

SOUTH BUCKS AND CHILTERN LOCAL PLAN TO 2036

BETJEMAN PARK - HP6 6JQ

A proposal to address requirements for Housing and Leisure needs

Overview

There is a need for a wide range of improved Community facilities for Sport, Leisure and Culture to accommodate a range of users; but with land values so high where can these have any chance of being sited? Alongside this we need to find suitable sites for housing.

Please refer to the Illustrative Plan which shows an area adjacent to the Bell Lane residential area for specialist sport facilities and new housing to be sited between the railway and the public footpath.

South Bucks and Chiltern Districts have 49 outdoor cricket pitches, many based on Commons and Village Greens, usually on small sites with a basic pavilion and limited practice facilities, which curbs the appeal for attracting new members.

A comprehensive Cricket facility provides sporting action from 6 years old to over 70's, for youth, senior and ladies sides. With no such building in Bucks (the nearest specific centres being in Eversley, Hants and Redbourn, Herts) there is demand in the area for an Indoor Cricket Hall for both indoor league matches and cricket nets. If required, it can also be designed to accommodate other indoor sports.

Other local groups are seeking improved facilities, so extending from a new pavilion, cricket school and nets will be indoor halls to provide for Dance and Raans Gymnastics Club.

The Proposal

Some areas of Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are likely to be released to accommodate the 15,100 residential units required in the Plan Period to 2036, so as a community we have to debate which should be kept and to choose the least attractive to be built on. The proposed site is currently zoned Green Belt but there is no other such site in the South Bucks and Chiltern area backing on to a railway, with high warehousing behind which would lend itself so readily for affordable housing.

The site can be considered for two balanced uses:

- **A new cricket ground**

This will provide a permanent buffer of "green separation" between Little Chalfont and Amersham; and adjacent to this across from the existing warehousing, new buildings for Sports and Leisure can combine to provide a hub of excellence in South Bucks and Chiltern, improving its attraction as an area to live in. A carefully designed layout providing a central pavilion reception area would be sustainable by offering an attractive setting for the social side of all the partner clubs, with areas for parents to meet when their children are participating.
- **Community housing for local people who work locally**

The remaining land from the access in Raans Road up to the railway line clearly suits community housing for local people who work locally. It is little more than scrub land, and as an example it is not overlooked in a valley setting as other sites proposed to be built on, such as those around Old Amersham.

Accessibility

The main access is from Raans Road, where the capacity of the bridge will be addressed. Little Chalfont is slightly nearer than Amersham Station.

A cycle route can be incorporated alongside to provide a safer alternative route between Amersham and Little Chalfont away from the busy main A404 road. Full landscaping will be required, with ample scope for tree planting to complete a "Village Green" setting for the cricket ground.

Partners

Raans Gymnastics Club has c.300 members largely in the age range of 4 to 18 years. They are limited as they have no permanent base, and have to travel to Milton Keynes for "home" competitions. A large hall with specialised gymnastic fittings and equipment will allow them to offer comprehensive facilities that simply cannot be provided in shared space. They have had members who have represented their country, but cannot offer all disciplines unless they have a purpose built building.

We have also had meetings with a member of the British Dance Council (who is a 6 times UK and British Champion). Representing Amateurs in the O 35's she sees a unique opportunity to create a centre of excellence which connects all generations and ability levels through dance. Despite the continuing popularity of Strictly Come Dancing there are nationwide precious few quality facilities for ballroom dancing. A new purpose designed building including a sprung floor and space for socialising would attract dancers of all levels from beginner's classes to the highest national standard. A quality environment where even the less sporty can enjoy a popular activity until well into their 80's and attract those wishing to dance competitively. Most well equipped facilities are now abroad and the District would therefore stand out nationally.

A smaller community building of c.180 sqm can be used say by a playgroup during daytime hours, and would suit the likes of The Amersham Band for a permanent home.

Context

The larger halls proposed would take up the size of c 6 tennis courts, against the established height backdrop of the existing warehouse buildings across the railway line.

Summary

The overall proposal focuses on key users in the community who have little prospect of ever getting facilities to suit their specific needs. Schools no longer offer so many activities outside their core curriculum, and this centre will offer an introduction to sport, music and dance for many youngsters.

This mixed use scheme offers much for local people seeking affordable homes, along with a unique chance to deliver a ground breaking facility for the South Bucks and Chiltern area.

Please consider the benefits of this to the wider community.

Community Sports Hub & Affordable Housing - South Bucks and Chiltern Districts

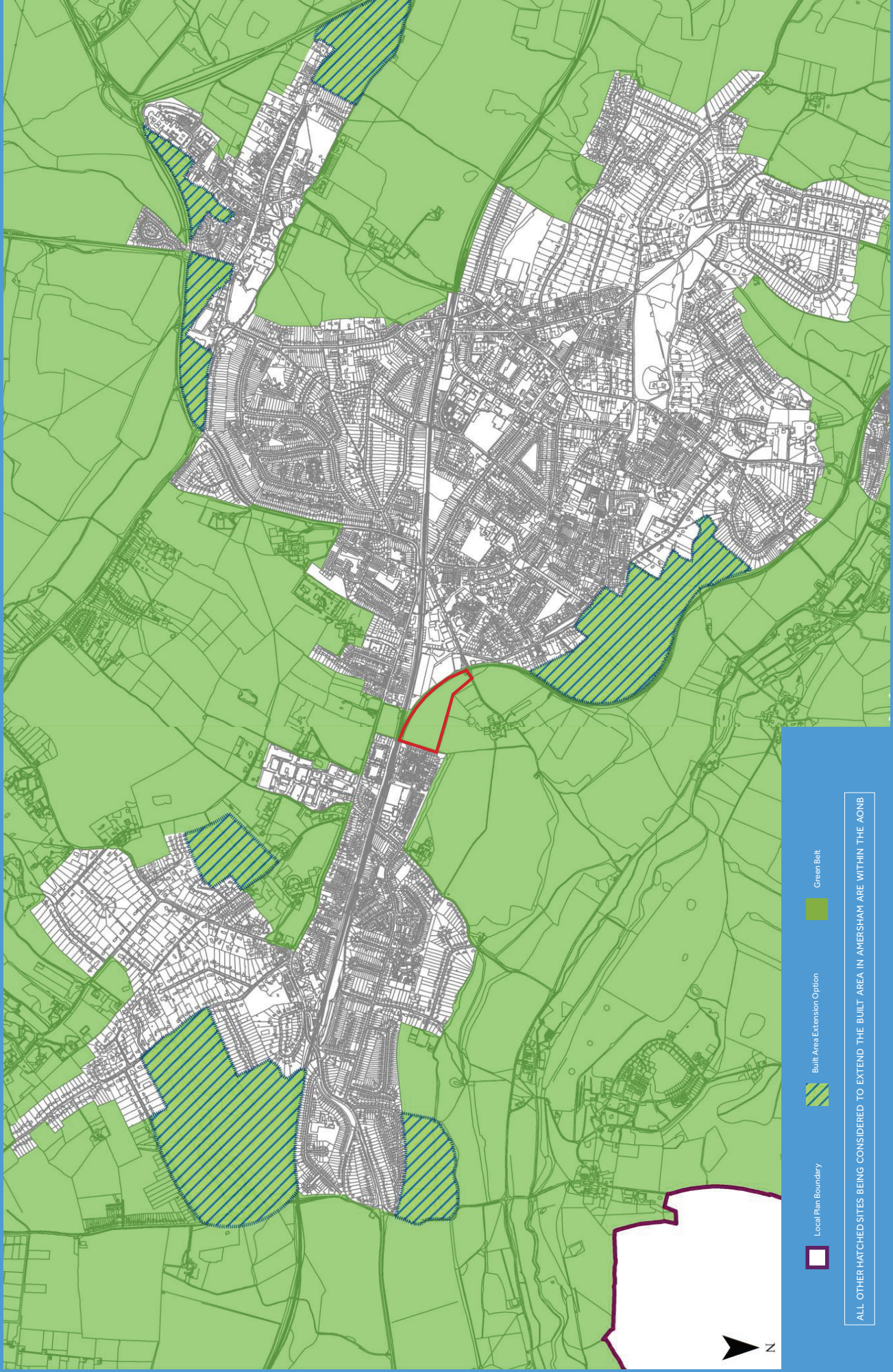


CONCEPT

- Residential
- Industrial
- Cricket Ground
- Car Park
- Sports Hub



Community Sports Hub & Affordable Housing - South Bucks and Chiltern Districts



Green Belt

Built Area Extension Option

Local Plan Boundary

ALL OTHER HATCHED SITES BEING CONSIDERED TO EXTEND THE BUILT AREA IN AMERSHAM ARE WITHIN THE AONB