

PH policies: HOUSING AND PHASING



POLICY HP1 A SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE TOWN

A. The Neighbourhood Plan defines a settlement boundary for Buckingham, as shown on the Policies Map, for the purposes of:

- i. directing future development in the town to strengthen the role of Buckingham as a sustainable market town in Buckinghamshire;**
- ii. promoting infilling and encouraging the re-use of previously-developed land, as defined in the NPPF, within the settlement boundary; and**
- iii. making provision for approximately 1,100 new homes, 10ha of employment land, and new and/or improved social and green infrastructure.**

B. Proposals for development outside of the settlement boundary will only be supported if they accord with development plan policies managing development in the countryside.

1. The policy responds to the call of the VALP for growth in Buckingham to be led by neighbourhood planning (§8 of the VALP). The policy defines a settlement boundary on the Policies Map as a means of establishing the furthest extent and direction of development growth planned for the period to 2040.
2. The policy also encourages the completion of infilling of the urban area to minimise the need to consider additional extensions of the town into the open countryside. The assessment work of the projects showed that there were several smaller infill sites and previously developed land within the town which could also come forward as windfall development during the plan period. The historic windfall rate ranging between 1-13 new dwellings per annum.
3. The policy also makes provision for additional growth to 2040. The quantum of development proposed is derived from a combination of factors comprising the Housing Needs Assessment evidence and a view on past and future market absorption rates in the town. It is considered sufficient to support the next level of infrastructure growth but without prejudicing longer term growth options for the town to 2050 and beyond. Growth comprises a range of brownfield and greenfield sites of different sizes within and around the town.
4. The settlement boundary follows that of the made neighbourhood plan, but also includes developments which have recently been completed, are underway or have planning permission, land that has been proposed for the allocation of housing, employment land, and new social infrastructure, and allows for the continuing growth of the town through the use of brownfield land or other suitable infill sites so that it can continue to fulfil its role as a strategic settlement and a service centre for other villages surrounding it. It will secure crucial improvements to local schools and other community facilities and support the creation of higher value-added job opportunities for the

local workforce.

5. Outside the defined settlement boundary, development will only be supported if proposals accord with policies managing development in the open countryside to provide certainty to applicants and the community and to recognise the valued function of the countryside.

POLICY HP2 URBAN AREA ALLOCATIONS

- A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies nine previously developed ('brownfield') sites in Appendix A and on the Policies Map that are considered suitable in principle to a change of use to residential or residential-led development. Redevelopment proposals on the land will be supported provided they can show that their social and environmental benefits will outweigh any economic cost.**
- B. In addition, the redevelopment of site E will need to demonstrate that any progress on Policy EE3 does not require the land to meet university accommodation demands to enable any additional university accommodation needs to keep pace with its education offer.**
- C. The Neighbourhood Plan retains the residential allocation of Site J in the made neighbourhood plan for approximately 39 dwellings over 1.7ha of land linked with providing dwellings for older residents and relocating tree provision from the centre of the site to result in no overall loss of biodiversity.**

1. The policy identifies nine sites that have been assessed as being previously development ('brownfield') land and comprises retained allocations from the made Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan, the Buckinghamshire Local Plan Brownfield Call for Sites and the project's own site assessment work. The project's assessment work indicates that these brownfield sites have a combined capacity to deliver approximately 300 homes as well as some new commercial, business and service floorspace. In most cases, the sites are under-occupied with some vacant land; others are occupied with businesses users or entirely vacant. The policy requires that any adverse economic effect of any loss of land or floorspace currently

in established Class E, B2 or B8 use will be outweighed by the social and/or environmental benefits.

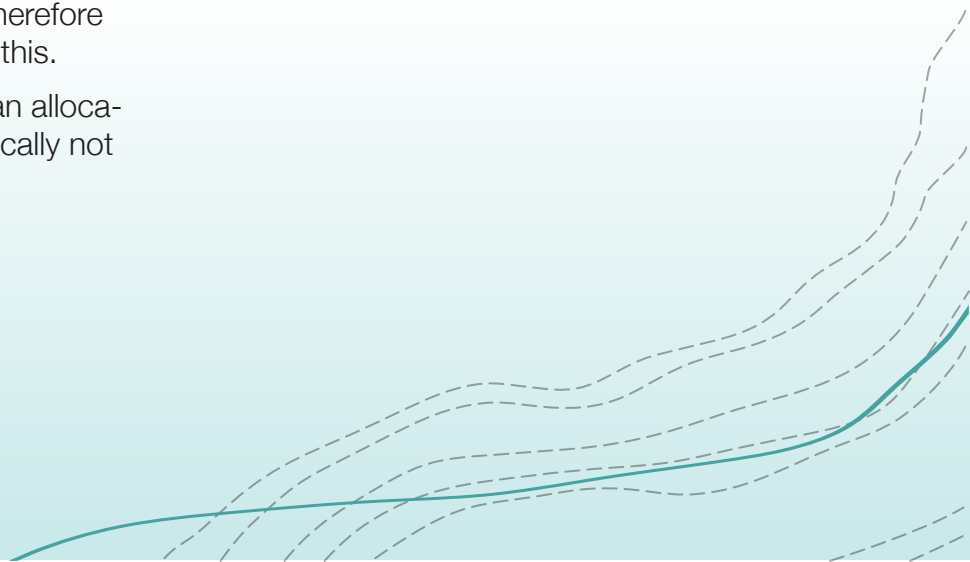
2. In measuring economic effects the applicants should show not just the amount of land and/or floorspace but also the number of FTE jobs affected (although the effects may be mitigated by proposals to relocate the use and jobs within Buckingham, either within the town centre (if appropriate) or the allocated employment land of Policy EE2 for example). The social benefits will be measured primarily in terms of the number, type and tenure of new homes provided for by the site taking in to account the provisions of Policy HP5 of this plan. The environmental benefits will be measured primarily on the improvement to residential amenity and the delivery of on-site BNG, contribution to the Buckinghamshire Green Ring, and provision of any other required public amenity space.

3. The policy is intended to signal to land interests and investors that the community is keen to see the reuse of brownfield land to deliver new homes and jobs in the first instance, therefore limiting the scale of any greenfield sites which need to be considered for allocation.

4. It has been very difficult to establish certainty on the University's future plans. The scale and nature of its operations mean that issues and matters are constantly changing and the University therefore requires a flexible approach in managing its estate. The University is a major employer within the town, as well as providing significant input into the town's economy. Policy EE3 is therefore very supportive of any expansion or redevelopment plans which supports the University's presence in the town. The plan seeks to ensure that the growth of the University's education services is accompanied with the provision of the necessary University accommodation needs. Clause B of the policy therefore works alongside Policy EE3 to ensure this.

5. The policy also retains the made plan allocation of Site J. Landowners have historically not

been in a position to bring forward a scheme for the site for one reason or another, but the site remains available, in a suitable location and suitable for residential development.



POLICY HP3 LAND TO THE SOUTH WEST OF BUCKINGHAM

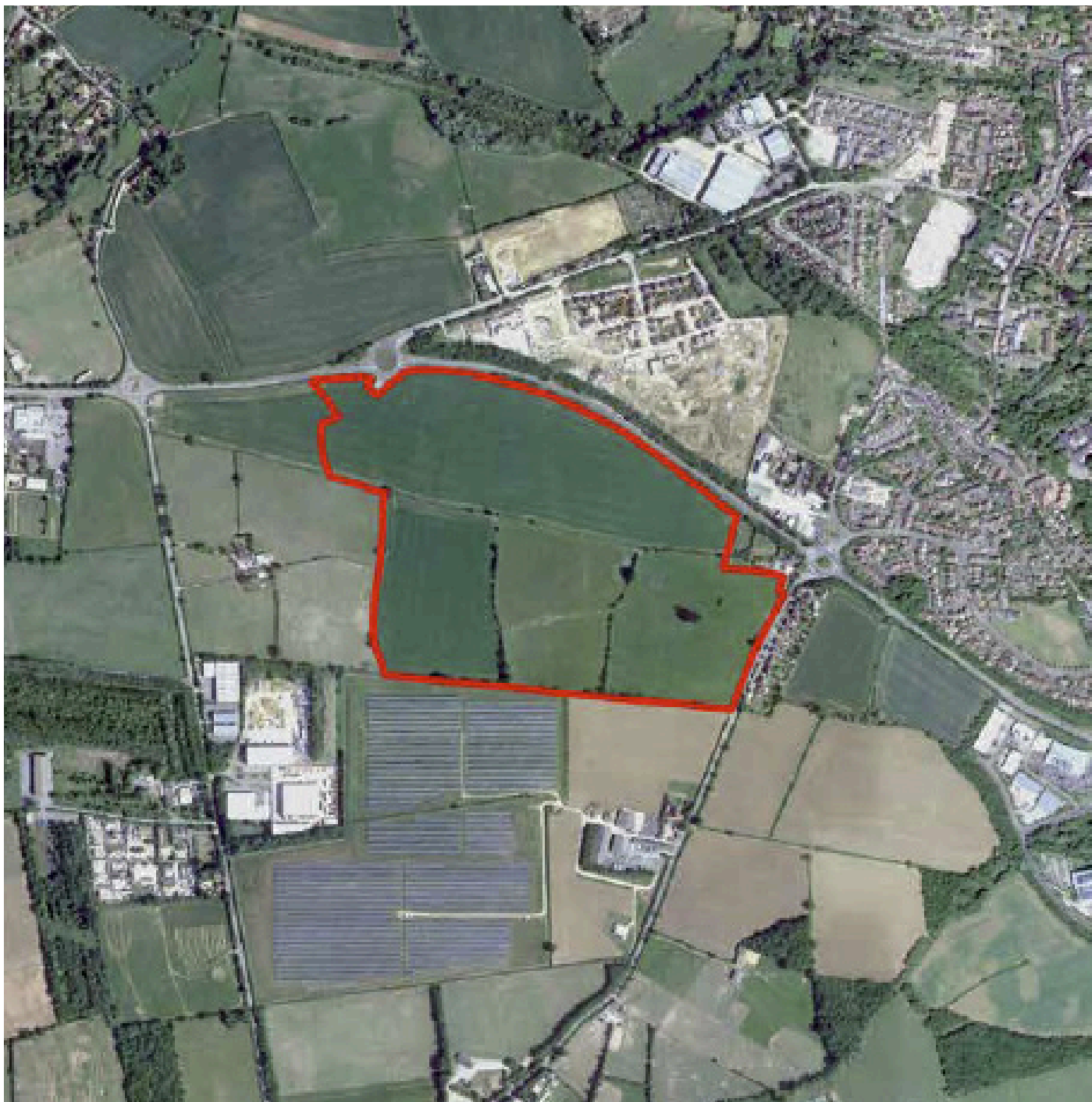
A. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates land to the South West of Buckingham, as shown on the Policies Map, for a mix of residential, education, and local centre uses. Development proposals for the land will be supported provided:

- i. The residential scheme comprises approximately 800 dwellings, including a mix of open market homes of which a percentage should be self-build and/or custom build housing*, and a mix of affordable homes having regard to the evidence of need and viability; *Where serviced plots have been made available and marketed appropriately for at least 12 months and have not sold, the plots may either remain on the open market for self-build/custom build or be built out by the developer**
- ii. The education scheme comprises the provision of a serviced site capable of accommodating a new two form entry primary school with integrated early years provision and proportionate financial contributions (or alternative mechanism) towards the construction and provision of the education facilities (the provision of the site and contributions to be in accordance with the triggers to be agreed);**
- iii. The education scheme shall be designed to facilitate access by sustainable modes from locations within the site and in adjoining communities to ensure that the existing Buckingham community in the southwestern part of the town can also access the primary school safely and securely;**

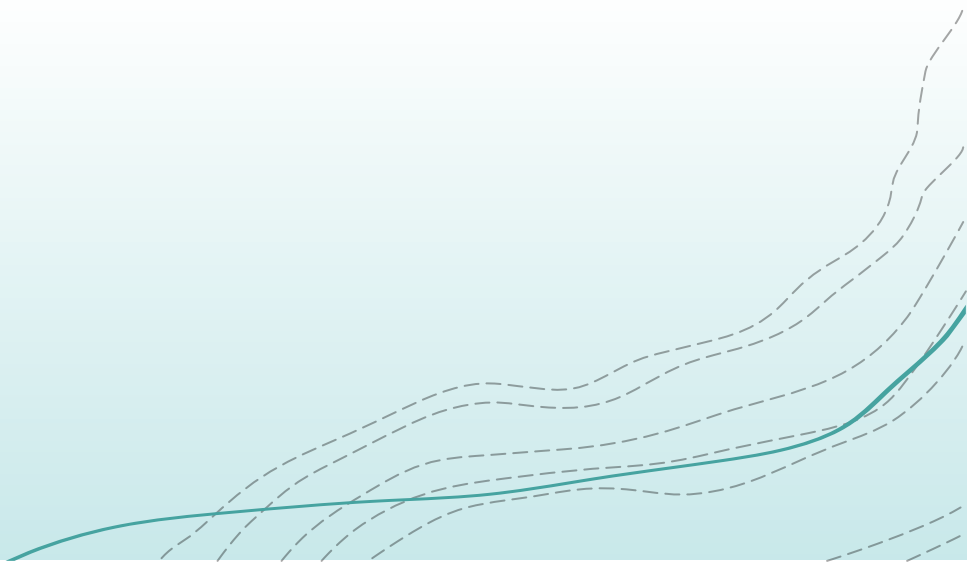
- iv. The local centre comprises workspace and/or retail uses and/or other uses to meet daily convenience needs or provide the opportunity to access such uses locally;**
- v. The transport strategy comprises:**
 - a. Design approaches to promote active and sustainable modes for journeys within the site;**
 - b. Measures to satisfactorily manage its traffic effects on the road network and to encourage and enable safe walking and wheeling to the town centre, community facilities and employment areas in the town;**
 - c. Proposals for the improvement of existing bus services to serve the proposals and connecting to the town centre, community facilities and employment areas in the town; and**
 - d. Provision to encourage a connected movement network within the site, and to encourage connections to the boundary of the site to complement as appropriate proposals for strategic access around the south of the town.**
- vi. A design strategy demonstrates full regard to all the relevant provisions of Buckinghamshire and Buckingham Design Guidance and Codes;**
- vii. The green infrastructure strategy shall make provision for onsite public open space and biodiversity net gain of at least 10% (as measured by the most up to date metric) complementary to the proposed Buckingham Green Ring and as part of its proposals to integrate with the wider network of green infrastructure. The strategy shall:**

- a. Seek to avoid any loss of existing mature trees and hedgerows within the site boundaries and shall seek to meet or exceed an Urban Greening Factor of 0.4 in accordance with Policy ENV3;**
 - b. Use species of known benefit to UK wildlife in any soft landscape proposals;**
 - c. Include an area of open space solely for habitat enhancements and predominantly comprising semi-improved grassland/other neutral grassland. Additional habitats should be incorporated into this area including wetland, scrub and orchard;**
 - d. introduce permanent or ephemeral waterbodies (such as ponds, scrapes, ditches and rain gardens) on site to create new habitats.**
- viii. A flood and sustainable drainage strategy demonstrates how the scheme will manage and not increase surface water flood risk;**
- ix. Proposals should be made in the form of a comprehensive planning application and must include:**
- a. An illustrative masterplan that defines the land uses and sets out the key development principles for access, layout and design;**
 - b. A planning obligation as per clause ii. above;**
 - c. Evidence that it meets the provisions of Policy 1 of the Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Plan 2016 – 2036, or any subsequent replacement, where relevant.**

1. The policy allocates land to the south west of Buckingham and establishes key land uses and development principles to meet the needs of the local community and to ensure a successful scheme is delivered. Alongside the brownfield sites identified within the town, the policy is an enabling policy to support the next level of infrastructure growth within the town without prejudicing longer term growth options.
2. The allocation extends to 32.4 HA of land to the south west of Buckingham and includes a new primary school, local centre, green and blue infrastructure enhancements and new homes. An outline of the site boundaries is shown in Plan 1.
3. There is a larger concentration of primary schools located within the eastern part of the town. The allocation of housing in this location therefore enables the delivery of a new primary school to serve the southwestern part of the town. In addition, the highway scheme of the allocation can be designed in such a way so that any future growth scenario options are not prejudiced in any way.
4. The policy therefore seeks to ensure that the school is located in such a way so that it can be accessed by the existing and new community and that the highways scheme makes provision for a layout and access points which does not harm any future strategic access around the south of the town.
5. Importantly, the policy also requires a planning obligation to be agreed to secure all the infrastructure requirements of the policy, alongside other Local Plan requirements, to deliver a satisfactory scheme. The obligation will detail the phasing of onsite delivery of infrastructure as well as financial contributions to other off-site works.
6. Based on the housing land budget, it is anticipated that approximately 800 dwellings can be delivered. The allocation will be expected to deliver a wide range of house sizes, types and



Plan 1. Outline site: Land South West of Buckingham

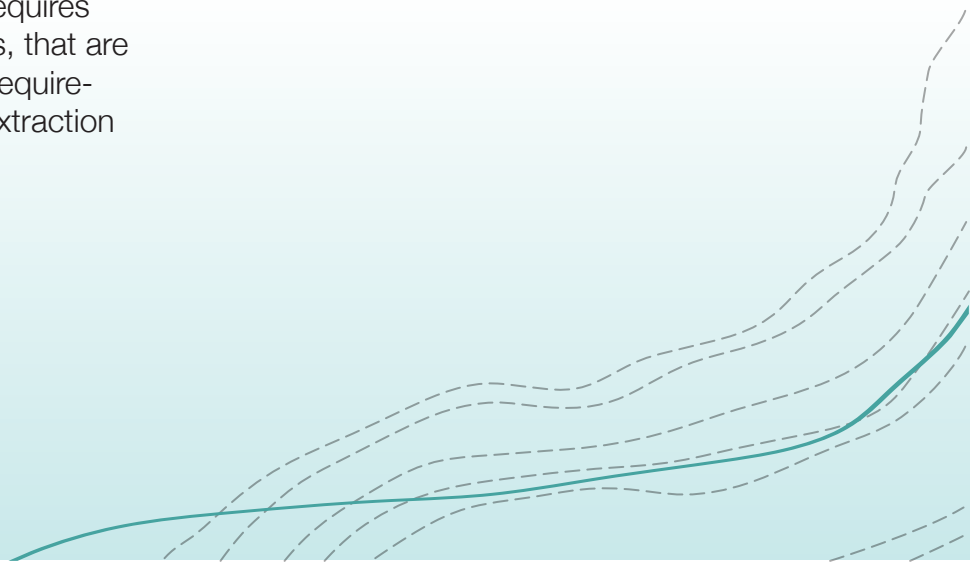


tenures, comprising open market, affordable and self-build/custom-build homes in accordance with other planning policies.

7. The local centre is intended to provide a mix of uses to be negotiated to provide amenities that meet the day to day needs of this new community.
8. In addition to the transport strategy taking into account measures required to enable strategic access around the south of the town, the policy also requires a range of measures to promote sustainable modes of travel and manage its impact on the local road network appropriately.
9. The neighbourhood plan is supported by its own evidence base and benefits from the insights of a desk-based ecological assessment prepared by Future Nature WTC, which is published alongside this plan. It recognises that there is an opportunity to create species-rich grassland in this area alongside other habitats to create habitat mosaics. In addition, the site provides an opportunity to complete another section of the Buckinghamshire Green Ring. The policy therefore requires the consideration of specific measures as part of the wider green infrastructure strategy which also reflects wider requirements imposed by national policies.
10. The site does not fall within a flood risk zone however small part of the site is subject to surface water flood risk. The policy therefore seeks appropriate measures to ensure that the development of the site manages surface water appropriately.
11. A small part of the site also lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area for limestone. Policy 1 of the adopted Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Plan 2016 – 2036 requires schemes located within such areas, that are not development exempt from its requirements, to demonstrate that prior extraction

is possible; the development is of a form or nature that would not hinder future extraction; there is an over-riding need for the development; or that the resource is not viable. The proposal does not meet exemption criteria and the policy therefore seeks to ensure that this test is undertaken and demonstrated as part of any planning application submitted.

12. Finally, the policy requires that any planning application that wishes to benefit from its support must be comprehensive in covering all of its elements and must set out precisely how and when the education scheme will be delivered. This ensures no prospect that the housing element of the development will be built out and occupied before it is secured and able to operate. This will be done through a planning obligation, which will also secure other elements of the policy, for example its provision of affordable housing. The land interest has confirmed that this approach is reasonable and acceptable. A technical summary note for the site is also attached at Appendix B.



POLICY HP4 DEVELOPMENT PHASING AND CONTRIBUTIONS

- A. All housing developments, including infill and windfall sites, should contribute to the range of planning obligations set out in policies of the current and any future adopted development plan if it is demonstrably clear that the net developable area of the site could otherwise accommodate a suitable major housing scheme. On phased schemes, a planning application for a phase with fewer homes that could reasonably otherwise form part of a larger site, should also contribute to the range of planning obligations. Artificially subdividing sites to circumvent proportionate infrastructure contributions and operation will not be supported.**
- B. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the role that the Town Council plays in the long-term management of community buildings and land used by the local community and visitors. Developers are encouraged to engage with the Town Council at an appropriate stage enabling discussions to feed into the process of negotiating eligible S106 funding and long-term management schemes of community buildings and land.**
- C. The following are local priorities for using contributions:**
- 1. Delivering and expanding healthcare provision at Lace Hill**
 - 2. Expanding existing, and delivering new, secondary school or college provision**
 - 3. Improvements to walking and wheeling routes, including town centre access improvements**

- 4. Improvements to public transport into, away from, and within Buckingham**
- 5. Delivering of a community centre (minimum 18m x 10m) with fixed or demountable stage suitable for theatre, to seat at least 200 people**
- 6. Expansion of existing sport and recreation facilities**
- 7. Improvements to existing green and open spaces**

1. Specific contributions on major development sites allocated in this Plan are dealt with within the site-specific policies. This policy broadly applies to any other housing development which may come forward within the plan period. The town has in the past suffered the consequences of a piecemeal approach to development resulting in infrastructure shortfall. Clause A of the policy therefore seeks to ensure that sites are not subdivided to purposely avoid the threshold for making developer contributions.
2. Clause B seeks to signal the Town Council's ability to undertake the long-term management of community buildings and land. The list of assets currently owned and/or managed by the Town Council is extensive and can be found online: www.buckingham-tc.gov.uk. Proposed management plans should be clearly mapped, with the site constructed to appropriate standards, for consideration of the proposal by the Town Council. To be clear, by seeking to negotiate S106 contributions, this does not mean that the Town Council will be supportive of new development, but the opportunity for the community to benefit as a whole if an application is found to meet national and local planning policy and subsequently approved should not be missed.
3. Clause C sets out the how local infrastructure capacity improvements in Buckingham will be prioritised. The Town Council continues to

work closely with Buckinghamshire Council in preparing the indicative cost of each project.

4. Policy S5 of the VALP requires new development to support local infrastructure capacity improvements through a combination of on-and off-site provision, and land and developer contributions. Policy HP3 makes it clear how local infrastructure capacity improvements will be prioritised in Buckingham.
5. It is noted that the method for collecting developer contributions in the former Aylesbury Vale area (of which Buckingham forms part of) does not yet operate a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) scheme. The LURA 2023 also sets out a legislative framework for a new Infrastructure Levy (IL) scheme. It requires secondary legislation to become operational. It is therefore possible that CIL or IL may become operational during the plan period. If so, the Town Council will receive a 25% proportion from a CIL scheme as it has a made neighbourhood plan and the list of local priorities for infrastructure capacity improvements will remain as set out in this policy, until such a time that they are reviewed.

POLICY HP5 HOUSING MIX AND TENURE

- A. All proposals for new housing on sites 1 hectare or over (or 25 dwellings or more) should provide affordable housing at a minimum rate of 35%, (subject to viability). Planning applications for residential development of 25 or more dwellings and sites of 1 hectare or more must be accompanied by an Affordable Housing Plan. The Affordable Housing Plan will set out the mix and location of affordable housing and how it will be phased.**
- B. A greater proportion of affordable housing for social rent will be sought in the overall tenure mix of affordable housing with the final tenure mix agreed taking account of the most up-to-date evidence on housing need and any available evidence regarding local market conditions.**
- C. New residential development must seek to include in their housing mix smaller dwellings (up to 3-bed) with an emphasis on types of homes suitable for first time buyers and those looking to rent their first home, and downsizers. The number of smaller dwellings should be greater than 50% of the total in schemes of five or more dwellings. The provision of bungalows for downsizers as part of the overall mix of homes will be particularly supported.**

1. The policy retains the affordable housing threshold established by the made Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan. There have been no instances of viability issues for proposals in delivering this policy requirement since the implementation of the policy and Clause A therefore retains this policy position. VALP Policy H1 requires a minimum of 25% affordable housing contributions on 11 dwellings or more or on sites of 0.3 Hectares or more. The VALP Inspector's Report noted that some

neighbourhood plans required higher percentages (than in the VALP policy) and that these were justified at the time of the making of those plans. These policies exist side by side and the fact that this policy requires a greater proportion does not mean that it is inconsistent with VALP Policy H1 which sets a minimum requirement. Therefore, the higher threshold established in this policy will continue to apply where relevant.

2. A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) was commissioned for the town of Buckingham in October 2023 and it is published alongside the Plan. It recognises that it will be important to maximise the delivery of new affordable rented housing to address a current backlog, future-proof the stock, and provide homes for households living in the wider rural hinterland. The policy therefore draws attention to this updated evidence and the importance of maximising affordable housing for social rent in the affordable housing delivery of schemes.
3. The HNA also estimates the size mix of future homes that might best accommodate demographic trends and addresses imbalances in the existing housing stock. It recognises that Buckingham needs a diversification away from the high proportion of 4+ bedroom homes in the current housing stock. Clause C of the policy therefore sets out the size and type of dwellings required to achieve these aims. The provision of a stock of smaller housing would not only provide opportunities for 'entry-level' housing but also 'exit-level' housing for downsizers, freeing up family homes. The provision of a given proportion of smaller dwellings (i.e. greater than 50% of the total) will also ensure an efficient use of land in the built-up areas of the town.
4. The HNA also notes that university accommodation in the town is currently provided for through a range of accommodation

types across the town at various sites and the former Best Western Hotel has recently been converted for use as university accommodation. Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) also serve some of this market and is likely to continue to do so. The Town Council will therefore continue to monitor the location and concentration of HMOs in the town to consider any necessary policy intervention in the future.

5. Buckingham has not escaped the national trend of fewer bungalows being built. Research does indicate that there has been a rise in the number of over-65s who would consider moving to a bungalow with the ability to live on one level and easier maintenance bungalows bring offering an opportunity for older people to keep their independence when downsizing. The policy therefore also makes it clear that the provision of bungalows in the overall housing mix will be particularly supported.

