

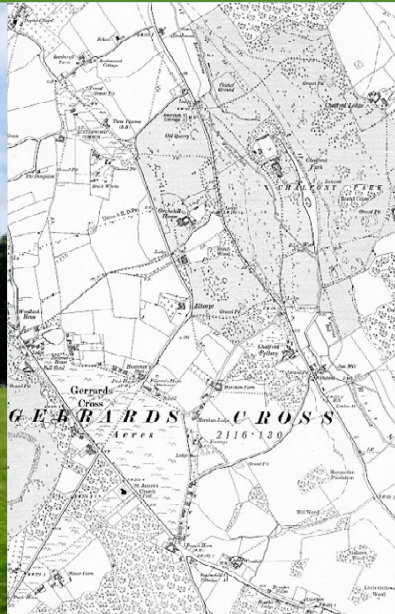


# Gerrards Cross Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2017 - 2040

Pre-Submission Regulation 14

Executive Summary

July 2023



## Welcome to our Neighbourhood Plan

This plan has been produced on behalf of our community by a team of local residents. We have consulted widely with the community in a number of different settings in order to ensure that the plan meets our needs. We have spoken with older people, younger people, families, and people from surrounding areas in order to gain as many different views as possible about how our town should develop. We hope that you will take the time to read this summary and also the full document, but most importantly that you will let us know what you think. This plan belongs to the town and your feedback is important. The Neighbourhood Plan extends to over 60 pages and over 17,000 words. This summary can serve only to give a taster of what is included. We want it to show you the areas covered by the plan but also for it to encourage you to read the full document, to ask any questions you may have about its content, and to give feedback as you feel appropriate.

## What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

On 22nd Sept 2017, Gerrards Cross Town Council was granted approval to start the process of preparing a neighbourhood plan.

The purpose of the neighbourhood plan is to sit alongside the future Buckinghamshire Local Plan to guide development within the parish and provide direction to any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within the parish. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Gerrards Cross (GX),

its residents, businesses and community groups.

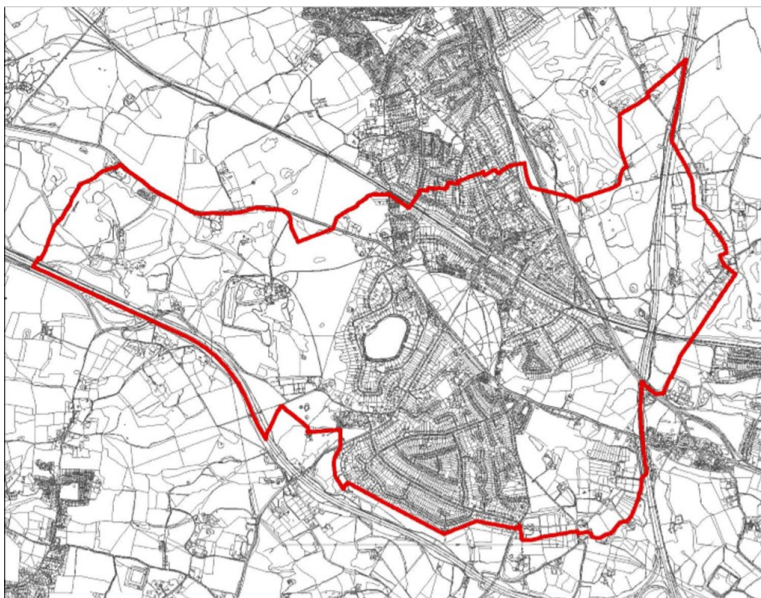
The GX Neighbourhood Plan has been developed by volunteers from the parish to: influence any development as allocated by Bucks Local Plan, according to the wishes of the community; ensure that development is sympathetic to, and improves the look and feel of the parish; protect the area's environment and biodiversity, thus maintaining the essential character of GX and provide the parish with the opportunity to access 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy to improve local facilities.

## Scope of the Plan

Our policies have to be written in the context of the planning system and therefore have to either propose changes to land-use (i.e. be proactive) or provide a set of policies against which any planning applications which are submitted can be determined by Buckinghamshire Council as the local planning authority (i.e. reactive). In order to add something to what the policies set out in national guidance and the Buckinghamshire Local Plan already say, or the protections they provide, our policies also need to provide local detail. Therefore, the policies of our neighbourhood plan will be used

alongside these other planning policies and guidance by those proposing development and those making decisions on planning applications.

From consultation and other evidence we have developed 18 objectives under 5 themes which provide the “direction of travel” for the plan and the basis for our objectives, which suggest how we will meet those aims between now and 2040. These objectives are set out in the full document and provide the basis for the planning policies we have developed.



**Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan Area**



# GXplan

*Your Town Your Voice*

## Challenges for Gerrards Cross

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address as far as possible the challenges that face the community of Gerrards Cross town. In summary, these challenges are:

- ◆ To ensure that the infrastructure of Gerrards Cross is sufficient to address the cumulative impacts of the growth in population, which will arise through previously permitted residential developments. In particular, this relates to the need for a GP surgery, leisure facilities and parking / traffic and highways provision
- ◆ Ensuring the community continues to have good access to the surrounding countryside and green belt
- ◆ The growing volume of traffic in the town centre and the need for adequate parking to address the needs of commuters
- ◆ The need to protect recreational areas and green spaces of value to the community, to prevent the urbanisation of Gerrards Cross
- ◆ The need to create new recreational areas and green spaces
- ◆ To bring the vacant sites and buildings within the town back into positive use, so helping to retain the heritage and heart of the town
- ◆ For Gerrards Cross town centre to continue to be a focal point for the community and a high-quality destination for shopping and leisure, with movement possible by a range of modes, not just the car
- ◆ Lack of bus services, particularly in the evenings

## Our Vision

In 2040 Gerrards Cross has conserved, protected and enhanced the quality of life within the town, which is enjoyed and cherished by those who live and work here. The town now has a growing community, and by having positively planned through our Neighbourhood Plan for the increase in the number of new homes, we have attracted new people who want to live and work here and contribute positively to the culture and ethos of the town. By having preserved what is best about Gerrards Cross i.e. its heritage, eclectic mix of housing and its unique culture and community spirit, we have made Gerrards Cross a great place to live, work and play.

Through our Neighbourhood Plan for the town, we have successfully addressed the five main themes outlined in it and we now have:

- A thriving local economy, with new shops and businesses providing a wide range of retail, restaurants and entertainment facilities to both residents and visitors.
- The protection of the character of the town centre has led to an increase in the number of visitors coming to the town with significant improvements to the local economy.
- New development, which has been designed sympathetically in size, scale and character, to be in keeping with existing buildings and which has contributed towards the sustainability of Gerrards Cross. This has encouraged new people to move into Gerrards Cross, who have contributed to the maintenance of the vibrancy and economy of the town.
- A safe community where people feel comfortable using the local facilities at all times of day or night due to measures in place to improve traffic management and good community policing. New walkways and cycle paths have been introduced creating a safer pedestrian environment. The new commuter parking facilities at the station have encouraged people to use this mode of public transport rather than their cars. This has reduced congestion and encouraged people to use the town centre as a place to stop and walk around.
- Fast electric charging points are available throughout the town which has helped promote active travel.
- A new GP Surgery in Gerrards Cross which has improved health & well-being for all the community by meeting their primary healthcare needs, whilst also reducing the need to travel to local villages and towns for GP provision.
- A town with a strong community spirit integrating well with new residents, and opportunities for all to live a fulfilling, healthy and safe life.

# The Policies

## Town Centre

**Objective 1:** Resist the re-use of retail premises for residential development where appropriate

**Policy 1: Re-use of retail premises**

- a. Development proposals which will enable the retention of existing commercial services (Class E) within the existing settlement boundary will be strongly supported.
- b. Where premises meet the criteria at 'a' above, applications for the conversion of the ground floor existing retails and commercial premises to residential dwellings will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the premises are no longer required and/or that there is no other viable use, following the active marketing of the property for a minimum of 6 months.
- c. Where it is proven that commercial premises are no longer viable, schemes which incorporate the sympathetic reuse of buildings and are informed by the historic character of these buildings will be supported, subject to other policies within this Plan.

**Objective 2:** Re-use or redevelop empty premises where possible

**Policy 2: Small scale business development**

- a. Development proposals will be supported that will enable the expansion and retention of existing local businesses.
- b. Support will also be given to development proposals for the establishment of new businesses that diversify and strengthen the local economy without significantly adversely affecting the distinctive character of the community or creating significant additional traffic.
- c. Applications will be particularly encouraged if they offer employment opportunities to local people. In particular, strong support will be given to development proposals that provide space for small start-up businesses.

**Objective 3:** Encourage and support new businesses and retail opportunities in order to maintain the vibrant feel of a thriving town centre that is the hub of the local community.

**Policy 3: New businesses and retail support**

Planning permission for new business and retail development will be supported within the town centre as defined in F1 provided it can be demonstrated it is in accordance with Policy 17 (**Protection of Historic Environment**), and that:

- a. the scheme has satisfactory access and servicing arrangements,
- b. the design will enhance the visual appearance of the town centre,
- c. it is supported by an appropriate level of car and cycle parking and
- d. any harm to local amenity can be mitigated.

Outside the defined town centre, retail development will be considered if it serves local or specialist needs, and the location is demonstrated to be appropriate in terms of traffic, access, servicing, cycle and car parking and amenity.

*Maps and appendices can be found at [www.GXPlan.co.uk](http://www.GXPlan.co.uk)*

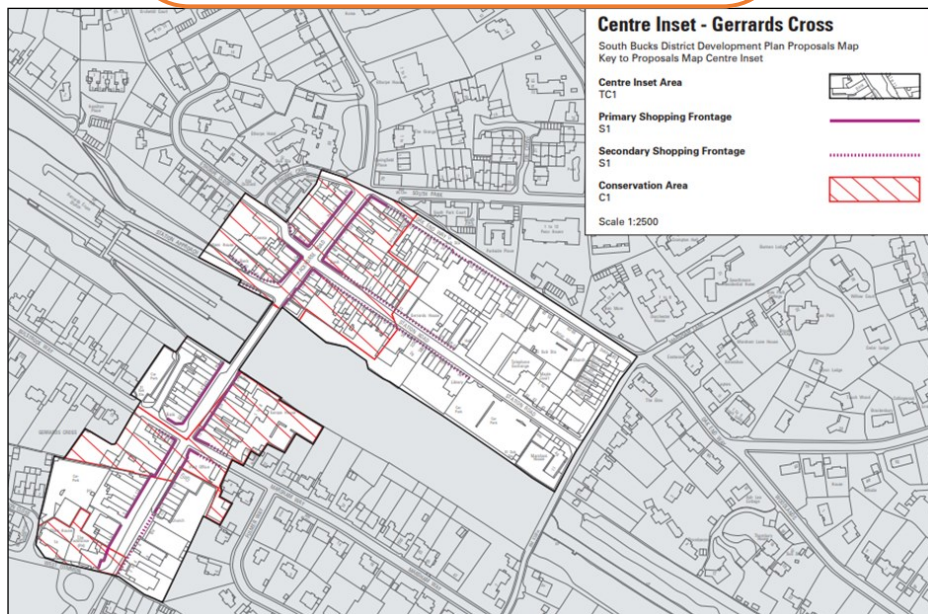


Fig F1 Core Retail Area as per [South Bucks Plan](#)

**Objective 4** To allocate a site for future development in Gerrard Cross to meet the identified needs of the community

**Policy 4** *Orchehill Rise Car Park*

- a. This site shall provide 7 dwellings along with associated open space in the area identified on the Proposals Map 4
- b. Any development must ensure appropriate landscaping is provided to minimise the landscape and visual effects of development.
- c. This site should provide a minimum of 35% - 40% of housing as two or three bed houses unless evidence through a local needs housing survey or an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment is produced at the time of application that market need is different.
- d. Design of any development should use the Chiltern and South Bucks Character Study 2017 (*or the most up-to-date version of the document*) to guide proposals. The maximum building height is not expected to exceed the surrounding buildings.
- e. Site access will be from Orchehill Rise as marked on the proposals map (this is subject to discussions with highways authority and South Bucks)
- f. Dwellings will be expected to meet the highest possible standards of construction, Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) standards or equivalent.
- g. Developers will be expected to investigate any potential contamination onsite and ensure appropriate remediation prior to development if necessary.
- h. To protect the Burnham Beeches from an increase in recreational pressure, developers of new housing development will need to be in compliance with the adopted Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMM), which sets out a 500m development exclusion zone and a 500m – 6.5km SAMM mitigation zone.
- i. Developers of housing in the mitigation zone will be required to make financial contributions towards SAMM projects in line with the tariffs identified in the strategy (subject to yearly adjustments for inflation and changes in housing delivery rates)



**Orchehill  
Rise Car  
Park site**



**Objective 5:** Ensure future housing is developed sympathetically and in character to the existing built environment of Gerrards Cross

**Policy 5: General design of residential development**

Proposals for residential development and conversions within the settlement boundary, will be expected to be in general compliance with the Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study 2017 (or the most up-to-date version of the document), unless protections for the Historic Environment set out in other policies of the statutory development plan would be compromised. In particular, proposals will need to comply with the following specific local characteristics, and they must:

- a. be proportionate to the scale, layout and character of surrounding buildings,
- b. use external materials that complement the existing external materials in the area,
- c. provide adequate storage for bins and recycling,
- d. have a varied appearance.
- e. provide good pedestrian and cycle connections with the town and countryside,
- f. provide high quality boundary treatment,
- g. provide appropriate cycle storage facilities,
- h. where appropriate and possible, traditional, or vernacular style buildings will be encouraged to naturally follow this local distinctiveness through their siting, and the use of local materials and building styles,
- i. any development seeking to depart from the intentions of this policy must be justified and must be sympathetic to its surroundings.

In addition, dwellings will be expected to meet the highest possible standards of construction, Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) standards or equivalent.

**Objective 6:** Provide a housing mix that meets the needs of the community including the provision of two and three bed properties

**Policy 6: Housing Mix**

- a. Proposals for ten dwellings or more should demonstrate how they meet the requirement to increase the proportion of modest family homes in the Neighbourhood Area. Unless viability, housing needs or other material considerations show a robust justification for a different mix, at least 40% of dwellings in new developments should have two or three bedrooms.
- b. The provision of one / two-bedroom dwellings should not normally be provided through flats or apartments unless it can be shown, with credible evidence, that the market need is different.
- c. An alternative dwelling mix will only be permitted where new evidence through local needs housing surveys or updated SHMA evidence is brought forward, which clearly demonstrates the need for a different mix.

**Objective 7:** Where appropriate and possible, retain and redevelop existing buildings

**Policy 7: Existing Buildings**

The re-use, conversion, and adaptation of permanent, structurally sound, buildings of substantial construction to meet the objectively assessed Housing Needs Assessment, which would lead to an enhancement of the character of the area and will be supported subject to:

- a. the proposed use being appropriate to its location.
- b. the conversion and / or adaptation works proposed respecting the local character of the surrounding buildings and local area.
- c. the local highway network being capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed new use and adequate car parking being provided within the site.

***Maps and appendices can be found at  
[www.GXPlan.co.uk](http://www.GXPlan.co.uk)***

**Objective 8:** Ensure that previously developed land, particularly where vacant, derelict or underused, is prioritised for development over greenfield sites.

**Policy 8: Brownfield Land**

- a. Priority should be given to the development of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ over ‘greenfield’ land unless evidence clearly demonstrates this is not a viable option.
- b. Support will be given to the re-use of previously developed or ‘brownfield’ land within the settlement policy boundary.

**Objective 9:** Encourage greater local participation in community initiatives by discouraging gated developments

**Policy 9: Lifetime neighbourhoods and security**

- a. The location, design and layout of new housing development will be required to contribute towards the creation of “lifetime neighbourhoods” and show inclusive design, connectivity and permeability.
- b. In particular, all new dwellings should be safe and secure for everyone in line with the entry requirements of Part Q of the Building Regulations and the design principles of “Secured by Design Homes 2023”(or the most up-to-date version of the document). Gated developments will be discouraged.

## Traffic and Transport

**Objective 10:** Manage the growing volume of traffic

**Policy 10: Highway Improvements**

- a. Proposals to improve the flow of traffic and pedestrian safety on highways and at key junctions in the Neighbourhood Plan area will be strongly supported, subject to demonstrable, positive engagement with the community at the earliest stage. This is particularly the case in respect of highways and junctions serving Gerrards Cross Town Centre.
- b. New development that results in an increase in traffic generation will need to provide a strategy to mitigate traffic impacts and ensure the free and safe flow of traffic and the safety of pedestrians and cycle users.

**Objective 11:** Provide parking for commuters, shoppers and residents

**Policy 11: Off-street parking**

- a. Where at all possible, these should be in curtilage or adjacent to the house, not at a separate location away from the dwellings.
- b. On housing developments of 10 or more dwellings allocated visitor car parking should be provided on site to an additional 20% of the figure calculated for the development based on the minimum car parking standards.
- c. Developments where parking will be expected to be 'on road' will not be supported.
- d. Proposals for all new homes to be built in Gerrards Cross should provide off-street parking spaces to the following minimum standards:

dwellings	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms	5+ bedrooms
10 & below	1	2	2	3	3
Above 10	1.5	2	2	2.5	3

*Maps and appendices can be found at  
[www.GXPlan.co.uk](http://www.GXPlan.co.uk)*

**Objective 11:** Provide parking for commuters, shoppers and residents

**Policy 12: Retention of public car parking**

With the exception of allocated site at Orchehill Rise, change of use of existing public car parking will not be permitted unless equivalent and equally accessible parking can be provided as a replacement. This includes, but is not limited to the following locations:

Packhorse Road,  
Bulstrode Way,  
Station Road

Planning applications to increase the amount of public parking in Gerrards Cross will also be supported (subject to other policies within the plan).

**Objective 12:** Provide more cycle routes and footpaths in order to cut the volume of traffic and promote a healthy lifestyle

**Policy 13: Pedestrian access and walkway routes**

- a. To ensure that residents can walk safely to the town centre, public transport facilities, schools and other important facilities serving Gerrards Cross town, all new developments should ensure safe pedestrian access to link up with existing footways that, in turn, directly serve the Walkway Routes shown on the Appendix H or any other Walkway Routes subsequently identified.
- b. Proposals to enhance the identified Walkway Routes and any other Walkway Routes that are subsequently identified will be strongly supported.
- c. Developments will be expected to:
  - make financial contributions toward the enhancement of these Walkway Routes; and
  - not have an unacceptable impact on Walkway Routes and provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on the safety and flow of pedestrian access.

## Environment and Character

**Objective 13:** Where not deemed suitable for release to development, preserve the existing Green Belt around the town

**Policy 14: Green Belt, safe guarded land and Gerrards Cross Settlement Boundary**

- a. The settlement boundary of Gerrards Cross Town is shown on the Figures F2. Development or redevelopment will be permitted within the settlement boundary subject to the other policies in this plan and those in the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan.
- b. Outside the settlement boundary within the Safeguarded Land, only development that is not prejudicial to the potential future use of this land to meet Gerrards Cross' longer term development needs will be acceptable.
- c. Within the Green Belt, development should comply with Policies 5 (General design of residential development) and 6 (Housing Mix) in this plan, National Policy and South Bucks Core Strategy.

**Objective 14:** Preserve and protect woodlands, commons and green open spaces that are important to the community of Gerrards Cross.

**Policy 15: Protection and enhancement of Local Green Space**

The following areas, as shown on green space maps A/B/C (Appendix D), are recognised as important to the local community and as such are designated as Local Green Spaces:

- GS1 St Marys School playing/sports fields
- GS2 Oval Way central island
- GS3 St James Church Cemetery
- GS4 Gerrards Cross C of E School playing/sports fields
- GS5 Gerrards Cross Cricket & Sports Club
- GS6 Gaviots Green
- GS7 Gaviots Close
- GS8 Memorial Centre Allotments
- GS9 Memorial Centre Tennis Courts
- GS10 Memorial Centre Green area
- GS11 Memorial Centre War Memorial

Development on the designated Local Green Spaces will only be permitted in very special circumstances.

*Maps and appendices can be found at  
[www.GXPlan.co.uk](http://www.GXPlan.co.uk)*

**Objective 15:** Ensure landscaping and planting schemes where possible are proposed and implemented within all the new developments.

**Policy 16: Trees and Landscape**

- a. Any development that would result in the loss of, or the deterioration in the quality of an important natural feature(s), including protected trees and hedgerows will not normally be permitted.

In exceptional circumstances where the benefit of development is considered to outweigh the benefit of preserving natural features, development will be permitted subject to adequate compensatory provision being made. The retention of trees, hedgerows and other natural features in situ will always be preferable. Where the loss of such features is unavoidable, replacement provision should be of a commensurate value to that which is lost.

*(Continued on following page)*

b. Appropriate landscaping schemes to mitigate against the landscape impact of and complement the design of new development will be required, where appropriate. Conditions and/or planning obligations will be used to secure landscaping schemes and the replacement of trees, hedgerows or other natural features or their protection during the course of development.

**Objective 16:** Preserve the heritage and historic character of Gerrards Cross

**Policy 17: Protection of Historic Environment**

Any designated historic heritage assets in the Parish and their settings, both above and below ground, will be conserved or enhanced for their historic and architectural significance and their importance to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place. In particular, these include, but are not limited to:

- Bulstrode Camp Iron Age hillfort
- Bulstrode Park
- Gerrards Cross Common
- Gerrards Cross Memorial Building

Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage assets.

A full list of historical assets can be found at Appendix F

**Objective 17:** To maintain a strategic gap between Gerrards Cross and surrounding areas

**Policy 18: Strategic Gaps**

The Neighbourhood Plan designates a Strategic Gap, as shown on the Maps in Appendix G, at:

- Gerrards Cross to Beaconsfield (map I)
- Gerrards Cross to Chalfont St Peter (map II)
- Gerrards Cross to Higher Denham (map III)
- Gerrards Cross to Tatling End (map IV)

Development proposals within the Strategic Gaps that will lead to the visual coalescence or will damage the integrity and distinctive identity of the adjoining settlements will not be supported.

This summary gives brief details of the Neighbourhood Plan. We encourage you to read the full document which is available, along with all supporting documents on the following websites:

<https://www.gxplan.co.uk>

<https://www.gerrardscross.gov.uk>

Paper versions of the full Neighbourhood Plan are available from the Town Council offices and there is a reference copy at Gerrards Cross Library but it is over 60 pages so please save paper and cost and view digitally if you can.

Local feedback is essential, please comment via:

- contact form on our website: [gxplan.co.uk](https://www.gxplan.co.uk)
- email: [gxnpdg@btinternet.com](mailto:gxnpdg@btinternet.com)
- <https://www.Surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GXPlan>
- Scanning the QR code below
- paper feedback form - obtain from and return to Town Council Offices.



## What Happens Next?

There is a strict process which dictates the production of a Neighbourhood Plan and ensures that the final result represents the true wishes of the community. The Formal Consultation Period for the Plan will run from **Monday 3rd July to Sunday 27 August 2023**.

After this period we collate all your comments and make any necessary changes. The Plan is then submitted to Buckinghamshire Council who will conduct their own consultation and appoint an independent examiner. This ensures there are no areas of the plan which contravene other local or national policies that would prevent its implementation.

Following examination Buckinghamshire Council conduct a local referendum allowing the community a final opportunity to either accept or reject the plan.

If the plan is accepted it remains in force until 2040 and will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure it remains current and up-to-date.