

South Bucks District Council
Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Annual Monitoring Report
2008-09

December 2009



South Bucks
District Council

Foreword

Welcome to the Fifth 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 a few areas to be addressed. 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 believe 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 progress towards sustainable development.



Councillor Roger Reed
Portfolio Holder Local Development Framework
December 2009

Annual Monitoring Report 2008/09

South Bucks District Council

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Planning and Compulsory 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. 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 also indicators determined in the Core Strategy
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 data on:-

- the District's sustainable development
- whether the aims and vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) are being met through the local spatial approach to planning

The AMR will present an analysis of: -

- Core Output Indicators
- Contextual Indicators reflecting local changes and circumstances
- Significant Effects Indicators which also reflect local change and circumstances

From indicators collected over the past year, key trends and issues have been identified in six sections and these have been outlined below: -

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. Following consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options in 2006, the Council decided to delay progress on its Core Strategy to allow further work to be carried out and to strengthen the evidence base.

The Residential Design Guide SPD was adopted in October 2008. In March 2009, the Council published the Core Strategy Emerging approach document for extensive public consultation. During 2009/10 a revised LDS will be produced and the Council will also submit the Core Strategy to the Government for examination. In addition, South Bucks will continue to provide input to Partial Review on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation, liaise with key stakeholders, review existing and designate new Conservation Areas and respond to consultations from the County Council on Minerals and Waste DPDs.

Quality of Life

Local Trends

- The health of South Bucks residents remains good, although there are pockets of deprivation
- Higher than average quality of life
- Crime levels remain static
- Education, skills levels and employment remains higher than average
- The green belt and open spaces have been protected
- Water pollution incidents have increased dramatically

Key issues

1. High cost of housing and lack of affordable housing

Housing

Local Trends

- The total number of housing completions was 194 which is almost half last years net completions (378). The total is still over twice the average annual requirement set by the South East.
- 7 affordable housing units were completed during the 2008/09, a decrease of 80% on last year. At 31st March 2009, however, there was a net stock of 101 affordable units with planning permission outstanding.

Key Issues

1. Meeting affordable and other housing requirements in sustainable locations (i.e. with access to transport and services). There is very limited achievement of affordable housing compared to assessed need because of the very high level of housing requirement, land constraints and adopted policies that are now dated. This should change with the publication of the new Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

Business Development and Town Centres

Local Trends

- A significant amount of new employment floorspace was completed in 2008/09, although this was more than offset by losses of existing employment floorspace to alternative uses.
- The trend for B2 and B8 floorspace to be redeveloped for B1 uses is less pronounced in 2008/09, although the Employment Land by Type table above, is weighted heavily towards the future provision of new B1 and mixed use floorspace.
- Unemployment has increased as a result of the economic downturn, but remains low in comparison with the South East as a whole.
- There has been an annual increase in the amount of retail floorspace in the District for the past four monitoring years.

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.

Environmental Quality

Local Trends

- The District continues to resist development in the flood plain
- The status of SSSI's and the SAC remain largely unchanged with one site declining and two improving
- High use of fossil fuels in the District continues, and South Bucks continues to have highest consumption of energy per capita in the UK
- Local decentralised renewable, low carbon technologies are increasing very marginally as part of new developments in the District and need to be increased, so the Council will need to encourage such technologies in the LDF, subject to landscape and other considerations.
- 33% of Local Sites (LS) are in positive conservation management. One LS is not in positive conservation management and there is insufficient data on 62.5% of the sites

Key Issues

1. Support for Biodiversity through the delivery of development and other means is required
2. Reduce the local energy use /carbon emissions locally.
3. Identify opportunities for appropriate decentralised, renewable, low carbon technologies across the District. The current policy is now outdated for national carbon reduction targets
4. The LS sites with insufficient data are a cause for concern and further research into these sites is required

Section 1 Introduction and Purpose of the Report

Introduction

1.1 The Planning and Compulsory 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
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 data on:-

- the District's sustainable development
- whether the aims and vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 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.

1.5 The Core Strategy Preferred Options Document was prepared in September 2006 but this did not contain detailed policy wording. In March 2009, the Council published its 'Core Strategy Emerging Approach' for extensive public consultation. This was based on a much improved evidence base and also reflected recent national and regional planning guidance. It contains draft monitoring indicators, which closely reflect emerging approaches, and these will be finalised before the Core Strategy is submitted for examination.

1.6 Seventy five policies 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 policies of the existing adopted Local Plan.

1.7 The AMR will present an analysis of: -

- Core Output Indicators
- Contextual Indicators reflecting local changes and circumstances
- Significant Effects Indicators which also reflect local change and circumstances

Review of Indicators

1.8 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 of which, H6 Housing quality - Building for Life Assessment was one. This could not be fulfilled in this AMR. The local authority will receive training in this area but until then, monitoring this indicator is unlikely to be achieved.

1.9 Local indicators have also been reviewed in the light of changing contexts within South Bucks, particularly those relating to Local Plan policies which have expired. A review is also underway on the use of national and local indicators to reflect local circumstances and new policies emerging from the Core Strategy.

Structure of the Report

1.20 The report is in two parts:-

- Part One - contains a narrative analysis of indicator outcomes collected over the year
- Part Two - contains all statistical information behind the AMR

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

1.22 The structure of the report is as follows: -

Part One: Annual Monitoring Report 2008/09

- **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 year's completions and projections for future housing in the District to 2026
- **Section 5: Business Development and Town Centres** - provides an assessment of the District's business environment
- **Section 6: Environmental Quality** - details the state of the local environment and issues relating to energy
- **Section 7: Conclusions** - summarises the outcomes and sets out key issues for future spatial planning

Part Two: Technical Appendices

Annex 1: Housing Provision in South Bucks 2008/09

Appendix A: Outstanding Permissions for Housing Development

Appendix B: Density of Completed Developments

Appendix C: Density of New Permissions

Appendix D: Dwelling Size of New Permissions

Annex 2: Contextual Indicators

Annex 3: 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. In meeting local aspirations, the South Bucks Partnership is preparing a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), which is based on comprehensive consultation with local stakeholders, residents, community and the voluntary sectors. The aim of the SCS is to set a framework for developing a sustainable community in South Bucks where people want to live and work now and in the future.

2.2 The vision of the strategy is to ensure:-

- A prosperous and diverse economy, with more people choosing to live and work locally;
- Green space, thriving and attractive towns and villages, where our heritage is protected and more affordable homes are available to help meet community needs;
- A sustainable environment where people take pride in their community and live low carbon lives;
- Lower levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, where the police are an active part of the community and people are knowledgeable about how to prevent crime
- Good health which is enjoyed by all including those in deprived groups and where people take responsibility for their own well-being;
- Active communities involved in shaping decision locally and who support the elderly and vulnerable to live full and independent lives.

2.3 The South Bucks Core Strategy, currently being developed, will integrate the SCS vision throughout the document and into emerging its policies so that the vision of the SCS can be met. Integration across sectors in this way is more likely to deliver tangible local solutions than through one sector alone.

Standard of Quality of life in South Bucks

2.4 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 and Education

2.5 The unemployment rate has long been among the lowest in the country, standing at 2.1 per cent (April 2009), while median earnings for South Bucks residents working full time are £32,991³. Economic inactivity is lower than the South East and national averages.

2.6 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 76.3 percent a rise of 8.8 percentage points on last year, and higher than the

¹ Office for National Statistics Mid term Estimates

² Halifax, 2007

³ Office for National Statistics, 2009

Buckinghamshire average⁴. 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%⁵. Furthermore, 49 per cent of the District's working age population are working in managerial or professional roles, compared with 32 per cent in the South East⁶.

Owner Occupancy

2.7 Owner occupancy within South Bucks is higher than the regional or national average at 78%⁷. 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 £531,623 an increase on last year's prices by £3,250⁸. The average working salary is £32,544⁹. The affordability ratio for a joint income household would require 8.17 times the joint income to live in the average house in South Bucks, which is down from last year. 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).

House Price Levels ¹⁰		Affordability ¹¹	
Type	Cost	Single Income	Two Incomes
Average	£531,623	16.34	8.17
Detached	£885,569	27.21	13.61
Semi detached	£337,893	10.38	5.19
Terraced	£316,956	9.74	4.87
Flat/Maisonette	£174,095	9.23	4.62

Table 1: Housing affordability ratios 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% nationally¹². 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-

⁴ DCSF, 2009

⁵ Census, 2001

⁶ APS ONS, 2009

⁷ Census, 2001

⁸ Land Registry figures 2007

⁹ Land Registry

¹⁰ Data available for house price levels is based on data from Land Registry 2007

¹¹ Affordability = the average income obtained from MK Observatory @ 28,977 per annum

¹² Census, 2001

commuters. This compares with 19,100 in-commuters. About 65% of out-commuters use a car to travel to work¹³.

2.10 The Local Plan policies contribute towards the reduction of transport movements throughout the District and consequent minimisation of carbon emissions locally by seeking that new development is built in accessible locations. These existing policies relating to the reduction of traffic are in line with the objective of the South East Plan of reducing the impact of the transport system on the environment. The emerging view in the Core Strategy is that planning should rebalance transport use in favour of non car modes through for example, reducing transport movements through locating development in sustainable locations, and through supporting opportunities for the provision of improved local public transport. The County Council is working to increase the number of School Travel Plans (STP), which comprises a total of 18 to date in South Bucks, an increase of three from last year, and so 50% of South Bucks schools now have School Travel Plans.

Health

2.11 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 population. The rate of road injuries and death, however, is higher than the England average¹⁴ (please refer to Community Safety below).

Community Safety

2.12 Throughout 2007/08 serious and violent crime has reduced by 10% in South Bucks. Thames Valley police are now collecting information in a tiered format and comparison data for crime indicators usually is unavailable for this monitoring period. Current and future monitoring on this aspect will be following Tier 2 - NI 15 'Serious Violent Crime'. Vehicle and 'Burglary' crimes will use those comprising, National Indicator 16.¹⁵

2.13 Despite having a high incidence of road fatalities and casualties, the number of people (including children) killed and seriously injured as a result of road accidents has halved since last year on South Bucks roads. 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). For all those who are killed or seriously injured 24% occur on Highways Agency roads, along with 38% of the total number of casualties¹⁶. Children need to be given high priority regarding road fatalities and casualties.

Open Space

2.14 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

¹³ Census 2001

¹⁴ South Bucks Health Profile 2008, NHS

¹⁵ Thames Valley Police 2008/09

¹⁶ Traffic Policy and Monitoring, Transport for Buckinghamshire, Buckinghamshire County Council 2009

created with development. Nationally important open spaces sites such as the Special Area of Conservation and local wildlife sites are accessible from all 2008/09 developments.

Green Belt

2.15 The District has very strong Green Belt policies, through maintaining and protecting it from inappropriate development. Four dwellings were granted permission in Green Belt settlements in accordance with Green Belt policy. Whilst a further site partly in the Green Belt and partly within a settlement received permission for residential development, all of the residential development was in the settlement and not in the Green Belt. Accordingly, there is clear evidence to demonstrate that the Council's Green Belt policies GB 1- 4, 9 -11 and 13 are being effective.

Pollution and Local Water and Land Quality

2.16 There have been 9 significant and 1 major water pollution incidents occurring in South Bucks during the year 2008/09. This represents a significant shift in South Bucks from a previous trend of low or no pollution occurrences. Overall the number of incidences of blocked and overflowing drains has decreased since 2004 to 2007 by 11.13%. Last year, however, saw a rise of 12.5% on 2007 figures. Biological and chemical river quality overall remains good, however, the quality of the River Misbourne between Denham and Gerrards Cross STW, and Denham and Colne has dropped from B to C. The Environment Agency, who collect statistics on water quality have reduced their sampling sites from 10 to five. These five will be reported on in future. No contaminated land sites have been investigated.

Conservation and Public Urban Open Space

2.17 The District has in the region of 750 Listed Buildings. Two buildings were removed from the English Heritage 'at risk register' leaving only one building remaining - a 75% reduction on last year's numbers on the register. At the end of 2008/9 there were 17 conservation areas in the District. In April 2009 the Council designated an additional conservation area, the Gerrards Cross Centenary Conservation Area, together with alterations to the boundary of the existing Gerrards Cross Common Conservation Area. A detailed character appraisal was produced for both areas. English Heritage issued a new 'at risk register' for Conservation Areas and 6 of the Districts Conservation Areas are on it. The council is actively pursuing its programme of Conservation Area review and designation into 2009/10. Residential Character is of high importance to communities in the District and the Council has adopted a Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2.18 Public Open Space Environmental Improvements:-

Thornbridge Road, Iver Heath

An Environmental Improvement scheme has been completed at Thornbridge Road, Iver Heath. New paving has been installed outside the shops with an improved parking layout to allow better pedestrian access and easier turnaround for shoppers visiting by car. A new parking lay-by and pedestrian footpath has been installed on a former grass verge to stop parking on the grass and to improve the aesthetics of the area. Local teenagers were involved in the design of metal art features depicting local features which were installed in the paving, resulting in the some successful

local community inclusion. The project was undertaken with the support of Buckinghamshire County Council, Iver Parish Council and Pinewood Studios.

2.19 Key Trends

- The health of South Bucks remains good, although there are pockets of deprivation
- Higher than average quality of life
- Crime levels remain static
- Education, skills levels and employment remains higher than average
- The green belt and open spaces have been protected
- Water pollution incidents have increased dramatically
- Pressure on the Green Belt remains high, but Green Belt policies continue to be effective

2.20 Key issues

1. High cost of housing and lack of affordable housing
1. Connectivity and transportation between settlements remains an issue

Section 3 Local Development Scheme

3.1 Annual Monitoring Reports, under PPS12 are required to 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.

3.2 The most recent South Bucks Local Development Scheme (LDS) was submitted to the Government Office for the South East in March 2007. The Government Office subsequently 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 LDS took effect.

3.3 The Local Development Scheme set out the Council's proposals to concentrate on the preparation of the following documents during 2008-09: -

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

3.4 Table 3 'Programme Management - Milestones' from the Local Development Scheme submitted in March 2007 can be found on page 12 below. It should be noted that for various reasons that will be explained, the Council has not met these milestones.

Overview from 2008-09

Core Strategy

3.5 As reported in last year's AMR, following consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options in 2006, the Council decided to delay progress on its Core Strategy to allow further work to be carried out and to strengthen the evidence base.

3.6 The 2007 Local Development Scheme (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:-

- Revised Government guidance on the preparation of LDFs¹. This 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. The Council, therefore, had to reformulate earlier work to meet the new requirements.
- The South East Plan Proposed Changes, which were published in July 2008. These changes influenced the emerging policy direction.
- Staff resource issues - the Planning Policy Unit had a vacant Principal Planner post from February to September 2008.

¹ PPS12 Local Spatial Planning (2008)

3.7 In March 2009, the Council published its 'Core Strategy Emerging Approach' for extensive public consultation. This was based on a much improved evidence base and also reflected recent national and regional planning guidance.

Residential Development Design Guide

3.8 The Residential Design Guide² Supplementary Document (SPD) provides 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 it was adopted in October 2008. The table below sets out whether the milestones for the SPD were 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 for consultation	June - October 2007	August - November 2007	No
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 - August 2008	No
Adoption of SPD	May 2008	October 2008	No

Table 2: Residential Design Guide

3.9 The slight delay on the SPD was due to resourcing issues, with the majority of the work on the SPD being undertaken by a Development Management officer working part time on the document. In addition, more work than expected was needed 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

3.10 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 2008/09

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

- Strengthening the evidence base for the Core Strategy, including completing the following studies:-
 - Strategic Housing Market Assessment (May 08)

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

- Bucks Infrastructure Study - Phase 2 (April 08)
- Settlement Hierarchy Study (2008)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment - Parts 1 & 2 (2008)
- Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Strategy (2008)
- Informal discussions with key stakeholders, including the Local Strategic Partnership, Bucks County Council, adjoining District Councils, and the Primary Care Trust.
- Continuing the review of Conservation Areas (CA) in the District, including completing CA appraisals for Beaconsfield Old Town and Denham.
- Responding to consultations from the County Council on Minerals and Waste DPDs, including the Mineral and Waste Core Strategy.
- Providing input into the South East Plan process, including the Partial Review of the SEP on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Progress on the Local Development Framework - April 2009/10

3.12 Over the 2009/10 period the Council will: -

- Continue to strengthen the evidence base for the Core Strategy, including finalising the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), the Transport Evaluation and the Townscape Character Study before the document is submitted for examination.
- Take account of the final South East Plan (May 09) and continue to provide input into the Partial Review on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation
- Consider whether additional evidence is needed in 2010.
- Continue to liaise with key stakeholders as necessary, including the infrastructure providers, the County Council and others.
- Liaise with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) as necessary on the 'refresh' of the Community Plan as a Sustainable Community Strategy.
- Continue the review and designation of new Conservation Areas in the District, with character appraisals, including within Gerrards Cross and Farnham Royal.
- Continue to respond to consultations from the County Council on Minerals and Waste DPDs.
- Prepare a revised LDS.
- Publish the 'Pre-submission' Core Strategy, inviting formal representations to be made (in March 2010).

South Bucks Local Development Framework

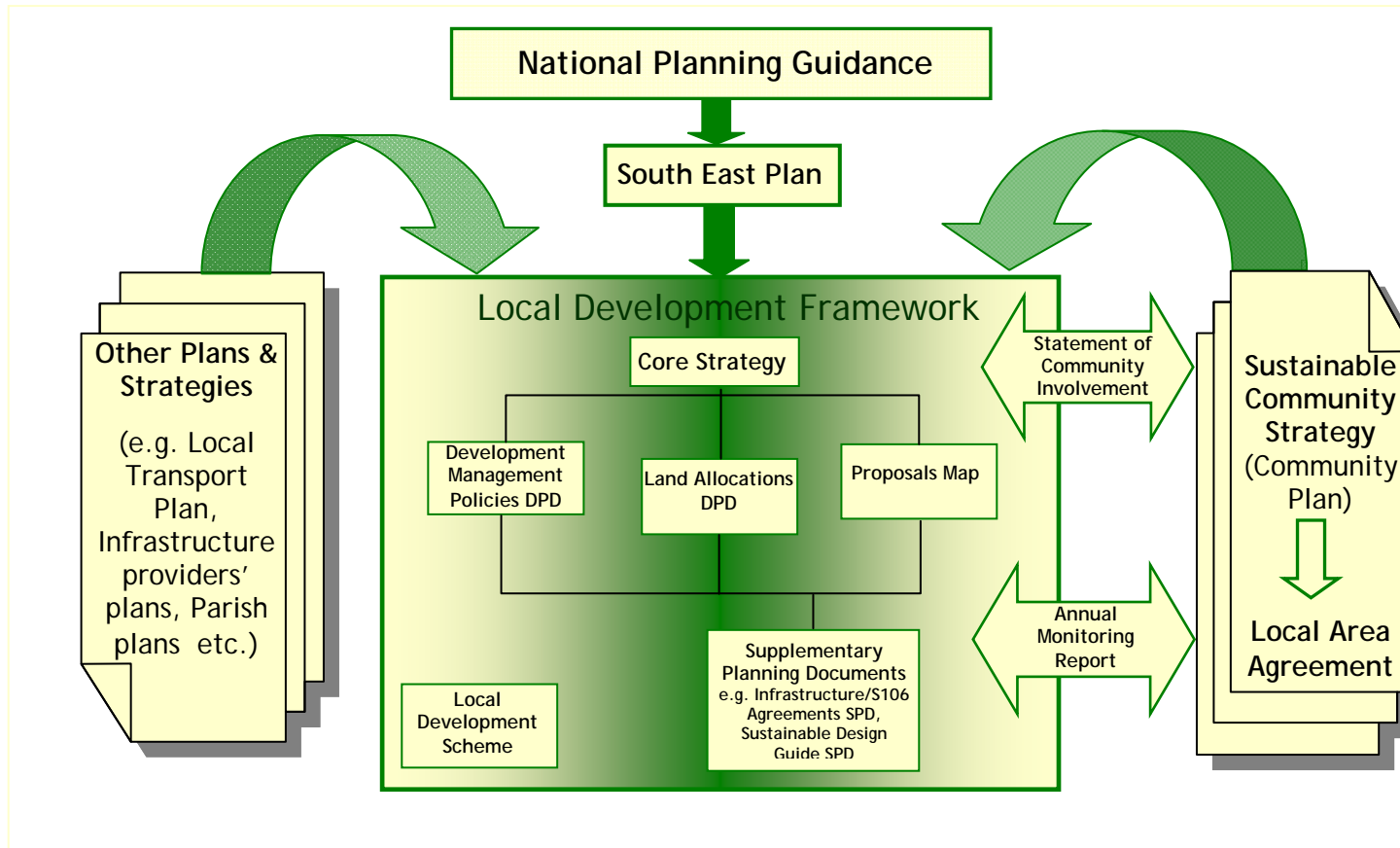


Figure 1: Local Development Framework

Section 4 Housing

Housing Core Output Indicators

4.1 A revision on the set of 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 The South East Plan was published and finalised in May 2009, covering the period from 2006 to 2026. The Plan sets out a housing requirement for South Bucks of 1,880 additional dwellings over the plan period, or an average of 94 dwellings per annum.

	Start of plan period	End of Plan Period	Total housing requirement	Source of Plan Target
H1	2006	2026	1,880 (94 per annum)	Finalised South East Plan

Table 4: H2 Housing Land Supply and Trajectory

4.3 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 2015.

4.4 The housing trajectory, see Figure 2, pages 20/21 and Table 15 pages 22/23 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 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.

Indicator H2(a) & (b): Net additional dwellings - in previous years

4.5 Table 5 below shows the recent levels of housing delivery. This is a net figure which consists of new build dwellings minus demolitions plus change of use, plus conversions.

Net additional dwellings - for the reporting year and in previous years

Year	Net completions
2002/3	91
2003/4	54
2004/5	171
2005/6	133
2006/7	195
2007/8	378
2008/9	194
Total	1216

Table 5: Indicator H2 (a) and (b): Net additional dwellings - for the reporting year and in previous years

4.6 In the monitoring period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 a total number of 194 dwellings were delivered which is almost half last years net completions (378), but this is still over twice the average annual requirement set by the South East Plan.

Indicator H2(c): Net additional dwellings - in future years

4.7 The Housing Trajectory for South Bucks Figure 2 pages 20/21 and Table 15, pages 22/23 shows that housing provision remains above the strategic housing requirements on a residual basis. This has been calculated on the basis of the annualised housing requirement of 94 dwellings per annum from the published South East Plan. Currently there is a residual requirement of 1,112 dwellings to be met by 2026 and the housing trajectory indicates that this requirement will be reached by 2016/17. The SHLAA which will be published in early 2010 provides a basis for future housing projections in the District.

Indicator H2 (d) - Managed Delivery Target

4.8 This indicator demonstrates how likely levels of future housing are expected to come forward taking into account the previous year's performance. The SHLAA informs the housing trajectory and aims to provide a realistic picture of future housing provision. The orange manage line in the housing trajectory Figure 2, Pages 20/21 shows the annual number of completions needed to meet the strategic plan total, taking into account any shortfalls or surpluses from previous and future years. The manage line for South Bucks shows the total number of dwellings required falling steadily from 73 dwellings in 2008/09 to 2 in 2015/16 and then dips below zero for the remainder of the plan period.

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). In 2008-09, 98% 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.

H3 New and Converted Dwellings on Previously Developed Land

H3		Total
	Gross	233
	% Gross on PDL	98

Table 6: New and Converted Dwellings on Previously Developed Land

H4 Net Additional Pitches for Gypsies and Travellers

H4	Permanent	Transit	Total
	None	None	None

Table 7: Net additional pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople

H4 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

4.10 Local planning authorities are required to make provision for the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. 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. In addition the Council also worked with the other Buckinghamshire authorities and commissioned a Needs Assessment for Travelling Showpeople, published in July 2007. These studies identified the existence of 59 permanent pitches on local authority sites, 35 pitches on private sites, and 7 pitches on a local authority transit site. A number of the private pitches are either unauthorised but tolerated or are the subject of temporary permission. The transit site is currently closed. There is no provision for Travelling Showpeople. These studies have helped inform the partial review of the South East Plan, which will be the subject of Examination in February 2010. Since the publication of the GTAA several other existing pitches have been identified.

4.11 The outcome of the Examination into the partial review of the South East Plan will determine if additional provision needs to be made in the District. On 31st July 2009 planning permission was granted for the construction of 3 additional pitches with fully serviced amenity units at one of the local authority run sites at Mansion Lane, Iver. At present time these additional pitches have not been constructed. Permission was also granted on appeal in May 2009 for the extension of 6 pitches at the Bottom Waltons site in Burnham. The Council will be publishing its Core Strategy in March 2010 which will include a policy consistent with Government guidance setting out criteria to be used in identifying the location of any future sites to be provided.

H5 Gross Affordable Housing Completions

4.12 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 securing of affordable housing

prior to the granting of planning permissions on larger private sites. In 2008-09, 7 net affordable units were completed, compared to 33 units in 2007-08.

4.13 Only 3.6% of the overall completions were affordable housing. The achievement of affordable housing was very limited compared to assessed need. The new Core Strategy will be looking to address the shortage of affordable housing by requiring a much higher percentage of affordable housing and a lower threshold. 7 affordable housing units were completed during the 2008/09, a decrease of 80% on last year. At 31st March 2009, however, there was a net stock of 101 affordable units with planning permission outstanding.

H5	Social Rented	Intermediate	Total
	5	2	7

Table 8: Gross Affordable Housing Completions

4.14 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 housing stock. This would, however, reduce supply at the lower end of the private market. Additionally, any opportunities to increase provision by encouraging owners to bring empty homes back into use, and by more intensive use of existing properties owned by RSL's, need to be considered. It is also becoming apparent that the majority of new affordable units are in the form of apartments rather than houses. Whilst existing Local Plan policy does not facilitate commuted payments, the Core Strategy Emerging Approach published in March 2009 indicates the intention to change policy to facilitate this where there are compelling reasons for doing so (e.g. where the provision of accommodation on a development site itself would not be affordable in practice).

H6 Housing Quality - Buildings for Life Assessments

4.15 Both the adopted Local Plan and the Core Strategy Emerging Approach emphasise the need to ensure that development is of a high quality to protect the character of the local environment. Many policies in the adopted Local Plan which address design issues have been 'saved', and accordingly are in active use in decision making. The Council considers that the quality of the environment and housing development is very important. The Council has continued to ensure that permissions that it has granted have secured high quality developments. Design considerations are one of the most common reasons for the refusal of planning permission, and the Council robustly defends such decisions when they are the subject of appeal. As part of its ongoing process of raising the importance of design, the Council's Planning Committee undertakes a regular tour of completed developments to look at their impact, including their design in their setting.

4.16 The Council has also undertaken Building for Life Assessments in accordance with the guidance from the Commission for the Built Environment (CABE). Building for Life assessments score the design quality of planned or completed housing developments against 20 'Building for Life Criteria'. Building for Life criteria, however, are different from the detailed criteria set out in the adopted Local Plan,

and they do not form part of the statutory Development Plan. The Building for Life criteria are summarised below under 4 main headings:-

- Environment and Community
- Character
- Street Parking and Pedestrianisation
- Design and Construction

4.17 The results show that overall developments scored much higher against the criteria relating to character, reflecting the importance which is given in adopted policy to protecting the character of the locality whilst still enabling development to take place. The scores for other criteria are lower overall, reflecting factors such as the relatively poor access to public transport in many areas and the dominance of the highway and the car.

4.18 Tables 9 - 14 (below) set out the summary scores for the six housing developments over 10 dwellings which have been assessed during 2008/09. A full version of each assessment can be found in the Technical Appendices, Annex 5 page 46. The CABA scoring system rates developments which score 16 or more points as being 'very good'; 14 - 15.5 as 'good'; 10 - 13.5 as 'average'; and 9.5 or less as 'poor'.

4.19 Building for Life Assessment Summary Tables

Upper Meadow Gerrards Cross			
Residential development for 19 dwellings and 29 apartments approved under application 07/00692/FUL on land at Upper Meadow, Hedgerley Lane, Gerrards Cross.			
Environment & Community	1.5	Street Parking & Pedestrianisation	0.5
Character	1.0	Design & Construction	1.0
Total Score			4.0

Table 9: Upper Meadow Gerrards Cross

Former Canadian Red Cross			
This scheme involves the re-use of a redundant hospital site. Application ref. 04/00074/REM			
Environment & Community	1.0	Street Parking & Pedestrianisation	4.5
Character	5.0	Design & Construction	4.0
Total Score			14.5

Table10: Former Canadian Red Cross

Lea Barton, High Street, Iver

Residential development approved under application ref. 06/01652/FUL

Environment & Community	2.2	Street Parking & Pedestrianisation	0.0
Character	2.0	Design & Construction	0.5
Total Score			5.0

Table 11: Lea Barton, High Street, Iver

Blue Dragon Laundry Site

Residential redevelopment of former Blue Dragon Laundry Site approved under ref. 07/00120/FUL

Environment & Community	2.0	Street Parking & Pedestrianisation	1.0
Character	3.0	Design & Construction	1.0
Total Score			7.0

Table 12: Blue Dragon Laundry Site

Bulstrode, Gerrards Cross

Residential development approved under ref. 04/00250/FUL

Environment & Community	1.0	Street Parking & Pedestrianisation	0.5
Character	3.5	Design & Construction	1.0
Total Score			6.0

Table 13: Bulstrode, Gerrards Cross

141, Station Road, Beaconsfield

Environment & Community	2.0	Street Parking & Pedestrianisation	1.0
Character	2.0	Design & Construction	0.5
Total Score			5.5

Table 14: 141, Station Road, Beaconsfield

Other Key Housing Indicators

Numbers and size of dwellings

4.20 Regarding the size of dwellings, of all newly granted permissions in 2008-09 (excluding outline permissions where the size of dwellings is generally not known), 154 or 66% (gross) were 1 or 2 bedrooms. 18 or 8 % of the newly granted permissions were 3 bedroom dwellings and 61 or 26% were 4 bedrooms or more. This shows a rise in 1 or 2 bedroom properties from the previous year, and that 4+ bedroom dwellings make up about a quarter of all new permissions. Much of the provision of 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings are 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 demand.¹

4.21 Most of the larger dwellings derive, primarily, from individual plot redevelopments where the prevailing character of the host area informs both market perception and planning control. These 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 2008/09 amounted to 194 units (net) which is almost half last years net completions (378).

Densities

4.22 It is clearly shown in the tables in Annex 1, p.1 of the Technical Appendix, AMR 2008/09, that the aggregate density of new developments, both completed and permitted, continued in 08-09 to be consistently significantly higher on larger sites of 10+ dwellings than previously. The aggregate density of *completed development*, excluded from the Green Belt, has remained stable for the last few years. 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.

4.23 Key Trends

- The total number of housing completions was 194 which is almost half last year's net completions (378). The total is still over twice the average annual requirement set by the South East Plan.
- 7 affordable housing units were completed during the 2008/09, a decrease of 80% on last year. At 31st March 2009, however, there was a net stock of 101 affordable units with planning permission outstanding.

4.24 Key Housing Issues

1. Meeting affordable and other housing requirements in sustainable locations (i.e. with access to transport and services). There is very limited achievement of affordable housing compared to assessed need, because of the very high level of housing requirement, land constraints and adopted policies that are now dated. This should change with the publication of the new Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

¹ Chiltern and South Bucks Housing Needs Study 2002

South Bucks District Housing Land Supply Trajectory

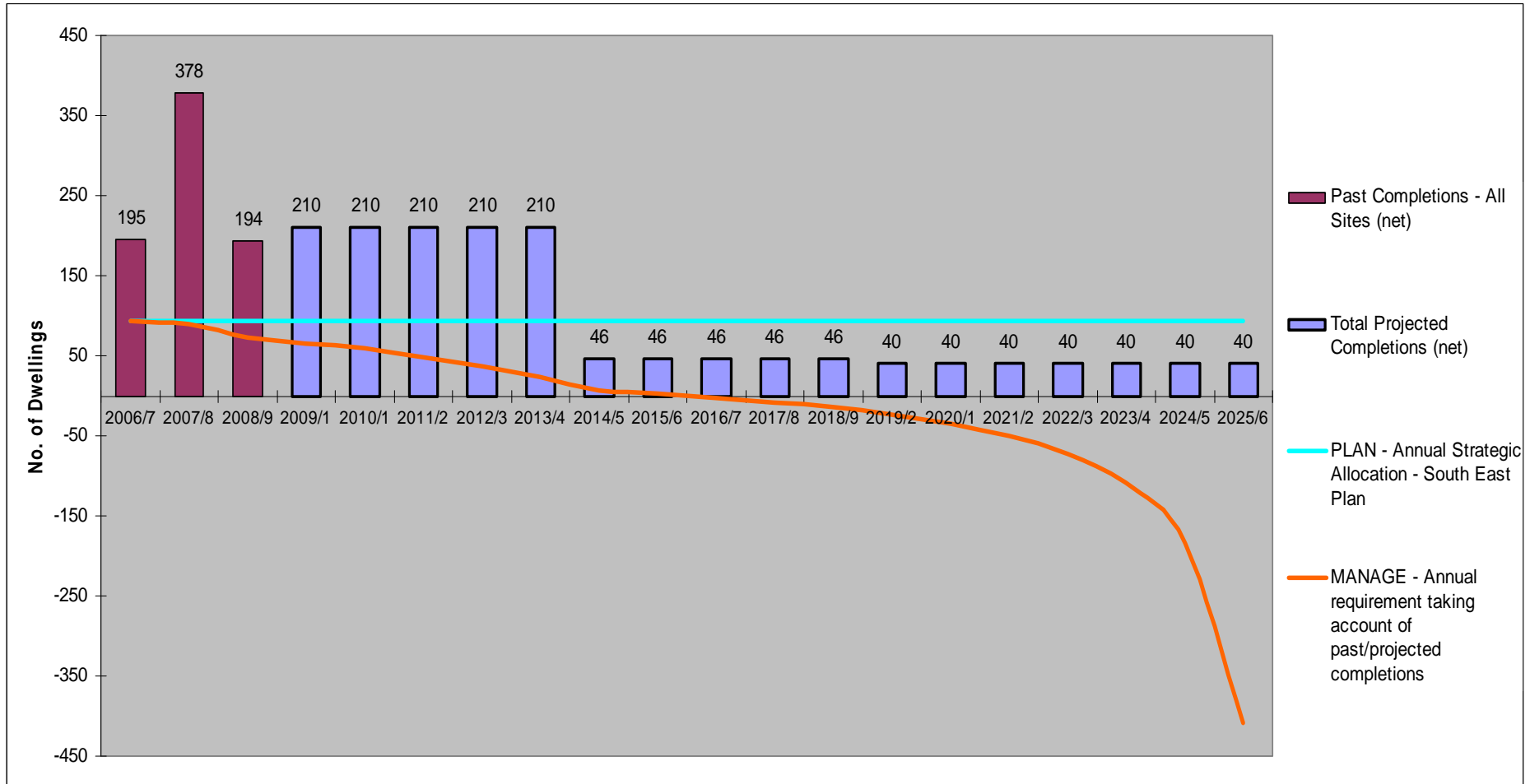


Figure 2: South Bucks District Housing Land Supply Trajectory

South Bucks District Housing Land Supply Trajectory (con't)

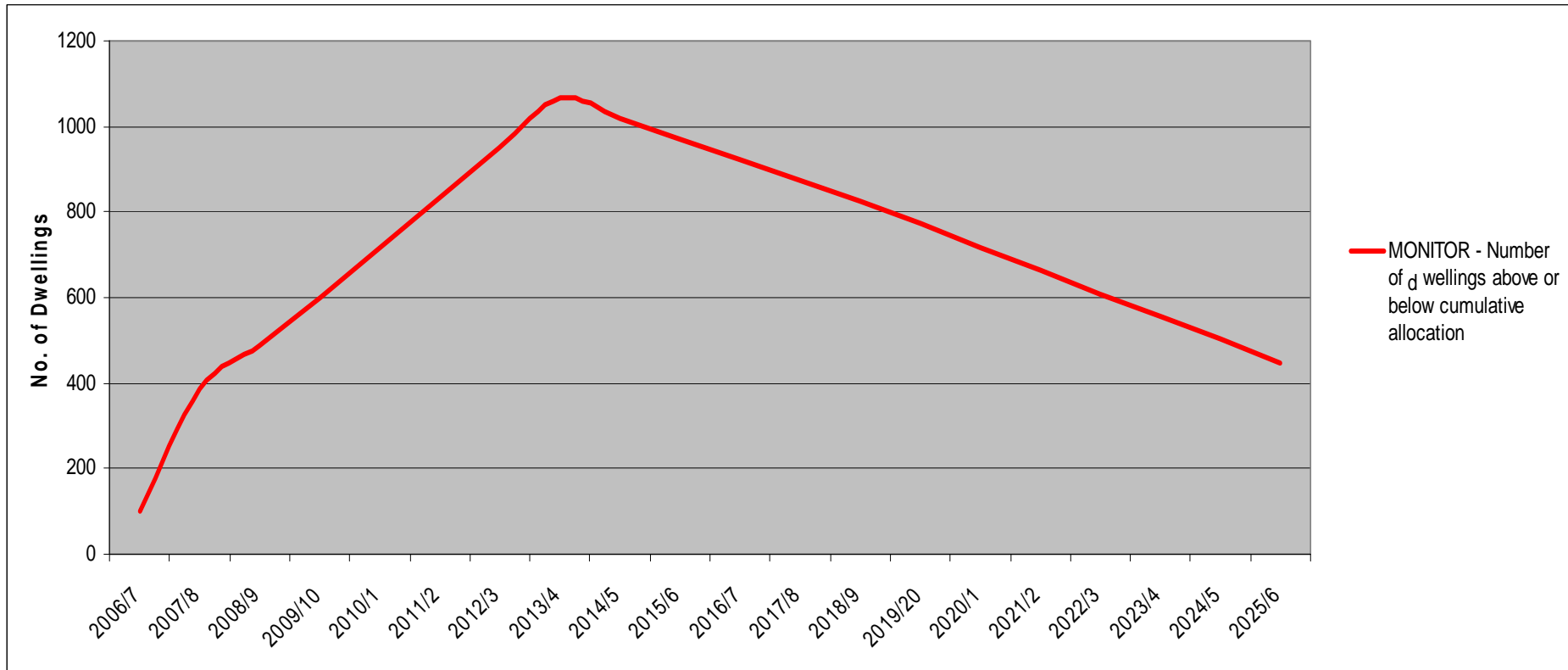


Figure 2 (con't): South Bucks District Housing Land Supply Trajectory

South Bucks District Housing Land Supply Trajectory Table

	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/1	2011/2	2012/3	2013/4
Past Completions - All Sites (net)	91	54	171	133	195	378	195					
Projected Supply - Extant Planning Permissions								170	170	170	170	170
Projected Supply - sites in the SHLAA								40	40	40	40	40
Total Projected Completions (net)								210	210	210	210	210
Cumulative Completions					195	573	768	978	1188	1398	1608	1818
PLAN - Annual Strategic Allocation - South East Plan					94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
PLAN - Cumulative Strategic Allocation					94	188	282	376	470	564	658	752
MONITOR - Number of dwellings above or below cumulative allocation					101	385	486	602	718	834	950	1066
MANAGE - Annual requirement taking account of past/projected completions					94	89	73	65	60	49	37	23

Table 15: South Bucks District Housing Land Supply Trajectory Table

South Bucks District Housing Land Supply Trajectory Table (con't)

	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)												1217
Projected Supply - Extant Planning Permissions	14	14	14	14	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	948
Projected Supply - sites in the SHLAA	32	32	32	32	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	612
Total Projected Completions (net)	46	46	46	46	40	40	40	40	40	40	40	1560
Cumulative Completions	1910	1956	2002	2048	2088	2128	2168	2208	2248	2288	2328	2328
PLAN - Annual Strategic Allocation - South East Plan	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	1880
PLAN - Cumulative Strategic Allocation	940	1034	1128	1222	1316	1410	1504	1598	1692	1786	1880	1880
MONITOR - Number of dwellings above or below cumulative allocation	970	922	874	826	772	718	664	610	556	502	448	
MANAGE - Annual requirement taking account of past/projected completions	2	-3	-8	-15	-24	-35	-50	-72	-109	-184	-408	

Table 15: (con't) South Bucks District Housing Land Supply Trajectory Table

Section 5 Business Development and Town Centres

The Business Base

5.1 The main economic 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). Other significant employment sites include Uxbridge Business Park (near Uxbridge), Sefton Park (Stoke Poges) and Broadwater Park (Denham).

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. Large employment sectors within South Bucks are wholesale trade, hotels and restaurants and public sector activities (including health and social work, and education). Key business sectors within the District include ICT, creative and media industries, and healthcare, with Pinewood Film Studios - a market leader in the film and media sector.

5.3 Large employers in South Bucks include 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	3,099	0	2,151	876	105	1,600	7,831
Net	-1,495	0	1,401	-1,418	-745	1,600	-657

Table 16: BD1 - Total amount of additional floorspace by type

5.4 A new 2-storey office building (2,100sqm gross internal) on a former garage site in Tatling End accounted for the majority of the new B1a floorspace completed in 2008/09. Further B1a floorspace was delivered through a number of small schemes, involving redevelopment, the extension of existing premises, or change of use from retail, residential and other uses. Overall, however, there was a net loss of B1a floorspace, mainly as a result of the reinstatement of Denham Place (3,300sqm gross internal) as a single dwelling house.

5.5 The gain in B1c floorspace is largely attributable to a single change of use scheme on the Ridgeway Trading Estate. The same scheme accounts for the net loss in B2 floorspace.

5.6 There is no discernable trend in employment floorspace completions in the last few years. The large amount of new employment floorspace completed in 2007/08 was mainly attributable to a new 3-storey office building (9,072sqm gross internal) completed on the Uxbridge Business Park. The small overall loss in employment floorspace in 2008/09 was mainly attributable to the Denham Place scheme and from B1c and B8 to B8 - mixed.

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 most of the new employment floorspace completed in 2008/09 was on existing employment sites.

BD2	B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8	Mixed	Total
Gross	3,099	0	1,995	876	105	1,600	7,573

Table 17: BD2 - Total amount of employment floorspace on previously developed land by type

5.8 With a single exception (involving the change of use of a building previously used for horticulture), all of the new employment generating floorspace completed in 2008/09 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.

BD3	B1a	B1b	B1c	B2	B8	Mixed	Total
Gross	18,209	372	9,530	3,207	3,485	67,260	102,063

Table 18: BD3 - Employment land available by type¹

5.9 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 secured planning permission in 2007/08 for residential redevelopment of their existing premises, north east of Denham Green.

5.10 In addition, there are outstanding planning permissions on the Uxbridge Business Park for some 11,225sqm of B1a floorspace.

Access to Employment Opportunities

5.11 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 on commuting patterns, 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, Uxbridge and Heathrow.

Labour Market

5.12 South Bucks has a well qualified and well remunerated workforce that performs above the national and regional level on these measures. 45.3 per cent of the District's working age residents hold degree level qualifications (NVQ4+)

¹ The definition for this indicator has changed since the 2007/08 AMR. Whilst the indicator previously only included land allocated for employment purposes in the Local Plan, it now also includes sites for which planning permission has been granted for employment uses, but the development is not yet complete.

compared to 33.6 per cent in the South East². Furthermore, 49 per cent of the District's working age population are working in managerial or professional roles, compared with 32 per cent in the South East³.

5.13 The unemployment rate has long been among the lowest in the country, standing at 2.1 per cent (April 2009), while median earnings for South Bucks residents working full time are £32,991, 15 per cent above the South East level. Annual full time earnings for those working in South Bucks are 18 per cent above the South East median, at £32,532⁴

The Environment

5.14 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 paragraph 2.16) and the quality of the environment, helping to maintain the reputation of South Bucks as an attractive place to do business.

5.15 There are particular issues in and around Iver, where HGV movements associated with the Bison and Ridgeway Trading Estates and Court Lane employment 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 Royal and the A4 between Slough and Maidenhead.

District, Town and Local Centres

5.16 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.

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

5.18 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 m net of comparison floorspace within South Bucks District.

² DCSF, 2009

³ APS, ONS, 2009

⁴ ASHE, ONS, 2009

Within Town Centre Areas

BD4(i)	A1	A2	B1a	D2	Total
Gross	437	0	136	0	573
Net	196	0	-14	0	182

Table 19: BD4 - (i) Total amount of floorspace for town centre uses

Local Authority Area

BD4 (ii)	A1	A2	B1a	D2	Total
Gross	3,670	85	3,099	0	6,854
Net	2,379	85	-1,495	0	893

Table 20: BD4 (ii) - Total amount of floorspace for town centre uses

5.19 Two change of use applications in Beaconsfield New Town delivered most of the new A1 floorspace in Town Centre Areas (426sqm net). On a similar basis, two small change of use applications delivered all of the new B1a office space in Town Centre Areas in 2008/09.

5.20 In South Bucks as whole, there was a significant net gain in A1 floorspace, and a loss of B1a floorspace.

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

5.22 Local Plan policies S1 and S2 seek to generally protect A1 floorspace in District and Local Shopping Centres. Monitoring shows that two small schemes were permitted in Gerrards Cross and Burnham, allowing change of use from A1 to A3 use (see also Indicator S2). The other loss of A1 floorspace was as a result of a small change of use scheme (to B1 office use).

5.23 Local Trends

- A significant amount of new employment floorspace was completed in 2008/09, although this was more than offset by losses of existing employment floorspace to alternative uses.
- The trend for B2 and B8 floorspace to be redeveloped for B1 uses is less pronounced in 2008/09, although the Employment Land by Type table above is weighted heavily towards the future provision of new B1 and mixed use floorspace.
- Unemployment has increased as a result of the economic downturn, but remains low in comparison with the South East as a whole.
- There has been an annual increase in the amount of retail floorspace in the District for the past four monitoring years.

5.24 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. The 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. The 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 The 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	One (withdrawn subject to the carrying out of EA conditions)	None

Table 21: Planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds

6.2 There was one major application submitted in the AMR reporting period which was objected to by the Environment Agency (EA) on the grounds of flooding and water quality. This was at the William King Flour Mill site in Denham. The EA, however, withdrew their objection subject to any development satisfying their conditions such as protection of the integrity of natural water /watercourse and buffer zone, conservation and ecological enhancement.

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 22: Change in areas of biodiversity importance

National Indicator 197

6.4 National Indicator 197 measures the performance of Local Authorities biodiversity improvement by assessing the implementation of positive conservation management at Local Wildlife Sites (LWS's) and Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIG's). These two site types are known collectively as Local Sites (LS). NI 197 also relates to the influence Local Authorities have on LS systems and the measures and procedures involved in ensuring effective conservation management is introduced to, and acted upon, by LS owners and managers. Assessing the extent of positive management will also identify sites where positive management is lacking and will help focus the effort in ensuring that LS are managed and their biodiversity value is maintained or enhanced.

6.5 Bucks CC have compiled a methodology to assess the positive management of LS, and over 2008/09 they established a 'positive conservation management' baseline for each of the Districts and Bucks / Milton Keynes as a whole.

Local Sites in Positive / Non Positive Conservation Management for South Bucks	No's	%
Numbers of Local Wildlife Sites	21	
Total number of LWS's in Positive Conservation Management (% of total LWS's)	8	38%
Total number of LWS's not in Positive Conservation Management (% of total LWS's)	1	5%
Total number of LWS's which are Data Deficient	12	57%
Total number of RIGS sites - all are data deficient	3	
Total number of RIGS and LWS's	24	
Total number of LS (LWS and RIGs) in positive conservation management		33%

Table 23: South Bucks Local Sites in conservation management

6.6 Overall, 33% of all South Bucks LS are in positive conservation management, and 4.1% are not in positive conservation management. Insufficient data is unavailable for other sites to enable an assessment to be made.

Status of Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

6.7 There has been no change of SSSI designation status at Black Park, Burnham Beeches, South Lodge Pit and Stoke Common. Some of the original SSSI units have been amalgamated which may have affected the status of some sites. Littleworth Common has declined slightly, moving from unfavourable recovering /favourable to unfavourable recovering. More positively, Kingcup Meadows and Oldhouse Wood has improved slightly from favourable / unfavourable recovering to favourable. The section of the Mid Colne Valley which lies in South Bucks has also an improved status and has moved from unfavourable declining to favourable. District's Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Burnham Beeches, continues to be in favourable condition. There has been no loss of habitat.

Green Infrastructure Strategy

6.8 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 District, and has influenced the development of the South Bucks Core Strategy. Examples of Green Infrastructure assets include: - allotments, accessible green space, wildlife habitats, historic landscapes, parks and gardens, urban parks and gardens and waterways, water bodies and new allotments in Hedgerley Lane Gerrards Cross.

Conservation and Enhancement work 2008/09

6.9 The following is work has been undertaken by the Council in the local environment:-

Colne Valley Projects:-

Work was undertaken on two sites in the Colne Valley Regional Park, in partnership with Groundwork Thames Valley:-

Footpath IV 16 from Iver Water Works to Iver Village

Improvements to public footpath and access to the bridge over the Slough Canal included:-

- Planting, fence and surfacing works.

Langley Circular Walk.

Improvements to circular public footpath from Langley railway station into South Bucks district will make this walk more attractive and to improve access, especially for disabled users included:-

- Replacement of 2 stiles near the Orchards residential park with kissing gates, and improvements to enable easy access over bridge near Orchards residential park.

Littleworth Common

South Bucks District Council manages Littleworth Common, an area of heathland to the north of Burnham, which is of international importance as a lowland heathland and is a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI). The Common has public access for walkers, dog walkers and horse riders with two ponds that give a valuable species habitat. Littleworth Common is owned by the Dropmore Estate.

The District Council is concentrating on an area of heath in the centre of the site to encourage natural regeneration of heather. Consultation and works on the site has been undertaken with various organisations and members of the community. Works included clearing an area of bracken and birch, and a plan for the future of the common beyond 2010 when the current Management Plan ends. The Council will also investigate further sources of funding for the site and encourage local people to take a more active role in the future management of the Common, and to undertake some of the practical tasks that are necessary.

Green Flag Awards

6.10 The Districts Memorial Gardens received a Green Flag award and a Heritage Green Flag award during 2008/09. Black Park Country Park which is owned and managed by Bucks County Council also received a Green Flag award for 2008/09.

Tree Preservation

6.11 The making of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) is a demand-led process which relates to the number, merit and strength of threats to significant trees, for example, threats from increased development pressure. The nationally recognised average figure for new TPO's undertaken is 30. The numbers of TPO's made by SBDC for 2008-09 were marginally higher than the previous year, 38 for 2008/09 and 35 respectively, despite indications that the figures for TPO's may fall due to the economic downturn on developments.

6.12 A project involving the reviewing, varying and revoking old TPO's, which could have seen a dramatic rise in the numbers of TPO's made, was established but as yet, has not led to any new TPO's. It is anticipated, therefore, that figures for the next two years will be similar to those of recent years.

E3 Renewable Energy Generation

6.13 The total recorded renewable energy generation, as applied to the revised Core Indicator specifications, for 2008/09 was 9.5 Megawatts (MW). This is a decreased capacity of 4.90 MW from the previous year. The renewable energy resource is derived from an Energy from Waste (EfW) plant at Wapsey's Wood landfill site. This is a small contribution towards renewable energy targets for the Thames Valley and Surrey sub-region. Please see Table 24 page 33 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 across the District. Whilst Local Plan policies EP14 and EP15 have supported renewable energy so far within the District, EP14 has now expired and EP15 needs updating.

6.14 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 36.10 MW of renewable energy from solar water panels from new development comprising 19 new dwellings.

Local Energy Use

6.15 The per capita emissions in South Bucks remain high. In 2007 the EST Green Barometer Report highlighted that the District has one of the highest carbon footprints in the UK. This trend continues, despite a year on year decrease in emissions since 2005 of approximately 0.9 tonnes (10%). This means that development measures need to be considered to reduce the area's carbon footprint along with other measures such as NI 186, which will support carbon reduction in the area across all sectors such as business, other public sector organisations, community etc..

6.16 Gas consumption per capita has seen a drop of 452 KW/h's (-1.8%) during 2007, the second drop since the collection of energy statistics, and the lowest consumption figure to date, which reveals a slight trend in reducing consumption of domestic energy in South Bucks but this is still an insignificant change in consumption. Gas use, however, remains well above the South East average by 5,871KW/h (33%). Commercial and Industrial gas use is significantly below the South East average (-44%) in 2007 but there has been an overall increase of 2.85% in gas consumption by the Commercial and Industrial sectors within South Bucks.

Renewable Energy Generation in South Bucks

	Wind Onshore	Solar Photovoltaic's	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				9.5						

Table 24: Renewable Energy Generation

6.17 Electricity consumption for South Bucks is showing a trend of reduction. Consumption has dropped by 3.4% since 2005, the highest recorded figure for domestic use. In 2007, however, South Bucks was consuming, on average, 20% and 30% more than the South East region and nationally respectively.

6.18 Electricity consumption in the Industrial and Commercial Sectors has reduced overall by 18.8% since 2004. In comparison to electrical consumption to the South East region and national averages South Bucks was 3.9% above and 6% below respectively.

6.19 The average SAP rating for the District during 2008/09 was 80, a fall of 2.5% on last year. The trend for District SAP ratings has been on average, high. Of the 194 new dwellings completed in the District during 2008/09, 32 properties were granted SAP ratings by the District's Building Control team.

6.20 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 Council will, therefore, consider if recording the average home energy performance could be a future Core Strategy performance indicator, and recorded in future AMR's.

6.21 Key Trends

- The District continues to resist development in the flood plain
- The status of SSSI's and the SAC remain largely unchanged with one site declining and two improving
- High use of fossil fuels in the District continues, and South Bucks continues to have one of the highest consumption of energy per capita in the UK
- Local decentralised renewable, low carbon technologies are increasing very marginally as part of new developments in the District, and will be given further encouragement in the LDF Core Strategy.
- 33% of Local Sites (LS) are in positive conservation management. One LS is not in positive conservation management and there is insufficient data on 62.5% of the sites

6.22 Key Issues

1. Support for Biodiversity through the delivery of development and other means is required.
2. Reduce the local energy use /carbon emissions locally.
3. Identify opportunities for appropriate decentralised, renewable, low carbon technologies across the District. The current Local Plan policy is now outdated for meeting national carbon reduction targets, so the Council will need to encourage such technologies in the LDF.
4. The Local Sites with insufficient data are a cause for concern and further research into these sites is required.

Section 7

Conclusions and Summary

Review of Indicators

7.1 The Core Indicators have been reviewed, and the AMR 2008/09 has used the new indicators to reflect change in the local area and the effectiveness of adopted Local Plan policies over the past year.

Local Development Scheme

7.2 Following consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options in 2006, the Council decided to delay progress on its Core Strategy to allow further work to be carried out and to strengthen the evidence base. In March 2009, the Council published its 'Core Strategy Emerging Approach' for consultation. The Residential Design Guide SPD was adopted in October 2008. Other work undertaken to deliver the LDS included strengthening the evidence base for the Core Strategy, undertaking informal discussions with stakeholders, reviewing the Districts Conservation Areas, responding to key consultations and providing input to the South East Plan process.

7.3 During 2009/10 a revised LDS will be published outlining the next three years programme of LDF documents to be produced, including taking the Core Strategy to adoption. In addition, South Bucks will continue to provide input to the South East Plan Partial Review on Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation, liaise with key stakeholders, to review existing and designate new Conservation Areas and respond to consultations from the County Council on Minerals and Waste DPDs.

Quality of Life

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

Housing

7.5 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. From the South East Plan there is a residual requirement of 1,112 dwellings to be met by 2026 and the 2008/09 housing trajectory indicates that this requirement will be reached by 2016/17. In total for 2008/09, the housing completions amounted to 194 units (net) which is almost half last years net completions (378), but twice the average annual housing requirement for the District as set in the South East Plan.

7.6 2008-09, 98% of gross new dwellings were built upon previously developed land (PDL). This percentage represents the Council's high level of success in protecting both the Green Belt and settlement green spaces.

7.7. Meeting the need for affordable and other housing in sustainable locations (i.e. with access to transport and services) are key tenants of the Core Strategy. There is limited achievement of affordable housing compared to assessed need, however, because of the high level of need, land constraints and adopted policies that are now dated. In 2008-09, whilst the total housing completions in 2008/09 was fairly average, only 3.6% of the completions were affordable housing. 7 net affordable units were completed during 2008/09, compared to the previous years

33 units in 2007/08 - a decrease of 80%. Albeit that they have yet to be built, planning permission was granted in 2008/9 for some 101 affordable housing units. The new Core Strategy will be looking to address the shortage of affordable housing by requiring a much higher percentage of affordable housing and a lower site size threshold. The Core Strategy Emerging Approach published in March 2009 indicates the intention to change policy to facilitate this where there are compelling reasons for doing so (e.g. where the provision of accommodation on a development site itself would not be affordable in practice).

Business Development

7.8 A significant amount of new employment floorspace was completed in 2008/09, although this was more than offset by losses of existing employment floorspace to alternative uses such as residential. Despite this, there has been an annual increase in the amount of retail floorspace in the District for the past four monitoring years. The trend for B2 and B8 floorspace to be redeveloped for B1 uses is less pronounced in 2008/09 than previously. There are issues however that need addressing; the pressure for redevelopment of existing urban employment sites for housing remains high, and this is demonstrated through the amount of residential approvals on employment land.

7.9 There is increasing pressure for redevelopment of employment land and whilst there is a broad balance between the size of the resident workforce and local employment opportunities, there continues to be high in and out commuting which causes traffic congestion, adverse environmental impacts and affects local quality of life. There is the need, therefore, to maintain economic prosperity through the careful management of the existing employment land portfolio - with limited opportunities for the identification of new employment sites. In addition, in meeting the needs of local communities and increasing sustainable development, improvements in local retail provision needs to be encouraged, reducing the need for local residents to travel further afield for services.

Environment

7.10 The District has a good quality environment. Measures such as implementation from the Open Spaces, Sports and Recreational Facilities 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, and there appears to be limited scope at present to reverse this trend.

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), 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-Environment	Agreements between landowners and the Countryside Agency (Natural

	Schemes (now Environmental Stewardship)	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
LS	Local Sits	New approach to understanding the proportion of Local Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Geographical Sites (RIG's) in positive conservation management
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	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	GX	Gerrards Cross
BU	Burnham	HE	Hedgerley
DE	Denham	IV	Iver
DGV	Denham Garden Village	LR	Burnham Lent Rise
DO	Dorney	SP	Stoke Poges
FR	Farnham Royal	TP	Taplow
FL	Fulmer	WE	Wexham
		RX	Former Canadian Red Cross Hospital



South Bucks
District Council

Capswood, Oxford Road
Denham
Buckinghamshire
UB9 4LH

Tel: 01895 837200

<http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/>