

GOVERNMENT PLANNING POLICIES POINT TO THE SOUTHERN ARC

In deciding direction of growth, Councillors need to take account of relevant statements of the Government's planning policy

1. Planning Policy Statement 12 Requires Councils To Take Account Of The Sustainability Appraisal Findings

It would be unwise for AVDC to ignore the findings of its own Sustainability Appraisal. The October 2008 Sustainability Appraisal report points to the southern arc as the most sustainable option for development, having the most positive impacts and fewer negative impacts than the other two options.

In order to quantify it, we have taken the Sustainability Appraisal summary and applied a simple scoring mechanism to the 17 objectives:

Objective	EGA (Eastern)	CGA (Combined)	SGA (South)
1 HOUSING.	2	2	2
2 CRIME AND SAFETY.	0	0	0
3 ACCESS TO SERVICES.	-1	0	1
4 COMMUNITY IDENTITY.	-1	-1	-1
5 HEALTH AND EQUALITIES.	0	0	0
6 TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL.	-2	-2	-2
7 WATER AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION.	-1	-1	-1
8 BIODIVERSITY.	-2	-2	-1
9 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE.	-1	1	1
10 LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE.	-1	-1	-1
11 ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE.	-2	-2	-2
12 WASTE.	-2	-2	-2
13 LAND USE EFFICIENCY.	-2	-2	-2
14 FLOODING.	-1	-1	1
15 BUSINESS.	1	1	1
16 ECONOMY.	0	0	0
17 SKILLS.	0	0	0
	-13	-10	-6

Key	score
++ Major positive impact	2
+ Minor positive impact	1
0 Neutral	0
? Uncertain	0
- Minor negative impact	-1
-- Major negative impact	-2

This shows the southern arc is the most suitable choice with a score of minus 6, the combined arc has a score of minus 10 and the eastern arc is least suitable for development with a score of minus 13.

The Government Planning Inspectorate says: "The Sustainability Appraisal will be a key piece of evidence. If the strategy chosen is not endorsed by the Sustainability Appraisal, the reasons for the choice of strategy contrary to the Sustainability Appraisal will need to be fully justified. Failure to do so is likely to result in a finding of unsoundness."

2. Planning Policy Statement 7 Says Best & Most Versatile Land Should Be Taken Into Account

The AVDC local plan follows PPS7 Government guidelines by stating that 'best & most versatile land' (B&MV) should be protected. A substantial portion of land where houses are proposed immediately to the north of Bierton and east of Watermead is highly productive grade 2 agricultural land.



According to the 2007 Sustainability Appraisal, 75% of site C is assessed as 'best & most versatile land'.

3. Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 9 Says Planning Should Prevent Harm To Biodiversity

Buckinghamshire CC says: "The ecological evidence points strongly towards directing any new development away from Watermead-Bierton and Broughton Crossing. On ecological grounds the preferred option is the southern growth arc." **PPS9 states: "When granting planning permission**

would result in significant harm to those interests, local planning authorities will need to be satisfied that the development cannot reasonably be located on any alternative sites that would result in less or no harm."



Shallow flooding at Broughton

4. NERC Act Requires Authorities To Conserve Biodiversity

As well as pointing out PPS9, the Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust draws attention in its response to



Snow Geese at Broughton



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the Natural Environmental & Rural Communities Act 2006 under Section 40, which also places a duty on local planning authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity when exercising their functions. The BBOWT objects to the inclusion of site G and the eastern growth arc. It goes on to say that site G and site C both have high value for bats as well as great crested newts and that they are **strictly protected as European Protected Species under the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994.**

5. Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 13 Promotes Sustainable Travel And Reducing Reliance On Cars

The southern arc (SGA) will generate 700 fewer vehicle journeys per day than the eastern arc (EGA) by 2026. As stated in the 2008 Sustainability Appraisal, **the SGA will also generate a staggering 4,500 fewer vehicle journeys per day** than the combined arc (CGA) hybrid option.

In its consultation submission, the Highways Agency says: "It is important to encourage travel by sustainable modes in accordance with PPG13."

Buckinghamshire CC states: "A key test of the three options is the extent to which they meet the objectives of PPG13 and the Aylesbury Transport Strategy. The transport modelling note produced by the County Council to support the directions of growth consultation



comments that **if a key measure of success is an ability to reduce dependence on car use, then the SGA performs better** as the new development can

be better integrated with the existing town, with good opportunities for walking and cycling routes to link the developments to the town. In terms of rail accessibility both the SGA and to a lesser extent the CGA appear to have advantages over the EGA. In view of the considerable increase in traffic that will be generated by the scale of the planned expansion of Aylesbury, the District Council should seek to ensure that opportunities to reduce the need to travel by car are maximised."

6. Planning Policy Guidance 15 Says Preserving A Conservation Area Should Be A Material Consideration

Buckinghamshire CC in its response to the consultation says: "PPG15 states that preserving a conservation area should be a material consideration in the planning authority's handling of development proposals."



Bierton – a conservation area

Policy G.53 in the Aylesbury Vale District Plan reflects the principle of protecting the

setting of conservation areas. By virtue of the scale of development north and south of Bierton and the extent of the conservation area, the EGA is likely to have the greatest impact on the setting of conservation areas followed by the CGA."

7. Ignoring a Government Inspector's Report Is Risky

In 2002, the Government Inspector's conclusion (in section 6.2.46) was: "**There are fundamental objections to development at Broughton Stocklake that cannot be satisfactorily overcome.**" In a letter to AVDC, John Bercow MP wrote: "It seems at best curious and at worst perverse that AVDC has accepted as valid the Inspector's conclusion in respect to the MDA's at Berryfields, Weedon Hill and Aston Clinton Road but is not according comparable recognition to the Inspector's judgement as regards the Broughton area."



Site C – High value landscape

