

# GREAT HORWOOD PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2014–2031

## Spatial Policy: Site Size

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The first Core Planning Principle expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states, in part, that planning should

*be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area.<sup>1</sup>*

The fifth principle also states, in part, that planning should

*take account of the different roles and character of different areas<sup>2</sup>*

These principles must be formulated in ways that conform to the “golden thread” of the presumption in favour of sustainable development<sup>3</sup> and, in so far as neighbourhood plans are concerned, support the strategic development needs set out in local plans<sup>4</sup>.

1.2 The Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan (GHPNP) promotes sustainable development within a “Great Horwood Settlement Boundary” (GHSB) on sites comprising no more than 15 dwellings, where the extent of the site is no more than 0.5 ha<sup>5</sup>. It also specifies three specific sites within the GHSB where development satisfying these conditions is expected to take place during the plan period<sup>6</sup>.

1.3 It is the purpose of this document to justify the 15 dwelling limit on individual sites.

### 2. Historical background

2.1 Great Horwood is mentioned as a settlement in Domesday, and a useful description of its built history may be found in the Historic Town Assessment<sup>7</sup>. A large fire in 1781 destroyed many farms and cottages, so that most of the fourteen houses around The Green and the ten houses in High Street date from the subsequent rebuilding.

2.2 The development of the village continued on a piecemeal basis up to the Second World War, as is evident from a survey carried out by the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society<sup>8</sup>. However the

---

1 NPPF, paragraph 17

2 NPPF, paragraph 17

3 NPPF, paragraph 14

4 NPPF, paragraph 16

5 GHPNP, Policy 1(i)

6 GHPNP, Policies 2, 3 and 4

7 Great Horwood Historic Town Assessment Report, English Heritage, 2012

8 Great Horwood Village Survey, October 2011: Historic Buildings Group, Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society

biggest expansion in the history of the village came about with the construction of Little Horwood Airfield in 1942 and the need for associated living quarters; this resulted in a large development of RAF accommodation to the south of the village and elsewhere<sup>9</sup>. After the war, and with the national housing shortage, some of these buildings were occupied by squatters.

2.3 Many of the RAF buildings were still shown on maps in 1956<sup>10</sup>, but those in what is now Spring Lane, Greenway, Willow Road and The Close were demolished and replaced by new housing in the late fifties and early sixties. Apart from these developments on brownfield sites, post-war building on farmland in Great Horwood has been limited to two groups of sixteen dwellings each, at Townsend Cottages in the 1940s and at Weston Road in the 1970s, together with occasional infilling by smaller groups of no more than five houses.

2.4 The wartime building on the large site of Spring Lane and Greenway was at a time of national emergency, and cannot be regarded as a precedent for future development.

### **3. Future development**

3.1 The principle behind the restriction in Policy 1(i) to sites comprising no more than 15 dwellings is that of development at a scale proportionate for a village the size of Great Horwood, with a current population of 1,049<sup>11</sup>.

3.2 The history of development in Great Horwood outlined in Section 2 above shows that, apart from the wartime buildings on appropriated land and their subsequent replacements, all other development in the village has been limited to sixteen dwellings per site. Two of the replacements for the RAF sites were also redeveloped on a comparatively small scale, with 19 houses built in The Close and 25 in Willow Road. Only the development in Spring Lane/Greenway was significantly larger. It can reasonably be argued that this large redevelopment was disproportionate, and that the smaller developments (and redevelopments) are much more appropriate to a village the size of Great Horwood.

3.3 A significant advantage of planning for several smaller-scale developments is that it allows for the phasing of those developments over the plan period, and therefore permits greater flexibility in matching housing supply to demand. The timing of the developments, and indeed their number, can be modified during the regular reviews of the plan more readily than would be the case with larger developments.

3.4 It has been clear, throughout the process of preparing the GHPNP, that the preference of residents is for smaller-scale developments. This preference was tested at the Community Event held on 29/30 March 2014, where residents were asked to vote on Policy 1, and also on an alternative of allowing developments of between 15 and 50 dwellings. There were strong majorities in favour of the first proposition, and against the second.<sup>12</sup>

---

9 See map on p.146 of "Great Horwood Past & Present", Modestine Press 2012, ISBN 978-898720-00-3

10 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map SP56, 1956

11 2011 Census

12 Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan: Community Event 29/30 March 2014, GHPNP Evidence Base

#### 4. Relation to strategic development needs

4.1 The Great Horwood Neighbourhood Area was designated on 10 September 2012, and initial work on the GHPNP was based upon the strategic development needs outlined in the Emerging Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VAP).

4.2 Following examination in December 2013 the VAP was found to be unsound in terms of overall provision for housing and jobs, and it was withdrawn on 5 February 2014.

4.3 The NPPF clearly envisages the preparation of neighbourhood plans in the context of existing or emerging local plans:

*Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.<sup>13</sup>*

4.4 Current Government guidance states

*A draft neighbourhood plan or Order must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan in force if it is to meet the basic condition. A draft Neighbourhood Plan or Order is not tested against the policies in an emerging Local Plan although the reasoning and evidence informing the Local Plan process may be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is tested.*

*Where a neighbourhood plan is brought forward before an up-to-date Local Plan is in place the qualifying body and the local planning authority should discuss and aim to agree the relationship between policies in:*

- *the emerging neighbourhood plan*
- *the emerging Local Plan*
- *the adopted development plan*

*with appropriate regard to national policy and guidance.<sup>14</sup>*

4.5 Advice has been received from AVDC on the need to justify the site size limit proposed in the GHPNP. It is therefore important to ensure that this aspect of GHPNP Policy 1 does not compromise the ability of AVDC to set appropriate strategic policies in its replacement local plan, the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP). This is done in two ways. First, it is shown in Appendix A below that a plausible household projection for Great Horwood in 2031, based upon proportionate sustainable growth, suggests an additional housing requirement of 46 dwellings, close to the proposed development quantum in GHPNP Policies 2–4 of 45 dwellings. Secondly, the flexibility described in 3.3 above and the explicit provision for the GHPNP to be reviewed in tandem with the

---

13 NPPF, paragraph 184

14 Planning Practice Guidance “What is neighbourhood planning”, paragraph 009, reference ID 41-009-20140306

preparation and review of the VALP will ensure that GHPNP Policy 1(i) will not constrain strategic policies in the event that a modified household projection is adopted. It follows that GHPNP Policy 1(i) should not itself be regarded as a strategic policy, and that the arguments of Section 3 above should take precedence<sup>15</sup>.

---

15 “Local planning authorities should avoid duplicating planning processes for non-strategic policies where a neighbourhood plan is in preparation.” NPPF, paragraph 185

## APPENDIX A

### A household projection for 2031

A.1 The population of Aylesbury Vale in 2001 was 165,748 and that of Great Horwood was 1,025, a proportion of 0.62%<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, the population of Aylesbury Vale in 2011 was 174,137, and that of Great Horwood was 1,049, a proportion of 0.60%<sup>17</sup>. It is therefore reasonable to expect the proportion to remain at about 0.60% for the period to 2031.

A.2 A range of population predictions for Aylesbury Vale was produced by G.L.Hearn Limited<sup>18</sup> in 2013 (UDPP), to update their predictions of 2011<sup>19</sup> (HEGA). Six different models were used in UDPP, giving estimated 2031 populations for the District ranging between a low value of 187,237 using projection PROJ 1 based on demographic trends, and a high value of 220,341 using projection PROJ 6a based on employment trends<sup>20</sup>. Given the limited employment opportunities within Great Horwood, planning based on employment trends would encourage commuting and so would not satisfy the criterion of being sustainable. Using projection PROJ 1 and taking a proportion of 0.60% would therefore suggest that the population of Great Horwood in 2031 could be 1,123.

A.3 To translate this into a number of households requires estimates of household size, and this may be expected to change over time. Although UDPP also gives projections for household numbers, from which estimates for household size may be deduced, these are unsatisfactory for two reasons. First, the mean household size in Great Horwood was 2.59 in 2011<sup>21</sup>, significantly higher than the value of 2.51 for Aylesbury Vale as a whole<sup>22</sup>. Secondly, UDPP used household size projections based on the 2008 DCLG household projections, with an ad-hoc correction for the anticipated slow-down in household size reduction<sup>23</sup>. As the 2011 DCLG household projections are now available<sup>24</sup>, these are used instead to estimate the likely household size in Great Horwood in 2031. These projections extend to 2021, and show that in each of the two five-year periods 2011–2016 and 2016–2021 the mean household size in Aylesbury Vale is expected to decrease by a factor of very close to 0.99 (in fact, 0.9898 and 0.9914)<sup>25</sup>. Assuming that the same proportionate decrease holds for the following two five-year periods 2021–2026 and 2026–2031, the household size for Great Horwood could be expected to be  $2.59 \times (0.99)^4 = 2.49$ .

A.4 The total number of households in Great Horwood in 2031, using the data as above, might reasonably be estimated at  $1,123 \div 2.49 = 451$ , an increase of 46 over the number 405 of households in 2011<sup>26</sup>.

---

16 2001 Census

17 2011 Census

18 Updated Demographic Predictions Report, Aylesbury Vale District Council, April 2013

19 Housing and Economic Growth Assessment, Aylesbury Vale District Council, September 2011

20 UDPP, Figure 19

21 2011 Census,  $1049 \div 405$

22 Computed from UDPP Figures 19 and 23

23 UDPP, Paragraphs 3.17 and 3.18

24 DCLG Household projections for England and local authority districts, Interim 2011-based, 9 April 2013

25 DCLG 2011, Table 427. The actual values for household size given here differ from those used in UDPP as different assumptions have been made, but this has no effect as only the ratios of household size, comparing one year with another, are used for computational purposes.

26 There were 405 households in Great Horwood Parish (2011 Census)