



Buckinghamshire Council  
The Gateway  
Gatehouse Road  
Aylesbury  
Buckinghamshire  
HP19 8FF

13 March 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Berryfields Parish Council – Buckinghamshire Local Plan Consultation

Berryfields Parish Council writes to formally register its objection to the proposed site allocations within the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan, specifically those relating to land within the Aylesbury Northern Board Area (ANBA) including OPUS Ref 509 and Land North of Martin Dalby Way (OPUS Ref 3113).

The Parish Council has significant concerns regarding the soundness of the draft Local Plan, the adequacy of the supporting evidence base and the lack of due diligence demonstrated in the site selection process.

We have liaised with neighbouring Parish Councils and our collective view is that the Local Plan, as currently presented for consultation, is not fit for purpose and raises serious concerns regarding Buckinghamshire Council's ability to produce and implement a robust and deliverable Local Plan.

### **Strategic Distribution of Growth**

The draft Local Plan proposes to locate a substantial proportion of approximately 95,000 new dwellings in the northern part of Buckinghamshire, an area characterised largely by rural land and limited strategic transport infrastructure.

Previous Government proposals for both the Aylesbury Spur of East–West Rail and the East–West Expressway have now been abandoned. As a result, Aylesbury and the wider Aylesbury Vale area remain without direct access to a motorway, dual carriageway trunk road or a main line railway connection.

While Buckinghamshire does have unmet housing need, much of that need arises in the south of the county closer to London and the major employment centres of the Thames Valley and Greater London.

Locating a large proportion of proposed housing growth in the northernmost part of Buckinghamshire, furthest from where housing demand is greatest and without the necessary transport infrastructure, is neither logical nor sustainable.

### **Consultation Process**

The Parish Council is also concerned about the quality and timing of the consultation process.

This consultation represents a major planning exercise with consequences that will affect residents for generations. However, the consultation period has been limited to approximately one month, during which many Parish Councils were not scheduled to meet.

In addition:

- Parish and Town Council briefings have been held during weekday mornings at short notice, preventing many councillors from attending.
- Requests from Parish Councils for evening engagement sessions have repeatedly been ignored.
- The Community Connections Local Plan Sites Engagement meeting scheduled for 11 March was cancelled without explanation.

These factors significantly limit effective community participation and undermine confidence in the consultation process.

### **Inadequate Due Diligence and Failure to Consider Previous Planning Decisions**

The Parish Council is particularly concerned that the Local Plan evidence base fails to properly acknowledge and address previous planning appeal decisions affecting the sites under consideration.

ANBA / OPUS Ref 509

Within the consultation documents is the Buckinghamshire New and Expanded Settlement Study (NESS) Part 3 prepared by AECOM.

The Parish Council notes that the study fails to acknowledge relevant planning evidence including the Strategic Environmental Assessment prepared for the Watermead Neighbourhood Plan (January 2025), also produced by AECOM, which assessed the same geographical area.

That assessment concluded that land within this area was unsuitable for development.

Furthermore, part of the site forms land previously considered through a major planning appeal:

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 78  
Appeal by Hallam Land Management Ltd  
Land East of A413 Buckingham Road and Watermead  
Application Ref: 13/03534/AOP

In refusing planning permission, the Secretary of State identified several critical harms including:

Landscape and visual impact

- Significant adverse impact on landscape character
- Loss of historic strip fields and ridge-and-furrow landscape features
- Urbanisation of the rural approach to Aylesbury

Settlement coalescence

- Narrowing of the open gap between Aylesbury, Bierton and surrounding communities

Agricultural land loss

- Permanent loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land including Grade 2 land

The Secretary of State concluded that the harm significantly and demonstrably outweighed the benefits and that the proposal did not represent sustainable development.

These findings represent important material considerations which have not been adequately addressed within the Local Plan evidence base.

Land North of Martin Dalby Way – OPUS Ref 3113

The Secretary of State also ruled against development affecting land north of Martin Dalby Way in the decision relating to major planning appeals involving Fleet Marston Farm, Hampden Fields and Land North of Weedon Hill.

The Secretary of State concluded that development in this location would cause:

**Significant harm to landscape character and appearance**

- Development would extend beyond the existing defensible settlement boundary.
- The scheme would intrude into open countryside and alter the character of the landscape.
- Built form would extend up to a ridgeline, making development highly visible and intrusive.

### **Conflict with adopted planning policy**

The proposal was found to conflict with Policy GP.35 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan which requires development to respect and integrate with the character of the surrounding landscape.

### **Intrusive expansion of the urban edge**

The development would spill beyond the natural containment of Buckingham Park and require artificial buffer planting to define a new settlement edge which would appear unnatural within the wider landscape.

The Secretary of State concluded that the landscape harm significantly outweighed the benefits of the proposal, including housing provision.

It is therefore a serious omission that these appeal decisions are not properly referenced or addressed in the Local Plan evidence base.

### **Landscape Sensitivity and the Weedon Ridge**

The Parish Council is particularly concerned about the impact that the proposed allocations would have on the sensitive landscape associated with the Weedon Ridge and the northern setting of Aylesbury.

Previous planning decisions have recognised the importance of maintaining a clear transition between the built form of Aylesbury and the surrounding open countryside.

Development extending northwards from Berryfields towards the Weedon Ridge would fundamentally alter the character of the landscape and undermine this established settlement edge.

The land north of Martin Dalby Way forms part of this sensitive landscape setting. Development of the scale proposed would represent a substantial extension of the urban edge of Aylesbury and would result in built development extending into open countryside that currently provides an important landscape buffer.

Development on rising ground approaching the ridgeline would be visually prominent and widely visible across the surrounding rural landscape.

### **Cumulative Impact of Development**

Berryfields has already delivered a substantial proportion of housing growth for Aylesbury as part of the town's planned expansion.

Allocating additional large-scale development immediately north of Berryfields would represent a further outward expansion rather than consolidation of the existing settlement.

When considered alongside other potential developments in the area, the proposed allocations could result in a contiguous urban extension between the A41 at Berryfields and the A418 near Berton.

This would represent a major expansion of Aylesbury across the Weedon Ridge landscape and would be contrary to the conclusions reached in previous planning appeal decisions.

### **Flood Risk and Drainage**

Berryfields Parish Council also has concerns regarding flood risk and drainage.

The land proposed for development is currently largely agricultural and absorbs rainfall to a degree, although lower areas already experience periodic surface water accumulation.

Development of this scale would significantly increase impermeable surfaces and therefore surface water runoff.

The area ultimately drains toward the River Thame catchment and the wider drainage network serving northern Aylesbury. Without substantial drainage infrastructure improvements there is a risk that development could exacerbate surface water flooding both locally and downstream.

### **Infrastructure Capacity**

Transport

Transport infrastructure in the area is already under considerable pressure.

Key routes including the A413, the A418 and local roads connecting Berryfields to Aylesbury experience regular congestion during peak hours.

The proposed development areas would rely heavily on these routes and on Martin Dalby Way as a primary access corridor.

A development of this scale would generate substantial additional traffic movements and risks worsening congestion and reducing network resilience.

### **Health**

Healthcare provision in the Aylesbury area is already stretched, with many GP practices operating at or beyond capacity.

Previous large-scale developments such as Berryfields and Kingsbrook have already placed significant pressure on existing services. The proposed scale of additional development would exacerbate these pressures without clear evidence of new healthcare provision.

## **Education**

Primary and secondary schools serving the Berryfields and wider Aylesbury area are already close to capacity.

A development of the scale proposed could introduce several thousand additional residents, including a substantial number of school-age children.

Without clear plans for the provision of new education facilities and supporting infrastructure, development on this scale would be unsustainable.

## **Conclusion**

Berryfields Parish Council considers that the draft Local Plan fails to properly account for relevant planning precedents, infrastructure constraints and environmental impacts associated with the proposed sites.

The failure to address previous planning appeal decisions relating to OPUS Ref 509 and OPUS Ref 3113 represents a significant weakness in the evidence base and calls into question the soundness of the proposed allocations.

Given the scale of development proposed in this area, the Parish Council believes that the Local Plan in its current form is unsound and requires significant reconsideration before it can be considered suitable for adoption.

Yours faithfully,

Anthea Cass CiLCA  
Parish Clerk  
Berryfields Parish Council