

IVERS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

QUESTIONS FOR BUCKS COUNCIL: APRIL 2021

Q1 Gaps between Settlements

We have defined a small number of important gaps between the settlements in and adjoining the Parish to prevent their potential future visual coalescence. We have commissioned a landscape study to bring together the evidence of various landscape and Green Belt studies in the South Bucks evidence base to support our policy.

Although all the proposed gaps apply to land in the Green Belt, there are proposals (like the MSA on the M25) that may be considered appropriate (or where Very Special Circumstances can be argued) and there is the potential for future land releases by your new Local Plan. In both cases, we intend the policy to put down important markers for how such proposals should be judged.

Is Bucks supportive of the principle of the NP defining such gaps?

Q2 Managing Traffic

We intend to take forward parts of Policy DM CP4 of the withdrawn CSBLP to secure traffic mitigation measures (not including the Iver Relief Road – see below) and public realm benefits from new development schemes in the Parish.

Will Bucks continue to support this type of proposal?

Q3 Iver Relief Road and Reducing HGVs

Our NP will not make reference to the Iver Relief Road idea, as we no longer consider an effective scheme has any chance of being funded and delivered. Recent correspondence with Bucks has more or less confirmed this to be case, and in any event, responding to climate change will likely prevent major road schemes of this type being consistent with national policy in the longer term.

Instead, our intention is to directly address the causes of our biggest problems – HGV traffic – through encouraging changes of use of existing sites in the Parish that are a source of the problem and preventing new uses that generate or attract large numbers of HGV movements in all but some specific locations (on HGV routes and close to suitable road entrances/exits at the Parish boundary). Of course, there are other actions that can be take outside the planning system.

Will Bucks support such an approach?

Q4 Thorney Business Park

We are mindful that the CSBLP (SP BP11) proposed to allocate the existing business park and the Green Belt land between it and Thorney Lane South for a scheme of 1,000 homes and 12,000 sq.m. of employment floorspace. The proposal was partially argued on the basis that it would deliver a section of the Iver Relief Road.

We recognise that the close proximity of the Iver railway station and the compromised open and brownfield nature of this land means that it may be suitable for releasing the land from the Green Belt that is not already inset. However, with the Relief Road no longer possible; with that scale of employment use also likely to generate and attract HGV/commercial traffic in a poor location; and us not wanting to see the station become a park and ride for a much wider area, we propose a different solution.

This would focus on delivering a housing only scheme (of up to say 800 homes) on the approx. 30 Ha of the 44 Ha site primarily between Thorney Lane South and the existing eastern edge of the Business Park. It would also include a small local car park, a new primary school and a community facility next to the station to serve Richings Park as well as the new scheme. It would become a second, northern half of Richings Park rather than a standalone community.

We propose that the remaining 14 Ha comprising the existing Business Park would be reclaimed as a new country park as part of the Colne Valley Regional Park and returned to the Green Belt as a compensatory measure for the release of the housing site. There will be no need to deliver a section of the Relief Road.

Our draft policy had to be careful to avoid overstepping its scope into Green Belt release and so was not able to fully express the above intent. The agents for the Business Park, Savills, have seen the draft policy and have objected on the basis that a smaller scheme to that proposed in BP11 will not be able to deliver the full benefits. But, they have assumed that Bucks will continue to require a significant employment land allocation and the delivery of the Relief Road as part of a scheme, neither of which we think necessary. In which case, the various parties may be closer in their expectations than they think. We have noted that they have said they are continuing to promote their proposal through the new Local Plan.

Will Bucks wish to see our NP play an active role in setting the policy framework for this land to secure earlier benefits than waiting for the adoption of the Local Plan? If so, will it engage with the PC now in finalising an acceptable policy, and will it encourage the land interests to engage too?