



Technical Research for Wooburn & Bourne End Parish Council in respect of their Neighbourhood Plan: Matter 2: Local Green Space

On Behalf of:

Wooburn & Bourne End Parish Council

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Wooburn and Bourne End Parish Council have commissioned West Waddy to undertake some technical research into matters raised by Buckinghamshire Council and Catesby Estates in their comments on the 'Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Development Plan: Local Consultation Draft – 31 March 2020.'

1.2 The matters addressed relate to:

- Matter 1: Local Infrastructure;
- Matter 2: Local Green Space;
- Matter 3: Proposed policy relating to the development brief for Hollands Farm Development; and
- Matter 4: Proposed Policy WBE/HH1 – preserving the character of Hawks Hill and Harvest Hill;

1.3 The analysis relating to each of these matters is contained in a separate report. This report relates to Matter 2: Local Green Space.

1.4 In order to take these matters forward it is strongly recommended that members of the Parish Council meet with Buckinghamshire Council and Catesby Estates to discuss their representations and how the Parish are proposing to address them.

2 Matter 2: Local Green Space

2.2 **Wooburn & Bourne End Parish Council comment:** *'We have asserted that there is a lack of green space in the Parish without referencing how we concluded this although we do recall seeing a document (we don't have its title or author) that indicated a certain level of green space is recommended per capita.'*

2.3 **Agreed scope of work:** West Waddy are to identify evidence (documents) which set out recommendations on how much green space the size of population should have. Then compare what is currently available in the Parish from the Wycombe Local Plan's designated green spaces and assess the deficit.

2.4 This work is to be undertaken by reviewing Wycombe's Open Spaces Framework Assessment, which formed part of the evidence base for the now adopted Wycombe Local Plan.

Response on Matter 2:

2.5 Information on open space provision in Wooburn & Bourne End is contained in the Wycombe Open Spaces Framework – Appendix 2-2: Settlement Analysis for Chepping Wye Valley.

2.6 The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan is divided into two in the open space assessment, namely:

- Wooburn Green;
- Bourne End/Wooburn;

2.7 The local standard that the Council has adopted for open space provision is 9.71 ha/per 1,000 population.

Wooburn Green

- 2.8 The table for open space provision in Wooburn Green indicates that there is 3.86 ha of unrestricted open space provision/per 1,000 population and 5.4 ha/per 1,000 population when account is taken of restricted open space. Restricted public open space consists of areas such as private playing fields and allotments where access by the public is limited. Against the standard of 9.71 ha/per 1,000 population there is therefore a deficit of 4.31 ha per 1,000 population, even when account is taken of restricted open space.
- 2.9 There is a shortage of playgrounds with only 0.25 ha/per 1,000 population, whereas the standard is for 0.68 ha per 1,000 population. There are adequate parks (2.42 ha against a requirement for 1.67 ha) and outdoor sport (2.18 ha against a requirement for 1.86 ha). The key findings for Wooburn Green include the following:

Quantity of Open Space

- The open space provision in Wooburn Green is below district average and proposed local standards even when both public and private spaces are taken into account
- There are no allotments; teen facilities or green corridors.
- There are only two public playgrounds (Watery Lane – 1919 and Wooburn Park – 1915) associated with the development although a further restricted access play area exists in the Glory Mill development.
- There is a particular quantitative shortfall in semi-natural spaces and commons but the area adjoins the open countryside on two sides, so that this deficiency is not of concern
- Many amenity spaces are road verges with little recreational benefit
- Although there is no deficiency in parks when standards are applied, this is mainly due to Wooburn Park, which is a large site and adjoins the settlement to the south. There is only little other publicly available space within the built-up area of the settlement.
- Play areas only exist at the northern and southern end leaving a void in the centre of the settlement

Accessibility of Open Space

- The lack of play areas in the centre of the settlement



- The majority of the existing spaces are either not publicly available or comprise small road verges of little recreational value
- High traffic volumes along Wycombe Lane and at Wooburn Green act as a line of severance to movement in this area

Possible options for improvement

- Integrate teen facility in one of the existing open spaces, e.g. Wooburn Park (1915)
- Improve access to school playing fields out of school hours, e.g. the Meadows County School (1913)
- Integrate play and teen facilities in any larger new development in the area
- Encourage multi-functionality of existing spaces
- Improve access to Public Rights of Way
- Increase allotment capacity if and when an opportunity arises, e.g. through conversion from a different open space category.
- The conclusion of the assessment is that: '*A strategic and a local open space deficiency exist in this area.*'

Bourne End/Wooburn

- 2.10 Within Bourne End/Wooburn the open space provision is 2.19 ha of unrestricted open space/per 1,000 population, and 4.89 ha/per 1,000 population when restricted open space is taken into account. This compares with a proposed standard of 9.71ha/per 1,000 population. Even when restricted open space is taken into account there is therefore a deficit of 4.82 ha/per 1,000 population, or only half of what there should be.
- 2.11 Some of the significant deficits include natural and semi-natural greenspaces, where the standard is 3.2 ha/per 1,000 population, but the level of unrestricted provision is only 0.16 in ha per 1,000 population. There is also only 0.70ha/per 1,000 population of unrestricted access to parks, when the standard is 1.67 ha per 1,000 population. Similarly, there are only half of the required playgrounds with 0.3 ha/per 1,000 population against a requirement for 0.68 ha/per 1,000 population.
- 2.12 The key findings of the Council's assessment are that:

Quantity of Open Space



- Bourne End's provision in open space is both below the District average and below proposed local standards.
- There is a shortfall in all typologies with the exception of allotments and public amenity space. The lack of larger multi-functional open spaces is of particular concern. Shortfall in informal open spaces, such as semi-natural spaces and commons are not of concern since the settlement is surrounded by high-quality countryside.
- Many of the public amenity spaces are small and therefore limited in their use

Accessibility of Open Space

- Parts of Bourne End are deficient in play and teen facilities
- There are only a few open spaces in the southern and western part of Bourne End
- Open spaces within this settlement are generally rather small with the exception of Wooburn Park (1915) and the publicly available part of Slate Meadow (109)
- The River Thames acts as a line of severance to south and west of Bourne End

Possible Options for Improvement

2.13 The Council has outlined a number of possible options for improvement, which are as follows:

- Improve access to school grounds, e.g. Wye Valley School (121) to address deficiencies in outdoor sport;
- Increase quality of existing sports facilities to maximise use, e.g. through the installation of new changing rooms at Bourne End Recreation Ground (122) and Sappers Field (123);
- Create additional teen facility, e.g. at Wooburn Park;
- Maintain and improve quality of multi-functional spaces to maximise use (Blind Lane open space (102), Bourne End Recreation Ground (122), Sappers Playing Field (123), Wooburn Park (1915));
- Create multi-functional open space if opportunity arises, e.g. at Slate Meadow



- Deficiency in semi-natural space is of lesser concern but improved access to countryside via PROW (Public Rights Of Way network) could be considered. Such a deficiency could also be addressed through the creation of a country park in the Little Marlow Gravel Pits area.

2.14 The assessment concludes with the statement: '*A strategic and a local open space deficiency exist in this area.*'

Former Bourne End to High Wycombe Railway Line

2.15 With regard to open space and footpath provision in Bourne End and Wooburn, an important policy is policy DM4 in the Delivery & Site Allocations Plan, which proposes that the former Bourne End to High Wycombe Railway Line is used to create a new walk/cycle route. The supporting text in paragraph 6.24 states that: '*the route does offer great potential as a walking and cycling route as it is direct and well connected to homes, schools, jobs, railway stations, open space and town/district centres on a largely flat route through an attractive landscape. The route is therefore safeguarded for the provision of a dedicated walking/cycling route. The route also has potential to enhance green infrastructure as it has potential to be a significant green corridor and is identified as a Corridor Opportunity Area by [policy] DM11.*'

2.16 This would therefore be an important informal recreation asset in the Bourne End/Wooburn/Wooburn Green area.

3 Conclusion on Matter 2

- 3.1 This assessment has demonstrated that there is a substantial open space deficit within the Neighbourhood Plan area when assessed against the former Wycombe District Council's open space standards. It is therefore appropriate to make reference to this matter in the Wooburn and Bourne End Neighbourhood Plan provided reference is made to the supporting evidence to justify this assertion.