4 GENERAL POLICIES

HOUSING

A CHOICE OF DWELLING TYPES

4.1. National planning policy in “PPG3: Housing” requires that a better mix of housing should be provided giving a wider choice in the size, type and location of dwellings. Nationally, the Government is seeking the provision of greater numbers of smaller dwellings to account for an increase in smaller, and particularly single-person, households. Providing smaller dwellings also helps to use sites more efficiently. The Council’s housing needs study, undertaken in 1999, identified a shortfall in flats, apartments and maisonettes in the District, while the proportion of small houses, such as terraces, was similar to the national average. This implies that there is a need in the District, as in the country as a whole, to increase the proportion of smaller homes; this need is greater in some parts of the District than others.

4.2. In villages, where development is generally more restricted, it is important to take every opportunity to seek to redress shortfalls in local housing choice in order to help to provide sustainable communities. Even the smallest developments in villages can have a considerable impact on the overall choice of housing available to the community. In larger settlements, small developments will have less of an impact, and it would be appropriate to only apply a requirement to redress housing type shortfalls to larger proposals.

4.3. To provide a cohesive design for developments and to meet significant local shortfalls it may often be appropriate, particularly on smaller sites, for only a limited range of different house sizes and types to be provided, including designs comprising houses of only one type.

GP.1 Proposals for sites comprising five or more dwellings in Aylesbury, Buckingham, Wendover, Haddenham or Winslow, and all proposals for residential development elsewhere, shall contribute to redressing shortfalls in the range of dwelling sizes (in terms of bedroom numbers) in order to increase housing choice.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND LOW COST MARKET HOUSING

4.4. The Housing Needs Study undertaken for the Council in 1999 gave a strong indication that a considerable affordability problem may arise in the District from the relationship between local income levels and the supply of average and below average priced properties. This was the case despite the fact that at the time access to the housing market was at its lowest level in real terms for many years.

4.5. The Study also confirmed that low cost market housing was required as well as affordable dwellings to meet identified needs and to address a shortage of units of that type in the existing stock.

4.6. As part of their study of housing need, the consultants undertook a large sample survey. The results indicated that there were many “concealed households”, that is potentially independent households currently living as part of an existing household.

4.7. For the purposes of this Plan, the following definitions shall be used: “Affordable housing” comprises dwellings provided with subsidy for occupation by “qualifying persons”. “Qualifying persons” are those who are assessed by the Council and/or the registered social landlord as being unable to resolve their housing needs in the private sector market because of the relationship between housing costs and incomes; these may include “key workers”. “Low cost market housing” comprises 1- or 2-bedroom dwellings of a type approved by the Council as being appropriate to help satisfy the home-ownership aspirations of people, including “key workers”, whose incomes are only just adequate to access the property market.

4.8. The Council will monitor the provision of affordable and low cost housing and the need for such housing including the use of further studies of housing need.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

4.9. The 1999 Study demonstrated that there was a need for 2,000 affordable units by 2006, even just to maintain the priority waiting list at its current level. This need for affordable dwellings is a material planning consideration.
4.10. Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are the normal providers of affordable housing. However, if grant funding (via social housing grant or local authority social housing grant) is not sufficient to provide the number of affordable dwellings that are required, it will be necessary to explore and make use of other ways of achieving subsidised housing, such as by the use of land made available at a reduced price. Where it is anticipated that a RSL will not be responsible for the management of affordable dwellings, the Council will use occupancy conditions or planning obligations to ensure that the dwellings will be occupied in perpetuity by ‘qualifying persons’ (as defined in para.4.7 above).

GP.2 The Council will negotiate for the provision as affordable dwellings of a minimum of 20% and up to 30% of the total number of dwellings on developments of 25 or more dwellings, or sites of 1 hectare or more (or which form part of a site of such a size which is capable of development), regardless of the number of dwellings. The Council will assess the circumstances of each proposed development individually. It will take into account in particular the need locally for affordable dwellings (including evidence from the Council’s Housing Needs Survey), the economics of the development (including the cost of any contributions towards the achievement of any other planning objectives also being sought from the development of the site), Government guidance and sustainability considerations. The Council will wish to ensure that the affordable dwellings are occupied initially by ‘qualifying persons’ and are retained for successive ‘qualifying persons’.

LOW COST MARKET HOUSING

4.11. A conclusion of the Housing Needs Study was that the relationship between local incomes and prices of dwellings in the District is such that low cost market housing is not affordable for the majority of “concealed” households. On the basis of conservative assumptions and any realistic assessment of the availability of properties, access to home ownership is beyond the reach of more than three-quarters of the ‘concealed’ households identified in the study. Nevertheless, the study confirmed that in the District there is still an important role for low cost market housing, that is the smallest size of units. That role is to meet the needs of households whose incomes are just sufficient to make a purchase on the open market. However, the consultants found that those types of market units are currently in short supply in the District. Additional units of this type are required to help redress that imbalance in the housing stock. A conclusion of the Housing Needs Study was that it
would be appropriate to seek 500 low cost market units by 2006. This need for low cost market dwellings is a material planning consideration.

**GP.3** The Council will negotiate for the provision as low cost market units of a minimum of 10% of the total number of dwellings on developments of 25 or more dwellings, or sites of 1 hectare or more (or which form part of a site of such size which is capable of development), regardless of the number of dwellings. The Council will assess the circumstances of each proposed development individually. It will take into account in particular the need locally for low cost market dwellings (including evidence from the Council’s Housing Needs Study), Government guidance and sustainability considerations.

4.12. The determination of what will be appropriate in any particular case will be based upon information regarding housing need, including the findings of the Council’s Housing Needs Study, and the advice contained in DETR Circular 6/98 - Planning & Affordable housing.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR LOCAL NEEDS IN RURAL AREAS**

4.13. In accordance with Government advice, small sites which would not normally be acceptable for housing development, may exceptionally be developed for affordable schemes to meet a proven local need for such housing. “Exception schemes” are more likely to be justified in the more remote parts of the District distant from towns and larger villages. The number of dwellings should be no greater than required to meet the current need. Consideration of the number and types of units should take into account the likely level of continuing need in the community.

4.14. A number of schemes for local needs housing have been given planning permission as exceptions in the District. However, the Council expects that the stringent requirements will severely limit the total number of such dwellings.

4.15. Local housing needs can best be identified by a survey of households in the locality. The extent of the “locality” in any particular case should be agreed in consultation with the Council. It might be a single village or parish or an associated group of settlements. Households which need affordable housing will be those which need to be housed but which, having regard for the local market conditions and wage rates,
are genuinely unable to afford local accommodation. To qualify, households must also have a strong demonstrable local connection. The following circumstances of households will generally count in assessing local need:

- existing residents needing separate accommodation in the area (newly married couples, people leaving tied accommodation on retirement);
- people whose work provides important services and who need to live closer to the local community;
- people who are not necessarily resident locally but have longstanding links with the local community (e.g. elderly people who need to move back to a village to be near relatives); and
- people with the offer of a job in the locality, who cannot take up the offer because of the lack of affordable housing.

4.16. Proposals will need to be supported by the results of a survey or other information demonstrating to the Council’s satisfaction that there is a special local need for affordable housing.

4.17. The development must be economically viable taking into account the level of rent/purchase that enables the identified need to be met.

4.18. In considering the suitability of a site for development, infrastructure requirements to serve it and accessibility to services will be taken into account. The site should be located within or adjoining the existing built-up area of a settlement. The development should respect the character of the settlement and be in scale with it, and the development should be integrated with the existing pattern of development and land uses.

4.19. The scheme will need to provide for housing for rent and/or shared equity and/or shared ownership as identified by the established need. It will be necessary to ensure the continued availability of the housing to meet a need. If the lessee of a shared ownership unit exercises a right to buy an additional proportion of the equity, or if only the initial price is discounted, on resale the unit may be too expensive to meet the established need. In accordance with Government advice, mixed development of affordable housing subsidised by open market or higher priced housing on the same site will not be acceptable under the exceptions policy.
4.20. The Council will need to be satisfied that arrangements are in place to ensure the dwelling(s) would meet the established local need for affordable housing initially and will remain so in the future. This should preferably be with the management of the scheme by a Registered Social Landlord. Alternatively, it could be by planning obligation or planning condition.

GP.4 The Council will grant permission for affordable housing on small sites adjacent to the built-up areas of settlements to meet local needs that would not otherwise be met under the policies of the plan.

Such sites will only be released as an exception to normal housing restraint policies in the Rural Areas. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate a local need for the number and style of affordable dwellings by reference to an up-to-date survey and assessment of the relevant area.

Proposals for these rural exception sites must accord with the Plan’s design policies and reinforce the distinctive character of the villages in which they are located. Dwellings permitted in accordance with this policy will be reserved in perpetuity for affordable local needs by planning conditions or obligations.

EXISTING DWELLINGS

Maintenance of Housing Stock

4.21. A general presumption against development involving the loss of dwelling units is appropriate.

GP.5 In deciding planning applications the Council will resist any numerical loss to the District’s housing stock.

Conversion of Dwellings

4.22. The conversion and subdivision of existing dwellings can make a useful contribution to housing provision by adapting the existing housing stock to meet the needs of the increasing number of smaller households. It may also help to meet the need for affordable and low-cost market housing.

4.23. The resultant residential units need to have an adequate standard of accommodation, and the proposals need to have regard for the character of the area in which the property is located and for the amenity of nearby properties.
Proposals for the subdivision or conversion of existing dwellings into two or more units of accommodation will be permitted, provided they make adequate provision in terms of access, parking, amenity space and noise attenuation and have regard to the amenity of adjoining or nearby properties and the effect on the character of the area and the balance of the community.

Changes of Use of Residential Accommodation

4.24. The Council recognises that residential properties may be used in part for commercial purposes. However, amongst other considerations, the effect on the amenity of occupants of other properties and the effect on the character of the locality are important.

Proposals for changes of use of parts of dwellings for non-residential purposes or home-working will only be permitted where they:

a) would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of occupiers of the retained residential accommodation or of adjoining dwellings;
b) would not have an adverse effect on the character of the locality;
c) make appropriate provision for access, parking and noise attenuation; and
d) accord with the other policies of the development plan.

Protection of the Amenity of Residents

4.25. It is a central theme of planning that good neighbourliness and fairness are among the most important factors against which development proposals should be measured. While planning decisions should always be made on balance in the public interest, this should not be at the expense of unreasonable harm to people’s peaceful enjoyment of their property. Most development will have some impact on its neighbours, but it is important to ensure that this impact is reasonable in relation to the benefits of the development.

4.26. Some of the policies of this Plan refer to the protection of the amenity or amenities of neighbours. Amenity can be harmed in a number of ways, for example by noise, fumes or odours, excessive or speeding traffic, loss of light, the overbearing nature of a new structure, disruptions to services, increased risk of injury, illness or damage to property. Aylesbury Vale is a
valued place in which to live, and the Council aims to protect this aspect of its residential environment, and improve situations where amenity is currently reduced.

**GP.8** Planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would unreasonably harm any aspect of the amenity of nearby residents when considered against the benefits arising from the proposal. Where planning permission is granted, the Council will use conditions or planning obligations to ensure that any potential adverse impacts on neighbours are eliminated or appropriately controlled.

### Extension of Dwellings and Annexes

**4.27.** When planning permission for extensions and annexes is required, applications will be judged on their merits having regard to the effect on the original building, neighbouring properties and the area in general.

**4.28.** The Council has adopted guidance on the detailed design of extensions to dwellings - “Design Guide - Residential Extensions”).

**GP.9** Proposals for extensions to dwellings will be permitted where they:

a) protect character of outlook, access to natural light and privacy for people who live nearby;

b) respect the appearance of the dwelling and its setting and other buildings in the locality; and

c) accord with published Supplementary Planning Guidance on residential extensions and the other policies of the development plan.

**4.29.** Extensions to houses are sometimes provided as “granny annexes” to accommodate relatives. Within built-up areas of towns and villages these are acceptable provided that the standards that apply to independent dwellings are met. When, otherwise, they are built as extensions to dwellings, planning conditions will be imposed requiring their occupancy as ancillary to the host dwelling. Where a detached building is proposed, the Council will ensure the new building remains ancillary to the existing building by the use of conditions or a planning obligation.

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A “granny annexe” is a self contained unit of accommodation associated with the main dwelling either attached or detached.
4.30. Detached annexe accommodation will not be permitted in locations where the erection of new houses would not be granted. It should be constructed as an extension to the existing dwelling, which could be incorporated into the accommodation of the existing dwelling should the need for it cease.

GP.10 Proposals for residential annexes to dwellings within built-up areas of settlements, as either extensions or detached buildings, will be permitted provided that they meet standards that apply to independent dwellings. The Council will use planning conditions or legal agreements to control the use of such annexes.

GP.11 Residential annexes to dwellings outside the built-up areas of settlements will be permitted providing they are physically attached to the dwelling and capable of being incorporated with the existing residential accommodation. The Council will use planning conditions or legal agreements to control the use of such annexes.

MOBILE HOMES/RESIDENTIAL CARAVANS/RESIDENTIAL MOORINGS

4.31. “Residential caravans” are caravans used for residential purposes as opposed to holiday homes. These caravans can either form part of a large authorised site or be an individual or ancillary unit. There is one such site in the District: a permanent site at Nicky Nook, Great Horwood.

GP.12 Proposals for new permanent residential caravan/mobile home sites will be considered against the same policies as would applications for conventional residential development.

4.32. It is preferable that caravans be grouped on a well located, properly maintained site. However, in certain circumstances it is appropriate for a temporary planning permission to be given where an identified need arises e.g. during the establishment of an agricultural enterprise that requires a resident worker or where a new dwelling is being built or an existing habitable dwelling is being rebuilt.

GP.13 Temporary permission for an individual residential caravan will only be given in exceptional circumstances to meet an accepted need arising from a site. The Council will seek to ensure that the caravan is sited to mitigate any visual intrusion, and will require that the caravan is removed and the site is returned to a satisfactory condition once the permission has expired.
4.33. There is a demand for residential canal moorings. Residential moorings are normally only acceptable within urban areas where proper provision for access, car parking and other facilities can readily be made. In Aylesbury Vale, only at Aylesbury is there operational canal within an urban area. Policies for residential moorings and for canal side development are set out at GP80-81 and paragraphs 4.206-4.208.

GYPSIES

4.34. There is no longer a legal requirement on local authorities to provide gypsy sites. Government advice presumes that proposals for gypsy sites will come from the private sector. The Government recognises that many gypsies would prefer to find and buy their own sites to develop and manage. Local Plans should wherever possible identify locations suitable for gypsy sites, whether local authority or private sites. Where this is not possible, they should set out clear, realistic criteria for suitable locations, as a basis for site provision policies.

4.35. There is no up-to-date information on gypsy accommodation needs within Aylesbury Vale. In these circumstances, it is appropriate to establish a criteria-based policy against which planning applications for gypsy sites will be considered.

**GP.14**

Outside the Metropolitan Green Belt, Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other protected areas including Areas of Attractive Landscape, Local Landscape Areas and the best and most versatile agricultural land, the Council may permit small-scale gypsy caravan sites to meet clearly demonstrated and particular local needs. In evaluating such proposals the Council will take into consideration the following factors:

a) the accessibility of local services such as shops, schools, and public transport;

b) the suitability of the physical environment of the site and its surroundings for habitation;

c) the likely impact on the amenity of local residents with regard to the potential from noise and other disturbance, from the movement of vehicles to and from the site, the stationing of vehicles on the site, and on-site business activities;
d) the adequacy of vehicular access from the public highway, provision for parking, turning and servicing on site, and road safety for occupants and visitors; and

e) the impact upon the appearance of the countryside and the environment generally and the landscaping proposed.

TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE

4.36. Government guidance states that Local Planning Authorities should consider the needs of travelling show people when preparing local plans. A realistic assessment should be made of the amount of accommodation needed to provide a basis for relevant and appropriate Plan policies.

Government guidance is contained in DETR circular 22/91.

4.37. There are a number of sites in the District used by show people. The Showmen’s Guild of Great Britain has not indicated a need to identify additional sites for show people in Aylesbury Vale. Nonetheless, such a need may arise in the future. It is important to have a criteria based policy against which applications for accommodating show people will be considered.

GP.15 Outside the Metropolitan Green Belt, Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other protected areas including Areas of Attractive Landscape, Local Landscape Areas and the best and most versatile agricultural land, the Council may permit small-scale show people’s quarters to meet clearly demonstrated and particular local needs. In evaluating such proposals the Council will take into consideration the following factors:

a) the accessibility of local services such as shops, schools, and public transport;

b) the suitability of the physical environment of the site and its surroundings for habitation;

c) the likely impact on the amenity of local residents including the impact of vehicle movements to and from the site and the maintenance and testing of equipment;

d) the adequacy of vehicular access from the public highway, provision for parking, turning and servicing on site, and road safety for occupants and visitors; and

e) the impact upon the appearance of the countryside and the environment generally and the landscaping proposed.
EMPLOYMENT

INTRODUCTION

4.38. Employment in Aylesbury Vale is primarily focussed on the town of Aylesbury where approximately half of all job opportunities are located. Elsewhere in the District, employment patterns are influenced both by Aylesbury and the large number of other employment centres located in towns all around the District’s periphery. These towns exert varying degrees of influence. London is less than an hour’s travelling time by train on the lines from Aylesbury, and through Haddenham, Cheddington, Stoke Mandeville and Wendover. The capital exerts a considerable influence, particularly in the southern part of the District.

4.39. Other towns that have significant influence on the travel to work patterns of the population include Milton Keynes, Bletchley, Banbury and Brackley to the north, Luton, Dunstable, Tring, Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead and Leighton Buzzard to the east, Oxford and Bicester to the west and High Wycombe, Amersham and Chesham to the south.

4.40. Within the expansive and largely rural parts of the District, employment was traditionally linked closely with agriculture. However, in line with trends nationally, the numbers employed locally in this sector have declined dramatically. The great majority of job opportunities now in the District are in the service sectors. This is particularly noticeable at Aylesbury, where a decline in its post-war manufacturing base has also been marked, again in line with national trends.

4.41. Nevertheless, Aylesbury has grown significantly and consistently over a long period and that growth has been largely employment led. Its success in attracting jobs is demonstrated by the fact that unemployment rates in the town, and District, have been consistently below national and regional averages.

4.42. In the Rural Areas, there is a range of employment opportunities concentrated in the towns, larger villages and a few large industrial estates/business parks. In accordance with the principle of maintaining a diverse rural economy and providing local employment opportunities accessible to rural communities and their workforce, the expansion of such facilities will generally be encouraged.
4.43. Firms that have established in converted barns or former aerodrome buildings also provide a small but nonetheless significant proportion of rural employment. The expansion of these isolated businesses can have adverse effects on rural interests and such applications will need to be judged against their conflict with other uses in the vicinity, along with local employment needs and the availability of more appropriate locations.

4.44. The following sections deal with strategic employment issues. Specific employment development proposals at settlements and within the Rural Areas are contained in the subsequent relevant Chapters.

**EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AND STRATEGIC LAND REQUIREMENTS**

4.45. The County Structure Plan envisages that employment in the District will grow by 11,000 jobs over the Plan period.

4.46. Presently, approximately 20% of Aylesbury Vale’s total employment needs are accommodated outside the District, i.e. more of the District’s resident workforce commutes out of the District to work than is replaced by those commuting in. Although AVDLP promotes a closer correlation of jobs and homes, it is not expected that it will impact greatly on this phenomenon over the Plan period. The levels of commuting to work will be closely monitored.

4.47. It is assumed, therefore, that 20% of the new job growth (2,200 jobs) will be located outside the District as a result of net out-commuting. Of the 8,800 remaining jobs, 2,800 will be provided on existing employment sites leaving a residue of 6,000 to be accommodated.

4.48. A third of these new jobs will be provided in education, health, retail, leisure and personnel services. The Plan proposes, therefore, that employment land for only about 4,000 office and industrial jobs need to be provided.

4.49. Details as to the assumptions made and the rationale for accommodating new employment needs is given in the Employment Background Paper and Economic Background Paper.
4.50. In order to ensure that employment opportunities match the needs generated by its expanding population and its structure keeps pace with modern employment needs, efforts to attract modern industries are required.

4.51. The employment policies contained within AVDLP have been developed in a manner consistent with the Plan’s overall strategy and the policy objectives contained within the District and County Economic Development Action Plans and the Buckinghamshire Rural Strategy. Those Action Plans have in turn been developed consistently within the aims of the Thames Valley and the Milton Keynes and North Bucks Economic Partnerships, in both of which Aylesbury Vale District is a partner. Other members include other County and District local authorities, Learning and Skills Councils, Business Link, and the Chambers of Commerce.

GP.16 In deciding applications for employment development the Council will aim to secure a close correlation between the location of homes, jobs and skills. The location of employment uses must be consistent with the availability of services, including public transport and highway capacity. Employment development proposals must be consistent with the need to safeguard the environment of towns, villages and the countryside.

EXISTING EMPLOYMENT SITES

4.52. In line with the objective of maintaining a healthy and diverse economy and balancing the number of jobs with the workforce, the Council will generally seek to retain existing employment sites in employment use. However, where employment sites give rise to effects, such as noise or traffic, that may impact on neighbours, a flexible approach needs to be taken. Alternatively, some employment sites may not be suitable or attractive to new users, and may appear to become redundant.

4.53. In many cases there will be opportunities to utilise parts, if not all, of such sites in employment uses, and the Council would support such redevelopments, where any existing adverse environmental impacts would be reduced. The social structure of settlements could be damaged and commuting levels increased if employment sites are lost where there is little or no alternative employment available nearby, or where the loss of the employment site would significantly reduce opportunities in the locality; in such cases redevelopment for alternative employment uses would be appropriate. In larger settlements,
where there is greater access to a wider range of alternative employment opportunities, mixed-use proposals including residential development, could provide a more appropriate land-use balance.

GP.17 The Council will seek to retain existing employment sites and uses. Proposals for changes of use or redevelopment of employment sites will only be permitted where:

a) the existing use has an adverse impact on amenity of neighbours and its proposed replacement would be an improvement;

b) there are appropriate alternative employment opportunities either on other sites in the locality or as part of the proposed development; and

c) there are opportunities in larger settlements of a more advantageous land-use arrangement through redevelopment for mixed use, including residential, purposes.

4.54. One of the main objectives of land use planning is to ensure the efficient use of land whilst minimising conflict between adjoining land uses. New developments, particularly for certain industrial processes, which would have a detrimental impact on neighbouring uses will not be acceptable.

GP.18 Proposals for employment development will not be permitted where:

a) they would be incompatible with nearby uses and utilities; or

b) the effects of activities or processes undertaken or associated traffic would be harmful to the amenity, health or safety of occupants of nearby land uses.

EMPLOYMENT SITE DEVELOPMENT DENSITIES

4.55. Much of the District’s employment park development has been built at a ratio of about 40% coverage. This is typical of developments elsewhere. Where employment development is found acceptable outside built-up areas it is often important to ensure that it is accompanied by landscaping on and around the site, and sometimes away from the site, to protect the visual and rural amenities of the locality. This may mean that in some instances the proportion of the site covered by buildings and car parks could be lower than the historic figure for the District, and the site coverage ratio applying within settlements.
GP.19 Employment development permitted in the countryside or adjacent to the built-up areas of settlements will be expected to provide extensive landscaping to mitigate any adverse visual effects. Planning conditions will be applied or obligations sought to secure those objectives.

WORKING FROM HOME

4.56. Advances in technology and changing work practices have made tele-working and working from home a more realistic option for many people. This can be environmentally beneficial by reducing the need for people to commute and socially beneficial by giving people more flexibility to combine working with caring responsibilities. Usually, such practices do not require an application for planning permission as they can be carried out without material changes to the structure or function of the building concerned. Where planning permission is required, proposals will be considered against policy GP7.

TRANSPORT

INTRODUCTION

4.57. This section includes those general transport policies that will apply across the District, including Aylesbury. Policies specific only to a certain settlement, including the major transport proposals for Aylesbury, or to the Rural Areas will be found in the relevant section.

4.58. Transport has major implications for land use and the environment. Current Government forecasts suggest that car traffic nationally will increase by around 30% by 2011. In Aylesbury Vale this figure may be exceeded because of the amount of development proposed over the same period. Both the District and County Councils consider that such overall rates of growth in road traffic can neither be accommodated nor sustained in terms of compliance with Government policy.

4.59. This Plan therefore carries through the new approach emphasised in Government advice and in the County Structure Plan that recognises the need to control and manage land use and transport in an integrated manner.
The Council will take the following key factors into account in assessing the transport implications of development proposals:

a) the need to reduce car usage;

b) the need to promote the availability and use of convenient and safe public transport, cycling and walking opportunities;

c) the need to reduce car parking associated with new development, and in town centres;

d) the need for traffic management measures to improve environmental standards; and

e) the need to create better and safer conditions for all road users.

TRAFFIC IN TOWNS AND THE RURAL AREAS

4.60. AVDLP has been prepared against a background of increasing car ownership and usage and a heightened awareness of the need to protect the District from the environmental effects of motor vehicles. While it is recognised that some vehicle journeys are essential to maintain a healthy economy, many are not and could be made by other less environmentally damaging modes of transport.

New Development

4.61. New development may generate increased levels of traffic. This can affect local congestion levels, pollution levels and road safety. An integral element of the Plan is a concern to maintain and enhance the safety, amenity and accessibility of all those using highways. It is important, therefore, that roads, footways and cycleways in new developments are designed and maintained to a standard that provides a safe, convenient and accessible environment.

4.62. Travel plans provide an opportunity for difficulties associated with increased traffic levels to be addressed prior to development. The requirement for a travel plan will depend on the scale and type of development but such a plan will be expected in support of planning applications for all proposals with significant transport implications or to tackle a particular local traffic problem.
In considering the highway aspects of planning applications the Council will have regard to:

a) the need to secure public transport links and improvements related to the development;

b) the need for safe and convenient access for road users, including cyclists, pedestrians and disabled persons;

c) the adequacy of the highway network involved;

d) the requisite level of car parking;

e) the contents of any associated travel plan; and

f) the satisfactory design and layout of any proposed road system.

In appropriate cases the Council will secure the above benefits by means of planning conditions or obligations. These considerations are elaborated in subsequent policies.

In granting permission for development likely to impact upon the transport system the Council will impose conditions or seek planning obligations including, where appropriate, financial contributions by developers, to secure the provision or improvement of relevant public transport facilities, cycle and footways, and other transport infrastructure.

In some instances, communal parking courts should be provided close to the dwellings that they serve. Parking courts can be a source of nuisance to neighbouring residential properties and their location and design should take this into account. It is important also that their design includes as an integral element landscaping or other appropriate measures to minimise the visual impact.

Communal parking areas should be located conveniently for the dwellings they are intended to serve. Their design and layout should:

a) respect the visual characteristics of the area;

b) protect the residential amenities of nearby occupiers; and

c) promote security and community safety.
CAR PARKING GUIDELINES

4.64. In line with PPG advice and general issues of sustainability, the Council is moving away from the rigid application of minimum car parking standards. A key aim is to seek a reduction in the amount of non-residential parking available in the future, to discourage non-essential car use, and encourage where possible the development and use of public transport, cycling and walking as alternatives. In accordance with this principle, it may be appropriate, in exceptional circumstances, for the parking requirement for certain developments to be zero.

4.65. In moving towards a more flexible but restrictive policy on car parking, the Council acknowledges that to do so unilaterally, or too quickly, may have a detrimental impact on the District by deterring existing and potential investors. A strategy is therefore proposed that provides for a gradual change in application of the policy over the period to 2011 and beyond.

4.66. This principle is now enshrined in the Council’s Parking Guidelines, published as Supplementary Planning Guidance. These will be amended as appropriate through the Plan period to reflect the gradual tightening of application of policy.

GP.24 New development will be required to provide vehicular parking in accordance with the Council’s operative guidelines published as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

These guidelines are intended to promote more sustainable transport options and will establish maximum levels of parking appropriate to the scale, type and location of development. In applying the guidelines the Council will have regard to the requirements of disabled people and those occupying specialised accommodation, and the need to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres.

During the period of the Plan the Council will review and may revise the parking guidelines in order to enhance the objectives of reducing car usage and traffic growth, and easing congestion.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Buses

4.67. Bus services are operated by independent bus companies, although BCC has an obligation to secure such additional services as it deems are necessary which are not provided commercially. It also has to obtain the best value for money in public and educational transport services when viewed together.
4.68. There are a number of passenger rail lines through the District:
- West Coast Main Line with a station at Cheddington (and nearby stations outside Aylesbury Vale at Bletchley, Central Milton Keynes, Leighton Buzzard and Tring);
- Aylesbury to London Marylebone, via Amersham, with stations in the District at Stoke Mandeville and Wendover;
- Aylesbury to London Marylebone, via High Wycombe; and
- London Marylebone to Birmingham with a station at Haddenham.

4.69. There is potential for rail to make a bigger contribution to public transport provision. The existing rail stations typically act more as places from which to enter or leave the District, rather than facilitating travel within it. Improvements to and extension of the network would be needed to enable a greater and more effective use of the system by residents and others in the District. Those residents north of Aylesbury are particularly isolated from the rail network.

4.70. In light of the much-reduced road-building programme there is a stronger case to consider rail alternatives, especially between Aylesbury - Milton Keynes and Aylesbury - High Wycombe. While there has been significant improvements to the latter service there is no northwards link from Aylesbury.

4.71. Over a number of years various studies have looked into the feasibility of re-opening to passenger traffic the line between Bicester and Bletchley (Milton Keynes). Aylesbury is linked to this route at Claydon Junction via a little-used line to Calvert. The Council is a member of a consortium of local authorities and others, including BCC and Network Rail, looking at establishing a new east west rail link (EWR) between East Anglia and Central Southern England. The study includes the Bicester - Bletchley and Aylesbury lines.

4.72. The latest report is very positive in its recommendations on the design, operation and financial feasibility of the establishment of the EWR. The section of line between Bedford and Bicester, including the line running through the centre of the District, has the best potential for re-opening. The Council has expressed support for this project, including the Aylesbury link, and will safeguard the line between Bicester and Bletchley and the line
running northwards from Aylesbury from development likely to prejudice its possible re-opening to passenger and freight services.

**GP.25** The Council will resist development that might prejudice the use of the rail route running through the District between Bicester and Bletchley, and the northward link from Aylesbury, by passenger and freight services. In considering proposals for any associated rail development the Council will protect the amenities of occupiers close to the route.

4.73. In addition to safeguarding the route, it is important to ensure that adequate station stops can be provided to serve local movements in the District. A key site is at Winslow, both to serve the town and centre of the District. Similarly, a station at Quainton could serve the village and locality and a station at Calvert could also serve the new housing development on the old brickworks.

**GP.26** Provision is made for railway stations on sites defined on the Proposals Map at Winslow, Quainton and Calvert. The Council will resist development that would prejudice station schemes or related rail transport proposals for these sites.

**Taxi Services**

4.74. Taxis provide a valuable service within the urban areas and in linking to the surrounding villages. Policies designed to encourage public transport are also likely to lead to increased demand for such service. Taxis should be available close to the major public transport stops and interchanges.

**Walking and Cycling**

4.75. Cycling is an important means of transport for local trips and is a healthy and non-polluting form of transport that has markedly increased in popularity. The town of Aylesbury and the Rural Areas are ideally suited for cycling but many journeys are undoubtedly suppressed because of perceived or actual dangers to cyclists on the roads.

4.76. The District and County Councils are working with SUSTRANS to link, via dedicated cycleways, the main settlements in the District to the National Cycle Network. A route is being developed between Milton Keynes and Oxford, via Winslow. Further linkages are proposed between Aylesbury and Winslow, Aylesbury to Leighton Buzzard and Aylesbury to Thame via Princes Risborough and Buckingham to Winslow. While totally

**SUSTRANS**, which stands for Sustainable Transport, is a charity established to help put together the National Cycling Network. It offers assistance to Local Authorities and others working towards this aim. SUSTRANS is a Millennium Project funded by the National Lottery.
separate cycleways are usually preferable, cyclists can successfully share lightly trafficked roads and footpaths, provided the latter are properly designed and surfaced and of adequate width. Such arrangements are being introduced between Stone and Aylesbury, along the A418, and have been introduced between Wendover and Aylesbury, along the A413.

4.77. The Council supports further measures to improve conditions for cyclists in the District in terms both of safety and convenience, and of providing links within and between settlements, particularly between the main settlements and surrounding villages.

GP.27 The Council will protect existing cycle routes from adverse effects of new development. In dealing with planning applications the Council will seek new or improved cycle access and facilities, including cycle storage, and will use planning conditions or legal agreements to secure such arrangements.

4.78. As with cycling, walking is important as a means of travel as well as recreation. There is an extensive footpath and footway network in the towns and villages, as well as in the countryside. It is imperative that the existing network is protected from development likely to sever or extinguish definitive footpaths or other well used pedestrian routes.

4.79. New development proposals will be required to take into account existing pedestrian movements and routes. It is also important to secure extensions of the existing pedestrian network and, wherever feasible, new development should include within the scheme links into the existing network. Footpaths should be suitable for use by disabled persons to allow them full access to the network.

GP.28 The Council will safeguard existing pedestrian routes from adverse effects of new development. Development proposals will not be permitted that do not provide for direct, convenient and safe pedestrian movement and routes, connected where appropriate to the existing pedestrian network. In deciding planning applications the Council will use planning conditions or legal agreements to secure the provision of new footpaths and the improvement of existing routes.
ROADS

4.80. The County Council defines a hierarchy of roads. This consists of the primary and secondary road networks. The primary network comprises all the strategic routes that include all the motorways, trunk roads and the main distributor roads across the County. These routes carry most of the through traffic across the County and provide links between the main settlements.

Motorways and Trunk Roads

4.81. A section of the M40 passes through the south-western part of the District. Most of the A41 which runs south-east to north-west, via Aylesbury, through the District has now been de-trunked. A proposal to construct an A41 bypass for Aston Clinton was approved in 1991, and construction started in 2001. The bypass opened in October 2003 and forms the final part of a much-improved link between Aylesbury and the M25 Motorway and provides much needed environmental relief to Aston Clinton. There are no other proposals for the A41 through the District.

County Roads

4.82. BCC, as local highway authority, is responsible for all roads other than motorways or trunk roads. Generally the Council has supported transport schemes, including bypasses, relating to the Strategic Highway Network which bring about environmental improvements, make conditions safer for highway users, or are in the interests of the local economy. Examples include bypasses for Buckingham, Wendover and Tingewick. The Council is concerned that any local bypass scheme should be designed to a standard sufficient for local needs, to achieve environmental improvement, without attracting long distance through traffic nor generating undue levels of additional trips.

4.83. BCC’s proposed capital road programme has been cut back heavily over the last few years. This reflects the national scarcity of funding for major projects and the changing transport philosophy. There remain a number of schemes that either have planning permission or have safeguarded lines, which will improve conditions for traffic and effect environmental improvements to bypassed settlements. The routes for these schemes will be protected accordingly.
4.84. These schemes will be funded from the County Capital Programme or other ways, such as public/private partnership, supported where appropriate by contributions from developers.

4.85. The Council supports proposals for construction of the A4146 Stoke Hammond and Linslade Western Bypasses to an appropriate standard.

GP.29 The design of new road schemes should protect landscape, drainage, ecological and amenity interests. In considering such applications the Local Planning Authority will resist layouts that attract extraneous traffic unrelated to local needs, and encourage complementary measures intended to reduce speed and improve safety and environmental conditions.

GP.30 The Council will not permit development likely to prejudice routes safeguarded for the construction of the following road schemes (as defined on the Proposals Map):

a) A4146 Stoke Hammond Bypass;

b) A4146 Linslade Western Bypass; and

c) Stocklake road improvement, Aylesbury.

4.86. Between 1996 and 2011 the 1997 National Road Traffic Forecasts postulate a 46% increase in articulated HGV movements nationwide. This emphasises the need to ensure that those vehicles without a destination or origin within the District should be directed to the most appropriate through routes.

Other Road Schemes

4.87. In addition to major schemes, BCC has approved many improvement lines for existing highways. These include, for example, works designed to improve forward visibility or reduce accidents and provide footways/cycleways. BCC carries out a periodic review of these highway improvement lines to rescind those no longer considered necessary.

4.88. BCC safeguards these lines but they do not constitute proposals in this Plan. Where appropriate, BCC draws attention to these lines when considering development proposals.

Roadside Services

4.89. Roadside services on primary routes contribute to an efficient transport system by meeting the needs of motorists and
reducing the need for them to deviate from such routes. Government advice encourages meeting the need for new roadside services on these routes by the development of key sites with a range of facilities for travellers in cars and lorries.

4.90. In choosing a site for roadside services that are needed, particular account should be taken of the importance of protecting the countryside including, in particular, Metropolitan Green Belt and the separate identity of settlements from development.

4.91. The Government advises that road users on primary routes should not need to travel more than 12 miles before reaching a roadside service area; a maximum of 25 miles is recommended in the case of facilities on the same side of the road.

SHOPPING

4.92. This section deals with the general shopping strategy applying to the whole of the District. Specific shopping policies for the main settlements and other areas are contained in their respective chapters.

4.93. Aylesbury town centre is defined in the County Structure Plan as a sub-regional shopping centre. Aylesbury (along with High Wycombe) is second only in Buckinghamshire to Milton Keynes in the hierarchy of shopping centres. A key retail policy of the County Structure Plan is that the role of such centres, as the central focus of shopping activity within their catchments, should be maintained and enhanced.

4.94. Based on the broad indications for new retail development in the County Structure Plan, and the Shopping Background Paper prepared as part of this Plan, it is evident there will be considerable potential for new shopping floorspace of all types over the Plan period.

4.95. Government guidance emphasises that priority should be given to town centres and accommodation of retail development within them. A sequential approach is required to be applied to the selection of shopping development sites. The purpose of this concentration on town centres is to ensure that new retail development is accessible by a choice of transport modes and that it facilitates multi-purpose trips.
4.96. Accordingly, the majority of the District’s new retail development is to be concentrated at Aylesbury. To accommodate this, and accord with the sequential test, first preference will be given to town centre sites (where suitable sites or buildings suitable for conversion are available), followed by edge-of-centre sites, then neighbourhood and local centres sites, and only thereafter, out-of-centre sites in locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport. Crucial to the selection of any sites not in or on the edge of the town centre will be the relationship to the land use/transport strategy for Aylesbury.

4.97. Outside Aylesbury, a number of settlements have an important but more local shopping role, especially Buckingham, Haddenham, Wendover and Winslow. Through the application of the sequential test, the Plan will safeguard and enhance the role of these District and local centres. Similar considerations to those at Aylesbury, in particular the application of PPG6 considerations, will apply to new shopping developments at these settlements. To consolidate and enhance these centres the Council will designate Central Shopping Areas and Primary Shopping Frontages.

4.98. In the Rural Areas, it is important to protect shops, post offices and public houses, as these fulfil a local function providing local services and reducing the need to travel. This protection is particularly important where there are no alternatives available locally. Applicants will need to satisfy the Council that the existing use is no longer viable and that a genuine attempt has been made to market the enterprise as a going concern. Where development is permitted, it would be regrettable if the building works prevented the future resumption of the former, or similar, activity.

4.99. The general shopping aims of the Plan are:

- to maintain and enhance the role of Aylesbury as a sub-regional shopping centre, of Buckingham, Wendover and Winslow as District centres and Haddenham as a local centre;
- to undertake a programme of developments and improvements in these centres to provide a safe, attractive and convenient environment for shoppers;
to make provision for a range of shopping outlets to complement and enhance the centres’ respective shopping roles in the District; and

to retain existing local public houses, shops and post offices in both rural and urban settlements.

GP.31 The retail strategy is to locate most shopping development in Aylesbury. All applications for retail development will be considered having regard to:

a) a sequential approach to site selection;

b) the impact of the development on the trading strength of Aylesbury and other retail centres;

c) the effect on traffic growth, movement and parking;

d) the need to provide a safe and attractive shopping environment accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

GP.32 The Council will resist proposals for the change of use of shops, post offices and public houses for which there is a demonstrable local need.

In considering applications for alternative development or uses the Council will have regard to the viability of the existing use, the presence of alternative local facilities and the community benefits of the proposed use. Where permission includes building conversions, conditions will be imposed so as not to exclude later resumption of the existing use.

DESIGN AND ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

4.100. The Council is aware that the majority of people in the community will at some time in their lives experience mobility difficulties or some other form of disability. The Council, through pursuance of planning policies and the implementation of Building Regulations, will seek to ensure that those with impaired mobility or other disabilities are not prevented from participating in or contributing to all community activities.

4.101. In the design and landscaping of the built environment, accessibility shall be a prime concern. There is often perceived to be a conflict between aesthetics and access, but with sensitive
and imaginative design, access can be improved for everyone in the community. The Council will expect that buildings, open spaces and public areas are designed to ensure equal access for people with disabilities.

4.102. The Council has adopted and published a guide entitled “Designing for People with Disabilities.” The Council will have regard to the guide in determining planning applications.

4.103. Local Planning Authorities have a duty to consider the needs of disabled people when determining proposals for a wide range of buildings to which the public have access.

GP.33 In considering planning applications the Council will pay special attention to the needs of people with disabilities, including physical and sensory impairments. Development proposals should facilitate easy and safe movement and access to and from buildings and through outside public spaces and include, where appropriate, suitably located disabled parking provision. Regard will also be had for published and adopted guidance on “Designing for People with Disabilities”.

4.104. People with disabilities can experience severe difficulties in negotiating their way from their transport to the buildings they wish to use. Although it is a requirement of the Building Regulations to take account of access into and through buildings, there is no similar provision regarding parking provision. In determining planning applications, the Council will seek to ensure that adequate parking and adequate access to and from the buildings is provided for disabled people.

CONSERVATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

4.105. Design and landscaping of development are important priorities. An approach is required that respects the traditional character of towns and villages, and, where development in the countryside is necessary or appropriate, the traditional character of rural landscape and buildings.

4.106. The character of the settlements differs across the District, especially in the materials used in traditional buildings, reflecting the changing geology and geography. It is vital that new development is of similar scale and character to its surroundings and does not compromise environmental quality.
4.107. Half the District is designated as attractive landscape. Just 5% lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but 45% lies within other areas protected by Area of Attractive Landscape (AAL) or Local Landscape Area (LLA) designations.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

4.108. The Council believes that it is important to encourage good and discourage poor design in the built environment. Development that respects and enhances its surroundings will be supported.

4.109. The key to the Council’s approach towards the design of new development is “local distinctiveness”. This refers to the qualities of buildings, planting and topography in a locality that define its character. Within the District there is a wide variety of landscape character types, from the nationally recognised natural beauty of the hills and woodlands of the Chilterns to the locally important pattern of fields, hedgerows and streams in other, less hilly parts of the District. Similarly, there is a wide range of settlements with distinctive characteristics such as the narrow roads and high walls of Haddenham and Chearsley, to the wide main street and limestone houses of Thornborough. Designs or layouts that may be entirely acceptable in one part of the District may not be appropriate elsewhere.

4.110. The Council wishes to encourage these distinctions between areas of the District and neighbouring Districts and to reinforce a sense of place by requiring development to acknowledge its immediate surroundings. This will be especially important in areas recognised for their landscape or townscape quality, i.e. the designated special landscape areas and Conservation Areas.

4.111. Traditional or vernacular buildings naturally follow this local distinctiveness through their siting, and the use of local materials and building styles. The historic environment can be an important component of local distinctiveness. Development that respects the historic characteristics of its surroundings will be encouraged. Modern developments should look towards the same qualities in order to be appropriate to their environment. That is not to suggest that previous styles should be reproduced but rather to ensure that development respects traditional themes. The Council wishes to encourage development that has an individual identity that either complements or forms an attractive contrast with its surroundings.
In determining planning applications the Council will seek to protect or improve the traditional building characteristics of towns, villages and the countryside. Development proposals should respect the local distinctiveness and environmental qualities of their setting and surroundings. Permission will not be granted for poor designs that harm these important visual and historic interests.

There are several aspects of a development’s design that contribute to its ability to reflect and reinforce local distinctiveness: siting and layout, scale, density, design details, materials, and various aspects of landscaping.

**Siting and Layout**

A form of development that recognises local character, historic context and patterns of earlier building will be sought. The highest quality developments are those that reflect characteristic features of the locality in terms of the appearance of buildings, their relationship to each other and the spaces between them. In addition, new buildings will almost always integrate with existing development more fully if they utilise the existing features of the site such as levels and vegetation.

Closely spaced buildings or buildings placed close to flank boundaries can erode local character in a village or edge of settlement situation. This is also true in countryside locations where space about buildings is a fundamental requirement of the rural setting.

**Scale**

New development, whether urban or rural, should be appropriate in scale to its surroundings. Proposals will be assessed in terms of the impact of their size, massing and location upon skylines and public views.

The vast majority of buildings in the District are one or two-storey. The few modern high-rise buildings are often prominent and out of keeping with the character of their surroundings. Further high-rise building will generally be unacceptable.

Any development affecting a skyline can have a detrimental impact upon public views. When considering proposals affecting a skyline the Council will have regard to views of the site from elsewhere and avoid unacceptable impacts on views and skylines.
Materials and Design Details

4.118. Development should use materials of similar quality, texture and colour to those predominantly used in the locality. They should also reflect elements of design, such as roof and window types and decorative details utilised on traditional buildings locally. This is particularly important in or adjacent to Conservation Areas, listed buildings and the special landscape areas.

4.119. Where there is no predominant use of particular materials or design details, the Council will expect proposed materials and design details to respect development in the vicinity.

GP.35 The design of new development proposals should respect and complement:

a) the physical characteristics of the site and the surroundings;
b) the building tradition, ordering, form and materials of the locality;
c) the historic scale and context of the setting;
d) the natural qualities and features of the area; and

e) the effect on important public views and skylines.

Development Density

4.120. Increasing the net density of residential development, particularly where that development is accessible to public transport, is a key aim of planning guidance and can assist both with reducing the demand to develop greenfield sites and with promoting the viability of public transport and local services. In optimising the density of new development, a balance must be struck between using land efficiently and avoiding overcrowding. It is normal to expect higher net densities of development in towns, particularly in their centres, and lower, though not necessarily low, net densities in suburbs and villages. This pattern should continue, but additionally, the Council now expects higher net densities of development in public transport corridors at principal nodes such as bus stops and railway stations. The efficient use of land is as important for other uses, such as employment and retail, as it is for residential development.
4.121. New residential development should be provided at a net density that has regard for a number of factors including:
- the character of the surrounding area;
- accessibility to good public transport;
- accessibility to employment and local services and facilities;
- design considerations such as visual amenity, compatibility with the density of neighbouring development and impact upon the skyline;
- highway capacity;
- provision of adequate space around and between buildings;
- provision of appropriate public open space and car parking; and
- the need for privacy, safety and convenience.

4.122. The Council considers the following are appropriate net densities for residential developments in the District:
- in and immediately adjacent to Aylesbury town centre and in other town centres in the District that are well served by public transport: 50 dwellings per hectare net;
- at locations that are well related to Primary Public Transport Corridors, such as within the MDAs: 40 dwellings per hectare net;
- other locations within Aylesbury, Buckingham, Haddenham or Winslow: 35 dwellings per hectare net;
- Wendover and other village locations: 30 dwellings per hectare net.

It may be appropriate for the Council to seek higher net densities on sites or a part of larger sites where any of the following situations apply:
- surrounding development is already at a higher density;
- proposals are particularly close to or have good access to employment or local services;
- proposals have particularly good public transport access.
4.123. On large sites where the density of the whole site has been agreed in accordance with the density guidelines by a planning brief or outline planning permission, lower densities on parts of the site will be permitted provided that the average net density of the whole site is not reduced. On those sites permitted for local needs (affordable) housing development, where dwellings are likely to be smaller, densities may be higher.

GP.36 All development proposals should make best and most efficient use of land. In considering applications the Council will seek the use of previously developed sites or buildings in preference to undeveloped sites, consistent with the need to achieve a pleasing arrangement of buildings and spaces, and neighbourly development standards.

GP.37 New housing schemes should be designed to as high a density as is reasonable having regard to the residential characteristics of the locality and the need to avoid wasting land. In and around the centres of towns within the District and on sites with good public transport accessibility the Council will accept more intensive forms of residential development that correspond with the overall development strategy and criteria of the Plan.

Landscape Design

4.124. The appearance and treatment of the spaces between and around buildings is of equal importance to the design of the buildings themselves. New development should have a spatial and planting structure that reflects and complements the surrounding development. Landscape considerations should therefore form an integral part of design and layout. Developments should ensure that existing site assets such as vegetation, topography, water and topsoil are used to best advantage, that the layout has a clearly recognisable structure of useable spaces and planted areas and that types of boundary enclosure, paving and any street furniture are integrated into the overall design.

4.125. Special attention will be required to landscape design for developments at the periphery of settlements where they meet countryside to soften the interface between the landscape and built development.

Hard Landscape Features

4.126. Relatively small details of new development can have a marked effect on the overall character of the development and whether it integrates well with the surroundings. For example, fencing
General Policies

4.127. New development, particularly where there is little or no existing vegetation can appear starkly at variance with its setting for a substantial period of time. New planting helps to soften the immediate impact of the development and helps to enhance the immediate surroundings in terms of its appearance and nature conservation value. It is essential that planting schemes are prepared as an integral part of development.

4.128. In most cases, the use of appropriate local native species will be preferred and a mix of young and more mature plants should be used.

GP.38 Applications for new development schemes should include landscaping proposals designed to help buildings fit in with and complement their surroundings, and conserve existing natural and other features of value as far as possible.

Hard landscaping should incorporate materials appropriate to the character of the locality. New planting should be with predominantly native species. Conditions will be attached to relevant planning permissions to require the submission of landscaping schemes and implementation of the approved arrangements.

Existing Vegetation

4.129. Trees, hedgerows and other vegetation are an important element of both urban and rural environments in several respects. They often characterise a locality, provide wildlife or ecological interest and screen development from view, softening its impact and improving its appearance.

4.130. The Council will therefore expect proposals for development and redevelopment of land to include appropriate measures for retention of existing vegetation.

4.131. When the Council is notified of the intention to fell or carry out other works to a tree which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order, regard will be had to the health and stability of the tree and surface treatment of access roads can alter the character of a new dwelling from a rural appearance to an urban one. These details can reinforce local distinctiveness very effectively and the Council will expect any such opportunities to be exploited. It is therefore vital that the proposed hard landscape details are designed to be in harmony with the overall setting and context.

The Buckinghamshire Tree and Woodland Strategy, produced by the Buckinghamshire Woodland Forum, provides information on the protection and management of trees and woodlands.

BS5837 ‘Trees in Relation to Construction’ gives guidance on the satisfactory positioning of trees and constructions to ensure successful integration of built development with trees.
and its likely future life, and the existing and likely future contribution of the tree to public amenity. Where trees of amenity, landscape or wildlife importance, whether protected or not, are felled, it would be appropriate to secure replacement planting, usually with locally appropriate species, in the next planting season.

**GP.39** In considering applications for development affecting trees or hedges the Council will:

a) require a survey of the site and the trees and hedges concerned;

b) serve tree preservation orders to protect trees with public amenity value; and

c) impose conditions on planning permissions to ensure the retention or replacement of trees and hedgerows of amenity, landscape or wildlife importance, and their protection during construction.

**Black Poplars**

4.132. Rare species of tree occur in the District, in particular the Black Poplar, of which Aylesbury Vale has a high proportion of the British population. Black Poplars are important features in the landscape in Aylesbury Vale. They also support a wide variety of wildlife, such as birds and insects. They grow in wet areas alongside streams and rivers and in the floodplain. Sensitive and appropriate management, which may include pollarding, and planting are vital to maintain the District’s population of this nationally rare tree. Particular weight will therefore be given to the protection and the planting of this species. Tree Preservation Orders will be served where appropriate, in accordance with the above policies.

**GP.40** In dealing with planning proposals the Council will oppose the loss of trees, particularly native Black Poplars, and hedgerows of amenity, landscape or wildlife value.

**Lighting**

4.133. Control of lighting is currently exercised primarily through environmental controls, though supplemented by listed building and advertisement controls. Excessive, poorly designed and badly aimed lighting can have adverse effects. Glare from poorly aimed or bright lights can cause dazzle, with safety implications for drivers and pedestrians. Light spill may impinge directly on homes, destroying privacy and interfering with people’s ability to sleep. In rural areas, it can lead to “skyglow” that obscures
views of the night sky and subtly alters the character of the area giving a night time appearance more reminiscent of built-up areas. In open landscape areas, the lighting structures themselves may have an adverse daytime visual impact on the surroundings.

4.134. The Council will encourage BCC, as Highway Authority, to minimise the effects of light pollution arising from new/improved highway schemes.

4.135. The Council will consider the lighting aspects of planning applications, in particular, illumination for sports facilities, car parks and advertisement signs, and require light pollution to be minimised. Appropriate conditions will be imposed restricting hours of lighting, size and appearance of lighting structures, strength and direction of light beams etc.

GP.41 Where proposals include external lighting, the Council will require the submission of details of the lighting system proposed. Proposals will not be permitted where glare or light pollution from external lighting would have an adverse effect on the character of rural areas, road safety and residential properties. Where external lighting is necessary, for example for security or operational purposes, the Council will use planning conditions or legal agreements to reduce its detrimental impact.

Advertisements

4.136. The display of advertisements is subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. Most of the District is designated as an Area of Special Control for advertisement purposes. This provides extra control in rural areas and other areas requiring special protection on grounds of amenity such as attractive landscape areas and Conservation Areas.

4.137. The Council has resolved to amend the boundaries of the exclusions from the Area of Special Control so that they reflect the extent of the urban areas in the District and the conservation area boundaries within those urban areas. The concurrence of the Secretary of State has been sought for those changes. The boundaries of the areas now to be excluded are indicated on the Proposals Map. They are: the developed urban areas of Aylesbury, Buckingham, Winslow and Wendover (not including their Conservation Areas).
GP.42 In considering applications for the display of advertisements the Council will protect:

a) the interests of amenity, including the appearance of the building on which the advertisement is to be erected and the visual characteristics of the surroundings;

b) the interests of public safety, particularly for road users, cyclists and pedestrians.

GP.43 In considering applications for advertisements in the Area of Special Control for Advertisements the Council will seek to protect the distinctive amenity interests concerned and will resist illuminated signs and those not reasonably required in connection with the buildings or land on which they are located.

GP.44 The Council will seek to secure the removal of any advertisement displayed with deemed consent where it is necessary to do so in the interests of public safety, or it is considered that such display is seriously detrimental to the appearance or character of the building on which, or area in which, it is located.

4.138. Within Conservation Areas GP.57 also applies to proposed advertisements.

Safe and Secure Development

4.139. In association with the Police authorities, the Council is keen to promote good practice in applying “Secured by Design” principles. Crime prevention is a material consideration in planning decisions. It is possible with careful layout and design of development to avoid obvious opportunities for crime. This can be achieved by maximising natural surveillance, encouraging a mix of uses and allowing views to permeate development. “Threatening” designs should be avoided, such as poorly lit subways and high walled footways. The objective should be to create a safe environment. The Council has produced Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to “Secured by Design”.

4.140. The Council is especially keen to improve safety and security in town centres. In association with local businesses and the Police authorities, a number of initiatives have been introduced to reduce crime and improve safety in Aylesbury. These include a town centre closed-circuit television (CCTV) scheme, and a programme of security improvements to public car parks. A similar programme is being discussed for Buckingham.

“Secured by Design” is a Police initiative which was launched in 1989. The objective of “Secured by Design” is to encourage the building industry to adopt recommended crime prevention guidelines, in both house and estate design.
Particularly in town centres, it may be appropriate to require developments, which include public access and public movement through the centre, such as retail and leisure facilities and some employment uses, to contribute to the programme of security measures.

The design and layout of all planning proposals should incorporate measures to assist crime prevention and help reduce risks to personal safety. In considering applications for planning permission the Council will have regard to the security aspects of development including personal visibility, the arrangement of buildings, landscaping and walls, and lighting and closed circuit television surveillance.

In granting permission for buildings in town centres with public access, the Council will use planning conditions or legal agreements, which may include financial contributions, to secure reasonably-related measures that would improve community safety.

More detailed interpretation of the Council’s design policies is available as adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance. These include Design Guides, Site Briefs and other publications that will be issued and adopted by the Council following public consultation. Design Guides have already been produced on the Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings, Residential Extensions, New Housing in Towns and Villages, Building Materials and New Buildings in the Countryside. Guides on Landscape Design and the Countryside will soon be published.

The Council has produced, and will continue to prepare, Supplementary Planning Guidance to provide a clearer understanding of the policies and proposals of the Plan. Applicants for planning permission should have regard to relevant published supplementary guidance, which the Council will take into account in coming to planning decisions.

There are over 2,800 buildings, bridges, statues and other structures in the District contained in Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Of these listed buildings over 200 are recorded as Grades I or II* and the remainder as Grade II. Buildings in Aylesbury were last

The Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest are compiled by the Secretary of State for National Heritage.
surveyed in 1973. Those in Buckingham were surveyed in 1994 and lists for the remaining parishes were revised between 1981 and 1985.

4.144. The objective of listing buildings is to ensure their protection. The Council has a statutory duty to have a special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. Listed building consent is required for all works that would affect a building’s special interest including internal work.

Changes of Use

4.145. Generally, the best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings is to keep them in active use. Where it is no longer practicable to maintain a historic building in the use to which it has traditionally been put, it may be appropriate to consider alternative uses that would help to secure its protection. The aim of protecting listed buildings can be of sufficient importance to outweigh certain other planning considerations. For this reason, it may be appropriate to relax normal planning policies to enable alternative uses for listed buildings that would secure the building’s survival. It is important that the use so proposed would not in itself harm the interests that the building’s listing was intended to protect.

GP.47 In dealing with applications for changes of use involving conversions of buildings of architectural or historic interest the Council will consider making exceptions to the ordinary requirements of the Plan in order to promote the preservation of and a beneficial future for the listed building, where the proposed use would be compatible with the structure, fabric and setting of the building.

Alterations and Extensions

4.146. Many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension without loss of their special interest. Cumulative changes reflecting the history of use and ownership are themselves an aspect of the character of some buildings, but in some cases successive works of indifferent quality can cumulatively be very destructive of a building’s special interest. Alterations, even of a minor nature must respect the individual characteristics of the building and ensure the survival of as much historic fabric as is practical. Modern extensions should not dominate the existing building in scale, material or situation, and, in some cases, any extension would be damaging.
### General Policies

**GP.48** Applications for planning permission that involve alterations or extensions to buildings of architectural or historic interest should respect and protect the special interest and features of the listed building.

**Demolition**

*4.147.* The objective of listing buildings is to ensure their protection and this is best achieved by retaining them in their original form. However the demolition of inappropriate extensions to a listed building may be permitted, provided the retained section of the building is made good.

**GP.49** There is a presumption against the total or substantial demolition of any building of architectural or historic interest.

**GP.50** Consent for partial demolition of a building of architectural or historic interest will only be granted where the Council is satisfied that the special interest and features of the building would be preserved or enhanced.

### Setting and Long Distance Views

*4.148.* The setting of a listed building is often an essential part of the building’s character, especially if grounds were laid out to complement its function. Equally, the setting of an individual building may owe its character to the surrounding buildings and the spaces between them. It may therefore be difficult to ascertain the extent of a building’s setting and any proposed development will need to be examined according to the proposals themselves and the particular character and extent of the setting of the listed building. Many listed buildings in the District are visible from a considerable distance. The views of some of the finer buildings, for example Waddesdon Manor, the buildings and temples at Stowe and prominent churches, make an important contribution to the character of the District.

**GP.51** Development proposals or listed building alterations that affect the location of a building of architectural or historic interest should protect its setting. Works that do not respect the special characteristics of the setting of a listed building will not be permitted.

**GP.52** The Council will seek to ensure that new development does not dominate important long distance views of churches and other listed or historic buildings.
CONSERVATION AREAS

4.149. A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

4.150. Seventy five Conservation Areas have been designated in the District. The Council may make other designations as appropriate, and review existing Conservation Area boundaries. It is the Council’s practice, prior to the designation or variation of a Conservation Area, to publish draft proposals to enable local people to consider and comment on the proposals.

4.151. The special character of Conservation Areas is derived from one or more of the following elements: the topography of the land; a unity of scale in the buildings; building densities; the nature of building materials; the shape and incidence of open and enclosed spaces; a historic street pattern or archaeological features; the incidence of individual or groups of trees; the use of walls, fences, railings and hedgerows as a means of enclosure; and views into, within and out of the area.

New Development

4.152. In Conservation Areas, the Council will pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. Greater control can be exercised over new development, demolition or works to trees than elsewhere. Where new development is permitted, its design and the external materials used will necessarily be of the highest standard and be required to complement its surroundings. Detailed drawings and information may be required to illustrate how the proposed development relates to its surroundings and outline planning applications giving minimal information will not be accepted. In such cases, the Council will seek further details of the proposal, if necessary by requiring the submission of a full application.

4.153. The use and development of land adjacent to Conservation Areas can frequently have a material effect on the character of the area, for example by affecting views to or from the Conservation Area. Therefore the need to respect the setting of the Conservation Area in terms of design of new buildings and alterations will also apply beyond the designated boundaries.

4.154. Surface treatments and street furniture, including signs, lighting and overhead cables, can detract from the character of a Conservation Area. Development proposals in Conservation Areas will be expected to respect and complement the area’s
character in the use and design of these features. The Council will encourage developers, including utilities, to replace surfaces and features disturbed by works in Conservation Areas on a like-for-like basis.

GP.53 In Conservation Areas the Council will seek to preserve or enhance the special characteristics that led to the designation of the area.

Proposals for development will not be permitted if they cause harm to the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, their settings or any associated views of or from the Conservation Area.

Proposals for development or redevelopment must respect the historic layout, scale and form of buildings, street patterns, open spaces and natural features in the Conservation Area that contribute to its character and appearance.

Proposals for alterations, extensions and changes of use must respect and complement the character, materials and design details of the structure and site concerned and its neighbours.

4.155. In Conservation Areas, particularly those including town or village commercial centres, unrestricted vehicular access can lead to an intrusive number of movements and pressure for a multiplicity of car parking requirements, both on- and off-street. Compliance with the Council’s guidelines for off-street parking may, therefore, not be appropriate within Conservation Areas.

GP.54 In Conservation Areas where normal car parking standards could adversely affect the special character of the area, the Council will be prepared to modify the ordinary requirements of the plan in relation to car parking standards.

Development proposals will not be permitted that would impact adversely upon the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, through increases in vehicular movements or new car parking arrangements.

Demolition

4.156. Conservation Area designation introduces control over demolition of buildings within them. The general presumption is in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area.
Account will be taken of the extent that the building for which demolition consent is sought contributes to the historic or architectural interest of the area and the wider effects of such a demolition on the building’s surroundings as a whole. Consent will not be given unless there are acceptable detailed proposals for redevelopment of the site. A condition will be imposed on any such consent preventing demolition until planning permission has been granted for the works of redevelopment.

| GP.55 | The demolition of any building of individual merit or group value within a Conservation Area will not be permitted unless the Council is satisfied that the building cannot reasonably be retained. Before consent is granted for the demolition of any building the Council will wish to be satisfied as to proposals for the subsequent development or other use of the site. |

**Trees**

4.157. Conservation Area designation introduces special provision for trees that are not already protected by tree preservation orders. Anyone proposing to undertake works to trees must, with certain limited exceptions, give written warning to the Local Planning Authority so that the Council can consider whether an order should be made (under policy GP.39). There are penalties for not giving appropriate notice. Trees are valued features of Conservation Areas that often contribute to the setting of open spaces and buildings in the area. These factors will be taken into account when Conservation Area trees are affected by felling or development proposals and if consent is given to remove a protected tree, replanting with a suitable replacement may be required.

| GP.56 | When informed of works affecting trees, determining planning proposals or deciding whether to make tree preservation orders in Conservation Areas the Council will take account of the trees’ contribution to the amenity and character and appearance of the area, and will seek to protect trees whose contribution is considered important to the Conservation Area. In granting planning permission that involves the removal of trees in Conservation Areas the Council will impose conditions to require suitable replacement planting. |

**Advertisements**

4.158. A high quality of advertisements will be expected in Conservation Areas. Signs will often be traditional in form and materials, and any projecting signs should be hung beneath brackets rather than side mounted. Internally illuminated signs will generally not be accepted.
### ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANCIENT MONUMENTS

**4.159.** There are sixty one sites in the District that are included in the statutory schedule of Ancient Monuments. The consent of the Secretary of State is required for any proposals that may affect them. Additionally, there are other identified sites of archaeological importance. The Council is committed to protect all these sites from development that would damage or endanger them and will afford protection to archaeological remains in accordance with their archaeological importance. Sites currently known to be of archaeological importance are shown on Archaeological Notification Maps held by the Council and regularly updated.

**4.160.** Applications for development of sites containing or likely to contain archaeological remains will be required to be accompanied by an archaeological field evaluation. It is desirable for developers to consult the Council at pre-application stage wherever possible. In certain cases, permission will be refused if the appropriate evaluation has not been carried out.

**4.161.** The Council will expect proposals for sites containing important archaeological remains to be preserved *in situ*, i.e. preservation undisturbed in the monument’s existing location and setting, sometimes under a new building or structure. In dealing with proposals affecting archaeological remains of lesser importance, the desirability of preserving them will be weighed against other material considerations, including the need for the development.

**4.162.** Where preservation *in situ* is not justified, the Council will seek preservation by record. This involves digging the site, exposing and removing whatever archaeological remains are found and making a record of the findings. The developer will be required to make satisfactory arrangements for the excavation and recording of the archaeological remains and the publication
of the results. This will be achieved by the imposition of suitable conditions and/or agreement between the Council and the developer.

**GP.58** The Council will resist development that affects sites of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their settings.

**GP.59** In dealing with development proposals affecting a site of archaeological importance the Council will protect, enhance and preserve the historic interest and its setting.

Where research suggests that historic remains may be present on a development site planning applications should be supported by details of an archaeological field evaluation. In such cases the Council will expect proposals to preserve the historic interest without substantial change.

Where permission is granted for development involving sites containing archaeological remains the Council will impose conditions or seek planning obligations to secure the excavation and recording of the remains and publication of the results.

**HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS**

4.163. In Aylesbury Vale there are nine Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest included in the national register of such. They are graded in a similar way to listed buildings. The inclusion of a historic park or garden in the register carries obligations on the Local Planning Authority to consult English Heritage on all applications for development likely to affect the area of special interest. The Garden History Society must also be consulted before granting planning permission for such development. In considering the impact of a proposal the Council will have regard to the historical layout and landscaping of the Park or Garden and public views within, into or from it.

**GP.60** Development proposals within or affecting a Park or Garden of Special Historic Interest should take full account of the area’s historic and landscape significance. The Council will resist proposals that do not protect the distinctive characteristics of such Parks and Gardens.
CONSERVATION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

4.164. The District supports a rich variety of natural habitats. Numerous species of flora and fauna occur in the District, including many of regional importance and several which are nationally rare. The Council supports initiatives to protect and where possible enhance the natural environment of the District generally, and seeks to ensure by the application of development control policies that sites of nature conservation value are not harmed by development proposals.

SITES OF ACKNOWLEDGED NATURE CONSERVATION VALUE

4.165. The District contains many sites of special nature conservation value. Their characteristics, degree of protection and the amount of information about them varies considerably. Part of the Chilterns Beechwoods candidate Special Area of Conservation lies within the District and this is of international importance and is protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 1994. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are of national importance, have statutory protection and have been investigated and recorded thoroughly. The Council has designated two Local Nature Reserves in Buckingham and Haddenham because of their regional/local importance. The non-statutory nature reserves managed by Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) are of regional importance and have been investigated and recorded; 20 of these lie within the District. Many other sites of geological and biological interest within the District have been identified by other bodies, and are generally of county or local interest. They have no statutory protection and detailed information on many is limited.

4.166. Buckinghamshire County Museum holds the Buckinghamshire Biological and Geological ALERT Maps showing sites of known nature conservation interest. Following detailed surveys, some of these have been designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). Additionally, there may be sites of considerable importance which have not been brought to the attention of the Council but it may be highly desirable to protect them.

4.167. The Council will pay full and proper regard to nature conservation considerations when determining any applications for development.
In determining development proposals affecting sites of international, national nature conservation importance and designated Local Nature Reserves the Council will ensure that their nature interest and ecological value is fully protected and, where possible, enhanced.

When considering applications affecting sites of local importance for nature conservation the Council will seek the conservation of their special nature features and ecological characteristics. In granting permission the Council will impose conditions or seek planning obligations to promote the management and conservation of the nature interests involved.

**Amenity Potential of Safeguarded Sites**

4.168. Safeguarded or sensitive nature conservation sites will differ in their capacity for accommodating formal or informal recreation or providing an amenity resource. Planning permission is required for any proposed development of land within an SSSI - there are no permitted development rights. Accordingly, consideration can be given as to how the site can be utilised for recreation, for example on a limited or seasonal basis. Where they occur within settlements, the exploitation of such sites in an informal rather than a formal manner may be compatible with the desire to conserve such habitats. On the edge of towns and close to large residential areas sites of nature conservation interest may be more susceptible to harm from recreational uses.

In areas of nature conservation value, leisure, recreational and sporting uses will only be permitted where compatible with the ecological and wildlife interests to be protected.

**Wildlife and Habitats**

4.169. The presence of a protected species is a material planning consideration when considering proposals for development. There is legislation, such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which seeks to protect certain species of plants and animals and makes it an offence to kill, injure, take or disturb them. The Council will have regard to the Buckinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan to ensure that development does not prejudice biodiversity in Aylesbury Vale. The Council will consult English Nature on any development proposals which may affect protected species and, if permission is granted, will consider attaching conditions and/or legal agreements under which the developer will be required to take steps to secure the protection of the species.
The Council will expect building operations and new land uses to minimise interference with and avoid harm to any protected species or its habitat, and will have regard to the effect of all development proposals on plant and animal species. The Council will use planning conditions or legal agreements to secure protection of wildlife interests affected by development.

THE PROTECTION OF RIVERS AND SURFACE WATERS

4.170. Preserving the quantity and quality of water is important to a wide range of uses and users, including abstraction for residential and industrial supply, fisheries, inland navigation, recreation and conservation. The Council will consult the Environment Agency and where appropriate British Waterways regarding proposals that may affect surface water quality.

Planning proposals should protect the quantity and quality of watercourses and open water systems. Where relevant, the Council will impose conditions on planning permissions, or seek planning obligations, to ensure the protection of water flows and potability, and the leisure and amenity characteristics of water systems.

In riverside or canalside development proposals, the Council will require access corridors and buffers adjacent to the watercourse to:

a) conserve and enhance existing areas of landscape or wildlife value;

b) promote public access and provide recreational opportunity; and

c) protect or enhance the environment and habitat of those watercourses.

It is the general objective of the Environment Agency to maintain and where practical restore the capacity of the natural floodplains and washlands of the river system. It is important to ensure that new development is not subject to flooding, and also, in order to avoid flooding being caused elsewhere, that it does not impede the flow of flood water nor reduce the capacity of the floodplain itself. The general advice from the Agency, therefore, is that within the floodplain there should be a presumption against development.
4.172. There is no objection to recreational development in these areas, provided that no buildings are erected, nor the ground levels raised. However, development that might otherwise be precluded could be acceptable by providing compensatory works for any loss of flood water storage and conveyance.

**SOURCE CONTROL**

4.173. Unless carefully sited and designed, new development can increase the rate and volume of surface water run-off as permeable surfaces are replaced by impermeable ones such as roofs, paving and roads. This can increase the risk of flooding in areas downstream and physical damage to river environments.

4.174. Source control is a method of water disposal that the Environment Agency has been promoting in recent years. The traditional practice for disposal of surface water is to pipe it away to the nearest watercourse or an impounding reservoir to ensure rapid run-off. This can lead to increased risk of flooding, aquifers not being recharged and reduced groundwater supplies leading to increased use of treated water for horticulture and increased transmission of pollutants.

4.175. Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) guidelines on “Design of Flood Storage Reservoirs” (1993) and, particularly, the CIRIA technical report No.156 on “Source Control Techniques” (1998) offer detailed advice on how best to achieve satisfactory drainage of new developments.

4.176. The Environment Agency advocates, wherever appropriate, the use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), including source control techniques in the drainage of new development areas (in areas of contaminated land such techniques may not be appropriate). A “Strategic Drainage Study for Aylesbury” is currently being prepared by the Environment Agency.

**GP.67** In considering planning proposals the Council will pay special attention to the need to manage and reduce any risk of flooding. Within areas of flood risk full account will be taken of the hazard of flooding to proposed development. In all cases regard will be had to the effect of development on flood flows, flood storage capacity and flood run-off and the consequences for property protection and personal safety.

New development should be designed to restrict and reduce surface water discharge and incorporate suitable measures for the management and disposal of surface water to avoid the risk
of flooding. Where permission is granted for development in areas at risk from flooding or that might increase flood risks, the Council may impose conditions or seek planning obligations, including financial contributions, to promote flood-risk management and avoid or mitigate any adverse effects.

GROUND WATER PROTECTION

4.177. Ground water resources are an essential source of water for public supply, industry and agriculture. They also sustain the base flow of many rivers. The Council aims to prevent their pollution.


GP.68 New development should not impair the supply or quality of groundwater and underground water reserves. In considering applications the Council aim to protect water resources and avoid their contamination.

TOURISM

INTRODUCTION

4.179. Tourism is a major growth industry in both volume and value terms. Domestic tourism is particularly important with nearly two thirds of all tourism expenditure coming from domestic trips. Day trips make a major contribution with over half of visits made to museums, galleries or historic buildings.

4.180. There are several significant tourist attractions in the District and there is potential for new tourist developments. The Council is involved in the promotion of tourism and has developed its first strategy for development of this business. The key objectives of the Tourism Strategy are:

- to ensure a co-ordinated and planned approach to tourism;
- to maximise strengths and capitalise on future opportunities to the benefit of the area; and
- to increase the profile and economic strength of the District through the encouragement of appropriate forms of tourism with due regard to the environmental impacts.
4.181. As a result of the Council’s involvement in tourism promotion the District is well served by Tourist Information Centres at Aylesbury, Buckingham and Wendover. The centres are recognised to be vital to the promotion of tourism generally and the Council will continue to support and promote these centres.

4.182. It is recognised that the development of a tourism base creates significant new employment opportunities. In particular tourism may contribute towards the diversification of the rural economy.

**SERVICED ACCOMMODATION**

4.183. Demand for hotels, motels, guest houses and bed and breakfast accommodation is expected to increase in accordance with other tourism trends.

4.184. The number of establishments in Aylesbury Vale has increased steadily over the last few years. Although this increase is not as great as that experienced in neighbouring Districts, the trend is likely to continue.

4.185. The County Structure Plan policies recognise the need for further serviced accommodation, provided that proposals are located on suitable sites and guided by other policies for the control of development. *Buckinghamshire County Structure Plan policy TM1.*

**Hotels and Motels**

4.186. The development of hotel accommodation in built-up areas is to be generally welcomed. A specific proposal for a new hotel at Aylesbury is made elsewhere in this Plan, in AY.34. A cornerstone of planning policy is the protection of the countryside for its own sake. In terms of tourism, this protection should be balanced with providing opportunities to enjoy the qualities of the countryside. New construction of hotels and motels on greenfield sites outside settlements would be contrary to this aim and would help to increase traffic in the countryside. However, the sensitive redevelopment of previously-developed sites (as defined in “PPG3: Housing”), including the re-use of existing buildings, could provide opportunities to both meet the need for hotel and motel development, and provide environmental improvements on brownfield sites that, by their location, are not appropriate for residential development.
Within the built-up areas of settlements, the Council will permit proposals for the construction of new hotels and motels and the conversion of buildings to such uses, subject to the other policies in this plan.

Proposals for new hotels and motels outside or on the edge of the built-up areas of settlements will only be permitted on previously-developed land, including the re-use of existing buildings, where the redevelopment would be consistent with the aims of protecting the character and appearance of the countryside and reducing car-borne travel.

Historic buildings are a useful asset to the tourist industry in both a cultural and an economic sense. Their sensitive conversion to accommodation is acceptable, providing the character and historic features of the building are not harmed.

Proposals for the change of use of rural buildings to hotels or motels will only be permitted where they are consistent with the principle of protecting the character and appearance of the countryside and the need to reduce car-borne travel.

A relaxation of normal restrictions on change of use of buildings of historic or architectural importance will be considered where the proposals would help to secure the conservation of the buildings and their settings.

Bed and Breakfast/Guest Houses

There is an acknowledged shortage of bed and breakfast accommodation in the District. The limited use of a building for bed and breakfast purposes may not require planning permission. Where permission is required, the Council recognises that the use of a dwelling either for bed and breakfast accommodation or as a guest house will have a more significant impact than when used simply for residential purposes. When considering proposals for this type of facility regard will be paid to the effect on the amenity of local residents.

Proposals for the use of existing dwellings as guesthouses or bed and breakfast accommodation will only be permitted where the proposal would not have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the locality or the residential amenities of people living nearby.
Self-Catering Holiday Cottages

4.189. A survey carried out for the Southern Tourist Board in 1997 has established an unmet demand for self-catering accommodation and holiday cottages. There are many opportunities to increase the supply of self-catering accommodation in the District. Redundant farm buildings may be appropriate for conversion and farmers are being encouraged to diversify their farm economy.

4.190. The use of a dwelling for self-catering accommodation does not normally require planning permission unless subdivision of the dwelling occurs. Where proposals require planning permission the Council will seek to ensure sensitive conversions that do not harm the character and appearance of the building or the area.

GP.72 Proposals for the construction of self-catering holiday accommodation and holiday homes will be assessed against the housing and rural settlement policies of the plan.

Applications for the conversion or changes of use of existing dwellings and other buildings to self-catering holiday accommodation outside the built-up areas of settlements will be considered against the background of the Council’s Tourism Strategy, and the need to protect the character and appearance of the countryside.

In granting permission the Council will impose conditions or seek planning obligations to control the use and occupation of holiday accommodation.

Camping and Caravaning

4.191. There is little provision for either camping or caravanning within Aylesbury Vale. Small-scale demand has been established anecdotally through enquiries at the Tourist Information Centres.

4.192. Visitors walking long distance footpaths or cycling require camp sites for overnight stays in the District. The development of the SUSTRANS cycling routes throughout the District may contribute towards the development of demand in this tourism sector.
GP.73  For proposals involving the provision of camping and touring caravan sites, as well as other considerations set out in this plan, particular attention will be given to ensuring that:

a) the location, access and scale of facilities can be satisfactorily accommodated within the landscape character of the area;

b) the site is well served by public transport or walking or cycling networks;

c) the proposal does not cause significant highway problems;

d) facilities and buildings associated with the proposal are constructed of appropriate materials, are of a scale appropriate to the locality and are landscaped effectively to minimise any visual impact; and

e) essential facilities such as toilets, showers and wash facilities are adequately provided for.

EXISTING TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

4.193. There are several important tourist attractions in Aylesbury Vale: Ascott House near Wing; Waddesdon Manor; Stowe Landscape Gardens; Silverstone Motor Racing Circuit; the Buckinghamshire County Museum at Aylesbury; and the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre at Quainton to mention only a few. The District has a wealth of historic towns and villages that also attract visitors.

4.194. In addition there are several other historic properties open to the public, several of which are owned by the National Trust (NT). These include Boarstall Tower (NT), Boarstall Duck Decoy (NT), Brill Windmill, Claydon House (NT), Dorton House, Ford End Watermill, Long Crendon Court House (NT), Mentmore Towers, Nether Winchendon House, Pitstone Windmill (NT), Quainton Windmill, Winslow Hall and Wotton House.

4.195. The Council recognises that these existing tourist attractions will form an integral element in any strategy for increasing tourism in the District. Measures that improve or enhance these facilities and increase access to the public are to be encouraged, providing there is no significant conflict with other proposals in the Plan.
RECREATION AND LEISURE

INTRODUCTION

4.196. This section of the Plan deals with recreation and leisure proposals as they apply to the whole of the District. Specific policies and proposals for individual settlements and in the countryside are dealt with elsewhere in the Plan.

4.197. Demand for leisure and recreation facilities in the District is increasing as a result of changing interests, lifestyles, population structure and social groupings. Aylesbury Vale has a rising population with the largest increase predicted in one of the most frequent countryside user groups, the 55-69 age group. In addition, the District has a high proportion of socio-economic groups with large incomes and longer leisure hours.

4.198. In addition to these changing demand patterns, there has also been a shift in supply over the last few years. Local authorities have traditionally been a major provider of leisure and recreation facilities. Local authorities now are adopting an enabling role in leisure provision. Policies seek to exploit this increased commercial interest in recreation and the Council is generally sympathetic towards leisure and recreation proposals.

GP.74 The Council will protect the open recreational, sporting and amenity spaces, and leisure facilities of the District from development that would result in the loss of a facility for which there is a local need or demand.

All planning proposals should make adequate provision for open space and leisure needs associated with the development concerned.

WATER-BASED RECREATION

4.199. The Council recognises the importance of lakes and reservoirs in both catering for water recreation and supporting a freshwater ecosystem. As well as providing for a number of water sports, these areas also act as pleasant amenity areas for informal activities. It is the Council’s view that both recreation and nature conservation should be integral elements in any new proposal since the enjoyment of the former is enhanced by the diversity of the latter.
4.200. Activities such as water-skiing and other noisy sports are detrimental to the enjoyment of some other users and should only be allowed where there is an identified demand and where they can be located away from wildlife habitats and other major areas of informal recreation (see also paragraph 4.205 and GP79).

GP.75 Proposals affecting established water sports and water-based recreational facilities should safeguard the leisure interests. In determining applications the Council will require the provision of alternative facilities for any eliminated by the development.

4.201. Water-based recreation can be an appropriate activity on lakes, reservoirs and water-courses, but activities need to take account of the landscape, ecological and wildlife factors related to the associated stretches of water. Recreational development that is compatible with these factors, or would lead to their enhancement, is to be welcomed, subject to other policies of the Plan.

GP.76 Proposals for water sports and water-based recreational development should avoid adverse impacts on the ecological and wildlife interest of the body of water affected. In determining such applications the Council will safeguard these natural assets and will require landscaping and other appropriate measures, where appropriate, to protect and promote nature conservation.

HORSE-RELATED DEVELOPMENT

4.202. Equestrian development is an acceptable use in principle, providing there are no detrimental effects on either the surroundings or local residents. Although agricultural land may be involved, providing the land is not built upon, it may still revert to its previous use if required. This diversification is also beneficial to the farm economy and may enable a farm holding to remain viable.

4.203. Equestrian developments can have a particularly adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside where they result in the subdivision of previously large fields into small paddocks with associated buildings and equipment. With intensive use and inadequate management the appearance of the land can deteriorate to the extent that the landscape is harmed. It is acknowledged, therefore, that, whilst such uses can enhance disused or derelict land, restrictions may be needed elsewhere, particularly in or adjacent to special landscape areas and Conservation Areas.
When considering proposals for horse-related development the Council will have particular regard to:

a) the effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;

b) the maintenance of the open nature and rural character of the land;

c) the impact on land of high agricultural or ecological value, the fragmentation of farm units and the effect on the viability of farm units;

d) the suitability of the access and the adequacy of on-site parking and turning facilities;

e) the environmental effects of the development in terms of noise, smell or other disturbances; and

f) the suitability of the location, bearing in mind, in particular, the desirability of location away from busy roads and close to existing bridleways or lightly trafficked lanes.

Stables, loose boxes and other related buildings requiring planning permission should, where possible, be sited adjacent to existing buildings or natural features such as trees or hedgerows, be of a design and constructed of such materials as are appropriate to the locality and proposed use, and be landscaped or screened so as to minimise any visual intrusion.

Applications for dwellings or temporary residential accommodation will be dealt with in the manner set out at RA.22-RA.24.

**NOISY SPORT AND RECREATION**

Certain sports and recreation, by their nature, give rise to noise and visual disturbance. Some of these, such as motor sports, trial bike riding, clay pigeon shooting, flying activities and kart racing, create major problems of noise but require countryside locations. There is a growing demand for these types of facilities, so they need to be accommodated if demand is to be satisfied. The Council will seek to ensure that such facilities are managed by organised clubs or commercial operators, and licensed and monitored where appropriate.
In dealing with applications for sporting and recreational proposals likely to generate noise, the Council will protect from unreasonable disturbance noise-sensitive uses and their occupiers, and avoid any effect on the public enjoyment of areas of landscape, wildlife and historic value.

Conditions will be imposed on planning permissions, or planning obligations sought, in order to safeguard amenities and mitigate the impact of noisy activities.

**CANALSIDE DEVELOPMENT**

**4.206.** The Council recognises the amenity potential of the Grand Union Canal, particularly in quiet places in the open countryside. The Aylesbury Arm is open to canal users and its enhancement creates a significant opportunity for further recreation in the area. The Wendover Arm, although closed to navigation along much of its length, constitutes an important amenity resource, and considerable leisure and amenity benefits can result from the restoration of this arm of the canal. The Council supports the principle of the re-opening of the Wendover Arm as a navigable waterway and the provision of facilities necessary for its use as such and appropriate to its location and setting. Opportunities exist for angling, boating, casual walking and nature conservation. There is also potential for tourism and canal-related activities, such as establishment of launching facilities, car parking and boat-based businesses, provided that the essential open and quiet nature of the canal in the countryside is protected.

**GP.80** Development that would prejudice the future restoration of the Wendover Arm of the Grand Union Canal to a navigable waterway will not be permitted.

**4.207.** The Council will seek to take advantage of opportunities to enhance the environment along the Aylesbury Arm of the canal.

**4.208.** The Council recognises that there may be a need for some canal-based development adjacent to the canal.
Proposals for the development of canal-related facilities should respect the character and appearance of the canal, its setting and the surroundings.

In dealing with applications for such development the Council will seek to avoid adverse impacts on:

a) landscape, ecological interests and the countryside;

b) townscape and the historic environment; and

c) residential amenities

**PICNIC AREAS**

**4.209.** Picnic sites can be provided on small areas of land in open countryside or woods. Sites are often located at a viewpoint or recreational facility and should also take advantage of the rights of way network and cycle routes. In addition, sites can also be formed to improve an eyesore or waste land close to a main road.

**4.210.** There is scope for more picnic areas in the District and the Council will encourage appropriate further provision where necessary.

**GP.82** The Council supports the further provision of picnic areas, provided that they would not significantly detract from the character or appearance of the countryside or harm sites of ecological, biological or historical importance.

**GP.83** Facilities and buildings associated with picnic areas should be constructed from materials and be of a scale appropriate to the locality and should be landscaped effectively to minimise any visual impact.

**FOOTPATHS**

**4.211.** Walking in the countryside is one activity enjoyed by a wide spectrum of the population. Footpaths are used not only by the casual user but also by organised walking clubs. Surveys by the Countryside Agency confirm that this activity is still one of the most popular of all informal recreational activities. The countryside is particularly important around the main growth areas of Aylesbury and Buckingham. Footpaths provide public access to some of the most attractive countryside, including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Areas of Attractive Landscape and Local Landscape Areas.
4.212. Walking is also an important means of travel especially within towns and villages. It is imperative that the existing network is protected from development likely to sever or extinguish definitive footpaths or other well used pedestrian routes.

4.213. The network of footpaths in the District has considerable potential for walkers, and improvements by way of maintenance, waymarking and signposting facilitate access by the public. Six major paths have sections in the District: the Aylesbury Ring, the Thame Valley Walk, the North Bucks Way, the Ridgeway, the Cross Bucks Way and the Two Ridges Link.

GP.84 In considering applications for development affecting a public right of way the Council will have regard to the convenience, amenity and public enjoyment of the route and the desirability of its retention or improvement for users, including people with disabilities. Planning conditions will be imposed on planning permissions, or planning obligations sought, to enhance public rights of way retained within development schemes.

Where it is proposed to stop up or divert a public right of way to enable development to take place, permission will only be granted where there is an existing suitable alternative route, or provision is so made.

BRIDLEWAYS

4.214. Provision for recreational horse-riding occurs on the bridleway sections of the rights of way network, but bridleways require higher levels of maintenance to keep them in a satisfactory condition. Footpaths are not normally suitable for use as bridleways. The network of bridleways is generally less extensive and less complete than that of footpaths, although a long-distance bridleway, the Swan’s Way, does cross the District. Also, horses are banned from using many open areas available to walkers due to the operation of local bye-laws. In terms of horse trails laid out in country parks, the District is relatively poorly provided for in an area of high demand. Therefore, as part of its commitment to maintaining and improving rights of way in general, the Council will encourage the provision of new bridleways, particularly where they would connect with or complement the existing bridleway network.
 CYCLING

4.215. Cycling is an important recreational pursuit and much of the District is ideally suited to it. In the future it is expected that cycling will play a major part in contributing towards the achievement of the sustainable transport goals of AVDLP.

4.216. The general support for provision for cycling will include support for the creation and promotion of recreational networks within the District, such as the Circular Cycle Routes being provided by BCC.

OPEN SPACE

4.217. In its widest sense, the term “open space” includes all open land ranging from formal sports fields and parks to planted areas in housing estates and roads. Whatever form it takes, open space is an important element in the environment and character of settlements and is, from a functional point of view, one of the main uses of land within settlements.

4.218. Government advice stresses the importance of retaining open spaces in cities, towns and villages, and the need for new open spaces in conjunction with new housing development.

4.219. Open space is required to accommodate a variety of special recreational pursuits and also to serve a general need and contribute to the visual amenity of the locality. Whilst some areas may be set aside for a particular purpose and others may serve more than one function, open space is dealt with in this Plan in terms of the following distinct categories:

- playing space, which incorporates sports fields and formal and informal play areas;
- amenity areas including footpaths, verges, shrub beds, woodland, parks etc.; and
- allotments.

4.220. Specialised sports facilities and large areas dedicated to one function, such as golf courses, are dealt with in paragraph 10.10 and RA.4-RA.5.
**Protection of Existing Open Space**

**4.221.** Existing open spaces, whatever their function, contribute a great deal to the character of the District and the quality of the environment. Difficulties in providing new open spaces within the existing built-up area serve to emphasise the importance of retaining and making best use of those that already exist. The need to protect open space that contributes towards meeting community needs for both formal and informal recreation is vital. The types of open space to which this policy applies include the following, whether in public or private ownership:

- formal and informal landscaped parks and gardens;
- sports fields;
- recreation grounds;
- play areas;
- areas of amenity space provided as part of the design or landscaping of developments; and
- other areas of open space such as churchyards and burial grounds.

**4.222.** The Council recognises the very significant contribution made by privately owned and managed sports fields and school and other educational sports fields, and in particular the effect of any reduction in their availability. Accordingly, any proposals for the development of school and other playing fields, whether public or private, will be resisted except where redevelopment of a small part of the site will enhance sports or recreational provision, or where alternative provision of at least the equivalent size, suitability and convenience can be made.

**4.223.** Similarly, open space that contributes to the visual amenity of the settlement by providing space between buildings and/or a setting within which buildings are viewed must not be lost to the community. This includes preventing the enclosure of such areas into private gardens where other residents cannot enjoy them.

**GP.85** In dealing with applications for development involving the loss or reduction of public and private open space the Council will have regard to its recreational, conservation, wildlife, historical and amenity value and the desirability of protecting those aspects of its enjoyment.
Proposals for building on playing fields will only be permitted where there is sufficient existing community recreation and amenity land to meet local needs, or where appropriate new or enhancement of existing sport and recreation facilities would be provided.

In granting permission involving the loss of facilities for which there is a local need or demand, the Council will impose conditions or seek planning obligations, including financial contributions, to secure alternative relevant recreational arrangements.

PLAY SPACE PROVISION FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Outdoor Play Space

4.224. The Council will maximise opportunities to provide additional forms of sports and recreation facilities. To this end the Council considers it appropriate to use an overall rate of provision at a minimum of 2.43 hectares of outdoor playing space per thousand population. This standard is derived from recommendations made by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA).

4.225. This standard relates to outdoor playing space only, that is outdoor land set aside for sport and/or play; it does not include amenity areas.

4.226. The Council will ensure that developers make provision, in accordance with the above standard, to accommodate needs generated by new housing development. The existing provision of sports fields is to be kept under review and the Council will seek to redress any shortfall and meet future needs arising from increasing population and demand in the District.

4.227. Arrangements for future maintenance should be agreed between the developer and the Council. Conditions will be imposed on any planning permission and/or a legal agreement will be required before planning permission is granted to ensure the permanent retention of the land for this function. A commuted sum will be required to cover future maintenance costs.

4.228. As well as applying the general NPFA standard, the Council will have regard to the existing sports and playing space provision in the locality. In some housing developments, both sports fields and play areas can be provided since minimum levels can be fulfilled. However, on smaller sites, the amount of land required
will not provide sufficient space for sports fields as well as play areas. In all cases, the type and location of existing facilities must be taken into account when considering the open playing space requirement for new housing development.

4.229. The Council intends to produce Supplementary Planning Guidance on the design, management and maintenance of outdoor playing space.

GP.86 New housing proposals should include sufficient outdoor play space to meet requirements associated with the development.

In considering applications the Council will seek provision for the needs of occupiers of the dwellings, based ordinarily on a standard of 2.43 hectares outdoor play space per 1000 population, and the provision of and accessibility to existing open space in the locality.

In granting permission the Council will use conditions or planning obligations to regulate the scale, distribution and management of outdoor play space and related facilities and equipment.

4.230. In applying the overall standard referred to, the Council will generally base the playing space requirement for each development on the more detailed guidance given in “The Six Acre (2.43 hectares) Standard - Minimum Standards for Outdoor Playing Space” NPFA 1992 (see Appendices 2 and 3).

4.231. Developers may be required to devote the total playing space requirement to children’s play areas, particularly on smaller developments. This reflects the priority to provide children’s play area provision. A range of types and sizes of play area is required (see Appendix 2) in order to cater for both young children near to home which can be overseen by people in nearby properties and the more boisterous play of older children including ball games, which needs to be located so as not to cause annoyance to nearby residents. Children’s play areas whether formal or informal, must be located close to home, away from passing traffic and accessible to those intended to use them without having to cross busy roads.
4.232. Sports fields, sports facilities and play areas should be designed in accordance with the Council’s currently adopted standards. The minimum size for a sports field is 0.9 hectares although, where appropriate, a larger area would be required to justify the provision and effective use of changing facilities. In some situations, playing areas may incorporate existing trees and vegetation, or planting may be carried out to enhance these areas. This must not interfere with the essential function of these areas which is to allow play or sport. Planted “buffer zones” and linear areas that do not lend themselves to informal play do not form part of the requirement but are classed as amenity areas.

GP.87 Housing schemes designed for family occupation should make suitable provision for equipped play areas for children’s use, located safely and with due regard for residential amenity.

Sports fields for organised play and games should be not less than 0.9 hectares in area and planned to enable full use to be made of the playing surfaces.

In dealing with applications for residential development the Council will have regard to these considerations and its published standards for the size, layout and equipping of outdoor play spaces.

Funds Provided in Lieu of Providing Outdoor Play Space

4.233. In most cases the Council will require useable play space to be provided on site. In exceptional circumstances, however, the Council may consider alternative methods of providing for the outdoor playing space requirements.

4.234. Such circumstances include those where the land required for play areas or sports fields may not comply with the accepted minimum standards and the space is not realistically capable of use, or the topography of the site may not lend itself to useable play areas or there may be existing facilities nearby which, if enhanced, could better fulfil the playing space function. If the requirement for play space were to be waived without any compensation, the outcome would be that an unacceptable overall deficit would emerge in playing space provision.
Where planning agreements or undertakings are sealed in order to secure outdoor play spaces or facilities associated with residential development, but such provision either is not practicable on site or is better made elsewhere, the Council will accept monetary payments in lieu of their provision by parties to the obligation.

The recreational benefits to be obtained or provided by the Council by virtue of the obligation will be directly relevant to the development permitted and the needs of its occupiers, and fairly and reasonably related to its scale and kind.

**Access, Location and Design of Outdoor Playing Space**

4.235. It is vital that the potential users can easily access playing spaces of all sizes. Accordingly, the Council will require suitable footpaths and cycleways to be provided to facilitate access to and through all new sports fields and play areas. In addition to the sports or play function of new outdoor playing space, such areas will also make a visual contribution to the development and its surroundings, and planted amenity areas around them may enhance this contribution. Playing spaces should therefore be properly integrated with the design of the development and the scale and context of their surroundings.

4.236. It is an established aim of the Aylesbury Vale District Leisure Strategy to encourage better management of existing facilities and encourage the juxtaposition of facilities in order to maximise the potential for access and use by the greatest possible proportion of the community.

**GP.89** Planning proposals that include outdoor playing areas should incorporate complementary landscaping and provide for the retention of trees and hedges, consistent with the recreational function. In considering such development the Council will protect and improve rights of way through and connected with the open space.

**PROVISION OF INDOOR FACILITIES**

4.238. The facilities envisaged may include sports halls, swimming pools, tennis courts and golf courses. The type of facilities that should be provided as part of a particular development will be determined by reference to the range and location of existing facilities, the Council’s sports development strategy and advice and guidance produced by Sport England.

4.239. In all housing proposals the Council will consider whether there is a need for a development contribution towards indoor sports provision. In terms of which facilities should be provided, consideration will be given to the range and location of existing facilities and to the Council’s sports development strategy. Conditions will be imposed on any planning permission and/or a legal agreement will be sought before planning permission is granted, to ensure the appropriate phasing and provision of the appropriate level of indoor sports facilities.

GP.90 In considering applications for residential development the Council will have regard to the need for the provision of indoor sports facilities arising from the proposal. Conditions will be imposed on permissions, or planning obligations sought in order to secure appropriate indoor recreation amenities, or financial contributions thereto, reasonably related to the scale and kind of housing proposed.

PROVISION OF AMENITY AREAS

4.240. Amenity areas are not credited against the Council’s playing space standard. They are highly valued by residents and visitors. They may include land in private as well as public ownership and generally make a significant contribution to the environment.

4.241. The Council will encourage the provision of new amenity areas in conjunction with new development. It is emphasised that this does not replace the playing space requirement. There are no generally accepted standards for amenity areas, provision being more related to the nature and context of the development, the topographical character of the land and other physical constraints. In particular, potential exists alongside streams and in other areas that may not be developed such as above the routes of underground services. The Council will take positive steps to exploit the amenity potential of such open spaces. Amenity spaces linked to other open land perform important strategic functions in providing ‘green corridors’ through built-up areas and linking to surrounding countryside.

In Buckingham the Council has taken positive steps to develop the Buckingham Riverside Walk. The riverside environment has been enhanced and benefits both recreation and nature conservation.
The design of new housing and other building proposals should include suitable informal amenity open spaces appropriate to the character of occupation of the development, especially in the case of sites adjoining open water or watercourses, or where protection may be given to or advantage taken of nature conservation interests.

In granting permission for proposals including informal open space the Council will impose conditions, or seek obligations, to secure the provision and management of the amenity.

ALLOTMENTS

4.242. Gardening is one of the most popular forms of outdoor recreation and allotments play an important role in providing a facility for those without or with insufficient gardens. In addition to their functional use, allotments can also be of amenity value and provide a pleasant contrast to the built environment.

4.243. The demand for allotments is subject to fluctuation. There is therefore merit in locating new allotments adjacent to other recreational facilities. This allows for effective use and management of the land since any surplus land at a particular time can be incorporated into adjacent recreational open space. Although the location of allotments is related to the distribution of population, this factor is not as critical for this use as it is for other types of open space.

The Council will protect working allotment gardens from adverse development.

Exceptionally, permission will only be granted for the change of use from allotment purposes in cases:

a) where there is no demonstrable allotment demand; and
b) where suitable alternative provision can be made; and
c) where the allotment facility would be enhanced through the development.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

4.244. Community facilities and services include public halls, schools, places of worship, libraries, museums, crèches, day centres and doctors surgeries. They make a vital contribution to the social and economic life of the community, particularly in rural areas, and are especially important for elderly and disabled people and
for those who do not have easy access to private or public transport. Shops, post offices and public houses can also support a valuable community function that should not be ignored (see also policy GP32).

4.245. As such the Council will refuse proposals that would result in the erosion of community facilities and services, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no long-term requirement for their retention. In the case of a commercial venture, the applicant will need to satisfy the Council that the existing use is no longer commercially viable and, where a business is continuing to trade, that a genuine attempt has been made to market the enterprise as a going concern.

4.246. Similarly, new development creates an additional need for community facilities of a type that may be determined by reference to existing facilities in the locality and the type of development proposed.

GP.93 The Council will resist proposals for the change of use of community buildings and facilities for which there is a demonstrable local need.

In considering applications for alternative development or uses the Council will have regard to the viability of the existing use, the presence of alternative local facilities and the community benefits of the proposed use. Where permission includes building conversions, conditions will be imposed so as not to exclude later resumption of a community use.

GP.94 In considering applications for residential development the Council will have regard to the need for the provision of community facilities arising from the proposal. Conditions will be imposed on permissions, or planning obligations sought in order to secure appropriate community facilities, or financial contributions thereto, reasonably related to the scale and kind of housing proposed.

OTHER MATTERS

UNNEIGHBOURLY USES

4.247. One of the main objectives of this Plan is to ensure the efficient use of land whilst minimising conflict between adjoining land uses. Certain existing uses are poorly located or have a detrimental effect on neighbouring land uses and the environment generally. Whilst under ideal conditions the
Council would wish to take positive action to relocate unneighbourly uses, the economic climate will determine whether such action can be taken. Nevertheless, the Council will seek to ensure such effects do not worsen and that new development does not cause similar problems. In appropriate cases, the Council will encourage the relocation of existing unneighbourly uses to more suitable sites and will permit the redevelopment of the site for some other suitable use appropriate to the character of the area. For the purposes of this Plan, unneighbourly uses are those that have a detrimental impact on neighbouring land uses, arising from factors such as noise, vibration, dust, fumes, smell or excessive traffic generation or other adverse effects on health, safety or amenity.

**GP.95** In dealing with all planning proposals the Council will have regard to the protection of the amenities of existing occupiers. Development that exacerbates any adverse effects of existing uses will not be permitted.

**GP.96** Development proposals that reduce or eliminate the adverse impacts of an unneighbourly use on the amenities of the users of nearby properties will be permitted subject to other policies of this Plan. Such proposals may include mitigation works, relocation of the user or redevelopment of the site. Where a relocation is proposed, the Council will ensure that the proposal would not result in adverse impacts on a new set of neighbouring uses.

4.248. Some uses of land that are unneighbourly are nevertheless necessary and provision may need to be made for them, for example sewage treatment works, certain industrial processes and some agricultural uses. It is desirable to ensure that such uses are located on sites where their effects are minimised. Proposals for such uses will be considered on their merits and in the light of their likely impact on the surrounding area.

**NOISE-SENSITIVE USES**

4.249. Noise can be as harmful to the quality of the environment as other more tangible forms of pollution, and positive steps can be taken to reduce the risk of noise intrusion in existing developed areas and ensure that new development will not be seriously affected by an existing noise source. The most common local sources are traffic and industrial premises. A number of methods can be employed to reduce their effects. The Council will seek to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to minimise noise or to require sound insulation of buildings so that noise levels are acceptable.
GP.97  Proposals for uses or operations that generate high levels of noise should be located away from noise-sensitive uses such as houses, hospitals and schools and valued amenity areas.

In dealing with applications for development that involves noisy activities, the Council will seek the avoidance of any disturbing effect on amenities and environmental qualities. Where permission is granted, conditions will be imposed, or planning obligations sought, to regulate the noise characteristics of the proposal.

GP.98  Proposals for noise-sensitive development, such as houses, hospitals and schools, should be located away from uses and operations likely to generate noise that could prove disturbing for their occupation or operation.

In dealing with applications for noise-sensitive proposals the Council will have regard to the impact of noise from other sources. Where permission is granted the Council will impose conditions, or seek planning obligations, to mitigate or attenuate the effect of noise.

OVERHEAD ELECTRICITY LINES

In the Countryside

4.250.  Proposals for the erection of overhead electricity lines are considered under the Electricity Act 1989. Under this Act, electricity utility companies must apply for consent to the relevant Secretary of State and serve notice to the Local Planning Authority, who may make representations regarding the proposal. While the Council does not make the decisions on such proposals, it does have the opportunity to inform their consideration. It is proper therefore to state here the Council’s policy on overhead lines.

Some overhead lines benefit from permitted development rights, meaning that, in those instances, consultation with the Council is not required.

Overhead electricity lines, particularly the pylon supports can be visually intrusive and harmful to amenity. The Council will therefore seek to encourage electricity companies to adopt routes where the lines can be more easily assimilated into the rural landscape.
In Towns and Villages and Affecting New Development

4.251. Electricity transmission lines and their pylon supports are visually intrusive, the lines are often noisy and the electromagnetic fields that surround them can cause radio interference. There is public concern about having to live, or play beneath them and about their implications on property values.

New Development in Proximity to Existing Overhead Lines

4.252. For amenity reasons, the Council regards areas that lie below and alongside overhead electricity transmission lines as unsuitable for residential accommodation and uses which involve an element of outdoor activity where amenity could be affected, such as community buildings, including their grounds, and formal play areas. Such areas may be exploited as informal amenity areas of the type allowed for by policy GP.91 but should not be used to fulfil any part of the formal open space or sports requirement of policies GP.86-87.

4.253. Forms of land use where there would not be an impact upon residential or recreational amenity can be acceptable below overhead lines. These would include, but are not restricted to, employment, utilities, infrastructure, recreation of a wholly indoor nature and car parking, provided requisite safety clearances are met. In such circumstances the height of any buildings or structures will be subject to limitations.

4.254. The Council will only apply the requirement for these amenity zones to overhead electricity lines that carry voltages of 132 kV or more.

GP.99 New residential development, formal open space and public buildings such as schools that are occupied for a substantial part of the day should not be located beneath overhead electricity conductors carrying voltages of 132 kv or more.

In considering applications for development close to power lines the Council will have regard to any adverse effect on amenity caused by the cables and pylons. Where permission is granted, conditions will be imposed, or planning obligations sought, to regulate the proximity of buildings to the conductors, the height of any new structures, and the use of land below the overhead lines.
TELECOMMUNICATIONS

4.255. The Government encourages the growth of telecommunications in order to improve business and domestic communications, which it regards as essential to the functioning of a modern economy. It nevertheless recognises the need to preserve the national heritage and does not wish to see the appearance or character of buildings, towns, villages and countryside suffer damage as a consequence of such development.

4.256. Some small-scale telecommunications development is permitted under the General Permitted Development Order. However, large structures or groups of smaller structures may require permission.

4.257. The Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones was set up in 1999 at the request of the Government and in response to public concern over possible health effects associated with the use of mobile phones and with base stations. The Group published their findings (The Stewart Report) on 11th May 2000. In its response, the Government noted that it was minded to require all new masts to be subject to applications for full planning permission. It would consult widely on this subject as part of a review of PPG8, Telecommunications.

4.258. It is not for Local Planning Authorities to seek to replicate through the planning system controls under the health and safety regime, which are the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive. However, health considerations and public concern can in principle be material considerations in determining applications for planning permission and prior approval. The Government considers that if a proposed development meets the International Commission for Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for public exposure, as recommended by the Stewart Report on a precautionary basis, it should not be necessary for a planning authority to consider the health effects further. All new base stations should meet these guidelines, in particular those at or close to sensitive sites (e.g. schools).

4.259. All applications for planning permission or prior approval should be accompanied by details of maximum emissions from the proposed transmitter at (i) any publicly accessible point (ii) directly in front of the antennae (iii) at ground floor level in the beam of maximum intensity. Details of the location used for each calculation should be specified.
Proposals for telecommunication development should avoid visual intrusion. High masts and large telecommunication structures will not be permitted within the Green Belt, designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation Areas unless there are no alternatives, including the shared use of existing equipment, that would enable the reasonable coverage of the area concerned.

In considering applications the Council will seek to avoid adverse effects of equipment on the visual characteristics of the surroundings and the availability of less intrusive options, together with any technical considerations and limitations.

Proposals should, where necessary, be supported by an appropriate landscaping scheme. Where permission is granted conditions will be imposed, or planning obligations sought, to ensure the removal of equipment when it is no longer required.

HAZARDOUS INSTALLATIONS

4.260. The District contains a number of installations handling notifiable substances, including high-pressure natural gas transmission pipelines. Whilst there are stringent controls under existing health and safety legislation, it is necessary to control the kinds of development permitted in the vicinity of these installations. The Council has been advised by the Health and Safety Executive of consultation distances for each of these installations.

4.261. There are also long-distance oil pipelines that cross the District and other installations that may be hazardous. It is necessary to control development in the vicinity of installations such as these, which are not covered by the Health and Safety Executive, and to liaise with the relevant operators when determining planning applications in respect of such development.

GP.101 The Council will refuse planning permission for proposals for installations where hazardous substances or activities may be involved where they will be in close proximity to housing or places of work and in any other situation where the safety of the public or environment will be put at risk. When considering proposals for development in the vicinity of installations involving hazardous substances or activities the Council will take account of consultation with the relevant operators.
CONTAMINATED SITES

4.262. Particular care is needed before land subject to potentially hazardous contamination by a previous use, or neighbouring land to which such contamination may have or may yet spread, is developed or re-used.

4.263. Government advice identifies that the following land uses are some of those that, because of their nature, may have led to the contamination of the site they occupied:

- asbestos works; chemical works; docks and railway land, especially large sidings and depots; gasworks, other coal carbonation plants and ancillary by-product works; metal mines, smelters, foundries, iron and steel works and metal finishing plants; munitions production and testing sites; oil refineries, petroleum storage and distribution; paper and printing works; heavy engineering installations, e.g. shipbuilding and shipbreaking; radioactive processing installations; scrap works; sewage works and sewage farms; tanneries; and industries making or using wood preservatives.

This list is not exhaustive; other types of use may also lead to contamination of land.

4.264. From 1st April 2000 a new regime for the identification, investigation and remediation of contaminated land was introduced in Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 under section 57 of the Environment Act 1995. The Local Authority is the lead regulator for this legislation, however in specific cases this role will fall to the Environment Agency.

GP.102 Proposals for the development of land affected by contamination should avoid risks to public health and environmental amenities.

The Council will require applications to be supported by information about the nature and extent of previous contamination, and measures for its remediation. In granting permission on contaminated land, the Council will impose conditions, or seek planning obligations, to secure remedial action and ensure safe occupation of the site and nearby land, and to provide notice of the presence of unsuspected pollutants discovered during development.