

# Steeple Claydon Neighbourhood Plan

## Vision Paper

January 2016

### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to capture the outcome of the Steeple Claydon Neighbourhood Plan (SCNP) planning workshop held on 2 December 2015 and to make recommendations on the form of the draft document for the consideration of the Steering Group. These recommendations relate to:

- The vision, key objectives and land use planning policy scope of the SCNP
- Further community engagement activities and evidence analysis
- The project plan through to the submission of the SCNP

The recommendations reflect not just the outcome of the workshop but also initial insights into the national and local planning policy context of the SCNP. Specifically, the SCNP must meet a series of 'basic conditions' relating to its general conformity with that policy context. The examination of the SCNP in due course will focus on how those conditions have been met, before it goes to referendum.

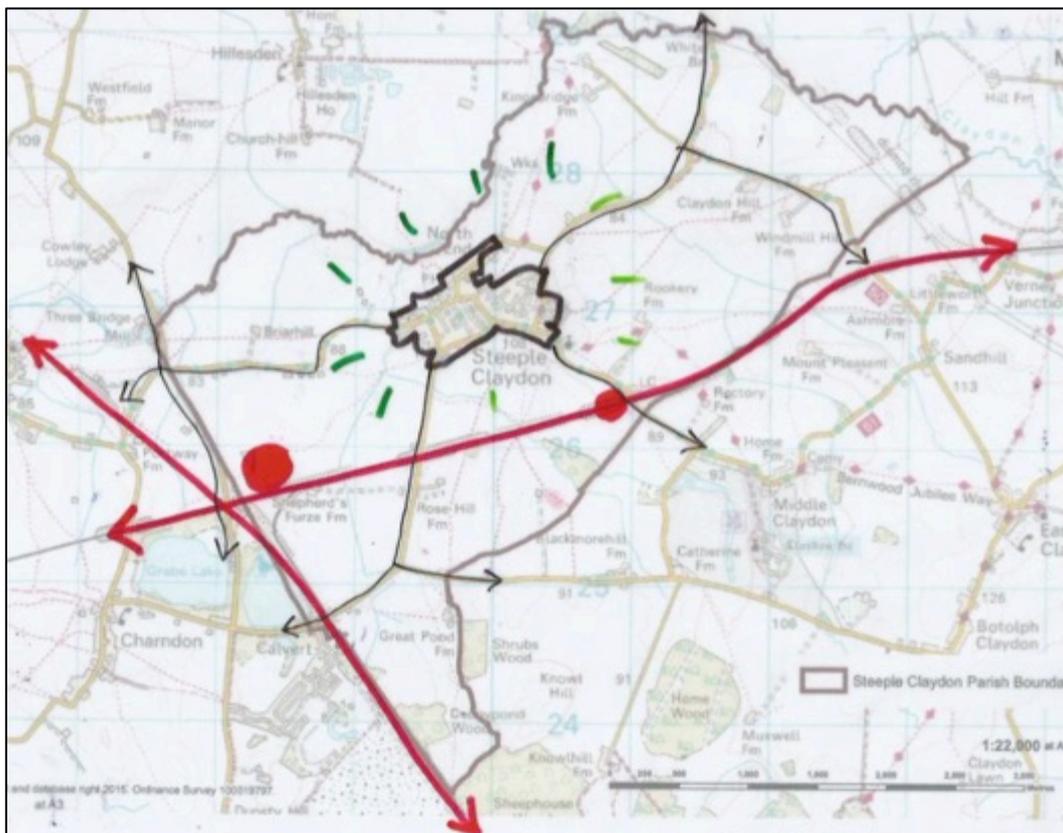


Figure A: Steeple Claydon Parish, HS2 & East West Rail

## Background & Context

The context indicates relatively few environmental parameters – although there are some listed buildings in clusters in the village, there is no Conservation Area designation. The landscape to the north and west is assessed as being of relatively high sensitivity to development; the land to the south and east having relatively little.

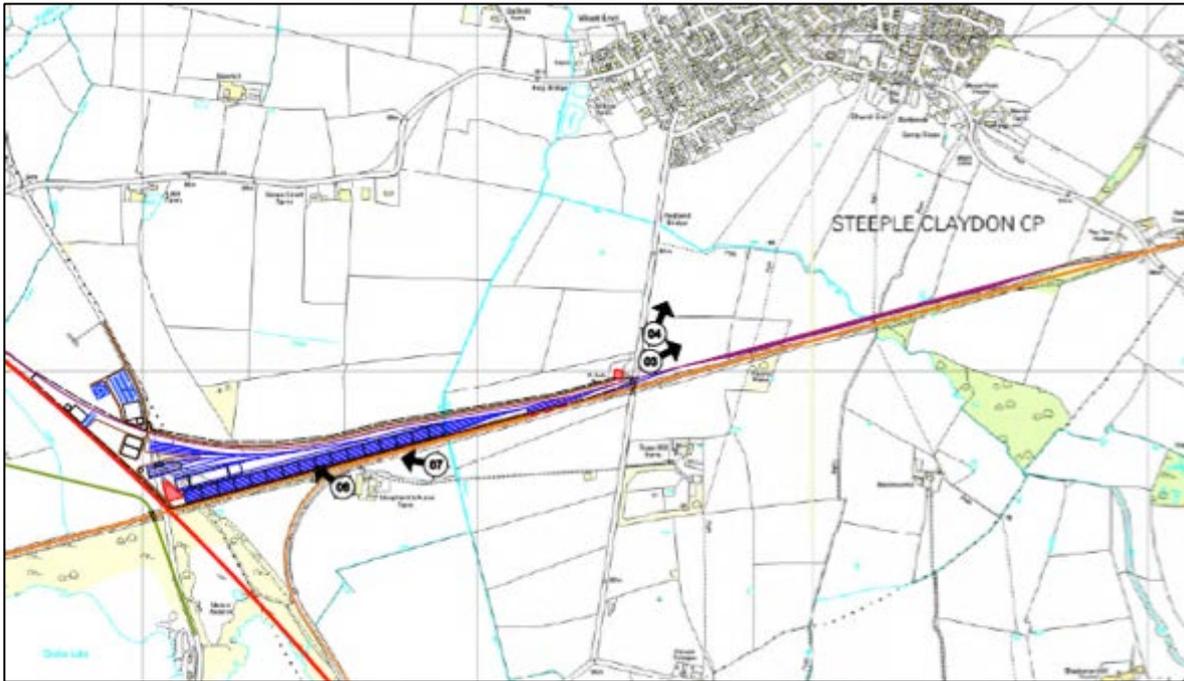
The village has a population of approx. 2,500 and benefits from a good mix of community facilities, including local shops, and from a reasonable range of housing types and tenures. However, some facilities are in poor condition and some are in problematic locations for car parking and road safety.



Figure B: Steeple Claydon Village – key features

There is relatively little local employment; the majority of the working population commutes east to Milton Keynes and west to Bicester and beyond in roughly equal proportion. There is thought to be relatively high levels of home working, supported by good local broadband accessibility.

The village lies just to the north of the proposed East – West Rail Link project, which will re-open the line between Oxford and Milton Keynes to passenger services before the end of the decade. Although not currently part of the plans, the County and Parish Councils have lobbied for a new station at the level crossing on Queen Catherine Road, about ¼ mile SE of the village. This would be intended to service not just the village, but also in-commuters (and the initial construction workers) of the proposed High Speed Rail 2 Infrastructure Maintenance Depot that is proposed at the junction of the two new rail lines about ¼ mile SW of the village (see Figures A and C).



*Figure C: Proposed HS2 Infrastructure Maintenance Depot*

There is currently little in the way of a strategic planning policy framework at the district level. The saved policies of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan of 2004 will therefore be used to examine if the SCNP meets the basic conditions.

The Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) is being prepared but it will not be adopted until well after the making of the SCNP. Some of its emerging evidence base has recently been published, comprising an Issues & Options consultation document and updated Housing & Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

A number of sites have been submitted to AVDC for HELAA assessment (shown in Figure D). They comprise mostly edge of village locations but also the Langston & Tasker coach business on Buckingham Road and Claydon Garage on Queen Catherine Road; both are currently operational. Some sites have been completed since 2013 (part of 001 and all 004) and others have planning consent or are already in the application process (009 and part of 010). There are also proposals for a 95 home scheme on land east of Buckingham Road and north of Sandholme (shown on Figure B).

That evidence base indicates that Steeple Claydon is a 'larger village' and as such the VALP Issues & Options document proposes approximately 100 – 120 new homes are supplied over the plan period 2013 - 2033. But, the VALP housing and spatial strategies have yet to be determined by AVDC or tested at examination. With the consents at sites 001, 004 and 009, the village will already supply over 80 new homes in that period, with a further 22 homes in abeyance at site 010. Should the VALP housing strategy remain the same, it may be that the SCNP need only identify land for another 20 – 30 homes. If the proposals at Buckingham Road are consented in due course, then it may not even need to do that.

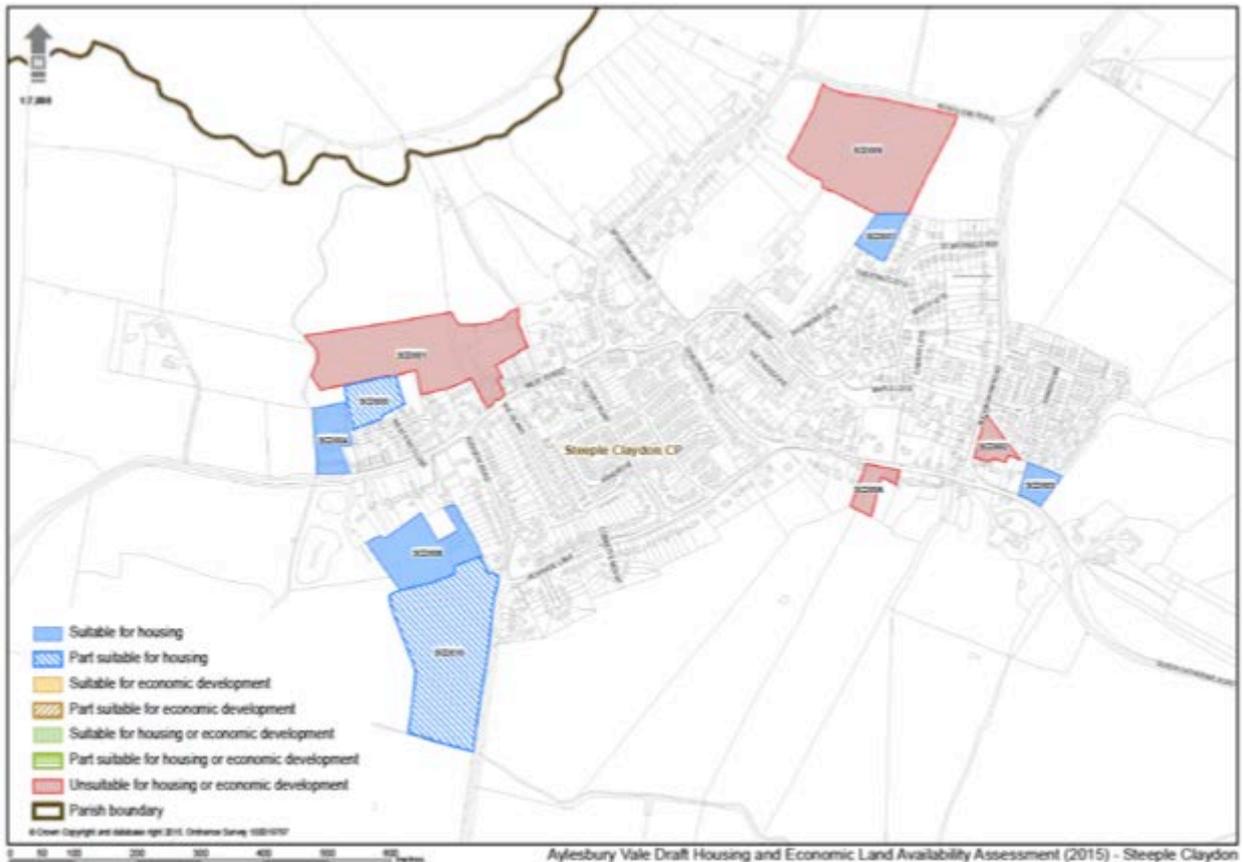


Figure D: VALP HELAA 2015 - Steeple Claydon Extract

The Draft SCNP will provide an outline of this policy context and of the environmental parameters as a justification for its emerging policies. It will also be shaped by the strategic environmental assessment (SEA), which will now be screened for by AVDC using this report, and by the recommended engagement activities set out below.

### Vision & Objectives

There appears to be an emerging vision for the SCNP area for the next 20 years or so, comprising a combination of:

- Managing the future growth of housing in the village by limiting the size of new housing schemes and distributing them throughout the village to minimise the effects of traffic on its narrow streets and lanes
- The protection of the special historic and architectural character of the village’s Listed Buildings and their settings
- Providing new homes to meet the local need for housing, notably of older households wanting to downsize and of newly forming households from local families
- Identifying mixed use schemes to enable some new housing sites to deliver new employment and/or retail premises
- The survival and ongoing improvement of valued community assets, most notably the primary school, village shops and community facilities

## Outline Policy Scope

The vision and objectives suggest the following opportunity/need for planning policy:

- A spatial policy to define the settlement boundary of the village that reflects any proposed SCNP policies supporting development on the edge of the settlement (replacing AVDLP Policy RA14)
- One or more site specific policies that support particular development proposals in line with the spatial policy, with the intention of encouraging planning applications and of establishing the key development principles (e.g. access, layout, design, landscaping, S106) to which an application must adhere – these policies may include housing-only schemes on specific sites and schemes for a mix of other uses with enabling housing development (refining AVDLP Policy RA13 and pursuant to Policy GP35)
- A design policy that includes common design characteristics of the different parts of the village (refining AVDLP Policies GP35 and GP53)
- A policy allocating and/or supporting local economic development on new sites (pursuant to AVDLP Policy GP17)
- A policy that identifies those community facilities (buildings and land) that will be protected from a change of use and that allocates land for new facilities (pursuant to AVDLP Policies GP93 and GP94)
- A policy that designates Local Green Spaces as provided for by paras 76-77 of the NPPF (replacing former AVDLP Policy GP85) that may be part of a wider Green Infrastructure policy that incorporates site allocations and other policies

On all other policy matters it is likely that the SCNP will choose to remain silent as they are already covered by saved AVDLP policies and by the provisions of the NPPF, with no effective room for further refinement.

## Policy Issues

With the need to determine the precise nature of these policies, there are a number of issues to discuss/resolve:

- How we do select possible housing sites? What 'layers' of information could we use, e.g. size of available site, proximity to village services, effect of new traffic on 'Co-op Corner', landscape sensitivity, effect on listed building setting, use of brownfield land, opportunity to deliver non-housing objectives?
- What do we do about housing if forthcoming planning applications result in our VALP 'target' being met? Might there still be value in allocating sites to achieve other objectives?
- Should we encourage the relocation of the Co-op to a new, larger site on the edge of the village to remove the current traffic, parking and safety problems and to give the village a larger convenience store? Would the Co-op be interested? Where could a new store go? Would the land be available for that purpose? Part of the recreation ground with the Meadoway frontage? Buckingham Road/Sandholme? Molly's Folly?

- Should we protect the two employment uses or reuse one or both for housing and other purposes as brownfield land?
- How do we select possible new employment sites? What 'layers' of information would we use, e.g. traffic access, size of site, suitability of site for mixed use scheme with housing, landscape sensitivity, effect on listed building setting and willing landowner? Can we include starter offices for locally based small businesses?
- What community facilities would be on the list of those to be protected from a change of use?
- What are the plans for the GP Surgery? Can we develop proposals that meet their needs for an improved health care facility in the village?
- Which spaces meet the criteria of para 77 of the NPPF for designation as Local Green Spaces?
- Should we consider relocating all or part of the recreation ground to the edge of the village to use the Parish Council-owned land to achieve an affordable housing scheme for local people under its control? Where and how might this happen?
- What are the most important design features of the village that we would like to see repeated in new development? Can we evidence this with photos? Do different parts of the village have different characteristics?

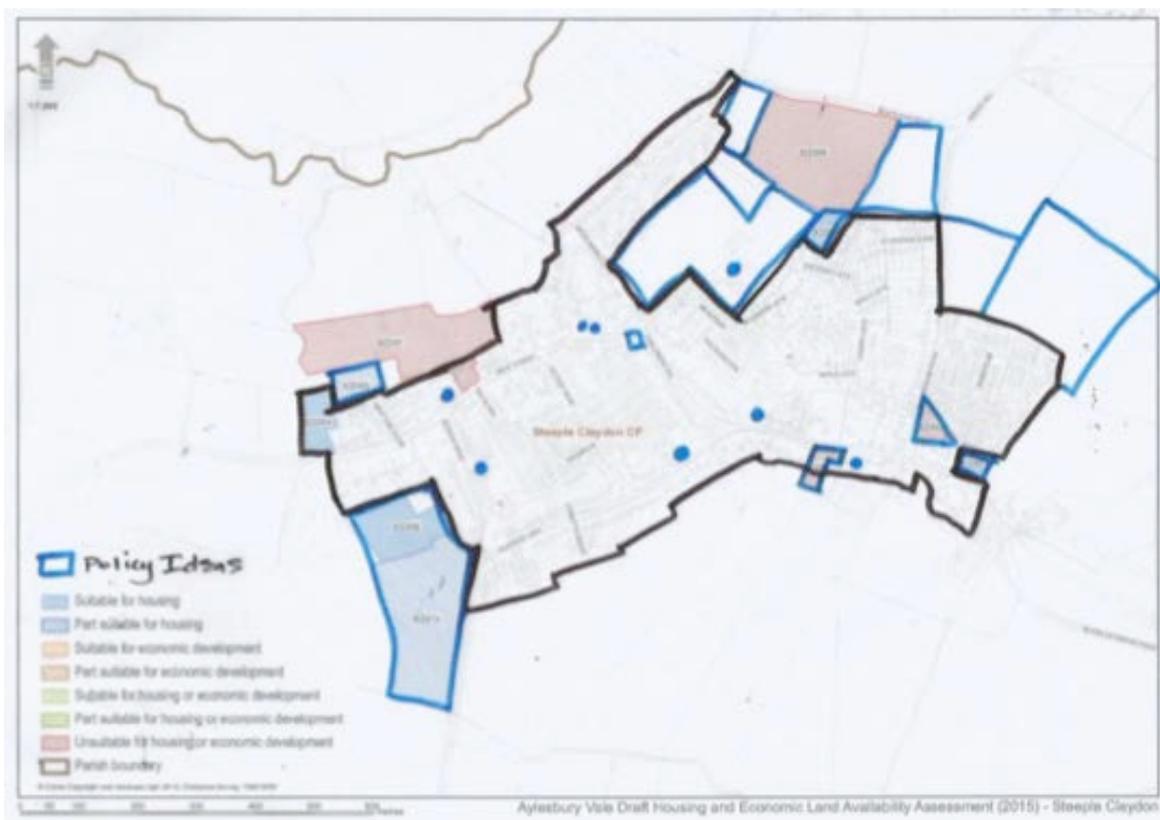


Figure E: Steeple Claydon: Policy Opportunity Sites

## **Engagement Activities**

The following Task Groups should be established to address the above policy ideas and issues. Each task group should be given simple terms of reference and deadline for output. Each group should be chaired by an steering group member with relevant experience/expertise/interest. Their outputs should be a short report summarising insights, opinions, data etc. including plans as appropriate.

### Housing Group

- Review HELAA and identify other potential sites to assess based on local knowledge
- If new sites then check with landowner that the land will be made available and on what terms
- Prepare a site assessment report with simple criteria to identify sites as suitable, not suitable or worthy of further consideration
- RCOH to prepare simple capacity assessments of suitable sites if information not already available
- Meet with landowners as necessary to discuss emerging site policy principles

### Employment Group

- Review the coach and garage sites and check intentions of landowners/operators
- Identify potential sites for new employment uses
- Review Co-op relocation idea, check with Co-op if interested in relocation to larger site and identify potential sites
- RCOH to prepare simple site capacity assessments of suitable sites

### Environment Group

- Identify candidate Local Green Space sites as per NPPF para 77 criteria
- Provide description and photo of each site
- Identify any green assets within and adjoining the village and identify opportunities to improve their quality and connectivity, e.g. open spaces, cycleways, public footpaths, ecological areas

### Community Assets Group

- Identify community facilities to benefit from an protection and improvement policy
- Review the recreation ground and identify potential for reuse of parts for other community benefits (e.g. affordable housing, new shop)
- Identify land for new recreation facilities if relocation necessary

## **Project Plan: Key Milestones**

This is an indicative project plan with the key milestones outlined. A more detailed project plan will be agreed with the Steering Group.

### Pre Submission Plan

- All above engagement activities to be completed and RCOH and Steering Group to review all action outputs in early March
- RCOH to prepare draft SCNP for Steering Group consideration by end March
- RCOH completes Pre Submission Plan for Steering Group consideration then Parish Council approval for public consultation (Reg. 14) in early April
- Statutory six week public consultation period finishes end of May
- Analysis of representations and Steering Group approval to modifications in early June

### Submission Plan

- RCOH prepares final Plan and Basic Conditions Statement for submission plan to NPSG by end June
- NPSG prepares Consultation Statement for same
- Parish Council approves documents for submission to AVDC for examination in July