



South Bucks District Council
Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Annual Monitoring Report
2007-2008

December 2008



South Bucks
District Council

Annual Monitoring Report 2007/08

South Bucks District Council

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Foreword

Welcome to the Fourth Annual Monitoring Report. We hope you find the information contained within useful and interesting.

The report reflects the particular diversity and context of South Bucks, most of it is good news but there are some areas of concern. Although we are required to report on procedural progress of the new Local Development Framework (see Section 3), the report also highlights delivery and changes to social economic and environmental factors on the ground - a look beyond traditional land use planning.

The report sets out a picture of sustainable development for the area through interlinking the outcome of policies together with aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy, and the adopted Local Plan 2006. We think there is value in the AMR. It will develop in future years, evolving with the Core Strategy and drawing in corporate input, which will assist in the monitoring of both the AMR and Sustainable Community Strategy. Whilst monitoring can only review recent past activity, the purpose of the AMR is so that we can learn from past activity and project to the future, and findings from this report are directly contributing to the preparation of the Core Strategy.

Whether you are an interested local resident or part of a larger organisation, we welcome both your views on the report and your requests for information to be included in future.

We hope that we have given you a cohesive picture of South Bucks District and its progression towards sustainable development.



Councillor Frank Bowater
Portfolio Holder Local Development Framework
December 2008

Executive Summary

Introduction

Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, local authorities are required to produce a Local Development Framework (LDF) setting out their planning policies and proposals. In addition, they must produce a Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out how and when documents making up the LDF will be produced. As part of the process, under the above Act, Regulation 48 of its accompanying Regulations, local planning authorities must produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) by the 31st December each year.

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is two fold:-

1. To monitor how well policies in the LDF are performing against a set of Core Indicators, and indicators determined in the Core Strategy / adopted local plan
2. To report whether the local authority is meeting its targets for the production of the LDF as set out in the LDS

The AMR defines key issues and trends and also provides monitoring on:-

- the Districts sustainable development
- whether the aims and vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy are being met through the local spatial approach to planning

Review of Indicators

The Government revised the Core Output Indicators for the AMR in February 2008. The AMR has, therefore, been prepared and set out in accordance with the new guidelines. Two new indicators were included in the revised set on Housing, however, H6 Housing quality - Building for Life Assessment could not be fulfilled in this AMR.

Local Development Framework

The South Bucks Local Development Framework (LDF) is currently being prepared, and the first development plan document will be the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy Preferred Options Document was prepared in September 2006 but this did not contain detailed policy wording. A revised Emerging Approach is being prepared which is based on much stronger evidence than at previous stages, and work throughout 2007/08 on the LDF has concentrated on delivering that document. There were no Core Strategy milestones in the reporting year ending March 2008.

A Residential Design Guide Supplementary Document (SPD), which is intended to provide guidance to developers, is being produced. The Guide is to ensure high quality residential development which respects and enhances the character and sustainability of the district. Work began on the SPD in early 2007, and is due to be adopted in 2008.

Adopted Local Plan Saved Policies

The adopted Local Plan saved policies (2006) are continuing to deliver sustainable development across South Bucks, though some policies need updating such as those relating to local energy development opportunities. Whilst development continues to be in sustainable locations such as towns helping to reduce the need to travel, the interconnection between settlements remains an issue. This and other issues raised in the AMR need to be addressed through effective joint working with other bodies and organisations.

The following paragraphs summarise the key trends and issues arising in the Annual Monitoring Report, which comprise the summary and conclusions of the report.

Quality of Life

The quality life in South Bucks is high with higher than average wages. Education, skills and employment are higher than the South East average, and there is good access to employment opportunities. Crime is falling and South Bucks residents continue to enjoy good health.

Housing

A key issue is the need for Affordable Housing in the District. In 2007-08, 33 (net) affordable units were completed, compared to 18 units in 2006-07. Whilst the total housing completion in 2007-08 was exceptionally high, only 8.7% of the completion was affordable housing. The achievement of affordable housing was limited compared to assessed need. Preparation of the new Core Strategy is looking at the extent to which the planning policy threshold may be lowered and the affordable proportion of future new development increased, as measures to increase supply of affordable housing.

378 (net) housing completions were achieved during 2007/08, which is exceptionally high and is almost double last year's completion (195), an increase of 53.71% on the target set out in the 2004/05 AMR.

Business Development

A significant amount of new employment floorspace was completed in 2007/08 totalling 11,131 square meters (net), the most since 2002/03. All of the new employment generating floorspace completed in 2007/08 was on previously developed land.

The district has seen an annual increase in retail detail throughout the District over the past three years. Overall, comparison retail sales floorspace within South Bucks District appears to be trading healthily. Comparison expenditure growth up to 2016 could support about 1,950 sq m net within South Bucks District as a whole.

Environment

The District has a good quality environment. Measures such as the recommendations from the Open Spaces Strategy, work through Green Infrastructure planning, National Indicator 197, and the Biodiversity Priority Areas will enhance the area. Generally, pollution is low and the District does not appear to suffer from adverse issues such as high noise levels and other environmental health related impacts. The District, however, has the highest consumption of energy per capita in the UK but energy provided by local decentralised renewable, low carbon technologies is limited but increasing.

Summary

South Bucks is a popular area to live and this can be attributed to existing adopted Local Plan policies, which has been illustrated through this report. These policies will continue to be used until the new Core Strategy is adopted.

The report demonstrates a thriving economic area, set in a good quality environment with a good quality of life. It delivers a comprehensive view of South Bucks District and its progression towards sustainable development.

Section 1 Introduction and Purpose of the Report

Introduction

1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new system for producing planning policies. Local authorities are required to produce a Local Development Framework (LDF) setting out their planning policies and proposals. In addition, they must produce a Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out how and when documents making up the LDF will be produced. As part of the process, under the above Act, Regulation 48 of its accompanying Regulations, local planning authorities must produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) by the 31st December each year.

Purpose of the Report

1.2 The purpose of the report is two fold:-

1. To monitor how well policies in the LDF are performing against a set of Core Indicators, and also indicators determined in the Core Strategy / adopted local plan
2. To report whether the local authority is meeting its targets for the production of the LDF as set out in the LDS

1.3 The AMR defines key issues and trends and also provides monitoring on:-

- the Districts sustainable development
- whether the aims and vision of the Community Strategy are being met through the local spatial approach to planning

1.4 The South Bucks Local Development Framework (LDF) is currently being prepared, and the first development plan document will be the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy Preferred Options Document was prepared in September 2006 but this did not contain detailed policy wording. A revised Emerging Approach is being prepared which is based on much stronger evidence than at previous stages. It contains draft monitoring indicators, which closely reflect emerging approaches, and these will be finalised before the Core Strategy is submitted for examination.

1.5 Seventy five polices in the adopted South Bucks District Local Plan were saved indefinitely until replaced by policies contained within emerging Local Development Plan documents. Until the new development plan documents are in place, the AMR will continue to refer to the saved polices of the existing adopted Local Plan.

1.6 The AMR will present an analysis of: -

- Core Output Indicators
- Local Indicators
- Contextual Indicators
- Significant Effects Indicators

Review of Indicators

1.7 The Government revised the Core Output Indicators for AMR's in February 2008. The AMR has, therefore, been prepared and set out in accordance with the new guidelines. Two new indicators were included in the revised set on housing and H6

Housing quality - Building for Life Assessment could not be fulfilled in this AMR. The local authority will be trained in this area but until then, monitoring this indicator is unlikely to be achieved.

1.8 Local indicators have also been reviewed in the light of changing context within South Bucks, particularly those relating to Local Plan policies which have expired, and the creation of new and relevant Business and Town Centre Development indicators which reflect local circumstances.

Structure of the Report

1.9 The report this year is in two parts: -

Part One, contains the analysis of indicator outcomes collected over the year (narrative). Part Two, contains all statistical information behind the AMR.

Each section (below) contains a mixture of Core Output Indicators supported by local, contextual and significant indicators, along with key references to policies set out in the current adopted Local Plan.

The structure of the report is as follows: -

1.10 Part One: Annual Monitoring Report 2007/08

- **Section 2: Quality of Life** - is a contextual analysis of South Bucks, determined by the outcomes of contextual and significant affects indicators
- **Section 3: Local Development Scheme Implementation** - is an update on the progression of the LDF
- **Section 4: Housing** - sets out the past years completions and projections for future housing in the District to 2026
- **Section 5: Business Development and Town Centres** - provides an assessment of the Districts business environment
- **Section 6: Environmental Quality** - details the state of the local environment and local decentralised renewable, low carbon energies arising from development
- **Section 7: Conclusions** - summarises the outcomes and sets out key issues for future spatial planning

1.11 Part Two: Technical Appendices

The Technical Appendices comprise as follows: -

Annex 1: Housing Provision in South Bucks 2007/08

Appendix A: Outstanding Permissions for Housing Development

Appendix B: Density of Completed Developments 2007/08

Appendix C: Density of New Permissions 2007/08

Appendix D: Dwelling Size of New Permissions 2007/08

Annex 2: Contextual Indicators

Annex 3: Local Indicators

Annex 4: Significant Effects Indicators

Section 2 Quality of Life

Community Strategies for Buckinghamshire and South Bucks

2.1 The Core Strategy plays a critical role in helping to deliver community aspirations and quality of life. To meet local aspirations Local authorities are required to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) (formerly Community Plans) through Local Strategic Partnerships. Local Development Documents must therefore have regard to the SCS and ensure that land-use requirements arising from this are addressed. Clearly issues are cross cutting in nature, and one sector alone would be unlikely to be able to deliver solutions to keep and raise the quality of life in South Bucks.

2.2 The second Buckinghamshire Community Strategy, covering the period 2005-2015, was produced by the Bucks Strategic Partnership in 2005. It sets out a 10 year vision for the future of Buckinghamshire.

2.3 The Community Plan for South Bucks 2006-2016 (“The Shape of Things to Come”) was developed by local organisations working together as the South Bucks Partnership. The South Bucks Partnership brings together local authorities, parishes, health bodies, the police and representatives from the education, business, youth, faith and voluntary sectors. The South Bucks Community Plan includes the following vision:-

- Falling crime and fear
- Greater community pride and a sense of belonging
- A sustainable and thriving community
- Green space, character and the environment of the District preserved and enhanced
- Public services flexible and meeting diverse needs of our community
- Improving health and well-being, especially for those in deprived groups
- Improvements in traffic congestion, road safety and public transport

2.4 A new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for South Bucks is being prepared. Work on this new SCS will have been completed in time for the submitted version of the Core Strategy to reflect the revised SCS vision, and address the resulting land use implications.

Standard of Quality of life in South Bucks

2.5 South Bucks is relatively small, prosperous and semi-rural, covering around 141 square kilometres. According to the 2007 mid term population estimates¹, the population of the District was around 64,300. Reflecting the relative affluence of the area, residents of South Bucks were recently judged to have the second highest quality of life of any local authority area in Great Britain².

Unemployment, Education and Skills

2.6 Unemployment for the area was 3.4%, 1.8% below the national average, a drop in unemployment of 200 from last year³. The percentage of 15 year old pupils in schools maintained by the local education authority achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* - C for South Bucks was 67.5%, 7.0% higher than the Buckinghamshire

¹ Office for National Statistics Mid term Estimates

² Halifax, 2007

³ Nomis 2008

average. Higher educational levels are generally good, and almost 29% of people aged 16-74 have at least one Degree, compared with a national figure of just under 20%⁴. A higher than average number of people work as managers (25.8%) or professionals (28.85)⁵.

Owner Occupancy

2.7 Owner occupancy within South Bucks is higher than the regional or national average at 78%⁶. Houses in the District tend to be large, with an average of 6.37 rooms, although in recent years a higher proportion of smaller units have been built.

Affordability

2.8 The cost of housing is, however, above average for Buckinghamshire and England. The cost of the average dwelling in South Bucks is £528,376⁷. The average working salary is £28,977⁸. The affordability ratio for a joint income household would require 9.11 times the joint income to live in the average house in South Bucks. See Table 1 below for further ratios. This demonstrates the need for more affordable housing in the District, through both the development route and alternative routes such as acquisitions / reacquisition's via Registered Social Landlords (RSL's). Last year the District saw 12 empty houses returned to occupation.

House Price Levels ⁹		Affordability ¹⁰	
Type	Cost	Single Income	Two Incomes
Average	528,376	18.23	9.11
Detached	801,522	27.66	13.83
Semi detached	349,057	12.04	6.02
Terraced	296,279	10.22	5.11
Flat/Maisonette	275,673	9.51	4.75

Table 1 Affordability Ratios of housing in the District based on one and two incomes

Transport and Accessibility

2.9 Car ownership is high with 53% of households owning two or more cars, compared to 38% in the South East and 29% nationally. Only 11.1% of households have no car or van, compared to 26.8% nationally¹¹. Frequent rail services are provided by the Birmingham / Marylebone line, serving Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and the Denham area and the Bristol / Paddington mainline serving Burnham, Taplow, Iver and Richings Park. There are frequent bus services serving the larger settlements, and those smaller settlements located on the principal route network. Other settlements (including Dorney and Stoke Green) have poor public transport accessibility. Of a total resident workforce of 30,100 around 19,400 are out- commuters. This compares with 19,100 in-commuters. About 65% of out-commuters use a car to travel to work¹².

⁴ Census, 2001

⁵ Census 2001

⁶ Census, 2001

⁷ Land Registry figures 2007

⁸ Land Registry

⁹ Data available for house price levels is based on data from Land Registry 2007

¹⁰ Affordability = the average income obtained from MK Observatory @ 28,977 per annum

¹¹ Census, 2001

¹² Census 2001

2.10 Local Plan policies contribute towards the reduction of transport movements throughout the District, and subsequent minimisation of carbon emissions locally, by seeking that new development is built in accessible locations. Table 2, below, demonstrates this with all new domestic developments in reach of certain public services such as schools, medical facilities and shopping. Overall the scores are higher than last year, however, the access to hospitals is much lower with access being only 20%, a 60% drop from last years score of 50%. Existing Local Plan policies relating to the reduction of traffic are in line with the South East Plan policies on reducing the impact of traffic. The emerging view in the Core Strategy will be to rebalance transport use in favour of non car modes. In addition the County Council is working to increase the number of School Travel Plans (STP), which comprise a total of 15 to date in South Bucks. Currently 42% of schools have a signed off STP¹³. This is an increase of 17% from 2006/07.

Key services	Access within	No's. of new residential developments	No's. of residential developments with access	%
Hospitals	30 mins	74	15	20%
GP's	30 mins	74	73	99%
Primary Schools	30 mins	74	71	96%
Secondary Schools	30 mins	74	60	81%
Retail Centres	30 mins	74	49	66%
SOA	30 mins	74	72	97%

Table 2 Accessibility to key services (SOA = Super Output Area)¹⁴

2.11 The Annual Average Yearly growth in traffic supports improved accessibility, as the statistics reveal a reduction of traffic over the past two years (2005/06 - 2006/07) by almost 3%¹⁵. The area is served well by rail and by bus between major centres.

Health

2.12 Indicators of health are good when compared to England and the South East, but good health is not shared equally across the population, with stark inequalities of health between vulnerable groups and the rest of the population¹⁶. There are no NHS hospitals in the District and residents rely on hospitals in other areas for acute care. Many doctor's surgeries in the District are small and are not necessarily equipped to take on this wider role. The PCT will, however, upgrade facilities. Gerrards Cross lacks a doctor's surgery, although there are surgeries in nearby Chalfont St Peter. The District has an older population than average, and projections show that the number of people over 65 will rise between 30 and 40% over the next 20 years¹⁷. This is likely to have long term implications for healthcare and housing provision.

¹³ Buckinghamshire County Council 2008

¹⁴ Figures calculated through Accession, Buckinghamshire County Council 2008

¹⁵ Annual average flow of principal roads - South Bucks data obtained from continuous Automatic (ATC) Counters

¹⁶ South Bucks Health Profile 2007, NHS

¹⁷ Buckinghamshire Population Projections 2006-2026 (September 2007), and Subnational Population Projections 2006

2.13 The Council's emerging view is to promote healthier communities by encouraging access to a range of open spaces and recreational facilities, locating new development in accessible locations supporting healthier forms of transport such as walking and cycling, and away from sources of significant noise. The Council will also work with health authorities and developers (via section 106 agreements) to secure the provision of improved or new health facilities where there is need. Existing facilities serving the elderly will be protected.

Community Safety

2.14 South Bucks experiences relatively high levels of crime, and the number of overall offences per 1,000 population is slightly higher than in England and Wales as a whole¹⁸. Violent crime has increased from 2006/07 by half a percent, burglary has increased by 3.79%, but vehicle crime bucks this trend and has reduced by 4.27%¹⁹. Overall, however, the rate of crime in South Bucks is falling. Planning has a role to play in crime reduction through ensuring that development incorporates crime prevention and community safety measures, such as the layout of buildings and increased natural surveillance.

2.15 The number of people (including children) killed and seriously injured as a result of road accidents has decreased since 2002, whilst the trend for 2005 (only) increased. Targets to 2010 for this indicator have been laid out in the Buckinghamshire Local Transport Plan 2006/07-2010/11 as follows; 36% reduction in the No. of people killed or seriously/injured, a 27% reduction in the No. of children killed/seriously injured (0-15), and 10% reduction in the No. of slight casualties (all ages). The Highways Agencies roads running through the District contributed 4 fatal casualties (36%), 67 serious injuries (64%) (which is 63% of the total Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) figure) and 261 slight casualties (47%) to these figures. A coach crash in January 2008 alone accounted for 40% of the Districts KSI figure (2 fatal, 44 seriously injured) and 75% (3 serious) of the Child KSI figure²⁰.

Open space

2.16 Open space in South Bucks is owned and managed by private individuals and public bodies such as Councils, the City of London and the Forestry Authority. There has been no development on green space within the District as a result of Local Plan policies R 1, 2 and 4, but there has been no additional green space created with development. Nationally important open spaces sites such as the Special Area of Conservation and local wildlife sites are accessible from all 2007/08 development within South Bucks.

Green belt

2.17 The District has very strong Green Belt policies, which protects it from inappropriate development. There were 2 housing applications permitted in the Green Belt 2007/08 (2.75%), both were for barn conversion/change of use from agriculture to dwellings. The figure met the expectations as predicted in the previous AMR. Conversely, the remaining 95.7% housing permissions were inside existing settlements, including Green Belt Settlements. These demonstrate that the Green Belt policies GB 1- 4, 9 -11 and 13 are being effective. One of the key policies H10 from the local plan, recorded as part of the Appeals process, did not feature as part of the development decision making process. It is, however, a Local Plan policy which will be retained until the adoption of the Core Strategy.

¹⁸ Crime Statistics for England and Wales 2003/04 - Home Office

¹⁹ Thames Valley Police 2008

²⁰ Buckinghamshire County Council 2008

Green Infrastructure Strategy

2.18 The District Council has worked with the County Council to prepare a Green Infrastructure Strategy that looks at existing green spaces and green space needs throughout the County. This document will be used in the future to improve green infrastructure in the County. Examples of Green Infrastructure assets include: - allotments, accessible green space, wildlife habitats, historic landscapes, parks and gardens, urban parks and gardens and waterways and water bodies.

Conservation and Enhancement work

2.19 Supporting the plan policies is work undertaken by the Council in the local environment: -

Colne Valley Project

2.20 Work has been undertaken on two sites in the Colne Valley Regional Park, the subject of Local Plan policy L6, in partnership with Groundwork Thames Valley. Work comprises footpath and access improvements near the Iver Water Treatment works which includes:-

- Recent improvements by the County Council to the footpaths near the Colne Brook and the Iver Water Treatment works
- A section of the footpath number IV 16 has been moved closer to the Colne Brook, away from the Court Lane industrial estate
- A new section of the Colne Valley Trail circuit has been opened, to link to the South Bucks circuit
- An Aggregates Levy grant of £20,000 was attracted

Iver Allotments Wildlife Area

2.21 Other works include the Iver Allotments Wildlife Area, and work comprises: -

- Recent works to create a new wildlife area
- A new management plan produced for this site
- Existing scrapes have been improved and deepened into new ponds
- New site interpretation has been provided

Pollution and local land quality

2.22 There have been no reported water pollution incidents, and issues such as blocked drains are decreasing year on year which will contribute towards sustainable urban drainage. Biological and chemical river quality remain good, however, the chemical quality of the River Misbourne has dropped from 'B' to 'C' between Gerrards Cross Sewage Treatment Works and Denham, and Denham and Colne. There have been 2 priority contaminated land sites investigated at Taplow²¹.

Conservation and Public Urban Open Space

2.23 There are 17 conservation areas in the District and two reviews were undertaken in 2007/08. District has 732 Listed Buildings, the same as last years figure, so there has been no deterioration. The total number of buildings on the at risk register remain at 4²². Residential Character is of high importance to communities in the District and the Council is working on a Residential Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which directly tackles both quality and sustainability of design of buildings and open space. The due adoption date for the SPD is in 2008.

²¹ Environment Agency Website 2008

²² South Bucks District Council 2008

Works for urban open spaces include: -

1. Broadway East, Denham Green

2.24 An Environmental Improvement scheme has been completed at Broadway East, Denham Green. New paving has been installed outside the shops, and a new parking lay by installed on a former grass verge to stop parking on the grass and to improve the aesthetics of the area. Local school children were involved in the design of clay tile mosaics that were installed in the paving, resulting in the successful inclusion of the local community in the project. The project was undertaken with the support of Buckinghamshire County Council, Denham Parish Council and Denham Green Residents' Association.

2. Thornbridge Road, Iver Heath

2.25 Funding has been obtained and designs prepared, for an Environmental Improvement scheme to enhance an area outside some shops at Thornbridge Road, Iver Heath. Works to improve the paving outside the shops, and to control some of the parking provision in the area will be completed in 2008/09. The project has been progressed with Buckinghamshire County Council and Iver Parish Council.

2.26 Key Trends

- Residents of South Bucks were recently judged to have the second highest quality of life of any local authority area in Great Britain
- The health of South Bucks remains good, although there are pockets of deprivation
- Crime is falling
- Education, skills levels and employment remains higher than average
- The green belt and open spaces have been protected

2.27 Key issues

1. Access to larger more diverse health care provision especially for the older population is limited
2. High cost of housing and lack of affordable housing
3. Connectivity is poor between settlements

Section 3

Local Development Scheme

3.1 The most recent South Bucks Local Development Scheme was submitted to the Government Office for the South East on 1st March 2007. In April 2007, the Government Office confirmed that the First Secretary of State did not intend to issue a direction requiring the Local Planning Authority to amend the Scheme. Accordingly, the Local Development Scheme took effect.

3.2 Revised guidance in PPS12¹ states that the AMR should report progress on the timetable and milestones for the preparation of documents set out in the Local Development Scheme including reasons where they are not being met.

3.3 The Local Development Scheme set out the Council's proposals to concentrate on the preparation of the following documents during 2007-08: -

- Core Strategy
- Residential Development Design Guide SPD
- Generic Development Control Policies DPD
- Annual Monitoring Report 2006-07

Table 4 'Programme Management - Milestones' from the Local Development Scheme submitted in March 2007, can be found at the end of this chapter page 12.

Overview from 2007-08

Core Strategy

3.4 As reported in last year's AMR, public consultation at regulation 26 stage on the Preferred Options took place in September/October 2006. Following this, several other core strategies elsewhere were found 'unsound' at their examinations. The Council then decided to delay progress on its Core Strategy to allow further work to be carried out and to strengthen the evidence base.

There were no Core Strategy milestones in the reporting year ending March 2008.

Residential Design Guide

3.5 The Residential Design Guide² Supplementary Document (SPD) is intended to provide guidance to developers in order to secure high quality residential development which respects and enhances the character and sustainability of the district. Work began on the SPD in early 2007, and is due to be adopted in 2008. The table below sets out whether the milestones for the SPD have been met.

Stage	Milestone dates as set out in the Local Development Scheme	Dates milestones achieved.	Milestone met?
Pre-production / evidence gathering, including SA scoping	January - May 2007	January - July 2007	No
Preparation of draft SPD and gain approval	June - October 2007	August - November 2007	No

¹ PPS12 Local Spatial Planning (2008)

² The word "development" was removed from the title of the SPD during its production.

for consultation			
Regulation 17 participation on draft SPD	November - December 2007	December 2007 - January 2008	No
Consideration of representations and finalising of SPD	January - March 2008	February 2008 -	No

Table 3 - Residential Design Guide

3.6 A wide range of stakeholders were consulted during the preparation of the SPD, including English Heritage, English Nature and the Environment Agency. A number of comments were received and the SPD and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (SA) were amended in the light of these.

3.7 The milestones were not quite met, although the main Regulation 17 consultation on the draft SPD took place only one month later than programmed in the LDS (see above). This slight delay was due to resourcing issues, with the majority of the work on the SPD being undertaken by a Development Control officer working part time on the document. Also, more work was expected in making changes to the draft SPD as a result of comments received in the Regulation 17 consultation process

Generic Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents

3.8 The Local Development Scheme states that work on the above DPD would commence in February 2008. The Core Strategy process has proved more complex and resource intensive than expected, and the Council has been advised by the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) to concentrate on the Core Strategy rather than start any other DPDs at this stage.

Other Local Development Framework outputs in 2007/08

3.9 A great deal of other work took place over this period, including: -

- Strengthening the evidence base for the Core Strategy, including commencing or completing a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, an Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study, a Transport Assessment and a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Liaising with key stakeholders, including the Local Strategic Partnership, Bucks County Council, adjoining District Councils, the Primary Care Trust, the Environment Agency and water companies
- Holding a key stakeholder workshop with an independent facilitator in September 2007 to discuss some potential options for the Core Strategy
- Continuing the review of Conservation Areas in the District, including completing CA appraisals
- Responding to consultations from the County Council on Minerals and Waste DPDs, including the LDF Core Strategy
- Providing input into the Partial Review of the South East Plan on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
- Producing interim guidance on residential parking standards

Progress on the Local Development Framework since April 2008

3.10 The LDS states that the Council will publish its Revised Preferred Options (regulation 26) Core Strategy in May 2008. Progress, however, has been further delayed recently by several factors, including: -

- The publication of the revised PPS12 'Local Spatial Planning'. This has introduced changes to the LDF process, including amalgamating the Regulation 25 (issues and options) and Regulation 26 (preferred options) consultation stages into a single requirement to engage the public. It also introduces a new 'pre-submission' stage for people to make representations before the plan is submitted. The new PPS12 also makes substantial changes to guidance on the content of Core Strategies.
- The South East Plan Proposed Changes were published in July 2008. These changes needed to be analysed and influenced the emerging policy direction.
- Staff resource issues - the Planning Policy Unit had a vacant Principal Planner post from February to September 2008.

3.11 Nevertheless, progress has already been made during the first part of 2008/09. Over the whole of the 2008/09 period the Council will: -

- Continue to input into the South East Plan process, including responding to proposed changes following the Panel Report
- Continue to strengthen the evidence base for the Core Strategy, including producing a Sustainability Appraisal, an Appropriate Assessment, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, an Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study, a Transport Assessment and a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment before the document is submitted for examination. Consideration is being given to whether additional evidence is needed.
- Continue to liaise with key stakeholders. The Community Plan is being 'refreshed' as a Sustainable Community Strategy and the Planning Policy Team will liaise with the Local Strategic Partnership as necessary.
- Continue the review and designation of new Conservation Areas in the District, with character appraisals.
- Continue to respond to consultations from the County Council on Minerals and Waste DPDs
- Provide further input into the Partial Review of the South East Plan on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
- Finalise and adopt the Residential Design Guide in October 2008
- Publish a Core Strategy 'emerging approach' document for consultation in early 2009. This will not be called 'revised preferred options' due to changes to the LDF process introduced by revised regulations and PPS12 during 2008.
- Prepare a revised Local Development Scheme, if resources permit.

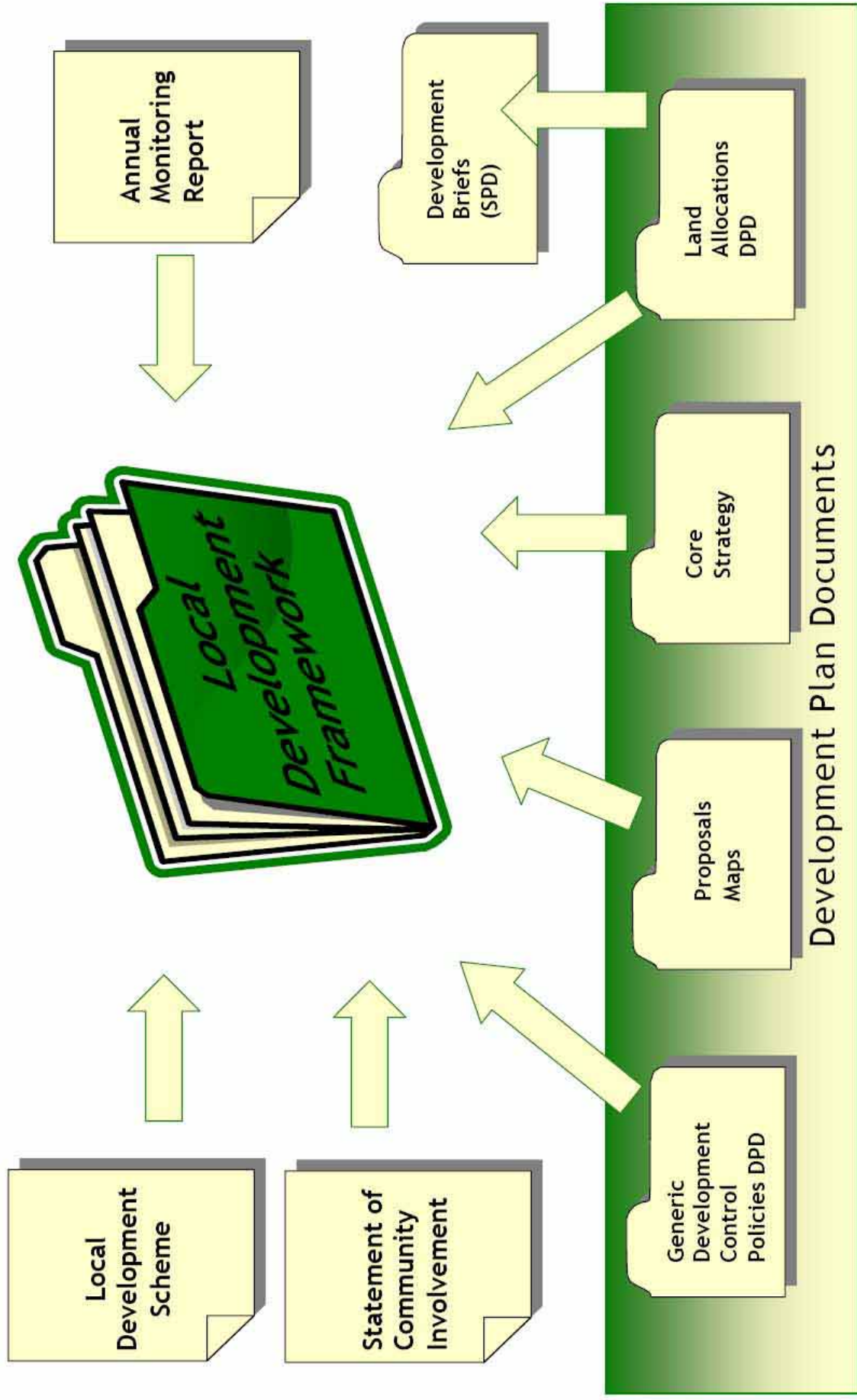


Figure 1

Section 4 Housing

Housing Core Output Indicators

4.1 A revision of the Core Output Indicators for Housing was produced in July 2008 by the Government. It includes the following 6 Core indicators:

- H1: Plan Period and Housing Targets
- H2: Housing Land Supply and Trajectory
- H3: New and Converted Dwellings on Previously Developed Land
- H4: Net Additional Pitches for Gypsy and Traveller
- H5: Gross Affordable Housing Completions
- H6: Housing Quality - Buildings for Life Assessments

H1 Plan Period and Housing Targets

4.2 Housing requirements for the period to 2006 are derived from the adopted Buckinghamshire Structure Plan (1996). They were based on an assessment of the ability of the District to accommodate housing development without the need to release land from the Green Belt, or harm the character and amenity of those areas in which residential development would be acceptable in principle. The requirements were for a total of 1800 dwellings to be provided between 1991 and 2001, and then 600 dwellings between 2001 and 2011.

4.3 The South East Plan was submitted to Government on 31 March 2006. It has the plan period from 2006 to 2026. The Panel Report on the submitted Plan was published on 29 August 2007. It recommended the housing figures for South Bucks be raised from 90 to 94 dwellings per annum. In July 2008, the Government published the proposed changes to the South East Plan with the housing figure of 94 dwellings per annum for South Bucks (or 1,880 dwellings for the 20 year plan period)¹. The Council has, therefore, used this figure as the strategic housing requirement from 2006 onwards.

H2 Housing Land Supply and Trajectory

4.4 Since 2004, completions have been above the annual housing requirement. A number of large-site redevelopment schemes have come forward in recent years enabling high completion figures to be projected with confidence into the short term, at least until 2012-13.

4.5 The housing trajectory, see Figure 2, p. 20, is an essential part of the housing implementation strategy in terms of managing delivery. The first housing trajectory for South Bucks was established in the AMR 2004-05. The Council then updates the trajectory annually. The trajectory has the time frame to 2026, which is in line with the plan period in the South East Plan.

4.6 There are a number of assumptions made when preparing the housing trajectory. All outstanding permissions are expected to be implemented in the coming 5 years (except for one permission where information indicated that the scheme would not be implemented). The projected net completion on large sites with outstanding planning permission is shown in Table 5, below. The projection is based on the current implementation status and other sources including advice from the applicants/developers.

¹ South East Plan Report to panel Vol. 1, Report 2007

	2008-9	2009-10	2010-1	2011-2	2012-3
BE:5, 7, 9 & 11 North Drive, Holtspur	9				
BE: Greenacres, 119 Station Road			10		
BE: The Former Blue Dragon Laundry Site	13				
BE: Candlemas Lane depot			11		
BE: 54-58 Gregories Road			12		
BE: 40-42 Station Road			12		
BE: 141 Station Road	13				
BE: 44-46 Station Road			12		
BE: 22-24 Grove Road			10		
BE: Ivy House, Hedgerley Lane				10	
BU: 136-146 Lent Rise Road	6				
BU: Gore Road allocation					20
DGV Phase 3			35		
GX: Bulstrode	10				
GX: 1-5 South Park View					9
GX: Upper Meadow	19	19			
IV: Lea Barton	11				
IV: Meadow Cottage, Bangors Rd South				11	12
SP: Bells Hill centre		15	15		
TP: Old Court Hotel				10	
TP: Ex Red Cross Hospital: - Phase 2		32			
TP: Ex Red Cross Hospital: - Phase 3			16	17	
TP: Ex Red Cross Hospital: - Phase 4				21	20
TP: Dropmore Estate	21	21			
TP: S G T				27	26
Small site (<10 dwelling) U/C as at 31 Mar 08	43	44			
Other outstanding sites (<10 dwelling) NYS as at 31 Mar 08:		27	27	28	28
TOTALS:	145	158	160	124	115
Target from SE Plan Proposed Change	94	94	94	94	94

Table 5 - Projected net completion on large sites with outstanding planning permissions

4.7 The Urban Capacity (Potential) Study 2003-06 was published in September 2006 to show the potential of housing land delivery over the long term. As required by PPS 3, a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is being prepared to assess the deliverability and developability of all the potential housing sites. Initial findings of the SHLAA was published in May 2008 for consultation and the data was used for the housing trajectory for this year. The SHLAA is being revised and the report will be produced in spring 2009. Housing delivery is assessed over a 5-year period in the SHLAA. An assumption is made that an equal number of dwellings would be delivered each year within its 5-year period.

4.8 Table 7, p. 19 shows the level of net additional housing expected to come forward in South Bucks to 2026. The last row in the table refers to the annual managed delivery target by taking account of past/projected completions.

H3 New and Converted Dwellings on Previously Developed Land

4.9 PPS3 states that the national annual target is that at least 60% of new housing should be provided on previously developed land (PDL)². In 2007-08, 96.86% of gross new dwellings were built upon PDL. The high percentage represents the Council's high level of success in protecting both the Green Belt and settlement green spaces.

H4 Net Additional Pitches for Gypsy and Travellers

H4	Permanent	Transit	Total
	None	None	None

Table 6 Net additional pitches for gypsy and travellers

4.10 Local planning authorities are required to make provision for the residential and business needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The Council has worked with its sub-regional partners, and a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) covering the Thames Valley Region was published in September 2006. This identified an indicative need for 91 additional pitches in Buckinghamshire for the period, 2006-2011. The current provision is 66 pitches on local authority approved sites, with 59 as permanent and 7 as transit. There have been no net additional increases since 1996. Further work is now being undertaken with SEERA, and this will inform a draft alteration to the South East Plan, which will identify how many Gypsies and Travellers pitches are needed in each council area. The Communities and Local Government (CLG) website 2008 identifies 4 local authority sites in the District as having permanent and transit spaces³. In addition to the 4 local authority sites, there are 2 private authorised sites but the GTAA report does not detail whether or not the sites are permanent or transit.

H5 Gross Affordable Housing Completions

4.11 Affordable housing includes social rented and intermediate housing. Delivery of new affordable housing can be through new build, acquisitions and conversion. Provision also relies on negotiation and securement prior to the granting of planning permissions on larger private sites. In 2007-08, 33 (net) affordable units were completed, compared to 18 units (net) in 2006-07.

4.12 Whilst the total housing completions in 2007-08 was exceptionally high, only 8.7% of the completion was affordable housing. The achievement of affordable housing was, therefore, limited compared to assessed need. Preparation of the new Core Strategy is looking at the extent to which the site threshold may be lowered, and the affordable proportion of future new development increased, to increase the supply of affordable housing. The Core Strategy is also looking at whether a financial contribution (a 'commuted payment') should sometimes be collected in lieu of on-site provision, so that affordable housing can be provided elsewhere. Other non-planning measures also need to be considered where feasible and fundable, such as acquisitions or re-acquisitions from existing private housing stock by Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) which would add to affordable stock but not the total

² Planning Policy Statement 3, Housing, 2006

³ Gypsy sites provided by Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords in England

housing stock. This would, however, reduce supply at the lower end of the private market. Additionally, any opportunities to increase provision by more intensive use of existing properties owned by RSL's, need to be considered. It is also becoming apparent that a large number of new affordable units are in the form of apartments rather than houses.

H6 Housing Quality - Buildings for Life Assessments

4.13 There is no available statistical information on Building for Life Assessments in South Bucks.

Other Key Housing Indicators

Numbers and size of dwellings

4.14 Regarding the size of dwellings, of all newly granted permissions in 2007-08 (excluding outline permissions where the size of dwellings is generally not known), 102 or 48.1% (gross) were 1 or 2 bed-roomed. 30 or 14.2 % of the newly granted permissions were 3 bedroom dwellings and 80 or 37.7% were 4 bedrooms or more. The percentage of 4 or more bedroom dwellings has increased dramatically from previous years, whilst the percentage for 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings permitted continues to fall. Much of the provision of 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings is in the form of apartments rather than houses, which may be less suited to families with children. The size of dwellings provided can be due to several reasons, including national planning guidance (which seeks the more efficient use of land), the cost of land and developers wanting to maximising financial returns; and developers seeking to build dwellings that meet local market demand⁴.

4.15 The increased percentage of larger dwellings (of which most were in the form of houses) may be an indication of market needs for family houses in the District. These larger dwellings derive, primarily, from individual plot redevelopments where the prevailing character of the host area informs both market perception and planning control. There are also a number of one-for-one replacements, which do not add to the overall stock of houses but tend to replace moderately sized houses with larger ones of 5 bedrooms or more. In total, the housing completions for 2007/08 amounted to 378 units (net) which is almost double last net years completions(195 net), and is an increase on the housing trajectory target of 175 (net) by 53.7%. This is result of three major schemes in the District at Denham with 54 completions, Farnham Royal with 46 completions and Taplow with 29 completions.

Densities

4.16 It is clearly shown in the tables in Annex 1, (see Technical Appendix AMR 2007/08), that the aggregate density of new developments, both completed and permitted, continued in 07-08 to be consistently significantly higher on larger sites of 10+ dwellings. These will have been in the main, assembled, and have greater flexibility to shape future character - compared to smaller sites where there may be less market and planning flexibility to depart from the established character of often very spacious development. The aggregate density of **completed development**, excluded from the Green Belt, has remained stable for the last few years. The aggregate density of **new permissions** excluded from the Green Belt dropped from last year's exceptionally high percentage. The overall density of all development, however, is likely to depend to a significant extent on the balance between larger and smaller sites within the full portfolio of completions or permissions granted in the monitoring year.

⁴ Chiltern and South Bucks Housing Needs Study 2002

4.17 Key Trends

- The total number of housing completions was 378 which is almost double last years net completions (195), and is an increase on the target of 175 by 53.7%, resulting from three major schemes in the District at Denham, Farnham Royal and Taplow
- 33 affordable housing units were completed during the 2007/08, an increase of 45.5% on last year

4.18 Key Issues

1. Meeting the need for affordable and other housing in sustainable locations (i.e. with access to transport and services). There is only limited achievement of affordable housing compared to assessed need, however, because of the very high level of need, land constraints and adopted policies that are now dated

South Bucks District Housing Land Supply Trajectory

	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/1	2011/2	2012/3	2013/4	2014/5	2015/6	2016/7	2017/8	2018/9	2019/20	2020/1	2021/2	2022/3	2023/4	2024/5	2025/6	TOTAL	
Past Completions - All Sites (net)	91	54	171	133	195	378																			1022	
Projected Supply - Extant Planning Permissions							145	158	160	124	115															702
Projected Supply sites in the draft SHLAA *							6	6	6	42	42	43	43	29	29	29	29	29	29	60	60	60	60	60	662	
Total Projected Completions (net)							151	164	166	166	157	43	43	29	29	29	29	29	29	60	60	60	60	60	1364	
Cumulative Completions					195	573	724	888	1054	1220	1377	1420	1463	1492	1521	1550	1579	1608	1637	1697	1757	1817	1877	1937	1937	
PLAN - Annual Strategic Allocation - South East Plan					94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	1880	
PLAN - Cumulative Strategic Allocation					94	188	282	376	470	564	658	752	846	940	1034	1128	1222	1316	1410	1504	1598	1692	1786	1880	1880	
MONITOR - Number of dwellings above or below cumulative allocation					101	365	442	512	584	656	719	668	617	552	487	422	357	292	227	193	159	125	91	57		
MANAGE - Annual requirement taking account of past/projected completions					94	89	73	68	62	55	48	39	39	38	39	40	42	43	46	49	46	41	32	3		

* draft SHLAA initial findings published in May 2008

Table 7

South Bucks District Housing Land Supply Trajectory 2008

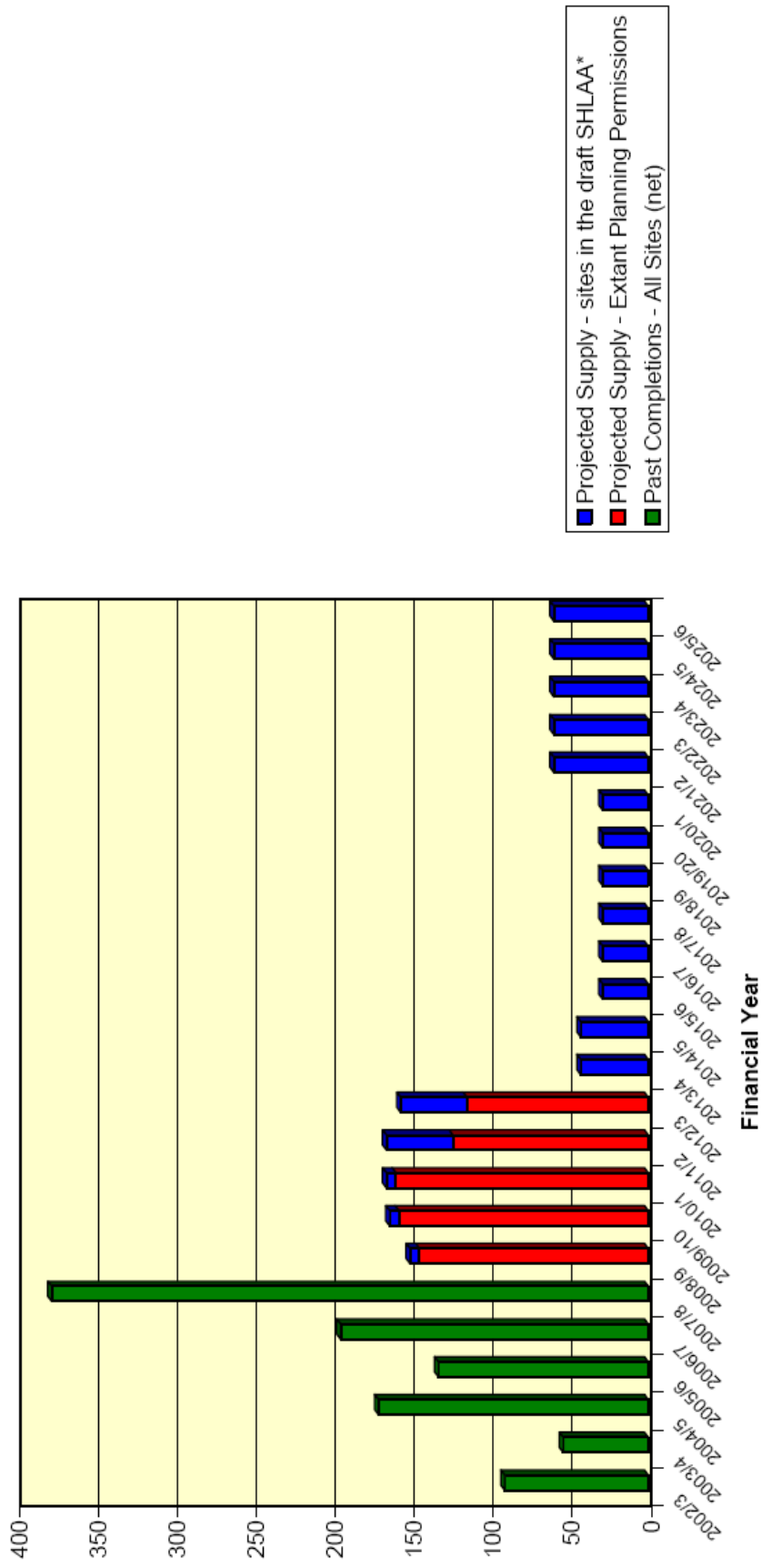


Figure 2

Section 5 Business Development and Town Centres

The Business Base

5.1 Economically the main centres in South Bucks are Beaconsfield (New and Old Towns), Gerrards Cross, and Burnham. There is also a concentration of employment generating development to the south of Iver (mainly on the Ridgeway and Bison Trading Estates, and at Court Lane).

5.2 The business base of South Bucks is mixed with both manufacturing and higher value added businesses, which demand good services and quality premises. Key business sectors within the District include IT and electronics, and medical / pharmaceutical, with Pinewood Film Studios a market leader in the film and media sector. Particular large employers, other than Pinewood Studios are Martin Baker at Higher Denham, Siemens Financial Services in Stoke Poges and Wyeth Laboratories at Huntercombe Lane South, Taplow.

BD1 Business Development

BD1	B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8	Mixed	Total
Gross	9,802	0	2,304	0	1,541	234	13,881
Net	9,645	0	2,304	-2,593	1,541	234	11,131

Table 8 - BD1 Total amount of additional floorspace by type

5.3 A new 3-storey office building on the Uxbridge Business Park (9,072 sq m gross internal) accounted for most of the new B1a floorspace completed in 2007/08. The gain in B1c floorspace (and loss of B2 floorspace) was principally due to a change of use application on the Ridgeway Trading Estate, near Iver. A further scheme on this Estate accounted for the entire gain in B8 floorspace.

5.4 It is difficult to identify trends in employment floorspace completions. Whilst there has been a significant increase in the amount of new employment floorspace completed in comparison with 2006/07, this is as a result of just a few large schemes. The loss of some B2 and B8 floorspace to B1 and other uses is continuing.

5.5 Notable outstanding planning permissions include 67,260 sq m of mixed B1-B8 floorspace and 9,530 sq m of B1c floorspace at Pinewood Studios. The latter permission provides replacement premises for DeLuxe Limited, who recently secured planning permission for residential redevelopment of their existing premises, north east of Denham Green.

BD2	B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8	Mixed	Total
Gross	9,802	0	2,304	0	1,541	234	13,858

Table 9 BD2 - Total amount of employment floorspace on previously developed land by type

BD3	B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8	Mixed	Total
Gross	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

Table 10 BD3 - Employment land available by type¹

5.6 All of the new employment generating floorspace completed in 2007/08 was on previously developed land. With no employment land available for new development it is anticipated that the percentage of employment floorspace completed on previously developed land will remain very high.

5.7 Local Plan policies E1, E3, E4, E5 and E6 seek to generally retain existing employment sites in employment use. The more intensive use of existing employment sites is generally supported, subject to the impact of development on the environment and local amenity. Monitoring shows that nearly all of the new employment floorspace completed in 2007/08 was on existing employment sites. Two completed schemes resulted in the loss of a very small amount of employment floorspace (157 sq m gross), through changes of use from B1 to residential and D1.

Access to Employment Opportunities

5.8 In 2001, the Census showed that there was a broad balance between the number of local job opportunities (29,800) and the size of the resident workforce (30,100). In practice, approximately 19,400 South Bucks residents commuted out of the District for work on a daily basis (with 19,100 in-commuters). No more up to date information is currently available, but it is clear that many South Bucks residents continue to commute out of the District to the nearby employment centres of Slough, Maidenhead, High Wycombe and Uxbridge.

Labour Market

5.9 South Bucks has a well qualified and well remunerated workforce that performs above the national and regional level on these measures. 36 per cent of the District's working age residents hold degree level qualifications compared to 31 per cent in the South East, with 54 per cent working in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations compared to 48 per cent in the South East. The unemployment rate has long been among the lowest in the country, currently standing at 0.9 per cent, while median earnings for residents working full time are £28,977, 9.5 per cent above the South East level. Annual earnings for those working in South Bucks are 10 per cent above the South East median at £28,200.

The Environment

5.10 Proximity to a high quality environment is an important location factor for high value added businesses. Local Plan policies seek to maintain the Green Belt (see p 6 paragraph 2.17) and the quality of the environment (see p 25), helping to maintain the reputation of South Bucks as an attractive place to do business.

5.11 There are particular issues in and around Iver, where HGV movements associated with the Bison and Ridgeway Trading Estates and Court Lane employment

¹ The definition for this indicator is changing. Whilst it previously only included land allocated for employment purposes in the Local Plan, the latest guidance on National Indicators suggests that Council's will, from next year, also need to include sites for which planning permission has been granted for employment uses, but the development is not yet complete.

The figures presented in table BD3 only relate to land allocated for employment purposes in the Local Plan. The new definition will be adopted in the 2008/09 AMR.

area are causing localised amenity issues. More generally, the environmental impact of local road traffic congestion is a concern. Areas of particular concern include the junction of the A355/A40 at Beaconsfield, the A355 through Farnham Common and Farnham Road and the A4 between Slough and Maidenhead².

District, Town and Local Centres

5.12 The nearby strategic town centres of Slough, Maidenhead, High Wycombe, and Uxbridge have continued to be the focus for major retail and other town centre developments, and provide higher order facilities for residents of South Bucks. Within the District, Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross are District Centres with a reasonable range of shops and services, sufficient to meet most day-to-day needs.

5.13 Beaconsfield Old Town, Burnham, Farnham Common and Iver are all defined as Local Centres. They meet the more localised needs of their immediate community.

5.14 The Joint Retail and Town Centre Study (December 2007) suggests that if the Tesco store in Gerrards Cross is implemented then there are no obvious areas of deficiency in main and bulk food shopping provision in South Bucks District. Overall, comparison retail sales floorspace within South Bucks District appears to be trading healthily. Comparison expenditure growth up to 2016 could support about 1,950 sq m net within South Bucks District as a whole. If current growth trends continue into the longer term, there could be considerable scope for development up to 2026, with a possible need for a further 6,100 sq net of comparison floorspace within South Bucks District.

Within Town Centre Areas

BD4(i)	A1	A2	B1a	D2	Total
Gross	33	0	446	0	479
Net	33	0	379	0	412

Table 11 BD4 (i) Total amount of floorspace for town centre uses

Other Areas

BD4 (ii)	A1	A2	B1a	D2	Total
Gross	615	0	9,356	0	9,971
Net	615	0	9,266	0	9,881

Table 12 BD4 (ii) - Total amount of floorspace for town centre uses

5.15 Very little new A1 Retail was completed within town centres in 2007/08 (33 sq m net). The increase in A1 retail floorspace in other areas was as a result of a single scheme, involving a retail plant nursery.

5.16 The significant increase in B1a floorspace (in 'other areas') is largely attributable to the completion of a new 3 storey office building on the Uxbridge Business Park. The increase in town centre B1a floorspace was delivered through a mixed use redevelopment scheme.

² Joint Retail and Town Centre Study December 2007

5.17 Looking ahead, the new Tesco's Store in Gerrards Cross is unlikely to be completed until 2010/11.

5.18 Local Plan policies S1 and S2 seek to generally protect A1 floorspace in District and Local Shopping Centres. Monitoring shows that three small schemes were permitted in Gerrards Cross and Beaconsfield, allowing change of use from A1 to A3 use (see also Indicator S2).

5.19 Local Trends

- A significant amount of new employment floorspace was completed in 2007/08, the most since 2002/03
- The loss of some B2 and B8 floorspace to B1 and other uses is continuing. With no new employment land allocated for development, the increase in employment floorspace is being achieved through the more intensive use of existing sites
- Unemployment levels remain very low
- The district has seen an annual increase in retail throughout the District over the past three years

5.20 Key Issues

1. Pressure for redevelopment of existing urban employment sites for housing remains high
2. Whilst there is a broad balance between the size of the resident workforce and local employment opportunities, there is high in and out commuting. Impacts include traffic congestion and adverse environmental effects.
3. Need to maintain economic prosperity through the careful management of the existing employment land portfolio - with limited opportunities for the identification of new employment sites
4. Role of affordable housing, particularly in terms of attracting and retaining workers is important, especially for those in lower paid professions
5. Encourage improvements in local retail provision in District and Local Centres to meet the needs of local communities, thereby reducing the need to travel further afield for shopping needs

Section 6 Environmental Quality

Introduction

6.1 This section sets out the revised Environmental Quality indicators for the AMR, supported by local, contextual and significant effects indicators and local information where relevant. The new revised indicators for environmental Quality comprise: -

- E1: Planning permissions granted contrary to Environmental Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds
- E2: Changes in areas of biodiversity importance
- E3 Renewable Energy Generation

E1 Flooding

	Flooding	Quality	Total
E1	None	None	None

Table 13 Planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds

6.2 There were five major applications put forward in the AMR reporting period which were objected to by the Environment Agency on the grounds of flooding and water quality ground. Three of these applications were refused and the remaining 2 were withdrawn¹.

6.3 The Local Authority has undertaken a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) which forms part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. Under the SFRA, a collation of sources of flood risk has been undertaken, resulting in the District being delineated into 'high', 'medium' or 'low' probabilities of flood risk. This provides the basis for the application of the 'Sequential Test' under PPS 25, resulting in specific planning recommendations for all settlements within the District which have been included within the SFRA.

E2 Biodiversity

	Loss	Addition	Total
E2	None	None	None

Table 14 Change in areas of biodiversity importance

¹ Environment Agency 2008

National Indicator 197

6.4 Buckinghamshire county Council is preparing a baseline report to be released in April 2008 on National Indicator 197 improved local biodiversity. Information from this regular information source will be included in future AMR's.

Status of Special Sites of Scientific Interest and Special Areas of Conservation

6.5 There is no change to the status of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) from the previous year apart from Stoke Common. Stoke Common was surveyed by Natural England in May 2008 and its status changed from Unfavourable Declining to Unfavourable Recovering². South Bucks has a total area of 139.68 ha covered by Local Wildlife Sites, and similarly to SSSI's, there has been no change in habitat loss or quality. The District's Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Burnham Beeches, is in Favourable Condition. There has been no loss of habitat.

Littleworth Common

6.6 South Bucks District Council manages Littleworth Common, a lowland heath and SSSI. The Common has public access for walkers, dog walkers and horse riders with two ponds that give a valuable species habitat. Here, the Council undertook 2 hectares (4 acres) of heathland regeneration. Consultation has also been undertaken with the County Council and local residents to establish the way forward for the site. SBDC will work with Natural England and local residents to clear an area of bracken and birch, and plan for the future of the common beyond 2010 when the current Management Plan ends, encouraging local people to take a more active role in the future management of the SSSI.

The Future of Stoke Common

6.7 In order to maintain Stoke Common into the future for the benefit of local residents, South Bucks District Council successfully transferred the ownership and management of it to the City of London on 31st October 2007.

The transfer was undertaken for two main reasons:-

1. To ensure ongoing expert management of the heathland
2. To ensure long term financial support for the Common through additional funding opportunities

6.8 The City of London has expertise in management work on similar sites, notably Burnham Beeches. The transfer to the City of London has enabled more of the objectives in the Management Plan to be undertaken, whilst still safeguarding the commons and the SSSI's future.

Agri-Environment Schemes

6.9 Supporting and integrating the SSSI's, the SAC and the biodiversity of South Bucks, are the Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) areas, Countryside Stewardship Schemes (CSS), and existing Woodland Grant Schemes (WGS). There are 9 ELS schemes and 1 organic ELS. The ELS are delivering a total area of 1550.93 hectares of land managed to certain environmental stewardship standards. In addition, there remains 405.07 hectares of land under CSS - the environmental stewardship precursor to ELS. There are nine Woodland Grant Schemes existing throughout the District, although the hectareage is unknown³.

² Natural England 2008

³ Natural England 2008

Green Flag

6.10 In addition to the agri-environment schemes above, two Green Flag Awards were awarded locally, one was for the Memorial Gardens owned and managed by the District Council and the other was for Black Park Country Park, the largest owned and managed by Buckinghamshire County Council.

Tree Preservation

6.11 The making of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) is demand-led according to merit and strength of threat, i.e. more trees are under threat from development, and the process is, therefore, not appropriate to numerical target setting. The Numbers of TPO's for 2007-08 were marginally lower than the previous year despite indications that the figures may rise. Indications are that with the current economic crisis the pressures of development on trees may well decline this year, so the total of TPO's made in 2008 - 09 total could well be less. Based on recent occurrences, a project will be undertaken commencing 2008-09, which will start varying and revoking old Orders which could lead to a dramatic rise in the number of new TPO's made in the years 2008-09 and 2009-10⁴.

E3 Renewable Energy Generation

6.12 The total recorded renewable energy generation, as applied to the revised Core Indicator specifications, for 2007/08 was 13.40 MW. This is an increased capacity of 4.50 megawatts from the previous year. This is a small contribution towards renewable energy targets for the Thames Valley and Surrey sub-region of 140 Mega Watts (MW) by 2010 and 209 MW by 2016⁵. Please see Table 14, p. 28 for a breakdown of recorded energy types. In meeting these targets, national planning guidance actively seeks that we plan for and do not restrict local opportunities for renewable, decentralised or low carbon energy, even in areas of designation. Whilst Local Plan policies EP14 and EP15 have supported renewable energy so far within the District, EP14 has now expired and EP15 needs updating.

6.13 It is worth noting that the use of fossil fuel energy locally is being displaced by forms of renewable energies. In the past year local development has yielded renewable forms of energy - solar water panels, and there is full permission for a small hydro scheme on the River Colne as part of a development. One development (phases one and two) comprising 49 dwellings produced approximately 163.66 megawatts of thermal capacity (solar hot water panels) over the past 12 months (non-recordable as a core indicator). A further proposed development with full planning permission has included a retained plant room for a new biomass boiler to provide renewable energy to a converted, refurbished listed building - the megawatt capacity is as yet unknown.

Local Energy Use

6.14 Whilst local energy improvement has increased by 2.6% from last year, the Energy Savings Trust Barometer Report III 2007, highlighted the fact that South Bucks had the highest carbon footprint per capita in the whole of the UK. This means that development measures need to be undertaken to reduce the area's carbon footprint

⁴ South Bucks District Council 2008

⁵ South East Plan 2006

Renewable Energy Generation Table

E3	Wind Onshore	Solar Photovoltaics	Hydro	Biomass						Total	
				Landfill Gas	Sewage sludge Digestion	Municipal (and industrial) solid waste combustion	Co-firing of biomass with fossil fuels	Animal Biomass	Plan Biomass		
Permitted installed capacity in MW											
Completed installed capacity in MW				10.90					2.5		13.40

Table 15 - Renewable Energy Generation

along with other measures such as NI 186, which will support carbon reduction in the area across all sectors such as business, community etc..

6.15 Energy consumption per capita continues to be well above the South East average. The use of gas has seen a drop of 922 Kw/h's, which is the first significant drop since 2001, however, gas use continues to be well above the South East average, as does the use of electrical energy. For housing managed by Registered Social Landlords (RSL's), the energy improvement in these dwellings has increased by 2.6% from last year.

6.16 The average SAP rating for the District was 82. The District has scored on average a high rating. 15 properties having SAP attributed ratings were completed by Building Control in 2007/08. This is, however, a small proportion (4.98%) of the 301 new dwellings completed in the District under the control of Approved Inspectors submitting Initial Notice Applications.

6.17 Since April 2006, new dwellings have to be designed to take account of carbon dioxide emissions from the property. In order to satisfy Building Regulations, the carbon dioxide emissions Design Emission Rate (DER) must be lower than the Target Emission Rate (TER). A SAP rating is still calculated for the property, however, and recorded by Building Control. SAP 2005 is also the tool used to calculate the figures on the energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for dwellings. EPC became mandatory for the completion of new dwellings in October 2008. The AMR will, therefore, consider if recording the average home energy performance could be a future Significant Effects Indicator.

6.18 Key Trends

- The District continues to resist development in the flood plain
- The status of SSSI's and the SAC remain unchanged apart from Stoke Common which has moved from an Unfavourable Declining position to one that is Unfavourable Recovering
- High use of fossil fuels in the District continues, and South Bucks has the highest consumption of energy per capita in the UK
- Local decentralised renewable, low carbon technologies are increasing in the District as part of new developments

6.19 Key Issues

1. Support Biodiversity through the delivery of development and other means
2. Reduce the local energy use /carbon emissions locally through the identification for, and implementation of decentralised, renewable, low carbon technologies. The current policy is now outdated for national carbon reduction targets

Section 7: Conclusions and Summary

Review of Indicators

7.1 The Core Indicators have been reviewed, and the AMR 2007/08 has used these indicators to reflect change in the local area and the effectiveness of adopted Local Plan policies over the past year.

Core Strategy

7.2 The number of the early core strategies produced by local authorities elsewhere were found not to comply with government guidance, and after taking expert advice, the Council was advised to undertake further work on its own Core Strategy and to improve the 'evidence base'; for this reason, the LDF timetable has slipped.

7.3 A new LDS will be prepared in early 2009. The South Bucks Community Plan is being taken into account in the production of the Core Strategy, and the Core Strategy will reflect the vision for South Bucks to be included in the refreshed sustainable Communities Strategy.

Adopted Local Plan Saved Policies

7.4 The adopted Local Plan saved policies (2006) are continuing to deliver sustainable development across South Bucks, though some policies need updating such as those relating to local energy development opportunities. Whilst development continues to be in sustainable locations such as towns helping to reduce the need to travel, the interconnection between settlements remains an issue. This and other issues raised in the AMR need to be addressed through effective joint working with other bodies and organisations.

Quality of Life

7.5 The quality life in South Bucks is high with higher than average wages. Education, skills and employment are higher than the South East average, and there is good access to employment opportunities. Crime is falling and South Bucks residents continue to enjoy good health.

Housing

7.6 A key issue is the need for Affordable Housing in the District. In 2007-08, 33 (net) affordable units were completed, compared to 18 units (net) in 2006-07. Whilst the total housing completion in 2007-08 was exceptionally high, only 8.7% of the completion was affordable housing. The achievement of affordable housing was limited compared to assessed need. Preparation of the new Core Strategy is looking at the extent to which the planning policy threshold may be lowered and the affordable proportion of future new development increased, as measures to increase supply of affordable housing.

7.7 378 (net) housing completions were achieved during 2007/08, which is exceptionally high and is almost double last year's completion (195), an increase of 53.71% on the target set out in the 2004/05 AMR.

Business Development

7.8 A significant amount of new employment floorspace was completed in 2007/08 totalling 11,131 square meters (net), the most since 2002/03. All of the new employment generating floorspace completed in 2007/08 was on previously developed land.

7.9 The district has seen an annual increase in retail detail throughout the District over the past three years. Overall, comparison retail sales floorspace within South Bucks District appears to be trading healthily. Comparison expenditure growth up to 2016 could support about 1,950 sq m net within South Bucks District as a whole.

Environment

7.10 The District has a good quality environment. Measures such as the recommendations from the Open Spaces Strategy, work through Green Infrastructure planning, National Indicator 197, and the Biodiversity Priority Areas will enhance the area. Generally, pollution is low and the District does not appear to suffer from adverse issues such as high noise levels and other environmental health related impacts. The District, however, has the highest consumption of energy per capita in the UK but energy provided by local decentralised renewable, low carbon technologies is limited but increasing.

Summary

7.11 South Bucks is a popular area to live and this can be attributed to existing adopted Local Plan policies, which has been illustrated through this report. These policies will continue to be used until the new Core Strategy is adopted.

7.12 The report has demonstrated a thriving economic area, set in a good quality environment with a good quality of life. It delivers a comprehensive view of South Bucks District and its progression towards sustainable development.

Glossary of Terms

Local Development Framework

AMR	Annual Monitoring Report	Submitted to Government each December for the preceding year
DPD	Development Plan Document	Document to form part of the statutory development plan
LDF	Local Development Framework	Portfolio of Local Development Documents
LDD	Local Development Document	DPD or Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
LDS	Local Development Scheme	Statement of documents to be prepared within the LDF, and timetable
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance	Old national guidance formerly issued by the ODPM
PPS	Planning Policy Statement	Current documents issued by Dept. Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (formerly Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)), replacing Planning Policy Guidance (PPG's)
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	Statement to be prepared by all authorities as part of their LDF
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document	Document to be supplementary to policies in DPDs
SOA	Super Output Area	Combination of output area census data for parts of wards

Designations

AAL	Area of Attractive Landscape	Non statutory countywide designations by Bucks CC - see Local Plan
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Statutory designation by Countryside Agency (now Natural England) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area	Designation by the district council under the Environment Act 1995
CSSAG	Countryside Stewardship Agri-	Agreements between landowners and

	Environment Schemes (now Environmental Stewardship)	the Countryside Agency (Natural England)
ELS / HLS	Entry Level Stewardship / Higher Level Stewardship	Agreements between landowners and Natural England on conservation / landscape management. ELS replaces CSSAG above
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area	Broad designation by DEFRA that supports voluntary arrangements by farmers to manage land to maintain natural features and conserve habitats
HPG	Historic Park / Garden	Designation of land by English Heritage
LB	Listed Building	Designation of buildings by English Heritage
LLA	Local Landscape Area	Non-statutory designation at District level by South Bucks District Council (SBDC) - See Local Plan
LNR	Local Nature Reserve	Statutory designation at district level by SBDC under the above 1949 Act
LWS	Local Wildlife Site	Non-statutory designation at county level by BCC or the County Wildlife Trust, for their local biodiversity importance.
NNR	National Nature Reserve	Statutory designation at national level by English Nature
PDL	Previously Developed Land	Categorisation of land in accordance with Annex C of Planning Policy Guidance 3 (PPG3)
RIG	Regionally Important Geological Site	Non-statutory designation relating to rocks, the earth's structure and landform
SAC	Special area of Conservation	European level designation of habitats of European importance
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest	Statutory local designation by Natural England (formerly English Nature)

Organisations

BCC	Buckinghamshire County Council	GP	General Practitioner
		HA	Housing Association
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government	NE	Natural England
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs	SBDC	South Bucks District Council
EA	Environment Agency	SBS	Small Business Service
LA	Local Authority		

Use Classes (Use Classes Order 2005)

A1	Shops	B1A	Offices not open to visiting public
A2	Professional and financial services open to the visiting public	B1B	Light industry
A3	Restaurants and cafes	B1C	Research and development
A4	Drinking establishments	B2	General industry
A5	Hot food takeaways	B8	Warehousing and distribution

Local Areas

BE	Beaconsfield	HE	Hedgerley
BU	Burnham	IV	Iver
DE	Denham	LR	Burnham Lent Rise
DGV	Denham Garden Village	SP	Stoke Poges
DO	Dorney	TP	Taplow
FR	Farnham Royal	WE	Wexham
FL	Fulmer	RX	Former Canadian Red Cross Hospital



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