

LITTLE CHALFONT PARK

Vision Newsletter September 2021

A New Neighbourhood

A planning application is being prepared on behalf of Biddulph (Buckinghamshire) Ltd to bring forward a new neighbourhood at the former golf course site and Homestead Farm, between Lodge Lane and Burtons Lane. Biddulph (Buckinghamshire) Ltd is keen to engage with the local community to inform and help shape the proposals.



Artists' impression of the Community Hub

"I'm not for it precisely, but I'm not in denial, I can see that houses are needed."

Quote from local resident

Community Consultation

As a first step over the summer, around 2,800 newsletters were distributed to local residents and businesses to ask for their views on Little Chalfont and their ideas for the new neighbourhood and its relationship with Little Chalfont and the surrounding area. Comments received were assessed and fed to the design team as they drew up a Vision for the new neighbourhood. The Vision was presented to the community via Zoom on Wednesday 15 September 2021 and this newsletter sets out the key themes from the consultation, with quotes from the community, and the Vision masterplan. The full presentation is available to view and comment on online in video or pdf format on - webpage address below.

Have Your Say on the Vision

You are invited to send us your views on the Vision for Little Chalfont Park by Wednesday 29 September 2021. Visit jtp.co.uk/projects/littlechalfont to view the full presentation and make comments via the link or email the JTP community planning team directly on community@jtp.co.uk or write to us at **Freepost JTP** (no stamp or other address required on the envelope)

Community Views

Whilst many respondents were not in favour of the principle of development, many others saw the potential for the disused, privately owned site to provide a well-designed, "community focussed" neighbourhood set in a high quality, accessible landscape. Ideas included: a mix of homes, including affordable housing and homes for down-sizers and the elderly; a new primary school; a new community building with provision for young people and associated activities including farmers' markets; retained and enhanced landscape with areas for allotments, recreation and re-wilding; and improvements to transport and connectivity with better active travel provision. Ideas also included providing a pedestrian and cycle bridge over the railway linking to Little Chalfont and the countryside.

Next Steps

Having received and assessed the comments on the Vision, the design team will prepare an outline planning application for submission in late October 2021.

Planning Background

The land comprising the former golf course and Homestead Farm is designated as a Green Belt site bounded by existing housing on two sides, an industrial site to the south and is heavily screened by established trees which limit direct views into the site. The site is contiguous to the existing settlement and well located to key services.

The site was previously included in the now withdrawn Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan, with the site proposed for allocation for residential housing by Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils. The allocation included a much larger area of land than is proposed in this consultation. The assessment work undertaken by the Council indicated that the site makes a limited contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt and was the lowest scoring site in Chiltern District in respect of contribution to Green Belt purposes.

Key Themes

The following Key Themes are a summary of comments received through the summer engagement process. All quotes are from the community. Key Themes continue on the back page.

Principle of Development

A variety of views were received for and against development. Many respondents did not support the development of the site in principle, for three key reasons, its role as a "green lung", its current green belt designation and the current absence of a Local Plan. This was not a consensus view however, as many others recognised that a well-designed scheme, with quality homes of mixed tenure, community facilities, appropriate infrastructure and significant, accessible green space would be beneficial to Little Chalfont. Most people conversed with face to face recognised the need for housing and were aware that the currently unused former golf course is in private ownership and acknowledged that development could give the opportunity to provide new assets for the community.

"There's a fear that permitting this site to be developed will be the thin end of the wedge."

"I personally feel that the land shouldn't be lying there un-used, but I admit that many people don't think like me."

Key Themes continue on the back page.

LITTLE CHALFONT PARK

Illustrative Masterplan and Vignette

“People need houses, they need to live somewhere, we can’t just stand still ... as long as it’s done well!”
Quote from local resident



Illustrative Masterplan

Key

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Access from Burtons Lane | 6 One form entry primary school | 12 Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) |
| 2 Access from Lodge Lane | 7 Public square / community building with shop, café and GP drop-in | 13 Community allotments and growing spaces |
| 3 Re-wilding area to support biodiversity enhancement | 8 Retirement living | 14 Bespoke sports/BMX pump track |
| 4 Preserved and protected ancient woodland and existing woodlands | 9 Care home | 15 Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) System including ponds |
| 5 Valley Park | 10 High quality play areas | 16 Pedestrian / cycle paths and emergency access only |
| | 11 Community orchards | |



Artists' impression of the Valley Park with BMX track

The Vision for Little Chalfont Park includes:

- Up to 380 homes including custom/self build homes
- 40% affordable homes
- One form entry primary school
- Retirement living (100 homes)
- Care home
- Community building including shop, café and drop-in GP surgery
- Over 50% of the site retained as landscape
- Protection of existing woodlands
- Sensitive green edges to existing homes
- New public open space including community orchards, play areas, allotments and sports
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems including ponds
- Pedestrian/cycle paths through the site and connections with public footpaths towards the AONB
- Car parking in accordance with latest Council standards

LITTLE CHALFONT PARK

Key Themes (continued)

Image and Identity

Little Chalfont is a popular place to live for a variety of reasons, including access to countryside, good transport connections and local schools. Some residents, many of whom have lived in Little Chalfont for decades, felt that there has already been more than enough infill development over the years. As is the case in much of the south east, there is great housing pressure and the cost makes it difficult for many, including the younger generation to find suitable, decent homes. Whilst some residents felt the proposed scheme would detrimentally change the character of Little Chalfont, others pointed out that change happens, and a more balanced perspective is needed to accept the benefits that could be brought by a well designed development.

"If you flood the village with housing it will lose its charm!"

"Every place is different, you can't have one size fits all, places need to adapt and change ... it's all about the balance."

Housing Need and Affordability

There is an obvious opinion divide between those who first purchased their homes in Little Chalfont many years ago and those who have been priced out of the area they were born in. There is an obvious local shortage of well-designed smaller properties with gardens for those who wish to down-size and a lack of homes that local people now, and in the future, can afford to buy. Parents who wish to see their children remain nearby acknowledge the need for more housing, the site was seen by some as ideal for an increase in "gentle density" development, which could offer a mix of housing sizes and tenure. The provision of affordable homes is key to people supporting development on the site.

"I want my children to be able to afford to stay living in the area – so there is a need for more housing, but it must be affordable."

"I've been looking everywhere for somewhere smaller to downsize to – but there's nothing like this available in the area."

Schools, Amenities and Infrastructure

Little Chalfont has expanded over recent years, and there is a strong perception that services, including schools, medical services, utilities, parking, etc. are already stretched and more homes would increase pressure further. There is concern that development will add traffic to roads that are already busy at peak times, and many felt that access to the site would need significant improvement. For those residents who accept the need for new homes, their principal concern relates to the local amenities and infrastructure that would need to be improved to support more residents. In particular, a new school on the site would be required and this could provide a useful shared local amenity for other activities. *(Please note: As part of the planning process, the developer will contribute millions of pounds to the Council, to help fund local infrastructure improvements.)*

"The schools in the area are full!"

"I'm not against development, as long as it comes with infrastructure - you can't just have housing!"

Green Landscape and Environment

Some respondents wanted the site returned exclusively to landscape uses such as a nature park, sports fields, farmland or rewilded. Others who supported new housing, felt that "green" should be key to the character of any residential scheme, with trees and woodland retained and more trees planted. Several people mentioned the idea of a water body, to attract wildlife. Pathways should connect with Little Chalfont and the countryside and provide places to walk dogs, cycle and stroll in a green and natural environment. There could be spaces for outdoor exercise, a trim trail, even a tree house in the woods. Local involvement in the management and maintenance of community facilities and open space would be important.

"There should be as much green as possible, preferably a park, with walking paths and some kind of water feature or lake."

Community Focussed

Supporters of development wanted it to be sensitive to its surroundings, guided by design codes to ensure quality and provide amenities to complement those currently available in Little Chalfont and create a 'social focus'. Discussions with teenagers, who felt underprovided for; resulted in a "wish list" of amenities that they would love to see and key to this was a new Community Centre, providing young people with an inside venue. Westwood Park, the village green and the nature park are well used by children as outside spaces, but there are limited venues when the weather is bad. The Village Hall is seen as a place for parties and some community activities, but not as a place to "hang out". Both young and older residents aspired for a space where people could meet and socialise, with a cafe, toilets, with the potential for live performance, a place for local bands to play and films to be screened. Other ideas included a skate park / BMX track. It was also suggested that a community centre in this location could become home to weekly farmers' markets and arts & crafts / bric-a-brac markets etc.

"We need something for everyone, especially the kids."

"Proper community facilities can provide a social focus, so you need a place to bring people together... you've got to get people talking to each other."

Getting Around

Little Chalfont has excellent public transport connections - particularly by train, although the service can sometimes be unreliable. The settlement suffers from rat running, through traffic and local congestion at peak times. There was concern that required improvements to Lodge Lane to provide for vehicular access could alter its essentially rural character on the edge of the AONB. Also, any change to junctions to ameliorate traffic along the A404 could be impractical. To encourage people out of their cars for more local journeys, respondents felt that the bus service needs to be improved, likewise better provision of safe walking and cycle paths is needed to the centre and train station. A new non-vehicular bridge over the railway at the north-eastern corner of the site was suggested to provide residents with an easy means of access to the centre, without adding traffic to the local roads.

"Everyone drives round here!"

"You can live here without driving but the bus service needs to be improved - and both the Tube and Chiltern Railways can be unreliable."

Post-Covid Changes

Discussions with members of the local community inevitably referred to the changes that have taken place due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and how these have affected the way people live now and might live in future. Work patterns have changed, and for some people employment prospects have become more limited, other may work from home more and require more local support services. The reduction in people commuting has added traffic to local roads during the day, although perhaps fewer cars at peak times at the start and end of the day. Open space has become more critical for health and wellbeing. The Little Chalfont Park development provides the opportunity for these issues to be considered and responded to in the design of buildings, streets and landscaped spaces and activities held there.

"After Covid there'll be a need to re-invent work and markets are one way for people to make money by selling things. Try running it one day a week to see if it catches on, then maybe twice."

"Covid has made everyone want outside space and a garden - a balcony is not enough."