

Great Missenden & Prestwood Revitalisation Group

Incorporating Ballinger, South Heath and Heath End

Representation to Buckinghamshire Council Visions & Objectives Survey 2023

Overall, the proposed objectives look very good. However, without seeing details of how Buckinghamshire Council intends to achieve them it is too early to comment extensively. All Great Missenden & Prestwood Revitalisation Group (GMPRG) can do at this stage is provide local surveys and opinion, which it is hoped will be helpful to Buckinghamshire Council in understanding the needs of this area for the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan as it progresses.

Local consultation in the Parish

The Great Missenden Parish Market Town Health Check Consultation in 2008 and the update in 2018 highlighted a number of local needs such as a residential care home and affordable housing, in particular starter homes.

<http://www.gmprg.org.uk/cv4hp16.html>

https://www.gmprg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CV2018_results.pdf

Previous responses to Local Plan Consultations by GMPRG to Local Plan Consultations:

Please also see GMPRG's submission to the last Chiltern & South Bucks Local Plan 2036, which includes details of local need, such as an educational site allocation for a new combined school. This in turn could provide sites in the built-up area to provide for other needs, such as better medical provision and a youth and community hub.

<https://www.gmprg.org.uk/response-to-new-local-plan/>

<https://www.gmprg.org.uk/submission-to-latest-local-plan-public-consultation/>

The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire vision

The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire objectives

To achieve the vision, we have created 8 draft objectives.

These are equally important and cover all major aspects of the local plan. Each objective has an aim and a set of actions.

Objective 1: Natural and built environment

Aim: To conserve and enhance Buckinghamshire's valued natural, historic, and built environments, to ensure they are protected from inappropriate development. To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

- a. sustain the predominantly rural character of Buckinghamshire
- b. protect valued landscapes including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Green Belt from inappropriate development
- c. conserve and enhance special places for nature and create a connected county-wide network of green and blue infrastructure which maximises opportunities for biodiversity net gain with the creation of new priority habitats and green infrastructure
 - green infrastructure includes open spaces, parks, woods, footpaths and cycleways
 - blue infrastructure includes ponds, rivers, lakes and floodplains
- d. improve water quality in our rivers and watercourses, prioritising our chalk streams

e. ensure that development respects historic assets and facilitates the enhancement of their setting

Do you agree with the 'Natural and built environment' objective for the local plan?

GMPRG Response

Overall agreed, but with a high priority for improving our chalk streams. These need to be improved immediately not by 2040.

In addition, high priority needs to be given to funding for the essential mapping, ongoing tracking and community communication of the health of ecological systems in our bioregion.

Objective 2: Mitigating / adapting to climate change

Aim: To ensure the delivery of sustainable development, mitigating climate change and adapting to the impacts on Buckinghamshire's environment. To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

- a. work towards achieving a carbon-neutral plan – this means reducing and offsetting carbon emissions across Buckinghamshire
- b. direct growth to the most sustainable locations in terms of connections and services
- c. design new development to be resilient to climate extremes and manage the risk of flooding
- d. increase the supply of renewable / low-carbon energy and provide supporting infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging points and alternative fuels
- e. require the highest standards of insulation and energy efficiency in new and refurbished buildings
- f. enable locally liveable neighbourhoods in new development and regenerated areas
- g. provide attractive and viable alternatives to the private car

4. Do you agree with the 'Mitigating / adapting to climate change' objective for the local plan?

GMPRG Response:

Agree overall. Urgent needs include:

- Emphasis on building in sustainability. This would include all new buildings required to have:
 - solar panels or tiles,
 - Grey water systems to reduce extracted water consumption
 - Heat pumps
 - High insulation standards
- Converting buses, trains and waste service vehicles to environmentally friendly forms such as hydrogen or electric.
- Public education around the difference between mitigation and adaptation that includes long term visioning around, and responses to future community resource challenges relating to the systemic impacts of anticipated climate and biodiversity loss.
- Funding for community-generated responses to adaptation, due to climate change.
- Local governmental support for the ongoing development for community operational plans to accommodate the extended failure of local resources (water, food supply chain, electricity).

Objective 3: Provision of homes

Aim: To meet housing needs, increase housing affordability and tenure choice throughout Buckinghamshire, prioritising brownfield land development. To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

- a. provide a range of housing to meet local needs for market, affordable, accessible and specialist needs (such as Lifetime homes so people can stay in their homes for longer) while recognising the diversity in the character and context of our urban, suburban and rural areas
- b. enable the delivery of homes for key workers, people with local connections, and those seeking self- and custom-build opportunities
- c. ensure new housing is of high-quality design, low-carbon and digitally enabled and in keeping with its surroundings.

Do you agree with the 'Provision of homes' objective for the local plan?

GMPRG Response:

Yes in principle, but due to the constraints of Green Belt it will be a challenge to meet the needs of this area.

Local needs need to be provided locally, not miles away in Aylesbury, so some local development will be necessary to provide it. It is not sustainable to encourage people to travel any further than is necessary.

To achieve this requires creative Master-planning for the settlements of Prestwood and Great Missenden, which are considered locally as separate communities with different needs, so that the right things are in the right places.

In the Great Missenden Parish Village Design Statement (GMPVDS), consulted in 2012, it was considered that smaller sites around settlement areas deliver greater community cohesion.

Prestwood has a population of 8,000 and there are small pockets of land that could be used to build a small number of houses for older people and young first time buyers so that they may remain close to and be supported by their existing families within the village.

In Prestwood, other than Giles Gate for downsizing in old age, there are no other developments within the village and no residential or nursing care accommodation. More are needed.

A refresh of the Market Town Health Check - Community Vision was conducted in 2018 and whilst residents do not support major changes to the area, there are common themes of requirements:

- "Affordable housing for our children, so they don't have to move away."
- "A mixed age community."
- "There are many people in their 80's living on their own in 4-bedroom houses because there are few alternatives for them".
- "Keep it rural- no major development".
- "A wider range of shops and restaurants to sustain those already here and more local employment opportunities".

Local estate agents have confirmed that there is a great need for down-size and more age-restricted properties. During the C&SBLP2036 plan period the number of residents aged over 80 in Bucks was due to increase by 44%.

Identified needs such as affordable housing for key workers should also be provided locally within the district, not sent to Aylesbury, as the high cost of housing in Chiltern is making it difficult to recruit teachers, emergency service workers. Redevelopment of the current Paradigm social housing in Hazell Road, Prestwood is supported. From plans drawn up locally, it can be seen that this site could provide twice the amount of sustainable and better designed dwellings.

It should be noted that in recent years the Parish has lost provision of 36 residential care beds due to redevelopment of Chalk Leys, (Freemantle Trust). Great Missenden in particular has an aging demographic with a higher proportion of over 60's than other settlements in the Chiltern area. The only facilities for residential and dementia care are miles away and not easily accessible by public transport. Therefore it is imperative to provide for this need locally.

Objective 4: Quality of place

Aim: Create great places to live and work that function well, and are welcoming, safe, and accessible to all. To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

- a. take inspiration from valued and unique characteristics of Buckinghamshire to deliver high quality design that reinforces Buckinghamshire's distinctiveness, while being innovative in design and construction
- b. enable self-contained neighbourhoods that are supportive of healthy lifestyles, easy to move through and easy to understand
- c. provide sufficient and well-integrated parking
- d. ensure development is built to high standards of sustainability and energy efficiency
- e. secure a robust network of spaces across Buckinghamshire for recreation, play, biodiversity, and water infrastructure, connecting into the rights of way network

Do you agree with the 'Quality of place' objective for the local plan?

GMPRG Response:

This covers far too broad a subject and looks like a brief just for new development, rather than improvement and providing what is needed in existing settlements.

In terms of improvements to the existing settlements of Great Missenden and Prestwood, please see the plan for a proposed place-making project to create a village centre for Prestwood on our website: <https://www.gmprg.org.uk/current-projects/prestwood-village-revitalisation/>

As can be seen in the brief and the report there would be many benefits by implementing such a scheme.

Objective 5: Community health and wellbeing

Aim: To support sustainable communities throughout Buckinghamshire, by improving health care facilities and access to them – supporting physical and mental health, and social and cultural wellbeing for residents. To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

- a. create places that support active lifestyles and good physical and mental health through people-friendly streets, open and green spaces, and play areas
- b. work with health providers to ensure appropriate local health facilities and access to them (and deliver new ones where they are needed)

- c. provide new or enhanced sport, leisure and cultural facilities where needed, (improve access to existing)
- d. improve air quality in Air Quality Management Areas – these are locations where the air pollution levels exceed safe levels

Do you agree with the ‘Community health and wellbeing’ objective for the local plan?

GMPRG Response:

There have been a number of attempts to provide better services in Prestwood, particularly sports facilities, but they have been fraught with planning and funding issues.

Prestwood lacks green spaces within the village and Prestwood Common and the adjoining Recreation Ground needs to remain a Local Green Space, with improved buildings and more sports and play facilities in line with CDC Open Spaces Strategy- <https://www.chiltern.gov.uk/open-space-strategy>



Medical facilities: In Prestwood a much better GP surgery needs to be built; the current facilities are inadequate for the size of population. This could be achieved on the Chequers Lane allotment site, owned by Great Missenden Parish Council, by relocating the allotments to a Green Belt site outside of the village settlement area.

Objective 6: Infrastructure

Aim: To ensure the right infrastructure required to support communities is provided in the right place and at the right time, and make best use of existing facilities. To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

- a. facilitate wider connectivity across Buckinghamshire and beyond
- b. ensure improved local connections within and between settlements
- c. provide appropriate social infrastructure including for health, education, skills training, sports, recreation and other community facilities
- d. provide and connect green and blue infrastructure to enhance the landscape and biodiversity
- e. create safe and vibrant public spaces in towns and villages

f. provide flood risk mitigation and sustainable urban drainage solutions g. ensure the provision of energy, water and other utilities, and manage waste of all kinds

Do you agree with the 'Infrastructure' objective for the local plan?

GMPRG Response:

Agree overall with the following comments:

Please refer to the Community Vision and previous Local Plan submissions where a detailed response relating to this objective can be found:

For Prestwood in the Local Plan high priority needs to be given to the provision of an educational site allocation for a new academised combined infant/junior school to be built. This is due to the fact that when the Lodge Lane Estate was built many years ago, by the developer Lovells, it did not provide the infrastructure promised within the scheme. Hence, the infants & junior schools are inadequate. Details of proposed site can be found in previous Local Plan submissions via the links above and below:

Proposed area of land (Site 4.055 in the HELAA) to be retained as an educational site allocation



Improvements to the Public Realm via Community Infrastructure Levies

To enable revitalisation projects, such as town centre redesigns and road improvement schemes, developers of larger projects need to make contributions via a Community Infrastructure Levy or investment in projects so that new development is a benefit to all.

Within the 2018 refresh of the Community Vision for the Parish, the top priority for local improvements is to public space, closely followed by improvements to the appearance of villages.

See- <http://www.gmprg.org.uk/current-projects/community-vision/>

Objective 8: Transport, physical and digital connectivity

Aim: To improve connectivity across and between Buckinghamshire towns and villages with regional and national centres beyond by securing new sustainable transport infrastructure, upgrading existing infrastructure and improving digital connectivity. To achieve this objective, the local plan will:

- a. maximise the connectivity opportunities presented by large-scale strategic transport schemes such as East West Rail to focus the location of growth and encourage inward investment in Buckinghamshire
- b. create safe and attractive walking and cycling routes as the first choice for shorter journeys for those who are able
- c. diversify, extend and enhance public transport provision including planning for low-carbon innovations, facilitating changes of mode to complete car-free journeys
- d. facilitate effective transport solutions for those with mobility challenges
- e. direct road freight to the most appropriate routes and plan for facilities that support sustainable freight activity (e.g. consolidation centres and community delivery hubs) and first mile / last mile solutions
- f. support the provision of digital infrastructure to the most remote parts of Buckinghamshire
- g. deliver low or zero carbon fuel infrastructure through new development

Do you agree with the 'Transport, physical and digital connectivity'

GMPRG Response:

Yes, in principle, but there are challenges. Please see reports on GMPRG and the Prestwood Village Association websites:

<https://www.gmprg.org.uk/current-projects/community-transport-group/>

and [Carousel Bus Route 41 | Prestwood Village Association \(prestwoodva.org.uk\)](https://www.prestwoodva.org.uk/carousel-bus-route-41)

With regard to buses in Prestwood there is no funding and limited interest from the current providers to improve the service. It's a chicken and egg situation; the providers will not increase the service and the residents don't use it because there are too few buses and only a minimal timetable, with no service on Sundays.

An improved bus service which links Prestwood to Aylesbury, Amersham, Chesham and High Wycombe in a direct route that doesn't go round the houses is needed. The current situation with the 41 route run by Carousel takes 45 minutes, versus fifteen minutes by car. It would be particularly useful to have a pick-up service with smaller buses and a more regular timetable, similar to that currently available in High Wycombe. By way of example, the 300 route that links High Wycombe and Aylesbury via Naphill and Princes Risborough has a 30 minute schedule with a Sunday service, with a comparable population en route. A service to Stoke Mandeville and Amersham hospitals would be helpful. Currently many local people rely on volunteer services like Prestwood Area Community Transport <https://prestwoodca.org.uk/>

www.gmprg.org.uk

4 June 2023