



School Close
Halton Village
HP22 5AG
Clerk@haltonpc.org
1 Mar 24

To: Charlotte Morris, Planning Policy Team Leader, Buckinghamshire Council

David Waker, Senior Planner (Policy), Buckinghamshire Council

Charlotte and David,

Thank you for all of the work that you and your team have put into the Strategic Planning Document (SPD) for the RAF Halton site allocation. Although we have been included in the workshops that have led up to this draft policy document, following the public consultation in the Village Hall and close scrutiny by our team we offer the following feedback.

We feel that the SPD reflects the result of the workshops where we worked together with Buckinghamshire Council Planners and other parties to agree a vision and the objectives for Halton Woods. We think it is a very good document and our concerns are how does Buckinghamshire Council make it happen as we envisage it.

What we liked:

- Local centre located between the original village and the new development to bring the two communities together.
- Protection of our green spaces for the community i.e. the Registered Park and Gardens (RPG). We agree to land swaps, knocking down large buildings (Sgts' Mess and the dental building) in the RPG which results in greater density of housing on the Old Workshops site (Trade off).
- Only the workshops site will have higher density housing.
- Built Area – we agree that to protect our heritage the new developments should reflect the character of the individual sites i.e. military on Henderson/Maitland, modern to reflect the industrial styled old workshops, traditional on Chestnut Ave by the RPG, they MUST be environmentally friendly builds with adequate parking for each dwelling.
- A Master Developer is key to ensure a cohesive development of land and green spaces or at least a 'Condition of Planning Application' to link the various developers together to secure delivery of infrastructure serving the whole site.
- Early engagement with the DIO and future landowner, preferred developers and Halton Parish Council and local community to share ideas as to how community assets can be delivered and secured for future generations to ensure a long-lasting legacy.
- Provision of school located at local centre and to neutralise impacts to the RPG due to height and scale.

- Strongly agree with the requirement for bespoke, high quality and environmentally responsible design, addressing climate emergency.
- Conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.
- Retention of existing sports facilities run by Halton Parish Council in perpetuity for the community.
- Affordable housing pepper potted across the site - same quality as the surrounding properties.
- Use of spaces to provide allotments and community orchards.
- Enhanced safe crossing at the junction of Chestnut Ave and Upper Icknield Way. Traffic calming and crossings for Upper Icknield Way and Chestnut Ave.
- We strongly agree with 5.7.9 which states that streets must be designed so on street parking is adequate width to accommodate parking without obstructing the highway.
- Phasing strategy for infrastructure.

What we need to change, add, or clarify:

3.3.1.4 We suggest the play park currently shown by the allotments is moved to be nearer the edge of the higher density housing, so it is overlooked and less prone to vandalism. There should also be an allotment site near Henderson/Groves barracks as they have no gardens

3.5.7. The wording should change to strengthen the policy from 'innovative car parking solutions will be **encouraged**' to 'innovative car parking solutions will be **required**' if the proposed number and density of dwellings are to be built.

3.2.5. We should add the following requirements to the convenience store/supermarket at the centre of the community

- Pharmacy – important that this service is local to save car journeys to Wendover
- Post Office – we have one today (Rowborough Rd) that will need rehousing
- Café – help build a community
- Pub/restaurant

As the community centre's services (deliveries etc) will be to the front of the businesses we should add the requirement for good waste management facilities / processes so that rubbish and commercial bins are not on display to spoil the street scape.

4.3.1 and Fig 13 Potential SANG Movements Network Options. Reviewing Fig 13 it is apparent that the woodland both sides of the main site are used as potential alternative options to the Chiltern Beechwood SAC. As both these areas of woodland abutt the Forestry Commission at Wendover Woods it would be sensible to propose that they take over the management of this woodland and footpaths so there is a sustainable solution. Clearly they may need a financial contribution from the developer but that should satisfy the SANG requirement without any additional burden on the dwelling owners or adding another management company into the mix.

4.2. Under land Swaps the words 'the *Council wishes to ensure co-ordination of land swaps*' should be strengthened and changed to **the Council will require complete co-ordination of land swaps**.

'*In such cases, the Council will expect to use a condition or planning obligation to link together different planning applications*' we believe this statement should be strengthened and changed to **-In such cases, the Council will use a condition of planning obligation**

to link together different planning applications.

Self Build and custom plots. Where will they be located? Will they be required to adhere to the same building guidance as applies to that area, there needs to be more detail on where self build could be located and how it would be designed to fit with the character areas.

Parking

Between Henderson/ Groves site and the land swapping which will make the old workshop site denser housing, on street parking will be the norm. Given what has happened at Princess Mary Gate (PMG) we do not want a repetition of that situation. Therefore, adequate parking has to be planned as a necessity rather than just an option.

In addition, there should be a requirement for EV charge points for on street parking – for example in Pimlico London where lampposts have charging points and QR codes so that residents can join the scheme.

The roads near Henderson/Groves area may have to be residents only parking as that area will join up to the PRow for Wendover Woods. Mansion Hill has suffered in the past with visitors to Wendover Woods parking to avoid paying car parking fees at the woods. We need to avoid this scenario from the outset.

We believe the new school should include proper entrance and exit roads, a drop off and pick up zone and sufficient room for school buses to pick up and drop off. This could be landscaped to protect the RPG. Sharing parking with the retail facilities will cause long term problems and will be inadequate. Obviously, the parking at the Nuffield sports centre could be used except when there is a club or sports event. It would be good to see some modelling on the exact requirements.

Page 75 wording needs to change. It is not RAF Halton's school; it is the village school which also serves RAF Halton personnel. It should read 'adjoining existing Halton Combined School'.

What needs to be monitored during the planning phase:

These items are probably self-evident however we feel these items will help us achieve the vision and objectives that have been laid out in the SPD

- Building heights especially along the edge of the high-density housing. We feel that the higher 3 storey buildings should be along the Icknield Way to add to the street (rather than road) feel. With lower building heights abutting the green spaces to avoid a harsh edge next to fields and woodland.
- Number of buildings footprint/volume/openness
- Parking spaces
- Land swaps
- Building quality affordable housing

Major Concerns:

As a matter of course any significant change in your environment, surroundings or position will naturally give rise to anxiety and concern. The natural reaction is to reject the change and to go back to what it was. We do not want to do that. We want to move forward to get the best possible result for our current and future community. We have four major areas of concern which we would like to have addressed so we can be more certain and confident of the future that we envisage for Halton.

Medical Services and the provision of GP services

With 1000 more dwellings we will have circa 2,500 more residents. The Westongrove Health Centre practice which incorporates Wendover, Aston Clinton and Bedgrove surgeries is oversubscribed and overloaded. With houses being built in Weston Turville – 3,000, Aston Clinton – 2,000, Kingsbrook ultimately 3,000 and Stoke Mandeville, there does not appear to be a coherent plan to provide medical cover. Anecdotally we hear half of the people that have moved to Kingsbrook have not been able to sign up with a GP surgery. This is a failure of the organisation responsible for GP provision and needs to be fixed. At the very minimum we need a pharmacy.

Traffic and Highways

According to the VALP Planning Inspector the simple analysis provided to him by the Highway Department was that the car movements by the people who worked at RAF Halton would be offset by the car movements of the new 1000 dwellings. This analysis seemed to ignore the fact that many of the people working at RAF Halton lived within cycling or walking distance in the service housing, while others lived on site. This lack of a proper traffic analysis is a serious concern and must take into account a wider area than just the SPD area, including our neighbouring parishes, and factoring in all the new houses currently being built in surrounding parishes.

In particular it must consider Halton Lane which is already a rat run, and has a bridge which is a pinch point and a danger to pedestrians crossing it.

This concern is heightened by our lack of confidence in the Highways Department who apparently do nothing and appear to have no public accountability. Our concern is they will do the bare minimum and take any saving in s278 monies to spend on their own priority projects rather than looking after this area.

The Right Infrastructure

We believe the right infrastructure including road improvements has to be put into place at the beginning of the build in order to future proof the development, make it more resilient, and make it a place people want to live. And importantly to allow plant and building equipment to access the site on a daily basis during construction. Here are some of the thoughts that we have noted:

- All the new dwellings should have super-fast broad band cable laid as standard
- That there is good mobile phone signal throughout the site
- that the surface drains and SUDS are sufficient for the task across the whole site, which already suffers from surface water due to the mix of chalk escarpment and clay
- Dwellings should have rainwater harvesting as Halton is in a 'high stress area' as designated by Thames Water.
- Dwellings will need EV charging points, and for on street parking there needs to be on street EV charge points.
- The new built housing should be on a district heating system as gas is to become obsolete

- Solar panels/heat pumps to address the climate change targets and future blackouts due to a shortage of electricity grid infrastructure.

Princess Mary Gate experience:

The PMG development was a disaster.

It was sold to one developer who sold off various parts of it to other developers to raise money. There was No master builder. It started off at c390 houses/dwellings and ended up at over 600 for no increase in land. Minimal road widths and on street parking became flexible as more houses were shoehorned in. The Planners decided that everyone was meant to walk to Wendover so would not need cars! The garages that were built would either not fit the size of today's cars or people could not open their car doors to get out once they were in the garage. The promised bus service did not materialise.

The result is that the roads have not been adopted by Buckinghamshire Council. The roads are cluttered with parked cars to the extent you cannot guarantee that emergency vehicles can access the streets and pedestrians cannot walk on the pavements, as cars are parked on them. There are a variety of maintenance companies set up by various developers which are charging a range of fees for the same/similar activities. Neighbours find themselves paying different management fees and receiving different standards of care for their community areas. During the Covid lockdowns it led to some instances of antisocial behaviour.

A number of things could have prevented this

- Strict control on the number of houses
- No relaxation on the VALP parking standards, or agreed road widths
- A Master Developer
- Designs with useable garages

We do not want a repetition of this at Halton, so we hope that the SPD will afford us protection from such an outcome.

Halton Parish Council