

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 – SECTION 77

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND)
RULES 2000**

**APPLICATION BY OXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL C/O JONATHAN HILL, AECOM
(AGENT) FOR THE DUALLING OF THE A4130 CARRIAGEWAY, CONSTRUCTION
OF THE DIDCOT SCIENCE BRIDGE, ROAD BRIDGE OVER THE APPLEFORD
RAILWAY SIDINGS AND ROAD BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER THAMES AND
ASSOCIATED WORKS BETWEEN THE A34 MILTON INTERCHANGE AND THE
B4015 NORTH OF CLIFTON HAMPDEN, OXFORDSHIRE (APPLICATION NO:
R3.0138/21)**

Full Statement of Case of Vale of White Horse District Council

PINS reference: PCU/RTI/U3100/3326455

Council's reference: P23/V2012/CM

October 2023

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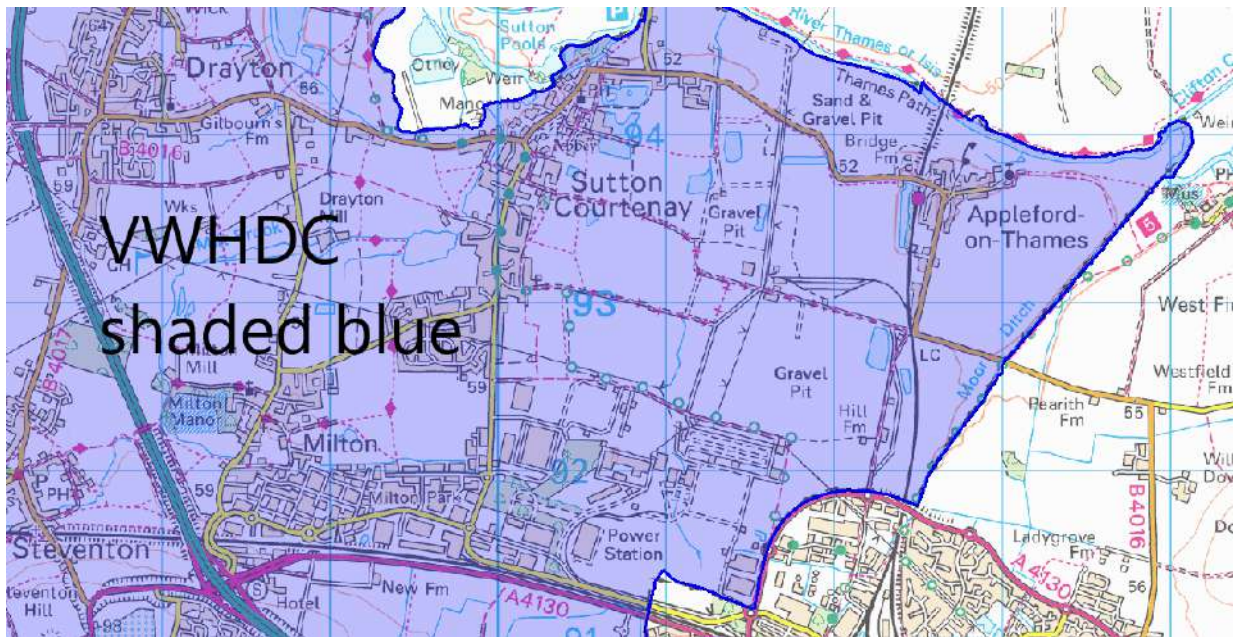
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the Statement of Case on behalf of the Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) which has been granted Rule 6 status for the forthcoming public inquiry in respect of the called in planning application for dualling of the A4130 carriageway, construction of the Didcot Science Bridge, road bridge over the Appleford railway sidings and road bridge over the River Thames and associated works between the A34 Milton Interchange and the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden, Oxfordshire. This statement of case provides a succinct outline of the council's support for the proposals which will be further detailed when presented at the inquiry.
- 1.2 In summary, the VWHDC strongly support the principle of the development, as it aligns with development plan policies and the proposals are critical to the delivery of the VWHDC development plan spatial strategy for planned housing and employment supply.

2 SITE LOCATION

- 1.1 The application site traverses land within both the VWHDC and within South Oxfordshire District Council. Those parts of the proposal south of the river Thames are primarily within the Vale of White Horse; the exceptions being parts of the A4130 and land to its south. The Vale district in the vicinity of the site is shown on the plan below; areas not shaded blue on the plan are in South Oxfordshire District:



3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The VWHDC was consulted on the application proposals including two sets of amendments. This council's three responses to the County Council are included at appendices 1, 2 and 3 of this statement. In each case the council expressed support in principle for the proposals as providing this vital infrastructure will assist in delivering the housing and employment growth identified in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2. Without this proposed infrastructure planned new growth it at risk of not being satisfactorily delivered or delivered at all.
- 3.2 The responses provided by the VWHDC also included opinions expressed by its technical and planning officers with the last set and most relevant comments included in the letter dated 16 June 2023 (appendix 1).

4. THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 4.1 Section 70 the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes clear that planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 Much of the emerging Joint Local Plan relies upon the continued delivery of sites which are allocated within the adopted Plans of the Districts.
- 4.3 The Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1) and Part 2 (LPP2) is a relevant part of the Development Plan to consider when determining this application. A Regulation 10A review (five-year review) for the LPP1 was completed and approved by the Council in December 2021. The review demonstrates that five years on, the LPP1 (together with the LPP2) continues to provide a suitable framework for development in the Vale of White Horse that is in overall conformity with central government policy.
- 4.4 The adopted Local Plans were prepared to align with the NPPF's principle of growth being focused on a location that can be made sustainable. The Local Plans were prepared with the close engagement of Oxfordshire County Council so that the County's strategies and investments in support of HIF1 carefully aligned with the aims of the Plans, therefore, the growth strategies in the Local Plans can only be successfully achieved with the HIF1 schemes implemented.
- 4.5 Core Policy 4 of LPP1 and Core Policy 4a of LPP2 set a combined housing requirement of at least 22,760 homes for the District and for cross boundary needs. At least 11,850 homes are included in the strategy to be delivered within the Science Vale ringfenced area.
- 4.6 LPP1 paragraph 4.44 sets out how critical HIF1 is to the council's spatial strategy: *"Infrastructure delivery is important to ensure new development is sustainable and this is particularly important across the Science Vale area. This is where around 70 % of our projected jobs and 75 % of our strategic housing is*

directed. Essential strategic highway infrastructure has been identified to support the identified growth across Science Vale.”

- 4.7 Employment delivery planned for in the Local Plans is also linked to HIF. Core Policy 15 of LPP1 sets out an employment provision of 208 hectares for the South-East Vale sub-area with much of this being within Science Vale. This location for employment sites is strategically important employment to the Oxfordshire economy which is of material consequence. Science Vale hosts almost the entire District’s 218 hectare total employment land provision.
- 4.8 Core Policy 17 of LPP1 states: *“In order to deliver the growth... the Science Vale Area Strategy has identified highways infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the planned growth across Science Vale and secure the future economic viability of the area.”* It then lists the HIF1 schemes specifically. Core Policy 18 of LPP1 and Core Policy 18a of LPP2 safeguards the lands necessary to deliver the HIF1 schemes.
- 4.9 In summary, the HIF1 planning application is fully compliant with the Vale of White Horse Development Plan. Importantly, HIF1 is required to properly deliver the council’s Spatial Strategy, its housing and employment supply and the allocations in Science Vale. The council is strongly of the view that the principle of development for the HIF1 schemes is entirely consistent with the policies of the Vale Local Plans.

Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.10 Within the Vale of White Horse District, the application site includes land in Milton, Western Valley, Sutton Courtenay and Appleford Parishes. Of these, only Sutton Courtenay Parish is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. A draft Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted for independent examination. Presently this draft Neighbourhood Plan is not part of the development plan but its policies are a material consideration. Relevant policies include:

- SC1 – Green gaps
- SC2 – Landscape character and value
- SC3 – Key views and vistas
- SC6 – Biodiversity
- SC7 – Flooding and drainage
- SC10 – Design heritage and setting
- SC16 – Economy and employment
- SC17 – Traffic management

Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan

- 4.11 The Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan (DGTDP) was approved by the VWHDC in October 2017 and provides a vision for Didcot Garden Town, the boundaries of which include land within the application site. Whilst the DGTDP is not a statutory planning document or part of the development plan, it is a material consideration. Its visions include strengthening the economic base of Didcot, providing supporting infrastructure including transport infrastructure particularly for sustainable modes of travel, and deliver a wide choice of homes. The DGTDP also includes a masterplan which seeks to bring about positive change for Didcot.

5 THE CASE FOR THE COUNCIL

- 5.1 The council's case will address the subject matters listed in paragraph 7 of the Planning Inspectorate's letter dated 25 July 2023 which are repeated below:

- a) *"The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for delivering a sufficient supply of homes as set out in the NPPF (Chapter 5); and*
- b) *The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for building a strong, competitive economy as set out in the NPPF (Chapter 6); and*
- c) *The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with the development plan for the area; and*

d) any other matters the Inspector considers relevant.”

- 5.2 The council will refer to S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which provides that if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.3 The council will refer to the Development Plan, and the case for the council in respect of the issues arising from the four matters above listed in paragraph 7 of the Planning Inspectorate’s letter dated 25 July 2023.
- 5.4 In summary, below is the council’s case in respect of the four matters listed in paragraph 7 of the Planning Inspectorate’s letter dated 25 July 2023.

a) The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for delivering a sufficient supply of homes as set out in the NPPF (Chapter 5)

- 5.5 The council will demonstrate that the development plan seeks to deliver at least 22,760 dwellings during the plan period (2011 to 2031) to meet objectively assessed housing need (core policy 4 of the LPP1 and core policy 4a of the LPP2), with the majority of these dwellings being provided in the South East Vale sub-area within which the proposed development is located. The development is required to ensure housing is delivered without resulting in severe congestion on the highway network. The council will demonstrate that the proposals meet the expectations of Chapter 5 of the NPPF in boosting the supply of homes to meet identified local need and in delivering a sufficient supply of homes including affordable homes, in appropriate locations.
- 5.6 The NPPF in Chapter 5 sets out the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and doing this using planning policies to identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites. At paragraph 73 the NPPF explains that “*The*

supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes)." It goes on to instruct strategic policy-making authorities to *"consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains"*.

- 5.7 The HIF1 scheme is consistent with the Government's aim of boosting the supply of housing. At the time of the last Local Plan examination in 2020, it was calculated that HIF1 would underpin at least 19,319 homes directly, and indirectly all planned housing in South and Vale Districts contained in the adopted Local Plans¹. These homes are plan-led, in adopted development plans², and include larger scale developments (Didcot Garden Town and Dalton Barracks, for example). The planned homes and the HIF1 scheme accompanying them are an integrated, sound and tested package, which are plan-led and funded.

b) The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with Government policies for building a strong, competitive economy as set out in the NPPF (Chapter 6)

- 5.8 The council will demonstrate that the development plan seeks to deliver 218ha of land for employment development during the plan period with most of this to be delivered in the South East Vale sub-area (core policy 6 of the LPP1), and

¹ South Oxfordshire Local Plan Examination Matter 10 Note – Didcot Garden Town Explanation of Traffic Modelling Figures (August 20202)
https://data.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/support/dynamic_serve.jsp?ID=1670535398&CODE=29E63255D19FC715D4CD90BE6DFED999

² South Oxfordshire Local Plan: <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/planning-and-development/local-plan-and-planning-policies/local-plan-2035/adopted-local-plan-2035/>; Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/10/Local-Plan-2031-Part-1.pdf>; Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2: <https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/03/VOWHDC-Master-1.pdf>

that the proposals are necessary to ensure economic development can be achieved in proximity to planned housing growth sites without resulting in severe congestion on the highway network. The council will refer to the DGTDP economic aims and reference to sites to assist in demonstrating that the proposals meet the expectations of Chapter 6 of the NPPF.

- 5.9 The NPPF paragraph 81 is relevant to consider *“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.”*
- 5.10 The planned employment development directly linked to HIF1 includes some of the 208 hectares within the ‘South-East Vale sub-area’ as much of this is within Science Vale.
- 5.11 Harwell Campus, with over 200 organisations sited there, has received over £3billion in scientific infrastructure investment. It is a pioneering site which hosts companies making advances in energy, space, health and quantum computing.
- 5.12 Milton Park is home to 250 businesses at the UKs largest single ownership science, business and technology community.
- 5.13 The route of the HIF1 schemes intersects with thee of the Didcot Growth Accelerator Enterprise Zones including Milton Interchange, Didcot A (also known as Signia Park) and Didcot Technology Park. All the business rates growth generated within the Didcot Growth Accelerator from April 2016 to March 2041 will be retained for use in funding local infrastructure projects. The HIF1 scheme is currently key to unlocking up to £110m in retained rates.

- 5.14 Significant weight should be placed on the ability of HIF1 to help address infrastructure challenges to secure a significant amount of employment development of high value and in a nationally and globally important hotspot for enterprise and innovation that Science Vale is.

c) The extent to which the proposed development is consistent with the development plan for the area

- 5.15 By reference to development plan policies including core policies 17 and 18 of the LPP1 and core policy 18a of the LPP2 which seek to deliver and safeguard land for highway improvements, the council will demonstrate that in principle the proposals are compliant with the development plan. It will also reference the DGTDP and its masterplan in support of the proposals.
- 5.16 Furthermore, the council will demonstrate that the imposition of conditions including conditions for bridge design, landscaping, agreeing lighting, acoustic fencing design and tree protection as recommended in annex A of Oxfordshire County Council's report to its Planning and Regulation Committee in July 2023 (extract at Appendix 4), can make the proposals development compliant as a whole thereby addressing matters raised in the council's June 2023 response to the proposals.
- 5.17 The adopted Local Plans were prepared to align with the NPPF's principle of growth being focused on a location that can be made sustainable. The Local Plans were prepared with the close engagement of Oxfordshire County Council so that the County's strategies and investments in support of HIF1 carefully aligned with the aims of the Plans, therefore, the growth strategies in the Local Plans can only be successfully achieved with the HIF1 schemes implemented.
- 5.18 Core Policy 4 of LPP1 and Core Policy 4a of LPP2 set a combined housing requirement of at least 22,760 homes for the District and for cross boundary

needs. At least 11,850 homes are included in the strategy to be delivered within the Science Vale ringfenced area.

- 5.19 LPP1 paragraph 4.44 sets out how critical HIF1 is to the Vale spatial strategy: *“Infrastructure delivery is important to ensure new development is sustainable and this is particularly important across the Science Vale area. This is where around 70 % of our projected jobs and 75 % of our strategic housing is directed. Essential strategic highway infrastructure has been identified to support the identified growth across Science Vale.”*
- 5.20 Employment delivery planned for in the Local Plans is also linked to HIF. Core Policy 15 of LPP1 sets out an employment provision of 208 hectares for the South-East Vale sub-area with much of this being within Science Vale. This location for employment sites is strategically important employment to the Oxfordshire economy which is of material consequence. Science Vale hosts almost the entire District’s 218 hectare total employment land provision.
- 5.21 Core Policy 17 of LPP1 states: *“In order to deliver the growth... the Science Vale Area Strategy has identified highways infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the planned growth across Science Vale and secure the future economic viability of the area.”* It then lists the HIF1 schemes specifically. Core Policy 18 of LPP1 and Core Policy 18a of LPP2 safeguards the lands necessary to deliver the HIF1 schemes.
- 5.22 In summary, the HIF1 planning application is fully compliant with the Vale of White Horse Development Plan. HIF1 is required to deliver Vales Spatial Strategy, its housing and employment supply and the allocations in Science Vale. We are strongly of the view that the principle of development for the HIF1 schemes is entirely consistent with the policies of the Vale Local Plans.

d) any other matters the Inspector considers relevant

- 5.23 If requested, the council will either through examination or providing supplementary information, address any other matters the Inspector considers relevant.

6 DOCUMENTS

6.1 The council considers the following should be included within the Core Documents:

- Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 core policies 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 15, 16, 17, 18, 28, 33, 35, 37, 42, 43, 44, and 46
- Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 core policies 4a, 15a, 16b and 18a Development Policies 16, 17, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31 and 39
- National Planning Policy Framework

7 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – VWHDC response to OCC - June 2023

Appendix 2 – VWHDC response to OCC – December 2022

Appendix 3 – VWHDC response to OCC – February 2022

Appendix 4 – Annex A of the report to Oxfordshire County Council Planning and Regulation Committee 17/18 July 2023

Appendix 5 – Relevant policies from the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2

Appendix 1 – VWHDC response to OCC - June 2023

Planning

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135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park
ABINGDON OX14 4SB

16 June 2023

Ref: P23/V1046/CM

Dear Emily

Re: Application R3.0138/21

- **The dualling of the A4130 carriageway (A4130 Widening) from the Milton Gate Junction eastwards, including the construction of three roundabouts;**
- **A road bridge over the Great Western Mainline (Didcot Science Bridge) and realignment of the A4130 north east of the proposed road bridge including the relocation of a lagoon;**
- **Construction of a new road between Didcot and Culham (Didcot to Culham River Crossing) including the construction of three roundabouts, a road bridge over the Appleford railway sidings and road bridge over the River Thames;**
- **Controlled crossings, footways and cycleways, landscaping, lighting, noise barriers and sustainable drainage systems.**

Location: A linear site comprising a corridor between the A34 Milton Interchange and the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden including part of the A4130 east of the A34 Milton Interchange, land between Didcot and the former Didcot A Power Station and the Great Western Mainline, land to the north of Didcot where it crosses a private railway sidings and the River Thames to the west of Appleford-on-Thames before joining the A415 west of Culham Station, land to the south of Culham Science Centre through to a connection with the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden.

Thank you for re-consulting the Vale of White Horse District Council on the above application.

As per previous public statements The Vale of White Horse District Council supports this project. The council consider that the proposed infrastructure will assist in delivering the housing and employment growth identified in the Vale of White



Horse Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2. Without this proposed infrastructure planned new growth is unlikely to be delivered.

The following planning matters should be assessed ahead of any permission given:

Planning Team – Development Management

Bridges

In response to this council's comment that the Science Bridge should be a landmark feature as envisaged in the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan (the DGTDP), paragraph 3.3 of the Aecom EIA Regulation 25 response states *"Given the recent plans for large monolithic data centres and warehousing immediately north of the Science bridge the appropriateness of a 'spectacular bridge' structure may now be inappropriate"*.

Perceived *"large monolithic"* structures justify a 'spectacular bridge' design to enhance the approach to Didcot.

The design of the River Thames Crossing between Didcot and Culham is not revised. Appendix G (Oversized bridge examples) of the Reg 25 response, provide little confidence that the bridge will an attractive feature or sensitive to its rural setting.

The NPPF places great weight on good design. Paragraph 126 of the NPPF expects *"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities"*.

The bridge designs by reason of their concrete materials, massing, unbroken grassed banks, lack of vertical landscaping on the approaches to the Science Bridge and on the banks of the bridge will result in them being an unspectacular and visually intrusive feature comprising poor design contrary to paragraphs 126, 130 and 131 of the NPPF, core policies 37 and 44 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan.

Tree and Hedge Planting

The DGTDP envisages Didcot as a *"super green town prioritising green infrastructure including tree lined streets"*. This aligns with the principles of core policies 44 and 45 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and paragraph 131 of the NPPF. The widened A4130 is a key gateway to Didcot. To aspire to the DGTDP vision, the A4130 needs to be judiciously tree and hedge lined.

Tree and hedge planting is necessary to screen the road in views from new housing proposed on the southern side of the A4130 e.g. Valley Park, and act as a noise buffer.

Trees and hedges should visually separate the road from the cycle and pedestrian paths alongside the road.

The planting comprising shrub planting and occasional trees is weak and will not achieve the aims above or the expectation in paragraph 131 of the NPPF that streets should be tree lined.

A comparison of the landscaping and street lighting plans shows that street lighting conflicts with the proposed locations of trees and even more so if OCC requires 10m gaps between lighting columns and trees. Consequently, landscaping will be further weakened.

The proposed landscaping is considered inadequate to address the expectations of the DGTDP, core policies 44 and 45 of the Local Plan and paragraph 131 of the NPPF.

Street Lighting

Street lighting continues to be shown extending north of Didcot beyond Hartwright House (OX14 4PJ) when there appears to be no overriding need for it particularly as this is a rural area whereby the lighting will be intrusive.

Acoustic Barriers and Noise

Acoustic barriers of unspecified height but possibly 2 or 3 metres in height, beside the road leading from Didcot to the River Thames Crossing will be visually intrusive in this primarily rural area.

Given the comments made by the council's Environmental Protection Team (see below), whereby a number of residents of affected dwellings will experience significant adverse effects despite acoustic barriers and given the visually intrusive appearance of the acoustic barriers, this authority questions the suitability of the road alignment between Didcot and the Thames Crossing and consideration should be given to moving the road further west.

Environmental Protection Team – noise and vibration

Aecom's response indicates that there is little further that can be done to mitigate the noise impacts of the proposed development. This suggests that there will remain a number of properties which will experience a significant adverse impact from this development but will not benefit from the Noise Insulation Regulations 1975. The decision process will have to balance this negative impact against any benefits that the development is expected to bring.

Forestry Team

A Revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment Addendum dated April 2023 has been submitted. This report sets out the changes to the proposal and how the revisions impact on trees.

The report still identifies that the proposal will require a very significant amount of tree removal and will reduce canopy cover significantly. It is therefore essential that new planting is maximised as part of the scheme.

The preliminary landscape masterplans submitted still do not show the level of detail required to be able to scrutinise the mitigation planting in detail.

Considering the extensive tree removal proposed for this application, very considerable amounts of tree planting will be required. This is essential to ensure that the scheme delivers a net increase in canopy cover to address

environmental issues such as climate change and carbon sequestration, as well as the landscape and amenity benefits required to be achieved for this project.

If planning permission is to be granted, then conditions will be required to secure tree protection measures (Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plans) in accordance with BS 5837:2012 and conditions to secure planting and its long term management, to ensure that the planting becomes successfully established to help mitigate the tree removal.

Landscape Architect

Holding objection

The extent of planting mitigation proposed remains inadequate, as noted in previous comments. There has been very little increase in planting compared to the previous proposals, limited to a hedge and some individual trees. In a number of places where vegetation has been removed, there is a reference that the landowner of allocated sites will provide this replacement as part of yet unknown planning applications. It is essential that HIF1 mitigates for its impacts.

The submitted response to landscape comments shows a lack of willingness to include even otherwise unusable areas of land for planting to help with mitigation, see below, these awkward spaces will be of no use to the landowner, but to use them for additional planting would be beneficial in helping to screen the road and better integrate the scheme into the landscape and replace lost vegetation. This approach to landscape mitigation is reflected throughout the proposals, resulting in a scheme where the extent of mitigation appears to have been predominantly limited to the operational land take, rather than defined by an assessment of landscape and visual mitigation requirements.

The landscape plans still do not include sufficient information to enable a proper understanding of the scheme, such as embankments and cuttings, and vegetation removed. There is also an excessive amount of gravel access paths which circle the Suds features (in some cases 7m wide paths), this limits the design of the Suds features and the ability to integrate them into the landscape further highlighting their highly engineered design.

Where the scheme abuts the Valley Park Vale of White Horse Local Plan housing allocation, the proposed drainage basins will abut or overlap the housing schemes SUDs basins and will not leave any space for mitigation planting. I am unsure why there is no roadside hedgerow provided north of the Valley Park site (on the southern side of the road, sheet 2), but hedgerow is provided further to the east near the entrance to the Valley Park site and the Science Bridge.

Recommendations

Please refer to landscape comments on the previous application and the County Council's Landscape Specialist comments.

Holding objection maintained

Yours sincerely,

A Butler

Adrian Butler
Principal Major Applications Officer

Appendix 2 – VWHDC response to OCC – December 2022

Planning

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Abbey House, Abbey Close
ABINGDON OX14 3JE

22 December 2022

Ref: P22/V2475/CM

Dear Emily

Re: Application R3.0138/21

- **The dualling of the A4130 carriageway (A4130 Widening) from the Milton Gate Junction eastwards, including the construction of three roundabouts;**
- **A road bridge over the Great Western Mainline (Didcot Science Bridge) and realignment of the A4130 north east of the proposed road bridge including the relocation of a lagoon;**
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Location: A linear site comprising a corridor between the A34 Milton Interchange and the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden including part of the A4130 east of the A34 Milton Interchange, land between Didcot and the former Didcot A Power Station and the Great Western Mainline, land to the north of Didcot where it crosses a private railway sidings and the River Thames to the west of Appleford-on-Thames before joining the A415 west of Culham Station, land to the south of Culham Science Centre through to a connection with the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden.

Thank you for re-consulting the Vale of White Horse District Council on the above application.

The Vale of White Horse District Council continues to support the principle of the proposals as the infrastructure will assist in delivering the housing and employment



growth identified in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2. Without this proposed infrastructure planned new growth is unlikely to be delivered.

Previous comments provided by this council in its response dated 4 February 2022 remain applicable and this council's further observations on the proposals are set out in the table below:

Planning Team – Development Management

Bridges

In response to this council's comment that the Science Bridge should be a landmark feature as envisaged in the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan (the DGTDP), paragraph 3.3 of the Aecom EIA Regulation 25 response states *"Given the recent plans for large monolithic data centres and warehousing immediately north of the Science bridge the appropriateness of a 'spectacular bridge' structure may now be inappropriate"*.

Perceived *"large monolithic"* structures justify a 'spectacular bridge' design to enhance the approach to Didcot.

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The NPPF places great weight on good design. Paragraph 126 of the NPPF expects *"The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities"*.

The bridge designs by reason of their concrete materials, massing, unbroken grassed banks, lack of vertical landscaping on the approaches to the Science Bridge and on the banks of the bridge will result in them being an unspectacular and visually intrusive feature comprising poor design contrary to paragraphs 126, 130 and 131 of the NPPF, core policies 37 and 44 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan.

Tree and Hedge Planting

The DGTDP envisages Didcot as a *"super green town prioritising green infrastructure including tree lined streets"*. This aligns with the principles of core policies 44 and 45 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and paragraph 131 of the NPPF. The widened A4130 is a key gateway to Didcot. To aspire to the DGTDP vision, the A4130 needs to be judiciously tree and hedge lined.

Tree and hedge planting is necessary to screen the road in views from new housing proposed on the southern side of the A4130 e.g. Valley Park, and act as a noise buffer.

Trees and hedges should visually separate the road from the cycle and pedestrian paths alongside the road.

The planting comprising shrub planting and occasional trees is weak and will not achieve the aims above or the expectation in paragraph 131 of the NPPF that streets should be tree lined.

A comparison of the landscaping and street lighting plans shows that street lighting conflicts with the proposed locations of trees and even more so if OCC requires 10m gaps between lighting columns and trees. Consequently, landscaping will be further weakened.

The proposed landscaping is considered inadequate to address the expectations of the DGTDP, core policies 44 and 45 of the Local Plan and paragraph 131 of the NPPF.

Street Lighting

Street lighting continues to be shown extending north of Didcot beyond Hartwright House (OX14 4PJ) when there appears to be no overriding need for it particularly as this is a rural area whereby the lighting will be intrusive.

Acoustic Barriers and Noise

Acoustic barriers of unspecified height but possibly 2 or 3 metres in height, beside the road leading from Didcot to the River Thames Crossing will be visually intrusive in this primarily rural area.

Given the comments made by the council's Environmental Protection Team (see below), whereby a number of residents of affected dwellings will experience significant adverse effects despite acoustic barriers and given the visually intrusive appearance of the acoustic barriers, this authority questions the suitability of the road alignment between Didcot and the Thames Crossing and consideration should be given to moving the road further west.

Environmental Protection Team – noise and vibration

Aecom's response indicates that there is little further that can be done to mitigate the noise impacts of the proposed development. This suggests that there will remain a number of properties which will experience a significant adverse impact from this development but will not benefit from the Noise Insulation Regulations 1975. The decision process will have to balance this negative impact against any benefits that the development is expected to bring.

Forestry Team

The following previous three comments have been addressed in Aecom's Reg 25 response at paragraphs 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4 respectively:

1. There are inconsistencies between the information included within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and shown on the Tree Protection Plan and information shown within other plans submitted for the application. For example, drainage shown on the Tree Protection Plans is not consistent with the locations of drainage shown on the drainage plans. Therefore, this may lead to further arboricultural impacts than is shown in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
2. The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment has not assessed the impact of works to existing services/utilities and new services/utilities will have on trees. Works for services/utilities have the potential to cause

significant adverse impact on trees and should therefore be accurately assessed in an Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

3. It is not clear from assessing the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, whether or not all of the physical construction works that will be required to implement this project, for example any changes in land levels that may be required, have been assessed in relation to their impact on trees. The submitted Tree Protection Plans also include statements such as 'Final extent of tree removals to be determined following site clearance works and setting out of scheme'. It is therefore foreseeable that the proposed works may lead to a larger tree loss than has been identified in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted.

However, other points remain unresolved and inappropriate being:

- Whilst the drainage has been amended in the vicinity of tree T24 which is a veteran tree, there still appears to be construction works proposed within the root protection area/buffer of this tree which remains contrary to BS 5837:2012, Forestry Commission and Natural England standing advice and section 180 of the NPPF.
- The preliminary landscape masterplans submitted, still do not show the level of detail required to be able to scrutinise the mitigation planting in detail, to determine whether or not the proposed planting will mitigate the proposed tree loss. Considering the extensive tree removal proposed for this application, very considerable amounts of tree planting will be required. This is essential to ensure that the scheme delivers a net increase in canopy cover to address environmental issues such as climate change and carbon sequestration, as well as the landscape and amenity benefits required to be achieved for this project. Many of the landscape masterplans submitted appear to show very limited levels of tree planting along the route of the proposed road.

Conclusion:

When assessed against both local plan and national policies the impact of the proposal is contrary to:

- Core Policies 37 and 44 of the Local Plan 2031 Part 1;
- Paragraphs 131 and 180 of the NPPF; and,
- BS 5837, 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.

Landscape Architect

There have been very limited changes to the proposals, largely restricted to a few more individual trees and areas of planting, such that previous comments generally still apply.

The extent of planting mitigation proposed remains inadequate, figures included in 9.6 of the Aecom EIA Regulation 25 response document, show that for the scheme overall there will be over 5000m² more tree cover lost than planted, which is not acceptable. This would be contrary to Core Policy 44 of the local plan, which states development will only be permitted where it protects and where possible enhances features that contribute to the nature and quality of the landscape, including trees, woodlands, hedgerows and field boundaries. Hedges have not been included in the figures, but loss and replacement of these should also be quantified. The opportunity to plant more woodland in line with the central Government's aim to plant more trees is lost.

Overall, the proposed mitigation to the road is limited, and hasn't been designed to link into the existing landscape pattern to help to integrate the road into the landscape. Embankments in many places need to grade out more softly to better fit the topography, rather than using standard 1 in 3 gradients. The use of false cutting should be considered in preference to acoustic barriers, also where this would help assimilate the road rather than cutting across the grain of the landscape.

The landscape plans do not include sufficient information to enable a proper understanding of the scheme, such as embankments and cuttings, vegetation removed, and in some instances existing vegetation retained. In the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report many areas of retained vegetation on the Tree Protection Plans are caveated that "Final extent of tree removals to be determined following site clearance works and setting out of scheme. Trees retained where feasible."

The proposals

Tree and vegetation removal, replacement and mitigation

- Overall, the proposed mitigation to the road is limited, with limited planting and where hedgerows have been used, they tend to follow the road accentuating its alignment. A more imaginative approach sympathetic to the existing landscape pattern could help to integrate the road into the landscape. There are numerous areas where land has been left over from the road alignment that are now likely to be too small to farm.
- The use of offsite planting should be explored where the impact of the road is difficult to mitigate, such as the viaduct section. The use of hedges with trees, larger areas of tree planting alongside offsite roads and footpaths would help limit visibility.
- It would help to have the tree and vegetation removal information marked on the Landscape Masterplan to fully understand the vegetation being lost and whether this is being replaced. For example, there are many areas where the roadside vegetation/ hedgerows have been lost but are not proposed to be replaced. Replacement vegetation is required both to soften the edge of the roads and help reduce its landscape and visual impact but also to replace the lost vegetation linkages.

Planting

- Detailed planting plans are not provided (these should be conditioned to follow) but I note the information provided on the Preliminary Landscape Masterplan Sheets does not fully tally with the information provided in the Landscape Biodiversity Plan.
- More variety of shrub species are required for the woodland edge mix, such as hazel, holly, crab apple, guelder rose which are listed in the woodland mix. I also wouldn't plant blackberries, to limit competition at the establishment phase, this species is likely to self-seed at a later date.
- Hedgerow planting should also contain hedgerow trees, there should be an indication of what species will be used for hedgerow trees.
- There are some areas of larger tree planting blocks, it may be more appropriate to rabbit fence areas of planting rather than only using tree guards. Are there any proposals for deer protection to planting?

Bridges and Acoustic Fences

- The design of the bridges does not necessary minimise their visual impacts, the viaduct supports are visually bulky, and there is minimum space to soften the northern side of the Science Bridge.

- While planting is proposed to soften the acoustic fencing, this will take time to establish and a good maintenance regime to be successful. Can a softer approach to the acoustic fencing be used? A green barrier will be prominent in views where seen against the sky, such as on bridges, alternative colours should be explored.
- Care is needed with regards to the proposed sedum treatment of some of the bridge areas. This will require bespoke maintenance to allow establishment to be successful. The cost/ benefit of this approach needs to be fully understood.

Balancing ponds

Why are all balancing ponds completely surrounded by a gravel track? This increases the artificial appearance. There should be marginal planting and tree and shrub planting associated with the balancing ponds to break up the engineered appearance of consistent slopes and improve wildlife value.

Use of embankments

The road should not be located on embankment simply to achieve a balance of cut and fill, but should be kept as low as possible in the landscape to limit the adverse impact. Surplus fill can be accommodated through appropriate creation of false cuttings.

Presentation of information

Embankment and cutting slopes should be shown on the landscape plans, also tree loss as previous comments.

Recommendations

Recommendations remain as previous comments. The mitigation planting associated with this scheme needs additional work and the scheme should provide the opportunity to create new woodland in line with the governments aims and be designed to fit in with the existing landscape pattern. Softer gradients are required for the embankments and the use of false cutting should be considered.

The issues raised in the comments above should be addressed including further clarity with regard to the extent of vegetation loss, and areas of embankment and cutting.

Countryside Officer

With reference to previous ecological comments provided by the district, the only matter that has been potentially addressed is the biodiversity metric assessment. Other matters raised are not explicitly addressed in this latest submission / amendment.

The updated BNG assessment document (Appendix R) has concluded that development can likely achieve a net gain for biodiversity. This conclusion is based upon the assumption that high value (distinctiveness) habitats will be retained and enhanced as a result of development. OCC should be satisfied that the habitat creation and enhancement proposals contained within the Outline Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan are sufficient (and practically deliverable) to meet the relevant condition criteria of the 3.1 metric for each habitat.

Yours sincerely,

A Butler

Adrian Butler
Principal Major Applications Officer

Appendix 3 – VWHDC response to OCC – February 2022

Planning

HEAD OF SERVICE: **Adrian Duffield**



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135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park
ABINGDON OX14 4SB

4 February 2022

Ref: P21/V3189/CM

Dear Emily

Re: Application R3.0138/21

- The dualling of the A4130 carriageway (A4130 Widening) from the Milton Gate Junction eastwards, including the construction of three roundabouts;**
- A road bridge over the Great Western Mainline (Didcot Science Bridge) and realignment of the A4130 north east of the proposed road bridge including the relocation of a lagoon;**
- Construction of a new road between Didcot and Culham (Didcot to Culham River Crossing) including the construction of three roundabouts, a road bridge over the Appleford railway sidings and road bridge over the River Thames;**
- Controlled crossings, footways and cycleways, landscaping, lighting, noise barriers and sustainable drainage systems.**

Location: A linear site comprising a corridor between the A34 Milton Interchange and the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden including part of the A4130 east of the A34 Milton Interchange, land between Didcot and the former Didcot A Power Station and the Great Western Mainline, land to the north of Didcot where it crosses a private railway sidings and the River Thames to the west of Appleford-on-Thames before joining the A415 west of Culham Station, land to the south of Culham Science Centre through to a connection with the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden.

Thank you for consulting the Vale of White Horse District Council on the above application.

The Vale of White Horse District Council has no objections in principle as providing this vital infrastructure will assist in delivering the housing and employment growth identified in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Parts 1 and 2. Without this proposed infrastructure planned new growth is unlikely to be delivered.

The comments in the table below set out this council's further observations on the proposals for your consideration.

Whilst consultation has been undertaken with this council's technical specialist officers, only high-level comments have been possible. The County Council should therefore use its own internal specialist advisors to provide advice to ensure that proposals meet all relevant policy or legislative requirements.

Planning Team – Strategic Comments

This planning application includes highways infrastructure and measures to support active travel that will benefit existing residents in the District and enable the delivery of the new homes across the Vale allocated in the development plan.

The scheme will support the delivery of allocated housing sites including sites at East of Sutton Courtenay, Milton Heights, Valley Park and North West of Valley Park.

It is essential to enable jobs growth at key employment sites in area. This project provides important support to the economic and social prosperity of Science Vale UK, one of the first Enterprise Zones. It is home to one of the largest science based research and knowledge clusters in Western Europe, based around Harwell (space sector), Culham Science Centre (nuclear fusion), and Milton Park (life sciences). These sites are subject to significant public and private investment and creating thousands of jobs.

Consent for this planning application is required to deliver infrastructure necessary to provide homes for the growing highly skilled workforce required by the world leading businesses and their supply chains. The employment land allocations linked to this infrastructure in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan (Parts 1 and 2) include: Didcot Power Station, Harwell Campus and Milton Park.

This proposal will therefore deliver key transport infrastructure, relieve congestion and improve connectivity in our districts, to unlock the new homes and jobs required for Oxfordshire to grow as a thriving economy. In addition to supporting new housing and employment growth, it will also help alleviate current congestion issues in and around Didcot Garden Town. In conclusion these schemes will provide essential support for the development coming forward in the Vale Local Plans and are important for the delivery of key housing and employment sites. This application is supported in principle by Local Plan policies.

Planning Team – Development Management

Paragraph 5.94 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (the LPP1) recognises the strategic importance of the highways schemes in the Science Vale Area Strategy and explains that *“Local authorities have been working together through the Oxfordshire Growth Board and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to identify funding mechanisms for this infrastructure to secure its delivery. As part of this work the package has been identified as one of the top*

priority projects within the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan". Core Policy (CP) 17 of the LPP1 lists the highway improvements required and these include the infrastructure proposed in this planning application i.e:

- Science Bridge and A4130 re-routing through the Didcot A site
- A4130 dualling between Milton Interchange and Science Bridge
- A new strategic road connection between the A415 east of Abingdon-on-Thames and the A4130 north of Didcot, including a new crossing of the River Thames.

Policy CP18 of the LPP1 safeguards land to support the delivery of the aforementioned road schemes.

In principle the proposals are supported by the LPP1 which forms part of the Development Plan.

Policy CP16b of the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (the LPP2) requires proposals for development within the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Area to demonstrate how they positively contribute to the achievement of the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Principles. The Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan (the DGTDP) is a material consideration. It seeks to reduce travel by private motor vehicle and encourage more sustainable modes of travel including journeys by public transport, cycling and walking. This is also the thrust of policies CP33 and CP35 of the LPP1.

For the A4130, defined by the DGTDP as The Gateway Spine, it envisages improvements *"to deliver a spectacular arrival experience into Didcot from the east, the west or the station - enhancing first impressions of the town. Movement along the east-west corridor will be enhanced with three key projects: infrastructure improvements to carriageways, cycle and footpaths, a SuDS scheme along its length and a public art programme to enhance neglected bridges and underpasses"*. These ambitions are supported by policies, CP33, CP35, CP37 and CP42 of the LPP1 and policies CP16a and DP20 of the LPP2.

The DGTDP explains that improving the arrival experience into Didcot as well as accommodating multi modal infrastructure to enhance this key corridor must be a key aim of the HIF1 proposals. Improvements would allow a separate lane for public transport vehicles and potentially for autonomous vehicles. It is disappointing that this vision and aim is not met with the proposal favouring private vehicle movements over sustainable modes of travel.

The proposals contain limited information on how SUDS will be designed including to benefit biodiversity or how public art can be incorporated in to the scheme. Presently the proposals appear to conflict with policies CP42 and CP46 of the LPP1 and policy DP20 of the LPP2.

The DGTDP envisages Didcot as a *"super green town prioritising green infrastructure including tree lined streets"*. This aligns with the principles of core policies CP44 and CP45 of the Local Plan. The widened A4130 is a key gateway to Didcot. To aspire to the DGTDP vision the A4130 needs to be tree and hedge lined and opportunity taken to plant trees in the central reservation. The proposals lack ambition in this respect.

Tree and hedge planting will help screen the road is views from new housing on sites allocated for housing on the southern side of the A4130 and act as a noise buffer.

Trees and hedges should visually separate the road from the cycle and pedestrian paths alongside the road.

Street lighting is excessive with much of its proposed in spaces shown on the landscaping plans for hedge and tree planting. It is questionable as to whether adequate tree planting could be secured as a consequence.

Judicious landscaping is crucial in providing some mitigation for the carbon footprint of the proposals, in reducing their landscape and visual impacts and some compensation for biodiversity impacts.

The Science Bridge should be a landmark feature as envisaged in the DGTDP. The design is mediocre, uninspiring and will not meet the aims of the DGTDP.

To prevent increased visual intrusion in the rural area, street lighting should not extend north of Didcot beyond Hartwright House (OX14 4PJ).

The design of the River Thames Crossing between Didcot and Culham is disappointing. The concrete supporting columns, mass of concrete retaining walls and acoustic barrier on the bridge will be incongruous and intrusive features in the landscape particularly in views from the Thames path.

3m high acoustic barriers beside the road leading from Didcot to the River Thames Crossing are likely to be visually intrusive. Please note the discrepancy between plans with the cross section plan sheet 5 of 6 showing a 3m high noise barrier whereas the River Crossing Structures GA and Proposed Elevations plan sheet 1 of 3 showing a 1.5m high barrier.

All maintenance areas and tracks should be of an absolute minimum width necessary for maintenance vehicle access and should be surfaced in grasscrete or similar to allow vegetation to grow through and limit their visual impact.

The cycle and pedestrian ways beside the roads is welcomed and provide sustainable links between Didcot and villages to the north as well as linking the town and residential areas with employment sites at its northern and western edges.

Environmental Protection Team – noise and vibration

The acoustic report submitted in support of the application identifies 38 residential and two non-residential properties that will be subject to Significant Observable Adverse Effect by the operation of this scheme, but only two properties that are likely to qualify under the Noise Insulation Regulations 1975. How is it proposed that the identified significant adverse impact will be mitigated for those properties not qualifying for assistance under the Noise Insulation Regulations?

During the construction phase, a number of properties have been identified that will suffer Significant Observable Adverse Effect and vibration annoyance. The construction environmental management plan must identify specific, achievable and measurable steps to minimise noise and vibration impacts.

Contaminated Land Officer

The content of the relevant reports satisfactorily address the requirements for submission to the LPA.

Following the site walkovers and scrutiny of historic mapping, areas for potential contamination relating to both historic and current land uses were identified. These included past and current landfills, above and underground storage tanks, sewage treatment works, unknown filled land, buried infrastructure related to the former Didcot power station, railways and agricultural land. The preliminary conceptual site model resulted in a minimal/negligible risk to identified receptors for all four locations. Intrusive investigations revealed made ground at varying depths, with levels of contaminants in soils not exceeding the commercial/industrial and public open space (POS) generic assessment criteria (GAC), except for a slight exceedance at one location (TP401), for arsenic (180 mg/kg at 1.5 mbgl). Both groundwater testing and gas monitoring were undertaken, but only on a limited scale. While groundwater samples gave results for metals and non-metals above drinking water standards, sampling of hydrocarbons appears not to have been undertaken. Further groundwater risk assessment is planned and should include samples taken for the measurement of hydrocarbons. Following limited monitoring, risks from ground gas can be regarded currently as non-significant for end users, but with risks to construction workers possible, due to the possible build-up of gas in enclosed spaces, such as drainage runs and manholes. Further visits will be required to ensure worse-case gas regime is established for all four locations. It is anticipated that material excavated will be re-used on site. Where this occurs a Material Management Plan should be produced and followed, in accordance with best practice, as stipulated in the Definition of Waste: Code of Practice (CL:AIRE, Sept 2011). To ensure such re-use of material is appropriately undertaken details of the MMP activities followed are to be included with the verification report, following the completion of all remedial works required.

There is no objection to the development from a contaminated land perspective. However, given review of the above reports, it is evident that further investigations are required and that remediation is likely in some areas. Therefore, the following contaminated land conditions are recommended, should the County Council be mindful to grant permission:

1. Prior to the commencement of the development a phased risk assessment shall be carried out by a competent person in accordance with current government and Environment Agency Guidance and Approved Codes of Practice such as Land Contamination: Risk Management 2020 and BS10175:2011 +A2:2017 'Investigation of potentially contaminated sites'. Each phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Phase 1 shall incorporate a desk study and site walk over to identify all potential contaminative uses on site, and to inform the conceptual site model. If potential contamination is identified in Phase 1 then a Phase 2 investigation shall be undertaken.

Phase 2 shall include a comprehensive intrusive investigation in order to characterise the type, nature and extent of contamination present, the risks to receptors and if significant contamination is identified to inform the remediation strategy.

Phase 3 requires that a remediation strategy be submitted to and approved by the LPA to ensure the site will be rendered suitable for its proposed use.

Reason: To ensure that any ground, water and associated gas contamination is identified and adequately addressed to ensure the safety of the development, the environment and to ensure the site is suitable for the proposed use in accordance with Policy CP43 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

2. The developer shall confirm in writing to the Local Planning Authority the presence of any unsuspected contamination encountered during the development. In the event of any contamination to the land and/or water being encountered, no development shall continue until a programme of investigation and/or remedial works to include methods of monitoring and certification of such works undertaken. Where land contamination investigation/remedial works are required this must be carried out by a competent person in accordance with current government and Environment Agency Guidance and Approved Codes of Practice such as Land Contamination: Risk Management 2020 and BS10175:2011 +A2:2017 'Investigation of potentially contaminated sites' and submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that any ground, water and associated gas contamination is identified and adequately addressed to ensure the safety of the development, the environment and to ensure the site is suitable for the proposed use in accordance with Policy CP43 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

Forestry Team

The following points are the key arboricultural issues that have been identified as part of that review:

- The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment report has identified a very significant amount of tree removal proposed. According to the report, this includes 152 individual trees, 34 groups of trees, seven hedges, 50 partial groups, 2 partial woodlands and 13 partial hedges. This includes trees protected by Tree Preservation Order (trees shown as T237, G262, G318, G327, T352 and G355 within the report) and trees within a conservation area (trees shown as G454 within the report). Many of these trees have sufficient arboricultural quality to normally be considered as a constraint to development.
- Works are required within the root protection areas of a large amount of other trees and therefore have the potential to adversely impact on more trees than indicated in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- There are inconsistencies between the information included within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and shown on the Tree Protection Plan and information shown within other plans submitted for the application. For example, drainage shown on the Tree Protection Plans is not consistent with the locations of drainage shown on the drainage plans. Therefore, this may lead to further arboricultural impacts than is shown in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

- The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment has not assessed the impact of works to existing services/utilities and new services/utilities will have on trees. Works for services/utilities have the potential to cause significant adverse impact on trees and should therefore be accurately assessed in an Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- It is not clear from assessing the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, whether or not all of the physical construction works that will be required to implement this project, for example any changes in land levels that may be required, have been assessed in relation to their impact on trees. The submitted Tree Protection Plans also include statements such as 'Final extent of tree removals to be determined following site clearance works and setting out of scheme'. It is therefore foreseeable that the proposed works may lead to a larger tree loss than has been identified in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted.
- Tree shown as T424 has been categorised as a veteran tree. A drainage swale is shown within the root protection area/Buffer of this tree, contrary to BS 5837:2012, Forestry Commission and Natural England standing advice and section 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- The preliminary landscape masterplans submitted, do not show the level of detail required to be able to scrutinise the mitigation planting in detail, to determine whether or not the proposed planting will mitigate the proposed tree loss. Considering the extensive tree removal proposed for this application, very considerable amounts of tree planting will be required. This is essential to ensure that the scheme delivers a net increase in canopy cover to address environmental issues such as climate change and carbon sequestration, as well as the landscape and amenity benefits required to be achieved for this project. Many of the landscape masterplans submitted appear to show very limited levels of tree planting along the route of the proposed road, for example from Sheets 6 of 19 to Sheets 12 of 19.

Conclusion:

When assessed against both local plan and national policies the impact of the proposal is contrary to:

- Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031 Core Policy 44 and Core Policy 37
- Sections 131 and 180 of the NPPF
- As well as BS 5837, 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.

Landscape Architect

Conclusion

There is currently inconsistent information submitted as part of the application with regards to the extent of level changes, tree and vegetation removal and how this is represented on and mitigated for within the scheme and the Landscape Masterplans.

Overall, the proposed mitigation to the road is limited, and in many places hasn't been designed to link into the existing landscape pattern to help to integrate the road into the landscape. Embankments in many places need to grade out more softly and to better fit the topography rather than using a standard 1 in 3 gradient.

Recommendations

The mitigation planting associated with this scheme needs additional work and the scheme should provide the opportunity to create new woodland in line with the governments aims and be designed to fit in with the existing landscape pattern. Softer gradients are required for the embankments.

The issues raised in the comments above should be addressed including further clarity with regards to the extent of the loss of vegetation and if this extent has been fully incorporated into the Landscape Masterplans and LVIA.

Comments:

Scheme Design

There are inconsistencies between the information submitted in the Planning Application and additional information or clarification is required. These inconsistencies predominantly relate to the amount of vegetation loss and the associated proposed mitigation. Changes could be required to ensure the scheme provides appropriate mitigation, however, it is unlikely that these changes would impact on the conclusions of the LVIA.

Tree and vegetation removal, replacement and mitigation

- Overall, the proposed mitigation to the road is limited, with limited planting and where hedgerows have been used, they tend to follow the road accentuating it's alinement. A more imaginative approach sympathetic to the existing landscape pattern could help to integrate the road into the landscape.
- The use of offsite planting should be explored where the impact of the road is difficult to mitigate, such as the viaduct section, photomontage VP16. The use of hedges with trees, larger areas of tree planting alongside offsite roads and footpaths would help limit visibility.
- At present there are inconsistencies in the information which would have an impact on the Landscape and Visual Assessment work as well as the associated Landscape Masterplans. The Tree Protection Sheets are indicating less tree and hedge retention than illustrated on the Preliminary Landscape Masterplans. One example is Tree Protection Sheet 3 which shows the removal of the vegetation from the southern side of the existing road, however the Preliminary Landscape Masterplan Sheet 1 shows the southern vegetation retained within the roads central reservation. The road section plans show level changes which indicate potential difficulties in retaining the existing hedgerows on the A4130, west of the Science Bridge location. It would help to have the proposed retained areas of vegetation plotted on these sections.
- It would help to have the tree and vegetation removal information marked on the Landscape Masterplan to fully understand the vegetation being lost and whether this is being replaced. For example, there are many areas where the roadside vegetation/ hedgerows have been lost but are not proposed to be replaced. For example, the Northern side of the A4130 Northern Perimeter Road. Preliminary Landscape Masterplan Sheets 6 and 7, again show different information to the Tree Protection Sheets with the extend of tree removal greater than that shown on the landscape plans with the removed hedgerow and tree planting not proposed to be replaced. Replacement vegetation is required both to soften the edge of the roads and help reduce its landscape and visual impact but also to replace the lost vegetation linkages.

Planting

- Detailed planting plans are not provided (these should be Conditioned to follow) but I note the information provided on the Preliminary Landscape Masterplan Sheets does not fully tally with the information provided in the Landscape Biodiversity Plan.
- With regards to the Road Verge mix, at present a Lawn Mix is proposed, I suggest that a seed mix bespoke to Highway verges should be specified, the species would be better suited to the different management and growing regimes such as grass cutting frequency and salt rather than a lawn mix.
- More variety of shrub species are required for the woodland edge mix, such as hazel, holly, crab apple, guelder rose which are listed in the woodland mix. I also wouldn't plant blackberries, to limit competition at the establishment phase, this species is likely to self-seed at a later date.
- Hedgerow planting should also contain hedgerow trees, there should be an indication of what species will be used for hedgerow trees.
- There are some areas of larger tree planting blocks, it may be more appropriate to rabbit fence areas of planting rather than only using tree guards. Are there any proposals for deer protection to planting.

Bridges and Acoustic Fences

- The design of the bridges does not necessary minimise their visual impacts, the viaduct supports are visually bulky, and there is minimum space to soften the northern side of the science vale bridge.
- The use of light concrete on the bridges and bridge abutments may make them more prominent when viewed against the landscape backdrop. Could darker materials be used to minimise the visual impact of the bridges?
- The abutments of the Thames crossing bridge are located away from the river to provide a more open aspect to the Thames Path and this is an appropriate approach. However, the abutments are of a large scale and will be prominent in views from the Thames Path National Trail, can the extent exposed concrete of the abutments be softened by breaking up their mass.
- The appearance of the proposed acoustic fence is very hard, with limited softening proposed. Can a softer approach to the acoustic fencing be used?

Conservation Officer

Chapter 7 of the Environment Statement (ES) accurately identifies the designated and non-designated heritage assets likely to be impacted by the proposed infrastructure scheme. I do not propose to list them all here. Appendix 7.1 to the ES provides a gazetteer of Cultural Heritage Assets and I am satisfied that this captures the assets relevant to the scheme.

No objection in respect of potential impacts for the settings of heritage assets within the Vale of White Horse District.

Countryside Officer - Biodiversity

The following summary comments are intended to aid Oxfordshire County Council in assessing this application but should not be considered as a full and comprehensive assessment of the proposed development.

Oxfordshire County Council, as the determining authority, is obliged by law to have regard for the impacts of the proposed development biodiversity (section 40 of the

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) and consider the potential for adverse impacts on certain sites and species (regulation 9 of the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended)).

Summary comments:

- The proposed development would cross areas of low ecological value (former power station, arable land) and high ecological value (reedbeds, lakes, rivers, woodland).
- The proposed bridge crossing over the River Thames has been designed to be a clear span structure, which avoids direct impacts to the river channel itself. The position of supports and piles would be approximately 7m away from the top of the bank, and would have some impacts on the riparian zone either side of the watercourse. The river crossing is not proposed to be lit. “hop over” planting is proposed to mitigate against mortality and severance impacts on commuting and foraging bats. Detailed planting is not proposed at this stage and the efficacy of such an approach described.
- Great crested newt (GCN) surveys have concluded that impacts on the species are unlikely. Surveys concluded absence in waterbodies previously known to support GCN. OCC has their own GCN district level licence and the proposed development would impact habitats within the red and amber zones of the GCN impact risk map. OCC should consider utilising their own GCN district level licence to ensure that impacts on GCN are adequately mitigated and compensated.
- The proposed development would involve direct and indirect impacts on waterbodies and aquatic habitats of high ecological value (ponds, lakes, reedbeds, etc.). It is likely that development, particularly around the Culham Finger Lakes, will require the draining of waterbodies, which are known to support protected species. This approach would require the capture and translation of species (e.g. European eel) from the waterbodies. It is not clear whether a receptor site has been identified for captured species. This matter should be confirmed prior to the grant of any permission.
- Initial habitat surveys were conducted in January 2020, at a time of year unsuitable to determine botanical assemblage. Certain areas of the site were resurveyed in June 2020, related to changes in the red line area. The PEA recommends that further botanical surveys are undertaken at a suitable time of year to ensure that habitats, particularly grassland habitats near to the Culham Science Campus (known to support acid grassland, recorded as improved grassland), are adequately recorded. This would have impacts on the biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment.
- The BNG assessment has not provided justification for pre or post development habitat conditions. These should be justified against the technical supplement habitat condition tables.
- The BNG assessment appears to take into account habitats proposed as part of minerals restoration agreements (e.g. Hanson Restoration Area). These areas of habitat creation have been agreed separately and should not be accounted for as benefits of the scheme. Indeed, in areas where previously agreed habits would be lost in these areas, the target condition of those habitats should be accounted for as if they were existing at the time of development.
- It has been concluded that development will deliver a calculated 11% net gain for habitat units, 13% gain for hedgerow units and 1% net gain for river units.

In the absence of part 6 of the Environment Act 2021 taking force, this level of gain would be compliant with the NPPF.

- Habitat creation proposals within the Valley Park residential development site will need to accord with details proposals which have not yet been submitted.
- The proposed development is likely to result in adverse impacts on roosting, foraging and commuting bats. Tree lines, particularly those close to the River Thames and other waterbodies, have been demonstrated to have high levels of use by foraging and commuting bats. The habitats and levels of bat activity on site have been assessed as being of county importance. OCC, in determining the application, should be satisfied that the adverse impacts of the proposed development can be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated to ensure that the favourable conservation status of the local bat population is not prejudiced by the development. Specific mitigation details, such as hop over planting adjacent to roads, has not been described in detail and as such it is not clear whether mitigation measures would be adequate to ensure no impacts.
- Impacts on designated sites are unlikely as reasonable impact pathways do not exist.
- Details documents (landscape and biodiversity management plans, biosecurity management plans, construction environmental management plans, etc.) will need to be secured.

Air Quality Officer

Due to the nature and the size of the proposed development we would request a detailed Air Quality Assessment to be carried out in order to fully assess the air quality impacts of the development. This must be in line with the Council's Air Quality Guidance for Developers document, and include both mitigation and incorporate basic good practice design in order to help mitigate against the air quality impacts and the potential cumulative effects of piecemeal developments and to enable future proofing of the development as laid out in the guidance.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Butler
Principal Major Applications Officer

Appendix 4 – Annex A of the report to Oxfordshire County Council Planning and Regulation Committee 17/18 July 2023

Divisions Affected – Sutton Courtenay & Marcham, Hendreds & Harwell, Berinsfield & Garsington, and Didcot Ladygrove

PLANNING AND REGULATION COMMITTEE

17th July 2023

- The dualling of the A4130 carriageway (A4130 Widening) from the Milton Gate Junction eastwards, including the construction of three roundabouts;
- A road bridge over the Great Western Mainline (Didcot Science Bridge) and realignment of the A4130 north east of the proposed road bridge including the relocation of a lagoon;
- Construction of a new road between Didcot and Culham (Didcot to Culham River Crossing) including the construction of three roundabouts, a road bridge over the Appleford railway sidings and road bridge over the River Thames;
- Construction of a new road between the B4015 and A415 (Clifton Hampden bypass), including the provision of one roundabout and associated junctions; and
- Controlled crossings, footways and cycleways, landscaping, lighting, noise barriers and sustainable drainage systems.

Report by the Director of Planning, Environment and Climate Change

Contact Officer: David Periam **E-mail:** Planning@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Location: A linear site comprising a corridor between the A34 Milton Interchange and the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden including part of the A4130 east of the A34 Milton Interchange, land between Didcot and the former Didcot A Power Station and the Great Western Mainline, land to the north of Didcot where it crosses a private railway sidings and the River Thames to the west of Appleford-on-Thames before joining the A415 west of Culham Station, land to the south of Culham Science Centre through to a connection with the B4015 north of Clifton Hampden.

OCC Application No: R3.0138/21
SODC Application No: P21/S4797/CM
VOWH Application No: P21/V3189/CM

District Council Areas: South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

Applicant: Oxfordshire County Council

Annex 1 – Conditions

- 1) Time limit for commencement
- 2) Development to be carried out in accordance with approved documents and drawings
- 3) Submission of Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) prior to commencement of each part of the development to be approved in writing by the CPA
- 4) Submission of Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) prior to commencement of each part of the development to be approved in writing by the CPA
- 5) Submission of contour plan showing existing and final ground levels prior to commencement of each part of the development to be approved in writing by the CPA
- 6) No lighting shall be erected other than in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA
- 7) Details of noise barriers to be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA prior to erection
- 8) Noise barriers and other noise mitigation measures shall be erected prior to first use of each part of the development
- 9) The details of the external appearance of each bridge structure, including colour of parapets, shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to commencement of the construction of each bridge structure
- 10) Footways and cycleways in each part of the development shall be open for use prior to first use of carriageways for motorised vehicles in each part of the development
- 11) Visibility splays to be provided in accordance with drawings to be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA prior to first use of each part of the development
- 12) A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) to be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA prior to implementation of approved landscaping scheme for each part of the development
- 13) Updated protected species surveys to be provided to the CPA prior to commencement of each part of the development for any survey that is more than two years old
- 14) Submission of biodiversity mitigation and enhancement strategy to be approved in writing by the CPA prior to commencement of the development
- 15) An updated biodiversity net gain assessment to be submitted and approved in writing by the CPA prior to first use of the development to demonstrate delivery of minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain
- 16) A phased ground contamination risk assessment to be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA prior to the commencement in each part of the development
- 17) Development in each part of the development to cease if unexpected contamination is found unless and until a remediation strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA. The remediation strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
- 18) No drainage systems for infiltration of surface water to the ground shall be permitted unless and until details have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA

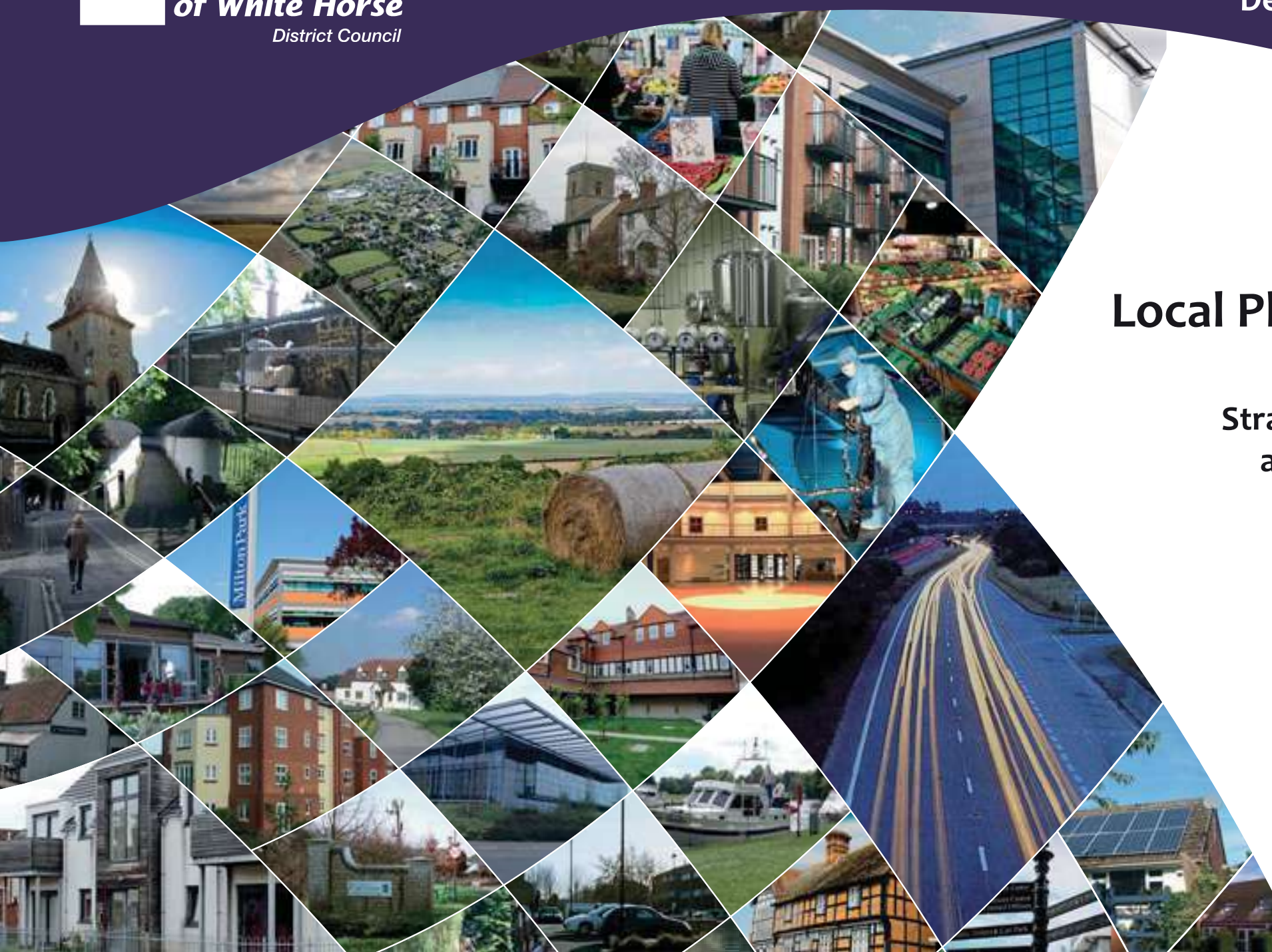
- 19) Detailed surface water drainage scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA prior to the commencement of each part of the development
- 20) A SuDS compliance report to be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA prior to first use of each part of the development
- 21) Development to be carried out in accordance with approved Flood Risk Assessment
- 22) No development shall take place until such time as a scheme for level for level flood compensatory storage, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA
- 23) Details of hard and soft landscaping proposals to be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA within 3 months of the commencement in each part of the development
- 24) Planting to be carried out in first available planting season following the completion of each part of the development
- 25) A topographical tree survey to be submitted to the CPA prior to commencement in each part of the development to indicate precise location and condition of trees currently shown to be indicative
- 26) Trees in each part of the development to be protected in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA in an Arboriculture Method Statement
- 27) Carbon Management Plan to be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA prior to commencement in each part of the development
- 28) An updated Climate Vulnerability Risk Assessment Table to be submitted to and approved in writing prior to the commencement of each part of the development
- 29) Land required only temporarily for construction purposes shall be restored to its current condition within one year of the completion of construction in each part of the development
- 30) No development to take place within the Didcot to Culham River Crossing section of the development until revised restoration and aftercare schemes have been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA for Sutton Courtenay Landfill Site
- 31) No development to take place within the Didcot to Culham River Crossing section of the development until revised restoration and aftercare schemes have been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA for Bridge Farm Quarry
- 32) A programme of archaeological works shall be undertaken prior to the commencement of each part of the development
- 33) Details of the design and appearance of the downgraded section of the A415 to be submitted and approved, including include details of materials and structures e.g. lighting and signage
- 34) No development shall take place until such time as a compensatory tree planting scheme on land controlled by the applicant has been submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA.
- 35) Details of the replacement lagoon shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the CPA prior to the commencement of development on the Didcot Science Bridge part of the development

Appendix 5 – Relevant policies from the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031
Parts 1 and 2



**Vale
of White Horse**
District Council

Adopted
December 2016



Local Plan 2031

Part 1

Strategic Sites and Policies

1 Introduction



Core Policy 2: Cooperation on Unmet Housing Need for Oxfordshire

The Council will continue to work under the ‘duty-to-cooperate’ with all other Oxfordshire local authorities on an ongoing basis to address the objectively assessed need for housing across the Oxfordshire housing market area.

As a first step, Vale of White Horse District Council has sought to accommodate the housing need for Vale of White Horse District in full in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1. The Council recognises that Oxford City is unlikely to be able to accommodate the whole of its new housing requirement for the 2011-2031 period within its administrative boundary.

In tandem, the Council will continue to work jointly and proactively with all of the other Oxfordshire local authorities and through the Oxfordshire Growth Board to address any unmet housing need. This will include assessing all reasonable spatial options, including the release of brownfield, the potential for new settlements and a full strategic review of the boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt. These issues are not for the Council to consider in isolation.

To ensure Oxford’s unmet need is addressed, the Council will allocate sites to contribute towards Oxford’s unmet housing need within the Local Plan 2031: Part 2, to be submitted to the Secretary of State, within two years of adoption of the Local Plan 2031: Part 1. This will ensure that unmet need is considered and planned for in a timely manner and is tested through a robust plan-making process in accordance with national policy, national guidance, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

Whilst the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 is in preparation, the Council’s housing requirement will be 20,560. However, if the Part 2 plan is not adopted within two years of the adoption of Local Plan 2031: Part 1, then from that time until the adoption of the Part 2 plan, the Council’s housing requirement will be 20,560 plus the agreed quantum of Oxford’s unmet housing need to be addressed within the Vale of White Horse District.



4 Spatial Strategy

Overview

This chapter sets out our Spatial Strategy for the future shape of development across the Vale, which is called: ‘Building on our strengths’ (see **Figure 4.1**). This shows where new homes will be built, where opportunities to provide new jobs will be created, and where new infrastructure and services (such as new roads, schools, shops and leisure facilities) will be required.

The Spatial Strategy has three main strands. These seek to:

- focus sustainable growth within the Science Vale area
- reinforce the service centre roles of the main settlements across the district, and
- promote thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character.

The Spatial Strategy makes provision for growth of around 23,000 new jobs, 218 hectares of employment land, and at least 20,560 new homes, to be delivered during the plan period from 2011 to 2031.

The Spatial Strategy has been informed by the key challenges and opportunities facing the district outlined in Chapter 2 and will help us to deliver our vision and objectives outlined in Chapter 3.

Significant weight has been attached to ensuring our strategy delivers sustainable development and it has been informed by the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development (**Core Policy 1** – see Chapter 1).

4 Spatial Strategy

► The Strategy

4.1 A common theme running through the strategy is the need to support the delivery of new housing and jobs to be complemented by new services, facilities and infrastructure – **Figure 4.1**.

4.2 The Spatial Strategy is underpinned by five core policies:

- **Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy** – which classifies the settlements in the Vale according to their role and function.
- **Core Policy 4: Meeting our Housing Need** – which specifies the scale and location of new housing, ensuring development is built in the most appropriate locations.
- **Core Policy 5: Housing Supply Ring Fence** – which identifies a core area within Science Vale where new homes will be provided to achieve sustainable development in accordance with the Spatial Strategy. The area will have a separate housing land supply target from the rest of the district.

- **Core Policy 6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs** – which specifies the scale and location of opportunities for economic growth to ensure that sufficient new jobs are provided across the Vale in appropriate locations, and
- **Core Policy 7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services** – to ensure new services and facilities are delivered alongside new housing and employment.

Sub-Area Strategies

4.3 We have also developed three **Sub-Area Strategies**, which give spatial expression to the strategy and ensure that it is locally distinctive and focused on each part of our district. These are set out in **Chapter 5 (See Figure 4.2)**. The three sub-areas are:

- **Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe** – which covers the northern and north eastern part of the Vale, which have strong linkages with the city of Oxford. It contains the Market Town of Abingdon-on-Thames, the Local

Service Centre of Botley and several Larger Villages including Cumnor, Drayton, East Hanney, Kennington, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Marcham, Radley, Steventon and Wootton. A large part of this area is located within the Oxford Green Belt.

- **South East Vale** – which includes much of the Science Vale area and contains the Market Town of Wantage, the Local Service Centre of Grove as well as a number of significant employment sites, including Harwell Campus, Milton Park and Didcot A Power Station. The area also contains a number of Larger Villages including Blewbury, East Hendred, Harwell, Harwell Campus, Milton and Sutton Courtenay.
- **Western Vale** – which is a more rural area stretching from the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the River Thames, containing the Market Town of Faringdon and several Larger Villages including East Challow, Shrivenham, Stanford-in-the-Vale, Uffington and Watchfield.

Science Vale

4.4 We are working jointly with South Oxfordshire District Council to plan for the Science Vale locality, which spans district boundaries. Additional delivery and implementation details for our proposals across the Science Vale locality will be included within the Local Plan 2031 Part 2. This is discussed more in **Chapter 5**.

District wide policies

4.5 We have developed district wide policies set out in **Chapter 6**, which apply across the Vale for specific issues. These policies are needed to complement the Spatial Strategy and Sub-Area Strategies to help ensure the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives can be successfully delivered. They build on, rather than duplicate, national guidance and are important to enable the determination of development proposals in a consistent manner.

4 Spatial Strategy

4.6 We have saved some policies from the Local Plan 2011, as identified in **Appendix G**. These policies remain relevant for planning for the Vale and we will continue to apply these saved policies for Development Management purposes until they are replaced by the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.



4 Spatial Strategy

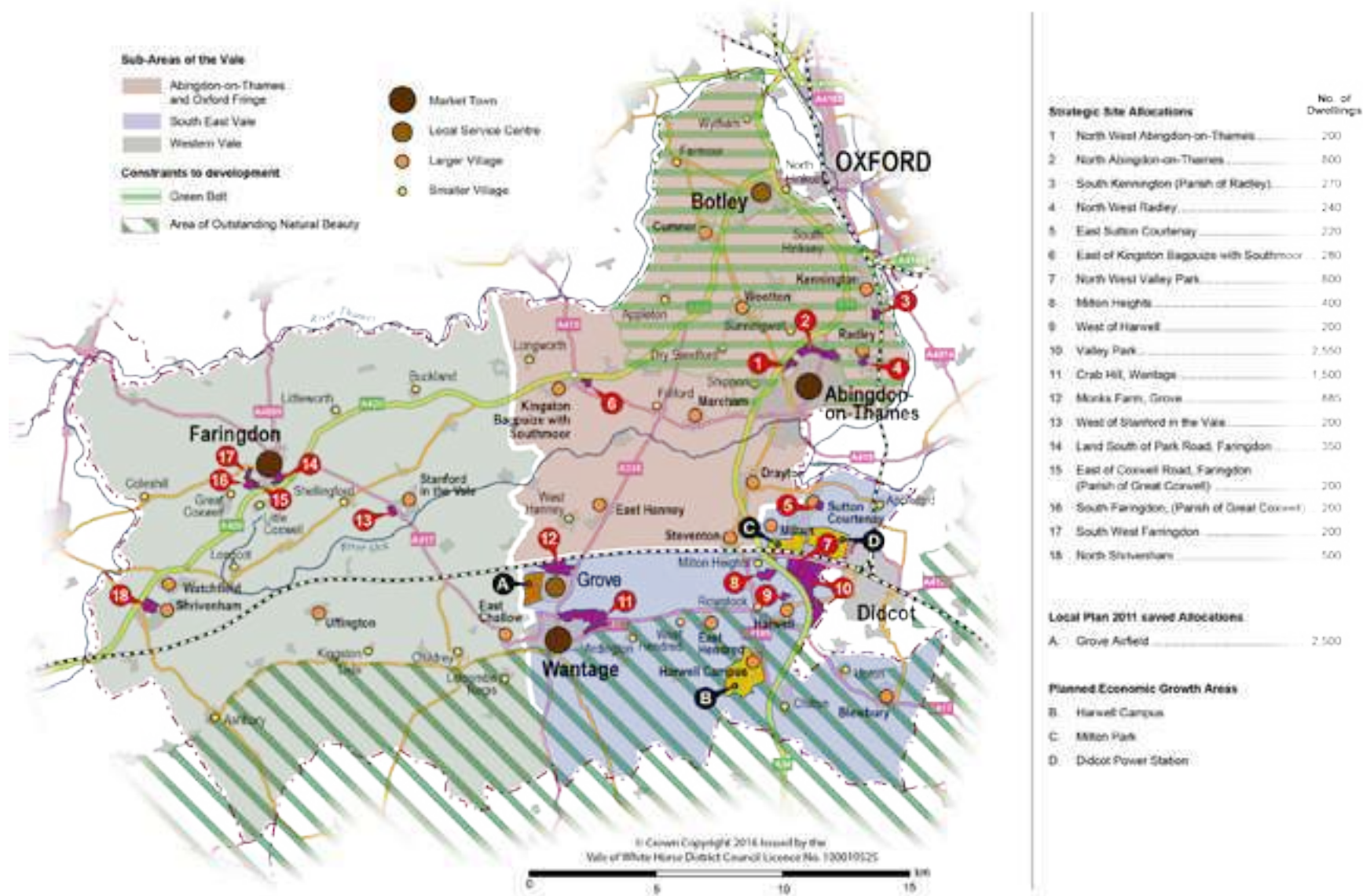
Figure 4.1: ‘Building on our strengths’- a sustainable strategy for the Vale of White Horse

➤ **The strategy will support the delivery of sustainable growth through three key strands:**

Focusing sustainable growth within the Science Vale area, by	Reinforcing the service centre roles of the main settlements across the district, by:	Promoting thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character, by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting Science Vale as a world-class location for science and technology-based enterprise and innovation, especially the Enterprise Zone sites at Milton Park and Harwell Campus • allocating appropriate land for strategic housing growth to help improve the self-containment of the area. New homes will be delivered at five key locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Grove – Harwell and Milton Parishes, east of the A34 – Harwell Campus – Milton Parish, west of the A34 – Wantage • supporting the redevelopment of surplus land at Didcot A Power Station • delivering a comprehensive package of strategic and local infrastructure and services alongside the housing and employment growth, and • working jointly with South Oxfordshire District Council to drive forward the delivery of high quality development across Science Vale including the provision of enabling infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concentrating larger shopping, tourism and community facilities at Abingdon-on-Thames, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage to improve their vitality and ensuring they are widely accessible • focusing housing growth at the Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger Villages • allocating strategic housing growth at Abingdon-on-Thames and Faringdon, in addition to the growth within the Science Vale area, to strengthen their service centre roles, and • allocating land for strategic employment growth at Faringdon and Grove to complement the Science Vale sites and to provide jobs close to where people live. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocating strategic housing growth at our Larger Villages of Harwell, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Radley, Shrivenham, Stanford-in-the-Vale and Sutton Courtenay to help maintain their vibrant communities • identifying appropriate housing requirements for the rural areas to inform neighbourhood plans or the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 • focusing development within the rural areas to the Larger Villages, thus helping to maintain their vitality and the sustainability of local services, and • supporting appropriate development in the Smaller Villages to help meet the local needs of rural communities.

4 Spatial Strategy

Figure 4.2: Map showing the strategic growth across the three Sub-Areas within the Vale of White Horse District



4 Spatial Strategy

➤ Settlement Hierarchy

4.7 The Settlement Hierarchy (**Core Policy 3**) defines the settlements across the Vale of White Horse District into four tiers based on an assessment of their facilities, characteristics and functional relationships with their surrounding areas³⁶. Each tier of settlement has a different strategic role:

- Market Towns
- Local Service Centres
- Larger Villages, and
- Smaller Villages

4.8 The Local Plan 2031 protects and enhances the services and facilities provided by the Market Towns, Local Service Centres and our Larger Villages and ensures that any new facilities, homes and jobs are focused on these settlements. This will help to ensure the delivery of sustainable development because:

- these settlements provide the best

range of services and facilities and new development will help to support and enhance them

- locating new homes in the communities with the best services and facilities will enable the residents in the new homes to access them by walking, cycling and public transport, so reducing the need to travel by car
- it will enable more affordable homes to be built where there is most need, and
- the main service providers, including the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, the County Council and the emergency services, prefer this approach because it will help them to deliver their services more efficiently.

4.9 The settlement boundaries for Market Towns and Local Service Centres³⁷ are shown by the Adopted Policies Map. These boundaries may be reviewed and updated in the future either through the Local Plan 2031 Part 2, or neighbourhood plans.



³⁶ Town and Village Facilities Study (2014), available at: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

³⁷ There is no settlement boundary defined for Botley as the Oxford Green Belt provides a policy limit on development around the settlement.

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 3: Settlement Hierarchy

Market Towns

Market Towns are defined as settlements that have the ability to support the most sustainable patterns of living within the Vale through their current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities.

Market Towns have the greatest long-term potential for development to provide the jobs and homes to help sustain, and where appropriate, enhance their services and facilities to support viable and sustainable communities in a proportionate manner.

Local Service Centres

Local Service Centres are defined as larger villages or neighbourhoods to larger settlements with a level of facilities and services and local employment to provide the next best opportunities for sustainable development outside the Market Towns.

Larger Villages

Larger Villages are defined as settlements with a more limited range of employment, services and facilities. Unallocated development will be limited to providing for local needs and to support employment, services and facilities within local communities.

Smaller Villages

The Smaller Villages have a low level of services and facilities, where any development should be modest and proportionate in scale and primarily be to meet local needs.

The Settlement Classifications are:

Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area:

Market Town:	Abingdon-on-Thames
Local Service Centre:	Botley
Larger Villages:	Cumnor, Drayton, East Hanney, Kennington, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Marcham, Radley, Steventon and Wootton
Smaller Villages:	Appleton, Dry Sandford, Farmoor, Frilford, Longworth, North Hinksey, Shippon, South Hinksey, Sunningwell, West Hanney and Wytham

South East Vale Sub-Area:

Market Town:	Wantage
Local Service Centre:	Grove
Larger Villages:	Blewbury, East Hendred, Harwell, Harwell Campus* Sutton Courtenay and Milton
Smaller Villages:	Appleford, Ardington, Chilton, Milton Heights**, Rowstock, Upton and West Hendred

Western Vale Sub-Area:

Market Town:	Faringdon
Larger Villages:	East Challow, Shrivenham, Stanford-in-the-Vale, Uffington and Watchfield
Smaller Villages:	Ashbury, Buckland, Childrey, Coleshill, Great Coxwell, Kingston Lisle, Little Coxwell, Littleworth, Longcot, Letcombe Regis and Shellingford

Those villages not included within the categories described above are considered to form part of the open countryside.

*Harwell Campus has facilities and services equivalent to a Larger Village.

**Milton Heights has facilities and services within a short walk that are equivalent to those offered by a Larger Village.

4 Spatial Strategy

Meeting our housing needs

4.10 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 makes provision for 20,560 new homes to be delivered during the plan period (2011/12 to 2030/31; **Core Policy 4**). This reflects the Objectively Assessed Need for Vale of White Horse District Council as identified by the up-to-date Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Oxfordshire.

4.11 If or when required, any needs arising elsewhere in the Housing Market Area, will be addressed by timely and effective cooperative working in accordance with **Core Policy 2** (see **Chapter 1**).

Sources of housing supply

4.12 A number of sources of housing supply will ensure a continuous supply of housing delivery across the plan period. These sources include:

- strategic allocations made within this plan
- retained Local Plan (2011) allocations
- existing planning commitments
- additional sites to be identified through neighbourhood plans, or identified through the Local Plan 2031 Part 2, and
- sites not yet identified that will come forward through the development management process in accordance with the policies set out in the Local Plan 2031. These are sometimes known as ‘windfalls’.

4.13 The strategic allocations (listed in **Core Policy 4** and outlined in more detail within the Sub-Area Strategies) are central to the delivery of the Local Plan 2031 and the Strategic Objectives for the Vale.

4.14 To identify the strategic allocations, we have followed a comprehensive selection process, which began with an assessment of land surrounding each of our most sustainable settlements and key business parks. This helped to identify the broad locations that offered the most suitable locations for development, which were then comprehensively tested, including by the Sustainability Appraisal, Evaluation of Transport Impacts Study, Viability Study, Landscape Study and review of responses to earlier stages of consultation³⁸.

4.15 The scale of development on these strategic sites will enable infrastructure to be provided that offers wider benefits to their local areas.

³⁸ More information about how we have selected the strategic allocations is set out in our Topic Papers available from the Council website: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=FolderView&ID=627981346&CODE=5C4C901196E98386319052F2DED5F64A&NAME=02+TOP+-+Topic+Papers&REF=Local%20Plan%202031%20Part%201%20Examination%20Library>

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 4: Meeting Our Housing Needs

The housing target for the Vale of White Horse District is for at least 20,560 homes to be delivered in the plan period between 2011 and 2031^a. 12,495 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. 1,840 dwellings remain to be identified and will be allocated through the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 or Neighbourhood Development Plans or through the Development Management process. The contribution of all sources of housing supply are shown by the following table:

Category		Number of Dwellings
Housing requirement for the full plan period (Apr 2011 to Mar 2031)		20,560 ^a
Housing Completions (Apr 2011 to Mar 2016)		3,065
Housing Supply (Apr 2016 to Mar 2031)	Known Commitments	4,468
	Local Plan 2031 Part 1 allocations	12,495
	Local Plan 2031 Part 2 allocations	1,000 ^b
	Windfalls	840

^a This target addresses needs arising in the Vale of White Horse. If or when required, needs arising elsewhere in the Housing Market Area, will be addressed by timely and effective cooperative working in accordance with Core Policy 2.

^b The Local Plan Part 2 allocation will be reduced where dwellings are allocated in Neighbourhood Development Plans or come forward through the Development Management Process.

Strategic Allocations-

Development will be supported at strategic site allocations where it meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix A** and in accordance with the policies of the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following tables show how the level of housing required through strategic development sites will be distributed:

Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area:

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement/ Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Abingdon-on-Thames	Market Town	North of Abingdon-on-Thames	800
		North-West of Abingdon-on-Thames	200
Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	Larger Village	East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor	280
Radley		North-West of Radley	240
		South of Kennington	270
Sub total			1,790

Continued overleaf

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 4: Meeting Our Housing Needs

South East Vale Sub-Area:

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement/ Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Wantage	Market Town	Crab Hill ^c (North East Wantage and South East Grove)	1,500
Grove	Local Service Centre	Grove Airfield ^{c,d}	2,500
		Monks Farm (North Grove)	885
Harwell and Milton Parishes east of the A34 adjoining Didcot Town	Adjoining Didcot Town	Valley Park ^f	2,550
		North-West of Valley Park	800
Harwell	Larger Village	West of Harwell	200
Milton Parish west of the A34		Milton Heights (Smaller Village)	400
Sutton Courtenay		East of Sutton Courtenay	220
Sub total			9,055

Western Vale Sub-Area

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement/ Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Faringdon	Market Town	Land South of Park Road, Faringdon ^c	350
		South-West of Faringdon	200
Great Coxwell Parish	Adjoining Faringdon Market Town	East of Coxwell Road Faringdon ^c	200
		South of Faringdon	200
Shrivenham	Larger Village	North of Shrivenham	500
Stanford-in-the- Vale		West of Stanford- in-the-Vale	200
Sub total			1,650

^c These sites have 'Resolution to Grant' planning permission subject to legal agreement as at Sept 2014

^d Saved Local Plan 2011 Allocation

Continued overleaf

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 4: Meeting Our Housing Needs

Development at Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger Villages

There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the existing built area of Market Towns^e, Local Service Centres^e and Larger Villages in accordance with Core Policy 1.

Development outside of the existing built area of these settlements will be permitted where it is allocated by the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 or has been allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan 2031. This development must be adjacent, or well related, to the existing built area of the settlement or meet exceptional circumstances set out in the other policies of the Development Plan and deliver necessary supporting infrastructure.

Development at Smaller Villages

At the Smaller Villages, limited infill development may be appropriate within the existing built areas of these settlements, or if it is allocated within an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or future parts of the Local Plan 2031. Proposals for limited infill development will be supported where they are in keeping with local character and are proportionate in scale and meet local housing needs, and/ or provide local employment, services and facilities.

Open Countryside

Development in open countryside will not be appropriate unless specifically supported by other relevant policies as set out in the Development Plan or national policy.

^e As defined by the Settlement Boundaries shown by the Adopted Policies Map

^f The allocation at Valley Park has the capacity to deliver more housing subject to further appropriate infrastructure improvements. Housing which is in addition to the 2,550 homes is expected to be delivered after 2031

4 Spatial Strategy

➤ Housing supply ring-fence

4.16 The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan³⁹ identifies Science Vale as one of three key growth areas on the 'Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine', with significant potential to build on the extensive existing research infrastructure and the designated Enterprise Zone. The wider strategy of the Local Economic Partnership includes supporting economic growth to ensure that we maximise the potential of this important area.

4.17 Further analysis⁴⁰ of the economic forecasts prepared for the Oxfordshire Housing Market Area⁴¹ indicates that around 15,850, or almost 70%, of the 23,000 new jobs forecast for the district to 2031 are likely to be located in the Science Vale area. New scientific and research jobs will principally be provided at the two Enterprise Zone sites at Harwell Campus and Milton

Park. There will also be significant general business and indirect service sector employment growth that is likely to locate in the surrounding business locations, such as Williams F1 in Grove and the Didcot A site, and in the main town centres including Wantage.

4.18 It is the jobs being created in Science Vale that generate the need for a significant proportion of the houses required in the district. The majority (almost 75%) of our strategic housing growth is allocated within close proximity to these key Science Vale business locations. Our plans for significantly enhancing and delivering new infrastructure are also focused on the Science Vale area to enable our growth potential to be realised. This infrastructure cannot currently be delivered without the planned housing.

4.19 The Council is therefore adopting a 'ring-fence' approach to

housing supply to help ensure that jobs, homes and infrastructure are provided together. This will help to achieve sustainable development by minimising the need to travel and the burden on transport networks. The central planning justification for the ring fence is that it supports the delivery of our Local Plan Spatial Strategy focus on development in Science Vale. The ring fence serves to concentrate housing growth and infrastructure investment in this location and reinforces our commitment to the Spatial Strategy. In doing so it also improves our ability to seek external funding to support infrastructure delivery and accelerate housing growth.

4.20 The funding of Science Vale infrastructure will include significant contributions from housing development. Enabling loans to be repaid from future Enterprise Zone business rates will help deliver infrastructure earlier than might

otherwise be achieved. If housing growth does not take place in the ring fence area, Enterprise Zone and other business growth prospects would be harmed and business rates' contributions to infrastructure provision jeopardised.

4.21 The ring-fence area encompasses the Science Vale geographical area, as shown on **Figure 4.3**. This area complements the Didcot ring-fence in the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, and will support the delivery focus of growth at Science Vale. Growth in both districts will contribute to the shared strategic infrastructure package set out in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

39 Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) (2014) *Strategic Economic Plan*- <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/>

40 GL Hearn (2014) Science Vale Housing and Employment Study draft report, Vale of White Horse District Council (June 2014)

41 *Economic Forecasting to Inform the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic Housing Market, Assessment* (Cambridge Economics February 2014)

4 Spatial Strategy

4.22 The housing supply calculation will be undertaken on two separate areas: the ring fence area as set out in this policy and the rest of the district, with each of the areas having its own housing target and monitoring approach. The respective housing targets, ring fence 11,850 dwellings and rest of district 8,710 dwellings equate to the housing requirement for the whole of the district as identified within **Core Policy 4**. The approach taken to each of the supply areas, Liverpool* for the ring fence area and Sedgefield** for the rest of district area, will ensure the delivery of housing within the Science Vale area

is assessed over a longer period with the economic and housing needs coming forward in parallel. The Council is therefore ensuring there is a boost in housing supply whilst a balance is struck in the delivery of economic and housing needs in the Science Vale area. The two supply calculations are combined to provide a district wide calculation.

*The Liverpool approach seeks to meet a backlog of housing supply by spreading it evenly over the whole plan period.

**The Sedgefield approach seeks to meet a backlog of housing supply within the first five years.



4 Spatial Strategy

Core Policy 5: Housing Supply Ring-Fence

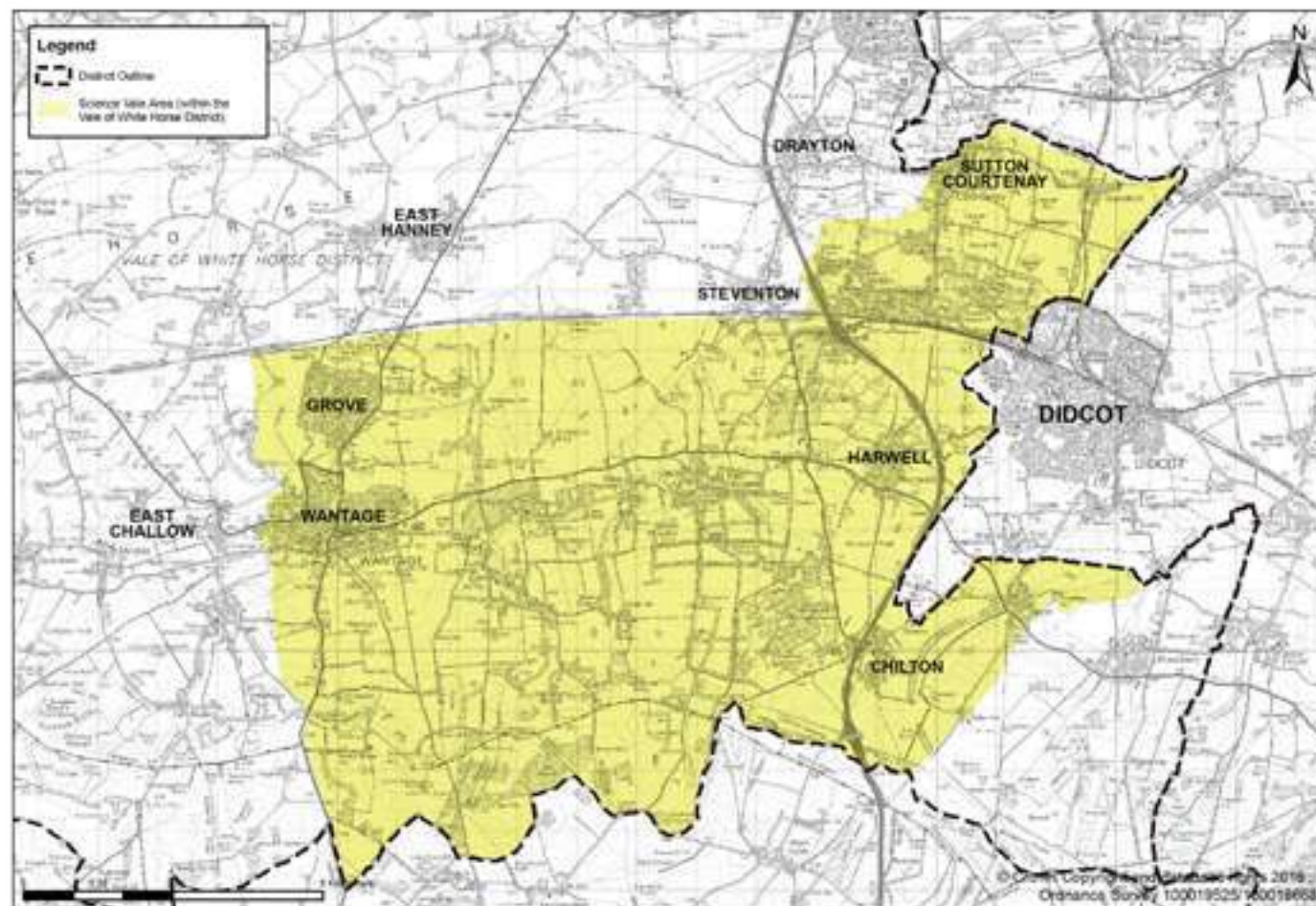
The Council will employ a ring-fence approach to housing delivery in the Science Vale area as shown by **Figure 4.3** and set out on the Adopted Policies Map.

For the purposes of the assessment of housing land supply, the ring-fence area will be treated as a separate sub-area with a housing requirement of 11,850 homes in the plan period (593 homes per annum) in support of the 15,850 jobs planned in this sub-area and as a contribution towards the district's housing need set out in **Core Policy 4**.

The supply calculations for the ring-fence area and the rest of district area will be combined to provide a district wide calculation.

Any proposals for development within the ring fence area, whether a five year housing supply is in place or not, will still need to demonstrate conformity with relevant national and local policy.

Figure 4.3: Housing supply ring-fence area



4 Spatial Strategy

Meeting business and employment needs

4.23 Overall demand for employment land in the Vale is strong due to a combination of local assets, including: excellent quality of environment; high-quality research and science facilities; a large catchment pool of skilled labour; and existing science and business parks with growth aspirations and where the demand for growth is expected to remain buoyant throughout the plan period⁴².

4.24 This strategy makes provision for around 218 hectares of strategic employment land for new employment development in accordance with our assessed needs, set out in our Employment Land Review⁴³ and it is anticipated that this will deliver approximately 23,000 jobs between 2011 and 2031. This land will be provided by a combination of different sites including:

- provision of employment land as

- part of mixed use urban extensions
- sites covered by the adopted Milton Park Local Development Order, and
- vacant and developable land retained from Vale Local Plan 2011 allocations for employment land.

4.25 Employment provision within the Vale is led by Science Vale, and in particular, the Enterprise Zone sites at Milton Park and Harwell Campus. Milton Park is a large science park and a major regional and national hub for knowledge-intensive industries. Harwell Campus is home to a number of world leading science research facilities including, for example, the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and the European Space Agency. Milton Park and Harwell Campus account for 156 hectares of the identified demand for new employment land.

4.26 Additional detail to assist the delivery and implementation of growth across the Didcot Garden

Town area will be set out in the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

4.27 Overall the employment provision within the Science Vale area accounts for around 15,850 projected jobs, which equates to around 70 % of the planned total for the district.

4.28 There is an adopted Local Development Order (LDO) for Milton Park⁴⁴ that allows for the intensification and expansion of the existing site. The LDO is designed to allow development within the B1, B2 and B8 use classes. It also permits elements of other uses so long as they support the vitality and viability of the park and complement the primary business uses. A map showing the area covered by the LDO and the area covered by saved Policy E5 (which is slightly smaller) is provided in **Appendix C**.

4.29 Employment land will also be provided as part of mixed-use strategic sites at Land South of Park Road, Faringdon and Monks Farm, North Grove. This employment land

will help to ensure that jobs are available close to people's homes.

4.30 The strategy identifies that the Didcot A Power Station site is an appropriate location for employment development to contribute to the 218 hectares to be provided. The size of this site could also provide additional land, and/ or accommodate mixed-use development, over and above the identified requirement, in the latter stages of the plan period. Any development on this site should come forward in accordance with **Core Policy 16: Didcot A Power Station**.

4.31 Policy CSEM2 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy⁴⁵ indicates that 6.5 hectares of employment land will be provided at Didcot, within the Vale of White Horse District, in order to help meet the town's needs. This 6.5 hectares is included within the 28 hectares to be provided at Milton Park and contributes towards the identified requirement of 218 hectares for the Vale of White Horse District.

⁴² URS (2012) Vale of White Horse Employment Land Review Update

⁴³ URS (2012) Vale of White Horse Employment Land Review Update

⁴⁴ Milton Park Local Development Order, December 2012, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/milton-park-local-development-order>

⁴⁵ South Oxfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, December 2012, available at: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/core-strategy/adopted-core-strategy>

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs

218 hectares of land is identified for future employment development on the following strategic sites and saved Vale Local Plan 2011 allocations.

Site Name	Sub-Area	Type of Site	Available Development Land (Hectares)
Milton Park	South East Vale	Saved Local Plan 2011 allocation	28*
Harwell Campus		Saved Local Plan 2011 allocation	93 (Enterprise Zone)
			35 (Outwith EZ)
Monks Farm, North Grove		New mixed use strategic allocation	6
Didcot A		Identified future potential supply	29**
South of Park Road, Faringdon	Western Vale	New mixed use strategic allocation	3
		Other saved Local Plan 2011 allocations	24.2
Total			218

*The 28 hectares to be provided at Milton Park includes sites covered by the Local Development Order (LDO) which are not within the area of the Local Plan 2011 allocation. A map showing the extent of the LDO and the area of the Local Plan 2011 allocation is included at **Appendix C**.

** The Didcot A Power Station site consists of around 47 hectares for potential redevelopment. The Employment Land Review recommends that 29 hectares of this land should be identified for employment development. Development at this site should be considered in accordance with **Core Policy 16: Didcot A Power Station**.

Employment and business development as part of mixed-use development will be supported at Monks Farm, Grove and South of Park Road, Faringdon where this meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix A**, and in accordance with the Sub-Area Strategies.

The other saved Vale Local Plan 2011 employment allocations are:

Site Name	Sub-Area	Available Development Land (Hectares)
Abingdon Business Park at Wyndyke Furlong	Abingdon/ Oxford Fringe	0.7
Abingdon Science Park at Barton Lane		0.7
Cumnor Hill		0.3
Wootton Business Park		1.5
Milton Hill Business and Technology Park	South East Vale	11.2
Grove Technology Park		5.4
Land adjacent to A420 (4&20 site), Faringdon	Western Vale	4.2
Land north of Park Road (HCA site), Faringdon		0.2
Total		24.2

Continued overleaf

4 Spatial Strategy



Core Policy 6: Meeting Business and Employment Needs

Proposals for employment related development on unallocated sites will be supported in accordance with **Core Policy 28: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites**. In addition to the sites identified for new employment development, a number of existing strategic employment sites have been identified in the Sub-Area Strategies. These sites will be safeguarded for employment uses in accordance with **Core Policy 29: Change of Use of Existing Employment Land and Premises**.

Addressing the needs for retailing

4.32 The focus of Vale's existing retail offering occurs in the three historic Market Towns of Abingdon-on-Thames, Wantage and Faringdon. One of the Strategic Objectives of this Local Plan 2031 is to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the existing centres in these settlements.

4.33 It is important that existing centres remain active and vibrant in light of changing trends. The historically and naturally constrained nature of Vale's Market Towns limits the potential for significant retail expansion to accommodate the district's need up to 2031.

4.34 It is key that retail development is provided in the most sustainable locations, close to where people live and work. In Abingdon-on-Thames, the redevelopment of the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter area, phase one of which has been completed, continues to be a priority

for the Council and is set out in **Core Policy 10: Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon-on-Thames**.

4.35 The Council continues to support the steering committees of both Wantage and Faringdon Neighbourhood Development Plans who seek to expand on their current retail offering in line with the expected need for the plan period.

4.36 Vale's strategy identifies a significant level of housing growth to occur in the South East Vale Sub-Area and in particular on land to the west of Didcot, the town centre of which is located in South Oxfordshire. Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils will continue to work together through the 'duty-to-cooperate' to ensure that the cumulative retail need arising for the wider Didcot area from new strategic site allocations can be successfully delivered through the continued expansion of the Orchard Centre in the town centre and through the new district centre at Great Western Park.

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

South East Vale Sub-Area Strategy

Introduction

5.52 The South East Vale Sub-Area provides an important strand to our Spatial Strategy and is where around 75 % of our planned strategic housing growth and around 70 % of our projected new jobs are located (15,830 of 23,000).

5.53 The South East Vale Sub-Area houses a number of significant centres of employment, including several sites located within the Science Vale area. These include Harwell Campus and Milton Park, which were designated as an Enterprise Zone in 2011.

5.54 Science Vale is one of the key growth areas set out within the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and is the focus of significant investment. The Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal announced in

2014 will continue to unleash a new wave of innovation-led growth by maximising the area's world class assets. The Science Vale sites are central to the City Deal programme and the area is benefiting from part of £95 million of Government investment for the county.

5.55 Didcot A Power Station, a feature on the area's landscape for over forty years, closed in March 2013 and offers a significant opportunity for further development when it is fully decommissioned.

5.56 This Sub-Area contains the Market Town of Wantage, the nearby large village of Grove (which functions as a Local Service Centre in its own right), and extends within Harwell and Milton parishes, to the western edge of Didcot. Although the town of Didcot is located within South Oxfordshire, some of the proposed housing for this area is to be located within the Vale. For this reason we are working closely with

South Oxfordshire District Council to prepare our Local Plan and ensure that appropriate services and facilities and infrastructure are available for the new communities in this area.

5.57 The historic Market Town of Wantage and the nearby larger village of Grove are separate settlements with their own unique character and identity. They have a strong functional relationship with many shared services including for health, education and leisure. It is important that growth here is carefully coordinated to seek to ensure that service and infrastructure provision closely matches the needs of the two communities. Grove Airfield⁵⁷ will contribute up to 2,500 homes to Grove and provide services and facilities. New development should be successfully integrated with the existing and newly planned communities.

5.58 The South East Vale Sub-Area also houses many attractive rural villages and approximately half of

the area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. These more rural settlements are an important part of the wider community and their historic character should be conserved and enhanced.

5.59 The proposals within the South East Vale Sub-Area will be supported where appropriate, by additional policies in the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 to provide additional delivery and implementation detail to cover the Didcot Garden Town area that falls within the Vale district. LPP2 will set out greater plan detail to support the delivery of high quality development and supporting infrastructure across the area.

5.60 To help to ensure that our vision for the Vale of White Horse is achieved, our focus for this Sub-Area is to ensure that employment growth centred on the Enterprise Zone and Science Vale sits alongside strategic housing and infrastructure to support sustainable growth.

⁵⁷ Saved Local Plan (2011) allocation

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

5.61 This section sets out:

- how the Sub-Area will change by 2031, and
- our strategic policies to address the key challenges and opportunities identified for this Sub-Area in relation to our four thematic areas:

Building healthy and sustainable communities

Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy for the South East Vale Sub-Area – which sets out our strategic site allocations for this area

Supporting economic prosperity

Core Policy 16: Didcot A Power Station – which safeguards land at this site for employment development

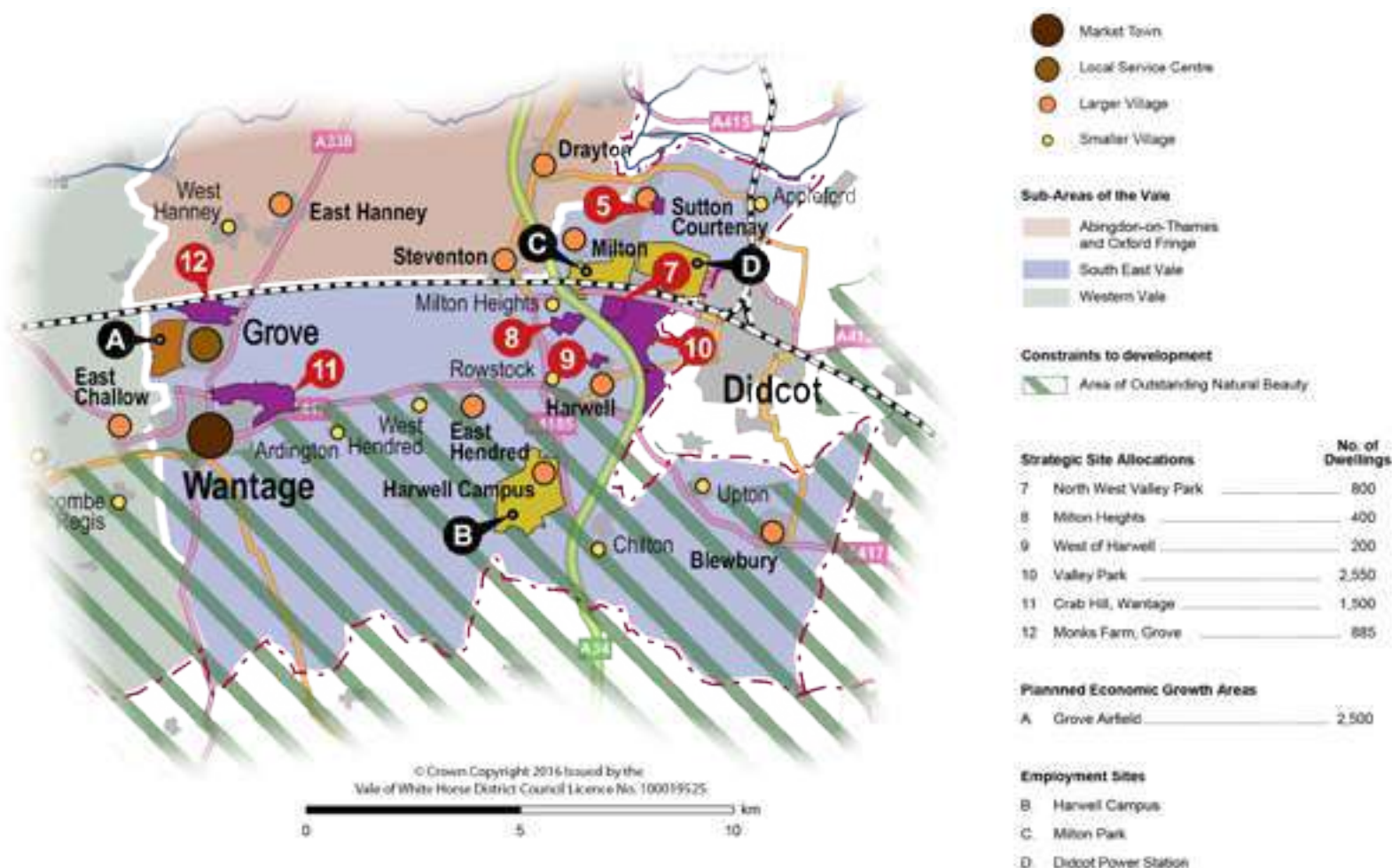


Figure 5.4: South East Vale Sub-Area

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

Supporting sustainable transport and accessibility

Core Policy 17: Transport Delivery for the South East Vale Sub-Area – which sets out the approach for delivering critical transport infrastructure within this area

Core Policy 18: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Schemes in the South East Vale Sub-Area – which seeks to ensure land required for the critical transport infrastructure in this area is protected

Core Policy 19: Re-opening Grove Railway Station – which sets out the Council's commitment to support the ambition to re-open the station at Grove

Protecting the environment and responding to climate change

How the South East Vale Sub-Area will change by 2031

The South East Vale Sub-Area will consist of thriving communities that have benefited from sustainable growth and the successful delivery of major infrastructure. The area will continue to be a vital economic area for Oxfordshire, including employment of international importance, where new jobs have been provided alongside housing and community facilities.

Wantage and Grove will be places where people are proud to live and work and recognised as a vital part of the Science Vale area. Growth in these settlements will have been balanced alongside the delivery of community facilities. This will have included new schools and significant highway improvements, including the Wantage Eastern Link Road and the Grove Northern Link Road. The area will benefit from improved public transport and strategic growth in these settlements will have provided more local job opportunities.

The ecological value of the Letcombe Brook as an important wildlife habitat will have been enhanced. The strategic development sites will have successfully extended the network of green spaces in the area for both recreation and wildlife benefits. Strategic development in Harwell and Milton parishes, to the west of Didcot, will have provided a sustainable urban extension of high quality homes and community facilities. The strategic road and public transport improvements identified in the Science Vale Area Strategy will have been delivered and will be helping to reduce traffic congestion.

The town centre in Wantage will have been conserved and enhanced and the local centre in Grove will have been strengthened. The countryside and villages will have maintained their distinctive character. The Larger Villages will have retained their separate identities and their services will provide for residents' day-to-day needs. New residents in the villages will be helping to sustain the services and social life of the rural communities.

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

Strategic policies for the South East Vale Sub-Area

➤ Building healthy and sustainable communities

5.62 The South East Vale Sub-Area forms the focus of our proposals for new housing and will accommodate around 60 % of the total planned and permitted new housing for the district and around 75 % of our strategic housing allocations.

5.63 The provision of new housing in this area will help to improve the self-sufficiency of the South East Vale Sub-Area overall and provide opportunities for living closer to places of work. For this reason, a number of sites have been identified as sustainable locations for strategic housing development within the Sub-Area.

5.64 The strategic housing growth will complement the new employment and job creation

forecast and will also support the vitality and viability of the area and help to facilitate the delivery of a package of new or enhanced infrastructure, services and facilities. The new homes allocated to this Sub-Area will be in balance with the forecast new jobs, thus helping to deliver sustainable growth⁵⁸.

5.65 Primary school places in Wantage and Grove are currently close to full capacity. Strategic growth at these settlements will provide additional capacity as part of a long term and sustainable strategy for education provision in the area. The additional school places to be provided across the Sub-Area will need to be phased appropriately alongside housing delivery.

5.66 Our strategy for meeting our housing needs in this Sub-Area are set out in **Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy for the South East Vale Sub-Area**.



58 GL Hearn (2014) Science Vale Housing and Employment Study, Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council report, (November 2014)

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale



Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area

Our over-arching priority for this Sub-Area is to secure the aligned delivery of housing and employment growth together with the infrastructure required to achieve sustainable development.

Development in the South East Vale Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in **Core Policy 3**:

Market Town:	Wantage
Local Service Centre:	Grove
Larger Villages:	Blewbury, East Hendred, Harwell, Harwell Campus*, Milton and Sutton Courtenay
Smaller Villages:	Appleford, Ardington, Chilton, Milton Heights**, Rowstock, Upton and West Hendred

*Harwell Campus has facilities and services equivalent to a Larger Village

** Milton Heights has facilities and services within a short walk that are equivalent to those offered by a Larger Village.

Housing Delivery

At least 12,450 new homes will be delivered in the plan period between 2011 and 2031. 9,055 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations. 416 dwellings remain to be identified and will be allocated through the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 or Neighbourhood Development Plans or through the Development Management Process. The contribution of all sources of housing for this Sub-Area are shown by the following table:

Category		Number of Dwellings
Housing requirement for the full plan period (Apr 2011 to Mar 2031)		12,450 ^a
Housing Completions (Apr 2011 to Mar 2016)		1,031
Housing Supply (Apr 2016 to Mar 2031)	Known Commitments	1,725
	Local Plan 2031 Part 1 allocations	9,055
	Local Plan 2031 Part 2 allocations	56 ^b
	Windfalls	360

^a This target addresses needs arising in the Vale of White Horse. If or when required, needs arising elsewhere in the Housing Market Area, will be addressed in accordance with **Core Policy 2**.

^b The Local Plan Part 2 allocation identified in the above table will be reduced where dwellings are allocated in Neighbourhood Development Plans or come forward through the Development Management Process.

Housing Supply Ring Fence

11,850 new homes are 'ring-fenced' for the purposes of the assessment of housing land supply within this Sub-Area in accordance with **Core Policy 5**. Development will be supported at the strategic site allocations through a masterplanning process involving the community, local planning authority, developer and other stakeholders where development meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix A** and are in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. Design, delivery and implementation detail will also be set out in the Local Plan 2031 Part 2. The following table shows how the level of housing required within this Sub-Area through the strategic development sites will be distributed:

Continued overleaf

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area

Part 1 Allocations

Settlement/ Parish	Settlement Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Wantage	Market Town	Crab Hill (North East Wantage and South East Grove)	1,500
Grove	Local Service Centre	Monks Farm (North Grove)	885
		Grove Airfield ^{c,d}	2,500
Harwell and Milton parishes, east of the A34 adjoining Didcot town	Adjoining Didcot Town	Valley Park ^e	2,550
		North West Valley Park	800
Milton parish west of the A34	Larger Village	Milton Heights (Smaller Village)	400
Harwell		West of Harwell	200
Sutton Courtenay		East of Sutton Courtenay	220
Total			9,055

^c This site has 'Resolution to Grant' planning permission subject to a legal agreement as at Sept 2014.

^d Saved Local Plan 2011 Allocation.

^e The allocation at Valley Park has the capacity to deliver considerably more housing, subject to appropriate infrastructure improvements. Housing which is in addition to the 2,550 homes is expected to be delivered after 2031.

Employment

208 hectares of employment land will be provided for business and employment growth in accordance with **Core Policy 6**. In addition, the following strategic employment sites will be safeguarded for employment use in line with **Core Policy 29**:

Strategic employment sites:

Grove Technology Park
 Grove Road, Wantage
 Downsview Road, Grove
 Station Road, Grove
 Existing Business Premises around Didcot Power Station (not including vacant surplus land)
 Milton Park Site
 Harwell Campus

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

Supporting economic prosperity

5.67 The Science Vale area spans from Didcot in the east to Wantage and Grove in the west and includes the Science Centre at Culham within South Oxfordshire. Vale of White Horse District Council is committed to the future growth and development of the Science Vale area, which has been identified as a strategic priority of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)⁵⁹.

5.68 There is an ambitious programme of job creation and growth for the Science Vale area, including the two Enterprise Zone sites at Harwell Campus and Milton Park designated in 2011. It is important this growth is delivered alongside new housing and the provision of appropriate infrastructure to help make the area more self-contained and to achieve a sustainable pattern of development.

5.69 Job growth in this Sub-Area will therefore be focused at the Science Vale sites, which make a nationally significant contribution to the UK economy and provide the area with a positive opportunity for job creation.

5.70 The Harwell Campus and Milton Park sites are both identified as strategic employment sites in **Core Policy 15**, providing a combined total of 156 hectares of available employment land. Other employment sites across the Sub-Area notably include Williams F1 and Grove Technology Park and the former power station at Didcot.

5.71 A Local Development Order has been adopted for Milton Park, which simplifies the planning process at the site for a period of 15 years. A Local Development Order may also be appropriate for the Harwell Campus; the Council will work with partners to ensure appropriate future planning for the development of this site.

5.72 As part of delivering this growth, a key challenge is ensuring that the area remains attractive for private sector investment. A number of projects to enable the continuing attractiveness of the area have already been funded and some have already been delivered. For example, a Science Vale Broadband project will secure superfast broadband to the Enterprise Zone, providing market advantage and ensuring occupants of the Zone are fully digitally enabled. The electrification and signalling of the Great Western main line and improvements to Didcot Parkway Station Interchange will further enhance the accessibility of the Science Vale area by rail.

5.73 A key challenge to the continued attractiveness of this rapidly expanding area is the capacity of the local road network and a number of improvements have been identified in the Science Vale Area Strategy⁶⁰. These are outlined in the

‘Supporting sustainable transport and accessibility’ section of this Sub-Area Strategy.

Didcot A Power Station

5.74 The redevelopment of the Didcot A Power Station site provides the area with an opportunity for the regeneration of around 47 hectares of brownfield land⁶¹ and the site will be instrumental in the future place shaping of Didcot (**Figure 5.5**).

5.75 The provision of the Science Bridge, a new bridge over the railway at the Didcot A power station site, aims to help reduce congestion on the A4130 through Didcot and reduce severance caused by the railway line. The new bridge will also help to create direct connections with the new housing developments of Great Western Park and Valley Park to the south of the site.

⁵⁹ Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Study (SCOTS) final report, 2008

⁶⁰ Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 3, 2011-2030

⁶¹ The south eastern corner of the site lies within the administrative boundary of South Oxfordshire District Council

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

5.76 The Employment Land Review⁶² highlighted that part of the Didcot A Power Station site (29 hectares; refer to **Core Policy 6**) should be safeguarded for employment uses. This is to ensure the district can provide sufficient employment to deliver new jobs alongside new housing in line with forecast population growth up to 2031⁶³.

5.77 The distribution of the employment and other potential uses across the site, as identified in **Core Policy 16**, will need to be carefully considered through a detailed masterplanning process. Development proposals will need to reflect the aspirations for Didcot as a whole. Achieving a high quality development with active frontages will be important, particularly due to the site's location on what will become a key access route into the town.

5.78 Part of the site is located within South Oxfordshire District and so it is important that development proposals are considered jointly with both local authorities. The Local Plan 2031 Part 2 will set out more detail to help inform the master planning of the site.



⁶² Employment Land Review Update Addendum (July 2014)
⁶³ Employment Land Review Update Addendum (July 2014) Page 10



Core Policy 16: Didcot A Power Station

The Council supports the redevelopment of the Didcot A site to provide a high quality mixed-use development. The site will continue to be reserved for a range of uses, particularly employment (B1, B2 and B8). Other acceptable uses for the site include, but are not limited to, residential (C1, C2 and C3), ancillary retail, an element of bulky goods retail, leisure (D2) and community uses. Any proposed uses for the site must have regard to relevant policies contained within South Oxfordshire District Council's Adopted Core Strategy.

Proposals for retail development that exceed 500 square metres gross retail floorspace will need to be subject to a retail impact assessment to demonstrate there would be no adverse impacts on the vitality and viability on nearby centres.

The mix of these uses will need to reflect demand, suitability of the site and any transport implications to be identified by a detailed transport assessment with appropriate mitigation provided. Any development will need to be appropriate to the site's location adjacent to Didcot B Power Station.

These uses need to be carefully considered in the masterplanning process to ensure that the site incorporates the following key design principles:

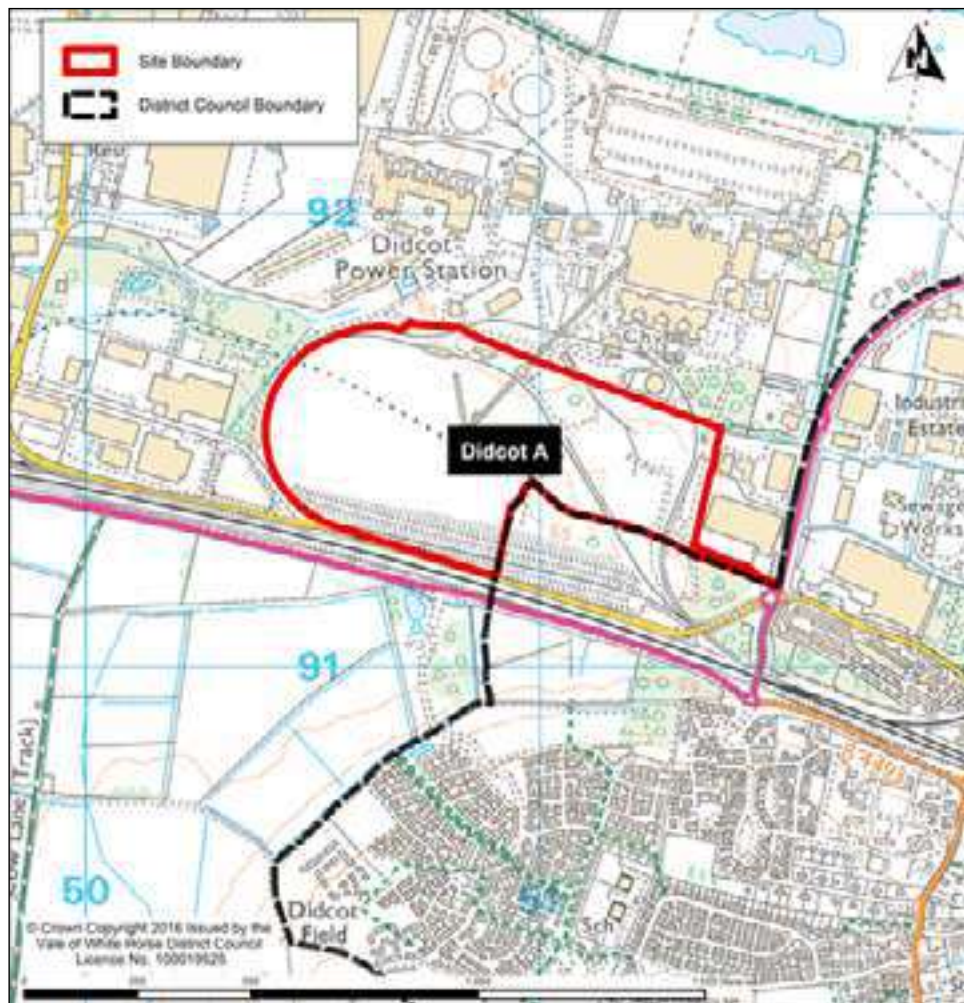
- The creation of a mixed-use local centre forming a high street and active frontages on the main routes through the site;
- Strong connectivity with Didcot town centre, Milton Park and Valley Park;
- Design across the site must have regard to sensitive views from elevated positions towards (but not limited to) residential amenity space, the treatment of facades and rooftops of prominent buildings, and reducing the visual impact of car parks;
- Any residential development (C2 and C3) to be situated towards the south of the site and separate from the movement of heavy goods vehicles along key transport corridors; and
- Integrated SUDS and natural landscape features throughout the site.

The proposed route of the new Science Bridge and A4130 re-routing is safeguarded. Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of this highway infrastructure in accordance with **Core Policy 17**.

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

Figure 5.5: Didcot A Power Station Site



5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

Science Vale

5.79 The Science Vale area is a nationally and internationally significant location for research and innovation and is the focus for large-scale expansion. The area is predominately located within the South East Vale Sub-Area and this is where we are focusing most of our future development. As outlined above, the area is home to the largest of our significant employment sites, and is where the largest number of our new jobs will be created.

5.80 The area extends into South Oxfordshire and it is important we plan effectively across our district boundaries to ensure the coordinated delivery of new infrastructure, services and facilities.

5.81 The town boundary of Didcot is located within our neighbouring district of South Oxfordshire and adjoins parts of the Vale to the north and west. The Vale parishes

of Appleford-on-Thames, Sutton Courtenay and Harwell all have borders with Didcot. Some of these parishes house the important employment land to the west of Didcot, including the Didcot A Power Station and Milton Park sites.

5.82 Parts of Harwell and Milton parishes have been identified for future housing, which although located within the Vale, clearly relate to Didcot. As a larger settlement and service centre, Didcot will provide many important services and facilities for the new development, including for retail and leisure.

5.83 Didcot is identified as a location for strategic growth within the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, which allocates 6,300 homes within South Oxfordshire at Didcot⁶⁴. The Core Strategy also identifies the need for significant regeneration and outlines proposals for improvements to the central area of the town, the Orchard Centre and the railway station.

5.84 Overall there is significant change proposed around Didcot, in both the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Districts, which includes housing, employment and large infrastructure projects. There is also significant change proposed across other parts of the Science Vale area, as described in the rest of our South East Vale Sub-Area Strategy.

5.85 The Didcot area forms part of Science Vale and has been designated by central government as a Garden Town. To ensure our aspiration for this area of change is met (refer to **Figure 2.2**), this will be considered further through the Local Plan Part 2, which will provide additional focus on delivery and implementation and on successful place making.



⁶⁴ South Oxfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, December 2012, available at: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/core-strategy/adopted-core-strategy>

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

Meeting the needs for retailing

5.86 The main retail facilities in the Wantage and Grove area are provided by Wantage town centre. Large improvements were delivered to the retail offer in Wantage in 2007 when a major food store and several large non-food (comparison) stores were built, just to the north of the town centre. These new stores successfully complement the historic Market Square, which includes a number of attractive historic buildings.

5.87 Wantage is one of the main shopping and commercial centres within the District. The centre provides a reasonable range and mix of national and independent comparison retailers and has a good range and choice of non-retail services. The vitality and viability of Wantage town centre will be maintained and enhanced through the implementation of **Core Policy 32**.

5.88 Grove functions as a small neighbourhood shopping centre with a limited range of non-food (comparison) shops and predominantly independent traders serving day-to-day shopping needs. Grove's role as a Local Service Centre will be supported by **Core Policy 32**. The Local Plan 2011 allocation of 2,500 new homes on the former Grove Airfield site will provide a new local centre, which will help to improve the range of shops available in the village.

5.89 The nearby settlement of Didcot, located in South Oxfordshire, also provides for the shopping needs of residents within the Sub-Area. Furthermore, housing growth in the Vale of White Horse makes a significant contribution to the continued viability and vitality of Didcot Town Centre.

Supporting sustainable transport and accessibility

Delivery of strategic highway infrastructure within the South East Vale Sub-Area

5.90 We are planning to focus most of our development within the South East Vale Sub-Area (around 75 % of the proposed strategic growth). This is because the area is home to the largest of our significant employment sites and where the largest number of new jobs will be created. Locating the majority of the planned housing within this area, also provides the opportunity to promote and deliver sustainable transport options, allowing easy access between homes, employment and facilities.

5.91 Working jointly with key partners, including Oxfordshire County Council, we have investigated the impact of the proposed growth within this area and have identified a significant package of

new infrastructure. This includes new roads and improvements to public transport, to ensure that development is sustainable. The identified package of measures complements and builds upon those already identified in the 'Science Vale Area Strategy' as set out in the Local Transport Plan 3⁶⁵ which was the relevant document up until July 2015.

5.92 The main focus of these improvements is to ensure that there are efficient and effective transport linkages between the major Science Vale employment sites (as well as those within the Science Transit Arc) and the planned housing growth, as well as allowing for strategic public transport and road access to the area. The package includes improvements to the cycle and public transport network within, and to, the area, as well as necessary upgrades to roads and road junctions to allow for growth (**Figures 5.6 a to c**).

65 <http://m.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/roadsandtransport/transportpoliciesandplans/localtransportplan/ltp3/May2011CompleteApprovedLTP3.pdf>

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

5.93 The measures are consistent with the Local Transport Plan 4 which was approved by Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet in July 2015. Of relevance to Vale of White Horse, Local Transport Plan 4 includes a Science Vale Area Strategy, as well as a Science Transit Strategy and an A420 Strategy. In addition to the highway schemes identified in the LTP4 Science Vale Area Strategy the Local Plan also safeguards land to deliver a West Wantage Link Road (WWLR) connecting the A417 from Mably Way in Wantage to East Challow, a South Abingdon bypass crossing the Thames and connecting with the A415 and some junction improvement schemes. These are safeguarded to ensure their future delivery is not compromised, should they be found to be needed later in the plan period, or beyond.

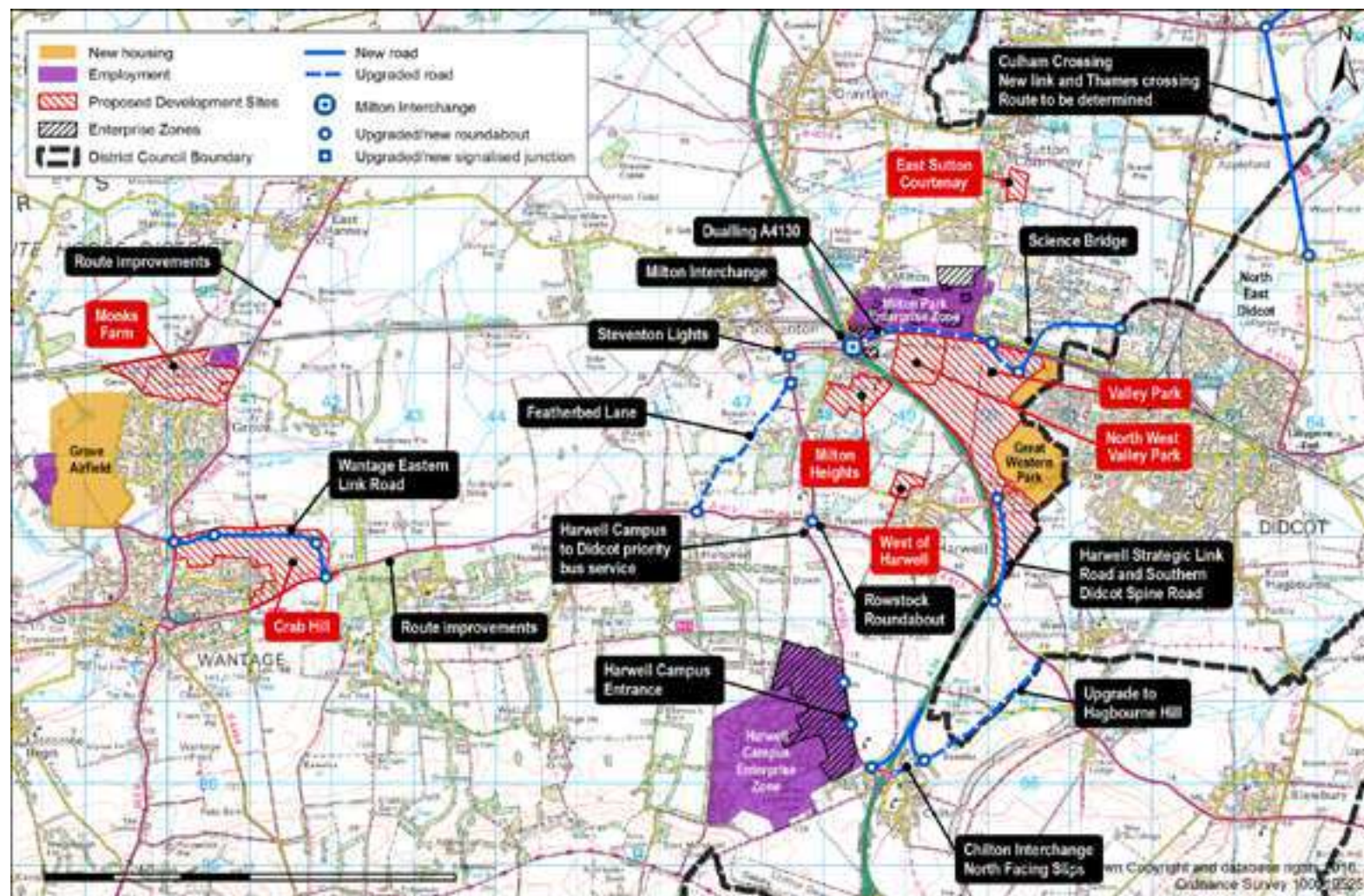


Figure 5.6a: Map showing the proposed road and junction improvements within the Science Vale area

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

Figure 5.6b: Map showing the proposed Science Vale strategic cycle network

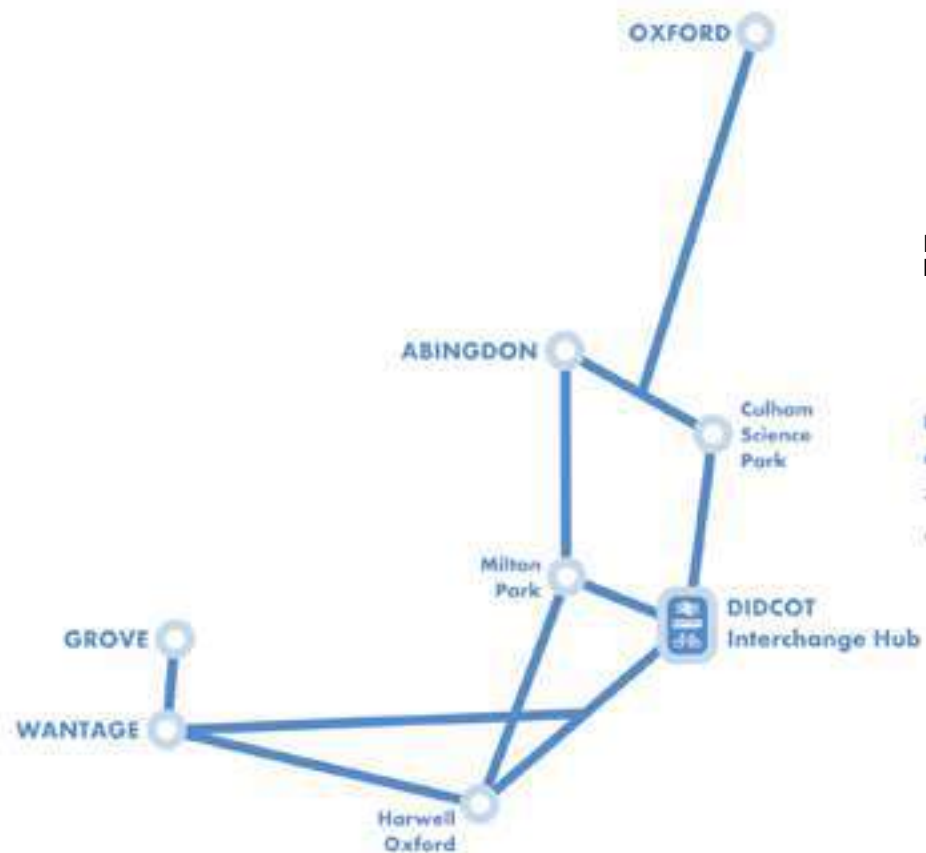
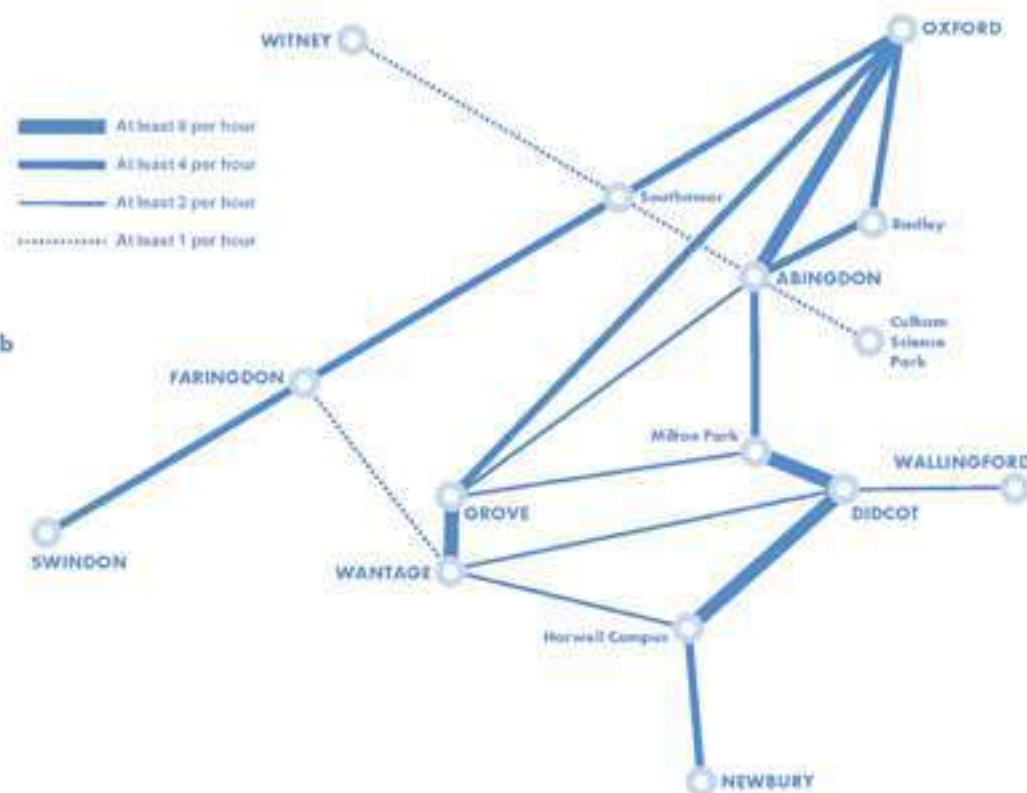


Figure 5.6c: Map showing the proposed improvements to the bus network within the Science Vale area



5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

5.94 The strategic importance of the highway schemes identified in the Science Vale Area Strategy have been acknowledged at a larger than local planning level. Local authorities have been working together through the Oxfordshire Growth Board and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to identify funding mechanisms for this infrastructure to secure its delivery. As part of this work the package has been identified as one of the top priority projects within the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan⁶⁶.

5.95 **Core Policy 7 (Chapter 4)** sets out the principle that all developments will contribute to infrastructure provision as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁶⁷ that supports the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

5.96 Without investment in the identified infrastructure, the growth in the Science Vale area would be unsustainable and be put at risk. For this reason, **Core Policy 17** sets

out the requirement for all strategic growth within the Sub-Area to contribute towards strategic highway infrastructure.

5.97 The housing supply ring-fence (**Core Policy 5 - Chapter 4**) supports our Spatial Strategy to ensure housing is located in the Science Vale area and in close proximity to the projected new jobs. This approach will also focus financial contributions from development to help deliver the essential infrastructure needed to support sustainable development.

5.98 In addition to the infrastructure identified within the Science Vale Area Strategy, there is an existing requirement for a development road to serve the Local Plan 2011 allocation at Grove Airfield. This is known as the Grove Northern Link Road (GNLR) and is required to provide access to the Grove Airfield site from the A338. It does not form part of the Science Vale Area Strategy and will be provided in association

with the Saved Local Plan 2011 allocation at Grove Airfield and the new strategic allocation at Monks Farm (refer to the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix A**).



© Milton Park

⁶⁶ Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (2010) *Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan*, available at: https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/download/501/oxfordshire_local_investment_plan

⁶⁷ <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence>

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

Core Policy 17: Delivery of Strategic Highway Improvements within the South-East Vale Sub-Area

In order to deliver the growth in the South East Vale Sub-Area and the wider Science Vale area, the Science Vale Area Strategy has identified highways infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the planned growth across Science Vale and secure the future economic viability of the area. The package will be further refined through development of the Local Transport Plan 4 being developed by Oxfordshire County Council, and the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

All development within the South East Vale Sub-Area will be required to contribute in accordance with **Core Policy 7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services**. Within the South East Vale Sub-Area this will include contributions towards the infrastructure identified within the Science Vale Area Strategy:

- access to the strategic road network, for example, improvements to the A34 at the Milton and Chilton junctions
- Backhill Lane tunnel (pedestrian and cycle link) and junction on the A4130
- a new link road at north east Wantage between the A338 and A417 (known as the Wantage Eastern Link Road)
- relief to the road network at Rowstock and Harwell (including an improved junction configuration at Steventon Lights, upgrading Featherbed Lane and Hagbourne Hill)

- Science Bridge and A4130 re-routing through the Didcot A site
- A4130 dualling between Milton Interchange and Science Bridge
- a new Harwell Link Road between the B4493 and A417 and Southern Didcot Spine Road
- a new strategic road connection between the A415 east of Abingdon-on-Thames and the A4130 north of Didcot, including a new crossing of the River Thames
- route improvements to the A417 between Wantage and Blewbury
- improvement of the strategic cycle network
- improvement to the bus network, particularly between the strategic housing and employment growth, including a priority bus system between Harwell Campus and Didcot
- a West Wantage Relief Road.

5 Sub-Area Strategies

South East Vale

Safeguarding of land for strategic highway improvements within the South East Vale Sub-Area

5.99 The planning and funding of transport infrastructure can take a long time to prepare and it is therefore important that our plans are not compromised by inappropriate development occurring in the interim. **Core Policy 18** seeks to prevent development that may prejudice the delivery of the required schemes identified in the Science Vale Area Strategy.



Core Policy 18: Safeguarding of Land for Transport Schemes in the South East Vale Sub-Area

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of the identified transport schemes listed by **Core Policies 17 and 19**.

Any proposals for development that may reasonably be considered to impact the delivery of the identified transport schemes (as shown by the maps in Appendix E and the Adopted Policies Map)* should demonstrate the proposal would not harm their delivery.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of the transport schemes listed.

New development in these areas should be carefully designed having regard to matters such as building layout, noise insulation, landscaping, the historic environment and means of access. Where appropriate, further detail for these schemes will be set out in Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

* the area shown on the Adopted Policies Map illustrates where **Core Policy 18** will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the transport schemes, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council and other relevant parties.

Rail services

Didcot

5.100 The Council is working with Oxfordshire County Council and other partners to examine how the rail network can be accessed more effectively and to deliver improvements to facilities at stations.

5.101 Whilst located within South Oxfordshire, Didcot Station is nonetheless an important transport hub for Vale residents, particularly for those commuting or travelling outside of the district and functions as an important gateway for Science Vale. For these reasons, Didcot Station is the focus for investment that will lead to a step change in the station's capacity for rail services, the delivery of an integrated transport hub with facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users.

6 District Wide Policies

Supporting economic prosperity

6.27 The Spatial Strategy set out in **Chapter 4** seeks to support economic prosperity in the Vale by focusing sustainable growth in the Science Vale area. The Spatial Strategy also seeks to reinforce the service centre roles of the main settlements across the district, including by directing new shops and facilities towards these settlements, and to promote thriving villages and rural communities.

6.28 The policies in this section complement the policies included in **Chapters 4 and 5** by setting out policies that will apply across the whole district to assist decision making and to support the delivery of our Strategic Objectives. They will help to support a strong and sustainable economy within the Vale's towns and rural areas and to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the Vale's town centres and local shopping centres to strengthen their service centre roles.

6.29 Any site or area specific policies are included in our Sub-Area Strategies (**Chapter 5**). This section sets out policies that apply across the district, these are:

- **Core Policy 28: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites** – which sets out the Council's approach to assessing proposals for employment on sites not already allocated.
- **Core Policy 29: Change of Use of Existing Employment Land and Premises** – which sets out the Council's approach to assessing proposals for change of use.
- **Core Policy 30: Further and Higher Education** – which seeks to support enhanced provision to enhance access to skills across the district.
- **Core Policy 31: Development to Support the Visitor Economy** – which seeks to support the visitor and tourism sector across the district.
- **Core Policy 32: Retail Development and other Main Town Centre Uses** – which sets out the Council's approach to

determining proposals for retail and town centre uses.



6 District Wide Policies

› New employment development on unallocated sites

6.30 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 sets out employment allocations within **Core Policy 6**. There is a strong focus on the Science Vale area, with a total of 157 hectares allocated to Milton Park and Harwell Campus, and 29 hectares to be provided at the Didcot A Power Station site. **Core Policy 28** complements these allocations by supporting appropriate B-Class employment development on unallocated sites across the district.

6.31 In the rural areas, outside the Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger and Smaller Villages, new employment activities can be accommodated with least impact on the landscape through the re-use, conversion or adaptation of suitable existing buildings. However, there is some flexibility for new employment buildings to come forward in the rural areas if there are no suitable existing buildings available for re-use, providing that the proposals meet the other criteria set out in the policy.

› Core Policy 28: New Employment Development on Unallocated Sites

Proposals for new employment development (Use Classes B1, B2 or B8) will be supported on unallocated sites in or on the edge of, the built up area of Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger and Smaller Villages provided that the benefits are not outweighed by any harmful impacts, taking into account the following:

- i. the effect on the amenity of nearby residents and occupiers
- ii. the provision of safe site access for pedestrians and cyclists and for all types of vehicles likely to visit the sites, and measures to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport where possible, and
- iii. the scale, nature and appearance of the employment development and its relationship with the local townscape and/or landscape character

In the rural areas the re-use, conversion or adaptation of suitable existing buildings for employment will also be supported subject to criteria (i)-(iii) where applicable. Other rural proposals will be supported, provided that, in addition to criteria (i)-(iii) where applicable:

- iv. the proposal cannot reasonably be accommodated on employment land identified as vacant or developable, and
- v. it can be demonstrated that the proposal will benefit the local economy and will not undermine the delivery of the strategic employment allocations.

6 District Wide Policies

Change of use of existing employment land and premises

6.32 In addition to supporting appropriate new employment development, there is also a need to protect important existing employment sites in the Vale. This will help ensure the overall employment provision is increased over the Local Plan 2031 period. The Government has introduced new permitted development rights that impact upon existing employment uses in the district⁸². Vale of White Horse District Council will continue to monitor the impacts of these rights on the district. Should we consider them to potentially conflict with our Spatial Strategy, we will seek an Article 4 direction to maintain control of our strategic employment sites. **Core Policy 29** will apply to all proposals for changes of use of existing employment land and premises that are not covered by the new permitted development rights.

6.33 There are a number of key existing strategic employment sites, at the main settlements and in the Science Vale area, where retention of the existing employment uses will be particularly important to help deliver our overall Spatial Strategy. These strategic employment sites are listed in the Sub-Area Strategies in **Chapter 5**. **Core Policy 29** sets out the Council's intention to safeguard land and premises on these existing sites and on sites allocated for new employment development (also listed in the Sub-Area Strategies in **Chapter 5**), for employment uses.

6.34 There is an adopted Local Development Order (LDO) that covers the Milton Park site⁸³ for a period of 15 years from December 2012. The LDO permits an element of non-B class employment generating uses (specifically car dealership and private healthcare uses) and also allows for some other uses that will help support the sustainability and viability of the business park, such

as small-scale shops and recreation facilities. **Core Policy 29** will apply to any applications for non B-class uses at Milton Park which are not permitted by the LDO.

6.35 There are also a number of rural employment sites that make an important contribution to the local economy and provide employment opportunities in rural locations across the district. These rural multi-user sites and large campus style sites (listed in **Appendix D**) are identified in the Local Plan 2011 and will be reviewed through the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.

6.36 Proposals for alternative uses on these rural employment sites and other employment land and premises in the district will need to demonstrate that at least one of the criteria set out in **Core Policy 29** will be met.

6.37 In seeking to demonstrate that a site has no reasonable

prospect of being used for employment purposes, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the site is no longer viable for its present, or any other realistic and suitable, employment use. They must demonstrate that the site has remained un-sold or un-let for at least 12 months. In addition, applicants will need to provide evidence relating to the marketing of the site for its present use for a minimum period of 12 months up to the date at which the planning application was lodged. This should demonstrate that despite genuine and sustained attempts to sell or let a site on reasonable terms for employment use, they have failed to do so.

⁸² <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/commonprojects/changeofuse/>

⁸³ Milton Park Local Development Order, December 2012, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/milton-park-local-development-order>

6 District Wide Policies

minimise the identified impacts. Where infrastructure is funded by development, we will seek the timely provision of infrastructure to ensure any short term impacts are within acceptable limits before they improve. The proposals include:

- the delivery of a comprehensive package of new highway infrastructure
- significant improvements to public transport and measures to encourage sustainable travel choices, and
- requiring Transport Assessments and Travel Plans to accompany planning applications for any major development⁹¹ to ensure any local impacts are successfully mitigated.

6.62 Our main proposals for improving the transport network are located within the Science Vale area because this is where around 75 % of our strategic housing growth is located. This is explained in more detail in the South East Vale Sub-Area Strategy (see also **Figure 5.6a**).

6.63 However, the plan also proposes improvements to the highway network across the other parts of the district to ensure development in our other Sub-Areas is sustainable and to minimise any impacts on the highway network. These are set out in the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area and Western Vale Sub-Area Strategies.

6.64 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) published alongside this strategy sets out the strategic transport measures that are planned or required to accommodate proposed development in the plan⁹². The IDP is a live document that will be updated as further requirements emerge and where additional resources are secured through the Local Plan 2031 and Local Transport Plan processes.

6.65 Vale of White Horse District Council, working with Oxfordshire County Council, has had some



Core Policy 33: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

The Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to:

- actively seek to ensure that the impacts of new development on the strategic and local road network are minimised
- ensure that developments are designed in a way to promote sustainable transport access both within new sites, and linking with surrounding facilities and employment
- support measures identified in the Local Transport Plan for the district, including within the relevant local area strategies
- support improvements for accessing Oxford
- ensure that transport improvements are designed to minimise any effects on the amenities, character and special qualities of the surrounding area, and
- promote and support improvements to the transport network that increase safety, improve air quality and/or make our towns and villages more attractive.

success in securing significant external funding towards strategic highway infrastructure (£26.1 million as at Sept 2014). The funds include monies contributed from the Oxfordshire and Oxford City Deal and Local Growth Fund, in addition to a commitment from the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to contribute £40 million Enterprise Zone Business Rate

income towards critical new highway infrastructure.

6.66 **Core Policy 33** sets out the Council's commitment to continue working with Oxfordshire County Council to promote sustainable transport and accessibility, for example, by supporting measures identified in the up-to-date Local Transport Plan.

⁹¹ Refer to Oxfordshire County Council Guidance for New Developments: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans (March 2014). <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/transport-new-developments>

⁹² www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

6 District Wide Policies

Public transport, cycling and walking

6.73 New development should be designed to positively promote the use of public transport, walking, cycling and efficient car use and the location of development is therefore essential to encourage their use. However, this approach should also be complemented with the provision of new services and facilities.

6.74 For this reason, a package of improvements is proposed to upgrade existing public transport services, particularly between key routes, and to introduce new services to ensure the proposed housing growth is connected by public transport. **Figure 5.6c** shows the proposed new bus routes within the district.

6.75 However, the rural nature of the district does mean that some residents will continue to be dependent on car travel, for some or all of their journeys, and so we will

also support improvements to travel choices in rural areas.

6.76 Transport Assessments are required to support any planning application for major development⁹⁴. These will help us to determine the precise nature of local impacts associated with individual proposals and identify appropriate mitigation measures to compensate for such impacts. Where off-site mitigation is identified, the developments that result in the need for the mitigation will be required to make financial contributions through the appropriate mechanism. These include, for example, Section 106 and Section 278 agreements. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulation 123 list will contain some highway infrastructure projects to be funded by use of the levy.

6.77 Travel Plans will also be required for major development, to encourage the use of sustainable forms of travel⁹⁵. These plans should



Core Policy 35: Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking

The Council will work with Oxfordshire County Council and others to:

- i. encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and support measures that enable a modal shift to public transport, cycling and walking in the district
- ii. ensure new development is located close to, or along, existing strategic public transport corridors, where bus services can then be strengthened in response to increases in demand for travel
- iii. ensure that new development is designed to encourage walking as the preferred means of transport, not only within the development, but also to nearby facilities and transport hubs
- iv. ensure that new development encourages and enables cycling not only through the internal design of the site, but also through the provision of cycle friendly infrastructure to link the new residents with nearby services, employment areas, educational facilities and public transport hubs where interchange can be provided for longer distance travel
- v. seek to support the provision of new cycling routes where the proposals are consistent with the other policies of this plan
- vi. ensure proposals for major development* are supported by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council guidance**, and
- vii. ensure adequate parking is delivered on new developments in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's published standards***.

* as defined by Development Management Procedure Order 2010

** Transport for new developments (Oxfordshire County Council)

*** Parking standards for new developments (Oxfordshire County Council)

94 As defined by Development Management Procedure Order 2010

95 Refer to Oxfordshire County Council Guidance for New Developments: Transport Assessments and Travel Plan (March 2014).
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/transport-new-developments>

6 District Wide Policies

Design

6.85 The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment⁹⁷. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making better places to live and work. New development should create a sense of place and distinct character where people will feel safe and be proud to live and work. Design quality and the historic environment are linked because the historic environment often includes characteristics we associate with high standards of design quality.

6.86 The Council has prepared a comprehensive Design Guide to support the design policies set out in the Local Plan 2031 (**Core Policies 37 and 38**). The Design Guide has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that ensures new development

is provided to the high quality standards that are appropriate for the Vale. **Core Policy 37** and the SPD will apply to all development in the district, although not all of the requirements will apply in every case.

6.87 The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 makes provision for significant strategic growth, including a number of major urban extensions to our existing towns and villages. It is important the new developments are places where people will want to live in, and that new buildings also make a positive contribution to established settlements and the local environment.

6.88 The demonstration of good urban design principles through a masterplan approach for strategic and major applications⁹⁸ is required by **Core Policy 38**. The masterplan should set out the strategy for new development to help clarify site expectations, improve collaboration between stakeholders and should be

prepared in accordance with the Site Development Templates (**Appendix A**). This approach should also optimise the potential of the site to:

- create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including open and other public spaces as part of developments)
- support existing services and amenities and facilitate delivery of housing, and
- tie the design process into the planning process by setting an overarching framework to achieve a cohesive development that integrates with the existing settlement.

6.89 The masterplans should be produced in consultation between Vale of White Horse District Council, the community and other stakeholders where appropriate (for example, Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council) and may be subject to design review. The information

provided should be proportionate to the scale, complexity and location of the application⁹⁹. Applicants are recommended to contact the Local Planning Authority at an early stage to determine the extent of information required.

⁹⁷ NPPF, paragraph 56

⁹⁸ As defined by the Development Management Procedure Order 2010

⁹⁹ Additional design policies may be set out within Local Plan Part 2 for sites within this area

6 District Wide Policies



Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness

All proposals for new development will be required to be of high quality design that:

- i. responds positively to the site and its surroundings, cultural diversity and history, conserves and enhances historic character and reinforces local identity or establishes a distinct identity whilst not preventing innovative responses to context
- ii. creates a distinctive sense of place through high quality townscape and landscaping that physically and visually integrates with its surroundings
- iii. provides a clear and permeable structure of streets, routes and spaces that are legible and easy to navigate through because of the use of street typology, views, landmarks, public art and focal points
- iv. is well connected to provide safe and convenient ease of movement by all users, ensuring that the needs of vehicular traffic does not dominate at the expense of other modes of transport, including pedestrians and cyclists, or undermine the resulting quality of places
- v. incorporates and/or links to high quality Green Infrastructure and landscaping to enhance biodiversity and meet recreational needs, including Public Rights of Way
- vi. is built to last, functions well and is flexible to changing requirements of occupants and other circumstances
- vii. addresses the needs of all in society by incorporating mixed uses and facilities as appropriate with good access to public transport and a wide range of house types and tenures
- viii. is visually attractive and the scale, height, density, grain, massing, type, details and materials are appropriate for the site and surrounding area
- ix. creates safe communities and reduces the likelihood and fear of crime
- x. secures a high quality public realm with well managed and maintained public areas that are overlooked to promote greater community safety, with clearly defined private spaces
- xi. ensures a sufficient level of well-integrated car and bicycle parking and external storage, and
- xii. is sustainable and resilient to climate change by taking into account landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption and mitigate water run-off and flood risks.

6 District Wide Policies

Flood Risk

6.103 **Core Policy 42** seeks to ensure that development provides appropriate measures for the management of surface water as an essential element of reducing future flood risk to both the site and its surroundings. Sustainable drainage methods, such as green roofs, ponds and permeable surfaces, will be encouraged, where technically possible. The drainage elements of new development must be designed to the principles set out in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010¹⁰⁶ and associated relevant design standards. Further information on sustainable drainage systems can be found in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)¹⁰⁷ and from Oxfordshire County Council, who are the lead flood authority for Oxfordshire. Sustainable drainage systems should seek to enhance water quality and biodiversity in line with The Water Framework Directive (WFD)¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2003/3242/contents/made>



Core Policy 42: Flood Risk

The risk and impact of flooding will be minimised through:

- i. directing new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding
- ii. ensuring that all new development addresses the effective management of all sources of flood risk
- iii. ensuring that development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, and
- iv. ensuring wider environmental benefits of development in relation to flood risk.

The suitability of development proposed in flood zones will be strictly assessed using the Sequential Test, and, where necessary, the Exceptions Test. A sequential approach should be used at site level.

A site-specific flood risk assessment will be required for all developments of 1 hectare and greater in Flood Zone 1 and, for all proposals for new development, including minor development and change of use in Flood Zone 2 and 3 and, in Critical Drainage Areas, and also where proposed development or a change

of use to a more vulnerable class that may be subject to other forms of flooding. Appropriate mitigation and management measures will be required to be implemented.

All development proposals must be assessed against the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Oxfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to address locally significant flooding. Appropriate mitigation and management measures must be implemented.

All development will be required to provide a drainage strategy. Developments will be expected to incorporate sustainable drainage systems and ensure that run-off rates are attenuated to greenfield run-off rates. Higher rates would need to be justified and the risks quantified. Developers should strive to reduce run-off rates for existing developed sites.

Sustainable drainage systems should seek to enhance water quality and biodiversity in line with the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

6 District Wide Policies

Efficient Use of Natural Resources

6.104 National planning policy underlines the importance of prudent use of natural resources, from using land effectively to encouraging the use of renewable resources. **Core Policy 43** incorporates all elements of natural resources, including land, water and air quality, to ensure they are protected from decline.

6.105 National policy states that policies should take account of the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. There are three Air Quality Management Areas designated in the Vale. These are:

- those parts of Botley closest to the A34 have been declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to the pollution generated by the heavy volume of traffic. The

Council will continue to monitor levels of nitrogen dioxide in this area

- central Abingdon-on-Thames was designated as an AQMA for nitrogen dioxide in 2006 and an Action Plan was approved in 2009. Abingdon's Integrated Transport Strategy (AbITS) was subsequently put in place to alter the flow of traffic within the town centre. Pollution levels in the town will continue to be monitored, and
- an AQMA was designated in Marcham in 2005 due to a highly constrained road layout and resultant traffic congestion and nitrogen dioxide pollution. The Council will continue to monitor pollution levels and work with stakeholders to identify a long-term solution.

6.106 The Water Framework Directive¹⁰⁹ requires that there is no deterioration in the status of water bodies and that they all achieve good ecological status by 2027. The

Thames River Basin Management Plan¹¹⁰ sets out actions to help meet this obligation. Policies on Green Infrastructure, biodiversity and sustainable construction will also assist in achieving this objective by ensuring that surface water run-off is appropriately controlled.

6.107 Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for determining planning applications for minerals and waste development and producing the Minerals and Waste Local Plan¹¹¹, which will safeguard mineral resources, aggregate rail depots, sites for recycled and secondary aggregate supply, other minerals infrastructure sites and sites for waste management. These areas will be marked on this Plan's Adopted Policies Map for reference in future, following adoption by the County Council. Should the district receive a planning application in any of these areas, the County Council will be consulted on the development. Applicants are advised to review the

Minerals and Waste Local Plan prior to making a planning application.

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2003/3242/contents/made>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thames-river-basin-management-plan>

¹¹¹ <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/minerals-and-waste-core-strategy>

6 District Wide Policies



Core Policy 43: Natural Resources

The Council encourages developers to make provision for the effective use of natural resources where applicable, including:

- i. minimising waste and making adequate provision for the recycling of waste on site
- ii. using recycled and energy efficient materials
- iii. maximising passive solar heating, lighting, natural ventilation, energy and water efficiency and re-use of materials
- iv. making efficient use of water, for example through rainwater harvesting and grey water
- v. causing no deterioration in, and where possible, achieving improvements in water quality
- vi. takes account of, and if located within an AQMA, is consistent with, the Council's Air Quality Action Plan
- vii. ensuring that the land is of a suitable quality for development and that remediation of contaminated land is undertaken where necessary
- viii. avoiding the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, unless it is demonstrated to be the most sustainable choice from reasonable alternatives, by first using areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality, and
- ix. re-using previously developed land, provided it is not of high environmental value.

Landscape

6.108 The Vale of White Horse occupies an attractive part of the Upper Thames Valley. From south to north the landscape features range from the rolling sweep of the chalk downs (designated as part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)), across the wide vistas of the lowland clay vale, then rising to the limestone Corallian ridge, before dropping to the floodplain of the River Thames.

6.109 The distinctive landscapes within the district have been classified by Natural England as falling within three distinct National Character Areas:

- NCA 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales
- NCA 109 Midvale Ridge
- NCA 116 Berkshire and Marlborough Downs

6.110 Within these national areas there are a number of smaller and

more detailed landscapes that add to and enhance the local landscape character of the district.

6.111 The conservation of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside is a core planning principle of the NPPF, stating that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.

6.112 Landscape encompasses all outdoor space. There are pressures on these landscapes as a result of changes in agricultural practice and the impact of new development for housing and employment. The distinctive landscape of the Vale needs to be enhanced and protected for the future. There will be opportunities to enhance the landscape particularly in growth areas around Science Vale and elsewhere in the district and the Green Infrastructure Strategy will identify further opportunities for landscape enhancement within the district.

6 District Wide Policies

6.113 **Core Policy 44** will be applied using the most up-to-date legislation¹¹² and landscape studies available from Natural England, the District and County Council, and from the North Wessex Downs AONB Board. These include: National Character Areas; Vale of White Horse Landscape Strategy 2006; the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study; Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation; Oxford View Cones Study 2015 produced by Oxford City Council in association with Oxford Preservation Trust and Historic England; and documents produced by the North Wessex Downs AONB Board such as the AONB Landscape Character Assessment. Reference should also be made to the Council's Design Guide SPD.

6.114 Other studies may be forthcoming to support more detailed landscape policies in the Local Plan 2031 Part 2. The Council will also examine the necessity for an update to the district wide Landscape Character Assessment to support the Local Plan 2031 Part 2.



Core Policy 44: Landscape

The key features that contribute to the nature and quality of the Vale of White Horse District's landscape will be protected from harmful development and where possible enhanced, in particular:

- i. features such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and water bodies
- ii. important landscape settings of settlements
- iii. topographical features
- iv. areas or features of cultural and historic value
- v. important views and visually sensitive skylines, and
- vi. tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion.

Where development is acceptable in principle, measures will be sought to integrate it into the landscape character and/or the townscape of the area. Proposals will need to demonstrate how they have responded to the above aspects of landscape character and will be expected to:

- vii. incorporate appropriate landscape proposals that reflect the character of the area through appropriate design and management;
- viii. preserve and promote local distinctiveness and diversity and, where practical, enhance damaged landscape areas.

High priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs AONB and planning decisions will have regard to its setting. Proposals that support the economy and social wellbeing of communities located in the AONB, including affordable housing schemes, will be encouraged, provided they do not conflict with the aims of conservation and enhancement.

¹¹² AONB Management Plan and CROW Act 2000

6 District Wide Policies

Green Infrastructure

6.115 Green Infrastructure relates to the active planning and management of substantial networks of multi-functional open space. Such networks need to be planned and managed to deliver the widest range of linked environmental and social benefits, including conserving and enhancing biodiversity as well as landscape, recreation, water management, and social and cultural benefits to underpin community health and well being.

6.116 The Council has produced a Green Infrastructure Audit that identifies the main Green Infrastructure assets within the Vale and assesses the provision of Green Infrastructure against an adapted version of nationally accepted standards. The Green Infrastructure Audit recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural green space:

- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home

- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home, and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home.

6.117 The Council has commissioned a joint Green Infrastructure Strategy with South Oxfordshire District Council. This strategy will set out the main priorities, policies and standards for the delivery of new Green Infrastructure to meet the identified needs. The Strategy will need to take account of plans already in place to maintain and deliver new Green Infrastructure provision, such as the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, and will also consider whether there are opportunities to enhance access to Green Infrastructure and recreation in the Oxford Green Belt.

6.118 When assessing planning applications, the Council will take into account the findings of the Green Infrastructure Audit, Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Habitat Regulations Assessment

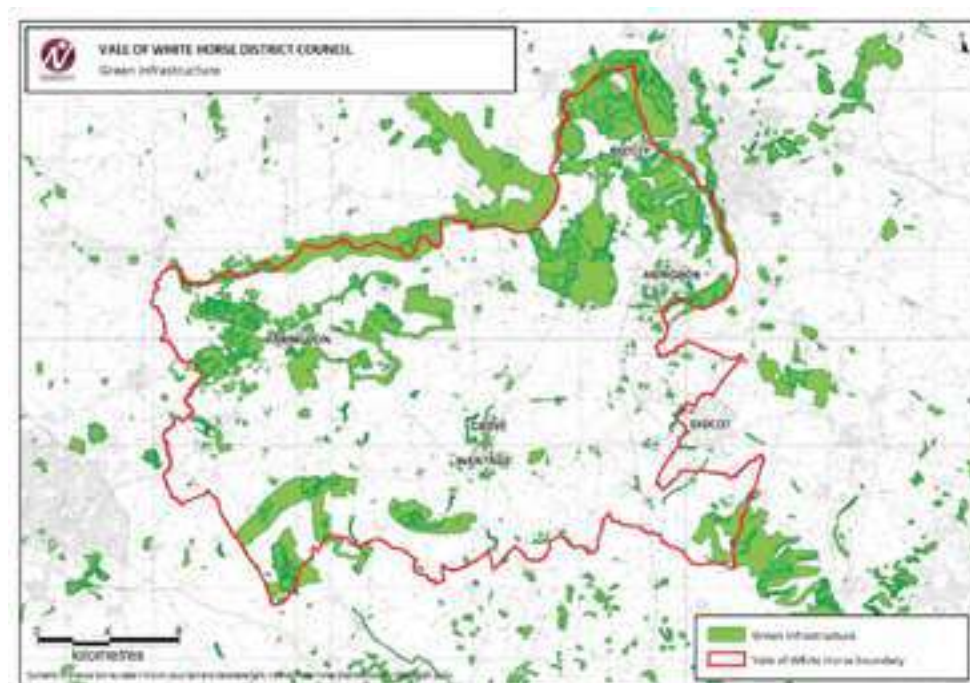


Figure 6.1: Vale of White Horse Green Infrastructure network

(HRA) to define what new Green Infrastructure will be required and how it should be delivered. Where there are justifiable reasons why Green Infrastructure cannot be delivered on site, the Council will seek a financial contribution, which will focus on improvements in Conservation Target Areas¹¹³ and

areas of deficit as outlined in the Green Infrastructure Audit. Where new Green Infrastructure is identified as a mitigation requirement within the Habitats Regulations Assessment this will have to be delivered by the developer to meet the requirements of the HRA.

¹¹³ Conservation Target Areas are ecological networks that promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats and the protection and recovery of populations of priority species. They represent the main components of the ecological networks across Oxfordshire.

6 District Wide Policies



Core Policy 45: Green Infrastructure

A net gain in Green Infrastructure, including biodiversity, will be sought either through on-site provision or off-site contributions and the targeted use of other funding sources. A net loss of Green Infrastructure, including biodiversity, through development proposals, will be resisted.

Proposals for new development must provide adequate Green Infrastructure in line with the Green Infrastructure Strategy. All major applications must be accompanied by a statement demonstrating that they have taken into account the relationship of the proposed development to existing Green Infrastructure and how this will be retained and enhanced. Proposals will be required to contribute to the delivery of new Green Infrastructure and/or the improvement of existing assets including Conservation Target Areas in accordance with the standards in the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Biodiversity

6.119 The district contains a rich variety of semi-natural habitats including woodlands, hedgerows, rivers, streams, and meadows. Together they help secure the survival of many species. There are a number of important nature conservation sites, which are protected at international, national and local level. These include:

- International:
 - Two Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- National:
 - One National Nature Reserve
 - 23 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Local:
 - 84 Local Wildlife Sites*
 - Five Local Nature Reserves
 - Nine Geologically Important Sites

* A current list of Local Wildlife Sites is available on the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre website¹¹⁴. The list is updated periodically so should be referred to for the most up to date list of conservation sites.

6.120 In addition to these sites, there are numerous important natural habitats, including ancient woodlands and habitats of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity (under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act)¹¹⁵. Waterways and river corridors are also an important feature in the district, making a significant contribution to the character, biodiversity and landscape quality. There are also a wide variety of legally protected and priority species resident throughout the Vale.

6.121 Distinctions will be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.

6.122 Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around

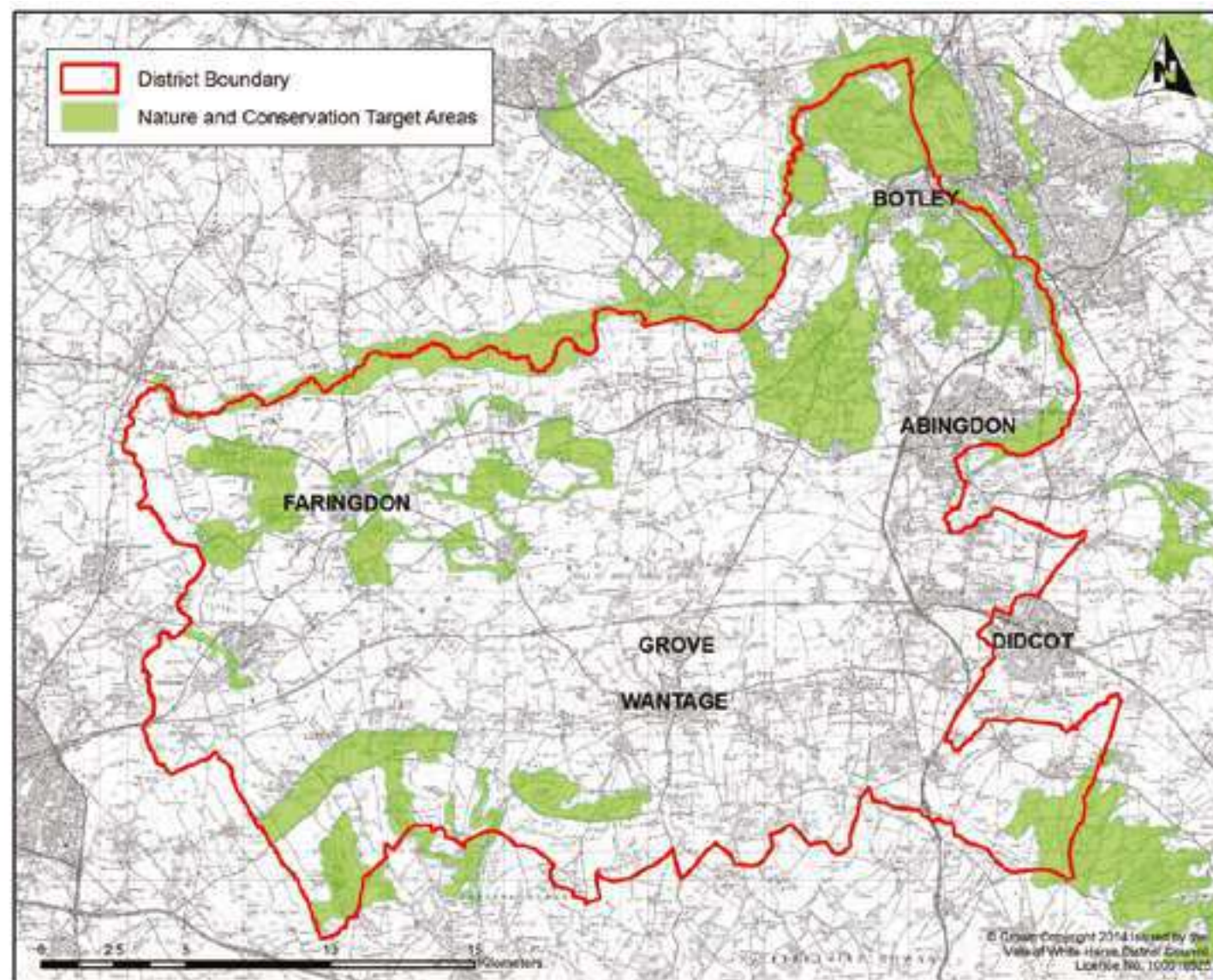
¹¹⁴ <http://www.tverc.org/cms/>

¹¹⁵ Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

6 District Wide Policies

developments will be encouraged. The Vale was the first Council in the UK to use biodiversity offsetting to provide compensation for the impacts of development. Biodiversity offsetting is a mechanism used to secure compensation for the impacts of development for the creation or restoration of important habitats elsewhere. Offsetting is used to ensure that development schemes do not result in a net loss in biodiversity, particularly where it is not possible to avoid or mitigate the impacts of a development proposal on-site. Biodiversity offsetting will be considered as a means of compensating for loss of biodiversity through **Core Policy 46**, but only where avoidance and on-site mitigation have been discounted as options.

Figure 6.2: Vale of White Horse Conservation Target Areas



6 District Wide Policies



Core Policy 46: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity

Development that will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in the district will be permitted. Opportunities for biodiversity gain, including the connection of sites, large-scale habitat restoration, enhancement and habitat re-creation will be actively sought, with a primary focus on delivery in the Conservation Target Areas. A net loss of biodiversity will be avoided.

The highest level of protection will be given to sites and species of international nature conservation importance (Special Areas of Conservation and European Protected Species). Development that is likely to result in a significant effect, either alone or in combination, on such sites and species will need to satisfy the requirements of the Habitat Regulations*.

Development likely to result in the loss, deterioration or harm to habitats or species of importance to biodiversity or of importance for geological conservation interests, either directly or indirectly, will not be permitted unless:

- i. the need for, and benefits of, the development in the proposed location

outweighs the adverse effect on the relevant biodiversity interest;

- ii. it can be demonstrated that it could not reasonably be located on an alternative site that would result in less or no harm to the biodiversity interests; and
- iii. measures can be provided (and are secured through planning conditions or legal agreements), that would avoid, mitigate against or, as a last resort, compensate for, the adverse effects likely to result from development.

The habitats and species of importance to biodiversity and sites of geological interest considered in relation to points i) to iii) comprise:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Local Nature Reserves
- Priority Habitats and species listed in the national and local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Ancient Woodland and veteran trees
- Legally Protected Species
- Locally Important Geological Sites

The level of protection and mitigation should be proportionate to the status of the habitat or species and its importance individually and as part of a wider network.

It is recognised that habitats/areas not considered above (*i.e. Nationally or Locally designated and not priority habitats*) can still have a significant biodiversity value within their local context, particularly where they are situated within a Conservation Target Area and/or they have good potential to be restored to priority habitat status or form/have good potential to form links between priority habitats or act as corridors for priority species. These habitats will be given due weight in the consideration of planning applications. If significant harm to these sites cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts) it will be expected that mitigation will be provided to avoid a net loss in biodiversity or, as a last resort, compensation will be required to offset the impacts and achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

* Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992.



**Vale
of White Horse**
District Council

Adopted
October 2019



Local Plan 2031 Part 2 Detailed Policies and Additional Sites

2

Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Green Belt surrounding Oxford

Overview

The Part 1 plan sets out the Spatial Strategy for the district to help achieve sustainable development. This is referred to as **Building on our Strengths** and helps to shape where new homes will be built, where opportunities to provide new jobs will be created, and where new infrastructure and services will be provided.

The Spatial Strategy has three main strands which seek to:

- focus sustainable growth within the Science Vale area
- reinforce the service centre roles of the main settlements across the district, and
- promote thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character.

The Part 1 plan allocates strategic development sites to fully meet the Vale's own housing requirement up to 2031 (**20,560 homes**).

This chapter sets out the additional housing allocations needed to ensure the agreed quantum of unmet housing for Oxford to be addressed within the Vale is also fully met. This requirement, as agreed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board, is for **2,200 homes** to be delivered within the same period up to 2031, subject to the plan making process.

The agreed quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford to be addressed within the Vale is allocated to the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area. Unmet need in the Vale will be addressed through a combination of strategic sites allocated in the Part 1 plan and the additional sites allocated in the Part 2 plan.

The Part 2 plan also allocates an additional site to deliver 400 homes within the Science Vale area to provide continuing support for economic growth in accordance with the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan, to support the delivery of strategic infrastructure and facilitate comprehensive masterplanning.

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Introduction

2.1. The Local Plan 2031: Part 1 sets out a Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives that establish the direction of travel for future development and investment in the district. They are informed by a detailed understanding of issues and opportunities facing the district and reflect national and local priorities.

2.2. The Part 1 plan also sets out the Spatial Strategy and strategic policies for the district to deliver sustainable development. The strategy, referred to as **Building on our Strengths**, helps to shape where new homes will be built, where opportunities to provide new jobs will be created, and where new infrastructure and services will be provided.

2.3. The Spatial Strategy has three main strands. These seek to:

- focus sustainable growth within the Science Vale area

- reinforce the service centre roles of the main settlements across the district, and
- promote thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character.

2.4. The Spatial Strategy set out in the Part 1 plan makes provision for growth of around 23,000 new jobs, 218 hectares of employment land, and at least 20,560 new homes to be delivered during the plan period from 2011 to 2031.

2.5. As has been explained in Chapter 1, the Part 1 plan addresses housing need arising from the Vale of White Horse District (20,560 homes). The Part 2 plan seeks to address the agreed quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford City to be met within the Vale, which has been identified as 2,200 homes¹⁷.

2.6. The Part 1 plan makes a clear policy commitment for how to plan for

unmet need for Oxford in the Vale. **Core Policy 2** sets a timetable for when this additional housing need will form part of the Vale's housing requirement, subject to the plan making process.

2.7. The Vale of White Horse housing requirement, on adoption of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 2, or two years after adoption of Local Plan 2031: Part 1, whichever is sooner, will be at least **22,760 homes**¹⁸.

2.8. The Part 2 plan therefore allocates additional housing sites to address the agreed quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford to be addressed within the Vale.

2.9. The Part 2 plan also sets out a new policy to support the delivery of the part of Didcot Garden Town that lies within the Vale of White Horse District, as well as continuing to support the focus upon strategic growth across the wider Science Vale

area. In order to support the Science Vale area and the delivery of strategic infrastructure, the plan allocates an additional site for **400 dwellings** within the South-East Vale Sub-Area.

2.10. This chapter sets out the additional sites that are allocated by the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 to complement those set out in the Part 1 plan. The Local Plan 2031 (Parts 1 and 2) seeks to fully meet the objectively assessed need for housing arising from the Vale of White Horse district (**20,560 homes**) and from neighbouring authorities (**2,200 homes**) and seeks to deliver an additional **400 homes** within the South-East Vale Sub-Area. The Part 2 allocations are consistent with the Spatial Strategy set out in the Part 1 plan, in particular by:

- Focusing sustainable growth within the Science Vale area
- Reinforcing the service centre roles of the main settlements across the

¹⁷The Oxfordshire Growth Board signed a Memorandum of Cooperation – 26 September 2016 – which agrees the apportionment of unmet housing need for Oxfordshire; https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/5834/gdl13_-_oxfordshire_growth_board_-_signed_memorandum_of_cooperation ¹⁸The Local Plan 2031: Part 1 was adopted 14/12/2016: on this basis the Vale housing requirement of 22,760 will apply on 14/12/2018, or when the Local Plan 2031: Part 2 is adopted, whichever is sooner. The final housing requirement for the Vale of White Horse, taking into account unmet housing need for Oxford, will ultimately be determined through the plan making process, as set out in Core Policy 2

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

district, and

- Promoting thriving villages and rural communities whilst safeguarding the countryside and village character.

2.11. This chapter also updates selected Core Policies where new information has become available since preparing the Part 1 plan, for example relating to the need for additional safeguarding of land to support the delivery of strategic highway schemes.

Unmet Housing Need for Oxford

Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area

2.12. As has been explained above, Vale of White Horse District Council has worked with the other Oxfordshire authorities, over the past few years, to identify how the unmet housing need for Oxfordshire should be apportioned between those authorities

neighbouring the city of Oxford. This process was administered by the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

2.13. It is important that, in addition to addressing housing need, any additional housing allocations are appropriately located to address both the quantum of unmet need to be met within the Vale, and the district's own housing requirements.

2.14. The Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area is closest to and has the most frequent and reliable public transport linkages to Oxford with the greatest potential for future enhancements and for these reasons, the Vale's agreed quantum of unmet need for Oxford (2,200 dwellings) is allocated to this Sub-Area as set out by **Core Policy 4a: Meeting Our Housing Needs**.

2.15. The Vale is not seeking to ring fence allocations for the purposes of addressing the agreed quantum of Oxford's unmet need to be met within

the Vale. The unmet need is met by a combination of the Part 1 strategic allocations and the Part 2 additional allocations.

2.16. On this basis, the Part 2 plan ensures that at least 2,200 additional dwellings are allocated within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area; and that at least 2,200 dwellings are provided for on sites within this Sub-Area that are suitably close to and accessible to Oxford (**Table 2.1**)¹⁹.

2.17. The Local Plan 2031: Part 1 identified land for strategic housing on a range of sites across the district, including on sites close to, and easily accessible to Oxford. These sites include those located to the north and north-west of Abingdon-on-Thames and at the larger villages of Kennington (within Radley parish) and at Radley. These sites are suitable locations for development in the Vale, with comparatively high levels of services and facilities, good public transport

connectivity with opportunities for improvement and good access to a wide range of employment.

2.18. It is the case that whilst the sites listed above are allocated within the Part 1 plan with the primary intention of meeting the Vale's own objectively assessed need for housing, the sites are also well located to provide for Oxford's unmet housing need. Housing on these sites would be just as much available to those people falling into the category of Oxford's need as to those of the Vale. The Planning Inspector's Report of the Examination into the Part 1 plan states:

"In reality, it would be all but impossible to determine if a potential occupier of this housing (Part 1 allocations) represents a Vale or Oxford housing need"²⁰

2.19. The Planning Inspector's Report of the Examination into the Part 1 plan also confirmed that Oxford City

¹⁹Site Selection Topic Paper (2017), available at: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2

²⁰Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 1 - Inspector's Report (2016), Paragraph 25; available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031-part-1-strategic-sites>

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Council consider that these sites (listed above) are well-located to provide for their own unmet housing needs. In total 1,510²¹ dwellings are allocated in the Part 1 plan on four sites closest to Oxford at Abingdon-on-Thames, Kennington (within Radley Parish) and at Radley.

2.20. The Council has followed a comprehensive approach to site selection, which was consistent to the approach followed to inform the Part 1 plan, and with national guidance²². Over 400 sites were assessed and a refined list of sites were subject to detailed assessment including being informed by comprehensive technical evidence, such as assessing transport impacts, landscape and flood risk.

2.21. The site selection process included considering all potential sites within the Oxford Green Belt and considering the likely impact of development on the Green Belt and has been informed by Sustainability Appraisal. The Part 2 plan represents

the Council's strategy for meeting the plan objectives appropriately, to minimise harmful impacts, such as harm to the Oxford Green Belt and to maximise opportunities for mitigating impacts, such as increasing the use of sustainable modes of travel.

2.22. Dalton Barracks is conveniently located close to Oxford and provides the potential for a high quality, sustainable Garden Village style development to be created, that is easily accessible to Oxford, Abingdon-on-Thames and the surrounding area by public transport, but also includes a comprehensive range of services and facilities on site. Around 1,200 dwellings are allocated at Dalton Barracks within the Part 2 plan. This is discussed in more detail later in this chapter (under Additional Site Allocations and Strategic Policies for the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area).

Table 2.1: Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1 and Part 2 Allocations that are close to and accessible to Oxford.

Site	Allocation
North Abingdon-on-Thames (LPP1 allocation)	950 ^a
North-West Abingdon-on-Thames (LPP1 allocation)	200
North-West Radley (LPP1 allocation)	240
South of Kennington (Radley Parish; LPP1 allocation)	270
Dalton Barracks (LPP2 allocation)	1,200
Total	2,860

^aThe LPP1 allocation for North Abingdon-on-Thames was for around 800 dwellings, however an outline application for up to 950 dwellings received planning permission on 27 October 2017.



²¹The LPP1 allocation for North Abingdon-on-Thames was for around 800 dwellings, however an outline application for up to 950 dwellings received planning permission on 27 October 2017. The strategic allocations within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area set out in the Part 1 Plan contribute towards a provision of 1,660 dwellings

²²Site Selection Topic Paper (2017), available at: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Affordable Housing for Oxford Unmet Need

2.23. In addition to planning for the appropriate housing requirement, it is also important to plan for the appropriate type of dwellings, and to contribute towards the affordable housing needs of Oxford City.

2.24. The Part 1 plan sets out the Vale's approach to affordable housing (**Core Policy 24**). The Council will seek 35 % affordable housing on sites capable of a net gain of eleven dwellings or more^{23a 23b}.

2.25. The allocation of affordable housing to those in need is a matter of housing policy rather than planning policy. Allocations will therefore be made in accordance with an approach to be agreed between Vale of White Horse District Council and Oxford City Councils.

2.26. Vale of White Horse District Council will continue to work positively

with Oxford City Council and other Oxfordshire authorities to plan for housing for Oxfordshire in the longer term. It is anticipated this will include the preparation of an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Oxfordshire. Until the updated Oxfordshire SHMA and Oxford City Local Plan are completed, it will not be possible to determine the precise affordable housing need for Oxford, to be provided for within the Vale of White Horse.

Housing Mix, Tenure and Size for Oxford Unmet Need

2.27. Planning for an appropriate mix of housing types, size and tenure is clearly important. Housing mix is addressed through **Core Policy 22** as set out in the Part 1 plan. This makes provision for a mix to be delivered in accordance with the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and provides flexibility should the Housing Register demonstrate an alternative would be more appropriate.

2.28. The Oxfordshire SHMA takes account of housing mix requirements across each of the Oxfordshire authorities and recommends a mix suitable for both Vale and Oxford City. The SHMA mix favours 3 bedroom properties a little more than the Oxford City evidence suggests (45 % vs. 39 %). This is consistent with the Oxford City 'Preferred Options' Local Plan 2036, which states a need for more 3 bedroom properties, rather than smaller dwellings.

2.29. It is considered that **Core Policy 22** already provides sufficient flexibility to support a housing mix suitable to both Vale and Oxford City. However, the policy also provides sufficient flexibility to support a more bespoke mix on Part 2 allocations should this become necessary.

South East Vale Sub-Area

2.30. The Local Plan Part 1 Inspector also recognised the potential role of housing allocated within the Part 1

plan within the South-East Vale Sub-Area to help meet the unmet need for Oxford, stating, for example:

“Whilst the Abingdon-on-Thames / Oxford Fringe Sub-Area is closer to Oxford, it is true that more than 3,000 dwellings proposed in the South East Vale (the two Valley Park sites) would also be close to Didcot Station with its fast and frequent rail service to Oxford”²⁴.

2.31. It is therefore important that the role of housing located within the South-East Vale is not overlooked, especially given the fast and frequent rail service available from Didcot to Oxford. However, in total, over 7,000 dwellings are provided for within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area, and over 13,000 dwellings are provided for within the South-East Vale Sub-Area. Whilst the plan identifies sites that are demonstrably close to and accessible

^{23a}HDH Planning & Development (2014) Local Plan Viability Study, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031-part-1-strategic-sit-0> ^{23b}The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Core Policy 24: Affordable Housing has since been superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework, published July 2018. The affordable housing policy will now apply to sites of ten dwellings or more – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018) National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 63. ²⁴Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 – Inspector's Report (2016), Paragraph 56: Available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031-part-1-strategic-sites>

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

to Oxford (**Table 2.1**), it is also the case that, in reality, any of the homes allocated across the two Sub-Areas could contribute towards the unmet housing needs of Oxford City, including those located in the Vale to the west of Didcot.

2.32. It is therefore not considered necessary to allocate any additional sites in the Part 2 plan within the South-East Vale Sub-Area to specifically address unmet housing need for Oxford.

Other Housing Needs

2.33. In addition to planning for the quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford to be addressed within the Vale, the Council is also allocating additional housing to help achieve the Council's objective to support the Science Vale area.

2.33. The Science Vale area houses a number of significant employment sites, including the Enterprise Zone sites at Harwell Campus and Milton Park, and forms the southern end of

the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine. Supporting the accelerated delivery of housing within Science Vale is a priority for the Oxfordshire LEP, along with delivering a comprehensive package of strategic infrastructure. Housing and infrastructure delivery will help to unlock the area's potential for economic growth and this forms a key strand of the Council's Spatial Strategy.

2.35. Some of the housing the Council proposed within the Part 1 plan was deleted from the plan during the Examination process and did not form allocations in the adopted plan. The Planning Inspector, when discussing the deletion of these sites from the Part 1 plan, stated in his Interim Report that this:

“Would reduce the potential supply of housing in the South-East Vale and the Council may wish to consider the need to allocate replacement sites in this area through the Part 2 plan”²⁵.

2.36. For these reasons, 400 additional homes are allocated within the South-East Vale Sub-Area and this is discussed in more detail within the following chapter (under Additional Site Allocations and Strategic Policies for the South-East Vale Sub-Area).

2.37. The quantum of housing identified for allocation within the Part 2 plan, as set out within the Part 1 plan (i.e. for 1,000 dwellings) is subsumed by a combination of: updated completions and commitments that have come forward since March 2016; the additional allocations set out in this plan in the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area; and those that complement the Spatial Strategy and support infrastructure delivery (400 dwellings) in the South-East Vale Sub-Area.

2.38. The updated housing supply position for each of the three Sub-Areas is updated in Core Policies 8b, 15b and 20b. The windfall allowance has been updated to reflect up to date evidence on the delivery of small sites in the district since 2011.

2.39. No additional sites are proposed for allocation within the Western Vale Sub-Area, this area does not relate well to either Oxford or Science Vale and the identified housing need for this area is already adequately planned for.

Meeting the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People

2.40. Alongside the preparation of the Part 2 plan, the council produced a joint Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Assessment²⁶ with Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. The new assessment identifies that only one new pitch is required in the later part of the plan period (2027-2031). No allocations for gypsy, traveller and travelling show people are therefore proposed in the Part 2 plan. Applications for new pitches will be considered alongside the requirements of Core Policy 27: Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People.

²⁵Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031: Part 1 - Inspector's Interim Findings (2016), Paragraph 9.12, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031-part-1-strategic-sit-0>
²⁶Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Assessment (June 2017)

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Core Policy 4a: Meeting our Housing Needs

The strategy for meeting the housing target for the Vale of White Horse is set out within **Core Policy 4: Meeting our Housing Needs** (Local Plan 2031: Part 1) and includes details of the strategic allocations necessary to meet this target, along with a policy framework for development.

This policy sets out how the Council will address housing needs arising from elsewhere in the Housing Market Area, expressly the quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford City to be addressed within the Vale of White Horse of 2,200 homes, as agreed at the Oxfordshire Growth Board meeting in September 2016.

The housing target for the Vale of White Horse is for at least 22,760 homes to be delivered in the plan period between 2011 and 2031. 2,252 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations (LPP1 Allocations). 2,420 dwellings will be delivered through additional allocations (LPP2 Allocations). The agreed quantum of unmet housing need for Oxford City to be addressed within the Vale of White Horse of 2,200 dwellings will be provided for through either strategic or additional sites within the Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area*. Additional site allocations also complement those set out within the Part 1 plan to assist with delivering the Spatial Strategy and supporting infrastructure delivery.

Additional dwellings (for example, windfalls) will be delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans or through the Development Management Process. The contribution of all sources of housing supply are shown by the following table, which supersedes the table set out in **Core Policy 4**:

Category		Number of Dwellings
Housing requirement for the full plan period (Apr 2011 to Mar 2031)		22,760
Housing Completions (Apr 2011 to Mar 2018)		6,300
Housing Supply (Apr 2018 to Mar 2031)	Known Commitments	13,387
	Local Plan 2031: Part 1 allocations	2,252 ^a
	Local Plan 2031: Part 2 allocations	2,420
	Windfalls	1,000 ^b
Total Supply (at 31 March 2018)		25,359

* The 2,200 dwellings for Oxford City are to be provided between 2019-2031 for 5YHLS purposes, increasing the annual requirement by 183 per annum for that period.

^a Local Plan 2031: Part 1 allocated 12,495 dwellings. This figure is updated to reflect commitments.

^b Windfall figures are updated to reflect past delivery.

Continued overpage

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies



Core Policy 4a: Meeting our Housing Needs (continued from previous page)

Additional Allocations

In addition to the strategic site allocations set out in **Core Policy 4**, development will be supported at the additional site allocations through a masterplanning process involving the community, local planning authority, developer and other stakeholders, where development meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix A** and are in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following tables show how the level of housing required through additional sites will be distributed:

Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area

Settlement / Parish	Settlement Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
East Hanney	Larger Village	North of East Hanney	80
East Hanney		North-East of East Hanney	50
Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor (Fyfield and Tubney Parish)		East of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor (Fyfield and Tubney Parish)	600
Marcham		South-East of Marcham	90
Shippon	Smaller Village	Dalton Barracks	1,200 ^c
Total			2,020

South-East Vale Sub-Area

Settlement / Parish	Settlement Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Grove	Local Service Centre	North-West of Grove	400 ^d
Total			400

Western Vale Sub-Area

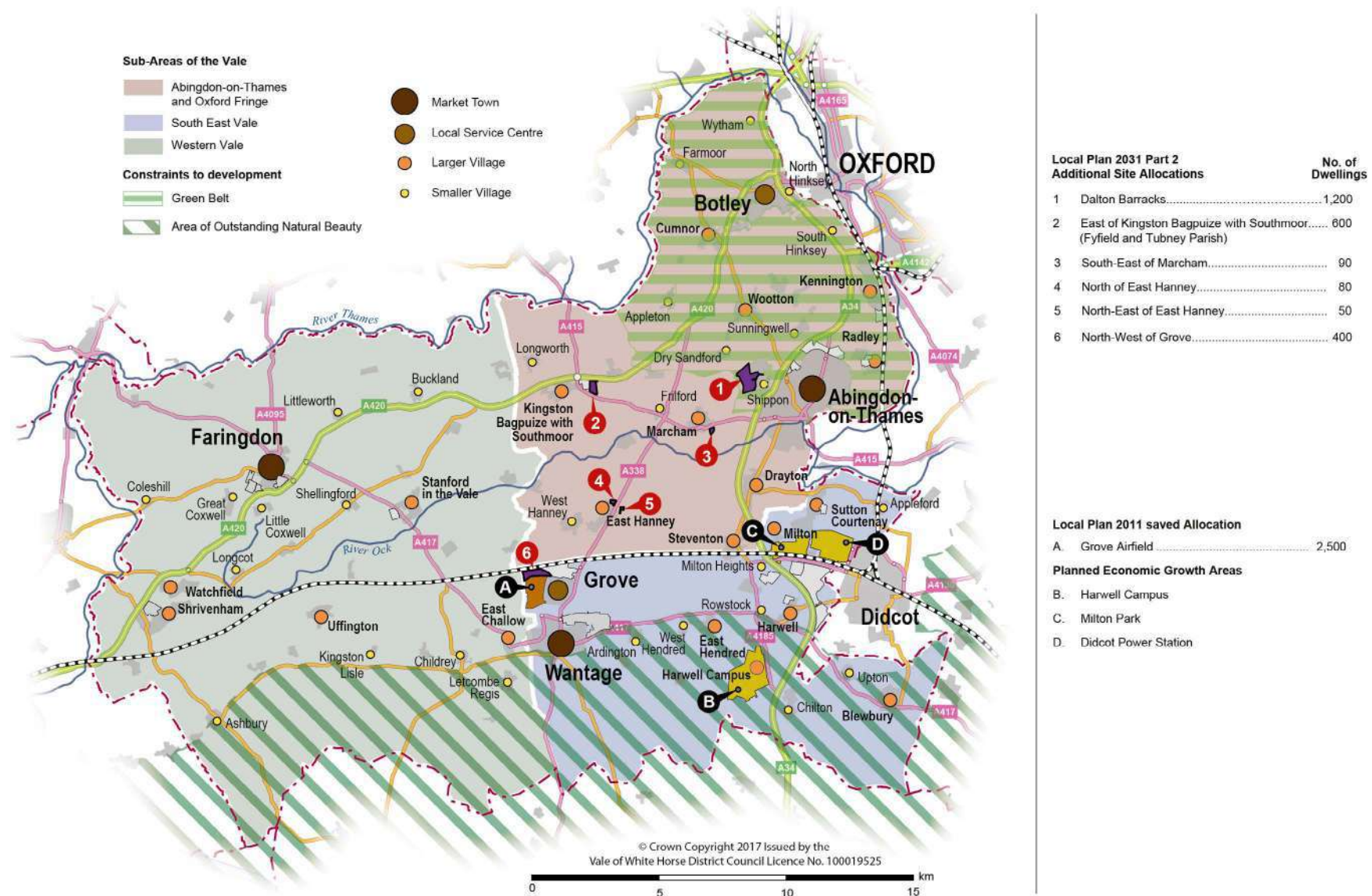
Local Plan Part 2 does not allocate additional sites within the Western Vale Sub-Area.

^c The development proposed at Dalton Barracks will provide services and facilities equivalent to a Larger Village.

^d The allocation at North-West of Grove has the capacity to deliver more housing, subject to appropriate infrastructure improvements. Housing which is in addition to the 400 homes is expected to be delivered after 2031.

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Figure 2.1 Map showing the additional allocations across the three Sub-Areas within the Vale of White Horse District



2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Sub-Area Strategies

2.41. The Part 1 plan establishes three Sub-Area Strategies, which give spatial expression to the plan and ensure that it is locally distinctive and focused on each part of our district. The three sub-areas are:

- **Abingdon-on-Thames and Oxford Fringe** – which covers the northern and north eastern part of the Vale and geographically has strong linkages with the city of Oxford. The Sub-Area contains the market town of Abingdon-on-Thames, the local service centre of Botley and several larger villages, including Cumnor, Drayton, East Hanney, Kennington, Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor, Marcham, Radley, Steventon and Wootton. A large part of this area is designated within the Oxford Green Belt.
- **South-East Vale** – which includes much of the Science Vale area and contains the market town of Wantage, the local service centre of Grove, as well as a number of significant employment sites, including Harwell Campus, Milton Park and Didcot A Power Station. The Sub-Area also contains a number of larger villages, including Blewbury, East Hendred, Harwell, Harwell Campus, Milton and Sutton Courtenay.
- **Western Vale** – which is a more rural area stretching from the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the River Thames, containing the market town of Faringdon and several larger villages, including East Challow, Shrivenham, Stanford-in-the-Vale, Uffington and Watchfield.



Market Place, Wantage

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

South-East Vale Sub-Area

Additional site allocations and strategic policies for the South-East Vale Sub-Area

2.89. The South East Vale Sub-Area provides the main focus for housing and economic growth within the Vale of White Horse District, as identified by the Spatial Strategy set out in **Core Policy 4: Meeting our Housing Needs** within the Local Plan 2031: Part 1. The Sub-Area contains a number of internationally significant Science Vale sites, including the Enterprise Zone sites at Harwell Campus and Milton Park.

2.90. Science Vale is also one of the key growth areas set out within the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and is the focus of significant investment from the Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal announced in 2014⁴⁷. The City Deal seeks to support a wave of innovation-led growth to maximise the area's world class assets. Science Vale sits at the southern end

of the Oxfordshire 'Knowledge Spine'; arguably the most important and significant growth corridor in Oxfordshire and one of the most important in the South-East of England⁴⁸.

2.91. For these reasons, the Sub-Area is planned to accommodate around 70 % of our projected employment growth (15,830 of 23,000 jobs) and around 75 % of the housing identified by the Part 1 plan.

2.92. This Sub-Area contains the market town of Wantage, the local service centre of Grove and extends eastwards to Harwell and Milton parishes, which sit on the western edge of Didcot. The settlement of Didcot itself lies within neighbouring South Oxfordshire, but some of the housing proposed for the area is located within the Vale and both Councils are working closely to plan for the area together.

2.93. The settlement of Didcot, and those adjoining parishes located within the Vale of White Horse,

were identified as a Garden Town in 2015 and partnership working is now under way to plan for the future of the settlement and area more comprehensively. This will ensure that Didcot can fulfil its potential as a service centre at the heart of Science Vale and provide quality and fit-for-purpose facilities and services for its expanding population.

2.94. The Part 1 plan identified sites for strategic housing growth at a number of locations within this Sub-Area, including at Wantage and Grove, on sites within the Vale adjoining the settlement of Didcot, and at the sustainable larger villages of Milton Heights, Harwell and Sutton Courtenay.

2.95. Modifications to the Part 1 plan removed two sites proposed on land adjoining Harwell Campus within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

2.96. The removal from the Part 1 plan of these two sites located

adjacent to Harwell Campus (North-West and East Harwell Campus) reduced the potential housing supply in the Science Vale area by 1,400 dwellings. The replacement, in part, of these sites within the Part 2 plan will not only provide additional housing supply, but will also assist with delivering the Spatial Strategy and the aim of the plan objective to achieve sustainable development overall. The Council considers that additional housing is required to:

- help to achieve and maintain a sustainable balance of housing and employment within the Science Vale area by ensuring that housing is located close to the provision of new jobs and is accessible by sustainable modes of travel
- help to deliver the Science Vale Strategic Infrastructure Package⁴⁹ through developer contributions by assisting further in the achievement of sustainable development within the Science Vale area, and

^{47, 48}Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal (2014); available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/city-deal-oxford-and-oxfordshire>
available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/lt4-policy-and-overall-strategy>

⁴⁹Oxfordshire County Council (2016) *Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031*,

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

- support the Oxfordshire LEP priority for accelerating housing delivery within the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine growth corridor⁵⁰.

2.97. For the above reasons, the Part 2 plan allocates an additional site within this Sub-Area at the local service centre of Grove.

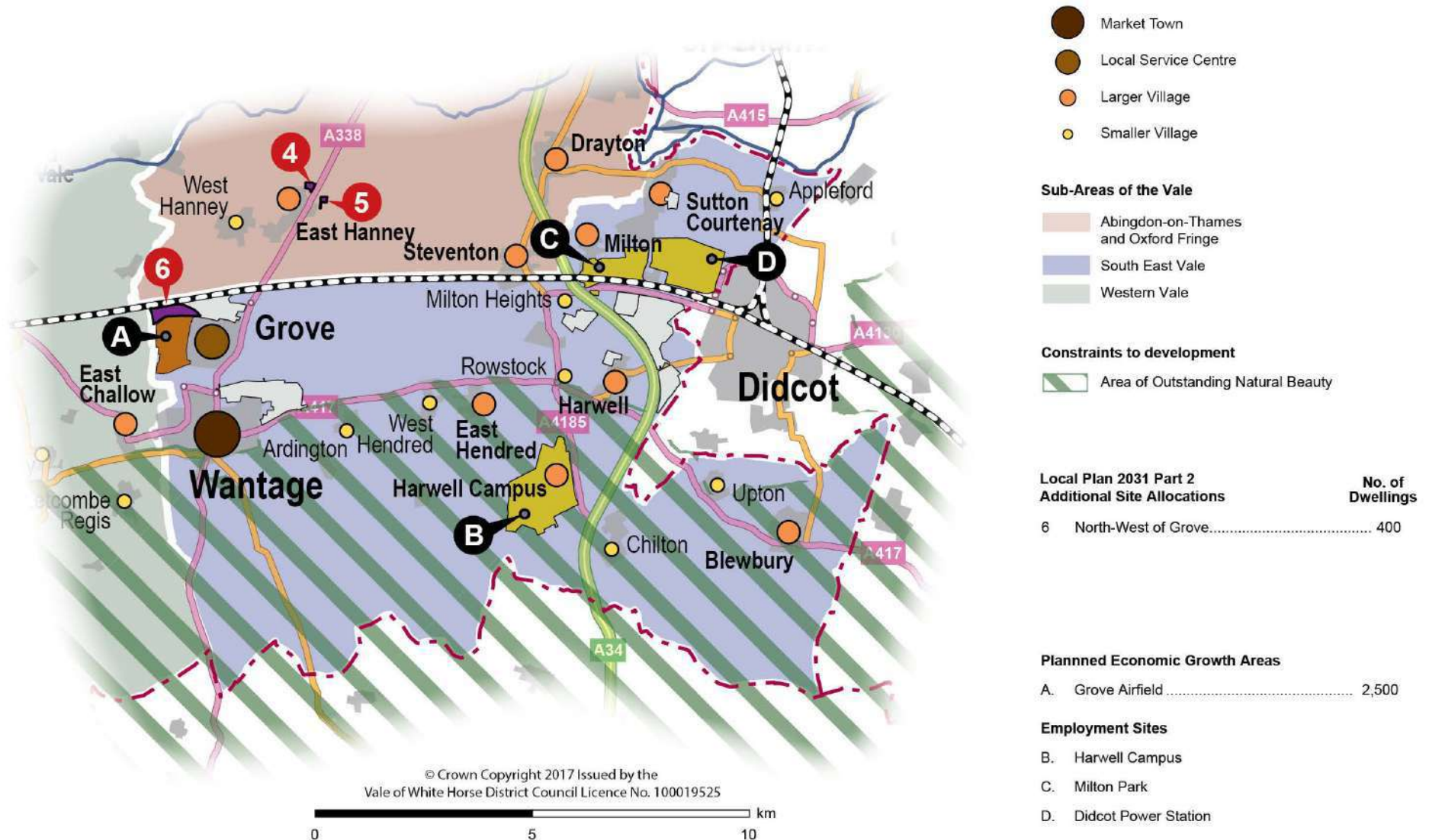


Wallingford Street, Wantage

⁵⁰Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal (2014); available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/city-deal-oxford-and-oxfordshire>

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Figure 2.5: Map showing additional housing allocations within the South-East Vale Sub-Area



2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies



Core Policy 15a: Additional Site Allocations for South-East Vale Sub-Area

The overarching priority and Settlement Hierarchy for this Sub-Area are set out in **Core Policy 15: Spatial Strategy for South-East Vale Sub-Area** (Local Plan 2031: Part 1) along with the strategy for addressing housing need arising in the Vale of White Horse and for employment.

Housing Delivery

This policy sets out an additional site allocation to complement those set out within the Part 1 plan to assist with delivering the Spatial Strategy and supporting infrastructure delivery

At least 11,949 new homes will be delivered in the plan period between 2011 and 2031. 1,517 dwellings will be delivered through strategic allocations (LPP1 Allocations). 400 dwellings will be delivered through an additional allocation (LPP2 Allocation) North-West of Grove. Additional dwellings (for example, windfalls) will be delivered through Neighbourhood Development Plans or through the Development Management Process. The contribution of all sources of housing supply for this Sub-Area are shown in the following table:

South-East Vale Sub-Area Housing Supply

Category		Number of Dwellings
Housing requirement for the full plan period (Apr 2011 to Mar 2031)		11,949 ^b
Housing Completions (Apr 2011 to Mar 2018)		2,338
Housing Supply (Apr 2018 to Mar 2031)	Known Commitments	8,580
	Local Plan 2031: Part 1 allocations	1,517 ^a
	Local Plan 2031: Part 2 allocations	400
	Windfalls	440 ^b
Total supply (at 31 March 2018)		13,275

^a Local Plan 2031: Part 1 allocated 9,055 dwellings. This figure is updated to reflect commitments. Local Plan 2031 Part 1 allocations include the saved Local Plan 2011 allocation at Grove Airfield for 2,500 homes as set out in Core Policy 15. This Local Plan 2011 allocation (Policy H5) continues to be saved. The Full Local Plan 2011 Policy for this site is set out in Appendix D

^b Windfall figures are updated to reflect past delivery

Continued overpage

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Core Policy 15a: Additional Site Allocations for South-East Vale Sub-Area (continued from previous page)

Additional Allocations

In addition to the strategic site allocations set out in **Core Policy 15**, development will be supported at the additional site allocation through a masterplanning process involving the community, local planning authority, developer and other stakeholders where development meets the requirements set out within the Site Development Templates shown by **Appendix A** and are in accordance with the Development Plan taken as a whole. The following table sets out the additional development sites for this sub-area:

Part 2 Allocations

Settlement / Parish	Settlement Type	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Grove	Local Service Centre	North-West of Grove	400 ^c
Total			400

^c The allocation at North-West of Grove has the capacity to deliver considerably more housing, subject to appropriate infrastructure improvements. Housing which is in addition to the 400 homes is expected to be delivered after 2031.

Grove Comprehensive Development Framework

2.98. The Part 1 plan allocates a number of sites at Wantage and Grove and these are expected to be delivered through the plan period up to 2031. These include the site at Grove Airfield, which was allocated in the Local Plan 2011 and the Policy (H5) for this site continues to be saved (**Core Policy 15a: Additional Site Allocations for South-East Vale Sub-Area** and **Appendix E**).

2.99. It is important that the new development planned for Wantage and Grove delivers infrastructure (such as new services, facilities and roads) alongside the delivery of new housing. To assist with infrastructure delivery in this area, an additional development site is allocated in the Part 2 plan at North-West of Grove on land between the Monks Farm and Grove Airfield sites.

2.100. The allocation of the North-West of Grove site will assist with

delivering the North Grove Link Road (NGLR) that will form an important connection between Grove Airfield and the A338, along with contributing to a range of other services and facilities. Allocating this site will also ensure the masterplanning for this site can be considered alongside planning for the Monks Farm and Grove Airfield sites, ensuring they are fully integrated. It is, however, expected that housing development on the North-West of Grove site will not come forward until towards the end of the plan period and much closer to 2031. It is therefore important to consider the long-term development potential for Grove and plan effectively for its delivery.

2.101. Development of North-West Grove will be considered within a comprehensive development framework approach that will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in accordance with **Core Policy 15c: Grove Comprehensive Development Framework**.

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Didcot Garden Town

2.114. The Government announced that Didcot would become a Garden Town in December 2015. Garden Towns are locally-led and ambitious proposals for new communities that work as self-sustaining places and should have high quality and good design embedded from the outset⁵⁴.

2.115. The designation of Didcot and the neighbouring parishes in the Vale of White Horse as a Garden Town is an exciting opportunity. Both South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils are working closely together and in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and other key stakeholders to develop a joined-up vision and delivery strategy for the area.

2.116. It is important that the area realises its potential as a thriving and attractive location to live, work and visit and in particular to provide a high quality service centre at the heart of Science Vale. This will allow Science Vale's international reputation for

science and technology to support continued and accelerated growth of businesses in these sectors.

2.117. The Garden Town initiative will help to shape growth already identified through the Local Plan 2031: Part 1 within the Vale and that being identified within the emerging Local Plan 2034 for South Oxfordshire for housing, employment and infrastructure. The emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan will focus on shaping the town centre of Didcot and helping the area to function more successfully in a joined-up way, whilst embracing the key principles of Garden Towns.

2.118. To support the successful implementation of the Garden Town initiative, seven high level principles have been developed (**Figure 2.7**) to help shape how development proposals come forward. Proposals for development within the Garden Town Masterplan Area will be expected to demonstrate how they comply with these principles in accordance with **Core Policy 16b: Didcot Garden Town**. The Garden

Town Masterplan Area does not form a development boundary for Didcot and will include substantial areas of formal and informal open space and green infrastructure. The important separation between the surrounding villages, including for example Sutton Courtenay, will continue to be protected from development.

2.119. To assist the delivery of the Garden Town, further detail, for example in respect of design, will be set out either in a future Development Planning Document (DPD) or Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Local Development Orders (LDOs) will also be developed to support the delivery of individual sites.



Core Policy 16b: Didcot Garden Town

Proposals for development within the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Area, as defined on the **Adopted Policies Map** and shown by **Figure 2.8**, will be expected to demonstrate how they positively contribute to the achievement of the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Principles (**Figure 2.7**).

⁵⁴Department for Communities and Local Government (2016) *Locally-led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities*; available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/locally-led-garden-villages-towns-and-cities>

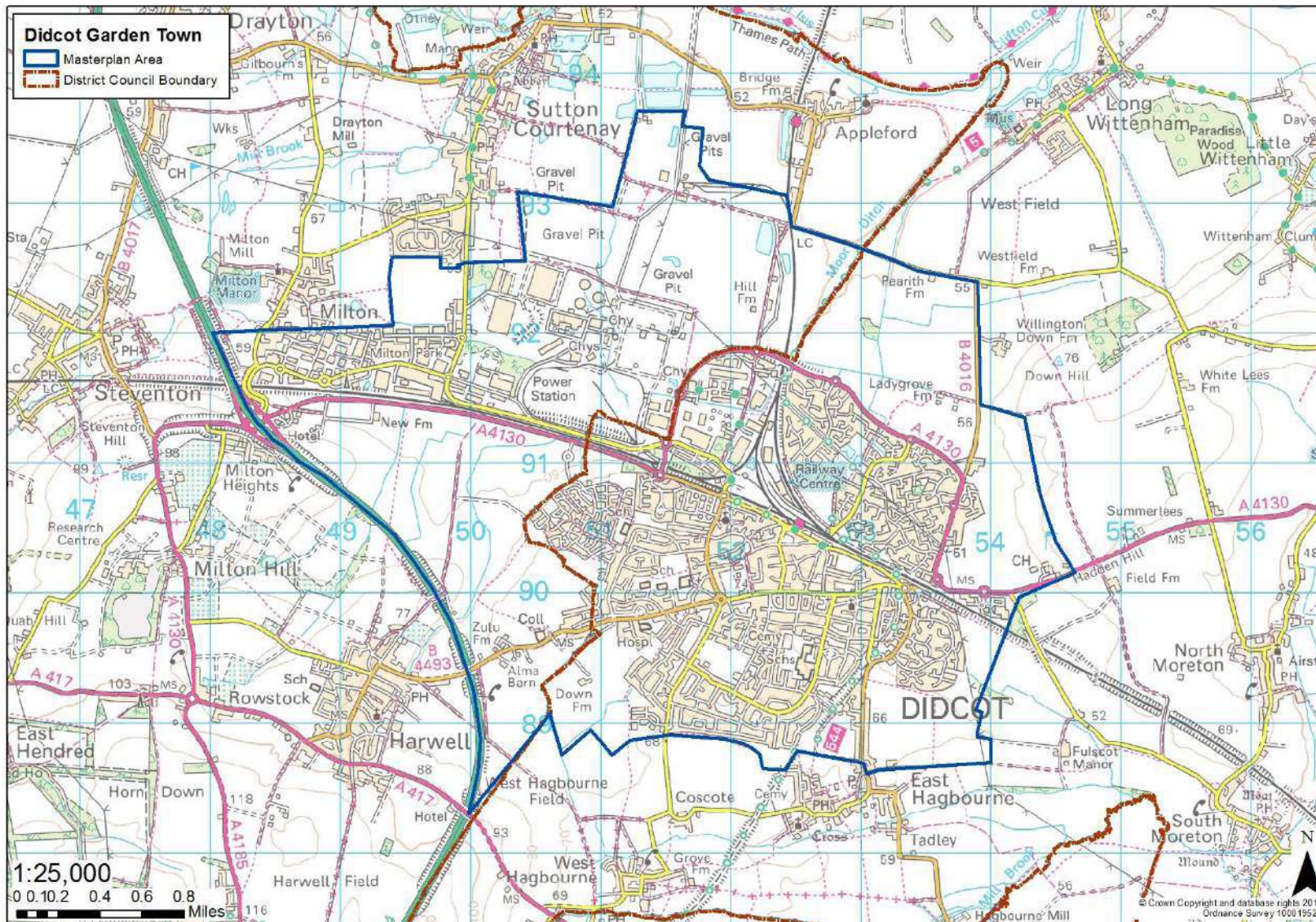
2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Figure 2.7: Didcot Garden Town Masterplan Principles

- 1. Design** – The Garden Town will be characterised by design that adds value to Didcot and endures over time; it will encourage pioneering architecture of buildings and careful urban design of the spaces in between, prioritising green spaces over roads and car parks. All new proposals should show the application of the Council's adopted Design Guide SPD and demonstrate best practice design standards.
- 2. Local Character** – The Garden Town will establish a confident and unique identity, becoming a destination in itself that is distinctive from surrounding towns and villages whilst respecting and protecting their rural character and setting. Didcot's identity will champion science, natural beauty, and green living, in part delivered through strengthened physical connections and active public and private sector collaboration with the Science Vale.
- 3. Density and tenure** – The Garden Town will incorporate a variety of densities, housing types and tenures to meet the needs of a diverse community. This will include high density development in suitable locations, such as in central Didcot and near sustainable transport hubs; higher density development will be balanced by good levels of public realm and accessible green space.
- 4. Transport and movement** – The Garden Town will reduce reliance on motorised vehicles and will promote a step-change towards active and public transport through the creation of a highly legible, attractive and accessible movement network and the appropriate location of housing, employment and leisure facilities. The Garden Town will seek to improve opportunities for access to sport and physical activities through Sport England's Active Design Principles. Cycling and pedestrian links between the Garden Town, its surrounding villages, and natural assets and the strategic employment sites will be enhanced.
- 5. Heritage** – the Garden Town will conserve and enhance heritage assets, both designated and non-designated, within and adjacent to the development area. This includes the Scheduled Monuments of the settlement sites north of Milton Park and east of Appleford and any archaeological remains and historic landscapes and / or landscape features identified in the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record, the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment, other sources and / or through further investigation and assessment.
- 6. Landscape and Green Infrastructure** – New development in the Garden Town will enhance the natural environment, through enhancing green and blue infrastructure networks, creating ecological networks to support an increase (or where possible achieve a net gain) in biodiversity and supporting climate resilience through the use of adaptation and design measures. The Garden Town will also seek to make effective use of natural resources including energy and water efficiency, as well as exploring opportunities for promoting new technology within developments. Innovative habitat planting and food growing zones will characterise the Garden Town and, in turn, these measures will support quality of life and public health.
- 7. Social and community benefits** – The planning of the Garden Town will be community-focused, creating accessible and vibrant neighbourhoods around a strong town centre offer of cultural, recreational and commercial amenities that support well-being, social cohesion and vibrant communities. The Garden Town will embrace community participation throughout its evolution. It will promote community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets where desirable.

2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Figure 2.8: Didcot Garden Town Masterplan area



2 Additional Sites and Sub-Area Strategies

Safeguarding of land for strategic highway improvements within the South-East Vale Sub-Area

2.120. The South-East Vale Sub-Area contains much of the Science Vale area, Enterprise Zone sites, other significant employment locations and forms the southern part of the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine; perhaps the most significant growth corridor identified in Oxfordshire and one of the most important in the South-East of England.

2.121. For these reasons, the South-East Vale Sub-Area forms the focus of employment and housing growth within the Vale and is supported by a comprehensive package of strategic infrastructure. This includes highway infrastructure set out in the Science Vale Area Strategy that forms part of the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 4.

2.122. The announcement by the Department for Transport to explore

an Oxford – Cambridge Expressway and Government's commitment in the Autumn Budget 2017⁵⁵ could have benefits in relieving traffic congestion on the A34 and bringing further investment to the Science Vale area⁵⁶. It could also have significant environmental impacts that need careful consideration, depending on the exact route chosen. The Council will continue to engage in the process to ensure that matters of relevance to the district are considered appropriately, including better understanding of any forecast environmental impacts. It is expected that construction would commence at the end of the next Road Investment Strategy period (RIS2, 2020 to 2025).

2.123. **Core Policy 17: Delivery of Strategic Highway Improvements within the South-East Vale Sub-Area** (Local Plan 2031: Part 1) identifies a package of strategic highway infrastructure necessary to ensure planned employment and housing development in the area



Core Policy 18a: Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Improvements within the South-East Vale Sub-Area

Land is safeguarded to support the delivery of a new Thames River Crossing between Culham and Didcot, in accordance with **Core Policy 18** (Local Plan 2031: Part 1).

This policy updates the area safeguarded as shown by the **Adopted Policies Map** and **Appendix B**.

In addition to land safeguarded for identified transport schemes set out in **Core Policy 18** (Local Plan 2031: Part 1) the following schemes are also safeguarded:

- dedicated access to / from the A34 to Milton Park
- provision for a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the A34 at Milton Heights
- Cinder Track cycle improvements

These schemes are safeguarded in accordance with **Core Policy 18** and as shown by maps in **Appendix B** and the **Adopted Policies Map**^a.

^aThe area shown on the **Adopted Policies Map** illustrates where Core Policy 18 will apply. It does not seek to show a precise alignment for the transport scheme, which will need to be informed by detailed design work, carried out in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council and other relevant parties.

⁵⁵HM Treasury (2017) Autumn Statement 2017, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-2017-documents>
⁵⁶Department for Communities and Local Government (2016) Oxford to Cambridge Expressway Strategic Study: Stage 3 Report, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oxford-to-cambridge-expressway-strategic-study-stage-3-report> and HM Treasury (2016) Autumn Statement 2016, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/autumn-statement-2016>

3 Development Management Policies

Access

3.113. Improving the quality of new development and achieving high design standards is a priority for the Local Plan 2031: Part 1, as supported by **Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness**, which sets out criteria that all new developments need to demonstrate are met.

3.114. The physical form and qualities of a place shape the way it is used and the way people and vehicles move through it. The NPPF is clear that development proposals should ensure **“safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people”**⁹³.

3.115. Furthermore, the NPPF states that

“plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of

sustainable transport modes can be maximised”⁹⁴.

3.116. The NPPF also stresses the importance of:

- the efficient delivery of goods and supplies
- giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements
- safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts, and
- considering the needs of people with disabilities⁹⁵.

3.117. **Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness** sets out twelve criteria that all development proposals should comply with to ensure they are comprehensively planned; these include consideration for connectivity, and the safe movement and access for all users so developments are not overly dominated by vehicular traffic.

3.118. Development Policy 16:

Access sets out some additional detail to complement that provided by **Core Policy 35: Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking**, **Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness**, and other Part 1 policies.



Development Policy 16: Access

All proposals for new development will be required to be of high quality design in accordance with **Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness**. In addition to those criteria set out in **Core Policy 37** and other relevant Local Plan policies, proposals for development will also need to provide evidence to demonstrate that:

- adequate provision will be made for loading, unloading, circulation, servicing and vehicle turning, and
- acceptable off-site improvements to the highway infrastructure (including traffic management measures), cycleways, public rights of way and the public transport network can be secured where these are not adequate to service the development.

⁹³Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Paragraph 32
Paragraph 34

⁹⁴Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Paragraph 35

3 Development Management Policies

Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

3.119. Promoting sustainable modes of travel, such as through public transport, cycling, and walking, is a key priority for both Vale of White Horse District Council and for Oxfordshire County Council. These modes of travel can help to reduce congestion, make a positive contribution to local air quality and help to encourage active and healthy lifestyles⁹⁶ for communities within the Vale. For this reason, the Part 1 plan sets out the requirement for major development proposals to be supported by a Transport Assessment or Statement and Travel Plan (**Core Policy 35: Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking**) which will need to take into account Oxfordshire County Council and National Planning Practice Guidance⁹⁷.

3.120. Ensuring that proposals for development are accompanied by appropriate supporting information

helps to support a comprehensive approach to their assessment and the identification of appropriate mitigation measures, should they be necessary.

3.121. A Transport Assessment should set out the transport issues relating to a proposed development. It will be used to help us determine whether the impact of the development is acceptable and therefore should be supported by appropriate traffic modelling and take account of any particular local sensitivities, such as those relating to air quality, noise and / or safety.

3.122. Mitigation measures may be required to address the transport impacts of development. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulation 123 list should be referred to*, as some infrastructure projects and types will be wholly funded by CIL. Where applicable, mitigation measures may be required through Section 106 and Section 278 agreements. Transport Assessment or Statements



Development Policy 17: Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

Proposals for ^amajor development will need to be supported by a Transport Assessment or Statement and Travel Plan in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council guidance, including their Walking and Cycling Design Standards, and the latest National Planning Practice Guidance^b. The scope of the assessment should be agreed with the County Council as the highway authority, in association with the district council, as the planning authority. Highways England should also be consulted as appropriate, in accordance with Highways England guidance^c.

The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan should consider opportunities to support the take up of electric and / or low emission vehicles, in accordance with latest best practice, and in particular if part of mitigation identified in line with **Development Policy 26: Air Quality**.

The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will need to demonstrate consistency with **Core Policy 37: Design and Local Distinctiveness** in addition to the sustainable transport priorities identified in Local Plan 2031: Part 1 and other relevant Local Plan policies.

^a As defined by Development Management Procedure Order 2010.

^b Refer to Oxfordshire County Council Guidance for New Developments, available at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/transport-new-developments>; Oxfordshire County Council Walking and Cycling Design Standards (2017), available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/transport-development-control-tdc> and CLG (2014) Travel plans, transport assessments and statements, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-plans-transport-assessments-and-statements>

^c Highways England (2015) The Strategic Road Network: planning for the future (2015) and Highways England and Circular 02/2013: the strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development.

⁹⁶Oxfordshire County Council (2016) *Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015 – 2031 – Active & Healthy Travel Strategy*, available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/ltp4-countywide-strategies> ⁹⁷ Refer to Oxfordshire County Council *Guidance for New Developments*, available at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/transport-new-developments>; *Oxfordshire County Council Walking and Cycling Design Standards (2017)* available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/transport-policies-and-plans/transport-new-developments/transport-development-control> and Department for Communities and Local Government (2014) *Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-plans-transport-assessments-and-statements> * No longer exists following recent changes to CIL by government

3 Development Management Policies

External lighting

3.145. Light can be seen as a form of pollution, where it impedes a view of the night sky or causes glow in the countryside, and can harm local biodiversity. Light fittings can also affect the visual amenity of an area. For example, inappropriately designed and/or located spotlights can have

a detrimental impact on an area's character. Pole-mounted light fittings are often required for many sport and recreation facilities and the height and number of these fittings can be obtrusive, particularly if located within the open countryside or in a Conservation Area.

3.146. Given the increasing demand

for all types of outdoor lighting, it is important that the impact on the amenity of the surrounding area is considered when determining applications that involve the use of external lighting. This can be particularly important when related to illuminated advertisements, security floodlights for commercial and residential premises, street lighting and floodlights for outdoor sports and recreational facilities.

3.147. Although some lighting is considered to be Permitted Development, the Council will ensure applications that involve the use of lighting will be determined in accordance with **Development Policy 21: External Lighting**.

3.148. The Council will expect applicants to demonstrate, through preparation of a lighting strategy, that they have appropriately considered the design of their scheme in accordance with **Development Policy 21**, the principles set out in the Design Guide SPD, **Core Policy 44: Landscape** and **Core Policy 37: Design and**

Local Distinctiveness (in the adopted Local Plan 2031: Part 1).

3.149. Development proposals located within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or its setting should seek to avoid and reduce light pollution, including control of lighting schemes that threaten the integrity of dark night skies, taking account of the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan¹⁰⁶.

3.150. Applications for the display of advertisements that involve an element of external lighting should demonstrate that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the local character or the amenity of neighbouring uses, and would not cause harm towards the safety of pedestrians.

3.151. Where permission is granted for a proposal that involves external lighting, the Council may impose planning conditions to mitigate the impacts from external lighting.

3.152. In certain circumstances, applicants may be required to take



Development Policy 21: External Lighting

Development that involves external lighting will be permitted provided that:

- i. there would not be an adverse effect on the character of the area, the amenity of neighbouring uses or on local biodiversity
- ii. there would not be a hazard for pedestrians or people using any type of transportation, and
- iii. the lighting proposed is the minimum necessary to undertake the task for which it is required

Where permission is granted for external lighting, conditions may be imposed that require:

- iv. the fitting of devices to reduce glare and light spillage, and
- v. restricting the hours during which the lighting may be operated.

¹⁰⁶North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-2019, available at: http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/uploads/File_Management/NWD_Docs/About_Us/Management_Plan/NWD_AONB_Management_Plan_2014-19.pdf

3 Development Management Policies

3.159. Advertisement proposals are guided by national policy and guidance, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements, England) Regulations 2007, and subsequent amendments.

3.160. The Council will seek to ensure that no harm is caused by the cumulative effects of illuminated advertisements associated with commercial property.

3.161. Proposals for development involving the use of illuminated advertisements will need to demonstrate compliance with **Development Policy 22: Advertisements** along with other relevant policies: **Core Policy 37: Design** and **Local Distinctiveness; Core Policy 39: The Historic Environment;** and **Development Policy 21: External Lighting.**

3.162. Developers will be required to ensure that proposals for illuminated advertisements will not harm or detract from amenity and public safety. Advertisements may not be acceptable

where, cumulatively, they would spoil the appearance of a town centre or the open countryside. The Council will encourage businesses in the same location to combine their advertising needs for this reason.

3.163. **Development Policy 22** also ensures that advertisements do not cause visual intrusion by virtue of light pollution, and avoid flashing internal or external illumination.

3.164. Where advertisements are proposed in relation to business premises, the Council may seek appropriate mitigation through a planning condition to reduce any harmful impacts, for example, limiting the hours of operation of any illumination.

Impact of Development on Amenity

3.165. In addition to applicants demonstrating that their proposals achieve high design standards (in accordance with **Core Policies 37 and 38** and the Design Guide SPD), it is also important that their proposals

will not cause harm to the amenity of neighbouring or nearby properties.

3.166. Amenity can be compromised by new development in a number of ways: through detrimental loss of daylight and sunlight to existing and adjacent occupiers; loss of privacy and outlook, and harmful noise, odour, vibration and air pollution from existing and proposed developments.

3.167 Care should be taken to ensure new development does not

overshadow or visually dominate existing properties or adversely affect their existing levels of privacy. Furthermore, it is important that the design of new development minimises any impacts, both for the short and long term.

3.168 The Council will consider the impact of development proposals on amenity in accordance with **Development Policy 23: Impact of Development on Amenity.**



Development Policy 23: Impact of Development on Amenity

Development proposals should demonstrate that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses when considering both individual and cumulative impacts in relation to the following factors:

- i. loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight
- ii. dominance or visual intrusion
- iii. noise or vibration
- iv. dust, heat, odour, gases or other emissions
- v. pollution, contamination or the use of / or storage of hazardous substances; and
- vi. external lighting.

3 Development Management Policies

Noise Pollution

3.173. Noise and associated vibration can have an adverse impact on environmental amenity and on biodiversity, and may have a range of sources, which can include: road traffic; trains; aircraft; commercial uses; and entertainment premises.

3.174. Noise pollution can lead to harmful impacts on health and well-being, which may be from direct or indirect sources, for example, through the loss of sleep or by affecting relaxation and social interaction.

3.175. The planning process can assist by ensuring that, as far as possible, 'noise sensitive' developments, such as dwellings, schools, hospitals and nursing homes are located away from existing sources of noise. Furthermore, development types that may be associated with generating noise can be located in areas where noise will be less likely to lead to harmful impacts.

3.176 In accordance with national

policy, the Council will ensure that where new development may create additional noise, and in instances where new development would be sensitive to the existing acoustic environment, the impact of noise will not cause an unacceptable impact on amenity.

3.177 **Development Policy 25: Noise Pollution** seeks to ensure that development proposals set out a scheme of mitigation, where noise-generating development would otherwise result in an unacceptable impact on neighbouring uses, environment or biodiversity. Developers should also take into account **Core Policy 44: Landscape** in the Local Plan 2031: Part 1 if proposals are likely to impact on the landscape, including the North Wessex Downs AONB and / or its setting.

3.178. The policy also ensures that noise-sensitive uses are located and designed in such a way that they are protected from existing sources

of environmental noise. Depending on the level of environmental noise, the impact can in some cases be satisfactorily mitigated, allowing noise-sensitive development to proceed on the affected site. The Council will require an appropriate scheme of mitigation that should have regard to the need to provide a satisfactory environment for future occupiers and take account of other material planning considerations such as urban design.

3.179. Proposals for noise-sensitive development in areas with elevated noise levels, and / or proposals for noise-generating development in noise-sensitive locations, will be required to provide evidence of existing levels of environmental noise and the measures needed to bring noise down to acceptable levels¹⁰⁹. This will typically require the submission of an assessment of environmental noise and scheme of mitigation as part of a planning application.

3.180. The Council may also seek

measures from the developer to control the exposure to noise through planning conditions. For example, developers may be required to insulate buildings, erect screens or natural barriers, ensure adequate distances are established between noise and the noise sensitive land use or limit the operating times of a potentially noisy activity.

3.181. Developers will be expected to take into account the council's noise planning guidance to ensure noise is adequately addressed and mitigated within their development proposals. Developers should further engage with the Council's Environmental Health team early during the planning process to help ensure the approach taken is acceptable.

¹⁰⁹Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Acoustic & Noise Consultants, Institute of Acoustics (2016) *Draft Professional Practice Guidance on Planning & Noise - New Residential Development*; available at: <http://www.association-of-noise-consultants.co.uk/propg-planning-noise-new-residential-development/>; World Health Organisation (1999) *Guidelines for Community Noise*; available at: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/noise>

3 Development Management Policies



Development Policy 25: Noise Pollution

Noise-Generating Development

Noise-generating development that would have an impact on environmental amenity or biodiversity will be expected to provide an appropriate scheme of mitigation that should take account of:

- i. the location, design and layout of the proposed development
- ii. existing levels of background noise
- iii. measures to reduce or contain generated noise, and
- iv. hours of operation and servicing.

Development will not be permitted if mitigation cannot be provided within an appropriate design or standard^a.

Noise-Sensitive Development

Noise-sensitive development in locations likely to be affected by existing sources of noise^b will be expected to provide an appropriate scheme of mitigation to ensure appropriate standards of amenity are achieved for future occupiers of the proposed development, taking account of:

- v. the location, design and layout of the proposed development
- vi. measures to reduce noise within the development to acceptable levels, including external areas, and
- vii. the need to maintain adequate levels of natural light and ventilation to habitable areas of the development.

In areas of existing noise, proposals for noise-sensitive development should be accompanied by an assessment of environmental noise and an appropriate scheme of mitigation measures.

Development will not be permitted if mitigation cannot be provided to an appropriate standard with an acceptable design.

^aCurrently set out in British Standards 4142:2014 and 8233:2014. The Council is currently developing guidance relating to noise mitigation.

^bBusy roads, railway lines, aerodromes, industrial / commercial developments, waste, recycling and energy plant, and sporting, recreation and leisure facilities.

3 Development Management Policies

Water Quality

3.182. The pollution of controlled waters may pose a risk to human health and lead to an impact on wildlife. It is therefore important the planning process is used, as far as possible, to minimise the risk of pollution caused by new development.

3.183. Maintaining and enhancing water quality of rivers, lakes and underground water bodies can also be important because they can be an important source of water and can provide a valuable amenity and recreational resource.

3.184. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) requires that all 'water bodies' including rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater, achieve a good ecological status. Under the WFD, all water bodies are classified by current and future water quality, ecological, hydromorphological and chemical status. It is therefore important that future development,

including the provision of supporting infrastructure, in the Vale¹¹⁰ is carefully planned to help achieve the objectives set out in the WFD¹¹¹.

3.185. Development would be considered unacceptable if it led to a deterioration in WFD status, or prevents the waterbody achieving 'good' ecological status.

3.186. National policy requires councils to consider the need to plan effectively to protect and enhance local surface water and groundwater to allow new development to proceed, while avoiding costs at the planning application stage. In doing so, councils should consider the type or location of new development where an assessment of the potential impact on water bodies may be required. The Council has worked with the Environment Agency and Thames Water to prepare an addendum to the Water Cycle Study which is an update to the study that informed the Part 1 plan. This assesses the

environmental and physical demand of growth on water resources and supply and wastewater collection and treatment. It identifies opportunities for more sustainable planning and improvements so proposals do not exceed the existing water cycle capacity.

3.187. **Core Policy 43: Natural Resources** seeks to ensure that developers make provision for the effective use of natural resources, including the need for proposals to cause no deterioration in, and where possible, achieving improvements in, water quality.

3.188. In line with **Core Policy 43: Natural Resources** the Council will therefore resist developments that pose unacceptable risk to water quality. **Core Policy 43** will help to ensure that development is either located where adequate water resources are already available, or where new provision of water resource can be made to serve the

new development, without adversely affecting abstraction, river flows, water quality, agriculture, fisheries, amenity or nature conservation.

3.189. In circumstances where development may be likely to have an adverse impact on water quality, it will be necessary for a detailed water quality assessment to be undertaken. The need for an assessment will depend on the type or location of new development

3.190. Where development is allowed, the Council may require developers to undertake measures to ensure that a proposed development does not contaminate surface or groundwater resources, including ponds, streams and other watercourses. Works may also be required to remedy historical contamination to protect these water resources.

3.191. The Environment Agency (EA) has published a Thames River Basin Management Plan¹¹² that identifies areas

¹¹⁰Core Policy 7: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services in the adopted Local Plan 2031: Part 1 and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031/evidence-base
¹¹²Environment Agency (2015) *Thames River Basin Management Plan*; available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/river-basin-management-plans-2015#thames-river-basin-district-rbmp:-2015>

¹¹¹Vale of White Horse Water Cycle Study (2015); available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031/evidence-base>

¹¹²Environment Agency (2015) *Thames River Basin Management Plan*; available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/river-basin-management-plans-2015#thames-river-basin-district-rbmp:-2015>

3 Development Management Policies

of poor water quality and assesses surface watercourses, lakes, canals and groundwater for various characteristics including those that may be required to achieve a 'good' ecological status. The Council will support the EA and other partners to prevent groundwater pollution and improve surface water quality. In accordance with **Core Policy 43: Natural Resources**, proposals will be expected to include sufficient information to demonstrate how they have taken into account the Thames River Basin Management Plan.

Air Quality

3.192. National planning policy is clear on the importance of taking into account the potential impacts of air quality when assessing development proposals. Furthermore, legislative¹¹³ limits are set for concentrations of major air pollutants that may impact on public health, amenity and local biodiversity, such as airborne particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide.

3.193. Air quality within the Vale of White Horse District is predominantly good, although there are specific areas where air pollution exceeds the levels set by European and UK regulations. For this reason, the Council has declared three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), which relate to elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). These are located at Abingdon-on-Thames, Botley and Marcham.

3.194 Development proposals located within these areas will need to demonstrate how they take into account the Council's Air Quality Action Plan¹¹⁴ in accordance with **Core Policy 43: Natural Resources**.

3.195 Proposals will be considered in accordance with **Development Policy 26: Air Quality**. Early engagement with the Council's Air Quality Officer is encouraged to help ensure the approach taken is acceptable.

3.196 It is likely that an Air Quality Assessment will be required, where



Development Policy 26: Air Quality

Development proposals that are likely to have an impact on local air quality, including those in, or within relative proximity to, existing or potential Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) will need to demonstrate measures / mitigation that are incorporated into the design to minimise any impacts associated with air quality.

Where sensitive development is proposed in areas of existing poor air quality and / or where significant development is proposed, an air quality assessment will be required.

The Council will require applicants to demonstrate that the development will minimise the impact on air quality, both during the construction process and lifetime of the completed development, either through a redesign of the development proposal or, where this is not possible or sufficient, through appropriate mitigation in accordance with current guidance.

Mitigation measures will need to demonstrate how the proposal would make a positive contribution towards the aims of the Council's Air Quality Action Plan.

Mitigation measures will be secured either through a negotiation on a scheme, or via the use of a planning condition and / or planning obligation depending on the scale and nature of the development and its associated impacts on air quality.

¹¹³2008 Ambient Air Quality Directive; available at: Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010; available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1001/pdfs/ukxi_20101001_en.pdf
Action Plan, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/environment/pollution/air-quality>

¹¹⁴Vale of White Horse District Council (2015) *Air Quality*

3 Development Management Policies

proposals are of a large scale and / or likely to have a significant or cumulative impact upon local air quality, particularly where development is located in or within relative proximity to an AQMA. The level of assessment will depend on the nature, extent and location of the development.

3.197 Any air quality assessments and other related work should be undertaken by a competent person / company in line with best practice and the Council's emerging Air Quality Developer Guidance¹¹⁵.

Land Affected by Contamination

3.198 The Government has encouraged councils to consider the need to reclaim and redevelop brownfield land rather than greenfield sites. Brownfield land is land that has been previously developed, often for industry and so where the potential for contamination may be greater. The contamination of land can have adverse impacts on health and social well-being, as well as damaging

natural habitats and contributing to the pollution of surface waters and groundwater.

3.199 Land contamination is often a result of previous industrial activities such as fuel storage, vehicle maintenance, landfills, gasworks and other industrial activities. Other locations, such as rural areas, may contain contaminants from agricultural practices, natural occurrence, unsuitable made ground used in previous developments, or as a result of leaching, gas or groundwater contamination from surrounding land.

3.200 Source Protections Zones (SPZs) are mapped zones that are used to identify areas close to drinking water sources where the risks associated with groundwater contamination are greatest. Developments within SPZs must not increase the risk to drinking water supply abstraction. Types of development associated with risks of high pollution, including, for example,

cemeteries or waste operations may not be appropriate within SPZs. This is particularly notable within SPZ1, the area immediately around the drinking water source.

3.201 National policy and guidance is clear that the responsibility for safe development on sites affected by contamination lies with the developer and / or landowner. The developer / landowner is responsible for identifying land affected by contamination, ensuring that remediation is undertaken to secure a safe development and that the land is suitable for its proposed use.

3.202 The need to adequately deal with contamination is a national requirement, and efforts should be made to reduce the potential risk or harm caused to human health, property and the wider environment. The Council has a legal duty to address contamination in accordance with European Directives, for example, the Water Framework Directive, the Environmental Protection Act

1990, Building Regulations and Environmental Permitting Regulations.

3.203 Development Policy 27: Land Affected by Contamination

requires developers to address all land contamination risks to the development, environment, controlled waters and adjacent land associated with the development.

3.204 Development Policy 27: Land Affected by Contamination

will be used by the Council to assess and determine the suitability of development proposals by considering the potential implications of any existing contamination for the new development, environment, controlled waters and adjacent land, and to also ensure that developers are able to demonstrate that the proposal will prevent unacceptable risk from pollution in the future.

3.205 Where development, redevelopment or re-use is proposed on or adjacent to land that is suspected or known to be

¹¹⁵Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management (2017) *Land-Use Planning and Development Control: Planning for Air Quality*; available at: <http://www.iaqm.co.uk/text/guidance/air-quality-planning-guidance.pdf>

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Development Policy 27: Land Affected By Contamination

Proposals for the development, redevelopment or re-use of land known, or suspected, to be contaminated, will be required to submit a Contaminated Land Preliminary Risk Consultant Report.

Where development involves a particularly vulnerable use^a to contamination and land is not suspected, or known to be contaminated, a Contaminated Land Questionnaire will be required.

Planning conditions may be imposed where the Council is satisfied that all risks associated with the development, environment, controlled waters and neighbouring land uses from land affected by contamination have been identified and the development is viable.

Proposals that fail to demonstrate that the intended use would be compatible with the condition of the land, or which fail to exploit appropriate opportunities for decontamination, will be refused.

^aDevelopments that are classed as particularly vulnerable to contamination include: residential (limited to creation of new residential units); nursing homes; allotments; schools; nurseries and crèches; children's playing areas and playing fields; and mixed use development, including vulnerable proposals.

contaminated, proposals should be accompanied by an appropriate level of information in the form of a Contaminated Land Preliminary Risk Consultant Report. This would typically consist of a desk-based study and a site walkover as a minimum.

3.206 Where development involves a particularly vulnerable use to contamination and land is not suspected, or known to be contaminated, a Contaminated Land Questionnaire will be required as a minimum¹¹⁶.

3.207 These assessments should be submitted with the planning application and undertaken in accordance with the Council's best practice and current national guidance¹¹⁷.

3.208 Further works will be required before a planning application is determined if the developer has not provided sufficient information to demonstrate that the development is considered viable.

3.209 Where the Council is satisfied that the development is viable, subject to any further contaminated land investigations and / or remedial works, planning permission may be granted subject to appropriate conditions or obligations that ensure any land contamination is addressed.

3.210 Applicants who are aware of possible land contamination will be encouraged to engage in pre-application discussions with the Council's Contaminated Land Officer and, where appropriate, the Environment Agency, prior to submitting a planning application. This will indicate whether further preliminary investigations, intrusive site investigations data and remedial proposals may be needed before a planning application can be determined.

¹¹⁶Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Council's (2016) *Contaminated Land Questionnaire*; available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/environment/pollution/contaminated-land/contaminated-land-planning-advice> ¹¹⁷Oxfordshire Contaminated Land Group Consortium (2017) *Oxfordshire Planning Advice Note: Dealing with Land Contamination During Development – A Guide for Developers*, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/environment/pollution/contaminated-land/contaminated-land-planning-advice>; Environment Agency (2016) *Land Contamination: Technical Guidance*; available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/land-contamination-technical-guidance>

3 Development Management Policies

of environmental or historical assets that contribute towards a settlement's distinct and local identity.

Green Infrastructure

3.229. The Local Plan 2031: Part 1 seeks to ensure that new development provides an appropriate contribution to delivering Green Infrastructure and takes account of the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy¹²¹.

3.230. The Green Infrastructure Strategy sets out a vision for the creation of an interconnected, multifunctional Green Infrastructure (GI) network of green and blue spaces and corridors in the Vale. In considering new development proposals, it is important to ensure that GI is designed in a way that enhances the connectivity between GI assets at both district and local level.

3.231. Green Infrastructure relates to the active planning and management of multi-functional open space

networks. It includes sites protected for their importance to wildlife or the environment, nature reserves, greenspaces and greenway linkages. Other assets include, but are not limited to: woodlands; parks; rivers; watercourses; trees; ponds; Public Rights of Way; and cycle paths. Together they provide a network of green space, both urban and rural, within and adjacent to settlements.

3.232. The provision of GI promotes a positive effect on people's physical health and well-being by providing opportunities for access to nature, sport, play, recreation and social interaction. It serves as a function for improving the quality of the visual and natural environment and mitigating flood risk. GI also protects and enhances local nature conservation by creating and connecting habitats for wildlife.

3.233. **Core Policy 45: Green Infrastructure** ensures that GI is appropriately designed and integrated

into new developments and helps to improve the function and linkages to existing GI assets across the Vale.

3.234. The Council recognises the importance of improving the health and well-being of residents in the Vale, whilst maintaining and enhancing the natural environment, including biodiversity, landscape, GI and waterways.

3.235. The Local Plan 2031: Part 2 provides additional detail that focuses on the importance of watercourses as an asset of GI. Watercourses are vital to biodiversity and provide a unique range of habitats that form an important part of the Vale's ecological network.

Watercourses

3.236. The term watercourse refers to both main rivers, (larger rivers, brooks and streams) as defined as those present on the main river map for England¹²² and ordinary watercourses (headwaters, smaller brooks, streams and ditches)¹²³. All types of watercourse and their corridors have a part to play in enhancing biodiversity across the district.

3.237. All watercourses are vital to biodiversity, providing a unique range of habitats, acting as wildlife corridors, and forming an important element of the Vale's ecological network. They make a significant contribution towards the character of our landscape and form an important part of GI. Watercourses also provide vital ecosystem services, particularly in terms of improving water quality and drainage and flood management, but also providing green space for informal recreation, benefiting health and well-being.

¹²¹ Chris Blandford Associates (2017) *Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils Green Infrastructure Strategy* (2017), available at: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/LPP2

¹²²<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/main-river-map-for-england-proposed-changes-and-decisions>

¹²³Watercourses as defined in s72(1) Land Drainage Act 1991, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/59/section/24>; Ordinary watercourses as defined in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

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Development Policy 30: Watercourses

Development of land that contains or is adjacent to a watercourse will only be permitted where it would not have a detrimental impact on the function or setting of the watercourse or its biodiversity, or the detrimental impact can be appropriately mitigated.

Plans for development adjacent to or encompassing a watercourse should include a minimum 10 m buffer zone along both sides of the watercourse to create a corridor of land and water favourable to the enhancement of biodiversity.

Proposals which involve culverting a watercourse are unlikely to be considered acceptable.

Development which is located within 20 m of a watercourse will require a construction management plan to be agreed with the Council before commencement of work to ensure that the watercourse will be satisfactorily protected from damage, disturbance or pollution.

3.238. Of specific note are the Vale's globally rare chalk streams. There are around 224 known chalk streams in England, which constitutes over 85 % of the total world resource. As a result Chalk Rivers have been specifically identified as a priority for conservation

under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)¹²⁴.

3.239. The geology of chalk streams produces characteristic features that support special wildlife habitats and

species. Fed from aquifers in the chalk rocks of the North Wessex Downs, the water is characterised as having high clarity and quality with a stable temperature regime. It is the quality of the water as well as the in-stream and bankside habitats that make chalk streams so important for a variety of rare and protected species, including, for example, White Clawed Crayfish, Otters and Water Voles. Chalk streams in the Vale arise from the escarpment of the North Wessex Downs, and the headwaters are often associated with spring-line villages. Examples include the Letcombe Brook and Ginge Brook.

3.240. It is estimated that only around a quarter of Britain's chalk streams are achieving good ecological status under the Water Framework Directive¹²⁵. The health of all watercourses are under pressure from a variety of issues including abstraction, pollution originating from urban developments, and increased human associated disturbance.

3.241. The Part 1 plan seeks to

maintain and improve the natural environment including GI and waterways. **Core Policy 45: Green Infrastructure** ensures a net gain in GI is achieved for new development proposals. The Part 1 plan recognises the contribution of waterways and river corridors to the character, biodiversity and landscape quality in the Vale. **Core Policy 46: Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity** in the Part 1 plan ensures that proposals likely to harm links between priority habitats or corridors for priority species achieve a net gain in biodiversity either through appropriate mitigation or off-setting.

3.242. In line with these Part 1 policies, Part 2 sets out **Development Policy 30: Watercourses** to ensure that watercourses are positively integrated in the design of new development from the outset, and that the ecological importance of the watercourse is not compromised, and biodiversity is retained and enhanced. By giving consideration to the watercourses from the start of

¹²⁴S41 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/59/contents>
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/59/contents
¹²⁵World Wildlife Fund (WWF) (2015) *The State of England's Chalk Streams*, available at: http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/wwf_chalkstreamreport_jan15_forweb.pdf

¹²⁵World Wildlife Fund (WWF) (2015) *The State of England's Chalk Streams*, available at: http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/wwf_chalkstreamreport_jan15_forweb.pdf

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the design process, it is possible to make the most of attractive riverside settings that can form natural areas of GI useful for informal recreation and other ecosystem services. Proposals should consider how access to watercourses can be improved for all users (depending on biodiversity sensitivities) including provision for those with mobility impairments.

3.243. All development proposals adjacent to watercourses should aim to avoid damaging impacts on the watercourse, its biodiversity or historical significance and provide mitigation for any unavoidable impacts. All development proposals that incorporate watercourses should ensure that the watercourse is protected from the development and aim to provide enhancements to the watercourse that benefit biodiversity and other ecosystem services.

Buffer zones

3.244. Buffer zones are important along watercourses to give species

and habitats protection from increased disturbance associated with development. The extent of the buffer is dependent on the size and nature of the development, but it should be a minimum of 10 metres wide, measured from the top of each bank and remain free of any built development. Where a watercourse flows through a development, a buffer zone should be provided on both sides of that watercourse. Larger developments should provide further buffering, and these additional areas can be used for informal recreation.

3.245. Undeveloped buffer zones are important as they can help to:

- allow the watercourse to undergo the natural processes of erosion and deposition and natural changes to the bank profile without necessitating intrusive and harmful bank protection works
- provide space for semi-aquatic and terrestrial habitats which are important to the lifecycle of many species

- create, maintain and enhance wildlife corridors which can also be used as part of the green infrastructure networks within development
- prevent permanent overshadowing of the water by buildings
- reduce the risk of pollution caused by run-off, and
- reduce incidences of flooding by allowing water storage and the natural drainage of rainwater.

3.246. Proposals should:

- include long term management plans for the buffer zone which retain and enhance its biodiversity value
- where a 10 m wide buffer zone is not considered possible by the local planning authority (for example in dense urban areas where existing development comes closer to the watercourse), a smaller buffer

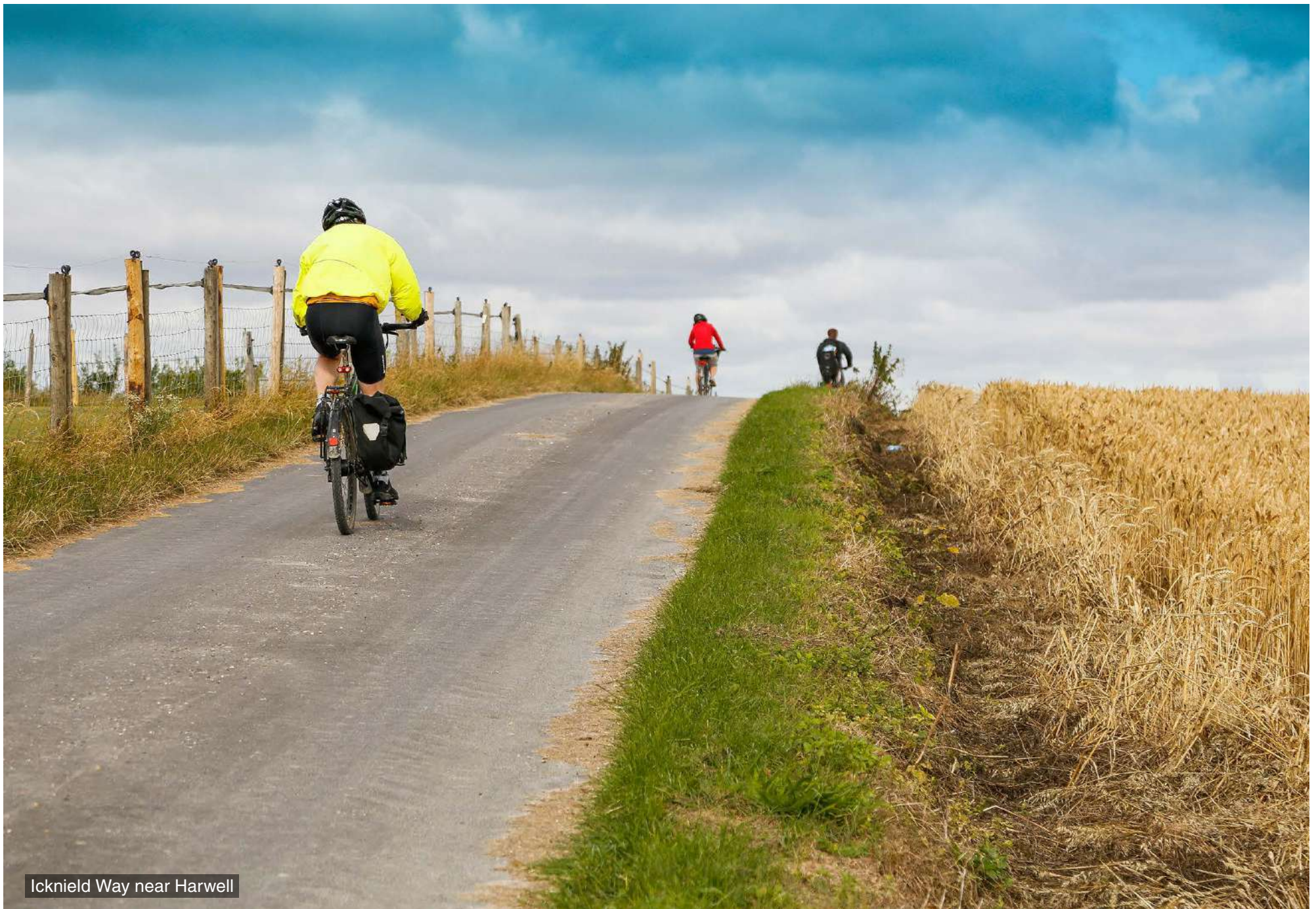
zone may be allowed, but should still be accompanied by detailed plans to show how the land will be managed to promote biodiversity, and how maintenance access to the watercourse will be created. Wherever possible, a minimum 10m buffer should be maintained. Where development occurs on land outside the boundaries of an existing settlement a significantly wider buffer is likely to be required.

- seek to reinstate buffer zones where previous land uses or development have not provided this, and
- where a buffer zone is not included in a proposal, justification must be provided by the developer to the satisfaction of the local planning authority before planning permission will be granted.

3.247. Buffer zones should be reserved as a natural or semi-natural habitat, free from built development and formal landscaping. Soft infrastructure such as pedestrian footpaths should be kept



Bridge Street, River Thames, Abingdon



Icknield Way near Harwell

3 Building Healthy and Sustainable Communities

to a minimum, for example a footpath that provides limited pedestrian access to the watercourse is more likely to be considered acceptable than one which closely follows the length of the watercourse. Buffer zones should be planted with native species that are naturally found by local riversides. It should not form domestic land or parking areas of any kind, but may form part of the requisite GI for new developments.

3.248. Watercourses should be designed into the development to create a safe space, overlooked by, and where possible, fronted by, dwellings or other buildings, and forming an attractive part of the development with a positive impact on the visual amenity and character of the settlement.

Culverts

3.249. Culverting a watercourse has an impact on the ecology of the watercourse by removing habitat and fragmenting the channel and its river corridor. All opportunities to de-culvert

a watercourse should be taken. New culverting should be avoided and only used as a last resort as:

- the absence of sunlight, natural banks and vegetation means that culverts are not usually able to sustain significant life
- changes in the channel dynamics resulting from the flow are focused into a particular route
- culverts are often protected from blockage by screens, which usually makes the culvert impenetrable to animals such as otter, water voles, fish and invertebrates
- culverts can prevent the movement of species along the river corridor and lead to animals, such as otters and other large mammals, being forced onto roads in order to seek food and shelter. Not only can this lead to animal deaths, it can also lead to road traffic incidents, and
- culverting can significantly increase

the risk of flooding due to the risk of blockage; restricted access can make maintenance and clearing of blockages more complicated.

3.250. For these reasons, sites for new development with existing culverts will be expected to investigate the feasibility of de-culverting the watercourse. Where bridges are proposed as an alternative to culverting, the construction method should take into account the importance of maintaining an obstruction free bank for wildlife.

3.251. It should be noted that in addition to any planning permission, consent is required from either the Environment Agency or the Lead Local Flood Authority to carry out any work within 8 metres of a watercourse.

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Public Rights of Way, National Trails and Open Access Areas

Protection of Public Rights of Way, National Trails and Open Access Areas

3.252. Public Rights of Way, National Trails and designated Open Access Areas are an important resource for health and well-being, recreational and tourism activities and for their tranquillity, landscape, ecological and historical significance to the Vale. Such routes and areas also provide both residents and visitors to the Vale with an opportunity to access, enjoy and experience the diversity of farmed and open countryside areas used for a number of recreational activities, including walking, cycling and horse-riding.

National Trails

3.253. National Trails are long distance routes designated under legislation, two of which run through the Vale. These are the Ridgeway and the

Thames Path.

3.254. The Ridgeway is one of the oldest routes in Europe. The trail runs from Overton Hill, near Avebury in Wiltshire, to Ivinghoe Beacon in Buckinghamshire, and offers attractive views and, in most places, a sense of remoteness to visitors and residents in the Vale.

3.255. The Thames Path is a long distance walking trail, following the route of the River Thames. Starting from its source in the Cotswolds, the route passes features such as water meadows and the historic Market Town of Abingdon-on-Thames.

3.256. The Council supports the continued need to protect and further enhance these long-distance recreational paths.

Public Rights of Way

3.257. National policy recognises Public Rights of Way as an important component of sustainable transport



Development Policy 31: Protection of Public Rights of Way, National Trails and Open Access Areas

Development on and / or over public rights of way will be permitted where the development can be designed to accommodate satisfactorily the existing route, or where the right of way is incorporated into the development site as an attractive, safe and continuous route. Alternative routes will need to be made equally or more attractive, safe and convenient to rights of way users.

The Council will actively seek opportunities to improve the accessibility and the addition of new connections and status upgrades to the existing rights of way network, including National Trails. Proposals of this nature will be supported where they would not lead to increased pressure on sensitive sites, such as those of important ecological value.

Development will not be permitted where proposals remove, narrow or materially impair the approved line of the Thames Path or Ridgeway National Trails, key connecting routes, and / or public access to them.

3 Development Management Policies

3.322. Applications for reasonable adjustments to Listed Buildings to improve access for people with mobility issues or disabilities, which would not otherwise significantly harm the fabric of the building and, if necessary, could be removed without harm to the significance of the building at a later date, will be considered favourably.

Registered Parks and Gardens

3.323. The Vale of White Horse District has eight Registered Parks and Gardens that are identified by Historic England on the National Heritage List for England¹⁴⁵. These are shown on the **Adopted Policies Map** and listed in **Appendix G**. There are also many non-designated historic parks and gardens of local interest. The Council will seek to work with Oxfordshire Gardens Trust and others to establish a local list of historic parks and gardens.

3.324. Proposals that would lead to the harm or total loss of a Registered

Park or Garden will be assessed in accordance with **Development Policy 36: Heritage Assets** and Paragraphs 132 and 133 of the NPPF.

Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

3.325. Archaeological remains are a finite and irreplaceable resource that represent a unique record of past times. The remains are often fragile and highly vulnerable to damage and disruption by development or agricultural activity.

3.326. The Vale has an important archaeological heritage, with remains dating back to prehistoric times, and is home to an extensive range of archaeological features, including burial mounds, field systems, historic routes and ancient settlements. The majority of these features are buried below ground, although there are some features, for example, The Barn at Great Coxwell, which are situated above ground that provide a significant contribution towards the

Vale's distinctive landscape.

3.327. The Vale also contains a wealth of ancient settlements including those from the prehistoric period, the Roman occupation and the Saxon, Norman and medieval periods. Examples of sites of archaeological interest include the Neolithic Long Barrow at Wayland Smithy, the Iron Age hillfort at Uffington Castle, the Roman temple at Frilford, the lost medieval villages at Seacourt and Tulwick (near Grove) and the White Horse itself, thought to date from the Bronze Age.

3.328. A network of historic routes also exist as an archaeological feature, ranging from pre-historic tracks such as The Ridgeway, Roman roads, medieval coffin ways, salt roads, and droveways, to later turnpike roads, historic waterways and canals. These routes are integrated into the Vale's landscape and serve an important function in linking settlements and forming a unique setting for the Vale's distinctive landscape features, such as White Horse Hill and Uffington

Castle.

3.329. Some nationally important sites are selected for protection as Scheduled Monuments by the government on the advice of Historic England. At present there are 69 Scheduled Monuments within the district. Scheduled Monuments are given statutory protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, which requires consent to be obtained from the Secretary of State for any works that affect them. These are listed in **Appendix F**.

3.330. Some non-scheduled archaeological sites may demonstrably be of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments and should be considered subject to the policies for Scheduled Monuments. Other non-designated archaeological assets are protected under the government's policy on non-designated heritage assets¹⁴⁶ and **Core Policy: 39 The Historic Environment** in the Part 1 plan.

¹⁴⁵Historic England (2017) *The National Heritage List for England (NHLE)*; available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/> (NPPF), Paragraph 139

¹⁴⁶Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework

3 Development Management Policies



Development Policy 39: Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

Development will be permitted where it can be shown that it would not be detrimental to the site or setting of Scheduled Monuments or nationally important designated or non-designated archaeological remains.

When researching the development potential of a site, applicants will be expected to undertake an assessment of appropriate detail to determine whether the site is known or is likely to contain archaeological remains, and demonstrate how the development proposals have had regard to any such remains.

Where the assessment indicates known archaeological remains on site, and development could disturb or adversely affect important archaeological remains and / or their setting, applicants will be expected to:

- i. submit an appropriate archaeological desk-based assessment, or
- ii. undertake a field evaluation (conducted by a suitably qualified, archaeological organisation) where necessary.

Nationally important archaeological remains (whether scheduled or demonstrably of equivalent significance) should be preserved in situ. Development proposals that would lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance of such remains will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where:

- iii. it can be clearly and convincingly demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the circumstances in paragraph 133

of the NPPF apply.

For other archaeological remains, the effect of a development proposal on the significance of the remains, either directly or indirectly, will be taken into account in determining the application. As such assets are also irreplaceable, the presumption will be in favour of the avoidance of harm. The scale of the harm or loss will be weighed against this presumption and the significance of the heritage asset.

Where harm to or loss of significance to the asset is considered to be justified, the harm should be minimised and mitigated by a programme of archaeological investigation, including excavation, recording and analysis. Planning permission will not be granted until this programme has been submitted to, and approved by, the local planning authority, and development should not commence until these works have been satisfactorily undertaken by an appropriately qualified organisation. The results and analysis of findings subsequent to the investigation should be published and made available to the Historic Environment Record (HER) and the relevant local and county authorities.