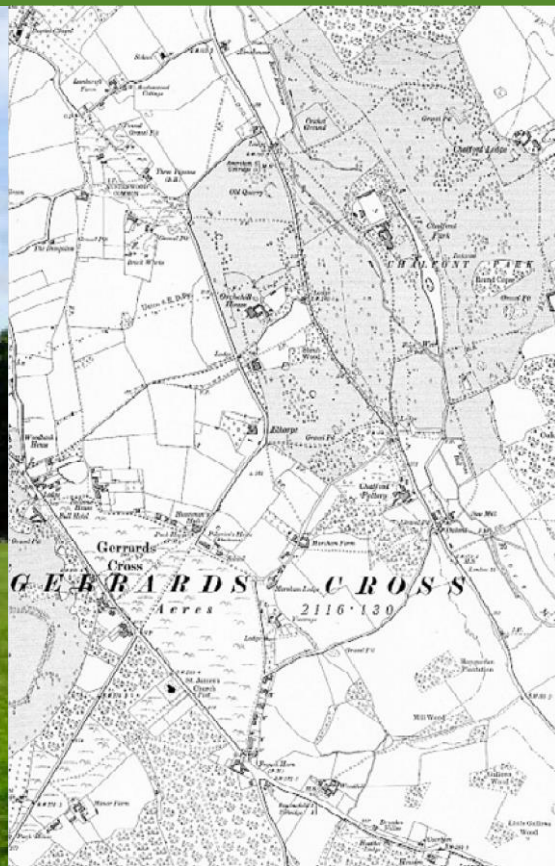


Gerrards Cross Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2017 - 2040

Submission draft
December 2023



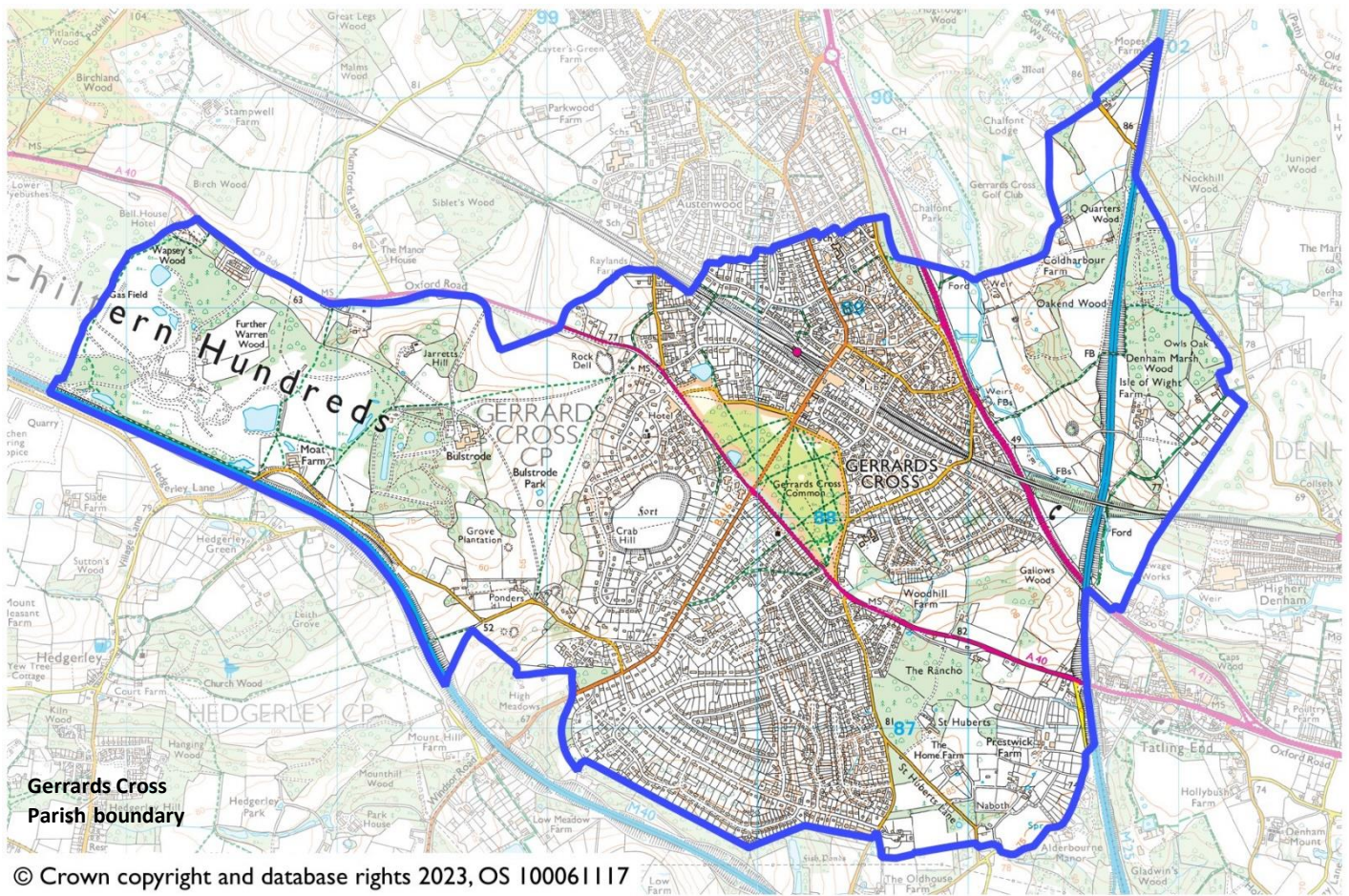
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1 Introduction

- a. This document represents the Neighbourhood Plan for Gerrards Cross Parish. It represents one part of the development plan for the parish over the period 2017 to 2040, the other part being the emerging Buckinghamshire Local District Plan and the adopted South Bucks Local Plan (Adopted Mar 1999) and South Bucks Core Strategy (Adopted Feb 2011). The South Bucks adopted documents will be replaced by the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan during the life of the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood.
- b. South Bucks District Council, as the (then) local planning authority, designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of the Gerrards Cross Parish on 22nd September 2016 to enable Gerrards Cross Town Council to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has been prepared by the community through the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (GXNPSG).
- c. The Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan (referred to hereafter as the Plan or GXNP) is being prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). The GXNPSG has prepared the plan to establish a vision for the future of the parish and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning land use and development change over the plan period 2017 to 2040. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the parish and provide guidance 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, its residents, businesses, and community groups.
 - The Government's intention in introducing Neighbourhood Planning is to enable communities to:
 - choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built
 - have their say on what those new buildings should look like
 - grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead.
- d. Each section of the plan covers a different topic. These headings are:
 - Town Centre
 - Housing
 - Transport and Movement
 - Environment
 - Community Health and Leisure
- e. Under each heading there is the justification for the policies presented which explains what the plan is seeking to achieve. The policies themselves are presented in coloured boxes, alongside the development plan and national guidance, against which planning applications will be assessed. It is advisable that, in order to understand the full context for any individual policy, it is read in conjunction with the supporting text.
- f. The map overleaf shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, which is the same as with the boundary of Gerrards Cross Parish.
- g. The GXNPSG has prepared the Plan to provide a vision for the future of the town. It sets out clear policies and objectives to realise these visions through planning and controlling land use and development change over the Plan period 2017 to 2040.
- h. These policies accord with higher level planning policy, principally the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, updated Sept 2023) and the existing South Bucks Local Plan (*Adopted March*

1999) and the South Bucks Core Strategy Development Plan (*adopted February 2011*), as required by the Localism Act.



- i. The Plan is a living document. It gives the community of Gerrards Cross the opportunity to take some control over how the town will evolve over the next 17 years, by introducing policies that are specific to Gerrards Cross and supplement and expand upon the policies contained in the emerging Buckinghamshire Local Plan.
- j. Although deciding where possible future housing could come forward is an important part of the Plan, the community engagement and local research undertaken offers the opportunity to investigate a wider range of issues and opportunities, including:
 - How to protect retail and business areas to support the local economy
 - How to help determine where housing should be built for the period up to 2040, and what it should look like
 - How traffic routes and travel around the parish could be improved
 - To protect, enhance and invest in the natural and built environment, its amenities and its surroundings.
 - How to build on the sense of community and ensure a healthy environment for people to live in
 - How health and education will be improved for a growing community, both young and old
 - How the heritage assets of Gerrards Cross can be preserved and maintained

- How to protect existing, and propose new community land uses such as allotments, open spaces, playing fields, community gardens.
- k. The Plan seeks to answer two questions:
- What are the problems and concerns the Plan should address?
 - What opportunities are there that the Plan could make the most of?

The Plan Preparation Process

- l. This Neighbourhood Plan has emerged from major, sustained community consultation. Consultation details and survey reports can be viewed on the Gerrard Cross Neighbourhood Plan website at: www.gxplan.co.uk

Sustainable Development

- m. The NPPF encourages the re-use of land that has been developed (brownfield land) provided it is, “not land of high environmental value”. The objective of the Neighbourhood Plan and resultant policies is to:
- protect the environment.
 - develop brownfield sites ahead of greenfield.
 - protect the historic built and natural environmental assets of the town.
 - increase or, as a minimum, maintain biodiversity, soil, water, air, climatic factors, architectural and archaeological heritage as well as landscape setting.
- n. As such, the Plan will help to achieve sustainable development by ensuring that its development policies and proposals will meet the needs of people living and working in the parish, whilst at the same time helping to ensure that any adverse environmental impact is minimised.

Neighbourhood plan evidence base

- o. There is a substantial and significant amount of background information that has helped in producing the Plan (this is known as the ‘Evidence Base’). This is available on the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan website.

National policy

- p. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) states:
- “Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies..”* (para.29).
- q. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they obtain the right types of development for their community. The ambitions of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them.

“.....Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies” (para.13).

“Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.” (para 30).

- r. Following the creation of the unitary authority, Buckinghamshire Council in April 2020, the decision was taken to withdraw the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan 2040 due to the examiner’s belief that Chiltern and South Bucks Councils had failed in their Duty to Cooperate with Slough Borough Council. Although as part of the creation of Buckinghamshire Council it was required to have a Local Plan in place by April 2025 due to impending changes to national planning legislation and the requirements for Local Plan production it is understood that this date is not achievable. Buckinghamshire has started work on a new county wide Local Plan but this is not going to be in place before the Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood plan. As the Plan is not expected to be complete before the GXNP, the existing South Bucks Local Plan and South Bucks Core Strategy¹ remains of relevance.

Consultation

- s. The GXNPSG has developed the Neighbourhood Plan through extensive engagement with the community.
- t. A wide-spread programme of engagement has also been undertaken to identify further issues, develop policy options and seek feedback on the emerging plan. This has included:
- Public exhibitions and drop-in events
 - A questionnaire distributed to all households
 - Age-specific events to engage younger members of the community.

Site Selection

- u. The Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address the housing needs identified within the Parish as a result of the consultation process, whilst ensuring that development doesn’t have an unacceptable impact on the local infrastructure. This will be achieved by:
- Providing for 7 new dwellings.
 - Prioritising the use of brownfield sites.
 - Encouraging small-scale residential developments that are sympathetic to their surroundings.
 - Ensuring that new developments include a mix of housing to meet the needs of local people considering the current and projected demographic of the parish.
 - Providing well-designed dwellings that are sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area.
 - Identifying areas of the surrounding green belt which would be suitable for removal, should the strategic policy identify this need.

¹ South Bucks Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document Feb 2011

Site Selection Criteria

- v. The site selection process for Gerrards Cross was carried out in an open and transparent way and included considerable consultation with the community, who favoured small sites with fewer houses over one large site.
 - w. The Steering Group undertook a number of consultation events at which local resident's views were heard and acknowledged and as far as possible, within the planning constraints, considered.
 - x. The site selection criteria adopt the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan listed in Section 5. Sites were identified through the South Bucks Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) and following a call for sites in October 2020, site promoters were invited to demonstrate how their sites would contribute towards achieving these objectives.
 - y. Sites were then assessed against the following criteria:
 - **Availability:** if the site is available for development
 - **Suitability:** if, when assessed against the below criteria, it is a suitable location for development. These include:
 - **Policy Restrictions:** Designations i.e., protected areas, existing planning policy
 - **Physical problems:** i.e., access, infrastructure, ground conditions, flood risk, hazardous risks, pollution, or contamination
 - **Effects on surrounding area:** i.e., effect upon landscape, features, and conservation
 - **Effects on the community:** i.e., those which would be experienced by existing/prospective residents.
 - **Achievability:** if there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site, this being a judgement about its economic viability.
 - **Vision and Objectives:** How the proposed sites would help Gerrards Cross achieve its vision for the future and deliver its objectives.
- These criteria are provided by Government guidance on undertaking assessments of housing sites.
- z. As part of the process a review was undertaken of the most recent Local Plan relating to Bucks Council as well as associated site allocations documents, Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), Local Housing Need Assessment, (LHNA) and Housing Options Paper in order to check sites already allocated for development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

A more detailed review of the site selection process is included as **Appendix J**.

- aa. The GXNP was subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA). These noted that Gerrards Cross lies within the Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation zone of influence, the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation recreational catchment, the Thames Valley National Character Area and is also in close proximity to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- bb. Both assessments concluded no likely significant effects, provided the recommended policy wording is incorporated into the GXNP. These have subsequently been integrated into the Plan.

Monitoring of the Plan

- cc. The Gerrards Cross Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to assist with the planning of sustainable growth across the Neighbourhood Plan Area for a period up to 2040.
- dd. As the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan for Buckinghamshire Council, it will be subject to the Council's Local Plan Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) regime. This report provides many of the monitoring and review mechanisms relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan policies, as they nest within the wider strategic policies of the local plan.
- ee. Gerrards Cross Town Council, as the neighbourhood plan authority, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and monitor delivery. The ongoing development of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan means that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be reviewed within five years of being made.
- ff. As a result, it is considered that the existing monitoring arrangements for the strategic policies and the detailed policies will be sufficient for most of the Neighbourhood Plan policies.
- gg. This is particularly relevant since the updating of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to review and update their local plan every five years.
- hh. In all cases, Gerrards Cross Town Council and its partners should consider undertaking a partial review of the Plan in five to six years after adoption in line with the Local Plan Review, with a full review no later than 2028.
- ii. In order to determine when a review is necessary, the Town Council will monitor development in Gerrards Cross along with the local and national policy and legislative context. It may be that this policy is reviewed at other times because of changes to relevant local policies, national policies and legislation.

2 Local Context

2.1 History of Gerrards Cross

Gerrards Cross is one of the larger settlements (population 8,600-2021 census) in former South Bucks District, a predominantly rural (89% green belt) area immediately outside Greater London. It is widely regarded as a very desirable place to live because of its high-quality residential accommodation set in a spacious, leafy environment with excellent communication links.

Gerrards Cross is roughly 20 miles west of London on the A40, formerly the main road between London and Oxford. With the coming of the railway in 1906 its location in the attractive countryside of “Beechy Bucks,” prompted the creation of a new settlement intended primarily for London commuters. With London only 30 minutes away by train on the Chiltern Line, Gerrards Cross remains a popular commuter settlement but the developers of the Edwardian era and the 1920s ensured that the new community was supplied with shops, banks, schools and churches making it almost self-sufficient.

Whilst the range of shops may be more limited today there have been recent developments of larger offices, providing more jobs. There remains a strong sense of community and Gerrards Cross has avoided becoming a dormitory settlement. Its 19th century reputation as the “Brighton of Bucks” is still reflected in its relatively high proportion of retired residents.

With a population of just over 8,000 Gerrards Cross is hard to classify since it demonstrates the historic characteristics of neither town nor village. Although local residents refer to the “village” the Parish Council became a Town Council in 2016.

Gerrards Cross is located towards the south-eastern edge of the Chilterns on a gravel terrace at an altitude of around 85 metres. The terrain in the conservation area is almost completely flat with a slope down to the Misbourne Valley to the north-east, and to the west. When the Gerrards Cross Parish was created in 1861 its boundaries were fixed somewhat arbitrarily, and today the northern end of Gerrards Cross melds imperceptibly into Chalfont St. Peter. Green belt designation has prevented the growth of the settlement to the west and east. To the south of the Conservation Area are 20th century developments of houses.

2.2 Modern Gerrards Cross

At the heart of the town, alongside the A40 is Gerrards Cross Common, much loved by residents and intensively used for recreation and for dog walking. The children’s play area is always busy, and the football pitch is well used at weekends.

The Common is by far the largest and most dominant feature, both physically and historically, with the other major influence being the road passing through the area, making Gerrards Cross a significant place of passage.

With its excellent communication links, attractive rural setting, good local facilities, and high-quality housing, Gerrards Cross is noted as a desirable place to live and one of the most expensive postcodes in the country.

The buildings have grown up around the Common as a result of organic growth and one of their key characteristics is variety. They range from workers’ cottages to gentlemen’s residences and show a mix of uses.

The M40 motorway has relieved the A40 – Oxford Road - of much of the through traffic which used to choke the road. The western and eastern ends of the Common are marked by bends in Oxford Road and road junctions with historic routes leading, at the east end, to Fulmer (Fulmer Road) and at the

west end, to Maltmans Green (Bull Lane). Packhorse Road was, and remains, the main route across the Common northwards to Chalfont St. Peter.

There are a number of independent schools in Gerrards Cross as well as a Church of England Primary School, The Gerrards Cross Church of England School. Buckinghamshire Council operates selection at 11 for public secondary education. Approximately 30% of pupils are offered places at (mostly) single-sex grammar schools.

Although many residents are daily commuters to employment in London, Gerrards Cross is not just a dormitory town. It has a thriving town centre with shops, restaurants, hotels, estate agents, solicitors, a cinema and many other facilities. To the north, Gerrards Cross is adjacent to the larger community of Chalfont St Peter which also has facilities used by Gerrards Cross residents and in particular the local hospital and associated GP surgery.

Of particular benefit to Gerrards Cross is the Memorial Centre – a community centre created to honour the memory of residents who lost their lives in two World Wars. The Memorial Centre, run by Gerrards Cross Community Association (GXCA) has rooms for educational and recreational activities, a large hall for public meetings and a bar.

Gerrards Cross not only has good access to London by road and rail, but also to Heathrow Airport, 12 miles away with a half hourly bus service during the working day. There are many other places of interest to the tourist, including Beaconsfield (Bekonscot Model Village), Burnham Beeches (ancient woodlands owned by the Corporation of London with public access), Eton, Windsor and other charming riverside locations upstream such as Maidenhead, Cookham and Marlow on the way to Henley and Oxford beyond.

Modern Gerrards Cross has a thriving town centre with a typical range of High Street names such as Boots, WH Smith, Caffe Nero and Costa Coffee. In addition, Gerrards Cross benefits from a wide range of independent shops such as boutique clothing shops, gift shops, a butcher, jewellery shops, etc. There are also five different estate agents.

Gerrards Cross benefits from more than 20 pubs / restaurants and wine bars, as well as two major supermarket chains having a presence in and around the town. These include Waitrose and Tesco's. A comprehensive list is included in appendix A.

There is a strong community spirit in Gerrards Cross, and there are a wide range of clubs and organisations providing for both social, sports and cultural experiences which meet regularly, many of them at the Memorial Centre. A current full list can be found at <https://www.gxca.org.uk/clubs/>.

Gerrards Cross Church of England Combined School serves the community of Gerrards Cross and there are a number of schools nearby including the following:

- Maltman's Green, independent day school for girls 2-11
- St Mary's, independent day school for girls 3-18
- Gayhurst, independent co-ed prep school for 3-11
- Thorpe House, independent day school for boys 3-16
- Dr Challoner's Grammar, Amersham, selective, boys
- Dr Challoner's High School, Little Chalfont, selective, girls
- Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe, selective, boys
- John Hampden, High Wycombe, selective, boys
- Beaconsfield High, selective, girls
- Chesham Grammar, selective, co-ed
- The Chalfonts Community College, co-ed, non-selective
- The Beaconsfield School, co-ed, non-selective
- Pioneer Secondary Academy co-ed, Sikh faith, Stoke Poges

There are a number of places of worship covering a range of denominations providing for the community of Gerrards Cross.

- St James Church of England
- The Methodist Church
- Saint Andrews Church, United Reform Church
- Church Extension Association (Community of the Sisters of the Church), Anglican convent
- St Josephs' Catholic Church
- Al Muhassin Mosque in nearby Fulmer
- Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Slough
- Shree Adhya Shakti Mataji Hindu Temple in Uxbridge
- synagogues in Ruislip and Pinner

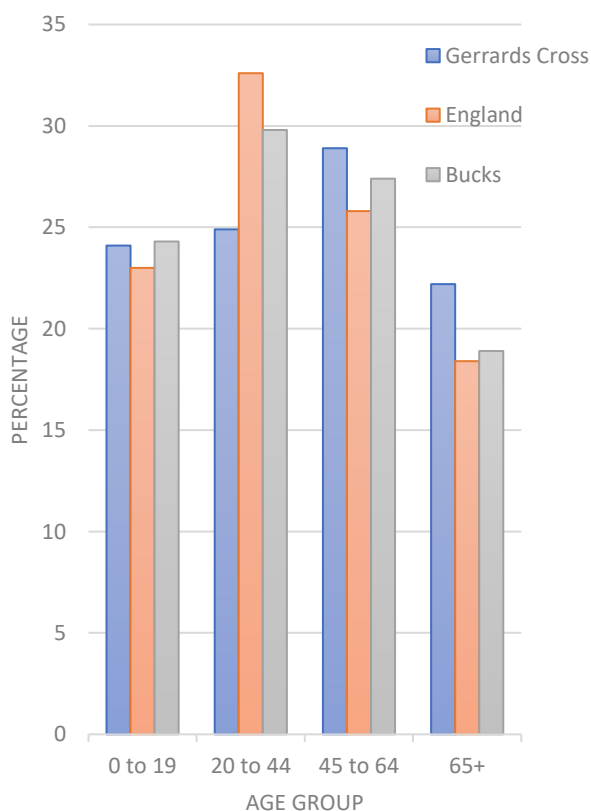
3 Profile of the community today²

Key Facts (Census data 2021)	Gerrards Cross
Area:	1,088 ha
Total population*:	8,600
Density:	7.9 persons per hectare
Households*:	3,100

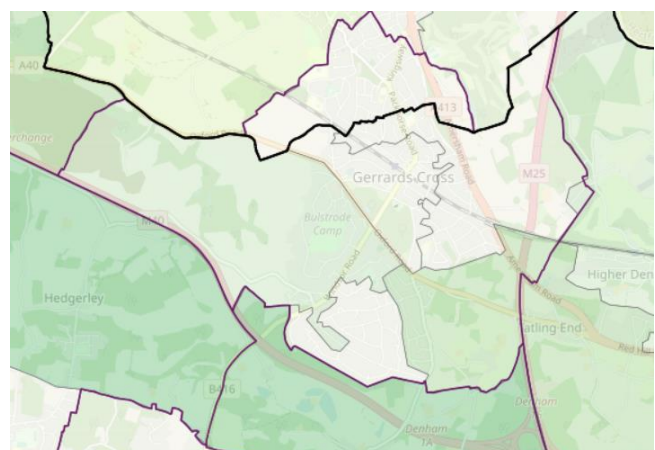
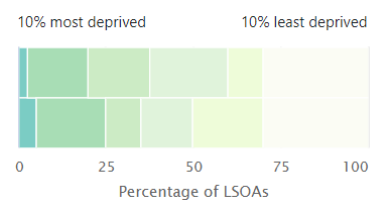
*to the nearest 100.

3.1 Population

Gerrards Cross is located in the former South Bucks District and is classified as a District Shopping Centre. The Parish is split into three wards: north, south, and east. Taken together the overall population size of the Parish, according to the 2021 census was 8,600 persons or 1.55% of the unitary authority area, living in 3,100 households. The population of Buckinghamshire was 553,100* at the 2021 census. The population of Gerrards Cross grew by 8.4% between 2001 and 2011 and by 7.3% between 2011 and 2021 and continues to grow. In contrast, the number of households only grew by a maximum of 2.2% between 2011 and 2021.

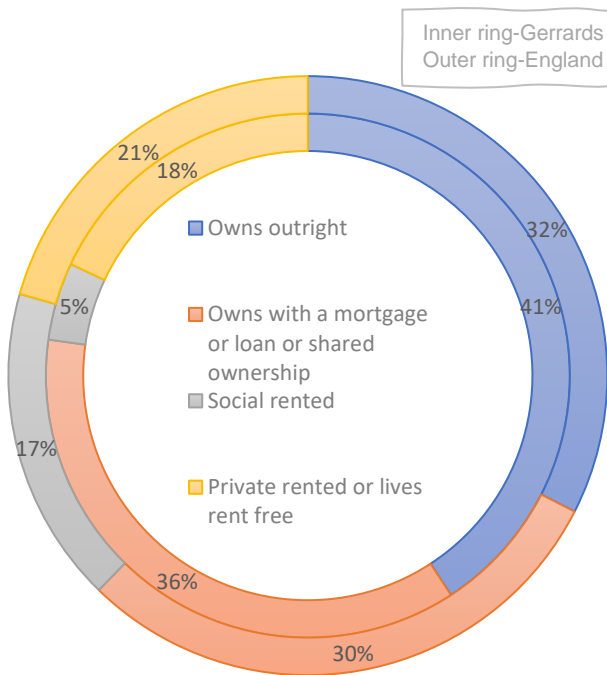


Deprivation Scale



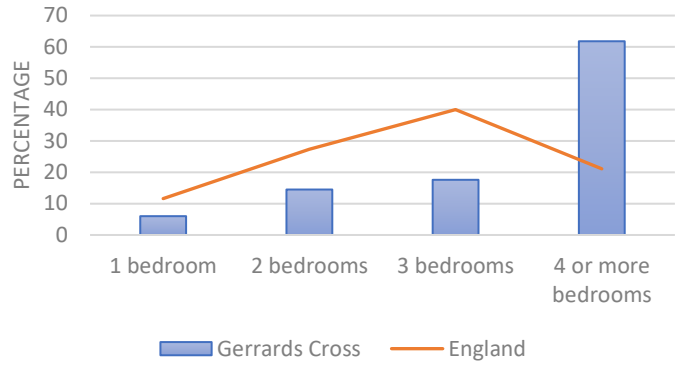
² Source – [ONS Census data 2021](#)

3.2 Housing Data



There were 3,100* households in Gerrards Cross at the time of the 2021 census (1.4% of the 220,300* households across the district).

Number of Bedrooms



0.5% of households in Gerrards Cross did not have central heating at the time of the census compared to 1.5% nationally.

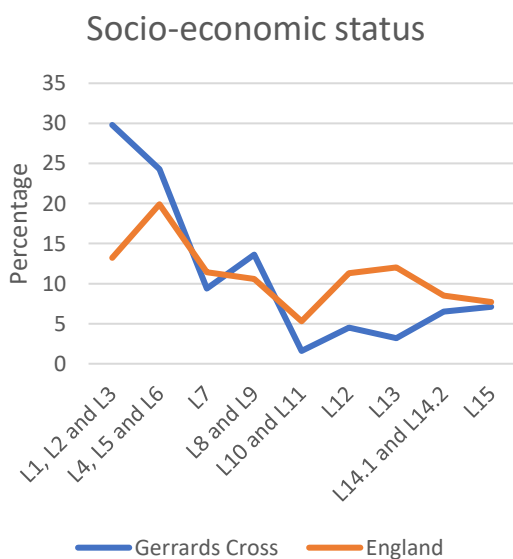
68.1% of households in the Parish were single family households very similar to 67.8% across the county but slightly higher than the England figure of 63%. The percentage of one person households in Gerrards Cross was 23.4%, Buckinghamshire 26.3% and England 30.1%.

3.3 Employment

In 2021, 56.8% of people were economically active and in employment, 2.6% were unemployed.

40.7% were economically inactive (retired or not seeking employment).

50.2% worked 31-48 hours/week and 21.8% worked 49 hours or more/week. This is in comparison to the England figures of 59.1% and 11.1% and Buckinghamshire figures of 57.8% and 13.6% respectively.



KEY

- L1, L2 and L3: Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations
- L4, L5 and L6: Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations
- L7: Intermediate occupations
- L8 and L9: Small employers and own account workers
- L10 and L11: Lower supervisory and technical occupations
- L12: Semi-routine occupations
- L13: Routine occupations
- L14.1 and L14.2: Never worked and long-term unemployed
- L15: Full-time students

4 Local Infrastructure

4.1 Local Plan

In April 2020, the local authority, South Bucks District Council, became part of the Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority. At this point, the draft Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan was under examination. Following consideration of the examiner's comments regarding the Local Plan by the new Unitary Authority, a decision was made to officially withdraw the local plan in October 2020 and concentrate on a new county-wide local plan. Buckinghamshire Council have until April 2025 to produce a Local Plan (although Buckinghamshire Council have stated that due to impending changes to national planning legislation and the requirements for Local Plan production this date is not achievable). The Council opened a "Call for Brownfield Sites" consultation which closed in April 2021.

4.2 Housing Numbers and Allocations

Due to the withdrawal of the South Bucks and Chiltern Local Plan and the current situation with the Buckinghamshire Local Plan, GXNP SG have had to use the South Bucks Core Strategy (2011), South Bucks local plan (1999) when considering policies and conformity. In addition, the Chiltern and South Bucks five-year housing land supply position statement (Apr 2022)³ para 1.2 states there is a supply of 2.7 years for South Bucks for the period 2000-2027. Gerrards Cross has long been one of the most expensive places in the country to live⁴ with the average cost of a home being over £1million⁵. The housing and economic needs assessment⁶ suggests there a need of +1,500 affordable homes throughout the South Bucks area over the 2016-2036 period, although only a handful of affordable dwellings have been built there since the start of the Plan period. The Core Strategy allocated at least 280 dwellings to be built within the built-up area of Gerrards Cross by 2026⁷. This allocation has been fulfilled as 287 dwellings have been completed since 2010⁸.

4.3 Housing Needs Assessment

1. In May 2020 AECOM were instructed to carry out a Housing Needs Assessment for Gerrards Cross. Between 2001 and 2011, there was a 67.7% increase in private renting. *'The strong growth in private renting is likely connected to the increasing cost of home ownership driving households into more affordable alternative tenures, hence also the low growth in home ownership (3.6%). Given Gerrards Cross's low incidence of social renting, the rise in private renting may also be a result of households who would otherwise qualify for social rented homes instead entering private rented housing, for example using housing benefits to cover the cost.'*
2. *'House prices have grown in Gerrards Cross by 18.9% overall between 2010 and 2019. Semi-detached house prices increased by a significant 50.5%, with 42.4% growth for detached homes, 33.4% growth for terraced homes and just 26.2% for flats.'*

³ [Buckinghamshire five-year housing land supply position statement Apr 2022](#)

⁴ South Bucks Core Strategy 2.2.13

⁵ [Zoopla Zed-Index Feb 2023](#)

⁶ [Figure 35](#), Chiltern and South Bucks Housing & Economic Needs Assessment (2019)

⁷ South Bucks Core Strategy 2011

⁸ South Bucks Authority Monitoring report 2016/17 and Joint Chiltern and South Bucks Areas Authority Monitoring Report 2019-2020

4.4 Medical Infrastructure

The Core Strategy recognises that Gerrards Cross has a slightly poorer range of health facilities than nearby Beaconsfield or Burnham, but identifies services are accessed in the neighbouring parish of Chalfont St Peter.

Gerrards Cross has the following facilities:

- Dentists
- Opticians
- Pharmacies

There are no GP services within the parish of Gerrards Cross. Community engagement showed a high support for the provision of a medical hub within the Gerrards Cross parish, this has become a community aspiration.

4.5 Road Network

The Core Strategy states that Gerrards Cross has good road links with other surrounding areas. The A40 dissects the parish and offers access to the M25 and M40.

Pinch points and traffic issues are a regular occurrence at: East Common pinch and Tesco traffic lights.

4.6 Public Transport

There is a railway station in Gerrards Cross with regular trains into and out of London (Marylebone). Bus Services: Amersham-Slough every 2 hours weekdays 8am-6pm; High Wycombe-Uxbridge 3 buses every hour 6am-8pm.

4.7 Sport & Recreation

Gerrards Cross has several options for sports and recreation in the town:

- Cricket pitches
- Outdoor tennis court
- Football pitches
- Golf Course
- Playparks at the Common
- Inspire Gym
- Yoga Studio
- Adult outdoor gym equipment on East Common
- Squash courts

4.8 Council Tax Bands

Council tax information can provide an overview of house value within an area, however whilst they provide an indication, it should be noted that these bandings were created several years ago. This information is only available at parish level rather than by ward. The percentage of houses falling in the G & H bands for Gerrards Cross Parish is significantly higher than the district average.

Parish	Dwelling Count	Bands A-C	Bands D-F	Bands G-H
Gerrards Cross	3,115	1.6%	18.3%	80.1%
South Bucks District	28,288	5.4%	50.5%	44.1%

Source: Valuation list for the authority of 17 February 2015

4.9 Local Plan relevant policies

As previously mentioned, Gerrards Cross is currently reliant on conformity with the South Bucks Core Strategy (2011) and South Bucks Local Plan (1999). Policies which are of relevance to the GXNP are:

South Bucks Core Strategy (2011)

- Core Policy 1: Housing Provision and Delivery
- Core Policy 2: Housing Type and Size
- Core Policy 3: Affordable Housing
- Core Policy 4: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People
- Core Policy 5: Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- Core Policy 6: Local Infrastructure Needs
- Core Policy 7: Accessibility and Transport
- Core Policy 8: Built and Historic Environment
- Core Policy 9: Natural Environment
- Core Policy 10: Employment
- Core Policy 11: Health and Viable Town and Village Centres
- Core Policy 17: Other Development Sites

South Bucks Adopted Local Plan (1999) Saved Policies Updated Feb 2011)

- GB1: Green Belt Boundaries and Control over Development in the Green Belt
- GB2: Re-use and extensions of Buildings in the Green Belt
- GB4: Employment Generating and Commercial Development in the Green Belt (excluding Green Belt Settlements)
- GB10: Extensions to Dwellings in the Green Belt
- GB11: Rebuilding of Dwellings in the Green Belt
- L10: Proposals involving felling or other Works affecting Trees Covered by a Tree Preservation Order
- C1: Development within a Conservation Area
- C6: Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings
- C15: Sites of Geological Importance
- EP3: The Use, Design and Layout of Development
- EP4: Landscaping
- EP5: Sunlight and Daylight
- EP6: Designing to Reduce Crime
- EP7: Signs and Advertisement
- EP16: Hazardous Substances
- EP17: Aerodrome/Air Traffic Safeguarding
- EP18: Telecommunications Development
- R5: Horse Related Facilities
- R6: Specialist Sports
- R8: Floodlighting
- R9: Golf Courses
- R10: Golf Driving Ranges
- T2: Service Accommodation in the Green Belt
- T4: New Built Development to provide Tourist Facilities
- H2: New Housing Allocations
- H6: Specialist Residential Accommodation
- H9: Residential Layout and Design

- H10: Residential Areas of Exceptional Character
- H11: Alterations and Extensions to Dwellings
- H12: Self-Contained Residential Annexe to Provide Ancillary Accommodation
- H13: Ancillary Buildings within Residential Curtilage
- TC1: Development in Beaconsfield (New Town), Burnham, and Gerrards Cross
- S1: District Shopping Centres
- S2: Local Shopping Centres
- S3: Neighbourhood Shops
- S4: Individual Shops
- S6: Out-of-Centre Shopping Development
- S9: Markets, Car-boot Sales, etc
- E2: Pinewood Studios
- TR4: Provision for those with Special Needs
- TR5: Accesses, Highway Works and Traffic Generation
- TR7: Parking Provision
- TR10: Heavy Goods Vehicles
- TR12: West Drayton to Poyle Railway Line
- TR13: Freight Facilities
- COM1: Provision of Community Facilities
- COM2: Loss of Community Facilities

5 Vision and Objectives

5.1 Challenges for Gerrards Cross

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community of Gerrards Cross Parish. 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.
- 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.

5.2 Vision for Gerrards Cross

In consultation with the community, the established vision for Gerrards Cross is as follows:

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 routes with clear wayfinding and signage have been introduced creating a safer pedestrian environment and encouraging active travel. The 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 low emission 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.*

5.3 Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

The objectives of the GXNP as identified through engagement with the community address the following topics:

TOWN CENTRE

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

Objective 2: Reuse or redevelop empty premises where possible.

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.

Community Aspiration 1: Support the creation of a banking hub in Gerrards Cross.

Community Aspiration 2: Investigate opportunities to encourage outdoor eating/socialising areas within Town Centre.

Housing

Objective 4: To allocate a site for future development in Gerrards Cross to meet the identified needs of the community.

Objective 5: Ensure future housing is designed and developed sympathetically and in character with the existing built environment of Gerrards Cross.

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

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

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

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

TRAFFIC and TRANSPORT

Objective 10: Manage the growing volume of traffic.

Objective 11: Provide parking for visitors, shoppers and residents.

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

Community Aspiration 3: Provide a better bus service that extends late into the evening.

Community Aspiration 4: Provide sufficient electric car charging points around the town.

Community Aspiration 5: improve the flow of traffic and pedestrian safety on highways and at key junctions in the Neighbourhood Plan area- is particularly in respect of highways and junctions serving Gerrards Cross Town Centre.

ENVIRONMENT and CHARACTER

- Objective 13:** Where not deemed suitable for release to development, to preserve the existing Green Belt around the town.
- Objective 14:** Preserve and protect woodlands, commons and green open spaces that are important to the community of Gerrards Cross.
- Objective 15:** Ensure landscaping and planting schemes where possible are proposed and implemented within all new developments.
- Objective 16:** Preserve the heritage and historic character of Gerrards Cross.
- Objective 17:** To maintain a strategic gap between Gerrards Cross and surrounding areas.

COMMUNITY, HEALTH and LEISURE

- Community Aspiration 6:** Provide appropriate space for the provision of a new GP surgery within Gerrards Cross.
- Community Aspiration 7:** Support and improve sports and community facilities.

Objective/Policy Matrix

		Policy																	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Objectives	1	X																	
	2	X	X																
	3		X																
	4			X	X														
	5				X	X													
	6						X												
	7							X											
	8				X				X										
	9									X									
	10										X								
	11											X	X						
	12													X					
	13														X				
	14														X	X			
	15																X		
	16																	X	
	17																		X

6 Policies Development

6.1 Introduction to the Policies

- 6.1.1 Section 4 provides the planning policies which have been written to explain how development in Gerrards Cross should be approached, designed and built, in order to support the objectives identified by the community set out in section 3.
- 6.1.2 There are a total of 18 policies addressing five topic areas. These are: Town Centre, Housing, Traffic and Transport, Environment, Community and Health and Leisure
- 6.1.3 Each of the five policy sections are introduced by explaining the background to that particular issue as it relates to Gerrards Cross and by setting out the local context and circumstances in which the policy area has been approached. This includes the problems, issues, concerns, objectives and aspirations of the local community.
- 6.1.4 Each of the individual policies then forms two parts:
 - 1) the policy itself, which provides the wording which should be understood and followed by developers when proposing new development, and by the local planning authority when considering proposals
 - 2) an explanatory section to provide an understanding of the reasons behind the policy, the background of the particular issue that the policy seeks to address, more detail on the outcome(s) the policy is intended to achieve, and how the policy is expected to be implemented.
- 6.1.5 Not all the policies will be relevant to every type of development, but anyone proposing development in Gerrards Cross will be expected to ensure that they consider and address the policies that are relevant to their proposals, so that the plan is implemented successfully to achieve the local community's objectives.

7 Town Centre Policies

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 12 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.

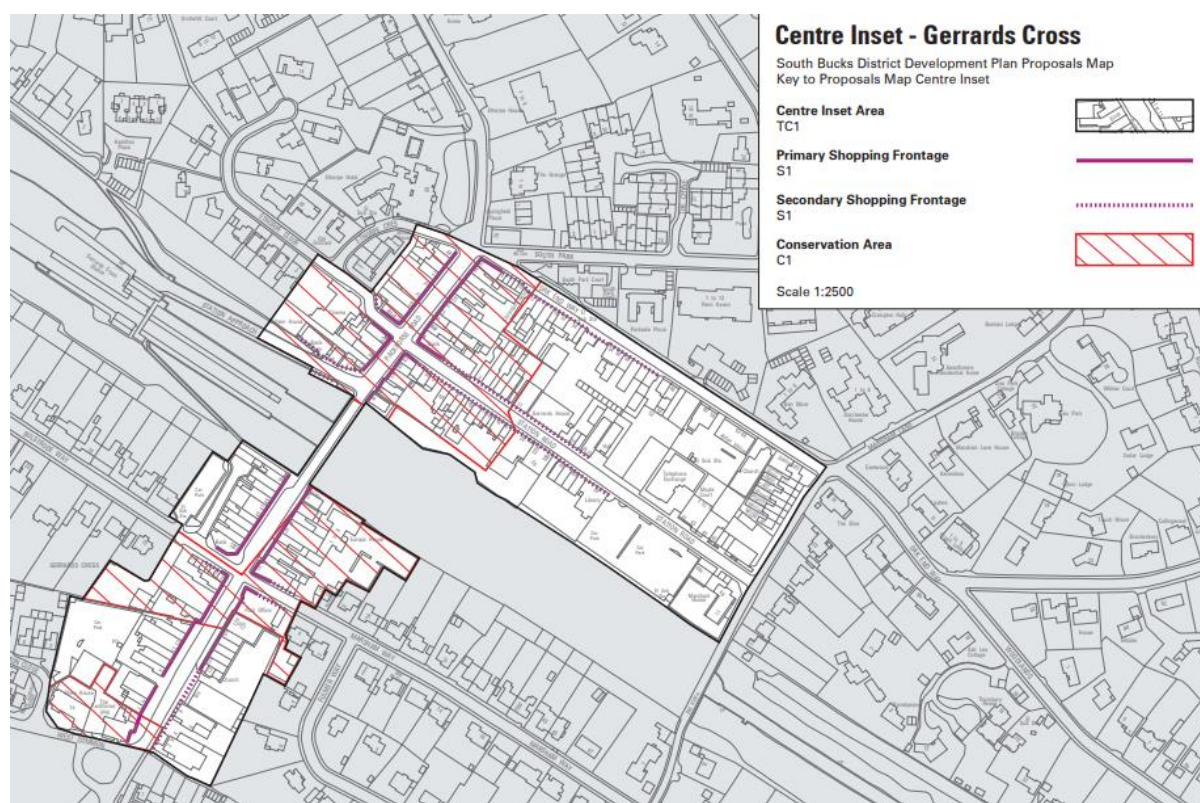


Fig F1 Core Retail Area map taken from [South Bucks Plan](#)

<i>Objective 2:</i>	Re-use or redevelop empty premises where possible.
<i>Objective 3:</i>	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 2: Maintaining a Vibrant Town Centre

Planning proposals that generate new employment opportunities, support existing ones or provide opportunities for start-up businesses and that are within the built-up areas of the town centre (as identified in Fig F1) will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- The proposals do not severely and negatively impact on traffic.
- The proposal respects the built character and landscape character of the town centre.
- The proposal does not cause an unacceptable impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties; and
- The proposal provides adequate parking, servicing and access arrangements.

7.1 Policy justification

7.1.1 National planning policy states “..local planning authorities should:

“Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;”

7.1.2 The consolidated South Bucks District Plan (1999) policy TC1 stated: “...*The District Council will seek to protect and where possible, strengthen, the retail function of these centres..*” and the South Bucks Core Strategy (Adopted Feb 2011) names Gerrards Cross as one of the District Centres and aims for it to “..*continue to serve as [one of] the main focus [es] of retail activity in the north of the District..*”.

7.1.3 The community acknowledges the importance of bringing derelict buildings and commercial brownfield sites back into economic use however, a number of vacant or derelict land and buildings undermine the high quality of some areas of the parish. This is especially true within the historic core (Packhorse Road) where the quality of the shopping street and the gateway is undermined by closed shops and units. Bringing these back into use is a key aspiration of the plan.

7.1.4 Nevertheless, care needs to be taken that these shops and units are brought back into economic use. In the recent past, many of these unused commercial buildings have been re-developed into flats and it would be easy for this trend to continue but allowing this to occur unchecked would reduce the availability of retail and commercial premises within the parish and ultimately the shopping offer for local people.

7.1.5 The plan, and the policy set out above, seek to set a balance to ensure that redevelopment of brownfield and vacant buildings is supported, but not at the expense of the vitality of the shopping street. Engagement with the community clearly identifies that the retail area is important to them with over 60% of respondents identifying that the variety of shops and businesses is very important to them. The community also see the reuse of previously developed land and buildings (often known as brownfield redevelopment) as a key development resource.

7.1.6 An article by the Local Government Association⁹ highlights the permanent changes on the high street since the pandemic *‘Patterns of work and commuting have, and will remain, changed – with implications for the future of high streets. The pandemic will prompt a permanent shift in the home location decisions of many families, and domestic tourism and staycationing will remain above pre-pandemic levels. The pandemic has reinvigorated interest in community and what’s local, while technology has proven capable of replacing in person and physical connections in*

⁹ [Creating resilient and revitalised high streets in the ‘new normal’](#)

many aspects of daily life.’ Gerrards Cross needs to adapt new experiential offers and new technology to entice visitors and increase footfall. The report continues ‘Many residents in villages, green belt and peripheral settlements with office-based jobs are continuing with hybrid working in the near-term, and high streets in these locations will need to meet the demands of former commuters. With fewer commuters leaving home during the day, high streets in feeder towns and suburban centres stand to benefit from increased footfall and a new higher spending weekday demographic.’

- 7.1.7 Every effort should be made to retain the retail area of Gerrards Cross as a welcoming and enticing destination.



Oak End Way

- 7.1.8 Gerrards Cross is defined as a “District Centre” for South Buckinghamshire providing shopping, primary education, employment and professional services. The consolidated South Bucks Local Plan (1999) para 10.2 states

“..The importance of small businesses to the economy must also be recognised;..”

and the South Bucks Core Strategy para 3.4.10 states

“To encourage new business formation, and support micro and small businesses, the Council will promote home-working ..(providing it benefits the local community), and encourage the provision of managed workspace..”

and;

“Further employment floorspace will...be supported within Gerrards Cross centre.”

- 7.1.9 The improvement to local employment opportunities will not only provide employment, in particular the chance for local people to access jobs but will ensure that these are sustainable in terms of the patterns of commuting that they generate.
- 7.1.10 73% of respondents to the community engagement said, “Encouraging more businesses into the town centre” was “important” or “very important” with 88% of respondents citing “not leaving premises empty” as “important” or “very important”. In addition, when asked about encouraging a variety of shops and businesses into Gerrards Cross, 92% of respondents to the community engagement rated this as “important” or “very important”.
- 7.1.11 Nationally there has been strong growth in self-employment and it is considered that, to grow medium and larger-sized businesses in and around Gerrards Cross, it is necessary to nurture business start-ups.

- 7.1.12 The Bank of England reported¹⁰ that the number of new business registrations increased from 50,000 a month to 60,000 a month after March 2020 and solo entrepreneurs rose from 60% to 65% of the total (in other words, the uplift is almost entirely down to an increased number of solo entrepreneurs).
- 7.1.13 Not all these businesses will require employment space, as many people will work from home. However, for small start-up businesses, the ability to access workspace on flexible, 'easy-in, easy-out' terms help to provide the foundation to grow a business. The demographic analysis in Appendix B shows that Gerrards Cross has a highly qualified workforce, and this foundation creates the potential for new businesses to be started up by local residents who are keen to also work locally.
- 7.1.14 It is therefore important to ensure that employment land is used to meet local needs for a provision of a range of types and sizes of businesses to promote the vitality and viability of the town, including start-ups and micro businesses (a business of less than 10 employees).
- 7.1.15 This will also encourage younger people of working age to remain in the area rather than seeking work in the surrounding area or further afield.
- 7.1.16 Despite the presence of two large supermarkets, the town shops are still highly valued and well used for convenience shopping.
- 7.1.17 The policy aims to ensure that new retail development, redevelopment and extensions preserve and enhance the vitality and viability of shopping areas. Therefore, proposals which individually or cumulatively would lead to a decline in the attractiveness and vitality or viability of any of Gerrards Cross retail centre will be resisted.
- 7.1.18 All new built development should be of a scale and design which harmonises with the character and role of the centre and with the scale and architectural composition of any adjacent buildings. Details of materials and any landscaping proposals will also be taken into account when considering applications.
- 7.1.19 The vitality of the retail area within the town centre is largely dependent on primary retail frontages and so it is important that the retail frontages be retained and enhanced, and the majority of the businesses located in the primary area are retail outlets. The secondary shopping areas are also vital to the wellbeing of the town centre as they provide opportunities for many independent and smaller traders.
- 7.1.20 To support the vitality and sustainability of the town centre a range of commercial uses are encouraged including offices, leisure, community and retail uses. Support is also given to the provision of new residential accommodation in the town centre but as the opportunities for this are limited it is also important that existing residential units in the town centre are retained. This will help the vitality, viability and security of the town centre particularly outside the hours when commercial activities are operating.
- 7.1.21 In the community engagement, people were asked to rate how important six different aspects of the town centre were to them. Of these, "*variety of shops/businesses*" received the highest weighted average overall.
- 7.1.22 90% of respondents to the community engagement felt that Gerrards Cross needs more independent shops.

¹⁰ [Business creation during Covid-19](#)

8 Housing Policies

8.1 Housing Supply

- 8.1.1 Due to the current state of the South Bucks/Buckinghamshire Local Plan and their lack of five-year housing supply³, Gerrards Cross does not have any housing figure to work with. In addition to this, before the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan was withdrawn, the examiner highlighted major concerns over the “Duty to Cooperate” with Slough on the subject of Slough’s shortfall of housing land supply.
- 8.1.2 In order to move the NP forward, the Chiltern and South Bucks Five-Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement (Apr 2022)³ has been used as a base. This document calculates that South Bucks has a land supply of 2.7 years- a deficit of 1,029¹¹ homes over the period 2022-2027.
- 8.1.3 GXNPSG has also taken into consideration NPPF paragraph 11a ‘*..all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area...*’ and Basic Condition (d) ‘*the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) contributes to the achievement of sustainable development*’.
- 8.1.4 As a result of this, GXNPSG carried out a call for sites and one site was identified as suitable to allocate for future development to meet local housing need.
- 8.1.5 In addition to the allocated site, the GXNP has identified four sites (GX3, GX4, GX5, GX6 on the site assessment) shown in Appendix E, currently in the Green Belt (Appendix C) in the Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB), which would be suitable for removal from Green Belt in exceptional circumstances, as per NPPF (2023) para 142.
- 8.1.6 All these sites border the built-up area and existing transport routes.
- 8.1.7 It is understood that the South Bucks Core Strategy seeks to protect the Green Belt, and the emerging work on the Buckinghamshire Local Plan is seeking to avoid any Green Belt release. The GXNP also seeks to protect the Green Belt-whilst also seeking to provide longevity of its plan by using the opportunity to identify acceptable options for small-scale Green Belt development, should Buckinghamshire Council seek to do so, in accordance with NPPF (2023) para 140.
- 8.1.8 Gerrards Cross is bounded by Green Belt on three sides and the GX SPB adjoins the Chalfont St Peter SPB on the fourth side. It is therefore extremely difficult to identify sites suitable for development outside the green belt.
- 8.1.9 The government regularly measure various sets of deprivation across England, based on 7 different aspects¹². Although overall Gerrards Cross scored in the 10% least deprived areas for the Indices of Deprivation, for the ‘Barriers to housing and services’ domain (which measures the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services) the overall score was in the 10% most deprived Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA)¹³.
- 8.1.10 In addition, the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) identifies the need for affordable homes for rent or shared ownership in the form of small and medium homes and affordable retirement homes.
- 8.1.11 The issue of the shortfall of housing land supply for Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead is currently (Mar ‘23) unresolved, and whilst the Duty to Cooperate has been withdrawn, this is expected to be replaced in the future with an ‘alignment policy’, which is yet to be defined.
- 8.1.12 The GXNP has policies seeking to ensure brownfield sites are prioritised over greenfield sites and supporting the re-use of existing buildings, however, on investigation, these options are extremely limited.

¹¹ [Table 6b South Bucks Five-year housing land supply position](#)

¹² [English Indices of Deprivation 2019 FAQ's Q1](#)

¹³ [Indices of Deprivation: 2019 and 2015](#)

8.1.13 Sites have been identified which ‘infill’ or ‘flatten out’ the current Green Belt boundary.

<i>Objective 4</i>	To allocate a site for future development in Gerrard Cross to meet the identified needs of the community.
<i>Objective 5</i>	Ensure future housing is designed and developed sympathetically and in character with the existing built environment of Gerrards Cross.
<i>Objective 8</i>	Ensure that previously developed land, particularly where vacant, derelict, or underused, is prioritised for development over greenfield sites.

Policy 3 Protection of European Sites

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. 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).

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 2017¹⁴ (*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 Buckinghamshire Council).
- 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) ranking of ‘Very Good’ or equivalent.
- g. Developers will be expected to investigate any potential contamination onsite and ensure appropriate remediation prior to development if necessary.
- h. Development must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption. Refurbishments and other non-domestic development will be expected to meet BREEAM water-efficiency credits. Residential development must not exceed a maximum water use of 105 litres per head per day (excluding the allowance of up to 5 litres for external water consumption) using the ‘Fittings Approach’ in Table 2.2 of Part G of Building Regulations. Planning conditions will be applied to new residential development to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met.

¹⁴ [Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study](#)



Proposal Map 4 Orchehill Rise Car Park Allocation

8.2 Policy Justification

- 8.2.1 The GXNPSG carried out a call for sites which yielded 8 potential housing sites. Only one of these sites was identified through a site assessment (Appendix J) as suitable to allocate for future development to meet local housing need, although a number of currently green belt sites would be suitable if released.
- 8.2.2 This site is allocated in an area with good access to both the schools and public transport as well as the town centre.
- 8.2.3 The community wishes to retain the integrity, shape and characteristics of Gerrards Cross by minimising the use of greenfield sites; adopting designs and materials that are consistent with the location; and encouraging the creation of complementary development reflecting the historic character, which includes keeping the building height to a level that retain the towns characteristics.
- 8.2.4 This site is a brownfield site and is not within the Green Belt.
- 8.2.5 The Gerrards Cross SEA para 6.18 highlights *'The site allocation policy works well to ensure the development incorporates a landscape scheme that will reduce the visual impact and encourages proposals that utilise local building materials and techniques to make the development blend with the existing built-up area'*.
- 8.2.6 The SEA also highlights the potential requirement for land remediation (if the site is contaminated). This should be taken into consideration by the developers.
- 8.2.7 The HNA identified the average household income in the GX middle layer super output area as £83,900 and the lower quartile gross earnings for South Bucks (more localised figures are unavailable) is £25,263.

- 8.2.8 The average price for an entry-level market home is £495,000 (AECOM HNA calculations), putting home ownership out of reach for many people.
- 8.2.9 Recreational pressure is an emerging theme for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, with trampling damage, contamination and deadwood removal identified as key issues in a recent impact assessment. While Gerrards Cross Parish lies at a considerable distance from the closest part of the SAC (approx. 10.5km, an in-combination contribution of the plan to recreational footfall cannot be excluded. Developers will ensure that any residential development coming forward under the Neighbourhood Plan will make financial contributions to any mitigation approaches (e.g. SANG and SAMM) that form part of an emerging mitigation strategy for the SAC developed by Buckinghamshire Council.’

Objective 5: Ensure future housing is designed and 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 which reflects the surrounding buildings,
- 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. Development must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption. Refurbishments and other non-domestic development will be expected to meet BREEAM water-efficiency credits. Residential development must not exceed a maximum water use of 105 litres per head per day (excluding the allowance of up to 5 litres for external water consumption) using the ‘Fittings Approach’ in Table 2.2 of Part G of Building Regulations. Planning conditions will be applied to new residential development to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met.

In addition, dwellings will be expected to meet the highest possible standards of construction and a minimum BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) standards ranking of ‘Very Good’ or equivalent.

8.3 Policy Justification

- 8.3.1 The design of new housing development schemes will play a vital part in maintaining the local distinctiveness of Gerrards Cross. This extends to the qualities of buildings, planting and topography in a locality that defines its character.

- 8.3.2 For all housing development proposals, the Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape Character Study 2017, should be used to inform design solutions which reflect the character of the different areas of Gerrards Cross in their scale, siting, layout, materials, landscaping and design details.
- 8.3.3 It is clear from the consultation and engagement process that the community wish to see any new developments in the plan area integrated within the existing rural setting, in ways which enhance the area rather than diminish what is distinctive about the settlements and their setting or undermine their established character. This applies whatever the specific form or purpose of any building development. This policy will apply to all development proposals that come forward.
- 8.3.4 In the community engagement, respondents were given 9 design principles to rate regarding new developments in Gerrards Cross. Of these 9, “*be proportionate to scale, layout and character of surrounding buildings*” had the highest weighted average.
- 8.3.5 Cycle Storage should match The London Plan 2016 guidance for cycle parking¹⁵ of 1 space per studio/1 bedroom unit and 2 spaces per all other dwellings. Cycle storage should be secure, fit-for-purpose and well-located.
- 8.3.6 Bin/recycling storage should conform to the local authority’s storage and collection strategies and requirements.
- 8.3.7 Where appropriate, planning permission for developments which result in the need for off-site upgrades, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades.
- 8.3.8 The Local Planning Authority should seek to ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve all new developments. Developers are encouraged to contact the water/wastewater company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements.
- 8.3.9 It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer, as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding.

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 five 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.

8.4 Policy Justification

8.4.1 South Bucks Core Strategy Core Policy 2: Housing type and size “*To deliver mixed and sustainable communities, the council will encourage a range of housing types and sizes. On sites of 5 units or more, provision should be made for a suitable mix of dwelling types and*

¹⁵ [The London Plan-Parking Addendum](#)

sizes. The mix of housing provided will vary from site to site, but the aim should be to provide a range of types and sizes that take account of the existing housing mix in the area. To ensure that new accommodation is sufficiently flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of all sections of the community, a proportion of the new dwellings on sites of 5 units or more must be to the full Lifetime Homes standard. Further details will be provided in the Development Management DPD.”

- 8.4.2 The parish is home to 8,600* people in 3,100* dwellings with an average occupancy of 2.60 people per dwelling¹⁶. Therefore, the need for properties with a large number of bedrooms is limited.
- 8.4.3 In the 2021 Census, 60.9% of households in the Gerrards Cross middle layer super output area¹⁷ had 4 or more bedrooms. 22.7% had 1 or 2 bedrooms.
- 8.4.4 By 2029, Buckinghamshire is expecting a 42% increase in the over-85 age bracket¹⁸.
- 8.4.5 In the community engagement survey, residents were asked to rate the size of properties needed in Gerrards Cross on a scale of 1-4, 1 being “no need”, 4 being “strong need”. Large houses (4 or more beds) received 43% ranking of “1” and only 5% gave a ranking “4”.
- 8.4.6 69% of respondents to the community engagement ranked “medium houses (3 beds)” as 3 or 4 in terms of need for Gerrards Cross. 63% ranked “small houses (1 or 2 beds)” the same.
- 8.4.7 In recent years, there have been a number of developments which have provided 1 or 2 bed flats leading to a desire for houses instead of flats. Community consultation showed over 70% of the community did not feel there was a need for more flats in Gerrards Cross.
- 8.4.8 The South Bucks Core Strategy para 2.2.13 identifies Gerrards Cross as ‘one of the most expensive places in the country to live’ and highlights the ‘high levels of affordable housing need throughout the settlement.’
- 8.4.9 Throughout the neighbourhood plan process, there has been a desire to increase the amount of affordable housing available within the NP parish area. The HNA identified a shortfall of 21.3 homes per annum. The average house price in Gerrards Cross is over £1 million¹⁹. The disparity between even the average income of £83,900 and average house price makes home buying in Gerrards Cross out of the reach for many. It was therefore concluded that the provision of affordable housing within the neighbourhood plan could not effectively address the larger need.
- 8.4.10 The HNA highlights in Gerrards Cross in 2011 53.3% of dwellings had 4 or more bedrooms compared to 35.5% in South Bucks and 19% across England. Conversely, 31.7% of dwellings had 2-3 bedrooms in Gerrards Cross, compared to 56.2% in South Bucks and 69.1% across England.

¹⁶ [ONS Census date 2011](#)

* to the nearest 100

¹⁷ [ONS Census map](#)

¹⁸ [Evidence base for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy](#)

¹⁹ [Zoopla March 2023](#)

Tenure	Cost of purchase	Annual rent	Annual Income required ¹²
Average market sale (median)			
Entry-level Market Sale	£495,000	N/A	£141,429
Shared ownership (75%)	£371,250	£13,750	£119,821
Discounted market housing (20%)	£396,000	N/A	£113,143
Shared ownership (50%)	£247,500	£27,500	£98,214
Entry-level Market Rent	N/A	£20,376	£81,504
Shared ownership (25%)	£123,750	£41,250	£76,607
Affordable Rent	N/A	£16,301	£65,203
Social Rent - 3 Bed Dwelling	N/A	£6,938	£27,753
Social Rent - 2 Bed Dwelling	N/A	£6,103	£24,413

¹² On top of deposit assumed at 10%

Affordability thresholds in Gerrards Cross (income required)

8.4.11 As an alternative, the Neighbourhood Plan has focussed on providing smaller homes, to maximise the opportunities for buyers.

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 which would lead to an enhancement of the character of the area and will be supported.

Proposals for the demolition, redevelopment or substantial alterations to these buildings should demonstrate the consideration that has been given to retaining:

- the important character building itself;
- its most distinctive and important features;
- the positive elements of its setting and its relationship to its immediate surroundings; and
- the contribution that the building and its setting makes to the character of the local area.

8.5 Policy Justification

8.5.1 The reuse of buildings, and development of land already in commercial use, can strengthen the local economy, as it is better to make provision in the parish rather than further away, or not at all.

8.5.2 Such sites can offer opportunities for commercial uses which may be more difficult to accommodate within the settlement due to the lack of suitable premises or sites, and potential impacts on neighbouring residents and other uses.

8.5.3 To be suitable for reuse, buildings should not require substantial rebuilding or extension to accommodate the proposed new use. In addition, the proposed reuse should not have a harmful impact on the historic and architectural importance of traditional buildings.

8.5.4 When asked in the community engagement, 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, “retaining and redeveloping existing buildings wherever possible,” should influence the design of any new developments.

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.

8.6 Policy Justification

- 8.6.1 Paragraph 120 (c) of the NPPF (2021) states that planning polices, and decisions should, *“give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;”*
- 8.6.2 The sight of derelict sites is a disincentive to investors in a town and greenfield development draws life out of the towns. Gerrards Cross residents are keen to maintain and increase the vibrancy of the town centre and so are keen to explore all opportunities to rejuvenate any derelict areas.
- 8.6.3 Brownfield sites tend to be much better located than greenfield sites, closer to shops, education, healthcare and public transport.
- 8.6.4 Building on brownfield land presents opportunity to simultaneously remove local eyesores and breathe new life into urban areas in need of regeneration. It can bring homes, jobs and services closer together, reduce car dependence and enhance communities.

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 2023²⁰” (or the most up-to-date version of the document). Gated developments will not be supported.

8.7 Policy Justification

- 8.7.1 Legible developments are easily understood by their users, they help people to find their way around both the development and the wider area, and to understand how a place works and its function. Developments that promote a successful relationship between public and private spaces have clear public fronts and private backs of buildings, they give a clear indication of ownership and management responsibility for these spaces.
- 8.7.2 Gated development is generally unacceptable, other than for back land developments where there is no possibility of creating a through-route.
- 8.7.3 Gated developments are not an effective response to current issues of crime and disorder in terms of physical security; nor do they assist in regenerating deprived areas. Indeed, any further

²⁰ [Secured by Design Homes 2023](#)

growth of collective fortification of affluent homes is likely to contribute to increased social divisiveness.²¹

²¹ Housing Responses to a less than perfect world; where do gated communities fit in? 2005

9 Transport & Movement

Objective 10: Manage the growing volume of traffic.

Policy 10: Highway Improvements

- a) 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.

9.1 Policy Justification

- 9.1.1 Significant concern was expressed by the community of Gerrards Cross in respect of the increased traffic on the highway network resulting from recent developments.
- 9.1.2 In response to community engagement asking for levels of concern to 19 different topics in Gerrards Cross, 'The speed of traffic' rated 4th 'Levels of traffic congestion' rated 2nd and 'The condition of roads and pavements' rated 1st. The comments raised particular concerns about the impact on the town centre highways and key junctions. The speed of traffic through the town was also highlighted by many residents during the consultations on the plan.
- 9.1.3 The South Bucks Core Strategy²² recognises that Gerrards Cross, amongst others, has the best accessibility to services and aims for the spatial strategy to contribute to the rebalancing of the transport system.
- 9.1.4 In the community engagement, respondents were asked 'If you could improve one thing in Gerrards Cross, what would it be? Of the 383 comments made, 256 mentioned traffic and transport.

Objective 11: Provide parking for visitors, shoppers and residents.

Policy 11: Residential 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:

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

²² South Bucks Core Strategy Adopted 2011

Policy 12: Retention of public car parking

- a) Change of use of the following, existing public car parking (shown in Appendix K) will not be permitted unless equivalent and equally accessible parking can be provided as a replacement:
- 1) Station Upper car park-Ethorpe Close,
 - 2) Cinema car park,
 - 3) Bulstrode Way car park,
 - 4) Packhorse Road car park,
 - 5) Station Road car park,
 - 6) Tesco car park,
 - 7) Memorial Centre car park,
 - 8) Gerrards Cross Train Station car park.

9.2 Policy 11 & 12 Justification

9.2.1 in the community engagement, respondents were asked to rank their concern over 4 different aspects of the availability of parking:

- a. for residents
- b. for commuters
- c. for local workers
- d. for shoppers

They were ranked 10th, 8th, 5th and 6th respectively out of nineteen (nineteen being of least concern).

9.2.2 79% of respondents ranked parking in the town centre as an important or very important issue.

9.2.3 97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that having off-street parking was an important principle that should influence the design of any new development.

9.2.4 South Bucks Core Strategy recognises there are parking issues within the town.

9.2.5 Car parking issues for residents are exacerbated by commuters driving into Gerrards Cross to use the railway station and trying to avoid parking charges by parking on residential roads.

9.2.6 To ensure parking does not become even more of a problem it is important that any new residential development provides sufficient parking for residents.

9.2.7 Current traffic and congestion issues will be exacerbated if more dwellings are built without sufficient parking being provided.

9.2.8 In February 2020, GX Town Council commissioned Transport for Buckinghamshire to conduct a parking review²³ as there were safety concerns around the parking in GX. There was also an intent to increase parking availability for shoppers and shop workers, to retain and improve the vitality of the town.

9.2.9 26 locations were included in the consultation, earmarked due to parking issues having been highlighted by residents and stakeholders.

9.2.10 Following this consultation, several recommendations were made including introducing restricted parking times/days and removal, retention or replacement of various double yellow lines.

9.2.11 Buckinghamshire Council discussed this in November 2022 and the recommendations were approved.

9.2.12 Although it is hoped these recommendations will ease the parking issue in some places, there are still parking problems in other areas of the town.

²³ [Gerrards Cross parking review](#)

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:
 - i make financial contributions toward the enhancement of these Walkway Routes
 - ii not have an unacceptable impact on Walkway Routes and
 - iii provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on the safety and flow of pedestrian access.

9.3 Policy Justification

9.3.1 Strategic developments in Gerrards Cross, where practical should be designed to provide dedicated footpaths and cycleways which will provide access for pedestrians and cyclists towards the existing built-up areas of Gerrards Cross and the key focal points within it (e.g. the station, schools, the retail centre), as well as enabling access to the green belt and wider countryside

9.3.2 With the growth in the population that will occur through any development at Gerrards Cross, movement by all modes will continue to become a challenge. The key types of movement can be classed as 'local' and 'strategic':

- 'Local' movement is principally within Gerrards Cross, to key points in the town such as the school, the railway station, the retail centre. It also includes people accessing community infrastructure and leisure activities – even as simple as dog walking.
- 'Strategic' movement is mainly to areas outside the parish, principally the larger towns and road network.

9.3.3 The NPPF (2021) para 104c states, "*opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued (at the earliest stages of plan making and development proposals)*". For Gerrards Cross, the benefits of investing in walking and cycling include:

- providing genuine alternatives to the private car as a means of accessing key shops and services, such as the local schools.
- providing health benefits through increased walking and cycling.
- facilitating less congestion at busy times by encouraging children walking to and from school and people walking to the station and shops rather than 'jumping in the car' for a short journey.
- providing a safer environment for the community, including for vulnerable users

9.3.4 In the community engagement, 98% of respondents ranked "retaining access to green spaces through paths and cycleways" as "important" or "very important".

9.3.5 At the GX Annual Town Meeting April 2019 the following question was asked in relation to cycling initiatives. "Are there any plans for safer cycling in GX?" The answer was as follows: In 2015/16 Sustrans prepared a Station Travel Plan for Gerrards Cross. This was submitted to BCC/NW rail in June 2016. However, we understand that there was no money available from

the Government Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy to progress this. Parking for cyclists has improved at the Station and there is some signage around showing cycle routes around GX. GXTC can also confirm that cyclists can use new footpaths on the commons.

- 9.3.6 All walkway routes are expected to consider accessibility requirements for those with mobility difficulties such as the elderly and young children.

10 Environment

Objective 13: Preserve the existing Green Belt around the town.

Policy 14: Gerrards Cross Settlement Boundary

- a) The settlement boundary of Gerrards Cross Town is shown on Figure 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 any 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) Development should comply with Policies 5 (General design of residential development) and 6 (Housing Mix) in this plan.

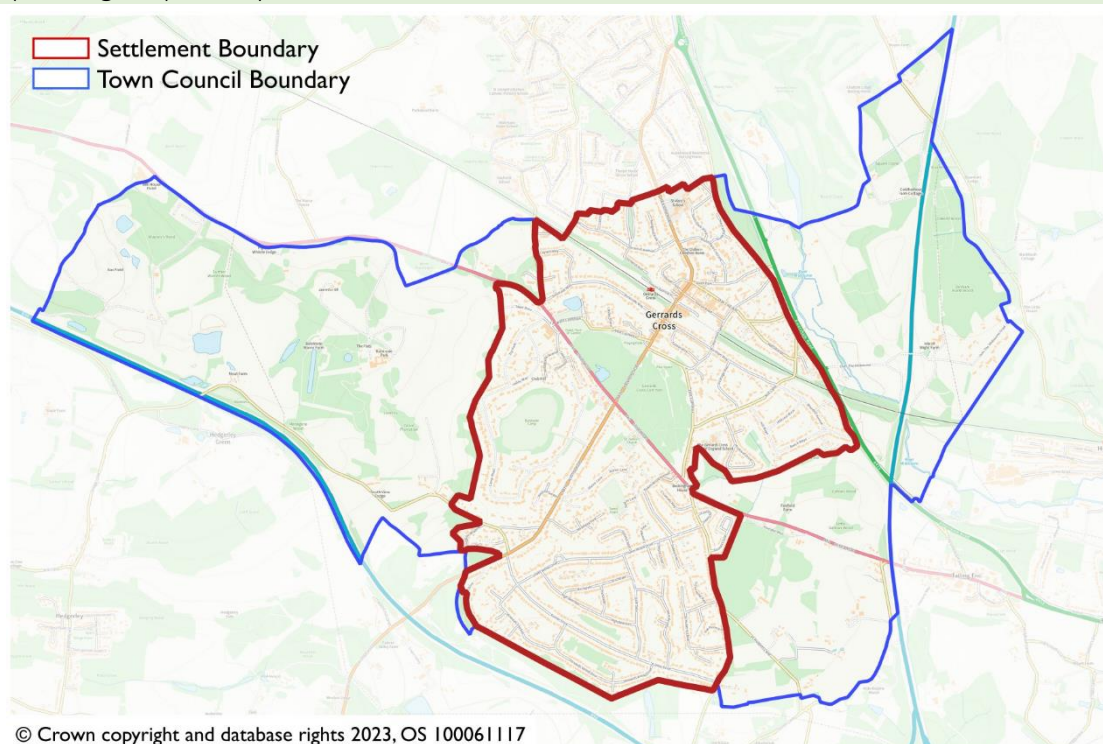


Fig F2 Settlement Boundary

10.1 Policy Justification

- 10.1.1 In the Green Belt Development Options Appraisal²⁴ part of Gerrards Cross NP designation area falls within the 5km buffer zone for Burnham Beeches.
- 10.1.2 Additionally, in the Green Belt Development Options Appraisal there are no areas identified on the Gerrards Cross NP designation boundary as land likely to be removed from the Green Belt.
- 10.1.3 Although it is understood that at the current time the emerging work on the Buckinghamshire Local Plan is seeking to avoid any Green Belt release, within this plan are suggestions of small areas of Green Belt land which would be considered acceptable for removal from green belt designation. These sites have been carefully considered and chosen as they are small areas which abut the SPB and have built up areas on at least 2 sides.

²⁴ Green Belt Development Options Appraisal, Chiltern & South Bucks District Councils Emerging Local Plan (2014-2040) Nov 2016

10.1.4 During the community engagement process, respondents were asked to rank 5 different environmental issues from 1-4. 1 being not important, 4 being very important the results were as follows:

Issue	% ranking of “important” or “very important”
Retaining and protecting green spaces (woodlands, commons etc)	98%
Maintaining green “gaps” around Gerrards Cross	96%
Retaining and protecting green belt around the town	93%
Retaining access to green spaces through paths and cycleways	91%
Protection of wildlife and plants that are key to biodiversity	88%

10.1.5 It is understood that there is currently no safeguarded land (land between the urban area and the Green Belt) surrounding Gerrards Cross. However, to ensure the longevity of the Neighbourhood Plan, safeguarded land has been included in this policy.

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

- a) 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
- b) Development on the designated Local Green Spaces will only be permitted in very special circumstances.
- c) Development proposals within a Green Space will only be supported where they otherwise comply with the policy implications of the relevant environment designations as set out in the individual tables below. In particular development proposals should respect the undeveloped, open character of the Green Space concerned and its ecological, landscape or recreational contribution both to its immediate locality and to the wider neighbourhood area.

10.2 Policy Justification

- 10.2.1 The GXNPSG and community consultations identified several locally valued landscapes, open spaces and other visually significant areas within the settlement boundary which are an integral part of the character and intrinsic value of the town and villages and should be protected.
- 10.2.2 These areas create green screens between residential developments and link town and country. They improve quality of life by providing visually attractive green spaces close to where people live and promote health and well-being by providing recreation and leisure opportunities for all ages. They can be an important community resource for public events, religious festivals, fêtes and fairs. Furthermore, these spaces can provide safe havens for wildlife and may act as vital corridors or steppingstones that connect one habitat to another.
- 10.2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework enables local communities, through local and neighbourhood plans, to identify for special protection those green areas of particular importance by designating land as 'Local Green Space' (LGS). Paragraph 102 states that this designation should only be used where the land is:
- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife;
 - local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.
- 10.2.4 The NPPF further states at paragraph 103 that "Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts".

10.2.5 A list of potential Local Green Spaces was compiled based on local knowledge and suggestions from local residents. Each candidate site was assessed against the qualifying criteria set out in Paragraph 102 of the NPPF and the results are summarised below.

10.2.6 The sites identified in the tables below satisfy the criteria for LGS designation and are afforded special protection in Policy 15. The policy follows the matter-of-fact approach in the NPPF. In the event that development proposals come forward on the local green spaces within the Plan period, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the unitary Council. In particular it will be able to make an informed judgement on the extent to which the proposal concerned demonstrates the ‘very special circumstances’ required by the policy.

Area GS1 St Marys School Playing/sports fields	
“in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”	It is marked Area GS1 on the Green Space Map A and is a feature within the town
“demonstrably special to a local community”	It is playing and sports fields for a school.
“local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”	The site is within the built-up area of the town, surrounded by native trees. The whole area covers approx. 1ha.

Area GS2 Oval Way central island	
“in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”	It is marked Area GS2 on the Green Space Map A and is a feature within the town and is surrounded by homes on all sides.
“demonstrably special to a local community”	It provide visual amenity for local residents and is home to wildlife with many mature trees.
“local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”	The site is within the built-up area of the town and has many native trees. The whole area covers approx. 0.5ha.

Area GS3 St James Church Cemetery

“in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”	It is marked Area GS3 on the Green Space Map B and is a feature within the town and is surrounded by homes on all sides.
“demonstrably special to a local community”	The cemetery surrounds St James Church and Hall and has been used by the community since mid-1880’s.
“local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”	The site is within the built-up area of the town and has many native trees. The whole area covers approx. 0.9ha.

Area GS4 Gerrards Cross C of E School playing/sports fields

“in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”	It is marked Area GS4 on the Green Space Map B and is a feature within the town and is surrounded by homes on 3 sides.
“demonstrably special to a local community”	It is playing and sports fields for a school.
“local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”	The site is within the built-up area of the town and is surrounded by many native trees. The whole area covers approx. 1.4ha.

Area GS5 Gerrards Cross Cricket & Sports Club

“in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”	It is marked Area GS5 on the Green Space Map B and is a feature within the town and is surrounded by homes on all sides.
“demonstrably special to a local community”	It is sports fields which provide coaching and sports facilities for the community, especially 5-18 year olds.
“local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”	The site is within the built-up area of the town and is surrounded by many native trees. The whole area covers approx. 1.8ha.

Area GS6 Gaviots Green	
“in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”	It is marked Area GS6 on the Green Space Map B is surrounded by homes on all sides.
“demonstrably special to a local community”	Local amenity space.
“local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”	The site is within the built up area of the town. The whole area covers approx. 0.25ha.

Area GS7 Gaviots Close	
“in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”	It is marked Area GS7 on the Green Space Map B is surrounded by homes on all sides.
“demonstrably special to a local community”	Local amenity space.
“local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”	The site is within the built up area of the town. The whole area covers approx. 0.25ha.

Area GS8 Memorial Centre Allotments	
“in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”	It is marked Area GS8 on the Green Space Map C, in part of the Memorial Hall Centre and is surrounded by homes on all sides.
“demonstrably special to a local community”	The area is dedicated to providing allotments for the residents of Gerrards Cross.
“local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”	The site is within the built up area of the town. The whole area covers approx. 0.05ha.

Area GS9 Memorial Centre Tennis Courts

“in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”	It is marked Area GS9 on the Green Space Map C, in part of the Memorial Hall Centre and is surrounded by homes on all sides.
“demonstrably special to a local community”	Tennis Courts which are available for use by anyone in the community.
“local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”	The site is within the built-up area of the town. The whole area covers approx. 0.1ha.

Area GS10 Memorial Centre Green area

“in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”	It is marked Area GS10 on the Green Space Map C, in part of the Memorial Hall Centre and is surrounded by homes on all sides.
“demonstrably special to a local community”	A large green space used by after school clubs, as a play area and to host firework displays.
“local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”	The site is within the built-up area of the town. The whole area covers approx. 0.3ha.

Area GS11 Memorial Centre War Memorial

“in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves”	It is marked Area GS11 on the Green Space Map C, in part of the Memorial Hall Centre and is surrounded by homes on all sides.
“demonstrably special to a local community”	An area surrounding the war memorial, used on civic occasions such as Remembrance Sunday.
“local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”	The site is within the built-up area of the town. The whole area covers approx. 0.3ha.

10.2.2 Other notable green spaces of importance to the community include:

- East Common (registered common land)
- West Common (registered common land)
- Bulstrode Park Camp (scheduled monument ref 1006954)
- Bulstrode Parkland (registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest in England ref 1001371)

Whilst these spaces are not recorded in the Green Spaces Policy as they have other designations on them, it is important to note their importance to the community and the strong desire from the community that these spaces are retained as green space.

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.
- b) 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.
- c) Appropriate landscaping schemes will be required to mitigate against the landscape impact and complement the design of new development.
- d) 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.

10.3 Policy Justification

- 10.3.1 Trees, as well as other significant vegetation and landscape are key components of the town's ecological and green infrastructure network. They soften the hardness of buildings and streets, add life, colour and character to the urban landscape and enhance open spaces and the landscape.
- 10.3.2 Trees and other planting, including contiguous gardens and green oases, deliver multiple benefits; they provide an important habitat for wildlife, reduce levels of carbon dioxide and airborne pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and harmful particulates (such as PM10's and PM2.5's); dampen noise from traffic and congestion; increase the supply of oxygen, provide shade for streets, open areas and parks as well as for buildings.
- 10.3.3 Development proposals are required to retain and protect existing trees, and minimise any impacts on trees, shrubs and other significant vegetation, including through the provision of sufficient space for the crowns and root systems of existing and proposed trees and their future growth.
- 10.3.4 Indicative landscape proposals should be included with applications for outline permission where site layout is shown.
- 10.3.5 In the community engagement, 89% of respondents ranked "include landscaping and planting schemes" as important or very important.
- 10.3.6 98% of respondents rated "retaining and protecting green spaces (woodlands, commons etc)" as important or very important.

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

Policy 17: Protection of Historic Environment

- a) 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. Those of particular community value include:
- o Bulstrode Camp Iron Age Hillfort
 - o Bulstrode Park
 - o Gerrards Cross Memorial Building (Historic England list entry 1430052)
 - o Gerrards Cross Memorial Centre (Historic England list entry 1124424)
- b) 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.

10.4 Policy Justification

- 10.4.1 The historic environment gives distinctiveness, meaning and quality to the places in which we live, providing a sense of continuity and a source of identity. Heritage provides people with a link to the past, a symbol of permanence and stability, a sense of belonging. Communities cohere and thrive through an awareness of their shared endeavours, past and present and it is important that any new development respects the historical past of the area.
- 10.4.2 The DCLG Planning Practice Guidance (April 2014) sets out guidance on '*Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*' (Reference ID: 18a-001-20140306). It states that neighbourhood plans need to include enough information about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the Local Plan into action at a neighbourhood scale. In addition, and where relevant, neighbourhood plans need to include enough information about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions.
- 10.4.3 The draft Heritage Strategy²⁵ states it is "*important to acknowledge the importance of heritage assets locally and although not worthy of national protection some local heritage assets may be important in defining the local character of the area.*"
- 10.4.4 Gerrards Cross did not exist in any formal sense until 1859 when it was formed by taking pieces out of the five parishes of Chalfont St Peter, Fulmer, Iver, Langley Marish and Upton to form a new ecclesiastical parish.
- 10.4.5 Near its centre is the site of an Iron Age minor hillfort, Bulstrode Camp, which is a scheduled ancient monument. Originally named Jarrett's Cross after a highwayman, before the times of the Gerrard family. Some areas retain the original name, such as Jarrett's Hill leading up to Bulstrode House off the A40 west of the town.
- 10.4.6 On the south side of the town is the Gerrards Cross Memorial Building, on the site of the former vicarage. The building was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and unveiled in 1922 to commemorate the town's losses during the First World War. It is the only example of a Lutyens war memorial designed with a functional purpose.

²⁵ Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council draft Heritage Strategy January 2016

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

Policy 18: Strategic Gaps

- a) The Neighbourhood Plan designates a Strategic Gap, as shown on the Maps in Appendix G, at:
 - Gerrards Cross to Beaconsfield
 - Gerrards Cross to Chalfont St Peter parish boundary
 - Gerrards Cross to Higher Denham
 - Gerrards Cross to Tatling End
- b) 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.

10.5 Policy Justification

10.5.1 It is recognised that all four of these strategic gaps have Green Belt status. It is also recognised that Local Authorities have the power to review green belt boundaries.

10.5.2 Gerrards Cross is a market town, surrounded by countryside, which gives it a rural feel. To maintain this, the GXNP has identified these areas as strategic gaps.

10.5.3 Gerrards Cross is surrounded by a network of motorways, therefore all natural green spaces help to mitigate noise and air pollution. Strategic gaps will provide multifunctional green spaces in terms of maintaining settlement identity and providing a green-lung to Gerrards Cross and wider settlements. These gaps help to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

10.5.4 During the community engagement, 93% of respondents ranked, “retaining and protecting green belt around the town,” as important or very important and 96% ranked, “Maintaining green ‘gaps’ around Gerrards Cross as important or very important.

10.5.5 **Beaconsfield Gap:** This area lies to the Northwest of Gerrards Cross on the A40. Part of this site is visible along the A40 and forms one side of the open green / partially wooded Northern Entrance to Gerrards Cross and helps to maintain the rural identity. This whole area is very important to the community in a number of ways; historically it is the site of Neolithic-Bronze Age finds, plus early Roman pottery kilns²⁶, it is surrounded by public footpaths and adjacent to Bulstrode House & Park and the fact that this area is not built means the full 360-degree view from this historic house and garden remains unspoilt by buildings. It supports wildlife and



²⁶ 2011 Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Assessment

10.5.6 **Chalfont St Peter Parish Boundary Gap:** -

This area lies to the Northeast of Gerrards Cross between the A40 and Bull Lane and is considered very rural by residents. This area completes the East side of the Northern Entrance to Gerrards Cross and provides a green, visible and open gap between Gerrards Cross and Chalfont St Peter beyond the railway line. Chalfont St Peter has already coalesced with Gerrards Cross along other routes, for example along the Packhorse and Lower Roads. This area also completes a clear view from Bulstrode Park across to Bull Lane and vice versa.



10.5.7 **Higher Denham Gap:** This gap is very important locally providing an open and rural feel, surrounded by footpaths, bluebell woods, farmland and mature woodland all very much used and appreciated by the community. This gap provides a natural space from the near-by Denham aerodrome and the built-up Denham settlements which merge into Maple Cross, Rickmansworth and HS2 construction. It provides a clear view from Mill Lane enhancing a feeling of space.



10.5.8 **Tatling End Gap:** This area is the Southern

Entrance to Gerrards Cross and provides a pleasant open and green view on both sides of the A40 and a strong sense of leaving Greater London and built-up Tatling End; Denham; Uxbridge plus the busy M25 motorway. This area reinforces the separate identity of Gerrards Cross as well as the settlement character, of rural fields and farmland, much appreciated by locals and visitors who are passing through or coming home.



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