



Chilterns National Landscape

Planning Committee

10am, Thursday 23 October 2025

At the offices of the Chilterns Conservation Board, The Lodge, 90 Station Road, Chinnor, OX39 4HA commencing at 10am in the meeting room.

Members of the Planning Committee of the Chilterns Conservation Board are hereby summoned to attend meeting at the above date, time and venue. Access to the meeting from 9.45am. Voting (Board) members are encouraged to attend in person to ensure the meeting is quorate; voting is not permitted for remote attendees. Remote access will be available for non-voting members.

Agenda

1. Introductions & Apologies
2. Declarations of interest
3. Notice of urgent business
4. Approval of minutes of previous meeting: notes of 17 April 2025 meeting
5. Matters arising
6. Consideration of motions submitted by members
7. Public questions
8. Planning Committee work programme
9. Development Management Casework update Q1 2025/26
10. Development Management Casework update Q2 2025/26
11. Development Management Casework – special reports
 - 11.1. Watlington Bypass
 - 11.2. Ashridge (NT Estate) Gateways
 - 11.3. Outcomes of key appeals
12. Planning Policy Casework update
 - 12.1. 2025/6 narrative update, incl. Dacorum local plan; South and Vale – advised to withdraw LP due to DtC; include commentary on grey belt?
 - 12.2. Bucks Local Plan (live consultation)
 - 12.3. Some thoughts on future directions for policy casework, incl. procedures, a local plan 'checklist' and moving towards reviewing our 'model AONB policy'

13. Urgent Business

14. Dates of next and future meetings

- tbc

Dr E. King, CEO

Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 17th April 2025

Chilterns National Landscape

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF
THE CHILTERNs CONSERVATION BOARD
held on Thursday 17th April 2025 at CCB offices, The Lodge, 90 Station Road,
Chinnor OX39 4HA commencing at 10.00 AM**

Present:

Cllr Louise Price	Board Member	Local Authorities
Cllr Charles Hussey	Board Member	Parish Councils
Simon Mortimer*	Board Member	Secretary of State
Cllr Paula Hiscocks*	Board Member	Local Authorities
Paul Hayes*	Co-opted Member	

In attendance:

Matt Thomson	Head of Strategy & Planning	Officer
Mike Stubbs	Planning Advisor	Officer
Lorna Coldwell	Clerk to the Board and Minute taker	Officer

*listened online

No public present.

The Chair welcomed all present and introductions were made. The Head of Strategy and Planning, Matt Thomson noted that the meeting was inquorate due to lack of Secretary of State appointees in the room. The meeting was duly adjourned and key decisions deferred to the next meeting. Those present agreed to continue discussions on the agenda items as an update for members and an informal steer for officers.

24/25.29 Apologies for absence

Apologies received and accepted from Committee members:

Cllr Sue Rowlands – Parish Council member
Colin Courtney – Secretary of State member
Cllr Robert Carington – Local Authority member
Chris Hannington – Co-opted member
Elaine King – Chief Executive Officer

24/25.30

Declarations of Interest

None declared.

24/25.31 Notice of Urgent Business

None.

24/25.32 Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 2025

The minutes from the meeting were taken as a true record but could not be signed by the Chair due to not being quorate.

24/25.33 Matters Arising

- The Head of Strategy and Planning, Matt Thomson will circulate the response to the Dacorum Local Plan and upload the response on the shared drive for all to see. A reminder of how to access this will also be sent to members.
- It was agreed at the March Board meeting to defer the approval of the Management Plan refresh until the June Board meeting. This will allow for a better understanding of consultation responses, and for conversations with Local Authorities to take place, particularly with those who did not respond to the consultation so they have a chance to give input and feel able to endorse the Management Plan refresh.
- The Head of Strategy and Planning, Matt Thomson is exploring working with contractors for the Planning Officer role that has not been filled and is in the process of obtaining quotations and discussions with various organisations.

Action: MT to forward Dacorum Local Plan response

24/25.34 Considerations of Motions Submitted by Members

No motions received.

24/25.35 Public Question Time

None in attendance.

24/25.36 Planning Committee work programme (summary paper)

Several Local Authorities, namely Buckinghamshire Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire County Council along with some Parish Councils are currently in a pre-election period, and appointees to the Board and Committees will be addressed post-election if needed.

The Board approved at its last meeting the Lighting Position Statement and the Chilterns Chalk Stream guidance; these will be ready for publication within the next months.

As agreed last year, there is no Planning Committee meeting until October however a written update will be circulated in July when a meeting would have been held if frequency had not been decreased.

1. The Committee NOTED these updates**24/25.37 Strengthened section 85 duty – key decisions and implications (summary paper)**

The Head of Strategy and Planning, Matt Thomson had provided a detailed paper regarding the strengthening of the section 85 duty to “seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area” from “have regard” to the same purpose. The National Landscapes Association published guidance in November 2024, and Defra in December 2024. In December 2024, a High Court judgement regarding a planning application in the New Forest National Park was the first judgment to the new legislation and will therefore have significance to the strengthened duties and how they are applied in practice. The Local Planning Authority refused an application for

Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 17th April 2025

an upper storey extension to a house located in the National Park, which subsequently was taken to appeal and approved by the Planning Inspectorate. The LA then went to the High Court to challenge the decision, which was dismissed. It was deemed that the level of attention paid to the duty should be proportionate to the level of impact the proposal has on the National Landscape. If there is a minor impact, then the proposal should not be expected to significantly enhance the area.

The Head of Strategy and Planning will circulate a written statement to Committee members outlining the potential future implications of the verdict. Both the National Parks and National Landscapes teams are currently reviewing the matter.

The application for the extension at Luton Airport was approved by the Secretary of State, a written report will be provided in due course. The approval considers the recommendations from the Planning Inspectorate and work has been completed to addresses issues raised. Committee members queried if a Judicial Review could be held, however it is not felt in this case it would be warranted. £250,000 was agreed as per the suggestion from the applicant for a fund for enhancement of the National Landscape. The Secretary of State viewed the impact to the National Landscape as slight, therefore the funding is also slight. It was suggested to seek to gear this settlement to CPI to account for future inflation, as the sum is not due to be triggered until a certain point in the expansion process which is scheduled for the 2030s.

The Chair thanked the planning team for the explanations and hard work on this matter.

Action: MT to circulate responses to the High Court judgement when available

1. The Committee NOTED these updates

24/25.38 Development Management Casework Update (full paper)

Mike Stubbs, Planning Advisor had provided a detailed paper on live cases. He noted that a new format had been created for reporting items so the Committee members received a shorter version of representations made, picking out points of particular importance. He also commented that there has been an uptake in the number of requests for comments by various organisations received, due to an increase in applicants appealing decisions.

Between January and March 2025, a total of 23 responses were made, including 5 appeal representations, 4 objection in principles, 4 supportive comments.

Particular note was made of the following applications:

- Land at Green Park Copperkilns Lane Amersham – 8 enforcement notices were upheld to remove an unauthorised caravan site.
- OS Field 7141, Latimer Road, Chenies (unauthorised chicken farm) was dismissed on appeal, notices were upheld but varied on time for remedies.
- London Luton Airport expansion – as discussed, the Secretary of State permitted
- Land between Footpath 79 and Park Lane Stokenchurch – a prior approval application for an agricultural building under permitted development, to which an objection in principle has been submitted to seek a full planning application. The proposed building is intrusive within the National Landscape.
- DBC 23/01894/FUL Frithsden Vineyard Frithsden Lane Frithsden – formation of a new winery. Following amendments requested, the application is now suitable and has been supported.

Chilterns Conservation Board

Planning Committee meeting 17th April 2025

- CBC CB/25/00140/VOC Mile Barn Farm Dagnall – following amendments the scheme is now acceptable and a comment of support has been submitted.

A brief update was provided regarding the National Trust site at Ashridge, Meadley’s Meadow following a site visit by the Committee in September 2024. The National Trust have submitted a proposal for temporary parking at the beginning of April. This is the first of several stages to resolve the parking issue to avoid further environmental damage and unlawful parking.

1. **The Committee NOTED the updates in the paper but were unable to ENDORSE and this was DEFFERED to the October meeting due to note being quorate**

24/25.39 Planning Policy Casework Update (verbal update)

A list of current casework was provided, including the Grand Union Canal Transfer and applications located within the National Landscape but with no responses proposed.

24/25.40 Urgent Business

The Head of Strategy and Planning, Matt Thomson discussed the proposed Grand Union Canal Transfer and provided a summary of the scheme, which is to take water from the Severn Trent area in the Midlands and pump through to an existing underground reservoir located between Luton and Dunstable. Whilst the formal process begins in September 2026, the water companies have been in contact with the Chilterns National Landscape since the beginning giving the opportunity to discuss. Whilst it is unlikely that the scheme could be stopped, the effects on the Chilterns and how to mitigate will be investigated.

Cllr Paula Hiscocks raised concerns regarding the current state of the River Chess at Rickmansworth. Cllr Louise Price confirmed she would raise the matter with Three Rivers District Council. Matt Thomson, the Head of Strategy and Planning, advised that as the area falls outside the Chilterns National Landscape it is beyond the team's remit; however, he will refer the issue to the Chalk Streams team.

24/25.41 Dates of the next Meeting

- Thursday 23rd October, 10am, Chilterns National Landscape Office, Chinnor

The meeting was closed at 12.04.

The Chair.....

Date.....

Item 8 Planning Committee Work Programme**Author:** Matt Thomson, Head of Strategy & Planning**Purpose and Summary:** To update the Committee on progress with various initiatives that are part of the Committee's work programme.**Background**

1. This paper provides summary information on a number of matters relevant to the Planning Committee's work programme not dealt with in detail elsewhere in the agenda.

Committee membership

2. At its September meeting, the Board approved the following membership of Planning Committee:

Local Authority members	Cllr Robert Carington (Buckinghamshire) Cllr James Norman (South Oxon District) Cllr Louise Price (Three Rivers District) – Deputy Chair <i>One vacancy (but see below)</i>
Secretary of State members	Simon Mortimer <i>Two vacancies</i>
Parish Council members	Cllr Charles Hussey (Bucks Parish Councils) Cllr Sue Rowland (Oxon Parish Councils) - Chair

3. In addition, the Committee continues to benefit from two co-opted (non-voting) members, Chris Hannington and Paul Hayes.
4. Recent changes to procedures, alongside changes to the Constitution, have resulted in a move away from appointing committees at the Board's AGM. Recognising the ongoing churn of Board members, including through local government elections (usually in May) and the protracted recruitment of Secretary of State appointees (usually over the Summer), the Board will review committee membership in future as vacancies arise. An outcome of this is that committees will no longer be dissolved and reformed at the AGM, requiring the election of new chairs and deputy chairs at the next meeting. The Chairs and Deputy Chairs of committees will now remain in post until they (a) choose to resign from the post, (b) cease to be a member of the Board, or (c) are deselected by resolution of the Committee.
5. Cllr Sue Rowlands has agreed to remain in post as Chair of Planning Committee, and Cllr Louise Price has agreed to remain as Deputy. For the benefit particularly of our co-optees, please note that Cllr Price is also Chair of the Board.
6. Despite significant efforts, including by the Chairs of the Board and of this Committee, we have not been able to appoint the full complement of members, with one LA appointee vacancy and two Secretary of State appointee vacancies outstanding. At the Board meeting, Cllr Philip Spicer offered to fill the LA vacancy, but only if he could attend meetings online. Since attending online does not affect quorum, and all Board members are entitled to attend Committee meetings, Cllr Spicer was not appointed, but has been invited to attend this meeting.

7. The latter vacancies put even greater pressure on our sole Sec of State member, Simon Mortimer, being able to attend in person to ensure that meetings are quorate. This situation is not sustainable, and, while efforts will continue to be made to seek additional appointees, this informs the discussion below on options for the future of Planning Committee.

Capacity

8. The capacity issues felt by CCB's planning function for the last 2-3 years have at last been alleviated by the appointment of Dr Victoria Thomson as Planning Adviser (Policy).
9. Victoria is a highly skilled planning and heritage professional, with extensive experience as a planning and/or conservation officer in local authorities in the Chilterns region, during which time, as an officer with the former Wycombe District Council, she was on the advisory group that produced the current Chilterns Buildings Design Guide. She has also worked at the national level, with ODPM (the forerunner of the current MHCLG), Historic England and the Canal and River Trust, and still found time to complete a PhD on the protection of historic parks and gardens through the planning system. By way of full disclosure, please note that Victoria is related to the Head of Strategy & Planning by marriage. Her appointment by the Conservation Board followed the Head of Strategy & Planning stepping back from the recruitment process, and was undertaken by the CEO, selecting from other consultancy options that had been identified. The CEO is retaining oversight of Victoria's contract and performance.
10. Victoria will be working on national and local planning policy matters, especially local plans (neighbourhood plans still sit with Mike in his parallel Planning Adviser (Development Management) role). Victoria is contracted until the end of March 2026, and will be working on average 1.5 days per week (flexibly to account for peaks and troughs in workload).
11. All planning enquiries and intelligence relating to planning matters should continue to be addressed to planning@chilterns.org.uk. This mailbox is monitored by all three members of the Planning Team with protocols in place to ensure correspondence is dealt with by the appropriate team member. Please do not email or copy in the Head of Strategy & Planning on any planning-related correspondence, unless it is of a sensitive nature.

The Future of Planning Committee

12. For a number of years, problems with recruitment to the Committee, with meetings being inquorate as a result, and with the understandable competing pressures on members' time, have led us to consider whether there might be a better alternative to maintaining a formal standing Planning Committee.
13. Arguments in favour of maintaining the Committee include the cachet afforded to a consultation response or appeal submission when it can be presented as being the outcome of a discussion at the Planning Committee, or, better still, the submission having been approved by the Committee. Furthermore, maintaining a Planning Committee demonstrates both internally and externally the importance placed on planning as a vehicle through which the Board secures its purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the National Landscape.
14. However, CCB's statutory foundations – which are based on local government legislation – stipulate certain requirements for the operation of a Committee. This is because Committees are empowered to discharge the Board's functions (where delegated by the Board), and this requires certain safeguards to be in place, including that:

- a. Membership of the Committee comprises a prescribed proportion of members from different appointing groups (local authority, Secretary of State, parish councils).
 - b. To be quorate, a minimum number of members from each appointing group must physically be present at the meeting.
 - c. Papers must be circulated and published at least 3 clear days in advance of meetings, which must be open to the public and give opportunities for public questions, etc.
15. These requirements enable the Committee to discharge the functions of the Board that have been delegated to it. Established practice, now regularised in the Board's Constitution, has been that most of the Board's planning functions are delegated to officers, subject to retrospective ratification by the Committee. The Planning Committee itself has only very rarely directly discharged the Board's functions. The new Scheme of Delegation, inserted into the Constitution in September, now delegates to Planning Committee the decision to develop or publish for consultation (but not to *approve*) potential Board policy statements on planning matters. This provision is more about managing officers than empowering Planning Committee, however; a similar provision in relation to 'non-planning' policy statements requires a Board decision still. The only other matters delegated to the Committee are to: determine its Chair and Deputy, co-opt non-voting members, and set its calendar of meetings (and even the last matter needs Board approval).
16. A key driver for this direction of travel has been to reposition Planning Committee as being more strategic, providing a clear and up-to-date context for the work of officers under delegated authority, rather than necessarily focusing on individual cases or submissions. (This is the same direction of travel informing the overall work of the Board.)
17. The key question is whether the benefits of having the imprimatur of a Planning Committee discussion or decision on a submission made by the Board's planning officers are sufficient (on the number of occasions they are invoked) to warrant the administration of the Planning Committee, especially given the risk that meetings will not be quorate, in which case a submission presented to the Committee cannot lawfully be claimed to have been considered or approved by the Committee. This is also in the context that Planning Committee meets three times a year, and so meetings cannot be expected to be timed to be helpful to all possible submissions made.
18. Officers therefore propose to start a conversation with the presentation of the following options (which are not mutually exclusive):
 - a. Carry on as we are, but with the Committee being more strategic, but still being able to benefit from the Planning Committee imprimatur and the recognition of the importance of planning provided by a formal Committee, but with the ongoing administrative effort, and risk of meetings being inquorate.
 - b. Replace the Committee with a less formal 'Panel', which could engage with officers more responsively, with more engagement by email or other electronic means, including meetings that could be online or in hybrid format. The Panel could have a larger membership than the current Committee (or not), and meetings (where necessary) could be subject to less stringent quorum requirements. Such a Panel would only advise officers in the discharge of their

functions under delegated authority, but the Panel could have a function in referring matters up to the Board, or to an 'as-needed' Committee (option c).

- c. Replace the 'standing' Planning Committee with a Committee that could be convened on an 'as-needed' basis (as was the case for the former (HR) Appeals Sub-Committee). This could be an option running in parallel with a Planning Panel (option b).
19. Consideration could also be given to constituting the suggested Panel in option b from a wider membership than Board members (plus up to four co-opted members), for example seeking the engagement of planning officers from some or all of CCB's host authorities, and/or representatives from other key stakeholders (Natural England, Chiltern Society, National Trust, Wildlife Trusts, CPRE, etc.). This would revert to something closer to the 'planning committee' (not a real committee) convened by the former Chilterns Standing Conference, which was a two-way advisory vehicle between the Standing Conference and its constituent local planning authorities.
20. Other options and further refinements of the above options may of course be considered.
21. Dissolving or evolving the Planning Committee is of course a matter for the Board ultimately to determine, and is not something to be entered into lightly. For the time being, officers are expressing no preferences and making no recommendations, other than for the Committee to discuss the above issues and options, and agree a way forward, which may include a programme for further consideration of the matter.

Management Plan Review

22. The Board approved the 'refreshed' Management Plan at its June meeting. The Plan is currently with a consultant designer employed by our Communications Team (the same designer is also working on the approved Nature Recovery Plan). As mentioned at the June Board meeting, we are revising the Introduction to reflect the current context for protected landscapes, and including a foreword suggested by Natural England. We also have further discussions with Natural England concerning comments they have made at the 'publication' stage, which we were not expecting: the comments do not seem to necessitate any further changes to the Plan. In the meantime, the Schedule of Amendments to the Plan approved by the Board are available on our website¹, along with an 'illustrative clean version' of the Plan's text – the Schedule of Amendments is definitive, however.

Future Committee dates

23. The Committee is required to suggest its proposed meeting dates for 2026 to the Board for their approval at the December meeting.
24. Assuming Planning Committee continues in its current form, it is proposed that its meetings follow the same pattern as in 2025, consistent with the meetings of the Board and Executive Committee. To this end, it is proposed to meet three times in 2026 in January, April and October, in each case towards the end of the month. This enables alignment with our quarterly reporting of activities.

¹ <https://www.chilterns.org.uk/what-we-do/future-proofing-the-chilterns/management-plan/>

25. The dates suggested by officers for the Planning Committee to consider are as follows (the current proposed dates for Executive Committee and the Board are included for reference purposes – these dates have not yet been approved by the Board).

Planning Committee	Executive Committee	Board
Thu 22 January	Thu 26 February	Thu 26 March
Thu 30 April	Tue 19 May	Thu 25 June (inc AGM)
None	Tue 1 September	Thu 1 October (Strategy)
Thu 29 October	Thu 19 November	Thu 10 December

26. All the above meetings are understood to be in the morning, usually starting at 10am, and held in CCB's office in Chinnor. Thursdays have historically been found to be the best days for most people to meet. Alternatives to the three suggested PlanCo meeting dates will be considered, subject to the availability of a suitable venue. We are open to alternative, low-cost (preferably free) venues, so long as they have sufficient parking, reliable wi-fi and are able to provide or accommodate our projector equipment. Please note that alternative dates in week commencing 26 January will not be possible.

Recommendations:

1. That the Committee **NOTES** these updates.
2. That, having considered the issues and options on the future of the Committee in paras 12-21 above, the Committee agrees a way forward, which may include a programme for further consideration of the matter.
3. That the Committee **AGREES** dates for its meetings in 2026 to be submitted to the Board for approval at its December meeting.

Item 9. Development Management Casework updates – Q1 2025/26**Author:** Michael Stubbs, Planning Adviser (DM)**Purpose and Summary:** To inform the Committee about and seek approval of the responses made under delegated powers concerning the planning applications as listed and to update the Committee on any outcomes.**Background**

1. This paper refers specifically to responses made during Q1 (April-June) 2025/26. It had been our intention to circulate this paper to Committee members in July, but we were short of capacity over the summer to focus on this.
2. Usually a quarterly DM Casework paper would include an appendix listing “live” cases. This has been excised from this paper now, as it would be out of date and would unnecessarily repeat material now included in the Q2 update.
3. (i) A summary of submissions (support, objection in principle, comments over details, appeals and ‘others’ covering EIA matters and pre-application responses).

New applications/appeals since 1 st April 2025 = 12	Appeal representation = 1 Comments over details = 2 Objections in Principle = 1 Support = 4 Others = 4 (one prior notification, one pre-application on telecoms, one NSIP scoping and one common land application)
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4. (ii) A summary of outcomes (CCB impacts upon decisions) during Q1.

Applications granted to which CCB commented or supported = 1	Ambrose Quarry to vary a consent (s.73) to continue storing skips. CCB commented. Granted 26 th January 2025.
Applications granted to which CCB had objected = 1	Rumbolds Pit Ewelme (OCC MW.0171/23) to retain a waste transfer station (retrospective). Granted 14 th April 2025.
Applications refused to which CCB had commented or objected = 2	Land between footpath 79 and Park Lane, Stokenchurch . Prior approval for an agricultural building for hydroponic vertical growing. CCB commented on this sensitive AONB location and made a case for planning permission to be granted. The planning authority issued a ‘details required’ determination, and this application has been resubmitted (June).
Planning appeal / DCO decisions received = 3	Huttons Estate OS Parcel 5940 Main Road Rotten Row Hambleden, Bucks (BC-Wycombe written representation) to build a shooting lodge and PINS reference APP/K0425/W/24/3356181, issued 2 nd June 2025. Of note, the Inspector embraced the new ‘duty to further’. He applied the Chilterns Management Plan, finding that, <i>‘the appeal proposal would not conserve nor enhance the NL, it would, therefore, adversely affect the character and appearance of the area, including the Chilterns National Landscape’</i> .

	<p>Pirton Water Tower (NHDC written representation) to demolish and build a dwelling, with a similar appeal dismissed in 2023. APP/X1925/W/24/3348028, issued 8th May 2025. The Inspector found conflict with the Development Plan and the Chilterns Management Plan, stating that <i>'A dwelling on the appeal site would introduce a built form at odds with the open character of the Chilterns National Landscape, especially given that it is not located within an existing built settlement. Whilst the appellant highlights that the exterior fence would be lower than that which exists, they have not adequately demonstrated that the dwelling would not harm the character of the Chilterns National Landscape. Furthermore, the existing water tower allows for views through the appeal site of the Chiltern National Landscape at a lower level, given that the legs of the structure, in this respect, are permeable in construction'</i>.</p> <p>Satwell House Henley (SODC, written representations), landscaping master planning, new access gates and internal estate roads. PINS reference APP/Q3115/W/24/3356473, issued 29th May 2025. The Inspector attributed weight to the loss of a significant hedgerow, finding much to commend in the overall design, but harmful to the character of the National Landscape due to the proposed new access that eroded a significant feature of a boundary hedgerow and the width of the new access track (at 5.5 m), creating the new entrance. In concluding, at paragraph 17, the Inspector stated that, <i>'Overall, the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area, and I give great weight to the fact that it would fail to conserve and enhance the landscape beauty of the CNL'</i> TO NOTE – at the forthcoming October 2025 planning committee, we anticipate presenting and discussing this case, due to the importance of these conclusions. .</p>
<p>Planning appeal decisions outstanding = 7</p>	<p>Chartridge House nr Chesham (BC-C&SB written representation) for 11 dwellings (part AONB).</p> <p>Land West of Leighton Buzzard (DBC, planning inquiry dealing with 390 dwellings and 70 care home). Inquiry to be set.</p> <p>Marlow Film Studios (BC-Wycombe and Planning Inspectorate or PINS) for 168,718 gross external floorspace production floorspace The Inquiry closed on 24th February 2025.</p> <p>Land at West of Field Cottage Buslins Lane, Chartridge, Chesham (BC-C&SB, written representations). Enforcement notice appeal to remove surfacing / hardstanding outside the previous permission.</p> <p>Land northeast of Wandon End, North Hertfordshire (NHDC, planning inquiry opened 17th June), 108 HA solar array.</p> <p>Land at Lane End (CL13) Bolter End Common. Informal Consultation on Proposed Section 16 Commons Act Application Within BC-Wycombe and an allocation in the Local Plan 2019. Submission of written evidence prior to a formal application to vary common land. This is reported below.</p> <p>White Cross Farm, nr Wallingford (OCC). Sand and gravel extraction, impacting the Thames Path and the setting of the</p>

	AONB. Planning Inquiry opens 15 th July and scheduled for 4 days. This appeal is reported below.
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5. **New CCB responses on planning applications since 1st April 2025 are listed in Appendix 1.** The Planning Adviser will provide reflections on the outcomes of CCB representations at the 23rd October 2025 planning committee. Matters for the Planning Committee to note are set out at the end of each section.

Recommendations:

- 1. **That the Committee:**
 - a. **NOTES the updates in this paper, and ENDORSES the responses made in connection with the applications listed in Appendix 1.**

APPENDIX 1**New CCB Responses on Planning Applications during Q1 2025/26**

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
Ashridge House, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire.	DBC Reference number: 25/01374/MFA	Change of use to repurpose the existing 206 rooms for visitor accommodation alongside current uses and facilities.	Pending	<p>CCB Support (with conditions/obligations relating to the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC).</p> <p>The applicant's supporting planning statement confirms that there will be no overall increase in the number of rooms on site. They set out a long-term vision and a comprehensive suite of measures, including restricting dog access, improvements, and maintenance to a footpath within the applicant's ownership, and the creation of a SANG within the property, potentially located within the north lawn. The alternative recreational space of the Repton Registered Landscape (Grade II* Historic Park and Garden) presents a realistic alternative for hotel guests wishing to walk the wider AONB/SAC landscape. The Registered Landscape at Ashridge is not a SANG. It would not be suitable for a SANGs style of design, consistent with the guidance of Natural England, because this would, inevitably, detract from its historic significance. Yet its promotion to guests is an obvious asset to the hotel's occupancy</p> <p>CCB PC TO NOTE: This application is the result of a downturn in the MBA training market, as has impacted the Ashridge Management College. A detailed suite of measures offers great reassurance, to prevent further recreational pressures on the SAC.</p>	11th June 2025
Pond Between Footpath 79 And Park Lane Stokenchurch Buckinghamshire	BC-Wycombe 25/05470/PNP 6A	Agricultural building with reference to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Statutory	Pending	<p>CCB Comments on Prior Notification (seeking a determination that full planning permission is required).</p> <p>We conclude that such a structure, if it is to be accommodated within a nationally protected landscape, should be located within topography that largely shields and conceals it, and/or within an</p>	23rd June 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
		<p>Instruments 2015: 596, schedule 2, part 6 (prior approval).</p> <p>Prior approval application (Part 6, Class A) for construction of agricultural barn</p>		<p>existing nest of rural or agricultural buildings, to avoid harmful impacts upon the landscape character. The Chilterns Buildings Design Guide also contains details of rural and agricultural buildings, albeit generally smaller and including some vernacular details. On the individual merits of this case, we conclude that the siting in this location and consequential design and external appearance impacts are harmful.</p> <p>We respectfully request that the LPA examine the landscape implications and sensitivities involved. We do not consider, on the merits of what is proposed, that Condition A.2(2)(i) 'siting, design and external appearance' is satisfied or delivered and that planning permission is required. Such an application would be contrary to policy and would not satisfy the new 'duty to further' within the CROW Act.</p> <p>CCB PC TO NOTE: This is a resubmission of the application considered at the PC's March 2025 meeting. We maintain a similar stance.</p>	
Grand Union Canal Transfer Project (Nationally Significant Infrastructure)	Planning Inspectorate Reference: WA0210001	Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (The EIA Regulations) – Regulations 10 and 11 Application by Affinity Water and Severn Trent (the applicants) for an Order granting Development Consent for the Grand Union Canal Transfer project (the	NSIP Scoping	<p>Submissions on the Scoping Consultation (31st March-28th April 2025)</p> <p>The CCB supports three important key principles, contained within,</p> <p>(1). A receptor-based approach, i.e., receptors sensitive to change because of this development. In our submission, a key receptor is the Chilterns National Landscape, including Chilterns Chalk Streams, the Chilterns Aquifer and supported habitats, acknowledged as special qualities of the AONB in the Management Plan (a statutory Document).</p> <p>(2). The Rochdale Envelope Principle, i.e. consideration of a 'reasonable worst-case scenario' and/or the application of a precautionary principle (as set out in the NSIP Guidance on Linear Projects, 27th Feb 2025),</p>	28th April 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
		proposed development) Scoping consultation and notification of the applicant's contact details and duty to make available information to the applicant if requested.		(3). Cumulative Assessment i.e. involves optioneering and alternatives covering flexibility and options, which also requires drawing up a spatial and temporal zone of influence (ZOI) as noted in the PINS Guidance Note 17 on Cumulative Effects. CCB PC TO NOTE: All of the CCB representations relate to the project's defined area 4(b), which includes the northern Chilterns around Tring, Dunstable and Luton. This project is anticipated to commence (i.e. to take evidence and convene hearings) in the final quarter of 2026).	
Land at Bulbourne Wood, Northchurch, Berkhamsted	Dacorum BC reference: 24/02705/MOA	Construction of a nursing home (Use Class C2) of up to 67 bedrooms for dementia care with separate bin/cycle store building, electricity substation and associated works and landscaping with all matters reserved except for the construction of access junction and road.	Pending	CCB Objection in principle. This application demonstrably harms the special qualities of the AONB/CNL due to, (1) The loss of a comprehensive volume of trees under TPO blanket protection, including 30 category B and 72 category C trees amongst a grand total of 153 to remove. (2) Through the introduction of development into the Upper Bulbourne Valley Landscape Character area 117 where it would otherwise be resisted, (3) The visual impact of creating a 'sky glow' and 'sky glare' erosion of the rural dark skies environment in this part of the Chilterns AONB. These matters cannot be resolved by layout or design revisions and cannot be overcome by mitigation The applicant accepts this is major development and applies the exceptional development test in the NPPF at 190 (c). In their supporting planning statement, they state that some ' <i>limited adverse effects</i> ' will result and, in their opinion, can be mitigated. Overall, they say this harm must be given ' <i>limited weight</i> '. The NPPF stipulates that ' <i>great weight</i> ' must be applied in AONB cases (Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing	12th May 2025, and 17th April 2025.

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
				<p>landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues).</p> <p>In our judgment, this seriously miscalculates the impacts. We would invite the LPA to challenge this when evaluating landscape harm. Further, the new 'duty to further' in the amended s.85 CRow 2000 (following s.245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023) is not the subject of any detailed comment and appraisal in the supporting planning statement. This duty points to positive and beneficial outcomes, and this application runs counter to those outcomes by demonstrably eroding tranquillity, eroding a dark skies environment, and eroding woodland cover and land-use character where development would otherwise be resisted.</p> <p>CCB PC TO NOTE: This is a harmful erosion of the landscape. We anticipate this will go to the July planning committee meeting at Dacorum BC. As yet, we do not know the officer's recommendation.</p>	
Land at Old Rifle Range Farm Risborough Road, Great Kimble Buckinghamshire.	Utility company pre-consultation reference CS 112383 30	Pre-planning application consultation for a mobile phone base station upgrade comprising new antenna	Pre-application	<p>CCB Comments</p> <p>We recommend that the upper sections, nominally above the indicated tree canopy at 17.5 metres, be as recessive as possible. Therefore, the colour finish is tested to blend in with its context and background. This would be a suitable matter for the operator to implement. We have noted that no external lighting is proposed, nor required.</p> <p>Whilst writing, we also want to draw your attention to the new 'duty to further' which applies to all decision-makers, including network operators, and therefore will also apply to your client. When collating and submitting the planning application, you will want to address this new duty</p>	24th June 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
				<p>and include a suitable commentary in your supporting statement. We have provided additional guidance below and hope it is of assistance.</p> <p>CCB PC TO NOTE: This upgrades an existing facility. Views towards it from nearby Pulpit Hill are obscured by distance, topography, and the telecoms location, which nestles within a complex of farm buildings.</p>	
At Land Located Between Wendover Road and Risborough Road Wendover Road Stoke Mandeville Buckinghamshire	Buckinghamshire -Aylesbury Area reference 25/00167/AOP	Outline planning application for up to 650 dwellings, local centre (Use Class E), country park (SANG), multi-functional open space, community orchards, community allotments, locally equipped areas of play, multi-use games areas, SuDs features, landscaping, a mobility hub, enhanced pedestrian connections and associated infrastructure including a new pedestrian footbridge across the railway line and new footway/cycle way connection to Stoke Mandeville Railway Station. Proposed vehicular access sought from	Pending	<p>CCB Comments</p> <p>Two matters arise at (1) lighting and (2) the impact on views from Coombe Hill and Beacon Hill.</p> <p>(1) Lighting We would seek reassurance on the impact of lighting when viewed from higher ground within the AONB. This links to policy DP8 in the AONB Management Plan. Three key viewpoints occur within the vicinity of Stoke Mandeville within the Chilterns: Wendover Woods to the south-east, at around 250m AOD, Coombe Hill to the south at around 260m AOD, and Beacon Hill to the south-west at around 225m AOD.</p> <p>(2) Long-distance views The Site is also discernible in long-distance views from the higher ground within the Chilterns to the south. Appx 5.5 of the landscape report deals with assessing views and includes, importantly, views from Coombe Hill and Beacon Hill. It is fully acknowledged that the site is visible from these important 'vistas' but, in the professional view of the applicant's landscape adviser, these are deemed '<i>negligible</i>', mostly because the receptor (person) would experience the site as a part of the wider view. We would ask that attention be paid to the Landscape Institute's GLVIA 3rd edition at page 113 (paragraph 6.33) which states that '<i>The visual receptors most susceptible to change are</i></p>	30th April 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
		Risborough Road and Wendover Road. All other matters reserved for later consideration.		<p><i>generally likely to include (second bulled point) people, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views'.</i></p> <p>CCB PC TO NOTE: Applying our own CCB Position Statement on development that impacts the AONB setting, we have concluded that landscape assessments for the AONB require greater detail and have invited the applicant to comment further. Greater details may resolve such matters.</p>	
Land at Marchmont Farm Piccotts End Lane Hemel Hempstead	Dacorum BC 19/02749/MOA :	Outline planning application for up to 350 dwellings, land for 5 gypsy & traveller pitches. Vehicular access from A4147, public open space including extension to Margaret Lloyd Park and associated landscaping, infrastructure and drainage. Detailed approval for access arrangements (Revised Scheme: Emergency Access Link to Laidon Square). Additional details, 1st April 2025	Pending	<p>CCB Support</p> <p>We maintain that this allocated site falls within the wider setting of the AONB/National Landscape. However, with due attention to landscaping and layout in the 2021 revisions, there would be no resulting harm to the National Landscape, and its setting would be conserved. Updated details in the current application, which address lighting and the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC (a new Habitats report has been submitted), provide satisfactory assurance on protecting the wider dark skies around the AONB/NL and delivering a meaningful SANG within the site. Respectfully, these address the principal matters of importance to the AONB/NL, and we have no objections to the proposal.</p> <p>CCB PC TO NOTE:</p> <p>This application has been updated and amended, with the inclusion of a SANG of 10.32 ha (above the requirement of 6.72 ha when applying the Natural England metric of 8 ha of SANG per 1,000 residents). SANG policy came into effect during the application and has been embraced to a high standard. The applicant is Homes England.</p>	28th April 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
The National Trust Visitor Centre and Cafe Moneybury Hill Ashridge Berkhamsted Hertfordshire	DBC Reference number 25/00855/MFA	Creation of interim car park with 134 parking spaces and change of use to create additional seasonal overflow car parking area to accommodate up to 372 cars, both at Meadley's Meadow. Proposed timber knee rail along Monument Drive. Surface repairs, line marking, signage and pay and display machines at Barracks Square and Visitor Centre car parking areas.	Pending	<p>CCB Support</p> <p>This application is an essential step towards a landscape and habitat management masterplan to resolve the ongoing and potentially increasing diminution of the special qualities of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and their pivotal role as an acknowledged special quality of the natural beauty of the Chilterns. This holistic and longer-term strategic vision outweighs the identified harm in the immediate location of Meadley's Meadow. Further, that landscape harm is moderated by mitigation, including design detailing and habitat creation.</p> <p>We recommend that the LPA grant temporary planning permission with appropriate conditions. We recommend a planning condition on the 'curfew' point in the Design & Access Statement (4.6) that a protocol will be used to discourage further vehicles from entering Monument Drive when the parking situation at Meadley's, Barracks, and the Visitor Centre is full.</p> <p>CCB PC TO NOTE: Members will recall the site visit hosted by the NT in September 2024. This is the beginning of several applications to address the medium to long-term impacts of recreational pressures on the Ashridge SAC habitats.</p>	6th May 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
Mile Barn Farm, Hemel Hempstead Road, Dagnall, Berkhamsted,	CBC reference CB/25/01639/D OC	Discharge of Conditions	Pending	<p>CCB Support</p> <p>Condition 2. We support this choice of materials. The Michelmersh Freshfield Lane contains a red-brown-purple mix that approximates a Matthew's Chesham Multi and is acceptable. The Freshfield Lane brick meets the BS EN771-1 specification for clay bricks. This addresses frost resistance, soluble salts, compression strength, water absorption, and size, as supported by our supplementary note on bricks. The mortar choice and preferred pointing are addressed, supporting a dark, gritty mix. A red plain clay tile is appropriate. Black weatherboarding is suitably recessive and in keeping with the vernacular. Black soffits, gable end boards, and rainwater goods are suitably recessive when viewed within the landscape.</p> <p>CCB PC TO NOTE: A matter of design detail in which the applicant has engaged with the CCB, to discuss materials in advance of their submission to the planning authority.</p>	16th June 2025
Newlands Wood Puddephats Lane, Markyate	DBC reference 23/02850/RET (Amended details)	Surfacing of pre-existing forest track with approx 150mm depth of recycled crushed concrete, to facilitate woodland management operations. The width of the existing track has not been increased (track width approx 3m) and no trees have been removed as part of the upgrade works. This forestry track	Pending	<p>CCB Comments</p> <p>Updated comments on 29th May 2025 (addressing further re-consultation details as submitted to DBC portal on 19th May) dealing with content of the crushed surfacing and a seeding mix for the trackway and their business model on the future use of the woodland, subject to a covenant).</p> <p>The CCB would have no further comments to make and we have had sight of the Herts CC Ecologist's comments and the Forestry Commission's comments. To confirm, we are content to rely on our previous comments.</p>	29th May 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
		has been in existence for over 100 years as evidenced by the extracts of OS maps and Google Earth images attached as document NW006			
Consultation on Proposed Section 16 Commons Act Application – Land at Lane End (CL13) Bolter End Common.	Email to commonlandca.sework@planninginspectorate.gov.uk	Section 16 of the Commons Act 2006 Proposed deregistration of common land at: BOLTER END COMMON CL13 Paul and Charles Edgley have applied to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under section 16 of the Commons Act 2006 for land forming part of the abovementioned registered common land (the “release land”) to cease to be so registered.	Pending	<p>CCB Comments</p> <p>The CCB does not raise any objections to these applications. Material to this conclusion is that the following presumptions apply:</p> <p>(1) Planning permission has been granted, and the current s.16 application is required to facilitate access, and the s.38 application is to facilitate landscape requirements as stipulated in planning permission 21/07913/OUT</p> <p>(2) The s.16 application proposes a 1,700 square metre replacement of 375 square metres of existing Common Land. This is supported by a detailed plan and an appropriate strategy to buffer the ancient woodland to the immediate west.</p> <p>(3) That the new ‘duty to further’ the AONB is discharged by the decision-maker.</p> <p>(4) That consideration and weight is given to the principles of Ancient Woodland restoration, as the Woodland Trust promotes in their guidance for planners (a copy is attached to these representations). Planning application 21/07913/OUT results in some damage to the bordering ancient woodland, which was acknowledged in the officer's report to the planning committee and factored into the planning balance by the case officer and the planning committee.</p> <p>(5) The long-term management of this additional 1,700 square</p>	7th May 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
				metres is confirmed. It may be a matter covered in the section 106 agreement as pertinent to the planning consent. We are grateful to know that such a matter is confirmed and before the decision-maker. CCB PC TO NOTE: This is a common land application and land swap, to implement a planning permission granted by BC-Wycombe and allocated in the Wycombe Local Plan.	
Land at White Cross Farm, Reading Road, Cholsey, Oxfordshire	Planning Inspectorate (PINS) reference: APP/U3100/W/25/3361505	<p>Appeal by London Rock Supplies against the refusal of planning permission as issued by</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council for the extraction and processing of sand and gravel</p> <p>including the construction of new site access roads, landscaping and screening bunds,</p> <p>minerals washing plant and other associated infrastructure with restoration to</p> <p>agriculture and nature conservation areas, using inert fill.</p>	Pending	<p>Representations by the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB), dealing with landscape and settings impacts (10th April) and supplementary representations (23rd April) dealing with the Conservation Target Area and ecological connectivity of the site.</p> <p>CCB objected in principle at the application stage. For the appeal, we have submitted 2 key points:</p> <p>(1). The AONB setting is experienced when walking the Thames Path. That would be diminished, and the setting harmed. The CCB would ask that great weight be given to this. Following the 'duty to further' in the updated CROW Act section 85, we respectfully invite the appointed Planning Inspector to give weight to this negative impact upon the conservation and enhancement of the setting as many recreational walkers enjoy. One of the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB is its 'relative tranquillity' (see page 11 of the AONB Management Plan 2019-2024). Landscape is an area 'perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'. (Source: Glossary in the Landscape Institute (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment).</p> <p>(2) This proposal harms the AONB during operational and restoration periods. Harm to the</p>	<p>10th April 2025</p> <p>&</p> <p>23rd April 2025</p>

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
				<p>setting will be clear, with a denuded and quasi-industrial landscape juxtaposed with the AONB. Walkers along the Thames Path will experience an AONB highly protected landscape on one side of the Thames and extensive minerals extraction on the other. Some glimpsed views will be apparent from The Ridgeway national trail as it passes through Mongewell, albeit the former Carmel College will screen some of them. Nevertheless, and when taken overall, the setting of the AONB will be harmed.</p> <p>CCB PC TO NOTE: The planning inquiry, to consider this appeal, opens on 15th July, for 4 days.</p>	

Item 10. Development Management Casework 1st July to 30th September 2025**Author:** Michael Stubbs, Planning Advisor**Purpose and Summary:** To inform the Committee about and seek approval of the responses made under delegated powers concerning the planning applications as listed and to update the Committee on any outcomes.**Background****(i)** A summary of submissions (support, objection in principle, comments over details, appeals and 'others' covering EIA matters and pre-application responses).

New applications/appeals during Q2 2025/26 = 15	Appeal representation = 0 Comments over details = 6 Objections in Principle = 7 Support = 2 Others = 0
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(ii) A summary of outcomes (CCB impacts upon decisions) since 1st July 2025.

Applications granted to which CCB Positively commented or supported = 4	<p>Land at Marchmont Farm nr Hemel Hempstead (DBC 19/02749/MOA) for 350 dwellings in the setting of the AONB (supported due to site landscaping and a SANG included). Granted 3rd July 2025.</p> <p>Land at Watling Street/Millfield Lane nr Markyate (DBC and CBC 24/01606/MFA) Solar Farm, within the AONB and with an amended design to avoid and mitigate a landscape impact. (supported) Granted 14th August 2025.</p> <p>Mile Barn Farm nr Dagnall (Central Beds CB/25/00140/VOC) approval of details for a residential development, with attention to Chilterns Buildings Design Guide (supported and engaged with the applicant). Granted 2nd April 2025.</p> <p>Land Opposite Wymondley Grid Station and to the South Of Sperberry Hill St Ippolyts (North Herts DC 24/02455/FP) 36 Ha solar farm, granted 28th July 2025. CCB commented and confirmed that this fell outside the setting of the AONB but sought assurances on the impacts of the boundary extension (which was subsequently ceased by Natural England).</p>
Applications granted to which CCB had objected = 1	Orchard Caravans Warrenden Road Hughenden (BC-Wycombe 25/05071/CLP), Certificate of Lawfulness for 4 caravans, granted 26 th June 2025. CCB had argued this did not meet the legal tests to establish the use. The LPA did not agree.
Applications refused to which CCB had commented or objected = 2	<p>Land at Bulbourne Wood near Berkhamstead (DBC 24/02705/MOA) for a care/nursing home facility. Refused 1st August 2025 including reason 2 that the AONB exceptional development test in the NPPF was not satisfied.</p> <p>Land at Bishopswood Camp, Gallowstree Road near Sonning Common, for a gypsy pitch with dayroom, associated</p>

	<p>parking, access and services (SODC P25/S0696/FUL). Refused 26th September 2025, including in the reasoning that this would fail to conserve and enhance this part of the AONB/National Landscape.</p>
<p>Planning appeal / DCO decisions received = 2</p>	<p>Land northeast of Wandon End, North Hertfordshire (NHDC) for 108 HA solar array. Allowed on appeal (PINS APP/X1925/W/25/3359065, dated 15th July 2025). At paragraph 30 the Inspector stated, <i>'At the time of the planning application the site was within a 'candidate area' for an extension to the Chilterns National Landscape. However, in May 2025 Natural England announced that the boundary extension review was cancelled and so there is now no prospect that the site could be included in the National Landscape for the foreseeable future'</i>.</p> <p>CCB did not object but sought clarification on the AONB boundary extension.</p> <p>Land West of Leighton Buzzard Road Hemel Hempstead (DBC) for 390 dwellings and 70 bed care home. Allowed on appeal (PINS APP/A1910/W/24/33454350). The impact upon the Chilterns AONB was identified as a main issue and the Inspector concluded that at paragraph 23. <i>'In terms of exercising my duty to seek to further the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Chilterns National Landscape, I am satisfied that the development of this part of its setting in the manner proposed would leave those specified characteristics of that National Landscape unharmed and would provide some support to its qualities'</i>. Paragraph 24. <i>'In conclusion to this main issue, the appeal proposal would cause <u>minor adverse harm</u> to the landscape character and appearance of the area. However, this would not transpose as harm to the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Chilterns National Landscape'</i>. (our emphasis).</p> <p>CCB did not raise objections due to the nature of the setting's relationship (topography, local context and woodland blocks). Costs were granted, which, while linked to the landscape evidence, were also a result of procedural matters. For the CCB, this case is interesting because a finding as to a settings relationship requires a measure of caution before any determination that this would harm the special qualities. Each case would rest on its own merits. Of note, the Inspector found harm to the landscape character but concluded that this would not result in harm to the special qualities of the AONB/NL.</p>
<p>Planning appeal decisions outstanding = 4</p>	<p>Chartridge House nr Chesham (BC-C&SB written representation) for 11 dwellings (part AONB).</p> <p>Marlow Film Studios (BC-Wycombe and recovered by the Secretary of State for decision) for 168,718 gross external floorspace production floorspace. The Inquiry closed on 24th February 2025. A decision is now anticipated on or before 27th November 2025.</p> <p>Land at West of Field Cottage Buslins Lane, Chartridge, Chesham (BC-C&SB, written representations). Enforcement notice appeal to remove surfacing/hardstanding outside the permitted area.</p> <p>White Cross Farm, nr Wallingford (OCC). Sand and gravel extraction, impacting the Thames Path and the setting of the</p>

	AONB. Planning Inquiry opened 15 th July, and a decision is anticipated in November/December 2025.
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1. **New CCB responses on planning applications during Q2 2025/26 (July to September) are listed in Appendix 1**, and current live casework is in **Appendix 2**. The Planning Adviser will provide reflections on the outcomes of CCB representations at the 23rd October 2025 planning committee. Matters for the Planning Committee to note are set out at the end of each section.

Recommendations:

1. **That the Committee:**
- a. **NOTES the updates in this paper, and ENDORSES the responses made in connection with the applications listed in Appendix 1, and 2.**

APPENDIX 1**New CCB Responses on Planning Applications submitted during Q2 2025/26**

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
Between Footpath 79 And Park Lane Stokenchurch, Buckinghamshire	BC-Wycombe 25/06637/AGD	Prior Approval application for approval of siting, design and external appearance for construction of agricultural barn with hardstanding.	Pending	<p>CCB Objection-in-Principle</p> <p>We agreed with the applicant's agent in their supporting statement at 5.47 that permitted development (PD) is not explicitly restricted in National Landscape areas and at 5.50 that agricultural buildings are an integral part of the Chilterns landscape. The secondary legislation governing PD explicitly directs attention to siting, design and external appearance.</p> <p>PC NOTE: This application proposes an industrial structure in a highly sensitive boundary location within the AONB/National Landscape, which serves as a gateway to the wider landscape character area.</p>	19th August 2025
Bishopswood Sports Club Horsepond Road Gallowstree Common Oxfordshire	SODC P25/S1784/FUL	Creation of a 3G Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) with perimeter fencing, hardstanding areas, storage container, floodlights, an access footpath, and a pavilion.	Pending	<p>CCB Comments over details</p> <p>We sought further Information as:</p> <p>(i) Additional information and commentary on the E1 (i.e. AONB) status of the site and its surroundings,</p> <p>(ii) Consideration of sky glare and the extent to which this can be avoided and/or the subject of control</p> <p>(iii) If this best practice approach cannot reduce or delete sky glow in this case, then we suggest that the lighting element be deleted. However, we accept that it is a matter for further detail and consideration.</p> <p>PC NOTE: This is the first case to which we have recommended the application of our new Chilterns Lighting guidance. The applicant's responded on 23rd Sep and we are considering this.</p>	18th August 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
Chiltern View Nurseries Wendover Road Stoke Mandeville Buckinghamshire	BC- Waste & Minerals. CM/0007/25	Waste Transfer Station Erection of an open-fronted canopy building to cover the existing open storage yard	Pending	CCB Comments over details This application site is situated within the 'view corridor' of the Vale of Aylesbury, as viewed from Coombe Hill. This is one of the special qualities of the AONB/National Landscape, and given this, we recommend a low-impact roofing design, due to the scale of the proposed development. A dark green patina is suggested. The LPA may want to consider colour tones and hues to ensure the impact is appropriately made. ÷	18th August 2025
Land adjacent to Digberry Farm Digberry Lane near Park Corner. Oxfordshire	SODC P25/S2124/FUL	The material change in use of the land to a mixed use, comprising agricultural grazing for horses and a caravan site, to provide residential accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers, comprising a single-family pitch consisting of 1 Static caravan, 1 touring caravan, parking and associated infrastructure, new access	Pending	CCB Objection-in-Principle. The CCB was aware that a similar recent refusal and its subsequent appeal were dismissed on 20th May 2025 (PINS 3352693). This appeal decision is highly relevant and carries considerable weight as a material planning consideration. The appointed Planning Inspector was clear that this development would demonstrably reduce the open character of the site (paragraph 13), would not conserve or enhance the AONB/National Landscape and was contrary to a host of policies in the Local Plan, including ENV1 (paragraphs 16 and 26). The current application is materially the same. PC NOTE: The 20th of May 2025 Planning Inspector was aware of the new tests in the amended section 85 duty in the CRow Act 2000, addressing the 'duty to further'. This appeal decision is, therefore, highly relevant and applicable to the current proposal for retrospective planning permission.	18th Sep 2025
Mop End Farm Mop End Lane nr Holmer Green, Buckinghamshire	BC-C&SB PL/25/2447/FA	Proposed battery energy storage facility and associated works	Pending	CCB Objection in Principle This application was deemed harmful to the special qualities of the AONB, not a grey belt under the NPPF footnote 7 test (as it adversely impacts the AONB), and a major	16th Sep 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
				<p>development test under the NPPF 190 (b) test.</p> <p>We invited the LPA to consider the following:</p> <p>(i) The duties to protect the AONB in law, policy and guidance.</p> <p>(ii) The special qualities of the AONB, which link to its natural beauty in this location.</p> <p>(iii) The consistent nature of the AONB, including the homogenous landscape character in Landscape Character Area 18.2 and its tranquil, rural context.</p> <p>(iv) The CCB's measured stance on renewable energy, as demonstrated by its policy statement and Management Plan and experience of recent applications, including the battery facility project at Dereham's Farm, Loudwater.</p> <p>(v) The CCB's own Management Plan and its relevance, as confirmed in Planning Practice Guidance and our work with the farming community through the five farmer clusters that we are facilitating in the Chilterns.</p> <p>PC NOTE: This site is adjacent to several farms that are members of the Central and Chess & Misbourne Valley Farmer Clusters, who have been actively improving wildlife habitat on their land and reducing chemical inputs and run-off. The proposal is major development and alternatives outside the AONB/NL must be considered first.</p>	
Fawleyfields Fawley Henley-on-Thames RG9 6HU	SODC P25/S1618/FUL	Installation of 80 solar PV panels mounted via a low-profile ground-mounted racking system.	Pending	<p>CCB Support</p> <p>We consider this application to be acceptable because of its location within the (functional) curtilage of a residential property, the proposed low-profile anti-reflective and low-impact design and the topography within which it is located, to some extent nestled within its location, including plentiful and well-established hedgerows.</p> <p>In arriving at this conclusion, we have considered the site-specific</p>	28th July 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
				location, design details, and the landscape character assessment (5A wooded chalk ridge and valleys, with 'a generally rural and unspoilt landscape, with a strong structure of woodland and incised valley landforms creating an intimate and enclosed character and restricting long range views') and the special qualities of the AONB (as set out in the 2025 Schedule of Amendments (see policy /DP2). PC NOTE: Small-scale renewables are appropriate, subject to location, within our own Renewables Position Statement.	
Outline application for the erection of 18 dwellings including 9 affordable units (matter to be considered at this stage: access),	Chiltern & South Bucks reference: PL/25/1732/OA	Land Adjacent to Hampden Farm Barn Greenlands Lane Prestwood	Pending	CCB Objection in Principle Harmful to the special qualities of the AONB, not a grey belt under the NPPF footnote 7 test and contrary to recent planning appeal decisions of 2022 and 2024. PC NOTE: This application is detrimental to the AONB Management Plan's 2025 schedule of amendments, particularly at DP2 (i.e., it harms the local landscape character, distinctiveness, and natural beauty). The special qualities of the AONB are harmed, notably by the loss of relative tranquillity, relatively dark skies, unspoilt countryside and secret corners. Three previous appeals of similar merit have been dismissed.	2nd Sep 2025
Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (The EIA Regulations) – Regulations 10 and 11 Application by	Planning Inspectorate reference: TR020003	Addendum Scoping consultation and notification of the applicant's contact details and duty to make available information to the applicant if requested	Pending	CCB Comments over details In the scoping content, we promote the addition of further reference/material as applies to the new 'duty to further', which amended section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000, as introduced by section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. This new duty was the subject of questions set and led by the Examining Authority during their third set of examinations dealing with the Luton Airport expansion	12th Sep 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
Heathrow Airport Limited (the applicant) for an Order granting Development Consent for the Heathrow Expansion (the proposed development)				<p>NSIP (Luton Rising) in November 2023.</p> <p>We are aware that (as confirmed at paragraph 4.5.2 of the Scoping Addendum) the newly established body vested with responsibility to plan for the UK's Airspace Modernisation Strategy will play an essential role in this modelling as to future impacts. We know the applicant will want to work with the newly created UK Airspace Design Services (UKADS), as well as bodies such as Natural England and ourselves, to understand the implications of overflying and, with careful regard to policies set out in the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS), which discourages the overflying of Nationally Protected Landscapes.</p> <p>PC NOTE: The anticipated Heathrow 3rd runway NSIP/Development Consent Order is at an early stage. These comments relate to the scoping of the environmental assessment document, commenced in 2018, but paused during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	
At Kimble Farm Dudley Lane Southend Buckinghamshire	BC- Wycombe area reference 25/06412/FUL	Proposed creation of a tennis court and a padel court	Pending	<p>CCB Support</p> <p>We have considered the PINS decision reference 3347750 and the locational sensitivities in this part of the AONB/National Landscape.</p> <p>We noted that no external lighting is proposed, which can be controlled by a suitable planning condition.</p>	24th July 2025
Land bordering either side of the M40 near Postcombe and Lewknor villages.	SODC P25/S1987/FUL	Installation of a solar farm and cable corridor with associated infrastructure, access, security fencing and landscaping. (Additional information	Pending	<p>CCB Objection in Principle.</p> <p>This application is deemed to be harmful to the setting of the AONB and its identified special qualities of panoramic views, also including the mosaic 'tapestry' landscape beneath the escarpment and detrimental to public benefit derived from views and vistas within the AONB 'looking out'.</p>	2nd Sep 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
		received 21 August 2025)		<p>In the delivery of the planning balance, the identified harm to the AONB's setting, which is itself accepted by the applicant's agents, demonstrably outweighs the benefits of renewable energy delivery in this location.</p> <p>The CCB fully acknowledges that the benefits derived from renewable energy are evident in addressing the climate crisis. We accept that the proposal delivers the policy details and national targets and national objectives as set out in the NPPF Chapter 14, the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended) and in delivering CE5 in the Local Plan.</p> <p>PC NOTE: This application impacts the special qualities of the AONB/NL, notably the panoramic views out from within Beacon Hill and Bald Hill.</p>	
Land east of Tring (Marshcroft)	Dacorum BC 25/01880/MOA	Hybrid application (with access details of two main access points from Bulbourne Road and Station Road in Full and the main development on the rest of the site in Outline with all matters reserved) for the demolition of all existing buildings on the site and the development of up to 1,400 dwellings (including up to 140 Use Class C2 dwellings); a new local centre and sports/community hub; primary school;	Pending	<p>CCB Objection-in-Principle</p> <p>We raised objections based upon the requirement of due process to test the plan at examination and avoid speculative applications outside the plan process. Further, the need to demonstrate that the AONB/NL setting has been taken into account and amended since the Secretary of State's 2024 dismissed appeal scheme which cited harm to the setting.</p> <p>We sought details on how the illustrative masterplan has changed to address the specific point regarding views from the Ridgeway and Pitstone Hill, as raised by the Secretary of State in 2024. Our conclusion is that nothing has changed at all.</p> <p>PC NOTE: This application appears to be identical to the 2024 appeal, which the Secretary of State dismissed. No meaningful amendments have been undertaken, following the Secretary of State's 2024 decision, which dealt with the setting of the AONB and views out from the Ridgeway national</p>	3rd Sep 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
		secondary school; and public open spaces including creation of a SANG.		trail and at Pitstone Hill. Currently, this is being promoted in the new DBC Local Plan; however, the outcome of the current examinations will not be reported until 2026.	
Land off Wyfold Lane, Peppard Common, Oxfordshire	SODC application reference: P25/S1825/PiP	Outline application with all matters reserved, for the erection of 7 Custom Build dwellings	Pending	<p>CCB Objection-in-Principle</p> <p>Contrary to AONB/National Landscape policy with the planning principle not being established.</p> <p>This site exhibits a long and detailed planning history. The applicant, in this current application, seeks to recalibrate the planning balance based on a permission-in-principle application and consideration of housing supply and the benefits arising from five custom-built housing developments. The applicant's attribution of weight to National Landscape/AONB issues is inconsistent with the previous planning appeal decision on this site (under PINS reference 3180206). Both housing land supply and custom-built housing matters were previously considered by the 2018 Planning Inspector, and 'great weight' was attributed to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB, consistent with national guidance and development plan policy.</p>	21st July 2025
Land To North of Little Green Lane Croxley Green WD3 3SP	Three Rivers DC reference: 24/2073/OUT	Outline Application: Development of up to 600 residential dwellings (Use Class C3(a)), construction of a 5-bedroom property for childrens social care and supported living (Use Class C3(b)). Two vehicular access points from Little Green Lane and further	Pending	<p>CCB Comment over details.</p> <p>The statutory boundary of the Chilterns AONB/National Landscape is set away from the application site and lies some 2.4 to 2.6km to the west of the submitted red line. The landscape within and surrounding the application site shares several characteristics with the Chilterns landscape, notably narrow and partly sunken lanes, dry chalk valley features, and a chalk plateau landscape. The River Gade, a Chilterns Chalk stream and valley landscape, is located approximately 2-3 km to the east of the application site. This</p>	21st July 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
		pedestrian / cycleway accesses. A one form entry primary school (Use Class F1(a)) (plus expansion land for a two form entry primary school). A mixed use local centre including provision for NHS health and social care services (Use Class E(e)), community building (Use Class F2), retail and cafe provision (Use Class E(a-c)), car parking and associated infrastructure. A country park, areas for play and recreation, allotments, community orchard and landscaping with associated infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage systems. (Layout, scale, appearance and landscape as reserved matters).		<p>flows from within a source within the National Landscape.</p> <p>It is material that in the Spring of 2025, Natural England ceased work on the Chilterns boundary extension review, along with other candidate projects. The distance and intervening topography to the east of this application site result in a very marginal impact upon the setting of the Chilterns, and we accept that this would not harm the special qualities following an appraisal of visual impacts alone.</p> <p>In taking a more holistic view of the impacts upon the Chilterns, we would seek assurances that the River Gade's ecology is not impacted. The applicants within their submitted landscape and visual impact assessment and/or ecological assessment are welcome to comment on the wider implications upon the River Gade and the recreational impacts upon footpaths and green infrastructure more generally. We would welcome an addendum to the landscape assessment with a Chilterns perspective.</p> <p>PC NOTE: This application is within the wider setting of the Chilterns but at a distance and with topography that results in a largely 'neutral/no harm' impact. We have sought some assurances on the ecological impacts on the River Gade.</p>	
Land at Marchmont Farm Piccotts End Lane Hertfordshire	DBC reference: 25/01742/MOA	Outline Planning Application for up to 750 dwellings, a neighbourhood centre comprising up to 1000 sqm	Pending	<p>CCB Support</p> <p>The CCB'S overall conclusion, subject to the examination of the draft plan being successful, is that the proposal is acceptable within the setting of the AONB, assessing the setting against visual impacts, landscape</p>	5th August 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
		Class E/ F2 floorspace, two form entry primary school, Public Open Space, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, associated infrastructure and engineering works with all matters reserved except for access to the site from Berkhamsted Road.		<p>impacts, biodiversity and chalk streams impacts.</p> <p>Considering the new duty placed upon the decision-maker by the amendments to s85 (please see below), we encourage the local planning authority to implement the Green Infrastructure early and ensure BNG within those corridors, linking the SANG to the entire development via a green network. By increasing these GI corridors, the visual impact upon the wider countryside, including the AONB, is further lessened.</p> <p>PC NOTE: This site is not allocated in the current DBC Local Plan, but we anticipate it will be allocated in the new Local Plan (currently under examination). By ensuring the early delivery of substantial green corridors with access to the proposed SANG, this scheme has the potential to be a template for future housing allocations in the Hemel Garden Communities.</p>	
Fields to the northern and eastern outskirts of Watlington in Oxfordshire. The Proposed Development intersects five local roads: from east to west, these are the B4009, Rosemoor Drive, B480 (Cuxham Road), Pyrton Lane and Watlington Road (B4009)	OCC reference R3.0010/24	The construction of two sections of single carriageway forming part of the Watlington Relief Road (WRR) including footways and cycleways, two new roundabouts, a new junction linking Britwell Road/Harman's Way and the provision of a vehicular pick-up and drop-off area to Icknield Community College, a new section of bridleway (Pyrton Lane to east and west of the	Pending	<p>CCB Comments/Support</p> <p>4th CCB's correspondence and Comments on additional details (June 2025).</p> <p>The CCB has now had the opportunity to review the additional details on 'landscape and visual' matters, comprising the submission of additional lighting details. These are matters of particular importance when enjoying 'views out' as well as 'views in' to the National Landscape/AONB, with some iconic viewpoints, such as the impressive vantage point of Watlington Hill, affording a much-valued vista of the National Landscape and the valued landscape that adjoins it (as is now advanced in the Vale/SODC joint Local Plan). Watlington is, to some extent, nestled within that vista, and it is essential that lighting within the road corridor is kept to a minimum for operational purposes. We welcomed the</p>	23rd July 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
		route alignment), pedestrian crossing facilities, a new bridge over Chalgrove Brook, landscaping and planting, drainage improvements, street lighting and associated earthworks and infrastructure		<p>previous reduction in lighting columns and confirmation of a curfew and dimming arrangements, to be controlled by planning conditions.</p> <p>We would, briefly, make the following points:</p> <p>(i). At this juncture, we would seek to reaffirm the need for lighting controls. We have considered the submitted Appendix 1.10 lighting details (dated 25th June 2025). These details confirm a CCT or colour-coordinated temperature of 2.7 (2,700) kelvin, resulting in a softer lighting impact. However, we noted in the December 2024 consultation that the CCT was set at 2,400 Kelvin. We welcome the LPA's clarification, and we promote the lower figure as the result will be a warm white light.</p> <p>(ii). We have assumed 23 columns are to be approved. From the various lighting documents in Appendix 1.10, we noted 11 in one report and 13 in a second report (i.e. 24 overall). We are grateful for that to be clarified.</p> <p>(iii). We noted the drawings denoting the radii of lighting illumination, which are tightly drawn and appropriately so. We recommend that these radii drawings show the spatial extent of the lighting impact, as well as curfew timings and the 50% dimming of lamps (also denoted in Appendix 1.10), which are all the subject of appropriate planning conditions.</p> <p>The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) published its Chilterns Lighting Planning Guidance in July 2025. We consider this a material consideration, to which weight can be attached. For this application, we consider that it adds weight and authority to our case in support of the minimum lighting standard of the highest environmental standard. Further, it supports our earlier</p>	

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
				<p>viewpoint that all of this application falls within the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) defined 'Natural' E1 zone (see page 11 of the new guidance) and that the promotion of intrinsically dark zones is an essential land-use outcome. Further, it supports and embeds our AONB Management Plan policy DP8 on Dark Skies.</p> <p>PC NOTE: A separate paper in this agenda updates the Committee on this application.</p>	
Land at Woodway Farm Chinnor Road Aston Rowant	SODC P25/S1671/O	Outline planning application (scale, landscaping and appearance reserved) for the demolition of existing equestrian buildings and the erection of seven detached and semi-detached dwellings with access, parking and garaging and amenity space. (As amplified by additional information received 11 August 2025).	Pending	<p>CCB Comments over details</p> <p>We would not propose to comment upon the planning principle as this site falls outside the AONB/National Landscape, and that would ordinarily be a matter for the Local Planning Authority. Insofar as nationally protected landscape matters are concerned, this existing farmstead falls within the wider setting of the AONB, as acknowledged by the applicant.</p> <p>PC NOTE: This application is not located on an allocated site; however, it is approximately 700 metres from the AONB/NL boundary (the Ridgeway National Trail) and its visibility is moderated by both distance and its location within an existing farm cluster. We have asked that greater regard is paid to the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide, which provides exemplary advice on development within a clustered farmstead.</p>	23 rd Sep 2025
Land to the South East Of Whielden Street Amersham Buckinghamshire	BC Chilterns & South Bucks area reference: PL/25/2404/OA	Outline planning application, with all matters reserved (except access), for the erection of up to 45 dwellings, including affordable housing, public open space,	Pending	<p>CCB Objection in Principle</p> <p>This application is wholly located within the AONB/National Landscape. It provides a contextual setting to Old Amersham and adjoins the Amersham Old Town Conservation Area, itself a constituent part of Landscape Character Area (LCA) 13.5 (Misbourne Upper Chalk River Valley). The site sits within the</p>	30 th Sep 2025

Location	LPA & Ref No	Development	Status	Summary of the Board's Response	Date
		hard and soft landscaping, biodiversity enhancements and new vehicular access onto Whielden Street, and associated infrastructure.		<p>valley landscape that helps to define this part of the Chilterns AONB. This site was previously deemed a candidate for the Local Plan process (SP BP5) in the withdrawn Chilterns and South Bucks Local Plan. The CCB, in its Regulation 19 submissions (November 2019), called for the deletion of this allocation, which was the same site area as the current application and denoted for an allocation of (then) up to 50 dwellings</p> <p>PC NOTE: The application papers downplay the AONB/NL status of this site, without any detailed justification. No detailed discussion is offered regarding the link between a historic Chilterns linear settlement, the valley and dip-slope landscape within it, and the more expansive views from vantage points along the surrounding public right-of-way network. The LVIA concludes at 8.16 that <i>'this application has been informed by the aims set out in the Management Plan and Chilterns Buildings Design Guide'</i>. We could not find any discussion on how that conclusion was drawn.</p>	

APPENDIX 2

Live CCB Development Management Casework at the end of September 2025

Location	LPA	Ref number	Development	Deadline
Land south of Greenfield Road and Clayhill Farm, Westoning (aka Sampshill Solar Farm)	Cental Beds BC	CB/25/02017/FULL	Construction of a temporary solar farm to include panels, transformers, sub-station, DNO room, security fencing and landscaping	23rd July 2025
Cutlers Farm Marlow Road Lane End Buckinghamshire	BC-Wycombe	PL/25/2744/OA	Construction of 59 dwellings and a local area of play. PC Note: This is speculative and not an allocation in the Development Plan.	8 th October 2025

Kensworth Quarry, Isle of Wight Lane, Kensworth Bedfordshire	CBC	CB/25/02694/MWR	Periodic review of restoration planning conditions.	16 th October 2025
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Item 11 DM updates – special reports

Author: Michael Stubbs, Planning Adviser (DM).

Purpose and Summary: To update the Committee on two key current development proposals – Watlington Bypass and Ashridge Gateways – and on several recent planning appeal decisions of interest.

Background

1. This paper presents as appendices updates on two key development proposals and the outcomes of several recent planning appeal decisions of interest.
2. Appendix 1 provides an update on the Watlington By-Pass and the CCB's recent response following correspondence from Beechwood Estates Company Limited (BECL), which owns and manages an estate to the immediate north of the AONB, at Shirburn, Watlington.
3. Appendix 2 provides an update on the National Trust's progress with their proposals for two "Gateway" facilities to their estate at Ashridge at Ward's Hurst Farm (within Buckinghamshire – Aylesbury Vale area) and Hill Farm (within Dacorum BC area). The planning committee was hosted last September 2024 by the National Trust, who set out the background to these applications, which are intended to reduce harmful visitor pressure on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC within their popular estate, followed by a site visit to both locations.
4. Appendix 3 provides brief updates on several recent appeals that are worthy of note.

Recommendations:**1. That the Committee:**

- a. **NOTES** the updates in the appendices to this paper,
- b. **ENDORSES** the response to the Local Planning Authority set out in Appendix 1, expressing comments in support of the amendments to this application.
- c. **ENDORSES** the response to the National Trust, set out in Appendix 2, noting that this may be included in the NT's supporting papers for a pre-application opinion by Dacorum Borough Council.

Appendix 1: Watlington By-Pass

5. The Watlington By-Pass planning application, currently before Oxfordshire County Council, has been reported to the previous CCB Planning Committee meetings, on 25th April 2024 (item 8, page 48) and 23rd January 2025 (item 11, page 82). The most recent and fourth consultation on further amendments took place in July 2025, and the CCB responded (as reported in these papers). The CCB considered these additional details and concluded that the proposal was acceptable from the standpoint of AONB/National Landscape matters, which are exclusively confined to setting, involving visual appearance and impacts from lighting within the national landscape. We raised objections at the first consultation (February 2024); however, following subsequent detailed amendments, this was changed to 'comments over details', with support at the third consultation, and clarification on some technical details was provided at the fourth and most recent consultation (i.e. further 'comments over details').

6. In summary, we have commented on and supported the following key issues:

3.1 Reduction of lighting columns. We supported the applicant's efforts to reduce the lighting columns from 89 to 23. We deemed this a very material amendment that reduces what would have been a visually intrusive linear strip of lighting, as originally proposed. This would have been visible from higher ground at Watlington Hill, within the AONB/NL. We supported and welcomed this amendment. We caveated our support based on conditions to enforce the applicant's proposed curfew, specifically regarding the timing, technical deployment of pre-set dimming at 21:00 hours, and the use of a CCT (colour-coordinated temperature) set at 2,400 kelvins, reduced from the previously proposed 3,000 kelvins. The AONB Management Plan 2025 schedule of amendments policy DP8 (Dark Skies) promotes this as a maximum figure to reduce impact to a 'warm white' colour. The proposed CCT/kelvins also complies with our new Lighting Guidance.

3.2 Revised Landscaping. The amended landscaping is more generous, embracing clustering and species-rich grassland with predominantly native species. The revisions incorporate 278 trees, mostly native, with a small number of non-native trees to assist with the earlier screening of the road, within the norm of a 15-year assessment period (under the Landscape Institute's guidance).

3.3 BNG. We welcomed the increased Biodiversity Net Gain target of 20%, which is now promoted in the current draft of the Vale/SODC Joint Local Plan. Due to the site constraints, we have assumed that some of this relates to off-site credits. Again, we assume a suitable condition will be imposed and control the 'best practice' approach towards appropriate ecological management.

3.4 Oxfordshire Way. Pyrton Lane, to the northwest of Watlington Road, falls outside the AONB but is within its setting. The Oxfordshire Way follows this route to the southeast and links to the AONB as you cross the road and walk to Christmas Common, which also links with Swan's Way. We noted the point in the Landscaping Details (Volume 4, Part 1, version 31st Oct 2024) that *'more could be done to enhance the Oxfordshire Way to cross the B4009 to Station Road at the B4009 Watlington Road/Station Road/Pyrton Lane crossroads* (see para 2.4). We welcome the improvements for non-motorised users, including the details set out at appx 5.2 (its figure 3). We noted some correspondence on cycle corridors and their widths in the various papers. We can see the matter has been given attention. Considering the wider connections to the Chilterns Cycleway, we promote cycling as a priority to deliver the environmental, health, and well-being benefits that are closely linked to the broader Chilterns area. One of the key AONB issues will be the path of the Oxfordshire Way as it crosses the main road - we say it will be improved and made safer by the proposed

'Pegasus crossing' (a type of signalised pedestrian crossing, with special consideration for horse riders).

7. Correspondence received from BECL on 8th August 2025 requested that the CCB reconsider its response. Officers consider it would be helpful to put these points to the Planning Committee and to explain our stance on these matters. BECL helpfully forwarded their additional representations to Oxfordshire County Council. These were presented by Richard Buxton Solicitors, dated 8th August 2025, and incorporated three professional reports on highways, veteran trees/arboriculture, and bat ecology. Officers have considered all these reports. In our professional judgment, these reports do not change our own responses from the standpoint of the AONB/NL and its setting. In further explanation, the highways report submitted by BECL raises concern that the proposed lighting is unenforceable in planning because the safety requirements, vested with the highway authority, as opposed to the planning authority, have not been the subject of comment and will need to be far more intrusive than those currently suggested. In CCB's judgment, the enforceability of a planning condition is the subject of 6 tests in planning practice guidance (necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects). We consider that the current proposals meet these tests. Other points raised in the BECL highways report question the need for this road, the potential for vehicles to make illegal turns from the newly configured Pyrton Lane junction, the creation of 'induced' traffic (i.e., generated by the road itself), and the marginal time saving achieved compared to alternative routes. On the merits of this case, these are not matters for the CCB, as they do not impact our duties and obligations as set out in Section 87 of the CRoW Act 2000. We have also made the point to BECL that the current difficulties experienced by vehicles in Watlington do generate 'rat-running' along the Chilterns Cycleway route that passes through Christmas Common. We rely on anecdotal evidence of this, but the new road, on the balance of probability, should reduce this harmful consequence upon a valued Chilterns amenity from which public benefit is derived.
8. The other two professional reports by BECL deal with the proper protection of veteran trees on the boundary of the proposed route and the protection of bat ecology. Both matters are important, of course, but, on the basis of the evidence presented so far, CCB has no further comments and is content for them to fall for consideration by the LPA in its assessment of the submitted details, including suitable protection and the application of arboricultural and ecological best practice. This includes the application of ecological best practice with the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) /Bat Conservation Trust's Guidance Note 8 on Bats and Artificial Lighting (2023).
9. If members of the Planning Committee would like to view the BECL representations made by Richard Buxton's Solicitors, officers will make copies available. We have concluded that the differences of opinion between CCB and BECL are matters of professional judgement and interpretation. Our duties, as contained in the CRoW Act, shape the nature of our representations. This application has undergone considerable amendments since its submission in February 2024. With appropriate controls on lighting and landscaping, the now amended application is deemed acceptable when assessed against the impact upon the AONB/NL. When these points of detail are combined with the likely reduction in 'rat running' along the Chilterns Cycleway, the proposal can be deemed to further the purpose of the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape as contained in section 85 of the CRoW Act 2000.

Appendix 2: Ashridge Gateways

10. The National Trust's Ashridge Estate has been experiencing unsustainable visitor numbers for some years now. These pressures culminated in Natural England's March 2022 moratorium on future housing within a 12.6 km radius or zone of influence around the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Approximately 40% of the NT's Ashridge falls within this SAC, suffering habitat deterioration due to over-recreation. The whole estate accommodates around 1.7 visitors annually. Subsequently, Natural England lifted this restriction with the delivery of a SANGs policy or protocol (suitable alternative natural green spaces), which were geared to divert some countryside visits away from the SAC. The draft Dacorum Local Plan, currently at the examination stage, promotes new visitor gateways at Ashridge, as a component of this strategy. The gateways will deliver new visitor reception and car parking within a more strategic SANG, so that the NT will consequently restrict parking at the existing Monument Drive facilities. As a part of this, the interim planning involves the creation of temporary car parking at Meadley's Meadow and the immediate cessation of parking along Monument Drive, which adjoins the SAC. That application is currently with Dacorum BC for determination, and the CCB has expressed support (DBC 25/00855/MFA).
11. The NT has engaged the CCB in its initial design and layout ideas for both Ward's Hurst and Hill Farm. At **Ward's Hurst**, this involves the key principles of reusing buildings and restoring the walled garden. At **Hill Farm**, more detailed location and design ideas are being developed. Officers will show some images and drawings. The NT proposes to proceed with a pre-application opinion from the Local Planning Authority in late October 2025. With the Planning Committee's approval, officers propose expressing support for the key design principles behind the Hill Farm gateway. These principles involve locating the car parking and visitor building on the eastern side of the site, thereby concentrating them in a single, secluded area away from the wider landscape. The built form would follow an evolving design approach to replicate a 'folly' or 'eyecatcher', so that the visitor building, circular in form, would be visible in the wider landscape. The car parking would, however, be shielded mainly by planting and existing woodland. This would be approximately 30m from the nearest ancient woodland, exceeding the 15m threshold in the long-standing guidance issued by Natural England. Reflecting the use of locally sourced Totternhoe chalk clunch in the nearby Ashridge House, the project team are considering the use of Portland Stone walling, sourced as offcuts from a project in London, together with HE Matthews's 'strocks', comprising blocks of clay-rich earth and chopped straw, suitable for an inner skin of internal load-bearing walls. Both materials perform well in terms of sustainability, comprising an upcycled facing (Portland Stone) and a low embodied energy, locally sourced material (the 'strocks' brick).
12. Subject to the agreement of the Planning Committee (PC), officers would propose to offer the following feedback ahead of the submission of a pre-application opinion.
13. *'The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) has engaged with the Ashridge Gateways project since 2023, when the National Trust (NT) commenced its public engagement programme. In September 2024, the CCB's Planning Committee, hosted by the National Trust, visited the site locations and was briefed on the problems caused by over-recreation within the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. The current principles behind the Hill Farm Gateway, within Dacorum BC, were presented to the CCB's PC on 23rd October 2025 and the PC supports the evolving but evident principles of (i) Siting the car park and visitor centre toward the eastern boundary, away from the dry valley landscape of this proposed SANG, (ii) Concealing the car parking by virtue of its relatively sheltered location and topography and through additional landscaping/planting/mitigation, and (iii) the deployment of design thinking that involves the use of sustainable and re-purposed*

materials. The PC endorsed the opinion that a building in the landscape is acceptable but should not be so prominent as to impact the wider landscape character of the site, which includes a dry valley landscape, (iv) That the location of this infrastructure within the design of a wider SANG is consistent with the draft pre-submission Dacorum Local Plan to 2041 policies NE 5 on SANGs, NE 6 Gateway Principles and Natural England's Guidelines for Creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), issued August 2021 and the Development policies in the AONB Management Plan 2025 schedule of amendments.

Appendix 3: Appeal decisions

14. Several notable appeal decisions have been issued since the last Planning Committee meeting in April 2025. Officers wanted to draw attention to a number of decisions which impact the National Landscape and the decision-making process.

Huttons Farm Estate, Main Road, Hambleden (APP/K0425/W/24/3356181)

15. An application to construct a shooting lodge facility was dismissed on appeal on 2nd June 2025. This appeal was made against the non-determination of the planning application. The CCB had objected on grounds of its landscape impact and diminution of the special qualities of the AONB in this location. Buckinghamshire – Wycombe area submitted that, had the application not otherwise been appealed, they would have recommended approval. The Planning Inspector disagreed, finding that the landscape would be harmed. He reported that:

14. Overall, the scale, design and materials of the building and the layout of the site are not objectionable. However, the appellant has accepted, within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), the Landscape Statement and the Landscape Response submitted with Final Comments, that the development would result in a change to the character of the site. Furthermore, the development would be visible from the PROWs when alongside the new building and also visible from wider PROWs during the winter months...

15 (continues) '...Nevertheless, even with the enhanced landscaping, the development would adversely affect the views from the PROWs and the public perception and aesthetic appreciation of the NL. The development would not go so far as to conserve and enhance the scenic beauty of the NL, or further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the NL. Taking account of the DEFRA advice, in my judgement, the development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area...'

16 (continues) '.....The LURA requires development in the NL to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing it. This supports the Framework's requirement of conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of the NL and the advice to limit the scale and extent of development.'

16. In this decision, the Inspector focused heavily on the public perception and aesthetic appreciation of the National Landscape. He robustly applied the strengthened s.85 duty to seek to further the statutory purpose (referred to in his report, incorrectly, as the LURA).

Pirton Water Tower (APP/X1925/W/24/3348028)

17. A second appeal was dismissed on 8th May 2025 seeking the demolition of a redundant water tower within the National Landscape and its replacement with a dwelling. The Planning Inspector gave due weight and attention to the AONB Management Plan, consistent with planning practice guidance. He stated:

15. 'I have identified above that the introduction of a dwelling would be at odds with the open character of the Chilterns National Landscape.... (continues)... The scale of the harm caused by its demolition and replacement with an unsympathetic built form to the character and appearance of the surrounding area would not be justified'

18. 'It follows therefore, that the appeal scheme would also fail to accord with the aims of the Chiltern's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024 and the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031 (the NP) insofar as they seek to conserve and enhance the Chilterns National Landscape.'

18. In this decision, the Inspector specifically identified the AONB Management Plan and gave it appropriate weight when dismissing the appeal.

Satwell House, Satwell, near Henley on Thames (APP/Q3115/W/24/3356473)

19. An appeal was dismissed on 23rd April 2025 for extensive landscaping works including the creation of a new access. This application involved a comprehensive reworking of the landscape within a sizable portion of this large estate. The Inspector noted the wooded dip-slope qualities and the largely rural and unspoilt character of this estate.

20. At **10**, he focused upon the new entrance, finding *'The proposed development would involve the introduction of a new entrance from Witheridge Hill to the north of Cherry Tree Cottage. The proposed entrance would require the removal of part of the existing hedgerow, which as outlined above, makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The loss of this part of the hedgerow would diminish the sense of enclosure and would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area'*.

21. At **11** *'Further, visibility splays would require a significant part of the existing hedgerow to be replaced or transplanted and a grass verge to be introduced along a stretch of the road...'*

22. At **13**. *'The proposed development with its stone pillars and decorative cast iron gate would result in the introduction of an incongruous urbanising feature at odds with the existing character and appearance of the area'*.

23. This case presents an interesting decision on the impacts arising from a new access within the National Landscape. The Planning Inspector was clear that **15** the result would be a *'harmfully incongruous feature that would cut across existing undeveloped verdant open land and would puncture a hole through the existing band of woodland that extends from the northern boundary of the appeal site in a southerly direction'*. This would **20** *'unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area and would not conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns National Landscape'*.

24. Vehicular access does impact the natural beauty of the National Landscape, and this is a useful case in point. This is a matter addressed in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide. This decision will provide a useful planning history should a similar threat arise in future applications. CCB had not raised objections over the original application.

Land West of Leighton Buzzard Road Hemel Hempstead (DBC)
(APP/A1910/W/24/33454350)

25. A proposal for 390 dwellings and 70 bed care home was granted on appeal on 5th August 2025. The impact upon the Chilterns AONB was identified as a main issue and the Inspector concluded that at paragraph **23**. *'In terms of exercising my duty to seek to further the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Chilterns National Landscape, I am satisfied that the development of this part of its setting in the manner proposed would leave those specified characteristics of that National Landscape unharmed and would provide some support to its qualities'*. At paragraph **24**. *'In conclusion to this main issue, the appeal proposal would cause minor adverse harm to the landscape character and appearance*

of the area. However, this would not transpose as harm to the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Chilterns National Landscape. (our emphasis). The CCB had not raised objections due to the largely concealed and shielded relationship to the development, resulting from distance, woodland, and topography. The Inspector's approach involved identifying landscape harm and then determining if it would also constitute harm to the special qualities of the AONB/NL.

Item 12. Policy Casework update

Authors: Matt Thomson, Head of Strategy & Planning, Victoria Thomson, Planning Adviser (Policy), Michael Stubbs, Planning Advisor (DM)

Purpose and Summary: To inform the Committee about policy developments and consultation responses submitted during Q1 & Q2 2025/26, and 'live' matters, including the current consultation on the new Buckinghamshire Local Plan.

Background

1. This paper sets out a number of key policy matters, including submissions made on formal consultations under delegated authority, but focuses on the key "live" consultation on the new local plan for Buckinghamshire. The paper also raises some ways in which the Planning Team intends to improve its operational effectiveness in relation to planning policy, now that we have additional capacity to support this important area of work.

Formal responses made in Q1 & Q2 2025/26**Dacorum Local Plan examination:**

2. Hearings on the examination began in September. Unfortunately, we did not have the capacity at that time to attend the hearings in person, or to submit additional material to the examination. In communication with the examination's Programme Officer, we were able to offer our apologies to the Inspectors, and received confirmation that our original submissions were being considered by the examination.
3. The examination continues, and officers are monitoring the programme to identify opportunities to contribute to hearings on matters of relevance to the Chilterns National Landscape.

Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan

4. Three Rivers DC consulted us on the revised Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan, which included a modified version of our current Model Policy (see also below). This is a matter of interest, as we continue to promote a series of model policies, including the general policy, as well as addressing detailed policies relating to lighting and chalk streams highlighted in our recently-published guidance. We have sought further changes to the Sarratt NP landscape policy to improve alignment with the strengthened s.85 duty to "seek to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area". We also referred TRDC and Sarratt NP colleagues to the latest guidance on the duty from both [Defra](#) and the [National Landscapes Association](#).

Live Consultation: Buckinghamshire Local Plan, "regulation 18"

5. Buckinghamshire Council published its draft local plan for consultation on 17 September, just in time for it to be picked up by our new Planning Adviser (Policy), and, with a closing date of 29 October, in time for a discussion of the draft plan at this meeting of the Planning Committee.
6. A paper, setting out the analysis of the draft plan to-date, is attached as Appendix 1. As noted in the paper, it currently focuses on Part A of the plan, which contains the plan's

spatial strategy; this will be supplemented with the assessment of Part B (development management policies) in due course.

7. The paper, and the ongoing work on the Bucks Local Plan, reflects and is undertaken in the context of related work being undertaken by the Planning Adviser (Policy) in relation to *how* we work on and respond to planning policy consultations. Some of this work is long overdue, as a result of our recent capacity issues. We are developing this work alongside the Bucks Local Plan response, with a constructive dialogue between the content of the response itself, and our proposals for improved ways of working. See below for further information.
8. Please see appendix 1 for the current paper containing the assessment of the Bucks Local Plan (part A) as it stands. We hope to be able to give at least a verbal update on progress with the assessment and development of a response.
9. Note that the paper begins with a visually accessible summary of the nature and status of the plan under consideration. This is one part of the new ways of working being developed for the team, and potentially for wider application. The idea here is that this information could be provided as part of the information made available to members online (a.k.a. the “Real Time System”). This table includes a coloured (“RAG”) element highlighting the current stage of the consultation, in this case coloured amber to indicate that the plan is “largely OK with some concerns”. Elements of the spatial strategy identified as being potentially positive or negative for the Chilterns National Landscape are summarised in the appendix.
10. Members are invited to offer any observations on the draft local plan, our assessment so far, and/or the approach taken to it.

Ways of working: Planning Policy

11. As noted above, in parallel with the response to the Bucks Local Plan, the Planning Adviser (Policy) is working with the Planning Team to develop new approaches to improve operational effectiveness and communications with CCB members and other officers. This work includes:
 - a. Populating and improving the effectiveness of a resource developed for the Committee’s ill-fated ‘Real Time System’ known as the ‘**Development Plans Dashboard**’. This was intended to be a single document, possibly to evolve into a web-based resource, providing key information about the status of key planning policy materials, including development plans, across the Chilterns region. Keeping this resource up-to-date would help us all keep track of planning and related policies that are in place, the status of emerging policies, and a pipeline of future consultations. We now have a much better understanding of the status of development plans (local plans, so far).
 - b. Mapping out robust and deliverable **procedures** for dealing with consultation responses, proportionate to their significance and our resources, including enabling us to engage with Board members and with specialist CCB officers where appropriate. These are at a very early stage of preparation, but will be shared with the Committee in due course.
 - c. Defining a **checklist** of what the CCB will look for in development plans, which we can use to structure our responses, but which we can also make available to local planning authorities and neighbourhood planning bodies as a constructive tool to assist them. The checklist will be drawn from CCB’s existing policies and

guidance, including the Management Plan, Buildings Design Guide, etc., but may raise new issues on which officer may need to seek the Board's approval – Planning Committee's inputs to this will be crucial.

- d. Reviewing CCB's current recommended **model development plan policy**. The model policy has been an extraordinarily helpful tool, but is showing its age, not least in branding terms, but also because it is not necessarily consistent with:
 - i. The strengthened s.85 duty.
 - ii. New understandings of our statutory purposes.
 - iii. New policies in the NPPF (including the setting policy).
 - iv. New approaches to local plans (including the separation of "strategic" and "development management" policies), and/or whether a different approach would be appropriate for local and neighbourhood plans.

12. All of the above are very much interrelated, and having a live consultation as wide ranging as the Bucks Local Plan to inform their consideration is very helpful. Observations on any of the above would be welcome, but the intention is to bring more detail of these proposals to future Planning Committee meetings (and the Board where changes to policy need to be approved). Appendix 2 (to be circulated separately, closer to the meeting) includes some illustrative or informative material of relevance to this.

Other updates

13. There is a lot going on that may relate to or impact upon our planning activities at the moment. We shall endeavour to give further updates verbally at the meeting. In the meantime:
 - a. The local pressure group LADACAN has been given leave to challenge the Secretary of State for Transport's decision to approve the expansion of **London Luton Airport**; hearings are expected to commence in the High Court on 4 November.
 - b. Government's controversial **Planning and Infrastructure Bill** continues to wend its way through Parliament. The Bill is broadly welcomed by the development industry and condemned by the environment sector. Officers have not had the capacity to keep track of developments, but suffice to say the Bill does not look good for the achievement of our statutory purposes. The Campaign for National Parks has been engaging actively with the Bill, supported by colleagues at the National Landscapes Association, with occasional input on specific matters from us. Thanks to the concerted efforts of the CNP and NLA, with CCB's support, ministers appear now to have ruled out repealing s.245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, and hence rolling back the strengthened **duty under section 85** of the CROW Act. Significant engagement with local MPs by our CEO is considered to have been a factor.
 - c. The impacts of the new NPPF policy on "**grey belt**" are beginning to be felt. The purpose of grey belt was to encourage (or force) green belt LPAs to release land from the Green Belt that does not contribute to the purposes of the designation by allowing the definition of such land as "grey belt". The policy and its application needs further assessment, but a key (unwritten) function of the Green Belt appears to have been overlooked, which is that of helping to protect the natural

beauty of protected landscapes by designating their setting as Green Belt, or simply retaining an open buffer between designated landscapes and urban areas. That function was implicitly included in the Green Belt purpose relating to “safeguarding the countryside”, which is not a purpose that the designation of “grey belt” can be assessed against. More work is needed.

- d. The programme of **English Devolution** continues, with local authorities working up proposals for mergers or boundary changes to meet the government’s aspirations. Impacts for planning in the Chilterns will include having fewer statutory development plans to engage with, although the plans will be larger and more complex; each strategic planning authority could have wider opportunities to plan strategically to avoid harm to the National Landscape. No local authority in the Chilterns has so far thought to approach the CCB to discuss their proposals, even though the changes will have an impact on how they engage with us. Current proposals are understood to be (mostly) restricted to changes within our historic counties, as follows:
- i. Oxfordshire: at least 3 different options, all of which would result in CCB needing to engage with a single unitary authority (that authority would also include parts of the North Wessex Downs, and possibly parts of the Cotswolds)
 - ii. Buckinghamshire: no fundamental change
 - iii. Bedfordshire: Luton and Central Beds to form part of a single unitary authority, with different options including different parts of the county outside of the Chilterns.
 - iv. Hertfordshire: Several options all of which would result in two unitary authorities overlapping with the Chilterns – one including North Herts, and the other including Dacorum and Three Rivers
 - v. Berkshire: not supported by the Oxfordshire authorities, but it is understood that Reading Borough Council could be bidding for a boundary review that could annexe additional land currently in South Oxfordshire on their borders around Caversham and the Thames Valley.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee **NOTES** the contents of this paper.
2. That the Committee **ENDORSES** submissions made on planning policy matters as set out in this paper.
3. That the Committee **CONSIDERS** the attached assessment of Part A (Spatial Strategies) of the Buckinghamshire Plan, and any updates provided in relation to that and Part B, and **OFFERS OBSERVATIONS** on the assessment to contribute to a submission made under delegated authority.

Appendix 1: Consultation on Draft Local Plan for Buckinghamshire

LPA	Buckinghamshire Council						
DOCUMENTS	Draft Local Plan for Buckinghamshire: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Part A: Spatial Strategies- Part B: Development Management Policies <i>[To replace the adopted local plans for the 4 former districts]</i>						
FORMAL STAGE	EARLY WORK	REG 18	FURTHER WORK	REG 19	SUBMISSION	EXAMINATION	IR/ADOPTION
	2021/22 + 2023	✓	Nov. 2025-Jun 2026	Jul-Aug 2026	Dec 2026	Dec. 2026-Sep 2027	TBC
PLAN COVERAGE	PERIOD		To 2045				
	AREA		Buckinghamshire (excl. Milton Keynes)				
CONSULTATION	17 September – 29 October, 2025						
WEBSITE	https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/planning/local-plan/						

Overview

The Draft Local Plan for Buckinghamshire recently published for consultation is in two parts. Part A deals with spatial strategies, and is addressed in the assessment below. Part B deals with development management policies, and is still to be assessed in detail; accordingly, only a limited assessment is provided in this report.

Overall, references to the National Landscape (NL) are encouraging and generally to be welcomed, though some refinement is needed. There remains much uncertainty about the planning context for the county, though, as no decisions have yet been taken on the location and indeed quantum of proposed development, and evidence-gathering continues. For now, it is not at all clear how the emerging development strategies being outlined to address significant development pressures will be reconciled with the commitment to protecting the Chilterns.

A detailed response is being drafted for submission by the consultation deadline (whilst the Council's preferred method is the completion of an online survey, the format is too prescriptive: a written response will be submitted instead): the response will address the relevant points below, and any related detail emerging from the ongoing assessment of Part B of the plan.

Assessment*Acknowledgement of Designation*

- There is strong reference to the Chilterns National Landscape from the outset (e.g. the second sentence of the Spatial Strategy: 'We must plan to respond to challenges such as climate change, increasing population and protecting areas of

sensitive landscape such as the Chilterns'), and the extent is shown on the Key Diagram.

National Landscape Handling

- There is an early reference in the Spatial Strategy to the Chilterns National Landscape that suggests a fundamental misunderstanding as to the purpose of the designation and the mechanisms for its protection, which will need addressing (it is not a designation 'to conserve beauty through protecting flora, fauna, and geological features'). A subsequent reference in the Vision is better: 'In 2045... we have protected and supported the purposes of the Chilterns National Landscape'.
- Policy NE18 (National Landscapes and their Setting) broadly complies with statutory and policy requirements, but needs some refinement.
- The Spatial Strategy notes that both the Green Belt and Chilterns National Landscape 'affect the scale and types of development that can happen' within them, which seems to strike the right balance between flagging the very real protections needed and avoiding too much emphasis on the NL designation being a constraint.
- Protection of the National Landscape features throughout, e.g. in Local Plan Objective 1.
- There are no preferred or proposed site allocations in the current consultation as the Council is still assessing sites for their suitability, and further technical studies are required.
- The assumed housing need for Buckinghamshire (not yet confirmed) is 4,332 dwellings per annum to 2045, an increase of 43% from the previous calculation, which 'implies a dramatic change to the County should this level of development proceed'. The emerging local plan is 'underpinned by seven different strategic approaches for development in certain locations', all of which are expected to be delivered if housing need is to be met, and here approach 6 is of particular concern:
 - 1) Brownfield sites within existing towns and villages (includes taller buildings and higher densities): **1,500-2,500 homes**
 - 2) Growth on the edges of existing main towns (includes 'more homes and jobs in the countryside surrounding existing settlements'): **23,000-28,000 homes**
 - 3) New towns (includes greenfield sites, changing the rural nature of the areas, and impact on the identity of surrounding settlements): **11,000-13,000 homes**
 - 4) Development at transport hubs (includes greenfield sites and 'access to large high-quality natural areas, especially in the south of Buckinghamshire'): **16,000-19,000 homes**
 - 5) Expansion near key employment areas (includes greenfield sites): **5,000-6,000 homes**
 - 6) Limited expansion of villages (includes greenfield sites, Green Belt locations, 'could adversely impact on high quality landscape', and 'impact on village character': **13,000-15,000 homes**.
 - 7) Expanding urban areas on the edge of Buckinghamshire (includes large-scale urban extensions into Buckinghamshire, and greenfield sites): **6,000-7,000 homes**.
- With regard to employment, the quantum of new employment land needed is unclear from the information presented. The consultation notes that new employment land primarily located towards the north and centre of

Buckinghamshire, and states that 'new employment land will be designated in other locations...to help re-balance the current skewed distribution'. An additional requirement for data centres is noted, along with support for rural businesses and tourism and visitor attractions (in relation to which there are policies in Part 2 of the draft plan). Six approaches to identifying new employment allocations are identified:

- 1) Expansion at strategic employment sites
- 2) New employment within urban expansions and new settlements (see housing approaches 2 and 3)
- 3) Small-scale employment sites promoted through the 'calls for sites'
- 4) Modern Economy uses including datacentres
- 5) Intensification and expansion at existing 'key employment sites'
- 6) Utilising town centres to support regeneration.

Related Policies

- Policy NE19 (Landscape Character and Visual Amenity) addresses other types of landscape within Buckinghamshire.
- There are references throughout the plan to nature recovery and habitat restoration (including in the plan's Vision, Local Plan Objective 1 and a range of development plan policies).
- Local Plan Objective 1 and Policy NE2 (Watercourses and Associated Corridors) address water quality in rivers and watercourses, including chalk streams.
- There are further policies relating to biodiversity net gain, and noise and light pollution.
- Local Plan Objective 1 has laudable intentions with regard to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, but, along with Policy BE4 (Heritage Assets) needs amending to ensure compliance with national planning policy and legislation.

Related Documents

- Policy NE18 (National Landscapes and their Setting) makes direct reference to the Chilterns National Landscape Management Plan, Chilterns Building Design Guide, Technical Notes and Position Statements (including that on the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape).
- There is no reference with the local plan to the CCB Nature Recovery Plan.

Next Steps

The Council proposes to undertake further evidence gathering, before issuing a draft publication version of the Local Plan for public consultation in summer 2026.