

Response ID ANON-54U7-EH4X-E

Submitted to The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire: Help us plan for the future
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Place

What do you most value about where you live?

Place - Belonging to a local community:

Place - Countryside / wildlife:

1

Place - Environment:

2

Place - Green spaces:

3

Place - Good local facilities (e.g. pub, shops, GP surgery, village hall, playground):

Place - Good transport links (e.g. close to train stations or main roads, cycling or walking):

Place - Historic buildings / areas:

Place - Quality of life:

Place - Quiet / isolated community:

If you have any other comments about what you value about where you live, please tell us here::

The Chilterns AONB is a nationally important landscape that needs to be protected and enhanced for the future. The 2019 Glover Report and the recent Government response are seeking to enhance the protection for AONBs. The situation is particularly acute in Buckinghamshire as there is intense pressure for development in and around the towns and villages within the AONB and its setting. The Council are right to prioritise brown over green and should be looking to locate new development outside the Chilterns AONB and the Green Belt.

Pressure on the Green Belt is also intense and the Council should raise the bar for accepting 'exceptional circumstances' for taking land out of the Green Belt. Removing the Green Belt status should be truly exceptional and only apply to small areas of land. There is enormous scope within the Green Belt and the AONB to retain the openness of the countryside and make a real difference to the Nature Recovery aims being set for Buckinghamshire by the Natural Environment Partnership.

The new Local Plan must include more focus on landscape, biodiversity and climate change than its predecessors. It really must address the issue of managing competing land uses such as housing, biodiversity and food production.

Homes

Do you think you will want / or need to move into a new home in the next five years?

I don't know

Homes

In the future we need to build many more new homes in Buckinghamshire. What do you think are the best locations for new homes?

Locations for homes - Close to a main town:

Locations for homes - Close to a town / village:

Locations for homes - In new towns / villages:

Locations for homes - Land which has been previously built on (brownfield site):

3

Locations for homes - Within existing towns:

1

Locations for homes - Within existing villages:

2

Locations for homes - Other:

If 'Other', please give details here::

It is essential that the Plan includes a brownfield before greenfield policy to maximise the reuse of land and protect areas of AONB, Green Belt and open countryside. Pressure for development needs to be taken off the Chilterns, including making provision for the likely extension to the area of the AONB as set out in the Government's response to the Glover Review of national landscapes.

Whilst it is unclear what the Government's planning reforms will propose in terms of calculation of housing numbers, we would hope that AONB and Green Belt designation would be a reason to reduce the housing numbers in the Chilterns. Now that the Council covers the whole of Buckinghamshire, there is an option to consider placing the majority of development in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc in the north of the county where it could link with the proposed east-west rail link.

If development is to take place to the north, then an integrated sustainable transport and employment measures are required to avoid a significant increase in commuter traffic passing through the Chilterns. The Plan should embrace increased working from home to reduce vehicle movements and keep people within their local community during the working day.

Social housing

On a scale of 1 to 10, should the Council identify sufficient additional new homes to clear our housing waiting list?

Social housing - Please select::

7

Key workers

On a scale of 1 to 10, do you agree that the Council should make provisions to build additional new homes for key sector workers in Buckinghamshire?

Social housing - Please select::

7

Nature

What improvements to the natural environment would you like to see in your area? (Select all that apply)

Community orchards, Improve air quality, Linking pathways and natural environments, More green spaces, More ponds, Noise reduction, Sustainable building materials and designs, Tree planting

Please give details here::

Nature recovery and landscape protection and enhancement must be at the core of the Plan and be fully integrated into all proposals. This includes full contributions to nature recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain with enhancement being provided on site rather than allowing developers to pay financial contributions instead. A strategic approach to the development and enhancement of wildlife networks needs to be part of the emerging plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain must be set up in such a way that the 10% (or ideally 20% in the AONB) should be realised on completion of a development, rather than realised many years later with a drop in biodiversity value in between. Measures need to be put in place to ensure long term biodiversity management, led by a management organisation and guided by a long-term management plan.

The Plan needs to give strong protection to the Chilterns Chalk Streams, avoiding development that would physically impact on their corridors or increase water abstraction to supply new homes. It is essential that the Council work with Water Resources South East in order to address water supply in the long term.

The Plan should also include strong policies relating to the protection and enhancement of blue infrastructure (rivers, canals, wetlands) and their adjacent corridors. These can provide a strong basis for an interconnected network of wildlife habitats as well as providing variety and interest to local landscapes. Links with River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Plans are essential.

Work and activity

What are your views on supporting the local economy?

Work and activity - Having employment sites which are easy to get to using public transport, walking and cycling, as well as by car:

1

Work and activity - Land / sites for new infrastructure like roads, utility services, etc:

Work and activity - Land / sites for new jobs:

Work and activity - Protecting existing employment sites:

Work and activity - Other:

If 'Other', please give details here::

Climate change

The policies we include in a Local Plan for Buckinghamshire could help to mitigate climate change. How important do you think each of these is to mitigate the impacts of climate change and reduce our carbon footprint?

Climate change - Better facilities for cycling and walking:

Climate change - Low carbon heating systems and energy efficiency measures in new buildings:

Climate change - More facilities for electric vehicles:

Climate change - More green spaces and tree planting:

3

Climate change - On-site renewable energy generation:

Climate change - Protecting areas from flood risk and avoiding new building in high risk flood zones:

2

Climate change - Sustainable building materials and designs:

1

Climate change - Tighter water efficiency standards in new buildings:

Climate change - Other:

If 'Other', please give details here::

It is unclear why biodiversity and landscape (AONB) are included under this heading. They are both in the introductory section, but not included in the options. The biodiversity crisis needs to be addressed separately to climate change, although there are many linkages between the two.

The Plan needs to incorporate measures to ensure the resilience of the Chilterns to climate change, including food supply, wildlife habitats, flood risk management, water supply and renewable energy generation.

Sustainable transport modes, including public transport, walking and cycling need to be promoted and infrastructure needs to be developed to support electric car use as petrol and diesel use is phased out.

Infrastructure

What sort of new infrastructure will we need to plan for?

Infrastructure - Cycle lanes:

Infrastructure - Facilities for disabled people:

Infrastructure - Healthcare facilities:

Infrastructure - Power / water generation:

1

Infrastructure - Roads:

Infrastructure - Schools – primary and secondary:

Infrastructure - Telecommunications:

Infrastructure - Village halls / community buildings:

Infrastructure - Other:

2

If 'Other', please give details here::

The Plan needs to address sustainable transport across Buckinghamshire, promoting alternatives to the car. It needs to link to the regional strategy prepared by England's Economic Heartland and the proposed strategy for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

Buckinghamshire-wide strategic issues

Thinking about Buckinghamshire as a whole, the challenge of accommodating the need for new homes and other development, the importance of infrastructure, the challenges of climate change and the need to protect the environment, what do you think are the top three priorities we need to focus on?

Priority 1::

1. Protection of the AONB and Green Belt

Buckinghamshire is a highly constrained county due to these designations and also parts of the county being in areas of flood risk. In developing the Plan, the Council must set a very high bar for allowing development in the AONB and demonstrating exceptional circumstances for removing land from the Green Belt.

Government policy also seeks to restrict inappropriate development in the settings of AONBs, and this needs to be reflected in the new Plan.

The Government's recent response to the Glover Review proposes a strengthening of the protections of AONBs, an enhanced role for the Chilterns Conservation Board and a significant extension to the area covered by the Chilterns AONB. These all need to be addressed in detail in developing the new Plan.

The Plan should also protect the countryside through focussing development on existing settlements to enhance their contribution to sustainability. One example is the Chesham Masterplan, where the Chesham Renaissance CIC have a fully developed plan for regenerating the town centre. This is a model that could be applied to other settlements across the county.

Priority 2::

2. Nature Recovery

The Local Plan must link closely to Biodiversity Net Gain, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) to take a co-ordinated approach to developing wildlife habitats and networks across the county. A 20% biodiversity net gain should be required within the Chilterns AONB.

A particular focus should be on the protection and enhancement of the Chilterns Chalk Streams, which contain rare and precious habitats that are at risk through water abstraction to serve existing and proposed developments. To address this, the Plan needs to work closely with water companies and Water Resources South East to plan for water use on a regional and local scale.

Priority 3::

3. Adapting to climate change

The Plan should encourage a step change in the design of sustainable buildings to avoid a 'one size fits all' approach to housing developments. Hopefully the emerging design guide will encourage developments appropriate to their location and with sustainability measures incorporated.

The Plan must include a detailed consideration of domestic water consumption with the aim of reduce water use through the design of new homes and retro-fitting existing homes.

Should the Local Plan contain anything else?

Please tell us here::

The Plan needs to recognise that land is a limited resource and the right balance needs to be struck between housing development, biodiversity recovery and retaining productive farmland.

As part of its proposals to protect the environment, the Plan should include proposals to enhance air quality across Buckinghamshire, particularly focussing on current problem areas.

More about you

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, what is your organisation?

Please give details here::

Chiltern Society

Where do you live?

Village, town or city::

Chesham

What is your postcode?

We are asking this so we can understand the experience of people living in different areas. You don't have to provide your postcode but the information will help us plan and offer better services.: