

## The Buckingham Society, Buckingham's Civic Society, is to campaign for a "Yes" vote in the referendum on the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan (BNDP)

The Buckingham Society, Buckingham's Civic Society is to campaign for a "Yes" vote in the forthcoming referendum on the Buckingham Neighbour Development Plan (BNDP). This will be held on 22 January.

If a majority of votes cast in the referendum are in favour of the BNDP (i.e. are "Yes" votes) then this will become the statutory land use plan for Buckingham between 2025 and 2040.

The BNDP encapsulates the efforts of a large number of organisations and individuals within Buckingham, including Buckingham Town Council (BTC) and Buckingham Society members, coordinated by a working group.

It should provide an element of certainty about what the next 15-years hold as far as future developments within Buckingham are concerned.

More importantly, it provides the context in which all the various decision makers and participants within the planning process will be required to operate.

For example, prospective developers will not normally be permitted to build or develop land outside the sites identified within the Plan. Nor will they normally be able to develop a site that has been allocated to a specific use-class, such as commerce or industry, to housing.

The Plan has been approved by both BTC as well as an independent examiner appointed by Buckinghamshire Council (BC), Buckingham's local planning authority, to ensure that it meets its legal obligations.

However, it will **NOT** become effective or, in force as the statutory Plan, unless it secures a majority of the votes cast in the referendum on 22 January.

If the BNDP doesn't achieve this then it will fail. Moreover, there will be no second chance to tweak the plan to make it more acceptable to voters. It is very much a case of "take it or leave it." Should Buckingham's voters decide not to vote "yes" or vote in sufficient numbers to ensure that "yes" votes account for a majority of the votes cast, then the town could become an open-house to all sorts of unwelcome or "unplanned" developments.

"Of course, Buckingham will not be completely unprotected as the UK's statutory planning system will still remain in force," said Ian Orton, the Buckingham Society's chairman.

"But there are **three** other reasons that registered voters in Buckingham should vote "Yes" in the referendum on 22 January 2026," Mr Orton continued.



**"The first** is, as noted above, the BNDP is very much the outcome of local initiative and effort. It reflects the expertise of local organisations and individuals rather than BC's planners located in Aylesbury."

**"The second** reason for voting "yes" in the referendum is that it enables those voters that were not directly involved in the plan making process, as members of the working group, to still participate in the way in which Buckingham develops and evolves over the next 15-years."

"This is good for democracy. Voting in the referendum helps reduce the democratic deficit. It is only the neighbourhood planning process that facilitates this. Any future plans that cover Buckingham produced by BC will **not** be subject to a referendum. It will be another case of Whitehall or, more likely in this case, Aylesbury knowing best!"

**"A third** reason for voting yes is that if the BNDP does become the statutory plan in force then the town may receive a bigger proportion of any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds, to support new developments, once this regime is implemented in the former Aylesbury Vale District Council area."

"For all these reasons we are encouraging our members to vote for the BNDP in the referendum on 22 January and will try to persuade registered voters in Buckingham to do so as well," said Mr Orton.

**Ends.**

**For further information contact:**

Ian Orton, Chairman of the Buckingham Society. Email: [buckcsoc@gmail.com](mailto:buckcsoc@gmail.com) Tel: 01280 812600

Anthony Ralph, for the Buckingham Society's Planning Group Email: [buckcsoc@gmail.com](mailto:buckcsoc@gmail.com)

**Notes for editors:**

**1. The Buckingham Society**

Established in 1974 as a successor organisation to a community group that successfully campaigned for a bypass around the town, the Buckingham Society has focused its activities on helping to make Buckingham a better place in which to live and work.

Most of its activities have focused on planning-related activities but it has also organised a variety of talks across a range of subjects including local history.



It helped organise and underwrote the recent commemoration of the three-hundredth anniversary of the Great Fire of Buckingham.

It is a registered charity (No. 268503) and a member of Civic Voice, the national charity for the civic movement in England.

## 2. Neighbourhood Development Plans

Introduced by the Localism Act 2011, the neighbourhood planning process empowers local communities, such as town and parish councils to create planning policies to guide future developments covering housing, retail and commercial, green spaces, design etc. in their areas.

If approved in a referendum they become the statutory plan for the area in question.

Although they must align with national planning policies and cannot stop necessary developments, they can nonetheless play an important role in shaping the direction of future development at a local level.

