

BURFORD TOWN COUNCIL



West Oxfordshire Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

BURFORD TOWN COUNCIL FEEDBACK ON 2021-2041 LOCAL PLAN

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Purpose

The following is a summary of the position from Burford Town Council (BTC) on the screening of parcels of land for potential locations within Burford generated by the call for sites as part of the early Section 18 consultation on the emerging 2021-2041 Local Plan. This is intended to be pre-emptive feedback from BTC, that we want West Oxfordshire strategic planners to take into consideration when assessing the sites.

Site assessment context

The Call for Sites, which was part of the early consultation on the local plan objectives and broad spatial strategies, generated a large number of sites, many of which are very speculative. West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) has published a list of these sites and is now beginning a screening process to prepare a West Oxfordshire Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). This screening process will take account of the sites' development potential, suitability, availability and achievability.

The HELAA will be subject to consultation, probably at the same time as the first draft of the Local Plan. It is therefore advisable for the Town Council to write in to the Strategic Planner to provide input into this screening process.

Type of Housing required

The main types of housing required in Burford are:

- houses for young families and
- those retiring who want to downsize.

Plus, the need to ensure 40-50% of housing are affordable. The considerations that are needed and have been checked:

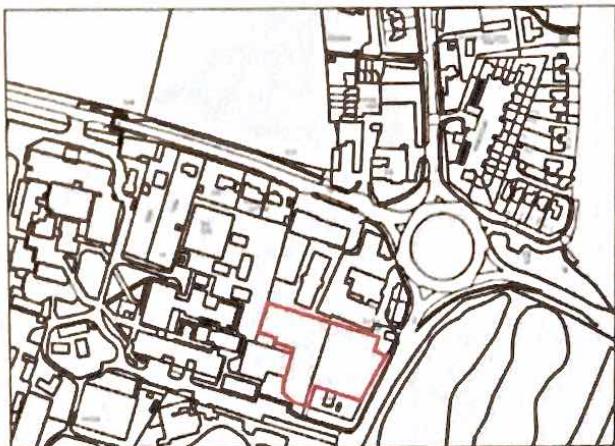
- Surgery has capacity and could be extended,
- Burford Secondary and Primary schools have capacity to take more pupils from the Burford catchment, but this would mean taking fewer pupils from further away.

For infrastructure, there is a continual issue with highway capacity at the Windrush Bridge and with car parking capacity. For water and sewerage capacity we need to rely on Thames Water's assessment.

Any houses should be developed considering eco forms of energy such as solar panels, air or ground source heat pumps instead of oil. Plus, considerations for usage of grey water etc and where feasible to offset so carbon neutral developments.

Site 1: Burford Wysdom Caravan Park (Caravan Park off A361 on OCC-owned land)

This site is near to the Burford Secondary School car park entrance on A361 road. Currently, this is a Caravan Park, that is extremely well used with tourists visiting the local area throughout the year. It is owned by OCC and leased to Burford School. The Headteacher has said that if it is turned into housing then the school would want to allocate the affordable housing to teachers.



Pros	Cons	Comments/Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The location will provide up to 10-12 houses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school owns a bungalow adjacent to the site which might need to be demolished for optimum development of the site. 	The caretaker would need to be provided accommodation in the vicinity of the school.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would lose the tourism business of caravan site. 	It is a valuable and well used affordable option for tourism for Burford area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport and other infrastructure i.e. access in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current proposed access is through the school entrance which would be difficult during peak periods. May need another entrance, and if so, would lose part of the parking layby that is well used. 	Entrance from A361 is next to Burford Secondary school. The option of changing that would mean knocking down the caretaker's cottage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially affordable housing for teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty to allocate to teachers as would have to go on open market. 	County covenant would not be suitable option as difficult to break contract.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjacent to school for families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would be exceptionally busy at school start/finish times. 	So may not be able to arrive/depart at busy school times even with separate entrance.

BTC Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievability – Difficulty with bungalow in place, access. Appropriateness – Not appropriate usage as probably cannot be allocated exclusively to teachers, better to continue as is. Overall – SITE NOT RECOMMENDED
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Site 2: On corner of A40 and Tanners Lane

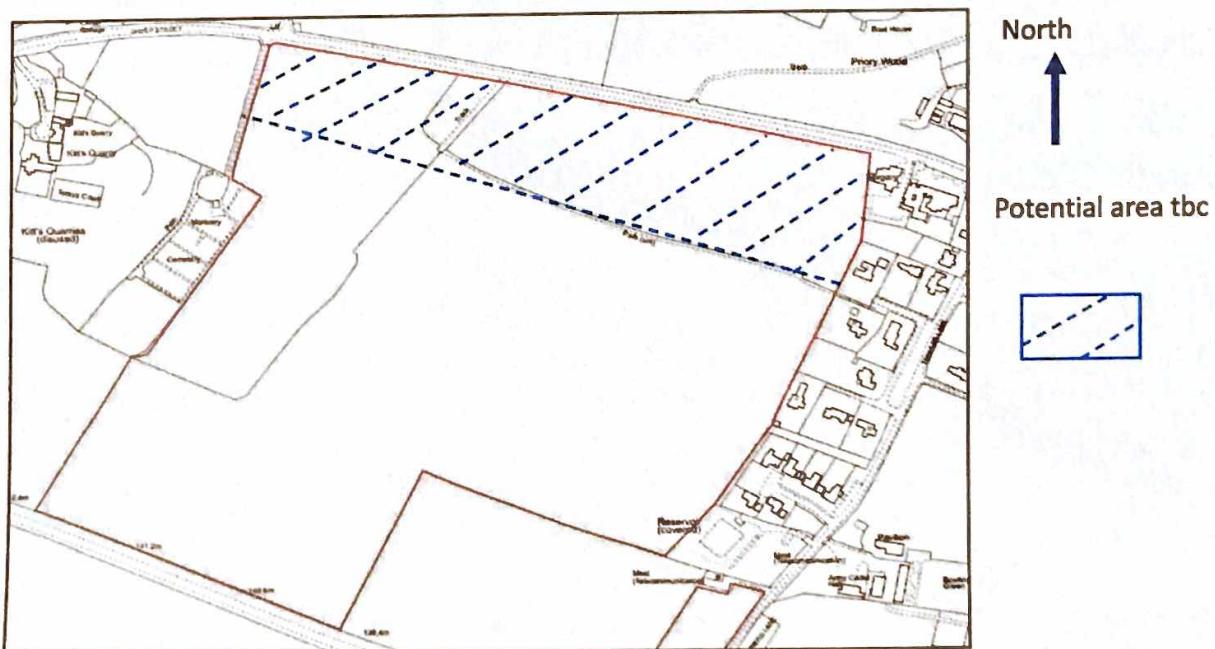
This is a very small plot of land, opposite the allotments. There are no considered positives to this site.



Pros	Cons	Comments/Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not suitable or large enough to build significant housing. 	Site was considered previously for affordable housing (approx. 2005) and deemed unsuitable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remote location, not good access. 	Remote to Burford Town centre.
BTC Recommendation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achievability – Remote and not good access. Appropriateness – Not appropriate due to small size of plot. Overall – SITE NOT RECOMMENDED

Site 3: Land South of Sheep Street (Large plot between Sheep Street and A40)

This is a very large plot of land. BTC understands that for the plot to be viable, there needs to be at least 80 houses. Half of these would need to be affordable housing. Due to the nature of the land and being in the Cotswolds National Landscape, the only part of this land that is being considered as viable is the **northern most part next to Sheep Street**, so that it does not affect the view or landscape. It has also been discussed with the landowner to include a car park and it could possibly incorporate a coach park too. These will all need to be screened by trees/bushes in keeping with landscape. The dotted lines in northern most part of land is for indication purposes only. The exact location would need to be identified and confirmed.



Pros	Cons	Comments/Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good sized plot of land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only northern part of plot can be used, due to not affecting views. 	Only northern most part right next to Sheep Street and bounded by footpath is deemed appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be viable needs to have 80 houses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure will be dramatically impacted with this number of houses. 	Burford Surgery and both schools have capacity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central location is good, ideal for schools, surgery and town centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheep street would become much busier on a road sensitive to traffic. 	As well as the houses having sufficient off-road parking will also need to have a car park for town.

BTC Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievability – Land-owner states it needs 80 houses built to be viable, which is a significant number for Burford, maybe there could be a discussion on the number of houses and other options such as car/coach park plus an example of eco-friendly housing etc. • Appropriateness – Location is good being central to town and to schools, surgery, shops etc. BTC want condition to have car and coach parks as condition for development. • Overall – SITE RECOMMENDED (northern section only)
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Site 4: Land North of Burford School (opposite Westwell Road)

This site is a rectangular parcel of land owned by OCC, which is north of A40. If houses are built here, the condition could be that there is a layover for coaches, i.e. they complete a drop off in Burford High Street/Priory Lane and then this is used as layover for coaches whilst waiting for tourists with an entrance and exit.

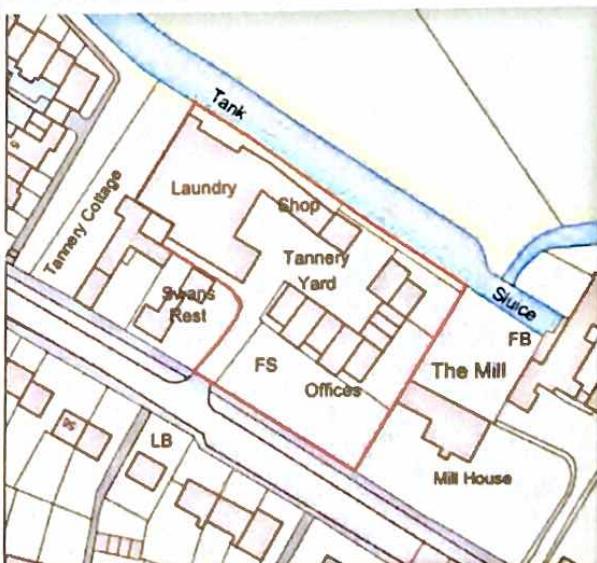


Pros	Cons	Comments/Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land is located quite a distance from the Town centre and amenities. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposed land which is visible. 	Due to high visibility from the north this is not suitable housing.

BTC Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievability – Not viable as exposed land to north. • Appropriateness – Not close to Town centre. • Overall – SITE NOT RECOMMENDED
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Site 5: Burford Laundry, Tannery Yard, off Witney Street (Business/ Commercial offices)

Currently this is an area used for commercial usage with the Burford Laundry company and other businesses. BTC know how difficult it is to change the policy (Policy E1 of the Local Plan 2031 prohibits non-employment uses) from business/commercial use to residential. It is important to keep employment opportunities in local businesses for local residents. For this reason, BTC are against this as potential residential site.



Pros	Cons	Comments/Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonably central location in Burford. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access would be ok and potential for parking next to housing. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially provide of 8 - 10 houses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would be the maximum number of houses on plot. 	BTC want to keep this site for employment with local businesses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings could be changed for usage as housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would mean a change of use from business to residential. 	It is difficult to make a change of use from business to residential.

BTC Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievability – buildings could be changed to housing. • Appropriateness – not appropriate as site for commercial use. • Overall – SITE NOT RECOMMENDED
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Summary

Of the five sites identified in Burford through the call for sites, four of the sites are not recommended by Burford Town Council.

This is due to the lack of appropriateness and inability to achieve objectives for housing. There is only one site that BTC support which is the: **northern most part of the large plot between Sheep Street and A40.** BTC provide their full support and co-operation in the site recommended.

This recommendation is on the understanding that the development is built according to planning guidelines for Burford being an historic town within the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly known as AONB) so long as the following caveats for any carpark development:

- Provision is made for a new off-Street car park for the town, and consideration given to a coach park or drop-off facility.
- Assurance is provided that sufficient sewage treatment capacity is available, and the sewerage capacity is upgraded to prevent further flooding of overloaded sewerage in the Lower High Street

BTC is keen to work with WODC to take this site forward. The council is keen to know the next steps, timeline and dependencies.