

**C24.2 Representation by Gillian Fisher about the size of the settlement.
Council to produce a response in writing.**

Representation 225 Gillian Fisher

If 15 houses are built at Dadbrook Farm there will be a minimum of 30 more vehicles in the village. Dadbrook is a narrow, poorly maintained road, not appropriate for more vehicles. The general infrastructure in Cuddington is suitable for a 'small village' so therefore proposed more housing is inappropriate. The access roads in Cuddington are already overused by outside traffic. Access to amenities in Cuddington is very limited and to use a regular bus service residents have to walk up to the A418 along Dadbrook which is narrow and with no footpath.

AVDC Response:

This response concerns the issue about the size of settlement and the sustainability credentials of Cuddington generally.

The VALP settlement hierarchy identifies the relative sustainability of each settlement for supporting further development. The evidence behind the VALP settlement hierarchy is the Settlement Hierarchy Assessment (CD/MIS/003 <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/supporting-documents-miscellaneous>) which for Aylesbury Vale District forms part of the evidence base for identifying the distribution of development for the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP). The aim of the assessment is to determine the capacity of settlements to accommodate sustainable development and the likely role of each settlement within the district. The assessment is based on a desktop audit of settlement services and facilities (on which Parish and Town Councils were consulted).

The Settlement Hierarchy Assessment criteria were divided into five sections set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report:

1. **Settlement size** – settlement population
2. **Settlement connectivity** – distance to large service centre and level of public transport
3. **Employment** – number of B use class units within close proximity (2km) to the settlement
4. **Facilities & Services** – split into 'key' and 'non-key' services and facilities (CD/MIS/003 <https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/supporting-documents-miscellaneous>)

Although 'settlement size' is listed as criteria 1, the size of the settlement is only one of the four elements in the assessment criteria. The final position of where a settlement was ultimately categorised in the hierarchy depended on the key facilities score and a qualitative assessment.

Table 2 of the VALP classifies Cuddington as a 'Medium Village'. Medium villages have some provision key services, making them moderately sustainable locations for development. The plan proposes some sites at medium villages. There are two sites allocated at Cuddington and since the VALP hearings, one of these sites, CDN001, has been granted full planning permission for 8 houses. Therefore this site will become a 'commitment' rather than an 'allocation' at the VALP modification stage.

CD/MIS/003 'Settlement Hierarchy Assessment for the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan to accompany Proposed Submission Plan September 2017' para 4.4 identifies the assessment criteria for assessing the sustainability of settlements as including settlement size, settlement connectivity, employment, facilities & services split into 'key services' and 'non-key services criteria'.

Para 5.15 of CD/MIS/003 sets out that medium villages typically have a population of 600 to 2,000. To be a medium village, para 5.15 of CD/MIS/003 sets out that between 6 and 7 of the key criteria should be met (within 4 miles of a service centre, employment of 20 units or more), food store, pub, post office, GP, village hall, recreation facilities, primary school, hourly or more bus service and train station). It is true that Cuddington has the smallest population (569) of the 19 settlements classified as medium villages. However, para 5.16 of CD/MIS/003 identified that Cuddington met 7 of the 11 key services criteria for settlement ranking, with at least six being the minimum for a medium village.

The key services available are the main determinant of the final position of a settlement in the hierarchy, not a settlement's population. Settlements therefore do not have to meet both the population and key services criteria to be classified in a particular category of village. For example Ivinghoe and Whitchurch are considerably short of the typical population of a 'larger village' (2-3,000 people). In the Medium category Weston Turville exceeds the population criteria and Cuddington is below it. In the Smaller category six villages exceed the upper level and one is below the lower level. Notably Weston Turville in the Medium category only meets six criteria but has a population of 2,115.

Appendix A of CD/MIS/003 sets out that Cuddington has two non-key services (place of worship) as well as meeting the following seven 'key services' according to the criteria set out:

- Is 1.5 miles to a service centre (Haddenham)
- Has 1 food store (can be local store/bakery/butcher/farm shop/garage shop)
- 1 public house
- 1 post office
- 1 village/community hall
- 1 recreation ground/playing field
- 1 primary school

In comparison, as set out in the settlement hierarchy document at para 5.19, Smaller villages were found on average to have a population of 463 and only meet four of the criteria. Significantly none of the smaller settlements have more than five key services which means that Cuddington with seven key services would therefore not fit into this category as well it does in the medium village category where eleven of the settlements have less than seven of the key services. The results of the 'smaller village' key services criteria assessment follow para 5.19 of CD/MIS/003.

The lack of a direct bus service is taken into account in the assessment of Cuddington on page 28 of the settlement hierarchy document, but this does not counteract the score of seven key services for the village referred to above. The qualitative assessment in Appendix A of CD/MIS/003 for Cuddington then states: "Small population, infrequent bus service and no employment although well connected to a large service centre (Haddenham less than two miles away). Good provision of key services" which accepts the areas where key services are lacking, but recognises the overall good provision of key services in the village.

Further it is noted above that the allocation for six houses in Cuddington has now been permitted leaving only the allocation for 15 houses. This proposed increase in housing only represents a 5.7% increase over the housing total of 264 contained in the 2011 census which does not take account of completions or current commitments. This does not represent a significant increase in housing numbers and an extra 30 persons is only a 5.3% increase in population.

In relation to the general accessibility of the village and the impact of traffic from new development it should be noted that the County Council as highway authority has raised no concerns about the impact of traffic from the allocated sites on the highway network.

AVDC is therefore satisfied that the VALP is justified on the basis of evidence in the settlement hierarchy in classifying Cuddington as a medium village.