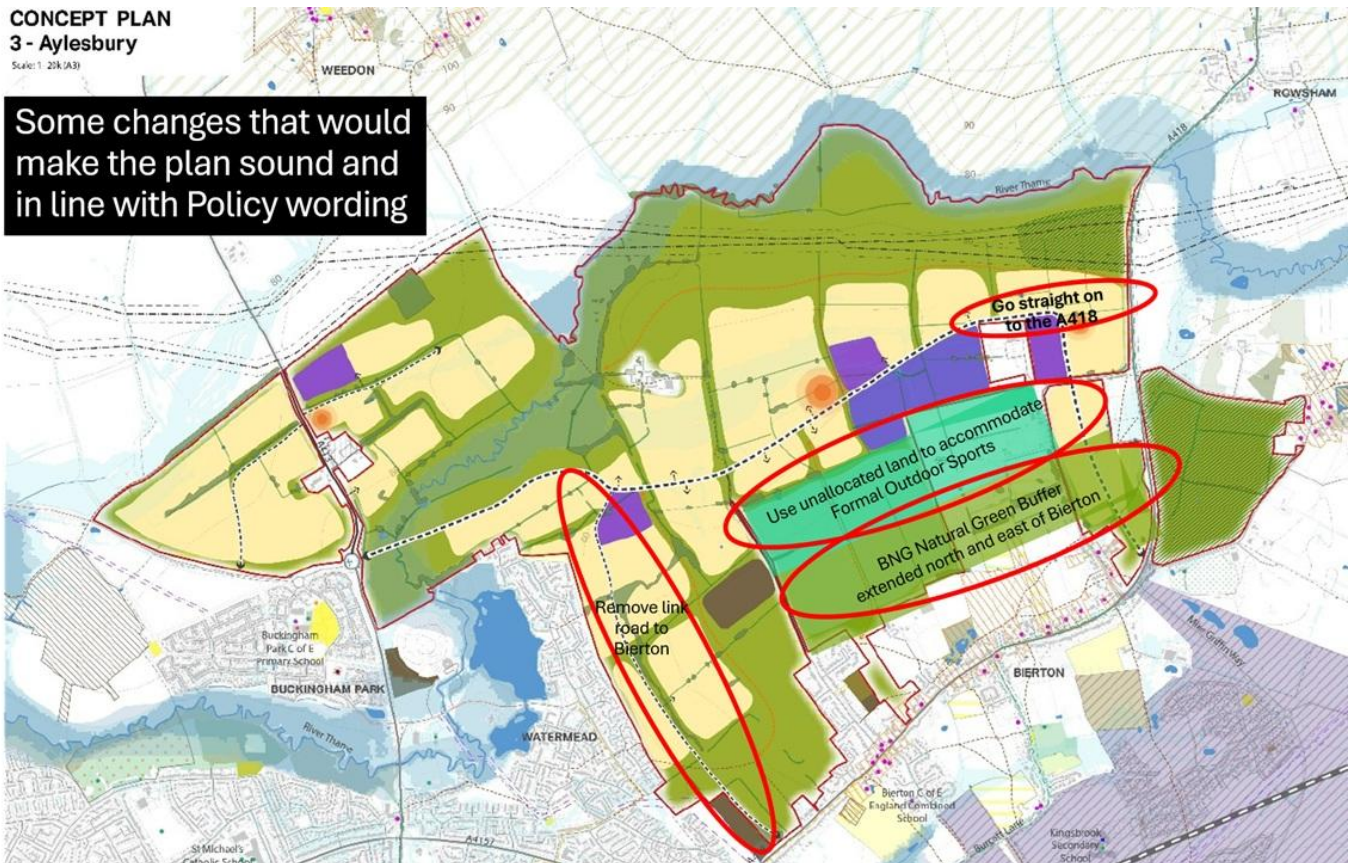


Bierton Action Group

Regulation 19 Local Plan Evidence Paper

NESS003 Aylesbury North and the protection of Bierton's setting



Illustrative Bierton Action Group proposed modifications to the Regulation 19 concept plan

Purpose: to support residents' Regulation 19 representations. This paper does not oppose the principle of strategic growth at NESS003; it seeks changes that minimise its impact on Bierton and better deliver the Plan's own policy objectives.

August 2026

1. Executive summary

Bierton Action Group's principal concern is the relationship between the proposed Aylesbury North strategic development (NESS003) and the historic village of Bierton. The Regulation 19 policy recognises the need for a strategic green gap, prevention of coalescence, protection of Bierton's Conservation Area setting and visual separation. The issue is whether the Concept Plan is the most appropriate and effective way of delivering those objectives.

The Concept Plan places a substantial area of Formal Outdoor Sports immediately adjoining Bierton. The Action Group considers that a predominantly natural and semi-natural landscape buffer would provide a less urbanising transition and would better protect the village's identity and historic setting. The required sports provision can be retained but relocated, subject to proper assessment of suitable and deliverable land.

The Action Group also asks the Council to assess a more direct eastern connection of the Northern Link Road (NLR), east towards the A418, and to reconsider the proposed southern connection towards Bierton. These transport changes should be tested through the transport evidence rather than assumed.

The central soundness question is not whether NESS003 should exist, but whether the published evidence adequately demonstrates that the chosen spatial arrangement is preferable to realistic alternatives that could deliver the same housing and sports requirements with less impact on Bierton.

2. What is the Inspector asked to consider

- Whether the Concept Plan gives practical effect to the policy requirement for a strategic green gap that prevents coalescence and protects Bierton's setting.
- Whether Formal Outdoor Sports immediately adjoining Bierton is the most appropriate land use for that sensitive edge.
- Whether a reasonable alternative - Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space adjoining Bierton, with formal sports provision relocated - has been adequately assessed and explained.
- Whether the NLR alignment to the east is adequately justified against a more direct connection to the A418 and whether the southern connection to the west of Bierton has been fully assessed against alternatives.
- Whether the policy/masterplanning framework provides sufficiently clear and durable protection for Bierton's separate identity over the long build-out of NESS003.
- What binding delivery triggers can be put in place to ensure infrastructure delivery in advance of development.

3. Soundness and reasonable alternatives

For this Regulation 19 representation the primary case is one of soundness. Under the applicable national plan-making framework, a Local Plan should be justified and effective. An appropriate strategy should take account of reasonable alternatives based on proportionate evidence.

Government Planning Practice Guidance states that Sustainability Appraisal should assess the plan against reasonable alternatives, identify significant adverse effects and mitigation, and explain why rejected options were not taken forward. It also says the preferred approach and reasonable alternatives should be compared on a consistent basis.

The Action Group's alternative is deliberately constructive: it does not require the deletion of NESS003, a reduction in the strategic housing requirement, or the loss of formal sports provision. It proposes a different disposition of land uses to better achieve the Plan's stated objectives for Bierton.

A key question for examination: what published evidence demonstrates why Formal Outdoor Sports adjoining Bierton is preferable to Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space adjoining Bierton, with the sports provision relocated?

4. Regulation 19 Concept Plan

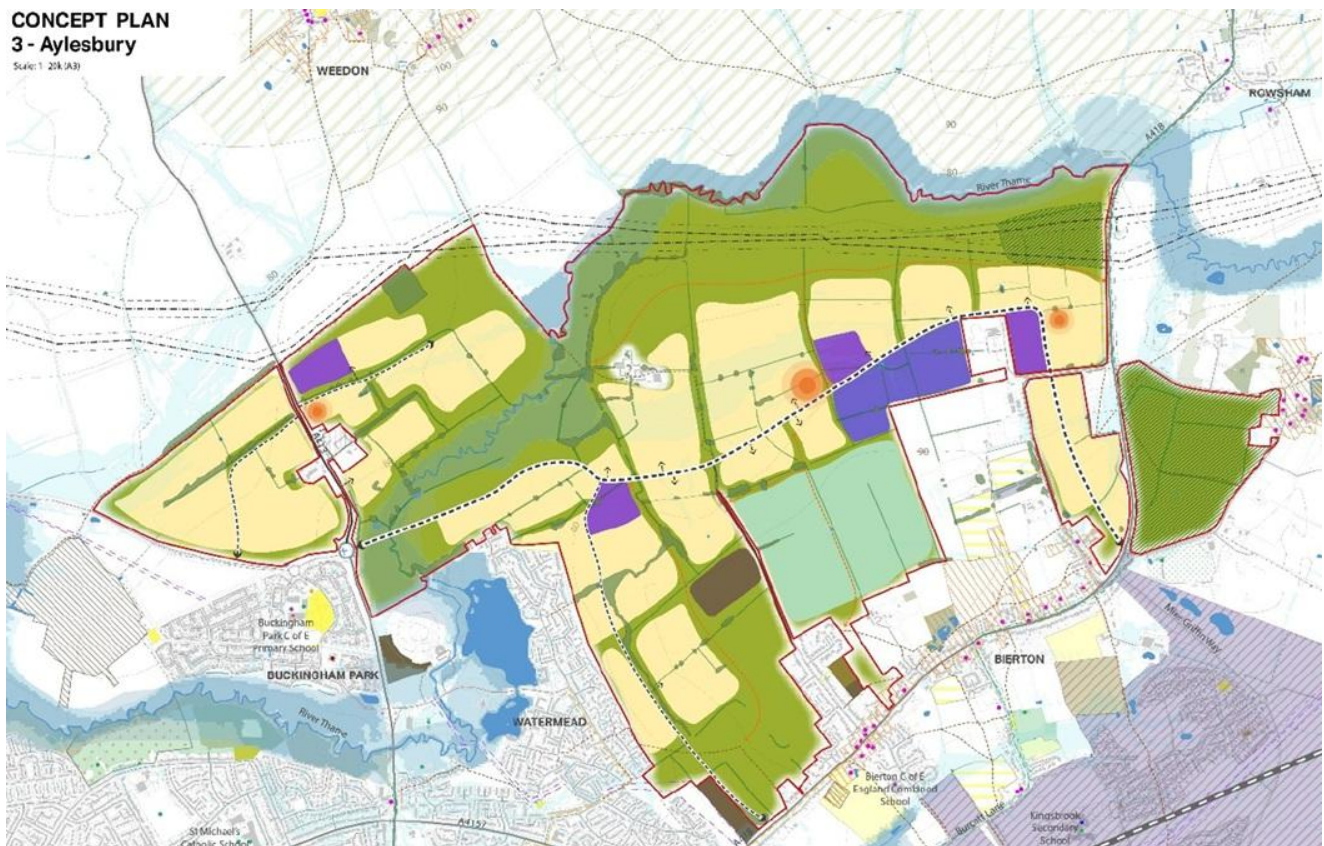


Figure 1 - Regulation 19 Concept Plan supplied for NESS003.

The plan shows the relationship between the proposed development parcels, green infrastructure, formal outdoor sports, strategic transport routes and Bierton. Our concern is concentrated on the Bierton-facing southern/eastern edge rather than the overall principle of the strategic allocation.

5. Bierton Action Group illustrative alternative

CONCEPT PLAN
3 - Aylesbury
Scale: 1:20K (A3)

Some changes that would make the plan sound and in line with Policy wording

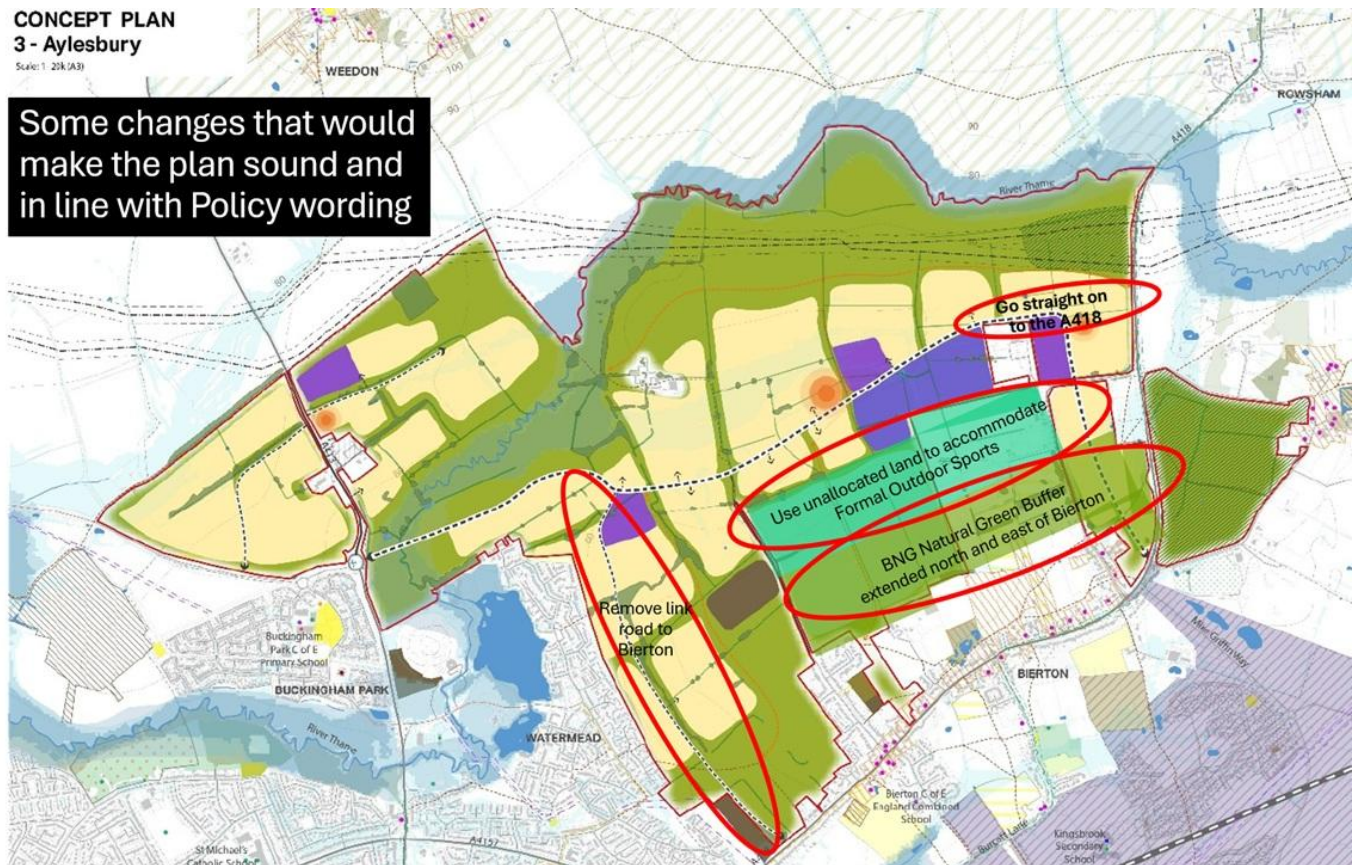


Figure 2 - Illustrative proposed modifications. This is intended to identify alternatives for assessment, not to prescribe a detailed engineering or landscape design.

The three principal changes

- Create a predominantly Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space buffer along the north and east of Bierton, capable of incorporating woodland, meadow, hedgerows, habitat creation, ecological connectivity and Biodiversity Net Gain where appropriate.
- Retain the overall requirement for Formal Outdoor Sports but relocate provision away from the immediate Bierton edge, using suitable and deliverable land identified through the masterplanning process.
- Assess a more direct eastern NLR route east directly towards the A418 and reconsider the need for the southern connection to the west of Bierton towards a traffic calmed road, having regard to traffic, place-making and the objective of maintaining Bierton's separate identity.

6. Why Natural Green Space is preferable at the Bierton edge

Formal sports pitches are green in appearance, but their operational character can be significantly more urban than natural green infrastructure. Depending on detailed design they may involve pavilions or changing facilities, parking, access roads, fencing, lighting, artificial surfaces and concentrated activity.

A natural and semi-natural buffer has greater potential to perform several functions simultaneously:

- Provide a clear visual and physical transition between Aylesbury's urban extension and Bierton.

- Protect and reinforce the rural setting and separate identity of Bierton.
- Support the setting and significance of the Bierton Conservation Area.
- Create habitat and strengthen ecological networks.
- Provide opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain and nature recovery.
- Provide informal recreation and access to nature where compatible with ecological objectives.
- Create a durable landscape structure that can mature over the long build-out period.

The Action Group is not asking for formal sports provision to be removed. The proposal is to place the least urbanising green use closest to Bierton and locate more intensive recreational uses further from the historic village edge and closer to housing & schools.

7. Heritage, landscape and village identity

The importance of the strategic gap is heightened by Bierton's Conservation Area and the cumulative scale of planned growth around the village. The purpose of the gap should therefore be secured in policy and masterplanning terms, not left solely to detailed applications many years later.

The Action Group asks that the final policy/masterplan framework clearly establishes the Bierton-facing land as a permanent landscape and ecological buffer whose primary purposes include separation, visual containment, heritage setting and nature recovery. Biodiversity Net Gain can contribute to delivery, but the long-term protection of the strategic gap should not depend only on BNG accounting.

8. Northern Link Road and southern Bierton connection

The eastern end of the NLR and the proposed southern connection towards Bierton are major local concerns. The Action Group's plan illustrates an alternative in which the strategic route continues more directly eastwards, to connect with the A418 which may need a section going south upgrading to join with Mike Griffin Way and help complete the outer Aylesbury ring road.

The Action Group asks for transport evidence to demonstrate why the Regulation 19 alignment and southern Bierton connection are necessary and preferable. In particular, the assessment should consider whether the southern connection could encourage additional through-traffic onto the traffic-calmed A418 through Bierton and whether a direct eastern connection would better support the intended strategic function of the route.

The Action Group does not present the alternative road alignment as an engineered solution. It asks that the reasonable alternative is transparently assessed against the Regulation 19 route using the Council's transport evidence.

9. Suggested modifications

To make the Bierton-facing element of NESS003 more clearly justified and effective, the Action Group asks the Council/Inspector to consider modifications which:

- Identify the strategic green gap adjoining Bierton predominantly as Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space rather than Formal Outdoor Sports.
- Secure the gap's primary purposes of preventing coalescence, maintaining visual separation, protecting Bierton's Conservation Area setting and reinforcing village identity.
- Retain the overall Formal Outdoor Sports requirement but relocate it to suitable and deliverable land away from the immediate Bierton edge.

- Require the site-wide masterplan to integrate habitat creation, ecological connectivity, woodland/meadow/hedgerow enhancement and BNG opportunities within the Bierton buffer.
- Require transparent assessment of the alternative eastern NLR/A418 connection and the necessity and impacts of the southern Bierton connection.
- Ensure the strategic gap is protected for the long term and delivered early enough to establish meaningful landscape structure before adjoining development is occupied.

10. Related Appendix K allocations

Residents may also be making a separate representation against Policy SMA001/Appendix K. The three Bierton allocations identified in the Regulation 19 material total 218 dwellings: 115 at Gib Lane (OPUS 735 – this site has recently been given planning consent), 70 at Corner Farm, Gib Lane (OPUS 3128), and 33 north of The Paddocks/Marshalls Lea (OPUS 238).

The Action Group considers that the cumulative relationship between these allocations and NESS003 should be assessed, including effects on infrastructure, landscape, Conservation Area setting and Bierton's separate village identity. This is a separate representation from the proposed modifications to NESS003.

A site immediately west of the Bierton C of E School appears to have been shaded Yellow as a HEELA suitable site however does not appear in the Appendix K allocation. The Action Group request that this is clarified and, if it is to be included in the allocation, that feedback / comments are allowed.

11. Conclusion

Bierton Action Group recognises that NESS003 is proposed as a major component of Buckinghamshire's growth strategy. Its objective is therefore practical: to minimise the long-term impact on Bierton while allowing the strategic development and its required infrastructure and sports provision to be delivered.

The Regulation 19 policy already recognises the need to prevent coalescence, protect Bierton's setting and maintain visual separation. The Action Group asks that the Concept Plan be altered - or the alternatives properly assessed and justified - so that the land use and transport arrangement actually deliver those objectives.

The preferred outcome is a clear sequence: BIERTON -> permanent natural/semi-natural strategic green buffer -> formal sports / other green infrastructure -> built development, supported by a transport arrangement that avoids unnecessary impacts on the village.

Sources and status

- Buckinghamshire Council, Regulation 19 Local Plan for Buckinghamshire and NESS003 Concept Plan, July 2026.
- Buckinghamshire Council, Regulation 19 evidence base, including Sustainability Appraisal and supporting NESS evidence.
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Planning Practice Guidance: Plan-making; Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal; natural environment; historic environment; transport evidence.
- National Planning Policy Framework applicable to the examination of the transitional Local Plan, together with the August 2026 NPPF as relevant to current national policy direction and decision-making.

Note: This paper is a community evidence/representation document. The illustrative plan is not a technical masterplan, transport design or land availability assessment. Detailed feasibility, ownership, ecology, landscape, heritage and highways matters should be tested through the Local Plan evidence and masterplanning process.