

FILE NOTE

Project: Ivers Neighbourhood Plan
Date: 10 September 2021
Circulation: Project Steering Group
Bucks Council (Helen Harding and David Waker)
Neil Homer (ONeillHomer)

NOTE OF MEETING OF 9 SEPTEMBER 2021

Purpose – to clarify Bucks Council comments at Reg 14 and to seek to resolve matters of disagreement, or at least to be clear about any matters that cannot be resolved prior to the submission of the NP – the outcome of this initiative will be captured in final modifications to the Reg 15 version of the NP and its Basic Conditions Statement.

Intro – NH identified five NP policies where there appeared disagreement of substance: 7 (Air Quality), 8/9 (Traffic and HGVs), 11 (Local Centres) and 15 (Thorney Business Park). With all other policies it is expected that Bucks Council issues can be addressed with relatively minor modifications to phrasing etc.

NH further noted that common to four of those policies – 7, 8, 9 and 15 – as well as some others (e.g. Pinewood) is the underlying different past and future visions of the Parish held by the PC and Bucks. For Bucks (and South Bucks before) IPC considered that the Parish has been seen as a suitable location for major economic and waste development schemes, based on a legacy of old industrial estates, major road and rail infrastructure and minerals sites on the edge of London. The result has been years of blight for the three village communities that would otherwise benefit from relative rural isolation in the Metropolitan Green Belt. The PC's vision is of a Parish that comprises sustainable communities benefiting from residential amenity that any village should expect. There is a major concern about the impacts on local air quality and the health of the local population.

The meeting discussed how this issue is brought into starkest contrast by the Iver Relief Road proposal. Long considered to be the antidote to the significant HGV and other traffic problems that blight the Parish, the proposal is no nearer agreement in terms of specification/route and no nearer having a viable means of delivery. This was confirmed by Bucks' Cllr Tett in a briefing to local councillors in November 2020 in relation to the M25 service station proposals.

And yet Bucks Highways in their Reg 14 comments still appear wedded to a scheme (there are at least four different variations). As a result this may encourage a variety of land

interests to part deliver a scheme to promote their own proposals in the current policy vacuum with the withdrawal of the CSB Local Plan.

It was noted that the above NP policies are argued on the basis that no 'relief road' will happen and other strategies to deal with root causes, not symptoms, are needed. It was agreed that the NP examiner will struggle with understanding the goals of the NP if this remains unresolved. HH suggested that Bucks Highways will need to assist IPC in providing a suggested wording for the NP in respect of the Iver relief road and advise whether there were any knock – on implications for other NP policies. IPC needed confirmation that there was no objection to policies 7,8 and 9 from Bucks Highways.

HH and DW were not able to clarify Bucks' position on these matters at the meeting, but noted that the Reg 14 comments from BC represented the many different policy responsibilities that the new unitary authority now held. HH noted that the SB Core Strategy policy 16 remained relevant in part (seeking redevelopment to reduce HGV movements and allowing for suitable employment uses – offices – of an appropriate scale) and this was agreed. It was noted that the PC intends that NP Policy 15 will update and replace CS16 (now more than a decade old) by significantly scaling down the latter's emphasis on employment and by accommodating the residential-led proposals in the withdrawn LP. HH noted that the Housing Land Supply position for South Bucks could be an important factor in considering suitable uses for the site.

However, NH noted that a new vision for the land north of Iver Station (Thorney Business Park) cannot work with a Relief Road scheme that severs the new community from Richings Park and that will require the land interests to bring forward an area and quantum of housing and employment development great enough to finance part of the Road. The meeting was reminded of past proposals by the land interests to deliver a new sustainable community that were generally supported locally but were not included in the Core Strategy. IPC felt that there was a vulnerability from other potential proposals in the Green Belt which might not be required to finance a relief road.

The PC wishes to meet again with the land interests for the NP policy 15 site to seek to negotiate a final version of policy 15. In their Reg 14 comments, it is clear that they expect Bucks Highways to require the same approach as proposed in the withdrawn LP. The Parish considers that Bucks Council perceive policy 15 (which provides for less overall development and requires a compensatory return to the Green Belt of the non-developable part of the site) as unworkable as Green Belt status cannot be altered via a neighbourhood plan without strategic policy indicating Green Belt changes need to be made and have objected. The PC considers that its new vision may be welcomed if the Relief Road is no longer required and if the policy intent can be better explained. It was also noted that although there are limitations on neighbourhood planning in the Green Belt it would be desirable for policy 15 to provide a framework to guide the critical matters for a 'very special circumstances' case to be made in a planning application for earlier delivery of new residential development (and fewer HGV movements). Policy 15 helps the NP set out main matters of concern and opportunities which a potential planning application could address

Otherwise, the redevelopment of the land may not benefit from a potential Green Belt release and site allocation until the new LP some years away (there is no certainty about the location of new site allocations in the Buckinghamshire Local Plan).

There was a discussion on whether the wording of clause (x) of Policy 15 could be amended to address the concerns about traffic impacts alongside its references to suitable land uses for the site. HH queried whether IPC considered that new offices could potentially be suitable and Cllr Matthews agreed as this was accepted within the CSB LP and was accepted locally. It was agreed that the key issue was the need to reduce traffic and air quality impacts from the site. It was agreed that the NP could not specify the amount of new floorspace which could be accommodated on the site as this would be subject to more detailed assessment, e.g. via a planning application. It was suggested that the provisos about the need to mitigate traffic and air quality impacts could be added into clause (x) to link the scope of new land uses more closely to such impacts. HH and DW could explore these suggestions with other colleagues at Bucks.

HH and DW proposed to arrange an internal Bucks meeting to discuss and resolve these matters if possible. This was very much welcomed by the PC and it hopes this will happen within the next month as it will seek to arrange a meeting with the land interests w/c 18 October, leaving room for a PC/Bucks pre-meeting w/c 11 October. If it is concluded that a mutually agreeable solution can be found then ideally the meeting with the land interests will be attended by relevant Bucks officer(s) alongside the PC.

It was agreed that the Article 4 Direction (A4Ds) matter in relation to Local Centres (policy 11) will be addressed by the PC in a separate note for HH and DW as the intention of IPC was to provide a supporting context to facilitate A4Ds.