

Press Release from Buckinghamshire Council

16 February 2021

Call for brownfield sites in Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire Council has now started work on the Buckinghamshire Local Plan (BLP). The BLP will allocate sites for development in the period up to 2040.

A part of this process, we are carrying out a 'call for brownfield sites' that have the potential for future development. A brownfield site is an area of land that has previously undergone development, but is currently no longer in use. These could be sites that will become vacant in the next 5-10 years too, and not just currently empty sites.

The 'call for brownfield sites' will start today (16 February) and run for five weeks until 5pm on the 22 March 2021.

To submit sites, the applicant must complete a 'call for sites' proforma which can be found here – <https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/planning/brownfield-call>

Or by calling 0300 131 6000 for a hard copy. Once completed the form can be sent to Planning Policy, Buckinghamshire Council – Wycombe area office, Council Offices, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe, HP11 1BB or by email to planningpolicyteam.bc@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

It is important that the 'call for sites' form is completed in as much detail as possible, and that a plan is submitted with the form, which clearly shows the site boundary as well as information about land ownership and any technical information available (e.g. heritage statement, air quality report, ecological survey) and indicative plans and layouts.

Sites can be put forward by anyone or any organisation, although typically it would be by land owners, developers, agents, local businesses, individuals and groups.

The Council will technically assess all brownfield sites submitted to see whether they are suitable, available and achievable (including viable) to meet the development needs (for both housing and economic purposes) of the Council. We will follow government advice as to how to do this, which is set out in the Planning Practice Guidance on [Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments \(HELAA\)](#).

Once the HELAA assessment has been completed, the Council will publish a schedule and a map setting out which sites it considers to have the potential to be considered further in the plan-making process. We will publish full details of our HELAA in due course, and this will be available for public consultation.

The preparation of a HELAA is a Government requirement, which allows councils to better understand the amount of land which may be available for development in an area. However, inclusion of a site within a HELAA does not mean that it will be allocated for development in a local plan.

The HELAA may include many more sites than are needed to meet development needs. Should HELAA sites then get allocated in a local plan, the plan and its supporting evidence will be subject to further formal public consultation and an independent examination, where concerns about sites allocated for development can be raised. Plans cannot be adopted unless they pass this independent examination.

Warren Whyte, Cabinet Member for Planning and Enforcement said: "Buckinghamshire is in an area of limited development opportunities with our towns and villages surrounded by Green Belt, valuable countryside, open space and areas needing protection, whilst on the other hand we need to provide for new housing.

As part of the research for the new Buckinghamshire Plan, I am keen that we re-visit all our town and villages to make sure we don't miss existing brownfield sites that have potential for redevelopment, and I urge residents, parish councils and land owners to help us compile a comprehensive list to identify any previously developed land across the county that could potentially be used for residential development in the future.

I encourage everyone to take part so that together we can look at finding positive solutions for the growth needed to provide new homes for future generations whilst protecting important open spaces and countryside."

Notes to Editor

What is a brownfield site?

The Government's definition of a brownfield site is one which:

is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

It excludes land that:

- is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings;
- was developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made;
- is in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments;
and
- was previously developed but where structural remains have blended into the landscape.