

Advice from Buckinghamshire County Council to Aylesbury Vale District Council concerning changes to housing allocations

Summary

Following the VALP Examination in Public, AVDC and BCC commissioned additional transport modelling reports to further examine points raised during the EiP and in the Inspector's Interim Conclusions which were:

- BUC051 had been omitted from the Countywide modelling Phase 3 work
- Concerns about the impact on Buckingham Town Centre of BUC051, and whether without mitigation BUC051 could be released on a phased basis
- The need to identify additional housing sites

This Advice Note sets out Buckinghamshire County Council's view concerning the above issues taking into account the transport modelling work, previous planning applications and their transport assessments as well as our local knowledge of the transport network.

Buckingham

In relation to Buckingham, our view is that the detailed town centre modelling shows that BUC051 would have an unacceptable impact on the town centre, even if the development was phased. The only mitigation to congestion in the town centre that we have been able to identify is the Western Relief Road, as set out in the Buckingham Transport Strategy. However, it has been acknowledged that the scale of the proposed BUC051 allocation would be insufficient to provide funding for this mitigation measure. One option would be to increase the size of the allocation in order that the development was able to deliver the relief road. However, this would lead to a much larger allocation at Buckingham resulting in further modelling work being required to assess the potential impact on the A421. This suggestion does not take into account any site constraints such as flood risk.

The second option would be to delete the BUC051 site from the draft VALP.

AVDC also asked for our view on including site BUC025. In highway impact terms it would have less impact on the town centre, due to its direct access onto the A421 and so could not be discounted on highway impact terms. However, from a transport strategy perspective the site allocation would not assist with reducing traffic through the town centre, in that it does not contribute to strategic infrastructure such as the Western Relief Road nor the Buckingham Transport Strategy. Neither does the site appear to be a sustainable option, given the severance from Buckingham due to the site being on the south side of the A421. Our concern is that such a development would be car dependent for even short journeys. However, we consider that the final decision on whether to include this site within the draft VALP needs holistic consideration by AVDC of its sustainability in relation to other housing site allocation options. If the site is allocated, then measures would be needed to ensure that this was not a car-dependent location.

Additional housing allocations North-East Bucks (South West Milton Keynes)

AVDC wished to test different options for additional housing allocations in the NE of Buckinghamshire (to the SW of Milton Keynes). Five different options were considered and tested in the Countywide Model.

The DS4 scenario – with Shenley Park removed and 1200 dwellings at Eaton Leys has the least impact on the Buckinghamshire highway network. AVDC have discussed potential housing site allocations with Highways England and their informal view is that current proposed improvement to the A5 and A5 junctions would be able to accommodate additional growth in NE Bucks. This informal view of Highways England has provided re-assurance to BCC on potential impacts on the strategic road network.

As the Countywide modelling is at a high level, we have also considered the initial review of the transport assessment for the previous planning application for Eaton Leys for 1,800 dwellings and have identified a number of potential mitigation measures that might be required. However, this is not an up to date assessment of a proposed development in this location and provides only an indicative view of the types of mitigation that might be required and the locations.

Our initial views on mitigation for the proposed development at Eaton Leys were:

- We had concerns with a standalone at grade Pegasus crossing on the A416 at the existing right of way. We would want to see the existing right of way diverted to meet one of the access points and incorporate an appropriate crossing at this point.
- We were of the view that the whole of the A416 should be dualled as far as possible between the A5 and Stoke Hammond By-Pass
- An upgrade to the Galley Lane roundabout (possibly a 4 arm junction or having a jet lane past it for northbound traffic) and the A416/Stoke Road roundabout.
- ITS provision (CCTV/Journey time monitoring/MVS signing)

As the Countywide model is a high level strategic model, the impacts on the highway network show little difference between the Phase 3 modelling (with Shenley Park at 1600), DS1 scenario (with Shenley Park at 1400) or the DS2 scenario (Shenley Park at 1,400 dwellings and 1,200 at Eaton Leys).

The DS3 Scenario with both Shenley Park and Salden Chase appears to perform worse in terms of impact on the highway network. The DS5 Scenario with Shenley Park removed but with Salden Chase (1100) does not show as much improvement to congestion as the DS4 scenario.

The advantage of the Shenley Park development is that it has the potential to provide a new grid road which would address rat running through Whaddon.