

## **Response to Buckinghamshire Council Local Plan Consultation 2025 On behalf of Marlow Town Council**

Marlow Town Council (MTC) has engaged with the local community through a combination of informal dialogue with councillors, a drop-in session on 23<sup>rd</sup> October and through eliciting feedback via a webform. We have used these channels to help in developing a response which is provided below. This submission was approved by MTC at a council meeting on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

### **Background**

Marlow is an attractive town which is geographically constrained by the River Thames to the South, the Chilterns National Landscape to the North and West and the dual carriageway A404 to the East. The surrounding area is all within designated Green Belt. The central area is a designated conservation area. Within the Buckinghamshire Council area (North of the River Thames) it is bounded by Great Marlow Parish Council, Marlow Bottom Parish Council and Little Marlow Parish Council.

The estimated population, according to ONS data is approximately 14,300 and is growing slowly. The local population is slightly older than the national average with 60+ representing 29.3% of population compared to the national average of 24.5% (ONS Census 2021).

### **Key features**

The town gains from a vibrant High Street, with high retail unit occupancy providing a mix of cafes, bars, boutique fashion shops and art galleries. It benefits from recreation grounds, including the River Thames facing Higginson Park and Riley Park and Rookery Gardens. The retail and recreational venues mean it is highly popular with local residents as well as visitors from outside Marlow.

It has a designated economic employment area at Globe Park which is recognised in the Buckinghamshire Economic strategy 2025 as one of the two most successful business parks in the whole of Buckinghamshire.

It has an enviable national reputation for gastronomic venues with several Michelin-standard restaurants in the area. It also has an international sporting reputation that has supported national and international champions in rowing, hockey, cricket and golf.

It benefits from a selection of highly rated schools that provide education at both primary and secondary levels.

### **Local Issues**

As a “destination venue” there is a need to strike a balance between retaining its attractiveness to visitors whilst not increasing the negative impact due to traffic congestion and parking problems for residents, visitors and local businesses. The A4155, which provides a link from Henley to the West and Bourne End to the East goes through Marlow and is already often at capacity.

The town has very limited NHS healthcare facilities with just a single GP practice to serve the local and surrounding area. The current service, which covers beyond just Marlow, already generates a lot of negative feedback about the lack of capacity.

Geographically, it has limited development potential in the Southern part due to being bounded by the River Thames which has an associated flood risk. The area suffers from flooding at times which would be exacerbated by further buildings and increased rainwater runoff.

To the North and West it is bounded by the Chilterns National Landscape (formerly AONB). To the East the land is within designated Green Belt and is bounded by the A404 Dual carriageway which links the M4 and M40. Within the parish, most areas have built developments already and provide limited opportunity for in-fill.

**Considering the specific areas of the local plan, we have identified a number of key considerations and suggestions when developing the plan:**

| THEME   | Associated policy                                                    | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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|         |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Housing | General                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where sites are large enough, green space should be incorporated into any development plans</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|         | HO1 Housing Mix                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the concept of “gentle density” whereby properties can use a relatively small footprint which is aimed to limit future expansion</li> <li>Flats are considered an efficient way to maximise site utilisation but desirability would depend on location and must be in keeping with the local area.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|         | HO2 Affordable Housing                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordability was an oft-cited desire however, rather than sticking to any definition of “affordability”, the local plan should consider smaller dwellings which provides starter properties and allow for people to downsize and so free up larger properties for families.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|         | HO3 Accessible Housing                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessibility needs to be considered – as well as all new housing meeting standard M4(2), all ground floor toilets and doors should be wheelchair accessible.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|         | HO4 Self and custom-build housing                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|         | HO5 Houses in multiple occupation                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|         | HO6 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show-people provision            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|         | HO7 Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show-people accommodation policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|         | HO8 Specialist Housing                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported living for adults (young and old) with additional needs but being mindful that age groups may need to be segregated.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|         | HO9 Rural Exception sites                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|         | HO10 Windfall policy                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Economy |                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|         | EC1 Strategic and Key Employment sites                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Globe Park including Marlow International are existing sites that need to be included in the plan</li> <li>Globe Park and Marlow International should be protected as a zone area under article 4 direction A4D restricting the change of use</li> <li>Globe Park is perceived by residents as underutilised.</li> <li>There is an opportunity to adapt to changing working practices – perhaps offering increased flexible/hotdesking facilities</li> <li>Improve parking facilities at Globe Park to make it more attractive to prospective tenants</li> <li>Bucks Council needs to actively support businesses by keeping business rates low</li> </ul> |
|         | EC2 Other Employment sites                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marlow has a thriving visitor population which needs to be supported by increased infrastructure of park and ride weekend facilities, well sign posted and using current business areas that are underutilised at the weekends</li> <li>There is a need for creating supported space for small and medium start up business with affordable rent</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|         | EC3 Skills and Local Employment                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retail and hospitality provide employment and should be considered in the plan</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|         | EC4 Data Centres                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data centres are a current trend where developers are utilising the current government’s policy of supporting development as part of its overall industrial strategy. Any proposed</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|                     |                                                                                          | developments should be considered in the context of adequate electricity and water supply. Sustainable technology for heating and cooling should be used.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                     | EC5 Silverstone Circuit and Silverstone Park Enterprise Zone                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                     | EC6 Westcott Venture Park Enterprise Zone and Strategic Employment site                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                     | EC7 Pinewood Studios                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                     | EC8 Rural Diversification                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                     | EC9 Tourism                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of Marlow as a high-end restaurant venue with multiple Michelin starred facilities, independent shops and historical points of interest</li> <li>Value of Higginson Park as a visitor attraction bringing up diverse range of day tourists</li> <li>Marlow is a destination for coach day trip operators</li> <li>Marlow via train – there is an opportunity to do more for visitors by train especially day trippers</li> <li>Links to housing being used as short-term lets vs use of hotels etc</li> </ul> |
|                     | EC10 Retail Hierarchy                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                     | EC11 Development within Buckinghamshire's centres                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clustering of hospitality units (i.e. hotels, restaurants, pubs and cafes) makes Marlow a desirable destination venue</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                     | EC12 Development for main town centre uses outside Buckinghamshire's centres             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Natural Environment | General                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flooding around south east Marlow needs to be mitigated through the completion of the Newt Ditch project</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                     | NE1 Water Quality                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recreational amenity of the River Thames does not meet water standards and detracts from both visitor and resident enjoyment</li> <li>Many river users – rowers, Longridge, wildlife, etc need good quality water</li> <li>The sewage facilities are unable to cope and this requires increased investment in sewage and drainage as it impacts the environment</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                           |
|                     | NE2 Watercourses and associated corridors                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                     | NE3 Protection and enhancement of sites of high biodiversity and geodiversity importance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                     | NE4 Biodiversity - Protection and enhancement of notable species                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                     | NE5 Biodiversity Gain and Nature Recovery                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                     | NE6 Green Infrastructure                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                     | NE7 Resisting the Loss of Existing Green Space                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marlow greenspace has high usage and needs to be maintained</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                     | NE8 Trees, Ancient and Veteran Trees, Woodland, Orchards                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                     | NE9 Ecological enhancements                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                     | NE10 Mitigating light impacts                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overly dim/inadequate street lighting needs to be reconsidered. Lighting should be made more directional and reduce unwanted light spill</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                     | NE11 Colne Valley Regional Park                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                     | NE12 Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                     | NE13 Suitable Natural Green Space                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                     | NE14 Gateway sites                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|           | NE15 Little Marlow Lakes                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This area needs to be protected for both Marlow residents, residents in surrounding area and visitors and MTC agree with the statement made to support the development of more access to the area for walkers, cyclists and disabled users</li> <li>Should the planning decision be made to allow the Marlow Film Studios, or any other development, to go ahead public access must be maintained to the lake and across the site at all times + mitigation for loss of habitats for wildlife</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|           | NE16 Protection of the Green Belt                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green Belt is considered important by the local community</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|           | NE17 Development in the Countryside outside the Green Belt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|           | NE18 National Landscapes and their setting                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|           | NE19 Landscape Character and Visual Amenity                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chilterns National Landscape (AONB) provides views from Winter Hill</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|           | NE20 Pollution, Air quality and Contaminated Land          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AQMA being revoked – but WHO data now says target should be lower and Marlow readings are above latest WHO recommendations</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Transport | General                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MTC supports the development of public transport in the area and the emphasis on encouraging active travel</li> <li>Improve rail connectivity to Maidenhead</li> <li>Road maintenance and pothole repair is a regularly cited complaint by residents</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|           | TR1 Transport requirements in new developments             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include transport requirements if areas in call-for-sites are used</li> <li>Marlow has an old street plan that already struggles to cope with the amount of traffic on its roads</li> <li>Bucks Council says “should” for sustainable transport provision we would say this be “must”</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|           | TR2 Transport improvements                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town + local area bus does not currently address needs of the town</li> <li>Direct links to Marlow and High Wycombe train stations are required</li> <li>Segregated cycle routes where physically possible</li> <li>The town would benefit from a 20 mph speed limit</li> <li>Cycle paths will need a creative approach as due to the nature of our street structure.</li> <li>Secure cycle parking for commuters at railway station</li> <li>Need to ensure utilities companies don't compound traffic congestion with regular road closures</li> <li>Existing train service between Marlow and Maidenhead needs improvement in order to make it a more attractive travel option</li> </ul>                           |
|           | TR3 Parking standards                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within the town we need to explore preferential parking access/costs for residents</li> <li>Parking in the town is at capacity and further exacerbated during visitor season (all year at weekends) – any development needs to incorporate additional parking measures such as park and ride</li> <li>Parking provision needs to be improved – consider multi-storey parking</li> <li>Need to ensure a balance is achieved between providing parking for visitors (who contribute to the local economy through spending in local shops) and the impact on residents of traffic congestion</li> <li>Provide additional short stay parking near to shops and encourage longer stay parking to be less central</li> </ul> |
|           | TR4 Public Rights of Way                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temple Bridge (West of Marlow) is closed and needs to be reopened</li> <li>The alley between Newfield Road and Victoria road needs to be widened</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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|                   | TR5 Freight and logistics                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local delivery proposals should be sympathetic to local road use and business needs (e.g. loading bays out of peak hours)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                   | TR6 Aviation development                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No mention is made in plan of the opportunity to support and develop Wycombe Air Park (to the North of Marlow).</li> <li>Opportunities to provide technical employment should be encouraged</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                   | TR7 East West Rail                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                   | TR8 High Speed Two                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                   | TR9 Former Bourne End to High Wycombe railway line | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We support an active travel link for leisure and commuting</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Infrastructure    |                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                   | IN1 Infrastructure delivery                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marlow cemetery provision is almost at capacity for Burials and new space needs to be identified.</li> <li>Marlow has several local parks which provide a useful community amenity</li> <li>Healthcare provision is perceived as already struggling. The current GP practice appears unable to cope with the demands made on it by the current Marlow population and it needs to be increased further to cope with increase demand caused by additional housing</li> <li>The above points would be exacerbated if Marlow expands</li> <li>Segregated Cycle routes along key roads are wanted</li> <li>Marlow Town Council did not take part in the Baseline Infrastructure Study (<a href="https://media.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/documents/Baseline_Infrastructure_Study_-_March_2024.pdf">https://media.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/documents/Baseline_Infrastructure_Study_-_March_2024.pdf</a>)</li> </ul> |
|                   | IN2 Water infrastructure                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upstream investment needed to protect Marlow. (obviously investment needed to stop discharges)</li> <li>Sewage infrastructure needs to be upgraded as unable to cope with capacity.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                   | IN3 Telecommunications Infrastructure              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Placement of telecoms boxes on pavements should be avoided</li> <li>Telecomms providers need to upgrade their provision for the town. Marlow has a very patchy mobile and broadband access – providers need to be encouraged to upgrade facilities for all</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Built Environment |                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                   | BE1 Sense of place                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marlow has a conservation area</li> <li>Court Gardens is a listed building in need of significant repair</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Emerging Policies | These are currently in development                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MTC supports the development of the new emerging policies and looks forward to seeing the content for comment</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Other             | Climate Change                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased development on the boundaries of Marlow which currently absorb water would contribute to increased flooding of surface water during downpours.</li> <li>Planning controls for householder developments should incorporate stricter surface water controls for increased footprint.</li> <li>Due consideration needs to be taken on any developments given that Marlow is a flood risk area</li> <li>Increase EV charging point provision</li> <li>Rooftop solar panels to be considered for all new developments and existing Community and Business Buildings</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                   | Social environment                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The allotments in Marlow are valued and important to the community</li> <li>Increase number (and size) of public bins</li> <li>Wheelchair / mobility accessibility needs more consideration when planning pedestrian access</li> <li>Public toilets need to be maintained and cleaned to ensure they are open for visitors and residents</li> <li>Improvements such as a refurbished skatepark and open-air multi-use gyms should be considered for all age groups</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |