



## Didcot Town Centre

Supplementary Planning Document

May 2009



Listening Learning Leading



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# The Vision

**This Supplementary Planning Document establishes a bold new vision for the future of Didcot town centre**

**South Oxfordshire District Council intends that, by 2026, the town centre will have grown significantly to provide a vibrant, dynamic and living heart at the centre of the town – competing effectively in the sub-region as the principal town centre within the district.**

**The Council will promote a town centre that will:**

- bring together a mix of uses, including retail, residential, leisure, and community, that work together to create an attractive, vital and viable centre throughout the day and into the evening to serve the current and future catchment;
- have a varied and interesting retail and catering offer to meet the needs of the current and future catchment;
- provide new town centre homes for sale and rent, including affordable and key worker housing;
- be a permeable and accessible town centre, with good linkages from the surrounding streets and railway station;
- be accessible and appealing to pedestrians and people using cycles and public transport;
- contain attractive, welcoming, safe, inclusive and accessible public and open amenity spaces which facilitate social interaction;
- be distinctive, with a sense of place and of high quality in urban design and architectural terms;
- contribute positively to Didcot's image and engender civic pride; and
- be a sustainable town centre with regard to energy supply, environmental performance, sustainable access and design.

**The objectives were developed following a review of the evidence base and have been confirmed through the consultation work. The process and methodology used to analyse and interpret these findings (in order to arrive at these objectives) are detailed in the Consultation Report which accompanies the SPD.**



# **Introduction**

- 1.1 Introduction**
- 1.2 Aims and Objectives**
- 1.3 The Status of this Document**
- 1.4 Sustainability Appraisal**
- 1.5 Stakeholder Consultation**
- 1.6 Didcot and its context**
- 1.7 Structure of SPD**
- 1.8 Associated documents**



## 1.1

### Introduction

**Didcot is a town of great significance within South Oxfordshire and the wider Southern Central Oxfordshire sub-region. It is and will continue to be a key focus for the provision of new homes, with 8,750 proposed in the draft South East Plan before 2026. In recognition of this housing growth, Didcot has been designated as a government New Growth Point. Located at the centre of one of the strongest economic growth areas in the UK, Didcot plays an important role in contributing to the economic development and success of the area and, accordingly, it needs a town centre that reflects this role.**

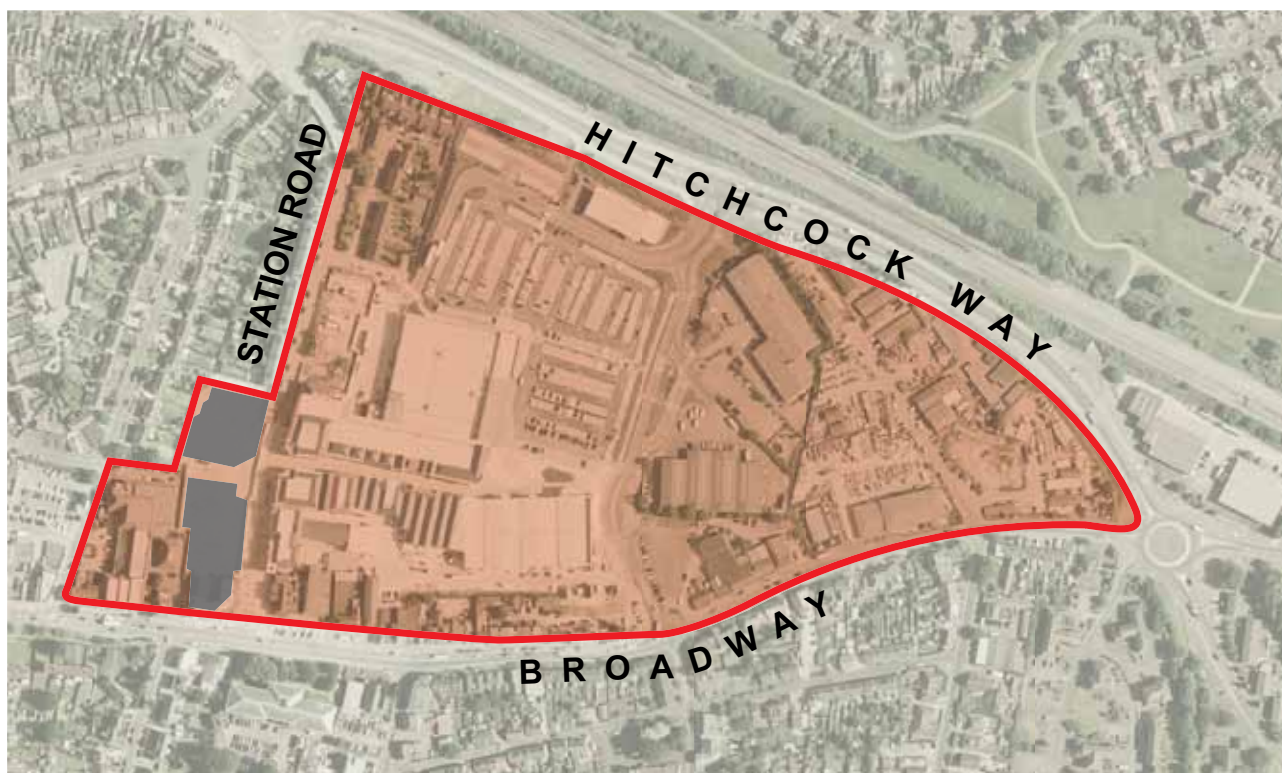
South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) is determined to create a successful, vibrant, attractive and sustainable town centre for Didcot. Recent improvements in the form of the Orchard Centre have made a big difference, but much more is needed for Didcot to deliver the vibrant and vital town centre that is required to meet the

needs of the area. Another step-change in the scale, variety and quality of facilities is required.

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out SODC's vision for the town centre and the strategic development principles that will help shape this vision and guide future development proposals for the town centre. As part of this process, SODC is working with its preferred development partner, Hammerson Plc, the owners of the Orchard Centre, to deliver the expansion of Didcot town centre. This SPD has been prepared on behalf of SODC by a team led by Indigo Planning and including Knight Frank (advising on property matters), URS (sustainability appraisal) and PPS (consultations).

The area under consideration includes the existing Orchard Centre, the cinema, arts centre and town square and the area covered by policies DID7 and DID8 in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. The SPD also addresses the need for linkages with the wider area.

Figure 1.1: Aerial photo of study area



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This SPD and the associated Sustainability Appraisal (SA) have been published for consultation, with all responses taken into account in the preparation of this final version. The SPD and SA will be monitored regularly and reviewed against the objectives to ensure these objectives are being met, the SPD remains relevant and the development is sustainable.

## 1.2 Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the SPD is to set out an overall vision, aims and objectives and associated development principles for the town centre, which will guide its future development. The SPD is a spatial plan setting out principles for buildings and urban form, spaces, movement and land use, along with proposals for a delivery strategy. The principles set out in this document will be used in assessing future planning applications for development proposals.

The key objectives for the town centre extension are:

- **Mix of Uses** – to bring together a mix of uses, including retail, residential, leisure, commercial and community, that create a vibrant and living centre throughout the day and into the evening to serve the current and future catchment;
- **Retail** – to create a varied and interesting retail and catering offer to meet the needs of the current and future catchment and create a step change in retailing terms for Didcot;
- **Residential** – Residential – to provide new town centre homes for sale and rent, including affordable housing which would incorporate provision for people with disabilities and older people, and key worker housing;

- **Access and Movement** – to ensure good links with the existing Orchard Centre and the shops and facilities on Broadway, and to be easily accessible from the surrounding streets and railway station; and to ensure good accessibility that is appealing to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users;

- **Public Realm** – to provide attractive, safe, inclusive and accessible public and open amenity spaces which facilitate social interaction;

- **Building Quality** – to create a distinctive centre with a sense of place and achieve high urban design and architectural standards;

- **Civic Pride** – to contribute to improving Didcot's image to increase civic pride, and make the town centre more attractive for local people and visitors; and

- **Sustainability** – to deliver future-proofed and sustainable solutions.

This vision and related objectives have been developed through consultation with key stakeholders and have shaped the strategic development principles that are key to delivering a thriving and vibrant town centre. In the event that any of the strategic development principles are demonstrated to be unachievable SODC will be prepared to discuss alternative approaches that deliver the vision and objectives.

## 1.3 The Status of this Document

The SPD and its contents will be a material consideration taken into account when determining any planning application for development in Didcot town centre. It will sit alongside the development plan for the area, which currently comprises the saved policies

of the South Oxfordshire District Local Plan (2006) and the Oxfordshire Structure Plan (2005) and other relevant Supplementary Planning Documents. .

In time, the Structure Plan and Local Plan will be replaced by the South East Plan and the Local Development Framework (LDF). The South East Plan is currently at an advanced stage and is due to be adopted in 2009. However, SODC is currently preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF) with consultation on the Preferred Options draft Core Strategy taking place between March and May 2009. Other Development Plan Documents (DPDs) will include the Site Allocations DPD, the Didcot Area Action Plan, and the Development Management Policies DPD. This SPD, whilst based on the current Local Plan, will after a review eventually form part of the suite of documents which form the LDF.

## 1.4 Sustainability Appraisal

This SPD has been prepared with the intention of contributing to sustainable development in Didcot. Under the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the preparation of the SPD was required to have been the subject of a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) that assesses the social, economic and environmental effects of the SPD to ensure that it contributes to sustainable

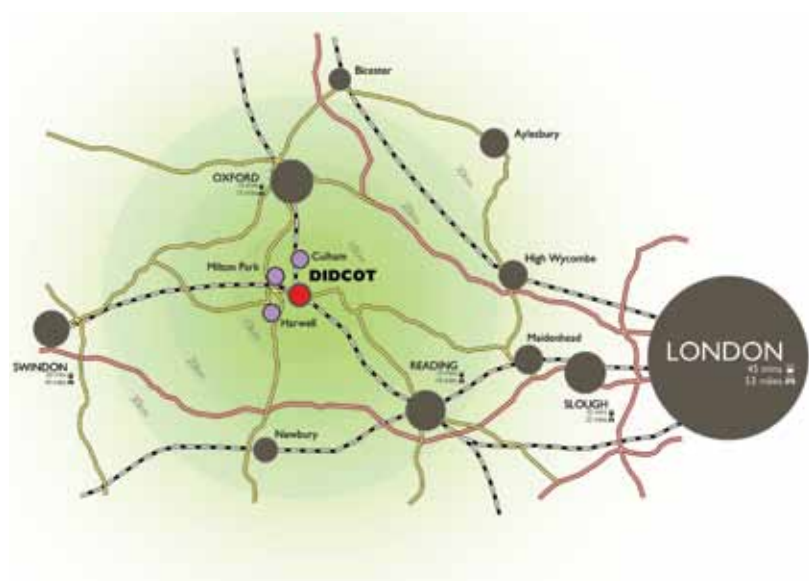
development. This is an iterative process and has been going on throughout the preparation of the SPD. The SA process has followed the framework established in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report prepared by SODC for its Local Development Framework (LDF). This report defines the sustainability objectives for the SPD. A SA Report has been produced which assesses the proposals in the SPD against the sustainability objectives contained in the SA Scoping Report in order to make recommendations for the improvement of the document.

## 1.5 Stakeholder Consultation

The SA Scoping Report has already been subject to consultation. The SA Report for the SPD has been consulted on as part of this recent public consultation. Both reports are available from SODC.

A wider consultation process has also taken place in relation to the SPD itself. Further details of this are provided in Section 3 and a separate Consultation Statement.

Figure 1.2: Strategic Context





## 1.6

### Didcot and its context

Didcot lies 14 miles south of Oxford and 20 miles north-west of Reading. It has excellent road links via the A34, only two miles to the west, and hence to both the M4 and the M40. The town has excellent train links, being on the London to Bristol mainline railway, at its junction with the Oxford branch line.

Didcot is the largest of the four main settlements in the district of South Oxfordshire, the other main settlements being Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford. The district is mainly rural

in nature, and Didcot is close to the boundary with the Vale of White Horse District and is surrounded by a number of villages and smaller settlements, such as Harwell, East and West Hagbourne, Upton, Blewbury, Sutton Courteney, North and South Moreton and Appleford. Didcot is the nearest service centre for these and other villages, which have no or very few shops and facilities of their own. Currently a population of some 95,000 live within a 10 mile radius of Didcot town centre.

The main competing retail centres to Didcot include Reading and Oxford, both of which are identified in the emerging South East Plan as 'primary regional centres,' which are intended to be the focus for development that attracts large numbers of visitors. More locally, Didcot also faces competition from Abingdon, Newbury and Wantage.

Didcot is close to a number of major, high value employment centres and is the main settlement in the area known as 'Science Vale UK,' an area defined in terms of its knowledge and scientific facilities, including Harwell Science and Innovation Centre, Culham Science Centre and Milton Park. More than 10,000 people are employed in high-tech industries in the Science Vale UK and more jobs will be created as the employment centres continue to expand.

Didcot town centre is compact and provides only a limited range of shops and other facilities. The quality of the built environment is relatively poor, and does not reflect the town's status, prosperity or its potential as identified within the emerging South East Plan. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan identified Didcot as a minor district centre, but with the strategic aim to make it into a major district centre by making the town "a principal location for a new shopping development". This objective has been achieved to some extent with the development of the Orchard Centre and SODC anticipates that its extension will further enhance the status of the centre to operate as a town centre as defined by PPS6.

Figure 1.3: Local Context

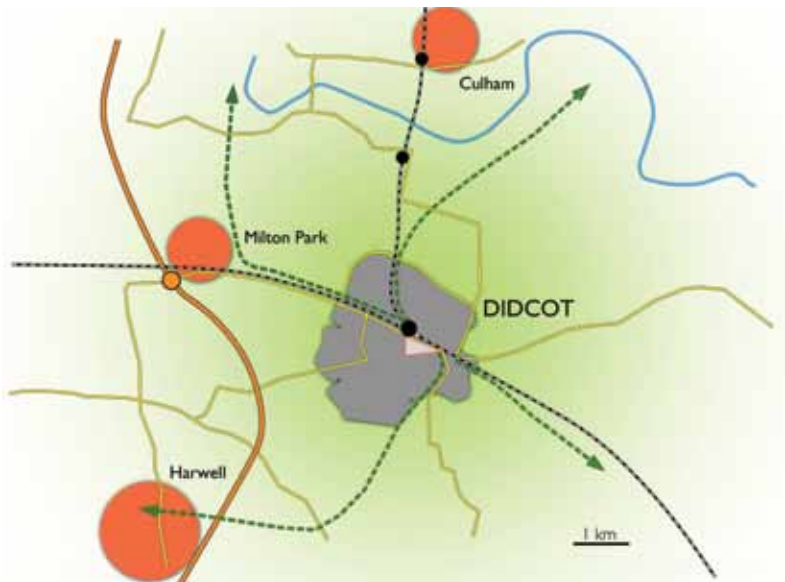


Figure 1.4: Plan of study area



The SPD area is surrounded by low to medium density residential developments of various ages, with the Station Road conservation area to the immediate west and a further conservation area, Northbourne, is immediately to the south. To the east, there are a number of industrial units between Broadway, Hitchcock Way and the railway line, with housing developments to the south and east. To the north runs the Great Western railway line, beyond which lies the Ladygrove housing estate. Didcot Parkway, the town's railway station, is five minutes walk away to the north-west of the SPD area.

## 1.7 Structure of SPD

The SPD has the following sections:

- **Section 2** explains the planning policy context, including a summary of relevant local policy including the South Oxfordshire District Local Plan and the emerging Local Development Framework, regional guidance, and national policy;
- **Section 3** provides an overview of the key issues identified for Didcot town centre by reference to the evidence base and the results of the consultation process;
- **Section 4** describes the existing town centre and significant opportunities and constraints that exist within the study area;
- **Section 5** details the strategic principles for the development under the headings of land uses, site capacity and density; access and movement; townscape; public realm and landscaping; safety and security; and sustainable design;

- **Section 6** describes the sub areas – Existing Town Centre, High Street Extension, Orchard Street Extension, Hagbourne Road Extension, Broadway, and Hitchcock Way, and the key features of these areas; and
- **Section 7** sets out some important considerations relating to the delivery and implementation of the SPD with reference to land assembly; infrastructure and utilities provision; planning obligations; indicative phasing; development partners; future planning applications; and market conditions.

The appendices include a glossary of terms (**Appendix 1**), full document reference list (**Appendix 2**), key stakeholder list (**Appendix 3**), and key Local Plan policies (**Appendix 4**).

## 1.8 Associated documents

This SPD is accompanied by the SA Report and Consultation Statement. Both are available from SODC at the following address and on the Council's website:

**South Oxfordshire District Council**  
Benson Lane  
Crowmarsh Gifford  
Wallingford  
Oxon  
OX10 8ED  
Tel: 01491 823000  
Email: [info@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:info@southoxon.gov.uk)

## **Planning Policy Context**

- 2.1 Planning Policy Context**
- 2.2 Local Policy**
- 2.3 Regional and Sub-Regional Policy**
- 2.4 National Policy**

## 2.1 Planning Policy Context

This section summarises the local, regional and national planning policies which will apply to proposals for the expansion of Didcot town centre.

## 2.2 Local Policy

This SPD provides detailed guidance for the town centre based on adopted local policy and is consistent with the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF). Adopted Local Plan policy accords with the strategic and national policy guidance current at the time of preparation and the LDF is being prepared in accordance with current higher level policies.

### South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011

The Local Plan provides policies to guide development until 2011. The majority of policies within the Local Plan are 'saved' until replaced by policies in the LDF.

The Local Plan covers a range of matters that are relevant to this SPD, including:

- **The protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment (i.e. in regards to conservation areas – policies CON7; pollution – policy EP1, noise – policy EP2, flood risk – policy EP5, surface water protection – policy EP6, and contaminated land – EP8);**
- **Sustainable and high-quality development (i.e. the need for good design and local distinctiveness – policy D1, parking – policy D2, mixed-use development – policy D5, and design against crime D6);**
- **The avoidance or minimisation of adverse impacts on the environment (i.e. through energy, water, materials, and efficient design – policy D8, and the inclusion of renewable energy – policy D9);**
- **Infrastructure and service requirements – policy D11;**
- **Housing (i.e. detailing the amount – policy H1, densities – policy H8, a range of dwelling types and sizes – H7, and inclusion of affordable housing – policy H9);**
- **Provision of recreation and leisure facilities – policies R1-3 and R6, and of community facilities and services - policy CF2;**
- **Economy (i.e. relating to business, industry – policies E1 and E4-5, and tourism – TSM1-4);**
- **Encouragement of vital and viable town centres (i.e. with regards to town centre economy and future strategy – policies TC3 and TC4-6, range and quality of facilities – policies TC1-2, and protection of the retail function – policies TC7-8);**
- **Promotion of a sustainable transport strategy (i.e. in regards to new developments – policies T1-2, transport assessments and travel plans – policy T3, public transport – policy T4, Cycling and walking – policy T7, and parking – policy T8); and**
- **A strategy for Didcot (i.e. relating to the expansion of Didcot town centre – policy DID6, the regeneration of Market Place and Broadway – policy DID7 and land to the east of the Didcot town centre – policy DID8).**

Full extracts of these Local Plan policies are included at **Appendix 4**.

Policy DID6 proposed mixed-use development on land at Broadway, Station Road and Station Road Industrial Estate. In 2001, the Council granted full planning permission for a comprehensive scheme of development on the land allocated in Policy DID6

(the Orchard Centre). This permission has since been implemented and the policy no longer forms part of the Local Plan.

Policy DID7 proposes the regeneration of Market Place and Broadway involving:

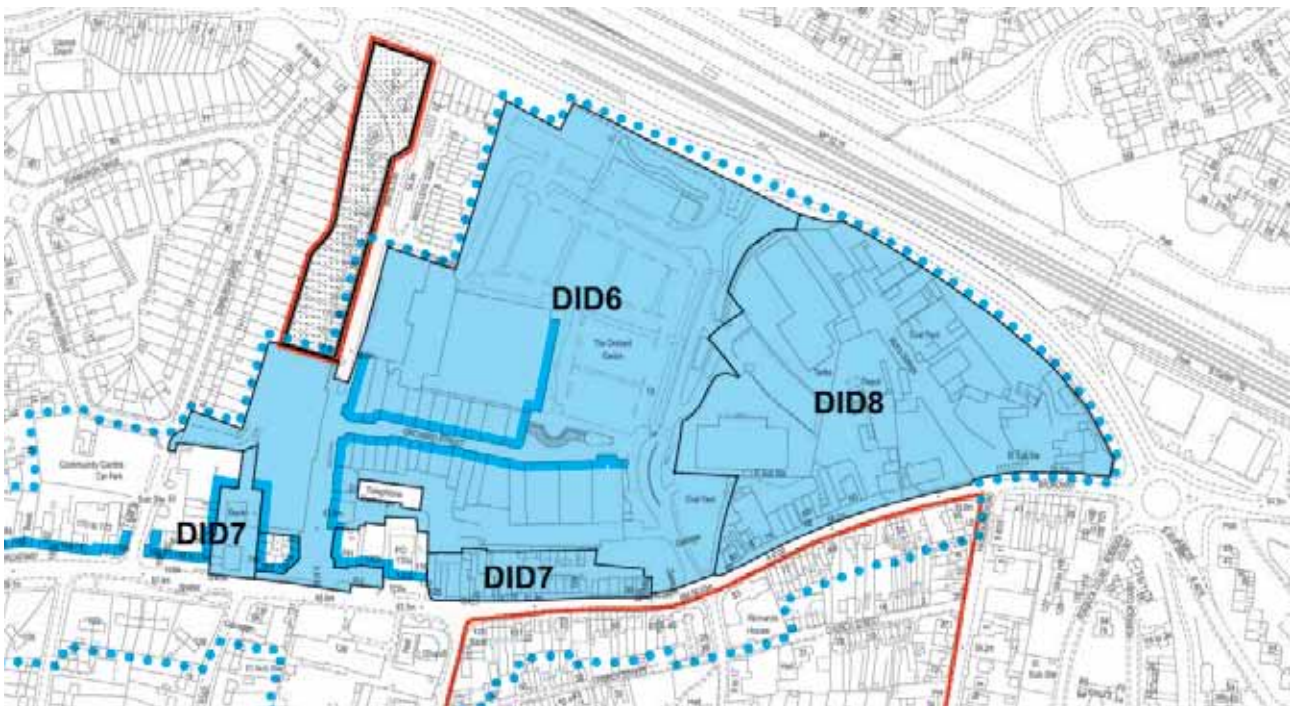
- **the demolition of the existing building occupied by a bank in the centre of Market Place and the enlargement of the existing civic space or for alterations to the existing building to create either a covered civic space, or accommodation at street level for key town centre uses that would present active building frontages to Market Place.**
- **redevelopment of the terraces at numbers 84a to 98 Broadway and at 114 to 128 Broadway to provide new two- and three-storey buildings accommodating key town centre uses that would present active frontages to the street. Residential or office uses would be accommodated at upper floor levels;**

- **refurbishment of the existing three-storey terrace at 100 to 112 Broadway; and**
- **provision of a communal car parking and servicing area at the rear and accessed from Broadway.**

Policy DID8 proposes mixed-use development for key town centre uses on the land to the east of DID6 subject to the following requirements being met:

- **the existence of sufficient retail capacity in the Didcot area to support the amount of retail floorspace proposed;**
- **sufficient land and premises being made available elsewhere in Didcot to enable businesses to relocate from their existing premises on the land (taking precedence over Policy E6, which generally seeks to retain employment sites);**
- **provision of vehicular accesses from Didcot to Milton Heights Link Road Stage 2 (DMH2) link road (via the access road servicing the development proposed in Policy DID6) and from Lower Broadway; and**

Figure 2.1: Local Plan Proposals Map





- **the access requirements of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport being accommodated including good footway linkage with the development proposed in Policy DID6 and Broadway.**

#### **South Oxfordshire LDF Core Strategy: Issues and Options (2007)**

The Local Plan will be replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF) comprising several documents. The Core Strategy will be the first and will identify the Council's spatial visions and objectives up to 2026. This emerging policy document has reached the 'Preferred Options' stage.

The key issues that are relevant to the expansion of Didcot town centre include:

- **Further growth in Didcot town centre to be looked through the Didcot Area Action Plan;**
- **Identification of the Orchard Centre extension to meet identified retail need to 2016 and to create a heart for the town;**
- **No evidence to support out of centre retail development;**
- **Further growth in Didcot town centre to be looked through the Didcot Area Action Plan;**
- **The new housing allocated for Didcot (6,000 homes by 2026) with a further 2,750 within the Vale of White Horse;**
- **The allocation of employment land;**

The Preferred Options document is available for consultation between March and May 2009 and due to be submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2010

Various other supplementary planning guidance and other documents are also relevant as set out below.

#### **SODC Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document**

The South Oxfordshire Design Guide provides guidelines to help the Council assess the design of development proposals in planning applications. It sets out the broad principles that should inform new development with the overarching aim of producing designs that are sustainable, locally distinctive and of high quality.

#### **Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance**

This provides detailed guidance on how Policy H9 of the adopted Local Plan will be implemented. It seeks to secure levels of affordable housing which are necessary to meet the identified need. Where affordable housing is required, the Council will seek 40% of the total as available in perpetuity as affordable accommodation. Design standards for the affordable housing should be no different to open market housing.

#### **Other local policy guidance**

The South Oxfordshire Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026 identifies ways in which organisations from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors could improve the quality of life for people of all ages living and working in the area.

The South Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership's Community Safety Strategy 2008 -2011 aims to make South Oxfordshire a safer place by reducing anti-social behaviour, improving road safety engaging and supporting communities and other actions.

The Vale of White Horse Core Strategy Preferred Options document seeks to guide new development up to 2026 in the Vale of White Horse district, the south eastern part of which adjoins Didcot. Some of town's future growth will take place within the Vale.

Individual policies and documents of relevance are referred to in

sections 5 and 6 where appropriate. A comprehensive list of local policy documents is included at **Appendix 2**.

## 2.3

### Regional and Sub-Regional Policy

#### Draft South East Plan

The Local Plan was prepared based on RPG9: Regional Planning Guidance for the South East. Since then, the draft South East Plan has been prepared, with Proposed Changes published in 2008. This SPD takes account of this

emerging policy.

The Draft South East Plan (Submission Document 2006 and Proposed Changes 2008) emphasises the importance of accessible, attractive and vibrant town centres for sustainable development. Of particular relevance is Policy H1 (as amended by the Proposed Changes), which provides an update to the proposed housing figures for the South East of England to be delivered until 2026. Table H1b clarifies the requirement for South Oxfordshire as a total of 10,940 net additional dwellings at an average annual rate of 547.

Policy CO3 (Proposed Changes) provides further details of the scale and distribution of housing within Central Oxfordshire and allows for about 8,750 new dwellings to be built at Didcot between 2006 and 2026 (6,000 for South Oxfordshire and

Figure 2.2: Part of Didcot town centre



2,750 for Vale of White Horse).  
The Draft South East Plan recognises Didcot as a new growth point and Policy TC2 provides for stimulating investment in town centres in growth areas and rebalancing the network of centres.

### **Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016**

The Oxfordshire Structure Plan will be replaced by the South East Plan when it is adopted in 2009. Until then, however, a number of policies are 'saved' and this SPD has taken these into account.

## **2.4 National Policy**

This SPD has had regard to national planning guidance issued by government in the form of a number of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Circulars, as well as other documents of relevance.

Guidance documents of particular relevance to this SPD include the following:

- **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development** and companion documents;
- **Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms;**
- **Draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development;**
- **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6: Planning for Town Centres;**
- **Draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6: Planning for Town Centres;**
- **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Housing;**
- **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12: Local Spatial Planning;**
- **Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 13: Transport;**
- **Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation;**
- **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 22: Renewable Energy;**
- **Manual for Streets, by Department for Transport;**
- **Design guidance prepared by The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE); and**
- **Transforming Places; changing lives: a framework for regeneration by Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (Consultation Draft)**

A comprehensive list of national and regional policy documents and their key contents is included at **Appendix 2**.

# 3.0

## **Evidence Base and Consultation**

**3.1 Evidence Base and Consultation**

**3.2 Evidence Base**

**3.3 Consultation**

### 3.1

## Evidence Base and Consultation

This section sets out an overview of the key issues identified for Didcot town centre through the review of the evidence base and an analysis of the consultation responses.

### 3.2

## Evidence Base

The Evidence Base supporting the SPD comprises a number of studies and documents.

One of the core documents informing this SPD is the Didcot Town Centre Masterplan by Roger Evans Associates Limited (REAL) and associated documents including the consultation exercise results.

The Didcot Town Centre Expansion Masterplan was commissioned by SODC and was completed in January 2009. This Masterplan was shaped by a series of workshops and consultations with SODC officers, members, community stakeholders and the wider community.

The Masterplan provides design guidance on a number of key elements for the town centre comprising:

- **a strategic framework of design principles;**
- **townscape principles with regard to built form, architecture and soft landscaping of the future development;**
- **land use and site capacity principles; and**
- **guidance on accessibility of the future development.**

Other relevant documents that form the evidence base for this SPD include:

- **Background information relating to growth and development at Didcot;**
- **Housing Needs Survey;**
- **Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment;**
- **PPG 17 Assessment of Sport & Recreation Facilities; and**
- **Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Strategy (SCOTS).**

Some of the key issues identified in the above documents and relevant to the expansion of Didcot town centre are outlined below:

#### Retail need in South Oxfordshire

Recent surveys indicate that the majority of Didcot's residents believe that the town has improved through the additional shopping provision introduced by the Orchard Centre. More shops and restaurants should be provided as part of the growth of the town.

The Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment states that the future capacity for additional retail floorspace in South Oxfordshire has recently been assessed and while an additional net comparison floorspace requirement of 13,070 sq m is forecasted up to 2016 and 18,083 sq m up to 2026 as well as a requirement for a new foodstore in Didcot of 2,000 sq m or more, these forecasts must be treated with caution considering the current economic downturn.

The retail and leisure needs assessment identified area DID8 as the focus for retail expansion. The LDF Core Strategy and Didcot Area Action Plan will address how to meet further retail and leisure within the wider town centre

#### Housing need in South Oxfordshire

The Council's Housing Need Survey states that the level and type of housing



supply does not match up to the long-term demand for flats, especially smaller units, and semi detached houses.

An increasing aging population adds to the need for sheltered and special needs housing. In addition, a rising number of people have difficulty entering the housing market, both buying and renting, which needs to be addressed, and there is a particular local demand for Key Worker housing.

### Proposed growth at Didcot

Didcot was designated a Growth Point by the Government in recognition of the need for large scale and sustainable growth. Didcot's location lends itself to significant growth due to: proximity to the M4; the rail station with links to Oxford and London; and its location in the 'Science Vale UK' area of science and technology industries. The growth will impact on the surrounding area, in particular the Vale of White Horse where a significant level of the housing will be located. Cross-boundary working will be aided through the current move towards a shared management team of the two Councils.

### Leisure, open space and natural greenspaces in South Oxfordshire

Public and open spaces should be considered in an integrated manner, in particular recognising opportunities associated with the large-scale housing allocations.

### Urban design principles

The current disjointed nature of the town centre requires established urban design principles to guide future plans. The town centre has grown in piecemeal fashion and therefore a consistency in layout, in particular with regards to access and movement, has not been achieved. There is also a need to better integrate the existing foodstore, surface car park and petrol station into the town centre environment.

### Transport in South Oxfordshire

The Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Strategy (SCOTS) seeks to; improve access to key services; improve the actual and perceived safety of travel; improve connectivity within the study and wider area to enable the efficient and reliable movement of people; to minimise the impact of traffic related to the housing developments on the local and strategic routing of freight; reduce the contribution of transport to greenhouse gas emissions; and consider the impact of transport on the local environment. The vision for Didcot, as set out in the Didcot Integrated Transport Strategy Phase One (2004), is that Didcot will be an attractive and pleasant place to live and work and an important employment and retail centre.

Regard should be had to the impact of potential alterations to traffic management arrangements through the Cow Lane Tunnel on the surrounding highway network.

### Socio-economic details of Didcot

Didcot has had high population growth in recent years and further growth is forecasted. Highly skilled jobs are provided with many businesses based at Milton Park and Harwell (Science and Innovation Campus). Household incomes in Didcot are relatively low and there is a considerable number of young people living in Didcot. Levels of satisfaction about the local area are lower in Didcot than the South Oxfordshire average.

Potential areas of improvement include improving the quantity and quality of offer for young people, improving transport particularly green modes which reduce pressure on local roads, tackling crime and adding to the cultural provision.

## Air quality and waste management

Recent air quality monitoring data indicates raised levels of nitrogen dioxide in Didcot. It is possible that the levels will sooner or later exceed the Government's national target for nitrogen dioxide and the Council will have to declare an Air Quality Management Area. Additional development and traffic may accelerate this process further.

SODC encourages waste reduction and recycling. A new contractor has recently been selected as the company to run a new shared waste collection and street cleansing contract for South Oxfordshire District Council and the Vale of White Horse.

Individual issues and documents of relevance are referred to in sections 5 and 6 of this SPD where appropriate.

## 3.3 Consultation

Stakeholder and community involvement in the preparation of the SPD has followed the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 12 and SODC's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, and has involved the following methods and events:

- **Initial discussions and meetings with stakeholders including SODC staff, Hammerson Plc and local councillors were held between January and March 2009;**
- **Letters to key stakeholders and business notifying them of the formal consultation on the draft SPD**
- **A leaflet was distributed to local stakeholders announcing the public drop-in exhibition; posters were placed in libraries, SODC offices and local community information boards; advert was placed in the Didcot Herald and**

**SODC newsletters; announcement was posted on SODC website and Brilliant Didcot website;**

- **The draft SPD was presented to SODC councillors and key senior officers on 10 March 2009;**
- **SPD exhibition material and the draft SPD document was posted on SODC's website and the Brilliant Didcot website for viewing and downloading by the public and interested parties between 17 March and 17 April 2009;**
- **The draft SPD document was also made available for viewing in local libraries and SODC offices;**
- **CDs or hard copies of the draft SPD document were sent to individuals upon request; and**
- **A public drop-in exhibition was held at the Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot, Friday 27 March and Saturday 28 March 2009 and feedback forms regarding the draft SPD were provided;**

The results of the consultation including the drop-in exhibition were analysed and have informed the preparation of the final SPD document.

A full list of key stakeholders consulted is contained at Appendix 3 and further information is available in the Consultation Statement.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report (SA) has also been subject to public consultation and, alongside viability work, has informed the final SPD.



Figure 3.1: Exhibition Poster advertising the Consultation Event

# 4.0

## **The Area Covered**

**4.1 Didcot Town Centre Today**

**4.2 Opportunities and Constraints**



## 4.1

### Didcot Town Centre Today

**The area that is the subject of this SPD is bounded by Hitchcock Way, Station Road, Edinburgh Drive and the Broadway.**

The area includes the existing Orchard Centre, the cinema, Cornerstone arts centre and town square (referred to as 'the existing town centre' for the purpose of this SPD) and the area comprising 'Market Place and Lower Broadway' and 'Richs Sidings', covered by policies DID7 and DID8 respectively in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (referred to as 'the town centre extension' for the purpose of this SPD).

SODC recognise that the 'town centre' area referred to in this document differs from the town centre as defined in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. The Local Plan covers a wider area which includes the existing shopping area on Broadway outside the area covered by this SPD.

To the immediate west of the SPD area is the Station Road conservation area, which includes a series of residential cottages. Northbourne conservation area, which is also of primarily residential character, is immediately to the south. To the east of the SPD area are a number of industrial units, as well as the Roebuck Court and Fleet Meadow area to the south and east of the Hitchcock Way/Broadway/Jubilee Way roundabout. To the north runs the Great Western railway line, beyond which lies the Ladygrove Estate. Didcot Parkway, the town's railway station, is

Figure 4.1: Aerial photo of study area



© GeoPerspectives



Figure 4.2 Didcot Cinema

located in walking distance to the northwest of the SPD area.

#### The Orchard Centre

The existing Orchard Centre scheme is anchored by a Sainsbury's superstore comprising approximately 6,500m<sup>2</sup> (approximately 70,000 sq ft) with a petrol filling station and 500 car parking spaces. The scheme also includes a number of other retail units, with tenants currently including Next, Argos, New Look and Robert Dyas and comprising 14,594m<sup>2</sup> (157,087 sq ft). It also includes 896m<sup>2</sup> (9,644 sq ft) of office floor space.

The retail accommodation is arranged in two facing terraces forming Orchard Street, which is pedestrianised.

#### Cinema, Art Centre and Town Square

The recently developed cultural "hub" on the southern end of Station Road includes a cinema and an arts centre. The 900 seat, five screen Cineworld cinema with concessions area and a café/bar opened in 2007. Alongside this, the Cornerstone arts centre provides a multipurpose auditorium for drama, music and dance, with seating for up to 278 people, four multipurpose arts education spaces, a visual art exhibition space and a café/bar. The cinema and arts centre front on to the newly-built town square, which provides an area of public realm that can be used for small-scale events and links Market Place to Station Road and the Orchard Centre.

Figure 4.3: Cornerstone Arts Centre



## Richs Sidings

The site makes up the majority of the town centre extension comprising approximately four hectares currently occupied by a number of industrial and trade counter businesses. In the South Oxfordshire Local Plan the area is allocated under Policy DID8, which proposes a mixed-use development for key town centre uses subject to a number of requirements being met.

## Market Place and Lower Broadway

The area of the existing Market Place comprises a small retail development dating from the 1980s and anchored by a Wilkinsons store, and is adjacent to the arts centre and the cinema. Lower Broadway is the existing street block between 84a and 128 Broadway and contains two terraces of smaller retail and business units. Both Market Place and 84a -128 Broadway are covered by Policy DID7 in the Local Plan proposing the regeneration and redevelopment of these locations.

## 4.2 Opportunities and Constraints

Didcot town centre presents a number of significant opportunities, which include:

- **A Commuter Hub** – Didcot benefits from good accessibility, particularly by train, attracting in a large commuting population. At present, the commuting population does not view the town centre as a commercial or retailing attraction. This 'untapped market' presents an opportunity which could support the future growth of the town centre;
- **Proximity of the Railway Station to the Town Centre** – the town centre is physically well located to the railway station, which makes Didcot town centre a sustainable and attractive location for housing;
- **Proximity to Major, High Value Employment Centres** – Didcot is the main settlement in the area known as Science Vale UK. The employees of this area should be encouraged to make more use of the town centre and links to these employment centres could help support the town centre's future growth;

Figure 4.4: Rich Sidings





- **Significant Planned Population Growth** – Didcot is and will continue to be a key focus for the provision of new homes, with 8,750 proposed in the draft South East Plan before 2026. This will increase footfall and expenditure and justify significant growth in town centre floorspace;
- **Presence of Key Development sites** – the town centre has large areas of low density employment land which can be utilised to deliver a comprehensive development that meets the growth aspirations of South Oxfordshire's Council and population; and
- **Lack of Distinctive Building Style or Identity** – a 'blank canvas' by way of building design presents an opportunity to create a unique and inspirational identity to the town centre.

There are also a number of physical, social, and economic constraints to further development in the town centre which must be understood including:

- **Orchard Street**, Orchard Street provides an important link between the cinema and Cornerstone Arts Centre and the future mixed-use development and car parking facilities to the east. It has been successful as an addition to Didcot's retail provision but the continuation of its architectural style and form into an extended town centre area would not be desirable.
- The Hitchcock Way/Station Road/Cow Lane junction has been identified in the REAL Masterplan as an important "node" but with poor quality public realm and lack of development edges. **Nos 74 and 76 Station Road** form part of this problem, but the historic significance of the buildings (which form part of the Station Road conservation area) is such that they should be retained;
- Whilst an acceptable town centre use (Local Plan Policy T9), the Sainsbury's **petrol filling station** does not sit comfortably alongside town centre shops and public spaces. Its relocation might assist in creating an attractive town centre but the costs make this unviable in the short term;
- **The Sainsbury's store** occupies a central position in the town centre. Its predominantly single storey form, inactive façades and surface car park to the front make little contribution to the town centre environment but could be improved;
- Didcot would benefit from the expansion of its **commercial floorspace** within the town centre area, but, in view of the large amount of office accommodation available and under development in Milton Park, this is unlikely to be viable in the short term;
- The impact of **traffic** generated by the expansion of the town centre needs to be carefully considered in relation to any application for development and the ability of the existing road and bus network to accommodate these changes must be demonstrated;
- An appropriate balance is required between a sufficient and attractive supply of **car parking** spaces, the promotion of sustainable transport modes and car park development costs;
- The SPD needs to accommodate safe and efficient access for **servicing** of existing and future shops and facilities that will not be to the detriment of a successful mixed-use centre;
- Changes to the form and alignment of the watercourse located to the east of Orchard Street are acceptable but **sustainable urban drainage** would need to be incorporated in the design of the future development; and
- The **topography** of the town centre requires consideration as there is a considerable **drop in level** from the south-west to the north-east of the town centre and future development would need to incorporate the changes of level.



# 5.0

## **Strategic Principles for Development**

- 5.1 Land Uses**
- 5.2 Site Capacity and Density**
- 5.3 Access and Movement**
- 5.4 Urban Design and Architecture**
- 5.5 Public Realm, Open Space  
and Landscaping**
- 5.6 Safety & Security**
- 5.7 Sustainable Design**

In order to deliver the vision, this section identifies key strategic principles that will guide the future development of the town centre. These principles have been developed following a review of the evidence base and the local policy context, and the consultation exercise. The Didcot Town Centre Expansion Masterplan forms the main basis for the strategic principles outlined below. These principles include:

- **Land uses**
- **Site capacity and density**
- **Access and movement**
- **Urban design and architecture**
- **Safety and security, and**
- **Sustainable design.**

Applied together, these strategic principles will facilitate the creation of a sustainable retail-led extension to the town centre, and help achieve the economic development that will be necessary to support the population of Didcot.

Other environmental issues will need to be considered at the planning application stage including hydrology and drainage, contaminated land and air quality. This is important in relation to the existing industrial uses within the town centre and the increase in car movements associated with the town centre improvements, particularly along the Broadway

## 5.1 Land Uses

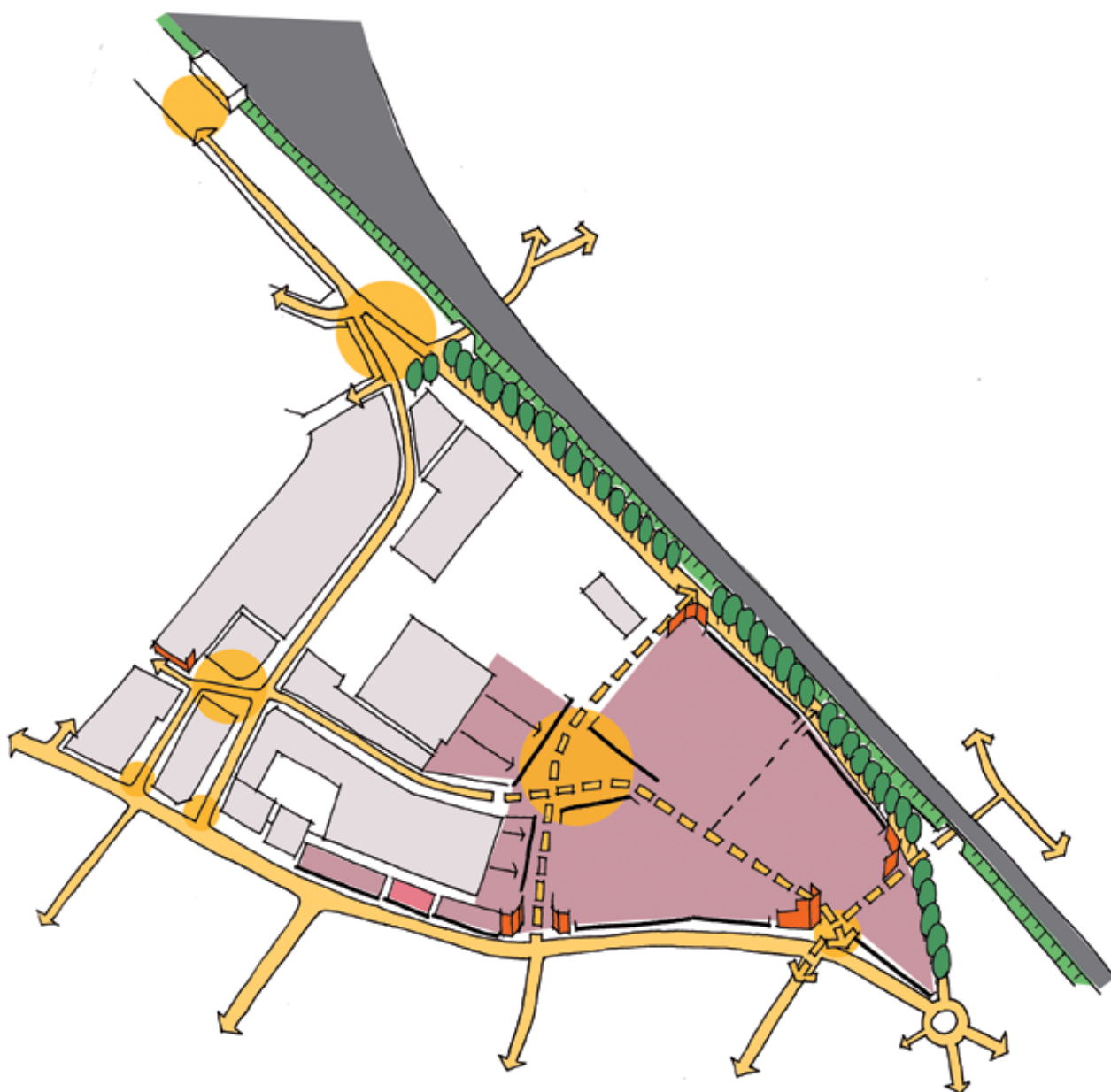
This next phase of town centre development must complement the existing Orchard Centre development to further extend and improve the mix of town centre uses. This extension should integrate successfully with the existing Orchard Centre and provide a comprehensive development for the town centre. SODC consider a mixed-use environment is key to creating a vibrant and living town centre which will spread activity throughout the working day and evening to help increase the vitality and viability of Didcot town centre. Principal uses will be:

- **Retail**
- **Community and leisure facilities**
- **Employment**
- **Residential**
- **Vehicle/cycle parking**

### Retail

Local Plan Policy DID8 places particular emphasis on retail uses within the town centre extension. Not only is there a quantitative need for more retail floorspace but there is also a qualitative need to improve the range of comparison retail shops. Retail floorspace will therefore be a significant part of the town centre extension. This will comply with PPS6 and follow the guidance in the Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment, which suggests the capacity available in Didcot up to 2026 is 31,824m<sup>2</sup> of comparison floorspace and 4,124m<sup>2</sup> of convenience floorspace. Increased retail floorspace will better serve the existing population and meet the shopping needs of future residents of Didcot and its catchment.

### Figure 5.1 framework





-  EXISTING ROUTES
-  EXTENDED ROUTES
-  MEMORABLE BUILDING
-  DEVELOPMENT FRONTAGE
-  TREE-LINED BOULEVARD
-  SIDE STREET
-  MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT
-  IMPORTANT PUBLIC SPACE

**Figure 5.2:** The long term framework for the development of Didcot town centre



The new retail floorspace should take a number of different forms and sizes. For example, the REAL Masterplan suggests the following distribution of floorspace could be physically feasible:

- **Extension to existing convenience superstore – approximately 3,400m<sup>2</sup>**
- **Department store – approximately 9,500m<sup>2</sup>**
- **New retail units – approximately 16,500m<sup>2</sup>**
- **Redevelopment of existing retail units on the Broadway – approximately 2,700m<sup>2</sup>**

This suggests a total of approximately 32,000m<sup>2</sup>. The amount of retail floorspace identified within the Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment might need to be adjusted downwards in view of the lower growth rates now likely in the next few years, but the actual amount in any phase and in total, and its distribution between different retail formats, will be a matter for the developer. However, with the Masterplan providing an up to date indication of physical capacity, the Council will require any proposals for amounts or types of development that are significantly different to demonstrate why these proposals should be preferred to what is shown as possible and appropriate in the Masterplan and the Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment.

An extended Orchard Street is likely to be the focus for the additional retail floorspace, including a department store. The eastern section of Broadway could also accommodate more retail floorspace.

## Community and Leisure Facilities

SODC is keen to see an increased quantity of community and leisure facilities within the town centre (Local Plan CF2). These should be located in spaces that are highly accessible and visible in order to attract visitors and contribute to the identity of the town.

The town centre expansion should include an enlarged, enhanced and relocated public library within the retail area, with the possible inclusion of other community and social facilities, possibly for County Council services. These may include floorspace provision for activities of the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector as encouraged by the South Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy. In addition, facilities for young people should be integrated in the new development.

In order to facilitate the evening economy, a range of cafes and restaurants (A3 uses) should be included. In addition, accommodation for commercial leisure uses, such as a fitness centre or ten-pin bowling, will be encouraged.

Given the growth of Didcot and the planned expansion of its town centre, SODC considers a hotel would be an asset to the town and provision could therefore be included within the comprehensive proposals.

## Employment

The loss of existing businesses at Rich's Sidings will be mitigated by providing alternative land and premises for those businesses affected by the redevelopment that wish to relocate to alternative sites in Didcot (Local Plan Policy DID8). These businesses will generally be better suited to locations outside the town centre.

Didcot itself is not currently a key office location but the town centre extension and Growth Point status are likely to change this. Small offices in the town centre are likely to prove attractive to the market (especially for businesses

serving the growing local community), as established in the Employment Land Review. However, with large existing science/technology parks to the west (Milton Park and Harwell Campus), large offices are unlikely to be a significant land use. This is most likely to change if a particular organisation identifies the town as the optimal location for its offices, possibly because of its accessibility and the benefits of being planned into an attractive new town centre development.

## Residential

The town centre extension offers a valuable opportunity to increase the amount of town centre housing. This would bring an increased presence to the area during evenings and support associated uses such as restaurants, cafes and leisure and should therefore be included.

The Masterplan suggests that the town centre extension could accommodate:

- **50 – 100 townhouses**
- **50 – 100 flats**
- **Approximately 250 flats above shops.**

Townhouses and free-standing blocks of flats are likely to be located at the fringes of the development, for example on the Broadway, especially where the extension to Orchard Street is proposed to meet the Broadway, or along Hitchcock Way.

The Masterplan suggests additional residential accommodation above shops

in the centre of the development. SODC considers residential uses above shops as important to contributing to the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre, providing activity and surveillance throughout the day and evening. Accordingly, any proposals which fail to provide residential accommodation above shops in the centre of the town centre would need to justify to the satisfaction of SODC why this could not be provided.

A mixture of dwelling types and sizes should be provided in accordance with Local Plan Policy H7. The level of affordable housing required is set in Local Plan Policy H9 at 40%. However, SODC will consider whether this level would prejudice the realisation of a scheme, but any case for a lower level will need to be supported by compelling evidence based on an up-to-date viability assessment. At least 10% of homes will be required to meet the lifetime homes standard set out in Local Plan Policy H14. This will ensure adequate affordable housing provision for people with disabilities and older people.

## Vehicle/Cycle Parking

Future development must balance the need for safe and secure car parking to attract people into Didcot against the need to avoid the over-dominance of the car. Surface car parking will generally not be appropriate and therefore basement or, more likely, multi-storey car parking would be

**Figure 5.3:** Local Plan parking standards

	Residential Retail	Residential	Non-food Retail	Offices	Leisure	Restaurant/ Bar
<b>Car Parking (maximum levels)</b>	1 bed = 1 space 2/3 beds = 2 spaces	1 space per 14m <sup>2</sup>	1 space per 20m <sup>2</sup>	1 space per 30m <sup>2</sup>	1 space per 22m <sup>2</sup>	1 space per 5m <sup>2</sup> of public space
<b>Cycle Parking (minimum levels)</b>	1 bed = 1 stand 2+ beds = 2 stands	1 stand per 12 staff	1 stand per 6 staff	1 stand per 150m <sup>2</sup>	1 stand per 12 staff	1 stand per 12 staff

desirable.

The amounts of both vehicle and cycle parking should be in accordance with current standards as set out in the Local Plan or any successor policy statement. The current Local Plan standards are set out in Figure 5.3 below.

The Masterplan indicates provision of approximately 2,000 car parking spaces would be needed for the amount of development envisaged.

Provision should be made for disabled people in accordance with SODC parking standards in the Local Plan.

All car parking should meet best current standards in terms of design quality, passive safety, ease of maintenance and lighting. This includes the Park Mark Safer Parking Award.

## 5.2 Site Capacity and Density

The town centre extension should be built at a significantly higher density than exists on the site in order to achieve an efficient centre, to make the best use of land, and to enable the form of buildings to signify the centrality and importance of the place. Buildings in the central area (ie along the extensions to High Street and Orchard Street) should be three, four or five storeys high with retail on the ground floor and other uses above.

The Masterplan indicates the site could accommodate a total of approximately 70,000 – 75,000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace distributed between the following land uses:

- **Approximately 32,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace;**
- **Approximately 8,000m<sup>2</sup> of community and leisure floorspace; and**
- **Between 30,000 – 35,000m<sup>2</sup> of residential accommodation.**

In order to achieve the required higher densities and avoid the over-dominance of the car surface car parking will generally not be appropriate and therefore basement or, more likely, multi-storey car parking will be required

## 5.3 Access and Movement

SODC will require careful consideration of the accessibility of the town centre for both residents and visitors by different means of transport including walking, cycling, public transport, and private car. This will also bring wider benefits to the local population in the terms of healthy living. Proposals should enable safe and efficient movement in order to overcome the current disjointed nature of routes within Didcot. Development proposals must take account of the findings of the South Central Oxfordshire Transport Strategy.

High quality pedestrian routes need to be created to connect the extended town centre with the surrounding residential areas. SODC will require improved connections between the town centre and the railway station in order to meet the objective of Local Plan Policy T5. A dedicated cycle network will also be promoted (Local Plan Policy T7). The provision and enhancement of public open space should be part of the pedestrian and cycle network provision.

Shop mobility initiatives will be an important consideration for SODC and any proposals should promote equality of access and encourage independence of people with disabilities (permanent or temporary). This should be done through the provision of mobility equipment such as scooters, wheelchairs and power chairs. Accordingly, any proposals which fail to provide for shop mobility in the town centre would need to justify to the satisfaction of SODC why this could not be provided. Developers should work with Oxfordshire County Council and public

transport operators to enhance the public transport network. This should include improved bus services and connections.

The existing High Street forms a barrier in the integration of the Orchard centre with the proposed extension. SODC would expect to see plans showing how a pedestrianised link between the two areas would be achieved. This may involve some changes to bus routes and access arrangements which require further consideration.

Proposals should provide for linkages between the town centre and the surrounding countryside in order to promote healthy living. These should cross-refer to the Didcot Greenspace Network – Feasibility Study and meet the aims of the Oxfordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

## 5.4 Urban Design and Architecture

SODC requires a built form that creates a dense urban character with a distinct sense of place. Any proposals must provide, through a combination of good urban design and architecture, together with public realm and landscaping improvements, a form of development which is distinctive. Proposals should include:

- **buildings positioned to overlook the key routes and spaces and corner buildings to address both streets;**
- **buildings aligned to accommodate views in and out of the new development to surrounding streets and spaces;**
- **buildings to emulate the scale of the existing urban fabric of central Didcot i.e. at least three storeys, except if sunlight is blocked as a result;**
- **development that takes topography**

**of the site into account and avoids excessive use of steps;**

- **an increase in development height and scale away from the roadway towards the centre of the town;**

- **a building scale which closely relates to the public realm in line with the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.**

Landmark buildings should be incorporated at important nodes and corners. Whilst it is important to maintain scale and character, architectural diversity will be encouraged. Whilst most towns in Oxfordshire have a significant legacy of historic and sometimes architecturally important buildings, Didcot is a relatively new town with much less to constrain the design of new buildings. Opportunities for innovation and boldness are therefore greater, making it easier for the town centre extension to accommodate contemporary design and place making.

Design quality is essential to creating an attractive built environment with lasting effect. The Cornerstone Arts Centre has set a benchmark in terms of design for the town centre, which should be matched or exceeded in future proposals

Good urban design and place making principles as set out in the SODC Design Guide, CABE guidance should be followed to achieve a high standard and variety of urban design and architecture, and assist in promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Future development should address its surroundings in a positive manner and respond to the scale and character of existing development including the historic fabric of adjacent conservation areas. Buildings should be positioned to front directly onto the street. The amount of active frontage onto the street should be maximised. This will help create a safe and secure

environment in line with the companion guide to PPS1.

The blocks should be flexible in use so that they may be adapted to meet changing land use requirements.

All proposals for the town centre should follow the guidance provided by the SODC Design Guide and reflect the principles of the Didcot Brand wherever possible.

## 5.5 Public Realm, Open Space and Landscaping

SODC will require landscaping that defines the spaces between and around buildings and boundaries. Planting will be particularly important in softening and enhancing the streetscape, encouraging biodiversity, and providing shade. The green character of the Upper Broadway should be reflected in future proposals. Proposals should also give consideration to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

The town centre extension will allow a 'joining-up' of public space across the town centre. The public realm must be accessible, multi-functional, and have a comfortable micro-climate. In particular, the meeting of Orchard Street and High Street will form a key public space, perhaps in the form of a town square. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide (Section 3.6) provides guidance on the development of the public realm. Furthermore, the SODC Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment provides a baseline of existing facilities and a guide to future needs. The level of formal and informal recreation space must refer to the principles established in Local Plan Policies R2 and R6 whilst taking account of local characteristics.

SODC will require the green character that characterises Upper Broadway to be extended throughout the town centre through the introduction of street trees and, where appropriate, green verges. As well as serving to provide visual relief, tree planting may be used to create an attractive micro-climate and reinforce the hierarchy of routes and spaces to help create an integrated town centre environment. The nearby conservation areas provide historic features that should also be taken into account.

The public open spaces should be free of street clutter, with the correct level of signage which is in-keeping with the local character. Street furniture should draw on contemporary designs and finishes whilst maintaining ease of access. It is important to reflect the Didcot Brand throughout the town centre and this should be part of all design proposals. Consideration should also be given to covered pedestrian areas in order to provide protection from the elements.

The town centre development offers an excellent opportunity for public art (Local Plan Policy D12). SODC will seek a contribution towards public art to benefit the community, add to the identity of Didcot and improve the visiting experience.

SODC will place particular importance on the management of the public realm (Local Plan Policy TC3). It will work with interested parties to draw up a non-statutory town centre management strategy. This will enable the high quality of the built environment and open spaces to be maintained.

## 5.6 Safety & Security

SODC will require safety and security to be considered at the early stage of scheme design. The layout of the scheme has an important role in reducing opportunities for and fear of crime.



A mixed-use development will spread activities throughout the day and ensure natural surveillance. In addition an active public realm will increase 'eyes on the street'. Lighting schemes must be well considered to enhance public safety, in particular in the car parking areas. SODC will encourage measures to reduce crime and anti social behaviour and at the same time create surroundings that reduce the fear of crime and the potential for anti social behaviour. By providing a well designed, mixed-use environment where people of all ages can mix and take part in community life, the perception of cohesion and safety will increase.

Any development proposals should have regard to the SODC Design Guide which requires compliance with the Secured By Design principles. In addition, the local Crime Prevention Design Advisor should be consulted at an early stage.

Servicing areas must be well integrated into the urban form and be designed with recognition of safety and security, particularly for pedestrians. Servicing should take place off-road and within the curtilage of new buildings. Consideration will need to be given to safe and efficient access for service and waste vehicles. A Delivery and Service Management Plan for the core retail and residential area which will show how the impact of service vehicles will be minimised should be provided with all applications.

## 5.7 Sustainable Design

New development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they would use resources in an accountable and responsible manner. Sustainable design techniques should be employed to maximise efficiency in the use of energy, water and building materials.

New developments should be designed to take account of climate changes

expected over the life of the development such as rising temperatures, summer droughts, and heavy rainfall events. Developments should provide comfortable internal and external environments with least use of energy, include drainage systems with the capacity to cope with intense rainfall events, and take account of emerging best practice in this field.

SODC will promote renewable energy and low carbon development and assess developments for the following key sustainability initiatives:

- **maximising of solar gain;**
- **flexibility of building design to take account of changing needs, i.e. rising temperatures and heavy rainfall;**
- **minimising water consumption (e.g. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS), permeable surfaces or green and brown roofs);**
- **maximising use of reclaimed construction materials; and**
- **recycling of construction waste.**

SODC will expect standards it has established with regard to the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM to be met (see Section 4.4 of South Oxfordshire Design Guide).

Proposals for renewable energy will be encouraged, provided they do not have a significant adverse impact on the local and wider environment. In particular, Didcot town centre presents the opportunity for community heating infrastructure with the establishment of a local network or grid.

All developments must provide adequate waste management facilities with a consideration of how this impacts on the layout of the wider scheme.

# 6.0

## Sub-Areas

- 6.1 Sub-Areas
- 6.2 Existing Town Centre
- 6.3 High Street Extension
- 6.4 Orchard Street Extension
- 6.5 Hagbourne Road Extension
- 6.6 Broadway
- 6.7 Hitchcock Way



## 6.1 Sub-Areas

This section draws on the Strategic Principles to describe preferred key design and development characteristics of six Sub-Areas within the expanded town centre. However, this is one possible approach, and there may be others that also adequately reflect the strategic principles set out in Section 5. The Sub-Areas have been defined by reference to the Masterplan and the existing built form. Similarly, the evidence for land-use configurations and urban design principles is drawn from the Masterplan.

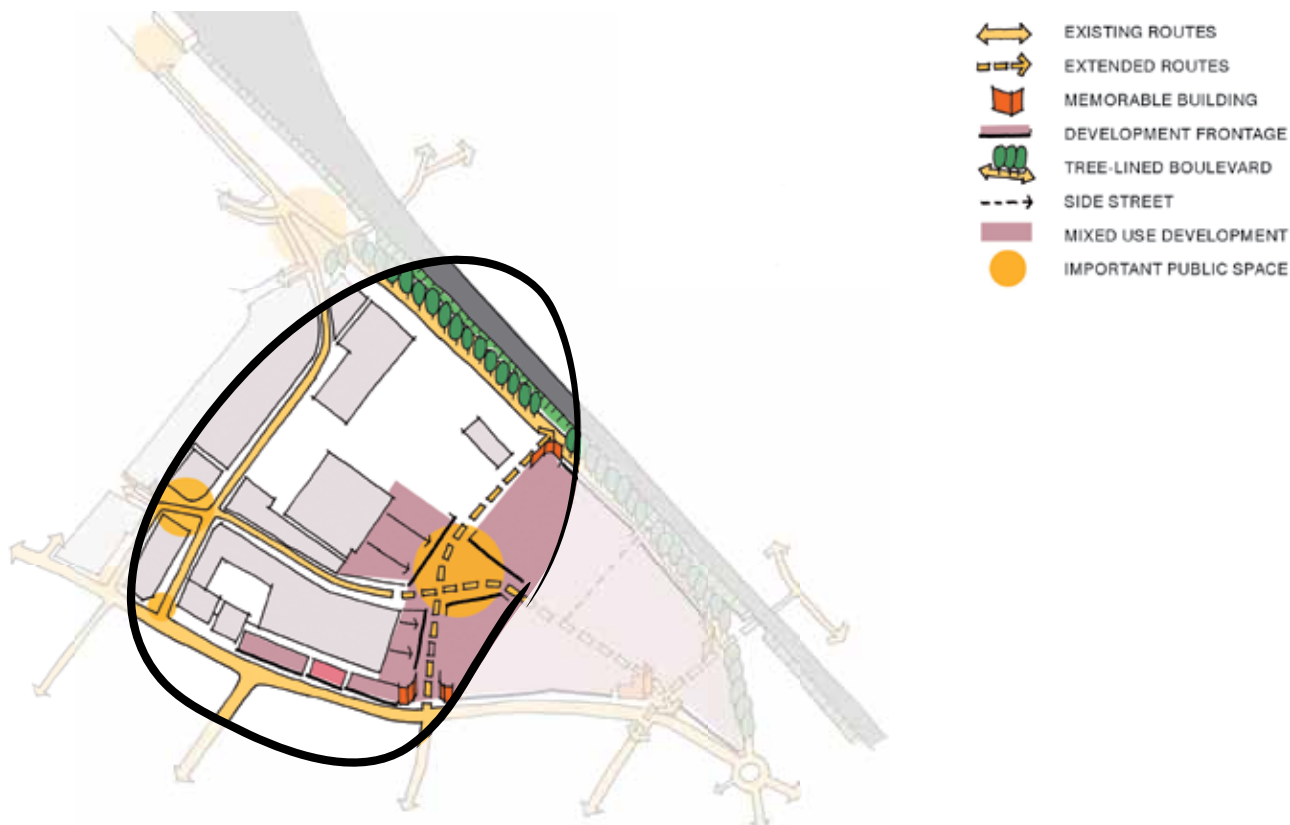
Whilst these Sub-Areas have independent characteristics they are not mutually exclusive but interlocking (and possibly overlapping) parts of the town centre as a whole. This reflects the requirement for a comprehensive approach to the planning and delivery of the town centre extension.

## 6.2 Existing Town Centre

Parts of the existing town centre need to be remodelled to contribute most effectively to, and to complement, the extended town centre. This remodelling should increase densities and contribute to the promotion of an evening economy.

The Sainsbury's store does not provide active frontages and needs to be better integrated with the core of the town centre. It is expected that a scheme would include plans to enable the car parking to be provided in a convenient but less prominent location and in a way which uses less land. Similarly, the petrol station is not appropriate in its current location and its relocation would be desirable, although this is likely to be possible only in the long term. The financial viability of both of these initiatives will be a major consideration.

Figure 6.1: Existing Town Centre



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The existing town centre should maximise linkages with the extended town centre, in particular through the Broadway and Orchard Street. Improvements to the streetscape should be included to improve the continuity between the two parts of the town centre.

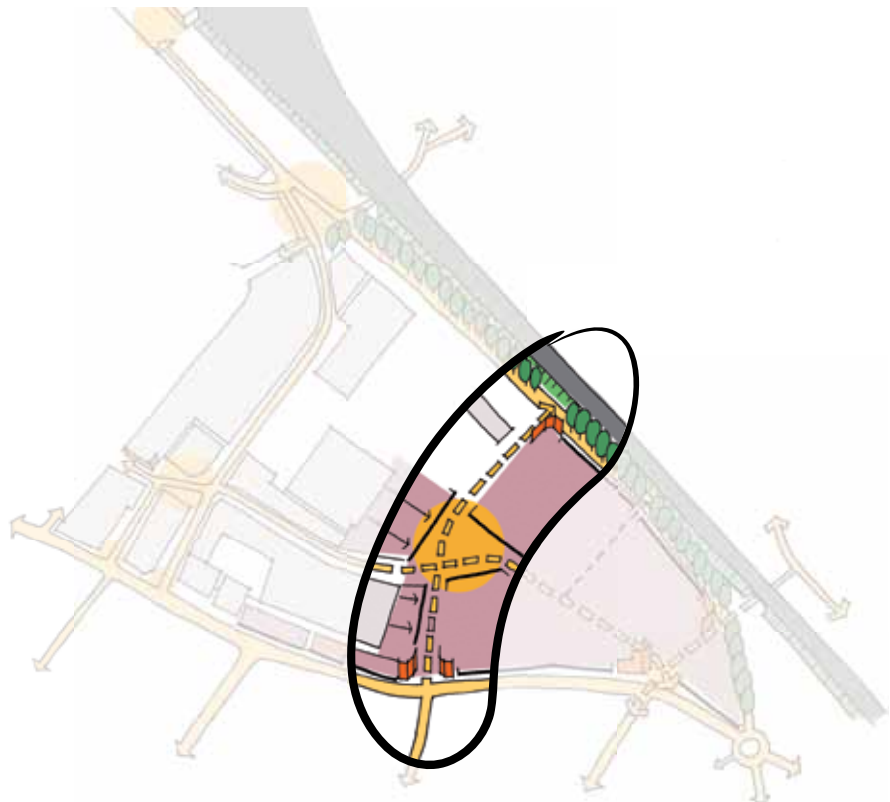
### 6.3 High Street Extension

Extending Northbourne High Street to meet Hitchcock Way would create an important north-south spine along the join between the existing and extended town centre. The southern part would link Orchard Street with the Broadway, whilst the northern part would create a northern access point on Hitchcock Way. The High Street extension presents opportunities for improving movement within the town centre and providing for a mix of land uses.

Proposals must demonstrate a consideration of the following planning issues:

- The southern section of the High Street would have a high pedestrian footfall. This should be reflected in land uses, which could include leisure and evening uses such as restaurants and bars;
- In the northern section of the High Street buildings on the eastern side might overlook the surface car park, at least for a period, in which case the type of the land uses must take account of this. For example, residential uses might not be appropriate. The form of any development on the west side would present different options;
- In the absence of development on its western side (currently the Sainsbury's car park), the eastern side of the High Street would be highly visible when approaching the town centre from the rail station. In this scenario, therefore the design of these buildings should be welcoming and contribute positively to an identity for the town centre;
- As an important north-south orientated route, the streetscape should add to the visual character

Figure 6.2: High Street Extension



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and quality of the place and include appropriate green landscaping; and

- Building heights should be between three to five storeys, with an increase towards the public space at the intersection with Orchard Street.

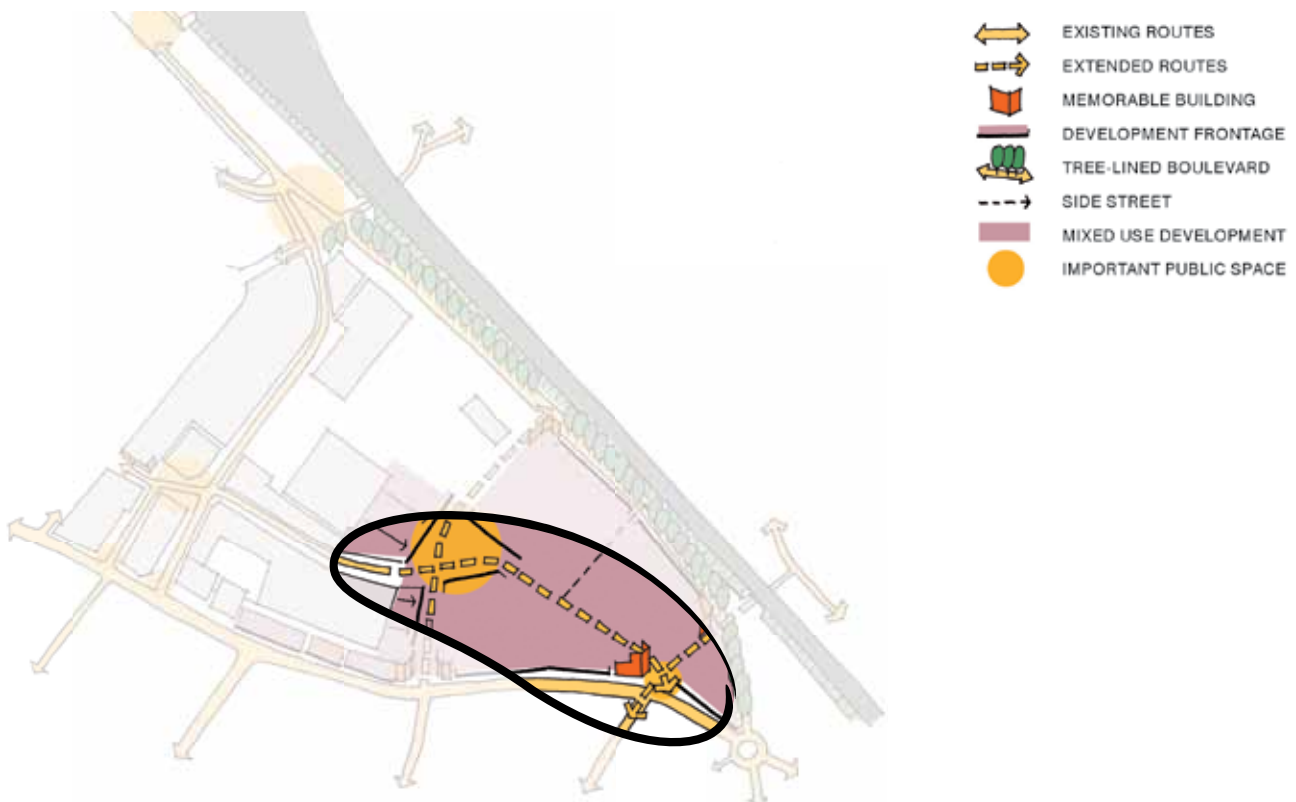
## 6.4 Orchard Street Extension

An extended Orchard Street should link together the existing and extended town centre. This presents an opportunity for developing continuity within the wider Didcot town centre. The street would stretch from the public space alongside the Cornerstone in the west to the junction with Hagbourne Road in the east.

Proposals must demonstrate a consideration of the following planning issues:

- Orchard Street should serve as the main retail street within the town centre. Land uses, building design and layout must take account of this function, being those that attract shoppers for shopping or to meet other needs, including access to post office and other services;
- The character of the streetscape must reflect the street's town centre retail role, providing a safe and pleasant pedestrian environment with access to cafes and restaurants, public toilets, etc;
- The meeting of Orchard Street and High Street is an opportunity for a central public space. This space should be large enough to accommodate events but should also be of an appropriate scale in relation to the surrounding buildings; and
- The east-west orientation of the street presents constraints on building heights with respect to daylight and sunlight. Whilst

Figure 6.3: Orchard Street Extension



building heights on the northern side are likely to be three, four or five storeys, heights on the southern side should be lower.

## 6.5 Hagbourne Road Extension

The extension to Hagbourne Road would provide an important link between the town centre and the residential areas to the north. This is  
Proposals must demonstrate a consideration of the following planning issues:

- The orientation of the extension can maximise the view corridor along Hagbourne Road and connect with the railway line underpass; and
- Safety must be considered at the crossing of Hitchcock Way and along the railway line underpass.

## 6.6 Broadway

As an established route in the town centre, the section of Broadway contained within the study area will continue to maintain a key role. Similar to Orchard Street, the Broadway could provide a linkage between the existing and extended town centre. The Broadway forms the southern border to the town centre and will include a number of access points into the town centre site itself. The road will also be important as a transport access route into and within the town centre.

Proposals must demonstrate a consideration of the following planning issues:

- The eastern end of the Broadway to form part of the 'retail circuit'; commercial viability;
- Development on the northern side of the Broadway should respect the conservation area on the opposite side of the street. Sensitivity to the

Figure 6.4: Hagbourne Road Extension

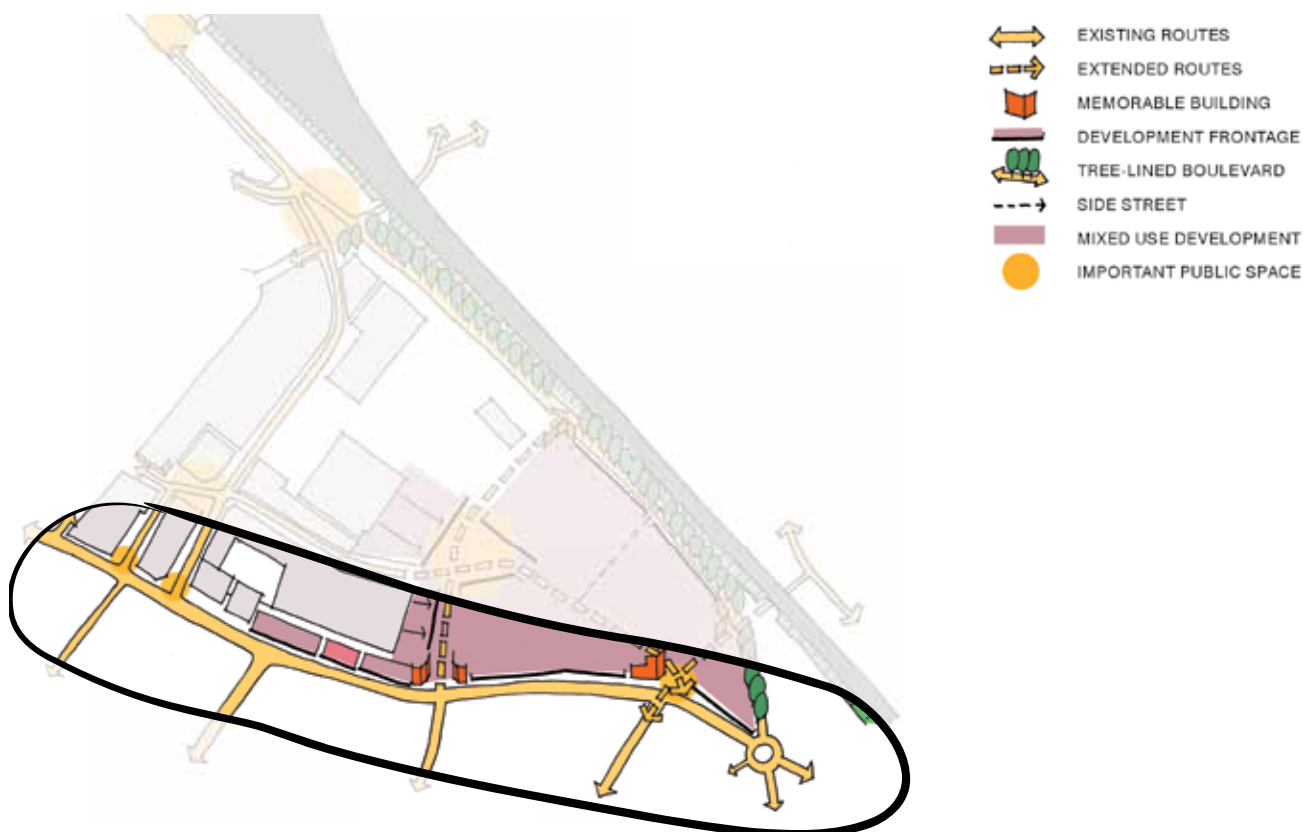


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conservation area will dictate building design and heights;

- The meeting point of the **Broadway** and the extended **Orchard Street** would form a key gateway location. The land use and building design should reflect this important location;
- The western section of the **Broadway** will act as a link between **Station Road** and **High Street**. The land uses and building quality are required to complement the proposals for the town centre extension; and
- Building should be two or three storeys.

Figure 6.5: Broadway



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## 6.7 Hitchcock Way

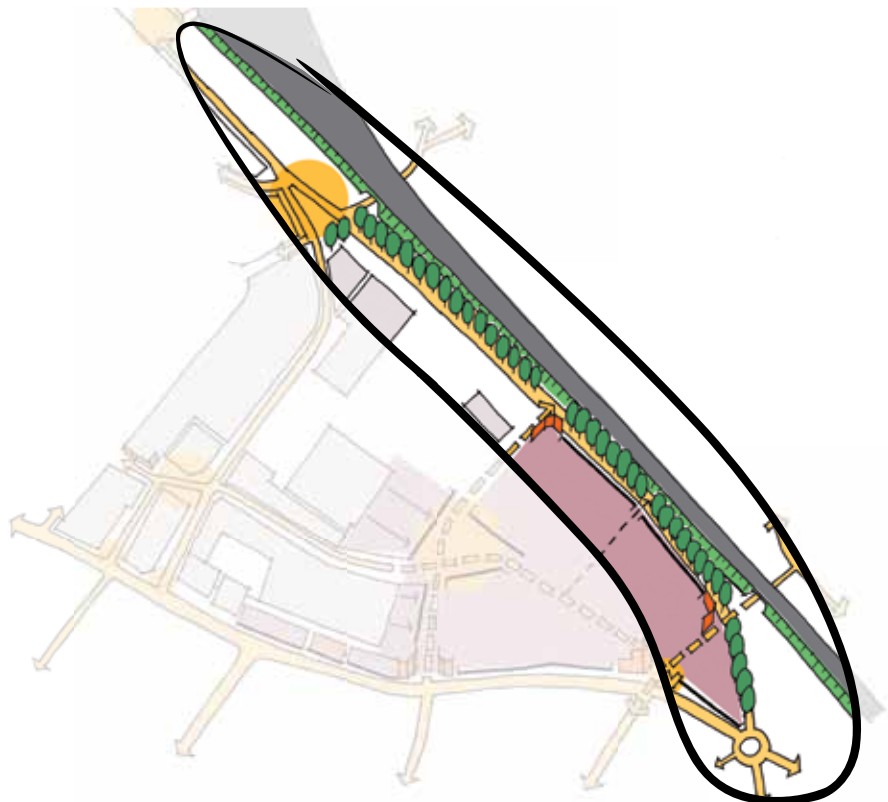
Similar to the Broadway, Hitchcock Way is a key route that borders the town centre site. Despite its connection to the rail station, Hitchcock Way currently lacks integration with the wider town centre. Redevelopment will change the nature of the road in order to improve its setting within the town centre and the experience of road users, both pedestrian and non-pedestrian. Proposals must demonstrate a consideration of the following planning issues:

- Noise impacts from the railway line will determine land uses and building design on the southern side of the road; and
- Buildings should be three, four or five storeys, with the potential to maximise views over the railway line.

Whilst there is a desire to provide an active frontage on Hitchcock Way, this should not prevent the road from functioning as an access and relief road.

- Hitchcock Way will form an important route from the rail station. The pedestrian experience should be improved through the use of urban design techniques including lighting, green landscaping, the provision of active frontages, and better crossing facilities;

Figure 6.6: Hitchcock Way



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## **Delivery and Implementation**

- 7.1 Delivery and Implementation**
- 7.2 Development partners**
- 7.3 Land assembly**
- 7.4 Phasing**
- 7.5 Infrastructure**
- 7.6 Future Planning applications**
- 7.7 Planning obligations**
- 7.8 Other agreements**

## 7.1

### Delivery and Implementation

SODC is determined to bring about the expansion of Didcot town centre in accordance with the vision set out in this document. SODC will therefore work closely with all interested parties, acting as local authority, landowner and, above all, as champion of the Didcot growth agenda. It will use all of its powers and resources to deliver an attractive, well designed, expanded town centre that will meet the needs of the town and the wider area in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

This SPD provides a framework for investment in, and for the regeneration of, the town centre. It provides guidance on what is required, what is desirable and what should be avoided. This section deals with the delivery and implementation of the vision. It points to the partner organisations that will be involved, and identifies issues of viability and deliverability that will affect how and when the development takes place.

The development will take place over several years, during which time economic and market conditions are likely to change significantly. This needs to be taken into account when considering the design and development issues addressed here.

## 7.2

### Development partners

SODC is taking the lead in bringing about the successful expansion of Didcot town centre but will rely on a number of key partners. SODC has selected Hammerson Plc as its preferred development partner and this company, or any successor company in this role, will play a crucial role in delivering the key parts of the town centre.

Other landowners will also be important, for example in redeveloping existing retail premises along the northern side of Broadway. Oxfordshire County Council will play an important role in ensuring the expanded town centre is as accessible as possible for all sections of the community (by assisting in the evolution of scheme proposals and adopting and then maintaining public highways through the extended centre). The cooperation and assistance of statutory undertakers and other service providers will also be needed.

## 7.3

### Land assembly

The recently completed town centre development (which effectively implemented Local Plan Policy DID6) took place on land that is owned by SODC/Hammerson/Sainsbury's. The next stages required to implement SODC's vision will involve the further development of some of this land but, more significantly, land to the east (the subject of Policy DID8), which is in a number of separately owned parcels. The redevelopment of the northern side of Broadway, would also relate to property owned by others.

The development will be undertaken by the private sector, but SODC will be pro-active in assisting to realize the vision in this SPD as quickly as practicable without compromising its objectives. This will, if necessary, involve SODC using its compulsory purchase powers to secure control of the land needed. If it does prove necessary for SODC to use these powers to purchase land or premises being used by service trades that provide a valued service to the community, SODC will, where appropriate, assist with the relocation of those businesses to suitable land or premises elsewhere in the Didcot area (in accordance with policy DID8). This will require an appropriate legal obligation on the part of the preferred developer to deliver an agreed plan for relocation.

## 7.4 Phasing

The comprehensive development of the expanded town centre might be phased. If it is, the development should proceed in an appropriate sequence. For example, the retail core should continue as a logical extension from the Sainsbury's superstore on Orchard Street eastwards into the area covered by policy DID8. It is likely to be most appropriate for development towards the fringes of the DID8 area to follow later. Planning applications should include details of proposed phasing

SODC is keen for the development to take place as soon as possible, but the pace at which it does proceed will depend upon the resolution of land ownership issues and market conditions.

The state of the economy generally, and the retailing sector in particular, have recently been so dynamic and uncertain as to make it difficult to establish a timeline with confidence. This is compounded by uncertainty about the rate of housebuilding in Didcot and elsewhere in South Oxfordshire, and therefore expenditure in the local catchment.

SODC will monitor the development in relation to changing market conditions and progress with other aspects of the Didcot growth agenda. It will also monitor the positive and any negative impacts of the earlier phases with a view to adjusting the form or timing of later phases if the need to do so becomes apparent.

## 7.5 Infrastructure

SODC will need to be satisfied that all necessary infrastructure will be in place when needed at each phase of the development. SODC and the developer will therefore need to liaise with the providers of sewers, drainage, water and energy supplies and other forms of physical infrastructure.

Each element of the development will be expected to provide the infrastructure needed.

## 7.6 Future Planning applications

SODC will require a comprehensive application for development of the whole of the DID8 site area and any necessary reconfiguration of the wider town centre. Applications will need to show how the development proposed would make an effective and positive contribution to meeting SODC's aspirations. All applicants must show that, although they might be implemented in phases, their proposals accord with the guidance in this SPD and that they will comprise comprehensive proposals for the achievement of the town centre vision, or would not frustrate its achievement.

Proposals for comprehensive schemes should include an indication of phasing, and this is likely to be controlled by a condition attached to any planning permission.

SODC is aiming to achieve a successful, vibrant, attractive and sustainable town centre for Didcot and is therefore seeking an appropriate mixture of uses and activities in accordance with this SPD. If specific proposals do not match SODC's aspirations, the applicant must make the case for them by reference to as much relevant supporting evidence as possible. The presumption will be that proposals that do not meet the

requirements of this SPD will be refused.

Having regard to the above principles, good practice generally, and SODC's planning applications checklist (which can change from time to time so should be reviewed when an application is prepared), all planning applications must be supported by the following:

- A statement showing how the proposals comply with this SPD and its associated SA report (and, in so far as they do not, evidence and a rationale for different proposals);
- A phasing scheme;
- A Design and Access Statement;
- A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan; and
- Heads of terms for a Section 106 legal agreement (see below).

Applications for large scale proposals might need to be supported by an environmental statement in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations [1999].

## 7.7

### Planning obligations

In order to ensure that undesirable impacts are mitigated satisfactorily, each applicant will need to enter into a section 106 legal agreement specifying the measures required and their timing. There will be requirements from both SODC and Oxfordshire County Council.

Measures included should be in accordance with Local Plan Policy D11 and emerging policy guidance on planning obligations. However, more town centre specific measures include (but are not limited to):

- **Delivery of an agreed plan for the relocation of existing service trades and other businesses**

- **Transport contributions**

- **Public art**

- **Affordable housing**

- **Police infrastructure**

- **Local training initiatives**

- **Management and maintenance of the public realm**

Other agreements may include:

- **Section 278 agreements**

- **Section 38 agreements**

- **Rights of Way**

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms  
and Abbreviations**

**Appendix 2: Full document reference list**

**Appendix 3: List of Key Stakeholders**

**Appendix 4: Relevant Local Plan policies**





# **Appendix 1**

## **Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations**

## Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term	Explanation
<b>SODC</b>	South Oxfordshire District Council	The district planning authority for South Oxfordshire.
<b>SPD</b>	Supplementary Planning Document	<p>SPDs form part of the LDF for the area. They may cover a range of issues, both thematic and site specific, which may expand policy or provide further detail to policies in a DPD.</p> <p>SPDs will not be subject to independent examination and will not form part of the Development Plan.</p>
<b>SA</b>	Sustainability Appraisal	A process of appraising plans, policies and programmes for their social, economic and environmental effects to assist in assessing how these impacts can be minimised., which must be applied to all DPDs and SPDs.
<b>PPGs</b>	Planning Policy Guidance Notes	Guidance on general and specific aspects of planning policy issued by Central Government.
<b>PPS</b>	Planning Policy Statement	Statements of national planning policy produced by Government, gradually replacing Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs).
<b>LDD</b>	Local Development Document	An individual component or document of the LDF
<b>LDS</b>	Local Development Scheme	A document explaining a local planning authority's work programme for producing elements of the Local Development Framework.
<b>LDF</b>	Local Development Framework	The portfolio of LDDs which will provide the spatial planning framework.
<b>DPD</b>	Development Plan Document	A type of LDD which sets out the planning policy framework for an area or for a particular planning topic and which carries significant weight in the development control process. DPDs are spatial planning documents which are subject to independent examinations.
<b>Local Plan</b>	South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011	The local plan guides development in the district and sets out the Council's policies for the use of land. The plan also makes specific proposals for the use of particular sites and designates areas of particular value. The plan forms the basis for decisions made on planning applications.
<b>AMR</b>	Annual Monitoring Report	LDD required each year to assess the implementation of the LDS and the extent to which policies are being successfully implemented.
	Evidence Base	The researched, documented, analysed and verified basis for preparing the LDF.

## Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations **continued**

Abbreviation	Term	Explanation
	New Growth Point	The New Growth Points initiative provides support to local communities who wish to pursue large scale and sustainable growth, including new housing, through a partnership with Government.
	Use Classes Order	Part of planning law which identifies certain classes or types of development with similar characteristics.
	Use Class A1	Shops (also retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices, dry cleaners, Internet cafes etc).
	Use Class A2	Financial and professional services where the service is provided principally to visiting customers
	Use Class A3	Restaurants, snack bars and cafes.
	Use Class A4	Drinking establishments
	Use Class A5	Hot food take-away
	Use Class B1	Business (office, research and development, and industry) which can be carried out in a residential area without causing nuisance
	Use Class B2	General industrial
	Use Class B8	Storage and distribution
	Use Class C1	Hotels and hostels
	Use Class C2	Residential institutions
	Use Class C3	Dwellinghouses
	Use Class D1	Non-residential institutions
	Use Class D2	Assembly and leisure
	Sustainable Development	<p>Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>The Government states in Securing the Future: the UK Sustainable Development Strategy: DEFRA 2005, that the goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations. This goal will be pursued in an integrated way through an innovative and economy that</p>

## Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations **continued**

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Abbreviation	Term	Explanation
		delivers high levels of employment and through a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal wellbeing. This will be done in ways that protect and enhance the physical and natural environment, and use resources and energy as efficiently as possible.
	SUDS	Surface water drainage methods that take account of quantity, quality and amenity issues are collectively referred to as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). These systems are more sustainable than conventional drainage methods and treat drainage at its source using natural processes.
	Affordable housing	Housing which meets the needs of those households in the district that are living in unsuitable accommodation and cannot afford to rent or buy housing of a suitable size.
	Biodiversity	The variety of life on earth encompassing the whole range of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects, and other invertebrates, plants, fungi and micro-organisms.
	Conservation areas	Designated by district councils and described in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The boundaries of all designated conservation areas in the district are shown on the Proposals Map.
	Density	The number of houses to be accommodated on a given area of land
	Infrastructure	All the ancillary works and services which are necessary to support human activities, including roads, sewers, schools, hospitals, etc.
	Renewable energy	Energy flows that occur naturally in the environment from the sun, wind, oceans, plants and the fall of water.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Full document reference list**

## Full document reference list

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### National Policy

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Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1: Delivering Sustainable Development  
Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms  
Draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development  
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6: Planning for Town Centres  
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Housing  
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 12: Local Spatial Planning  
Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 13: Transport  
Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation  
Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 22: Renewable Energy  
Safer Places – The Planning System and Crime Prevention (2004)  
Manual for Streets (Department for Transport)  
Design guidance prepared by The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)

- By Design - urban design in the planning system: towards better practice (2000)
- Better Places to Live by Design: a companion guide to PPG3 (2001)
- The cost of bad design (2006)
- Living with risk: promoting better public space design (2007)
- Inclusion by design. Equality, diversity and the built environment (2008)

Transforming Places; changing lives: a framework for regeneration (DCLG) (Consultation Draft)  
The 2006 Local Government White Paper: Strong and prosperous communities

### Regional Policy

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Draft South East Plan (Submission Document 2006 and Proposed Changes 2008) and associated documents

### Local Policy

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SODC Local Plan 2011 and associated documents  
SODC Local Plan Deposit Stages Sustainability Appraisals  
SODC Core strategy papers and preferred options paper

- Background Paper Settlement Hierarchy
- Final Preferred Options Paper
- Local Development Scheme

SODC LDF and Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal and scoping report  
SODC adopted SPG documents

- Affordable Housing SPD

SODC Design Guide  
SODC Statement of Community Involvement  
SODC Sustainable Community Strategy  
SODC Community Safety Strategy 2008 -2011  
Vale of White Horse LDF – Core Strategy Preferred Options document  
Planning Policy Statement 12 and other procedural guidance documents



## Full document reference list **continued**

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### Mapping

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Ordnance Survey plans/maps for study area  
Aerial Photography  
Tree Preservation Orders

### Evidence Base

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Didcot town centre master plan (REAL)  
Didcot town centre master plan – baseline analysis report  
Didcot town centre master plan – transport analysis report  
Didcot town centre master plan – strategic framework  
Didcot Developments Information

- Bid submission 2006
- CE's letter to DCLG
- Letter to EIP
- Sustainable Growth at Didcot Report
- Council's response to Draft SE Plan
- Historic plans, Land constraints map, photos

Didcot Ipsos Mori Opinion Survey  
Housing Needs Survey  
Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment  
PPG 17 Assessment of Sport & Recreation facilities

- Audit of facilities
- Consultation document and maps

Air Quality Information

- Henley Air Quality Action Plan
- Wallingford AQMA Map

Didcot Greenspaces Report  
Didcot Strategic Flood Risk Assessment  
Land ownership plans  
Southern Gas mains pipeline mapping  
Conservation area information

- Station Road CA Character Assessment, map and Article 4 Direction
- Northbourne CA information (not available)

OCC – South Central Oxfordshire Transport Study – Evidence and information/ Technical Notes



# Appendix 3

## List of Key Stakeholders

## List of Key Stakeholders

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Name	Title/ Organisation
David Buckle	Chief Executive SODC
Anna Robinson	Strategic Director SODC
John Cotton	Cabinet Member for Didcot SODC
Angie Patterson	Cabinet Member for Planning SODC
Cll. Colin Daukes	Didcot All Saints SODC
Cll. John Flood	Didcot All Saints SODC
Cll. Tony Harbour	Didcot Ladygrove SODC
Cll. Roger Hawlor	Didcot Ladygrove SODC
Cll. Bill Service	Didcot Ladygrove SODC
Cll. Lyndon Elias	Didcot Northbourne SODC
Cll. Jane Murphy	Didcot Northbourne SODC
Cll. Margaret Davies	Didcot Park SODC
Cll. Margaret Turner	Didcot Park SODC
Martin John	Housing, Development & Regeneration Manager SODC
Darren Detheridge	Contaminated Land Officer SODC
Sam Bryan	Air Quality Officer SODC
Sally Wilson	Waste Manager SODC
Helen Green	Partnerships Manager (Community Safety) SODC
Suzanne Malcolm	Economic Development Manager SODC
John Backley	Technical Projects Manager SODC
Kate Arnold	Leisure Manager SODC
Shona Parsons	Communications & Tourism Manager SODC
Gill Oliver	Planning Policy Manager SODC
Cathie Scotting	Major Applications Officer SODC
Adrian Duffield	Head of Planning & Building Control SODC
Graham Hawkins	Strategic Property Officer SODC
Craig Miller	Didcot Project Manager SODC
Dave Baldwin	Monson (Drainage Engineer for SODC)
Dominic Lamb	SODC Biodiversity Team/ Greenspaces
Annemarie de Boom	Roger Evans Associates Limited
Peter Mann	Assistant Head of Transport – OCC
Tamsin Atley	Planning Officer, District Planning Consultations Team -OCC
Simon Betty	Hammerson
Ben Wighton	Cushman & Wakefield
Dominic Stapleton	Clerk to Didcot Town Council
David Pryor	Didcot First
	Didcot Community Forum
Inspector Nick Cain	Thames Valley Police
Toby Warren	Science Vale UK Project Manager
Katie Barrett	Vale of White Horse District Council
Ann Ducker	Leader of Council SODC
Ms G Parkhouse	Environment Agency (Government)
Ms J Smallman	English Partnerships (Agent)
Mr S Williams	English Heritage South East Region (Built Environment)

## List of Key Stakeholders

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Name	Title/ Organisation
Mr K Bown	Government Office for the South East (Government)
Ms J Griffin	SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) (Didcot, Government, Your future workshop)
Mr N Woods	South East Regional Assembly (SEERA) (Government)
Head of Planning Services	Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority (Health)
Ms Charlotte Barrett	Vale of White Horse District Council (Local Authority)
Ms Linda Currie	Highways Agency (Government, Local Authority)
Planning Policy Manager	Oxfordshire County Council (Local Authority)
Cll. Bill Service	Oxford City Council (Local Authority)
Cll. Neville F. Harris	Didcot Ladygrove OCC
Cll. Terry Joslin	Didcot South OCC
Ms G Cook	Didcot South OCC
	National Grid UK Transmission (Service Provider)
	Thames Water Property Services (Didcot, Service Provider)
	Thames Water Utilities Ltd (Service Provider)
	Network Rail (Transport)
	Southern Gas Networks (Service Provider)
Mrs S Mansfield	Natural England (Environmental)
Naomi Manning	Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust (Service Provider)
Carolyn Wilson MRTPI	MONO Consultants Ltd for Mobile Operators Association (MOA)
Katherine Woolley	Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust (Health, Service Provider)
	Oxford City Council (Estates) (Local Authority)
	Oxford Bus Company
	White Coaches
	Thames Travel
Ms Lesley Nesbit	Thames Valley Police
Mr Peter Mann	OCC Assistant Head of Transport
Mr Glynn Hall	President/Chairman Didcot Chamber of Commerce
Huw Jones	Director of Environment, Oxfordshire County Council
Steve Moss	Harwell Science and Innovation Campus
James Hepple	MEPC
Richard Peacock	Soha Housing Ltd
Richard Rowland	First Great Western

Further contacts are available from the Didcot Community Forum membership list





# Appendix 4

## Relevant Local Plan policies

## Relevant Local Plan policies

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### Section 3: Protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment

#### The Historic Environment

##### Proposals affecting a conservation area

###### Policy CON7

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would harm the character or appearance of a conservation area.

The following will be required when considering proposals for development in conservation areas:

- (i) the design and scale of new work to be in sympathy with the established character of the area; and
- (ii) the use of traditional materials, whenever this is appropriate to the character of the area.

The contribution made to a conservation area by existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, open spaces and important views will be taken into account. Proposals for development outside a conservation area which would have a harmful effect on the conservation area will not be permitted.

#### Environmental Protection

##### Proposals affecting a conservation area

###### Policy EP1

Proposals which would (by reason of smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust, grit, or other forms of polluting emissions) have an adverse effect on people and other living organisms, the atmosphere, the land, underground water supplies or water courses will not be permitted, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented. In addition, development will not be permitted near to an existing or proposed polluting use, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the health and amenity of future occupiers.

#### Noise and vibrations

###### Policy EP2

Proposals which would by reason of noise or vibrations have an adverse effect on existing or proposed occupiers will not be permitted, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented. In addition, noise sensitive development will not be permitted close to existing or proposed sources of significant noise or vibrations.

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### **Section 3: Protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment**

#### **Flood risk**

##### **Policy EP5**

Development in areas at risk from flooding will only be permitted where the proposals include effective works to mitigate the adverse effects of the development.

#### **Surface water protection**

##### **Policy EP6**

Developers will be required, wherever practicable, to demonstrate that the surface water management system on any development accords with sustainable drainage principles and has been designed as an integral part of the development layout. The system should effectively mitigate any adverse effects from surface water run-off and flooding on people, property and the ecological value of the local environment.

#### **Contaminated land**

##### **Policy EP8**

Development on contaminated land will not be permitted unless the contamination is effectively treated by the developer to prevent any harm to human health and the wider environment.

### **Section 4: Encouraging sustainable and high-quality development**

#### **Principles of good design**

##### **Good design and local distinctiveness**

##### **Policy D1**

The principles of good design and the protection and reinforcement of local distinctiveness should be taken into account in all new development through:

- (i) the provision of a clear structure of spaces;
- (ii) respecting existing settlement patterns;
- (iii) providing for a choice of routes and transport modes to, from and within the development;
- (iv) providing a development that users find easy to understand through the use of landmarks, vistas and focal points;

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### **Section 4: Encouraging sustainable and high-quality development**

- (v) providing landscape structure as a framework for new development;
- (vi) respecting the character of the existing landscape;
- (vii) respecting distinctive settlement types and their character;
- (viii) providing good quality site and building design and appropriate materials; and
- (ix) providing well-designed external areas.

#### **Vehicle and bicycle parking**

##### **Policy D2**

Planning permission will not be granted for developments that fail to incorporate adequate, safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles. Vehicle parking should be provided in a discreet and sensitive manner.

#### **Promoting mixed-use development**

##### **Policy D5**

A compatible mix of uses will be retained and encouraged in town and local district centres; on large-scale housing developments; and on sites within settlements that are well served by public transport, provided that:

- (i) there is no harmful effect on the amenity of adjoining uses;
- (ii) the design of the scheme is appropriate to the site and its surroundings; and
- (iii) the development is served by an adequate road network which can accommodate any additional traffic without creating traffic hazards or damage to the environment.

#### **Design against crime**

##### **Policy D6**

The design and layout of development will be encouraged in ways which will reduce the opportunity for crime and will promote suitable means of improving the security of premises.

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### **Section 4: Encouraging sustainable and high-quality development**

#### **Minimising adverse impacts on the environment**

##### **Energy, water and materials efficient design**

###### **Policy D8**

All new development should demonstrate high standards in the conservation and efficient use of energy, water and materials through its siting, landscaping, building design, use of materials, layout and orientation of buildings.

##### **Renewable energy**

###### **Policy D9**

Proposals for renewable energy development will be permitted provided that they do not have a significant adverse effect on the landscape, heritage and biodiversity of an area, traffic generation or the amenities of local communities.

#### **Infrastructure and service requirements**

###### **Policy D11**

Development will only be permitted if adequate on-or off-site infrastructure and other services and facilities made necessary by the development are available or will be provided to service it. The requirement for infrastructure and other services and facilities will be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and will include, where appropriate, the provision of:

- (i) affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;
- (ii) transport measures including infrastructure, public transport services, traffic management and measures for cyclists and pedestrians;
- (iii) education facilities;
- (iv) arts and cultural facilities;
- (v) facilities for the emergency services;
- (vi) public open spaces and associated facilities;
- (vii) community (including social services) and recreation facilities;
- (viii) health care services;
- (ix) local convenience shops;
- (x) measures to allow effective waste collection and recycling;

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### **Section 4: Encouraging sustainable and high-quality development**

- (xi) surface water and foul drainage works;
- (xii) measures designed to mitigate the effects of the development on the environment. Regard will be had to the cumulative impact of development and developers may be required to contribute jointly to necessary infrastructure improvements. Before planning permission is granted legal obligations must be completed between owners and/or developers and infrastructure providers, securing the provision of land and the payment of financial contributions to the providers to enable the provision and, where appropriate, the subsequent maintenance of essential infrastructure and facilities.

### **Section 5: Meeting the social needs of the rural and urban communities**

#### **Housing**

##### **The amount and location of new housing**

###### **Policy H1**

Sufficient land will be released for housing development to ensure that the housing provisions in the Structure Plan are met. Development which would cause these provisions to be significantly exceeded will not be permitted.

##### **Dwelling densities**

###### **Policy H8**

On sites where housing development is acceptable in principle, a density of 30 dwellings or more per hectare (net) and in town centre locations, of 40 dwellings or more per hectare (net) will be required, unless such densities would have an adverse effect on the character of the area.

##### **Affordable housing**

###### **Policy H9**

Based on the demonstrated need for affordable housing in the district, a proportion of affordable housing will be sought on:

- (i) sites allocated for housing in this plan;
- (ii) housing sites which are greater than 0.5ha or would accommodate 15 dwellings or more in settlements of over 3000 population where 40% affordable housing will be sought; and
- (iii) housing sites which are capable of accommodating a net gain of 5 or more small dwellings in settlements of less than 3000 population where 40% affordable housing will be sought.

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

### Section 5: Meeting the social needs of the rural and urban communities

The affordable housing should:

- (i) be available to local people in perpetuity;
- (ii) be of a size and type which meets the requirements of those in housing need; and
- (iii) meet the standards of housing development set out in Section 4.

## Recreation

### Formal recreation

#### Policy R1

Proposals for new or improved facilities for outdoor sport or children's play to serve local needs will be permitted in or adjacent to settlements provided that there are no overriding amenity, environmental, Green Belt, transport or agricultural objections.

On housing sites which are less than 0.4 hectare or which would accommodate less than 15 dwellings, where it may not be reasonable to expect the developer to provide the outdoor playing space within the development site, improvements to an existing outdoor playing space or, if appropriate, provision in a nearby area will be sought.

#### Policy R2

When granting planning permission for new residential development, developers will be required to provide outdoor playing space for the new residents to a minimum standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 persons. Developers will be required to demonstrate that satisfactory provision for long-term maintenance has been made.

### Indoor sports facilities

#### Policy R3

Within the built-up area of towns and villages outside the Green Belt the erection of buildings to provide new or extended indoor sports facilities will be permitted provided that the scale, design and materials of the building are in keeping with its surroundings and there are no other overriding objections on highway and amenity grounds.

The change of use of existing buildings will also be permitted provided that the building is suitable for the use proposed and there are no overriding objections on amenity, highway or environmental grounds.



## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### **Section 5: Meeting the social needs of the rural and urban communities**

#### **Informal recreation**

##### **Policy R6**

When granting planning permission for new residential development, developers will be required to provide public open space for informal recreation to meet the needs of the new residents in accordance with an amount appropriate to the locality and the size of the development proposed.

#### **Community facilities and services**

##### **Provision of community facilities and services**

##### **Policy CF2**

Proposals that would result in the provision of additional community facilities or services within settlements will be permitted, provided that there are no overriding amenity, environmental or traffic objections to the proposals and that there is no conflict with the other policies in this plan.

### **Section 6: Supporting the local economy**

#### **Business, industry, storage and distribution**

##### **Didcot**

##### **Policy E1**

In Didcot planning permission for business and industry, storage and distribution will be granted:

- (i) for proposals on sites allocated in Section 10 in accordance with Policies DID5 to DID9 and DID11;
- (ii) for new premises or the conversion of existing buildings on a suitable site within the built-up area; and
- (iii) for the reasonable extension of a firm on its present site; provided that in all cases the requirements of Policies E4 and E5 are met.

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### Section 6: Supporting the local economy

#### General employment policies

##### **Policy E4**

Proposals for employment-generating development which would conflict with the overall strategy of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan to restrain the overall level of development, with Didcot as the preferred location for new development, will not be permitted. In particular it must be demonstrated that there is sufficient existing or planned housing land available to meet any demand generated by the proposals.

##### **Policy E5**

Proposals for business, industry, warehousing and storage will not be permitted which:

- (i) conflict with the policies in the plan to protect the Green Belt and the countryside;
- (ii) conflict with the policies in the plan to protect the built environment and to retain recreational uses and essential community facilities and services in accordance with Policies CF1 and CF3;
- (iii) are of a scale and type of development inappropriate to the proposed site and its surroundings;
- (iv) are not in keeping with the surrounding area in terms of design, layout and materials. Where appropriate, the site must be suitably landscaped, in accordance with Policies D1 and C1. In new developments the Council will normally require at least one-tenth of the gross developable area to be set aside for landscaping;
- (v) have inadequate access and car and lorry parking and manoeuvring facilities and/or would cause problems on the wider road network in accordance with Policies D2 and T1 to T3;
- (vi) where appropriate, are in locations which are not accessible by public transport in accordance with Policy T2; and/or
- (vii) cause problems as a result of noise, smell, dust, loss of privacy or cause any other environmental problems in accordance with Policies EP1 to EP9.

#### Recreation

##### **Policy TSM1**

The prosperity of the area's tourist industry will be supported through encouragement for enterprises which are based on the conservation and enjoyment of the inherent qualities and heritage of the area, provided that there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections.

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### Section 6: Supporting the local economy

#### General employment policies

##### **Policy TSM2**

Proposals for improvements to tourist attractions and facilities, and proposals for new attractions based on the character of the area, will be permitted provided that:

- (i) there is no conflict with policies for the Green Belt;
- (ii) the scale, nature and location of the development is appropriate and in character with the area;
- (iii) the design, layout and materials relate well to adjacent buildings and are in keeping with the surroundings;
- (iv) where appropriate the site is accessible by public transport and provision is made for pedestrian and cycle links with adjacent areas; and
- (v) there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections.

#### Serviced accommodation, public houses and restaurants

##### **Policy TSM3**

The conversion of existing buildings for use as hotels, other serviced accommodation, public houses and restaurants will be permitted, provided that:

- (i) the proposal is in keeping with the character, appearance and setting of the building;
- (ii) there is no objection on highway or traffic grounds, and no loss of amenity by local residents; and
- (iii) there is no conflict with Policy E8 or Green Belt policies.

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### Section 6: Supporting the local economy

#### Policy TSM4

The construction of hotels, other serviced accommodation, public houses and restaurants will be permitted within the built-up area of existing settlements provided that:

- (i) the site is not in the Green Belt;
- (ii) the scale and location of the development is appropriate and the design and materials are in keeping with the locality;
- (iii) there is no significant loss of amenity by local residents;
- (iv) where appropriate the site is accessible by public transport and provision is made for pedestrian and cycle links with adjacent areas; and
- (v) there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections. Outside the Green Belt, extensions to existing premises in the district will normally be permitted subject to criteria (ii)-(v) above.

### Section 7: Supporting vital and viable town centres

#### Extending the range and quality of facilities

#### Policy TC1

Planning permission will be granted for mixed-use development (including shops, offices, housing and other key town centre uses that attract many people) on the sites allocated in the town centres, in accordance with Policies DID6 to DID8, HEN2, THA1 and WAL4.

#### Policy TC2

Within the town centre boundaries as shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will be granted for proposals involving:

- (i) the extension of existing buildings to facilitate the expansion of the uses specified in Policy TC1;
- (ii) the infilling of small gaps in existing street frontages; and
- (iii) the small-scale redevelopment of existing premises in street frontages to accommodate the uses specified in Policy TC1;

provided that in each case the site is well integrated with the primary shopping frontages proposed in accordance with Policy TC8 and that there are no overriding amenity, design, environmental or traffic problems or conflicts with other policies in this plan.

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### Section 7: Supporting vital and viable town centres

#### Environmental improvements

##### **Policy TC3**

Planning permission will be granted for environmental improvements and other works in the public realm that are designed to improve the environment, character and quality of the town centres.

#### Encouraging a diversity of uses

##### **Policy TC4**

The Council will grant planning permission for the residential use of accommodation at upper floor levels above existing shops and other commercial premises in the town centres provided that the residential use does not adversely affect the viability of any ground floor shop use.

##### **Policy TC5**

The loss of existing residential accommodation in the town centres will not be permitted other than in accordance with the relevant policies of this plan, except in cases of upper floor accommodation where an independent access does not exist and cannot be provided, or in cases where there are insurmountable environmental factors which militate against continued residential use. The loss of private gardens, which could affect the viability of existing dwellings will also be resisted.

##### **Policy TC6**

Within the town centre boundaries shown on the Proposals Map, office uses will be permitted in upper floor accommodation above existing commercial premises provided that:

- (i) the viability of any ground floor shop use would not be adversely affected;
- (ii) that no viable or potentially viable, dwelling would be lost (see Policy TC5);
- (iii) the site is well integrated with the primary shopping frontages; and
- (iv) there is no conflict with the policies for business uses in Section 6 of this plan and for the control of alterations and changes of use to listed buildings in Section 3 of this plan.

#### Protecting town centres from out-of-centre development

##### **Policy TC7**

Proposals for shops and other key town centre uses that attract many people will not be permitted in locations outside the town centre boundaries shown on the Proposals Map.

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### Section 7: Supporting vital and viable town centres

#### Protection of the retail function in town centres

##### Policy TC8

Within the primary shopping frontages in each town centre shown on the Proposals Map, the change of use of a shop (Class A1) to a non-shop use will not be permitted if it would undermine the vitality and viability, and the dominant retailing character and function, of the primary shopping frontages in each centre.

### Section 8: Promoting a sustainable transport strategy

#### Transport requirements for new developments

##### Policy T1

Proposals for all types of development will, where appropriate:

- (i) provide for a safe and convenient access to the highway network;
- (ii) provide safe and convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians;
- (iii) be accessible by public transport and have a safe walking route to nearby bus stops or new bus stops and appropriate infrastructure should be provided;
- (iv) be served by an adequate road network which can accommodate traffic without creating traffic hazards or damage to the environment;
- (v) where new roads, pedestrian routes, cycle ways and street lighting are to be constructed as part of the development, be constructed to adoptable standards and be completed as soon as they are required to serve the development; and
- (vi) make adequate provision for those whose mobility is impaired.

##### Policy T2

Proposals for development will, where appropriate, make provision for:

- (i) loading, unloading, circulation and turning space;
- (ii) parking for people with disabilities;
- (iii) the parking of vehicles in accordance with the Council's maximum parking standards;
- (iv) measures to reduce the need for vehicle parking where appropriate; and
- (v) cycle parking in accordance with the Council's standards.

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### **Section 8: Promoting a sustainable transport strategy**

#### **Transport assessments and travel plans**

##### **Policy T3**

A transport assessment should be submitted with planning applications for all developments with significant transport implications. Where appropriate a travel plan should be included with the assessment.

#### **Cycling and walking**

##### **Policy T7**

Planning permission will be granted for proposals to improve and extend the footpath and cycleway network provided that there are no significant adverse effects on the environment or amenities of residents. Development that would prejudice pedestrian and cycle circulation or route provision will not be permitted.

#### **Car parks and on-street parking**

##### **Policy T8**

A comprehensive approach will be adopted to the provision and management of car parking spaces in order to:

- (i) improve the attraction of existing town and village centres and seek to maintain and enhance their vitality and viability; and
- (ii) encourage other transport modes as alternatives to car-borne travel.

Current and planned levels of car parking in the towns and villages will be maintained until public transport services and safe cycle routes are sufficiently developed. Additional parking will only be provided where there is special justification.



### Section 10: Promoting a sustainable transport strategy

#### The expansion of Didcot town centre

##### **Policy DID6**

Proposals for mixed-use development on land at Broadway, Station Road and Station Road Industrial Estate, Didcot (as defined on the Proposals Map) will only be permitted where that development comprises part of a comprehensive scheme for the site and where all necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure is provided in accordance with Policy D11. It is proposed that the development of the site will include:

- (i) a superstore (Class A1) up to about 7000 square metres total gross internal area (GIA);
- (ii) Class A1 retail units up to about 14,800 square metres GIA;
- (iii) Class D1 uses including premises for a primary health care practice;
- (iv) Class D2 uses including an arts, cultural and entertainments building, a cinema and gymnasium/health and fitness facilities;
- (v) an urban civic space network including a large town square on a pedestrian-priority street network;
- (vi) the provision of tree and shrub planting and areas for the enhancement of biodiversity;
- (vii) a petrol filling station;
- (viii) about 22 dwellings on land adjacent to the Station Road Conservation Area;
- (ix) Class B1a office premises on land adjacent to Broadway and the bus link road and further offices (Class B1a or A2), where appropriate, in upper floor accommodation in accordance with Policy TC6, up to a total of about 3,000 square metres GIA;
- (x) public conveniences;
- (xi) parking facilities for bicycles and private cars including not less than about 550 car parking spaces in car parks available to the public and operated on a short-stay basis;
- (xii) a public transport (bus) interchange and bus-only road link between Broadway and the DMH2 link road; and
- (xiii) a network of footways, cycle tracks and roads connecting to existing networks at the site boundaries with the main road access from DMH2 located where shown on the Proposals Map. Motor vehicles will be excluded from the main shopping streets and civic spaces.

## Relevant Local Plan policies **continued**

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### Section 10: Promoting a sustainable transport strategy

#### Regeneration of Market Place and Broadway

##### **Policy DID7**

Planning permission will be granted for proposals for the regeneration of Market Place and Broadway (as defined on the Proposals Map) involving:

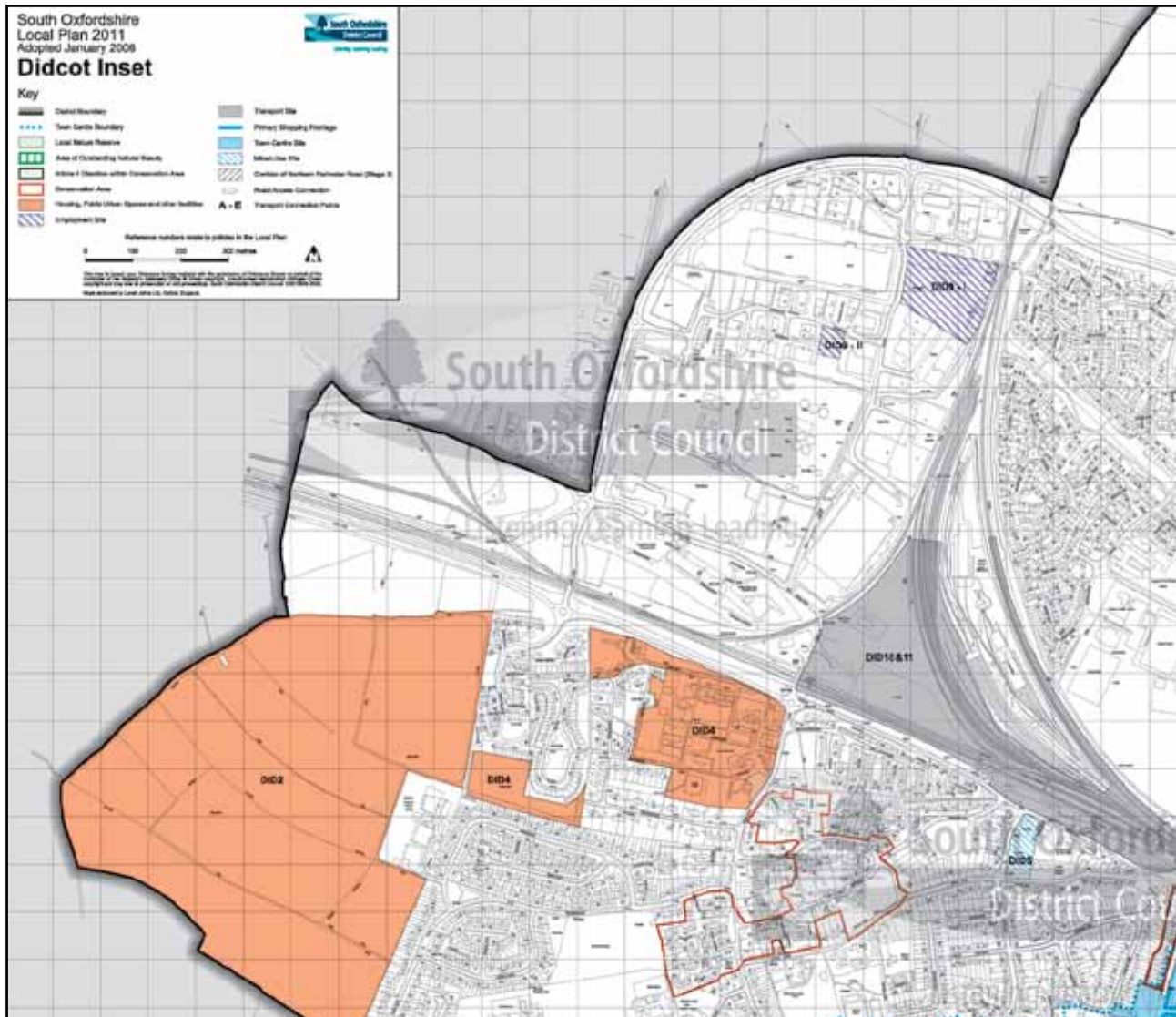
- (i) the demolition of the existing building occupied by a bank in the centre of Market Place and the enlargement of the existing civic space or for alterations to the existing building to create either:
  - a) a covered civic space, or
  - b) accommodation at street level for the type of key town centre uses, as specified in Policy TC1, that would present active building frontages to Market Place.
- (ii) redevelopment of the terraces at numbers 84a to 98 Broadway and at 114 to 128 Broadway to provide new two- and three-storey buildings accommodating the type of key town centre uses, as specified in Policy TC1, that would present active frontages to the street. Residential or office uses would be accommodated at upper floor levels in accordance with Policies TC4 and TC6;
- (iii) refurbishment of the existing three-storey terrace at 100 to 112 Broadway; and
- (iv) provision of a communal car parking and servicing area at the rear of the premises in (ii) and (iii) accessed from Broadway.

#### Land to the east of the Didcot town centre expansion scheme

##### **Policy DID8**

Following completion of the town centre expansion proposed in Policy DID6, mixed-use development for key town centre uses, as defined in Policy TC1, will be permitted on the land to the east of that development (as shown on the Proposals Map) subject to the following requirements being met:

- (i) the existence of sufficient retail capacity in the Didcot area to support the amount of retail floorspace proposed;
- (ii) sufficient land and premises being made available elsewhere in Didcot to enable businesses to relocate from their existing premises on the land;
- (iii) provision of vehicular accesses from DMH2 (via the access road serving the development proposed in Policy DID6) and from Lower Broadway; and
- (iv) the access requirements of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport being accommodated including good footway linkage with the development proposed in Policy DID6 and Broadway.





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