



Edlesborough Parish Council

Buckinghamshire Draft Local Plan Comments – Edlesborough Parish Council

Agreed 16/10/2025

Part A comments

Location of New Housing Strategy

- Vision and objectives are all sound - particularly objective 2 on climate change where it is stated that 51% of Buckinghamshire emissions come from transport. Therefore, future housing developments must be designed to decrease overall need for transportation.

- Seven different approaches to meeting the housing target. Numbers allocated to each seem to be mainly based on the response to calls for sites. Proposed number and percentage range allocated to each is as follows:

1. Brownfield sites within existing towns and villages 1,500-2,500 (1.8 - 2.5%)
2. Growth on the edges of existing main towns 23,000-28,000 (28 - 28.3%)
3. New towns 11,000-13,000 (13.1 - 13.4%)
4. Development at transport hubs 16,000-19,000 (19.2 - 19.5%)
5. Expansion near key employment areas 5,000-6,000 (6 - 6.1%)
6. Limited expansion of villages 13,000-15,000 (15.2 - 15.9%)
7. Expanding urban areas on the edge of Buckinghamshire 6,000-7,000 (7.1 - 7.3%)

Of all the objectives set out for the plan but particularly climate change, approach 6 meets the objectives worst of all, yet it is allocated the third greatest proportion of houses.

A calculation undertaken by our Bucks Councillors showed this would mean an average allocation of 60 houses per village and hamlet in the Ivinghoe ward. For some villages that is a huge proportional increase which would add significantly to the volume of journeys undertaken by car, hence entirely failing to meet objective 1. It is clear that some expansion of some villages is inevitable, but the proportion allocated is unreasonably high and at odds with meeting the objectives of the plan. The Parish Council believe that a much more appropriate figure for Approaches 2 and 4 combined, would be nearer to 70% of the total housing need.

Growth of Villages (Approach 4)

Significant growth of villages is not only undesirable from a sustainability perspective, because it places too much reliance on the use of private cars, but it can overwhelm the status quo and change the character of small communities. It is that character which existing residents value so much, and is usually the main reason they choose to live there.

The Parish Council recognise that the villages must take some of the growth, and in some cases a small amount of growth can actually be beneficial. Past experience has shown that a village the size of Edlesborough can absorb small developments without seriously compromising the local character. Consequently, for a medium sized village like

Edlesborough, we would suggest that the size of new developments should be capped at 25 to 30 houses. For smaller villages, a cap of 10 to 15 houses would probably be more appropriate. That is not to say that a village like Edlesborough would be limited to just 25 to 30 new houses in the plan, only that individual developments should not be larger than that.

Edlesborough – Medium or Large Village?

In the past, planning officers have made the error of confusing the population of Edlesborough Village with that of the Parish of Edlesborough, when considering housing allocations.

Edlesborough Parish is made up of three separate wards, Edlesborough, Dagnall and Northall. The National Census only identifies population figures down to parish level, but housing allocations are usually made at village level. The 2021 Census population figure for the Parish of 2,952 is made up of 1,932 in Edlesborough, 532 in Dagnall and 488 in Northall.

Consequently, Edlesborough should be regarded as a medium sized village rather than a large one.

This misunderstanding of the village population has resulted in the past in a disproportionate village allocation, because it was assumed to be significantly larger than reality. We would ask that this fact is recognised by officers, and that the error is not repeated when drawing up the new housing allocations.

Part B comments

2.2 Affordable housing: despite the caveats for greenbelt and Chilterns locations, the fact that developments smaller than 10 dwellings generally need contain no affordable housing, this means that most small village developments will have none. This is at odds with part A's objective 3.

2.15 Data Centres: the criteria set out are sound but, as this is an emerging sector with a (limited) history to date of high environmental impacts, they could be stronger still e.g. require evidence at the planning stage that ONLY sustainable technologies will be used for heating and cooling and that ONLY renewable sources of energy will be used.

2.36 SANG: whilst these seem a good idea in principle we can see nothing in the proposals about monitoring of their success in the mitigation they are supposed to provide e.g. visitor numbers at SANGs and pre-existing green spaces compared to new development occupant numbers. Nor for any monitoring of the vaguely referred to responsible bodies that will manage the SANGs. Without these how will the Council know if they have had the desired effect and ensure the relevant infrastructure is kept up to ensure they are long lived and well used in the long run?

2.37 Gateway sites: The introduction of gateway sites to supplement SANGS is something of a concern. These are being proposed by the National Trust around the perimeter of Ashridge, to draw people away from the central Monument area. The big draw of Ashridge is the natural woodland. The gateway site criteria could result in them being somewhat contrived, making them rather like glorified parks. Our concern is that people that have travelled several miles to the area, will still be drawn to the natural woodland areas in preference to the gateway sites. The main purpose that the gateway sites would serve would be creating additional housing

credits (to the considerable financial benefit of the National Trust), rather than actually relieving Ashridge to any great extent. The bulk of people using them would be those living relatively nearby, saving them having to drive the mile or two to the real Ashridge.

2.44 Transport requirements for new developments: if vision-led transport planning is to be enacted then no development within villages would ever be approved as the goals listed are unachievable where private cars must be used for every journey outside the village. This is at odds with approach 6 in part A of the consultation.

2.46 Parking Standards: It states that the current standards are under review, but indicates that the main area of change they are considering is electric vehicle infrastructure.

One deficiency of the existing standards is allowing tandem parking to achieve the required number of spaces per dwelling. This often results in triple tandem spaces, which inevitably means that the third (and possibly the second) vehicle is parked on the highway, which defeats the object of the policy. New developments should avoid the need for on-street parking as much as possible, and needs a policy stating that dwellings which are required to provide more than a single parking space, should provide at least two parallel spaces and never more than two in tandem.

2.53 Infrastructure delivery: It is not mentioned here but a key goal should be to ensure all necessary infrastructure is in place before any new house can be sold. This should include promised schools, shops, improvements to drainage, water and electricity supply, new streetlights, roads, laybys etc. All too often these come later or even never leaving new and existing residents to cope without what they were promised the new development would bring.

2.65 Sports and leisure: the requirement for new developments to contribute to sports and leisure improvement locally is generally positive. However, in villages there is only so much improvement that can be made - once you have upgraded the play equipment and re-decorated the village hall that might be all that can be done! Contributions to traffic calming and other infrastructure improvements such as electricity sub-station upgrades, fibre broadband, school maintenance etc are often much needed so an expanded pool of improvements that the money can be spent on would be much more valuable.

Yours sincerely

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