



Little Chalfont Parish Council
 Little Chalfont Village Hall,
 Cokes Lane,
 Little Chalfont,
 HP8 4UD

Tel: 01494 766655

20 February 2023

To:
 Planning Policy Team
 Buckinghamshire Council

Dear Sir/Madam,

Response to the Bucks Council Planning Policy Team – Settlement Review

Further to your recent emailed letter requesting Little Chalfont Parish Council to review the data from your desk-based audit for the evidence base as input for the Local Plan for Buckinghamshire, please find below our response. As for all matters relating to the Local Plan from Little Chalfont, this letter is submitted jointly by the Parish Council and the Little Chalfont Community Association.

We have structured our response to be in line with your information request and, therefore, it has been split into two parts - Part one: review of the services and facilities, and Part two: general feedback.

Please note that some of the data and information pre-supplied in Part one, appeared to relate to another village but has of course been corrected in this letter.

Part One:

Little Chalfont

Population: 6,918 (ONS 2021 Census)

No. of households: 2,800 (estimated based on ONS 2021 Census data)

Key Services	Number of Services/ Facilities	Address and Details (e.g., opening times)	Amendments/ Comments
Food Shop (supermarket/ local store/ garage)	8	6 on Chenies Parade; 1 on Elizabeth Avenue; and 1 on Chalfont Station Road. Generally open during normal working hours with 3 shops closed on some days (Sun/Mon) and 2 having extended	1 food shop on Chenies Parade is in the process of closing. One food shop on Chenies Parade also operates as a combined food shop/post office (see below).

		opening hours (one until 21.00h and the other to 23.00h).	
Pub	3	White Lion Road, Station Approach and Chalfont Station Road. Various opening times from noon to 23.00; all open every day of the week.	The number of pubs includes a small craft beer shop.
Post Office	1	Chenies Parade; opening hours of 9.00-17.00 Mon-Fri, 9.00-13.00 Sat and closed on Sun.	Combined post office/food shop (see above)
GP	1	200 White Lion Road; opening hours of 8.30-13.00 and 14.30-18.00 on Mon-Fri.	5,081 registered patients; 4 GPs and 1 nurse employed
Community/ Village Hall	1	Cokes Lane	
Recreation grounds/ Playing fields/ sports facilities	2	Westwood Park and Nature Park	Westwood Park has the following facilities: football pitches (full size and reduced size – winter only); 1 cricket square (summer only); 1 MUGA; 3 all-weather tennis courts; and 1 children's (under 14) playground.
Primary School	2	Oakington Avenue and Bell Lane	Oakington Avenue - Mixed school; ages 3-11; 247 registered pupils with little change in the last 10 years; pupil capacity is 244; sufficient land exists for expansion though significant investment in infrastructure would be required; catchment area is east and south Little Chalfont. Bell Lane - Mixed school; ages 3-11; 150 pupils - was 119 in 2016; catchment area is west Little Chalfont.
Non-key Services	Number of Services/ Facilities	Address and Details (e.g., opening times)	Amendments/ Comments
Secondary School	1	Cokes Lane	Girls school; ages 11-18; 1,050 pupils in the years to 2015/2016 but then expanded to current number of 1,289 pupils to meet demand; current capacity is ~1,290 pupils; expansion is possible though significant investment in infrastructure would be required; catchment

			area is represented by a NW-SE corridor either side of the A413 stretching from the south of Wendover to Denham that includes the major towns of Amersham, Chesham, Chalfont St. Giles, Chalfont St. Peter, Gerrards Cross and Denham.
Places of Worship	3	Chalfont Avenue and White Lion Road	Church of England, Roman Catholic and Methodist faiths.
Pharmacy	1	Nightingales Corner; opening hours of 9.00-17.30 Mon-Fri and 9.00-17.00 Sat.	-
Library	1	Cokes Lane; opening hours of 10.00-17.00 Tues-Wed, 10.00-13.00 Thur-Fri and 10.00-15.00 Sat.	-
Dentist	3	Nightingales Corner, Chenies Parade and White Lion Road. All open in normal weekday working hours and 2 open on Sat morning with 1 open until 20.00 on Mon.	2 offer NHS and private consultations; 1 offers private consultations only.
Leisure Centre	0	-	-
Public Transport	Number of Services/ Facilities	Address and Details (e.g., opening times)	Amendments/ Comments
Train station	2 services - Metropolitan line underground and Chiltern rail overground; car park with 487 spaces	Metropolitan line: approx. every 15 mins Mon-Sun. Chiltern rail: approx. every 30 minutes Mon-Fri and Sat/Sun morning; every hour Sat/Sun afternoon/evening	Metropolitan line to Amersham and Chesham (to the northwest) and central London (to the southeast). Chiltern rail to Aylesbury (to the northwest) and London Marylebone (to the southeast).
Bus Transport Services (frequencies are approximate as vary depending on the route and time)	Red Rose 71 (Chesham – Little Chalfont) Carousel 106/107 (Amersham – Slough)	Red Rose 71 – every 2 hours Carousel 106/107 – approx. every hour	Red Rose 71 – 5 trips per day Mon-Fri only excl. public holidays. Carousel 106/107 – No. of trips per day: 12 to Slough and 14 to Amersham on Mon-Fri; 9 to Slough and 8 to Amersham on Sat. No service on Sun or public holidays.

	Arriva 336 (Amersham – Watford)	Arriva 336 – irregular service times	Arriva 336 – 4 trips per day Mon-Fri; 3 trips per day on Sat. No service on Sun or public holidays.
School Bus Transport Services (x1 am and return pm service)	MDCS843 Penn- Dr Challoner’s High School MDCS844 Hazlemere Crossroads-Dr Challoner’s High School	MDCS843 (07.41- 08.35 & 15.45- 16.39) MDCS844 (07.55- 08.35 & 15.45- 16.25)	Both routes have morning inbound and afternoon return services.

Sources: ONS Census population 2021, primary and secondary school websites, Google maps, TfL and Chiltern rail timetables, local knowledge, direct stakeholder communication, Red Rose/Arriva/Carousel bus timetables, NHS.

Part Two:

Key points:

- Need to recognise planning problems caused by Little Chalfont's position on the A404 (paragraphs 1-4).
- Congestion and increasing danger to pedestrians at certain road junctions (5).
- Pressure on school and medical services (6).
- Railway station and its car park may need improvement as commuting grows (7).
- Surrounding Green Belt and AONB greatly valued by community (8-9).
- Shopping centre and public green spaces (updated list provided) greatly valued (10).
- Nature Park, unique in the area, should be mentioned in plan (11).
- Tradition of low-level building, and remaining bungalows, should be preserved (12-13).
- Large brownfield employment site, not on register, may become available from local company (14).
- Threat of overwhelming urbanisation (15).
- About 17% of present homes in Little Chalfont are housing association properties, representing a significant amount of affordable housing (16).
- Existing Little Chalfont Community Improvement Plan (copy attached), adopted after public review (17).
- Local Plan should recognise needs identified in the above Community Improvement Plan for a new community centre at Cokes Lane, and a new pavilion in Westwood Park (18-22).
- Local Plan could note that, of the existing registered brownfield sites in Little Chalfont, Station Approach should be a priority for redevelopment (23).
- No prospect of neighbourhood development plan in near future, although one would be desirable once the outcome of a present planning appeal is known (24).

Question 1: Does your Town/ Parish have any issues that the Local Plan might help to solve? E.g., road junction capacity, bus services, school places or localised flooding.

Response:

The A404

1. It would be helpful if the new plan would recognise in writing and take account of a problem, unique to Little Chalfont among local towns, to which our community has often drawn attention.
2. The busy A404 Strategic Inter-Urban Route runs through the centre of the village, separating the facilities on the south side of the road - including Little Chalfont's only public car park, Dr Challoner's High School, and most of the shops - from the rail/underground station, a large development of flats for the elderly, and the cycle path which are on the north side.
3. In this respect Little Chalfont is unique among the four 'main settlements for growth' identified in policy CS2 of the Chiltern Core Strategy of 2011 (Chesham, Amersham, Little Chalfont, and Chalfont St Peter). The other three all benefit from bypasses, which prevent the centre suffering such congestion from their local main roads. Other large local settlements such as Chorleywood and Chalfont St Giles are also free of this problem.

4. There is no room to build a viable bypass around Little Chalfont. All major local planning decisions should therefore take into account the disproportionate increase in congestion, danger to pedestrians, pollution and loss of amenity, which occur in Little Chalfont whenever developments are permitted, significantly increasing the traffic on the A404. Recent plans at Newlands Park (whose residents will use Little Chalfont Railway station rather than Gerrards Cross because of the cheaper London Underground fares), Green Street Chorleywood, and between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane (appeal in progress) all threaten substantial traffic increases on the A404 – already heavily congested at busy times.

Road Junction Capacity

5. In the context of the A404 problems described above, four junctions are particularly sensitive and should be considered for mitigation measures, or as objections to a proposal, whenever large local developments are proposed. The four junctions are as follows.
 - i. The junction of the A404 with Church Grove East and Stony Lane, at the edge of the settlement, where crossings or right turns by vehicles are already difficult at busy times, and where fatal crashes have occurred. In the future, a roundabout might become necessary.
 - ii. The junction of the A404 with Burtons Lane in the village centre.
 - iii. The junction of the A404 with Cokes Lane in the village centre which is so close to (ii) above that the two should really be considered as one junction. (iii) is particularly sensitive because Cokes Lane, where there is no controlled crossing, is crossed at the corner with the A404 by all shoppers using Little Chalfont's only public car park at Snells Wood, and by students from Dr Challoner's High School (over 1,200 capacity) accessing the shops or the railway/Underground station.
 - iv. The entrance from the A404 to the Chenies Parade service road by the shops. Queues to make this turn already cause long tailbacks on the A404.

School places and medical services

6. These are under great pressure in Little Chalfont, as in most other locations in this region. Proposed large developments should always be required to pay for improvements to both, and any other opportunity to improve these services should be taken.

The railway / London Underground station

7. Before the pandemic, the station car park was usually full by 8.30 am, leaving nowhere else convenient for rail users to park. Car park capacity needs to be monitored as commuting resumes, and improvements made if necessary. Improvements to the station and the rail service should also be considered to relieve overcrowding on the trains.

Question 2: What would you most like to preserve or improve about your Town/ Parish? E.g., local green space, historic character, local shops and services. We are also still interested to hear about any sites that we might have missed in the Call for Sites engagement exercises.

Response:

General statement

8. The local community values the semi-rural nature of Little Chalfont, the Green Belt and AONB areas surrounding the village, and the convenient – though overcrowded at peak times outside pandemics – rail travel into London.

Case against release of Green Belt

9. Whatever the outcome of the current application for a large development in the Green Belt between Lodge lane and Burtons Lane in Little Chalfont (PL/21/4632/OA, (appeal in progress at the date of this response), we hope the new local plan will contain no proposals for release of Green Belt land in or surrounding Little Chalfont. We believe that a strong case against such release has been made on material planning grounds, in our joint Parish Council / Community Association objection to the above application. The same arguments would apply against any similar proposals for Little Chalfont in the new local plan.

Shopping Centre and Green Spaces with public access

10. The local community would certainly want to preserve and improve our lively local shopping centre, and to preserve the green spaces. Lists made in the past by the LPA of public green spaces in Little Chalfont, for example the Chiltern and South Bucks Councils Joint Open Space Study of August 2018, have been incomplete, so the following updated list should be used:

- The Little Chalfont Nature Park, off Cokes Lane.
- Snells Wood, an area of semi-natural ancient woodland off Cokes Lane.
- Westwood Park, which includes sports pitches and a children's playground.
- The land known and used as the Village Green (not a designated 'village green') on the corner of Burtons Lane and the A404.
- The green square bounded by Elizabeth Avenue and Cavendish Close.
- Burtons Wood, a designated 'village green' off Burtons Lane.
- The pond area in Finch Lane (adjacent to St. Aidan's Catholic Church).
- The green triangle at the junction of Chalfont Avenue and the A404.
- The land between Amersham Way and the A404, including the small wood between Amersham Way and Church Grove.
- The green area in the centre of The Retreat, off Oakington Avenue.
- The small children's playground in the Turners Field development off Bell Lane.
- The green area west of Boughton Way.

Nature Park

11. Among the above green spaces, the Nature Park, off Cokes Lane and close to the village centre, is of particular interest and deserves a mention in any account of the amenities of Little Chalfont in a new local plan. Opened in June 2016, it was created entirely by local effort. The park consists of 4.6 acres containing a rare wildflower meadow, semi-natural ancient woodland, plus relics of its past as a farm, cherry orchard and source of clay for brickmaking. Open from dawn to dusk every day, it is a tranquil place with

marked paths, a place for picnics and a story-telling arena, ideal for children to learn about the natural world. More visitors and educational trips are to be encouraged.

Historic character

12. The development of Little Chalfont in the early years of the 20th century was characterised by low-rise buildings, not of more than two storeys plus roof, sometimes with roof dormers. This pattern has generally been attractively preserved and should be maintained. Taller buildings should not be permitted. There is an excellent book about the development of Little Chalfont: 'A History of Little Chalfont' by Ivor White, printed by Alpine Press for the (former) Little Chalfont Rural Preservation Society. Bucks Council Planning Policy might find it helpful to hold a copy of this book, and, if possible, to consult it as background to the new Local Plan. The Little Chalfont Community Association would be happy to provide a copy.

Bungalows and downsizing

13. Another common feature of Little Chalfont in its earlier days was the prevalence of bungalows in several roads, including Oakington Avenue and Church Grove. Most bungalows in Oakington Avenue have survived and are sought after by elderly local people seeking to 'downsize' from larger houses in the locality. The Parish Council considers that there is a need to preserve bungalows for this reason where possible, and therefore opposes the frequent applications that are made to convert the relatively few that remain into full two-storey houses – although we do not object to the construction of rooms with dormers inside the bungalow roof. It would be helpful if the new Local Plan would give support to this policy.

Sites

14. The LPA should be aware of the large employment site of 8.9 hectares owned by GE Healthcare at the Grove Centre on White Lion Road. We understand that the company intends to dispose of this site, which is now in the process of decommissioning. We understand that decommissioning is likely to be complete by the end of this decade, and possibly earlier for some areas. In the context of the new Local Plan, Bucks Council may wish to discuss future use of the site with the company.

Development in the Village

15. Little Chalfont will expect normal windfall development, and possible development of the brownfield sites already on the Council's register. However, Little Chalfont has already suffered overloading of our infrastructure from two large developments (270 homes at Turners Field / Old Mill Place and 45 at Harvard Grange completed in 2017) and bringing the total number of homes in the village to around 2,800. To these may be added the 480 homes and other facilities proposed in PL/21/4632/OA now under appeal. Any large strategic housing developments (including PL/21/4632/OA if permitted) will overwhelm the village with urbanisation, congestion of local roads (see above), worsening of the present shortage of car parking space, and pressure on infrastructure.

Affordable Housing

16. Research by the Parish Council has shown that there are at least 465, and probably around 500, housing association properties in Little Chalfont. As a proportion of about 2,800 households in the village, this represents a relatively good level of local affordable housing. Where new developments are permitted, affordable housing is welcome and

should be included to meet the usual regulatory requirements but claims by developers that Little Chalfont is short of affordable housing should be discounted in view of the above figures.

Question 3: What are your aspirations for your Town/Parish over the next 20 years?

Response:

17. Please see at Annex the Little Chalfont Community Improvement Plan adopted in July 2018 after a public review with our community.
18. Among the projects in the annexed improvement plan is one for a new community centre on the existing village hall site in Cokes Lane. This project is at an active and advanced stage, therefore further details are provided below.

New Community Centre at Cokes Lane site

19. At present the village is served by a Village Hall (including a small office) situated on Cokes Lane near its junction with White Lion Road. It is centrally and conveniently situated in the village and has the benefit of the village's public carpark on one side and the Community Library on the other side. It is close to the doctor's surgery, shops, Dr Challoner's High School for Girls and the Nature Park. The building is over 50 years old. As an amenity, it is coming to the end of its natural life.
20. In environmental terms, the building is seriously out of date and inefficient. There is effectively only one room/space available to users of the Hall at any one time. It has been the intention of the Parish Council that it should be redeveloped, to provide a greater spread of amenities, providing flexible rooms/spaces to enable events to take place simultaneously. It is now proposed that the redevelopment should incorporate the Community Library and thereby create a Community Centre in the heart of the village. The reasoning being that the population of the Parish has grown substantially and that modern, flexible and user-friendly facilities are required to serve the needs of the growing population. Redevelopment of the Village Hall has been expected for a good number of years and there is now a long-standing expectation in the village that the Parish Council will proceed to such a redevelopment.
21. Designs have been prepared with a view to a planning application in the near future. It would be helpful if the new Local Plan would recognise the need described above for an appropriate new building, which meets planning regulations.

Westwood Park Pavilion

22. A further priority after the community centre is to replace the present pavilion in Westwood Park. The facilities provided are inadequate to meet the needs of the present high usage of the park by football and cricket teams. The pavilion is also environmentally inefficient.

Brownfield Sites: Redevelopment of Station Approach

23. Of the Little Chalfont brownfield sites listed in Bucks Council's register, the one that the local community would probably most like to see improved is Station Approach, the area owned by TfL to the south of the station. At present, it is an unattractive introduction to the village for visitors. The new local plan might refer to the possibility of redevelopment there, including the former vehicle body shop.

Question 4: If you have not already done so, do you aspire to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan? If so, what are your reasons for doing so, or not doing so?

Response:

24. A Neighbourhood Development Plan would be useful for Little Chalfont in order to promote some of the ideas set out above. Other local settlements have produced such plans, and these have proved of practical value. The Parish Council and the Little Chalfont Community Association continue to seek the volunteers needed to embark effectively on development of such a plan. However, even if volunteers were available, it would not make sense to begin preparation of a plan until the outcome of the present appeal for a massive development on land between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane is known, and the consequences of any subsequent detailed proposals on the amenity and infrastructure in the village can be assessed.

We trust that the above provides a sufficient response to your enquiry. However, should you have any questions or require clarification on the above then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr. Vinod Patel
Chairman
Little Chalfont Parish Council

Mr. Roger Funk
Chairman
Little Chalfont Community Association