



Listening Learning Leading

# South Oxfordshire Core Strategy

December 2012

Part of the Local Plan

# **South Oxfordshire Core Strategy**

Adopted December 2012

Part of the Local Plan

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# Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
What is a core strategy? .....	1
The wider context .....	3
Working with partners.....	4
Our evidence base.....	4
National policy guidance.....	5
The core strategy and sustainability appraisal.....	5
<b>2. South Oxfordshire: issues and trends.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Location and connections.....	6
Jobs, skills and the economy.....	10
Infrastructure and meeting the needs of growth.....	12
Housing .....	12
Population change.....	13
Pockets of deprivation.....	15
Town centres.....	15
Rural communities.....	15
Community infrastructure.....	16
Climate change and energy consumption.....	17
Environment.....	18
SWOT analysis.....	20
<b>3. The vision and objectives.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Our objectives.....	22
Key delivery objectives.....	24
<b>4. The overall strategy.....</b>	<b>26</b>
The structure of the strategy.....	26

A strong network of settlements.....	27
<b>5. Moving around.....</b>	<b>31</b>
Introduction.....	31
The strategic transport network.....	32
Transport infrastructure improvements.....	33
Accessing Science Vale UK and the South Central Oxfordshire Transport Study..	33
Access to Oxford.....	34
Cross Thames travel.....	34
Mitigating the impacts of our spatial strategy .....	34
Promoting sustainable modes of transport.....	36
Transport assessments.....	37
Public transport.....	38
Cycling and walking.....	38
Infrastructure Plan.....	38
Traffic management and environmental improvements.....	39
Car parking.....	40
Rural initiatives.....	40
Electronic communications.....	40
Access for all.....	40
<b>6. A thriving economy.....</b>	<b>41</b>
Introduction.....	41
The amount and distribution of employment.....	43
Skills development and infrastructure.....	46
<b>7. Delivering new homes.....</b>	<b>47</b>
The amount of new housing.....	47
Housing distribution.....	47
Didcot.....	51

Rest of District.....	51
Density.....	54
Meeting residents' housing needs.....	54
Affordable housing.....	54
Meeting housing needs.....	56
Specialist Accommodation for Older people.....	57
Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.....	57
<b>8. Town centres and shopping.....</b>	<b>59</b>
Introduction.....	59
Local distinctiveness.....	59
The retail hierarchy.....	60
The amount and location of new retail floorspace.....	61
Town centre boundaries.....	63
Primary and secondary frontages.....	63
Partnership working.....	63
<b>9. Didcot.....</b>	<b>64</b>
The central area.....	65
The Orchard Centre.....	66
The Broadway.....	68
The station area.....	68
New housing.....	68
The location of housing.....	69
Meeting employment needs.....	71
Infrastructure.....	71
Transport.....	72
Green infrastructure.....	72

Sport and leisure.....	72
Education and health.....	72
<b>10. Henley-on-Thames.....</b>	<b>73</b>
Introduction.....	73
The strategy for Henley-on-Thames.....	74
Retail and leisure.....	76
Transport .....	77
Employment.....	77
Infrastructure .....	77
<b>11. Thame.....</b>	<b>79</b>
Introduction.....	79
The strategy for Thame.....	81
Retail and leisure.....	82
Employment.....	83
New housing in Thame.....	83
Infrastructure requirements.....	84
<b>12. Wallingford.....</b>	<b>85</b>
Introduction.....	85
The strategy for Wallingford.....	87
Retail and leisure.....	87
Employment.....	88
New housing in Wallingford.....	89
Infrastructure requirements.....	89
<b>13. Rural Communities.....</b>	<b>91</b>
Housing.....	93
Employment.....	94
Community facilities and rural transport.....	95

<b>14. The environment.....</b>	<b>96</b>
Introduction.....	96
Landscape.....	96
Green Belt.....	98
Historic environment.....	99
Water.....	99
Flood risk management.....	99
Minerals safeguarding areas.....	100
<b>15. Quality development.....</b>	<b>101</b>
Sustainable design and construction.....	101
Renewable energy generation.....	101
Renewable energy as part of new development.....	102
Standards for design and construction.....	103
Climate change adaptation.....	104
Design quality.....	105
Design briefs .....	107
<b>16. Green infrastructure and biodiversity.....</b>	<b>108</b>
Introduction.....	108
Biodiversity.....	109
<b>17. Infrastructure provision.....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>18. Implementation of the strategy.....</b>	<b>113</b>
Delivery mechanisms.....	113
Working with partners.....	113
Delivery and Contingency.....	113
<b>List of policies.....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>Appendix 1 Glossary.....</b>	<b>141</b>

<b>Appendix 2 How the objectives are delivered.....</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>Appendix 3 Housing Trajectories.....</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>Appendix 4 Category list for settlement strategy.....</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>Appendix 5 Schedule of Local Plan 2011 policies to be replaced.....</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>Key Diagram.....</b>	<b>154</b>

## Tables

Table 4.1 What the strategy will deliver.....	30
Table 5.1 Roads predicted to experience increased pressure outside of Science Vale UK area.....	35
Table 7.1 Housing targets and number of dwellings to allocate.....	49
Table 7.2 Planned housing provision in Didcot.....	51
Table 7.3 Planned housing provision in the Rest of the District.....	53
Table 8.1 Amount of existing floorspace and need for additional floorspace.....	61
Table 9.1 Didcot floorspace needs in square meters.....	67
Table 10.1 Henley floorspace needs in square metres.....	76
Table 11.1 Thame floorspace needs in square metres.....	82
Table 12.1 Wallingford floorspace needs in square metres.....	88
Table 18.1 Anticipated delivery of housing development.....	115
Table 18.2 Policy development and monitoring framework.....	116

## Maps

Map 2.1 South Oxfordshire in context.....	6
Map 2.2 Commuting patterns in South Oxfordshire (2001 Census).....	8
Map 2.3 Key public transport and road corridors in South Oxfordshire.....	9
Map 2.4 Science Vale UK area.....	11
Map 2.5 South Oxfordshire showing rivers and AONB.....	19
Map 4.1 Network of settlements in South Oxfordshire.....	29
Map 5.1 Key movement corridors and areas for transport improvements within the district.....	36
Map 5.2 Proposed Premium and Hourly bus route network.....	39
Map 7.1 Number of new homes we need to plan for in South Oxfordshire.....	50
Map 9.1 The central area of Didcot.....	66
Map 9.2 The strategy for Didcot.....	70
Map 10.1 Henley-on-Thames showing significant sites and conservation areas.....	75

Map 11.1 Thames.....	80
Map 12.1 Wallingford.....	86
Map 14.1 The key environmental assets of our district.....	97
Map 16.1 Existing green infrastructure and conservation target area.....	111

## Figures

Fig. 1.1 Plans in South Oxfordshire.....	2
Fig. 2.1 Forecast population change in South Oxfordshire between 2006 and 2026.....	14
Fig. 2.2 Forecast population change by age in South Oxfordshire between 2006 and 2026 .....	14
Fig. 8.1 Existing floorspace and quantitative need for additional A1 - A5 use class floorspace.....	62

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This core strategy sets out our vision for South Oxfordshire to 2027. It shows how we have developed a strategy that responds to our vision and how we will deliver it by working in partnership with everyone with a stake in the future of this district.
- 1.2. A Mori poll in 2008 showed that 91 per cent of residents in South Oxfordshire were satisfied with the area as a place to live. We want to make sure that residents continue to enjoy the quality of life the district offers but there are pressures and challenges we need to address. These include:
  - Housing is more expensive than in most other parts of the country. Our young people struggle to remain living and working where they were brought up and our ageing population does not have enough choice of homes that will protect their independence.
  - Jobs in the district are less well paid than in the rest of the county and some businesses cannot recruit staff with the skills they need.
  - Facilities in our villages such as shops, pubs and schools are struggling to adapt to the changing ways we live our lives. Our market towns are also facing competition from the larger towns and cities around.
  - Climate change and concern for future generations demand that we alter our habits and our use of resources.
- 1.3. During this period the district will experience pressures as well as opportunities. These will challenge the way we plan for the future and how we work with our partners, neighbouring authorities, businesses, housing and environmental stakeholders and the wider community.
- 1.4. Planning has a key role to play in successfully meeting these challenges in a way that not only protects what we value about our district, but that also builds on the opportunities to make it an even better place.

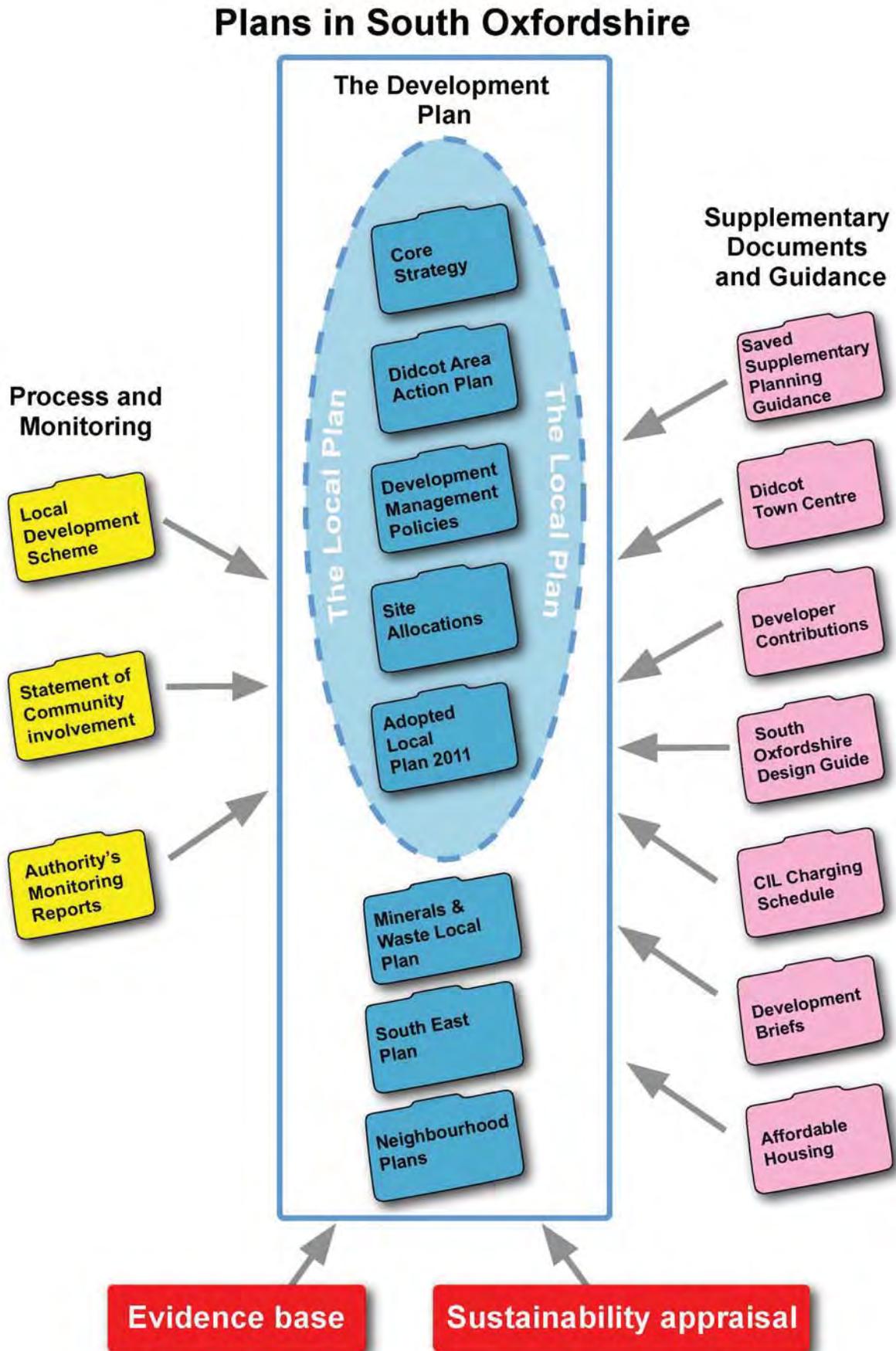
## What is a core strategy?

- 1.5. The Core Strategy is the key policy document in our Local Plan. The Local Plan is made up of a number of policy documents. The development plan documents (shown in blue in the diagram overleaf) will eventually replace the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011. The timetable for preparing these documents is in our Local Development Scheme on our website<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.6. The first development plan document we have produced is this South Oxfordshire Core Strategy. It sets out the key elements of the spatial planning framework for the district. The other Local Plan documents will develop this overall strategy.
- 1.7. The core strategy shows how we will deliver the vision and objectives. It sets out the overall amount of development in the district, the broad locations for delivering housing and other development needs such as employment, shopping and transport. The strategy includes the allocation of strategic sites for development and sets out what physical, social and green infrastructure is needed and how and by what means it will be delivered. It covers the period to 2027.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.southoxon.gov.uk/lds](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/lds)

Figure 1.1. Plans in South Oxfordshire



- 1.8. This core strategy contains:
- a spatial vision of how we see the district and the places within it developing in the next 20 years;
  - strategic objectives for the area which are the key matters we are seeking to address;
  - a strategy for managing and monitoring delivery of the strategy;
  - a delivery strategy which shows where things will happen and who will be part of making them happen. This includes:
    - a key diagram illustrating areas of change
    - strategic policies for key issues
    - proposals for the different places which show how they will change
- 1.9. We have tried to avoid using technical terms but some are contained in Government guidance and their use is unavoidable. We have included a glossary in Appendix 1.
- 1.10. Our Local Development Scheme shows that, subject to further reforms to the plan making system proposed by the Government, we intend to prepare three further development plan documents (DPDs) which will sit under the core strategy and show how it will be implemented. These are included in Figure 1.1 and are:
- The Didcot Area Action Plan DPD which will show how and where Didcot will change. This will be a joint plan with the Vale of White Horse District Council;
  - The Site Allocations DPD which will identify development sites in the district; and
  - The Development Management Policies DPD which will set out the policies which we will use to determine planning applications in addition to those in this strategy.
- 1.11. In addition we will be preparing a supplementary planning document on developer contributions. We will work with developers, landowners, infrastructure providers, town and parish councils and local residents to prepare development briefs for strategic sites. We will also work with town and parish councils to provide advice on the development of Neighbourhood Plans as appropriate.

## The wider context

- 1.12. The core strategy seeks to deliver the spatial, mainly land-use elements of the corporate strategies of the local strategic partnerships (LSPs) and the council. We have worked with our LSPs in preparing the Oxfordshire and South Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategies through joint consultation and a shared evidence base. We have held workshops with the South Oxfordshire Partnership on the vision and objectives for this strategy. The core strategy shows how the relevant priorities in these strategies will be delivered.
- 1.13. The strategy also takes into account the Local Area Agreement which is a type of contract between the government and organisations in the Oxfordshire Partnership to deliver improvements in key services. It also reflects the strategic objectives in the council's corporate plan<sup>2</sup> and in other relevant council strategies. The background paper on the overall strategy shows the linkages between these documents<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Corporate Plan 2008-2011 and 2012-2016, South Oxfordshire District Council

<sup>3</sup> Background Paper on Strategy Development, South Oxfordshire District Council

## Working with partners

- 1.14. The delivery of this strategy is dependent on a wide range of organisations. These include organisations such as the Environment Agency and those responsible for services such as health, education, transport, community safety and water resources. We have involved these organisations in preparing this strategy and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that accompanies it. Landowners and developers are also central to this process and we are working closely with them to make sure the strategy can be delivered. Making places better by integrating with the policies and programmes of our partners is what spatial planning is all about.
- 1.15. In preparing this strategy we have involved neighbouring authorities to ensure our plans are consistent and we have taken account of the impacts of development on the surrounding area. We have worked with all the Oxfordshire authorities on some aspects of our evidence base and with the Vale of White Horse District in particular in relation to Didcot and the Science Vale UK area.

## Our evidence base

- 1.16. In order to make sure that the strategy addresses the right issues and to understand the effects of the strategy we have assembled an extensive evidence base. This is made up of two elements:
- the views of the local community and others with a stake in the future of the area; and
  - research/ fact finding evidence.
- 1.17. We consulted on an Issues and Options document in November 2007, on a Preferred Options document in March 2009 and on further options for development around Wallingford in January 2010. In October 2010 we held further consultations on proposed changes to the core strategy and on housing sites around Thame. During the examination stage, modifications to the core strategy were published for public comment in June 2011, February 2012 and July 2012. We have talked to a number of organisations and individuals about the strategy. We have also taken into account views expressed in consultations on related matters such as the market town action plans. We have considered community views expressed through parish plans. Full details of the community involvement in plan preparation are in our Consultation Statement<sup>4</sup>.
- 1.18. In preparing the strategy we have collected and analysed relevant statistical evidence and commissioned a number of studies. These are referred to in the relevant sections of the strategy and a list of them is on our website<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.southoxon.gov.uk/planning-policy](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/planning-policy)

<sup>5</sup> [www.southoxon.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/evidence) (studies are available to download from this page)

## National policy guidance

### **Policy CS1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

Planning applications which accord with the policies in the Development Plan (including, where relevant, Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning permission will also be granted where relevant policies in the Development Plan are out of date or silent unless:

- any adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in the Framework or other material considerations indicate that development should be restricted.

- 1.19. Our strategy for South Oxfordshire must conform with national policy guidance. The main sources of national guidance are the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and circulars<sup>6</sup>. They provide the context within which Local Plans and other strategies and programmes are prepared.
- 1.20. When considering development proposals which accord with the policies in the Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework is also a material consideration. The Council will take a positive approach to the consideration of development proposals, following the presumption in favour of sustainable development. We will work proactively with applicants and other stakeholders to seek solutions which mean that proposals can be approved where possible, and to secure development which achieves sustainable improvements in the economic, social and environmental conditions in South Oxfordshire.

## The core strategy and sustainability appraisal

- 1.21. The core strategy has been shaped through a combination of consultation, consideration of policy guidance at national level, the findings of our evidence base, the technical assessment (sustainability appraisal) of all options and fundamentally a consideration of the alternative ways our vision and objectives can be delivered.
- 1.22. A sustainability appraisal (SA) must accompany every development plan document that we produce. It is a tool that highlights any significant environmental, social or economic effects of the plan. It assesses the plan against a number of sustainability objectives in order to identify these impacts. The appraisal has been fully integrated into the plan preparation process so that it informed and influenced the plan as it developed.
- 1.23. The SAs done at earlier stages of the process tested each possible option against a number of sustainability objectives. We have used the results of these tests in deciding on our final strategy and the policies and proposals that support it. However, even when options appeared favourable when considered against SA objectives, we still had to ensure they were the right ones to meet the objectives of the strategy listed in section three.

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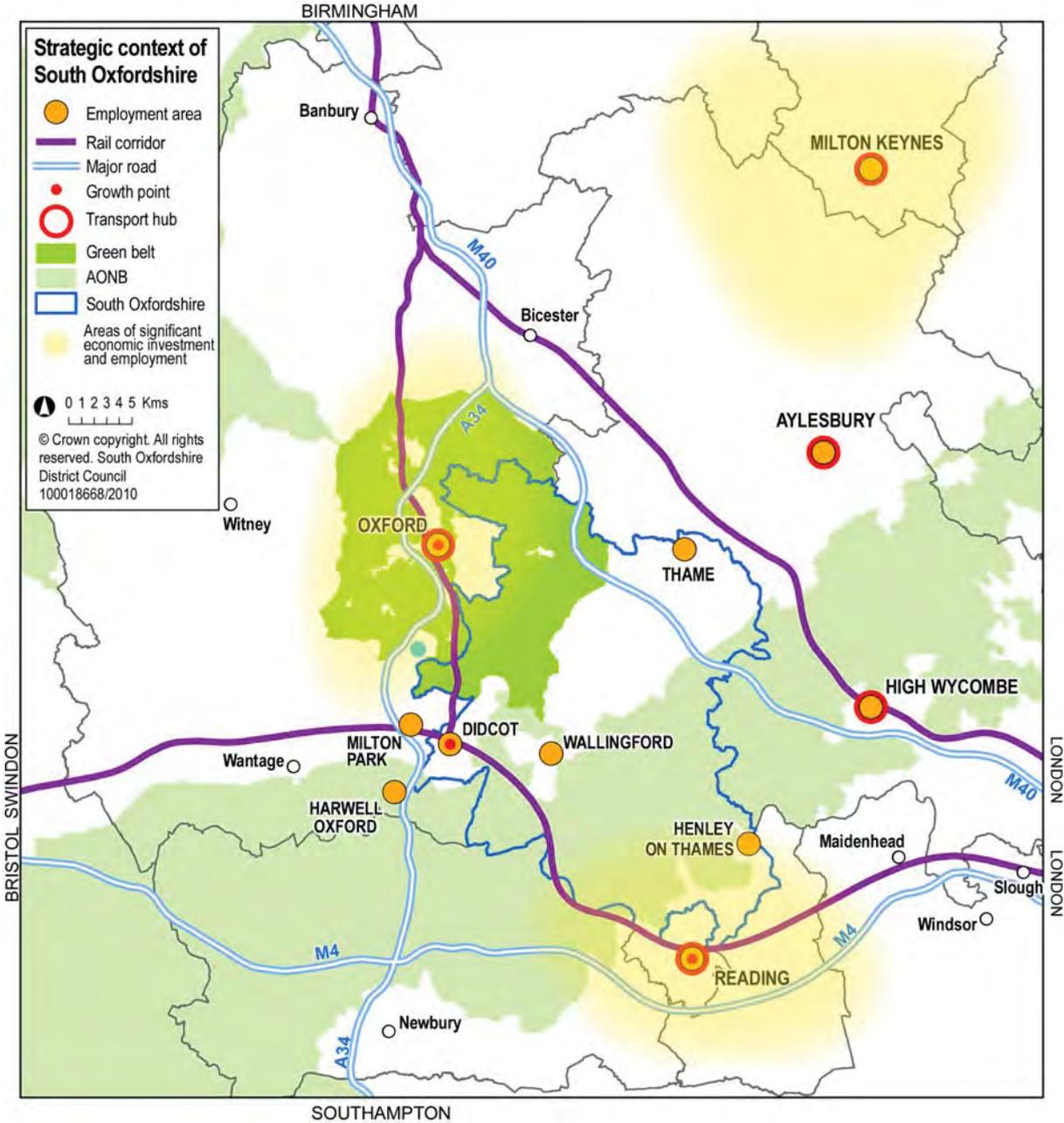
<sup>6</sup> [www.communities.gov.uk/planning](http://www.communities.gov.uk/planning)

## 2. South Oxfordshire: issues and trends

2.1. This section contains a spatial portrait picking out some key features of the district. We then identify some of the key challenges we need to address in the core strategy. The section is arranged broadly in themes, but they should not be considered in isolation and it is very clear that many of the issues relate to each other. For example, the change in population structure has implications for nearly all other issues including housing, employment, rural communities and health.

### Location and connections

Map 2.1 South Oxfordshire in context

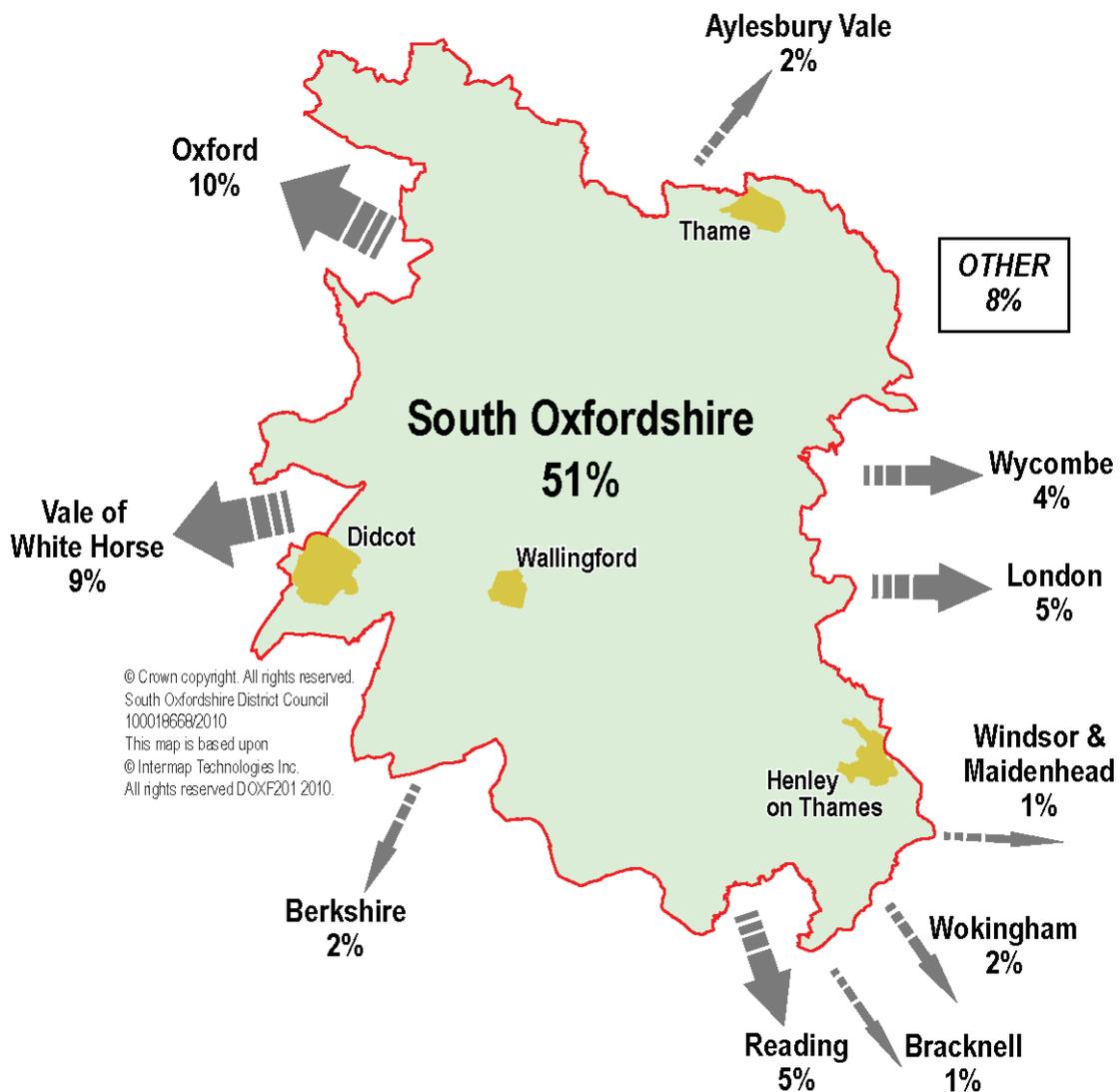


- 2.2. South Oxfordshire is a mainly rural district in South East England covering an area of 253 square miles. Map 2.1 shows the district's location in context with the urban areas that surround it. These neighbouring urban areas present challenges particularly in relation to travel, housing and employment. The district lies within the sphere of influence of London and the area to the west of London.
- 2.3. The issues that South Oxfordshire faces in relation to its surroundings are discussed in detail in the Cross Boundary Issues background paper<sup>7</sup>. The plans for growth in the surrounding areas will impact on this district. It is therefore important that the policies in this core strategy are coherent with neighbouring authorities' plans for growth.
- 2.4. An example of an impact that the surrounding areas of growth have on the district is a high level of commuting out of the district for work. There are several major employment areas close to the district and almost half of the working population work outside the district. 40 per cent of the jobs in the district are filled by people commuting in. The main employment destinations outside the district are shown in Map 2.2.

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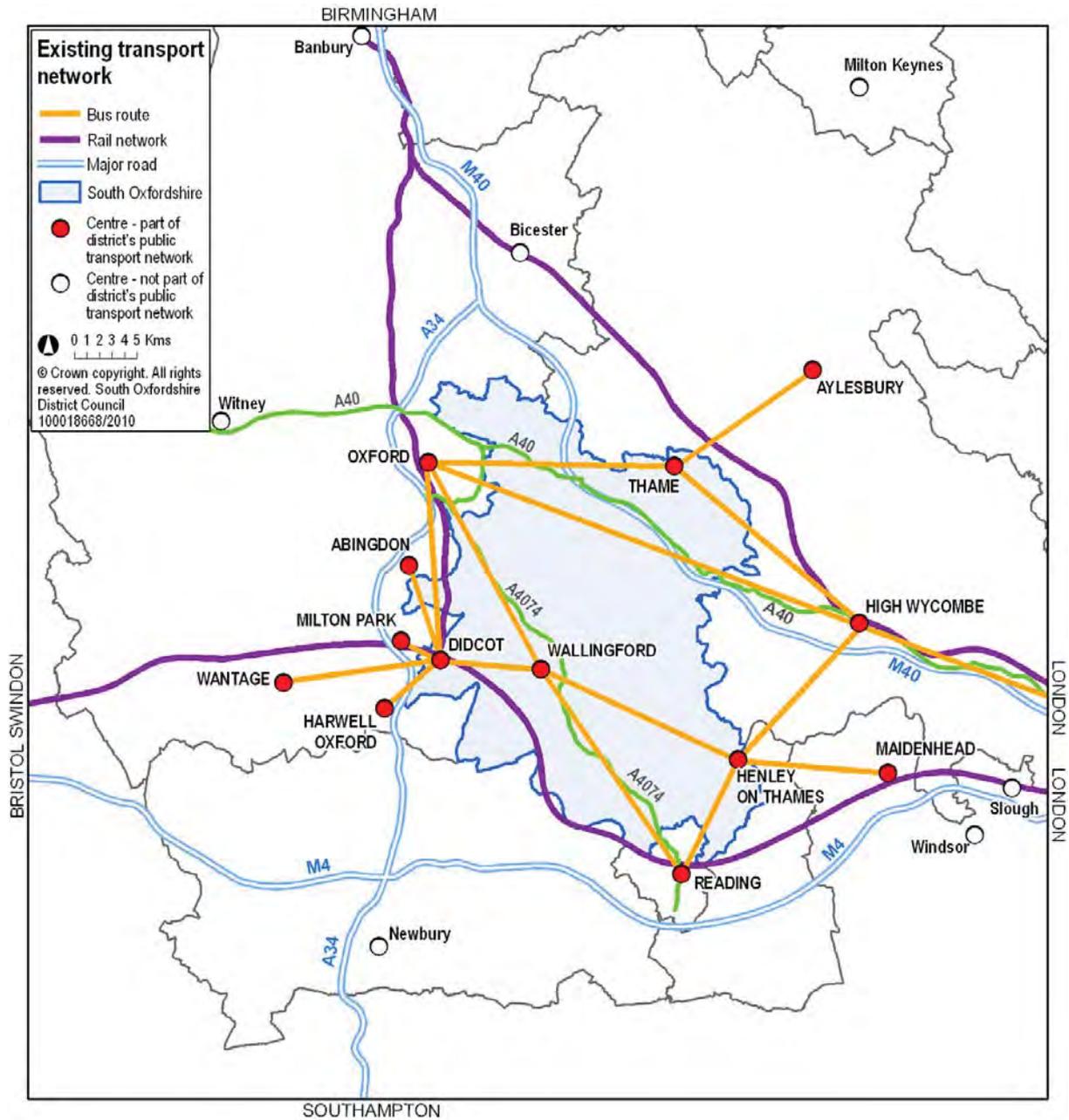
<sup>7</sup> Cross Boundary Issues Background Paper, March 2011, SODC

**Map 2.2 Commuting patterns in South Oxfordshire (2001 Census)**



- 2.5. This has implications for the transport network in the district as well as impacting on the economy of South Oxfordshire. This issue has been an important consideration in designing a plan that aims to provide a sustainable place to live. The A34 is already very congested at peak hours and therefore we aim to limit the impact of the planned growth on the existing transport network (see map 2.3 which shows the key public transport and major road links in our district). This will be done through a number of policy approaches including promoting employment within the district and improving access to the rail network and public transport.

**Map 2.3 Key public transport and road corridors in South Oxfordshire**



**Location and connections – key challenges for the core strategy:**

- How to manage travel demand in an area surrounded by large and expanding urban areas and with issues of congestion on key routes.
- How to improve public transport services in a rural district with a dispersed population.
- How to limit the impact of growth on the A34 and improve access to the rail network.
- How to encourage sustainable modes of travel.
- How to deal with the influence of larger urban areas outside of the district.
- How to reduce long distance out commuting and get a more self contained economy.

## Jobs, skills and the economy

- 2.6. South Oxfordshire lies in the economically buoyant Thames Valley.
- 2.7. The employment rate in the district is 80 per cent<sup>8</sup>. This is slightly lower than other Oxfordshire districts but is still at a healthy level. Most businesses within the district are small with those of 10 or fewer workers accounting for 78 per cent of the district's employers<sup>9</sup>. The number of new businesses is high when compared to the average for Oxfordshire. However, the growth in the number of VAT registered businesses has been slowing, which could indicate a dropping survival rate for businesses.
- 2.8. Over 20 per cent of employees in South Oxfordshire are employed in roles that are classified as managers and senior officials, and just under 20 per cent are in professional occupations. There are a relatively high number of associate professional and technical occupations and skilled trades, which may reflect the number of high-tech industries in the area<sup>10</sup>. The service sector is overwhelmingly the main employer in South Oxfordshire accounting for 87 per cent of working people. Tourism related jobs account for around ten per cent of employment<sup>11</sup>.
- 2.9. The level of qualifications held by residents is high although 20 per cent of the workforce has no formal qualifications. This compares to an Oxfordshire average of 21 per cent and an average for England of 29 per cent<sup>12</sup>. 28 per cent of employers in Oxfordshire reported skills gaps - well above the regional average of 18 per cent<sup>13</sup>. However, exam results show that schools in South Oxfordshire are successful compared to both the Oxfordshire and England averages<sup>14</sup>.
- 2.10. Employment is concentrated around the four towns, particularly Wallingford and Didcot. In the rural areas there are some significant campus style developments including Culham Science Centre and Oxford Brookes University's Wheatley campus. There are also a lot of small enterprises, many in converted agricultural buildings.
- 2.11. Reliance on working outside the district (see Map 2.2) is reflected in residents' income levels. South Oxfordshire has the highest income per capita of all Oxfordshire districts. However, rates of pay of those working in the district are the lowest. In 2007, the average weekly earnings of those who work in South Oxfordshire were 15 per cent lower than those who live in South Oxfordshire. The weekly earnings of those who work in the county as a whole are 4 per cent lower than those who live in the county<sup>15</sup>.
- 2.12. To some extent this difference between residents' income levels and income per capita is a reflection of the condition of our employment stock and accessibility considerations. Our Employment Land Review<sup>16</sup> rated 66 employment sites in our district on the basis of the existing buildings, their wider environment and access. Of these, 32 per cent were rated as good, 44 per cent were rated as average and 24 per cent were rated as poor.

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8 Annual Population Survey February 2007

9 Oxfordshire County Council Company Information database January 2008

10 ONS ABI from NOMIS web Dec 2007

11 ONS ABI Employee Analysis, NOMIS 2006

12 2001 Census

13 2005 National Employer Skills Survey

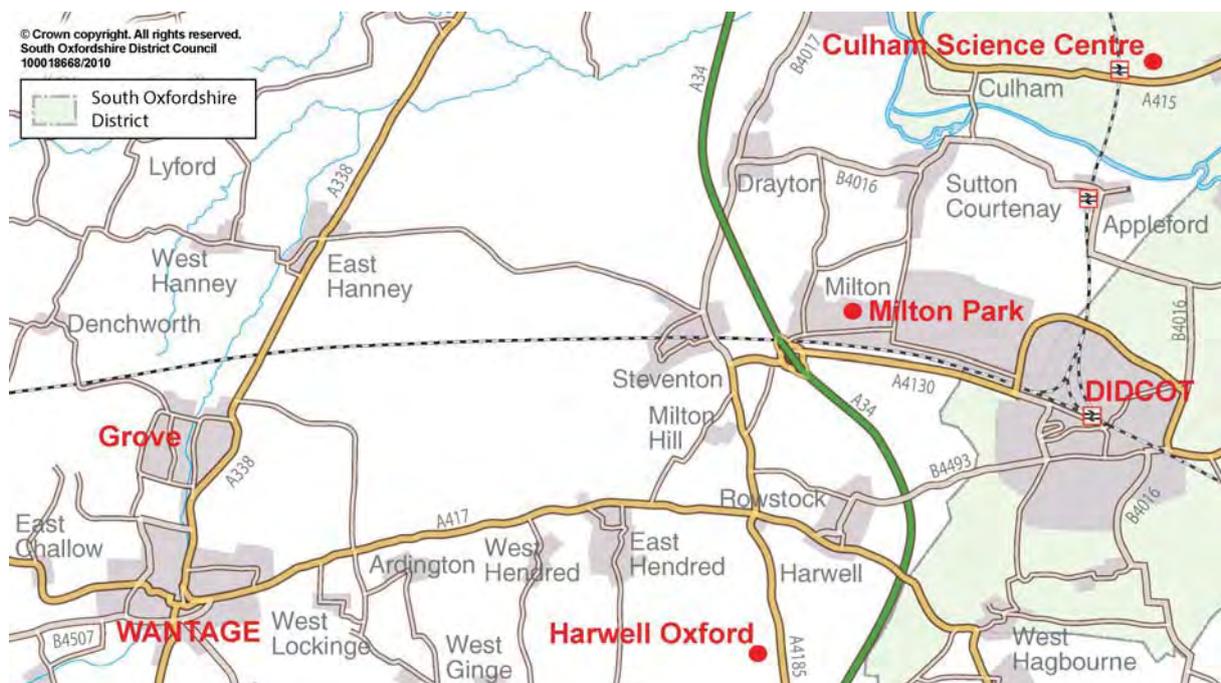
14 Department for Education and Skills

15 Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2007

16 South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review DTZ 2007

- 2.13. There are significant levels of dissatisfaction and frustration with current broadband provision in South Oxfordshire<sup>17</sup>. The lack of adequate broadband services has a direct impact on local businesses and the economy and hence there is a need for fast and reliable access to the internet and mobile phone communications. The Council will aspire to a speed of 100 mbps over the life of this plan.
- 2.14. The north western part of the district is an area where there is significant economic investment and employment centred around Oxford. It was previously identified as a Diamond for Growth and Investment (an area designated in the Regional Economic Strategy as a catalyst to stimulate prosperity).
- 2.15. Science Vale UK is an area of economic growth in southern Oxfordshire which is defined by four points: Didcot (in South Oxfordshire), Harwell Oxford, Milton Park and Grove (all in the Vale of White Horse District). The area also contains Culham Science Centre. Large amounts of economic investment and housing are planned for this area, with expansion of Milton Park and Harwell, nearly 9,000 dwellings at Didcot and up to a possible 4,900 at Wantage/Grove. Improvements are needed to ease access around this area particularly in respect of east-west movements.

### Map 2.4 Science Vale UK area



- 2.16. The south of the district is within the influence of the employment and investment area centred around Reading. East of the district, High Wycombe and Aylesbury play an important role as economic centres for surrounding areas.

17 SODC Survey on Broadband provision 2006

### **Jobs and economy – the key challenges for the core strategy are how to:**

- create jobs and support business growth;
- balance the needs for new housing and employment;
- support the local economy;
- improve the quality of jobs and income levels;
- link employment growth at Science Vale UK with growth in Didcot;
- ensure that businesses have access to technology such as fast and reliable access to the internet and mobile phone communications; and
- address the skills shortages.

## **Infrastructure and meeting the needs of growth**

- 2.17. There is a significant amount of new housing development planned for the district, much of which will be located at Didcot. This is one of the areas designated by central government as a New Growth Point – a focus for accelerated additional sustainable economic and housing growth.
- 2.18. One of the key concerns that people have regarding growth is whether there will be sufficient infrastructure and services to support it and we recognise the need to ensure the necessary infrastructure is provided with development.

### **Infrastructure and meeting the needs of growth – the key challenges for the core strategy are how to:**

- ensure that new development is accompanied by all the necessary infrastructure to support communities;
- ensure that new development takes into account existing and future pressures on utilities and resources in the local area; and
- work closely with infrastructure providers to ensure that they can deliver improvements at the right time.

## **Housing**

- 2.19. There is a very strong need for more affordable housing in the district. The Housing Needs Assessment identified an annual level of outstanding affordable need of 530 units. This is almost equal to the full annual housing allocation of 547 units in the period 2006 to 2027<sup>18</sup>.
- 2.20. Property prices within the district are relatively high. South Oxfordshire's average house price is 14% above the Oxfordshire average and 30% above the average for the South East<sup>19</sup>. There are severe affordability problems. For example, you would have needed an individual income of £43,400 to afford a one bed flat in Wallingford. However, 82 per cent of those who were seeking a home of their own had incomes below the local average of £27,300 p.a.<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Housing Needs Assessment 2008 produced by DCA

<sup>19</sup> Based on UK House Price figures for Jan-March 2010. Sourced from Land Registry of England and Wales, Crown copyright.

<sup>20</sup> Housing Needs Assessment 2008 produced by DCA

- 2.21. Modelling carried out for the Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment suggests that in a worst case scenario there could be four households for every affordable dwelling available by 2026<sup>21</sup>.
- 2.22. Since the majority of the housing needs information was collated in July 2008, the economy has experienced a downturn. Between Quarter 2 in 2007 and Quarter 2 in 2008 the average price of all properties rose only by one per cent. However over four years to Quarter 1 2008 the prices of all properties rose by 23.6 per cent<sup>22</sup>. The current downturn is not having any significant impact on housing affordability given the huge disparity between the income needed for entry level properties and the earnings of people seeking housing.

**Need for housing – the key challenges for the core strategy are how to:**

- ensure there are sufficient homes to meet the needs of the growing population;
- balance the needs for new housing and employment; and
- provide the amount, size and type of housing that helps keep our young people, caters for the ageing population, and is affordable.

## Population change

- 2.23. The population of South Oxfordshire is growing and getting older and the average household size continues to fall. This population change has significant implications for all aspects of life including housing, employment, health and services.
- 2.24. South Oxfordshire had an estimated population of 128,100<sup>23</sup> in 2006. The population has increased at a greater rate than England as a whole with a 7.28 per cent increase between 1991 and 2001 compared to England's 2.57 per cent. This overall population growth is caused by the number of births being greater than the number of deaths, but is also affected by migration.
- 2.25. Forecasts of future population can vary as different assumptions are used<sup>24</sup>. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) in 2008 forecast a population of 142,500 by 2026 but Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in 2010 forecast a very similar 141,420 by 2026.
- 2.26. There is also a trend to smaller households as a result of people living longer, higher rates of divorce and more single people. These trends, together with the growing population, create a need for further housing. The changing population profile also affects the type of housing needed in the district.

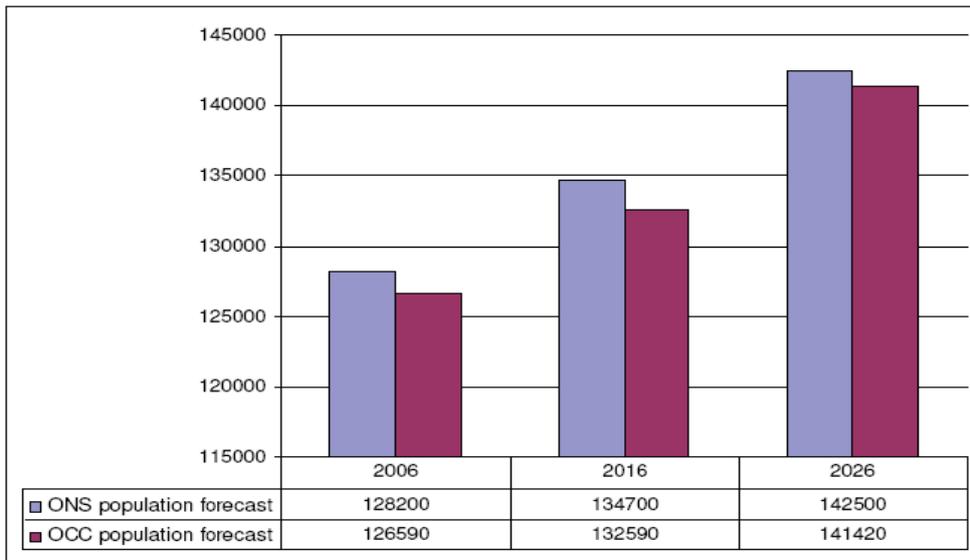
<sup>21</sup> Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment 2008 produced by Tribal Consulting

<sup>22</sup> Housing Needs Assessment Study 2008 produced by DCA

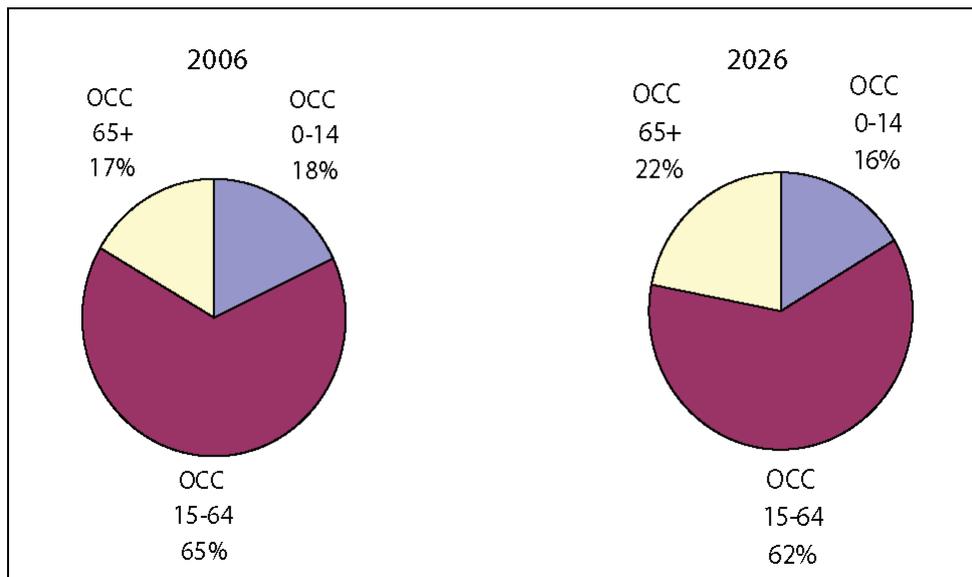
<sup>23</sup> ONS 2008-based sub-national population projections

<sup>24</sup> The Office of National Statistics (ONS) forecasts are trend based and use data on local fertility, mortality and migration from five years prior to the base year. They do not take into account any influence of policy or use data on local housing development. On the other hand, the Oxfordshire County Council forecasts use data on known and planned housing development in the county.

**Figure 2.1 Forecast population change in South Oxfordshire between 2006 and 2026**



**Figure 2.2 Forecast population change by age in South Oxfordshire between 2006 and 2026**



### **Population change – the key challenges for the core strategy are how to:**

- ensure there are sufficient houses, jobs, services and facilities to meet the needs of the growing population;
- cater for the ageing population in terms of housing, extra care, health facilities, transport and services so they can maintain their independence and quality of life;
- balance the demands of a growing population against maintaining the character of the area; and
- encourage young people to stay in the district.

## **Pockets of deprivation**

2.27. There are some areas which have a relatively high score on the indices of multiple deprivation, despite South Oxfordshire as a whole being one of the least deprived parts of the country. These include Berinsfield and parts of Didcot. They perform particularly poorly in the education, training and skills domain<sup>25</sup>.

### **Pockets of deprivation – the key challenges for the core strategy are how to:**

- improve areas that need regeneration; and
- use specific land allocations for development to help regenerate these areas.

## **Town centres**

2.28. Shopping facilities and many other key services in the district are available in the towns of Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford.

2.29. A new shopping centre opened in Didcot in 2004/5 and a second phase is planned. The market towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford all have a range of shops but are experiencing problems in maintaining their viability and vitality<sup>26</sup>.

2.30. Our centres have to compete with those in adjoining districts. Nearby centres at Reading, Oxford and Aylesbury are, or will be, undergoing significant redevelopment to improve their shopping facilities. High Wycombe completed a major new shopping development in 2008.

### **Town centres – the key challenges for the core strategy are how to:**

- encourage the provision of facilities and services in our towns, whilst maintaining and developing their distinctive character and tourism potential; and
- deal with the influence of larger shopping areas outside the district and their impact on our towns.

## **Rural communities**

2.31. Given that the district is mainly rural, there is a wealth of smaller communities. The rural communities range from villages such as Chinnor with a population in 2001 of 5,857<sup>27</sup> to

<sup>25</sup> Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2007)

<sup>26</sup> Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment, Roger Tym and Partners 2009

<sup>27</sup> 2001 Census

hamlets with just a few houses. In 2001, approximately 60 per cent of the district's population lived outside the four towns<sup>28</sup>. The settlement pattern in the Chilterns tends to be more dispersed than that of the district as a whole.

- 2.32. There are shops and post offices in some of these rural settlements but many face economic problems which can lead to closure. They are an important part of community life and provide an essential service for some residents.
- 2.33. Services have declined in many villages and there is concern that some settlements will increasingly become just places for commuters to sleep. Our monitoring shows that in 1991, 42 parishes had a food shop but by 2008 this had decreased to 31. In the same period, the number of parishes with a petrol filling station fell from 29 to 15, and with a GP surgery from 19 to 12<sup>29</sup>.
- 2.34. A number of parishes have produced parish plans, which local people see as key to being able to influence the future of their communities. Our review of all the recent parish plans shows that maintaining existing services and facilities as well as providing new ones is a strong priority. Many people also recognise the need for more affordable housing, but there is some concern about levels of future housing growth threatening the character and appearance of villages.
- 2.35. Transport in rural areas is an issue and unsurprisingly South Oxfordshire has high levels of car ownership. In 2001, 46.9 per cent of households had two or more cars compared to the South East average of 27.9 per cent and the England average 37.9 per cent<sup>30</sup>.
- 2.36. Rural South Oxfordshire in 2009 ranked very poorly on a national measure of accessibility of services (including GPs, supermarkets, post offices and primary schools). Wards with the worst scores included Watlington, Chiltern Woods and Great Milton<sup>31</sup>. Good public transport is limited to key corridors and this can make access to services very difficult for those without a car.

#### **Rural communities – the key challenges for the core strategy are how to:**

- ensure that needs of rural communities are met – housing, employment, and services;
- support communities to find solutions in their own communities; and
- make sure our rural communities are vibrant and foster community initiatives.

### **Community infrastructure**

- 2.37. Health in the district is generally good and there are low levels of crime.
- 2.38. The York Index of Safety in relation to a number of crimes, shows that South Oxfordshire is safer than the wider Thames Valley or the South East. Residents are concerned, however, about a number of issues including graffiti and vandalism while speeding vehicles are seen as a particular issue<sup>32</sup>. Research also reveals that a significant number of residents do not feel safe walking alone at night especially in the district's urban areas<sup>33</sup>.

28 2001 Census based on parish populations

29 SODC monitoring of services and facilities 1991, 2001 and 2008.

30 2001 Census

31 Rural South Oxfordshire Summary of Evidence, 2009

32 Oxfordshire County Council Citizens Panel July 2006 cited in Rural South Oxfordshire Summary of Evidence, 2009

33 South Oxfordshire Citizen's Panel Sept 2008 cited in Rural South Oxfordshire Summary of Evidence, 2009

- 2.39. Although health is good, the NHS estimates that 1 in 5 adults are obese and only 12.4 per cent of adults who took part in a survey were taking the recommended level of exercise<sup>34</sup>. Key healthcare services are located in Oxford and Reading. Access to healthcare is currently an issue, particularly, but not exclusively, in rural areas<sup>35</sup>. However healthcare providers aim to provide increased services in primary and community care settings<sup>36</sup>.

**Community infrastructure – the key challenge for the core strategy is how to:**

- promote accessible high quality healthcare, cultural, leisure, sport and other services.

## Climate change and energy consumption

- 2.40. Oxfordshire's main areas of climate-related vulnerability include:
- increasing numbers of intense downpours and higher temperatures;
  - increasing summer temperatures and decreasing summer rainfall which will have a direct impact on the county's water resources which are already at or near to capacity; and
  - increasing frequency of drought, and at the same time, greater demand for water (the UK Climate Impacts Programme estimates that climate change may lead to a 1.5 per cent increase in per capita consumption of water over the next 25 years).
- 2.41. South Oxfordshire has high levels of energy consumption. The rural and relatively affluent nature of the district is responsible for it having the highest level of domestic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Oxfordshire<sup>37</sup>. Alongside this, according to 2007 figures, South Oxfordshire has the highest total domestic energy consumption per capita in Oxfordshire at 10,700 kWh, higher than the 2007 average for the South East of 9,430 kWh<sup>38</sup>. Total industrial and commercial energy consumption per employee in South Oxfordshire is roughly similar to that of neighbouring districts within the county and less than the South East average.
- 2.42. The issues of climate change and sustainability are becoming increasingly important for local residents and there is evidence of this in the most recent parish plans.

**Climate change and energy consumption – the key challenges for the core strategy are how to:**

- encourage sustainable modes of travel to help reduce energy consumption;
- adapt to the challenges posed by climate change;
- ensure that new development considers the need for adapting to and mitigating against climate change; and
- address the national target for zero carbon by 2016 for new housing.

<sup>34</sup> NHS Health Profile for South Oxfordshire 2006

<sup>35</sup> Rural South Oxfordshire Summary of Evidence, 2009

<sup>36</sup> NHS Oxfordshire Strategic Plan 2009 - 2013 and Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust Strategic Commissioning Plan 2009 - 2014

<sup>37</sup> Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2006 quoted in Oxfordshire Partnership Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy Briefing Paper 6: Environment, August 2007

<sup>38</sup> DTI, sub-regional high level energy indicators, February 2009 viewed at: <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file50238.xls>

## Environment

- 2.43. A major asset in South Oxfordshire is the quality of its rural and urban environment. This is key to the attraction of the district as a place to live and work. It brings visitors to the district who contribute significantly to the local economy.
- 2.44. A high quality landscape characterises the district. It includes rolling downland, wooded hills, historic parkland, low lying farmland and riverside meadows. 45 per cent of the district falls in either the North Wessex Downs or the Chilterns Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty as shown on Map 2.5.
- 2.45. The River Thames runs through the district from the south east of Abingdon to Goring and forms the district boundary in the north-west and south. The River Thame runs through the north of the district to join the Thames at Dorchester. Large areas of land are at risk of flooding from these rivers and their tributaries.
- 2.46. The area is rich in biodiversity and has 4 Special Areas of Conservation, 38 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 155 proposed or confirmed Local Wildlife Sites<sup>39</sup> and 4 Local Nature Reserves. Agriculture is the main land use and the maintenance of the rural character depends on a viable agricultural industry.
- 2.47. The built form of the district is an important part of the character of the area. Included in this high quality environment are approximately 3,300 listed buildings, 72 conservation areas and 50 ancient monuments.

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<sup>39</sup>

A current list of Local Wildlife Sites is available on the Thames Valley Environment Records Centre website, as the list changes over time, [http://www.tverc.org/html/local\\_wildlife\\_sites.html](http://www.tverc.org/html/local_wildlife_sites.html)

**Map 2.5 South Oxfordshire showing rivers and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**



**Environment – the key challenges for the core strategy are how to:**

- accommodate development to meet people’s needs for housing, jobs and services while protecting, enhancing and managing the built, natural and historic environment; and
- plan for a linked green infrastructure framework that provides easy access to our open spaces enabling everyone to enjoy the benefits of South Oxfordshire’s countryside.

## SWOT analysis (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats)

2.48. Set out below is a SWOT analysis. It pulls together the main findings of issues and trends in the district and leads into the vision and objectives.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Location of the district in prosperous South East and accessible to rest of South East, the Midlands and the South West.</li> <li>▪ High quality rural environment and historic towns and villages attract people to live, work and visit the district.</li> <li>▪ High levels of employment and a well qualified workforce.</li> <li>▪ Major employment centres and many small businesses.</li> <li>▪ Strong communities with high levels of involvement in voluntary activities.</li> <li>▪ High levels of satisfaction with the district as a place to live.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Geography of the district means 3 of the 4 towns are at the district's edge.</li> <li>▪ Pulling power of nearby larger centres means many residents look outside the district for work, shopping and entertainment and higher level services.</li> <li>▪ Shortage of skilled employees in some sectors.</li> <li>▪ High per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and resource use.</li> <li>▪ There are some pockets of deprivation.</li> <li>▪ 2 of the 4 towns have no rail service.</li> <li>▪ Poor ICT and broadband service in some rural areas.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Growth point of Didcot and momentum for change means real opportunities for transforming and growing the town.</li> <li>▪ Parts of the district fall within Science Vale UK investment and employment area, part of which includes the Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone.</li> <li>▪ Potential for creating new jobs including high value jobs.</li> <li>▪ Potential to improve transport links to access Science Vale UK.</li> <li>▪ New housing gives opportunities to meet needs.</li> <li>▪ More housing in rural areas will support local services and village life.</li> <li>▪ New emphasis on infrastructure and delivery.</li> <li>▪ Potential for resource efficient developments that mitigate and adapt to climate change.</li> <li>▪ Opportunity for setting new vision and objectives for planning the district.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High house prices mean that many people are priced out of the housing market and/or are unable to take up employment opportunities in the area.</li> <li>▪ Changing population structure.</li> <li>▪ Increasing levels of traffic congestion impacting on the local economy.</li> <li>▪ Lack of sufficient resources to deliver infrastructure.</li> <li>▪ Continuing decline in rural services.</li> </ul>

### 3. The vision and objectives

- 3.1. In preparing our spatial vision we have drawn on the spatial portrait of the district so that our vision is based on evidence and responds to the issues identified. The spatial vision also closely relates to the Oxfordshire and South Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategies. It draws on the community engagement that we have done and is consistent with national guidance.

#### **Our vision - to have made a positive contribution to the evolution of South Oxfordshire**

- In 2027 South Oxfordshire will have developed to meet the changing needs and aspirations of residents and business whilst continuing to be a desirable place to live and work.
- We will be enjoying economic prosperity; there will be more opportunities to work locally, more high value jobs created by existing and new businesses. Our positive attitude to business growth, the quality of our workforce and the environment of the district will attract these new businesses.
- Our schools and colleges will be providing an excellent education which will be relevant to the changing economy and enable our young people to take up the high-value jobs.
- All our residents will have the opportunity of a high standard of living, with access to high quality leisure, cultural, health and shopping facilities. We will work with the private sector and other public sector partners to provide these.
- The high quality of the built and natural environment will still be a significant feature of South Oxfordshire.
- Didcot will be a major centre in southern Oxfordshire, playing a key role in the Science Vale UK area and providing new housing and better services.
- Henley, Thame and Wallingford will be thriving market towns.
- Our villages will be strong enough to sustain day to day services.
- With partners, we will be using opportunities to provide alternatives to car use. However, we recognise that, in this rural district, the car will continue to be an important way of getting around.
- There will be more housing, especially of a type which those on lower incomes can afford and which meets our residents' needs.
- This housing will have been distributed in a way that reflects the dispersed nature of our existing population. The current scale and dependencies between our market towns and villages will be generally maintained.
- Our residents will value new development because it will have been built to the highest standard of design, have the lowest viable environmental impact and have provided the services and infrastructure which residents need.
- In 2027 South Oxfordshire will be a place where opportunity is for everyone, and potential is fulfilled.

## Our objectives

### Objective 1: Settlements

- (i) Support the character and distinctiveness of all our towns and villages, recognising the need for all communities to thrive.
- (ii) Transform Didcot into a lively thriving town through regeneration of the central area and construction of greenfield neighbourhoods ensuring it meets the community's aspirations for positive change.
- (iii) Enhance Henley, Thame and Wallingford as local market towns.
- (iv) Maintain the general balance between the market towns and villages recognising the need to maintain the character of the district and to ensure that the character and distinctiveness of the towns and villages is maintained.

- 3.2. This objective sets out how we see the various places in the district changing in the next 20 years. Most change will be focused on Didcot which will grow considerably enabling further retail, leisure and highway improvements to take place and strengthening the linkages between the town and the expanding employment centres in the Vale.
- 3.3. The three market towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford, with our larger villages, play a key role in providing employment opportunities and many of the services and facilities residents in the district need. Evidence shows that the role of shops is declining. We aim to reverse this trend by reinforcing their special character and strengthening their attraction for visitors as well as local residents.
- 3.4. South Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district and we intend to maintain and strengthen the communities in the villages. We also intend to ensure that their character and distinctiveness is maintained, growth is proportionate to the size of the existing village, and the relationship between the villages and the towns remains.
- 3.5. This objective recognises the importance of making sure services can be delivered as close to people as possible. It recognises that new development can have a role in bringing benefits to an area. We also recognise the need to work with community and faith groups, the voluntary sector and local enterprise in delivering services.

### Objective 2: Communities and housing

- (i) Ensure that day-to-day services (e.g. local shops, schools, pubs and recreation facilities) are available nearby.
- (ii) Support those facilities that keep communities strong.
- (iii) Improve poor quality housing estates and other run down areas.
- (iv) Provide for a range of housing development across the district that respects the scale of existing settlements and caters for residents' needs
- (v) Ensure that a significant proportion of this housing falls within the 'affordable' definition.

- 3.6. This objective recognises the need for more housing in the district and acknowledges the role more housing can play in supporting communities. It seeks to deliver new homes for the existing and future population of the district providing for a mix of types, sizes and tenures to meet the needs and aspirations of all sections of the community, particularly young people, older people and vulnerable groups in both rural and urban areas.

- 3.7. Whilst the quality of our towns and villages is generally high, there are areas in need of improvement and our objectives recognise this.

#### **Objective 3: Environment and design**

- (i) Ensure that all new development is well designed, respects the local character, and fosters a sense of community and safety.
- (ii) Ensure that all new development is built to the highest viable standards in terms of water and energy efficiency, waste management and sustainable construction measures.
- (iii) Ensure that all new development integrates in its design and location the need for adapting to and mitigating against climate change.
- (iv) Ensure all new development provides the necessary infrastructure, including green infrastructure.
- (v) Enhance and manage the built and natural environment.

- 3.8. This objective seeks quality in the design of all new buildings in its widest sense. It recognises the need to take into account all aspects of climate change including minimising the risks and effects of flooding.
- 3.9. It also recognises the importance of new development providing the necessary infrastructure to support communities and takes into account existing and future pressures on utilities and resources in the local area.
- 3.10. The objective also recognises the quality of the built and natural environment of the district and aims to enhance and manage this. We will protect the Oxford Green Belt and the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the district from inappropriate development.

#### **Objective 4: Employment and education**

- (i) Build on the economic success of the area through supporting existing business and encouraging new business.
- (ii) Seek to reduce long distance commuting out of and within the district.
- (iii) Encourage those creating more high value jobs for example in the science and high technology sectors.
- (iv) Maintain or raise activity rates.
- (v) Encourage the provision of a high standard of education and training facilities to develop the skills employers need.
- (vi) Encourage investment in technologies to enable remote working.

- 3.11. This objective recognises the economic strengths of the area. It seeks to build on these strengths whilst recognising that there is a need to improve educational attainment and skills in order for the local workforce to be able to fully support the economy. The objective also recognises that South Oxfordshire is an area of net out-commuting and seeks to reduce the need for residents to travel long distances to work. Providing local employment opportunities may help in increasing economic activity rates by encouraging those not in work to enter the workforce.

### **Objective 5: Getting around**

- (i) Encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport whilst recognising that the rural nature of the district means that many residents will rely on car travel.
- (ii) Make sure that new development is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure for efficient and effective transport systems.
- (iii) Encourage adequate provision for parking.
- (iv) Encourage improvements to make cycling and walking safer and more attractive.
- (v) Support local and community led transport initiatives.

3.12. This objective recognises the need for people to travel by more sustainable modes of transport. However, it acknowledges that the rural nature of the district and the limited opportunity for alternative modes of transport means that much travel will continue to be dependent on the private car. The objective also acknowledges the role local communities can play in providing and running local transport initiatives.

### **Objective 6: Leisure, culture and health**

- (i) Promote provision of high quality sports, leisure, cultural and health facilities for all ages across the district.
- (ii) Enable people to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- (iii) Support the provision of high quality design in public buildings and spaces.
- (iv) Encourage innovative ideas for activities and facilities.
- (v) Encourage investment in technologies to enable remote access to services.

3.13. This objective recognises the importance of leisure and health to quality of life.

## **Key delivery objectives**

3.14. Through the strategy which follows, we have translated these objectives into some key delivery objectives which contain the critical success factors by which we will be able to judge whether or not we have delivered the overall vision to 2027. Appendix 2 shows how all six objectives link to policies and proposals in the core strategy. In this core strategy the Council has identified strategic development sites for new housing at Didcot and Wallingford which are central to the delivery of the overall strategy. The key delivery objectives are as follows:

### **At and around Didcot**

We aim to:

- (i) complete a mixed use development on land to the east of the Orchard Centre to be delivering on site by 2016/17;
- (ii) identify land for a further 2,330 new homes ;
- (iii) work with partners to help provide jobs for Didcot residents at Harwell Oxford and Milton Park;
- (iv) regenerate the area around the station and the Broadway;
- (v) work with the County Council to deliver the package of schemes under the umbrella of Accessing Science Vale UK; and

- (vi) make provision for key infrastructure including a further secondary school, a learning park, a sports centre and green infrastructure.

### **At Henley**

We aim to:

- (i) identify land for 400 new homes;
- (ii) identify opportunities for further retail development to strengthen the town centre; and
- (iii) support Henley College, Gillotts School and Townlands Hospital meet their accommodation needs.

### **At Thame**

We aim to assist Thame Town Council in producing their Thame Neighbourhood Plan to meet the needs identified in this strategy for:

- (i) 775 new homes;
- (ii) a further 2ha of land for employment and support the upgrading of existing employment sites; and
- (iii) further retail development to strengthen the town centre.

### **At Wallingford**

We aim to:

- (i) identify land for 555 new homes;
- (ii) identify land for a further 2ha of employment and support the upgrading of existing employment sites; and
- (iii) identify opportunities for further retail development to strengthen the town centre.

### **In the rural areas**

We aim to:

- (i) identify land for 1,154 new homes in the larger villages to support these villages as local service centres;
- (ii) support limited further housing in the villages;
- (iii) identify about 4.2 ha of land for employment in the larger villages, support the conversion of rural buildings for employment and support people working at home;
- (iv) provide for the redevelopment of parts of Culham Science Centre to provide further high value jobs; and
- (v) provide for the redevelopment of parts of Oxford Brookes University Campus at Wheatley recognising its contribution to the local economy.

## 4. The overall strategy

- 4.1. The strategy sets out how we will deliver the vision and objectives. It identifies the role that Didcot, the market towns, the villages and the countryside will play in the future and shows how much new development will be provided. It takes into account the changes that will take place in the area around the district and wider trends and changes in society and the environment. It shows how we will work in partnership to deliver the strategy with those responsible for key services. These include healthcare, schools, transport, water supply and community safety and with other key stakeholders such as affordable housing providers.
- 4.2. Climate change is a key consideration that runs through this core strategy. The transport and distribution strategies reflect the need to address the causes of climate change and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. These seek to reduce the need to travel and to locate most development where it is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, therefore reducing vehicle emissions. In the strategy, we consider the need to support renewable energy generation, reduce energy demand, increase energy efficiency and make sure that new development is resilient to the effects of climate change. Based on the findings of our Strategic Flood Risk Assessment<sup>40</sup> we have taken into account minimising the risk from flooding within the distribution strategy.
- 4.3. The strategy recognises the close relationship and interdependency of the district with the surrounding area. In particular, Didcot is within a wider growth area of Science Vale UK. Both Reading and Oxford lie immediately adjacent to our boundaries and provide a higher level of services for shopping, health and education. Abingdon also lies immediately adjacent to the district. Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Greater London also exert some influence on the area.
- 4.4. The strategy provides a framework for the area to enhance its strengths, to allow the communities within it to maintain their individuality and character whilst accommodating development that delivers the vision.

### The structure of the strategy

- 4.5. We have translated the vision and objectives into a number of inter-related spatial themes:
  - Establishing a strong network of settlements with the aim of making the district more self-sufficient, however, still recognising its predominantly rural nature and the proximity of major service and employment areas close to it.
  - Supporting a movement strategy that strengthens the linkages to key places, allows a greater choice of transport modes, enables local initiatives to prosper and manages traffic to improve the quality of the environment.
  - Delivering a spatial strategy to meet the economic objectives of creating a thriving economy with a range of jobs including more high value jobs. Developing a workforce with the necessary skills, whilst meeting the needs of existing firms and addressing the needs of the economy of the rural areas.
  - Delivering new homes to meet needs in locations that support the strategy and deliver the type of housing that meets people's needs and supports economic growth.
  - Providing a town centre and retailing strategy which regenerates our town centres.

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<sup>40</sup> South Oxfordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: June 2009 jba consulting and Didcot SFRA, HR Wallingford

- 4.6. We then show how these relate to the individual places in the district: the four towns and the rural areas. The strategy is shown on a key diagram at the end of this document. Table 4.1 shows what the strategy will deliver in each place. The core strategy then contains a number of policies relating to:
- maintaining and enhancing the built and natural environment;
  - ensuring quality in our new developments; and
  - providing an infrastructure strategy to secure the services and facilities that are required to support our communities, including green infrastructure.
- 4.7. Section 18 shows how we will deliver the strategy, monitor progress, and what action we will take if delivery is not on track.

## A strong network of settlements

### Policy CSS1 The overall strategy

Proposals for development in South Oxfordshire should be consistent with the overall strategy of:

- (i) focusing major new development at the growth point of Didcot so the town can play an enhanced role in providing homes, jobs and services with improved transport connectivity;
- (ii) supporting the roles of Henley, Thame and Wallingford by regenerating their town centres through measures that include environmental improvements and mixed-use developments and by providing new houses, employment, services and infrastructure;
- (iii) supporting and enhancing the larger villages of Berinsfield, Benson, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley and Woodcote as local service centres;
- (iv) supporting other villages in the rest of the district by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment and by the provision and retention of services; and
- (v) outside the towns and villages, and other major developed sites, any change will need to relate to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment.

- 4.8. Understanding the nature of our towns and villages and how they inter-relate and link with the places outside the district is vital to forming a robust strategy for the future. Movement patterns within the district are complex and vary depending on the purpose of the journey. Journeys to work are generally much longer than trips to primary schools for instance. Some key services such as the main hospitals and regional shopping centres will continue to be provided in towns outside the district, particularly Oxford and Reading. Within the district the strategy can influence how services and employment are accessed and where development is located. It can support and influence where and how service providers deliver their services and encourage different and improved ways of delivery.
- 4.9. As well as understanding movement patterns we need to understand the nature of our towns and villages. South Oxfordshire contains about 140 settlements, although some of these are simply isolated groups of housing with no community facilities. We looked at these against a range of criteria on employment opportunities, schools, health services, recreation and leisure, shops, accessibility and population. The methodology and results are in the Settlement Assessment background paper<sup>41</sup>. Predictably Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford offer the widest range of facilities.

<sup>41</sup> Settlement Assessment Background Paper, South Oxfordshire District Council 2010

- 4.10. Didcot is a growth point, 8,800 homes will be built in and around the town up to 2027. Didcot will become a much larger town containing a wider range of facilities and services with better linkages to the key employment sites. Its location between Oxford and Reading means it is ideally located to serve a wider catchment and so reduce the need for the local population to travel to the major centres for employment and for some key services and facilities.
- 4.11. The three market towns are all significant local service and employment centres as well as very attractive towns. There is evidence through sources such as our Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment that the retail offer of Henley, Thame and Wallingford is declining<sup>42</sup>. The strategy therefore aims to strengthen these towns by improving the retail and service offer and focusing some new development there to support and enhance their role. We need to work with other stakeholders to retain and improve leisure, tourism, cultural and educational facilities in these towns.
- 4.12. The Rural South Oxfordshire Summary of Evidence<sup>43</sup> shows that 60 per cent of the population live in the rural areas outside the four towns. The strategy must not only address the needs of the population in new development but also consider how we can meet the needs of the existing population. An objective of this strategy is to help all communities to thrive and maintain the role played by villages and the social and economic relationships they have with each other and the towns. Other objectives include making sure day-to-day services are available nearby and supporting facilities that keep communities strong. The location of the towns in and around the district means that those living in some rural communities have to travel relatively long distances to use their services.
- 4.13. In practice, many of our villages have very few facilities and the scale of development required to secure greater self-containment is unlikely to be acceptable to the local communities as it would change the character of villages. We therefore propose a strategy that strengthens the role of some of the larger villages as smaller service centres. This will increase economic and social linkages between nearby communities and reduce the need to travel.
- 4.14. The strategy therefore provides for a network of settlements throughout the district which provide a good range of services. All parts of the district will be within about a five kilometre radius of a local centre. The network comprises Didcot, Henley, Wallingford, Thame and twelve of the larger villages. It also takes into account the towns on the edge of the district including the district centres within those towns. The network of settlements is shown on Map 4.1 and the key diagram.
- 4.15. The towns and larger villages vary considerably in the services they offer but all include a foodstore, a state primary school, a community hall and public transport links. Most have a doctors' surgery and a range of other shops including a post office. The strategy aims to strengthen local linkages and help deliver services as well as provide local affordable housing. These towns and villages are also generally well-related to the public transport network shown on Map 5.1 in the transport section.
- 4.16. The strategy also recognises that we want to encourage villages to be more socially and economically sustainable. Some smaller villages have facilities such as primary schools which form a focus for the local community. The strategy provides for local needs to be met outside the areas designated for growth. It also allows housing and employment

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42 South Oxfordshire Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment, Roger Tym and Partners, February 2009

43 Rural South Oxfordshire Summary of Evidence, April 2009 [www.southoxon.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/evidence)



**Table 4.1 What the strategy will deliver**

	Housing (new units)			Employment (hectares)		Town centre uses (Use Classes A1 - A5) (sqm gross) to 2016	
	Completed as at March 2012	Committed as at March 2012	Additional in this strategy	Committed as at March 2012	Additional in this strategy	Committed as at March 2012	Total in this strategy to 2016
<b>Didcot</b>	322	3,661	2,330	2.79	6.5 in VOWH	24,578	26,800
<b>Henley</b>	276	115	400	4.98	0	411	2,100
<b>Thame</b>	290	66	775	-0.32	2	2,142	1,400
<b>Wallingford</b>	241	28	555	3.02	2	3,960	2,500
<b>Rural areas</b>	686	758	1,154	1.76	4.2 + 1000 jobs at Culham	476	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,815</b>	<b>4,628</b>	<b>5,214</b>	<b>12.23</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>31,567</b>	<b>32,800</b>

## 5. Moving around

### Introduction

- 5.1. Good connections are essential to our quality of life. We need to travel to work, school, shops, leisure and health facilities. A thriving economy needs good connections to operate efficiently. These can range from the strategic road and rail network, to our ability to access the internet with the benefits that it can offer to work from home and provide services. Improving accessibility to services and employment is fundamental to sustainable development and to meeting the objectives of this plan. The challenge is to do this in a way that minimises the impact of the transport system on the environment. We need to address climate change issues as well as improve access.
- 5.2. The location of all forms of development can be a key factor in influencing where and how we travel and, in particular, reducing the need to travel. The principles in this transport strategy have a key influence on the other elements of the plan. For example, accessibility to services and facilities and the availability of public transport are key features for a strong network of settlements and the overall distribution of new housing and employment land.
- 5.3. This strategy contributes towards our vision and objectives which seek to build on opportunities for sustainable travel. However, we recognise that the rural nature of the district means that many residents will be dependent on car travel for some or all of their journeys. The strategy has been informed by and is consistent with Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP)<sup>45</sup>. This council recognises that in rural areas the car is likely to remain the primary mode of travel. Improving travel choice in rural areas is to be encouraged, while accepting that there is unlikely to be a single model for delivering the flexible and responsive transport services required to meet the diverse needs of rural communities. LTP3 sets the transport policies and provides transport strategies for the county to 2030. It aims to deliver four local transport goals: supporting local economic growth; making it easier to get around the county; reducing the impact of transport on the environment; promoting healthy, safe and sustainable travel. It will achieve this through developing and implementing local area strategies for the county's major settlements and roads.

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<sup>45</sup> Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2 2006-2011 and Local Transport Plan 3 2011-2030 adopted in April 2011, Oxfordshire County Council.

## Policy CSM1 Transport

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

- (i) in partnership with the Vale of White Horse District Council, actively seek to deliver the transport infrastructure and measures which improve movement in Didcot and within the Didcot/ Wantage and Grove corridor, in particular linking Didcot with the major employment sites at Harwell and Milton Park as identified in the County Council's LTP3 SVUK Area Strategy and Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Study;
- (ii) actively seek to ensure that the impact of new development on the strategic and local road network, in particular the Milton, Chilton and Marcham junctions of the A34 and the road links and junctions identified in the Council's Evaluation of Transport Impact and County Council's Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Study is adequately mitigated (see Policy CSM2);
- (iii) support improvements for accessing Oxford;
- (iv) work with the authorities affected by cross Thames travel in the Reading area to ensure that traffic and environmental conditions in South Oxfordshire are improved by the implementation of measures which also improve access to Reading;
- (v) support measures which enable modal shift to public transport, cycling and walking particularly where these support the network of settlements in the district;
- (vi) promote and support traffic management measures and environmental improvements which increase safety, improve air quality, encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and/or make our towns and villages more attractive;
- (vii) adopt a comprehensive approach to car parking aimed at improving the attraction of our town and village centres;
- (viii) encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport;
- (ix) promote electronic communications allowing businesses to operate throughout the district and to provide services and information which reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable modes of transport; and
- (x) cater for the needs of all users.

## The strategic transport network

- 5.4. The extent of the strategic transport network in and around the district is shown in Map 2.3 in section two.
- 5.5. The portrait of the district showed that much of the regional transport network is on the edge of, or outside the district. There are no major planned improvements to the network within the district. There are however a number of schemes to improve the rail network in the region which will affect the district. These are:
  - East West Rail – re-opening the railway between Oxford and Cambridge to provide a strategic orbital rail link between the East of England and Central Southern England.
  - Southampton to Midlands Line - upgrading the railway between Southampton and the Midlands to allow new sized freight containers to be carried by rail rather than heavy lorries.
  - Crossrail - providing fast, efficient and convenient rail access to the West End and the City of London by linking existing routes from Maidenhead and Heathrow in the west and Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east.
  - HS2 – a proposed new high speed railway line linking London, Birmingham and the north.

- Reading Station – increasing capacity.
- Airtrack – a proposal to connect Heathrow directly to the South West Trains rail network.
- High Wycombe regional coachway with a transport hub on the south side of High Wycombe.

## Transport infrastructure improvements

- 5.6. Major changes to the local network are focused around three key areas, south central Oxfordshire, access to Oxford and cross Thames issues in the Reading area. These are consistent with the overall strategy that focuses growth at Didcot linking in with the growth of the high-tech economy of the area and which recognises the role Oxford and Reading play in providing higher order services.

## Accessing Science Vale UK and the Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Study

- 5.7. As the highways authority, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is responsible for the delivery of transport infrastructure within the county. OCC has prepared the Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Study (SCOTS) with input from South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse district councils in consultation with the Highways Agency. The main purpose of SCOTS is to accommodate sustainable economic and housing growth in the area through a combination of transport investment and demand management. It particularly aims to achieve a higher degree of containment of trips in the area through focusing on the links between the towns in the Science Vale UK area and the major employment centres at Harwell Oxford and Milton Park.
- 5.8. SCOTS identified a package of infrastructure necessary to support planned housing and employment growth in the SVUK area. This includes new road infrastructure, public transport service improvements and associated infrastructure and strategic cycle routes across the area. These are set out in LTP3 as part of the Science Vale UK Area Strategy. Development in and around Didcot will need to provide financial contributions towards the delivery of this package of infrastructure. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have a joint Didcot Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This sets out the timeframes for the implementation of this infrastructure along with sources of funding.
- 5.9. Whilst the majority of the highway schemes will be located in the Vale of White Horse District, they will be delivered by the highways authority (OCC). It is important for our core strategy to refer to these schemes contained within LTP3 as they are part of a package of infrastructure necessary for the delivery of housing and employment in the SVUK area, including the Didcot greenfield neighbourhood within South Oxfordshire. We will therefore need to work in partnership with OCC as the highways authority to secure developer contributions from development in and around Didcot towards the delivery and maintenance of these schemes in association with other sources of funding.

## Access to Oxford

- 5.10. Oxford provides the largest concentration of services and facilities within the county, including employment, health and education meaning many journeys will be made to Oxford by residents of the district. Some will make that journey on public transport but many will be by car due to the rural nature and location of settlements within the district. Trips by car to Oxford will either be direct to the destination or to one of the Park and Ride sites (P&R). It is therefore important that there are good local bus services from the main settlements, along with capacity at the Park & Ride sites and on the roads approaching them to cope with the levels of demand. In order to achieve this, the expansion of existing P&Rs (in particular Thornhill) and improvements to junctions on the southern part of the Oxford Ring Road are needed to accommodate the planned growth within the district.
- 5.11. The Local Transport Plan (LTP3) includes policies outlining the future direction and the role of current and future Park and Ride car parks. Due to the location of the existing car parks, and the fact that by their nature P&R sites are located on the periphery of settlements, any expansion is likely to be in the Green Belt. Such proposals should demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location, preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the five purposes of including land in Green Belt as set out in the NPPF.

## Cross Thames travel

- 5.12. The River Thames forms much of the western and southern boundary to the district and it runs through the district from south of Abingdon to north of Goring. Over much of its length the capacity of the river crossings forms a barrier to movement.
- 5.13. The problem is particularly severe around Reading where the local authorities in the area have been examining potential options for many years. Many residents in the south of the district live to the north of Reading and work, shop and use other services in Reading. There has been considerable pressure for a further bridge. However, the Oxfordshire authorities consider that if the capacity of the crossings is increased it will lead to unacceptable increases in traffic on the limited road network in South Oxfordshire and affect the quality of life of residents.
- 5.14. We recognise that alternatives need to be explored and we will continue to work with the local authorities on both sides of the river. In the first instance, we will support public transport measures which offer benefits to residents of the district whilst improving cross Thames travel.
- 5.15. There are problems of congestion around Henley Bridge which are covered in the Henley section. Abingdon Bridge is also a pinch point and traffic management measures have been introduced in both towns to manage traffic in the town centres.

## Mitigating the impacts of our spatial strategy

- 5.16. A district wide transport assessment<sup>46</sup> has been conducted to assess the impacts of our spatial strategy on the strategic and local transport network. This was prepared jointly for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils in consultation with the Highways Agency.
- 5.17. The assessment confirms that the strategy for a strong network of settlements results in the least impact on the local and strategic road network when compared to alternative

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<sup>46</sup> South Oxfordshire Evaluation of Transport Impact, Final Report, November 2009

options and that the level of development proposed can be accommodated. However, the delivery of new housing through this strategy will place increased pressure on the road network at certain locations within the district. These are predicted to occur at the locations set out in Table 5.1 below.

- 5.18. The sections of road contained within Part B of the table are predicted to experience a more significant impact. This is because they will experience both an increase in traffic flows of 10 per cent or more and an associated increase in the number of vehicles of 100 or more in the morning peak between 7 and 9am. Transport impact assessments, to accompany planning applications for new development, will determine the precise nature of the impacts on the road sections detailed below. Mitigation measures will be required to address the impacts identified.

**Table 5.1. Roads predicted to experience increased pressure outside Science Vale UK area**

<b>Predicted 10% (or more) increase in traffic levels</b>		
<b>A</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Section of road</b>
	B4012	Thame to Postcombe
	B4445	Thame to Chinnor
	B4009	Chinnor to M40 junction 6
	B480	Oxford to Stadhampton
	B4009	Watlington to Benson
<b>Predicted 10% (or more) increase in traffic levels and the increase in vehicles using section of road is greater than 100 between 7 and 9am.</b>		
<b>B</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Section of road</b>
	A4074	Benson to Crowmarsh Gifford (A4130)
	A4130	Wallingford (S) to Wallingford (N) Reading Road to Wantage Road
	A4130	Wallingford (N) to Didcot
	A329	Wallingford (S) to Streatley
	A4074	Crowmarsh to Woodcote
	A4074	Woodcote to Reading

- 5.19. The main areas for transport improvements in the district are shown on Map 5.1 alongside the key movement corridors. This map also demonstrates how our network of settlements relates to the proposed Premium and Hourly bus routes set out in Local Transport Plan 3.

**Map 5.1 Key movement corridors and areas for transport improvements within the district**



## Promoting sustainable modes of transport

- 5.20. Alongside the Local Transport Plan, the core strategy has a key role to play in maximising accessibility and reducing the need to travel. The way in which we manage the location of new housing, employment, retail and leisure provision within the district offers much scope for reducing the need to travel and promoting walking, cycling and the use of public transport. In looking at schemes and improvements in the plan period, we will give priority to schemes which support the strategy and network of settlements.
- 5.21. Ensuring that new development is located in areas accessible by walking, cycling and public transport will not in itself ensure that these modes are fully promoted. New provision will need to be made where appropriate, with particular measures put in place to ensure that their use is encouraged. New developments will need to be designed to

positively promote the use of public transport, walking, cycling and efficient car use, enforceable travel plans will be required to encourage these modes. Travel plans should set out a package of measures and initiatives with the aim of reducing the number of car journeys made by people travelling to and from a site by providing them with greater choice.

## Transport assessments

- 5.22. Where new development would undermine the efficient, effective or safe operation of the highway, the identified impacts will need to be remedied. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan will be required for development proposals in accordance with the County Council's requirements. All the transport effects arising from the direct or cumulative impact of the development will need to be mitigated, except in agreed exceptional circumstances. Mitigation may not only be required for the immediate area but also on the wider transport network. The scoping and agreement of Transport Assessments and Travel Plans is the responsibility of the County Council. The mitigation measures can be either through carrying out remedial works or by making an appropriate contribution to allow this work to be done by the County Council. Transport assessments will therefore be required to accompany proposals for new development. A transport assessment is a comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It should identify what measures will be taken to deal with anticipated transport impacts of the scheme and to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport. Before submitting a planning application, applicants are advised to contact the County Council on the need and scope for a transport assessment.

### **Policy CSM2 Transport Assessments and Travel Plans**

Proposals for new developments which have transport implications that either arise from the development proposed or cumulatively with other proposals will need to submit a transport assessment. Appropriate provision for works and/or contributions will be required towards providing an adequate level of accessibility by all modes of transport and mitigating the impacts on the transport network.

The assessment should (notwithstanding OCC requirements):

- (i) illustrate accessibility to the site by all modes of transport;
- (ii) show the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site;
- (iii) detail the proposed measures to improve access by public transport, cycling and walking to reduce the need for parking and reduce transport impacts;
- (iv) illustrate the impact on the highway network and the impact of proposed mitigation measures where necessary; and
- (v) include a travel plan where appropriate.

Travel plans will be required, implemented and monitored (notwithstanding OCC requirements):

- (i) for all major developments comprising residential, employment, shopping or leisure uses or services; and
- (ii) for other small developments comprising residential, employment, shopping, leisure, or education facilities which would generate significant amounts of travel.

## Public transport

- 5.23. South Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district and access to services and facilities by public transport can be problematic, especially when compared to the relative ease of accessibility by car. The dispersed nature of settlements and the small size of many of them mean that the provision of a readily accessible and frequent bus service for every settlement is neither practical nor a viable solution. Consequently, the car will continue to provide an important means of transport, especially for those located in the most rural parts of the district.
- 5.24. However, securing improvements to the accessibility of key employment and service locations by public transport is a key aim of both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LTP.
- 5.25. The Premium Routes network aims to develop bus services which operate at a turn up and go level on the most heavily travelled corridors in the county. The public transport policy aims for an hourly service operating at frequencies of at least once an hour during weekdays and local services to help meet local accessibility needs. Good quality infrastructure will be provided at stops along the Premium Routes network and along other routes designated for further development. Along the Premium Routes network, we will consider the provision of small scale parking facilities, where appropriate, to enable rural settlements to access the network. Map 5.2 shows the public transport routes across the county.
- 5.26. The rail network in and adjacent to the district caters primarily for longer distance trips outside the district boundaries. Within the district there is a need to enhance the use of rail through providing improved linkages to the rail stations and enhancing their role as transport interchanges.

## Cycling and walking

- 5.27. Cycling and walking have the potential to replace car use for short trips and to form part of a longer journey by public transport. The County Council has put in cycle parking facilities at some bus stops to encourage this. Cycling and walking are not only means of transport but also recreational activities. Whether used as a means of transport or a leisure activity, there are benefits to health in travelling by these means. The strategy therefore seeks to promote cycling and walking through improving the existing network, providing new routes both generally and in association with new development as well as providing information on the routes and other measures to promote these modes. Details of the proposed Science Vale UK cycle corridor routes are given in the infrastructure delivery section of the Moving Around background paper. Local walking and cycling routes will also need to be considered and implemented.

## Infrastructure Plan

- 5.28. Our Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which accompanies this document, sets out all the strategic transport measures that are planned or required to accommodate development. This is a live document which we will update as further requirements emerge.

**Map 5.2 Proposed Premium and Hourly bus route network**



### Traffic management and environmental improvements

- 5.29. Traffic management and environmental improvement schemes can achieve a number of objectives. They can improve the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists or increase the efficiency of public transport. They can enhance the quality of the street environment to improve residential areas. They can also form part of a strategy to enhance and revitalise town centres and in recent years schemes have been completed in all our towns.
- 5.30. Poor air quality is an issue in some of our towns and villages and traffic management schemes can be essential in achieving improvements.

## **Car parking**

- 5.31. The approach to car parking needs to recognise the rural nature of the district and the dependence on the car for many journeys. Providing and managing car parks is a key part of the strategy to maintain and improve the vitality of our market towns. Car parking standards will take account of the objective to increase the use of sustainable modes in the context of the alternatives available.

## **Rural initiatives**

- 5.32. The strategy recognises the difficulty of serving rural areas by conventional bus services. It identifies that a range of initiatives need to be considered including community based schemes and the wider use of specialised transport.

## **Electronic communications**

- 5.33. The internet is having a profound influence on how we communicate and access information and services. Its role will increase in the future and it increasingly means that location is less important for businesses. The strategy therefore recognises the role of the internet and seeks to promote it as a means of reducing the need to travel and supporting the economy.

## **Access for all**

- 5.34. Our movement strategy considers the needs of all people including those with limited mobility and people with pushchairs.

## 6. A thriving economy

### Introduction

- 6.1. This section covers business, industry and tourism. Other activities such as retailing and agriculture also make a substantial contribution to the local economy but are covered elsewhere in the strategy.
- 6.2. South Oxfordshire is in the economically buoyant Thames Valley area and lies between Oxford and Reading, both centres for high technology, science and research industries. The southern part of the district sits within Science Vale UK and is the location of a particularly high density of science and high technology activities centred around Harwell Oxford, Culham Science Centre and Milton Park (one of Europe's largest business parks).
- 6.3. Whilst South Oxfordshire has a successful economy, companies tend to be small. Incomes of people living in the district are higher than those working within the district reflecting a significant degree of out-commuting to higher value jobs, mostly in the surrounding areas of Science Vale UK, Reading and Oxford<sup>47</sup>. There are skills shortages within the whole area and limited provision for vocational training in South Oxfordshire<sup>48</sup>. There has been a fall of almost eight per cent in the number of jobs in the district since 2001<sup>49</sup>. We intend to encourage and support the local economy and develop a better balance between well-paid jobs and housing.
- 6.4. We aim to support employment development by planning new housing and by working with partners to improve skills and economic activity amongst residents. We recognise that a wider economic strategy will deal with other aspects of this. We need flexibility to respond to changing economic circumstances by having enough land available which is capable of development and well served by infrastructure. We also need to make sure that there is a variety of sites for large and small businesses, for innovation and for skills development which links to the knowledge based economy.
- 6.5. Whilst this section deals specifically with the economy, the wider strategy supports the economic objectives. It recognises that a thriving economy needs housing provided (including affordable housing) and other services for the workforce, good transport links and other infrastructure. We also recognise that the environmental quality of the district is a key attraction for businesses coming into the area.
- 6.6. The area has high concentrations of businesses and employment in industries such as research & development, publishing, education and high technology manufacturing activities such as motor vehicles and IT, reflecting the presence of some large and prestigious employers in these industries. Around four in ten establishments are in the business & financial services sector, and a quarter in distribution, hotels & restaurants.<sup>50</sup>
- 6.7. Over a third of Oxfordshire's 32,000 employers and 46% of its employees are in highly skilled industries, where more than 40% of the workforce has qualifications at Level 4 and above. The majority of Oxfordshire businesses are micro-businesses, with 78% employing 10 people or less. However, the 1% who employ more than 200 people account for 31% of employment in the County.

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47 Office for National Statistics, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) 2007

48 Learning and Skills Council, Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Strategic Area Review 2004

49 Source: Office for National Statistics, Annual Business Inquiry (NOMIS)

50 Oxfordshire Skills Study 2010, Oxfordshire Economic Partnership

- 6.8. Employers take a very positive view of South Oxfordshire as a place to do business. Almost 92% of businesses surveyed in 2010 are satisfied with South Oxfordshire as a business location, similar to the county as a whole. Key strengths highlighted by employers include its central geographic location, proximity to customers, suppliers and other businesses, good transport links and the fact that it is a thriving and prosperous area, perhaps better able to weather the economic downturn than other parts of the UK<sup>51</sup>.
- 6.9. The four towns in the district are the main employment centres and they provide a range of employment opportunities. The rural areas are characterised by a large number of small firms and some major, international research institutions. The largest of these is Culham Science Centre which specialises in fusion research and hosts related enterprises. There is also a cluster of environmental science companies and research institutions in Crowmarsh Gifford and Wallingford.
- 6.10. Our core strategy vision and objectives aim to create economic prosperity through increasing local incomes by providing the opportunity for higher value jobs, ensuring we have a skilled workforce, ensuring more people have the opportunity to work locally, developing the high-tech economy, welcoming new companies and supporting existing businesses and new business formation. We also aim to give people the opportunity to work at or nearer their home and reduce long distance out-commuting. Employment development will contribute to meeting the overall vision. We aim to provide jobs for the increased population of the district and flexible business space that fulfils demand. We will encourage key economic sectors that can add value to the local economy, along with support for existing businesses and education providers.
- 6.11. These objectives reflect our corporate plan objective of supporting economic growth by promoting business growth and the creation of new jobs. They also support the sustainable community strategies' key economic themes of improving the economic vitality of our market towns, achieving a sustainable balance of business growth and environmental protection, increasing inward investment and developing a skilled and motivated workforce.

### **Policy CSEM1 Supporting a successful economy**

We will work with our business and education partners to provide an environment that positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth. We will do this by:

- (i) providing a framework for innovation and enterprise through encouraging knowledge transfer, emerging technologies and innovative business development;
- (ii) supporting measures that ensure young people leave education with the skills that the future economy needs, including the development of further education facilities at Didcot;
- (iii) supporting measures that deliver sustainable transport solutions, home working, and a stronger link between local jobs and local labour supply;
- (iv) taking advantage of the opportunities brought by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to meet key investment priorities including transport infrastructure;
- (v) seeking measures that support the development of the digital economy and the roll-out of high speed broadband across the district;
- (vi) supporting the prosperity of the area's tourism industry and recreation-based rural diversification where proposals are of a scale and type appropriate to their location.

<sup>51</sup> Oxfordshire Employers Skills Study 2010, Oxfordshire Economic Partnership

- 6.12. Our approach is consistent with the NPPF. This stresses that planning policies should positively encourage sustainable economic growth. It sets out that policies should proactively meet the development needs of business by recognising and seeking to address potential barriers to investment, including a poor environment or any lack of infrastructure, services or housing. It encourages positive planning for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven or high technology industries. We have worked to establish Science Vale UK as such a cluster, an important element of our strategy is to support economic development within Science Vale UK.
- 6.13. South Oxfordshire falls within the remit of the Oxfordshire City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). All LEPs are intended to empower locally driven growth, encourage business investment and promote economic development. The role of the Oxfordshire LEP will include setting out key investment priorities, coordinating bids for the Regional Growth Fund, ensuring business is involved in consideration of strategic planning applications and tackling barriers to growth through focused investment.

### The amount and distribution of employment

- 6.14. We need to actively plan for a strong and stable local economy to support our objectives. We know that in a large rural district when businesses outgrow their existing premises or new businesses start up they will need premises locally. We aim to make sure that there are enough suitable locations, premises and infrastructure and to promote high quality sustainable development.
- 6.15. We have used the evidence from our Employment Land Review (ELR) which we completed in 2007 and updated in 2008<sup>52</sup> to forecast future needs. It uses an analysis of labour demand which estimates the number of jobs likely to be generated using recent and likely future population and economic trends and translates them into land requirements. Only B1 office, B2 general industry and B8 warehousing uses are included.
- 6.16. The ELR update predicts a future requirement for an additional 16.5 hectares of employment land for the district as a whole up to 2026. This figure is in addition to existing commitments and allocations. It makes an allowance for vacant sites or churn while businesses move and sites are redeveloped and includes provision to help meet our aim of reducing long distance out-commuting. The detail of the calculation is provided in the Thriving Economy background paper.
- 6.17. We aim to maintain a buoyant economy in the district but we are conscious that we continue to lose employment land to other uses when sites become unviable. We therefore plan to allocate the equivalent of 20 hectares of land for employment uses to allow a small contingency for this continuing loss of sites. These new land allocations together with existing commitments should result in an additional 5,000 B class jobs<sup>53</sup> above 2006 levels.

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<sup>52</sup> South Oxfordshire District Council Employment land Review, DTZ 2007, Revisiting South Oxfordshire's Employment Land Projections, WM Enterprise October 2008

<sup>53</sup> Jobs potential has been calculated using an estimated figure of 190 jobs/hectare as advised by Employment Land review update consultants WM Enterprises

## **Policy CSEM2 The amount and distribution of employment**

This core strategy provides for around 5,000 additional B class jobs to 2027. To facilitate this, the equivalent of 13.5 additional hectares of land will be provided, in various centres across the district plus a further 6.5 hectares at Didcot in the Vale of White Horse district.

This provision will be made by allocating:

- (i) about 2ha of further employment land at Thame;
- (ii) about 2ha of further employment land at Wallingford; and
- (iii) about 4.2ha of further employment land distributed among some of the larger villages.

The balance of the 13.5 hectares will be provided through increasing jobs at Culham Science Centre.

Additional employment land will be allocated to replace any need identified from a review of existing commitments in the Site Allocations DPD.

New employment sites should provide for a range of types and sizes of units including start-up and grow-on space.

- 6.18. Most housing growth will be in Didcot. Our strategy makes a strong link between the housing growth in Didcot and the business growth needs of Science Vale UK, including at Harwell Oxford<sup>54</sup> and Milton Park outside the district. We are seeking with Vale of White Horse District Council to provide enough B class jobs to cater for Didcot's increased population, as well as catering for the increased population in the Vale of White Horse District. We have agreed with Vale of White Horse District Council that there will be a cross boundary allocation and 6.5 hectares of land will be allocated there to meet our needs for Didcot. Policies CSEM2 and CSEM3 show how we will distribute the remaining 13.5 hectares through new allocations and job growth.
- 6.19. Employment should be in accessible locations that are, or will be, well served by a choice of means of transport in order to improve sustainability. Our distribution strategy is consistent with our overall settlement strategy and is to:
- provide for most development to be in the four towns as our strategy is to support the towns; and
  - allow for the allocation of some small sites in some of the larger villages.
- 6.20. Around two hectares of employment land will be allocated in both Thame and Wallingford where significant housing is planned. We do not propose to provide any additional employment land in Henley as there is scope to intensify uses on existing sites. We will make provision for 4.2 hectares of employment land to be spread between some of the larger villages. This will help provide a range of employment and business opportunities to support the economic and social needs of the rural areas. We will identify specific sites in the towns and villages in the Site Allocations DPD.
- 6.21. The strategy takes into account employment land already identified. The Site Allocations DPD will review these commitments and confirm their allocation or allocate alternative land if there is evidence that they are unlikely to be delivered. Included in the existing commitments is about two hectares at Howbery Park in Crowmarsh Gifford. This has the potential to be developed to support the environmental sciences cluster at Crowmarsh Gifford. We will encourage the use of this land for further employment growth and examine whether there is the potential for more growth through the Site Allocations DPD.

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<sup>54</sup> Harwell Oxford formerly known as Harwell Science and Innovation Centre

- 6.22. In order to promote a balanced local economy, we need to make sure that a range of size and types of premises is available. We will seek to widen the variety of premises, to include more modern and flexible business space. We need enough space for small and medium sized businesses, including start-up/incubator (up to 150m<sup>2</sup>) and grow-on space (up to 500m<sup>2</sup>), and we will look for opportunities to provide this. Whether units are suitable for start-up businesses will depend partly on management arrangements and lease terms that are beyond our control. Consistent with the aim to provide higher value jobs, the majority of the new space should be for B1 uses.

### **Policy CSEM3 Culham Science Centre**

The redevelopment and intensification of Culham Science Centre for research and science based businesses will be supported. Proposals for redevelopment and the intensification of uses with the creation of about 1,000 new jobs will be supported. We will work proactively with Culham to develop an agreed masterplan that facilitates this growth.

- 6.23. Culham Science Centre (CSC) is part of Science Vale UK. It includes the Joint European Torus (JET) project. It is the leading UK centre for fusion research and technology and is of international importance. The site also hosts a number of related businesses. The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) wants to start redeveloping the CSC buildings within the next five years as the current stock is outdated. Although the European fusion project is being moved to France, the JET facility will continue to operate for some time and it is possible that Culham may be selected for further facilities linked to fusion research.
- 6.24. We recognise the key role of the CSC site and would support and encourage redevelopment in accordance with the advice in the NPPF on redevelopment of previously developed sites in the Green Belt. We will work with UKAEA to agree a masterplan that will consider the future of the whole site recognising that many of the JET facilities will remain in the foreseeable future. The masterplan will need to take into account the wider transport implications of the proposals.
- 6.25. This approach to Culham is consistent with the objective to increase the number of high value jobs in the district. A number of the buildings on the site have temporary permissions related to the JET project and due to the nature of the project many of these buildings provide very little employment. There are currently around 2,000 jobs on the Culham Science Centre site.
- 6.26. The redevelopment of the site will give rise to opportunities for significantly more employment through the provision of permanent buildings and intensification of uses, however we recognise that there may still be need for some buildings which give rise to low levels of employment. We are therefore specifying a job creation target rather than a site size to meet the needs and aspirations of the site owners and that of the council to ensure that transport and other impacts can be managed.

### **Policy CSEM4 Supporting economic development**

Planning permission will be granted for:

- (i) employment<sup>55</sup> on identified allocated employment sites<sup>56</sup> in accordance with the policy;
- (ii) the redevelopment of employment sites where this improves the quality and choice of business premises available;
- (iii) the reasonable extension of premises on existing sites;
- (iv) appropriate forms of working at home, where permission is needed;
- (v) new premises or the conversion of existing buildings on suitable sites within the built-up area of settlements;
- (vi) the re-use of rural buildings where the proposals accord with other policies in the development plan.

### **Skills development and infrastructure**

- 6.27. The availability of a skilled workforce is vital. Where specialised skills are available, clusters of enterprises can form added value to the economy. This spatial strategy can support skills development by encouraging the provision and expansion of suitable education and training facilities with access in person and by electronic means.

### **Policy CSEM5 Oxford Brookes University**

Proposals for the redevelopment of Oxford Brookes University Campus at Holton will be supported. We will work proactively with the University to develop an agreed masterplan that meets its business objectives.

- 6.28. Oxford Brookes University has a campus in the Green Belt at Holton near Wheatley. The University has plans to redevelop this campus to improve and expand facilities. We will support this and work with the University<sup>57</sup> to agree a masterplan that takes account of the constraints on the site and addresses the transport issues, to achieve redevelopment in accordance with the advice in the NPPF on previously developed sites in the Green Belt.
- 6.29. Initial ideas have been framed for a Didcot Learning Park which will focus on further education and developing skills needed in the research and business sectors of Science Vale UK. This is likely to be located in the part of Didcot which is within the Vale of White Horse district. We will support the development of proposals that address the skills gap for local employment and for further education through the Didcot Area Action Plan DPD.
- 6.30. The availability of advanced ICT infrastructure is important for the success of the local economy and skills development. Good transport connections and adequate provision of other infrastructure is also essential. We will work with infrastructure providers to secure these. The infrastructure section covers these matters in more detail.

<sup>55</sup> Employment in this context is defined as uses which fall within Part B of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended and sui generis uses of a similar nature

<sup>56</sup> Identified employment sites are those allocated in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and those to be identified through the Site Allocations DPD or neighbourhood plans

<sup>57</sup> The masterplan was adopted alongside the core strategy in December 2012

## 7. Delivering new homes

### The amount of new housing

- 7.1. This core strategy demonstrates how and where we will meet needs for new housing in the district. We need more housing to cater for the growing population. There is also a trend towards smaller households which means we need to build more houses to accommodate the same population. To illustrate this, based on the household projections, a village with a population of 3,000 would need an additional 110 houses by 2026 just to accommodate the existing population<sup>58</sup>. In addition to demographic needs, there is also a strong need for affordable housing.
- 7.2. Economic factors are also important. Government guidance places particular importance on the development of the economy. We need to make sure that there is enough housing for the workforce who will drive the economic growth.
- 7.3. Our objectives are to provide for a range of housing development across the district that caters for residents' needs and to make sure that a significant proportion of this housing is affordable.
- 7.4. We decided to continue with the housing numbers that were set out in the South East Plan<sup>59</sup>. These were based on robust demographic projections and economic forecasts for the county alongside assessments of the levels of growth that could reasonably be accommodated with a view to infrastructure provision.
- 7.5. We fed into this process during the preparation of the South East Plan and made recommendations for the housing numbers and how they should be distributed throughout the county. The figures were tested at a public examination and were found to be sound.
- 7.6. This means that we need to provide enough land to help the delivery of 10,940 dwellings in the district up to 2026. We have added an extra year's worth of housing, planning up to 2027, which meets government advice in the NPPF that plans should be drawn up on an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon. We therefore need to plan for the 10,940 to 2026 plus an additional 547 dwellings for the period 2026 to 2027.

### Housing distribution

- 7.7. The South East Plan proposed a 'South of Oxford Strategic Development Area' of 4,000 dwellings within this District, adjoining the City boundary. The Treasury Solicitor conceded a legal challenge to this as insufficient sustainability appraisal had been undertaken of possible alternative locations for meeting the wider housing needs of the City. Any provision of development on that scale would need to have been preceded by joint work and sustainability appraisal of reasonable alternative options involving the City and all of its adjoining authorities.
- 7.8. The current Oxford Core Strategy provides for 8,000 dwellings within the City 2006-2026. It also states that 'Some needs that cannot be met within the City may be met elsewhere within the Central Oxfordshire sub-region'. If (following the planned updating of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Oxfordshire) joint work were to be initi-

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<sup>58</sup> Calculation based on the average household size in 2006 being 2.37 and by 2026 forecast to 2.18, CLG - Revised 2004 Household Projections

<sup>59</sup> South East Plan, May 2009

ated to address how the study findings should be evaluated and met, the Council would fulfil its statutory 'duty to co-operate' in partnership with all the other necessary participating authorities.

- 7.9. Our overall strategy for a strong network of settlements throughout the district, as explained in Section 4, has shaped our housing distribution strategy. We aim to focus a large proportion of new development at the growth point of Didcot. The number of houses allocated to Didcot is ring-fenced to this settlement as this level of housing growth is closely linked to planned economic growth within Science Vale UK, our bid for transport infrastructure in the Didcot area, our plans for the expansion of Didcot town centre and Didcot's designation as a New Growth Point.
- 7.10. Outside Didcot, the rest of the district will be a single area for housing land supply. About 60% (1,730) of the balance of the total of new housing allocations to be provided through this strategy in that area is directed to the market towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford. A high proportion of South Oxfordshire residents (about 60%) currently live in rural areas, so the urban focus of the strategy, directing new allocations primarily towards Didcot and the other three towns will significantly rebalance the present urban/rural mix in South Oxfordshire, especially taken in context with the substantial number of existing commitments at Didcot (3,780). However, about 40% of the balance of new allocations to be made outside Didcot (1,154 homes), or about 28% of new allocations including those at Didcot (1,154/4,060) is directed towards the 12 larger villages because it is an important aim of this strategy to provide growth to support the maintenance of services and facilities at this identified network of key rural centres.
- 7.11. The starting point for the strategy was to distribute the homes allocated to Henley, Thame and Wallingford generally in proportion to their relative sizes (40% / 35% / 25%). However, a cap of 400 has been imposed at Henley because of the lack of identifiable certain capacity for physical growth due to constraints posed by the Thames flood plain and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This results in the diversion of a total of just under 350 or so homes proportionately to Thame and Wallingford. The distribution of the growth allocated to the larger villages will be decided through the Site Allocations DPD on the basis of the principles set out in paragraph 7.20.
- 7.12. The overall number of houses to allocate to Didcot and the rest of the district is shown in Table 7.1 and on Map 7.1.
- 7.13. The base date of our housing supply period is 2006. Some of the housing needed has been built already and a number of other deliverable sites have been identified through planning permissions, allocations in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and sites within the built-up area of existing settlements shown in our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment<sup>60</sup>. Table 7.1 and Map 7.1 show how much land we have already identified and the amount we need to identify in this plan.

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<sup>60</sup> Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, South Oxfordshire District Council

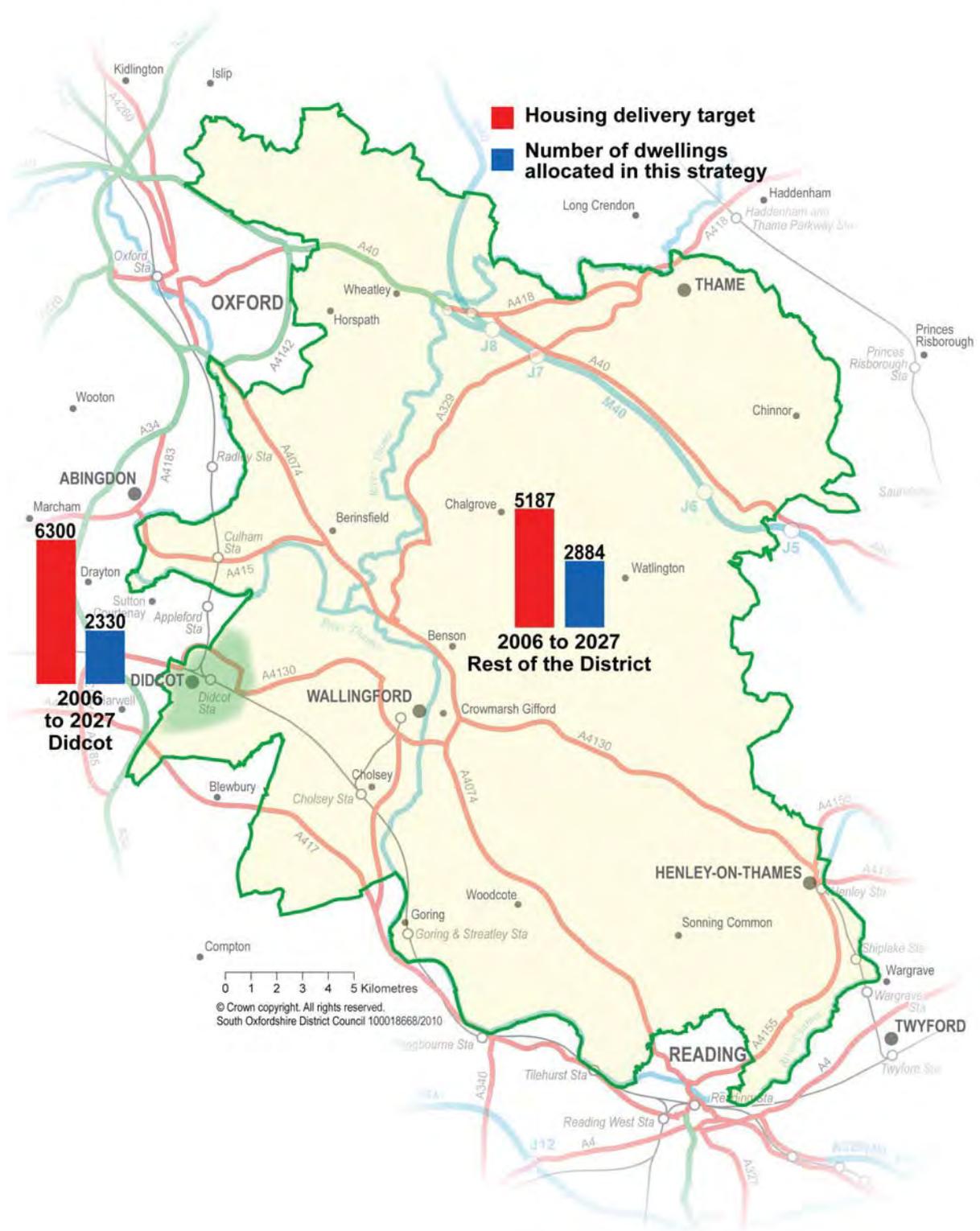
**Table 7.1 Housing targets and number of dwellings to allocate**

	2006 to 2027 target	Completions 2006-2012, existing allocations & identified deliverable sites	Number of dwellings allocated in this strategy
Didcot	6,300	3,983	2,330
Rest of the District	5,187	2,460	2,884
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,487</b>	<b>6,443</b>	<b>5,214</b>

**Policy CSH1 Amount and distribution of housing**

Planning permission will be granted to meet housing requirements in Table 7.1 in accordance with Tables 7.2 to 7.3.

Map 7.1 Number of new homes we need to plan for in South Oxfordshire



## Didcot

- 7.14. Our strategy provides for 6,300 homes to be built at Didcot to 2027. A further 2,750 will be provided in the Vale of White Horse district. The figure for South Oxfordshire includes 750 of the extra 1,500 homes the councils supported up to 2016 so that Didcot became a New Growth Point.
- 7.15. We have already identified land in Didcot at Great Western Park and Ladygrove East. Two further strategic allocations are made in this plan on the Orchard Centre Phase 2 site and in a greenfield neighbourhood to the north east of Didcot. Post 2016, we expect Vauxhall Barracks, a Ministry of Defence site which is allocated for housing in our current local plan, to come forward as well as a continuation of development to the north-east of Didcot. Table 7.2 summarises the position in Didcot. The details, including anticipated delivery, are set out in Section 9 Didcot and Section 18 Implementation of the Strategy.

**Table 7.2 Planned housing provision in Didcot**

<b>DIDCOT 2006-2027</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Supply</b>
<b>Requirement</b>		
Target 2006-2026 (South East Plan target carried forward)	6,000	
Additional housing requirement 2026-2027	300	
<b>Supply</b>		
Completions 2006/07 – 2011/12		322
<b>Existing strategic sites</b>		
Great Western Park		2,587
Ladygrove East		642
Vauxhall Barracks		300
Other deliverable sites as at 31.03.12		132
<b>New strategic allocations in this core strategy</b>		
North east Didcot		2,030
Orchard Centre Phase 2		300
<b>Total 2006 to 2027</b>	<b>6,300</b>	<b>6,313</b>

## Rest of the District

- 7.16. In the Rest of the District we are allocating land for 2,884 new homes. This takes into account our existing completions from 2006 to 2012 and existing allocations and deliverable sites as at 31 March 2012. This is shown in table 7.3 overleaf.
- 7.17. Wallingford, Thame and Henley are the towns in this area. The villages offering the most services and with the ability to act as local centres as part of the network of settlements are Benson, Berinsfield, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley and Woodcote.
- 7.18. Wallingford and Thame have a good range of services and facilities. Wallingford's town centre has been suffering recently from loss of trade and could benefit from an increased population. The strategy allocates a greenfield neighbourhood at Wallingford to

accommodate 555 homes. This is consistent with its role in the network of settlements and should provide a level of growth that will strengthen the town centre. The new homes at Thame will be allocated through the Thame Neighbourhood Plan.

- 7.19. Henley is tightly constrained by the River Thames and its floodplain, and the high quality of its landscape setting. As a result we do not believe we could find sufficient deliverable sites if we allocated a similar proportion of growth to Henley as we have in Thame and Wallingford and we have not made a strategic allocation. A provision of 400 homes has been made for Henley and a number of smaller non-strategic sites will be allocated through the Site Allocations DPD. The approach is explained in detail in Section 10.
- 7.20. For the larger villages we are allocating a total of 1,154 dwellings to be divided between these settlements and Bayswater Farm, a small area of land next to Oxford which performs well against sustainability criteria. These are not strategic allocations and will be addressed in our Site Allocations DPD. The general starting point for the Site Allocations DPD in distributing housing allocations among the larger villages and Bayswater Farm will be proportionality in relation to their existing number of dwellings, or in the case of Bayswater Farm constraints and design, but this will be modified by consideration of factors such as the individual vision for each village, the existence of designations such as Green Belt and AONB, the individual sustainability credentials of villages in relation to local facilities and transport links, and the existence of particular local needs and opportunities.
- 7.21. Policy CSEN2 provides for a local review of the Green Belt at Berinsfield, a planned post-war village built on the site of a Second World War airbase. The village is currently entirely within the Green Belt. The exceptional circumstances which justify this review are as follows:
- Areas of Berinsfield are in need of regeneration and Green Belt policy is inhibiting this.
  - Some further land may be needed around Berinsfield to improve the mix of housing and to provide further opportunities for employment and service provision.
  - Berinsfield is a local service centre and some further development would be consistent with the overall strategy.

The outcome of the review will need to be in accordance with paragraph 84 of the NPPF that states when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.

- 7.22. The review will be undertaken in consultation with the local community in the context of a new vision for the village prepared through the Site Allocations DPD.
- 7.23. The southern half of the remainder of the district is predominantly within the Chilterns AONB. The fundamental aim of planning policies for the AONB is to conserve and enhance its natural beauty and landscape quality. There is also a duty to consider the economic and social well-being of the area. Henley and three of the larger villages are either within or largely surrounded by the AONB. Implementation of this strategy of strengthening these communities and enhancing their role will require some limited incursion into the AONB. We consider this to be justified in the context of the wider strategy, to create stronger communities and meet the social, and in particular the housing and economic needs of the area.

7.24. As part of our distribution strategy we have considered land outside Reading. Some of this lies within the floodplain and other areas within the Chilterns AONB. Further development focused on Reading would increase the pressures on the constrained bridges crossing the Thames and the strategy does not therefore provide for urban extensions to Reading.

7.25. Table 7.3 shows the strategy for the Rest of the District from 2006 to 2027. Sections 10, 11 and 12 contain further details on the proposals at Henley, Thame and Wallingford.

**Table 7.3 Planned housing provision in the Rest of the District**

<b>REST OF THE DISTRICT 2006-2027</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Supply</b>
<b>Requirement</b>		
Target 2006-2026 (South East Plan target carried forward)	4,940	
Additional housing requirement 2026-2027	247	
<b>Supply</b>		
Completions 2006/07 - 2011/12		1,493
<b><u>Existing strategic sites in Local Plan</u></b>		
Fairmile Hospital		270
Chinnor Cement Works		77
Mongewell Park		166
Former Thame United Football Club		12
Other deliverable sites as at 31.03.12		442
<b><u>New strategic allocations in this core strategy</u></b>		
Wallingford greenfield neighbourhood		555
Site(s) to be allocated in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan		775
Sites to be allocated in the Site Allocations DPD at Henley		400
<b><u>Sites to be allocated in the Site Allocations DPD for the larger villages</u></b>		
Benson, Berinsfield, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wheatley, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Woodcote and Bayswater Farm		1,154*
<b>Total 2006 to 2027</b>	<b>5,187</b>	<b>5,344</b>

\*These allocations should be divided so that at least 500 are provided at Larger Villages in the Central Oxfordshire area. This will secure general conformity with the South East Plan. The Larger Villages in Central Oxfordshire are Benson, Berinsfield, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford and Wheatley. Part of this Central Oxfordshire provision will also be met by an appropriate allocation at Bayswater Farm.

## Density

### Policy CSH2 Density

On sites where housing development is acceptable in principle, a minimum density of 25 dwellings per hectare (net) will be required unless this would have an adverse effect on the character of the area.

- 7.26. This policy aims to promote sustainable development by promoting the efficient use of land and to meet needs for smaller and more affordable homes, particularly where there are good public transport links. The minimum density of 25 dwellings per hectare is designed to give more flexibility in sensitive locations such as village locations. Higher densities can be justified where there is access to frequent public transport services and a wide range of services and facilities, but it should not compromise living standards. New housing should provide good quality, attractive and acceptable living environments. This policy should be read in conjunction with Policy CSQ3 Design.

## Meeting residents' housing needs

- 7.27. The issues and trends section identified the high cost of housing in the district and the disparity between income levels and housing costs. It showed the trends towards an ageing population and to smaller, including single person, households. Our vision and objectives seek to provide more housing which those on lower incomes can afford and provide the type of housing that meets the needs of our residents.

## Affordable housing

### Policy CSH3 Affordable housing

40% affordable housing will be sought on all sites where there is a net gain of three or more dwellings subject to the viability of provision on each site.

- In cases where the 40% calculation provides a part unit a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part unit;
- A tenure mix of 75% social rented and 25% intermediate housing will be sought;
- With the exception of part units the affordable housing should be provided on site and the affordable housing should be mixed with the market housing;
- The housing should meet required standards and should be of a size and type which meets the requirements of those in housing need.

- 7.28. Affordable housing includes social rented/ affordable rented and intermediate housing<sup>61</sup> that is available to households in the district whose needs are not met by the market. The cost must be low enough for eligible households to afford based on local incomes and house prices. The home should be restricted for use by future eligible households. If these restrictions are lifted, the subsidy should be recycled for alternative affordable housing in the district.
- 7.29. The Housing Needs Assessment reported that the annual level of need for affordable housing in the district is 530 units<sup>62</sup>. This is almost equal to the full housing allocation in

<sup>61</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, CLG provides a definition of these terms

<sup>62</sup> Housing Needs Assessment DCA 2008

the South East Plan of 547 units each year until 2026. Setting a target in relation to need is therefore unrealistic and the strategy subsequently seeks to maximise the amount of affordable housing whilst making sure that housing schemes are deliverable.

- 7.30. Our Housing Needs Assessment recommended an overall affordable housing target of 40 per cent of the total of all suitable private development sites throughout the district. Our Affordable Housing Viability Study<sup>63</sup> supported this figure and recommended that it should be applied taking full account of individual site circumstances and the viability of development.
- 7.31. The policy includes the requirement to provide affordable housing on all sites which result in a net gain of three or more units. This threshold will help the provision of affordable housing throughout the district but particularly in relation to small sites in villages. Our Affordable Housing Viability Study supported this threshold. Where land which is above the threshold is subdivided to create separate development schemes, we will consider the site as a whole and seek affordable housing on each part. Where the application of 40% affordable housing results in a part unit, we will ask for a financial contribution. We will pool this with other contributions to provide additional affordable housing on or off site.
- 7.32. The policy recognises that there may be sites on which the provision of 40% affordable housing would render the development uneconomic or would prejudice the realisation of other planning objectives that need to be given priority. In these circumstances the developer must provide a full development viability appraisal for scrutiny. We will take into account exceptional site costs and the existing use value of the site but we will not normally consider the price paid for the site to be relevant.
- 7.33. The council's Housing Needs Assessment showed that 75% of the housing need is for social rented housing and 25% for intermediate housing. The NPPF<sup>64</sup> also includes the category of affordable rented housing. Our affordable housing viability study shows that there are circumstances where the 40% affordable housing target could be achieved with the 75% social rented to 25% shared ownership tenure split retained. This could be achieved on sites with low existing use values. In such circumstances we will seek a 75% social rented to 25% shared ownership tenure split, unless viability or other factors show a robust justification for a different mix or rent model. For sites with medium or high existing use values where viability issues can be demonstrated in achieving a 75% social rented to 25% shared ownership tenure split, we will accept a tenure split of 75% affordable rented and 25% shared ownership, unless viability or other factors show a robust justification for a different mix.
- 7.34. We encourage developers to work with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and to engage with them and the council's housing development service at an early stage in the planning process. We have a number of preferred partner RSLs and we encourage developers to use one of these. The modelling work undertaken in our Affordable Housing Viability Study had regard to Local Housing Allowances and ensured that the affordable rents considered did not exceed these levels. The affordable rent levels used were therefore lower than would otherwise have been the case. Acceptable rent levels for affordable rented housing within the district will be set out in the council's forthcoming Tenancy Strategy.

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63 Affordable Housing Viability Study BNP Paribas Real Estate 2009 and Affordable Housing Viability Study: Addendum Report following introduction of 'Affordable Rent' tenure, BNP Paribas Real Estate 2011

64 National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, CLG

- 7.35. The affordable housing should generally be provided on site and should be fully integrated within the market housing. It should be of a type and size that meets the needs of those eligible for affordable housing. It should be built in accordance with the standards in this plan, in approved supplementary planning documents and those of the RSL and any grant funding body.
- 7.36. We will include further guidance on affordable housing in a supplementary planning document.

## Meeting housing needs

### Policy CSH4 Meeting housing needs

A mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households will be sought on all new residential developments.

- At least 10 per cent of market housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more should be designed to meet current Lifetime Homes standards.
- In the case of affordable housing all ground-floor properties should be designed to meet current Lifetime Homes standards.
- The provision of dwellings for people with additional special needs will be sought as part of the overall affordable housing percentage.
- Specialist accommodation for older people should be provided in the new greenfield neighbourhoods identified in this strategy and will be permitted at other suitable locations.

- 7.37. Our Housing Needs Assessment provides detail on the recommended mix of housing type and size. The Assessment found a shortfall of smaller units, especially two bedroom properties, in both the market and affordable sectors. It is important that new housing addresses the need for smaller units to address the existing stock imbalance and the impact of demographic and household formation change. It is also important to provide the type of housing needed to attract people to live and work locally. In providing new housing it is also important that they are built to a size and standard that gives a good quality of life.
- 7.38. We will set out further details of housing types and sizes required through a supplementary planning document as this will be based on the most up-to date evidence of need.
- 7.39. The aim of government policy is to provide support for people to be able to live in or remain in their own homes<sup>65</sup>. This can include homes adapted for people with disabilities and/or in housing schemes which provide specific forms of support. These include people with disabilities, older people and vulnerable young people. Within the affordable housing element of the larger developments, we will look for scheme(s) to meet the needs of specific vulnerable groups.
- 7.40. The Housing Needs Assessment suggested that 7,614 households (14.2%) in the district had one or more member affected by a disability or long-term illness. A relatively low percentage of households which included a wheelchair user had accommodation adapted to suit their needs. We will require that at least 10 per cent of market housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more be designed to the revised Lifetime Homes standards<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Delivering Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society February 2008 CLG

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

or any standards that supersede them. In affordable housing schemes all ground-floors of properties should be designed to Lifetime Homes standards. The CLG Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods established the Government's clear objective that all new publicly funded housing is built to Lifetime Homes Standard by 2011 and that this standard will become the norm for all newly built housing by 2013.

## Specialist accommodation for older people

- 7.41. There are a range of models that can play a part in providing specialist accommodation for the elderly. These include sheltered and enhanced sheltered housing, Extra Care housing, retirement villages, continuing care retirement communities and registered care homes both with and without nursing care. The council's preference is for Extra Care housing or schemes which include an element of Extra Care provision within them, in accordance with the county council's Extra Care housing strategy<sup>67</sup>.
- 7.42. Where appropriate, specialist accommodation for the elderly should be provided on a mixed-tenure basis, and such accommodation should be located on sites in or adjacent to the towns or within the larger villages.<sup>68</sup> Where any scheme providing specialist accommodation for the elderly (with or without care) includes an affordable housing component, this can count towards the overall 40% affordable housing requirement if part of a wider development.

## Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 7.43. The overall scale of the need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in the district is small in comparison to wider housing needs, but we have a responsibility to address their needs. Providing new pitches<sup>69</sup> will help to solve the problems caused by illegal camping and unauthorised sites.
- 7.44. Legislation and national guidance<sup>70</sup> provide a framework within which to formulate policies for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople for our development plan.

### Policy CSH5 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

A supply of pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be provided by:

- (i) safeguarding existing sites<sup>71</sup>
- (ii) extending existing sites where possible to meet the needs of existing residents and their families
- (iii) identifying new sites through the Site Allocations DPD and Didcot Area Action Plan.

The location of new sites will be determined in accordance with the following priorities:

- (i) incorporated within the greenfield neighbourhood at Didcot
- (ii) located near to existing settlements
- (iii) located within walking distance of essential services or high frequency public transport.

Sites for Travelling Showpeople may need to be large enough to accommodate equipment.

<sup>67</sup> OCC Extra Care Housing Strategy, Jan 2008

<sup>68</sup> A Framework for an Oxfordshire Extra Care Housing Strategy, Oxfordshire County Council, January 2008

<sup>69</sup> A pitch can normally accommodate more than one caravan. Several pitches make up a site.

<sup>70</sup> Human Rights Act 1998, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Housing Act 2004, Sustainable Communities: Homes for all (2005), Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, March 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Existing sites in this context means sites with planning permission

- 7.45. As part of a partial review of the South East Plan, in October 2007 all local authorities in the South East including those in Oxfordshire provided advice to SEERA on the number and distribution of new pitches required for Gypsies and Travellers. This regional process has now been halted<sup>72</sup>, and the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets a framework for councils to decide how many pitches are necessary according to local need and historic demand.
- 7.46. Our advice to SEERA in October 2007 led on from an assessment of need<sup>73</sup> and for South Oxfordshire, it shows the need to provide nine net additional pitches in the period to 2016.
- 7.47. All authorities in Oxfordshire commissioned a joint needs assessment for Travelling Showpeople in 2008<sup>74</sup>. For South Oxfordshire this study identifies a need to provide seven pitches for Travelling Showpeople for the period 2008-2016.
- 7.48. The council has been working in partnership with the other Oxfordshire councils and plans to continue this work with partner authorities and Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's organisations on matters such as transit pitches and updated assessments for the post 2016 period.

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72 When SEERA was disbanded in March 2009 their work was taken on by the South East England Partnership Board but this too closed, on 30 July 2010.

73 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment for the Thames Valley Region, Tribal Consulting for ACTVAR (2006)

74 Needs Assessment for Travelling Show People, Tribal Consulting for the Oxfordshire local authorities (2008)

## 8. Town centres and shopping

### Introduction

- 8.1. This section outlines the amount, type and location of retail and town centre uses to 2027. The strategy is consistent with national guidance in the NPPF that town centre and retail development should be directed to existing town centres<sup>75</sup>, complemented by the need to provide for our rural area with its distinctive network of rural centres.
- 8.2. A key element of the vision and supporting objectives is to maintain the general balance between market towns and villages to make sure that all our communities continue to thrive. Two of the objectives which this town centres and retail strategy addresses are supporting facilities which keep communities strong, and making sure that day to day services are available nearby.

### Local distinctiveness

- 8.3. South Oxfordshire's three market towns (Henley, Thame and Wallingford) retain their traditional role as key service centres for the rural community and are historic towns attractive to visitors. Didcot is a designated growth point strategically located in the Science Vale UK area.
- 8.4. The relatively large distances between Henley, Thame and Wallingford help to explain the development over time of a network of larger villages servicing their immediate rural area. A key challenge during the plan period will be to strengthen this network of centres in the face of current trends for retail polarisation which is making larger town centres stronger at the expense of smaller centres. In South Oxfordshire you can see this both in the relationship between the towns and villages in the district as well as in relation to the attraction of the major centres outside the district.
- 8.5. Our Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment<sup>76</sup> found that residents of South Oxfordshire tend to go to the dominant centres located near to, but outside, the district for comparison goods<sup>77</sup>. The exception to this is Didcot, which is dominant for comparison shopping within its zone. The district's town and village centres face competition from:
  - larger superstores selling comparison goods;
  - regional centres - Reading, Oxford, Aylesbury and High Wycombe;
  - other centres - Abingdon; and
  - internet shopping.Convenience goods shopping is more localised and the stores in South Oxfordshire attract a higher proportion of spending.
- 8.6. In the rural areas the Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment found that trading performance was mixed, but it also found relatively low levels of vacancy and only a few businesses planning to cease trading.
- 8.7. In terms of leisure, the assessment found that the largest proportion of leisure expenditure in the district was on food and drink activities (restaurants, cafés, bars etc). All four towns are successful in retaining leisure expenditure, with Henley and Thame

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<sup>75</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, paragraphs 23 to 27

<sup>76</sup> Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment, Roger Tym and Partners, February 2009, updated November 2010

<sup>77</sup> Comparison shopping is the provision of goods not obtained on a frequent basis, such as non-food products like clothing, furniture and electrical goods for which some comparison is normally made before purchase. Convenience shopping is the provision of everyday goods such as food, newspapers and drinks.

particularly successful in attracting expenditure in their areas and beyond. Patterns of leisure activities are more dynamic than those of shopping, because people are often willing to travel longer distances for leisure activities than for shopping. Oxford and Reading are dominant attractors for leisure activities. However, leisure patterns for activities such as cinema or health and fitness depend on where the facilities are provided.

### **Policy CST1 Town centres and shopping**

The district's town and village centres will be supported and strengthened to ensure that they continue to be the focus of communities. Initiatives which safeguard and enhance their role and function will be supported.

The hierarchy of centres in the district is:

#### **Town centres serving a local and wider catchment area:**

Didcot and Henley

#### **Town centres serving a local catchment area:**

Thame and Wallingford

#### **Local centres serving their immediate rural area:**

Berinsfield, Benson, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley and Woodcote.

To achieve the long term success of our centres development proposals will be permitted which:

- Provide further retail and leisure uses within the town and larger village centres through infill development and small scale redevelopment;
- Diversify the town centres to provide uses which are complementary to retail, while not undermining the town's retail role, including where appropriate mixed-use developments, uses which contribute to the evening economy, community facilities and upper floor residential and office uses;
- Reinforce the local distinctiveness of our market towns, improve their vitality and viability and encourage more visits.

As a starting point, the Council looks for proposals for main town centre uses to be sited within defined town centres. Applications for such uses on unallocated sites outside town centres will be required to be in accessible locations well connected to the town centre. Such proposals will be subject to the sequential test and, for proposals over 2,500sq.m, an impact assessment. Proposals which fail to satisfy these tests will not be permitted.

Changes of use within defined primary and secondary retail frontages will be managed to maintain the role of the town centres.

## **The retail hierarchy**

- 8.8. The town centre hierarchy set out in Policy CST1 is informed by an assessment of the retail and leisure needs of our town centres and larger villages. The hierarchy of town centres aims to support facilities which keep communities strong with available day-to-day services and also aims to maintain the general balance between market towns and villages. The hierarchy is explained further in the Town Centres and Shopping background paper.
- 8.9. The Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment identifies opportunities to increase the market share of the town centres. It notes that although sites for retail development in

the villages should not be identified, we should encourage small scale retail or leisure development if it contributes to the vitality and viability of the villages.

- 8.10. This strategy takes into account areas where investment should be stimulated such as town centres with deficiencies, and those areas that will be the subject of significant growth. It therefore supports:
- the aspiration to move Didcot beyond its current status as a town centre serving a local and wider catchment area to a secondary regional centre;
  - proposals which reinforce the local distinctiveness of our market towns, improve their vitality and viability and encourage more visits. In particular, those initiatives identified in the market towns strategy and action plan<sup>78</sup>; and
  - opportunities associated with rural development initiatives.

## The amount and location of new retail floorspace

- 8.11. The NPPF explains that both the quantitative and qualitative need for retail and leisure development should be assessed as part of the plan making process. This will enable the local planning authority to plan positively about where they should accommodate development. The Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment was carried out in 2008/9, and it identified a need for new retail and leisure floorspace in the district over the period to 2026. Figures were based on expected expenditure growth and population growth, the latter particularly resulting from the new homes planned at Didcot. In November 2010 an update was carried out to reflect the final housing distribution in the core strategy and the economic downturn. Table 8.1 shows the existing floorspace in each town and the amount of new floorspace (the quantitative assessment of need) the updated RLNA indicates is likely to be needed for town centre uses including leisure. The economic downturn may slow the rate of consumer expenditure growth and could delay project development in the market towns until later in the plan period. The forecasts after 2016 are less reliable and we will review the figures for this period with an update to the Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment before land allocations are made for the post 2016 period.

**Table 8.1 Amount of existing floorspace and quantitative need for additional floorspace**

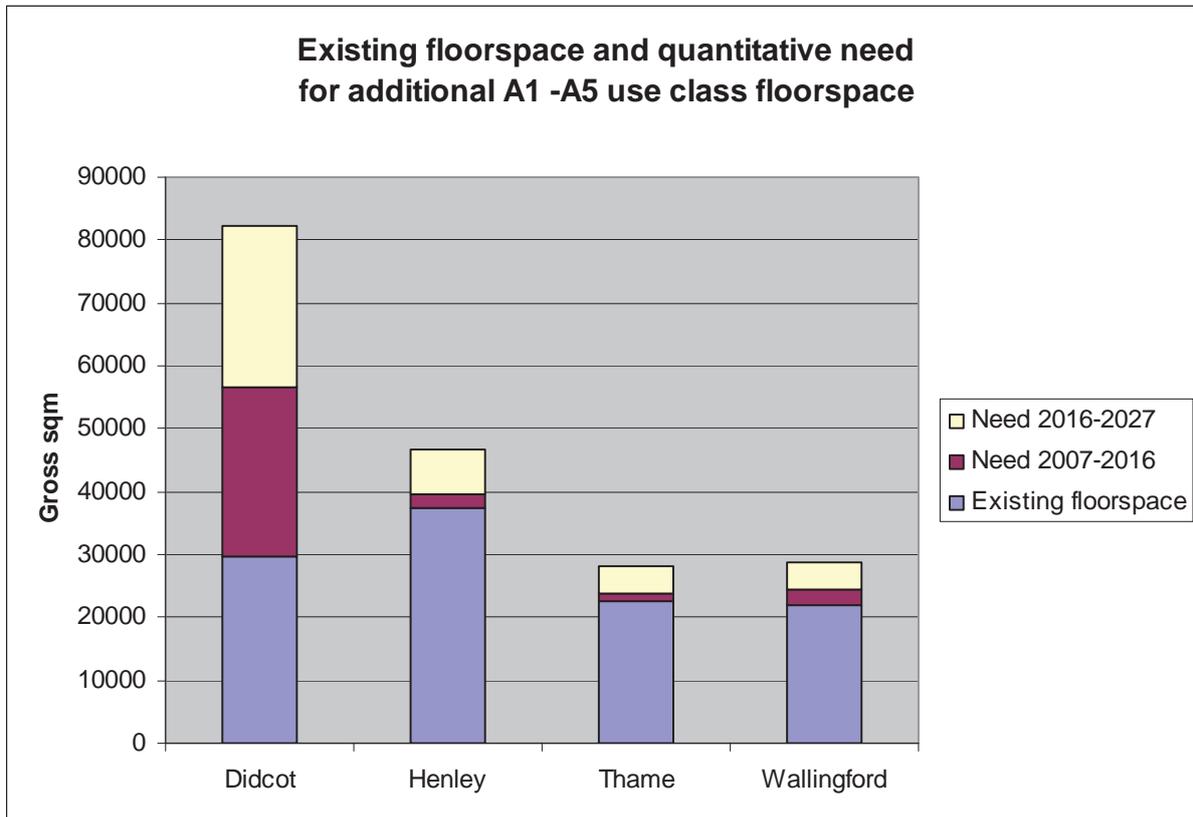
Town	Existing floorspace in Use Classes A1– A5 sqm gross	Total quantitative need for new town centre floorspace (Use Classes A1-A5) sqm gross	
		2007-2016	2007-2027
<b>Didcot</b>	29,707	26,800	52,700
<b>Henley</b>	37,534	2,100	9,200
<b>Thame</b>	22,556	1,400	5,700
<b>Wallingford</b>	21,870	2,500	6,900

Source: SODC. Figures from Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment Update (2010)

<sup>78</sup> Market Towns Strategy 2009 and annual Action Plans, South Oxfordshire District Council (Economic Development)

8.12. Table 8.1 and Figure 8.1 below illustrate the level of growth for each town. The numbers are guidelines on the scale of development appropriate for each centre. They will be reflected in the Site Allocations DPD and Didcot Area Action Plan DPD which will take into account the physical capacity of opportunity sites and any existing commitments to new floorspace. The strategy for accommodating the growth is set out in the section on each town.

**Figure 8.1 Existing floorspace and quantitative need**



8.13. Identifying sites to help meet the need for new retail and leisure floorspace requires looking for ways to accommodate new floorspace which accord with the overall strategy in CST1 and the strategies for each town. A central part of the strategy to transform Didcot is the retail-led mixed-use regeneration of the town centre. Most of the projected need will be met through Phase 2 of the Orchard Centre which is covered by Policy CSDID2 and the Didcot Town Centre SPD<sup>79</sup>, and the Didcot Area Action Plan will consider any remaining requirement. In the rest of the district we will look for opportunities for the period to 2016 through the Site Allocations DPD. The ability to accommodate the demand in the market towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford will depend on the availability of sites in the context of the strategy to protect their historic character and reinforce their local distinctiveness. Therefore the availability of sites is likely to be particularly limited in the market towns. In planning for retail, our policy approach will protect town centres as the heart of our communities, in line with advice in the NPPF to pursue policies that support the vitality and viability of town centres.

8.14. The Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment (2009) did not find any evidence to support out of town centre development and recommended resistance to any out of centre

<sup>79</sup> Didcot Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document, May 2009

development for town centre uses. National guidance in the NPPF requires a sequential and an impact assessment for planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with the development plan<sup>80</sup>. The impact assessment includes assessing the impacts of large unplanned out of town schemes on town centre vitality and viability, and on existing, committed and planned investment in centres in the catchment area of a proposal.

## Town centre boundaries

- 8.15. Town centre boundaries define the area within a town where retail development and leisure uses are concentrated. New development for these purposes will generally be focused within the town centre boundaries.
- 8.16. The Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment indicates that current town centre boundaries are capable of accommodating the town centre and retail needs identified above in the plan period. The Development Management Policies DPD will define the town centre boundaries for Henley, Thame and Wallingford. There will be a much greater amount of change in Didcot and we will consider the boundary for Didcot through the Didcot Area Action Plan when more work has been done on the impact of Phase 2 of the Orchard Centre.

## Primary and secondary frontages

- 8.17. The health of our town centres depends on them having the necessary amount of balanced, integrated and accessible shopping, services and community facilities. Maps and policies in the Development Management Policies DPD will indicate the extent of the primary and secondary shopping frontages, which together make up the primary shopping area, in order to help us manage change within our town centres in a more responsive and flexible manner. This will be done by making sure that the primary shopping frontages<sup>81</sup> retain their prime retail function, while secondary shopping frontages will have the crucial role of providing shops, financial and professional services, and restaurants and cafés which complement them.
- 8.18. Policies in the Development Management Policies DPD will guide changes in a way that takes into account all uses that contribute to the sustained success of our town centres. They will focus on matters which include, but also go wider than, retail use class A1, provided that changes would not result in a concentration of non-retail uses.

## Partnership working

- 8.19. Working with partners including local businesses and the voluntary sector will be crucial to implementing town centre strategies. We will deliver these through a combination of development management policies, initiatives in the council's economic development strategy and town centre action plans. We will also use business and voluntary sector initiatives aimed at increasing retail, cultural and leisure services across the district.

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<sup>80</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, paragraphs 24 to 27

<sup>81</sup> Areas with a high proportion of retail uses, normally having the highest rents, pedestrian movements and national retailer representation.

## 9. Didcot

- 9.1. Didcot is the focus for housing growth in the district and is a New Growth Point<sup>82</sup>. It is our largest town with a population of about 25,000 in 2009. It forms part of a development corridor extending westwards to Wantage and Grove known as Science Vale UK. This area is shown on Map 2.4. Our strategy for Didcot is to provide for housing growth linked to employment growth in the knowledge intensive and high technology businesses in the area, with the aim of increasing social and economic self containment. With the benefit of this growth, one of the council's objectives, reflected in the aims of this strategy, is to transform Didcot into a lively thriving town.
- 9.2. Didcot's expansion started with the arrival of the Great Western railway in 1839. A station was built about half a mile from the original medieval village. This was followed by the building of the railway village of Northbourne at the end of the nineteenth century and commercial development and hotels around the station. In the 1920s several housing estates were built in the centre and the south side of Broadway developed as the shopping area. Housing development increased after the Second World War with new estates to the south, west and east of the town. In the 1980s work started on the Ladygrove Estate and Southmead Business Park to the north of the main line railway. In 2004 the Orchard Centre opened, moving the retail focus of the town to the north and east. The power station is a key feature in Didcot located just across the district boundary in the Vale of White Horse. Didcot A is a dual firing station (coal and natural gas) while Didcot B is a combined cycle gas turbine power station. Didcot A will operate up until April 2013 when it will close.
- 9.3. Didcot's strengths include:
- the completion of a new shopping centre with an arts centre and a multi-screen cinema all of which have proved very successful and work has started to plan a further phase;
  - being part of the 'Science Vale UK'. This includes employment sites at Harwell Oxford, Milton Park and Culham Science Centre that are at the forefront of global scientific enterprise and innovation and offer significant potential for future growth;
  - being a housing growth point giving the opportunity to bid for government funding to support growth;
  - strong transport links with a railway station on the main Paddington to Bristol line, and a branch line to Oxford and beyond and access to the A34 and M4 road links; and
  - forthcoming improvements to the transport interchange facility at the station forecourt which will improve the appearance of the area and encourage access to the station by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 9.4. The planned growth raises some issues and offers a number of opportunities:
- The growth gives the impetus to further improve the town centre by a retail-led mixed-use scheme.
  - The regeneration of areas particularly around the station and Broadway is needed.
  - Improved movement networks are required particularly those that assist east-west movement and that improve access to the town centre and mitigate the barrier effect of the railway.

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<sup>82</sup> The Growth Point initiative is designed to provide local communities, who wish to pursue large-scale and sustainable growth, with support through a partnership with Government.

- The enhancement of links between Didcot and the key employment sites in the area to encourage more people to live and work locally. The need to provide the type of housing needed with good local facilities and services.
- High quality greenfield neighbourhoods need to be delivered in ways which will integrate well with the town.
- New facilities will be required for education including tertiary education, health and recreation.
- Other initiatives which contribute to improving the environment and image of Didcot such as gateway features will help the transformation of the town.

## The central area

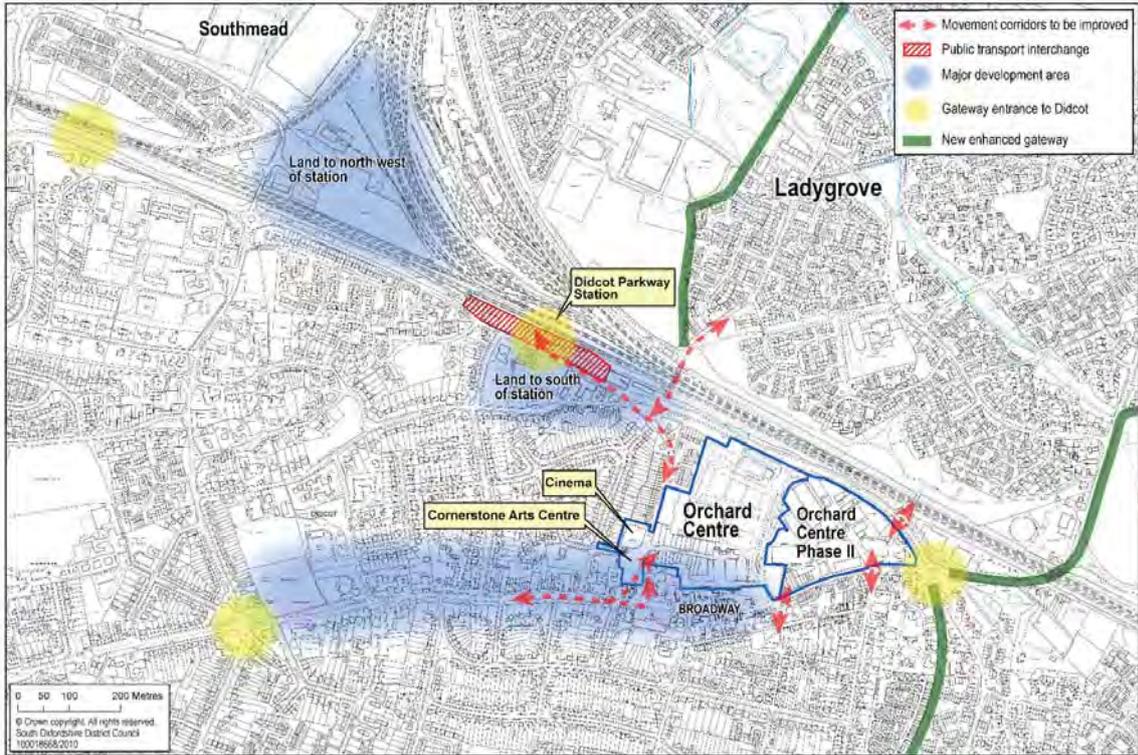
- 9.5. The piecemeal development of the town and lack of an historic core has resulted in a series of neighbourhoods which lack the connectivity and focus of a more traditional market town. A key challenge is to build on what has already been achieved and create an improved central area. The main areas for change will be the land to the east of the Orchard Centre, the Broadway, the station and the area around the station. Map 9.1 shows the strategy for the centre of Didcot.

### **Policy CSDID1 The central area of Didcot**

The council will work with others to secure improvements to the central area of Didcot by:

- (i) a retail-led mixed-use extension to the Orchard Centre (see Policy CSDID2)
- (ii) regeneration of the Broadway
- (iii) regeneration of the area around the station
- (iv) improvements to the long term parking facilities to the south and west of Didcot station
- (v) improvements to Cow Lane tunnel
- (vi) improvements to the movement network around the centre
- (vii) gateway features at key points of access to the town
- (viii) enhanced greenways to the centre
- (ix) measures to improve air quality.

**Map 9.1 The central area of Didcot**



**The Orchard Centre**

9.6. The existing Orchard Centre, cinema and arts centre have started the process of transforming the town centre but we recognise that more needs to be done. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 allocated an area to the east of the Orchard Centre for an extension to the town centre. This is shown on Map 9.1 and the Adopted Policies Map. A masterplan<sup>83</sup> has been prepared for the site and a supplementary planning document was adopted in May 2009<sup>84</sup>. The scheme will create a ‘heart’ for Didcot through a retail-led mixed use scheme.

<sup>83</sup> Didcot Town Centre Expansion Masterplan, Roger Evans Associates Ltd, December 2008

<sup>84</sup> The Didcot Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), May 2009, SODC

## Policy CSDID2 The Orchard Centre

Permission will be granted for a mixed-use retail-led development to include:

- 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> to 25,000 m<sup>2</sup> gross of additional retail floorspace (Use Classes A1-A5)
- approximately 300 dwellings, and
- may also include leisure, community, commercial and hotel uses

on land at the Orchard Centre (as shown on the Adopted Policies Map) provided that the scheme:

- provides for the comprehensive development of the whole site
- provides a movement network that extends and improves the existing urban pattern
- maximises the amount of active frontage onto streets
- creates an attractive and multi-functional urban realm
- creates a safe and lively environment
- provides a form of development which responds to the topography of the site with building heights appropriate to adjacent development
- provides additional car parking and servicing including reconfiguring the existing provision where necessary, and
- considers alternatives to the spine road through the site.

- 9.7. Our Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment supports increased retail provision in Didcot. Table 9.1 shows the needs identified in the assessment. As explained in section eight, the figures for the period post 2016 are less reliable.

**Table 9.1 Didcot floorspace needs (square metres)**

Type of space	2007- 2016	2007- 2027
Shops - A1 comparison net	15,100	28,900
Shops - A1 convenience net	1,300	3,500
Financial & services - A1 service/A2 net	1,500	2,900
Total net for A1/A2 uses	17,900	35,300
<b>Total for A1/A2 uses gross</b>	<b>25,600</b>	<b>50,400</b>
Restaurants, cafes and bars A3, A4 and A5 gross	1,200	2,300
<b>Total for A1-A5 uses gross</b>	<b>26,800</b>	<b>52,700</b>

Source: Retail and Leisure Assessment Update 2010 – Roger Tym and Partners

- 9.8. The proposed phase 2 extension to the Orchard Centre is intended to provide around 25,000 sqm of new A1-A5 floorspace and this is intended to open in the 2011 to 2016 period. The remaining requirement will be considered in the Didcot Area Action Plan. Where relevant other policies in this plan will apply to any proposals.
- 9.9. The proposals will be delivered by the private sector in a comprehensive manner and potentially in a series of development phases. We will support the delivery of this important development through the use of our compulsory purchase powers if necessary, and we will assist the relocation of affected local businesses, where appropriate.

- 9.10. The Didcot Town Centre SPD provides greater detail in respect of building design, movement and public space expectations for this site. The Didcot Area Action Plan will provide further detail on the expectations of the town centre as a whole.

## The Broadway

- 9.11. The new and extended town centre has and will have an impact on the retail and service activity in the Broadway, the former main shopping street in the town. The Didcot Area Action Plan will contain proposals for the regeneration of the Broadway area.
- 9.12. The town centre boundary and the primary and secondary frontages are likely to change with the Orchard Centre Phase 2 and the subsequent review of the Broadway. These will also be defined in the Didcot Area Action Plan.

## The station area

- 9.13. The improvement of the area around Didcot station is key to the regeneration of the town. A scheme is being progressed for the improvement of the station forecourt which also addresses the parking issues around the station. We will support the provision of decked parking on the area west of the station and the Didcot Area Action Plan will look at the potential for commercial development on that site should part of it not be needed for car parking.
- 9.14. To the south of the station is an area of mixed uses including vacant sites used as car parks. This area is a key entrance point to Didcot but its appearance is generally run down and routes from the station to the rest of the town are not clear. The Didcot Area Action Plan will contain proposals to regenerate this area which will include assessing the capacity for commercial development and links between this area and the town centre.
- 9.15. The railway through Didcot is a barrier to movement and integration of the community to the north of Didcot with the rest of the town. The main access from Ladygrove to the town centre is through the Cow Lane tunnel. This is one-way southbound for vehicular traffic and whilst it also allows pedestrian and cycle movements in both directions, the environment is poor. Through the Didcot Area Action Plan we will explore opportunities for improvements including a two way road link.
- 9.16. The other movement corridors to be improved are the links between the station and the town centre and the access from Broadway to the Orchard Centre and Hitchcock Way.

## New housing

- 9.17. We are making provision for 6,300 new homes at Didcot by 2027. A further 2,750 new homes will be allocated at Didcot in the Vale of White Horse district and proposals for these homes are contained in their core strategy. As part of being awarded New Growth Point status, South Oxfordshire committed to providing an additional 1,500 new homes by 2016 at Didcot. These 1,500 New Growth Point Homes have been split 50:50 between South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, with each authority to deliver 750 homes. As the Vale of White Horse is not expecting its 750 homes to be delivered until post 2016, we have agreed to front load 750 homes from the rest of our housing requirement for Didcot prior to 2016. This gives a total of 5,250 new homes to be built between 2006 and 2016. Owing to a delay in anticipated housing delivery at Didcot as a result of economic conditions, it is recognised that we will not be able to meet this commitment by 2016 and consequently the delivery programme for the New Growth Point Agreement is under review.

- 9.18. Table 7.2 in section 7 sets out our housing proposals for Didcot. This includes supply from our existing strategic sites: Great Western Park, Ladygrove East and Vauxhall Barracks alongside the supply from other smaller deliverable sites. The new strategic allocations in this core strategy at Didcot are the Didcot North East greenfield neighbourhood and the Orchard Centre Phase 2. The anticipated delivery from all these sites is shown in Table 18.1 and the Didcot housing trajectory at Appendix 3. These demonstrate that the sites will help to address the backlog of housing supply at Didcot and contribute as closely as possible to our original New Growth Point commitment.

## The location of housing

- 9.19. This strategy allocates land for a new greenfield neighbourhood to the north east of Didcot. Map 9.2 shows the committed and proposed housing sites.

### **Policy CSDID3 New housing at Didcot**

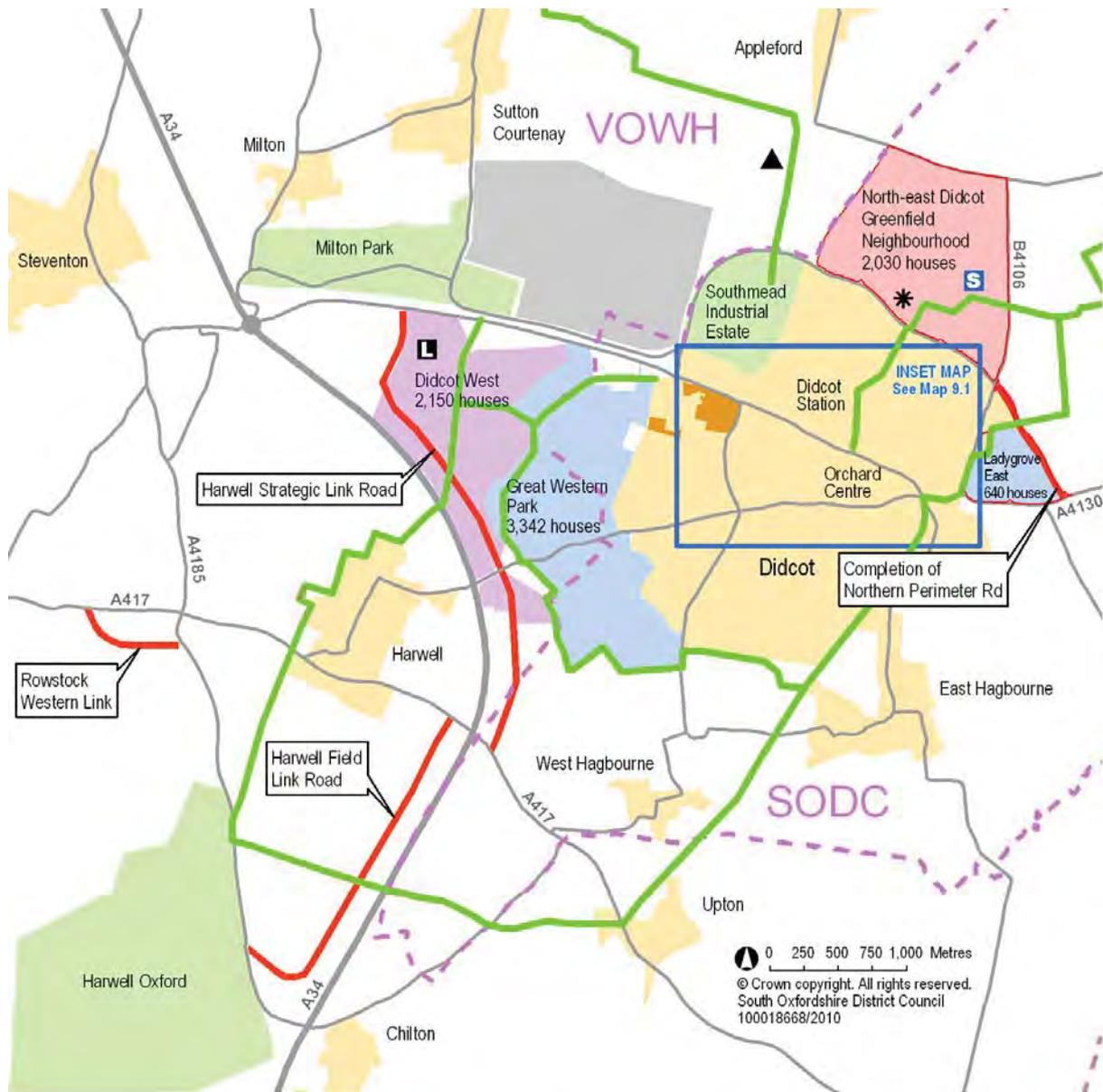
Permission will be given for a new greenfield neighbourhood of 2,030 homes to the north east of Didcot (as shown on the Adopted Policies Map) provided that:

- the area is planned comprehensively and the development takes place in accordance with an agreed design brief as required by Policy CSQ4
- the form and characteristics of the development meet identified housing needs and attract people to live and work in the Didcot area
- there is no built development on the western part of the site in the area of flood risk
- access is from the northern perimeter road (A4130) and the north-south section of the B4016 only
- good safe linkages are provided to Ladygrove and Didcot town centre
- provision is made, or contributions are provided, towards the supporting infrastructure set out in our infrastructure delivery plan including new primary schools, a new secondary school and new sports centre.

Planning permission will also be granted for housing in Didcot on suitable infill or redevelopment sites.

- 9.20. In providing for new housing at Didcot it is important that it is of a standard and type which attracts people who work in the area to live in the town. As well as meeting identified housing needs set out in section seven, the housing should include a proportion of executive homes. The housing needs survey identified a need for more four or more bedroom homes in the district and the existing stock in Didcot is predominantly terraced or semi-detached houses.

## Map 9.2 The strategy for Didcot



9.21. In accordance with policies CSQ1, CSQ2, CSQ3 and CSQ4, the council will work with the developers to produce a design brief incorporating a vision and masterplan for the site which meets the requirements of these policies and other relevant policies in the Local Plan. The feasibility of securing waste heat from Didcot power station to contribute towards the heating needs of the site must be considered alongside other appropriate solutions for decentralised energy and heat supply.

- 9.22. Planning permission will also be granted for housing in Didcot on suitable infill or redevelopment sites. The Development Management Policies DPD will contain the criteria against which we will assess applications.

## Meeting employment needs

- 9.23. One of the main reasons for locating housing growth at Didcot is its proximity to Science Vale UK which includes the expanding research and business parks at Milton Park and Harwell Oxford. These two employment centres have the potential to create at least 8,500 high value jobs in the plan period and the strategy seeks to strengthen the links between the town and nearby employment areas. We are seeking with the Vale of White Horse District Council to provide enough B class jobs to cater for Didcot's increased population.
- 9.24. Southmead Industrial Estate is the largest employment area in the district, but this area now has only limited scope for expansion. There has been a loss of large B8 companies on the park and we would support the redevelopment of premises to provide a range of employment opportunities. This may increase the level of employment on the business park. We will give guidance in the Didcot Area Action Plan.

### **Policy CSDID4 Other proposals for Didcot**

The council will work with others to secure necessary infrastructure to support development including:

- the package of transport measures identified in the Accessing Science Vale UK strategy
- green infrastructure
- sports and recreation provision including a replacement for the Didcot Wave
- provision for secondary education and a Learning Park
- provision for improved local health services

Schemes will be supported which improve the physical environment of the town including the creation of high quality visual 'gateways' at the points of access into the town.

## Infrastructure

- 9.25. Section 17 sets out the principle that developments will contribute to infrastructure needed. We have carried out consultations with the service providers and they have indicated that there is no barrier to accommodating this growth. Policy CSDID4 is not intended to be comprehensive and only lists the major infrastructure requirements. The accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan<sup>85</sup> sets out the currently identified requirements in detail and the major requirements with significant land-use implications are set out below.
- 9.26. As acknowledged in the Joint Didcot Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the Didcot North East greenfield neighbourhood is dependent on the delivery of the SCOTS / Accessing Science Vale UK transport infrastructure. Although development on this site can commence prior to the construction of the highway schemes, a funding mechanism to deliver this infrastructure needs to be confirmed over the plan period to allow the full housing provision of this site to be developed. Without investment into the package of infrastructure, the growth in the Science Vale UK area would be unsustainable and would be put at risk. If the full funding for the delivery of this package of infrastructure is

<sup>85</sup> Joint Didcot Infrastructure Delivery Plan, SODC and VOWH

not forthcoming then the principle of this level of growth at Didcot would have to be reviewed.

## Transport

- 9.27. The major transport infrastructure required to support development at Didcot is set out in Section 5.

## Green infrastructure

- 9.28. There will be increased demand for open green space and leisure provision. Our Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment 2008<sup>86</sup> showed existing deficiencies of:
- 8 hectares of parks and gardens
  - 0.6 hectares of allotments
  - 1 community hall
  - 1 neighbourhood play area
  - 2 multi-use games areas
  - 11 junior and mini football pitches, cricket and rugby pitches
  - a synthetic turf pitch.
- 9.29. The green space study<sup>87</sup> for Didcot has calculated predicted needs for accessible natural green space to 2026 and sets out a proposed strategy for this provision. Our South Oxfordshire Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy<sup>88</sup> calculates sport and recreation needs to 2026 and includes priorities for provision.

## Sport and leisure

- 9.30. The draft Sport and Leisure study for Didcot<sup>89</sup> has identified a shortfall in sport and leisure provision to 2026. It recommends replacing the Didcot Wave with a new centre at a new site. Proposals indicate that such a facility would need approximately 3.8 hectares of land with a further 8 to 9 hectares required for playing fields. Provision should be made for this in the north-east Didcot greenfield neighbourhood. The site should be adjacent to the A4130.

## Education and health

- 9.31. Provision for a new secondary school will need to be made in the north-east Didcot greenfield neighbourhood. To address the lack of facilities for further education and skills shortages in local businesses, a Science Learning Park is proposed to the west of Didcot adjacent to the A4130 in the Vale of White Horse District.
- 9.32. The Primary Care Trust advises that the expansion of existing practices can meet the requirement for more general practitioners.
- 9.33. The strategy also provides for schemes to improve other parts of Didcot as opportunities arise. It also provides for gateway features on entering Didcot and to look at the possibility of improving the key entrances to the town centre.

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<sup>86</sup> Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment, November 2008

<sup>87</sup> Didcot Greenspace Network Feasibility Study, Final Report, March 2008, Chris Blandford Associates

<sup>88</sup> South Oxfordshire Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy, adopted March 2011

<sup>89</sup> Feasibility Study into Future Requirements for Sport and Recreation Facilities in Didcot, Draft Final Report Jan 2009, Max Associates

## 10. Henley-on-Thames

### Introduction

- 10.1. Henley has a population of around 10,600 and lies in the south-east of the district adjoining Wokingham district in Berkshire and close to Reading. Henley's shopping centre is the largest of our market towns; it has local shops and services as well as high end shopping for visitors. Shops include large supermarkets, local and specialist retailers, and there are regular markets. The town also has many popular restaurants, cafés and pubs. Tourism, based on the town's riverside setting, its legacy of historic buildings and the festivals and events that take place, is important to the economy and vitality of Henley.
- 10.2. Henley is shown on Map 10.1. It is notable for its riverside location, its many listed buildings, its late 12th century medieval street layout and for the long narrow plots (burgage plots) stretching out from the main streets. These are a rare example of medieval planning, although most are only evident from private gardens. In the south, the curving boundary of the burgage plots marks the line of the town ditch.
- 10.3. The street pattern we see today was probably established by the late 1400s. The wide market area was important in the 14th and 15th centuries when Henley exported grain by river to London. Several buildings remain from this period: the White Hart Hotel, the Bull Inn, the Red Lion Hotel and Chantry House and the Rose and Crown in the Market Place. Capability Brown landscaped Fawley Court gardens to the north of Henley and James Wyatt designed an elegant temple on the river island which is prominent in views from the bridge and as part of the setting of the town.
- 10.4. There was intense growth in the 18th and 19th centuries, export remained important and the town became a brewing centre. It was also an overnight stop on the Oxford to London coach route. Red brick was predominant for new buildings and timber-framed buildings were re-fronted and modernised. The railway brought commuters in the west and south of the town. The Regatta started in 1839, adding to Henley's attractions and many Victorian boathouses, rowing clubs and hotels were built. This period provided many prestigious buildings, such as the Imperial Hotel in Station Street and attractive Victorian terraces, such as Albert Road and Queen Street. The historic interest of the town is reflected in its extensive conservation areas and parks and gardens of special historic interest contained in English Heritage registers.
- 10.5. Henley has a larger proportion of older residents (over 65's) than the average for South Oxfordshire, correspondingly it has a smaller proportion of young people and working age residents than elsewhere<sup>90</sup>. This affects the type of housing and facilities which we need to provide to reflect a balanced community.
- 10.6. Henley's strengths include:
  - an international reputation;
  - its setting on the Thames and adjacent to the Chilterns AONB;
  - well preserved historic features;
  - a good range of facilities for education, health and recreation;
  - a range of employment opportunities;
  - a range of good shops and restaurants;
  - a range of housing;

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<sup>90</sup> Oxfordshire Data Observatory

- being an important service centre for nearby areas in Oxfordshire and Berkshire;
- events that draw people to the town including markets, festivals and the annual regatta;
- a good range and number of active voluntary groups.

However some issues need addressing in this core strategy:

- Henley's shopping centre is performing well but its position nationally has fallen by around 40 places since 2003/4 and some shopkeepers indicate that business is declining<sup>91</sup>. How to maintain the town's attractiveness and reputation, and develop tourism opportunities are important.
- Traffic congestion causes inconvenience to road users and pedestrians and creates an unpleasant environment in the town<sup>92</sup>. We need to consider how to manage traffic including that generated by new proposals.
- A large proportion of the employment areas in the town are attractive and good quality<sup>93</sup>, but maintaining and enhancing the town's economic vitality is important. We need to identify whether any employment sites should be used for other purposes and whether we need to find any additional employment land.
- The town is tightly constrained by the river and the AONB, we need to allocate land for new housing and determine how to maintain a supply of affordable housing. The Housing Needs Assessment<sup>94</sup> indicates that 150 households would like affordable housing in Henley in the next three years.
- We need to identify the new services and facilities required to support development and when these should be in place. A number of the town's major facilities have inadequate accommodation, for example Gillotts School, Henley College and Townlands Hospital<sup>95</sup>.
- We need to plan for improvements to recreation facilities.
- We should try to plan for changes that are likely to happen in the town, for example an ageing population.

## The strategy for Henley-on-Thames

10.7. The strategy for Henley must address these issues within the context of the overall vision and objectives for the district. Central to this is the future of the town centre. Recent town centre studies<sup>96</sup> have made suggestions for action and the town centre action plan includes a wider set of measures.

10.8. Our strategy for Henley seeks to develop its role as a local service centre as well as enhancing its tourism potential. We know that there is a general trend towards smaller households and an older population<sup>97</sup>. The ease of access to the improved shopping and leisure facilities in Reading and trend towards internet shopping present further

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91 Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2009, Roger Tym and Partners

92 Local Transport Plan, Oxfordshire County Council, Henley-on-Thames Integrated Transport Strategy 2004, Halcrow Group Ltd

93 South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review 2007, DTZ

94 Housing Needs Assessment 2009, DCA

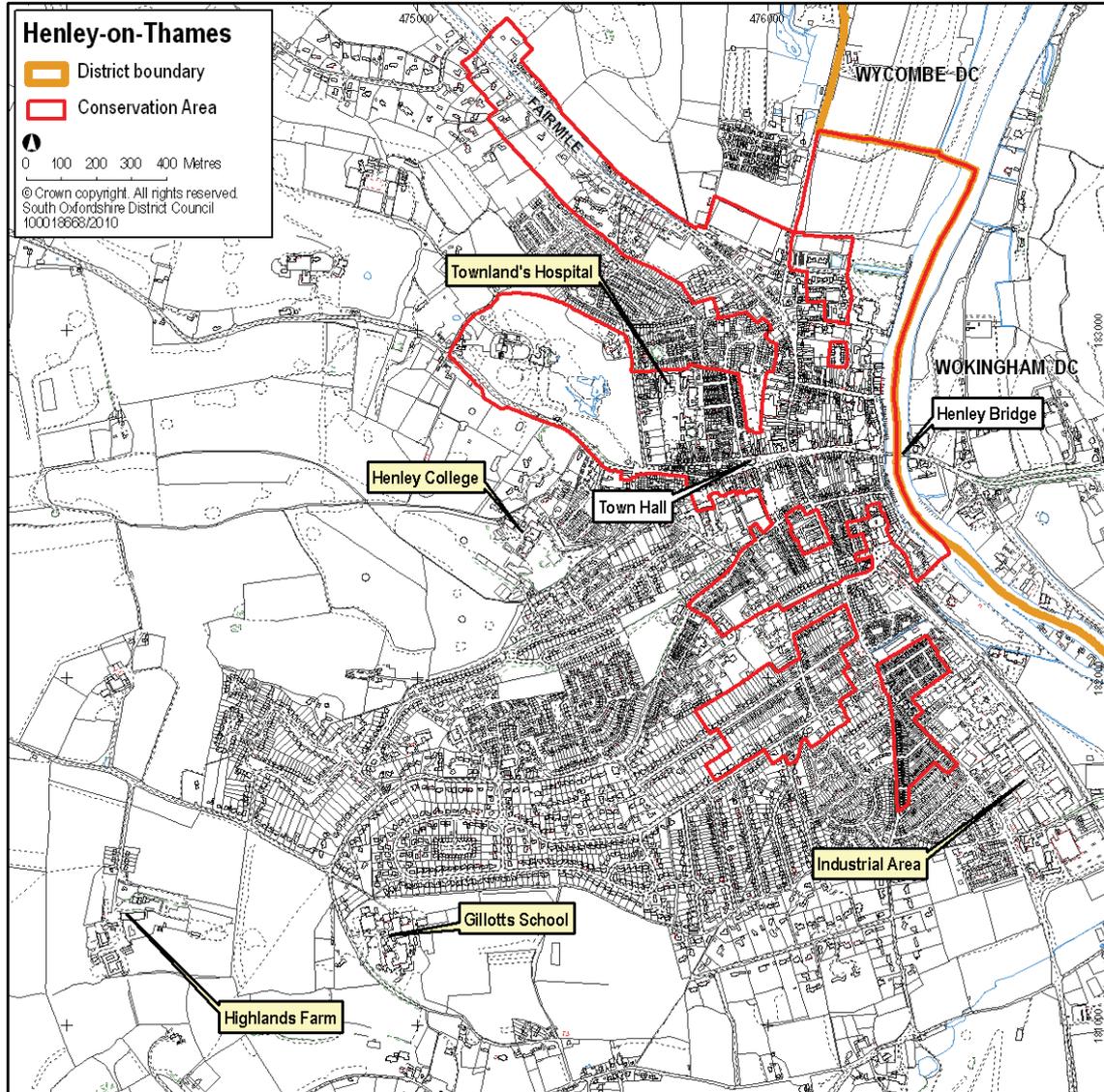
95 Identified in negotiations with these organisations

96 Henley on Thames Action Plan 2006/7, SODC/Henley Partnership, Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2009, Roger Tym and Partners and Market Towns Strategy and Action Plan, South Oxfordshire District Council (Economic Development), 2009

97 Oxford Data Observatory

challenges. Particular difficulties for Henley are the high cost of housing<sup>98</sup> and traffic congestion.

**Map 10.1 Henley-on-Thames showing significant sites and conservation areas**



98 Housing Needs Assessment 2009, DCA

## Policy CSHEN1 The Strategy for Henley-on-Thames

Proposals for development in Henley-on-Thames should be consistent with the strategy which is to:

- (i) identify land for 400 new homes;
- (ii) allow housing on suitable infill and redevelopment sites;
- (iii) strengthen commerce in the town centre through retail-led, mixed-use development and identify additional retail and leisure floorspace;
- (iv) support housing and employment uses above shops;
- (v) enhance the town's environment;
- (vi) improve the attraction of Henley for visitors;
- (vii) improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links;
- (viii) improve the stock of commercial buildings and the environment of the employment areas;
- (ix) support Henley College, Gillotts School and Townlands Hospital meet their accommodation needs.

10.9. Our Housing Needs Assessment indicates that Henley is the least affordable area in the district for both home ownership and rented housing. It suggests there is a potential demand for around 150 affordable homes over the next three years. It is difficult to identify suitable sites for housing around Henley because of the strong constraints of the Thames floodplain and the town's position, flanked by the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Our strategy therefore caps the level of growth that the town would otherwise take on a proportional basis, requiring the Site Allocations DPD (SADPD) to identify land for 400 homes. A capacity study in September 2011 indicated a reasonable prospect that this is achievable, although the margin of contingency may be limited. However, in view of the level of need in Henley, the SADPD will explore the possibility of easing the capped growth of the town by allocating up to 50 additional dwellings (i.e. total of 450) if it proves to be possible to identify suitable land free of constraints in the circumstances then pertaining.

## Retail and leisure

10.10. Table 10.1 shows the needs identified through the Retail and Leisure Assessment. As explained in section eight, the figures for the period post 2016 are less reliable.

**Table 10.1 Henley floorspace needs (square metres)**

Type of space	2007 - 2016	2007 - 2027
Shops - A1 comparison net	1,000	3,800
Shops - A1 convenience net	0	500
Financial and services - A1 service / A2 net	100	400
Total for shops and services - A1/ A2 net	1,100	4,700
<b>Total for shops and services – A1/ A2 gross</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>6,700</b>
Restaurants, cafes and bars - A3, A4 and A5 gross	500	2,500
<b>Total all uses for A1 – A5 uses gross</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>9,200</b>

Source: Retail and Leisure Assessment Update 2010 – Roger Tym and Partners

- 10.11. The assessment indicates that there are quite a number of operators seeking representation in Henley because of the town's profile and catchment area, so there is potential to improve the shopping centre. The study also indicates that Henley would benefit from an improved range of bars, restaurants and cafés, a choice of food store in the town centre to improve expenditure retention and a greater range of town centre uses to make sure that it maintains its market share.
- 10.12. The retail assessment indicates a need for 2,100m<sup>2</sup> of additional floorspace in the town centre to 2016; 1,600m<sup>2</sup> of this is for shopping and financial and other services. The need to protect Henley's historic character and reinforce its local distinctiveness will affect whether and how this can be accommodated. Market Place Mews which has planning permission will provide 1,260m<sup>2</sup> and the retail assessment considered that there was potential in land at Greys Road/Reading Road. We will review this and other smaller opportunities in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD).
- 10.13. To support the strategy, the Development Management Policies DPD will define the town centre boundary, the primary and secondary frontages and include policies to promote the vitality and viability of the town centre. Other studies<sup>99</sup> have suggested a range of further measures to regenerate the town centre, these have general public support and include:
- improving accessibility, car parking, pedestrian links and limiting congestion;
  - strengthening the Market Place as a focal hub;
  - enhancing the quality of the town's environment including measures to improve air quality;
  - encouraging a mix of uses in the town centre to promote vitality.
- 10.14. Visitors contribute to Henley's vitality and we will support measures which attract visitors to the town. This includes providing visitor accommodation and other attractions which enhance the character of the town.

## Transport

- 10.15. Traffic congestion is a major issue in Henley, some is caused by through traffic but a significant amount is local traffic. Congestion is an issue for all our towns and cannot be a reason for preventing housing and other development altogether as the towns are the most sustainable places. We will work with the county council to promote alternatives to car travel and to minimise the effects caused by new developments.

## Employment

- 10.16. Henley has a reasonable amount of employment premises. Our Employment Land Review indicates that some more land is required for employment in South Oxfordshire as a whole, and that we should not lose existing sites unless there is clear evidence that they are no longer required for employment. In general, sites in Henley are of good quality but there are a few sites that have potential for redevelopment to provide better quality premises and more employment. We will support proposals to upgrade employment areas and provide better premises.

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<sup>99</sup> Henley on Thames Action Plan 2006/7 - SODC/Henley Partnership Local Transport Plan also raised at the 'Shaping South Oxfordshire's Market Towns - Henley Focus' workshop 2008, Local Transport Plan - Oxfordshire County Council, Henley on Thames Integrated Transport Strategy 2004 - Halcrow Group Ltd, Henley-on-Thames Air Quality Action Plan 2007, SODC.

## Infrastructure

- 10.17. New facilities and infrastructure will be required to support growth. The requirements for Henley are set out in detail in our Infrastructure Delivery Plan and take account of service providers' comments.
- 10.18. Henley College serves a wide catchment area and it makes a significant contribution to the local economy. It operates from two sites and has many buildings that need improving or replacing to provide a good quality teaching environment. The college is keen to find a new single site that would allow it to operate more efficiently. The council would support the college moving to a brownfield site on the edge of Henley and redevelopment of their existing sites for housing or the redevelopment of its existing sites taking account of the constraints on the sites. The Site Allocations DPD will contain further guidance.
- 10.19. We have had discussions with stakeholders about the possible improvement or replacement of facilities at Gillotts School, Townlands Hospital and Chilterns End care home. At Gillotts School the buildings are in a poor condition and there is a need to replace them. The strategy supports proposals for improvements on these sites and the Site Allocations DPD will include proposals.
- 10.20. Our Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment 2008<sup>100</sup> identifies existing deficiencies in Henley as:
- 22.02 hectares of parks and gardens
  - 1.3 hectares of allotments
  - 2 neighbourhood play areas
  - equivalent of 2 badminton courts at a sports hall
  - leisure elements at the swimming pool
  - multi-use games area
  - 10 junior and mini football pitches
  - 2 rugby pitches.
- 10.21. Our South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy<sup>101</sup> calculates the need for parks and gardens and accessible natural green space to 2027. Our South Oxfordshire Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy<sup>102</sup> calculates the need for sport and recreation facilities to 2026.
- 10.22. We have identified more needs than can reasonably be met within the plan period. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out priorities and identified funding based on the council's Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy.

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<sup>100</sup> Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment, November 2008

<sup>101</sup> South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, July 2011

<sup>102</sup> SODC South Oxfordshire Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy, adopted March 2011

# 11. Thame

## Introduction

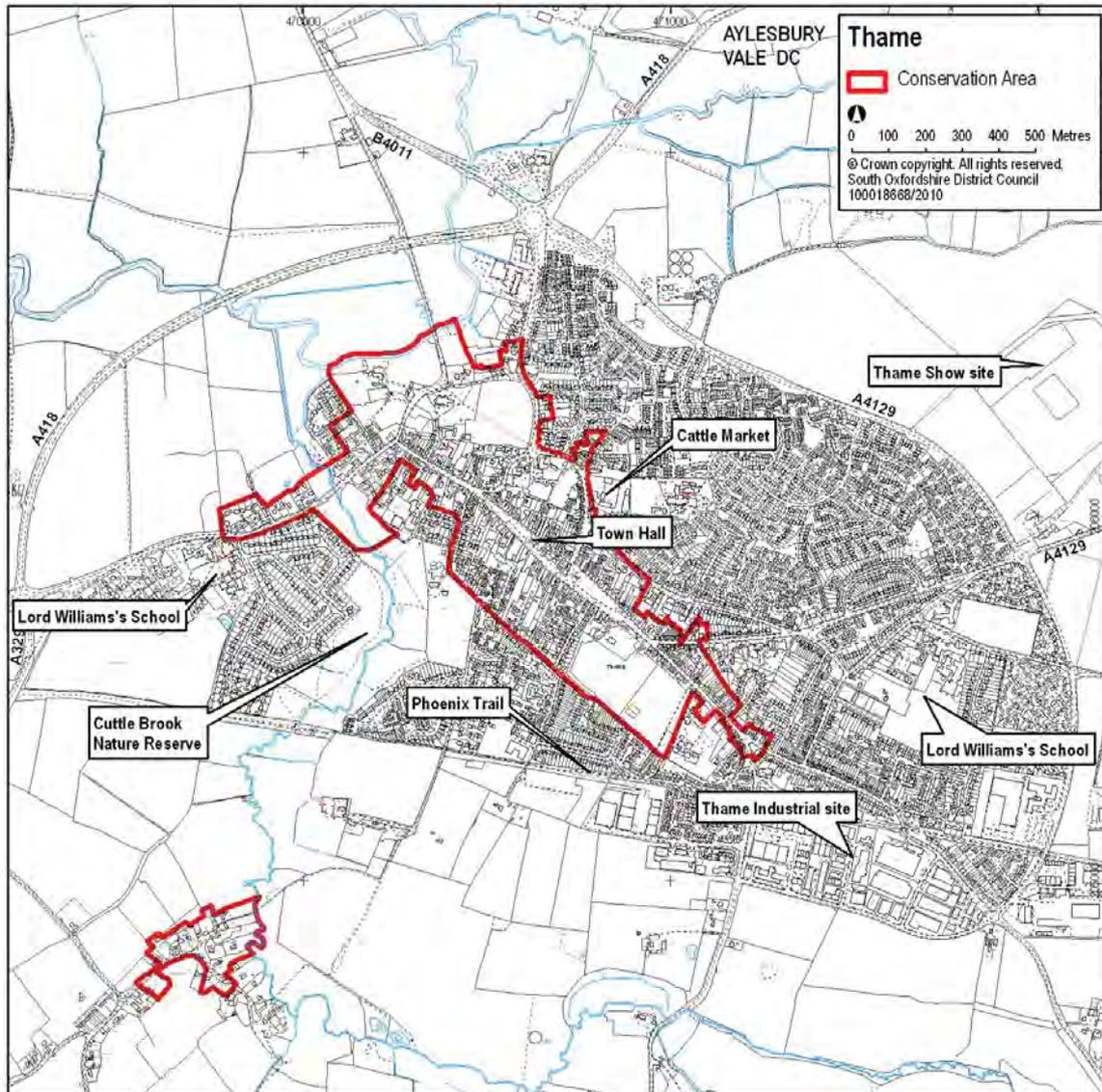
- 11.1. Thame is a market town with a strong agricultural base, on the north-east edge of our district adjacent to Aylesbury Vale district. It has a population of 10,886 and is an important local service centre for nearby villages both in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Thame has close links with nearby larger towns like Aylesbury and High Wycombe for shopping, work, services and leisure facilities.
- 11.2. Aylesbury is approximately 10 miles to the north east of Thame. Aylesbury has been an area of significant growth and has a strong emphasis on strengthening its economic and employment role. Aylesbury Vale's proximity will impact on Thame and its residents. Haddenham Business Park is located approximately 2 miles to the north east of Thame and there are plans to expand this. The business park provides the majority of the 2,500 jobs in Haddenham.
- 11.3. Thame is shown on Map 11.1. The evidence of medieval Thame makes a substantial contribution to its interest and character today. It was deliberately planned to provide a generous market area in the principal trading street and this still forms the focal point of Thame. Unsurprisingly, there are a large number of listed buildings and the town centre is in a conservation area. Major housing expansion occurred in the 1970s and 80s with the creation of the Lea Park Estate to the north east of the town.
- 11.4. The agricultural industry plays an important role in Thame. There are regular livestock markets at the cattle market, which have taken place since the 1950s. This livestock market is one of the few remaining in the south of England and is an important element in Thame's status and function as a market town. The Thame Show takes place every July and is billed as the 'greatest one day agricultural show in the country'. It attracts approximately 20,000 visitors each year.
- 11.5. The strategy for Thame, in accordance with the vision and objectives, seeks to enhance the economic role of the town and make sure it continues its key role of providing employment opportunities and services.
- 11.6. Thame's strengths include:
  - good transport links being near to the M40, rail access at Haddenham and bus links to Aylesbury and Oxford;
  - being an important service centre for nearby areas in both Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire;
  - attractive historic character and architectural variety – 59% of respondents in the Town Centres Visitors Survey<sup>103</sup> liked the character and atmosphere of Thame and 43% liked the historic buildings;
  - a range of independent outlets and good mix of shops in the town centre, which contribute to a healthy town centre with few vacancies. There is also free parking very close to the shops;
  - the important role of agriculture – regular livestock markets and the Thame Show attract a large number of people to the area. Other special events are held such as the Towersey Festival and Thame 10k run;

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<sup>103</sup> Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment, Roger Tym and Partners, 2009

- good opportunities for recreation and culture - Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve, the Phoenix Trail, sports centre with swimming pool, skateboard park, football partnership, Thame Players Theatre and Thame Museum;
- being a working town with further employment opportunities in easy reach and having a range of housing;
- friendliness of people and a good community spirit<sup>104</sup>.

## Map 11.1 Thame



<sup>104</sup> Raised at the 'Shaping South Oxfordshire's Market Towns Thame Focus' workshop on 3 November 2008.

11.7. However some issues need addressing:

- Whilst the retail function of Thame is currently performing quite well, our Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment highlights the real risk that the continued expansion of competing centres such as High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Oxford will put pressure on Thame to maintain its market share. Thame needs to make sure it continues to perform well.
- Parking is a problem in the town centre, particularly on market days.
- Residents often raise the lack of leisure and community facilities as an issue.
- Some of the employment areas need upgrading. The Employment Land Review<sup>105</sup> noted that there was some deterioration and poor upkeep at Thame Industrial Estate, the depot and works on Rycote Lane, Station Yard and at the industrial site on Aylesbury Road.
- The need to identify the new services and facilities required to support development and when these should be in place. A number of the town's facilities need improvement, for example health facilities and the fire station. Some of the services such as the secondary school are at or close to capacity and there may be an opportunity to explore alternative sites for some facilities. Opportunities for this can be explored in relation to the sites for housing development in line with community aspirations.
- The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment<sup>106</sup> showed there were areas for improvement and a striking deficiency of 13.04 hectares for parks and gardens.
- There is a need for more affordable housing<sup>107</sup>. The Housing Needs Assessment indicated in 2008 that 317 households in need of affordable housing would like accommodation in Thame in the next three years. The main reasons for choosing Thame were the quality of the neighbourhood, to be nearer family and for employment purposes<sup>108</sup>.

## The strategy for Thame

11.8. The strategy for Thame needs to address these issues in the context of the overall vision and objectives for the district.

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<sup>105</sup> South Oxfordshire District Council Employment Land Review, DTZ, 2007, Revisiting South Oxfordshire's Employment Land Projections, WM Enterprises, October 2008

<sup>106</sup> Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment, November 2008 (p. 36)

<sup>107</sup> Raised in consultations responses and exhibitions in relation to the core strategy and site allocations DPD

<sup>108</sup> Housing Needs Assessment, DCA (Table 10-9)

## Policy CSTHA1 The strategy for Thame

Proposals for development in Thame should be consistent with the strategy which is to:

- (i) strengthen commerce in the town centre and identify sites suitable for future retail, leisure and community uses;
- (ii) support housing and employment uses above shops;
- (iii) improve the attraction of Thame for visitors and businesses;
- (iv) improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links;
- (v) support schemes which enhance the quality of the town's environment;
- (vi) identify sites for about 2 hectares of land for employment growth;
- (vii) support schemes which improve the stock of existing commercial buildings and the environment of the employment areas;
- (viii) identify land for 775 new homes through a Neighbourhood Plan (see policy CSTHA2);
- (ix) allow housing on suitable infill and redevelopment sites; and
- (x) support the schools, health and other service providers meet their accommodation needs, in particular the amalgamation of the secondary school onto a single site.

## Retail and leisure

11.9. Our Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment<sup>109</sup> shows a need set out in Table 11.1. As explained in section eight, the figures for the period post 2016 are less reliable.

**Table 11.1 Thame floorspace needs (square metres)**

Type of space	2007-2016	2007-2027
Shops - A1 comparison net	800	2,600
Shops - A1 convenience net	0	600
Financial and services A1 service/A2 net	100	300
Total for A1/A2 uses net	900	3,500
<b>Total for A1/A2 uses gross</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>4,900</b>
Restaurants, cafes and bars A3, A4 and A5 gross	100	800
<b>Total for A1 – A5 uses gross</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>5,700</b>

Source: Retail and Leisure Assessment Update 2010 – Roger Tym and Partners

11.10. The assessment concluded that Thame will not maintain its current retail market share simply by consolidating the existing retail offer. With competition from the retail developments planned at Aylesbury and Oxford, and recently completed developments in High Wycombe, the town needs to implement a major development and attract a wider range of operators in order to retain its market share and continue its present role. The challenge therefore, will be to attract new retailers and leisure providers to Thame, whilst keeping the current small and independent retailers that are characteristic of the town.

<sup>109</sup> Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment, Roger Tym and Partners, February 2009, updated November 2010

- 11.11. The assessment considered that it was important for Thame to improve its 'eating out' and socialising offer in order to boost the economy of the town and enhance its interest. It suggested two sites with potential for development. The main one is the site of the Cattle Market, which has now secured permission to move to a site to the east of the ring road. The study recommends the site should be developed as mixed use. It did not identify a need for a large food store and Local Plan policy THA1 excludes development of food supermarkets on the Cattle Market site. A smaller development site encompassing the postal sorting office and telephone exchange was also suggested for development in the medium term. These will be reviewed alongside other smaller opportunities in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan or in the Site Allocations DPD. The need to protect Thame's historic character and reinforce its local distinctiveness will affect whether and how this can be accommodated.
- 11.12. To support the strategy a future Plan e.g. the Thame Neighbourhood Plan or Development Management Policies DPD will define the town centre boundary and the primary and secondary frontages and include policies to promote the vitality and viability of the town centre.

## Employment

- 11.13. There are quite high levels of commuting out from Thame. At the time of the 2001 Census only 44 per cent of the resident working population worked within Thame. Information collected as part of the Housing Needs Survey<sup>110</sup> showed a similar trend, with only 38 per cent of people working in South Oxfordshire, 19 per cent in Aylesbury Vale and 10 per cent in Oxford City. Our strategy seeks to improve the existing employment stock and also to provide a new employment site or sites totalling about two hectares to encourage more people to work locally.

## New housing in Thame

### **Policy CSTHA2 New Allocations at Thame**

The Neighbourhood Plan for Thame will allocate land for 775 new homes on land selected through that process as the most appropriate and sustainable.

- 11.14. Provision of additional housing will help to support the town centre's attraction in relation to nearby centres and maintain Thame's services and facilities. The overall strategy is to provide 775 additional houses to 2027 on sites selected by a neighbourhood plan.
- 11.15. The selected sites will need to have a form and character which meet identified needs and be planned comprehensively in accordance with agreed design briefs reflecting policies CSQ1-4 and other relevant policies in the Local Plan. The developments should avoid building on areas of land within flood zones 2 and 3, provide safe pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre, and make provision (or provide contributions towards) such necessary supporting infrastructure as is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

<sup>110</sup> Questionnaire carried out in August 2008

## Infrastructure requirements

- 11.16. New infrastructure is needed to support this growth. This is set out in our Infrastructure Delivery Plan which accompanies this document.
- 11.17. Our Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment August 2008<sup>111</sup> identifies existing deficiencies in Thame as:
- 13.04 hectares of parks and gardens
  - 4.58 hectares of amenity greenspace in Thame South
  - 2.9 hectares of allotments
  - equivalent shortfall of a two badminton court hall (sports hall)
  - one community hall
  - 3 rugby pitches.
- 11.18. Our South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy<sup>112</sup> calculates the need for parks and gardens and accessible natural green space to 2027. Our South Oxfordshire Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy<sup>113</sup> calculates the need for sport and recreation facilities to 2026.
- 11.19. We have identified more needs than can reasonably be met within the plan period. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out priorities and identified funding based on our Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy.

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111 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Assessment, November 2008

112 South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, July 2011

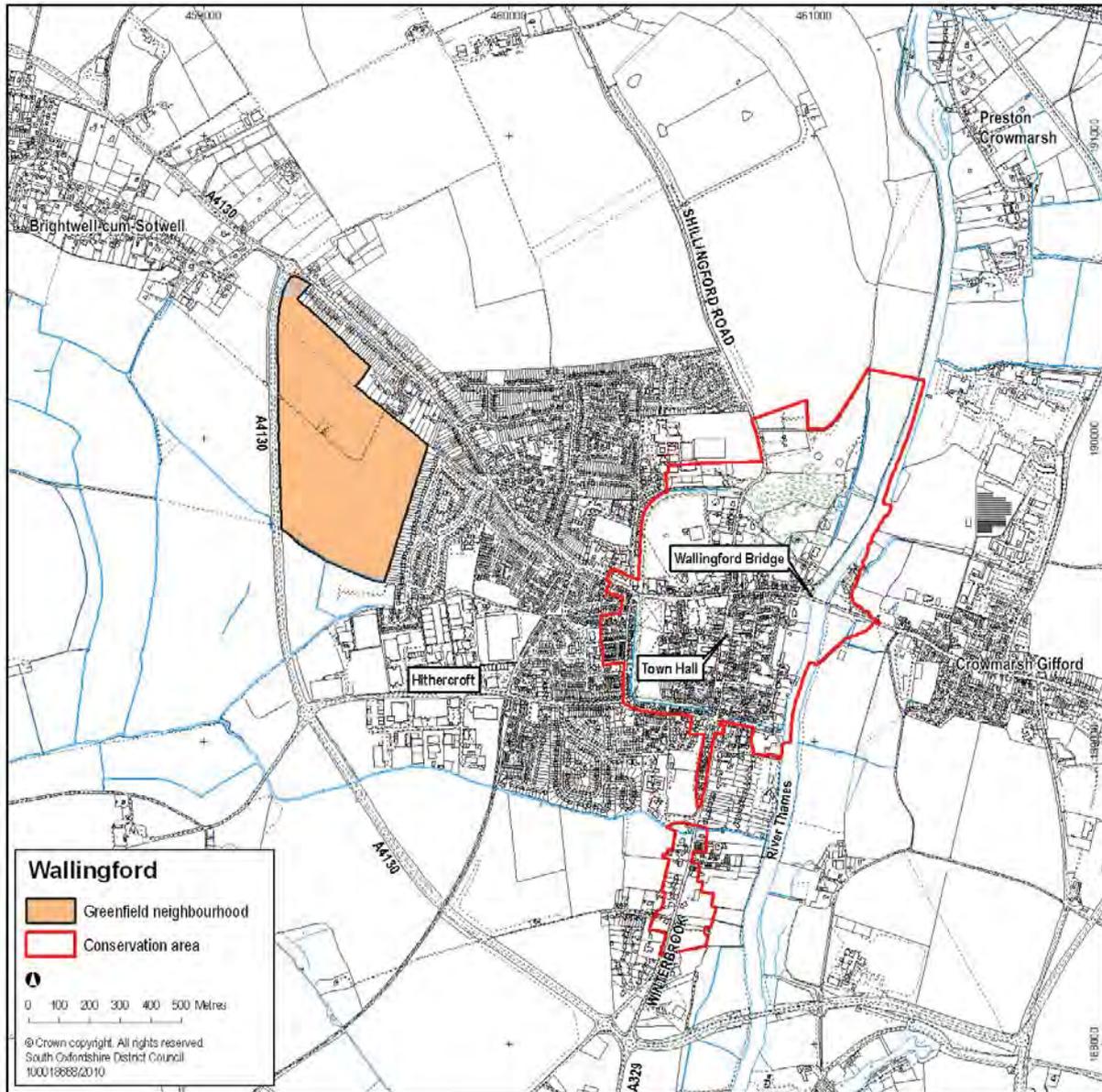
113 South Oxfordshire Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy, adopted March 2011

## 12. Wallingford

### Introduction

- 12.1. Wallingford is the smallest market town in the district with a population of some 8,000 people, if Winterbrook in the parish of Cholsey is included. It is only 6 miles away from Didcot and the recent growth of Didcot town centre is impacting on Wallingford. Our vision and objectives seek to enhance our market towns and build on the district's economic success. Our strategy for Wallingford will develop the town's role as a local service centre to complement rather than compete with Didcot, using Wallingford's particular strengths.
- 12.2. Wallingford is shown on Map 12.1. It has a long history which its urban form and open spaces reflect. The town was one of King Alfred's new towns in the 9th century and the layout of the town centre remains largely unchanged. Wallingford Castle was a royal residence in the 13th and 14th centuries and a royalist stronghold in the Civil War, but the town declined following the siege of the castle and destruction of houses. The castle grounds remain an important green space and the town still has many buildings and features of historical significance.
- 12.3. Wallingford revived in the 19th century with the opening of railway connections. It has grown mainly to the west with the Hithercroft Estate, the town's major employment area in the south-west of the town. Wallingford is an important local service centre for the surrounding villages providing retail, educational, health, sports and leisure facilities.
- 12.4. The historic form of the town and its river crossings lead to issues of air quality in the centre. A bypass was built to the south and west of the town in the early 1990s. The rail link to the main line at Cholsey is now closed and the line is used by a railway society.
- 12.5. Wallingford's strengths include:
  - its location by the River Thames and proximity to the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs;
  - well preserved historic features including a compact medieval central area encircled by Saxon banks and ditches, the castle gardens and meadows and Wallingford Bridge;
  - a good range of facilities in terms of schools, health and recreation;
  - a range of employment opportunities and links with the concentration of environmental science organisations at nearby Crowmarsh Gifford;
  - a number of independent shops and restaurants;
  - a range of housing;
  - a bypass taking through traffic out of the town;
  - hosting events which draw people to the town including markets, festivals and rowing events; and
  - a number of active and successful voluntary groups.

## Map 12.1 Wallingford



12.6. However, we need to address some issues in the town:

- the declining retail function of the town centre;<sup>114</sup>
- the re-use of the former Waitrose store needs a permanent solution;
- the potential of the town to attract visitors is not fully exploited;
- some facilities, for example some schools, are at capacity;
- the need for affordable housing remains high in spite of recent new building;
- the average overall rating of the Hithercroft Industrial Estate, the towns main employment area;<sup>115</sup>
- the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment showed there were areas for improvement;
- there are local air quality problems; and

<sup>114</sup> South Oxfordshire Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment, 2009

<sup>115</sup> South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review DTZ August 2007

- a higher percentage of over 65s than the average for the district, county and South East.

## The strategy for Wallingford

12.7. The strategy for Wallingford needs to address the above issues in the context of the overall vision and objectives for the district. Central to this will be the future of the town centre. There have been a number of recent studies of Wallingford town centre<sup>116</sup>, which suggest actions that need to be taken. The Market Town Action Plan for Wallingford sets out a strategy for the town centre which is wider than the measures set out in this strategy.

### Policy CSWAL1 The strategy for Wallingford

Proposals for development in Wallingford should be consistent with the strategy which is to:

- (i) strengthen the town centre including supporting schemes which allow for the re-use or redevelopment of the former Waitrose site provided that the retail element and car parking is retained;
- (ii) support housing and employment uses above shops;
- (iii) support the market place as a focal hub;
- (iv) support measures which improve the attraction of Wallingford for visitors with particular emphasis on the River Thames;
- (v) improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links and local air quality;
- (vi) support schemes which enhance the town's environment;
- (vii) identify land for about 2ha for employment growth;
- (viii) support schemes which improve the stock of existing commercial buildings and the environment of existing employment areas;
- (ix) identify land for 555 new homes (see policy CSWAL2);
- (x) allow housing on suitable infill and redevelopment sites.

## Retail and leisure

12.8. Table 12.1 shows the needs identified through the Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment. As was explained in section eight, the figures for the period post 2016 are less reliable.

<sup>116</sup> Civic Trust Report for Wallingford Town Council (2005) Keeping the Competitive Focus on Wallingford (The Lockwood Report, August 2005) and Developing a Unique Selling Point for Wallingford (Miller Research, February 2010)

**Table 12.1 Wallingford floorspace needs (square metres)**

Type of space	2007-2016	2007-2027
Shops - A1 comparison net	1,000	3,000
Shops - A1 convenience net	300	700
Financial and services A1 service/A2 net	100	300
Total for A1/A2 uses net	1,400	4,000
<b>Total for A1/A2 uses gross</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>5,700</b>
Restaurants, cafes and bars A3, A4 and A5 gross	500	1,200
<b>Total for A1 – A5 uses gross</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>6,900</b>
Source: Retail and Leisure Assessment Update 2010 – Roger Tym and Partners		

- 12.9. The assessment identifies the single most important initiative to be the redevelopment of the former Waitrose site. It should be a retail-led, mixed-use scheme in accordance with a development brief to be approved by the council. It also identifies that Wallingford would benefit from an improved range of bars, restaurants and cafes, a choice of food stores to increase the expenditure retention and a diversification of the retail offer to make sure that it maintains its market share over the next 20 years. The Site Allocations DPD will look at opportunities for further development in Wallingford. This will include looking at the future of the former Waitrose site in more detail. We will assess how retail growth and car parking can be accommodated whilst making sure any new development preserves and enhances the character of the conservation areas and the distinctiveness of the town both in terms of its physical environment and the type of shopping it offers.
- 12.10. Previous studies have suggested a range of further measures to regenerate the town centre and we have incorporated these in the strategy. The Site Allocations DPD and Development Management Policies DPD will include further proposals and policies.

## Employment

- 12.11. With its focus on the environmental sciences, Wallingford and Crowmarsh Gifford have potential for employment growth and the employment strategy provides for about two hectares of additional employment land at Wallingford. This will be allocated in our Site Allocations DPD. In addition the strategy supports upgrading the existing stock of business premises and improving the environment of the employment areas, particularly the Hithercroft Estate which had an average rating in the Employment Land Review.

## New housing in Wallingford

### **Policy CSWAL2 Greenfield neighbourhood west of Wallingford**

Permission will be granted for a new greenfield neighbourhood of 555 homes to the west of Wallingford (as shown on the Adopted Policies Map) provided that:

- (i) the area is planned comprehensively and the development takes place in accordance with an agreed design brief as required by Policy CSQ4;
- (ii) the form and characteristics of the development meet identified housing needs of Wallingford;
- (iii) access is from the western bypass, with no vehicular access provided through Queen's Avenue;
- (iv) a through route is provided for public transport;
- (v) measures are put in place to mitigate any impacts on the Wallingford Air Quality Management Area;
- (vi) safe pedestrian and cycle linkages are provided from the development to the town centre and to Hithercroft;
- (vii) the western and southern boundaries are reinforced with significant landscape buffers, with no built development along the western boundary adjacent to the bypass;
- (viii) the existing footpath through the site is developed into a green corridor linking the town to the wider countryside;
- (ix) provision is made, or contributions are provided, towards the supporting infrastructure set out in our infrastructure delivery plan including a new primary school.

12.12. Locating strategic housing growth at Wallingford will add new households to the town and help support town centre businesses and services as well as the Science Vale economic area. 555 homes are proposed to 2027. The anticipated delivery of this development is set out in Section 18. The growth will be accommodated through a new greenfield neighbourhood to the west of Wallingford, as shown on Map 12.1 and the Adopted Policies Map. The background paper on Wallingford explains the reasons for selecting this as the strategic site.

12.13. In accordance with policies CSQ1, CSQ2, CSQ3 and CSQ4, the council will work with the developers to produce a design brief incorporating a vision and masterplan for the site. This will meet the requirements of these policies and other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

12.14. We will also grant planning permission for housing in Wallingford on suitable infill or redevelopment sites. The Development Management Policies DPD will contain the criteria against which we will assess applications.

### **Infrastructure requirements**

12.15. New infrastructure will be needed to support this growth. Our Infrastructure Delivery Plan which accompanies this document sets out the requirements for Wallingford and takes account of service providers' comments.

12.16. Our Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment (2008)<sup>117</sup> identifies existing deficiencies in Wallingford as:

- 1.3 hectares of allotments

<sup>117</sup>

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment, November 2008

- 1 Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play type facility
- 'Pay and play' golf provision
- 1 Multi-Use Games Area
- 3 junior football pitches
- 12 mini-soccer pitches
- 2 rugby pitches

12.17. Our South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy<sup>118</sup> calculates the need for parks and gardens and accessible natural green space to 2027 and our South Oxfordshire Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy<sup>119</sup> calculates the need for sport and recreation facilities to 2026.

12.18. We have identified more needs than we can reasonably meet in the plan period. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out the priorities and identified funding based on the council's Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy.

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118 South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, July 2011

119 South Oxfordshire Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy, adopted March 2011

## 13. Rural communities

- 13.1. South Oxfordshire has about 140 rural communities. These vary considerably in size and character reflecting their natural setting and historical development. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide<sup>120</sup> describes the six broad character areas in the district, their settlement pattern and building characteristics.
- 13.2. Our vision and objectives are clear on the need to strengthen rural communities to allow them to sustain services and employment. The Taylor Review<sup>121</sup> and the Government response to it<sup>122</sup> place strong emphasis on the need to consider the wider social, economic and environmental factors which contribute to the long term sustainability of smaller villages.
- 13.3. A key aim is to maintain the relationship between the various communities so that change is appropriate in scale, and we keep the character and distinctiveness of our communities.
- 13.4. Our rural communities have a number of strengths:
- Villages have been able to retain their particular character and the quality of their landscape setting. This is through the designation of 64 village conservation areas and concentration of most development in the towns and the larger urban settlements of Oxford and Reading.
  - Some people believe that the rural areas offer a better quality of life and community spirit than urban areas<sup>123</sup>. Communities use parish and neighbourhood plans to express the way they wish their community to progress.
  - Wider use of technology has freed some people from working in a normal office environment and allowed them the opportunity to both live and work in the countryside, reducing the need to commute.
- 13.5. However a number of issues need addressing:
- The dispersed nature of settlements leads to more reliance on private transport. For those without access to private transport this restricts opportunities, as public transport provision is limited.
  - There is a difference in income between those who work in the rural parts of the district and those who live in the area but have better paid jobs elsewhere.<sup>124</sup>
  - The cheapest market housing remains beyond the reach of many who live and work in rural areas; entry level housing far exceeds a single income threshold.
  - All rural areas are suffering from the loss of local facilities such as schools, village shops, pubs and post offices<sup>125</sup>.
  - Access to social and health services can be harder to achieve in rural areas.
  - There are areas which have poor broadband speeds or a poor mobile phone signal. This can act as a severe constraint on working at home or developing a business in rural areas.
  - There is a continuing decline in jobs in the agricultural sector. These have declined by almost a quarter from 1990 to 2007<sup>126</sup>.

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120 South Oxfordshire Design Guide, July 2008, SODC

121 Living Working Countryside: The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing, July 2008

122 The Government Response to The Taylor Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing, March 2009

123 Rural South Oxfordshire summary of evidence, January 2009

124 Rural South Oxfordshire summary of evidence, January 2009

125 Survey of village services and facilities South Oxfordshire District Council 1991, 2001, 2008, 2009

- 13.6. The overall strategy aims to support rural communities. It allocates growth to the larger villages and allows some limited development in other rural communities. The concept is to develop a network of settlements to reduce the need to travel to meet day-to-day needs. We want to allow flexibility for development that can assist sustainability but which doesn't detract from the character of the settlement.
- 13.7. Our objectives provide for a range of housing development across the district that respects the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Green Belt designations, the scale of existing settlements and maintains the general balance between the market towns and the villages. To translate this into a policy framework we looked at what each settlement offers in terms of services and facilities and the size of the settlement. We used this as the basis for dividing our settlements into the following categories:
- Towns
  - Larger villages
  - Smaller villages
  - Other villages
- 13.8. A list of which settlements fall into which category is in Appendix 4. You can find the full assessment of the settlements within South Oxfordshire in our Settlement Assessment Background Paper<sup>127</sup>.
- 13.9. We recognise that this approach does not fully reflect the relationship between communities both in and outside the district. Each resident uses services differently, and travel to work patterns within and beyond the district are complex reflecting employment destinations and lifestyles.

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126 Defra Agricultural Census, June 2008

127 Settlement Assessment Background Paper, South Oxfordshire District Council, March 2011

## Housing

### Policy CSR1 Housing in villages

In order to contribute to the present and future economic, environmental and social sustainability of the villages, housing will be allowed where the scale and nature of the development is as follows:

	Allocations	Infill	Rural exceptions
Larger villages	Yes	Yes - no limit	Yes if need shown
Smaller villages	No	Sites of up to 0.2ha*	Yes if need shown
Other villages	No	Sites of up to 0.1ha**	Yes if need shown
All other places not listed	No	No	No
See Appendix 4 for list of settlements within each category		* Equivalent to 5-6 houses ** Equivalent to 2-3 houses	

All development should respect national designations such as Green Belt and should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Suitably designed and located development at an appropriate scale that facilitates the economic and social well-being of such areas, especially in the Larger Villages in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be supported. This includes the provision of adequate housing to meet identified local needs. Local character and distinctiveness will be protected and the requirements of relevant development plan policies will be met.

Redevelopment proposals in all categories of settlement may be acceptable but will be considered on a case by case basis through the development management process in line with other policies in the Development Plan.

- 13.10. We can provide rural housing by allocating specific sites, allowing infill development and redevelopment through the development management process and through rural exception sites. Paragraph 7.20 in the delivering new homes section explains how the Site Allocations DPD will identify sites in the larger villages. Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings. Rural exception sites are small sites for affordable housing within or adjacent to villages where housing would not normally be permitted.
- 13.11. Our Development Management Policies DPD will include detailed criteria for housing in villages and a policy for rural exception sites. Traditionally, small unallocated windfall sites have contributed substantially to our housing completions. We aim to increase this through the more flexible approach in this strategy.

## Employment

### Policy CSR2 Employment in Rural Areas

Planning permission will be granted for proposals which support the economy of the rural areas through:

- schemes for agricultural diversification and the re-use of rural buildings;
- small-scale infill schemes in villages including mixed housing and employment schemes;
- working at home;
- schemes which support agricultural production and the retention of functioning farm units; and
- schemes which support tourism based on the character of the area.

- 13.12. About 58 per cent of employment in the district is within the rural areas<sup>128</sup> although this includes some major employment sites such as Culham Science Centre and the various sites at Crowmarsh Gifford. In recent years with changing agricultural practices, converted former agricultural buildings have provided a significant addition to the stock of rural workplaces. Employment in rural areas can help to support rural services and reduce the need to travel for residents of the area.
- 13.13. Agriculture remains the main land use in the district and makes a major contribution to the character of the district. The need to protect home food production is becoming more important, reflecting the need to cut unnecessary food miles. Whilst most agricultural activity lies outside planning control, the strategy aims to support local food production. This is through development proposals which support the continued viability of enterprises and encouraging farm shops and farmers' markets.
- 13.14. Residents and visitors enjoy the quality of the countryside through walking and cycling, boating on the River Thames or visiting specific attractions. The strategy supports enterprises which are based on the conservation and enjoyment of the qualities of the area.
- 13.15. Our overall strategy provides for some growth in the larger villages and we will allocate land in those villages through our Site Allocations DPD. Throughout the district we will continue to support schemes for agricultural diversification, the conversion of rural buildings for employment which comply with the NPPF and allow small-scale employment or mixed housing/employment schemes as infill in the villages. Schemes which allow working at home will be encouraged unless they cause nuisance or detract from the character of the village. Our overall strategy for the economy seeks to protect existing employment sites.

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<sup>128</sup> Understanding Rural Oxfordshire The Rural Economy Briefing Paper, Oxfordshire Economic Observatory January 2007

## Community facilities and rural transport

### **Policy CSR3 Community facilities and rural transport**

Proposals which result in the provision of facilities and services in the rural areas will be encouraged, those which result in the loss of services and facilities will be resisted.

Rural transport initiatives that improve movement particularly to access services and employment will be encouraged.

- 13.16. The community sees that keeping community facilities is a high priority<sup>129</sup>. We carried out a comprehensive survey of village facilities in 1991, updated it in 2001, 2008 and again in 2009<sup>130</sup>. All facilities which we consider important to the vitality of communities have declined since 1991. The facilities covered by the survey were food shops, GP's surgeries, primary schools, petrol filling stations and pubs. We will continue to try to protect these facilities through the planning system as they contribute to the sustainability of village communities. However, in the face of continuing decline we understand that some services are being provided differently. For example, the internet provides opportunities for online shopping which some rural residents find useful.
- 13.17. Community initiatives will be important and these can be enhanced through funding from developer contributions. Another way that planning can be involved is through allowing the flexible use of community buildings.
- 13.18. Sustainable means of transport are more difficult to provide in rural areas and access to services and employment can be difficult for rural residents who do not have access to a car. The movement strategy in section five seeks to support the network of settlements by encouraging the identification of opportunities to improve public transport, cycle routes and public rights of way to local service and employment centres. We will seek contributions to this from development. We will support local initiatives and the strategy supports traffic management initiatives which protect local character and address air quality issues.

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<sup>129</sup> 86 per cent of replies to the Issues and Options report wanted us to go further than the existing policy in protecting village facilities

<sup>130</sup> Survey of village services and facilities South Oxfordshire District Council, 1991, 2001, 2008, 2009

## 14. The environment

### Introduction

- 14.1. The high quality of the built and natural environment is a significant characteristic of the district. Our vision and objectives seek to maintain this quality and to enhance and manage the environment. There will be further development in the district and some of this will be on the edge of our towns and villages. In planning this development we will take account of and seek to reduce the impact of development on the environment.

### Landscape

#### Policy CSEN1 Landscape

The district's distinct landscape character and key features will be protected against inappropriate development and where possible enhanced.

- (i) Where development is acceptable in principle, measures will be sought to integrate it into the landscape character of the area.
- (ii) High priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and planning decisions will have regard to their setting. Proposals which support the economies and social well being of the AONBs and their communities, including affordable housing schemes, will be encouraged provided they do not conflict with the aims of conservation and enhancement.
- (iii) The landscapes and waterscapes of the River Thames corridor will be maintained and where possible enhanced as will the setting and heritage of the river for its overall amenity and recreation use.

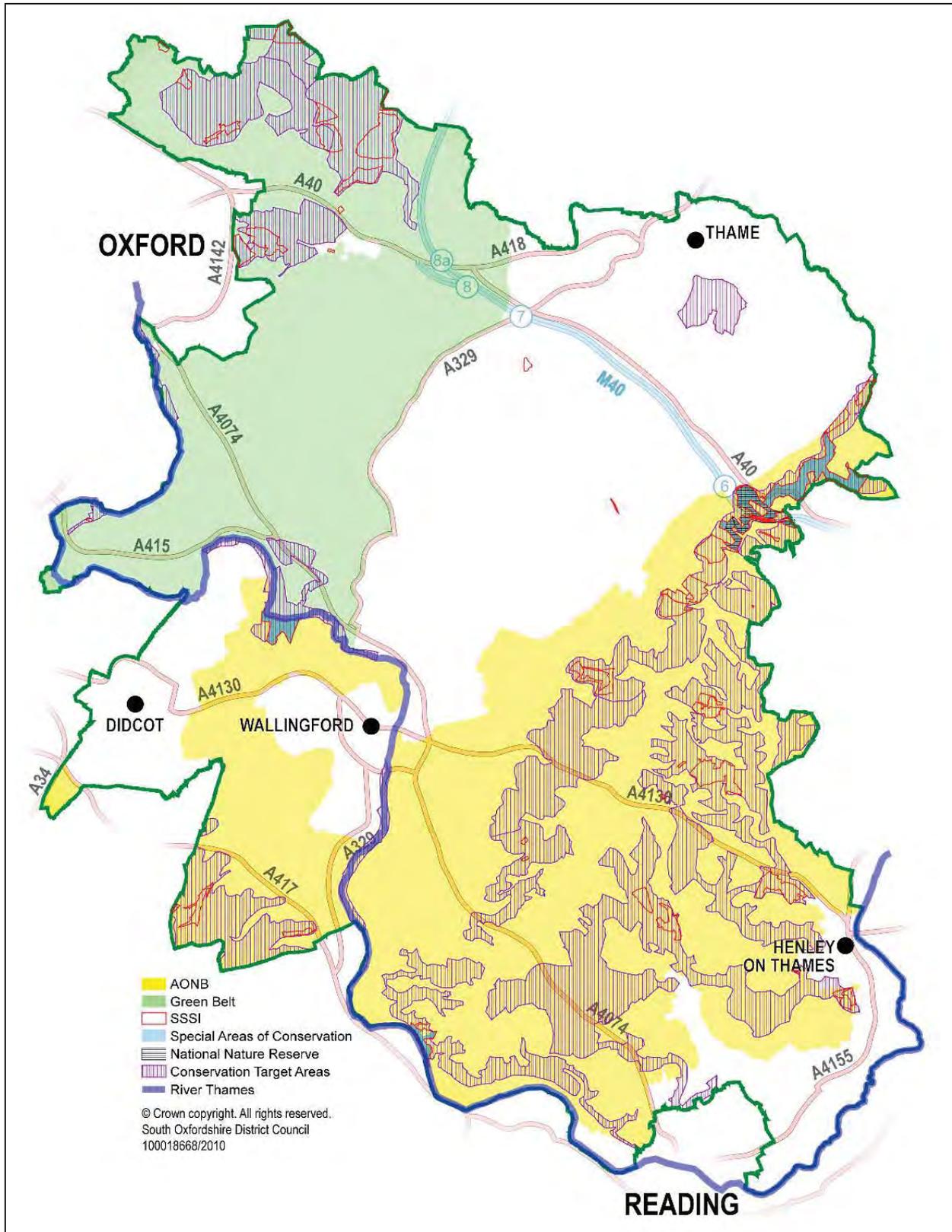
- 14.2. The South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment SPG<sup>131</sup> describes the district as mainly rural with a high proportion of attractive countryside and details the landscape character of the district and how landscape influences settlement character. It divides the district into 11 local character areas and includes guidelines for landscape enhancement, planning and development. We have also commissioned more detailed landscape assessments around the towns to inform the strategic site allocations and help assess the capacity for housing at Henley.
- 14.3. The southern half of the district is covered by two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Chilterns AONB washes over the south-east and meets the North Wessex Downs AONB at the Goring Gap to the south-west. In considering proposals for development in the AONB we will apply the advice in the NPPF. This is to give great weight to conserving the natural beauty, landscape and countryside whilst supporting suitably located and designed development necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of the areas and their communities. This includes providing enough housing to meet identified local needs. We have worked in partnership to prepare management plans for both AONBs which have been taken account of in preparing this strategy<sup>132</sup>. We will continue to use the South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment SPG to assess any proposals for development which may affect the character of our AONBs and other landscapes.

<sup>131</sup> South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment, adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in July 2003

<sup>132</sup> Chilterns AONB Management Plan, North Wessex Downs Management Plan

14.4. The River Thames runs through, and in places forms the boundary of, our district. Its valley is noted for its unspoilt peace and tranquillity. The Thames Path long distance footpath follows the river and both the river and its banks are heavily used for leisure activities. Map 14.1 shows these and other key environmental assets in our district.

**Map 14.1 The key environmental assets of our district**



## Green Belt

### **Policy CSEN2 Green Belt**

The special character and landscape setting of Oxford will be protected by the Oxford Green Belt, the boundary is shown on the Adopted Policies Map.

A local review of the Green Belt will take place at Berinsfield.

Policy CSR1 allows for limited amounts of new housing through infilling in some Green Belt villages however planning permission will not be granted for development within the Oxford Green Belt that is contrary to national policy guidance in the NPPF and the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

The following are key previously developed sites in the Green Belt:

- Oxford Brookes University campus at Holton
- Culham Science Centre
- Culham No.1 Site
- Sandford Sewage Treatment Works

- 14.5. The Oxford Green Belt covers the north-western part of the district. It is shown on Map 14.1, the Key Diagram and the Adopted Policies Map. The purposes of the Oxford Green Belt are to:
- preserve the special character and landscape setting of Oxford;
  - check the growth of Oxford and prevent ribbon development and urban sprawl;
  - prevent the merging of settlements;
  - assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and
  - assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 14.6. Section 7 of this strategy explains the exceptional circumstances warranting a local review of the Green Belt at Berinsfield to be undertaken in the Site Allocations DPD. Apart from this, we will maintain the Green Belt and apply national policy guidance as set out in the NPPF.
- 14.7. The strategy identifies four key previously developed sites in the Green Belt. We will follow the advice in the NPPF in relation to these sites. Oxford Brookes University and Culham Science Centre are strategic sites and Section 6 contains more detail on these sites. The Site Allocations DPD will include policies for Culham No.1 Site and Sandford Sewage Treatment Works.

## Historic environment

### Policy CSEN3 Historic Environment

The district's designated historic heritage assets, both above and below ground such as:

- nationally designated assets including listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, historic battlefields and Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- conservation areas; and
- their settings

will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

This will be carried out through:

- conservation area appraisals/reviews;
- management plans;
- designating new conservation areas where appropriate;
- the determination of planning, listed building consent and other relevant applications.

Proposals for development that affect non-designated historic assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

- 14.8. We currently have some 3,300 listed buildings and 72 conservation areas in the district. There are 2,171 recorded archaeological monuments including 50 Scheduled Ancient Monuments as well as other sites of historic interest including battlefields, parks, gardens and landscapes.
- 14.9. We must protect these important assets for their intrinsic value as they help establish the distinctive character of South Oxfordshire. The NPPF emphasises the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality.
- 14.10. It is therefore important that in managing change, we protect what is special in our historic environment. Our strategy follows national guidance in the NPPF.

## Water

- 14.11. The Water Framework Directive<sup>133</sup> requires us to make sure that there is no deterioration in the status of our water bodies and that they all achieve good ecological status by 2027. The Environment Agency has produced a Thames River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) that sets out practical actions to help meet this obligation<sup>134</sup>. To link in with this RBMP we have policies on water resources, flood risk management, water services, infrastructure, green infrastructure, biodiversity, climate change and sustainable urban drainage (SUDS). These are contained in this section and in sections 15, 16, 17 and 18 and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

## Flood risk management

- 14.12. The River Thames is the main river crossing the district and there are also a large number of smaller watercourses. Many of these rivers, including the Thames, flood after heavy rain. A number of places have also suffered flooding from surface water drainage

<sup>133</sup> Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC)

<sup>134</sup> Environment Agency - River Basin Management Plan, Thames River Basin District, Submitted Version, December 2009

and sewers. Working with the Environment Agency we have prepared two Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (Didcot and the rest of the district) in accordance with the advice in the NPPF to take account of the impacts of climate change.

- 14.13. The NPPF requires that we follow a sequential test when identifying land for development, looking at zone 1 land first. This is land least likely to flood. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment<sup>135</sup> shows that there is enough zone 1 land available in the district to meet our future greenfield allocation needs in our towns and villages. We will not therefore need to look at zone 2 or 3 land for the built element of greenfield allocations or carry out any exception testing. For other development we will follow the NPPF and its technical guidance and extant guidance in PPS25: Development and Flood Risk Practice Guide. The strategic flood risk assessment provides detailed developer guidance and we will pick this up in our Didcot Area Action Plan, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPDs.

### **Minerals safeguarding areas**

- 14.14. South Oxfordshire has extensive reserves of mineral deposits, these are a finite resource and have been safeguarded by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) through their Minerals and Waste Local Development Documents. Whilst we do not want to see additional workings within the district and would encourage efficient use of resources to minimise this we will work with the county council and follow government advice in the NPPF. This indicates that our policies and proposals for non-minerals development should not normally be in Minerals Safeguarding Areas (MSAs), or sensitive locations around safeguarding areas, where such policies would affect the potential for future extraction and working of minerals.
- 14.15. We will consult with OCC the Minerals Planning Authority on proposals that affect MSAs.

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<sup>135</sup> Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, March and July 2011, South Oxfordshire District Council

## 15. Quality development

### Sustainable design and construction

- 15.1. Climate change is a key issue in this core strategy, in particular reducing the level of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the district. Given the broad ranging nature of climate change it can be seen as a cross cutting theme. It runs through our core strategy, particularly in relation to the location of new housing and employment development, the need to reduce the need to travel by car and the promotion of more sustainable modes of transport. The focus of this section is specifically on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through the use of renewable energy generation, reducing the energy use of new development, and adapting to the effects of climate change.
- 15.2. Our Sustainable Community Strategy highlights that we need to make reducing energy consumption a priority and do more to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings<sup>136</sup>. This is reflected in both the vision and objectives of this core strategy which seeks the highest viable build standards for new development in terms of sustainable design and construction practices.
- 15.3. On a national scale, energy use in buildings accounts for nearly half of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. More than a quarter comes from the energy we use to heat, light and run our homes. To put this into context, South Oxfordshire has higher levels of domestic energy consumption per person than the South East average<sup>137</sup>. Domestic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are the highest in the county and are above the UK and South East averages.
- 15.4. In addition to this, a significant number of new homes (11,487) will be provided throughout the district between 2006 and 2027, particularly at Didcot which is a New Growth Point. This has the potential to impose a large environmental footprint in terms of resources and materials, the use of energy and associated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. There is therefore, a clear need for our core strategy to focus on renewable energy generation and reducing the energy use in new development.

### Renewable energy generation

#### Policy CSQ1 Renewable Energy

Proposals for development for the generation of energy from renewable resources will be permitted provided any adverse impact on the landscape, heritage and biodiversity of an area, traffic generation or the amenities of local communities is outweighed by wider environmental, social, economic or other benefits.

- 15.5. Renewable and decentralised energy generation schemes provide a valuable source of green energy for both existing and new development that contributes towards reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The availability of such schemes will become increasingly important with the Government's target for zero carbon new housing by 2016.
- 15.6. Our evidence base reveals that wind and biomass<sup>138</sup> will provide the greatest potential for renewable energy generation in the district.

<sup>136</sup> Our Place, Our future: South Oxfordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026

<sup>137</sup> DTI, sub-regional high level energy indicators, March 2007

<sup>138</sup> SEE-Stats database (operated by TV Energy for the South East Sustainable Energy Partnership) [www.see-stats.org](http://www.see-stats.org)

- 15.7. The location and design of all renewable energy proposals should be informed by a landscape character assessment where required. Priority for large scale wind energy will be given to areas outside the AONB and its setting. Biomass plants should ideally be located close to the source of the biomass fuel to reduce transport distances.
- 15.8. An important contribution towards renewable energy generation can be achieved by making sure that a percentage of the predicted energy demand for proposed development schemes is provided from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources.

## Renewable energy as part of new development

### Policy CSQ2 Sustainable Design and Construction

Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where:

- (i) For developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> or more of non-residential floor space, 20% of the energy demand is secured from decentralised (on or near site) and renewable or low carbon energy sources (including the use of Combined Heat and Power where appropriate), where this would be viable.
- (ii) For developments of 200 dwellings or more, it can be demonstrated that the proposal will achieve at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- (iii) For new residential development of less than 200 dwellings, it can be demonstrated that the proposal will achieve at least Code Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. From April 2013, proposals will need to demonstrate that at least Code Level 4 will be achieved.
- (iv) For the refurbishment of existing residential buildings, it can be demonstrated that the proposal will achieve at least EcoHomes 'Very Good' standard\*. From 2013, proposals will need to demonstrate that at least 'Excellent' standard\* will be achieved.
- (v) For proposals for non-residential development up to 500 m<sup>2</sup> floor space, it can be demonstrated that the proposal will achieve at least BREEAM 'Very Good' standard. For proposals for non-residential development above 500 m<sup>2</sup> floor space it can be demonstrated that the proposal will achieve at least BREEAM 'Excellent' standard.
- (vi) For all new development SUDS are implemented where appropriate taking into account current policy and good practice guidance, and the emerging national SUDS standards.
- (vii) All new developments incorporate measures that address issues of adaptation to climate change taking account of best practice. These include resilience to increasing temperatures and heavy rainfall events and the need for water conservation and storage.

\* or equivalent standard through the forthcoming BREEAM Residential Refurbishment standards

- 15.9. Before considering the use of renewable energy technologies, the design of a development should first identify measures to reduce overall energy demand. This can include optimising solar gain, natural lighting and ventilation to reduce the need for space heating, cooling and lighting. Secondly, the design should include measures to use energy more efficiently such as increasing levels of insulation in walls, floors and roofs and improved air tightness. Once the optimum benefit from these first two stages has been achieved, the design should include measures to reach the required proportion of energy demand to be met from renewable or low carbon sources.
- 15.10. For developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> or more of floor space if non-residential, 20% of the predicted energy demand should come from such sources. We

have fully considered the additional costs associated with achieving this standard as part of our evidence base. For residential development, this requirement will eventually be superseded by the higher standards (Levels 5 and 6) of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

- 15.11. For calculation purposes, energy demand should be converted to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Major applications must be submitted with an energy statement that clearly indicates the methods used to calculate predicted annual energy demand and associated annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the calculations used to determine the renewable energy requirements based on the annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- 15.12. On occasions where it can be fully and clearly demonstrated that the 20% target is not feasible or viable due to technical or site constraints, we will consider a lower percentage contribution. In such cases, proposals will need to demonstrate the full range of renewable and low carbon technologies that they have considered and the contribution that can be achieved from these towards energy demand.
- 15.13. There is an expectation that developments will achieve a minimum of 10% of their energy demand from renewable sources, unless a comprehensive case can be provided to demonstrate that this would not be viable.
- 15.14. Where there are firm proposals for decentralised energy supply systems with capacity to supply new development, or where a supply already exists, proposals for development should connect to this system or be designed to be able to connect in future.

## Standards for design and construction

- 15.15. Energy efficiency and the use of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy is only one aspect of sustainable design and construction. We also need to make sure that high standards of water efficiency are achieved along with other measures such as recycling construction materials, provision for the recycling of household waste, the use of sustainably sourced materials and the protection and enhancement of ecological features on a development site. The use of the nationally recognised standards of BREEAM, EcoHomes and the Code for Sustainable Homes are the most appropriate means to measure this.
- 15.16. The government has a timeframe for the introduction of the different levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes to coincide with improved standards of the Building Regulations. This will require that new houses are built to Code Level 4 standards by 2013 and are zero carbon by 2016. However, national planning guidance<sup>139</sup> is clear that local planning authorities can set local requirements for a building's sustainability.
- 15.17. Our evidence base shows that for larger developments, it is more cost effective to achieve Code Level 4 through using district heating schemes (gas or biomass). Where Combined Heat and Power (CHP) can be used (e.g. where domestic heat demand can be combined with non-domestic i.e. for a school, sports and leisure uses, offices and retail) the increase to base build costs are significantly reduced and the reaching of Code Level 4 will be automatic.
- 15.18. Achieving Code Level 4 on larger sites is also more feasible as the potential to exploit renewable energy sources is greater. There is much greater scope to make sure that the orientation of buildings optimises solar gain and that roof slopes offer the greatest potential for solar water heating and PV (photovoltaic) panels. Enough space can also be planned to accommodate ground source heat pumps and storage space for bio fuels.

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139 NPPF March 2012, paragraph 95

- 15.19. Therefore, in advance of 2013, proposals for strategic sites of 200 houses or more will be expected to achieve Code Level 4.
- 15.20. To demonstrate that the required Code for Sustainable Homes, EcoHomes and BREEAM standards will be met, proposals for new development should be accompanied by a pre-assessment certification under the relevant scheme approved by a registered assessor.

## Climate change adaptation

- 15.21. Oxfordshire's main areas of climate-related vulnerability are increasing intense downpours and higher temperatures<sup>140</sup>. New development should be designed to take account of such climate changes expected over the life of the development and incorporate current best practice.
- 15.22. Managing higher temperatures should be addressed at differing scales of development. For larger scale developments this can include incorporating open green spaces and green corridors to provide cool and attractive outdoor areas. Street trees can provide an evaporative cooling effect and can be used to shade buildings.
- 15.23. At the individual building scale, design should optimise the potential for natural ventilation and the use of thermal storage or mass to absorb heat during hot periods so that it can escape in cooler periods. In considering design, a careful balance needs to be struck between measures to promote solar gain and reduce heat loss in the winter and the potential to exacerbate summer heat risks. The use of carefully designed shading such as louvres can help to overcome this.
- 15.24. Where appropriate, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) should be used to help cope with intense rainfall events. In determining the suitability of SUDS for individual development sites, developers should seek advice from the Environment Agency or the SUDS approval body.

## Design quality

### Policy CSQ3 Design

Planning permission will be granted for new development that is of a high quality and inclusive design that:

- responds positively to and respects the character of the site and its surroundings, particularly the historic significance and heritage values of the historic environment, enhancing local distinctiveness and ensuring that new development is of a scale, type and density appropriate to the site and its setting;
- improves the quality of the public realm with well designed external areas, and, where appropriate a clear structure of open spaces;
- provides and/or links into green infrastructure where available;
- is designed to create safe communities and reduce the likelihood and fear of crime;
- creates a distinctive sense of place and is easy to understand through the use of vistas, landmarks and focal points;
- ensures high levels of accessibility and ease of use by all modes of transport both within the site and with the wider area, also making sure that any new development is properly integrated with existing development ensuring accessibility to local services; and
- is adaptable to changing requirements and constructed with materials appropriate to the area.

All proposals for new development should be accompanied by a design and access statement to show how they have responded to the above criteria.

15.25. Good design is an important factor in new development. Well designed schemes can influence not only the way a place looks but also how it works. High quality buildings, places and particularly the public realm can have a positive impact on social, quality of life and sustainability issues. Such impacts include building a sense of community, achieving a safer and more secure environment, attracting people to the area and contributing to the long term protection of the natural environment. This is in addition to the benefits of maintaining and reinforcing the character, quality and distinctiveness of South Oxfordshire.

15.26. A key aspect of our Sustainable Community Strategy is enhancing the quality of our built and historic environment through appropriate development and quality building standards. This is reflected in the vision and objectives of this strategy which seek to make sure that the high quality of the environment remains a significant feature of South Oxfordshire and that all new development is well designed, respects the local character, and fosters a sense of community and safety.

15.27. As a council, we recognise the importance of design. We have adopted the South Oxfordshire Design Guide<sup>141</sup> and the Chilterns Building Design Guide<sup>142</sup> as supplementary planning documents to assist in the practical application of design principles on developments within the district. There are also a number of village design statements. We subscribe to the use of Design Coding as promoted by CABE<sup>143</sup> (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment).

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141 South Oxfordshire Design Guide, July 2008, SODC

142 Chilterns Building Design Guide, 2008, The Chilterns Conservation Board

143 Preparing Design Codes: A Practice Manual, DCLG/CABE, November 2006.

- 15.28. Central government guidance in the NPPF contains extensive advice on design in new developments and the core strategy does not need to repeat this. However, there are certain elements that are particularly important to design in South Oxfordshire and which reflect the strategy's objectives. This strategy highlights these elements and should be used in conjunction with the South Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD which provides further detail on the design of new extensions, buildings and developments.
- 15.29. This core strategy provides for several extensions to our existing towns. To ensure that these new areas are places that the new residents want to live in as well as complementing the existing environment, our approach deals specifically with key issues involving greenfield neighbourhoods. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan and other policies contain additional requirements.

## Design Briefs

### **Policy CSQ4 Design briefs for greenfield neighbourhoods and major development sites**

Proposals for housing allocations and major development sites must be accompanied by a design brief that includes the following:

- (i) **A Vision** – a clear vision for the type of place that could be created building on the overall vision for the district and town;
- (ii) **A Masterplan** which should:
  - demonstrate a robust design process including an in-depth assessment of the site and its context, constraints and identifying those issues that have informed the vision for and design of the development;
  - show a clear development structure and design concept;
  - show that the design requirements of the scheme work within the vision / demonstrate how the vision may be achieved;
  - explain the key elements and development principles of the masterplan to create a simple, robust framework for development that fixes: land use and density, movement and access and open space and landscape;
  - contain a mechanism for delivering the vision at more detailed stages, for example design coding;
  - contain strategic urban design principles that will be used to inform subsequent more detailed design;
  - define and respond to local context and create or reinforce local distinctiveness;
  - show how consultation with the existing community has been incorporated.
- (iii) **A Design Brief** which must demonstrate:
  - **integration with the surrounding area** both built and natural, in particular maximising existing and potential movement connections with the existing environment to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport;
  - **quality of development and positive sense of place and identity;**
  - **high level of accessibility** and good connections to public transport, community facilities and local services;
  - **community facilities, suitable infrastructure and other amenities** to meet the needs of all the community, including the provision of education and training facilities, health care, community, leisure and recreation facilities;
  - **a clear structure of open spaces and landscape network** to ensure that open space standards are met and that the new spaces relate well to each other and to existing areas;
  - **how sustainability and environmental matters** will be addressed including the efficient use of resources both during construction and when the development is complete;
  - **delivery, phasing and implementation strategies** to be in place to ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure and services to the development when they are needed by new residents, and that new developments are built out in a logical manner;
  - **well integrated mix of housing types and tenures** to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes to meet identified housing needs.

## 16. Green infrastructure and biodiversity

### Introduction

- 16.1. 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.
- 16.2. These benefits make a significant contribution to the objectives contained within our Sustainable Community Strategies and these are reflected in this strategy's vision and objectives.

#### **Policy CSG1 Green infrastructure**

A net gain in green infrastructure including biodiversity will be sought through developer works, developer contributions and the targeted use of other funding sources.

Proposals for new development must demonstrate that they have taken into account the relationship of the proposed development to existing green infrastructure. Where appropriate, proposals will be required to contribute to the delivery of green infrastructure and/or the improvement of existing assets including Conservation Target Areas in accordance with the standards in the South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and Didcot Natural Greenspaces Study.

A net loss of green infrastructure including biodiversity through development proposals will be avoided.

- 16.3. Green infrastructure includes a variety of different forms including woodland and grassland, amenity green space, outdoor sports facilities, allotments and churchyards. Our Green Infrastructure Strategy aims to deliver primarily the following types of green infrastructure in South Oxfordshire:
  - Parks and gardens
  - Natural and semi-natural accessible green space
  - Green corridors
  - Accessible countryside
  - Registered Common Land
  - Nature reserves (national/local/private).
- 16.4. Other types of open green space such as playing pitches, children's play areas, amenity green space and allotments will be delivered through Policy CSI1. Map 16.1 shows the existing green infrastructure assets in the district.
- 16.5. We as a local authority and our partners need to work together to plan, provide and manage connected and substantial networks of existing and new accessible multi-functional green space. In order to make sure that new green infrastructure is delivered in a planned and co-ordinated manner, we have produced the South Oxfordshire Green

Infrastructure Strategy (SOGIS) and a specific green infrastructure study for the New Growth Point of Didcot<sup>144</sup>.

- 16.6. Both strategies map the existing green infrastructure assets, identify shortfalls in provision of green infrastructure to 2027, and provide a targeted approach for the delivery of new green infrastructure assets and green corridors. The strategies use the standards in the Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment<sup>145</sup>. We have planned the delivery of new green infrastructure sites to coincide with the locations for new housing development.
- 16.7. The Didcot strategy also identifies specific sites that should be delivered to provide for identified green infrastructure needs as a result of planned new development. The selection of these sites has been informed by existing landscape features and the potential to create more interesting landscape features, the potential deliverability of the site and the proximity to and potential to link to identified housing sites.

## Biodiversity

- 16.8. One of the key aims of the green infrastructure strategy is to protect and enhance biodiversity which includes the need to mitigate the impacts of new development. South Oxfordshire contains 203 important nature conservation sites which are protected at international, national and local levels. These include:
- 4 Special Areas of Conservation
  - 38 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
  - 155 confirmed or proposed Local Wildlife Sites<sup>146</sup>
  - 4 Local Nature Reserves.
- 16.9. In addition to these sites there are a number of other 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). There is also a wide variety of legally protected species resident throughout South Oxfordshire. We will consider proposals for development which affect biodiversity in relation to the NPPF.

### **Policy CSB1 Conservation and improvement of biodiversity**

A net loss of biodiversity will be avoided, and opportunities to achieve a net gain across the district will be actively sought.

Opportunities for biodiversity gain, including the connection of sites, large-scale habitat restoration, enhancement and habitat re-creation will be sought for all types of habitats, with a primary focus on delivery in the Conservation Target Areas.

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).

Damage to nationally important sites of special scientific interest, local wildlife sites, local nature reserves, priority habitats, protected or priority species and locally important geological sites will be avoided unless the importance of the development outweighs the harm and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

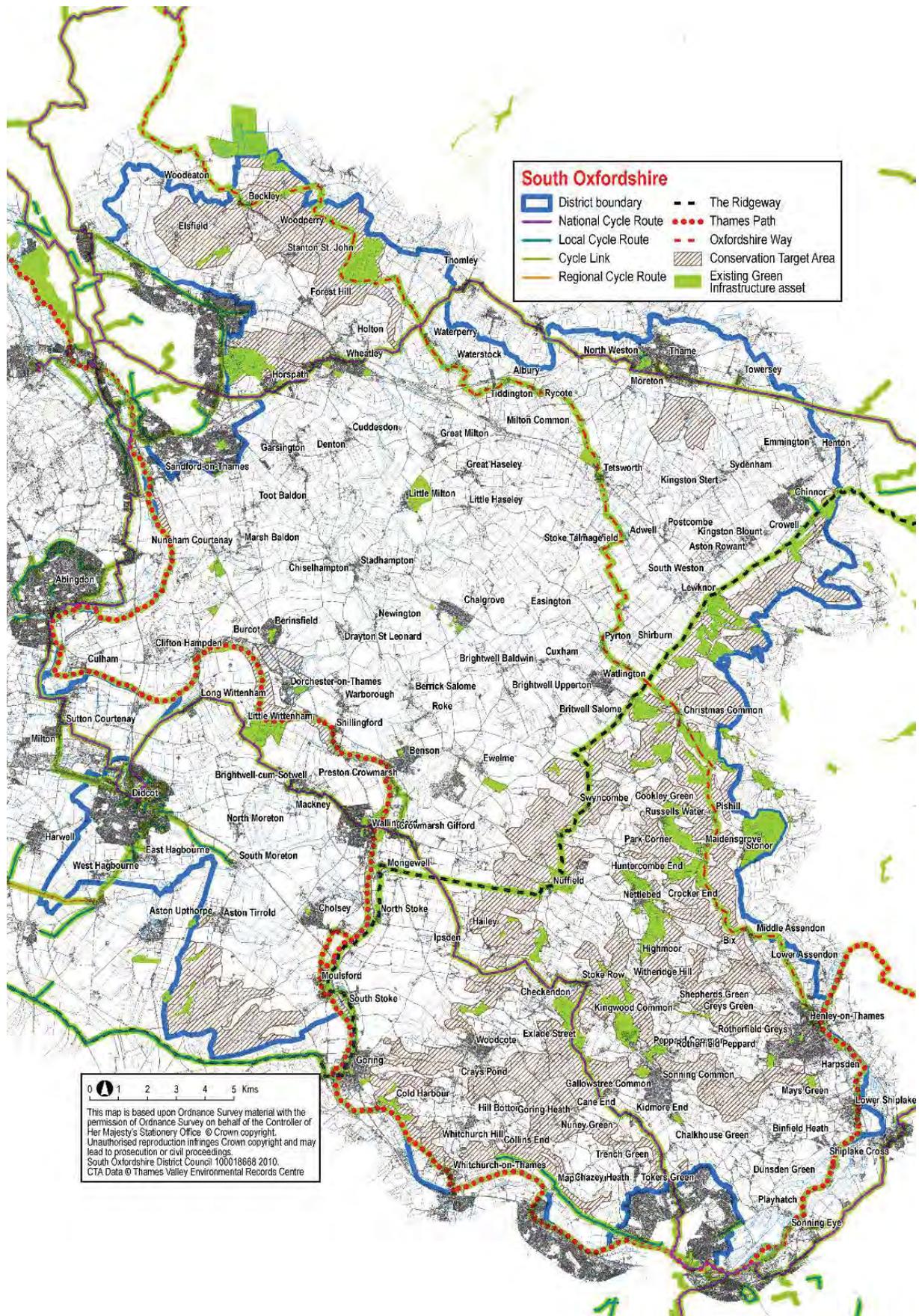
<sup>144</sup> South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, July 2011 and Didcot Greenspace Network Feasibility Study, March 2008

<sup>145</sup> Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment, November 2008

<sup>146</sup> A current list of Local Wildlife Sites is available on the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre website, as the list changes over time, [http://www.tverc.org/html/local\\_wildlife\\_sites.html](http://www.tverc.org/html/local_wildlife_sites.html)

16.10. We have identified Conservation Target Areas. These are strategic areas which contribute to the Biodiversity Action Plan Targets in the South East Biodiversity Strategy (February 2009) to create, restore and enhance biodiversity priority habitats. They are the most important areas for biodiversity and wildlife conservation in the district and complement the green infrastructure network. They are shown on Map 16.1. These areas provide the focus for targeted conservation action as detailed in our green infrastructure strategies and Policy CSG1 and CSB1 above.

## Map 16.1 Existing Green Infrastructure and Conservation Target Areas



## 17. Infrastructure provision

- 17.1. Successful and sustainable communities and new developments depend on suitable physical and social infrastructure being in place to meet the needs of their residents. Businesses also need infrastructure to operate effectively and meet the needs of their employees. These needs include transport, utilities and waste, social infrastructure, environmental and green infrastructure, cultural, education, leisure, faith and community facilities. The type of infrastructure can range from major investments such as new schools, to support for community transport schemes.
- 17.2. To maintain and provide infrastructure and other community services effectively, it is essential that there is a partnership working approach between the public, private and voluntary sector agencies involved. We are working with a wide range of infrastructure providers and stakeholders. Key organisations include Oxfordshire County Council, the Highways Agency, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust, Town and Parish Councils, Thames Water and the Environment Agency but there are many other organisations which have a stake in providing the facilities and services that communities and business need.

### **Policy CSI1 Infrastructure provision**

New development must be served and supported by appropriate on- and off-site infrastructure and services. Planning permission will only be granted when infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the new development, including that set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and/or mitigate the impact of the new development is already in place or will be provided to an agreed timescale.

Infrastructure and services required as a consequence of development, and provision for their maintenance, will be sought from developers and secured by the negotiation of planning obligations, by conditions attached to a planning permission, and/or other agreement, levy or undertaking, all to be agreed before planning permission is granted.

- 17.3. We want adequate infrastructure, services and community facilities made necessary by new development to be in place to meet the need for them as soon as it arises. This will make sure that people's requirements are well served and that the existing community does not suffer adverse impacts. Therefore, we will only grant planning permission for new development once this has been secured. If demonstrated through an Independent Viability Assessment that the viability of a development is an issue, infrastructure contributions will be negotiated alongside other issues that affect the viability of the development.
- 17.4. Where existing infrastructure, services and facilities are not able to support the additional demand generated from new development, we will require developers to contribute towards or to provide the relevant additional items. In addition, we will secure, where appropriate, arrangements for future maintenance of facilities and services.
- 17.5. Section 18 sets out how this strategy will be delivered. Accompanying the strategy is a detailed Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which we will maintain as a live document to support the Local Plan as a whole.
- 17.6. We will also support the provision of new facilities for existing communities and the retention of existing services and facilities. These will be dealt with through the Development Management Policies DPD.

## 18. Implementation of the strategy

- 18.1. This section sets out how we will deliver the strategy. For each proposal in the strategy, Table 18.2 sets out the 'what, where, how, who and when' of delivery. The targets which we will assess the policies against are in Table 18.2. The final column shows what action we will take if targets are not being met.
- 18.2. We will report on the implementation of the core strategy through the Authority's Monitoring Report which we produce each December.

### Delivery mechanisms

- 18.3. This strategy sets out key principles. Many proposals need developing through more detailed policy documents. These comprise:
- Development briefs for strategic sites;
  - Didcot Area Action Plan which will contain policies and proposals specific to Didcot;
  - Site Allocations DPD and Neighbourhood Plans which will allocate sites for the uses set out in this strategy throughout the rest of the district;
  - Development Management Policies DPD which will set out the detailed criteria against which planning applications will be assessed;
  - A Developer Contributions SPD which will explain the approach to contributions and also include further guidance on affordable housing; and
  - The South Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD.
- 18.4. In order to ensure the timely delivery of sites and infrastructure we will consider using our compulsory powers to acquire land needed to progress development.

### Working with partners

- 18.5. Delivering this strategy will require a wide range of private, public sector and voluntary bodies working together. We will work with town and parish councils to provide advice in producing Neighbourhood Plans. Those most relevant to the delivery of a proposal or policy are listed in Table 18.2 but we recognise that the list is not exhaustive and it may change over time. We also recognise that other initiatives, for example the implementation of Town Centre Action Plans will contribute to the implementation of this strategy.

### Delivery and Contingency

- 18.6. Table 18.1 shows when the housing provisions in this strategy are anticipated to deliver. It shows that expected delivery is not steady over the years of the plan period. We recognise that large sites will take time to masterplan and come on stream, especially where significant infrastructure is required. Table 18.1 also identifies anticipated contingency that will occur over the plan period. We anticipate a contingency supply of homes from unallocated sites. This provides some buffer for slippage in the anticipated delivery of larger sites. However, if development is not coming forward in a timely manner we will implement the measures in Policy CSC1.
- 18.7. The housing trajectories in Appendix 3 also show the anticipated housing delivery. The Didcot Growth Point agreement may be revised in the plan period. To bring forward sites in the plan period the strategic site to the north-east of Didcot will need to be permitted in order to begin delivering homes as soon as possible. The Didcot Area

Action Plan and Site Allocations DPD will contain further information on delivery of the sites allocated within them.

- 18.8. The strategy needs to be resilient and cope with changing circumstances. Importantly it needs to set out what will happen if an allocated site does not come forward as expected. In preparing the strategy we have worked with infrastructure providers and landowners/developers to establish that the allocated strategic sites are deliverable. If circumstances change, and unless the problem is common to all potential development sites, we will implement the measures set out in Policy CSC1. Any requirement to bring forward additional sites or alternative strategies will need to be in line with the distribution strategy of this plan. This is summarised in Table 4.1.
- 18.9. Table 18.2 also includes how we will monitor other policies and proposals. It includes targets and indicators and, where relevant, the action that we will take if targets are not met.

### **Policy CSC1 Delivery and Contingency**

Sites are anticipated to be developed in the timescales set out in Table 18.1.

If sites or other policies are not delivered in accordance with Tables 18.1 and the housing trajectories, the contingency measures set out in Table 18.2 will apply.

If the Authority's Monitoring Report shows that allocated development sites and/or neighbourhood plans are not coming forward in a timely manner, we will consider:

- (i) seeking alternative sources of funding if lack of infrastructure is delaying development
- (ii) bringing forward sites anticipated to come on stream later in the plan process
- (iii) identifying alternative deliverable site(s) through a plan or other mechanism in general accordance with the distribution strategy of this plan as set out in Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3.

**Table 18.1 Anticipated delivery of housing development**

	Completions 2006/07- 2011/12	Projected Delivery			Total Supply
		2012/13- 2016/17	2017/18- 2021/22	2022/23- 2026/27	
<b>Didcot</b>					
Great Western Park	113	1,154	500	933	2,700
Ladygrove East		175	467		642
Vauxhall Barracks			300		300
Other deliverable sites as at 31.03.2012	209	132			341
Didcot North East		500	1,000	530	2,030
Orchard Centre Phase 2		220	80		300
<b>Total for Didcot</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>2,181</b>	<b>2,347</b>	<b>1,463</b>	<b>6,313</b>
<b>Rest of District</b>					
Fairmile Hospital	84	270			354
Chinnor Cement Works	101	77			178
Former Thame United Football Club	87	12			99
Mongewell Park (Carmel College)		166			166
Other deliverable sites as at 31.3.2012	1,221	442			1,663
Core Strategy allocation at Wallingford		180	350	25	555
Sites to be allocated in Thame in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan			390	385	775
Sites to be allocated in Henley in the Site Allocations DPD			333	67	400
Sites to be allocated in Larger Villages in the Site Allocations DPD			615	539	1,154
<b>Total in Rest of District</b>	<b>1,493</b>	<b>1,147</b>	<b>1,688</b>	<b>1,016</b>	<b>5,344</b>
<b>Total supply</b>					
<b>Total for District</b>	<b>1,815</b>	<b>3,328</b>	<b>4,035</b>	<b>2,479</b>	<b>11,657</b>
<b>Contingency (additional supply from unallocated sites over and above district housing requirement)</b>					
Expected delivery from windfall sites in Didcot		27	55	55	137
Expected delivery from windfall sites in Rest of District area		184	460	460	1,104
<b>District Contingency Total</b>		<b>211</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>1,242</b>

Total requirement for 2006-2027 is 6,300 for Didcot, 5,187 for Rest of District and 11,487 district-wide. Monitoring years shown in the table run from 1 April to 31 March. Figures as at 31.03.2012.

To avoid double counting between unallocated sites and sites that already have planning permission, for the period 2012/13 to 2016/17 only two years' worth of the rates on sites between 10-14 and 15-19 have been included and for sites of less than 10 the number of homes with planning permission has been subtracted from the 'expected delivery from unallocated sites' in the contingency section.

The expected delivery rates from unallocated sites, in the contingency supply, are based on historic rates over the past 5 years (2007/8-2011/12) excluding development of residential gardens in these broad locations. This is calculated by taking 90% of actual historic rates on sites of less than 10 units at Didcot and the Rest of District, 80% of actual historic rates on sites of 10-14 units in the Rest of District and 60% of actual historic rates on sites of 15-19 units in the Rest of District.

**Table 18.2 Policy development and monitoring framework**

Policy	Delivery Mechanism	Partners	Targets	Indicators	Action if not on target
CS1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers</li> <li>Oxfordshire County Council</li> <li>Town/Parish councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine ‘minor’ and ‘other’ applications within 8 weeks</li> <li>Determine ‘major’ applications within 13 weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of applications determined within timeframe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review reasons for not meeting targets</li> </ul>
CSS1 – The overall strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other policies in this strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>see other specific policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>see other specific policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>see other specific policies</li> </ul>	
CSM1 – Transport (Major infrastructure at Didcot)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Transport Plan</li> <li>Development Management Process</li> <li>Regional transport funding, LTP, developer contributions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highways Agency</li> <li>Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)</li> <li>Neighbouring local authorities</li> <li>Public transport operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work jointly with Oxfordshire County Council to secure developer contributions towards the strategic SVUK infrastructure identified in SCOTS, LTP3 and the Joint Didcot IDP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion as soon as funding allows or by 2022</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review strategy for Didcot.</li> </ul>
CSM 1 – Transport (Other measures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Transport Plan</li> <li>Development Management Process</li> <li>Regional transport funding, LTP, developer contributions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highways Agency</li> <li>Oxfordshire County Council</li> <li>Neighbouring local authorities</li> <li>Public transport operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant targets set through LTP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitored through LTP of highway authorities and achievement of small-scale schemes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate alternative funding sources</li> <li>Investigate alternative measures</li> </ul>
CSM2 – Transport Assessment and Travel Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel Plans and transport assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public and private sector developers</li> <li>Public transport operators</li> <li>OCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning permission will not be granted for relevant developments if no travel plan provided. Work with OCC to assist developers</li> <li>No planning permission will be granted for applications that do not have an agreed transport assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of developments including a travel plan and agreed transport assessments</li> <li>Other indicators through LTP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review reasons why any permissions were granted without an agreed transport assessment and travel plans</li> </ul>

Policy	Delivery Mechanism	Partners	Targets	Indicators	Action if not on target
CSEM1 - Supporting a successful economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work of Local Enterprise Partnership</li> <li>• Economic Development Strategy</li> <li>• Development Management Policies DPD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OCC</li> <li>• Local Enterprise Partnership</li> <li>• Vale of White Horse District Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net increase in gross value added (GVA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual gross/net change in GVA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review processes and partnerships to ensure we are being proactive in our approach to economic growth</li> </ul>
CSEM2- Amount and distribution of employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site Allocations DPD</li> <li>• Development Management Process</li> <li>• Didcot Area Action Plan</li> <li>• Vale of White Horse Local Plan</li> <li>• Market Town Strategy and Action Plan</li> <li>• Development Management Policies DPD</li> <li>• Work with owners of major sites to agree masterplans and development briefs</li> <li>• Economic Development Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector, landowners, developers and businesses</li> <li>• Economic Development agencies</li> <li>• Oxfordshire Economic Partnership</li> <li>• Economic Development, SODC</li> <li>• Vale of White Horse DC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make provision in the Site Allocations DPD to meet forecasted need for new employment land, include delivery programme within DPD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of land allocated in the Site Allocations DPD for employment uses</li> <li>• Take up in accordance with DPD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review land allocations for B class employment uses and check with landowners likely delivery prospects</li> <li>• Allocate replacements sites where delivery unlikely</li> <li>• Review economic development strategy</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No overall net loss in employment land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual gross/net change in different employment uses, by location and by former use class</li> </ul>	
CSEM3 – Culham Science Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masterplan for the redevelopment of the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UKAEA</li> <li>• Science Vale UK</li> <li>• OCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redevelopment and intensification of Culham Science Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of masterplan by April 2013</li> <li>• Progress in accordance with agreed masterplan</li> <li>• Number of new jobs created</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review masterplan</li> <li>• Review overall employment strategy to identify alternative opportunities for high-value jobs</li> </ul>
CSEM4 Supporting economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Management Policies DPD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector</li> <li>• Economic Development agencies</li> <li>• Oxfordshire Economic Partnership</li> <li>• Economic Development, SODC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No net loss in employment land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net additional employment floorspace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review policy approach</li> <li>• Allocate more land for employment use</li> </ul>
CSEM5 – Oxford Brookes University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masterplan for the redevelopment of the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford Brookes University</li> <li>• OCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and implement masterplan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of masterplan by January 2013</li> <li>• Progress in accordance with agreed masterplan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review masterplan milestones</li> </ul>

Policy	Delivery Mechanism	Partners	Targets	Indicators	Action if not on target
CSH1 – Amount and distribution of housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic allocations in this strategy</li> <li>Existing planning permissions and allocations</li> <li>Site Allocations DPD</li> <li>Neighbourhood Plans</li> <li>Didcot Area Action Plan</li> <li>Sites coming forward through the development management process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers, RSLs, Landowners</li> <li>Homes and Communities Agency</li> <li>VWHDC (Didcot)</li> <li>Oxfordshire Housing Partnership</li> <li>Infrastructure providers</li> <li>Town and parish councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet the housing targets in the Core Strategy</li> <li>Maintain a 5 year land supply of deliverable sites in each policy area</li> <li>Deliver according to the programme for strategic sites in this strategy set out under the relevant policy and that to be included in the Site Allocations DPD, Neighbourhood Plan and Didcot Area Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Net dwelling completions against Core Strategy housing targets recorded annually in the AMR</li> <li>Land supply figure produced annually in April</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the measures detailed in CSC1</li> </ul>
CSH2 – Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic allocations in this strategy</li> <li>Existing planning permissions and allocations</li> <li>Site Allocations DPD</li> <li>Didcot Area Action Plan</li> <li>Sites coming forward through the development management process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers, RSLs, Landowners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All new housing within the district will comply with the policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of planning permissions for new housing developments to comply with the policy depending on the location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review policy if issues become apparent in implementation of the plan</li> </ul>
CSH3 – Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocated sites</li> <li>Sites coming forward through the development management process</li> <li>Supplementary planning document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers, RSLs Landowners</li> <li>Homes and Communities Agency</li> <li>Oxfordshire Housing Partnership</li> <li>Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40% of housing completions on sites of 3 dwellings or more to be affordable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Net affordable housing completions as proportion of total completions (by size of site)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake analysis of why 40% has not been achieved. We may have to accept lower proportion on some sites if a higher proportion is not viable on all sites – the policy already recognises this</li> <li>Work with RSLs to stimulate as much affordable housing as possible</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenure mix of 75 per cent social rented and 25 per cent intermediate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable housing completions by tenure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake analysis of why the tenure has not been achieved</li> <li>Work with HCA and developers to get sufficient grant to enable mix to be achieved</li> </ul>

Policy	Delivery Mechanism	Partners	Targets	Indicators	Action if not on target
CSH4 – Meeting Housing Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocated sites</li> <li>Sites coming forward through the development management process</li> <li>Supplementary planning document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers, RSLs</li> <li>Oxfordshire Housing Partnerships</li> <li>Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnerships</li> <li>Homes and Communities Agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10% of housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more to be designed to Lifetime Homes Standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of completed dwellings that meet the Lifetime Homes Standards (by size of site)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of why Lifetime Homes standards are not being achieved through discussions with developers / RSLs</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In affordable housing schemes all ground-floor properties should be designed to Lifetime Homes standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of completed affordable dwellings that meet the Lifetime Homes Standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve a mix of dwelling types and sizes to accord with latest needs information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dwelling completions by type and size</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of why desired mix of housing has not been achieved</li> <li>Assess whether survey information on housing mix needs to be updated</li> </ul>
CSH5 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocations in the Site Allocations DPD and Didcot Area Action Plan DPD</li> <li>Sites coming forward through the development management process</li> <li>Development Management Policies DPD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's organisations</li> <li>Oxfordshire County Council</li> <li>Developers, RSLs, Landowners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make provision for new pitches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches delivered in the district</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate with landowners / developers of site allocations what constraints are to delivery and agree plan to overcome these</li> <li>Bring forward other land through a DPD</li> </ul>
CST1 – Town Centres and Shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies in the sections on the four towns in this strategy</li> <li>Site Allocations DPD or Neighbourhood Plans</li> <li>Development Management Process</li> <li>Market Town Strategies and Action Plan</li> <li>Economic Development Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private Developers</li> <li>Private sector agencies</li> <li>Local businesses</li> <li>Voluntary sector organisations</li> <li>Town Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To monitor against the needs for new town centre floorspace (use classes A1 – A5) to 2016 taking into account sites identified in the Site Allocations DPD. This is based on requirements detailed in the core strategy policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A1 – A5 floorspace completions by use class and location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to bring sites forward</li> <li>Identify other sites in the town centres if possible</li> <li>Review assumptions in retail and leisure needs assessment</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No key town centre uses permitted outside the town centre boundaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of key town centre uses permitted outside the town centre boundaries</li> </ul>	

Policy	Delivery Mechanism	Partners	Targets	Indicators	Action if not on target
CSDID1 – The central area of Didcot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Didcot Area Action Plan</li> <li>• Development Management Process</li> <li>• Development Brief</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market town business partners and strategy partners</li> <li>• Developers</li> <li>• Town Council</li> <li>• OCC</li> <li>• Network rail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to the Centre of Didcot as outlined in the Didcot Area Action Plan which will include specific targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be included in Didcot AAP</li> <li>• Didcot AAP to be completed according to targets in LDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review resources to complete plan</li> </ul>
CSDID2 – Land to the east of the Orchard Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Didcot Area Action Plan</li> <li>• Development Management Process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developers</li> <li>• Landowners</li> <li>• Market town business partners and strategy partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mixed use development on land to the east of the Orchard Centre to be delivering on site by 2016/17</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail and other floorspace completed</li> <li>• No. of dwellings completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review issues and identify appropriate actions that can be taken to bring development forward</li> <li>• Consider the need to bring forward other allocations</li> <li>• Consider the need to release alternative sites through a DPD</li> </ul>
CSDID3 – New housing at Didcot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Management Process</li> <li>• Development brief / masterplan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developers, RSL's, Landowners</li> <li>• Homes and Communities Agency</li> <li>• VWHDC (Didcot)</li> <li>• Oxfordshire Housing Partnership</li> <li>• Infrastructure providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New greenfield neighbourhood to be delivering on site by 2014/15</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net dwelling completions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review issues and identify appropriate actions that can be taken to bring development forward</li> <li>• Consider the need to bring forward other allocations</li> <li>• Consider the need to release alternative sites through a DPD</li> <li>• Review the strategy for Didcot</li> </ul>
CSDID4 – Other proposals for Didcot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Didcot Area Action Plan</li> <li>• Developer Contributions DPD</li> <li>• Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> <li>• Development Management Process</li> <li>• Development Brief</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire County Council</li> <li>• VWHDC (Didcot)</li> <li>• Infrastructure Providers</li> <li>• Developers, RSL's, Landowners</li> <li>• Didcot Town Council and neighbouring parish councils</li> <li>• Statutory bodies</li> <li>• Oxfordshire PCT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All new development to be served by appropriate on and off site infrastructure and services in accordance with the Developer Contributions DPD and Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions to infrastructure by development compared to requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify alternative sources of funding</li> <li>• Identify alternatives to some infrastructure provision</li> <li>• Review development programme</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key infrastructure to be delivered in accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure provided to date from Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with all infrastructure providers listed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to ascertain obstacles for delivery</li> </ul>

Policy	Delivery Mechanism	Partners	Targets	Indicators	Action if not on target
CSHEN1 – Strategy for Henley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process and DPD</li> <li>Site Allocations DPD</li> <li>Market Town Strategy and Action Plan</li> <li>Development Briefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Henley Town Council</li> <li>Market town business partners and strategy partners</li> <li>Developers, RSL's, Landowners,</li> <li>Homes and Communities Agency</li> <li>Oxfordshire Housing Partnership</li> <li>OCC</li> <li>Infrastructure providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify land for 400 homes through Site Allocations DPD</li> <li>A1 – A5 use classes floorspace completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Net dwelling completions phased in accordance with Site Allocations DPD</li> <li>Monitor against the needs for new A1-A5 floorspace taking into account identified sites in the Site Allocations DPD</li> <li>Monitor against LTP proposals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring forward other allocations</li> <li>Release alternative sites through DPD</li> <li>Work with partners to bring sites forward</li> <li>Identify other sites in the town centres if possible</li> </ul>
CSTHA1 – Strategy for Thame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process and DPD</li> <li>Site Allocations DPD or Neighbourhood Plan</li> <li>Development Brief</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thame Town Council</li> <li>Market town business partners and strategy partners</li> <li>OCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A1 – A5 use classes floorspace completed</li> <li>employment floorspace completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor against the needs for new employment and A1-A5 floorspace taking into account identified sites in the Site Allocations DPD</li> <li>Monitor against LTP proposals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release alternative sites through DPD</li> <li>Work with partners to bring sites forward</li> <li>Identify other sites in the town centres if possible</li> </ul>
CSTHA2 – New allocations at Thame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development brief/masterplan</li> <li>Development Management Process</li> <li>Site Allocations DPD or Neighbourhood Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thame Town Council</li> <li>Developers, RSLs, Landowners</li> <li>Homes and Communities Agency</li> <li>Oxfordshire Housing Partnership</li> <li>Infrastructure providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocations for 775 homes to be made in an adopted Thame Neighbourhood Plan in time to enable an appropriate delivery programme to commence by 2017/18</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption of Thame Neighbourhood Plan</li> <li>Net dwelling completions by year on sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review issues and identify appropriate actions that can be taken to bring development forward</li> <li>Consider the need to release further sites through a DPD produced by SODC</li> </ul>
CSWAL1 – Strategy for Wallingford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Policies DPD</li> <li>Site Allocations DPD</li> <li>Development Briefs</li> <li>Development Management Process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town and parish councils</li> <li>Market town business partners and strategy partners</li> <li>OCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A1 – A5 use classes floorspace completed</li> <li>employment floorspace completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor against the needs for new employment and A1- A5 floorspace taking into account identified sites in the Site Allocations DPD</li> <li>Monitor against LTP proposals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release alternative sites through DPD</li> <li>Work with partners to bring sites forward</li> <li>Identify other sites in the town centres if possible</li> </ul>

Policy	Delivery Mechanism	Partners	Targets	Indicators	Action if not on target
CSWAL2 – Greenfield neighbourhood to the west of Wallingford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development brief / masterplan</li> <li>• Development Management Process</li> <li>• Site Allocations DPD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developers, RSL's, Landowners</li> <li>• Homes and Communities Agency</li> <li>• Oxfordshire Housing Partnership</li> <li>• Infrastructure providers</li> <li>• Town and Parish Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New greenfield neighbourhood to be delivering on site by 2014/15</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net dwelling completions by year on the site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review issues and identify appropriate actions that can be taken to bring development forward</li> <li>• Consider the need to bring forward other allocations</li> <li>• Consider the need to release alternative sites through a DPD</li> </ul>
CSR1 – Housing in Villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Management Process</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxfordshire Rural Community Council</li> <li>• Developers</li> <li>• RSL's</li> <li>• Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership</li> <li>• Parish Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature and scale of development in villages to accord with the category list of settlements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net dwelling completions by category of settlement to be included in the AMR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMR will contain analysis of why completions are not in accordance with settlement strategy.</li> <li>• Consider allocating land for housing and rural exception sites in smaller villages</li> </ul>
CSR2 – Employment in Rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Management Process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developers</li> <li>• RSL's</li> <li>• Economic Development agencies</li> <li>• Oxfordshire Economic Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A year on year increase in employment in rural areas to support the rural economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of permissions approved for new schemes generating new employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to work with partners to ensure funding is available (LEADER or equivalent) for supporting rural enterprises</li> <li>• Continue to work with the Oxfordshire Rural Forum which promotes the development of the rural economy in Oxfordshire</li> </ul>

Policy	Delivery Mechanism	Partners	Targets	Indicators	Action if not on target
CSR3 – Community facilities and rural transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers</li> <li>ORCC</li> <li>Parish Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No loss in rural services and facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of permissions for applications involving a loss of rural services and facilities</li> <li>Number of permissions for new services and facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out detailed analysis on all applications approved resulting in a loss and for what reasons. If services are shown to be unviable we may have to accept their loss</li> <li>Work with community organisations through Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and their village shop and village hall workers and parish plan groups to identify opportunities for alternative provision for facilities if loss is unavoidable</li> </ul>
CSEN1 - Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process</li> <li>Development Management Policies DPD</li> <li>Working closely with national and local organisations such as the Chilterns Conservation Board and the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chilterns Conservation Board</li> <li>North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Council of Partners</li> <li>Natural England</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No major development in AONBs unless compliant with policy CSEN1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of major developments in AONBs not allocated through the development plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand why exceptions have been made</li> <li>Review policies if necessary</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All major applications to be accompanied by a landscape impact assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of major applications that have produced a landscape impact assessment</li> </ul>	
CSEN2 – Green Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All development in Green Belt to comply with policy CSEN2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of applications permitted contrary to policy CSEN2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of why applications permitted if they do not comply with CSEN2</li> </ul>
CSEN3 – Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process</li> <li>Development Management Policies DPD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English Heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All development proposals impacting on designated and non-designated historic assets to comply with policy CSEN3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of new and reviews of conservation area appraisals and management plans as these are two of the main tools by which policy CSEN3 is applied</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to progress new and reviews of conservation area appraisals and management plans</li> </ul>

Policy	Delivery Mechanism	Partners	Targets	Indicators	Action if not on target
CSQ1 – Renewable Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process and DPD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Energy companies</li> <li>Homes and Communities Agency</li> <li>Private sector</li> <li>Public agencies e.g. Energy Saving Trust, Thames Valley Energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developments will achieve 10% of energy demand from renewable sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of renewable energy produced as recorded in renewable energy statistics for South Oxfordshire by capacity and type</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to understand why proposals for renewable energy are not coming forward / being approved and amend policy approach if necessary</li> </ul>
CSQ2 – Sustainable Design and Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process and DPD</li> <li>South Oxfordshire Design Guide SPG</li> <li>Didcot Area Action Plan</li> <li>Code for Sustainable Homes</li> <li>BREEAM Standards</li> <li>EcoHomes standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All developments of 10 or more dwellings, or 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more of floor space if non residential, to secure at least 10% of the energy demand from decentralised (on or near site) and renewable or low carbon energy sources</li> <li>30% of the above developments to secure between 10 and 20%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and proportion of qualifying applications achieving 10% of energy demand from decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to understand barriers to achieving these targets and amend if necessary</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All developments of 200+ dwellings achieve at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and proportion of developments ≥200 achieving at least Code Level 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All new residential development less than 200 dwellings achieve at least Code Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. From April 2013, proposals will need to demonstrate that at least Code Level 4 will be achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and proportion of development ≤200 achieving at least Code Level 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All refurbishments of existing residential buildings to achieve at least EcoHomes 'Very Good' standard. From 2013, proposals will need to demonstrate that at least 'Excellent' standard will be achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and proportion of developments for refurbishment of existing buildings achieving at least EcoHomes 'Very good standard'; from 2013, 'Excellent' standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above</li> </ul>

Policy	Delivery Mechanism	Partners	Targets	Indicators	Action if not on target
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For proposals for non-residential development up to 500 sqm floor space achieve at least BREEAM 'Very Good' standard. For proposals for non-residential development above 500 sqm floor space achieve at least BREEAM 'Excellent' standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and proportion of developments achieving at least 'Very Good' BREEAM standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above</li> </ul>
CSQ3 - Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process and DPD</li> <li>South Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD</li> <li>Market Town Strategy and Action Plan</li> <li>Didcot Area Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers</li> <li>Chilterns Conservation Board (design awards)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All new developments to complete a design and access statement addressing the criteria of policy CSQ3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of permitted and completed developments that submitted a design and access statement addressing the criteria of policy CSQ3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide further training for officers and applicants and review guidance on design and access statements. Further training to be provided through the Agents User Group and in house to staff</li> </ul>
CSQ4 - Design briefs for greenfield neighbourhoods and major development sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design briefs/ Masterplans</li> <li>South Oxfordshire Design Guide</li> <li>Development Management Process and DPD</li> <li>Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> <li>Developer Contributions SPD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers, RSL's, Landowners,</li> <li>Homes and Communities Agency</li> <li>VWHDC (Didcot)</li> <li>Oxfordshire Housing Partnership</li> <li>Infrastructure providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All proposals for housing allocations and major development sites to be accompanied by a design brief addressing the criteria in policy CSQ4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number / proportion of proposals for housing allocations and major development sites accompanied by a design brief addressing all the criteria in policy CSQ4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide further training for officers and applicants and review guidance on design and access statements. Further training to be provided through the Agents User Group and in house to staff</li> </ul>
CSG1- Green infrastructure and CSB1 biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process</li> <li>Market Town Strategy and Action Plan</li> <li>Didcot Area Action Plan SPD</li> <li>Developer Contributions SPD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers</li> <li>Town and Parish Councils</li> <li>National and local environmental groups</li> <li>Oxfordshire Environment Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A net gain in green infrastructure</li> <li>A net gain in area of habitats created</li> <li>Proposals to meet the standards for green infrastructure and / or the improvement of existing assets including Conservation Target Areas set out in the South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Study and Didcot Natural Greenspaces Study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount of green infrastructure gained</li> <li>Area of habitats created</li> <li>Number / proportion of relevant proposals complying with the standards in the South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Study and Didcot Natural Greenspaces Study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Green Infrastructure Strategy</li> </ul>

Policy	Delivery Mechanism	Partners	Targets	Indicators	Action if not on target
CSI1 – Infrastructure provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process and DPD</li> <li>Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> <li>Developer Contributions SPD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statutory bodies</li> <li>Infrastructure providers</li> <li>Oxfordshire County Council</li> <li>Neighbouring local district councils</li> <li>Parish and Town Councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All new development to be served by appropriate on and off site infrastructure and services in accordance with the Developer Contributions DPD and Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions to infrastructure by development compared to requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify alternative sources of funding</li> <li>Identify alternatives to some infrastructure provision</li> <li>Review development programme</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key infrastructure to be delivered in accordance with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure provided to date from Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings with all infrastructure providers listed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to ascertain obstacles for delivery</li> </ul>
CSC1 – Delivery and Contingency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Management Process and DPD</li> <li>Authority's Monitoring Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developers</li> <li>Statutory bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sites allocated in the core strategy will be delivered generally in accordance with the timescales set out in Table 18.1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Net dwelling completions by year on the allocated sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the sites allocated in this core strategy fall significantly behind these timescales set out in Table 18.1 and subsequently impact on the council's ability to demonstrate a 5 year land supply the council will take the actions set out in policy CSC1</li> </ul>

## List of policies

### Section 1. Introduction

#### Policy CS1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Planning applications which accord with the policies in the Development Plan (including, where relevant, Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning permission will also be granted where relevant policies in the Development Plan are out of date or silent unless:

- any adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in the Framework or other material considerations indicate that development should be restricted.

### Section 4. The overall strategy

#### Policy CSS1 The overall strategy

Proposals for development in South Oxfordshire should be consistent with the overall strategy of:

- (i) focusing major new development at the growth point of Didcot so the town can play an enhanced role in providing homes, jobs and services with improved transport connectivity;
- (ii) supporting the roles of Henley, Thame and Wallingford by regenerating their town centres through measures that include environmental improvements and mixed-use developments and by providing new houses, employment, services and infrastructure;
- (iii) supporting and enhancing the larger villages of Berinsfield, Benson, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley and Woodcote as local service centres;
- (iv) supporting other villages in the rest of the district by allowing for limited amounts of housing and employment and by the provision and retention of services; and
- (v) outside the towns and villages, and other major developed sites, any change will need to relate to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment.

### Section 5. Moving around

#### Policy CSM1 Transport

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

- (i) in partnership with the Vale of White Horse District Council, actively seek to deliver the transport infrastructure and measures which improve movement in Didcot and within the Didcot/ Wantage and Grove corridor, in particular linking Didcot with the major employment sites at Harwell and Milton Park as identified in the County Council's LTP3 SVUK area Strategy and Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Study;
- (ii) actively seek to ensure that the impact of new development on the strategic and local road network, in particular the Milton, Chilton and Marcham junctions of the A34 and the road links and junctions identified in the Council's Evaluation of Transport Impact and County

Council's Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Study is adequately mitigated (see Policy CSM2);

- (iii) support improvements for accessing Oxford;
- (iv) work with the authorities affected by cross Thames travel in the Reading area to ensure that traffic and environmental conditions in South Oxfordshire are improved by the implementation of measures which also improve access to Reading;
- (v) support measures which enable modal shift to public transport, cycling and walking particularly where these support the network of settlements in the district;
- (vi) promote and support traffic management measures and environmental improvements which increase safety, improve air quality, encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and/or make our towns and villages more attractive;
- (vii) adopt a comprehensive approach to car parking aimed at improving the attraction of our town and village centres;
- (viii) encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport;
- (ix) promote electronic communications allowing businesses to operate throughout the district and to provide services and information which reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable modes of transport; and
- (x) cater for the needs of all users.

### **Policy CSM2 Transport Assessments and Travel Plans**

Proposals for new developments which have transport implications that either arise from the development proposed or cumulatively with other proposals will need to submit a transport assessment. Appropriate provision for works and/or contributions will be required towards providing an adequate level of accessibility by all modes of transport and mitigating the impacts on the transport network.

The assessment should (notwithstanding OCC requirements):

- (i) illustrate accessibility to the site by all modes of transport;
- (ii) show the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site;
- (iii) detail the proposed measures to improve access by public transport, cycling and walking to reduce the need for parking and reduce transport impacts;
- (iv) illustrate the impact on the highway network and the impact of proposed mitigation measures where necessary; and
- (v) include a travel plan where appropriate.

Travel plans will be required, implemented and monitored (notwithstanding OCC requirements):

- (i) for all major developments comprising residential, employment, shopping or leisure uses or services; and
- (ii) for other small developments comprising residential, employment, shopping, leisure, or education facilities which would generate significant amounts of travel.

## **Section 6 A thriving economy**

### **Policy CSEM1 Supporting a successful economy**

We will work with our business and education partners to provide an environment that positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth. We will do this by:

- (i) providing a framework for innovation and enterprise through encouraging knowledge transfer, emerging technologies and innovative business development;

- (ii) supporting measures that ensure young people leave education with the skills that the future economy needs, including the development of further education facilities at Didcot;
- (iii) supporting measures that deliver sustainable transport solutions, home working, and a stronger link between local jobs and local labour supply;
- (iv) taking advantage of the opportunities brought by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to meet key investment priorities including transport infrastructure;
- (v) seeking measures that support the development of the digital economy and the roll-out of high speed broadband across the district;
- (vi) supporting the prosperity of the area's tourism industry and recreation-based rural diversification where proposals are of a scale and type appropriate to their location.

### **Policy CSEM2 The amount and distribution of employment**

This core strategy provides for around 5,000 additional B class jobs to 2027. To facilitate this, the equivalent of 13.5 additional hectares of land will be provided, in various centres across the district plus a further 6.5 hectares at Didcot in the Vale of White Horse district.

This provision will be made by allocating:

- (i) about 2ha of further employment land at Thame;
- (ii) about 2ha of further employment land at Wallingford; and
- (iii) about 4.2ha of further employment land distributed among some of the larger villages.

The balance of the 13.5 hectares will be provided through increasing jobs at Culham Science Centre.

Additional employment land will be allocated to replace any need identified from a review of existing commitments in the Site Allocations DPD.

New employment sites should provide for a range of types and sizes of units including start-up and grow-on space.

### **Policy CSEM3 Culham Science Centre**

The redevelopment and intensification of Culham Science Centre for research and science based businesses will be supported. Proposals for redevelopment and the intensification of uses with the creation of about 1,000 new jobs will be supported. We will work proactively with Culham to develop an agreed masterplan that facilitates this growth.

### **Policy CSEM4 Supporting economic development**

Planning permission will be granted for:

- (i) employment<sup>147</sup> on identified allocated employment sites<sup>148</sup> in accordance with the policy;
- (ii) the redevelopment of employment sites where this improves the quality and choice of business premises available;
- (iii) the reasonable extension of premises on existing sites;
- (iv) appropriate forms of working at home, where permission is needed;
- (v) new premises or the conversion of existing buildings on suitable sites within the built-up area of settlements;

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<sup>147</sup> Employment in this context is defined as uses which fall within Part B of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended and sui generis uses of a similar nature

<sup>148</sup> Allocated employment sites are those in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and those to be identified through the Site Allocations DPD or neighbourhood plans

- (vi) the re-use of rural buildings where the proposals accord with other policies in the development plan.

### **Policy CSEM5 Oxford Brookes University**

Proposals for the redevelopment of Oxford Brookes University Campus at Holton will be supported. We will work proactively with the University to develop an agreed masterplan that meets its business objectives.

## **Section 7 Delivering new homes**

### **Policy CSH1 Amount and distribution of housing**

Planning permission will be granted to meet housing requirements in Table 7.1 in accordance with Tables 7.2 to 7.3.

### **Policy CSH2 Density**

On sites where housing development is acceptable in principle, a minimum density of 25 dwellings per hectare (net) will be required unless this would have an adverse effect on the character of the area.

### **Policy CSH3 Affordable housing**

40 per cent affordable housing will be sought on all sites where there is a net gain of three or more dwellings subject to the viability of provision on each site.

- In cases where the 40 per cent calculation provides a part unit a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part unit;
- A tenure mix of 75 per cent social rented and 25 per cent intermediate housing will be sought;
- With the exception of part units the affordable housing should be provided on site and the affordable housing should be mixed with the market housing;
- The housing should meet required standards and should be of a size and type which meets the requirements of those in housing need.

### **Policy CSH4 Meeting housing needs**

A mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households will be sought on all new residential developments.

- At least 10 per cent of market housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more should be designed to meet current Lifetime Homes standards.
- In the case of affordable housing all ground-floor properties should be designed to meet current Lifetime Homes standards.
- The provision of dwellings for people with additional special needs will be sought as part of the overall affordable housing percentage.
- Specialist accommodation for older people should be provided in the new greenfield neighbourhoods identified in this strategy and will be permitted at other suitable locations.

## **Policy CSH5 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

A supply of pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be provided by:

- (i) safeguarding existing sites<sup>149</sup>
- (ii) extending existing sites where possible to meet the needs of existing residents and their families
- (iii) identifying new sites through the Site Allocations DPD and Didcot Area Action Plan.

The location of new sites will be determined in accordance with the following priorities:

- (i) incorporated within the greenfield neighbourhood at Didcot
- (ii) located near to existing settlements
- (iii) located within walking distance of essential services or high frequency public transport.

Sites for Travelling Showpeople may need to be large enough to accommodate equipment.

## **Section 8 Town centres and shopping**

### **Policy CST1 Town centres and shopping**

The district's town and village centres will be supported and strengthened to ensure that they continue to be the focus of communities. Initiatives which safeguard and enhance their role and function will be supported.

The hierarchy of centres in the district is:

#### **Town centres serving a local and wider catchment area:**

Didcot and Henley

#### **Town centres serving a local catchment area:**

Thame and Wallingford

#### **Local centres serving their immediate rural area:**

Berinsfield, Benson, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley and Woodcote.

To achieve the long term success of our centres development proposals will be permitted which:

- Provide further retail and leisure uses within the town and larger village centres through infill development and small scale redevelopment;
- Diversify the town centres to provide uses which are complementary to retail, while not undermining the town's retail role, including where appropriate mixed-use developments, uses which contribute to the evening economy, community facilities and upper floor residential and office uses;
- Reinforce the local distinctiveness of our market towns, improve their vitality and viability and encourage more visits.

As a starting point, the Council looks for proposals for main town centre uses to be sited within defined town centres. Applications for such uses on unallocated sites outside town centres will be required to be in accessible locations well connected to the town centre. Such proposals will be subject to the sequential test and, for proposals over 2,500sq.m, an impact assessment. Proposals which fail to satisfy these tests will not be permitted.

Changes of use within defined primary and secondary retail frontages will be managed to maintain the role of the town centres.

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<sup>149</sup> Existing sites in this context means sites with planning permission

## Section 9 Didcot

### Policy CSDID1 The central area of Didcot

The council will work with others to secure improvements to the central area of Didcot by:

- (i) a retail-led mixed-use extension to the Orchard Centre (see Policy CSDID2)
- (ii) regeneration of the Broadway
- (iii) regeneration of the area around the station
- (iv) improvements to the long term parking facilities to the south and west of Didcot station
- (v) improvements to Cow Lane tunnel
- (vi) improvements to the movement network around the centre
- (vii) gateway features at key points of access to the town
- (viii) enhanced greenways to the centre
- (ix) measures to improve air quality.

### Policy CSDID2 The Orchard Centre

Permission will be granted for a mixed use retail led development to include:

- 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> to 25,000 m<sup>2</sup> gross of additional retail floorspace (Use Classes A1-A5)
- approximately 300 dwellings, and
- may also include leisure, community, commercial and hotel uses

on land at the Orchard Centre (as shown on the Adopted Policies Map) provided that the scheme:

- provides for the comprehensive development of the whole site
- provides a movement network that extends and improves the existing urban pattern
- maximises the amount of active frontage onto streets
- creates an attractive and multi-functional urban realm
- creates a safe and lively environment
- provides a form of development which responds to the topography of the site with building heights appropriate to adjacent development
- provides additional car parking and servicing including reconfiguring the existing provision where necessary, and
- considers alternatives to the spine road through the site.

### Policy CSDID3 New housing at Didcot

Permission will be given for a new greenfield neighbourhood of 2,030 homes to the north east of Didcot (as shown on the Adopted Policies Map) provided that:

- the area is planned comprehensively and the development takes place in accordance with an agreed design brief as required by Policy CSQ4
- the form and characteristics of the development meet identified housing needs and attract people to live and work in the Didcot area
- there is no built development on the western part of the site in the area of flood risk
- access is from the northern perimeter road (A4130) and the north-south section of the B4016 only
- good safe linkages are provided to Ladygrove and Didcot town centre
- provision is made, or contributions are provided, towards the supporting infrastructure set out in our infrastructure delivery plan including new primary schools, a new secondary school and new sports centre.

Planning permission will also be granted for housing in Didcot on suitable infill or redevelopment sites.

### **Policy CSDID4 Other proposals for Didcot**

The council will work with others to secure necessary infrastructure to support development including:

- the package of transport measures identified in the Accessing Science Vale UK strategy
- green infrastructure
- sports and recreation provision including a replacement for the Didcot Wave
- provision for secondary education and a Learning Park
- provision for improved local health services

Schemes will be supported which improve the physical environment of the town including the creation of high quality visual 'gateways' at the points of access into the town.

## **Section 10 Henley-on-Thames**

### **Policy CSHEN1 The Strategy for Henley-on-Thames**

Proposals for development in Henley-on-Thames should be consistent with the strategy which is to:

- (i) identify land for 400 new homes;
- (ii) allow housing on suitable infill and redevelopment sites;
- (iii) strengthen commerce in the town centre through retail-led, mixed-use development and identify additional retail and leisure floorspace;
- (iv) support housing and employment uses above shops;
- (v) enhance the town's environment;
- (vi) improve the attraction of Henley for visitors;
- (vii) improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links;
- (viii) improve the stock of commercial buildings and the environment of the employment areas;
- (ix) support Henley College, Gillotts School and Townlands Hospital meet their accommodation needs.

## **Section 11 Thame**

### **Policy CSTHA1 The strategy for Thame:**

Proposals for development in Thame should be consistent with the strategy which is to:

- (i) strengthen commerce in the town centre and identify sites suitable for future retail, leisure and community uses;
- (ii) support housing and employment uses above shops;
- (iii) improve the attraction of Thame for visitors and businesses;
- (iv) improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links;
- (v) support schemes which enhance the quality of the town's environment;
- (vi) identify sites for about 2 hectares of land for employment growth;
- (vii) support schemes which improve the stock of existing commercial buildings and the environment of the employment areas;
- (viii) identify land for 775 new homes through a Thame Neighbourhood Plan (see policy CSTHA2);
- (ix) allow housing on suitable infill and redevelopment sites; and

- (x) support the schools, health and other service providers meet their accommodation needs, in particular the amalgamation of the secondary school onto a single site.

### **Policy CSTHA2 New Allocations at Thame**

The Neighbourhood Plan for Thame will allocate land for 775 new homes on land selected through that process as the most appropriate and sustainable.

## **Section 12 Wallingford**

### **Policy CSWAL1 The strategy for Wallingford**

Proposals for development in Wallingford should be consistent with the strategy which is to:

- (i) strengthen the town centre including supporting schemes which allow for the re-use or redevelopment of the former Waitrose site provided that the retail element and car parking is retained;
- (ii) support housing and employment uses above shops;
- (iii) support the market place as a focal hub;
- (iv) support measures which improve the attraction of Wallingford for visitors with particular emphasis on the River Thames;
- (v) improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links and local air quality;
- (vi) support schemes which enhance the town's environment;
- (vii) identify land for about 2ha for employment growth;
- (viii) support schemes which improve the stock of existing commercial buildings and the environment of existing employment areas;
- (ix) identify land for 555 new homes (see policy CSWAL2);
- (x) allow housing on suitable infill and redevelopment sites.

### **Policy CSWAL2 Greenfield neighbourhood west of Wallingford**

Permission will be granted for a new greenfield neighbourhood of 555 homes to the west of Wallingford (as shown on the Adopted Policies Map) provided that:

- (i) the area is planned comprehensively and the development takes place in accordance with an agreed design brief as required by Policy CSQ4;
- (ii) the form and characteristics of the development meet identified housing needs of Wallingford;
- (iii) access is from the western bypass, with no vehicular access provided through Queen's Avenue;
- (iv) a through route is provided for public transport;
- (v) measures are put in place to mitigate any impacts on the Wallingford Air Quality Management Area;
- (vi) safe pedestrian and cycle linkages are provided from the development to the town centre and to Hithercroft;
- (vii) the western and southern boundaries are reinforced with significant landscape buffers, with no built development along the western boundary adjacent to the bypass;
- (viii) the existing footpath through the site is developed into a green corridor linking the town to the wider countryside;
- (ix) provision is made, or contributions are provided, towards the supporting infrastructure set out in our infrastructure delivery plan including a new primary school.

## Section 13 Rural communities

### Policy CSR1 Housing in villages

In order to contribute to the present and future economic, environmental and social sustainability of the villages, housing will be allowed where the scale and nature of the development is as follows:

	Allocations	Infill	Rural exceptions
Larger villages	Yes	Yes - no limit	Yes if need shown
Smaller villages	No	Sites of up to 0.2ha*	Yes if need shown
Other villages	No	Sites of up to 0.1ha**	Yes if need shown
All other places not listed	No	No	No
See Appendix 4 for list of settlements within each category		* Equivalent to 5-6 houses ** Equivalent to 2-3 houses	

All development should respect national designations such as Green Belt and should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Suitably designed and located development at an appropriate scale that facilitates the economic and social well-being of such areas, especially in the Larger Villages in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be supported. This includes the provision of adequate housing to meet identified local needs. Local character and distinctiveness will be protected and the requirements of relevant development plan policies will be met.

Redevelopment proposals in all categories of settlement may be acceptable but will be considered on a case by case basis through the development management process in line with other policies in the Development Plan.

### Policy CSR2 Employment in Rural Areas

Planning permission will be granted for proposals which support the economy of the rural areas through:

- schemes for agricultural diversification and the re-use of rural buildings;
- small-scale infill schemes in villages including mixed housing and employment schemes;
- working at home;
- schemes which support agricultural production and the retention of functioning farm units; and
- schemes which support tourism based on the character of the area.

### Policy CSR3 Community facilities and rural transport

Proposals which result in the provision of facilities and services in the rural areas will be encouraged, those which result in the loss of services and facilities will be resisted.

Rural transport initiatives that improve movement particularly to access services and employment will be encouraged.

## Section 14 The environment

### Policy CSEN1 Landscape

The district's distinct landscape character and key features will be protected against inappropriate development and where possible enhanced.

- (i) Where development is acceptable in principle, measures will be sought to integrate it into the landscape character of the area.
- (ii) High priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and planning decisions will have regard to their setting. Proposals which support the economies and social well being of the AONBs and their communities, including affordable housing schemes, will be encouraged provided they do not conflict with the aims of conservation and enhancement.
- (iii) The landscapes and waterscapes of the River Thames corridor will be maintained and where possible enhanced as will the setting and heritage of the river for its overall amenity and recreation use.

### Policy CSEN2 Green Belt

The special character and landscape setting of Oxford will be protected by the Oxford Green Belt, the boundary is shown on the Adopted Policies Map.

A local review of the Green Belt will take place at Berinsfield.

Policy CSR1 allows for limited amounts of new housing through infilling in some Green Belt villages however planning permission will not be granted for development within the Oxford Green Belt that is contrary to national policy guidance in the NPPF and the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

The following are key previously developed sites in the Green Belt:

- Oxford Brookes University campus at Holton
- Culham Science Centre
- Culham No.1 Site
- Sandford Sewage Treatment Works

### Policy CSEN3 Historic Environment

The district's designated historic heritage assets, both above and below ground such as:

- nationally designated assets including listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, historic battlefields and Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- conservation areas; and
- their settings

will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

This will be carried out through:

- conservation area appraisals/reviews;
- management plans;
- designating new conservation areas where appropriate;
- the determination of planning, listed building consent and other relevant applications.

Proposals for development that affect non-designated historic assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

## Section 15 Quality development

### Policy CSQ1 Renewable Energy

Proposals for development for the generation of energy from renewable resources will be permitted provided any adverse impact on the landscape, heritage and biodiversity of an area, traffic generation or the amenities of local communities is outweighed by wider environmental, social, economic or other benefits.

### Policy CSQ2 Sustainable Design and Construction

Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where:

- (i) For developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> or more of non-residential floor space, 20% of the energy demand is secured from decentralised (on or near site) and renewable or low carbon energy sources (including the use of Combined Heat and Power where appropriate), where this would be viable.
- (ii) For developments of 200 dwellings or more, it can be demonstrated that the proposal will achieve at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- (iii) For new residential development of less than 200 dwellings, it can be demonstrated that the proposal will achieve at least Code Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. From April 2013, proposals will need to demonstrate that at least Code Level 4 will be achieved.
- (iv) For the refurbishment of existing residential buildings, it can be demonstrated that the proposal will achieve at least EcoHomes 'Very Good' standard\*. From 2013, proposals will need to demonstrate that at least 'Excellent' standard\* will be achieved.
- (v) For proposals for non-residential development up to 500 m<sup>2</sup> floor space it can be demonstrated that the proposal will achieve at least BREEAM 'Very Good' standard. For proposals for non-residential development above 500 m<sup>2</sup> floor space it can be demonstrated that the proposal will achieve at least BREEAM 'Excellent' standard.
- (vi) For all new development SUDS are implemented where appropriate taking into account current policy and good practice guidance, and the emerging national SUDS standards.
- (vii) All new developments incorporate measures that address issues of adaptation to climate change taking account of best practice. These include resilience to increasing temperatures and heavy rainfall events and the need for water conservation and storage.

\* or equivalent standard through the forthcoming BREEAM Residential Refurbishment standards

### Policy CSQ3 Design

Planning permission will be granted for new development that is of a high quality and inclusive design that:

- responds positively to and respects the character of the site and its surroundings, particularly the historic significance and heritage values of the historic environment, enhancing local distinctiveness and ensuring that new development is of a scale, type and density appropriate to the site and its setting;
- improves the quality of the public realm with well designed external areas, and, where appropriate a clear structure of open spaces;
- provides and/or links into green infrastructure where available;
- is designed to create safe communities and reduce the likelihood and fear of crime;
- creates a distinctive sense of place and is easy to understand through the use of vistas, landmarks and focal points;

- ensures high levels of accessibility and ease of use by all modes of transport both within the site and with the wider area, also making sure that any new development is properly integrated with existing development ensuring accessibility to local services; and
- is adaptable to changing requirements and constructed with materials appropriate to the area.

All proposals for new development should be accompanied by a design and access statement to show how they have responded to the above criteria.

### **Policy CSQ4 Design briefs for greenfield neighbourhoods and major development sites**

Proposals for housing allocations and major development sites must be accompanied by a design brief that includes the following:

- (i) **A Vision** – a clear vision for the type of place that could be created building on the overall vision for the district and town;
- (ii) **A Masterplan** which should:
  - demonstrate a robust design process including an in depth assessment of the site and its context, constraints and identifying those issues that have informed the vision for and design of the development;
  - show a clear development structure and design concept;
  - show that the design requirements of the scheme work within the vision / demonstrate how the vision may be achieved;
  - explain the key elements and development principles of the masterplan to create a simple, robust framework for development that fixes: land use and density, movement and access and open space and landscape;
  - contain a mechanism for delivering the vision at more detailed stages, for example design coding;
  - contain strategic urban design principles that will be used to inform subsequent more detailed design;
  - define and respond to local context and create or reinforce local distinctiveness;
  - show how consultation with the existing community has been incorporated.
- (iii) **A Design Brief** which must demonstrate:
  - **integration with the surrounding area** both built and natural, in particular maximising existing and potential movement connections with the existing environment to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport;
  - **quality of development and positive sense of place and identity**;
  - **high level of accessibility** and good connections to public transport, community facilities and local services;
  - **community facilities, suitable infrastructure and other amenities** to meet the needs of all the community, including the provision of education and training facilities, health care, community, leisure and recreation facilities;
  - **a clear structure of open spaces and landscape network** to ensure that open space standards are met and that the new spaces relate well to each other and to existing areas;
  - **how sustainability and environmental matters** will be addressed including the efficient use of resources both during construction and when the development is complete;

- **delivery, phasing and implementation strategies** to be in place to ensure the timely delivery of infrastructure and services to the development when they are needed by new residents, and that new developments are built out in a logical manner;
- **well integrated mix of housing types and tenures** to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes to meet identified housing needs.

## **Section 16 Green infrastructure and biodiversity**

### **Policy CSG1 Green infrastructure**

A net gain in green infrastructure including biodiversity will be sought through developer works, developer contributions and the targeted use of other funding sources.

Proposals for new development must demonstrate that they have taken into account the relationship of the proposed development to existing green infrastructure. Where appropriate, proposals will be required to contribute to the delivery of green infrastructure and/or the improvement of existing assets including Conservation Target Areas in accordance with the standards in the South Oxfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and Didcot Natural Greenspaces Study.

A net loss of green infrastructure including biodiversity through development proposals will be avoided.

### **Policy CSB1 Conservation and improvement of biodiversity**

A net loss of biodiversity will be avoided, and opportunities to achieve a net gain across the district will be actively sought.

Opportunities for biodiversity gain, including the connection of sites, large-scale habitat restoration, enhancement and habitat re-creation will be sought for all types of habitats, with a primary focus on delivery in the Conservation Target Areas.

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).

Damage to nationally important sites of special scientific interest, local wildlife sites, local nature reserves, priority habitats, protected or priority species and locally important geological sites will be avoided unless the importance of the development outweighs the harm and the loss can be mitigated to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

## **Section 17 Infrastructure provision**

### **Policy CSI1 Infrastructure provision**

New development must be served and supported by appropriate on- and off-site infrastructure and services. Planning permission will only be granted when infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the new development, including that set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and/or mitigate the impact of the new development is already in place or will be provided to an agreed timescale.

Infrastructure and services required as a consequence of development, and provision for their maintenance, will be sought from developers and secured by the negotiation of planning obligations, by conditions attached to a planning permission, and/or other agreement, levy or undertaking, all to be agreed before planning permission is granted.

## **Section 18 Implementation of the strategy**

### **Policy CSC1 Delivery and Contingency**

Sites are anticipated to be developed in the timescales set out in Table 18.1.

If sites or other policies are not delivered in accordance with Tables 18.1 and the housing trajectories, the contingency measures set out in Table 18.2 will apply.

If the Authority's Monitoring Report shows that allocated development sites and/or neighbourhood plans are not coming forward in a timely manner, we will consider:

- (i) seeking alternative sources of funding if lack of infrastructure is delaying development
- (ii) bringing forward sites anticipated to come on stream later in the plan process
- (iii) identifying alternative deliverable site(s) through a plan or other mechanism in general accordance with the distribution strategy of this plan as set out in Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3.

## Appendix 1 Glossary

Acronym	Subject	Explanation
	Affordable Housing	Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Most affordable housing will be provided through a registered social landlord at rates substantially lower than the prevailing market rates. It does not include low cost market housing.
	Affordable Rented Housing	Rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent.
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area	Under Section 82 of the Environment Act 1995, the Council must declare an Air Quality Management Area where there is a likelihood that the objectives set out in Air Quality Regulations 2000 will not be met by the relevant deadlines.
AMR	Authority's Monitoring Report	Local Development Document required each year showing progress with policy delivery and the work programme in the Local Development Scheme.
AAP	Area Action Plan	Provides the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. It includes specific site allocations, layout and design requirements and sets the timetable for the implementation of the proposals.
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Nationally designated areas accorded the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
	Biodiversity	Biodiversity is seen as the total complexity of all life, including not only the great variety of organisms, but also their varying behaviour and interactions.
	Biomass	Usually takes the form of wood pellets and chips. In a biomass boiler these would be burned to produce heat.
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method	Nationally recognised standard for sustainable design and construction.
CABE		Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (now part of the Design Council).
CHP	Combined Heat and Power	Where the heat generated from electricity production is used for heating purposes.
	Conservation Area	An area designated by the District Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There are additional controls over demolition, minor developments and the felling of trees.
CTA	Conservation Target Areas	These are important areas of landscape that present the best opportunities for prioritising the conservation, enhancement and re-creation of designated sites and important habitats.
	Consultation Statement	Details how a particular consultation was carried out and the main issues generated from the consultation.
	Code for Sustainable Homes	Introduced to increase environmental sustainability of homes and sets out standards (from 1 to 6) for the sustainability performance of a house.

Acronym	Subject	Explanation
CS	Core Strategy	A Development Plan Document setting out long-term spatial vision and objectives, and containing both strategic policies and generic policies which will apply to all development proposals in the district.
DPD	Development Plan Document	A type of Local Development Document which carries significant weight in the development control process. Development Plan Documents are spatial planning documents which are subject to independent examination.
	Development Plan	This includes adopted Development Plan Documents, Neighbourhood Plans and the South East Plan.
	Ecohomes	Quality standard applied to new homes by BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) and now replaced by the Code for Sustainable Homes.
	Evidence Base	The researched, documented, analysed and verified basis for preparing the Local Plan.
	Examination	An examination of the 'soundness' of Development Plan Documents held in public by a Planning Inspector.
EIP	Examination in Public	Public hearing to decide whether the content of a plan sets out an appropriate planning framework.
	Extra Care Housing	Provides older and disabled people with various care needs with an assured tenancy / owner-occupation in a self-contained flat in a purpose-built or adapted scheme.
	Floodplain/Flood Risk Zones	Areas identified by the Environment Agency, marking areas as high (zone 3), low to medium (zone 2), or little or no risk (zone 1).
	Framework	Shorthand for National Planning Policy Framework.
	Green Belt	Designated land around a town or city where land is kept permanently open and where there is a strong presumption against inappropriate development.
	Green Corridors	Green spaces that provide avenues for wildlife movement, often along streams, rivers or other natural features. They often provide pleasant walks for the public away from main roads.
	Green Infrastructure	The network of accessible, multi-functional green and open spaces.
	Greenfield Neighbourhood	Area of undeveloped land allocated for comprehensively planned housing development.
	Gypsies and Travellers	Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such (Annex 1 of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites).
	High technology	Innovative and knowledge based industries.
	Infilling	The filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.
	Infrastructure	All the ancillary works and services which are necessary to support human activities, including roads, sewers, schools, hospitals, etc.
	Intermediate Affordable Housing	Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market price or rents. These can include shared equity products (eg HomeBuy), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.

Acronym	Subject	Explanation
	Issues and Options Report	Prepared by the District Council, it was the first stage in consulting people about the Core Strategy. It set out what key issues South Oxfordshire will face in the future. It was published in November 2007.
	Lifetime Homes	Incorporates 16 design criteria that can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each design feature adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life.
	Listed Buildings	Buildings and structures which are listed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as being of special architectural and historic interest and whose protection and maintenance are the subject of special legislation. Listed building consent is required before any works are carried out on a listed building.
LAA	Local Area Agreement	An agreement between central government and local government as well as other key partners at the local level that sets out the priorities for the local area.
LDD	Local Development Document	An individual component or document of the Local Plan.
LDS	Local Development Scheme	A three year work programme for production of Local Development Documents.
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership	A partnership between local authorities and the local business community to give strategic leadership for economic growth and job creation.
LP	Local Plan	The portfolio of Local Development Documents which provides the spatial planning framework.
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership	A way of bringing together a range of key organisations to work jointly to tackle issues and plan for the future of a local authority district. In South Oxfordshire it is called The South Oxfordshire Partnership and comprises representatives from the public, private, community, faith and voluntary sectors.
	Market Housing	Private housing for rent or for sale, where the price is set in the open market.
NP	Neighbourhood Plan	A plan forming part of the development plan prepared by Town or Parish Councils.
NGP	New Growth Point	The New Growth Points initiative provides support to local communities who wish to pursue large scale and sustainable growth, including new housing, through a partnership with Government.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	Single document replacing planning policy statements and guidance, setting out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
OHP	Oxfordshire Housing Partnership	The Oxfordshire Housing Partnership aims to increase the supply of good quality affordable housing across Oxfordshire and ensure that all partners maximise their contribution to the sustainable communities' agenda. It promotes strategic housing work across the county, and monitors performance in delivering Local Area Agreement affordable housing targets. The OHP is committed to county-wide development of good quality affordable housing and recognises the contribution this can make to a sustainable Oxfordshire.

Acronym	Subject	Explanation
ORHP	Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership	The Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership (ORHP) was formed in September 2003 by the four rural Oxfordshire district councils, to maximise the opportunities for rural communities across Oxfordshire to benefit from new housing and to assist people who cannot afford to buy or rent from the open market. The ORHP was the first partnership of its kind in the region and now reports to the Oxfordshire Housing Partnership.
	Preferred Options	Prepared by the District Council and was the second stage of consultation in preparing the Core Strategy. It set out the Council's preferred approach to planning South Oxfordshire's future.
	Renewable Energy	Energy generated from the sun, wind, oceans, plants, the fall of water, biomass and deep geothermal heat.
RSL	Registered Social Landlord	Independent housing organisations registered with the Tenant Services Authority under the Housing Act 1996.
	Rural Exception Sites	Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. The NPPF states that small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without granting funding.
SVUK	Science Vale UK	An area of economic growth in southern central Oxfordshire which is defined by four points: Didcot (in South Oxfordshire), Harwell Oxford, Milton Park and Grove (all in the Vale of White Horse District).
	Social Rented	(Affordable Housing). Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime.
	Soundness	Development plan documents are required to be sound when judged against tests set out in the NPPF. In summary, to be sound they must be justified, effective, consistent with national policy, and have satisfied the legal procedural requirements.
	Spatial planning	Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they can function.
	Spatial vision	A brief description of how the area will be changed at the end of a plan period.
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	A compulsory Local Development Document which explains the Council's intended approach to public participation in Local Plan production and in the determination of planning applications.
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment	Assessments made compulsory by a European Directive (the SEA Directive). To be implemented in planning through Sustainability Appraisal of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	An assessment carried out by Local Authorities to inform their knowledge of flooding, refine the information on the Flood Map and determine the variations in flood risk from all sources of flooding across and from their area.
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	A study to identify sites with potential for housing, assess their housing potential and assess when they are likely to be developed.

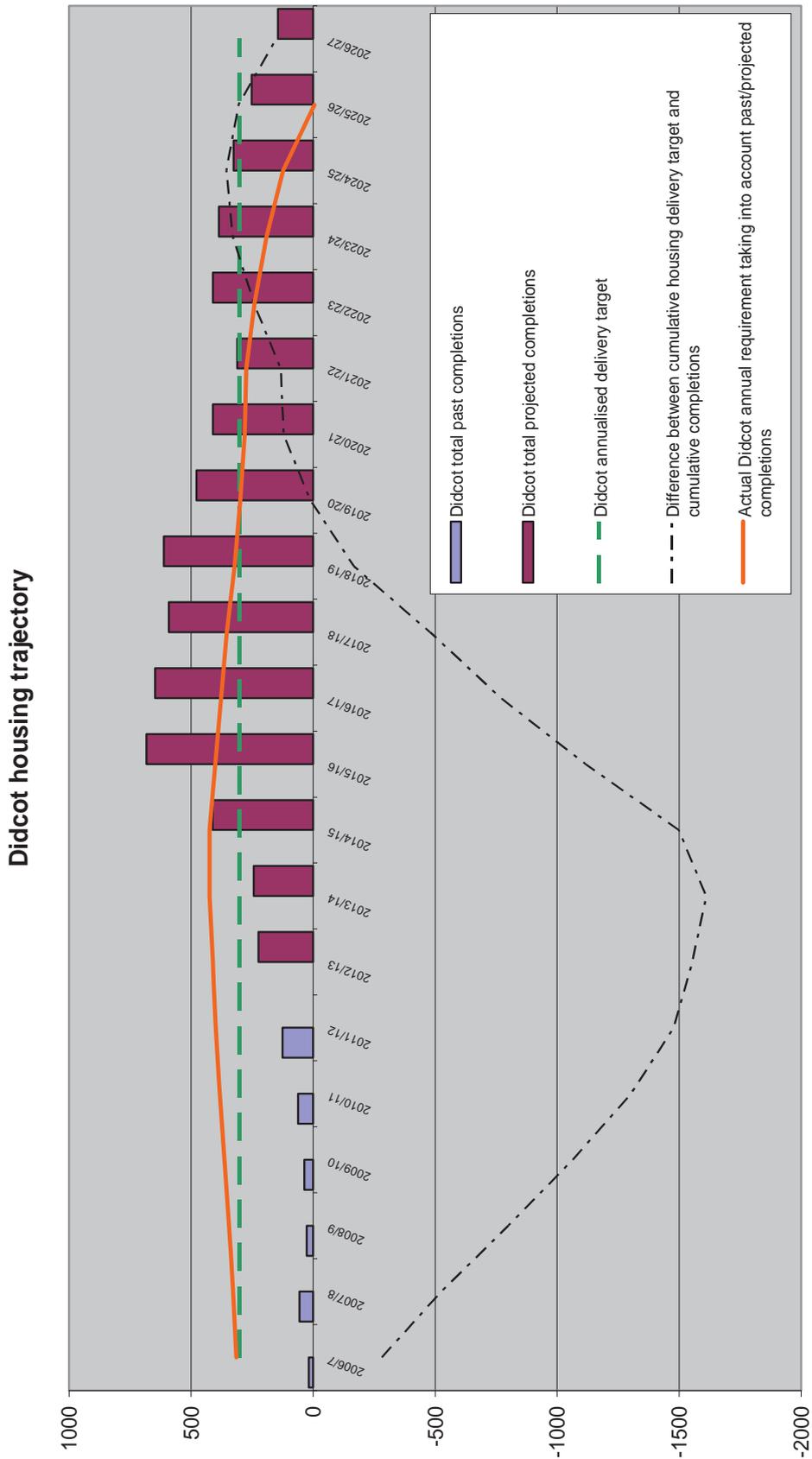
Acronym	Subject	Explanation
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document	Optional Local Development Documents adopted by the Council, these hold less weight in the determination of applications than Development Plan Documents. Replace Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	A process of appraising policies for their social, economic and environmental effects, which must be applied to all Development Plan Documents and SPDs. See also SEA Directive.
	Sustainable Community Strategy	A document that discusses the economic, social and environmental well-being of South Oxfordshire. It sets out a vision for the future of the district and identifies priority actions to help achieve the vision.
SUDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems (previously referred to as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems)	A sequence of management practices and control structures designed to drain surface water in a sustainable manner.
	Travelling Showpeople	Members of a group organised for the purpose of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined in Annex 1 of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites.
	Unallocated sites	Unallocated sites are housing sites that come forward which are not allocated in the development plan. These include both greenfield land and previously developed land. Predicted delivery rates are based on past trends.

## Appendix 2 How the objectives are delivered

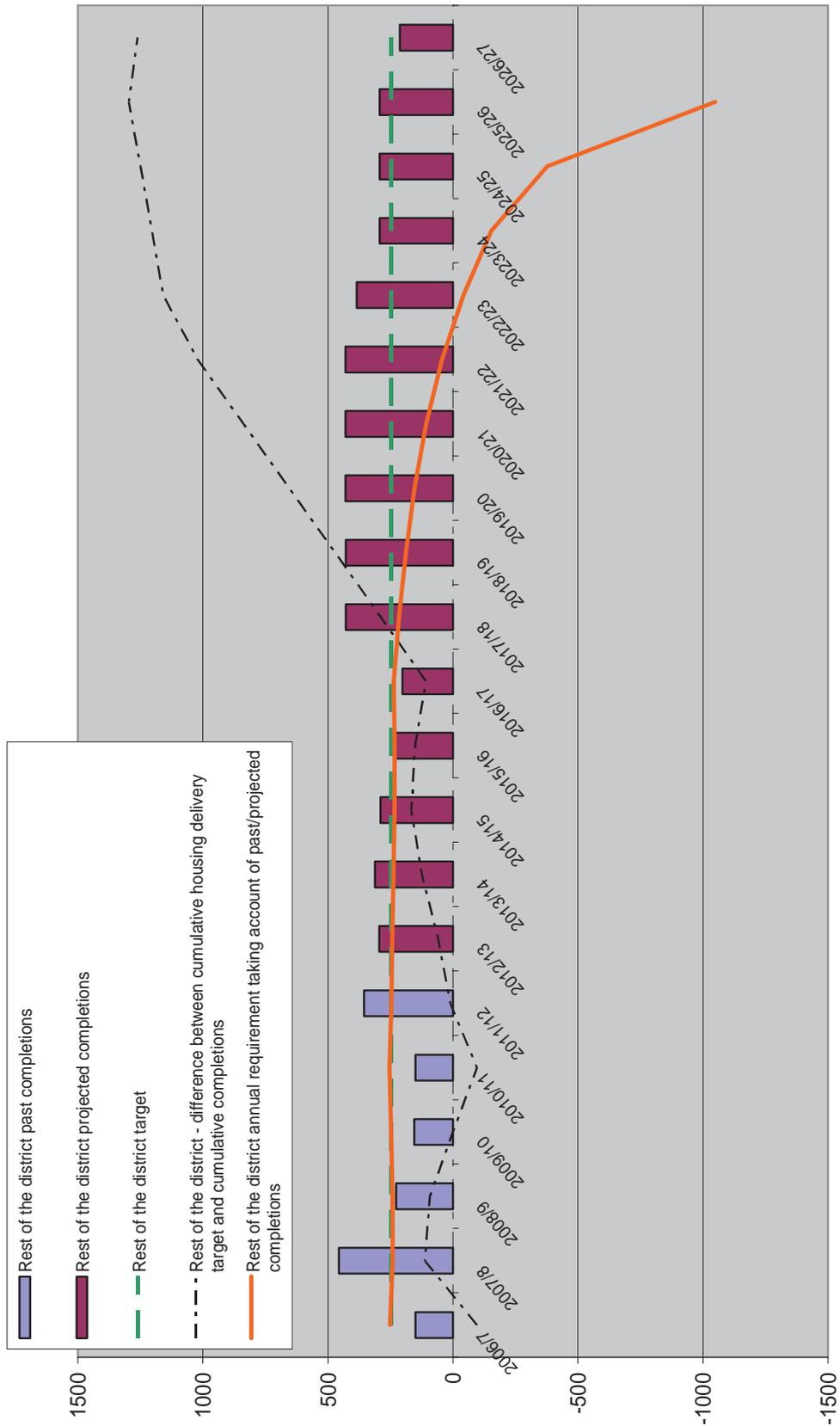
	Objective	Strategy (policy or paragraph number)
1(i)	Support the character and distinctiveness of all our towns and villages, recognising the need for all communities to thrive	CSS1, CST1, CSQ3, CSR1, CSEN3
1(ii)	Transform Didcot into a lively thriving town through regeneration of the central area and construction of greenfield neighbourhoods ensuring it meets the community's aspirations for positive change	CSDID1, CSDID2, CSDID3, CSDID4
1(iii)	Enhance Henley, Thame and Wallingford as local market towns	CSHEN1, CSTHA1, CSTHA2, CSWAL1, CSWAL2
1(iv)	Maintain the general balance between the market towns and villages recognising the need to maintain the character of the district and to ensure that the character and distinctiveness of the towns and villages is maintained.	CSS1, CSH1, CSH3, CSR1, CSEN3
2(i)	Ensure that day-to-day services (e.g. local shops, schools, pubs and recreation facilities) are available nearby	CSS1, CST1, CSR3, CSQ4 and para. 13.16
2(ii)	Support those facilities that keep communities strong	CST1, CSQ4, CSI1, CSR3
2(iii)	Improve poor quality housing estates and other run down areas	CSS1, CST1, CSDID4
2(iv)	Provide for a range of housing development across the district that respects the scale of existing settlements and caters for residents' needs	CSH1, CSH4, CSH5
2(v)	Ensure that a significant proportion of this housing falls within the 'affordable' definition	CSH3
3(i)	Ensure that all new development is well designed, respects the local character, and fosters a sense of community and safety	CSM1, CSQ2, CSQ3, CSQ4, CSEN3
3(ii)	Ensure that all new development is built to the highest viable standards in terms of water and energy efficiency, waste management and sustainable construction measures	CSQ1, CSQ2
3(iii)	Ensure that all new development integrates in its design and location the need for adapting to and mitigating against climate change	CSQ1, CSQ2
3(iv)	Ensure all new development provides the necessary infrastructure, including green infrastructure	CSI1, CSG1
3(v)	Enhance and manage the built and natural environment	CSEN1, CSEN2, CSQ3, CSG1, CSEN3
4(i)	Build on the economic success of the area through supporting existing business and encouraging new business	CSEM1, CSEM2, CSEM3, CSEM4, CSDID1, CSDID2, CST1, CSDID4, CSHEN1, CSTHA1, CSWAL1, CSR2
4(ii)	Seek to reduce long distance commuting out of the district	CSS1, CSM1, CSM2, CSEM1, CSEM2, CST1

	Objective	Strategy (policy or paragraph number)
4(iii)	Encourage those creating more high value jobs for example in the science and high technology sectors	CSEM1, CSEM2, CSEM3, CSEM4, CSR2
4(iv)	Maintain or raise activity rates	CSEM1, CSEM2, CSEM3, CSEM4, CSEM5
4(v)	Encourage the provision of a high standard education and training facilities to develop the skills employers need	CSEM1, CSEM5, CS11, CSDID4
4(vi)	Encourage investment in technologies to enable remote working	CS11, Para. 5.33, CSEM1
5(i)	Encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport whilst recognising that the rural nature of the district means that many residents will rely on car travel	CSM1, CSM2
5(ii)	Ensure that new development is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure for efficient and effective transport systems	CS11, CSM1, CSM2
5(iii)	Encourage adequate provision for parking	CSM1, para. 5.31
5(iv)	Encourage improvements to make cycling and walking safer and more attractive	CSM1, para. 5.27, CSQ4
5(v)	Support local and community led transport initiatives	CS11, Para. 5.32
6(i)	Promote provision of high quality sports, leisure, cultural and health facilities for all ages across the district	CST1, CSG1, CSDID1, CSDID4, CSHEN1, CSTHA1, CSWAL1, CSR3
6(ii)	Enable people to adopt healthy lifestyles	CST1, CSG1, CSM1
6(iii)	Support the provision of high quality design in public buildings and spaces	CSQ3
6(iv)	Encourage innovative ideas for activities and facilities	CS11, CSR3
6(v)	Encourage investment in technologies to enable remote access to services	CSR3, CSEM1

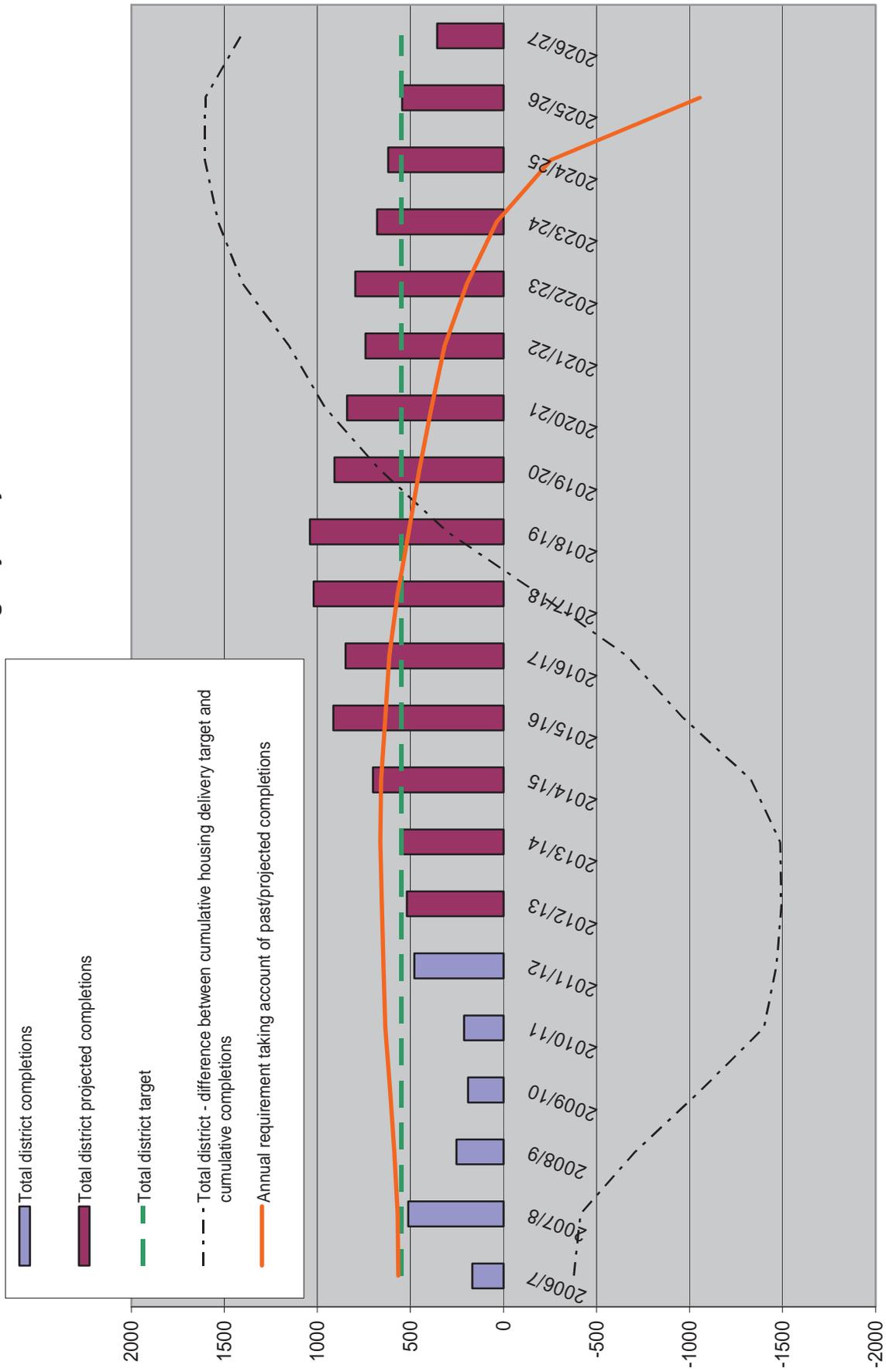
# Appendix 3 Housing Trajectories



## Rest of the district housing trajectory



# Total district housing trajectory



## Appendix 4 Category list for settlement strategy

Full details available in Settlement Assessment Background Paper

This table should be read in conjunction with Policy CSR1 Housing in villages.

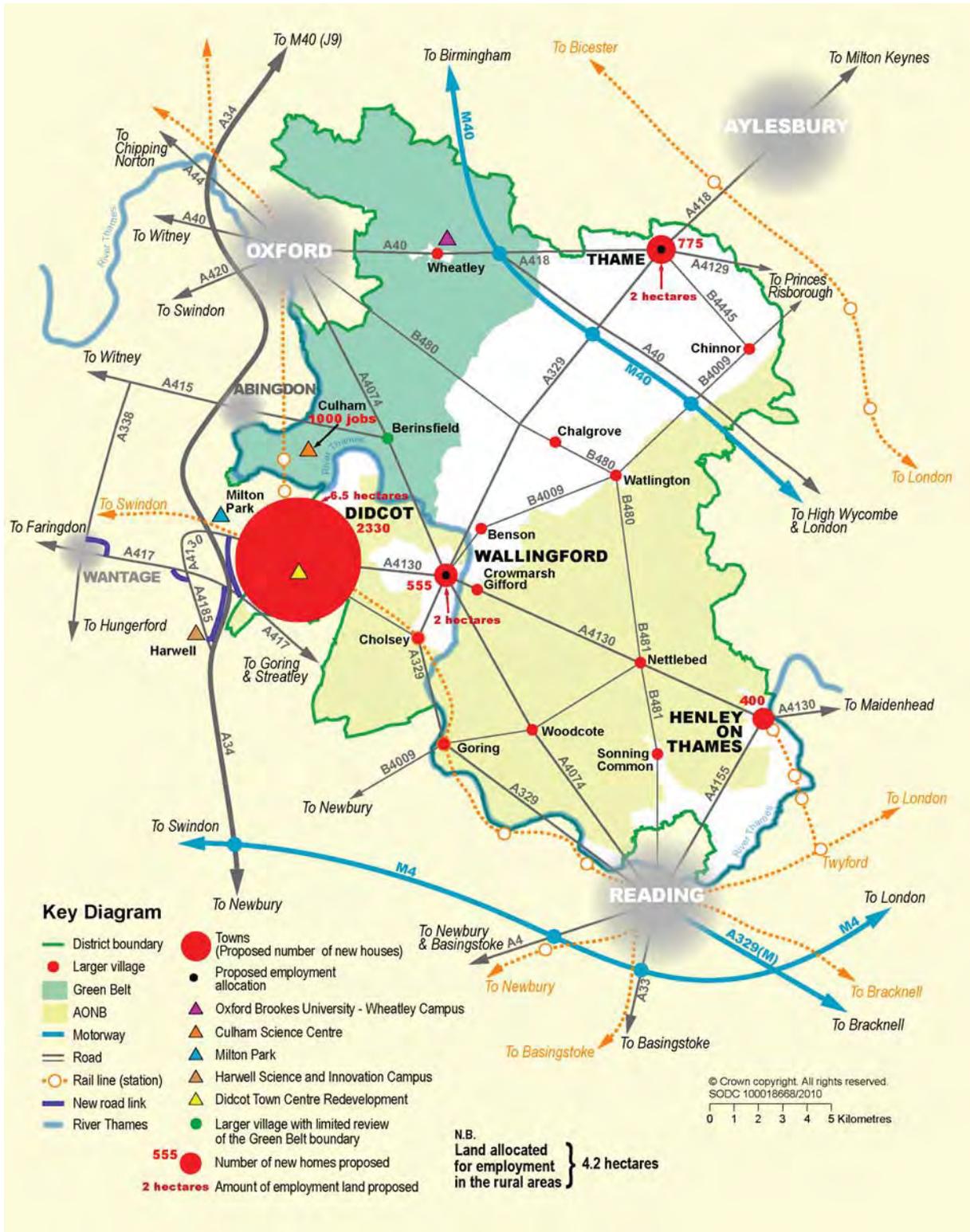
<b>Towns</b>		
Didcot	Henley	Thame
Wallingford		
<b>Larger Villages</b>		
Benson	Cholsey	Sonning Common
Berinsfield	Crowmarsh Gifford	Watlington
Chalgrove	Goring	Wheatley
Chinnor	Nettlebed	Woodcote
<b>Smaller Villages</b>		
Aston Rowant	Gallowstree Common	Nuneham Courtenay
Aston Tirrold / Aston Upthorpe	Garsington	Peppard Common
Beckley	Great Haseley	Playhatch
Berrick Salome	Great Milton	Rotherfield Peppard
Binfield Heath	Harpsden	Sandford
Brightwell cum Sotwell	Highmoor Cross	Shiplake Cross
Britwell	Holton	South Moreton
Burcot	Horspath	South Stoke
Checkendon	Ipsden	Stadhampton
Chiselhampton	Kidmore End	Stanton St John
Clifton Hampden	Kingston Blount	Stoke Row
Cuddesdon	Kingwood Common	Sydenham
Culham	Lewknor	Tetsworth
Cuxham	Little Milton	Tiddington
Dorchester	Long Wittenham	Towersey
Drayton St Leonard	Lower Shiplake	Warborough & Shillingford NE of A4074
Dunsden Green	Marsh Baldon	Whitchurch Hill
East Hagbourne	Moulsford	Whitchurch on Thames
Ewelme	North Moreton	
Forest Hill	Nuffield	
<b>Other Villages</b>		
Bix	Hill Bottom	Rotherfield Greys
Brightwell Baldwin	Huntercombe	Russells Water
Cane End	Little Wittenham	Satwell
Chazey Heath	Maidensgrove	Shepherds Green
Christmas Common	Mapledurham	Shillingford South West of A4074
Cookley Green	Middle Assendon	Sonning Eye
Crays Pond	Milton Common	Stoke Talmage
Crocker End	Mongewell	Stonor
Crowell	Moreton	Tokers Green
Emmington	North Stoke	Toot Baldon
Exlade Street	North Weston	Waterperry
Greys Green	Postcombe	Waterstock
Hailey	Preston Crowmarsh	West Hagbourne
Henton	Pyrton	Witheridge Hill
Highmoor	Roke	

## Appendix 5 Schedule of Local Plan 2011 policies to be replaced

Policy Number	Policy Title/Purpose	Replacement Policy in core strategy
G1	General restraint and sustainable development	CSS1
G2	Protection and enhancement of the environment	CSS1
G3	Locational strategy	CSS1
G4	Development in the countryside and on the edge of settlements	CSS1
G6	Promoting good design	CSQ3
C1	Landscape character	CSEN1
C2	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	CSEN1
GB1	The extent of the Green Belt	CSEN2
GB2	New buildings in the Green Belt	CSEN2
D8	Energy, water and materials efficient design	CSQ2
D9	Renewable energy	CSQ1
D11	Infrastructure and service requirements	CSI1
H2	Sites identified for housing	CSH1
H3	Phasing of development	CSC1
H4	Towns and larger villages outside the Green Belt	Towns policies & CSR1
H5	Larger villages within the Green Belt and smaller villages throughout the district	CSR1
H6	Locations where new housing will not be permitted	CSS1 CSR1 CSH1
H7	Range of dwelling types and size	CSH4
H8	Dwelling densities	CSH2, CSQ3
H9	Affordable housing	CSH3
H14	Lifetime homes	CSH4
E1	Didcot	CSEM2
E2	Henley, Thame and Wallingford	CSEM2, CSTHA1, CSWAL1

E3	The rural areas	CSR2
E4	Employment generating development	CSEM2
TC1	Extending the range and quality of facilities	CST1
TC3	Environmental improvements	CST1, CSDID1, CSHEN1, CSTHA1, CSWAL1
TC4	Encouraging a diversity of uses	CSHEN1, CSTHA1, CSWAL1
T3	Transport assessments and travel plans	CSM2
T4	Public transport and interchanges	CSM1
RUR2	Oxford Brookes University, Holton	CSEM5
RUR4	Culham Science Centre and the JET Project	CSEM3
DID5	Land at Station Road and Haydon Road	CSDID1
DID7	Regeneration of Market Place and Broadway	CSDID1 & 2
DID8	Land to the east of the Didcot town centre expansion scheme	CSDID2
DID10	Land at Didcot Parkway railway station	CSDID1
<p>These policies are partially replaced by the new core strategy policies and will be fully replaced when the new development management policies are adopted.</p>		

# Key Diagram



هذه الوثيقة متاحة باللغة العربية عند الطلب.  
*Arabic*

এই ডকুমেন্ট অনুরোধে বাংলায় পাওয়া যায়।  
*Bengali*

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।  
*Punjabi*

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز اردو میں بھی مل سکتی ہے۔  
*Urdu*

本文件可以應要求，製作成中文(繁體字)版本。  
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