

## **The Ivers Neighbourhood Plan summary**

Our neighbourhood plan has to address a number of difficult challenges.

Firstly, we have to try and fill the gap left by the recent failure of the South Bucks Local Plan. Whilst it contained some proposals for Green Belt land releases in the Parish that we strongly objected to, there is no prospect of a new Local Plan being adopted for another four years. We can't pretend that those proposals may not return but, unlike parishes outside the Green Belt, our neighbourhood plan can't take responsibility for deciding which land is and isn't developed.

Secondly, many of our problems in the Parish stem from the extensive use of our local roads by HGVs. But, a lot of this traffic is generated by sites outside the Parish, which we can't control in our Plan. And in any event, the planning system is limited in what it can do – often it's more a licensing matter.

Thirdly, our neighbours in Slough have ambitions to meet their housing needs by growing their town into our Parish around Richings Park and Shreding Green. This will be a decision for Bucks Council in its new Local Plan, but if it's not a fight that a small Parish can win, how do we make sure future proposals preserve the distinct identities of our villages?

And finally, many of the major development projects we're seeing in the Parish – the expansion of Pinewood, the new Motorway Service Area, minerals extraction, Heathrow Rail Link – are national or strategic policy matters that neighbourhood plans can't directly control.

However, we think that there are ways in which our Plan can face up to these challenges and make a difference. It can also propose the kinds of policies on design and climate change that most other neighbourhood plans successfully include.

Our recent engagement with the local community on the draft proposals for addressing these challenges was very helpful. But many misunderstood those challenges and what we can and can't do about them in our own Plan. So, we have put together this short note to help us explain what it is we're proposing in this next revised version of the Plan.

Our policies are focused on a small number of key objectives:

- Design, Identity and Heritage – to raise the standards of design within our villages, to protect their distinctive character by not allowing new development to merge them together or with Slough and to properly recognise our local history (Policies IV1 – IV5)
- Traffic and Air Quality – to reduce the harmful amenity, safety and air quality effects of HGVs by encouraging the change of use of traffic generating sites, limiting where new sites will be allowed (Policies IV6 – IV9)
- Community Assets – to protect our valuable village centres, community facilities and urban open spaces from harmful redevelopment (Policies IV10 – IV12)
- Climate Change – to ensure the Parish makes its own contribution to global efforts by maximising the biodiversity, natural flood management and carbon sinking, as well as recreational value of the Colne Valley Regional Park and the number of new zero carbon buildings (Policies IV13 and IV14)
- Key Development Sites – to shape successful schemes for redeveloping Thorney Business Park, Link Park Heathrow and Thorney Mill Sidings (Policies IV15 and IV16)

## **Summary of Policies**

### IV1 Gaps Between Villages

We have identified some key visual gaps between our villages to prevent new development from making them merge into each other. We've also identified the risk of more ribbon development on roads leading out of the Parish to Uxbridge. The policy doesn't stop development full stop, but it does require that the scale and height of new buildings should be carefully designed.

### IV2 Design in Iver Heath

We've identified some key design characteristics of the village, including some of its key buildings to make sure infill and plot redevelopment schemes maintain its character. We've also identified the special character of some roads around The Parkway and Ashford Road, where many of the original buildings have survived with their classic 1930's appearance.

### IV3 Design in Iver Village

We've identified some key design characteristics of the village, including some of its key buildings to make sure infill and plot redevelopment schemes maintain its character. Its historic core is a Conservation Area and we've identified some opportunities to improve its special character, especially on the High Street.

### IV4 Design in Richings Park

The village is a good example of a 1920's planned estate with some wonderful surviving houses, bungalows and shops inspired by the Arts & Crafts Movement. We've identified its key characteristics to make sure infill and plot redevelopment schemes maintain its character.

### IV5 Local Heritage Assets

These are buildings and other features in the Parish that, although not of a standard to be listed, have local architectural and historic interest, or play an important role in shaping its character. From historic records we've identified more than 60, ranging from a prominent early Victorian coaching inn ('The Bull') in Iver High Street to 20th century parkland like at White Lodge in Iver Heath. Having this status doesn't mean that listed building rules apply, or that improvements etc can't be carried out, but does mean that owners should take into account and preserve that local interest wherever they can.

### IV6 Sustainable Travel

We've identified a network of important walking, cycling and horse-riding routes through the Parish so that we can protect it and require future development proposals to improve its quality and connectivity.

#### IV7 Air Quality

The whole of our Parish has been designated an Air Quality Management Area as an attempt to tackle the problems we have with pollution created by many different sites and roads within the Parish and beyond (the M25 and Heathrow for example). The planning system can only do so much about this, so this policy is intended to do as much as we can to reduce air pollution.

#### IV8 Managing Traffic

We don't believe the Iver Relief Road will ever happen. To be effective it needs to be too long and costly to be affordable and we wouldn't want any half measures that simply pushed the problem further along the road. Instead, as well as tackling the HGV traffic at source with Policy IV9, we want to maximise the financial contributions from future developments to improving our public spaces and to install traffic management and safety measures.

#### IV9 Reducing Heavy Goods Vehicles

Having accepted that the Relief Road won't happen, we want to tackle the problem at source by encouraging existing sites in the Parish that generate HGV traffic to change their use and to restrict new HGV traffic generating uses to only those edges of the Parish nearest to suitable roads. Of the nine main road entry/exit points into the Parish, we think only five of them can handle HGV traffic.

#### IV10 Community Facilities

We've identified a wide range of facilities in the Parish that we know our local communities enjoy and cherish, ranging from our schools, sports grounds and play areas to our community centres. This policy is intended to protect them from loss and to support proposals to improve and extend them.

#### IV11 Village Centres

We have two village shopping centres in the Parish: Iver High Street and Bathurst Walk at Richings Park. Both are well used by local people for some convenience shopping on the doorstep. With changes to shopping behaviour and COVID, we want to protect these centres from losing their small number of remaining shops and services.

#### IV12 Local Green Spaces

We've identified a number of important green spaces within the three villages that might be at risk of future development or encroachment. Including them in this policy will give them the same high level of protection as the Green Belt that surrounds the villages.

#### IV13 Colne Valley Regional Park

All of the Parish lies within the Regional Park, which is a major countryside and recreation asset to have on our doorstep. Climate change is making this type of 'green infrastructure' more valuable in a variety of ways, as well as being important for the local community to enjoy. The Park has set out its own plans for improving its features and our policy has embraced them to given them more importance in the planning system.

#### IV14 PassivHaus Buildings

One of the most important measures we can take to tackle climate change is in how we design new buildings to 'zero carbon' standards now, so we don't have to retro fit them in a few years' time. PassivHaus is the most common standard and, although the build cost is slightly higher than normal, the ongoing energy cost to occupiers is a fraction of the cost now. It's not possible for every site to be suited to meeting this standard, but most are, and we want them all to.

#### IV15 Thorney Business Park

The failed Local Plan proposed a scheme of 1,000 homes and 12,000 sq.m. of employment floorspace covering the existing industrial area as well as all the Green Belt land up to Thorney Road South. It included provision for a new primary school, community centre and a Park & Ride site next to the station. We didn't like that idea but recognised that with the station close by some of the land would be suitable for development. Our policy encourages proposals for fewer homes and no new employment land or Park & Ride (because of the extra traffic they would generate). It would also see a large part of the industrial area being reclaimed for a new country park to form part of the Colne Valley.

#### IV16 Link Park Heathrow & Thorney Mill Sidings

These sites on the eastern edge of the Parish have been one of main sources of HGV traffic problems. We want to encourage new uses of the land that don't generate this type of harmful traffic but that are not huge buildings that will undermine the purpose of the Green Belt in that sensitive location between us and Uxbridge.