



South Bucks Local Development Framework

South Bucks Proposed Submission Core Strategy - Sustainability Appraisal Report Non-Technical Summary

March 2010



South Bucks
District Council

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South Bucks Proposed Submission Core Strategy - Sustainability Appraisal Report

Non-Technical Summary

1. South Bucks District Council is currently in the process of replacing the Local Plan with a new type of Development Plan called the South Bucks Local Development Framework (LDF). It will comprise a suite of separate but linked Development Plan Documents, the most important of which is the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy sets out the scale, form and broad location of development to be accommodated in the District in the period 2006-26.
2. As part of the process of preparing the Core Strategy, the Council is required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan. This work looks at the likely significant environmental, social and economic effects of different policy options. It supports the process of drafting the Core Strategy, and helps to demonstrate that Plan is the most appropriate given the reasonable alternatives.
3. The main Sustainability Appraisal Report (March 2010) describes the results of the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment processes. It is structured, as follows:
 - **Section 1: Introduction and Background**
Sets out the requirements for Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment and provides an outline of the content, vision and objectives of the Core Strategy.
 - **Section 2: Sustainability Appraisal Process and Methodology**
Explains the approach taken to appraising the South Bucks Core Strategy (with a timetable setting out what work was undertaken and when). The consultation process to date is also described.

- **Section 3: Context, Baseline and Sustainability Objectives**
Lists the other policies, plans and sustainability objectives taken into account in preparing the Core Strategy, describes the current social, environmental and economic conditions in the District, and sets out the key spatial issues for South Bucks. The Sustainability Appraisal Framework is also presented (which includes the social, environmental and economic objectives used in the appraisal process).
- **Section 4: Testing the Plan Objectives**
Assesses the Core Strategy Strategic Objectives against the sustainability objectives, to identify any potential conflicts.
- **Section 5: Core Strategy Options**
Sets out the process of developing and appraising the Core Strategy options (with a timetable outlining what options were appraised and when). The reasons for rejecting certain options are also explained.
- **Section 6: Core Strategy Policies**
Sets out the process of developing the Core Strategy policies, and the appraisal conclusions. Consideration is also given to the potential cumulative impact of different effects (for example, the impacts of a number of smaller developments on townscape character).
- **Section 7: Monitoring**
Presents a framework for monitoring the effects of the Core Strategy over time.

4. The process of testing the policies looked at the most important or significant effects of the Proposed Submission Core Strategy (March 2010), on a range of sustainability objectives.

5. A summary of the likely significant effects of the Core Strategy is presented in the table below.

Core Policy	Principal Sustainability Effects
<p>CP1 - Housing Provision and Delivery</p> <p>This policy sets out the scale and broad distribution of new housing development in South Bucks in the period 2006-26. It seeks to focus new housing development on previously developed land in the settlements of Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and to a lesser extent, Burnham. Further development is to be managed, to avoid a cumulative adverse impact on Burnham Beeches.</p>	<p>Core Policy 1 will help deliver more housing than required by the South East Plan, and lead to a significant increase in affordable housing provision. It will focus a high proportion of new housing in the Principal settlements of Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Burnham, which have the best range of facilities and services.</p> <p>This policy should also have a positive environmental impact, by encouraging the use of sustainable methods of transport, making more efficient use of land and conserving soil resources and the local landscape. However, the focus on the larger settlements is likely to have some effect on their historic environment and townscape character. Other Core Strategy Policies (in particular Core Policy 8: Built Environment) provide mitigation, by requiring high quality design that is sensitive to its surroundings. In addition, the lower rates of development proposed later in the Plan period will help to reduce the impact of development on townscape character.</p> <p>The new housing development will provide accommodation for additional workers, helping to sustain the local labour supply and supporting economic growth objectives.</p>
<p>CP2 - Housing Type and Size</p> <p>This policy encourages a range and mix of housing types and sizes, including the provision of some new homes to the full Lifetime Homes standard. Support is also given to the provision of new accommodation for older people, including nursing and extra care units.</p>	<p>Core Policy 2 will provide residents with the opportunity of living in a decent home by encouraging a range of housing types and sizes, appropriate to local needs. The policy also encourages the provision of new accommodation for older people, taking into account projected demographic change.</p> <p>The policy should have a positive effect on the environment overall, encouraging the provision of new accommodation for the elderly in sustainable locations within settlements, where there is good access to services and facilities, including public transport.</p> <p>There is no significant relationship with the economic objectives, although the provision of specialist accommodation for the elderly should create additional jobs in this sector.</p>

<p>CP3 - Affordable Housing</p> <p>This policy aims to deliver 500 new affordable dwellings in South Bucks in the period 2006-26. It requires at least 40% of all dwellings on housing scheme of 5 units and above, or on sites of 0.16 hectares and above, to be affordable (unless clearly demonstrated not to be viable).</p> <p>Provision of affordable housing on rural exception sites is supported in principle, where there is a demonstrable local need for such dwellings, and local community support.</p>	<p>Whilst well below the estimated level of need (459 units per annum), the Core Policy 3 seeks to maximise the delivery of new affordable housing (within the overall dwelling range set in Core Policy 1). Rural exception site schemes will help meet local affordable housing needs in situ.</p> <p>Most affordable housing will be provided in the larger settlements, ensuring good access to services, facilities and public transport.</p> <p>Some rural settlements in South Bucks are very small, and a number are designated as conservation areas. These settlements are very sensitive to change, and any rural exception site schemes within or adjacent to these settlements could have an adverse impact on their character, local landscape, the historic environment and biodiversity resources. Any adverse impacts should be mitigated by the application of other Core Policies.</p> <p>Additional affordable housing will provide accommodation for key workers (that might not otherwise be able to afford to live and work in the District). Key workers provide essential services that support the economic growth agenda.</p>
<p>CP4 - Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People</p> <p>This policy states that the Council will identify suitable provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, in accordance with the South East Plan requirement.</p> <p>Criteria are given that would need to be taken into account when assessing the suitability of sites.</p>	<p>Core Policy 4 should enable more gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople to have the opportunity to live on appropriate, safe and sustainably located sites, with good access to local services. It should also help to reduce illegal sites and minimise conflict with existing residents.</p> <p>The policy should have a generally positive impact on the environment, by reducing the number of unauthorised sites and ensuring that new sites do not have a detrimental impact on the local landscape or biodiversity.</p> <p>There is no significant relationship with the economic objectives.</p>
<p>CP5 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation</p> <p>This policy aims to protect open space, sport and</p>	<p>Protecting and enhancing open space, sport and recreation facilities could help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, by providing alternative recreational activities. Core Policy 5 should also ensure that new residential development is supported by</p>

<p>recreational facilities in line with national policy, and sets out the circumstances where the loss of such facilities would be permitted.</p> <p>New residential development should be supported by adequate open space and recreational facilities, with opportunities for new and enhanced facilities to be sought where possible, especially where there are current deficiencies. Local standards will be developed later in the Plan period.</p>	<p>adequate open space and recreation facilities. Opportunities will be taken to enhance existing areas of open space.</p> <p>Overall, the policy is likely to have a positive environmental impact, for example by protecting sites of biodiversity interest and by reducing surface water run off. However, other environmental impacts are uncertain or could be negative, for example by allowing the limited loss of open space.</p> <p>There is no significant relationship with economic objectives.</p>
<p>CP6 - Local Infrastructure Needs</p> <p>This policy seeks to protect existing physical, social and Green Infrastructure, unless it is clearly not needed or alternative appropriate provision is made elsewhere. Facilities and services for older people will be protected with new facilities provided where opportunities arise.</p> <p>New development is required to provide the necessary infrastructure, either directly or through a financial contribution. A Community Infrastructure Levy will be developed as a further source of funding.</p>	<p>Core Policy 6 should have a significant positive effect on the social objectives, for example by seeking to provide infrastructure facilities where they are needed, including emergency services, health, education and recreation. This should help to reduce anti-social activity, including crime, and improve accessibility to services.</p> <p>There is likely to be a positive effect on some of the environmental objectives, in particular the objective relating to biodiversity, although on the whole the effects are likely to be fairly neutral.</p> <p>Infrastructure improvements will support the economic objectives. Investment in Broadband will support growth in high value added, local impact activities (see also Core Policy 10).</p>
<p>CP7 - Accessibility and Transport</p> <p>This policy aims to improve accessibility to services and ensure a sustainable transport network by supporting a rebalancing of the transport network in favour of more sustainable forms of transport.</p>	<p>Core Policy 7 will improve accessibility to services by supporting more sustainable modes of transport and addressing traffic problems. It will also have a positive impact on creating safer places, for example through better pedestrian and cycling routes.</p> <p>The policy will support more sustainable modes of transport, including public transport, walking and cycling, and should also reduce air pollution by tackling congestion and rebalancing the transport system. The construction of new transport infrastructure (for</p>

<p>Existing traffic problems to the east of Beaconsfield will be addressed through a range of measures, which could include an A355/A40 relief road later in the Plan period. HGV problems in the Iver and Richings Park will be addressed through land use changes, but consideration may be given to the provision of a relief road or alternative means of access to the employment sites in the South of Iver area.</p>	<p>example, a relief road at Beaconsfield) could have a direct (but localised) adverse impact on the landscape, biodiversity and soil resources.</p> <p>Reduced traffic congestion and good quality public transport services will support economic growth and competitiveness.</p>
<p>CP8 - Built Environment</p> <p>This policy aims to protect and enhance the District's historic environment, in particular nationally designated assets.</p> <p>All development must be of a high standard of design, help tackle climate change and make a positive contribution to the character of the local area.</p> <p>New housing should be built at an average density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare, although this will vary according to local factors. All development proposals should improve community safety.</p>	<p>Core Policy 8 should result in high quality, sustainable proposals that make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area. These schemes should also be designed to reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social activity.</p> <p>The policy will have a strongly positive impact on the environmental objectives. It should help to conserve and enhance townscape character and protect and enhance the District's historic environment, with conservation areas to be reviewed and created where necessary. New development should also make efficient use of land and be designed to tackle the causes of, and be resilient to, climate change.</p> <p>There is no significant relationship with the economic objectives.</p>
<p>CP9 - Natural Environment</p> <p>This policy gives the highest priority to the conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns AONB and Burnham Beeches. Landscape character and biodiversity within South Bucks will be conserved and enhanced, including the</p>	<p>Core Policy 9 is not likely to have significant positive or negative social impacts, although it should help improve accessibility to recreational facilities.</p> <p>Core Policy 9 will have a significant positive effect on the environmental objectives, in particular those relating to biodiversity, landscapes and the historic environment. Particular protection is afforded to the Chilterns AONB and Burnham Beeches SAC. There should also be improvements to the rural / urban fringe in the Colne Valley Park. Whilst</p>

<p>historic landscape.</p>	<p>Core Policy 9 will not have a significant impact on sustainable building practices or renewable energy, it seeks to conserve the natural environment (including woodlands) which, help to absorb carbon, hence helping to mitigate against climate change.</p> <p>The high quality environment in South Bucks is a locational factor for some businesses. Core Policy 9 therefore indirectly supports the economic objective of encouraging economic growth and competitiveness.</p>
<p>CP10 - Employment</p> <p>This policy aims to retain existing employment land and uses, except in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>New employment development should be accommodated in District and Local centres, on the Opportunity Sites and through appropriate intensification on existing sites, where these have good access.</p> <p>The Council will also seek to improve access to high speed broadband, increase the presence of high value and knowledge based businesses in the District, and support home working and rural diversification schemes.</p>	<p>Core Policy 10 should help to improve accessibility to services (including remote access) by accommodating new employment uses in areas where there is good access by a variety of transport modes, and by enabling improvements in ICT infrastructure (in particular, broadband).</p> <p>There are some positive impacts on the environmental objectives. A better balance between the size and skills of the local workforce, and the number and type of local job opportunities, will hopefully help reduce commuting levels. Together with the encouragement given to home working - the net effect should be lower carbon emissions. In addition, the more intensive use of appropriate employment sites will improve the efficiency of land use.</p> <p>Core Policy 10 will have a significant positive effect on the economic objectives. The protection of existing employment land and premises will help to retain a range of employment accommodation for new and existing business - helping to encourage a diverse economy.</p>
<p>CP11 - Healthy and Viable Town and Village Centres</p> <p>This policy states that new retail, office and other town centre uses should enhance the vitality and viability of District and Local centres. Neighbourhood centres are also protected.</p>	<p>Core Policy 11 focuses most new retail, office and other town centre uses in the larger centres, which should improve accessibility to services and facilities.</p> <p>The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the environment, for example, by focusing town centre uses in locations that are accessible by sustainable forms of transport and through the regeneration of Iver Village centre.</p> <p>Core Policy 11 seeks to enhance the vitality and viability of District and Local Centres in South Bucks. It should therefore support the economic objectives - ensuring that the</p>

<p>New retail provision will be encouraged to meet indicative floorspace requirements set out in the policy, with particular support given to retail improvements in Beaconsfield New Town, Gerrards Cross and Burnham. The regeneration of Iver Village Centre is encouraged and the redevelopment of the Bishop Centre is supported, so long as it does not impact adversely on other centres.</p>	<p>centres remain competitive, retaining retail expenditure within the District.</p>
<p>CP12 - Sustainable Energy</p> <p>This policy aims to promote and encourage energy efficiency and renewable / low carbon energy in all development through a range of measures.</p>	<p>The policy should contribute towards the social objective of providing residents with a decent home by ensuring that new (and converted/extended) dwellings are energy efficient.</p> <p>The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the environment, for example by helping to tackle the causes of climate change, although some impacts are uncertain or indirect, and will depend on locational factors. Stand alone energy infrastructure could potentially have a negative effect on landscape/townscape character and the historic environment if it is not sensitively designed and located.</p> <p>There is no significant relationship with economic objectives, although emerging 'green technologies' may benefit the local economy in the longer term.</p>
<p>CP13 - Environmental and Resource Management</p> <p>This policy seeks to ensure the prudent and sustainable management of the District's environmental resources. This is to be achieved by promoting best practice in sustainable design and construction, protecting and enhancing water quality, encouraging the mediation of contaminated land and seeking improvements in air quality.</p>	<p>Core Policy 13 would indirectly assist the social objective of providing residents with a decent home, by directing new development away from existing sources of noise and air pollution, and away from areas at risk of flooding.</p> <p>The policy should have a strong positive impact on the environment, for example by helping to tackle and mitigate against climate change, promoting water quality and efficiency, conserving and enhancing biodiversity and minimising waste. Much of the Mill Lane site is subject to flood risk, although this is mitigated by steering vulnerable development to the lowest risk parts of the site.</p> <p>There is no significant relationship with the economic objectives, although emerging 'green technologies' may have benefits to the local economy in the longer term.</p>

<p>New development will be directed away from existing sources of pollution and vulnerable uses will be steered away from areas at risk of flooding.</p>	
<p>CP14 - Wilton Park (Opportunity Site)</p> <p>This policy defines Wilton Park as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt and aims to deliver a comprehensive, high quality and sustainable redevelopment of the site, with a mix of residential, employment, community facilities and open space.</p>	<p>The redevelopment of Wilton Park, when released by the MoD, could make a significant contribution towards meeting the need for more affordable housing. The Council will encourage new development that has been designed to improve community safety and minimise criminal activity.</p> <p>The comprehensive redevelopment of Wilton Park would provide scope for localised environmental improvements. Wilton Park is reasonably accessible to Beaconsfield, and the policy seeks to encourage the use of sustainable and integrated methods of transport. Proposals would need to deliver a net gain in biodiversity, and ensure that open space areas are integrated with the surrounding countryside. The site is in an area of water stress, but this will be mitigated through demanding water efficiency measures. Criteria in Core Policy 14 will help ensure that the risk of pollution and flooding are minimised.</p> <p>Core Policy 14 supports the economic objectives. Wilton Park would be suitable for high value added and lower impact employment development. The new affordable housing to be provided will provide accommodation for local key workers.</p>
<p>CP15 - Mill Lane (Opportunity Site)</p> <p>This policy defines Mill Lane as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt and aims to deliver a comprehensive, conservation-led and high quality regeneration of the site, with a mix of development, watercourses and parkland. Suitable uses include residential, commercial development, a hotel and open space.</p>	<p>The redevelopment of Mill Lane could make a contribution towards meeting the need for more affordable housing. The Council will encourage new development that has been designed to improve community safety and minimise criminal activity. The policy supports provision of new recreational uses on the site, and improved public access to the River Thames.</p> <p>The comprehensive redevelopment of Mill Lane would have a positive effect on the local environment on this sensitive site, next to the Thames, and provide scope for localised environmental improvements. It would bring a largely derelict site back into productive use and make good use of previously developed land.</p> <p>Mill Lane would be suitable for high value added, lower impact employment</p>

	development and afford the opportunity for people to live and work locally. The new affordable housing to be provided will provide accommodation for local key workers.
<p>CP16 - South of Iver (Opportunity Area)</p> <p>This policy defines Court Lane as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt and supports appropriate employment generating uses on Court Lane, Thorney Business Park and the Ridgeway Trading Estate, particularly uses that would lead to a reduction in HGV movements.</p>	<p>Core Policy 16 requires that development at Court Lane results in improved access to Iver High Street and Iver station, as well as improved access to the open space and water areas in the Colne Valley Park.</p> <p>The redevelopment of Court Lane and the other estates would have a positive effect on the local environment, for example by addressing contamination issues, providing for habitat improvements and improving access to the Colne Valley Park. It will make good use of previously developed land and help to reduce HGV movements through Iver Village and Richings Park.</p> <p>Core Policy proposes appropriate employment uses on the three named estates. The new jobs created would support the economic objectives, but the majority of new housing development would be in other parts of the District, with limited new housing planned for the Iver area. Redevelopment of the Court Lane site would see replacement of more traditional manufacturing and open storage uses, with higher value added, lower impact activities.</p>
<p>CP17 - Other Significant Development Proposals</p> <p>This policy states that when significant sites come forward for redevelopment, a Development Brief will normally need to be prepared. The Council may subsequently designate additional Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt where this offers the opportunity for environmental improvements.</p>	<p>This Policy could not be subject to effective Sustainability Appraisal.</p> <p>The social, environmental and economic effects of any proposed development (on a significant site) will need to be considered through the preparation of the Development Brief. Equally, in the future, the Council will need to consider the significant social, environmental and economic effects of designating any additional Major Developed Sites.</p>

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