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By email only to: planning.policy@chilternandsouthbucks.gov.uk

Dear Mr Meecham

Taplow Parish Council ("TPC") representations on the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2016 - 2036 Publication Version under *Regulation 19, The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012*

Please find set out below our representations in response to the Regulation 19 consultation on the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2016 - 2036 Publication Version ("PVLP").

As you will know the Taplow Neighbourhood Area has been designated and Taplow Parish Council will be the qualifying body for the emerging Taplow Neighbourhood Plan.

Our representations cover the following elements of the PVLP;

- 1. Vision, Objectives and Overall Strategy (Pg 8)**
 - Policy DM DP2 Design- Designated Heritage Assets (Pg 17)**
 - Policy DM DP4 Design- Local Heritage Assets (Pg 19)**
 - Policy DM NP6 Natural- River Character and the Water Environment (Pg 139)**
 - Policy DM PP2 Protected- Replacement of a Building in the Green Belt (Pg 152)**
 - Policy DM PP3 Protected- Previously Developed Land in the Green Belt (Pg 152)**
- 2. Appendix LP1 - Housing Supply (Pg 67)**

- 3. Policy DM CP1 : Connected – Transport Assessments and Travel Plans (Pg 97)
 - Policy DM CP2 : Connected – Pedestrian Routes and Cycleways (Pg 98)
 - Policy DM CP3 : Connected – Car Parking Standards (Pg 99)
 - Paragraph 7.9.12; Non-Residential Car Parking Standards (Pg 111)
 - 4. Policy SP BP14 : Building – Land Adjacent to Taplow Station (Pg 197)
 - 5. Evidence Base and the Draft Infrastructure Development Plan
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We highlight our strong support for some particular elements of the Plan, in particular their careful and exact wording;-

1. Vision, Objectives and Overall Strategy (page 8)

We support the Vision on page 8 which states at paragraph 3.4.1 that the spatial vision of the Local Plan will “achieve sustainable development - to meet the local needs of today without compromising our ability to meet the needs of tomorrow, supporting our communities to be resilient and adaptive to climate change and secure enduring social, economic and environmental benefits.”, and support paragraph 3.4.3 which states that the Plan will “continue to protect and enhance our treasured local built and undeveloped environments contributing to local identity, community wellbeing and biodiversity.” This includes conservation areas, listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, scheduled ancient monuments, important wildlife areas and river corridors, all of which are features in Taplow that require preservation in order to benefit the local community.

In this regard, we strongly support the draft plan’s strategic objective “to protect and enhance our treasured environments” (paragraph 3.5.8), in particular regarding its green infrastructure, heritage assets, important biodiversity areas and water bodies including the River Thames, the protection of which are all vitally important within Taplow.

Policy DM DP2 Design - Designated Heritage Assets (page 17)

We support the objective of Policy DM DP2 of the Draft Local Plan in protecting designated heritage assets and ensuring future generations will value and enjoy their special qualities, which is a sound policy and reflects national policy.

Therefore, we vigorously support the inclusion of the wording “*wholly exceptional circumstances*” for granting permission where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset as it conforms to the intention of the NPPF and in particular the theme of paras 193, 194 and 195 and is therefore consistent with national policy.

We also support the current wording of the policy narrative (as below) which should not be subject to change as the NPPF Glossary classifies the Designated heritage assets that are covered by this term and any attempts to alter the DM DP2 sentence to suit developers intentions for some heritage assets would affect the other heritage assets detrimentally. For example, any attempt to include the word “total” in front of “loss” would be completely inapplicable for designated heritage assets such as

Conservation Areas as it is absolutely inconceivable to consider that only the total loss of a Conservation Area would prevent any pre-designated granting of planning permission (as indeed it would be for any other designated heritage asset). Further, changing the wording from “loss” to “total loss” would not conform with NPPF para 193 and para 194 and is against the very essence of para 195 which presumes total loss to a designated heritage asset should be refused (unless on certain specified criteria which would be judged on this basis) and therefore cannot be pre-prescribed as being an automatic right for granting permission.

The same applies to any attempt to remove the wording “*wholly exceptional circumstances*” from this sentence, particularly as 4.2.7 of the Draft Local Plan regarding Conservation Areas states they are “*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”.

We therefore endorse the wording within the draft Local Plan for “Policy DM DP2 Design - Designated Heritage Assets” as follows and accordingly there are no changes required to be made to it and to do so would undermine its purpose and therefore make it unsound and not in conformity with National Policy;-

“Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset, planning permission will be granted only in wholly exceptional circumstances and where:

- 1. The harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss;**
- 2. the nature of the asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;**
- 3. no viable use of the asset itself can be found in the medium term (through appropriate marketing) that will enable its conservation;**
- 4. conservation by grant funding or similar is not possible;**
- 5. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use; and**
- 6. a plan for recording and advancing understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost, including making this evidence publicly available, is agreed with the Council.”**

Policy DM DP4 Design - Local Heritage Assets (page 19)

The NPPF does not have Local Heritage Assets as a definition and so it is not appropriate to have them as a definition in the Draft Local Plan as the term Heritage Assets is utilised within the NPPF Glossary and any change from that would therefore not be in accordance with National Policy and therefore be unsound.

We are delighted to note that the Draft Local Plan provides protection of the Local Heritage Assets at a level deserving of their standing within the local community beyond the minimum required of the NPPF as it is fitting that consideration is given to the public benefits that may result from development proposals and we welcome the recognition of the significant importance of Local Heritage Assets to communities.

Policy DM NP6 Natural - River Character and the Water Environment (page 139)

We are supportive of this policy that seeks to ensure the protection and enhancement of all rivers and their settings. We are keen to preserve this important and natural resource for the community and many visitors to our area and their access to the rivers here is an important feature for river walkers and ramblers alike which generates most important tourism trade for the local economy. This policy will encourage opportunities for recreation and river related businesses around the water environments and to enhance the special character, landscape and amenity of the river.

Policy DM PP2 Protected - Replacement of a Building in the Green Belt (page 152)

We advocate the wording of this policy and strongly support the extensions refinement of the NPPF requirement to policy DM PP2 in respect to the existing footprint and height to be respected for any replacement building to ensure the harmony with its local setting which is naturally of the utmost importance in the local environment within the Green Belt and to not impact on its openness.

Policy DM PP3 Protected - Previously Developed Land in the Green Belt (page 152)

We strongly support the Policy wording for DM PP3 to preserve the material benefits of the Green Belt regarding its openness and to safeguard or improve important views within and through it.

We raise concerns with some other aspects of the Plan;-

2. Appendix LP1 - Housing Supply (page 67)

Appendix LP1 details the '*Potential Housing Numbers from HELAA Sites*' in 11 of the Local Plan areas designated as neighbourhood areas, of which the Taplow Neighbourhood Area is one. The basis for, and explanation of, Appendix LP1 is at paragraph 5.1.11 under the sub-heading '*NPPF - Indicative Homes Requirement for Designated Neighbourhood Areas*'.

Grounds of Objection

However, Appendix LP1 does not appear to comply with the stated NPPF requirement and furthermore clarification is needed on the details presented, particularly with regard to the Taplow Neighbourhood Area with which we are primarily concerned.

The NPPF requires that within the housing requirement figure for the local plan area, *strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations (Paragraph 65)* and that *if it is not possible to provide a requirement figure for a neighbourhood area, the local planning authority should provide an indicative figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning body (Paragraph 66)*.

Whilst paragraph 5.1.11 correctly recognises that the *Council is required to provide a housing requirement figure for a Neighbourhood Plan Area (NPA)*, Appendix LP1 presents '*Potential Housing Numbers from HELAA Sites*' rather than a housing need figure for each neighbourhood area as the NPPF requires. In short, Appendix LP1 seems to detail an element of housing *supply* rather than housing *need*, so does not fulfil the NPPF requirement cited in paragraph 5.1.11.

By email of 25 June 2019, the Chiltern and South Bucks Planning Policy Team has told us that the Appendix LP1 entry for Taplow of '345 dwellings' is incorrect. They identified a document "Settlement Capacity Study" (SCS) as the source for NPA figures. This document is part of the Evidence Base for the PVLP held on the SBDC website. *In particular, page 1 paragraph 3: The purpose of this study is to calculate required housing numbers...*

Table LPb "Homes – Requirement and Supply" shows how total housing **need** is met from various supply side sources to exactly match requirements and satisfy the Plan. The SCS maps the total need figure back to individual parishes using the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations as required by Paragraph 65. As all NPAs within the Plan area are aligned with parish boundaries, this supplies a requirement figure for all current NPAs.

On inspection the SCS identifies a figure of 431 as the required housing number for the Taplow NPA. The email content, however revised this number to be 427.

Although the SCS provides explanation of how the NPA figures are derived it is not possible to fully reconcile the number to documents of the Evidence Base. This requires further data files - the Authority Monitoring Reports. Although these files are held on the SBDC website they are not identified as part of the Evidence Base. Neither the SCS nor the Monitoring files are identified within the PVLP.

Referring back to para 5.1.11 of the PVLP we note it is identified as an **indicative** requirement. The processes that are followed by the SCS (and its declared purpose) appear to be exactly as prescribed by NPPF para 65, so in our view 5.1.11 should refer to a requirement, not an indication.

The confusions between requirements and supply figures, the lack of a fully identified evidence base to support calculations used to provide the housing figures for NPAs makes the Plan unsound.

As the SCS calculations are used within the Plan to provide NPA numbers we make further objections within the context of the SCS itself.

Allocation of the "windfall" allowance for an NPA housing requirement

The calculation is incorrect. The SCS allocates the statistically expected windfall numbers across all parishes for the PVLP period. This is OK but it is not correct to allocate this number directly as part of an NPA number. Table LPb "Homes – Requirement and Supply" shows that total need is met by only using 5 years of Windfall numbers (450). As the NPA number is a REQUIREMENT number, then it should in turn only carry the corresponding 5 years of Windfall. From the SCS, the Windfall numbers across all parishes across the PVLP period is 1602. Accordingly the allocated Windfall number to an NPA should be 450/1602 of its total Windfall. For

our particular NPA of Taplow this should reduce the windfall allocation from the quoted 43 to $43 \times 450 / 1603 = 12$.

The miscalculation of NPA numbers across all NPAs makes the PVLP unsound

So the SCS Windfall Allowance for Taplow on pg 107 SCS - that is 43 (as 3% of residual windfall allocation of 1,438 - pg 4 SCS), is inconsistent with total plan area Windfall Allowance of 450 in Table LPb: Homes – Requirement and Supply at 5.1.16 on pg 53. That inconsistency makes the PVLP unsound.

Taplow NPA specific windfall number

We contend that the windfall number allocated to Taplow (43) (as 3% of residual windfall allocation of 1,438 - pg 4 SCS) is unrealistically high.

Taplow is all Green Belt other than the Bishop Centre area and the Taplow Riverside (TR) area proposed within the Plan for removal from the Green Belt. Taplow Village (TV) is identified also as suitable for infilling within the Green Belt. These two areas TR and TV are therefore the only areas available for housing growth outside of exceptional circumstances situations. The TR area has two components. North of the A4 it is the recently built Mill Lane site that fully developed the available space (as per HELAA entries). South of the A4 it is almost entirely covered by the TR Conservation Area, which in practice will significantly reduce development scope, particularly as there is no undeveloped space within it. Within TV, as for TR, the area identified is within the TV Conservation Area. The strictures this will impose – again with no undeveloped space - will also severely restrict development. We accept that the council has to make judgement calls when allocating windfall numbers but contend that the Taplow number is unrealistically high.

Disputed HELAA entry, Taplow NPA

The table entry at P107 of the SCS shows a HELAA entry of 24 dwellings for Taplow. This is from the published HELAA tables data as site SB0063 for 27 dwellings with no planning permission. This item will be included in the HELAA sites entry in table LPb of the PVLP for 1791 dwellings. However, the PVLP “Building Places” policy SP BP14 explicitly identifies this same site for removal from the Green Belt for office development. As this is a strategic policy of the PVLP, it absolutely overrides any housing development on the same site should the PVLP be adopted. The land owner may not choose to develop offices but would be refused permission for housing development. Accordingly, the 27 units of item SB0063 should be removed from the LPb HELAA entry and added to the requirement from the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan. In turn it should then be removed from the Taplow NPA figure to ensure accuracy and consistency across the PVLP.

Legal Compliance and Soundness

We maintain that the Local Plan fails the test of soundness set out in Paragraph 35, NPPF, because Appendix LP1 - to the extent it purports to provide housing need figures for a designated NPA - is not *consistent with national policy*, because the figures actually presented appear to relate to supply. It also fails the test of soundness in that the authority has a full set of requirement numbers for NPAs in its Evidence Base as required by paragraph 65 of the NPPF so need not rely on

paragraph 66 and only publish indicative numbers. The Appendix LP1 figure for Taplow is also considered unsound as the windfall allowance is inconsistent with the figure in Table LPb at 5.1.16, and in any case because even at 3% of the residual windfall allocation of 1,438, the figure is unrealistically high.

Proposed Modification

The Local Plan should be modified to revise paragraph 5.1.11 to refer to REQUIRED housing numbers for designated Neighbourhood Plan areas in accordance with the available information held in the Settlement Capacity Study. These numbers should be carried in an appendix to the Living Places section in place of the current LP1 appendix. The appendix should also identify the studies and datasets used to produce these figures (e.g. HELAA tables, the SCS and Authority Monitoring reports).

The calculations within the SCS should be revised in accordance with our criticisms above.

3. Policy DM CP1 : Connected – Transport Assessments and Travel Plans (Pg 97)

Policy DM CP2 : Connected – Pedestrian Routes and Cycleways (Pg 98)

Policy DM CP3 : Connected – Car Parking Standards (Pg 99)

Paragraph 7.9.12; Non-Residential Car Parking Standards (Pg 111)

These three policies to ensure the provision of sufficient transport-related infrastructure provision are reliant on their respective appendices (*Appendix CP1 - Transport Assessment, Appendix CP2 - Travel Plans and Appendix CP3 - Parking Standards*) for the essential supporting details and relevant standards.

The provision of infrastructure and facilities for sustainable transport is a key element of sustainable development and this is recognised in the PVLP itself which has amongst its 'Strategic Objectives', at paragraph 3.5.2;

To focus new development in accessible locations, reducing the need to travel and increasing opportunities for walking, cycling and use of passenger transport.

The rationale for this is set out further at paragraphs 7.0.1 and 7.0.2 of the 'Connected Places' section which state that;

Sustainability can be achieved through creating an environment where the activities important to the quality of day-to-day life are within easily accessible locations and which minimise the need to travel: an environment where homes, employment, education, recreation, retail, leisure, community facilities and cultural attractions are all easily accessible to each other, and;

When planning for movement, there should be a hierarchy of preference of walking, cycling and then public transport, before reliance on the use of a private car.

We fully support these policy objectives and the rationale behind them, which in the plan area appear to us uncontroversial and entirely logical particularly as they are so closely connected with other key policy objectives relating to business growth, the environment, residential amenity, climate change, public health and general wellbeing.

Grounds of Objection

Our grounds of objection relate to points of detail in the appendices that will have potentially significant consequences when applied through the policies themselves and which in our view render the policies unsound currently.

First, of the various types of development and planning uses listed in *Appendix CP1*, *Appendix CP2*, *Appendix CP3* and *7.9.12* there is no express reference to 'sports centres' or 'sports facilities' and all three of the related policies (*Policy DM CP1*, *Policy DM CP2* and *Policy DM CP3*) could be interpreted as not applying the relevant threshold or standard to sports centres or sports facilities. This is an unacceptable omission.

Whilst "*swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations*" fall within the D2 (Assembly and Leisure) planning use class, which therefore clearly includes 'sports centres' and 'sports facilities', none of the appendices in question refers solely or uniformly to use classes. Although they refer to 'leisure' development, it is by no means clear or unequivocal that sporting facilities are included in that description. On the contrary it may be argued that sports centres and sports facilities are not included, and in that case there are no threshold or standards given for sports centres or facilities.

Secondly, the thresholds for triggering the need for Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plans (TP) in *Appendix CP1* and *Appendix CP2* are much, much too high. These high threshold are not explained, justified or reasoned, and they appear not to be based on any evidence but instead seem to be quite arbitrary. They clearly have little regard to the principle of sustainable development or to the strategic objectives of the Local Plan.

Furthermore, for TAs under *Policy DM CP1* and *Appendix CP1* the terms '*Basic Assessment*' and '*Detailed Assessment*' are not clearly or consistently defined, and the circumstances in which one or other should apply are not clearly explained or justified.

In our view, all development of any size and description should be accompanied by a *basic transport assessment* of the type described, and covering the four points set out, at paragraph 7.7.4. This is hardly an onerous requirement and for development of a type or scale within minimal transport impacts, a *basic transport assessment* will be commensurate with that and entirely straightforward. This should be reflected in a modified *Policy DM CP1*.

Development of a type or scale with more significant potential transport impacts should be subject to a *detailed transport assessment*, the contents of which should either be prescribed in *Appendix CP1* or by planning officers on a case-by-case basis. The need for a *detailed transport assessment* should, as a general rule, be triggered by much lower thresholds and this too should be reflected in *Appendix CP1*

and applied by *Policy DM CP1*. We maintain that all the applicable thresholds should be reduced to be only 25% of the current figures at paragraph 7.7.2.

The same principles apply to Travel Plans. All planning applications should be accompanied by a *basic travel plan*, the content of which should be prescribed in *Appendix CP2*. Again, much lower thresholds - at 25% of the current figures at paragraph 7.8.1 - should be used to trigger the need for a *detailed travel plan* that should in all cases be required to cover the elements at paragraphs 7.8.6 to 7.8.10. The current, optional, requirements for the 'Contents' of a TP at paragraph 7.8.5 can be far too easily avoided.

It is just as important and there is just the same plan-making responsibility to assess the transport implications of, and make plans for sustainable transport in relation to, five or ten new dwellings as it is for 20 or 40. The higher thresholds simply encourage developers to contrive to avoid what should be universal requirements if the underlying objectives of these policies are to stand any chance of being met.

Thirdly, *Policy DM CP2: Connected – Pedestrian Routes and Cycleways* should impose a substantive requirement to deliver *direct, safe and secure pedestrian routes and cycleways* where a proposed development exceeds the suggested lower thresholds for Appendix CP2, rather than merely requiring a Travel Plan to include measures for such. A *detailed travel plan* should set out how occupants of the development will be encouraged to use such facilities, but that can only happen if the infrastructure - the *direct, safe and secure pedestrian routes and cycleways* - is delivered as part of and conditional to the development. As currently drafted, *Policy DM CP2* is a weak and ineffective policy that achieves very little and in its final paragraph adds nothing to the allocations policies it refers to.

Fourthly, the '*Non-residential car parking standards*' set out at paragraph 7.9.12 of Appendix CP3 should reflect a minimum standard in each case. Any variation due to exceptional circumstances should not reduce the optimum standard by more than 10%. This should be reflected in the notes to Appendix CP3.

Paragraph 7.9.12 should have a parking standard based on GFA as a default and the GFA should be clearly stated that it includes floors on all levels.

Lastly, paragraph 7.7.1 currently states that the Council can reduce the scope of the TA dependent upon unquantified circumstances, however guidelines are meaningless if they are not required to be adhered to and those affected by the development are rendered unable to contest it by the Council's discretionary ability to reduce it, which should not be possible as this is unsound and thus requires changing to prevent circumstantial appraisal and reduction by the Council.

Overall these policies and their supporting appendices are not well resolved but confused and lacking the focus and consistency of approach needed to meet the very important strategic objectives they should be contributing to. We are concerned that unless these policies are comprehensively modified they will fail in their purposes.

Legal Compliance and Soundness

Policy DM CP1 and Policy DM CP2 would permit significant and even major development without the need for appropriate Transport Assessments or Travel Plans to accompany such proposals. This in turn would prevent the necessary measures to alleviate traffic impacts and to deliver sustainable transport to be put in place, used or monitored for effectiveness. Policy DM CP1 and Policy DM CP2 are therefore inconsistent with and arguably contrary to one of the principal and seminal strategic objectives of the PVLP (at paragraph 3.5.2) and these policies fail to meet the objectives and purposes of sustainable transport at paragraphs 7.0.1 and 7.0.2 of the 'Connected Places' section.

PVLP does not meet the test of soundness at Paragraph 35 of the NPPF because Policy DM CP1 and Policy DM CP2 are NOT;

- a) *positively prepared*, because they fail to provide a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs;
- b) *justified*, because it is not an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- c) *effective*, because the thresholds for development that requires Transport Assessment and Travel Plans are too high and the sustainable transport measures needed are therefore unlikely to be delivered;
- d) *consistent with national policy*, because they do not enable the delivery of sustainable transport as an essential and defining component of sustainable development and are therefore contrary to the policies of the NPPF and not in compliance with *the presumption in favour of sustainable development - for plan-making* - at Paragraph 11.

Proposed Modifications

We accept that there are different ways in which the wording of Appendix CP1 and Appendix CP2 may be modified to meet this objection but we propose that as a minimum;

- (i) the threshold figures be reduced to 25% of the current figures (eg. 4,000 sq m reduced to 1,000 sq m, 2,000 sq m reduced to 500 sq m, 40 residential units reduced to 10 etc.) for detailed Transport Assessments and Travel Plans;
- (ii) that the different types of *transport assessment* and *travel plan* are defined by reference to the content required from each, and the circumstances in which they are required clearly set out;
- (iii) the introductory sentence of 7.7.2 is amended to reflect that all development should provide a basic TA in accordance with 7.7.4. Likewise, 7.8.1 should also be changed to say Travel Plans to be submitted with the planning application, and the Thresholds sentence should be amended to "*Proposals over the following thresholds will require a detailed TP:*"
- (iv) 7.8.5 should have the wording "*should be considered*" replaced with "*are required*".

(v) *Appendix CP1, Appendix CP2, Appendix CP3 and 7.9.12 to have an entry for 'sports facilities' under the various types of development and planning uses listed*

(vi) *remove from 7.7.1 the sentence "The Council may agree to the scope of the TA being reduced if the development proposal is in a suitable location and in line with planning policy"*

(vii) *paragraph 7.9.12 should say that "Each class parking standard is based on Gross Floor Area (GFA) as default, or by staff/consultation room where indicated, and the GFA includes floors on all levels."*

We propose the following modifications (in bold) to the policies concerned.

Policy DM CP1 : Connected – Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

A basic Transport Assessment and Travel Plan must be submitted with a planning application for any development of a type listed in Appendix CP1.

*Where a proposed development would exceed the thresholds set out in Appendix CP1, a **detailed** Transport Assessment must be submitted with a planning application. Transport Assessments must meet the requirements of Appendix CP1 and assess the multi-modal impacts of development proposals and demonstrate the measures which would be used to mitigate the development's impact.*

*A **detailed** Travel Plan with specific, measurable and achievable objectives, accompanied by a target and monitoring review procedure, must be submitted to the Council as part of planning applications for development that are likely to have significant transport implications in accordance with the requirements in Appendix CP2.*

Delivery and Servicing Management Plans are required to be submitted for proposals that may affect a Town or District Centre and also for sites in close proximity to residential areas. They should set out measures that will be introduced to minimise impacts, such as managing delivery times and vehicles.

Policy DM CP2 - Connected – Pedestrian Routes and Cycleways

Where a proposed development would exceed the thresholds set out in Appendix CP2, the planning application should include full details of the direct, safe and secure pedestrian routes and cycleways to be delivered as part of the development, and the Travel Plan submitted under Policy DM CP1 must include measures for encouraging and monitoring their use.

All development on allocated sites must provide for safe and secure pedestrian routes and cycleways with appropriate lighting and cycle locking facilities.

4. Policy SP BP14 : Building – Land Adjacent to Taplow Station (Pg 197)

This is a site allocation policy for approximately 4,000 square metres (gross) of office floor space on land adjacent to Taplow Station which sets out numbered site-specific

requirements to be agreed through the masterplan process and which must form part of any planning application.

Grounds of Objection

This site has been the subject of much concern over the traffic impacts of the development and various traffic studies have been undertaken because of that. It is clear that the proposed development of this site requires significant widening of the A4 to support increased traffic volumes. This is acknowledged in paragraph 11.15.3.

The proposed *4,000 square metres (gross) of office floor space* is intended to contribute to overall employment growth across the Plan area. The location of this site with the stated requirement to enhance A4 capacity clearly indicates that the expectation is that most of those employees would be commuting from Slough and Maidenhead, outside the plan area. This development would therefore generate significant additional motor traffic on the A4 from outside the Plan area, which is already way over its capacity.

We submit that in its present form it does not achieve the declared Strategic intent and is thereby unsound.

The allocation for *office floor space* in this location is contrary to the strategic objective at paragraph 3.5.3 of the PVL *to focus new development in accessible locations, reducing the need to travel and increasing opportunities for walking, cycling and use of passenger transport.*

The policy also fails to comply with key requirements of the NPPF. Under the heading of '*Achieving sustainable development*', '*the economic objective*' under Paragraph 8a), NPPF is closely linked to *identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.*

Paragraph 20, NPPF also requires that;

*Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and **make sufficient provision for infrastructure for transport** [our emphasis], etc.*

Policy SP BP14 fails to do this. Merely identifying a necessary infrastructure project without delivering or coordinating that infrastructure is not enough.

A recent application to develop a care home on the site clearly evidences a need for a type of development which would be a far better use of the site that would not have anything like the same level of adverse traffic impact. However, the current wording of Policy SP BP14 precludes such a development and is unduly restrictive.

Legal Compliance and Soundness

Policy SP BP14 fails the test of soundness set out in Paragraph 35, NPPF, in particular the elements at Paragraph 35. The policy is NOT;

a) *positively prepared*, because it fails to provide a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs;

b) *justified*, because it is not an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence (which is that significant highway improvements are necessary as a prerequisite of major development comprising office floor space);

c) *effective*, because without significant highway improvements being delivered and operational, the proposed development will only worsen the problem of traffic congestion and reduce the effectiveness of any economic benefits from the development;

d) *consistent with national policy*, because it does not enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies of the NPPF and clearly fails to meet the substantive requirements under Paragraphs 8 a) and 20 of the NPPF.

By ignoring the clear substantive requirements of NPPF Paragraphs 8a) (for identifying *and coordinating* the provision of infrastructure) and 20 (to *make sufficient provision for infrastructure for transport*), Policy SP BP14 does not comply with Section 19(2)(a), Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which provides that "*in preparing a local development document the local planning authority must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State*".

Proposed Modification of Policy SP BP14

Our proposed modification is in order to ensure that Policy SP BP14 effectively addresses the need for any necessary highway improvements to be fully operational prior to the occupation of any development that would otherwise worsen the already serious and adverse traffic impacts on the area. The proposed modified policy reads as follows (with modifications in bold).

Policy SP BP14 : Building – Land Adjacent to Taplow Station

*Land adjacent to Taplow Station, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for **any one or a mix of planning uses B1(Business), C1 (Hotels), C2 (Residential Institutions), D1 (Non-Residential Institutions) and D2 (Assembly and Leisure) that will deliver or contribute to the delivery of any highways improvements necessary to facilitate the development.** Planning permission will be granted provided that the following site-specific requirements are agreed through the masterplan process and form part of the planning application:*

1 an integrated, coordinated and comprehensive planning approach will be taken to the site. The site will require a single masterplan to ensure this is delivered and a high quality design outcome achieved;

2 vehicular access will be taken from the existing junction on Station Road;

3 no new vehicular access is created to the A4 Bath Road;

4 access, transport impacts and mitigation will need to be assessed through local junction modelling as part of Transport Assessments, as agreed by the Highway Authority, to accompany planning applications on this site and to demonstrate that access and egress by all modes of transport can be achieved;

*5 sufficient road space capacity / network improvements to be secured **prior to any occupation of the development**, taking into account expected traffic demands as set out in a Transport Assessment, in particular any required improvements to the A4;*

6 enhanced public transport access and public car / cycling parking to serve Taplow railway station;

7 provision of structural planting to create a sense of place, integration into the surrounding landscape and to reinforce a defensible Green Belt boundary;

8 provision of Green Infrastructure, including the creation of new links and improvements to the Public Rights of Way network within the site and beyond; and

9 a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment and suitable mitigation.

5. Evidence Base and the Draft Infrastructure Development Plan (DIDP)

The DIDP presented as part of the Evidence Base has a different status to the other documents in the Evidence Base. These other documents record either detailed processes or collections of data that are used as the basis for preparing the PVL. The DIDP contains unvalidated predictions of developments that may be required if the PVL is approved.

Neither the PVL nor the associated consultation make clear how these predictions are to be assessed or approved. We assert it must be made clear that acceptance of the PVL should not imply any automatic approval of items within the DIDP. Some of them are first level proposals from Transport for Buckingham and require proper public evaluation before acceptance.

We take as an example the proposal relating to changes at Berry Hill on the A4 in Taplow (Page 44 of Appendix 1 of the DIDP).

These proposals were first aired publically as part of the consultation on the establishment of a Cycleway along this stretch of the A4 in 2016. Extensive and detailed local objections caused Transport for Buckingham (TfB) to withdraw this part of the proposal for review. The proposal returned the following year unchanged with no review having taken place. The validity of these objections being then restated, TfB withdrew the proposal for two eastbound lanes and the banning of right turns into Berry Hill with no further review.

The fact that this proposal is still in the DIDP and obviously should not be, having been withdrawn, illustrates the point being made as to the status of entries in the DIDP. It is not appropriate here to argue the validity or otherwise of the particular merits of the objections raised but the process that has been followed to date on this item clearly shows that it must not be implemented without further public debate and justification.

Any approval of the PVL must make it clear that further public consultation is required on many DIDP items. An item in the DIDP must not receive automatic approval from approval of the PVL. Automatic approval would make the PVL unsound.

Further to the above representations, Taplow Parish Council requests the right to be heard by the Planning Inspector at the examination of the PVLP.

We also request to be notified at our office address above of the submission of the Local Plan for independent examination, the publication of the recommendations of the examination inspector and the adoption of the Local Plan.

Please let us know if you have any queries or questions in relation to these representations.

Yours sincerely

Mr. M. Maund

Chairman, Taplow Neighbourhood Plan Working Party