

Core Strategy Emerging Approach



Help shape the future of South Bucks

March 2009

Issue 2

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Q. What is this Newsletter?

A. The Council is reviewing its planning policies, and we want to involve you in the process. This newsletter sets out the work undertaken since the previous consultation (September 2006) and the Council's emerging views on the form and location of future development. For a more detailed account of the preferred approach, please refer to the main consultation document (available at the locations listed on the back of this newsletter).

Q. What is the Local Development Framework?

A. The Government has changed the planning system, and has introduced a new type of plan called a Local Development Framework (LDF). The South Bucks LDF will be a set of documents that will guide future development in the District for the next 15 to 20 years.

Q. What is the Core Strategy?

A. The Core Strategy is at the heart of the LDF and will set the 'big picture'. It will have a long-term vision, objectives and will set the broad strategy for accommodating future development in South Bucks. The Core Strategy cannot be prepared in isolation and needs to have regard to national guidance, the South East Plan and the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Q. What are the key challenges in South Bucks?

- A. A comprehensive analysis of the issues, problems and challenges facing the District has resulted in a list of nine strategic spatial issues for South Bucks:
- ◇ Where to accommodate a minimum of 1,880 new dwellings in the period 2006-26, of the right type, with the necessary supporting infrastructure.
 - ◇ How to accommodate further development, whilst protecting the character of our towns and villages.
 - ◇ Where and how to provide more affordable housing.
 - ◇ How to support the local economy.
 - ◇ How to ensure that existing and new development is made more sustainable.
 - ◇ How to conserve and enhance the natural environment.
 - ◇ How to reduce traffic congestion, and the related impacts on quality of life
 - ◇ How to address the issues arising from an ageing population.
 - ◇ How to address the causes of crime and the related fear of crime.

The Council is in a strong position in terms of meeting its housing requirement, as a significant proportion of the 1,880 dwellings (required by the South East Plan in the period 2006-26) have already been built or granted planning permission. The strategy for accommodating future development will take into account these existing "commitments" - but must also allow for any unforeseen circumstances (e.g. that some or all of the existing planning permissions might not be built).

**PLEASE NOTE
THE CLOSING
DATE FOR
COMMENTS IS
27TH APRIL
2009**



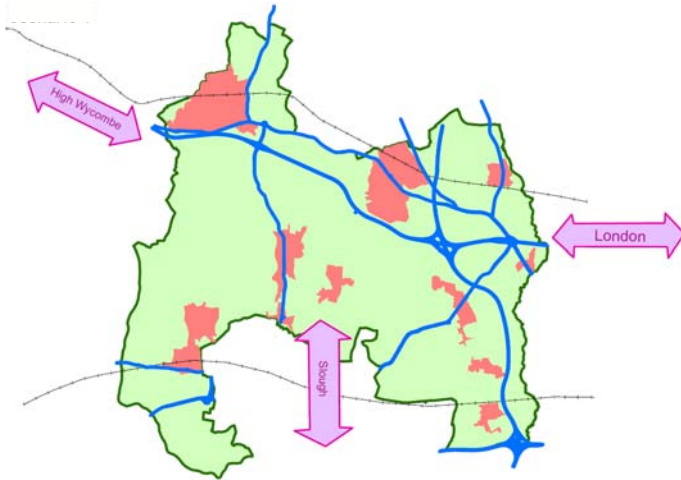
More details on how you can find out more and have your say are given on the back page of this newsletter

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR SOUTH BUCKS

Alternative Options

The Core Strategy will guide the broad distribution of future housing, employment and other forms of development across South Bucks District. Four alternative scenarios have been developed, which would lead to different amounts of development in each of the towns and villages in South Bucks, and would have different advantages and disadvantages. They are not presented as Council policy, but show the different approaches the Council has had to consider in developing its emerging view on the preferred spatial strategy.

Scenario 1 - Urban Intensification



Scenario 1 would result in a pattern of development broadly similar to that experienced in recent years. It would seek to accommodate future housing and other development within existing settlements excluded from the Green Belt.

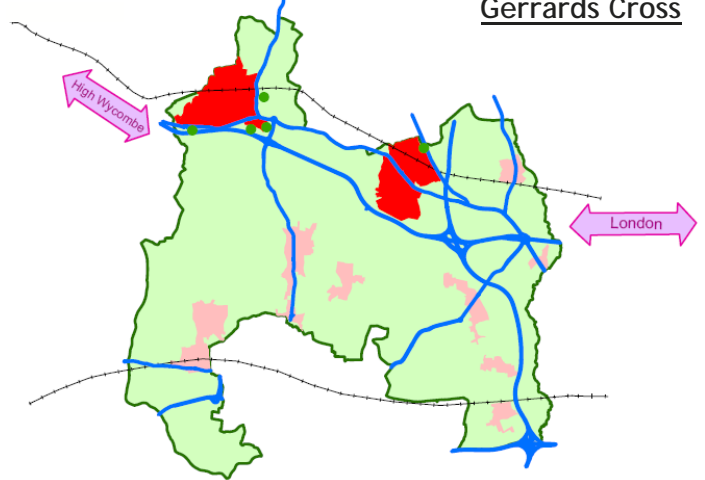
Main Advantages

- ◇ Makes most efficient use of previously developed land
- ◇ Protects the Green Belt boundary
- ◇ More new development would take place in the larger settlements, with access to widest range of facilities and services
- ◇ Some employment sites within settlements (including those creating amenity issues) would be redeveloped for housing

Main Disadvantages

- ◇ Change in the character of settlements across South Bucks, through higher densities
- ◇ Limited provision of affordable housing, and fewer new family homes
- ◇ Pressure for redevelopment of employment land for housing
- ◇ Limited scope to address public open space deficiencies in Beaconsfield
- ◇ Fewer opportunities to improve the range of shops and services in the District, because suitable sites would be developed for housing

Scenario 2 - Focus on Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross



Scenario 2 would see future development focused on the two largest settlements of Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross. LDF policies would give greater encouragement to the reuse of brownfield land in these larger settlements, where new residents would have access to a wider range of local facilities and services.

Main Advantages

- ◇ Most new development would be located in Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross, with access to the widest range of facilities and services
- ◇ Improvements in the range of shops and services in Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross
- ◇ Character of settlements (other than Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross) protected
- ◇ More affordable housing
- ◇ Potential to address public open space deficiencies in Beaconsfield
- ◇ Potential to encourage more sustainable travel patterns

Main Disadvantages

- ◇ Potential need to release some land from the Green Belt for development, adjacent to Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross
- ◇ Change in the character of Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross
- ◇ Limited affordable housing provision in Burnham and the smaller settlements across South Bucks (and less scope to sustain facilities and services in these settlements)

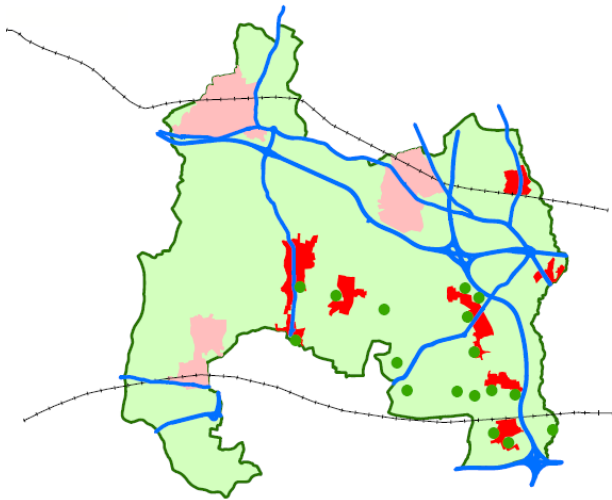
Map Key Relative Development Pressure High Medium Low

Principal corridors of movement

-2-

Green Belt sites put forward by developers and land owners that would fit in with the Scenario

Scenario 3 - Focus on Smaller Settlements



Scenario 3 would result in a more dispersed pattern of development across South Bucks District. Particular encouragement would be given to meeting local needs for housing and other development through the reuse of brownfield land within smaller settlements. As a strict exception to normal Green Belt policy, the Council would also allow the development of very small sites adjacent to some rural settlements, for 100% affordable housing ('Rural Exception sites').

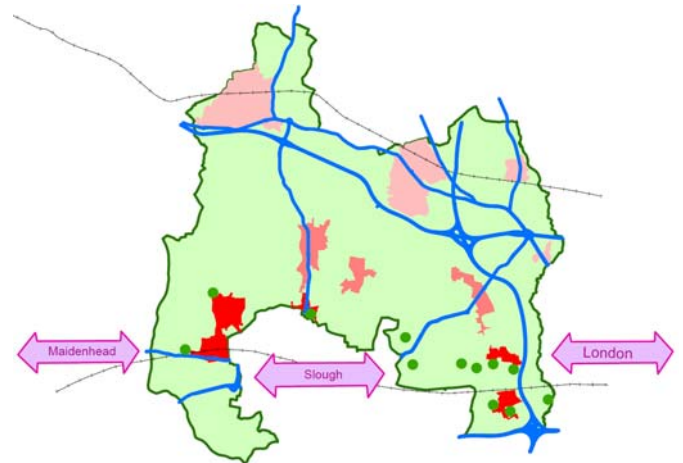
Main Advantages

- ◇ Limited change in the character of Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Burnham
- ◇ Most new affordable housing provision, including on Rural Exception Sites
- ◇ Scope to help sustain facilities and services in the smaller settlements across South Bucks.
- ◇ Potential for provision of new small-scale employment opportunities, adjacent to villages
- ◇ Strong support for home-working
- ◇ Potential for improvement in the range of shops and services available in towns and villages across South Bucks

Main Disadvantages

- ◇ Some development in the Green Belt on Rural Exception sites
- ◇ Potential need to also release some land from the Green Belt for development, adjacent to smaller settlements
- ◇ Change in the character of smaller settlements
- ◇ Inefficient use of land in the larger settlements
- ◇ New residents would have relatively poor access to the facilities and services available in the larger urban areas within/adjoining South Bucks
- ◇ Increased private car use

Scenario 4 - Greater Focus on Settlements near and adjacent to Slough



Scenario 4 would acknowledge the draw of the Thames Valley for employment, shopping and leisure activities. While some new housing would still be delivered on previously developed land within Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross, the aim would be to maximise the amount of new housing accommodated within settlements in the south of the District, particularly Burnham and Iver / Richings Park.

Main Advantages

- ◇ Character of Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and small settlements in the north of the District largely protected
- ◇ More opportunities to address the impact of HGV movements through Iver
- ◇ New residents would have good access to the jobs, shops and leisure opportunities in nearby Slough, Uxbridge and Maidenhead
- ◇ Potential to encourage sustainable travel patterns (rail stations at Iver and Taplow)
- ◇ More affordable housing than in Scenarios 1 and 2
- ◇ Improvements in the range of shops and services available in Burnham and Iver centres

Main Disadvantages

- ◇ Potential need to release some land from the Green Belt for development, near Slough
- ◇ Change in the character of settlements in the south of the District
- ◇ Less potential to address public open space deficiencies in Beaconsfield
- ◇ Lowest level of affordable housing provision at Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross

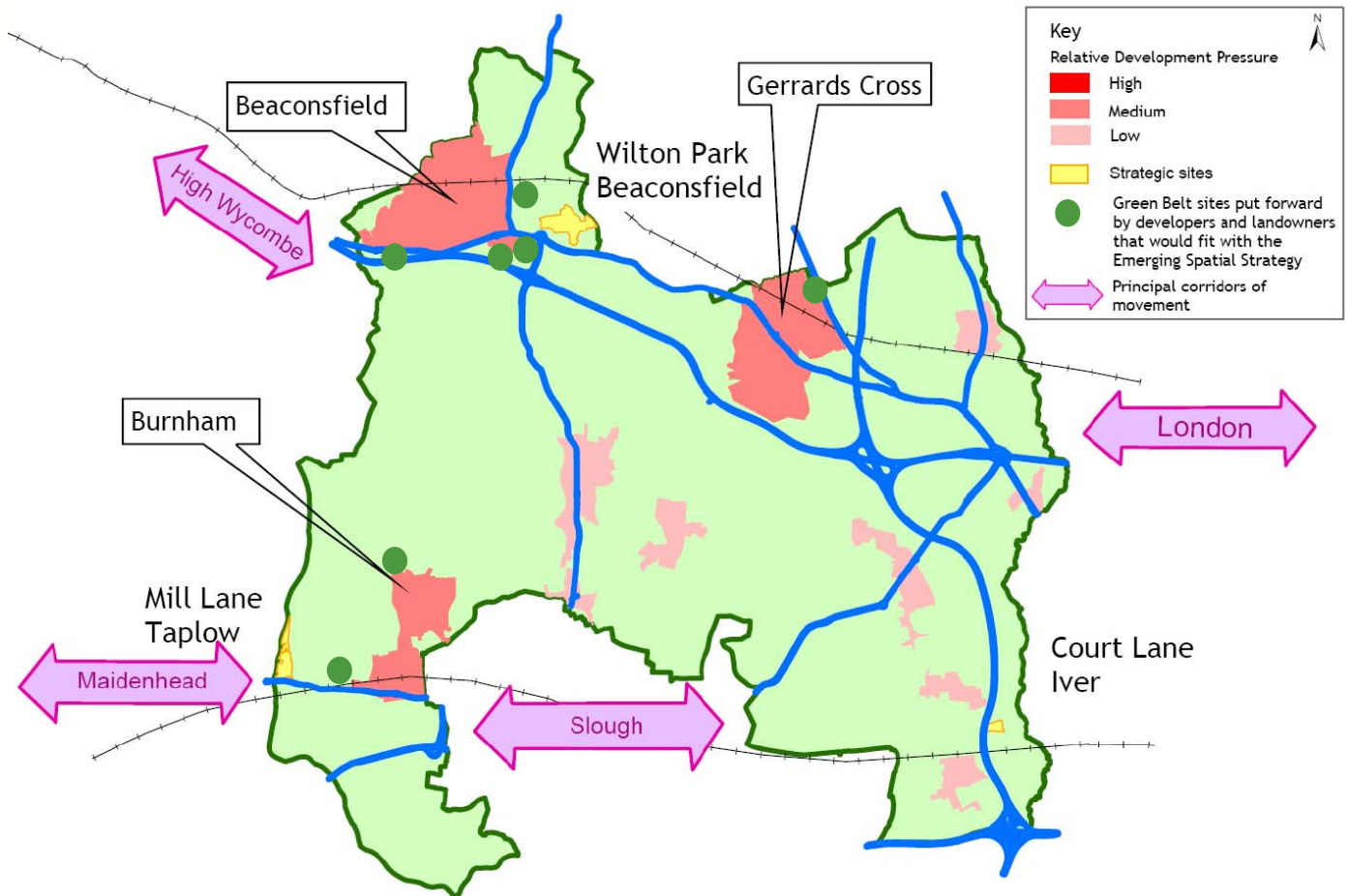
No one of the four scenarios performs "best". A balance must be struck between issues such as:

- Protecting the Green Belt and protecting settlement character
- Protecting all employment land, or allowing some land to be redeveloped for housing and;
- Meeting the housing needs of smaller settlements and helping to sustain their local services, or directing new development principally to the larger settlements, which offer access to a wider range of facilities and services.

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR SOUTH BUCKS

Emerging Spatial Strategy

After carefully considering the advantages and disadvantages of each scenario, and looking at ways in which some of the negative effects could be mitigated, the Council's emerging view is that the spatial strategy should be broadly based around Scenario 1 (with elements of the other Scenarios).



The Council's emerging view is that:

- ◇ Brownfield land within settlements will be the principal source of housing land supply. More development is likely to take place in the settlements of Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Burnham, with access to a wide range of facilities, services and jobs.
- ◇ As it is anticipated that together, the Strategic Sites (see opposite page) will deliver at least 300-400 new homes, average development densities within settlements could be lower than assumed in Scenario 1, providing greater scope to protect settlement character.
- ◇ The Council will develop and implement strong design policies to protect the character of all settlements in South Bucks, and in particular those areas with a special townscape character.
- ◇ The Council will enable the development of affordable housing on Rural Exception sites in appropriate circumstances and locations, alongside some limited development in smaller settlements to support local services.
- ◇ The release of land from the Green Belt for housing will not be required due to the strong housing land supply position, including permissions already granted. However, the Government will require us to identify a small number of broad locations in the Green Belt as contingency areas. These will be adjacent to Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and / or Burnham.
- ◇ The Council will seek to manage the housing supply through annual monitoring and taking action where the supply is significantly above or below the expected levels. Currently the supply position is running ahead of what is required by the Government in the South East Plan.

- ◇ Employment land will be generally protected from redevelopment for other uses, although some limited releases may be acceptable in special circumstances. The more intensive use of existing employment sites will be generally supported, with encouragement given to those types of businesses that are more likely to use the skills and experience of the local workforce.
- ◇ Improvements in the range of shops and services available in Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Burnham will be supported, with qualitative improvements also sought in Burnham, as well as in Iver Village.

Strategic Sites

Three major sites have been identified where comprehensive redevelopment could help to deliver environmental improvements and make more efficient use of brownfield land. These Strategic Sites will also assist in the delivery of the preferred spatial strategy. For example, redevelopment of the Court Lane site will provide an opportunity to help address the issue of HGV movements through Iver.

Wilton Park, East of Beaconsfield

Wilton Park is a military base located to the east of Beaconsfield old town. A firm decision is expected to be made shortly as to whether, and when, the Ministry of Defence will vacate the site. The whole site covers an area of about 40 hectares, of which about half comprises brownfield land. The Council's emerging view is that if it is released, Wilton Park should be redeveloped with a sustainable mixed-use scheme, including at least 300 dwellings and some employment uses. Some of the existing leisure uses and open space should be retained, particularly as Beaconsfield has a shortage of parks and gardens.

Court Lane, Iver

The 6 hectare Court Lane industrial area is situated to the south east of Iver Village. Current uses include workshops, open storage and vehicle breaking. The Council's emerging view is that redevelopment of the Court Lane estate for B1 business uses would be most appropriate, although consideration would also be given to other non-residential land uses. Any scheme must significantly reduce the number of HGV / commercial vehicle movements in the Iver area, be of a high quality design, and ensure that there is public access across the site, linking into the local footpath network.

Mill Lane, Taplow

The Mill Lane site comprises about 22 hectares of land at Taplow, next to the River Thames. It includes a range of uses, including a former Paper Mill, gas utilities and open land. Over half of the site is at risk of flooding. The Council's emerging view is that appropriate uses for the site could include employment, housing, a hotel, open space and recreational facilities. Redevelopment would provide a rare opportunity to improve public access to the Thames.

Merits of the Emerging Spatial Strategy

- ◇ Green Belt boundary protected.
- ◇ Settlement character protected, particularly those areas with special townscape character.
- ◇ More affordable housing provision, and a better mix of housing types.
- ◇ Some limited new housing development in smaller settlements (including on Rural Exception sites) to help sustain local communities.
- ◇ Scope to address public open space deficiencies in Beaconsfield.
- ◇ Improvement in the range of shops and services in Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Burnham, with environmental improvements to Burnham and Iver Village
- ◇ Development in larger settlements will ensure new residents have good access to the widest range of facilities and services.
- ◇ Most existing employment sites protected from redevelopment. Some new employment provision on the strategic sites.
- ◇ Potential to encourage more sustainable travel (for example, rail stations at Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross, Taplow and Iver and the improvements associated with Crossrail).

Photo:
Mill Lane Strategic
Site, Taplow



A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR SOUTH BUCKS

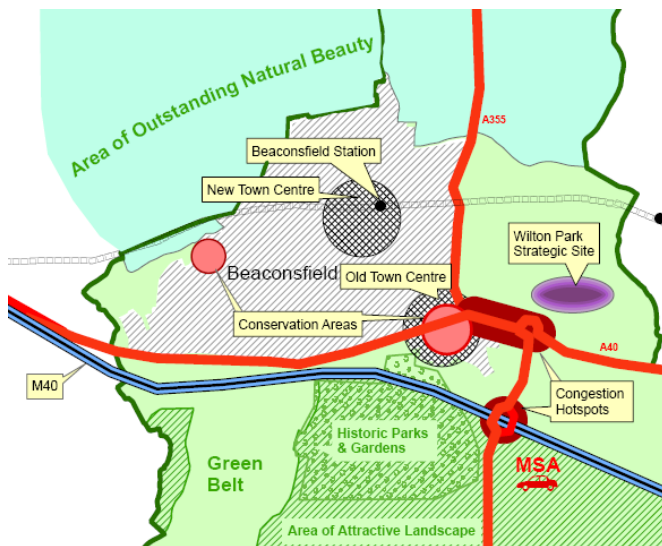
Place Shaping

'Place shaping' is all about local authorities and communities working together to create a vision for the future of their towns and villages in response to local challenges and opportunities. It is important to understand what makes settlements locally distinctive, and how their character can be retained.

Beaconsfield

Beaconsfield is the largest settlement in the District. It is a prosperous and attractive market town with three distinct areas - the Old Town, the New Town and Holtspur. Beaconsfield has very high house prices.

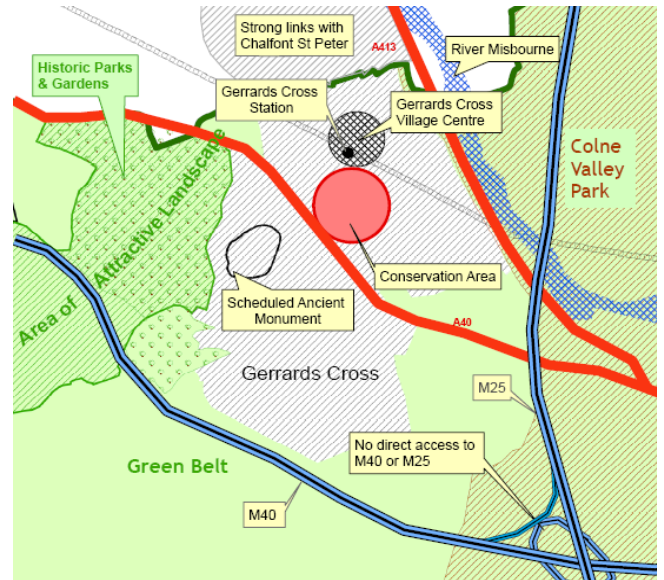
Residential densities in Beaconsfield are generally low, although there are concerns that its character is gradually changing.



Beaconsfield has the best infrastructure, including a good range of shops, schools, community facilities and public transport. However, much of the settlement is deficient in public parks. There are some congestion hotspots and the Old Town has insufficient public car parking. There are some opportunities to enhance the landscape to the south and east of the town. If Wilton Park is redeveloped, this could help address some of these issues.

Gerrards Cross

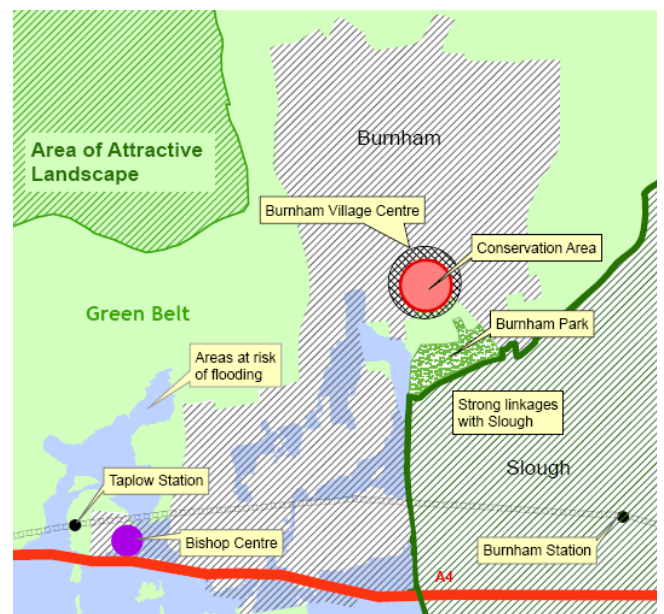
Gerrards Cross is the second largest settlement in South Bucks in terms of area. It is a prosperous town, with low residential densities. Gerrards Cross has a reasonable range of shops and a village ambience. It has a poorer range of schools and health facilities than Beaconsfield or Burnham, although residents have access to the facilities in adjoining Chalfont St Peter.



Although Gerrards Cross is deficient in some types of parks and gardens, the Common has many of the functions of a recreation ground. A new 'Centenary' conservation area is about to be established to recognise the special interest of the area developed after 1906.

Burnham

Burnham is the third largest settlement in terms of size. It has relatively higher residential densities than either Beaconsfield or Gerrards Cross, and house prices are among the lowest in the District.



Burnham has a close relationship with nearby Slough.

Burnham has an attractive local shopping centre, with a range of small shops and services, and a good range of schools and community facilities. The northern part of the town is deficient in local parks. There are some traffic hotspots in the area, particularly on the A4 between Slough and Maidenhead. Burnham town centre is in need of some regeneration.

Other settlements

As well as the three principal settlements, there are five medium sized 'secondary settlements' (Denham Green, Iver Heath, Iver Village, Stoke Poges and Farnham Common), four smaller 'tertiary settlements' (New Denham & Willowbank, Farnham Royal, Denham (south of the village) and Richings Park) and thirteen small rural settlements, all within the Green Belt and with few if any facilities.

Other Core Strategy Matters

How can we create high quality, safe & healthy places?

- > Character will be protected through strong design policies and lower densities where appropriate.
- > Healthier communities will be promoted, with open space, sports and recreational facilities protected.

How do we enable provision of the right kind of housing?

- > A mix of dwelling types and sizes should be provided to meet the needs of the whole community, including elderly people.
- > At least 35% of dwellings on schemes of 5 units and above should be affordable (helping to deliver at least 450 new affordable dwellings by 2026).

How can we support the local economy?

- > We will encourage more residents to live and work locally and seek to retain existing employment sites in employment use.

- > The more intensive use of existing employment sites will be generally supported.

How can we protect and enhance the natural environment?

- > The Core Strategy will include policies on protecting and enhancing landscape and biodiversity, including the Chilterns AONB, Burnham Beeches and the River Thames.

How can we adapt to the challenge of climate change?

- > The Council will help to tackle climate change, for example, by steering development away from areas liable to flood and promoting sustainable energy.

How can we deliver the infrastructure?

- > Improvements to the local transportation network will be supported to address existing traffic problems, including in and around Iver.
- > Existing physical, social and green infrastructure will be safeguarded, unless no longer needed, and necessary new or improved facilities provided.

Photograph:
Wilton Park
Strategic Site,
Beaconsfield



HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

You are invited to have your say on the Core Strategy Emerging Approach and help shape the future of our District. All comments received will help us draft the version of the Core Strategy that will be submitted to Government. A full length version of the Core Strategy is available to download from the Council's website (www.southbucks.gov.uk), along with the Sustainability Appraisal and other supporting documents. All documents can be seen on the Council's website, following the links from Environment/Planning/Local Development Framework/Core Strategy. Copies of the full length Core Strategy and the Sustainability Appraisal are available for inspection at public libraries and all District / Town / Parish Council offices that are open to the public.

Please let us have your comments in one of the following ways:

- Complete the attached Newsletter Response Form and post it to:
 - Planning Policy Manager,
South Bucks District Council,
Capswood, Oxford Road,
Denham,
FREEPOST SCE 9630, UB9 4BR, or
 - Email it to LDF@southbucks.gov.uk,
or
 - Fax it to 01895 837269.
- Download the Newsletter Response Form or the longer response form (available on the Council's website), complete it and return it to us in one of the ways shown above.

The consultation period will last six weeks. The closing date for responses is 27th April 2009 (12.00 Noon).

Please note that your comments and contact details will have to be placed on a public register and cannot be treated as confidential.

Thank you for reading this newsletter. We hope you found it helpful. For further information, please visit our website (www.southbucks.gov.uk), call us on 01895 837200 or e-mail us at LDF@southbucks.gov.uk.

FIND OUT MORE...

Find out more at one of the exhibitions to be held at:

- Beaconsfield Town Hall - 10am-3pm on Saturday 28th March
- Cornerstone, St Peters Church, Burnham - 3pm-8pm on Wednesday 1st April
- The Memorial Centre, Gerrards Cross - 10am-3pm on Saturday 4th April
- Iver Village Hall - 10am-3pm on Saturday 18th April

Planning officers will be available at these exhibitions to discuss local concerns and receive feedback on the Core Strategy Emerging Approach document.

In addition, exhibitions will be held at:

- Sainsburys, Beaconsfield - Monday 23rd March to Friday 27th March
- Sainsburys, Taplow - Monday 30th March to Friday 3rd April

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

When the consultation period has finished, we will consider all of the responses and publish our response to them. The full draft of the Core Strategy will then be published in early 2010. The public will get a chance to make formal representations at that stage. The document will then be submitted to the Government and an independent Inspector will test its 'soundness' and produce a report, which will be binding on the Council. The Core Strategy will be adopted in 2010/11.

If you require a translation or large print version of any of these documents, we will seek to provide them on request.