

South Oxfordshire Local Plan Second Preferred Options

Employment Topic Paper

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper supports the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan. It provides information on the need for additional employment land, background explanation on the employment sites allocated, the reasons they have been identified as appropriate for development through the plan-making process, and information on the development on the draft planning policies relating to employment contained within the emerging plan.

2. National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- 2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. The NPPF states that plans should set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities. The NPPF seeks to build a strong, competitive economy and states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. To help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.

3. Background

- 3.1. The business base in South Oxfordshire is dominated by Small to Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs¹) (a company employing fewer than 250 employees) accounting for 99.8% of all recorded enterprises. However this is on par with the UK at 99.6%. The majority of SMEs employ fewer than 10 employees.
- 3.2. The four towns of Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford are the main employment centres. The rural areas are characterised by a large number of small firms and some major international research institutions. The largest rural employment centre is Culham Science Centre which specialises in fusion research and hosts related enterprises. Monument Business Park at Chalgrove provides an important range of business and premises. There is also an important cluster of environmental science companies and research institutions in Crowmarsh Gifford and Wallingford.
- 3.3. South Oxfordshire has a higher than average number of economically active people at 89.5% compared with a national average of 77.8% as of December 2015. The number of economically active people increased from 71,500 in January 2011 to 79,000 in December 2015.

¹ Draft SME Business and Innovation Strategy 2017 (NLP)

Unemployment fell from 4.1% to 2.4% over the same period² The Council will continue to encourage and support the local economy and develop a balance between jobs and housing.

- 3.4. Some 88% of the people in South Oxfordshire are employed in service industries which is on a par with the South East and 85% nationally. However financial and other business services comprise 33% of this sector compared with 22% nationally, with 32% of all workers employed in this sector. The second largest sector is Public Administration, Education and Health employing 18% of all workers and Wholesale and Retail, including Motor Trades that employs 16%³ South Oxfordshire has a slightly higher than average number of micro-businesses that employ up to 9 people.
- 3.5. In December 2015 64% of South Oxfordshire's employees were either Managers, Directors or Senior Officials, employed in Professional Occupations or employed in Associate Professional & Technical positions, significantly higher than the national average of 44%. Correspondingly the area employs lower than average numbers of people in all other professions⁴.
- 3.6. South Oxfordshire's residents are highly-qualified. Almost 58% of the workforce has qualifications at Level 4 and above, compared with 37% nationally⁵.
- 3.7. Employers take a very positive view of South Oxfordshire as a place to do business. Almost 92% of businesses surveyed in 2010 are satisfied with South Oxfordshire as a business location. Key strengths highlighted by employers include its central geographic location bringing them in close proximity to customers, suppliers and other businesses alongside good transport links and the fact that it is a thriving and prosperous area⁶. For many SMEs, the quality of life and work/life balance represents the key reason for locating and operating within the district⁷.
- 3.8. In 2015 the income of residents living in the district was higher than people working within the district as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1	Average earnings per week⁸	
	South Oxfordshire	Nationally
Resident	£617	£530
Worker	£583	£529

²

³

⁴ ONS annual population survey - Employment by occupation (Jan 2015-Dec 2015)

⁵ ONS annual population survey Qualifications (Jan 2015-Dec 2015)

⁶ Oxfordshire Employers Skills Study 2010, Oxfordshire Economic Partnership

⁷ Draft SME Business and Innovation Strategy 2017 (NLP)

⁸ ONS annual survey of hours and earnings 2015

- 3.9. This means that people living within the district are earning higher incomes by commuting to work outside of the district, mostly in the surrounding areas of Science Vale, Reading and Oxford and also by commuting to London. This situation implies that the area suffers from a leakage of highly skilled residents to employment elsewhere.
- 3.10. The South Oxfordshire Core Strategy was adopted December 2012 and covers the plan period from 2006 to 2027. The Core Strategy was informed by the South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review 2007 prepared by DTZ. The land needs figures were updated in 2008 (referred to as the ELR Update) to incorporate figures for the self-employed (following advice from SEEDA) and to reflect the economic downturn. This was based on the report “Revisiting South Oxfordshire Employment Land Projections” 2008 WM Enterprise (WME).
- 3.11. As a result of the above studies and as set out in the “South Oxfordshire Submission Core Strategy Thriving Economy Background Paper” (March 2011), the adopted Core Strategy (policy CSEM2) planned for around 5,000 additional B class jobs to 2027. To facilitate this, the equivalent of 13.5 additional hectares of land was to be provided in various centres across the district, plus a further 6.5 hectares at Didcot in the neighbouring Vale of White Horse district. This is a total of 20ha of additional employment land over the plan period from 2011 to 2027.
- 3.12. Following the adoption of the Core Strategy, in March 2014 the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) published a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) setting out an ambition for accelerated economic growth for Oxfordshire. The SEP seeks to meet the needs of our science and knowledge-rich economy, placing Oxfordshire at the forefront of the UK’s global growth ambitions⁹. In January 2014 an agreement known as the “Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal” was made between the Government, Oxfordshire County Council, the local authorities in Oxfordshire, University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University, and OxLEP on what the region will do to support economic growth. The “City Deal” advises that despite a wealth of assets in the area, Oxford City and Oxfordshire have underperformed, not reaching their full potential when compared with other internationally renowned areas around world-class universities. City Deal partners are committed to dealing with these issues as a priority in the SEP and Local Growth Deal bid, and to bring together local resources to make investment where it is needed to create the right conditions to develop, grow and retain dynamic businesses.

⁹ Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan March 2014

4. Economic Forecasts

- 4.1. In 2014 together with the other Oxfordshire authorities, and using Government guidance, the Council prepared a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). To support and inform the development of the SHMA, together with the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP's) Strategic Economic Plan, the local authorities commissioned Cambridge Econometrics (CE) and SQW to prepare economic forecasts for Oxfordshire. The report "Economic Forecasting to Inform the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic Housing Market Assessment" was published 28 February 2014.
- 4.2. CE and SQW have developed forecasts for the Oxfordshire economy in three stages, using Cambridge Econometrics' Local Economy Forecasting Model (LEFM). These stages were:
 - A Baseline Scenario
 - An Alternative Demography Scenario
 - A Committed Economic Growth Scenario
- 4.3. The Committed Economic Growth scenario projects a total increase in employment of around 88,000 people over the period 2011-31, or 4,400 pa (1% pa) for Oxfordshire. This compares with growth recorded for Oxfordshire over the period 2001-11 of around 3,000 pa (0.8% pa). The report advises that employment growth based on past trends may have been underestimated in the Science Vale where there is strong potential for both inward investment and growth of existing businesses. The CE and SQW report advises that there is sufficient land allocated in all districts except South Oxfordshire, where there could be a shortfall in relation to the requirement.
- 4.4. Based on the above committed economic growth scenario the SHMA projects an objectively assessed need of 749 dwellings per annum (dpa). For the reasons set out in the "Housing need and potential supply – Background Paper" the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan has included an objectively assessed need figure of 775 dpa which is higher than the committed economic growth scenario.

South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review 2015

- 4.5. Following the publication of the Oxfordshire SHMA 2014 the Council published a "*South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review*" in 2015 (prepared on behalf the Council by URS). The ELR considers all commercial and industrial uses falling into classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order. A broad range of land and premises were assessed including industrial estates, business parks, science and technology parks and some office premises, agreed with the Council.
- 4.6. The 2015 ELR undertook a review of the policies and strategies relevant to employment and employment land in South Oxfordshire. This review highlighted the importance of increasing the employment

land capacity in South Oxfordshire to retain, create and develop the local business base.

- 4.7. The 2015 ELR undertook an analysis of South Oxfordshire's socio-economic characteristics. The details of the results of this are included in the "Background" section above.
- 4.8. The 2015 ELR undertook a review of the quality and characteristics of employment land in the district. The 2015 ELR undertook a field study of South Oxfordshire's strategically important employment sites putting these sites into a variety of "clusters". It focused on the sites' condition, utilisation and suitability for their current use, assessing each site against pre-determined appraisal criteria.
- 4.9. The review concludes that surveyed clusters have the capacity to expand employment land by 27.1ha at development sites that are appropriate in terms of the criteria assessed for a mixture of office and industrial employment uses.
- 4.10. The 2015 ELR went on to examine South Oxfordshire's office and industrial land market within the context of the wider property market area (PMA). The ELR advises that in general South Oxfordshire is a healthy employment market with demand steady and growing.
- 4.11. Two main dynamics were found:
- 1) There is a local office and industrial market that largely meets the needs of the local population. The needs of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are particularly important in this regard as these types of firm require good quality but also affordable and flexible work space.
 - 2) The area is linked in to the higher value national or international high tech manufacturing/science sector particularly at sites such as Culham, Monument Park and those close to Science Vale.
- 4.12. The 2015 carried out a quantitative assessment of the demand for office floorspace and industrial land across the PMA. All forecasts suggest a positive additional demand.
- 4.13. The 2015 ELR used the above to perform a "Gap Analysis", estimating the extent to which supply-demand imbalances may exist.
- 4.14. The 2015 ELR advises that at the time of the study within South Oxfordshire there was approximately:
- 215,000m² of gross office floorspace
 - 540,000m² of gross industrial floorspace (excluding that located at Culham Science Centre¹⁰) - Approximately a third of this

¹⁰ This figure is taken from the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). However, Culham is not included within the VOA figures.

space is industrial type (B1c and B2), with the majority characterised by warehousing and distribution use (B8).

- 4.15. The 2015 ELR sets a projected demand for industrial and office space; based on a Committed Economic Growth Scenario using the “Gap Analysis”.

Table 2: Net South Oxfordshire Employment Requirements 2014 to 2031 (from 2015 ELR)	
Office space	38,700m ² (6.7ha at 57.5% plot ratio)
Industrial Land	17.7 ha
Total	24.4 ha

- 4.16. The 2015 ELR makes four policy recommendations:
 R1) Retention of employment land
 R2) Net requirement of office space and potential locations
 R3) Net requirement of industrial land and potential locations
 R4) Continued monitoring

5. The amount and distribution of new B-class employment land

- 5.1. The adopted Core Strategy set out broad locations for 20 hectares of additional employment land for the period 2011 to 2027.
- 5.2. The 2015 ELR which was published following the adoption of the Core Strategy estimates that there is net additional demand for 25 hectares of B class employment land over the period from 2014 to 2031.
- 5.3. The first Preferred Options version of the emerging Local Plan rolled the 2015 ELR figures forward one year to 2032 proposing 26ha for 2014 to 2032.
- 5.4. Draft policy STRAT2 of the emerging Local Plan has reviewed the above 2015 ELR figures. The draft policy takes into consideration the plan period of the Local Plan from 2011 to 2033 compared to the ELR period of 2014 to 2031 and has adjusted the figures accordingly. The emerging Local Plan therefore proposes an additional 30ha of employment land over the plan period. Draft policy EMP1 sets out the amount and location of new B-class employment land required throughout the district.
- 5.5. Sites are identified in the emerging Local Plan at Didcot and Crowmarsh Gifford where no Neighbourhood Development Plans are being prepared. Sites are safeguarded at Wallingford until a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is prepared. The Council supports communities who wish to prepare a NDP and such plans may wish to allocate additional employment land.

Didcot

Southmead Business Park

- 5.6. Southmead Business Park also known as Southmead Industrial Park is located north of Didcot and is occupied by a wide variety of firms.
- 5.7. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 previously identified two employment sites within Southmead Business Park under saved policy DID9. The saved policy allocated the following sites:

Site	Area Ha
DID9i	2.66
DID9ii	0.26
Total	2.92

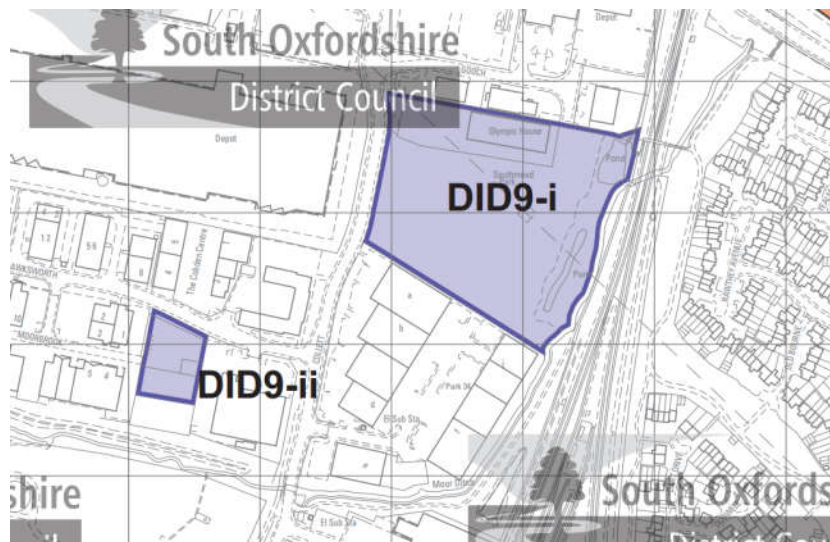


Figure 1: Adopted Core Strategy Proposals Map - Didcot

- 5.8. The text to saved Local Plan Policy DID9 advises that DID9i is intended to be used for the re-location of firms being displaced by town centre redevelopment. This remains the case with further town centre development expected under the Didcot Garden Town plans. The text relating to DID9i could equally apply to DID9ii.
- 5.9. Both sites are located within cluster 3 of the 2015 ELR with the sites being identified as undeveloped in table 5.6. The ELR makes a recommendation that both sites are potential development sites to meet demand.
- 5.10. Both DID9i and DID9ii, allocated in the Local Plan 2011, were granted Enterprise Zone status under the Didcot Growth Accelerator Enterprise Zone (announced 25 November 2015).

- 5.11. On site DID9ii planning application P16/S3514/FUL was granted on 2 December 2016 for “*Change of use to category B8 for storage of construction equipment. Erection of building for workshop, offices and welfare facilities, car parking and landscaping...*” The total site area is identified as 0.384 hectares as it included land to the south of DID9ii. An application has been made to discharge condition 6 of this permission in relation to ground contamination.
- 5.12. Due the above reasons it is important to continue to allocate these sites for employment uses. No NDP is being produced for Didcot and therefore allocations must be made through the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.13. Therefore both DID9i and DID9ii have been carried forward in the emerging Local Plan as allocations for employment land.
- 5.14. Draft Policy EMP1 proposes 3.04* ha of employment land at Didcot which is a combination of the above two sites, which have been renamed in accordance with draft Policy EMP4:

Table 4: Draft Policy EMP4 sites		
Site	Name	Area Ha
EMP4i	Southmead Industrial Estate East	2.66
EMP4ii	Southmead Industrial Estate West	0.26*
Total		2.92*
*Policies EMP1 and EMP4 refer to 3.04ha as the initial calculation included the land covered by permission P16/S3514/FUL		

- 5.15. The sites are shown on the relevant plan in appendix 3 of the emerging Local Plan: Second Preferred Options.

Didcot (Vale of White Horse)

- 5.16. Under our Duty to Cooperate, in addition to the two allocated sites above, draft policy EMP1 advises that 6.50 hectares of employment land to serve Didcot will be located within the Vale of White Horse. The policy carries forward the existing Core Strategy policy CSEM2. The Council’s strategy makes a strong link between the housing growth in Didcot and the business growth needs of Science Vale, including at Harwell Oxford¹¹ and Milton Park outside the district (within Vale of White Horse District). The Council has worked with the Vale of White Horse District Council to plan for enough B-class jobs to cater for Didcot’s increased population. Part 1 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 was adopted 14 December 2016. Core Policy 6 of the Vale’s Local Plan identifies 218 hectares of land for future employment development. 28 hectares allocated at Milton Park and paragraph 4.31 of the plan states that 6.5 hectares of this land at Milton Park is to meet

¹¹ Harwell Oxford formerly known as Harwell Science and Innovation Centre

the cross boundary employment land needs of Didcot within South Oxfordshire.

Henley-on-Thames

- 5.17. Saved policy HEN2 of the Local Plan 2011 proposed mixed-use development at Market Place Mews with office uses at upper floor levels. Saved policy HEN3 proposed redevelopment of under-used land on the southern part of Reading Road Industrial Estate for Class B1 and B8 uses.
- 5.18. The Joint Henley and Harpsden NDP was made (adopted) on 14 April 2016. The plan has allocated various employment sites within the NDP area and contains employment related policies. There are policies in relation to the Reading Road Industrial Estate and details of the Market Place Mews development.
- 5.19. The emerging Local Plan identifies an additional supply of 1,355 new homes to come forward between 2011-2033 at the three market towns of Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford, of which the Henley-on-Thames NDP will need to plan for a proportion of 677 additional dwellings. The 2015 ELR makes recommendations for B1a/b uses in policy R2 and B1c/B2 and B8 uses in policy R3 suggesting that residual demand can be met at Henley-on-Thames.
- 5.20. In order to support sustainable development draft policies EMP1 and EMP5 recommend a further 1ha of employment land at Henley in line with the recommendations of the 2015 ELR and in line with the additional dwellings to be provided at Henley. Sites are to be identified within a review of the Joint Henley and Harpsden NDP and the NDP group would be able to allocate additional employment land as they deem appropriate.

Thame

- 5.21. Saved policy THA1 of the Local Plan 2011 proposed mixed-use development, including offices at the Cattle Market, North Street. The adopted Core Strategy in policy CSEM2 and CSTHA1 allocates about a further 2ha of employment land at Thame.
- 5.22. The “Thame Neighbourhood Plan” was made in March 2013. The Thame NDP sets out policies on how the Cattle Market site is to be re-developed. The 2013 Neighbourhood Plan allocates 3Ha of employment land to the east of the town on site B. This allocation consists of 2ha to meet the Core Strategy requirement and an additional 1ha to compensate for the loss of employment land at the former Memec site, which the neighbourhood plan allocates for residential.

- 5.23. Planning application P14/S1347/FUL was granted on 17 October 2014 on site B for the “erection of two industrial units (Class B1/B2/B8)....”. This permission has since been implemented.
- 5.24. The 2015 ELR in table 5.6 notes 1.6ha of undeveloped land within cluster C11: Thame Industrial Cluster at land south-east of Howland Road Business Park. This 1.6ha is in addition to the Thame NDP allocation of 3ha. The 2015 ELR recommends this site in policy R3 as a potential development site.
- 5.25. The 2013 Thame NDP sets a target of 775 new dwellings. The emerging Local Plan recommends that a potential further 452 dwellings are delivered through a revised Thame NDP.
- 5.26. In order to support sustainable development and to meet the needs of business in Thame, draft policies EMP1 and EMP6 of the emerging Local Plan recommend a further 2 hectares of employment land at Thame with sites to be identified within the reviewed NDP. A possible site would be the Howland Road site however it would be up to the revised Thame NDP to allocate a site or sites. The NDP group would be able to allocate additional employment land as they deem appropriate

Wallingford

- 5.27. Saved policy WAL5 of the Local Plan 2011 proposes:
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).
- 5.28. The above therefore proposed a total of 5.8ha of employment land. The sites are shown below:

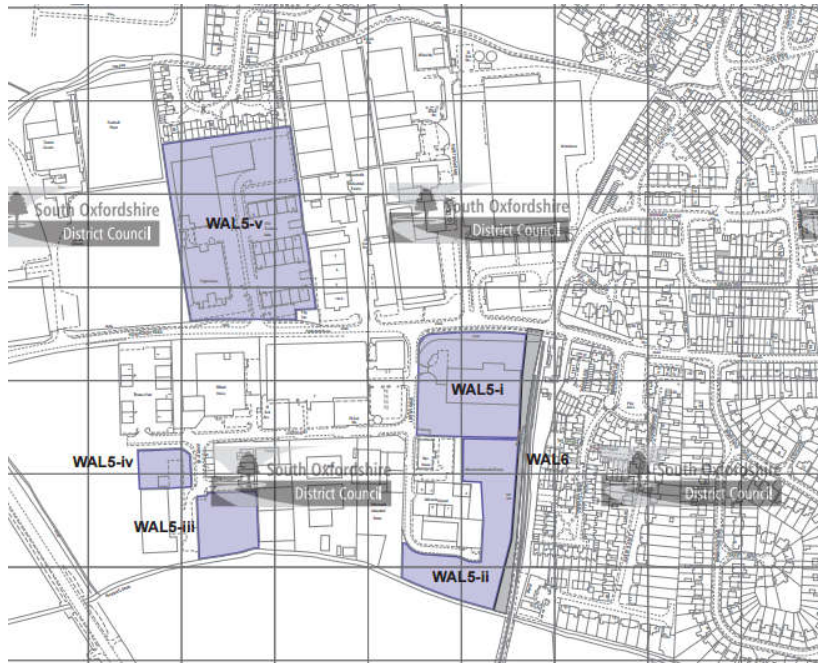


Figure 2: Adopted Core Strategy Proposals Map - Wallingford

5.29. Site visits to WAL5i to v were undertaken in February 2017

WAL5i and 5ii

5.30. Site WAL5i remained occupied by a warehouse supplying bathroom products. The northern part of WAL5ii remained undeveloped. On these two areas planning application P12/S2563/FUL was granted on 11 April 2014 for “*Demolition of existing industrial unit and redevelopment to provide a new foodstore (5,078 sqm GIA) and a petrol filling station....*”. The permission was valid for three years and therefore expired on 11 April 2017.

5.31. Planning application P12/S2580/FUL was granted on 5 February 2013 on the southern part of WAL5ii for the “*erection of a building (flexible B1/B2/B8)...*”. This permission has been implemented occupying 0.56ha. The remainder of WAL5ii (0.66ha) remains undeveloped.

WAL5iii

5.32. On site WAL5iii planning permission P13/S3960/FUL was granted on 3 March 2014 for a “*12Mw gas fuelled capacity mechanism embedded generation plant*”. This permission has been implemented occupying the whole site of 0.4ha and is likely to be considered as a B2 use.

WAL5iv

5.33. WAL 5iv remains undeveloped.

WAL5v

5.34. WAL5v is fully developed and occupied by modern three-storey office buildings, warehouses, business units, open storage and car parking.

Former “Habitat” Building

- 5.35. Hithercroft Industrial Estate has also seen further changes. Planning permission P13/S3451/FUL was granted on 24 September 2014 for *“Demolition of the existing Habitat building and the erection of 134 residential dwellings, including an extra care facility, affordable housing and the erection of 2,610 sqms of B1/B8 commercial building, with associated works”*. There is a section 106 agreement with the permission which states that the developer cannot cause or permit more than 89 dwellings to be occupied before the commercial unit has been serviced and constructed to shell and core, parking completed, area landscaped. The scheme resulted in the loss of 13,299 sqm of B8 warehousing and distribution but included an increase of approximately 970 sqm B1 space.
- 5.36. Planning permission P16/S0535/FUL was granted on 10 May 2016 for amendments to permission P13/S3451/FUL which reduced the proposed increase in B1a space to 532.5 sqm to provide 868.5 sqm of B1 in total, in addition to 1,161 sqm of new B1c space. The amendment results in a loss of 14,023.5sqm of B8 space on the site compared with the previous loss of 13,299 sqm of B8 space.
- 5.37. Development has commenced on the site with a number of the dwellings completed.

Land adjoining Lester Way

- 5.38. On land adjoining Lester Way, planning permission P14/S2633/FUL was granted on 5 June 2015 for *“New 11,100m sq (B8) warehouse distribution unit with offices and trade showroom and detached 1620m sq (B1) headquarters offices...”*. The permission has yet to be implemented. The greenfield site measures approximately 3.1ha.

Analysis

- 5.39. The 2015 ELR identifies 1.9ha of undeveloped land at Hithercroft Industrial Estate within cluster C6 identifying this as Land at Lupton Road (WAL5i 1.2ha); Land at Whitley Road (WAL5iii 0.4ha); Land at the junction of Whitley Road and Lester Road (WAL5iv 0.3ha) as potential development sites (in table 5.6).
- 5.40. The eventual adopted Core Strategy in policy CSEM2 allocates about a further 2ha of employment land at Wallingford in addition to the sites allocated under saved local plan policy WAL5.
- 5.41. R3 of the 2015 ELR recommends that 1.9ha of employment land is provided in Wallingford at the Hithercroft Industrial Estate during the period 2014 to 2031. R2 recommends that residual additional office demand could be met in the town centre of Wallingford (including Crowmarsh Gifford).

- 5.42. Wallingford is currently preparing a neighbourhood plan and further assessment of employment needs and allocation of sites will take place in the preparation of this NDP.
- 5.43. The adoption of emerging new Local Plan will replace the adopted Core Strategy and the saved policies of the Local Plan 2011. It is recognised that there is a potential for a period of time between the adoption of the new Local Plan and the adoption of the Wallingford NDP. At present it is unknown which sites the Wallingford NDP will allocate for employment. To avoid an interim situation where no sites in Wallingford are allocated for employment uses and to achieve sustainable development in Wallingford and the district, draft policies EMP1 and EMP7 carry forward several of the WAL5 sites.
- 5.44. Draft policy EMP7 therefore proposes to carry forward the following sites:

Table 5: Policy EMP7 sites			
Site	Name	Area Ha	Undeveloped Ha
EMP7i	Former Elliott factory, Hithercroft Road	1.2	1.2
EMP7ii	Land at Lupton Road	1.22	0.66
EMP7iii	Land at Whitley Road	0.4	0*
EMP7iv	Land at the junction of Whitley Road and Lester Road	0.3	0.3
Total		3.12**	2.16
* carried forward to clarify the employment use of this site			
** There is an adding error in policies EMP1 and 7 with the total being 3.12ha rather than the listed 2.82 ha			

- 5.45. Site WAL5v, measuring 2.68ha is in employment use no longer needs to be allocated for employment development as it is protected by draft policy EMP3.
- 5.46. In addition to the above sites carried forward, draft policy EMP1 and EMP7 proposes a further 3.1ha of employment land to be identified at Wallingford in the Wallingford NDP. This is due to the changes in employment uses on Hithercroft Industrial Estate, and following on from the recommendations in the Core Strategy and 2015 ELR for an additional 2ha of employment land at Wallingford, and further to the potential 226 additional dwellings at Wallingford suggested in the emerging Local Plan. The Wallingford NDP group may consider it appropriate to allocate the Lester Way site which measures approximately 3.1ha and would meet this need in full however the decision would rest with the NDP group. The NDP group would be able to allocate additional employment land as they deem appropriate or allocate alternative sites.

Crowmarsh Gifford

- 5.47. The 2015 ELR in table 5.6 identifies 2.5ha of undeveloped land suitable for employment uses within the C7 Crowmarsh Gifford Cluster. The ELR identifies this land as two undeveloped plots of 1.9 ha and 0.6ha at Howberry Park. Policy R2 of the 2015 ELR recommends the provision of additional office space with residual demand met at Crowmarsh Gifford. Policy R3 makes recommendations on the location of additional employment land however there is an acknowledged error in the policy as neither Crowmarsh Gifford or Howberry Park are mentioned although this location is highlighted in table 5.6. R3 advises that the residual 6.3ha of B2 and B8 general industrial, and storage and distribution land could be provided at new sites spread across the four main towns. The supporting text to policy R3 confirms that the provision of medium and larger occupiers may be met by land at C7 (Crowmarsh Industrial Cluster).
- 5.48. Paragraph 6.21 of the adopted Core Strategy advises that about two hectares of employment land at Howberry Park in Crowmarsh Gifford has the potential to be developed to support the environmental sciences cluster at Crowmarsh Gifford. The Core Strategy states that the Council will encourage the use of this land for further employment growth and examine whether there is the potential for more growth.
- 5.49. In order to promote sustainable development the two sites identified in the 2015 ELR at Howberry Park are allocated for employment development in draft policy EMP1 and EMP8 at:
- Site EMP8i: Howberry Park North
 - Site EMP8ii: Howberry Park Centre

Culham Science Centre – Proposed Strategic Allocation

- 5.50. The Culham Science Centre (CSC) site was first developed during the Second World War and opened in 1944 as an Aircraft Receipt and Despatch Unit for the Royal Navy named RNAS Culham (HMS Hornbill).
- 5.51. The ground layout of the airfield was typical of many bomber stations, with three runways. However it had a large number of hangars which were sited mostly around the field's perimeter. The airfield was operational as part of the Fleet Air Arm between 1944 and 1953. The airfield closed on 30 September 1953 and the Admiralty subsequently used it as a storage facility. In 1960 the airfield was transferred to the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority for use in nuclear and atomic research.
- 5.52. The site is home to the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy (CCFE) and is the site of the Joint European Torus (JET), Mega Ampere Spherical Tokamak (MAST) and the now closed Small Tight Aspect Ratio Tokamak (START).

- 5.53. The Local Plan 2011 identified the importance of CSC for its contribution to employment and research. Saved policy RUR3 of the 2011 Local Plan identified the importance of CSC within the Green Belt by supporting limited infill with saved local plan policy RUR5 supporting B1, B2 and B8 uses.
- 5.54. The adopted Core Strategy built on the saved Local Plan policies further recognising the importance of CSC in policy CSEM3. The policies support the redevelopment and intensification of CSC for research and science based businesses. The policy has the expectation that about 1,000 new jobs will be created through this redevelopment which is calculated to be the equivalent of approximately 5.3ha of employment land. Policy CSEM2 of the Core Strategy sets the amount and distribution of employment stating that the balance of the 13.5 hectares [5.3ha] will be provided through increasing jobs at Culham Science Centre. Core Strategy policy CSEN2 recognises CSC as a previously developed site in the Green Belt.
- 5.55. CSC is part of Science Vale and important for the economic prosperity of the district.
- 5.56. Further to the adoption of the Core Strategy in July 2014 the Council consulted on a Culham Science Centre Masterplan Consultation draft Supplementary Planning Document. The draft SPD considered the future development/redevelopment of CSC. It was prepared jointly by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority and the Council in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council in its role as Highway Authority. The draft masterplan was prepared in the context of the site's setting within the Green Belt which is a constraint on development. The draft masterplan set out the special circumstances of this brownfield site within the Green Belt and examined how the site could be developed without material harm the surrounding landscape and wider Green Belt.
- 5.57. Since the publication of the Core Strategy there has been progress in achieving the aims of policy CSEM2 and 3. There have been several planning permissions granted on the site which have been implemented:

Permission	Ha (sqm)	Use Class	Description	Status
P13/S3034/FUL	0.7 (2,865)	B1a	Erection of new building to accommodate a Materials Research Facility (MRF) with associated car parking.	Built
P11/W1576	0.17 (952)	B1a	Demolition of Building B8 and Building B14 and Erection of a New 1,921 sq.m Manufacturing and Assembly Facility	Built

P14/S1902/FUL	0.81 (3,322)	B1a	Erection of a 3, 222 sqm Class B1 building (workshop, research and development facility).	Built
P13/S2287/O	1.28 (7,354)	B1a	Outline application for erection of up to 9,000 sq metres of Class B1 development.	Renewed – promoter is marketing for a developer /partner
P16/S2368/FUL		Sui Generis	Development of an Energy Storage facility	

- 5.58. The first preferred options consultation proposed further development within the Science Vale. The proposal for the intensification of CSC set out in policy CSEM2 and 3 was carried forward in this consultation.
- 5.59. It is noted that there is still significant potential at the CSC and its location adjacent to Culham train station is important. It is recognised that development and investment at CSC has been constrained by its inclusion within the Green Belt. The emerging Local Plan notes that the site is at the outer edge of the Green Belt, at a distance from the special historic setting of the City of Oxford, and does not make a significant contribution towards the purposes of including land in the Green Belt to check the unrestricted sprawl of Oxford City. The exceptional circumstances justifying a review of the Green Belt are set out in the emerging Local Plan second Preferred Options.
- 5.60. It is proposed that the CSC site measuring approximately 73ha is to be inset from the Green Belt with the whole site (which is considered to be previously developed land) available for redevelopment.
- 5.61. Draft policy STRAT1 seeks to focus new development in Science Vale, including Culham so that this area can play an enhanced role in providing homes, jobs and services with improved transport connectivity. Draft policy STRAT5 supports the strategic allocations of the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.62. Draft policy STRAT6 therefore supports proposals for the redevelopment and intensification of CSC where this does not have an unacceptable visual impact. It is proposed to remove CSC from the Green Belt to remove this constraint. Draft policies EMP1 and 9 therefore carry forward the ambitions of Core Strategy policies CSEM2 and 3 supporting the redevelopment of CSC to provide the equivalent of 5.3ha of employment land.

Culham No.1 site and Land West of CSC – Proposed Strategic Allocation

- 5.63. The Culham No.1 site shares a similar history to the CSC site and was once part of RNAS Culham (HMS Hornbill). Most of the buildings on site were constructed as wartime works. The aircraft related buildings on the site were used after the war by government departments until the site was sold in 1996 to a private company with the buildings being taken up by a variety of firms and uses. Due to this history, the existing buildings are generally poorly designed and dispersed through the site without making the best use of this previously developed land.
- 5.64. The Local Plan 2011, in a similar vein to CSC, recognised the special circumstances of the site and saved policies RUR6, 7 and 8 support limited infill, redevelopment and B1, B2 and B8 uses. Core Strategy Policy CSEN2 recognises the No.1 site as a previously developed site in the Green Belt
- 5.65. The Council's Refined Options version of the emerging Local Plan identified the Culham No.1 site and land around the Culham railway station as a location that would support economic growth potential in Science Vale. It is also recognised that the redevelopment is likely to coincide with, and be complimented by, the delivery of the Clifton Hampden bypass and Didcot Science Bridge.
- 5.66. The Council's First Preferred Options consultation continued to support the allocation and redevelopment of the Culham no.1 site for housing. However, taking account of the benefits that would arise from delivering housing around Culham railway station there is the potential for a larger strategic allocation that would further support the economic growth of Science Vale.
- 5.67. The No.1 site is part of Science Vale and important for the economic prosperity of the district.
- 5.68. Similar to CSC, there is significant potential at the No.1 site and its location adjacent to Culham train station is important. The factors that apply to CSC also apply to the No.1 site. The exceptional circumstances justifying a review of the Green Belt are set out in the emerging Local Plan Second Preferred Options.
- 5.69. Draft policy STRAT1 seeks to focus new development in Science Vale, including Culham so that this area can play an enhanced role in providing homes, jobs and services with improved transport connectivity. Draft policy STRAT5 supports the strategic allocations of the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.70. Draft policy STRAT7 therefore supports proposals for the redevelopment and intensification of the No.1 site where this does not have an unacceptable visual impact. It is proposed to remove the No.1

site from the Green Belt to remove this constraint. Draft policies EMP1 and STRAT7 therefore build in the initial ambitions of saved local plan policies RUR6, 7 and 8 and recognise the importance of this site within Science Vale.

- 5.71. Draft policy STRA7 focuses on strengthening the heart of the district and Science Vale through a strategic allocation on land adjacent (to the west) of CSC. It is proposed that an area of approximately 242ha including the No.1 site is inset from the Green Belt providing a developable area of approximately 189ha.
- 5.72. The strategic allocation will be a comprehensive scheme of development, following a site wide masterplan of sustainable development. The No.1 site will be included within this masterplan to ensure the best use of this land whilst protecting the surrounding landscape. It is proposed that the No.1 site is redeveloped for a mix of uses including employment in order to make the best use of its strategic location adjacent to CSC and Culham railway station and adjacent to the proposed residential development to the west.
- 5.73. Draft policy STRAT7 recognises the importance of the existing businesses occupying units at the No.1 site and the existing employment the No.1 site provides. Therefore the existing 10ha of employment land provided by the No.1 site will be retained within the wider strategic allocation in accordance with the masterplan. An additional 2ha of employment land will also be provided within the strategic allocation. Support will be given to the existing business on the No.1 site to find suitable premises.

Chalgrove

- 5.74. Chalgrove contains two potential employment locations, firstly at the existing Monument Business Park, located north-east of the village of Chalgrove, and secondly at a potential strategic allocation for the redevelopment of Chalgrove Airfield, located north of the village. Chalgrove Parish Council is working on a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The NDP area was designated on 21 December 2012 with the plan area covering the village of Chalgrove, Monument Business Park and the airfield. The allocation of the airfield however is proposed to be a Local Plan policy rather than a NDP policy due to the strategic nature of the site.

Monument Business Park

- 5.75. Monument Business Park (MBP) is currently operated by Jennings and is occupied by a variety of enterprises. The 2015 ELR advised that MBP is *“a very successful location for office use, particularly in providing affordable and flexible space to accommodate the growth of SMEs”*.

- 5.76. The 2015 ELR in table 5.6 identifies 4.5ha of undeveloped land suitable for employment uses within the C9 MBP Cluster. Policy R2 of the 2015 ELR recommends the provision of 4,000 sqm of additional office space at MBP. Based on a 57.5% plot ratio this is a land-take requirement of 0.7ha. Policy R3 recommends an additional 2.5ha of B2 and B8 general industrial, and storage and distribution at MBP.
- 5.77. Application P13/S3488/O granted outline planning permission on 12 February 2014 for “Expansion of the existing business park and PV solar array”. Reserved matters for this outline permission were granted permission on 18 August 2015 under reference P15/S1804/RM for a new two storey B1 use class building and parking facilities. Further reserved matters were granted permission on 17 December 2015 under reference P15/S3610/RM. These permissions provide 2.25ha of B1a (4250 sqm) and 0.2ha of B8 (600sqm), with 400sqm of ‘other’ uses.
- 5.78. In line with the recommendations of the 2015 ELR and considering the above extant planning permissions, draft policy EMP1 recommends 2.25ha of employment land to be identified in the Chalgrove Neighbourhood Development Plan. The policy highlights that this is likely to be at MBP however the NDP group would be able to allocate alternative sites and additional employment land as they deem suitable.

Chalgrove Airfield

- 5.79. Chalgrove Airfield is a former Second World War airfield and partially previously developed land. Opened in 1943, it was used by both the Royal Air Force and United States Army Air Forces. During the war it was used primarily as a combat reconnaissance airfield. After the war it was closed in late 1946. Today, the airfield is primarily used by the Martin-Baker company for testing ejector seats. Ownership of the airfield has been transferred from the Ministry of Defence to the Homes and Community Agency (HCA), a Government Department. The site is located outside of the Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 5.80. The site was submitted by the HCA as a potential development site in April 2016, later than the other potential strategic allocation sites and after the Council’s Refined Options consultation. Up until this stage in the plan-making process it had not been considered.
- 5.81. In the Council’s first Preferred Options consultation Chalgrove Airfield was identified as the Council’s preferred option for a strategic allocation. GVA, agents for the HCA, submitted initial proposals for at least 3,500 new homes and 10ha of new employment land plus the retention of existing employment land. The HCA are continuing to collect and share evidence regarding potential site constraints. The HCA have refined their proposals to reduce this to approximately 3,000 new homes and 5ha of new employment land.

5.82. A strategic allocation at Chalgrove Airfield remains one of the Council's preferred options. Draft policy STRAT1 proposes major development at Chalgrove Airfield. Draft policy STRAT5 supports this proposal requiring the strategic sites to provide an appropriate scale and mix of uses, in suitable locations, to create sustainable developments. Draft policy STRAT9 proposes 5ha of employment land at this strategic location to support this sustainable development. The provision of employment land on this strategic site will provide the opportunity for those living in the new dwellings to find local employment.

Berinsfield

5.83. Core Strategy Policy CSEN2 provides for a local review of the Green Belt at Berinsfield. This policy is carried forward in draft policy STRAT1 of the emerging Local Plan which proposes major development at Berinsfield. Draft policy STRAT8 supports development necessary for the regeneration of the village including up to 2,100 new homes. Proposals to develop land at Berinsfield will be expected to deliver a scheme in accordance with an agreed comprehensive masterplan and strategy for the regeneration of Berinsfield. Further work is to be commissioned by the Council to explore potential options for the regeneration of the village. This further work will identify the required regeneration package and include a masterplan and delivery strategy. This is being jointly developed with the local community to provide locally required regeneration and infrastructure. It is therefore expected that further employment land and development will form part of this regeneration strategy.

Summary of the amount and distribution of new B-class employment land

5.84. The emerging Local Plan 2033 has examined progress of the saved employment policies of the Local Plan 2011, the employment policies of the adopted Core Strategy, and further evidence and studies published since this time and has therefore allocated employment sites where there is no NDP or set a suggested target for employment land to be included within NDPs.

Table 7: Summary of Draft Employment Sites		
Location	Site	Area Ha
Didcot	EMP4i and ii at Southmead Industrial Estate	2.92*
Didcot	Allocation within Vale of White Horse	6.5
Henley-on-Thames	To be allocated through revised Henley NDP	1.0
Thame	To be allocated through revised Thame NDP	2.0
Wallingford	EMP7i to iv at Hithercroft Industrial Estate	3.12 (2.16ha undeveloped)*
Wallingford	To be allocated through Wallingford NDP	3.1
Crowmarsh Gifford	EMP8i and ii at Howberry Park	2.5
Culham Science Centre	Strategic Allocation	5.3
Culham No.1 Site and Land West of CSC	Strategic Allocation	2.0 (plus retention of 10ha existing)
Chalgrove	To be allocated through Chalgrove NDP (Possible Monument Business Park)	2.25
Chalgrove Airfield	Strategic Allocation	5
Berinsfield	Regeneration Project	Tba
Total		35.68**
*Draft Policy EMP1 and EMP7 refers to 2.82 due to an adding error		
**Policy EMP1 refers to 35.51 due to an adding error		

6. Other Employment Policies within the Emerging Local Plan

Draft Policy EMP2: Range, Size and Mix of Employment Premises

6.1. Chapter 1 of the NPPF stresses the importance of building a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 7 states that the planning system should ensure that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation.

Paragraph 21 states that local planning authorities should support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area.

- 6.2. National Planning Policy Guidance provides additional guidance on assessing economic development needs and uses. The guidance states that, when looking at what type of employment land is needed, the increasing diversity of employment generating uses requires different policy responses and an appropriate variety of employment sites. It is also clear that the need for rural employment should not be overlooked.
- 6.3. The 2015 ELR in policy recommendation R2 advises that there is an opportunity to promote flexible and smaller size office workspace units to accommodate the needs of smaller and medium size businesses and that this affordable and flexible business space should be promoted within the four town centres where possible.
- 6.4. South Oxfordshire District council in partnership with the Vale of White Horse District council commissioned consultants NLP to prepare a Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SME) Business and Innovation Strategy (2017). The strategy highlights the importance of SMEs in South Oxfordshire and highlighted the difficulties these firms are experiencing in finding suitable premises.
- 6.5. It is therefore important that proposals for employment use should provide a range and size of premises including flexible business space to meet current and future requirements.

Draft Policy EMP3: Retention of Employment Land

- 6.6. In addition to the above the NPPF in paragraph 22 also advises that planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. The NPPF advises that applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.
- 6.7. However economic growth and the availability of employment land and employment premises is a long-term issue which is material when looked at against often short-term economic fluctuations. The NPPF is clear that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation.
- 6.8. Saved local plan policy E6 states:
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*

6.9. The council has a guidance note, “*Guidance on making applications for the change of use of employment or service trade sites to other uses*” that demonstrates the sorts of marketing that we believe necessary to meet the above criterion for market interest evidence.

6.10. The 2015 ELR is clear in policy R1 that to help ensure that the needs of business are met and that not too much employment land is lost to non-employment uses, the Council should update saved Local Plan Policy E6. The 2015 ELR provides updated criteria for policy E6. The recommendations of the 2015 ELR have been taken into account and reflected in draft policy EMP3 in the emerging Local Plan Second Preferred Options.

Development in the countryside and Rural areas

6.11. The NPPF in paragraph 28 states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. The emerging Local Plan Second Preferred Options therefore contains draft Policy EMP11 which seeks to support proposals for sustainable economic growth in the countryside and rural areas.

Tourism and Visitors

6.12. In addition to “B-class” employment the emerging Local Plan Second Preferred Options recognises the importance of tourism and visitors within the district and the importance contribution this makes to providing employment and to the economy. In 2014 £1.56 billion was spent by visitors to Oxfordshire with a further £362.5 million of business turnover generated through indirect and induced spending (multiplier spend). This supported 23,197 FTE jobs and 32,089 actual jobs and accounted for 5.7% of all employee jobs across the county.¹²

6.13. The emerging Local Plan Second Preferred Options therefore contains draft Policy EMP12 which seeks to support sustainable tourism. In addition to this draft policy the emerging local plan also contains draft policies which support sustainable caravan and camping sites (EMP13) and visitor accommodation (EMP14) due to the economic and employment benefits they bring to the district.

¹² The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire Estimates for 2014, Tourism South East Research Unit August 2015

7. Next Steps

- 7.1. South Oxfordshire District Council will gather responses from the Local Plan 2033 Second Preferred Options Consultation. Continued monitoring of existing employment land, allocated sites and extant planning permissions will take place along with further evidence gathering.