneration

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE



ECONOMY

worth **£17.4 billion**



BUSINESSES

home to **31,355 businesses**



CONNECTIVITY

fully integrated with the London tube network and rail, hosting two underground stations at Chesham and Amersham



EDUCATION

76% of schools are rated **“Good”** or **“Outstanding”** by OFSTED



REGENERATION BUCKS

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future is our Buckinghamshire Regeneration Framework. It introduces an ambitious agenda for our town centres and high streets and articulates the role people and places can play in achieving the Buckinghamshire vision for growth.

Regeneration vision for Buckinghamshire

The regeneration of our towns will celebrate local identity, create prosperity, and achieve our ambitions for communities and local businesses in Buckinghamshire.

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future identifies two interdependent guiding aims for regeneration activities:

- To create vibrant and characterful town centres which celebrate local culture and heritage and offer high quality inclusive public realm where people will want to live, work, visit, shop and relax.
- To create fertile conditions for enterprise and skills to support the launch of new businesses and create the conditions for them to succeed.

Whilst the two priorities underpin town centre regeneration, how the priorities will be delivered, areas of focus and the actions and interventions required will vary by place.

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future also identifies ten principles to guide change:

1. To ensure the creation of a strong network of towns in Buckinghamshire.
2. To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally.
3. To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs.
4. To create a network of high quality, well planned road networks with attractive streets and spaces, and cycling routes that are safe to use, well connected and accessible.
5. To maximise the county's natural capital through its network of waterways and green spaces.
6. To provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and managed environment.
7. To enhance strategic connectivity opportunities.
8. To ensure a greener and more carbon neutral future.
9. To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities.
10. To prioritise skills and development opportunities.

Regeneration Bucks - Transforming for the Future sets the tone for our 'place' strategies and paves the way for leveraging High Wycombe's distinct identity. The High Wycombe Regeneration Strategy has been developed in accordance with this county-wide framework so that we can achieve place-based growth and long-lasting change in the best way possible.

HIGH WYCOMBE



WELL CONNECTED BY ROAD

accessible by the M40 from Oxford in the West and London in the East; the A4010 heads north towards Aylesbury; the A404 gives access to Maidenhead southbound and Amersham and Great Missenden northbound



WELL CONNECTED BY RAIL

a regular service from High Wycombe train station arrives into London Marylebone in as little as 30 minutes with regular services to Oxford and Birmingham also available



PEOPLE

105,034 population growing by 18% over the last decade



HOMES

6,350 new homes proposed to be built from 2019 to 2033



SCHOOLS

a range of excellent educational establishments



HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

the main campus for Buckinghamshire New University is in High Wycombe and is home to a range of state of the art facilities, such as personal art and design workspaces, Aviation Simulator, Gym and Film and TV Studios. The Bucks College Group is due to build its brand-new state of the art campus in 2025 in the town centre

WHY HIGH WYCOMBE?

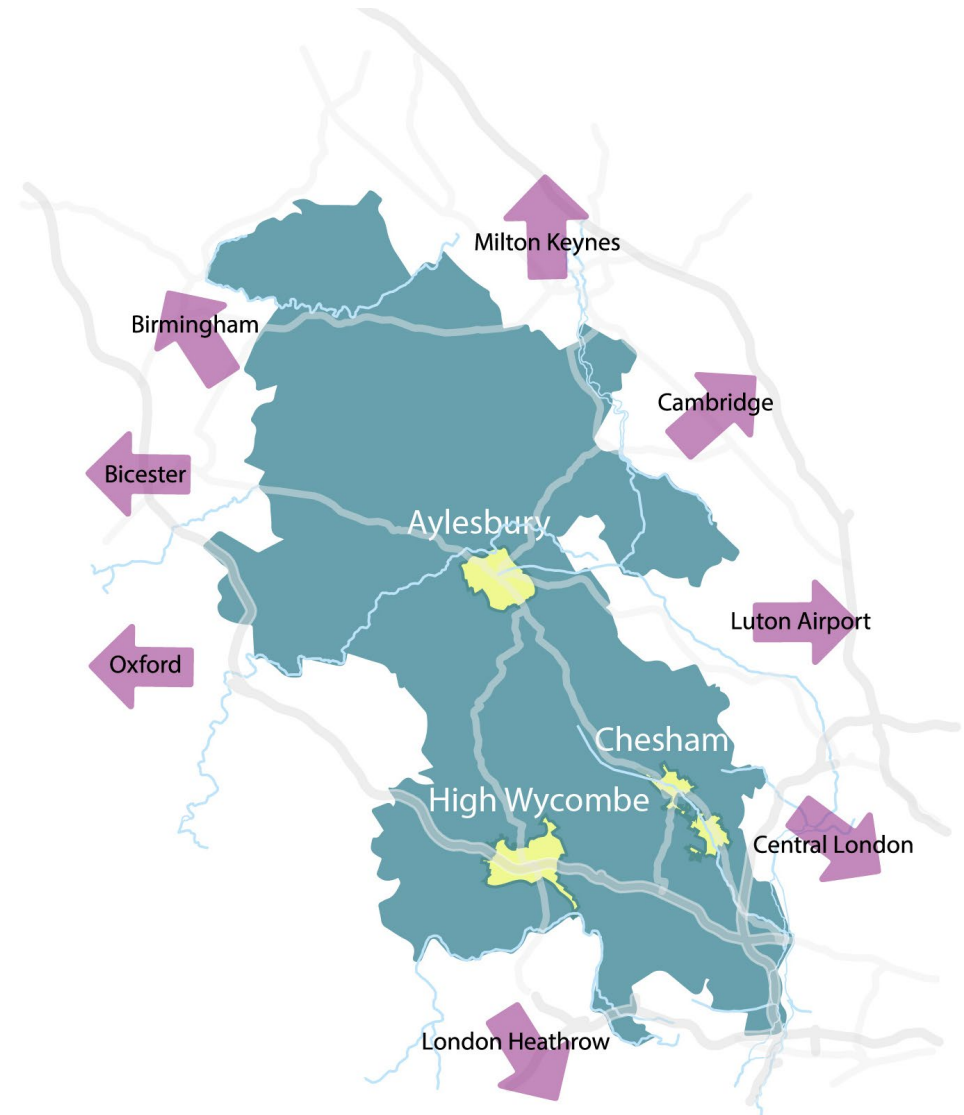
High Wycombe is a historic market town rich in character and architectural diversity, with a settlement having existed since 970. By 1875 High Wycombe was known as the furniture capital of England, with the furniture industry continuing to dominate the manufacturing base of the town into the 20th century.

Today, High Wycombe has a diverse social fabric and is a successful and vibrant market town in Buckinghamshire. The town is a gateway to the surrounding Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), sitting within the rare chalk stream valley of the River Wye.

It is well served by the strategic road network, including the M40 and M4, and has fantastic rail connections into London, Oxford and the north, towards Birmingham. Alongside physical infrastructure, there is good communications infrastructure, such as high-speed fibre optic broadband.

The Cressex Business Park is home to more than 400 business premises, collectively supporting over 20,000 jobs in sectors that are as diverse as tech to health to manufacturing. It recently formed its own Business Park Improvement District, enabling companies to invest in and improve its surrounding environment.

HIGH WYCOMBE LOCATION MAP



Town centre businesses have also organised their own Business Improvement District (HWBIDCo), a key asset and stakeholder in the town centre. It is an independent, not-for profit partnership, representing over 675 businesses in the town centre, ranging from major players such as the Eden Shopping Centre, as well as smaller businesses including independent businesses. The HWBIDCo has helped embed a new identity for the town aimed at promoting local heritage, businesses, and town centre events. In its third term now, HWBIDCo is able to invest £1.3m each year, through its levy and external funding, back into the town centre. This supports businesses around the core themes of festivals and events and supports the representation of business voices.

High Wycombe is home to the expanding Buckinghamshire New University, which is ranked 11th in What Uni's 2022 University of the Year. The Eden Shopping Centre in the centre of the town attracting a substantial number of visitors per year. Recently, the town centre has seen significant residential development, including the redevelopment of the gas works site to 239 residential units and 1,472 sqm of commercial space.



WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY?

High Wycombe is home to international companies such as Johnson & Johnson, Wilkinson Sword, and global science and technology innovator, Danaher. There are also many exciting opportunities for business start-ups wanting to locate in High Wycombe, in business incubator spaces such as Desbox and HQube, with plenty of further 'grow-on-spaces' when they are ready to move into bigger premises. Alongside this, there has been major inward investment from larger more established businesses including Porsche and Bentley as part of the wider Motorsport Valley industry cluster in the Thames Valley.

Buckinghamshire New University has plans for diversifying its educational offering and increasing student numbers. The University is an important partner in building High Wycombe's identity as a thriving university town. More young people living and studying in the town centre will greatly benefit the vibrancy of the High Street and drive footfall into the night-time economy with its experiential offerings, food, beverage, and cultural opportunities.

The upcoming implementation of the White Hart Street Public Realm Improvement Scheme not only enhances the area for residents and visitors but will support food and beverage businesses to provide an outdoor 'alfresco' offer. Improved public realm affords greater cultural and creative activities such as the popular 'Frog Fest'. This will help to activate, animate, and celebrate the culture of High Wycombe through expressive means such as murals, shows, and events. It will draw people into the town and offer opportunities to meet, socialise and dwell.



WHY NOW?

Strong partnerships already exist in High Wycombe and across Buckinghamshire, and these partnerships are supporting High Wycombe's continued growth as a market town.

Buckinghamshire is an 'aligned county,' with a shared geography between the council, Healthcare NHS Trust, Buckinghamshire Business First and a place-based partnership for Buckinghamshire with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership.

These strong partnerships mean Buckinghamshire has an excellent track record of delivery as well as strong, aligned leadership turning ambition into action. The Brunel Engine Shed and delivery of Future High Streets projects are just two examples of how we have delivered on our ambitions in High Wycombe in recent years.

This strategy sits alongside the *Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All Framework*, which outlines an approach to creating equality of opportunity for all residents and communities. The focus is upon the ten most deprived wards, some of these are in High Wycombe. The Opportunity Bucks framework identifies five key themes - education and youth engagement; jobs, careers, and skills; quality of our public realm; standard of living; and health and wellbeing. The delivery of these themes will enable the town centre to support the needs of a range of individuals and communities.



INVESTING IN HIGH WYCOMBE

Track record

We have a strong track record of delivery in High Wycombe. We have been successful in bidding for Future High Street funding, demonstrating we are a place that can deliver regeneration and heritage-led developments.

Strong partnerships

High Wycombe benefits from strong existing partnerships between delivery partners, building on programmes that have already been delivered such as the building of the Hughenden Gardens Retirement Village, and the establishment of two Business Improvement Districts in the town.

Ideally located

High Wycombe has excellent road and rail connections, with 1.6 million passengers using the station in the last year for services to London, Oxford, Aylesbury, Reading and Heathrow Airport.

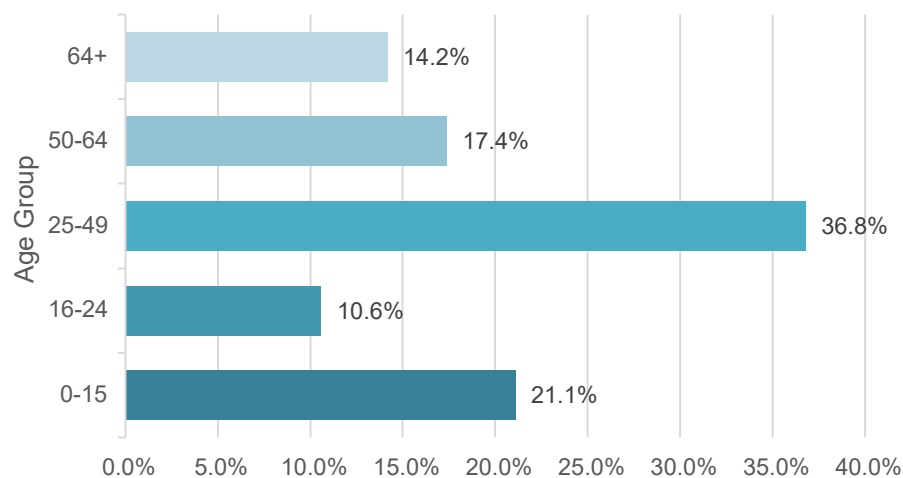


LOCAL ECONOMY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

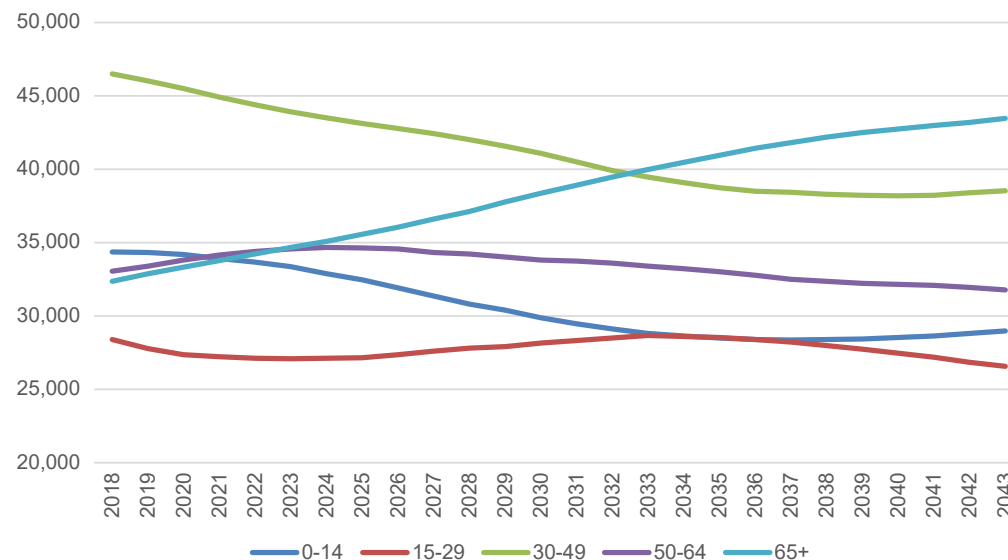
Census data from 2021 showed the built-up area of High Wycombe to have a population of 105,034 - a growing town with the population increasing by approx. 18% from 2001. Graph 1 shows the proportion of total population for each age group.

Compared with Buckinghamshire and the national average, High Wycombe has high proportions of children (0-15) and people aged 25-49 – highlighting the attraction of the town for families.

Census data published in 2022 shows the ethnic makeup of the town to be diverse, with 66.8% of the population identifying themselves as 'White', with the second largest group being 'South Asian' at 22%, followed by 'Black' at 7%.



Graph 1: Proportion of total population by age group.
Source: ONS 2021



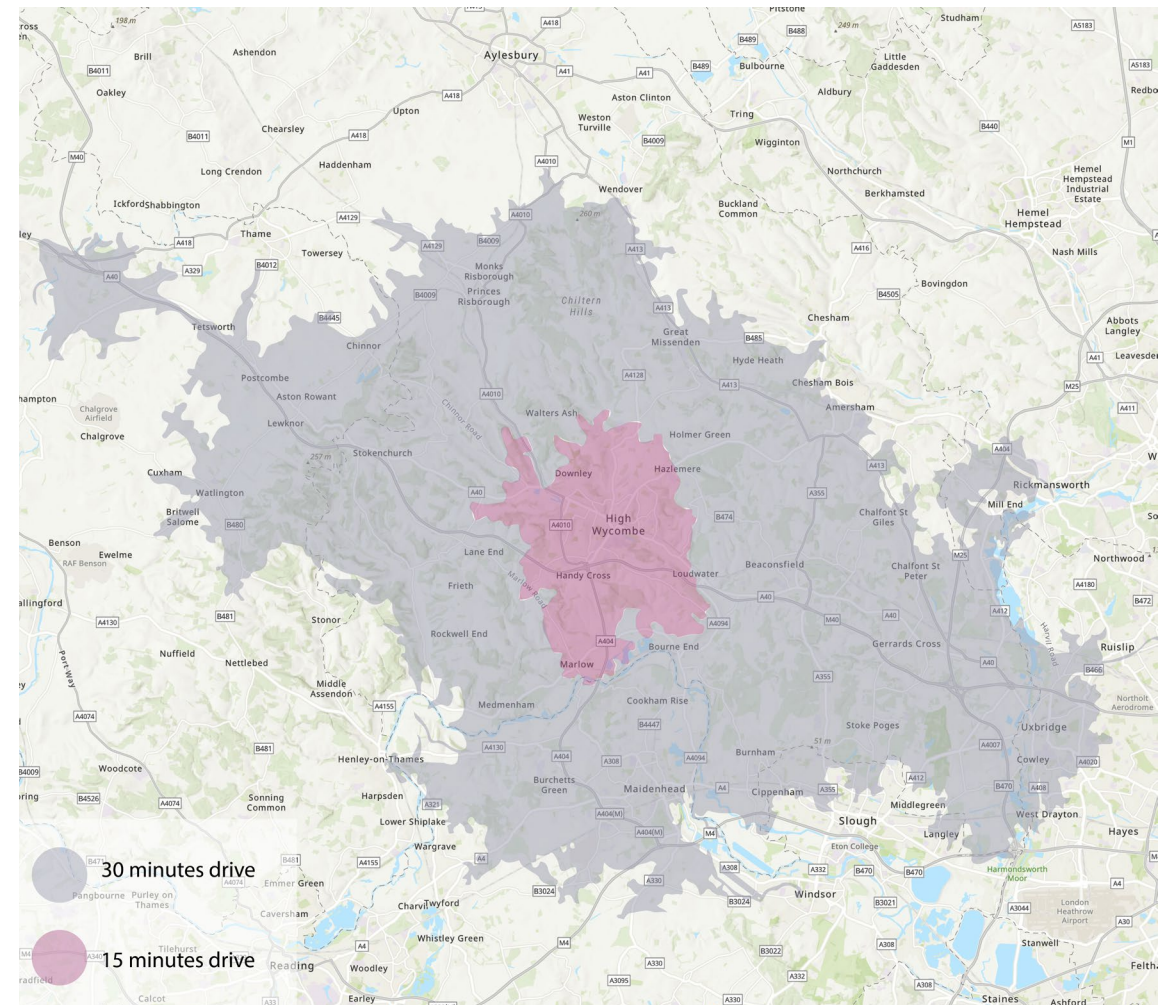
Graph 2 shows the Population Projection in High Wycombe – The 65+ demographic is expected to increase in number, while other age groups are expected to decline in numbers moderately. Source: ONS 2018

RETAIL CATCHMENT AND HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE

High Wycombe is the nearest centre of retail for the population within a 15-minute travel time radius. Regular train services bring in a wider market of shoppers along the Chiltern Mainline.

High Wycombe has an affluent local catchment with higher-than-average spending power, demand for leisure, trends for homeworking, and amenity needs.

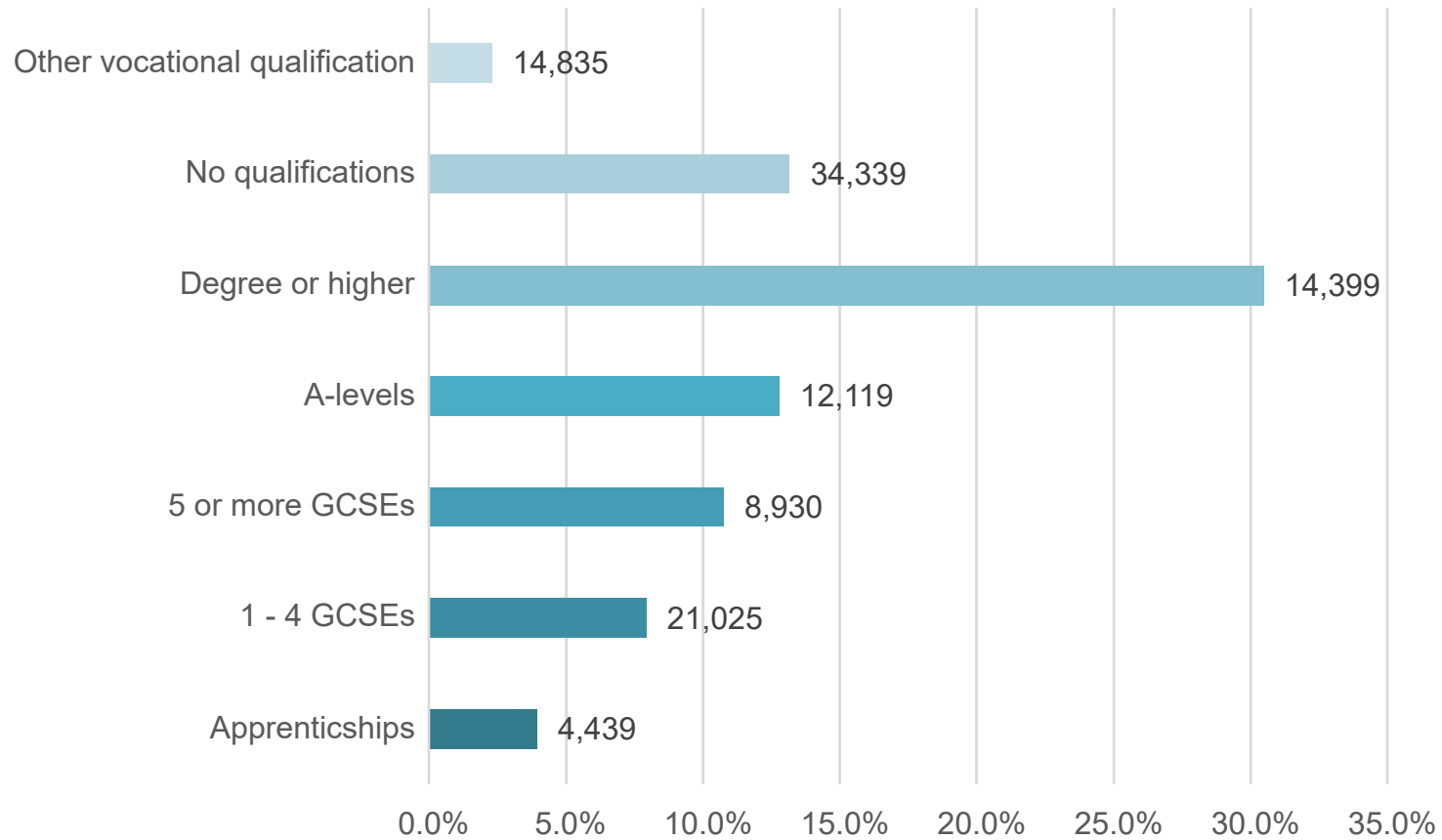
Footfall data for High Wycombe town centre shows an average of 247,500 visits a week which is approaching pre-Covid levels once more. The busiest days are Saturday, Friday, and Thursday (with Tuesday not far behind) with an average of 33,300 to 42,200 visits a day. The busiest period is between 9am to 5pm. 80% of visits are over 20 minutes with 32% of visits having the longest monitored dwell time of 60 to 90 minutes.



Map 1: High Wycombe retail catchment area.

THE LABOUR MARKET

As High Wycombe's population grows, so does the local labour market. The town has a diverse working population with a range of qualifications, from professional to vocational accreditation.

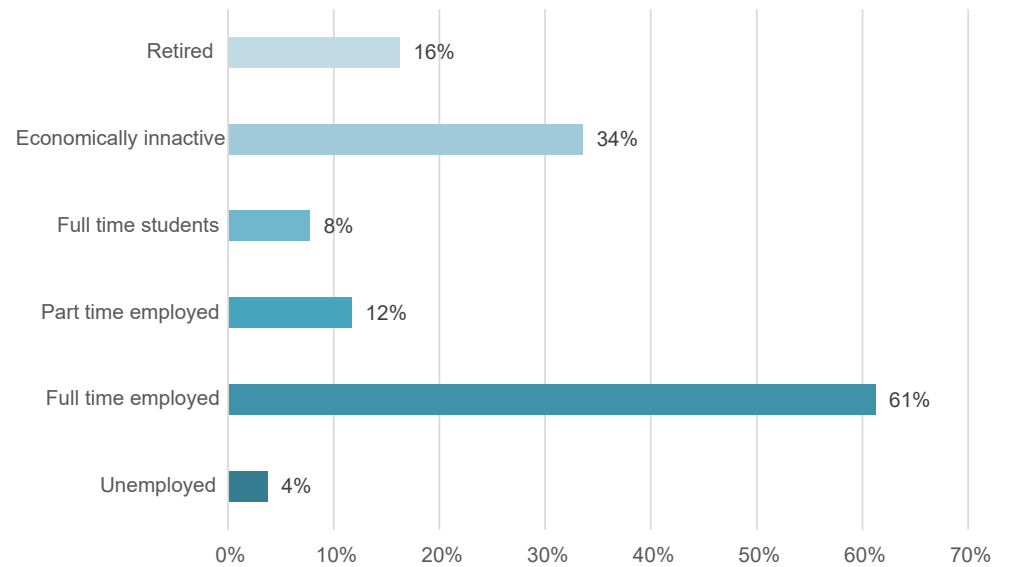


Graph 3 - Qualifications within the labour market. Source: ONS 2021

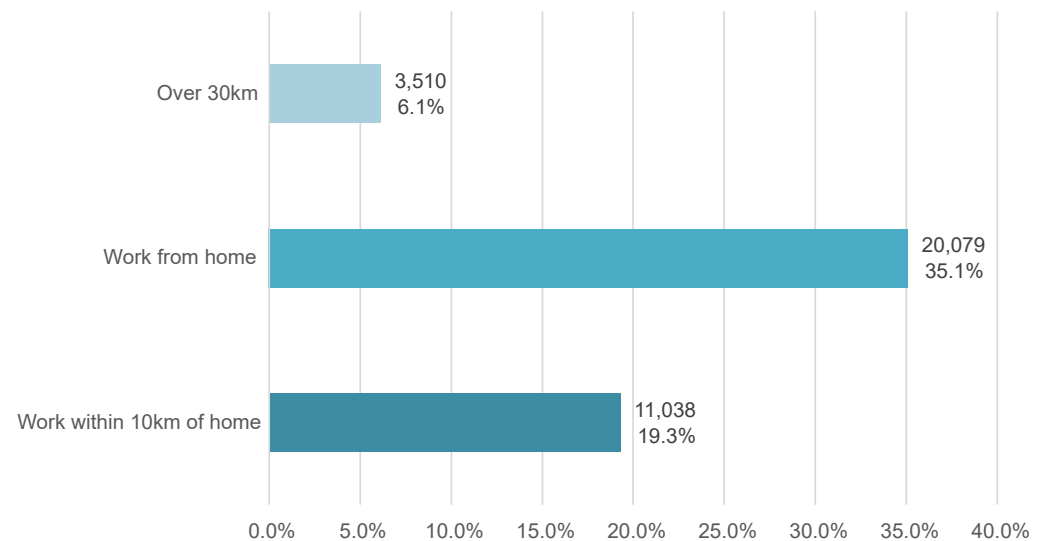
Around 30% of the population is educated to degree level and uptake of apprenticeships is also high within High Wycombe, with 4% of residents holding a trade qualification. However, nearly 13% have no qualifications. There is a strong focus in the *Opportunity Bucks – Succeeding for All* framework to support people with low or no qualifications into quality jobs supported by upskilling and retraining.

Just under half of all residents (50k) are in full time employment, with a further 10k residents in part time employment. The town has a sizable student population of just under 6,500, of which around 1,500 also work in either part-time or full-time roles.

Around 6% of residents have a commuting distance of more than 30km, while 35% of local residents are employed within 10km of the town. Hybrid working trends have also seen a notable increase in the number of people working at home or close to home, which for High Wycombe is 19.3% of the working population.



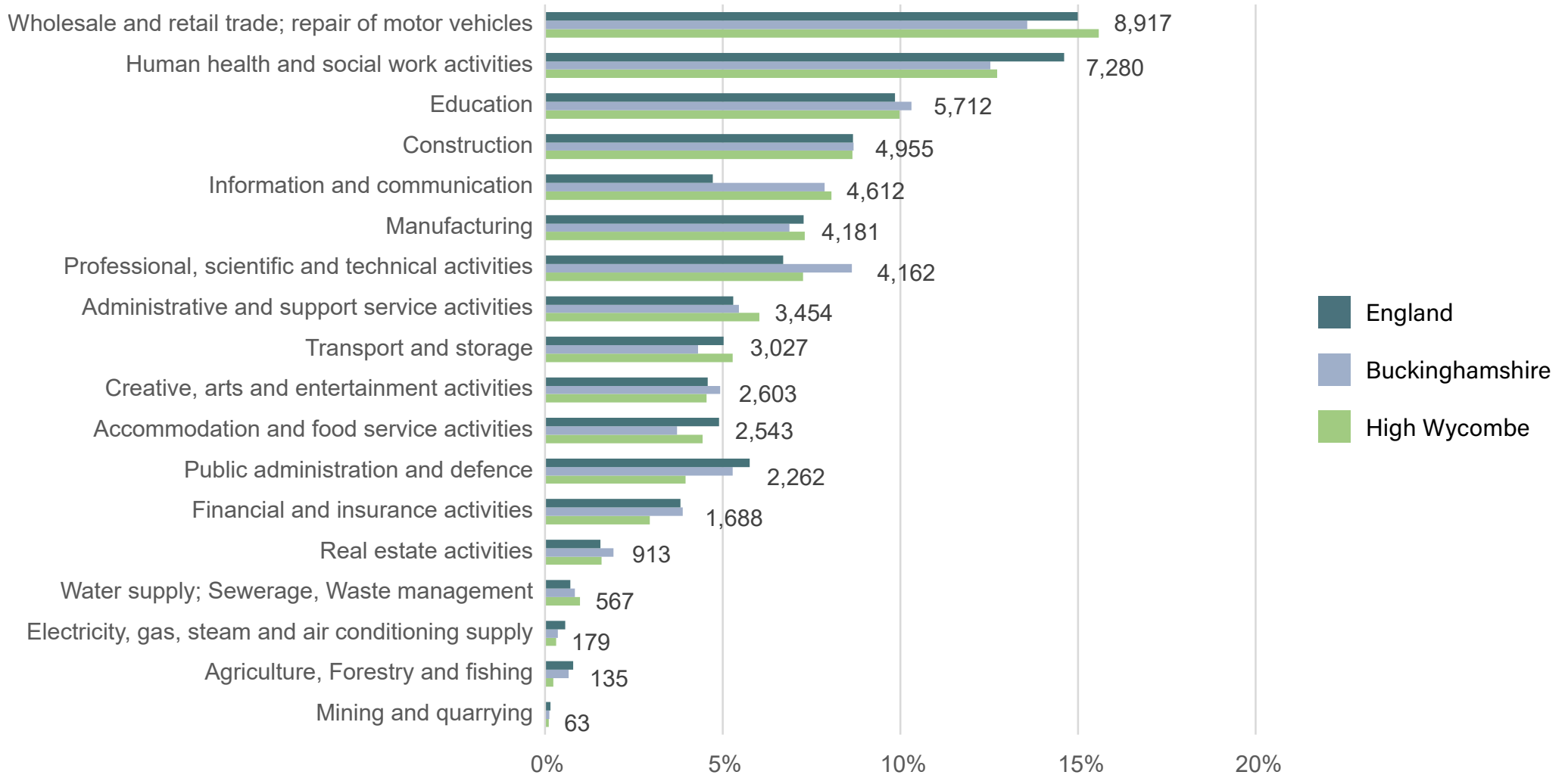
Graph 4 - Economic status of High Wycombe residents. Source: ONS 2021



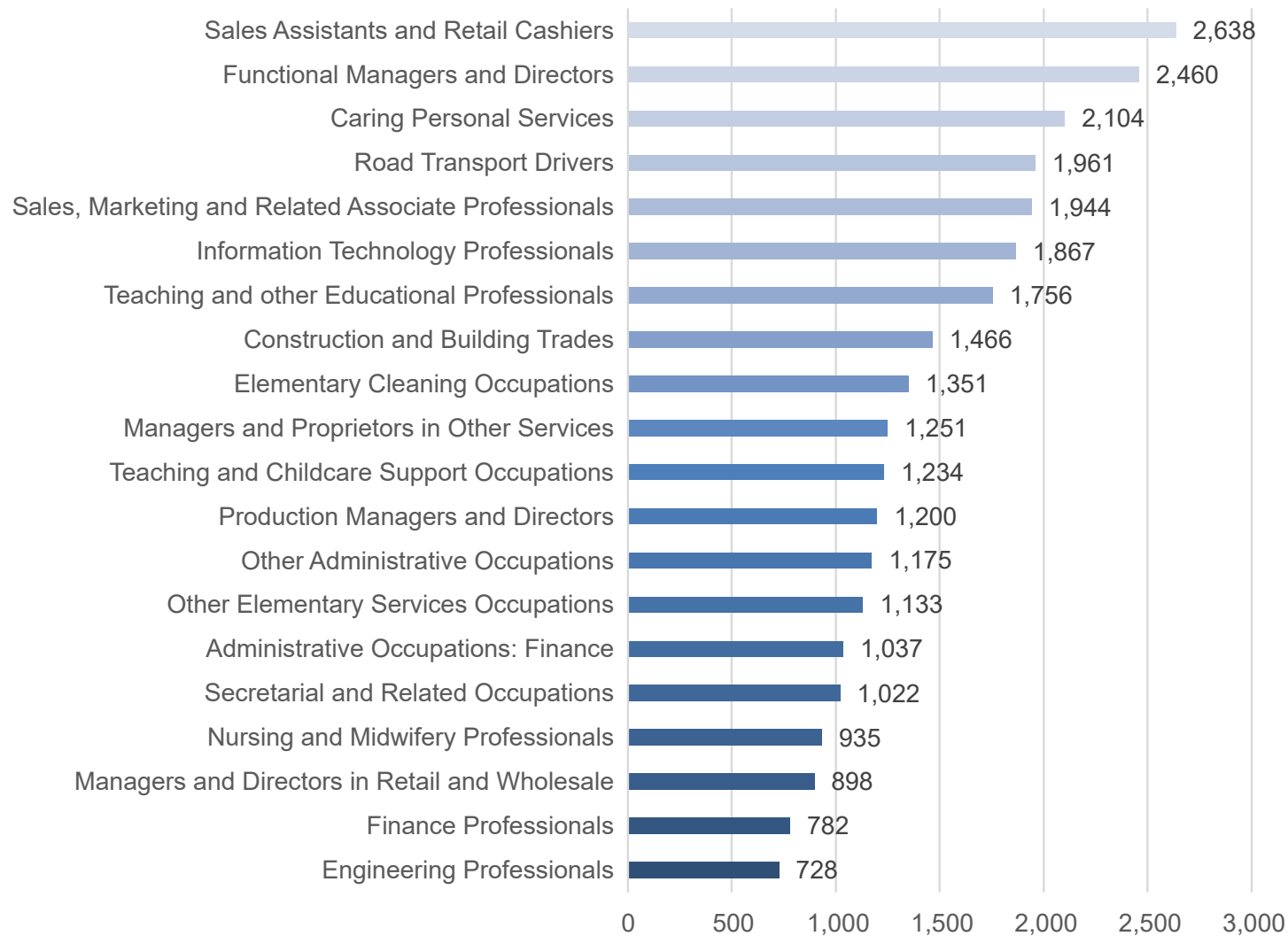
Graph 5 - Number and percentages of full time working population in High Wycombe, by distance travelled to work. Source - ONS 2021

INDUSTRY SECTORS

High Wycombe is home to around 62,000 jobs and the table below highlights the sectors providing the largest number of jobs in the town.



Graph 6 - Industry sectors in High Wycombe, compared to Buckinghamshire and England. The graph shows the percentage of the working population in each sector, with absolute numbers shown to the right of each bar. Source: ONS 2021



Graph 7 - Top 20 occupations of residents in High Wycombe. Source: ONS 2021

As of 2022, High Wycombe is home to just under 5,000 businesses of which 90% are classified as small and medium sized enterprises with under 10 employees. There are 480 medium sized businesses employing between 50 and 250 staff and 255 large enterprises employing 250 (or more) staff. 30 businesses in High Wycombe have a turnover in excess of £50m.

LAND USES

High Wycombe is increasing home to residents and 'urban living' in the town centre is more popular than ever. Residential demand is driven by Buckinghamshire New University's expansion plans and the Buckinghamshire College Group's new campus site development in the town centre.

There are a number of car parking facilities in High Wycombe including some surface level car parks as well as multi-storey. There is an opportunity to analyse this further and consider rationalising car park land uses in conjunction with redevelopment opportunities.

High Wycombe town centre is an important retail area for the town as well as the surrounding area with a large retail footprint. Physical Retail as a sector has seen a steady decline for some time at a national level and this is reflected locally in High Wycombe. The two shopping centres have had turnover challenges including a recent exit of House of Fraser from Eden Shopping Centre. Due to the large retail footprint in High Wycombe, regeneration proposals need to consider a wide variety of repurposing uses, including towards more 'experiential' activities and flexible co-location options.



Independent retail, and food and beverage sectors have been growing recently. As part of the town's Future High Street Funds programme, retail and commercial units are being refurbished, repurposed, and brought back into use, assisting businesses to locate and grow within the town centre.

High Wycombe's strength as a centre of economic start-up activity within Buckinghamshire continues to drive economic performance. Desbox and HQube are prime examples of start-up business premises. As part of ongoing investment in the town, consideration needs to be given to expanding this model to encourage more start-ups but also for the provision of attractive and flexible grow-on space so that businesses can continue to stay in High Wycombe. The Brunel Engine Shed is now complete and when the new tenants, Buckinghamshire New University, open the premises, it can provide for exciting times ahead for student spin off businesses.

While there are a number of parks and other natural spaces just outside the town centre, there are a limited number of greenspaces and waterways within it. The River Wye runs through the town centre and there are opportunities both to improve access to the river where it is not built over and consider incorporating further 'opening-up' of the river as part of potential redevelopment proposals. Over the longer-term there may be further opportunities around the river, but these will be subject to wider development plans and investment.



PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE CHANGE

To capitalise on the opportunities and address the challenges, a number of the overarching principles of *Regeneration Bucks – Transforming for the Future* will be deployed:

- **To create multi-purpose hubs of activity and experiences in our main towns and transform our high streets to encourage people to spend more time locally**

For High Wycombe town centre, this will support the delivery of additional residential (including student accommodation). New housing development will be most successful if it comes forward as mixed-use commercial proposals that keep the street level active. We will explore opportunities to build a vibrant night-time economy and actively consider a wide variety of repurposing uses, including towards more 'experiential' activities and flexible co-location options.

- **To foster town centres as opportunities for business hubs**

For High Wycombe, this principle will be applied by supporting start-ups and growing businesses - exploring incubation space for small businesses and innovators. It will also be applied by supporting facilities within our business parks, such as in Cressex Business Park, for growing demands of businesses and raising the profile of High Wycombe as a location of choice.

- **To provide a high-quality, well-maintained, and managed environment**

There will be a focus on enhancing public realm and the environment by improving our streets, creating more greenery, and making the River Wye more attractive and accessible. Improving the physical quality of buildings and public spaces goes hand in hand with improving the experience of using them, while designing out anti-social behaviour at the outset. Enhancements to the natural environment through more tree planting, sustainable planting and improving bio-diversity in the town centre will be prioritised where possible.

- **To enhance Buckinghamshire's cultural and heritage legacy, celebrating the unique characteristics, diversity and identity of our towns and communities**

Working closely with key cultural partners such as the Swan Theatre and the active arts community, this principle will support High Wycombe's unique identity and heritage in chair and furniture making.

- **To prioritise skills and development opportunities**

The sizable university and college presence in the town centre in High Wycombe creates a strong 'university town' identity. Aligning the local higher education partners ambitions with regeneration initiatives will elevate the town centre offer and accelerate the change.

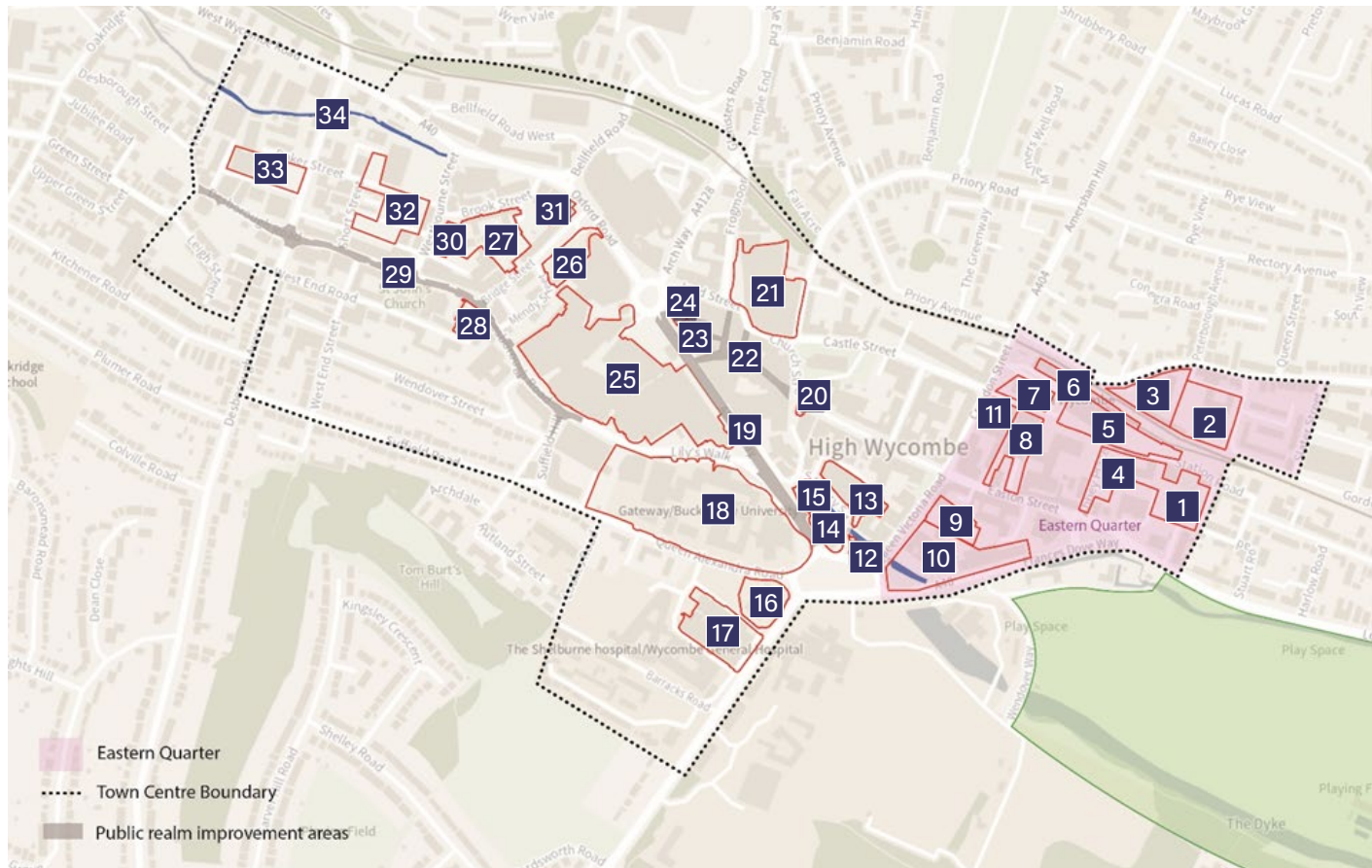
SITES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are many anchor locations in High Wycombe town centre which present opportunities to enhance, develop, renew and re-provide sites. This forms the basis of a programme of works that brings projects forward, readying them up for regeneration activity.

The town centre can be split into two areas in order to focus regeneration work on options and redevelopment opportunities. These are the Western Quarter of the town covering the main High Street and shopping area and the Eastern Quarter covering the railway station area, Easton Street and the Queen Victoria Road council offices.

In addition to the town centre 'quarters' there is also the Cressex Business Park, which plays an important role in High Wycombe's economy. Given the size and location of the business park, there is a need to coordinate the interplay between it and the town centre economic development.





- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 Railway Place Car Park | 13 Swan Theatre | 25 Eden Shopping Centre |
| 2 Duke Street | 14 Fire Station | 26 Bus Station |
| 3 Sword House | 15 Riverside Social Club | 27 BNE Brook Street |
| 4 Abbey Place | 16 Office Outlet | 28 Bridge Court |
| 5 Station Car Park | 17 Wycombe General Hospital | 29 Desborough Road |
| 6 Train Station | 18 Buckinghamshire New University | 30 Vernon Building |
| 7 Brunel Engine Shed | 19 Abbey Way Flyover | 31 Bucks College Group |
| 8 Easton Street Car Park | 20 Guildhall | 32 Desborough Car Parks |
| 9 Royal Mail | 21 Chilterns Shopping Centre & Frogmoor | 33 Lidl and Car Park |
| 10 Council Offices | 22 White Hart Street & Bull Lane | 34 River Wye |
| 11 Prospect House | 23 Travelodge | |
| 12 High Wycombe Social Club | 24 The Curve | |

WESTERN QUARTER

The Western Quarter currently provides the main retail offering and shopping experience. At its heart is the Eden Shopping Centre, which offers a good mix of retail and entertainment. The changing nature of retail nationally has seen that shops and commercial areas have had to adapt, in some cases reducing retail land use in town centres; this trend is playing out in High Wycombe as well. The Eden Shopping Centre has recently lost its anchor tenant, House of Fraser.

In 2021, High Wycombe received the first tranche of grant funding via the Future High Streets Fund. Investment from this fund is already breathing new life into retail units that have become vacant or are otherwise in decline. Where there is turnover for commercial and retail space, this creates opportunities for repurposing. The introduction of more innovative business hubs and startup units similar to the model in place for HQube and Desbox are good options in the industrial areas to the rear of Westbourne Street, such as the Vernon building.

Buckinghamshire New University's campus sits at the centre of the Western Quarter. Along with other new investment by the Buckinghamshire College Group and their new site, the recent and planned investment by higher education partners will have a significant impact on the town centre.

Alongside the university campus area is the hospital campus, home to Wycombe Hospital and the BMI Shelburne (a privately run hospital). Wycombe Hospital is currently considering options for their future use of that site.

This area includes the old historic town, an important part of the conservation area. Within this is the location of a number of fantastic historic buildings including the Grade 1 listed Guildhall, the former Wheatsheaf public house built in 1399, and All Saints Church. There are opportunities to build on the assets of the conservation area and create a place to socialise and enjoy the heritage and culture. The encouragement of additional sympathetic mixed-use developments that provide retail, office, and residential spaces can introduce new life and vibrancy to the street-level. With an expanding university population, increased footfall will support emerging new food and beverage, and experiential economy growth. Despite these heritage assets there are improvements that should be considered to address underutilised public areas, some areas with poor public realm, a general lack of wayfinding, and sporadic greenery.

The area surrounding the Swan Theatre, the fire station, and the High Wycombe Social Club, presents an exciting opportunity to consider an improvement and animation of the open space. Adjacent to the River Wye, this area could be reshaped into a 'piazza' offering with outdoor eating and drinking.

Investment by the Council is underway in public realm enhancements for White Hart Street and Bull Lane. In addition, the Council is developing new residential options for the future through the redevelopment of the Chilterns Shopping Centre. Other enhancements to Frogmoor and a new walkway connecting different parts of the town are also progressing.

The bus station is in this quarter and together with the surrounding car parks serves as a key transport access location. There is a large multi-storey car park attached to the Eden Shopping Centre as well as a number of smaller car parks nearby.

A key feature of the Western Quarter is the Desborough Road area. It is vibrant and ethnically diverse, which is reflected in the cultural food and retail offering. Historically home to a thriving manufacturing base, the area has transitioned to a mix of light industrial, small retail and other mixed use residential. There is an energy on Desborough Road and opportunities to consider additional event and specialty market activities, and better linking between the entrepreneurial start-up businesses and the university and college group.



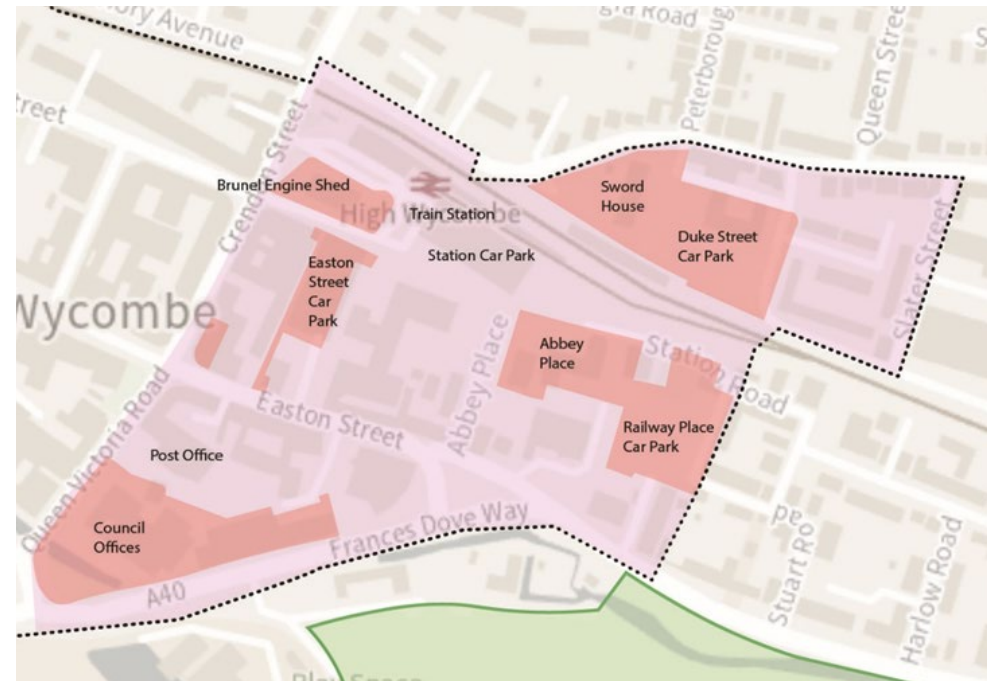
EASTERN QUARTER

The Eastern Quarter is located to the east of the town centre and is the gateway for people arriving to High Wycombe via the railway station. To the north of the station are a number of key sites including the Wilkinson Sword building, Duke Street car park, and a mix of office and commercial space.

The rail station itself is the key transport hub for High Wycombe with a number of local bus bays co-located there. There are two multi-storey car parks adjacent to the station which are the Network Rail owned multi-storey car park just to the east and the council owned Easton Street multi-storey car park to the south.

The Brunel Engine Shed has recently been restored and renovated through investment by the council. The Brunel Shed is a significant piece of Britain's industrial heritage and for those arriving by rail is the first local landmark seen as they exit the rail station. Buckinghamshire New University have taken the lease on the building and are planning a cafe gallery space which will be open to the public as well as providing work-space for entrepreneurs and start-up business.

This quarter also includes a large site that the council owns. On this site are the council office building and car park/office building. Adjacent to the council's site is the Royal Mail High Wycombe North Delivery Office and the High Wycombe Magistrates Court. Across the Eastern Quarter there are significant public sector landholdings.



Map 3: showing Buckinghamshire Council assets within the Eastern Quarter

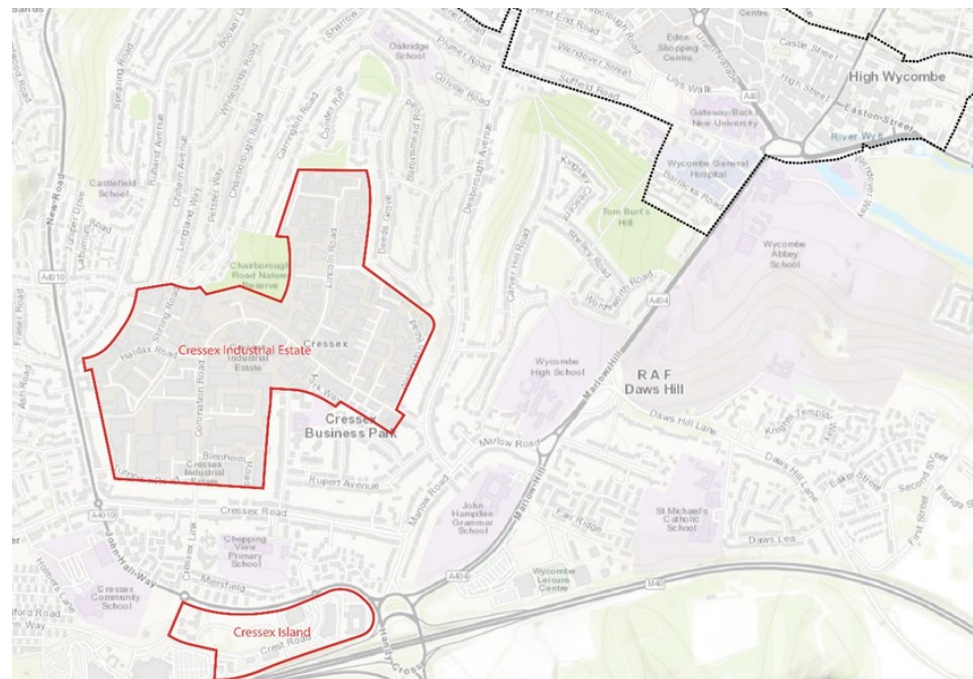
CRESSEX INDUSTRIAL ESTATE AND CRESSEX ISLAND

Cressex Business Park is located to the south of the town centre close to junction 4 of the M40 and the A404. There are real opportunities for Cressex to be a location of choice for business. By aligning with the University to develop a highly skilled, adaptive workforce, Cressex Business Park can become a high value, high growth proposition.

It is home to over 400 businesses and includes a diverse range of multinational and Small Medium Enterprise (SME) businesses, including Biffa, Hovis, and UPS. Basepoint, which offers managed workspace, is also located here. The business park is a key economic driver for Buckinghamshire, generating around £1.4b of GVA.

A variety of sectors operate at the Business Park, ranging from biomedical through to construction and distribution. There is a mix of manufacturing, automobile servicing and trade supply stores located in the business park.

A new Business Improvement District (BID) was established in October 2022 with a five-year business proposal up to 2027. The BID's vision is for Cressex Business Park to become the greenest, cleanest and safest environment for business. A premier location, home to a diverse and successful business community, that provides high value employment for the local community and where businesses lead and shape the development of the business park into 2027 and beyond.



Map 3: Cressex Industrial Estate and Cressex Island proximity to High Wycombe Town Centre

Cressex BID delivers key activities including:

- Improving the park's image through signage enhancements
- Lobbying for better transport and parking
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Channeling the voice for businesses
- Enhancing the working environment

The council works closely with Cressex BID in the above and any further development proposals for the park.

NEXT STEPS: TAKING THE STRATEGY FORWARD AS A PARTNERSHIP

The next stage seeks to build on opportunities and to develop a programme of works. Some projects will require additional assessments and further analysis before regeneration activities can be delivered. Other projects are ready to be delivered and can form quick wins for the town centre.

The key priorities for the High Wycombe regeneration programme in the short term will focus on public realm improvement project delivery (for White Hart Street) and the next batch of Future High Street Fund investments. We'll continue to align council town centre investment with the plans coming forward from our key partners such as the university and college expansion initiatives and the hospital site redevelopment plans. For the longer term, we are initiating a major piece of work now to explore potential options for wider-scale redevelopment in the Eastern Quarter and exploring how the council's assets in that area can play a role in delivering the strategy. Similar exploratory work will be initiated for the Desborough area.

Establishing and delivering the regeneration programme for High Wycombe requires a collaborative, partnership approach. Buckinghamshire Council will continue to build on the relationships developed with key local stakeholders and will work with partners including High Wycombe Town Committee, High Wycombe BidCo, Cressex BID, the High Wycombe Community Board and other active groups in the town to take proposals forward. The High Wycombe Regeneration Group, made up of the council alongside key local stakeholders is the strategic steering group for delivering this strategy and the regeneration programme for High Wycombe. It forms part of the wider Place Based Growth Board governance and reports into the Regeneration Sub-Board.





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Report for Cabinet

Date:	10th October 2023
Title:	Adoption of AGT1 Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document
Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration
Contact officer:	Charlotte Morris, Planning Policy Team Leader
Ward(s) affected:	Central planning area wards
Recommendations:	To adopt the Aylesbury South Supplementary Planning Document (site D-AGT1 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan)
Reason for decision:	To provide guidance to applicants and decision makers on Aylesbury South site allocation (D-AGT1), of the Vale of Aylesbury Plan

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report requests that the Aylesbury South Site Allocation (D-AGT1) Supplementary Planning Document is approved for adoption.
- 1.2 Supplementary Planning Documents provide guidance to implement Local Plan policies. This Supplementary Planning Document applies to the allocation Aylesbury South (D-AGT1) in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.
- 1.3 To adopt a Supplementary Planning Document, the council is legally required to conduct a public consultation for a minimum of four weeks. This was conducted from 22 September to 2 November 2022. This report requests that Cabinet adopts this Supplementary Planning Document.

2. Aylesbury South (D-AGT1) Supplementary Planning Document

- 2.1 The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan sets out a vision and framework for sustainable growth across the north and central planning areas for the period up to 2033. It promotes new development to meet identified needs, which will contribute to creating a thriving, diverse, safe, vibrant place to live, work and visit.
- 2.2 It also promotes growth that is shaped by strong place-shaping and sustainability principles to create well-designed developments that are sensitive to the areas local character, heritage, scale, land use and design.
- 2.3 This Supplementary Planning Document is intended to inform and guide the development of allocation D-AGT1 within the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (2021). The allocation contributes to and takes forward the principles of the Aylesbury Garden Town initiative, as designated in January 2017.
- 2.4 A Strategic Environmental Assessment to assess the environmental impacts of the Supplementary Planning Document is appended to this report. A Habitats Regulation Assessment which determines the Supplementary Planning Document will have no significant effects on the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation, is also appended to this report.
- 2.5 The draft version of this Supplementary Planning Document was the subject of public consultation, and it is proposed to be amended with the changes set out in the Consultation and Adoption Statement (appended). The revised version of the D-AGT1 Supplementary Planning Document (appended) is presented to Cabinet to seek agreement for its adoption and to become guidance for developers and decision makers for the central planning area.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 The alternative is to not adopt the Supplementary Planning Document. This would mean that the requirement for the Supplementary Planning Document as set out in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan would not be met.
- 3.2 This option was considered but officers concluded it was not an appropriate option for the reason set out in 3.1.

4. Legal and financial implications

4.1 Legal Implications

A Supplementary Planning Document is a document that contains additional detail on how the Local Planning Authority will interpret and apply specific policies in its Development Plan. Any guidance contained in a Supplementary Planning Document must not conflict with the relevant adopted Development Plan and must be linked to

a Development Plan policy. Supplementary Planning Documents are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Officers paid due regard to these requirements and have prepared a Supplementary Planning Document that is drafted appropriately in relation to the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

Financial Implications

- 4.2 The adoption of this SPD does not commit the Council to any costs. The development which will be made possible by this SPD will unlock developer funding to contribute towards the required infrastructure. Corporate implications

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 4.3 The Public Sector Equality Duty was introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) The Act protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in the provision of services and in wider society. Section 149 of the Act requires public authorities to have due regard to a number of equality considerations when exercising their functions.
- 4.4 All public bodies must have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The Council has conducted an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening in compliance with the Act. The EqIA screening on the adoption version of the D-AGT1 Supplementary Planning Document, was conducted on 16 May 2023, this determined that a full EqIA is not necessary. The document itself is unlikely to have impacts on protected groups. The adopted document will be available in an accessible format in accordance with Buckinghamshire Council's guidelines.

Data Protection Impact Assessment

- 4.5 The Council has conducted a Data Protection Impact Assessment screening, and this determined that a full data impact assessment is not required for the approval of this adoption version of the Design Supplementary Planning Document.

5. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 5.1 This Supplementary Planning Document was prepared with a series of workshops with local councillors and the parish council. This led to draft the Supplementary

Planning Document which was approved for public consultation. During the consultation comments were received from the public, public bodies, industry, societies and local councillors. These have been taken account of and changes have been made to the draft, as set out in the Consultation and Adoption Statement attached as an appendix to this report.

- 5.2 Councillor Peter Strachan, as Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration at his Portfolio Holder briefing session on 27 June 2023 considered and endorsed that the post consultation version of the Supplementary Planning Document go forward to Cabinet for consideration of its Adoption.
- 5.3 At that meeting, Councillor Strachan stated that he considered that the Supplementary Planning Document was important to help guide new place making in the context of the Aylesbury Garden Town, and the natural and historic environment of the Vale of Aylesbury. He also noted the consultation responses made by parish councils, government bodies, societies and individuals, and the resulting changes to the final document.
- 5.4 Consultation was conducted on the draft version of this Supplementary Planning Document, please see section 7.
- 5.5 Given the extent of engagement and public consultation undertaken as part of the development of the Supplementary Planning Document, the Community Board has not specifically been engaged in the process. Nevertheless, the relevant Community Board Chairmen were engaged in the development of the SPD.

6. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 6.1 The Council has consulted on the Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance in accordance with the Adopted Statement of Community Involvement 2021. Thereby it published the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance for consultation on its website, together with the required supporting documentation and made paper copies available to view at the public council offices. It also issued a press release informing people about the consultation and promoted it through 'Your Voice Buckinghamshire,' the Planning Policy team's consultation database, and through social media.
- 6.2 For the adoption of the Supplementary Planning Guidance, in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and consistency with the consultation on the Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance, the council will:
 - publish the adopted document, the amended consultation statement and adoption statement by making them available to view at the public council offices, and on the council's website;

- send a copy of the Adoption Statement directly to those who asked to be notified;
- issue a press release; and
- use of social media.

7. Next steps and review

- 7.1 The post consultation version for the Adoption of the Supplementary Planning Document will be presented to Cabinet on the 10 October, for a decision on whether not to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document with, or without modification. If adopted, the guidance will be published on the council's website and will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the central planning area.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 The following appendices support this cabinet report:
- Appendix 1 - Adoption version of the Aylesbury South Supplementary Planning Document a
 - Appendix 2 - Consultation and Adoption Statement
 - Appendix 3 - Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report
 - Appendix 4 - Strategic Environmental Assessment
 - Appendix 5 -Habitats Regulation Assessment
 - Appendix 6 - Equalities Impact Assessment
 - Appendix 7 - Data Protect Impacts Screening Assessment

9. Background Papers

- 10.1 The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, including policy D-AGT1.

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email to democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

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Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

Aylesbury Garden Town - 1

Supplementary Planning Document

September 2023





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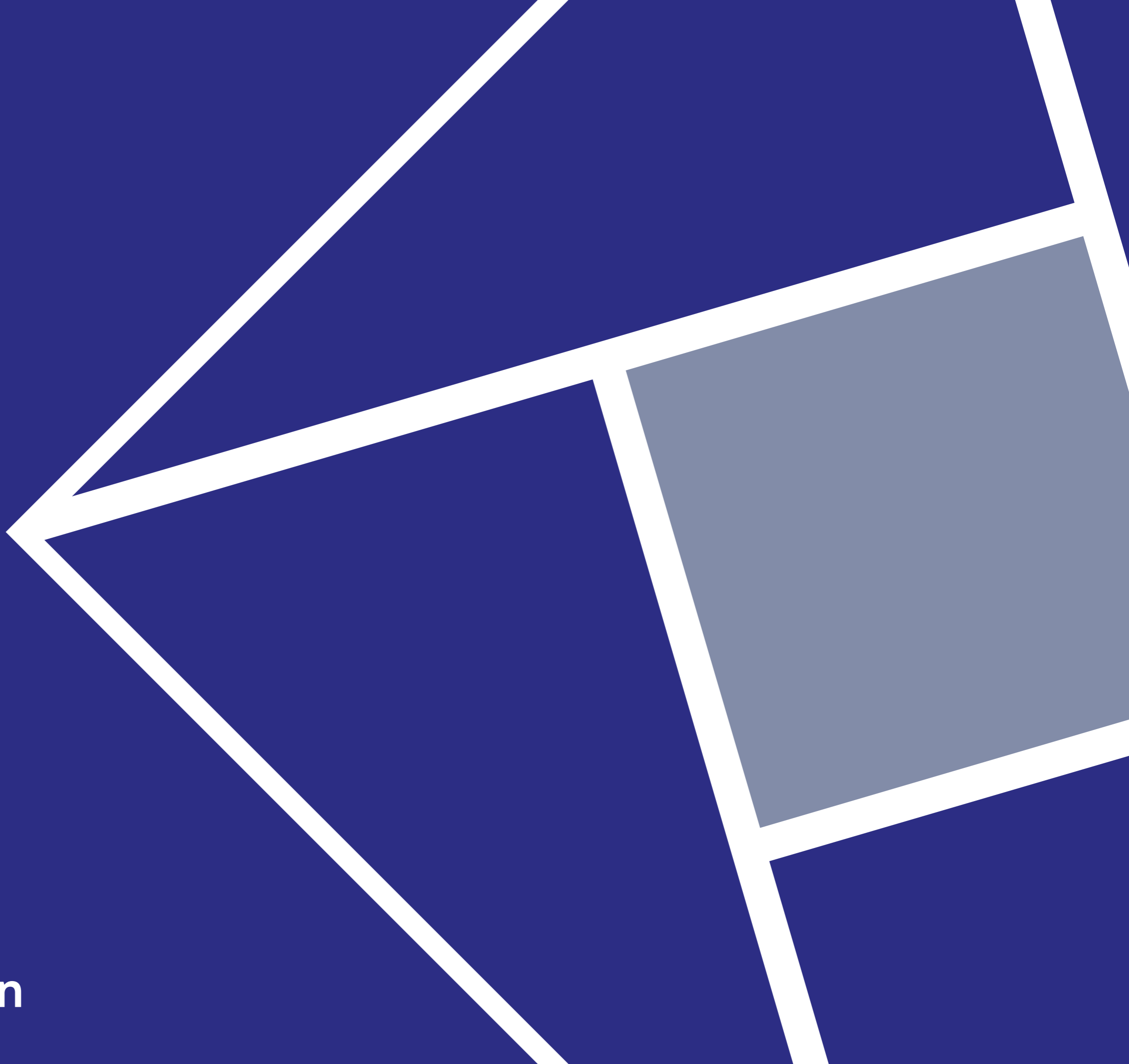
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1 - Introduction





1.1 Introduction

The site, known as South Aylesbury, is a strategic allocated site for Aylesbury, which together with other allocations and commitments contribute to the delivery of the housing requirement identified within the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, together with associated infrastructure and facilities.

South Aylesbury is an approximately 95 hectares sustainable extension to Aylesbury being developed on land between the town, to the north, and the village of Stoke Mandeville, to the south. The AGT1 site will integrate with the existing built-up area of Aylesbury whilst maintaining the setting and individual identity of Stoke Mandeville. Wendover Road (A413) forms the boundary to the east, with Lower Road (B4443) to the west of the site. The London Marylebone to Aylesbury Vale Parkway railway line runs north to south through the centre of the site.

Located within Stoke Mandeville Civil Parish the site is situated within Buckinghamshire and therefore falls under the jurisdiction of Buckinghamshire Council ("the Council"), a Unitary Authority.

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033 (VALP) sets out the long-term vision and strategic context for promoting and managing growth within the former Aylesbury Vale area of Buckinghamshire until 2033.

Aylesbury is a primary settlement within Buckinghamshire, identified within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan as a Strategic Settlement for growth. The strategy contained within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan utilises the settlement hierarchy to localise the most development at the most sustainable locations. Aylesbury Garden Town (comprising Aylesbury town and adjacent parts of surrounding parishes) will grow by 16,207 new dwellings. Taking into account commitments and completions, 3,282 homes are allocated at Aylesbury, with the majority being located within six sites, including South Aylesbury.

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan identifies the AGT1 site for the development with the key development and land use requirements being the delivery of at least 1,000 dwellings; a primary school; the South-East Aylesbury Link Road (the "SEALR") and supporting infrastructure including multi-functional Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) compliant green infrastructure; a local centre and cycling and walking links.

The AGT1 site consists of several parcels of land which are in different ownerships and / or control by developers / promoters. The parcels are merged to enable a comprehensive, cohesive, and co-ordinated approach to the development of the site as a whole.



Site Location Plan



1.2 Purpose & Role of the Supplementary Planning Document

This masterplan document has been prepared and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide landowners, developers, the public and the local planning authority in respect of environmental, social, economic and design objectives for the site. It has been prepared by Buckinghamshire Council in partnership with the main land promoters, CALA Homes; Lands Improvement Holdings (LIH); Redrow Homes; and Vanderbilt Strategic and has been informed by consultation with key stakeholders and people in the local community.

The Supplementary Planning Document sets out the broad principles for the site to demonstrate how the policy requirements of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and other supporting adopted policy documents should be implemented. It has been prepared in accordance with the Councils guidance and policies contained within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, including Policy D1 and D-AGT1 which specifically relate to the delivery of Aylesbury Garden Town and South Aylesbury.

It is intended to be a flexible guide to development aimed at establishing development principles to achieve a high level of design and quality of place, reflecting the status of Aylesbury as a Garden Town. The Supplementary Planning Document sets out the guiding context that development will have to have regard to in order to be acceptable, whilst also acting as a plan to inform comprehensive development across the site ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is delivered

Further to Policy D-AGT1 the Supplementary Planning Document sets out a context for new development to ensure that through a series of overarching visions a high quality, distinctive, sustainable, and well-integrated development is achieved.

The masterplan Supplementary Planning Document provides coordination and consistency of approach to the development of the site and its design. It provides the basis for identifying the spatial disposition of the main uses of land and infrastructure to be accommodated on the site together with the main features of the proposed development.

The guidance within this Supplementary Planning Document is adaptable and includes an element of flexibility to allow the development to take account of changing factors such as changes in the housing market, infrastructure requirements/costs, building costs and affordability. The Supplementary Planning Document does not set out a rigid and prescriptive blueprint for the development, but instead sets out a series of key principles and guidance on how the site should be designed and developed. More detailed guidance on urban design and architectural principles will be prepared, if required, as part of the detailed planning permission stage.

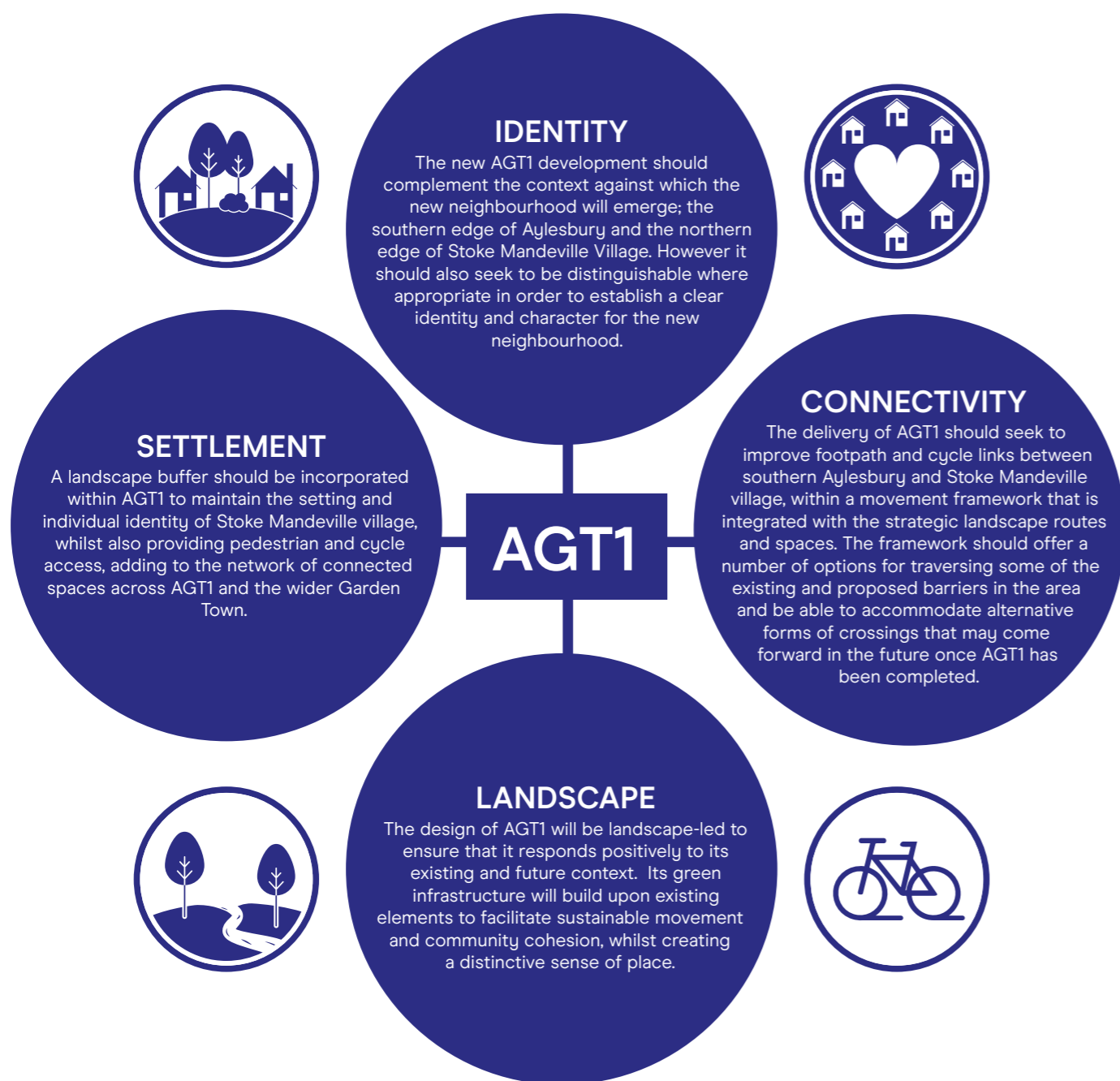
The Supplementary Planning Document has been informed by extensive survey work and analysis and has been prepared in accordance with national planning policies and has been subject to the required statutory consultation process. In line with design principles / guidance and the requirements of Policy D-AGT1 the site will provide a high quality built and semi natural environment with 50% ANGSt compliant green infrastructure and, where appropriate, Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) either onsite as part of the green infrastructure, or offsite as part of a strategic SANG.

The document, together with the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, the Supplementary Planning Document, together with the Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan (SMNP - which will ultimately form part of the Development Plan once 'made') will be used as the policy basis on which the determination of planning applications relating to the development of the site are made. It will inform the preparation of planning applications, assist the Council when considering proposals, and can be referenced by stakeholders and the local community when viewing and responding to development proposals.

1.3 Vision

The new AGT1 development should complement the context against which the new neighbourhood will emerge; the southern edge of Aylesbury and the northern edge of Stoke Mandeville Village. However it should also seek to be distinguishable where appropriate in order to establish a clear identity and character for the new neighbourhood.

The objectives for the design of the new community to be established at AGT1 have therefore been established as follows:





1.4 Planning Policy Context and Requirements

Whilst other policies from the Local Plan apply, Policy D-AGT1 is specific to the site, allocating approximately 95ha of land south of Aylesbury and within Stoke Mandeville Parish, for the following site-specific requirements:

- A landscape led approach to providing at least 1,000 dwellings and 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches.
- Safeguarding of land for the South-East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR).
- Provision of new access points from Wendover Road (A413) and Lower Road (B4443). Access from the SEALR will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that this would not leave a parcel of land inaccessible and incapable of development.
- Provision of public transport and integration of existing public rights of way into the development together with the creation of cycling and walking links.
- Existing vegetation to be retained and existing habitats enhanced where practicable including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets.
- Provision of 50% multi-functional ANGSt compliant green infrastructure and a buffer between the new development and Stoke Mandeville to maintain its setting and individual character.
- Retention of the Grade II listed Magpie Cottage within an appropriate setting
- Provision of one primary school and associated facilities, together with contributions to secondary school provision and off-site health facilities.
- Provision of a local centre, including parking and a community building.
- The development is to be designed using a sequential approach with drainage designs designed to exceed and accommodate existing surface water flows.
- Surface water and the Aylesbury Arm (Grand Union Canal) should be modelled.

Policy D-AGT1 expects development proposals to demonstrate how they positively contribute to the achievement of the Supplementary Planning Document and the Aylesbury Garden Town Principles as set out in Policy D1 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

Stoke Mandeville Parish Council are in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan which includes the D-AGT1 allocation area. The Neighbourhood Plan is required to be in general conformity with the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, which sets out the requirement for this Supplementary Planning Document to guide development of the land.

1.5 Relationship to & Integration with the Wider AGT

In 2017 Aylesbury was given Garden Town Status and the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan was published in July 2020. This document explains how the Aylesbury Garden Town 2050 Vision will be delivered through a comprehensive and co-ordinated town-wide plan. The Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan is an advisory framework, providing support and guidance further to the policies contained within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) covering the period to 2033, and the further opportunities, aspirations and ambitions for the Garden Town to 2050.

Within the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan is the aspiration to create ‘Distinctive Garden Communities’ (Chapter 8) of which AGT1 is one. The Masterplan states that:

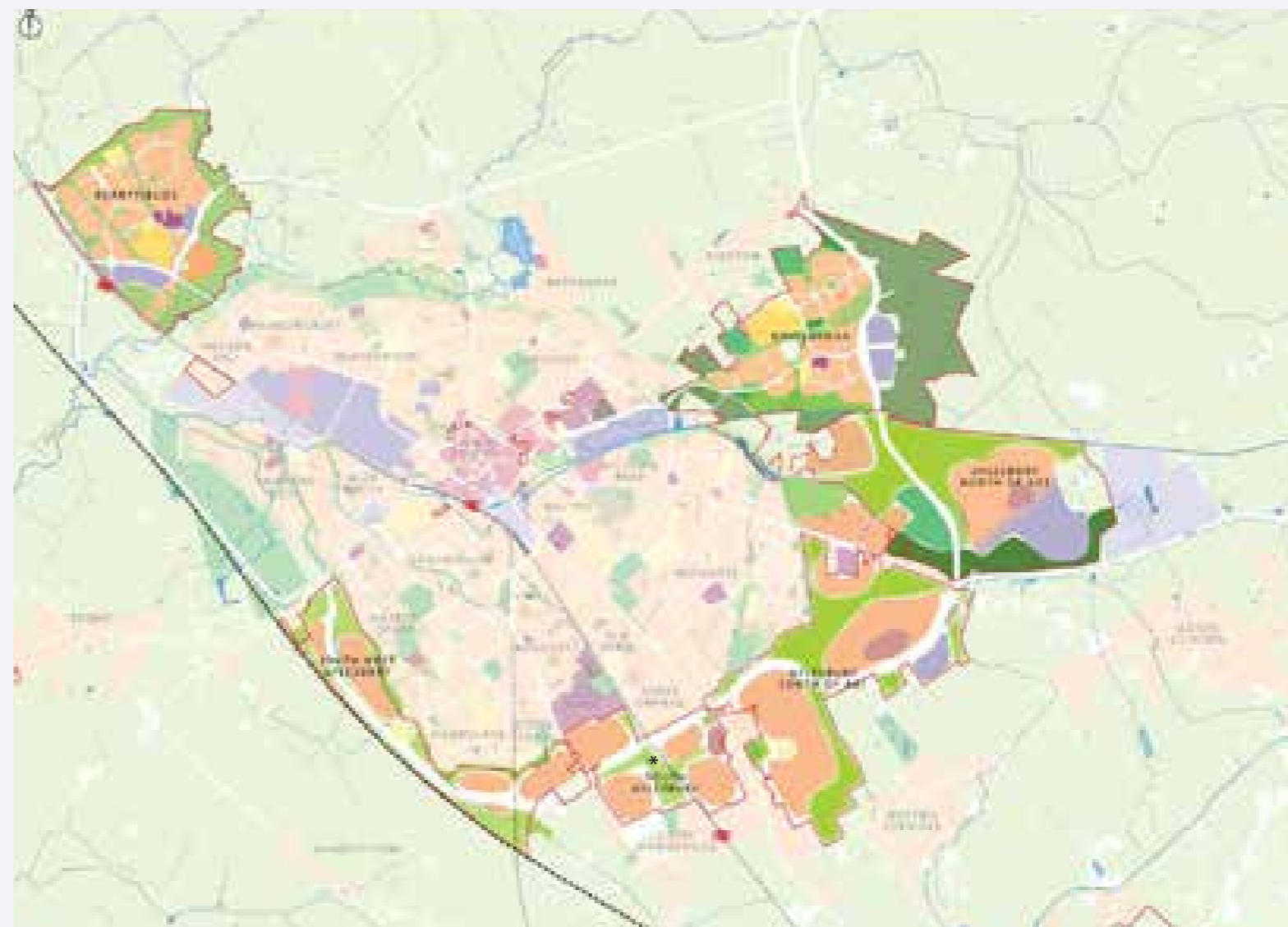
“The neighbourhoods are to be designed to embody the Garden Town Vision, deliver elements of the town-wide Garden Town projects such as the Gardenway and create exemplary and distinctive living environments”.

AGT1: South Aylesbury ‘Stoke Mandeville Park’ – the site is designated within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan for accommodation of new housing, a primary school, multi-functional green space, link road (South-East Aylesbury Link Road), local centre and walking & cycling links. The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan also contains a series of site specific requirements providing further detail on the key accommodation. The AGT Masterplan identifies a series of site specific opportunities:

- Physical link between Stoke Mandeville Village/Station and Stoke Mandeville Hospital/ Stadium;
- Opportunity to capture views of Chiltern ridge through orientation of streets and spaces;
- Minimise the potential impact of the South-East Aylesbury Link Road + embankment through landscaping, crossing points and walking/cycling routes;
- Potential for 3 different character areas related to their immediate surroundings (Stoke Mandeville Village and Stoke Leys/Stoke Mandeville Hospital);
- Consider position of local centre & primary school – close to Wendover Road or Lower Road?;
- Opportunity for ‘Stoke Mandeville Park’ – potential at crossing point of north-south & east-west routes, link with existing village recreation ground.

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan requires that new housing allocations in Aylesbury Garden Town (combined with existing committed and sites already built) will ensure that 16,207 new dwellings will be provided in Aylesbury between 2013 and 2033. South Aylesbury (D-AGT1) will deliver at least 1,000 of these homes.

The Council published the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan in July 2020 which provides an advisory and guidance framework for the delivery of the Aylesbury Garden Town. To accompany the Garden Town Masterplan, an AGT Framework and Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document details the wider Garden Town phasing and delivery requirements to 2033.



Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan

Site D-AGT1 sits between D-AGT2 to the west, and D-AGT4 (including Hampden Fields) to the east. D-AGT4 has been granted planning permission and will connect to the D-AGT1 site via the South-East Aylesbury Link Road roundabout on Wendover Road.

D-AGT2 is separated from the site by development in Stoke Mandeville Parish, but would ultimately be connected via the South West Link Road, the Stoke Mandeville Relief Road and the South-East Aylesbury Link Road junction on Lower Road.

South Aylesbury will create a distinctive, inclusive, sustainable, high quality, successful new community which supports and enhances existing communities and integrates with Aylesbury, Stoke Mandeville, D-AGT2 and D-AGT4 and adheres to the Council’s vision for Aylesbury Garden Town.



1.6 Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan

The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan establishes a number of 'masterplan zones' across the parish that the Council are seeking to be reviewed through forthcoming designs/ applications in a cohesive manner. The AGT1 site falls within the 'Stoke Mandeville Corridor' masterplan zone, and therefore should be reviewed in the context of this area which also includes part of the AGT2 development area.

The first publicly circulated version of the Plan has been consulted upon (Regulation 14 Consultation) with comments requested by the 19 August 2021.

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- Stoke Mandeville Corridor Boundary
- Stoke Mandeville Parish Boundary

Stoke Mandeville Parish and Corridor Masterplan Zone



1.7 Community and Stakeholder Consultation

The South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document has been prepared and informed by technical and stakeholder consultation events. This has taken the form of three Stakeholder Workshops, and a further four Technical Workshops, in addition to extensive engagement with statutory consultees.

The comments and feedback gathered from those events have influenced the final Supplementary Planning Document document. The consultation process is summarised in this section.

Stakeholder Workshops – January to March 2021

Three Stakeholder Workshops were held in January, February, and March 2021. These events had a range of attendees comprising the D-AGT1 principal landowners, Buckinghamshire Council, Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Network Rail.

The events focused on the following matters:

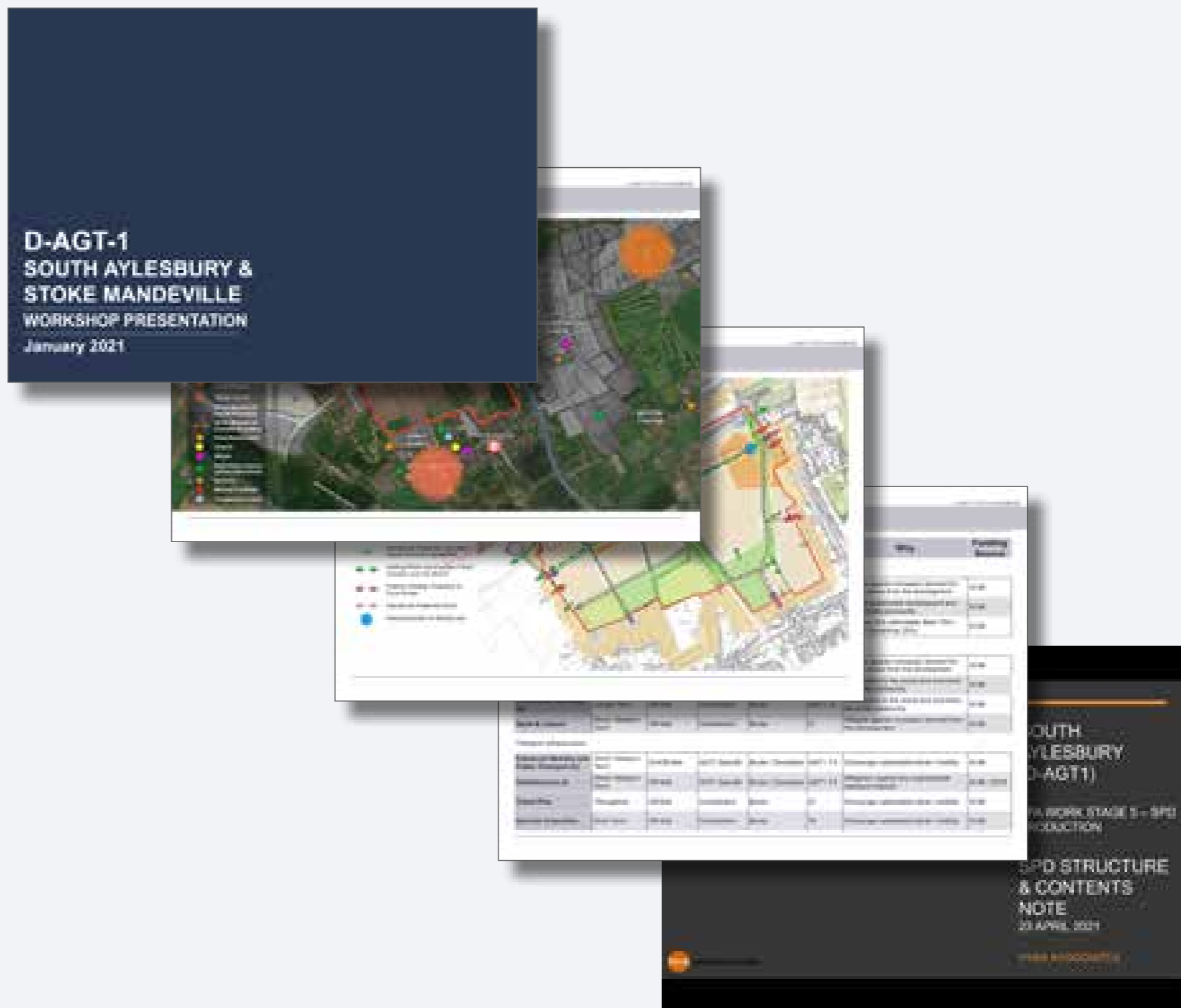
- Workshop 1: Site and Contextual analysis, scope of technical evidence base work and opportunities and constraints;
- Workshop 2: Framework proposals – landscape, transport and connectivity, uses and character;
- Workshop 3: Supplementary Planning Document form and content, design principles, concept framework masterplan, infrastructure, and delivery.

Technical Workshops and on-going focused Technical Meetings - April to October 2021

Following completion of the Stakeholder Workshops, four Technical Workshops were held across April and May which took themes and emerging discussions from the Stakeholder Workshops, and explored these further in a more detailed, technical matter. Attendees comprised the D-AGT1 principal landowners, Buckinghamshire Council Officers and Parish Council representatives.

The Technical Workshops were structured around the following programme of work:

- Technical Session 1: Access and Movement.
- Technical Session 2: Landscape, Green & Blue Infrastructure.
- Technical Session 3: Character Areas, Design Principles and Land Uses.
- Technical Session 4: Infrastructure.



2 - Context and Understanding of the Site and Area





2.1 The Site and its Location

South Aylesbury is in a highly sustainable location, on the southern edge of Aylesbury. Lower Road passes the western edge of the site connecting Aylesbury to Stoke Mandeville. Lower Road provides access to Station Road and Risborough Road and onwards to High Wycombe. Wendover Road passes the eastern edge of the site and also provides access to Station Road.

The AGT1 site is well located to take advantage of a range of sustainable transport options, these include: bus, train and existing pedestrian/cycle routes linking through to Aylesbury in the north and Stoke Mandeville to the south. Public footpaths also cross the site linking Stoke Mandeville Hospital to the north and the adjacent Asda Superstore.

There are a number of existing bus stops in close proximity on both Lower Road and Wendover Road.

The route of the South-East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) crosses the site east to west.

Part of AGT1 is already under construction by Crest Nicholson, in the north west corner, and as such is not included as part of the design considerations of this Supplementary Planning Document.

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Connections Plan



2.2 Site Context

South Aylesbury is well located relative to existing amenities as illustrated on the adjacent diagram. To the north, the Stoke Leys area contains Stoke Mandeville Hospital, a supermarket, Stoke Mandeville Stadium with its sport facilities, and education facilities such as a nursery immediately north of AGT1 and Booker Park School and the Mandeville School.

To the south, Stoke Mandeville village includes the local railway station, a post office and convenience store, local pubs and Stoke Mandeville Primary School,

To the east, the forthcoming AGT4 site will include a number of amenities within its local centre.



Amenities Plan



2.3 Placemaking Challenges

The Vision for AGT1 as outlined in section 1.3 includes the commitment to offer solutions for traversing some of the existing and proposed barriers in the area. This point relates to the railway line that dissects AGT1 on a north to south axis centrally to the site, and the forthcoming South-East Aylesbury Link Road that will link Wendover Road and Lower Road across the northern part of the site on an east to west basis.

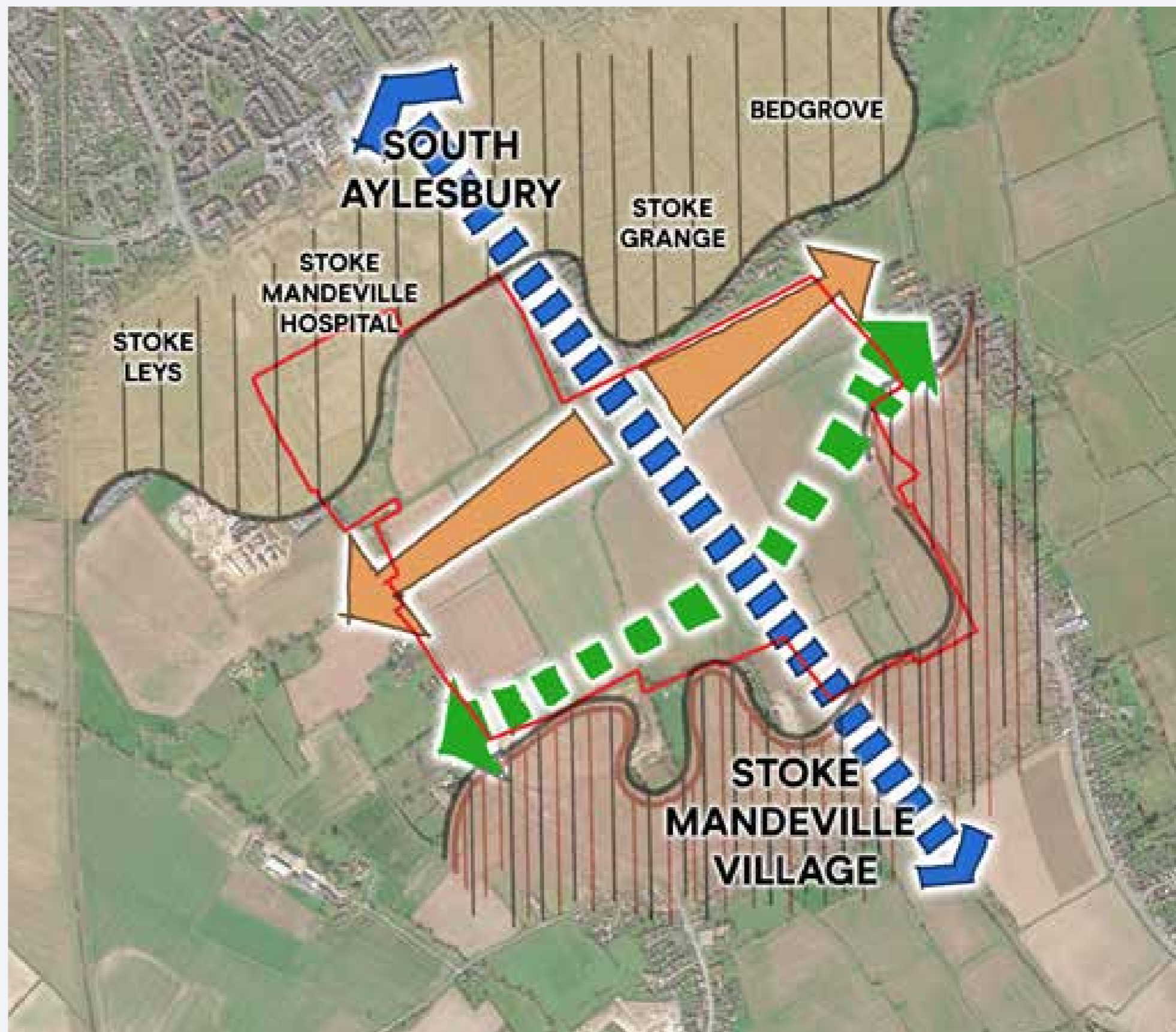
One of the objectives of Policy D-AGT1 in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan is for the new development to be in accordance with the overarching principles for the development of Aylesbury Garden Town. Commentary on this point is included in section 3.1 of this Supplementary Planning Document. However one of the challenges for AGT1 will be to deliver the design principles of the Garden Town Vision such as Inclusive Design, a connected street layout, and a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces, without letting these 'barriers' reduce the strength of these aspirations.

Another objective of Policy D-AGT1 in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan is to incorporate a buffer to maintain the setting and individual identity of Stoke Mandeville village. The routing of this buffer will require careful consideration regarding how it can fulfil this role.

Another challenge to consider is the differing context to the north and south of the AGT1 area; a dense settlement edge to south Aylesbury against a looser context to Stoke Mandeville village to the south. The existing context is considered further in section 2.5.1 of this Supplementary Planning Document.

KEY

- Railway line corridor** - barriers to connectivity east-west across the site; limited opportunities for crossing the railway;
- South-East Aylesbury Link Road corridor** - barrier to connectivity north-south across the site; limited opportunity at bridge for pedestrian/cycle crossing the South-East Aylesbury Link Road without having to go across the road;
- Settlement Identity** - South Aylesbury settlement area to north vs Stoke Mandeville Village area to south/east
- Provision of settlement buffer** - what route should this take; treatment of settlement edge in south-east of AGT1;



Placemaking Challenges



2.4 Landscape Context

The landscape character of the area in which the South Aylesbury site is located is predominantly influenced by its position within the Vale of Aylesbury, with the nationally important landscape of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) forming the southern valley slopes, and with the town of Aylesbury directly to the north.

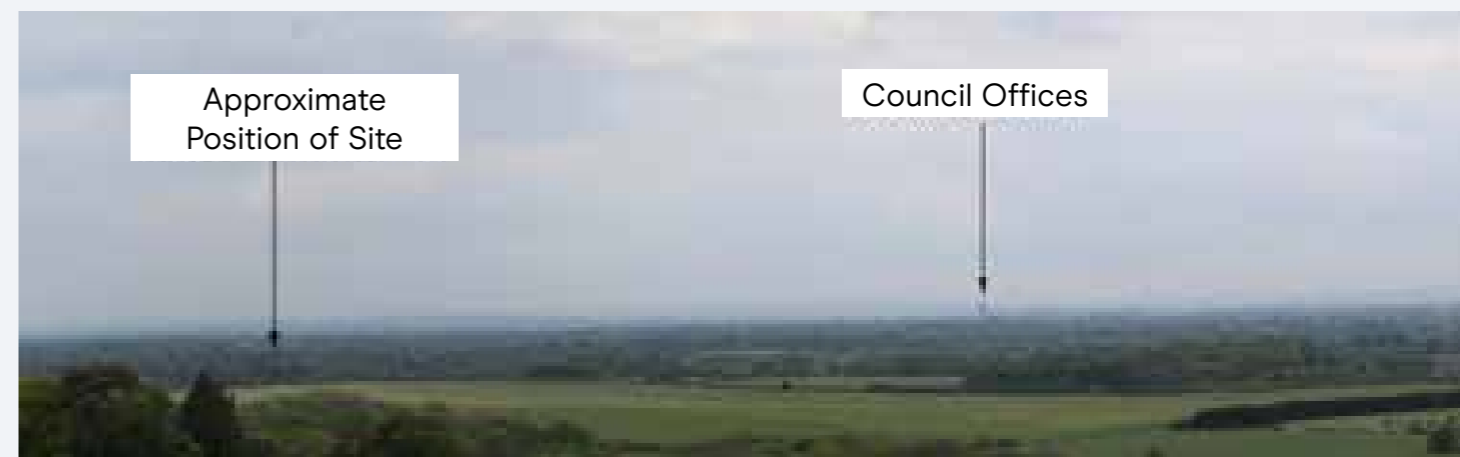
The AGT1 site occupies currently open fields that form the existing gap between the settlements of Aylesbury to the north and Stoke Mandeville to the south and east.

The wider context of the Vale is that of open agricultural land, predominantly arable and punctuated with small to medium-sized villages. To the south, the land rises with a combination of pasture and woodland to the Chiltern Escarpment, from which expansive views over the Vale can be gained, particularly from Coombe Hill.

The Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment, published in 2008, places the site within the Southern Vale Landscape Character Area, which is associated with the Vale Landscape Character Type. This is broadly described as a “large area of low lying vale landscape with limited topographic variation and containing transport corridors and large villages that due to the open nature and the urban edge of Aylesbury break down the rural character. This is least apparent between the A41 and the Grand Union Canal. The Chilterns to the south are the backdrop to many views.”

The published assessment found the overall condition of the Southern Vale to be Poor and its sensitivity to be Moderate. A strategy of landscape restoration and enhancement is therefore recommended, which includes the following guidelines:

- Restore and enhance the original field pattern, where practical.
- Maintain and improve the condition of existing hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Encourage the planting of new woodland coverts and hedgerow trees, to enhance the landscape structure and screen suburban edges and road corridors.
- Encourage the development of native vegetation in particular black poplar along streams and other watercourses.
- Maintain the condition and extent of neutral grassland.
- Maintain and improve connectivity, particularly of areas of neutral grassland.
- Encourage car-free access to the countryside from Aylesbury and settlements within the Landscape Character Area through the creation of safe routes accessible to the less mobile and cyclists.



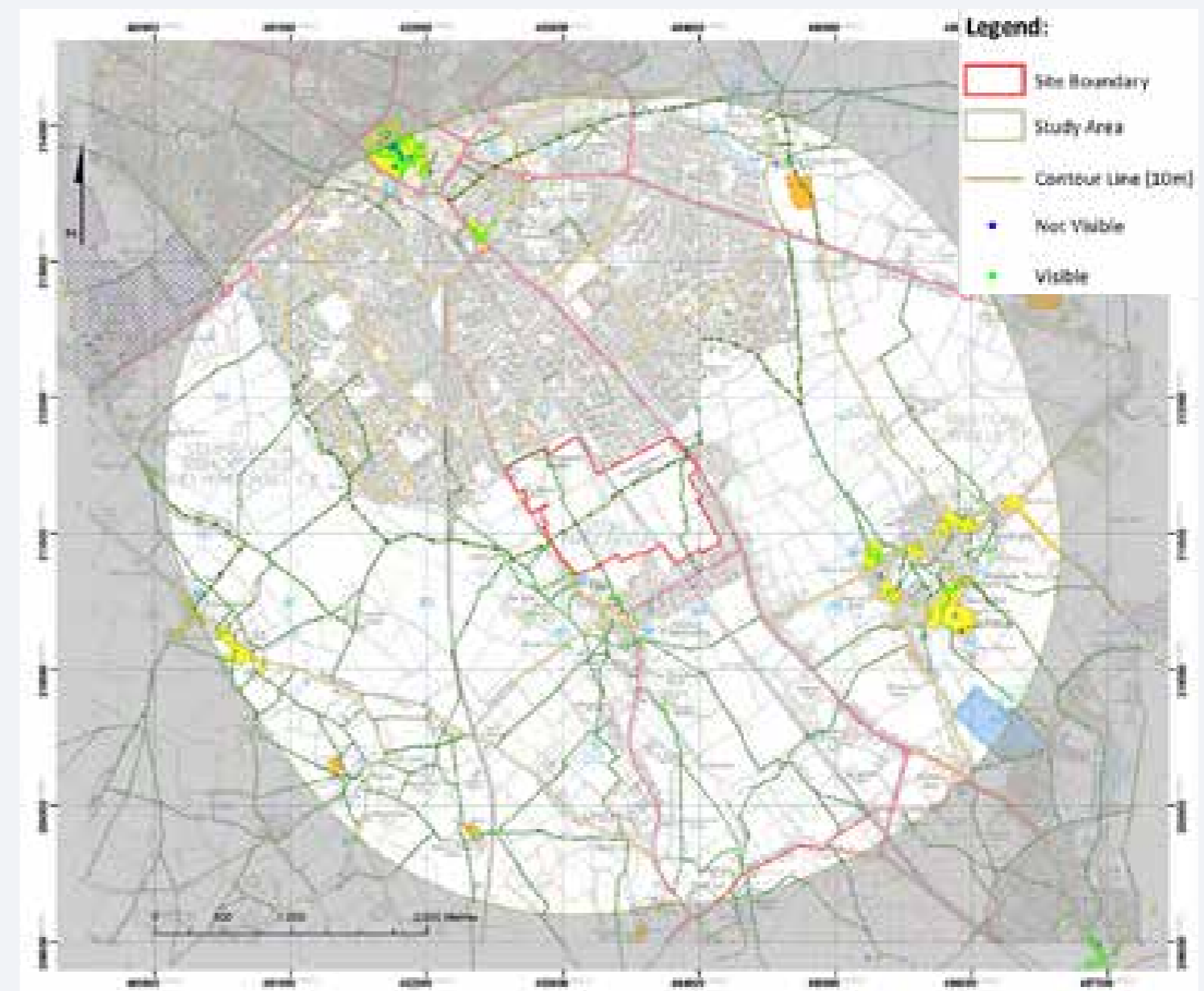
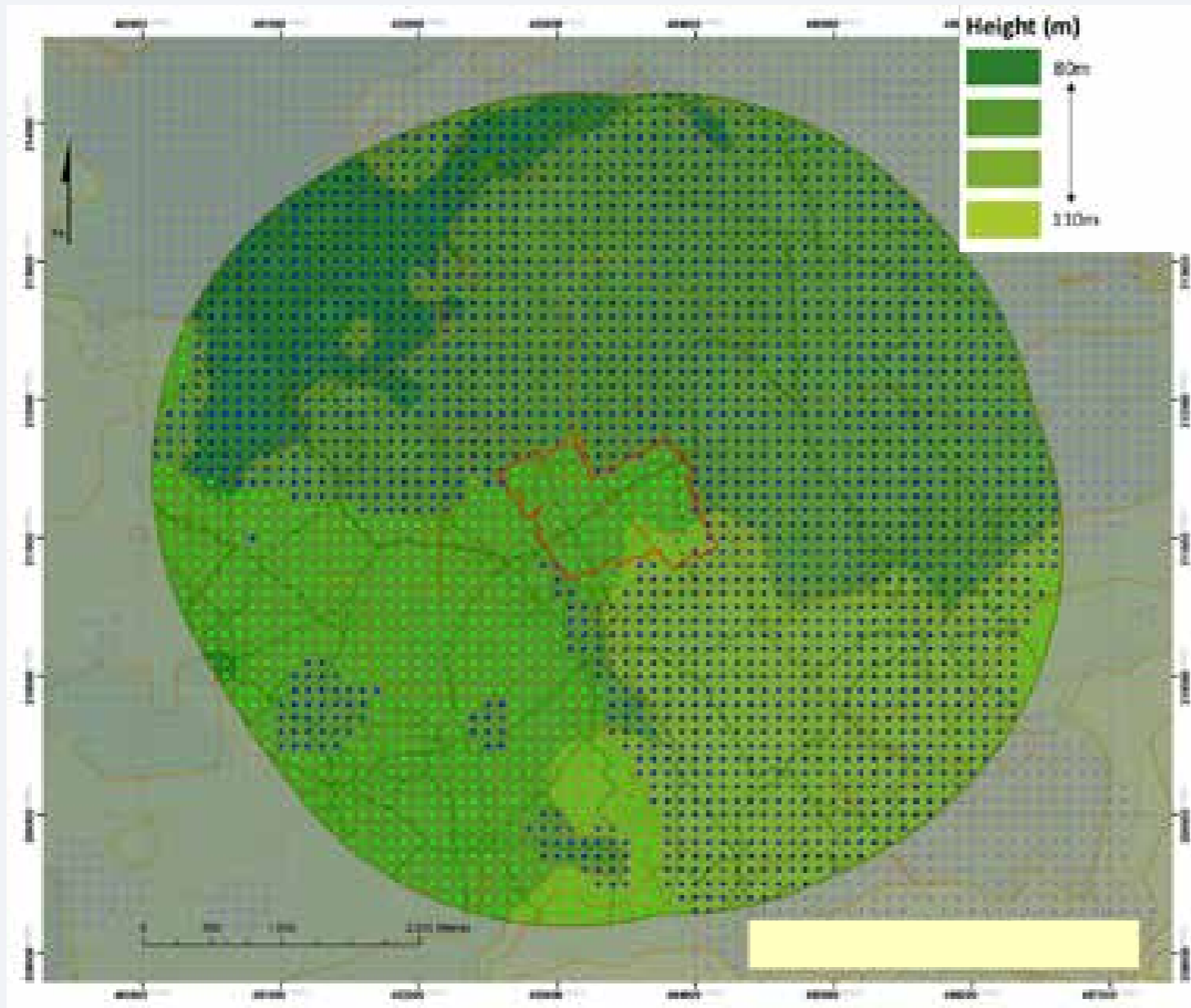
View from B4009 Upper Icknield Way



View from Monument at Coombe Hill within Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



02 Context and Understanding of the Site and Area



Landscape Assessment Plans



2.5 Townscape and Heritage

2.5.1 Townscape

South Aylesbury borders a number of Townscape Character Areas:

- Stoke Leys (including Stoke Mandeville Hospital) to the north-west;
- Stoke Grange (including Elm Farm) to the north-east;
- Stoke Mandeville village to the south and east;

These areas are highly varied and indicative of settlement evolution over time, with each element of townscape being reflective of the era in which it was built. The differing settlement context will require consideration as outlined in Vision and section 2.3 of this Supplementary Planning Document.

The southern suburbs of Aylesbury (Stoke Leys and Stoke Grange) establish the most dominant urban areas around AGT1. Two main routes (Wendover Road and Lower Road) connect Aylesbury with the villages and settlements to the south which are characterised by their linear and historic development and evolution along these routes.

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South-facing View of Aylesbury Settlement & Stoke Mandeville Parish Area

Stoke Leys

The southern edge of Stoke Leys is urban in form with large buildings within the Stoke Mandeville Hospital complex and large areas of parking. Within this development area is Stadium Approach and a large amount of high density residential development up to three and four storeys in height.



Higher density housing around Stadium Approach

Stoke Grange

The southern edge of Stoke Grange is more domestic with outwardly facing housing areas onto a stronger landscape boundary. There is a varied typology of houses and density, with low density to the east adjacent to Wendover Road, increasing to a higher density including maisonettes adjacent to the railway.



Medium density terrace housing within Stoke Grange



Lower density detached housing within Stoke Grange

Stoke Mandeville

Stoke Mandeville has evolved into a linear settlement along Station Road, and whilst initially separate from Aylesbury, there is only a small gap between the settlements along Wendover Road to the east. A more convincing buffer from Aylesbury is maintained to the south-west along Lower Road. Stoke Mandeville retains a partially rural character in its centre. Its northern edges, closest to the AGT1 site, are characterised by a feathered edge west of the railway line reflecting the most recent development areas which are in general outwardly facing, whereas east of the railway line a harder edge is formed due to piecemeal developments backing onto the AGT1 site. The density of these areas are generally low to medium, with a mixture of detached and semi-detached houses.



Higher density housing off Wendover Road



Lower density housing on Eskdale Road



Medium density housing on Hampden Road



Medium density housing on Station Road



2.5 Townscape and Heritage

2.5.2 Heritage

The nearest conservation area to South Aylesbury is located within the village of Weston Turville, which is separated from the site by the existing settlement of Stoke Mandeville.

There is one listed building within the AGT1 site, being the Grade II Listed Magpie Cottage which lies directly adjacent to Lower Road in the south-west corner of the site. There are a number of other Listed Buildings within the wider area, however given the strong level of containment afforded to the AGT1 site by adjacent structures, the only Listed Buildings that will require consideration of their setting through the proposed development are Magpie Cottage, Stoke Cottage and Lone Ash. Green buffers should be provided to separate adjacent listed buildings from the new development.

Magpie Cottage's listing description notes that it is of 17th century date, altered and extended, and restored in the 20th century. It includes a timber frame with white painted infill, a half-hipped thatch roof with two eaves dormers in the south slope. The building is considered to be of significance as a rural vernacular building of pre-1700 date which retains a significant proportion of its original fabric. The agricultural setting of the building is considered to contribute to its significance. Any planning application for development within the vicinity of the property should be accompanied by a Heritage Impact Assessment, with an appropriate and justified buffer of undeveloped land provided to ensure development is set back from the property and its boundary in order to protect its setting.

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Listed Buildings

Historic Townscape Development



1913

1934

1960

2003



2.5 Townscape and Heritage

2.5.3 Archaeology

Across the landscape to the south of Aylesbury, lies a rich multi period landscape, with archaeological evidence for human occupation of all periods. The AGT1 SPD area contains two Archaeological Notification Areas (representing Roman farmsteads/settlements) as well as numerous individual Historic Environment Record points referencing evidence of multi period archaeological activity.

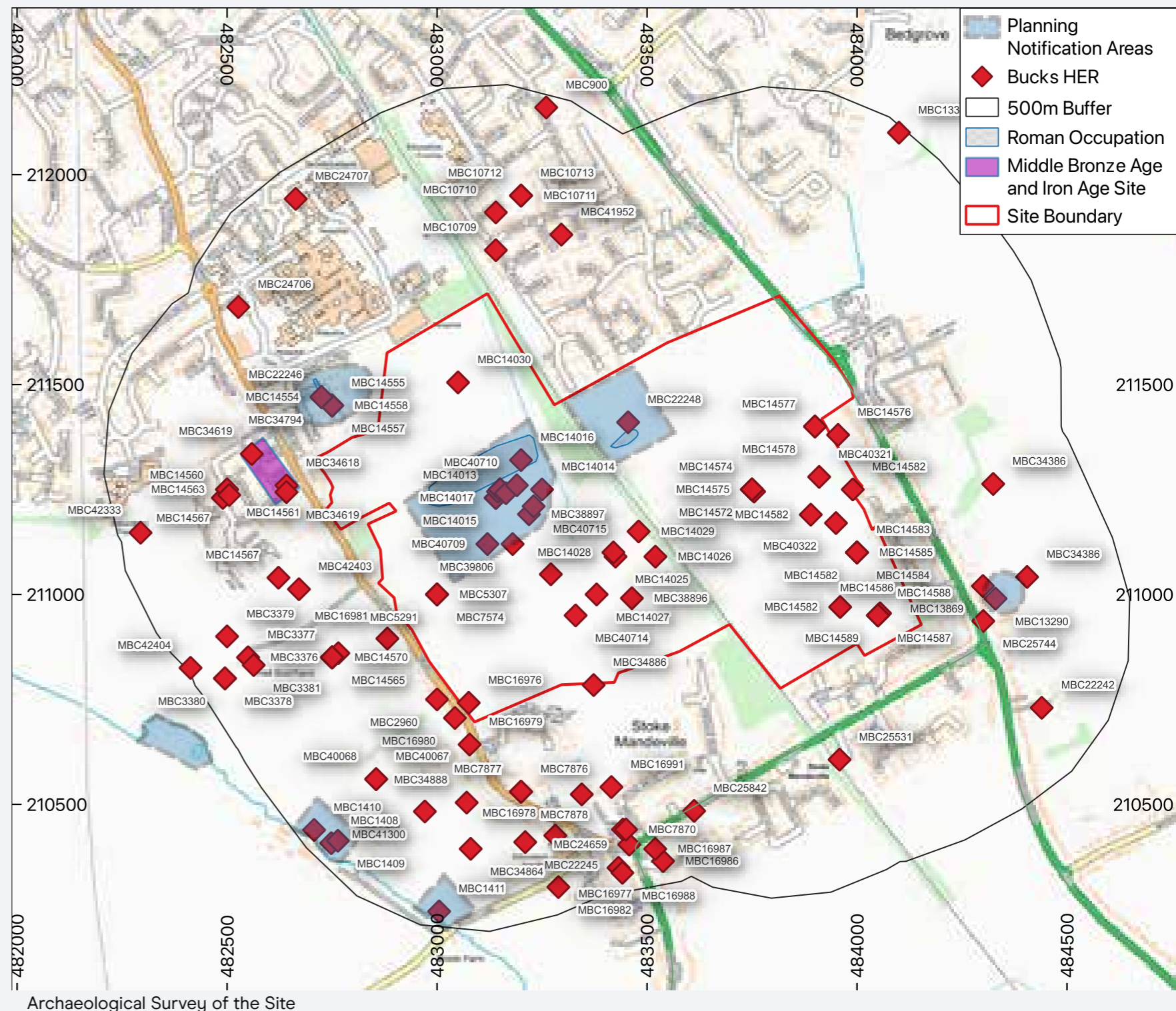
The AGT1 site has been subject to a series of archaeological investigations and surveys, including a fieldwalking survey in 1998, which identified evidence for historic activity dating from the Mesolithic period (9600 - 4000 BC) through to the post-medieval period (1540-1901AD). More recent works have also identified settlement activity and inhumations of Bronze Age (2600 BC - 700 BC) and Romano - British (43 AD to 410 AD) date, whilst works immediately to the north of the AGT area have identified further evidence of Roman occupation.

The AGT1 area is therefore considered to have a high potential for archaeological remains to be present, which could contribute to our understanding of human activity within this area. These remains would be deemed as being at risk of impact from any development.

The AGT1 SPD area is divided by the boundary of the railway line and consists of several parcels of land under different ownerships. Archaeological evaluation through geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation has already been undertaken in places within the AGT1 SPD boundary, which has provided further detail about the presence, scale and significance of the archaeological resource within the SPD area. Where significant archaeological remains have been identified, an appropriate mitigation strategy, which may include preservation in situ or archaeological excavation, will be required in advance of development to reduce any harm to the archaeological resource.

In areas where sufficient archaeological evaluation has not been undertaken, appropriate evaluation works would be required in advance of any development plan being finalised. Dependant on the results of these initial works, a strategy for the mitigation of impacts from the development on those areas where archaeological remains of significance are identified would need to be agreed prior to development.

The evidence to-date shows no reason that development within the AGT1 site cannot take place on archaeological grounds. However, an appropriate mitigation strategy to best preserve and mitigate any potential impact to known and hitherto unknown buried archaeological deposits within the AGT1 area will be required as part of any planning application.

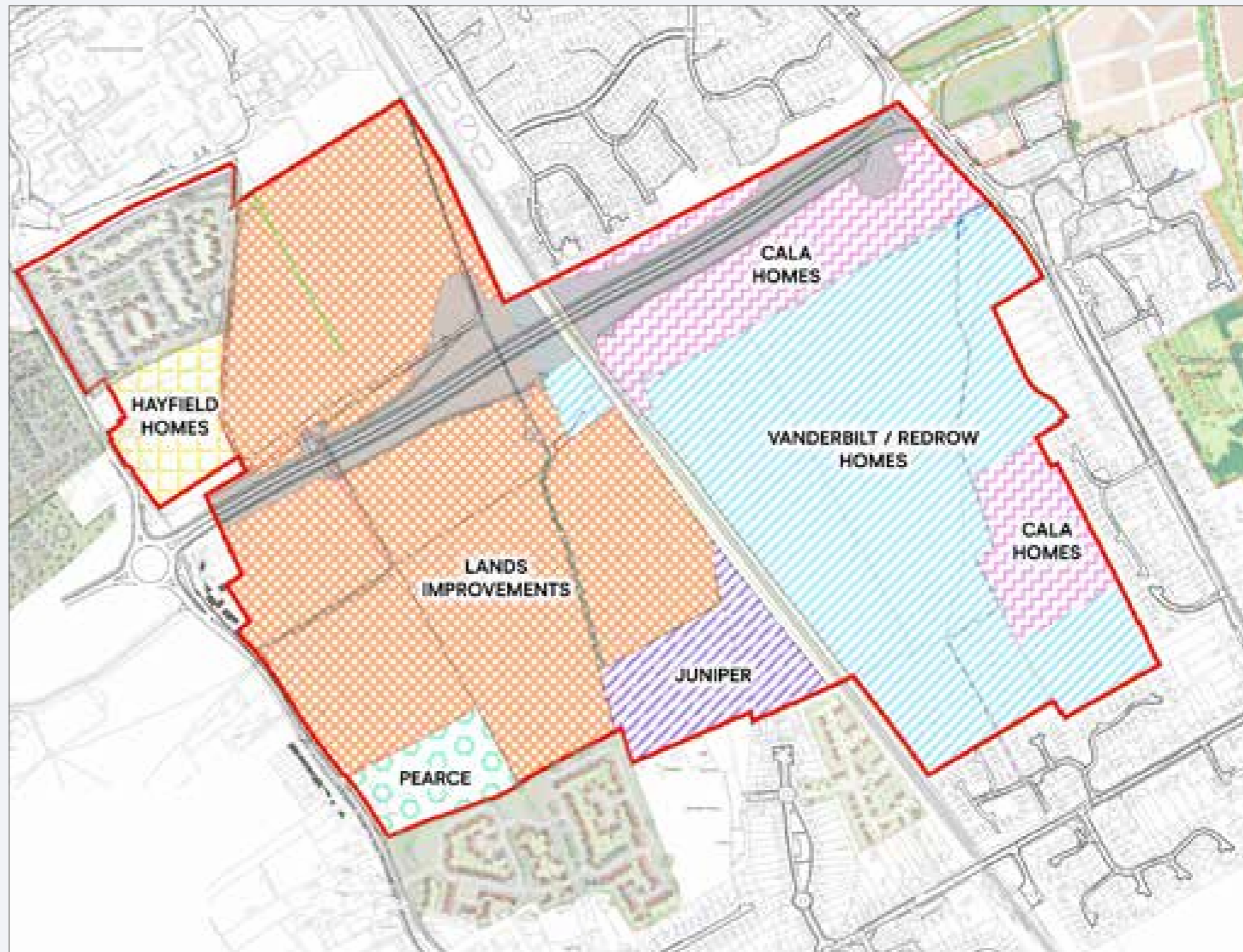




2.6 Land Ownership

South Aylesbury is controlled by several different land ownerships / parties, these are identified on the adjacent plan. Buckinghamshire Council have worked together with the four Principle Parties (Lands Improvement, CALA, Vanderbilt Strategic and Redrow) to produce this Supplementary Planning Document in a collaborative fashion to ensure a cohesive and co-ordinated approach to development of the allocation as a whole.

This Supplementary Planning Document provides a strategic context to allow landowners / controlling parties to submit a planning application(s), whilst ensuring a comprehensive and cohesive development is delivered. In the event a single planning application is not submitted which would otherwise ensure the comprehensive development of the site, then multiple applications could be considered provided that an appropriate delivery mechanism is assured, as set out in outline Chapter 5.



Land Ownership / Controlling Party Plan

2.7 AGT1 Site - Existing Features, Topography and Ecology

2.7.1 Existing Features

South Aylesbury is divided by the north-south alignment of the London Marylebone to Aylesbury Vale Parkway railway line. The railway is at a similar level as the site, and is fairly well screened by existing vegetation on either side. Away from this, the rest of the site consists of a number of fields, many of which are divided by strong existing hedgerow features which also form the routing of an existing network of public footpaths crossing the site. The east-west route across AGT1 is connected by a level crossing over the railway.

The AGT1 site is generally flat across its entirety, with very gentle falls towards a watercourse in the western half of the site running along the central north-south field boundary on the eastern half of the site.

2.7.2 Ecology

The main constraints are the ecological value of the existing hedgerows, trees and in particular two black poplar trees located on the eastern side of the railway line.

A wintering bird survey of the land has identified that the area is used by relatively low numbers of bird species typically associated with farmland, woodland edge and garden habitats. Although some of the bird species recorded are included on the Birds of Conservation Concern 'Red' and 'Amber' lists, these generally relate to common and widespread, albeit declining, species such as Song Thrush, Starling, Skylark and Yellowhammer. No large flocks of wintering waders such as Lapwing or Golden Plover were recorded. Suitable mitigation for impacted habitats should be identified and provided part of the application process.






Any scheme for development will aim to retain the existing hedgerows where appropriate and / or provide enhancement through improved connectivity and ANGSt compliant green infrastructure. Loss of hedgerow would require compensation.

Development on South Aylesbury should provide a net gain in biodiversity, which will be assessed by detailed reports submitted at planning application stage. The net gain in Biodiversity, which is required through VALP Policy NE1, will protect, manage, enhance and extend existing biodiversity resources through habitat creation / improvement such as grassland, scrub, woodland and hedgerow creation as well as wetland habitat.



AGT1 Existing Setting and Site Features

Key

	Site Boundary		Setting of Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
	Existing and Future Landscape Barriers		ANGSt compliant green infrastructure Corridors
	Distinctive Tree Feature		Existing Public Right of Way

2.8 Drainage and Flood Risk

The railway line divides the site into two distinct hydrological areas. Land to the East drains to the Bedgrove Brook and land to the west drains to the Southcourt Brook. The Aylesbury Vale Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) presents the outputs of broadscale modelling which shows parts of the site to be at risk of flooding from surface water and fluvial flooding associated with the existing channels on site. Site-specific modelling has been carried out to refine the understanding of flood risk as discussed below;

East Area East Area

Within the eastern parcel the mapped flood risk is predominantly associated with the Bedgrove Brook. The majority of the flows arise from the urban areas to the south and east and discharge to the Bedgrove Brook via piped connections.

Hydraulic modelling work undertaken by some of the landowners reveal that small culverts below agricultural crossings on the site, alongside and below Wendover Road cause shallow flooding of the site during extreme events and present a residual risk should a blockage occur. Agricultural crossings should be removed as part of the development. It will also be necessary to raise some land in the northern part of the site to secure safe access and to deliver the AGT1 proposals.

Options modelling undertaken by some of the landowners demonstrates that creating additional storage alongside the Bedgrove Brook to the south is a feasible strategy for mitigating flood risk. The modelling work has been reviewed by the LLFA which included requests for amendments which are currently in hand [we expect to submit by the end of next week at the latest] and do not impact the proposed mitigation. This presents an opportunity to enhance the ecological and landscape value of the channel corridor which should be explored as part of any planning application.

West Area

The Southcourt Brook flows on the eastern side of the western parcel and two field drainage ditches are present within the allocation along field boundaries. These features predominantly receive diffuse runoff from the surrounding undeveloped land. The risk from these watercourses has therefore been modelled using a direct rainfall approach. This work was done on behalf of LIH and submitted as part of a planning application.

Flooding during extreme events is generally constrained to locations adjacent to the existing ditch network and localised depressions. The modelling also highlights a potential for surface water to enter the site from Lower Road. Modelling of the proposed development and surface water drainage concludes that the site's surface water drainage would reduce flows within the ditches, providing a reduction in flooding both on the site and beyond the site.

Development proposals should provide an 8m ecological buffer from the top of banks of the principal watercourses (Bedgrove Brook and Southcourt Brook) where practicable and ideally 10m. Within this buffer development should not impair floodplain flows, pathways should be permeable and set back from the banks with formal access at a limited number of distinct locations. Planting within the buffer should enhance the ecological value of the corridor and should aim to limit light spill into the corridor and the channel. Watercourse crossing should be clear-span from bank to bank and soffits should be set above the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event where technically feasible.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment mapping also indicates that part of the site is potentially susceptible to groundwater flooding. A review of the hydrology, topography and available geology data concludes that the risk of groundwater flooding above the surface is low. However, ground investigation works recorded elevated ground water levels which will influence the design of surface water drainage features. As site proposals are brought forward, this risk should be assessed in more detail through ground investigation works and suitable mitigation identified where necessary.

Built development should be avoided in areas shown to be at risk from a 1 in 1,000 year event following mitigation works. Hydraulic modelling will be required to demonstrate that development proposals will not increase flood risk elsewhere.



Modelled Existing 1,000 Year Flood and Ditches Plan

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment mapping also indicates that part of the site is potentially susceptible to groundwater flooding. A review of the hydrology, topography and available geology data concludes the risk is very low, but it should be considered in more detail as site proposals are brought forward and suitable mitigation identified.

Built development should be avoided in areas shown to be at risk from a 1 in 1,000 year event following mitigation works. Hydraulic modelling will be required to demonstrate that development proposals will not increase flood risk elsewhere.



2.9 Current and Future Development of South Aylesbury

A key consideration for the development of South Aylesbury is the new South-East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) which will cross the AGT1 site on an east to west basis in the northern part of the site, connecting new roundabouts on Lower Road and Wendover Road.

The central section of the South-East Aylesbury Link Road as it crosses AGT1 will be raised to pass over the railway line, and as such new embankments will be formed sloping down to the existing ground level. On the western side of the railway, an underpass route will be included allowing for pedestrian and cycle movement north-south through the AGT1 site. This is part of an aspirational route connecting Stoke Mandeville Station to the south with Stoke Mandeville Stadium to the north - much of this route will be through South Aylesbury.

Around the edges of the site are a number of new residential development areas;

- **North west** - Crest Nicholson (part of overall AGT1 area) and Bloor Homes developments off Lower Road;
- **South-west** - Abbey Homes development off Lower Road;
- **South** - Ridgepoint Homes development off Eskdale Road.

Also to note are the other Garden Town extension sites adjacent to AGT1:

- **AGT2** - located west of Lower Road
- **AGT4** - located east of Wendover Road

Both of these sites have similarities to AGT1 by dealing with strategic buffers, the Gardenway and strategic link roads.



South-East Aylesbury Link Road + New Developments Plan






















2.10 AGT1 Site Specific Considerations

Combining the technical baseline information as highlighted over the preceding pages forms an overarching constraints plan for the AGT1 site. This plan should be used as a basis for the development of concept ideas and framework layout plans for the site.

The constraints plan also refers to the contextual studies of the wider area at the beginning of this chapter which will inform the positioning of various infrastructure elements as required in South Aylesbury.

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Key

-  Existing Hedgerows
-  Existing Trees
-  Baseline 1000yr Flood Extent
-  South-East Aylesbury Link Road Sustainable Drainage Systems
-  Noise Source
-  Adjacent Residential Development
-  Safeguarded Land for the South East Aylesbury Link Road
-  Railway
-  Existing Public Right of Way
-  Proposed Vehicle/Pedestrian/Cycle Access Points
-  Potential Emergency Access
-  Existing Public Right of Way Access
-  Potential Access Locations
-  Potential Pedestrian Links
-  Potential Underpass Access under South East Aylesbury Link Road between development areas
-  Existing Roads
-  Existing Railway Crossing
-  Views from The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Views to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Constraints Plan



2.11 Design Response & Opportunities

Alongside the consideration of technical constraints a strategy to outline key design opportunities has been reviewed, and in doing so respond to the challenges outlined in section 2.3. These opportunities should also reflect the Vision aspirations as set out in section 1.3

- Landscape framework – the site has a strong network of hedgerows and trees which can establish a framework of green corridors and spaces that should form the basis of placemaking around the site
- Functional Connectivity – the aspiration to strengthen connections between south Aylesbury and Stoke Mandeville can be incorporated through enhancement and additions to the existing public routes that cross the site
- Barrier crossings – specific locations to cross the railway line and South-East Aylesbury Link Road are identified – these could be split between options that can be delivered in the short term and options for future connections
- Visual Buffer – the route of the potential landscape buffer has provides the opportunity to link the ‘gaps’ in between existing settlement areas on the east and west edges of AGT1;
- Settlement Identity – potential development areas can relate to the context to which they are closely related; northern area being south Aylesbury and southern area to Stoke Mandeville village. The central areas can be transitional and adopt a stronger theme/character that distinguishes AGT1 as a new Garden Town neighbourhood.
- Locations of ‘centres’ to development area – where other uses could be located and where housing densities could be increased.

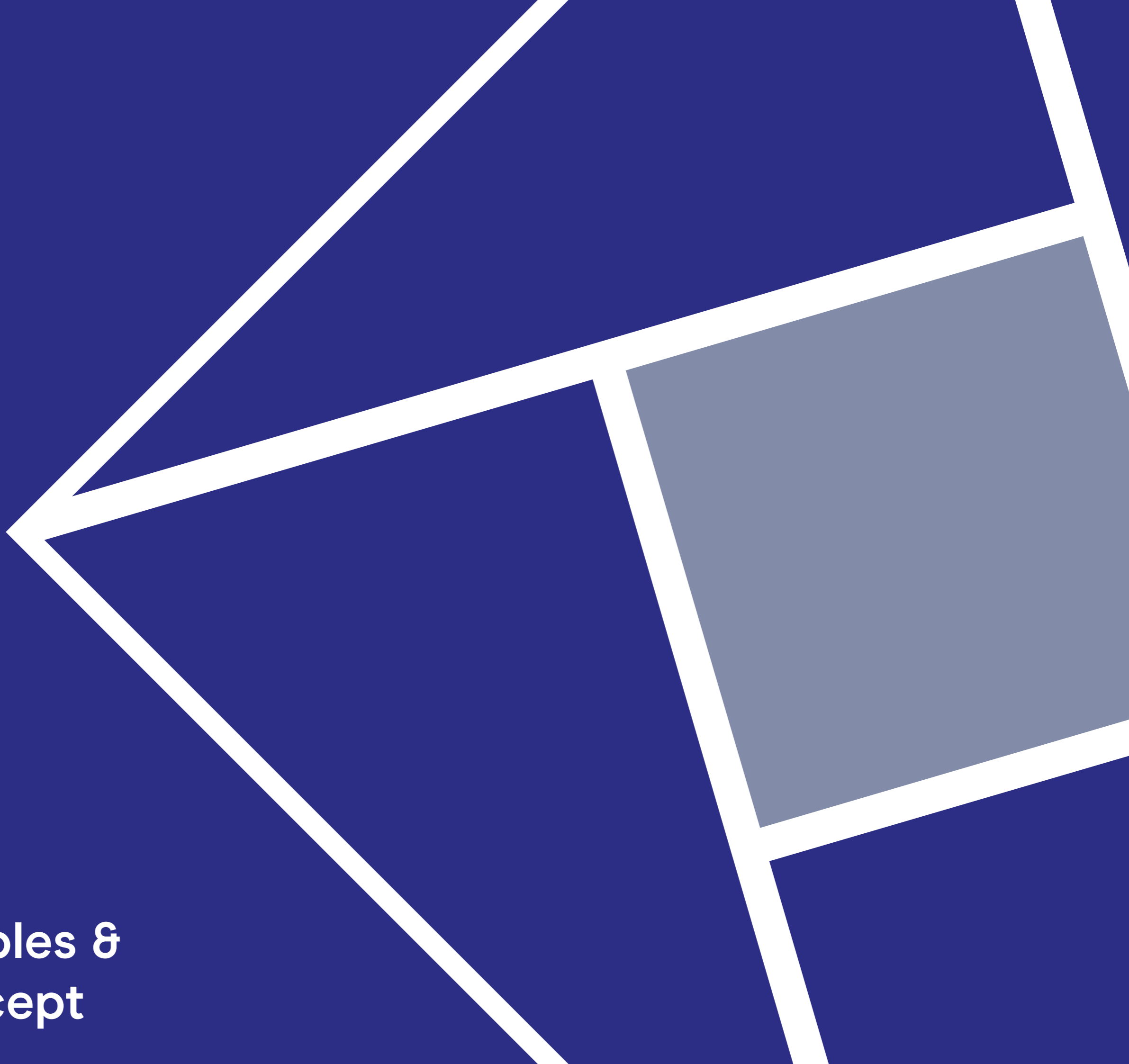
Key

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | Key Destinations | | Potential Vehicle Access Points |
| | Potential Pedestrian / Cycle Desire Lines | | Potential Emergency Access |
| | Potential Pedestrian / Cycle Desire Lines combined with Green Corridors | | Existing Public Right of Way |
| | Potential Route of Buffer | | Potential Pedestrian Links |
| | Potential Development Cells | | Potential Underpass Access under SEALR between Development Areas |
| | Potential Centres to Development Areas | | Potential Access Location |
| | Potential Crossing Points | | |



Opportunities Plan

3 - Key Principles & Overall Concept



3.1 Key Guiding Principles

3.1.1 Garden Town Design Principles

AGT1 will follow development and design guidelines as set out in the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan document (AGTM). Within this are a set of key design principles (section 8.8) that reflect the Garden Town Vision and Town and County Planning Association (TCPA) guidance on garden community principles.

The emerging Aylesbury Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document will also contain design principles that forthcoming proposals for AGT1 should reflect and comply with.

In addition to the Garden Town vision and principles the development of South Aylesbury will be guided by the policies contained within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 – 2033 (VALP), the Aylesbury Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, together with other guidance and policies relevant at the time specific applications for the site are developed and considered.

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3.1.2 Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan Site Specifics

Section 8.9 of the Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan document is a site specific set of opportunities for the AGT1 site covering the following points:

Links – connect Stoke Mandeville Village and Station with Stoke Mandeville Hospital and Stadium, supporting health and accessibility initiatives linked to these facilities;

Views – capture views to the Chilterns ridge to the south through orientation of streets and green spaces;

Connectivity – minimise impact of transport ‘barriers’ through good landscape design, crossing points & integration of walking, cycling and vehicle routes;

Areas – opportunities for differing character separated by these ‘barriers’ and review potential for each sub-neighbourhood to relate closely to its immediate context;

Local centre – siting of this requires careful consideration recognising the challenges of connectivity across the site, and ideally sited with primary school to offer critical mass; potential for alternative location closer to Stoke Mandeville Village and Station;

Gardenway – review opportunities for creation of strategic open space along desire lines and east-west and north-south nodal crossing points, and review integration with the South-East Aylesbury Link Road underpass crossing.



Extract from AGT Masterplan Document - Section 8.9



3.2 Development Principles and Concept

With an understanding of the contextual considerations and key opportunities as set out in chapter 2 of this Supplementary Planning Document, a series of development principles can be established which will seek to inform the Framework Masterplan for AGT1.

These development principles can be treated as a series of layers, applied in a hierarchical order which seek to apply the aspirations of the AGT1 Vision. The resulting collection of all these layers forms the basis of a concept plan around which the masterplan can be developed.

Therefore this chapter 3 'Development Principles and Concept' sets out these layered principles as follows with the combined concept plan at the end of the chapter.

These layers are set out in a hierarchical order as follows:

- Landscape New and Proposed
- ANGSt compliant green infrastructure
- Access
- Movement & Mobility
- Placement of Uses
- Character, Identities and Densities
- Concept Plan





3.2 Development Principles and Concept

3.2.1 Landscape New and Proposed

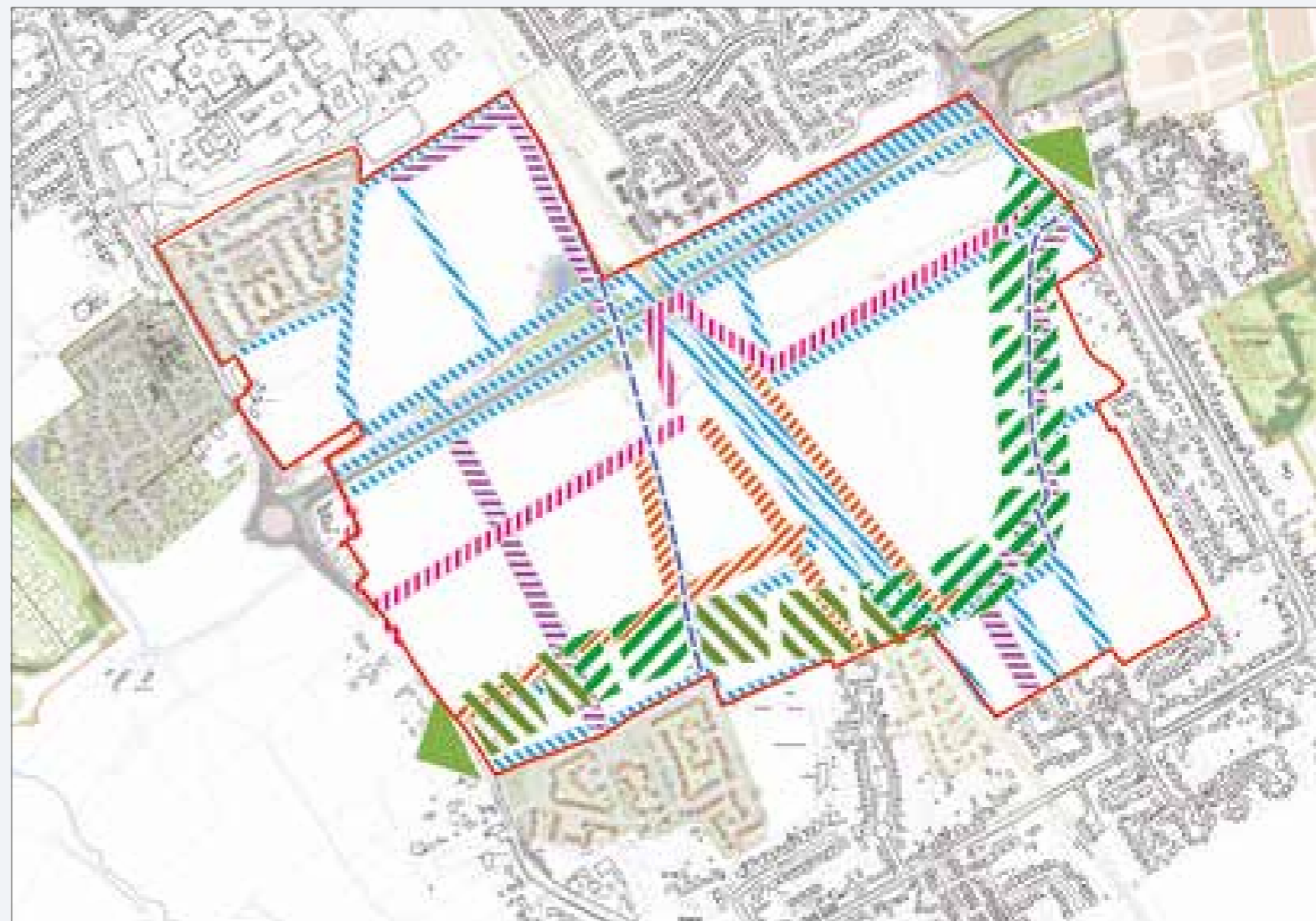
As an overall principle, the AGT1 development will seek to retain and improve the existing landscape resources within the site, whilst introducing new features as part of a site-wide green ANGSt compliant infrastructure network. It will seek to provide a variety of landscape treatments that respond to the character of, and strategy for, the Southern Vale Landscape Character Area whilst providing a range of public benefits.

In particular, the development framework will respond positively to the existing hedgerow, watercourse and Public Right of Way connections the basis of the AGT1 landscape structure, responding to the published landscape strategy and building upon their existing character and connectivity. This will include the creation of new areas of trees and woodland, the planting of native black poplar adjacent to watercourses and the rejuvenation of existing hedgerows. This landscape structure will then go on to inform an overall landscape-led masterplan for the scheme.

In line with Aylesbury Garden Town policy requirements, the AGT1 development will comprise 50% ANGSt compliant green infrastructure, which will take a variety of forms. This will include measures to address the identified landscape sensitivities and in particular, the important views to and from Coombe Hill and the wider Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.








The landscape character of the site is negatively affected by the main line railway, which strongly divides it into eastern and western parts, and this sense of division will be intensified by the delivery of the South-East Aylesbury Link Road strategic highway connection, which will run through the northern part of the site. Opportunities will be sought, however, to improve the landscape contribution of the edges of these routes.

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Landscape Concept

Key

-  Existing Hedgerows adjacent to Round Aylesbury Walk, inclusion of proposed diversion over the South-East Aylesbury Link Road
-  Existing Hedgerows that could incorporate Principal Pedestrian / Cycle Connections
-  Existing Hedgerows that could incorporate Secondary Pedestrian / Cycle Connections
-  Retained and Enhanced Watercourse
-  Structural Vegetation
-  Strategic Buffer
-  Retained Peri-urban Agriculture

3.2 Development Principles and Concept

3.2.2 ANGSt compliant green infrastructure

In line with the requirements of Policy D-AGT1, the site will provide a high quality built and semi-natural environment with 50% ANGSt compliant green infrastructure by area, as with all other Aylesbury Garden Town developments. The green ANGSt compliant infrastructure will be relevant to the development permitted and needs of its occupiers and be reasonably related to its scale and kind, as required by Policy I1, which also requires it to meet the ANGSt standards contained in Appendix C of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP).

The overarching principles for the site's ANGSt compliant green infrastructure network, as agreed with stakeholders, are for it to be multi-functional to ensure the delivery of a range of environmental services across the network. These are anticipated to include the following:

- Public recreation and healthy lifestyles;
- Sustainable access;
- Ecological habitat;
- Sustainable drainage;
- Soil conservation;
- Carbon sequestration;
- Local food production;
- Water quality; and
- Air filtration.

In addition, the ANGSt compliant green infrastructure network will facilitate the development achieving a biodiversity net gain, as required by emerging legislation.

There is a policy requirement within the Local Plan for a buffer between the new development and the existing village of Stoke Mandeville. This will be achieved by a combination of new public open space creation within the site, and the retention of areas of existing pastoral farmland on the village edge.

The public open space component of the buffer will be variable in character according to its location with public accessibility and water as a unifying feature. A watercourse will provide a sense of natural separation of the areas to the north and south, as well as habitat diversity, sustainable drainage and natural and formal play opportunities. In the eastern part of the buffer, this will be based upon an existing brook that runs between agricultural fields.

The buffer will contain scattered trees and woodland blocks along its length, which will not only serve to increase its presence and visual interest but will also serve to filter inward views from Coombe Hill, combining with street trees throughout the scheme.

The western part of the buffer will also incorporate more formal recreation facilities, such as playing fields and equipped play. This location will enable these facilities to be shared between existing and new residents via the existing public footpath connection into Stoke Mandeville. Parts of the strategic buffer to the west of the railway line will include Peri-urban agriculture, being retained pastoral farmland on the edge of Stoke Mandeville. The requirements of Policy NE2 should be adhered to in the buffer design.



ANGSt Compliant Green Infrastructure Plan

Key

- Strategic Buffer
- Strategic Buffer - Peri-Urban Agriculture
- Secondary Connections
- Aylesbury Walk
- South East Aylesbury Link Road Corridor
- Railway Corridor
- Central Open Space
- School Playing Fields (size & position TBC)
- Sports Pitches



3.2 Development Principles and Concept

3.2.3 Access

Vehicle Access

Potential vehicle access to the site will be taken from various points, as shown on the adjacent diagram.

Access to the land to the west of the rail line will be achieved from a new access on Lower Road. An additional access off Lower Road just north of the SEALR Lower Road roundabout would be capable of facilitating some development north of the South-East Aylesbury Link Road. Options for crossing the South-East Aylesbury Link Road into the northern parcels are being assessed by the Consortium members alongside Buckinghamshire Council. This includes the potential for an underpass of the South East Aylesbury Link Road, which will be subject to further assessment.

As required by the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan the creation of the South-East Aylesbury Link Road will not leave the northern parcel unable to be accessed for development. Access from the South East Aylesbury Link Road will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that this would leave parcels of land inaccessible and incapable of development. Were access from the South-East Aylesbury Link Road required, a 'left in, left out' option would be explored through the planning application process.

The land to the east of the rail line would take vehicular access from Wendover Road. The precise location and details of the access arrangements from Wendover Road would be considered in detail at the planning application stage. An access point taken from Castlefields on the eastern side of the site may be able to serve a small selection of new dwellings but would not connect the wider street network in the site, except by way of potential pedestrian/cycle links. This access, which would provide vehicle connection to a limited number of units, would be subject to further / full details at the planning application stage. Emergency Access points have been considered and proposed adjoining with Carters Rise, and if not possible due to land ownership matters then potentially from Dorchester Close.

The precise location of the access arrangements will be considered at planning application stage.

Pedestrian and Cycle Access

Potential pedestrian and cycle access points into the site from the surrounding land have been considered and are illustrated on the adjacent diagram in three categories:

- Existing Public Rights of Way
- Potential links that would require third party agreement
- Potential links that will not be considered due to emerging constraints

North-west - The Crest Nicholson scheme is currently being constructed; this has been designed to be outwardly facing along the eastern boundary therefore allowing for potential connectivity into the northern part of AGT1. Opportunities for achieving a connection point should be reviewed at application stages, subject to agreements with landowners outside of the Consortium. A Public Right of Way crosses this part of the site providing connection to Stoke Mandeville Hospital.



South-west - There are two existing Public Rights of Way entering the site in the south western area - one from Lower Road and another from land to the south. A strategic walking and cycling route between Stoke Mandeville Stadium and the railway station is being considered by Buckinghamshire Council, which would pass along the eastern boundary and access through the southern boundary of AGT1 should allow for this. Potential options include linking with the new development off Eskdale Road. There are also Parish Council owned playing fields and access to these should be reviewed at application stage.

North-east - Housing within the Elm Farm development to the north has been designed to be outwardly facing towards the boundary and potential access into AGT1 could be available. However due to the alignment of the new South-East Aylesbury Link Road connections with the main site are no longer possible. There is an existing Public Right of Way entering the site from Wendover Road to the east.

South-east - There is an existing Public Right of Way entering the site from Dorchester Close which will be utilised to provide access to Stoke Mandeville Station to the south. There is a connection point on the eastern boundary from Castlefields, and also to Petersfield which would require third party agreement.



3.2 Development Principles and Concept

3.2.4 Movement & Mobility

A network of routes that can be established through AGT1 should be developed to link the potential access points as set out in the preceding section. Desire lines have been established that seek to link key destinations around the site utilising the access points identified and crossing the site in a direct manner.

Key destinations in the immediate surrounding area are identified as:

- Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Stadium and local centre;
- Stoke Mandeville Village and Rail station;
- AGT4 and its new facilities – local centre and schools;

Key to the success of these links is the manner in which they cross the 'barriers' of the railway line and the South-East Aylesbury Link Road. Further guidance and aspirations for these crossing points is given in section 4.

Wendover Road (A413) is located to the east of the site, with Lower Road (B4443) located to the west. The SEALR, when constructed, will run to the north of / through the South Aylesbury site. These all connect the South Aylesbury to the wider area, including Aylesbury town centre, Wendover, Princes Risborough and beyond.

The local topography within the wider area lends itself to walking and cycling with the existing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the area considered to be suitable. Footways are provided on both sides of Wendover Road and Lower Road, whilst the Amber Way and Jet Way cycle routes, part of the Aylesbury active travel route network, run adjacent connecting South Aylesbury to Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury town centre and Wendover.

There are also several local Public Rights of Way (PROW) and bridleways which cross South Aylesbury, with others in the vicinity, provide alternative traffic-free routes to the surrounding area. Whilst access to the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 57 is available within Princes Risborough located approximately 10km to the southwest.

The nearest existing bus stops are located on Wendover Road and Lower Road providing regular services into Aylesbury for connection onwards and to Wendover, Princes Risborough, and High Wycombe.

Stoke Mandeville Railway Station is located to the south, providing regular direct services to several local and regional destinations including Aylesbury, Aylesbury Vale Parkway, Amersham, Harrow-on-the-Hill, and London Marylebone.



Movement Plan

Key

- Potential Strategic Pedestrian & Cycle Routes
- ... Potential Gardenway Route

- ⊙ Potential location for South-East Aylesbury Link Road underpass Crossing Point

- Potential location for future Footbridge
- ⊞ Potential location for South-East Aylesbury Link Road embankment crossings to Railway bridge



3.2 Development Principles and Concept

3.2.5 Gardenway

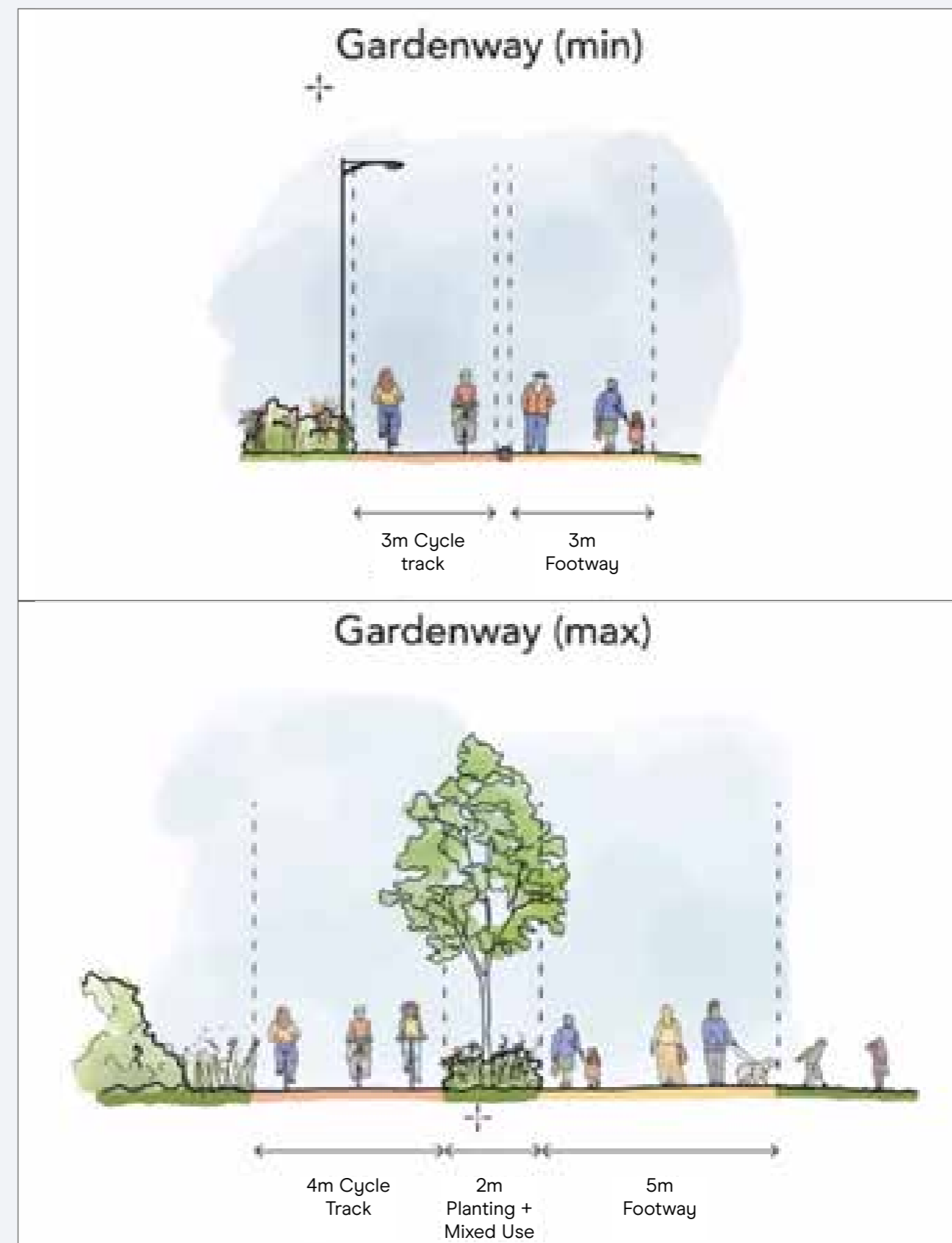
The new circular route around Aylesbury is intended to be accessible for non-vehicular modes of transport, providing sustainable connections between the various urban extensions that comprise Aylesbury Garden Town, as well as the wider countryside. Its vision is to be a high quality and tranquil route, within a naturalistic corridor for the majority of its route.

The route of the proposed Gardenway is not a policy requirement, however, consideration has been given to movement corridors that could accommodate this route in future. As part of proposed ANGSt compliant green infrastructure, it is felt the indicated desire lines allow potential options for the routing of this, subject to off-site connectivity with adjacent AGT sites and options for crossing the railway line.

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Potential Route for Gardenway



Street Sections for Potential Gardenway Routes



3.2 Development Principles and Concept

3.2.6 Placement of Uses

Key locations can be identified within the network of potential movement routes, that act as nodal points at key crossing locations, where infrastructure benefits can be located such as elements of the local centre, primary school, mobility hubs and community centre.

Nodal points can be derived from the connectivity/desire lines plan, and should pick up where movement is most prominent, either within or off site. Any proposed facilities located in this area should therefore benefit from footfall and passing traffic.

By virtue of basing the key movement routes with the green corridors through the site, this should enable these facilities to be directly accessible within the immediate area via sustainable walking and cycling routes.

Three such points are derived from the studies:

- **East of the railway** – a location adjacent to the main access that can gain benefit from visual connections with passing traffic along Wendover Road along with a key location with the landscape framework at the head of the strategic buffer;
- **West of the railway** – at a central location where the east to west movement crosses with north-south movement from the South-East Aylesbury Link Road underpass to Stoke Mandeville Village to the south.
- **Stoke Mandeville Parish Centre** – provides a third location to reflect the aspirations within the first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, which suggests a potential location for a Parish Centre on the western side of Lower Road. However, the proposal for a Parish Centre is many years from fruition.

As such the Framework Masterplan should review potential locations for Local Centre and facilities within this which are located to suit these nodal points. These locations could also incorporate 'Mobility Hubs' which would offer a range of sustainable transport options for residents within AGT1 or people passing through.



Mobility Hub + School Plan

Key

- Key Nodal Points within East and West development areas
- Potential location for Mobility Hub
- Existing School Locations
- ▲ Existing Community Centres
- Existing Local Centre
- Potential Nodal point with Stoke Mandeville Parish Centre

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3.2 Development Principles and Concept

3.2.7 Development Area and Character

Development Area

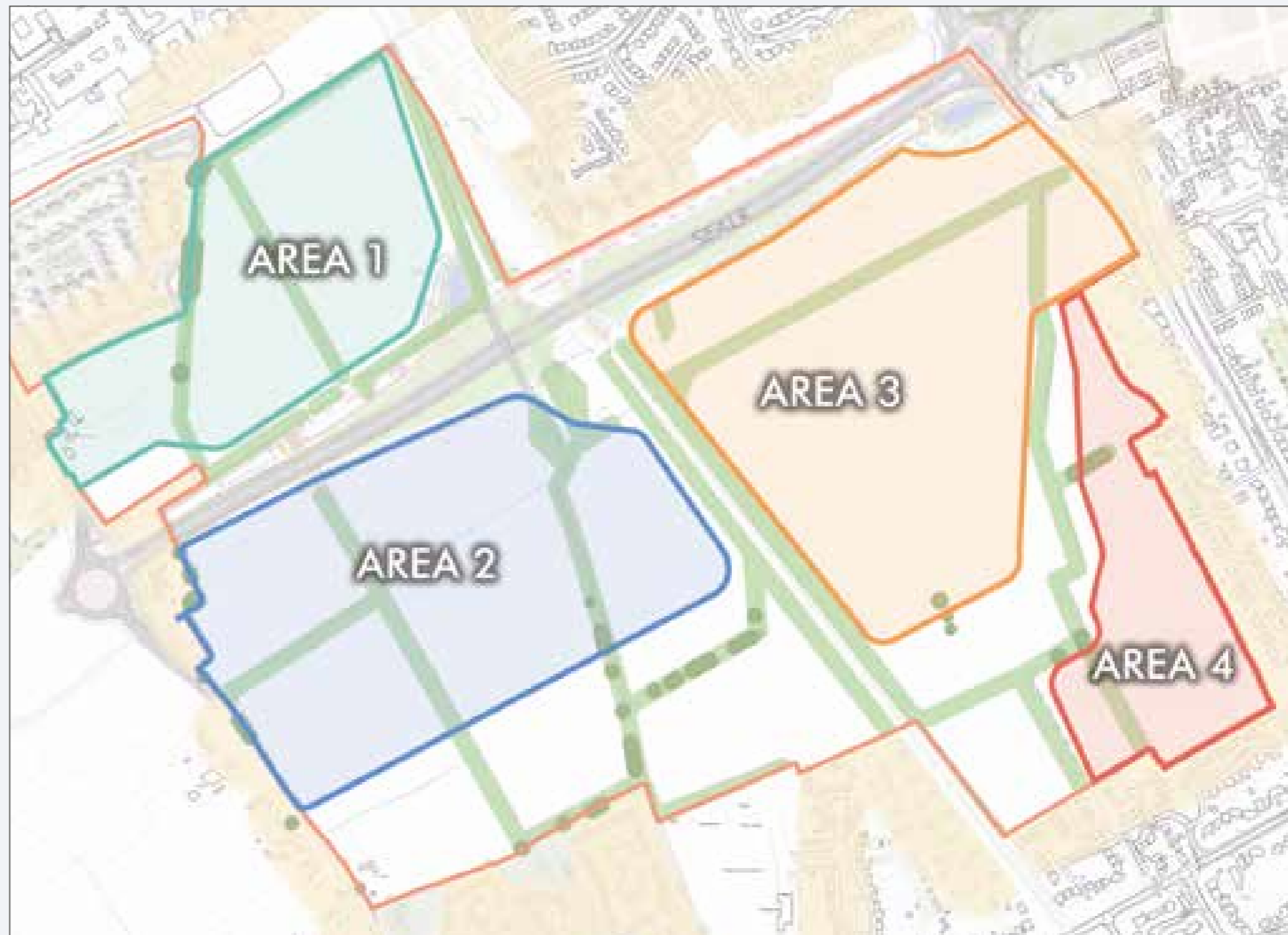
Overlaying the landscape strategy outlined in section 3.2.2 with the base constraints and opportunity plans create a series of potential areas of development within AGT1, each segregated from one another by an existing or proposed element of infrastructure. These infrastructure 'barriers' present challenges in terms of placemaking and connectivity, however do assist the potential application of character across the site by creating four distinct areas of development, each of which could have a differing character.

The development areas can be characterised as follows:

- **Area 1 (Northern Area)** – separated from the rest of AGT1 by the South-East Aylesbury Link Road;
- **Area 2 (Western Area)** – enclosed by Lower Road, South-East Aylesbury Link Road, railway line and strategic buffer;
- **Area 3 (Eastern Area)** – enclosed by Wendover Road, South-East Aylesbury Link Road, railway line and strategic buffer;
- **Area 4 (South-East Area)** – separated from rest of AGT1 by the strategic buffer;

The movement routes and creation of nodes suggest where development could be intensified within these areas, and edges adjoining existing context will require consideration to reflect the adjoining character. Likewise, consideration is required where edges face open spaces or 'barriers' such as the railway or South-East Aylesbury Link Road corridor.

Note this diagram and the concept plan in section 3.3 indicates these areas in full however these would be subdivided further by internal residential streets and smaller areas of open space such as pocket parks.



Character Area Plan



03 Key Principles & Overall Concept

Density

Different building typologies play an important role in providing an area with character. As such, the masterplan for AGT1 should outline where differing densities are appropriate and where they can actively help provide character and identity to the new development. Common terminologies for the description of density are lower, medium and higher density, and these could be proposed within the Framework Masterplan. There are varied examples of these different types of densities in the area around the AGT1 site;

A description of the setting of each of these areas, and potential guiding principles that could be considered are shown on the following page.

	Lower Density	Medium Density	Higher Density
Density (dph)	approx. 25-29dph	approx. 30-39dph	approx. 40+dph
Building types	detached building typologies	Predominantly semi-detached and terraced houses, with some detached houses and some small scale apartment buildings	predominance of linked building typologies such as apartments and terraces
Building heights	generally up to 2 storey building heights	generally 2 and 2 ½ storeys in height, allowing for some increase in height to 3 storeys in key locations	Generally taller buildings then located elsewhere; In the local area 3-4 storey buildings can be found
	 <p>Lower density housing on Carters Ride - approx. 24dph</p>	 <p>Medium density detached housing on Silver Birch Way - approx. 38dph</p>	 <p>Higher density housing on Stadium Approach - approx. 60dph</p>



03 Key Principles & Overall Concept

Character

Key to identifying character is the aspiration of the AGT1 Vision to complement the context against which the new neighbourhood will emerge; but also to be distinguishable where appropriate in order to establish a clear identity and character for the new neighbourhood.

As such the four development areas could each take on a role to apply this objective. Areas 1 and 4 should respond directly to the surrounding areas; Areas 2 & 3 are set apart from adjacent settlement edges and therefore, whilst incorporating characteristics common with the outer Areas, this character could be strengthened in these areas to a more distinguishing feature/aesthetic that could then provide a potential identity for AGT1.

A description of the setting of each of these areas, and potential guiding principles that could be considered are shown below.

Area 1 (Northern Area)

Guiding principles for the development of this character area are as follows:

- Surrounded by built form west, north and east;
- Adjoining development generally faces outwards towards boundaries;
- Vehicle access to be confirmed; pedestrian/cycle access to north and under the South-East Aylesbury Link Road;
- Development character perceived as extension of surrounding typologies but set within landscape framework - similarities of setting to new adjacent development;

Area 2 (Western Area)

Guiding principles for the development of this character area are as follows:

- Adjoin and will provide consistent frontage to Lower Road;
- Elsewhere separated from surroundings by the South-East Aylesbury Link Road, railway, strategic buffer;
- Development to outwardly face onto these edges;
- Opportunity for denser area within centre and at confluence of routes around nodal points;
- Potential location for Local Centre uses such as Primary School at central crossing point of routes and increased density to support this;
- Distinctive character for this parcel being separated from other development areas.

Area 3 (Eastern Area)

Guiding principles for the development of this character area are as follows:

- Generally separated from surroundings by the South-East Aylesbury Link Road, railway, strategic buffer;
- Development to outwardly face onto its edges;
- Opportunity for denser area within centre and at confluence of routes around nodal points and onto Wendover Road;
- Potential location for Local Centre uses such as retail floor space at Wendover Road frontage and increased density to support this;
- Distinctive character for this parcel being separated from other development areas.

Area 4 (South-East Area)

Guiding principles for the development of this character area are as follows:

- Seen as an extension to the existing settlement and forming a link in townscape (rather than a gap) to the existing settlement on Wendover Road and Dorchester Close/Walnut Close.
- Opportunity to form new northern edge of Stoke Mandeville Village facing towards new strategic buffer within AGT1 site;
- Similar 'feathered' outwardly facing edge to that emerging north of village to west of railway;
- Potentially lower density in sensitive locations and at southern end of buffer;
- Opportunities for 'clusters' of development within existing field boundaries and therefore landscape influenced area.

3.3 Response to Placemaking Challenges

Combining all of the layered principles as set out within this chapter and outlined in 3.2 produces a Concept plan, upon which a framework masterplan can be developed. This Concept plan should respond to the placemaking challenges outlined in section 2.3 and meet the aspirations of the AGT1 Vision as follows:

Landscape – A landscape framework that maintains and enhances existing vegetation and Public Rights of Way; incorporation of a green buffer to maintain the setting of Stoke Mandeville village including retained pastoral land to retain elements of the existing rural character and provide a soft transition;

Connectivity – movement routes direct within sub-areas of AGT1, and directed towards potential crossing points of the ‘barriers’ that dissect the site;

Settlement – development areas should be established by the landscape strategy and therefore respect adjacent settlement edges; settlement identity to be created through an understanding of the surrounding characters;

Identity – opportunities to reflect the individual identity of Stoke Mandeville village and south Aylesbury, whilst forming a known identity for AGT1 in the more central areas of the development;

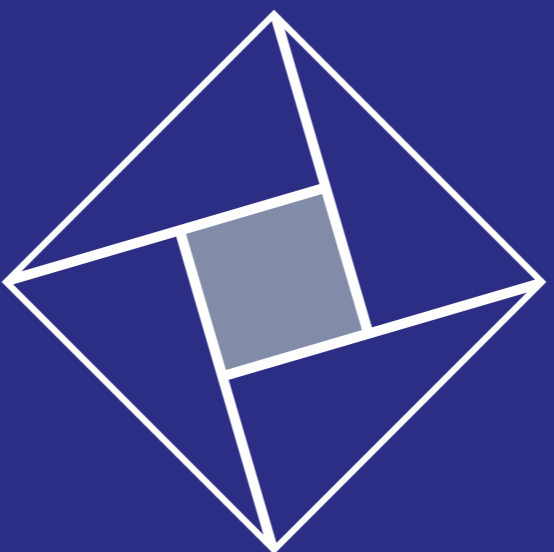
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Key

- Existing Trees to be retained
- Existing Hedgerows to be retained
- Strategic Buffer
- Retained Peri-urban Agriculture
- Structural Development Platform - to include streets, buildings, public open space including parks and squares, private gardens, Non-structural Landscaping and Parking Areas
- Proposed Vehicle Access Points
- Potential Emergency Access
- Existing Public Right of Way
- Potential Access Locations
- Potential Pedestrian Links
- Potential Underpass Access under SEALR between development areas
- Potential Strategic Pedestrian & Cycle Routes
- Potential location for Key Space and Mobility Hub



Concept Plan



4 - Framework Masterplan & Design Guidance





4.1 Framework Masterplan

The context analysis and conceptual layering illustrated through sections 2 & 3 of this document have informed the production of a Framework Masterplan for the AGT1 site. The Framework Masterplan illustrates the following:

- Landscape and ANGSt compliant green infrastructure – strategic spaces, green corridors, open spaces, infrastructure buffers;
- Access and Movement – potential vehicle and pedestrian/cycle access locations, movement framework, ‘barrier’ crossing options;
- Development Area and Character– character and identity, urban design principles, density and massing;
- Land Uses and infrastructure – potential locations for infrastructure delivery and facilities;

The contents of Section 4 have been aligned with the Framework Masterplan content and as such the following pages are grouped under the headings above. Each section provides an overview of the parameters that may influence the design of the specific element, and guidance and examples of how good design could be achieved.

Key

Landscape and ANGSt compliant green infrastructure

- L1 - Buffer
- L2 - Round Aylesbury Walk
- L3 - South-East Aylesbury Link Road Corridor
- L4 - Railway Corridor
- L5 - Central Open Space
- L6 - Green Corridor
- L7 - SuDS

Development Area and Character

- Area 1
- Area 2
- Area 3
- Area 4

Land Uses

- Primary School 2FE
- Gypsy + Traveller Pitches
- Local/Community Centre
- Housing
- Sports Pitch

Access and Movement

- Potential Vehicular Access
- Potential Emergency Access
- Potential Pedestrian / Cycle Access
- Potential Pedestrian Links
- Potential Access Location
- Potential Underpass Access under SEALR between Development Areas
- South-East Aylesbury Link Road
- Primary Streets
- Secondary Streets
- Edge Streets
- Pedestrian / Cycle Route
- Aylesbury Garden Way
- Integrated Movement Corridor
- Round Aylesbury Walk
- Potential South-East Aylesbury Link Road Crossing Bridge
- Potential South-East Aylesbury Link Road Underpass
- Embankment Access Points
- Potential Railway Crossing Point





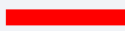







4.2 Landscape, ANGSt compliant green infrastructure / Blue Infrastructure

An overarching Green and Blue Infrastructure plan has been developed for AGT1, which will form the basis for forthcoming designs of each area. Within this the landscape areas have been characterised to set out their differing typologies and design principles. In addition to the retention of existing vegetation and habitats, including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets, additional trees and woodland will be planted where appropriate. Given the integrated nature of green and blue infrastructure within the scheme, the majority of the typologies below represent both kinds to some degree. The importance of the delivery of the green infrastructure is acknowledged and that it should keep pace with the release and occupation of the residential phases of South Aylesbury. Strategies will be implemented, where appropriate and timely with development of South Aylesbury.

Green and Blue Infrastructure Typology Principles

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Key

-  Site Boundary
-  1. Strategic Buffer
-  2. Round Aylesbury Walk
-  3. South-East Aylesbury Link Road Corridor
-  4. Railway Corridor
-  5. Central Open Space
-  6. Minor Connections
-  7. School Playing Fields



Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan



4.2.1 Strategic Buffer

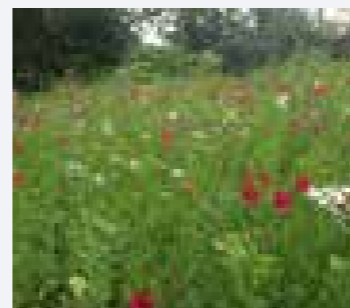
This will be a substantial swathe of public open space and retained agricultural land that will preserve the separate identity of Stoke Mandeville village, whilst providing an attractive resource for its residents. It is also possible that this will support the Aylesbury Gardenway in the future.

It will be designed in accordance with the following principles:

- Mix of landscape treatments, with carefully designed transition to avoid abrupt change.
- Non-agricultural areas to be accessible, including provision of all-ability access.
- Surfaced access routes to be provided in line with Aylesbury Gardenway design principles, to support potential future alignment.
- Land to be reserved for future provision of Aylesbury Gardenway additional railway crossing.
- Water to be a unifying theme, including watercourses along its length and ponds providing additional interest.
- Woodland and tree planting to be used to achieve effective visual separation of the settlement areas.
- Design to consider public safety and signposting to give confidence to users.
- Combination of amenity grassland and meadow areas to balance public recreation with ecological habitat and seasonal diversity.
- Play to be subtly incorporated within the area and not limited to fenced areas, through the use of naturalistic features such as clamber art, land art (e.g. mown labyrinths), and water play.
- Species mixes to be predominantly native and reflective of the prevailing character and soil type, with a 10% proportion of climate-proof species and provenances.
- Additional pitch(es) to school provision, as per Policy I2 requirements. Pitch(es) located in close proximity to existing recreational use to the south to enhance use and connection between AGT1 and Stoke Mandeville.



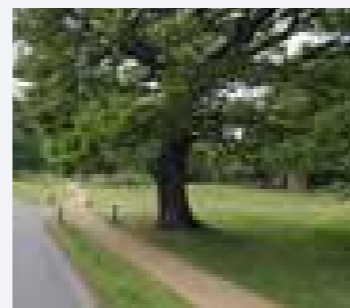
Biodiversity led landscape



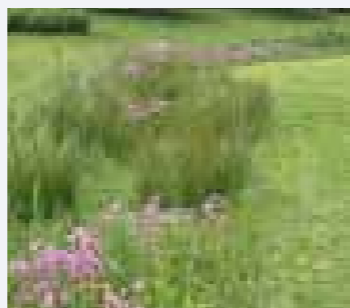
Wildflower Meadows



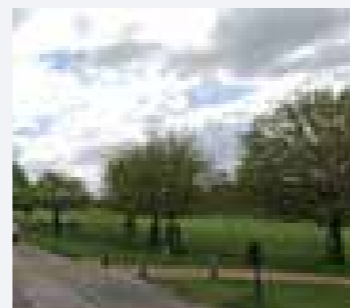
Footpath/Cycleway and Swale



Wildflower Meadows



Swale Linear Wetland Habitat



Path/Road Crossing



Landscape Buffer Crossing Wider Context Plan



Road Crossing Buffer Image

4.2.2 Round Aylesbury Walk

This will be a green boulevard crossing the development on the approximate alignment of the existing Long Distance Recreational Route. It will be a wide urban street with strong ANGSt compliant green infrastructure, such as street trees, rain gardens and meadow verges, and it will include provision to possibly support the alignment of the Aylesbury Gardenway. It will utilise the proposed South-East Aylesbury Link Road crossing over the main line railway to provide a sustainable connection through the site between Lower Road and Wendover Road. The Round Aylesbury Walk is a historic route separate to the Proposed Gardenway.

It will be designed in accordance with the following principles:

- Wide, high quality urban boulevard that reflects the latest positive street design principles.
- Use of ANGSt compliant green infrastructure elements such as street trees, rain gardens and meadow verges to deliver social and environmental value.
- Inclusion of places to pause, meet and congregate, in association with trees to take advantage of natural shade and shelter.
- Strong presence of street trees to contribute to overall urban tree canopy when viewed from Coombe Hill.
- Inclusion of open water features for positive sensory input and sustainable drainage.



4.2.3 South-East Aylesbury Link Road Corridor

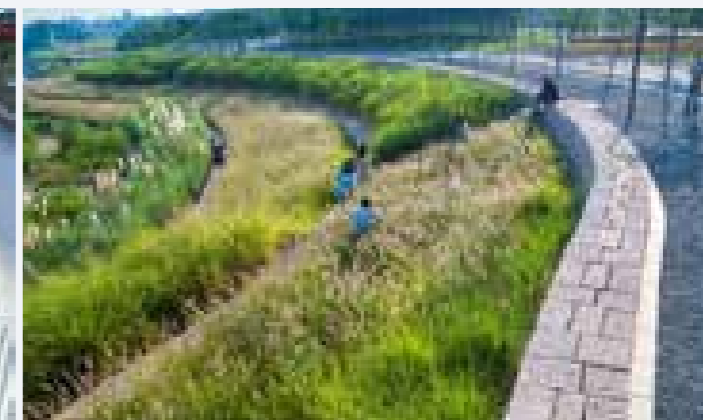
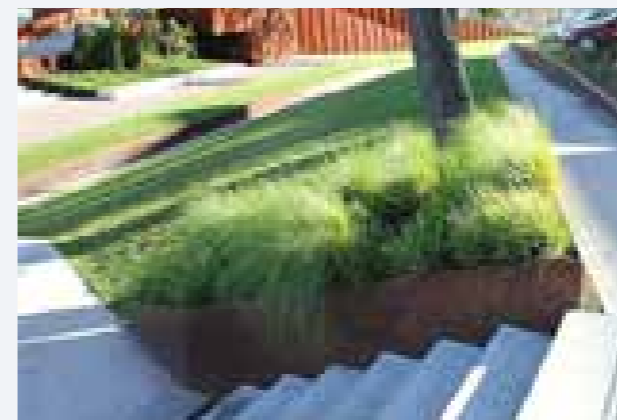
Whilst the primary aim of this area will be to support a strategic access route, the verge and embankment areas are substantial and have the potential to deliver ANGSt compliant green infrastructure value. In addition, given the level of elevation of the proposed embankment, it is important to respond positively to the visual relationship with the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south, and in particular the nationally important view from Coombe Hill.

It will be designed in accordance with the following principles:

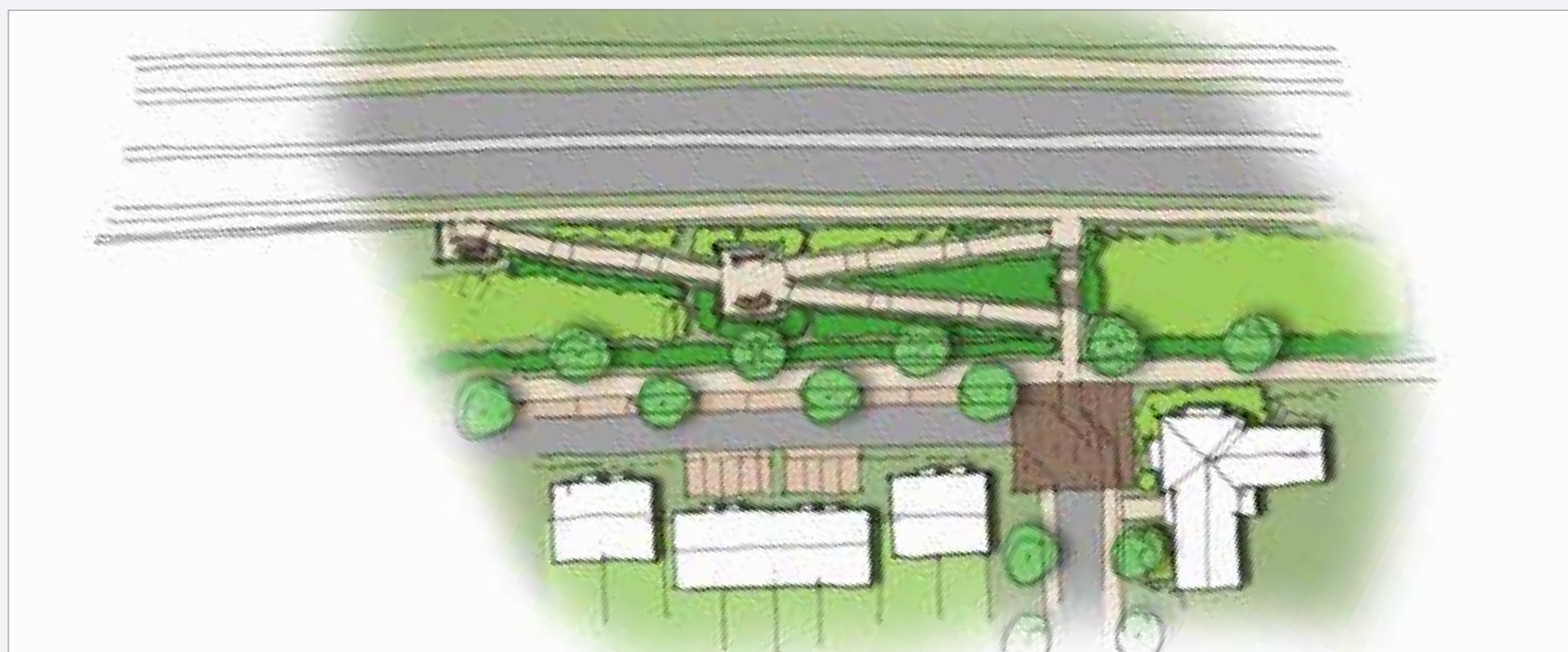
- Use of naturalistic rough grassland and woodland to soften the appearance of embankments and maximise biodiversity value and seasonal interest.
- Setting of routes over the embankment within meadow grassland corridors to enable long visibility and for visual interest.
- Seeking the inclusion of a viewing point at the top of the southern face of the embankment to enable the backdrop of the Chiltern Escarpment to be appreciated.

1. **South-East Aylesbury Link Road Bridge** – the proposed bridge carrying the new South-East Aylesbury Link Road (application CC/0015/20) over the railway has been approved which includes a segregated pedestrian/cycle route set away from the road. As such this should be utilised as a way of crossing the railway for people walking and cycling and links to this crossing should be established to the AGT1 development. Each point of access should conform to the following principles:

- Be usable by all pedestrians and cyclists, in that ramps should be at an appropriate gradient, and be minimised to ensure the ease of movement from the site level up to the bridge is considered;
- These ramps should be well lit and overlooked as much as possible by the new development within AGT1. Therefore buildings closest to the ramps should have frontage and habitable windows overlooking these spaces;
- The routes should link with the wider movement framework through AGT1 to ensure direct movement is promoted, and use of non-vehicular forms of transport.
- The ramps can be used as a design feature in the landscape treatment of the embankment, with potential layering of soft and hard landscape design used to provide interest for users.



Example of Street Type



Indicative Example of Access between South-East Aylesbury Link Road and AGT-1



4.2.4 Railway Corridor

This area represents the flanks of the railway line, which support scrubby woodland vegetation and therefore provide ANGSt compliant green infrastructure connections through the site, as well as visual screening of the railway line.

It will be designed in accordance with the following principles:

- Retention of scrubby woodland habitat areas and protection through construction process.
- Creation of narrow belts of complementary habitat within the AGT1 site in association with public movement routes.
- Working with Network Rail to seek to manage these areas to retain and enhance their ecological value, e.g. through periodic coppicing to maintain dense, scrubby character.

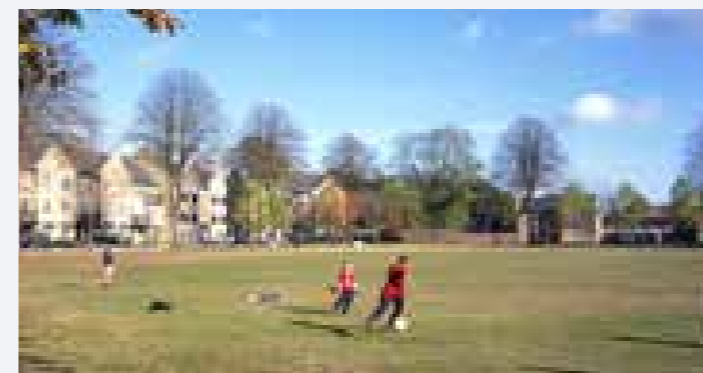
4.2.5 Central Open Space

This will be an area of naturalistic informal open space within the centre of the site, close to the proposed railway crossing. It will provide an attractive place for people to come together, with a central area of close-mown grassland for informal play, and with areas of open water. Being located at the end of the Green Boulevard on the western side of the site, it also has the potential to host local community events.

The central location of this space allows for good accessibility from the other development areas within AGT1. As such the design of the space should allow for differing movement routes to be accommodated once further detail work has been conducted on the appropriate access proposals to the other development areas. The space should be well overlooked, with development frontage around at least two sides, ensuring a space that is safe to use and move through at any time of day or night.

It will be designed in accordance with the following principles:

- Naturalistic space supporting a combination of native woody vegetation, meadow grassland, amenity grassland and open water.
- All non-water areas to be fully accessible to the public, with ground vegetation managed to facilitate this.
- Existing vegetation to be retained where possible, and rejuvenated through coppicing and pruning.
- Paths to provide all-ability access, linking in with Green Boulevard.
- Inclusion of picnic benches to facilitate opportunities for community cohesion and family use.
- Inclusion of naturalistic play features (boulders, logs, mounds, etc) to encourage imaginative play, possibly including sculptural elements.





4.2.6 Minor Connections

This represents a number of smaller connections through the site, which are likely to provide ANGSt compliant green infrastructure value at a neighbourhood scale. They are principally based upon local sustainable movement routes, although it will be important for them to deliver a range of environmental services to fulfil their ANGSt compliant green infrastructure potential.

These routes will be designed in accordance with the following principles:

- Surfaced routes providing all-ability sustainable access (walking and cycling), all year round.
- Signposting giving walking and cycling minutes to key locations
- Naturalistic features such as hedgerows and swales along the routes to provide wildlife connectivity and habitat, seasonal interest and other environmental services.
- Sufficient width of corridors to accommodate movement routes and natural features, whilst conveying a sense of space and security.
- Positive relationship with adjacent urban edges, with properties presenting active frontages, not rear garden boundaries.



4.2.7 School Playing Fields

This represents an area of playing fields associated with a new primary school within the development, but which have the potential to be made available out of hours to the wider community.

The playing fields will be designed in accordance with the following principles:

- Inclusion of native hedgerows on the boundaries of the playing fields, for natural security and wildlife connectivity.
- Inclusion of hedgerow trees on the boundaries of the playing fields, to provide natural shade and shelter, and to improve wildlife value.

4.2.8 Surface Water Drainage

The site is shown by British Geological Society data to be underlain by a mixture of Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone. Local borehole records show groundwater levels to be relatively close to the surface. At this stage it has been presumed that it will not be possible to manage site surface water using infiltration techniques. Site investigation works should be carried out to determine the specific conditions on site to support any detailed planning application in accordance with Lead Local Flood Authority guidance.

It has therefore been assumed that surface water is managed using a store-and-release approach and discharging to the existing channels within the site. Given the sensitivity of the urban areas downstream of AGT1, surface water discharge should be attenuated to ensure it does not exceed the existing greenfield rates wherever technically feasible.

To deliver the vision for AGT1 as part of the Aylesbury Garden Town, it is considered essential that water is managed using vegetated above ground Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as far as reasonably practicable.

The likely location of strategic surface water storage features has been derived taking consideration of the development proposals, existing topography and assuming a design storage depth of 1m and an additional 0.3m of freeboard. It has also accounted for the proposed flood alleviation storage in the eastern parcel which will be provided and has been tested through hydraulic modelling.

It is envisaged that these features will take a variety of forms depending on their location, varying from ecological driven designs with permanent standing water (for example alongside the railway line), through naturalized designs that remain dry in a 1 in 10-year event and provide valuable open space, to formal hard-landscaped features within the higher density parts of the development.

Large drainage features should have minimum side slopes of 1:3 [this was agreed with the LLFA a long time ago] and should provide variable and slacker slopes where practicable, reflecting potential access and input from landscape architects and ecologists.

Proposals for Sustainable Drainage Systems must be considered from the outset for any development proposals brought forward for planning to maximise water quality, quantity, biodiversity, and amenity benefits. The potential for integrating open conveyance features within the development rather than relying on a piped solution should be considered, especially in flatter parts of the site where a conventional solution would necessitate significant development plot raising. Specific consideration should be given to using Sustainable Drainage System features and modification of the existing drainage channels to create distinctive blue-green corridors, providing wildlife corridors linking habitats and aiding biodiversity.

Site design should seek to deliver Sustainable Drainage Systems. Recommended techniques include rainwater harvesting, permeable paving, rain gardens, tree pits, rills, and swales, bioretention features, attenuation basins, ponds and wetlands.

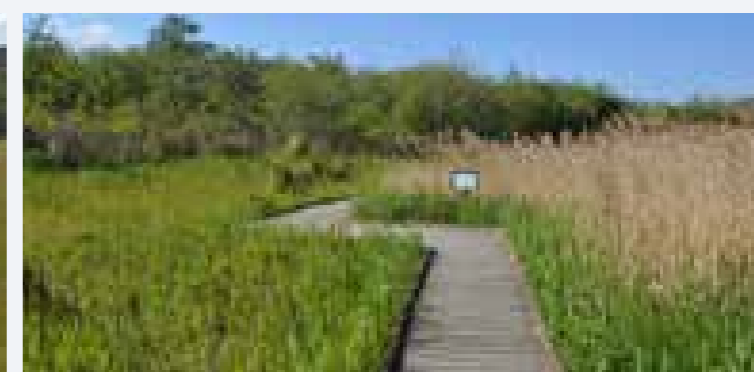
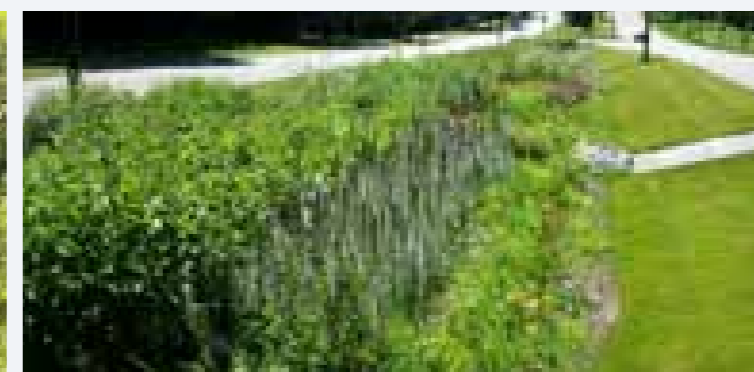
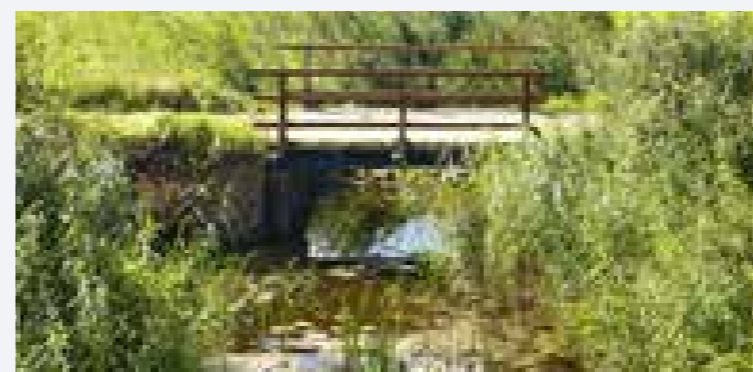
Foul Water Drainage and Potable Water Supply

There are existing foul water sewers crossing the site which should allow for gravity drainage of the site's foul water. Trunk water mains are present under Wendover Road and in the northern part of the site.

There must be adequate capacity in foul waste infrastructure to accommodate the proposed development in order to prevent the deterioration in current water quality standards.



Indicative Sustainable Drainage Systems Plan



4.3 Access and Movement

4.3.1 Street and Movement Hierarchy

The movement framework has been developed in the context of the key N-S and E-W linkages on either side of the railway line taking into account constraints such as the South-East Aylesbury Link Road. Where the N-S/E-W linkages converge this provides a natural location for activity in the form of local centre (café, shop, the Third Place) and school (where activity is forecast to be greatest) and also the provision of Mobility hubs to enhance access to travel choice.

In terms of the network of streets throughout the site, then this will comprise at least three levels of hierarchy (as per the principles within Manual for Streets) from the primary road into the site from Lower Rd / Wendover Rd respectively and then Secondary and Tertiary roads (not shown on this plan). Whilst the primary road will naturally provide greater priority in terms of vehicle movements, the landscape strategy and movement strategy for pedestrians / cyclists should dictate the character / cross section of the road, rather than the vehicle movement itself. At Tertiary street level, and depending on the attitude towards car parking provision (it could be zero), the streets should be designed with greater emphasis on space for pedestrians/cyclists and a reduction in parking standards.

The Transport Strategy for AGT1 is predicated on taking advantage of the locational benefits and of the site relative to local amenities such as employment, retail, Aylesbury town centre and Stoke Mandeville train station and through informed masterplan design to maximise the potential for the internalisation of trips. It is based on the Garden Town Principles and National Transport Policy relating to mobility and sustainability, encouraging travel choice and trips made by foot/cycle (local topography is flat and conducive), public transport and reducing car use. The strategy will be made of numerous movement components including commuting and recreational cycle routes, bike hire, mobility hubs, demand responsive buses and personalised travel planning.

The Framework Masterplan sets out a potential movement framework that could be adopted in forthcoming designs. Key to this is the pedestrian and cycle movement across AGT1 which should be placed as the highest priority in terms of layout design for direct access, and treatment at junctions in terms of priorities over roads.

The Movement Framework plan sets out the potential hierarchy of routes, and these can be characterised as follows:



Indicative Movement Hierarchy

Key			
	Primary Street		Pedestrian / Cycle Movement Corridors
	Secondary Streets		Potential Gardenway Route
	Lower / Wendover Road Frontage		Potential Vehicular Access
	Potential Underpass Route under South East Aylesbury Link Road		Potential Emergency Access
	South East Aylesbury Link Road Edge		Potential Pedestrian / Cycle Access
	Railway Edge		Potential Pedestrian Links
	Buffer Edge		Potential Access Location
			Potential Underpass Access under SEALR



	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4
Access				
Primary	✓	✓	✓	
Secondary	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pedestrian / Cycle Access	✓	✓	✓	✓
Routes / Edges				
Primary Movement Corridor	✓	✓	✓	
Secondary Streets	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lower / Wendover Road Frontage	✓	✓	✓	
South-East Aylesbury Link Road Edge	✓	✓	✓	
Railway Edge	✓	✓	✓	
Buffer Edge		✓	✓	✓
Courtyard Space	✓	✓	✓	
Private Drive	✓	✓	✓	✓
Residential Edge	✓			✓
Pedestrian / Cycle Routes	✓	✓	✓	✓
Infrastructure				
Central Mobility Hub		✓	✓	
Minor Mobility Hub	✓	✓		✓

Movement Hierarchy Matrix



4.3 Access and Movement

4.3.2 Street Types

Street Type
Primary Streets
Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corridors that should incorporate multiple modes of transport; Existing trees/hedgerows or new planting central to corridor; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority to be given to pedestrian/cycle routes;
Parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varied parking strategies; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on-plot and parallel visitor spaces within road; Side/rear courtyard parking potential where there is no alternative practicable solution;
Width
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.5m min. width to road; 2m min width verge for parking/landscaping; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2m min. pedestrian footpaths 3m wide segregated cycleway;



Gardenway Precedent



Indicative Example of Street Type

Street Type
Pedestrian / Cycle Routes
Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct routes following desire lines with existing trees/hedgerows or new planting central to corridor;
Parking
N/A
Width
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3m min. segregated cycle route; 2m min. segregated pedestrian route



Indicative Example of Street Type

4.3 Access and Movement

4.3.2 Street Types

Street Type
Secondary Streets
Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streets that should connect the primary corridor, or secondary access points, to the wider areas of the development; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic scale of buildings with frontage to both sides of the road; Opportunities should be explored for street trees where possible;
Parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-plot primary method of parking; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> frontage parking;
Width
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.5m min. width to road; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2m parking / landscape verge where possible; 2m min. width to footpath to at least one side



Upton, Northampton



Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge



Indicative Example of Street Type

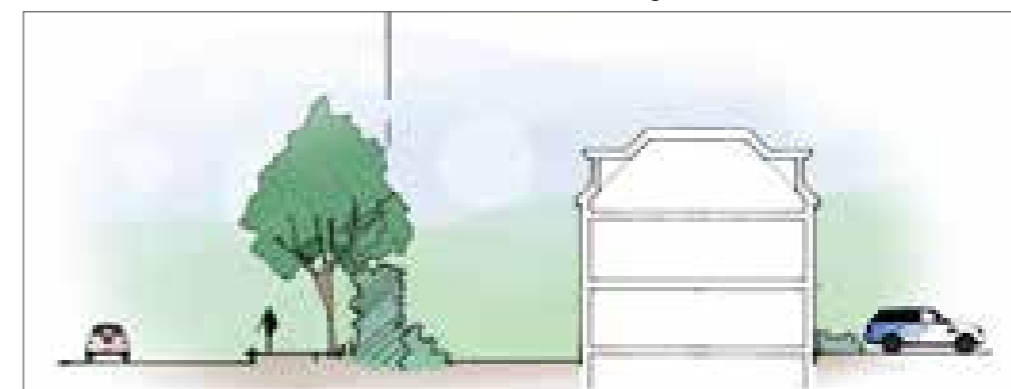
Street Type
Lower/Wendover Road Frontage
Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development edge facing existing Lower Road and Wendover Road; Built form accessed from within site therefore opportunity to push building frontage closer to road – avoid 'parallel' roads adjacent to existing road where possible; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong development edge – apartments, terraces, semi-detached houses Existing hedgerow to be retained with breaks for direct access/visibility onto street;
Parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where frontage road access then prioritise on-plot (side) parking; Side/rear courtyard parking potential where there is no alternative practicable solution;
Width
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Key route treat as Secondary street type with segregated pedestrian footpath/cycleway; Opportunity for 5.5m integrated shared surface if in cul-de-sac/close arrangement serving 25 properties or less; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for some direct housing frontage onto pedestrian footpath/cycleway; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2m parking/landscape verge where possible;



The Avenue, Saffron Walden



Sovereign Gate, Cheshunt



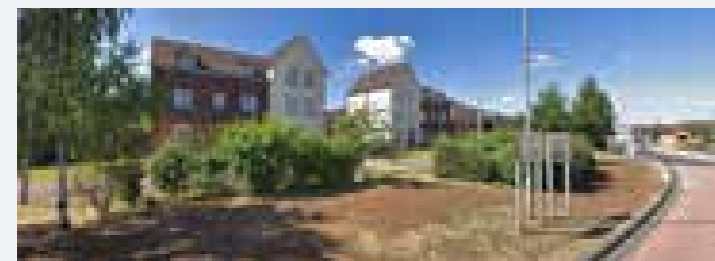
Indicative Example of Street Type



4.3 Access and Movement

4.3.2 Street Types

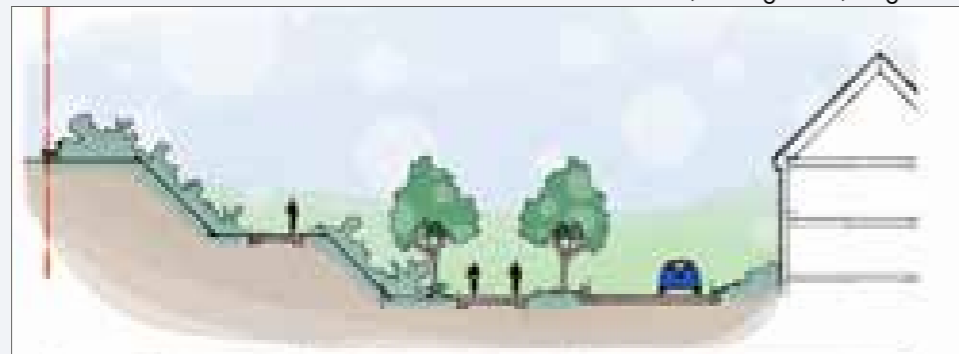
Street Type
South East Aylesbury Link Road Edge
Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development edge condition facing South-East Aylesbury Link Road; Frontage should face towards South-East Aylesbury Link Road so amenity space is protected by built form; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linked frontage where possible – apartments, terraces;
Parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where frontage road access then prioritise on-plot (side) parking; Side/rear courtyard parking potential where there is no alternative practicable solution; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor parking in parallel bays in limited locations;
Width
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Key route treat as Secondary street type with segregated pedestrian footpath/cycleway; Opportunity for 5.5m integrated shared surface if in cul-de-sac/close arrangement serving 25 properties or less; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for some direct housing frontage onto pedestrian footpath/cycleway; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2m parking/landscape verge where possible; Inclusion of maintenance road for South East Aylesbury Link Road bridge, with potential to perform dual role as pedestrian/cycleway route;



Peacock Farm, Bracknell



Cedar Avenue, Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath



Indicative Example of Street Type

Street Type
Railway Edge
Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development edge condition facing Railway corridor; Frontage should face toward railway so amenity space is protected by built form; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic scale frontage – terraces, semi-detached houses;
Parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frontage parking acceptable to limit gaps between buildings; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for some on-plot (side) parking; Visitor parking in parallel bays to outer edge of street;
Width
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Key route treat as Secondary street type with segregated pedestrian footpath/cycleway; Opportunity for 5.5m integrated shared surface if in cul-de-sac/close arrangement serving 25 properties or less; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for some direct housing frontage onto pedestrian footpath/cycleway; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2m parking/landscape verge where possible;



Oakgrove Village, Milton Keynes



Horsted Park, Chatham



Indicative Example of Street Type



4.3 Access and Movement

4.3.2 Street Types

Street Type
Buffer Edge
Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development edge overlooking landscaped buffer; Generally low density frontage to edge except around north-west area where buffer adjoins Local Centre on Wendover Road; Opportunity for varied approach to buffer edge street – ‘hard’ edge to provide strong line of frontage overlooking buffer, feathered edge where development integrated with landscape setting;
Parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritise on-plot (side) parking; Visitor parking in parallel bays to outer edge of street;
Width
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Key route treat as Secondary street type with segregated pedestrian footpath/cycleway; Opportunity for 5.5m integrated shared surface if in cul-de-sac/close arrangement serving 25 properties or less; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for some direct housing frontage onto pedestrian footpath/cycleway; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2m parking/landscape verge where possible; Opportunity for private drives to be considered to extents of street network;



Tadpole Garden Village



North Bersted



Indicative Example of Street Type

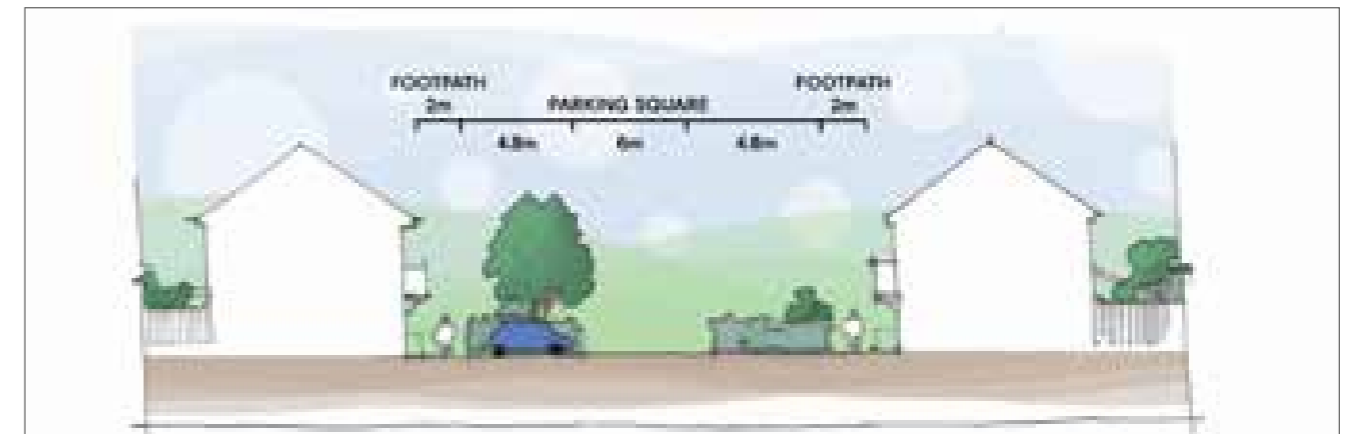
Street Type
Courtyards
Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Squares located centrally within development blocks incorporating parking for surrounding buildings; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong frontage to ensure good surveillance and activity over parking square; Design of courtyard should ensure adequate space for planting bays of min. 2m width to break parking up;
Parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frontage parking within shared courtyard; maximum of 4no. parking spaces between landscape bays;
Width
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6m width between parking spaces – services within road if possible; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2m footpath to rear of parking bays;



Horsted Park, Chatham



Abode Cambridge



Indicative Example of Street Type



Street Type

Private Drive

Role

- Outer edge of street network, driveways serving small collection of houses (max. 5 houses) where maintenance vehicles are not required to enter;
- Opportunity for inclusion along buffer edge or lower density areas backing onto existing properties;

Parking

- On-plot side parking, including side garages;
- Frontage parking within shared courtyard;

Width

- 4.8m min. width, integrated shared surface

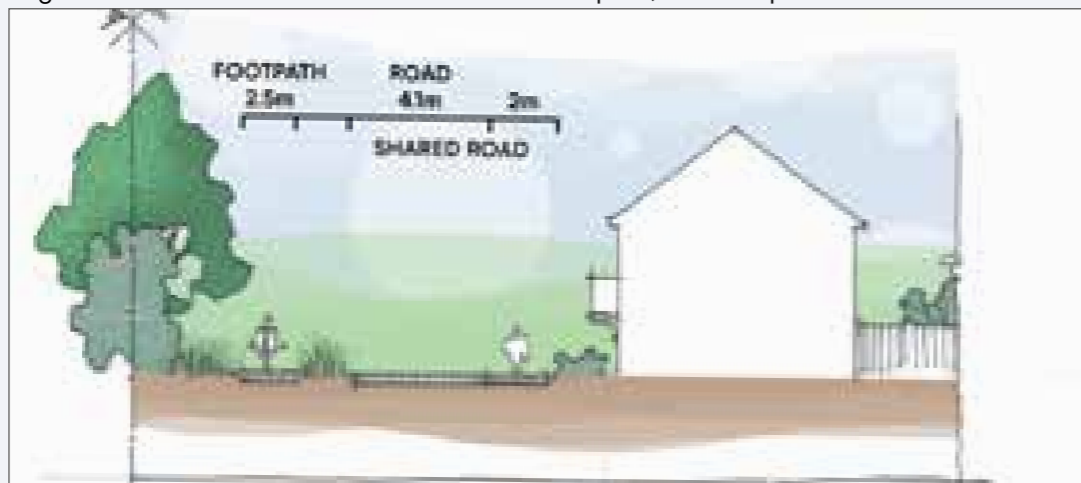
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Abode, Great Kneighton



Upton, Northampton



Indicative Example of Street Type

4.3 Access and Movement

4.3.3 Mobility Hubs

Sustainable Transport Hubs (also known as Mobility Hubs) have become a successful mechanism in many European countries to increase the uptake of active travel, low emissions and shared transport. The Hubs act as a convenient interchange at a neighbourhood level providing first and last mile connectivity with public transport, Demand Responsive Transport, car clubs, bike, eBike share and other services, whilst offering amenities such as electric vehicle charging points, charging for electric 'last mile' deliveries, cycle storage, workspaces, wifi, cafés and bike repair. This can help reduce car use and car ownership in a community. Through prominent signage and branding, the hubs act as their own advertising and research has shown that the majority of users first learn about the service after having passed by.

Mobility Hubs come in different shapes and sizes offering convenient and real alternatives which can be flexibly selected to serve the chosen neighbourhood.

Mobility Hubs can be located in new or existing residential areas, business parks, town centres, shopping centres and rural or suburban areas. They can help to plug gaps in the public transport network in a more cost effective way than new public transport services and unlock private sector investment. They harness new technologies in offering on-demand services which are growing in relevance to younger generations and proliferation in flexible working patterns.

Two mobility hubs could be provided within AGT-1 located on key movement routes within the development. They may form part of a connection to a wider centre or community square as a stand-alone building, or be adapted into a larger building such as the ground floor of a residential or communal building. Smaller mobility hubs could be located in outer areas of the development away from the central areas – such as e-Bike/e-scooter sharing points adjacent to pedestrian/cycle access points into AGT1.

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Essential Components	Key Principles
Electric vehicle Parking bays for car club	Proximity to other neighbourhood amenities within 10 minute walk
High-quality bicycle parking	High quality facilities
Proximity to a public transport stop	Wider shared mobility programme across the city
Safety (e.g. good lighting)	Clear and visible branding and signage
Easily accessible for everyone	Unique name for each Mobility Hub (akin to bus stop names)



Mobility Hub Example showing electric vehicle charging, cycle hire, information board, drop off/collection facilities - Munich



Mobility Hub Example showing bus stop, car club parking, cycle hire facilities - Calderwood, West Lothian

4.3 Access and Movement

4.3.4 South-East Aylesbury Link Road/Railway Crossing Locations

The Framework Masterplan identifies potential locations for pedestrian and cycle crossing points, to ensure each neighbourhood area has good connections to each other and in all directions to the surrounding area

Options for the potential design of the South-East Aylesbury Link Road embankment and the form of access between the bridge over the railway and the development in AGT1 are provided with the landscape information in section 4.2.3.

1. **South-East Aylesbury Link Road Underpass** – north-south movement is to be strengthened with the aspirational new route connecting Stoke Mandeville Hospital and Stadium with Stoke Mandeville Village. This should be incorporated within designs for AGT1 and as part of this the design of the underpass through the South-East Aylesbury Link Road for pedestrians and cyclists should be carefully considered.
 - a. The width and ‘containment’ of the underpass should be considered to ensure users do not feel enclosed and in areas that could pose a risk to their safety;
 - b. The underpass should be well lit and utilise design techniques to ensure natural light can serve as much of the route as possible, and use materials that are light and help reduce the darkness that similar routes can have;
 - c. The underpass access points should be overlooked as much as possible by the new development within AGT1. Therefore buildings closest to the ramps should have frontage and habitable windows overlooking this space;
2. **Future Crossing Point** - A further, potential future crossing point has been identified on the Masterplan, as a potential pedestrian footbridge crossing the railway at a southern point in AGT1 that Buckinghamshire Council may seek to bring forward in the future. The future design of this piece of infrastructure should ensure:
 - That it seeks to integrate within the Strategic buffer within which it will be located, and ensure views from the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are acknowledged and mitigated if necessary;
 - Its location and design should ensure acceptable impact on the design of adjacent areas of housing development in AGT1.
 - The housing in these areas should be designed to overlook the key landscape feature of the buffer, and therefore ensure that the potential future crossing has development frontage towards it, albeit at a distance.



1. South-East Aylesbury Link Road Underpass



2. Future Crossing Point



4.4 Development Area and Character

Development Blocks

To establish a legible and safe environment, buildings should establish a frontage along the perimeter of all development parcels.

Front doors and ground floor windows should be positioned to promote natural surveillance of the streets they look out upon.

All back to back and back to side relationships should be acceptable in terms of overlooking, privacy, daylight and sunlight.

In order to ensure intersections are properly defined, buildings should be placed on the corner of every block to aid place-making.

Frontages

Building elevations should engage with the public realm. Where more than one elevation engages with the public realm, the building must be designed in the round so as to engage fully with its entire context, not just the street facing the primary façade.

At crossroad intersections, all four corners should be framed by buildings

Landmarks

Buildings which terminate vistas should be treated as a key elevations. These key elevations must be carefully located and provide a considered design.

Key elevations of focal buildings should be defined by certain design principles, such as:

- a change in building material;
- a change in colour of the building material; set back or forward from adjacent building line;
- raised or reduced building height from the adjacent buildings; alternatively raising or reducing roof eaves and/or ridge line;
- specific/feature detail to building.

Key Spaces

Key spaces should be accentuated by a combination of surrounding building frontages and landmarks, treatment of the space with regard to its surface, and its use and role within the development.

Key spaces should be actively overlooked from surrounding buildings, and these buildings should generally be orientated so that front doors open directly onto the space.

Edges

Sensitive edges should be informed by the adjoining context, with privacy maintained where required

Buildings should front onto retained vegetation so that vegetation comes into the public domain and is more easily managed. Where vegetation is at the rear of existing gardens then alternative treatments may be required to ensure security and privacy is maintained.



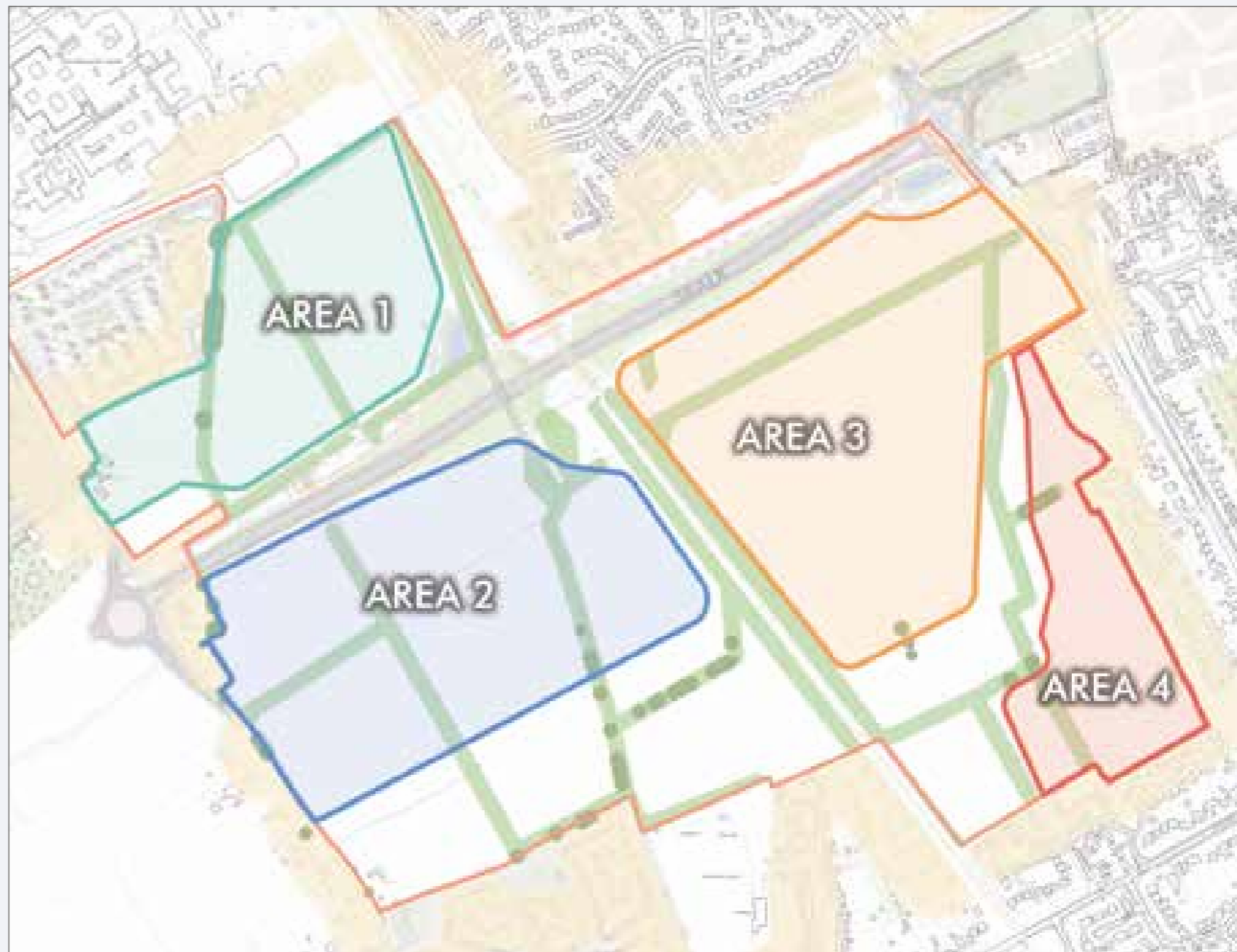


4.4 Development Area and Character

Section 3.2.6 outlines four development areas within AGT1 and how these could have differing character. This section provides indicative design guidance and principles for each of these areas that should be adopted within forthcoming designs.

Information on each area has been broken down to cover the topics below and provide indicative design guidance on a number of subject matters:

- **Area Overview** – overview of the character area and indicative illustration of potential layout;
- **Urban Design Framework** – overview of indicative layout with design principles for frontages, key routes and spaces, density and feature buildings;
- **Key Routes and Spaces** – Indicative examples of how some of the key routes or spaces could be provided
- **Building Typologies** – reference and precedent information of potential building typologies that suit the density and heights;
- **Area Key View** – artist's impression of one of the key areas and function of the space;



Indicative Character Area Plan

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.1 Area 1 - Northern Area

Overview

Features of this character area include:

- Outwardly facing development onto the South-East Aylesbury Link Road to mitigate noise source;
- Creation of gateway arrival space around vehicle access;
- Creation of landscaped arrival space for pedestrians and cyclists from existing neighbourhood to north;
- North-south green corridor around existing Public Right of Way and hedgerow with strong development frontage;
- Development to overlook landscaped arrival space linking with the South-East Aylesbury Link Road underpass;
- Creation of internal green spaces and squares within development platform;
- Higher Density built form to central spine and aligning the South-East Aylesbury Link Road;
- Medium density elsewhere including land parcel off Lower Road to match adjacent development;
- Potential for a vehicle link to north-west linking with new Crest Nicholson development;

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Key



Lower Density Housing



Potential Cycle Route



Enhanced Green Corridor



Medium Density Housing



Landscaped Open Space



Higher Density Housing



Area 1 Indicative Features Plan

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.1 Area 1 - Northern Area

Urban Design Framework

Key design principles for Area 1 should follow the guidance of the urban design framework sketch adjacent, with particular reference to the following:

- **Vehicle Access** - to Area 1 is subject to ongoing technical considerations. There is an opportunity for crossing the South-East Aylesbury Link Road and linking with Area 2 to the south. This comprises an underpass in the south east corner that is technically feasible but subject to more detailed assessment. There is potential for some housing to be accessed directly off Lower Road, just north of the South-East Aylesbury Link Road junction. There is potential for a further connection through to the existing development to the north west. A 'left in/left out' access off the SEALR could be explored if all other options would leave the land parcel inaccessible and incapable of development.
- **Edges** – are generally outwardly facing towards the boundary as there is no adjacent development to be respected. Strong frontages should be adopted and perimeter blocks should be created to the development areas.
- **Movement Corridors** – should align with existing hedgerow/tree lines to establish multi-purpose green corridors through Area 1. These corridors should respect the existing vegetation and therefore be wide, with space for incorporation of Surface Water Drainage within the corridor design. Development should overlook these corridors and be intensified to maximise activity and surveillance over the route.
- **South-East Aylesbury Link Road Crossing Point** – suitable locations for ramps & steps crossing the embankment aligning the road should be reviewed collectively with the emerging designs for Area 1. The location of these crossing points should facilitate direct connections with the key movement corridors in Area 1, and also be located to minimise the extent of ramps and steps, for ease of access for all. Level access connections with the footpath along the South-East Aylesbury Link Road will be available along the south western edge of Area 1.

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Key			
	Primary Movement Corridor Frontage		Medium density
	Lower Road Frontage		Higher Density
	South-East Aylesbury Link Road Frontage		Gypsy / Travellers Site
	Railway Frontage		Focal Building
	Shared Surface / No Car Frontage		Potential Vehicle Access Points
	Frontage to Key Space		Potential Pedestrian/Cycle Access
	Existing Residential Edge		Potential Access Location



Area 1 Indicative Urban Design Framework

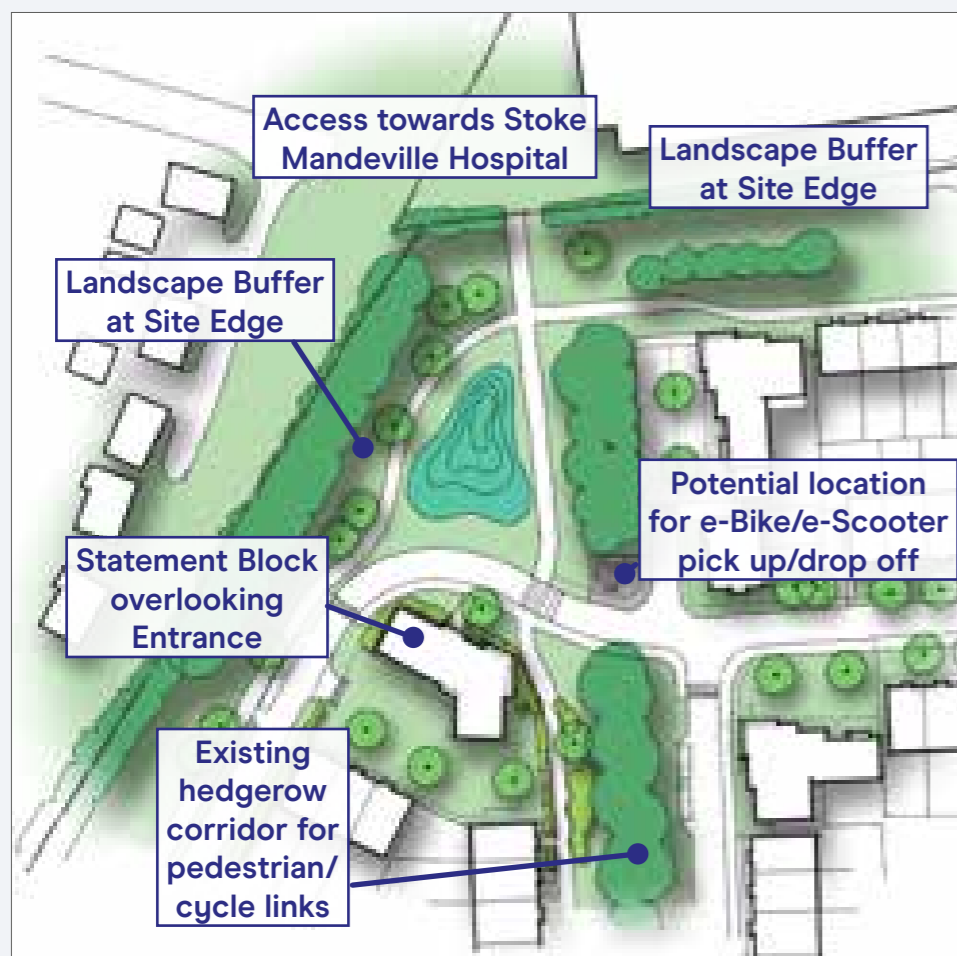
	Potential Pedestrian Links
	Potential Underpass Crossing
	South-East Aylesbury Link Road Embankment Crossing

	Key Spaces:
A1	- Lower Road Arrival
A2	- Stoke Mandeville Hospital Arrival
A3	- Southern Arrival
PP	- Pocket Park

4.4 Development Area and Character

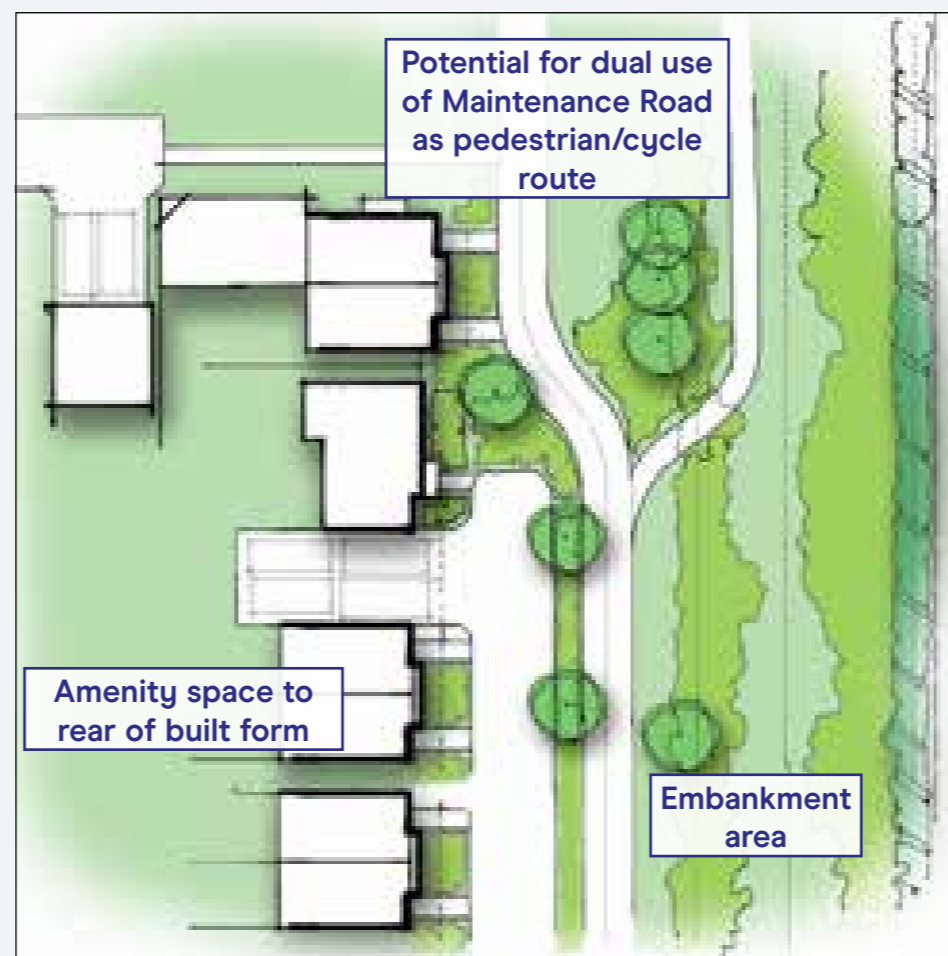
4.4.1 Area 1 - Northern Area

Key Routes and Spaces



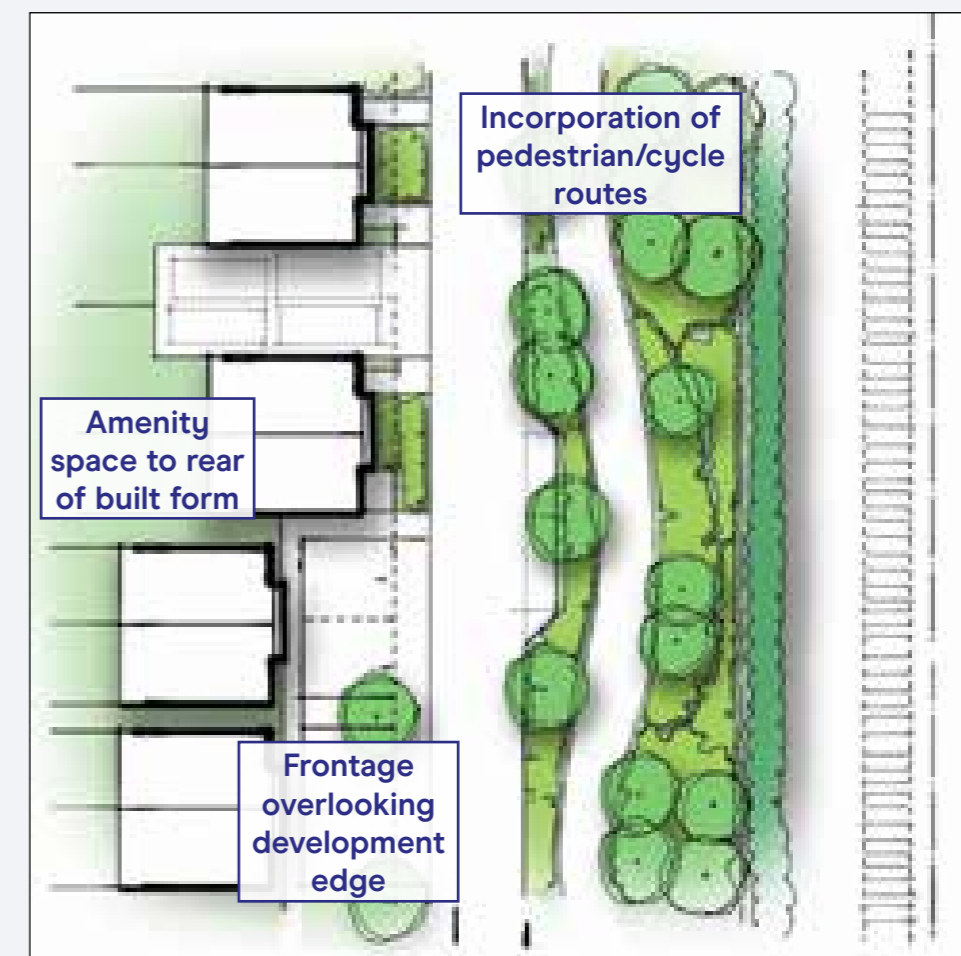
Stoke Mandeville Hospital Arrival

The Northern Arrival space is a key location for the whole of AGT1 being the entry point to the site from the Stoke Mandeville Hospital area, including its Local Centre and Stoke Mandeville Stadium facilities, therefore is likely to be very well used. As such an attractive arrival space should be created, with buildings surrounding the space and overlooking it, and opportunities for key statement buildings on the corners of ends of development blocks. There is potential for inclusion of a minor mobility hub in this location, which could provide e-bike or e-scooter access for use when travelling northwards from AGT1 towards Aylesbury centre.



South-East Aylesbury Link Road Edge

Buildings should face towards the South-East Aylesbury Link Road to ensure amenity space is protected from noise by the building line. As such a strong and linked building line should be created consisting of apartments, terraces and linked houses. There is opportunity for 'car-free' frontage here - the maintenance road serving the South-East Aylesbury Link Road could perform a dual function as a pedestrian/cycle route along the edge of the development area.



Railway Edge Plan

Buildings should face towards the railway edge to ensure amenity space is protected from noise by the building line. Within the landscape buffer alongside the railway corridor should be located a pedestrian/cycle route connecting Stoke Mandeville Hospital area with the South-East Aylesbury Link Road underpass and onwards to the south. Opportunity for on-street visitor parking in parallel bays on outer edge of road, aligning landscape buffer.



4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.1 Area 1 - Northern Area

Building Typologies

The design of building forms and use of materials must reference an understanding of the local character. A character study should be conducted as part of the design process and used to help inform the appearance of the proposed buildings.

Building forms in Area 1 must have a relevance to the local vernacular and take visual cues from the area, such as the local context in Stoke Leys and emerging development to the north-west.

Contemporary forms of buildings can be proposed however should be informed by the character study in terms of building form, roof scape, facade composition and window hierarchy.

All buildings should use materials that are durable, age well and are positively enhanced by weathering. Material choice will be informed by a character study of the area and strong design rationale for the specific character area within which the buildings are located.

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Sustainable Movement Example - Abode, Great Kneighton



Green Corridors Example - The Paddocks



Key Routes Example - Upton, Northampton



Key Routes Example - Marmalade Lane, Cambridge

Building Typology	
Apartments	Gateway and Arrival Spaces
	Central North-South Corridor
	Key junctions within Area
Terraced Houses	Throughout, in particular Stoke Mandeville Hospital, South-East Aylesbury Link Road and Railway Edges
Semi-Detached Houses	Throughout
Detached	To edges such as fronting green corridors, or internal courtyards areas



Stoke Leys - Apartments & Townhouses



Example of Development Fronting onto a Major Road - Bracknell

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.1 Area 1 - Northern Area

Area Key View



4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.2 Area 2 - Western Area

Overview

Features of this character area include:

- Creation of gateway arrival space off Lower Road;
- Incorporation of strategic east-west corridor integrating key movement route and green corridor, along route of existing Public Right of Way; high density development along this route;
- North-south green corridors around existing Public Right of Way and hedgerow with strong development frontage;
- Potential for location of Local centre uses such as Primary School at junction of movement routes and higher density along street;
- Creation of internal green spaces and squares within development platform;
- Creation of green spaces around edges of development area to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems within Green and blue infrastructure network;
- Lower density development along southern edge of development facing towards strategic buffer;
- Higher Density built form to central routes and development parcels aligning South-East Aylesbury Link Road;

Key

- | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|---|
| | Lower Density Housing | | Landscaped Open Space | | Potential Location for Primary School |
| | Medium Density Housing | | Enhanced Green Corridor | | Potential Location for Sports Pitch(es) |
| | Higher Density Housing | | Potential Cycle Route | | Potential Community Centre |
| | Potential Event Space | | | | |



Area 2 Indicative Features Plan

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.2 Area 2 - Western Area

Urban Design Framework

Key design principles for Area 2 should follow the guidance of the urban design framework sketch adjacent, with particular reference to the following:

- **Movement corridors** – key to the design of Area 2 is the ‘grid’ that is created when incorporating existing tree/hedgerows through the development area, and the potential opportunity to create a strong sustainable movement framework through the area. As with Area 1, these routes could be multi-functional by providing a green corridor and opportunities for surface water drainage integration in the street design.
- **Edges** – Area 2 is generally outwardly facing except for a small area in the north-west corner which backs onto existing houses, which should be respected. Elsewhere, development edges should provide a strong frontage towards the edge they face. The edge of Area 2 facing the South-East Aylesbury Link Road will be varied – where residential uses are proposed guidance as suggested in Area 1 should be incorporated – however note that if a primary school is to be included, part of the northern boundary will align this corridor and may require a specific treatment to address noise and surveillance matters.
- **Primary School** – as indicated in this SPD there is a nodal point in Area 2 where routes converge and at this location is the potential to include the primary school for AGT1. This would be in close proximity to Lower Road and therefore easily accessible, and also within the internal AGT1 framework allows for good access from the north, south and east. A central square incorporating play and mobility facilities could be included adjacent to the school.
- **Buffer** – the layered concept studies in section 3 suggest that a linear edge to the buffer could be created in this part of AGT1. This edge could form an attractive feature when viewed from the buffer and form a key role in the identity of Area 2 and AGT1 as a whole.
- **Central open space** – frontage to overlook large open space area to north-east of Area 2; this space should be landscaped as outlined in section 4.2.5 and will include movement and connections with Area 1 and 3 to the north and east, therefore a strong frontage should be established facing this space with opportunities for focal buildings around routes to assist wayfinding;
- **South-East Aylesbury Link Road crossing point** – suitable locations for ramps & steps crossing the embankment aligning the road should be reviewed collectively with the emerging designs for Area 3. The location of these crossing points should facilitate direct connections with the key movement corridors in Area 3, and also be located to minimise the extent of ramps and steps, for ease of access for all. Level access connections with the footpath along the South-East Aylesbury Link Road will be available along the north eastern edge of Area 3.

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Key

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------------------------|--|----------------|
| | Primary Movement Corridor Frontage | | Shared Surface / No Car Frontage | | Lower Density |
| | Lower Road Frontage | | Frontage to Key Space | | Medium density |
| | South-East Aylesbury Link Road Frontage | | Existing Residential Edge | | Higher Density |
| | Railway Frontage | | Buffer Edges | | |



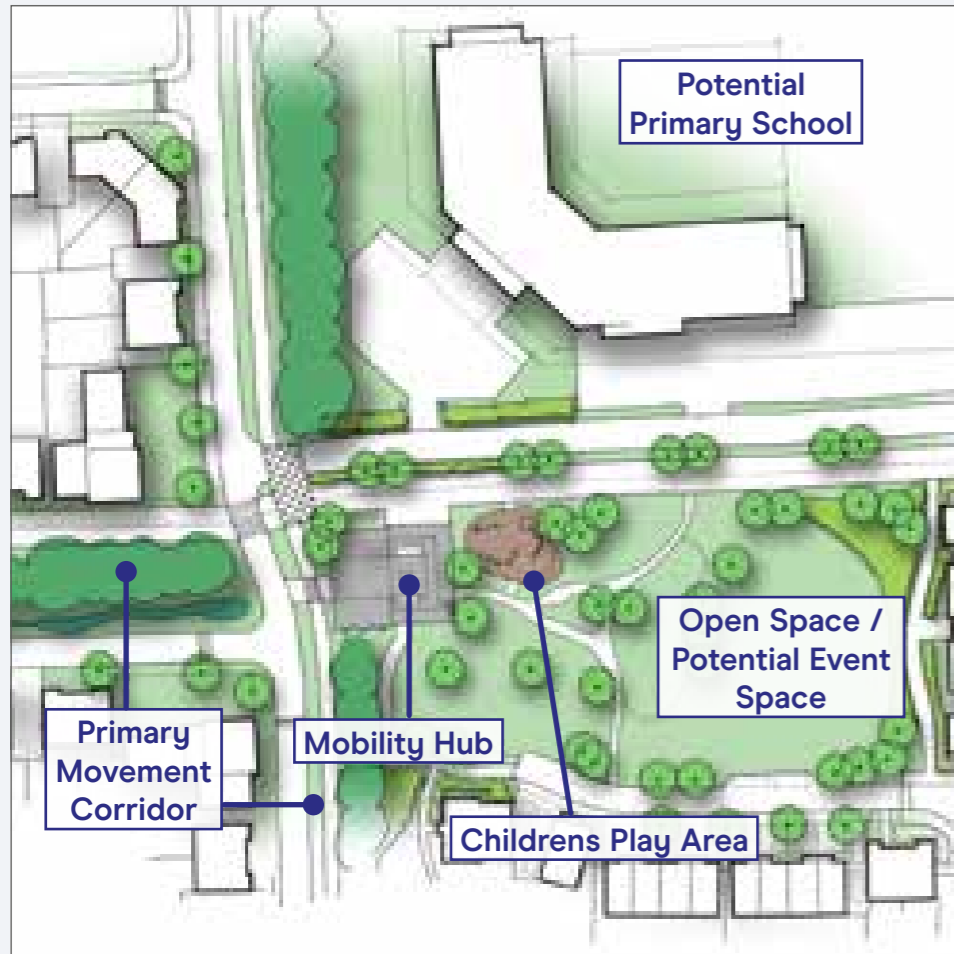
Area 2 Indicative Urban Design Framework

- | | | | |
|--|--|------------|--------------------------|
| | Focal Building | | Key Spaces: |
| | Potential Vehicle Access Points | LRA | LRA - Lower Road Arrival |
| | Potential Pedestrian/Cycle Access | CS | CS - Central Square |
| | Potential Pedestrian Link | COS | COS - Central Open Space |
| | Potential Underpass Crossing | PP | PP - Pocket Park |
| | South-East Aylesbury Link Road Embankment Crossing | | |

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.2 Area 2 - Western Area

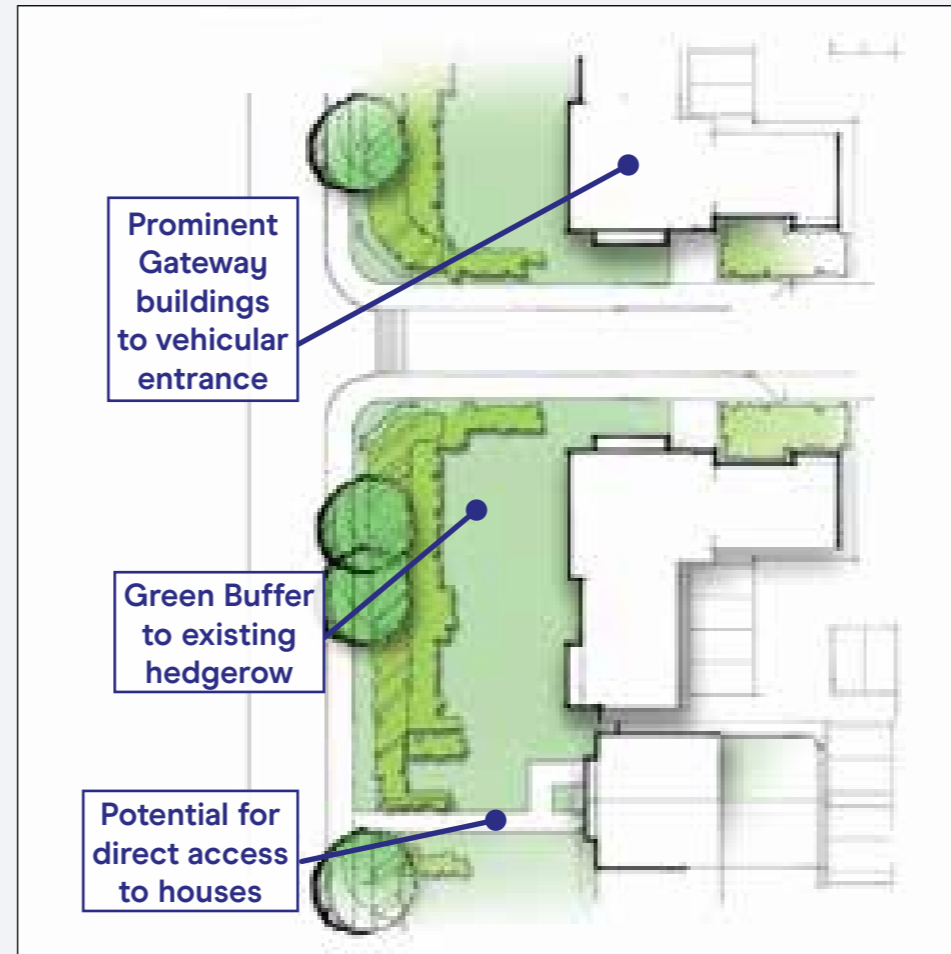
Key Routes and Spaces



Central Square

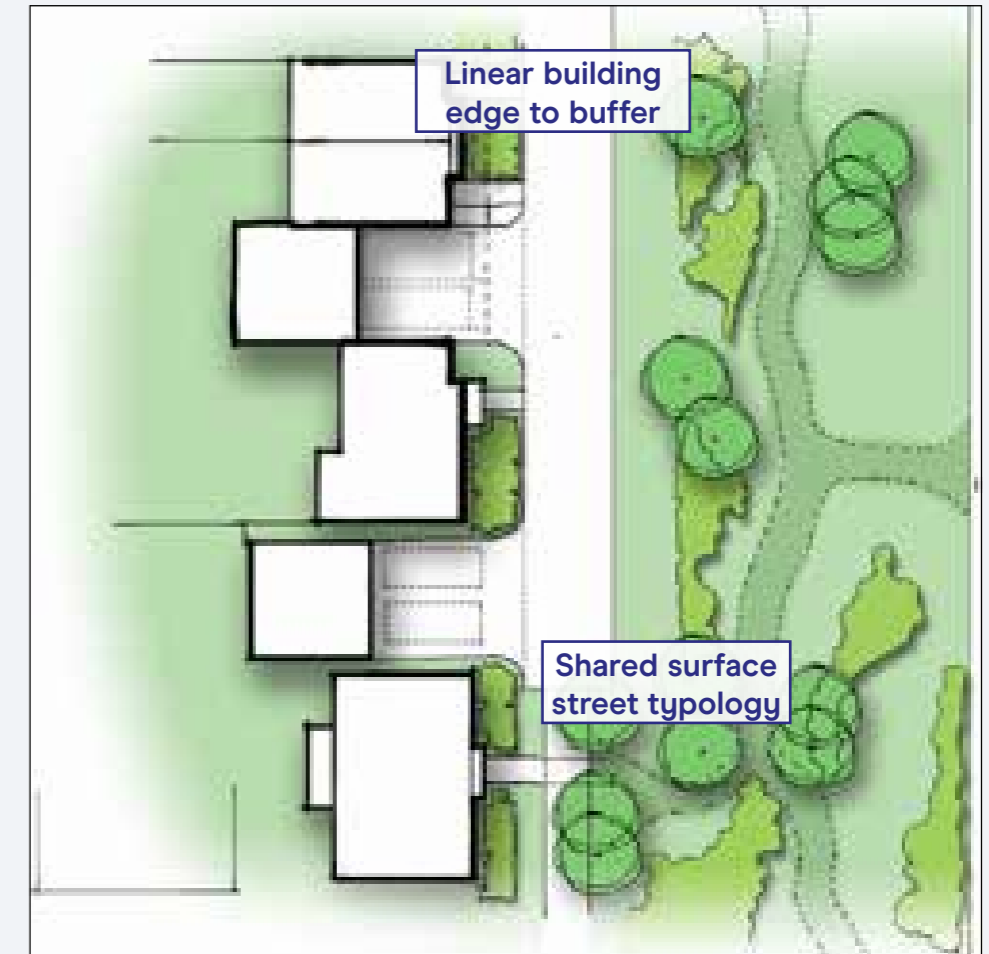
A focal square could be designed centrally to Area 2 which acts as a space that the local community in this area can utilise, and therefore opportunity for increased density and height should be explored around the edge of this space.

This area should incorporate a local centre facility such as a primary school which should outlook onto this space and therefore play a key role in placemaking. Mobility hub facilities could also be incorporated in this key space. The space is well located being on the junction of the key north-south and east-west movement corridors through Area 2.



Lower Road Frontage

Buildings facing Lower Road are accessible from within the site, therefore opportunity to push building frontage closer to road – avoid 'parallel' roads adjacent to existing road where possible. Create a strong development edge by use of apartments as gateway blocks around entrances and elsewhere terraced cottages. The existing hedgerow should be retained with breaks for direct access/visibility onto street to the front doors or houses to enhance activity.



Buffer Edge

The buffer edge in Area 2 could form an attractive linear feature providing a strong edge to AGT1 when approached from Stoke Mandeville Village to the south. As such building types should seek to incorporate repetition, with gateway buildings created on the corners of blocks at the southern end of the movement corridors. The road edge however could be varied, with opportunities to be explored which allow for reduced road widths (shared surface or private drive) or car-free pedestrian frontage where possible with parking accessed from the rear.



4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.2 Area 2 - Western Area

Building Typology

Building forms in Area 2 must have a relevance to the local vernacular and take visual cues from the area, such as the local context in Stoke Mandeville Village. Contemporary forms of buildings can be proposed however should be informed by the character study in terms of building form, roof scape, facade composition and window hierarchy.

Suggested building typologies for key parts of Area 2 could be as follows:

- **Buffer edge** – repetition to buildings with larger plots framing corners of movement corridors;
- **Central square** – density to edges of square with use of terraces or apartment buildings and increased height; potential for statement buildings in key locations, such as new primary school;
- **Movement corridors** – strong building line along movement corridor with enhancement of surveillance over the route; development to transition towards southern end to reduced density and scale of building along buffer edge;

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Primary school example - Trumpington Park Primary School, Cambridge'



Local Centre Example - Lightmore, Telford



Green Edges Example - Bolnore Village, Haywards Heath



Western Buffer Example - Oakgrove Village, Milton Keynes

Building Typology	
Apartments	Gateway and Arrival Spaces
	East-West Gardenway Route
	Key junctions within Area
Terraced Houses	Gateway and Arrival Spaces
	East-West Gardenway Route
	North-South Green Corridors South of East-West Gardenway
	Lower Road Frontage
Semi-Detached Houses	Throughout
Detached	Spread South of East-West Gardenway Route
	Buffer Edge



Stoke Mandeville - Semi-Detached Houses



Stoke Leys - Townhouses & Terraces

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.2 Area 2 - Western Area

Area Key View



Gateway Blocks to Overlook New Entrance/Arrival Spaces

Perimeter Block Approach To Development Blocks

Dwellings on Corner to Face Both Public Edges

Green buffer to inside edge of existing hedgerow could incorporate Surface Water Drainage system and informal pedestrian links



4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.3 Area 3 - Eastern Area

Overview

Features of this character area include:

- Creation of arrival space off Wendover Road to include northern end of strategic buffer;
- Potential to include Local centre uses around arrival space offering frontage to traffic on Wendover Road;
- Incorporation of strategic east-west corridor integrating key movement route and green corridor, along route of existing Public Right of Way; high density development along this route;
- Creation of internal green spaces and squares within development platform;
- Eastern edge of development area to overlook strategic buffer; transitional frontage from high density around arrival space to lower density at southern edge;
- Lower density development along southern edge of development facing towards strategic buffer;
- Higher Density built form to development parcels aligning the South-East Aylesbury Link Road;
- Development to overlook landscaped pedestrian/cycle arrival space linking with the South-East Aylesbury Link Road underpass;

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Key

	Lower Density Housing		Landscaped Open Space		Potential Local Centre
	Medium Density Housing		Enhanced Green Corridor		Potential Event Space
	Higher Density Housing		Potential Cycle Route		



Area 3 Indicative Features Plan



4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.3 Area 3 - Eastern Area

Urban Design Framework

Key design principles for Area 3 should follow the guidance of the urban design framework sketch adjacent, with particular reference to the following:

- **Wendover Road Arrival** – key to the design of Area 3 is the creation of an arrival space which forms a dual use as the northern most section of the buffer through AGT1. The buffer should be provided with positive frontage on both sides therefore buildings should be located on the eastern edge backing onto the existing houses along Wendover Road. Built form here should be orientated to face Wendover Road and therefore protect amenity to the adjacent dwellings.
- **Local centre** – from an evaluation of the placement of uses there is an opportunity to locate the Local Centre at the nodal point adjacent to the entrance area off Wendover Road. This would be visible by passing traffic and in a location accessible to residents of AGT1 via the key east-west movement corridor and movement routes within the buffer. Built form should 'hold' this corner providing frontage onto Wendover Road and also northwards to the arrival space;
- **Movement corridor** – this should be a similar east-west corridor as in Area 2, however in Area 3 the existing hedgerow is a much stronger feature. Therefore opportunity to split the movement types (road, footpath, cyclepath) either side of the hedgerow and treat the area as a key 'space' rather than a corridor.
- **Buffer** – the edge of Area 3 adjoining the buffer could be treated in a similar fashion to Area 2, however to set this apart and provide a more informal edge to the space, opportunity could be explored for a non-linear development edge allowing for extensions to the buffer via small 'pockets' of open space around which dwellings should be located;
- **Pocket parks** – opportunities to be explored to include pocket parks of various sizes to create interest within development areas and promote sense of community.

Key

- | | | | |
|--|---|------------|--|
| | Primary Movement Corridor | | Potential Vehicle Access Points |
| | Frontage | | Potential Pedestrian/Cycle Access Points |
| | South-East Aylesbury Link Road Frontage | | Potential Pedestrian Links |
| | Railway Frontage | | South-East Aylesbury Link Road Embankment Crossing |
| | Frontage to Key Space | | Key Spaces: |
| | Lower Density | NA | Northern Arrival |
| | Medium density | WRA | Wendover Road Arrival |
| | Higher Density | BPP | Buffer Pocket Park |
| | Focal Building | PP | Pocket Park |
| | | LC | Local Centre |



Area 3 Indicative Urban Design Framework

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.3 Area 3 - Eastern Area

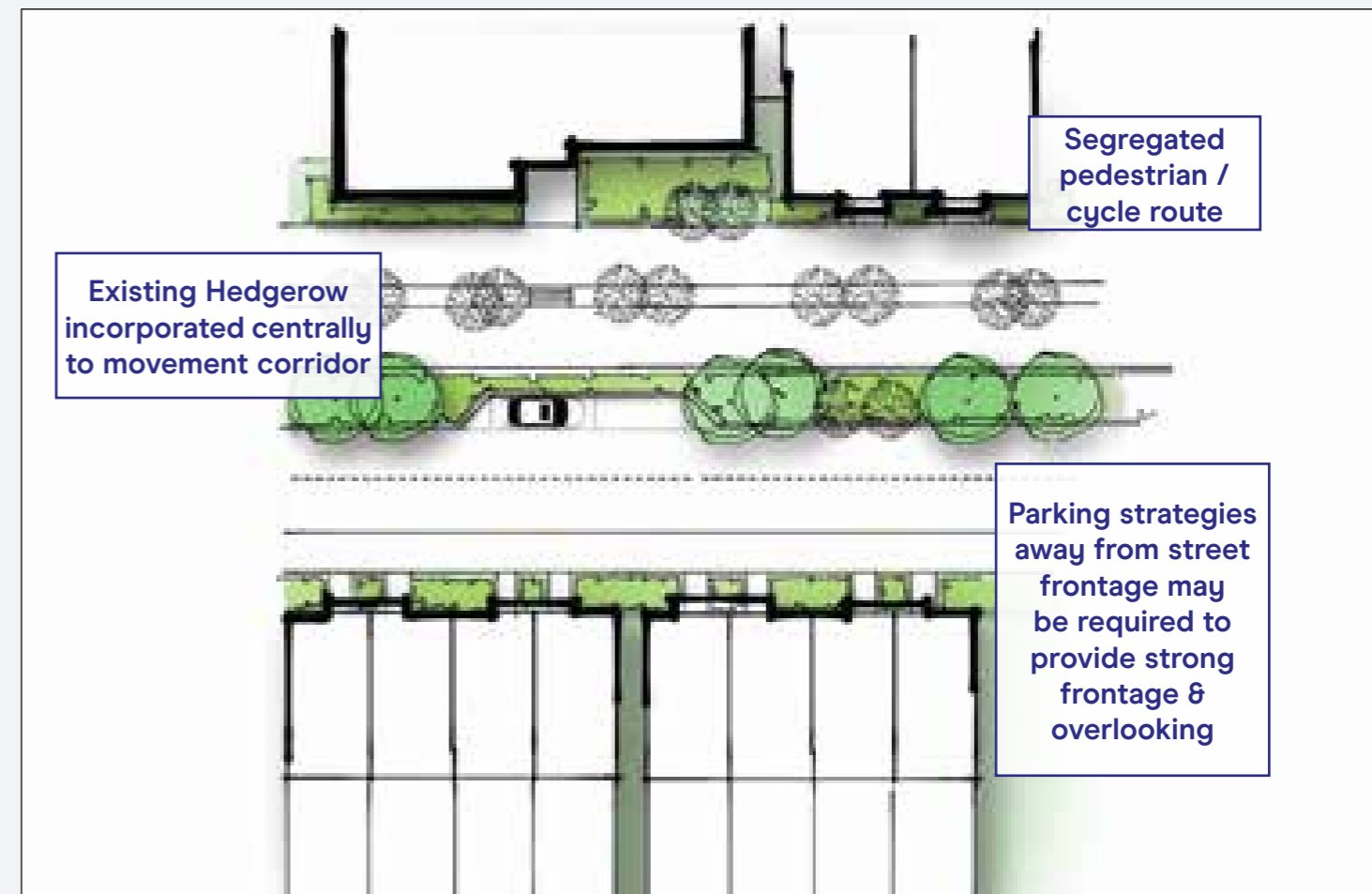
Key Area Locations



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Wendover Road Arrival

Opportunity for focused space around main eastern arrival to AGT1. Located in what will be a heavily used nodal point of north-south and east-west movement, and as such integration of these routes and placement of facilities will be key to the success of the space. Local centre frontage proposed overlooking the corner of the arrival space, with creation of an external space fronting onto the open space in this area. There is potential within this external space to locate mobility hub facilities including a kiosk, drop-off collection lockers, e-bike or e-scooter racks and a cycle repair shop.



Primary Movement Corridor

At the centre these movement routes include either existing tree/hedgelines or proposed new planting. Around these should be positioned the key movement elements and these can be split either side of the treeline to reduce the amount of hardstanding in one area and improve the quality of landscape across the space. Building frontage should be strong along the edge with a continuous line where possible, parking located away from the front to ensure facades are close to the space, and opportunities for key focal buildings on corners of junctions with other routes.



4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.3 Area 3 - Eastern Area

Building Typology

Building forms in Area 3 must have a relevance to the local vernacular and take visual cues from the area, such as the local context in Stoke Mandeville Village. Contemporary forms of buildings can be proposed however should be informed by the character study in terms of building form, roof scape, facade composition and window hierarchy.

Suggested building typologies for key parts of Area 3 could be as follows:

- **Movement corridors** – strong building line along movement corridor with enhancement of density and height to ensure surveillance over the route;
- **Wendover Road arrival** – potential for series of statement buildings around space given distance between development areas; blocks can be linked architecturally and create a potential identity at the entrance gateway which could be referenced within Area 3 and other areas of AGT1;
- **Buffer edge** – Creation of a varied edge comprising collections of differing building forms, however with elements of repetition focussed around pocket park space extensions to the buffer;
- **Pocket parks** – potential increase to density around central squares with prominent buildings located on corners of key routes leading through the space;

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Landscaped Arrival Space Example - Hartland Village



Green Edge Example



Internal Residential Streets Example - Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge



Eastern Buffer Example

Building Typology	
Apartments	Gateway and Arrival Spaces
	East-West Gardenway Route
	Key Junctions within Area
Terraced Houses	Gateway and Arrival Spaces
	East-West Gardenway Route
	North-South Green Corridors South of East-West Gardenway
	Railway Edge
Semi-Detached Houses	Throughout
Detached	Throughout



Stoke Leys - Strong Building Line

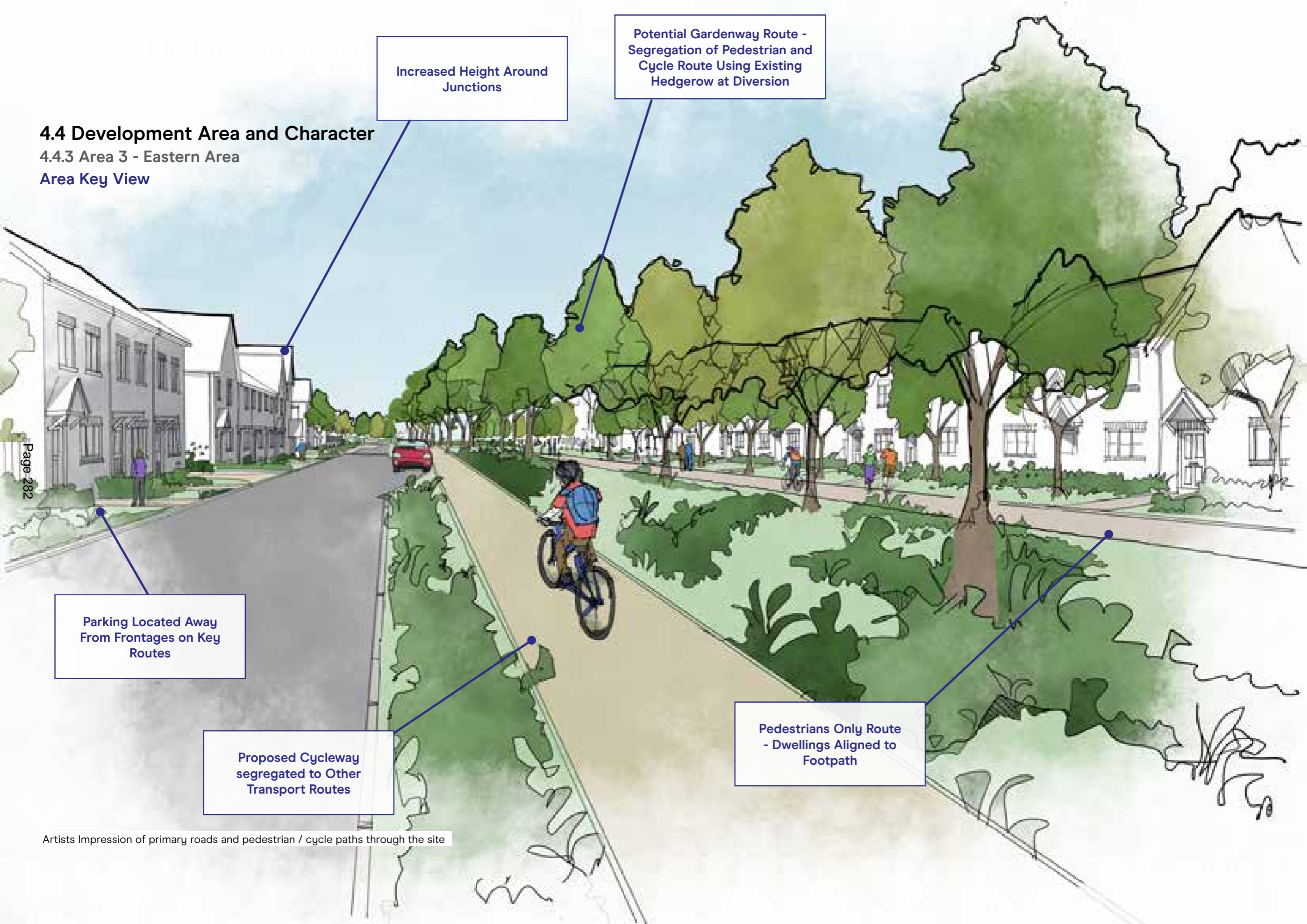


Stoke Mandeville - Detached House

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.3 Area 3 - Eastern Area

Area Key View



Increased Height Around Junctions

Potential Gardenway Route - Segregation of Pedestrian and Cycle Route Using Existing Hedgerow at Diversion

Parking Located Away From Frontages on Key Routes

Proposed Cycleway segregated to Other Transport Routes

Pedestrians Only Route - Dwellings Aligned to Footpath

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.4 Area 4 - South-Eastern Area

Overview

This character area will include features such as:

- Development to extend up to boundary of AGT1 in south-east area to provide security and privacy to existing rear gardens adjoining this boundary;
- Development to face towards Strategic buffer to provide positive frontage; screening of dwellings either side of buffer proposed via retention and enhancement of tree/hedgerow planting along wetland corridor;
- Access points across buffer between Eastern Area and Stoke Mandeville Village Extension area to be sensitively incorporated through existing hedgerow;
- Other existing hedgerows to be retained with development parcels broken up around the landscape assets;
- Western edge of development area to overlook strategic buffer; transitional frontage from high density around arrival space to lower density at southern edge;
- Creation of internal green spaces within development platform;
- Medium density development to this area generally;

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Key



Lower Density Housing



Landscaped Open Space



Medium Density Housing



Enhanced Green Corridor



Higher Density Housing



Potential Cycle Route



Area 4 Indicative Features Plan

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.4 Area 4 - South-Eastern Area

Urban Design Framework

Key design principles for Area 4 should follow the guidance of the urban design framework sketch adjacent, with particular reference to the following:

- **Southern arrival** – a ‘low-key’ informal arrival space can be created at the southern most extent of the buffer where existing and proposed access points are to be created linking AGT1 and Stoke Mandeville Village, ensuring the existing setting in this area for footpath routes is maintained. Development will be set within existing field enclosures in the area therefore screening buildings from the buffer, and therefore pedestrian routes in this space will be segregated from the development. Opportunities to link these routes with the new houses through the existing hedgerow, where appropriate, should be explored to enhance safety of the route.
- **Eastern arrival** – a vehicle access point can be provided from Castlefields to the east, therefore this should be treated as a secondary access serving a limited number of dwellings, and therefore the style of space should also reflect this role. The space can also cater for pedestrian and cycle movement through to Wendover Road. Central to the space is a collection of existing trees. New buildings should be orientated to overlook this arrival, and focal buildings should be provided on the corners of the this route where it meets the buffer.
- **Existing residential edge** – development of Area 4 should extend to the existing settlement edge in the south-east corner of AGT1. This is unlike other parts of AGT1 where the buffer is located between AGT1 development and Stoke Mandeville, however this does ensure that the buffer within AGT1 is provided with a positive frontage overlooking the buffer on both sides. Locating the buffer along the rear boundary could create a space prone to crime that is not overlooked. As such privacy should be respected in this area by creating ‘back to back’ relationships to the existing houses at appropriate distances. Building form along this edge should be reduced in density to predominantly detached houses with gaps between them formed by on-plot parking to the side and garages to reduce the built form.

Key

- | | | | |
|--|---|-------------|--|
| | Buffer Frontage | | Focal Building |
| | Frontage to Key Spaces | | Potential Vehicle Access Points |
| | Shared Surface / Private Drive Frontage | | Potential Pedestrian/Cycle Access Points |
| | Existing Residential Edge | | Potential Pedestrian Links |
| | Lower Density | | Potential Emergency Access |
| | Medium density | | Key Spaces: |
| | | WRA | - Wendover Road Arrival |
| | | EAPG | - Eastern Arrival Pocket Green |
| | | SA | - Southern Arrival |
| | | PP | - Pocket Park |

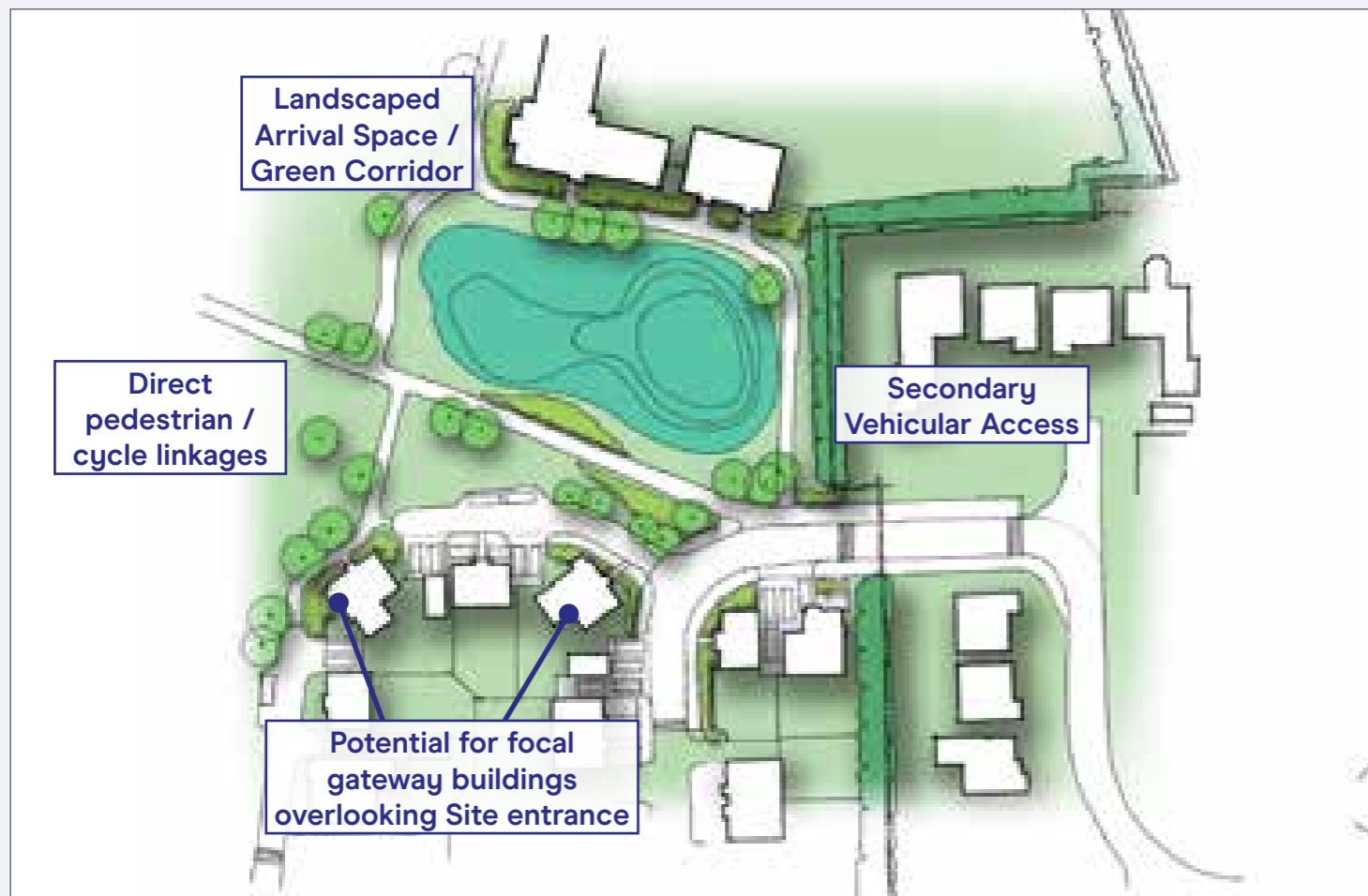


Area 4 Indicative Urban Design Framework

4.4 Development Area and Character

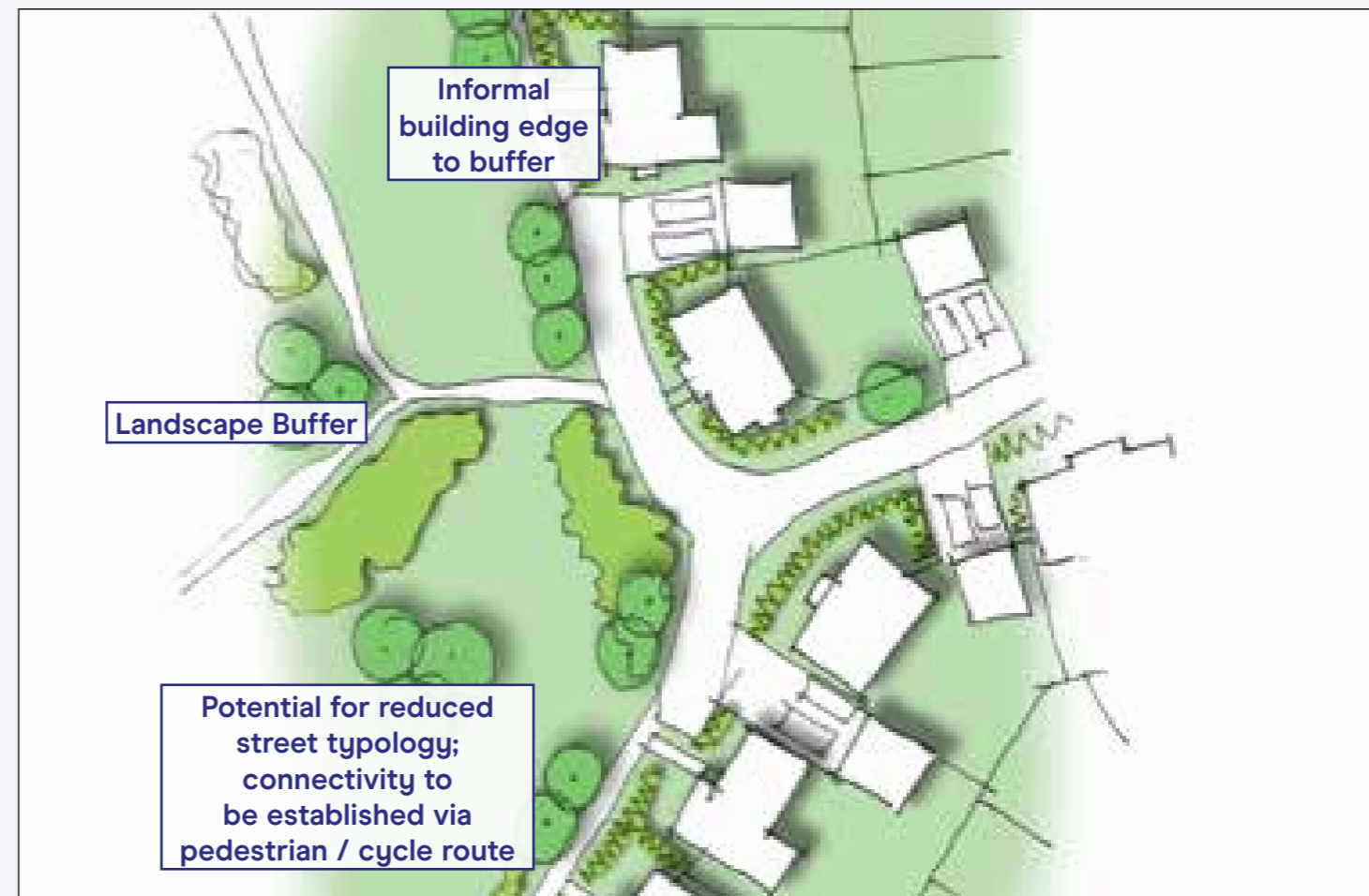
4.4.4 Area 4 - South-Eastern Area

Key Area Locations



Eastern arrival space

The eastern arrival should be a low key space incorporating a secondary vehicle access and pedestrian and cycle movement. Buildings should be placed to overlook the entrance with potential for a focal building on the entry to AGT1. Buildings should be orientated to overlook the space created here which is centred around the retention of a tree group in the centre of the space. Opportunities for integrated sustainable urban drainage can be included within a landscaped space. Buildings around this entrance should be of a similar typology to those existing in Stoke Mandeville; detached and semi-detached at 2 storey with potential for 2 ½ around the open space.



Buffer edge

The development edge of Area 4 to the buffer could be a very informal edge evoking the feathered edge to Stoke Mandeville that is elsewhere along its northern boundary. Where Area 3 suggested a potential for elements of linear edge broken by small pocket park extensions to the buffer, Area 4 could be more random and dictated by the line of the existing 'brook' which runs within the buffer. This could allow for an unstructured building edge with irregular corners and building orientated 'side' on rather than facing the buffer, to create small enclosures of space away from the main buffer area. Buildings should predominantly be detached along this edge if this style is to be progressed.



4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.4 Area 4 - South-Eastern Area

Building Typology

Building forms in Area 4 must have a relevance to the local vernacular and take visual cues from the area, such as the local context in Stoke Mandeville Village. Traditional forms of buildings may be proposed and therefore should be informed by the character study in terms of building form, roof scape, facade composition and window hierarchy.

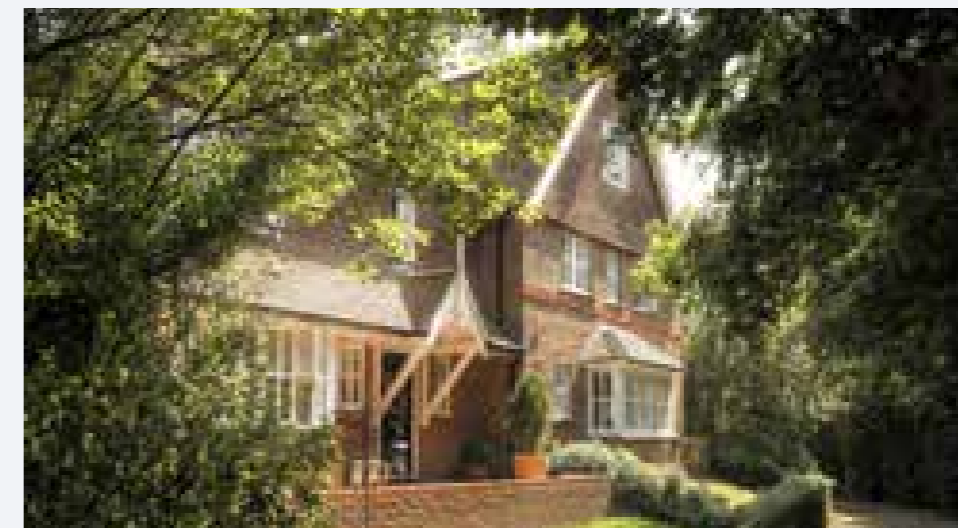
Suggested building typologies for key parts of Area 4 could be as follows:

- **Buffer edge** – Creation of a varied edge comprising differing building forms, predominantly detached houses with potential for small number of cottage style houses around edge spaces;
- **Existing residential edge** – predominantly detached houses to ensure density is reduced and street scene is softened; create gaps in the street scape by use of side parking and garages.
- **Internal streets** – opportunities to include a small increase to the density within the centre of the development area around internal courtyards and streets with development on both sides.

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Sustainable Movement Example



Courtyards & Edges Example - Bolnore Village, Haywards Heath



Eastern Buffer Example - Trumpington Meadows, Cambridge



Eastern Buffer Example - Bolnore Village

Building Typology	
Terraced Houses	Central Areas of Development Cells
	Small Scale Pedestrian Connections with existing Residential Areas - Castlefields, Petersfield, Carters Ride
Semi-Detached Houses	Central Areas of Development Cells
	Small Scale Pedestrian Connections with existing Residential Areas - Castlefields, Petersfield, Carters Ride
	Stoke Mandeville Village Edge
Detached	Throughout



Stoke Mandeville - Detached House

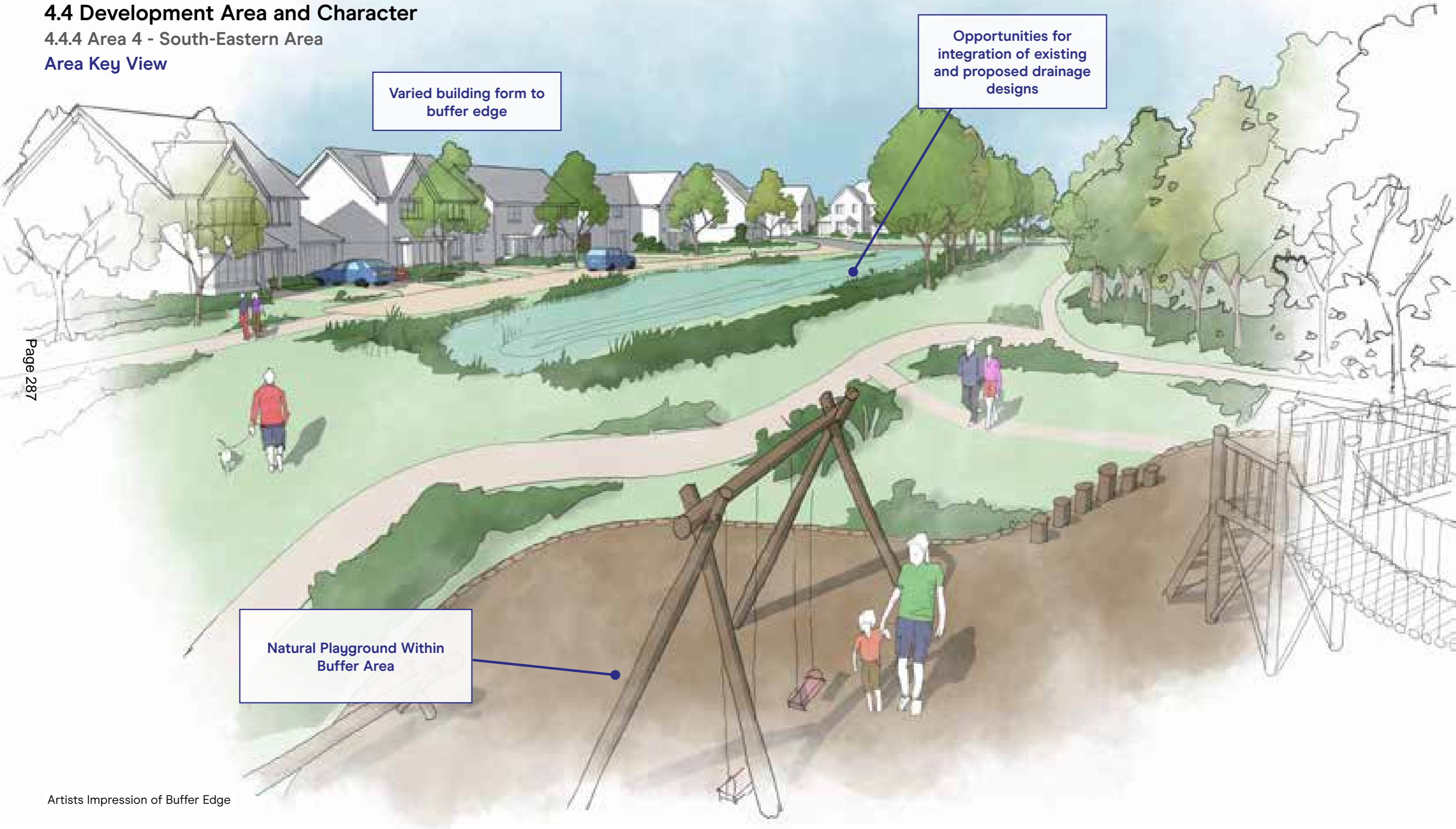


Stoke Mandeville - Detached House

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.4 Area 4 - South-Eastern Area

Area Key View



Varied building form to buffer edge

Opportunities for integration of existing and proposed drainage designs

Natural Playground Within Buffer Area

4.4 Development Area and Character

4.4.5 Scale and Density

The Framework Masterplan should adopt a density strategy to respond to the context within which each development area is located. The Framework Masterplan should take opportunities to increase density and scale around key movement routes and nodes through the site, and reduce density in sensitive areas. Based on the development of character areas as outlined over the preceding pages, an overarching density strategy for AGT1 should be developed as follows:

Lower Density	approx. 25-29dph
Building types	detached building typologies
Building heights	generally up to 2 storey building heights
Lower density areas of development should be located to the southern periphery of the AGT1 area adjacent to the proposed landscape buffer, and to some of the areas in the south-east of the site where development will back onto the existing settlement edge of Stoke Mandeville Village	

Medium density	approx. 30-39dph
Building types	transitional development area utilising a mixture of building types from the adjacent low and high density areas of development; small number of apartments, some terrace, semi-detached and detached houses
Building heights	generally 2 and 2 ½ storeys in height, allowing for some increase in height to 3 storeys in key locations
Should generally be located within development areas as a transition between the higher and lower density areas or where it reflects the adjacent context. Opportunity for some variance with the density within this zone, such as higher around courtyards & squares where smaller properties improve activity and frontage, and lower to edges where relating to adjacent context.	

Higher Density	approx. 40+dph
Building types	predominance of linked building typologies such as apartments and terraces
Building heights	generally 2 and 2.5 storeys in height including taller buildings up to 3 storeys and 4 storeys in limited key locations
Higher density areas should be located centrally to AGT1 within the central development areas, specifically along the east-west axis between the Primary Movement Corridor and the South-East Aylesbury Link Road corridor. The northern development area also has opportunities for higher density buildings and heights due to the existing context of larger buildings to the north around Stoke Mandeville Hospital, which should be set along the north-south movement corridor through this area.	



Indicative Site Density Plan

Note - The guidance provides general principles and that the context may change with other design solutions being appropriate if justified at detailed design stage.



4.5 Land Uses and Facilities

For the South Aylesbury development to be successful the focus for the development is not only on what is to be built but also on how it creates a sustainable, vibrant, healthy, and prosperous community whilst protecting and enhancing the environment in which it is situated.

4.5.1 Placement of Uses

Facility: Primary School

Location: Locate to the west of the railway line within the centre of the site

Justification:

- Most central location within D-AGT1 therefore the most accessible location to the majority of AGT1 residents.
- Link to western mobility hub.
- Education supports a central location within D-AGT1.
- Encourages walking / cycling to school from all areas of D-AGT1, including the northern parcel, to the north of the South-East Aylesbury Link Road, and the eastern parcel.
- Located appropriate distance from other school in the local area (i.e. William Harding, Stoke Mandeville and proposed school on Hampden Fields)
- Access to Lower Road, with traffic movements split from the local centre.
- Will have close links with Stoke Mandeville Parish Centre should this come forward on Lower Road as part of the Neighbourhood Plan considerations and development; whilst the position proposed within AGT1 allows for good accessibility with the rest of the development.

- **Facility: Community Building**

Location: West of railway line

Justification:

- Appropriate central location within D-AGT1 therefore providing the most accessible location to the majority of AGT1 residents.
- The proposed position within AGT1 allows for good accessibility with wider area around AGT1 including southern Aylesbury and Stoke Mandeville.
- Located in close proximity to the proposed school therefore allowing shared use of resources and potential use by the school.
- Access to Lower Road, with traffic movements split from the local centre with the potential for linked trips with the adjacent school.
- Located appropriate distance from other similar facilities.
- Link with western mobility hub.

Facility: Local Centre

Location: Locate to the east of the railway line adjacent to Wendover Road

Justification:

- Link to eastern mobility hub.
- By locating on the edge of the site the facility will be more visually and locally available therefore making uses more likely to be economically solvent.
- Located away from existing Asda supermarket and provision within Stoke Mandeville, both of which are in close proximity to the western parcel.
- Accessible to Wendover Road and passing trade / pass by trips.
- Accessible to existing residents of Stoke Mandeville / Stoke Grange.
- Smaller, subsidiary local uses could still be provided, if demand is sufficient, to the western parcel.
- The Parish Centre, as part of the draft Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan identifies land around Lower Road for retail facilities.
- Some local centre uses (eg Hot Food takeaway) would create conflict if located adjacent to the primary school.
- Good and direct access to Wendover Road, with movements split from the school.
- Potential vehicle congestion if located adjacent to the school at peak school times.
- Located in close proximity to the existing public right of way crossing the site and the proposed Gardenway route where it enters the site from Wendover Road.

Facility: Gypsy/Traveller Pitches

Location: Locate on land adjacent to the South-East Aylesbury Link Road and Lower Road

Justification:

- Independent location on a discrete parcel of land.
- Direct and independent access from the road network can potentially be provided, whilst pedestrian links still possible with wider site.
- Excellent potential vehicle access to Lower Road (B4443) and onward connections to the South-East Aylesbury Link Road is provided, therefore providing good access to the wider road network.



4.5.2 Housing

The development will, in line with policy, create at least 1,000 dwellings, with potential to achieve more at an appropriate density together with the provision of 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The density of development will consider the adjacent existing settlement character and identity, creating a balanced, sustainable, and attractive community with a diverse range of housing forms and types.

South Aylesbury may be suited to a different mix of new homes from that which might be provided within other parts of the authority. Proposals will be expected to deliver a mix of houses and apartments with a range of sizes from 1-bed through to 4+ bed properties. The housing mix provided will consider the Council's most up-to-date evidence on housing need together with local market conditions and requirements, ensuring it meets current and future housing needs. Flexibility will be applied in terms of mix for individual phases or parcels within the site, reflecting the timing and nature / character of the area being developed.

Through the provision of a variety of accommodation types, including the provision of an overall objective to deliver 25% affordable dwellings on individual phases or parcels within the site, an inclusive environment will be created. A range of housing tenures will be supported on the site, together with a variety of housing types and sizes aimed at meeting the needs of the local population to enable households to more easily find housing which suits their needs and that they can afford.

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (Policy H5) requires that developments proposing 100 dwellings and above, including partial developments of a wider site, provide a percentage of serviced plots for sale to self/custom builders. Numbers will be determined on a site-by-site basis at the planning application stage and will be dependent on evidence of demand and viability.

Affordable Housing Delivery

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (Policy H1) seeks the provision of affordable housing on development of 11 or more dwellings, or sites of 0.3 hectares or larger with a minimum of 25% affordable homes provided.

The overall objective is to deliver 25% affordable dwellings on individual phases or parcels within the site, with the type, size, tenure, and location of affordable housing to be agreed with the Council. This will take into account the Council's most up-to-date evidence on housing need and any available evidence regarding local market conditions. Affordable housing, including the provision of 'First Homes' where appropriate, should be delivered in step with market housing.

Residential development on the site will have regard to housing mix in terms of type, size, tenure, and location and be designed so that affordable housing is mixed with the market housing. There should not be undue clustering of affordable homes

Gypsy and Traveller Provision

The Council has identified that 5 pitches for gypsies and travellers will be needed in addition to the affordable housing provision via Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Policy D-AGT1(b). The pitches will be provided on the western parcel where independent, immediate, and good access from Lower Road can potentially be provided. The area will be provided to the required size and will incorporate appropriate access and good quality landscaping.

Whilst several locations within South Aylesbury were considered, all were equally adjacent to existing / proposed dwellings and accessible to existing / new services. The pitches will be provided on the western parcel adjacent to the SEALR / Lower Road where the most appropriate independent, immediate, and good access from Lower Road and the SEALR can potentially be provided. The area will be provided to the required size and will incorporate appropriate access and good quality landscaping in line with Policy D11 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

4.5.3 Open Space and Green / Blue Infrastructure

To create a desirable place to live and to integrate the new development with the existing built area of Aylesbury and Stoke Mandeville, including the Grade II listed Magpie Cottage, attractive high quality new neighbourhoods will be developed creating a semi-natural environment whilst providing quality housing for both the private and social sectors.

South Aylesbury will accommodate 50% ANGSt compliant green infrastructure within each application parcel linking the new development areas to the wider area as part of a high quality built and semi-natural environment. Existing vegetation and habitats will be retained where practicable with urban greening and green / blue infrastructure incorporated, providing structural landscaping and a network of open spaces for informal use together with more formal sports provision.

A Suitable Alternative Natural Green (SANG) space must be provided in accordance with the Buckinghamshire SANG Guidance where mitigation is required for the recreational impacts of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. The SANG can be provided either onsite as part of the Green Infrastructure provision or offsite at a Strategic SANG.

The development of play and sports facilities will be in accordance with current appropriate design principles, contributing positively to the promotion of healthy communities and the requirements of good design. With children's play areas and outdoor sports provided where required and appropriate taking into account both new and existing residents.

Based on the average household size of 2.5 people (Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Paragraph 1.51) the South Aylesbury development will generate a population of at least 2,500 people (based on 1,000 dwellings). The development will, in line with Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Appendix C, therefore aim to provide a minimum of 5 hectares of accessible natural green space (2 hectares per 1,000 population); 3.5 hectares of incidental open space (1.4 hectares per 1,000 population), and 3 hectares of major open space (1.2 hectares per 1,000 population), with a cricket pitch (or the equivalent requirement). The grass sports pitch(es) is proposed to be located on the western side of the railway line.

The concept masterplan for the development makes provision for natural areas / corridors to be located to run through the site, including a strategic buffer running from Wendover Road to Lower Road. This will not only help retain the individual identity of the settlement of Stoke Mandeville but will act as an important linear park link through South Aylesbury and beyond. Walking and cycling routes, where practicable, will be delivered through these areas, with the buffer providing a potential route for the Aylesbury Gardenway.

The buffer, which will be developed in relation to the appropriate phases of development to ensure timely delivery, will act as a link between residential character areas and will itself change in character. Planning applications will ensure it has a natural character and isn't overly designed, with



a gradual transition between character areas. The existing watercourse which runs through the eastern parcel and proposed buffer will be enhanced and its ecological status improved, whilst through the modification of the channel it will provide flood elevation measures, reducing the risk of flooding downstream.

The provision of blue networks through the site will enhance wildlife while providing important drainage and flood elevation measures. These features are likely to take a variety of forms depending on their location, including permanent standing water features, naturalized designs that remain dry most of the time providing open space when not required for mitigation, and formal hard-landscaped features.

Policies D-AGT1 and I4 of VALP set out requirements for drainage, flooding and associated infrastructure which will require consideration by forthcoming planning applications.

4.5.4 Transport Connectivity

An important part of any development is the need to provide access in the form and location that is needed by its residents and the surrounding community. Ensuring that South Aylesbury is developed so that people can get to and from, as well as get around, by a range of different transport modes will help create an inclusive and sustainably accessible community.

Existing public rights of way will be incorporated, with their route retained and integrated into the development where possible. A safe and secure environment will be provided directly and appropriately linking areas within the development as well as linking the site with surrounding communities, existing public transport connections and facilities.

Walking and cycling routes will be delivered through the site, including to Stoke Mandeville station through the western half of the development, whilst a crossing over the London Marylebone to Aylesbury Vale Parkway railway line via the South-East Aylesbury Link Road will connect the east and west halves of the development. Shared and segregated foot / cycleways will be provided and where possible appropriate key routes will be segregated from motorised traffic.

The green strategic buffer running from Wendover Road to Lower Road will provide a potential route for the Aylesbury Gardenway, with a secondary link running from east to west further north, nearer to the South-East Aylesbury Link Road, providing a supplementary route. The location for a second railway crossing is indicatively indicated on the concept masterplan as being within the green strategic buffer, and whilst this will not be provided by the development of South Aylesbury, land to allow its provision in the future will be safeguarded from development.

The concept masterplan also safeguards the land required for the delivery of the South-East Aylesbury Link Road dual carriageway distributor road between Lower Road (B4443) and Wendover Road (A413), which is subject to planning application reference CC/0015/20.

A hierarchy of roads and access routes into and through the site are indicatively identified on the concept masterplan, with the Supplementary Planning Document providing illustrative arrangements for different types of roads. The concept masterplan remains flexible regarding the ultimate location of internal roads, with details to be provided at detailed / reserved matters planning application stage.

The primary vehicle access routes into the site will be via junctions directly off Lower Road and Wendover Road, ensuring permeability throughout the site reflecting the illustrative arrangements.

A secondary vehicular access point from Castlefield will provide access to a limited number of dwellings, whilst emergency vehicle access is proposed from either Carters Ride or Dorchester Close.

The full potential of walking, cycling, public transport, and other sustainable modes of transport should be realised through the development. Sustainable Transport Hubs (also known as Mobility Hubs) will act as a convenient interchange at a neighbourhood level providing connectivity with public transport and other services, whilst offering amenities such as electric vehicle charging points, cycle storage, workspaces, and bike repair. The Hubs will be located on key routes and at cross over points within the development. They may form part of a connection to a wider centre or community square as a standalone building or be provided and integrated into part of a wider building, such as on the ground floor of a commercial or residential building.

Car parking will be integrated into development with planning applications setting out how the car parking will meet standards at the time of submission. Where required in line with the Council policy guidance, as set out in the design Supplementary Planning Document, electric vehicle charging infrastructure should be provided.

Financial contributions to off-site highway works, and the provision of and enhancement of sustainable travel and public transport provision will be provided where the infrastructure tests set out in Section 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations are met.



4.5.5 Education

The Council estimate, based upon pupil place planning assumptions for the site, that there will be a need for a new two-form entry (FE) primary school to accommodate pupils from the development, together with a 52 place childrens nursery. The timing of the provision of the school as part of the scheme will depend on balancing the aspiration to deliver the school whilst ensuring that it has sufficient pupils to operate viably. The timing of the school will be dependent upon school place capacity in the area and the developments progression, with land being made available so that it can be operational at the required time within the short to medium term.

This will require developers of South Aylesbury to make available an appropriate site of 1.9ha (assuming an area of 0.3ha for drop off / pick up facilities), ensuring that it is adequately serviced and in a location within the development, which is close to homes, other facilities and located on or close to primary access routes. Thus, ensuring that walking and cycling access is achievable in addition to road access. The concept masterplan identifies a potential location to the west of the railway line for use as a primary school. It's exact location, form and layout would meet the Council's published school site specifications.

The location is the most central and generally accessible position to the majority of future residents, encouraging walking / cycling to the school from all areas, whilst also being linked to the western mobility hub. It would be located an appropriate distance from other schools in the local area, with vehicular access provided to Lower Road.

In addition to the timely provision of an on-site primary school, secondary contributions will be required towards the new Kingsbrook Secondary School or any future expansion project at the school. Further contributions will be required to fund the Council's Special Educational Needs school expansion programme to meet the growing demand in Aylesbury due to new housing - current plans include expansion of Pebble Brook School and The Vale Federation and other schools as appropriate, including potentially new school provision – subject to planning and consultation plus the availability of funding.

4.5.6 Utilities and Servicing

Adequate water, foul water, drainage, and electricity supply must be provided to serve each phase of development. These supplies will be capable of adoption by a statutory undertaker and may require upgrades to the existing supply network. The Future Homes Standard will, once the proposed legislation is confirmed, ban gas boilers from being installed in new homes which are built from 2025. Accordingly, it is unlikely given the phasing of development at South Aylesbury, that gas supplies will be installed.

In seeking to achieve carbon emission reductions the development of the site, in line with Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan policy C3, will seek to achieve greater efficiency in the use of natural resources through reducing energy use; energy efficiency and making use of renewable energy.

Where utilities require above ground infrastructure (such as a primary sub-station) these should be sensitively located and designed to visually blend in with the character of the area and not affect residential amenity.

All homes, community buildings and businesses within the South Aylesbury will benefit from access to superfast fibre optic broadband, which will be laid throughout the development.

Developers are encouraged to contact the water/waste water company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. Where there is a capacity constraint the Local Planning Authority will, where appropriate, apply phasing conditions to any approval to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development as per policy I5 Water Resources and Wastewater Infrastructure of the VALP.

Development must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption. Any development must meet any relevant requirements of building regulations. Planning conditions will be applied to any future planning permissions to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met.

All development proposals must adhere to policy I4 Flooding of VALP. It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. Where infiltration is not possible it is expected that surface water will be discharged to the local watercourses. Drainage should not be discharged to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding in the area.

Site design should seek to deliver sustainable water usage features such as rainwater harvesting, grey water systems, with mains water consumption target of 110 litres per head per day (105 litres per head per day plus an allowance of 5 litres per head per day for gardens) being the target.



4.5.7 Gypsy and Traveller Pitches

The Council has identified that 5 pitches for gypsies and travellers will be needed in addition to the affordable housing provision via Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Policy D-AGT1(b). Whilst several locations within South Aylesbury were considered, all were equally adjacent to existing / proposed dwellings and accessible to existing / new services.

The pitches will be provided on the western parcel, adjacent to the SEALR / Lower Road, where independent, immediate, and good access from Lower Road can potentially be provided. Plot sizes will be sufficient to adhere to fire safety regulations and for the provision of sufficient space to provide for a caravan, amenity space / block and will incorporate appropriate access and good quality landscaping in line with Policy D11 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

4.5.8 Community Facility

It is envisaged that the community building will be approximately 300 sqm in size and provide rooms / facilities in line with the requirements of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (Appendix D). It will be located on the western side of the railway line, in close proximity to the school to facilitate linked trips and to be best placed to take advantage of the largest population.

The dual use of the primary school facilities within the wider community (e.g. the sports pitches and school hall - out of school hours) will also be supported by the Council, in order to help with ongoing management and maintenance. It is important to note that any events / community facilities will take place close to, not within school grounds.

Financial contributions in relation to health facilities and sports / leisure provision will be provided where the infrastructure tests set out in Section 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations are met.

4.5.9 Local Centre

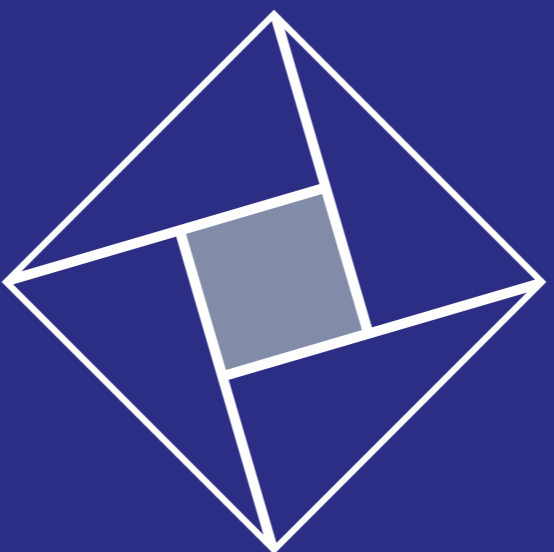
South Aylesbury will be integrated with its surroundings, including Aylesbury to the north and Stoke Mandeville to the south. Whilst both provide local and community facilities, the development of the site will include the delivery of a local centre, including retail, and a separate community building.

The provision of shops within Use Class E(a) and E(b), and / or Sui Generis drinking establishment / hot food takeaway and a community facility within Use Class F.2(b) will be supported by the Council. The shared use of space, providing mixed use units, for example a cafe / shop, and the shared use of space will be supported by the Council where appropriate.

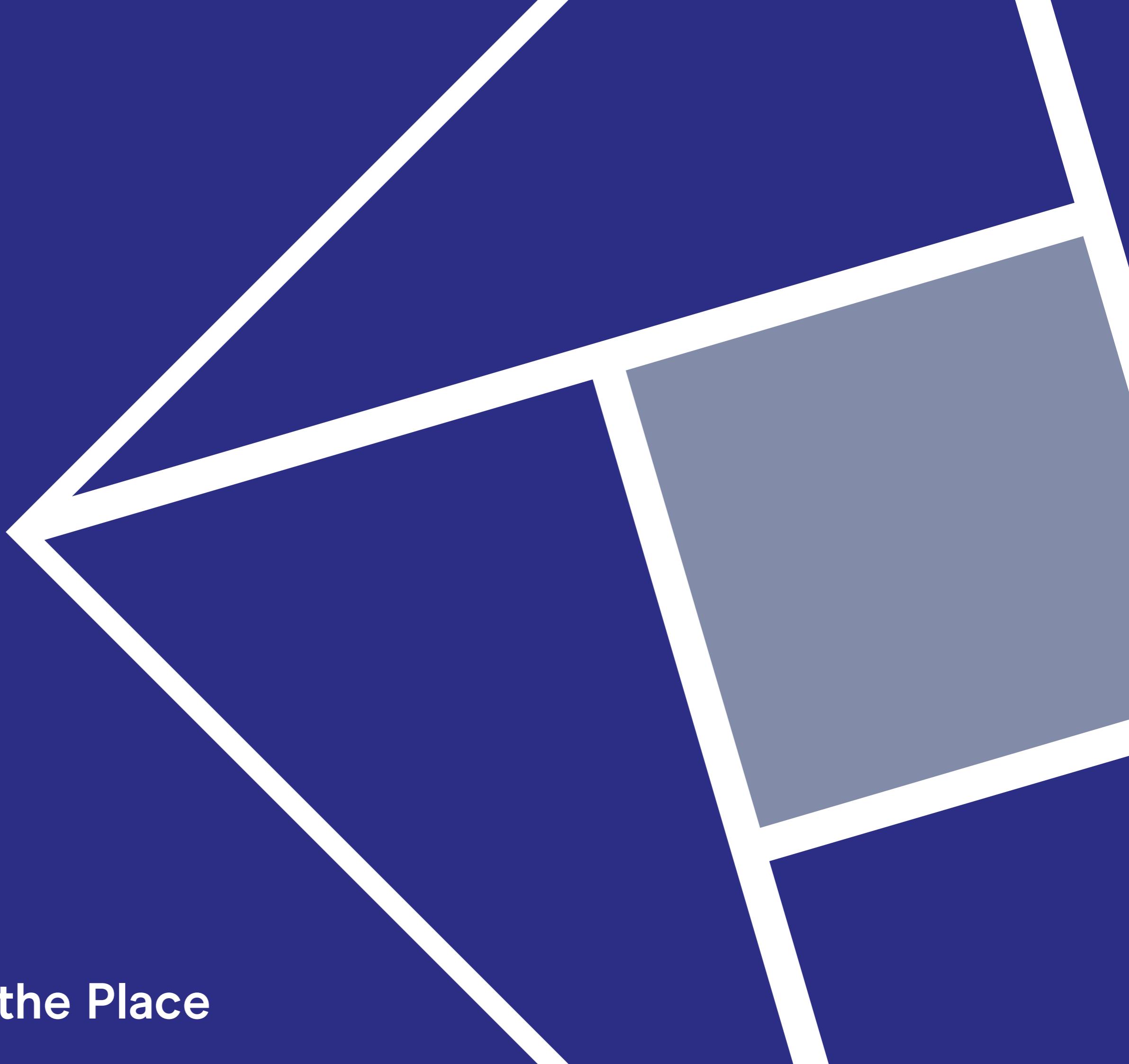
That the development will deliver an area of at least 0.36 hectares as a local centre, although the Council consider its use and integration within the development to be more important than its ultimate size, with the overall scale of provision also being informed by demand. This will allow for a larger retail store to be provided and / or smaller units, helping the facility to respond to the market and making South Aylesbury a more sustainable place.

The concept masterplan indicates a potential location for the local centre, on the eastern side of the London Marylebone to Aylesbury Vale Parkway railway line. The provision of a local centre would link to the eastern mobility hub, being accessible to not only the South Aylesbury development but the wider area. Located away from existing provision in the area, and close to Wendover Road, public rights of way, cycle and footpaths and the proposed Gardenway it would also be accessible to passing trade / pass by trips. Located on the edge of the site the facility will be visually and locally available therefore making uses more likely to be economically solvent. Uses which would conflict with a school / community facility, such as hot food takeaways, would be able to be provided.

In addition to the primary anticipated uses of the centre by a convenience store or café / coffee shop it is predicted that a mobility hub will be part of the centre, with the concept masterplan identifying both together. The local centre is likely to be designed to be mixed-use development with a range of commercial uses on the ground floor frontages with residential or self-contained extra care accommodation on the upper floors. Equally a larger retail store may also be considered appropriate subject to demand.



5 - Delivering the Place





This section of the Supplementary Planning Document sets out the envisaged approach to the phased provision of required infrastructure alongside the progression of housing delivery across the site. It also explains the key principles for the timely delivery of the infrastructure and the approach to be employed to assigning and managing infrastructure provision and contributions across the site through an Infrastructure Delivery Framework.

5.1 Overall Approach to Development & Infrastructure Phasing

Development of the proposals at AGT1 are expected to take place over at least 8 years and will be likely to include several different house builders with some completions having already taken place. It is therefore recognised that flexibility needs to be retained in setting out proposed phasing and sequencing in order that the development can respond to changing circumstances over time, including changes to planning policy and market conditions.

The overall approach taken towards phasing and infrastructure delivery in this Supplementary Planning Document is to seek to ensure that each phase of development is as self-sufficient as possible whilst delivering necessary strategic elements of infrastructure in a timely manner and not prejudicing the ability of the following phases to do the same. Proposals to bring forward later planned phases sooner than proposed will be likely to be acceptable provided they do not undermine delivery elsewhere within the overall site, or the provision of supporting infrastructure and mitigation of the impacts of the development because of early delivery.

In considering the approach to phasing, as well as land ownership / land promoter interest, how the supporting infrastructure specified in this Supplementary Planning Document for the specific number of units proposed in any application will be secured has been considered. Infrastructure should be provided in a timely way and with certainty to reduce / mitigate the impact of the development. A coherent and coordinated approach to residential and infrastructure delivery, construction management and development phasing will be undertaken to ensure that the overall policy aspirations are met and to avoid the creation of parcels of land or pockets of development that are isolated from each other.

The anticipated time frame/phasing for the residential elements of the site is indicated in the table below. Critically the pace of delivery will not only relate to house builder take up, but also facilitating infrastructure delivery and how quickly demand for new homes is developed as the provision of an attractive, sustainable, and desirable place to live is formed. The expected completion figures assume two or more house builders on site at any one time, with the build out of the site to be undertaken by 2033.

It is important to note that the above phasing is based on the expected year on year trajectory for the provision of housing on the site, as set out in Appendix A of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. Given the potential for the AGT1 site to deliver more than 1,000 units, as acknowledged by policy D-AGT1, the number of dwellings provided per phasing term, and / or the length of time for the site to be completed may differ.

The ultimate level of development delivered in South Aylesbury will be based on the approach set out previously in this SPD taking account of the adjacent settlement character and identity whilst responding positively to the best characteristics of the surrounding area. The figures below breakdown the gross area of the site and assesses

Illustrative Phasing	
Completed (Past / Projected)	132 Dwellings
Short Term (2024 - 2027)	325 Dwellings
Medium Term (2028 - 2029)	300 Dwellings
Long Term (2029 - 2031)	250+ Dwellings

Expected Trajectory from Appendix A of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

ANGSt compliant green infrastructure requirements together with other infrastructure benefits that will be provided within AGT1, to provide a net area for potential development for new residential dwellings.

AGT1 Gross Area (minus railway corridor)	90.45Ha
GI Requirement	45.23Ha
South-East Aylesbury Link Road (road)	3.51Ha
2FE Primary School (with drop off area)	1.9Ha
Gypsy & Traveller Pitches	0.34Ha
Community Facility (may include residential)	0.1Ha
Net Development Area for Residential Use	39.72Ha

Areas of Development and Infrastructure within AGT1

5.2 Infrastructure Delivery & Phasing

Infrastructure Requirements

The delivery of infrastructure at AGT1 is to be provided in a timely and viable way to ensure that the impact of the development is reduced / mitigated against. Given the scale of the site, its location and subdivision by the London Marylebone to Aylesbury Vale Parkway railway line and the South-East Aylesbury Link Road, once constructed, there is a need to balance certainty of delivery of key infrastructure elements with the need to maintain flexibility over delivery.

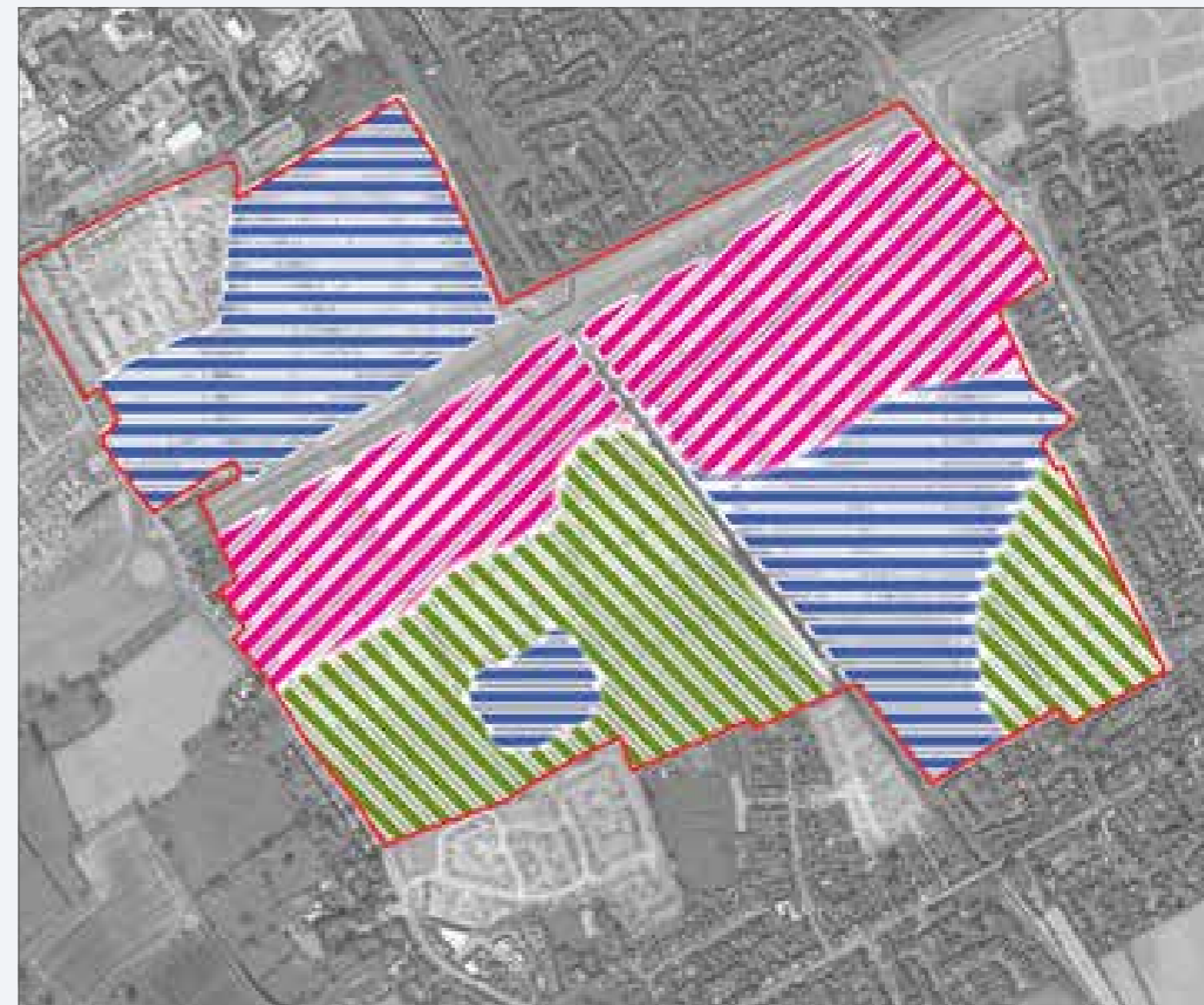
The sequencing of development and provision of supporting infrastructure set out in this Supplementary Planning Document has been structured to provide the appropriate flexibility over where and when development takes place. The key infrastructure requirements are noted in the following table and have been derived from the Councils Infrastructure Development Plan Document (Draft September 2017) and the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. This table only includes the key infrastructure requirements where coordination of overall delivery is most required. For each element, it identifies the anticipated phase of development and any identified trigger points.

The indicative phasing plan below seeks to show the areas of the AGT1 development (housing and infrastructure) that will be brought forward during each of the short, medium and longer term timeframes described in the earlier housing delivery phasing table.

In compiling a list of infrastructure in relation to this allocation, the Council has had regard to the infrastructure tests set out in Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations which state that requests must be:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fair and reasonably related in scale and kind of development

Developers will be required to make Section 106 contributions to fund specific items of infrastructure and services, where required, for the development.



Indicative Phasing Plan

Key

- Short Term
- Medium Tern
- Long Term



05 Delivering the Place

Item	Requirement	Policy	Delivery Timescale	Where	Delivery Lead	Mechanism
Residential						
Affordable Housing	Provision of a minimum of 25% affordable units.	H1	Throughout	All Parcels	Provider	Section 106 & IDF
Gypsy and Traveller Pitches	Provision of 5 pitches, including access and landscaping.	D-AGT1(b)	Short/Medium Term	AGT1 West	Developer	Section 106 & IDF
Community						
Local Centre	Provision of land, buildings, and car parking for a new local centre (including retail).	D-AGT1(q)	Short / Medium Term	AGT1	Developer	Section 106 & IDF
Health	Financial contribution towards off-site health facilities to mitigate against increased demand from the development.	D-AGT1(r)	Short Term	Off-Site Contribution	Council	Section 106 & IDF Per-population cost provided by Council
Community Buildings	Provision of community buildings, including temporary buildings if necessary. Standards contained in Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan Appendix D.	D-AGT1(s)	Medium Term	AGT1	Developer/ Council	Section 106 & IDF
Education						
Primary School	Provision of a school site, buildings, and parent drop off for a combined primary school, including playing field provision and pre-school.	D-AGT1(p)	Short / Medium Term	AGT1	Council	Section 106 & IDF
Secondary School	Financial contribution to an off-site secondary school to mitigate against increased demand from the development.	D-AGT1(p)	Medium Term	Off-Site Contribution	Council	Section 106 & IDF Per-pupil cost provided by education authority
Special Educational Needs (SEN) School	Financial contribution to off-site SEN provision to mitigate against increased demand from the development.	D-AGT1(p)	Medium Term	Off-Site Contribution	Council	Section 106 & IDF Per-pupil cost provided by education authority

Indicative Delivery Timescales: Short Term = Year 2024 - 2027 / Medium term = Year 2027 - 2029 / Long Term = Year 2029 - 2030



05 Delivering the Place

Item	Requirement	Policy	Delivery Timescale	Where	Delivery Lead	Mechanism
Open Space and ANGSt compliant green infrastructure						
Sport & Leisure	Financial contribution to off-site sports facilities to mitigate against increased demand from the development.	I2	Short Term	Off-Site Contribution	Council	Section 106 & IDF Per-population cost provided by Council
Sport Pitches	Suitable sports pitch provision to be agreed with the council.	I2	Medium Term	AGT1 West	Developer	Section 106 & IDF
Green infrastructure - ANGSt compliant and/or SANG compliant	Provision and management of 50% ANGSt compliant green infrastructure and provision of Strategic Alternative Natural Green Space in accordance with the Buckinghamshire SANG Guidance, either onsite as part of the GI or offsite contribution towards a Strategic SANG and contributions towards SAMM, where appropriate.	D-AGT1(h) and Habitats Regulations	Throughout	All Parcels / Applications	Developer	Section 106 & IDF
Access and Transport						
Strategic road infrastructure including South-East Aylesbury Link Road	Safeguarding land required for the delivery of a dual carriageway distributor road, together with associated land. Provision and contribution to road infrastructure as appropriate; including new accesses from Lower Road and Wendover Road.	D-AGT1(c) and (t)	Short term	Relevant Parcels	Council	Section 106 / Other, inc. HS2 & IDF
Public Transport	Provision for public transport into the town and to surrounding areas.	D-AGT1(e and t), D1(f) and T4	Throughout	All Parcels	Council	Section 106 & IDF
Enhanced Sustainable Travel and Mobility	Promote and encourage sustainable travel choices through the requirement of integrated, forward looking and accessible transport options including provision of Travel Plans and non-car promotion.	D1(f) and T4	Short / Medium Term	On-site provisions and off-site contributions	Council	Section 106 & IDF
Highway Improvements	Contributions towards or delivery of transport capacity improvements and/or junction improvements (including link roads) where required and justified (to be confirmed).	D1(f), T4 and AGT1(t)	Short / Medium Term	On/off -site provisions and off-site contributions	Council	Section 106 & IDF
Other Infrastructure	Infrastructure requirements as set out in policy in the Local Plan including, utilities, water supply, waste water, flood mitigation – SUDS, and equipped play areas.	Throughout	Throughout	All parcels	Developer	Section 106 & IDF

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Indicative Delivery Timescales: Short Term = Year 2024 - 2027 / Medium term = Year 2027 - 2029 / Long Term = Year 2029 - 2030



Apportionment

On the basis that more than one planning application will come forward for development within D-AGT1, an apportionment mechanism is required. This approach is consistent with the approach taken by the Council in other locations in Buckinghamshire where there are multiple landowners within a strategic development.

The preferred method of calculating apportionment is by Net Developable Area held by each landowner or developer. The detailed mechanisms for delivery, the exact costings and permutations for different areas coming forward at different times will be considered at the planning application stage.

The development consortium will produce an Infrastructure Delivery Framework for the Council's consideration and approval. The Infrastructure Delivery Framework will evolve as applications are submitted. It will be a living document to reflect the latest position and more thorough analysis that accompanies planning applications.

The Infrastructure Delivery Framework will not be a binding legal document but it will set out definitive expectations of what will be contained within the legally binding commitments in each application S106 agreement. This will enable the Council to ensure that infrastructure will be costed and delivered in a timely and holistic manner. A separate memorandum of understanding document between the Consortium members would also be produced which will be submitted to the Council as additional assurance (potentially as an additional application document when each application comes forward). The Memorandum would provide a clear basis for the Council to impose lawful planning obligations and conditions to secure the relevant infrastructure in a planned holistic manner, in accordance with this document and Infrastructure Development Framework.

Highways Improvements

Highway modelling work is being undertaken to consider the proposed access locations; trip generation methodology and modelling scenarios in relation to the development of AGT1. This uses existing data together with predicted data estimates of future traffic to calculate the capacity of infrastructure and thus the need for improvements to highway infrastructure. These improvements will be detailed within the infrastructure agreement made between the individual landowners and legally secured through the section 106 agreement and planning conditions for each individual application.

Site Improvements

Further site / area specific infrastructure will be required on a more local basis, for delivery under individual detailed planning permissions for the relevant phase of the development. This will include the provision of items such as cycle and footpaths, streets, public open space, urban green and ANGSt compliant green infrastructure [Policy D-AGT1(f), (g) and (h)] including the provision of a buffer [Policy D-AGT1(o)], provision for on-site SANG or financial contributions towards a strategic SANG where appropriate, and the provision of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) [Policy D-AGT1(k)]. Provision for these will need to be made in step with the requirements of each phase of development whilst ensuring that provision is coordinated between phases.

A range of facilitating utilities related to the development of the site will also be required [Policy D-AGT1(t)], such as power, ultra-fast broadband internet access and telecommunications [Policy D1(j)], water and foul drainage.

Provision for these will be made in line with the requirements of each phase of development, with coordination between phases ensured.

Delivery

The delivery of AGT1 will take place over several years, with the main development expected to take place between 2024 to 2033. Development is likely to come forward via the submission of different planning applications, either in outline or detailed form, for individual phases based on the subdivision of the site into smaller parcels.

Subject to the requirement for delivery of necessary infrastructure in relation to the trajectory of development and the location of the application area, all planning applications submitted will need to consider the delivery of appropriate infrastructure required to either make the application development acceptable and / or the development of the wider AGT1 site acceptable. Thus, ensuring that infrastructure is delivered in a timely way to reduce the impact of the development and to ensure that residents have access to the necessary amenities.

Delivery Mechanism

To ensure the appropriate mechanism to deliver the required infrastructure, the proposed apportionment and methodology will be set out upfront so that both the council and individual landowners / developers within the site are aware of the requirements, thus ensuring the approach to delivery is as comprehensive as possible.

An Infrastructure Delivery Framework will set out the key infrastructure items, guided by those listed within this Supplementary Planning Document, with appropriate apportionment / charges detailed, together with details to secure delivery including land costs and details of potential conditions and legal mechanisms.

The delivery of the infrastructure referred to in this Supplementary Planning Document will be guided by an infrastructure agreement made between the individual landowners. This document will be endorsed by the council in due course and will set out the agreed apportionment of financial and in-kind contributions that will ensure delivery of all D-AGT1 infrastructure. These principles will be legally secured through the section 106 agreement and planning conditions for each individual application.

Viability and Deliverability

Key to a successful development will be the delivery of a high quality and sustainable place in which to live, including the provision of appropriate infrastructure at the right time. Co-ordination between the Council, landowners / developers and key stakeholders will be key to this.

Given the long timescale for delivery of South Aylesbury the continued viability of the site to ensure its continued long-term delivery is of paramount importance. It may therefore be appropriate to reconsider the viability of proposals at later stages. This may mean that the level and / or timing of affordable housing provision required or the timing of provision of elements of infrastructure as set out in this Supplementary Planning Document may need to be revisited.

Where landowners / developers wish to consider scheme viability, which is likely to be when planning applications are submitted, the Council will require an open book approach to be taken so that the outcomes and implications of viability testing at application stage can be carefully evaluated by the Council in light of the aspirations and requirements set out in this Supplementary Planning Document.



5.3 Infrastructure Delivery Framework

In terms of the mechanisms for securing the timely and comprehensive delivery of infrastructure at AGT1, the Council's preferred approach would be for there to be a single planning application and accompanying S106 legal agreement to cover the whole of the allocation area. However, it is recognised that circumstances may prevail where there are a number of related planning applications and s106 agreements that come forward. In this scenario, it is important that this SPD provides a basis for setting out how those planning applications can demonstrate:

- that policy compliant development can still be achieved;
- how the separate developments will accept their share of the costs;
- how the approach will provide certainty over the delivery of full package of the necessary infrastructure while overcoming issues of phasing; and
- how delivery will be achieved.

This approach is consistent with the approach taken by the Council in other locations in Buckinghamshire where there are multiple landowners within a strategic development.

To respond to the above, in addition to the provisions set out elsewhere in this SPD, delivery of the infrastructure referred to in this Supplementary Planning Document will be guided by a detailed Infrastructure Delivery Framework (IDF).

The IDF, once endorsed by the Council, will expand upon the key delivery principles and infrastructure items, guided by those listed within this Supplementary Planning Document. Importantly, it will also set out the agreed apportionment of financial and in-kind contributions that will ensure delivery of all AGT1 infrastructure. These principles will be legally secured through planning obligations (contained within each section 106 agreement) and planning conditions for each individual application.

Development of the Infrastructure Delivery Framework will be based on the following key principles:

1. Positive engagement and involvement of all parties needed to deliver strategic infrastructure;
2. Identified responsibility for delivery of strategic infrastructure;
3. Agreed triggers for delivery of infrastructure (distinguishing between negotiable and non-negotiable triggers);
4. Speed, pace & sequencing of development. Infrastructure to reflect partners' positions (e.g. what if sites come forward in different order to that envisaged);
5. Apportionment of infrastructure costs by net developable area and proportionality in respect of costs or as may otherwise be agreed
6. Framework for public funding to be levered in if appropriate;
7. Reasonably easy to use and monitor;
8. Does not hold up development starting;
9. Commitments from all parties:
 - 9.1 to the delivery of Strategic Infrastructure;
 - 9.2 not inhibit other parties' right to develop/deliver;
10. Framework for review mechanism;
11. Flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances, e.g. significant market shifts, housing mix & values;
12. Includes early warning signals to highlight problems including delay with delivery arrangements and explore the possibility of mechanisms e.g. 'step-in' rights
13. Full recovery of costs and forward funding by the Council or any agreed and implemented Delivery Body.

As noted above, the preferred method of calculating apportionment is by Net Developable Area held by each landowner or developer. The IDF will set out the position with regards to the areas and proportions of the AGT1 site under various different land ownerships. To ensure the appropriate mechanism to deliver the required infrastructure, the proposed apportionment and methodology will be set out in the IDF so that both the council and individual landowners / developers within the site are aware of the requirements, thus ensuring the approach to delivery is as comprehensive as possible. The IDF will be worked upon as applications are submitted and evolve and will be able to include detailed mechanisms for delivery, the exact costings and permutations for different areas coming forward at different times resulting in it being a living document to reflect the latest position analysis that accompanies planning applications.



The IDF will be brought forward by the development consortium and adopted by the Council in advance of the determination of the first major planning application for the AGT1 site and each AGT1 planning application is required to be fully compliant with its terms. Any planning application that seeks to be determined in advance of the IDF being adopted would be required to demonstrate full policy compliance, acceptance of a proportionate cost of all of the AGT1 infrastructure and that infrastructure could be delivered in full and how this would be achieved.

The IDF will set out definitive expectations of what would be contained within the legally binding commitments in each application s106 agreement. This will enable the Council to ensure that infrastructure will be costed and delivered in a timely and holistic manner. A separate memorandum of understanding document between the AGT development Consortium members could also be produced and submitted to the Council as additional assurance (potentially as an additional application document when each application comes forward). The Memorandum would provide a clear basis for the Council to impose lawful planning obligations and conditions to secure the relevant infrastructure in a planned holistic manner, in accordance with this SPD document and Infrastructure Development Framework to follow.

Highways Improvements

Further site / area specific highway infrastructure will be required for delivery under individual detailed planning permissions for the relevant phase of the development. This will include the provision of items such as cycle and footpaths, streets, and possible off-site highway improvement works.

Highway modelling work will consider the proposed access locations; trip generation methodology and modelling scenarios in relation to the development of AGT1. This uses existing data together with predicted data estimates of future traffic to calculate the capacity of infrastructure and thus the need for improvements to highway infrastructure.

Provision for these site and highways improvements will need to be made in step with the requirements of each phase of development whilst ensuring that provision is coordinated between phases. These will be detailed within the IDF agreement and legally secured through the section 106 agreement and planning conditions for each individual application.

Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation

D-AGT1 will create at least 1,000 new homes. Some parts of the site will lead to an increase in the number of homes and therefore an increase in the population residing within the 12.6 kilometre Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Zone of Influence.

Where it is assessed that this population increase will lead to potential recreational disturbance to the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation, a twin mitigation package is required.

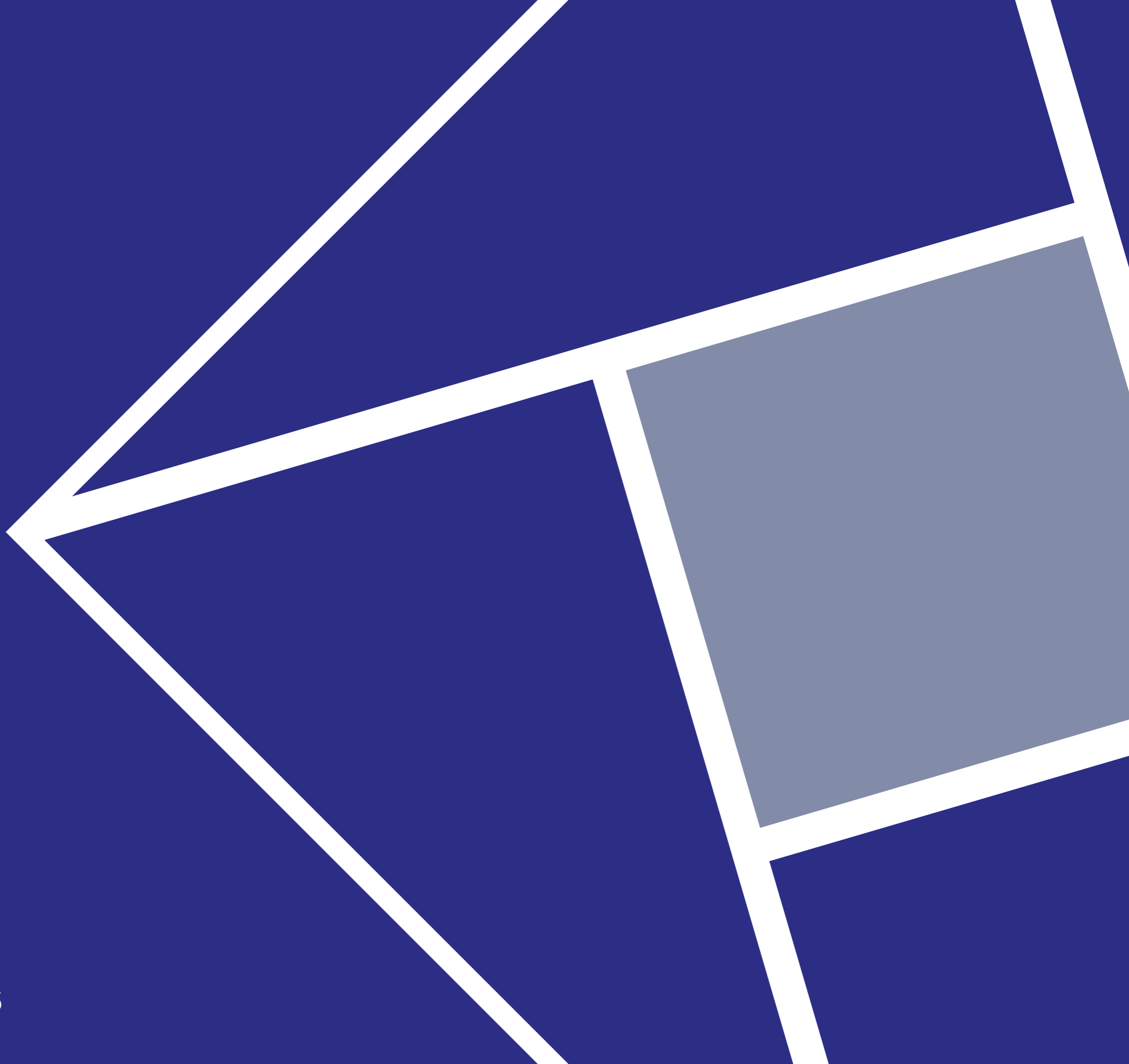
It is anticipated that this will take the form of:

1. A financial contribution from each net new home within the Zone of Influence towards a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMB). This strategy will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.
2. The delivery of a Suitable Alternative Natural Green (SANG) space in accordance with the Buckinghamshire SANG Guidance within the allocation as part of the green infrastructure or offsite financial contribution towards a Strategic SANG. The green infrastructure being provided must have a long-term management and maintenance strategy and be agreed by the council. A mechanism must be secured to manage the green infrastructure in perpetuity. The management and maintenance strategy shall set out details of the owner, the responsible body and how the strategy can be implemented by contractors.

The delivery and the in-perpetuity maintenance of the Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space to satisfy the necessary requirements, should be agreed with Natural England where provided on-site. The aim of this green space is to provide a good quality and alternative recreational space capable of reducing the need for the new population to visit the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. Perpetuity in this context is taken as at least 80 years.

Both of these mitigation measures will be considered as part of the determination of planning applications submitted to the council for this allocation affecting the Zone of Influence.

6 - Next Steps





6.1 The Planning Application Process and Expectations

The Council's preference is for a single application, however this Supplementary Planning Document acknowledges that multiple outline and/or full planning applications for individual land parcels may be made. In the case of outline applications, these will be followed by reserved matters applications.

This Supplementary Planning Document, along with the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, Garden Town Masterplan and other Supplementary Planning Documents adopted by the Council creates a strategic framework against which an application will be determined. It is a requirement that an application is accompanied by a suite of accompanying documents and information in accordance with national and local planning policy. The information to be submitted is as set out in the following list. This list is not a definitive list and should individual applications be submitted not all will need to provide all the information set out; it will depend upon the size and scale of the proposal and any pre-application discussions with the Council.

- Plans and drawings
- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Transport Assessment and Travel Plans
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statement
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
- Arboricultural Survey & Landscaping
- Biodiversity Report
- Archaeology and Heritage Assessment
- Air Quality Assessment
- Noise Assessment
- Environmental Statement Screening and/or Scoping (with potential Environmental Statement subject to Screening)
- S106 Heads of Terms
- Infrastructure Delivery Statement

6.2 Subsequent Design Stages and Expectations

An outline planning application will need to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement that will set out how the application relates to the overall Supplementary Planning Document Masterplan and fits within the wider Garden Town design context. An application will need to provide parameter plans, proposed character areas, typologies and illustrative layouts which will demonstrate how the Garden Town and Supplementary Planning Document design objections can be delivered within the scheme.



6.3 Governance and Engagement Expectations

The Garden Town Masterplan states *“A key objective for AGT is the involvement of the local community in delivering long-term governance and stewardship structures for community facilities, as well as non-adopted parks and open spaces. Community engagement and ‘ownership’ is a key objective of the Garden Town concept.”*

Planning applications for the site should set out how public areas and community assets will be maintained in the long term, and, where appropriate, how the community can be involved in the governance of these assets. In particular, this is likely to consider the school, local centre and Aylesbury Gardenway where these are provided within the site.

Early engagement with the local community will provide opportunities for all parties to share ideas and suggestions as to how the community assets can be delivered and secured for future generations to ensure a long-lasting legacy.

6.4 Delivering, Monitoring and Review

This Supplementary Planning Document carries statutory weight in the planning process and is a material consideration for planning applications. It provides an overarching design framework that informs and will guide future planning applications for the site and in particular the delivery of homes and key infrastructure.

Future planning applications will be expected to include information on phasing and delivery and a delivery mechanism to ensure a coordinated approach to infrastructure delivery. In particular, this will need to secure the delivery of the school in accordance with the details set out in Section 5 of this Supplementary Planning Document.

Planning applications will also need to include a means to secure the other infrastructure elements, such as the local centre, community centre, 50% ANGST compliant green infrastructure, strategic buffer and gypsy & traveller pitches as required by the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and this Supplementary Planning Document.

Policy S8 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan sets out how the Council will monitor policies in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan annually through their Monitoring Report. The Council will monitor the content of and implementation of this Supplementary Planning Document in the same fashion to ensure the aims and objectives of this Supplementary Planning Document are being achieved. In the event delivery is not being achieved in accordance with the Supplementary Planning Document and the principles set out in the Garden Town Masterplan then it may be necessary for the Council to review the Supplementary Planning Document and propose remedial steps.





D-AGT1 Supplementary Planning Document

Central Planning Area

Consultation and Adoption Statement

September 2023

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1. Introduction

This statement is the 'Consultation Statement' for the AGT1 Supplementary Planning Document (central planning area) as required by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

It sets out how the public and other stakeholders were consulted on the consultation draft Supplementary Planning Document, provides a summary of the issues which were raised during the consultation, and how those issues have been addressed in preparing the final version of the document.

The document has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The relevant regulations relating to the consultation process are explained below.

Regulation 12: Regulation 12(a) requires the Council to produce a consultation statement before the adoption of the Supplementary Planning Document. This must set out who was consulted in preparing the document; a summary of the main issues raised by those individuals and organisations who responded, and how those issues have been addressed in the final version of the Supplementary Planning Document. This document is the 'Consultation Statement' for the adopted Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of Regulation 12(a).

Regulation 12(b) requires the Council to publish the documents (including a 'consultation statement') for a minimum four-week period, to specify the date when responses should be received, and identify the address to which responses should be sent. The consultation statement that accompanied the draft Supplementary Planning Document set out that information.

Regulation 13: Regulation 13 stipulates that any person may make representations about the Supplementary Planning Document and that the representations must be made by the end of the consultation date referred to in Regulation 12. The consultation statement that accompanied the draft Supplementary Planning Document set out that requirement.

Regulation 35: Regulation 12 states that when seeking representations on a Supplementary Planning Document, documents must be made available in accordance with Regulation 35. This requires the Council to make documents available by taking the following steps:

- Make the document available at the principal office and other places within the area that the Council considers appropriate;
- Publish the document on the Council's website.

These measures were undertaken as part of the consultation on the draft Supplementary Planning Document.

2. Details of how the consultation was undertaken

This Supplementary Planning Document concerns the and central planning area of Buckinghamshire and provides guidance to policies within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. The following statement was published to notify the public on how to make representations and the consultation statement notes what consultation had taken place prior to the draft being put to public consultation.

2.1. Statement of Representations Procedure and Consultation Statement

STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIONS PROCEDURE AND CONSULTATION STATEMENT

Simon Meecham, Lead Local Plan Consultant

Version: Final

Aylesbury Garden Town 1 - Supplementary Planning Document

STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIONS PROCEDURE

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

Buckinghamshire Council has published the Aylesbury Garden Town 1 - Supplementary Planning Document for

consultation from 10am on 21 September 2022 until 11:59pm on 2 November 2022

Title of Document: Aylesbury Garden Town 1 Supplementary Planning Document

Subject matter: This Supplementary Planning Document is intended to guide developers and key organisations on the following:

1) To provide more detailed guidance regarding the implementation and interpretation of the policies within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, in particular Policies D-AGT1S South Aylesbury and D1 delivering Aylesbury Garden Town, as adopted in September 2021.

The consultation will run from 10am on 21 September 2022 until 11:59pm on 2 November 2022. During this consultation period the Supplementary Planning Document will be available to view online on the Council's consultation portal.

Any comments on the Supplementary Planning Document, its Habitats, Regulations Assessment or Strategic Environmental Assessment must be submitted in writing. Comments can be submitted:

- online through our planning consultation portal: [planning consultation portal](#);
- via Your Voice Bucks to our planning consultation portal: [Your Voice Bucks](#); or
- via email to planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Representations may be accompanied by a request to be notified at a specified address of any further updates in the preparation of the Draft Supplementary Planning Document.

STATEMENT OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR INSPECTION OF THE DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

All representations should be clear on which documents and sections you are making the representation. It would be helpful if you could state the section number and paragraph number as relevant.

This will ensure that the Council has all the information needed to process any representation you wish to make.

All comments on the Draft Supplementary Planning Document, the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Habitats Regulations Assessment must be received no later than 11:59pm on 2 November 2022

After the end of the consultation period, any comments received will be considered by the Council and the Draft Supplementary Planning Document will be amended accordingly. Please note that all comments (including some of your personal details) will be made available for the public to view, and therefore cannot be treated as confidential. The Council's privacy statement can be found here at the end of this document.

CONSULTATION STATEMENT

Persons the local planning authority consulted when preparing the supplementary planning document.

This draft Supplementary Planning Document has been produced by the development consortium and the council's teams; including Planning Policy, Development Management, Transport, Ecology, Landscape, Highways, Communities, Leisure, SuDS, Infrastructure and Housing.

The council with their consultants Hyas Associates held a series of consultation and engagement workshops with parish councils, Network Rail, representative of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and the development consortium for AGT. These considered spatial and technical details to influence of the content of the Draft SPD.

In addition to the Draft SPD, a Habitats Regulations Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment were prepared and consulted upon with the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England.

**Summary of the main issues raised by those persons.
How those issues have been addressed in the supplementary planning document?**

This can be found in section 3 of this Statement.

Privacy and Planning Policy and Compliance

Buckinghamshire Council's Planning Policy and Compliance team collects, uses and is responsible for certain personal information about you.

When we collect personal information we are regulated under the General Data Protection Regulation which applies across the European Union (including in the United Kingdom) and we are responsible as 'controller' of that personal information for the purposes of those laws.

If you have questions about data or privacy please contact our Data Protection Officer can be contacted at Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF or email dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

The personal information we collect

Information collected by us

The work for which we collect personal information includes:

- producing, reviewing and monitoring planning policy and guidance documents (these include local plans, neighbourhood plans and supplementary planning documents, and non-statutory supplementary planning guidance)
- keeping registers such as the self-build and custom housebuilding register and brownfield land register
- monitoring development

- producing a housing and economic land availability assessment and, from time to time, undertaking a “call for sites” and other evidence-based reports as appropriate
- collecting, spending and administering the community infrastructure levy
- responding to allegations of unlawful development

In order to fulfil these functions, it is necessary that we collect the following personal information:

- your name
- your phone numbers
- your email address
- your home address

At times, we may need you (or you may want) to supply other personal information such as your date of birth, marital status, gender, ethnic status, information on family members, medical, health or details on vulnerabilities and financial information regarding yourself or your existing or proposed business interests.

The type of information we collect will depend on the nature of the enquiry and we will never ask for more personal data than is necessary in order to deal with your enquiry or response on planning documents.

Information collected from other sources

We also obtain personal information from:

- other services within Buckinghamshire Council
- other government partners and agencies
- other third-party partners

How we use your personal information

In order to ensure that we are able to deliver the highest quality service to you, we use your personal information in the following ways:

- for the purposes of the production, review and monitoring of planning policy documents, including local plans, SPDs and neighbourhood plans
- for the purposes of undertaking a referendum in relation to a neighbourhood plan
- for the purposes of keeping and updating registers, such as self-build and custom housebuilding registers and brownfield land registers
- for the purposes of making development management decisions, including the determination of planning applications and planning appeals, and producing planning agreements

Who we share your personal information with

In order to carry out the above activities in an efficient way, we routinely share personal data with other service departments within Buckinghamshire Council, such as the Development Control, Electoral, Economic Development, Finance, Housing and Legal. We may also share personal data with other government partners and agencies, such as:

- the District Valuer
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England

In relation to statutory plan-making processes we may share your personal data with independent planning inspectors and examiners. This data sharing enables us to ensure the best service is delivered.

We do not anticipate that our data-transferring arrangements will involve a transfer outside of the European Economic Area (EEA). We do not sell your information to other organisations. We will not share your personal information with any other third party.

On occasion we may be required to share personal information with law enforcement or other authorities if required by applicable law. Where this occurs, we will ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place

Whether information has to be provided by you and, if so, why?

The provision of the personal data (as set out above) is required from you to enable us to deliver our services. We will inform you at the point of collecting information from you whether you are required to provide the information to us.

Failing to provide information may result in:

- us not being able to consult with you or deal with a response you have made in relation to a draft planning policy document
- you not being able to participate in a referendum in relation to a neighbourhood plan
- you not being included on a register, such as self-build and custom housebuilding registers or brownfield land register
- your views not being taken into account in development management decisions.

How long your personal information will be kept

We will hold the personal data provided by you until the relevant matter is concluded. In the case of planning policy documents, we may keep personal data until the relevant document is superseded. For auditing and accountability purposes we routinely hold information for a period of six years from conclusion or resolution of a matter, or longer if we have an obligation to retain this information.

Reasons for collecting and using your personal information

We rely on planning legislation (such as regulations relating to consultation on planning policy documents and the collection, administration and spending of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)) as the lawful basis on which we collect and use your personal data.

Redaction ('blinking things out')

We are required, as a part of the process of developing planning policies, neighbourhood plans, and other documents, to publish any responses received to consultations.

We operate a policy where we routinely redact the following details before making forms and documents available online:

- personal contact details (e.g., telephone numbers and email addresses)
- signatures
- special category data (e.g., information about health conditions or ethnic origin)
- information agreed to be confidential

If you are submitting information which you would like to be treated confidentially or wish to be specifically withheld from the public register, please let us know as soon as you can - ideally in advance of your submission. The best way to contact us about this issue is by email: planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Complaints and problems

If you need to make a complaint specifically about the way we have processed your data, you should email us at dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

2.2. Copies of consultation letters

Monday 5 September 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Documents for consultation

Buckinghamshire Council are consulting on three draft Supplementary Planning Documents:

- **Aylesbury Garden Town 1 Supplementary Planning Document.** This document provides draft planning guidance for policy D-AGT1 which is a site allocation within in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.
- **Aylesbury Vale Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.** This document provides draft planning guidance for the affordable housing policy H1 in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. It sets out how affordable housing requirements should be applied to new developments within the north and central planning areas.
- **Aylesbury Vale Design Supplementary Planning Document.** This document provides design planning guidance for new development across the north and central planning areas. It sets out principles and objectives to deliver high quality design in new developments.

What are Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary Planning Documents are documents which provide guidance on adopted policies and are capable of being material considerations in planning decisions. These Supplementary Planning Documents apply only to the north and central planning areas and are guidance to the policies in the in the 2021 Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

Taking part in the consultation

You can get involved and have your say by taking part in the consultations between **Wednesday 7 September from 10:00am to Wednesday 19 October at 11:59pm.**

Please submit your views to the council in one of the following ways:

- Submitting your comments online:

Using the online consultation system at:

- <https://buckinghamshire.oc2.uk/document/23> for the Aylesbury Garden Town 1 Supplementary Planning Document.

- <https://buckinghamshire.oc2.uk/document/22> for the Aylesbury Vale Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

- <https://buckinghamshire.oc2.uk/document/29>

for the Aylesbury Vale Design Supplementary Planning Document.

- Email us on planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- Write to us at:
Supplementary Planning Documents
Planning Policy
Buckinghamshire Council
The Gateway
Gatehouse Rd

Aylesbury
HP19 8FF

What happens next.

We will take account of the responses received and make any necessary changes to the Supplementary Planning Documents. Following any amendments, the Supplementary Planning Documents SPDs will then be adopted by the Council and will become a material planning consideration.

Why have you contacted me about this consultation.

You have previously expressed an interest in planning policy. For further details on how and why we are using your information please see:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/privacy/privacy-and-planning-policy-and-compliance/>

Simon Meecham
Lead Local Plan Consultant

On behalf of
Steve Bambrick
Director, Planning & Environment
Planning, Growth & Sustainability Directorate
Buckinghamshire Council
planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Tuesday 1 November 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning documents for consultation

As you may be aware, Buckinghamshire Council are consulting on the **Aylesbury Garden Town 1, Supplementary Planning Document**. This document provides draft planning guidance for policy D-AGT1, which is a site allocation within in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

The original closing date for representations was 2 November, 2022. However, the Council has now published the Strategic Environmental Appraisal for this Supplementary Planning Document.

We are therefore extending the consultation period until 30 November, 2022. This is to provide you with the opportunity to consider this Strategic Environmental Appraisal in any representations you may make on the Supplementary Planning Document.

What are Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary Planning Documents are documents which provide guidance on adopted policies and are capable of being material considerations in planning decisions. This Supplementary Planning Document only applies to the north and central planning areas and provides guidance to the policies in the 2021, Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.

What is a Strategic Environmental Assessment?

Strategic Environmental Assessment is a systematic process for identifying, reporting and proposing mitigation measures for any effects of plans, programmes and strategies on the environment. It aims to ensure that environmental issues are taken into account at every stage in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and review of plans, programmes and strategies of a public nature.

Taking part in the consultation

You can get involved and have your say by taking part in the consultation until **Wednesday 30 November at 11:59pm**.

Please submit your views to the council in one of the following ways:

- Submitting your comments online:

Using the online consultation system at: <https://buckinghamshire.oc2.uk/>

- Emailing planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

- Writing to: Supplementary Planning Documents
 Planning Policy
 Buckinghamshire Council
 The Gateway
 Gatehouse Rd

Aylesbury
HP19 8FF

What happens next.

We will take account of the responses received and make any necessary changes to the Supplementary Planning Document. Following any amendments, the Supplementary Planning Document will then be adopted by the Council and will become a material planning consideration.

Why have you contacted me about this consultation?

You have previously expressed an interest in planning policy. For further details on how and why we are using your information please see: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/privacy/privacy-and-planning-policy-and-compliance/>

Simon Meecham
Lead Local Plan Consultant

On behalf of
Steve Bambrick
Director, Planning & Environment
Planning, Growth & Sustainability Directorate
Buckinghamshire Council
planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

2.3. Website Text

Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary planning documents provide guidance on policies in the adopted local plans in Buckinghamshire and should be read in conjunction with the local plan to which they relate. They are a material consideration when determining planning applications.

From 7 September at 10am to 19 October at 23.59 Buckinghamshire Council is consulting on the following supplementary planning documents which relate to the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan:

Aylesbury Garden Town 1 - Supplementary Planning Document

This document sets out planning and development guidance for the area identified in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan as South Aylesbury, which is located within Stoke Mandeville civil parish. This is a mixed-use allocation and part of the Aylesbury Garden Town.

This masterplan document is intended to guide landowners, developers, the public and the local planning authority in respect of environmental, social, economic and design objectives for the site.

Aylesbury Vale Area Affordable Housing - Supplementary Planning Document

This document provides planning guidance on how affordable housing policy should be applied to proposals for residential development within the Aylesbury Vale.

Aylesbury Vale Area Design- Supplementary Planning Document

This document provides guidance on design to ensure that new development across Aylesbury Vale is of the highest quality, is in context with its location, and is inclusive and sustainable.

The document sets out clear principles and objectives that aim to inspire developers and designers and assist landowners, developers, applicants, and planners in the process of delivering high quality and well-designed development.

We would like to hear your views on these supplementary planning documents.

You can get involved and have your say by taking part in the live consultations which are running from 10:00am on Wednesday 7 of September 2022 to 23:59pm on Wednesday 19 of October 2022.

Please follow the links below to the respective consultation pages for each of the three supplementary planning documents.

- Aylesbury Vale Area Design Supplementary Planning Document: <https://buckinghamshire.oc2.uk/document/23>
- Aylesbury Vale Area Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document: <https://buckinghamshire.oc2.uk/document/22>
- Aylesbury GardenTown1 (AGT1) Supplementary Planning Document: <https://buckinghamshire.oc2.uk/document/29>

2.4. Frequently Asked Questions

AGT-1, Affordable Housing and Design Supplementary Planning Documents Consultation FAQs for Call Centre

No.	Question	Answer/Comment
1	What is this about?	<p><u>AGT-1</u> This document sets out planning and development guidance for the area identified in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan as South Aylesbury, which is located within Stoke Mandeville civil parish. This is a mixed-use allocation and part of the Aylesbury Garden Town.</p> <p>This masterplan document is intended to guide landowners, developers, the public and the local planning authority in respect of environmental, social, economic and design objectives for the site.</p> <p><u>Affordable Housing</u> This document provides planning guidance on how affordable housing policy should be applied to proposals for residential development within the Aylesbury Vale area.</p> <p><u>Design</u> This document provides guidance on design to ensure that new development across Aylesbury Vale is of the highest quality, is in context with its location, and promotes sustainable development.</p> <p>The document sets out clear principles and objectives that aim to inspire developers and designers and assist landowners, developers, applicants, and planners in the process of delivering high quality and well-designed development.</p>
2	When did it go live? When does it end?	10:00 21 September – 23:59 2 November 2022
3	Where can I find the document?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning Policy consultation portal 2. Your Voice Bucks

		3. The four council office access points (Gateway, Amersham, Wycombe, Walton Street)
4	Events to find out more	<p>Planning Policy are hosting two public drop-in sessions to find out more about the documents. The drop-in sessions will be held on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 26 September 2022, from 9am to 2pm • Tuesday 27 September 2022, from 3pm to 9pm <p>Both sessions will be held at Stoke Mandeville Stadium (Guttman Centre), Guttman Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP21 9PP.</p>
5	How can I register my comments/objections?	<p>Preferred option, via: Planning Policy consultation portal</p> <p>alternatively email: planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</p> <p>or postal: Supplementary Planning Documents, Planning Policy Team, Buckinghamshire Council, King George V House, King George V Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire. HP6 5AW</p> <p>Or by posting into the deposit box at one of the council offices.</p>
6	Why does the Council have to produce this document?	The Council produces a range of guidance for implementing planning policy. These supplementary planning documents relate to the recently adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.
7	Is it possible to upload my comments as a document?	Yes, follow the link on: Planning Policy consultation portal
8	I would like to speak with someone about this document.	<p>Customer Service take the calls and contact one of the responsible officers as required</p> <p>Phone numbers of responsible officers:</p> <p>Simon Meecham – 01494 732175 Charlotte Morris – 01494 421064 David Broadley – 01296 585866</p>
9	I don't understand some of the terms	Explanation of most of the terms are in the glossary sections

10	Can I have a copy of the document posted to me?	Preferably not, but, if necessary, please ask for name / address / email address / phone number and pass to responsible officers to sort out: Jakob.bright@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
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2.5. Press Release for the Consultation

Press Release from Buckinghamshire Council

21 September 2022

New planning guidance for the Vale of Aylesbury unveiled

Buckinghamshire Council today launched a consultation on three important planning guidance documents that, once adopted, will inform planning and development decisions in the former Aylesbury Vale district area. These documents, known as supplementary planning documents (SPDs), provide detailed advice and guidance on policies in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan which was adopted by the council in September 2021. The consultation will be open until 2 November 2022. Individuals and organisations are invited to give their views on the following documents:

Aylesbury Garden Town – South Aylesbury Masterplan

This masterplan document is intended to guide landowners, developers, the public and the local planning authority in respect of environmental, social, economic and design objectives for the planning and development of the South Aylesbury area of the Aylesbury Garden Town, situated within Stoke Mandeville civil parish.

Affordable Housing SPD

This document provides further planning guidance on how affordable housing policy should be applied to proposals for residential development within the Aylesbury Vale local plan area.

Design SPD

The aim of the design supplementary planning document is to ensure that new development

across Aylesbury Vale is of the highest quality, is in context with its location, and is inclusive and sustainable. The document sets out clear principles and objectives that aim to inspire developers and designers and assist landowners, developers, applicants and planners in the process of delivering high quality and well-designed development.

Public exhibition

If you'd like to find out more about the supplementary planning documents and discuss them with members of the council's Planning Team, why not come along to our public exhibition:

Guttmann Centre: Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Guttmann Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP21 9PP

- Monday 26 September 9am – 2pm
- Tuesday 27 September 3pm – 9pm

Peter Strachan, Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, said: "These important documents provide additional detailed guidance to support the policies set out in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan adopted by the council in September 2021.

"I'd encourage individuals and organisations to take the time to look at these draft documents and provide feedback via the consultation. Once we have considered all the responses, we'll produce updated documents that will go forward for adoption by the council. These documents will then help to inform planning applications and decisions."

To find out more about the supplementary planning documents and to take part in the consultation, go to: www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/spd

–Ends–

Notes to Editor Image: A housing development in Kingsbrook, Aylesbury

Contact us at communications@buckinghamshire.gov.uk during office hours. For urgent out of hours enquiries, please call 07825 430 978. www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Consultation on Draft Supplementary Planning Documents

Consultation Period: 7 September – 19 October 2022

Draft Aylesbury Garden Town 1 Supplementary Planning Document

Draft Aylesbury Vale Design Supplementary Planning Document

Draft Aylesbury Vale Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

Public Consultation in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Buckinghamshire Council is seeking views on three draft Supplementary Planning Documents:

Aylesbury Garden Town 1 Masterplan;

Aylesbury Vale Design Guide; and

Aylesbury Vale Affordable Housing Guide.

1. Draft Aylesbury Garden Town 1 - Supplementary Planning Document

This document sets out planning and development guidance for the area identified in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan as South Aylesbury, which is located within Stoke Mandeville civil parish. This is a mixed-use allocation and part of the Aylesbury Garden Town.

This masterplan document is intended to guide landowners, developers, the public and the local planning authority in respect of environmental, social, economic and design objectives for the site.

2. Draft Aylesbury Vale Area Affordable Housing - Supplementary Planning Document

This document provides planning guidance on how affordable housing policy should be applied to proposals for residential development within the Aylesbury Vale.

3. Draft Aylesbury Vale Area Design- Supplementary Planning Document

This document provides guidance on design to ensure that new development across Aylesbury Vale is of the highest quality, is in context with its location, and is inclusive and sustainable.

These documents can be reviewed on the Councils website.

- Our **Draft Aylesbury Garden Town 1 Supplementary Planning Document**, which can be viewed online at: <https://buckinghamshire.oc2.uk/document/29>
- Our Draft Aylesbury Vale Design SPD Supplementary Planning Document, which can be viewed online at: <https://buckinghamshire.oc2.uk/document/23>
- Our Draft Aylesbury Vale Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, which can be viewed online at: <https://buckinghamshire.oc2.uk/document/22>

Viewing Consultation Documents in Person

Hard copies of the consultation documents have been placed for review at three deposit points:

Walton Street offices - Walton St, Aylesbury HP20 1UA;

Wycombe office - Queen Victoria Rd, High Wycombe HP11 1BB; and

Amersham office (King George V House, King George V Rd, Amersham HP6 5AW.

How to Submit Comments

Comment forms can be sent to Planning Policy, Gateway office - Gatehouse Rd, Aylesbury HP19 8FF.

By placing written comments on this form and dropping into the adjacent consultation box.

Full details on how you can submit comments on the consultation document can be found at the end of this comments form and on our website:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-development-plans/local-planning-guidance/>

The deadline for submitting comments is **midnight on 19 October 2022**.

What Happens Next?

The procedure for preparing and adopting the Aylesbury Garden Town 1 Supplementary Planning Document, Aylesbury Vale Design Supplementary Document and Aylesbury Vale Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document must be carried out in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The three draft Supplementary Planning Documents do not require independent examination. However, under Regulation 12, after the consultation period has come to an end, the Council must prepare a statement setting out: who was consulted in the document's preparation; a summary of the main issues raised by respondents; and how those issues have been addressed. The draft Supplementary Planning Documents, with any amendments, can then be considered for adoption by the council.

Sharing your personal details

Comments submitted by individuals, businesses and/or organisations may be summarised, alongside their name. No other contact details will be published.

Please refer to our Privacy Notice regarding how your personal data is used for this consultation. If you would like to know more about the council's data protection registration or to find out about your personal data, please visit https:

www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/privacy/data-protection-and-gdpr/

Any queries?

If you have any queries about this form please email planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Council Deposit Points

If you wish to complete a Comments Form please do so and put in the consultation box.

This form has two parts: Part A – Personal details and Part B - Your comments

Part A – Personal details

1. Are you responding as: (please tick one box)

An individual

A business or organisation

An agent

2. Your name, postal address and email (where applicable) are required for your comments to be considered.

	Personal Details	Agent Details (if applicable)
Title	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Full Name	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Organisation (if relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Job Title (if relevant)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Address Line 1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Address Line 2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Address Line 3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Postal Town	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Postcode	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Telephone Number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Part A – Personal details

1. Are you responding as: (please tick one box)

An individual

A business or organisation

An agent

2. Your name, postal address and email (where applicable) are required for your comments to be considered.

Email Address

Part B - Your comments:

3. Consideration of Representations and Modifications

Please see attached Excel Spreadsheet.

4. Adoption Statement

ADOPTION STATEMENT - *DAY DATE* 2023



Aylesbury Garden Town 1 - Supplementary Planning Document.

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

In accordance with Regulations 11 and 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), notice is hereby given that Buckinghamshire Council adopted the Design Supplementary Planning Document on xx 2023.

This document was prepared to support the implementation of policies in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2021. The document provides guidance on how allocation D-AGT1 should be built out in the Aylesbury Vale Area of Buckinghamshire.

Any person with sufficient interest in the decision to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of that decision. Any such application must be made promptly and, in any event, not later than 3 months after the date on which the SPD was adopted.

The AGT1 Supplementary Planning Document is available to view at:

Insert web link

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Aylesbury Garden Town - 1 SPD

September to November 2022 - Taking account of the Publics Representations -

SPD D-AGT1
Reference: Simon Meecham

Response From	Ref	Comment	Consideration of Representation	Modifications to the SPD
Thames Water	466 467 Response	Water / Waste Water Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recommend early engagement to determine; demand for water supply infrastructure, demand for sewage / wastewater treatment and network infrastructure both on and off site, surface water drainage requirements and flood risk of the development both on and off site provision of waste water / sewerage and water supply infrastructure to service development proposed specific text is recommended to be included within the SPD 	Add Thames Water requested text (with slightly amendments so that it reads coherently) to the SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add to Section 4.5.6: The Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve the new development. Developers are encouraged to contact the water/waste water company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. Where there is a capacity constraint the Local Planning Authority will, agree phasing with Thames Water to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development. <p>Where appropriate, planning permission for developments which result in the need for off-site upgrades, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades.</p>
		Water Efficiency / Sustainable Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support mains water consumption target of 110 litres per head per day (105 litres per head per day plus an allowance of 5 litres per head per day for gardens). Noted as a condition request to any planning approval specific text is recommended to be included within the SPD 	Add Thames Water requested text (with slightly amendments so that it reads coherently) to the SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add to Section 4.5.6: Development must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption. Residential development must reflect Building Regulations at the time with planning conditions will be applied to any new residential planning permissions to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met.
		Flood Risk / Sustainable Drainage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> approach to SuDS that limits as far as possible the volume of and rate at which surface water enters the public system specific text is recommended to be included within the SPD 	Add Thames Water requested text (with slightly amendments so that it reads coherently) to the draft SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add to Section 4.5.3: It is the responsibility of a developer to ensure drainage follows the SuDS hierarchy. Where infiltration is not possible it is expected that surface water will be discharged to the local watercourses. Drainage should not be discharged to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding in the area. Move from Section 2.8 to Section 4.5.3: The AGT-1 policy sets out requirements for drainage, flooding and associated infrastructure which will require consideration by forthcoming planning applications.
Representation	444 445 Response	Green Buffer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AGT-1 non-compliant with the adopted VALP as it requires a buffer between the new development (Area 4) and Stoke Mandeville to maintain the setting and individual identity of Stoke Mandeville 	Whilst some residential development is identified adjacent to the existing properties in Stoke Mandeville the proposed buffer follows the natural line of existing field boundaries, hedges and Bedgrove Brook where surveillance from both sides would be available creating a new northern edge of Stoke Mandeville. It will therefore create a break utilising the natural land features, whilst allowing visual and ecological connection between the buffers on the eastern and western side of the railway line. In addition it will ensure the rear gardens of as many existing properties are contained by providing appropriate distance back to back relationships to the existing houses aiding security.	None proposed
		Vehicle Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is unclear how the vehicle access point from Castlefields to the east will be a secondary access point an increase in vehicle movements will cause an adverse effect on the safety of vehicle access into Wendover Road 	The draft SPD (inc. Section 3.2.3) notes that the access point taken from Castlefields may be able to serve a small selection of new dwellings, but would not be connected to the wider street network in the site except by way of potential pedestrian/cycle links. However, further clarification text will be provided.	Amend / add to Section 3.2.3: An access point taken from Castlefields on the eastern side of the site may be able to serve a small selection of new dwellings but would not connect the wider street network in the site, except by way of potential pedestrian/cycle links. This access, which would provide vehicle connection to a limited number of units, would be subject to further / full details at the planning application stage.
Representation	483 583	Green Buffer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AGT-1 non-compliant with the adopted VALP as Stoke Mandeville requires a buffer between Aylesbury in order to maintain the identity of Stoke Mandeville and will lead to urban sprawl moving the strategic buffer will not provide security and privacy to existing rear gardens 	See response to 444 & 445	N/A
		Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> access from Castlefield is inappropriate as they are very small roads and turning on to Wendover Road is already difficult during peak periods. 	See response to 444 & 445	N/A
Historic England	880 Response	Heritage / Conservation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the SPD should further consider how the area's heritage will inform the design of this site. A heritage assessment is required for Magpie Cottage, whilst the SPD needs to advance plans to deliver AVLP's requirements for Magpie Cottage in relation to archaeological remains a desk based assessment (supported by field evaluation where necessary) is needed to support the SPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments noted and additional text in relation to Magpie Cottage, its heritage status and need to protect its setting included within the SPD. Need for a Heritage Asset Assessment to accompany any application in the vicinity also added. Further text added in relation to archaeological deposits / assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add to Section 2.5.2: Magpie Cottage's listing description notes that it is of 17th century date, altered and extended, and restored in the 20th century. It includes a timber frame with white painted infill, a half-hipped thatch roof with two eaves dormers in the south slope. The building is considered to be of significance as a rural vernacular building of pre-1700 date which retains a significant proportion of its original fabric. The agricultural setting of the building is considered to contribute to its significance. Any planning application for development within the vicinity of the property should be accompanied by a Heritage Asset Assessment, with an appropriate and justified buffer of undeveloped land provided to ensure development is set back from the property and its boundary in order to protect its setting.
		Further Details / Specific Text Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> set out within appendices A and B within the formal comments (pages 4-9). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments noted and additional / amended text included within Section 2.5.3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amendments to 2.5.3.
Smith Jenkins Planning and Heritage obo Hayfield Homes Construction Ltd	883 Response	Gypsy and Traveller Allocation Within Area 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the land at Redhouse Farm is not an appropriate location and there are other sites that would reasonably achieve suitable access. The SPD fails to consider alternative sites. The pitches are located next to proposed housing and existing dwellings thus aren't independent, unacceptable visual harm, unacceptable noise impacts upon existing and future occupiers, conflict between settled and travelling community 	Various locations with the allocation were considered as part of the masterplanning exercise. However, no other location was able to provide such a discrete (separate) location with such immediate and independent access onto the highway network and in particular the SEALR, a key connection. All other sites would be located near proposed housing and / or existing dwellings, whilst visual harm isn't noted within the draft SPD as a reason for their location. Whilst the properties being located adjacent to the SEALR may be more sensitive to noise it is not uncommon for such accommodation to be located adjacent to major transport routes. The proposed location is therefore considered compliant with VALP Policy D11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend Section 4.5.2: Whilst several locations within South Aylesbury were considered, all were equally adjacent to existing / proposed dwellings and accessible to existing / new services. The pitches will be provided on the western parcel adjacent to the SEALR / Lower Road where the most appropriate independent, immediate, and good access from Lower Road and the SEALR can potentially be provided. The area will be provided to the required size and will incorporate appropriate access and good quality landscaping in line with Policy D11 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. Add to Section 4.5.7: In compliance with Policy D11 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan.
		Phasing of Development Including Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redhouse Farm should be identified as a short term development site in the phasing of AGT1, as it's located outside of the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. 	The draft SPD phasing plan in Section 5.2 notes that the timeframes for the areas identified are indicative. Whereas the illustrative phasing (Section 5.1) provides dwelling completion numbers as opposed to location of units. The draft SPD notes that delivery of residential units is also subject to the delivery of the necessary infrastructure, which smaller parts of the wider allocation will not be able to provide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend Indicative Phasing Plan (Section 5.2) so that the Redhouse Farm land is, as is the adjacent land, noted as being 'medium term'.
		Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council's preference for a single planning application is unrealistic considering 2no applications have already been submitted. 	Whilst the Council's preference is for a single application, the draft SPD acknowledges that multiple outline and/or full planning applications for individual land parcels may be made	None required
Representation	878	Residential Edge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of Area 4 should extend to the existing settlement edge in the south-east corner of AGT1. This is unlike other parts of AGT1 where the buffer is located between AGT1 development and Stoke Mandeville, however this does ensure that the buffer has a positive frontage which is overlooked. Locating the buffer along the rear boundary could create a space prone to crime that is not overlooked. 	Development in this location is seen as an extension to the existing settlement and forming a link in townscape terms (rather than a gap) to the existing settlement. The strategic buffer is best located to follow the Bedgrove Brook where surveillance from both sides would be available creating a new northern edge of Stoke Mandeville. Through appropriate planting privacy and security of adjacent properties can be provided.	None required
		Block of Flats Proposed by Cala Homes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fails to respect the privacy of occupiers within existing residential dwellings and are out of character with Peterfield. 	The comment relates to a submitted planning application as opposed to the draft SPD	N/A
		Access / Parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proposed access to Area 4 from Castlefield will significantly increase traffic and road safety issues for those cars turning in to Castlefields from the Wendover Road, 	See response to 444 & 445	N/A

Aylesbury Society	875	Access / Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> need to detail physical linkages (bus routes, cycle/pedestrian routes and highways network) disagrees with incorporation of parking courtyards Provision of transport / mobility hubs and railway crossing welcomed impact of the development on Walton Triangle road junction needs to be considered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further information relating to the connections from the site to the wider area to be included in Section 3.2.4 Where side / rear courtyard parking is referenced within section 4.3 this is noted as being only appropriate where there is no alternative practicable solution Positive comment noted Regarding the impact on the local road network (including Walton Triangle) is noted within the draft SPD, whilst highway / traffic movement impacts will also need to be considered as part of any planning application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add to Section 3.2.4: Wendover Road (A413) is located to the east of the site, with Lower Road (B4443) located to the west. The SEALR, when constructed, will run to the north of / through the South Aylesbury site. These all connect the South Aylesbury to the wider area, including Aylesbury town centre, Wendover, Princes Risborough and beyond. The local topography within the wider area lends itself to walking and cycling with the existing pedestrian and cycle infrastructure in the area considered to be suitable. Footways are provided on both sides of Wendover Road and Lower Road, whilst the Amber Way and Jet Way cycle routes, part of the Aylesbury active travel route network, run adjacent connecting South Aylesbury to Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury town centre and Wendover. There are also several local Public Rights of Way (PROW) and bridleways which cross South Aylesbury, with others in the vicinity, provide alternative traffic-free routes to the surrounding area. Whilst access to the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 57 is available within Princes Risborough located approximately 10km to the southwest. The nearest existing bus stops are located on Wendover Road and Lower Road providing regular services into Aylesbury for connection onwards and to Wendover, Princes Risborough, and High Wycombe. Stoke Mandeville Railway Station is located to the south, providing regular direct services to several local and regional destinations including Aylesbury, Aylesbury Vale Parkway, Amersham, Harrow-on-the-Hill, and London Marylebone.
		Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> proposed local centre on Wendover Road could negatively impact upon the Elm Farm Road shops. Has a retail impact study been carried out? A local centre near the western hub seems more appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific impact assessment has been undertaken as part of the SPD process. Policy AGT1 requires the provision of a local centre but doesn't require it's exact location. Given the presence of the Asda adjacent to the hospital, the location of the store on Station Road and the Parish Council's ambitions for a Parish Centre to the west of the site, it was deemed that a location on the eastern side of the railway line was the most appropriate. Moreover to ensure the viability / vitality of the centre, it should be located on a through route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None proposed
Juniper Investments	893 894 895 Response	Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> proper and full engagement by Council and principal parties with Juniper is required if Juniper Land is required for the master planning and delivery of the allocation (Juniper has not been treated as a principal landowner) OR Juniper Land should be left as 'white land' for consideration, at a future date, for residential development as an extension to Stoke Mandeville (as the Juniper land is obviously not considered necessary to the masterplan and delivery of the allocation) the strategic buffer and connectivity sought by the masterplan can only be delivered if there is proper and full engagement with Juniper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All landowners have been aware of the consortium and, should they have wished to, been allowed to formally join. They were invited to attend the workshops relating to the preparation of the draft SPD, with some, including Juniper, attending the workshops either directly or via a third party. Landowners or their agents were, where requested, regularly updated in relation to the progress of the drafting of the SPD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None required
		Land Use Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no land use budget contained in the draft SPD to confirm the uses and how they will achieve the 50% ANGSt compliant green infrastructure and on which land holdings. Instead, the land use figures in the draft SPD just identify the overall AGT1 allocation (90.45 hectares) and the green infrastructure required (45.23 hectares). It is clear by the masterplan the draft SPD can only realistically deliver the required 50% ANGSt compliant green infrastructure at South Aylesbury by including the Juniper land holding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft SPD (inc. Section 4.5.3) notes that 50% ANGSt compliant green infrastructure will be provided within each application parcel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None required
Aylesbury Old Town Residents Association	896	HS2 and D-AGT2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general comments relating to the expansion of Aylesbury, the development of RAF Halton Camp and Aylesbury Town Centre in proposals for D-AGT-2 land needs to be reserved and protected to eventually build an 'Aylesbury International Railway Station' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments made are not directly applicable to the draft SPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service	890 Response	Parking / Traffic / Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> following elements should be incorporated; new roads wide enough for fire LGV appliance, traffic management systems, strategically placed fire hydrants, adequate off-street parking and pinch points where emergency vehicles need to travel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft SPD indicates a road hierarchy which it is acknowledged will need to meet fire and rescue requirements. These issues will be considered and dealt with at either Reserved Matters or Full application stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
		Residential Dwellings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) should be fitted and promote installation of sprinkler systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These issues will be considered and dealt with at either Reserved Matters of Full application stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
		SuDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SuDs need to be incorporated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft SPD indicates the use of SuDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None required
Stoke Mandeville Parish Council	891 892 Response	Local Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> further consultation required for proposed Parish Centre which is many years from fruition. Facilities in AGT1 should not be deferred to a future Parish Centre the following facilities should be provided: civic hub (inc meeting space); adventure playground and play facilities; public toilets; landscaped car parking; innovation and business start-up centre; nursery and early years provision; on-site medical facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate reference to the Neighbourhood Plan and the proposed Parish Centre should be noted within the SPD. Infrastructure requirements for the AGT1 site, together with others, were considered and justified as part of the local plan process. Policy D-AGT1 of the VALP requires the provision of a school, local centre and a community building, all of which are provided for within the draft SPD. The draft SPD also notes the requirement for financial contributions to other off-site facilities, including health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3.2.6 amended: provides a third location to reflect the aspirations within the first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, which suggests a potential location for a Parish Centre on the western side of Lower Road. However, the proposal for a Parish Centre is many years from fruition. None proposed
		Green Buffer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> needs to be expanded throughout AGT1 and proportionately distributed across the entire Parish/AGT1 as a minimum it must protect identity of existing housing. The green buffer must not be reduced to gardens of adjoining properties and existing properties must not be subsumed into the new housing planned as part of AGT1 should provide walking routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See response to 444 & 445 Potential future walking and cycling routes, including through the green buffer, are identified within the draft SPD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None required
		Housing Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dense housing is unsuitable for any part of AGT1 as it is incompatible with the rural setting / identity of Stoke Mandeville 1000 new residential units is excessive and does not appear to be in line with ambition of green infrastructure and Garden Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of densities is proposed across the AGT1 site, ranging from 25-29dph (lower), through 30-39dph (medium) to 40+dph (higher). These densities are considered appropriate for the area whilst making the best use of the available land, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework and local planning policy. Policy D-AGT1 of the VALP requires the provision of at least 1,000 dwellings. The draft SPD is therefore complying with the VALP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None proposed
		Proposed School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the SPD proposes the School in a slightly different location to that which has been proposed by the Neighbourhood Plan, which has the school closer to the Lower Road entrance to mitigate traffic and so the school fields could serve as a green buffer for the existing properties on Lower Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consultation period of the first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan ended in August 2021. It is understood that since then no subsequent drafts have been issued / progressed and therefore it isn't currently a material consideration. The proposed school has been indicatively located towards the centre of the site to improve accessibility from the development to the east of the railway line. Whilst it is also the common desire of local education authorities not to locate schools on main roads, which the Neighbourhood Plan proposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None proposed
		Inappropriate Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all environmental indicators show that it is the wrong place for development. All new residential developments should be relocated to north of the County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site (AGT1) is allocated for residential development as part of the adopted VALP (Policy D-ADT1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Representation	829	Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new housing should be for social housing and not market-led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VALP requires the provision of both market and affordable housing within Buckinghamshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None required
Representation	862	Character and Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> insufficient regard for retaining the Stoke Mandeville village identity and will lead to the development of a sprawling conurbation, the housing styles depicted do not define identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See response to 444 & 445. Local reference properties within Section 4.4.4 are taken from Stoke Mandeville, whilst other images reference movement and buffer edges, rather than house types. Text to be made more explicit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area Building Typology for Areas 1 to 4 (4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.3 & 4.4.4): Text overlaid on the images to be positioned below, with the text associated with the bottom images changed to "Local Reference (Property Type) - XXXX".
		Flood Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> insufficient consideration for environmental impact with risk of flooding being downplayed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The risk of flooding has been considered as part of the drafting of the SPD and will be subject to more detailed considered / mitigation methodology as part of any outline or detailed planning applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None proposed
		Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no thought regarding the impact on healthcare system or the increase to the existing transport issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure requirements for the AGT1 site, together with others, were considered and justified as part of the local plan process. Policy D-AGT1 of the VALP requires the provision of a local centre and a community building, both of which are provided for within the draft SPD. The draft SPD also notes the requirement for financial contributions to off-site health facilities. Regard to the impact on the local road network (including Walton Triangle) noted within the draft SPD, whilst highway / traffic movement impacts will also need to be considered as part of any planning application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None required
		Ecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little evidence of conservation and natural habitats on the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In line with the policies of the VALP the proposal at AGT1, as identified within the draft SPD, will provide a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), 50% ANGSt compliant green infrastructure, and open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None required
Woodland Trust	885 886 887 888 889	Ecology / Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supports the overall landscape-led masterplan including the retention and enhancement of existing vegetation and habitats where practicable including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets. Would like to see explicit mention made of established woodland, including ancient woodland, and of trees (particularly ancient, veteran and notable trees) outside woods as part of this should seek to protect and increase the use of trees and woodland within the various development areas. Existing ancient woodland and individual ancient, veteran or notable trees outside woods should be mapped, identified and protected. Where ancient woodland or veteran trees are lost or damaged there will always be net loss of biodiversity and it is impossible to secure net gain. welcomes the commitment to secure ANGSt compliant green infrastructure throughout the scheme. It is important that the delivery of the green infrastructure keeps pace with the release and occupation of the residential phases of the project and is not all left to the end. recommend linking to the pilot Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and future LNRS. Recommend considering setting a tree canopy cover target for the area, to address loss of trees to disease and development and to contribute to the uplift in tree cover needed in response to climate change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive comment noted Amendments proposed to Section 4.2 to address comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add to Section 4.2: An overarching Green and Blue Infrastructure plan has been developed for AGT1, which will form the basis for forthcoming designs of each area. Within this the landscape areas have been characterised to set out their differing typologies and design principles. In addition to the retention of existing vegetation and habitats, including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets, additional trees and woodland will be planted where appropriate. Given the integrated nature of green and blue infrastructure within the scheme, the majority of the typologies below represent both kinds to some degree. The importance of the delivery of the green infrastructure is acknowledged and that it should keep pace with the release and occupation of the residential phases of South Aylesbury. Strategies will be implemented, where appropriate and timely with development of South Aylesbury.
		Representation	897	Green Buffer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> development is much larger than originally told with a lack of green buffer
Representation	897	Community Facilities and Shops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unacceptable impact upon existing schools / hospitals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure requirements for the AGT1 site, together with others, were considered and justified as part of the local plan process. Policy D-AGT1 of the VALP requires the provision of a local centre and a community building, both of which are provided for within the draft SPD. The draft SPD also notes the requirement for financial contributions to off-site health facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None required

Representation	905	Greenfield Development • disagrees with green field development	The site (AGT1) is allocated for residential development as part of the adopted VALP (Policy D-ADT1)	N/A
		Traffic / Highways • road links within the town need to be improved	Regard to the impact on the local road network (including Walton Triangle) noted within the draft SPD, whilst highway / traffic movement impacts will also need to be considered as part of any planning application	None required
Representation	912	Brownfield Land • housing should be built on brownfield land. Development shouldn't be taking place on the countryside	The site (AGT1) is allocated for residential development as part of the adopted VALP (Policy D-ADT1)	N/A
		Community Facilities and Shops • Aylesbury town does not have access to retail facilities. Town centre looks like a disused market town	Comments made are not directly applicable to the draft SPD	N/A
The Environment Agency	898 899 900 901 902 903 904	Ecology • supports proposal as it provides a net gain in biodiversity in line with policy NE1 and seeks opportunities to improve ecological status of all watercourses by retaining buffer zones adjacent to all watercourses	Positive comment noted	None required
		Drainage / Flood Risk • parts of the site are at risk from both fluvial and surface water flooding. Development should follow a sequential approach in line with NPPF and within east region and west region - flood zones 2 and 3 should be preserved for greenspace and flood zone 1 should be used for built development • to provide floodplain storage, with an allowance for climate change, reducing flood risk elsewhere ideally an undeveloped buffer zone of at least 10m wide measured from top of bank should be provided. Planting should be locally native species; lighting to reduce spill into the watercourse; paths should be made of permeable materials and set towards the rear of the buffer, with more formal access to the top of the bank at a limited number of points; fences must be open in design so they don't block flood flow paths and allow wildlife movement; and bridge crossings need to be a clear span design and the soffit set above the 1 in 100 year plus climate change flood event • recommend that new ponds/lakes are created off line from any existing watercourses • impacts on groundwater quality should also be considered when designing the surface water drainage scheme for the site • concerned about water treatment and sewerage infrastructure, due to the risk of adverse impacts on water quality if water treatment works are overloaded or operating beyond capacity	• Positive comments noted. • Some amendments made to section 2.8 and 4.2.8.	• Amendments to Sections 2.8 and 4.2.8:
		Infrastructure • policy S5 of the adopted 2021 Aylesbury Vale Local Plan requires new development to provide appropriate on and off site infrastructure. We support the stated intentions in the first paragraph of 4.5.6 regarding the provision of water, foul water and drainage utilities. We also support the stated aims to comply with C3, especially regarding water efficiency • in relation to foul water drainage, regard should be had to the Local Plan, particularly paragraphs 3.43 – 3.45 and the Aylesbury Vale Water Cycle Study as some waste water treatment works are currently at capacity. The final sentence of paragraph 3.45 applies here: "There must be adequate capacity in foul waste infrastructure to accommodate the proposed development in order to prevent the deterioration in current water quality standards".	• Positive comment noted • Add Environment Agency requested text to the SPD	• None required • Add to Section 4.2.8 (box): There must be adequate capacity in foul waste infrastructure to accommodate the proposed development in order to prevent the deterioration in current water quality standards.
		Water Efficiency • support mains water consumption target of 110 litres per head per day (105 litres per head per day plus an allowance of 5 litres per head per day for gardens)	Add Environment Agency requested text to the SPD	• Add to Section 4.5.6: Site design should seek to deliver sustainable water usage features such as rainwater harvesting, grey water systems, with mains water consumption target of 110 litres per head per day (105 litres per head per day plus an allowance of 5 litres per head per day for gardens) being the target.
		Biodiversity Net Gain • no reference in the SPD (Section 67) to Biodiversity net gain, but assume this will be addressed via future planning application.	In line with the policies of the VALP, as identified within the draft SPD, the proposal at AGT1 will need to provide a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), 50% ANGST compliant green infrastructure, and open space. Within Section 6.1 reference is made to the requirement of a Biodiversity report as part of any planning application.	None required
Representation	884	Green Buffer • AGT-1 non-compliant with the adopted VALP as Stoke Mandeville requires a buffer to maintain its identity. East of the railway (Area 4) there is no separation, with the buffer too far north and of inadequate width. Development on Area 4 should be precluded	See response to 444 & 445	N/A
Representation	906	Access • new access road via Castlefields is too narrow and will be dangerous	See response to 444 & 445	N/A
Representation	907	Ecology • skylarks which are ground nesting birds exist in area and require open space - how will they be protected	In line with the policies of the VALP, as identified within the draft SPD, the proposal at AGT1 will provide a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), 50% ANGST compliant green infrastructure, and open space. Any applications will need to specifically address any existing species noted on the land.	None required
Representation	908	Ecology • the proposal will destroy important habitat and not enough trees	In line with the policies of the VALP the proposal at AGT1, as identified within the draft SPD, will provide a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), 50% ANGST compliant green infrastructure, and open space.	None required
		Open Space • the proposal will place the existing and new residents into a built up cramped area lacking green space and diminishing the mental health of residents as a result	The site (AGT1) is allocated for residential development as part of the adopted VALP (Policy D-ADT1). In line with the policies of the VALP the proposal at AGT1, as identified within the draft SPD, will provide a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), 50% ANGST compliant green infrastructure, and open space.	None required
		Community Facilities and Shops • the new school is welcome but not enough supporting infrastructure proposed such as doctors surgeries	See response to 897	N/A
		Urban Sprawl • understand need for new homes but cramming people into increasingly unpleasant locations does nothing for the value of our market town	The site (AGT1) is allocated for residential development as part of the adopted VALP (Policy D-ADT1)	N/A
Representation	909	Traveller / Gypsy Site • concerned as to why this is being provided amongst new estate. The gypsy campe should be put somewhere more isolated	Infrastructure requirements for the AGT1 site together with others were considered and justified as part of the local plan process. Policy D-AGT1 of the VALP requires the provision of a local centre and a community building, both of which are provided for within the draft SPD. The draft SPD also notes the requirement for financial contributions to off-site health facilities.	None required
Tiddington with Albury Parish Council	911	Access • concerned with proposal's impact upon the A418, which already experiences substantial traffic and accidents	Regard to the impact on the local road network (including the A418 and its junctions) is noted within the draft SPD, whilst highway / traffic movement impacts will also need to be considered as part of any planning application	None required
Representation	913	Impact on Magpie Cottage • the property is the only existing dwelling encompassed within the AGT1 allocation boundary. What are the implications • the proposed buffer is to protect the Grade II listed property LPA Ref. 22/02772/APP • this application contradicts the proposed landscape buffer included in the AGT1 plan	See response to 880 Application has been withdrawn	N/A N/A
		Stoke Mandeville Village Plan • the proposal is not in accordance with the Stoke Mandeville Village Plan	The consultation period of the first draft of the Neighbourhood Plan ended in August 2021. It is understood that since then no subsequent drafts have been issued / progressed and therefore it isn't currently a material consideration.	None proposed
Representation	914	Housing Density • is too high and there is not enough green space. No details are shown it just says 1,000 houses	In line with the policies of the VALP, as identified within the draft SPD, the proposal at AGT1 will need to provide a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), 50% ANGST compliant green infrastructure, and open space. The draft SPD follows the policy requirements as noted in the VALP.	N/A
		Community Facilities and Shops • No evidence of doctors surgery or shops or conveniences, pubs, community centre meeting places	Infrastructure requirements for the AGT1 site, together with others, were considered and justified as part of the local plan process. Policy D-AGT1 of the VALP requires the provision of a local centre and a community building, both of which are provided for within the draft SPD. The draft SPD also notes the requirement for financial contributions to off-site health facilities.	None required
		Ecology • The area, currently fields, is essential for drainage, wildlife habitats, hedgerows (which are in serious decline). Intensive human occupation which brings pollution, noise and all sorts of disturbance, local habitats will be lost, not protected and enhanced. Loss of Two Major Footpaths • At least 2 major footpaths, free from urbanisation, are currently enjoyed by walkers wanting to get away from urban sprawl and traffic noise and pollution, right through the centre of the proposed development	In line with the policies of the VALP, as identified within the draft SPD, the proposal at AGT1 will need to provide a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), 50% ANGST compliant green infrastructure, and open space The site (AGT1) is allocated for residential development as part of the adopted VALP (Policy D-ADT1). In line with the policies of the VALP the proposal at AGT1, as identified within the draft SPD, will provide 50% ANGST compliant green infrastructure, and open space, which will include footpaths / cycleways	None required None required
Representation	915	Conservation • grade II listed Magpie Cottage in its natural rural surroundings should be maintained with a retained generous margin free from development	See response to 913	N/A
		Flood Risk • concern that the proposal will increase flood risk. The flood risk to not only the immediate area, but also the knock-on increased flooding impact to the rest of Aylesbury, especially with climate change	See response to 862	N/A
		Representation	826 827 828	Green Buffer • Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan shows the green buffer between the existing village and AGT1. The plan shows the green buffer away from the existing edge of the village. Strongly object to this change which will severely impact the individual identity of Stoke Mandeville
Representation	910	Vehicle Access • vehicular access to Area 2 and 4 is inadequate. No access is possible at the south and west of the site so all access must come through Castlefields or the north of the site. The many journeys from the north to south and east of the site which will be a safety issue.	See response to 444 & 445	N/A
		Community Facilities • not enough supporting infrastructure proposed - the hospital is unable to cope now and one primary school is not enough	Infrastructure requirements for the AGT1 site, together with others, were considered and justified as part of the local plan process. Policy D-AGT1 of the VALP requires the provision of one primary school which is provided for within the draft SPD. The draft SPD also notes the requirement for financial contributions to secondary school and special educational needs schools	None required

		Environment - concern about negative impact upon environment. Land should be retained for growing food, green areas with woodland to replace that which has been destroyed	The site (AGT1) is allocated for residential development as part of the adopted VALP (Policy D-ADT1)	N/A
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Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Aylesbury South Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document

SEA Screening Document

August 2021





Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Aylesbury
South Masterplan
Supplementary Planning Document
SEA Screening Document

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Photo: The Chiltern Hills AONB by Richard Gillin

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
EU	European Union
GI	Green Infrastructure
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LSE	Likely Significant Effect
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PP	Policy or Programme
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
VALP	Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 This report

1.1.1 This Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening report has been prepared to determine whether the Aylesbury South Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) should be subject to an SEA, in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive)¹ and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations)².

1.1.2 This SEA screening report is based on the proposed content of the SPD, which is currently in draft as per the information presented in the Aylesbury South (D-AGT 1) Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement version 1.1 dated 04 June 2021 as prepared by Buckinghamshire Council.

1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessment legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC. This was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations). Detailed guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive'³ and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 'Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal' section⁴.

1.2.2 Under the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, certain types of plans that set the framework for the consent of future development projects must be subject to an environmental assessment.

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=en> [Date Accessed: 05/08/21]

² The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/contents/made> [Date Accessed: 05/08/21]

³ ODPM (2005) A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf [Date Accessed: 05/08/21]

⁴ Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal> [Date Accessed: 05/08/21]

1.2.3 A previous SA was carried out for the VALP by AECOM⁵ which considered the sustainability performance including assessment of policies within the VALP but did not assess the specific content of the SPD.

1.3 Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

1.3.1 The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD will provide a framework for the development of the proposed site D-AGT1 'South Aylesbury' allocated within the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP). D-AGT1 is a strategic site which forms part of the proposed Aylesbury Garden Town, which is the focus for the majority of Aylesbury District's growth.

1.3.2 Site D-AGT1 is proposed to include the development of:

- At least 1,000 dwellings;
- One primary school;
- Multi-functional green infrastructure;
- Aylesbury South East Link Road (A413 to B4443 Lower Road);
- Local Centre; and
- Cycling and walking links.

1.3.3 The SPD takes the proposals from the VALP and outlines the aspirations of the area as well as responses and key issues that will influence the new development. The SPD will be a material consideration, which expands on policies set out in the VALP, to help guide the preparation and assessment of future planning applications within the site.

1.3.4 **Table 1.1** below presents the criteria for development at D-AGT1 as proposed within the VALP Proposed Submission Plan (November 2017) as Proposed to be Further Modified (October 2019)⁶.

Table 1.1: D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Site Allocation criteria as presented in the VALP as Proposed to be Further Modified

D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Criteria

- a. Provision of land for at least 1,000 dwellings at a density that takes account of the adjacent settlement character and identity, integrates new development with the existing built area of Aylesbury and responds positively to the best characteristics of the surrounding area
- b. Provision of 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches
- c. Safeguarding the land required for the delivery of a dual carriageway distributor road between B4443 Lower Road and A413 Wendover Road to cross the railway line (the SEALR), with sufficient land for associated works including but not limited to earthworks, drainage and structures

⁵ VALP SA report Available at: <https://www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/sustainability-appraisal-sa> (Date Accessed: 25/08/2021)

⁶ Aylesbury Vale District Council (2019) Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033. Proposed Submission Plan (November 2017) as Proposed to be Modified (October 2019) (showing main and additional modifications). Available at: https://www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/MASTER%20main%20mods%20VALP%20final_1.pdf [Date Accessed: 05/08/21]

D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Criteria

- d. Provision of new access points into the development parcels from the B4443 (Lower Road) and A413 (Wendover Road). No vehicular access to or from the South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) will be permitted to serve the development parcels.
- e. Provision for public transport into the town and to surrounding areas
- f. Existing vegetation should be retained where practicable, including existing woodlands and hedgerows. Existing public rights of way need to be retained and integrated into the development within safe and secure environments as part of a wider network of sustainable routes, to directly and appropriately link the site with surrounding communities and facilities
- g. Proposals must retain and enhance existing habitats where practicable, including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets and green corridors linking development with the wider countryside and surrounding communities.
- h. Provision and management of 50% green infrastructure to link to other new development areas and the wider countryside as part of a high quality built and semi-natural environment
- i. The development should be designed using a landscape-led approach including consideration of the long-distance views of the AONB and the field pattern and landscape features on the site
- j. Detailed modelling will be required to confirm 1 in 20, 100 and 1,000 year extents and 1 in 100 year plus climate change extents on the ordinary watercourse (see SFRA Level 2)
- k. Surface water modelling should be undertaken to define the level of surface water risk and the risk areas/flow paths. Climate change should be modelled using the +40% allowance (February 2016) for rainfall intensity. A surface water drainage strategy should ensure that the development does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Opportunity to mitigate against potential surface water flooding of Stoke Mandeville Hospital
- l. Risk of overtopping or breach of the Aylesbury Arm (Grand Union Canal) should be modelled
- m. The development should be designed using a sequential approach. Flood Zones 2 and 3, and 3a plus climate change (subject to a detailed flood risk assessment) should be preserved as green space as shown in the policies map as the area of 'not built development'. Built development should be restricted to Flood Zone 1
- n. Drainage designs should 'design for exceedance' and accommodate existing surface water flow routes, with development located outside surface water flood area
- o. Provision of a buffer between the new development and Stoke Mandeville to maintain the setting and individual identity of the settlement of Stoke Mandeville
- p. Provision of land, buildings and car parking for a combined primary school, including playing field provision, and a contribution to secondary school provision
- q. Provision of land, buildings and car parking for a new local centre, including retail
- r. Provision of financial contributions towards off-site health facilities
- s. Provision of community buildings, including temporary buildings if necessary
- t. Provision of and contribution to infrastructure as appropriate.
- u. Retention of the Grade II listed Magpie Cottage within an appropriate setting

1.3.5 The SPD will be a Masterplan which expands upon the policy contained within the VALP and provides a framework to help guide the preparation and assessment of future planning applications within proposed site D-AGT1.

1.3.6 It incorporates the requirements of various plans and policies, including:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2021:

- Planning Practice Guidance;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006): Biodiversity Duty (sections 40 and 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006);
- HM Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' (2018);
- Upcoming Environment Act (likely to be enacted Spring 2021): building on the Environment Bill (2019);
- Biodiversity Action Plan: Forward to 2020 for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes;
- Vision and Principles for the Improvement of Green Infrastructure in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (2018) and the accompanying Green Infrastructure opportunities mapping (2018);
- Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2018) and Strategy (2009);
- Transport schemes under Policy T2 Protected Transport Schemes shown in the upcoming VALP (2013-2033);
- Policies D2 and S4 support infrastructure delivery which is stated in the upcoming VALP (2013-2033); and
- Other relevant Local Plan policies.

1.3.7 The plans and policies set out above require that development proposals protect the natural environment including internationally, nationally and locally designated biodiversity sites, and seek to ensure that ecological networks and Green Infrastructure (GI) assets are protected and enhanced, alongside delivering the required growth. The plans and policies above will help form decisions on site development for D-AGT1 with considerations to the local area.

1.3.8 The site boundary for D-AGT1 is shown in **Figure 1.1**. The site comprises approximately 95ha of largely undeveloped land and lies to the south east of Aylesbury Town.

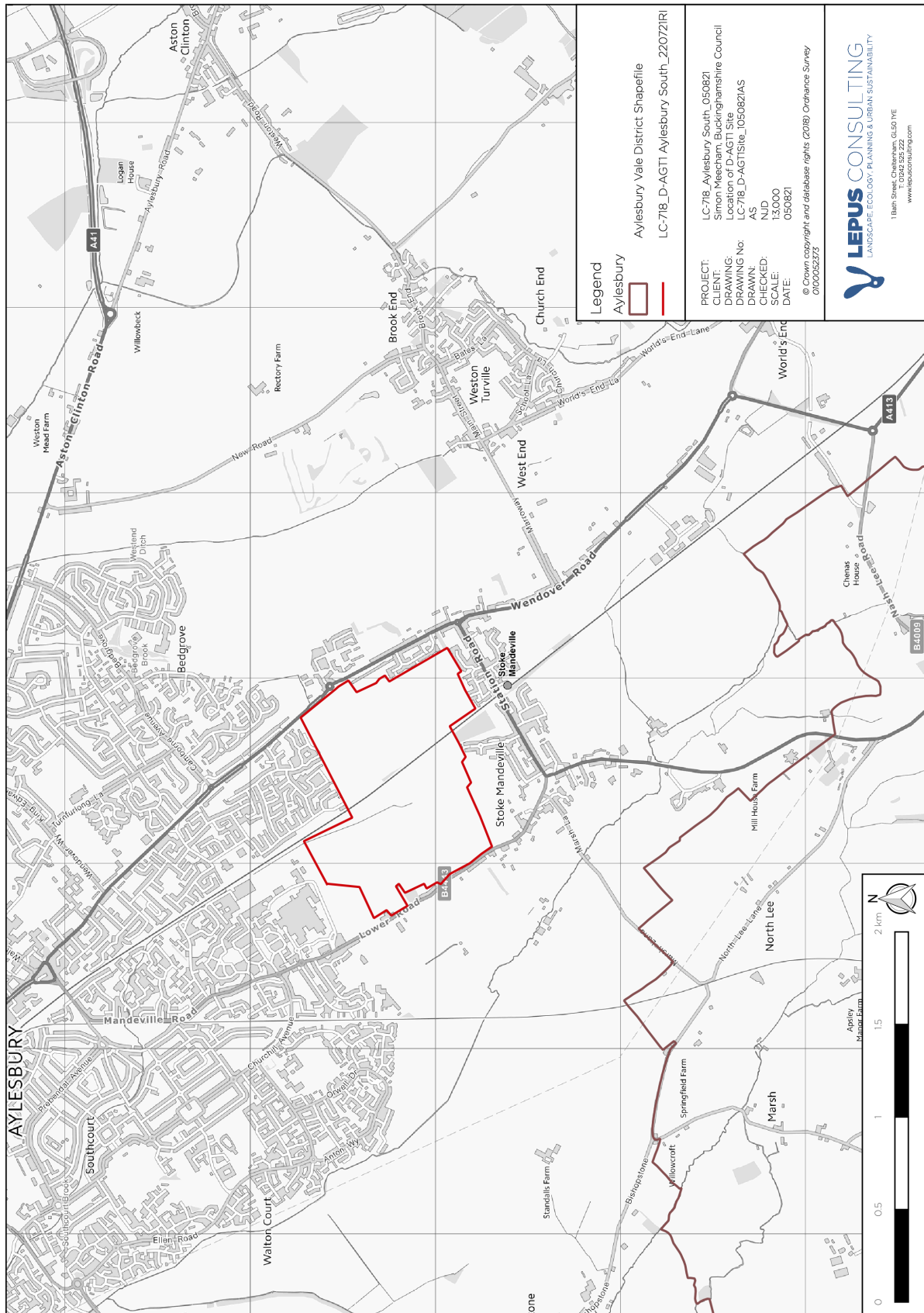


Figure 1.1: Proposed site D-AGTI boundary area

1.4 Consultation

- 1.4.1 The SPD is subject to public consultation, which provides an opportunity for the public and local organisations to comment on the SPD. After consultation, responses are taken into account and, if relevant, are used to prepare an updated version of the SPD.
- 1.4.2 The updated version is then adopted by the Council, following the formal adoption procedure for an SPD⁷.

1.5 Relationship with the Local Plan

- 1.5.1 The SPD is a planning document, produced at the local level to provide more detail, advice or guidance on local policies. This SPD sets out the agreed strategy for mitigating the impact of new development on the environment, by ensuring that the Masterplan is comprehensive in regard to the delivery of future development and its implications within Buckinghamshire Council, arising as a consequence of the VALP.
- 1.5.2 The purpose of the SPD is to provide further guidance and information for the development of the strategic allocated site D-AGT1 which has been proposed in the emerging VALP. The strategy for mitigation includes retaining and enhancing on-site GI and habitats, providing improved transport links including walking and cycle paths as well as public transport infrastructure, and a requirement to carry out detailed modelling with regards to flood risk and water management. The SPD does not seek to introduce any new policies.
- 1.5.3 Should the SPD be significantly refined in the future, a re-screening of any significant amendments should be undertaken for the purposes of the SEA screening processes.

⁷ The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. Part 5 Supplementary Planning Documents. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/2204/part/5/made> [Date Accessed: 05/08/21]

2 SEA Screening

2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment

2.1.1 SEA seeks to ensure that environmental considerations are part of the process of preparing certain plans and programmes. The objective of the SEA Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, with a view to promoting sustainable development. It helps to ensure that, in accordance with the Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

2.1.2 The process for determining whether or not an SEA is required is called screening. In order to screen, it is necessary to determine if a plan will have significant environmental effects using the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule I of the SEA Regulations. Regulation 9(2)(b) states that a determination cannot be made until the three statutory consultation bodies have been consulted: The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.

2.1.3 A specific time limited consultation period with the three statutory bodies is not prescribed in law but a period of three weeks is considered appropriate. Following receipt of consultation comments, the Councils may then finalise the screening determination. Regulation 11 (1) states that within 28 days of its determination, the local planning authority must send a copy of the determination, setting out its decision to the consultation bodies. Where the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has determined that an SEA is not required, the determination must include the reasons for this. The determination should also be shared with the public.

2.2 The screening process

2.2.1 Paragraph 008 (Revised 06/03/2014) of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 'Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal' section states:

"Supplementary planning documents do not require a sustainability appraisal but may in exceptional circumstances require a strategic environmental assessment if they are likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already have been assessed during the preparation of the relevant strategic policies."

2.2.2 Paragraph 047 of this PPG (Revised 22/07/2019) also states

“An appropriate assessment, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), identifies whether a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This assessment must determine whether significant effects on that site can be ruled out on the basis of objective information.

If the conclusion is that the plan is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site then an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan for the site, in view of the site’s conservation objectives, must be undertaken. If the plan is determined to require an appropriate assessment then it will normally also require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.”

2.2.3 **Figure 2.1** presents a diagram prepared by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (2005). This shows the application of the SEA process to plans and programmes. The sequential approach in the flow diagram can be used to screen the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD.

2.2.4 **Table 2.1** uses the questions presented in **Figure 2.1** to establish whether the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is likely to require an SEA or not.

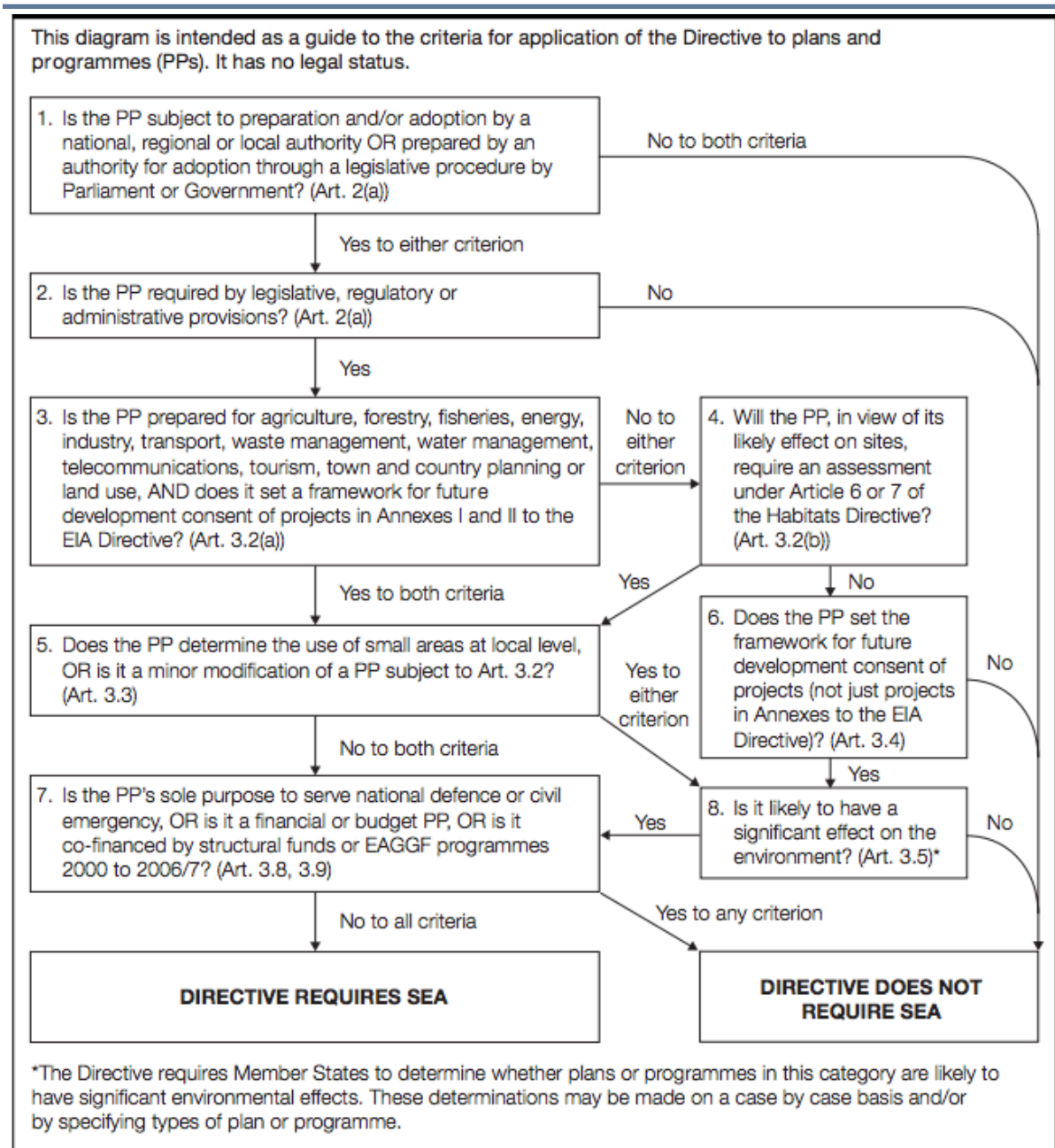


Figure 2.1: Application of the SEA Directive to plans and programmes (source: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) ⁸.

⁸Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (October) (2018) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited. Available at: www.dtapublications.co.uk

Table 2.1: Establishing whether there is a requirement for SEA.

Stage	Y/N	Reason
Is the PP (plan or programme) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	The SPD is prepared by, and will be adopted by, the local authority (Buckinghamshire Council).
Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes	The SPD is prepared under the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012. The SPD is a requirement of emerging VALP Planning Policy 'D-AGT1 South Aylesbury'. Once adopted, in collaboration with the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, it will provide a detailed guide for development of the D-AGT1 site.
Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	No	The SPD is being prepared to inform the design principles of the D-AGT1 allocation. The VALP establishes the development framework and sets the requirement and high-level specification for the SPD. The SPD will form a material consideration which will be considered by the Local Planning Authority when determining any future planning applications for the area.
Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b))	Yes	The requirement for Appropriate Assessment of land at the SPD location was identified by Buckinghamshire Council in an HRA screening report (June, 2021).
Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in Annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	No	The SPD provides further guidance and information to the expected time of development delivery for the proposed 1,000 homes, new primary school, local centre, Green Infrastructure and cycling and walking links for the South Aylesbury site. The SPD will provide further guidance on the design principles to be applied at the D-AGT1 site as stated in the VALP.
Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment (Art 3.5)?	Yes	Likely significant effects have been identified for biodiversity, climate change, cultural heritage and landscape.

2.3 Relevance to the SEA Directive

2.3.1 Question 8 within the ODPM guidance flowchart (see **Figure 2.1**) refers to whether the SPD would have a significant effect on the environment. The criteria from Annex II of the SEA Directive and Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 can be used to consider the relevance of the Plan to the SEA Directive. **Sections 2.5 – 2.12** consider the likely environmental effects of the plan.

Table 2.2: South Aylesbury Masterplan and the SEA Directive

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of Regulations)	Response
The characteristics of plans and programmes	
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	The South Aylesbury Masterplan SPD sets a framework by providing detail regarding the site allocation D-AGT1 'Aylesbury South' as set out in the emerging VALP. The SPD will form a material consideration for the nature and operating conditions of the development.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The SPD provides additional guidance and details regarding site D-AGT1 as set out in the VALP. It does not create new policies.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	There are opportunities to integrate environmental considerations within the South Aylesbury Masterplan. The SPD aims to conserve important aspects of the built and natural environment. The SPD includes measures to improve local facilities and allow for sustainable growth, as well as preserving the rural character of the Neighbourhood Area whilst protecting open spaces and the natural environment is very important to the council (see Appendix A).
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	The potential characteristics and effects of the SPD, which include consideration of existing environmental problems, have been screened in sections 2.4 – 2.12 of this document.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection)	The SPD is a land use plan and sets the framework for future development consents within the VALP.
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	The potential characteristics and effects of the SPD have been screened in sections 2.4 – 2.12 of this document.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects	
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects	
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	

Criteria (from Annex II of SEA Directive and Schedule I of Regulations)	Response
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values (iii) intensive land-use 	
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	

2.4 Likely Significant Effects

2.4.1 Drawing on the answers to the questions presented in the ODPM flowchart, it can be concluded that the SPD should be screened into the SEA process (see **Table 2.1**). The following paragraphs explore which components of the SPD might be likely to have significant environmental effects on the environment.

2.4.2 A summary of the baseline conditions and a screening assessment of the potential effects of the SPD against each of the topics set out in Annex I (f) of the SEA Directive is presented in the following sections.

2.5 Biodiversity, flora and fauna

2.5.1 The closest European designated biodiversity site to the Aylesbury D-AGT1 site is Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), located at its closest point approximately 4.2km south-west from the site. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process has been carried out parallel to the preparation of the VALP to inform the plan-making process to ensure that potential impacts arising from the VALP in relation to this SAC and other European sites have been suitably addressed and mitigated.

2.5.2 An HRA Screening exercise has been completed by Buckinghamshire Council⁹. The screening process identified likely significant effects arising from recreational pressure associated with D-AGT1. Consequently, the Council proposes to prepare an Appropriate Assessment of the SPD.

⁹ Aylesbury South (D-AGT 1) Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement. Last updated: 04 June 2021 Version: 1.1 – 04 June 2021

- 2.5.3 There are several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the surrounding area, in particular to the south east along the Chiltern Hills. The closest SSSI to D-AGT1 is Weston Turville Reservoir SSSI, approximately 2.1km to the south east, with Bacombe and Coombe Hills SSSI approximately 3.7km to the south. Site D-AGT1 is located within Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) which do not indicate the proposed site uses as a threat to nearby SSSIs.
- 2.5.4 The site is located approximately 4.4km from the nearest Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Bacombe Hill. There are no nearby National Nature Reserves.
- 2.5.5 A number of stands of ancient woodland can be found towards the south east of Aylesbury Vale, including 'Hale Wood' and 'Aston Hill Coppice/Buckland Hoo', situated over 3km from Site D-AGT1.
- 2.5.6 Site D-AGT1 does not coincide with any known sites of national or local importance for biodiversity, however there is a small section of deciduous woodland priority habitat adjacent to the north of the site boundary, close to Stoke Mandeville Hospital.
- 2.5.7 The site comprises undeveloped land which is primarily agricultural in nature although hedgerow boundaries to fields and pockets of scrub would be expected to provide some ecological value.
- 2.5.8 The proposed development at Site D-AGT1 must be in accordance with VALP policies including Policies NE1 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and NE8 (Trees, hedgerows and woodlands) which seek to protect and enhance designated sites, protected habitats/species and GI, and deliver biodiversity net gain.
- 2.5.9 The site allocation as proposed within the VALP includes requirements to ensure "*existing vegetation should be retained where practicable, including existing woodlands and hedgerows*" and "*proposals must retain and enhance existing habitats where practicable, including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets and green corridors*". However, the SPD does not contain any policies with more specific guidance relating to the site. The proposed "*provision and management of 50% green infrastructure to link to other new development areas*" could potentially help to provide a high quality ecological network, ensuring habitat connectivity to the wider area is retained and improved. The SPD could be enhanced through inclusion of more specific detail regarding the proposed GI and how the existing non-designated biodiversity assets (e.g. hedgerows) would be incorporated into this scheme.

2.5.10 The proposed development should also have regard to future outputs of the Buckinghamshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy¹⁰, as advocated in the emerging Environment Bill.

2.5.11 **Drawing on the findings of the Council’s HRA screening exercise, the SPD would be expected to result in significant effects on biodiversity as a consequence of recreation pressure at the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC.**

2.6 Population and human health

2.6.1 The population of Buckinghamshire is approximately 547,060 people¹¹, with Aylesbury representing one of the main towns within the Unitary Authority.

2.6.2 Site D-AGT1 lies to the south east of Aylesbury, and as such, new residents would be expected to have generally good access to local services and facilities within the town. The nearest supermarket to the D-AGT1 site is Asda, located approximately 400m to the north west of the site, and a Sainsburys Local approximately 1km to the north. These local facilities may need to expand or a new supermarket provided to be able to cope with the influx of population that the 1,000 new houses will ultimately bring. However, the proposed development includes “*provision of land, buildings and car parking for a new local centre, including retail*”. This could potentially help to ensure that new residents have good access to local shops and services on site, reducing the need to travel further afield.

2.6.3 Stoke Mandeville Hospital is the nearest NHS hospital providing an Accident and Emergency service, 250m minimum distance from the proposed site and a GP clinic (Bedgrove Surgery) is approximately 1km away. These services will need to be monitored and potentially increased in capacity to be able to facilitate the new population increase. The proposed development at site D-AGT1 will include “*provision of financial contributions towards off-site health facilities*” which would be expected to address this however the timescale for delivery of any new or expanded healthcare facilities is uncertain.

¹⁰ Natural Environment Partnership (2021) Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Available at: <https://bucksmknep.co.uk/nature-strategy/overview/> [Date Accessed: 06/08/21]

¹¹ ONS (2021) Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (Mid-2020). Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalescotlandandnorthernireland> [Date Accessed: 06/08/21]

- 2.6.4 The South Aylesbury Masterplan includes the development of a new primary school within the D-AGT1 site, which would be likely to ensure that new residents have good access to primary education. The Masterplan however, does not include the development of a new secondary school to facilitate the new population brought to this area. Aylesbury High School, Aylesbury Grammar School, The Mandeville and Pebble Brooke School are all secondary schools within a 2.5km radius of the proposed site however the capacity of these schools is not known. The proposed development at site D-AGT1 includes “*contribution to secondary school provision*” which could potentially help to ensure sufficient secondary school places can be created to support the new development. Furthermore, Policy S1 of the VALP states that development will provide “*access to facilities including healthcare, education, employment, retail and community facilities*” and Policy T5 requires “*the provision of a travel plan to promote sustainable travel patterns for work and education related trips*”.
- 2.6.5 The VALP Policies D-AGT1 – D-AGT6, which deal with specific Aylesbury Garden Town urban extensions, as well as the over-arching Policy D1 ‘Delivering Aylesbury Garden Town’, include a vision that reflects wide-ranging community objectives.
- 2.6.6 The SPD seeks to deliver extensive multi-functional GI, which would be expected to incorporate space for outdoor recreation and exercise, which is known to be beneficial for mental and physical wellbeing. The site is well connected to the existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, and a local cycle route passes adjacent to the site along Wendover Road. The SPD aims to promote active travel, such as walking or cycling, which would help to encourage not using personal vehicles, and could consequently result in further benefits through improving the air quality and human health.
- 2.6.7 Therefore, the SPD would not be expected to result in significant effects on population and human health.

2.7 Transport and accessibility

- 2.7.1 Whilst not an Annex 1(f) topic in itself, transport and accessibility interact with a number of the topics such as population and human health, material assets and climatic factors.
- 2.7.2 Site D-AGT1 is located in close proximity to existing transport infrastructure. Stoke Mandeville Station is located approximately 200m to the south east of the site, and Aylesbury Station approximately 2km to the north west, situated on the main line to London Marylebone. There are several bus stops surrounding the site and it is anticipated that current bus routes would be expected facilitate the requirement to ensure “*provision for public transport into the town and to surrounding areas*”.

- 2.7.3 The new garden community will be, minimum, 2.5km from the centre of town. Development will increase the need for public transport and overall traffic, however, its location with respect to the town will also present opportunities to prioritise more sustainable transport. VALP Policy T1 states that “*the council will assist in delivering the pedestrian, cycle public transportation and public realm improvements to deliver the Aylesbury Garden Town initiative*” and Policy T3 states that the council will actively support proposals identified in the Aylesbury Transport Strategy. Policy T7 promotes and encourages sustainable travel choices through increased walking, cycling and public transport routes connecting the new garden communities with the town and beyond, which should be planned around a user hierarchy that places pedestrians and cyclists at the top. Consideration should also be given to disability discrimination requirements.
- 2.7.4 The South Aylesbury Masterplan will also safeguard land for the development of a new link road between the A413 to B4443 Lower Road which seeks to ease road congestion. Provisions for this link road, means to ensure safe and suitable access into the site and promotion of sustainable transport modes as an alternative to the private car should be considered as part of a Transport Assessment and Transport Statement for the site, with due regard to the Buckinghamshire County Wide Transport Modelling and Aylesbury Transport Study. Transport schemes that will be integral to supporting the growth of Aylesbury Vale will be secured under Policy T2 Protected Transport Schemes and T3 Supporting Local Transport Schemes. Proposals within the site allocation would also be expected to conform with the NPPF and Policies T4 and T5 relating to transport provision for new development in addition to policies T7 and T8 relating to walking, cycling and electric vehicle infrastructure provision.

2.8 Soil, water and air

- 2.8.1 The proposed site D-AGT1 comprises approximately 95ha of previously undeveloped land. The majority of the site is situated on Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Grade 3 land, with a small section of ‘Urban’ land to the north west. Development at this site could potentially result in the loss of a significant area of ‘best and most versatile’ agricultural land if the provisional Grade 3 land is found to be Subgrade 3a¹². The proposed multi-functional GI on site could potentially include community assets such as allotments to make the most of the Grade 3 soil in the area, however, the large scale of development proposed would be expected to result in a loss of ecologically and/or agriculturally valuable soil, to some extent.

¹² Natural England (2009) Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012> [Date Accessed: 06/08/21]

- 2.8.2 The A413 road runs in a north-south direction linking Aylesbury and Wendover. It is located to the west of the SPD area, adjacent to the site. Development within 200m of a main road could potentially lead to an adverse impact on the health of site end users due to increased levels of air pollutants¹³. There is likely to be scope within the site to ensure new residents are situated away from sources of air pollution, such as roads and railways, through careful design and layout and the use of GI buffers, which should be detailed in the SPD.
- 2.8.3 There are no obvious main watercourses which pass through the site. There is a narrow linear water feature running approximately north-south across the middle of the SPD area. The nearest watercourse is Stoke Brook, situated approximately 440m to the south west.
- 2.8.4 This site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1, and as such would not be expected to direct any development towards areas at risk of fluvial flooding. Some areas of the site (notably the north east along Wendover Road, and the northern corner in proximity to Stoke Mandeville Hospital) coincide with areas identified as being at low, medium and high risk of surface water flooding.
- 2.8.5 The site allocation within the VALP (see **Table 1.1**) states that “*detailed modelling will be required to confirm 1 in 20,100 and 1,000 year extents and 1 in 100 year plus climate change extents on the ordinary watercourse*”, and requires a surface water drainage strategy. All proposals for new development should demonstrate that existing flood risk will not be increased downstream and ideally limit runoff to the greenfield rate or better. In line with the requirements of the NPPF and emerging VALP policies, development should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to mitigate long term and flash flooding.
- 2.8.6 Policy I5 of the VALP states “*planning applications must demonstrate that adequate capacity is available at wastewater treatment works in time to serve the development*”. There are no site-specific policies to expand on how the capacity upgrades will cope with this increase in water usage or how sustainability in water use will be promoted within site D-AGT1, which would potentially be provided through the SPD.
- 2.8.7 The development of 1,000 new houses, a primary school and a new link road would potentially have an adverse impact on air quality. This should be mitigated wherever possible during construction and occupancy using GI and good planning practises. This is stated in policy NE6 in the VALP.

¹³ The Department for Transport in their Transport Analysis Guidance consider that “*beyond 200m from the link centre, the contribution of vehicle emissions to local pollution levels is not significant*”.

Department for Transport (2019) TAG unit A3 Environmental Impact Appraisal. Available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/webtag-tag-unit-a3-environmental-impact-appraisal-december-2015> [Date Accessed; 06/08/21]

2.8.8 NE6 within the VALP also considers light pollution that new developments might cause, how they might be mitigated and the protection of wildlife corridors from this light.

2.9 Climatic factors

2.9.1 Although the site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1 (see **Section 2.8**), it is likely that flood risk will become more prevalent in future years due to higher flood plain levels and climate change introducing more extreme weather events including higher volumes of rainfall. Multi-functional GI should be used within this development as a buffer for current and future flood risk. It is expected that the requirements of VALP and national policies, alongside the delivery of 50% GI on site, would help to ensure that significant adverse impacts regarding flood risk do not arise.

2.9.2 The proposed new link road between the A143 to B4443 Lower Road could potentially cause some negative impacts in terms of climatic factors, such as an increase in local air pollution. The SPD would be expected to facilitate active travel through the provision of new routes and multi-functional GI. Promoting active travel, such as walking or cycling, as well as improving the provision of public transport links into Aylesbury, would help to encourage new residents to use more sustainable travel modes compared to personal vehicles, and in turn, result in an improvement to the air quality.

2.9.3 The introduction of 1,000 new dwellings will inevitably cause an increase in energy consumption, pollution and traffic during both the construction and occupancy stages, to some extent.

2.9.4 VALP Policy D1 states that “*new garden communities should be designed to be resilient places that allow for changing demographics, future growth and the impacts of climate change by anticipating opportunities for technological change including renewable energy measures*”. In line with Policy C3, development would be expected to utilise sustainable design and construction measures and seek to use decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources for energy where feasible. The SPD would benefit from inclusion of more specific guidance with regards to sustainable energy, water consumption and how the proposed development will be adaptable to climate change.

2.9.5 **The screening assessment concludes that the SPD is likely to lead to significant effects on climate change.**

2.10 Material assets

- 2.10.1 The material assets topic considers social, physical and environmental infrastructure; transportation and accessibility has been addressed separately above. This sub-section should be read alongside 'Population and human health', which details health and social infrastructure implications of the SPD; 'Climatic factors', which considers transport infrastructure in terms of sustainable transport; 'Soil, water and air', which considers water infrastructure and agricultural land classification; the 'Biodiversity, flora and fauna' sub-section, which considers environmental infrastructure; and the Transport and Accessibility sub-section.
- 2.10.2 The South Aylesbury Masterplan SPD sets out to build a new primary school and a local centre within this new development. This would be expected to provide some local employment opportunities and improved access to education and local facilities for the area.
- 2.10.3 Policy I3 in the VALP seeks to retain existing local community facilities and consider the development of new facilities. The SPD has proposed a new local community centre which will need to follow the regulations set out in the VALP.
- 2.10.4 As discussed in **Section 2.7**, the site is well-served by existing transport infrastructure and would provide new public transport, pedestrian, cycle and road links alongside the development. The proposed development also seeks to deliver 50% GI on site leading to a high-quality local environment with multi-functional open space with likely benefits to both people and wildlife.
- 2.10.5 Overall, the SPD is not expected to lead to any likely significant effects on material assets.

2.11 Cultural Heritage

- 2.11.1 Stoke Mandeville is situated to the south of the proposed site and is currently relatively unconstrained, in that there is no designated conservation area; however, there are several Grade II Listed Buildings within and surrounding the settlement, including a cluster along the B4443 running north to Aylesbury, which represents the western edge of the proposed scheme. This includes the 'Stoke Cottage', 'Lone Ash' and 'Bell Cottage and Tudor Cottage'. One Grade II Listed Building, 'Magpie Cottage', lies within the southwest corner of the site D-AGT1 itself. No other designated heritage assets are located within the vicinity of the site.

2.11.2 Policy BE1, Heritage assets, in the VALP aims to protect the unique character, quality and diversity across the Vale. Any changes or developments must meet the criteria stated in BE1 to preserve and enhance the historic environment. If a development is thought to cause substantial harm to, or loss of, a designated heritage asset including its setting, then the council will not support this development. The proposed development at Site D-AGT1 should ensure the “*retention of the Grade II listed Magpie Cottage within an appropriate setting*” however the SPD could usefully add further clarity to this statement to ensure that the cottage and its setting are protected and enhanced in line with its historic significance.

2.11.3 **It is not clear as to whether or not the SPD is likely to lead to significant effects on heritage resources. On the basis of the precautionary principle, cultural heritage should be screened into the SEA process.**

2.12 Landscape

2.12.1 Site D-AGT1 lies within the National Character Area (NCA) ‘Upper Thames Clay Vales’. Key characteristics of this NCA include “*low-lying clay-based flood plains ... gently undulating topography ... fields are regular and hedged*”¹⁴.

2.12.2 The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 2.3km to the south east of the site, at its closest. The settlement of Stoke Mandeville lies between the proposed site and the AONB.

2.12.3 VALP Policy NE4, landscape character and locally important landscape, aims to ensure that the local landscape is maintained. Any development must recognise the individual character and distinctiveness of particular landscape character areas set out in the Landscape Character Assessment and must follow the relevant policies set out in the VALP.

2.12.4 The Round Aylesbury Walk long distance path is one of three walks that circumnavigate Aylesbury. The path is located to help provide open views of the countryside and high quality open air recreational experiences. The SPD is likely to adversely affect the recreational experience associated with the path.

2.12.5 As stated in the previous SA, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan¹⁵, completed in 2018, the main concern was the potential results that the expansion of Aylesbury to the south and southeast, may cause for the Chilterns AONB. The completed SA examined the ‘cumulative effects’ of growth at Aylesbury and concluded:

¹⁴ Natural England (2014) NCA Profile: 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales (NE570). Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5865554770395136> [Date Accessed: 06/08/21]

¹⁵ AECOM (2018) Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. Available at: https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/VALP%20-%20SA%20Report%20170918.pdf [Date Accessed 05/08/21]

“There would be direct visual effects on the AONB as a result of the cumulative development sites. The visual extent of the cumulative development sites, combined with the existing development at Aylesbury and nearby settlements, would be readily apparent. However, development across the sites will be predominantly low-rise and incorporate substantial mitigation planting, reducing the impact on views across the low-lying vale landscape from the elevated viewpoints within the AONB. The key characteristics of views across the wider landscape would be fundamentally unchanged, in that they would remain expansive across the settled vale landscape. It is considered unlikely that there would be significant cumulative residual landscape and visual effects on the AONB”.

2.12.6 The proposed development will aim to maintain the setting and individual identity of Stoke Mandeville, through the provision of a buffer. Whilst maintaining the character of the area, the long-distance views across the site to the Chiltern AONB should be maintained as much as practicable by building low lying dwellings. Green corridors, cycle and footpaths should be used to reduce traffic flow, noise, sound and air pollution that may affect the surrounding landscape quality and character. A carefully planned and well-managed GI network, as advocated by the VALP, would be expected to minimise intrusion on the nationally important landscape of the Chiltern Hills AONB.

2.12.7 **It is not clear as to whether or not the SPD is likely to lead to significant effects on landscape: either the AONB or the Round Aylesbury Walk long distance path. On the basis of the precautionary principle, landscape should be screened into the SEA process.**

3 Conclusion

3.1 SEA screening outcome

3.1.1 This SEA screening report has evaluated the likelihood of any significant effects arising against the criteria set out in the SEA Regulations.

3.1.2 It can be concluded that the emerging AGT1 Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is likely to have a significant environmental impact on the surrounding area and will therefore require an SEA in relation to:

- Biodiversity;
- Climate Change;
- Cultural Heritage; and
- Landscape.

3.1.3 Furthermore, the requirement for an appropriate assessment of the SPD as identified by the Council consequently triggers the requirement for an SEA under Regulation 5(3) of the SEA Regulations.

3.2 Next steps

3.2.1 This report will be subject to consultation with Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England at a date to be determined by the Councils. Their comments will be presented in **Appendix A**. Future development proposals will need individual assessments.

3.3 Screening determination

3.3.1 Following receipt of any comments received from the statutory consultation bodies, the Councils will make the screening determination. It will then make the findings available to the statutory bodies and the public, within 28 days of completing the determination.

Appendix A: Consultation Responses

To be completed following consultation with the statutory consultees.

DRAFT

Ecological Services

Green Infrastructure

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Landscape Character Assessment

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Sustainability Appraisal



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Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Aylesbury South Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document

SEA Scoping Document

December 2021





Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Aylesbury South Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document

SEA Scoping Document

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Photo: Aylesbury by Neil Hoskins

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This report was prepared between November and December 2021 and is subject to and limited by the information available during this time.

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CA	Conservation Area
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
EU	European Union
GI	Green Infrastructure
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LGS	Local Geological Site
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MHCLG	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
NBN	National Biodiversity Network
NCA	National Character Area
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PPP	Plan, Policy and Programme
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PRoW	Public Right of Way
RPG	Registered Park and Garden
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEO	Statement of Environmental Opportunities
SM	Scheduled Monument
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
VALP	Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 This report

1.1.1 The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) of the Aylesbury South Masterplan is being prepared by Buckinghamshire Council. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is being undertaken by Lepus Consulting to inform the SPD-making process. The purpose of this report is to identify the scope and level of detail of information that is necessary to inform the SEA.

1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.2.1 EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA Directive) is transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations). Detailed guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication '*A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive*' (ODPM, 2005) and Paragraph 009 of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) 'Neighbourhood Planning' section.

1.2.2 The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD SEA and HRA Screening was prepared by Lepus Consulting in October 2021¹. The screening opinion recommended that the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD should be screened in for full SEA. Following consultation on this report, the conclusion that SEA was required was agreed on with the three statutory bodies: Historic England, the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England, as well as the local planning authority, Buckinghamshire Council.

1.2.3 SEA seeks to ensure that environmental considerations are part of the process of preparing certain plans and programmes. The objective of the Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with the Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

1.2.4 Regulation 12 (5) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 1633) states that:

¹ Lepus Consulting (2021) Aylesbury South Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Documents.

1.2.5 “When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”.

1.2.6 This report will identify the appropriate scope for the SEA of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD. This report will then be consulted on with at least the three statutory bodies.

1.3 Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

1.3.1 The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD will provide a framework for the development of the proposed site D-AGT1 ‘South Aylesbury’ allocated within the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP), which was adopted in September 2021. D-AGT1 is a strategic site which forms part of the proposed Aylesbury Garden Town, which is the focus for the majority of the former Aylesbury Vale District’s growth.

1.3.2 Site D-AGT1 is proposed to include the development of:

- At least 1,000 dwellings;
- One primary school;
- Multi-functional green infrastructure;
- Aylesbury South East Link Road (A413 to B4443 Lower Road);
- Local Centre; and
- Cycling and walking links.

1.3.3 The SPD takes the proposals from the VALP and outlines the aspirations of the area as well as responses and key issues that will influence the new development. The SPD will be a material consideration, which expands on policies set out in the VALP, to help guide the preparation and assessment of future planning applications within the site.

1.3.4 **Table 1.1** below presents the criteria for development at D-AGT1 as proposed within the adopted VALP (September 2021)².

² Aylesbury Vale District Council (2021) Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033. Adopted Plan (September 2021). Available at: https://buckinghamshire-gov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Aylesbury_local_plan_L46JWaT.pdf [Date Accessed: 01/12/21]

Table 1.1: D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Site Allocation criteria as presented in the VALP

D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Information	Site Details
Site Reference	AGT1
Site Name	South Aylesbury
Size (hectares)	Approximately 95 ha
Completions and expected time of delivery	39 homes delivered up to 2020, 161 homes to be delivered 2020-2025 and 800 homes to be delivered 2025-2033
Allocated for (key development and land use requirements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 dwellings • One primary school • Multi-functional green infrastructure • Aylesbury South East Link Road (A413 to B4443 Lower Road) • Local centre • Cycling and walking links
Site-specific Requirements	<p>Development proposals must be accompanied by the information required in the council's Local Validation List and comply with all other relevant policies in the Plan, including the principles of development for Aylesbury Garden Town and the Masterplan SPD to be prepared for the site. In addition, proposals should comply with the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provision of land for at least 1,000 dwellings at a density that takes account of the adjacent settlement character and identity, integrates new development with the existing built area of Aylesbury and responds positively to the best characteristics of the surrounding area b. Provision of 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches c. Safeguarding the land required for the delivery of a dual carriageway distributor road (the SEALR) between B4443 Lower Road and A413 Wendover Road to cross the railway line, with sufficient land for associated works including but not limited to earthworks, drainage and structures d. Provision of new access points into the development parcels from the B4443 Lower Road and A413 Wendover Road. Access from the South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that this would leave parcels of land inaccessible and incapable of development. e. Provision for public transport into the town and to surrounding areas f. Existing vegetation should be retained where practicable, including existing woodlands and hedgerows. Existing public rights of way need to be retained and integrated into the development within safe and secure environments as part of a wider network of sustainable routes, to directly and appropriately link the site with surrounding communities and facilities g. Proposals must retain and enhance existing habitats where practicable, including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets and green corridors linking development with the wider countryside and surrounding communities. h. Provision and management of 50% green infrastructure to link to other new development areas and the wider countryside as part of a high quality built and semi-natural environment i. The development should be designed using a landscape-led approach including consideration of the long-distance views of the AONB and the field pattern and landscape features on the site j. Detailed modelling will be required to confirm 1 in 20, 100 and 1,000 year extents and 1 in 100 year plus climate change extents on the ordinary watercourse (see SFRA Level 2)

D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Information	Site Details
	<p>k. Surface water modelling should be undertaken to define the level of surface water risk and the risk areas/flow paths. Climate change should be modelled using the +40% allowance (February 2016) for rainfall intensity. A surface water drainage strategy should ensure that the development does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Opportunity to mitigate against potential surface water flooding of Stoke Mandeville Hospital</p> <p>l. Risk of overtopping or breach of the Aylesbury Arm (Grand Union Canal) should be modelled</p> <p>m. The development should be designed using a sequential approach. Flood Zones 2 and 3, and 3a plus climate change (subject to a detailed flood risk assessment) should be preserved as green space as shown in the policies map as the area of 'not built development'. Built development should be restricted to Flood Zone 1</p> <p>n. Drainage designs should 'design for exceedance' and accommodate existing surface water flow routes, with development located outside surface water flood areas</p> <p>o. Provision of buffer between the new development and Stoke Mandeville to maintain the setting and individual identity of the settlement of Stoke Mandeville</p> <p>p. provision of land, buildings and car parking for a combined primary school, including playing field provision, and a contribution to secondary school provision</p> <p>q. Provision of land, buildings and car parking for a new local centre, including retail</p> <p>r. Provision of financial contributions towards off-site health facilities</p> <p>s. Provision of community buildings, including temporary buildings if necessary</p> <p>t. Provision of and contribution to infrastructure as appropriate.</p> <p>u. Retention of the Grade II listed Magpie Cottage within an appropriate setting</p>
Implementation Approach	<p>Development of the South Aylesbury Strategic Site Allocation will come forward towards the latter end of the Plan period, and only once an AGT1 Masterplan SPD for the allocation has been prepared and adopted by the council. Proposals for development within the South Aylesbury Strategic Site Allocation will be expected to demonstrate how they positively contribute to the achievement of the SPD and the Aylesbury Garden Town Principles as set out in Policy D1. Any development on this site should be in accordance with the overarching policies and principles for the development of Aylesbury Garden Town.</p>

1.3.5 The SPD will be a Masterplan which expands upon the policy contained within the VALP and provides a framework to help guide the preparation and assessment of future planning applications within proposed development site D-AGT1.

1.3.6 The boundary for Site D-AGT1 is shown in **Figure 1.1**. The site comprises approximately 95ha of mostly undeveloped land and lies to the south east of Aylesbury Town.

1.3.7 The SPD is a masterplan, prepared for the site specific planning purposes of proposed development site D-AGT1.

- 1.3.8 A scoping report is not required by law, but it is a useful way of presenting information in order to establish a proportionate and relevant SEA process that informs the plan-making process effectively in a way in which the statutory bodies and the local authority agree.

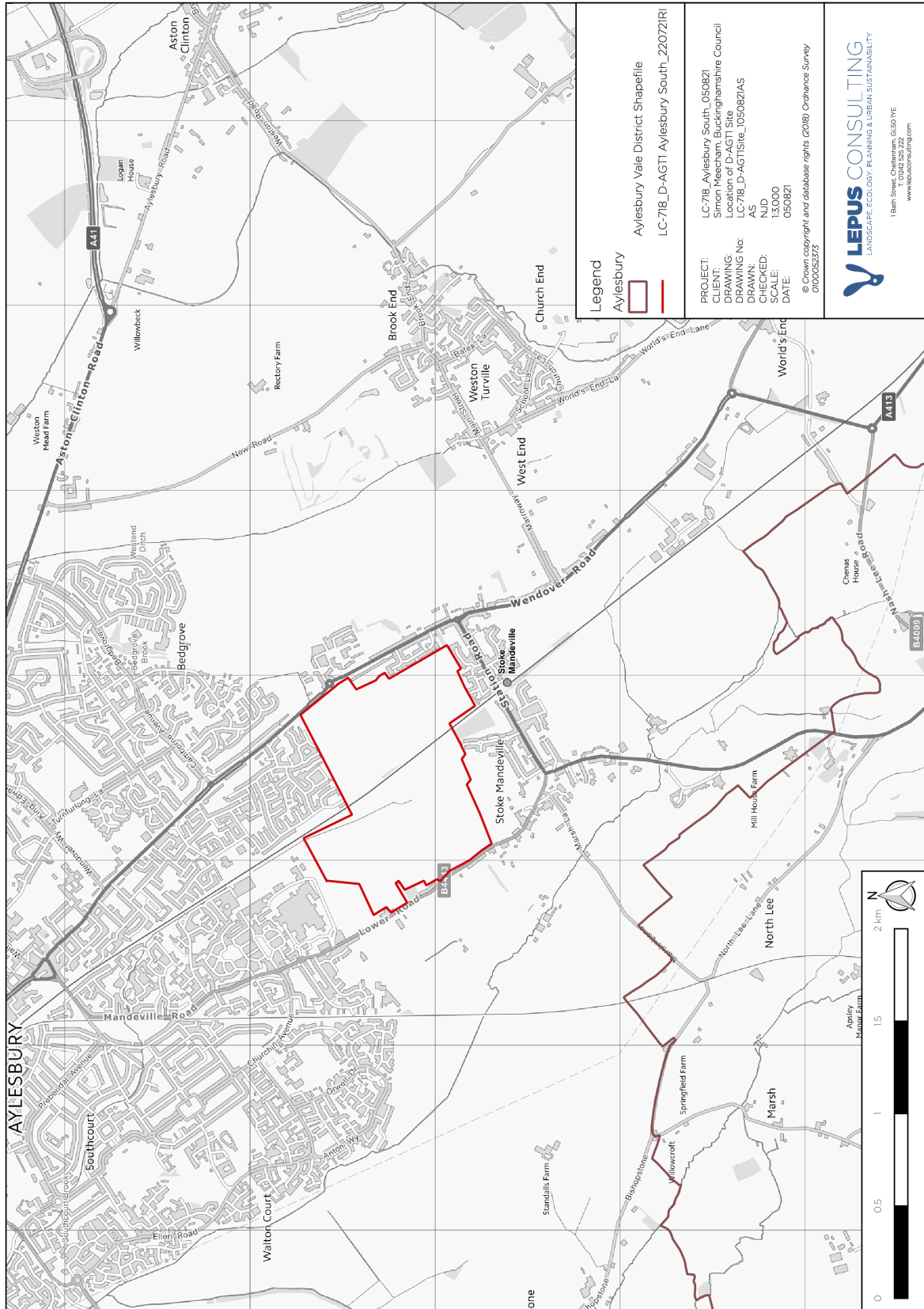


Figure 1.1: Proposed site D-AGTI boundary area.

2 Screening and scoping the plan

2.1 SEA Screening outcome

2.1.1 The SEA and HRA screening opinion prepared in October 2021 reviewed the extent to which the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD could potentially result in significant effects on the environment.

2.1.2 Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive³ states that the information provided in SEA should include:

2.1.3 *“The likely significant effects (⁴) on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors”.*

2.1.4 The SEA screening opinion considered the extent to which the SPD could potentially have a significant effect on each of the topics listed in Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive. The screening opinion concluded that a significant effect on the environment could not be ruled out. Potential impacts could not be ruled out due to several impact pathways:

- **Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna:** Conclusions from the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD SEA and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) state that there is potential for significant effects on Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), located at its closest point approximately 4.2km south west from the site which the SPD concerns. An HRA Screening exercise has been completed by Buckinghamshire Council⁵ which identified likely significant effects arising from recreational pressure associated with proposed development Site D-AGT1. Consequently, the Council proposes to prepare an Appropriate Assessment of the SPD. It is uncertain if development of Site D-AGT1 would result in negative impacts to other nationally or locally designated biodiversity assets.
- **Climate Change:** The proposed link road as set out within the SPD could potentially cause some negative impacts in terms of climatic factors, such as an increase in local air pollution. Additionally, the introduction of 1,000 new dwellings will likely increase energy consumption, pollution and traffic during both construction and occupancy stages, to some extent.

³ SEA Directive. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 22/11/21]

⁴ These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects.

⁵ Aylesbury South (D-AGT 1) Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement. Last updated: 04 June 2021 Version: 1.1 – 04 June 2021

- **Cultural Heritage:** There are a range of heritage assets within the area surrounding proposed development Site D-AGT1 and it is currently uncertain if new development would have a negative impact on the setting of these assets.
- **Landscape:** The site is located approximately 2.3km from the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural beauty (AONB) and also coincides with the Round Aylesbury Walk long distance footpath. It is currently uncertain if the construction and occupation of new dwellings and infrastructure at Site D-AGT1 would have a negative impact on the highly distinctive and sensitive character of the AONB, however development at the site is likely to have adverse impacts on the recreational experience associated with the long distance footpath.

2.1.5 It is not expected that new development outlined within the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD would result in any negative impacts in relation to any of the other topics listed in Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive.

2.2 Proportionate scope for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

2.2.1 The SEA screening stage determined that the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD could potentially have a significant effect on some of the SEA topics. After further consideration, these topics are determined to be: biodiversity and geodiversity, climate change, landscape and cultural heritage. It is therefore considered that an appropriate scope for the SEA of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD would be an Environmental Report that focusses on these topics. **Table 2.1** provides an overview of the SEA topics and their screening outcome.

Table 2.1: Content of the SEA topics screened in or out from this Scoping Report

Annex 1(f) topic	To be scoped into or out of the SEA of the SPD
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	In
Population	Out
Human health	Out
Soil	Out
Water	Out
Air	Out
Climatic factors	In
Material assets	Out
Cultural heritage	In
Landscape	In

2.3 Policy, Plan and Programme Review

2.3.1 The plan may be influenced in various ways by other policies, plans or programmes (PPPs), or by external sustainability objectives such as those put forward in higher strategies or by legislation. The SEA process will take advantage of potential synergies between these PPPs and address any inconsistencies and constraints. A summary of the PPP review is presented in the following chapters under each sustainability theme. The PPP summaries should be read alongside the more detailed information included in **Appendix B**.

2.4 Baseline data collection

2.4.1 **Chapters 3 to 6** provide a review of the current baseline data for each of the ‘screened in’ topics listed in **Table 2.1**. The purpose of the baseline review is to help define the key sustainability issues for the plan as well as the likely evolution of each topic in the absence of the SPD. This will enable the predicted effects of the plan to be effectively appraised. The currency, resolution and presentation of data is crucial to an effective baseline. This is limited by the range of data available but seeks to focus on data at the level of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD where possible whilst being up-to-date and fit for purpose. One of the purposes of consultation on the Scoping Report is to seek views on whether the data selected is appropriate.

3 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

3.1 Summary of policy and plan review

- 3.1.1 The strategic emphasis of the various PPPs is to conserve biological and geological diversity (including a reversal of the current trend of biodiversity loss) and protect and monitor endangered and vulnerable species and habitats. Policies identify a hierarchy of designations which aim to protect and enhance the natural environment. The highest priority is afforded to internationally designated habitats and species (Natura 2000) which are the subject of a specific HRA regime to examine the potential impacts on site or species integrity arising from policies or programmes. Other notable designations include national sites such as Sites for Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), as well as Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) being identified locally. The integration of biodiversity considerations into all environmental and socio-economic planning is strongly advocated.
- 3.1.2 The Natural Environment White Paper⁶ focuses on promoting high quality natural environments, expanding multifunctional green infrastructure (GI) networks and initiating landscape scale action to support ecological networks. The White Paper specifically seeks to: protect core areas of high nature conservation value; promote corridors and 'stepping stones' to enable species to move between key areas; and initiate Nature Improvement Areas, where ecological functions and wildlife can be restored.
- 3.1.3 The White Paper is supported by the Biodiversity 2020 strategy⁷. This seeks to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy, well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people. The Biodiversity Strategy for England also proposes introducing a new designation for Local Green Areas to enable communities to protect places that are important to them.

⁶ HM Government (2014): Natural Environment White Paper. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/366526/newp-imp-update-oct-2014.pdf [Date accessed: 22/11/21]

⁷ DEFRA (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services> [Date Accessed: 22/11/21]

- 3.1.4 The NPPF includes guidance on promoting the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. It requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- 3.1.5 The recently enacted Environment Act⁸ introduces plans, policies and targets to improve the natural environment. Focussing on biodiversity and the anticipated incorporation of the Biodiversity Metric 3.0⁹ into law, the act aims to ensure all new development delivers 10% net gain in biodiversity.
- 3.1.6 The 25 Year Environment Plan¹⁰ sets out how we must improve the environment over a generation by creating richer habitats for wildlife. The Plan also sets out how we will improve air and water quality, as well as reducing plastic within the world's oceans.

3.2 Baseline data

Natura 2000

- 3.2.1 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are sites of the Natura 2000 network protected under EU Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora¹¹ (the Habitats Directive). Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are also sites of the Natura 2000 network, protected under Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Conservation of Wild Birds¹² (the Birds Directive). Sites classified as a SPA or designated as a SAC are protected for the habitats and species they support.

⁸ Environment Act 2021. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted> [Date accessed: 22/11/21]

⁹ Natural England (2021) Biodiversity Metric 3.0. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720> [Date accessed: 22/11/21]

¹⁰ HM Government (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf [Date accessed: 22/11/21]

¹¹ European Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora . Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31992L0043&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

¹² European Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds . Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32009L0147&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

- 3.2.2 The closest Natura 2000 sites to the Aylesbury South Masterplan Site D-AGT1 is Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. This is located approximately 4.2km south-west from the site. A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process has been carried out parallel to the preparation of the VALP to inform the plan-making process to ensure that potential impacts arising from the VALP in relation to this SAC and other European sites have been suitably addressed and mitigated.
- 3.2.3 An HRA Screening exercise has been completed by Buckinghamshire Council¹³. The screening process identified likely significant effects arising from recreational pressure associated with D-AGT1. Consequently, the Council proposes to prepare an Appropriate Assessment of the SPD.

National designations

- 3.2.4 Natural England designates Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981¹⁴ (as amended). The closest SSSIs to Site D-AGT1 are Weston Turville SSSI and Bacombe and Coombe Hills SSSI located approximately 2.1km and 3.7km from the site respectively.
- 3.2.5 Natural England has developed Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) for each SSSI unit in the country. IRZs are a tool for rapid initial assessment of the potential risks to SSSIs posed by development proposals¹⁵. Site D-AGT1 is located within IRZs which do not indicate the proposed site uses are likely to be a threat to nearby SSSIs.

Ancient woodland

- 3.2.6 Ancient woodland is an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600AD and includes 'ancient semi-natural woodland' and 'plantations on ancient woodland sites', both of which have equal protection under the NPPF. A number of stands of ancient woodland can be found towards the south east of the former Aylesbury Vale, including 'Hale Wood' and 'Aston Hill Coppice/Buckland Hoo', situated over 3km from Site D-AGT1.

¹³ Aylesbury South (D-AGT 1) Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement. Last updated: 04 June 2021 Version: 1.1 – 04 June 2021

¹⁴ HM Government (1981): Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69> [Date accessed: 23/11/21]

¹⁵ Natural England (2021) Natural England's Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 12 October 2021. Available at: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/5ae2af0c-1363-4d40-9d1a-e5a1381449f8/sss-impact-risk-zones-england> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

Habitats and Species

- 3.2.7 The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas¹⁶ has revealed numerous protected and notable species have been recorded within Site D-AGT1 and surrounding land, some of which include:
- West European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)
 - Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)
 - Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)
- 3.2.8 Site D-AGT1 does not coincide with any known sites of national or local importance for biodiversity, however there is a small section of deciduous woodland priority habitat adjacent to the north of the site boundary, close to Stoke Mandeville Hospital.
- 3.2.9 The site comprises undeveloped land which is primarily agricultural in nature although hedgerow boundaries to fields and pockets of scrub would be expected to provide some ecological value.
- 3.2.10 The proposed development at Site D-AGT1 must be in accordance with VALP policies including Policies NE1 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and NE8 (Trees, hedgerows and woodlands) which seek to protect and enhance designated sites, protected habitats/species and GI, and deliver biodiversity net gain.
- 3.2.11 The site allocation as proposed within the VALP includes requirements to ensure “*existing vegetation should be retained where practicable, including existing woodlands and hedgerows*” and “*proposals must retain and enhance existing habitats where practicable, including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets and green corridors*”. However, the SPD does not contain any policies with more specific guidance relating to the site. The proposed “*provision and management of 50% green infrastructure to link to other new development areas*” could potentially help to provide a high quality ecological network, ensuring habitat connectivity to the wider area is retained and improved. The SPD could be enhanced through inclusion of more specific detail regarding the proposed GI and how the existing non-designated biodiversity assets (e.g. hedgerows) would be incorporated into this scheme.

¹⁶ NBN Atlas (2017) Explore your area. Available at: <https://records.nbnatlas.org/explore/your-area#51.79310644957166|-0.7914388227539004|14|Animals> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

3.3 Key Sustainability Issues

- 3.3.1 Based on the PPP review and baseline data presented in this Chapter, key sustainability issues for the Biodiversity and Geodiversity theme are listed in **Box 3.1**.

Box 3.1: Key Biodiversity and Geodiversity Issues for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- Avoiding damage through recreational pressures, promoting restoration and/or enhancement of protected site Chiltern Beechwoods SAC in line with the NPPF.

3.4 Future Evolution without the Plan

- 3.4.1 Annex 1(b) of the SEA Directive¹⁷ requires information on: *“the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme”*.

- 3.4.2 The Aylesbury South SPD is an essential component of Strategic Policy D-AGT1 within the VALP, where without the SPD in place, co-ordination of the various parcels of development would be unlikely to occur in a timely and well-planned method. Therefore, without the SPD, the housing requirement would still stand and a potentially less-comprehensive approach in place of the SPD could lead to possible adverse impacts on Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. Based on local and national trend data, the likely evolution of the Biodiversity and Geodiversity theme in the affected area is presented in **Box 3.2**.

Box 3.2: Future evolution of the baseline without the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- Sites designated for their national and international biodiversity and/or geodiversity value will continue to benefit from legislative protection.
- Without the SPD, it may be difficult to help ensure that development is not of a type, scale and location that could potentially have a major adverse impact on a biodiversity and geodiversity designation or on the functioning ecological network. It would be likely that biodiversity features would be somewhat protected by polices set out the VALP, however, it is uncertain to what extent.

¹⁷ SEA Directive. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

4 Climate Change

4.1 Summary of policy and plan review

- 4.1.1 Anthropogenic climate change is predominantly the result of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. GHGs are emitted from a wide variety of sources, including transport, construction, agriculture and waste. Typically, development leads to a net increase in GHG emissions in the local area, although efforts can be made to help limit these increases.
- 4.1.2 The Climate Change Act 2008¹⁸ is the basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. It requires that emissions of carbon dioxide and other GHGs are reduced and that climate change risks are prepared for. The Act also establishes the framework to deliver on these requirements.
- 4.1.3 The UK is a member of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC is the key forum which oversees international action to tackle climate change. The UNFCCC led the development and adoption of The Paris Agreement in 2015¹⁹. A total of 160 countries have pledged to cut their emissions as part of this process. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) report 'Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming'²⁰ recommended new emission targets: reducing GHG emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050.
- 4.1.4 Buckinghamshire Council have published a Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy²¹ which sets out a 'blueprint' on how the Council aims to tackle the issues of climate change and air quality within Buckinghamshire. Additionally, the former Aylesbury Vale District Council have outlined various programmes and initiatives to tackling climate change²² including a Carbon Management Plan, carbon off-setting initiative and an Energy Strategy.

¹⁸ Climate Change Act 2008. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

¹⁹ United Nations Climate Change (2015) The Paris Agreement. Available at: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

²⁰ Committee on Climate Change (2019) Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming. Available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

²¹ Buckinghamshire Council (2021) Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy. Available at: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/environment/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-change-and-air-quality-strategy> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

²² Aylesbury Vale District Council (2015) Your council tackling climate change. Available at: <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/your-council-tackling-climate-change> [Date Accessed: 23/11/21]

- 4.1.5 The CCC's latest progress report²³ discusses the need for further measures to be implemented by the Government to ensure that the UK meets the target of net zero by 2050. The COP26 event in November 2021 has provided an opportunity for the UK Government to continue to strengthen its focus on climate change resilience and adaptation and to ensure Covid-19 recovery plans help to accelerate the UK's transition to net zero.
- 4.1.6 Commitments to reduce GHG emissions have been introduced from the international level to the sub-regional level. The PPPs address policy development across all sectors and at all levels, combining both demand management (reduced energy consumption and increased efficiency of use) and supply-side measures (low carbon options including fuel mix and renewables).
- 4.1.7 Climate change and energy efficiency PPPs to encourage sustainable development are set out by central government. The national Building Regulations, as updated March 2015²⁴, require certain levels of sustainable construction to be met and provide guidance on additional, optional regulations for water and access. The UK Government has outlined, through the Localism Act, the importance of sustainable development and its commitments to reducing carbon emissions and GHGs.
- 4.1.8 The Environment Agency (EA) provides guidance on flood risk for planners, developers and advisors in order to inform flood risk assessments and the plan-making process and stresses the importance of making allowances for climate change²⁵.
- 4.1.9 Adaptation measures proposed by the PPPs include a presumption against development in flood risk areas, appropriate design of new development, the promotion of new infrastructure such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and improved maintenance to help address the changes that are likely to occur as a result of climate change. Through this approach, the Government is seeking to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages of the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk.

²³ Reducing UK emissions: 2021 Progress Report to Parliament. Available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/2021-progress-report-to-parliament/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

²⁴ The Building Regulations (Amendment) Regulations 2015. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/767/contents/made> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

²⁵ Environment Agency (2021) Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessments-climate-change-allowances> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

4.2 Baseline Data

Carbon emissions

- 4.2.1 Air quality within the Vale of Aylesbury is generally good²⁶, and there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within or in close proximity to Site D-AGT1.
- 4.2.2 The proposed new link road between the A413 to B4443 Lower Road could potentially cause some negative impacts in terms of climatic factors, such as an increase in local air pollution. The SPD would be expected to facilitate active travel through the provision of new routes and multi-functional Green Infrastructure (GI). Promoting active travel, such as walking or cycling, as well as improving the provision of public transport links into Aylesbury, would help to encourage new residents to use more sustainable travel modes compared to personal vehicles, and in turn, result in an improvement to the air quality.
- 4.2.3 The introduction of 1,000 new dwellings will inevitably cause an increase in energy consumption, pollution and traffic during both the construction and occupancy stages, to some extent.

Renewable energy

- 4.2.4 The SPD is expected to adhere to Policy C3 of the VALP, as well as national policies, where the development is expected to “*make use of renewable energy*” and residents will be encouraged to make use of community renewable energy schemes to achieve greater efficiency in the use of natural resources.

Flooding

- 4.2.5 Climate change is anticipated to increase the risk of extreme weather events. Of particular concern in the UK is the rising risk of fluvial, pluvial (surface water) and coastal flooding. In 2009 the EA estimated 2.4 million properties in England were susceptible to fluvial and/or coastal flooding, whilst 3.8 million properties in England were susceptible to pluvial flooding²⁷.

²⁶ Buckingham Council (2021) Air Quality. Available at: <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/section/air-quality> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21]

²⁷ Environment Agency (2009) Flooding in England: National Assessment of Flood Risk. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/292928/qeho0609bqds-e-e.pdf [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

- 4.2.6 Although Site D-AGT1 is located wholly within Flood Zone 1, it is likely that flood risk will become more prevalent in future years due to higher flood plain levels and climate change introducing more extreme weather events including higher volumes of rainfall. Multi-functional GI should be used within this development as a buffer for current and future flood risk. It is expected that the requirements of VALP and national policies, alongside the delivery of 50% GI on site, would help to ensure that significant adverse impacts regarding flood risk do not arise through a reduction in surface water runoff.

Green Infrastructure

- 4.2.7 Green Infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities²⁸. GI has many benefits including human health, climate change adaptation and wildlife value²⁹. GI can play an important role in helping urban areas adapt to climate change, by filtering airborne pollutants, providing shade and local cooling and reducing surface water runoff³⁰. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD requires development of Site D-AGT1 to implement 50% GI throughout its design, this may include parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural green spaces and green corridors and buffers. In order to meet the 50% GI requirements, the GI needs to be publicly accessible natural green space to subsequently meet the ANGSt standards, as outlined within VALP paragraphs 3.38 and 11.1.
- 4.2.8 VALP Policy D1 states that “*new garden communities should be designed to be resilient places that allow for changing demographics, future growth and the impacts of climate change by anticipating opportunities for technological change including renewable energy measures*”. In line with Policy C3, development would be expected to utilise sustainable design and construction measures and seek to use decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources for energy where feasible. The SPD would benefit from inclusion of more specific guidance with regards to sustainable energy, water consumption and how the proposed development will be adaptable to climate change.

4.3 Key Sustainability Issues

- 4.3.1 Based on the PPP review and baseline data presented in this chapter, key sustainability issues for the Climate Change theme are listed in **Box 4.1**.

²⁸ MHCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

²⁹ Forest Research (2010) Benefits of green infrastructure. Available at: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/benefits-of-green-infrastructure/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³⁰ Landscape Institute (no date) Green Infrastructure (GI). Available at: <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/policy/green-infrastructure/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

Box 4.1: Key Climate Change Issues for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- Development of the proposed link road between the A143 and B4443 could potentially lead to adverse impacts on local air quality and climate change mitigation through the release of pollutants, including GHGs.
- Introducing 1,000 new dwellings will increase energy consumption, pollution and traffic within the local area.

4.4 Future evolution without the Plan

4.4.1 The Aylesbury South SPD is an essential component of Strategic Policy D-AGT1 within the VALP, where without the SPD in place, co-ordination of the various parcels of development would be unlikely to occur in a timely and well-planned method. Therefore, without the SPD, the housing requirement would still stand and a potentially less-comprehensive approach in place of the SPD could lead to possible adverse impacts on climate change. Based on local and national trend data, the likely evolution of the Climate Change theme in the affected area is presented in **Box 4.2**.

Box 4.2: Future evolution of the baseline without the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- In the absence of the SPD, future planning applications for the land which encompasses Site D-AGT1 would be required to adhere to local and national policies regarding production of emissions and air pollution.
- The extent to which pollution could result in absence of the SPD is uncertain, and would depend on any future planning applications which would be required to fulfill the housing need. For example, the proposed link road between the A143 and B4443 may not be developed and therefore housing development applications on the land encompassing Site D-AGT1, or land proposed elsewhere, may increase local traffic on current road systems and associated air pollution.

5 Historic Environment

5.1 Summary of policy and plan review

5.1.1 Historic environment priorities from the international to the local level seek to address a range of issues. These include protecting designated resources and their settings (such as Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, and Registered Parks and Gardens); recognising the cultural aspects of landscape and establishing mechanisms for their protection against inappropriate development; recognising the potential value of unknown and undesignated resources; and conserving/enhancing sites and landscapes of archaeological and heritage interest so that they may be enjoyed by both present and future generations.

5.1.2 Regional guidance provides information on the way in which streets and public open spaces are managed in order to reinforce local character, creating a set of general principles for the continuing maintenance and enhancement of space. The local PPPs are in line with the regional, national and international PPPs, providing more specific guidance and information.

5.1.3 Relevant legislation, plans, policies and programmes include the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979³¹, the Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England 2010³², Historic England Corporate Plan 2021-22³³ and Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes 1-3³⁴.

5.2 Baseline data

Designated assets

5.2.1 Stoke Mandeville and the surrounding area contains an array of distinctive heritage assets and historic areas recognised through designations. This includes:

- Nationally designated Listed Buildings;
- Scheduled Monuments; and

³¹ UK Government (1979) Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³² UK Government (2010) Statement on the historic Environment for England 2010 - Parts 1,2 and 3. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-governments-statement-on-the-historic-environment-for-england> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³³ Historic England (2021) Historic England Corporate Plan (2021-2022). Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/about/what-we-do/corporate-plan/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³⁴ Historic England (2015) Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes 1-3. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

- Registered Parks and Gardens.

Listed Buildings

5.2.2 Listed Buildings are those that have been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. There are several Grade II Listed Buildings within and surrounding the settlement of Stoke Mandeville, including a cluster along the B4443 running north to Aylesbury, which represents the western edge of the proposed scheme. This includes the 'Stoke Cottage', 'Lone Ash' and 'Bell Cottage and Tudor Cottage'. One Grade II Listed Building, 'Magpie Cottage', lies within the southwest corner of Site D-AGT1 itself.

5.2.3 By applying Policy BE1 of the VALP, the proposed development at Site D-AGT1 should ensure the "*retention of the Grade II listed Magpie Cottage within an appropriate setting*", however the SPD could usefully add further clarity to this statement to ensure that the cottage and its setting are protected and enhanced in line with its historic significance.

Scheduled Monuments

5.2.4 A Scheduled Monument (SM) is a nationally important archaeological site or historic feature that is given protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

5.2.5 There are no SMs within close proximity to Site D-AGT1, with the closest SM, 'Motte and bailey in grounds of manor house', being located approximately 1.8km from the site.

Registered Parks and Gardens

5.2.6 The Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest was first published by English Heritage in 1988. Although inclusion on the Register brings no additional statutory controls, registration is a material consideration in planning terms.

5.2.7 Although there are no Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs) within close proximity to Site D-AGT1, with the nearest being 'Hartwell House' RPG located 2.4km to the north west of the site.

Conservation Area

5.2.8 Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local authorities have the power to designate conservation areas in any area of 'special architectural or historic interest' whose character or appearance is worth protecting or enhancing. This is judged against local and regional criteria, rather than national importance as is the case with listing. Conservation Area designations increase the local planning authority's control over demolition of buildings and over certain alterations to residential properties that would normally be classed as 'permitted development' and not require planning permission. There are no conservation areas located in close proximity to Site D-AGT1, and therefore there is likely to be a negligible impact on these assets.

Non-Designated Features

5.2.9 The Archaeology Data Service shows three records of physical archaeological evidence in the location of Site D-AGT1³⁵. This includes records of known features as well as digs and excavations, some of which resulted in archaeological finds. Although Policy BE1 within the VALP could help protect these features, it is uncertain if any adverse impacts will be completely mitigated by the policy.

³⁵ Archaeology Data Service (2018) ARCHSEARCH. Available at: <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

5.3 Key Sustainability Issues

- 5.3.1 Based on the PPP review and baseline data presented in this chapter, key sustainability issues for the Historic Environment theme are listed in **Box 5.1**.

Box 5.1: Key Historic Environment Issues for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- Development within Site D-AGT1 could potentially alter the setting of historic assets, both designated and non-designated.
- Archaeological remains, including that which has not yet been discovered, are present in the area and could potentially be affected by development proposals of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD.

5.4 Future evolution without the Plan

- 5.4.1 The Aylesbury South SPD is an essential component of Strategic Policy A-DGT1 within the VALP, where without the SPD in place, co-ordination of the various parcels of development would be unlikely to occur in a timely and well-planned method. Therefore, without the SPD, the housing requirement would still stand and a potentially less-comprehensive approach in place of the SPD could lead to possible adverse impacts on the historic environment. However, based on local and national trend data, the likely evolution of the Historic Environment theme in the affected area is presented in **Box 5.2**.

Box 5.2: Future evolution of the baseline without the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- In the absence of the SPD, the character and setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets is unlikely to change significantly, primarily due to policies set out in the Vale of Aylesbury Development Plan.
- The extent to which the accessibility, local awareness or setting of heritage assets may be enhanced over time without the SPD is uncertain.
- In the absence of the SPD, it is unlikely that archaeological assets (both discovered and undiscovered) will be harmed or threatened.

6 Landscape

6.1 Summary of policy and plan review

6.1.1 At European, national, regional and local levels, emphasis is placed on the protection of landscape as an essential component of people's surroundings and sense of place. The 2006 European Landscape Convention³⁶ acknowledges the quality and diversity of European landscapes, that they constitute a common resource and that it is important to co-operate towards its protection, management and planning. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF³⁷ states:

6.1.2 *“Achieving sustainable development means ... to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy”.*

6.1.3 The relevant plans, policies and programmes seek to increase recognition of the linkages and interplay between the different aspects and roles of landscape, including: local distinctiveness; the historic environment; natural resources; farming, forestry and food; educational, leisure and recreation opportunities; transport and infrastructure; settlements and nature conservation.

6.1.4 Policies generally advocate the provision of open space, green networks and woodland as opportunities for sport and recreation, creating healthier communities, supporting and enhancing biodiversity, reducing temperatures in built up areas in summer, reducing the impact of noise and air pollution, and limiting the risk of flooding.

6.1.5 The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 2.3km to the south east of the site, at its closest. The settlement of Stoke Mandeville lies between the proposed site and the AONB.

6.1.6 VALP Policy NE4, landscape character and locally important landscape, aims to ensure that the local landscape is maintained. Any development must recognise the individual character and distinctiveness of particular landscape character areas set out in the Landscape Character Assessment and must follow the relevant policies set out in the VALP.

³⁶ Council of Europe (2000) European Landscape Convention. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680080621> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³⁷ MHCLG (2021) NPPF. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

6.2 Baseline data

National Character Areas

- 6.2.1 Based on a combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and economic activity, England has been sub-divided into 159 National Character Areas (NCAs) that follow natural boundaries³⁸.
- 6.2.2 Site D-AGT1 lies within the National Character Area (NCA) 'Upper Thames Clay Vales'. Key characteristics of this NCA include "*low-lying clay-based flood plains ... gently undulating topography ... fields are regular and hedged*"³⁹.

Landscape Character

- 6.2.3 Landscape character is defined as the distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape. It is these patterns that give each locality its 'sense of place', making one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. In defining the combinations of components which make each landscape unique, landscape character is a way of thinking about landscape more holistically and objectively, rather than focusing on scenic beauty and subjective responses. Landscapes have evolved over time as a result of both natural and cultural processes.
- 6.2.4 Site D-AGT1 is located within Landscape Character Area 'Southern Vale'⁴⁰ which has key characteristics of:
- Flat landscape in the north rising gently to a rolling land form on the southern edge;
 - Parliamentary enclosure;
 - Streams and ditches draining off the chalk scarp to the south marked by belts of mature black poplar;
 - Landscape continuity interrupted by development and communication corridors;
 - Predominance of large open arable fields; and
 - Pockets of grazing land and smaller field parcels associated with settlements.

³⁸ Natural England (2014) National Character Areas. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

³⁹ Natural England (2014) NCA Profile: 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales (NE570). Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5865554770395136> [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

⁴⁰ Aylesbury Vale District Council (2008) Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.aylesburyvalecd.gov.uk/landscape-character-assessment> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21]

The Chilterns AONB

- 6.2.5 The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 2.3km to the south east of the site, at its closest. The settlement of Stoke Mandeville lies between the proposed site and the AONB.
- 6.2.6 The Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024⁴¹, prepared by the Chilterns Conservation Board, aims to conserve and enhance the AONB through four general policies:
- Explore the case for and against the Chilterns having enhanced status or being designated a National Park;
 - Review the boundary of the protected area to cover the wider area of the Chilterns landscape that merits it;
 - Establish a strong partnership to deliver the Chilterns AONB Management Plan working together in the best interests of the area, its environment, communities, economy and visitors; and
 - Support projects and proposals that have a positive impact on the ability of the Chilterns to contribute sustainable Ecosystem Services through various approaches, including 'sustainably managing land and water environments'.
- 6.2.7 VALP Policy NE3 specifically regards the conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns AONB and its setting. Additionally, VALP Policy NE4, landscape character and locally important landscape, aims to ensure that the local landscape is maintained. Any development must recognise the individual character and distinctiveness of particular landscape character areas set out in the Landscape Character Assessment and must follow the relevant policies set out in the VALP.

Visual impacts

- 6.2.8 As stated in the previous SA, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan⁴², completed in 2018, the main concern was the potential results that the expansion of Aylesbury to the south and southeast, may cause for the Chilterns AONB. The completed SA examined the 'cumulative effects' of growth at Aylesbury and paragraph 10.9.2 (page 95) of the SA report concludes:

⁴¹ Chilterns AONB (2019) Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024. Available at: https://www.chilternsaonb.org/uploads/files/ConservationBoard/ManagementPlan/Chilterns_Management_Plan_2019-2024_Full.pdf [Date Accessed: 24/11/21]

⁴² AECOM (2018) Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. Available at: https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/VALP%20-%20SA%20Report%20170918.pdf [Date Accessed 25/11/21]

“There would be direct visual effects on the AONB as a result of the cumulative development sites. The visual extent of the cumulative development sites, combined with the existing development at Aylesbury and nearby settlements, would be readily apparent. However, development across the sites will be predominantly low-rise and incorporate substantial mitigation planting, reducing the impact on views across the low-lying vale landscape from the elevated viewpoints within the AONB. The key characteristics of views across the wider landscape would be fundamentally unchanged, in that they would remain expansive across the settled vale landscape. It is considered unlikely that there would be significant cumulative residual landscape and visual effects on the AONB”.

6.2.9 The proposed development will aim to maintain the setting and individual identity of Stoke Mandeville, through the provision of a buffer. Whilst maintaining the character of the area, the long-distance views across the site to the Chiltern AONB should be maintained as much as practicable by building low lying dwellings. Green corridors, cycle and footpaths should be used to reduce traffic flow, noise, sound and air pollution that may affect the surrounding landscape quality and character. A carefully planned and well-managed GI network, as advocated by the VALP, would be expected to minimise intrusion on the nationally important landscape of the Chiltern Hills AONB.

6.2.10 The Round Aylesbury Walk long distance path is one of three walks that circumnavigate Aylesbury. The path is located to help provide open views of the countryside and high quality open air recreational experiences. Although the SPD outlines green corridors which may support the retention of this PRoW, the extent to which the development associated with the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is likely to adversely affect the recreational experience associated with the path is uncertain at this stage.

6.3 Key Sustainability Issues

- 6.3.1 Based on the PPP review and baseline data presented in this Chapter, key sustainability issues for the Landscape theme are listed in **Box 6.1**.

Box 6.1: Key Landscape Issues for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- The SPD seeks to develop Site D-AGT1 which is located 2.3km from The Chilterns AONB, separated by the settlement Stoke Mandeville. Development outside the AONB should seek to conserve and enhance its setting.
- Development proposed within the SPD could potentially alter views for users of The Round Aylesbury Walk long distance path and other PRowWs within the site.
- Assessments from Aylesbury's Landscape Character Assessment should also be considered.

6.4 Future Evolution without the Plan

- 6.4.1 The Aylesbury South SPD is an essential component of Strategic Policy D-AGT1 within the VALP, where without the SPD in place, co-ordination of the various parcels of development would be unlikely to occur in a timely and well-planned method. Therefore, without the SPD, the housing requirement would still stand and a potentially less-comprehensive approach in place of the SPD could lead to possible adverse impacts on the landscape. However, based on local and national trend data, the likely evolution of the Landscape theme in the Neighbourhood Plan area is presented in **Box 6.2**.

Box 6.2: Future evolution of the baseline without the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD

- The Chilterns AONB will continue to be proactively and effectively managed by the Chilterns Conservation Board and, in the absence of the SPD, would be likely to be conserved and enhanced through the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024.
- In the absence of the SPD, housing needs would likely be met through planning applications and it is uncertain whether distinctive and long-distance countryside views within and of the site, and of any alternative site, would be altered, which may include views experienced by local residents and users of the local PRow network. The SPD outlines green corridors which may protect these routes to some extent. Policies set out in the Vale of Aylesbury Development Plan would be likely to protect some views but may not be specific to Stoke Mandeville and the Chilterns AONB, however without proactive management to conserve landscape features and open space, the quality of these views could potentially deteriorate over time.
- In the absence of the SPD, the local distinctive and rural landscape character would be unlikely to be altered. Although housing need would still be required to be met, key landscape features would be likely to be preserved in the absence of the SPD through policies set out in the VALP.

7 SEA Framework

7.1 Purpose of the SEA Framework

7.1.1 The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD will be assessed through an SEA Framework of objectives, decision making criteria, indicators and targets. The full SEA Framework for the SPD is presented in **Appendix A**.

7.1.2 SEA Objectives are typically of a high level but at a detail appropriate to the plan being assessed. The extent to which proposals in the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD (predominantly policies and site allocations) will help to achieve each SEA Objective (or have a 'positive impact' on each SEA Objective) will be determined by using decision making criteria and a set of indicators. The decision-making criteria and indicators can be revised and updated over time should the baseline data or the key sustainability issues in the affected area change. The set of indicators in the Framework can also be used to monitor the success and sustainability performance of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD should it be adopted.

7.2 SEA Objectives

7.2.1 The purpose of the SEA objectives, found in **Appendix A**, is to provide a way of ensuring the proposed SPD policies consider the needs of the wider community in terms of their environmental and socio-economic effects. The SEA topics identified in Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive are one of the key determinants when considering which objectives should be used for the environmental criteria. Consequently, the SEA Objectives seek to reflect all subject areas to ensure the assessment process is transparent, robust and thorough.

7.2.2 The SEA/SA Framework used by the local planning authority, which in this case is Buckinghamshire Council, generally acts as a starting point for identifying suitable Objectives. However, the Objectives should be narrowed down to issues pertinent to the local area.

7.2.3 The SEA Objectives have drawn on the baseline information, the key issues and other plans and programmes of particular interest discussed earlier in this Scoping Report (see **Chapters 3 - 6**). It should be noted that the ordering of the SA objectives does not infer any prioritisation.

7.2.4 A summary of the proposed SEA Objectives for the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is presented in **Table 7.1**.

Table 7.1: Proposed SEA Objectives

SEA Objective	
1	Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Protect, enhance and manage the flora, fauna, biodiversity and geodiversity assets of the areas affected by the development of Site D-AGT1.
2	Climate Change: Mitigate and reduce the development of Site D-AGT1's contribution towards climate change.
3	Cultural Heritage: Conserve, enhance and manage sites, features and areas of historic and cultural importance, including their setting.
4	Landscape: Conserve, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening its distinctiveness.

8 Subsequent stages to be carried out

8.1 Refining options and assessing likely effects

8.1.1 The assessment of options (or alternatives) is an important requirement of the SEA Directive, which requires that the Environmental Report includes the following information about reasonable alternatives:

8.1.2 *“An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information”.*

8.1.3 Each proposal of the SPD, and their reasonable alternatives, will be assessed for their likely impacts against the SEA Framework. These impacts will be considered in light of the likely evolution of the baseline in the absence of the SPD (i.e. a do-nothing scenario). The assessments of reasonable alternatives will help the SPD group to identify and refine options so that they are more economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. Specifically, the SEA of the South Aylesbury Masterplan SPD will help to ensure that significant effects on the local landscape, the local biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage assets, as well as climate change are identified and mitigated.

8.1.4 Reasonable alternatives will be assessed through the SEA process and the assessment of alternatives will take place following consultation on the Scoping Report. This will enable options for the SPD to be explored. Whilst this report would not be a requisite of the SEA Directive, a report of this nature can help demonstrate iteration between the plan making process and the SEA and provide a coherent story of the SPD's evolution and choice of options.

8.1.5 The assessments of alternatives will include information in relation to:

- A description of the predicted effect;
- The duration of the effect: whether the effect is long, medium or short term;
- The frequency of the effect: will it be ongoing?
- Whether the effect is temporary or permanent;
- The geographic (international, national, regional, local) significance;
- The magnitude of effect;
- The severity of significance; and
- Whether mitigation is required/possible to reduce the effect.

- 8.1.6 The footnote for Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive⁴³ states:
- 8.1.7 *“These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects”.*
- 8.1.8 The terms ‘synergistic’, ‘secondary’ and ‘cumulative’ are not considered to be mutually exclusive and in this report the term ‘cumulative effects’ is taken to include secondary and synergistic effects. Each is defined as follows:
- Secondary effects are effects that are not a direct result of the Plan, but occur away from the original effect or as a result of a complex pathway;
 - Cumulative effects arise, for instance, where several developments each have insignificant effects, but in-combination have a significant effect, or where several individual effects of the Plan have a combined effect; and
 - Synergistic effects interact to produce a total effect greater than the sum of the individual effects, so that the nature of the final impact is different to the nature of the individual impacts.
- 8.1.9 Wherever possible, throughout the appraisal process, GIS will be used as an analytical tool to examine the spatial distribution of identified effects.

8.2 Environmental Report

- 8.2.1 The environmental report is a core output of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process. An environmental report for the purpose of the SEA Directive must identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the SPD⁴⁴. The Environmental Report will accompany the Consultation version of the SPD and will be consulted on with at least the statutory bodies; Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.

⁴³ SEA Directive. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

⁴⁴ MHCLG (2021) Plan-making. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

9 Consultation on the Scoping report

9.1 Purpose of Consultation

- 9.1.1 The SEA Regulations state that the scoping stage should be the subject of consultation with statutory bodies for a minimum period of five weeks.
- 9.1.2 Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SEA process. The SEA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies but not full consultation with the public at the scoping stage. Regulation 12 (5) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 1633) states that:
- 9.1.3 *“When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”.*
- 9.1.4 This report will be subject to consultations with the statutory bodies; Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England. Their responses will be presented within **Appendix C**.

Appendix A – Full SEA Framework

SEA Objective	Decision making criteria	Indicators
1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Protect, enhance and manage the flora, fauna, biodiversity and geodiversity assets of the areas affected by the development of Site D-AGT1.	Will it result in a net loss or a net gain for biodiversity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new residents which generate adverse impacts on sites of biodiversity importance, such as the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. • Creation of new biodiversity assets. • Provision of multi-functional green infrastructure. • Protection of existing vegetation and hedgerows.
	Will it protect or enhance wildlife sites or biodiversity?	
	Will it protect sites and habitats designated for nature conservation including protected species?	
	Will it protect and enhance the water environment?	
2 Climate Change: Mitigate and reduce Site D-AGT1's contribution towards climate change.	Will it reduce emissions from transport and the built environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of green infrastructure. • Public transport and cycling and walking provision for new development. • Increased local traffic. • Drainage designed for 'exceedence' events.
	Will it reduce flood risk?	
	Will it conserve water resources?	
3 Cultural heritage: Protect, enhance and manage heritage assets, including designated and non-designated, as well as features and areas of and heritage importance.	Will it preserve buildings of historic interest and, where necessary, encourage their conservation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of local heritage features including Listed Buildings, such as Grade II Listed Building 'Magpie Cottage'. • Annual number of visitors to historic attractions. • Below ground remains.
	Will it preserve or enhance archaeological sites?	
	Will it preserve or enhance the setting or character of cultural heritage assets or areas?	
4 Landscape: Conserve, enhance and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening their distinctiveness.	Will it protect and enhance the local landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape-led development with consideration of long-distance views of the AONB? • Use of locally sourced materials. • Is development in-keeping with surroundings (e.g. character of Stoke Mandeville)? • Increase of coalescence. • Protection of local PRoWs.
	Will it protect and enhance the local townscape?	

Appendix B – Plans, policies and programmes review

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018)	<p>The document sets out government action to help achieve natural world regain and retain good health. The main goals of the Plan are to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean air; • Clean and plentiful water; • Thriving plants and wildlife; • A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought; • Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently; and • Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.
EC Seventh Environmental Action Programme 2013-2020 (2013)	<p>The main concern of the EEB was the need to describe in an un-ambivalent manner the environmental challenges the EU is faced with, including accelerating climate change, deterioration of our eco-systems and increasing overuse of natural resources.</p>
Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 (2011)	<p>The EU biodiversity strategy follows on from the EU Biodiversity Action Plan (2006). It aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services across the EU by 2020. The strategy contains six targets and 20 actions. The six targets cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full implementation of EU nature legislation to protect biodiversity; • Better protection for ecosystems, and more use of green infrastructure; • More sustainable agriculture and forestry; • Better management of fish stocks; • Tighter controls on invasive alien species; and • A bigger EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.
The Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (1995)	<p>The strategy aims to stop and reverse the degradation of biological and landscape diversity values in Europe.</p>
UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	<p>The aims of the Convention include the conservation of biological diversity (including a commitment to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss), the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.</p>
Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979)	<p>The Convention seeks to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats, and to monitor and control endangered and vulnerable species.</p>

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992 (the Habitats Directive)	<p>The main aim of the Habitats Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring Member States to take measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species listed on the Annexes to the Directive at a favourable conservation status, introducing robust protection for those habitats and species of European importance. In applying these measures Member States are required to take account of economic, social and cultural requirements, as well as regional and local characteristics.</p> <p>The provisions of the Directive require Member States to introduce a range of measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain or restore European protected habitats and species listed in the Annexes at a favourable conservation status as defined in Articles 1 and 2; • Contribute to a coherent European ecological network of protected sites by designating Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for habitats listed on Annex I and for species listed on Annex II. These measures are also to be applied to Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under Article 4 of the Birds Directive. Together SACs and SPAs make up the Natura 2000 network (Article 3); • Ensure conservation measures are in place to appropriately manage SACs and ensure appropriate assessment of plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of an SAC. Projects may still be permitted if there are no alternatives, and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In such cases compensatory measures are necessary to ensure the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network (Article 6); • Member States shall also endeavour to encourage the management of features of the landscape that support the Natura 2000 network (Articles 3 and 10); • Undertake surveillance of habitats and species (Article 11); • Ensure strict protection of species listed on Annex IV (Article 12 for animals and Article 13 for plants). <p>Report on the implementation of the Directive every six years (Article 17), including assessment of the conservation status of species and habitats listed on the Annexes to the Directive.</p>
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitats regulations)	This transposes into national law the Habitats Directive and also consolidates all amendments that have been made to the previous 1994 Regulations. This means that competent authorities have a general duty in the exercise of any of their functions to have regard to the Directive.
The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	The Act provides for public access on foot to certain types of land, amends the law relating to public rights of way, increases measures for the management and protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation, and provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006	The Act makes provision in respect of biodiversity, pesticides harmful to wildlife and the protection of birds, and in respect of invasive non-native species. It alters enforcement powers in connection with wildlife protection and extends time limits for prosecuting certain wildlife offences. It addresses a small number of gaps and uncertainties which have been identified in relation to the law on sites of special scientific interest. And it amends the functions and constitution of National Park authorities, the functions of the Broads Authority and the law on rights of way.
DEFRA Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended)	The principle mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
DEFRA. Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (2011)	<p>The England biodiversity strategy 2020 ties in with the EU biodiversity strategy in addition to drawing links to the concept of ecosystem services. The strategy's vision for England is:</p> <p><i>"By 2050 our land and seas will be rich in wildlife, our biodiversity will be valued, conserved, restored, managed sustainably and be more resilient and able to adapt to change, providing essential services and delivering benefits for everyone".</i></p> <p>The Strategy's overall mission is <i>"to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people".</i></p>
DoE Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan (1994)	Government's strategy for protection and enhancement of biodiversity, from 1992 convention on Biodiversity commitments. Advises on opportunities and threats for biodiversity.
TCPA: Biodiversity by Design: A Guide for Sustainable Communities (2004)	The development process should consider ecological potential of all areas including both greenfield and brownfield sites. Local authorities and developers have a responsibility to mitigate impacts of development on designated sites and priority habitats and species and avoid damage to ecosystems.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2021)	<p>The recently released NPPF seeks to streamline the planning system and sets out the Governments planning policies and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>The NPPF includes guidance on promoting the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. It requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils; • recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; • minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; • preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and • remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network (2010)	<p>The Making Space for Nature report, which investigated the resilience of England's ecological network to multiple pressures, concluded that England's wildlife sites do not comprise a coherent and resilient ecological network. The report advocates the need for a step change in conservation of England's wildlife sites to ensure they are able to adapt and become part of a strong and resilient network. The report summarises what needs to be done to improve England's wildlife sites to enhance the resilience and coherence of England's ecological network in four words; more, bigger, better, and joined. There are five key approaches which encompass these, which also take into account of the land around the ecological network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management. • Increase the size of current wildlife sites. • Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through 'stepping stones'. • Create new sites. • Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites. <p>To establish a coherent ecological network 24 wide ranging recommendations have been made which are united under five key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to continue the recent progress in improving the management and condition of wildlife sites, particularly our SSSIs. We also make recommendations for how these should be designated and managed in ways that enhance their resilience to climate change.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to properly plan ecological networks, including restoration areas. Restoration needs to take place throughout England. However, in some areas, both the scale of what can be delivered to enhance the network, and the ensuing benefits for wildlife and people, will be very high. These large areas should be formally recognised as Ecological Restoration Zones. • There are a large number of surviving patches of important wildlife habitat scattered across England outside of SSSIs, for example in Local Wildlife Sites. We need to take steps to improve the protection and management of these remaining wildlife habitats. 'Protection' will usually be best achieved through incentive-based mechanisms, but at times may require designation. • There is a need to become better at deriving multiple benefits from the ways we use and interact with our environment. There are many things that society has to do that may seem to have rather little to do with nature conservation, but could have, or even should have if we embrace more radical thinking; e.g. flood management by creating wetlands. <p>It will not be possible to achieve a step-change in nature conservation in England without society accepting it to be necessary, desirable, and achievable. This will require strong leadership from government and significant improvements in collaboration between local authorities, local communities, statutory agencies, the voluntary and private sectors, farmers, landowners and other land-managers and individual citizens.</p>
DEFRA England's Trees, Woods and Forests Strategy (2007)	<p>The England's Trees, Woods, and Forest Strategy (2007) aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide, in England, a resource of trees, woods and forests in places where they can contribute most in terms of environmental, economic and social benefits now and for future generations • ensure that existing and newly planted trees, woods and forests are resilient to the impacts of climate change and also contribute to the way in which biodiversity and natural resources adjust to a changing climate • protect and enhance the environmental resources of water, soil, air, biodiversity and landscapes (both woodland and non-woodland), and the cultural and amenity values of trees and woodland • increase the contribution that trees, woods and forests make to the quality of life for those living in, working in or visiting England; and • improve the competitiveness of woodland businesses and promote the development of new or improved markets for sustainable woodland products and ecosystem services where this will deliver identify able public benefits, nationally or locally, including the reduction of carbon emissions.
The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature. The Natural Environment White Paper. (HM Government 2011)	<p>Published in June 2011, the Natural Environment White paper sets out the Government's plans to ensure the natural environment is protected and fully integrated into society and economic growth. The White Paper sets out four key aims:</p> <p>(i) <u>Protecting and improving our natural environment</u></p> <p>There is a need to improve the quality of our natural environment across England, moving to a net gain in the value of nature. It aims to arrest the decline in habitats and species and the degradation of landscapes. It will protect priority habitats and safeguard vulnerable non-renewable resources for future generations. It will support natural systems to function more effectively in town, in the country and at sea. It will achieve this through joined-up action at local and national levels to create an ecological network which is resilient to changing pressures.</p> <p>(ii) <u>Growing a green economy</u></p> <p>The ambition is for a green and growing economy which not only uses natural capital in a responsible and fair way but also contributes to improving it. It will properly value the stocks and flows of natural capital. Growth will be green because it is intrinsically linked to the health of the country's natural resources. The economy will capture the value of nature. It will encourage businesses to use natural capital sustainably, protecting and improving it through their day-to-day operations and the management of their supply chains.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Reconnecting people and nature</u></p> <p>The ambition is to strengthen the connections between people and nature. It wants more people to enjoy the benefits of nature by giving them freedom to connect with it. Everyone should have fair access to a good-quality natural environment. It wants to see every child in England given the</p>

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
	<p>opportunity to experience and learn about the natural environment. It wants to help people take more responsibility for their environment, putting local communities in control and making it easier for people to take positive action.</p> <p>(iv) <u>International and EU leadership</u></p> <p>The global ambitions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internationally, to achieve environmentally and socially sustainable economic growth, together with food, water, climate and energy security; and • to put the EU on a path towards environmentally sustainable, low-carbon and resource-efficient growth, which is resilient to climate change, provides jobs and supports the wellbeing of citizens.
UK National Ecosystem Assessment (2011)	<p>The UK National Ecosystem Assessment is the first analysis of the UK's natural environment and the benefits it provides to society and economic prosperity. The assessment leads on from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) and analyses services provided by ecosystem set against eight broad habitat types. The ecosystem services provided by these habitat types have been assessed to find their overall condition. The assessment sought to answer ten key questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What are the status and trends of the UK's ecosystems and the services they provide to society? 2) What are the drivers causing changes in the UK's ecosystems and their services? 3) How do ecosystem services affect human well-being, who and where are the beneficiaries, and how does this affect how they are valued and managed? 4) Which vital UK provisioning services are not provided by UK ecosystems? 5) What is the current public understanding of ecosystem services and the benefits they provide? 6) Why should we incorporate the economic values of ecosystem services into decision-making? 7) How might ecosystems and their services change in the UK under plausible future scenarios? 8) What are the economic implications of different plausible futures? 9) How can we secure and improve the continued delivery of ecosystem services? 10) How have we advanced our understanding of the influence of ecosystem services on human well-being and what are the knowledge constraints on more informed decision making?
DEFRA Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing Biodiversity Duty (2007)	<p>The Duty is set out in Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, and states that: "<i>Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity</i>". Particular areas of focus include: Policy, Strategy and Procurement; Management of Public Land and Buildings; Planning, Infrastructure and Development; and Education, Advice and Awareness.</p>
CABE Making Contracts Work for Wildlife: How to Encourage Biodiversity in Urban Parks (2006)	<p>Advises on how to make the most of the potential for biodiversity in urban parks and it shows how the commitment of individuals and employers can make the difference between failure and inspiring success.</p>
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	<p>The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the 'Garden Town' status.</p>

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development provides seamless interaction with the community.
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Biodiversity Action Plan (emerging)	This plan aims to build upon the previous Biodiversity Action Plan, the timeline of which completed in 2020, produced by the partnership of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes councils. The plan will aim to ensure that the unique local environment and biodiversity is promoted and protected, where local residents can connect to nature and promote health benefits.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)	Sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change.
UN Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015)	The Paris Agreement builds upon the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C.
IPCC Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1997)	Commits member nations to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases or engage in emissions trading if they maintain or increase emissions of these gases.
European Sustainable Development Strategy (2006)	This Strategy identifies key priorities for an enlarged Europe. This includes health, social inclusion and fighting global poverty. It aims to achieve better policy integration in addressing these challenges, and to ensure that Europe looks beyond its boundaries in making informed decisions about sustainability. The Sustainable Development Strategy was reviewed in 2009 and “underlined that in recent years the EU has mainstreamed sustainable development into a broad range of its policies. In particular, the EU has taken the lead in the fight against climate change and the promotion of a low-carbon economy. At the same time, unsustainable trends persist in many areas and the efforts need to be intensified”. Sustainable development is a key focus of the EU and the strategy continues to be monitored and reviewed.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
European Floods Directive (2007)	Requires Local Authorities to feed into the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, as well as the Local Flood Risk Strategy (already completed) and ensure that objectives within Local Plans compliment the objectives of the Directive.
UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009)	The UK has committed to sourcing 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020 – an increase in the share of renewables from about 2.25% in 2008. The Renewable Energy Strategy sets out how the Government will achieve this target through utilising a variety of mechanisms to encourage Renewable Energy provision in the UK. This includes streamlining the planning system, increasing investment in technologies as well as improving funding for advice and awareness raising.
UK Renewable Energy Roadmap Update (2013)	This is the second Update to the 2011 Renewable Energy Roadmap. It sets out the progress that has been made and the changes that have occurred in the sector over the past year. It also describes the continuing high ambitions and actions along with the challenges going forward.
The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan (2009)	<p>The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan sets out how the UK will meet the Climate Change Act’s legally binding target of a 34% cut in emissions on 1990 levels by 2020. It also seeks to deliver emissions cuts of 18% on 2008 levels.</p> <p>The main aims of the Transition Plan include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producing 30% of energy from renewables by 2020; • Improving the energy efficiency of existing housing; • Increasing the number of people in ‘green jobs’; and <p>Supporting the use and development of clean technologies.</p>
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	<p>The NPPF seeks to streamline the planning system and sets out the Government’s planning policies and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>The NPPF includes guidance on climate change, flooding, and coastal change. Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.</p> <p>To increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts); • consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and • identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co- locating potential heat customers and suppliers. • Local Plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid where possible flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change, by:

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applying the sequential test and then, if necessary, applying the exception test; • safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management; • using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding; and • where climate change is expected to increase flood risk so that some existing development may not be sustainable in the long-term, seeking opportunities to facilitate the relocation of development, including housing, to more sustainable locations.
Department for Transport: An Evidence Base Review of Public Attitudes to Climate Change and Transport Behaviour (2006)	This is a summary report of the findings of an evidence base review investigating the research base on public attitudes towards climate change and transport behaviour.
Carbon Trust: The Climate Change Challenge: Scientific Evidence and Implications (2005)	This report summarises the nature of the climate change issue. It explains the fundamental science and the accumulating evidence that climate change is real and needs to be addressed. It also explains the future potential impacts, including the outstanding uncertainties.
Energy Saving Trust: Renewable Energy Sources for Homes in Urban Environments (2005)	This document provides information about the integration of renewable energy sources into new and existing dwellings in urban environments. It covers the basic principles, benefits, limitations, costs and suitability of various technologies.
HM Government: The Road to Zero (2018)	This report outlines how the Government will support the transition to zero-emission road transport. This includes measures to reduce emissions from vehicles including specific targets for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), promoting low- and zero- emission cars and developing high quality electric vehicle infrastructure networks.
Environment Agency, Adapting to Climate Change: A Checklist for Development (2005)	The document contains a checklist and guidance for new developments to adapt to climate change. The main actions are summarised in a checklist.
Environment Agency: Building a Better Environment: A Guide for Developers (2013)	Guidance on addressing key environmental issues through the development process (focusing mainly on the issues dealt with by the Environment Agency), including managing flood risk, surface water management, use of water resources and preventing pollution.
DECC Energy White Paper: Meeting the Energy Challenge (2007)	<p>Sets out Government's long-term energy policy, including requirements for cleaner, smarter energy; improved energy efficiency; reduced carbon emissions; and reliable, competitive and affordable supplies. The White Paper sets out the UK's international and domestic energy strategy, in the shape of four policy goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aiming to cut CO₂ emissions by some 60% by about 2050, with real progress by 2020; • maintaining the reliability of energy supplies; • promoting competitive markets in the UK and beyond; and

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring every home is heated adequately and affordably.
Department of Energy and Climate Change: Microgeneration Strategy (2011)	The strategy aims to improve the effectiveness of the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS), enable policy makers and industry to understand the consumer protection structure and suitably sign post schemes in policy and create regulatory environment and assessment framework that enables accurate representation of contribution of microgeneration technologies to low carbon homes and buildings.
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the 'Garden Town' status.
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development provides seamless interaction with the community.
Buckinghamshire County Council: Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy (2021)	<p>The strategy seeks to reduce emissions, improve air quality and adapt to climate change and sets out the following targets to achieve aims through various objectives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve net zero carbon emissions across council operations no later than 2050 and possibly before this, potentially by 2030, subject to resources. Support communities to achieve net zero carbon emissions <p>The strategy guides activity for nearly 30 years, and sets out actions required to meet the targets outlined within the document.</p>
Aylesbury Transport Strategy (2017)	The strategy is intended to address current issues on the transport network and accommodate future planned growth. Additionally, it allows for the single coordinated approach to planning improvements and contains objectives aimed at improving transport connectivity within Aylesbury town, air quality and pollution and accessibility to other urban centres and new growth areas outside Aylesbury town, such as the site of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD.
Buckinghamshire County Council: Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015)	The strategy seeks to explain the current understanding of flood risk across the county and ensure that development does not increase flood risk, for example through encouraging the use of sustainable drainage techniques and working with natural processes.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Historic environment	
Council of Europe: Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985)	Aims for signatories to protect their architectural heritage by means of identifying monuments, buildings and sites to be protected; preventing the disfigurement, dilapidation or demolition of protected properties; providing financial support by the public authorities for maintaining and restoring the architectural heritage on its territory; and supporting scientific research for identifying and analysing the harmful effects of pollution and for defining ways and means to reduce or eradicate these effects.
Council of Europe: The Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Revised) (Valetta Convention) (1992)	The convention defines archaeological heritage and identifies measures for its protection. Aims include integrated conservation of the archaeological heritage and financing of archaeological research and conservation.
DCMS Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)	An act to consolidate and amend the law retain to ancient monuments, to make provision of matters of archaeological or historic interest, and to provide grants by secretary of state to the Architectural Heritage fund.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	<p>The NPPF seeks to streamline the planning system and sets out the Governments planning policies and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>The NPPF and related guidance given within the PPG includes direction on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It seeks to ensure local authorities plan recognise heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner that reflects their significance.</p> <p>Local planning authorities should take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; • the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; • the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and <p>opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.</p>
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)	An act to consolidate certain enactments relating to special controls in respect of buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest with amendments to give effect to recommendations to give effect to recommendations of the Law Commissions.
Circular on the Protection of World Heritage Sites, CLG 07/2009 2	<p>The purpose of this circular, which applies only to England, is to provide updated policy guidance on the level of protection and management required for World Heritage Sites.</p> <p>The circular explains the national context and the Government's objectives for the protection of World Heritage Sites, the principles which underpin those objectives, and the actions necessary to achieve them.</p>

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Historic environment	
Office of the Deputy Prime minister (ODPM) Secure and Sustainable Buildings Act (2004)	Amends the Building act, and others, with regard to sustainable construction practices and conservation of historic buildings. Also states the general nature of security provisions which should be in place at the construction stage and beyond.
Heritage 2020: strategic priorities for England's historic environment 2015-2020	<p>Over the next five years the commitment to the Heritage 2020 framework will achieve a step change in the understanding, valuing, caring and enjoyment of the historic environment of England. The vision concentrates on five strategic areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery, identification & understanding • Constructive conservation and sustainable management • Public engagement • Capacity building • Helping things to happen.
Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1, 2 and 3 (2015)	These three notes provide information on good practice to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the PPG.
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the 'Garden Town' status.
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development provides seamless interaction with the community.
Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Landscape	
Council of Europe: European Landscape Convention (2006)	Aims to promote the protection, management and planning (including active design and creation of Europe's landscapes, both rural and urban, and to foster European co-operation on landscape issues.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	The NPPF and related guidance given within the PPG states that development could seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness; both aesthetic considerations and connections between people and places should be considered. The NPPF also promotes the protection and enhancements of valued landscapes, giving greatest weight to National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

English Heritage and CABE: Guidance on Tall Buildings (2007)	Provides advice and guidance on good practice in relation to tall buildings in the planning process and to highlight other related issues, which need to be considered, i.e. where tall buildings would and would not be appropriate.
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the 'Garden Town' status.
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development of Site D-AGT1 provides seamless interaction with the community.
Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024	<p>This management plan of the Chilterns AONB sets out a series of policies and actions that, through effective long-term planning and decision making, aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns • Enhance public understanding and enjoyment of the special quality of the AONB <p>The management plans notes the special qualities of the AONB to be protected, including panoramic views which can be harmed by development, and has produced Position Statements on Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB and their cumulative impacts, to help protect the long-term interests of the landscape.</p>
Buckinghamshire County Council: Aylesbury Landscape Character Assessment (2008)	Explains the modern concepts of landscape and landscape character. Summarises the 13 landscape character types.

Appendix C: Responses from the statutory consultees

Habitat Regulations Assessments

Sustainability Appraisals

Strategic Environmental Assessments

Landscape Character Assessments

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments

Green Belt Reviews

Expert Witness

Ecological Impact Assessments

Habitat and Ecology Surveys



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Strategic Environmental Assessment of the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document

Environmental Report

August 2022





Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Aylesbury Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document

Environmental Report

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The conclusions below are based on the best available information, including information that is publicly available. No attempt to verify these secondary data sources has been made and they have been assumed to be accurate as published.

This report was prepared during May and August 2022 and is subject to and limited by the information available during this time.

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Acronyms

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AGT	Aylesbury Garden Town
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ER	Environmental Report
GI	Green Infrastructure
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
LGS	Local Green Space
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MHCLG	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PPP	Plan, Policy and Programme
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SMNP	Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
VALP	Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan
WCS	Water Cycle Study

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Non-Technical Summary

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment?

- N1. Lepus Consulting has prepared this Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report (ER) of the South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council. SEA is the process which informs and influences the preparation of the SPD to help optimise the environmental performance of the plan.

Purpose and content of the Environmental Report

- N2. This SEA document is known as an Environmental Report and has been prepared to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations¹.
- N3. The ER has been prepared to comply with procedural aspects of the SEA Regulations, whereby *“the requirement for environmental assessment also applies to other plans and programmes which set the framework for future development consent of projects if they are the subject of a determination under regulation 9(1) that the plan or programme is likely to have significant environmental effects (regulation 5(4); Article 3.4 of the Directive)”*.
- N4. This ER accompanies the latest version of the Draft SPD (dated 28 July 2022)² and follows on from the SEA Screening Report (October 2021) and Scoping Report (December 2021).
- N5. The purpose of this ER is to:
- Identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effect of the SPD on biodiversity, flora and fauna; climate change; cultural heritage; landscape and; water resources.
 - Suggest measures by which any negative effects could be mitigated;
 - If appropriate, make recommendations to improve the environmental performance of the SPD; and
 - Provide an effective opportunity for statutory consultees, interested parties and the public to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process that has been carried out to date.

¹ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made> [Date Accessed: 16/05/22]

² Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan: Aylesbury Garden Town – 1 Supplementary Planning Document Draft for Consultation, 28 July 2022

N6. The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the SPD and its relationship with other relevant plans, programmes and strategies.
- Details of the methodology used to prepare the assessment;
- Identification, description and evaluation of reasonable alternatives to the SPD;
- The likely significant environmental effects of the SPD; and
- The next steps for the SEA.

The Scope of the SEA

N7. An SEA screening exercise conducted by Lepus³ concluded that the SPD would be likely to lead to significant environmental effects on the topics of biodiversity, climate change, cultural heritage, and landscape, with the addition of the water resources topic which has been screened in at this ER stage following comments received from the Environment Agency on the SEA Scoping Report (see **Table 3.1**).

N8. The Scoping Report⁴ also identified relevant policies, plans, and programmes (PPPs) and baseline information relating to environmental issues in the area. The scoping document set out an SEA Framework, against which the SPD was to be assessed. The SEA Framework included indicators and decision-making criteria for the relevant SEA Objectives however an updated SEA Framework is within Appendix A which includes the water resources topic in lieu of comments made by the Environment Agency regarding the SEA Scoping report. The SEA screening and scoping documents have been consulted on with the statutory consultees (Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England).

Assessment of reasonable alternatives

N9. The assessment of reasonable alternatives refers to the plan-making stage of exploring options, where the SEA process is required to identify, describe and evaluate reasonable alternatives. The Council started the plan-making process of the SPD with the identification of potential options regarding development of Site D-AGT1. A total of three reasonable alternatives were considered, relating to minor differences in the layout of the proposed development, as follows:

- D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Draft SPD proposal;
- Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan (SMNP) draft masterplan proposal; and
- Broadway Malyan outline planning application masterplan proposal.

³ Lepus Consulting (2022) Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document – SEA Screening Document.

⁴ Ibid

- N10. Each reasonable alternative was appraised in the SEA Reasonable Alternatives Assessment (see **Chapter 5** and **Appendix C**).
- N11. The assessment of reasonable alternatives concluded that potential negative impacts would be expected to some extent in relation to the development of D-AGT1, regarding the following SEA topics: biodiversity, flora and fauna; climate change; cultural heritage; and landscape. It was not possible to draw conclusions about whether there would be likely significant effects on the water topic.
- **Biodiversity** – For all options, a precautionary minor negative impact was identified with respect to potential adverse impacts associated with recreational pressure to the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.
 - **Climate change** – Under any of the options, the introduction of at least 1,000 new dwellings would be likely to cause an increase in energy consumption, pollution, and traffic during both the construction and occupancy stages, to some extent, resulting in a minor negative impact on climate change.
 - **Cultural heritage** – Each of the options are likely to perform similarly at the strategic scale, in relation to cultural heritage, where potential minor negative impacts are associated with Site D-AGT1's coincidence with and close proximity to Grade II Listed Buildings and archeological remains.
 - **Landscape** – All options would be expected to have positive impacts in terms of promoting access to multi-functional greenspace, through various GI provisions including amenity greenspace alongside the proposed residential development. However, due to the nature and scale of the proposed development at Site D-AGT1, potential minor negative impacts on the landscape including views from the Chilterns AONB and urban sprawl/coalescence, could not be ruled out.
 - **Water** – All options would be expected to make positive contributions towards the protection and enhancement of river corridors and seek to protect water quality, and set out requirements for SuDS schemes. However, the potential implications of the development on water resources and water supply was uncertain.

Preferred Option

- N12. The Council are pursuing the approach as set out in the outline masterplan of Site D-AGT1, based on the various findings and documents comprising their evidence base and the adopted Buckinghamshire Local Plan⁵ policies. The preferred approach which is proposed within the SPD has been appraised in **Chapter 6**.

⁵ Buckinghamshire County Council (2021) Adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. Available at: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-development-plans/> [Date Accessed: 05/05/22]

Assessment of Significant Effects

N13. The assessment of the preferred option found that likely significant effects are attributed to the following SEA topics: biodiversity, flora and fauna; climate change; cultural heritage; landscape; and water. Potential negative effects were identified in relation to:

- **Biodiversity, flora and fauna** – primarily related to potential adverse recreational impacts on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC;
- **Climate change** – due to an increase in energy consumption, pollution, and traffic during both the construction and occupancy stages associated with the development of at least 1,000 dwellings;
- **Cultural heritage** – in particular, impacts on the setting of surrounding Listed Buildings and areas of archaeological remains;
- **Landscape** – including potential for minor adverse effects on views from the Chilterns AONB and urbanisation of the countryside; and
- **Water** – in terms of potential effects on water supply/resources and water quality arising from the proposed development of at least 1,000 dwellings.

Mitigation

N14. To meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations, the ER must provide details of the mitigation measures envisaged to help prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment which could occur due to the implementation of the SPD, as well as monitoring recommendations.

N15. The SPD would be anticipated to result in a range of positive effects including the opportunity to provide new homes, community facilities and pedestrian routes for the enjoyment of current and future residents, as well as having the potential to deliver enhanced multi-functional GI and biodiversity net gain.

N16. As there is the potential for adverse impacts on the environment following the implementation of the SPD, the mitigation considerations are presented within **Table 6.2**.

N17. Various provisions proposed within the SPD and policies outlined in VALP would help to ensure that future development takes into account the surrounding built and natural environment, historic assets and landscape character. These measures include:

- **Biodiversity, flora and fauna** – in accordance with the VALP policies and the findings of the emerging HRA, development is expected to seek to retain existing vegetation, deliver biodiversity net gain, and incorporate new GI and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) that is compliant with Natural England's Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) contributions in line with the emerging Ashridge Estate Mitigation Strategy.

- **Climate change** – various policies and provisions seek to ensure that the development promotes energy efficiency, incorporates open spaces and GI, and reduces reliance on private car use.
- **Cultural heritage** – in accordance with VALP policies, the development should seek to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- **Landscape** – the VALP policies require provision of a landscape buffer between the new development and the existing settlement of Stoke Mandeville, as well as various provisions to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment of the site.
- **Water** – the SPD seeks to ensure Sustainable Drainage Systems and measures such as rainwater harvesting are incorporated within the site to help manage surface water, in addition to provision of a proposed buffer alongside the watercourse to help enhance its ecological status and reduce flood risk.

Conclusions

N18. Following consideration of mitigation measures, as well as the outputs of the emerging HRA and other evidence base documents, a residual adverse effect on biodiversity and landscape have been ruled out. Potential residual adverse effects have been identified in relation to:

- **Climate change** – it is not expected that the identified adverse impacts from GHG emissions associated with the large scale of proposed development would be fully mitigated and so a residual adverse impact would remain, to some extent;
- **Cultural heritage** – it is likely that the setting of the Grade II Listed Building ‘Magpie Cottage’ would be altered to some extent by the proposed development; and
- **Water** – at this stage, the potential for increased pressure on demand for water resources and wastewater treatment cannot be ruled out.

Recommendations

N19. Several recommendations have been made in this SEA report (see **Table 6.4**) to potentially enhance the sustainability of the proposals within the SPD or to provide further clarity regarding certain issues.

Next Steps

N20. This ER will be subject to consultation with the statutory consultation bodies of Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency, and the public.

1 Introduction

1.1 Preface

- 1.1.1 Lepus Consulting is conducting a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council.
- 1.1.2 This document constitutes the SEA for the SPD and represents an Environmental Report (ER) as per the requirements of the SEA Regulations⁶. This represents Stage D of the SEA process according to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal⁷.
- 1.1.3 SEA is the process of assessing plans and programmes to *“provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment”*⁸.
- 1.1.4 SEA is also one of the ‘tests of soundness’ that examiners use to evaluate the soundness of planning documents.
- 1.1.5 A key objective of SEA is to promote a high level of environmental protection. The SEA is an objective assessment that helps to inform the identification of preferred options and the best way of implementing these with regard to environmental factors, but it does not necessarily dictate what these will be.

⁶ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/1633/contents/made> [Date Accessed: 16/05/22]

⁷ MHCLG (2015) Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal: Strategic environmental assessment requirements for neighbourhood plans. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal#strategic-environmental-assessment-requirements-for-neighbourhood-plans> [Date Accessed: 18/05/22]

⁸ EU Council (2001) Directive 2001/42/EC. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 18/05/22]

1.2 The SEA process

- 1.2.1 The European Union Directive 2001/42/EC or 'SEA Directive' applies to a wide range of public plans and programmes on land use, energy, waste, agriculture, transport etc. (see Article 3(2) of the Directive for other plan or programme types). The SEA procedure can be summarised as follows: an ER is prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment and the reasonable alternatives of the proposed plan or programme are identified. The public and the relevant environmental authorities are informed and consulted on the draft plan or programme and the ER prepared. Further details on methodology are explained in **Chapter 4**.
- 1.2.2 The SEA Directive has been transposed into English law by the SEA Regulations. Detailed guidance on these regulations can be found in the ODPM's publication 'A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive'⁹.
- 1.2.3 Under the requirements of the SEA Regulations, specific types of plans that set the framework for the future development consent of projects, must be subject to an environmental assessment.
- 1.2.4 Where an SPD could have significant environmental effects, it may fall within the scope of the SEA Regulations and so would require an SEA. One of the basic conditions that will be tested by the independent examiner is whether the making of the SPD is compatible with European obligations.
- 1.2.5 Whether an SPD requires a SEA, and (if so) the level of detail needed, will depend on what is proposed in the SPD. An SEA may be required, for example, where:
- The Plan area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan; or
 - The Plan may have environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through an SA of higher order plans.

1.3 Best practice guidance

- 1.3.1 A range of documents have been utilised in preparing the SEA of the South Aylesbury SPD:
- European Commission (2004) Implementation of Directive 2001/42 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment¹⁰;

⁹ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005) A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf [Date Accessed: 18/05/22]

¹⁰ European Union (2001) SEA Guidance, Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923_sea_guidance.pdf [Date Accessed: 18/05/22]

- Office of Deputy Prime Minister (2005) A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive¹¹;
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹²;
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities & Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹³; and
- Royal Town Planning Institute (2018) Strategic Environmental Assessment, Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of SEA/SA for land use plans¹⁴.

1.4 The South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document

1.4.1 This ER regards the proposed content of the SPD, as per the information presented in the latest version of the SPD provided to Lepus, titled 'Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan: Aylesbury Garden Town – 1 Supplementary Planning Document Draft for Consultation' dated 28 July 2022.

1.4.2 The South Aylesbury Masterplan SPD will provide a framework for the development of the proposed Site D-AGT1, 'South Aylesbury', allocated as a strategic site within the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)¹⁵. Site D-AGT1 is a strategic site which contributes to the delivery of Aylesbury Garden Town (AGT)¹⁶, which is the focus for the majority of Aylesbury's growth.

1.4.3 This strategic allocation is implemented in the VALP through Policy D-AGT1 and is proposed to include the development of:

- At least 1,000 dwellings;
- One primary school;
- Multi-functional green infrastructure;
- South-East Aylesbury East Link Road (A413 to B4443 Lower Road);
- Local Centre; and
- Cycling and walking links.

¹¹ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005) A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7657/practicalguidesea.pdf [Date Accessed: 18/05/22]

¹² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date Accessed: 18/05/22]

¹³ Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) Planning Practice Guidance Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> [Date Accessed: 18/05/22]

¹⁴ RTPI (2018) Strategic Environmental Assessment. Available at: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2018/january/strategic-environmental-assessment-seasa-for-land-use-plans/> [Date Accessed: 18/05/22]

¹⁵ Buckinghamshire Council (2021) Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013 – 2033. Available at: https://buckinghamshire-qov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Aylesbury_local_plan_L46JWaT.pdf [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

¹⁶ Aylesbury Garden Town. Available at: <https://www.aylesburygardentown.co.uk/> [Date Accessed: 18/05/22]

- 1.4.4 The SPD takes the proposals from the VALP and outlines the aspirations of the area as well as responses and key issues that will influence the new development. The SPD will be essential to ensure a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to development, and to guide phasing of the site.
- 1.4.5 The SPD expands upon Policy D-AGT1 to provide a framework to help guide the preparation and assessment of future planning applications within the site. The SPD will form a material consideration which will be taken into account by the Buckinghamshire Council when determining any future planning applications for the area.
- 1.4.6 **Table 1.1** presents the criteria for development at D-AGT1 as proposed within the adopted VALP¹⁷.

Table 1.1: D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Site Allocation criteria as presented in the VALP

D-AGT1 Information	Site Details
Site Reference	AGT1
Site Name	South Aylesbury
Size (hectares)	Approximately 95 ha
Completions and expected time of delivery	39 homes delivered up to 2020, 161 homes to be delivered 2020-2025 and 800 homes to be delivered 2025-2033.
Allocated for (key development and land use requirements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 dwellings • One primary school • Multi-functional green infrastructure • Aylesbury South East Link Road (A413 to B4443 Lower Road) • Local centre • Cycling and walking links
Site-specific Requirements	<p>Development proposals must be accompanied by the information required in the council's Local Validation List and comply with all other relevant policies in the Plan, including the principles of development for Aylesbury Garden Town and the Masterplan SPD to be prepared for the site. In addition, proposals should comply with the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provision of land for at least 1,000 dwellings at a density that takes account of the adjacent settlement character and identity, integrates new development with the existing built area of Aylesbury and responds positively to the best characteristics of the surrounding area b. Provision of 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches c. Safeguarding the land required for the delivery of a dual carriageway distributor road (the SEALR) between B4443 Lower Road and A413 Wendover Road to cross the railway line, with sufficient land for associated works including but not limited to earthworks, drainage and structures d. Provision of new access points into the development parcels from the B4443 Lower Road and A413 Wendover Road. Access from the South East Aylesbury

¹⁷ Buckinghamshire Council (2021) Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013 – 2033: Adopted Plan. Available at: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-development-plans/> [Date Accessed: 06/05/22]

D-AGT1 Information	Site Details
	<p>Link Road (SEALR) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that this would leave parcels of land inaccessible and incapable of development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Provision for public transport into the town and to surrounding areas f. Existing vegetation should be retained where practicable, including existing woodlands and hedgerows. Existing public rights of way need to be retained and integrated into the development within safe and secure environments as part of a wider network of sustainable routes, to directly and appropriately link the site with surrounding communities and facilities g. Proposals must retain and enhance existing habitats where practicable, including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets and green corridors linking development with the wider countryside and surrounding communities. h. Provision and management of 50% green infrastructure to link to other new development areas and the wider countryside as part of a high quality built and semi-natural environment i. The development should be designed using a landscape-led approach including consideration of the long-distance views of the AONB and the field pattern and landscape features on the site j. Detailed modelling will be required to confirm 1 in 20, 100 and 1,000 year extents and 1 in 100 year plus climate change extents on the ordinary watercourse (see SFRA Level 2) k. Surface water modelling should be undertaken to define the level of surface water risk and the risk areas/flow paths. Climate change should be modelled using the +40% allowance (February 2016) for rainfall intensity. A surface water drainage strategy should ensure that the development does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Opportunity to mitigate against potential surface water flooding of Stoke Mandeville Hospital l. Risk of overtopping or breach of the Aylesbury Arm (Grand Union Canal) should be modelled m. The development should be designed using a sequential approach. Flood Zones 2 and 3, and 3a plus climate change (subject to a detailed flood risk assessment) should be preserved as green space as shown in the policies map as the area of 'not built development'. Built development should be restricted to Flood Zone 1 n. Drainage designs should 'design for exceedance' and accommodate existing surface water flow routes, with development located outside surface water flood areas o. Provision of buffer between the new development and Stoke Mandeville to maintain the setting and individual identity of the settlement of Stoke Mandeville p. provision of land, buildings and car parking for a combined primary school, including playing field provision, and a contribution to secondary school provision q. Provision of land, buildings and car parking for a new local centre, including retail r. Provision of financial contributions towards off-site health facilities s. Provision of community buildings, including temporary buildings if necessary t. Provision of and contribution to infrastructure as appropriate. u. Retention of the Grade II listed Magpie Cottage within an appropriate setting

D-AGT1 Information	Site Details
Implementation Approach	Development of the Aylesbury South Strategic Site Allocation will come forward towards the latter end of the Plan period, and only once an AGT1 Masterplan SPD for the allocation has been prepared and adopted by the council. Proposals for development within the Aylesbury South Strategic Site Allocation will be expected to demonstrate how they positively contribute to the achievement of the SPD and the Aylesbury Garden Town Principles as set out in Policy D1. Any development on this site should be in accordance with the overarching policies and principles for the development of Aylesbury Garden Town.

1.4.7 The SPD incorporates the requirements of various plans and policies, including:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021);
- Planning Practice Guidance (June 2021);
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006): Biodiversity Duty (sections 40 and 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006);
- HM Government’s ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’ (2018);
- Environment Act (2021);
- Biodiversity Action Plan: Forward to 2030 for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes;
- Vision and Principles for the Improvement of Green Infrastructure in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (2018) and the accompanying Green Infrastructure opportunities mapping (2018);
- Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2013) and Strategy (2009);
- Transport schemes under Policy T2 (Supporting and Protecting Transport Schemes) as within the adopted VALP (2013-2033);
- Infrastructure provision under Policy S5 of the adopted VALP;
- Policies D2 and D4 which regard residential development delivery as within the adopted VALP (2013-2033); and
- Other relevant Local Plan policies.

1.4.8 The plans and policies set out above require that development proposals protect the natural environment including internationally, nationally and locally designated biodiversity sites, and seek to ensure that ecological networks and Green Infrastructure (GI) assets are protected and enhanced, alongside delivering the required growth. The plans and policies above will help form decisions on site development for Site D-AGT1 with considerations to the local area.

1.4.9 The site boundary for Site D-AGT1 is shown in **Figure 1.1**. The site comprises approximately 95ha of predominantly undeveloped land and lies to the south east of Aylesbury.

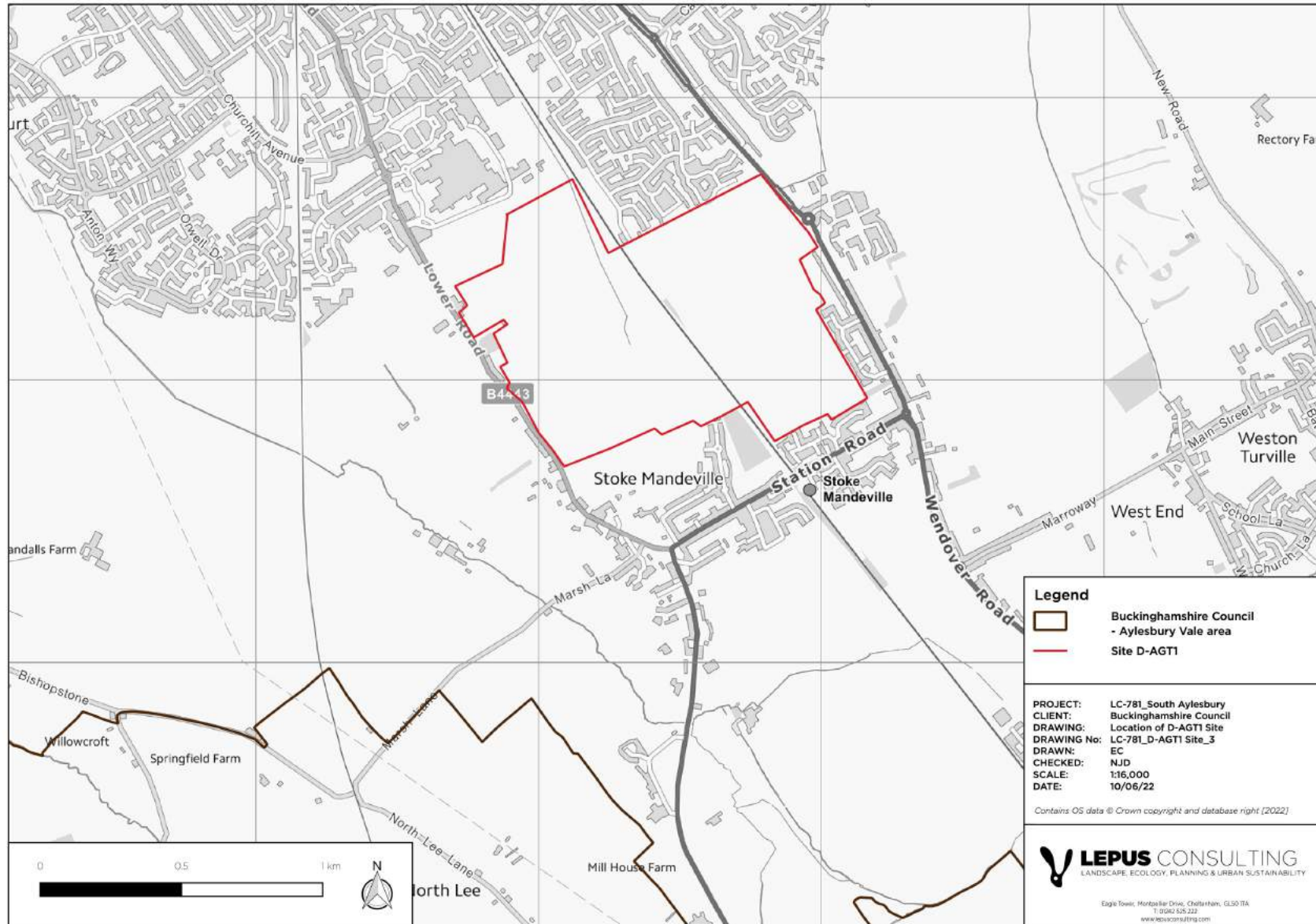


Figure 1.1: Proposed Site D-AGT1 boundary

1.5 Purpose of this report

- 1.5.1 This report has been prepared to help inform the preparation of the South Aylesbury SPD. It is not the role of the SEA to decide which is the most appropriate form of the SPD, but instead to provide an assessment of the Plan and any reasonable alternatives which should be given due consideration in the decision-making process and identify best performing options.
- 1.5.2 Regulation 12 of the SEA Regulations¹⁸ states that the Environmental Report “*shall identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects of the environment of – (a) implementing the plan or programme; and (b) reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan or programme*”.

1.6 Meeting the requirements of the SEA Regulations

- 1.6.1 **Table 1.2** includes the requirements of the SEA Regulations and shows where they have been met within the SEA process.

Table 1.2: Requirements of the SEA Regulations¹⁹

Requirement for Environmental Report	Location
Include an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.	See the SEA Scoping Report, and Environmental Report: Section 1.4. and Appendix B.
Include information on the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.	See the SEA Scoping Report, and Environmental Report: Chapter 3.
Describe the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	See the SEA Scoping Report, and Environmental Report: Chapters 5 and 6.
Specify any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.	See the SEA Scoping Report, and Environmental Report: Chapters 3, 5 and 6.
Consider the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	See the SEA Scoping Report, and Environmental Report: Chapters 5 and 6 and Appendix B.

¹⁸ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Regulation 12. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/regulation/12/made> [Date Accessed: 16/05/22]

¹⁹ Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations requirements checklist. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/580073/Strategic_Environmental_Assessment_Regulations_requirements_checklist.pdf [Date Accessed: 11/05/22]

Requirement for Environmental Report	Location
Assess the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, and cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.	Environmental Report: Chapter 5, 6, and Appendix C.
Give details of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment as a result of implementing the plan or programme.	Environmental Report: Chapter 6.
Give an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.	Environmental Report: Chapter 5 and section 6.1.
Include a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	Environmental Report Chapter 7.
Include a non-technical summary of the information provided.	Environmental Report: Non-Technical Summary

2 SEA Screening

2.1 Screening

2.1.1 The SEA Screening report²⁰ (October 2021) reviewed the extent to which the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD could potentially result in significant effects on the environment.

2.1.2 Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations²¹ requires that the SEA process should consider: *“the likely significant effects on the environment, ... on issues such as – (a) biodiversity; (b) population; (c) human health; (d) fauna; (e) flora; (f) soil; (g) water; (h) air; (i) climatic factors; (j) material assets; (k) cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage; (l) landscape; and (m) the inter-relationship between the issues referred to in sub-paragraphs (a) to (l)”*.

2.1.3 The Screening Report concluded that the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD would be likely to have a significant environmental impact on the surrounding area and would therefore require an SEA in relation to:

- Biodiversity;
- Climate Change;
- Cultural Heritage; and
- Landscape.

2.2 Consultation

2.2.1 The SEA Screening Report was subject to consultation with the statutory consultees of the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. The responses received are summarised in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Statutory consultee responses to the SEA Screening Report

Consultee	Summary of Consultee Response
Environment Agency	N/A – No comment received.
Natural England (17 th September 2021)	<i>“In our review of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD SEA and HRA Screenings we note that a draft SPD has not yet been made public. On the basis of the material supplied Natural England agree with the assessment that the proposal will cause significant effects and therefore a full SEA is required”</i> .
Historic England (17 th September 2021)	<i>“Thank you for consulting Historic England on the screening for strategic environmental assessment (SEA) of the AGT1 Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD. We agree with the conclusion of the report that SEA is required”</i> .

²⁰ Lepus Consulting (2021) Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Aylesbury South Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document - SEA Screening Document [Date Accessed: 09/02/22]

²¹ SEA Regulations. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/schedule/1/made> [Date Accessed: 30/05/22]

2.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 2.3.1 In 2021, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening of the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD was undertaken by Buckinghamshire Council²² as required under Regulation 105 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)²³.
- 2.3.2 The HRA Screening concluded that an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required due to the potential for likely significant effects associated with increased recreational pressure on Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, as a result of the development of Site D-AGT1 outlined within the SPD.
- 2.3.3 The HRA Screening found that there was a need for a greater level of detail on mitigation (such as details on the type, location and management of GI) to be evaluated in HRA terms. As these details were not available at the time of the VALP HRA, it summarised that an Appropriate Assessment should be carried out for the scope/draft SPD to evaluate if the mitigation details proposed are adequate or if there would be adverse impacts on the integrity of the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, as a result of the SPD.
- 2.3.4 The emerging HRA, including Appropriate Assessment, has informed potential likely significant effects on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, as outlined within **Chapter 6**, and required mitigation.

²² Buckinghamshire Council. October 2021. Aylesbury South (D-AGT 1) Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement – Final Outcome

²³ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 SI No. 2017/1012, TSO (The Stationery Office), London. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents> as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111176573> [Date Accessed: 19/05/22]

3 SEA Scoping

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The scoping stage represents Stage B of the SEA process, according to the strategic environmental assessment requirements²⁴. Scoping is the process of deciding the scope and level of detail of an SEA.

3.1.2 The purpose of Scoping is to set the criteria for assessment (including the SEA Framework), establish the environmental baseline and include a review of relevant policies, plans and programmes (referred to as PPPs). The scoping process can also help to identify key environmental issues relevant to the Plan area, highlighting areas of potential concern.

3.1.3 The SEA Framework is presented in **Appendix A**. Drawing on the information gained from the earlier SEA screening exercise which concluded that the SPD would be likely to lead to a significant environmental impact in relation to the following topics: biodiversity, flora and fauna; climate change; cultural heritage; and landscape. After consideration of the consultation response submitted by the Environment Agency (see **Table 3.1**), it was determined that the topic of water resources should also be addressed in the environmental report. The scope of the SEA is therefore focused on these five objectives.

3.2 Policies, plans and programmes review

3.2.1 A plan or programme may be influenced in various ways by other plans or programmes, or by external environmental protection objectives such as those laid down in policies or legislation.

3.2.2 The scoping exercise presented an analysis of the objectives of the key PPPs (including legislation) that are relevant to the SPD and the SEA assessment process, presented by their geographic relevance, from international to local level. The PPP Review is presented in **Appendix B**.

3.3 Baseline data and key sustainability issues

3.3.1 A key part of the scoping process is the collection of baseline data. The purpose of this exercise is to help identify key issues and opportunities facing the area which might be addressed by the AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD, and to provide an evidence base for the assessment.

3.3.2 Paragraph 016 of the PPG²⁵ states that “*baseline information provides the basis against which to assess the likely effects of alternative proposals in the plan*”.

²⁴ MHCLG (2015) Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal: Sustainability appraisal requirements for local plans and spatial development strategies. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal> [Date Accessed: 06/05/22]

²⁵ MHCLG (2015) Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal: Strategic environmental assessment requirements for neighbourhood plans. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal#strategic-environmental-assessment-requirements-for-neighbourhood-plans> [Date Accessed: 09/02/22]

3.3.3 The scoping exercise provided a review of existing environmental conditions within the Plan area and their likely evolution in absence of the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD. **Table 3.1** provides an outline of the identified key sustainability issues and future evolution without the SPD, building on those identified in the Scoping Report.

Table 3.1: Key sustainability issues and evolution without the SPD

SEA Objective	Key Sustainability Issues	Future Evolution of the Baseline without the SPD
Biodiversity, flora and fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoiding damage through recreational pressures, promoting restoration and/or enhancement of protected site Chiltern Beechwoods SAC in line with the NPPF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites designated for their national and international biodiversity and/or geodiversity value will continue to benefit from legislative protection. Without the SPD, it may be difficult to help ensure that development is not of a type, scale and location that could potentially have a major adverse impact on a biodiversity and geodiversity designation or on the functioning ecological network. It would be likely that biodiversity features would be somewhat protected by policies set out the VALP and within the emerging SMNP, however, it is uncertain to what extent.
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the proposed link road between the A143 and B4443 could potentially lead to adverse impacts on local air quality and climate change mitigation through the release of pollutants, including GHGs. Introducing at least 1,000 new dwellings will increase energy consumption, pollution and traffic within the local area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the absence of the SPD, future planning applications for the land which encompasses Site D-AGT1 would be required to adhere to local and national policies regarding production of emissions and air pollution, in addition to policies within the emerging SMNP when adopted. The extent to which pollution could result in absence of the SPD is uncertain, and would depend on any future planning applications which would be required to fulfil the housing need. For example, the proposed link road between the A143 and B4443 may not be developed and therefore housing development applications on the land encompassing Site D-AGT1, or land proposed elsewhere, may increase local traffic on current road systems and associated air pollution.
Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development within Site D-AGT1 could potentially affect the significance of heritage assets within and outside the site, both designated and non-designated. Archaeological remains, including that which has not yet been discovered, are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the absence of the SPD, the character and setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets is unlikely to change significantly, primarily due to policies set out in the VALP and the emerging SMNP.

SEA Objective	Key Sustainability Issues	Future Evolution of the Baseline without the SPD
	<p>present in the area and could potentially be affected by development proposals of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A desk-based assessment and, subject to the results of the assessment, field evaluation will be required to inform the development of the masterplan SPD and ensure relevant baseline information is available for the SEA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which the accessibility, local awareness or setting of heritage assets may be enhanced over time without the SPD is uncertain. In the absence of the SPD, it is unlikely that archaeological assets (both discovered and undiscovered) will be harmed or threatened.
<p>Landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SPD seeks to develop Site D-AGT1 which is located 2.3km from The Chilterns AONB, separated by the settlement Stoke Mandeville. Development outside the AONB should seek to conserve and enhance its setting. Development proposed within the SPD could potentially alter views for users of The Round Aylesbury Walk long distance path and other PRowWs within the site. Assessments from Aylesbury’s Landscape Character Assessment should also be considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chilterns AONB will continue to be proactively and effectively managed by the Chilterns Conservation Board and, in the absence of the SPD, would be likely to be conserved and enhanced through the Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 and any future management plans that are published. In the absence of the SPD, housing needs would likely be met through planning applications and it is uncertain whether distinctive and long-distance countryside views within and of the site, and of any alternative site, would be altered, which may include views experienced by local residents and users of the local PRowW network. The SPD outlines green corridors which may protect these routes to some extent. Policies set out in the Vale of Aylesbury Development Plan would be likely to protect some views but may not be specific to Stoke Mandeville and the Chilterns AONB, however without proactive management to conserve landscape features and open space, the quality of these views could potentially deteriorate over time. In the absence of the SPD, the local distinctive and rural landscape character would be unlikely to be altered. Although housing need would still be required to be met, key landscape features would be likely to be preserved in the absence of the SPD through policies set out in the VALP and the emerging SMNP.

SEA Objective	Key Sustainability Issues	Future Evolution of the Baseline without the SPD
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Aylesbury Vale Water Cycle Study (WCS)²⁶ identifies Stoke Mandeville Parish (within which the proposed Site D-AGT1 is located) as being of 'Amber' Water Resource Capacity and Local Distribution System Impact, meaning infrastructure and/or treatment upgrades are required to serve the proposed growth. Development proposed within the SPD could potentially place further pressure on water resources. The Council will need to give close consideration to the impacts of development proposals on wastewater treatment in the local area, and the capacity of treatment works, as well as the consequences of new wastewater generation for local water quality and the ecological status of ground and surface water bodies. Development proposed within the SPD may reduce the amount of rainfall that is intercepted by vegetation on the ground. Even very small-scale development can have detrimental implications for surface water run-off. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the absence of the SPD, planned enhancements to the water resources systems, as identified in the WCS and set out in the VALP, would be expected to continue which may be sufficient to ensure development can be accommodated in the short term. In the longer term, the WCS identifies greater uncertainty regarding potential need to invest in additional capacity to accommodate growth in the Stoke Mandeville Parish area as all the proposed development comes forward. Water abstraction, consumption and treatment in the local area will continue to be managed by the Environment Agency and water companies through the RBMP, WRMP and CAMS in line with the EU Water Framework Directive.

3.4 The SEA Framework

3.4.1 The purpose of the SEA Framework is to provide a way of ensuring that the SPD considers the sustainability needs of Site D-AGT1 and enables the environmental effects of the SPD to be described, analysed and compared.

3.4.2 The SEA Framework consists of objectives, which are measurable using indicators. There is no statutory basis for setting objectives, but they are a recognised way of considering the environmental effects of a Plan and comparing alternatives. The SEA Objectives are used to provide the basis against which effects of the SPD are assessed.

²⁶ JBA Consulting (2017) Aylesbury Vale District Council Water Cycle Study: Phase 1. Final Report, February 2017. Available at: https://www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/Aylesbury%20Vale%20Water%20Cycle%20Study%20Phase%201%20%28Final%29%20v2.0.pdf [Date Accessed: 30/05/22]

3.4.3 The SEA Framework for the AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD is focused on biodiversity, climate change, cultural heritage, landscape and water resources for the reasons specified within the scoping report²⁷ and the Environment Agency’s comments on the ‘water’ topic (see **Table 3.1**). The SEA Framework has been developed through the PPP review, the baseline data collection and the key issues identified for the Plan area. The SEA topics identified in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations²⁸ were one of the key determinants when considering the SEA Objectives to be used for appraisal purposes. The updated SEA Framework, reflecting consultee comments within **Table 3.1**, is presented in **Appendix A**.

3.5 Consultation

3.5.1 Consultation responses on the SEA Scoping Report are summarised within **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.2: Statutory consultee responses to the SEA Scoping Report

Consultee	Summary of Consultee Response
Natural England (5 th January 2022)	<p>SEA Objectives</p> <p>Biodiversity, flora and fauna: <i>“We advise that this object should include “restore”. In addition, sub-objectives could be included to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>protect and enhance habitats and wildlife corridors; and</i> • <i>ensure current ecological networks are not compromised, and future improvements in habitat connectivity are not prejudiced”</i> <p><i>“There should be consideration of geodiversity conservation in terms of any geological sites and features in the wider environment. A strategic approach for networks of biodiversity should support a similar approach for green infrastructure. Planning policies and decisions should secure wider environmental gains, as outlined in the NPPF (paragraphs 8, 73, 104, 120,174, 175 and 180).”</i></p> <p>Landscape: <i>“We advise that this objective includes ‘restore.’”</i></p> <p>Indicators and targets</p> <p><i>“Whilst it is not Natural England’s role to prescribe what indicators should be adopted, the following indicators may be appropriate.</i></p> <p><i>Green infrastructure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To work towards ensuring that the population have access to a natural greenspace within 400 metres of their home.</i> • <i>Length of greenways constructed</i> • <i>Hectares of accessible open space per 1000 population”</i>
Environment Agency (5 th January 2022)	<p><i>“We have reviewed section 2 and Table 2.1 of the Scoping document and whilst we agree with the topics that have been scoped in in regard to our interests – Biodiversity and Climate change, we do not agree that the topic ‘Water’ should be scoped out.</i></p> <p><i>With the scale of the proposal, it is not clear what the impact of the development will be on water resources in this area when considering issues such as waste water/sewage discharge and water use. The scoping document has not provided information on this to justify why and if water should</i></p>

²⁷ Lepus Consulting (2022) Strategic Environmental Assessment of the South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document – SEA Scoping Document.

²⁸ Biodiversity flora and fauna; Population; Human health; Soil; Water; Air; Climatic factors; Material assets; Cultural heritage (including architectural and archaeological heritage); and Landscape.

Consultee	Summary of Consultee Response
	<p><i>be scoped out. We require further information on this matter before we can provide further comments.”</i></p> <p><i>“Appendix A provides details on the SEA objectives in relation to the scoped in topics and the related decision making criteria and target indicators. We however note that some of the target indicators do not clearly match with some of the identified decision making criteria. For example, it is not clear what the target indicators are for the following as listed below;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Will it protect and enhance the water environment? [under Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna:]</i> <i>• Will it reduce flood risk? [under climate change]</i> <i>• Will it conserve water resources? [under climate change]</i> <p><i>We ask that that the indicators are modified to reflect the criteria listed in Appendix A with the aim of addressing the SEA objectives.”</i></p>
<p>Historic England (21st January 2022)</p>	<p><i>“We have some concerns about how this scoping report addresses the need for the SPD to be supported by appropriate heritage evidence. Heritage assessments will be needed to determine an appropriate setting for Magpie Cottage (and any affected listed buildings outside the site) and the significance and extent of archaeology. In the absence of such assessments, the effects of the SPD could be anywhere from significantly negative to positive, but the SEA would have to default to unknown, which would be unfortunate, given that heritage assessments will be needed later. The scoping report does not seem to deal with this issue.</i></p> <p><i>We therefore recommend that the heritage assessments that will be required to support the SPD are done early enough so that they may also inform the SEA. This is discussed further in the baseline information section below. We also address a number of more minor issues.”</i></p> <p>Introductory paragraphs</p> <p><i>“In addition to impacts on setting, there could also be direct impacts on heritage assets, in on particular below-ground archaeology. Therefore, we would expect all aspects of cultural heritage to be considered, not just those relating to setting.”</i></p> <p>Relevant Plans, Policies and Programmes</p> <p><i>“In general, the scoping report identifies the relevant PPP at international and national level. However, local PPP appear to be absent.</i></p> <p><i>In the summary of PPP at 5.1.1, while there is mention of “unknown and undesignated resources”, we recommend adding “particularly archaeological remains” after “unknown and undesignated resources”, in order to clarify meaning. We would also suggest changing “resources” to “heritage assets”, as this is the term the NPPF uses.”</i></p> <p>Baseline Information</p> <p><i>“We suggest paragraphs 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 are revisited. In 5.2.3, it states “By applying Policy BE1 of the VALP, the proposed development at Site D-AGT1 should ensure the “retention of the Grade II listed Magpie Cottage within an appropriate setting”, however the SPD could usefully add further clarity to this statement to ensure that the cottage and its setting are protected and enhanced in line with its historic significance.</i></p> <p><i>Our reading of the above is that it could be interpreted to mean that no positive actions need to be taken in order for BE1 to be applied. This may or may not have been the intent, but we suggest it is rewritten to clarify that this is not the case, for the reasons below.</i></p> <p><i>The intent of Policy BE1 is clear (retention of Magpie Cottage and an appropriate setting). The question for the SPD is how to apply Policy BE1. In our view, this would require firstly the heritage significance of the cottage to be assessed, so that an appropriate setting can be determined. A heritage assessment would serve for this. This would then be used to inform the layout (and other aspects) of development in the SPD itself so as to avoid harm to heritage and enhance it where</i></p>

Consultee	Summary of Consultee Response
	<p><i>appropriate. Therefore, it is also not strictly correct to say that the SPD “could usefully add further clarity”: this suggests an optional endeavour, whereas in fact, Policy BE1 directs this to be done. This is an essential requirement for the SPD.</i></p> <p><i>Given that one of the main functions of a masterplan is to determine the layout of the development, further information on archaeology will needed before the SPD is developed, in order to identify any areas of archaeological interest and their significance, which would in turn inform the layout of the development. This is especially true given that there are three archaeological notification areas within the site.</i></p> <p><i>To support the SPD, a desk-based assessment should be carried out. Trial trenching may also be required, subject to the results of the desk-based assessment. This cannot be delayed until planning application stage, as this information is needed in order to inform the development of the masterplan SPD. Furthermore, if this information is not available for purposes of the SEA, important baseline information will also be missing, and this SEA will have to give a score of unknown for effects on cultural heritage. This is far from ideal, given that this information will be required for the development SPD itself. We therefore recommend that heritage assessments are done early enough so that they can also inform the SEA.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, despite there being no explicit reference to heritage assets outside the site area in Policy BE1, the SEA still needs to consider them. Para 5.2.2 identifies “several Grade II Listed Buildings within and surrounding the settlement of Stoke Mandeville, including a cluster along the B4443 running north to Aylesbury, which represents the western edge of the proposed scheme. This includes the ‘Stoke Cottage’, ‘Lone Ash’ and ‘Bell Cottage and Tudor Cottage’.” These all need to be included in the assessment.</i></p> <p><i>We recommend that the Historic Environment Record for Bucks is consulted instead of the Archaeology Data Service.”</i></p> <p>Key Sustainable Issues</p> <p><i>“5.1 The first sentence should be amended to “Development within Site D-AGT1 could potentially alter affect the setting significance of historic heritage assets within and outside the site, both designated and non-designated. This would be more consistent with the terminology and policy intent of the NPPF.</i></p> <p><i>After the second bullet, a further sentence should be added: “A desk-based assessment and, subject to the results of the DBA, field evaluation will be required to inform the development of the masterplan SPD and ensure relevant baseline information is available for the SEA.”</i></p> <p>SEA Objectives</p> <p><i>“The SEA objective for cultural heritage covers the key issues in broad terms. Due to the archaeological potential of the site, we recommend a further sentence, such as: “For archaeology this means conserving archaeological remains where practicable, particularly remains of national importance, through masterplan design, to mitigate through archaeological investigation, recording and publication where conservation is not practicable.””</i></p>

4 Methodology

4.1 Approach to assessment

4.1.1 The assessment process has used the SEA Framework, the review of plans, programmes and policies, and the baseline (including various mapped data sources) to assess each policy. Assessments have been undertaken using this empirical evidence and, to a lesser extent, expert judgement. The precautionary principle²⁹ is applied to all assessments.

4.2 Appraisal process

4.2.1 When evaluating significance of effect, the SEA draws on criteria in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, derived from Annex II of the SEA Directive (see **Box 4.1**), and identifies a significance value using the guide in **Table 4.1**.

Box 4.1: Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations³⁰

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects (Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations)

1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:

- (a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
- (b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
- (c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
- (d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
- (e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

- (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- (b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
- (c) the transboundary nature of the effects;
- (d) the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
- (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- (f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - i. special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
 - ii. exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;
 - iii. intensive land-use; and
- (g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

²⁹ Judgment of 7 September 2004 in case C-127/02 (Waddenzee, paragraph 45).

³⁰ The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/contents/made> [Date Accessed: 30/05/22]

Table 4.1: Guide to scoring significant effects

Significance	Definition (not necessarily exhaustive)
Major Negative --	The size, nature and location of a reasonable alternative would be likely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanently degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of a quality receptor, such as a feature of international, national or regional importance; • Cause a very high-quality receptor to be permanently diminished; • Be unable to be entirely mitigated; • Be discordant with the existing setting; and/or • Contribute to a cumulative significant effect.
Minor Negative -	The size, nature and location of a reasonable alternative would be likely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not quite fit into the existing location or with existing receptor qualities; and/or • Affect undesignated yet recognised local receptors.
Negligible 0	Either no impacts are anticipated, or any impacts are anticipated to be negligible.
Uncertain +/-	It is entirely uncertain whether impacts would be positive or adverse.
Minor Positive +	The size, nature and location of a reasonable alternative would be likely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve undesignated yet recognised receptor qualities at the local scale; • Fit into, or with, the existing location and existing receptor qualities; and/or • Enable the restoration of valued characteristic features.
Major Positive ++	The size, nature and location of a reasonable alternative would be likely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance and redefine the location in a positive manner, making a contribution at a national or international scale; • Restore valued receptors which were degraded through previous uses; and/or • Improve one or more key elements/features/characteristics of a receptor with recognised quality such as a specific international, national or regional designation.

4.2.2 The results of the assessment will apply a single value from **Table 4.1** to the corresponding SEA Objective for each reasonable alternative or any other part of the plan which is being assessed as part of the SEA. Justification for the likely impact and corresponding score is presented in an accompanying narrative assessment text.

4.3 Significance

4.3.1 Where an environmental impact has been identified, the significance of effect has been categorised as minor or major. **Table 4.1** lists the significance matrix and explains the terms used. The nature of the significant effect can be either beneficial or adverse depending on the proposal.

4.3.2 Each reasonable alternative that has been assessed in this report has been scored according to its predicted performance in relation to the SEA Objectives in the Framework, using the values in **Table 4.1**.

4.3.3 It is important to note that the scores are high level indicators. The narrative assessment text which details the key decision-making criteria behind each awarded score should always be read alongside the score. Assumptions and limitations to the scores are presented in **Table 4.4** and **sections 4.7** and **4.8**.

4.3.4 Significance of effect is a combination of impact sensitivity and magnitude.

4.4 Impact sensitivity

4.4.1 Impact sensitivity is measured through consideration as to how the receiving environment will be impacted by a Plan proposal. This includes assessment of the value and vulnerability of the area, whether environmental quality standards will be exceeded, and if impacts will affect, for example, designated areas.

4.4.2 A guide to the range of scales used in the impact significance matrix is presented in **Table 4.2**. For most receptors, sensitivity increases with geographic scale.

Table 4.2: Geographic scales of receptors

Scale	Typical criteria
International/ national	Designations that have an international aspect or consideration of transboundary effects beyond national boundaries. This applies to effects and designations/receptors that have a national or international dimension.
Regional	This includes the regional and sub-regional scale, including county-wide level and regional areas.
Local	This is the district and neighbourhood scale.

4.5 Impact magnitude

4.5.1 Impact magnitude relates to the degree of change the receptor will experience, including the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact. Impact magnitude is determined based on the susceptibility of a receptor to the type of change that will arise, as well as the value of the affected receptor (see **Table 4.3**).

Table 4.3: Impact magnitude

Impact magnitude	Typical criteria
High	Likely total loss of or major alteration to the receptor in question; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a new receptor/feature; or • The impact is permanent and frequent.
Medium	Partial loss/alteration/improvement to one or more key features; or The impact is one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent and short-term; • Frequent and reversible; • Long-term (and frequent) and reversible; • Long-term and occasional; or • Permanent and occasional.
Low	Minor loss/alteration/improvement to one or more key features of the receptor; or The impact is one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reversible and short-term; • Reversible and occasional; or • Short-term and occasional.

4.6 Predicting effects

4.6.1 SEA is a tool for predicting potential significant effects. Predicting effects relies on an evidence-based approach and incorporates professional judgement. It is often not possible to state with absolute certainty whether effects will occur, as many impacts are influenced by a range of factors such as the design and the success of mitigation measures.

4.6.2 The assessments in this report are based on the best available information. Every attempt has been made to predict effects as accurately as possible.

4.6.3 SEA operates at a strategic level which uses available secondary data for the relevant SEA Objective. All reasonable alternatives are assessed in the same way using the same method. Sometimes, in the absence of more detailed information, forecasting the potential impacts of development can require making reasonable assumptions based on the best available data and trends.

4.7 Assessment assumptions

4.7.1 Assumptions have been used to help incorporate proportionality to the SEA of reasonable alternatives. In terms of published policy guidance, it is assumed that the following policies will apply to Site D-AGT1 and surrounding environments, and have been borne in mind when completing the assessment of reasonable alternatives:

- Adopted VALP 2013 – 2033 policies³¹;
- The Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024; and
- The NPPF (2021)³² and related PPG advice³³.

4.7.2 Other topic-specific assumptions have been applied to the report. These are presented in **Table 4.4**.

Table 4.4: Assumptions for the SEA Objectives

SEA Objective	Assessment Assumptions
<p>1. Biodiversity: Protect, enhance, restore and manage the flora, fauna biodiversity and geodiversity assets of the areas affected by the development of Site D-AGT1.</p>	<p>The biodiversity objective considers adverse impacts of the proposed development at a landscape-scale. It focuses on an assessment of proposed development on a network of designated and undesignated sites, wildlife corridors and individual habitats within and surrounding Site D-AGT1. Receptors include the following:</p> <p>Designated Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitats sites; (Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites). • Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). • National Nature Reserves (NNR). • Local Nature Reserves (LNR). • Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). • Local Geological Sites (LGS). <p>Habitats and Species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient woodland. • Priority habitats. <p>Negative impacts would be expected where the ecological or geological designations listed above may be harmed or lost as a result of proposals. The assessment is largely based on a consideration of the proximity of a site and the attributes and qualities of the receptor in question.</p> <p>For the purposes of this assessment, impacts on priority habitats protected under the 2006 NERC Act³⁴ have been considered in the context of Natural England’s publicly available Priority Habitat Inventory database³⁵. It is acknowledged this may not reflect current local site conditions in all instances.</p>

³¹ Buckinghamshire Council (2021) Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013 – 2033. Available at: https://buckinghamshire-gov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Aylesbury_local_plan_L46JWaT.pdf [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

³² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

³³ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) Planning Practice Guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

³⁴ Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

³⁵ Natural England (2021) Priority Habitat Inventory (England). Available at: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/4b6ddab7-6c0f-4407-946e-d6499f19fcde/priority-habitat-inventory-england> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

SEA Objective	Assessment Assumptions
	<p>It is assumed that construction and occupation of previously undeveloped greenfield land would result in a net reduction in vegetation cover and Green Infrastructure in the Plan area. Development proposals which would be likely to result in the loss of greenfield land are therefore expected to contribute towards a cumulative loss in vegetation cover. This would also be expected to lead to greater levels of fragmentation and isolation across the wider ecological network, such as the loss of habitat stepping-stones and corridors.</p> <p>It should be noted that no detailed ecological surveys have been completed by Lepus to inform the assessments made in this report.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the Council will require detailed ecological surveys and assessments to accompany future planning applications. Such surveys will determine on a site-by-site basis the presence of Priority Species and Priority Habitats protected under the NERC Act.</p> <p>It is assumed that the loss of biodiversity assets, such as ancient woodland or an area of priority habitat, are permanent effects.</p> <p>It is assumed that mature trees and hedgerows will be retained where possible.</p> <p>Where development proposals coincide with a Habitats site, a SSSI, NNR, LNR, CWS, CGS or ancient woodland, or are adjacent to a Habitats site, SSSI or NNR, it is assumed that development would have a permanent impact on these nationally important biodiversity and geodiversity assets, and a major negative impact would be expected.</p> <p>Where development proposals coincide with priority habitats, are adjacent to an ancient woodland, LNR, LWS, are located within a SSSI IRZ³⁶ which states to “consult <i>Natural England</i>” or are located in close proximity to a Habitats site, SSSI, NNR, LNR or stand of ancient woodland, it is assumed that development would have an impact on these biodiversity assets, and a minor negative impact would be expected.</p> <p>Where a development proposal would not be anticipated to significantly impact a biodiversity asset, a negligible impact would be expected for this objective.</p> <p>Where development proposals would be anticipated to enhance biodiversity through the designation of a biodiversity site, a positive impact would be expected.</p> <p>It is assumed that development on previously undeveloped or greenfield land would result in an increase in GHG emissions due to the increase in the local population and the number of operating businesses and occupied homes.</p>
<p>2. Climate change: Mitigate and Reduce Site D-AGT1's contribution towards climate change.</p>	<p>Development proposals which would be likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions in the local area would make it more difficult for the Council to reduce the Plan area's contribution towards the causes of climate change.</p> <p>The incorporation of GI within developments presents several opportunities to mitigate climate change, for example, through providing natural cooling to combat the 'urban heat</p>

³⁶ Natural England (2022) Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a Geographical Information System (GIS) tool which allow a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks posed by development proposals to: SSSIs, SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites. They define zones around each site which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts

Natural England's Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 03 May 2022. Available at: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/5ae2af0c-1363-4d40-9d1a-e5a1381449f8/sss-i-impact-risk-zones> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

SEA Objective	Assessment Assumptions
	<p>island' effect, reducing the effects of air pollution and providing more pleasant outdoor environments to encourage active travel^{37 38}.</p> <p>It is assumed that development on previously undeveloped or greenfield land would result in an increase in GHG emissions due to the increase in the local population and the number of operating businesses and occupied homes.</p> <p>The increase in GHG emissions caused by new developments is associated with impacts of the construction phase, the occupation and operation of homes and businesses, oil, gas and coal consumption and increases in local road transport with associated emissions. This impact is considered to be permanent and non-reversible.</p>
<p>3. Cultural Heritage: Protect, enhance and manage heritage assets, including designated and non-designated, as well as features and areas of and heritage importance.</p>	<p>Impacts on heritage assets will be largely determined by the specific layout and design of the development proposal, as well as the nature and significance of the heritage asset. There is a risk of adverse effects occurring, some of which may be unavoidable. As such, this risk has been reflected in the assessment as a negative impact where a site is in close proximity to heritage assets.</p> <p>Adverse impacts are recorded for options which have the potential to have an adverse impact on sensitive heritage designations, including Grade I, II* and II Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments (SM), Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG), and Conservation Areas.</p> <p>Adverse impacts on heritage assets are predominantly associated with impacts on the existing setting of the asset and the character of the local area, as well as adverse impacts on views of, or from, the asset.</p> <p>Where development proposals are not located in close proximity to any heritage asset, or the nature of development is determined not to affect the setting or character of the nearby heritage asset, a negligible impact would be expected for this objective.</p> <p>When considering any planning application that affects a Conservation Area, authorities must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance³⁹. A replacement of a building that currently has a detrimental impact on a Conservation Area could potentially result in a neutral or a minor beneficial effect.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the Council will require a Heritage Statement to be prepared to accompany future planning applications, where appropriate. The Heritage Statement should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposals, including any contribution made by their settings.</p> <p>It is assumed that desk-based assessments will be required on a site-by-site basis for planning proposals which could potentially impact archaeological features (followed by field evaluation / potential trial trenching where appropriate).</p>

³⁷ TCPA (2007) The essential role of green infrastructure: eco-towns green infrastructure worksheet. Available at: <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=dd06b21d-6d41-4c4e-bec5-4f29a192f0c6> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

³⁸ Worcestershire County Council (2014) Green Infrastructure Framework 4: Socio-economic Benefits of Green Infrastructure. Available at: http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/download/707/worcestershire_green_infrastructure_framework_documents [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

³⁹ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/section/69> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

SEA Objective	Assessment Assumptions
<p>4. Landscape: Conserve, enhance, restore and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening their distinctiveness</p>	<p>Impacts on landscape will be largely determined by the specific layout and design of development proposals, as well as the site-specific landscape circumstances. Detailed proposals for each development are uncertain at this stage of the assessment. Therefore, the nature of the potential impacts on the landscape are, to an extent, uncertain. However, there is a risk of negative effects occurring, some of which may be unavoidable. As such, this risk has been reflected in the assessment as a negative impact where a development proposal is located in close proximity to sensitive landscape receptors. The level of impact has been assessed based on the nature and value of, and proximity to, the landscape receptor in question.</p> <p>Where a development proposal would not be anticipated to impact a local or designated landscape, a negligible impact would be expected for this objective. Where the development or enhancement of green infrastructure / landscape features is proposed, which could potentially enhance the local landscape character, a minor positive impact</p> <p>It is anticipated that the Council will require developers to undertake Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) to accompany any future proposals, where relevant. The LVIAs should seek to provide greater detail in relation to the landscape character of the development proposals and its surroundings, the views available towards the development, the character of those views and the sensitivity and value of the relevant landscape and visual receptors.</p> <p>Development proposals which are considered to increase the risk of future development spreading further into the wider landscape would be expected to have a minor negative impact on the landscape objective.</p> <p>Development proposals which are considered to reduce the separation between existing settlements and increase the risk of the coalescence of settlements would be expected to have a potential minor negative impact on the landscape objective.</p>
<p>5. Water: Conserve, manage, restore and enhance water quality and supply.</p>	<p>The vulnerability of groundwater to pollution is determined by the physical, chemical and biological properties of the soil and rocks, which control the ease with which an unprotected hazard can affect groundwater. Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) indicate the risk to groundwater supplies from potentially polluting activities and accidental releases of pollutants. As such, any development proposal that is located within a groundwater SPZ could potentially have an adverse impact on groundwater quality. Site D-AGT1 does not coincide with any SPZs.</p> <p>Construction activities in or near watercourses have the potential to cause pollution, impact upon the bed and banks of watercourses and impact on the quality of the water⁴⁰.</p> <p>An approximate 10m buffer zone from a watercourse should be used in which no works, clearance, storage or run-off should be permitted⁴¹. However, it is considered that</p>

⁴⁰ World Health Organisation (1996) Water Quality Monitoring - A Practical Guide to the Design and Implementation of Freshwater Quality Studies and Monitoring Programmes: Chapter 2 - Water Quality. Available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/41851> [Date Accessed: 06/05/22]

⁴¹ Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (no date) Advice and Information for planning approval on land which is of nature conservation value. Available at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/advice-and-information-planning-approval-land-which-nature-conservation-value> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

SEA Objective	Assessment Assumptions
	<p>development further away than this has the potential to lead to adverse impacts such as those resulting from runoff.</p> <p>Thames Water, which covers the town of Aylesbury, is classed to be in an area of serious water stress⁴².</p> <p>It is assumed that development proposals will be in accordance with the VALP Policy I5 which requires higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in the Building Regulations Part G⁴³.</p>

4.8 Limitations

- 4.8.1 SEA is a tool for predicting potential significant effects. Predicting effects relies on an evidence-based approach and incorporates expert judgement. It is often not possible to state with absolute certainty whether effects will occur, as many impacts are influenced by a range of factors such as the design and the success of mitigation measures. The assessments in this report are based on the best available information, including information that is publicly available. Every attempt has been made to predict effects as accurately as possible.
- 4.8.2 All data used is secondary data available from Buckinghamshire Council or freely available on the Internet. No biodiversity records search has been commissioned through the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre.

⁴² Environment Agency and DEFRA (2021) Water stressed areas – 2021 classification. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification> [Date Accessed: 06/05/22]

⁴³ The Building Regulations 2010. Part G: Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/504207/BR_PDF_AD_G_2015_with_2016_amendments.pdf [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

5 Reasonable Alternatives

5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 The SEA Regulations require that the SEA process considers “*reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme*” (Regulation 12) and gives “*an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with*” (Schedule 2).
- 5.1.2 The SEA process must record how reasonable alternatives were identified, described, and evaluated. The plan makers must identify all reasonable alternatives, providing an explanation as to their provenance and qualities that qualify them as reasonable.
- 5.1.3 The findings of the SEA can help with refining and further developing these options in an iterative and on-going way. The SEA findings do not form the sole basis for decision-making; other studies, the feasibility of the option and consultation feedback will also contribute to the decision of identifying a preferred option.
- 5.1.4 The SEA results may reveal that there is no single, best performing option. Where there is no obvious discernible difference at a strategic scale, the SEA process will record this as an outcome.

5.2 Identifying reasonable alternatives

- 5.2.1 PPG notes that ‘reasonable alternatives’ are the different realistic options considered by the plan-maker in developing the policies in its plan. It notes that the SEA process should provide conclusions on the overall sustainability of the different alternatives and that the alternatives must be realistic and deliverable⁴⁴.
- 5.2.2 Reasonable alternatives for a development could constitute:
- A) Growth alternatives for housing and employment use e.g., the total number of dwellings or employment floorspace across the development area;
 - B) Alternative site allocations for development; and
 - C) Alternative policies, including a comparison between the inclusion of policies against the ‘do nothing’ approach.
- 5.2.3 Buckinghamshire Council has identified three reasonable alternatives for evaluation in the SEA process:
- D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Draft SPD proposal;
 - Stoke Mandeville NP draft masterplan proposal (June 2021); and

⁴⁴MHCLG (2018) Planning Practice Guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
[Date Accessed: 21/02/22]

- Broadway Malyan outline planning application masterplan proposal.

5.2.4 It should be noted that although the Broadway Malyan planning application is considered to be a reasonable alternative, it does not cover the full extent of the SPD area and only covers the area as discussed further in **section 5.3** and shown in **Figure 5.3**.

5.2.5 Furthermore, it should be noted that the Stoke Mandeville NP reasonable alternative as discussed within this report refer to the proposals from the draft NP, prepared in June 2021, which significantly pre-date the latest version of the SPD. A new iteration of the NP is expected in summer 2022 and the Council expects it to have taken account of the March 2022 version of the SPD.

5.2.6 In this instance, a 'do-nothing' approach would not be appropriate as a reasonable alternative, as Policy D1 within the adopted VALP requires an SPD to be produced in order to co-ordinate development at Site D-AGT1.

5.3 Describing the reasonable alternatives

5.3.1 There are three reasonable alternatives which have been identified during the preparation of the SPD, relating to the layout of the proposed development at Site D-AGT1:

- One alternative as proposed in the SPD;
- One as presented within the draft Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan (2021)⁴⁵. The proposed outline masterplan of the site is presented within the Stoke Mandeville Corridor Policy paper⁴⁶; and
- One as presented within the outline planning application masterplan submitted by Broadway Malyan (19/01628/AOP) which covers approximately half of Site D-AGT1⁴⁷.

5.3.2 The masterplan site boundary presented in the draft D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD is shown in **Figure 5.1**, the masterplan site boundary presented in the Stoke Mandeville Corridor Policy Paper is shown in **Figure 5.2**, and the masterplan site boundary presented by Broadway Malyan is shown in **Figure 5.3**. There are no discernible differences between the masterplans at the strategic scale, which SEA concerns; however, there are some minor differences at the local scale related to site layout.

⁴⁵ Stoke Mandeville Parish Council (2021) A Neighbourhood Plan for Stoke Mandeville 2021 -2033. Available at: <https://www.stokemandevilleparishcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/A-Neighbourhood-Plan-for-Stoke-Mandeville-2021-2033-ver2.pdf> [Accessed: 10/05/22]

⁴⁶ Stoke Mandeville Parish Council (2021) Stoke Mandeville Corridor Policy Paper [KPSMC]. Available at: <https://www.stokemandevilleparishcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Stoke-Mandeville-Corridor-Policy-Paper.pdf> [Accessed: 10/05/22]

⁴⁷ 19/01628/AOP | Outline planning application, for the proposed development of up to 750 dwellings, safeguarded land for delivery of South-East Aylesbury Link Road, Primary school, community hub, vehicular and pedestrian access off Lower Road, pedestrian and emergency access, new internal road and pedestrian footpath network and provision for green infrastructure | Land To East Of Lower Road Stoke Mandeville Buckinghamshire. Available at: <https://publicaccess.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PQRMXXCLOPG00> [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

-
- 5.3.3 The site boundary for D-AGT1 is identical between the SPD and the SMNP. The masterplan submitted by Broadway Malyan covers only the western proportion of the Site D-AGT1 between Lower Road and the railway line. The main differences between the masterplans outlined within the SPD and the SMNP are the following:
- Location of the strategic green buffer; and
 - Location of the local centre.
- 5.3.4 The full assessment of reasonable alternatives, which was provided to the Council in May 2022 to help inform the preparation of the SPD, is presented in **Appendix C**.



Green Infrastructure Plan

Key

-  Strategic Buffer
-  Strategic Buffer - Peri-Urban Agriculture
-  Secondary Connections
-  Aylesbury Walk
-  South East Aylesbury Link Road Corridor
-  Railway Corridor
-  Central Open Space
-  School Playing Fields (size & position TBC)
-  Sports Pitches

Figure 5.1: GI Plan for Site D-AGT1 as set out within the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD (Draft - March 2022)

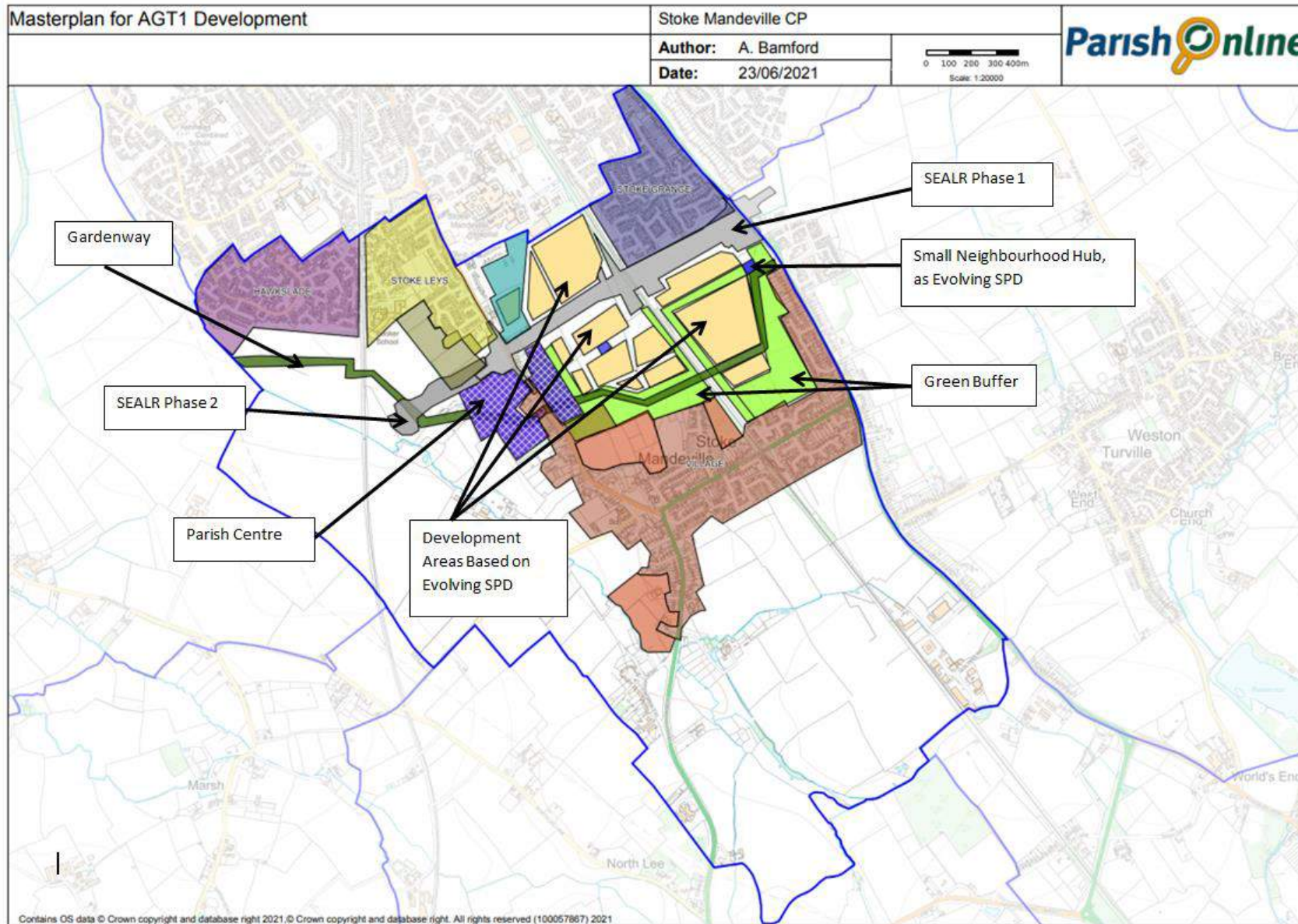


Figure 5.2: Outline masterplan of Site D-AGT1 as set out in the Stoke Mandeville Corridor Policy (Source: Draft Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan)

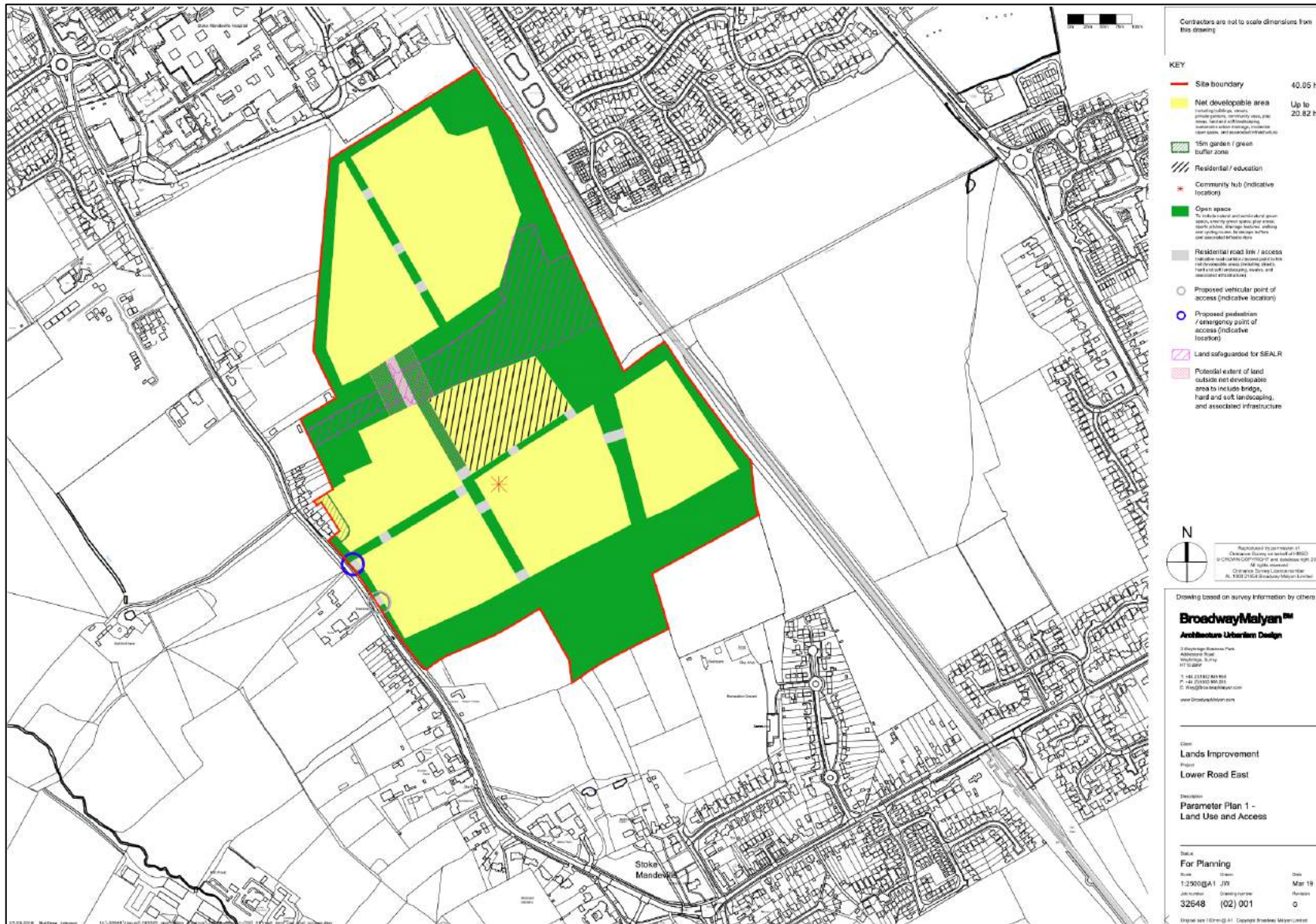


Figure 5.3: Outline masterplan covering part of Site D-AGT1 as set out in the Broadway Malyan planning application (Source: Buckinghamshire Council)

5.4 Evaluating the reasonable alternatives

- 5.4.1 Each reasonable alternative has been assessed against the SEA Framework, which itself focuses on biodiversity, climate change, cultural heritage, landscape and water.
- 5.4.2 The impact matrices for each reasonable alternative assessed in the SEA have been brought together in **Table 5.1**. These impacts should be read in conjunction with the assessment text narratives in **Appendix C**, as well as the topic-specific methodologies and assumptions presented in **Chapter 4**.
- 5.4.3 Whilst the assessment findings have drawn on the assumptions in **Table 4.4**, all assessment information excludes consideration of detailed mitigation i.e. additional detail or modification to the reasonable alternative that has been introduced specifically to reduce identified environmental effects of that site. Presenting assessment findings in this way facilitates transparency to the decision makers.
- 5.4.4 The three reasonable alternatives perform similarly in the SEA, with no single, best performing option identified owing to the small-scale differences identified between the options. In summary, the assessment presented in **Appendix C** identified the following effects:
- **Biodiversity** – For all options, a precautionary minor negative impact was identified with respect to potential adverse impacts associated with recreational pressure to the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.
 - **Climate change** – Under any of the options, the introduction of at least 1,000 new dwellings would be likely to cause an increase in energy consumption, pollution, and traffic during both the construction and occupancy stages, to some extent, resulting in a minor negative impact on climate change.
 - **Cultural heritage** – Each of the options are likely to perform similarly at the strategic scale, in relation to cultural heritage, where potential minor negative impacts are associated with Site D-AGT1's coincidence with and close proximity to Grade II Listed Buildings and archeological remains.
 - **Landscape** – All options would be expected to have positive impacts in terms of promoting access to multi-functional greenspace, through various GI provisions including amenity greenspace alongside the proposed residential development. However, due to the nature and scale of the proposed development at Site D-AGT1, potential minor negative impacts on the landscape including views from the Chilterns AONB and urban sprawl/coalescence, could not be ruled out.
 - **Water** – All options would be expected to make positive contributions towards the protection and enhancement of river corridors and seek to protect water quality, and set out requirements for SuDS schemes. However, the potential implications of the development on water resources and water supply was uncertain.

Table 5.1: Impact matrix for reasonable alternatives

Reasonable Alternative	Topic	Overall Score
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	-
	Climate change	-
	Cultural heritage	-
	Landscape	-
	Water	+/-
D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	-
	Climate change	-
	Cultural heritage	-
	Landscape	-
	Water	+/-
Broadway Malyan Planning Application Masterplan	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	-
	Climate change	-
	Cultural heritage	-
	Landscape	-
	Water	+/-

6 The Preferred Approach

6.1 Selection of reasonable alternatives

6.1.1 PPG states that the Environmental Report accompanying the SPD should outline the reasons why alternatives were selected and the reasons that the rejected options were not taken forward.

6.1.2 As discussed in **section 5.4** and **Appendix C**, the three reasonable alternatives perform similarly in the SEA, with no single, best performing option identified owing to the small-scale differences identified between the options.

6.1.3 As Site D-AGT1 is allocated as a strategic site for Aylesbury, a 'do nothing' scenario is not considered to be a reasonable alternative. The SPD is also deemed to have an overall positive outcome as the SPD will guide the delivery of development through a timely and well-planned approach.

6.2 Preferred option

6.2.1 **Table 6.1** presents an assessment of the likely significant effects associated with the SPD in relation to the topics of biodiversity, cultural heritage, landscape, climate change and water.

6.2.2 Each of the topic sections have drawn on information presented in the SEA Scoping Report and **Chapter 3** in terms of baseline, impacts and key issues for the area affected by the SPD.

6.2.3 The assessments include consideration of the impacts arising as a consequence of the inter-relationship between the different topics and identify secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects where they arise.

Table 6.1: Summary of identified impacts by SEA Objective

Objective 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna

- Site D-AGT1 comprises previously undeveloped land which is primarily agricultural in nature with hedgerow boundaries to fields and pockets of scrub which would be expected to provide some ecological value. Whilst in many cases these habitats can be conserved alongside development, it is possible that fragmentation or loss of habitats and connections between habitats could occur. This could lead to direct and cumulative effects associated with fragmentation of the habitat mosaic, with indirect or secondary impacts on reduction of genetic diversity and loss of species richness. However, given the relatively small size of the site these are unlikely to be significant especially if the existing features, especially the Black Poplars, are maintained and enhanced as part of the development proposals.
- Potential adverse recreational impacts have been identified upon the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI component of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC from Site D-AGT1. This is discussed further in the HRA⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ Lepus Consulting (2022) Habitats Regulations Assessment of the South Aylesbury (D-AGT 1) Supplementary Planning Document. Habitats Regulations Assessment Report, August 2022.

Objective 2: Climate change

- The introduction of 1,000 or more new dwellings will inevitably cause an increase in energy consumption, pollution, and traffic during both the construction and occupancy stages, to some extent, resulting in an increase in GHG emissions. It is therefore expected that the development at Site D-ATG1 could have an adverse impact on climate change, to some extent. An increase in carbon emissions is likely to contribute towards cumulative effects which exacerbate global events such as extreme weather events.
- The proposed new link road between the A413 to B4443 Lower Road could potentially cause some negative impacts in terms of climatic factors, such as increased carbon footprint.
- The proposed incorporation of Green Infrastructure within the site alongside the residential development would be expected to help offset GHG emissions, to some extent, and would be expected to provide areas of shade and shelter which may have beneficial impacts in terms of adapting to climate change.
- Although Site D-AGT1 is located wholly within Flood Zone 1, with likely benefits in terms of situating new development away from areas currently at risk of flooding, it is possible that flood risk will become more prevalent in future years due to higher flood plain levels and climate change introducing more extreme weather events including higher volumes of rainfall.

Objective 3: Cultural heritage

- There are several Grade II Listed Buildings situated in close proximity to the proposed Site D-AGT1, including 'Magpie Cottage' which lies within the southwest corner of the site. The proposed development has potential to cause a negative impact on cultural heritage, in relation to these heritage assets and their settings. In particular, the proposed development has the potential to irreversibly change the setting of Magpie Cottage, potentially resulting in a significant adverse impact on this Listed Building.
- The Archaeology Data Service shows three records of physical archaeological evidence in the location of Site D-AGT1⁴⁹. This includes records of known features as well as digs and excavations, some of which resulted in archaeological finds. Development on Site D-ATG1 could potentially directly impact archaeological remains and therefore a minor negative impact on these heritage assets could be expected.

Objective 4: Landscape

- The Chilterns AONB occupies partially elevated land, located approximately 2.3km to the south east of the site, at its closest point. New development can lead to the loss of landscape features and changes to landscape character and views. Changes in landscape character have the potential to adversely affect the Chilterns AONB and its setting in some locations. The proposed development at Site D-AGT1 could potentially have a minor negative impact on the surrounding landscape by altering views from the Chilterns AONB. Adverse effects may also arise as a consequence of development proposals at other locations in the Plan area, with the potential to result in cumulative adverse impact on views from more sensitive locations within the designated landscape.
- Site D-AGT1 is located to the south of Aylesbury and north of Stoke Mandeville. Development proposals which are considered to reduce the separation between existing settlements and increase the risk of the coalescence of settlements could potentially have a minor negative impact on the landscape character.

⁴⁹ Archaeology Data Service (2018) ARCHSEARCH. Available at: <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/> [Date Accessed: 09/05/22]

Objective 5: Water resources

- A minor watercourse runs through the eastern parcel of Site D-AGT1. The construction and occupation of development in close proximity to watercourses has the potential to increase the risk of contamination of the watercourse network and reduction in water quality, through pollution of surface water runoff.
- The proposed development of at least 1,000 dwellings as proposed within the SPD would be likely to increase the demand for water resources and wastewater treatment, with potential implications for water resource capacity. It is acknowledged that there are planned enhancements to the water resources systems, as identified in the WCS⁵⁰ and set out in the VALP, to accommodate development including for Site D-AGT1; however, in the longer term, the WCS identifies greater uncertainty regarding potential need to invest in additional capacity to accommodate growth in the Stoke Mandeville Parish area as all the proposed development in the area comes forward.

6.3 Mitigation considerations

- 6.3.1 The mitigation hierarchy is a sequential process that operates in the following way: firstly, if possible, negative impacts should be avoided. Failing this, the nature of the effect should be reduced, if possible, so that it is no longer significant. If neither avoidance nor reduction is feasible, compensation measures should be considered.

Table 6.2: Summary of mitigation measures by SEA Objective

Objective 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna

- The proposed development at Site D-AGT1 must be in accordance with VALP policies including Policies NE1 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and NE8 (Trees, hedgerows and woodlands) which seek to protect and enhance designated sites, protected habitats/species and GI, and deliver biodiversity net gain. This could lead to longer term positive effects on biodiversity if net gains are successful.
- VALP Policy D-AGT1 states that “*existing vegetation should be retained where practicable, including existing woodlands and hedgerows*”. This is reflected in the Open Space and Green / Blue Infrastructure provisions within the SPD.
- The HRA⁵¹ concluded that there would be no adverse impact on site integrity, when taking into consideration the proposed mitigation measures including the provision of 50% Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt) compliant GI, provision of connections to existing recreational resource within the local area, and commitment to meet provision Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG) guidelines and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) contributions in line with the emerging Ashridge Estate Mitigation Strategy. These provisions are outlined in Section 5 of the SPD.

Objective 2: Climate change

- The SPD sets out measures for mitigating climate change including reducing energy use, promotion of energy efficiency measures and use of renewable energy throughout the development, in line with Policy C3 of the VALP.

⁵⁰ JBA Consulting (2017) Aylesbury Vale District Council Water Cycle Study: Phase 1. Final Report, February 2017. Available at: https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/Aylesbury%20Vale%20Water%20Cycle%20Study%20Phase%201%20%28Final%29%20v2.0.pdf [Date Accessed: 30/05/22]

⁵¹ Lepus Consulting (2022) Habitats Regulations Assessment of the South Aylesbury (D-AGT 1) Supplementary Planning Document. Habitats Regulations Assessment Report, August 2022.

- The SPD seeks to create a strategic open space circular non-vehicular route, the 'Gardenway', which would be expected to improve connectivity to local amenities for new residents, encourage active travel and reduce reliance on private cars, potentially helping to reduce associated greenhouse gas emissions.
- The SPD sets out provision of a new local centre, to provide new residents in closer proximity to community facilities than current facilities available further away in Aylesbury and Stoke Mandeville, which would have positive impacts on active travel in the local area and reducing reliance on private cars.
- Policy PSGI 1 of the Draft SMNP also sets out the requirement for new developments to meet the Garden Town principles by providing at least 50% green infrastructure in the proposal. This criterion is also reflected in Policy D-AGT1 of the VALP. Vegetation acts as a carbon sink, providing an important ecosystem service and helping to mitigate the effects of climate change.
- VALP Policy D-AGT1 seeks to ensure that development is informed by detailed flood risk modelling to take account of climate change extents on ordinary watercourses and associated with surface water flood risk.

Objective 3: Cultural heritage

- The SPD, in line with the site-specific requirement of VALP Policy D-AGT1, seeks to retain Grade II Listed Building 'Magpie Cottage' within an appropriate setting, and states that "*green buffers should be provided to separate adjacent listed buildings from the new development*". The setting of Magpie Cottage must be subject to careful consideration as part of a detailed landscape and heritage evaluation at the Planning Application stage.
- Various VALP policies, such as BE1 (Heritage Assets) seeks to ensure that development in Aylesbury minimises impacts on heritage assets. According to the VALP, all development should seek to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, including their setting, and seek enhancement wherever possible.
- With regard to the archaeological remains present within the Site D-AGT1 boundary, the SPD states that "*an effective mitigation strategy of evaluation, for example, through geophysics and trial trenching, should be developed in consultation with the Archaeology Officer, Planning, Growth and Sustainability at Buckinghamshire Council, at the planning stage of development*".

Objective 4: Landscape

- The VALP sets out policies and strategic objectives for the built environment. This provides guidelines for new buildings and seeks to ensure that all developments conserves and enhances the natural, built and historic environment of the site.
- As a site-specific requirement, the VALP sets out to provide a buffer between the new development and Stoke Mandeville. The SPD sets out various principles for the proposed strategic buffer, to ensure that the provision of GI and retained agricultural land will "*preserve the separate identity of Stoke Mandeville village*" in addition to providing visual interest and amenity space for new residents. The buffer may help to reduce the extent of coalescence.
- According to VALP Policy D-AGT1, "*The development should be designed using a landscape-led approach including consideration of the long-distance views of the AONB*".

Objective 5: Water resources

- In relation to water management, the draft SPD (July 2022) recognises that local borehole records show that groundwater levels are close to the surface and outlines that "*development is to be designed using a sequential approach with drainage designs designed to exceed and accommodate existing surface water*"

flows". The SPD seeks to implement above-ground vegetative Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) including rainwater harvesting, grey water systems and rain gardens to effectively manage surface water which could indirectly have positive consequences for drainage and wastewater during flood events.

- The SPD states that *"the existing watercourse which runs through the eastern parcel and proposed buffer will be enhanced and its ecological status improved, whilst through the modification of the channel it will provide flood elevation measures, reducing the risk of flooding downstream"*.
- The VALP sets out policies which seek to promote sustainability in water use, maintain and enhance water quality and ensure adequate water resources are available. VALP Policy I5 also requires development proposals to adhere to the higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in the Building Regulations Part G.

6.4 Residual effects and recommendations

6.4.1 Following consideration of mitigation measures as outlined in **Table 6.2**, the following conclusions have been made, as presented in **Table 6.3**, regarding the residual effects of the SPD.

Table 6.3: Summary of identified residual effects by SEA Objective

SEA Topic	Identified Residual Effects	SEA Score
Objective 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	At this stage, there is anticipated to be no adverse impact on the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC as a result of the SPD, so long as the mitigation provisions as outlined in the HRA ⁵² are achieved. No adverse residual effect on biodiversity, flora and fauna is anticipated.	0
Objective 2: Climate change	The VALP and SPD set out various requirements which aim to help mitigate the adverse impacts relating to climatic factors. However, the implementation of these requirements would not be expected to fully mitigate the adverse impacts associated with net increases in greenhouse gases. An increase in carbon emissions would be likely to be a long term but potentially temporary significant effect.	-
Objective 3: Cultural heritage	Despite the provisions made in the VALP and SPD regarding the conservation of heritage assets, there is anticipated to be a residual adverse effect on the setting of the Grade II Listed Building, Magpie Cottage.	-
Objective 4: Landscape	Various VALP and SPD provisions would help to mitigate adverse impacts on the landscape character arising from the proposed development. Due to the scale of development proposed, particularly when considering the location of the site with respect to the AONB, these provisions are not expected to fully mitigate the potential impacts associated with urbanisation of the countryside although it is unlikely that these residual impacts would be significant. Overall, no adverse residual effect is anticipated.	0
Objective 5: Water resources	<p>Increased pressures on demand for water resources and wastewater treatment as a consequence of the proposed development has the potential to be a long-term and potentially permanent significant effect. The WCS indicates that more detailed study would be required to confirm the conclusions regarding the local distribution system impact within Stoke Mandeville.</p> <p>The proposed development could also contribute towards a cumulative adverse effect on river quality as a consequence of storm events and associated sewage discharge releases.</p> <p>In line with the precautionary principle, a minor negative residual effect has been identified.</p>	-

⁵² Lepus Consulting (2022) Habitats Regulations Assessment of the South Aylesbury (D-AGT 1) Supplementary Planning Document. Habitats Regulations Assessment Report, August 2022.

6.4.2 Therefore, the SPD is considered to have potential to lead to minor residual adverse effects in relation to climate change (SA Objective 2), cultural heritage (SA Objective 3) and water resources (SA Objective 5).

6.4.3 **Table 6.4** outlines further recommendations which may help to mitigate or offset identified adverse impacts, or further enhance the sustainability of the SPD.

Table 6.4: Recommendations to further improve sustainability of the SPD

SEA Topic	Recommendations
Objective 1: Biodiversity, flora and fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SPD should seek to incorporate the aims, objectives and principles of the Biodiversity Action Plan to ensure that the land can be effectively managed to support Buckinghamshire’s biodiversity beyond protected sites and sites managed for wildlife, and seek to embrace the priorities of the future publications from the Natural Environment Partnership including the upcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The development should secure management and monitoring of biodiversity features on and off-site, and to consider opportunities for enhancing connectivity of the wider ecological networks associated with designated biodiversity sites.
Objective 2: Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for increasing the proportion of trips made through sustainable transport should be understood and pursued, in line with the hierarchy of decarbonisation recommended in the RTPI’s Net Zero Transport⁵³. In line with the NPPF, the SPD should seek to prioritise renewable and low carbon energy sources, opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers. Energy statements could be required in order to demonstrate how carbon emissions have been minimised for the development over its lifetime. The SPD could seek Net Zero design principles to be prepared for the construction and operation of the site, such as with reference to the guide prepared by LETI⁵⁴.
Objective 3: Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is acknowledged that the SPD seeks to retain Grade II Listed Building ‘Magpie Cottage’ within an appropriate setting, however the SPD could benefit from further detail regarding the conservation and, where possible, enhancement of this heritage asset in line with its significance. This should be informed by a heritage assessment. Consultation with Historic England and the Council’s Conservation Officer is recommended with respect to this asset. Where there is potential for development to adversely affect a heritage asset, including the setting of that asset, an assessment should be undertaken to establish the extent of

⁵³ RTPI (2021) Net Zero Transport: the role of spatial planning and place-based solutions. Available at: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2020/june/net-zero-transport-the-role-of-spatial-planning-and-place-based-solutions/> [Date Accessed: 31/05/22]

⁵⁴ LETI (2020) Climate Emergency Design Guide: How new buildings can meet UK climate change targets. Available at: http://b80d7a04-1c28-45e2-b904-e0715cface93.filesusr.com/ugd/252d09_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf [Date Accessed: 31/05/22]

SEA Topic	Recommendations
	<p>this potential effect as per guidelines provided by Historic England⁵⁵. Historic England have also produced specific advice on rural planning⁵⁶ and guidance on the management of Conservation Areas⁵⁷.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible development should consider sensitive design around existing cultural assets and maintain the setting of such assets, including the use of screening (where appropriate). • It is also recommended that, where the opportunity exists, proposals should seek to increase the local awareness of cultural heritage assets in the local area.
Objective 4: Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is anticipated that the Council will require developers to undertake Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) or Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs) to accompany any future proposals, where relevant. The LVIAs or LVAs should seek to provide greater detail in relation to the landscape character of the proposal and its surroundings, the views available towards the development proposal, the character of those views and the sensitivity and value of the relevant landscape and visual receptors. • Landscaping proposals should include the use locally important native tree and hedge species and be guided by the Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessments. Where screening is considered appropriate, guidelines for species selection and conditions for screening foliage are provided by the Royal Horticultural Society⁵⁸.
Objective 5: Water resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The permeability of soil reduces as compaction increases. It is therefore recommended that construction workers adopt best practice measures to avoid the compaction of soils and exacerbating surface water flood risk during construction⁵⁹. • In line with the NPPF, development should seek to, wherever possible, help to improve environmental conditions, such as water quality. • Development proposals should be built in accordance with recommendations within the WCS and other relevant documents within the Evidence Base, including Water Resource Management Plans, Catchment Flood Management Plan and Basin Management Plans.

⁵⁵ Historic England (2017) The Setting of Heritage Assets - Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/apa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/> [Date Accessed: 28/02/22]

⁵⁶ Historic England (2021) Rural Planning. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/rural-planning/> [Date Accessed: 28/02/22]

⁵⁷ Historic England (2021) Designating and Managing a Conservation Area. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/conservation-areas/> [Date Accessed: 08/02/22]

⁵⁸ Royal Horticultural Society (2017) Plants for Screening. Available at: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=636> [Date Accessed: 31/05/22]

⁵⁹ DEFRA (2009) Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-sustainable-use-of-soils-on-construction-sites> [Date Accessed: 31/05/22]

7 Monitoring

7.1 Monitoring proposals

7.1.1 Regulation 17(1) of the SEA Regulations states that “*The responsible authority shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of each plan or programme with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action*”.

7.1.2 According to Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, the ER should also provide information on a “*description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring*”.

7.1.3 The monitoring requirements typically associated with the SEA process are recognised as placing heavy demands on authorities with SEA responsibilities. For this reason, the proposed monitoring framework should focus on those aspects of the environment that are likely to be negatively impacted upon, where the impact is uncertain or where particular opportunities for improvement might arise.

7.1.4 The purpose of monitoring is to measure the environmental effects of a plan, as well as to measure success against the plan’s objectives. It is therefore beneficial if the monitoring strategy builds on monitoring systems that are already in place. It should also be noted that monitoring could provide useful information for future plans and programmes.

7.1.5 Monitoring is particularly useful in answering the following questions:

- Were the assessment’s predictions of sustainability effects accurate?
- Does the development contribute to the achievement of desired sustainability objectives?
- Are mitigation measures performing as well as expected?
- Are there any unforeseen adverse effects? Are these within acceptable limits, or is remedial action required?

7.1.6 The SEA guidance suggests that SEA monitoring and reporting activities can be integrated into the regular planning cycle. As part of the monitoring process, Buckinghamshire Council are required to prepare Annual Monitoring Reports⁶⁰. It is anticipated that elements of the SEA monitoring programme for the development could be incorporated into these processes. The monitoring targets will be informed by the SEA Framework and its indicators (see **Appendix A**).

⁶⁰ Buckinghamshire Council (2022) Planning Reports. Available at: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/planning-reporting/#:~:text=The%20Buckinghamshire%20Council%20Authority%20Monitoring,much%20development%20is%20taking%20pl ace> [Date Accessed: 28/02/22].

7.1.7 Whilst the SEA process has not identified any significant negative effects associated with the development it is considered that monitoring may be beneficial to ensure the successful implementation of recommended mitigation and enhancement measures set out within the SPD. Monitoring suggestions are provided in **Table 7.1**.

Table 7.1: Proposals for monitoring adverse sustainability impacts of the SPD

SEA Topic	Indicator	Scale and frequency	Target
Biodiversity, flora and fauna	Percentage of SSSIs in favourable condition	Annually, Plan area wide	Increase
	Number of Planning Approvals granted contrary to the advice of Natural England or the Wildlife Trust	Annually, Plan area wide	Zero
	Percentage loss of the ecological network	Annually, Plan area wide	Zero
Climate change	CO ₂ emissions per capita	Annually, Plan area wide	Decrease
	Renewable energy generation	Annually, Plan area wide	Increase
Cultural heritage	Number of heritage assets identified as 'heritage at risk'	Annually, Plan area wide	Decrease
	Quantity of development in the open countryside	Annually, Plan area wide	Zero
	Change in tranquillity in the open countryside	Annually, Plan area wide	Zero
Water	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice	Annually, Plan area wide	Zero
	Quality of watercourses	Annually, Plan area wide	Increase
	Water efficiency in new homes	Annually, Plan area wide	Increase

7.1.8 Details of any monitoring programme are, at this stage, preliminary and may evolve over time based on the results of consultation and the identification of additional data sources (as in some cases information will be provided by outside bodies). The monitoring of individual schemes/proposals should also be addressed at project level.

8 Conclusion and Next Steps

8.1 Overview

8.1.1 This document constitutes an Environmental Report for the purposes of the SEA Regulations, in order to:

- Provide an outline of the contents and main objectives of the SPD and its relationship with other relevant plans;
- Consider the environmental protection objectives established at international, national or community level and how these objectives are relevant to the SPD;
- Assess the likely significant effects on the environment caused by the SPD (including biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, and cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors);
- Give details of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the SPD;
- Give an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information; and
- Include a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.

8.1.2 Assessment of reasonable alternatives identified that the three reasonable alternatives perform similarly in the SEA, with no single, best performing option identified owing to the small-scale differences identified between the options.

8.1.3 The Council are pursuing the approach as set out in the outline masterplan of Site D-AGT1, based on the various findings and documents comprising their evidence base and the adopted Buckinghamshire Local Plan⁶¹ policies.

8.1.4 The impact assessment identified potential negative effects as a result of the proposed development on:

- **Biodiversity, flora and fauna** – primarily related to potential adverse recreational impacts on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC;

⁶¹ Buckinghamshire County Council (2021) Adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. Available at: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-development-plans/> [Date Accessed: 05/05/22]

- **Climate change** – due to an increase in energy consumption, pollution, and traffic during both the construction and occupancy stages associated with the development of at least 1,000 dwellings;
- **Cultural heritage** – in particular, impacts on the setting of surrounding Listed Buildings and areas of archaeological remains;
- **Landscape** – including potential for minor adverse effects on views from the Chilterns AONB and urbanisation of the countryside; and
- **Water** – in terms of potential effects on water supply/resources and water quality arising from the proposed development of at least 1,000 dwellings.

8.1.5 The SPD would be anticipated to result in a range of positive effects including the opportunity to provide new homes, community facilities and pedestrian routes for the enjoyment of current and future residents, as well as having the potential to deliver enhanced multi-functional GI and biodiversity net gain. Various provisions proposed within the SPD and policies outlined in VALP would help to ensure that future development takes into account the surrounding built and natural environment, historic assets and landscape character.

8.1.6 Following consideration of mitigation measures (see **Table 6.2**), as well as the outputs of the emerging HRA and other evidence base documents, a residual adverse effect on biodiversity and landscape have been ruled out (see **Table 6.3**).

8.1.7 Potential residual minor adverse effects have been identified in relation to:

- **Climate change** – it is not expected that the identified adverse impacts from GHG emissions associated with the large scale of proposed development would be fully mitigated;
- **Cultural heritage** – it is likely that the setting of the Grade II Listed Building ‘Magpie Cottage’ would be altered to some extent by the proposed development; and
- **Water** – at this stage, the potential for increased pressure on demand for water resources and wastewater treatment cannot be ruled out.

8.1.8 Several recommendations have been made in this SEA report (see **Table 6.4**) to potentially enhance the sustainability of the proposals within the SPD or to provide further clarity regarding certain issues.

8.2 Next steps

8.2.1 This ER will be subject to consultation with the statutory bodies and the public.

8.2.2 Following the consultation period, responses will be considered by the Council to inform the final version of the SPD. If the Council members vote in favour of the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD, the SPD will become adopted as part of the statutory development plan.

8.2.3 SEA Regulations 16.3(c) (iii) and 16.4 require that a ‘statement’ be made available to accompany the plan, as soon as possible after the adoption of the plan or programme, known as a post-adoption statement. The purpose of the SEA statement is to outline how the SEA process has influenced and informed the SPD development process and demonstrate how consultation on the SEA has been taken into account.

8.2.4 In accordance with the SEA Regulations, the statement should contain the following information:

- The reasons for choosing the preferred policies for the SPD as adopted in the light of other reasonable alternatives dealt with;
- How environmental considerations have been integrated into the SPD;
- How consultation responses have been taken into account; and
- Measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the SPD.

8.3 Commenting on the Environmental Report

8.3.1 Any comments on this SEA Report should be directed through Buckinghamshire Council.

Appendix A: SEA Framework

SEA Objective	Decision making criteria	Indicators
<p>1</p> <p>Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Protect, enhance, restore and manage the flora, fauna, biodiversity and geodiversity assets of the areas affected by the development of Site D-AGT1.</p>	Will it result in a net loss or a net gain for biodiversity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new residents which generate adverse impacts on sites of biodiversity importance, such as the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. • Creation of new biodiversity assets. • Provision of multi-functional green infrastructure. • Enhancement and protection of habitats and wildlife corridors. • Ensure current ecological networks are not compromised and secure future improvement in habitat connectivity. • Protection of existing vegetation and hedgerows. • Protection and enhancement of watercourses.
	Will it protect or enhance wildlife sites or biodiversity?	
	Will it protect sites and habitats designated for nature conservation including protected species?	
	Will it protect and enhance the water environment?	
<p>2</p> <p>Climate Change: Mitigate and reduce Site D-AGT1's contribution towards climate change.</p>	Will it reduce emissions from transport and the built environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of green infrastructure. • Public transport and cycling and walking provision for new development. • Length of greenways constructed. • Natural greenspace within 400m of residential development. • Increased local traffic. • Drainage designed for 'exceedence' flood events (e.g. SuDS). • Design incorporating water conservation methods.
	Will it reduce flood risk?	
	Will it conserve water resources?	

SEA Objective	Decision making criteria	Indicators
<p>3</p> <p>Cultural Heritage: Protect, enhance and manage heritage assets, including designated and non-designated, as well as features and areas of and heritage importance.</p>	<p>Will it preserve buildings of historic interest and, where necessary, encourage their conservation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of local heritage features including Listed Buildings, such as Grade II Listed Building ‘Magpie Cottage’. • Annual number of visitors to historic attractions. • Below ground remains – For archaeology this means conserving archaeological remains where practicable, particularly remains of national importance, through masterplan design, to mitigate through archaeological investigation, recording and publication where conservation is not practicable.
	<p>Will it preserve or enhance archaeological sites?</p>	
	<p>Will it preserve or enhance the setting or character of cultural heritage assets or areas?</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>Landscape: Conserve, enhance, restore and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening their distinctiveness.</p>	<p>Will it protect and enhance the local landscape?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape-led development with consideration of long-distance views of the AONB. • Use of locally sourced materials. • Is development in-keeping with surroundings (e.g. character of Stoke Mandeville)? • Increase of coalescence. • Protection of local PRoWs.
	<p>Will it protect and enhance the local townscape?</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>Water: Maintain and enhance water quality and ensure the most efficient use of water.</p>	<p>Will it maximise water efficiency?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water efficiency in new homes (i.e. all new housing schemes to achieve water efficiency standard of 110 litres/person/day (lpd) • No indicators for water infrastructure have been identified. • Protect local watercourses and improve their water quality.
	<p>Will it minimise impact on water quality?</p>	
	<p>Will it impact on water discharges that affect designated sites?</p>	
	<p>Will it contribute to achieving the River Basin Management Plan actions and objectives?</p>	

Appendix B: Plans, Policies and Programmes Review

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018)	The document sets out government action to help achieve natural world regain and retain good health. The main goals of the Plan are to achieve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean air; • Clean and plentiful water; • Thriving plants and wildlife; • A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought; • Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently; and • Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment.
EC Seventh Environmental Action Programme 2013-2020 (2013)	The main concern of the EEB was the need to describe in an un-ambivalent manner the environmental challenges the EU is faced with, including accelerating climate change, deterioration of our eco-systems and increasing overuse of natural resources.
Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 (2011)	The EU biodiversity strategy follows on from the EU Biodiversity Action Plan (2006). It aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services across the EU by 2020. The strategy contains six targets and 20 actions. The six targets cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full implementation of EU nature legislation to protect biodiversity; • Better protection for ecosystems, and more use of green infrastructure; • More sustainable agriculture and forestry; • Better management of fish stocks; • Tighter controls on invasive alien species; and • A bigger EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.
The Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (1995)	The strategy aims to stop and reverse the degradation of biological and landscape diversity values in Europe.
UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	The aims of the Convention include the conservation of biological diversity (including a commitment to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss), the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979)	The Convention seeks to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats, and to monitor and control endangered and vulnerable species.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
<p>Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992 (the Habitats Directive)</p>	<p>The main aim of the Habitats Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring Member States to take measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species listed on the Annexes to the Directive at a favourable conservation status, introducing robust protection for those habitats and species of European importance. In applying these measures Member States are required to take account of economic, social and cultural requirements, as well as regional and local characteristics.</p> <p>The provisions of the Directive require Member States to introduce a range of measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain or restore European protected habitats and species listed in the Annexes at a favourable conservation status as defined in Articles 1 and 2; • Contribute to a coherent European ecological network of protected sites by designating Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for habitats listed on Annex I and for species listed on Annex II. These measures are also to be applied to Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under Article 4 of the Birds Directive. Together SACs and SPAs make up the Natura 2000 network (Article 3); • Ensure conservation measures are in place to appropriately manage SACs and ensure appropriate assessment of plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of an SAC. Projects may still be permitted if there are no alternatives, and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In such cases compensatory measures are necessary to ensure the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network (Article 6); • Member States shall also endeavour to encourage the management of features of the landscape that support the Natura 2000 network (Articles 3 and 10); • Undertake surveillance of habitats and species (Article 11); • Ensure strict protection of species listed on Annex IV (Article 12 for animals and Article 13 for plants). <p>Report on the implementation of the Directive every six years (Article 17), including assessment of the conservation status of species and habitats listed on the Annexes to the Directive.</p>
<p>The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitats regulations)</p>	<p>This transposes into national law the Habitats Directive and also consolidates all amendments that have been made to the previous 1994 Regulations. This means that competent authorities have a general duty in the exercise of any of their functions to have regard to the Directive.</p>
<p>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000</p>	<p>The Act provides for public access on foot to certain types of land, amends the law relating to public rights of way, increases measures for the management and protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation, and provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)</p>
<p>The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006</p>	<p>The Act makes provision in respect of biodiversity, pesticides harmful to wildlife and the protection of birds, and in respect of invasive non-native species. It alters enforcement powers in connection with wildlife protection and extends time limits for prosecuting certain wildlife offences. It addresses a small number of gaps and uncertainties which have been identified in relation to the law on sites of special scientific interest. And it amends the functions and constitution of National Park authorities, the functions of the Broads Authority and the law on rights of way.</p>

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
DEFRA Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended)	The principle mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain.
DEFRA. Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (2011)	<p>The England biodiversity strategy 2020 ties in with the EU biodiversity strategy in addition to drawing links to the concept of ecosystem services. The strategy's vision for England is:</p> <p>"By 2050 our land and seas will be rich in wildlife, our biodiversity will be valued, conserved, restored, managed sustainably and be more resilient and able to adapt to change, providing essential services and delivering benefits for everyone".</p> <p>The Strategy's overall mission is "to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people".</p>
DoE Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan (1994)	Government's strategy for protection and enhancement of biodiversity, from 1992 convention on Biodiversity commitments. Advises on opportunities and threats for biodiversity.
TCPA: Biodiversity by Design: A Guide for Sustainable Communities (2004)	The development process should consider ecological potential of all areas including both greenfield and brownfield sites. Local authorities and developers have a responsibility to mitigate impacts of development on designated sites and priority habitats and species and avoid damage to ecosystems.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2021)	<p>The recently released NPPF seeks to streamline the planning system and sets out the Governments planning policies and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>The NPPF includes guidance on promoting the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. It requires the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils; • recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; • minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; • preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and • remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network (2010)	<p>The Making Space for Nature report, which investigated the resilience of England's ecological network to multiple pressures, concluded that England's wildlife sites do not comprise a coherent and resilient ecological network. The report advocates the need for a step change in conservation of England's wildlife sites to ensure they are able to adapt and become part of a strong and resilient network. The report summarises what needs to be done to improve England's wildlife sites to enhance the resilience and coherence of England's ecological network in four words; more, bigger, better, and joined. There are five key approaches which encompass these, which also take into account of the land around the ecological network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of current sites by better habitat management.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the size of current wildlife sites. • Enhance connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through ‘stepping stones’. • Create new sites. • Reduce the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites. <p>To establish a coherent ecological network 24 wide ranging recommendations have been made which are united under five key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to continue the recent progress in improving the management and condition of wildlife sites, particularly our SSSIs. We also make recommendations for how these should be designated and managed in ways that enhance their resilience to climate change. • There is a need to properly plan ecological networks, including restoration areas. Restoration needs to take place throughout England. However, in some areas, both the scale of what can be delivered to enhance the network, and the ensuing benefits for wildlife and people, will be very high. These large areas should be formally recognised as Ecological Restoration Zones. • There are a large number of surviving patches of important wildlife habitat scattered across England outside of SSSIs, for example in Local Wildlife Sites. We need to take steps to improve the protection and management of these remaining wildlife habitats. ‘Protection’ will usually be best achieved through incentive-based mechanisms, but at times may require designation. • There is a need to become better at deriving multiple benefits from the ways we use and interact with our environment. There are many things that society has to do that may seem to have rather little to do with nature conservation, but could have, or even should have if we embrace more radical thinking; e.g. flood management by creating wetlands. <p>It will not be possible to achieve a step-change in nature conservation in England without society accepting it to be necessary, desirable, and achievable. This will require strong leadership from government and significant improvements in collaboration between local authorities, local communities, statutory agencies, the voluntary and private sectors, farmers, landowners and other land-managers and individual citizens.</p>
DEFRA England's Trees, Woods and Forests Strategy (2007)	<p>The England's Trees, Woods, and Forest Strategy (2007) aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide, in England, a resource of trees, woods and forests in places where they can contribute most in terms of environmental, economic and social benefits now and for future generations • ensure that existing and newly planted trees, woods and forests are resilient to the impacts of climate change and also contribute to the way in which biodiversity and natural resources adjust to a changing climate • protect and enhance the environmental resources of water, soil, air, biodiversity and landscapes (both woodland and non-woodland), and the cultural and amenity values of trees and woodland • increase the contribution that trees, woods and forests make to the quality of life for those living in, working in or visiting England; and • improve the competitiveness of woodland businesses and promote the development of new or improved markets for sustainable woodland products and ecosystem services where this will deliver identify able public benefits, nationally or locally, including the reduction of carbon emissions.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
<p>The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature. The Natural Environment White Paper. (HM Government 2011)</p>	<p>Published in June 2011, the Natural Environment White paper sets out the Government's plans to ensure the natural environment is protected and fully integrated into society and economic growth. The White Paper sets out four key aims:</p> <p>(i) <u>Protecting and improving our natural environment</u></p> <p>There is a need to improve the quality of our natural environment across England, moving to a net gain in the value of nature. It aims to arrest the decline in habitats and species and the degradation of landscapes. It will protect priority habitats and safeguard vulnerable non-renewable resources for future generations. It will support natural systems to function more effectively in town, in the country and at sea. It will achieve this through joined-up action at local and national levels to create an ecological network which is resilient to changing pressures.</p> <p>(ii) <u>Growing a green economy</u></p> <p>The ambition is for a green and growing economy which not only uses natural capital in a responsible and fair way but also contributes to improving it. It will properly value the stocks and flows of natural capital. Growth will be green because it is intrinsically linked to the health of the country's natural resources. The economy will capture the value of nature. It will encourage businesses to use natural capital sustainably, protecting and improving it through their day-to-day operations and the management of their supply chains.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Reconnecting people and nature</u></p> <p>The ambition is to strengthen the connections between people and nature. It wants more people to enjoy the benefits of nature by giving them freedom to connect with it. Everyone should have fair access to a good-quality natural environment. It wants to see every child in England given the opportunity to experience and learn about the natural environment. It wants to help people take more responsibility for their environment, putting local communities in control and making it easier for people to take positive action.</p> <p>(iv) <u>International and EU leadership</u></p> <p>The global ambitions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>internationally, to achieve environmentally and socially sustainable economic growth, together with food, water, climate and energy security; and</i> • <i>to put the EU on a path towards environmentally sustainable, low-carbon and resource-efficient growth, which is resilient to climate change, provides jobs and supports the wellbeing of citizens.</i>
<p>UK National Ecosystem Assessment (2011)</p>	<p>The UK National Ecosystem Assessment is the first analysis of the UK's natural environment and the benefits it provides to society and economic prosperity. The assessment leads on from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) and analyses services provided by ecosystem set against eight broad habitat types. The ecosystem services provided by these habitat types have been assessed to find their overall condition. The assessment sought to answer ten key questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What are the status and trends of the UK's ecosystems and the services they provide to society? 2) What are the drivers causing changes in the UK's ecosystems and their services? 3) How do ecosystem services affect human well-being, who and where are the beneficiaries, and how does this affect how they are valued and managed? 4) Which vital UK provisioning services are not provided by UK ecosystems?

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
	5) What is the current public understanding of ecosystem services and the benefits they provide? 6) Why should we incorporate the economic values of ecosystem services into decision-making? 7) How might ecosystems and their services change in the UK under plausible future scenarios? 8) What are the economic implications of different plausible futures? 9) How can we secure and improve the continued delivery of ecosystem services? 10) How have we advanced our understanding of the influence of ecosystem services on human well-being and what are the knowledge constraints on more informed decision making?
DEFRA Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing Biodiversity Duty (2007)	The Duty is set out in Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, and states that: “Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”. Particular areas of focus include: Policy, Strategy and Procurement; Management of Public Land and Buildings; Planning, Infrastructure and Development; and Education, Advice and Awareness.
CABE Making Contracts Work for Wildlife: How to Encourage Biodiversity in Urban Parks (2006)	Advises on how to make the most of the potential for biodiversity in urban parks and it shows how the commitment of individuals and employers can make the difference between failure and inspiring success.
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the ‘Garden Town’ status.
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development provides seamless interaction with the community.
Forward to 2030: Biodiversity Action Plan More, Bigger, Better and More Joined-up across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes	This plan aims to build upon the previous Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), the timeline of which completed in 2020, produced by the partnership of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes councils. The plan aims to ensure that the unique local environment and biodiversity is promoted and protected, where local residents can connect to nature and promote health benefits. The BAP serves as the interim Biodiversity Strategy, with a focus on nature’s recovery, until such time as formal Local Nature Recovery Strategies are finalised to cover Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, and includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extends the Priority Habitats biodiversity targets, set out in our Forward to 2020 Biodiversity Action Plan, to 2030. • Retains a focus on Biodiversity Opportunity Areas for the Plan’s spatial delivery. • Includes a series of broader, but connected and supporting objectives and principles, which together encourage the creation, improvement and connection of a broader range of habitats to achieve the Lawton principles of “<i>more, bigger, better and more joined-up</i>”.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides tailored example actions needed to achieve the aim and objectives and follow the principles within specific landscape character areas within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, using Natural England's National Character Areas as a guide, as well as across the area as a whole.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)	Sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change.
UN Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015)	The Paris Agreement builds upon the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Paris Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C.
IPCC Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1997)	Commits member nations to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases or engage in emissions trading if they maintain or increase emissions of these gases.
European Sustainable Development Strategy (2006)	This Strategy identifies key priorities for an enlarged Europe. This includes health, social inclusion and fighting global poverty. It aims to achieve better policy integration in addressing these challenges, and to ensure that Europe looks beyond its boundaries in making informed decisions about sustainability. The Sustainable Development Strategy was reviewed in 2009 and “underlined that in recent years the EU has mainstreamed sustainable development into a broad range of its policies. In particular, the EU has taken the lead in the fight against climate change and the promotion of a low-carbon economy. At the same time, unsustainable trends persist in many areas and the efforts need to be intensified”. Sustainable development is a key focus of the EU and the strategy continues to be monitored and reviewed.
European Floods Directive (2007)	Requires Local Authorities to feed into the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, as well as the Local Flood Risk Strategy (already completed) and ensure that objectives within Local Plans compliment the objectives of the Directive.
UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009)	The UK has committed to sourcing 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020 – an increase in the share of renewables from about 2.25% in 2008. The Renewable Energy Strategy sets out how the Government will achieve this target through utilising a variety of mechanisms to encourage Renewable Energy provision in the UK. This includes streamlining the planning system, increasing investment in technologies as well as improving funding for advice and awareness raising.
UK Renewable Energy Roadmap Update (2013)	This is the second Update to the 2011 Renewable Energy Roadmap. It sets out the progress that has been made and the changes that have occurred in the sector over the past year. It also describes the continuing high ambitions and actions along with the challenges going forward.
The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan (2009)	<p>The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan sets out how the UK will meet the Climate Change Act's legally binding target of a 34% cut in emissions on 1990 levels by 2020. It also seeks to deliver emissions cuts of 18% on 2008 levels.</p> <p>The main aims of the Transition Plan include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producing 30% of energy from renewables by 2020;

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the energy efficiency of existing housing; • Increasing the number of people in 'green jobs'; and • Supporting the use and development of clean technologies. <p>The NPPF seeks to streamline the planning system and sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>The NPPF includes guidance on climate change, flooding, and coastal change. Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.</p> <p>To increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts); • consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and • identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers. • Local Plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development to avoid where possible flood risk to people and property and manage any residual risk, taking account of the impacts of climate change, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applying the sequential test and then, if necessary, applying the exception test; • safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management; • using opportunities offered by new development to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding; and • where climate change is expected to increase flood risk so that some existing development may not be sustainable in the long-term, seeking opportunities to facilitate the relocation of development, including housing, to more sustainable locations.
Department for Transport: An Evidence Base Review of Public	This is a summary report of the findings of an evidence base review investigating the research base on public attitudes towards climate change and transport behaviour.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
Attitudes to Climate Change and Transport Behaviour (2006)	
Carbon Trust: The Climate Change Challenge: Scientific Evidence and Implications (2005)	This report summarises the nature of the climate change issue. It explains the fundamental science and the accumulating evidence that climate change is real and needs to be addressed. It also explains the future potential impacts, including the outstanding uncertainties.
Energy Saving Trust: Renewable Energy Sources for Homes in Urban Environments (2005)	This document provides information about the integration of renewable energy sources into new and existing dwellings in urban environments. It covers the basic principles, benefits, limitations, costs and suitability of various technologies.
HM Government: The Road to Zero (2018)	This report outlines how the Government will support the transition to zero-emission road transport. This includes measures to reduce emissions from vehicles including specific targets for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), promoting low- and zero- emission cars and developing high quality electric vehicle infrastructure networks.
Environment Agency, Adapting to Climate Change: A Checklist for Development (2005)	The document contains a checklist and guidance for new developments to adapt to climate change. The main actions are summarised in a checklist.
Environment Agency: Building a Better Environment: A Guide for Developers (2013)	Guidance on addressing key environmental issues through the development process (focusing mainly on the issues dealt with by the Environment Agency), including managing flood risk, surface water management, use of water resources and preventing pollution.
DECC Energy White Paper: Meeting the Energy Challenge (2007)	<p>Sets out Government's long-term energy policy, including requirements for cleaner, smarter energy; improved energy efficiency; reduced carbon emissions; and reliable, competitive and affordable supplies. The White Paper sets out the UK's international and domestic energy strategy, in the shape of four policy goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aiming to cut CO₂ emissions by some 60% by about 2050, with real progress by 2020; • maintaining the reliability of energy supplies; • promoting competitive markets in the UK and beyond; and • ensuring every home is heated adequately and affordably.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
Department of Energy and Climate Change: Microgeneration Strategy (2011)	The strategy aims to improve the effectiveness of the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS), enable policy makers and industry to understand the consumer protection structure and suitably sign post schemes in policy and create regulatory environment and assessment framework that enables accurate representation of contribution of microgeneration technologies to low carbon homes and buildings.
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the 'Garden Town' status.
Vision and Principles for the Improvement of Green Infrastructure in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (2016)	The document sets out what is meant by "green infrastructure", the collective vision for green infrastructure in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, and the considerations that should be taken into account when planning for green infrastructure, from strategic scales to individual projects. The document seeks to use the principles to influence and advocate good practice at all development scales within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. This document is accompanied by Green Infrastructure opportunities mapping.
Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2013)	The Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan builds on the GI planning framework and has been developed in parallel with work to enable the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (Local Nature Partnership or NEP) which was set up from 2011. The GI Delivery Plan identifies a suite of area specific GI proposals and projects within the strategic GI framework, which the NEP can begin taking forward with other key stakeholders. It also provides guidance on how these can be achieved, plus notes on synergies with other complementary projects, potential funding streams and governance models.
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development provides seamless interaction with the community.
Buckinghamshire County Council: Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy (2021)	<p>The strategy seeks to reduce emissions, improve air quality and adapt to climate change and sets out the following targets to achieve aims through various objectives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve net zero carbon emissions across council operations no later than 2050 and possibly before this, potentially by 2030, subject to resources. • Support communities to achieve net zero carbon emissions <p>The strategy guides activity for nearly 30 years, and sets out actions required to meet the targets outlined within the document.</p>
Aylesbury Transport Strategy (2017)	The strategy is intended to address current issues on the transport network and accommodate future planned growth. Additionally, it allows for the single coordinated approach to planning improvements and contains objectives aimed at improving transport connectivity

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Climate change	
	within Aylesbury town, air quality and pollution and accessibility to other urban centres and new growth areas outside Aylesbury town, such as the site of the Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD.
Buckinghamshire County Council: Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2015)	The strategy seeks to explain the current understanding of flood risk across the county and ensure that development does not increase flood risk, for example through encouraging the use of sustainable drainage techniques and working with natural processes.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Historic environment	
UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972)	<p>The Convention stipulates the obligation of States Parties to report regularly to the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of their World Heritage properties. These reports are crucial to the work of the Committee as they enable it to assess the conditions of the sites, decide on specific programme needs and resolve recurrent problems.</p> <p>Strategic Objectives, the “Five C’s”, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credibility; • Conservation; • Capacity-building; • Communities; and • Communication.
Council of Europe: European Landscape Convention (2006)	Aims to promote the protection, management and planning (including active design and creation of Europe’s landscapes, both rural and urban, and to foster European co-operation on landscape issues.
Council of Europe: Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985)	Aims for signatories to protect their architectural heritage by means of identifying monuments, buildings and sites to be protected; preventing the disfigurement, dilapidation or demolition of protected properties; providing financial support by the public authorities for maintaining and restoring the architectural heritage on its territory; and supporting scientific research for identifying and analysing the harmful effects of pollution and for defining ways and means to reduce or eradicate these effects.
Council of Europe: The Convention on the Protection of Archaeological	The convention defines archaeological heritage and identifies measures for its protection. Aims include integrated conservation of the archaeological heritage and financing of archaeological research and conservation.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Historic environment	
Heritage (Revised) (Valetta Convention) (1992)	
DCMS Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)	An act to consolidate and amend the law relating to ancient monuments, to make provision of matters of archaeological or historic interest, and to provide grants by secretary of state to the Architectural Heritage fund.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	<p>The NPPF seeks to streamline the planning system and sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>The NPPF and related guidance given within the PPG includes direction on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It seeks to ensure local authorities plan recognise heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner that reflects their significance.</p> <p>Local planning authorities should take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; • the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; • the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
Planning Practice Guidance (2019)	Advises on various topics in relation to planning, including the enhancement and conservation of the historic environment. Topics within the PPG regarding heritage assets includes plan making, decision making, designated and non-designated heritage assets, heritage consent and consultation.
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)	An act to consolidate certain enactments relating to special controls in respect of buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest with amendments to give effect to recommendations of the Law Commissions.
Circular on the Protection of World Heritage Sites, CLG 07/2009 2	<p>The purpose of this circular, which applies only to England, is to provide updated policy guidance on the level of protection and management required for World Heritage Sites.</p> <p>The circular explains the national context and the Government's objectives for the protection of World Heritage Sites, the principles which underpin those objectives, and the actions necessary to achieve them.</p>
Office of the Deputy Prime minister (ODPM) Secure and Sustainable Buildings Act (2004)	Amends the Building act, and others, with regard to sustainable construction practices and conservation of historic buildings. Also states the general nature of security provisions which should be in place at the construction stage and beyond.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Historic environment	
Heritage 2020: strategic priorities for England's historic environment 2015-2020	<p>Over the next five years the commitment to the Heritage 2020 framework will achieve a step change in the understanding, valuing, caring and enjoyment of the historic environment of England. The vision concentrates on five strategic areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery, identification & understanding • Constructive conservation and sustainable management • Public engagement • Capacity building • Helping things to happen.
Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 1, 2 and 3 (2015)	<p>These three notes provide information on good practice to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the PPG.</p>
Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024	<p>This management plan of the Chilterns AONB sets out a series of policies and actions that, through effective long-term planning and decision making, aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns • Enhance public understanding and enjoyment of the special quality of the AONB <p>The management plans notes the special qualities of the AONB to be protected, including panoramic views which can be harmed by development, and has produced Position Statements on Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB and their cumulative impacts, to help protect the long-term interests of the landscape.</p>
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	<p>The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the 'Garden Town' status.</p>
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	<p>The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development provides seamless interaction with the community.</p>

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Landscape	
Council of Europe: European Landscape Convention (2006)	Aims to promote the protection, management and planning (including active design and creation of Europe's landscapes, both rural and urban, and to foster European co-operation on landscape issues.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	The NPPF and related guidance given within the PPG states that development could seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness; both aesthetic considerations and connections between people and places should be considered. The NPPF also promotes the protection and enhancements of valued landscapes, giving greatest weight to National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
English Heritage and CABE: Guidance on Tall Buildings (2007)	Provides advice and guidance on good practice in relation to tall buildings in the planning process and to highlight other related issues, which need to be considered, i.e. where tall buildings would and would not be appropriate.
Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 - 2033	The adopted Local Plan, which covers the area of proposed development Site D-AGT1, seeks to ensure that development adheres to relevant policies within the Plan which will protect and enhance the local environment. The Aylesbury South Masterplan SPD is outlined within the Local Plan as a component of the strategic policy, which allocates the site as part of delivering the 'Garden Town' status.
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan 2021 – 2033 (emerging)	The emerging Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to incorporate the Aylesbury Garden Town project into the Plan and aims to take a holistic view on the need to ensure comprehensive planning of the whole Parish. The SPD will be required to adhere to the relevant supporting policies outlined within the Plan, to ensure the development of Site D-AGT1 provides seamless interaction with the community.
Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024	<p>This management plan of the Chilterns AONB sets out a series of policies and actions that, through effective long-term planning and decision making, aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns • Enhance public understanding and enjoyment of the special quality of the AONB <p>The management plans notes the special qualities of the AONB to be protected, including panoramic views which can be harmed by development, and has produced Position Statements on Development Affecting the Setting of the Chilterns AONB and their cumulative impacts, to help protect the long-term interests of the landscape.</p>
Buckinghamshire County Council: Aylesbury Landscape Character Assessment (2008)	Explains the modern concepts of landscape and landscape character. Summarises the 13 landscape character types.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
Water	
European Water Framework Directive (2000)	This provides an overarching strategy, including a requirement for EU Member States to ensure that they achieve 'good ecological status' by 2015. River Basin Management Plans were defined as the key means of achieving this. They contain the main issues for the water environment and the actions we all need to take to deal with them.
HM Government Strategy for Sustainable Construction (2008)	This Strategy encourages the construction industry to adopt a more sustainable approach towards development and identifies eleven themes for targeting action, which includes conserving water resources.
DEFRA: The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations (2003)	<p>Requires all inland and coastal waters to reach 'good status' by 2015. It mandates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development must not cause a deterioration in status of a waterbody; and • development must not prevent future attainment of 'good status', hence it is not acceptable to allow an impact to occur just because other impacts are causing the status of a water body to already be less than good. <p>This is being done by establishing a river basin district structure within which demanding environmental objectives are being set, including ecological targets for surface waters.</p>
Environment Agency: Building a Better Environment: A Guide for Developers (2013)	Guidance on addressing key environmental issues through the development process (focusing mainly on the issues dealt with by the Agency), including managing flood risk, surface water management, use of water resources, preventing pollution.
European Nitrates Directive (1991)	The European Nitrates Directive aims to protect water quality across Europe by preventing nitrates from agricultural sources polluting ground and surface waters and by promoting the use of good farming practices.
European Drinking Water Directive (1998)	The Drinking Water Directive sole aim is to is to protect human health from adverse effects of any contamination of water intended for human consumption by ensuring that it is wholesome and clean
European Landfill Directive (1999)	This Directive aims to prevent or reduce as far as possible negative effects on the environment, in particular the pollution of surface water, groundwater, soil and air, and on the global environment, including the greenhouse effect, as well as any resulting risk to human health, from the landfilling of waste, during the whole lifecycle of the landfill.
European Urban Waste Water Directive (1991)	<p>The Directive's main objective is to protect the environment from the adverse effects of urban waste water discharges and discharges from certain industrial sectors and concerns the collection, treatment and discharge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic wastewater; • Mixture of wastewater; and • Wastewater from certain industrial sectors.

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
<p>Environment Agency: Water for people and the environment - A Strategy for England and Wales (2009)</p>	<p>The strategy looks at the steps needed, in the face of climate change, to manage water resources to the 2040s and beyond, with the overall aim of improving the environment while allowing enough water for human uses.</p> <p>The strategy sets out actions with the aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support housing and associated development where the environment can cope with the additional demands placed on it; • allow a targeted approach where stress on water resources is greatest; • ensure water is used efficiently in homes and buildings, and by industry and agriculture; • provide greater incentives for water companies and individuals to manage demand; • share existing water resources more effectively; • further reduce leakage; • ensure that reliable options for resource development are considered; and • allocate water resources more effectively in the future.
<p>DEFRA (2015) Water for Life and Livelihoods: River Basin Management Plan, Thames River Basin District</p>	<p>River Basin Management Plans are prepared under the Water Framework Directive in order to identify the pressures facing the water environment and identify actions to address these pressures. Within the Thames River Basin District, South Bucks and Chiltern lie within both the Thames (Maidenhead to Sunbury) catchment and the Colne catchment.</p> <p>Key actions for the Colne catchment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving flows in the River Misbourne; • Promoting soil and nutrient management plans to local farmers; and • Assess improvements to fish passage on the River Colne at Denham Country Park. <p>Key actions for the Thames (Maidenhead to Sunbury) catchment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate improvements to sewage treatment works; • Assess the impact of abstraction on the ecology, recreation and navigation of the Lower Thames; and • Carry out further monitoring and investigation to allow targeting of additional measures to improve the status of this catchment.
<p>Environment Agency (2014) Thames Catchment Abstraction Licensing Strategy</p>	<p>Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) set out how water resources are to be managed, particularly in terms of water abstraction and guide decisions regarding granting abstraction licenses. Initial resource assessment indicates that there is no water available for licensing in the Thames catchment. Due to the heavily managed nature of the Thames and its importance to the area, a bespoke licensing strategy has been adopted. This includes a multi-tier Hands Off Flow (HOF), depending on the quantity of new consumptive abstractions.</p>
<p>Thames Water: Water Resources Management Plan 2019</p>	<p>Thames Water provides water supply across part of the Plan area and sewerage services across the entire Plan area. The Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) sets out how Thames Water plans to maintain the balance between supply and demand for water. This includes forecasting future supply and demand and proposing measures to align these two. The baseline demand is expected to</p>

Plan, policy and/or programme (PPP)	Main objectives and environmental / socio-economic requirements of PPP
	<p>increase by more than 250MI/d and supply is expected to decrease by approximately 90 MI/d between 2015 and 2040. Thames Water aims to meet demand through the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demand management;• Leakage reduction;• New raw water trading agreement with RWE N-Power; and• Groundwater schemes.

Appendix C: Assessment of Reasonable Alternatives

Strategic Environmental Assessment of the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document

Assessment of Reasonable Alternatives

May 2022



LEPUS CONSULTING
LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY



Report for Internal Use Only

Strategic Environmental Assessment of the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document

Assessment of Reasonable Alternatives

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The conclusions below are based on the best available information, including information that is publicly available. No attempt to verify these secondary data sources has been made and they have been assumed to be accurate as published.

This report was prepared during May 2022 and is subject to and limited by the information available during this time.

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Acronyms

AA	Appropriate Assessment
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
LGS	Local Green Space
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MHCLG	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PPP	Plan, Policy and Programme
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SMNP	Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
VALP	Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 This report

1.1.1 Lepus Consulting has been appointed by Buckinghamshire Council to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the draft D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)¹.

1.1.2 The role of SEA is to inform the plan-making group in their selection and assessment of alternatives. The findings of the SEA can help with refining and further developing these reasonable alternatives in an iterative and on-going way. The SEA findings do not form the sole basis for decision-making; other evidence studies, the feasibility of the reasonable alternatives and consultation feedback will also contribute to the decision.

1.1.3 The purpose of this document is to provide an appraisal of the reasonable alternatives considered by the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD during their plan-making process, in line with Article 5 Paragraph 1 of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment² (SEA Directive):

“Where an environmental assessment is required under Article 3(1), an environmental report shall be prepared in which the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme, and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme, are identified, described and evaluated”.

1.1.4 Buckinghamshire Council has identified three reasonable alternatives for evaluation in the SEA process:

- D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Draft SPD proposal;
- Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan (SMNP) draft masterplan proposal; and
- Planning application masterplan submitted by Broadway Malyan (19/O1628/AOP).

¹ Buckinghamshire Council (2022) D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document: Draft for Discussion (March 2022)

² SEA Directive. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

- 1.1.5 In this instance, a ‘do-nothing’ approach would not be appropriate as a reasonable alternative, as Policy D1 within the adopted VALP requires an SPD to be produced in order to co-ordinate development at Site D-AGT1.
- 1.1.6 Each reasonable alternative has been assessed against the SEA Framework, which itself focuses on biodiversity, climate change, cultural heritage, landscape and water.

1.2 The D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Supplementary Plan Document

- 1.2.1 The South Aylesbury Masterplan SPD will provide a framework for the development of the proposed Site D-AGT1, ‘South Aylesbury’, allocated within the adopted Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)³. Site D-AGT1 is a strategic site which forms part of the proposed Aylesbury Garden Town, which is the focus for the majority of Aylesbury District’s growth.
- 1.2.2 Site D-AGT1 is proposed to include the development of:
- At least 1,000 dwellings;
 - One primary school;
 - Multi-functional green infrastructure;
 - South-East Aylesbury East Link Road (A413 to B4443 Lower Road);
 - Local Centre; and
 - Cycling and walking links.
- 1.2.3 The SPD takes the proposals from the VALP and outlines the aspirations of the area as well as responses and key issues that will influence the new development. The SPD will be a material consideration, which expands on policies set out in the VALP, to help guide the preparation and assessment of future planning applications within the site.

1.3 Relationship to the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

- 1.3.1 The SPD is a planning document, produced at the local level to provide more detail, advice or guidance on local policies. This SPD sets out the agreed strategy for mitigating the impact of new development on the environment, by ensuring that the Masterplan is comprehensive in regard to the delivery of future development and its implications within Buckinghamshire Council, arising as a consequence of the VALP.

³ Buckinghamshire Council (2021) Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013 – 2033. Available at: https://buckinghamshire-gov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Aylesbury_local_plan_L46JWaT.pdf [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

1.3.2 The purpose of the SPD is to provide further guidance and information for the development of the strategic allocated site D-AGT1 which has been proposed in the adopted VALP. The strategy for mitigation includes retaining and enhancing on-site GI and habitats, providing improved transport links including walking and cycle paths as well as public transport infrastructure, and a requirement to carry out detailed modelling with regards to flood risk and water management. The SPD does not seek to introduce any new policies.

1.4 Best Practice SEA Guidance

1.4.1 A range of documents have informed the approach to the SEA of the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD, including national guidance and best practice standards set out for SEA:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021);
- Planning Practice Guidance (June 2021);
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006): Biodiversity Duty (sections 40 and 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006);
- HM Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' (2018);
- Environment Act (2021);
- Biodiversity Action Plan: Forward to 2030 for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes;
- Vision and Principles for the Improvement of Green Infrastructure in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (2018) and the accompanying Green Infrastructure opportunities mapping (2018);
- Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2013) and Strategy (2009);
- Transport schemes under Policy T2 (Supporting and Protecting Transport Schemes) as within the adopted VALP (2013-2033);
- Infrastructure provision under Policy S5 of the adopted VALP;
- Policies D2 and D4 which regard residential development delivery as within the adopted VALP (2013-2033); and
- Other relevant Local Plan policies.

2 Methodology

2.1 Screening

2.1.1 The SEA Screening report⁴ (October 2021) reviewed the extent to which the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD could potentially result in significant effects on the environment.

2.1.2 Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive⁵ requires that the SEA process should consider:

“The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors”.

2.1.3 The Screening Report concluded that the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD would be likely to have a significant environmental impact on the surrounding area and would therefore require an SEA in relation to:

- Biodiversity;
- Climate Change;
- Cultural Heritage; and
- Landscape.

2.2 Habitats Regulations Assessment

2.2.1 In 2021, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening of the AGT-1 South Aylesbury SPD was completed under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2018⁶ where the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD was screened in line with these regulations. The HRA Screening concludes that an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required regarding associated recreational pressure on Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, in relation to the development of Site D-AGT1 as outlined within the SPD.

⁴ Lepus Consulting (2021) Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Aylesbury South Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document - SEA Screening Document [Date Accessed: 09/02/22]

⁵ European Union (2001) SEA Guidance, Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eia/pdf/030923_sea_guidance.pdf [Date Accessed: 09/02/22]

⁶ UK Government (2018) The Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018 Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/1307/pdfs/uksi_20181307_en.pdf [Date Accessed: 09/02/22]

2.3 SEA scoping stage

- 2.3.1 Following screening, the second stage of the SEA process was the scoping stage. The D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Scoping Report was prepared by Lepus Consulting in December 2021⁷. This represented Stage B of SEA, according to the strategic environmental assessment requirements⁸.
- 2.3.2 In considering the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the SEA process, and importantly the environmental report, the Scoping Report identified biodiversity, climate change, cultural heritage and landscape issues associated with Site D-AGT1.
- 2.3.3 The topic of 'water' has since been scoped into the SEA process to reflect comments received during consultation on the Scoping Report from the Environment Agency concerning water resources and wastewater relating to Site D-AGT1.
- 2.3.4 All other topics in Annex 1(f) of the SEA Directive have been scoped out of further consideration in the assessment process.

2.4 Assessment of Reasonable Alternatives

- 2.4.1 The assessment process has used the SEA Framework, the review of plans, programmes and policies, and the baseline (including various mapped data sources), as presented in the SEA Scoping Report, to assess each reasonable alternative. The precautionary principle⁹ is applied to all assessments.
- 2.4.2 When evaluating significance of effect, the SEA draws on criteria in Annex II of the SEA Directive (see **Box 2.1**) and identifies a significance value using the guide in **Table 2.1**.

⁷ Lepus Consulting (2019) Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Creech St Michael Neighbourhood Development Plan: Scoping Report.

⁸ MHCLG (2015) Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal: Sustainability appraisal requirements for local plans and spatial development strategies. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal> [Date Accessed: 06/05/22]

⁹ Judgment of 7 September 2004 in case C-127/02 (Waddenzee, paragraph 45).

Box 2.1: Annex II of the SEA Directive¹⁰

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive

The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:

- the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and
- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste- management or water protection).

Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- the cumulative nature of the effects;
- the transboundary nature of the effects;
- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:
 - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
 - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values;
 - intensive land-use; and
- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

¹⁰ EU Council (2001) Directive 2001/42/EC. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 18/05/22]

Table 2.1: Guide to scoring significant effects

Significance	Definition (not necessarily exhaustive)
Major Negative --	The size, nature and location of a reasonable alternative would be likely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanently degrade, diminish or destroy the integrity of a quality receptor, such as a feature of international, national or regional importance; • Cause a very high-quality receptor to be permanently diminished; • Be unable to be entirely mitigated; • Be discordant with the existing setting; and/or • Contribute to a cumulative significant effect.
Minor Negative -	The size, nature and location of a reasonable alternative would be likely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not quite fit into the existing location or with existing receptor qualities; and/or • Affect undesignated yet recognised local receptors.
Negligible 0	Either no impacts are anticipated, or any impacts are anticipated to be negligible.
Uncertain +/-	It is entirely uncertain whether impacts would be positive or adverse.
Minor Positive +	The size, nature and location of a reasonable alternative would be likely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve undesignated yet recognised receptor qualities at the local scale; • Fit into, or with, the existing location and existing receptor qualities; and/or • Enable the restoration of valued characteristic features.
Major Positive ++	The size, nature and location of a reasonable alternative would be likely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance and redefine the location in a positive manner, making a contribution at a national or international scale; • Restore valued receptors which were degraded through previous uses; and/or • Improve one or more key elements/features/characteristics of a receptor with recognised quality such as a specific international, national or regional designation.

2.4.3 The results of the assessment will apply a single value from **Table 2.1** to the corresponding SEA Objective for each reasonable alternative or any other part of the plan which is being assessed as part of the SEA. Justification for the likely impact and corresponding score is presented in an accompanying narrative assessment text.

2.5 Significance

2.5.1 Where an environmental impact has been identified, the significance of effect has been categorised as minor or major. **Table 2.1** lists the significance matrix and explains the terms used. The nature of the significant effect can be either beneficial or adverse depending on the proposal.

2.5.2 Each reasonable alternative that has been assessed in this report has been scored according to its predicted performance in relation to the SEA Objectives in the Framework, using the values in **Table 2.1**.

2.5.3 It is important to note that the scores are high level indicators. The narrative assessment text which details the key decision-making criteria behind each awarded score should always be read alongside the score. Assumptions and limitations to the scores are presented in **Table 2.4** and **sections 2.7** and **2.8**.

2.5.4 Significance of effect is a combination of impact sensitivity and magnitude.

2.6 Impact sensitivity

2.6.1 Impact sensitivity is measured through consideration as to how the receiving environment will be impacted by a Plan proposal. This includes assessment of the value and vulnerability of the area, whether environmental quality standards will be exceeded, and if impacts will affect, for example, designated areas.

2.6.2 A guide to the range of scales used in the impact significance matrix is presented in **Table 2.2**. For most receptors, sensitivity increases with geographic scale.

Table 2.2: Geographic scales of receptors

Scale	Typical criteria
International/ national	Designations that have an international aspect or consideration of transboundary effects beyond national boundaries. This applies to effects and designations/receptors that have a national or international dimension.
Regional	This includes the regional and sub-regional scale, including county-wide level and regional areas.
Local	This is the district and neighbourhood scale.

2.7 Impact magnitude

2.7.1 Impact magnitude relates to the degree of change the receptor will experience, including the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact. Impact magnitude is determined based on the susceptibility of a receptor to the type of change that will arise, as well as the value of the affected receptor (see **Table 2.3**).

Table 2.3: Impact magnitude

Impact magnitude	Typical criteria
High	Likely total loss of or major alteration to the receptor in question; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a new receptor/feature; or • The impact is permanent and frequent.
Medium	Partial loss/alteration/improvement to one or more key features; or The impact is one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent and short-term; • Frequent and reversible; • Long-term (and frequent) and reversible; • Long-term and occasional; or • Permanent and occasional.
Low	Minor loss/alteration/improvement to one or more key features of the receptor; or The impact is one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reversible and short-term; • Reversible and occasional; or • Short-term and occasional.

2.8 Predicting effects

2.8.1 SEA is a tool for predicting potential significant effects. Predicting effects relies on an evidence-based approach and incorporates professional judgement. It is often not possible to state with absolute certainty whether effects will occur, as many impacts are influenced by a range of factors such as the design and the success of mitigation measures.

2.8.2 The assessments in this report are based on the best available information. Every attempt has been made to predict effects as accurately as possible.

2.8.3 SEA operates at a strategic level which uses available secondary data for the relevant SEA Objective. All reasonable alternatives are assessed in the same way using the same method. Sometimes, in the absence of more detailed information, forecasting the potential impacts of development can require making reasonable assumptions based on the best available data and trends.

2.9 Assessment assumptions

2.9.1 Assumptions have been used to help incorporate proportionality to the SEA of reasonable alternatives. In terms of published policy guidance, it is assumed that the following policies will apply to Site D-AGT1 and surrounding environments, and have been borne in mind when completing the assessment of reasonable alternatives:

- Adopted VALP 2013 – 2033 policies¹¹;
- The Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2019-2024; and
- The NPPF (2021)¹² and related PPG advice¹³.

2.9.2 Other topic-specific assumptions have been applied to the report. These are presented in **Table 2.4**.

Table 2.4: Assumptions for the SEA Objectives

SEA Objective	Assessment Assumptions
<p>1. Biodiversity: Protect, enhance, restore and manage the flora, fauna biodiversity and geodiversity assets of the areas affected by the development of Site D-AGT1.</p>	<p>The biodiversity objective considers adverse impacts of the proposed development at a landscape-scale. It focuses on an assessment of proposed development on a network of designated and undesignated sites, wildlife corridors and individual habitats within and surrounding Site D-AGT1. Receptors include the following:</p> <p>Designated Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitats sites; (Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites). • Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). • National Nature Reserves (NNR). • Local Nature Reserves (LNR). • Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). • Local Geological Sites (LGS). <p>Habitats and Species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient woodland. • Priority habitats. <p>Negative impacts would be expected where the ecological or geological designations listed above may be harmed or lost as a result of proposals. The assessment is largely based on a consideration of the proximity of a site and the attributes and qualities of the receptor in question.</p> <p>For the purposes of this assessment, impacts on priority habitats protected under the 2006 NERC Act¹⁴ have been considered in the context of Natural England’s publicly available Priority Habitat Inventory database¹⁵. It is acknowledged this may not reflect current local site conditions in all instances.</p> <p>It is assumed that construction and occupation of previously undeveloped greenfield land would result in a net reduction in vegetation cover and Green Infrastructure in the Plan</p>

¹¹ Buckinghamshire Council (2021) Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013 – 2033. Available at: https://buckinghamshire-gov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Aylesbury_local_plan_L46JWaT.pdf [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

¹² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

¹³ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021) Planning Practice Guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

¹⁴ Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

¹⁵ Natural England (2021) Priority Habitat Inventory (England). Available at: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/4b6ddb7-6c0f-4407-946e-d6499f19fcde/priority-habitat-inventory-england> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

SEA Objective	Assessment Assumptions
	<p>area. Development proposals which would be likely to result in the loss of greenfield land are therefore expected to contribute towards a cumulative loss in vegetation cover. This would also be expected to lead to greater levels of fragmentation and isolation across the wider ecological network, such as the loss of habitat stepping-stones and corridors.</p> <p>It should be noted that no detailed ecological surveys have been completed by Lepus to inform the assessments made in this report.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the Council will require detailed ecological surveys and assessments to accompany future planning applications. Such surveys will determine on a site-by-site basis the presence of Priority Species and Priority Habitats protected under the NERC Act.</p> <p>It is assumed that the loss of biodiversity assets, such as ancient woodland or an area of priority habitat, are permanent effects.</p> <p>It is assumed that mature trees and hedgerows will be retained where possible.</p> <p>Where development proposals coincide with a Habitats site, a SSSI, NNR, LNR, CWS, CGS or ancient woodland, or are adjacent to a Habitats site, SSSI or NNR, it is assumed that development would have a permanent impact on these nationally important biodiversity and geodiversity assets, and a major negative impact would be expected.</p> <p>Where development proposals coincide with priority habitats, are adjacent to an ancient woodland, LNR, LWS, are located within a SSSI IRZ¹⁶ which states to “consult <i>Natural England</i>” or are located in close proximity to a Habitats site, SSSI, NNR, LNR or stand of ancient woodland, it is assumed that development would have an impact on these biodiversity assets, and a minor negative impact would be expected.</p> <p>Where a development proposal would not be anticipated to significantly impact a biodiversity asset, a negligible impact would be expected for this objective.</p> <p>Where development proposals would be anticipated to enhance biodiversity through the designation of a biodiversity site, a positive impact would be expected.</p> <p>It is assumed that development on previously undeveloped or greenfield land would result in an increase in GHG emissions due to the increase in the local population and the number of operating businesses and occupied homes.</p>
<p>2. Climate change: Mitigate and Reduce Site D-AGT1’s contribution towards climate change.</p>	<p>Development proposals which would be likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions in the local area would make it more difficult for the Council to reduce the Plan area’s contribution towards the causes of climate change.</p> <p>The incorporation of GI within developments presents several opportunities to mitigate climate change, for example, through providing natural cooling to combat the ‘urban heat</p>

¹⁶ Natural England (2022) Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a Geographical Information System (GIS) tool which allow a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks posed by development proposals to: SSSIs, SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites. They define zones around each site which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts

Natural England’s Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 03 May 2022. Available at: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/5ae2af0c-1363-4d40-9d1a-e5a1381449f8/sss-i-impact-risk-zones> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

SEA Objective	Assessment Assumptions
	<p>island' effect, reducing the effects of air pollution and providing more pleasant outdoor environments to encourage active travel^{17 18}.</p> <p>It is assumed that development on previously undeveloped or greenfield land would result in an increase in GHG emissions due to the increase in the local population and the number of operating businesses and occupied homes.</p> <p>The increase in GHG emissions caused by new developments is associated with impacts of the construction phase, the occupation and operation of homes and businesses, oil, gas and coal consumption and increases in local road transport with associated emissions. This impact is considered to be permanent and non-reversible.</p>
<p>3. Cultural Heritage: Protect, enhance and manage heritage assets, including designated and non-designated, as well as features and areas of and heritage importance.</p>	<p>Impacts on heritage assets will be largely determined by the specific layout and design of the development proposal, as well as the nature and significance of the heritage asset. There is a risk of adverse effects occurring, some of which may be unavoidable. As such, this risk has been reflected in the assessment as a negative impact where a site is in close proximity to heritage assets.</p> <p>Adverse impacts are recorded for options which have the potential to have an adverse impact on sensitive heritage designations, including Grade I, II* and II Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments (SM), Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG), and Conservation Areas.</p> <p>Adverse impacts on heritage assets are predominantly associated with impacts on the existing setting of the asset and the character of the local area, as well as adverse impacts on views of, or from, the asset.</p> <p>Where development proposals are not located in close proximity to any heritage asset, or the nature of development is determined not to affect the setting or character of the nearby heritage asset, a negligible impact would be expected for this objective.</p> <p>When considering any planning application that affects a Conservation Area, authorities must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance¹⁹. A replacement of a building that currently has a detrimental impact on a Conservation Area could potentially result in a neutral or a minor beneficial effect.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the Council will require a Heritage Statement to be prepared to accompany future planning applications, where appropriate. The Heritage Statement should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposals, including any contribution made by their settings.</p> <p>It is assumed that desk-based assessments will be required on a site-by-site basis for planning proposals which could potentially impact archaeological features (followed by field evaluation / potential trial trenching where appropriate).</p>

¹⁷ TCPA (2007) The essential role of green infrastructure: eco-towns green infrastructure worksheet. Available at: <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=dd06b21d-6d41-4c4e-bec5-4f29a192f0c6> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

¹⁸ Worcestershire County Council (2014) Green Infrastructure Framework 4: Socio-economic Benefits of Green Infrastructure. Available at: http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/download/707/worcestershire_green_infrastructure_framework_documents [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

¹⁹ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/section/69> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

SEA Objective	Assessment Assumptions
<p>4. Landscape: Conserve, enhance, restore and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening their distinctiveness</p>	<p>Impacts on landscape will be largely determined by the specific layout and design of development proposals, as well as the site-specific landscape circumstances. Detailed proposals for each development are uncertain at this stage of the assessment. Therefore, the nature of the potential impacts on the landscape are, to an extent, uncertain. However, there is a risk of negative effects occurring, some of which may be unavoidable. As such, this risk has been reflected in the assessment as a negative impact where a development proposal is located in close proximity to sensitive landscape receptors. The level of impact has been assessed based on the nature and value of, and proximity to, the landscape receptor in question.</p> <p>Where a development proposal would not be anticipated to impact a local or designated landscape, a negligible impact would be expected for this objective. Where the development or enhancement of green infrastructure / landscape features is proposed, which could potentially enhance the local landscape character, a minor positive impact</p> <p>It is anticipated that the Council will require developers to undertake Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) to accompany any future proposals, where relevant. The LVIAs should seek to provide greater detail in relation to the landscape character of the development proposals and its surroundings, the views available towards the development, the character of those views and the sensitivity and value of the relevant landscape and visual receptors.</p> <p>Development proposals which are considered to increase the risk of future development spreading further into the wider landscape would be expected to have a minor negative impact on the landscape objective.</p> <p>Development proposals which are considered to reduce the separation between existing settlements and increase the risk of the coalescence of settlements would be expected to have a potential minor negative impact on the landscape objective.</p>
<p>5. Water: Conserve, manage, restore and enhance water quality and supply.</p>	<p>The vulnerability of groundwater to pollution is determined by the physical, chemical and biological properties of the soil and rocks, which control the ease with which an unprotected hazard can affect groundwater. Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) indicate the risk to groundwater supplies from potentially polluting activities and accidental releases of pollutants. As such, any development proposal that is located within a groundwater SPZ could potentially have an adverse impact on groundwater quality. Site D-AGTI does not coincide with any SPZs.</p> <p>Construction activities in or near watercourses have the potential to cause pollution, impact upon the bed and banks of watercourses and impact on the quality of the water²⁰.</p> <p>An approximate 10m buffer zone from a watercourse should be used in which no works, clearance, storage or run-off should be permitted²¹. However, it is considered that</p>

²⁰ World Health Organisation (1996) Water Quality Monitoring - A Practical Guide to the Design and Implementation of Freshwater Quality Studies and Monitoring Programmes: Chapter 2 - Water Quality. Available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/41851> [Date Accessed: 06/05/22]

²¹ Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (no date) Advice and Information for planning approval on land which is of nature conservation value. Available at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/advice-and-information-planning-approval-land-which-nature-conservation-value> [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

SEA Objective	Assessment Assumptions
	<p>development further away than this has the potential to lead to adverse impacts such as those resulting from runoff.</p> <p>Thames Water, which covers the town of Aylesbury, is classed to be in an area of serious water stress²².</p> <p>It is assumed that development proposals will be in accordance with the VALP Policy I5 which requires higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in the Building Regulations Part G²³.</p>

2.10 Limitations

- 2.10.1 SEA is a tool for predicting potential significant effects. Predicting effects relies on an evidence-based approach and incorporates expert judgement. It is often not possible to state with absolute certainty whether effects will occur, as many impacts are influenced by a range of factors such as the design and the success of mitigation measures. The assessments in this report are based on the best available information, including information that is publicly available. Every attempt has been made to predict effects as accurately as possible.
- 2.10.2 All data used is secondary data available from Buckinghamshire Council or freely available on the Internet. No biodiversity records search has been commissioned through the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre.

²² Environment Agency and DEFRA (2021) Water stressed areas – 2021 classification. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification> [Date Accessed: 06/05/22]

²³ The Building Regulations 2010. Part G: Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/504207/BR_PDF_AD_G_2015_wi_th_2016_amendments.pdf [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

3 Assessment of Reasonable Alternatives

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 The SEA Directive requires that the SEA process considers “reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the plan or programme” (Article 5) and gives “an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with” (Annex I).
- 3.1.2 The purpose of this Reasonable Alternatives SEA Report is to enable plan makers to make an informed decision about the final content of the plan. The role of SEA is to inform the plan making group in their selection and assessment of reasonable alternatives.
- 3.1.3 The findings of this Reasonable Alternatives SEA Report can help with refining and further developing these options in an iterative and on-going way. The SEA findings do not form the sole basis for decision-making; other studies, the feasibility of the option and consultation feedback will also contribute to the decision of identifying a preferred option.
- 3.1.4 The results of the Reasonable Alternatives SEA Report may reveal that there is no single, best performing option. Where there is no obvious discernible difference at a strategic scale, the SEA process will record this as an outcome.
- 3.1.5 It should be noted that a further SEA Report will be produced, known as an Environmental Report.
- 3.1.6 PPG notes that ‘reasonable alternatives’ are the different realistic options considered by the plan-maker in developing the policies in its plan. It notes that the SEA process should provide conclusions on the overall sustainability of the different alternatives and that the alternatives must be realistic and deliverable²⁴.
- 3.1.7 Reasonable alternatives for a development could constitute:
- A) Growth alternatives for housing and employment use e.g., the total number of dwellings or employment floorspace across the development area;
 - B) Alternative site allocations for development; and
 - C) Alternative policies, including a comparison between the inclusion of policies against the ‘do nothing’ approach.

²⁴MHCLG (2021) Planning Practice Guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>
[Date Accessed: 09/05/22]

3.1.8 The remainder of this chapter sets out the SEA of reasonable alternatives. Identified impact ‘scores’ have been presented by SEA Objective in tables which include assessment narrative text. The reasonable alternatives have been assessed per the methodology set out in **Chapter 2**.

3.2 Reasonable Alternatives

3.2.1 There are three reasonable alternatives which have been identified during the preparation of the SPD, relating to the layout of the proposed development Site D-AGT1:

- One alternative as proposed in the SPD;
- One as presented within the draft Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan²⁵. The proposed outline masterplan of the site is presented within the Stoke Mandeville Corridor Policy paper²⁶; and
- One as presented within the outline planning application masterplan submitted by Broadway Malyan (19/01628/AOP) which covers approximately half of Site D-AGT1²⁷.

3.2.2 The masterplan site boundary presented in the draft D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD is shown in **Figure 3.1**, the masterplan site boundary presented in the Stoke Mandeville Corridor Policy Paper is shown in **Figure 3.2**, and the masterplan site boundary presented by Broadway Malyan is shown in **Figure 3.3**. There are no discernible differences between the masterplans at the strategic scale, which SEA concerns; however, there are some minor differences at the local scale related to site layout.

3.2.3 The site boundary for D-AGT1 is identical between the SPD and the SMNP. The masterplan submitted by Broadway Malyan covers only the western proportion of the Site D-AGT1 between Lower Road and the railway line. The main differences between the masterplans outlined within the SPD and the SMNP are the following:

- Location of the strategic green buffer; and
- Location of the local centre.

²⁵ Stoke Mandeville Parish Council (2021) A Neighbourhood Plan for Stoke Mandeville 2021 -2033. Available at: <https://www.stokemandevilleparishcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/A-Neighbourhood-Plan-for-Stoke-Mandeville-2021-2033-ver2.pdf> [Accessed: 10/05/22]

²⁶ Stoke Mandeville Parish Council (2021) Stoke Mandeville Corridor Policy Paper [KPSMC]. Available at: <https://www.stokemandevilleparishcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Stoke-Mandeville-Corridor-Policy-Paper.pdf> [Accessed: 10/05/22]

²⁷ 19/01628/AOP | Outline planning application, for the proposed development of up to 750 dwellings, safeguarded land for delivery of South-East Aylesbury Link Road, Primary school, community hub, vehicular and pedestrian access off Lower Road, pedestrian and emergency access, new internal road and pedestrian footpath network and provision for green infrastructure | Land To East Of Lower Road Stoke Mandeville Buckinghamshire. Available at: <https://publicaccess.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PQRMXXCLOPG00> [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

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- 3.2.4 The SPD seeks to place development adjacent to existing development in Stoke Mandeville, to the south east of Site D-AGT1 separated from the central and western site areas by a strategic buffer (see **Figure 3.1**). However, the green buffer proposed by the masterplan for D-AGT1 development in the SMNP would separate development of the proposed site from existing development within Stoke Mandeville in the south east of the proposed site (see **Figure 3.2**). The Broadway Malyan masterplan does not cover the eastern area of Site D-AGT1, but matches the SPD layout in terms of the strategic buffer location in the western area of the site. The Broadway Malyan masterplan also provides further detail for a proposed layout of the site, including areas of formal and informal greenspace and retained / proposed trees.
- 3.2.5 The SPD presents two alternative locations of a proposed local centre within Site D-AGT1, to the east and to the west of the site. Conversely, the SMDP proposes that the local centre with associated amenities should be located at the Parish Centre site to the west of Site D-AGT1, outside of the proposed D-AGT1 site boundary as outlined by Policy PSBF1 of the NP. The Broadway Malyan 'Land Use and Access' Plan shows an indicative location for a community hub in the centre of the site (see **Figure 3.3**).



Green Infrastructure Plan

Key

-  Strategic Buffer
-  Strategic Buffer - Peri-Urban Agriculture
-  Secondary Connections
-  Aylesbury Walk
-  South East Aylesbury Link Road Corridor
-  Railway Corridor
-  Central Open Space
-  School Playing Fields (size & position TBC)
-  Sports Pitches

Figure 3.1: GI Plan for Site D-AGT1 as set out within the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD (Draft - March 2022)

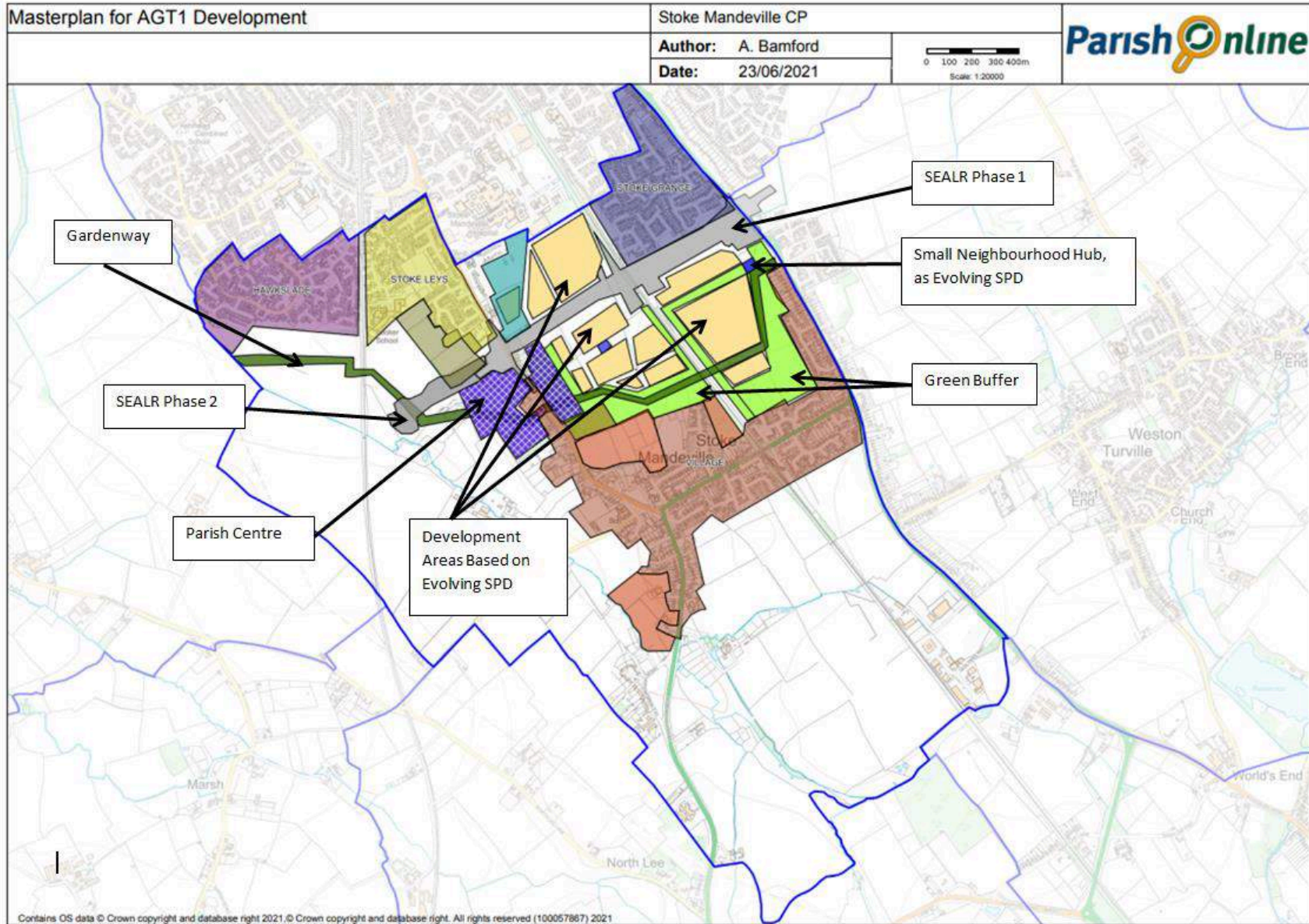


Figure 3.2: Outline masterplan of Site D-AGT1 as set out in the Stoke Mandeville Corridor Policy (Source: Draft Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan)

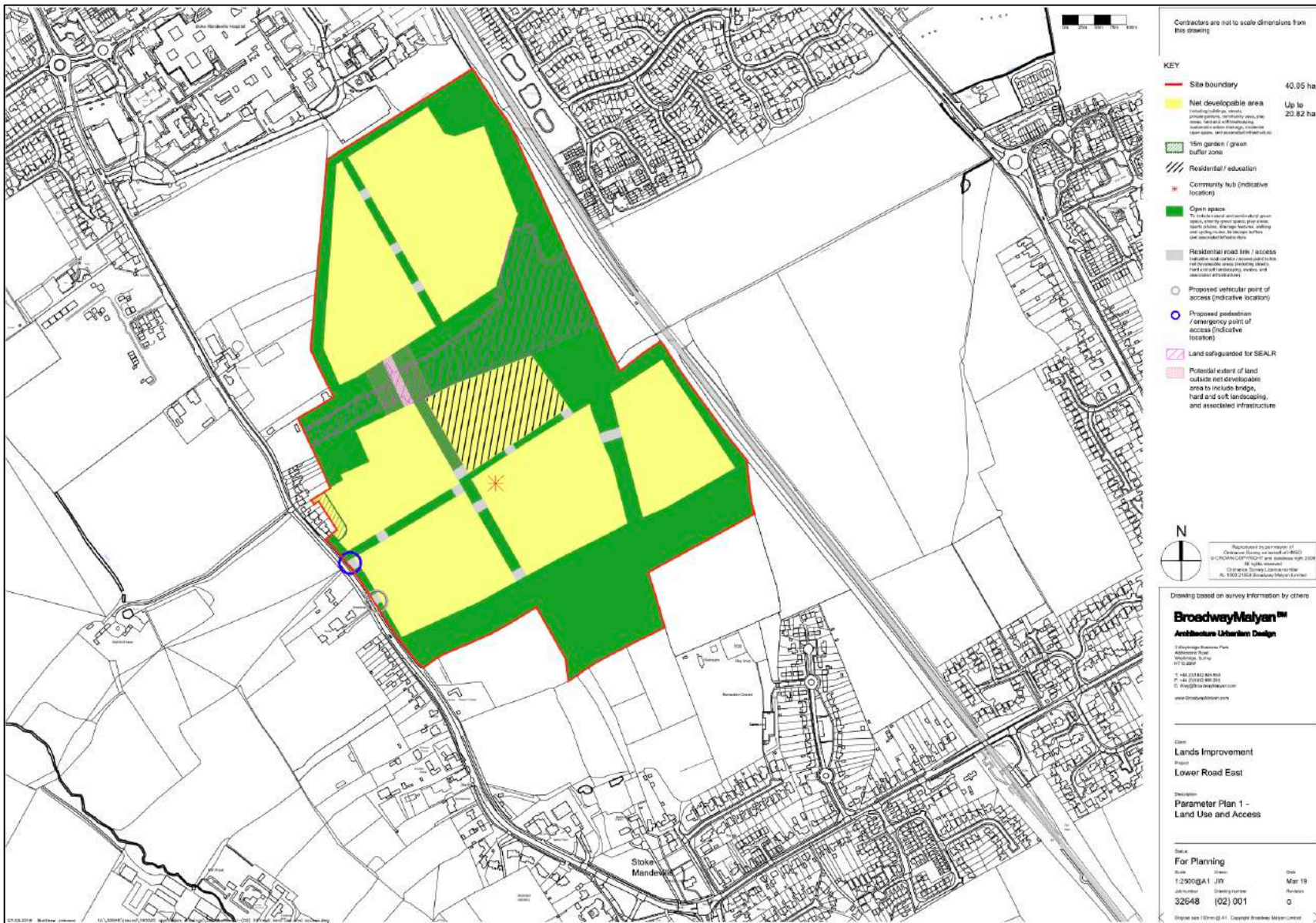


Figure 3.3: Outline masterplan covering part of Site D-AGT1 as set out in the Broadway Malyan planning application (Source: Buckinghamshire Council)

3.3 Assessment of alternatives

3.3.1 The impact matrices for each reasonable alternative assessed in this report have been brought together in **Tables 2.2 - 2.6**. These impacts should be read in conjunction with the assessment text narratives in **sections 3.4 - 3.8**, as well as the topic-specific methodologies and assumptions presented in **Chapter 2**. Whilst the assessment findings have drawn on the assumptions in **Table 2.4**, all assessment information excludes consideration of detailed mitigation i.e. additional detail or modification to the reasonable alternative that has been introduced specifically to reduce identified environmental effects of that site. Presenting assessment findings in this way facilitates transparency to the decision makers.

3.4 SEA Objective 1 – Biodiversity

3.4.1 The site is located approximately 4.2km from Chilterns Beechwoods SAC which potentially could lead to a minor negative impact on the SAC through recreational pressure. An HRA has been carried out parallel to the preparation of the VALP to inform the plan-making process to ensure that potential impacts arising from the VALP in relation to this SAC and other Habitats sites have been suitably addressed and mitigated.

3.4.2 An HRA Screening exercise of the SPD has been completed by Buckinghamshire Council²⁸. The screening process identified likely significant effects arising from recreational pressure associated with Site D-AGT1. Consequently, the Council proposes to prepare an Appropriate Assessment of the SPD.

3.4.3 Site D-AGT1 does not coincide with any known sites of national or local importance for biodiversity, however there is a small section of deciduous woodland priority habitat adjacent to the north of the site boundary, close to Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

3.4.4 The proposed development at Site D-AGT1 must be in accordance with VALP policies including Policies NE1 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and NE8 (Trees, hedgerows and woodlands) which seek to protect and enhance designated sites, protected habitats/species and GI, and deliver biodiversity net gain. This could lead to longer term positive effects on biodiversity if net gains are successful.

3.4.5 The details proposed within the SPD, the SMNP and the Broadway Malyan application regarding the development of Site D-AGT1 are likely to perform similarly at the strategic scale, in relation to biodiversity, where a minor negative impact could be attributed to the potential recreational impacts on Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. The emerging HRA will provide greater details on these impacts and the potential for mitigation, therefore a precautionary minor negative impact upon development of Site D-AGT1 has been identified in relation to the biodiversity topic for SEA purposes, relating to impacts on this designated site.

²⁸ Aylesbury South (D-AGT 1) Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement. Last updated: 04 June 2021 Version: 1.1 – 04 June 2021

Table 3.1: Impact matrix for Site D-AGT1 (Biodiversity)

Reasonable alternative for Site D-ATG1	SEA Objective 1 - Biodiversity						Overall score
	Habitats Site	Site of Special Scientific Interest (IRZ)	National Nature Reserve	Ancient Woodland	Local Nature Reserve	Priority Habitat	
Stoke Mandeville NP	-	0	0	0	0	0	-
South Aylesbury SPD	-	0	0	0	0	0	-
Broadway Malyan planning application	-	0	0	0	0	0	-

3.5 SEA Objective 2 – Climate change

- 3.5.1 Air quality within the Vale of Aylesbury is generally good²⁹, and there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within or in close proximity to Site D-AGT1.
- 3.5.2 The proposed new link road between the A413 to B4443 Lower Road could potentially cause some negative impacts in terms of climatic factors, such as an increase in local air pollution. However, the SPD would be expected to facilitate alternative transport modes including active travel through the provision of new routes and multi-functional Green Infrastructure (GI).
- 3.5.3 The introduction of 1,000 new dwellings will inevitably cause an increase in energy consumption, pollution, and traffic during both the construction and occupancy stages, to some extent. It is therefore expected that the development at Site D-ATG1 could have an adverse impact on climate change, to some extent.
- 3.5.4 Climate change is anticipated to increase the risk of extreme weather events. Of particular concern in the UK is the rising risk of fluvial, pluvial (surface water) and coastal flooding. In 2009 the EA estimated 2.4 million properties in England were susceptible to fluvial and/or coastal flooding, whilst 3.8 million properties in England were susceptible to pluvial flooding³⁰.

²⁹ Buckingham Council (2021) Air Quality. Available at: <https://www.aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/section/air-quality> [Date Accessed: 18/05/22]

³⁰ Environment Agency (2009) Flooding in England: National Assessment of Flood Risk. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/292928/aeo0609bads-e-e.pdf [Date Accessed: 10/05/22]

- 3.5.5 Although Site D-AGT1 is located wholly within Flood Zone 1, it is likely that flood risk will become more prevalent in future years due to higher flood plain levels and climate change introducing more extreme weather events including higher volumes of rainfall, which the SPD should ensure to consider.
- 3.5.6 The SPD sets out measures for mitigating climate change including reducing energy use, promotion of energy efficiency measures and use of renewable energy throughout the development, in line with Policy C3 of the VALP. Additionally, the SPD seeks to create a strategic open space circular non-vehicular route, the ‘Gardenway’, which would improve connectivity to local amenities for new residents, encourage active travel and reduce reliance on private cars, potentially helping to reduce associated greenhouse gas emissions.
- 3.5.7 The SPD sets out provision of a new local centre to be situated in either the east or the west of the site, to provide new residents in closer proximity to community facilities than current facilities available further away in Aylesbury and Stoke Mandeville, which would have positive impacts on active travel and reducing reliance on private cars. The layout proposed within the Broadway Malyan masterplan indicates that a new community hub would be provided in the centre of the western section of D-AGT1, connected via a network of existing and proposed footpaths, potentially resulting in similar benefits to the SPD in terms of promoting a walkable neighbourhood and encouraging more sustainable travel for new residents in this proportion of the site. However, the SMNP proposes that the local centre is placed to the west of Site D-AGT1, situated outside of the site boundary. Therefore, the SPD and Broadway Malyan proposal would place the local centre more centrally with potentially greater benefits for new residents at the proposed site. Overall, this difference is deemed to be minimal in strategic terms.
- 3.5.8 The details proposed within the SPD and within the SMNP regarding the development of Site D-AGT1 are likely to perform similarly at the strategic scale, in relation to climate change, where a minor negative impact would be attributed to increased energy consumption and emissions from the development of at least 1,000 dwellings during construction and occupation. Additionally, the development of the South East Aylesbury Link Road could lead to an increase in local air pollution and potentially result in minor negative impacts on climate change mitigation targets.

Table 3.2: Impact matrix for Site D-AGT1 (Climate change)

Reasonable alternative for Site D-ATG1	SEA Objective 2 – Climate change				
	AQMA	Main road	Increased energy consumption related GHG emissions	Flood Zone	Overall score
Stoke Mandeville NP	+	-	-	+	-
South Aylesbury SPD	+	-	-	+	-
Broadway Malyan planning application	+	-	-	+	-

3.6 SEA Objective 3 – Cultural heritage

- 3.6.1 There are several Grade II Listed Buildings within and surrounding the settlement of Stoke Mandeville, including a cluster along the B4443 running north to Aylesbury, which represents the western edge of the proposed scheme. This includes the ‘Stoke Cottage’, ‘Lone Ash’ and ‘Bell Cottage and Tudor Cottage’. The Grade II Listed Building, ‘Magpie Cottage’, lies within the southwest corner of Site D-AGT1 itself. Therefore, the proposed development at Site D-ATG1 has potential to cause a minor negative impact on cultural heritage, in relation to these assets and their settings.
- 3.6.2 The Archaeology Data Service shows three records of physical archaeological evidence in the location of Site D-AGT1³¹. This includes records of known features as well as digs and excavations, some of which resulted in archaeological finds. Development on Site D-ATG1 could potentially directly impact archaeological remains and therefore a minor negative impact on these heritage assets could be expected. The SPD could benefit from a desk-based archaeological assessment of the site, followed by relevant investigatory fieldwork.
- 3.6.3 It is acknowledged that the SPD seeks to retain Grade II Listed Building ‘Magpie Cottage’ within an appropriate setting, however the SPD could benefit from further detail regarding the conservation and, where possible, enhancement of this heritage asset in line with its significance. This should be informed by a heritage assessment.
- 3.6.4 The details proposed within the SPD, the SMNP and the Broadway Malyan application regarding the development of Site D-AGT1 are likely to perform similarly at the strategic scale, in relation to cultural heritage, where potential minor negative impacts are associated with Site D-AGT1’s coincidence and close proximity to heritage assets as outlined within **paragraphs 3.6.1 and 3.6.2.**

Table 3.3: Impact matrix for Site D-AGT1 (Cultural heritage)

Reasonable alternative for Site D-ATG1	SEA Objective 3 – Cultural heritage						
	Listed Buildings (Grades I, II* and II)	Conservation Area	Scheduled Monument	Registered Parks and Gardens	Archaeology	Heritage at Risk	Overall score
Stoke Mandeville NP	-	0	0	0	-	0	-
South Aylesbury SPD	-	0	0	0	-	0	-
Broadway Malyan planning application	-	0	0	0	-	0	-

³¹ Archaeology Data Service (2018) ARCHSEARCH. Available at: <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/> [Date Accessed: 09/05/22]

3.7 SEA Objective 4 – Landscape

- 3.7.1 Site D-AGT1 lies within the National Character Area (NCA) ‘Upper Thames Clay Vales’. Key characteristics of this NCA include *“low-lying clay-based flood plains ... gently undulating topography ... fields are regular and hedged”*³².
- 3.7.2 Site D-AGT1 is located within Landscape Character Area ‘Southern Vale’³³ which has key characteristics of:
- Flat landscape in the north rising gently to a rolling landform on the southern edge;
 - Parliamentary enclosure;
 - Streams and ditches draining off the chalk scarp to the south marked by belts of mature black poplar;
 - Landscape continuity interrupted by development and communication corridors;
 - Predominance of large open arable fields; and
 - Pockets of grazing land and smaller field parcels associated with settlements.
- 3.7.3 The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 2.3km to the south east of the site, at its closest point. The settlement of Stoke Mandeville lies between the proposed site and the AONB, although Stoke Mandeville is still separated from the AONB by approximately 1.9km of primarily arable land. The Chilterns AONB is partially elevated, including the area to the south of the site. The proposed development could therefore have a minor negative impact on the surrounding landscape by potentially altering the view from the Chilterns AONB.
- 3.7.4 As stated in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan³⁴, completed in 2018, a main concern was the potential impacts on the AONB from the expansion of Aylesbury to the south and southeast. The SA examined the ‘cumulative effects’ of growth at Aylesbury and paragraph 10.9.2 (page 95) of the SA report concludes:

³² Natural England (2014) NCA Profile: 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales (NE570). Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5865554770395136> [Date Accessed: 09/05/22]

³³ Aylesbury Vale District Council (2008) Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/landscape-character-assessment> [Date Accessed: 09/05/22]

³⁴ AECOM (2018) Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. Available at: https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/VALP%20-%20SA%20Report%20170918.pdf [Date Accessed 09/05/22]

“There would be direct visual effects on the AONB as a result of the cumulative development sites. The visual extent of the cumulative development sites, combined with the existing development at Aylesbury and nearby settlements, would be readily apparent. However, development across the sites will be predominantly low-rise and incorporate substantial mitigation planting, reducing the impact on views across the low-lying vale landscape from the elevated viewpoints within the AONB. The key characteristics of views across the wider landscape would be fundamentally unchanged, in that they would remain expansive across the settled vale landscape. It is considered unlikely that there would be significant cumulative residual landscape and visual effects on the AONB”.

- 3.7.5 Development proposals which are considered to reduce the separation between existing settlements and increase the risk of the coalescence of settlements would be expected to have a potential minor negative impact on the landscape objective.
- 3.7.6 The SMNP proposes a masterplan for Site D-AGT1 where a green buffer sits between the settlement of Stoke Mandeville and the site, which could reduce the extent of coalescence between the existing settlement and the proposed ‘Garden Town’. However, the site itself could increase the likelihood of urban sprawl and coalescence between the settlements and therefore both the SPD and SMNP could have potential for minor negative impacts on the local landscape. It is acknowledged that providing a buffer between existing and future developments, as proposed in the SMNP, could help to retain the identity of Stoke Mandeville to a slightly greater degree than the SPD version.
- 3.7.7 Whilst the Broadway Malyan application masterplan does not cover the eastern proportion of D-AGT1 where the proposed green buffer lies in the SMNP (as discussed in **paragraph 3.7.6**), the development would nonetheless be expected to result in adverse impacts at the strategic scale when considering the scale of expansion to the existing settlement, although the masterplan could result in varying impacts on landscape at the local level due to the specific location of GI provisions such as the retained and proposed trees and woodland as shown on the ‘proposed illustrative masterplan’³⁵.
- 3.7.8 Overall, using the precautionary principle and reflecting on points made in **paragraph 3.7.4**, potential minor negative impacts on the landscape including, views from the Chilterns AONB and urban sprawl/coalescence, cannot be ruled out at this stage upon development of Site D-AGT1 due to the scale and nature of the proposals.

³⁵ Available at: https://publicaccess.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/online-applications/files/BD5E8793674057042F83F0E33F97629E/pdf/19_01628_AOP-PROPOSED_ILLUSTRATIVE_MASTERPLAN-2005301.pdf [Date Accessed: 17/05/22]

Table 3.4: Impact matrix for Site D-AGT1 (Landscape)

Reasonable alternative for Site D-ATG1	SEA Objective 4 – Landscape						Overall score
	AONB	National Park	Country Park	Altered view from PRoWs	Urban sprawl/coalescence	Access to multi-functional greenspace	
Stoke Mandeville NP	-	0	0	0	-	+	-
South Aylesbury SPD	-	0	0	0	-	+	-
Broadway Malyan planning application	-	0	0	0	-	+	-

3.8 SEA Objective 5 – Water

3.8.1 The Environment Agency provided comments on the SEA Scoping report of the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD which included “*With the scale of the proposal, it is not clear what the impact of the development will be on water resources in this area when considering issues such as waste water/sewage discharge and water use. The scoping document has not provided information on this to justify why and if water should be scoped out*”. The SEA topic of water has therefore been included within the SEA to address these comments and provide recommendations to enhance the SPD regarding this topic.

3.8.2 Therefore, the SPD should seek to ensure that demand for water in an area which is under “*serious water stress*”³⁶ is kept to a minimum, for example by ensuring that water-saving measures are implemented within the design of the developments. It is recommended that the SPD outlines what measures are to be taken to ensure that water supply is not negatively impacted by the development of Site D-AGT1.

3.8.3 In relation to water management, the draft SPD (March 2022) recognises that local borehole records show that groundwater levels are close to the surface and outlines that “*development is to be designed using a sequential approach with drainage designs designed to exceed and accommodate existing surface water flows*”. The SPD seeks to implement above-ground vegetative Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) including rainwater harvesting, grey water systems and rain gardens to effectively manage surface water which could indirectly have positive consequences for drainage and wastewater during flood events.

³⁶ Environment Agency and DEFRA (2021) Water stressed areas – 2021 classification. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification> [Date Accessed: 06/05/22]

- 3.8.4 However, reflecting upon Environment Agency comments, it is recommended that the SPD should clarify the method in which resulting wastewater and sewage from the development of Site D-AGT1 would be processed in terms of capacity, acknowledging the aims and objectives of local River Basin Management Plans and environmental consequences of sewage discharges into water bodies due to over-subscribed treatment plants.
- 3.8.5 For the purposes of SEA assessment, the reasonable alternatives have been assessed in relation to their potential impacts on water quality, in particular watercourses and groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs).
- 3.8.6 A minor watercourse runs through the eastern parcel of Site D-AGT1. The SPD seeks to encourage growth of native vegetation along streams and other watercourses, which could enhance local watercourse quality. Policy PSBCC3 of the SMNP seeks to “ensure that all watercourses are protected from contamination”. Although the Broadway Malyan application masterplan does not cover the eastern parcel of D-AGT1, a number of water provisions are set out for the western parcel including indicative areas for watercourse improvements, swales and SuDS, alongside both retained and proposed trees. Therefore, minor positive impacts on local watercourses could be expected as a result of each reasonable alternative in relation to watercourses in the vicinity of Site D-AGT1.
- 3.8.7 There are no SPZs within the site area and therefore it is likely that development of Site D-AGT1 would have a negligible impact on groundwater quality.
- 3.8.8 At this stage, an overall uncertain impact is identified for SEA Objective 5 – Water as the potential implications of the development on water resources and water supply is unknown.

Table 3.5: Impact matrix for Site D-AGT1 (Water)

Reasonable alternative for Site D-ATG1	SEA Objective 5 – Water			
	Watercourse	SPZ	Water Resources	Overall score
Stoke Mandeville NP	+	0	+/-	+/-
South Aylesbury SPD	+	0	+/-	+/-
Broadway Malyan planning application	+	0	+/-	+/-

3.9 Overview of Assessments

Reasonable Alternative	Topic	Overall Score
Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	-
	Climate change	-
	Cultural heritage	-
	Landscape	-
	Water	+/-
D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	-
	Climate change	-
	Cultural heritage	-
	Landscape	-
	Water	+/-
Broadway Malyan Planning Application Masterplan	Biodiversity, flora and fauna	-
	Climate change	-
	Cultural heritage	-
	Landscape	-
	Water	+/-

4 Conclusion

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 This report has assessed the reasonable alternatives of the draft D-AGT1 South Aylesbury SPD. Each reasonable alternative has been assessed against the SEA Framework, which itself focuses on biodiversity, climate change, cultural heritage, landscape and water.
- 4.1.2 Overall, the reasonable alternatives assessed in this report would be expected to result in minor negative impacts relating to the issues outlined in **Chapter 3**, including biodiversity, climate change, cultural heritage and landscape. A degree of uncertainty remains in terms of water resource issues.
- 4.1.3 The three reasonable alternatives perform similarly in the SEA, with no single, best performing option identified owing to the small-scale differences identified between the options.
- 4.1.4 Various policies outlined in VALP would help to ensure that all future development takes into account the surrounding environment, historic assets and landscape. Several recommendations have been made in this SEA report (see **Chapter 3**) to potentially enhance the sustainability of the proposals within the SPD or to provide further clarity regarding certain issues, such as addressing water resource issues.

4.2 Next steps

- 4.2.1 At this stage of the SEA process, no defining conclusions can be made following the assessment of reasonable alternatives. The sustainability benefits and best performing options identified for all options should be considered in detail prior to the preparation of the Environmental Report.

Appendix A: SEA Framework

SEA Objective	Decision making criteria	Indicators
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna: Protect, enhance, restore and manage the flora, fauna, biodiversity and geodiversity assets of the areas affected by the development of Site D-AGT1.	Will it result in a net loss or a net gain for biodiversity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new residents which generate adverse impacts on sites of biodiversity importance, such as the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC. • Creation of new biodiversity assets. • Provision of multi-functional green infrastructure. • Enhancement and protection of habitats and wildlife corridors. • Ensure current ecological networks are not compromised and secure future improvement in habitat connectivity. • Protection of existing vegetation and hedgerows. • Protection and enhancement of watercourses.
	Will it protect or enhance wildlife sites or biodiversity?	
	Will it protect sites and habitats designated for nature conservation including protected species?	
	Will it protect and enhance the water environment?	
Climate Change: Mitigate and reduce Site D-AGT1's contribution towards climate change.	Will it reduce emissions from transport and the built environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of green infrastructure. • Public transport and cycling and walking provision for new development. • Length of greenways constructed. • Natural greenspace within 400m of residential development. • Increased local traffic. • Drainage designed for 'exceedence' flood events (e.g. SuDS). • Design incorporating water conservation methods.
	Will it reduce flood risk?	
	Will it conserve water resources?	

SEA Objective	Decision making criteria	Indicators
3 Cultural Heritage: Protect, enhance and manage heritage assets, including designated and non-designated, as well as features and areas of and heritage importance.	Will it preserve buildings of historic interest and, where necessary, encourage their conservation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of local heritage features including Listed Buildings, such as Grade II Listed Building 'Magpie Cottage'. • Annual number of visitors to historic attractions. • Below ground remains. For archaeology this means conserving archaeological remains where practicable, particularly remains of national importance, through masterplan design, to mitigate through archaeological investigation, recording and publication where conservation is not practicable.
	Will it preserve or enhance archaeological sites?	
	Will it preserve or enhance the setting or character of cultural heritage assets or areas?	
4 Landscape: Conserve, enhance, restore and manage the character and appearance of the landscape and townscape, maintaining and strengthening their distinctiveness.	Will it protect and enhance the local landscape?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape-led development with consideration of long-distance views of the AONB? • Use of locally sourced materials. • Is development in-keeping with surroundings (e.g. character of Stoke Mandeville)? • Increase of coalescence. • Protection of local PRowS.
	Will it protect and enhance the local townscape?	
5 Water: Maintain and enhance water quality and ensure the most efficient use of water.	Will it maximise water efficiency?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water efficiency in new homes (i.e. all new housing schemes to achieve water efficiency standard of 110 litres/person/day (lpd)) • No indicators for water infrastructure have been identified. • Protect local watercourses and improve their water quality.
	Will it minimise impact on water quality?	
	Will it impact on water discharges that affect designated sites?	
	Will it contribute to achieving the River Basin Management Plan actions and objectives?	

Habitat Regulations Assessments

Sustainability Appraisals

Strategic Environmental Assessments

Landscape Character Assessments

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments

Green Belt Reviews

Expert Witness

Ecological Impact Assessments

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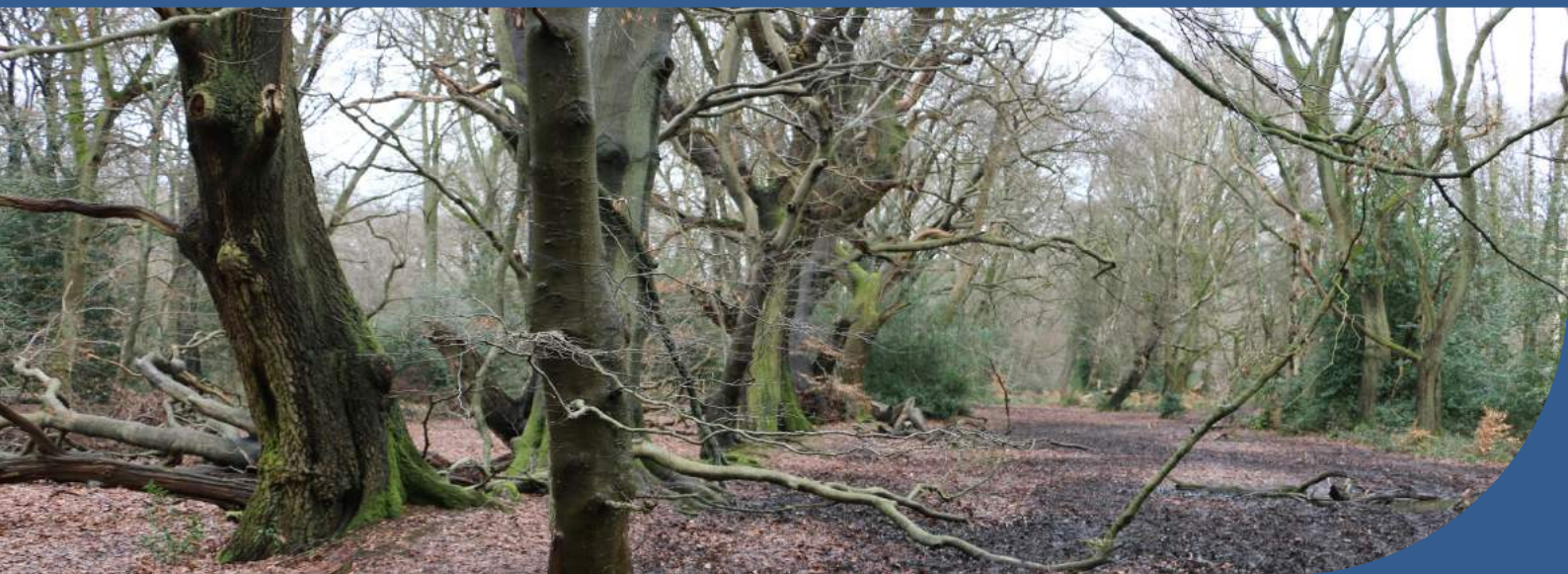
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Habitats Regulations Assessment of the D-AGT1 South Aylesbury Supplementary Planning Document

Habitats Regulations Assessment Report

August 2022



Habitats Regulations Assessment of the South Aylesbury (D-AGT 1) Supplementary Planning Document

Habitats Regulations Assessment Report

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Photo: Chilterns Beechwoods SAC by Lepus Consulting

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Acronyms

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
AIOSI	Adverse Impact on Site Integrity
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty §
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
DfT	Department for Transport
DMRB	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
DTA	David Tyldesley and Associates
GI	Green Infrastructure
GIS	Geographic Information System
ha	Hectares
HRA	Habitat Regulation Assessment
HEELA	Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LSE	Likely Significant Effect
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
NE	Natural England
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NVC	National Vegetation Classification
NP	Neighbourhood Plan
PRoW	Public Right of Way
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEALR	South East Aylesbury Link Road
SIP	Site Improvement Plan
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
UK	United Kingdom
VALP	Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan
ZOI	Zone of Influence

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The purpose of supplementary planning documents (SPDs) is to build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines SPDs as:

1.1.2 *Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan¹.*

1.1.3 Buckinghamshire Council is in the process of preparing an SPD for Aylesbury South (AGT1). The purpose of this SPD is to provide guidance on the future sustainable development of the strategic site known as Aylesbury South (AGT1), specifically in relation to policy D-AGT 1 Aylesbury South of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan².

1.1.4 Lepus Consulting has prepared this report to inform the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the SPD³ on behalf of the Buckinghamshire Council.

1.2 Purpose of this report

1.2.1 The HRA has been prepared in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)⁴, known as the Habitats Regulations. When preparing plans, councils are required by law to carry out an HRA. The requirement for authorities to comply with the Habitats Regulations when preparing a plan is also noted in the Government's online planning practice guidance⁵.

1.2.2 The purpose of this report is to inform the HRA of the SPD using best available information. Buckinghamshire Council, as the Competent Authority, will have responsibility to make the Integrity Test. This can be undertaken in light of the conclusions set out in this report, having regard to representations made by Natural England under the provisions of Regulations 63(3) and 105(2) of the Habitats Regulations.

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (July 2021). National Planning Policy Framework. Para 181. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

² Buckinghamshire Council. Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013 – 2033. September 2021. Adopted Plan. <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/VALP/AppendixA/Adopted%20Vale%20of%20Aylesbury%20Local%20Plan%201.pdf> Available at: [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

³ Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. Aylesbury Garden Town 1. Supplementary Planning Document. Draft for Consultation. 28th July 2022.

⁴ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 SI No. 2017/1012, TSO (The Stationery Office), London. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents> [Date Accessed: 29/01/21] as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111176573> [Date Accessed: 29/01/21]

⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (July 2019) Planning Practice Guidance Note, Appropriate Assessment, Guidance on the use of Habitats Regulations Assessment

2 Aylesbury South (AGT1) SPD

2.1 Background Context

2.1.1 The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013-2033 was adopted by Buckinghamshire Council as a Development Plan Document on the 15th September 2021⁶.

2.1.2 Development to the south of Aylesbury is allocated as a strategic site for Aylesbury and contributes to the delivery of Aylesbury Garden Town⁷.

2.1.3 This allocation comprises the following Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) sites as set out in the VALP:

- Land south of Stoke Mandeville Hospital (SMD004)
- Land around Red House Farm, Lower Road (SMD005)
- Land north of Stoke Mandeville adjacent Lower Road (SMD006)
- Land south of Aylesbury adjacent to Wendover Road (SMD007)
- Land between railway line and Wendover Road (SMD008)
- Land straddling railway line north of Stoke Mandeville (SMD016)

2.1.4 This strategic allocation is implemented in the VALP through Policy D-AGT 1 and will make provisions for the following:

- At least 1,000 dwellings
- One primary school
- Multi-functional green infrastructure
- Aylesbury South East Link Road (A413 to B4443 Lower Road)
- Local centre
- Cycling and walking links

2.1.5 Given the large number of smaller parcels that make up this allocation, an overall Aylesbury South (AGT1) Masterplan is essential to ensure a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to development, and to guide phasing of the site. This includes a coordinated approach to vehicular access which will be provided from the B4443 Lower Road and A413 Wendover Road.

2.1.6 The Aylesbury South (AGT1) Masterplan will become an adopted SPD. The SPD expands upon Policy D-AGT 1 to provide a framework to help guide the preparation and assessment of future planning applications within the site. The SPD will form a material consideration which will be taken into account by the Buckinghamshire Council when determining any future planning applications for the area.

⁶ Buckinghamshire Council. Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) 2013 – 2033. September 2021. Adopted Plan.

<https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/VALP/AppendixA/Adopted%20Vale%20of%20Aylesbury%20Local%20Plan%201.pdf>

Available at: [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

⁷ <https://www.aylesburygardentown.co.uk/>

2.1.7 Also of relevance will be the emerging Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for the local area, Stoke Mandeville, which is currently being prepared by the Parish Council⁸.

2.2 Aylesbury South Masterplan

2.2.1 The Aylesbury South Masterplan will:

- Be a masterplan to ensure the comprehensive development of the strategic allocation D-AGT1 in VALP.
- Cover the site layout and disposition of land uses.
- Provide further guidance and information on the expected time of development delivery. The expected time of delivery in VALP as Further Modified is 39 homes delivered up to 2020, 161 homes to be delivered 2020-2025 and 800 homes to be delivered 2025-2033.
- Ensure a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to development, and to guide phasing of the site.
- Include a coordinated approach to vehicular access which should be achieved from the B4443 Lower Road and A413 Wendover Road.
- Provide further detail on how the policy criteria in VALP Policy D-AGT1 will be met.

2.2.2 The criteria for Policy D-AGT 1 as set out in the VALP are provided in **Box 1**:

⁸ Stoke Mandeville Parish Council. 2021. A Neighbourhood Plan for Stoke Mandeville. Available at: <https://www.stokemandevilleparishcouncil.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan/> [Date Accessed: 26/11/21]

Box 1

D-AGT 1 Policy Criteria (extracted from VALP)

Development proposals must be accompanied by the information required in the council's Local Validation List and comply with all other relevant policies in the Plan, including the principles of development for Aylesbury Garden Town and the Masterplan SPD to be prepared for the site. In addition, proposals should comply with the following criteria:

- a. Provision of land for at least 1,000 dwellings at a density that takes account of the adjacent settlement character and identity, integrates new development with the existing built area of Aylesbury and responds positively to the best characteristics of the surrounding area
- b. Provision of 5 Gypsy and Traveller pitches
- c. Safeguarding the land required for the delivery of a dual carriageway distributor road (the SEALR) between B4443 Lower Road and A413 Wendover Road to cross the railway line, with sufficient land for associated works including but not limited to earthworks, drainage and structures
- d. Provision of new access points into the development parcels from the B4443 Lower Road and A413 Wendover Road. Access from the South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that this would leave parcels of land inaccessible and incapable of development.
- e. Provision for public transport into the town and to surrounding areas
- f. Existing vegetation should be retained where practicable, including existing woodlands and hedgerows. Existing public rights of way need to be retained and integrated into the development within safe and secure environments as part of a wider network of sustainable routes, to directly and appropriately link the site with surrounding communities and facilities
- g. Proposals must retain and enhance existing habitats where practicable, including the creation of linkages with surrounding wildlife assets and green corridors linking development with the wider countryside and surrounding communities.
- h. Provision and management of 50% green infrastructure to link to other new development areas and the wider countryside as part of a high quality built and semi-natural environment
- i. The development should be designed using a landscape-led approach including consideration of the long-distance views of the AONB and the field pattern and landscape features on the site
- j. Detailed modelling will be required to confirm 1 in 20, 100 and 1,000 year extents and 1 in 100 year plus climate change extents on the ordinary watercourse (see SFRA Level 2)
- k. Surface water modelling should be undertaken to define the level of surface water risk and the risk areas/flow paths. Climate change should be modelled using the +40% allowance (February 2016) for rainfall intensity. A surface water drainage strategy should ensure that the development does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Opportunity to mitigate against potential surface water flooding of Stoke Mandeville Hospital
- l. Risk of overtopping or breach of the Aylesbury Arm (Grand Union Canal) should be modelled
- m. The development should be designed using a sequential approach. Flood Zones 2 and 3, and 3a plus climate change (subject to a detailed flood risk assessment) should be preserved as green space as shown in the policies map as the area of 'not built development'. Built development should be restricted to Flood Zone 1
- n. Drainage designs should 'design for exceedance' and accommodate existing surface water flow routes, with development located outside surface water flood areas
- o. Provision of buffer between the new development and Stoke Mandeville to maintain the setting and individual identity of the settlement of Stoke Mandeville
- p. provision of land, buildings and car parking for a combined primary school, including playing field provision, and a contribution to secondary school provision
- q. Provision of land, buildings and car parking for a new local centre, including retail
- r. Provision of financial contributions towards off-site health facilities

- s. Provision of community buildings, including temporary buildings if necessary
- t. Provision of and contribution to infrastructure as appropriate.
- u. Retention of the Grade II listed Magpie Cottage within an appropriate setting

3 The HRA Process

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 The HRA process assesses the potential effects of a plan or project on the conservation objectives of Habitats sites designated under the Habitats⁹ and Birds¹⁰ Directives. These sites form a system of internationally important sites throughout Europe known collectively as the 'Natura 2000 Network'. In line with the Habitats Regulations, UK sites which were part of the Natura 2000 Network before leaving the EU, have become part of the National Site Network.
- 3.1.2 The Habitats Regulations¹¹ provide a definition of a European site at Regulation 8. These sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Community Importance, Special Protection Areas (SPA) and sites proposed to the European Commission in accordance with Article 4(1) of the Habitats Directive.
- 3.1.3 In addition, policy in England and Wales notes that the following sites should also be given the same level of protection as a European site¹². European sites together with sites set out in national policy (listed below) are referred to in England and Wales as a Habitats site¹³.
- A potential SPA (pSPA);
 - A possible / proposed SAC (pSAC);
 - Listed and proposed Ramsar Sites (Wetland of International Importance); and
 - In England, sites identified or required as compensation measures for adverse effects on statutory Habitats sites, pSPA, pSAC and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

⁹ Official Journal of the European Communities (1992). Council Directive 92 /43 /EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

¹⁰ Official Journal of the European Communities (2009). Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds.

¹¹ Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 SI No. 2017/1012, TSO (The Stationery Office), London. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2017/1012/contents> [Date Accessed: 02/02/22] as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111176573> [Date Accessed: 02/02/22]

¹² Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021). National Planning Policy Framework. Para 181. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf [Date Accessed: 02/02/22]

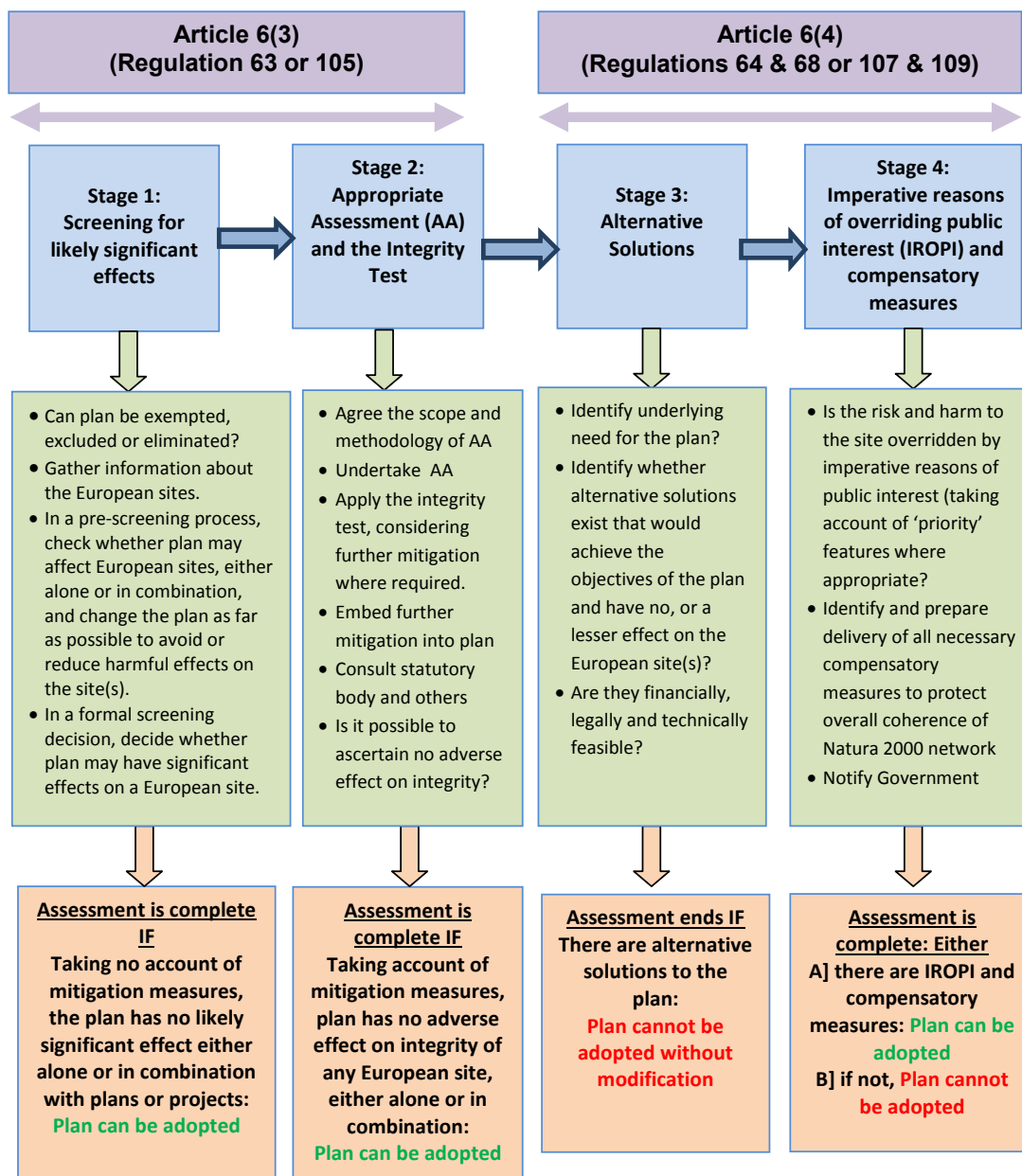
¹³ Habitats site: Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2021). National Planning Policy Framework. Para 181. Available in Annex 2 (Glossary) at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf [Date Accessed: 02/02/22]

- 3.1.4 Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations notes a competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project, must make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the plan or project for that site in view of its site conservation objectives. These tests are referred to collectively as a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).
- 3.1.5 HRA applies to plans or projects which are likely to have a significant effect on a Habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and / or not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site.
- 3.1.6 There is no set methodology or specification for carrying out and recording the outcomes of the assessment process. The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, produced by David Tyldesley Associates (referred to hereafter as the 'DTA Handbook'), provides an industry recognised good practice approach to HRA. The DTA Handbook, and in particular 'Practical Guidance for the Assessment of Plans under the Regulations'¹⁴, which forms part F, has therefore been used to prepare this report, alongside reference to Government Guidance on Appropriate Assessment¹⁵.
- 3.1.7 A step-by-step guide to the methodology adopted in this assessment, as outlined in the DTA Handbook, is illustrated in **Figure 3.1**. In summary, the four key stages of the HRA process are as follows:
- **Stage 1. Screening:** Screening to determine if the SPD would be likely to have a significant effect on a Habitats site. This stage comprises the identification of potential effects associated with a plan on Habitats sites and an assessment of the likely significance of these effects.
 - **Stage 2. Appropriate Assessment and the 'Integrity Test':** Assessment to ascertain whether or not the SPD would have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any Habitats site to be made by the Competent Authority (in this instance Buckinghamshire Council). This stage comprises an impact assessment and evaluation in view of a Habitats site's conservation objectives. Where adverse impacts on site integrity are identified, consideration is given to alternative options and mitigation measures which are tested.
 - **Stage 3. Alternative solutions:** Deciding whether there are alternative solutions which would avoid or have a lesser effect on a Habitats site.
 - **Stage 4. Imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures:** Considering imperative reasons of overriding public interest and securing compensatory measures.

¹⁴ Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook (September) (2013) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited. Available at: www.dtapublications.co.uk

¹⁵ Government Guidance on Appropriate Assessment. July 2019. Guidance on the use of Habitats Regulations Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/appropriate-assessment>

Outline of the four-stage approach to the assessment of plans under the Habitats Regulations



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Figure 3.1: Stages in the Habitats Regulations Assessment process¹⁶

¹⁶ Tyldesley, D., and Chapman, C. (2013) *The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook* (October) (2018) edition UK: DTA Publications Limited. Available at: www.dtapublications.co.uk

4 Methodology

4.1 HRA guidance

4.1.1 HRA applies to plans and projects in England and Wales. This report has been informed by the following guidance:

- Planning Practice Guidance: Appropriate Assessment¹⁷; and
- The Habitat Regulations Assessment Handbook - David Tyldesley and Associates (referred to hereafter as the DTA Handbook), 2013 (in particular Part F: '*Practical Guidance for the Assessment of Plans under the Regulations*').

4.2 HRA methodology

4.2.1 HRA is a rigorous precautionary process centred around the conservation objectives of a Habitats site's qualifying interests. It is intended to ensure that designated Habitats sites are protected from impacts that could adversely affect their integrity, as required by the Birds and Habitats Directives. A step-by-step guide to this methodology is outlined in the DTA Handbook and has been reproduced in **Figure 3.1**.

4.3 Stage 1: Screening for likely significant effects

4.3.1 The first stage in the HRA process comprises the screening stage. The purpose of the screening process is to firstly determine whether a plan or project is either (1) exempt (because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Habitats site), (2) whether it can be excluded (because it is not a project), or (3) eliminated (because there would be no conceivable effects), from the HRA process.

4.3.2 If none of these conditions apply, it is next necessary to identify whether there are any aspects of a project which may lead to Likely Significant Effects (LSEs) at a Habitats site. This informs the requirement to progress the Appropriate Assessment stage (stage 2 of the HRA process, see **Figure 3.1**).

4.3.3 Screening considers the potential 'significance' of adverse effects. Where elements of a plan will not result in an LSE on a Habitats site these are screened out and not considered in further detail in the process.

4.4 What is a Likely Significant Effect?

4.4.1 HRA screening provides an analysis of LSEs identified during the HRA screening process. It considers the nature, magnitude and permanence of potential effects in order to inform the plan making process.

4.4.2 The DTA Handbook guidance provides the following interpretation of LSEs:

¹⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (July 2019) Planning Practice Guidance Note, Appropriate Assessment, Guidance on the use of Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 4.4.3 *“In this context, ‘likely’ means risk or possibility of effects occurring that cannot be ruled out on the basis of objective information. ‘Significant’ effects are those that would undermine the conservation objectives for the qualifying features potentially affected, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects ... even a possibility of a significant effect occurring is sufficient to trigger an ‘appropriate assessment’¹⁸.*
- 4.4.4 With reference to the conservation status of a given species in the Habitats or Birds Directives, the following examples would be considered to constitute a significant effect:
- Any event which contributes to the long-term decline of the population of the species on the site;
 - Any event contributing to the reduction, or to the risk of reduction, of the range of the species within the site; and
 - Any event which contributes to the reduction of the size of the habitat of the species within the site.
- 4.4.5 Rulings from the 2012 ‘Sweetman’¹⁹ case provide further clarification:
- 4.4.6 *“The requirement that the effect in question be ‘significant’ exists in order to lay down a de minimis threshold. Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on the site are thereby excluded. If all plans or projects capable of having any effect whatsoever on the site were to be caught by Article 6(3), activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill”.*
- 4.4.7 Therefore, it is not necessary for the Council to show that a plan will result in no effects whatsoever on any Habitats site. Instead, the Council is required to show that a plan, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, will not result in an effect which undermines the conservation objectives of one or more qualifying features.
- 4.4.8 Determining whether an effect is significant requires careful consideration of the environmental conditions and characteristics of the Habitats site in question, as per the 2004 ‘Waddenzee’²⁰ case:
- 4.4.9 *“In assessing the potential effects of a plan or project, their significance must be established in the light, inter alia, of the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site concerned by that plan or project”.*

¹⁸Tyldesley, D. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook – Chapter F. DTA Publications

¹⁹ Source: EC Case C-258-11 Reference for a Preliminary Ruling, Opinion of Advocate General Sharpston ‘Sweetman’ delivered on 22nd November 2012 (para 48)

²⁰ Source: EC Case C-127/02 Reference for a Preliminary Ruling ‘Waddenzee’ 7th Sept 2004 (para 48)

4.5 Consideration of mitigation measures

- 4.5.1 The European Court Judgement on the interpretation of the Habitats Directive in the case of *People Over Wind and Sweetman vs Coillte Teoranta* (Case C-323/17²¹) determined that mitigation measures are only permitted to be considered as part of an appropriate assessment (**Box 2**).

Box 2: The Sweetman Case (April 2018)

A recent decision by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) *People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta* (C-323/17) (from here on known as the 'Sweetman Case') has important consequences for the HRA process in the UK.

In summary, the ruling reinforces the position that if an LSE is identified during the HRA screening process it is not appropriate to incorporate mitigation measures to prevent the LSE at this stage. An appropriate assessment (AA) of the potential effects and the possible avoidance or mitigation measures must be undertaken. The 're-screening the Plan after mitigation has been applied' is no longer an option which would be legally compliant:

"Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out, subsequently, an appropriate assessment of the implications, for a site concerned, of a plan or project, it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site."

- 4.5.2 In light of the above, it is necessary to further define mitigation measures. The DTA Handbook notes that there are two types of measures as follows:
- *"Measures intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European site; or*
 - *Features or characteristics of a plan which are essential in defining the nature, scale, location, timing, frequency or duration of the plan's proposals, or they may be inseparable aspects of the plan, without which an assessment of the plan could not properly be made, in the screening decision, even though these features or characteristics may incidentally have the effect of avoiding or reducing some or all of the potentially adverse effects of a plan"*²².
- 4.5.3 The HRA screening process undertaken for the SPD took no account of incorporated mitigation or avoidance measures that are intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a Habitats site when assessing the LSE of the SPD on Habitats sites. These are measures, which if removed (i.e. should they no longer be required for the benefit of a Habitats site), would still allow the lawful and practical implementation of a plan.

4.6 Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment and Integrity Test

- 4.6.1 Where LSEs are identified from a plan either alone or in-combination it is necessary to move to Stage 2 of the HRA process – the Appropriate Assessment and Integrity Test.

²¹ InfoCuria (2018) Case C-323/17. Available at: <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=200970&doclang=EN> [Date Accessed: 27/01/20]

²²Tyldesley, D. (2013) *The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook – Chapter F*. DTA Publications

- 4.6.2 The purpose of the Appropriate Assessment (as defined by the DTA Handbook) is to “undertake an objective, scientific assessment of the implications for the European site qualifying features potentially affected by the plan in light of their consideration objectives and other information for assessment”²³.
- 4.6.3 As part of this process decision makers should take account of the potential consequences of no action, the uncertainties inherent in scientific evaluation and should consult interested parties on the possible ways of managing the risk, for instance, through the adoption of mitigation measures. Mitigation measures should aim to avoid, minimise or reduce significant effects on Habitats sites. Mitigation measures may take the form of policies within a plan or mitigation proposed through other plans or regulatory mechanisms. All mitigation measures must be deliverable and able to mitigate adverse effects for which they are targeted.
- 4.6.4 The Appropriate Assessment aims to present information in respect of all aspects of a plan and ways in which it could, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, affect a Habitats site.
- 4.6.5 The Council (as the Competent Authority) must then ascertain, based on the findings of the Appropriate Assessment, whether the SPD will adversely affect the integrity of a Habitats site either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects. This is referred to as the Integrity Test and will draw on the conclusions of this report and take into consideration representations made by Natural England.
- 4.6.6 It is noted that failure to mitigate any identified adverse effects on the integrity of any Habitats site from the SPD, alone or in-combination, would trigger stage 3 (assessment of alternatives) and stage 4 (IROPI) of the HRA process, as set out in **Figure 3.1**.

4.7 Dealing with uncertainty

- 4.7.1 Uncertainty is an inherent characteristic of HRA, and decisions can be made only on currently available and relevant information. This concept is reinforced in the 7th September 2004 ‘Waddenzee’ ruling²⁴:
- 4.7.2 *“However, the necessary certainty cannot be construed as meaning absolute certainty since that is almost impossible to attain. Instead it is clear from the second sentence of Article 6(3) of the habitats directive that the competent authorities must take a decision having assessed all the relevant information which is set out in particular in the appropriate assessment. The conclusion of this assessment is, of necessity, subjective in nature. Therefore, the competent authorities can, from their point of view, be certain that there will be no adverse effects even though, from an objective point of view, there is no absolute certainty”.*

4.8 The Precautionary Principle

- 4.8.1 The HRA process is characterised by the precautionary principle. This is described by the European Commission as being:

²³Tyldesley, D. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook – Chapter F. DTA Publications

²⁴EC Case C-127/02 Reference for a Preliminary Ruling ‘Waddenzee’ 7th September 2004 Advocate General’s Opinion (para 107)

4.8.2

“If a preliminary scientific evaluation shows that there are reasonable grounds for concern that a particular activity might lead to damaging effects on the environment, or on human, animal or plant health, which would be inconsistent with protection normally afforded to these within the European Community, the Precautionary Principle is triggered”.

5 Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan HRA

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Development of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) was supported by the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process. The outputs were presented in a number of documents which contained the Council's findings and conclusions in respect of the HRA of the VALP as a whole. These assessments included consideration of the AGT1 Aylesbury South strategic allocation. Natural England was consulted at each stage of the HRA process. The following sections provide a summary of the HRA which was undertaken at each stage of the VALP planning making process.

5.2 Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2017 Submission HRA

5.2.1 The VALP 2017 Submission HRA²⁵ summarised the outputs of a screening assessment. It focused on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and Aston Rowant SAC. It concluded no LSEs as a result of VALP upon any Habitats site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, and as such, ruled out the requirement for further assessment of the VALP under the Habitats Regulations.

5.3 RAF Halton HRA Update

5.3.1 The Submission HRA work was updated in 2017 to take into consideration spatial site options, including a site at RAF Halton, which were being considered by the Council²⁶. This HRA found that the conclusions of the 2017 HRA (**Section 5.2**) remained valid.

5.4 Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 – 2033 HRA

5.4.1 The 2019 HRA²⁷ took into consideration emerging case law including People over Wind and Holohan (see **Box 2** and **Box 3** for more details) and included an HRA screening and Appropriate Assessment.

5.4.2 This report provided a screening assessment of LSEs at the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and Aston Rowant SAC. The Appropriate Assessment focused on likely significant recreation and air quality impacts at the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

²⁵ Land Use Consultants. VALP Habitat Regulations Assessment (2017). Available at <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/habitats-regulations-assessment> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

²⁶ Land Use Consultants. RAF Halton Addendum (2017). Available at <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/habitats-regulations-assessment> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

²⁷ Land Use Consultants. VALP Habitat Regulations Assessment Report 2019. Available at https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/page_downloads/ED209%20Vale%20of%20Aylesbury%20Local%20Plan%20-%20Final%20HRA%20Report%20June%202019.pdf [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

- 5.4.3 In terms of recreational pressure the Appropriate Assessment concluded that *“providing that the specific proposals for green infrastructure detailed above are re-inserted into Policy I1 in the modified plan and applied to housing allocation HALO3, and there is a commitment by AVDC to ensure that scheme design seeks to provide natural greenspace that contributes to alleviating visitor pressure on the SAC, it is certain that the VALP will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC as a result of recreational pressures, either alone or in- combination with other plans and projects”*.
- 5.4.4 In relation to air quality impacts, it concluded that there would be no adverse impact on site integrity.
- 5.4.5 Natural England was consulted on the 2019 HRA report at responded as follows:
- 5.4.6 *“Natural England agree with the conclusions reached within the Appropriate Assessment in regards to recreational disturbance. We agree with section 6.13, which states that provided the green infrastructure proposals detailed in Policy I1 are applied to the RAF Halton site, and that AVDC commit to providing natural greenspace to alleviate visitor pressure on the SAC, there will be no likely significant effect (either alone or in combination) on the integrity of the SAC. We also agree with the conclusions reached in regards to air pollution.”*
- 5.4.7 In summary the HRA concluded that
- 5.4.8 *“... providing that the adopted VALP includes the previously omitted open space standards specified in Policy I1 and there is a commitment by AVDC to ensure that the SPD Masterplan provides natural greenspace that contributes to alleviating visitor pressure on the SAC, the VALP will not result in adverse effects on European Sites, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects’*.

5.5 Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033 Proposed Further Modifications Stage – HRA Addendum

- 5.5.1 An HRA was undertaken in support of the VALP main modifications²⁸. This focused on an update to the air quality assessment in light of updated traffic modelling which resulted in an exceedance of the 1,000 AADT threshold along the A41. The Air Quality Assessment concluded that the effects of the VALP, as proposed to be modified, would not be significant with regard to annual mean NOx concentrations and nutrient and acid nitrogen deposition. Natural England agreed with this conclusion.

²⁸ Land Use Consultants. VALP Proposed Further Modifications Stage – Habitat Regulations Assessment Addendum (2020) available at <https://aylesburyvalecd.oc2.uk/docfiles/13/ED247%20Proposed%20Further%20Main%20Modifications%20Habitat%20Regulations%20Assessment.pdf> [Date Accessed: 25/11/21]

6 HRA Stage 1: Screening

6.1 Aylesbury South SPD HRA Screening

6.1.1 The Aylesbury South SPD is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any Habitats site. Neither can it be excluded or eliminated from the HRA process. Therefore, as required under Regulation 105 of the Habitats Regulations, an assessment of LSEs of the Aylesbury South SPD upon Habitats sites has been undertaken by Buckinghamshire Council²⁹.

6.1.2 This assessment prepared by the Council concluded that there would be the potential for LSEs associated with increased recreational pressure at the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC as a result of the SPD. It noted that the VALP HRA findings regarding the need for recreational pressure mitigation from the housing growth impacts on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC led directly to the inclusion of policies and proposals on green infrastructure mitigation as set out in Policy I1 and D-AGT1 of VALP (see **Section 5.4**). As the SPD is expected to add further details on the type of Green Infrastructure (GI), location of GI and management of GI in terms of how the policy requirements will be met on the Aylesbury South site, it concluded that there was a need for a greater level of detail on mitigation to be evaluated in HRA terms. As these details were not available at the time of the VALP HRA, it summarised that an Appropriate Assessment should be carried out for the scope/draft SPD to evaluate if the mitigation details proposed are adequate or if there would be adverse impacts on the integrity of the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, as a result of the Aylesbury South SPD.

6.1.3 The screening assessment took no account of mitigation measures that the SPD may incorporate to mitigate adverse impacts upon Habitats sites. It concluded that the SPD would be screened into the HRA process. The next stage of the HRA process is Stage 2 - Appropriate Assessment.

6.2 Screening Consultation

6.2.1 Natural England was consulted on the screening decision in September 2021 and indicated their agreement with the conclusions.

²⁹ Buckinghamshire Council. October 2021. Aylesbury South (D-AGT 1) Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement – Final Outcome

7 HRA Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Potential LSEs associated with increased recreational pressure from the Aylesbury South SPD at the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC were screened into the HRA process for further assessment in an Appropriate Assessment. This section of the HRA report focuses specifically on recreational impacts upon this Habitats site. All other Habitats sites and potential pathways of impact have been screened out of the HRA process.

7.2 Chilterns Beechwoods SAC

7.2.1 The Chilterns Beechwoods SAC comprises a number of components of woodland which represent a range of semi natural woodlands dominated by beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). These sites are scattered throughout the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with the exception of Bisham Woods SSSI. Due to the different locations of each component of the SAC, the underlying geology, topology and site conditions varies at each.

7.2.2 The SAC is designated for two qualifying habitats; semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies and Beech forests on neutral to rich soils, with its qualifying species being the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) (**Appendix A**). All components of the SAC, with the exception of Bishams Wood and Tring Wood, lie within Buckinghamshire's administrative boundary. Bishams Wood and Tring Wood are located immediately adjacent to its boundary.

7.2.3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are protected areas in the United Kingdom designated for conservation. SSSIs are the building blocks of site-based nature conservation in the UK. A SSSI will be designated based on the characteristics of its fauna, flora, geology and/or geomorphology. Whilst typically analogous in ecological function, the reasons for its designation can be entirely different to those for which the same area is designated as a SAC, SPA or Ramsar.

7.2.4 **Table 7.1** provides a summary of the SSSI components which are coincident with the SAC and their distance from the Aylesbury South site, these are also illustrated on **Figure 7.1**.

Table 7.1: SSSI components which are coincident with the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC

SSSI sites which are coincident with and together constitute the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC	Distance from Aylesbury South Site
Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI	11.9km to the east
Aston Rowant Woods SSSI	13.9km to south west
Bisham Woods SSSI	25.2km to the south
Bradenham Woods, Park Wood & The Coppice SSSI	11.5km to south
Ellesborough and Kimble Warrens SSSI	4.1km to the south
Hollowhill and Pullingshill Wood SSSI	24.1km to the south
Naphill Common SSSI	12.9km to south
Tring Woodlands SSSI	7.3km to the south east
Windsor Hill SSSI	7.3km to the south

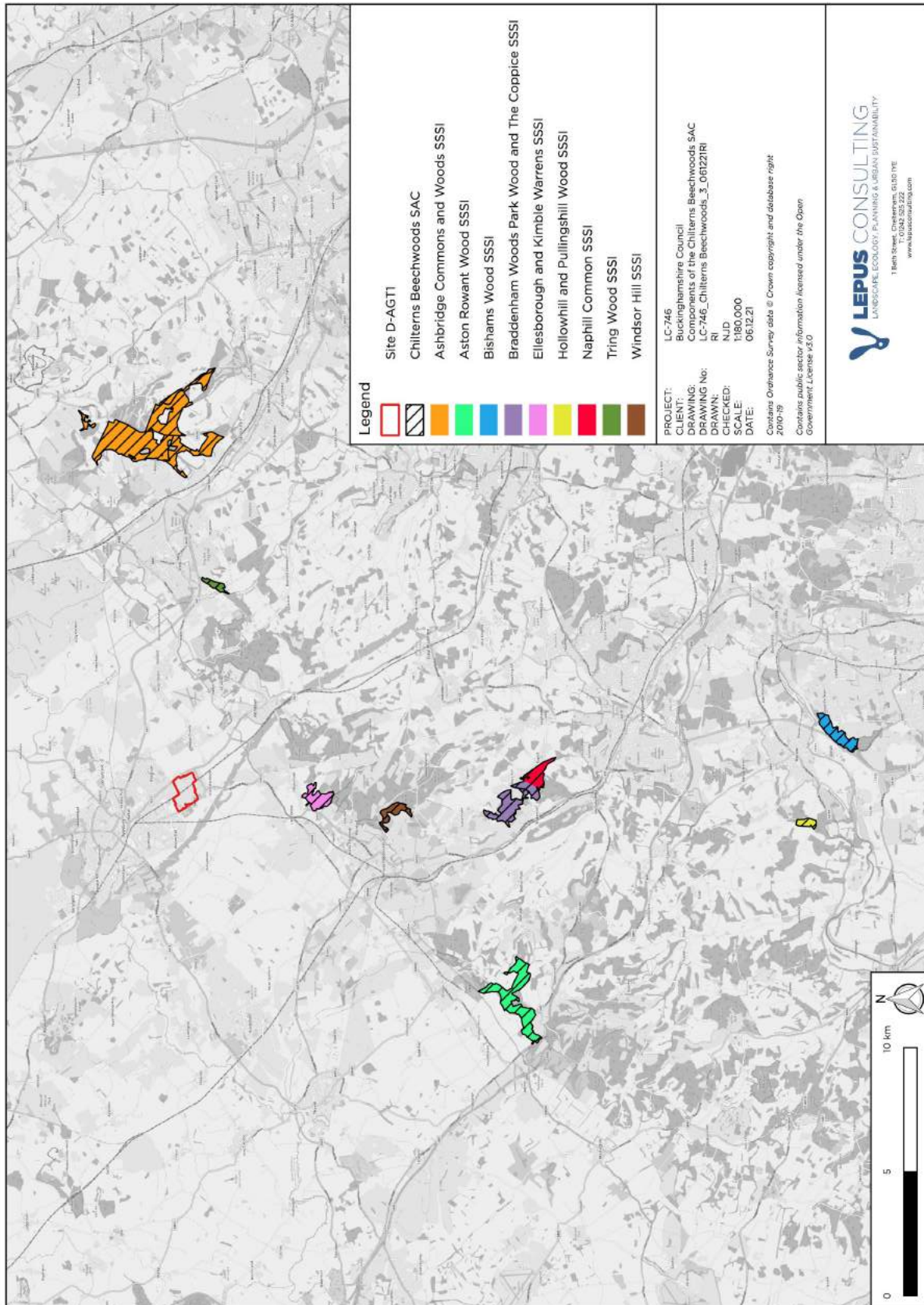


Figure 7.1: Location of Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and constituent SSSIs

- 7.2.5 Due to the varying locations of each component of the SAC the underlying soils also vary. As a result, each of the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) woodland classification types³⁰ in which beech is a major component feature across the components of the SAC. These include:
- W12 *Fagus sylvatica* – *Mercurialis perennis* woodland;
 - W14 *Fagus sylvatica* – *Rubus fruticosus* woodland; and
 - W15 *Fagus sylvatica* – *Deschampsia flexuosa* woodland.
- 7.2.6 The SAC also supports a number of rare plants with restricted distribution including coralroot bittercress (*Cardamine bulbifera*), southern woodrush (*Luzula forsterii*), red helleborine (*Cephalanthera rubra*) and lesser hairy-brome (*Bromus benekenii*). The Chilterns Beechwoods represent a stronghold for one of the UK's rarest plants, ghost orchid (*Epipogium aphyllum*). Another notable feature is the prominence of box (*Buxus sempervirens*) at Ellesborough and Kimble Warrens SSSI³¹.
- 7.2.7 Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone form a qualifying habitat of the SAC. This is associated with thin, well-drained, lime-rich soils associated with chalk and limestone. Within the SAC these are restricted and found at the Windsor Hill SSSI and Ellesborough and Kimble Warrens SSSI components of the SAC. These support a diversity of grasses and scarce invertebrates³².
- 7.2.8 The qualifying species of the SAC is the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*). This species is saproxylic and therefore reliant on dead and decaying wood for the larval stages of its lifecycle. Deadwood habitat is found within the SAC in the form of fallen branches and tree stumps. Records indicate the beetle has been recorded at the Bisham Woods SSSI and Hollowhill and Pullingshill Woods SSSI components of the SAC³³. This represents the northern range of the beetle.
- 7.2.9 Natural England's Site Improvement Plan (SIP)³⁴ notes that the SAC is vulnerable to a number of threats and pressures (see **Appendix A**) including public access and disturbance (the stag beetle).

³⁰ Rodwell, J.S. (ed.) 1991. British Plant Communities. Volume 1. Woodlands and scrub. Cambridge University Press.

³¹ Natural England (2019) Chiltern Beechwoods SAC Conservation Objectives Supplementary Advice. <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5422856020426752> [Date Accessed: 26/11/21].

³² Natural England (2019) Chiltern Beechwoods SAC Conservation Objectives Supplementary Advice. <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5422856020426752> [Date Accessed: 26/11/21].

³³ Natural England (2019) Chiltern Beechwoods SAC Conservation Objectives Supplementary Advice. <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5422856020426752> [Date Accessed: 26/11/21].

³⁴ Natural England (2015) Chiltern Beechwoods SAC Site Improvement Plan. <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5908864568393728> [Date Accessed: 26/11/21].

7.3 Ecological Condition

- 7.3.1 The CJEU ruling in the Holohan case (C-461/17³⁵) confirmed that Appropriate Assessment should: (i) catalogue (i.e. list) all habitats and species for which the site is protected and (ii) include in its assessment other (i.e. non-protected) habitat types or species which are on the site and habitats and species located outside of the site if they are necessary to the conservation of the habitat types and species listed for the protected area (**Box 3**).

Box 3: Holohan v An Bord Pleanala (November 2018)

“Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora must be interpreted as meaning that an ‘appropriate assessment’ must, on the one hand, catalogue the entirety of habitat types and species for which a site is protected, and, on the other, identify and examine both the implications of the proposed project for the species present on that site, and for which that site has not been listed, and the implications for habitat types and species to be found outside the boundaries of that site, provided that those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site.

Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43 must be interpreted as meaning that the competent authority is permitted to grant to a plan or project consent which leaves the developer free to determine subsequently certain parameters relating to the construction phase, such as the location of the construction compound and haul routes, only if that authority is certain that the development consent granted establishes conditions that are strict enough to guarantee that those parameters will not adversely affect the integrity of the site.

Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43 must be interpreted as meaning that, where the competent authority rejects the findings in a scientific expert opinion recommending that additional information be obtained, the ‘appropriate assessment’ must include an explicit and detailed statement of reasons capable of dispelling all reasonable scientific doubt concerning the effects of the work envisaged on the site concerned”.

- 7.3.2 This report fully considers the potential for effects on species and habitats. This includes those not listed as a qualifying feature for the Habitats site, but which may be important to achieving its conservation objectives. This includes consideration of functionally linked habitat. This ensures that the functional relationships underlying Habitats sites and the achievement of their conservation objectives are adequately understood.
- 7.3.3 Natural England periodically assesses the conservation conditions of each SSSI unit, assigning it a status. SSSIs which are coincident with the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC are listed in **Appendix B** along with their current conservation status. The conservation status of each SSSI highlights any component of the SAC that is currently particularly vulnerable to threats/pressures. Conservation status is defined as follows:
- Favourable;
 - Unfavourable – recovering;
 - Unfavourable – no change; or
 - Unfavourable – declining.

³⁵ EUR-Lex (2018) Case C-461/17. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:62017CJ0461&from=EN> [Date Accessed: 05/11/19]

- 7.3.4 SSSI units in either an 'Unfavourable – no change' or 'Unfavourable – declining' condition indicate that the Habitats site may be particularly vulnerable to certain threats or pressures. It is important to remember that the SSSI may be in an unfavourable state due to the condition of features unrelated to its Habitats designation. However, it is considered that the conservation status of SSSI units that overlap with Habitats designated sites offer a useful indicator of habitat health at that location.
- 7.3.5 There are two SSSI unit within the SAC designation which are in an unfavourable – recovering – condition, one at Tring Woodlands SSSI and the other at Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI.
- 7.3.6 Natural England defines zones around each SSSI which may be at risk from specific types of development, these are known as Impact Risk Zones (IRZ). These IRZs are *“a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks to SSSIs posed by development proposals. They define zones around each SSSI which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts. The IRZs also cover the interest features and sensitivities of European sites, which are underpinned by the SSSI designation and “Compensation Sites”, which have been secured as compensation for impacts on Natura 2000/Ramsar sites”*³⁶.
- 7.3.7 A review of Natural England's current SSSI IRZ data (updated 25th April 2022) indicates that none of the SAC components have an IRZ which covers Aylesbury South in relation to residential development.

7.4 Public Access and Disturbance Threats

- 7.4.1 Public access and disturbance threats at the SAC are noted in Natural England's SIP to be related to increased visitor pressures and disturbance on the stag beetle. Natural England's Supplementary Advice notes that, given its location within the Chilterns AONB, the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC has become a popular recreational destination for walking and cycling. Surveys undertaken by the Chilterns AONB indicated that in 2007 just over 55 million leisure visits were made to and within the Chilterns AONB³⁷, this figure is likely to have risen since these surveys were undertaken.

³⁶ Natural England (2019) Natural England's Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest User Guidance. Available at: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/Metadata_for_magic/SSSI%20IRZ%20User%20Guidance%20MAGIC.pdf [Date Accessed: 05/11/19]

³⁷ The Chilterns AONB. 2007. Chilterns AONB Visitor Survey. Available at: https://www.chilternsaonb.org/uploads/files/ConservationBoard/Chilterns_AONB_Visitor_Survey_2007.pdf [Date Accessed: 25/01/21]

- 7.4.2 Elsewhere in the UK, public access and disturbance threats have been considered in terms of buffer distances and zones. Urbanisation impacts are often experienced when development is located in close proximity of a designation boundary. For recreational impacts, buffers are defined by recreational survey data and are often dependent on a number of factors including the recreational draw of a site, accessibility and the availability of other recreational resource in an area. With the exception of the Ashridge Common and Woods SSSI and Tring Woodlands SSSI, a bespoke recreational zone of influence is not currently available for the other components of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (as outlined in **Section 7.5**).
- 7.4.3 With the exception of the Bisham Woods SSSI, all components of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC lie within the AONB. The Chilterns AONB Management Plan notes that 80,000 people live within the AONB and a further 1.6 million within 8km³⁸. The Management Plan aims to attract visitors within 8km of the AONB. The Management Plan notes that this is the area over which visitors are predominantly drawn to the AONB as a whole.
- 7.4.4 The characteristics and recreational draw of each of component of the SAC varies depending on its location and accessibility. **Sections 7.5** to **Section 7.13** provide an overview of the characteristics of each component, its ecological condition, location in relation to the Aylesbury South strategic site and levels of accessibility.

7.5 Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI component of the SAC

- 7.5.1 Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI is located 11.9km to the east of the strategic site, predominately within the administrative boundary of Dacorum Borough Council (70% of the designated area) with the remainder located in Buckinghamshire Council's administrative area.
- 7.5.2 The area of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, which is coincident with Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI, broadly corresponds with areas of the Ashridge Estate, for which the National Trust is the main landowner.
- 7.5.3 A number of areas of woodland within the SSSI comprise ancient woodland. The SSSI citation for Ashridge Commons and Woods indicates that the site comprises a mixture of ancient semi-natural and secondary woodland, plantation, scrub, a more open component dominated by bracken, and grassland³⁹. The woodland ground flora is noted to be associated with the underlying soils, with sparse flora in areas on the acidic plateau soils and more diverse communities on the more base rich soils. It also notes the diverse range of woodland bird species that are supported on site by the varied woodland stand types, areas of scrub (dominated by bracken and scattered trees) and small areas of unimproved calcareous and acidic grassland.

³⁸ Lepus Consulting. March 2021. Dacorum Local Plan. HRA Desk Study and Site Walkover Survey. Chilterns Beechwoods SAC: Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI and Tring Woodlands SSSI.

³⁹ Natural England. Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI Citation. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1000452.pdf> [Date Accessed: 02/12/21]

- 7.5.4 Ashridge is open to the public with a number of routes for walking, cycling, horse-riding and running promoted by the National Trust across the site. There is a visitor centre, toilets, a shop and a café on site located at the end of Monument Drive, and mobility vehicles are available for advance booking. Dogs are permitted on site on the lead. Free parking is provided along Monument Drive. The site can also be accessed from another 23 car parks which offer free parking in the local area, by foot, bike or horse from neighbouring residential areas and via the rights of way network which links to the site. There are three major trails that cross the site, the Chiltern Way, the Hertfordshire Way and the Icknield Way. In addition, the estate is freely accessible to the public with a substantial portion being designated as 'registered common land' or 'other access land' under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- 7.5.5 Monument Drive is registered as a byway open to all traffic (BOAT) which is a highway over which the public have a right of way for vehicular and all other kinds of traffic but which is used by the public mainly for the purposes for which footpaths and bridleways are used (i.e. walking, cycling or horse riding)⁴⁰. Dacorum Borough Council placed a Traffic Regulation Order 1991 on the road which restricts access past 10pm and before 7am (except for access).
- 7.5.6 Organised events at Ashridge over the past few years (before the national pandemic) included guided nature and education walks, workshops, children focused sessions, camping, organised horse rides and seasonal events, such as the annual Easter egg trail. The National Trust hold a license for a significant number of permitted events such as running events of various lengths, orienteering clubs, health walks, long distance walks, horse riding clubs, geocaching events, canicross, scout groups, birthday parties and group outings.
- 7.5.7 Dacorum Borough Council is currently preparing and updating the evidence base to support its Emerging Local Plan, which includes an HRA. As part of the HRA, research has been carried out to look at the impacts of recreational pressure on Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and in particular recreational impacts upon the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI and Tring Woodlands SSSI components. This research included visitor surveys, ecological surveys and parking transect surveys.
- 7.5.8 The output of these surveys identified current recreational impacts on the qualifying features of the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI component of the SAC, including evidence of severe damage occurring over many areas. These impacts included trampling and vegetation wear, soil compaction and erosion, nutrient enrichment (e.g. dog fouling), litter, invasive species, risk of fire (e.g. from BBQs), harvesting and impacts associated with the management of the site more generally.

⁴⁰ Land Registry Title Deeds. Available at: <https://www.landregistry-titledeeds.co.uk/frequently-asked-questions/information/public-rights-of-way.asp#:~:text=A%20Byway%20Open%20to%20All,%2C%20cycling%20or%20horse%20riding> [Date Accessed: 02/12/21]

7.5.9 The visitor surveys highlighted that the Ashridge Estate is an attractive 'honey-pot site' and draws visitors from a particularly wide area, primarily by car. Using postcode data, a recreational Zone of Influence (ZOI)⁴¹ was established which extends for a distance of 12.6km from the Ashridge Estate. The Aylesbury South Site (D-AGT 1) is located approximately 11.9km from this component of the SAC. Approximately half (45.16ha) of the Aylesbury South site is located within the 12.6km ZOI (see **Figure 7.2**).

⁴¹ The recreational ZOI is the area across which 75% of people will travel to use a site for recreational purposes.

- 7.5.10 Taking into consideration the precautionary principle (see **Section 4.8**), future housing growth within this ZOI has the potential to result in increased recreational pressure on this component of the SAC and its qualifying features, both on its own and when considered in-combination with other development.
- 7.5.11 Natural England provided advice to Buckinghamshire Council, and other LPAs affected by the emerging evidence base on 14th March 2022. This advice identified the need for mitigation to deal with recreational impacts from new growth. This advice indicates that Natural England will require adequate mitigation measures to be established for any net increased in development within the 12.6km ZOI to avoid additional recreational impacts. Natural England specially recommend that a permanent strategic solution is developed for the Ashridge Estate by all affected LPAs. Such mitigation is required to satisfy the Habitats Regulations such that an Appropriate Assessment would be able to conclude there would be no adverse impacts on the integrity of the SAC.
- 7.5.12 Natural England's advice, whilst not setting out what the strategic mitigation solution should look like, does outline a common approach to mitigation which has been successfully applied at other Habitats sites across the UK. This includes a combination of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring measures (SAMM) for the SAC itself, alongside provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)⁴². The package of SAMM would manage on-site impacts at the SAC, whilst SANG would work to re-direct visitors to alternative sites, relieving recreational pressure. These two measures would dovetail together to offer a strategic package of mitigation. The Natural England advice also points to creation of a new visitor gateway at the Ashridge Estate as a possible component of a mitigation strategy.
- 7.5.13 Whilst a strategic mitigation approach is established, Natural England notes the following:
- 7.5.14 *"Natural England understand that Strategic Solutions can be a time consuming process, and will lead to a period of time where strategic-level mitigation hasn't yet been identified. During this period we advise that HRAs will be needed, detailing how each individual site is going to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. **This is for all planning applications that result in a net increase in dwellings, within the entire 500m – 12.6km ZOI.** We are happy to work with the Local Planning Authorities and developers proactively to seek to find solutions during this temporary period. The interim position is likely to apply until such time that a formal strategic solution is found. We will be looking for all applications to incorporate mitigation measures that will avoid additional recreational impacts".*

7.6 Aston Rowant Woods SSSI component of the SAC

- 7.6.1 Aston Rowant Woods SSSI is located approximately 13.9km to the south west of the strategic site, partly within the administrative boundary of Buckinghamshire Council but predominantly within South Oxfordshire.

⁴² Where SANG is proposed, this should be delivered at a minimum standard of 8 ha / 1000 population. It should also be secured in perpetuity and agreed with the respective Local Planning Authority and Natural England. It should also meet bespoke SANG guidelines.

7.6.2 It comprises a large area of ancient beech woodland located on the escarpment of the Chilterns. The SSSI citation notes that the site '*consists of a series of contiguous areas of woodland on the chalk escarpment, plateau and dip slope of the Chilterns. Much of this site is ancient woodland and although parts have been modified by the planting of introduced trees and by sycamore invasion, a unusually wide range of semi-natural woodland stand types occur, dominated by oak and beech. The rich flora includes no fewer than 52 species indicative of old woods. Over a hundred species of fungi are recorded. Paths, rides and glades are numerous, and the presence of boggy hollows and standing and fallen dead timber provide diverse niches for invertebrates*'⁴³.

7.6.3 The Ridgeway long distance path passes to the north of the site and the Bledlow Circular Ride runs through the eastern section of the site. Sections of the SSSI to the south west and north east of the site are open access, with a number of linear footpaths running through the site along with some forestry tracks around Kington Wood. Aston Rowant National Nature (NNR) Reserve lies to the immediate west of the SSSI. There is car parking to the south of the SSSI at Beacon Hill, signposted from the A40 near Stokenchurch. The A40 runs through the western section of the SSSI.

7.7 Bisham Woods SSSI component of the SAC

7.7.1 Bishams Woods SSSI is located approximately 25.2km to the south of the strategic site, partly within the administrative boundary of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

7.7.2 Bisham Woods SSSI comprises an extensive area of predominantly broad-leaved woodland situated on a steep north-west facing slope overlooking the River Thames at Marlow⁴⁴.

⁴³ Natural England. Aston Rowant Woods SSSI Citation. Available at:
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1000426.pdf> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21]

⁴⁴ Natural England. SSSI Citation. <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1002835.pdf> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21].

7.7.3 Bisham Woods SSSI is managed by the Woodland Trust. The woods are open access and contain a number of PRoW, including restricted byways, bridleways and footpaths serving pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists. There is limited parking in the form of pull-ins along Quarry Wood Road, Grubswood Lane and Marlow Road which limits access to this site⁴⁵. The Woodland Trust have prepared a Management Plan for the woodland covering the period from 2018 to 2023⁴⁶ and actively manage this habitat. This Management Plan recognises the potential threats associated with increased public access pressure at the woodland and, as such, maintains a well-managed network of paths and signage. It states that “*deadwood will be allowed to accumulate wherever possible, with all windblown trees and the majority of trees felled for safety reasons left to decompose naturally. In this way the deadwood habitat will continue to support a viable population of stag beetles, as well as many other invertebrates and fungi*”.

7.8 Bradenham Woods, Park Wood and The Coppice SSSI component of the SAC

7.8.1 Bradenham Woods, Park Wood and The Coppice SSSI is located approximately 11.5km to the south of the strategic site, within the administrative boundary of Buckinghamshire Council.

7.8.2 The citation for the SSSI notes that the SSSI is ‘*primarily a woodland site, with extensive beechwoods of types characteristic of both the acid clay-with-flints of the Chiltern plateau, and the chalk and various deposits of the valley slopes*’⁴⁷.

7.8.3 The Bradenham Estate is managed by the National Trust and includes Bradenham Woods and The Coppice, an extensive area of ancient beech wood. It is open access land with a network of footpaths and permitted bridleways promoted by the National Trust across the site. Free parking is available in Bradenham village opposite cricket pavilion and a small National Trust car park is located on Smalldean Lane approximately 1.5 miles northwest of Bradenham village.

7.9 Ellesborough and Kimble Warrens SSSI component of the SAC

7.9.1 Ellesborough and Kimble Warrens SSSI is located approximately 4.1km to the south of the strategic site, within the administrative boundary of Buckinghamshire Council.

⁴⁵ The Woodland Trust. Bradenham Woods, Park Wood and The Coppice SSSI. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1000478.pdf> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21].

⁴⁶ Woodland Trust. 2018. Bisham Woods Woodland Management Plan. Available at: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/46991/4424-bisham-woods.pdf> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21].

⁴⁷ Natural England. Aston Rowant Woods SSSI Citation. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1000426.pdf> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21]

7.9.2 The SSSI citation notes the site *'forms part of the Chiltern escarpment here deeply incised by three valleys: Ellesborough, Great and Little Kimble 'Warrens'. The vegetation comprises deciduous woodland, of which some is developing, but most is overmature; dense scrub, including abundant box Buxus sempervirens, here thought to be native; and both grazed and ungrazed chalk grasslands, of which some are species-rich and contain both local and national rarities. Mixed scrub is invading some of these grasslands. One of the valleys harbours an unusual sedge-fen community. The site contains one of the richest assemblages of calcicolous bryophytes in the Chilterns, and is notable for its range of invertebrates as well as its overwintering and breeding bird populations'*⁴⁸.

7.9.3 Small parts of the site are open access and there are a number of PRowS which run around the south and western sections of the SSSI. There is no parking on site but parking is available to the south of the adjoining Pulpit Wood. As with the majority of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC components the site is steep in areas.

7.10 Hollowhill and Pullingshill Wood SSSI component of the SAC

7.10.1 Hollowhill and Pullingshill Wood SSSI is located approximately 24.1km to the south of the strategic site, within the administrative boundary of Buckinghamshire Council. Hollowhill Wood is owned by Buckinghamshire Council and managed by BBOWT; Pullingshill Wood is owned and managed by the Woodland Trust.

7.10.2 The SSSI citation indicates that there are contrasts between the acid gravelly soils of the plateau and both shallow and deeper chalky soils of the slopes are reflected in the presence of different types of beechwood. The ground flora includes some uncommon species, of which one is a national rarity⁴⁹.

7.10.3 Hollowhill Wood is open access with the Chilterns long distance way running along Pullingshill Wood's northern boundary. A variety of other permissive paths run through both woods, allowing for circular walks. BBOWT's website indicates that there is parking at the reserve entrance to Hollowhill Wood but no other facilities other than information boards in both woods.

⁴⁸ Natural England. Ellesborough and Kimble Warrens. SSSI Citation.
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1000639.pdf> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21].

⁴⁹ Natural England. Condition of SSSI Unit for Bisham Woods SSSI.
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/ReportUnitCondition.aspx?SiteCode=S1002835&ReportTitle=Bisham%20Woods%20SSSI> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21].

7.10.4 The Woodland Trust's Management Plan for Pullingshill Wood notes that parking is available at several lay-bys alongside the minor road that runs north to south through the site. Access into the wood is possible from the minor roads around the perimeter of the wood, as well as from four entry points off public footpaths. There are several permissive paths and no paths have been surfaced. The central and eastern portions of the wood are reasonably level and open whilst the western edge drops away down a steep slope into a dry valley. The Woodland Trust assesses the site as being a moderately used site (defined by the Woodland Trust as 5±15 people using one entrance per day). They note that it is popular with local residents from Marlow (1 mile away) and is accessible from other areas of woodland, in particular the larger area of Marlow Common to the north⁵⁰.

7.11 Naphill Common SSSI component of the SAC

7.11.1 Naphill Common SSSI is located approximately 12.9km to the south of the strategic site, within the administrative boundary of Buckinghamshire Council. It is located to the immediate south of Bradenham Woods, Park Wood & The Coppice SSSI. It is a registered common with commoners' rights of estovers, grazing and firebote.

7.11.2 The SSSI citation notes that *'the structure and composition of the woodland are believed to be more natural in character than any other Chiltern woodland. Unlike most Chiltern woods, the number of tree and shrub species is large. There is a scattering of old pollards, a mixed canopy and an extensive and varied understorey. There are patches of acid heathlands in the more open areas of the common and diversity is further increased by wet rides and ponds'*⁵¹.

7.11.3 In 2014 the Friends of Naphill Common prepared a management Plan for the site⁵². This noted that although the common never feels busy it well used by local people and those walking in the wider area. Naphill is part of a series of sites which are connected via open access land and linear PRoWs.

7.12 Tring Woodlands SSSI component of the SAC

7.12.1 Tring Woodlands SSSI is located approximately 7.3km to the south east of the strategic site, within the administrative boundary of Dacorum Borough Council. The part of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC component, which coincides with Tring Woodlands SSSI, is owned by Hertfordshire County Council and leased to Dacorum Borough Council who manage the site.

⁵⁰ Woodland Trust. 2015. Woodland Management Plan 2015 – 2020. Available at: <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/47022/4461-pullingshill-wood-and-marlow-common.pdf> [Date Accessed: 02/12/21]

⁵¹ Natural England. Naphill Commons. SSSI Citation. <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1002879.pdf> [Date Accessed: 01/12/21].

⁵² Friends of Naphill Common. Management Plan for Naphill Common. Available at: http://www.naphillcommon.org.uk/Documents/Management_Plan_2014%20v%202.pdf [Date Accessed: 01/12/21]

- 7.12.2 The market town of Tring is located to the north of this component of the SAC, approximately 300m beyond the A41. The woodland is located on an escarpment to the south of the town and is linked to Tring via Hastoe Hill road and a PRoW off the A41 underbridge.
- 7.12.3 The SSSI citation for Tring Woodlands indicates that the site comprises ancient semi-natural beech woodland⁵³. It notes that areas of standard ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) are associated with the beech woodland. With Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and yew (*Taxus baccata*) in its sparse shrub layer on upper slopes, with more variety including dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*) and coppiced hazel (*Corylus avellana*) on the lower slopes. It also notes the presence of a small area of mixed larch plantation (*Larix decidua*) and a woodland bird community.
- 7.12.4 The site comprises broadleaved woodland with areas of neutral grassland in the surrounding area. The SSSI unit data indicates the ground flora is representative of NVC W12, with NVC W14 community species also recorded on site⁵⁴.
- 7.12.5 The SAC part of the woodlands near Tring can be accessed along public footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic and a restrict byway. The woodland comprises Stubbing's Wood and Groves Wood. There is no open access across the woodland. With the exception of the byway which runs in a north / south direction between West Leith Farm and Hastoe in a sunken lane, the footpaths which cross the site are not well made. The topography of the site is undulating in nature. There are no facilities provided at the site or formal car parks serving the site. There is limited and infrequent informal road verge parking: under the A41 road bridge and to the south of the site off Gadmore Lane.
- 7.12.6 As part of Dacorum Borough Council's Emerging Local Plan evidence base to support the HRA, visitor surveys were also undertaken at the Tring Woodlands SSSI component of the SAC. A review of postcode data indicated that Tring Woodlands SSSI experiences somewhat fewer visitors and has a more local draw. Its ZOI is much smaller with a radius of 1.7km. Aylesbury South (D-AGT 1) is located approximately 7.3km from Tring Woodlands and therefore outside the ZOI where recreational impacts from new housing development are considered likely.
- 7.12.7 Natural England's advice provided to Buckinghamshire Council on 14th March 2022 noted the following in respect of Tring Woodlands:
- 7.12.8 *"As it stands we will not be requiring any specific work as part of this Strategic Solution. We are looking into this site further with our Natural England SSSI colleagues and reserve the right to reconsider our position. We accept that large housing developments within 1.7km of the site, may need to provide bespoke mitigation, outside the scope of the Strategic Solution".*

⁵³ Natural England. Tring Woodlands SSSI Citation. Available at:
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1000452.pdf>

⁵⁴ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) provide information on the National Classification System which is available at:
<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/nvc/>

7.13 Windsor Hill SSSI component of the SAC

- 7.13.1 Windsor Hill SSSI is located approximately 7.3km to the south of the strategic site, within the administrative boundary of Buckinghamshire Council.
- 7.13.2 The SSSI citation for Windsor Hill SSSI notes that the site forms an '*extensive tract of the Chiltern escarpment above Princes Risborough containing fine examples of beechwoods, scrub and chalk grassland. The woodlands harbour a legally protected orchid species. The scrub includes an important colony of juniper and an ancient hedge. The grasslands contain a wide range of chalk plants and invertebrates, several of county importance*'⁵⁵. Part of the SSSI is a BBOWT reserve and is well managed.
- 7.13.3 A review of OS mapping data indicates that there is no parking or facilities on site. There are a number of linear PRow which cross the site in a north to south and east to west direction. As with other components of the SAC the site is steep in parts which make access challenging.

7.14 Components of the SAC sensitive to recreational impacts

- 7.14.1 As outlined in **Sections 7.5** to **Section 7.13**, each component of the SAC varies in character with some being more accessible than others. With the exception of areas of the SAC which lie within the National Trust's Ashridge and Bradenham Estates, components of the SAC are not promoted widely as key recreational destinations. With the exception of the Ashridge Estate, access is limited and the sites which form the SAC are therefore likely to draw a more local patronage of visitors.
- 7.14.2 The VALP HRA drew on established recreational zones of influence when assessing recreational impacts, and in particular the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) Delivery Framework⁵⁶. This framework was used as it provided useful context in assessing whether proposed housing locations in the VALP would have the potential to result in LSEs as a result of recreation. For the purposes of the VALP screening assessment, only those allocation sites within 7km of any Chilterns Beechwoods SAC were assessed. This was considered highly precautionary because the ground nesting birds for which the Thames Basin Heaths SPA is designated are far more sensitive to recreational disturbance than the woodland, grassland and stag beetle for which the at the qualifying interests for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC is designated. The only component of the SAC within 7km of AGT1 is Ellesborough and Kimble Warrens SSSI (4.1km), however parking is limited and given the steep nature of the site, patronage is likely to be local in nature.
- 7.14.3 Tring Woodlands SSSI and Windsor Hill SSSI both sit slightly further than 7km from the strategic site at 7.3km. Given the local recreational draw of these sites, which has been confirmed through Dacorum Borough Council's HRA evidence base at Tring Woodlands SSSI (establishing a ZOI Of 1.7km – see **Section 7.12**), and lack of parking and facilities, it is unlikely that development at the strategic site would increase recreational pressure on these components of the SAC.

⁵⁵ Natural England. Windsor Hill SSSI Citation. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1002446.pdf> [Date Accessed: 02/12/21]

⁵⁶ Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board (2009). Thames Basin Heaths SPA Delivery Framework. <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/thames-basin-heaths-spa-delivery-framework.pdf>. [Date Accessed: 02/12/21].

- 7.14.4 Dacorum Borough Council's Emerging Local Plan evidence base has established a ZOI for Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI of 12.6km (see **Section 7.5**). AGT1 sits partly within this ZOI and therefore recreational impacts from a net increase in housing development are likely.
- 7.14.5 All other components of the SAC are not considered further due to both their distance from the strategic site, current levels of accessibility and the nature and topography of sites.

7.15 South Aylesbury Site

- 7.15.1 South Aylesbury is a strategic allocated site for Aylesbury, which together with other allocations and commitments contribute to the delivery of the housing requirement identified within the adopted VALP (Policy D-AGT 1), together with associated infrastructure and facilities.
- 7.15.2 Located within Stoke Mandeville Civil Parish the site is situated within Buckinghamshire Council's administrative area.
- 7.15.3 South Aylesbury is a 95-hectare sustainable extension to Aylesbury being developed on land between the town, to the north, and the village of Stoke Mandeville, to the south. The strategic site will integrate with the existing built-up area of Aylesbury whilst maintaining the setting and individual identity of Stoke Mandeville. Wendover Road (A413) forms the boundary to the east, with Lower Road (B443) to the west of the site. The London Marylebone to Aylesbury Vale Parkway railway line runs north to south through the centre of the site.
- 7.15.4 Aylesbury is a primary settlement within Buckinghamshire, identified within the VALP as a Strategic Settlement for growth. The strategy contained within the VALP utilises the settlement hierarchy to locate development in the most sustainable locations. Aylesbury Garden Town (comprising Aylesbury town and adjacent parts of surrounding parishes) will grow by 16,207 new dwellings. Taking into account commitments and completions, 3,282 homes are allocated at Aylesbury, with the majority being located within six sites, including South Aylesbury.
- 7.15.5 The VALP identifies the AGT1 site for the development with the key development and land use requirements being the delivery of at least 1,000 dwellings; a primary school; the South East Aylesbury Link Road (the "SEALR") and supporting infrastructure including multi-functional GI; a local centre and cycling and walking links.
- 7.15.6 The AGT1 site consists of several parcels of land which are in different ownerships and / or control by developers / promoters. The parcels are merged to enable a comprehensive, cohesive, and co-ordinated approach to the development of the site as a whole.

7.16 Recreational Mitigation

- 7.16.1 Potential adverse recreational impacts upon the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI component of the SAC from the Aylesbury South site cannot be ruled out of the HRA process and must therefore be considered further in the Appropriate Assessment. It is therefore necessary to consider application of mitigation measures which may avoid, cancel or reduce effects upon this component of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. Mitigation must be effective, timely, reliable and guaranteed to be delivered in perpetuity.
- 7.16.2 As outlined in **Section 5.4**, the HRA for the VALP noted that in order to conclude no adverse impacts on site integrity specific proposals for Green Infrastructure (GI) must be re-inserted into Policy I1 (Green Infrastructure) in order to alleviate visitor pressures on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. Policy I1 of the VALP was therefore updated and includes a number of key components which are of relevance to this assessment of impacts which takes into consideration mitigation (see **Box 4**).

Box 4: VALP: Policy I1 Green infrastructure⁵⁷

Green Infrastructure should provide a range of functions and provide multiple benefits for wildlife, improving quality of life and water quality and flood risk, health and wellbeing, recreation, access to nature and adaptation to climate change. The council will support proposals for green infrastructure where there is no significant adverse impact on:

- a. Wider green infrastructure networks including public rights of way and green infrastructure opportunity zones identified by the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership
- b. Potential to contribute to biodiversity net gains
- c. Management of flood risk and provision of sustainable drainage systems
- d. Provision of a range of types of green infrastructure
- e. Provision of sports, recreation facilities or public realm improvements
- f. Potential for local food cultivation by communities
- g. Achieving a satisfactory landscaping scheme including the transition between the development and adjacent open land

New housing developments of more than 10 units or which have a combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000 square metres (gross internal area) will be required to meet the ANGSt (accessible natural green space standards) in Appendix C to meet the additional demand arising from new residential development. Amenity green space will need to be provided on site. Sports and recreation facilities can be provided as required (Policy I2) on the same site where these are compatible with publicly accessible green infrastructure.

The Accessibility Standards in Appendix C will need to be met by providing accessible natural green space on or off site for developments of more than 10 homes and which have maximum combined gross floorspace of more than 1,000 square metres (gross internal area) unless it has been demonstrated in an assessment for a planning application that accessible natural green space provision has already been met, when including the increased population of the new development and any other committed development.

Conditions will be imposed on permissions or planning obligations sought in order to secure green infrastructure reasonably related to the scale and kind of housing proposed. The benefits to be obtained or provided by the council by virtue of the obligation will be directly relevant to the development permitted and the needs of its occupiers and fairly and reasonably related to its scale and kind.

⁵⁷ https://buckinghamshire-gov-uk.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Aylesbury_local_plan_L46JWaT.pdf

To count towards any ANGSt quantitative/accessibility requirement, such green space must meet the definitions of 'accessible' and 'natural' in paragraph 11.8

The council will only accept the loss of ANGSt including the incorporation of such areas into private garden land if:

- h. The ANGSt has been subject to an assessment which shows it to be surplus to requirements
- i. The land does not fulfil a useful purpose in terms of its appearance, landscaping, recreational use or wildlife value
- j. The land does not host an element of semi-natural habitat or any other feature of value to wildlife to a greater extent than would be the case if it were planted as a garden
- k. The loss of publicly accessible green infrastructure would not set a precedent for other similar proposals which could cumulatively have an adverse effect on the locality or the environment
- l. The continued maintenance of the land for publicly accessible green infrastructure would be impractical or unduly onerous
- m. Publicly accessible green infrastructure lost will need to be replaced by equivalent or better following an assessment justifying this need based on applying the standards in Appendix C.

Formal outdoor sports areas, play areas, and allotments all serve a specific purpose and may be located within or outside ANGSt. Either way such facilities should be located on land that is additional to the ANGSt provided by a developer and be complimentary to it.

Green infrastructure being provided must have a long-term management and maintenance strategy to be agreed by the council with assets managed for at least 30 years after completion and during this time secure a mechanism to manage sites into perpetuity. The management and maintenance strategy shall set out details of the owner, the responsible body and how the strategy can be implemented by contractors.

- 7.16.3 The design principles for Aylesbury Garden Town (which includes AGT1) include a requirement to achieve a minimum of 50% land within the proposed garden communities as local and strategic multi-functional GI. Policy D1 of the VALP – Delivering Aylesbury Garden Town – requires a site-specific Masterplan SPD to be developed for AGT1 Aylesbury South in order to set out clear and detailed advice for place-making. This was reflected in the VALP policy for Aylesbury South itself (D-AGT 1) which also requires the Masterplan SPD to include 50% provision of GI among other factors.
- 7.16.4 Policy PSGI 1 of the Draft Stoke Mandeville Neighbourhood Plan (NP)⁵⁸ also sets out the requirement for new developments over 10 units to meet the Garden Town principles by providing at least 50% GI in the proposal.
- 7.16.5 In order to satisfy requirements set out in Policy I1 (Green Infrastructure) (**Box 4**), Policy D-AGT 1 and Policy D1 (Delivering Aylesbury Garden Town) of the VALP and those set out in the draft Stoke Mandeville NP, the South Aylesbury site will be required to provide and manage 50% GI to link new development areas to the wider countryside as part of a high quality built and semi-natural environment. All GI must meet the ANGSt criteria which are set out in Appendix C of the VALP and have a long-term management and maintenance strategy associated with it.

⁵⁸ Stoke Mandeville Parish Council. A neighbourhood Plan for Stoke Mandeville. 2021 – 2033. Available at: <https://www.stokemandevilleparishcouncil.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan/> [Date Accessed 12/05/22].

7.16.6 The SPD therefore sets out a commitment that AGT1 will provide 50% GI by area to meet this requirement (see Section 3.2.1 of the SPD). Within each application parcel, GI will link the new development areas to the wider area. Existing vegetation and habitats will be retained where practicable with urban greening and green / blue infrastructure incorporated, providing a network of open spaces for informal use together with more formal sports provision.

7.16.7 Based on the average household size of 2.5 people (VALP Paragraph 1.51) the South Aylesbury development will generate a population of at least 2,500 people (based on 1,000 dwellings). The development will, in line with Appendix C of the VALP, aim to provide a minimum of 5 hectares of accessible natural green space (2 hectares per 1,000 population); 3.5 hectares of incidental open space (1.4 hectares per 1,000 population), and 3 hectares of major open space (1.2 hectares per 1,000 population), with 2 adult size grass pitches (0.73 adult size grass pitch equivalent per 1,000 population) (see Section 4.5.3 of the SPD). Overall, as set out in **Figure 7.3**, a total of 45.23ha of ANGSt compliant GI will be provided across AGT1 which represents 18.092ha/1000 population.

AGT1 Gross Area (minus railway corridor)	90.45Ha
GI Requirement	45.23Ha
South-East Aylesbury Link Road (road)	3.51Ha
2FE Primary School (with drop off area)	1.9Ha
Gypsy & Traveller Pitches	0.34Ha
Community Facility (may include residential)	0.1Ha
Net Development Area for Residential Use	39.72Ha

Areas of Development and Infrastructure within AGT1

Figure 7.3: Areas of Development and Infrastructure within AGT1 (Source: South Aylesbury SPD, August 2022)

7.16.8 An overarching Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan has been developed for AGT1 (see **Figure 7.4**), which will form the basis for designs in each area. This includes the following areas of GI:

- Strategic Buffer;
- Round Aylesbury Walk;
- South-East Aylesbury Link Road Corridor;
- Railway Corridor;
- Central Open Space;
- Minor Connections; and
- School Playing Fields.



Figure 7.4: SPD ANGSt compliant GI Plan (Source: South Aylesbury SPD, August 2022)

7.16.9 The overall aim of the Aylesbury Garden Town GI is to connect the surrounding countryside to the Chilterns and surrounding rural areas. A number of GI Strategies cover Aylesbury Vale at varying hierarchal levels and include:

- Vision and Principles for the Improvement of Green Infrastructure in Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes⁵⁹;
- Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2013)⁶⁰;

⁵⁹ <https://bucks.mknep.co.uk/projects/vision-and-principles-for-the-improvement-of-green-infrastructure/>

⁶⁰ http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/media/5014/Buckinghamshire-Green-Infrastructure-Delivery-Plan-Buckinghamshire-and-Milton-Keynes-Natural-Environment-Partnership-August-2013-/pdf/5326-Bucks-GI-Delivery-Plan-FINAL-ISSUE_2013_08_07_low_res.pdf

- Aylesbury Vale Green Infrastructure Strategy (2014)⁶¹; and
- Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan⁶².

- 7.16.10 The Aylesbury Garden Town GI forms part of the county GI provision and includes a number of countryside access gateways, notably Quarrendon Leas and, at greater distance, the Waddesdon Estate (National Trust), Tring Reservoirs Complex/College Lake and Wendover Woods. This wider, county level, GI provision provides an existing range of green spaces in the locality of AGT1 with which the development will be connected.
- 7.16.11 In their advice to Buckinghamshire Council on 14th March, Natural England acknowledged that a strategic mitigation solution is yet to be developed for the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI component of the SAC. The proposed components of this strategic solution are set out in **Section 7.5**. Whilst work is ongoing on a long-term strategic solution, Natural England has noted that HRAs will be required to detail how each individual development within the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI ZOI will avoid additional adverse recreational impacts on the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. Natural England note that they are happy to work with affected LPAs and developers to find solutions during this temporary period, but that all applications should look to incorporate mitigation measures that will avoid additional recreational impacts.
- 7.16.12 The work undertaken on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council⁶³ notes that provision of SANG (alongside SAMP – see **Section 7.5**) is an important strand of a long-term mitigation package as it will aim to absorb additional recreational pressure associated with new development away from the SAC. It notes that such green spaces may be provided through a number of mechanisms such as enhanced or new GI, or for instance combining it with active travel routes (such as a cycle way). The aim of this new green space must however be to increase recreational capacity away from the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and be in place prior to development coming forward in order for it to be effective. Management arrangements must also be in place in perpetuity for it to continue to deliver benefits over the lifetime of development. Provision of bespoke on-site greenspace is a common approach taken to delivering this type of recreational mitigation across the United Kingdom.

⁶¹ <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/green-infrastructure-strategy>

⁶² <https://www.aylesburygardentown.co.uk/the-masterplan-and-projects/>

⁶³ Panter, C., Liley, D., Saunders, P., % Caals, Z. (2022). Visitor survey recreational impact assessment and mitigation requirements for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and the Dacorum Local Plan Report by Footprint Ecology for Dacorum Borough Council.

- 7.16.13 An important consideration when providing this type of on-site recreational mitigation is the quality of green space provided. The work undertaken on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council for the Ashridge Estate includes suggested guidelines on what green space may look like. **Appendix C** provides a summary of these guidelines. In their correspondence to Buckinghamshire Council Natural England makes reference to their SANG guidelines for the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)⁶⁴. This provides detailed guidance and checklists for SANG covering small scale sites, linear SANG and networks of greenspace.
- 7.16.14 Section 5 (Delivering the Place) of the SPD acknowledges that additional dwellings will be provided within 12.6km of Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI component of the SAC. As such it notes that mitigation will therefore be required to address recreational impacts. As shown in **Box 5**, the SPD commits to a twin mitigation package to address these impacts comprising a mixture of SANG and SAMM.
- 7.16.15 Whilst bespoke SANG guidelines are yet to be developed for this component of the SAC, **Appendix C** provides an outline of provisional SANG criteria. This includes a minimum SANG standard of 8ha/1000 population; a principle supported by Natural England in a letter dated 14th March. As illustrated in **Figures 7.3** and **7.4**, the SPD will deliver approximately 45.23ha of ANGSt compliant GI. It is noted that approximately half (45.16ha) of AGT1 is located within the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI 12.6km ZOI. However, taking the site as a whole, a total of some 18ha of ANGSt compliant GI will be provided per 1000 population which is in excess of the suggested minimum SANG standard of 8ha/1000 population. The SPD makes a commitment that SANG provided at AGT-1 will be agreed with Natural England and managed in perpetuity (**Box 5**).
- 7.16.16 The SPD also commits to a financial contribution from each net new home within the Zone of Influence towards a SAMM (as detailed at **Section 7.5**). The details of this will be set out in a separate SPD.

Box 5: Chilterns Beechwoods SAC text extracted from the SPD

Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation

D-AGT1 will create at least 1,000 new homes. An increase in the number of homes is expected to lead to an increase in the population residing within the 12.6 kilometre Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Zone of Influence.

To mitigate the potential recreational disturbance from this population to the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation a twin mitigation package is required.

It is anticipated that this will take the form of:

1. A financial contribution from each net new home within the Zone of Influence towards a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy. This strategy will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.
2. The delivery of 50% green infrastructure to Accessible Natural Green Space Standard within the allocation. The green infrastructure being provided must have a long-term management and maintenance strategy and be agreed by the council. A mechanism must be secured to manage the green

⁶⁴ Natural England. Guidelines for Creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) - August 2021. Available at: https://www.hart.gov.uk/sites/default/files/4_The_Council/Policies_and_published_documents/Planning_policy/Guidelines%20for%20Creation%20of%20Suitable%20Alternative%20Natural%20Greenspace%20%28SANG%29%20-%20August%202021.pdf [Date Accessed: 12/05/22]

infrastructure in perpetuity. The management and maintenance strategy shall set out details of the owner, the responsible body and how the strategy can be implemented by contractors.

The delivery and the in-perpetuity maintenance of the 50% green infrastructure to Accessible Natural Green Space Standard is capable of satisfying the requirements for Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space; and should be agreed with Natural England. The aim of this green space is to provide a good quality and accessible recreational space capable of reducing the need for the new population to visit the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. Perpetuity in this context is taken as at least 80 years.

Both of these mitigation measures will be considered as part of the determination of planning applications submitted to the council for this allocation affecting the Zone of Influence.

7.17 Alone assessment

7.17.1 The assessment of recreational impacts from AGT1 alone at the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI) has taken into consideration the following factors:

- On-site GI provision to meet VALP and draft NP policy requirements which includes 50% ANGSt compliant GI and a commitment to develop a long-term management and maintenance strategy for all GI (**Paragraph 7.16.15**);
- Availability of existing recreational resource within the local and wider area and proposed connecting links from AGT1 to these areas (**Paragraph 7.16.9** to **Paragraph 7.16.10**); and
- The commitment of the SPD to meet SANG guidelines and SAMM contributions in line with the emerging strategic package of long-term mitigation for the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI component (**Box 5**).

7.17.2 Taking these factors into consideration it is considered that development at AGT1 will have no adverse impact upon the site integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

7.18 In-combination assessment

7.18.1 An Appropriate Assessment must consider information in respect of all aspects of the SPD and ways in which it could, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, affect a Habitats site. This is considered through the HRA process in an in-combination assessment.

7.18.2 Whilst the strategic site at Aylesbury South, following mitigation (see **Section 7.17**), will not have an alone impact on any Habitats site, there is the potential for residual recreational impacts which may contribute to in-combination impacts at components of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

7.18.3 Plans and projects which are considered to be of most relevance to the in-combination assessment of the SPD include those that have similar impact pathways. These include those plans and projects which have the potential to increase residential development in the HRA study area which may increase recreational pressure upon the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

- 7.18.4 Of relevance to this in-combination assessment are other residential allocations made in the VALP, the emerging NP for Stoke Mandeville and local planning authority growth in neighbouring authorities which are also located within the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI ZOI.
- 7.18.5 As set out in **Section 5**, the VALP HRA process included consideration of the AGT1 Aylesbury South strategic allocation. Taking into consideration mitigation, the VALP HRA concluded no adverse effect on site integrity from the plan alone or in-combination on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.
- 7.18.6 The strategic site is located with the Stoke Mandeville NP area. At Section 14 version of the NP was published for consultation in August 2021⁶⁵. The NP has been produced in line with the VALP but provides local policies to protect existing green space, amenities, historic buildings and important views and provide for new green space and public amenities in the form of a new Parish Centre, a nature reserve and parkland. It allocates land for business use within the Southern Boundary and provides a parish wide masterplan. The NP includes AGT1 and provides a masterplan for this site with which development must comply. It also provides local level detail as to how GI should be delivered at the Aylesbury South site (see PSGI policies).
- 7.18.7 The NP has been screened in for an HRA. The NP sets out local criteria to conserve GI and strengthen the VALP policies in relation to the protection of green space. It also includes provision for a new nature reserve and parkland. As such, it will have a positive impact on recreational pressure at the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC in combination with the SPD.
- 7.18.8 As noted in **Section 7.5**, a 12.6km ZOI, within which in-combination recreational impacts may occur, has been established for Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI as part of Dacorum Borough Council's Emerging Local Plan evidence base. LPAs which sit within this ZOI include Dacorum Borough Council, Buckinghamshire Council, St Albans City and District Council and Central Bedfordshire lie. Drawing on this evidence base, all affected LPAs have made a commitment to prepare a long-term strategic solution to mitigate recreational impacts from new development. As illustrated in **Box 5**, the SPD makes a commitment to this future mitigation package (including the SAMM contributions). This solution will address the impacts of new development both alone and in-combination with neighbouring LPA growth and as such ensure no adverse in-combination impacts upon the SAC.

⁶⁵ <https://www.stokemandevilleparishcouncil.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>

8 Conclusions and Next Steps

8.1 Conclusions

8.1.1 Buckinghamshire Council is in the process of preparing an SPD for Aylesbury South (AGT1). The purpose of this SPD is to provide guidance on the future sustainable development of this strategic site. AGT1 is implemented in the VALP through Policy D-AGT 1 and will make provisions for the following:

- At least 1,000 dwellings
- One primary school
- Multi-functional green infrastructure
- Aylesbury South East Link Road (A413 to B4443 Lower Road)
- Local centre
- Cycling and walking links

8.1.2 HRA aims to ensure that designated Habitats sites are protected from impacts that could adversely affect their integrity. An HRA has therefore been prepared in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This report provides the output of this assessment.

8.1.3 Taking no account of mitigation measures, the HRA screening assessment undertaken by Buckinghamshire Council concluded that there would be potential for LSEs associated with increased recreational pressure at the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC as a result of development set out in the SPD. As such the SPD was screened into the HRA process for further assessment through an Appropriate Assessment.

8.1.4 The Appropriate Assessment focused on recreational impacts upon the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and identified potential adverse impacts upon the Ashridge Commons and Woodland SSSI component specifically. This assessment took into consideration a number of mitigation measures as set out below:

- On-site GI provision to meet VALP and draft NP policy requirements which includes 50% ANGSt compliant GI and a commitment to develop a long-term management and maintenance strategy for all GI;
- Availability of existing recreational resource within the local and wider area and proposed connecting links from AGT1 to these areas; and
- The commitment of the SPD to meet emerging SANG guidelines and SMM contributions in line with the emerging strategic package of long-term mitigation for the Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI component.

8.1.5 Taking these factors into consideration, the Appropriate Assessment concluded no adverse impacts from the SPD, either alone or in-combination, on the site integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

8.2 Next steps

8.2.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the HRA of the SPD using best available information.

- 8.2.2 Buckinghamshire Council, as the Competent Authority, has responsibility to make the Integrity Test, which can be undertaken in light of the conclusions set out in this report.
- 8.2.3 This report will be submitted to Natural England, the statutory nature conservation body, for formal consultation. The Council must 'have regard' to their representations under the provisions of Regulations 63(3) and 105(2) prior to making a final decision as to whether they will 'adopt' the conclusions set out within this report as their own.

Appendix A: Chilterns Beechwoods SAC Conservation Objectives

Chiltern Beechwoods SAC¹

Conservation objectives:

Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring:

- The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species
- The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats
- The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species
- The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely
- The populations of qualifying species, and
- The distribution of qualifying species within the site.

Qualifying Features:

H6210. Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies: on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia); Dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone

H9130. Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests; Beech forests on neutral to rich soils

S1083. Lucanus cervus; Stag beetle

Threats and Pressures which could be affected by the SPD^{2,3}:

- Public access and disturbance;
- Air Pollution; and
- Hydrology.

¹ Natural England (2018) Chiltern Beechwoods SAC Conservation Objectives. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/4961243408629760> [Date Accessed: 26/11/21]

² Natural England (2015) Chiltern Beechwoods SAC Site Improvement Plan. <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5908864568393728> [Date Accessed: 26/11/21].

³ Natural England (2019) Chiltern Beechwoods SAC Conservation Objectives Supplementary Advice. [file:///Users/samanthacheater/Downloads/UK0012724_ChilternsBeechwoodsSAC_COSA_%20Formal%20Published_30%20Nov%202018%20\(1\).pdf](file:///Users/samanthacheater/Downloads/UK0012724_ChilternsBeechwoodsSAC_COSA_%20Formal%20Published_30%20Nov%202018%20(1).pdf) [Date Accessed: 26/11/21].

Appendix B: Site of Special Scientific Interest Condition Data

European Site	SSSI Name	No. of SSSI Units	Conservation Status of SSSI Units ¹	Reason for unfavourable status where applicable.
Chilterns Beechwoods SAC	Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI	7	6 Favourable	n/a
			1 Unfavourable - recovering	The Hangings. Little management and signs of deer browsing.
	Tring Woodlands SSSI	1	1 Unfavourable - recovering	Below FC targets for temporary open space, regeneration targets and canopy composition.
	Thorpe Park No.1 Gravel Pit SSSI	1	1 Favourable	n/a
	Wraysbury and Hythe End Gravel Pits SSSI	6	6 Favourable	n/a
	Wraysbury No.1 Gravel Pit SSSI	1	1 Favourable	n/a
	Wraysbury reservoir SSSI	1	1 Favourable	n/a

¹ Natural England. IRX <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>. Site condition data is provided for the SSSIs which legally underpin the European designation [Date Accessed: 20/01/21].

Appendix C – Chilterns Beechwoods SAC – Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI – Suggested SANG Guidelines

Suggested SANG Guidelines replicated from Appendix 13 of Panter, C., Liley, D., Saunders, P., & Caals, Z. (2022). Visitor survey recreational impact assessment and mitigation requirements for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and the Dacorum Local Plan Report by Footprint Ecology for Dacorum Borough Council.

- SANG should be provided at a rate of 8ha per 1000 new residents; this per ha standard is equivalent to 0.0192ha per dwelling (assuming an occupancy rate of 2.4 people per dwelling).
- Sites with sports grounds, playing fields or children's play areas are unlikely to meet the criteria for SANG or if such features are present they should not be counted towards the per ha standard.
- Where sites have existing visitor use, this existing use will need to be taken into account when applying the per ha standard. This will require visitor survey data to be available. Sites are likely to have additional capacity where average visitor use is less than 1 person per ha per hour⁶⁶. Where existing sites are already well used, there will be a need to demonstrate that the measures will be effective, and this may require some delivery upfront.
- The focus for the SANGs should be large sites of at least 40ha (which will accommodate suitably long routes⁶⁷), however smaller sites (15ha and above) may work, depending on the location and quality.
- SANGs should provide parking that is free or significantly cheaper than parking at the European sites. A guide to parking provision should be in the region of 1.5 spaces per ha of SANG⁶⁸.
- They should be quiet countryside locations, away from traffic noise (i.e. the motorway), industrial sites etc. They should have a sense of space, and be a viable alternative to the Chilterns Beechwoods.
- They should contain a variety of habitats and be scenic, ideally with views.
- They should provide attractive, informal areas for dog walking: a range of walk lengths on relatively dry terrain, including some of at least 2.5km where dogs can be safely off the lead during the whole walk.
- They should provide routes that attract walkers, potentially including families. Walks are likely to need to be circuits with some interest (such as viewpoints, heritage features etc.).
- The site(s) should provide access all year round, without areas becoming waterlogged or inaccessible due to wet or muddy terrain.
- They should provide routes that work for cycling, potentially accommodating family cycling groups and mountain bikes as a low-key destination.

⁶⁶ This provides a guide or approximate benchmark, typically busier than the relevant European sites but less than an urban park (see Liley et al., 2015). Sites will need to be considered on a case-case basis.

⁶⁷ A square with sides of 625m would be just under 40ha and provide for a linear route (around the perimeter) of 2.5km.

⁶⁸ This figure will depend on how close the SANG is to housing and the proportion of visitors that might arrive on foot or by bicycle. A busy SANG site might be expected to have up to 1 person visiting per ha per hour. Given that visitor numbers will not be constant every hour (i.e. there will be peak times of visiting) and easy parking is likely to be an important draw (meaning a need to ensure confidence to park), we suggest 1.5 spaces per ha.

- Access points to the SANG(s) should be primarily within a 5km radius or 10 minute drive and easily accessible by road from the development. Some direct foot access and good access routes for cyclists would be ideal. Direct access on foot would mean some SANG provision within around 500m radius of proposed housing locations.
- SANGs should be recognisable as a 'destination' such that sporadic visitors are drawn from a wide area and such that the site also attracts more regular (at least weekly) visitors. As such they will need to be positively promoted and welcoming.
- On-site infrastructure should be relatively low key, and could include the following as appropriate:
 - Small scale visitor centre/shelter(not necessarily staffed)
 - Interpretation (providing information about the area)
Wayfinding infrastructure to direct people around the site
 - Some surfaced paths/boardwalks
 - Wildlife viewing facilities (such as screens)
 - Range of paths (some waymarked) that provide a range different routes and circuits, potentially including some longer routes for cycling (perhaps family groups and relatively low-key mountain bike circuits) but not such that other access (e.g. appeal to dog walkers) is compromised
 - Access to water for dogs to drink, bathe and splash in
 - Benches/informal seating
Viewpoints
- SANGs will need to be promoted through a range of different ways, including signage, so that they are easy to find and local residents (both new and existing) are well aware of the site.
- SANGs will need to provide access in perpetuity, and therefore require some legal mechanism to ensure this.
- Sites with significant nature conservation interest (SSSI) or particularly vulnerable species present are unlikely to be suitable as SANG.

Ecological Services
Green Infrastructure
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Landscape Character Assessment
Habitats Regulations Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Sustainability Appraisal



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Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination in the workplace, in the provision of services and in wider society.

The duty requires all public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people

Public bodies demonstrate this due regard in different ways, including producing robust equality impact assessments when considering changes to policies and services.

An EqIA enables us to check the potential impacts on residents and employees of our policies, services and projects. It's an opportunity to challenge how we currently do things.

Carrying out an EqIA should not create extra work; it should be part of your normal service planning process. Most of the information required should already be available to you through other work already undertaken e.g. service user monitoring, analysis of complaints and national research.

The purpose of an EqIA is to *take account* of equality as plans develop, to promote and assist the consideration of equalities issues arising in plans and proposals and to ensure that where possible adverse or disproportionate impacts are minimised and positive impacts are maximised. As such where possible an EqIA should be started at the outset of a project/proposal and continually be developed and reviewed until a final proposal is adopted. An EqIA should be used to ensure decision makers have all the information they need regarding potential impacts to ensure they have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making judgements.

Carrying out EqIAs should be an integral part of policy or service development/change and larger projects may need more than one EqIA if different areas are impacted by the change.

Any project that requires consultation will automatically require an EqIA.

All approved and signed EqIAs are recorded in a central register. Please email your completed draft EqIA to equalities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk. Previous EqIAs can be made available for information upon request. For any questions or if you require support in completing your EqIA please contact Maria Damigos and Natalie Donhou Morley directly.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Part A (Initial assessment) - Section 1 - Background

Proposal/Brief Title: AGT1 Supplementary Planning Document – Adoption Version

OneDrive link to report/policy:

Related policies: Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan

Date: 23 06 2023

Type of strategy, policy, project or service:

Please tick one of the following:

- Existing
- New or proposed
- Changing, update or revision
- Other (please explain)

This assessment was created by:

Name: Simon Meecham

Job Title: Lead Local Plan Consultant

Email address: Simon.Meecham@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

Supplementary Planning Documents provide guidance to implement Local Plan policies. This Supplementary Planning Document applies to the central planning areas of Buckinghamshire. The central planning area is covered by the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. This means that this Supplementary Planning Document will not apply to the south, west or east planning areas.

The AGT1 Supplementary Planning Document sets out a framework masterplan for how development should come forward for the allocation AGT1.

The Draft SPD underwent a full public consultation between September and November 2022. All representations received have been considered and this Adopted SPD reflects changes the council considers necessary to improve the SPD.

What outcomes do we want to achieve?

Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence? No

Please explain your answer: This is new guidance to existing policy.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Does this proposal plan to reduce a service, activity or presence? No

Please explain your answer: This is new guidance to existing policy.

Does this proposal plan to introduce, review or change a policy, strategy or procedure? No

Please explain your answer: This is new guidance to existing policy.

Does this proposal affect service users and/or customers, or the wider community? No

Please explain your answer: This is new guidance to existing policy.

Does this proposal affect employees? Yes

Please explain your answer: It will aid the interpretation of policy.

Will employees require training to deliver this proposal? No

Please explain your answer: Advice will be available from Planning Policy.

Has any engagement /consultation been carried out, or is planned in the future? Yes

Please explain your answer: Full public consultation (as per the requirements of regulations and in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement) was carried out in September to November 2022.

Section 2 - Impacts

Please highlight potential impacts (including unintended impacts or consequences) for each protected characteristic*/equality groups below. Where there are negative or positive impacts please give more details of the impact. Where the impacts are unclear please explain why.

Age*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details:

Disability*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	-------------



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Details:

Pregnancy & maternity*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	-------------

Details:

Race & Ethnicity*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	-------------

Details:

Marriage & Civil Partnership*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	-------------

Details:

Religion & Belief*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	-------------

Details:

Sex*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	-------------

Details:

Sexual Orientation*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	-------------

Details:

Gender Reassignment*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	-------------

Details:

Gender identity

Positive	Negative	Unclear	None
----------	----------	---------	-------------

Details:



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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Carers				
Positive	Negative	Unclear		None
Details:				
Rural isolation				
Positive	Negative	Unclear		None
Details:				
Single parent families				
Positive	Negative	Unclear		None
Details:				
Poverty (social & economic deprivation)				
Positive	Negative	Unclear		None
Details:				
Military families / veterans				
Positive	Negative	Unclear		None
Details:				



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Section 3 – Is a full assessment required?

If you have answered yes to any of the initial assessment questions in section 1 of this EqIA, or have indicated a negative or unclear impact in section 2, it is likely you will need to complete part B of the EqIA form. Should you need guidance as to whether a full EqIA is needed at this time please contact Maria Damigos or Natalie Donhou Morley before continuing.

Following completion of part A, is part B completion required?

- Yes
- No**
- Not required at this time

Explain your answer:

The document itself is unlikely to have impacts on protected groups. The consultation document will be available in an accessible format in accordance with Buckinghamshire Council's guidelines.

Have you completed an DPIA for this project/change? Yes

(As you are completing an EqIA, you may also require a DPIA - for more information please contact dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

Section 4 – Sign off (Only complete when NOT completing Part B)

Officer completing this assessment: Simon Meecham Date: 16 05 2023

Equality advice sought from: (Natalie Donhou Morley & Maria Domigos) Date: 26 05 2023

Service Director sign off: Steve Bambrick Date: 22 05 2023

CMT sign off (*if deemed necessary by Service Director*) sign off: (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date) N/A

Next review Date: (Please insert Date) N/A

If required please complete part B (full assessment)

Part B (Full assessment) - Section 5 – Further information

Will there be an impact on any other functions, services or policies? If so, please provide more detail:

Are there any potential barriers to implementing changes to your service/strategy/policy/project?



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Section 6 - Information gathering – what do you need to know about your customers and making a judgement about potential impacts on them?

What data do you already have about your service users, or the people your policy or strategy will have an impact on, that is broken down by protected characteristics* and equality groups (non-statutory)?

Guidance note (delete after completion)

This will be more important for negative or unclear impacts identified in Section 2 above.

National data and research can be useful in identifying barriers, issues and areas where equality is likely to be a priority. These include Research undertaken by the Equality & Human Rights Commission, research undertaken by trades unions, commissioned research and reports, census data, labour force surveys

Institutional data such as ethnic monitoring data, surveys, consultations, and complaints and grievances can be used to identify local data.

Please also consider 'missing data' as this may be indicative of discriminatory practice.

Once all available data has been gathered, it should be examined to check whether there is evidence of any of the following: lower take up/participation rates by disadvantaged groups generally, lower take up/participation by certain groups, eligibility criteria which disadvantages groups, access to services being reduced or denied to people, people facing increased difficulty as a result of a policy/practice, a policy/practice resulting in reduced benefits for equality groups.

Age*:

Disability*:

Pregnancy and maternity*:

Race*:

Marriage & Civil Partnership*:

Religion or belief*:

Sex*:

Sexual orientation*:

Gender re-assignment*:

Gender identity:

Carers:

Rural isolation:

Single parent families:



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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Poverty (social & economic deprivation):

Military families / veterans:

Do you need any further information broken down by protected characteristic or equality group to inform this EqIA?

- Yes
- No

If yes, list here to help you gather data for the action plan in Section 11

Section 7 – Negative effects, impacts or consequences

Is there any potential for or actual direct or indirect discrimination or a disproportionate effect on a protected group or equality group?

Guidance note: Direct discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic, such as sex or race or an equalities group, such as being a carer. For example, someone is not offered a promotion because they're a woman and the job goes to a less qualified man. Indirect discrimination can happen when there are rules or arrangements that apply to a group of employees or job applicants, but in practice are less fair to a certain protected characteristic.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure at this time

What are the potential negative effects, impacts or consequences and how have, or may, they arise:

Guidance note (delete after completion)

Please state what the potential negative impact (s) are – Section 8 allows you to set out any minimising/mitigating actions.

State what the negative impact(s) are for each group, identified in Section 2. In addition, you should also consider and state potential risks associated with your proposal.

Section 8 – Proposals to remove or minimise negative effects, impacts or consequences

How is it proposed to mitigate or minimise the negative effects, impacts or consequences identified in Section 7?

Guidance Note (delete after completion)



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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Include details of steps proposed or taken to ensure that these measures will address and remove (or where not possible, minimise) any negative impacts identified above and by when. How severe are these impacts likely to be? Please also state how you will monitor the impact of your proposal once implemented.

What measures will be put in place to mitigate or minimise negative impact (provide details, including details of and additional consultation undertaken/to be carried out in the future). Please also identify actions you will take to assess whether these measures have addressed or will address and remove or minimise any negative impacts identified in your analysis? Please provide details. If you are unable to identify measures to mitigate/minimise impacts, please state so and provide a brief explanation.

Section 9 - Other factors to take into consideration:

Guidance note (delete after completion)

This should include balancing or other factors for decision makers to take into consideration such as positive impacts (financial or otherwise), costs and resources

Section 10 - Conclusion:

Section 11 - Action Planning

Guidance note (delete after completion)

Where the policy or practice would result in unavoidable or potentially unlawful impacts changes should clearly be made where possible and specific actions should be identified and noted in the action plan. The objectives of the policy or practice should be re-examined to find out if there is an alternative way of meeting the desired objectives without the adverse impact, and potentially creating a positive one.

Where impacts are unavoidable the objective of completing the EqIA and the action plan is to demonstrate that impacts have been considered as part of the decision making process to ensure compliance with the PSED. An example to show how this works - where a council decides to close a care home, if they do so without considering the equalities implications (via an EqIA or otherwise) the decision is extremely likely to be quashed by the Courts on a challenge, as per previous case law. This would happen even if it is almost certain that examination of the equalities implications will have little or no impact on the final decision (e.g. due to a lack of resources to pay for the care home) - because the PSED was not part of the decision making process.

A properly completed EqIA should be a full and complete record to show that all equalities implications and the PSED were appropriately considered by the decision maker.

If the adverse impact is potentially unlawful and alternatives cannot be found, the policy or practice may need to be completely redesigned.



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

Actions to be taken to address negative effects, impacts or consequences and maximise positive impacts	Potential Outcomes	Lead	Timescales

Section 12 - Monitoring Arrangements

What are the plans to monitor the actual and/or final impact? (The EqIA will help anticipate likely effect but final impact may only be known after implementation)

What are the proposals for reviewing and reporting actual impact?

Section 13 - Part A and B Sign off – (If Part B has not been completed please complete Section 4)

Officer completing Part A and B assessment: (Please insert Name(s)) Date: (Please insert Date)

Equality advice sought from: (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)

Service Director sign off: (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)

CMT sign off (if deemed necessary by Service Director) sign off: (Please insert name) Date: (Please insert Date)

Next review date:

Buckinghamshire Council

Data Protection Impact Assessment Screening Questionnaire

What is a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)? A DPIA is a process which assists the Council in identifying and minimising the privacy risks of new projects, services or policies. The DPIA will help to ensure that potential problems are identified at an early stage, when addressing them will often be simpler and less costly. A DPIA enables an organisation to systematically and thoroughly analyse how a particular project or system will affect the privacy of the individuals involved.

With this in mind please begin by completing the screening questions below

	Category	Screening question	Yes/No
1.1	Identity	Will the proposed activity involve the collection of new information about individuals? <i>i.e. information you have not previously collected/recorded before</i>	No
1.2	Identity	Will the proposed activity compel individuals to provide information about themselves?	No
1.3	Multiple organisations	Will information about individuals be disclosed to organisations or people who have not previously had routine access to the information?	No
1.4	Data	Are you using information about individuals for a purpose it is not currently used for, or in a way it is not currently used?	No
1.5	Data	Does the proposed activity involve using new technology which might be perceived as being privacy intruding for example biometrics or facial recognition?	No
1.6	Data	Will the proposed activity result in you making decisions or taking action against <u>individuals</u> in ways which could have a significant impact on them?	No
1.7	Data	Is the information about individuals of a kind particularly likely to raise privacy concerns or expectations? For example health records, criminal records, or other information that people are likely to consider as private?	No
1.8	Data	Will the proposed activity require you to contact individuals in ways which they may find intrusive?	No

If you answer 'Yes' to any of the questions above you must complete a full DPIA and inform your manager of this (if this is a project, you must inform the Project Sponsor too).

Please note, answering 'No' to all of the above questions does not mean that there are no privacy/data risks, as previous processes may not have been as robust as they are now. If you answer 'No' to all of the above but have not completed a DPIA for 2 or more years please contact the Information Management team for advice.

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Report to Cabinet

Date:	10 October 2023
Title:	Devolution & Asset Management Policy
Cabinet Member(s):	Cllr Arif Hussain, Cabinet Member for Communities
Contact officer:	Tim Weetman
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	To agree the updated Devolution & Asset Management Policy
Reason for decision:	The decision will ensure that the Devolution & Asset Management Policy reflects the current approach to the management of the programme.

1. Executive summary

Buckinghamshire Council made a commitment to devolution of property and assets to town and parish councils and other community organisations as part of the Unitary business case. To support the Council's devolution programme, a Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy was published in November 2019 setting out the approach and arrangements for the devolution of the responsibility for running services and community asset transfer. Over time, the approach to the management of the programme has been refined as we have learnt more about the devolution of assets. This report provides Cabinet with an updated policy for approval that better reflects the current approach.

2. Content of the report

- 2.1 Buckinghamshire Council has a strong commitment to localism as demonstrated through the investment in community boards and the development of the town and

parish charter. Devolution is not new in Buckinghamshire and there are several examples from legacy councils where Buckinghamshire Council services are devolved to town and parish councils, particularly in relation to grass-cutting, green spaces and, highways services.

- 2.2 To support the Council's devolution programme, a Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy was published in November 2019. The Policy sets out the approach and arrangements for the both the devolution of the responsibility for running services and community asset transfer.
- 2.3 The policy was published before the devolution programme got fully underway and the implementation of the pilot projects started. The implementation of the five pilot projects has undoubtedly been more complex and time consuming than anticipated. Accordingly, lessons have been learned on the way. As a result, there is a need to refresh the policy to bring it up to date with the current approach in order that a clear direction of travel is given to town and parish councils and other local organisation who may be interested in pursuing a devolution opportunity.

3. Next steps and future approach

- 3.1 The updated policy is provided as part of this report. There are several small changes to the Devolution and Asset Management Policy for Cabinet Members to note, as follows:
 - A clearer focus on the process for the devolution of assets
 - Reference to freehold only being considered on an exceptional basis, with a final decision made by Cabinet
 - The Devolution Board considering the criteria with which to assess applications on a case-by-case basis
 - Heads of Terms to be agreed at the end of the 'Expressions of Interest' stage to help applicants develop a business case that responds to any specification or terms provided by the Council
 - Car parks owned and/or run by Buckinghamshire Council where they generate income, hold an operational benefit, or retain a commercial interest are out of scope. The previous version had a blanket approach to all car parks being out of scope

4. Other options considered

- 4.1 The only other option would be to not update the policy. However, it is likely to be confusing or disappointing to town and parish councils or other local organisations

interested in a devolution opportunity if the practical approach differs from that which is published.

5. Legal and financial implications

Financial implications

- 5.1 The Devolution and Asset Transfer policy ensures that due diligence is carried out around all proposed transfers to ensure that the financial implications are clearly understood before any decisions are made and that any eventual transfers will not result in a net cost to the council or the loss of an income generating asset.

Legal Implications

- 5.2 The legal implications of each devolution pilot project are considered as part of the decision-making process. Legal consideration is built into the process for considering requests as per the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy.

6. Corporate implications

- 6.1 Devolution of assets involves the transfer of Council property, land or other assets to Parish or Town Councils or community organisations. The Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy sets out that longer-term leases will be granted – usually over 25 years.
- 6.2 There are no HR, climate change, sustainability, equality implications or value for money considerations arising from this report.

7. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 7.1 The approach set out in the Devolution & Asset Transfer Policy, was presented to the Members' Devolution Board on 28 April 2023.
- 7.2 As projects come forward local members will be consulted.

8. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 8.1 Once the new policy is agreed we will communicate this to all local members and Town and Parish Councils.

9. Next steps and review

- 9.1 Further communication will need to take place with local Members and Town and Parish Councils in order that expectations are managed.
- 9.2 The Communities & Localism Select Committee have asked for an update on the Devolution Programme at their meeting scheduled for 22 November 2023.

10. Background papers

- 10.1 Current service devolution and asset transfer policy:

https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/documents/14097/Service_Devolution_and_Asset_Transfer_Policy_-_print_version.pdf

11. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 11.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.



Service Devolution & Asset Transfer Policy



October 2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Buckinghamshire Council recognises the benefits of devolving services and assets to local communities.
- 1.2 We will consider devolving appropriate community assets and services where there is an additional benefit to local communities.
- 1.3 This policy document will be reviewed annually.

2. Scope of this Policy

- 2.1 The scope of this policy document applies to all types of devolution transfer by Buckinghamshire Council – both the devolution of the responsibility for running services and community asset transfer.
- 2.2 Service devolution involves the transfer of the responsibility for running a service from Buckinghamshire Council to another local body.
- 2.3 Community asset transfer involves the transfer of ownership of land, buildings, or other assets from a statutory body to a community organisation in order to achieve a greater public benefit.
- 2.4 The application of this policy may be triggered by either external requests from local organisations and/or triggered by Buckinghamshire Council through an identification by a service area that an asset is declared 'surplus to requirements'.

3. Types of Transfer Arrangement

- 3.1 The transfer of the responsibility for running a service and/or an asset will broadly be managed through different approaches as set out below. A devolution board will determine the most appropriate arrangement on a case- by-case basis considering any associated legislative frameworks relating to procurement, asset disposal or subsidy control. The different types of arrangement are broadly:
- Service Level Agreement - Where a service is devolved, Buckinghamshire Council may set out a service level agreement on the quality standards and activity expected in return for a devolved budget.
 - Freehold Transfer - This is where an asset is permanently transferred to a local organisation subject to any conditions attached.
 - Long Term Lease - 25 years or more in relation to a building.
 - Short Term Lease or other management arrangement - A lease less than 25 years or a license to occupy or other tenancy agreement.
- 3.2 There is a policy presumption that where an asset is to be transferred this will be offered on the basis of a long-term lease, rather than freehold or short-term lease arrangements. This is to provide opportunities for the applicant to consider investment in the asset and/or other funding opportunities whilst ensuring that the asset continues to be used for public benefit.
- 3.3 Short term lease arrangements may be considered under pilot arrangements; however, it is recognised that they may hinder the applicant in planning and investing in a community service without long term certainty.
- 3.4 Freehold transfers will only be considered where exceptional circumstances exist and where there is a clear benefit of this approach to Buckinghamshire Council and the local community. The final decision on a transfer of freehold will be made by the Council's Cabinet.

4. Eligibility and Assessment Criteria

4.1 The following eligibility criteria would apply:

Criteria	Description
a)	This Service Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy is open to: Parish or town councils Unincorporated charitable organisations Companies limited by guarantee with charitable status Community Interest Companies, limited by guarantee Community Benefit Industrial & Provident Society with an asset lock Community Interest Company, limited by shares
b)	Organisations must: Be legal entities Be non-profit making Have community and/or social objectives; and/or Be located within the boundaries of Buckinghamshire Council area or can demonstrate that they provide services within the area to residents.
c)	All community assets must remain open to the wider public. This does not disqualify special interest proposals or groups. However, evidence must be provided of how the asset will be used in an inclusive way.
d)	Applicants must provide full contact details for the organisation, including someone with the relevant decision-making authority.
e)	Applicants must provide supporting evidence where required and complete all sections of required forms.

4.2 Buckinghamshire Council will not consider expressions of interest from organisations which are political or with political affiliations; organisations engaged in supporting candidates for political office; individuals or businesses who intend primarily to run the service or use the asset for commercial gain.

4.3 In addition to the eligibility criteria set out above, the assessment of requests will consider a range of other criteria, including but not limited to:

- Community benefit
- Local control
- Sustainability
- Governance of legal structure
- Financial standing
- Maintenance
- Commitment

- 4.4 The Devolution Board will determine appropriate criteria for each project on a case-by-case basis. Further details on the assessment criteria are set out in Annex C.

5. Principles

- 5.1 Buckinghamshire Council is committed to applying the following principles in how it considers devolution requests:
- Being transparent in the process for devolution, including timelines and decision-making, with as much information published online as possible.
 - Providing timely information to local organisations to make an initial view on whether they are interested in discussing devolution arrangements.
 - Assessing devolution requests fairly through the application of this policy.
 - Transferring the budget for running a service when Buckinghamshire Council is requiring ongoing specific quality/activity standards to be met. Where no specific service standards are expected by Buckinghamshire Council it is anticipated that following a transfer of the service/asset that the future costs would be covered by the organisation taking on the service/asset.
 - Provide a named contact and respond in a timely manner to all devolution enquiries.

6. The Devolution Transfer Process

Decision-making

- 6.1 Following consideration of devolution requests, and negotiations, a decision by Buckinghamshire Council and the respective applicant organisation is needed on the sign-off of individual devolution transfers. All such decisions will be taken in accordance with this policy and Buckinghamshire Council's Constitution. Key decisions on significant devolution transfers will be taken by Cabinet and/or Leader decision, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet members. Non-key decisions will be taken by the relevant officers in accordance with the scheme of delegation.
- 6.2 An advisory Devolution Board will consider all devolution requests and oversee the devolution programme. This will be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Communities and comprise the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources, the Cabinet Member for Transport and senior officers from within the council from Policy and Improvement, Property & Assets, Legal, Finance and the incumbent service in respect of service devolution.
- 6.3 The Board will make recommendations to the relevant decision-maker (officer/member) on the detail of transfer agreement terms and sign-off.
- 6.4 The Council may need to balance the competing interests of community groups and an assessment will need to be made as to the option that will deliver most sustainable benefit to the local community. Where possible, potential beneficiaries can be brought together in a partnership, where this can result in greater benefit to residents.

Pre-Application Stage

- 6.5 Buckinghamshire Council can provide support to town and parish councils to enable them to consider submitting expressions of interest. This can include:
- Online guidance and information including template expressions of interest form and business plan.
 - Provision of information on the specification of services to help inform the development of proposals.
 - A named contact to support organisations to submit expressions of interest, support business plan development and to keep the applicant updated at all stages of the transfer process.

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest Submission

- 6.6 Buckinghamshire Council will then:
- Check that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria to be considered, and notify the applicant accordingly.
 - Notify the relevant local member(s) and seek their views.
 - For service devolution, information will be provided to the applicant in regard to service specifications and costs (where possible an estimate of disaggregated costs).

For community assets, the following information will be provided to the applicant:

- Existing costs for maintenance of the asset.
- Condition survey report providing an overview of the property's condition.
- If the applicant wishes to then proceed with the transfer request, in light of this information, the expression of interest will be considered by the Devolution Board.

The Devolution Board will determine if the application passes the stage 1 assessment and next steps which are:

- Business plan required before decision.
- Business plan not required and decision can be agreed (either as an offer decision or Cabinet Member if a key decision).
- Application rejected.
- Proposed Heads of Terms will be assessed and agreed by the Devolution Board, and provided to the applicant to inform any business case.

Stage 2: Business Plan Stage

- 6.7 A business plan will be required where an asset or service request is of value greater than £100,000 and/or for all key decisions.
- 6.8 The Council recognises that completing a business plan will take the applicant time and effort and will only ask organisations that meet all the eligibility criteria.
- 6.9 Where it is agreed to carry out a pilot of a wide-spread devolution of assets and services to a town or parish council, a single business case will be required. This document would be co-developed in partnership.
- 6.10 All business plans will be considered by the Devolution Board prior to a recommendation to the decision-maker (normally the Cabinet Member).
- 6.11 If a business plan is required it is anticipated that supporting evidence will also be requested on the following areas:
- Health & safety arrangements in place
 - Safeguarding arrangements
 - Staffing and/or contractual arrangements
 - Insurance
 - Operational procedures
 - Governance
 - Financial standing
 - Property management and maintenance
 - Proposed improvements and / or investment in the asset
- 6.12 The Council will consult local member(s) and Community Boards prior to a decision on transfers that require a business plan.

Stage 3: Negotiation and Transfer

6.13 The decision on the sign-off of all transfers will be made in accordance with decision-making rules as set out in Buckinghamshire Council's constitution.

Appeals

6.14 Applications that go forward for a decision will be made publicly available and objections / representations can be submitted. Cabinet / the Leader is able to put those objections back to the Devolution Board for further consideration as appropriate.

6.15 Any other matters will be managed in line with the Council's complaints procedure.

Annex A: Devolution Process Flowchart

Devolution and Asset Transfer Policy

For service devolution, information will be provided to the applicant in regard to service specifications and costs (where possible an estimate of disaggregated costs).

For community assets, the following information will be provided to the applicant:

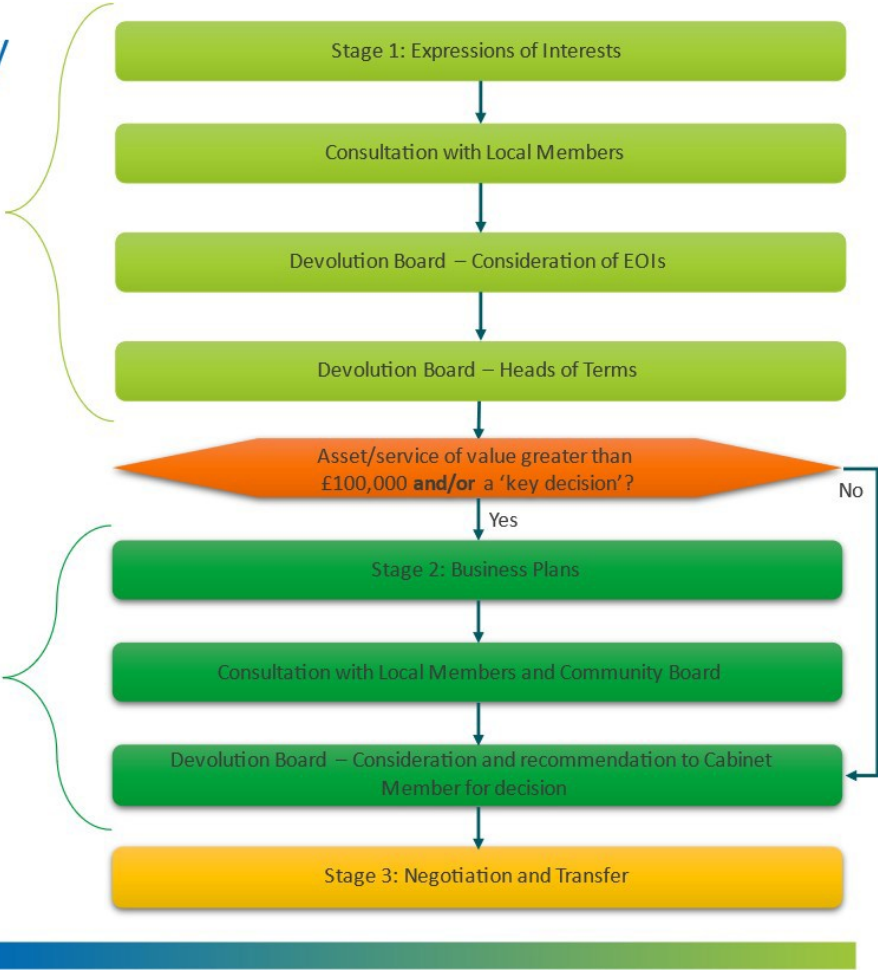
- Existing costs for maintenance of the asset.
- Condition survey report.

If the applicant wishes to then proceed with the transfer request, in light of this information, then the expression of interest will be considered by the Devolution Board.

A business plan will not be required to be submitted where a standard package is offered by Buckinghamshire Council.

If a business plan is required it is anticipated that supporting evidence will also be requested on the following areas:

- Health & safety arrangements in place
- Safeguarding arrangements
- Staffing and/or contractual arrangements
- Insurance
- Operational procedures
- Governance
- Financial standing
- Property management and maintenance
- Proposed improvement and / or investment in the asset



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Annex B: Assets out of scope

In Buckinghamshire Council's devolution programme some types of assets are considered out of scope of this policy. This means that Buckinghamshire Council will not consider such requests under this policy.

Some types of assets are best managed strategically and thereby wish to be retained by Buckinghamshire Council, just as others are better managed locally.

The following asset areas are out of scope:

- Assets held for investment purposes: both assets that generate a net income for Buckinghamshire Council and those held for future capital, revenue regeneration or corporate realisations.
- Vacant land or buildings that may generate a capital receipt, regeneration, revenue aspirations, or corporate aspirations.
- Land held for future development or with underlying development potential (both short and long term), as it would not be financially prudent to devolve land and be required to repurchase it in the future.
- Car parks owned and/or run by Buckinghamshire Council where they generate income, hold an operational benefit or retain a commercial interest.
- Leisure centres owned and/or run by Buckinghamshire Council.
- Buildings used solely as delivery sites for Buckinghamshire Council services.
- Potential buildings which may be considered as Community Access Points/Hubs in later years, to ensure maximum potential for building redevelopment/investment.

Annex C: Assessment Criteria

All applicants will be required to complete an Expression of Interest. A Business Plan will also be required at stage 2 in relation to transfer requests over the value of £100,000 for services/assets and in relation to all transfers which require a key decision.

Template forms will be published online as part of a devolution support toolkit. These template forms will include sections to complete in relation to the criteria areas, with an expectation that more detailed information would be provided where a business plan is required.

Assessment Criteria Area	EOI Evidence	Business Plan Evidence
a) Community benefit	Statement of intended community benefit	Strong track record of delivery of community benefit. Evidence of community impact and resident consultation on proposal.
b) Local control	Meet organisational eligibility criteria.	Evidence that residents will be able to have a say in future decisions on the asset / services.
c) Sustainability	Ability to manage service/property.	Clear long term plan for ensuring viability. A risk assessment and how these risks will be mitigated.
d) Governance & legal structure	Meet eligibility criteria.	Settled legal entity with proven ability to manage change.
e) Financial standing	Established record of financial probity.	Established record of financial probity with evidence of long term planning.
f) Maintenance	Ability to manage service/property.	Proven record of managing maintenance issues.
g) Commitment	Willingness to participate in evaluation.	Willingness to participate in evaluation and share learning.