

A plan for Winslow to 2033

Updating the town's Neighbourhood Plan



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What's the Neighbourhood Plan?

Our Neighbourhood Plan – the Winslow Neighbourhood Plan, or WNP - sets out how we, the local community, want Winslow to develop in the coming years. The existing Plan was made in 2014 and since then it has been of great help in steering planning decisions affecting the town. Neighbourhood Plans should be revised every five years or so – but they have to fit with the district-wide Local Plan. Work on a new Local Plan (the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, VALP) was begun several years ago by Aylesbury Vale District Council and is now being completed by Buckinghamshire Council. We now know what the Local Plan will require of Winslow up to 2033 when it is finally approved and adopted during 2021 – so the time has come for Winslow to update and extend WNP, to cover the period to 2033.

The Town Council leads the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan – seeking to ensure it reflects the wishes of the local community. This leaflet sets out how the Town Council thinks the current Plan needs to be revised, and includes a map on which the principal areas affected are shown. In these difficult times, public consultation events are not possible – so the Council is delivering this leaflet to every household and business in the town. We now need your thoughts about the ideas for change outlined below as soon as possible, using our on-line form at <http://tiny.cc/zqt7tz> by e-mail (plan@winslowtowncouncil.gov.uk) or by sending our response form or a letter to **Plan at Winslow Town Council, 28 High Street, Winslow MK18 3HF.**

We will need your feedback by 6 April 2021 to allow us to write the draft revised WNP in good time. The draft then will be checked by Buckinghamshire Council before the document is published for formal consultation. It then goes to an independent planning inspector, who will hold (Government rules permitting) a public hearing to consider any representations, for or against the Plan. The Inspector will also decide whether the changes are sufficient to require a referendum to be held locally to test public support for the plan. At the end of this process, if all is well, the Plan will be “made” (adopted) by Buckinghamshire Council and it will then become part of the Development Plan for the area, against which all planning applications for future development must be tested.

A copy of the existing WNP, “Winslow Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031”, can be viewed at or downloaded from <http://tiny.cc/9hcmsz>



The vision for Winslow

No single policy can describe a vision for the future of Winslow – but the Town Council believes that the town needs to accommodate natural levels of growth in housing, employment opportunities and community facilities, whilst seeking to preserve the character of the historic centre of the town.

The new Local Plan (VALP) sets targets for the housing that needs to be provided – and in the case of Winslow, VALP specifies that an area of land to the east of Great Horwood Road should be allocated for residential development. This is in addition to the allocations contained in the existing WNP.

A sustainable community also needs employment, for which land is already allocated adjacent to the site of the new railway station. Further land north of Winslow is also potentially available for the development of a new business park in the future.

Meeting the need for housing

The existing WNP allocated land for about 250 homes to the east of Furze Lane that are already under construction. It also allocated housing on what was the Rugby Pitch (about 75), on the Station Road industrial area (about 65), and on a site on Granborough Road (about 35) and these will remain in the new WNP. In addition the WNP will need to include the site to the east of Great Horwood Road allocated by VALP for at least 315 new homes. In doing so, it will meet the Local Plan's requirements for additional housing in Winslow and its surrounding area in the plan period.

The Local Plan requires each of these housing developments to offer a balanced mix of market and affordable housing (both shared-ownership and for rent), and the larger development sites will also be required to offer some plots for self-build development. A local lettings policy may be proposed for some of the affordable housing.

There is also a need for more specialist housing, and a development of Extra Care accommodation is proposed for part of the former Winslow Centre site which should deliver about 85 units. This is larger than had been envisaged in the current WNP, to ensure a viable project and to meet growth in the demand for such housing within Winslow and its surrounding area.

Where will people work?

Employment in the Station Road industrial area has declined significantly over recent years, and this had already led to proposals in the existing WNP for this brownfield site to be developed for housing once the remaining businesses have relocated. At the same time there is an allocation in the existing WNP for new employment development on land adjacent to the new railway station. There is no reason for these allocations to change. Proposals exist for the revitalisation of a small employment area on Granborough Road, outside the town's settlement boundary, and this would make a positive contribution to the sustainability of the town. So, too, will employment associated with the proposed Extra Care housing on the former Winslow Centre site.

Looking further to the future, the existing WNP also includes an allocation for a business park development on land at Redfield Farm. It is proposed to revise the size and precise location of this allocation in order to accommodate the Sports Hub on a larger plot than had previously been envisaged (see below). However the area marked on the map included within this document is only indicative, pending more information being provided by the land owner, Buckinghamshire Council.

Facilities for the town's residents

In the Town Centre: Winslow is a small market town with its town centre running from the Market Square along the High Street. The current WNP sought to retain as much retail shop frontage as possible in this area, and also contained provisions for the establishment of a larger convenience-store supermarket. Since that WNP was prepared, there has been a further loss of retail uses in the town centre – in line with national trends. The Co-op, however, is investing by significantly enlarging its town centre convenience supermarket, rendering the previous idea of converting the Public Hall to a small supermarket redundant. Changes to planning legislation have also provided more opportunities for existing retail space to be changed to other uses.

Notwithstanding these factors it is suggested that the revised WNP should continue to seek to protect town centre retailing as far as is possible, in order to maintain and hopefully enhance the viability of the town centre. To that end, the provision of additional car parking spaces in association with new community facilities in the Heart of Winslow area (see below) will also help to support retailers in the central section of the High Street.

In the Heart of Winslow: For the new WNP we have coined the phrase “Heart of Winslow” to refer to the area of the recreation ground and Tomkins Park & Arboretum, as well as the Public Hall, Bowls Club, Sports Club and Royal British Legion. Together this area, and its supporting areas of parking (including the Greyhound Lane car park), provide a central hub of meeting spaces and areas for leisure and recreation activities – forming the social Heart of the town.

The ambition set out in the existing WNP for an all-purpose community centre led to a search for a suitable site, but none could be found which was available and large enough, and which met all the other conditions such a building would have to satisfy, and in 2019 the Town Council reluctantly decided to abandon that proposal.

Instead, the Town Council is proposing to enhance facilities in the existing Public Hall, and in a replacement Sports Club building which will also include an additional community hall. This latter development will require about 50 additional car parking spaces which, when not in use for other purposes, will make a significant contribution to the parking provision for the town centre. To accommodate these parking spaces, the children’s playground currently alongside Elmfields Gate will be relocated to a site within Tomkins Park & Arboretum.

At the Sports Hub: the existing WNP made provision for a new Sports Hub on land at Redfield, at the corner of Great Horwood Road and Buckingham Road. The land, owned by Buckinghamshire Council, would accommodate a range of sports pitches and courts, with associated changing rooms and other facilities. Since the WNP was

prepared, however, this scheme has been investigated further and the constraints of the site have led to the realisation that a larger plot than previously proposed will be necessary to accommodate what is now required. The Sports Hub is important not just for the opportunities it will provide to the community, but also because it will allow the sports facilities that have been part of the Winslow Centre and its adjacent Rugby Pitch to be relocated which in turn will then allow the Winslow Centre site to be developed for alternative purposes.

At the former Winslow Centre site: the existing WNP envisages that this site would be used for a new health centre, and some Extra Care accommodation, along with the town's library and possibly other local authority functions. To do this, the site needs to be cleared (and all but the existing library building has now been demolished, whilst the former school's sports facilities are destined to be relocated to the Sports Hub (see above)). Buckinghamshire Council is now developing its proposals in more detail – and the revised WNP will seek to accommodate its plans. The Town Council considers that this site must still include a plot on which a new Health Centre can be constructed, to replace the Norden House surgery and adjacent buildings, at some time in the future. And Buckinghamshire Council wishes to retain the community library on part of the site. Alongside these, however, a more viable proposal for about 85 Extra Care units is envisaged, which is significantly larger than had previously been proposed. All of this would be set alongside an area of green space which could accommodate quiet recreation (such as croquet) or simply be a tranquil area.

Travel and transport

The construction of East West Rail is under way and a new station with car park off George Pass Avenue, south of Buckingham Road, will serve not only Winslow but also many villages around the town. The station will also be served by buses travelling between Aylesbury and Buckingham, and possibly services local to Winslow and its hinterland. Train services initially will run to and from Oxford in the west and Milton Keynes Central and Bedford in the East, providing connections with several other rail routes. The line is planned to be extended to Cambridge over the coming few years, when it will connect further with the East Coast main line and East Anglian main lines.

Roads within easy walking distance of the railway station and the town centre car parks will need to be protected from the intrusion of rail-user parking. Buckinghamshire Council is expected to propose appropriate forms of parking restrictions in the area to achieve this with the minimum of inconvenience to local residents.

Parking to meet the needs of the town centre has been less than adequate for many years, but the proposals for additional parking off Elmfields Gate associated with the additional community facilities in the Heart of Winslow proposals will seek to address this issue.

All new developments in the town will be expected to include provision for both pedestrians and cycle users. The cycle routes will link to the existing Buckingham – Winslow cycleway, and/or to the national route 51 cycleway that runs east-west through Winslow. Strategic provision for a cycleway between Winslow and Great Horwood is still envisaged, with a first phase of this being delivered by way of a route through the proposed housing development to the east of Great Horwood Road.

Traffic volumes will increase inevitably with more development in the town, but the capacity of the road network generally should be sufficient to carry that additional traffic. However the new WNP will be concerned to ensure that :

- Minor changes are made to the Great Horwood Road junction with the A413 to increase its capacity.
- A signalised pedestrian crossing over the A413 is implemented by the time the railway station opens.
- Monitoring of traffic conditions takes place regularly at the A413's junctions with Great Horwood Road, George Pass Avenue and Furze Lane to make sure that these continue to cope with traffic demands as developments progress.

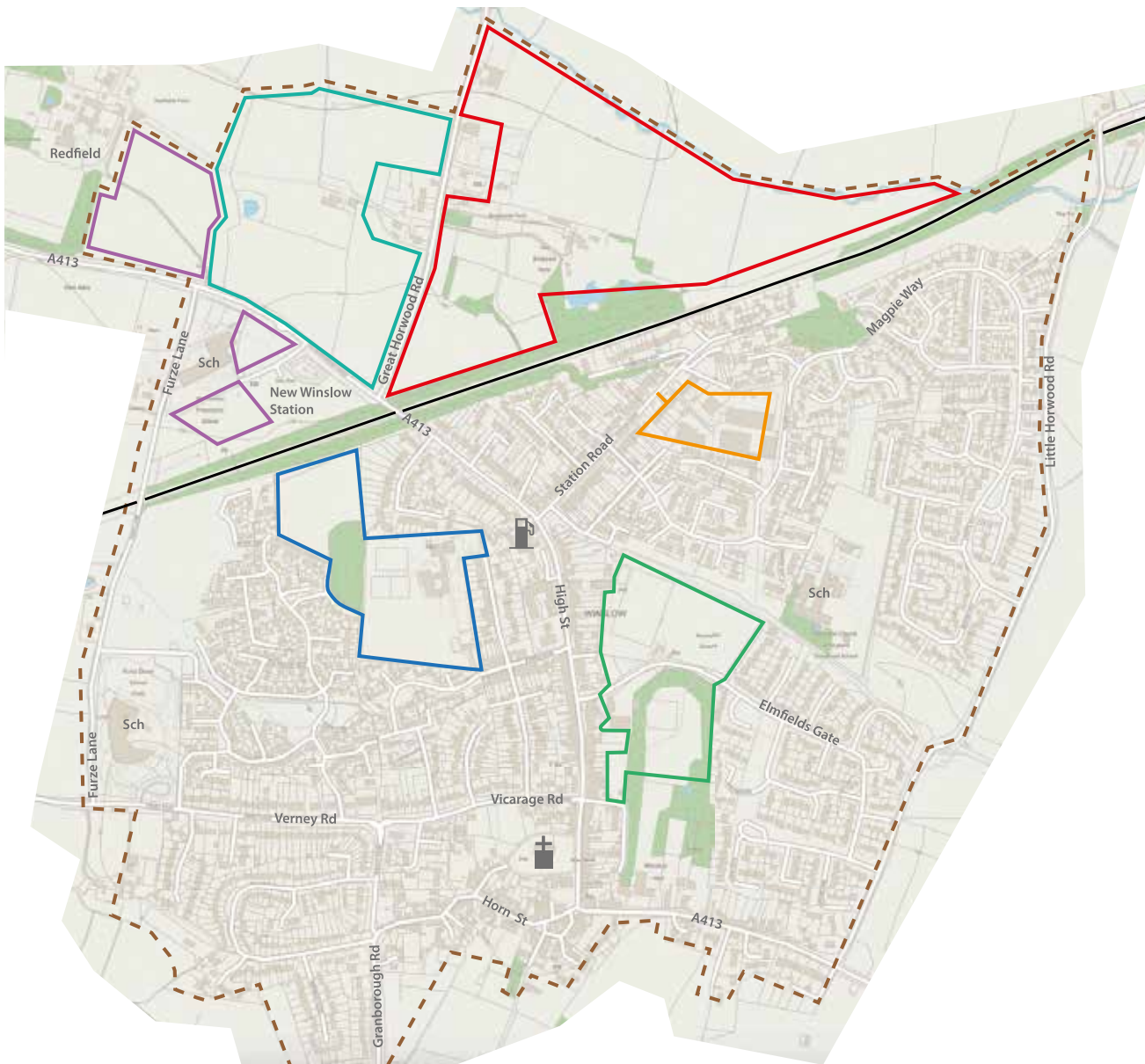
The Government's proposal for an Oxford-Cambridge Expressway road, which might pass close to Winslow, is currently on hold, and it is not something that VALP takes into account. So the revised WNP equally will make no provision to accommodate any changes that might arise from any future Expressway.

What goes where

The WNP defines a Settlement Boundary outside which new development may take place only in exceptional circumstances. The proposals set out in this leaflet will require the existing Settlement Boundary to be extended to cover the proposed residential development area east of Great Horwood Road, and to cover the extended site now found to be required for the Redfield Sports Hub and the adjacent business park that were proposed in the existing WNP.

The other areas previously planned for further housing development – on the Rugby pitch, on Station Road industrial area, and off Granborough Road - will remain unchanged, along with the increased provision of Extra Care units proposed on part of the former Winslow Centre site.

The detail in the existing WNP will need to be revised to provide for Buckinghamshire Council's proposals for the former Winslow Centre site and the adjacent Rugby pitch site. Land adjacent to the new railway station and secondary school will remain reserved for employment uses.



KEY

- Sports Hub
- Housing East of Great Horwood Road
- Housing – Station Road industrial estate
- Employment adjacent to Station site and west of Sports Hub
- Housing, Extra Care, Health, Library on former Winslow Centre and Rugby Pitch sites
- Heart of Winslow – community and recreation uses
- Settlement boundary
- Railway Line

Environmental policies

It is expected that all new development in Winslow will be as environmentally friendly as possible. That means that it should be energy efficient, encourage bio-diversity, contribute to the target of carbon neutrality, and so on. Policies on these topics, however, are increasingly being determined at a national level, such as through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Building Regulations. It is not clear that there is anything exceptional about development in Winslow that would justify specific policies in WNP about such matters.

What will not be in the revised WNP?

The revised WNP will follow national guidelines, and therefore no longer needs its own Policy about sustainable development. This is fundamental to the NPPF with which the WNP must conform.

The reference to a proposal to set up a Winslow Community Land Trust will be dropped – as this has not been found to be a viable approach to the meeting of local housing needs. Dropping it from the WNP, however, would not prevent such an initiative being set up if there were a need for it in the future.

The provision of a childcare nursery is no longer sought by Buckinghamshire Council so, as arrangements for the provision of this service have changed markedly over the past seven years, the previous policy is no longer required.

The existing policy related to Assets of Community Value is no longer effective. Other protections already exist for the assets that were listed, and therefore this policy is not required in the new WNP.

Guidance for Neighbourhood Planning has changed over the past seven years, particularly in respect of policies for Local Green Spaces. Accordingly it is proposed that these provisions in the WNP should be reviewed to follow current guidelines.

What do you think?

The consultation leaflet sets out the views of the Town Council's Steering Group – really as a way of stimulating comment from the community at large. So please tell us what you think before 6 April 2021.



Please respond using the on-line form at <http://tiny.cc/zqt7tz>

or

Complete and return the response form (or send a letter) to **Plan at Winslow Town Council, 28 High Street, Winslow MK18 3HF.**

or

Send an e-mail to plan@winslowtowncouncil.gov.uk with your answers and any additional comments.