

PART FOUR

SOUNDNESS OF NORTHERN AYLESBURY ALLOCATIONS

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SUMMARY OF WEEDON PARISH COUNCIL'S OBJECTIONS

Our ref	Issue	Test relied upon	Objections and Modifications Sought
PART FOUR - SOUNDNESS – Northern Aylesbury and its Proposed Extensions			
SNA1	Cumulative impact on place, environment and infrastructure	Soundness – Effective	The Plan does not effectively consider the combined effect of multiple developments on all aspects of place, environment and infrastructure. The cumulative impact of Aylesbury NESS003 and AYL06 should be properly assessed.
SNA2	Flood risk and drainage	Soundness – Justified / Effective	The River Thames catchment presents a significant constraint which requires proper consideration of cumulative development.
SNA3	Highway capacity	Soundness – Effective / Justified	Roads and junctions must be demonstrated to be capable of safely accommodating additional traffic. OR new roads and junctions must be planned and delivered by developers to keep pace with building.
SNA4	Landscape and settlement character	Soundness – Justified	The scale of development should not overwhelm the existing rural settlement pattern. A green buffer around Weedon Hill could be a means of mitigating the harm.
SNA5	Site selection	Soundness – Justified	The Council should demonstrate why these sites are preferable to reasonable alternatives.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned that the Weedon Hill Hamlet is overwhelmingly affected by the scale and location of proposed Northern Aylesbury growth.

The Parish Council's objections are directed not simply at individual site boundaries but at the compound effect of the overall development strategy in this area. These objections cannot be answered by demonstrating that individual allocations can each be mitigated in isolation.

The Local Plan must demonstrate that the combined effects of the allocations, including their cumulative demands upon transport, drainage, utilities, community infrastructure and the landscape setting of existing settlements, are acceptable and deliverable.

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SNA1 - Cumulative impact on place, environment and infrastructure

Weedon Parish Council is concerned about whether the combined scale, location and timing of development proposed for Northern Aylesbury can be accommodated without unacceptable cumulative effects on landscape, settlement character, infrastructure, transport and the environment.

The Parish Council considers that the combined development and proximity of AYL06 to NESS003 would fundamentally alter the existing relationship between Aylesbury and the surrounding rural settlements and would require the loss of a substantial area of the presently open landscape which contributes to the identity and setting of Weedon Hill.

Nor is there any evidence in the Plan of the combined effect on environmental issues such as air quality or wildlife. While individual site assessments claim negligible environmental damage, their aggregate footprint creates an unsustainable cumulative impact. The simultaneous loss of agricultural land and green space will also have an effect on wildlife corridors. It is hard to see, without detailed evidence, how Buckinghamshire's target for biodiversity net gain is actually achievable.

With regard to the effects on infrastructure – such as roads, drainage, schools, health services, utilities, public transport, recreation and community facilities – the Local Plan fails to provide a comprehensive delivery strategy that will account for the cumulative impact of AYL06 and NESS003 in the immediate locality. There are already identified capacity concerns in relation to the road network, healthcare and sewerage infrastructure serving this area. The Plan must demonstrate, through evidence from the relevant infrastructure and transport providers, that sufficient capacity exists or that the necessary additional capacity can be delivered in a timely manner.

The Parish Council therefore seeks a cumulative assessment of these sites taken as a whole which identifies the baseline position for each allocation and demonstrates the aggregate effect on place and environment as well as combined demand for services, and the infrastructure needed to bridge any gap in capacity.

Weedon Parish Council's position and modification sought

Undertake a cumulative assessment of the Northern Aylesbury sites NESS003 and AYL06 taken as a whole, with particular emphasis on the impact on Weedon Hill Hamlet.

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SNA2 - Flood risk, surface water and drainage

The Parish Council identifies the River Thames catchment as a significant constraint. The scale of the proposed developments means that drainage should be assessed cumulatively, including the effects of additional impermeable surfaces, surface-water pathways, sewer capacity and downstream consequences.

The River Thames forms a natural barrier and boundary to any extension of Aylesbury. The Council should demonstrate why this barrier should be breached with built development to the north.

The Parish Council also reports repeated water and sewer repairs at Weedon Hill and concerns about the age and capacity of existing infrastructure.

Weedon Parish Council's position and modification sought

Demonstrate that the cumulative drainage and flood-risk consequences of the proposed developments can be satisfactorily managed, with necessary infrastructure identified and secured before development relies upon the relevant capacity.

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SNA3 - Highway capacity and road safety

Weedon Hill is connected to Aylesbury by limited public transport and it is expected that highway capacity would be significantly and adversely affected given the scale of the Northern Aylesbury allocations.

The Parish Council has particular concerns about existing capacity of the A413, Martin Dalby Way and of the proposed Eastern Link Road. The effect of additional development on the rural road network in this area could be highly detrimental to road users and pedestrians alike.

Buckinghamshire Council's position should be tested against the published transport evidence, accident data, traffic counts, junction modelling and any proposed mitigation. The key criterion is whether the transport evidence demonstrates that the cumulative development in Northern Aylesbury can be safely accommodated and whether mitigation can be delivered in step with development.

If the necessary transport infrastructure is fundamental to making the allocations acceptable, the Plan must demonstrate that that infrastructure is both funded and deliverable within the relevant phases of development. It should not rely upon infrastructure which remains aspirational or whose funding, timing or delivery mechanism has not been established.

The NESS methodology for assessing major development areas is very weak on highways. Public transport is given huge weight, without allowing for the fact that its use may be unrealistic and that people will still need to use their private vehicles.

Weedon Parish Council's position and modification sought

Demonstrate that the transport infrastructure is both funded and deliverable within the relevant phases of development, not relying on infrastructure which remains purely aspirational.

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SNA4 - Landscape, settlement character, heritage and biodiversity

The Parish Council considers that the scale of Northern Aylesbury growth and the Weedon Village and Weedon Hill allocations must be assessed against the character of the existing rural settlements, their landscape setting, heritage assets, public views, rights of way, hedgerows and ecological networks. The impacts therefore need to be assessed at the level of the individual settlements and their settings as well as cumulatively.

For Weedon Village, the locally designated Area of Attractive Landscape, the Weedon West Conservation Area, nearby listed buildings, public footpaths and existing open countryside contribute to the settlement's identity. The Parish Council also identifies the ancient hedgerow along New Road and the Parish Council's Community Asset, the biodiverse wildflower meadow known as 'The View'.

Weedon Hill Hamlet has been identified as a historic rural settlement which due to its prominent ridge position has a relationship with an open agricultural landscape. The combined scale of development, form and location of the NESS003 site (which would surround the hamlet) risks fundamentally altering the relationship between Aylesbury, Weedon Hill and the surrounding rural landscape. The Local Plan must demonstrate that the resulting landscape, visual, heritage and ecological effects are acceptable and capable of effective mitigation.

Weedon Parish Council's position and modification sought

A reassessment of individual and cumulative landscape, heritage, biodiversity and green-infrastructure effects and amendment of allocated site capacities or boundaries where the evidence does not demonstrate an acceptable outcome.

A green buffer around Weedon Hill could be a means of mitigating the harm.

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SNA5 – Site selection and reasonable alternatives

The Parish Council considers that Buckinghamshire Council has not adequately demonstrated why the selected combination of Northern Aylesbury sites is preferable to reasonable alternatives, particularly where individual sites have materially changed since their original assessment.

Any comparison criteria should include sustainability, infrastructure, transport, landscape, heritage, biodiversity, flood risk, deliverability and the relationship with existing settlements.

Weedon Parish Council therefore seeks a clear comparative assessment of the selected sites against reasonable alternatives and explanations for any material departure from earlier site-selection evidence.

Weedon Parish Council's position and modification sought

A clear comparative assessment of the selected sites against reasonable alternatives and explanations for any material departure from earlier site-selection evidence.
