



LOCAL PLAN for Buckinghamshire

Draft Plan Consultation
Part A - Spatial Strategy

September 2025



Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. National Context.....	4
3. Buckinghamshire	5
Spatial Portrait	5
4. Local Plan Vision	8
5. Local Objectives.....	9
Planning for the Natural and Built Environment	9
Planning for Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change	10
Planning for New Housing	11
New Towns.....	12
Planning for Quality of Place.....	12
Planning for Community Health and Wellbeing	13
Planning for Infrastructure	15
Planning for New Jobs.....	17
Planning for Town Centres.....	18
Planning for Transport, Physical and Digital Connectivity	19
6. Local Plan Spatial Strategy.....	21
Housing	21
Approach 1: Brownfield Sites within Existing Towns and Villages.....	22
Approach 2: Growth on the Edges of Existing Main Towns.....	24
Approach 3: New Towns	26
Approach 4: Development at Transport Hubs	29
Approach 5: Expansion near key employment areas	31
Approach 6: Limited Expansion of Villages	32
Approach 7: Expanding Urban Areas on the Edge of Buckinghamshire	34
Summary of Approaches to Potential Housing Supply	38
Approach to Meeting Travelling Communities Accommodation	38

7. Employment Spatial Strategy 39

 The Level of Employment Growth 40

 Types of New Employment Premises and Land..... 41

 Location of New Employment 41

 Data Centres 42

 Rural Businesses and Other Business Needs 42

 Approaches for Identifying New Employment Allocations:..... 42

1. Introduction

This draft Local Plan for Buckinghamshire considers the current and future development needs of the county, setting out requirements for the delivery of new homes, jobs and infrastructure. We must plan to respond to challenges such as climate change, increasing population and protecting areas of sensitive landscape such as the Chilterns. We have been working and will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure necessary infrastructure to support new development is in the right place and delivered at the right time, ensuring residents and employees in Buckinghamshire day-to-day needs are met. This plan is focussed on finding solutions to these challenges.

Previous engagement has taken place with an 'attitudes survey' and 'draft vision and objectives' consultations. Taking into account your feedback, the vision and objectives have now been finalised and underpin this next stage of the draft Local Plan and published in a Consultation Statement.

This draft Local Plan sets out how we are developing the spatial strategy for Buckinghamshire, which includes different approaches for where future housing and employment could be located. The evidence to underpin this is underway including a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, New and Expanded Settlement Study and Green Belt Assessment. Once these studies have been completed this will inform site allocations for the plan. No final decisions have been taken on the location of development at this stage. The plans and diagrams in this consultation document are for illustrative purposes. Proposed housing numbers are a snapshot of where we have got to developing the plan so far, this will change once the technical studies have been completed. The indicative numbers show the direction of travel.

How to Have Your Say

The consultation on this document will start on 17 September and conclude on 29 October 2025 at 23.59 pm. We will review all the comments we receive and consider these to help us shape the final publication version of the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, before it is submitted for an independent examination.

You can share your views on the draft plan in the following ways:

- complete the online survey at www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/draft-local-plan
- complete, and return, a printed version of the survey
- email us at planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- write to us at Draft Local Plan Consultation, Planning Policy, Buckinghamshire Council, Walton Street, Aylesbury, HP20 1UA

2. National Context

The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire is informed by government policy. The key government policy informing the development of the Local Plan is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

The NPPF says that the Local Plan should balance economic, social and environmental objectives to plan for the development needs of Buckinghamshire over at least the next 15 years, as well as aligning growth and infrastructure, improve the environment and mitigate and adapt to climate change. This means we should meet the objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met in neighbouring areas.

In order to understand any unmet development needs of our neighbours and to maintain ongoing discussions about Buckinghamshire's own ability to meet development needs, we have ongoing 'duty-to-cooperate' discussions with neighbouring councils and other duty-to-cooperate bodies.

The NPPF was revised and published on 12 December 2024 by the government, which included a new calculation for assessing housing need and a requirement to look at Green Belt sites if development needs cannot be met on land that is not in the Green Belt. The new housing need for Buckinghamshire is based on a statistical formula set out by government, which requires 4,332 dwellings per annum, or around 95,000 new homes (with a 5% buffer) over the plan period to 2045 for Buckinghamshire. This is a 43% increase from the previous calculation used to assessing housing need. This increase implies a dramatic change to the County should this level of development proceed.

3. Buckinghamshire

Spatial Portrait

On 1 April 2020, the former District Council areas of Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe and Buckinghamshire County Council came together to form a single Unitary Authority, Buckinghamshire Council.

Buckinghamshire is a richly diverse, enterprising, and attractive county. In Buckinghamshire there is a population of 553,078 people in 2021. This is an increase of 9.5%, from 505,283 in 2011 (ONS census data). This is higher than the overall population increase of 6.6% for England in the same period. The south of Buckinghamshire is densely populated, and the north is more sparsely populated, however, there has been a particularly large population change in Aylesbury Vale which has seen a 10.4% rise since 2011, the highest rate of growth of any local authority in Great Britain. Buckinghamshire has an ageing population with an increase of 23.2% in people aged 65 years and over between the 2011 and 2021 census. There has been an increase of 6.4% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 7.9% in children aged under 15 years. For more see ONS census 2021 data. Statistics indicate that life expectancy within the most deprived areas is 5.4 years lower than within the more affluent areas for both men and women for Buckinghamshire.

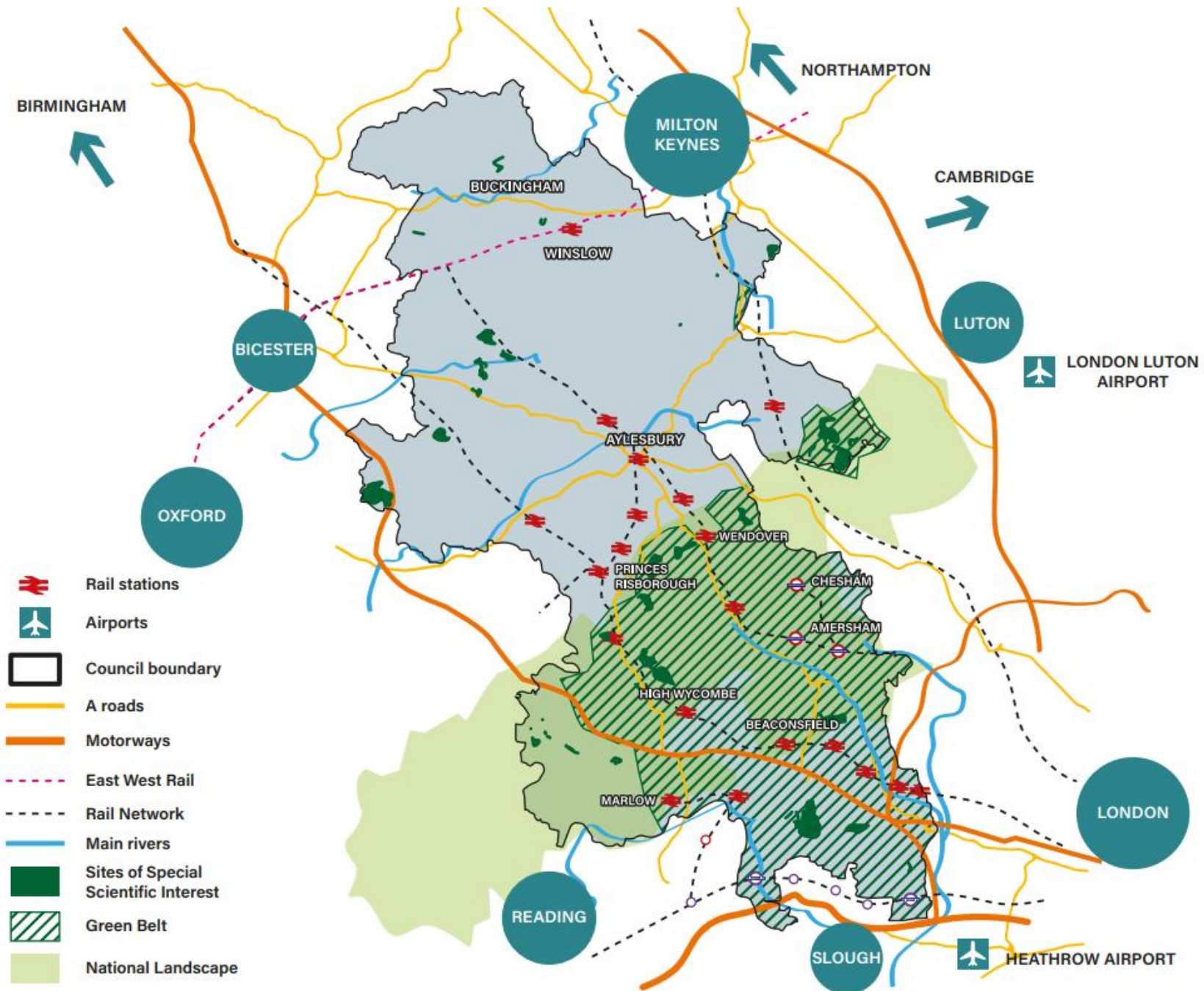
The council area is largely rural but includes a number of significant urban areas, Aylesbury and High Wycombe. Other market towns spanning the council area are Amersham, Beaconsfield, Buckingham, Chesham, Marlow, Princes Risborough, Wendover and Winslow.

Buckinghamshire Council covers an area of 604 sq. miles (1,564 sq. km) and includes parts of the metropolitan Green Belt and the Chilterns National Landscape. The Green Belt was introduced to restrain the urban sprawl of London, prevent the merging of towns, and to safeguard the countryside and character of historic towns. Designated Green Belt covers 32% of Buckinghamshire Council's area. Following an update to the NPPF, a Green Belt Assessment

is currently underway to consider whether the Green Belt strongly meets the purposes of the Green Belt as identified by national policy. The Chilterns National Landscape is a valued landscape, and its designation is to conserve beauty through protecting flora, fauna, and geological features. It covers 27% of the Buckinghamshire Council area. Both the Green Belt and Chilterns National Landscape affect the scale and types of development that can happen within these areas.

Buckinghamshire is well connected to the existing road and rail network, including the M40, M25 and M4 motorways, London underground and national rail services which run north to south. High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) is under construction through the county, from London to Birmingham. East West Rail (EWR) is under construction to connect Oxford to Milton Keynes and Bedford with a new station due to open at Winslow in 2025. HS2 and EWR cross at Calvert in the north of the county. With the exception of EWR and the Elizabeth line, transport links north to south are generally superior to those which traverse the county from east to west. Buckinghamshire is also well located to London Heathrow and London Luton airports.

Buckinghamshire has 220,727 households (ONS Census 2021) with 71% owning their home outright or with a mortgage. The average house price is £479,000 as at January 2025, a 2.6% rise from the previous year (ONS data). In 2024 the affordability ratio was 11.3%, ranking Buckinghamshire as the 55th most unaffordable place to live in England and Wales.



4. Local Plan Vision

Local Plan Vision

In 2045, we have sustained the essential rural character of Buckinghamshire, with its network of small towns and villages, maintaining its rich and varied historic environment. In particular, we have protected and supported the purposes of the Chilterns National Landscape and protected other valued local landscapes from harmful development. We have maximised use of brownfield and Grey Belt land to meet critical development and infrastructure needs following the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

We have created healthy places to grow-up, live, work, and age, that enable people to live healthy, fulfilling lives by supporting their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Our sustainable new communities are socially cohesive, through the delivery of well-designed housing for different groups in the community, including key worker housing, together with the social, digital and physical infrastructure needed to support them.

Our new employment sites provide the space for our businesses to grow and generate investment. These have all been built to high environmental standards in carefully chosen locations best able to accommodate growth. We have improved Buckinghamshire's productivity by cementing its reputation as a leader in creative industries, space, high performance technology sectors. It is seen as a place of innovation and collaboration where businesses of all sizes can grow, and local skills and career opportunities are easily accessed.

High-quality mixed-use developments have revitalised our town centres e.g. those of Aylesbury, High Wycombe, Chesham, and Princes Risborough, delivering public realm and local transport improvements.

Buckinghamshire continues to successfully protect and enhance our valued green spaces, local landscapes and our biodiversity (having regards to the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Local Nature Recovery). Green and blue infrastructure networks have been established, including significant new tree planting and natural habitat restoration and creation. Our initiatives provide active and sustainable travel choices, and the delivery of new renewable energy schemes have reduced harmful emissions.

5. Local Objectives

Planning for the Natural and Built Environment

Local Plan Objective 1

Aim: To conserve and enhance Buckinghamshire's valued natural, historic, and built environments, to ensure they are protected from inappropriate development.

- a. Sustain the predominantly rural character of Buckinghamshire.
- b. Protect valued landscapes, including the Chilterns National Landscape, and open countryside in the Green Belt from harmful or inappropriate development.
- c. Conserve and enhance special places for nature and create an enhanced connected county-wide network of green and blue infrastructure which maximises opportunities for biodiversity net gain through the creation of new priority habitats, (having regards to the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Local Nature Recovery Strategy).
- d. Improve water quality in our rivers and watercourses, including our globally rare chalk streams.
- e. Ensure that development respects historic assets and facilitates the enhancement of their setting.
- f. Support regeneration of the built environment.
- g. Seek to minimise waste and encourage the efficient use of resources and recycling.

The natural environment provides many benefits, which include improving air quality, mitigating the effects of climate change, providing habitats for flora and fauna, and providing places for people to connect with nature.

The Chilterns National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) already has a high level of protection. Whilst Green Belt is not an environmental designation, it still protects areas from development, preventing sprawl and keeping areas open. The Green Belt is being reviewed to identify Grey Belt land which could be taken out of the Green Belt for development. Grey Belt land is land that has previously been developed or does not strongly meet Green Belt purposes (as defined by central government).

Buckinghamshire has three Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) – the Chilterns Beechwoods, Burnham Beeches and in the south-west, adjacent to the Chilterns Beechwoods, Aston Rowant on the boundary with Oxfordshire. Two of these SACs require financial contributions from developers to offset the additional recreational impact of future development and provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green space (SANG). These areas currently include the eastern-most part of Aylesbury town, the settlements of Chesham, Amersham, Beaconsfield, Chalfont St Peter and Burnham.

Buckinghamshire also has many historic towns and villages with around 180 conservation areas and close to 6,000 listed buildings. Buckinghamshire has a number of Registered Parks and Gardens which are protected. Whilst some areas will experience change, we will also ensure we conserve our precious historic places and buildings.

The need to accommodate growth in Buckinghamshire will inevitably put pressure on our natural and built environment.

Planning for Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change

Local Plan Objective 2

Aim: To ensure the delivery of sustainable development, mitigating climate change and adapting to the impacts on Buckinghamshire's environment.

- a. Support the transition to a net zero carbon Buckinghamshire by 2050.
- b. Direct growth to the most sustainable locations in terms of transport connections and services.
- c. Design new development to be resilient to climate extremes and manage the risk of flooding.
- d. Increase the supply of renewable/low-carbon energy and provide supporting infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging points and hydrogen fuelling.
- e. Meet existing standards of insulation, water, and energy efficiency in new and refurbished buildings.
- f. Create locally liveable neighbourhoods in new development and regenerated areas.
- g. Provide attractive and viable travel choices in addition to the private car, for walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport.

The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire will help deliver the [Bucks Climate Challenge](#) to ensure that Buckinghamshire achieves net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Data shows that 51% of emissions in Buckinghamshire are transport related. We are preparing our Local Transport Plan for Buckinghamshire to set out our priorities for reducing our transport carbon emissions through sustainable travel choices, ultra-low or zero emission vehicles, and digital connectivity to reduce the need to travel. We are also preparing a Green Infrastructure Strategy, which will identify how we strengthen our networks of parks, lakes, rivers and canals.

Evidence has improved our understanding of current and future flooding impacts across Buckinghamshire. Climate change is expected to greatly increase local flood risks in areas such as the south-western and south-eastern edges of South Bucks, the environs of the River Thames in the Wycombe area, areas east of Aylesbury and the Great Ouse around Buckingham. High Wycombe and Chesham are identified nationally as areas of significant surface water flood risk. The areas with properties at highest risk from catchment-wide flooding from a cumulative level of growth are at the far northwest of Buckinghamshire (edges of Milton Keynes) and also at Aylesbury and High Wycombe [Strategic Flood Risk](#)

[Assessment](#). Future development will need to prioritise sites with the lowest flood risk before considering areas which will need to include flood mitigation measures.

Planning for New Housing

Local Plan Objective 3

Aim: To meet housing needs for all of the different groups in the community, including affordable housing, and to provide increased tenure choice throughout Buckinghamshire, prioritising the efficient use of land.

- a. Provide a range of housing to meet local needs for market, affordable, accessible and specialist needs (such as lifetime homes so people can stay in their homes for longer) while recognising the diversity in the character and context of our urban, suburban and rural areas.
- b. Enable the delivery of homes for key workers, people with local connections, and those seeking self- and custom-build opportunities.
- c. Ensure new housing is of high-quality design, low-carbon and digitally enabled and in keeping with its surroundings.

There is a national standard Local Housing Need method which local authorities are required to use to assess the number of new houses they should aim to deliver in the future. For Buckinghamshire, the standard methodology currently calculates a housing need of 4,332 new homes a year. For the plan period there is a need for just under 91,000 new homes, which is around 95,000 with a 5% buffer. We already have just over 22,000 homes committed for development from existing local plans, neighbourhood plans and planning permissions¹. This leaves an outstanding figure of just under 69,000 new homes needed to meet our future housing needs for Buckinghamshire.

We will ensure the housing we deliver in the future meets the needs of residents by understanding and planning for different types of homes (e.g. flats, houses, bungalows, pitches for gypsies and travellers) and the provision of affordable housing.

To help meet our future housing and employment needs we have conducted four call for sites engagement exercises. This asked for sites to be put forward for consideration as potential allocations within the Local Plan. To date we have received over 1,600 sites to consider. Following the Planning Practice Guidance ([Housing and economic land availability assessment - GOV.UK](#)), we are undertaking a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, which is the first stage in considering whether a site should be allocated in the Local Plan.

A New and Expanded Settlement Study is also underway to identify areas of search for new settlements and large urban expansions to help support future housing needs.

¹ As at 31 March 2023.

New Towns

As part of the government's initiative to deliver 1.5million new homes in the next 4 years a New Towns initiative has been established. Each New Town will contain at least 10,000 homes and this is a requirement in addition to the 95,000 set out in the standard method (including a 5% buffer) for calculating housing need. A New Towns Taskforce has been established by the government to shortlist recommendations. The short list is expected to be announced later this year.

In addition to the need for new homes, Buckinghamshire must meet the need for new pitches and plots from the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities. A revision in the national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) in December 2024 amended the definitions of a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople which altered how we address their needs. During the survey work for the [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment \(GTAA\)](#), householders were considered if they met the planning definitions. For the plan period the overall need for Gypsy and Travellers is 681 pitches and for Travelling Showpeople 38 plots.

Planning for Quality of Place

Local Plan Objective 4

Aim: Create great places to live and work that function well, and are welcoming, safe, and accessible to all.

- a) Take inspiration from the valued and unique characteristics of Buckinghamshire to deliver high quality design that reinforces Buckinghamshire's distinctiveness, while being innovative in construction and design where appropriate.
- b) Create neighbourhoods where goods and services are available locally, are supportive of healthy lifestyles and social connectedness, easy to move through and easy to understand.
- c) Provide sufficient and well-integrated parking.
- d) Ensure development meets energy efficiency standards and design that promotes natural surveillance to improve safety.
- e) Secure a safe, accessible, inclusive, and robust network of spaces across Buckinghamshire for recreation, play, biodiversity, and water infrastructure.
- f) Create safe and vibrant public spaces in towns and villages.

Whilst Buckinghamshire is generally a prosperous county, it contains some of the most deprived wards in the country in both Aylesbury and High Wycombe. This deprivation is associated with a higher number of health issues and poorer life outcomes.

The Local Plan can help contribute to mitigating existing challenges such as improving access to green space, making places easier to get around, and enhancing the built environment so that people are proud of it and feel safer.

Our [Regeneration Strategies](#) for Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham are part of the Buckinghamshire response to these issues and will help create welcoming and vibrant public spaces in our main towns. The Local Plan will support high quality development and will build on the unique positive characteristics of our various places, setting out key principles for how future development should happen. It will be supported in doing so by the emerging Buckinghamshire Design Code. Ultimately, we want to be able to create places which are pleasant to live and work in, and as importantly, which function well, to support positive life outcomes for all.

Planning for Community Health and Wellbeing

Local Plan Objective 5

Aim: To support communities throughout Buckinghamshire with their health, social and cultural wellbeing. We aim to protect and improve health care facilities and access to them for residents.

- a. Create accessible and inclusive places that support active lifestyles and good health through people-friendly streets, open and green spaces, and play areas.
- b. Work with health providers to ensure appropriate local health facilities and access to them (and deliver new ones where they are needed).
- c. Provide new or enhanced sport, leisure and cultural facilities where needed.
- d. Improve air quality across Buckinghamshire.

The built and natural environment is an important determinant of our residents' and visitors' health and wellbeing. A healthy place is described in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as one which:

- Provides opportunities for the community to improve their physical and mental health;
- Supports community engagement and wellbeing;
- Meets the needs of children and young people; and
- Is adaptable to the needs of an increasingly elderly population and those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights the role of the planning system in supporting health and wellbeing in creating healthy, inclusive and safe places that promote social interaction, are accessible, and that enable and support healthy living through creating opportunities for healthy choices that reduce health inequalities.

Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair and systematic differences in health between different groups of people. They arise because of the conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age and influence our opportunities for good mental, physical health and wellbeing. Vulnerable groups are at greatest risk of experiencing health inequalities which include, but are not limited to, children and young people, older adults, ethnic minorities, traveller communities, people with physical, sensory or non-visible learning disabilities, people with mental health issues, people living in areas of deprivation or those who can be

socially marginalised (for example, people experiencing homelessness, traveller communities and people in contact with the criminal justice system).

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 places a legal duty on local authorities to reduce health inequalities, encouraging planners to consider how housing, transport, and access to services affect vulnerable populations. The Act encourages health-led local planning, requires councils to consider health inequalities in service delivery, supports collaboration between planners and health professionals and makes Directors of Public Health key advisors in planning decisions.

Buckinghamshire's population experiences better health and wellbeing compared to other areas in England; however, this is not shared equally by residents across the county. Significantly poorer health outcomes are experienced by vulnerable groups and people living in income deprivation. Measures to prevent or minimise the occurrence of physical and mental health problems enable people to live happier more fulfilling lives, while also reducing the burden on our health care system. The Local Plan will need to ensure health and wellbeing are a key factor when determining where new development should go. People's physical health can be supported by providing high-quality streets and public places that encourage walking (well-designed, landscaped, vibrant, and interesting); providing good access to active sports and recreation areas and facilities that encourage physical activity (parks, sports fields and leisure centres); encouraging active modes of transport (cycling and walking); ensuring homes are healthy (access to natural light and ventilation, insulated and heated); and providing access to clean air.

The Local Plan can also support people's mental health by providing good access to community groups (recreational, cultural and religious); high-quality natural areas; education and employment opportunities; and inclusive recreation and leisure activities. The Council is currently preparing an Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy to guide the future provision and management of sports, leisure and recreation facilities.

While prevention is important, it is also important to ensure adequate health care is available for the treatment of health problems. Some health care buildings in Buckinghamshire are coming towards the end of their life, and some services have capacity and equipment issues. The Local Plan will need to ensure new development is supported by adequate healthcare infrastructure and also affordable accommodation for key workers to support the healthcare workforce.

Planning for Infrastructure

Local Plan Objective 6

Aim: To ensure the right infrastructure required to support communities is provided in the right place and at the right time, and make best use of existing infrastructure.

- a. Facilitate wider connectivity across Buckinghamshire and beyond.
- b. Ensure improved local connections within and between settlements.
- c. Provide and protect appropriate social infrastructure including for health, education, skills training, sports, recreation and other community facilities.
- d. Provide and connect green and blue infrastructure to enhance the landscape and biodiversity.
- e. Provide flood risk mitigation and sustainable drainage solutions, negotiating with utility companies for adequate sewerage and wastewater infrastructure.
- f. Encourage adequate provision of energy (gas and electricity), water and other utilities.

Planning infrastructure refers to the physical aspects of the urban environment that support residential and employment needs, such as transport (including roads, footpaths, cycle lanes and bus provision); community (including education, healthcare places of worship, libraries and community halls); recreation (including parks and sports provision); and utilities (water, sewer, gas, electricity, phone, broadband).

The Local Plan will need to plan for adequate levels of infrastructure in-line with new development and in the most appropriate locations. In collaboration with key infrastructure providers the [Baseline Infrastructure Study \(BIS\)](#) was prepared to understand current and anticipated future infrastructure quality and capacity issues. The study found that:

- While the capacity of many infrastructure providers is currently coping, there are some that are stretched beyond capacity, such as healthcare, Special Education Needs and Disabilities, and a Household Recycling Centre in the north of Buckinghamshire.
- Infrastructure providers have different strategies to deal with future capacity issues. Some react to situations that become apparent through frequent monitoring and review, while others take a longer-term strategic approach. For example, planning for early years and childcare tends to be short/medium term (2.5 to 5 years), as factors such as population changes affect the sustainability of providers in the market.

Work on water quality and wastewater (water cycle study) has identified that areas in Buckinghamshire will require upgrades to accommodate increased wastewater pressures from development. There are 73 wastewater treatment works within or serving Buckinghamshire, 41 of which are likely to be close to (including Haddenham), or to have exceeded their flow permit by the end of the Local Plan period (2045) (including Aylesbury, Buckingham, Long Crendon, Princes Risborough, Slough, Steeple Claydon and Winslow). Future development in these locations is likely to require an increase in permit limits and /or upgrades to treatment capacity. This will have implications for delivery lead in time, and

may delay some sites later in the plan period. Evidence on water quality suggests most receiving watercourses in Buckinghamshire may be sensitive to an increase in wastewater, which potentially impacts their ability to reach or maintain Good Ecological Status, as required under the European Water Framework Directive. There are a number of poorly performing storm overflows (including Tingewick, Whaddon, Steeple Claydon), and development in these locations will require upgrades.

The findings from the Baseline Infrastructure Study, together with other infrastructure studies, and close collaboration with key infrastructure providers will help inform the future preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) for the Local Plan, which will set out what type and level of infrastructure will be required and its location and timeframe, to support future development.

In order to help identify sustainable locations for future development, which provide proximity to services and facilities, employment and transportation options, a [Settlement Review](#) was carried out. This gathered information on the services and facilities found within existing settlements of 500 people and above in Buckinghamshire, as well other information including populations, numbers of employment premises and public transport provision. Using this data, each settlement was placed into one of five tiers reflecting how sustainable that location can be considered to be, in order to inform the Plan's spatial strategy and to help identify development needs. Settlements identified in the top three tiers are:

Table 1: Settlement Hierarchy for tiers 1 to 3

Tier 1 – Major urban areas which have all of the services and facilities which were looked at (such as food shops, primary and secondary schools and a post office), more than a hundred employment premises and excellent public transport	Aylesbury and High Wycombe
Tier 2 – Large market or other towns which have all of the services and facilities but fewer employment premises and good or excellent public transport	Amersham, Beaconsfield, Buckingham, Chalfont St Peter & Gerrards Cross, Chesham, Marlow, Princes Risborough, Wendover
Tier 3 – Small market towns or other large settlements which have most of the services and facilities, at least five employment premises and good public transport	Aston Clinton, Burnham, Chalfont St Giles, Great Missenden, Iver, Little Chalfont, Farnham Royal, Haddenham, Stokenchurch, Stoke Mandeville, Wing, Winslow, Wooburn and Bourne End

Planning for New Jobs

Local Plan Objective 7

Aim: To grow and diversify the economy by delivering the right employment opportunities in the right places, supporting economic growth, productivity, regenerating towns, and villages, and enabling delivery of education, training and skills to enhance the employability of Buckinghamshire residents.

- a. Enhance our economic assets by supporting Enterprise Zones, strategic and key employment areas.
- b. Support and enhance Buckinghamshire's specialisms and strengths in high performance technology, space, film and high-end television, life sciences and medical tech sectors, including through appropriate skills and education provision.
- c. Designate employment spaces that support a diverse range of commercial activity, from high quality offices to local workshops.
- d. Seek opportunities to link residential and commercial development to encourage local living.
- e. Locate new employment spaces close to good transport connections to ensure residents have access to viable public transport options.
- f. Support the repurposing and regeneration of town centres and villages for a diverse range of uses.
- g. Support a sustainable rural economy including sustainable agriculture and farm diversification, and safeguard food security.

We know that the Buckinghamshire economy has performed strongly over recent years and generated significant economic growth. Over the last 20 years job growth has been between 10.5% and 15.8% ([ELRS](#)). Local people and businesses benefit from this, and it is something we want to continue to support. The key growth sectors in Buckinghamshire are high performance technology, medical technologies, space innovation and creative and digital.

The Local Plan needs to help deliver land and premises to support economic growth. The overall net level of growth needed is 45.9ha for the plan period. The evidence shows that there will still be strong demand for new industrial and warehousing space in the future, with most of the new employment space requirement being for these uses. Increased working from home following the pandemic means that the demand for new office space is predicted to be lower than in the past, but it will still be important to provide some land for offices to meet future needs. Sites allocated for employment uses in previous plans and existing vacant units could meet some of this need. However, much of the existing supply is in a few large sites in the north of Buckinghamshire and new allocations of land for employment will be needed to meet the locational needs of business. The Local Plan will need to ensure our existing employment sites are protected, whilst supporting economic growth for new employment sites.

The NPPF requires us to plan to meet the needs of Modern Economy Uses. Data centres are one of these types of uses and Buckinghamshire has strong potential for this type of

development. Employment policies will also need to facilitate offices and Research and Development to support businesses based in laboratories and battery technology for electric vehicles. Updating of distribution premises is also needed to meet the NPPF Modern Economy requirements.

Planning for Town Centres

Buckinghamshire has two town centres of regional importance - Aylesbury and High Wycombe (see [retail hierarchy](#)). These centres attract visitors from a broad catchment, and we need to ensure they remain vibrant centres that people choose to visit. This means that we need to ensure that there is an appropriate range of shopping and leisure facilities. There is a range of smaller centres in towns and villages throughout Buckinghamshire that serve smaller catchments and allow people to meet their day-to-day needs. The work we've done so far indicates that the Local Plan needs to find 59,000 sqm of floorspace for retail, food / beverage and leisure / cultural uses by 2035. Initially we should focus on bringing vacant units in existing centres back into use. For example, if we could reduce the level of vacancies in our centres to 10% this would accommodate 14,300 sqm of floorspace. In the medium to longer term the majority of the additional floorspace is associated with population growth and so, allocations for these uses as part of large-scale mixed-use allocations are likely to be the best way to accommodate projected capacity.

The Council has an adopted [Regeneration Framework](#) with three sub-strategies for Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe. This framework highlights the potential of our towns and villages and in the case of the three sub-strategies sets out visions and highlights key opportunities in our three largest towns. The Local Plan will help deliver on these ambitions.

Planning for Transport, Physical and Digital Connectivity

Local Plan Objective 8

Aim: To improve connectivity across and between Buckinghamshire towns and villages with regional and national centres beyond, working in partnership across boundaries, by securing new sustainable transport infrastructure, upgrading existing infrastructure and improving digital connectivity.

- a. Maximise the connectivity opportunities presented by large scale strategic transport schemes to focus the location of growth and encourage inward investment in Buckinghamshire.
- b. Create safe and attractive walking, wheeling and cycling routes as the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey, for those who are able.
- c. Diversify, extend, and enhance public transport provision, including bus services and preparing for new types of transport to enable people to undertake car-free journeys.
- d. Create safe and accessible interchanges to and from public transport for walking, cycling and wheeling.
- e. Facilitate effective transport solutions for all users.
- f. Direct freight to the most appropriate routes and plan for sustainable freight activity and first mile / last mile solutions, in accordance with the Local Transport Plan.
- g. Support the provision of digital infrastructure, particularly in the most remote parts of Buckinghamshire.
- h. Deliver low or zero carbon fuel infrastructure through new development and the provision of charging infrastructure.

Buckinghamshire has a number of strategic road corridors passing through it, which play an important economic and connectivity role (parts of the M25, M4 and M40). The rest of the road network relies on important A-Roads that link the main towns in Buckinghamshire and provide connections to neighbouring authority areas.

A baseline modelling assessment of the highway network has predicted that existing development growth in adopted plans will lead to significant increases in traffic volumes in Aylesbury and High Wycombe. During the morning peak hour, the largest increases in delays are forecast in the south of Buckinghamshire (to and from High Wycombe, Beaconsfield, Henley-on-Thames, and Marlow), while the evening peak hour is predicted to see significant journey time increases to and from Aylesbury, Wendover, Watford, and Princes Risborough. With the majority of A-roads in Buckinghamshire functioning at or close to capacity, it will be important that the different growth approaches consider the impact on the highway network and whether development can be mitigated to prevent severe highway impacts.

There are important rail corridors including: the Chiltern Line, the West Coast Main Line and the Great Western Main Line and Crossrail. The level of rail connectivity and services is patchy for example with gaps between Aylesbury and Buckingham, or Leighton Buzzard (in adjacent Hertfordshire), or between High Wycombe and Amersham or Bourne End. Provision is constrained mainly by the need to balance long and short distance journeys, available infrastructure and funding. A new rail line, East West Rail (EWR) is currently under construction in the north of Buckinghamshire with a station at Winslow. High Speed 2 (HS2) is currently under construction passing through Buckinghamshire (although not stopping in Buckinghamshire, the severance it causes is a key issue for the area).

Bus networks are much denser nearer and within bigger urban areas in particular High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Amersham while inter-urban services connecting the various towns and smaller villages across Buckinghamshire tend to be sparsely distributed and infrequent. In more rural areas, bus services in and around villages are often unreliable or non-existent and demand is often too low to meet bus service operation and maintenance costs. The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) has outlined measures to improve bus provision including the requirement for new development to enhance or create new services to meet additional demand. Measures for a whole network multimodal approach, would need to be considered in the Local Plan.

Buckinghamshire is largely rural, and many people need to use cars to meet their daily needs due to few viable alternatives to driving. The distance covered by people in rural areas is one of the primary causes of high carbon emissions from the road network. The gradual switch to electric cars will help to address the air quality impacts of car use, however this will not address traffic congestion, car parking pressures or the health impacts associated with car-dependent lifestyles.

The Council is developing a new Local Transport Plan for Buckinghamshire (LTP5) which will set out the policies and implementation plans to deliver a transport network that works for all users. The Local Transport Plan will be aligned with planning policies to ensure the provision of effective travel choices in new housing and employment areas. This will mean that planning and transport policies will need to enable greater travel choices in the form of active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) for shorter journeys and public transport for longer journeys.

A key determinant of travel choices for new development will be where the development is located; development in larger towns with better access to services and facilities can result in less extra traffic than development in Buckinghamshire's villages.

6. Local Plan Spatial Strategy

Housing

National policy requires that we meet objectively assessed housing needs, including any unmet needs from neighbouring authorities, where it is practical to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development. The latest Government's standard method was used to calculate Buckinghamshire's objectively assessed housing need which identified a requirement of 4,332 new homes a year and just under 91,000 new homes for the plan period. This is around 95,000 homes when including a 5% buffer. We already have just over 22,000 homes committed for development from existing local plans, neighbourhood plans and planning permissions². This leaves an outstanding figure of just under 69,000 new homes needed to meet our future housing needs for Buckinghamshire. National policy requires that we are able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply with an appropriate buffer from the date of Local Plan adoption.

This draft Local Plan is underpinned by seven different strategic approaches for development in certain locations, which is informed by different sources of land supply including four call for sites exercises. These approaches are informed by a [Sustainability Appraisal Report](#) which has appraised each strategic approach against a series of sustainability objectives. It shows which approaches perform better and their significance.

The seven approaches for housing growth areas are set out below. It is likely all these strategic approaches will be required to meet our housing need.

The potential housing supply for each approach is based on our initial sites assessment which is still ongoing, over 1600 sites have been promoted to the council for consideration in the Local Plan. In the last call for sites over 500 were received, these are currently being assessed and do not make up this potential housing supply. Homes which have been identified as potentially suitable are based on an initial assessment, further technical studies need to be completed before being taken forward for an allocation.

The assessments of capacity for each approach have been presented as a range. This reflects the uncertainty at this stage and that further work is needed to better understand capacity and delivery rates. There is no double counting of sites between the seven strategic approaches.

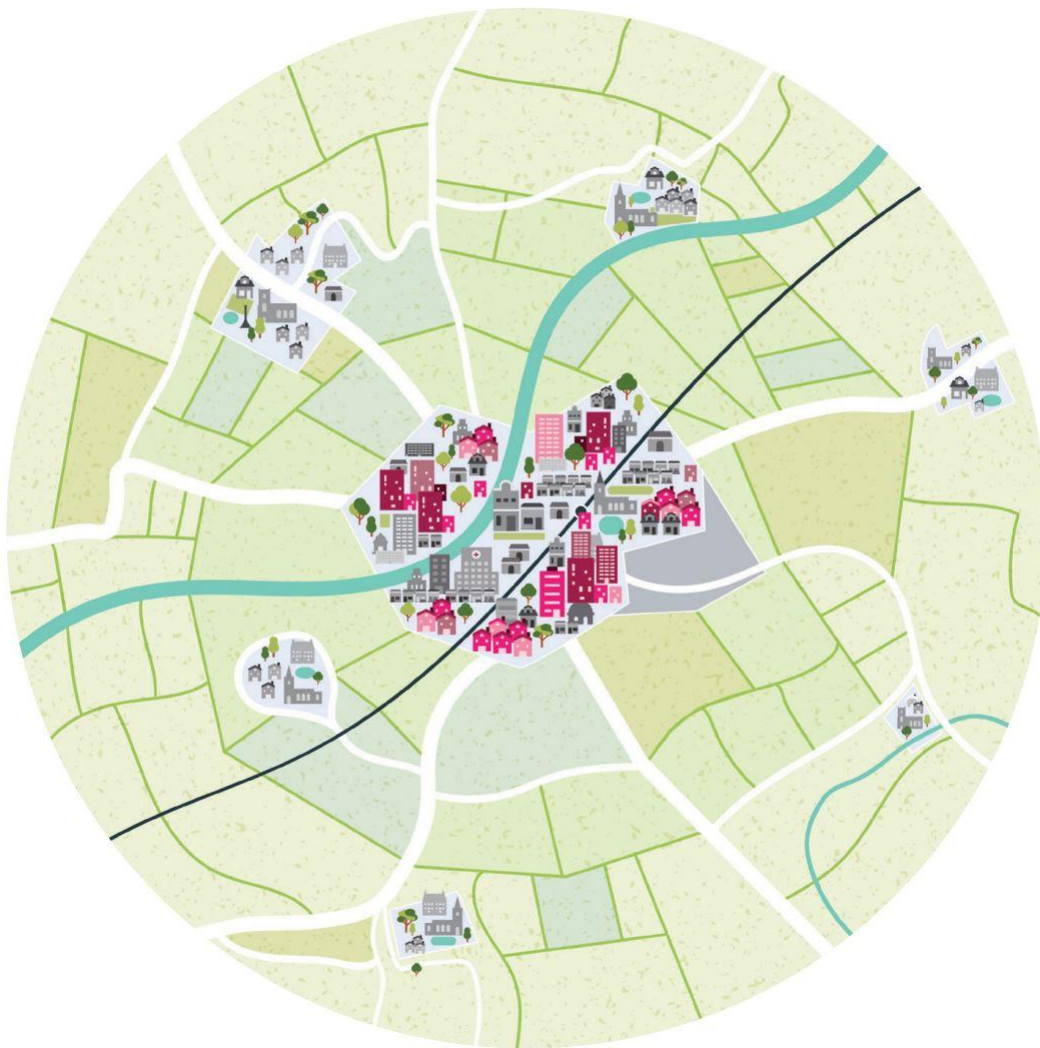
² As at 31 March 2023.

Approach 1: Brownfield Sites within Existing Towns and Villages

Description

This approach focuses on brownfield development and regeneration. This will provide more homes and jobs on underused land in town centres and in existing settlements. This could be by building taller buildings and / or redeveloping underused sites at higher densities.

This approach considers brownfield sites in our towns and villages. This approach has the potential to deliver **1,500-2,500 potential homes**. This provides for a variety of small to medium sized sites which take less time to deliver than when compared to large strategic extension or new settlement.



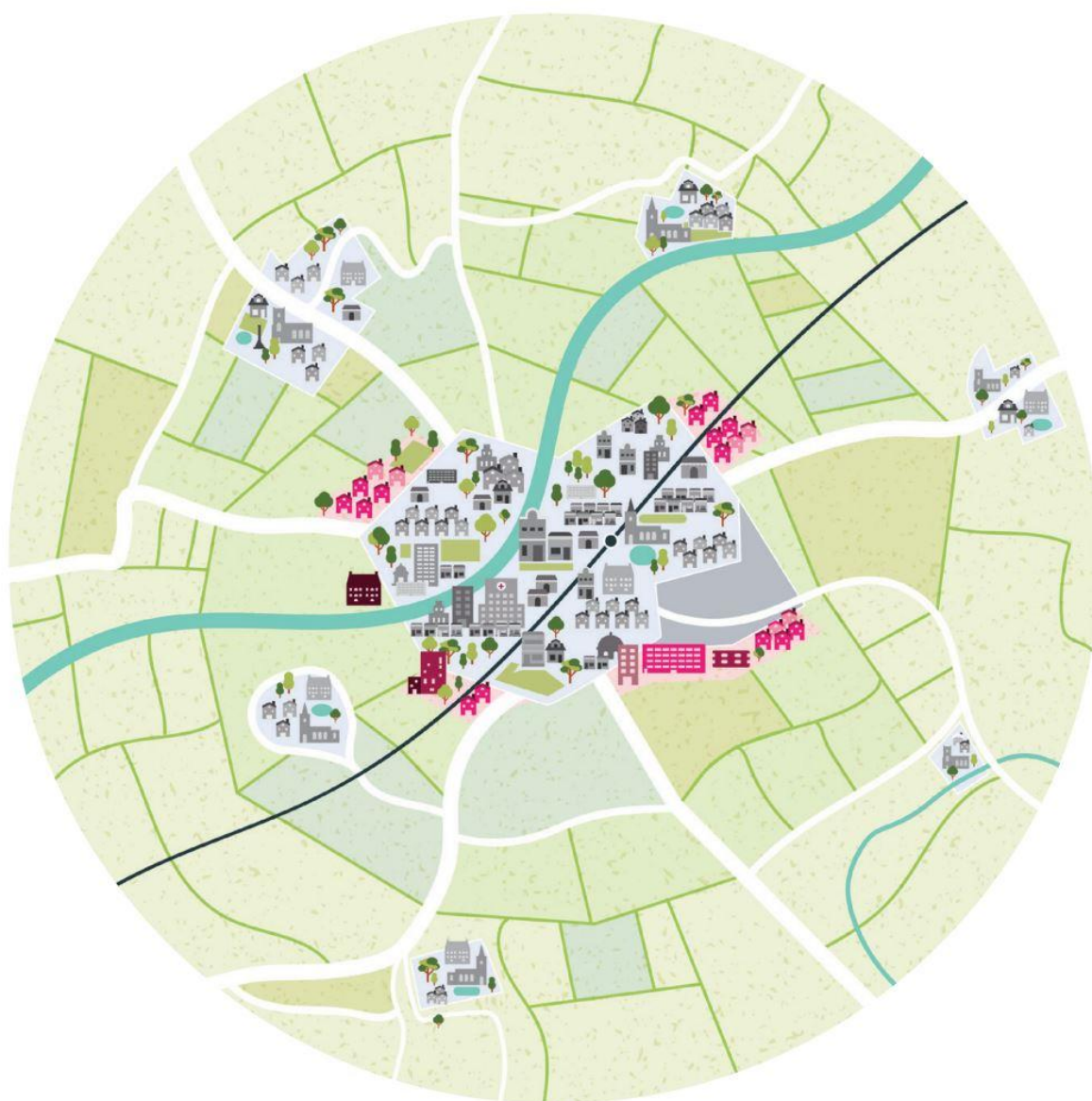
Advantages	Disadvantages
Reduces the need to allocate greenfield sites.	Care will have to be taken to ensure development enhances the quality of place, respects the character and identity, and does not result in the loss of valued open spaces.
Reduces the need to travel by car and makes a positive contribution to addressing climate change while planning for growth.	Access to natural areas and large green spaces may be more difficult.
Allows people to live close to a good range of local shops, services, and entertainment as well as employment opportunities.	Finding suitable sites within existing urban areas for new facilities and infrastructure may be difficult and expensive to acquire and develop.
Development in centres can provide a range of tenure choice.	Some infrastructure is likely to require major upgrades, e.g. water and wastewater.
This approach can support regeneration in our towns, with the creation of healthy neighbourhoods where public spaces and community assets are enhanced, creating a sense of place and making sustainable travel options easier to access and more enjoyable.	May have to deal with constraints from established development, especially in built-up areas, when providing new infrastructure.
Increasing the people living in urban areas will support more viable and active high streets, and more walkable, green, and interesting streets and public places to improve physical and mental health.	Land assembly and delivery can be more challenging in existing urban areas.
Makes better use of existing infrastructure and facilities.	Lower value employment sites tend to be lost because of redevelopment but there is still a need for these types of local facilities, e.g. car repairs, etc. Replacement provision may not be as affordable.
Upgrading infrastructure to meet increased demand may be easier and less expensive in this approach.	Potential for creation of 'bad neighbour' employment uses near to housing if not carefully controlled.
Could assist with the re-provision of older and poorer quality offices to meet future demand.	This approach alone will not meet our housing needs in full.
The viability of existing services within towns and villages improves when more people are using them.	

Approach 2: Growth on the Edges of Existing Main Towns

Description

This approach focuses on the expansion of larger settlements within Buckinghamshire through large scale urban extensions. This focuses on our most sustainable locations for Tier's 1 and 2 settlements. This will provide more homes and jobs in the countryside surrounding existing settlements. They would be integrated into existing settlements and provide new schools, roads and shops.

This approach provides **23,000-28,000 potential homes**.



Advantages	Disadvantages
Sustainable urban extensions can provide opportunities to enhance the setting of existing settlements.	Would require the allocation of greenfield sites.
Reduces the need to travel by car and makes a positive contribution to addressing climate change.	Could result in coalescence with nearby settlements.
Could provide a mix of homes to meet differing needs.	There may be barriers to knitting the new place with the existing town and community so that they have a shared sense of identity and belonging.
Large expansions can create opportunities for shaping new neighbourhoods following principles of good design and place-making.	The range of existing sport, recreation, leisure, cultural, community and religious services and facilities may be limited in the adjacent established settlement.
Makes more efficient use of existing sport, recreation, leisure, cultural, health, community and religious facilities in the adjacent established settlement.	Development areas on the fringe of larger settlements can be car-oriented and contain predominantly low-density housing with minimal shops, services, or facilities, which can be isolating for some people, especially for people who do not drive.
Supports the provision of new facilities, which will benefit new residents and existing residents.	Some infrastructure is likely to require major upgrades, e.g. water and wastewater.
There may be good access to large high-quality natural areas.	Retrofitting transport links to accommodate new development may require significant investment and may be technically challenging and disruptive.
Upgrading of infrastructure to meet increased demand may be easier and less expensive in this approach.	This approach alone is unlikely to meet our housing needs in full.
This could link new employment allocations to areas where there is an available labour supply and a major road network/motorway junction suited to businesses' locational needs.	

Provides new employment opportunities across Buckinghamshire, helping to meet local economic needs and addresses the over-concentration of current provision to a few sites in the northern/central part of Buckinghamshire.	
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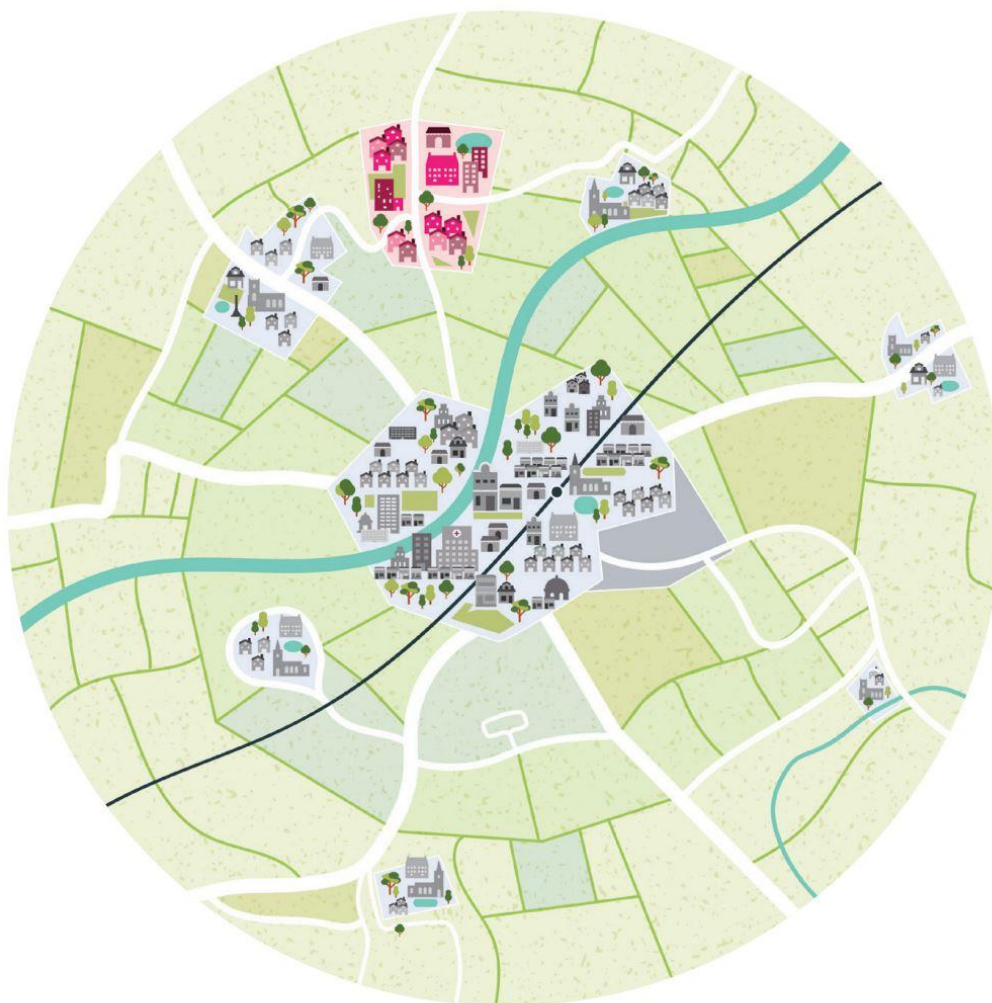
Approach 3: New Towns

Description

New towns are standalone settlements outside of existing urban areas. These will provide more homes and jobs in the countryside separate from existing settlements. They would provide their own new schools (primary and secondary), roads and shops. As they would require almost entirely new infrastructure, this would take a number of years to provide and so development from this approach would be slower to commence.

The preliminary work on capacity suggests that new settlements are likely to be needed to meet housing needs. Based on past delivery rates and average lead in times for sites of this size in Buckinghamshire, it is considered a maximum of 3,000 homes per new settlement could be achieved in the plan period (2045).

This is an indicative figure, further work will refine delivery and phasing time to implement new towns, which will need to be supported by new infrastructure. We are aware that three new towns have been promoted to the New Towns Taskforce at Beachampton, Calvert and Cheddington. It has not been concluded whether these will make the New Towns short listing or whether they could be delivered through the Local Plan. If they do make the short listing, each New Town will contain at least 10,000 homes and is a requirement in addition to the 95,500 set out in the standard method for calculating housing need (with a 5% buffer). Taking into account indicative capacities for delivering new settlements within the plan period, we may need four new settlements to meet our housing need. On these assumptions this approach has the potential to deliver **11,000-13,000 homes** within the plan period to 2045.



Advantages	Disadvantages
Development of a large new settlement allows, in the long-term, for the delivery of a self-sufficient new community with significant services and facilities. This can allow new residents to meet a significant proportion of their needs within the town.	Would result in the allocation of large greenfield sites.
Could provide a mix of homes to meet differing needs.	Early in the new settlement's development it will not be self-sufficient, and residents will have to use some services and facilities elsewhere.
Provides the opportunity to create distinctive, inclusive sustainable, high quality, successful new communities which support and enhance existing communities within neighbouring towns and villages with the highest quality,	New settlements take a number of years to begin development, so this approach would not deliver new homes quickly.

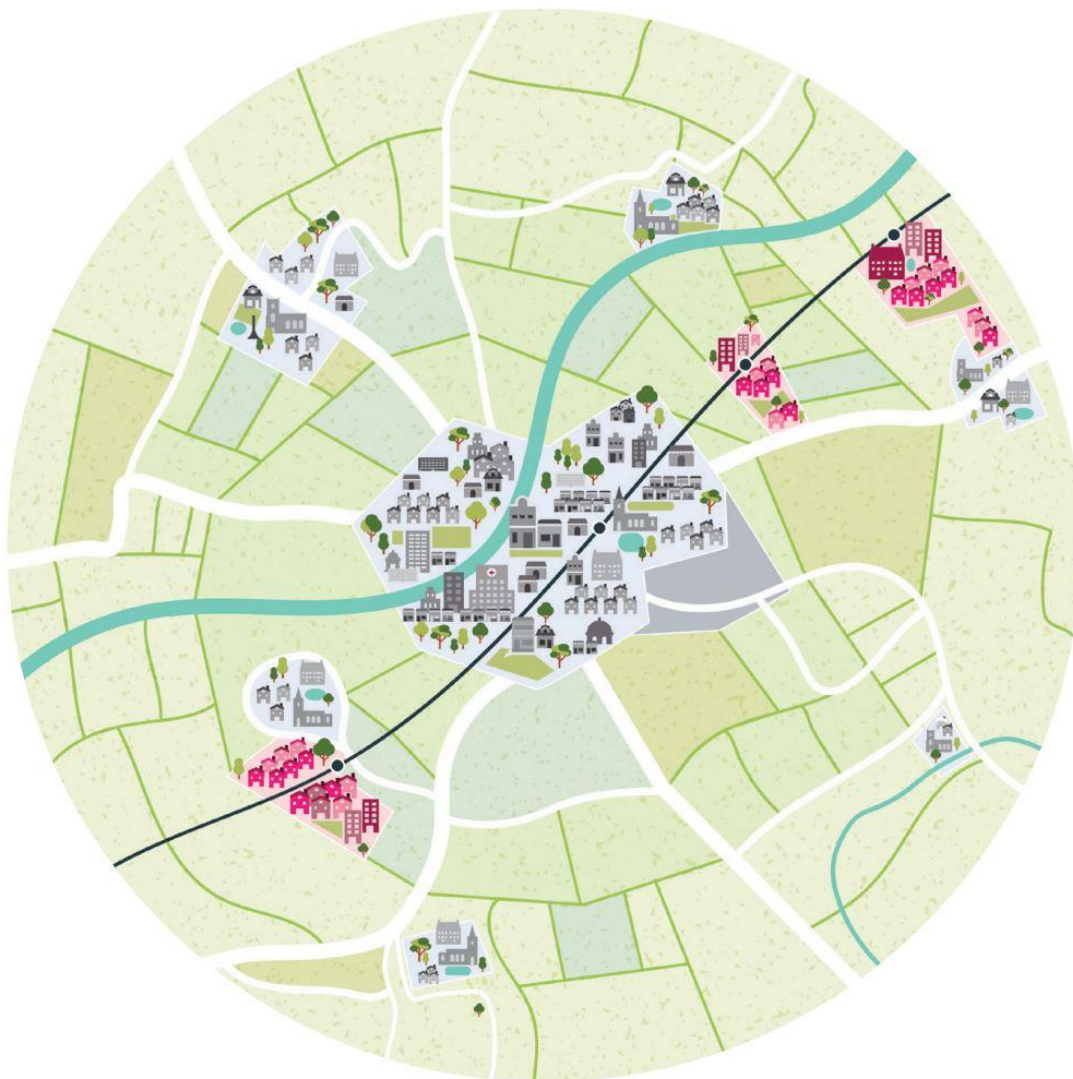
planning, design and management of the built and public realm.	
Developers will be required to provide new infrastructure, sport, recreation, leisure, cultural, community and health care facilities as part of large developments. These can be planned for and delivered in a vision-led way.	This approach alone is unlikely to meet our housing needs in full.
There may be good access to large high-quality natural areas.	A new settlement will change the rural nature of the area and could impact on the identity of existing surrounding towns and villages.
There will not be the constraint of established development when providing new infrastructure.	A new settlement could create competition with existing surrounding towns and villages in terms of sustaining and attracting investment for local services.
Could lessen impacts on existing communities in the long term.	The level of certainty over delivery and timing of infrastructure can be problematic.
Could provide entirely new industrial estates and offices of high quality, helping to update the employment stock in Buckinghamshire and helping to keep Buckinghamshire attractive to business.	Does not assist with rural diversification and rural employment.
Provides a new labour force and employment in close proximity to new employment uses.	A new settlement will require significant investment in new infrastructure.
Could help re-balance provision away from the few current employment allocations. The extent of this impact depends on where the new settlements are located.	Without good transport infrastructure there is a risk of providing a poorly connected, car dependent and isolated settlement.
Could link new homes with current employment areas.	New settlements would need to be of a large enough scale to support itself and justify the spend needed to connect to existing infrastructure.

Approach 4: Development at Transport Hubs

Description

This approach focuses development in close proximity to a high-quality public transport as identified in the [Baseline Transport Assessment](#). This will allow people to make some of their journeys using the train or bus, reducing the impact of new development on the existing road network and helping reduce emissions from vehicles and so address climate change.

The approach has the potential to deliver **16,000-19,000 homes** within the plan period.



Advantages	Disadvantages
Supports regeneration in and near our towns and allows for improvements to the built environment.	Would result in the allocation of greenfield sites.
Planning for development near strategic public transport hubs provides people with the choice to make some journeys by public transport.	Cannot meet our housing needs in full.
Could provide a mix of homes to meet differing needs.	Could result in coalescence with nearby settlements.
Residents will likely have good access to transport options to access a wider range of sport, recreation, leisure, cultural, community and health facilities.	Development at some of these settlements is likely to result in increased recreational pressures for Special Areas of Conservation.
There may be good access to large high-quality natural areas, especially in the south of Buckinghamshire.	In some of these settlements, infrastructure is likely to require major upgrades for water and wastewater.
Provides an opportunity for significant new/enhanced infrastructure to be delivered.	
Accessibility to public transport is important in planning for new offices and so helps meet part of the future employment needs.	
Could help rebalance the existing skewed supply of employment sites, by providing sites in new locations along sustainable transport corridors and near strategic transport hubs.	
Increased density in strategic locations or transport corridors encourages greater public transport use.	
Supports economic development by attracting skilled workers, businesses and services to the area and offers opportunities to enhance existing transport links.	
Transport hubs can offer a focal point for development as they offer accessibility and connectivity opportunities for different land uses.	

Approach 5: Expansion near key employment areas

Description

This approach identified broad development areas which are near to strategic employment sites and Enterprise Zones (areas where businesses receive incentives to establish or expand operations, aiming to promote economic growth). The [Employment Land Review](#) provides details on these locations. Providing more housing in these locations could benefit new and existing businesses by providing labour supply in close proximity to businesses.

The approach has the potential to deliver **5,000-6,000 homes** within the plan period.



Advantages	Disadvantages
Likely to support businesses through new employment allocations and the intensification of existing employment sites.	Would require the allocation of greenfield sites.
Siting new housing near employment sites means that people are able to live and work locally.	Cannot meet our housing needs in full.
It can provide collocation benefits, such as allowing for natural active surveillance at different times of day.	Existing business locations may already experience significant congestion in peak periods; adding housing to these locations is likely to worsen congestion.
Residents and employees of local businesses may use existing or newly provided sport, recreation, leisure, cultural, health and community facilities in the established settlement, leading to more efficient use of facilities throughout the day.	Existing business locations may not be the best sites for new homes due to unneighbourly and unsightly uses.
Gives the opportunity to improve infrastructure for existing businesses.	
Could allow existing outwards commuting patterns to be addressed.	

Approach 6: Limited Expansion of Villages

Description

This approach focuses on development in our more sustainable rural villages both within and outside the Green Belt. This will support the vitality and services within these villages as more residents will be able to use the local pub, school and shops. The scale of growth in these locations is more limited to that compared to the other approaches to retain the village character and not overload services.

The approach has the potential to deliver **13,000-15,000 homes** within the plan period.



Advantages	Disadvantages
Helps sustain existing facilities and infrastructure in the village.	Would require the allocation of greenfield sites.
Helps to meet local housing needs for the village community.	Cannot meet our housing needs in full.

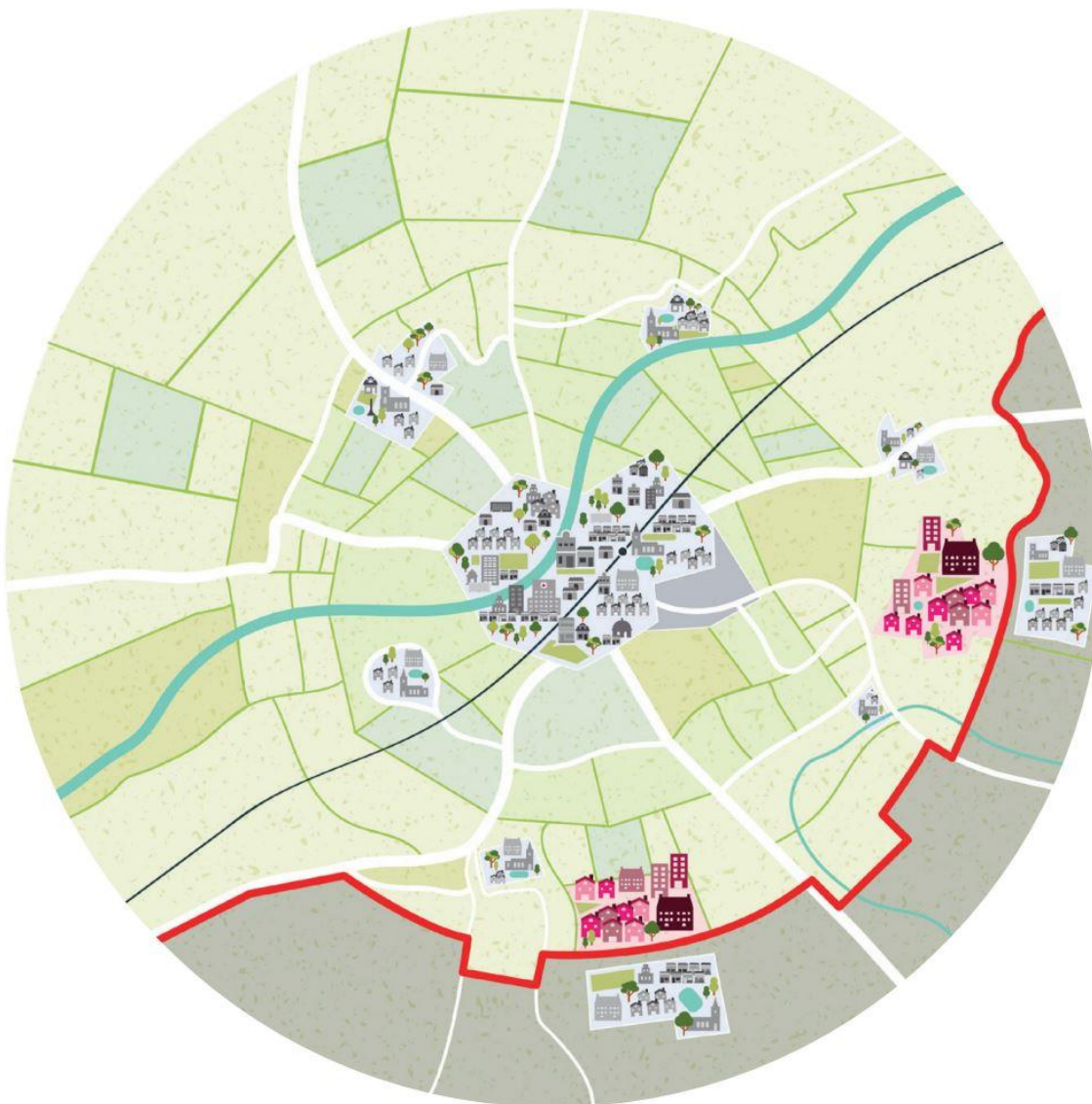
Provides good access to high-quality natural areas.	Could adversely impact on high quality landscape.
May provide small scale new and upgraded sport, recreation, health and community facilities.	May have adverse recreation impacts on our protected environmental areas and will therefore require mitigation which may be harder to deliver through small scale sites.
Has scope for limited small-scale employment development e.g. small-scale offices or other 'neighbourly' employment uses.	Services and facilities may be limited in the established settlement, development is unlikely to provide significant improvements.
This approach could avoid overloading one settlement or part of the road network.	Unlikely to have access to existing frequent public transport, development will be of a scale which is unlikely to provide significant public transport improvements.
Could assist with rural diversification and rural employment.	Small sites are unlikely to significantly contribute to infrastructure improvements.
	Unlikely to benefit Buckinghamshire's key growth sectors.
	This approach can be viewed as 'pepper potting' and not strategic.
	Likely to encourage continued car use and increase commuting by car and travel to access services and facilities, particularly if the village is away from main transport corridors.
	Potential impact on village character needs to be carefully managed.

Approach 7: Expanding Urban Areas on the Edge of Buckinghamshire

Description

This approach focuses on the expansion of sustainable settlements on the edge outside of Buckinghamshire through large-scale urban extensions into Buckinghamshire.

The approach has the potential to deliver **6,000-7,000** within the plan period.



Advantages	Disadvantages
Existing nearby jobs, infrastructure, services and facilities.	Would require the allocation of greenfield sites.
A development of this size will require new infrastructure, such as schools, local centres and green spaces can bring benefits to existing and new communities.	Cannot meet our housing needs in full.

Could be more attractive to the employment market and to nearby strategic employment locations as it's building on large existing urban areas with existing employment areas.	Some infrastructure is likely to require major upgrades, e.g. water and wastewater.
Transport interventions could improve a set of corridors feeding into nearby settlements.	Could divert growth away from current main employment centres in Buckinghamshire and would not help meet their local needs.
	Will require joint working with neighbouring authorities which could make the implementation of sites more difficult, e.g. compelling them to enhance transport infrastructure.

Q1

A) Are there any other approaches we should consider for meeting housing needs?

Please tick (✓) one option

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

If you answered 'Yes', please tell us the other approaches we should consider

B1) For the new settlement approach, are the three new towns that have already been promoted to the New Towns taskforce appropriate locations?

Please tick (✓) one option

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

If you answered 'Yes', please tell us the other approaches we should consider

B2) Are there any other locations which should be considered for a new town?

Please tick (✓) one option

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

☐ I don't know

If you answered 'Yes', please tell us the other approaches we should consider

C) Which are the aspects of Grey Belt that are important to you?

D) Do you have a preference(s) for any of the approaches identified if technical work concludes that not all approaches are needed?

Please tick (✓) one option

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I don't know

If you answered 'Yes', please tell us the other approaches we should consider

E) To support this housing need, what is the most important infrastructure needed for your area?

F) To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Local Plan should support health and wellbeing?

Please tick (✓) one option

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ I don't know

Please give the reasons for your answer

G) How can the Local Plan best support health and wellbeing?

Summary of Approaches to Potential Housing Supply

It is likely all of these approaches are required to meet the housing needs for Buckinghamshire. The proposed housing numbers are indicative, providing a snapshot of where we have got to developing the plan so far. This will change once the technical studies have been completed. The indicative numbers are provided to show the direction of travel.

	Potential housing supply
Approach 1: Brownfield sites within existing towns and villages	1,500-2,500
Approach 2: Growth on the edges of existing main towns	23,000-28,000
Approach 3: New towns	11,000-13,000
Approach 4: Development at transport hubs	16,000-19,000
Approach 5: Expansion near key employment areas	5,000-6,000
Approach 6: Limited expansion of villages	13,000-15,000
Approach 7: Expanding urban areas on the edge of Buckinghamshire	6,000-7,000
Total	75,000-91,000
Windfall	7,400
Total housing supply + commitments	82,000-99,000
Housing requirement	91,000
with 5% buffer	95,550

N.b. the numbers in the above table do not sum due to rounding.

Approach to Meeting Travelling Communities Accommodation

The Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment (2025) ([GTAA](#)) assessed the needs for travellers during the plan period. It sets out that during the plan period, there is a need for 681 pitches and 38 plots.

The PPTS sets out that local planning authorities should set pitch and plot targets for those who meet the Annex 1 definition for planning purposes. It further states that Local Plans should identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to meet 5 years supply and identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for six to 10 years and, where possible, for 11 to 15 years. The local plan therefore should, at the least, allocate sites to accommodate 516 pitches and 30 plots which would meet the needs for the first 10 years of the plan period, as required by the PPTS.

To meet the high level of identified needs for at least the first 10 years, which will be a challenge, we will assess the following approaches:

Approach 1 – Intensify and expand existing sites

Approach 2 – Consider temporary sites and unauthorised sites for allocation of permanent pitches

Approach 3 – Use vacant pitches

Approach 4 – Reclaim pitches used by non-travellers

Approach 5 – Call for sites for gypsy and traveller use

Approach 6 – Consider past refusals for allocation

Approach 7 – Review outstanding allocations

Approach 8 – Additional supply from pending planning applications

As part of this consultation, we are carrying out a call for sites exercise for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople to submit sites for consideration to help meet this need.

Q2) Are there any other options the Council should consider to identify sites for the travelling community?

Please tick (✓) one option

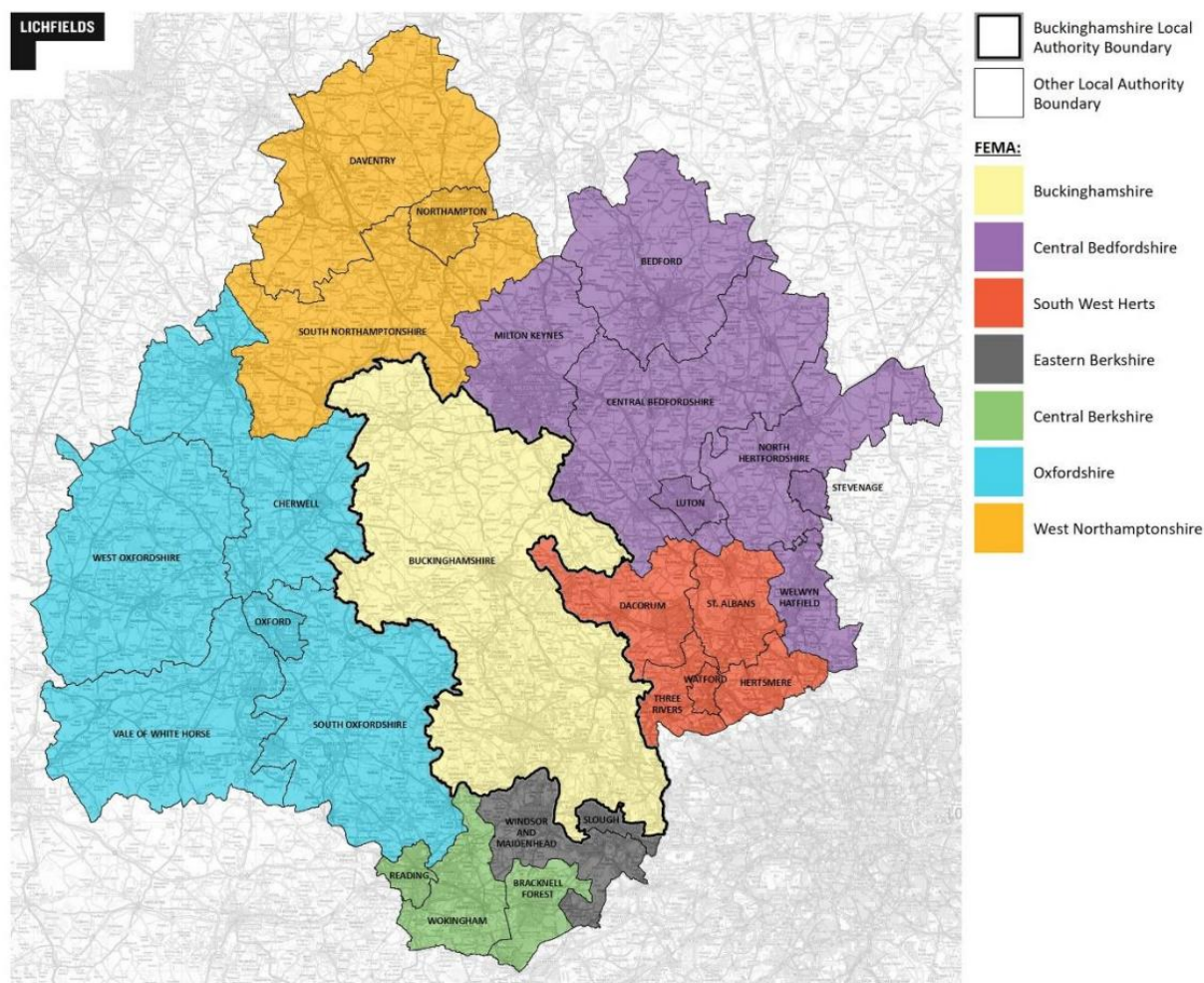
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

If you answered 'Yes', please tell us the other approaches we should consider

7. Employment Spatial Strategy

Buckinghamshire's employment catchment is defined within the Lichfields [Employment and Retail Study 2025](#). The catchment is the Buckinghamshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA). Therefore, the appropriate basis for planning for economic needs in this Local Plan is the Buckinghamshire Council area. There are cross boundary links in terms of flows of workers into and out of Buckinghamshire, but these are not so substantial as to extend the FEMA.

Map of Functional Economic Market Area



Source: ONS (2011) / Lichfields analysis

The Level of Employment Growth

The Local Plan needs to help deliver land and premises to support economic growth. The overall level of growth needed is 219.4 ha of new land to 2045.

Employment needs vary according to the business sector:

- 33.5 ha is needed for offices, research and development
- 185.8 ha is needed for industrial and warehousing & distribution

The amount of land needed also takes into account schemes which are already permitted or allocated in Local Plans. This gives a reduced net target of **45.9** ha.

The Local Plan also needs to meet the national requirement to help deliver critically important Modern Economy Uses. These are data centres and freight and logistics. There is a comparative advantage for new data centres in the Ivers area of southern

Buckinghamshire. This is linked to the existing cluster of data centres in the Slough – Hayes Availability corridor and the high demand for data centres in areas close by ([Modern Economy Study](#)).

Types of New Employment Premises and Land

The Councils' Economic Growth Plan for Buckinghamshire is of critical importance to future economic growth in the area by identifying sectors which help provide high quality jobs and increases local productivity. The Local Plan employment approaches and allocations refer to expanding our existing strategic employment sites at our Enterprise Zones, for example, as set out in the Bucks Economic Growth Plan. The Local Plan policies aim to meet the needs of key sectors which contribute to productivity. These are film and high-end television space research high-performance technology and MedTech. This includes positive planning for businesses that need to grow or update their premises, new locations to assist with regeneration and renewal of bad neighbour uses and support for intensification of existing sites.

The Local Plan employment strategy is also based on the comparative advantages that Buckinghamshire has for nationally important Modern Economy uses in the NPPF. Existing economic strengths and clusters in Buckinghamshire influence the attractiveness of the area to businesses in the Modern Economy sector. There are economic efficiencies of co-location or clustering and so the area has strengths for data centres, laboratories and logistics. Therefore, there is a specific criteria-based policy for new data centres. Support for laboratories, the renewal of storage and distribution premises, offices and Research & Development premises also helps meet growth needs for the modern economy uses within Buckinghamshire. Freight and logistics underpin the success of national and local business needs and are a vital part of planning for the Buckinghamshire economy.

Other policies within the Local Plan support economic growth, for example the delivery of more housing and affordable housing, which will help address labour and skills shortages in the area. New employment growth needs to be facilitated and supported by improvements in infrastructure. This could be road, public transport and active travel as well as other infrastructure such as green infrastructure, biodiversity improvements superfast broadband and flood mitigation to deliver new high quality employment premises which are attractive to the market.

Location of New Employment

The Local Plan needs to protect and enhance the key economic assets within Buckinghamshire. These are the three Enterprise Zones at Silvestone, Westcott and Arla / Woodlands and the globally important Pinewood Studios. These four sites are strategically important, and each has a specific policy approach within the Local Plan.

There are many other key employment sites in Buckinghamshire which provide local jobs, accommodate important firms and contribute to economic growth and productivity. These include the Cressex Business Park in High Wycombe and Rabans Lane in Aylesbury.

These strategic and key employment sites are at the core of the Local Plan employment strategy. The Local Plan policies support the need for their continued success.

The current distribution of new employment land is skewed towards the north and centre of Buckinghamshire. This is primarily due to the scope within current commitments at Silverstone, Woodlands and within the existing employment site at Wescott.

New employment land will be designated in other locations to help meet local business needs and to help re-balance the current skewed distribution. Technical work is underway to inform these allocations. In addition, there is likely to be new settlements within the Local Plan, and these will need to include land for new employment to create mixed use and balanced local communities.

Data Centres

The NPPF places an additional requirement on the Local Plan to help meet the needs for new data centres and other critical employment sectors. The scale of data centres may change in future as technology changes but as a general guide, sites for new data centres will need to be capable of accommodating 50,000 sqm. Further work will be undertaken to consider sites for the allocation of data centres.

Rural Businesses and Other Business Needs

The Local Plan policies have a positive approach to support the needs of local businesses outside main settlements and in rural areas. These can provide local jobs, support the agricultural sector and enhance local communities and facilities. Tourism is an important part of the Buckinghamshire economy with many visitor attractions which cater for local residents and visitors from further afield. They also contribute to local vitality and provide jobs. The Local Plan aims to support visitor attractions and other facilities for tourism.

Labour supply and shortages is a key problem for employers in Buckinghamshire. This limits the potential for new growth. The draft Local Plan identifies a policy EC3 Skills and Local Employment to require contributions towards skills and local employment in line with the Buckinghamshire Skills and Employment Strategy.

Approaches for Identifying New Employment Allocations:

Approach 1 - Expansion at strategic employment sites (Silverstone, Westcott and Pinewood and continued delivery of employment growth at Woodlands)

Approach 2 – New employment within urban expansions and new settlements (see housing approaches 2 and 3)

Approach 3 – Small-scale employment sites promoted through the ‘calls for sites’

Approach 4 - Modern Economy uses including datacentres – main opportunity area at Iver linked to Slough – Hayes Availability Zone identified in report by Lichfields

Approach 5 - Intensification and expansion at existing 'key employment sites' (37 sites identified in the Employment Land Review e.g. Globe Park, Cressex, Rabans Lane)

Approach 6 – Utilising town centres to support regeneration

Approaches 1, 4, and 5 meet the recommendations of the Employment Land Review. Approach 2,3 and 6 would help to meet the ELR recommendations to address the skewed supply of current employment in Bucks by helping to meet needs in other locations.

The Local Plan includes the protection of strategic and key employment sites, the types of location where new employment growth can take place and identifies what amount of new employment land is needed in future.

Q3) Do you agree with the approaches to employment?

Please tick (✓) one option

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

If you answered 'Yes', please tell us the other approaches we should consider

Q4) Are there any other approaches that should be considered?

Please tick (✓) one option

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

If you answered 'Yes', please tell us the other approaches we should consider

Q5) Should the new Local Plan aim to balance new employment land more evenly throughout Buckinghamshire to help meet the needs of local businesses?

Please tick (✓) one option

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

If you answered 'Yes', please tell us the other approaches we should consider

How to Have Your Say

The consultation on this document will start on 17 September and conclude on 29 October 2025 at 23.59 pm. We will review all the comments we receive and consider these to help us shape the final publication of the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire before it is submitted for an independent examination.

You can share your views on the draft plan in the following ways:

- complete the online survey at **[buckinghamshire.gov.uk/draft-local-plan](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/draft-local-plan)**
 - complete, and return, a printed version of the survey
 - email us at planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
 - write to us at draft plan Consultation, Planning Policy, Buckinghamshire Council, Walton Street, Aylesbury, HP20 1UA
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