

Executive Summary

The Planning Policy Statement sets out how Hambleden Parish Council (HPC) evaluates and responds to planning applications within the Parish. As a statutory consultee, HPC does not determine applications but provides informed, policy-based comments to assist Buckinghamshire Council's decision-making.

Hambleden Parish lies entirely within the Chilterns National Landscape, an area of exceptional natural and historic value. The Council therefore has a statutory duty to conserve and enhance natural beauty, and this responsibility underpins all planning responses.

The document explains the factors HPC must consider—such as landscape impact, design quality, heritage preservation, biodiversity, housing mix, and neighbour amenity—and makes clear that only **material planning considerations** can be used when forming a view. Matters such as personal circumstances, private rights, or property values are not relevant.

Key principles include protecting local character, avoiding suburbanisation, maintaining tranquillity and dark skies, safeguarding listed buildings and conservation areas, and promoting biodiversity net gain. Applications are expected to demonstrate high-quality, context-sensitive design that respects the historic landscape and settlement pattern.

The Statement outlines how HPC undertakes its assessments, including reviewing submitted documents, carrying out site visits where necessary, and engaging with relevant agencies such as the Chilterns Conservation Board and Historic England. Clear criteria are provided for when to object, when to offer no objection, and the rare circumstances in which support may be given.

Practical tools including a decision-making checklist and summaries of key Wycombe Local Plan policies ensure responses remain consistent, transparent, and grounded in planning policy.

Overall, the Policy Statement provides a structured framework to guide councillors in protecting the Parish's special qualities while allowing for appropriate, sensitively designed development.