

# CHOLESBURY-CUM-ST LEONARDS PARISH COUNCIL

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**Planning Policy Team**  
Chiltern District Council  
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22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019

Dear Sir or Madam

## **Response to Chiltern and South Bucks Draft Plan 2016-2036 Consultation**

This Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Chiltern and South Bucks Draft Plan 2016-2036 Consultation.

For the purposes of this response:

**'Draft Plan'** refers to The Chiltern and South Bucks Draft Plan 2016-2036.

**'Evidence Base Review'** refers to The Emerging Local Plan Evidence Base Review of the Green Belt.

**'Adopted Policies Maps'** refers to The Draft Chiltern and South Bucks Draft Plan 2016-2036 - Proposed Changes to the Adopted Policies Maps.

Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish is at the northern edge of the Chiltern District Council area, sharing borders with Aylesbury Vale District and Hertfordshire. The parish is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The parish is rural in nature and comprises a number of small scattered settlements, two of which include additional protection afforded by long-established Conservation Areas.

### **1. Proposed Policy –DM PP1**

This Council considers that proposed **Policy –DM PP1** in the **Draft Plan** together with the **Evidence Base Review**, which underpin it, do not meet the test for **SOUNDNESS**.

1.1 The criteria determining which settlements are covered by proposed **Policy DM PP1** are wholly inadequate. It makes no explicit reference that the inclusion of the list of settlements is based on Appendix 1 of the **Evidence Base Review**.

1.2 The **Evidence Base Review**, setting out how individual settlements are to be defined, is deficient. It fails to provide a clear and indisputable description of what the **Draft Plan** uses to determine what a village is. The key characteristics for each individual settlement are inconsistent and incomplete. The reasoning included for each settlement taken together is contradictory. Overall they fail to take a robust approach to applying criteria so as to differentiate between which particular settlement does or does not meet the threshold to be classed as a village for the purpose of the **Draft Plan**.

The proposed **Policy DM PP1**, includes a list of protected settlements within the Green Belt where some limited infilling might be permitted, so called 'washed over' villages. Three settlements in Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards parish are included; the settlements of **Cholesbury**, **Hawridge** and **Buckland Common**.

1.2.1 **Cholesbury** has only a single row of dwellings 'Sandpit Hill' currently covered under current policy GB4. The vast majority of the rest of the village is included in the extant Conservation Area. However, the **Evidence Base Review** assessed that this row of dwellings has no scope for infilling

1.2.2 **Hawridge** has a single row of dwellings covered by current Policy GB4, but not referred to specifically in the **Evidence Base Review**. This row of dwellings has no scope for infilling, as settled in 2018 in Planning Appeal (APP/X0415/W/18/3207372). Additionally, almost all dwellings in the village are included in an extant Conservation Area.

1.2.3 **Buckland Common** has three designated rows covered by Policy GB4, all are considered by the **Evidence Base Review** fully developed. See also the points covered in 1.2.4 below.

1.2.4 The **Evidence Base Review** is also inconsistent and thus unsound in that **Buckland Common** fails to meet the **Evidence Base Review** criteria for being deemed a village, since as much of it comprises discrete clusters of properties separated from others by open countryside it should more accurately be considered a hamlet.

1.3 In summary, the Parish Council contends the inclusion of three of its settlements in proposed **Policy DM PP1's** list of villages subject to limited infilling is not justified by the **Evidence Base Review**. The proposed **Policy DM PP1's** is therefore, flawed and thus unsound.

1.4 To further illustrate inconsistencies of the **Evidence Base Review**, one example of an omission from this report relates to this Parish Council is **St Leonards** which is not included in the list of settlements. St Leonards is comparable in size to the other settlements in this Parish Council area, included in **Policy DM PP1**. In terms of evidence it includes, a Church, a Community Hall and comprises over 110 dwellings.

1.5 The proposed **Policy DM PP1** is also flawed in that it fails to recognise the special protection due in law of all settlements within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding National Beauty, including those referred to above. By virtue of this designation, historic settlements and the landscapes in which they sit are in law to be afforded the maximum protection from development.

1.6 The Parish Council proposes an alternative approach in the **Draft Plan** which recognises the special status of the above, and other such settlements within the Chilterns AONB. These settlements should be removed from the list of settlements subject to limited infilling in proposed **Policy DM PP1** and designated under a separate policy within the **Draft Plan**, so as to recognise and ensure the additional protection these settlements and the landscapes in which they sit should be afforded, and to avoid the deleterious impact on the openness of this legally protected area within the Chilterns AONB.

**1.7 In conclusion, as a consequence proposed Policy DM PP1 does not meet the required test of SOUNDNESS because as it currently is worded it is not JUSTIFIED as it based on a flawed evidence base, and does not take into account reasonable alternative approaches, such as, an additional Policy for Chiltern AONB settlements, proposed by the Council.**

## **2. Adopted Policies Maps**

This Council contends the **Draft Plan's Adopted Policies Maps** do not meet the test for **SOUNDNESS**.

2.1 The proposed maps in **Adopted Policies Maps** containing **Infilling Maps of Protected Villages** of Buckland Common (page 97) Cholesbury and Hawridge (both page 100) contain errors.

**2.1.1 Buckland Common** - the 'infilling boundary' has erroneously included The Green, which is Registered Common Land, owned by the Parish Council.

**2.1.2 Cholesbury** - the indicated the 'infilling boundary' has erroneously included Cholesbury Camp, an Iron Age Hillfort and Scheduled Monument, and also part of Cholesbury Common, which is Registered Common Land

**2.1.3 Hawridge** the 'infilling boundary' erroneously includes Hawridge Common, which is Registered Common Land. Additionally, two areas are incorporated within the infilling boundary for the first time.

These are:

Firstly, Hawridge Vale, which is a lane within the northern edge of Hawridge Common, with only a few scattered dwellings which have never been part of the recognised Hawridge village envelope.

Secondly, several plots of agricultural land with no access to the road known as Hawridge Common and behind dwellings in the Hawridge Conservation Area.

2.2 The Parish Council contends that these maps should be redrawn to remove protected land, inappropriate dwellings and agricultural land from inside the proposed infilling boundary line.

**2.3 As it currently stands the Draft Plan, by virtue of the Adopted Policies Maps, fails to meet the required test of SOUNDNESS because the proposed Infilling Maps of Protected Villages are inaccurate and contain crucial errors. The maps are not JUSTIFIED because they do not take into account reasonable alternatives and is not based on sound evidence.**

### **3. Public Services Infrastructure**

The Parish Council is concerned about the lack of coherence regarding the proposals in the **Draft Plan** concerning planning for public services infrastructure developments, such as medical facilities, including NHS requirements, and provision for additional education provision including primary and secondary school places. Some reference is made to both these under specific policies relating to additional developments where changes are proposed to the Green Belt area.

**3.1 The Parish Council considers, in overall terms, that the proposals regarding for public services infrastructure developments in the Draft Plan fail to meet the test of SOUNDNESS. The absence of Planning Policy provision is not JUSTIFIED by the inclusion, in passing, within the background text of the Draft Plan document. These deficiencies could be rectified by one or more dedicated Policies to address the proposed approach for future public services infrastructure development.**

4. The Parish Council is grateful for the consideration given to its observations on the soundness of the Chiltern and South Bucks Draft Plan 2016-2036 and looks forward to learning of the outcome of the Inspector's examination.

Yours sincerely,

***Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish Council***