



Buckinghamshire's Draft Local Plan

A statement by Callum Anderson, Member of Parliament for the Buckingham and Bletchley constituency.

As the Member of Parliament for the Buckingham and Bletchley constituency, I am setting out my position on the draft Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, prepared by Buckinghamshire Council, published as part of the Regulation 19 consultation.

I write from two perspectives. First and foremost, as the Member of Parliament for north Buckinghamshire, covering Buckingham, Winslow and the many villages in between. I also write as the representative for Bletchley, Fenny Stratford, Kingsmead, Oxley Park, Tattenhoe, Tattenhoe Park, and Westcroft which sit within Milton Keynes and border Buckinghamshire, given a number of the sites proposed in this draft Local Plan would see new residents rely on Milton Keynes services, including its hospital, its schools, its GPs and its roads, while paying council tax to a Buckinghamshire Council based in Aylesbury.

This consultation has caused real distress for residents across north Buckinghamshire. Many feel they have been ignored, once again, by an administration whose focus has been predominantly on the south of the county, since Buckinghamshire Council's creation in 2020. My constituents rightly demand more from their Council than a simple passing of the buck to national government, especially given the risks of that come with not having a Local Plan at all.

Accordingly, my concern is not that a draft Local Plan exists, but rather whether it is based on robust investigation and genuine engagement with residents, businesses, and landowners in north Buckinghamshire, our parish councils, and neighbouring local authorities including Milton Keynes City Council.

What is a Local Plan, and why does this consultation matter?

A Local Plan sets out the vision and framework for the future development of an area. This Plan should meet the needs and opportunities of the whole of Buckinghamshire, north and south, for the period 2024 to 2045, particularly on housing, our local economy, community facilities and infrastructure.

This Regulation 19 consultation is the final opportunity for residents and their representatives to make representations before the draft Plan is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination. At that stage, any comments must focus on two questions: has the Plan been prepared in line with the relevant legal requirements, and is it sound?

A sound plan must meet four tests:

1. It must be positively prepared, providing a strategy that meets Buckinghamshire's identified needs and contributes to sustainable development. I fear that there will be legitimate questions as to whether that test is met, given how disproportionate the ask of north Buckinghamshire is compared with the rest of the county.
2. It must be justified, based on proportionate evidence and representing the most appropriate strategy when weighed against reasonable alternatives. Again, I believe many may well conclude that the Council has not shown that there is no more



reasonable alternative to the scale of housing being placed on north Buckinghamshire.

3. It must be effective, deliverable over the plan period and based on genuine joint working across boundaries. Given how heavily housing delivery is backloaded into the 2030s and beyond, I question whether this Plan can seriously be called effective. Instead it appears to be a politically-loaded Plan with the next general election, which must be held by August 2029, in mind.
4. Finally, it must be consistent with national policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework. I would very much welcome a clearer, more explicit, and more consistent role for Neighbourhood Plans within the Development Plan. Neighbourhood Development Plan policies and allocations have been through independent examination and a local referendum, yet they are mentioned only sporadically across this draft Local Plan's policies and supporting text.

National planning guidance reads clear to me: where a Neighbourhood Plan is in force, the Local Planning Authority — that is, Buckinghamshire Council — should take its policies into account, and local plan policies should not duplicate or supersede them without evidence of changed circumstances. A number of parish councils in north Buckinghamshire have told me directly that they have struggled to secure meaningful engagement from Buckinghamshire Council on their Neighbourhood Plans, and this draft Local Plan does little to reassure them that that has changed or will change in the future.

I also have strong concerns about whether Buckinghamshire Council has discharged its duty to co-operate under section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Over 12,000 new homes are allocated very close to the boundary with Milton Keynes, yet Milton Keynes City Council does not appear anywhere in Appendix 1 to the Sites Engagement Consultation Statement¹. As the Member of Parliament for Bletchley, Fenny Stratford, Tattenhoe, Tattenhoe Park, Oxley Park, Kingsmead and Westcroft, I would welcome clear evidence that Milton Keynes City Council has been properly consulted on this draft Local Plan, and clarity on what view it has expressed on the strategic sites proposed near its border, in particular the strategic site at Beachampton, but also at Winslow and Buckingham, given residents there would inevitably use facilities such as Milton Keynes Hospital.

I have also contacted by at least one landowner in north Buckinghamshire who tells me they have received no engagement whatsoever from Buckinghamshire Council, yet has seen a portion of their land identified in the Plan as a site for development. If this is one case among a number of similar cases across the county, I am concerned that the Planning Inspector may cast doubt on whether the Draft Local Plan's evidence base can be considered sound.

A national mission I'm proud to support

At the 2024 General Election, this Labour Government was elected on a national manifesto to build 1.5 million new homes over this Parliament, and I stood on a local manifesto in the Buckingham and Bletchley constituency in support of that mission.

Since that election, we have updated the National Planning Policy Framework, restored mandatory housing targets, and required every planning authority, including Buckinghamshire Council, to have an up-to-date Local Plan.



Our approach is brownfield first, prioritising previously used land and fast-tracking approval of urban brownfield sites. But brownfield alone will not meet our housing needs. We are also taking a more strategic approach to green belt land, prioritising the release of lower quality grey belt land, and introducing golden rules to ensure development benefits communities and nature alike.

I want to be clear that I support these changes – and recognise that Buckinghamshire Council's Conservative administration strongly opposes it and has done so from the beginning.

I have always been explicit in my support of housing targets and of planning reform because, over the past two and a half years, first as a parliamentary candidate and now as a Member of Parliament, too many young people have told me of their aspiration to lead independent lives in their own home is beyond their reach. They regularly tell me of their dreams to take that first step on the housing ladder, or for somewhere they can afford to rent in the place they grew up – and I, for one, want to support them

Too many working parents have confided in me of their desperation to climb the property ladder, so they can raise their family in a home that suits them. Too many people in middle age want their children to gain independence and start a new chapter of their own lives. And too many older residents who want their children and grandchildren to live near them in the autumn of their lives, yet find they are too often forced to move away from north Buckinghamshire, whether to Milton Keynes, Northampton or the south of the county.

I am not going to turn my back on the challenge facing us in Buckinghamshire because it may be politically difficult.

While it is the Labour Government which sets the planning rules and the housing targets, it is Conservative-led Buckinghamshire Council which is responsible for deciding where that housing goes. It is the Council's officers operating under the strict political direction of the Council Leader and Cabinet Member responsible for planning who have made these choices. That responsibility does not sit with the Westminster Government.

There are some who will claim that Labour wants to concrete over the countryside. That is simply wrong. I live in a Buckinghamshire village. I love our rural communities, and it is part of what makes this county so special.

A draft Local Plan that has been a long time coming

Given what my constituents are telling me, it is right that Buckinghamshire plays its full part in delivering the homes of the future.

I find it deeply regrettable that this draft Plan did not exist sooner. Buckinghamshire Council had six years since its establishment in April 2020 to prepare one, yet the Conservative administration took its eye off the ball, ultimately forcing the Minister for Housing and Planning to step in and take the unprecedented step of issuing a Local Plan intervention letter in February 2026² and set a deadline for the Council to get its Local Plan ready, in order to meet its housing target.



Buckinghamshire is currently covered by Local Plans inherited from its former district councils, all but one of which are more than five years old and contain policies that may be out of date. This is despite the hard work of many of our villages in producing Neighbourhood Development Plans - work that should have been given proper weight by Buckinghamshire Council far sooner.

As things stand, Buckinghamshire Council has not been able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply in any of the former district areas it inherited (including the now former Aylesbury Vale which covers my constituency), placing Buckinghamshire in the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The practical result is a near certainty of piecemeal, speculative development, with reduced public engagement and fewer guarantees that any site will reach its full potential.

We have seen this play out in real time. Recent, controversial Green Belt developments in the south of the county have been approved only because the Council lacked an up-to-date Local Plan and a five-year land supply, in cases where local Conservative Members of Parliament have publicly opposed them. I understand that those decisions have proven politically damaging for this administration, but that should not mean ill thought-out plans for the north of the county.

The numbers bear this out too. Office for National Statistics figures show that housing starts in Buckinghamshire fell by 53 per cent between 2019 and 2024, from 1,970 to just 930. Completions fell by 38 per cent over the same period, from 2,260 to 1,400. That is the record of an administration that let years slip by while the housing crisis for my constituents in this county grew worse.

The unequal distribution of housing allocations

The most striking feature of this draft Local Plan is the imbalance in how Buckinghamshire Council proposes to distribute future housing growth. North Buckinghamshire is effectively being proposed as the Council administration's housing release valve.

The former Aylesbury Vale District accounts for 29 per cent of identified local housing need, yet the Plan allocates it 51,609 of 55,902 new homes — 92 per cent of the total.

The contrast with the rest of the county, however, is stark. Wycombe accounts for 24 per cent of housing need but receives only 5 per cent of new allocations. Chiltern accounts for 32 per cent but receives 2 per cent. South Buckinghamshire accounts for 15 per cent but receives just 0.4 per cent.

Those figures deserve a clear explanation because they determine where communities will grow, where infrastructure will come under pressure, and which parts of the county will experience the greatest change.

Residents in Winslow, for example, find it difficult to digest Buckinghamshire Council's proposal for a minimum of 9,370 dwellings, of which 6365 would be delivered during the Plan period. That is a scale of development that would fundamentally alter the character and infrastructure needs of the town and surrounding communities.



Similarly, residents in Beachampton, Whaddon and west Milton Keynes find it hard to process the proposal for a new residential-led settlement delivering a minimum of 8,230 dwellings, of which approximately 3,200 would be delivered within the Plan period. Communities understandably want to know why such a substantial proportion of the county's future growth is being concentrated in this part of Buckinghamshire and whether the necessary infrastructure will be delivered alongside it.

As part of my duties and responsibilities as a local Member of Parliament, I speak regularly to people across north Buckinghamshire. Many recognise that we face a housing crisis. Many also accept that, given our transport links, including East West Rail, and our proximity to Milton Keynes, our area needs to take its fair share.

What people struggle to accept is the scale and concentration of that responsibility. They also question what they see as a lack of care and compassion from councillors who predominantly represent wards in the south of the county yet make decisions that will fundamentally change communities in the north.

I recognise that much of this additional housing falls within two of Buckinghamshire's three parliamentary constituencies currently represented by Labour MPs. That fact does not prove that party politics has influenced the Plan; I have no doubt that Buckinghamshire Council has undertaken its work objectively and professionally.

But residents are entitled to ask whether the administration itself has applied those principles fairly. People in north Buckinghamshire can see the numbers. They can see where the housing is going. They can see the Council's own assessment of housing need elsewhere in the county and where the Council's political leadership represents.

A Local Plan must do more than allocate housing numbers; it should set out a shared vision for Buckinghamshire's future. Every part of the county should feel that it matters within that vision.

There is an opportunity here to rebalance the Plan and give north Buckinghamshire's communities the recognition they deserve. If these communities are being asked to accommodate such significant growth, they deserve a clear explanation of why, meaningful investment in infrastructure and confidence that the burden of growth is being distributed fairly across the county.

North Buckinghamshire should not be treated as Buckinghamshire's housing release valve. Our communities are willing to play their part in meeting the county's housing needs, but they are entitled to expect fairness, proper infrastructure and a Plan that recognises the value of every community across Buckinghamshire.

Questions of deliverability and cross-boundary planning

My concerns do not stop at the fairness of the distribution. I also question whether the north can support development on this scale.

Beachampton raises particular concerns. The Government has now announced the seven locations selected for its New Towns Programme. Beachampton is not one of them. The Government has rejected it.



Therefore, continuing to describe Beachampton as a New Town after that decision creates a misleading impression about its status and potential support from the Westminster Government. A label does not make it a New Town. Residents deserve a straightforward explanation of what Buckinghamshire Council now means by the proposal and how it could realistically deliver a settlement of this scale.

The same principle applies to cross-boundary planning raises another set of questions. Turweston and Beachampton sit close to Buckinghamshire's boundaries with neighbouring local planning authorities. I remain severely concerned about the extent to which those councils, particularly Milton Keynes City Council, helped shape the proposals.

This matters to all of my constituents, in both the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes halves of my constituency, because infrastructure does not stop at a county boundary. Health services, schools, roads and public transport all require joined-up planning. With thousands of homes proposed close to Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire should not plan in isolation. I would welcome full transparency from Buckinghamshire Council as to what conversations they've had with Milton Keynes City Council – and specifically with whom and when they took place – and what the summary and subsequent responses to those conversations were.

The Plan also leaves almost no room for failure. It provides a buffer of just 35 homes against a total requirement of 91,230. Several major sites also depend on measures such as flood alleviation before they can proceed.

If one significant site fails to deliver, the Council could struggle to meet the overall target. The concern becomes greater when we look at the two major developments closest to Milton Keynes. Turweston and Beachampton, together with adjacent allocations, account for more than 12,000 homes. Yet I have not seen evidence of the Statements of Common Ground required by the NPPF to demonstrate how services such as health and education will support this growth.

I would welcome Buckinghamshire Council clarifying whether developments provide the infrastructure they need without relying on agreements with neighbouring authorities. If the answer is no, then a very large share of Buckinghamshire's housing target depends on arrangements that have not yet been properly tested.

Water, sewerage and infrastructure capacity

Water and sewerage capacity raise similar concerns. They also call into question the Plan's own Objectives 6(d) and 6(e).

The Water Cycle Study identifies seven water treatment works. Four of them — Aylesbury, Winslow, Steeple Claydon and Buckingham — sit in the North and Central Area, where the Plan places around 75 per cent of the county's new housing. All four are projected to exceed their permitted flows by 2045.

Figure 7.4 of the Water Cycle Study shows how little capacity remains across the North and Central Area. Paragraph 5.17 also acknowledges that the strategy for New and Extended Settlements depends on future infrastructure possibilities rather than infrastructure that the Council has already secured. That does not give residents enough confidence. If the Council



wants to put around three-quarters of the county's new housing in this part of Buckinghamshire, it needs to demonstrate that water and sewerage infrastructure can keep pace.

The Study contains no testing for Beachampton because, when the work took place, the authors considered significant development there unlikely. The Plan now proposes a major settlement on that same site.

That raises the obvious question of how the Council can rely on evidence that did not test the infrastructure against the development it now proposes.

Renewable energy on the right land

I support the growth of renewable energy, and I want Buckinghamshire to play its part. But the Policies Map's indicative solar site 4.6, the A421 Ridge stretching from Padbury to Nash, sits uneasily with the Plan's own Policy SP11.5.a, which is meant to direct large-scale solar development towards previously developed or non-agricultural land.

As far as I can tell, this site is agricultural land, not previously developed land. If the Council wants large-scale solar to command public confidence, its site selection needs to be consistent with its own policy, not in tension with it.

Sports and recreation provision

It is vital that we have infrastructure in place for new housing, but the Winslow Sports Hub shows how committed infrastructure can stall, even once a scheme has been consulted on and a site identified. Buckinghamshire Council consulted residents on the scheme back in November 2021, setting out plans for football and rugby pitches, tennis courts, a multi-use games area, a skate park and community facilities. Residents engaged with that consultation in good faith, on the understanding that it would meet the needs of a growing town.

Over four years later, there is still no published delivery timetable, no confirmed milestones, and no certainty about when construction will begin. Large parts of the site remain inaccessible behind locked gates, and families, sports clubs and young people in Winslow are left travelling to Aylesbury, Milton Keynes or Northamptonshire for facilities that should be available in their own town. Residents can only assume the project has quietly fallen off the Council's agenda.

If the Council cannot deliver a scheme it consulted on and committed to more than four years ago, on a site it has already identified, residents are entitled to ask why this draft Local Plan gives so little detail on how the much larger volume of infrastructure it now proposes for Winslow will actually be funded, sequenced and delivered. A town being asked to grow at such a scale should be able to see its existing infrastructure promises kept before it is asked to take on more, and this Plan should set out how that will happen.

Transport and employment

The NPPF makes clear that Local Plans should address barriers to investment, including inadequate infrastructure. The A421 Corridor Study has already identified the need for further modelling on improvements between Milton Keynes and Buckingham. Yet Local Transport



Plan 5 and the Infrastructure Schedule propose dualling only at the Milton Keynes end. It is difficult to see how that, on its own, resolves the transport problems already identified.

The Silverstone Enterprise Zone raises another concern. Buckingham has no public transport connection to the Enterprise Zone, while the direct road through Dadford is not suitable as a commuter route. If the Plan expects major employers to locate in the area, it must also explain how their employees will get to work.

The same principle applies to housing. I would welcome clear evidence that Policy SP4's 25 per cent affordable housing requirement in the north will not undermine the Plan's economic ambitions. If workers cannot afford to live near the jobs the Council wants to create, the Council risks creating more commuting rather than a sustainable local economy.

Education capacity

The Plan sets out secondary school requirements for every New and Extended Settlement except Buckingham and Winslow. Yet Winslow has already lost its sixth form, while Buckingham School is already full. If the Council has calculated secondary school requirements for every other major allocation, I would strongly encourage it do the same for Buckingham and Winslow.

The proposed settlement site at Turweston proposes no secondary school. It relies on contributions towards provision elsewhere, despite Buckingham School having limited scope to expand on its existing campus. I have also seen no formal agreement confirming that another county will provide the necessary capacity.

Beachampton creates another problem. Its proposed secondary school would not come forward until late in the Plan period. Until then, children from that development could continue to rely on schools in Buckingham, while the proposed Salden Park secondary school remains only a possibility.

The timing of any house building would make this worse. 1,100 homes on this allocation are due to come forward earlier than the Plan's own phasing suggests, without matching secondary school provision.

Parents across north Buckinghamshire have contacted me and the three ward councillors for Buckingham about the difficulty of securing places at their preferred secondary schools. We already face pressure. This Plan could turn that pressure into a serious capacity crisis – not just for our schools, but for our roads.

If the Council cannot link infrastructure delivery to first occupation, it must at least ensure that the proposed five years of bus support begin when schools and other essential infrastructure actually come into use. Otherwise, families will continue to rely on cars, and so, with it, road congestion will grow and any bus services will then struggle to attract enough passengers to survive.



Connectivity and the character of north Buckinghamshire

As many people will know, north and south Buckinghamshire remain poorly connected. Journeys between Buckingham or Winslow and Aylesbury or High Wycombe are often difficult and time-consuming, especially at peak times.

Yet the Plan proposes to concentrate almost all of the county's additional housing in the north, raising the fundamental question of how a Plan can that concentrates growth so heavily in the part of the county with the weakest connections to the rest of it be considered justified or effective.

The scale of development also sits uneasily with the Plan's own objectives. Objective 1(a) seeks to preserve Buckinghamshire's predominantly rural character. Objective 1(b) seeks to protect valued landscapes. Yet the Plan proposes major development across the north in pursuit of Objective 3(b), providing homes for key workers in the south and west. I therefore fear that the Plan does not explain how that works in practice.

If the Council wants to provide homes for key workers, it should consider where those workers actually work and where they would want to live. Putting large numbers of homes many miles from the main employment areas risks increasing commuting rather than reducing it.

I am also surprised at the decision not to identify any grey belt land anywhere in the county as a potential option for release. The Government has made its position on grey belt land clear. The Plan proposes significant green field release in the north. Against that background, the complete absence of identified grey belt alternatives requires a proper explanation. I would welcome Buckinghamshire Council explicitly evidencing what land it considered, how it assessed that land and why it rejected any grey belt options.

Building homes around stations, fairly across the county

In December 2025, the Minister for Housing and Planning confirmed that this Labour government would establish in principle support, a default yes, for suitable proposals to develop land around rail stations within existing settlements, and around well-connected stations outside settlements, including on Green Belt land. We are also proposing a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare around all stations, rising to 50 dwellings per hectare around the best-connected stations, to make the most of high levels of connectivity and improve access to jobs and services.

The south of Buckinghamshire has a much stronger economic and commuting relationship with London and its surrounding urban areas than the north does. Princes Risborough, Wendover, Chesham, Amersham, Aylesbury, Great Missenden, Saunderton, Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross, Denham, Chalfont and Latimer, and High Wycombe all have direct lines into London Marylebone or onto the London Underground network.

Given the Government's objective of building more homes around the places people commute to and from, the south of the county should take its fair share of growth in a way that reflects those connections, rather than simply exporting the burden north.



I support this principle being applied around Winslow. East West Rail will bring real economic and civic opportunity to Winslow and to north Buckinghamshire more widely. But I ask the Council directly why the same ambition has not been applied to Princes Risborough and Wendover, both of which already have direct lines into London Marylebone. If this Council is serious about sustainable development near good transport links, that seriousness should be visible in every part of the county, not only in the north.

I also want to see the planning system better support the needs of different groups within our communities. That means stronger support for rural social and affordable housing, clearer expectations for accessible housing that meets the needs of older and disabled residents, and more flexibility on the mix of homes for market sale once local requirements for affordable housing have been met.

An unfair affordable housing target for the north

My principal concern is the stark disparity in affordable housing requirements between the north and south of Buckinghamshire. While the Government's expectation is that at least 40% of new homes should be affordable, with half of those being social housing, Buckinghamshire Council proposes a minimum requirement of just 25% affordable housing in the north and centre of the county, compared with 40% in the south and east. I can see no convincing reason why residents in the north should have significantly less opportunity to access affordable housing than those elsewhere in the county.

Given this substantial difference in policy, the Council should publish the detailed methodology and evidence used to justify it. If viability genuinely differs so dramatically between the north and south of a single county, that conclusion must be supported by clear and transparent evidence. Until then, the disparity appears arbitrary and difficult to justify.

The issue is particularly significant because the majority of planned housing growth will take place in the areas subject to the lower affordable housing requirement. The Council's own housing needs assessment identifies a need for around 36,492 affordable homes, equivalent to approximately 40% of total housing provision. Yet around three-quarters of the county's planned housing will be delivered in the north and centre, where the affordable housing target is only 25%.

The consequence is a substantial shortfall. Based on the Council's proposed targets, the Plan would deliver only around 26,239 affordable homes, between 7,596 and 9,361 fewer than the Council's own assessment of need. In effect, the areas expected to accommodate most new development are also the areas where the Council is requiring the lowest proportion of affordable housing.

The Council's justification for this approach rests on its Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule Viability Report, yet that evidence is not being examined alongside the draft Plan. Until it has been fully scrutinised, it is impossible to determine whether factors such as lower CIL rates in the north, including the existing 0% rate for developments of 400 homes or more, could support a higher affordable housing requirement. As it stands, the Plan appears to embed a significant north-south inequality in affordable housing provision and a substantial county-wide shortfall from the outset.



I am also concerned that this viability assumption appears to have been modelled on 25 per cent affordable housing in the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, without accounting for the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan, which has required a minimum of 35 per cent since 2015.

That evidence has not been made available for public scrutiny, and it has not yet passed independent assessment. I do not think residents should be asked to accept a lower affordable housing target on the strength of evidence nobody outside the Council has been able to test.

The affordability gap is not abstract, either.

The Office for National Statistics does not publish salary data at constituency level, but its Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings does provide household income data for the relevant Middle Layer Super Output Areas: £65,863 a year gross in Buckingham North and £73,674 in Buckingham South, an average of £69,768.50. On that income, the average household in my constituency could stretch to a one-bedroom flat. A three-bedroom family home would be out of reach without significant help or a very large deposit. If this Plan is serious about attracting employers to the key new employment sites it proposes, most of them in north Buckinghamshire, it needs a genuinely affordable offer for the average worker those employers will need to hire. A watered-down affordable housing target does the opposite.

The Plan's own trajectory adds to my concern. It proposes a stepped approach of around 2,150 homes a year from 2024/25 to 2028/29, rising sharply to around 5,030 homes a year from 2029/30 through to 2044/45. Presented alongside a general election due to fall within that same window, the timing looks less like sound planning and more like a calculated bet that a future government will come along and lower Buckinghamshire's target before the heaviest years of delivery arrive.

Let me be direct about what I believe this represents. I do not believe it is the duty of Members of Parliament or council leaders to play political games with an issue as serious as housing.

Communities deserve genuine political leadership. Buckinghamshire Council's cabinet, whose Leader and whose Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning both represent wards in the south of the county, is not showing it.

The effect of this Plan is to intentionally place the bulk of the housing burden on the north of the county, to divide the communities of Buckinghamshire against one another, and to hand a future government a wedge issue to exploit at the next general election. Six years after this Council was formed, that is simply not good enough.

Building places not just homes

This is not an isolated example. I welcomed Buckinghamshire's Economic Growth Plan to 2045 when it was published in May 2026, yet Winslow, which the Council itself says could take over 3,000 more homes over the next twenty years and potentially many more, is mentioned only twice across the entire 52-page document.



I am also disappointed that the Council's strategy for economic growth sets out no town centre strategy for Buckingham or Winslow at all, despite asking our communities to take on such a high proportion of the county's new housing.

When the Council sets out which town centres it considers to be thriving, it names Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham, and no others. To me, and to many people in Buckingham, Winslow and the surrounding villages, that speaks to a distinct lack of interest in our future and in our ability to shape our own destiny. It is a matter of real regret that the sole Conservative councillor for the Buckingham ward, despite holding two Cabinet positions, has never publicly used that standing to make this case on our behalf.

Ever since I first met the then Leader of Buckinghamshire Council in July 2024, I have found this administration's starting position to be one of: no, we can't. I am disappointed that this has produced a highly political document, one that appears to place the greatest burden on the areas of our county that voted Labour at the last general election, while sparing those represented by Conservative MPs or Conservative ward councillors.

Securing the infrastructure investment our residents deserve

I was delighted and grateful to receive the open letter from the leader of Buckinghamshire Council to the six Members of Parliament representing constituencies across Buckinghamshire on 6th July 2026³. I welcome the opportunity it presents to work together in Westminster and Whitehall to make a united case to Government for the investment that north Buckinghamshire needs.

I want to be absolutely clear that I stand ready to shoulder this responsibility alongside the Leader, his Cabinet and the Council. That means advocating together for the infrastructure and services our communities need — from better roads, particularly improvements to the A421 and A422, to the secondary school places our children will require, and better primary healthcare services, including access to GPs and NHS dentists.

I would be pleased to meet with the Leader, relevant Cabinet Members and Council officers, alongside Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and independent councillors representing communities across north Buckinghamshire. The purpose should be practical and focused: to understand in detail the specific requirements and challenges facing north Buckinghamshire, identify the investment needed to address them, and agree a strategy for how we collectively make the strongest possible case to Government.

That should include identifying the relevant Whitehall departments and the ministers who need to be engaged during the Plan period, so that we are not simply setting out aspirations but putting in place a clear programme of advocacy and delivery. Where a project requires support from the Department for Transport, the Department for Education, the Department of Health and Social Care or another department, we should know that, identify the relevant minister and make the case together.

I have already shown that this approach can deliver for our communities. I was recently proud to secure £17 million for a new entrance at Bletchley railway station, and I will bring the same determination to securing the investment north Buckinghamshire needs.



Similarly, after a decade of painstaking campaigning and teamwork between the Swan Practice, local residents, Buckingham Town Councillors and Buckinghamshire ward councillors from the Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative Parties, and others, I was proud to play my part in helping secure the funding and legal agreements which will see the new Lace Hill Health Centre open in Buckingham in late 2026 / early 2027.

The new Local Plan must therefore be accompanied by a clear understanding of the infrastructure required to deliver it. That means properly addressing transport, schools, healthcare, utilities, community facilities and green infrastructure — including finally resolving the A421 Corridor Study gap I have set out above, as part of any infrastructure investment package rather than leaving it to a future study.

I would welcome the publication of a comprehensive assessment setting out the total infrastructure investment needed to deliver the Plan, broken down both by category and by settlement or parish. Communities across Buckingham, Winslow, Beachampton, Turweston and our villages, all of which are expected to accommodate significant growth, deserve to know precisely what investment is proposed for their area.

I also want to understand why a single county plan should result in different levels of Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 contributions in different parts of Buckinghamshire. We have been a unitary authority for six years; I believe the time has come for one unified system across the whole county, rather than a patchwork inherited from the former district councils.

New homes must be matched by investment in transport, schools, healthcare, utilities, community facilities and green infrastructure. Growth without infrastructure places unacceptable pressure on existing communities. Growth matched by infrastructure can instead create thriving, sustainable places where people want to live, work and raise a family.

The opportunity now is for Buckinghamshire to speak with one voice. I stand ready to work with the Leader, his Cabinet, Council officers and councillors of every political persuasion to develop the evidence, identify the priorities, target the right departments and ministers, and make the strongest possible case to Government.

The Government cannot allocate the necessary infrastructure funding until the Local Plan is in place, but we should be ready to get to work together and make that case the moment it is.

Looking ahead

For as long as I have the privilege of serving as the Member of Parliament for the Buckingham and Bletchley constituency, I will work constructively with the leader of Buckinghamshire Council, and with councillors of every political tradition – Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Labour, and Independent – across the wards of Buckingham, Grendon Underwood and The Claydons, Horwood, Newton Longville, Quainton and Winslow, as well as our parish and town councils, to fight for the resources our communities need. That fight will not be limited to the Aylesbury spur of East West Rail or the dualling of the A421.



My priority will be securing investment for north Buckinghamshire in full, and I will not accept a settlement in which investment is channelled overwhelmingly towards Aylesbury and High Wycombe while the towns and villages of the north are left behind. I would welcome far more granular detail on the specific infrastructure costs attached to the new and extended settlements proposed for sites in north Buckinghamshire.

We all want to see a Local Plan that works for the whole of Buckinghamshire, that balances growth with infrastructure, and that commands the confidence of the communities it is meant to serve. I remain ready to help secure the investment our county needs. But the case for that investment must start with honesty about what this Plan actually delivers, and for whom.

Annex 1: housing starts and completions in Buckinghamshire, 2009 to 2024 (ONS)

Housing starts fell by 53 per cent between 2019 and 2024; housing completions fell by 38 per cent during the same period.

Year	Starts	Completions
2009-2010	1,360	1,370
2010-2011	1,430	1,520
2011-2012	1,750	1,880
2012-2013	1,520	1,580
2013-2014	1,680	1,490
2014-2015	1,740	1,740
2015-2016	1,720	1,390
2016-2017	1,860	1,820
2017-2018	2,130	1,910
2018-2019	1,950	2,130
2019-2020	1,970	2,260
2020-2021	1,800	1,800
2021-2022	1,860	2,310
2022-2023	1,580	1,980
2023-2024	930	1,400



Annex 2: new housing allocations by predecessor authority

Predecessor authority	New allocations	Percentage
Aylesbury Vale District	51,609	92%
Wycombe District	3,067	5%
South Buckinghamshire	226	0.4%
Chiltern	1,000	2%
Total	55,902	

Annex 3: local housing need by predecessor authority / planning area

Predecessor authority / planning area	Local housing need (per year)	Percentage
Aylesbury Vale District	1,236	29%
Wycombe District (West Planning Area)	1,055	24%
South Buckinghamshire (South Planning Area)	641	15%
Chiltern (East Planning Area)	1,412	32%
Total	4,344	

Footnotes

¹ Appendix 1 - Duty to Cooperate and other key Bodies Responses –
[https://media.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/documents/Appendix 1 Duty to Cooperate and other key Bodies Responses.pdf](https://media.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/documents/Appendix_1_Duty_to_Cooperate_and_other_key_Bodies_Responses.pdf)

² Buckinghamshire Council: Local Plan intervention letter –
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/buckinghamshire-council-local-plan-intervention-letter>

³ An Open Letter to All Buckinghamshire Members of Parliament, 6th July 2026 –
[https://media.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/documents/Open Letter to Buckinghamshire MPs - Local Plan.pdf](https://media.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/documents/Open_Letter_to_Buckinghamshire_MPs_-_Local_Plan.pdf)