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# **South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011**

## **Adopted January 2006**

Strike-through version on adoption of  
South Oxfordshire Core Strategy  
December 2012

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## Section 1 Introduction

### The local plan

- 1.1** This is the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011. It has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirement on all district councils to produce, and to keep up to date, local plans covering the whole of their district. The local plan guides development in the district and sets out the Council's policies for the use of land. The plan also makes specific proposals for the use of particular sites and designates areas of particular value. The plan forms the basis for decisions made on planning applications. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 requires that, where the plan contains relevant policies, planning applications shall be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for South Oxfordshire in January 2006 comprised Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9, as amended), the Oxfordshire Structure Plan prepared by the County Council, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 prepared by the District Council, and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan prepared by the County Council.
- 1.2** This Local Plan has been prepared within the strategic framework provided by the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and within the context of national and regional planning guidance issued by the Government.
- 1.3** This Plan replaces the South Oxfordshire Local Plan which was adopted in April 1997. This Local Plan covers the period up to 2011.
- 1.4** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all local planning authorities to move towards a new system of plan making. At the district level, instead of a single Local Plan, there will be a portfolio of policy documents, which together will be known as the Local Development Framework (LDF). At its adoption, this Local Plan became part of the Local Development Framework. The Council has prepared a Local Development Scheme, available on the Council's website [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk), which sets out a programme for the preparation of the other elements of the Local Development Framework.

### The local plan process

- 1.5** The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 had to go through a number of stages before it was formally adopted and became part of the statutory development plan. The public, local organisations and other interested parties had the opportunity to participate in this process at a number of key stages.
- (i) **Issues consultation:** The Council carried out a consultation with the public, town and parish councils, statutory organisations, businesses, landowners and developers in 1999 on how the various planning issues facing the district could best be addressed. This took the form of a questionnaire, which was sent to every household and business in the district, and the publication of background papers which provided detailed information on the issues raised.
- (ii) **The deposit plan:** In June 2002 the plan was placed on first deposit. As a result of the representations, changes were made and incorporated in the second deposit draft, which was placed on deposit in September 2003.
- (iii) **Local plan inquiry:** A Local Plan Inquiry was held between May and December 2004.

The inquiry was in two phases, the first considered all objections to the Plan other than those relating to development west of Didcot. The second phase was a joint inquiry with the Vale of the White Horse District Council into the objections relating to development west of Didcot. The Inspectors' Reports were published in June 2005.

- (iv) **Proposed modifications:** The Council considered the Inspectors' reports and in September 2005 published proposed modifications to the plan for public consultation.
- (v) **Adoption:** Following consideration of the representations on the modifications to the Plan the Council adopted the plan.

## The format and scope of the Local Plan

- 1.6 The plan comprises a written statement setting out the Council's policies and proposals, with a reasoned justification for them, and a proposals map which shows the areas to which the policies or proposals apply, on an Ordnance Survey base.
- 1.7 The written statement is arranged in a number of separate sections. Section 2 sets out the aim and objectives of the plan and it contains the strategic policies. Sections 3 to 8 contain the specific policies which relate to the objectives of the plan. The final five sections contain the site-specific policies for the rural areas and each of the four towns in the district.
- 1.8 In accordance with Government guidance, the plan concentrates on key issues and it includes site-specific proposals for the larger sites only. The plan provides a planning policy framework within which detailed decisions on all sites can be taken through the development control process. Policies for specific uses list the criteria most likely to be relevant to a proposal for the particular use; however, all development proposals will be considered against the relevant policies in the plan as a whole.

## Supplementary planning documents

- 1.9 Many detailed matters relating to planning advice are best dealt with by the production of supplementary planning documents (SPD), previously known as supplementary planning guidance (SPG). The Council approved as SPG the South Oxfordshire Design Guide in December 2000, the South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment in July 2003, the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide in July 2003, and the Affordable Housing SPG in September 2004. Development Briefs have also been adopted as SPG for Fair Mile Hospital, Vauxhall Barracks and Chinnor Cement Works. A programme of Conservation Area Character Appraisal SPDs is underway and a number of these have been approved. The programme for the preparation of future SPDs can be found in the South Oxfordshire Local Development Scheme, available on the Council's website, [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk). The Council also publishes a number of leaflets giving advice on matters such as satellite dishes. A full list of publications is also available on the Council's website.

## Other strategies and policies adopted by the Council

- 1.10 There are many important issues facing the district which go wider than strict land-use planning. The Council has agreed a Statement of Strategic Intent for the district which is 'to work in partnership to maintain and improve the quality of life in South Oxfordshire'. This statement is supported by seven Strategic Objectives which provide a clear focus for the Council's priorities. Underpinning this are a number of Key Aims and a set of measurable Best Value Performance Indicators and Local Performance Targets. The Council's strategic

approach is set out in the annually updated Corporate Plan, which also indicates how the Council sets priorities. A Performance Management System is used to monitor progress on all targets, and to predict year-end outcomes so that remedial actions are identified as early as possible. The Council has also drawn up a number of strategies addressing a number of issues which are separate from, but complementary to the Local Plan. The following strategy documents are the most relevant to this plan:

- Agenda 21 Strategy
- Arts Development Strategy
- Community Safety Strategy
- Community Strategy
- Contaminated Land Strategy
- Economic Development Action Plan
- Energy Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Priorities for Nature Conservation
- Rural Strategy
- Sports and Recreation Strategy
- Tourism and Visitor Management Strategy
- Waste Management and Recycling Strategy

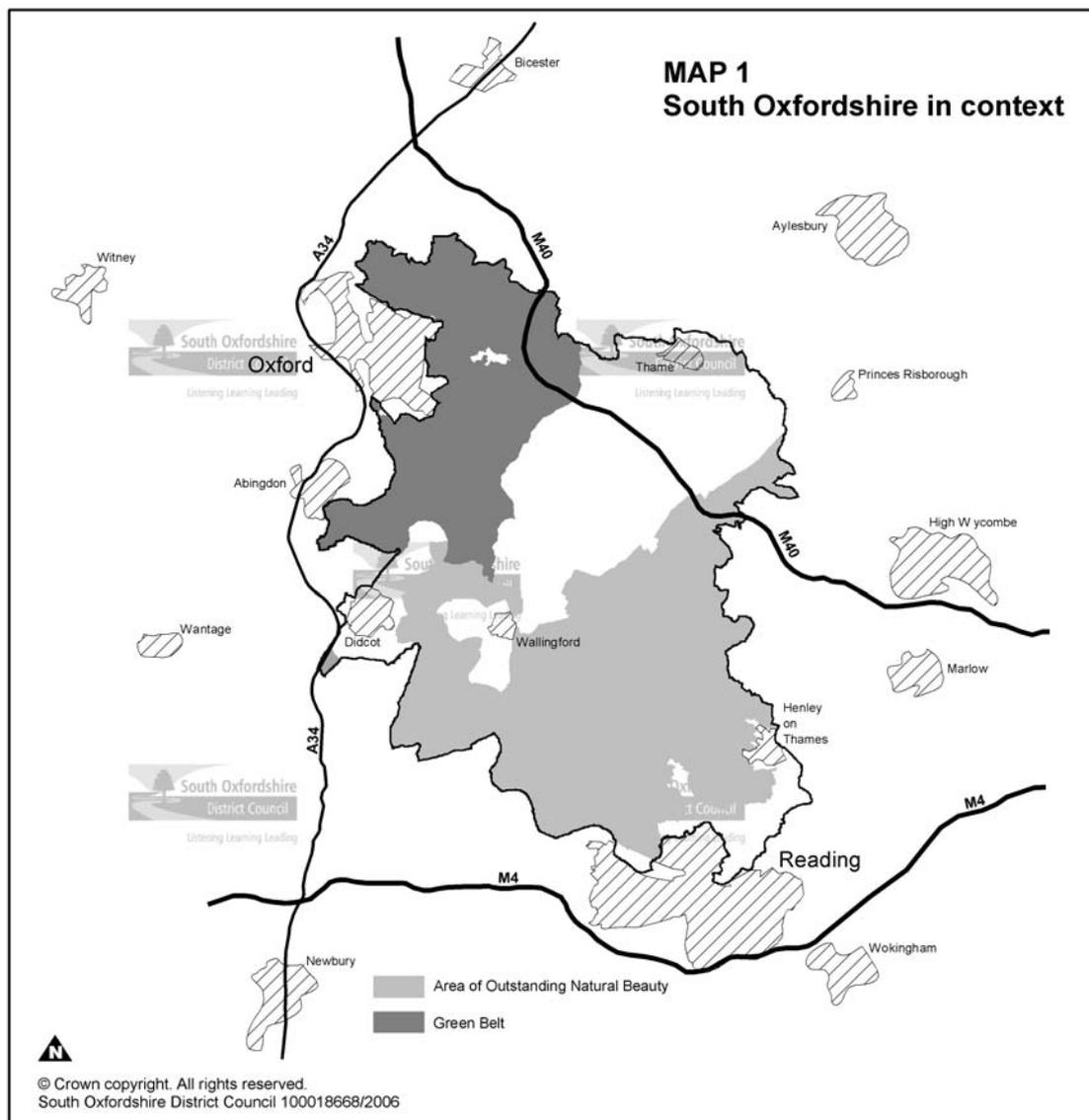
**1.11** The Council also assists town working groups in the four towns of the district to prepare town management strategies and action plans. Similarly, the Council has supported, and will continue to support, local groups preparing Village Appraisals, Parish Plans and Village Design Statements.

**1.12** Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council has a duty to prepare a Community Strategy for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. Our Place, Our Future: Community Strategy for South Oxfordshire 2004-2009 was published in June 2004 by the local strategic partnership known as the South Oxfordshire Partnership. The Community Strategy and Local Plan are complementary and each plan takes account of the vision and priorities of the other. The South Oxfordshire Partnership produces updates on the Community Strategy each year and will undertake a full review in 2007 to plan beyond 2009.

## **South Oxfordshire District**

**1.13** South Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural district, with the small market towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford, together with the larger town of Didcot, acting as local service centres for people living in the surrounding villages and countryside. The north of the district contains part of the Oxford Green Belt, and in the south, much of the district is designated as part of the North Wessex Downs or the Chilterns Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The district contains many attractive villages, and the towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford are of outstanding conservation importance.

- 1.14** The major urban centres of Oxford and Reading lie outside the district but adjoin it, and South Oxfordshire is very much part of their hinterland, with close economic and social links between the urban centres and the surrounding countryside. At the 2001 Census, South Oxfordshire had a resident population of 128,177. The district covers a land area of 65,521 hectares (253 square miles).
- 1.15** In common with much of the South East, South Oxfordshire experiences considerable pressures for further development. The pressures are particularly severe in the parts of the district close to Oxford and Reading. The district's very attractive environment and easy access to other parts of the country, particularly to London and Heathrow, make it a desirable place to live and work. As a consequence land and house prices in the area are high. This general affluence has resulted in a serious shortage of affordable housing for young people and those on low incomes. The Local Plan therefore needs to consider how to reconcile the pressures for development in the area, including the need to meet the requirements of local people for housing, jobs and services, with the maintenance of the environmental qualities of the district.



## Strategic context

### National planning guidance

**1.16** In preparing the plan, the Council has had regard to national planning guidance issued by the Government in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Circulars.

**1.17** PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development states that sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. Paragraphs 3 and 5 state:

'At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations. A widely used definition was drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

'Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by:

- making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people's quality of life;
- contributing to sustainable economic development;
- protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities;
- ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources; and,
- ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.'

**1.18** The Council has also had regard to the Rural White Paper Our Countryside: The Future published in November 2000. This sets out the Government's vision for more sustainable rural areas. It outlines the key issues in the countryside and sets out a comprehensive set of proposals to help rural communities.

**1.19** In addition to Government advice a number of agencies produce advice and guidance which has been taken into account in the production of this plan. These include the Environment Agency, the Countryside Agency, English Heritage and Sport England.

### Regional planning guidance

**1.20** In March 2001 a revised RPG9: Regional Planning Guidance for the South East was published. This states that the main principles that should govern the continuing development of the region are:

- urban areas should become the main focus for development
- greenfield development should normally take place only after other alternatives have been considered, and should have regard to the full social, environmental and transport costs of location

- the pattern of development should be less dispersed
- London's World City role and the South East's international connections should be developed
- economic opportunities should be increased by raising skills levels and reducing the disparities between different parts of the region, improving the performance of the poorer parts of the region and by managing the localised impacts of development in economically buoyant areas
- sufficient housing, and in particular affordable housing, should be provided for all who need to live and work in the region
- the development of housing should be more sustainable, providing a better mix of sizes, types and tenures
- development should be located and designed to enable more sustainable use of the region's natural resources, in the supply of food, water, energy, minerals and timber, in the effective management of waste, the promotion of renewable energy sources and to assist in reducing pollution of air, land and water
- there should be continued protection of the region's biodiversity and enhancement of its landscape and built and historic heritage
- the life of the countryside and rural communities should be sustained through economic diversity which respects the character of different parts of the region and enables sustainable agriculture and forestry
- access to jobs, services, leisure and cultural facilities should be less dependent on longer distance movement and there should be an increased ability to meet normal travel needs through safe walking, cycling and public transport with reduced reliance on the private car
- transport investment should support the spatial strategy.

**1.21** South Oxfordshire falls within the Thames Valley sub-region within the Western Policy Area. The guidance states that this area is characterised by concentrations of business service employment and high-tech, knowledge-based industries and by increasing pressure on local infrastructure, land resources and house prices. The guidance states that specific policies should be developed to tackle the identified local problems, and suggests a number of measures that might be appropriate, including greater emphasis on affordable housing based on local need assessments and additional investment in public transport provision and facilities for walking and cycling.

### **The Oxfordshire Structure Plan**

**1.22** The Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2011 was adopted in August 1998. An Alteration to Policy H1 dividing the housing provision for Didcot between this district and the Vale of White Horse District was approved in April 2001. The general strategy is to provide a sustainable planning framework for development to meet housing, economic and other requirements over the period 1996 to 2011 in ways which will:

- help meet the objectives of regional policy to secure a shift in the balance of development from the west to the east of the region
- protect the environment, character and natural resources of the county by restraining the overall level of development

- favour locations where the need to travel, particularly by car, can be reduced, where walking, cycling and the use of public transport can be encouraged and where a reasonable range of services and facilities exist or can be provided
- concentrate developments which generate a lot of journeys in locations which are, or are capable of being, well served by public transport
- make the best use of land and buildings within built-up areas to reduce the need for the development of greenfield sites, whilst not permitting development on important open spaces.

- 1.23** The plan states that the preferred locations for development will be Banbury, Bicester, Didcot and Witney and that, in the rural areas, local plans will make appropriate provision for development and in doing so will have regard to the economic and social well-being of local communities.

## Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.24** PPG12: Development Plans, published in 1997 states that local authorities are expected to carry out a full environmental appraisal of their development plan. In 1997 the Council commissioned consultants to carry out an environmental appraisal of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan and the conclusions of this work were fed into the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011.
- 1.25** The Government now recognises that the appraisal process needs to be widened to encompass social and economic issues as well as environmental matters. The Council carried out a sustainability appraisal of the policies and proposals in the first deposit draft plan. An appraisal of the proposed changes in the second deposit draft plan was also undertaken and the conclusion of the appraisal was that the Plan's policies were comprehensive and closely guided by the need to minimise the adverse impacts of development in the district in the context of creating a sustainable environment. Copies of both appraisals are available.

## Monitoring

- 1.26** To ensure that the plan is effective, it is essential that its policies and proposals are monitored. An annual monitoring report will be published each December, starting in 2005, setting out the results of the monitoring of planning decisions and other indicators. This will follow the guidance set out in the publication Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide produced in 2005 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.



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## Section 2 The General Approach

### Introduction

- 2.1 This plan is based on the principles of sustainable development reflected in national planning guidance and the policies and proposals of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan. This section of the plan describes the general background to, and role of the Local Plan in helping to achieve sustainable development. It sets out the overall aim and objectives of the plan and contains a number of strategic policies.

### Background to sustainable development

- 2.2 Sustainable development is a broad concept. Essentially it seeks to secure higher living standards for everyone whilst protecting and enhancing the environment for present and future generations. The Government's approach to sustainable development is based on achieving and integrating the following broad concepts:

- the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment
- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- effective protection of the environment
- the prudent use of natural resources.

- 2.3 It is increasingly recognised that society cannot continue to use the earth's resources and discharge waste without regard to the long-term economic and environmental consequences. It is also recognised that long-term damage is being inflicted on the environment from our current activities. The most obvious examples are emissions from industrial processes and from motor transport which are contributing to global warming and climate change. Our environmental assets are wide-ranging and include far more than the raw materials on which we base our industrial processes. They include our landscape and wildlife resources, our cultural and historic heritage in the built environment and historical sites, as well as air, water and soil quality. All these factors contribute to making up the human living environment which is central to our quality of life and general health.

- 2.4 However, sustainable development is not simply about the environment. It is also important that the needs of the community for housing, employment, education, health and leisure facilities are met and that the benefits of a good quality of life can be shared by all members of the community.

### Role of the Local Plan in sustainable development

- 2.5 The plan has an important role to play in the move towards sustainability. Firstly, it allocates land, in accordance with the Structure Plan strategy, for further houses and jobs and provides the framework within which other forms of development can be assessed. It seeks to influence the pattern of future development by ensuring that different uses are grouped together to reduce the need to travel. It encourages more mixed uses where areas dominated by single uses would benefit from diversity; this is of particular importance in encouraging vibrant town centres, and in the layout of large new housing areas. The plan will help to ensure that the best use is made of previously-developed land and buildings, particularly in the larger towns and villages, and thus reducing the amount of greenfield land

needed for development. It includes policies to protect and, where appropriate, enhance the many and varied assets of the district. This includes both the natural resources of the district and the built environment. The plan also seeks to improve the environment and quality of life in the district by promoting high standards in the quality of new development.

- 2.6 However, it must be recognised that the plan will only make a limited contribution to moving towards a sustainable pattern of development. The amount of new development that will occur in South Oxfordshire up to 2011 is marginal in relation to the existing amount of development in the district. South Oxfordshire has a very dispersed settlement pattern and access to services and adequate public transport is already a problem, particularly in the rural areas. Measures to overcome these issues will require far more than land-use planning policies and will involve significant changes in policy and investment decisions by this Council and other bodies.
- 2.7 Finally, it should not be forgotten that all residents of the district play a key role in moving towards sustainability through the lifestyle they adopt and by the sum of individual decisions they make on where to live, work, shop and travel.

## The overall aim and objectives

- 2.8 The overall aim of the plan is:

**To seek to improve the quality of life of present and future residents of South Oxfordshire and make provision for further development in accordance with the Oxfordshire Structure Plan, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and built assets of the district.**

- 2.9 From this overall aim, six key objectives, which form the basis of sections of the plan, have been developed as follows:

- **protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment.** This includes the protection, and, where appropriate, the enhancement, of the landscape, the Oxford Green Belt, the historic environment, nature conservation and biodiversity, landscape features and agricultural land. Under this objective the Council also seeks to prevent pollution in all its forms, to protect water resources, to ensure any development on contaminated land is safe and to protect the district and its residents from hazardous substances. Reference is also made to minerals and waste under this objective.
- **encouraging sustainable and high-quality development.** Under this objective the Council will encourage high-quality, resource-efficient and energy-efficient development which has regard to the locally distinctive characteristics of the area, which meets certain operational standards, and which reduces impacts on the environment, whilst also mitigating impacts that are generated by proposals.
- **meeting the social needs of the rural and urban communities.** This objective includes policies which seek to ensure that adequate provision is made in appropriate locations for housing, for recreation and leisure facilities, and for the provision of local community facilities and services.
- **supporting the local economy.** Under this objective the Council seeks to provide for local employment needs, to assist in the maintenance of a viable and sustainable agricultural industry, and to encourage tourism-related developments which are based on the conservation and enjoyment of the district's landscape and heritage. This section

of the plan also includes policies relating to telecommunications development and advertisements.

- **supporting the vitality and viability of town centres.** This objective recognises the importance of the district's four main towns in the contribution they make to the economic and social life of residents and to the objectives of sustainable development, through their ability to accommodate a mixture of uses.
- **promoting a sustainable transport strategy.** This objective acknowledges the role of transport in the quality of life of residents of the district, both in terms of the importance of access to facilities and services, and in terms of its impact on the environment. Promoting sustainable transport options and choices should improve quality of life in both these respects. This section of the plan includes policies relating to the transport requirements for new developments, public transport and interchanges, cycling and walking, car parks, service areas and lorry and freight distribution depots.

## Strategic Policies

- 2.10 The following strategic policies set out the general approach to development throughout the district in accordance with the Oxfordshire Structure Plan.

### ~~General restraint and sustainable development~~

#### **Policy G1**

~~Provision will be made for substantial new housing development at Didcot but elsewhere the overall level of development will be restrained. In considering development proposals their likely impact on the environment and the need to conserve non-renewable resources will be taken into account.~~

- 2.11 ~~The strategic framework for development in the district is set out in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and has been referred to in Section 1 of this plan. Policy G1 will ensure that all proposals are considered against this framework. This policy also reflects the overall aim of the plan to provide development to meet the needs of the district in a way that is sustainable. The Council will also try to ensure that the district has clean air and water, that land is not polluted and that the need to conserve energy is taken into account in planning decisions.~~

### Protection and enhancement of the environment

#### **Policy G2**

~~The district's countryside, settlements and environmental resources will be protected from adverse developments and opportunities sought to enhance the environment wherever they arise.~~

- 2.12 This reflects the Council's aim to balance the protection and enhancement of the district's resources, whilst meeting development needs ~~in accordance with Policy G1 and the Structure Plan requirement.~~

## Locational strategy

### Policy G3

~~In considering proposals for new development, locations which are close to services and facilities, and which are well served by public transport will be favoured. Development that would give rise to a significant increase in traffic generation in relatively inaccessible or isolated rural locations will not be permitted.~~

- 2.13 It is commonly recognised that there is a strong link between land use and transport and this is consistently referred to in Government policy advice concerning the location of new development. ~~In South Oxfordshire, apart from the Structure Plan proposals to concentrate significant further development in Didcot, the amount of new development in the rest of the district is expected to be relatively limited. This will inevitably restrict the ability of the Local Plan to influence people's choice of travel mode and car use through the location of new development. However,~~ it will be important to ensure that any new development which gives rise to traffic generation, is in locations where there is less need to travel by car and where the use of public transport, walking and cycling can be encouraged. This will mean that new development should not generally be permitted in isolated rural locations but should be concentrated in the towns and larger villages. The operational and locational needs of agriculture will, however, be taken into account. This policy will be particularly relevant when considering housing, employment, retail, and larger-scale recreation and tourism proposals.

## Development in the countryside and on the edge of settlements

### Policy G4

The need to protect the countryside for its own sake is an important consideration when assessing proposals for development. ~~Unless permitted by other policies in the plan, new built development in the countryside, in the open gaps between settlements and on the edge of settlements where the built-up area would be extended, will not normally be permitted, except for agriculture and forestry.~~

- 2.14 ~~This policy seeks to prevent development in the countryside, ribbon development on roads extending away from settlements and unplanned expansion of settlements beyond their existing built-up area. This policy also reflects the Government's overall aim in PPS7 which is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all. When considering proposals for development the Council will give high priority to retaining the open and rural character of the area, and the countryside generally. In the period to 2011 the strategic development requirements in South Oxfordshire can be met in an acceptable way by the policies and proposals in this plan. The Council considers that in accordance with PPG3 there is therefore no need to contemplate urban expansions or development in the countryside, other than in the agreed case of Didcot.~~

## Making the best use of land

### Policy G5

In considering development proposals within the built-up areas of settlements the best use of land and buildings will be sought, in terms of the type and density of development, in order to reduce the need for development of greenfield sites or of sites in non-sustainable locations. Priority will be given to the release of previously-developed sites within the four towns over greenfield sites or sites in less sustainable locations. In seeking to make the best use of land regard will be had to the role and importance of open space within settlements.

- 2.15 In line with PPS1, PPG3 and the Structure Plan, this policy seeks to ensure that the best use is made of sites within built-up areas in order to reduce the need to release greenfield sites, and that priority is given to releasing sites in the most sustainable locations. In applying this policy, the Council will also have regard to the important contribution that open spaces within settlements make to the social and cultural life of residents. This policy is amplified in Sections 3, 4 and 5.

## ~~Promoting good design~~

### ~~Policy G6~~

~~Planning permission will not be granted for proposals which are not of a high quality and inclusive design, which fail to protect and reinforce local distinctiveness, or which are of a scale or type that is inappropriate to the site and its surroundings.~~

- 2.16 ~~In accordance with PPS1, this policy seeks to ensure that all development in the district is of a high quality and inclusive design, that it has regard to the distinctive characteristics of the local area and that the development is appropriate in terms of its type and its scale. This policy is explained further in Section 4 of the plan and in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide.~~



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

### Introduction

- 3.1 This section of the Local Plan is concerned with protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment of the district. It builds upon Policies G1, G2 and G4 which refer to the protection of the countryside for its own sake and to the protection of natural and non-renewable resources. The policies in this section of the plan seek to:
- protect and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the district
  - protect and enhance the biodiversity of the district
  - maintain the Green Belt in the north-west of the district in order to preserve the special character and landscape setting of Oxford, check the growth of the city and assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
  - protect and enhance the historic environment of the district and safeguard and record its archaeological heritage
  - protect and improve the quality of the land, air and water environments.
- 3.2 The district is rich in a number of resources including its attractive countryside, large areas of which are designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, an area of between four to six miles wide in the north-west of the district, around Oxford, comprises part of the Oxford Green Belt. The heritage and historic character of the district is another important resource. The district contains 71 Conservation Areas, and 3,273 buildings which are listed for their historic and architectural interest. In terms of biodiversity, the district has a rich and varied natural environment. This section of the plan includes policies on landscape features including trees, hedgerows and woodlands, protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land and the water environment. In addition it contains policies on the prevention of pollution, contaminated land, hazardous substances and reference is made to the County Council's Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- 3.3 The Council recognises the interdependence of the economy of the district with the quality of its environment. One of the best ways of maintaining and enhancing the environmental quality of the district is to ensure a healthy economy, particularly in the rural areas. Conversely, the attractive environment of the district is a major contributor to the area's economic competitiveness.

## Landscape

### Landscape character

#### ~~Policy C1~~

~~The conservation and where possible, enhancement of the landscape of the district will be sought. Development that would adversely affect the distinctive features of the landscape character areas will not be permitted.~~

~~Where development is acceptable in principle it should:~~

- ~~(i) be integrated into the landscape character of the area;~~

- ~~(ii) protect important local features; and~~
- ~~(iii) where possible, contribute to local distinctiveness.~~

~~Measures will be sought to integrate new development sensitively, mitigate impacts and where appropriate, enhance local landscape character through conditions and agreements attached to planning permissions.~~

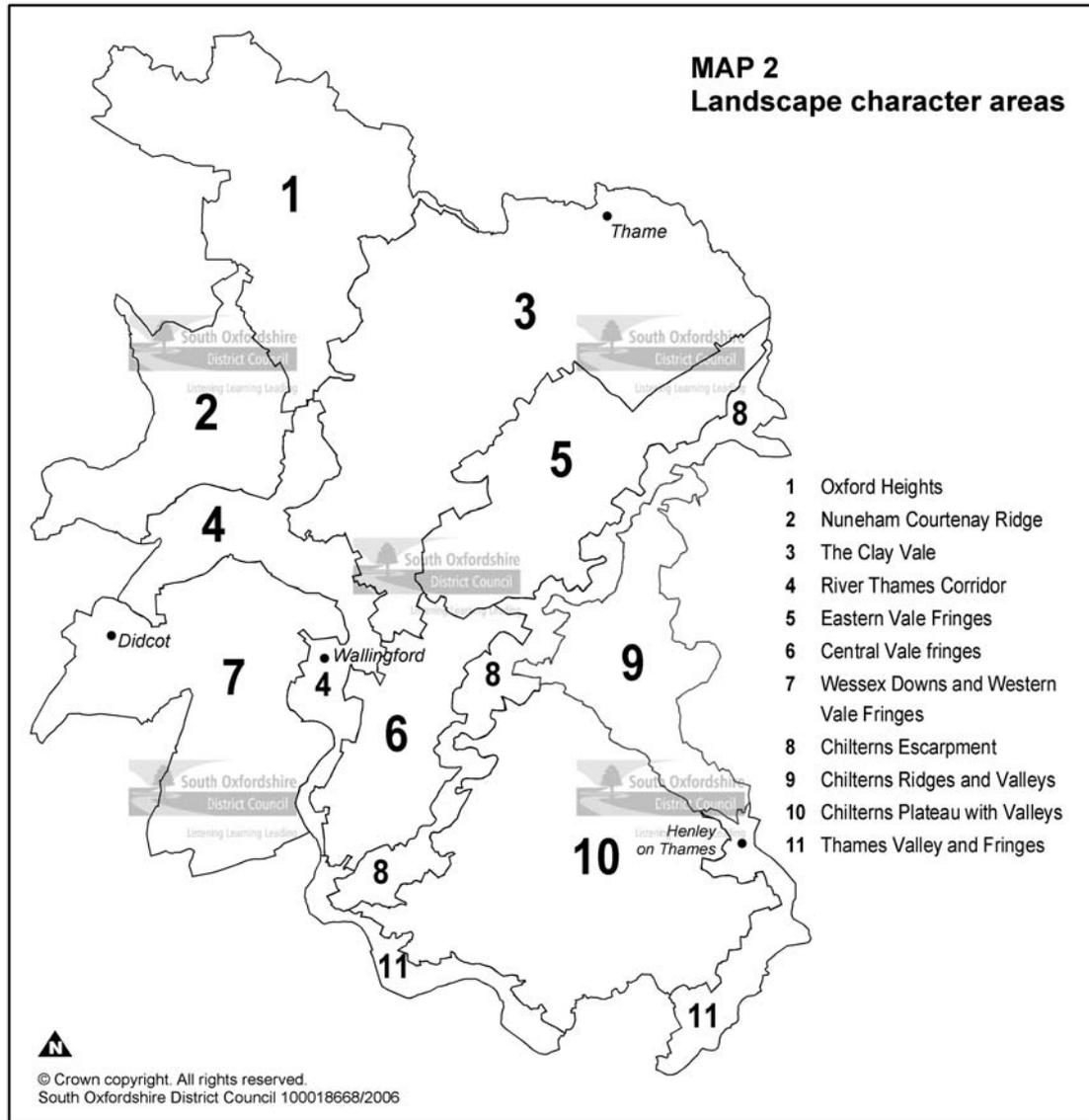
- 3.4** South Oxfordshire has a high proportion of unspoilt and attractive countryside, a large area of which is nationally designated for its outstanding beauty, namely the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Large tracts of the district were also locally designated as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in the 1954 County Development Plan. Considerable areas of AGLV were subsequently added when the Rural Areas, Central Oxfordshire and South Oxfordshire Local Plans were adopted. In recent years, however, the approach to and method of assessing landscape has changed. The Government and the Countryside Agency now encourage an approach to landscape which moves away from the relative value of individual landscapes, towards the assessment of the intrinsic character, quality and condition of the landscape. The landscape assessment process therefore involves the classification of landscapes into distinctive units, the description of their characteristic features and attributes, and the evaluation of their intrinsic quality and condition.
- 3.5** In response to this advice at a national level and as a result of criticism of the Council's approach to its local landscape designation (AGLV) the Council commissioned a district-wide Landscape Character Assessment.<sup>1</sup> The Assessment was approved by the Council in June 1998 as a material consideration to be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. Public consultation on the Assessment was carried out whilst the plan was on first deposit and the Council adopted it in July 2003 as supplementary planning guidance. The Character Assessment moves away from qualitative landscape evaluation, towards an approach based upon understanding the intrinsic character of a locality and its distinctive features.
- 3.6** The Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) with English Nature and English Heritage, have analysed the distinctive features of the English countryside and produced a New Map of England. This Map identifies broad areas of cohesive character which can be described in terms of their scenic quality, sense of place, the extent to which their character is unspoilt, how important the landscape is as a resource, and its nature conservation interest. The Map identifies four regional character areas within the boundaries of South Oxfordshire. These are:
- the Mid-vale Ridge
  - the Upper Thames Clay Vale
  - the Chilterns
  - the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs.
- 3.7** These regional character areas provide the basis for the 11 local character areas defined by the Landscape Assessment. These areas are tracts of landscape that have some unifying or consistent elements related to their physical form or geographical location which makes them distinctive, namely:

<sup>1</sup> South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 1998, Atlantic Consultants

- the **Oxford Heights** - focused upon the northerly, higher hills of the Mid-vale Ridge which surrounds Oxford to the east, and including the fringing lowlands of Otmoor and the Rivers Ray and Thame
- the **Nuneham Courtenay Ridge** - comprising the southerly part of the low limestone hills of the Mid-vale Ridge, which appears as a prominent spur of higher land above the River Thames which bounds it to the west and south
- the **Clay Vale** - embracing the low-lying, gentle landscape which overlies the Gault Clay across the centre of the district
- the **River Thames Corridor** - the flat, low-lying alluvial land which forms the corridor of the River Thames between Long Wittenham and Goring and includes the lower reaches of its main tributary, the River Thame
- the **Eastern Vale Fringes** - the easterly part of the 'shelf' of Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand which forms a belt of higher rolling ground between the low-lying vale and the steep Chilterns escarpment
- the **Central Vale Fringes** - the continuation of the Chalk 'shelf', sandwiched between the Chilterns escarpment and the central Clay Vale and Thames Valley, focused upon the denuded arable landscapes around Ipsden
- the **Wessex Downs and Western Vale Fringes** - a tract of mixed landscape lying between the River Thames and the district boundary at the western end of the Clay Vale, comprising an area of low-lying land encircled by the chalk hills of the Wessex Downs and the outlying Sinodun Hills
- the **Chilterns Escarpment** - the distinctive north-west facing slopes and top of the Chilterns escarpment
- the **Chilterns Ridges and Valleys** - the heavily incised dip slope of the Chiltern hills to the north-west of Henley, which forms a distinctive landscape of ridges and valleys
- the **Chilterns Plateau and Valleys** - the southern part of the Chilterns dip slope formed by a gently dipping plateau dissected by an irregular pattern of shallow valleys
- the **Thames Valley and Fringes** - focused upon the corridor of the River Thames around the southern fringes of the Chilterns, including the flat valley floor, the steep valley sides below Goring and the more gentle slopes between Caversham and Henley.

The character areas are shown on Map 2 on page 18. Detailed information about them is contained in the Landscape Assessment. The Landscape Assessment contains enhancement strategies for each of the character areas, the purpose of which is to guide landscape enhancement in the district.

- 3.8** The Council will seek to protect the countryside for its own sake and will give a high priority to retaining the distinctive features of the character areas. In assessing proposals for development, the Council will have regard to the guidance set out in the Landscape Assessment. Development proposals should be integrated into the landscape, protect important local features and where possible contribute to local distinctiveness.



## Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

### Policy C2

~~In the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty the primary aim is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, special landscape quality and distinctiveness of the area. Development which would harm the beauty or distinctiveness of the area will not be permitted. To be acceptable, development must be of a scale and type appropriate to the area, and be sympathetic in terms of its siting, design and materials used.~~

- 3.9 The 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act provides for the designation of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) by the National Parks Commission (now the Countryside Agency). South Oxfordshire contains parts of two AONBs, the Chilterns which was designated in 1965 and the North Wessex Downs which was designated in 1972. Together they form a considerable part of the district and their boundaries are shown on the Proposals Map.

- 3.10** The Chiltern Hills and the North Wessex Downs are part of a broad belt of chalk upland running across England in an arc from Dorset to Yorkshire. The Goring Gap, where the River Thames carves through the chalk escarpment, forms the boundary between the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in South Oxfordshire. Although both areas are chalk upland, their character differs; the Chilterns AONB is generally a more enclosed and wooded landscape than the broader more open uplands of the North Wessex Downs. The Chilterns escarpment in South Oxfordshire is particularly impressive, and the beech woods are justifiably famous.
- 3.11** Designation of an AONB indicates that the landscape is of national significance. The fundamental aim of planning policies in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty and landscape quality, although regard will also be had to the economic and social well-being of the area. Development within, or conspicuous from, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which would be damaging to the beauty or distinctive character of the area, will be strongly resisted. In assessing any proposals for development affecting the character of the AONBs, the Council will have regard to the South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 1998. ~~While the Council will make every effort to accommodate pressures for change and development, the conservation and enhancement of the Areas' outstanding visual character will take priority. Major development will not normally be permitted in the AONBs as this would be inconsistent with the aims of designation. Small-scale developments which comply with the other policies in this plan, will normally be permitted if they are in keeping with the landscape character of the area.~~ Care must be taken to ensure that new development is of a high standard and sympathetic to the local area. Attention will also be paid to the need to landscape the setting of any new building, and to preserve and enhance existing features such as trees and hedgerows.
- 3.12** The Council recognises the importance of maintaining a viable agricultural industry and will work with farmers and landowners to ensure that changes which are subject to planning control respect the beauty of the AONBs, whilst having regard to the economic and social well-being of the area.
- 3.13** The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, places a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce management plans for their AONBs, except in cases where conservation boards exist, in which case the requirement falls on the board. The management plans look at positive ways of enhancing the beauty of the AONBs. The Chilterns Conference prepared the first Management Plan for the Chilterns in 1994. The Chilterns Conservation Board assumed its full duties and powers in February 2005 and adopted the current AONB Management Plan in June 2005. The plan contains a vision and broad aims for the Chilterns, as well as policies covering a wide range of management issues affecting the AONB. Progress has also been made in the North Wessex Downs which established a Council of Partners in 2001. It adopted a Management Plan for the North Wessex Downs in January 2004. The Council has adopted the Management Plans and will do all it can, within its resources, to pursue their implementation to secure a sound future for the AONBs.

## The River Thames and its valley

### Policy C3

**The distinctive character of the River Thames and its valley and the settlements on its banks will be maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced. Proposals for any form of development which detracts from its special character will not be permitted.**

- 3.14 The River Thames and its valley constitute one of the most attractive features of the landscape of southern England. The section of the river between Reading and Oxford is particularly noted for its special visual and environmental qualities which are, for the most part, unspoilt. One of the main features of the river valley is its peace and tranquillity and it is essential that this is preserved. The Council will take great care to protect this special character and in assessing proposals for development which affect the character of the river, it will have regard to the South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment. The river is also important for the biodiversity which it supports and this is referred to later in this section. Policies for the recreational use of the river are contained in Section 5.
- 3.15 Outside settlements, the natural state of the river and its banks should be maintained and therefore proposals for mooring stages and posts, earthworks, and for campshedding the bank will not be permitted, as they destroy natural vegetation and seriously affect the character of the river environment. Where it is necessary to protect the riverbank from erosion, the protective measures should be designed to maintain and enhance the special character of the river and its environment.

## The landscape setting of settlements

### Policy C4

**Development which would damage the attractive landscape setting of the settlements of the district will not be permitted. The effect of any proposal on important local landscape features which contribute to the visual and historic character and appearance of a settlement will be considered.**

- 3.16 The relationship between settlements and their surrounding countryside is a significant element in the character of the area. The links and contrasts between towns and villages and their rural surroundings were often important historically, and the attractive juxtaposition of the two elements is the quintessence of English rural landscapes. The countryside around towns and villages is also highly valued, both visually and for informal recreation. The Council will seek to ensure that the landscape setting of settlements is protected from damaging development. In assessing proposals for development which would affect the landscape setting of a settlement, reference will be made to the South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment.

## Protection of agricultural land

### Policy C5

**Development involving the loss of greenfield land, including the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) will not be permitted unless there is an overriding need for development that cannot be accommodated on previously developed land. Where**

**development of agricultural land is necessary, poorer quality land should be developed in preference to higher-quality land, unless other sustainability criteria outweigh the need to protect high-quality agricultural land.**

- 3.17 The presence of best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as grades 1, 2, and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification) should be taken into account alongside other sustainability considerations when considering planning applications. Where significant development of agricultural land is unavoidable, poorer quality land should be used in preference to that of a higher quality, unless sustainability considerations indicate otherwise. These considerations can include factors such as biodiversity, the quality and character of the landscape, amenity value or heritage interest, accessibility to infrastructure, workforce and markets, maintaining viable communities, and the protection of natural resources, including soil quality. If any undeveloped agricultural land needs to be developed, any adverse effects on the environment should be minimised.
- 3.18 This policy to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land will also apply to development for 'soft' uses such as golf courses, as a return to best-quality agricultural use is seldom practicable. When assessing proposals for development of all grades of farmland, the Council will also take into account the ability of the remaining land on the holding to be farmed efficiently and the effect of a development on the operation of an adjoining agricultural holding.

## Biodiversity

- 3.19 South Oxfordshire contains a wide variety of wildlife habitats including river valleys, drainage ditch networks and worked-out wet gravel pits, ancient hedgerows and woodlands, and a diverse agricultural use of land. To the north of the district lie the wooded remnants of the former Royal Forest of Shotover and the herb-rich grassland of Otmoor. Much of the district's remaining woodland is ancient, especially in the Chilterns, although the Chilterns also has considerable areas of more recent woodland. These areas of woodland developed following enclosure in the nineteenth century or have been deliberately planted to supply the furniture industry over the past 200 years. Unimproved chalk grassland or downland now survives only in isolated pockets. Nonetheless, the district holds the largest total area of this resource in Oxfordshire. The most extensive areas are near Aston Upthorpe and Moulsoford in the North Wessex Downs, and at Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve in the Chilterns.
- 3.20 Riverside marshes on the Thames near Cholsey and South Stoke provide important breeding, roosting and overwintering sites for birds. The marshes at Cholsey also support a significant population of Desmoulin's Whorl Snail. The floodplain of the Thames and its tributary the Thame extends over the central area of the district. Some meadows on neutral soils survive along the Thames downstream of Oxford, notably near the Wittenhams and Dorchester. The seven, waterfilled, former gravel pits in the Dorchester lakes complex are of ornithological interest and amenity value.
- 3.21 In 1994 the [UK Biodiversity Action Plan](#) (BAP) was published, which set out a programme for the conservation and sustainable use of the country's biological diversity, and identified a range of 'priority' habitats and species of at least national importance. In response to the UK Action Plan, Oxfordshire produced its own [Action for Wildlife](#) local BAP framework. This refers to seven priority habitats: woodland; neutral meadows and grazing marsh; chalk and

limestone grassland; farmland; heathland; wetland and towns and villages. South Oxfordshire has examples of all seven priority habitat types within the district. The local BAP is supplemented by a series of Habitat Action Plans and Species Action Plans which provide more detailed information on local biodiversity. Further information is contained within Appendix 5 of a study commissioned by the Council entitled Priorities for Nature Conservation 2000, which includes a desk-top audit of the nature conservation resource in the district. An investigation into the landscape character and biodiversity resources of the county has been published in The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS). These publications should be used as guidance on biodiversity issues within the district.

- 3.22** Traditionally planning for biodiversity has focused on the protection and management of designated sites and the protection of endangered species. Whilst this is extremely important, the Government recognises that planning needs to take a widened perspective of biodiversity. This includes seeking opportunities to reverse habitat fragmentation through the positive management of features of the landscape, and by using landscape features to build good quality habitat into new development where possible. The maintenance and establishment of wildlife corridors is particularly important in facilitating the movement of species between areas of habitat and encouraging viable populations of plants and animals.
- 3.23** The Council currently operates a Landscape Conservation Scheme where grants are available towards planting and maintenance of trees, woodlands and landscape features for amenity purposes. Under this scheme the Council will encourage the planting of predominantly native deciduous trees in order to enhance the landscape. Details of this scheme are available from the Council's Forestry Officer. The Council can also provide small scale funding for nature conservation projects, and will encourage all sections of the community to be involved in enhancing the biodiversity interest of their local environment. Further information about this scheme is available from the Council's Countryside Officer.

## Biodiversity conservation

### Policy C6

**In considering proposals for development, the maintenance and enhancement of the biodiversity resource of the district will be sought. Full account of the effects of development on wildlife will be taken. Where there is any significant loss in biodiversity as part of a proposed development, the creation and maintenance of new landscape features, habitats, habitat links and wildlife corridors of appropriate scale and kind will be required to ensure there is no net loss in biodiversity resources.**

- 3.24** The Council will seek to ensure that there is no net loss in biodiversity resources, and where appropriate it will seek gains for biodiversity, when considering development proposals. The Council's approach will include avoiding the loss of or damage to key sites. This is covered in more detail in Policy C7. In addition, where appropriate, conditions will be imposed to protect biodiversity resources from the effects of development. Where there is any significant loss in biodiversity the Council will, through the use of conditions or planning obligations, require the creation of new landscape features and habitats, habitat links and wildlife corridors, which are of equal or greater ecological value than that which is lost. The Council will also consider using its powers to enter into management agreements under Section 39 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. Where appropriate, the Council will monitor

the management prescriptions for key habitats as part of an agreed management plan. Advice will also be sought from English Nature, the County Ecologist and other relevant organisations, as appropriate.

- 3.25** Even where the loss of countryside or open land is relatively small it is important to take full account of the effects upon biodiversity. The cumulative effect of a number of small-scale developments may seriously damage the integrity of habitats or habitat networks. Likewise, even the smallest opportunities for habitat creation can be significant and can make a contribution to the overall resource.
- 3.26** An ecological appraisal will be required by the Council wherever it is considered a proposed development could have any potential adverse effects on biodiversity interest, particularly priority habitats and species. It is the responsibility of the developer to undertake an ecological appraisal to ensure that habitats, species protected by law and landscape features will not be harmed by a proposed development, and to establish how any new landscape features and habitats can be designed to complement and integrate with existing features in and around the site. The appraisal should provide adequate information about the effects of the proposed development on the biodiversity value of the site and affected areas, and be used to design any new habitat to create links or stepping stones between existing habitats, where possible. Further information concerning landscape and habitat design is available in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.

## Protection of designated sites

### Policy C7

**Development that is likely to adversely affect a Special Area of Conservation, National Nature Reserve or Site of Special Scientific Interest will not be permitted. On locally designated sites of nature conservation importance, development that would damage biodiversity interest will not be permitted unless the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the site and unless the loss can be mitigated.**

- 3.27** PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation states that, "Plan policies and planning decisions should aim to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests. In taking decisions, local planning authorities should ensure that appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance; protected species; and to biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment". The hierarchy of nature conservation designations is set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.28** There are four candidate Special Areas of Conservation in the district, including Little Wittenham, Hartslock Wood, Aston Rowant and the Chiltern Beech Woods. English Nature has also designated 38 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the district and those containing priority habitat are listed in Appendix 2. All these designations are shown on the Proposals Map. The sites are designated because of their flora or fauna, or because of the geological or natural features which they possess. The publication: Sites of Special Scientific Interest in Oxfordshire, produced by English Nature in 1997, provides a detailed description of each SSSI, its particular scientific value and a list of operations which are likely to damage the special interest of the site. Owners and occupiers of these sites have a duty to give four months' notice to English Nature of their intention to carry out potentially harmful operations. The Council has a statutory duty to consult English Nature when

development proposals are submitted which could affect a National Nature Reserve or an SSSI. PPS9 states that, "Where a proposed development on land within or outside a SSSI is likely to have an adverse effect on an SSSI (either individually or in combination with other developments) planning permission should not normally be granted". Further information concerning procedures affecting SSSIs is provided in an English Nature publication entitled: Sites of Special Scientific Interest and in ODPM Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system.

- 3.29** Local Nature Reserves are statutorily designated sites of at least local importance for nature conservation. Unlike SSSIs and National Nature Reserves, these sites are designated by local authorities under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. They are often highly valued by local people and are designated for their local interest. They are listed in Appendix 2.
- 3.30** County Wildlife Sites are significant in the county context. The County Council has identified approximately 79 County Wildlife Sites in the district and they are listed in Appendix 2. These sites are based on information provided by English Nature, the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and other nature conservation bodies. English Nature has also prepared an inventory of ancient woodland sites throughout Oxfordshire, and the Council will seek the views of English Nature on proposals relating to a site in this inventory. There are no Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) in the district.
- 3.31** On some sites of local interest it may be possible to permit development if a replacement habitat is secured. However, many wildlife habitats have taken many decades, and in some cases centuries, to establish and are therefore irreplaceable. Development which would damage such sites will not normally be permitted particularly where the site supports priority habitats and species.

## Species protection

### Policy C8

**Development that would have an adverse effect on a site supporting a specially protected species will not be permitted, unless damage to the ecological interest can be prevented through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations.**

- 3.32** In addition to important habitats, there are a number of individual plant and animal species that are specially protected by law, primarily because of their endangered status. 'Specially protected species' which are rare or threatened in Europe are protected under the Habitats Regulations 1994. Those species which are rare or threatened nationally are identified in Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended), and some, such as badgers, are protected under their own legislation. Other species have been identified by the Government in response to Section 74(2) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. Lists are available from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Information about species found in South Oxfordshire that are included in the shortlist of globally threatened and declining species, and locally rare species are contained in a series of Habitat Action Plans. Certain species, such as otters and water voles also have their own Species Action Plan. It is important to protect these species from potentially damaging development.

- 3.33** Species such as barn owls and bats, can sometimes be threatened by proposals to re-use old or redundant buildings. Where protected species are present or are likely to be present in buildings proposed for conversion or alterations, the Council will require the developer to carry out a species survey in consultation with English Nature and the report of survey will accompany the planning application. English Nature will advise the Council how it considers that the application should be determined. Where species protection measures can be sensitively incorporated into the development or where the relocation of the species is a practical option, planning permission may be granted. A developer must obtain a site licence from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) before carrying out any activity in connection with a development that would affect bats, except where the activity is to take place within a dwelling house.

## Landscape features

### Policy C9

**Any development that would cause the loss of landscape features will not be permitted where those features make an important contribution to the local scene, and/or provide all or part of an important wildlife habitat and/or have important historical value. Where features are retained within the development site, conditions will be used to ensure that they are protected during development and have sufficient space to ensure their survival after development.**

- 3.34** Landscape features include woodland, trees, hedgerows, lakes, ponds, river corridors, minor watercourses and drainage ditches. These features are important for their landscape and amenity value and contribute to the local distinctiveness and character of an area. They can also form all or part of a wildlife habitat or network of features and often have important historical value. Ancient trees can be of particular value to wildlife and further information about these and other habitats and species is provided in the Habitat Action Plans which form part of the Local Oxfordshire BAP.
- 3.35** The Environment Agency produces Local Environment Action Plans (LEAPs) which provide a framework for protecting and enhancing the local environment around a specific river catchment. The LEAPs for the catchment of the Rivers Thames, Pang and Wye, Thame Valley, and Thames and Ock, all provide important information when considering the effect of development proposals upon the water environment in the district.
- 3.36** Trees, either as individual specimens, groups or areas of woodland, make an outstanding contribution to the landscape. They add beauty, colour and seasonal change to the built and rural environments and they are highly valued for their commercial and biodiversity importance. In a wider sense, they also have a role in influencing climatic change by acting as a sink for atmospheric pollution. Although matters to do with tree planting and felling are generally beyond the scope of the District Council, there are a number of areas within its influence. These include the control of tree felling and pruning in conservation areas, making Tree Preservation Orders, protecting existing trees and requiring new planting on development sites, commenting on tree felling licences and giving grants for small-scale amenity planting.
- 3.37** The Council will protect trees of significant amenity importance which are worthy of retention and considered to be at risk, by making Tree Preservation Orders. These Orders, however, cannot be made on areas of woodland which are subject to management

agreements with the Forestry Authority. Generally trees protected by an Order can be felled or have works carried out to them only with the consent of the Council. When trees have to be felled, the Council will normally require replanting, preferably with a tree of the same species, unless an alternative would be more suitable.

- 3.38** Similarly, when new development takes place, the Council will normally impose conditions to ensure the retention of important trees and hedgerows. The Council will also require the protection of trees during the development process. Further guidance on this is available from the Council. If development would result in the loss of important trees and hedgerows, planning permission will normally be refused. Exceptionally, where the approval of a development involves the loss of landscape features, the Council will require replacement features to be provided and maintained on or near the site. Where this involves the felling of a tree, replacement trees should be provided. These exceptions will only be permitted where a feature is in decline, has a limited number of years of life, or the need for the development outweighs the loss incurred.
- 3.39** The Council has control over tree felling, lopping or pruning in conservation areas, on trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders and when covered by a condition on a planning permission. Proposals for tree felling, lopping or pruning which would seriously diminish the visual quality of the area, will normally be opposed. When considering applications to carry out such work the Council will take account of good arboricultural practice, the effect of the trees on nearby properties, and the contribution they make to the visual quality of the area.
- 3.40** Owners wishing to cut down more than a certain volume of timber must generally apply to the Forestry Authority for a tree felling licence. There is close consultation between the Forestry Authority and the Council on felling licences, especially in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Council recognises that trees are a commercial crop that will need to be felled and replanted, and the Council will negotiate with the Forestry Authority to ensure that felling is carried out in a way which minimises the effects on the landscape. While proposals for felling which would seriously diminish the quality of the landscape will normally be opposed, the Council will try to ensure that good management practice is introduced to maintain the long-term visual quality and wildlife interest of woodlands, to the best effect.
- 3.41** The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 require landowners to issue the local planning authority with a 'Hedgerow Removal Notice' before removing a hedgerow. The Council has the power to issue a 'Hedgerow Retention Notice' where a hedgerow is deemed important. Hedgerows are an essential part of the rural landscape and they provide a valuable refuge for a wide variety of plants and animals. Many of them are of historic interest because they demarcate ancient boundaries. They provide windbreaks and assist in reducing soil erosion. They can also provide excellent natural screening to soften the impact of development on the landscape. In the past many hedgerows have been removed to improve the efficiency of farms, and others have been lost through neglect, poor management and stubble burning. However, the value of hedgerows is now being recognised and stubble burning is now illegal. New hedgerows are being planted as farmers recognise their value and grants are available from DEFRA.
- 3.42** The Council will encourage landowners and farmers to retain and regenerate existing hedgerows and to plant new hedgerows where appropriate. The Council will also encourage landowners to allow saplings to establish in hedgerows and grow to maturity. Where a planning permission results in the removal of a hedgerow the Council will ensure

new planting with a mixture of species natural to the area. In some cases planning permission may be refused if a proposed development would result in the loss of an important or ancient hedgerow. The Council is willing to advise on the proper management and planting of hedgerows and can also provide small scale funding under the Landscape Conservation Scheme referred to in paragraph 3.23.

### The Chilterns woodlands

- 3.43** The Council supports the effective management of the Chilterns woodlands. The majority of trees in the Chilterns are old and few are young and healthy enough to remain as features while new crops take their place. A very high proportion of the woodlands were established in the early to mid-nineteenth century and many have been allowed to grow to maturity and beyond, without controlled replacement. From the age of about 130 years beech trees start to deteriorate. This process starts earlier and can be more rapid on the poorer soils of the scarp and coombe sides. The woodlands continue to be threatened by grey squirrels which strip the bark from tree trunks during their mating season in spring. This can destroy or severely restrict the growth of young, thin-barked trees such as beech and sycamore.
- 3.44** The Chilterns Conservation Board recognises in its Management Plan: [A Framework for Action 2002](#) the lack of appropriate management of the Chiltern woodlands which has been a problem for many years. It recognises that without controlled clearance and replanting, very large areas of woodland will continue to decline within a short space of time. The Management Plan contains a number of policies which seek to encourage better and active management of existing woodlands. The Council endorses these policies and will support the planting of mixed woodlands including beech, oak, ash, hornbeam, wild cherry and hazel. Beech will be favoured in certain locations where it is desirable for amenity reasons and when the site is suitable and grey squirrel control is likely to be effective.

### The Green Belt

- 3.45** The retention of the special historic character of Oxford is one of the fundamental objectives of planning policy in Oxfordshire. The special character of Oxford is comprised not only of the University buildings themselves and the views of the "dreaming spires" from the surrounding hills, but also the wedges of open land which extend along the floodplains of the River Thames and Cherwell into the City, and the general area of attractive countryside which surrounds the City and creates its wider setting. The scale of activity in this area is an important determinant of its character. Any significant increase in the level of activity will result in increased pressures for development which threaten the character and setting of the City.
- 3.46** For over thirty years land in the north-west quadrant of the district around Oxford has been designated as Green Belt, where there is strict control over new development. Formal proposals for a Green Belt around Oxford were made in 1958. In 1975 the Secretary of State approved the outer part of the Green Belt but an extensive inner area was left as interim Green Belt pending the adoption of local plans. The Central Oxfordshire Local Plan, adopted in 1992, finally defined the boundaries of the Green Belt within South Oxfordshire and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan made no changes to these boundaries.

- 3.47 The Oxfordshire Structure Plan states that within the Green Belt around the built-up area of Oxford, land will be kept permanently open and development severely restricted. The purposes of the 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 coalescence of settlements
  - assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
  - assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

### ~~The extent of the Green Belt~~

#### ~~Policy GB1~~

~~The special character and landscape setting of Oxford will be protected by a Green Belt, the boundaries of which are shown on the Proposals Map.~~

- 3.48 ~~The Green Belt boundaries shown on the Proposals Map are those adopted in 1992. The Council considers these boundaries to be entirely appropriate in that they were endorsed by the Inspectors at the Local Plan Inquiries in 1991 and 1994, meet the objectives of the Oxford Green Belt as set out in the Structure Plan, and satisfy the designation criteria defined in Government advice.~~
- 3.49 ~~PPG2: Green Belts, advises that where existing local plans are being revised and updated, existing green belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the structure plan have been approved, or other exceptional circumstances exist, which necessitate such revision. The Oxfordshire Structure Plan states that circumstances were not so exceptional as to justify a review of a Green Belt so recently fully established. No changes have, therefore, been made to the Green Belt boundary in this plan.~~

### New buildings in the Green Belt

#### ~~Policy GB2~~

~~Within the Green Belt the construction of new buildings will not be permitted except for the following purposes:-~~

- ~~(i) agriculture and forestry (unless permitted development rights have been withdrawn);~~
- ~~(ii) essential facilities for outdoor sports and recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;~~
- ~~(iii) the limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings where consistent with Policies H12 and H13;~~
- ~~(iv) limited infilling in existing villages which have an adequate range of services and facilities provided it complies with the requirements of Policy H5; and~~
- ~~(v) limited affordable housing provided it complies with Policy H10.~~

~~The major developed sites of Oxford Brookes University, Culham Science Centre, No 1 Site, Culham and Sandford Sewage Treatment Works are considered in Section 9.~~

- ~~3.50 Within the Green Belt the basis of development control is a presumption against inappropriate development. This is set out in Policy GB2 which also sets out the forms of development which, under certain circumstances, may be acceptable within the Green Belt. This policy reflects the advice given in PPG2 Green Belts.~~
- 3.51 The construction of buildings for agriculture and forestry is considered in Policy A1. Essential facilities, ~~as set out in criterion (ii) above,~~ should be genuinely required for uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The purposes of the Green Belt are set out in paragraph 3.47 above. The limited extension of dwellings is also not inappropriate development provided that it complies with the criteria in Policy H13 and with the policies in Section 4 of this plan. The replacement of existing dwellings need not be inappropriate, providing the new dwelling is not materially larger than the dwelling it replaces and the proposal meets the criteria in Section 4. Proposals for replacement dwellings outside villages should comply with Policy H12 and the policies in Section 4. The Council's policy for affordable housing on 'exception sites' is set out in Policy H10.

### Changes of use of existing buildings

- 3.52 Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings are covered by Policy E8 in Section 6. Proposals for the change of use of buildings within settlements will be considered against the policies for the use proposed and policies in Section 4.

### ~~The use of land in the Green Belt~~

#### ~~Policy GB3~~

~~Within the Green Belt the carrying out of engineering and other operations and the making of any material change in the use of land will not be permitted unless the openness of the Green Belt is maintained and there is no conflict with the purpose of including land within the Green Belt.~~

- 3.53 ~~This policy reflects the advice given in paragraph 3.12 of PPG2, as revised. It covers any development in the Green Belt other than the erection or change of use of buildings, and emphasises that development will only be appropriate if it maintains the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The purposes of the Green Belt are set out in paragraph 3.47 above. Proposals should also be considered against other policies in the plan relating to the use proposed and to the general policies which apply to all forms of development.~~
- 3.54 ~~Outdoor sport and recreational uses are often sought within the Green Belt. In some cases these uses, particularly where they involve associated car parks, floodlights and/or ancillary structures, can have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt and accordingly would be inappropriate development.~~

### Visual amenity

#### Policy GB4

Where new development is permitted, either within or where it would be conspicuous from the Green Belt, it should be designed and sited in such a way that its impact on the open nature, rural character and visual amenity of the Green Belt is minimised.

- 3.55** This policy reflects the advice given in paragraph 3.15 of PPG2. The Council considers that, although the primary aim of green belt policy is to keep development within the Green Belt to a minimum, some development will take place and it is essential that such development, either within or just outside the Green Belt, should be most carefully designed and sited so that its impact on the character of the Green Belt is minimised.
- 3.56** One of the purposes of the Oxford Green Belt is to protect the special character of Oxford and its landscape setting. The University City can be best appreciated from certain elevated viewpoints, and such views of Oxford's spires, towers, pinnacles and domes in a setting of trees and green fields are justifiably celebrated.
- 3.57** The protection of the skyline and townscape of Oxford has been a policy of Oxford City Council since it produced its report High Buildings in Oxford in 1962. This described certain well-known viewpoints which are accessible to the public. One of these is within South Oxfordshire on the Elsfield Road, just south of Elsfield village. The District Council will support the City Council in seeking to protect this view of the skyline of Oxford. There are, of course, other views of the City which are worthy of similar consideration.

## The Historic Environment

### Introduction and historical background

- 3.58** The geology of South Oxfordshire is varied, with limestone in the north west around Oxford giving way to clay in the central vale, and then to chalk in the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs to the south. This varied geology has naturally had its effect on the building materials traditionally employed locally. In the south east, soft red brick and flint are the most commonly used building materials, but in the south west there are many houses and cottages of timber-framed construction. In the stone belt around Oxford, limestone is used, although it is often the friable clunch, a chalkstone formerly used throughout the district as a local building material. Cob or baked earth is also found, most usually in boundary walls, but also in cottages and farm buildings.
- 3.59** Thatched roofs, traditionally of long straw with plain, flush ridges, are a common sight in the district and there are also many attractive clay tile roofs and some tile hanging. Slate, too, makes its own contribution, particularly in towns, and there are some stone slate roofs in the north of the district.
- 3.60** **Henley-on-Thames** is one of the most important historic towns in Oxfordshire. It is sited by a prehistoric ford over the River Thames where two ancient route-ways converge, but the topography of the town centre as it survives today is predominantly that of the planned town, founded in the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries. The approximate area of the medieval town is bounded by New Street to the north, Friday Street to the south, the river to the east and the upper end of Market Place to the west. It is characterised as a planned town by its rectilinear layout, the regularity of its house plots and the width of the principal commercial street, extending from the east end of Hart Street to the present Market Place. Competition for space was a common feature of town life in the Middle Ages, every property owner in the centre of the town wanting to have a frontage onto one of the chief commercial streets. This led to the creation of long narrow plots of land, known as burgage plots after the townsmen or burghers who occupied them. The frontages of these plots, especially those on the main street, were often used for shops, usually with living accommodation above which extended to the rear. Behind the main building were ancillary outbuildings,

some connected with the keeping of livestock, while the rear of the plots was often used for the digging of cesspits and domestic refuse pits.

- 3.61** The chief economic importance of Henley in the late Middle Ages was as a collecting centre for grain grown in the Upper Thames Valley and its shipment to London. This trade continued into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and, coupled with the development of the malting industry and the town's new importance as a coaching halt, resulted in a period of considerable prosperity. During the eighteenth century several houses were built in the fashionable Georgian style, but even more characteristic of the time was the re-fronting in brick of earlier timber-framed buildings, many examples of which are to be seen in the centre of the town.
- 3.62** Despite a period of marked economic decline in the mid-nineteenth century, the arrival of the railway in 1857 provided some impetus for expansion, mainly to the south of the historic core. Even more important, however, was the increasing number of visitors attracted to the town by the river, especially after the creation of the Henley Regatta. This quickly led to the redevelopment of the river frontage, which previously had been occupied by warehouses associated with the grain shipping business. The private boathouses along Wharfe Lane are a striking symbol of the new recreational role for the river. The increasing demand for middle-class housing was met by the creation of the St Mark's estate in the late 1880s, while the large Edwardian houses in Norman Avenue are clearly influenced by Sir Frank Crisp's idiosyncratic Friar Park of 1896.
- 3.63** **Thame** stands at the centre of an ancient road network. The original settlement was sited by the crossing of the River Thame in the area around the Prebendal House and the parish church of St Mary. New Thame was founded by the Bishop of Lincoln on a site to the east of the old village, probably in the second half of the twelfth century, and a market charter was granted for the new development in 1215. This action seems to have had the desired commercial effect and Thame quickly developed into a flourishing market town. A survey of 1230/34 records 63 burgesses paying a shilling rent for their strips, and by 1258 the number had increased to 76.
- 3.64** The circumstances of the foundation of Thame as a medieval new town have clearly left their mark on its present-day topography and still make a substantial contribution to the town's interest and character. As a planted commercial speculation on some 50 acres of undeveloped land, it was deliberately planned to provide a generous market area in the principal trading street. The area of the medieval market was concentrated at the point where the principal street forms a considerable bulge. This is a characteristic feature of many deliberately planned medieval market towns. Originally the area would have been occupied simply by stalls and covered booths, the predecessors of the modern weekly market, but as early as 1221 there were permanent encroachments in the middle of the street. This occurred particularly in the area now bounded by Buttermarket to the north and Cornmarket to the south and is a clear indication of the market's early success. It is significant that some of Thame's earliest surviving buildings, such as The Bird Cage and the former Saracen's Head, are sited in this area, which is characterised by its high-density development and narrow interconnecting alley-ways. Another typical feature of Thame's medieval past, as at Henley, are the burgage plots. In Thame they survive on both sides of High Street and Upper High Street, those on the south being defined to their southern boundary by Southern Road, the original back lane, which serviced the rear of the plots.

- 3.65** In addition to the exceptional significance of its plan, Thame is also an exceedingly attractive market town. The historic buildings in the town centre range in date from at least as early as the fifteenth century down to the end of the nineteenth century. They include a number of rare survivals, such as several cruck-framed buildings, as well as the more obviously interesting examples of their periods like The Bird Cage and Spread Eagle inns, and the polite town-houses at No.15 High Street and No.13 Upper High Street. A number of earlier buildings were refronted in brick in the eighteenth century or in stucco in the nineteenth century and, following the arrival of the railway in 1858, the ubiquitous Welsh slate and Victorian bricks made their own contribution to the appearance of the town, especially in the suburbs of Park Street and East Street.
- 3.66** **Wallingford** has a long history, with evidence of prehistoric and Roman occupation, but it was probably not until the late ninth century that it became a major settlement. This is the original date of the surviving earthwork defences and the town is mentioned in the Burghal Hidage (c.919), which lists defended strongholds in Wessex. The creation of the defensive rampart and ditch was accompanied by the formal laying-out of an internal street pattern. By the time of the Domesday Book (1086) the town was of some importance with its own mint and market. The survey mentions 491 houses, some of which were destroyed by the building of the Norman castle in the north-east corner of the town. The castle was used as a royal residence from the early thirteenth century until c.1385, when it began to fall into decay.
- 3.67** Indeed, the town itself had begun to decline from its former importance as early as the mid-thirteenth century, reaching its nadir in the mid-seventeenth century following the siege of the re-occupied castle and the destruction of houses in the Civil War. Happily, revival stirred in the nineteenth century with the opening of railway connections and in recent years Wallingford has once more become a prosperous small market town.
- 3.68** Much of the town's early medieval topography is reflected in its street pattern and open spaces. The extensive earthworks of the castle and the masonry fragments of the College of St Nicholas survive in the north-east corner of the town and in the north west lay the Benedictine priory of Holy Trinity. In addition to the chapels attached to the castle and priory, there were at one time at least 11 parish churches, only 3 of which survive. Many fine buildings of all periods remain in Wallingford. The George Hotel is a good example of a later medieval timber-framed structure and No. 18 High Street has a fourteenth-century vaulted undercroft. The Town Hall (1670) is the centre piece of the rejuvenated Market Place and, as one would expect, there are many attractive eighteenth and early nineteenth-century re-frontings of earlier buildings, both here and in the other principal streets of the town.
- 3.69** **Didcot** is mainly a nineteenth-century creation. The arrival of the Great Western Railway in 1839 and the creation of a junction at Didcot in 1844 had a profound influence on the development of the town, the results of which remain clearly visible to this day. The station was built about half a mile to the east of the existing village and the development which followed was initially concentrated in the immediate environs of the junction. A link between the nineteenth-century railway village of Northbourne and the station complex of hotels, corn exchange and coal depot did not come until 1903, when the Railway Company constructed the long row of terraced housing on the west side of Station Road. At about the same time the Broadway began to be developed for housing. By the 1930s the Broadway had become the principal shopping centre for the town, serving the new residential areas which had grown up to the south during the previous decade.

- 3.70** All these momentous changes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries took place in an area surrounding the original village, but largely separated from it. Even the modern estate developments of the 1950s onwards were principally confined to those pockets of open farmland which still survived at that date and by and large avoided an excessively urban encroachment on the nucleus of the village. In consequence, it is one of the unexpected charms of Didcot that the village character of the medieval settlement survives unimpaired, even though it is surrounded on all sides by the visible evidence and the causes of its post-industrial expansion. The area of the old village is well defined by the parish church of All Saints to the north, the principal surviving farm houses of Smith's Farm and Manor Farm to the west, and Blagrove Farm to the east, and the track which links Lydalls Close to Lydalls Road to the south. This area contains the great majority of Didcot's listed buildings.
- 3.71** **South Oxfordshire's villages** are long established and form an essential part of the district's character. These range from former small towns like Dorchester and Watlington to isolated hamlets like Mackney and Stoke Talmage. Likewise, there are several important country houses, such as Mapledurham, Thame Park and Woodperry House, which lend distinction and interest to the landscape.

## Listed buildings

### Policy CON1

**Proposals for the demolition of any listed building will not be permitted.**

- 3.72** Listed buildings are a finite resource and an irreplaceable asset. Along with other physical survivals of the past, they are, in the words of PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment, "to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of national identity... Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside". The guidance in paragraphs 3.16, 3.17 and 3.19 of PPG15 will also be taken into account in considering any schemes involving the demolition of listed buildings.
- 3.73** The statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest is drawn up by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and is administered by the District Council as local planning authority. Buildings on the list are categorised at Grades I, II\* and II as an indication of their relative importance. For the purposes of the local plan policies, 'listed building' has the same meaning as in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 i.e. it includes curtilage structures. This means that specific consent is required for any demolition or any alteration or addition which affects the character of the building as a building of special architectural or historic interest. The carrying out of such works without listed building consent is a criminal offence which could attract stringent penalties including, in certain circumstances, imprisonment.
- 3.74** It is important to realise that internal works can affect the character of a listed building just as surely as alterations to the elevations, and consequently they are subject to the same legislation. The Council's Conservation and Design Team will be pleased to advise individual owners as to whether listed building consent is necessary for any particular works. Listing is a continuous process and the standards are revised from time to time. A major national resurvey was carried out between 1984 and 1988, which increased the

number of listed buildings in the district to 3,273. However, the lists are not closed and additions will be sought when new discoveries are made or as perceptions of that which is architecturally or historically valuable change. Where a building is considered to be under threat from proposals to alter or demolish it, the Council may protect it by serving a Building Preservation Notice or by requesting the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to 'spot-list' the building.

- 3.75** The list for Henley was last revised in 1974 and the town was not included in the resurvey of the lists for the remainder of the district. Consequently, the list is somewhat out of date by current standards. Some of the 62 buildings included on the 'local list' in 1974 (a category which has no legal significance) might be considered to be of listable quality by the current criteria, but the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has no plans to resurvey Henley in the foreseeable future. In these circumstances, the Council will appraise the architectural and historic character of any building on the 'local list' which is the subject of an application for planning permission and, where appropriate, will press for its inclusion on the statutory list in order that it is adequately protected.
- 3.76** PPG15 recognises that successful conservation is directly linked to economic prosperity. Historic buildings should be seen as an asset. Not only is the preventable loss of historic fabric through neglect a waste of economic as well as environmental resources, but also by ensuring attractive living and working conditions and encouraging inward investment, informed conservation plays a major role in the continuing economic prosperity or regeneration of an area. Historic buildings and areas are also of vital significance for tourism, leisure and education. Most historic buildings remain capable of a beneficial use. With a little imagination and determination there are few buildings which cannot be sympathetically adapted to modern needs so that they can continue to enhance their surroundings. Arguments for demolition based on the dilapidated condition of a building are generally the result of neglect of normal maintenance procedures and seldom stem from any inherent structural fault that cannot be eradicated. The owner of a listed building has a responsibility to ensure that the building is maintained in a sound condition. If an owner of a listed building fails to maintain it properly the consequences are serious for building and owner alike as the Council has the power to serve an Urgent Works Notice or Repairs Notice on any owner who neglects a listed building. In the latter case this could result in the compulsory purchase of the property. The Council will make full use of its powers under the Act to serve Repairs Notices and Urgent Works Notices to prevent the neglect of listed buildings.

## Alterations and extensions to listed buildings

### **Policy CON2**

**Any extension to a listed building must be appropriate to its character, must be sympathetic to the original structure in design, scale and materials and must not dominate or overwhelm it.**

### **Policy CON3**

**Any alteration to a listed building must respect its established character and not diminish the special historical or architectural qualities which make it worthy of inclusion on the statutory list.**

- 3.77** Proposals affecting listed buildings must always be justifiable. As stated in paragraph 3.4 of PPG15 "(applicants) will need to show why works which would affect the character of a

listed building are desirable or necessary. They should provide the local planning authority with full information, to enable them to assess the likely impact of their proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and on its setting." The Council will expect all applications for listed building consent or related planning applications to include a description of the proposals with a reasoned justification for them and specifications, drawings and illustrations at an appropriate scale which allow the impact of the proposals to be assessed against a full understanding of the special architectural and historic qualities and features of the building and its setting. Where this is not done, the Council will not register applications for listed building consent and related planning applications until the required information is provided. Further information on this point can be found at paragraph B.3 (Annex B) of PPG15.

- 3.78** The threat to the intrinsic character of an historic building by unsympathetic alterations or additions is a serious one. Great care must therefore be taken when considering alterations to a listed building to ensure that the features which made it worthy of listing in the first place are not destroyed, nor the building's special architectural and historic character diminished by the proposal.
- 3.79** When proposing alterations to a listed building it is important to respect its established character and any extension should generally be subservient to the original structure. In achieving this aim, careful attention must be paid to the design, bulk and materials of any proposed extension, which should always complement rather than overwhelm or directly compete with the listed building. In most cases the solution will be sought through the use of traditional materials and design but there may be instances where contemporary materials and design will be appropriate.
- 3.80** Most listed buildings are capable of being extended sympathetically in a manner which respects the character and form of the original building, but it should also be recognised that some buildings (especially small buildings such as lodges, tollhouses and some cottages) are not. Such structures often rely on their small scale and architectural simplicity for their importance and cannot be extended without fundamental diminution of these special qualities.
- 3.81** It should also be realised that in order to protect their essential agricultural character many listed farm buildings, especially large former threshing barns, will not be regarded by the Council as suitable for residential conversion.
- 3.82** Equal care must be taken in carrying out alterations to a listed building, even where these works might appear relatively minor. The undesirable effects of sealed-unit double-glazed windows, particularly where manufactured of uPVC or aluminium, on the character of historic buildings are now widely recognised. Similarly, the appearance and long-term maintenance of historic buildings can be severely compromised by inappropriate pointing or cleaning techniques and the painting of previously unpainted brickwork or stonework.
- 3.83** The interiors of listed buildings (whatever their grading) are protected by law and, as PPG15 makes clear, their alteration is subject to the same controls as those which apply externally. The character of a building can be eroded just as surely by the removal of internal walls, fireplaces and staircases, or the substitution of original doors and cornices by modern ones, as it can by more obvious alterations to the outside.

- 3.84** South Oxfordshire is an area rich in thatched buildings and in recent years there have been considerable advances in promoting the use of traditional thatching materials and methods with the result that plain, flush ridges and other traditional detailing are again frequent sights in the district.
- 3.85** In order to accord full weight to these issues, all of which are subject to control through the need for listed building consent and in recognition of the advice contained in paragraph 2.5 of PPG15, the Council has produced a guidance note [Repairs to Historic Buildings](#).

## Use and changes of use of listed buildings

### Policy CON4

**A change of use of part or the whole of a listed building will be permitted only if its character and features of special architectural or historic interest would be protected. Proposals for a change of use should incorporate details of all intended alterations to the building and its curtilage, to demonstrate their impact on its appearance, character and setting.**

- 3.86** As PPG15 makes clear, "the best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings is to keep them in active use". Frequently, this will be the original use but not all uses will now be viable (nor in some cases desirable) and "in principle the aim should be to identify the optimum viable use that is compatible with the fabric, interior and setting of the historic building".
- 3.87** While this calls for flexibility and imagination on behalf of the local planning authority in considering schemes for re-use, it also needs to be recognised that some proposals may not necessarily be regarded as compatible with the building's character. Assessing the best use for a listed building is one of the most important and sensitive judgements that those involved in conservation have to make. In balancing the economic viability of possible uses against the effect of any changes to the special architectural and historic interest of the building, the Council will ensure that the latter is safeguarded. Where planning permission is required for a change of use, the Council will not permit a use which is likely to be damaging to the character of the building or its fabric. In instances where major alterations to a building are likely to be made as a result of a new use, a planning application for change of use is unlikely to be determined without an accompanying application for listed building consent. Proposals for the change of use of rural buildings will also be considered in relation to Policy E8.

## Enabling development

- 3.88** In response to the increasing number of applications involving listed buildings where the issues of viability and enabling development are key issues, English Heritage has produced the policy statement, [Enabling Development and the Conservation of Historic Assets](#). This makes it clear that permission for 'enabling development' should only be granted where the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal meets a number of strictly defined criteria. Permission should not be granted unless a convincing case can be made that the benefits substantially outweigh any disbenefits, not only to the historic asset and its setting, but to any other relevant planning interests of acknowledged importance.
- 3.89** The Council will be guided by this policy statement and will take it into account in determining proposals for 'enabling development'.

## The setting of listed buildings

### Policy CON5

**Proposals for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will be refused.**

- 3.90** The setting of a listed building is often an essential feature of its character. This applies not only when gardens or grounds have been laid out as an integral part of the design, or where the building forms part of an attractive street scene or rural landscape, but also to instances when proposed development would reduce the area of land historically associated with the building. Many historic buildings in South Oxfordshire, including those of modest vernacular origin, such as smallholders' cottages, were often built on plots larger than those enjoyed by modern houses of comparable size and such plots are frequently crucial to their character and setting. Proposals to sub-divide these plots for development are often damaging to the setting of the listed building and can divorce it from its original context. Detailed consideration will therefore be given to the effect that any development proposals would have on the character and setting of a listed building.
- 3.91** It is not only development directly adjoining a listed building which can adversely affect its setting. For example, many of the district's churches are prominently sited and important in the wider landscape and even development some distance away could have an impact on their setting. Most of these buildings are listed at Grade I or II\* and particular care will therefore be needed to protect their surroundings.

## Conservation areas

- 3.92** Conservation areas are described in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Inevitably, these areas will be of many different kinds, ranging from landscaped parks surrounding a historic country house to urban terraced streets or small wayside cottages fronting onto common land. Pleasant groups of buildings, open spaces, trees, an historic settlement pattern, a village green, or features of archaeological interest, may all contribute to the special character of an area, and it is that character, rather than individual buildings, which conservation area legislation seeks to preserve and enhance.
- 3.93** The designation of a conservation area is a positive process. It does not imply that no further development or change will be permitted within the area, but rather that in considering any development, the Council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the area. Any proposals will be measured against the policies contained in the plan.
- 3.94** The boundaries of all designated conservation areas in the district are shown on the Proposals Map. There are different planning controls in conservation areas and anyone proposing development should seek advice at an early stage. The main differences are that in conservation areas specific consent from the Council is needed before any building or part of a building with a volume of more than 115 cubic metres can be totally or substantially demolished, and there is a requirement to give the District Council six weeks' notice of any intention to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy any tree of more than 75mm (approximately 3 inches) in diameter. All planning proposals which are

considered to affect the character of a conservation area will be advertised in the press as well as on site.

- 3.95** PPG15 and accompanying advice from English Heritage place great emphasis on the value of detailed definition and assessment of a conservation area's special character, both as a sound basis for local plan policies and development control decisions, and to assist in the formulation of proposals for the preservation or enhancement of the area. Approved as supplementary planning guidance and used as evidence of the Council's objective appraisal of a conservation area, they are also useful in the determination of planning appeals. For all of these reasons, the Council has embarked on its own series of Conservation Area Appraisals, based on the model advocated by PPG15. Amongst other features, the studies identify important open spaces, views, trees, walls, archaeological constraints and "Buildings of Local Note", both in text and map form. Sections covering the history and established character of the area are followed by separate Management Plans containing proposals for preservation or enhancement of the area.

## Proposals affecting a conservation area

### Policy CON6

**Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only if the loss of the building would not adversely affect the character of the area and, where appropriate, if there are detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment of the site.**

- 3.96** Although the legislation does not impose any excessively onerous planning controls, the Council has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. To this end, it is unlikely that consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted unless the removal of the building would preserve or enhance the character of the area, or unless there are detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment of the site. This general presumption against the demolition of buildings in conservation areas includes, but will not necessarily be limited to, buildings identified as "Buildings of Local Note" in the Council's Conservation Area Character Appraisals.

### Policy CON7

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

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

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

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

- 3.97** New buildings in conservation areas cannot be considered in isolation but must be seen as part of a larger whole, as worthwhile additions to an area which already has an established and recognised character of its own, and they must be designed to respect and to be in sympathy with that character. Accordingly, in most cases, the Council will ask for detailed plans and drawings to be submitted so that the impact of the proposed development on the special architectural and historic character of the area can be fully assessed. As with extensions to listed buildings, the use of contemporary materials and design will not be ruled out, but it will always be the character and appearance of the area as a whole and the proposed building's ability to blend with that whole which will be of paramount importance.
- 3.98** The traditional building materials used in the district have been described in the introduction to this section. If the existing character of the district is to be conserved, any new structures within conservation areas should generally be in sympathy with these materials. Where brick is considered to be the correct material for a new development, only that which is of a suitable quality, colour and texture should be used. Where stone is appropriate, only natural stone, laid in the traditional manner and using a lime mortar, will be acceptable. In some instances it will be appropriate to mix materials on a new development or in an extension to an existing building but due regard must always be paid to the predominant traditional building materials of the area or structure concerned. In all cases the materials used should be of the highest quality.
- 3.99** Properly pitched roofs are an essential part of the character of the district's conservation areas and the Council will seek to perpetuate this traditional form of roofing. Steeply-pitched thatched roofs are of long straw or combed wheat reed (or exceptionally of water reed) and where tiles are used (whether new or reclaimed) it is important that they are hand-made and of the right colour and texture. Roofs with a shallower pitch are usually clad in natural slate and its continued use, often in conjunction with thatch or tile on the same building, will be encouraged by the Council.
- 3.100** Whether predominantly low-density or high-density, rural or urban, the open spaces between buildings can often be as important an element in the character and appearance of a conservation area as the buildings themselves. This can apply not only to areas of public open space, such as urban parks, recreation grounds or village greens but to privately-owned gardens, where it is not only that which is clearly visible from the street which is important but the perception of open space behind a wall or hedge which contributes to the character and appearance of the area as a whole. Development on the edge of or outside a conservation area, which would damage its character and appearance will not normally be permitted.

### **Conservation area enhancement**

- 3.101** Under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council has a statutory duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. The Council has carried out a number of environmental improvement schemes in the past, usually in partnership with town and parish councils and it has made budgetary provision for further schemes. Some redevelopment schemes carried out by the private sector have also enhanced particular conservation areas. A good example of this is the recent replacement of the large concrete extension on the west side of the former Field and Hawkins store in Wallingford by a more sympathetic development in the form of five separate traditional buildings. Statutory undertakers can play an important role in the enhancement of conservation areas by, for

example, removing unnecessary signs and by siting overhead wires underground. Statutory undertakers will be urged to make such improvements where possible. Individual property owners, too, can play their part, perhaps by considering a co-ordinated repainting scheme in co-operation with their neighbours (although it should be pointed out that there may be occasions where this could require listed building consent) or simply by taking extra care over the regular maintenance of their properties. The Council realises that the conservation of the physical fabric of its towns must involve the co-operation of all concerned, not least the property owner and occupier. The Council's Conservation and Design Team will be pleased to discuss any proposals at a preliminary stage.

**3.102** Street furniture, lighting, signs and the floorscape can make a vital contribution to the character of a conservation area. In terms of floorscape, efforts will be made to retain or reintroduce, where appropriate, traditional surfaces such as stone paving. Where new surfacing materials are used, the texture and colour should be sympathetic to the setting. An example of this is shown to good effect in the paved lay-bys in Nuneham Courtenay. It is particularly important that those who carry out work disturbing existing surfaces, should reinstate those surfaces using materials in keeping with the local, historic character of the area. In carrying out its duty to maintain and improve the public highway, the County Council, acting as local highway authority, should consult the District Council on proposed streetworks in conservation areas and take the District's views on the appropriateness of such works into account before proceeding with them. The County Council will also be encouraged to use smaller road traffic signs and narrower yellow lines in conservation areas, wherever possible.

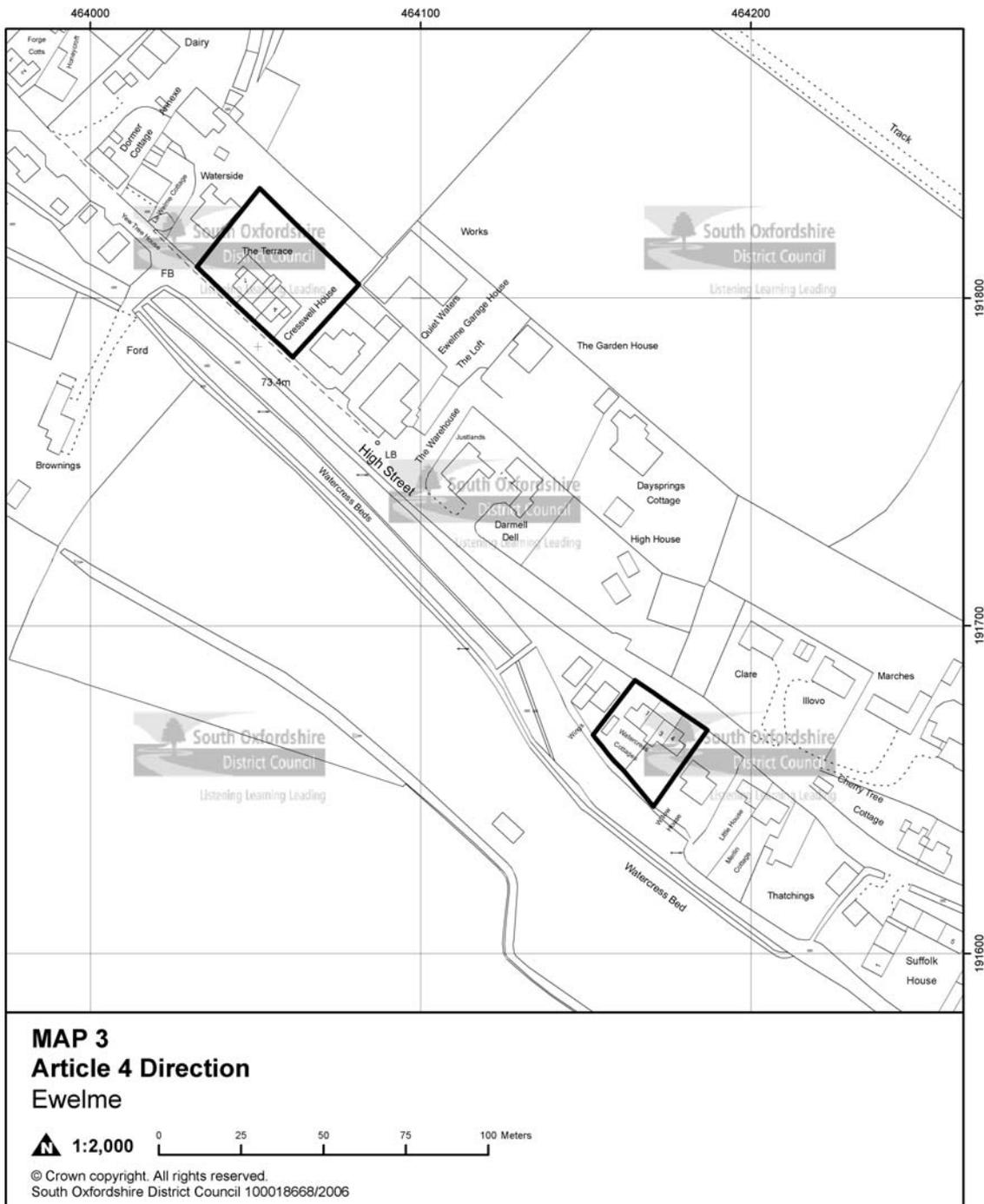
**3.103** In certain circumstances, grant aid for schemes of enhancement might be available from English Heritage under the terms of Section 77 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, but as the eligibility for national funds is governed by stringent criteria, applicants are advised to liaise with the Council before proceeding with an application. Indeed, while the Council will be pleased to offer advice on all conservation matters, it is important to recognise that the best guardians for the protection of any particular area will be the inhabitants themselves. Accordingly, the Council will give sympathetic consideration to any specific proposals presented by parish councils for the enhancement of individual conservation areas. At a time of severe restraint on public expenditure, it would be unrealistic to expect that any costly schemes would be implemented easily, but in most cases local energy and enthusiasm could be sufficient to carry out significant improvements at minimal cost.

#### **Article 4 Directions in conservation areas**

**3.104** There are several areas in Wallingford which are subject to a Direction under the provisions of Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1963. The effect of the Direction is that certain minor works which are usually permitted development require express planning permission. The Direction was imposed in order that the pleasing harmony and contribution to the landscape of these areas was not impaired. Owners and residents in these areas are urged to seek advice from the Council if they are contemplating any works to their property. The specific areas are shown on the Proposals Map.

**3.105** In 1903 the Great Western Railway Company built the cottages and houses in Station Road, Didcot, linking the private railway village of Northbourne with the railway junction. Not only were these company houses carefully designed as an architectural group, but they

were also laid out on strict hierarchical lines with the ordinary workmen housed in the terraces of six units, the engine drivers in the larger terraced units at the north end, and the foremen and inspectors in the detached houses. The cottages and houses are largely unaltered externally, retaining their original unpainted brickwork, roofing materials and windows. The special character of the area was recognised by its designation as a conservation area in 1982. Nevertheless this character could easily have been lost through permitted development rights. As a result of this potential threat, the Council served an Article 4 direction on the area in 1992. The area is shown on the Proposals Map. The terms of the Direction should ensure that the special historic character of this conservation area is maintained and with this end in view, the Council will be sympathetic to requests for grant aid in the repair and reinstatement of original windows, doors and other features.



- 3.106** In 1999 the Council served a similar Article 4 Direction on two late 19th-century terraces in Ewelme Conservation Area, as shown on the Proposals Map and Map 3 on page 41. In addition, the long-standing legal agreement between the Council and owners of the buildings in Nuneham Courtenay does much to provide the right level of protection for the unique character of this well-known model village. The Council will make full use of its powers to serve other Article 4 Directions in appropriate cases should the need arise.

## Advertisements in conservation areas and on listed buildings

### Policy CON8

**Consent will not be granted for the display of signs on a listed building or in a conservation area which are in any way harmful to the character and appearance of the building or area. Where it is accepted that a sign is needed, it should generally be non-illuminated, made of natural materials and to a design and scale reflecting the best traditional practice.**

- 3.107** Most of the commercial centres of the district's historic towns lie within their conservation areas and the advertisement of the services available is essential to their prosperity. However, it is important that this should not be at the expense of the town centres' unique historic character, which clearly accounts for much of their attraction. The Council, therefore, will exercise the strictest control over advertisements to ensure that the character and amenity of the historic town centres are not adversely affected, and the same considerations will apply in the case of historic village centres.
- 3.108** Illuminated advertisements (particularly those which are internally illuminated) seldom improve the appearance of an area and can have a detrimental effect on the buildings to which they are attached. Any increase in this form of advertising will be discouraged. Similarly, the flimsy and unsatisfactory appearance of plastic lettering can be seen on a number of shop fascias in the historic towns of the district. No matter how well designed the individual letters are, they rarely succeed in enhancing the building and often appear cheap and shoddy in comparison with more traditional methods. All new shop fascias should be made of natural materials and, where appropriate, legends should be signwritten. Detailed information on appropriate forms of advertising is set out in the Council's guidance document [Traditional Shopfront Design Guide](#). Advice should therefore be sought from the Council's Conservation and Design Team before any advertising is carried out on the exterior of any building in a conservation area.
- 3.109** The amount of advertising appropriate to a particular building will always depend on individual circumstances. Where a building of character has been converted from residential to commercial use, it is important that any necessary signing should be as discreet as possible if that intrinsic character is to be preserved. In the case of an office use a small brass plaque may suffice, whereas it may be more appropriate for a shop to be advertised by a small hanging sign. Each case will be assessed on its individual merits.
- 3.110** The display of signs on a building which is listed for its architectural or historic interest can damage the character of the building. Listed building consent will normally be required for signs even if no consent is necessary under the Advertisement Regulations. The character and appearance of a conservation area may similarly be greatly harmed by unsuitable signs. However, the Council recognises that there will always be a need to advertise commercial or retail premises. The Council's design guidance on traditional shopfronts and advertisements, referred to above, is intended to offer helpful advice in this regard.

## Blinds and canopies in conservation areas

### Policy CON9

**Permission will not be granted for the installation of blinds or canopies of non-traditional form or materials on buildings within conservation areas.**

- 3.111** Traditionally, many of the shops in the district's historic towns shielded their windows from the sun by retractable canvas blinds which sometimes carried the name of the establishment. Some of these survive to enliven the street-scene. However, the recent trend for shiny plastic canopies, especially of the 'wet-look' type, which are principally aimed at carrying additional advertising material and drawing attention to the premises, often appear as alien and intrusive features, and do not respect the more subtle traditions of the historic towns. The detrimental effect is compounded where the canopies are of semi-circular or elliptical form which create a prominent extension in front of the building to which they are attached. In certain circumstances some of these features can be erected on unlisted buildings without the need for planning permission, but, on listed buildings particularly, the Council will resist any further examples of this inappropriate form of advertising, in order to maintain the distinctive character of the historic towns.

## Burgage plots

### Policy CON10

**In the historic towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford the burgage plots to the rear of the principal streets will generally be protected from amalgamation and from development which by its nature would detract from their historic interest, amenity and nature conservation value.**

- 3.112** The burgage plots of Henley, Thame and Wallingford, which are referred to in the Introduction to this section, represent the original property boundaries of all three medieval towns and are among their principal historic assets. The long narrow strips of these plots, usually enclosed by high brick or stone walls, form an obvious barrier to the over development of the rear of properties and encourage the continued mixture of residential and commercial use, which has always been the traditional pattern in the district's historic towns. In addition to their historical and archaeological significance, the plots are an important haven for wildlife and act as a "green lung" in otherwise densely developed and populated areas. Their presence thus contributes in a variety of ways to the special character of the towns' historic centres, which would undoubtedly be devalued by their loss or removal.
- 3.113** The principal threat to the towns' burgage plots comes from applications to convert historic street frontage buildings formerly in residential or retail use to offices, such change often being accompanied by proposals to extend the property considerably to the rear. Not only can this frequently overwhelm the historic building in terms of scale and size, but also by extending built development into the burgage plots their essentially open character is by definition compromised. The associated demand for private car parking can lead to pressure for new vehicular accesses through historic walls or for amalgamation of the burgage plots themselves into larger property boundaries to accommodate extra car parking or further development to the rear. Even where this does not occur and the car

parking can be contained within the original plots, their character is harmed by the hard surfacing of former garden areas and their nature conservation value and role as "green lung" spaces severely reduced as a result.

- 3.114** Another major and increasingly common threat to the towns' burgage plots are proposals to erect new dwellings towards their rear. While this "backland" development may in some instances retain the original lines of the burgage plots, their boundary walls, some of which are of considerable historic interest in their own right, are often breached to create vehicular access and are extensively rebuilt. Furthermore, the structural permanence of new built development, where there has been none in the past, is particularly damaging to the open nature of plots undeveloped since the foundation of the towns in the Middle Ages.
- 3.115** The burgage plots of Henley, Thame and Wallingford are not only significant archaeologically and historically as part of their surviving medieval topography but also are part of the continuing life of these towns into the 21st century, thus warranting every effort made to preserve them. A positive way in which their importance could be more widely understood and disseminated is by encouraging public access. Greyhound Walk in Thame has worked very successfully with minimal alteration to the burgage plot as a pedestrian walk-way linking Waitrose to the town centre. In all three towns similar pedestrian links between existing or new public open spaces or buildings will be encouraged, provided that the coherence of individual plots is respected. The approximate extent of the plots is shown on the Proposals Map.

## Archaeology and historic building analysis and recording

### Policy CON11

**There will be a presumption in favour of physically preserving nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings.**

- 3.116** The archaeological heritage is a fragile and non-renewable resource and the Council is responsible for ensuring that archaeological remains are not needlessly damaged or destroyed. The archaeological resource has great social, economic, cultural and educational value for the community and this potential can be developed through suitable management and interpretation.
- 3.117** The archaeological remains in the planned medieval towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford are of considerable importance, the whole of their central areas being of potential archaeological significance. Large parts of Wallingford have Scheduled Ancient Monument status (see below), but the archaeological significance of all three towns was recognised as long ago as 1965 when they were included on the Council for British Archaeology's list of the most important historic towns in the country. There are many other nationally-important archaeological sites in the district, including the Thames gravel terraces, Gatehampton and the area around Dorchester-on-Thames, while most parts of the district contain sites of regional or local significance.
- 3.118** Some archaeological sites and monuments are designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments and are legally protected under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. This Act is administered by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and is not the direct responsibility of the local planning authority. A list of Scheduled Ancient Monuments is set out in Appendix 3. It is important to recognise that in

some instances potential damage to archaeological remains or the setting of an archaeological monument, whether visible or not, will be sufficient to refuse the grant of planning permission.

### **Policy CON12**

**Before the determination of an application for development which may affect a site of archaeological interest or potentially of archaeological importance, prospective developers will be required, where necessary, to make provision for an archaeological field evaluation, in order to enable an informed and reasoned planning decision to be made.**

- 3.119** PPG16: *Archaeology and Planning* stresses that not all important archaeological remains meriting preservation enjoy the special protection provided to Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The Council will need to make informed decisions on development proposals that adversely affect the character or setting of known or potential sites of archaeological interest. Where appropriate, therefore, the Council will require the applicant to provide further archaeological information as part of the application, in order that a reasoned and informed planning decision can be made. Where an archaeological constraint is identified through this process, the onus will be on the applicant to demonstrate how the constraint will be accommodated within the development scheme. The County Archaeological Officer and the County Sites and Monument Record should be consulted at the earliest possible stage to facilitate this process.

### **Policy CON13**

**Wherever practicable and desirable, developments affecting sites of archaeological interest should be designed to achieve physical preservation in situ of archaeological deposits. Where this is not practicable or desirable, conditions will be imposed on planning permissions, or planning obligations sought, which will require the developer to provide an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication by a professionally-qualified body.**

- 3.120** There will be occasions when the in situ preservation of archaeological remains will be outweighed by other considerations and in those circumstances, 'preservation by record', that is excavation and recording, will be considered in mitigation. In these cases, the developer will be responsible for implementing and funding a phased programme of excavation and recording, including the processing and primary research necessary to prepare the excavation archive for presentation in a usable form and producing a full report for publication. More detailed analysis and comparative studies, not essential to the interpretation of the site and the ordering and preservation of the site archive, are not considered a legitimate cost for the developer to bear.

### **Policy CON14**

**Before the determination of an application which affects a building of archaeological or historic interest, applicants will be required, where necessary, to submit a detailed record survey and analysis of the building. In some circumstances, further survey and analysis will be made a condition of consent.**

- 3.121** As PPG16 makes clear, it is important that a local planning authority has a full understanding of the impact a proposal will have on the character of the building involved. In order to gain this understanding, particularly in the case of multi-phased structures or complex proposals, a detailed record survey and analysis of the building will be required of the applicant. This will increase the understanding of the building's fabric and may also help to demonstrate why the proposed changes are considered "desirable or necessary". In such cases, the record survey and analysis will be needed before the application can be determined. Similarly, where proposals to alter or extend historic buildings involve major structural alterations, which will often reveal earlier historic fabric concealed by later work, the need for further recording and analysis will be made a condition of consent.

## Historic battlefields, parks, gardens and landscapes

### Policy CON15

**Proposals which would damage the character, setting or amenities of a battlefield, park or garden of special historic interest, contained in the English Heritage Registers, will not be permitted.**

- 3.122** Historic battlefields, parks and gardens are an important part of the district's heritage and environment and they comprise a variety of features: the open space itself, views in and out, archaeological remains and, in the case of parks or gardens, a conscious design incorporating planting and water features and frequently buildings. The nature conservation value of historic landscapes is also important; for example, over-mature trees can provide scarce deadwood habitats for a number of rare species of beetle and lichen. There is a need to protect such sites and their settings from new development which would destroy or harm them, and to encourage sympathetic management wherever possible.
- 3.123** A number of the most important sites have been included on the English Heritage [Register of Historic Battlefields and Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest](#). The Registers identify sites of national importance and categorise them at grade I, II\* and II. Neither is exhaustive and the local planning authority and members of the public are able to put possible additions to English Heritage, which in 1997 undertook a review of the existing Parks and Gardens Register. Paragraph 2.24 of PPG16 indicates the desirability of protecting such sites from new road schemes and new development generally. The effect of development on historic battlefields, parks and gardens is a material consideration for development control purposes. Registered sites are of national importance, but the district has a number of other sites of regional or local importance which should also be protected from harm, and enhanced where possible. It has not so far been possible to identify all of these but some, such as the landscaped park at Brightwell Baldwin and the formal garden earthworks at Waterstock, have been brought to the Council's attention through development proposals or Conservation Area Character Appraisals and it is likely that others will emerge in similar circumstances. A list of registered battlefields, parks and gardens in South Oxfordshire is included as Appendix 4 and their locations are shown on the Proposals Map. The District Council is statutorily obliged to consult English Heritage on proposals affecting Grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens and the Garden History Society on all grades of parks and gardens.
- 3.124** Work has begun at a national and county level on the definition and assessment of the wider historic landscape. No guidance or designations have, as yet, been produced, but

the Council is keen to ensure that all development which takes place within the district is consistent with and helps to maintain its overall historic character.

## Common land

### Policy CON16

**Proposals for development on or affecting common land, village greens and other important spaces within settlements will not be permitted.**

- 3.125** Commons and village greens are an important part of our heritage, with their ancient rights, customs, wildlife and, in some cases, archaeological remains. For centuries they have provided a place for grazing animals and for informal recreation. They often add greatly to the visual character of villages. The Council will take care to ensure that common land and village greens are not adversely affected by development, including tracks and roads across them. The Council will also protect other open spaces within villages which are important either to the character of the village or for informal recreation. "Common land" and "village greens" in this policy mean those that are registered with the County Council under the Commons Registration Act 1965. A copy of the maps of these areas is held by the District Council.

## Environmental Protection

### Prevention of polluting emissions

#### Policy EP1

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

- 3.126** It is important that certain activities, and particularly activities of an industrial nature, do not injure the amenities of an area or adversely affect or prejudice the use of nearby land. Conversely, pollution-sensitive development such as housing, hospitals, schools, or employment-intensive business uses, should not be located where they may be adversely affected by pollution.
- 3.127** The primary legislation for the control of polluting emissions from development is the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Water Resources Act 1991. PPS23: [Planning and Pollution Control](#), explains that the controls under the planning and pollution control regimes should complement rather than duplicate each other. The Council will consult the statutory bodies and take into account any recommendations made by them relating to the control of any indirect or consequential discharge of polluting substances. The Council will also take into account the wider impact of potential discharge of polluting substances from a proposal on the development and use of land. Assessment of this wider impact may include consideration of the effectiveness of any proposed mitigation measures designed to enable discharges to meet pollution control standards or objectives.

- 3.128** Where appropriate, conditions will be imposed on planning permissions, and planning obligations will be sought to secure the implementation of mitigation measures.
- 3.129** If a development has a significant effect on air quality, or if existing air quality information suggests that further development at a site might lead to breaches of national or international air quality standards, an environmental assessment has to be undertaken. The Council is carrying out a review of air quality in the district in accordance with its statutory duty under the Environment Act 1995.

## Noise and vibrations

### Policy EP2

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

- 3.130** Noise from road traffic, trains, aircraft, helicopters, industrial, commercial and entertainment premises can have serious effects on people's quality of life. In line with PPG24: Planning and Noise, the Council will seek to ensure that the noise created by a development is minimised and that essential development which does cause noise pollution is located away from sensitive locations such as residential areas and the wider countryside. Noise-sensitive developments such as housing, hospitals and schools should also be located away from existing sources of significant noise.
- 3.131** The level of disturbance that is generally acceptable depends upon existing background levels, and the character and duration of the noise or vibration. Where noise associated with a particular development is likely to adversely affect existing or future occupiers, applicants will be required to submit a noise assessment with any planning application.
- 3.132** Where appropriate, the Council will impose conditions to control noise or vibration levels, or place limits on the operating times of an establishment. Noise attenuation measures may also be imposed during the construction period, if it is anticipated that the construction work will create unacceptable levels of noise disturbance in sensitive locations.

## Light pollution

### Policy EP3

**Proposals for new floodlighting and other external lighting that would have an adverse effect on neighbouring residents, the rural character of the countryside or biodiversity will not be permitted, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented.**

- 3.133** Light pollution is caused by a number of factors. These include, sky glow - the orange glow around urban areas, glare - the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a dark background, and light trespass - the spilling of light beyond the boundary of the property on which the source is located. Light pollution is a concern in both rural and urban areas. In the countryside, in particular, it can affect the character of the area by making it appear more urbanised. It can also intrude on the amenity of local residents and adversely affect the biodiversity of an area. The Council will seek to ensure that floodlighting proposals

do not have an adverse effect on adjacent areas and will pay particular attention to safeguarding the character of the Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and SSSIs.

- 3.134** Pollution caused by excessive light can be substantially reduced, without adversely affecting the purpose of the lighting equipment, by directing the light through the use of shields and baffles, switching lights off when not required and by avoiding over-lighting. The Council will expect applicants submitting proposals which include outdoor lighting to provide details of the proposed lighting as part of the planning application. Landscaping measures will be encouraged to screen lighting installations, where possible. The Council will refer to Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution by the Institution of Lighting Engineers, and with respect to sports development, the Lighting Guide issued by the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) and Floodlighting issued by the Sports Council. The Chilterns Conservation Board, in association with the County Council, has produced Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Roads in the Chilterns AONB which provides further guidance on lighting.

## Protection of water resources

### Policy EP4

**Proposals which increase the requirement for water will not be permitted, unless adequate water resources either already exist or can be provided without detriment to existing abstraction, river flows, groundwater flow to and from springs, water quality, biodiversity or other land uses. Proposals which have a significant impact on water resources will be required to incorporate water conservation measures designed to mitigate that impact.**

- 3.135** Thames Water Plc and the Environment Agency will provide advice on the availability of water resources. The demand for water continues to increase and it is appropriate, therefore, that new development minimises the pressure on existing resources. Measures to reduce the demand for water should be incorporated into new development. Reference should be made to the supporting text to Policies D8 and EP6, and to Section 4.5 of the South Oxfordshire Design Guide. Where there is an adverse impact on water resources, planning conditions and planning obligations may be imposed to mitigate the adverse effects of the development and to secure water conservation measures.

## Flood risk

### Policy EP5

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

- 3.136** ~~The Government attaches high importance to the management and reduction of flood risk through the land-use planning process. Flooding can adversely affect the environment, people, their homes and livelihoods. The aim of the Government is to minimise these impacts by avoiding inappropriate development in flood-risk areas and ensuring that new development does not lead to additional flood risk. The Government also wishes to avoid placing an additional burden of responsibility on future generations by an unnecessary increase in the number of areas that need artificial defences against flooding.~~

- 3.137 South Oxfordshire has a number of river valleys in which flood plains must be protected from development. In addition to the risk of flooding to the development itself, development proposals may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere by reducing the storage capacity of the flood plain, by impeding the flow of floodwater and/or causing flooding through excess groundwater. A general objective of the Environment Agency is to maintain and, where practical, restore the capacity of the natural floodplains and washlands of the river system. The policy applies to all forms of development, including landscaping proposals or recreational/leisure developments. Development in functional flood plains will therefore be wholly exceptional or limited to essential infrastructure that has to be there. The Environment Agency's Policy and Practice for the Protection of Flood Plains (1997) provides further guidance.
- 3.138 To achieve these aims, PPG25: Development and Flood Risk, recommends a precautionary approach to development in flood-risk areas using a risk-based search sequence. This approach directs authorities and developers towards sites at lower risk, based on the numerical assessments of risk in use by DEFRA and the Environment Agency. In summary, the risk-based approach to proposals for development in flood-risk areas should take account of:
- the area liable to flooding
  - the probability of flooding occurring both now and over time (taking into account how it might be affected by climate change)
  - the extent and standard of existing flood defences and their effectiveness over time
  - the likely depth of flooding
  - the rates of flow likely to be involved
  - the nature of the development proposed and the extent to which it is designed to deal with flood risk.
- 3.139 The areas at risk from flooding are shown on the Environment Agency's 2001 Indicative Floodplain Maps, which can be viewed on the Environment Agency's website. The Council will be guided by the views of the Environment Agency in assessing the risk of flooding caused by a development. In preparing their proposals, applicants should consult the Environment Agency on the potential risks to their development, the likely effects of their proposals on flood risk to others, and whether mitigation would be likely to be effective and acceptable. They should also carry out a flood-risk assessment and consider the need for flood warning notices/signs in line with Appendices F and G of PPG25. Advice on this is contained in Appendix F of PPG25.

## Surface water protection

### Policy EP6

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

- 3.140** New developments may result in a substantial increase in surface water run-off to watercourses as permeable surfaces are replaced by impermeable surfaces such as roofs and paving. This can cause increased risk of flooding downstream, increased pollution, silt deposition, damage to watercourse habitats and river channel instability. These effects can often be at some considerable distance from the new development. The Council, in consultation with the Environment Agency, the sewerage undertaker and Thames Water Utilities Ltd, will assess the surface water run-off implications of new development proposals. New developments will only be permitted where the Council is satisfied that suitable measures, designed to mitigate effectively the adverse impact of surface water run-off, are included as an integral part of the development.
- 3.141** The Environment Agency encourages the use of source-control techniques in the drainage of new development. These refer to the treatment of a problem as close to its source as possible. Many of these techniques are based on natural processes and involve the creation of attractive landscape features of ecological value. The incorporation of features such as swales, detention ponds, infiltration basins and porous surfaces, wet ponds and reed beds are encouraged, where appropriate. The Construction Industry Research and Information Association's (CIRIA's) Sustainable urban drainage systems - design manual for England and Wales, provides information on controls that can be used to manage surface water run-off. PPG25: Development and Flood Risk (Appendix E) and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide provide further guidance. The Council may also use planning conditions or planning obligations to secure sustainable drainage systems.
- 3.142** Culverting of rivers and watercourses is discouraged because it can increase the risk of flooding and destroy wildlife habitats. Wherever practical and desirable, proposals for development should seek to restore culverted watercourses to open channels. Where culverting is unavoidable and there are no alternatives, the culvert should be restricted to a minimum, and compensation made for any loss of amenity and habitat through environmental improvements. Particular attention should be given to compensating for any loss of wildlife habitat and ensuring that measures are taken to integrate any broken corridors of wildlife, where possible. Land Drainage Consent under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Water Resources Act 1991, is required from the Environment Agency before culverting, damming or weir works are carried out to minor watercourses.

## Groundwater protection

### Policy EP7

**Development that may have an adverse effect upon groundwater resources will not be permitted unless effective preventative measures are taken to ensure that the quality and quantity of these resources are maintained.**

- 3.143** Groundwater resources are an essential source of water for public supply, industry and agriculture. They also supply the base flow of many rivers. Some activities such as disposal to soakaways, disturbance of contaminated land, inappropriate storage of chemicals and oils can result in pollution of the groundwater resources and supplies.
- 3.144** The Council will consult the Environment Agency in making planning decisions regarding proposals that may affect groundwater quality and will refer to the Agency's document Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater (1998). The Council will require a

developer to appraise the impact of development on groundwater and will refuse planning permission where there is likely to be an adverse impact on the quality of groundwater.

## Contaminated land

### Policy EP8

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

- 3.145** Re-using contaminated land is in line with sustainable development objectives in that it recycles land and reduces the need for the development of greenfield sites. PPS23 encourages the re-use of contaminated sites, provided that any risks to human health and the environment are adequately dealt with by the developer. The development proposed, however, must comply with the other policies in this plan.
- 3.146** The Contaminated Land (England) Regulations 2000 and DETR Circular 2/2000: Contaminated Land: Implementation of Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, set out a new regime whereby local authorities must identify contaminated land in their area and where appropriate, require such land to be investigated and any unacceptable risks removed. The Council is currently developing a contaminated land strategy in accordance with the Regulations. Where the local authority has declared land to be contaminated, the liability for remedial work lies primarily with the polluter of that land, or with persons who 'knowingly permitted' the contamination, which includes developers who leave contamination on site. Where such persons cannot be identified, the liability may revert to the owners or occupiers.
- 3.147** In South Oxfordshire the incidence of contaminated land is yet to be assessed, but is believed to be fairly small. In assessing the need for remedial works the Council will take into account technical advice from its Environmental Health service and from other statutory bodies. The Council will adopt a "suitable for use" approach in which the level of remedial action required will be sufficient to overcome risks to human health and the environment, taking into account the actual and intended use of the contaminated land or adjacent land. A balance therefore needs to be struck between the need to bring the land back into use and the risks and liabilities posed by the contamination. Planning permission will not be granted unless the Council is satisfied that adequate and effective remedial measures to remove the risks to human health and the environment will be implemented. The Council will secure remedial measures by the imposition of planning conditions or where appropriate, by seeking planning obligations.

## Hazardous substances.

### Policy EP9

**Development will not be permitted which involves the use, movement or storage of hazardous substances where there would be an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of users of the site, neighbouring land or the environment. Development will not be permitted in the vicinity of an installation involving hazardous substances or activities if the health and safety of occupants of that development would be put at risk by the installation.**

- 3.148** The Council is empowered under the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 to regulate the presence of hazardous substances, so that they cannot be kept or used above specified quantities. Circular 4/2000 Planning Controls for Hazardous Substances, outlines certain industrial and other human activities which use substances that are considered to be a risk to human health, either due to their toxicity or their reactive nature, which can lead to explosions, fire or other potentially-dangerous chemical reactions. Information and advice on the extent of risk, and the storage and treatment of hazardous substances is provided by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Development of new installations where hazardous substances are handled will be carefully controlled. Where hazardous installations exist, the HSE is responsible for notifying consultation zones around such sites. The Council will seek the HSE's view on development proposed in these zones to ensure that no risk is posed to people occupying that development.

### **Minerals and waste**

- 3.149** In 1996 the County Council adopted the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, which contains detailed guidance on the policies and proposals for mineral working and waste disposal in the County up to 2006. The County Council is now working toward producing a Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework which will provide a planning framework extending to 2011 and beyond.
- 3.150** The County Council is responsible for planning control over mineral workings and waste management sites in Oxfordshire. Structure Plan policies provide further policy guidance on these matters. The Council will offer its views to the County Council both in establishing appropriate sites to be allocated for mineral working and waste disposal within the Minerals and Waste Local Plan Review and on planning applications as they arise. The District Council will also liaise with the County Council, landowners, operators and other interested parties to help ensure that appropriate after-uses are found for worked-out mineral workings.
- 3.151** The District Council is working in partnership with the County Council, as waste disposal authority, and other waste collection authorities in Oxfordshire to develop sustainable waste management practices. These new practices will seek alternatives to the land filling of waste in the County through waste minimisation, recycling and composting, often involving new technologies. It is recognised that whilst new waste management facilities will need to be sited close to the sources of the waste in conformity with the Government's "proximity principle", proposals may also raise important amenity and environmental issues. Particular attention will be given to the effect of large-scale waste management proposals in the countryside.



## Section 4 Encouraging sustainable and high-quality development

### Introduction

- 4.1** This section of the Local Plan provides policies relating to the design, quality and overall character of the built environment and seeks to ensure that development:
- is of high quality
  - protects and reinforces those characteristics which contribute to the distinctiveness of the area
  - meets operational standards and safeguards general amenity
  - is provided in a way that is sustainable in terms of its impact on the environment
  - makes provision for the needs that it generates and mitigates the impacts that it has.
- 4.2** Good design can help to maintain and reinforce the character and quality of the district and in so doing, make it attractive for residents and visitors. It can help to maintain or build a sense of community, attract business and investment and assist in achieving a safer and more secure environment. It can also contribute to the long-term protection of the environment and natural resources through the sustainable use of materials, the employment of energy-efficient design and building techniques, and by helping to reduce the need to travel by providing a mix of uses in new development.
- 4.3** In PPG3: Housing, the Government places great emphasis on the importance of good design. It advises local planning authorities to:
- "make more efficient use of land by reviewing planning policies and standards;
  - place the needs of people before ease of traffic movement in designing the layout of residential development;
  - seek to reduce car dependence by facilitating more walking and cycling, by improving linkages to public transport between housing, jobs, local services and local amenity, and by planning for mixed use; and
  - promote good design in new housing developments in order to create attractive, high-quality living environments in which people will choose to live".
- 4.4** In order to assist the interpretation of the policies in this section, the Council has adopted supplementary planning guidance. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG) was adopted in December 2000 and applies to the whole district. At the same time the Council adopted the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide (CBDG) prepared by the Chilterns Conference, which applies to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the southern part of the district. In adopting both Guides, the Council resolved that in the event of any conflict, the SODG would take precedence. The Council has also adopted other supplementary planning guidance in the form of Conservation Area Character Studies as well as advice on shop front design. In addition, over the course of the plan's lifetime, some communities are likely to produce Village Design Statements (VDSs). The Council supports these as an important expression of the community's views on the future development of their local area. The village of Goring-on-Thames has already produced a VDS. In determining planning applications, the Council will have regard to supplementary design guidance and to any VDS relevant to the proposal.

- 4.5 The Council will expect all planning applications, other than small-scale developments such as minor extensions or alterations to buildings, to be accompanied by a Design Statement. This will set out how the proposals take account of the advice in this section and in the supplementary design guidance. In respect of householder applications, applicants should refer to Section 4.6 of the SODG.

## Principles of good design

- 4.6 There are a number of key principles which together provide the framework for achieving good design in new development. New development should also contribute to the distinctive character and sense of place of each part of the district. Some large-scale developments (such as the new housing area at Didcot) will have to be designed to possess their own individual identity, character and sense of place, based on the principles set out in this section and in the SODG. The Council will seek to ensure that the design of development makes a positive contribution to its surroundings and will refuse poorly designed proposals.

## Good design and local distinctiveness

### Policy D1

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

- (i) the provision of a clear structure of spaces;**
- (ii) respecting existing settlement patterns;**
- (iii) providing for a choice of routes and transport modes to, from and within the development;**
- (iv) providing a development that users find easy to understand through the use of landmarks, vistas and focal points;**
- (v) providing landscape structure as a framework for new development;**
- (vi) respecting the character of the existing landscape;**
- (vii) respecting distinctive settlement types and their character;**
- (viii) providing good quality site and building design and appropriate materials; and**
- (ix) providing well-designed external areas.**

- 4.7 Larger-scale developments should be designed with a clear network of linked and accessible public spaces and places which provide a focus for activity, assist in creating legible layouts and contribute to the character of the development. New large-scale developments should include an identifiable "heart" or primary public space. Its location should be marked by principal buildings, a concentration of facilities and by increased building heights to give a greater sense of enclosure. Larger-scale schemes should also incorporate secondary public spaces which include special features, such as public art and landmarks, to indicate their importance and function. Other incidental open space should also be incorporated in smaller schemes, and may be included in streets and courtyards and as a focal point in a development. All open space should be integral to the development and located and designed with a clear function or purpose in mind. The

Council will resist proposals that include poor quality or inaccessible areas of public space, that lack a function or that appear as space simply left-over from the development.

- 4.8** Modern housing layouts rarely match the established patterns of traditional settlements and often only serve to emphasise the difference between the old and the new. New development should respond to the local pattern of streets and spaces, follow the natural topography and take account of traditional settlement form. The arrangement of plots and buildings on a site should reflect the established layout and grain of adjacent areas, and provide links to adjoining development in the form of vehicle, cycle and pedestrian through-routes. The Council will resist developments based on the branched form of street pattern and suburban housing types that has been common in new housing over the past 25 years. Culs-de-sac, linked to a tree-like road system will, therefore, no longer be generally acceptable as an approach to the development of a site.
- 4.9** In order to be successful, new development should be easy to get to and from and should be designed so as to allow a choice of routes through it. To create a development which is 'permeable' in this way, will largely depend upon designing the maximum number of links to surrounding areas; maximising the number of routes through an area; ensuring that the routes provided are capable of being used by a range of transport modes; and limiting the size of development blocks, particularly near the primary public spaces. Blocks should be designed so as to allow adequate access for emergency and service vehicles, such as refuse lorries.
- 4.10** The protection or creation of landmarks, vistas and views can help people to understand a place and to find their way around. This legibility comes from the clarity of the layout of a place and the ability to appreciate what activities are being carried out in certain places - where key facilities are located, for example. Legibility will largely depend upon varying street widths, ensuring that landmarks are widely visible and providing key buildings. Other important elements include ensuring that there are strong sightlines towards and into public spaces, that important views are protected or created and by ensuring that buildings are designed to express their function and significance. On larger developments, it will also be important to establish a hierarchy of public spaces.
- 4.11** It is important that a well-defined open space and landscape structure is created as a framework for new development. The scale of the framework will need to relate to the scale of the development but, in the case of large-scale developments, many functions can be carried on within it. These include recreation (both formal and informal), tree planting for amenity, shelter and screening, woodland for amenity and carbon fixing, natural areas to enhance biodiversity, surface water run-off disposal and movement corridors. The landscape/greenspace structure is as important as the design of the buildings themselves in defining the character and quality of places and should not be treated as an afterthought. The SODG gives detailed advice on the level of structural greenspace to be provided in new developments.
- 4.12** New development in the district will be required to take into account its context in relation to both the wider and local landscape character and setting. The character of the built environment in South Oxfordshire has traditionally been closely related to the character of the landscape. In more recent years, however, this relationship has been weakened and, in some cases the link between settlements and their local landscape character has been lost. In formulating proposals for development, account should be taken of the district-wide

Landscape Assessment.<sup>1</sup> The SODG highlights the broad landscape influences upon the built environment of South Oxfordshire and provides more detailed analysis of settlement form and character in relation to local landscape context. Proposals for new development should have regard to this advice.

- 4.13** New development will need to take into account the structure and character of the settlement. The SODG identifies distinctive settlement types in the district and contains advice on the factors which help define their character. The guide defines four basic settlement types: linear rural settlements with a loose structure; nucleated rural settlements with a tighter, regular structure around a central open space; urban settlements with a dense structure; and settlements with a unique or strong character. Settlement character is often difficult to define but is likely to be a reflection of a number of different elements. These might include the density or 'grain' of the settlement (including the arrangement of open spaces), the road structure and street pattern, the relationship of buildings to each other, the building line, and the treatment of boundaries between public and private areas. The settlement type and key characteristics relevant to it should be taken into account in the design of new development.
- 4.14** In terms of the detailed design of the site and buildings, attention should be given to retaining and reinforcing the topography of the site and any particularly interesting features it contains, such as hedgerows or trees and any local landmarks. The scale of development should be in keeping with adjoining development and with the size of the plot. Building forms should be kept as simple as possible and should reflect the general relationship of buildings to the street in the local area - for example, reflecting the gable end or main elevation facing the street. Inspiration should be taken from locally distinctive styles and local building traditions. With regard to entrances to sites and vehicle access, care should be taken to ensure that the character of the area is respected and that existing site boundaries are not disrupted unnecessarily. In the detailed design of the building and the use of materials, reference should be made to local architectural themes or traditions, to paragraph 4.28 of this section and to the detailed advice contained in the SODG. The Council will encourage high-quality innovative design where it is appropriate for the site and its setting.
- 4.15** The design of hard and soft landscape and external areas around buildings is very important in defining the character and quality of places and should be treated as an integral part of the design process. The Council will resist proposals which fail to take into account existing site features such as trees, hedgerows, topographic features and waterbodies, or which fail to include appropriate hard and soft landscape details which will help to integrate the development into its surroundings. Further information regarding landscape and habitat design is available in the SODG and from Council officers. In addition, careful thought should be given to the way in which different types of space are demarcated and the materials that are used to achieve this. Surface treatment will vary, for example, between different types or classes of roads and between roads, footpaths and cycle tracks. Careful consideration also needs to be given to the way in which private and public space is defined and maintained and to the boundary treatments and frontages of sites.

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<sup>1</sup> South Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment 1998, South Oxfordshire District Council

## Vehicle and bicycle parking

### Policy D2

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

- 4.16 With the increase in private car ownership and the requirement to provide adequate car parking, it has become increasingly difficult to secure developments which are not dominated by parking spaces or garaging. The SODG provides detailed guidance on how to incorporate the car into new development. Where possible, parking should be accommodated on the development plot and located to the rear, side or, alternatively, underneath buildings rather than to the front. Communal parking areas should be well overlooked by adjoining development and well related to the properties they serve. In housing developments, garages should be of sufficient size to accommodate some storage space to avoid cars being displaced into external areas. The Council's Standards for car parking, disabled parking and cycle parking are set out in Appendix 5. Proposals which fail to provide discreet, adequate, safe and secure areas in which to park vehicles will be resisted.

## Plot coverage and garden areas

### Policy D3

**A private outdoor garden or outdoor amenity space, or alternatively a shared amenity area should be provided for all new dwellings. The amount of land to be used for the garden or amenity space will be determined by the size of the dwelling proposed, by the character of surrounding development and by plot coverage standards. Private outdoor sitting areas should not be overlooked by adjacent outdoor sitting areas, living/dining rooms or kitchens.**

- 4.17 The relationship of a building with its plot is critical to how well it fits in with neighbouring development and to its impact on the overall character of the street. The extent of plot coverage also determines the external area available for private garden space. This policy and the SODG seek to ensure that reasonable standards of private amenity space are provided in new developments. The SODG contains guidelines in respect of the maximum area of a plot that should be developed for different types of dwellings, and the recommended minimum size of garden that should be provided, with the size relating to the number of bedrooms in the proposed dwelling. Used on their own, these standards would lead to uniform plot sizes and shapes which pay little regard to the character of the area. This policy, however, requires the character of the site and the surrounding development to be taken into account in determining the appropriate garden area, as well as the type of dwelling that is being provided. It also requires that garden and outdoor sitting areas are designed so as to provide a reasonable degree of privacy.
- 4.18 Government advice in PPG3 states that local planning authorities should avoid inflexible planning standards whilst also creating places and spaces with the needs of people in mind (paragraph 56). In addition, the Government encourages more sustainable lifestyles. The Council therefore considers it important that new developments are provided with an amenity space that is of an adequate size to serve the needs of occupants and that

sufficient outdoor space is available to allow those who so wish, to lead more sustainable lifestyles. In drawing up the recommended standards set out in the SODG the Council has had regard not only to the size of the proposed dwelling but also to the types of activities and uses that occur in gardens and the space requirements that these uses give rise to. The following list is not intended to be exhaustive but gives an indication of the uses and activities that should be taken into account when designing garden areas. The uses include: a private sitting-out area; a space where cycles and outdoor implements can be stored; space to store bins for recycling and rubbish; a play or activity area for children away from traffic and where parents can ensure their safety; an area to dry washing; space for a water butt, grey water recycling (underground) and a compost heap; space to plant vegetables; space for pets.

- 4.19** The issue of the loss of garden area when extending a dwelling is dealt with under Policy H13. Schemes involving the conversion of existing buildings to residential in town centres, conservation areas or affecting listed buildings may be exempted from the recommended standards if all other relevant policy criteria are met.

## Privacy and daylight

### Policy D4

**All new dwellings should be designed and laid out so as to secure a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupiers. Development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight.**

- 4.20** New dwellings should be designed to ensure adequate privacy for existing and new residents to enable them to enjoy their homes without undue intrusion from neighbours or from the public. Buildings should also be orientated within their plots to maximise daylight, passive solar gain and sunlight to garden areas and to avoid overshadowing of adjoining dwellings. These objectives can be achieved by careful siting of properties, by ensuring that there are adequate distances between properties and through the erection of screen walls and fencing. The SODG contains detailed guidance. It is recognised that in high-density housing schemes, overlooking distances may not be so readily achievable. Innovative design approaches will therefore be sought to provide acceptable standards of privacy on the private side of dwellings.

## Promoting mixed-use development

### Policy D5

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

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

- 4.21 In accordance with Government guidance in PPS1 and PPG3, the Council will seek to retain and encourage mixed-use development in appropriate locations for social, economic and environmental reasons. Although it will not always be possible to achieve minimum operational standards in mixed-use developments, a satisfactory living and working environment must be achieved. Innovative design solutions to create successful developments will therefore be sought. Section 7 contains detailed advice regarding mixed use in town centres and reference to this section should therefore be made in respect of such proposals.

## Design against crime

### Policy D6

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

- 4.22 It is important that new developments are designed and laid out in such a way as to reduce crime against persons and property. The incorporation of the principles and guidelines set out in the SODG will help to create high-quality developments which will be less susceptible to crime. New developments can be designed so as to provide for informal surveillance of streets and open spaces without resulting in loss of privacy in adjacent buildings. The careful siting of street lighting with illumination at an appropriate intensity will help to improve surveillance of public areas after dark. Security of developments will be assisted by providing a clear distinction between public and private space and by ensuring that spaces have a well-defined function. Developers are also encouraged to produce developments which achieve the Police Secured by Design Award.
- 4.23 With regard to improving shop front security, the Council has produced guidance on effective measures which do not spoil the appearance of buildings or harm the character of the area. Developers and shop owners are referred to the advice contained in the guidance.

## Access for all

### Policy D7

**Proposals for new buildings to which the public have access must include in their design and external layout appropriate measures to ensure adequate access for those with impaired mobility, hearing or sight. The safety and access requirements of those with impairments should also be taken into account in the design and layout of new roads, parking areas, footways, pedestrian routes, cycleways, traffic management measures and pedestrian-priority areas.**

- 4.24 People with disabilities, for example those with sensory impairments or physical disabilities, often experience unnecessary difficulties in their contact with the built environment. In the design of new development it is important to make provision for their access requirements. This policy also recognises that a more accessible environment would be of benefit to the elderly, those with infants in pushchairs, or young children. Access issues include access to and into buildings from streets and parking areas, the design and layout of roads and pedestrian-priority areas.

- 4.25 Developers are referred to the SODG and to the Local Authority Building Control publication Designing for People with Disabilities which provide further guidance.

## Minimising adverse impacts on the environment

- 4.26 The United Nations Framework Convention on Climatic Change in Kyoto in 1997 set legally binding greenhouse gas emission targets for developed countries. For the UK the target is 12.5% below 1990 levels by the period 2008 to 2012. The Government also has a manifesto aim to reduce UK emissions of carbon dioxide to 20% below 1990 levels by 2010. The Government sees the planning system as having an important role in helping deliver its targets and goals for climate change. The four main areas of influence are through encouraging energy, water and materials efficient design, and encouraging the use of renewable energy.

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

#### ~~Policy D8~~

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

- 4.27 ~~Ensuring that a development proposal is energy, water and materials efficient is an integral part of the overall design and measures should be considered as part of all development proposals in the district. Section 8 of the plan deals with reducing the need to travel and reducing the need to use the private car by encouraging alternative modes of transport. In addition, the energy efficiency of a development will be affected by building form, design and layout. Applicants should refer to the SODG for more detailed advice on aspects of energy, water and materials efficiency and sources of further information. The Council has published targets for energy conservation in the Major Development Areas at Didcot (see Section 10 of the plan). In accordance with the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, the Council has also produced an Energy Strategy which sets out how it aims to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in the district.~~
- 4.28 In summary, the District Council will seek to ensure that new development:
- ~~● minimises heat loss and maximises the benefits of solar gain from buildings through attention to site layout, dwelling type, orientation, window design, insulation, ventilation and landscape details.~~
  - ~~● minimises embodied energy in buildings through the re-use of existing buildings, designing buildings for long-life with ease of maintenance and adaptability to changing needs and constructing buildings out of local, low-energy and/or recycled materials.~~
  - ~~● minimises water consumption by encouraging storing and collecting rainwater on site and recycling water which has already been used for certain functions. Reed beds can also be planted to clean surface water before it is discharged to watercourses or balancing ponds in a process of recycling. Section 3 of the plan provides further detail on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).~~
  - ~~● makes efficient use of construction materials, including the maximum use of reclaimed construction materials and use of recycled construction and demolition waste.~~

- maximises the recovery of reusable construction materials and the recycling of construction waste in proposals involving demolition and redevelopment.

4.29 Developers are requested to provide information on energy, water and materials efficient design as summarised above, as part of a design statement. In most cases energy-efficient design can be achieved as part of a development without significant change to its appearance. It is important, however, that energy-efficient measures do not detract from the achievement of good quality design which is in keeping with its surroundings. Particular care will be needed when designing proposals that are within conservation areas or which affect a listed building.

## Renewable energy

### Policy D9

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

- 4.30 Renewable sources of energy have an important role to play in reducing the consumption of finite resources and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. PPS22 *Renewable Energy*, identifies a range of renewable energy technologies including onshore wind generation, hydro, photovoltaics, passive solar, biomass and energy crops, energy from waste (excluding mass incineration of domestic waste), and landfill and sewage gas. The Government seeks to encourage renewable technologies through the Non-Fossil Fuel Obligation (NFFO) and has set a target to produce 10% of the UK's electricity supply from renewables by 2010. The Dti report *New and Renewable Energy: Prospects for the 21st Century* gives guidance on possible ways in which this can be achieved.
- 4.31 The Council will also have regard to the Oxfordshire Structure Plan policies in assessing proposals for renewable energy sources. The District Council will encourage the development of renewable technologies in the district provided that they do not have a significant adverse impact on the local and wider environment. Where the impacts of the development are likely to be significant, an Environmental Assessment will be required under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)(England and Wales) Regulations 1999.
- 4.32 *Development of a Renewable Energy Assessment and Targets for the South East* published by GOSE in 2001, provides guidance on the resources and technologies believed to be best suited to the Thames Valley sub-region.
- 4.33 In South Oxfordshire there is potential for the development of electricity-generating plants through the use of wood fuel derived from existing forestry and woodland areas, from coppiced wood grown specifically for the purposes of energy, and from other agricultural residues, such as straw. Electricity generation through such sources will be encouraged provided that the facility is located close to the source of energy and does not have an adverse effect on the local environment. Incineration with energy recovery and landfill gas can be used at waste disposal sites to generate electricity, and more advanced and efficient systems of combustion such as gasification and pyrolysis will be encouraged. These types of facilities are regulated to high standards to control emissions; however, the Council will closely scrutinise the environmental implications of such proposals. The County Council

~~will determine proposals for waste disposal and combustion in accordance with the policies in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Structure Plan.~~

- ~~4.34 There is some scope for wind turbines in the district but this is constrained by the climatic conditions as well as the high-quality landscape. Single or small clusters of turbines could have a role in serving farms or rural communities. The potential for generating energy through waterpower in the district is limited, although weirs on the River Thames hold some potential. Any such proposal would be considered in terms of its effect on visual amenity and the local environment.~~
- ~~4.35 Combined Heat and Power (CHP) stations convert fuels into useful energy more efficiently than conventional large-scale power stations and individual domestic boilers. The opportunity to install CHP and community heating infrastructure could arise where large-scale development is proposed, for example at Didcot, or through small or micro-scale CHP systems or grids.~~
- ~~4.36 Active solar systems that collect solar radiation and transfer it in the form of heat or electricity are encouraged, subject to the criteria set out in the above policy. They include solar panels which collect heat by the passage of water, and photovoltaic cells which convert light into electricity. A leaflet entitled All About Solar Energy for Your Home provides advice on active solar systems and is available from the Council. Planning permission for the installation of solar systems may be required and the advice of the Council should be sought at an early stage.~~

## Waste management

### Policy D10

**Proposals which do not make adequate provision for the management of waste in new developments, including communal and private storage space for recyclables and facilities for the disposal of waste products, will not be permitted.**

- 4.37 The management of waste in new developments is an important element of the design. A design which provides adequate waste management facilities can make it more convenient for occupants to compost or recycle waste. The Council has produced a guidance note for developers about this issue entitled Waste Management (refuse, recycling and street cleansing). Guidance is also contained in the SODG. Developers will be asked to comply with this advice when submitting proposals to the Council for consideration.
- 4.38 On developments in excess of 10 dwellings or commercial developments of 1,000 square metres or more, the Council will seek the provision of recycling banks. On large-scale schemes these may be accommodated underground. The provision of banks and the way in which waste is managed on a development may have implications for the layout of the scheme. The provision of communal waste management facilities in schemes where flats and high density development are proposed also needs careful thought. Applicants are therefore asked to seek advice from the Council at an early stage in the development process.

## Infrastructure and service requirements

### Policy D11

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

- (i) affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;
- (ii) transport measures including infrastructure, public transport services, traffic management and measures for cyclists and pedestrians;
- (iii) education facilities;
- (iv) arts and cultural facilities;
- (v) facilities for the emergency services;
- (vi) public open spaces and associated facilities;
- (vii) community (including social services) and recreation facilities;
- (viii) health care services;
- (ix) local convenience shops;
- (x) measures to allow effective waste collection and recycling;
- (xi) surface water and foul drainage works;
- (xii) measures designed to mitigate the effects of the development on the environment.

Regard will be had to the cumulative impact of development and developers may be required to contribute jointly to necessary infrastructure improvements.

Before planning permission is granted legal obligations must be completed between owners and/or developers and infrastructure providers, securing the provision of land and the payment of financial contributions to the providers to enable the provision and, where appropriate, the subsequent maintenance of essential infrastructure and facilities.

- 4.39 Whilst development brings benefits to the district, it also has an impact on existing infrastructure and facilities and on the environment generally. Before an associated planning permission will be issued, any planning and/or legal obligations that have been sought and agreed must be completed. Tight restrictions on public sector expenditure make it less likely that the Council and other service providers will be able to meet the costs of necessary improvements as a result of development. The District Council will therefore seek to ensure that new development meets the cost of the demands that it places on public services, facilities and the environment. Environmental impacts cover the impact of the development on factors such as landscape, biodiversity, resource use and climate change. The cumulative impact of several small and medium-scale developments in a particular area can place as much pressure on existing infrastructure and services as a single major development. It is important, therefore, that all developments make fair and reasonable provision to offset the additional demands they create, in accordance with Government guidance in Circular 05/2005 Planning Obligations. The County Council, in liaison with

~~local authorities in Oxfordshire, has produced an information guide for developers and landowners Infrastructure and Services Needs for New Development and this should be consulted before planning applications are submitted.~~

- 4.40** ~~Policy D11 contains an indicative list of the types of impact that will need to be mitigated by developers. The developer will be expected to provide facilities, services and infrastructure, or make arrangements to ensure that other agencies make that provision by the payment of appropriate financial contributions. The contribution sought will be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development proposed. The developer's obligations will normally be secured through a legal agreement made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.~~
- 4.41** ~~In the case of the major development on the western edge of Didcot, the Council will seek to ensure that the master developer or promoter assumes responsibility for the management of the delivery of that development, including delivery of all infrastructure, services and facilities made necessary by it. Further information on this obligation is given in Section 10.~~

## Public art

### Policy D12

**On all housing developments in excess of 1 hectare and on all employment or commercial developments in excess of 2,000 square metres gross floorspace, a contribution towards public art will be sought.**

- 4.42** The Council seeks to promote and support the arts in the district and has produced an Arts Development Strategy which confirms its commitment to a wide range of arts activities, including public art. There is a growing recognition that public art can play a very positive role in new developments. It can help to create a unique identity for a place and can make using the environment a generally more pleasant experience. Public art can also contribute to the character of an area, particularly if the art draws inspiration from local themes or associations.
- 4.43** In considering major development proposals, the Council will seek a proportion of the capital budget of the project to commission works of art or craft to benefit the community and the environment. The Council supports the Arts Council's recommendation that 1% of the contract sum be set aside for this purpose. Further advice can be obtained from the Council or from Southern Arts. The Council will consult and take into account the views of the local community in the process of considering proposals for public art on particular sites.

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

### Introduction

5.1 This section sets out the policies relating to housing, recreation and leisure, and local community facilities and services. The policies in this section seek to:

- meet the community's needs for housing whilst protecting the environmental qualities of the district and ensure that land is not released for major new development until adequate supporting infrastructure and facilities are in place;
- encourage the provision of a range in the size, type and tenure of housing to promote mixed and more sustainable communities and to meet the needs of those who cannot afford market housing in the district;
- locate housing development where there is access to services and facilities including public transport;
- use land and resources efficiently in the provision of housing by promoting the use of previously-developed sites within settlements in preference to greenfield sites, and by promoting higher-density development where appropriate;
- manage the demand for recreation facilities and seek to improve access to recreation and community facilities for all sections of the community; and
- encourage the provision and retention of recreation and community facilities.

5.2 Good quality housing is a basic need of the population and its provision, as well as the provision of services and facilities, contributes to the health and quality of life of residents and to the economic well-being of the area. It is an important objective of the plan to ensure that provision is made for housing and associated facilities in sustainable locations, so as to reduce the need to travel and encourage a sense of community. In making provision for development, it is also important to ensure that the environmental qualities of the district are protected.

5.3 Sport and recreation activities are important to the health and well-being of both residents and visitors alike and are also of economic importance to the district. The demand for recreation facilities and opportunities is growing as a result of increases in disposable income, more leisure time and an increased awareness of the relationship between health and exercise. This demand is for both formal activities such as playing fields, golf courses or sports centres and for more opportunities for informal activities such as walking, riding or simply enjoying the countryside. In addition there is a growing recognition of the value of existing open spaces, particularly those within urban areas which are under pressure for development.

### Housing

5.4 In meeting the housing requirements of the district the Council will seek to ensure that an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of type and affordability is provided in the right place and at the right time and that efficient use is made of the land available. The Council will also seek to protect the environmental qualities of the district and ensure that where development does take place, it is to the highest standards of design and layout in accordance with Section 4 of the plan and the Council's Design Guide.

## The amount and location of new housing

- 5.5 The amount of new housing to be built in the district up to 2011 is determined by the Oxfordshire Structure Plan within the framework of Regional Planning Guidance. In allocating land to meet the Structure Plan requirement, the Council has had regard to the results of its housing capacity studies of the four towns and the 11 larger villages outside the Green Belt.

### Policy H1

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

- 5.6 The Oxfordshire Structure Plan makes provision for an additional 8,000 dwellings in the district between 1996 and 2011. This provision is divided between Didcot – about 5,000 dwellings (with a further 500 dwellings in the Vale of the White Horse District at Didcot) and the rest of South Oxfordshire – 3000 dwellings. The table below sets out the position on the supply of housing land in the district. The figures for completions, allocations and commitments are the position at 31 March 2005.

	Didcot	Rest of District	Total
Dwellings completed 1/4/96 to 31/3/05	1548	2036	3584
Outstanding permissions	73	482	555
Outstanding allocations in this plan	3692	579	4271
Additional dwellings that could be built on small sites to 2011*	39	309	348
Additional dwellings that could be built on large sites to 2011*	8	25	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5360</b>	<b>3431</b>	<b>8791</b>
Structure Plan provision 1996 to 2011	5000	3000	8000
<b>Dwellings additional to the provision</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>791</b>

**Table 1: Housing monitoring in relation to the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 1998**

\* The small- and large-site trend rates have been calculated by assessing the number of completions on small sites (sites of 9 dwellings or less) and large sites (sites of 10 dwellings or more) in the period April 1991-March 2005, using these figures to calculate annual build rates and then projecting these rates forward. The small-site trend rate took account of the percentage that will no longer come forward due to the proposed change in housing policies H4-H6 (this does not affect Didcot). In Didcot the trend rate was increased to reflect detailed capacity work. To avoid double counting, the number of dwellings with planning permission on large and small sites has been subtracted from the totals.

- 5.7 From Table 1 it can be seen that for the period up to 2011, sufficient land has been identified in this plan to enable the Structure Plan requirements to be met. The plan provides for an

over-provision in the district to give a reasonable degree of flexibility to ensure that the housing provisions will be met.

## Sites identified for housing

### Policy H2

The following sites are allocated for residential development subject to the requirements set out in DID1 to DID6, ~~RUR10, RUR11, RUR13, THA4, HEN1, and WAL1 to WAL3:~~

	Estimated number of dwellings
<b>DIDCOT</b>	
Ladygrove East	670* <sup>▲</sup>
Haydon Road	22*
<del>Town Centre redevelopment</del>	<del>22*</del>
Vauxhall Barracks	300 <sup>▲</sup>
Didcot West	2700 <sup>▲</sup>
<b>REMAINDER OF DISTRICT</b>	
<del>Chinnor Cement Works</del>	<del>130<sup>▲</sup></del>
<del>Fair Mile Hospital, Cholsey</del>	<del>150<sup>▲</sup></del>
<del>Wilder's site and adjoining land, Crowmarsh</del>	<del>42*</del>
Townlands Hospital, Henley	62* <sup>▲</sup>
<del>Rycotewood College Thame</del>	<del>80<sup>▲</sup></del>
<del>Blue Mountains and Sinodun Centre, Wallingford</del>	<del>58<sup>▲</sup></del>
<del>Lamb Garage, Wallingford</del>	<del>10*</del>
<del>Station Road Industrial Estate, Wallingford</del>	<del>47<sup>▲</sup></del>

\* existing permission or allocation      <sup>▲</sup> new allocation in this plan

5.8 ~~The sites allocated in Policy H2 are those greater than half a hectare which the Council would wish to see developed in the plan period. One smaller site has been allocated at the Lamb Garage in Wallingford. This was an allocation in the previous Local Plan and the Council remains keen to see this site re-developed in a way which enhances the Conservation Area.~~

5.9 All the sites listed in Policy H2 are shown on the Proposals Map and the detailed requirements for the sites which do not have planning permission are dealt with in site-

specific policies in Sections 9 to 13 of the plan. On sites which do not have detailed planning permission, the number of dwellings shown in Policy H2 is given for guidance and statistical purposes only, and does not commit the Council to a particular number of dwellings on a particular site. In the event of planning permission on any of the sites expiring, the detailed requirements for each site will be reconsidered in the light of the policies contained in this plan when a new application on the site is submitted.

- 5.10 On unallocated sites proposals will be determined in accordance with Policies H4 and H5 below. All applications for housing development will be considered in the light of the other policies in this plan, including those dealing with the general approach, the natural and built environment, the policies encouraging sustainable and high-quality development, and the transport strategy. It is also essential that account is taken of Policy H9, relating to the provision of affordable housing.
- 5.11 The location of new housing has been based on advice contained in PPG3 Housing and the Oxfordshire Structure Plan. The framework for the provision of housing in the district seeks to concentrate most additional housing development at Didcot with smaller amounts of development on previously-developed land at Henley, Thame and Wallingford and within the larger villages. Four new sites have been allocated for housing at Didcot in this plan. These include land for 22 dwellings as part of the town centre redevelopment, an extension to the Ladygrove allocation which could accommodate 159 new dwellings, land at Vauxhall Barracks which could accommodate about 300 new dwellings, and a major new allocation at Didcot West which could accommodate about 2700 dwellings with about a further 500 dwellings, as part of the same scheme, within the Vale of the White Horse District.
- 5.12 Six new sites have been allocated for housing in this plan in the remainder of the district. Fair Mile Hospital, which includes a number of Grade II listed buildings, will become surplus to Health Authority requirements in 2003. Proposals for the site should pay particular regard to the desirability of preserving the character of the listed buildings and their setting. A number of uses and a mix of uses would be suitable for the site but the re-use for housing of some of the buildings is likely to be an appropriate use. Two other sites in Wallingford, the Station Road Industrial Estate and the site of Blue Mountains and the Sinodun Centre have also been identified as available for redevelopment within the plan period. The previous Local Plan allocated part of the Townlands Hospital site in Henley for redevelopment as a result of a rationalisation of the site and a new hospital and it was assumed that 30 dwellings might be provided. Further work has been carried out on the scheme and it seems that a total of about 62 dwellings might be appropriate and the allocation has been increased accordingly. The site of Rycotewood College in Thame is also likely to become available during the Plan period as the College is merging with two other colleges and the Rycotewood site will be surplus to requirements. The listed workhouse on the site is considered suitable for conversion to residential use and the remainder of the site can be redeveloped for housing. Provision has also been made for some new housing to replace the redundant buildings at Chinnor Cement Works. This scheme is dependent on the highway issues being resolved.

## Proportion of housing on previously-developed land

- 5.13 Government advice states that local plans should include a target for the percentage of development to be provided on previously-developed land and through conversions of existing buildings and that this should contribute to meeting the regional target of 60% of additional housing on previously-developed land by 2008. In the district outside Didcot it

has been possible to meet the majority of the Structure Plan requirement on previously-developed land and through conversions and the plan therefore seeks to provide 88% of dwellings on previously-developed land. In Didcot, given the size of the town in relation to the housing provision, with the exception of land at Vauxhall Barracks there is relatively little scope for re-using urban land and major allocations on greenfield sites are necessary to ensure the Structure Plan provisions are met. The target for the amount of development on previously-developed sites is therefore 13%. Combining these figures for the district as a whole, the target is to build 40% of development on previously-developed land in the plan period.

## Re-using buildings/conversions

- 5.14 Government advice also states that local planning authorities should identify and bring into use empty housing, vacant commercial buildings and upper floors above shops in conjunction with the local authority's housing programme and empty property strategy. The Housing Capacity Study examined these factors and found that the scope for re-using commercial buildings was relatively limited as there are few empty commercial premises in locations suitable for housing and Policy E6 seeks to retain employment sites in the district. Policy TC4 encourages the bringing into use of flats above shops. The Council's empty homes strategy is addressing the issue of bringing into use empty properties, but the proportion of empty dwellings in the district is relatively low in comparison with national figures.

## Phasing of development

### Policy H3

~~The release of land will be monitored to ensure that sufficient land is released to meet the Structure Plan housing requirements. With the exception of the major development areas at Didcot, planning permission for the release of greenfield sites will not be given if previously-developed land in sustainable locations is available.~~

- 5.15 ~~Government advice is that the release of sites should be managed to control the pattern and speed of urban growth and the presumption will be that previously-developed sites should be developed before greenfield sites. In the district outside Didcot, all the new allocations are on previously-developed land, and there is therefore no need to phase the allocations to ensure that such land is released first. The reliance on windfall sites and the likely availability of some of the allocated sites will ensure that the release of sites will be phased throughout the plan period. In the event that windfalls do not come forward as expected the housing provisions in the plan will be reviewed. Conversely, if a number of large windfall sites on previously-developed land in urban areas become available to the extent that the Structure Plan provisions are likely to be significantly exceeded, then the release of such sites will be phased.~~
- 5.16 ~~In Didcot there is a need to release the allocated land at an early date given the scale of the Structure Plan provisions. With Vauxhall Barracks becoming available for redevelopment, then a phase of the Didcot West development will be delayed to the period post 2011 to ensure that the Structure Plan provisions are not significantly exceeded.~~

## Sites not specifically identified for housing

**5.17** The settlements in the district have been categorised by the services and facilities they offer, and a hierarchy of policies has been established on this basis. This framework ensures development takes place within the more sustainable locations of the district. This is in accordance with the Structure Plan objective of providing most housing where a reasonable range of employment, services and community facilities exist or can be provided. It is recognised that the services and facilities within a settlement may change over time and therefore an updated and definitive list of the categories into which particular villages fall will be published each December in the Annual Monitoring Report. All settlements in the district have been tested against five criteria, each of which contributes to its sustainability. The criteria are: primary school within the settlement; food shop or post office within the settlement; population of over 1000; public transport to a local service centre more than once per day and community facilities within the settlement (this includes village hall, place of worship or pub). The categories at September 2003 were as follows:

- (i) **the towns** - the four towns of Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford contain a wide variety of shops, facilities including educational and health provision, community facilities and a frequent public transport service;
- (ii) **the larger villages outside the Green Belt** - the larger villages are those that meet all five criteria. These villages comprise Benson, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley and Woodcote;
- (iii) **the larger villages within the Green Belt** - these settlements meet each criterion but are washed over by the Green Belt, and so, in accordance with PPG2 only infill development will be allowed. The villages comprise Berinsfield, Garsington and Horspath;
- (iv) **the smaller villages in the Green Belt and elsewhere** - these settlements meet three or four of the criteria. They comprise, Aston Tirrold/Aston Upthorpe, Beckley, Binfield Heath, Checkendon, Clifton Hampden, Culham, Dorchester, East Hagbourne, Ewelme, Great Milton, Lewknor, Long Wittenham, Little Milton, Lower Shiplake, Nettlebed, Rotherfield Peppard, Sandford, Shiplake Cross, South Moreton, South Stoke, Stadhampton, Stanton St John, Stoke Row, Tetsworth, Tiddington, Warborough and Whitchurch;
- (v) **the small settlements not included in the above categories** - this includes those settlements that meet two or less of the criteria, and hamlets or isolated groups of housing in the countryside, where there are no, or very limited, services and facilities.

## Towns and ~~larger villages outside the Green Belt~~

**5.18** Sites for housing development which are not identified in Policy H2 may come forward for development within the plan period. Policy H4 addresses development in the towns and ~~larger villages outside the Green Belt as categorised in paragraph 5.17(i)-(ii)~~. It also sets out the criteria against which housing proposals will be judged. The Structure Plan says that most housing development should take place within larger settlements where a reasonable range of employment, services and community facilities exist or can be provided. Proposals for new housing development should also be accessible by regular public transport and not significantly increase the need for commuting by car in accordance with PPS1 and PPG3.

## Policy H4

**Proposals for housing on sites within the built-up areas of the 4 main towns of the district and of up to about 0.5 hectares within the built-up areas of the larger villages outside the Green Belt will be permitted provided that:**

- (i) an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt;**
- (ii) the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings;**
- (iii) the character of the area is not adversely affected;**
- (iv) there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections; and**
- (v) if the proposal constitutes backland development, it would not create problems of privacy and access and would not extend the built limits of the settlement.**

**5.19** The policy does not mean that every space within the settlements will be developed. Many open spaces, both public and private, are important for recreational, wildlife or amenity reasons or are vital to an area's character, and proposals for the development of such spaces will be resisted. Care will be taken to ensure that the cumulative effects of development would not damage the character and amenity of the surrounding area. Some residential areas have large houses set in extensive grounds and further residential development of such spaces will not normally be permitted if it would spoil the spacious character of the area. In appropriate locations the Council will encourage higher-density development and will seek innovative design solutions to ensure that adequate space and privacy levels are achieved. The Council will also ensure that development can have an adequate access, be serviced by other infrastructure, would not cause problems to neighbours, and would not cause the housing provisions in the Structure Plan to be significantly exceeded.

**5.20** The development of large back gardens or land behind an existing residential frontage may be acceptable in principle if it meets the criteria in the above policy. However, such development will not normally be permitted if it creates problems of privacy and access. 'Tandem' development, for example, consisting of one or more houses immediately behind others, either sharing the same access or having a long drive running beside the original dwellings, is generally unsatisfactory. Such development creates difficulties of access for public services, emergency vehicles and traders to the house at the back, and disturbance and lack of privacy to the house in front. Backland development behind properties on the edge of a settlement can also be objectionable because it has the effect of extending the built-up area into open land including instances where the proposed dwelling is within the curtilage of an existing dwelling. In some cases, however, there will be the opportunity to develop a number of back gardens and provide a satisfactory development. These opportunities are more likely to arise in the district's towns and larger settlements.

**5.21** All new housing developments must provide satisfactory living standards and meet the requirements in Section 4 of the plan. The Council's Design Guide and the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide provide advice on high-quality design and achieving locally distinctive developments and should be taken fully into account in the design of development proposals.

## **Larger villages within the Green Belt and smaller villages throughout the district**

### **Policy H5**

**Within the larger villages in the Green Belt and smaller villages throughout the district, infill, which is defined as the filling of an appropriate small gap in an otherwise largely built-up frontage by the erection of one or two detached or up to four small terraced or semi-detached dwellings, or backland development of the same scale, will be permitted provided that criteria (i)-(v) in Policy H4 can all be met.**

- 5.22 In the Green Belt strict infill development only is likely to be permitted in the villages listed in paragraph 5.17(iii)-(iv). This is in accordance with national policies to restrict development severely in Green Belt areas. Strict infill development and conversions will also normally be permitted in the smaller villages listed in paragraph 5.17(iv). Outside these settlements infill development will not be permitted. This is in accordance with PPG3 which advises against new housing in unsustainable locations.
- 5.23 Like Policy H4, Policy H5 does not mean that every space within villages will be developed. Many spaces within settlements are essential for recreational, wildlife or amenity reasons, and many spaces are vital to their character. Gaps within a village street for example can help to impart a rural atmosphere, and this is particularly important in loose-knit villages where the spaces can be as important as the buildings themselves. Even in areas which have seen much new development, the remaining open spaces can be very important. To be acceptable, infill development must be well-designed and of a suitable scale so that it can be easily assimilated and not cause problems in relation to adjoining properties. The advice on backland development in paragraph 5.20 above will also apply to proposals considered in relation to Policy H5 above. In accordance with Policies H7 and H8 the Council will seek the provision of smaller dwellings at higher densities. Thus, where appropriate, the Council will permit up to 4 one or two bedroom dwellings on infill sites which could accommodate one or two larger, detached dwellings. The Council will, however, need to consider the character of the area and all proposals will need to comply with the other policies in this plan. Access must be safe and in conservation areas the development must not harm the area's character.

## **Locations where new housing will not be permitted**

### **Policy H6**

**Except as specifically provided for under other plan policies, planning permission will not be granted for new houses:**

- (i) in the countryside;**
- (ii) in settlements not listed in paragraph 5.17(i)-(iv); and**
- (iii) on the edge of settlements where the built-up area of the settlement would be extended.**

- 5.24 Policy H6 confirms both long-established planning policies and Government advice within PPG3 that planning permission should not normally be given for isolated development in the countryside, nor for new houses in small settlements with few facilities, or as additions

to isolated groups of dwellings. In these locations further housing would spoil the quality of the countryside and the character of small settlements, and would be difficult and expensive to service. Locating new houses in remote rural locations also means that people have to use motorised transport to go to work, shops and schools. This would be contrary to Government advice to reduce the need for car journeys because of increasing concern over the level of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. In the Green Belt there is a general presumption against new housing in order to restrain development. Development on the edges of towns and villages, including consolidating ribbon development, will not normally be allowed because it would extend the built-up area, encroach upon the surrounding countryside and spoil the landscape setting of the district's settlements, contrary to Policy C4.

## Range of dwelling types and size

### Policy H7

**A mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households in the district will be sought in new residential developments. Areas of housing of uniform type and size will not be acceptable.**

- 5.25 ~~The Oxfordshire Structure Plan and Government advice advocate a mix of housing sizes and types, both in terms of character and tenure, on new residential developments. Ensuring that this is achieved will secure a better social mix in an area which, in turn, can lead to a more sustainable community. Including different sizes and types of housing on a development can result in a more visually interesting environment for people to live in and avoids creating areas of housing of a uniform size and type.~~
- 5.26 ~~As well as securing a mix of housing types, there is also a requirement to make sure the mix meets the needs of households in the area. The Council commissioned Fordham Research Limited to carry out a housing needs survey of the district, the South Oxfordshire District Council Housing Needs Survey, which was published in October 2000 and updated in February 2004. The Surveys looked at the needs of those in market and affordable housing. The results showed that there will be a need for owner-occupied housing of all sizes. However, the main component of this will be for 2 bedroom dwellings as shown in the table below:~~

<del>Number of bedrooms</del>	<del>% of total shortfall</del>
<del>1 bed dwellings</del>	<del>7.5%</del>
<del>2 bed dwellings</del>	<del>48.5%</del>
<del>3 bed dwellings</del>	<del>24.0%</del>
<del>4 or more bed dwellings</del>	<del>20.0%</del>

**Table 2: Projected need for market housing in South Oxfordshire, Housing Needs Survey Update 2004**

- 5.27 ~~The Council will, therefore, seek to ensure that the size of dwellings on all sites suitable for 2 or more dwellings, reflects the mix of sizes shown in the table above. Thus, the Council will seek to ensure that at least 45% of dwellings built for sale on the open market on sites~~

suitable for 2 or more dwellings should be 2 bedroom dwellings, unless it would adversely affect the character of the surrounding area. The most suitable mix for affordable housing is dealt with separately in Policy H9. The provision of types of dwellings will be monitored and these targets may be subject to review.

- 5.28 Whilst it is important to incorporate a variety of housing in new developments, the character of the area should also be respected and the individual identity of particular areas maintained. This can be achieved through imaginative and high-quality design solutions and further advice is contained in Section 4 of the plan, in the Council's Design Guide and in the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide.

## Dwelling densities

### Policy H8

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

- 5.29 This policy aims to promote sustainable development by promoting the efficient use of land and by aiming to meet the present and projected need for smaller dwellings, particularly where proposed development is situated close to good public transport links. In order to achieve this it is necessary for housing to be built at higher densities than has been the case in the past. This aim is supported by PPG3 which promotes a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare (net). Higher densities, for example, 40 dwellings per hectare (net) can be justified at locations where there is access to frequent public transport services and a wide range of services and facilities.
- 5.30 It is important that in higher-density development the living standards and design quality of the development is not compromised. Developers will therefore be expected to incorporate high-quality design solutions to achieve attractive and acceptable living environments for future and existing occupants. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide gives guidance on how to achieve this. The character of the surrounding area is also a significant factor when considering whether higher-density development would be acceptable, and will be taken fully into account when assessing development proposals.

## Affordable housing

- 5.31 Against a background of high and rising house prices and high private sector rents, housing need and homelessness continues to be a significant problem in South Oxfordshire. Oxfordshire is characterised by high house prices in relation to income. The Halifax House Price Index in the last quarter of 1999 showed that Oxfordshire was the seventh most expensive county in the United Kingdom and the average price of a semi-detached house was £129,050. A survey by Barclay's Private Clients published in December 2002 showed that the ratio between average house prices in South Oxfordshire and average income was 9.76 the 16th highest in the country outside London. House prices in South Oxfordshire are generally higher than the average for the County. The Housing Needs Survey showed that the average earned household income of households with at least one earner was £29,560 in January 2000. Average incomes can be misleading in areas such as South Oxfordshire as the study showed that over 10% of households had an income in excess of £60,000 and

that 56.7% of households earned less than £25,000. House prices have risen rapidly in the last 3 years and the Halifax House Price Index for the last quarter of 2002 shows that the average price for a semi-detached house was £226,700, an increase of 76%, making Oxfordshire now the fifth most expensive County. The Halifax also carried out a survey of house prices in individual towns. Henley emerged as the second most expensive town in the country with an average house price of £388,105. Data from the Land Registry gives the overall average price of property in South Oxfordshire as £238,887 in the last quarter of 2002.

- 5.32** A study carried out by the DETR, *Housing Supply in the South East* states: "In average terms affordability varies from county to county. There is no readily accepted guideline as to housing affordability within the South East, but one attempt to develop a model<sup>1</sup> which we have adopted shows that many new indigenous households are unable to afford to buy even the cheapest property on the market. These proportions vary between 30% in Bedfordshire, 42-45% in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex and Kent, 52% in Hampshire, Hertfordshire and Surrey and 60% in Oxfordshire".
- 5.33** The Council's *Housing Strategy 2003-2006* outlines the duties faced by the Council toward homeless families and households registered on the Housing Register. In 2004/05, the Council accepted 98 households from a total of 223 who presented themselves as homeless, and there are 2,200 households registered on the Housing Register in need of affordable housing in the District. With these pressures the Council needs to ensure that its housing policies are maximising the provision of additional low-cost homes and taking adequate account of the housing needs of special groups and localities. In 1997, the Council transferred its housing stock to the South Oxfordshire Housing Association. It is therefore no longer a direct provider of affordable housing. It does, however, have a key role in enabling the provision of affordable housing and has assisted in the provision of 836 new affordable homes in partnership with housing associations between 1997 and March 2005.
- 5.34** The *Housing Needs Survey*<sup>2</sup> assessed the extent of current and future housing need in the district. It showed that a further 4,062 additional affordable dwellings would be required by 2005 and a total of 7,428 dwellings by 2012. The *Housing Needs Survey Update 2004* showed that 835 additional affordable dwellings would be required each year in order to meet newly arising needs and clear the backlog over a five year period. The original survey divided the district into 12 sub areas and a significant amount of need was identified in each area.

<sup>1</sup> The Housing Affordability and Needs Model, Professor Glen Bramley et al.

<sup>2</sup> South Oxfordshire District Housing Needs Survey: October 2000

**Policy H9**

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

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

~~The affordable housing should:~~

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

- ~~5.35 Government advice states that a community's need for affordable housing is a material planning consideration and where there is evidence of need for affordable housing, local plans should include a policy for seeking an element of such housing on suitable sites. Where a local planning authority has decided, having regard to the relevant criteria, that an element of affordable housing should be provided, there is a presumption that it should be provided as part of the development of the site and that failure to provide affordable housing could justify the refusal of planning permission.~~
- ~~5.36 For the purposes of this plan, affordable housing is defined as housing which meets the needs of those households in the district that are living in unsuitable accommodation and cannot afford to rent or buy housing of a suitable size. What in practice will constitute affordable housing in South Oxfordshire needs to be defined in relation to local incomes and their relationship with local house prices and rents. To be affordable, the cost of housing must be less than the weekly outgoings required to be able to afford market housing. In relating these to income it is assumed that weekly outgoings on housing represent 30% of net earned income. In order to assist a reasonable number of households in need, the weekly costs should be well below the minimum market level as very few households in need earn incomes close to the threshold of market housing. For the purpose of the definition in this plan, housing will be considered to be affordable if it costs 80% of the weekly outgoing costs of minimum market priced housing. However, such housing would only be affordable to a small proportion of the households in housing need and, therefore, the majority of it would require to be at levels at or below Housing Corporation target rents.~~
- ~~5.37 In order to achieve these levels of outgoings, it is likely that the majority of the housing provided will be rented housing provided by Registered Social Landlords. However, the policy does not preclude other forms of tenure provided that they meet the affordability criterion and the other criteria in the policy. In order to achieve affordable housing a subsidy will be required. The precise level of this subsidy cannot be determined until the planning application stage when all the costs are known and the likely availability of public funds can be assessed.~~

- ~~5.38 The site-size thresholds set out in the policy are based upon the evidence in the Housing Needs Survey and other sources on the high level of housing need in the district. It is considered that the level of housing need identified, in relation to the likely supply of housing in the district and the objectives of the Council's Housing Strategy, justify the adoption of these thresholds in accordance with the advice in Circular 6/98.~~
- ~~5.39 The Council's Housing Needs Survey identified that by 2012 a further 7,428 additional affordable dwellings would be required to meet housing needs. The Housing Needs Survey Update 2004 showed that 835 additional affordable dwellings would be required each year in order to meet newly arising needs and clear the backlog over a five year period. This is in excess of the total number of additional dwellings to be provided during the plan period. The Council will therefore seek 40% affordable housing on sites greater than 0.5 hectares or 15 dwellings, and in settlements of 3000 population or less, 40% affordable housing on sites capable of accommodating a net gain of 5 or more dwellings. This approach is consistent with Regional Planning Guidance which indicates that the provision of affordable housing should be monitored against a provisional indicator of 18,000 to 19,000 affordable homes a year in the South East, out of an annual provision of 39,000 dwellings per annum in total. The settlements over 3000 are listed in the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing, which is available on the Council's website [www.southoxon.gov.uk/planning-policy](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/planning-policy).~~
- ~~5.40 In seeking to negotiate a proportion of affordable housing on sites suitable for housing, the Council will take into account the economics of provision and whether there are any particular costs associated with the development of the scheme. The Council will also consider whether the provision of affordable housing would prejudice the realisation of other planning objectives that need to be given priority in the development of the scheme. Landowners and developers will need to provide clear evidence of any unusual development costs. In assessing the viability of provision, the Council will not regard the price paid for the land as a development cost but will consider the residual value of the land taking into account all the costs of development.~~
- ~~5.41 The Council will expect that the affordable housing provided will be available to local people in perpetuity, subject to the relevant legislation. Schemes which provide for a discounted initial purchase price only will not meet the Council's requirements. The affordable housing must be properly managed by a Registered Social Landlord or other appropriate agency, who will ensure that the dwellings remain available for local people. A Section 106 agreement is the most appropriate method of ensuring this.~~
- ~~5.42 The Council will seek to ensure that the type and size of affordable dwellings meets the requirements of those in housing need in the area. This will be considered as part of the development control process and landowners and developers are advised to seek the advice of the Council before submitting a planning application. In the larger developments the Council will wish to ensure that the affordable housing is mixed in with the market housing and proposals which concentrate the affordable housing in the less desirable part of housing sites will not be acceptable.~~
- ~~5.43 Circular 6/98 advises that there may be circumstances where the Council and developer both consider that, on particular sites where a requirement for affordable housing may be appropriate, it is nonetheless preferable that a financial or other contribution should be made towards the provision of the element of affordable housing on another site in the local planning authority's area. The Council does not envisage that these provisions will be used~~

~~to any great extent, because suitable sites for housing in the district are limited and where they do arise the Council is likely to seek affordable housing on-site. However, in the event of agreement being reached with a developer to make provision off-site, the Council will follow the advice in the Circular on the content of the planning obligation.~~

- 5.44** The issue of key worker housing is gaining increasing importance both locally and regionally as public and essential services are experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining key staff and staff recruitment difficulties generally could impact on the economic and social well being of the area. No assessment has been carried out of the extent of the specific need for key worker housing and the housing needs survey will have included some of the needs of key workers in its findings. The issue is, therefore, essentially one of the degree of priority key workers will be given in allocating affordable housing. Where the Council has nomination rights, guidance on allocations is given in the Council's Housing Allocations Policy approved in February 2003. On other housing schemes negotiated in accordance with this policy, the Council will negotiate with the developer on the type of housing to be provided and will encourage innovative financial methods by which key worker housing can be encouraged.

## Rural affordable housing on exception sites

### Policy H10

**In exceptional circumstances special small-scale affordable housing schemes may be permitted within or adjoining villages, provided that:**

- (i) it can be demonstrated that all of the houses meet a particular local need that cannot be accommodated in any other way;**
- (ii) there are satisfactory arrangements to ensure that the benefits of the affordable housing can be enjoyed by subsequent as well as the initial occupants and that the dwellings remain available for local people; and**
- (iii) there are no overriding amenity, environmental, design or highway objections.**

**Preference will be given to sites where there are adequate local services and facilities.**

**Planning obligations will be sought before planning permission is issued to ensure that the above conditions are met.**

- 5.45** The Council will try to increase the stock of affordable housing (as defined in Policy H9) in rural areas by releasing sites which would not otherwise be permitted. This is in accordance with PPG3, as amended in January 2005, which accepts that local housing needs in rural areas may not always be met through the general affordable housing policy and states that:

"Affordable housing provision in rural areas should be supported by a rural exception site policy. Rural exception sites should be small, solely for affordable housing and on land within or adjoining existing small rural communities which would not otherwise be released for general market housing. The affordable housing provided on such sites should meet local needs in perpetuity and count towards the overall level of housing provision."

- 5.46** The Council will work closely with parish councils and local communities to progress these schemes. The involvement of landowners is also crucial. Some landowners are prepared

to make available land at, or only slightly above, agricultural value, where it is understood that an exception to normal policy is being made and that planning permission would not be given for speculative housing development on that land. The Council will always support the sale of land to housing associations by agreement but, in circumstances where agreement cannot be reached, will consider the use of compulsory purchase powers. This rural exceptions policy has been in existence since the early 1990s and by 2001, 97 houses had been provided on 11 sites, and proposals in other villages were being actively pursued.

- 5.47** The 'exceptions' initiative must clearly be implemented with caution and it does not mean that all sites which would not be granted planning permission for market housing are suitable for affordable housing. Sites must be within or immediately adjacent to villages and other policies in this plan must not be prejudiced. For example, proposals which would be visually intrusive or which would involve an unsatisfactory access, would be no less objectionable because they have an affordable housing label. In identifying sites it is necessary to look at all possible sites in and adjacent to a settlement so that all options are identified. The style and character of 'exception' developments should be in keeping with the surrounding area and particularly with local building styles. Sites which are likely to be suitable will be small and preference will be given to sites where there are adequate local services and facilities available.
- 5.48** The planning authority must be convinced of the need for affordable housing in a particular village and be satisfied that the housing provided would be available at a price which local people could afford. A detailed housing needs survey will be required to demonstrate the extent of the housing need arising from people with a local connection. This must be assessed by the Council prior to a planning application being submitted. Housing need is based on factors such as overcrowding, lack of or sharing of facilities, income, ill-health and disability. The following criteria will usually be used to define local connection:
- applicant to have lived in the parish for 5 out of the last 8 years
  - applicant's parent or child to be currently resident in the parish, and to have at least 10 years continuous residence
  - applicant has worked full time for 2 years in the parish, or equivalent in part time (this may include voluntary work), and there is evidence of continuing commitment to work in the parish.
- 5.49** Applicants must be on the housing register before they can be nominated for an exceptions site property. Where more applicants than vacancies exist, the dwellings will be allocated in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocations Policy. If there are insufficient applicants meeting these criteria, applicants meeting the local connection criteria for the immediately neighbouring parishes will be considered. In this case, applicants whose local connection is closer to the new properties may be given precedence over those who are more distant.
- 5.50** An essential feature of any scheme is that it would control not just the initial occupants of a property but ensure that the benefits of affordable provision pass to subsequent occupiers as well. A planning obligation will normally be required to ensure that the houses provided meet a local need, and that satisfactory arrangements are made to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing are enjoyed by subsequent as well as the initial occupants. Schemes will normally be managed by a Registered Social Landlord.

- 5.51** It is emphasised that schemes which provide for a discounted initial purchase price only, or which depend upon the sale of other speculative housing on the open market in a location which would not normally receive planning permission, will not be considered to be within this policy.
- 5.52** The preceding paragraphs demonstrate that exceptional circumstances are needed before the general policy of restraint of growth in the area can be set aside. The Government has indicated that the case for releasing additional land to provide affordable housing will be essentially a matter for local judgement and that the essentially local nature of any decision will be borne in mind on appeal. The implementation of an affordable housing scheme is a complex process and people interested in such a scheme are advised to discuss it with the District Council at an early stage.

## The sub-division of dwellings and multiple occupation

### Policy H11

**The sub-division of dwellings and conversions to multiple occupation will be permitted within the built-up area of settlements provided that the development:**

- (i) would not harm the amenity of the occupants of nearby properties;**
- (ii) is appropriate in terms of the size of the property and the proposed internal layout, access, private amenity space and car parking provision;**
- (iii) would not adversely affect the character of the building or the surrounding residential area; and**
- (iv) would not result in environmental or highway objections.**

**Outside the built-up limits of a settlement the sub-division of a dwelling will not be permitted.**

- 5.53** Within settlements, the sub-division of larger properties into flats can be a useful way of adding to the stock of smaller and less expensive units, more of which will be required over the coming decade to accommodate the growth in smaller households. Houses in multiple occupation have a number of residents living in them as separate households and they provide a useful and relatively affordable form of accommodation for single people. However, subdivision and conversion to multiple occupation will not be permitted if it would result in access problems, overdevelopment, lack of garden space, lack of car parking space and a general alteration to the character of the property and the residential character of the area, either on its own or cumulatively. The introduction of large areas of hard surfaces for car parking in gardens will be resisted where it would be detrimental to the character of the area.
- 5.54** Outside the built-up limits of settlements the sub-division of dwellings will normally be resisted as this would cumulatively result in an increase in housing in areas not well served by public transport or services and facilities, thus undermining the sustainability objectives of the plan.

## Replacement dwellings

### Policy H12

**Proposals for the replacement of a dwelling outside the built-up limits of those settlements listed in paragraphs 5.17(i)-(iv) will be permitted provided that:**

- (i) the use has not been abandoned;**
- (ii) the existing dwelling is not listed, or of historic, visual or architectural interest;**
- (iii) the proposed dwelling is not materially greater in volume than the existing dwelling (taking account of permitted development rights);**
- (iv) the overall impact would not be any greater than the existing dwelling on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area; and**
- (v) the siting, design and materials are in keeping with the locality.**

**5.55** Within the settlements listed in paragraph 5.17(i)-(iv) permission will normally be granted for replacement dwellings, subject to amenity, environmental and traffic considerations. Elsewhere the erection of new dwellings is strictly controlled by Policy H6. A replacement dwelling will normally only be permitted in accordance with the criteria in the above policy.

**5.56** In the case of listed buildings, where the Council has a duty to ensure their protection and maintenance, the restoration of the original building is the prime objective. Other non-listed but attractive buildings should be retained and restored wherever possible because of the contribution they make to the character of the district.

**5.57** The Council is mindful of the need to retain its stock of smaller and less expensive dwellings in order to help offset the demand created by the trend towards smaller households. In addition, PPG2 states that in Green Belts replacement dwellings should not be materially larger than the dwellings they replace. The Council will, therefore, normally only grant planning permission for the replacement of dwellings which are not materially greater in volume than the existing dwelling, taking into account any permitted development rights which remain unused. Not materially greater in volume means that, in addition to any unused permitted development rights, an increase of up to, but no more than, 10% in volume may be acceptable provided that criterion (iv) on no greater overall impact can still be met. Under this policy the volume calculation is based upon the existing dwelling, which means the volume of the house and any attached ancillary residential buildings, excluding unattached outbuildings. Where the existing dwelling has garage accommodation which is to be demolished, applications for the replacement dwelling should also include replacement garage accommodation or the volume of the replacement dwelling should be reduced commensurately.

**5.58** Where planning permission is granted for the replacement dwelling with a volume which is inclusive of permitted development rights, the Council will impose a condition removing permitted development rights for extensions/additions to the new house. Applications to extend replacement dwellings once completed, will be considered against Policy H13. Where applications are submitted to extend replacement dwellings, the Council will take into account the size of the original dwelling in accordance with Policy H13. In all cases, the Council will seek to ensure that the new dwelling does not have a greater impact on the

character of the site and its surroundings than the existing dwelling due to its scale, size, form or materials used. In the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Council will ensure that any proposals for replacement dwellings conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.

## Extensions to dwellings

### Policy H13

**Extensions to dwellings or the erection and extension of ancillary buildings within the curtilage of a dwelling, will be permitted provided that:**

- (i) in the Green Belt, outside the limits of the larger and smaller villages<sup>1</sup> the extension would be no greater than 40% of the volume of the original dwelling;**
- (ii) the scale and design of the proposal is in keeping with the character of the dwelling and the site and with the appearance of the surrounding area;**
- (iii) the amenity of occupants of nearby properties is not materially harmed;**
- (iv) the proposal would not be tantamount to the creation of a separate dwelling; and**
- (v) adequate and satisfactory parking and amenity areas are provided for the extended dwelling.**

**5.59** Planning permission is not always required for house extensions but where it is needed the above policy will apply. Householders contemplating alterations or extensions to their home should check with the Council to see whether planning permission is required and have regard to the Council's Design Guide.

**5.60** PPG2: Green Belts, advises that extensions to dwellings within the Green Belt should be limited in size and should not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original dwelling. The purpose of this is to protect the openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, outside the built-up limits of larger and smaller Green Belt villages, extensions will be limited in size to 40%. This figure represents a maximum and should not be taken to mean that all applications up to 40% will be acceptable. Proposals for extensions to all dwellings will also be subject to the other criteria in Policy H13.

**5.61** 'Original' means the volume as existing on July 1st 1948, or if constructed after that date, as originally built. Garages and outbuildings will not be included in this calculation. Applicants will be asked to complete a volume calculation when they submit their planning applications.

**5.62** On some smaller dwellings, or where houses are grouped closely together, it may not be possible to extend the dwelling without creating problems which would be unneighbourly. Depending on the location of the dwelling, it may also be necessary to provide additional and satisfactory off-street car parking spaces. In assessing proposals for extensions, the Council will also ensure that the character of the site and the surrounding area is not adversely affected and that an acceptable garden or amenity area is retained in accordance with Policy D3 and the Council's Design Guide.

<sup>1</sup> Beckley, Berinsfield, Clifton Hampden, Culham, Dorchester, Garsington, Great Milton, Horspath, Little Milton, Sandford, Stadhampton, Stanton St John and Warborough.

- 5.63 Proposals for self-contained units of residential accommodation within the gardens of existing houses, to accommodate staff or relatives, will be assessed on the basis of the housing policies in this plan. The Council will not grant planning permission for self-contained residential accommodation unless the proposal would be acceptable in terms of the principles and the criteria set out in Policies H4 and H5. Proposals for extensions to dwellings to provide accommodation for staff or relatives which are not self-contained units of accommodation will be considered under Policy H13.

### ~~Lifetime homes~~

#### ~~Policy H14~~

~~On suitable housing developments a proportion of housing designed to lifetime homes standards will be sought.~~

- 5.64 ~~Under this policy it is envisaged that a proportion of housing should be designed specifically to meet the needs of those who suffer impaired mobility. Approximately 2% of the population currently suffer from mobility impairments. However, as life expectancy increases, the proportion of the population with mobility impairments will also increase. As a result of changes to Part M of the Building Regulations, most new dwellings will have downstairs toilets and disabled access on the ground floor. However, this policy seeks to ensure that at least 10% of housing on sites of ten dwellings or more meets the lifetime homes standard or its equivalent. On-site gradients and ease of access to public transport and services and facilities will be important factors in determining whether a site is suitable. The Local Authority Building Control publication *Designing For People With Disabilities* gives detailed advice on design issues relating to mobility.~~

### Residential caravans and mobile homes

#### Policy H15

Proposals for new residential caravans or mobile home sites or extensions to existing sites will be considered in accordance with the housing policies in this plan. Permission will only be given for single residential caravans or mobile homes in exceptional circumstances on a temporary and personal basis.

#### Policy H16

Permission will only be granted for the redevelopment of residential caravan or mobile home sites for permanent residential development if such development would comply with the policies in this plan.

- 5.65 Mobile homes can provide an acceptable and relatively cheap form of home ownership and there are a number of permanent mobile home sites in the district. Most are well maintained and are occupied by modern homes which provide accommodation of a high standard. Applications for new mobile home sites will be judged in accordance with policies for traditional residential development. Particular care should be given to landscaping requirements in order to soften the appearance of sites and allow satisfactory integration with their surroundings.

- 5.66** In general, the Council considers that residential caravans and mobile homes should be grouped onto well-located and properly-maintained sites. The proliferation of single caravans within settlements or in the countryside should be avoided. Planning permission for single units will only be given in exceptional circumstances, for example, within the curtilage of a dwelling to provide care and support for an infirm relative or while a dwelling is being built, repaired or renovated. Applications for agricultural workers' caravans will be considered against Policy A6.
- 5.67** As many existing mobile home sites are in the Oxford Green Belt or in other locations where planning permission would not be granted today, permission will not usually be granted for their redevelopment for permanent housing. However, where the site would be appropriate for permanent housing, permission will normally be given for a residential redevelopment provided that usual planning criteria can be met.

## Gypsies

### Policy H17

**The provision of additional gypsy caravan sites will only be permitted if:**

- (i) there is an established need that cannot be met on existing sites;**
- (ii) the site is not in the Green Belt, in a conservation area, on open land in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or does not adversely affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest;**
- (iii) it would not have a detrimental effect on the landscape, the landscape setting of settlements, or on important open gaps within or between settlements;**
- (iv) it would not adversely affect the amenities of nearby residents or users of the countryside;**
- (v) the site is located within a reasonable distance of a primary school, shops and other services; and**
- (vi) there are no overriding objections on amenity, environmental or highway grounds.**

- 5.68** Under this policy, the term "gypsy" has the same meaning as defined in The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 (as amended) and includes persons of nomadic lifestyle, but does not include travelling showpeople or persons engaged in travelling circuses and so on. The duty on county councils to provide sites for gypsies and on district councils to manage them was repealed in 1994 by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. Authorities still have discretion to provide further caravan sites for gypsies. The Council's policy for determining proposals for gypsy caravan sites is based on Government advice, particularly Circular 1/94 Gypsy Sites and Planning. This advises that development plans should make adequate provision for gypsy sites through locational and/or criteria-based policies.
- 5.69** There are currently three gypsy caravan sites in South Oxfordshire, one at Sandford-on-Thames, one at Oakley Wood and one at Wheatley. The information indicates that sufficient pitches are available to meet the current needs of gypsies in the district. The situation will, however, be kept under review.

## Extension of gardens

### Policy H18

**Proposals to change the use of agricultural land to extend residential gardens or curtilages will be permitted provided that the proposal:**

- (i) does not have a detrimental effect on the landscape, on the landscape setting of settlements, on the open character and rural nature of the Green Belt or on important open gaps within settlements; and**
- (ii) does not adversely affect the amenities of adjoining residents or users of the countryside.**

**5.70** The extension of residential curtilages onto open agricultural land can often have the effect of adversely changing the character and appearance of the countryside. Such changes are brought about by enclosing land, by the planting of ornamental or evergreen trees or shrubs, by the erection of garden buildings and, in some cases, by the erection of tennis courts and swimming pools. In considering proposals for the extension of gardens, the Council will, therefore, consider the impact of the proposal on visual amenity and assess the prominence of the proposal in the local landscape, taking into account views from local footpaths. In particular, proposals which conflict with Policies C1 and C2 (which seek to protect the landscape of the district and the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or which conflict with Policy C4 (which seeks to protect the landscape setting of settlements) will not normally be permitted. Where sites are in the Green Belt the impact of any proposal on the open nature and rural character of the Green Belt will be taken into account. Where development is loose-knit, the open gaps between properties often make a significant contribution to the character of an area and proposals which affect part or all of these important gaps will not normally be permitted. Proposals may also, in certain cases, adversely affect the peace and privacy of adjoining residents, or detract from the quiet enjoyment of users of the countryside. In these circumstances it is unlikely that planning permission will be granted. In all cases the adequacy of the size of the existing garden will be a factor which the Council will take into account in reaching a decision.

**5.71** In cases where the Council is concerned particularly about the likely impact of possible new buildings or structures which are normally permitted by the General Permitted Development Order, planning permission may be granted subject to a condition removing these permitted development rights.

## Recreation

**5.72** The District Council wishes to encourage and support the provision of new and improved recreational facilities and places for residents and visitors alike and aims to ensure that the demand for both formal and informal recreation is met in a sustainable way. As a means of meeting this demand, the Council has prepared a Sports and Recreation Strategy, which aims to ensure that local people have reasonable and equal access to a core of recreational and competition indoor and outdoor sports facilities. The Council also provides a number of sports and leisure centres in the district, which are managed and maintained by 'SOLL Leisure' and 'Leisure Connection' on behalf of the Council. In the rural areas of the district the high landscape quality of the countryside and the River Thames provide major resources for informal forms of recreation. However, in these areas, proposals for certain

types of formal recreational use can conflict with the need to protect the countryside. The policies and proposals in this section of the plan need to be read in conjunction with those in other relevant sections, particularly those dealing with the Green Belt and the countryside.

## Formal recreation

- 5.73** Formal recreation in the context of this plan refers to all those recreational uses, which require some physical change in the character of the land, before they can take place.

### Policy R1

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

- 5.74** It is important that facilities for outdoor sport such as pitches, greens, courts and athletics tracks, and children's play areas are sited with care, taking into account local requirements, but also having regard to other policies in the plan. Of particular importance in this context are the countryside policies, especially Policy C4 which seeks to protect the landscape setting of settlements, and Policy C2 which seeks to protect the landscape in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policies in Section 4 on the design of new development should also be taken into account. Where the site is in the Green Belt the proposal should be considered in relation to Policy GB2 which sets out the Council's policy on outdoor sport in the Green Belt.
- 5.75** New facilities should be well related to the settlements they serve and should, therefore, be sited within or adjacent to settlements. Where new, major facilities for outdoor sport are to be provided they should, as far as possible, be accessible by public transport. All new facilities should also have safe and easy access for cyclists and pedestrians. The design and layout of facilities should ensure that they are attractive, safe and easy to maintain. In preparing proposals the guidelines set out in the District Council's Design Guide should be followed.
- 5.76** In some cases suitable land to meet a local recreational need is identified but the owner is not willing to sell it for recreational purposes. In appropriate circumstances and when requested to do so by a parish or town council, the District Council will give consideration to using its compulsory purchase powers to enable the parish or town council to buy the site. The District Council will need to be satisfied that no alternative suitable site is available before pursuing compulsory purchase.

### Policy R2

**When granting planning permission for new residential development, developers will be required to provide outdoor playing space for the new residents to a minimum standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 persons.**

**Developers will be required to demonstrate that satisfactory provision for long-term maintenance has been made.**

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

**5.77** Where there is evidence to show that due to the impact of development a need has arisen for recreational facilities then the Council will require developers to provide for this need within the new development. In certain circumstances, instead of providing outdoor playing space within the development, it may be appropriate for developers to provide an equivalent sum for the upgrading or extension of existing facilities or the provision of new facilities elsewhere. Developers will be required to provide outdoor playing space to a high standard and make provision for its management by a responsible body and subsequent maintenance. In the case of facilities predominately for the benefit of occupants of the associated new housing, such provision may be required in perpetuity. These provisions will be secured in planning obligations. In addition, the Council will seek a planning obligation to ensure that the outdoor playing spaces are retained. Further advice on play space is contained in the National Playing Fields Association's (NPFA) publication The Six Acre Standard, and in the Council's Design Guide.

**5.78** The NPFA recommends a minimum standard for outdoor playing space of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population. Some 1.6 hectares of this provision should be facilities such as pitches, greens, courts, athletic tracks, and putting greens in the ownership of local government, whether at county, district or parish level, provided that they are available for general public use. Facilities belonging to the voluntary or private sector may also be included if their facilities serve the leisure time needs of their members or the public. The remaining 0.8 hectares per 1000 population should be for children's use, such as equipped playgrounds and informal play space within housing areas. The NPFA recommend that three levels of children's play space should be provided:

- local areas for play (LAPs); these are small areas of open space for young children to play within a reasonable walking distance which is accessible safely by foot from where they live
- local equipped areas for play (LEAPs); these are areas equipped for children of early school age within a reasonable walking distance which is accessible safely by foot from where they live
- neighbourhood equipped areas for play (NEAPs); these are sites which serve a substantial residential area equipped mainly for older children within a reasonable walking distance and which is accessible safely by foot from where they live.

In addition, account should be taken of the advice in the NPFA publication regarding the provision of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs in settlements with populations of less than 1000.

**5.79** Play is essential for a child to develop physically, mentally, emotionally and socially and provision needs to be made for children's play space within new residential developments. Therefore, the Council will normally require provision of a minimum of 19 square metres of children's play space for every dwelling. This is based on an NPFA standard of 8 square metres per person and an average occupancy rate of 2.36 persons per dwelling. An exception to this approach will be made in the case of purpose-built sheltered housing for elderly people. The nature of the provision will depend on the size and type of the development and the availability and accessibility of nearby play spaces. The views of the

body responsible for long-term management of the play spaces will also be relevant. The areas provided should be specifically designed and laid out as play spaces. Play spaces should aim to incorporate, where possible, the natural landscape features of the site, whilst ensuring that the play area is suitable and safe for play.

## Indoor sports facilities

### Policy R3

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

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

- 5.80** In the district there are six indoor sports, leisure and arts facilities, for joint use by schools and the community, provided by the District Council in conjunction with the County Council. These are the Abbey Sports Centre at Berinsfield, Didcot Leisure Centre, the Castle Leisure Centre at Wallingford, Henley and District Indoor Sports Centre, the Park Sports Centre at Holton and Thame Leisure Centre. There are swimming pools at Berinsfield, Didcot, Henley and Thame and an outdoor pool at the Riverside Park in Wallingford. These indoor facilities are supplemented by the use of village halls, school facilities and private and voluntary clubs. Where there is a demand for indoor facilities to meet the needs of the residents of the area, the District Council will normally permit such provision provided that it is within an existing settlement and would not give rise to objection on amenity, environmental, highway or Green Belt grounds. Proposals for the change of use of existing buildings in the countryside will be considered under Policy E8.
- 5.81** New development may also give rise to a requirement for further indoor facilities, and the Council will seek planning obligations from developers to meet these requirements where appropriate, including provisions relating to future maintenance and the long-term retention of the facilities as per paragraph 5.79 above.

## Recreation in the countryside

### Policy R4

**Proposals for outdoor sport in the countryside, with the exception of golf courses, will be permitted provided that:**

- (i) the proposal would not detract from the rural character and landscape of the area particularly in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;**
- (ii) the proposal would not adversely affect the amenities of residents in the vicinity or spoil the enjoyment of other users of the countryside, particularly by noise, but also by smell, traffic generation or any other disturbance;**
- (iii) the proposal would not adversely affect sites of archaeological, historical or nature conservation importance or result in the loss of high-grade agricultural land as defined in Policy C5;**

- (iv) **full use is made of existing buildings worthy of retention, the only new buildings which will normally be permitted must be no larger than is essential for the functioning of the sport, be limited in scale and in keeping with the locality in terms of design; and**
- (v) **if the site is in the Green Belt the proposal would not conflict with the policies in Section 3 of the plan.**

**5.82** The rural parts of the district are generally not considered to be suitable for large-scale recreational buildings and structures such as sports centres, given the overriding policies for restraining development and protecting the countryside. Proposals for outdoor sports in the countryside will be considered in relation to the criteria in Policy R4 above. The District Council will consider the impact of the proposed use on the countryside and also the extent of associated facilities such as fencing, floodlighting, buildings and car parking. Where planning permission is granted, conditions may be imposed to manage the sporting facilities and to reduce any potential conflicts with other users of the countryside or local residents. Proposals for golf courses will be considered in relation to Policy R5 below and proposals for outdoor sport in the Green Belt will also be considered in relation to the policies in Section 3 of the plan.

**5.83** Certain sports can cause problems. Noise from motorised sports, air sports such as microlight flying, and some gun sports can severely affect the amenities of nearby residents and other users of the countryside such as walkers and horse-riders. Motorised sports can also have a serious impact on the landscape in the creation of tracks and the erection of ancillary facilities. New leisure activities, such as war games, can also cause disturbance and danger as well as noise problems. Some uses can be particularly damaging to Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Ancient Woodlands. Such uses will not be permitted where damage to the amenities of nearby residents is likely to occur. As the General Permitted Development Order allows some of these activities to take place on up to 14 or 28 days in any calendar year without the need for planning permission, the Council may make an Article 4 Direction withdrawing permitted development rights in certain circumstances, thus bringing the use within planning control.

## **Golf courses and golf driving ranges**

### **Policy R5**

**Proposals for golf courses will be permitted provided that:**

- (i) **the essential character of the area is conserved or where possible enhanced, particularly in the Green Belt and in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Golf courses will not be permitted in prominent locations or in areas where the landscape would be damaged;**
- (ii) **full use is made of existing buildings which are worthy of retention. The only new buildings that will normally be permitted will be a club-house and maintenance building and these must be limited in scale and in keeping with the locality in terms of siting, design and appearance;**
- (iii) **it would not damage the amenities of local residents, affect the use or enjoyment of public rights-of-way, spoil other people's enjoyment of the countryside, cause traffic or highway safety problems or conflict with the other policies in this plan;**

- (iv) the proposal would not adversely affect sites of archaeological, historical or nature conservation importance or result in the loss of high-grade agricultural land as defined in Policy C5; and**
- (v) wherever possible opportunities are taken to enhance the landscape, to improve public access and wildlife habitats.**

- 5.84** Golf courses generally retain the open nature of the countryside but they can change its character, by introducing features such as fairways, manicured greens, bunkers and other unnatural features which one does not expect to see in the rural landscape. Other problems can include extensive and unsympathetic landscaping, the provision of club-houses and car parks and an adverse effect on public rights of way. Policy R5 above is framed to take account of such issues. Proposals for golf driving ranges and pitch-and-putt courses will also be considered in the light of this policy. Where proposals for golf uses are in the Green Belt, they will also be considered in relation to the policies in Section 3 of the plan.
- 5.85** The Sports Council (Southern Region) published [A Guide to Golf Provision in the Southern Region](#) in 1995. It found that within Oxfordshire there is an overprovision of golf courses using a measure of one 18-hole golf course or equivalent for every 20,000 people. In South Oxfordshire in April 2001 there were 10, 18-hole golf courses. This is the equivalent of one 18-hole course for every 13,000 people in the district.
- 5.86** The need for courses where the general public can play golf on a "pay-as-you-play" basis is sometimes put forward as a justification for a golf course where one might not normally be acceptable. The Council wishes to encourage pay-as-you-play courses, but only where a golf course is acceptable in principle. In planning terms it is normally the land-use aspects of a proposal which are relevant and not the way in which a course may be managed or used. The management of a golf course is not generally a planning consideration and a particular form of management cannot be enforced by condition. Therefore, if a golf course proposal is unacceptable on land-use grounds, the fact that it may be put forward as a pay-as-you-play course will not generally override the objection. Only if the issues are finely balanced might the fact that a proposal is for a pay-as-you-play course be a material consideration. Where permission is given on this basis, the Council will seek a legal agreement to ensure that this type of course is provided.
- 5.87** The impact of a golf course on the landscape is fundamental to its acceptability. In order to be able to assess whether a golf course can be satisfactorily integrated into the landscape the Council will normally require full details of the course layout and landscaping to be submitted with the application. Some golf course proposals involve considerable earthmoving and land-sculpting and this may result in the creation of an artificial landscape, out of character with the surrounding countryside. In such cases, and where a golf course is acceptable in principle, the Council may impose conditions limiting the amount of land-sculpting in order to preserve the natural appearance of the countryside. The Council will also require the course to be laid out in such a way as to ensure the safety of people using footpaths and bridleways in the area. The County Council has adopted minimum design standards to protect rights-of-way on golf courses and the District Council would ask developers to have regard to these in the design of the course. Proposals which would materially reduce the safety, convenience and enjoyment of people using rights-of-way in the area will not normally be permitted. Details will also be required of the access point, expected traffic generation, features of historic interest and areas of wildlife importance. A

proposal which would have a detrimental effect on the local road network, would result in the loss of high-grade agricultural land, would damage an area of importance for wildlife or an historic landscape or an area of historic or archaeological importance will not normally be permitted. English Heritage has prepared guidance on golf course proposals in historic landscapes including archaeological remains, conservation areas and parks and gardens and the Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) has published an advisory booklet Golf Courses in the Countryside. Wherever possible the Council will expect the course and associated facilities to be designed to allow disabled people using wheelchairs or motorised buggies to play on the course. Details accompanying the application should also set out the effect of the golf course on the remainder of the farm holding and adjoining farmland, and whether it creates redundant farm buildings or farm houses.

- 5.88** It is important to ensure that golf course proposals do not result in damage to the water environment. Golf courses often require large quantities of water for irrigation purposes. Conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, to ensure that irrigation does not have a detrimental effect on local land drainage or water resources. Golf course construction can also, on occasions, involve mineral extraction or waste disposal. Any application should make clear the extent and nature of such operations and ensure that an assessment of the possible impact of operations on the water environment can be made. If the scale of minerals and waste development is significant then the whole golf course application would fall to the County Council to determine. Any proposals to bring in waste or dig minerals made subsequent to a grant of permission for a golf course would also be determined by the County Council and all such proposals would be considered in relation to the policies in the Structure Plan and Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- 5.89** Proposals for golf driving ranges may include an element of floodlighting. These will be considered in relation to Policy EP3. Where such proposals are acceptable, the impact of lighting emissions should be minimised by use of shielding and screening and by the selection of an appropriate intensity of lighting.
- 5.90** The District Council's planning policies generally do not allow the erection of new buildings in the countryside. Wherever possible existing buildings should be re-used to provide a club house and maintenance facilities. Where this is not possible the only buildings that will be permitted are a modest club-house and maintenance building and these must be sensitively designed and sited so as to have a minimum impact on the landscape. Details of any proposed buildings, car parks, internal roads and access points should be submitted with any applications.
- 5.91** Residential accommodation on the site will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that it is essential for a person to be available at all times and that this need cannot be met through existing accommodation in the area, or by the conversion of an existing appropriate building which cannot be used for the club house or maintenance building, or by the erection of a building in a nearby settlement. If these solutions are not possible, then the only type of accommodation that may be considered appropriate is a flat which is formed as an integral part of the club-house. Proposals for other forms of development, such as hotels, conference centres, restaurants and sports and leisure complexes, will be assessed in accordance with the other policies in this plan. Policies G2, G4, GB2 and E8 will be particularly relevant in this context. If, according to Green Belt or countryside protection policies, such development would be unacceptable, the application will generally be refused.

## Informal recreation

### Policy R6

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

- 5.92** Government guidance in PPG3 and PPG17 emphasises the importance of providing sufficient public open space for informal recreation as an integral part of new housing developments. The opportunity to play, walk, cycle or work on an allotment in a pleasantly-landscaped and largely open environment close to where people live is essential for a good quality of life and for promoting health and fitness. Many settlements in South Oxfordshire already possess a plentiful variety of attractive green spaces but others, such as Didcot for instance, are less fortunate.
- 5.93** The Council has commissioned an assessment of public spaces used for informal recreation in the district. This will identify where deficiencies exist in terms of quality and quantity. The Council will then prepare a strategy to address the deficiencies in partnership with town and parish councils and other interested parties. In settlements where the strategy indicates a deficiency of public space used for informal recreation, then developers of new housing developments will be required to provide public open space for informal recreation use on the development site.
- 5.94** The amount of land required for informal recreation use will be about 10% of the total site area and in larger developments the percentage is likely to be higher than this, where a public space network is required to fulfil multiple functions as well as informal recreation. In those cases, the amount of land required will be determined in master plans or development briefs prepared for individual large sites, which the Council will approve as supplementary planning documents. Further guidance on public space networks is given in the Council's Design Guide. In the case of small developments, developers may prefer to assist another body to provide an equivalent area of public open space for informal recreation elsewhere, rather than on the development site itself. This approach will be acceptable where the other body has firm plans to provide the open space elsewhere in accordance with plans that are approved by the Council and which are likely to be delivered within a reasonable timescale. The informal recreation land must also normally be within a ten minutes' walking distance of the development site.
- 5.95** In all cases, the Council will seek planning obligations from developers to secure the provision of the public open space in perpetuity for informal recreation use. The obligations will identify the body responsible for future management of the land and will provide a commuted sum for the cost of subsequent maintenance for use by the management body. In the case of facilities predominately for the benefit of occupants of the associated new housing, such provision may be required in perpetuity. In cases where open space is to be provided elsewhere, then the planning obligation will include a financial contribution at an amount sufficient to enable the open space provider to acquire the necessary land and to lay it out with such works and facilities as are required to render the land fit for informal recreation use.

**Policy R7**

**The role of the countryside in providing for a wide range of informal recreational activities is recognised. Small-scale facilities (such as car parking, toilets, or picnic sites) which support the recreational use will be permitted at popular locations, provided that they are sensitively designed and sited and there are no overriding amenity, environmental or traffic objections.**

- 5.96** In an attractive area such as South Oxfordshire, close to both Reading and Oxford, there are inevitably pressures for informal recreation. The protection and management of the countryside, especially in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, has to be reconciled with the need to allow some recreational use. The main informal activities are walking, picnicking, horse riding, country drives, cycling and fishing. These activities can create a demand for small-scale facilities such as car parks and picnic areas, but these can generally be regarded as appropriate in rural areas.
- 5.97** Planning policies are unlikely to affect the patterns of informal recreation, but they can help to ensure that the character of the area is protected from inappropriate development, and that adequate facilities are sensitively provided in suitable locations. On popular sites provision may be needed for car parking, cycle storage, picnic areas, litter bins and, in some cases, toilets may also be appropriate. All these facilities must be carefully designed and sited so as not to harm the attractiveness or character of the area. Wherever possible, facilities should be designed to accommodate the needs of disabled users. In some cases facilities may need to be limited so that a particular site is not over-used. Commercial facilities, such as refreshment or souvenir kiosks are rarely appropriate in the countryside. The Council will ensure that sporting and recreational activities do not damage the amenities of local residents or spoil other people's enjoyment of the countryside.

**Public rights-of-way****Policy R8**

**The retention and protection of the existing public rights-of-way network will be sought and where appropriate proposals to improve it will be supported.**

- 5.98** The district enjoys an extensive network of footpaths, bridleways and byways. These are important, not only as pedestrian routes but because they provide opportunities for people to enjoy quiet, open countryside. They are shown on the Definitive Map of Public Rights-of-Way prepared by Oxfordshire County Council, a copy of which is held by the District Council.
- 5.99** The District Council considers that the existing network should be protected and maintained, and because walking, cycling and horse riding are becoming more and more popular, the network should be extended where particular needs are shown to exist. When determining applications for development the Council will ensure that existing rights-of-way are protected. This does not necessarily mean that the existing line will be retained, but any diversion must provide a safe, attractive and convenient alternative, and where possible should be of benefit to the public. The Council will ensure that new developments, for example for housing or employment, are adequately linked into the existing rights-of-way network. This may involve the creation of new rights-of-way linking into the town or village network and the open countryside generally. The Countryside and Rights-of-Way Act 2000 gives a statutory right of access on foot to mountains, moor, heath, down and

registered common land. In Oxfordshire the County Council is responsible for sign-posting and maintaining routes and the District Council will liaise with the County Council to ensure the maintenance and improvement of the rights-of-way network.

- 5.100** There are a number of important recreation routes which are within or pass through the district. The Ridgeway Path is an 85-mile long national trail which runs from Avebury in Wiltshire to Ivinghoe in Buckinghamshire following the escarpment of the Chilterns in South Oxfordshire. The Oxfordshire Way links the Cotswolds with the Chilterns; within the district it runs eastwards from Beckley to beyond Tiddington and then turns south to Henley. The Thames Path National Trail is a long-distance route beside the River Thames from its source at Kemble in Gloucestershire to the Thames Barrier near Greenwich in London. The County Council has promoted a number of circular walks and cycle routes including the Oxfordshire Cycleway which is 200 miles of signed route in total, including several smaller circuits within the district. The core routes of the National Cycle Network were completed in June 2000 and include a route between Reading and Oxford via Wallingford, Didcot and Abingdon. The Council supports these initiatives and will consider promoting further routes in the district which encourage sustainable methods of transport in the countryside where these are not covered by the work of other organisations.

## River Thames

- 5.101** The River Thames is an important recreational resource and is used extensively for pleasure boating and for rowing, as well as a range of other recreational pursuits. The annual Henley Regatta focuses national attention on the River Thames. Policy C3 in Section 3 of this plan sets out the Council's policies on maintaining and enhancing the visual quality and natural beauty of the Thames and its valley and the policies for the recreational use of the River Thames are set in this context. The NRA (now the Environment Agency) and the Sports Council published A Recreational Strategy for the River Thames in 1995 which aimed to encourage recreation on the river whilst conserving and enhancing its ecology, landscape and heritage value. This has been taken into consideration in the following policy.

### Policy R9

**In considering proposals for recreational development associated with the River Thames and its valley, the overriding aim will be to preserve the river environment and landscape. To this end:**

- (i) new permanent moorings or new hire bases will not be permitted: temporary and overnight moorings for visitors will be permitted in suitable locations where no environmental damage is caused and where proper access and other facilities are available;**
- (ii) opportunities will be taken, where appropriate and desirable, to relocate existing on-river moorings into side channels provided that there is no harm to amenity or important biodiversity resources; and**
- (iii) wherever possible water-sports activities should develop through existing sites and premises rather than through the creation of new ones. Planning permission may be given for new facilities for water-sports, where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that existing facilities would not meet the need and that there would not, as a result of the development, be insuperable conflicts between river users, or significantly increased congestion.**

**Proposals to redevelop existing boatyards and boat hire facilities for other uses will not be permitted.**

**All development proposals should, where appropriate, include measures to improve opportunities for public access to and onto the river.**

**5.102** The District Council is anxious to reduce the number of permanent moorings on the river as they lead to congestion and reduce the visual amenity of the river for both walkers on the river bank and other users of the river. The Council considers that such moorings are best located off the river either in side channels or in purpose-built facilities such as the marina in a former gravel pit east of Caversham. The Council will therefore not normally permit further permanent moorings on the river. Seasonal moorings, which are permanent moorings during the summer months, will also not normally be permitted. There is, however, a need for temporary moorings for river users who wish to visit some of the attractive settlements adjacent to the river or who need an overnight stop. Such moorings must not cause damage to the environment and must have proper access to the services required by pleasure boaters.

**5.103** In recent years the number of boats registered on the Thames has declined, as has the amount of boat traffic. Research has indicated that most boat users believe that the river has improved for boating with reduced river congestion and a cleaner environment. It is important, however, that a balance is maintained between the use of the river and its conservation. To this end, the Council recognises that services such as boatyards are vital to the future of the river and once lost, are difficult to replace. The protection of existing boat hire facilities will also help to maintain the current provision of these facilities on the river. The Council will therefore resist proposals for the redevelopment of these sites to other uses.

## The keeping of horses

### Policy R10

**Proposals involving or connected with the keeping of horses will be permitted provided that the proposed development would not:**

- (i) be visually intrusive or damage the appearance and character of the area and the landscape;**
- (ii) conflict with the overriding objective in the Green Belt to maintain the open nature and rural character of the land; or**
- (iii) damage the amenities of the area in terms of traffic, excessive bridleway use, noise, smell or other disturbance.**

**5.104** Horse riding for recreational purposes, and horse breeding and training, are common activities in the district. There are two separate aspects to the activity as far as the need for planning permission is concerned; first the use of land, and secondly the erection of buildings. The use of land for the grazing of horses is regarded as an agricultural use under the Planning Acts and does not therefore, require planning permission. However, the use of land for the keeping of horses, with the attendant fences, jumps and shelters, can constitute a change of use requiring planning permission. Similarly the erection of a building, or the use of an existing building for keeping horses for any purpose, will generally require planning permission, and as a result the Council is often involved in investigations into unauthorised

activities in this respect. It is therefore advisable for people to check with the District Council whether planning permission is needed before carrying out any such development.

- 5.105** Applications for development related to keeping horses will be considered in the context of the above policy. Proposals in the Green Belt will also be considered in relation to the policies in Section 3 of the plan. In land-use terms the main difference between domestic and commercial stabling is that the level of activity generated by commercial establishments is much greater in terms of increased traffic, car parking, the number and size of buildings and the excessive use of bridleways. Very careful consideration will be given to new commercial riding establishments where the scale of operations may be particularly detrimental to the character of the countryside. Where development relating to the keeping of horses is acceptable in principle, every effort should be made to ensure that any new buildings and structures are sited and designed to harmonise with their surroundings, that the development is to a high standard and will be adequately maintained. Planning permission will not normally be given for dwellings or visitor accommodation associated with riding schools. Therefore, where continuous supervision is required, the riding facility should be located close to existing accommodation.

## Community facilities and services

- 5.106** The community facilities and services in the villages and towns of the district play a vital role in the quality of life of residents. The provision of facilities and services within settlements is particularly important to residents with limited or no access to a private car. Local facilities also meet sustainability objectives in that their provision reduces the need to travel. Government advice in PPS7 and PPG13 encourages the provision of local facilities and PPG6 emphasises the vital role of village shops in rural areas in sustaining the social structure of villages. The Rural White Paper *Our Countryside: The Future* also emphasises the need for active, living communities where people are able to meet their needs locally. It encourages the retention of village enterprises through diversification into new services, and in the case of post offices, embracing new banking services. The Rural White Paper also suggests that the sharing of premises by commercial facilities may assist long-term viability.
- 5.107** The District Council itself provides some services, including the refuse collection service, some direct financial assistance for the provision/improvement of community halls and day-care centres, and grants for sports and arts organisations. The Council also uses its development control powers to ensure community facilities and other infrastructure works are provided by developers when new housing and business premises are built in the district. Infrastructure and service requirements are covered in Section 4 of this plan.
- 5.108** Other services are provided by a wide range of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. The County Council administers many of the schools in South Oxfordshire and, in addition, there are a number of independent schools. The County Council also provides, as part of its social services responsibilities, sheltered accommodation and training and day centre facilities for elderly and disabled people. Other County Council services include libraries and museums, fire services, and magistrates' courts. The South East Oxfordshire, South West Oxfordshire, Vale of Aylesbury and Oxford City Primary Care Trusts administer health care provision in the district. Town and parish councils run community halls and there are a large number of other meeting places, and places of worship, run by churches and other organisations.

- 5.109** Other key services and facilities are provided by the private sector and these include general stores, post offices, garages and petrol filling stations and public houses.
- 5.110** This section of the plan provides a planning framework against which all proposals for the development of essential community facilities and services, including proposals which affect existing essential facilities and services, may be considered. It must be recognised, however, that many works carried out by the public utility organisations can be carried out as permitted development, without the need for planning permission to be obtained from the District Council. In these circumstances, the Council will foster close liaison procedures with the public utilities to ensure that amenity and other planning interests are safeguarded.

## Safeguarding community facilities and services including recreation facilities

### Policy CF1

**Proposals that result in the loss of a recreation facility or an essential community facility or service, through change of use or redevelopment, will not be permitted unless:**

- (i) suitable alternative provision is made for the facility (or similar facilities of equivalent community value) on a site elsewhere in the locality, or**
- (ii) in the case of recreational facilities, it is not needed, or**
- (iii) in the case of commercial services, it is not economically viable.**

- 5.111** The quality and convenience of every-day life is greatly influenced by the nature and extent of essential community facilities and services. A community facility or service may be essential, either because it is one of a limited number of that nature in a settlement or area, or is fundamental to the quality and convenience of everyday life in a settlement. Thus if suitable alternative provision already exists, a facility will not be considered essential. Essential community facilities and services may include general stores, post offices, public houses, community halls, libraries, primary health care services, garages and petrol stations, places of worship, schools, welfare and utility services, playing fields and other recreational facilities including allotments.
- 5.112** In the interests of the well-being of local communities and in view of the difficulties which many organisations find in obtaining premises for community use, it is important to protect the existing community use of sites, wherever possible, by resisting their loss to another use. This is particularly important in South Oxfordshire where the high value of development land creates pressures for land presently used for community facilities and services to be developed for other purposes. Such pressures may arise, for instance, where existing school buildings are declared redundant for education purposes due to falling school rolls or other factors. The Council will give priority, therefore, to the retention and enhancement of community uses on established sites. Any buildings or other land, currently or formerly in community use, will not normally be allowed to change to a different type of use, nor will other development be permitted on sites allocated for community use, unless it has been established that the community facility is no longer needed or in the case of commercial facilities is not economically viable, or the developer proposes to provide equivalent or better facilities in the locality. Planning conditions or legal obligations may be necessary to ensure that any replacement facilities are actually provided. Any replacement facility should normally be available before the original facility is lost.

- 5.113** This policy is intended to safeguard all existing recreation facilities whether formal or informal, publicly or privately owned, and whether buildings or open land, including allotments. This is considered important in view of the growing demand for recreational facilities and the restrictions on public spending. There is also increasing concern about the loss of recreational facilities, particularly within urban areas, as once land is lost to development it cannot be brought back into recreational use if a need arises for further provision in the future. Many open spaces within settlements are important not just for their recreational value but also because they contribute significantly to the character of a settlement or are an important visual amenity for local residents. PPG17 advises that playing fields should not be lost to development unless there is an established surplus of all forms of open space. If playing fields are no longer required for their original purpose, then consideration should be given to their use to meet recreational needs in the wider community.
- 5.114** Where a proposal involves the loss of non-commercial facilities, such as village halls, playing fields and allotments, the Council will determine whether the facility is not needed by evaluating the current usage of the facility, the provision of that type of facility elsewhere in the locality, local support for the facility and whether another community use can show a requirement for the site or buildings. For alternative provision to be acceptable, the replacement facility must be at least equivalent in accessibility and value to the local community as the previous facility.
- 5.115** In the case of a proposal to change the use of an essential commercial venture, the Council will refer to its Community Facilities Viability Assessment. This is available from the District Council. The assessment is based on CAMRA's Public House Viability Test and advice given in the Council's Shopping Study 2000. It will not be used rigidly, but rather as guidance to assist the Council and applicants in ensuring that all steps are taken to make a business viable. The assessment contains a list of the factors that should be taken into account in assessing the viability of a facility and is set out as a series of questions. The key factors that will be considered by the Council are:
- the trade potential of the business
  - studies of comparable businesses
  - the way the business is or was run
  - the attempts to sell the business
  - the business advice that has been sought and steps that have been taken as a result.
- 5.116** Some of this information will be immediately available to the Council, but other matters will need to be addressed by the applicant. If the Council, following discussions with the applicant, is of the view that there is insufficient information to demonstrate that the retention of a facility in its use as a community facility would not be economically viable, planning permission is likely to be refused. Applicants will be asked to produce evidence to the Council that they have taken professional business advice on appropriate actions to maintain and enhance the business, and that there was insufficient beneficial effect on turnover and profitability to make the facility viable. These actions should include consultation with the Council, the town or parish council and the local community to explore any sources of support for the business that may be available. In the case of shops in the villages, consultation should include the Village Shops Association and taking advice from the Association's Fieldworker. Any essential commercial community facility should also be

put on the market at a fair market value for at least twelve months before an application is submitted and the response to the marketing should be made available to the Council. The 'fair market value' should be for the business and not reflect the 'hope value' of a residential conversion or development. In particularly contentious cases, the Council will gain advice from expert advisors on the viability of a commercial use.

- 5.117** In cases where essential commercial community facilities are lost, in order to maintain employment uses and/or the vitality and mix of uses within a settlement, employment uses should be sought. Planning permission for housing will not be granted unless employment uses are demonstrated to be unacceptable or impractical.

## Provision of community facilities and services

### Policy CF2

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

- 5.118** In general, the Council will welcome proposals involving the provision of new buildings, or change of use of existing buildings, that will result in new community facilities and services for the local population, provided that there are no overriding objections to the proposal. The provision and improvement of public house facilities will also be considered in relation to policies TSM3 and TSM4.
- 5.119** New community facilities and services are usually most conveniently located for local people in or near town centres or within the built-up limits of other settlements. Development outside the confines of a settlement that would prejudice Green Belt or other countryside policies will normally be resisted.
- 5.120** In the residential areas of the district there are likely to be further proposals for development (including the change of use of existing dwellings) to provide day nurseries for young children, residential homes for the elderly and to provide "group homes" or hostels providing accommodation for people with learning difficulties or other people in need of social rehabilitation in the care of the Health Authority or in private care. In accordance with Government advice, these uses are generally appropriate in residential areas and planning permission will normally be granted, except where there is already an over-concentration of such uses in a street and the introduction of further uses would harm the character of the area. Other factors to be considered include potential noise disturbance to neighbours, and the adequacy of access and car parking arrangements.
- 5.121** Occasionally, a proposed development for another use in part of the curtilage of an existing community facility or service may inhibit the potential of the community facility or service to expand, thereby adversely affecting the successful long-term use for the site. In such cases the proposed development is unlikely to be permitted.
- 5.122** The Council will normally welcome proposals for local shops which meet the day-to-day needs of local people provided that the criteria in the policy are met. Permission will not be forthcoming for large shop units which may undermine the viability of an existing shopping area, as outlined in Policy TC7 in Section 7.

## Safeguarding the vitality and viability of neighbourhood and local centres

### Policy CF3

**In the local and neighbourhood centres of towns and in the larger villages, change of use of shops to non-retail uses will only be permitted where this would not detract from the overall role and attractiveness of the shopping area.**

- 5.123** Shopping is an important activity in the local and neighbourhood centres in the towns, and in several large villages - Benson, Berinsfield, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Dorchester, Goring, Sonning Common, Watlington, Woodcote and Wheatley - where groups of shops or individual shops in the village centres serve a wider area than the immediate parish.
- 5.124** The existing shopping parades and many individual shops provide a valuable community service and proposals to change the use of shops to non-shop uses will be carefully controlled. Such changes of use will be resisted where the number of non-shop uses is likely to reduce the attraction of the neighbourhood or village as a shopping centre and undermine the viability of remaining shops.

## Section 6 Supporting the local economy

### Introduction

**6.1** This section deals with business and industry, agriculture and forestry, tourism, telecommunications and advertisements. Other activities such as retailing and local services also make a substantial contribution to the economy of the area, but for convenience are covered elsewhere in the plan. The policies in this section of the plan seek to:

- provide for local employment needs
- meet the needs of existing firms and new small businesses
- encourage clusters of high value-added firms and enterprise centres in appropriate locations
- retain existing employment sites to maintain local employment opportunities
- maintain a viable and sustainable agricultural industry
- encourage tourism-related developments based on the conservation and enjoyment of the district's landscape and heritage.

**6.2** South Oxfordshire is situated within the area to the west of London characterised by concentrations of business-service employment and high-tech, knowledge-based industries. There has been a rapid growth in employment in the area in recent years and this has led to problems of pressure on the local infrastructure, rapidly rising house prices and skills shortages. Unemployment in the district was 1% in December 2000. The high environmental quality of this area is a factor in its success and there are considerable pressures for further employment growth in the district.

**6.3** This area makes a significant contribution to the national economy and an innovative and productive local economy is one of the key objectives of sustainable development. Access to employment and training opportunities is a fundamental human need. It is also important that economic growth does not adversely affect the environmental qualities of the area that are an essential part of its attraction. A selective approach to economic development is therefore required, in recognition of the fact that unrestrained economic growth would have severe consequences for the environment of the district, would place additional demands on the infrastructure of the area, in particular the transport network, and would create a demand for more housing to accommodate the workforce. There would also be an adverse effect on existing firms who would find it increasingly difficult to compete in the labour market.

**6.4** Agriculture is the single most important land use in the district. It covers about 590km<sup>2</sup> out of a total area of about 690km<sup>2</sup>. Employment in agriculture has been falling in recent years and about 900 people were employed in agriculture in 1997. In the last few years farm incomes have fallen sharply after a period of rising incomes in the early 1990s. This fall in income has resulted from a combination of factors, including the Common Agricultural Policy, the strength of the pound, low world commodity prices and lack of consumer confidence as a result of various food safety concerns. Farmers have increasingly looked to diversify their activities and the 1998 Oxfordshire Farming Study showed that farmers in the district derived over a quarter of their income from non-farming diversification. This trend is likely to continue.

- 6.5** Tourists are attracted to South Oxfordshire by a wide range of features. These include the quality of the landscape, particularly in the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs, the River Thames, and the historic villages and market towns. There are also buildings and features of special interest, museums and landscaped parklands. Tourism provides social and economic benefits for local people, particularly in supporting local services which may not be viable without the contribution of visitors. However, it needs to be managed to ensure that it is not of a scale which damages the environment on which it depends or adversely affects the quality of life of local people. This means encouraging tourism developments that are based on the conservation and enjoyment of the inherent qualities and heritage of South Oxfordshire, which generally do not create a large travel demand, and that are well served by forms of transport other than the car. The Council has published a Tourism and Visitor Management Strategy which deals with the promotion and management of the tourist industry in the district.

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

### **The Oxfordshire Structure Plan**

- 6.6** The County Council's overall strategy for economic development in Oxfordshire aims to encourage the development of a high-wage, high-skill, high-value-added economy which protects and enhances the quality of life of residents and enables them to fulfil their potential. The Structure Plan seeks, within the context of the plan's overall strategy, to ensure that sufficient land is available in appropriate locations to meet the needs of small businesses, existing firms and firms which need to be in Oxfordshire. The plan also seeks to encourage new employment-generating development in locations which contribute to reducing the need to travel. The plan emphasises that in 1996 the land supply for employment (in Class B uses) was just over 400 hectares and that this could provide for about 30,000 jobs. This excluded jobs likely to be created in other sectors of the economy such as retailing, health and education as well as any growth in employment on existing sites. The plan therefore states that there will be little need to release major areas of new land for employment-generating development, but it may be appropriate to provide new employment sites:

- "to provide local jobs well related to housing and local services and public transport to reduce the need for people to travel long distances to work and to seek to provide a balance between jobs and workforce in the main towns and their hinterlands
- "to provide for the expansion and relocation of existing firms and firms which have a demonstrable need to be in a particular area
- "to provide for the creation of new small and medium-sized firms and for suitable proposals which can help to diversify the rural economy."

- 6.7** The Structure Plan states that in Didcot the provision of land for employment-generating development will be made to meet the needs of local firms and firms which need to be located in the area, and to achieve an appropriate balance between the number and type of jobs and the size and skills of the local workforce. Outside Didcot, the provision of employment-generating development will be restrained. A limited amount of land for employment-intensive development will be made available in Henley, Thame and Wallingford. Throughout the county, premises for small firms or those for whom a specific location is necessary will be permitted in appropriate locations. The plan also states that in

considering proposals for employment-generating development account should be taken of the existing or planned housing provision. In relation to the rural economy, the plan states that proposals for small-scale, employment-generating development which support the diversification of the rural economy will normally be permitted in appropriate locations. The plan also encourages tourism projects which are based on the conservation and enjoyment of the county's inherent qualities and heritage, in appropriate locations, particularly where the proposed development is accessible by foot, cycle or public transport.

## Didcot

### ~~Policy E1~~

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

- ~~(i) for proposals on sites allocated in Section 10 in accordance with Policies DID5 to DID9 and DID11;~~
- ~~(ii) for new premises or the conversion of existing buildings on a suitable site within the built-up area; and~~
- ~~(iii) for the reasonable extension of a firm on its present site;~~

~~provided that in all cases the requirements of Policies E4 and E5 are met.~~

- ~~6.8 The Structure Plan identifies Didcot as a location for further employment-generating development. This has been a key element in the planning framework of the district since 1979 and there has been a substantial growth in employment opportunities in and around the town. At the same time it is clear that the Structure Plan strategy does not envisage uncontrolled growth, as this could undermine the strategy of restraining the overall level of development in the County and create overheating in the local housing and labour markets, as well as lead to other problems of environmental damage and road congestion.~~
- ~~6.9 Policies E2b and E5 of the Structure Plan establish that there should be a balance between the proposed amount of new housing and the proposed level of new business and industry. An assessment has therefore been carried out of the existing commitments for further employment growth in the Didcot area. In addition to the sites allocated for employment in this plan, there are significant commitments for further employment in the area. These are mainly at Milton Park and UKAEA Harwell - both of which are in the Vale of White Horse District. It is estimated that the commitments on these sites could provide over 5,000 jobs. This, with the allocations in this plan, the growth of other sectors of the economy such as retailing and the likely growth in employment in existing firms, will be at least sufficient to match the size and skills of the local workforce. Details of the site-specific proposals in Didcot are contained in Section 10.~~
- 6.10 Within the built-up area of Didcot proposals for extensions to existing buildings in employment use, the change of use of existing buildings to employment-generating uses, or small-scale new employment uses will be considered in relation to Policies E4 and E5.

## Henley, Thame and Wallingford

### ~~Policy E2~~

~~In Henley, Thame and Wallingford the provision of land for employment-generating development will be restrained. Planning permission for business and industry, storage and distribution will only be granted:~~

- ~~(i) for proposals on sites allocated in Sections 11 and 13 in accordance with Policies HEN2, HEN3 and WAL5;~~
- ~~(ii) for new premises or the conversion of existing buildings on a suitable site within the built-up area; and~~
- ~~(iii) for the reasonable extension of a firm on its present site;~~

~~provided that in all cases the requirements of Policies E4 and E5 are met.~~

6.11 This policy complies with Structure Plan Policy E3. In the plan period it is not anticipated that there will be significant housing growth in either Thame or Henley. Both these towns have a good existing stock of employment sites. The plan therefore provides for some limited further employment opportunities to enable the towns to maintain their vitality and provide a range of job opportunities for local residents. However, provision will be limited so that economic growth does not create pressures for further housing growth or increase the need to travel. Some further sites for housing have been allocated in the Wallingford area. It is therefore proposed to retain the employment allocations that remain undeveloped from the 1997 adopted Local Plan. Details of site-specific proposals are contained in Sections 11 and 13.

6.12 Within the built-up area of these towns proposals for extensions to existing buildings in employment use, the change of use of existing buildings to employment-generating uses, or small-scale new employment uses will be considered in relation to Policies E4 and E5.

### ~~The rural areas~~

### ~~Policy E3~~

~~In the rural areas planning permission for business and industry, storage and distribution will only be granted:~~

- ~~(i) for proposals on sites allocated in Section 9 in accordance with Policies RUR10, 11, 12, 14 and 15;~~
- ~~(ii) for new premises up to 500 square metres gross floorspace on a suitable site within the built-up area of a village outside the Green Belt;~~
- ~~(iii) for new premises on a suitable site within the built-up area of a village outside the Green Belt for firms whose sources of supply, commercial linkages, labour supply and markets make a specific location necessary;~~
- ~~(iv) for the conversion of existing buildings within the built-up area of villages;~~
- ~~(v) for the re-use of rural buildings in accordance with Policy E8; and~~

~~(vi) for the reasonable extension of a firm on its present site provided that the site is not within the Green Belt, the extension is well related to the existing buildings on the site, the firm is not considered to be badly sited and in the case of proposals which would generate significant new employment opportunities, the site is in a location which is accessible by walking, cycling and/or public transport;~~

~~provided that in all cases the requirements of Policies E4 and E5 are met.~~

- ~~6.13 This policy is based on Structure Plan Policy E4. The District Council considers that most development for employment purposes should take place in the towns because of the need to protect the attractive countryside and villages of the district, and in order to comply with the Structure Plan policies relating to general restraint and the Green Belt. The concentration of development in locations which are close to the labour force and well served by existing transport infrastructure also reduces the need for car and lorry journeys, thus contributing to the aim of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and helping to reduce the growth of traffic on unsuitable rural roads. The Council considers, however, that some small-scale developments within villages may be permitted as a means of providing local job opportunities and for meeting the needs of small businesses and local firms. Details of site-specific proposals are contained in Section 9. Proposals for the re-use of buildings within the Green Belt or the re-use of rural buildings in the remainder of the district will be considered in relation to Policy E8.~~
- ~~6.14 Small firms are important to the economy of the rural areas. A survey of rural businesses undertaken by the Council in 1997 showed that 85% of the businesses in the rural areas of the district employed less than 11 people. The Council will continue to support the establishment of small employment concerns on suitable sites within the built-up area of villages outside the Green Belt.~~
- ~~6.15 Subject to Policy E4, the Council may be prepared to allow new premises in villages outside the Green Belt for firms who have an operational need to be located in the plan area. Although the Council will not expect all the criteria in Policy E3(iii) to be met in every case, it will expect most of them to be met if a proposal is to be acceptable. In particular, it is important that the majority of the labour supply is available locally. Employment concerns which have occupied premises in the Local Plan area for more than two years will normally be considered as having an operational need to be in the area.~~
- ~~6.16 The continued prosperity of existing firms is obviously of great importance to the local economy and it is the Council's view that if such firms wish to expand on their current sites they should be encouraged to do so, provided that the existing site is suitable. Proposals from firms to enlarge their sites outside the existing planning unit do not, however, fall within this policy. Any extension should be well related to the existing buildings on the site, and to the area generally, extensions should not have an adverse impact on the character of a settlement or on the landscape. In cases where a firm is considered to be badly sited, it will be encouraged to move to a more appropriate site elsewhere. Where an extension will give rise to further employment opportunities, consideration will be given to the accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport. Where appropriate the Council will require the preparation and implementation of a travel plan as set out in Policy T3.~~
- ~~6.17 In recent years the Council has granted many planning permissions for the re-use of rural buildings in the countryside or on the edge of settlements for employment use. Many of~~

~~these were former agricultural buildings. The Council will not grant planning permission for the extension of these buildings. Government advice in PPS7 indicates that replacement buildings in the countryside are acceptable where buildings are suitably located and the existing building is of permanent design and construction and suitable for the use proposed. Such replacement buildings should be no larger in footprint, floorspace or volume than could be accommodated in the existing building. The replacement should result in a more sustainable development than could be achieved by conversion and bring about an environmental improvement in terms of the impact of the development on its surroundings and the landscape.~~

## General employment policies

### **Policy E4**

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

- 6.18 ~~This policy applies throughout the district and is based on the general strategy of the Structure Plan, as set out in Structure Plan Policy G1. Policy E4 also restates Policy E5 of the Structure Plan which reflects the need to ensure that further employment growth does not create pressures for housing above existing and planned levels. The policy will generally only apply to proposals with significant employment potential. What the Council considers to be significant will depend on the location of the proposed development and on the availability of housing and employment opportunities at the time of the application. This policy will not be applied, however, to individual proposals of less than 500 square metres.~~

### **Policy E5**

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

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

- (vi) **where appropriate, are in locations which are not accessible by public transport in accordance with Policy T2; and/or**
- (vii) **cause problems as a result of noise, smell, dust, loss of privacy or cause any other environmental problems in accordance with Policies EP1 to EP9.**

**6.19** All proposals for employment-generating development must be acceptable both in principle and in detail. The criteria listed above will be taken into account in considering all applications for such development and the Council will also have regard to the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and where appropriate the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide.

## Retention of employment sites

### Policy E6

**Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of redundant land or buildings in employment or service trade use to non-employment uses will be permitted if:**

- (i) **the site is less than 0.25 ha and buildings under 500 sq.m and in the towns of Didcot, Henley, Thame, or Wallingford; or**
- (ii) **the existing use is no longer economically viable and the site has been marketed at a reasonable price for at least a year for that and any other suitable employment or service trade uses.**

**6.20** One of the main aims of the Structure Plan and this Local Plan is to reduce the need to travel and thus minimise pollution, congestion and energy use. The provision and retention of local employment opportunities supports this aim. There is net out-commuting from the district and it is therefore important that local job opportunities are retained. It is accepted that not all jobs will be filled by local people, but it is nevertheless appropriate to ensure employment opportunities are available locally so that people have an element of choice. The need to retain employment opportunities in the villages of the district is particularly strong as many employment sites have been redeveloped for housing in recent years and as well as providing job opportunities, local employment plays an important role in supporting village services and facilities. This policy does not apply to the re-use of rural buildings which is covered in Policy E8, or to public houses, shops or other facilities and services to which Policy CF1 applies.

**6.21** It is also important that the main employment sites in the four towns of the district are retained to maintain a reasonable balance of employment and housing uses within them. This affords the residents of the town and surrounding villages the opportunity to find work locally. Employment in the towns supports their role as local service centres. It is however recognised that there are competing demands for sites and buildings in the towns and that there may be circumstances in relation to the smaller employment sites and buildings which would result in changes of use to housing or retailing being considered appropriate. Proposals on the smaller sites will be considered in relation to the policies in the plan for that use and the Council will consider the benefits of the use proposed against a continuing employment use. There may also be circumstances in relation to larger employment sites in or close to the town centres of the district where a more intensive use of the site could lead to the potential for a mix of uses. The precise mix will be a matter for determination in the context of individual site circumstances. A development brief should be prepared for the re-development or re-use of larger sites. Policies on maintaining the vitality and viability of town centres are included in Section 7 of the plan.

- 6.22** The Council is aware that some types of firms find difficulty in acquiring suitable land and premises in which to start up or expand their businesses. The problem applies particularly to firms engaged in certain service trades and repair activities such as builders or car repairers. The problems are caused by landowners' reluctance to accommodate these firms on their business parks, a failure by developers to provide the type of premises needed by such firms (often merely an open yard), the inability of firms to afford premises on offer, and the redevelopment of existing sites occupied by service trades for new uses.
- 6.23** The Council recognises that these firms often provide essential services to the residents of the district as well as being a useful source of employment. The Council will, therefore, seek to assist such firms, although it must be acknowledged that it has limited powers to do so. The Council considers that it can best assist by seeking to retain existing provision for such uses. This policy applies to all sites lawfully used by service trades throughout the district and the size threshold in the towns on general employment sites does not apply to sites for service trades. The Council will therefore resist proposals for the redevelopment of existing premises used by these firms to other uses, provided that the existing use is not giving rise to problems such as noise, pollution and highway safety. Where this is the case, the Council will generally support the change of use of a site to a different form of employment use which does not give rise to nuisance, rather than support a non-employment use such as housing. On occasions the Council's attention is drawn to service trades which are operating from premises without the benefit of planning permission. Notwithstanding Policy E6 the Council will continue to take appropriate action against firms where the use of the site is open to objection and there is a breach of planning control.
- 6.24** The district is an area of economic growth and demand for premises is usually high. However the Council accepts that there could be instances where the continued use of a site for employment may not be economically viable. In such circumstances, and before any planning permission for alternative, non-employment uses is granted, the Council will require evidence that the site has been marketed at a realistic price over a period of at least one year. The Council is likely to take advice from property consultants about the evidence submitted and prevailing market conditions. In the event that any employment use is demonstrably economically not viable, the Council may require that a range or mix of alternative uses is explored and the policies in this Plan on other uses will be relevant.

## Working from home

### Policy E7

**Where planning permission for working at home is required permission will be granted provided that:**

- (i) the business use would not adversely change the overall character of the dwelling and the locality;**
- (ii) the business use does not generate a material and detrimental increase in the amount of traffic or in car parking requirements;**
- (iii) there is no outside storage of goods, vehicles or materials; and**
- (iv) the proposed use does not cause problems as a result of noise, dust, smell or loss of privacy, nor cause any other environmental problems, in accordance with Policies EP1 to EP9.**

- 6.25** The Council recognises that many businesses are started by people working from their own homes and that this activity can often be carried out without adversely affecting neighbouring properties. Advances in technology are increasingly enabling people to work at home. This can benefit the environment by reducing the need to travel and hence reducing vehicle emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants. Planning permission is not normally required where the use of part of a dwelling house for business purposes is incidental to the main use of the house as a dwelling and does not materially change its overall character. However, the issue is a complex one and anyone intending to set up a business from home should contact the District Council for informal advice.
- 6.26** If planning permission is needed, applications will be assessed in relation to the criteria set out in Policy E7 above. Any permission granted may be subject to conditions restricting the number of employees, the hours of operation and the type of activities which can be carried out. In this way the needs of small businesses can be met whilst protecting the amenities of neighbouring residents. There are, however, certain business activities which cannot be satisfactorily accommodated in a residential area. The Council will take steps to control these uses either by refusal of planning permission or enforcement action where appropriate.
- 6.27** The Council will encourage the provision of live/work units in residential developments where proposals accord with the housing policies in this Plan.

## Re-use of rural buildings

### Policy E8

**Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings will be permitted provided that:**

- (i) they are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;**
- (ii) their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings;**
- (iii) the fabric and essential character of the buildings are maintained;**
- (iv) if the buildings are in the Green Belt, the proposed use does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;**
- (v) there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections;**
- (vi) in the case of proposals for B1 or B2 uses the floorspace in the building or in the complex of buildings does not exceed 500 square metres; and**
- (vii) in the case of proposals for residential use, other uses have been explored and found to be unacceptable in planning terms.**

- 6.28** Government guidance recognises that the re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of the rural areas for commercial and industrial development, as well as for tourism, sport and recreation. It can reduce demands for new building in the countryside, avoid leaving an existing building vacant and prone to vandalism and dereliction, and provide jobs. In recent years the re-use of rural buildings has provided a substantial stock of buildings for employment use. Such buildings can include churches, mills, schools and railway stations, but by far the most common are

agricultural buildings. With the present problems facing the agricultural industry, this will be a continuing issue. In line with Government advice the Council encourages the re-use of such buildings for employment purposes subject to certain provisos. This policy applies to buildings which are outside the built-up areas of the towns and villages of the district listed in paragraph 5.17 (i) - (iv). Proposals for the re-use of buildings within settlements will be considered in relation to the use proposed.

- 6.29** The Council considers that derelict buildings will not be appropriate for rebuilding and conversion, nor would buildings which are in such a poor structural condition that they would need significant alteration or rebuilding to bring them back into use. The policy requires that buildings are permanent and substantial, and do not require reconstruction. To meet this requirement buildings should normally be enclosed on all sides and the whole of the structure covered by a roof and it should be in a sound structural condition. The Council may request applicants to provide a structural survey to demonstrate that the criteria can be met. It is considered that if these criteria are not met, the proposal would be tantamount to the erection of a new building, which would be contrary to the restraint policies of the Structure Plan and contrary to policies in the plan to protect the countryside.
- 6.30** The Council also needs to be satisfied that the form, bulk and general design of any building is in keeping with its surroundings. This assessment will depend on a number of factors. Proposals will be more acceptable if they respect local building styles and use natural materials. Those buildings constructed of concrete blocks, asbestos sheeting, corrugated iron or other unsympathetic modern materials are much less likely to be considered to be in keeping with their surroundings. The size of buildings and their prominence in the landscape will also be of importance. However the conversion of buildings which do not conform with this policy will not be acceptable simply on the grounds that they cannot be seen from a public viewpoint.
- 6.31** It is important that the conversion of a building does not significantly alter its fabric or essential character. Particular attention needs to be given to retaining the building's original structure and features in order to retain its history and essential character. It is often difficult to accommodate new window and door openings in rural buildings, but where new openings are acceptable, these should be in keeping with the character of the building and appropriate materials and finishes should be used. The original window and door openings should generally be left unaltered. Similarly, the existing roof structure, shape and materials should be preserved.
- 6.32** Barns are usually the dominant agricultural buildings in the landscape. They are essentially simple structures enclosing a large open space, and any change of use should endeavour to preserve these characteristics.
- 6.33** Where the building is in the Green Belt, the Council will exercise strict control over any associated uses of land which would conflict with the openness of the Green Belt. Proposals for outside storage related to the use of a building will not normally be permitted, and proposals for ancillary car parking, fencing or boundary walling and lighting will be considered in relation to their impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 6.34** All proposals for the re-use or adaptation of rural buildings will need to satisfy other policies in the plan and particularly those relating to access and the ability of the local road network to accommodate the traffic generated. Landscape and other environmental and amenity considerations will also be important. Where the building is listed, the relevant policies in

Section 3 should be taken into account. In addition, barns and other old buildings are often used by breeding barn owls and bats which are protected species and Policy C8 will be relevant.

- 6.35** In accordance with Government advice, the Council will generally support the re-use of rural buildings for employment use. Such buildings are often particularly suitable for employment uses as they often need little adaptation. The overall employment policies in the plan provide for the general restraint of employment growth in the rural areas, whilst making provision for small firms of up to 500 square metres floorspace, or those firms with a particular need to be in the area. The policies also focus development on the towns and villages in the district and restrict development in the open countryside. Policies also seek to ensure that new employment-generating development is in locations where the need to travel by car can be reduced and where cycling and walking and the use of public transport can be encouraged. The Council will, therefore, generally allow a maximum of 500 square metres of floorspace for B1 or B2 uses in any building or complex of buildings, in accordance with the employment policies of this plan and the Oxfordshire Structure Plan. Where suitable buildings or complexes of buildings are larger than this, the Council will encourage B8 storage uses in appropriate locations. In considering applications for the re-use of traditional buildings of historic or architectural interest, some flexibility on the floorspace limitations may be applied if this is necessary to secure their continued use. Evidence to support such an approach should be submitted with the planning application. Barns can also provide suitable accommodation for uses which cater for public gatherings such as village halls, indoor sports halls, museums or theatres. As these attract large numbers of people such uses will generally only be appropriate where they are accessible by means of transport other than the private car.
- 6.36** Conversion to residential use inevitably involves major changes to the fabric of a building, its external appearance and its setting in the landscape. Apart from the alterations to the building itself, a residential use almost inevitably involves the enclosure of adjoining agricultural land to form a garden area, which increases the impact of a proposal on the landscape. The Council's policies for the location of new residential development are intended to protect the countryside and they will apply equally to proposals to convert rural buildings to residential use, unless the building makes a contribution to the landscape and should be retained for that reason and other uses are demonstrably impractical. In some circumstances, the conversion of a building to self-catering holiday accommodation may be more acceptable than conversion to a permanent dwelling. Holiday accommodation does not always require the same standards of design or space, nor the ancillary requirements such as gardens, garden sheds and garages which can detract from the setting of a building.
- 6.37** To prevent the proliferation of buildings in the countryside, planning permission for the conversion of old farm buildings may be subject to conditions to prevent their replacement by new buildings under permitted development rights. Similarly, the Council is unlikely to grant planning permission for the conversion of buildings erected under permitted development rights where they have clearly not been genuinely needed or used for agriculture.

## Institutions in the countryside

### Policy E9

**Proposals for extensions to existing institutions in the countryside, to meet the operational requirements of the institution will be permitted provided that:**

- (i) the site is not within the Green Belt;**
- (ii) the proposal does not conflict with the policies in this plan to protect the landscape;**
- (iii) the proposed extension is of a scale and type of development appropriate for the site and its surroundings, and the extension is well related to the existing buildings on the site;**
- (iv) the design and materials used are in keeping with existing buildings and suitable landscaping is provided where appropriate; and**
- (v) in the case of proposals which would generate significant additional journeys, the site is in a location which is accessible by public transport and/or by cycling and walking.**

**6.38** In the rural areas of the district, (i.e. outside the built-up area of the settlements defined in paragraph 5.17(i)-(iv)), there are a number of large complexes of buildings used by institutions such as private schools or nursing homes. Where extensions to these complexes are sought, the Council will consider any proposal in the light of Policy E9. An objective of the plan is to protect the countryside and therefore any new building within it will be limited and restricted to the operational requirements of the institution. In addition any proposal will be carefully assessed in relation to its impact on the landscape, and particular care will be taken in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Any new buildings should relate well to the existing buildings on the site and the design and materials used should be in keeping with them. Where an extension will give rise to further employment opportunities, consideration will be given to the accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport. Where appropriate, the Council will require the preparation and implementation of a travel plan as set out in Policy T3. Proposals for staff housing will be considered in relation to this policy and to the advice in paragraph 15 of Annex A to PPS7.

## Agriculture

### Agricultural buildings

**6.39** Much agricultural and forestry development does not come within planning control. However, planning permission is required for new houses for agricultural workers, certain farm buildings and some forms of agricultural diversification. Other agricultural development is permitted under the General Permitted Development Order, but in some cases farmers have to give the Council 28 days notice of their intention to carry out development. The need for planning permission with regard to agricultural buildings is complex and applicants are advised to seek advice from the Council. The Council will consider proposals for agricultural buildings in the context of the following policy:

## Policy A1

Where planning permission is needed for the erection of an agricultural building or structure, this will normally be permitted provided that there is a need for the building or structure which cannot satisfactorily be met by existing buildings or structures on the farm or nearby. Proposals for agricultural buildings and structures, or alterations and extensions to existing buildings and structures, will be permitted provided that:

- (i) the siting of the building or structure would not be prominent in the landscape and would not damage the environment or the amenities of the occupants of nearby properties;
- (ii) the design and materials to be used are in keeping with its surroundings, bearing in mind the particular needs of the farming industry, and that satisfactory landscaping is proposed; and
- (iii) wherever possible or acceptable, the development should be located close to existing buildings rather than in open countryside.

Where existing buildings or structures can no longer be used and replacement buildings or structures are required and the existing buildings or structures are of no historical or architectural importance, then the redundant building or structure should be demolished and replaced by the new building or structure in the same location, unless it can be demonstrated that this is impractical or inappropriate in a particular instance.

New agricultural roads, access ways or hardstandings should not be intrusive in the landscape, involve the loss of landscape features such as important trees or hedgerows and should not significantly harm the amenities of the area.

**6.40** The design of farm buildings requires special consideration as their scale, materials and general appearance are designed for function and economy rather than to fit into the landscape, and they can be seriously damaging to the visual amenities of the countryside. Some agricultural uses, and in particular intensive livestock units, can lead to serious problems of smell, disturbance and water pollution and their impact will need to be assessed. Where new farm buildings are proposed they should be sited to take advantage of natural screening features and levels to reduce their impact on the landscape. Imaginative landscaping and additional planting using native species of trees should be provided to supplement existing features and help new buildings blend into the landscape. It is important to have regard to the need to assimilate the design and materials of agricultural buildings into the countryside or, where located close to other traditional farm buildings, to respect the scale and materials of such buildings. In the Council's view the siting and design of agricultural buildings should receive the most careful attention. The Council's Design Guide provides further advice on design and the Council's officers will be pleased to provide planning advice in all cases.

**6.41** In order for agricultural businesses to comply with new environmental, hygiene and welfare legislation, alterations to existing buildings or new buildings may be necessary. The Council will, therefore, endeavour to accommodate development proposals which are necessary to achieve compliance with the legislation. Where existing buildings and structures can no longer be used and replacements are required, unless the existing buildings are of architectural or historical value, they should be removed and replaced by new buildings in the same location unless it can be demonstrated that this is impractical or inappropriate. The Council will also normally impose a condition to require that if, within ten years of the

substantial completion of the building, the use of the building for agricultural purposes ceases and, within a further three years, planning permission has not been granted for an alternative use, and there is no outstanding appeal, the building shall be demolished, the materials removed from the land and the land restored to its former condition.

## **Policy A2**

**Planning permission will not be granted for non-agricultural development near to an existing agricultural building used for the accommodation of livestock, or near to associated structures such as those for storage of slurry where the agricultural use would be likely to cause nuisance to the occupiers of the proposed development.**

- 6.42** Certain agricultural uses cause problems of smell and noise. Particular care will be given to the consideration of applications for housing development and other buildings within 400 metres of agricultural development used for the accommodation of livestock and ancillary development such as the storage of slurry in order to minimise the potential for future conflict between neighbouring uses. This policy does not apply to farm dwellings on the agricultural unit, or to any other agricultural building.

## **Farm diversification**

- 6.43** Over the past twenty years many farmers have decided to diversify their activities including setting up bed and breakfast facilities, or farm shops. The Rural White Paper encourages farm diversification as a source of extra income for farmers and as a means of sustaining farms. PPS7 gives advice on development related to farm diversification. Proposals involving the re-use of buildings only by enterprises not connected to the farm will be considered in relation to Policy E8. DEFRA provides advice on funding and planning issues and funding for diversification is available from the Rural Enterprise Scheme until 2007 when the situation will be reviewed.

## **Policy A3**

**Proposals to diversify the agricultural industry will be permitted provided that:**

- (i) the proposal conforms with the policies for the use proposed and there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections;**
- (ii) the land is kept predominantly open, and the appearance and character of the landscape is not damaged and where possible is enhanced;**
- (iii) the use is compatible with a countryside location and would not result in a loss of amenity, or spoil the enjoyment of users of the countryside; and**
- (iv) where farm buildings are to be used, the proposal conforms with Policy E8.**

**No new building will be allowed unless:**

- (i) it is essential for the diversification scheme to proceed,**
- (ii) it is ancillary to the proposed use,**
- (iii) existing buildings on the site are not available or suitable, and**
- (iv) there are no overriding amenity, environmental, landscape or highway objections.**

- 6.44** The Council supports the diversification of the agricultural industry but is anxious to ensure that it takes place in a way which conserves or enhances the countryside. It is important that the proposed use allows the land to be kept open and free from new buildings, and safeguards its rural character. Surplus farm buildings can provide suitable accommodation for diversified businesses. Proposals involving the loss of high-quality agricultural land will not usually be acceptable in accordance with Policy C5. The Council believes that this stance is consistent with the advice in PPS7, which explains that local planning authorities should take account of the need to encourage rural enterprise but weigh this against the need to protect the countryside, to safeguard good quality agricultural land and to protect other non-renewable resources. In the countryside the guiding principle is that development should both benefit economic activity and maintain or enhance the environment. Buildings in the open countryside should be sensitively related to existing settlement patterns and to historic, wildlife and landscape resources. In circumstances where a building is essential for an acceptable diversification scheme to proceed, a small-scale new building may be permitted, provided that it is strictly ancillary to the use proposed, that the existing buildings on the farm are not able to accommodate the use, and provided that there are no overriding environmental objections. The Council may also seek a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to tie the building to the land in order to discourage subsequent fragmentation of the agricultural unit by separate use of the building.

## Farm shops

### Policy A4

**Proposals for farm shops will be permitted provided that:**

- (i) the scale of operations is small;**
- (ii) it can be demonstrated that the shop is needed to sell goods produced on the farm unit and that the greater proportion of goods sold comprise local produce;**
- (iii) existing buildings are used if at all possible;**
- (iv) there would be no significant adverse impact on any nearby village shop; and**
- (v) there are no overriding environmental, amenity or highway objections.**

- 6.45** With the increasing diversification of the agricultural industry there is pressure for farm shops in the countryside. In certain circumstances, produce grown on farms or market gardens can be sold directly to the public from those farms without the need for planning permission. In other cases, however, farm shops sell non-local produce and in these circumstances the Council may impose conditions on any planning permission to ensure that the greater proportion of goods sold in the farm shop comprise locally-produced goods, and to limit the floor area of any existing farm building or new building used for retail sales. However, the Council will take account of the farmer's need to provide a service throughout the year and continuity of employment which may require bringing in a limited amount of non-local produce. In this way farm shops will not grow to a size where they would undermine the viability of other local shops, or create a need for large buildings, display areas, car parks and advertisements inappropriate in a country location. The small-scale farm shop is also unlikely to cause problems of excessive traffic generation on country roads.

## Garden centres

### Policy A5

Outside the Green Belt, proposals for garden centres will only be permitted when the location is within or on the edge of a settlement and where there are no significant amenity, environmental or transport objections. Within the Green Belt such proposals will not be permitted, and in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, preservation and enhancement of the AONB will be the primary aim.

- 6.46 Garden centres may be established in suitable locations within or on the edge of settlements outside the Green Belt, where the effect on the landscape can be minimised. Sites on the edge of hamlets or in the open countryside are unlikely to be acceptable because of the adverse impact on the character of the countryside. Not all edge-of-settlement sites will be acceptable for garden centres; many will not be suitable because of their effect on the countryside, or residential amenity, or the character of a village or its setting. The scale of the centre should be appropriate to the size of the settlement and, for highway safety and amenity reasons, should not generate large volumes of traffic on minor roads. Large-scale enterprises occupying prominent, industrial-type buildings attracting substantial traffic flows will not be permitted.

## Agricultural workers' dwellings

### Policy A6

~~Planning permission for new farmhouses and agricultural workers' dwellings outside villages will only be permitted where:~~

- ~~(i) it is essential for the proper functioning of the holding for a worker to be readily available at most times and where this need cannot be met in existing accommodation on the unit or in the area, or in a suitably converted building or in any other way;~~
- ~~(ii) a financial test demonstrates that the enterprise is economically viable;~~
- ~~(iii) the need relates to a full-time worker or one who is primarily employed in agriculture, and does not relate to a part-time requirement;~~
- ~~(iv) the unit and the agricultural activity giving rise to the claimed need for a new dwelling has been established for at least three years and has been profitable for at least one of them and can be expected to remain profitable in the future at a level which would sustain the provision of the agricultural dwelling proposed;~~
- ~~(v) unless there are exceptional circumstances, no dwellings or potential dwellings have been sold off from the enterprise within the previous five years;~~
- ~~(vi) there are clearly identifiable changed circumstances which give rise to the need for a new dwelling;~~
- ~~(vii) the proposed dwelling is of a size and style appropriate to the requirements of the enterprise and is sited close to existing or proposed buildings or where it will be screened by natural features;~~

~~(viii) the development is designed to respect the surrounding area in terms of scale, height, design and materials; and~~

~~(ix) an adequate and safe means of access exists or can be provided without an adverse impact upon the environment of the area, and the approach roads are capable of satisfactorily accommodating any additional traffic.~~

~~If it is considered that a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, whether on a newly-created agricultural unit or an established one, it should, for the first three years, normally be provided by a caravan, a wooden structure which can be easily dismantled, or other temporary accommodation.~~

~~Where planning permission is given for an agricultural worker's dwelling it will be made subject to an occupancy condition and such a condition may also be imposed on other dwellings on the unit.~~

~~A planning obligation may be sought to ensure that no dwellings or land forming part of the holding can be sold separately, without the prior agreement of the local planning authority.~~

- 6.47 ~~One of the few circumstances in which isolated residential development in the countryside may be justified is when the demands of the farming work concerned make it essential that a farm worker lives at or very close to the site of his or her work. In these circumstances the Council may be prepared to grant planning permission for a new dwelling contrary to its normal planning policies. Normally it will be as convenient for agricultural workers to live in a nearby town or village, and this will avoid potentially intrusive development in the countryside.~~
- 6.48 ~~The agricultural workforce in the district has fallen over the past ten years. The area of land farmed in the district has also fallen and no new farmland has been acquired. All applications are therefore to service farmland that has been adequately supervised in the past. The case for additional farm dwellings will, therefore, be carefully scrutinised to avoid abuse of the concession that the planning system makes for such dwellings. It will be important to establish that the stated intentions to engage in the farming enterprise are genuine, are reasonably likely to materialise and are capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time. The Council will apply the functional test and the financial test as described in PPS7.~~
- 6.49 ~~The dwelling should be for a full-time worker, and, if permanent, for a farm and agricultural activity established for at least three years. Temporary dwellings will be permitted for a new farming activity for a period of no more than three years to enable the farmer to develop the enterprise. Successive temporary permissions will not be granted.~~
- 6.50 ~~The functional test will establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times. This will be assessed on the needs of the farm enterprise and not on the personal preferences or circumstances of the individuals involved. A requirement for a house might arise if workers are needed to be on hand day and night to provide essential care or deal with emergencies.~~
- 6.51 ~~New agricultural dwellings cannot be justified on agricultural grounds unless the enterprise is economically viable. A financial test must be applied to establish the economic viability of the enterprise, and to provide evidence of the size of the dwelling which the unit can sustain.~~

- 6.52 If, on the basis of the functional and financial tests, the need for a new dwelling can be established and if no suitable accommodation exists in the locality, it may be appropriate for a new dwelling to be permitted. If a suitable dwelling has previously been sold from the enterprise, planning permission will not normally be granted for a new house, as this will be taken to be a way of circumventing the Council's strict controls over new buildings in the countryside. Any new dwelling should be sited close to existing buildings and be designed in a way which reduces its impact on the countryside. In general, agricultural workers' dwellings should not exceed 150 square metres, which would allow for the construction of an average-sized dwelling.
- 6.53 If a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, whether on a newly-created agricultural unit or an established one, it should for the first three years normally be provided by a caravan or a wooden structure which can be easily dismantled, or other temporary accommodation, and should satisfy the criteria as set out in Annex A of PPS7. If the enterprise proves to be viable, then a permanent home will normally be permitted. Temporary permissions for caravans will not be permitted in locations where the Council would not grant permission for a permanent agricultural dwelling.
- 6.54 If planning permission is granted for a new dwelling in the countryside, it is necessary to ensure that it is kept for meeting the needs of those employed in agriculture. Accordingly, a condition will be attached to the permission to tie the occupation of the dwelling to people working in agriculture. An occupancy condition may also be imposed on any other existing dwellings on the unit. This should help to protect the countryside against a proliferation of new dwellings. In addition, the applicant will normally be asked to enter into a legal agreement to ensure that the proposed dwelling and any existing dwellings are tied to the holding. This is to try to ensure that the land which supports the case for the new dwelling is not subsequently sold off, thus leaving the dwelling with insufficient land to support a viable enterprise. If an agreement is signed, this will still enable the holding to be sold in its entirety, and dwellings and/or parts of the land could still be sold with the agreement of the local planning authority. The Council hopes that these measures will ensure that the only new dwellings built in the open countryside are those required for the genuine needs of the farming industry. Proposals for forestry workers' dwellings will also be considered in the light of this policy. However, there is unlikely to be a justification for new forestry dwellings due to the modern methods of forestry management which require a largely peripatetic workforce.

### **Policy A7**

**Permission will be given for the removal of conditions restricting the occupancy of an agricultural dwelling where it is satisfactorily demonstrated both that the dwelling is no longer required to serve the needs of the holding and that there is no general demand for an agricultural dwelling in the locality.**

- 6.55 The policy of allowing dwellings to be erected outside settlements in cases of proven agricultural or forestry need has been allowed since the inception of planning controls. Consequently there is a considerable stock of such dwellings in the district and generally the Council is anxious to retain these, as this should assist in limiting the number of proposals for new dwellings. Applications for the removal of occupancy conditions will be considered on the basis of assessments of the continuing need for them. A full statement of the facts should be submitted with the application, including evidence to show that the

~~dwelling has been unsuccessfully offered for rent, or for sale on the open market, at a price which properly reflects the restrictive condition, for a period of about twelve months. The Council will take independent valuation advice in appropriate circumstances.~~

## Tourism

### Policy TSM1

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

- 6.56** This policy sets the broad framework against which all proposals for tourist-related development will be considered and reflects Policy E7 in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan. The impact of tourism at its current level does not create serious problems in the area and the economic benefits it brings are generally welcomed. The Council recognises that tourism can help to support a wider range of services than would be viable than if these services were entirely dependent on local people. Where possible, the Council will endeavour to resolve conflicts of interest which may arise between different users of the countryside, and will encourage effective provision and management of services and facilities for tourists. The Council will ensure that the nature and scale of development for tourist purposes is in keeping with the character of the area and will not damage the very qualities which people come to enjoy.

### Tourist attractions and facilities

- 6.57** Tourists are attracted to South Oxfordshire by a wide range of features. These include the attractive landscapes and countryside of the area, the River Thames, the pretty villages and the historic market towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford. There are also buildings and features of special interest, museums and landscaped parklands.

### Policy TSM2

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

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

- 6.58** The Council will generally be sympathetic to proposals to improve existing tourist attractions and to the creation of new attractions which have regard to the character and heritage of the area. Examples include opening historic houses or gardens to the public, farm visits, museums, historic trails, interpretation plaques and interpretation centres.

- 6.59** Facilities which assist tourists by providing information or services, for example, picnic areas, toilets, car parks and information points can help to contribute to the enjoyment of a visit and will normally be permitted. The Council will ensure that such developments are in keeping with the locality, both in terms of scale and design of any new building, and in terms of the level of activity and type of use. Clear, well-placed signs can also be of assistance to visitors, and the Council will support schemes to improve existing signing for tourist attractions and facilities where appropriate. Any signing must be well designed and in keeping with the surrounding area and applicants should refer to the [Tourism Signing in Oxfordshire](#) Application Pack produced by Oxfordshire County Council for guidance. Anyone wishing to erect a sign should seek advice from the District Council to see whether consent is required under the Advertisement Regulations and have regard to Policies AD1 and CON8 of this plan.
- 6.60** A key consideration for any new tourist facility or extension to an existing facility will be the level of traffic generated by the proposed development. In many rural areas, the existing road system is unable to accommodate a significant increase in traffic without causing unacceptable highway safety concerns. Where a facility is expected to attract a large number of visitors, it should be served by public transport and provision should be made for pedestrian and cycle links from the surrounding areas.
- 6.61** Proposals for large-scale tourist attractions such as theme parks and purpose-built, all-weather holiday complexes will not be permitted, due to their adverse effect on the local environment.

## Serviced accommodation, public houses and restaurants

### Policy TSM3

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

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

### Policy TSM4

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

- (i) the site is not in the Green Belt;**
- (ii) the scale and location of the development is appropriate and the design and materials are in keeping with the locality;**
- (iii) there is no significant loss of amenity by local residents;**
- (iv) where appropriate the site is accessible by public transport and provision is made for pedestrian and cycle links with adjacent areas; and**

**(v) there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections.**

**Outside the Green Belt, extensions to existing premises in the district will normally be permitted subject to criteria (ii)-(v) above.**

- 6.62** The Council will normally permit new hotels, including conference facilities and other serviced accommodation, in the larger settlements outside the Green Belt and also extensions to existing premises on sites outside the Green Belt, subject to the criteria set out in Policy TSM4. The conversion of suitable buildings to provide visitor accommodation will normally be permitted throughout the district, particularly as this can provide a good way of retaining historically important buildings in a viable use.
- 6.63** The Council will ensure that proposals for additional visitor accommodation do not cause traffic congestion and disturbance to neighbours. Such proposals must be in keeping with their surroundings and reflect the best features of the local environment. It is important that adequate off-street car parking is provided and is designed and landscaped to blend with its surroundings.
- 6.64** The use of existing houses to provide bed and breakfast is generally supported because it makes a valuable contribution to the local economy and provides for inexpensive short-stay visits. In many cases the provision of some bed and breakfast accommodation may not require planning permission (especially in relation to the use of one or two bedrooms in a house, where not more than 50% of the bedrooms are so used), however, the advice of the Council's officers should always be sought.
- 6.65** Proposals for the conversion of existing buildings in the countryside will be considered against the criteria in Policy E8. In accordance with long-established planning policies, permission will not normally be given for tourist accommodation in the Green Belt or in the countryside, even if they are associated with existing recreational facilities such as golf courses or riding schools. In accordance with green belt policy, permission will not normally be granted for new building to provide extensions to existing premises in the Green Belt.
- 6.66** Public houses and restaurants are not solely tourist-related developments, but similar considerations are likely to apply as for visitor accommodation generally. Therefore, proposals for public houses and restaurants will be considered in relation to policies TSM3 and TSM4. The diversification of public houses into restaurants can be beneficial to improving the long-term viability of the pub. The Council will, however, carefully consider related issues such as traffic congestion and disturbance to neighbours. Although a change of use from a public house to a restaurant does not require planning permission, where planning permission is required for extensions or alterations the Council will ensure that the amenities of neighbours will not be adversely affected and that, where alterations to a historic building are proposed, these are in keeping with the character of the building. Proposals which involve the loss of a public house will be considered in relation to Policy CF1.

## Self-catering accommodation

### Policy TSM5

**Proposals for self-catering holiday homes will be considered in relation to the housing policies set out in Section 5 of this plan and, where appropriate, Policy E8 relating to the re-use of rural buildings.**

- 6.67** Self-catering holidays are becoming increasingly popular and the Council would prefer to see this type of accommodation provided through appropriate conversion schemes rather than in new buildings. This is in line with the Council's policies to restrain development to protect the character and quality of the environment, particularly in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt.
- 6.68** As planning law exists at present, there is no difference between the use of a dwelling as a permanent home or a holiday home unless conditions restricting the use of the property have been imposed on the planning permission. Existing properties are generally not made available as holiday homes because the demand for them as permanent homes is greater and commands greater value. Purpose-built self-catering accommodation has a similar impact on the environment as new building for permanent homes and the Council considers it appropriate that it should be considered in relation to the same policies.
- 6.69** PPG21: Tourism recognises that the planning system can respond to the increased demand for self-catering accommodation without compromising policies to safeguard the countryside. The PPG indicates that, in exceptional circumstances, it is possible to allow the conversion of rural buildings to holiday accommodation where the conversion to residential dwellings would not be appropriate, if this is safeguarded by conditions. Holiday accommodation does not always require the same standards of space as a permanent dwelling nor the ancillaries such as gardens, garden sheds and garages. Nevertheless, where ancillary buildings and facilities are needed care must be taken to ensure that they do not detract from the setting of a historic building or a building in the open countryside. Where holiday accommodation is permitted, legal agreements may be used to ensure that the accommodation remains as holiday lets, and permitted development rights may be withdrawn to protect the setting of the building.

## Caravan and camping sites

### Policy TSM6

**Touring caravan and camping sites will be permitted provided that:**

- (i) the site is not in the Green Belt;**
- (ii) the proposed development has no adverse impact on the landscape, ecological or historic characteristics of the site and its surroundings;**
- (iii) the proposal is limited in scale and incorporates a comprehensive landscaping scheme which reinforces the visual, historic and ecological character of the site and its surroundings;**
- (iv) the proposed development would not cause any detrimental impact on the amenity of adjacent occupiers or the quiet informal enjoyment of the open countryside;**

- (v) where appropriate, the site is accessible by public transport and provision is made for pedestrian and cycle links with adjacent areas;
- (vi) there are no other overriding amenity, environmental, or highway objections; and
- (vii) where possible associated facilities are sited in existing buildings in accordance with Policy E8. Where new buildings are essential these must be designed to a high standard and be sensitively sited.

**Where permission is given, it will normally be subject to a condition restricting the use to holiday accommodation and the site may also be made subject to a seasonal occupancy condition. Static caravans will not be permitted.**

- 6.70** The use of land for touring caravans and camping can assist in farm diversification and help sustain the provision of services in rural areas. Caravan and camping sites can, however, be visually intrusive, particularly in the open countryside, and usually require a number of permanent buildings, such as reception areas and toilet blocks. The Council will take a cautious approach to the provision of caravan and camping sites, however, it recognises that with imagination and care it may be possible to design and locate new sites which are discreet and which respect the landscape. Large sites are unlikely to be acceptable in view of their impact on the countryside.
- 6.71** It is considered that touring caravan and camping sites are not an appropriate use in the Green Belt. Particular care will need to be given to ensure that proposals do not adversely affect Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation Areas. The sites should normally be located within walking distance of the main towns or large villages in the district which have a range of facilities and therefore reduce the need for visitors to travel. Adequate access to the site is particularly important where touring caravans are to be accommodated and local roads must be able to accommodate the size of caravans likely to be attracted to the site.
- 6.72** Caravan and camping sites will not be permitted in areas at highest risk from flooding. Where permission is granted for caravan and camping sites and flooding is an issue, planning conditions will be used to require the erection of suitable flood warning notices. Advice on these matters is provided in Appendix G of PPG25: Development and Flood Risk.
- 6.73** Where possible, associated facilities should be sited in existing buildings. If new buildings are essential these should be sensitively sited, ideally next to existing buildings and wherever possible, outside areas of identified flood risk.
- 6.74** A comprehensive landscaping scheme is fundamental to ensure that the site does not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape. Particular care should be taken with the boundary treatment of a site to ensure screening of any potential visual intrusion.
- 6.75** Touring caravans are not suitable for permanent occupation and their use will be restricted to holiday accommodation only. Change of use of part or all of a touring caravan site, or an extension to a touring caravan site to a permanent residential caravan site is unlikely to be acceptable given the additional impact on the environment and the need for additional services and facilities. In order to reduce the visual impact of new touring caravan and camping sites and to prevent them being used throughout the year, the site may be made subject to a seasonal occupancy condition.

## Telecommunications

### Policy TE1

Proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided that:

- (i) they are sited and designed so as to minimise visual intrusion;
- (ii) they do not have a significant adverse effect on the street scene, the appearance or setting of a building, or landscape character particularly in areas of special landscape value, conservation areas, and on listed buildings;
- (iii) no alternative, less visually intrusive site is available or technically feasible; and
- (iv) where a new mast is proposed, there is no opportunity for sharing existing masts or, where more appropriate, existing sites.

**6.76** The Council recognises the importance of modern telecommunications for the growing needs of business and individuals. Government guidance on telecommunications development is contained in PPG8: Telecommunications, August 2001. PPG8 emphasises the need to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems while keeping the environmental impact to a minimum. The Council will ensure that telecommunications development is sited with considerable care so as not to detract from the visual amenity of the area. Annex 1 of PPG8 provides guidance on the factors that will be considered when determining the appropriate siting and appearance of a proposal. Those relating to the appearance of the installation include materials, colour and design. The Council will expect visual intrusion to be minimised through screening or disguising of the mast and is likely to look favourably on the use of technical advances to achieve this aim. Factors concerning siting may involve:

- the height of the site in relation to surrounding land
- the existence of topographical features and natural vegetation
- the effect on the skyline or horizon
- the site when observed from any side, including from outside the authority's own area
- the site in relation to areas designated locally for their scenic or conservation value
- the site in relation to existing masts, structures or buildings, including buildings of a historical or traditional character
- the site in relation to residential property.

**6.77** PPG8 provides guidance on health issues in respect of telecommunications development and incorporates a series of precautionary measures recommended by the Stewart Report, which was published in 2000. All applicants should include with their application, a statement to confirm that the apparatus when operational will meet the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines.

**6.78** Some telecommunications installations are permitted under Part 24 of the General Permitted Development Order 1995. Amendments have subsequently been introduced to increase the time for authorities to deal with prior approval notifications to 56 days, to strengthen public consultation requirements on mast proposals of 15 metres and below so that they are exactly the same as applications for planning permission. PPG8 requires that school governors are consulted on all proposals for new masts on or near a school or college.

- 6.79** Where planning permission is needed, operators should enter into discussions with officers of the Council before submitting a planning application in order to discuss technical constraints on the location and nature of the proposed development. The Council will expect an operator when applying for planning permission, to submit details of the network coverage in the area, the area of search of the proposed installation, the alternative sites considered, a site appraisal assessing the visual impact of the installation, and details of any other masts in the area with an explanation of why these cannot be used. The Council will also seek to ensure that operators remove all antennae or masts which are no longer in use.
- 6.80** The Council keeps an up-to-date register of existing masts in the district, in order to promote site sharing, in accordance with the DETR's Code of Best Practice 1996.
- 6.81** With regard to the installation of satellite antennae or other apparatus, people are recommended to seek advice from the Council as to whether consent is required. As technology evolves, apparatus in different shapes and sizes are being produced for means of telecommunications, including digital aerials, cable, satellite and broadband technologies. Circular 10/05 gives guidance on permitted development rights for antennas. Listed building consent will always be needed where the building is listed. The Council will expect great care to be taken to ensure that the position and design of the apparatus does not detract from the character or appearance of the building or area. A leaflet is available from the Council providing detailed guidance on the installation of satellite dishes.

## Advertisements and signs

### Policy AD1

**Proposals for the display of outdoor advertisements and signs on the premises to which they relate will be permitted, provided that they do not have an adverse effect on visual amenity or public safety. Proposals for signs which are not to be displayed on the premises to which they relate will not be permitted, except where the premises are particularly remote and where the appearance of the local area is not spoilt.**

- 6.82** Signs and outdoor advertisements on premises must be in keeping with the characteristics of the building on which they are displayed and with the scenic, historic or architectural character of the locality. In assessing visual amenity, the Council will have regard to the size, colour and materials used, type and intensity of any illumination, and method of display and support of an advertisement. In rural areas, signing must be reasonably discreet and illuminated advertisements are unlikely to be acceptable. It is, however, recognised that illumination of signs may be required on business premises that are open late and which seek to attract customers in very poorly-lit locations or for isolated businesses in street frontages. Any source of illumination should be discreet and, where appropriate, the Council will restrict the hours during which signs may be illuminated. Policy EP3 on light pollution in Section 3 of the plan and the Council's Traditional Shopfront Design Guide provide further guidance on illumination.
- 6.83** In terms of public safety, advertisements must not distract or cause danger to road users or hinder ready interpretation of road traffic signs. Where signs are intended to be displayed away from the premises to which they relate, consent is only likely to be given in exceptional circumstances for certain types of discreet direction signs, where the premises

are particularly remote. This is in order to prevent a proliferation of intrusive advertising, especially in the countryside or adjoining roads, and is considered to be in accordance with the advice given in PPG19 and PPG21. In cases where enterprises are considered to be a tourist attraction, a brown sign can be an appropriate solution and advice on tourism signing is provided in paragraph 6.59. Further advice on advertisements and signs in conservation areas and on listed buildings is given in Section 3 of this plan.

## Section 7 Supporting vital and viable town centres

### Introduction

- 7.1** This section explains the role of the four main town centres in the district - Didcot, Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford - in the local hierarchy of town centres and describes the planning strategy for the four centres based on the latest available survey information and research. The section then sets out the Council's planning policies which aim to maintain and enhance the centres by:
- securing development for appropriate town centre uses on certain sites allocated for development in Sections 10 to 13 of the plan
  - encouraging development for appropriate town centre uses on other unforeseen sites within the town centres where that development is acceptable
  - improving the environment, character and quality of the centres
  - encouraging diversity of uses in the centres by bringing back into beneficial use disused or underused upper floors
  - preventing the loss of dwellings that contribute to the diversity and vitality of the centres
  - preventing out-of-centre development proposals that would harm the centres
  - protecting shop uses that underpin the vitality and economic viability of the centres.
- 7.2** The centres of South Oxfordshire's four main towns play an important role in the economic and social life of the district. They each provide a focus for a wide variety of functions. They serve as market places, shopping centres, business centres, meeting places, arts, culture and entertainment zones, centres of local administration, tourist attractions, transport hubs, and residential areas. The extent of these mixed-use areas comprising the four main town centres is defined on the Proposals Map.
- 7.3** The town centres contribute to the quality of life of a large number of people by providing employment and services for them and by making an important contribution towards achieving the aims of sustainable development. Attractive public spaces and streets in the town centres give a distinctive identity to South Oxfordshire's towns and this strong sense of place is valued by local people and by visitors to the district. The concentration of a variety of uses in a town centre enables the efficient provision of public transport services and provides a focus for cycling routes linking the town centres with their catchment areas. Concentration of uses also facilitates walking trips in the centre itself.
- 7.4** The relative proximity of uses in town centres facilitates easy comparison between shops selling similar products and the ability to combine several purposes in one journey. It also enables them to be lively places, where people can live, work and socialise. Promoting the vitality and viability of town centres is a key objective of Government policy in PPS6: [Planning for Town Centres](#) and it is thus an important objective of this plan. "Vitality" refers to the liveliness of a town centre, reflected in how busy the centre is at different times and in different parts. "Viability" refers to the ability of the centre to retain key uses that attract people in large numbers, including shops, commercial and public offices, entertainment, institutional, assembly and leisure uses.

## The hierarchy of town centres

- 7.5** The Oxfordshire Structure Plan identifies Oxford and Banbury as "sub-regional centres," which have an important role in meeting the comparison goods shopping and other specialised service requirements of the population of the wider catchment areas of these towns. Structure Plan Policy TC1 proposes further development in the two sub-regional centres to maintain and enhance this important role. In addition, Structure Plan Policy TC2 aims to encourage improved shopping facilities in the four country towns, including Didcot in South Oxfordshire, and the policy states that Didcot should be "a principal location for major new shopping development."
- 7.6** The Structure Plan does not define the hierarchy of town centres below the level of the four country towns or indicate in any policy the appropriate level of development to be permitted in these smaller centres. These matters are to be "dealt with as necessary in local plans." In order to determine the place of South Oxfordshire's four main town centres (including Didcot) in the hierarchy of centres, the Council commissioned research into the extent of their catchment areas for comparison goods and convenience goods shopping. The results of this research are set out in Section 3 of the South Oxfordshire Shopping Study (May 2000).
- 7.7** Observed comparison goods shopping patterns and the actual size of a centre are good indicators of the centre's position in the local hierarchy of centres. With regard to comparison shopping patterns, the Shopping Study shows that the catchment areas of the four main South Oxfordshire towns are to a greater or lesser extent overlain by the catchment areas of the sub-regional centres of Oxford, Reading, Aylesbury and High Wycombe. The South Oxfordshire town centres attract only a relatively small proportion of available expenditure from the survey area and the Study describes them as "district centres" in the hierarchy of centres. A district centre's primary role is to meet the needs of local residents for convenience goods and services that are needed regularly and preferably close to home. A district centre also performs to a varying degree all the functions listed in paragraph 7.2 above. Within South Oxfordshire District, Henley-on-Thames is both the leading comparison goods centre and the largest centre in the district and it is described in the Study as a "major district centre," whilst the existing smaller centres at Didcot, Thame and Wallingford are "minor district centres."
- 7.8** Having regard to the strategic aim to make Didcot a principal location for major new shopping development, it is an aim of local plan policies to advance Didcot town centre in the hierarchy towards the status of a "major district centre." National and strategic aims expressed in PPS6 and in the Structure Plan also require local plan policies to promote, sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the existing major district centre at Henley-on-Thames and the two minor district centres at Thame and Wallingford. It is the intention in this plan to further these aims.

## Town centre economy and future strategy

- 7.9** In accordance with Government advice, the Council has been monitoring the economic health of the four main town centres using the indicators of vitality and viability set out in paragraph 4.4 of PPS6. The Council commissioned the first health check in 1994 and the results were published in the South Oxfordshire Shopping Study (October 1994). At that time retail and service businesses in the town centres were experiencing slow recovery from a national economic recession that affected traders in district centres more severely

than traders in larger centres. The Council published an up-dated health check in the South Oxfordshire Shopping Study (May 2000). This revealed a continuing improvement on many of the indicators of vitality and viability in the four main town centres.

- 7.10** The retail convenience goods trade underpins the economies of the four main town centres in South Oxfordshire and this is likely to remain the case throughout the plan period. It is clear from the analysis contained in the Shopping Study that the four district centres will continue to face strong competition in comparison goods retail trade from the sub-regional centres (and from large retail warehouse stores outside those centres). The response of traders in the South Oxfordshire towns has been to develop a market in specialist, unique, high value goods that cannot be acquired in the larger centres and considerable success is being achieved in this endeavour. The four town centres possess a good diversity of other uses, with a wide range of other retail, professional, eating and drinking, and cultural services offered to local people. They are vital and viable centres worthy of maintenance and enhancement.
- 7.11** The Shopping Study contains a retail floorspace capacity assessment for each of the four towns for the period to 2011. This assessment, together with the results of the health checks and other survey work, are the basis of the following recommendations relating to a future strategy for the development and use of land aimed at sustaining and enhancing the centres. It is important to note that the Local Plan can only advance those elements of the Shopping Study's strategy, or of the Council's economic development strategy, that relate to the development and use of land.

### **Didcot**

- 7.12** In 2000 Didcot was a minor district centre serving a very localised catchment area. The town had a population of 24,000 making it the largest settlement in the district and further large-scale housing development proposed in this plan at Didcot would increase the population to over 30,000. In 2000, however, the retail and other service facilities available in Didcot town centre were the most limited of any of the four main towns in South Oxfordshire. The Shopping Study recommended that the plan's strategy for Didcot town centre should focus on:
- encouraging the major development scheme being promoted by the Council and a property company that was designed to increase the scale and mix of town centre uses and to promote the position of Didcot in the shopping hierarchy
  - resisting proposals for shops selling convenience goods in out-of-centre locations and adopting a cautious approach to proposals for retail warehouses in such locations
  - encouraging improvements to the appearance of buildings and civic spaces in the centre to give Didcot a better image
  - introducing more catering and leisure uses to enhance vitality and the evening economy
  - exercising a strict control over non-shop uses in defined primary shopping frontages, whilst adopting a more flexible approach to proposals for change of use elsewhere.

### **Henley-on-Thames**

- 7.13** In 2000 South Oxfordshire's residents spent more on comparison goods in Henley town centre than in any other town in the district. The sub-regional centres of Oxford, Reading and Aylesbury, however, still claimed a far greater share of this expenditure. The Waitrose

supermarket in Henley attracted the largest amount of spending on convenience goods of any town centre foodstore in the district. These facts, together with the relatively large size of the town centre (12,450 square metres retail floorspace), confirm Henley's status as a major district centre. The Shopping Study recommended that the plan's strategy for Henley town centre should focus on:

- the provision of additional retail floorspace on two large sites in the town centre where land was likely to become available for development in the period to 2011
- resisting proposals for shops selling convenience goods in out-of-centre locations and adopting a cautious approach to proposals for retail warehouses in such locations
- exercising a strict control over non-shop uses in defined primary shopping frontages, whilst adopting a more flexible approach to proposals for change of use elsewhere
- proposing land-use and traffic management measures (derived from an integrated transport strategy for Henley prepared by the local highway authority) that would improve shopper car parking facilities, enhance the pedestrian environment and circulation, and mitigate the problems of traffic volumes and congestion in Henley town centre.

## Thame

**7.14** The Shopping Study indicated that the economic health of Thame town centre was underpinned by the Waitrose and Co-op supermarkets, which fulfilled an important anchor role. The town centre's economy also benefited from the fact that, unlike Henley and Didcot, there was no diversion of food trade to out-of-centre stores. The scale of comparison goods shopping was relatively small, reflecting the close proximity of Aylesbury and Oxford, but shoppers were mainly content with the retail and other service facilities available and with the attractive appearance and layout of Thame town centre. The Shopping Study recommended that the plan's strategy for Thame town centre should focus on:

- encouraging new uses that would either add diversity to the range of uses presently found in the centre, or create a modest increase in comparison shopping floorspace
- exercising a strict control over non-shop uses in defined primary shopping frontages whilst adopting a more flexible approach to proposals for change of use elsewhere
- resisting proposals for expansion of convenience goods shopping in out-of-centre locations and adopting a cautious approach to proposals for retail warehousing in such locations
- proposing land-use and traffic management measures derived from the preparation of an integrated transport strategy for the Thame area by the local highway authority, that would improve accessibility to the town centre by all modes of transport.

## Wallingford

**7.15** The Shopping Study described Wallingford's retail economy as being "reasonably buoyant" in 2000 with the existing supermarkets in the town centre providing an important anchor role. As in Thame, there were no out-of-centre stores to divert trade from the town centre. Whilst comparison shopping outlets included few multiple stores, there were a growing number of specialist independent retail outlets contributing to the town centre's economy. Wallingford benefited from an attractive shopping environment and the town's location on the River Thames generated significant tourist expenditure. The Shopping Study recommended that the plan's strategy for Wallingford should focus on:

- encouraging the major development scheme being promoted by Waitrose that would provide additional floorspace for convenience goods shopping in the town centre in the form of a large foodstore for that company, and encouraging the re-occupation of the existing Waitrose store by new retail operators following the Waitrose relocation to the new foodstore
- resisting proposals for convenience goods shopping in out-of-centre locations and adopting a cautious approach to proposals for retail warehousing in such locations
- exercising a strict control over non-shop uses in defined primary shopping frontages whilst adopting a more flexible approach to proposals for change of use elsewhere
- proposing land-use and traffic management measures derived from the preparation of an integrated transport strategy for the Wallingford area by the local highway authority, that would improve accessibility to the town centre by all modes of transport.

## Extending the range and quality of facilities

### Policy TC1

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

- 7.16 The South Oxfordshire Shopping Study identifies a number of sites in town centres, which have the potential to be developed for mixed-use development. The sites could accommodate a wide range of uses including shops, offices, housing and other key town centre uses which attract many people, as defined in Parts A, C and D of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order. The development of these sites would provide significant opportunities for extending the range and quality of shops and other key uses appropriate in the town centres. Having regard to the findings of the Shopping Study, the Council is allocating sites for mixed-use development in Sections 10 to 13 of the plan where enquiries have shown that land is likely to be made available for development during the plan period. In each centre the scale of development proposed is consistent with the centre's intended place in the local hierarchy of centres as explained in paragraph 7.8 above. Bringing forward development on the allocated sites will be particularly important to the aim of extending the range and quality of shops and other town centre uses. The Council will, therefore, be prepared to use its compulsory purchase powers to facilitate site assembly in cases where a developer is unable to acquire sufficient land by private treaty to deliver a comprehensive scheme. All costs incurred by the Council in this respect will be borne by the developer.
- 7.17 It is the Council's intention to implement proposals on allocated sites in accordance with the criteria and specific requirements contained in the policies in Sections 10 to 13 and in accordance with development briefs to be approved by the Council as supplementary planning documents where appropriate, following consultation with landowners, developers, local people and other interested parties. The development briefs will provide guidance on detailed matters including the layout, type and amount of each use to be permitted on the site, having regard to local circumstances and to other policies in this plan.

## Policy TC2

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

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

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

**7.18** The survey of town centre uses contained in the Shopping Study revealed that many premises in the main shopping streets of the four towns were substandard in size having regard to the space requirements of modern businesses. Policy TC2 provides a positive planning framework in which proposals for extension of those premises will be considered.

**7.19** There are some relatively small sites in the town centres with a street frontage of up to about 10 metres that are presently undeveloped or occupied by existing buildings that are disused, underused and often of a poor design, detracting from the appearance of the street. In these cases the Council would welcome infill development, or redevelopment with a new building, that would enable new uses to become established or existing uses to relocate into larger, more modern premises. Policy TC2 provides a positive planning framework in which such development will be considered.

**7.20** In applying Policy TC2 the Council will need to ensure that any infill or redevelopment proposals for retail or other town centre uses attracting many people are well integrated with the primary shopping frontages designated in accordance with Policy TC8. Good integration will be achieved where the site is within reasonable walking distance of a primary shopping frontage, the guideline in PPG6 being 200 to 300 metres. What constitutes a reasonable distance, however, will vary depending on local topography, the degree of visibility of the site from the primary frontage, the ease of movement along the connecting footways and pedestrian safety considerations. Policy TC2 also requires the Council to ensure that proposals do not conflict with other policies in the plan and in this respect developers should pay particular attention to those policies designed to protect the historic environment, to secure good urban design and to prevent loss of dwellings.

## ~~Environmental improvements~~

### ~~Policy TC3~~

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

~~7.21 The Council will seek to engage with others in the effective management and promotion of the town centres. The Council will continue to work with town councils, relevant public agencies, residents, business organisations and individual businesses, investors and~~

~~voluntary groups to draw up non-statutory town centre management strategies. Many of the promotional activities and projects in the strategies will relate to non-land use planning considerations and in these cases, no planning permission will be required to implement them. Certain projects, however, do have a land use dimension and will require planning permission to be obtained. For instance, some environmental improvement schemes in streets and public spaces are in this category.~~

## Encouraging a diversity of uses

- 7.22 The four town centres already benefit from a wide diversity of uses as indicated in the Shopping Study. New development in the town centres in accordance with Policies ~~TC1 and TC2~~ of this plan will provide further opportunities for diversification. It will also be important for the town centre management strategies, described in paragraph 7.21, to pursue initiatives to attract appropriate new uses to the town centres, particularly when vacancies occur in existing buildings. The Structure Plan carries forward Government guidance in PPG3 and PPS6 by making specific reference to the need to encourage an increase in housing in town centres, above ground floor retail, leisure or other facilities. Such residential use is desirable because it not only provides ideal accommodation for small households but also adds to the vitality and security of the town centres, particularly in the evenings. Policies ~~TC1 and TC2~~ will enable housing development to take place as part of new mixed-use developments in the town centres. The following policies also address this issue.

### ~~Policy TC4~~

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

- 7.23 ~~There has been a gradual decline in the use of upper floor accommodation in town centres for residential use. There are a number of reasons for this, including the desire of many traders to have a home separate from the workplace, the policy of some businesses and investors not to provide housing over commercial premises, competition from more profitable commercial uses and difficulties with the building itself. Such difficulties can involve the lack of a separate access, security problems and the cost of converting upper floors into residential use. The identification of suitable upper floor accommodation for conversion to housing and the promotional work necessary to overcome the various difficulties described in this paragraph, will be an important initiative for town centre management strategies (see paragraph 7.21). In each case the Council will need to ensure that the change of use does not adversely affect the viability of any ground floor shop use.~~

### ~~Policy TC5~~

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

- 7.24** It is particularly important to retain residential accommodation in the town centres for the reasons given in paragraph 7.22 and Policy TC5 is intended to achieve this objective. The Council will allow a change of use in the exceptional circumstances described in the policy. With regard to environmental factors, however, there will be few locations in the four South Oxfordshire towns where noise, fumes or other forms of nuisance will be such as to render premises unsuitable for living accommodation. The Council will be guided in this matter by advice from its environmental health service. The amenity afforded by a private garden is often an important factor in keeping town centre flats and houses in residential use. The Council will, therefore, resist developments that would destroy such gardens.

### **Policy TC6**

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

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

- 7.25** The Council will permit office uses to occupy upper floor accommodation in locations that are within the primary shopping frontages or that can be well integrated with those frontages. Good integration is explained in paragraph 7.20 above. The size of office development proposed will be limited in accordance with Policy E2 and the requirements of Policy E5 of this plan.

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

### **Policy TC7**

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

- 7.26** The South Oxfordshire Shopping Study describes likely trends in the retail and commercial leisure industries over the next ten years and it is possible that the Council will receive proposals for the development of new, or extensions to existing, superstores in out-of-centre locations. These superstores sell mainly food and other goods in the convenience category, but increasingly they are seeking to diversify into other retail services and into the sale of goods in the comparison category.
- 7.27** The Council will refuse planning permission for these out-of-centre superstore proposals having regard to the findings of the Shopping Study. Briefly, the findings from consumer surveys contained in the Study indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the service already provided by existing convenience stores in the district. There is, therefore, no need to improve the quality of existing stores beyond the quality improvements that are already planned for town centre convenience stores, which accord with the provisions of this plan. The Study also predicts very little available spending power in the catchment areas of the four towns to support additional convenience goods floorspace in out-of-centre locations.

For both these reasons, the Council sees no need to permit further out-of-centre superstore development. The Shopping Study also advises the Council to resist such proposals having regard to likely adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the town centres.

**7.28** The propensity for superstores to sell comparison goods has been noted above. The Council may also receive proposals for retail warehouse developments in out-of-centre locations, containing both large and small shop units selling a wide range of comparison goods. The Shopping Study advises the Council to adopt a cautious approach to such proposals. The Council must assess the extent to which the range of goods proposed to be sold in each case would divert trade from nearby town centre stores. It is likely that when this assessment is made, an adverse impact would be predicted on town centre vitality and viability and this would lead to refusal of planning permission.

**7.29** The Council wishes to see the trend for expansion of commercial leisure uses, including multi-screen cinemas and restaurant uses, accommodated in town centre locations, in accordance with Policies TC1 and TC2 of this plan, where they can enhance vitality and viability and particularly enhance the evening economy of the centres. The Council will resist proposals for these commercial leisure uses in out-of-centre locations. Such proposals would divert large numbers of people away from the town centres and thereby have an adverse impact on town centre vitality and viability. Proposals for any large-scale, out-of-centre, commercial "leisure parks" will also be refused planning permission for this reason. The Council will also oppose such large-scale proposals on the grounds that they should be sited at the sub-regional centres in the hierarchy of centres from where the majority of their customers would be drawn.

**7.30** In the event that proposals for out-of-centre development for shops and other town centre uses attracting many people are received, then the Council will require the planning application for such proposals to be accompanied by a written statement which addresses the following issues:

- (i) explains the need for the development.
- (ii) explains that the development is of an appropriate scale.
- (iii) explains why the development could not be located on a town centre site or failing that on an edge-of-centre site with good links on foot to the primary shopping area. The statement should contain evidence that all such sites have been thoroughly investigated by the applicant for their suitability and availability. The Council will expect prior consultation on the list of sites to be investigated and may be prepared to assist the intending developer in land assembly if that assistance proves necessary. The Council will expect developers, in carrying out this investigation, to be flexible in their site and/or building requirements. In the case of retail development, the applicant will adopt the "class of goods" approach to flexibility and will not reject possible alternative sites on the grounds that they would not accommodate a particular format. The format-driven approach to site investigation will also not be appropriate in the case of leisure proposals.
- (iv) the statement should contain an impact assessment of the effect of the proposed development on town centre vitality and viability taking into account the cumulative impact effects of any committed developments in the area. The impact assessment for a store selling convenience goods should also include the effect of the proposed development on the economic viability of any village shop lying within the catchment area of the proposed store.

- (v) in all cases the written statement should include a transport assessment demonstrating how the site is accessible by a choice of means of transport and how the development would not result in an unacceptable increase in private car journeys.
- (vi) in cases where the site is used or allocated in this plan for employment uses, the written statement should explain how the proposed development would not materially prejudice the amount and variety of land provided for employment uses.

**7.31** If the Council decides to grant planning permission as a departure from Policy TC7, then in the case of retail developments, the Council may impose conditions to prevent the development being sub-divided into a number of smaller shops, which could be satisfactorily located in town centres, and to limit the range or type of goods sold. Such conditions will be imposed where it is appropriate to do so in order to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of existing town centres. In the event that developers propose works and measures acceptable to the Council that are intended to achieve compliance with any undertakings made in a written statement, submitted pursuant to paragraph 7.30, then these works and measures will be secured by the Council through planning obligations.

## Protection of the retail function in town centres

### Policy TC8

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

- 7.32** Class A1 shop uses are important to the economy, attractiveness and character of all four of South Oxfordshire's main town centres. Primary Shopping Frontages are, therefore, defined on the Proposals Map and within these frontages, Policy TC8 will be applied to resist proposals for change of use of shops to non-shop uses.
- 7.33** Other non-shop uses within Part A of the Schedule of the Use Classes Order are well represented in all four town centres and the Council recognises that these other uses are an important element in primary shopping frontages, making their own positive contribution to vitality and viability. Nevertheless, the South Oxfordshire Shopping Study has revealed a penetration rate of around 30% non-shop uses of all kinds (measured in units) when the whole extent of a centre's primary frontage is surveyed in each of the four towns. The Council agrees with the Study's recommendation that when the penetration rate exceeds 25% then the dominant retailing character and function in the primary frontages begins to be undermined. In present circumstances, therefore, where the penetration rate is around 30%, the Council will not permit further changes of use.
- 7.34** In relatively small district centres it is not appropriate to measure the penetration rate along short lengths of street frontage as is the usual practice in larger centres. The correct approach in district centres is to measure the penetration rate in the entire primary frontage, in recognition of the fact that the totality of shops contributes to the dominant retail function to be protected. This is the approach recommended to the Council in the Shopping Study.

## Section 8 Promoting a sustainable transport strategy

### Introduction

**8.1** This section of the Local Plan deals with a wide range of transport topics and looks at the issues relating to transport, including traffic management, public transport, cycling and walking, car parking, travel plans and lorries. The policies in this section of the plan seek to:

- provide for transport needs within the district in ways which are environmentally sustainable
- require the provision of transport assessments and travel plans for all developments which would generate significant amounts of travel or where there are local traffic problems associated with a planning application
- support proposals which improve public transport and reduce reliance on car-based travel
- promote, improve and extend the footpath and cycleway network in the district
- manage off-street parking to improve the attraction and viability of villages and town centres
- encourage traffic management measures which enhance the environment, improve safety and encourage sustainable modes of transport
- provide for the access needs of those whose mobility is impaired
- resist proposals for freight distribution depots and other developments which would increase the number of lorries on unsuitable roads, where this would have serious and adverse effects on the environmental quality of the rural areas, towns and villages.

**8.2** There is continuing concern within South Oxfordshire about the growing volume and speed of traffic, and over traffic congestion, particularly during the morning and evening peak periods. Growing levels of car use reflect the convenience, speed, comfort and relative affordability of travel by car when compared with many of the alternatives currently available. Continuing growth in road transport and the consequent environmental impacts, including pollution, present a major challenge to achieving the objective of a sustainable land use and transport strategy for the district.

**8.3** Growth in the use of cars and lorries is a national issue and is the result of deep-seated economic and social factors. These issues are addressed in the Government's White Paper on the Future of Transport, *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone*, published in 1998. The White Paper sets the tone for subsequent national and regional policy documents. There is a strong emphasis on integration within and between different modes of transport, and on integration between transport and land-use planning to promote more sustainable transport choices and to reduce the need to travel. PPG13: *Transport* published in March 2001 emphasises the importance of the role of land use planning in delivering the Government's integrated transport strategy. It aims to ensure that local authorities integrate their land use and transport policies and proposals in ways which:

- promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight
- promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling
- reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

**8.4** In Oxfordshire, the County Council is the highway authority and is responsible for local transport policy, traffic management and the maintenance of most roads in the district. It is therefore essential that the County and District Councils work in partnership on land use and transportation matters. The County Council's transport policies are contained in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan. The Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2001-2006, which is also prepared by the County Council, sets out proposals for delivering integrated transport over a five year period. The Local Transport Plan contains a 'Transport Vision for Oxfordshire' which states that "Oxfordshire will be a county with a prosperous economy, attractive environment and inclusive society where:

- dependence on travel by private car is reduced by increasing the choices available to meet transport needs
- suitable integrated transport networks are provided which are easily accessible for all, particularly those at risk of exclusion by virtue of mobility difficulties, location, income or other reasons
- appropriate transport infrastructure and services are provided to support new development and a growing economy
- an increasing proportion of trips is made on foot, by bicycle and by public transport
- the number of casualties associated with travel is reduced
- the quality of transport networks is safeguarded and enhanced by effective maintenance and enforcement of appropriate regulations
- access for people and goods is maintained or improved
- noise, pollution, fear of accidents, and other nuisances associated with traffic are contained."

**8.5** The District Council is working with the County Council on the preparation and implementation of a number of Transport and Land Use Studies covering various parts of the district. These are as follows:

- (i) **The Didcot Area Integrated Transport Study.** Work on an integrated transport study for the Didcot area began in 2002. The Steering Group comprises members of Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils, Didcot Town Council and two representatives of Parish Councils in the area. The Highways Agency is represented on the officer group. The purpose of the study is to look at all aspects of transport in the Didcot area and put forward a list of short and long-term transport measures taking particular account of the major developments in the area and the issues of congestion in the A34 corridor. The Study is using as its base the Didcot Transport Study which reported in February 2002. Phase 1 of the final report of the Integrated Transport Study relating to traffic management, walking and cycling, village and public transport improvements and the Provisional Strategy for Phase 2 relating to highway schemes were approved by the County Council in May and October 2004 respectively.
- (ii) **The Henley Integrated Transport Study.** A review of the Henley Integrated Transport Study started in 2003. The Steering Group comprises members of Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Henley Town Council. A need for a short to medium term strategy and a separate long term strategy was identified. The short to medium term strategy, approved in February 2004, contains schemes that can be implemented in the next few years to allow improvements to the town's transport

provision to be made. Work on the longer term strategy, which will include examining more strategic measures such as a bypass or bridge tolling, started in April 2004 and a final report was approved by the Steering Group in March 2005.

- (iii) **Thames Valley Multi Modal Study.** This study was published in 2003. In his response the Secretary of State endorsed the recommendation for closer working between local authorities and other stakeholders to develop coherent cross boundary strategies.
- (iv) **Cross-Thames Travel Study.** Consultants were appointed in October 1998 to undertake a study of cross-Thames travel along the boundary of Oxfordshire and Berkshire between Wallingford and Marlow, with a focus on the crossings of the Thames between Reading and Henley. The Study was funded and managed by five local authorities - Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Reading Borough Council, Wokingham District Council and West Berkshire Council. The Final Report, received in March 2002, recommended a strategy formed from a series of main components comprising a new mass transit system for the Reading/Wokingham area, park and ride facilities north and east of Caversham, improved bus and rail services for the South Oxfordshire area, traffic constraint at Reading, Sonning and Henley, a heavy goods vehicle management strategy and improved facilities for cycling and walking. The Council welcomed the report. Further work is needed to progress the suggested measures.
- (v) **Abingdon Transport Study.** Abingdon is in the Vale of White Horse District but the town is adjacent to South Oxfordshire and some of the measures that may result from this Study are likely to have an impact on parts of this district. This Council is therefore one of the partners in the Study. The Study was completed in 2001 and adopted by the County Council in June 2001. In the initial programme for implementation there are no major proposals which affect South Oxfordshire, as the proposals are primarily concerned with Abingdon town centre. However, should these measures result in increased traffic in the villages around Abingdon, consultation on suitable traffic calming measures for these villages will be carried out at an early stage. Should monitoring highlight a need for further measures later in the Plan period, the Council would expect to be consulted fully on these.

- 8.6 The strategies which are emerging from the studies will be delivered through the relevant local transport plans and local plans. Where specific studies have not been carried out, the approach to transport has and will be considered in the context of national, regional and local policy.
- 8.7 The District Council's other involvement in transport matters relates to the operation of a concessionary fares scheme, the licensing of taxis, and the provision and operation of public off-street parking. The Highways Agency is responsible for the M40. The A34 is outside the district, but is a major access route for the western parts of the district. In August 2004 the Regional Assembly recommended the Government to commission a full multi-modal transport study for the A34 trunk road corridor. The Assembly indicated the need for measures to be identified to keep the road corridor operating efficiently to meet the movement requirements not only of long distance traffic but also of more local traffic associated with major planned development in the corridor. In summer 2005 discussions were ongoing between the different stakeholders about the way forward. Public transport, in the form of rail, bus and taxi services, is operated by a range of private companies.

## Transport requirements for new developments

### Policy T1

Proposals for all types of development will, where appropriate:

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

- 8.8** In determining planning applications, the Council will, in consultation with the local highway authority, ensure that roads in new developments are designed to a standard that ensures a safe and attractive environment. The Council's Design Guide and the County Council's Highway Design Guide provide guidance to developers.
- 8.9** The Council will not normally permit developments which are likely to result in an unacceptable level of traffic on the local highway network, or which would result in a detrimental effect on the amenities and environment of the area.
- 8.10** The Council will expect developments which could generate a significant amount of private vehicular traffic to be accessible by public transport, in order to reduce the use of private vehicles. The Council will seek to ensure that developments provide good access to existing public transport routes or provide for new routes and services as appropriate. In 2001 the County Council endorsed a network of "Premium Routes" which will have services operating at frequencies of a bus at least every 15 minutes by 2011. The three routes within South Oxfordshire are Didcot, Thame and Wallingford to Oxford. The location of bus stops will need special consideration to facilitate the interchange between different bus services, particularly along Premium Routes. The provision of bus shelters and other infrastructure and measures such as bus-only links and other bus priority measures will also be sought as required.
- 8.11** The Council will also require appropriate provision of purpose-built, safe and secure infrastructure for both cyclists and pedestrians. This will include safe and convenient routes within the development, good links to the footpath and cycle network outside the development area and where appropriate, the creation of new routes or the improvement of existing routes. Changing facilities with showers and lockers are also important, especially at places of employment, and will be sought by negotiation during the consideration of planning applications.

## Policy T2

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

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

8.12 The Council's car parking, disabled parking and cycle parking standards are set out in Appendix 5.

8.13 PPG13: Transport states that applicants for development with significant transport implications should show the measures they are taking to minimise the need for car parking. This is likely to involve the provision or enhancement of alternative modes of transport to serve the development. In accordance with Policy D11, the Council will seek contributions for infrastructure, facilities and services to mitigate the impact of development.

## ~~Transport assessments and travel plans~~

### ~~Policy T3~~

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

~~8.14 Where proposed developments will have significant transport implications a transport assessment should be submitted with the planning application. Before submitting an application, applicants are encouraged to consult the County Council on the need for and scope of the transport assessment. The coverage and detail of these will depend on the scale of development. For small schemes the assessment should simply outline the transport aspects of the proposal. For major proposals the assessment should:~~

- ~~● illustrate accessibility to the site by all modes~~
- ~~● show the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site~~
- ~~● detail the proposed measures to improve access by public transport, cycling and walking, to reduce the need for parking and to mitigate transport impacts~~
- ~~● illustrate the traffic impact on the highway network~~
- ~~● include a travel plan where appropriate.~~

~~8.15 The Council will require a travel plan to be prepared and implemented:~~

- ~~● for all major developments comprising employment, shopping, leisure uses or services~~
- ~~● for other smaller developments comprising employment, shopping, leisure, or education facilities which would generate significant amounts of travel~~
- ~~● where a travel plan would help address a particular local traffic problem associated with a planning application, which might otherwise have to be refused on traffic grounds.~~

- 8.16 ~~Travel plans are becoming increasingly popular as a means of encouraging people to adopt travel habits which are more sustainable. Journeys to work cause particular problems of congestion. Travel plans aim to reduce unnecessary employee car use and can include a variety of measures, including a car-sharing register, secure cycle parking, discounted travel using public transport, offering attractive flexible working practices, and charging for workplace car parking. Where appropriate, travel plans should also aim to achieve more environmentally-friendly delivery and freight movements, including home delivery services. The plans should be worked up in consultation with the local highway authority and local transport providers. However, the existence of a travel plan should not be used to permit a development proposal which is unacceptable in scale or location. Travel plans should have measurable outputs and should set out the arrangements for monitoring the progress of the plan. Under certain circumstances some or all proposals in a travel plan may be made binding, either through planning conditions or through a related planning obligation.~~

## Public transport and interchanges

### Policy T4

~~Planning permission will be granted for proposals which improve public transport facilities in order to reduce reliance on car-based travel. This will include, where appropriate, the provision of suitable interchange facilities between public transport services and between different modes of transport such as car, bus, rail, taxis, cycling and walking provided that there are no significant adverse effects on the environment or amenities of residents.~~

- 8.17 ~~This policy is consistent with Structure Plan Policies T5 and T6 which seek to promote the use of public transport as an alternative to the use of private cars. The Council considers that if people are to be encouraged to use their cars less, transport alternatives to the car need to be put in place. The availability of an efficient and attractive public transport system is an issue of particular importance to residents without their own private transport, particularly the elderly and the young, and households where the car is used by one member of the household all day.~~
- 8.18 ~~A number of bus operators offer bus services in the district. Traditionally, the most frequent services have run between the towns in the district and Oxford or Reading. Increased Government funding has been made available to the County Council to subsidise bus services and this has assisted in the provision of some new and improved services in the district. The Local Transport Plan states that 86% of the population of the County live in settlements with at least an hourly daytime bus service and the Plan aims to increase this to 88% by 2011. Nevertheless, there remains a significant number of villages away from main routes which are not well served by buses. The District Council will support measures which contribute to improved bus services within the district. These measures could include dial-a-ride services and the provision of real-time information systems on the main town routes.~~
- 8.19 ~~The Council will support and, where appropriate, will promote suitable sites for interchange facilities between different modes of transport such as car, bus, rail, taxis, cycling and walking. These will be designed to provide easier access to public transport and better connections between different forms of transport. The Council will work with the County Council, as highway authority, together with town and parish councils, and public transport operators, in a partnership approach to identify and implement suitable sites for public~~

~~transport interchanges. Co-ordination will be needed between adjoining districts to ensure that efficient public transport provision is made across local authority boundaries.~~

### **Policy T5**

**Where required, planning permission will be granted for proposals which:**

- (i) improve rail services in South Oxfordshire;**
- (ii) improve access to rail services; and/or**
- (iii) improve facilities at railway stations provided that there are no significant adverse effects on the environment or amenities of residents.**

### **Policy T6**

**Existing or former rail facilities will be protected from development which might adversely affect their use or potential re-use for public transport or as a cycling route.**

- 8.20** The main London to Bristol railway line passes through the district from Goring to Didcot, and the Didcot/Oxford/Birmingham line runs northwards from Didcot. The Henley branch line joins the Paddington/Reading main line at Twyford. Just outside the district, Haddenham Parkway serves Thame and the local area, and Pangbourne and Tilehurst stations serve parts of the Chilterns, particularly as a commuter service into London.
- 8.21** Where planning permission is needed the Council will generally support improvements to the rail network and services. However, many improvements to the rail network will not require planning permission and in such cases the Council will use its powers and influence to support proposals which improve rail services within the district and which improve access to rail facilities. These rail services and station facilities are considered to be a vital and important asset and must be maintained and, where possible, improved in order to play a full part in providing alternative means of travel to the private car.
- 8.22** The Council will protect existing rail facilities from development which might adversely affect their use. Former rail facilities which could be re-opened for passenger or freight use will be protected from development which could prejudice any future re-use. Existing or disused railway lines which could be used as transport corridors for walking, cycling, or public transport use will also be protected.
- 8.23** The Council supports the proposed East-West Rail route connecting East Anglia with central-southern England. Within Oxfordshire the line will use existing railway lines. The route would run through Didcot and provide a link to a number of towns to the east of the district including Milton Keynes, Cambridge, Ipswich and Norwich.

## **Cycling and walking**

### **Policy T7**

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

- 8.24** Walking and cycling have the potential to replace car use for short trips and to form part of a longer journey by public transport. A strategic framework towards the comprehensive provision of walking and cycling is set out in the [National Cycling Strategy](#), [Advice to Local Authorities on Walking](#) and the County Council's [Cycling and Walking Strategies](#). The District Council will seek to encourage walking as the predominant mode of transport for journeys up to one mile, and cycling for journeys up to three miles, as far as possible within the land use planning framework. The Council will also, in the exercise of its land-use planning powers, seek to assist the County Council with the implementation of its Cycling and Walking Strategies.
- 8.25** Walking and cycling are forms of transport which are available to a wide cross-section of the community. Hence, promoting walking and cycling also encourages a range of social, environmental, health and safety benefits.
- 8.26** The Council will support new and improved provision of walking and cycling routes which form safe and convenient networks linking major trip generators and attractors. Maximum integration will be sought between walking, cycling and public transport. Recent initiatives include a study, produced in October 1999, of cycling facilities in and around Didcot, which is being developed further in the Didcot Area Integrated Transport Study, and the creation of a walking and cycling route between Princes Risborough and Thame, which opened in March 2001. An extension through Thame is proposed, (see Policy THA2) and a continuation of the route to Oxford is being considered.
- 8.27** In promoting the recreational aspects of cycling the Council supports the National Cycle Network route through South Oxfordshire. The route follows lightly-trafficked minor roads, tracks and bridleways from Reading across the Chilterns to Wallingford and Didcot. The active promotion of this route will increase cycle tourism in the district, and provide opportunities for local people to make journeys by bicycle to local destinations.
- 8.28** Good pedestrian provision should not be confined to a limited network of pedestrian routes. The patterns of pedestrian movement are more random than for other modes, particularly in town centres. Hence planning for pedestrians is more about identifying barriers and other deficiencies and identifying practical ways to overcome these.

## Car parks and on-street parking

### Policy T8

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

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

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

- 8.29** The responsibility for car parking within the district is divided between the County Council for on-street parking and residents' parking schemes, and the District Council for public off-street parking. Clearly, there is a very close relationship between on-street car parking and

off-street parking. Restrictions on on-street parking imposed by the County Council, perhaps in response to valid traffic management objectives, might place considerable pressure on the Council's car parks and other off-street parking. For this reason, close contact needs to be maintained with the County Council to ensure that car parking measures are properly co-ordinated.

- 8.30** The Council operates limited free parking within a pay-and-display system in the four towns of Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford, and at Goring. The free parking encourages local shopping which aids the economic viability of the district's town and village centres. Short-stay car parks are close to shopping areas and are generally restricted to a three-hour maximum stay. Within the rural areas of the district, the Council endeavours to provide off-street parking which is convenient to village centres, where it is needed. Car parking in the villages has become increasingly important, particularly in the larger villages, which offer a range of services that attract customers from the surrounding areas.
- 8.31** Government policy is seeking to limit car parking as a means of reducing levels of traffic and promoting public transport, cycling and walking as alternatives to the private car. It does, however, recognise that good quality secure parking is important to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres, and to enable retail and leisure uses to flourish.
- 8.32** The District Council recognises that the level of car parking provision in towns and villages has an important influence in determining the choice of means of travel by a significant proportion of the local population. However, it is also generally recognised that at present alternative means of transport, particularly public transport services and safe cycle routes, are insufficiently developed and publicised to present an adequate alternative means of transport for many of the shoppers and employees dependent on the market towns, villages and employment centres. When these facilities and services have been improved to provide viable alternatives, consideration will be given to reducing the number of long-stay car parking spaces in the towns and villages. In advance of these improvements the Council will maintain current and planned levels of parking and will only provide additional off-street parking spaces where there is special justification following every effort to manage existing spaces for the benefit of all users of the car parks.
- 8.33** The Council will support the introduction of residents' parking schemes in town and village centres where the lack of private parking causes difficulties for local residents. The County Council is responsible for the introduction of residents' parking schemes in the district and at present only one scheme, in Henley town centre, is in operation. Residents' parking schemes are beneficial where residents in town centres do not have garages or off-street parking available, often because of the layout of largely Victorian terraced houses. There is competition on streets within and surrounding town centres between shoppers, employees of local businesses, and residents. The District Council considers that there are benefits to the community, and to the vitality of the town centre, if residents are given priority in using road-side parking. Residents' parking schemes and short-stay, on-street, pay-and-display public parking can be provided together in circumstances where there is sufficient parking available to meet both requirements.

## Traffic management

- 8.34** Traffic management matters and road improvements are a core County Council function. Traffic management and traffic calming have a key role to play in reducing the impact of traffic in the district's towns, villages and rural areas. The Council will urge the highway

authority to promote traffic management measures where these contribute to improving the environment, improving the safety of pedestrians, cyclists or motorists, facilitating walking and cycling and/or improving the use of public transport (including the efficiency of public transport operation and the service provided). The District Council believes that within town and village centres with a mixture of land uses, priority should be given to pedestrians over traffic. Well designed pedestrianisation and pedestrian-priority schemes will be supported, together with measures to promote safe walking, cycling and public transport.

- 8.35** Traffic management measures should be promoted to enhance the quality of the street environment and to improve road safety, particularly in residential areas near shops and around local schools. New residential areas should be designed to encourage low traffic speeds through environmentally-sympathetic traffic calming. In established residential areas, there needs to be a creative use of traffic calming and traffic management measures to give priority to pedestrians and to reduce the impact of vehicular traffic, including the creation of "home zones". Home zones aim to improve the use of a range of traffic calming measures which will allow streets to be used by residents for a range of activities other than the passage of vehicles. Where part of a development is to be of 'home zone' style, developers should refer to the County Council's guidance: Home Zone Characteristics for New Housing Developments, February 2002.
- 8.36** Traffic management measures in the rural areas should be sympathetic to the character of the area. The District Council will support measures which reduce vehicle speeds in the rural areas, improve safety, reinforce the road network hierarchy, and control the use of unsuitable roads by non-local traffic. However, the Council is concerned that the right balance is achieved between safe and convenient roads, and the protection of the rural environment and beauty of the landscape. The Council will urge the highway authority to have proper regard to these environmental factors in the preparation of schemes. The County Council is promoting the 'CountryWays' project which is looking at ways of improving traffic management in part of the Chilterns AONB. The measures that will be considered include village entry treatments, signage strategies, quiet lanes and village traffic calming. The project has the support of the District Council, the Chilterns Conservation Board and the Countryside Agency. This is a pilot project which, if successful, will be extended to other areas.

## Service areas

### Policy T9

**Petrol filling stations or other service areas for motorists will not be permitted outside the built-up areas of the towns and larger villages of the district.**

- 8.37** It is considered that the existing provision of facilities for motorists in the district will be sufficient to meet the needs of motorists within the plan period. If, however, further facilities are required, they should be sited within the built-up area of the towns and larger villages in the district. Petrol filling stations are an important local service and in the villages often provide an ancillary shop. The Council will seek to protect the redevelopment or change of use of essential services and facilities in accordance with Policy CF1.
- 8.38** The Council considers that there can be no justification for a further motorway service area in South Oxfordshire. Oxfordshire County Council similarly takes the view that the existing provision meets all M40 services needed in the County. In August 1992 the Department of

Transport (DOT) announced a new regime for the provision of motorway service areas and reduced the minimum acceptable interval between them from 30 miles to 15 miles. Subsequently, DOT Circular 1/94 advised that the provision of services at intervals of not much more than 30 miles remains a desirable general aim. There are at present two motorway service areas in Oxfordshire, one at Ardley (Cherwell Valley) and one at Lower Farm, Waterstock (Wheatley Services). There are no motorway service areas between the Wheatley Services and the M25 London orbital motorway. However, the length of motorway which runs through the district is approximately 12.5 miles, and the distance from the Wheatley Services to the eastern boundary of the district is just over 9 miles. In addition, the motorway runs through open countryside, part of which is within the Oxford Green Belt and part within the Chilterns AONB. There would, therefore, be strong policy and environmental objections to any further provision within the district.

## Lorries and freight distribution depots

### Policy T10

**Development which would significantly increase the number of lorries on unsuitable roads or where there would be serious and adverse effects on the environmental quality of the rural areas, towns and villages within the district will not be permitted.**

### Policy T11

**Proposals for lorry and freight distribution depots which would have serious and adverse effects on the environmental quality of the rural areas, towns and villages within the district will not be permitted.**

- 8.39** There is concern within the district that the increasing amount of heavy goods traffic is having serious and adverse effects on the environmental quality of the rural areas, villages and towns. The District Council supports the County Council's policy that lorry traffic should, wherever possible, use the major road network and that new freight distribution depots should be located near to rail, pipeline or waterway networks. The transfer of movements from road to rail can relieve the road network, although it is recognised that most trips which use rail have to be completed by other forms of transport. Where lorries are servicing local firms, local roads will need to be used for access purposes. Similarly proposals permitted in accordance with employment Policy E8, which provides for the re-use or adaptation of rural buildings outside the built-up areas of towns and villages, might increase the number of lorries on rural roads.
- 8.40** Road freight is continuing to grow in terms of the amount of freight carried, the distances over which it is carried, and the number of road freight vehicles, particularly vans. The size and weights of the heaviest vehicles, and the proportion of road freight carried by these vehicles, has also increased. Lorries are particularly prone to causing hold-ups due to difficulties in manoeuvring, especially in historic town and village centres. Heavy vehicles can also cause damage to properties in these areas and to roads not built to accommodate them.
- 8.41** Proposals for lorry and freight distribution depots which would have serious and adverse effects on the environmental quality of the rural areas, towns and villages will be resisted. There are three existing depots in Didcot, one in Wallingford, and another on the outskirts of Thame. These depots have implications for HGVs travelling through the district to the motorway network.

- 8.42** The Council will urge the County Council to negotiate routing agreements, where appropriate, as a means of addressing freight-related environmental impacts in the towns and rural areas. The environmental impact of heavy goods vehicles passing through Henley has given rise to particular concerns, as many of these vehicles are not servicing local firms but are using the river crossing to travel to wider destinations. Many of these trips are associated with the freight distribution centres in Didcot and Milton Park.
- 8.43** Where the Council becomes aware of an application under the provisions of the Transport Act 1968 for the establishment of a Goods Vehicle Operator Licence on a site where planning permission is necessary, consideration will be given to the effect the proposed use would have on the local environment and the amenity of the local area. Where a proposed operating centre is likely to give rise to traffic problems or have an adverse effect on the amenity of the local area, the Council will refuse planning permission and may object to the grant of an Operator's Licence.

### **Transport policies in Oxford City**

- 8.44** Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council are implementing the Oxford Transport Strategy. This involves a wide range of measures including restricting traffic through the City centre and expanding the park and ride car parks around the City. The Thornhill Park and Ride Car Park on the A40 to the east of Oxford is within South Oxfordshire. The Council approved an extension of this car park to the west in 2001.

## Section 9 The rural areas

### Introduction

- 9.1** This section of the plan contains the site-specific proposals for the rural areas of the district. For the purposes of this plan this is the district outside the four towns of Didcot, Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford.
- 9.2** There has been a moderate growth in housing in the rural areas over the last Local Plan period alongside significant job creation. These trends are likely to continue given that a number of major employment sites are located outside the four towns. The rural areas site-specific policies include major developed Green Belt sites; an allocation for the re-use of Fair Mile Hospital, Cholsey for housing and employment; significant employment provision at Chinnor Cement Works; policies for Mongewell Park and the Wilders site, Crowmarsh; Mackenzie Myers, Watlington; as well as a policy for Shotover Country Park.

### Site-specific proposals in the Green Belt

- 9.3** PPG2 advises that major developed sites in the Green Belt may be identified and policies for the future of the sites may be included in the Local Plan where:
- (a) limited infilling at major developed sites in continuing use may help to secure jobs and prosperity without further prejudicing the Green Belt; and
  - (b) complete or partial redevelopment may offer the opportunity for environmental improvement without adding to their impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it.

The Council has identified Culham Science Centre, Oxford Brookes University at Holton and Sandford Sewage Treatment Works as major developed sites in the Green Belt. This part of the plan also contains a policy in respect of Number 1 Site at Culham.

### Oxford Brookes University, Holton

- 9.4** Oxford Brookes University is on a split site and its original and main buildings are in Oxford City at Headington. The University has more recently leased Westminster College at North Hinksey. A number of sites have also been acquired and developed in recent years to provide student accommodation notably at Marston Road, Oxford. In 2001, the University had 16,000 full- and part-time students and employed 2,200 staff on permanent full- and part-time contracts, as well as 800 on temporary contracts. The Holton site in South Oxfordshire was the former Lady Spencer Churchill College which merged with the former Polytechnic in 1975. Policy RUR1 sets out the framework for the consideration of proposals for infill development on the site and Map 4 shows the boundary within which infill development can take place in principle. Policy RUR2 provides the framework for the consideration of redevelopment proposals at the Holton site. The Council would support the preparation of a development brief for the site to provide a comprehensive framework within which specific proposals could be considered.

**Policy RUR1**

Limited infill development at Oxford Brookes University site at Holton will be permitted provided that it would:

- (i) be located within the infill boundary shown on Map 4;
- (ii) have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing development;
- (iii) not significantly increase student numbers without commensurate additional residential student accommodation being provided;
- (iv) not exceed the height of the existing buildings, excluding the main tower; and
- (v) not lead to a major increase in the developed portion of the site.

**~~Policy RUR2~~**

~~Redevelopment at Oxford Brookes University site at Holton will be permitted provided that it would:~~

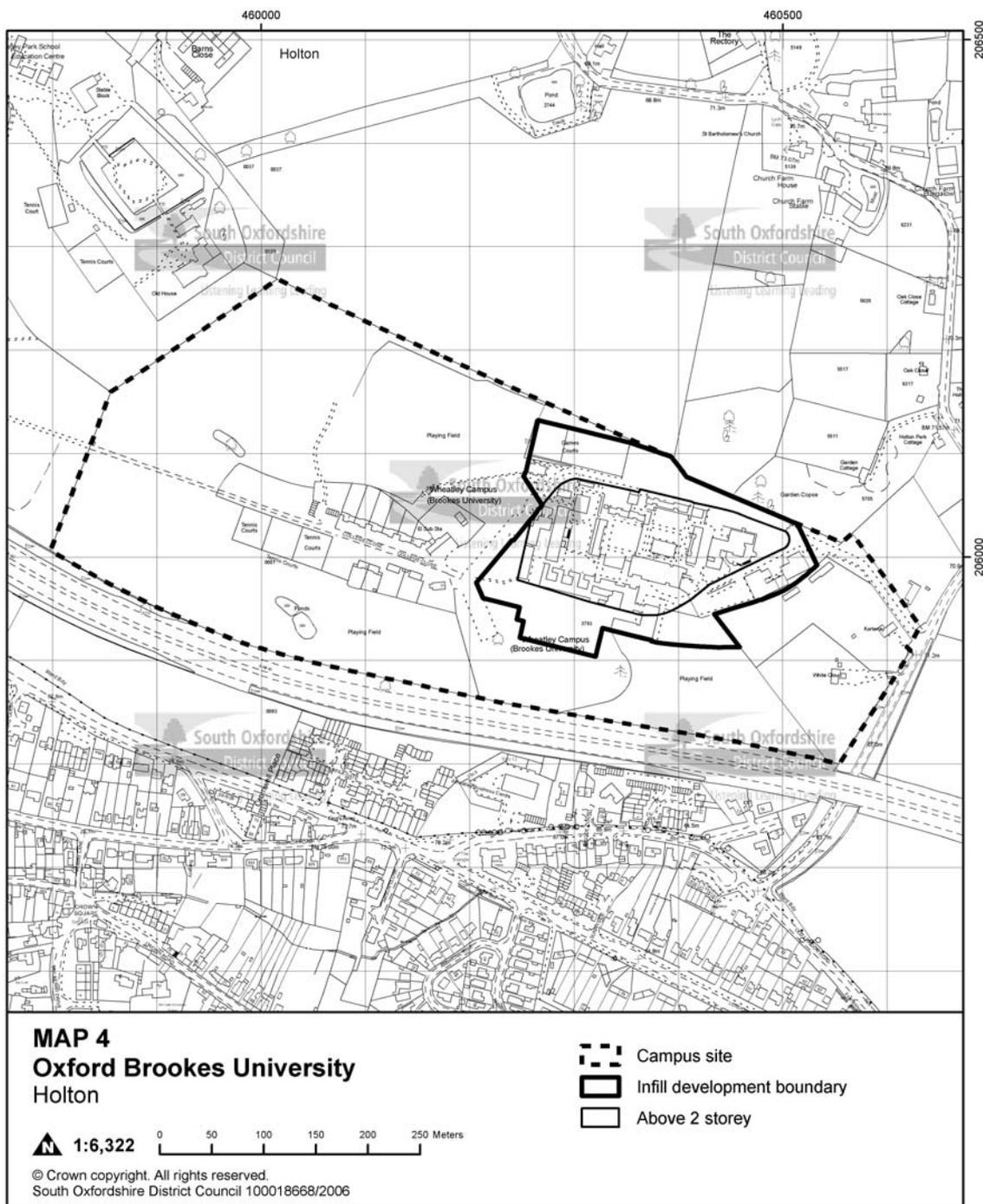
- ~~(i) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;~~
- ~~(ii) contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt;~~
- ~~(iii) not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings, unless this would achieve a reduction in height that would benefit visual amenity;~~
- ~~(iv) not significantly increase student numbers without the provision of commensurate residential student accommodation;~~
- ~~(v) not exceed the height of the existing buildings, excluding the main tower; and~~
- ~~(vi) not result in the loss of important trees on the site or important wildlife habitats.~~

9.5 Oxford City Council has for many years been concerned about the impact of Oxford Brookes University's students on the housing situation in Oxford, as accommodation managed by the University caters for about 40% of full-time students. This is one of the factors that has led to pressure to release land in the Green Belt to provide further housing. A large amount of new housing accommodation for students has been completed by the University and further provision is planned; however, there is still considerable pressure on housing in Oxford and any further expansion to cater for more full-time students would be likely to exacerbate the problem. The Council is, therefore, unlikely to consider favourably proposals for buildings which enable student numbers to be significantly increased, without a commensurate increase in the residential accommodation available for students.

9.6 With the University being on a split site there has historically been a considerable amount of commuting between the Holton and Headington sites. The University has sought to lessen this impact through the provision of a regular bus service to Oxford and a Green Travel Plan. The Council is keen to ensure that new development on the site does not result

in significant increases in commuting to other University sites and will look to the University to address this issue in the submission of planning applications and in its longer-term plans.

- 9.7 Map 4 defines the area of the site where limited infill development will be permitted, provided that it meets the criteria set out in Policy RUR1, and that it complies with the other policies relating to the Green Belt in Section 3 of the Plan. Infill development around the edge of the existing buildings should not exceed two storeys in height. Development in excess of two storeys may be acceptable within the inner area shown on Map 4, provided that it does not affect the openness of the Green Belt.



- 9.8 ~~Proposals for redevelopment will be considered against the criteria in Policy RUR2. In considering redevelopment proposals the Council will generally seek to protect the open~~

~~parts of the site. There is, however, scope for redevelopment of the two-storey housing at College Close, locating replacement proposals closer to the main buildings complex. In addition, the original 1960s high-rise tower block forms an intrusive feature in the landscape and the Green Belt. The Council will, therefore, look sympathetically at proposals which would result in its demolition. Any such proposal would have to demonstrate the benefits of removal of the Tower against further development on the open land. In accordance with PPG2, the area for the purposes of RUR2(iii) will be taken to mean the aggregate ground floor area of the existing buildings (or footprint), excluding temporary buildings, open spaces between buildings, and areas of hardstanding. Proposals for infill and redevelopment should also comply with the other policies in this plan, particularly in Sections 3 and 4.~~

## Culham Science Centre and the JET Project

9.9 In planning terms there are two distinct elements to the complex of research centres at Culham - the JET Project and Culham Science Centre. These sites and the former Overseas Development Natural Resources Institute (also known as No. 1 Site, Culham and dealt with below) were formerly a Royal Naval Air Station.

### JET Project

9.10 The Joint European Torus (JET) Project was one of the projects in the co-ordinated fusion programme of the European Atomic Energy Community and is now owned and managed by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA). The Project's long-term objective is the creation of safe, environmentally-sound, prototype, fusion reactors. Temporary planning permission was granted for the experiment in 1979. An exception to Green Belt policy was made because of the international significance of the project. It was originally intended that the project should end in the early 1990s but planning permission has now been extended to 2018. This allows for the clearance of the main experimental hall because it will be mildly radioactive. Following the cessation of the project no further development for employment purposes will be permitted on this part of the Culham site in view of its Green Belt location. For this reason this part of the site has not been designated as part of the major developed site in the Green Belt. The site boundary of the JET Project is shown on Map 5.

### Culham Science Centre

#### Policy RUR3

Limited infill at Culham Science Centre will be permitted provided that it would:

- (i) be located within the infill boundary shown on Map 5;
- (ii) have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing development;
- (iii) not exceed the height of adjacent, existing buildings;
- (iv) not lead to a major increase in the developed portion of the site; and
- (v) not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by car.

**Policy RUR4**

~~Redevelopment at Culham Science Centre will be permitted provided that it would:~~

- ~~(i) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;~~
- ~~(ii) contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt;~~
- ~~(iii) not exceed the height of existing buildings;~~
- ~~(iv) not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings and where possible less; and~~
- ~~(v) not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by private car.~~

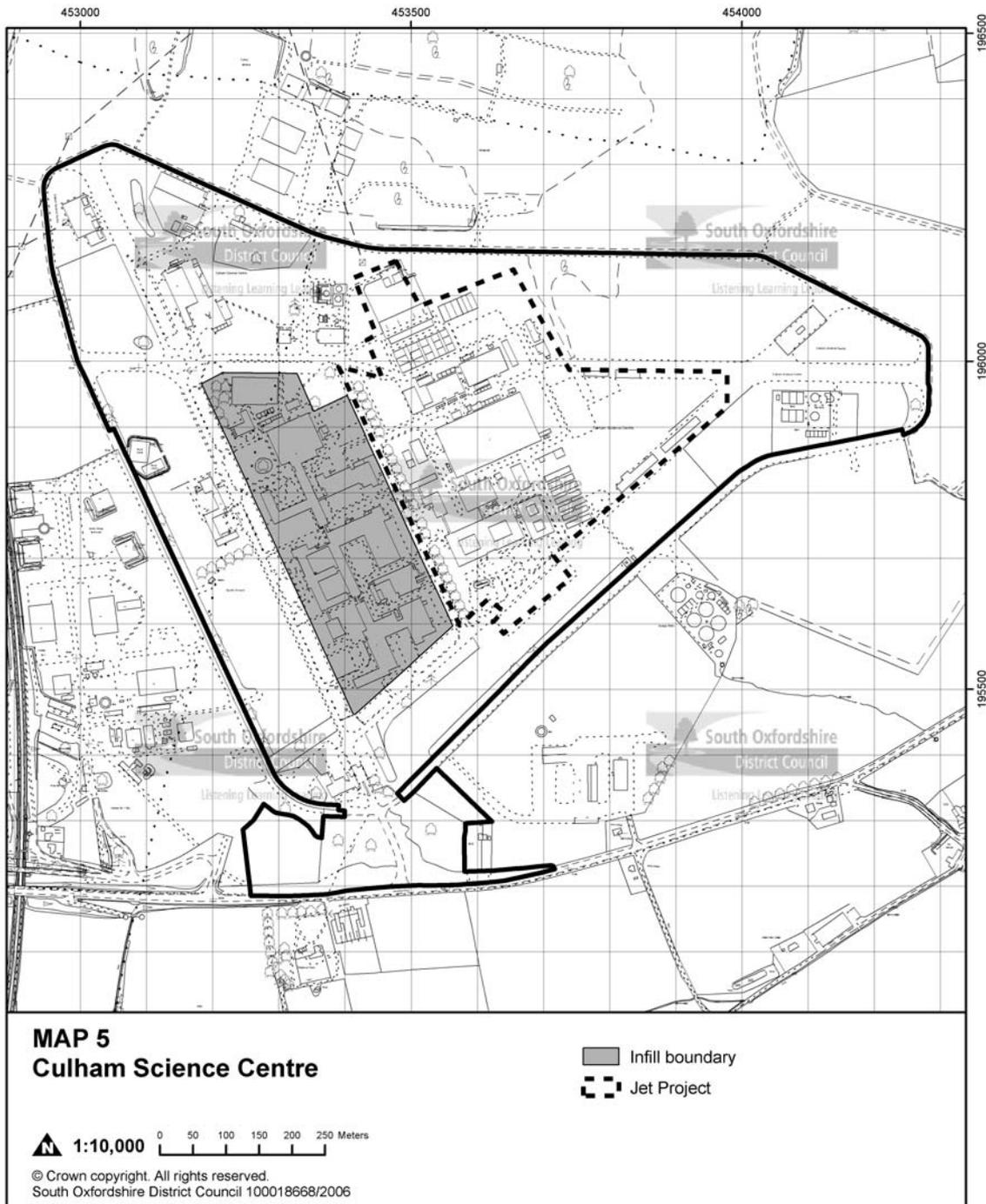
**Policy RUR5**

The change of use of existing buildings to Class B1, B2 and B8 uses at Culham Science Centre will be permitted provided that it would;

- (i) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;
- (ii) not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by private car.

- 9.11 The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority established Culham Science Centre (formerly Culham Laboratory) in the early 1960s as a government centre for research into controlled thermo-nuclear reactions and plasma physics. Although it was then proposed to include this area within the Green Belt, the County Council granted permission on the basis of the national importance of this type of research. The site at Culham was considered particularly suitable because it was close to Harwell Laboratory and Oxford University where similar types of research were being carried out. In spite of the exception to policy being made, no restrictive conditions were imposed on the planning permissions.
- 9.12 Culham Science Centre is organised into a number of businesses forming part of a single service organisation. The majority of the buildings could be used for B1 purposes by other firms or organisations without the need for planning permission and some of the buildings are now used by other organisations. Infill development will be permitted within the central area of the site defined on Map 5.
- 9.13 Proposals for infill development should not exceed the height of surrounding buildings. ~~Proposals for redevelopment of the site will be considered in relation to Policy RUR4. PPG2 Annex C indicates that such site should be considered as a whole and any proposals for partial redevelopment should be put forward in the context of comprehensive long-term plans for the site as a whole.~~ Proposals for infill development, ~~redevelopment~~ or change of use of existing buildings should not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively, the number of employees travelling to and from the site by private car. When considering proposals which would increase the numbers employed on the site the Council will base its calculations on the potential number of additional employees that could

result from a specific proposal for new buildings or changes of use of existing buildings taking into account any demolitions. The cumulative effect of proposals on the numbers employed will also be included. In demonstrating that a proposal would not significantly increase the number of employees travelling to and from the site by private car, the applicant will need to show that measures have been put in place which have achieved a proven reduction in the number of employees travelling to the site by car so that the impact of any new proposal and the likely proportion travelling by car can be properly assessed. Proposals will also be considered in the light of traffic and travel implications ~~in accordance with PPG13~~ and should comply with the other policies in this plan.



## Number 1 Site, Culham

### Policy RUR6

Limited infill at Number 1 Site, Culham will be permitted provided that it would:

- (i) be located within the infill boundary shown on Map 6;
- (ii) have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing development;
- (iii) not exceed the height of adjoining buildings within the infill boundary;
- (iv) not lead to a major increase in the developed portion of the site; and
- (v) not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by car.

### Policy RUR7

Redevelopment at Number 1 Site, Culham will be permitted provided that:

- (i) the proposals form a comprehensive scheme for the development of the site;
- (ii) existing buildings and hardstandings are removed and provision made for returning undeveloped land to a state fit for agriculture;
- (iii) it would result in material improvements to the openness of the Green Belt by grouping buildings in the central part of the site;
- (iv) it would contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts;
- (v) it would not exceed two storeys in height;
- (vi) it would not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings and where possible less; and
- (vii) it would not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by car.

### Policy RUR8

The change of use of existing buildings to Class B1, B2 and B8 uses at Number 1 Site, Culham will be permitted provided that it would:

- (i) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;
- (ii) not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by private car.

**9.14** Number 1 Site, Culham was formerly owned by the Government and during the Second World War was also part of the Royal Naval Air Station. Most of the buildings were constructed as wartime works. From 1968 the buildings were used by the Natural Resources Institute and the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food for storage, distribution, workshops, offices and research. In 1996 the site was sold to a private company and a number of individual occupants began to use the site for a variety of uses.



of existing buildings taking into account any demolitions. The increase in jobs will be related to the number of jobs in any lawful use which would be lost by any proposal for redevelopment or change of use. The cumulative effect of proposals on the numbers employed will also be included. In demonstrating that a proposal would not significantly increase the number of employees travelling to and from the site by private car, the applicant will need to show that measures have been put in place which have achieved a proven reduction in the number of employees travelling to the site by car so that the impact of any new proposal and the likely proportion travelling by car can be properly assessed.

- 9.17** Redevelopment proposals for Culham Number 1 Site should be comprehensive, comply with the criteria in Policy RUR7, and result in material improvements to the openness of the Green Belt with any new buildings grouped into the central part of the site. As part of any comprehensive scheme, existing buildings and hardstandings should be removed and provision made for returning undeveloped land to a state fit for agriculture. The extent and height of new buildings will be limited with tree planting carried out and appropriate arrangements for the future management of the land.

## Sandford Sewage Treatment Works

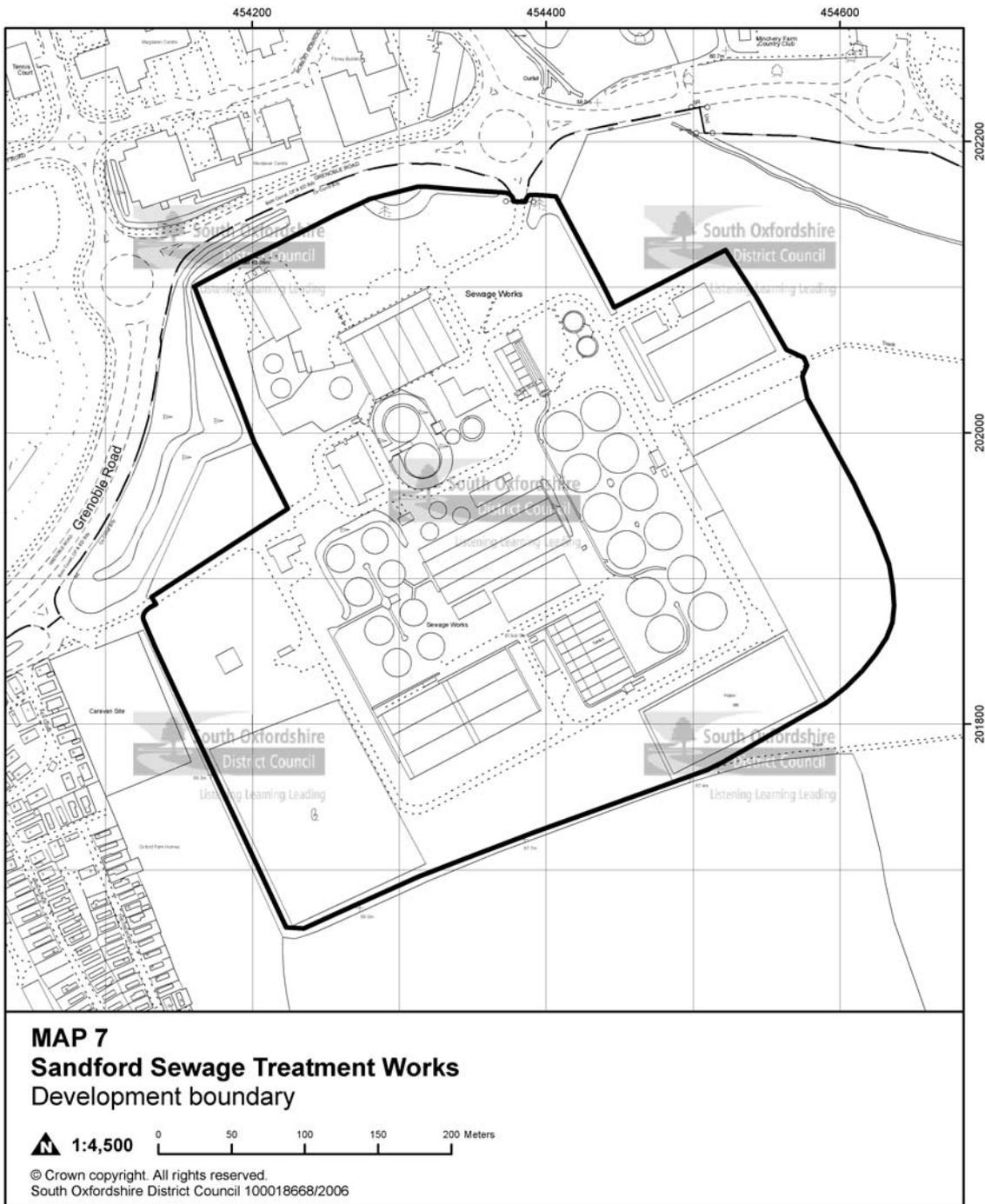
### Policy RUR9

**Redevelopment and limited infill development at Sandford Sewage Treatment Works will be permitted provided that it would:**

- (i) be within the development boundary shown on Map 7;**
- (ii) be for purposes associated with the operational use of the site;**
- (iii) not exceed two storeys in height; and**
- (iv) provide for adequate access and not result in problems on the wider highway network.**

- 9.18** Sandford Sewage Treatment Works is located within South Oxfordshire, south of the boundary with Oxford City. The site comprises a number of structures such as tanks and fixed plant as well as a number of buildings, including ancillary office space. Although there are some two-storey structures on the site, the greatest proportion of development is single storey or lower. The Works is well screened, lying in a natural hollow in the landscape and within the site there are relatively large areas which remain open. For these reasons the site has a very limited impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

- 9.19** Within the development boundary shown on Map 7 infill development connected with the operational use of the site will be permitted provided that the proposal is no greater than two storeys in height, has no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development, and complies with the other policies in this plan.



## Other site-specific proposals

### Fair Mile Hospital, Cholsey

- 9.20** Fair Mile Hospital, as shown on the Proposals Map and Map 8, was built as an asylum and opened in 1870. The principal hospital buildings are listed Grade II and the Chapel and Lodge are listed separately at Grade II. The hospital is also included on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens as a Grade II site. The site also includes a number of more modern buildings. The hospital is due to close in March 2003. A planning brief for the site was adopted by the Council as supplementary planning guidance in February 2003.

## Policy RUR10

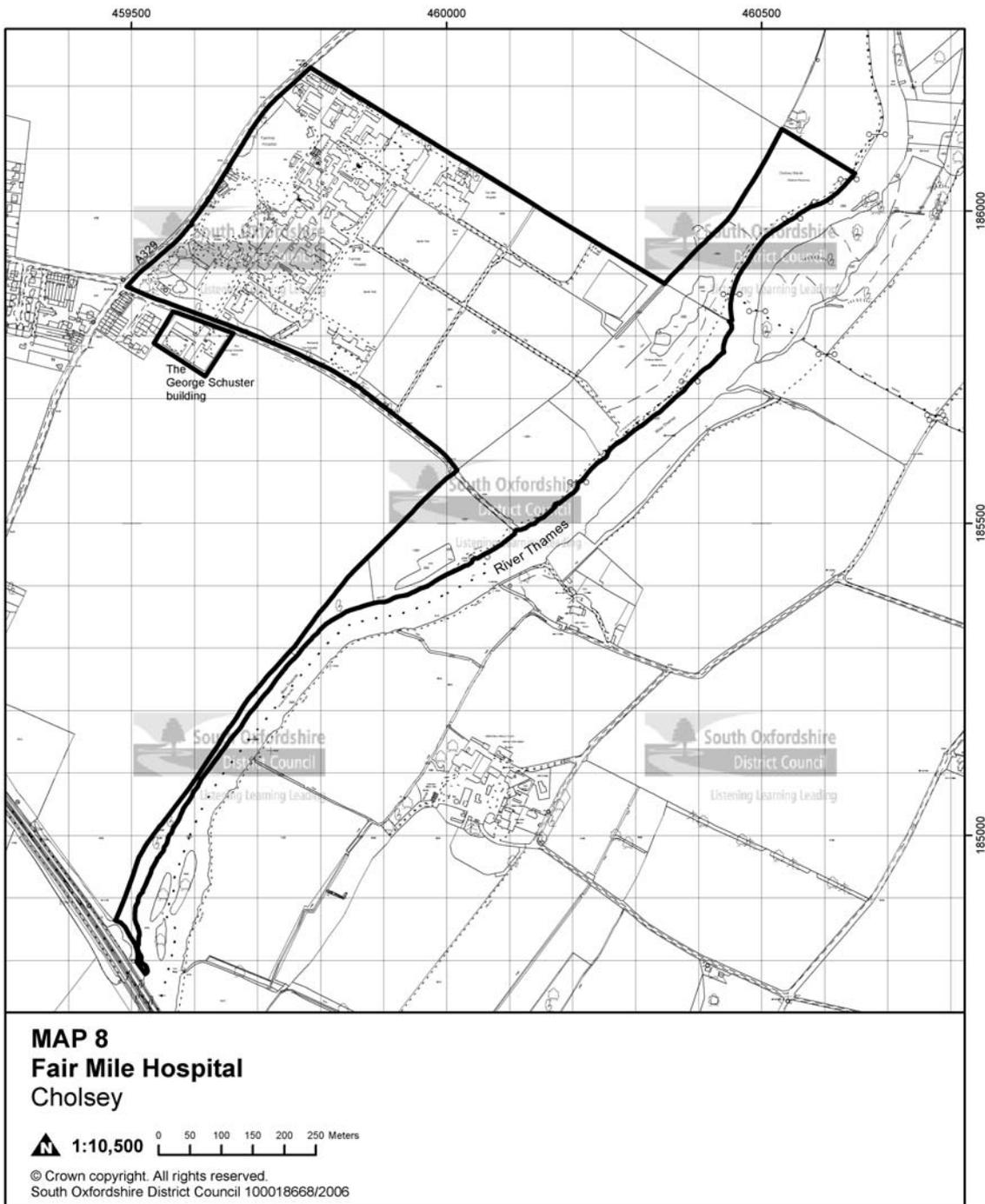
Proposals for the re-use of Fair Mile Hospital, Cholsey will be permitted provided that they:

- (i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the re-use of the buildings worthy of retention and for the future management of the site;
- (ii) secure a mix of uses for the buildings worthy of retention consistent with the need to preserve the listed buildings and the historic park and garden;
- (iii) provide for the demolition of buildings unsuitable for re-use;
- (iv) retain as open land the undeveloped parts of the site which are of historic interest and all the undeveloped land between the buildings and the River Thames and protect, in particular, the biodiversity interest of the land adjacent to the River Thames;
- (v) provide a management plan for the future maintenance of the listed buildings and the grounds;
- (vi) provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme which includes provision for the protection and enhancement of the historic park and garden and for the maintenance of important trees and other landscape features, as well as new planting in certain areas;
- (vii) protect the biodiversity interest of the site;
- (viii) provide for a package of sustainable transport measures;
- (ix) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan; and
- (x) in the case of proposals for housing, provide for 40% of the residential units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9; for a range of dwelling sizes in accordance with Policy H7; and for recreation, education, library and any other necessary on- or off-site infrastructure or services in accordance with Policy D11.

**9.21** Proposals for the re-use of the site should relate to the whole site. Only proposals for the re-use of the George Schuster building could be considered separately. As a first stage, the Council will require the submission of a Conservation Plan setting out the significance of the site and explaining how that significance will be retained in any future use. The Council adopted a planning brief for the site as supplementary planning guidance in February 2003.

**9.22** As far as future uses are concerned, the main objective is to secure the long-term future of the historic asset. This includes both the buildings worthy of retention and their setting. It is likely that any re-use will include a significant element of residential development, but other uses such as business, hotel, leisure or institutional uses may also be appropriate. There are a number of buildings on the site which are unsuitable for residential conversion and any scheme should provide for appropriate uses for these buildings which include the former farm, the Chapel and the theatre. A mixed-use scheme which reflects the diversity of the buildings on the site and reduces the need to travel will therefore be sought.

**9.23** The site also contains a number of modern, post-war, utilitarian buildings which detract from the site and which should be demolished. Any replacement floorspace will only be permitted if it is required to secure the long-term future of the listed building and meets the criteria set out in the English Heritage Policy Statement Enabling Development and the Conservation of Heritage Assets. The Council will be most unlikely to permit any increase in floorspace on the site.



- 9.24** Given the status of the site as a historic park and garden any scheme should include provision for maintaining and enhancing the grounds of the former hospital. Any new development on the open land between the existing buildings and the River Thames, or which would be detrimental to the historic park and garden, will not be permitted. A comprehensive landscaping scheme should be prepared. Particular care will be needed with regard to the provision of car parking to ensure that this does not have an adverse effect on the setting of the listed buildings and the historic park and garden. The land bordering the River Thames is a BBOWT reserve and any scheme should make provision for the continuing future management of this area.
- 9.25** The site is not considered to be in a sustainable location for development in terms of reducing the need to travel and encouraging the use of walking, cycling and public

transport. A package of sustainable transport measures will therefore be sought. In accordance with Policy D8, the development should demonstrate high standards in the conservation and efficient use of energy, water and materials.

- 9.26** A number of other policies in this plan are likely to be of relevance depending on the nature of the proposals, particularly those in Sections 3 and 4 of the plan. In the case of proposals for housing, the Council will seek the provision of 40% of the residential units as affordable housing.

## Chinnor Cement Works

### Policy RUR11

**Proposals for the redevelopment of the former Chinnor Cement Works will be permitted provided that they:**

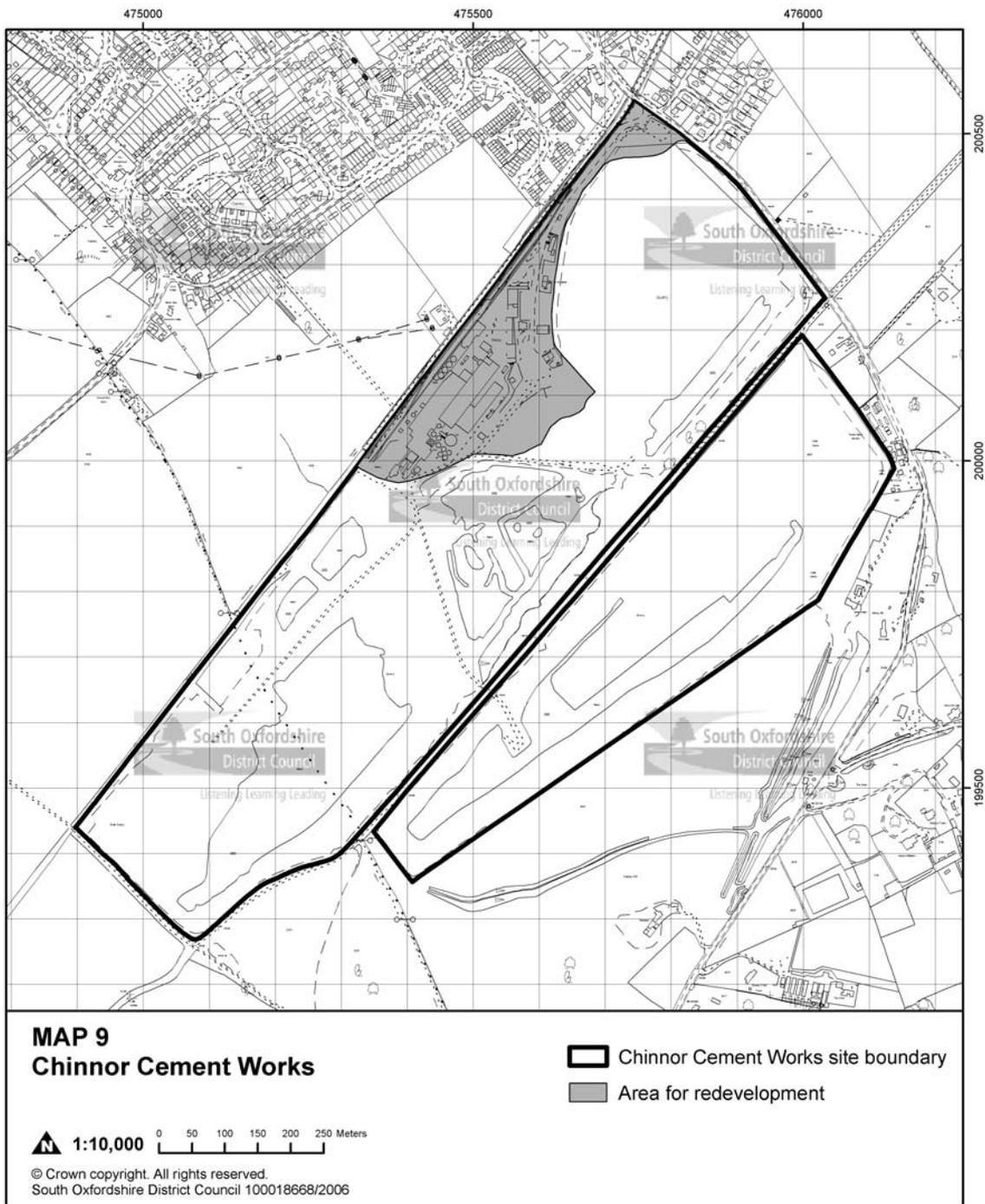
- (i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the re-use of the whole area of the former Cement Works as shown on the Proposals Map;**
- (ii) make provision for the long-term use and maintenance of the chalk pits in a way which recognises the amenity, geological and ecological value of the pits and their potential for quiet countryside recreation;**
- (iii) provide for the redevelopment of the area covered by buildings, as shown hatched on the Proposals Map, for 3.8 hectares of housing and 1 hectare of B1 and B2 employment uses and/or appropriate commercial leisure uses;**
- (iv) provide for a mix of size of employment uses with an element of small units to encourage small, local businesses;**
- (v) provide for 40% of units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9 and a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policy H7;**
- (vi) provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme for the site;**
- (vii) provide for the continued operation of the Chinnor/Princes Risborough railway line and protect the former line to the south west from development which may prejudice re-use in accordance with Policy T6; and**
- (viii) provide for adequate pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access and contribute to any necessary on- or off-site works, including sustainable transport measures, education, library and recreational and community facilities in accordance with Policy D11.**

- 9.27** Chinnor Cement Works is a site of 75 hectares to the south of Chinnor at the foot of the Chilterns where chalk extraction has taken place since before 1947. The works have now closed leaving an extensive area of former chalk pits and an area of 6.3 hectares covered by the buildings used for the manufacture of cement. The southernmost pit lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is a geological SSSI.

- 9.28** The Council considers that the site should be considered comprehensively and a planning brief for the site has been prepared and was adopted as supplementary planning guidance in September 2004. Any proposals for the site should include securing the long-term use and maintenance of the open areas of the site, having regard to safety considerations. Such proposals should maintain, and where possible enhance, the amenity, ecological and

geological value of the site. The Ridgeway long-distance path runs through the site and this route should be protected and consideration given to enhancing access to and from it.

**9.29** Any new buildings should be restricted to the area of the existing buildings defined on the Proposals Map and shown on Map 9. To reduce their impact on the landscape the buildings should not generally exceed two storeys in height. It is estimated that taking into account the access to the site and the need for a landscaped buffer adjacent to the railway line, some 4.8 hectares of the land forming the current access and occupied by buildings can be developed. Of this 3.8 hectares should be developed for housing. Of this 40% should be affordable housing and pepperpotted throughout the site in accordance with Policy H9. A range of sizes and mix of dwellings should also be provided in accordance with Policy H7.



Given the site's history of employment provision and the lack of a wide range of employment opportunities in Chinnor, it is also considered that 1 hectare of B1 (business) and B2 (general industrial) uses would be appropriate. A range of size of units should be provided, including small units to encourage new businesses and medium-sized units to allow for the growth of existing businesses in the area. As an alternative, or in addition to employment uses, appropriate commercial leisure uses, such as a hotel, may also be permitted on the existing developed part of the site. All proposals must accord with other relevant policies in the plan, particularly those in Sections 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8.

- 9.30** Any scheme should provide for the continued operation of the Chinnor/Princes Risborough railway line and not prejudice the future use of the disused part of the line to the south-west. A comprehensive landscaping scheme for the site will be required and any proposals will need to comply with the relevant policies in Section 4 of this Plan. Further work will need to be done on the traffic implications of the proposal and planning permission will not be granted until the highway issues are resolved satisfactorily. Access considerations may limit the amount of development that will be permitted on the site. Provision will need to be made for pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to the site and off-site works may be required. There is also likely to be a need for contributions towards necessary on- or off-site services and infrastructure including sustainable transport measures, education, library, and recreational and community facilities in accordance with Policy D11.

### **Mongewell Park, Crowmarsh**

- 9.31** Mongewell Park occupies a site of 30 hectares between the River Thames and the A4074 road, to the south of the Wallingford/Crowmarsh bypass. Until 1997 it was occupied by Carmel College, a Jewish foundation boarding school, which acquired Mongewell Park in 1953. At that time the site included a substantial mansion house and roadside lodge (a Grade II listed building), a wet boathouse, a mill house and a stable block. Carmel College erected a number of buildings from the 1960s. They include a synagogue (a Grade II listed building designed by Thomas Hancock), a dry boathouse and art gallery (a Grade II\* listed building designed by Sir Basil Spence), and a Grade II listed open-air amphitheatre. Many of the other buildings are flat-roofed teaching blocks or dormitories, generally two storeys in height. There are also several prefabricated and temporary buildings on the site which detract from its overall appearance. To the north of the lake are the former headmaster's house, a bungalow and the former stables block, which was significantly altered and extended and used as a dormitory. To the east are a number of former staff houses, some of which have now been sold.
- 9.32** Immediately to the north of the lake, enclosed by the estate grounds but in separate ownership, are the ruins of the Church of St John the Baptist, a Grade II listed building. To the south of the main complex of buildings are extensive playing fields. The site lies within the Chilterns AONB and has an extremely attractive parkland setting. The site is covered by an extensive 1950 Tree Preservation Order. The unclassified road inside the eastern boundary is part of a bridleway which forms the Ridgeway Path and from this a public footpath leads to the former Church of St John the Baptist.
- 9.33** The site should be considered comprehensively and a planning brief for the site should be prepared and adopted as a supplementary planning document. Any proposals for the site should include retention and enhancement of the open areas of the site. A comprehensive landscaping scheme should be provided which makes provision for the protection and

enhancement of the parkland setting, the important individual trees and groups of trees and the other important landscape features of the site, such as the lakes and ponds. Any proposals should also make provision to secure the long-term maintenance of the site. In addition, the archaeological and biodiversity interests of the site should be comprehensively assessed and any proposals should incorporate measures for the protection and enhancement of these interests. Particular attention should be given to the area of nature conservation interest to the west of the Ridgeway Path.

## **Policy RUR12**

**Proposals for the re-use of Mongewell Park, Crowmarsh will be permitted provided that they:**

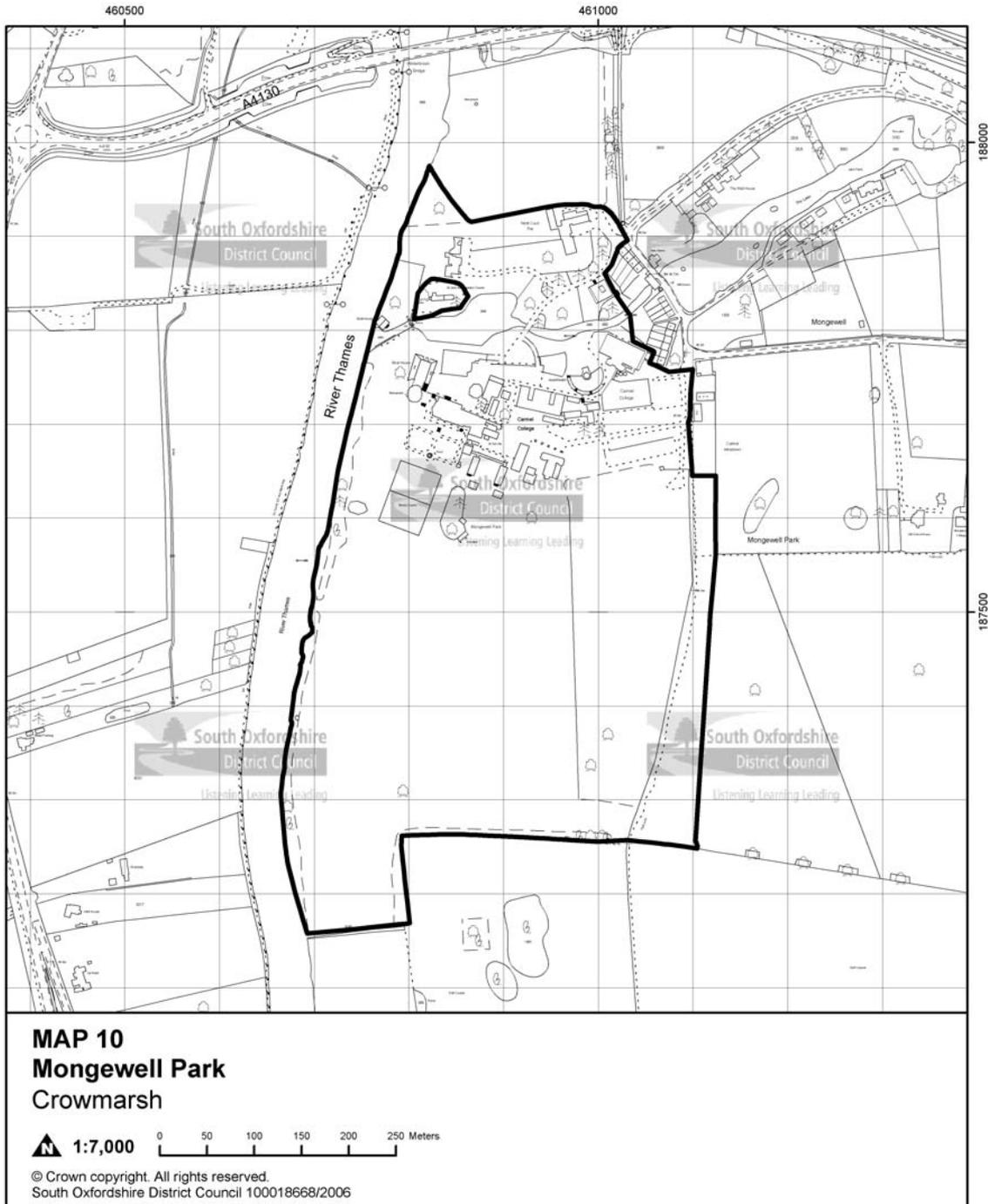
- (i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the re-use of the buildings worthy of retention and for the future management of the site;**
- (ii) secure a mix of uses on the site which reflect the nature of the buildings to be re-used and take into account the policies for particular uses in this plan;**
- (iii) provide for the demolition of buildings unsuitable for re-use;**
- (iv) protect the listed buildings on the site and their setting;**
- (v) retain as open land the undeveloped parts of the site and make provision for any additional car parking needs within the existing complex of buildings;**
- (vi) provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme which includes provision for the protection and enhancement of the AONB and parkland and the maintenance of important trees or groups of trees and other landscape features, such as lakes, ponds and the bank of the River Thames;**
- (vii) provide a management plan for the future maintenance and enhancement of the site including the listed buildings and its amenity and biodiversity value;**
- (viii) protect the archaeological interest of the site;**
- (ix) ensure that there is no loss of flood storage capacity;**
- (x) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;**
- (xi) make provision for adequate access and for sustainable transport measures; and**
- (xii) provide for any necessary on- or off-site infrastructure in accordance with Policy D11.**

**9.34** The Council considers that any proposals should seek to re-use the existing buildings on the site.

**9.35** There are a number of buildings on the site which are of a temporary nature, in that they are single-storey prefabricated buildings. These buildings detract from the appearance of the site, are not suitable for re-use and should be removed. There are also a number of listed buildings or structures on the site, and the mansion house and wet boathouse, whilst not listed, are attractive buildings. In considering any proposals for re-use, careful attention needs to be given to identifying suitable uses for these buildings which preserve their character and setting. The dormitories and teaching blocks are generally 1960s buildings. If in good repair they should be capable of re-use, or an alternative use should be identified.

If not redevelopment may be permitted if there is a significant environmental benefit and no material increase in height, footprint or floorspace.

- 9.36** The Council considers that the existing use as a residential institution remains the most suitable. However, alternatives will be considered and a mix of uses may also be appropriate. These could include a hotel and/or conference centre, B1 employment use and either residential or residential care in the mansion house and stables.



- 9.37** The site also contains a number of recreational facilities. These include the boathouses, the swimming pool and the playing fields. Policy CF1 of this Plan provides for the retention of such facilities and the desirability and practicality of retaining these facilities and the possibility of community use of them needs to be addressed. There is also the potential for

community use of some other buildings which should be investigated. Opportunities to increase public access to the river frontage would also be supported.

- 9.38** The site is accessed by a relatively narrow road from the A4074. The access and wider transportation implications of any new uses would need to be considered. The attractive parkland setting of the site should not be prejudiced by extensive areas of new car parking. Any additional car parking needs identified should be met within the existing complex of buildings and not compromise the setting of the important buildings. In order to reduce the need to travel by car and encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport, a package of sustainable transport measures will be sought.
- 9.39** Any proposals should comply with the requirements and standards of development set out in the preceding sections of this plan.

## The Wilder's site and adjoining land, Crowmarsh

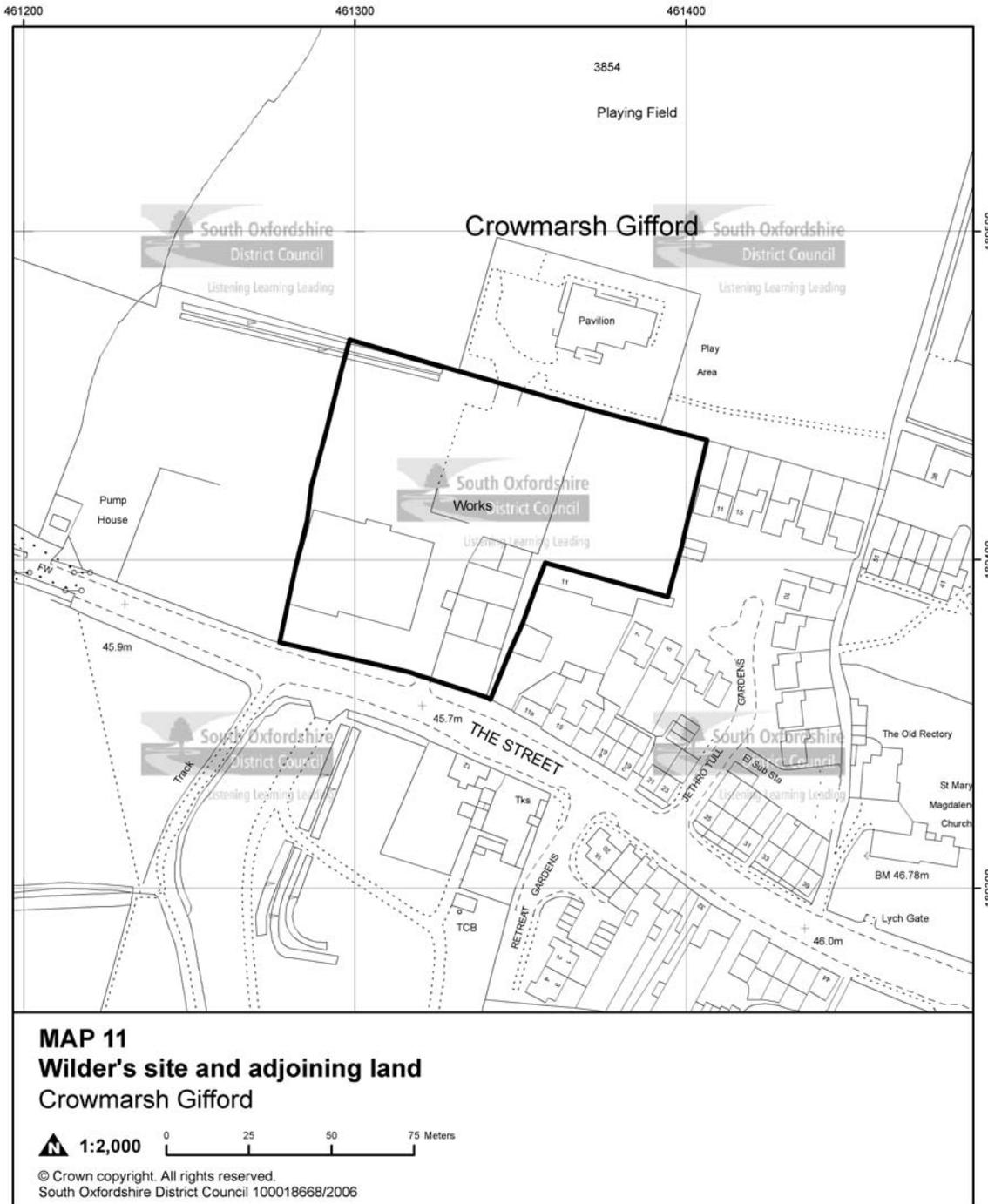
### Policy RUR13

**Proposals for the redevelopment of the Wilder's site and adjoining land, Crowmarsh, as shown on Map 11 for housing will be permitted provided that they:**

- (i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the whole site;**
- (ii) provide for the relocation of the existing agricultural machinery use;**
- (iii) provide an open landscaped area between the housing area defined on Map 11 and the Riverside Park;**
- (iv) provide a new access to the Riverside Park and maintain and improve the access to the Crowmarsh recreation ground;**
- (v) incorporate any necessary remedial works to contaminated land;**
- (vi) incorporate proposals for the alleviation of flood risk and flood compensation measures;**
- (vii) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high quality development in Section 4 of the Plan; and**
- (viii) provide for affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9, for a range of dwelling sizes in accordance with Policy H7 and for any necessary on- or off-site infrastructure in accordance with Policy D11.**

- 9.40** This 0.85 hectare site is shown on the proposals map and Map 11 overleaf. It is currently occupied by Lister Wilder agricultural machinery and a number of motor repair workshops. In order to secure improvements to the site and avoid problems of further unneighbourly uses it is essential that a comprehensive scheme for the whole site is provided. The Council also has a policy to protect employment uses, and although there would be environmental advantages in the redevelopment of this site it is important that an alternative site is found for the continuation of the agricultural machinery business. The Council will therefore seek a legal agreement requiring the securing of an alternative site for this business before any redevelopment takes place on this site.
- 9.41** The site is in a sensitive location, close to the River Thames, the Chilterns AONB and Wallingford Conservation area. The area currently used for open storage to the west of the proposed housing area also forms an important open gap between Crowmarsh and

Wallingford. It is therefore important that this area is kept open and a comprehensive landscaping and management scheme is submitted with any planning application. Provision should be made for an improved access to Riverside Park through this area. Any scheme should also provide for an improved, safer access to the village recreation ground to the north of the site.



- 9.42** Remedial work will be needed where ground contamination has been found. Flood alleviation and compensation works will also be required as will archaeological evaluation and, if appropriate, mitigation measures.
- 9.43** In relation to the housing development, a high standard of design will be sought. Affordable housing should be provided in accordance with Policy H9 and a mix of housing in

accordance with Policy H7. Any necessary on- or off-site infrastructure must also be provided in accordance with Policy D11.

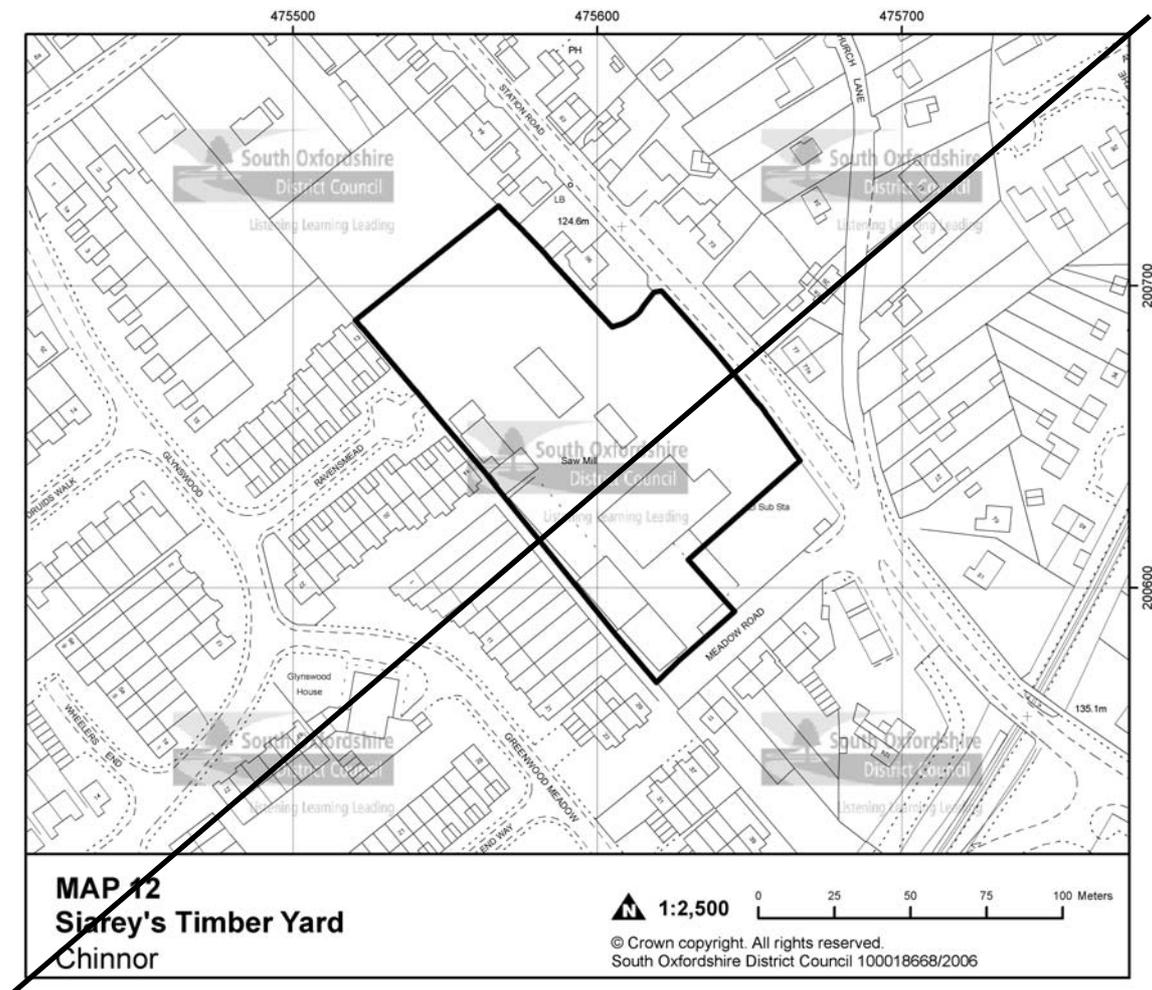
- 9.44 The Council would support the retention of the service trade uses on the land to the east of the allocation and would support any redevelopment proposals which retained the uses and enhanced the appearance of the area and, in particular, the access arrangements and frontage to The Street.

## Siarey's Timber Yard, Chinnor

### Policy RUR14

**Land at Siarey's Timber Yard is considered suitable for B1 uses.**

- 9.45 The whole of Siarey's Yard was allocated in the Local Plan 1997 for employment use. Outline planning permission was subsequently granted for housing on the land adjacent to Oakley Road in 1999 and a further outline application has been submitted for housing on the northern and southern parts of Siarey's Yard. Given that the principle of housing development has been accepted on part of the site, it is not considered appropriate to allocate that part of the site for employment use. The remaining area of land on the site, identified overleaf, is allocated for B1 use and covers 1.05 hectares. Planning permission was granted for light industry and B1 office use in 1999. Any proposal will need to comply with the relevant policies in Sections 4, 6 and 8 of this plan.

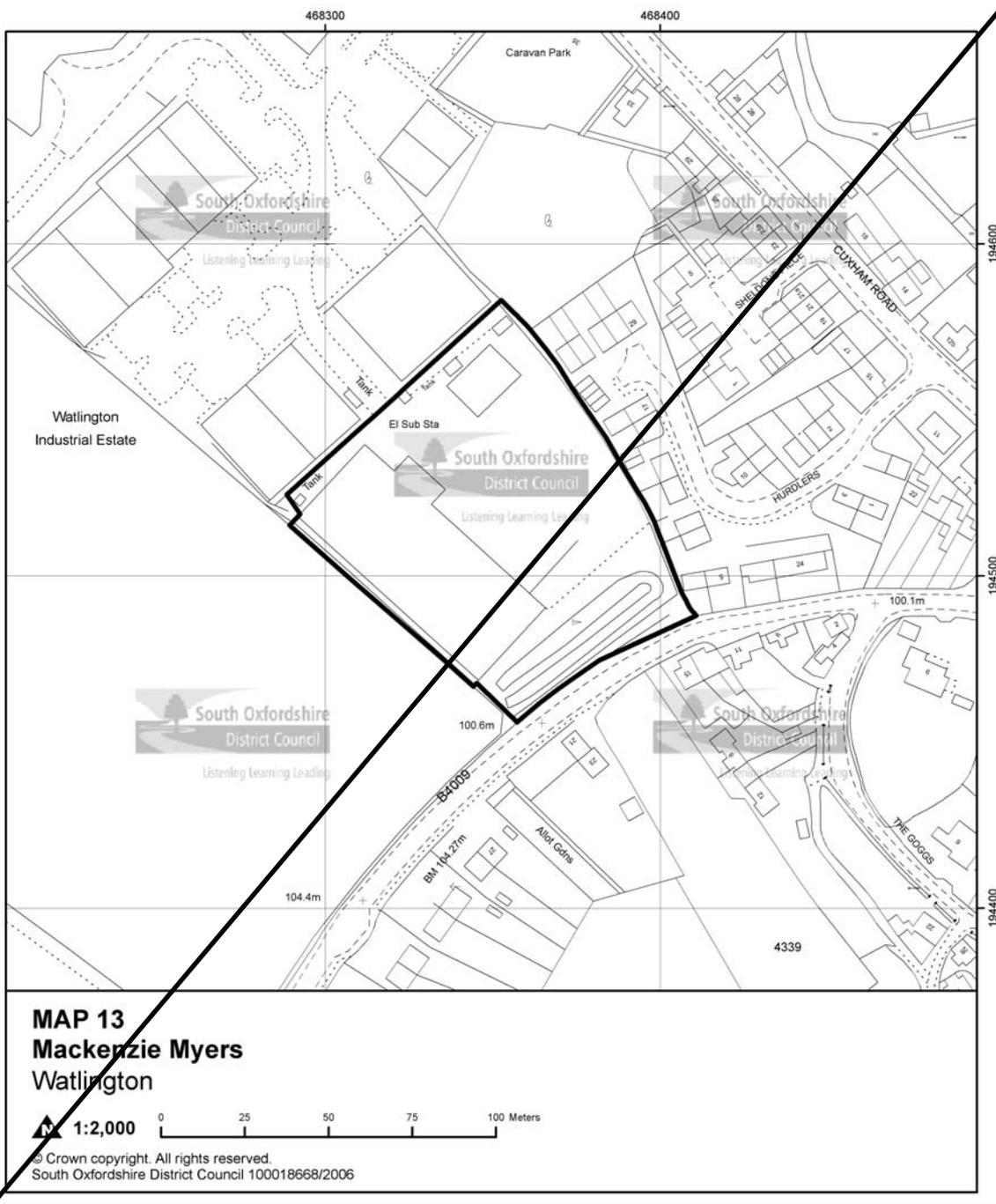


## Mackenzie Myers, Watlington

### Policy RUR15

**Land at the Mackenzie Myers site is considered suitable for B1 use.**

- 9.46 This site of 0.82 hectares is located on the edge of Watlington and is currently accessed via the Watlington Industrial Estate. It has a B8 use which is generating heavy goods vehicle movements through the surrounding villages. It is considered that a B1 use or a mixed use of housing and B1 would be more appropriate on this site, given that those uses would be unlikely to generate the type of traffic that is causing the current problems. A housing use will only be permitted, however, if appropriate arrangements for access to the site can be agreed, which do not involve taking access through the Watlington Industrial Estate. Any proposal will need to comply with the relevant policies in Sections 4, 6 and 8 of this plan.



## Shotover Country Park

### **Policy RUR16**

**The Council will seek to ensure that the special character and qualities of Shotover are maintained and protected and that the area continues to be used for informal recreation. The provision of formal recreation facilities which would adversely affect the character of the area will not be permitted.**

- 9.47** Although Shotover lies mainly within South Oxfordshire, it is largely owned by Oxford City Council. The area, located to the east of the City, is extensively used by local people for walking and picnicking, and other activities such as horse riding, running and orienteering take place. Most of the park is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and its biodiversity forms part of its special character. The Council holds the very firm view that the primary objective for Shotover should be the maintenance and protection of its special character. It should continue to provide an area which can be enjoyed by local residents for informal recreation.

## Section 10 Didcot

### Introduction

- 10.1** This section contains details of development proposals for certain large sites at Didcot (over 0.5 hectare in area) where the Council wishes to see development take place over the period to 2011. In 2001 Didcot was the largest town in South Oxfordshire with a population of about 24,500. The Structure Plan proposes that over 62% of the district's new homes be located at Didcot (see Section 5). When this major additional housing development proposed at Didcot is completed, the town's population will have grown to about 32,000.
- 10.2** There are presently about 17,000 jobs in the Didcot area. Having regard to the potential for employment growth in business and industry in that part of the Didcot area that lies within the administrative area of the Vale of White Horse District Council, there will be no need for new land allocations for business and industry in that part of the Didcot area that lies within South Oxfordshire (see Section 6). In Didcot, however, there will be a significant increase in employment in the service sector associated with shopping and other service development, particularly in the town centre, that is intended to meet the social and community needs of the growing population.

### Major development areas at Didcot

#### Policy DID1

**The major development areas (MDAs) at Didcot will be implemented in accordance with comprehensive Planning and Development Briefs for the whole of each MDA and Design Statements for parts of each MDA. Adherence to the Planning and Development Brief and Design Statements when the MDAs are implemented will be secured by means of planning conditions or planning obligations.**

- 10.3** There will be two major development areas (MDAs) at Didcot comprising the new area of Didcot West on the western edge of the town and Ladygrove East comprising the final part of the Ladygrove development area on the north-eastern edge of the town. The implementation of a comprehensive scheme of development will necessitate landowners and/or developers with a legal interest in land comprised in the MDAs to work together to prepare a Planning and Development Brief for the whole of each area and Design Statements for constituent parts of each area.
- 10.4** The Council considers that it is preferable if the landowners and/or developers in each MDA work together in a single body - "the Master Developer" or "Promoter" - that would assume responsibility for all stages of the planning, design and implementation of the MDAs. This is the approach advocated by the Urban Villages Forum as best able to achieve sustainable, high quality development in MDAs. The approach is consistent with Government policy for delivering sustainable development in PPS1. If the MDAs were developed piecemeal by a number of landowners/developers sharing no common purpose then it would be difficult for the Council to ensure the delivery of quality, of sustainability and of services when needed by the new resident population. The Council will seek a planning obligation that would establish a single body to act as Master Developer for each MDA.
- 10.5** The Council will impose planning conditions and will secure planning obligations to ensure that each MDA is implemented in accordance with a Planning and Development Brief for

the whole MDA and Design Statements for parts of the MDA. The Council considers that adherence to the principles, undertakings and details contained in the briefs and statements will be essential if its intention to deliver sustainable, high-quality, mixed-use development in the MDAs is to be achieved.

**10.6** The Planning and Development Brief will comprise a master plan and written statement with such drawings and illustrative material as necessary to indicate the following information:

- (i) the identity of the Master Developer with details of the land in the Developer's control and with a programme for the assembly of any further land needed to implement the MDA. The Council will expect the Master Developer to acquire land by private treaty but will be prepared to exercise its powers of compulsory land acquisition to overcome land ownership constraints where the Council considers it expedient to do so and where all costs involved in such action would be reimbursed to the Council.
- (ii) a Site Appraisal indicating how the constraints of existing topography, watercourses, boundaries, buildings and transport infrastructure, both on and off the MDA site, have influenced the urban form shown on the plans described in (iii) and (iv) below.
- (iii) a Development Strategy showing how the MDA would comprise one or more "walkable neighbourhoods" with homes in each neighbourhood within walking distance of local services located in centres on public transport routes. The Development Strategy will show the disposition of all built development in the form of perimeter street blocks with accompanying information on each block relating to its area, its net housing density, the estimated number and size of dwellings, the proportion of dwellings in the affordable category, and the location and size of buildings in non-residential use.
- (iv) a Public Realm Strategy showing the disposition of public buildings and of public urban space and public greenspace networks within and around the built development. With regard to public realm buildings to be provided in the MDA, the Strategy will give details and show the location of all schools, community centres, primary medical health care facilities, local convenience shops, emergency services facilities and indoor sports facilities. With regard to the public urban space and public greenspace networks, the Strategy will contain information on each space relating to its dimensions and design and to the public realm functions and facilities to be provided within it. These functions and facilities will include:
  - outdoor community sports
  - equipped children's play areas
  - allotment gardens
  - informal recreation (to be provided by civic spaces with paved surfaces, public gardens, open land with meadows and a varied topography including woodland, wetland, ponds and watercourses)
  - the assimilation and screening of buildings in the landscape (to be achieved by tree and woodland planting)
  - energy conservation including the shelter of buildings, mitigation of atmospheric pollution and safeguarding residential amenity from sources of noise (to be achieved by the provision of open land with meadows and woodland)
  - the enhancement of biodiversity (to be achieved by the provision of open land with meadows, public gardens, woodland, wetland, ponds and watercourses)
  - the creation of local distinctiveness (to be provided by works of public art).

- (v) a Transport Strategy showing the layout and design of all proposed footways, footpaths, cycletracks and roads in the MDA based on a permeable, generally rectilinear, grid pattern of movement corridors consistent with the objectives of the Didcot Area Integrated Transport Study. The Strategy will indicate proposals for the extension of this transport infrastructure where it is necessary to provide good communications between the MDA and key destinations in Didcot, key destinations in local employment centres, the A34 trunk road and the countryside. The Transport Strategy will also contain proposals for the enhancement of existing and provision of new public transport routes and services affording residents of the MDA good public transport access from Didcot and within Didcot. The Master Developer will undertake a Transport Assessment of the MDA and this assessment will inform the contents of the Transport Strategy.
- (vi) the definition of a number of Character Areas with each area comprising groups of adjacent perimeter street blocks. Information will be given on how building design, building materials, plot dimensions and boundary details and the design of the public realm would be varied between the Character Areas to achieve distinctiveness and thereby a sense of place and a legible townscape within each neighbourhood. The Planning and Development Brief will contain details of the layout of all buildings and public spaces in the local service centres, including streetscape illustrations of all building frontages in those centres.
- (vii) an Energy Conservation and Resource Management Strategy indicating the Planning and Development Brief's proposals for meeting targets for the conservation of energy and use of water resources in the MDA and for minimising the use and transport of natural resources, for maximising the use of recycled materials and for the management of waste. In relation to energy conservation the strategy will have regard to the targets recommended in the technical report entitled Energy Conservation Measures for Didcot Development - Targets produced for the Council by AEA Technology Environment in July 2001.
- (viii) a Surface Water Drainage Strategy indicating the Planning and Development Brief's proposals for a sustainable urban drainage system, including works and measures to prevent flooding of adjacent land and pollution of the water environment.
- (ix) a Strategy for the Protection of the Historic Environment indicating the Planning and Development Brief's proposals for the protection of buildings and places of architectural or historic interest and proposals for the preservation of archaeological remains that may exist on or under the land.
- (x) an Ecological Strategy indicating the Planning and Development Brief's proposals for the protection of sites of ecological importance on the land and proposals for the development of new sites of ecological importance to enhance biodiversity and to compensate for habitats lost through development. Particular attention will be given to the provision of continuous corridors for the movement of wildlife around and through the MDAs.
- (xi) the Management of Site Development. This will include a plan and accompanying timetable showing the Master Developer's intentions for the phased implementation of the MDA. In exceptional circumstances the Council may consider the desirability of compulsory purchase of land identified for housing, to bring it forward for development. However, this will only be considered where land remains undeveloped for a prolonged period because of ownership constraints, and where the Council's efforts to persuade owners to bring the land forward for development have failed.

(xii) the Management of the Delivery of Infrastructure and Services. The Council must be assured that all elements of the public buildings, of the public urban space and public greenspace networks and of the facilities and services described in iii) to x) above will be made available for use by residents of the MDA when needed by them. The Planning and Development Brief will indicate when in the development timetable each element of these facilities and services will be delivered. It will also identify the body (including the Master Developer if appropriate) that has agreed to be responsible for the provision, including the construction and completion, of each element. In addition, the Planning and Development Brief will identify the body that has agreed to be responsible for the long-term management, including the maintenance, of each of these public realm facilities.

**10.7** It is essential that the Master Developer works with the Council when the Planning and Development Brief is being prepared and takes into account the Council's views during that preparation. The draft Planning and Development Brief will be the subject of public consultation and the views of consultees will be taken into account before the brief is finalised and adopted as a supplementary planning document. The Planning and Development Brief should be adopted prior to the submission of any planning applications. In determining planning applications the Council will have regard to the requirements of the brief and may refuse permission for any proposals that do not comply with it.

**10.8** The Council will require an application for approval of reserved matters pursuant to an outline planning permission for development in a MDA, or an application for full planning permission for the same development, to be accompanied by a Design Statement. For further information on design statements see paragraph 4.5 in Section 4 of this plan. A design statement relating to development in a MDA will include a written statement with such plans, drawings and other illustrative material as is necessary to convey the following information:

- (i) a Site Analysis with an explanation of how the layout of buildings and public spaces takes account of the opportunities, constraints and characteristics of the site.
- (ii) the Design Framework with an explanation of how the layout of buildings, public spaces and transport corridors will conform with the Master Plan framework contained in the adopted Planning and Development Brief.
- (iii) the Design Concept Plan for the site with an explanation of how building frontages will be located so as to enclose strongly-defined streets and public spaces and with details of the locations of important vistas, gateways, focal points and key buildings.
- (iv) the Character Area Framework for the site with an explanation of how the design of buildings, plot dimensions, boundary treatments, public spaces, and the choice of materials used will conform with the Character Area for each part of the MDA as defined in the adopted Planning and Development Brief.

The Council may refuse planning permission in cases where the plans and drawings submitted with a planning application indicate to the Council that the development would not achieve the quality to which the Design Statement aspires.

**10.9** The Council will seek a planning obligation that would require the Master Developer to prepare and obtain the Council's approval for a Design Statement relating to any part of the MDA that is proposed to be transferred by the Master Developer to another body. Council approval of the Design Statement will be obtained before that transfer is completed. The

Council justifies this obligation on the grounds that it is essential that intending developers in the MDA have a clear idea of the high quality development sought by the Council before contract terms are agreed.

## Didcot West Major Development Area

**10.10** The Oxfordshire Structure Plan proposes major housing development at Didcot adjoining the western edge of the town and extending north and south of the Wantage Road (B4493). The administrative boundary between South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Councils dissects this major development area and in preparing their local plans the two councils have worked together to determine the optimum disposition of development. The Proposals Map shows the land allocation for that part of the MDA that lies within South Oxfordshire. Map 14 below shows the whole extent of the MDA including that part which will be a land allocation in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011. It includes a 12 hectare field in the north-western corner which is to be considered as a reserve allocation, solely for the purpose of accommodating playing fields, if such a facility cannot be located elsewhere within the area. The two District Councils have ensured that the planning policy framework for the Didcot West MDA is consistent in both local plans.

### Policy DID2

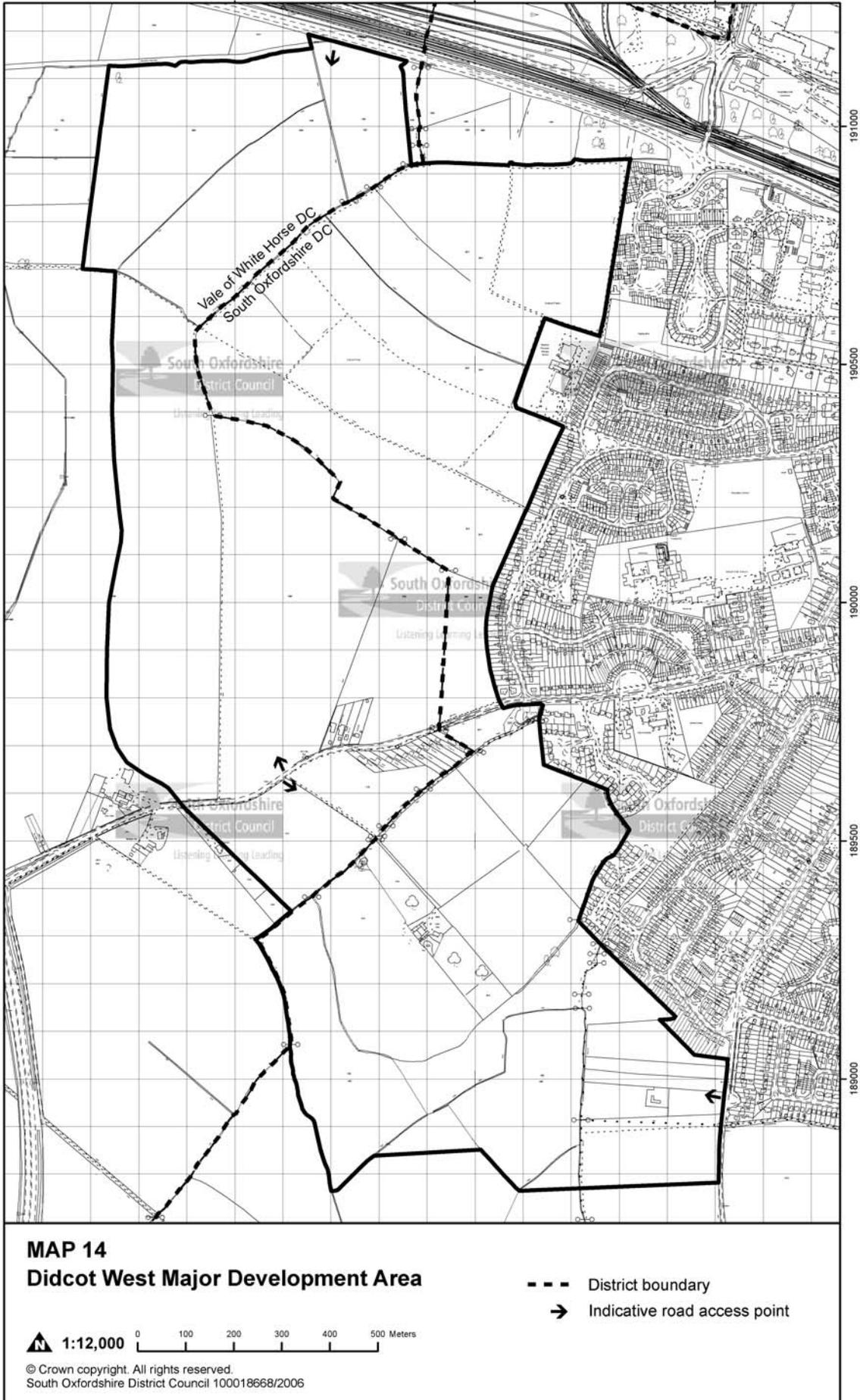
**Proposals for development at Didcot West (as defined on the Proposals Map) will only be permitted where they are in accordance with the requirements of Policy DID1 and where all necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure and service requirements are met in accordance with Policy D11. It is proposed that the development of the site will include:**

- (i) provision of about 3,200 dwellings of which about 2,700 dwellings will be located in South Oxfordshire District. The land developed in the MDA for housing (about 80 hectares) will be at 40 dwellings per hectare average net density;**
- (ii) a mix of dwelling types and sizes of the general market housing with about 50% small (1 or 2 bedroom units);**
- (iii) provision for 40% of dwelling units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9 with the units distributed evenly throughout the area used for housing;**
- (iv) provision of a District Centre including:**
  - a) a secondary school;**
  - b) a primary school;**
  - c) a community centre;**
  - d) an indoor community sports hall;**
  - e) playing fields for outdoor community sports and an equipped children's play area;**
  - f) premises for a primary health care practice;**
  - g) local shops and retail services, limited to uses within Part A of the Use Classes Order, including a small supermarket (about 500 square metres) and further small unit premises (about 1,200 square metres in total);**

- h) narrow-fronted, mixed-use buildings generally more than two storeys in height. The street-level uses in these buildings will include the uses in (g) above. A proportion of these mixed-use buildings will be live-work units with internal access between the workspace and a dwelling at upper floor level; and
  - i) buildings in residential use, within Part C of the Use Classes Order, generally narrow-fronted and more than two storeys in height.
- (v) two neighbourhood centres with each centre including:
- a) a primary school;
  - b) a community centre;
  - c) local shops and retail services, limited to uses within Part A of the Use Classes Order, in small unit premises (about 500 square metres in total);
  - d) narrow-fronted mixed-use buildings as described in (iv)(h) above with the exception of small supermarkets; and
  - e) buildings in residential use as described in (iv)(i) above;
- (vi) provision of a network of public urban spaces (not less than 8 hectares) including a primary civic space in the District Centre, secondary civic spaces in the neighbourhood centres and other civic spaces within the built-up area located at key junctions in the movement network;
- (vii) provision of a network of public greenspaces (not less than 62 hectares) including community outdoor playing space, children's play areas, public gardens, open grassland, woodland, hedgerows, wetland, ponds and watercourses. A significant proportion of the public greenspace network will be located around the western and southern edges of the built-up area within the major development area;
- (viii) provision of children's play areas within the land developed for housing in accordance with Policy R2;
- (ix) provision of off-site infrastructure and services in accordance with Policy D11 including, where appropriate, financial contributions towards improving:
- a) library, arts, cultural and entertainment facilities in Didcot town centre;
  - b) community sports facilities at Didcot Wave Leisure Centre;
  - c) facilities at Didcot Civic Hall; and
  - d) waste management facilities in or near Didcot.
- (x) provision of off-site surface water drainage works; and
- (xi) provision of transport infrastructure in accordance with Policy T1, aimed at encouraging sustainable modes of travel and reducing the need to travel by car including:
- a) a movement network of footways, footpaths, cycletracks and roads in the MDA, connecting to existing and proposed networks at the site boundaries. The indicative location of road access connections is shown on the Proposals Map;

- b) financial contributions to enable the provision of off-site footway, footpath and cycletrack links, road improvements and traffic management measures in Didcot, in the countryside and villages around Didcot and on the A34 trunk road made necessary by and as a consequence of development in the MDA in accordance with proposals contained in the Planning and Development Brief;**
- c) financial contributions to enable the provision of bus services and associated infrastructure to afford residents of the MDA good public transport access from Didcot and within Didcot in accordance with proposals contained in the Planning and Development Brief.**

- 10.11** The criteria in Policy DID2 set out the planning requirements for development of the MDA site. The District Councils and Oxfordshire County Council will secure these requirements by means of planning conditions wherever possible, but certain requirements will need to be secured in agreements made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The average net housing density specified in criterion (i) is justified having regard to the need to make efficient use of land and to the large proportion of small dwellings required in the MDA by criterion (ii). It is also justified by the intended delivery in the MDA of very good accessibility by all modes of transport to a wide range of services, facilities and employment opportunities.
- 10.12** The proportion of small dwellings in the general market housing sector required by criterion (ii) is justified by the local need for this type and category of dwellings as shown in Section 5 of the plan. The Council will seek about 10% 1 bedroom units, 40% 2 bedroom units, 30% 3 bedroom units and 20% 4 bedroom units and larger. As far as the mix of affordable housing is concerned the Council will seek to ensure that the type and size of housing provided meets the need. The Council will also consider a mix of tenures depending on the identified needs and will clarify the detailed requirements for different categories of affordable housing in the MDA. This mix may change as the development progresses and the position alters. The Council will require the affordable housing required by criterion (iii) to be distributed evenly throughout the MDA in order to encourage the development of a mixed and balanced community as advocated in PPG3.
- 10.13** There will be three new neighbourhoods in the MDA with the district centre being the focal point of the central neighbourhood as well as being the focal point of the development as a whole. Neighbourhood centres will be the focal points of the two other neighbourhoods. These centres will enjoy good accessibility by all modes of transport and as such they are the appropriate locations for local services that generate many trips from the new homes. The centres and the main movement corridors linking them are also the preferred locations for higher-density development containing large numbers of small dwellings in accordance with criterion (ii).
- 10.14** The requirement for the provision of new schools is based on information received from the County Council, acting as local education authority and from the Learning and Skills Council. The school buildings should be focal points and key buildings in the townscape and should not be located away from street frontages in open campus settings where they would not fulfil these urban design functions.
- 10.15** The justification for the provision of three community centres in the Didcot West MDA is based on the identified accommodation requirements of those voluntary and local authority bodies that intend to provide valued services to the Didcot West community. In planning



the three community centres the Master Developer should have regard to the outline planning briefs that these bodies have supplied to the Council setting out their accommodation needs. The Council, however, will seek to ensure by means of planning obligations that accommodation to be provided in all three community centres is not used exclusively by particular bodies. As with schools, the Council will require the community centre buildings to act as focal points and key buildings in the townscape of the district and neighbourhood centres.

- 10.16** In planning the provision of indoor and outdoor community sports facilities the Council will require the Planning and Development Brief to have regard to the background paper entitled: Didcot West Development Sport and Recreation Facilities Planning Brief published by the Council. This Planning Brief recommends that all the community sports facilities in the MDA be located at and adjacent to the new secondary school. This location will enable the provision of a dual use sports facility maximising the benefits that can be obtained by both the school and the community in terms of the quality of the facilities to be provided and in terms of engaging young people in sports activity.
- 10.17** In accordance with PPS6, the Council is proposing the establishment of convenience shops and other service uses in the district centre and two neighbourhood centres to meet people's day-to-day needs for convenience goods and services. The limitations on the number of such shop and service uses in the MDA and on the amount of floorspace to be provided are justified having regard to the position of the district and neighbourhood centres in the local hierarchy of centres. These local centres should be small in scale and the trade generated in them should not be such as to undermine the vitality and viability of Didcot town centre.
- 10.18** In order to enhance their vitality, the Council will require the provision in the district centre and two neighbourhood centres of a number of two- and three-storey buildings with a mix of land uses in individual buildings. As a guideline, the Council suggests the provision of about ten such individual buildings in mixed-use in the district centre and three such buildings in each of the two neighbourhood centres. The reason for the limitation on the number and size of commercial uses is explained in paragraph 10.17 above. A proportion of these mixed-use buildings will be "live-work units" where the commercial use at street level would be linked internally to a dwelling at upper floor level. As a guideline, the Council suggests that 50% of these mixed-use buildings should comprise "live-work units." Narrow-fronted buildings (5 to 8 metres wide) are required to create active frontages and a rich variety of buildings in the three centres.
- 10.19** The requirement for the provision of primary health care facilities located in the district centre is based on advice received from the local Primary Care Trust relating to the health care requirements of the MDA population.
- 10.20** The amount of land to be used for public urban space and public greenspace networks is based on the standards contained in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and on the particular circumstances of the Didcot West site. The public urban spaces will comprise focal points in the built-up area. Civic squares will have predominantly paved surfaces providing an open setting for buildings enclosing them. The focal points will also include public gardens with predominantly planted surfaces. The land uses to be accommodated in public greenspace are set out in criterion (vii) and the public realm functions are described in paragraph 10.6(iv) above. This requirement is justified particularly having regard to the need to provide generous space for informal recreation in a MDA containing

a high proportion of small dwellings, some of which will lack private gardens. There is also a need to provide wide belts and blocks of woodland around the periphery of Didcot West to screen and soften the landscape impact of buildings on an elevated and prominent site. These open areas will also form a buffer between the new development and nearby villages and the built development in the MDA will not extend farther south than the line of the existing southern built-up limit of Didcot. The boundary of the MDA shown on Map 14 includes a field in the north-western corner which may be necessary to accommodate playing fields if suitable land cannot be found elsewhere on the site. If it is not required for this purpose the land should not be developed and should remain in agricultural use.

**10.21** It is important that as MDA residents move into their new homes they are afforded the opportunity for ease of movement by all modes of transport from Didcot and within Didcot. Criterion (xi) will secure this objective by providing appropriate on and off-site transport infrastructure. The highway authority and the Highways Agency will advise on the transport measures required. These measures will be identified through the development of an integrated transport strategy for the Didcot area, having regard to the following objectives:

- to reduce reliance on the use of the private car by improving choices available to meet transport needs within Didcot and between Didcot and surrounding settlements
- to increase accessibility to facilities for those without cars and/or with mobility impairment
- to promote the use of public transport (bus and rail)
- to identify and provide a safe, continuous and high quality network of pedestrian and cycle routes
- to promote road safety and reduce the number and severity of road casualties
- to promote efficient highway management including the identification of transport infrastructure as appropriate, and parking demand and supply
- to improve provision for interchange between all modes of transport
- to relieve traffic congestion where it is causing significant amenity or environmental problems.

## Ladygrove East Major Development Area

### Policy DID3

**Proposals for development at Ladygrove East, Didcot (as defined on the Proposals Map) will only be permitted where they are in accordance with the requirements of Policy DID1 and where all necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure and service requirements are met in accordance with Policy D11. It is proposed that the development of the site will include:**

- (i) **provision of about 670 dwellings with the land developed for housing (16.8 hectares) at 40 dwellings per hectare average net density;**
- (ii) **a mix of dwelling types and sizes of the general market housing with about 50% small (1 or 2 bedroom units);**
- (iii) **provision for 40% of dwelling units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;**

- (iv) provision of a neighbourhood centre with a primary school and a community centre;**
- (v) provision of a network of public urban spaces and public greenspaces (not less than 8 hectares) with the largest greenspace comprising a local park (not less than 6 hectares) containing an equipped children's play area, open grassland, woodland, wetland, ponds and watercourses located in the south-western part of the allocated area. Other greenspaces will comprise green corridors in the movement network and buffer zones, containing open grassland, earth mounding and woodland. The buffer zones will be of sufficient width to protect homes from noise generated on major distributor roads and to protect road users from the Hadden Hill golf course. A buffer zone not less than 30 metres in width will separate any dwelling from the centre line of the HV overhead electricity transmission lines that cross the site;**
- (vi) provision of children's play areas within the land developed for housing in accordance with Policy R2;**
- (vii) provision of off-site infrastructure and services in accordance with Policy D11 including inter alia, financial contributions towards improving:**
  - a) primary and secondary education facilities;**
  - b) library, arts, cultural and entertainment facilities in Didcot town centre;**
  - c) community sports facilities at Didcot Wave Leisure Centre;**
  - d) facilities at Didcot Civic Hall; and**
  - e) waste management facilities in or near Didcot.**
- (viii) provision of transport infrastructure including:**
  - a) completion of the Didcot northern perimeter road between Abingdon Road and Wallingford Road before more than 200 dwellings are occupied in the MDA;**
  - b) completion of a footway and cycletrack between Upperway Furlong and the primary school in the MDA via Abingdon Road prior to the opening of the school;**
  - c) completion of a movement network of footways, footpaths, cycletracks and roads in the MDA, with connections to existing networks at the site boundaries. The indicative location of road access connections is shown on the Proposals Map;**
  - d) financial contributions to enable the provision of off-site footway, footpath and cycletrack links, road improvements and traffic management measures in Didcot and in the countryside and villages around Didcot made necessary by and as a consequence of development in the MDA, in accordance with proposals contained in the Planning and Development Brief; and**
  - e) financial contributions to enable the provision of bus services and associated infrastructure to afford residents of the MDA good public transport access from Didcot and within Didcot in accordance with proposals contained in the Planning and Development Brief.**

- 10.22** Development in the Ladygrove town expansion area has been continuing since 1987 in accordance with allocations made in earlier local plans. In 1997 and 2000 the Council received planning applications proposing housing development on the land at Ladygrove East.
- 10.23** The proportion of small dwellings in the general market housing sector required by criterion (ii) is justified by the local need for this type and category of dwellings as shown in Section 5 of the plan. The Council will seek about 10% 1 bedroom units, 40% 2 bedroom units, 30% 3 bedroom units and 20% 4 bedroom units and larger. The amount of affordable housing specified in criterion (iii) is in accordance with the provisions of Policy H9. The Council will require the affordable housing required by criterion (iii) to be distributed evenly in seven parcels throughout the MDA in order to encourage the development of a mixed and balanced community as advocated in PPG3.
- 10.24** The requirement for the provision of a primary school is based on information relating to the need for the school received from the County Council, acting as local education authority. The Council justifies the provision of a community centre having regard to the likely accommodation requirements of voluntary bodies that intend to provide valued services to the Ladygrove East community. The Master Developer should have regard to the outline planning brief that these bodies have supplied to the Council, setting out their accommodation needs. The Council, however, will seek a planning obligation to ensure that the accommodation to be provided in the community centre is not used exclusively by particular bodies.
- 10.25** The amount of land to be used for public urban space and public greenspace networks is based on the proposals contained in the Local Plan adopted in 1997. The requirement for a relatively large local park in the Ladygrove East MDA arises from the remoteness of the MDA from Ladygrove Park and from the need to provide a large and thereby attractive area of public greenspace to meet the informal recreation needs of MDA residents. The local park will contain an area of land for informal recreation use that was not provided in earlier phases of the housing development at Ladygrove East. Developers of those earlier phases made financial contributions to the Council to enable the Council to provide a large local park elsewhere in the MDA. The Council will use these contributions to compensate the Master Developer of Ladygrove East for this enlargement of the park on to land that would otherwise have been developed for housing.
- 10.26** There is a need for dwellings to be set back from Wallingford Road and from the proposed northern perimeter road in order to protect residents from traffic noise. The resulting buffer zone is best used to provide a continuous green corridor around the edge of the MDA. The woodland planting would soften the landscape impact of buildings where the expanded town adjoins the countryside. A wide buffer zone is required to protect users of the perimeter road from golf balls played on the adjacent golf course. The buffer zone would also reduce the adverse visual and noise impact of traffic on users of the golf course. Earth mounding and woodland planting in this buffer zone would be appropriate and would also serve to soften the landscape impact of the MDA. The high voltage overhead electricity transmission lines in the MDA are visually intrusive and it is desirable that residential amenity is protected by the buffer zone proposed.
- 10.27** The Didcot Northern Perimeter Road must be completed before more than 200 homes are occupied on the MDA. Additional traffic from the MDA must not be allowed to exacerbate the environmental problems, inconvenience and road safety hazards already being

experienced on Abingdon Road that would be mitigated by completion of the Perimeter Road.

**10.28** The Council considers it desirable that the movement network includes an internal link for use by all modes of transport that would run through the MDA between Abingdon Road and Wallingford Road between the points marked A and B on the Proposals Map via Upperway Furlong/Middle Furlong. This internal link is not an essential pre-requisite for further housing development to take place in the MDA as the highway authority advises that a convenient and sustainable movement network can be provided in the MDA without it. The link would, however, be a desirable addition to the movement network by further improving accessibility in the vicinity. However, ownership constraints on land in the earlier, completed phases of the MDA may obstruct the connection of the movement network in the MDA to the public highway in Upperway Furlong/Middle Furlong. The Council will, therefore, seek planning obligations from the Master Developer in the following terms:

- the Developer will construct the internal access road and footways up to the northern boundary of the MDA so as to afford connection of that road and footways to Upperway Furlong/Middle Furlong. The Developer will also undertake not to impose any premium on the Council or other bodies for the right to connect Upperway Furlong/Middle Furlong to the internal access road and footways constructed in the MDA.
- prior to the opening of the primary school to be built in the MDA the Developer will construct and make available for public use a footway and cycletrack along the general alignment A, C, D and E shown on the Proposals Map with point E being located at the entrance to the primary school.
- the Developer will reimburse the Council in respect of all costs and claims for compensation that may arise in connection with the Council's compulsory acquisition of any land required to effect completion of the internal link road between Abingdon Road and Wallingford Road, and in connection with the construction costs thereof. In its turn, the Council would undertake to open the internal link road for use by all traffic at the earliest possible date.

**10.29** It is important that as MDA residents move into their new homes they are afforded the opportunity for ease of movement by all modes of transport from Didcot and within Didcot. The pattern of movement corridors and the connections, required by criterion (viii), should ensure that this objective is achieved.

## Vauxhall Barracks

**10.30** The Ministry of Defence has indicated that Vauxhall Barracks will be surplus to requirements and available for redevelopment by 2007. The site should be considered comprehensively and a planning brief for the site has been prepared and was adopted as supplementary planning guidance in February 2004. The barracks site accommodates offices and other ancillary buildings. There is existing housing for military personnel to the south and west of the site which is being retained.

**10.31** The Council considers that the site would be suitable for residential and community uses but could also accommodate a hotel and/or limited B1 employment uses. The only building which is worthy of retention is the Officers' Mess and consideration should be given to the retention and conversion of the original part of this building.

## Policy DID4

Proposals for development at Vauxhall Barracks, Didcot as defined on the Proposals Map will be permitted provided that they:

- (i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the development of the site for residential and community uses. A hotel and/or limited B1 employment uses could also be accommodated on the site;
- (ii) provide for the retention of the playing field and tennis courts on the site and the provision of children's play areas and amenity open space;
- (iii) provide a landscaping scheme which includes provision for the protection and maintenance of the important trees on the site and provides for the retention and maintenance of the memorial garden;
- (iv) comply with policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the Plan;
- (v) provide for a pedestrian, cycle and public transport link through the site and linking with routes in the Didcot West MDA to the west of the site;
- (vi) provide for 40% of the dwelling units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;
- (vii) provide for a mix of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policy H7;
- (viii) make provision for off-site and on-site infrastructure and services in accordance with Policy D11 including contributions towards transport works and measures, education facilities, library, arts, cultural and entertainment facilities in Didcot town centre, health care facilities, community centre facilities, indoor community sports facilities including improvements at the Didcot Wave Leisure Centre, improvements to Didcot Civic Hall and towards improvements to waste management facilities in or near Didcot.

**10.32** The site contains a playing field and tennis courts and these facilities should be retained or acceptable alternative provision made. The site also contains a number of important trees and provision should be made for their retention. In the south east of the site is a memorial rose garden which should also be retained and enhanced as part of any scheme.

**10.33** New development on the site should be in accordance with the policies in Section 4 and 5 of the Plan and have regard to the South Oxfordshire Design Guide. Particular attention will need to be given to the design of development along the frontages of the site to the B4493 and Foxhall Road.

**10.34** The proposed Major Development Area at Didcot West lies immediately to the west of the site and it is important that there is a pedestrian, cycle and bus link between the two sites to allow access by the residents of the Vauxhall Barracks site to the services, facilities and open space to be provided in the MDA and to provide a good public transport and cycle route to Didcot town centre and railway station.

**10.35** The Council will seek the provision of 40% affordable housing which should be evenly distributed throughout the site. A mix of dwelling types and sizes should be provided in accordance with Policy H7. Infrastructure and services will also be required. These are

likely to include contributions to the provision of a primary and the secondary school at Didcot West, indoor community sports and leisure facilities, community hall, primary health care facilities and on- and off-site transport infrastructure and services.

## **Land at Station Road and Haydon Road**

### **Policy DID5**

**Proposals for mixed-use development including housing and Class B1a offices will be permitted on the land at Station Road and Haydon Road, Didcot (as defined on the Proposals Map).**

- 10.36 In 1998 planning permission was granted for 22 dwellings and 1,160 square metres of offices on this 0.65 hectare site at the corner of Station Road and Haydon Road, Didcot. The dwellings would be located on the southern part of the site and would be two-storey buildings designed to be in keeping with existing development in Haydon Road and Lydalls Road. The offices would occupy the northern part of the site adding to the existing concentration of commercial uses near the railway station and creating a key "gateway" building on the entrance to the station area from the west.
- 10.37 Having regard to the requirements of Policy E6, no objection is raised in this case to the loss of Julian's Garage, which is used in part for the repair/maintenance of motor vehicles. It is recognised that the existing use does not make best use of land in the commercial area near the station and the replacement of the existing unattractive buildings and uses would also enhance the appearance of this important "gateway" site on the western approach to the town centre. The loss of the commuter car parking facility on the southern part of the site would be compensated by the provision of additional long-stay car parking for commuters in accordance with Policy DID10.
- 10.38 The planning permission granted in 1998 has expired through lapse of time and any further permission would only be granted if it was in accordance with the policies in Section 5 of the plan. In this respect, provision would need to be made for smaller dwelling units in accordance with Policy H7, for a net housing density that accorded with Policy H8 and for affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9.

## **The expansion of Didcot town centre**

### **Policy DID6**

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

- (i) a superstore (Class A1) up to about 7000 square metres total gross internal area (GIA);
- (ii) Class A1 retail units up to about 14,800 square metres GIA;
- (iii) Class D1 uses including premises for a primary health care practice;

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

- ~~10.39 In accordance with the strategy for Didcot proposed in the Structure Plan the Council is proposing a major expansion of town centre uses in Didcot town centre to meet the needs of the town's growing population. The scale of retail development proposed is justified by the recommendations of the South Oxfordshire Shopping Study 2000 and is intended to elevate Didcot town centre to the status of a major district centre in the local hierarchy of centres.~~
- ~~10.40 The major expansion of the town centre should be carried out as a comprehensive scheme in order that good pedestrian linkages between the new town centre uses and the heart of the existing town centre at Broadway and Market Place are established as soon as the scheme is completed. These linkages are important to achieve the objective of enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.~~
- ~~10.41 In 2001 the Council granted full planning permission for a comprehensive scheme of development on the land allocated in Policy DID6. This permission secured the planning requirements set out in the criteria of Policy DID6 and a Section 106 agreement secured planning obligations in accordance with Policy D11. The Council has also supported the expansion of Didcot town centre by land acquisition and this initiative also included the making of a compulsory purchase order. The relocation of existing businesses from the land to be redeveloped has been facilitated by the Council acquiring vacant industrial land at Southmead Business Park and by making that land available to existing businesses.~~

## Regeneration of Market Place and Broadway

### Policy DID7

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

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

10.42 In 2001 the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit prepared a Centre Vision Report entitled: *Didcot Town Centre Making the Link* for the District Council, the Town Council and the Didcot Development Agency. This Report recommended that action was necessary by all those with a stake in the future of Market Place and Broadway to carry out works and measures to improve and regenerate these town centre streets to secure their future economic prosperity. The development proposals contained in the Vision Report are set out in Policy DID7. The Report also recommends the carrying out of a number of public realm improvements and town centre management initiatives to help to secure the prosperity of Market Place and Broadway.

10.43 In Market Place the demolition of the central building, occupied by a bank, would enlarge the existing civic space, thereby enabling Market Place to accommodate a larger street market, more open-air eating and drinking uses and more street entertainment activities that have the potential to enhance the vitality of the area. The existing central building has "dead" frontages at street level on three sides. If the building is not demolished then it would be desirable to modify it to create either a covered public space at street level, or new street level uses with active frontages that would present attractive shopfronts to the street.

10.44 The existing street block between 84a and 128 Broadway contains two terraces of mediocre appearance with cramped or out-dated floorspace that does not meet modern business requirements. Redevelopment of both these terraces with larger, more attractive buildings in mixed use and designed to meet business requirements would be appropriate. The substantial, three-storey terrace in the centre of the street block should be retained and works carried out to improve its external appearance. Vehicle parking and servicing requirements for the street block would be met in a new communal service yard located at the rear of the premises with a single vehicular access from Broadway.

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

### Policy DID8

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

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

10.45 Following completion of the town centre expansion scheme proposed in Policy DID6, development proposals may be received for key town centre uses on the land to the east of that scheme. This land is presently used by a wide variety of small businesses mostly engaged in retail and service trades. The existing premises are generally out-dated and of poor quality design and those fronting Lower Broadway detract from the eastern part of the town centre. There is, therefore, merit in redeveloping the land to improve the appearance of the area.

10.46 The Council will be seeking uses that complement the uses in Didcot town centre as expanded by the development proposed in Policy DID6. A mixed-use development would be appropriate and should only be permitted on the basis of a Development Brief, approved by the Council, relating to a comprehensive proposal. This could include retail development if sufficient capacity exists, a hotel, commercial leisure development, offices and a limited element of housing.

10.47 The Council will expect the developer to provide alternative land and premises for those businesses affected by the redevelopment that wish to relocate to alternative sites in Didcot. The importance of maintaining land and premises for service trades that provide a valued service to the community has been explained in Section 6 of the plan. The Council will seek a planning obligation to secure this requirement.

## Land at Southmead Business Park

### Policy DID9

Proposals for business, industry, storage and distribution (Classes B1 and B8) will be permitted on sites (i) and (ii) at Southmead Business Park as shown on the Proposals Map.

10.48 The majority of the 37 hectares of land at the Southmead Business Park is now developed. A wide variety of firms have become established and Southmead has proved particularly attractive to storage and distribution firms. The two sites identified on the Proposals Map

are the only remaining sites yet to be fully developed. Site (i) extends to 2.66 hectares and is owned by the Council. It is intended to be used for the re-location of firms being displaced by the town centre redevelopment proposed in Policies DID6 and DID8. If land is not required by firms relocating from the town centre, then consideration will be given to other Class B1 and B8 development on the site. Site (ii) extends to 0.26 hectare and the northern part is used for low-intensity open storage purposes. The site could be used more intensively for Class B1 and B8 development. Proposals for such development on this site would need to comply with the relevant policies in Sections 4, 6 and 8 of this plan.

## Land at Didcot Parkway railway station

### Policy DID10

~~Land at Didcot Parkway railway station as shown on the Proposals Map will be used for development related to the expansion of railway transport services and for the improvement of interchange facilities between those services and other modes of transport. Development proposals will be in accordance with a comprehensive scheme that meets the following requirements:~~

- ~~(i) land to the south of the Paddington-Bristol railway will be used for:~~
  - ~~a) the provision of footways and cycle tracks linked to the wider movement network with bicycle parking facilities at the Station entrance;~~
  - ~~b) the provision of facilities for bus and taxi hire operators to set down and collect railway passengers including facilities for the lay-over of vehicles; and~~
  - ~~c) the provision of facilities for private car drivers to set down and collect railway passengers with a short duration of vehicle stay and spaces for disabled drivers;~~
- ~~(ii) land to the north of the Paddington-Bristol railway will be used for:~~
  - ~~a) the provision of footways and cycletracks linked to the wider movement network with bicycle parking facilities at the Station entrance; and~~
  - ~~b) the provision of long-stay car parks for railway passengers. Improvements to off-site footway, cycletrack and road infrastructure will be secured in accordance with Policy D11 and the improvements will be completed before any enlarged long-stay car parks are first used.~~

### Policy DID11

Proposals for Class B1 business-use development will be permitted on land at Didcot Parkway railway station, where the land proposed for this use would not be required in the long term for the expansion of railway services and for the improvement of interchange facilities between those services and other modes of transport.

- 10.49** The Council supports proposals by the Strategic Rail Authority, the rail infrastructure company and train operating companies to expand rail services at Didcot Parkway railway

station, including proposals to improve the interchange facilities. The Council considers that development at the station should only proceed in accordance with a comprehensive scheme and programme that will ensure that growth in railway passenger traffic proceeds in parallel with improvements to interchange facilities and other transport infrastructure that will be needed by those passengers. The comprehensive scheme should be supported by a transport assessment ~~in accordance with Policy T3.~~

- 10.50** It is important to improve access to the Station Road entrance to Didcot Parkway railway station for pedestrians, cyclists, local bus services, taxis and car drivers who deliver and collect passengers from that entrance involving only a very short duration of stay. The land to the south of the Paddington-Bristol railway should be used to accommodate these activities to the maximum extent possible to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport. The comprehensive scheme should aim to segregate footways and cycletracks from motor vehicle movements in the interests of safety. It should also aim to meet the access requirements of those with impaired mobility in accordance with Policy D7. An attractive public realm should be provided in this area in order to enhance the Station Road "gateway" to Didcot town centre.
- 10.51** The Council considers that the existing long-stay car parks, located to the south of the railway, should be re-located on to land north of the railway. This would reduce peak-hour traffic flows in Station Road, reduce traffic congestion near the station entrance and release land for the more sustainable modes of transport in this location. The Council will oppose any proposals to enlarge the existing commuter car parks adjacent to Station Road by the provision of decked car park buildings. Such buildings would increase traffic flows on Station Road and exacerbate traffic congestion at the station entrance. The buildings would also be visually intrusive at this "gateway" to Didcot town centre. The Council will permit decked, long-stay car parks to be built on land north of the railway on the site of the existing surface level car park. The interchange improvements should include improved pedestrian access to the station platforms from these long-stay car parks.
- 10.52** Policy DID11 permits Class B1 development for business use on any land at Didcot Parkway railway station where the Council is satisfied that the land to be so used is genuinely surplus to requirements for the expansion of railway services and for the improvement of interchange facilities. In making such a determination the Council will have regard to the contents of the comprehensive scheme for the future development of the whole of the station site and to the likely long-term transport needs of the Didcot area as advised by the County Council as local transport authority.

## Section 11 Henley-on-Thames

### Introduction

- 11.1** This section of the plan contains the site-specific policies for Henley-on-Thames. Henley had an estimated population of 9,718 in 2001. Between 1996 and 2001, 185 homes were completed and it is estimated that approximately 700 jobs were also created in the town during that period. Townlands Hospital is the only site in Henley allocated for housing in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (1997) that was not completed. This allocation has been carried forward, therefore, into the present plan. In accordance with strategic planning policy explained in Section 5 there will be no significant housing growth in Henley. Henley has a strong employment base, particularly in the service sector. Provision of further sites for employment-generating development has been limited, therefore, so that economic growth does not create pressure for further housing growth.
- 11.2** Henley has a long standing problem of traffic congestion. This is caused by a mixture of commuting both into and out of the town, and through traffic which uses the town's bridge to cross the River Thames. A traffic study in the 1990s developed a strategy which has resulted in the pedestrianisation of part of Market Place and identified other supporting measures. This strategy is being reviewed to ensure that it meets the current and future needs of the town.

### Townlands Hospital

#### Policy HEN1

**Proposals for the use of part of the Townlands Hospital site for housing will be permitted provided that they:**

- (i) make provision for the continuing hospital use on the remaining part of the site;**
- (ii) ensure the preservation and sympathetic conversion of the listed buildings on the site and preserve the setting of those buildings;**
- (iii) ensure that new housing is sympathetic with the character of the area in terms of scale, design and materials used;**
- (iv) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;**
- (v) provide for 40% of units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;**
- (vi) provide a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policies H7 and H8;**
- (vii) provide recreation, library and any other necessary on- or off-site infrastructure or services made necessary by and as a consequence of the development in accordance with Policy D11; and**
- (viii) provide for a safe and convenient access from the highway and provide vehicle parking facilities in accordance with Policies T1 and T2.**

- 11.3** South East Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust has indicated that Townlands Hospital is in need of significant enhancement and the Trust is proposing a comprehensive scheme of development on the site that would involve new community hospital buildings and releasing some land for housing. Policy HEN1 allocates up to 1.5 hectares of land in the northern part of the site that the Council considers could accommodate up to 62 dwellings.
- 11.4** The oldest buildings on the northern part of the site, dating from the 18th century, are Grade 2 listed and are part of the former workhouse. The remaining buildings within this area are of no architectural distinction. The whole site lies within the Conservation Area. The Council considers that the most appropriate use for the retained listed buildings would be to convert them to residential use. A residential use would be in keeping with the residential neighbourhood around Townlands Hospital and would be likely to have the least harmful effect on the quiet atmosphere of the hospital.
- 11.5** The scale and height of new buildings must be in keeping with the scale and height of existing buildings adjacent to the hospital site. In this respect, the adjacent buildings are small in scale and do not exceed two-storeys in height. New development on the site should not dominate the immediate area. The design statement accompanying the planning application should assess the impact of new buildings on this prominent site from elsewhere in the town and from the high ground to the east of the Thames.
- 11.6** Building conversions will need to respect the fine quality and character of the existing buildings. The Council will require proposals to comply with the policies for achieving good design, reinforcing local distinctiveness, ensuring that development meets operational standards and for safeguarding amenity contained in Section 4 of the plan.
- 11.7** The Council will seek the provision of 40% of dwelling units as affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9. A mix of dwelling types and sizes must also be provided in accordance with Policy H7.
- 11.8** Access to the hospital will be taken from York Road and/or Mount View and access to the new dwellings taken from Clarence Road and/or Mount View. The Council will require a traffic and parking assessment of the development to be carried out and any off-site transport infrastructure improvements made necessary by the development or as a consequence of it will be secured in planning obligations.

## Market Place Mews expansion

### Policy HEN2

**Proposals for mixed-use development at Market Place Mews and adjacent land at the rear of Market Place, Bell Street and Kings Road, Henley (as defined on the Proposals Map) will only be permitted, where that development comprises part of a comprehensive scheme for the site, and where all necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure is provided in accordance with Policy D11. The development will include:**

- (i) Class A1 retail units and retail service units (Classes A2 and A3) up to about 2,000 square metres total gross internal area (GIA);**
- (ii) residential or office uses at upper floor levels in accordance with Policies TC4 and TC6 (office uses not to exceed 500 square metres GIA);**

- (iii) **widening Market Place Mews to provide a pedestrian-only walkway linking Market Place with Kings Road car park;**
- (iv) **high quality design of buildings and of the public realm that enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area and that preserves the setting of the listed buildings; and**
- (v) **no loss of public car parking spaces in the Kings Road car park.**

- 11.9** In accordance with the recommendation contained in the South Oxfordshire Shopping Study 2000 the Council is proposing an expansion of Market Place Mews to create a mixed-use development that would provide a significant increase in retail floorspace in Henley town centre designed to meet modern business requirements. The Council will require the development to be implemented in accordance with a comprehensive scheme to ensure delivery of a development that functions well in terms of the layout and size of buildings, access and servicing facilities. The Council will expect the developer to acquire land by private treaty, but will be prepared to exercise its powers of compulsory land acquisition to overcome land ownership constraints if the Council considers it expedient to do so and where all costs involved in such action would be reimbursed to the Council.
- 11.10** The limitation on the amount of retail floorspace is justified having regard to the limited area of potential development land available in this area and to the retail floorspace capacity assessment contained in the Shopping Study. The number of retail service uses (Classes A2 and A3) in the new primary shopping frontages in Market Place Mews will accord with the provisions of Policy TC8 in Section 7 of the plan. The limitation on the amount of office floorspace is justified having regard to the requirements of Policy E2. It is also desirable to limit the size of the development in order that satisfactory access and servicing facilities may be made available to both new and existing premises, that the setting of listed buildings may be protected and in order that the development may enhance the character of the Henley-on-Thames Conservation Area.
- 11.11** The Council will permit minor and sympathetic works of demolition, alteration and refurbishment to be carried out to the listed buildings to allow the development to proceed. The Council will also permit the demolition of certain historic walls that follow burgage plot boundaries. In this case the provisions of Policy CON10 will be relaxed because the pattern of burgage plot boundaries is less well defined here than elsewhere in Henley town centre. The Council also considers that, in this instance, the conservation objective of Policy CON10 is outweighed by the need for development that would help to maintain and enhance the town centre's economy.
- 11.12** The size and scale of new buildings should be subordinate to that of the large and dominant listed buildings on the existing street frontages in order to respect the historic character and setting of those buildings. A key "gateway" building, however, is required at the entrance to the widened Market Place Mews from the car park. The design of new buildings and the public realm must be to a high standard on this prominent site in the Henley-on-Thames Conservation Area. Care must be taken to screen unsightly service areas from public viewpoints and to ensure that vehicular servicing arrangements do not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 11.13** The development should not result in the loss of any existing car parking spaces in the Kings Road public car park or obstruct vehicular access to the car park or to neighbouring commercial premises.

## Land at Reading Road Industrial Estate

### Policy HEN3

Proposals for the redevelopment of under-used land on the southern part of Reading Road Industrial Estate for Class B1 and B8 uses will be permitted where they:

- (i) include measures to enhance the appearance of the area.;
- (ii) make adequate provision for car parking and where possible, improve existing arrangements; and
- (iii) would not significantly worsen peak hour congestion on the Reading Road.

**11.14** Within the plan period there is scope for the redevelopment and physical enhancement of the southern part of the Reading Road Industrial Estate. The 5.19 hectares of land allocated in Policy HEN3 contain several areas of under-used land that detract from the appearance of the estate. Proposals for redevelopment will be permitted provided that they would not significantly worsen traffic conditions on Reading Road and that they comply with the relevant policies in Sections 4, 6 and 8 of this plan.

## Informal open space

### Policy HEN4

The provision of small areas of informal open space within Henley will be supported.

**11.15** Whilst Mill Meadows provides a valuable and substantial area of open land for informal recreation it does not meet the needs of residents for informal recreation space and children's play areas close to their homes. Further provision will, however, be difficult to achieve because of the lack of open land within established residential areas. When proposals come forward for development or redevelopment, therefore, the Council will seek to include open land for informal recreation or children's play areas within such schemes, with suitable provision for maintenance. The Council will also support other initiatives to remedy this deficiency.

## Section 12 Thame

### Introduction

**12.1** This section of the plan contains the site-specific proposals for Thame. In 2001, the estimated population of Thame was 10,886. There has been some housing development since 1995 with the completion of 99 dwellings at the BP Oil site and a further 39 dwellings at Pickenfield. The sites allocated for housing and employment-generating uses in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 1997 were all taken up. Having regard to the strategic policy explained in Section 5 other than the redevelopment of Rycotewood College, there will be no significant growth in housing at Thame in the plan period to 2011. At the Issues Stage of this plan people did not support further allocations for business use development at Thame. There will, however, be limited opportunities for such use in the redevelopment of certain existing premises presently in business use.

### Thame Cattle Market, North Street

#### Policy THA1

**Proposals for mixed-use development at the Cattle Market, North Street, Thame (as defined on the Proposals Map) will only be permitted where that development comprises part of a comprehensive scheme for the site and where all necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure is provided in accordance with Policy D11. The development of the site could include:**

- (i) Class A1 retail units (excluding food supermarkets) and retail service units (Classes A2 and A3) not exceeding a total of 2,000 square metres gross internal area (GIA);**
- (ii) residential uses including dwellings at upper floor levels over the units in (i) above in accordance with Policy TC4;**
- (iii) office uses (Classes B1a or A2), up to a total of about 500 square metres GIA, including office uses at upper floor levels over the units in (i) above in accordance with Policy TC6;**
- (iv) residential and non-residential institutions (Classes C2 and D1) and assembly and leisure uses (Class D2);**
- (v) public car parking spaces; and**
- (vi) improved pedestrian links with the primary shopping frontages.**

**12.2** At some stage during the plan period the Cattle Market site in North Street, Thame, may cease to be used for livestock auctions and in that event, a mixed-use redevelopment of part of the site would be appropriate. The Council will prepare a development brief setting out the detailed planning requirements for the site. This brief would be informed by a commercial appraisal of the mix of uses that would comprise a viable scheme. The scheme should include arts, cultural and entertainments uses in accordance with the aspirations expressed by Thame Town Council. The mix of uses should also include retention of the existing sports club building on the site in accordance with Policy CF1. The need for retention of public car parking spaces on the site should also be considered in order to maintain good accessibility by car to Thame town centre in accordance with Policy T8. The housing element of the mix

of uses will comply with the policies for dwelling types and sizes, density and for affordable housing in Section 5 of this plan.

- 12.3** The limitation on the amount of retail floorspace that may be provided and the exclusion of food retail supermarket uses are based on recommendations contained in the South Oxfordshire Shopping Study 2000. The requirements of Policy E2 restrain the amount of office floorspace that may be permitted on the site. The existing footway connections between the site and Upper High Street and Greyhound Walk should be improved to make them safe and attractive for pedestrian use. The development would then integrate well with the primary shopping frontages in Thame town centre.

## The Phoenix Trail

### Policy THA2

**Proposals for the extension of the footpath/cycleway (the Phoenix Trail) to Lord Williams School, as identified on the Proposals Map, will be permitted.**

- ~~12.4 Thame Oil Depot was the sole user of the branch railway line running from Thame to Princes Risborough. The closure of the oil depot resulted in the railway becoming unused. Sustrans purchased most of the line from Princes Risborough and a cycle/pedestrian route has been built as far as the former oil depot. Planning permission has been granted to extend the route westwards to Lord Williams School and the Council will support the implementation of this scheme.~~

## Land adjacent 32 Upper High Street

### Policy THA3

**The use of land adjacent to the Elms, 32 Upper High Street, Thame for informal open space, as identified on the Proposals Map, will be permitted.**

- 12.5** This site is one of the few open spaces in the centre of Thame and it is considered to be important to retain it and maintain its rural character. For this reason, the Council will support proposals which achieve this aim should the site become available during the plan period.

## Rycotewood College

- ~~12.6 Rycotewood College, as shown on the Proposals Map is merging with other colleges in the area and disposing of the site in Thame. The site totals 2.78 hectares. It is on the western edge of Thame and the site slopes down to open floodplain land to the north and west. Part of the site lies within the Thame conservation area. To the east of the site is the Prebendal which contains a number of buildings listed as Grade I or Grade II\*. The site has been used as a College since 1935 and contains a variety of buildings. The main College building is a Grade II listed former workhouse built in 1835/6. There are also two Grade II listed gatehouses and an important area of open space between the entrance to the site and the former workhouse building. The remaining buildings on the site are purpose-built college buildings and could be demolished.~~

## Policy THA4

~~Proposals for the redevelopment of Rycotewood College, Thame for residential and community uses will be permitted provided that they;~~

- ~~(i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the re-use of the site;~~
- ~~(ii) protect the listed buildings on the site and their setting and preserve or enhance the conservation area;~~
- ~~(iii) provide a management plan for the future maintenance of the listed buildings and the grounds;~~
- ~~(iv) provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme which includes provision for the maintenance of important trees and open spaces, as well as new planting in certain areas;~~
- ~~(v) provide for a package of sustainable transport measures;~~
- ~~(vi) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;~~
- ~~(vii) ensure that new building is of a scale appropriate to the listed building, the landscape setting of the site and neighbouring uses;~~
- ~~(viii) provide for 40% of units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;~~
- ~~(ix) provide for a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policies H7 and H8; and~~
- ~~(x) provide any necessary on- or off-site infrastructure in accordance with Policy D11.~~

- ~~12.7 The site should be considered comprehensively and a planning brief for the site incorporating a design statement should be prepared and adopted as a supplementary planning document.~~
- ~~12.8 It is considered that the listed, former workhouse could, in principle, be converted to residential use and/or community use. However, it is essential that before a scheme is produced a Conservation Plan is prepared setting out the original function and historic significance of the building and explaining how that significance will be retained in any future use. The building was originally designed with large rooms and this should be reflected in any scheme. The removal of the insensitive modern additions would be supported. The setting of the building should also be enhanced. The open space between Oxford Road and the listed building should be retained and consideration should be given to enhancing this area by relocating the car parking to a less sensitive part of the site. Any new building to the rear will need to be very carefully designed and respect the scale of the original buildings.~~
- ~~12.9 The listed gatehouses and boundary walls should be retained although the creation of a separate pedestrian entrance to Oxford Road would be supported. A management plan for the future maintenance of the listed buildings and open spaces should be submitted with any proposal.~~
- ~~12.10 The site is considered suitable for residential development and community facilities and the ground floor of the former workhouse would be particularly suitable for community uses.~~

The site would also be suitable for a residential care home. New development should respect the topography of the site, protect the setting of the Prebendal and protect or enhance the character of the conservation area and its setting. The Council will require proposals to comply with the policies for achieving good design, reinforcing local distinctiveness and energy-efficient design in Section 4. The site is adjacent to the floodplain and consultation with the Environment Agency will be needed to ensure there is no impact on areas of flood risk.

- 12.11** The Council will seek the provision of 40% of the dwelling units as affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9 and these should be pepperpotted around the site. A mix of dwelling types and sizes must also be provided in accordance with Policy H7. There will also be a need to ensure the provision of any necessary on- or off-site infrastructure and services in accordance with Policy D11.
- 12.12** The listed gatehouses mean that access to the site is restricted. As stated in paragraph 12.9 above, the creation of a separate pedestrian access would be supported but a further vehicular access would not. The access problem could, therefore, restrict the amount of development on the site. Particular care will also be needed in the design of the internal roads and the provision of segregated footways would be beneficial. There will be a requirement for traffic calming measures on Oxford Road adjacent to the site.

## Section 13 Wallingford

### Introduction

- 13.1 This section of the plan contains the site-specific proposals for Wallingford. In 2001, Wallingford had an estimated population of 6,273. Between 1996 and 2001, 94 dwellings were completed in the town and planning permissions for housing had been granted on the former Paul's Malt and Wallingford Upper School sites. A number of the allocations for employment-generating development in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 1997 have not been taken up and most of these have been carried forward into this plan.

### ~~Redevelopment of Blue Mountains and the Sinodun Centre, Wantage Road~~

#### ~~Policy WAL1~~

~~Proposals for the redevelopment of Blue Mountains and the Sinodun Centre, Wantage Road, Wallingford for housing will be permitted provided that they:~~

- ~~(i) comply with the policies encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;~~
- ~~(ii) provide for 40% of units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;~~
- ~~(iii) provide a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policies H7 and H8;~~
- ~~(iv) provide education, recreation, library, transport and any other necessary on- or off-site infrastructure or services in accordance with Policy D11;~~
- ~~(v) provide a landscaping scheme which includes provision for the protection and maintenance of important trees on the site; and~~
- ~~(vi) retain the two Victorian/Edwardian frontage properties.~~

- 13.2 Oxfordshire County Council has identified this site as being surplus to their requirements when the relocation programmes for Blue Mountains Older People's Home and the Sinodun Centre have taken place. An overall strategy is in place for these services, and it is expected that this process will be completed and the site made available for redevelopment by mid-2004.
- 13.3 The site is 1.57 hectares in area and is shown on the Proposals Map. It is considered that a residential use would be appropriate having regard to the character of the neighbouring land uses. Any redevelopment proposal should complement the surrounding development patterns and include frontage development onto Wantage Road. A high-quality design will be required and proposals must reflect the need for a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policy H7. The proposal must take account of important features on the site, and provide for the retention of the important trees on the site including the trees protected by tree preservation orders.
- 13.4 Other policies in the plan will also have relevance to any redevelopment. In particular, the Council will seek the provision of 40% of units as affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9. Contributions to necessary infrastructure services and facilities will be required in accordance with Policy D11.

## Redevelopment of Lamb Garage site, Castle Street

### Policy WAL2

Proposals for the redevelopment of the Lamb Garage, Castle Street, Wallingford for housing will be permitted provided that they:

- (i) preserve and enhance the character of the Wallingford Conservation Area and respect the setting of the surrounding listed buildings;
- (ii) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;
- (iii) provide a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policies H7 and H8; and
- (iv) provide education, recreation, library, transport and any other necessary on- or off-site infrastructure or services in accordance with Policy D11.

- 13.5** This site is approximately 0.1 hectares in size and is shown on the Proposals Map. It is located on the important approach to the town centre along Castle Street and should be developed in accordance with a comprehensive scheme, which would achieve an attractive group of buildings, with satisfactory access and parking arrangements. Piecemeal proposals for part of the site will not be permitted.
- 13.6** Proposals should retain the former Coach House adjacent to Bear Lane, which is a listed building. The Council would welcome proposals that retain and convert into residential use the disused Lamb Garage building, with its interesting clay tiled roof, alongside Castle Street. However, should conversion be demonstrably impractical, the Council would consider the demolition of this building provided that replacement buildings are in keeping with the urban design characteristics of Castle Street. In this respect, buildings must be sited close to the street creating a strong sense of enclosure. A two-storey building height would be appropriate, except on the corner of Castle Street and Bear Lane where a three-storey building would be appropriate to create a key building at the entrance to the Lane. Buildings in excess of two-storeys over the whole site would detract from the setting of the Lamb Arcade, which should remain the dominant building at the southern end of Castle Street.
- 13.7** Proposals must accord with other policies in the plan, in particular with Policies H7 and H8 which seek to ensure that a suitable mix of dwelling types and sizes are achieved at an appropriate density. The Council will also seek to ensure that the design of the development is of a high standard meeting the requirements of Section 4 of the plan and having regard to the Council's Design Guide. Contributions to necessary infrastructure services and facilities will be required in accordance with Policy D11.
- 13.8** If redevelopment proposals result in the provision of fifteen or more dwellings then the Council will seek the provision of 40% of units as affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9.

## Station Road Industrial Estate

### Policy WAL3

Proposals for the redevelopment of Station Road Industrial Estate, Wallingford for mixed-use development will be permitted provided that they:

- (i) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;
- (ii) provide for 40% of dwelling units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;
- (iii) provide a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policies H7 and H8;
- (iv) provide education, recreation, library, transport and any other necessary on- or off-site infrastructure or services in accordance with Policy D11;
- (v) provide a landscaping scheme; and
- (vi) provide for the retention of the community uses in accordance with Policy CF1.

13.9 This site is mainly in the ownership of the District Council and is currently an industrial estate. The estate is generally of a run-down appearance and a number of the premises are substandard for modern business use and/or empty. The Council considers that the re-use of the whole site for housing would be preferable. However a mixed housing/employment scheme which retained a limited number of employment uses would also be acceptable provided that the amenities of the occupiers of adjacent residential properties were protected.

13.10 The site is 1.77 hectares in size and currently contains premises used by the Scout Association and St John's Ambulance Brigade and provision should be made for the retention of these community uses either on site or on a suitable alternative site within Wallingford.

13.11 The development should be designed in accordance with the requirements set out in Section 4 of this plan and have regard to the provisions of the South Oxfordshire Design Guide. The density of the proposed development should accord with Policy H8 and a mix of size and type of dwellings should be provided in accordance with Policy H7. The Council will seek the provision of 40% of the dwellings as affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9. Contributions to necessary services and infrastructure will be required in accordance with Policy D11. Provision should be made for children's play in accordance with Policy R2 and this could include enhancement of the existing play space at Allnatt Avenue.

## Waitrose supermarket and public car park at 11-16 St Martins Street

### Policy WAL4

Proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of the existing Class A1 supermarket building and public car park at 11-16 St Martins Street, Wallingford will not be permitted where those proposals would involve loss of a Class A1 use and public car parking spaces.

- 13.12** The South Oxfordshire Shopping Study indicates that in the event that the existing Waitrose supermarket relocates from its existing building at 11-16 St Martins Street then the southern part of Wallingford town centre would lose an important anchor store. The withdrawal of large numbers of shoppers from this locality would adversely affect the vitality and viability of the southern part of the town centre. The Shopping Study recommends, therefore, that it would be important, if Waitrose relocates, to secure a new retail use for the supermarket building that would continue to draw large numbers of shoppers and thereby maintain the anchor role. Accordingly, Policy WAL4 will not permit proposals for changes of use or redevelopment that would extinguish the Class A1 use. The loss of a significant number of car parking spaces in the adjacent public car park would also harm the economy of the town centre.

## Land at Hithercroft Estate

### Policy WAL5

**The following sites at Hithercroft Estate (as shown on the Proposals Map) are considered suitable for employment-generating uses (Classes B1 and B8):**

- (i) former Elliott factory, Hithercroft Road (1.2ha);**
- (ii) land at Lupton Road (1.22 ha);**
- (iii) land at Whitley Road (0.40 ha);**
- (iv) land at the junction of Whitley Road and Lester Road (0.30ha); and**
- (v) land north of Hithercroft Road (2.68ha).**

- 13.13** The sites on the Hithercroft Estate identified above are considered to be suitable for new or more intensive employment-generating development. Part of the former Elliott Factory (site (i)) is used for warehousing and storage and outline permission was granted for B1 and B8 uses on the site in 2000. Land at Lupton Road (site (ii)) is also partially developed and outline planning permission was granted for B1 and B8 units on this site in 1999. There have been no planning applications for development on land at Whitley Road (site (iii)), which lies adjacent to Bradford's Brook. There is also no development on land at the junction of Whitley Road with Lester Road (site (iv)), although planning permissions were granted in 1990 and 1991 to extend the adjacent factory, offices and warehouse. These have now expired. No development has occurred on land north of Hithercroft Road (site (v)), however, there is an outline planning application for a B1 and B8 business park on this site. Any proposal on these sites will need to comply with the relevant policies in Sections 4, 6 and 8 of this plan.

## Cholsey and Wallingford Railway

### Policy WAL6

**Land adjoining the railway at Hithercroft, shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated for uses associated with the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway line.**

- 13.14** The railway spur from Wallingford closed some years ago and is now used by the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway Preservation Society. It is also hoped that the line could be re-used as a rail link to the main line at Cholsey. The land shown on the allocation would provide extra space for the Society, particularly for car parking and would assist in providing for any future passenger rail link.

## Summary of policies

### Section 2 - The general approach

- ~~G1 Provision will be made for substantial new housing development at Didcot but elsewhere the overall level of development will be restrained. In considering development proposals their likely impact on the environment and the need to conserve non-renewable resources will be taken into account.~~
- G2 The district's countryside, settlements and environmental resources will be protected from adverse developments ~~and opportunities sought to enhance the environment wherever they arise.~~
- ~~G3 In considering proposals for new development, locations which are close to services and facilities, and which are well served by public transport will be favoured. Development that would give rise to a significant increase in traffic generation in relatively inaccessible or isolated rural locations will not be permitted.~~
- G4 The need to protect the countryside for its own sake is an important consideration when assessing proposals for development. ~~Unless permitted by other policies in the plan, new built development in the countryside, in the open gaps between settlements and on the edge of settlements where the built-up area would be extended, will not normally be permitted, except for agriculture and forestry.~~
- G5 In considering development proposals within the built-up areas of settlements the best use of land and buildings will be sought, in terms of the type and density of development, in order to reduce the need for development of greenfield sites or of sites in non-sustainable locations. Priority will be given to the release of previously-developed sites within the four towns over greenfield sites or sites in less sustainable locations. In seeking to make the best use of land regard will be had to the role and importance of open space within settlements.
- ~~G6 Planning permission will not be granted for proposals which are not of a high quality and inclusive design, which fail to protect and reinforce local distinctiveness, or which are of a scale or type that is inappropriate to the site and its surroundings.~~

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

- ~~C1 The conservation and where possible, enhancement of the landscape of the district will be sought. Development that would adversely affect the distinctive features of the landscape character areas will not be permitted.~~

~~Where development is acceptable in principle it should:~~

- ~~(i) be integrated into the landscape character of the area;~~
- ~~(ii) protect important local features; and~~
- ~~(iii) where possible, contribute to local distinctiveness.~~

~~Measures will be sought to integrate new development sensitively, mitigate impacts and where appropriate, enhance local landscape character through conditions and agreements attached to planning permissions.~~

- C2** ~~In the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty the primary aim is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, special landscape quality and distinctiveness of the area. Development which would harm the beauty or distinctiveness of the area will not be permitted. To be acceptable development must be of a scale and type appropriate to the area, and be sympathetic in terms of its siting, design and materials used.~~
- C3** The distinctive character of the River Thames and its valley and the settlements on its banks will be maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced. Proposals for any form of development which detracts from its special character will not be permitted.
- C4** Development which would damage the attractive landscape setting of the settlements of the district will not be permitted. The effect of any proposal on important local landscape features which contribute to the visual and historic character and appearance of a settlement will be considered.
- C5** ~~Development involving the loss of greenfield land, including the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) will not be permitted unless there is an overriding need for development that cannot be accommodated on previously developed land. Where development of agricultural land is necessary, poorer quality land should be developed in preference to higher quality land, unless other sustainability criteria outweigh the need to protect high quality agricultural land.~~
- C6** In considering proposals for development, the maintenance and enhancement of the biodiversity resource of the district will be sought. Full account of the effects of development on wildlife will be taken. Where there is any significant loss in biodiversity as part of a proposed development, the creation and maintenance of new landscape features, habitats, habitat links and wildlife corridors of appropriate scale and kind will be required to ensure there is no net loss in biodiversity resources.
- C7** Development that is likely to adversely affect a Special Area of Conservation, National Nature Reserve or Site of Special Scientific Interest will not be permitted. On locally designated sites of nature conservation importance, development that would damage biodiversity interest will not be permitted unless the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the site and unless the loss can be mitigated.
- C8** Development that would have an adverse effect on a site supporting a specially protected species will not be permitted, unless damage to the ecological interest can be prevented through the use of planning conditions or planning obligations.
- C9** Any development that would cause the loss of landscape features will not be permitted where those features make an important contribution to the local scene, and/or provide all or part of an important wildlife habitat and/or have important historical value. Where features are retained within the development site, conditions will be used to ensure that they are protected during development and have sufficient space to ensure their survival after development.
- GB1** ~~The special character and landscape setting of Oxford will be protected by a Green Belt, the boundaries of which are shown on the Proposals Map.~~

- GB2** ~~Within the Green Belt the construction of new buildings will not be permitted except for the following purposes:-~~
- ~~(i) agriculture and forestry (unless permitted development rights have been withdrawn);~~
  - ~~(ii) essential facilities for outdoor sports and recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;~~
  - ~~(iii) the limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings where consistent with Policies H12 and H13;~~
  - ~~(iv) limited infilling in existing villages which have an adequate range of services and facilities provided it complies with the requirements of Policy H5; and~~
  - ~~(v) limited affordable housing provided it complies with Policy H10.~~
- ~~The major developed sites of Oxford Brookes University, Culham Science Centre, No 1 Site, Culham and Sandford Sewage Treatment Works are considered in Section 9.~~
- GB3** ~~Within the Green Belt the carrying out of engineering and other operations and the making of any material change in the use of land will not be permitted unless the openness of the Green Belt is maintained and there is no conflict with the purpose of including land within the Green Belt.~~
- GB4** Where new development is permitted, either within or where it would be conspicuous from the Green Belt, it should be designed and sited in such a way that its impact on the open nature, rural character and visual amenity of the Green Belt is minimised.
- CON1** Proposals for the demolition of any listed building will not be permitted.
- CON2** Any extension to a listed building must be appropriate to its character, must be sympathetic to the original structure in design, scale and materials and must not dominate or overwhelm it.
- CON3** Any alteration to a listed building must respect its established character and not diminish the special historical or architectural qualities which make it worthy of inclusion on the statutory list.
- CON4** A change of use of part or the whole of a listed building will be permitted only if its character and features of special architectural or historic interest would be protected. Proposals for a change of use should incorporate details of all intended alterations to the building and its curtilage, to demonstrate their impact on its appearance, character and setting.
- CON5** Proposals for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will be refused.
- CON6** Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only if the loss of the building would not adversely affect the character of the area and, where appropriate, if there are detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment of the site.

**CON7** Planning permission will not be granted for development which would harm the character or appearance of a conservation area.

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

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

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

**CON8** Consent will not be granted for the display of signs on a listed building or in a conservation area which are in any way harmful to the character and appearance of the building or area. Where it is accepted that a sign is needed, it should generally be non-illuminated, made of natural materials and to a design and scale reflecting the best traditional practice.

**CON9** Permission will not be granted for the installation of blinds or canopies of non-traditional form or materials on buildings within conservation areas.

**CON10** In the historic towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford the burgage plots to the rear of the principal streets will generally be protected from amalgamation and from development which by its nature would detract from their historic interest, amenity and nature conservation value.

**CON11** There will be a presumption in favour of physically preserving nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings.

**CON12** Before the determination of an application for development which may affect a site of archaeological interest or potentially of archaeological importance, prospective developers will be required, where necessary, to make provision for an archaeological field evaluation, in order to enable an informed and reasoned planning decision to be made.

**CON13** Wherever practicable and desirable, developments affecting sites of archaeological interest should be designed to achieve physical preservation in situ of archaeological deposits. Where this is not practicable or desirable, conditions will be imposed on planning permissions, or planning obligations sought, which will require the developer to provide an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication by a professionally-qualified body.

**CON14** Before the determination of an application which affects a building of archaeological or historic interest, applicants will be required, where necessary, to submit a detailed record survey and analysis of the building. In some circumstances, further survey and analysis will be made a condition of consent.

**CON15** Proposals which would damage the character, setting or amenities of a battlefield, park or garden of special historic interest, contained in the English Heritage Registers, will not be permitted.

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- CON16** Proposals for development on or affecting common land, village greens and other important spaces within settlements will not be permitted.
- EP1** Proposals which would (by reason of smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust, grit, or other forms of polluting emissions) have an adverse effect on people and other living organisms, the atmosphere, the land, underground water supplies or watercourses will not be permitted, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented. In addition, development will not be permitted near to an existing or proposed polluting use, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented to ensure that there would be no adverse effect on the health and amenity of future occupiers.
- EP2** Proposals which would by reason of noise or vibrations have an adverse effect on existing or proposed occupiers will not be permitted, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented. In addition, noise sensitive development will not be permitted close to existing or proposed sources of significant noise or vibrations.
- EP3** Proposals for new floodlighting and other external lighting that would have an adverse effect on neighbouring residents, the rural character of the countryside or biodiversity will not be permitted, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented.
- EP4** Proposals which increase the requirement for water will not be permitted, unless adequate water resources either already exist or can be provided without detriment to existing abstraction, river flows, groundwater flow to and from springs, water quality, biodiversity or other land uses. Proposals which have a significant impact on water resources will be required to incorporate water conservation measures designed to mitigate that impact.
- ~~**EP5** Development in areas at risk from flooding will only be permitted where the proposals include effective works to mitigate the adverse effects of the development.~~
- EP6** Developers will be required, wherever practicable, to demonstrate that the surface water management system on any development accords with sustainable drainage principles and has been designed as an integral part of the development layout. The system should effectively mitigate any adverse effects from surface water run-off and flooding on people, property and the ecological value of the local environment.
- EP7** Development that may have an adverse effect upon groundwater resources will not be permitted unless effective preventative measures are taken to ensure that the quality and quantity of these resources are maintained.
- EP8** Development on contaminated land will not be permitted unless the contamination is effectively treated by the developer to prevent any harm to human health and the wider environment.
- EP9** Development will not be permitted which involves the use, movement or storage of hazardous substances where there would be an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of users of the site, neighbouring land or the environment. Development will not be permitted in the vicinity of an installation involving hazardous substances or activities if the health and safety of occupants of that development would be put at risk by the installation.

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

- D1** The principles of good design and the protection and reinforcement of local distinctiveness should be taken into account in all new development through:
- (i) the provision of a clear structure of spaces;
  - (ii) respecting existing settlement patterns;
  - (iii) providing for a choice of routes and transport modes to, from and within the development;
  - (iv) providing a development that users find easy to understand through the use of landmarks, vistas and focal points;
  - (v) providing landscape structure as a framework for new development;
  - (vi) respecting the character of the existing landscape;
  - (vii) respecting distinctive settlement types and their character;
  - (viii) providing good quality site and building design and appropriate materials; and
  - (ix) providing well-designed external areas.
- D2** Planning permission will not be granted for developments that fail to incorporate adequate, safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles. Vehicle parking should be provided in a discreet and sensitive manner.
- D3** A private outdoor garden or outdoor amenity space, or alternatively a shared amenity area should be provided for all new dwellings. The amount of land to be used for the garden or amenity space will be determined by the size of the dwelling proposed, by the character of surrounding development and by plot coverage standards. Private outdoor sitting areas should not be overlooked by adjacent outdoor sitting areas, living/dining rooms or kitchens.
- D4** All new dwellings should be designed and laid out so as to secure a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupiers. Development will not be permitted if it would unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight.
- D5** A compatible mix of uses will be retained and encouraged in town and local district centres; on large-scale housing developments; and on sites within settlements that are well served by public transport, provided that:
- (i) there is no harmful effect on the amenity of adjoining uses;
  - (ii) the design of the scheme is appropriate to the site and its surroundings; and
  - (iii) the development is served by an adequate road network which can accommodate any additional traffic without creating traffic hazards or damage to the environment.
- D6** The design and layout of development will be encouraged in ways which will reduce the opportunity for crime, and will promote suitable means of improving the security of premises.

- D7** Proposals for new buildings to which the public have access must include in their design and external layout appropriate measures to ensure adequate access for those with impaired mobility, hearing or sight. The safety and access requirements of those with impairments should also be taken into account in the design and layout of new roads, parking areas, footways, pedestrian routes, cycleways, traffic management measures and pedestrian-priority areas.
- D8** ~~All new development should demonstrate high standards in the conservation and efficient use of energy, water and materials through its siting, landscaping, building design, use of materials, layout and orientation of buildings.~~
- D9** ~~Proposals for renewable energy development will be permitted provided that they do not have a significant adverse effect on the landscape, heritage and biodiversity of an area, traffic generation or the amenities of local communities.~~
- D10** Proposals which do not make adequate provision for the management of waste in new developments, including communal and private storage space for recyclables and facilities for the disposal of waste products, will not be permitted.
- D11** ~~Development will only be permitted if adequate on- or off-site infrastructure and other services and facilities made necessary by the development are available or will be provided to service it. The requirement for infrastructure and other services and facilities will be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and will include, where appropriate, the provision of:~~
- ~~(i) affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;~~
  - ~~(ii) transport measures including infrastructure, public transport services, traffic management and measures for cyclists and pedestrians;~~
  - ~~(iii) education facilities;~~
  - ~~(iv) arts and cultural facilities;~~
  - ~~(v) facilities for the emergency services;~~
  - ~~(vi) public open spaces and associated facilities;~~
  - ~~(vii) community (including social services) and recreation facilities;~~
  - ~~(viii) health care services;~~
  - ~~(ix) local convenience shops;~~
  - ~~(x) measures to allow effective waste collection and recycling;~~
  - ~~(xi) surface water and foul drainage works;~~
  - ~~(xii) measures designed to mitigate the effects of the development on the environment.~~
- ~~Regard will be had to the cumulative impact of development and developers may be required to contribute jointly to necessary infrastructure improvements.~~
- ~~Before planning permission is granted legal obligations must be completed between owners and/or developers and infrastructure providers, securing the provision of land and the payment of financial contributions to the providers to enable the provision and, where appropriate, the subsequent maintenance of essential infrastructure and facilities.~~

- D12** On all housing developments in excess of 1 hectare and on all employment or commercial developments in excess of 2,000 square metres gross floorspace, a contribution towards public art will be sought.

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

- H1** ~~Sufficient land will be released for housing development to ensure that the housing provisions in the Structure Plan are met. Development which would cause these provisions to be significantly exceeded will not be permitted.~~

- H2** The following sites are allocated for residential development subject to the requirements set out in DID1 to DID6, ~~RUR10, RUR11, RUR13, THA4, HEN1, and WAL1 to WAL3:~~

	Estimated no. of dwellings
<b>DIDCOT</b>	
Ladygrove East	670* <sup>▲</sup>
<del>Haydon Road</del>	<del>22*</del>
<del>Town Centre redevelopment</del>	<del>22*</del>
Vauxhall Barracks	300 <sup>▲</sup>
Didcot West	2700 <sup>▲</sup>
<b>REMAINDER OF DISTRICT</b>	
<del>Chinnor Cement Works</del>	<del>130<sup>▲</sup></del>
<del>Fair Mile Hospital, Cholsey</del>	<del>150<sup>▲</sup></del>
<del>Wilder's site and adjoining land, Crowmarsh</del>	<del>42*</del>
Townlands Hospital, Henley	62* <sup>▲</sup>
<del>Rycotewood College Thame</del>	<del>80<sup>▲</sup></del>
<del>Blue Mountains and Sinodun Centre, Wallingford</del>	<del>58<sup>▲</sup></del>
<del>Lamb Garage, Wallingford</del>	<del>10*</del>
<del>Station Road Industrial Estate, Wallingford</del>	<del>47<sup>▲</sup></del>

\* existing permission or allocation      <sup>▲</sup> new allocation in this plan

- H3** ~~The release of land will be monitored to ensure that sufficient land is released to meet the Structure Plan housing requirements. With the exception of the major development areas at Didcot, planning permission for the release of greenfield sites will not be given if previously-developed land in sustainable locations is available.~~
- H4** Proposals for housing on sites within the built-up areas of the 4 main towns of the district and of up to about 0.5 hectares within the built-up areas of the larger villages outside the Green Belt will be permitted provided that:
- (i) an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important public view spoilt;
  - (ii) the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings;
  - (iii) the character of the area is not adversely affected;
  - (iv) there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections; and
  - (v) if the proposal constitutes backland development, it would not create problems of privacy and access and would not extend the built limits of the settlement.
- H5** ~~Within the larger villages in the Green Belt and smaller villages throughout the district, infill, which is defined as the filling of an appropriate small gap in an otherwise largely built-up frontage by the erection of one or two detached or up to four small terraced or semi-detached dwellings, or backland development of the same scale, will be permitted provided that criteria (i)-(v) in Policy H4 can all be met.~~
- H6** ~~Except as specifically provided for under other plan policies, planning permission will not be granted for new houses:~~
- (i) ~~in the countryside;~~
  - (ii) ~~in settlements not listed in paragraph 5.17(i)-(iv); and~~
  - (iii) ~~on the edge of settlements where the built-up area of the settlement would be extended.~~
- H7** ~~A mix of dwelling types and sizes to meet the needs of current and future households in the district will be sought in new residential developments. Areas of housing of uniform type and size will not be acceptable.~~
- H8** ~~On sites where housing development is acceptable in principle, a density of 30 dwellings or more per hectare (net) and in town centre locations, of 40 dwellings or more per hectare (net) will be required, unless such densities would have an adverse effect on the character of the area.~~
- H9** ~~Based on the demonstrated need for affordable housing in the district, a proportion of affordable housing will be sought on:~~
- (i) ~~sites allocated for housing in this plan;~~
  - (ii) ~~housing sites which are greater than 0.5ha or would accommodate 15 dwellings or more in settlements of over 3000 population where 40% affordable housing will be sought; and~~

- ~~(iii) housing sites which are capable of accommodating a net gain of 5 or more small dwellings in settlements of less than 3000 population where 40% affordable housing will be sought.~~

~~The affordable housing should:~~

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

**H10** In exceptional circumstances special small-scale affordable housing schemes may be permitted within or adjoining villages, provided that:

- (i) it can be demonstrated that all of the houses meet a particular local need that cannot be accommodated in any other way;
- (ii) there are satisfactory arrangements to ensure that the benefits of the affordable housing can be enjoyed by subsequent as well as the initial occupants and that the dwellings remain available for local people; and
- (iii) there are no overriding amenity, environmental, design or highway objections.

Preference will be given to sites where there are adequate local services and facilities.

Planning obligations will be sought before planning permission is issued to ensure that the above conditions are met.

**H11** The sub-division of dwellings and conversions to multiple occupation will be permitted within the built-up area of settlements provided that the development:

- (i) would not harm the amenity of the occupants of nearby properties;
- (ii) is appropriate in terms of the size of the property and the proposed internal layout, access, private amenity space and car parking provision;
- (iii) would not adversely affect the character of the building or the surrounding residential area; and
- (iv) would not result in environmental or highway objections.

Outside the built-up limits of a settlement the sub-division of a dwelling will not be permitted.

**H12** Proposals for the replacement of a dwelling outside the built-up limits of those settlements listed in paragraphs 5.17(i)-(iv) will be permitted provided that:

- (i) the use has not been abandoned;
- (ii) the existing dwelling is not listed, or of historic, visual or architectural interest;
- (iii) the proposed dwelling is not materially greater in volume than the existing dwelling (taking account of permitted development rights);
- (iv) the overall impact would not be any greater than the existing dwelling on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area; and
- (v) the siting, design and materials are in keeping with the locality.

- H13** Extensions to dwellings or the erection and extension of ancillary buildings within the curtilage of a dwelling, will be permitted provided that:
- (i) in the Green Belt, outside the limits of the larger and smaller villages<sup>1</sup> the extension would be no greater than 40% of the volume of the original dwelling;
  - (ii) the scale and design of the proposal is in keeping with the character of the dwelling and the site and with the appearance of the surrounding area;
  - (iii) the amenity of occupants of nearby properties is not materially harmed;
  - (iv) the proposal would not be tantamount to the creation of a separate dwelling; and
  - (v) adequate and satisfactory parking and amenity areas are provided for the extended dwelling.
- <sup>1</sup> Beckley, Berinsfield, Clifton Hampden, Culham, Dorchester, Garsington, Great Milton, Horspath, Little Milton, Sandford, Stadhampton, Stanton St John and Warborough.
- ~~**H14** On suitable housing developments a proportion of housing designed to lifetime homes standards will be sought.~~
- H15** Proposals for new residential caravans or mobile home sites or extensions to existing sites will be considered in accordance with the housing policies in this plan. Permission will only be given for single residential caravans or mobile homes in exceptional circumstances on a temporary and personal basis.
- H16** Permission will only be granted for the redevelopment of residential caravan or mobile home sites for permanent residential development if such development would comply with the policies in this plan.
- H17** The provision of additional gypsy caravan sites will only be permitted if:
- (i) there is an established need that cannot be met on existing sites;
  - (ii) the site is not in the Green Belt, in a conservation area, on open land in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or does not adversely affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest;
  - (iii) it would not have a detrimental effect on the landscape, the landscape setting of settlements, or on important open gaps within or between settlements;
  - (iv) it would not adversely affect the amenities of nearby residents or users of the countryside;
  - (v) the site is located within a reasonable distance of a primary school, shops and other services; and
  - (vi) there are no overriding objections on amenity, environmental or highway grounds.
- H18** Proposals to change the use of agricultural land to extend residential gardens or curtilages will be permitted provided that the proposal:
- (i) does not have a detrimental effect on the landscape, on the landscape setting of settlements, on the open character and rural nature of the Green Belt or on important open gaps within settlements; and
  - (ii) does not adversely affect the amenities of adjoining residents or users of the countryside.

- R1** Proposals for new or improved facilities for outdoor sport or children's play to serve local needs will be permitted in or adjacent to settlements provided that there are no overriding amenity, environmental, Green Belt, transport or agricultural objections.
- R2** When granting planning permission for new residential development, developers will be required to provide outdoor playing space for the new residents to a minimum standard of 2.4 hectares per 1000 persons.
- Developers will be required to demonstrate that satisfactory provision for long-term maintenance has been made.
- On housing sites which are less than 0.4 hectare or which would accommodate less than 15 dwellings, where it may not be reasonable to expect the developer to provide the outdoor playing space within the development site, improvements to an existing outdoor playing space or, if appropriate, provision in a nearby area will be sought.
- R3** Within the built-up area of towns and villages outside the Green Belt the erection of buildings to provide new or extended indoor sports facilities will be permitted provided that the scale, design and materials of the building are in keeping with its surroundings and there are no other overriding objections on highway and amenity grounds.
- The change of use of existing buildings will also be permitted provided that the building is suitable for the use proposed and there are no overriding objections on amenity, highway or environmental grounds.
- R4** Proposals for outdoor sport in the countryside, with the exception of golf courses, will be permitted provided that:
- (i) the proposal would not detract from the rural character and landscape of the area particularly in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
  - (ii) the proposal would not adversely affect the amenities of residents in the vicinity or spoil the enjoyment of other users of the countryside, particularly by noise, but also by smell, traffic generation or any other disturbance;
  - (iii) the proposal would not adversely affect sites of archaeological, historical or nature conservation importance or result in the loss of high-grade agricultural land as defined in Policy C5;
  - (iv) full use is made of existing buildings worthy of retention. The only new buildings which will normally be permitted must be no larger than is essential for the functioning of the sport, be limited in scale and in keeping with the locality in terms of design; and
  - (v) if the site is in the Green Belt the proposal would not conflict with the policies in Section 3 of the plan.
- R5** Proposals for golf courses will be permitted provided that:
- (i) the essential character of the area is conserved or where possible enhanced, particularly in the Green Belt and in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Golf courses will not be permitted in prominent locations or in areas where the landscape would be damaged;

- (ii) full use is made of existing buildings which are worthy of retention. The only new buildings that will normally be permitted will be a club-house and maintenance building and these must be limited in scale and in keeping with the locality in terms of siting, design and appearance;
- (iii) it would not damage the amenities of local residents, affect the use or enjoyment of public rights-of-way, spoil other people's enjoyment of the countryside, cause traffic or highway safety problems or conflict with the other policies in this plan;
- (iv) the proposal would not adversely affect sites of archaeological, historical or nature conservation importance or result in the loss of high-grade agricultural land as defined in Policy C5; and
- (v) wherever possible opportunities are taken to enhance the landscape, to improve public access and wildlife habitats.

**R6** When granting planning permission for new residential development, developers will be required to provide public open space for informal recreation to meet the needs of the new residents in accordance with an amount appropriate to the locality and the size of the development proposed.

**R7** The role of the countryside in providing for a wide range of informal recreational activities is recognised. Small-scale facilities (such as car parking, toilets, or picnic sites) which support the recreational use will be permitted at popular locations, provided that they are sensitively designed and sited and there are no overriding amenity, environmental or traffic objections.

**R8** The retention and protection of the existing public rights-of-way network will be sought and where appropriate proposals to improve it will be supported.

**R9** In considering proposals for recreational development associated with the River Thames and its valley, the overriding aim will be to preserve the river environment and landscape. To this end:

- (i) new permanent moorings or new hire bases will not be permitted: temporary and overnight moorings for visitors will be permitted in suitable locations where no environmental damage is caused and where proper access and other facilities are available;
- (ii) opportunities will be taken, where appropriate and desirable, to relocate existing on-river moorings into side channels provided that there is no harm to amenity or important biodiversity resources; and
- (iii) wherever possible water-sports activities should develop through existing sites and premises rather than through the creation of new ones. Planning permission may be given for new facilities for water-sports, where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that existing facilities would not meet the need and that there would not, as a result of the development, be insuperable conflicts between river users, or significantly increased congestion.

Proposals to redevelop existing boatyards and boat hire facilities for other uses will not be permitted.

All development proposals should, where appropriate, include measures to improve opportunities for public access to and onto the river.

- R10** Proposals involving or connected with the keeping of horses will normally be permitted provided that the proposed development would not:
- (i) be visually intrusive or damage the appearance and character of the area and the landscape;
  - (ii) conflict with the overriding objective in the Green Belt to maintain the open nature and rural character of the land; or
  - (iii) damage the amenities of the area in terms of traffic, excessive bridleway use, noise, smell or other disturbance.
- CF1** Proposals that result in the loss of a recreation facility or an essential community facility or service, through change of use or redevelopment, will not be permitted unless:
- (i) suitable alternative provision is made for the facility (or similar facilities of equivalent community value) on a site elsewhere in the locality, or
  - (ii) in the case of recreational facilities, it is not needed, or
  - (iii) in the case of commercial services, it is not economically viable.
- CF2** Proposals that would result in the provision of additional community facilities or services within settlements will be permitted, provided that there are no overriding amenity, environmental or traffic objections to the proposals and that there is no conflict with the other policies in this plan.
- CF3** In the local and neighbourhood centres of towns and in the larger villages, change of use of shops to non-retail uses will only be permitted where this would not detract from the overall role and attractiveness of the shopping area.

## Section 6 - Supporting the local economy

- ~~**E1** In Didcot planning permission for business and industry, storage and distribution will be granted:~~
- ~~(i) for proposals on sites allocated in Section 10 in accordance with Policies DID5 to DID9 and DID11;~~
  - ~~(ii) for new premises or the conversion of existing buildings on a suitable site within the built-up area; and~~
  - ~~(iii) for the reasonable extension of a firm on its present site;~~
- ~~provided that in all cases the requirements of Policies E4 and E5 are met.~~
- ~~**E2** In Henley, Thame and Wallingford the provision of land for employment-generating development will be restrained. Planning permission for business and industry, storage and distribution will only be granted:~~
- ~~(i) for proposals on sites allocated in Sections 11 and 13 in accordance with Policies HEN2, HEN3 and WAL5;~~
  - ~~(ii) for new premises or the conversion of existing buildings on a suitable site within the built-up area; and~~
  - ~~(iii) for the reasonable extension of a firm on its present site;~~
- ~~provided that in all cases the requirements of Policies E4 and E5 are met.~~

- E3** ~~In the rural areas planning permission for business and industry, storage and distribution will only be granted:~~
- ~~(i) for proposals on sites allocated in Section 9 in accordance with Policies RUR10, 11, 12, 14 and 15;~~
  - ~~(ii) for new premises up to 500 square metres gross floorspace on a suitable site within the built-up area of a village outside the Green Belt;~~
  - ~~(iii) for new premises on a suitable site within the built-up area of a village outside the Green Belt for firms whose sources of supply, commercial linkages, labour supply and markets make a specific location necessary;~~
  - ~~(iv) for the conversion of existing buildings within the built-up area of villages;~~
  - ~~(v) for the re-use of rural buildings in accordance with Policy E8; and~~
  - ~~(vi) for the reasonable extension of a firm on its present site provided that the site is not within the Green Belt, the extension is well related to the existing buildings on the site, the firm is not considered to be badly sited and in the case of proposals which would generate significant new employment opportunities, the site is in a location which is accessible by walking, cycling and/or public transport;~~
- ~~provided that in all cases the requirements of Policies E4 and E5 are met.~~
- E4** ~~Proposals for employment-generating development which would conflict with the overall strategy of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan to restrain the overall level of development, with Didcot as the preferred location for new development, will not be permitted. In particular it must be demonstrated that there is sufficient existing or planned housing land available to meet any demand generated by the proposals.~~
- E5** Proposals for business, industry, warehousing and storage will not be permitted which:
- (i) conflict with the policies in the plan to protect the Green Belt and the countryside;
  - (ii) conflict with the policies in the plan to protect the built environment and to retain recreational uses and essential community facilities and services in accordance with Policies CF1 and CF3;
  - (iii) are of a scale and type of development inappropriate to the proposed site and its surroundings;
  - (iv) are not in keeping with the surrounding area in terms of design, layout and materials. Where appropriate, the site must be suitably landscaped, in accordance with Policies D1 and C1. In new developments the Council will normally require at least one-tenth of the gross developable area to be set aside for landscaping;
  - (v) have inadequate access and car and lorry parking and manoeuvring facilities and/or would cause problems on the wider road network in accordance with Policies D2 and T1 to T3;
  - (vi) where appropriate, are in locations which are not accessible by public transport in accordance with Policy T2; and/or
  - (vii) cause problems as a result of noise, smell, dust, loss of privacy or cause any other environmental problems in accordance with Policies EP1 to EP9.

- E6** Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of redundant land or buildings in employment or service trade use to non-employment uses will be permitted if:
- (i) the site is less than 0.25 ha and buildings under 500 sq.m and in the towns of Didcot, Henley, Thame, or Wallingford; or
  - (ii) the existing use is no longer economically viable and the site has been marketed at a reasonable price for at least a year for that and any other suitable employment or service trade uses.
- E7** Where planning permission for working at home is required permission will be granted provided that:
- (i) the business use would not adversely change the overall character of the dwelling and the locality;
  - (ii) the business use does not generate a material and detrimental increase in the amount of traffic or in car parking requirements;
  - (iii) there is no outside storage of goods, vehicles or materials; and
  - (iv) the proposed use does not cause problems as a result of noise, dust, smell or loss of privacy, nor cause any other environmental problems, in accordance with Policies EP1 to EP9.
- E8** Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings will be permitted provided that:
- (i) they are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;
  - (ii) their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings;
  - (iii) the fabric and essential character of the buildings are maintained;
  - (iv) if the buildings are in the Green Belt, the proposed use does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
  - (v) there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections;
  - (vi) in the case of proposals for B1 or B2 uses the floorspace in the building or in the complex of buildings does not exceed 500 square metres; and
  - (vii) in the case of proposals for residential use, other uses have been explored and found to be unacceptable in planning terms.
- E9** Proposals for extensions to existing institutions in the countryside, to meet the operational requirements of the institution will be permitted provided that:
- (i) the site is not within the Green Belt;
  - (ii) the proposal does not conflict with the policies in this plan to protect the countryside;
  - (iii) the proposed extension is of a scale and type of development appropriate for the site and its surroundings, and the extension is well related to the existing buildings on the site;
  - (iv) the design and materials used are in keeping with existing buildings and suitable landscaping is provided where appropriate; and
  - (v) in the case of proposals which would generate significant additional journeys, the site is in a location which is accessible by public transport and/or by cycling and walking.

**A1** Where planning permission is needed for the erection of an agricultural building or structure, this will normally be permitted provided that there is a need for the building or structure which cannot satisfactorily be met by existing buildings or structures on the farm or nearby. Proposals for agricultural buildings and structures, or alterations and extensions to existing buildings and structures, will be permitted provided that:

- (i) the siting of the building or structure would not be prominent in the landscape and would not damage the environment or the amenities of the occupants of nearby properties;
- (ii) the design and materials to be used are in keeping with its surroundings, bearing in mind the particular needs of the farming industry, and that satisfactory landscaping is proposed; and
- (iii) wherever possible or acceptable, the development should be located close to existing buildings rather than in open countryside.

Where existing buildings or structures can no longer be used and replacement buildings or structures are required and the existing buildings or structures are of no historical or architectural importance, then the redundant building or structure should be demolished and replaced by the new building or structure in the same location, unless it can be demonstrated that this is impractical or inappropriate in a particular instance.

New agricultural roads, access ways or hardstandings should not be intrusive in the landscape, involve the loss of landscape features such as important trees or hedgerows and should not significantly harm the amenities of the area.

**A2** Planning permission will not be granted for non-agricultural development near to an existing agricultural building used for the accommodation of livestock, or near to associated structures such as those for storage of slurry where the agricultural use would be likely to cause nuisance to the occupiers of the proposed development.

**A3** Proposals to diversify the agricultural industry will be permitted provided that:

- (i) the proposal conforms with the policies for the use proposed and there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections;
- (ii) the land is kept predominantly open, and the appearance and character of the landscape is not damaged and where possible is enhanced;
- (iii) the use is compatible with a countryside location and would not result in a loss of amenity, or spoil the enjoyment of users of the countryside; and
- (iv) where farm buildings are to be used, the proposal conforms with Policy E8.

No new building will be allowed unless:

- (i) it is essential for the diversification scheme to proceed,
- (ii) it is ancillary to the proposed use,
- (iii) existing buildings on the site are not available or suitable, and
- (iv) there are no overriding amenity, environmental, landscape or highway objections.

- A4** Proposals for farm shops will be permitted provided that:
- (i) the scale of operations is small;
  - (ii) it can be demonstrated that the shop is needed to sell goods produced on the farm unit and that the greater proportion of goods sold comprise local produce;
  - (iii) existing buildings are used if at all possible;
  - (iv) there would be no significant adverse impact on any nearby village shop; and
  - (v) there are no overriding environmental, amenity or highway objections.
- A5** Outside the Green Belt, proposals for garden centres will only be permitted when the location is within or on the edge of a settlement and where there are no significant amenity, environmental or transport objections. Within the Green Belt such proposals will not be permitted, and in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, preservation and enhancement of the AONB will be the primary aim.
- A6** ~~Planning permission for new farmhouses and agricultural workers' dwellings outside villages will only be permitted where:~~
- ~~(i) it is essential for the proper functioning of the holding for a worker to be readily available at most times and where this need cannot be met in existing accommodation on the unit or in the area, or in a suitably converted building or in any other way;~~
  - ~~(ii) a financial test demonstrates that the enterprise is economically viable;~~
  - ~~(iii) the need relates to a full-time worker or one who is primarily employed in agriculture, and does not relate to a part-time requirement;~~
  - ~~(iv) the unit and the agricultural activity giving rise to the claimed need for a new dwelling has been established for at least three years and has been profitable for at least one of them and can be expected to remain profitable in the future at a level which would sustain the provision of the agricultural dwelling proposed;~~
  - ~~(v) unless there are exceptional circumstances, no dwellings or potential dwellings have been sold off from the enterprise within the previous five years;~~
  - ~~(vi) there are clearly identifiable changed circumstances which give rise to the need for a new dwelling;~~
  - ~~(vii) the proposed dwelling is of a size and style appropriate to the requirements of the enterprise and is sited close to existing or proposed buildings or where it will be screened by natural features;~~
  - ~~(viii) the development is designed to respect the surrounding area in terms of scale, height, design and materials; and~~
  - ~~(ix) an adequate and safe means of access exists or can be provided without an adverse impact upon the environment of the area, and the approach roads are capable of satisfactorily accommodating any additional traffic.~~

~~If it is considered that a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, whether on a newly-created agricultural unit or an established one, it should, for the first three years, normally be provided by a caravan, a wooden structure which can be easily dismantled, or other temporary accommodation.~~

~~Where planning permission is given for an agricultural worker's dwelling it will be made subject to an occupancy condition and such a condition may also be imposed on other dwellings on the unit.~~

~~A planning obligation may be sought to ensure that no dwellings or land forming part of the holding can be sold separately, without the prior agreement of the local planning authority.~~

~~**A7** Permission will be given for the removal of conditions restricting the occupancy of an agricultural dwelling where it is satisfactorily demonstrated both that the dwelling is no longer required to serve the needs of the holding and that there is no general demand for an agricultural dwelling in the locality.~~

**TSM1** The prosperity of the area's tourist industry will be supported through encouragement for enterprises which are based on the conservation and enjoyment of the inherent qualities and heritage of the area, provided that there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections.

**TSM2** Proposals for improvements to tourist attractions and facilities, and proposals for new attractions based on the character of the area, will be permitted provided that:

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

**TSM3** The conversion of existing buildings for use as hotels, other serviced accommodation, public houses and restaurants will be permitted, provided that:

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

**TSM4** The construction of hotels, other serviced accommodation, public houses and restaurants will be permitted within the built-up area of existing settlements provided that:

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

Outside the Green Belt, extensions to existing premises in the district will normally be permitted subject to criteria (ii)-(v) above.

**TSM5** Proposals for self-catering holiday homes will be considered in relation to the housing policies set out in Section 5 of this plan and, where appropriate, Policy E8 relating to the re-use of rural buildings.

**TSM6** Touring caravan and camping sites will be permitted provided that:

- (i) the site is not in the Green Belt;
- (ii) the proposed development has no adverse impact on the landscape, ecological or historic characteristics of the site and its surroundings;
- (iii) the proposal is limited in scale and incorporates a comprehensive landscaping scheme which reinforces the visual, historic and ecological character of the site and its surroundings;
- (iv) the proposed development would not cause any detrimental impact on the amenity of adjacent occupiers or the quiet informal enjoyment of the open countryside;
- (v) where appropriate, the site is accessible by public transport and provision is made for pedestrian and cycle links with adjacent areas;
- (vi) there are no other overriding amenity, environmental, or highway objections; and
- (vii) where possible associated facilities are sited in existing buildings in accordance with Policy E8. Where new buildings are essential these must be designed to a high standard and be sensitively sited.

Where permission is given, it will normally be subject to a condition restricting the use to holiday accommodation and the site may also be made subject to a seasonal occupancy condition. Static caravans will not be permitted.

**TE1** Proposals for telecommunications development will be permitted provided that:

- (i) they are sited and designed so as to minimise visual intrusion;
- (ii) they do not have a significant adverse effect on the street scene, the appearance or setting of a building, or landscape character particularly in areas of special landscape value, conservation areas, and on listed buildings;
- (iii) no alternative, less visually intrusive site is available or technically feasible; and
- (iv) where a new mast is proposed, there is no opportunity for sharing existing masts or, where more appropriate, existing sites.

**AD1** Proposals for the display of outdoor advertisements and signs on the premises to which they relate will be permitted, provided that they do not have an adverse effect on visual amenity or public safety. Proposals for signs which are not to be displayed on the premises to which they relate will not be permitted, except where the premises are particularly remote and where the appearance of the local area is not spoilt.

## Section 7 - Supporting vital and viable town centres

~~**TC1** Planning permission will be granted for mixed-use development (including shops, offices, housing and other key town centre uses that attract many people) on the sites allocated in the town centres, in accordance with Policies DID6 to DID8, HEN2, THA1 and WAL4.~~

- TC2** Within the town centre boundaries as shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will be granted for proposals involving:
- (i) the extension of existing buildings to facilitate the expansion of the uses specified in Policy TC1;
  - (ii) the infilling of small gaps in existing street frontages; and
  - (iii) the small-scale redevelopment of existing premises in street frontages to accommodate the uses specified in Policy TC1;
- provided that in each case the site is well integrated with the primary shopping frontages proposed in accordance with Policy TC8 and that there are no overriding amenity, design, environmental or traffic problems or conflicts with other policies in this plan.
- ~~**TC3** Planning permission will be granted for environmental improvements and other works in the public realm that are designed to improve the environment, character and quality of the town centres.~~
- ~~**TC4** The Council will grant planning permission for the residential use of accommodation at upper floor levels above existing shops and other commercial premises in the town centres provided that the residential use does not adversely affect the viability of any ground floor shop use.~~
- TC5** The loss of existing residential accommodation in the town centres will not be permitted other than in accordance with the relevant policies of this plan, except in cases of upper floor accommodation where an independent access does not exist and cannot be provided, or in cases where there are insurmountable environmental factors which militate against continued residential use. The loss of private gardens, which could affect the viability of existing dwellings will also be resisted.
- TC6** Within the town centre boundaries shown on the Proposals Map, office uses will be permitted in upper floor accommodation above existing commercial premises provided that:
- (i) the viability of any ground floor shop use would not be adversely affected;
  - (ii) that no viable or potentially viable, dwelling would be lost (see Policy TC5);
  - (iii) the site is well integrated with the primary shopping frontages; and
  - (iv) there is no conflict with the policies for business uses in Section 6 of this plan and for the control of alterations and changes of use to listed buildings in Section 3 of this plan.
- TC7** Proposals for shops and other key town centre uses that attract many people will not be permitted in locations outside the town centre boundaries shown on the Proposals Map.
- TC8** Within the primary shopping frontages in each town centre shown on the Proposals Maps, the change of use of a shop (Class A1) to a non-shop use will not be permitted if it would undermine the vitality and viability, and the dominant retailing character and function, of the primary shopping frontages in each centre.

## Section 8 - Promoting a sustainable transport strategy

- T1** Proposals for all types of development will, where appropriate:
- (i) provide for a safe and convenient access to the highway network;
  - (ii) provide safe and convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians;
  - (iii) be accessible by public transport and have a safe walking route to nearby bus stops or new bus stops and appropriate infrastructure should be provided;
  - (iv) be served by an adequate road network which can accommodate traffic without creating traffic hazards or damage to the environment;
  - (v) where new roads, pedestrian routes, cycleways and street lighting are to be constructed as part of the development, be constructed to adoptable standards and be completed as soon as they are required to serve the development; and
  - (vi) make adequate provision for those whose mobility is impaired.
- T2** Proposals for development will, where appropriate, make provision for:
- (i) loading, unloading, circulation and turning space;
  - (ii) parking for people with disabilities;
  - (iii) the parking of vehicles in accordance with the Council's maximum parking standards;
  - (iv) measures to reduce the need for vehicle parking where appropriate; and
  - (v) cycle parking in accordance with the Council's standards.
- ~~**T3** A transport assessment should be submitted with planning applications for all developments with significant transport implications. Where appropriate a travel plan should be included with the assessment.~~
- ~~**T4** Planning permission will be granted for proposals which improve public transport facilities in order to reduce reliance on car-based travel. This will include, where appropriate, the provision of suitable interchange facilities between public transport services and between different modes of transport such as car, bus, rail, taxis, cycling and walking provided that there are no significant adverse effects on the environment or amenities of residents.~~
- T5** Where required, planning permission will be granted for proposals which
- (i) improve rail services in South Oxfordshire
  - (ii) improve access to rail services and/or
  - (iii) improve facilities at railway stations provided that there are no significant adverse effects on the environment or amenities of residents.
- T6** Existing or former rail facilities will be protected from development which might adversely affect their use or potential re-use for public transport or as a cycling route.
- T7** Planning permission will be granted for proposals to improve and extend the footpath and cycleway network provided that there are no significant adverse effects on the environment or amenities of residents. Development that would prejudice pedestrian and cycle circulation or route provision will not be permitted.

- T8** A comprehensive approach will be adopted to the provision and management of car parking spaces in order to:
- (i) improve the attraction of existing town and village centres and seek to maintain and enhance their vitality and viability; and
  - (ii) encourage other transport modes as alternatives to car-borne travel.
- Current and planned levels of car parking in the towns and villages will be maintained until public transport services and safe cycle routes are sufficiently developed. Additional parking will only be provided where there is special justification.
- T9** Petrol filling stations or other service areas for motorists will not be permitted outside the built-up areas of the towns and larger villages of the district.
- T10** Development which would significantly increase the number of lorries on unsuitable roads or where there would be serious and adverse effects on the environmental quality of the rural areas, towns and villages within the district will not be permitted.
- T11** Proposals for lorry and freight distribution depots which would have serious and adverse effects on the environmental quality of the rural areas, towns and villages within the district will not be permitted.

## Section 9 -The Rural Areas

- RUR1** Limited infill development at Oxford Brookes University site at Holton will be permitted provided that it would:
- (i) be located within the infill boundary shown on Map 4;
  - (ii) have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing development;
  - (iii) not significantly increase student numbers without commensurate additional residential student accommodation being provided;
  - (iv) not exceed the height of the existing buildings, excluding the main tower; and
  - (v) not lead to a major increase in the developed portion of the site.
- ~~**RUR2** Redevelopment at Oxford Brookes University site at Holton will be permitted provided that it would:~~
- ~~(i) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;~~
  - ~~(ii) contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt;~~
  - ~~(iii) not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings, unless this would achieve a reduction in height that would benefit visual amenity;~~
  - ~~(iv) not significantly increase student numbers without the provision of commensurate residential student accommodation;~~
  - ~~(v) not exceed the height of the existing buildings, excluding the main tower; and~~
  - ~~(vi) not result in the loss of important trees on the site or important wildlife habitats.~~

- RUR3** Limited infill at Culham Science Centre will be permitted provided that it would:
- (i) be located within the infill boundary shown on Map 5;
  - (ii) have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing development;
  - (iii) not exceed the height of adjacent, existing buildings;
  - (iv) not lead to a major increase in the developed portion of the site; and
  - (v) not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by car.
- ~~**RUR4** Redevelopment at Culham Science Centre will be permitted provided that it would:~~
- ~~(i) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;~~
  - ~~(ii) contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt;~~
  - ~~(iii) not exceed the height of existing buildings;~~
  - ~~(iv) not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings and where possible less; and~~
  - ~~(v) not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by private car.~~
- RUR5** The change of use of existing buildings to Class B1, B2 and B8 uses at Culham Science Centre will be permitted provided that it would;
- (i) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;
  - (ii) not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by private car.
- RUR6** Limited infill at Number 1 Site, Culham will be permitted provided that it would:
- (i) be located within the infill boundary shown on Map 6;
  - (ii) have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing development;
  - (iii) not exceed the height of adjoining buildings within the infill boundary;
  - (iv) not lead to a major increase in the developed portion of the site; and
  - (v) not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by car.
- RUR7** Redevelopment at Number 1 Site, Culham will be permitted provided that:
- (i) the proposals form a comprehensive scheme for the development of the site;
  - (ii) existing buildings and hardstandings are removed and provision made for returning undeveloped land to a state fit for agriculture;
  - (iii) it would result in material improvements to the openness of the Green Belt by grouping buildings in the central part of the site;

- (iv) it would contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts;
- (v) it would not exceed two storeys in height;
- (vi) it would not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings and where possible less; and
- (vii) it would not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by car.

**RUR8** The change of use of existing buildings to Class B1, B2 and B8 uses at Number 1 Site, Culham will be permitted provided that it would:

- (i) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;
- (ii) not significantly increase the numbers employed on the site or alternatively the number of employees travelling to and from the site by private car

**RUR9** Redevelopment and limited infill development at Sandford Sewage Treatment Works will be permitted provided that it would:

- (i) be within the development boundary shown on Map 7;
- (ii) be for purposes associated with the operational use of the site;
- (iii) not exceed two storeys in height; and
- (iv) provide for adequate access and not result in problems on the wider highway network.

**RUR10** Proposals for the re-use of Fair Mile Hospital, Cholsey will be permitted provided that they:

- (i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the re-use of the buildings worthy of retention and for the future management of the site;
- (ii) secure a mix of uses for the buildings worthy of retention consistent with the need to preserve the listed buildings and the historic park and garden;
- (iii) provide for the demolition of buildings unsuitable for re-use;
- (iv) retain as open land the undeveloped parts of the site which are of historic interest and all the undeveloped land between the buildings and the River Thames and protect, in particular, the biodiversity interest of the land adjacent to the River Thames;
- (v) provide a management plan for the future maintenance of the listed buildings and the grounds;
- (vi) provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme which includes provision for the protection and enhancement of the historic park and garden and for the maintenance of important trees and other landscape features, as well as new planting in certain areas;
- (vii) protect the biodiversity interest of the site;
- (viii) provide for a package of sustainable transport measures;
- (ix) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan; and

- (x) in the case of proposals for housing, provide for 40% of the residential units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9; for a range of dwelling sizes in accordance with Policy H7; and for recreation, education, library and any other necessary on- or off-site infrastructure or services in accordance with Policy D11.

**RUR11** Proposals for the redevelopment of the former Chinnor Cement Works will be permitted provided that they:

- (i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the re-use of the whole area of the former Cement Works as shown on the Proposals Map;
- (ii) make provision for the long-term use and maintenance of the chalk pits in a way which recognises the amenity, geological and ecological value of the pits and their potential for quiet countryside recreation;
- (iii) provide for the redevelopment of the area covered by buildings, as shown hatched on the Proposals Map, for 3.8 hectares of housing and 1 hectare of B1 and B2 employment uses and/or appropriate commercial leisure uses;
- (iv) provide for a mix of size of employment uses with an element of small units to encourage small, local businesses;
- (v) provide for 40% of units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9 and a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policy H7;
- (vi) provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme for the site;
- (vii) provide for the continued operation of the Chinnor/Princes Risborough railway line and protect the former line to the south west from development which may prejudice re-use in accordance with Policy T6; and
- (viii) provide for adequate pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access and contribute to any necessary on- or off-site works, including sustainable transport measures, education, library and recreational and community facilities in accordance with Policy D11.

**RUR12** Proposals for the re-use of Mongewell Park, Crowmarsh will be permitted provided that they:

- (i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the re-use of the buildings worthy of retention and for the future management of the site;
- (ii) secure a mix of uses on the site which reflect the nature of the buildings to be re-used and take into account the policies for particular uses in this plan;
- (iii) provide for the demolition of buildings unsuitable for re-use;
- (iv) protect the listed buildings on the site and their setting;
- (v) retain as open land the undeveloped parts of the site and make provision for any additional car parking needs within the existing complex of buildings;
- (vi) provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme which includes provision for the protection and enhancement of the AONB and parkland and the maintenance of important trees or groups of trees and other landscape features, such as lakes, ponds and the bank of the River Thames;
- (vii) provide a management plan for the future maintenance and enhancement of the site including the listed buildings and its amenity and biodiversity value;

- (viii) protect the archaeological interest of the site;
- (ix) ensure that there is no loss of flood storage capacity;
- (x) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;
- (xi) make provision for adequate access and for sustainable transport measures; and
- (xii) provide for any necessary on- or off-site infrastructure in accordance with Policy D11.

**RUR13** Proposals for the redevelopment of the Wilder's site and adjoining land, Crowmarsh, as shown on Map 11 for housing will be permitted provided that they:

- (i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the whole site;
- (ii) provide for the relocation of the existing agricultural machinery use;
- (iii) provide an open landscaped area between the housing area defined on Map 11 and the Riverside Park;
- (iv) provide a new access to the Riverside Park and maintain and improve the access to the Crowmarsh recreation ground;
- (v) incorporate any necessary remedial works to contaminated land;
- (vi) incorporate proposals for the alleviation of flood risk and flood compensation measures;
- (vii) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high quality development in Section 4 of the Plan; and
- (viii) provide for affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9, for a range of dwelling sizes in accordance with Policy H7 and for any necessary on- or off-site infrastructure in accordance with Policy D11.

**RUR14** ~~Land at Siarey's Timber Yard is considered suitable for B1 uses.~~

**RUR15** ~~Land at the Mackenzie Myers site is considered suitable for B1 use.~~

**RUR16** The Council will seek to ensure that the special character and qualities of Shotover are maintained and protected and that the area continues to be used for informal recreation. The provision of formal recreation facilities which would adversely affect the character of the area will not be permitted.

## Section 10 - Didcot

**DID1** The major development areas (MDAs) at Didcot will be implemented in accordance with comprehensive Planning and Development Briefs for the whole of each MDA and Design Statements for parts of each MDA. Adherence to the Planning and Development Brief and Design Statements when the MDAs are implemented will be secured by means of planning conditions or planning obligations.

**DID2** Proposals for development at Didcot West (as defined on the Proposals Map) will only be permitted where they are in accordance with the requirements of Policy DID1 and where all necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure and service requirements are met in accordance with Policy D11. It is proposed that the development of the site will include:

- (i) provision of about 3,200 dwellings of which about 2,700 dwellings will be located in South Oxfordshire District. The land developed in the MDA for housing (about 80 hectares) will be at 40 dwellings per hectare average net density;
- (ii) a mix of dwelling types and sizes of the general market housing with about 50% small (1 or 2 bedroom units);
- (iii) provision for 40% of dwelling units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9 with the units distributed evenly throughout the area used for housing;
- (iv) provision of a District Centre including:
  - a) a secondary school;
  - b) a primary school;
  - c) a community centre;
  - d) an indoor community sports hall;
  - e) playing fields for outdoor community sports and an equipped children's play area;
  - f) premises for a primary health care practice;
  - g) local shops and retail services, limited to uses within Part A of the Use Classes Order, including a small supermarket (about 500 square metres) and further small unit premises (about 1,200 square metres in total);
  - h) narrow-fronted, mixed-use buildings generally more than two storeys in height. The street-level uses in these buildings will include the uses in (g) above. A proportion of these mixed-use buildings will be live-work units with internal access between the workspace and a dwelling at upper floor level; and
  - i) buildings in residential use, within Part C of the Use Classes Order, generally narrow-fronted and more than two storeys in height.
- (v) two neighbourhood centres with each centre including:
  - a) a primary school;
  - b) a community centre;
  - c) local shops and retail services, limited to uses within Part A of the Use Classes Order, in small unit premises (about 500 square metres in total);
  - d) narrow-fronted mixed-use buildings as described in (iv)(h) above with the exception of small supermarkets; and
  - e) buildings in residential use as described in (iv)(i) above;
- (vi) provision of a network of public urban spaces (not less than 8 hectares) including a primary civic space in the District Centre, secondary civic spaces in the neighbourhood centres and other civic spaces within the built-up area located at key junctions in the movement network;
- (vii) provision of a network of public greenspaces (not less than 62 hectares) including community outdoor playing space, children's play areas, public gardens, open grassland, woodland, hedgerows, wetland, ponds and watercourses. A significant proportion of the public greenspace network will be located around the western and southern edges of the built-up area within the major development area;

- (viii) provision of children's play areas within the land developed for housing in accordance with Policy R2;
- (ix) provision of off-site infrastructure and services in accordance with Policy D11 including, where appropriate, financial contributions towards improving:
  - a) library, arts, cultural and entertainment facilities in Didcot town centre;
  - b) community sports facilities at Didcot Wave Leisure Centre;
  - c) facilities at Didcot Civic Hall; and
  - d) waste management facilities in or near Didcot.
- (x) provision of off-site surface water drainage works; and
- (xi) provision of transport infrastructure in accordance with Policy T1, aimed at encouraging sustainable modes of travel and reducing the need to travel by car including:
  - a) a movement network of footways, footpaths, cycletracks and roads in the MDA, connecting to existing and proposed networks at the site boundaries. The indicative location of road access connections is shown on the Proposals Map;
  - b) financial contributions to enable the provision of off-site footway, footpath and cycletrack links, road improvements and traffic management measures in Didcot, in the countryside and villages around Didcot and on the A34 trunk road made necessary by and as a consequence of development in the MDA in accordance with proposals contained in the Planning and Development Brief;
  - c) financial contributions to enable the provision of bus services and associated infrastructure to afford residents of the MDA good public transport access from Didcot and within Didcot in accordance with proposals contained in the Planning and Development Brief.

**DID3** Proposals for development at Ladygrove East, Didcot (as defined on the Proposals Map) will only be permitted where they are in accordance with the requirements of Policy DID1 and where all necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure and service requirements are met in accordance with Policy D11. It is proposed that the development of the site will include:

- (i) provision of about 670 dwellings with the land developed for housing (16.8 hectares) at 40 dwellings per hectare average net density;
- (ii) a mix of dwelling types and sizes with about 50% small (1 or 2 bedroom units);
- (iii) provision for 40% of dwelling units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;
- (iv) provision of a neighbourhood centre with a primary school and a community centre;
- (v) provision of a network of public urban spaces and public greenspaces (not less than 8 hectares) with the largest greenspace comprising a local park (not less than 6 hectares) containing an equipped children's play area, open grassland, woodland, wetland, ponds and watercourses located in the south-western part of the allocated area. Other greenspaces will comprise green corridors in the movement network and buffer zones, containing open grassland, earth mounding and woodland. The buffer zones will be of sufficient width to protect homes from noise generated on

major distributor roads and to protect road users from the Hadden Hill golf course. A buffer zone not less than 30 metres in width will separate any dwelling from the centre line of the HV overhead electricity transmission lines that cross the site;

- (vi) provision of children's play areas within the land developed for housing in accordance with Policy R2;
- (vii) provision of off-site infrastructure and services in accordance with Policy D11 including inter alia, financial contributions towards improving:
  - a) primary and secondary education facilities;
  - b) library, arts, cultural and entertainment facilities in Didcot town centre;
  - c) community sports facilities at Didcot Wave Leisure Centre;
  - d) facilities at Didcot Civic Hall; and
  - e) waste management facilities in or near Didcot.
- (viii) provision of transport infrastructure including:
  - a) completion of the Didcot northern perimeter road between Abingdon Road and Wallingford Road before more than 200 dwellings are occupied in the MDA;
  - b) completion of a footway and cycletrack between Upperway Furlong and the primary school in the MDA via Abingdon Road prior to the opening of the school;
  - c) completion of a movement network of footways, footpaths, cycletracks and roads in the MDA, with connections to existing networks at the site boundaries. The indicative location of road access connections is shown on the Proposals Map;
  - d) financial contributions to enable the provision of off-site footway, footpath and cycletrack links, road improvements and traffic management measures in Didcot and in the countryside and villages around Didcot made necessary by and as a consequence of development in the MDA, in accordance with proposals contained in the Planning and Development Brief; and
  - e) financial contributions to enable the provision of bus services and associated infrastructure to afford residents of the MDA good public transport access from Didcot and within Didcot in accordance with proposals contained in the Planning and Development Brief.

**DID4** Proposals for development at Vauxhall Barracks, Didcot as defined on the Proposals Map will be permitted provided that they:

- (i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the development of the site for residential and community uses. A hotel and/or limited B1 employment uses could also be accommodated on the site;
- (ii) provide for the retention of the playing field and tennis courts on the site and the provision of children's play areas and amenity open space;
- (iii) provide a landscaping scheme which includes provision for the protection and maintenance of the important trees on the site and provides for the retention and maintenance of the memorial garden;

- (iv) comply with policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the Plan;
- (v) provide for a pedestrian, cycle and public transport link through the site and linking with routes in the Didcot West MDA to the west of the site;
- (vi) provide for 40% of the dwelling units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;
- (vii) provide for a mix of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policy H7;
- (viii) make provision for off-site and on-site infrastructure and services in accordance with Policy D11 including contributions towards transport works and measures, education facilities, library, arts, cultural and entertainment facilities in Didcot town centre, health care facilities, community centre facilities, indoor community sports facilities including improvements at the Didcot Wave Leisure Centre, improvements to Didcot Civic Hall and towards improvements to waste management facilities in or near Didcot.

**DID5** ~~Proposals for mixed-use development including housing and Class B1a offices will be permitted on the land at Station Road and Haydon Road, Didcot (as defined on the Proposals Map).~~

**DID6** ~~Proposals for mixed-use development on land at Broadway, Station Road and Station Road Industrial Estate, Didcot (as defined on the Proposals Map) will only be permitted where that development comprises part of a comprehensive scheme for the site and where all necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure is provided in accordance with Policy D11. It is proposed that the development of the site will include:~~

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

- (xiii) ~~a network of footways, cycletracks and roads connecting to existing networks at the site boundaries with the main road access from DMH2 located where shown on the Proposals Map. Motor vehicles will be excluded from the main shopping streets and civic spaces.~~

**DID7** ~~Planning permission will be granted for proposals for the regeneration of Market Place and Broadway (as defined on the Proposals Map) involving:~~

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

**DID8** ~~Following completion of the town centre expansion proposed in Policy DID6, mixed-use development for key town centre uses, as defined in Policy TC1, will be permitted on the land to the east of that development (as shown on the Proposals Map) subject to the following requirements being met:~~

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

**DID9** Proposals for business, industry, storage and distribution (Classes B1 and B8) will be permitted on sites (i) and (ii) at Southmead Business Park as shown on the Proposals Map.

**DID10** ~~Land at Didcot Parkway railway station as shown on the Proposals Map will be used for development related to the expansion of railway transport services and for the improvement of interchange facilities between those services and other modes of transport. Development proposals will be in accordance with a comprehensive scheme that meets the following requirements:~~

- (i) ~~land to the south of the Paddington-Bristol railway will be used for:~~

- a) ~~the provision of footways and cycle tracks linked to the wider movement network with bicycle parking facilities at the Station entrance;~~
  - b) ~~the provision of facilities for bus and taxi hire operators to set down and collect railway passengers including facilities for the lay-over of vehicles; and~~
  - c) ~~the provision of facilities for private car drivers to set down and collect railway passengers with a short duration of vehicle stay and spaces for disabled drivers;~~
- (ii) ~~land to the north of the Paddington-Bristol railway will be used for:~~
- a) ~~the provision of footways and cycletracks linked to the wider movement network with bicycle parking facilities at the Station entrance; and~~
  - b) ~~the provision of long-stay car parks for railway passengers. Improvements to off-site footway, cycletrack and road infrastructure will be secured in accordance with Policy D11 and the improvements will be completed before any enlarged long-stay car parks are first used.~~

**DID11** Proposals for Class B1 business-use development will be permitted on land at Didcot Parkway railway station, where the land proposed for this use would not be required in the long term for the expansion of railway services and for the improvement of interchange facilities between those services and other modes of transport.

## Section 11 - Henley-on-Thames

**HEN1** Proposals for the use of part of the Townlands Hospital site for housing will be permitted provided that they:

- (i) make provision for the continuing hospital use on the remaining part of the site;
- (ii) ensure the preservation and sympathetic conversion of the listed buildings on the site and preserve the setting of those buildings;
- (iii) ensure that new housing is sympathetic with the character of the area in terms of scale, design and materials used;
- (iv) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;
- (v) provide for 40% of units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;
- (vi) provide a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policies H7 and H8;
- (vii) provide recreation, library and any other necessary on- or off-site infrastructure or services made necessary by and as a consequence of the development in accordance with Policy D11; and
- (viii) provide for a safe and convenient access from the highway and provide vehicle parking facilities in accordance with Policies T1 and T2.

**HEN2** Proposals for mixed-use development at Market Place Mews and adjacent land at the rear of Market Place, Bell Street and Kings Road, Henley (as defined on the Proposals Map) will only be permitted, where that development comprises part of a comprehensive scheme for the site, and where all necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure is provided in accordance with Policy D11. The development will include:

- (i) Class A1 retail units and retail service units (Classes A2 and A3) up to about 2,000 square metres total gross internal area (GIA);
- (ii) residential or office uses at upper floor levels in accordance with Policies TC4 and TC6 (office uses not to exceed 500 square metres GIA);
- (iii) widening Market Place Mews to provide a pedestrian-only walkway linking Market Place with Kings Road car park;
- (iv) high quality design of buildings and of the public realm that enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area and that preserves the setting of the listed buildings; and
- (v) no loss of public car parking spaces in the Kings Road car park.

**HEN3** Proposals for the redevelopment of under-used land on the southern part of Reading Road Industrial Estate for Class B1 and B8 uses will be permitted where they:

- (i) include measures to enhance the appearance of the area.;
- (ii) make adequate provision for car parking and where possible, improve existing arrangements; and
- (iii) would not significantly worsen peak hour congestion on the Reading Road.

**HEN4** The provision of small areas of informal open space within Henley will be supported.

## Section 12 - Thame

**THA1** Proposals for mixed-use development at the Cattle Market, North Street, Thame (as defined on the Proposals Map) will only be permitted where that development comprises part of a comprehensive scheme for the site and where all necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure is provided in accordance with Policy D11. The development of the site could include:

- (i) Class A1 retail units (excluding food supermarkets) and retail service units (Classes A2 and A3) not exceeding a total of 2,000 square metres gross internal area (GIA);
- (ii) residential uses including dwellings at upper floor levels over the units in (i) above in accordance with Policy TC4;
- (iii) office uses (Classes B1a or A2), up to a total of about 500 square metres GIA, including office uses at upper floor levels over the units in (i) above in accordance with Policy TC6;
- (iv) residential and non-residential institutions (Classes C2 and D1) and assembly and leisure uses (Class D2);
- (v) public car parking spaces; and
- (vi) improved pedestrian links with the primary shopping frontages.

~~**THA2** Proposals for the extension of the footpath/cycleway (the Phoenix Trail) to Lord Williams School, as identified on the Proposals Map, will be permitted.~~

**THA3** The use of land adjacent to the Elms, 32 Upper High Street, Thame for informal open space, as identified on the Proposals Map, will be permitted.

- THA4** ~~Proposals for the redevelopment of Rycotewood College, Thame for residential and community uses will be permitted provided that they;~~
- ~~(i) provide a comprehensive scheme for the re-use of the site;~~
  - ~~(ii) protect the listed buildings on the site and their setting and preserve or enhance the conservation area;~~
  - ~~(iii) provide a management plan for the future maintenance of the listed buildings and the grounds;~~
  - ~~(iv) provide a comprehensive landscaping scheme which includes provision for the maintenance of important trees and open spaces, as well as new planting in certain areas;~~
  - ~~(v) provide for a package of sustainable transport measures;~~
  - ~~(vi) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;~~
  - ~~(vii) ensure that new building is of a scale appropriate to the listed building, the landscape setting of the site and neighbouring uses;~~
  - ~~(viii) provide for 40% of units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;~~
  - ~~(ix) provide for a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policies H7 and H8; and~~
  - ~~(x) provide any necessary on- or off-site infrastructure in accordance with Policy D11.~~

### Section 13 - Wallingford

- WAL1** ~~Proposals for the redevelopment of Blue Mountains and the Sinodun Centre, Wantage Road, Wallingford for housing will be permitted provided that they:~~
- ~~(i) comply with the policies encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;~~
  - ~~(ii) provide for 40% of units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;~~
  - ~~(iii) provide a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policies H7 and H8;~~
  - ~~(iv) provide education, recreation, library, transport and any other necessary on- or off-site infrastructure or services in accordance with Policy D11;~~
  - ~~(v) provide a landscaping scheme which includes provision for the protection and maintenance of important trees on the site; and~~
  - ~~(vi) retain the two Victorian/Edwardian frontage properties.~~
- WAL2** Proposals for the redevelopment of the Lamb Garage, Castle Street, Wallingford for housing will be permitted provided that they:
- (i) preserve and enhance the character of the Wallingford Conservation Area and respect the setting of the surrounding listed buildings;
  - (ii) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;
  - (iii) provide a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policies H7 and H8; and

- (iv) provide education, recreation, library, transport and any other necessary on- or off-site infrastructure or services in accordance with Policy D11.

**WAL3** ~~Proposals for the redevelopment of Station Road Industrial Estate, Wallingford for mixed-use development will be permitted provided that they:~~

- ~~(i) comply with the policies for encouraging sustainable and high-quality development in Section 4 of the plan;~~
- ~~(ii) provide for 40% of dwelling units to be affordable housing in accordance with Policy H9;~~
- ~~(iii) provide a range of dwelling types and sizes in accordance with Policies H7 and H8;~~
- ~~(iv) provide education, recreation, library, transport and any other necessary on- or off-site infrastructure or services in accordance with Policy D11;~~
- ~~(v) provide a landscaping scheme; and~~
- ~~(vi) provide for the retention of the community uses in accordance with Policy CF1.~~

**WAL4** Proposals for the change of use or redevelopment of the existing Class A1 supermarket building and public car park at 11-16 St Martins Street, Wallingford will not be permitted where those proposals would involve loss of a Class A1 use and public car parking spaces.

**WAL5** The following sites at Hithercroft Estate (as shown on the Proposals Map) are considered suitable for employment-generating uses (Classes B1 and B8):

- (i) former Elliott factory, Hithercroft road (1.2ha)
- (ii) land at Lupton Road (1.22 ha)
- (iii) land at Whitley Road (0.40 ha)
- (iv) land at the junction of Whitley Road and Lester Road (0.30ha); and
- (v) land north of Hithercroft Road (2.68ha).

**WAL6** Land adjoining the railway at Hithercroft, shown on the Proposals Map, is allocated for uses associated with the Cholsey and Wallingford railway line.

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## Glossary

**Affordable housing** Housing which meets the needs of those households in the district that are living in unsuitable accommodation and cannot afford to rent or buy housing of a suitable size.

**Agricultural land classification** The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA's) system of classifying agricultural land quality. There are five grades numbered 1 to 5, with grade 3 divided into two sub-grades (3a and 3b). Technical guidelines and criteria for grading using this system were published in 1988.

**Agricultural worker's dwelling** A dwelling in which the occupation of the property is limited to those employed or last employed in agriculture or forestry.

**Allocations** Land identified in the Local Plan for development (with or without planning permission).

**Ancient trees** Trees which are of interest biologically, aesthetically or culturally because of their age and/or trees in the ancient stage of their life and/or trees that are old relative to others of the same species.

**Ancient woodland** Land which has been continuously wooded since 1600 AD.

**Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)** A report which all local planning authorities are required to publish by December each year under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Part of the Local Development Framework, it reports on indicators of change and whether the LDS is to be updated.

**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** An area of outstanding landscape value designated by the Countryside Agency for its national importance within which conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty is the priority.

**Article 4 Directions** Directions made by district councils under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order and confirmed by the Secretary of State. The effect of a Direction is to require planning permission to be obtained for certain development which would not otherwise need planning permission.

**Biodiversity** The variety of life on earth encompassing the whole range of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects, and other invertebrates, plants, fungi and micro-organisms.

**Biodiversity action plan** A framework for achieving the conservation of biodiversity based on the targeting of resources towards priority habitats and species.

**Brownfield site** Land which has been previously developed.

**Built environment** A term used to describe the appearance of buildings or the appearance of a combination of buildings and spaces in a settlement.

**Burgage plots** Long plots of land with a narrow street frontage which are usually occupied by a building. The plots are named after the townsmen or burghers who occupied them and were usually laid out in the Middle Ages as part of planned "new" settlements. They remain as important historic features in the towns of Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford.

**Campshedding** The strengthening of a river bank using materials such as timber, steel and concrete.

**Circulars** Advice or guidance issued by the Government.

**Combined heat and power stations** CHP stations convert fuel into useful energy for local heating.

**Commuted sum** A sum of money paid by a developer to the local authority to provide a service or a facility, rather than the developer providing it direct. One common example is a payment for car parking spaces to be provided on a site away from where development is to take place.

**Completions** All proposals for development which have been constructed or brought into use.

**Compulsory purchase** The power given to local authorities to acquire land compulsorily in certain circumstances.

**Conservation areas** Designated by district councils and described in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". The boundaries of all designated conservation areas in the district are shown on the Proposals Map.

**Cruck-framed buildings** Crucks are long, curved timbers which rise from ground level to support the roof of a building. They are formed from a single tree trunk, framed together in pairs and joined by a tie beam or collar. Cruck-framed buildings first appeared in the 12th Century and the use of crucks continued to be a common construction technique until the early 17th Century.

**Culvert** A covered channel or pipeline which is used to continue a watercourse or drainage path under an artificial object.

**Curtilage** A small area around a building which serves the building in a useful way.

**Density** The number of houses to be accommodated on a given area of land.

**Detention ponds** Ponds designed to collect surface water run-off, which can dry out in dry weather.

**Development briefs** A document prepared by a local authority, a developer, or jointly, providing guidance on how a site of significant size or sensitivity should be developed.

**Embodied energy** The total energy used in the extraction, processing, manufacture and transportation of a material.

**Enabling development** A mechanism through which the public (typically the local community) accepts some disbenefit as a result of a planning permission, in return for a benefit funded by the value added to the land by that consent.

**Flood plain** Low-lying part of a river valley which floods when a river is in spate.

**Gasification** A process of partial combustion of carbon-based wastes or biomass to produce a gas mixture which can be combusted to produce electricity or heat.

**General Permitted Development Order** Part of planning law which lists certain forms of development which are automatically granted planning permission (sometimes subject to standard conditions) without the need to make a planning application.

**Global warming** The tendency for the earth's atmosphere to warm up as a result of gas emissions (for example carbon dioxide) released by man's activities. Global warming could have many adverse effects.

**Green belt** Designated land around a town or city where land is kept permanently open and where development is severely restricted. The extent of the Oxford Green Belt is defined on the Proposals Map.

**Habitat** The natural living place of a plant or animal.

**Habitat action plan** A target programme of management measures aimed at maintaining/restoring a specific type of habitat.

**Heavy goods vehicle** Any vehicle whose gross unladen weight exceeds 7.5 tonnes.

**Hectare** 10,000 square metres / a metric unit of area equivalent to 2.471 acres.

**Hedgerow Regulations** Procedures governing the protection and removal of hedgerows. The land owner is required to submit for determination by the local planning authority, a notification of intent to remove a hedgerow.

**Hinterland** The area surrounding a town or city which generally looks to that town or city for its services.

**Housing association** A non-profit making organisation that provides and manages affordable housing.

**Infilling** The filling of an appropriate small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage by the erection of one or two detached dwellings or up to four small terraced or semi-detached dwellings.

**Infrastructure** All the ancillary works and services which are necessary to support human activities, including roads, sewers, schools, hospitals, etc.

**In perpetuity** In the context of affordable housing this means that, in so far as is allowed by legislation, new housing should be affordable not only to the first occupiers but should continue to be affordable to people needing such housing in the future.

**Legibility** The degree to which a place can be easily understood and traversed.

**Listed buildings** Buildings of special architectural or historic interest included at Grades I, II\* and II on the statutory list of such buildings.

**Listed building consent** The consent needed from the District Council for any works of demolition, alteration or addition which affects the character of a listed building, including its interior.

**Live/work units** Dwellings which have an area on the ground floor for workshop or office uses within Class B1.

**Local Development Framework (LDF)** A portfolio of Local Development Documents which will provide the spatial planning framework under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)** A document explaining a local planning authority's work programme for producing elements of the Local Development Framework. All local planning authorities are required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to produce an LDS covering a 3 year period, and to update it when necessary.

**Multiple occupation** Dwellings where the occupiers share facilities, such as the bathroom and kitchen, but do not live together as a family unit.

**Permeability** The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.

**Permitted development** The types of development which, under the General Permitted Development Order (see above), are automatically granted planning permission.

**Planning obligations** Agreements normally made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which confers special powers on a local planning authority to regulate land use by agreement. The agreements are entered into voluntarily between the authority and anybody with an interest in land in its area. Their purpose is to restrict or regulate the use of land, or to make such other arrangements (including the payment of money) as the authority considers necessary.

**Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)** Guidance on general and specific aspects of planning policy issued by Central Government.

**Planning Policy Statement (PPS)** Statements of national planning policy produced by Government, gradually replacing Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs).

**Primary shopping frontage** The main shopping areas in a town. The streets or parts of a street where the type or the concentration of shop units is such as to maximise retail trade for shop traders.

**Priority habitats and species** Habitats and species identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan as having the highest priority for conservation.

**Pyrolysis** A process whereby carbon-based wastes or biomass are heated in the absence of air and under pressure, to break the material down into its gaseous, liquid and solid components, all of which have a fuel value and can be used to produce electricity or heat.

**Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)** Introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, RSSs are produced at a regional level to replace both Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) and Structure Plans. In this region the RSS will be the South East Plan, produced by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA).

**Renewable energy** Energy flows that occur naturally in the environment from the sun, wind, oceans, plants and the fall of water.

**Residents' parking scheme** A scheme designed to give priority to residents who wish to park on public roads near their homes.

**Ribbon development** Development extending in a linear form along main roads, often on the edge of settlements.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest** A site of national importance for wildlife within which statutory protection is afforded to ecological or geological features.

**Species action plan** A target programme of management measures aimed at maintaining/re-establishing a particular species.

**Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest** This list, drawn up by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and administered by the District Council, contains descriptions of all listed buildings in the district (see listed buildings above).

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** Part of the Local Development Framework, these are optional local development documents adopted by a local planning authority. They supplement and elaborate on policies in the development plan, either concerning general issues or taking the form of site-specific development briefs. Those produced before the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 are known as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

**Sustainability appraisal** Identifies the environmental, social and economic impacts of the policies in the Local Plan, to assist in assessing how these impacts can be minimised.

**Sustainable development** Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)** The treatment of drainage at its source using natural processes.

**Swales** Grassed depressions which lead surface water overland from the drained surface to a storage or discharge system, typically using the green space or roadside margins.

**Telecommunications development** Apparatus, plant and equipment used to receive microwave transmissions, such as satellite television equipment.

**Topography** Distinctive parts of the earth's surface such as hills, valleys, rivers and lakes.

**Traffic calming measures** Measures (such as road humps) which are designed to reduce traffic speeds, improve accident records, improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and generally improve residents' quality of life and the environment.

**Traffic management measures** Restrictions imposed on cars and commercial vehicles to assist traffic flows or to allow greater priority to be given to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport vehicles, or to improve conditions for local residents.

**Tree Preservation Order** An Order made by the local planning authority under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to protect a specific tree or group of trees against felling, lopping, topping or other damage.

**Use Classes Order** Part of planning law which identifies certain classes or types of development with similar characteristics. Changes from one activity to another in a particular Use Class do not normally require planning permission. The Use Classes Order 2005 contains the following classes:

- A1** Shops
- A2** Financial and professional services where the service is provided principally to visiting customers
- A3** Restaurants and cafes
- A4** Drinking establishments
- A5** Hot food take-away
- B1** Business (office, research and development, and industry) which can be carried out in a residential area without causing nuisance
- B2** General industrial
- B8** Storage and distribution
- C1** Hotels and hostels

- C2** Residential institutions
- C3** Dwellinghouses
- D1** Non-residential institutions
- D2** Assembly and leisure

**Vitrified bricks** Bricks of local clay fired to a higher than normal temperature, producing in this area a silvery-grey 'glazed' colour and appearance.

**Windfall sites** Previously-developed land of any size which gains planning permission for housing and which has not been previously identified as a housing allocation in the Local Plan.

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## Abbreviations

<b>AMR</b>	Annual Monitoring Report
<b>AONB</b>	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<b>BAP</b>	Biodiversity Action Plan
<b>BBOWT</b>	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
<b>CAMRA</b>	Campaign for Real Ale
<b>CHP</b>	Combined Heat and Power
<b>DEFRA</b>	Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs
<b>DETR</b>	Department of Environment Transport and the Regions
<b>DMH2</b>	Didcot to Milton Heights Link Road Stage 2
<b>DPH</b>	Dwellings per hectare
<b>DTLR</b>	Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions
<b>CBDG</b>	Chilterns Buildings Design Guide
<b>Dti</b>	Department for Trade and Industry
<b>GIA</b>	Gross Internal Area (within external walls)
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information System
<b>GOSE</b>	Government Office for the South-East
<b>HSE</b>	Health and Safety Executive
<b>LEAP</b>	Local Environment Agency Plan
<b>LDF</b>	Local Development Framework
<b>LDS</b>	Local Development Scheme
<b>MDA</b>	Major Development Area
<b>ODPM</b>	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
<b>PPG</b>	Planning Policy Guidance note
<b>PPS</b>	Planning Policy Statement
<b>RSS</b>	Regional Spatial Strategy
<b>SEERA</b>	South East England Regional Assembly
<b>SODG</b>	South Oxfordshire Design Guide

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

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<b>SPD</b>	Supplementary Planning Document
<b>SPG</b>	Supplementary Planning Guidance
<b>SSSI</b>	Site of Special Scientific Interest
<b>TPO</b>	Tree Preservation Order
<b>VDS</b>	Village Design Statement

## Hierarchy of Nature Conservation Designations

Importance	Site Designation	Explanation
Sites of <b>International</b> Importance	Ramsar Sites	Listed under the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance, 1971 (as amended)
	Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	Classified under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds, 1979
	Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)*	Designated under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, 1992 (the Habitats Directive).
Sites of <b>National</b> Importance	National Nature Reserves (NNRs)	Declared under Section 19 of National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 or Section 35 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	Notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Sites of <b>Regional/Local</b> Importance	Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)	Designated by local authorities under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
	Non-Statutory Nature Reserves	Established and managed by a variety of public and private bodies e.g. county wildlife trusts, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
	Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) e.g. County Wildlife Sites (CWSs)	These are non-statutory sites of at least county importance for wildlife which meet agreed selection criteria. The status of this type of site varies considerably.

\* The Habitats Directive also applies to candidate Special Areas of Conservation. It is Government policy that all candidate sites of international importance notified to the European Commission should receive the same protection as designated sites.

Source: PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, 2005



## Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

### Sites of Special Scientific Interest containing Priority Habitats

Broad/Priority habitat	SSSIs containing priority habitat
<b>Boundary and linear features</b>	
Ancient hedgerow	Aston Rowant SU728972 Otmoor SP575130
<b>Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland</b>	
Mixed deciduous woodland	Bix Bottom SU715880 Holly Wood SP588100 Holton Wood SP603080 Sidlings Copse and College Pond SP555095 Stanton Great Wood SP588093 Waterperry Wood SP605090 Woodeaton Wood SP533123
Yew woodland	Hartslock SU619793
Lowland beech woodland	Aston Rowant SU728972 Bear, Oveys and Greatbottom Wood SU693840, SU703830 Berrick Trench SU705882 Aston Rowant Woods SU750984 Harpsden Wood SU761804 Lambridge Wood SU738841 Pishill Woods SU715901, SU713905

<b>Broad/Priority habitat</b>	<b>SSSIs containing priority habitat</b>
<b>Calcareous grassland</b>	
Lowland calcareous grassland	Aston Rowant SU728972
	Aston Upthorpe Downs SP545834, SU536835
	Berins Hill Bank SU654852
	Chinnor Hill SP766007
	Hartslock SU619793
	Moulsford Downs SU578827
	Shirburn Hill SU715955
	Sidlings Copse and College Pond SP555095
	Swyncombe Downs SU672915
	Warren Bank SU653857
	Watlington and Pyrton Hills SU705936
	Wormsley Chalk Banks SU747926, SU751923, SU737932, SU728936, SU745938, SU736958
<b>Fens, marsh and swamps</b>	
Fens	Sidlings Copse and College Pond SP555095
	Spartum Fen SP654016
<b>Neutral grassland</b>	
Lowland meadow	Shabbington Woods Complex SP615110
	Otmoor SP575130

**Local Nature Reserves**

Ewelme Watercress Beds	SU	636920
Cuttlebrook	SP	702055
Mowbray Fields	SU	523887
Watlington Chalk Pit	SU	700940

**County Wildlife Sites\***

Almshill Larch	SU	737884
Bank by Pindars Wood	SU	729825
Beckley Pasture	SP	564115
Blewburton Hill	SU	544861
Bottom Farm Bank	SU	673777
Bottom Wood	SU	658781
Bozedown	SU	647780
Bozedown Vineyard (north)	SU	639780
Bozedown Vineyard (south)	SU	640777
Buckingham Bottom Meadow	SU	728943
Bypass Swamp	SP	525029
Clifton Hampden Meadow	SU	552956
Clifton Hampden Wood	SU	552958
Combe Fields (east)	SU	615797
Combe Fields (north)	SU	615803
Combe Fields (west)	SU	612798
Cookes Copse	SP	557112
Crowsley Park	SU	732798
Didcot Marshalling Yard	SU	548893
Dorchester Gravel Pits (Allen Pit)	SU	572945
Dorchester Gravel Pits (Drayton Road Pit)	SU	582952
Dorchester Gravel Pits (Queenford Pit)	SU	578953
Dorchester Gravel Pits (Whittles Pit)	SU	585945
Dorchester Meadow	SU	572940
Easington Fen	SU	667965
Edge of Nippers Grove	SU	673809
Eversdown	SU	743857
Ewelme Cress Beds	SU	640916
Fiddle Hill	SU	612819
Fiddlers Elbow Marsh	SP	529019

Furze Brake	SU	535965
Hayward's Eyot	SU	542937
Henley Road Pit	SU	734744
Henton Marsh	SP	767027
Hernes	SU	748827
Heyford Hill Lane Pasture	SP	526026
Holly Hill (Elmore Park Grassland)	SU	628814
Holton Brook Meadow (central)	SP	610080
Holton Brook Meadow (east)	SP	614079
Holton Brook Meadow (south)	SP	614077
Holton Brook Meadow (west)	SP	607082
Holton Brook Meadow Extension	SP	608083
Kents Hill	SU	726808
Kingwood Common	SU	696825
Langtree House Bank	SU	639826
Lollingdon Hill	SU	568849
Long Wood	SP	535105
Lower Farm bottom hay pasture	SP	535001
Lowerhill Farm Wood	SU	580931
Monastic Fish Ponds, South Stoke	SU	597838
Monks Wood Grassland	SP	565066
Nettlebed Common	SU	702872
North Unhill Bank	SU	563834
Nuffield Common	SU	674875
Nuneham Arboretum	SU	554985
Parklane Shaw	SU	675805
Peppard Common	SU	705816
Pishill Bank	SU	725906
Pond north of Cholsey marsh	SU	605861
Reading Golf Course (east)	SU	712772
Reading Golf Course (west)	SU	704771
Rush Court	SU	602918
Sandford Brake	SP	562017
Shillingford Boathouse Carr	SU	593925
Shillingford Hotel Meadow	SU	593921
Shiplake Marsh	SU	759774
South Stoke Marsh (north)	SU	594841
South Stoke Marsh (south)	SU	596832

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Stonor Park (North)	SU	738893
Stonor Park (south west)	SU	738888
Straw Hill	SU	660778
Thames Island near Streatley	SU	599813
Unhill and Ham Woods	SU	560823
Upper Park Farm	SP	573113
Warren Wood	SU	765779
Watlington Hay Meadow	SU	698938
Westford Hill	SU	666776
Westford Hill Copse	SU	666778
Whitchurch-on-Thames Wet Meadow	SU	627770

\* The County Wildlife Site selection system is informed by a rolling survey programme with sites being added to and removed from the list as part of the process. The list only represents, therefore, the picture at the point of publishing the plan.

The identification of sites in these lists does not confer any public rights of access to the land.



## Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Parish	County No	Monument Title	Grid Ref
Aston Upthorpe	204	Lowbury Hill Camp	SU 540823
Aston Upthorpe	205	Blewburton Hill	SU 547862
Aston Upthorpe	214	Grim's Ditch - section on Aston Upthorpe Down	SU 535833 SU 543830
Aston Upthorpe	258	Bell Barrow NE of Oven Bottom	SU 542838
Beckley & Stowood	28140	Two sections of a Roman road on Otmoor	SP 572144 SP 572139 SP 572138 SP 570126
Bix & Assendon	99	Bix old church	SU 726870
Brightwell-cum- Sotwell	28197	Brightwell barrow	SU 577919
Checkendon	129	Castle Grove camp	SU 683809
Chinnor	28154	Three round barrows on Chinnor Hill	SP 765002 SP 767006
Crowmarsh (Ipsden) (Nuffield)	32	Grim's Ditch - portion from Mongewell Park Lodge to S of Nuffield Church	SU 617879 SU 657872 SU 658872 SU 666871
Crowmarsh (South Stoke)	121	North Stoke henge and ring ditch site	SU 611857
Culham	13	Culham Bridge	SU 501958
Culham	147	Settlement site N of Thames	SU 523945
Culham	231	Abingdon Bridge including Maud Hale's Bridge	SU 498969 SU 500967
Culham	30848	Dovecote at Culham Manor	SU 500948
Dorchester	17	Dyke Hills	SU 570938 SU 578932

Parish	County No	Monument Title	Grid Ref
Dorchester	116	Roman town	SU 577941 SU 576940 SU 578942 SU 579943 SU 578943
Dorchester (Warborough)	144	Ring ditches, cursus, enclosures and settlement site	SU 590940
East Hagbourne	28155	Coscote village cross	SU 515884
East Hagbourne	28156	Village cross	SU 526883
Ewelme	163	Site of manor house and royal palace	SU 64 915
Garsington	28157	Garsington Cross	SP 580023
Goring Heath	114	Earthworks in Friarhampstead Wood	SU 645807
Great Haseley	28161	Rycote Chapel	SP 667046
Harpsden	254	Highlands Farm palaeolithic site	SU 744813
Holton	30823	Moated site in grounds of Holton Park	SP 600063
Holton	30824	Site of manor house in Holton Park	SP 598065
Ipsden (Nuffield) (Crowmarsh)	32	Grim's Ditch - portion from Mongewell Park Lodge to S of Nuffield Church	SU 617879 SU 657872 SU 658872 SU 666871
Little Wittenham	208	Sinodun Hill camp	SU 569924
Long Wittenham	180	Settlement site at Northfield Farm	SU 558947
Marsh Baldon	132	Site of Roman kilns	SU 562977
Nuneham Courtenay	54	Carfax conduit	SU 537977
Rotherfield Greys	28	Greys Court - castle wall, towers and well-house	SU 725834 SU 726835
South Moreton	455741	Mound west of church	SU 557880

Parish	County No	Monument Title	Grid Ref
South Stoke	30847	Dovecote at Manor Farm	SU 599836
South Stoke (Crowmarsh)	121	North Stoke henge and ring ditch site	SU 611857
Stadhampton	9	Chiselhampton Bridge	SU 594987
Thame	162	Moated site east of Moorend Lane	SP 710062
Wallingford	176	Wallingford Castle	SU 609897
Wallingford	182	Saxon town	SU 606897 SU 605893
Wallingford	234	Town walls	SU 604894 SU 604891 SU 606891 SU 607898 SU 604898 SU 604895
Wallingford	235	Wallingford Bridge	SU 610895
Warborough (Dorchester)	144	Ring ditches, cursuses, enclosures and settlement site	SU 590940
Warborough	186	Church Piece cemetery site	SU 589945
Warborough	31431	Long barrow 140m north west of Crookes Cottage	SU 606923
Warborough	31432	Romano-British settlement 520m north west of Crookes Cottages	SU 605926
Warborough	31435	Long barrow 340m north west of Crookes Cottages	SU 606925
Waterperry with Thomley	237	Thomley deserted medieval village	SP 630091
Waterstock	227	Ickford Bridge	SU 649065
Whitchurch	130	Camp on Bozedown	SU 643782
Woodeaton	28158	Village cross	SP 535119



## English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in South Oxfordshire

	Location	Grade
1.	Ascott, Stadhampton	II
2.	Beckley Park	II*
3.	Fair Mile Hospital	II
4.	Fawley Court (part) near Henley	II*
5.	Friar Park, Henley-on-Thames	II
6.	Garsington Manor	II*
7.	Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys	II
8.	Nuneham Courtenay	I
9.	Shirburn Castle	II
10.	Shotover, nr Oxford	I
11.	Stonor	II*
12.	Thame Park	II*

## English Heritage Register of Historic Battlefields in South Oxfordshire

1. Chalgrove Field



## Parking Standards

### Car parking provision for people with disabilities

Land Use	Provision
Workplaces (B1, B2, B8)	One space for each employee who is a disabled motorist plus either, at least one space or 2% of total capacity for visiting disabled motorists. Where the number of disabled motorists is not known the requirement is at least one space or 5% of total capacity whichever is the greater.
Shopping, recreational (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D2)	1 space for each employee who is a disabled motorist plus 5% of total capacity for visiting disabled motorists.
Railway car parks	1 space for each employee who is a disabled motorist plus 5% of the total capacity for visiting disabled motorists.
Churches, crematoria and cemetery chapels (D1)	At least 2 spaces.

#### Note

BS 8300:2001 gives detailed requirements for the layout of parking spaces for people with disability. The above table summarises the recommended provision.

## Car Parking Standards - Maximum Levels

Accessibility Characteristic	Residential	Food Retail **	Non-Food Retail **	B1 and A2 Offices	B2 General Industry
	1 bed - 1 space; 2/3 beds - 2 spaces; 4 bed + - 2+ spaces on merit	1 space per 14 sqm	1 space per 20 sqm	1 space per 30 sqm	1 space per 50 sqm
Application Threshold GFA (sqm)	N/A	1000	1000	500	500

Accessibility Characteristic	B8 Warehousing	D2 Assembly and Leisure **	Cinema and Conference **	Hotel and Guest House **	Hospital
	1 space per 200 sqm	1 space per 22 sqm	1 space per 5 seats	1 space per 1 bed	on merits
Application Threshold GFA (sqm)	1000	1000	1000	30	N/A

Accessibility Characteristic	Higher Education	A3 Restaurant A4 Pub A5 Take-away	Stadia
	1 space per 2 staff 1 space per 15 students	1 space per 5 sqm of public space	on merits (guide 1 per 15 seats) *
Application Threshold GFA (sqm)	2500	N/A	1500 seats

\* Coach parking treated separately

\*\* A PPS6 sequential test location policy will apply to these land uses

### Parking Standards for Developments below the Threshold Size

There will be a presumption that the above maximum standards apply to developments below the threshold size but each case will be on merit and the parking provision for each site will be considered in the light of its location and the need to reduce private vehicle mileage in line with PPG13.

### Notes

Where developers are proposing levels of parking below the maximum levels they will be required to submit supporting information to show the likely impact on street parking and the availability of public transport.

The information could include parking surveys to show the level of existing parking stress and an assessment of any road safety implications. A contribution may be required to improve public transport and to implement parking controls.

Travel Plans will be required to show how the use of private vehicles will be controlled or private vehicle trips reduced.

## Cycle Parking Standards - Minimum Levels

	Residential	Food Retail	Non-Food Retail	A2 Banks and Professional Services	B1 Offices
<b>Long stay/ employee/ resident</b>	1 bed - 1 space; 2+ beds - 2 spaces***	1 stand per 12 staff *	1 stand per 6 staff *	1 stand per 12 staff **	1 stand per 150 sqm
<b>Visitor</b>	1 stand per 2 units where more than 4 units	1 stand per 200 sqm	1 stand per 200 sqm	1 stand per 100 sqm	1 stand per 500 sqm

	B2 General Industry	B8 Warehousing	D2 Assembly and Leisure	Cinema and Conference	Hotel and Guest House
<b>Long stay/ employee/ resident</b>	1 stand per 350 sqm	1 stand per 500 sqm	1 stand per 12 staff **	1 stand per 12 staff **	1 stand per 12 staff **
<b>Visitor</b>	1 stand per 500 sqm	1 stand per 1000 sq.m	1 stand per 20 sqm	1 stand per 20 sqm	1 stand per 10 beds

	Hospital	Higher Education	A3 Restaurant A4 Pub A5 Take-away
<b>Long stay/ employee/ resident</b>	1 stand per 12 staff	Subject to individual assessment	1 stand per 12 staff **
<b>Visitor</b>	on merits	Subject to individual assessment	1 stand per 20 sqm of public space

### Notes

- a) Where number of staff is not known assume:
  - \* 1 staff per 50 sqm
  - \*\* 1 staff per 7 sqm
- \*\*\* b) Garages should be designed to allow space for car plus storage of cycles in line with the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.
- c) 1 stand = 2 spaces. The number of stands to be provided from the calculations to be rounded upwards. The preferred stand is of the 'Sheffield' type.
- d) All cycle parking facilities to be secure and located in convenient positions.
- e) The County Council encourages the use of covered facilities for long stay/staff cycle parking.
- f) Residential visitor parking should be provided as communal parking at convenient and appropriate locations throughout the development.

