

ONH

Planning for Good

PLAN ... OR BE PLANNED

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ALC
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

3RD OCTOBER 2026



WHY PLAN?

“Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth.”

— Mike Tyson

“It wasn’t raining when Noah built the ark.”

— Howard Ruff

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

— Jane Jacobs



CONTEXT



Changing national policy

- New rules for plan making and development management
- National Development Management Policies (NDMPs)
- Delegated decision making



An uncertain future

- Volatility, complexity, predictability and uncertainty
- In the factors driving change in towns and villages



Infrastructure matters more

- Access to quality movement, social, green and utility infrastructure
- Ever more vital to successful placemaking



INSIGHTS

1

Greater premium on future insights ...

2

... using exploratory scenario planning to model different futures and understand the variables ...

3

... and then choose the best strategy ...

4

... to pull the future towards you



RESPONSES

1. Producing Neighbourhood Plans
2. Producing Settlement Spatial Plans



NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS

A sharper spatial focus

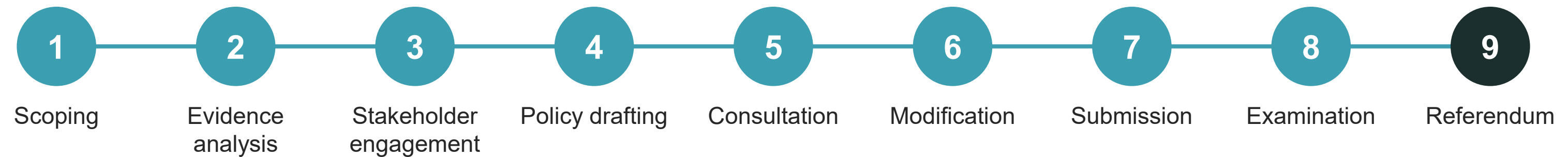
- Local spatial policy – site allocations, settlement boundary definition, design zoning etc
- Refining NDMPs – showing where they ‘hit the ground’ on the policies map and adding local detail (but not contradicting them)

Housing supply: top down and bottom up

- **Top down:** the Standard Method as the starting point for an indicative target (homes per year × plan period), then judgement on the factors that may pull it up or down
- **Bottom up:** the functional relationship between growth and the distribution and capacity of local infrastructure, creating two or more indicative targets

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS: PROCESS, TIME & COST

The plan making process remains the same



SEA

Strategic environmental assessment very likely to be required

≤ 12 months

Maximum from scoping to submission – can be quicker to control events

£5k – £30k

Guide price (£5,000 – £30,000)



SETTLEMENT SPATIAL PLANS

What is a Settlement Spatial Plan?

- An ONH product, derived from our neighbourhood planning experience, that can inform new plans and representations on Local Plans and major planning applications
- Builds and tests a small number of distinct, plausible scenarios of a place's future using simple 'cause and effect' assumptions and storytelling
- Enables much richer conversations with communities, infrastructure operators, land interests and planning authorities
- Frames a pragmatic, resilient, high level land use and development strategy that avoids predicting the future

3 – 5 months

depending on the extent of engagement

£9k – £13k

guide price (£9,000 – £13,000)



CASE STUDIES

Bloxham Neighbourhood Plan (made July 2026)

WWATCH Settlement Spatial Plan (summer 2026)

CASE STUDY: BLOXHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



Painters Farm concept masterplan (Policy BL2)

Modified plan 2024–2042 · Bloxham Parish Council · Cherwell District

340

homes provided for to 2042

125

homes allocated at Painters Farm

15

planning policies

- A Category A village under pressure from a wave of speculative applications
- New settlement boundary: development supported inside, resisted outside
- 14 sites assessed with SEA; the site chosen for what it delivers on site
- Allocation secures school expansion land, a burial ground, a community barn, Hobb Hill open space and better flood resilience
- Deliberately plans beyond the Local Plan figure of 75 homes to secure infrastructure
- Being used successfully to refuse major planning applications outside the settlement boundary

CASE STUDY: WWATCH SETTLEMENT SPATIAL PLAN

Scenarios tested with four parish councils SE of Aylesbury

Greater Hampden Fields

+4,000 homes

New Halton (1,500) and a new link road

PREFERRED

Network of Bigger Vibrant Villages

+3,000 homes

Growth shared across the villages

New Halton

+4,000 homes

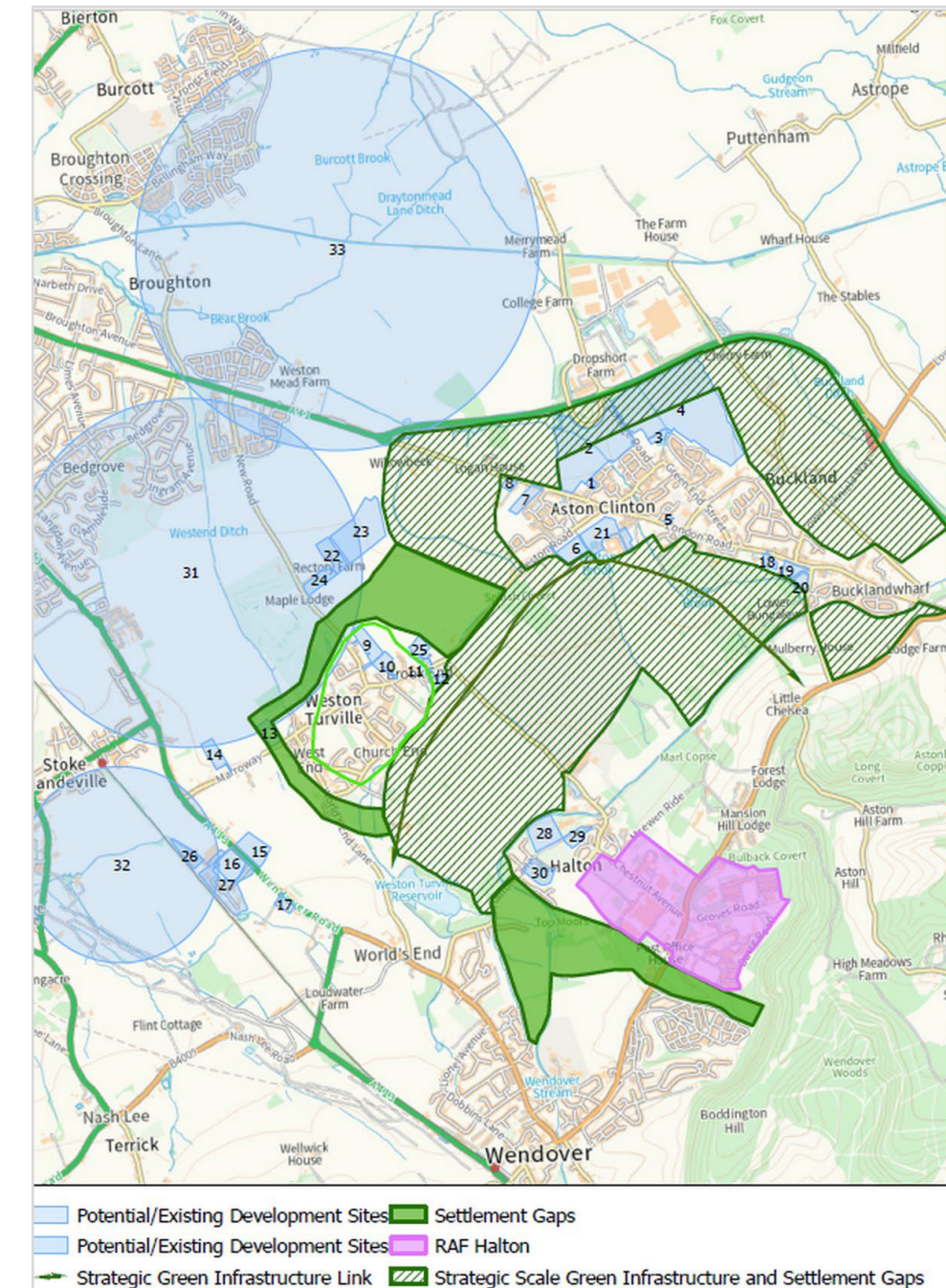
A larger New Halton of c.3,000 homes

Greater Aylesbury

+5,000 homes

Rapid transit; services shared with Stoke Mandeville

- Built by a combined, four parish, steering group and tested against consistent lenses: character, social infrastructure, traffic, climate, centres and deliverability
- Exposed a gap in the draft Buckinghamshire Local Plan: no plan for the cumulative infrastructure of c.8,000 homes in this area
- Framed a preferred development and local infrastructure strategy protecting strategic green infrastructure between settlements
- Used as the basis for the Reg 19 representations of each Parish Council with the group considering the designation of a new neighbourhood area for a joint Neighbourhood Plan



Draft Local Plan sites and proposed strategic green infrastructure

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THANK YOU – QUESTIONS?

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