

# South Oxfordshire LOCAL PLAN 2032

PREFERRED OPTIONS

STAGE THREE OF THE PROCESS

JUNE 2016



Please share  
your opinions  
& help shape our  
South Oxfordshire

[www.southoxon.gov.uk/newlocalplan](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/newlocalplan)



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# Foreword

by John Cotton

As we move closer to a final version of our new Local Plan, your response to this consultation is crucial. We have listened to what you said in previous consultations and used that to narrow down the options for delivering homes and jobs in our district in the next few years.

I know that many are concerned about the impact on their lives of new houses being built near them. However, I also talk to people who are equally worried about the prospects of homes for their children if we don't address the shortfalls that we face.

This plan attempts to balance those tensions.

What I hope you will find particularly striking about the plan is our desire to let more of the decisions be made by communities for themselves. South Oxfordshire has been in the vanguard of neighbourhood planning and, with your backing, our proposals can keep us there.

Finally, don't worry about answering all the questions: if you're not sure how you feel or you just can't decide, you can skip answers. Equally, if there's something you feel strongly needs saying, please tell us. We will read and consider all responses.



**John Cotton**

Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for corporate strategy, and strategic policy (including the local plan)



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Have your say on development in South Oxfordshire

- 1.1 South Oxfordshire District Council is continuing work on the Local Plan 2032 that will shape the future of our district. We are committed to involving our communities in preparing the new plan, and would now like your views on our Preferred Options.
- 1.2 Planning has a key role in enabling us to meet the challenges the district faces that not only protects what we value about the district, but also builds on opportunities to make it an even better place.

### What is the Local Plan for?

- 1.3 The Local Plan 2032 provides a policy framework for sustainable development across South Oxfordshire to 2032. It sets out our vision, shows how we have developed a strategy that responds to that vision and how we will deliver it, primarily through Neighbourhood Plans and working in partnership with our stakeholders. The policies in this plan will be used to help us make decisions on planning applications across the district.
- 1.4 Our Local Plan 2032 sets out a strategy for delivering growth, managing change and protecting the natural and built environment. It identifies the amount and distribution of housing, employment and retail across the district. It also identifies the infrastructure, such as community facilities and strategic transport required to support sustainable development. We have and will continue to work with our neighbouring councils on cross-boundary issues, for example, how we can help Oxford City meet its unmet housing need. It will also include policies that are used when we are determining planning applications and identify circumstances where development will not be appropriate.
- 1.5 In preparing the new plan we are:
  - exploring how much land is likely to be needed for different uses;
  - identifying the right areas and sites to make sure that we have a healthy supply of developable land that will be delivered;

- working with our neighbouring councils and the county council, expert advisors (such as the Environment Agency and Natural England) and infrastructure providers (such as Thames Water) to look at how the impacts of development and growth can be managed across South Oxfordshire and beyond;
- supporting parish and town councils who are working on neighbourhood development plans and orders; and
- listening to our residents, businesses and communities.

### Why has the name of the Local Plan changed?

By preparing a new Local Plan we will be able to control where new development takes place

- 1.6 The previous two stages of consultation were based on a plan that ran between 2011 and 2031, the plan period. We are required to ensure that once the plan is adopted, we have at least 15 years remaining. Our work programme indicates that the plan is likely to be adopted in 2017, therefore it must run to 2032. We have rolled-forward our needs on a pro-rata basis and changed the name of the Local Plan to address this requirement.

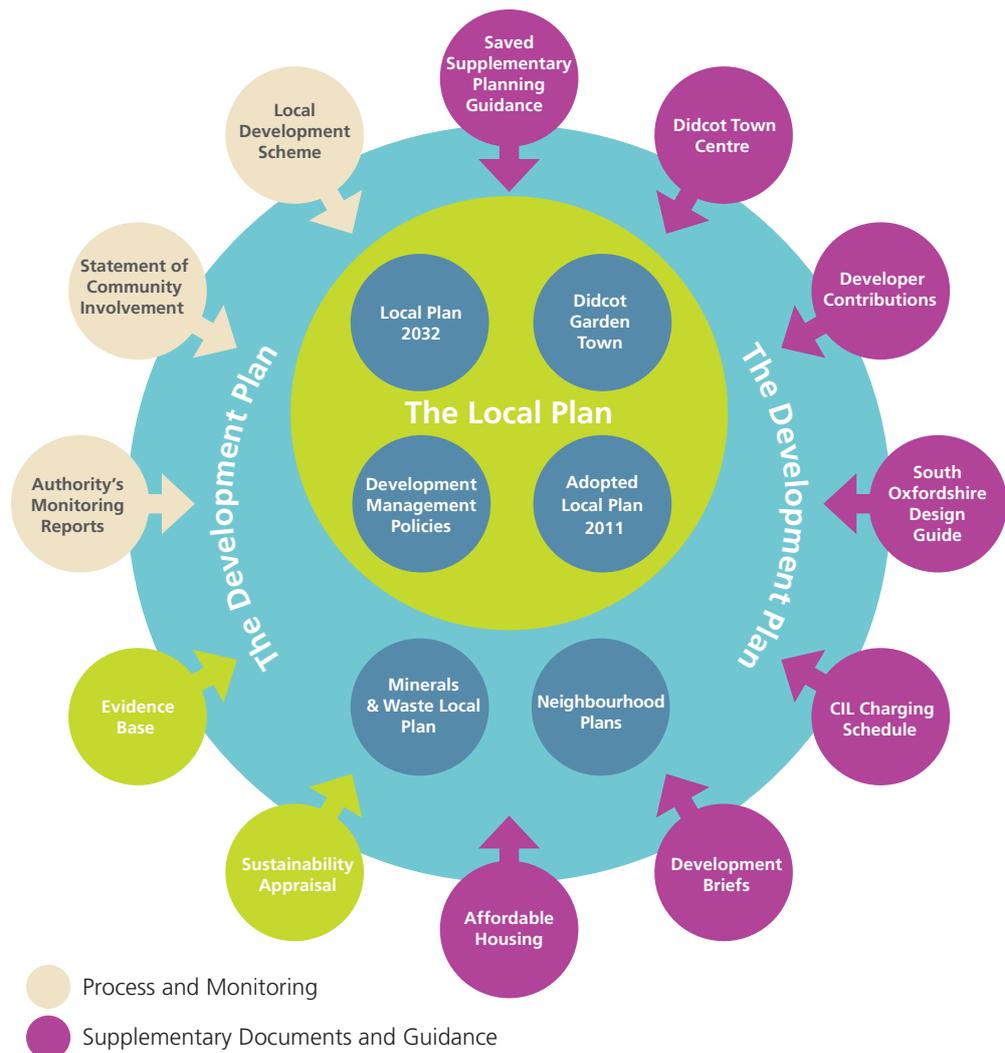
### Why are we preparing a new Local Plan?

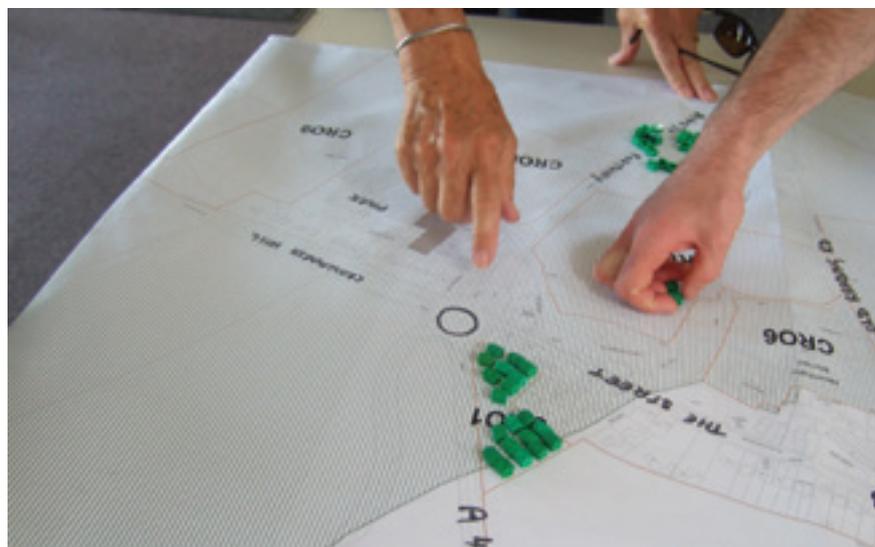
- 1.7 In April 2014, the councils across Oxfordshire published a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). This identified new evidence of South Oxfordshire's housing need beyond that which is planned for in the existing Core Strategy. Oxford City Council has indicated that they could have difficulties in meeting their identified housing need within the city boundary and have asked other districts across the county to consider taking some of this "unmet need."
- 1.8 This change in evidence means that we need to review our existing plan, the Core Strategy, and consider how we can plan for additional growth in the most advantageous and positive way. This Preferred Options document is the latest stage in that process.
- 1.9 By preparing a new Local Plan we will be able to control where new development takes place, and plan for all our needs in the best way.
- 1.10 Whilst the Local Plan will provide the broad strategic framework for growth, much of the detail, such as the specific sites to be allocated for housing, will be finalised at the local level through neighbourhood development plans and orders.

## The Development Plan

1.11 The South Oxfordshire Development Plan is the starting point in making decisions on planning applications. All planning applications will be determined in accordance with the development plan taken as a whole, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan comprises:

- the existing Core Strategy (including the “saved policies” of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011) until it is replaced by the Local Plan 2032;
- “made” neighbourhood development plans or orders prepared by local communities;
- any development planning documents (DPDs), such as those relating to minerals and waste prepared by Oxfordshire County Council and our own proposed DPD for Didcot Garden Town;





### Neighbourhood Planning

- 1.12 Neighbourhood development plans can be prepared by town or parish councils and form part of the development plan. They set out in more detail how a community wishes to see its area develop. These must be in general conformity with the Local Plan 2032.
- 1.13 We will continue to support communities who wish to undertake neighbourhood planning. They are a key way in which we expect to deliver much of the Local Plan. Details of how we can help such groups are set out on our website.

## What we have done so far

- 1.14 This Preferred Options document is the third stage in the process of preparing the Local Plan 2032.

### The Plan Preparation Process



1.15 The process of reviewing our Core Strategy and developing an up to date Local Plan started in June and July 2014, when we held a Local Plan Issues and Scope public consultation. It asked a number of questions about how we could approach planning for additional housing, where business and job growth could be located, and how we can improve transport, infrastructure, shopping and community facilities. You can see the consultation document on our website at: [www.southoxon.gov.uk/issuesandscope](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/issuesandscope).



1.16 We received nearly 4,000 comments from the Issues and Scope consultation, from almost 800 individuals and organisations. Our Issues and Scope Consultation Report is available at [www.southoxon.gov.uk/issuesandscope](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/issuesandscope) and this provides a detailed summary of the main themes arising from the responses.

1.17 The comments received helped us refine the wide range of issues raised in the previous consultation and informed the Refined Options consultation, that was held between 19 February and 2 April 2015.

1.18 Over 3,200 responses were received from 750 individuals and organisations. The Refined Options Consultation Report provides a detailed summary of the main themes, and can be found at [www.southoxon.gov.uk/RefinedOptions](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/RefinedOptions). The responses received from this second consultation have informed this Preferred Option document.

1.19 Public consultation is only one method by which we collect evidence and information to help us prepare our new Local Plan. We have also carried out or commissioned a range of other studies to provide us with a comprehensive picture of the opportunities and constraints in the district. Completed studies are available on the evidence page of our website [www.southoxon.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/evidence).

We received nearly 4,000 comments from the Issues and Scope consultation, from almost 800 individuals and organisations.





Studies which set out requirements – these provide evidence of the level of need we should plan for, including for housing, employment, shopping and leisure.



Studies which look at the suitability of sites and places for development – these provide information about which places might be most appropriate for development.



Studies which look at the impacts of development – these provide information about how development will affect roads, water supply and so on, and what might need to be done to deal with these impacts.



Public consultation – this plan will go through at least five stages of public consultation (of which this is the third) and a public examination before it can be adopted as the development plan for the district.

## 2 THE PREFERRED OPTIONS DOCUMENT

- 2.1 Our consultation on our Preferred Options asks for your comments on our proposals and for your ideas for further shaping the Local Plan. **It is not a set of final decisions.**
- 2.2 This Preferred Options document is not a draft Local Plan. It sets out our preferred approach in respect of a number of key issues. A further consultation will take place later in 2016 in respect of the other proposed elements of the Local Plan, such as the development management policies.

### The Context

- 2.3 We are preparing our Local Plan in the face of a number of challenges, including:
- meeting our increased housing need as evidenced by the SHMA
  - the requirement to work with Oxford City and the other four districts in the county to ensure that the city's housing needs can be met
  - maintaining an on-going 5-year housing land supply
  - securing a faster rate of housing delivery in Didcot
  - ongoing housing affordability difficulties
  - maintaining employment growth and skill development to maximise opportunities for our existing and new workforce
  - balancing employment growth with the provision of an appropriate choice of housing
  - protecting the Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
  - ensuring that we provide for housing and employment growth whilst protecting our natural and historic environment
- 2.4 We believe that our Preferred Options set out the most appropriate way of tackling these challenges.

### What does the Preferred Options document do?

- 2.5 It builds on the first two consultation stages of the Local Plan process. It takes account of the comments and ideas received and the growing evidence base that we have produced.



This will be a plan for everyone with an interest in South Oxfordshire, but particularly residents, businesses and local communities

2.6 The Preferred Options document contains:

- A vision for South Oxfordshire in 2032;
- Objectives and a strategy for showing how we will meet the vision;
- Distribution of sites or areas for development where these are needed;
- Key policies on important topics that underpin the strategy – this excludes development management policies at this stage; and
- A number of specific questions that we would like our communities and all stakeholders to consider

### How can you take part?

2.7 This will be a plan for everyone with an interest in South Oxfordshire, but particularly residents, businesses and local communities. It is therefore essential that we get the views and thoughts of as many of these groups as possible, as these will inform the next key stage of the process, the Proposed Submission document.

2.8 To help achieve this, we are undertaking extensive public consultation and engagement over an eight-week period commencing on Monday 27 June 2016 and ending on Friday 19 August 2016.

- 2.9 We will be holding a series of “roadshow” events across the district during the consultation period. Full details of the consultation programme can be found at our website [www.southoxon.gov.uk/newlocalplan](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/newlocalplan).

### What happens next?

- 2.10 The development of the Local Plan follows a number of different stages that are defined by legislation, set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The detail of the process is set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.11 We will undertake a consultation on the further elements of the Local Plan, including the development management policies, in the autumn of 2016.
- 2.12 The comments received at this Preferred Options stage, and at the further consultation in the autumn, will be used to inform the Proposed Submission document, that we aim to produce very early in 2017. This, again, will be subject to consultation.



## 3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 South Oxfordshire is a beautiful and prosperous place with many strengths: its natural environment, picturesque towns and villages, and a buoyant and successful economy. There are challenges in ensuring that we plan for development in a way that protects and enhances all that is special about our district. In our vision for 2032 we set out how we see the district evolving, building on our strengths and rising to the challenges.
- 3.2 A set of strategic objectives define what the Local Plan 2032 will focus on to deliver our stated vision. Our strategy is an evolution of that developed for the Core Strategy 2012, as we believe it is still appropriate and sustainable, and it reflects valued input from the community.

### Our Vision for 2032

- 3.3 South Oxfordshire will remain a beautiful and prosperous place to live and it will be an attractive place for people to work and spend their leisure time.
- 3.4 By meeting our housing and employment need and the creation of new, sustainable and vibrant places, we will have provided enough homes and jobs for those wishing to live and work here. By planning for housing in our four towns of Didcot, Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford and in our villages, we will have ensured that all our communities thrive and that everyone has access to services within a short distance. New development meets the highest standards of design with necessary associated infrastructure.
- 3.5 Science Vale<sup>1</sup> will have continued to grow as a world renowned science, research and innovation led hub that attracts business, creates job opportunities and delivers housing growth. Didcot will be a flourishing Garden Town, being both the gateway to and the heart of Science Vale. Roads and rail links will have been improved and pedestrian and cycle networks will have made it easier for people to get around, in particular to major employment sites.
- 3.6 Through careful management of the Oxford Green Belt we will have protected the important setting of Oxford whilst also making appropriate provision for housing, business growth and both urban and rural regeneration. The North Wessex Downs and Chilterns Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected and enhanced, whilst also allowing for appropriate and sustainable growth in places that will thrive and benefit.

<sup>1</sup> Science Vale is an area in Southern Oxfordshire, crossing the border of South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. It is one of the most successful science clusters in the UK. This activity is concentrated around the three centres for science at Harwell Campus, Culham Science Centre, and Milton Park, but is supported by a number of important settlements including Didcot, Wantage and Grove.

- 3.7 We will exceed people's high expectations in terms of healthy living, sustainable travel and the design of buildings, homes and public spaces. Everyone will have access to high quality leisure, retail and cultural facilities, that will also attract visitors. South Oxfordshire will be a top tourist destination, helping our towns and villages to remain vibrant and prosperous. Communities will thrive, and through neighbourhood planning and community engagement, they will have their say on how their local area is shaped.

We will exceed people's high expectations in terms of healthy living, sustainable travel and the design of buildings, homes and public spaces



## Strategic Objectives

- 3.8 Our Strategic Objectives are underpinned by the three strands of the National Planning Policy Framework: social, economic and environmental.

### Objective 1 - Settlements

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- OBJ 1.1** Support the settlement hierarchy, the development of Didcot Garden Town, the growth of our towns and the vitality of our villages.
- OBJ 1.2** Support rural communities and their way of life, recognising that this is what attracts people to the district.
- OBJ 1.3** Meet identified housing needs by delivering high-quality, sustainable, attractive places for people to live and work.
- OBJ 1.4** Focus growth in Science Vale through delivering homes and jobs, retail and leisure facilities and enhanced transport infrastructure.

## Objective 2 - Housing

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- OBJ 2.1** Deliver a wide range of housing options to cater for the housing needs of our community (including self-build, starter homes and older person's accommodation).
- OBJ 2.2** Support the regeneration of housing and facilities to strengthen communities, and address identified poverty and social exclusion.
- OBJ 2.3** Contribute to meeting the economic and housing needs of the county as a whole, reflecting the special character of South Oxfordshire

## Objective 3 - Economy

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- OBJ 3.1** Improve employment opportunities and employment land provision, providing high quality local jobs to help retain more of its skilled residents in the local workforce.
- OBJ 3.2** Support business growth, especially in locations close to existing business areas, transport connections and broadband provision and provide the opportunity to reduce commuting distances.
- OBJ 3.3** Ensure economic and housing growth are balanced and facilitate sustainable journeys to work.
- OBJ 3.4** Give emphasis to high-technology industries whilst supporting the retail and service sectors.
- OBJ 3.5** Create the conditions whereby world-renowned and cutting edge industries choose to locate and grow their businesses here, contributing to a strong and successful economy, in line with the Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire (SEP).
- OBJ 3.6** Inspire the next generation of workers by planning for high quality education facilities.
- OBJ 3.7** Encourage tourism by protecting our built and natural assets, such as the Thames, and providing services and facilities for visitors.

## Objective 4 - Infrastructure

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- OBJ 4.1** Ensure that essential infrastructure is delivered to support our existing residents and services as well as growth.
- OBJ 4.2** Make sustainable transport an attractive and viable choice for people, whilst recognising that car travel and parking provision will continue to be important in this rural district.

## Objective 5 - Design

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- OBJ 5.1** Deliver high quality, innovative, well designed and locally distinctive developments in sustainable locations.
- OBJ 5.2** Support development that respects the scale and character of our towns and villages, enhancing the special character of our historic settlements and the surrounding countryside.



## Objective 6 - Community

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- OBJ 6.1** Champion neighbourhood planning, empowering local communities to direct development within their area and provide support to ensure Neighbourhood Plans are deliverable, achievable and sustainable.
- OBJ 6.2** Provide access to high quality leisure, recreation, cultural, community and health facilities.
- OBJ 6.3** Ensure all communities have access to the services and facilities they value, supporting the health and wellbeing of everyone.



## Objective 7 - Natural and Built environment

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- OBJ 7.1** Protect and enhance the natural environment, including biodiversity, the landscape, green infrastructure and our waterways, placing particular importance on the value of the Oxford Green Belt, our two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the River Thames.
- OBJ 7.2** Conserve and enhance our rich and varied historic assets and their settings, celebrating these as some of our strongest attributes.

## Objective 8 - Climate change

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- OBJ 8.1** Minimise carbon emissions and other pollution such as water, air, noise and light, and increase our resilience to the likely impact of climate change, especially flooding.



## 4 OUR SPATIAL STRATEGY

- 4.1 We have updated our spatial strategy previously set out in the Core Strategy, to ensure that we meet our housing needs requirement in full. The revised strategy sets out how we will deliver the vision and objectives.
- 4.2 The Plan seeks to meet housing needs identified for South Oxfordshire as well as a contribution towards our neighbour, Oxford City's unmet housing need. At present a joint programme with the other Oxfordshire authorities<sup>2</sup> is progressing work on the scale of Oxford's unmet needs and how those could be met. The outcome of this work is expected in September 2016.
- 4.3 This Preferred Options consultation proposes to make provision for 15,750 homes to meet the identified housing need for South Oxfordshire over the plan period (2011 to 2032), this equates to 750 homes per annum. This reflects the committed economic growth housing requirement for our district identified in the SHMA and falls within the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) range.
- 4.4 Under the Duty to Cooperate we have worked closely with all the authorities in Oxfordshire to identify the scale of unmet need and how Oxford's housing requirement could be distributed across the county. The outcome of the Oxfordshire Growth Board's work is expected in September 2016 so we have decided to include a provisional allocation for Oxford's needs in this Preferred Options document. We currently propose to make provision for an additional 3,750 homes as a working assumption to help meet the housing needs of Oxford City.
- 4.5 The Preferred Options also make provision for at least 19.5 hectares of employment land and appropriate levels of retail development in our four towns.
- 4.6 The majority of the allocations made in the Core Strategy are retained and new allocations are made to meet the additional housing requirements identified in the SHMA.
- 4.7 The strategy has been updated to help address the key challenges facing the district now and to make best use of available opportunities. Our strategy will deliver sustainable development supporting the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in national policy.

<sup>2</sup>Cherwell District Council,  
Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire  
County Council, Vale of White  
Horse District Council, West  
Oxfordshire District Council

## The Strategy

- 4.8 At the Refined Options stage we set out eight potential options for our housing distribution that we could apply. In response to your comments and further analysis, we have combined options: broadly retained Option A (the Core Strategy approach), and incorporated elements of Option B (Science Vale and ‘Sustainable Settlements’) and Option D (all growth in a new settlement).
- 4.9 Our preferred strategy supports the delivery of new housing and economic growth and translates our vision and objectives to:
- support a strong network of vibrant settlements including the regeneration of town centres, enhancing the district’s sustainability and self-sufficiency, recognising the rural nature of South Oxfordshire and the impact of the nearby major centres of Oxford and Reading
  - support a movement strategy that strengthens connections to key places and allows a choice of transport modes and manages traffic to improve environmental quality
  - create thriving local economies in urban and rural areas with a range of work opportunities including more high value jobs and enable the up-skilling of our workforce to support existing and new firms
  - deliver sufficient new homes of the right types and tenure to meet the needs of our communities and economy supported by excellent infrastructure, services and facilities
  - maintain and enhance the built and natural environment and ensure good quality developments and change.



## Housing supply

4.10 We have developed a range of housing supply to help provide a choice and to maximise housing delivery across the plan period. These include:

- Retained Core Strategy allocations
- Strategic allocations made in this plan
- Neighbourhood Plan allocations for smaller scale sites
- Infill in our settlements that will come forward through the development management process in accordance with the policies in this plan, known as windfalls
- Existing planning commitments

4.11 Although we will rely on Neighbourhood Plans to deliver a major part of our housing supply, the strategic allocations are central to the delivery of the Local Plan 2032 and to the achievement of our objectives. We followed a comprehensive selection process to identify the proposed strategic sites. This began with an assessment of land surrounding Oxford and Reading, land submitted as potential locations for a new settlement and land adjoining our key employment area at Culham Science Centre. This helped us identify the most suitable and sustainable broad locations that were then comprehensively tested through our Sustainability Appraisal and other evidence assessments. The scale of development on strategic sites will enable infrastructure improvements that offer benefits to their local areas.



4.12 Our proposed strategic policy is as follows:

### Proposed Policy - The Overall Strategy

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

- retaining Didcot/Science Vale as a focus for major new development so that this area can play an enhanced role in providing town centre improvements, homes, jobs and services with improved transport connectivity
- providing for major development at Chalgrove Airfield, including necessary infrastructure and community facilities
- supporting the roles of Henley, Thame and Wallingford by maintaining and improving the attractiveness of their town centres through measures that include environmental improvements and mixed-use developments and by providing new homes, jobs, services and infrastructure
- supporting and enhancing the roles of the larger villages of Benson, Berinsfield, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley and Woodcote as local service centres
- supporting smaller villages by allowing limited amounts of housing and employment to help secure the provision and retention of services
- protecting and enhancing the countryside and particularly those areas within the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Oxford Green Belt by ensuring that outside towns and villages any change relates to very specific needs such as those of the agricultural industry or enhancement of the environment
- working closely with partner agencies, local authorities, communities, Neighbourhood Plans groups and other stakeholders to ensure the comprehensive and timely delivery of our strategy

- 4.13 Understanding the nature of our towns and villages and how they inter-relate and link with places outside the district is vital. Movement patterns are complex and vary with the purpose of the journey. Some key services such as main hospitals and regional shopping centres will continue to be provided outside the district, particularly in Oxford and Reading.
- 4.14 The strategy can influence how services and employment are accessed and where new development is located within the district. It can support and influence where and how service providers deliver their services and encourage different and improved ways of delivery.
- 4.15 South Oxfordshire has around 140 settlements, although some are just isolated groups of houses with no community facilities. We looked at these against a range of criteria such as employment opportunities, schools, health services, recreation and leisure opportunities, shops, accessibility and population to prepare a settlement assessment and hierarchy<sup>3</sup>. The settlement hierarchy is set out in Appendix 2. Our strategy reflects the status of settlements in this assessment.

**YOUR VIEW**

**Q1** *Is this the correct strategy to deliver the objectives for our district to 2032?*

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**Q2** *Are there any improvements that you can suggest for the strategy?*

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<sup>3</sup>Settlement Assessment Background Paper, South Oxfordshire 2016



## 5 A PLACE TO LIVE (DELIVERING NEW HOMES)

5.1 During the refined options consultation:

- There was strong support for higher and lower levels of additional homes than we suggested. Many respondents also felt that we should not accommodate unmet housing need for Oxford City and suggested that the City should look more closely and imaginatively at how more of this need could be met within their own boundaries.
- The accuracy of the number we identified for additional homes (both for South Oxfordshire and Oxford's unmet need) was frequently questioned, along with the SHMA on which the figures were based.
- There was some support for the idea that the majority of housing growth should be directed to the Science Vale part of the district.
- Some also supported limited development in larger villages, with comments that this should be proportionate to the existing size of the village, and not be dependent on major new infrastructure.
- A similar proportion of respondents agreed that we should introduce more flexibility, and perhaps allocate sites in the smaller villages, often on grounds either of "fairness" or of supporting local services.

### The Amount of New Housing

5.2 In 2014 together with the other Oxfordshire authorities and using Government guidance we prepared a SHMA to understand how many new homes are needed. This looked at both the expected growth in population and at the anticipated economic growth between 2011 and 2031. Based on these, it recommended the amount of housing we should be planning for (known as the 'Objectively Assessed Need' or OAN).

5.3 The SHMA identifies a total need for between 14,500 and 16,500 homes for South Oxfordshire over the twenty-year period 2011-2031. At least 15,000 homes are required to support planned economic growth. This is primarily to meet the needs of our existing businesses wishing to expand and to allow for new business formation at similar rates to the past. This is our preferred level of growth to meet our own needs and it equates to 750 new homes per year. A proportion of this provision will also meet the need for affordable housing in the district.

5.4 As our plan period is 2011 to 2032 we will roll forward the annual SHMA requirement for another year thereby giving us an overall OAN for South Oxfordshire 2011 to 2032 of 15,750.

- 5.5 The SHMA also identifies a significant OAN for Oxford City. The city considers it does not have the available land to deliver its full OAN. For working purposes, the Oxfordshire Growth Board has agreed an assumption to assist Oxford's unmet housing need of 15,000 homes to 2031. As part of our statutory obligation to work together to solve such issues (the Duty to Co-operate), the districts around Oxford have agreed to identify land to support the delivery of unmet housing need from the city. The level of need for which South Oxfordshire is provisionally planning is 3,750 homes (this is for working purposes only at this stage). Work is continuing to help the Growth Board agree a number and its distribution to all district councils in Oxfordshire, and an announcement is expected in the Autumn 2016.
- 5.6 Between 2011 and 2032 the net new homes target will be for at least 19,500 homes:

We also expect that some small sites will come forward that are not allocated but are still acceptable in planning terms

### Proposed Policy – Housing Provision

**Provision will be made for at least 19,500 new dwellings over the plan period, following our overall strategy, comprising:**

<b>To meet South Oxfordshire's housing needs:</b>	
750 dwellings x 21 years	15,750
To meet Oxford City's unmet housing needs	3,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,500</b>

- 5.7 This will be achieved mainly through the delivery of identifiable development sites between 2011 and 2032. Some sites have already been developed since 2011, some are allocations carried forward from the Core Strategy adopted in 2012 and some are new allocations to be included in this Local Plan or will be allocated in Neighbourhood Plans.
- 5.8 We also expect that some small sites will come forward that are not allocated but are still acceptable in planning terms. These sites are referred to as windfalls. These windfall sites will come forward across the district at all levels of the settlement hierarchy, in addition to any allocations made in this plan or in Neighbourhood Plans.

## Housing Distribution

### 5.9 Overview of the likely distribution of new homes up to 2032

Supply of new homes to come forward by 2032	Net number of units
Completions 2011 - 2016	2,634
Commitments at 31 March 2016 - sites under construction, with planning permission or resolution to grant planning permission and allocations carried forward from the Core Strategy	8,795
New strategic allocation in the Local Plan 2032	3,500
Brownfield allocations (Oxford Brookes University, Wheatley & Culham No.1)	800
New allocations at Thame and Wallingford for their Neighbourhood Plans	1,025
New allocations in the Larger Villages (inc. 707 roll forward from Core Strategy) for their Neighbourhood Plans	2,465
Sites in smaller villages (Neighbourhood Plans) and windfalls	785
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,004</b>



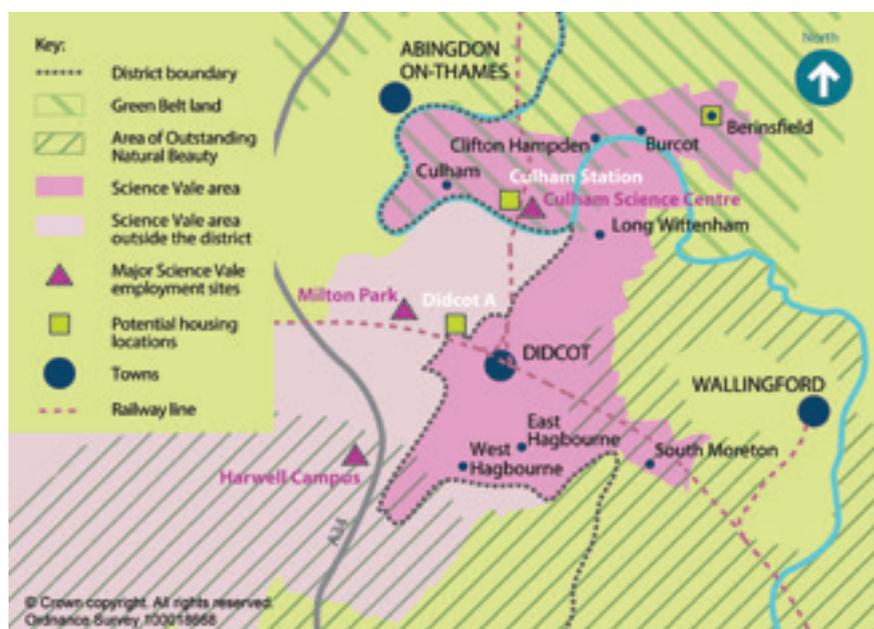
## Didcot & Science Vale

### Proposed Policy – Housing Distribution Didcot and Science Vale

**In the area identified titled “Didcot & Science Vale” planning permission will be granted for at least 7,300 homes between 2011 and 2032.**

- 5.10 Science Vale is an area of major economic growth and positive change. Didcot is the main housing and transport hub for Science Vale and we need to provide a wide range of housing options in and around the town to provide for young professionals and families. We continue to identify a large amount of housing in and around Didcot, and have around 7,300 homes in the pipeline. Of these, around 6,500 are in Didcot and are already committed. This reflects our strategy of focusing growth in Didcot and Science Vale.
- 5.11 Chapter 9 includes more detail about the Garden Town proposals where the two councils of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse intend to support the delivery of 15,000 homes.

Science Vale is an area of growth and positive change and we think that housing growth in South Oxfordshire's part could bring real benefits





## Strategic Allocation

5.12 Our preferred housing distribution includes the provision of a “Strategic Allocation” of at least 3,500 dwellings. We have considered three ways to provide this:

- an urban extension to Oxford, within the Oxford Green Belt
- a new settlement or
- extensions to existing settlements.

5.13 Our preferred option is to meet this requirement on a single strategic site. A “new community” would provide the benefits of being of a sufficient scale to provide the required infrastructure for the new housing, such as road improvements, schools, GP surgery and local shops. National policy advises that the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities.

5.14 We also prefer that this single location be outside the Oxford Green Belt. The need to supply more housing is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance for a review of the Green Belt and this is particularly the case as we have options which are not within the Green Belt. The Green Belt was a particular topic that was referenced by over half the respondents to our “Refined Options” consultation, with strong support for its protection.

5.15 We have considered seven possible locations for this strategic new community.



Five of these proposals (Option 3 to 7) are located within the Oxford Green Belt and therefore do not meet with our preferred criteria. Two sites, Option 1 (Chalgrove Airfield) and Option 2 ("Harrington" at Junction 7 on the M40) are both outside the Green Belt and therefore merit more detailed consideration.

5.16 Other issues raised at the refined options stage included:

- the capacity of existing infrastructure, especially roads
- the impact on the natural and historic environment
- views that all new development, particularly that for Oxford's need, should be allocated near to employment

Accessibility to the transport network and their likely deliverability are also significant issues.

## Option 1 - Chalgrove Airfield



- 5.17 Chalgrove Airfield is a former Second World War airfield located directly north of the village of Chalgrove, north east of the B480, approximately 11 miles to the east of central Oxford and approximately 5 miles south of junction 7 of the M40 motorway.
- 5.18 The airfield opened in 1943 and was closed in July 1946 when it was leased to the Martin-Baker company for development and testing of aircraft ejection seats. The site contains three runways and a perimeter track surrounded by security fencing, with managed grass across the rest of the site. Buildings including the war-time T-2 hangers are located to the east of the site. The site is currently used by Martin-Baker. Chalgrove Airfield has a CAA Ordinary Licence (Number P683) that allows flights for the public transport of passengers or for flying instruction as authorised by the licensee (Martin-Baker (Engineering) Limited). Monument Industrial Estate site to the southeast of the airfield was once part of the airfield.
- 5.19 The airfield is flat and largely free from constraints. The runway elements of the site constitute 'previously developed land'. There are no known archaeological or ecological constraints. "Chalgrove Field 1643", a registered historic battlefield, is located adjacent to the site to the east. The Martin Baker facility is located on this historic battlefield
- 5.20 The site is located outside any flood zone, the AONB and the Green Belt. The site is centrally placed in South Oxfordshire:

Travel times to:	Car (without traffic) (mins)	Cycle (mins)
Oxford rail station	22	50
Didcot rail station	22	55
Haddenham rail station	19	60
Thame	15	45
Wallingford	15	40
Abingdon	16	50

5.21 The road network to the site comprises the B480, a two lane carriageway running east-west to the south of the site, serving Chalgrove village and connecting to the A329 via Stadhampton to the west. The B480 continues westwards towards Oxford and east towards Watlington.

5.22 The village of Chalgrove itself is categorised as a “Larger Village” and therefore provides the higher level of village facilities and services. It has a population of 2,830 (Census 2011). The facilities and services provided currently include:

- Convenience store
- Pharmacy
- Hot food takeaway
- GP Surgery
- Church
- Sports Club
- Public Park
- Post office
- Pub
- Primary school
- Creche/nursery
- Village Hall
- Sports Pitch

Monument Business Park provides 17 hectares of B1 and B2 employment uses.

5.23 The site is in single ownership, having been transferred from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to the Homes and Community Agency (HCA). Single ownership can provide a greater certainty of delivery. The HCA is an executive non-departmental public body. It is the national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England. The statutory objectives of the HCA are listed in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, but generally seek to improve the supply and quality of housing and sustainable development.

5.24 The HCA's responsibilities include:

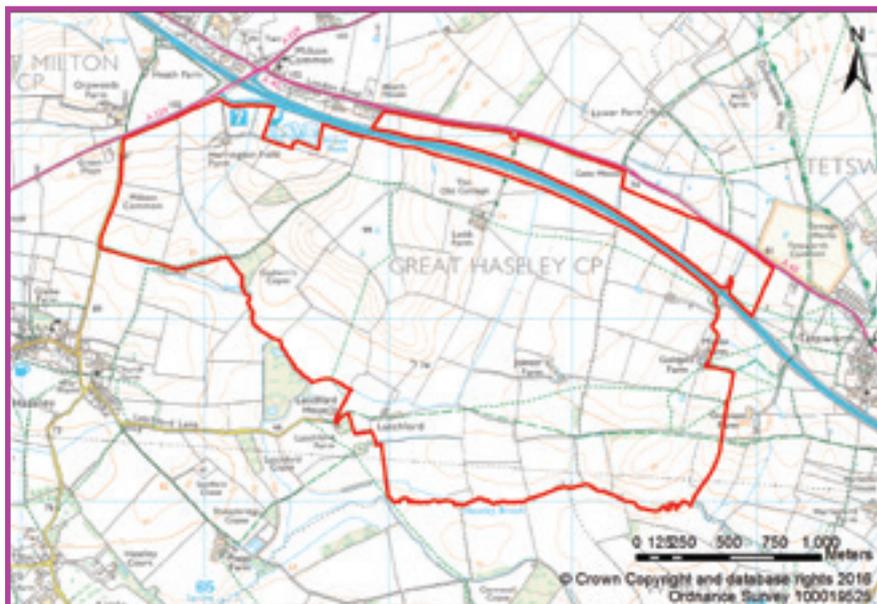
- increasing the number of new homes that are built, including affordable homes and homes for market sale or rent
- improving existing affordable homes and bringing empty homes back into use as affordable housing
- increasing the supply of public land and speeding up the rate that it can be built on
- helping to stimulate local economic growth by using its land and investment, and attracting private sector investment in local areas

There is a high degree of confidence that the HCA would deliver housing on this site.

5.25 GVA, agents for the HCA, have submitted initial proposals that include the provision of:

- At least 3,500 homes
- 144 hectares
- 10ha of new employment land plus existing employment land
- 10ha for a new secondary school and leisure facilities
- 20ha of public greenspace and access to the wider countryside

### Option 2 - "Harrington" at Junction 7 of the M40



5.26 Framptons Town Planning Ltd is currently promoting approximately 500ha of land south-east and east of Junction 7 of the M40. The site is approximately 13 miles to the east of central Oxford. Most of the land is located south of the M40, to the east of Great Milton and Great Haseley and west of Tetsworth. The site is largely greenfield with a small element of previously developed land.

5.27 There are existing dwellings and mixed uses north of the M40 and south of the A40 east of J7, with further dwellings and mixed uses north of the A40 to the west of J7. Milton Common Highway Depot/Maintenance Compound is located between the M40 and A40 west of J7.

5.28 The site is undulating, with high points of 99m above sea level west of Lobb Farm and 102m at Oxhouse Farm. There are several public rights of way crossing the site from Great Haseley, Lobb Farm and Latchford House. There

is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) west of Latchford Farm (Spartum Fen). Great Crested newts are found around Milton Common. Godwin's Copse copse adjacent to the site to the south-west is classed as Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland. Lobb Farmhouse and Latchford House are grade 2 listed buildings.

- 5.29 Part of the site is within flood zone 2 and 3 from Latchford towards Lobb Farm from Haseley Brook. Two high pressure gas mains run north-south across the centre of the site and electricity lines east-west to the south. The site is located outside the AONB and the Green Belt.

Travel times to:	Car (without traffic) (mins)	Cycle (mins)
Oxford rail station	22	60
Didcot rail station	30	70
Haddenham rail station	12	40
Thame	15	25
Wallingford	25	60
Abingdon	30	65

- 5.30 The site is located close to junction 7 of the M40, with A329 to the east and Latchford Lane leading to Latchford farm.

- 5.31 Great Milton, Great Haseley and Tetsworth are all close to the site, and have populations of 790, 511 and 693 respectively (2011 Census). These villages are all categorised as "Smaller Villages" and therefore provide a lower level of facilities and services.

- 5.32 Taken together, these villages provide a variety of facilities and services currently including:

- Convenience store
- Pub
- Primary school
- Church
- Post office
- Hotel
- Creche/nursery
- Village Hall

There are some employment opportunities at the above settlements.

- 5.33 The site is made up of four land ownerships. These owners are promoting their combined land for residential development. Initial proposals for the site include:

- New garden settlement over three sectors
- Up to 6,500 homes, plus room for future expansion
- 23ha employment land (adjacent to motorway and in town and local centres)
- 11ha motorway depot

- Transport hub with park and ride
- Town centre
- Local centres
- Primary schools
- Secondary school
- Country park
- Community facilities
- Healthcare facilities
- Energy centre

5.34 The promoter has advised that access will be provided onto both the A329 and A40 and these would be linked internally via an improved crossing of the M40. M40 junction 7 would be remodelled, with roundabouts instead of the priority junctions, providing direct access to the motorway. The M40 west-facing slip roads would be reinstated but these may be reserved for public transport services only. The interchange hub would take direct access from the remodelled M40 Junction 7.

### Our Preferred Option – Strategic Allocation

5.35 Our preferred option is for a new community at Chalgrove Airfield. The site is centrally placed within the district, and adjacent to existing employment and the existing settlement of Chalgrove. The development would be partially on previously developed land. As the development progresses, additional services and facilities would be required on site. However, during the early phases the scheme would support the existing services and facilities at Chalgrove. The existing residents of Chalgrove would benefit from the new facilities, open space and infrastructure to be provided at the new community.

**Our preferred option is for a new community at Chalgrove Airfield**

5.36 Upgrades to the road network would be required, with improved links to the M40 and to Oxford. Improvements to the public transport network would also be necessary, that would benefit the existing residents of Chalgrove. The site is unlikely to present harm to ecological interests and, whilst the site is adjacent to an historic battlefield site, appropriate mitigation can be put into place. We are also confident that the HCA would deliver the proposed housing in a timely manner due to their ability to implement the required infrastructure, and the fact that the site is in single ownership.

5.37 Whilst the Harrington site has many benefits including its proximity to J7, the site is surrounded by several smaller villages with fewer facilities and is more constrained due to flood issues, ecology and access. In addition, its location directly adjacent to the M40 would create the possibility of a less sustainable, commuter-based settlement.

## Rest of the District

### Proposed Policy – Housing Provision Rest of the District (Outside Didcot and Science Vale)

**In the “rest of the district” outside Didcot and Science Vale, planning permission will be granted for at least 12,200 homes between 2011 and 2032. These will be delivered, wherever possible, through Neighbourhood Plans.**

**It is vital that the towns of the district and the more rural areas remain economically and socially sustainable**

- 5.38 It is vital that the towns of the district and the more rural areas remain economically and socially sustainable. This Plan sets out a strategy to help places grow and evolve in a way that supports their position in the settlement hierarchy as places with a good level of local service and access to larger town and cities for work and leisure. This is what we call our strong network of settlements.
- 5.39 We embrace the concept of localism and believe local communities should direct where development is located. Therefore, with the exception of the proposed ‘brownfield land’ allocations at Oxford Brookes University Wheatley and Culham No.1 Site, and the proposed Strategic Allocation, all other specific housing land allocations should be made through Neighbourhood Plans wherever this is possible.
- 5.40 Our preferred approach is to maintain the principle of a “Settlement Hierarchy” but the details could be amended. We consider that a growth strategy based on the 2011 housing stock plus a percentage increase will help places to grow and evolve in an appropriate and measured way.

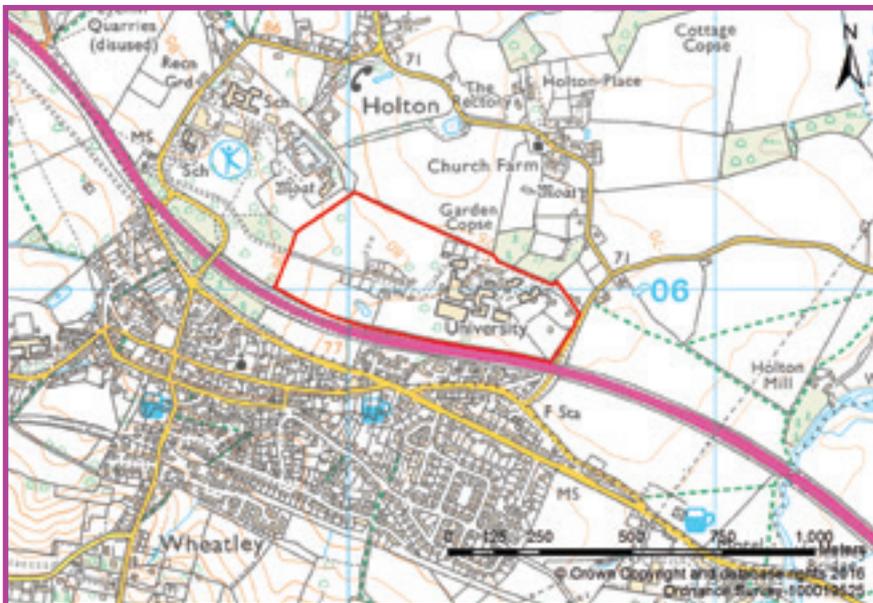
This is based on the following model:

- Towns and Larger Villages: 10% growth
- Smaller Villages: 5% growth

- 5.41 At a recent appeal hearing for a housing site in Stadhampton, the Inspector made the suggestion that we include a category for medium villages. These are places that have fewer services than the larger villages but still have good access to some and are therefore a sustainable location. Our updated settlement assessment shows that there are some settlements that have the potential to be medium sized villages.
- 5.42 Further detail about the proposals for growth of the larger and smaller villages and how this could be delivered is discussed in chapter 11.

## Brownfield Development Opportunities

- 5.43 Two brownfield sites in the Green Belt have been submitted to us for consideration as sites for new homes. These are the Culham 'No.1 site' adjacent to the Science Centre and the Oxford Brookes Wheatley Campus. The 'No.1 site' is discussed in chapter 9 as part of Science Vale. Further information on the Culham No.1 Site and policy guidance is available within chapter 9 of this plan.
- 5.44 Oxford Brookes University have indicated that they will soon vacate the campus north of Wheatley in Holton parish. This will provide an opportunity for redevelopment of the site for homes in the Green Belt. Our preferred approach is to allocate the site for an appropriate amount of development and work with the local Neighbourhood Plan group, Oxford Brookes University and eventual developers to create a quality redevelopment scheme.
- 5.45 Given the amount of development proposed on the site and its suburban nature, we propose the inset the site from the Green Belt, and a detailed boundary will be proposed at the next stage in the Local Plan process.



### Proposed Policy - Oxford Brookes (former) Wheatley Campus

**The Oxford Brookes (former) Wheatley Campus is allocated for mixed use development (including likely net capacity of at least 300 dwellings). The requirements and details of any scheme will be agreed through the local neighbourhood plan in partnership with key stakeholders.**

## Affordable Housing

- 5.46 Affordable housing includes social rented / affordable rented and intermediate housing that is available to households in the district whose needs are not met by the market. The cost must be low enough for eligible households to afford based on local incomes and house prices. The home should be restricted for use by future eligible households. If these restrictions are lifted, the subsidy should be recycled for alternative affordable housing in the district.
- 5.47 We are in the process of updating our Housing Strategy. This will continue to inform the negotiations for the delivery of affordable housing and help shape our aims for a healthy mix of available housing. Our proposed starting position for the provision of affordable housing is outlined below.

### Proposed Policy – Affordable Housing

**On all sites where there is a net gain of 11 or more dwellings\* 40 percent of the dwellings on the site shall be affordable housing subject to the viability of provision on each site.**

- **In cases where the 40 percent provision provides a part unit a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part unit**
- **A tenure mix of 50% social rented and 50% intermediate housing<sup>4</sup> will be sought for the affordable element**
- **With the exception of part units the affordable housing should be provided on site and the affordable housing should be mixed with and be indistinguishable from the market housing**
- **The affordable housing should meet required standards and should be of a size and type that meets the requirements of those in housing need**

**\* Except in the AONB where affordable housing at 40 percent will be required on sites with a net gain of 6 or more dwellings. However, the cost of the 40 percent provision on sites with a net gain between 6 and 11 will be sought as an off-site commuted sum.**

<sup>4</sup> Intermediate housing is defined as homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels. These can include shared equity, other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

YOUR  
VIEW

- Q3 *Do you agree with the overall level of housing provision proposed?*
- 
- Q4 *Do you agree with the proposed distribution of housing around the district?*
- 
- Q5 *Do you agree with our choice of Chalgrove Airfield as the preferred Strategic Allocation and if not, what changes do you suggest?*
- 
- Q6 *Do you agree with our preferred approach, whereby the allocation of most housing sites will be undertaken through Neighbourhood Plans for the towns and villages?*
- 
- Q7 *Do you agree with a proposed approach for the Oxford Brookes Wheatley Campus? If not, what changes do you suggest?*
- 
- Q8 *Do you agree with our proposed approach towards the provision of affordable housing, particularly the percentage proposed and the proportional tenure split between social rented and intermediate housing and the requirement to provide on-site?*
-



## 6 A PLACE TO WORK (EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY)

### Introduction

- 6.1 South Oxfordshire lies within the economically buoyant Thames Valley area between Oxford and Reading, both centres for high technology, science and research industries. The western part of the district sits within "Science Vale UK", the location of a particularly high density of science and high-technology activities centred around Harwell Oxford, Culham Science Centre and Milton Park.
- 6.2 South Oxfordshire's residents are highly-qualified. Almost 58% of the workforce has qualifications at Level 4 and above, compared with 37% nationally<sup>5</sup>.
- 6.3 The area has a higher than average number of economically active people at 89.5% compared with a national average of 77.8% in December 2015. The number of economically active people has increased from 71,500 in January 2011 to 79,000 in December 2015. Unemployment has fallen from 4.1% to 2.4% over the same period<sup>6</sup>. We will continue to encourage and support the local economy and develop a better balance between well-paid jobs and housing.
- 6.4 The income of people living in the district is higher than those working within the district. Earnings by residence in 2015 were £617 per week per person (£530 nationally)<sup>7</sup> where earnings by workplace were £583 per week per person (£529 nationally). This reflects a significant degree of out-commuting to higher value jobs, mostly in the surrounding areas of Science Vale UK, Reading and Oxford. This situation implies that the area suffers from a leakage of highly skilled residents to employment elsewhere. We will seek to improve employment opportunities and employment land provision within the district, and encourage the provision of high quality local jobs to help retain more of its skilled residents in the local workforce.
- 6.5 Some 88% of the people in South Oxfordshire are employed in the services industries, that 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

<sup>5</sup> ONS annual population survey Qualifications (Jan 2015-Dec 2015)

<sup>6</sup> ONS annual population survey (numbers are for those aged 16 and over, % are for those of aged 16-64)

<sup>7</sup> ONS annual survey of hours and earnings 2015

<sup>8</sup> ONS business register and employment survey - Employee jobs (2014)

<sup>9</sup> Oxfordshire Employers Skills Study 2010, Oxfordshire Economic Partnership

<sup>10</sup> Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan March 2014

18% of all workers and Wholesale and Retail, including Motor Trades that employs 16%<sup>8</sup>. South Oxfordshire has a slightly higher than average number of micro-businesses that employ up to 9 people.

**Employers take a very positive view of South Oxfordshire as a place to do business**

6.6 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 area<sup>9</sup>.

6.7 The four towns are the main employment centres and they provide a range of opportunities. 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 that specialises in fusion research and hosts related enterprises. There is also a cluster of environmental science companies and research institutions in Crowmarsh Gifford and Wallingford.

6.8 The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership has published a Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire setting out an ambition for accelerated economic growth to meet the needs of our science and knowledge-rich economy, placing Oxfordshire at the forefront of the UK's global growth ambitions<sup>10</sup>. Oxford and Oxfordshire and the Government have agreed the 'Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal' in January 2014 that sets out the actions the region will take to create new jobs, support research and businesses, and improve housing and transport. The City Deal advises that despite a wealth of assets in the area, Oxford and Oxfordshire has underperformed, not reaching its full potential when compared with other internationally renowned areas around world-class universities such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford or Cambridge. City Deal partners are committed to dealing with these issues as a priority in the Strategic Economic Plan and Local Growth Deal bid, and to bring together local resources to make the investment where it is needed to create the right conditions to develop, grow and retain dynamic businesses.

6.9 Our Vision and Objectives aim to persist economic prosperity. This will be achieved through increasing local incomes by providing the opportunity for higher value jobs, ensuring we have a skilled workforce, providing more opportunities for people to work locally, supporting the development of the high-tech economy, welcoming new companies and supporting existing businesses and new business formation. We also aim to reduce long distance out-commuting. Employment development will contribute to meeting the

overall vision. We aim to support the provision of jobs for the increased population of the district and flexible business space that fulfils demand. We will encourage key economic sectors that can add value to the local economy, along with support for existing businesses and education providers.

6.10 The objectives also support the improvement of the economic vitality of our towns, achieving a sustainable balance of business growth and environmental protection, increasing inward investment and developing our skilled and motivated workforce.

6.11 We aim to support employment development by planning new housing and by working with partners to improve skills and economic activity amongst residents. We recognise that a wider economic strategy will deal with other aspects of this aim. Flexibility is key to respond to changing economic circumstances by having enough land available that can be developed and is well-served by infrastructure. We also need to provide a variety of sites for large and small businesses, for innovation and for skills development, all of which link to the knowledge-based economy.

6.12 Whilst this section deals specifically with the economy, the wider strategy will also support broader economic objectives. We recognise that a thriving economy needs housing to be provided (including affordable housing) and other services for the workforce such as good transport links and other infrastructure. We also recognise that the environmental quality of the district is a key attraction for businesses coming into the area.

6.13 At the Refined Options stage:

- There was a general view that housing and employment provision should be provided in close proximity to each other;
- There was a strong theme that employment should be provided in locations with good public transport connections, good road connections and with good parking;
- There was general support for the locations suggested in the Refined Options consultation, which were Monument Business Park, Culham Science Centre, Didcot Station area, the market towns and also some support for all employment to be in Science Vale;
- There was some support for smaller business premises across the district, home working and conversion of agricultural premises.

**We aim to support employment development by planning new housing and by working with partners to improve skills and economic activity amongst residents**

## Amount and Distribution of Employment Land

### Proposed Policy - The amount and distribution of B class employment land

#### To facilitate the provision of additional B class jobs,

- **At least 14.2ha of further employment land will be provided across the district;**
- **As agreed with our neighbour, Vale of White Horse District Council, at least 6.5ha of further employment land will be provided at Didcot in the Vale of White Horse district; and**
- **The equivalent of 5.3ha of land will be provided through the redevelopment and intensification of Culham Science Centre for research and science based businesses in order to support the creation of about 1,000 new jobs.**

**Sites will be allocated through Neighbourhood Plans and within the South Oxfordshire Local Plan at the most sustainable locations.**

6.14 We have used the evidence from our Employment Land Review (ELR) that we completed in September 2015<sup>11</sup> to forecast future needs. The ELR uses an analysis of labour demand that estimates the number of jobs likely to be generated, using recent likely future population and economic trends, and translates them into land requirements. Only B1 office, B2 general industry and B8 warehousing uses are included in the ELR.

6.15 The ELR identifies that, at the time of the review, there was approximately 215,000m<sup>2</sup> of gross office floorspace in South Oxfordshire. The majority of stock is located in the town centres of Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford. Henley-on-Thames is the most predominant office location in the district, followed by Thame and Wallingford. Didcot is not currently a major office location. The ELR forecasts that there will be an additional demand for approximately 32,300m<sup>2</sup> (5.5ha) and 40,000m<sup>2</sup> (7ha) of office (B1a/b<sup>12</sup>) floorspace/land up to 2031. There is the potential for additional office floorspace to come forward as part of existing permissions.

6.16 The ELR identifies approximately 540,000m<sup>2</sup> of gross industrial floorspace in South Oxfordshire, excluding that located at Culham Science Centre<sup>13</sup>. Approximately a third of this space is industrial type (B1c and B2), with the majority characterised by warehousing and distribution use (B8). The ELR forecasts that there will be an additional demand for industrial (B1c/B2/B8) land of between 10.5 and 17.7 hectares in the period 2014 to 2031.

<sup>11</sup> South Oxfordshire District Council Employment Land Review, URS 2015

<sup>12</sup> Use Class B1 (Business) comprises offices (other than those that fall within A2), research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area

<sup>13</sup> This figure is taken from the VOA. However, Culham is not included within the VOA figures.

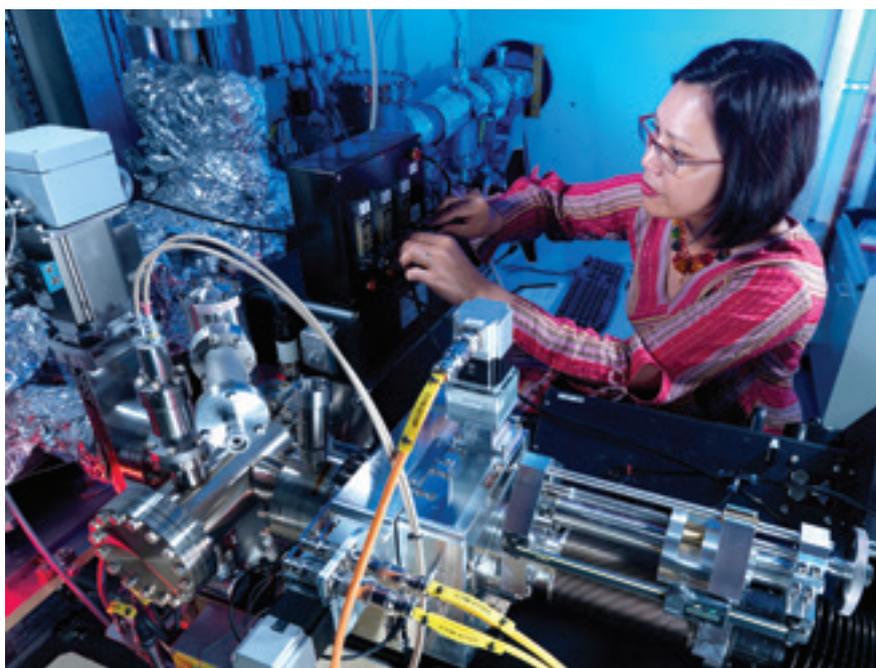
6.17 The ELR estimates that there is net additional demand for between 16 and 25 hectares of B class employment land over the period from 2014 to 2031. Rolling this forward to 2032 gives a requirement of between 17 and 26 hectares. The Core Strategy previously set out broad locations for 20 hectares of additional employment land for the period 2011 to 2027. This Local Plan increases the allocation of employment land to 26 hectares to meet the planned economic growth for the district in line with the forecasts of the ELR.

6.18 Employment should be in accessible locations that are, or will be, well served by a choice of means of transport in order to improve sustainability. Most housing growth will be in Didcot. Our strategy makes a strong link between the housing growth in Didcot and the business growth needs of Science Vale UK, including at Harwell Oxford<sup>14</sup> and Milton Park outside the district (within Vale of White Horse District). We are working with the Vale of White Horse District Council to provide enough B class jobs to cater for Didcot's increased population, as well as catering for the increased population in that district. We have agreed with the District Council that there will be a cross boundary allocation of 6.5 hectares to meet our needs for Didcot.

6.19 The ELR has suggested possible locations for additional employment land within the district. For office uses these include:

- Culham 19,000m<sup>2</sup> (3.3ha) (approx.)
- Central Didcot 15,000m<sup>2</sup> (2.6ha) (approx.)
- Monument Business Park 4,000m<sup>2</sup> (0.7ha) (approx.)

<sup>14</sup> Harwell Oxford formerly known as Harwell Science and Innovation Centre



6.20 For industrial uses these include:

- Culham 1.3ha (approx.)
- Southmead Industrial Estate 2.9ha (approx.)
- Hithercroft Industrial Estate 1.9ha (approx.)
- Monument Business Park 2.5ha (approx.)
- Thame Industrial Cluster 1.6ha (approx.)
- London Road Industrial Estate, Wheatley 0.4ha (approx.)
- Additional sites across the four main towns 6.3ha (approx.)

6.21 To promote a balanced local economy, we need to ensure that a range of size and types of premises is available. We will seek to widen the variety of premises, to include more modern and flexible business space. We need enough space for small and medium sized businesses, including start-up/incubator businesses (up to 150m<sup>2</sup>) and grow-on space (up to 500m<sup>2</sup>), and we will look for opportunities to provide this. Whether units are suitable for start-up/incubator businesses will depend partly on management arrangements and lease terms that are beyond our control.

To promote a balanced local economy, we need to ensure that a range of size and types of premises is available

6.22 Culham Science Centre (CSC) is part of Science Vale UK. It includes the Joint European Torus (JET) project. It is the leading UK centre for fusion research and technology and is of international importance. The site also hosts a number of related businesses. The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) aims to redevelop the CSC buildings within the next five years as the current stock is outdated. Although the European fusion project is being moved to France, the JET facility will continue to operate for some time and it is possible that Culham may be selected for further facilities linked to fusion research.

6.23 We recognise the key role of the CSC site and support and encourage its redevelopment, as a previously developed site in the Green Belt. We will work with UKAEA to agree a masterplan that will consider the future of the whole site recognising that many of the JET facilities will remain in the foreseeable future. The masterplan will need to take into account the wider transport implications of the proposals. This is consistent with the objective to increase the number of high value jobs in the district. A number of the buildings on the site have temporary permissions related to the JET project and due to the nature of the project many of these buildings offer scope for additional employment. The site currently employs around 2,000 people.

6.24 Redevelopment of the CSC site will present opportunities for significantly more employment through the provision of permanent buildings and intensification of uses. However, we recognise that there may be the need for redevelopment of some buildings for industries that tend to provide lower density of

employment. We are therefore specifying a job creation target rather than a site size to meet the needs and aspirations of the site owners and that of ourselves, to ensure that transport and other impacts can be managed.

**YOUR  
VIEW**

**Q9** *Do you agree with our preferred amount and distribution of new employment land? If not, what changes do you suggest?*

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## 7 MOVING AROUND (TRANSPORT) AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

### Introduction

- 7.1 Good connections are essential to our quality of life. We need to travel to work, school, shops, leisure and health facilities. A thriving economy needs good connections to operate efficiently. These can range from the strategic road and rail network, to our ability to access the internet with the benefits that it can offer to work from home and provide services. Improving accessibility to services and employment is fundamental to sustainable development and to meeting the objectives of this plan. The challenge is to do this in a way that minimises the impact of the transport system on the environment and provides for necessary improvements in a cost-effective way.
- 7.2 The location of all forms of development can be a key factor in influencing where and how we travel and, in particular, reducing the need to travel and enabling sustainable travel options. The principles in this proposed transport strategy have a key influence on the other elements of the plan. For example, accessibility to services and facilities and the availability of high quality, frequent and reliable public transport are key features for a strong network of settlements and the overall distribution of new housing and employment land.
- 7.3 This proposed transport strategy contributes towards our vision and objectives, that seek to build on opportunities for sustainable travel. However, we recognise that the rural nature of the district means that many residents will be dependent on car travel for some or all of their journeys. The strategy has been informed by and is consistent with Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan, that sets the transport policies and provides transport strategies for the county to 2031. Improving travel choice in rural areas is to be encouraged, whilst accepting that there is unlikely to be a single model for delivering the flexible and responsive transport services required to meet the diverse needs of rural communities.



## Proposed Policy – Transport Strategy

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

- i. actively seek to deliver the transport infrastructure and measures that improve movement in and around Didcot, in particular those linking Didcot with the major employment sites at Harwell, Milton Park and Culham, and those measures that help support delivery of the Didcot Garden Town
- ii. support measures identified in the Local Transport Plan for the district including within the relevant area strategies
- iii. actively seek to ensure that the impacts of new development on the strategic and local road network, including the A34 and M40, are adequately mitigated
- iv. work with the authorities affected by cross Thames travel in the Reading area to ensure that any traffic and environmental impacts of proposed measures are adequately mitigated in South Oxfordshire
- v. ensure that as far as possible new development is located close to, or along, existing strategic public transport corridors, where bus and/or rail services can then be strengthened in response to increases in demand for travel
- iv. work with Network Rail and others to plan positively for rail improvements within the area that support improved connectivity to areas of new development
- vi. ensure new development is designed to encourage walking and cycling, not only within the development, but also to nearby facilities, employment and public transport hubs
- vii. support provision of measures that improve public transport (including Park & Ride), cycling and walking networks within and between towns and villages in the district
- viii. promote and support improvements to the transport network that increase safety, improve air quality, encourage use of sustainable modes of transport and/or make our towns and villages more attractive
- ix. adopt a comprehensive approach to the provision and management of car parking aimed at improving the attraction of our town and village centres
- x. ensure the needs of all users are planned for in development of transport improvements



Across a wider cross boundary area, plans for development and supporting infrastructure also need to be understood and appropriately planned for

- 7.4 To enable delivery of transport network improvements required to bring forward new development, we need on-going positive engagement with infrastructure providers throughout the plan period. Oxfordshire County Council adopted their Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP 4) on 8 September 2015, and it is important that as far as possible the local plan supports delivery of measures in this plan to improve highway and public transport networks within areas of development growth. The LTP4 also supports promotion of sustainable travel, and new development can help fund and enable the provision of new public transport, walking and cycle links between homes, jobs, shops and other facilities such as centres of health. Across a wider cross boundary area, plans for development and supporting infrastructure also need to be understood and appropriately planned for. In particular, we recognise the ambition of authorities to the south of our district for additional connections across the River Thames and the potential for park and ride options into Reading.
- 7.5 At a strategic level, road and rail connections within and through South Oxfordshire are currently experiencing significant growth in demand as a result of strong economic growth. This is set to continue as new homes and jobs come forward in the district and the surrounding areas. Significant new investment is already taking place, such as upgrades to junctions on the A34 Trunk Road, and electrification of the Great Western Mainline, but current studies being undertaken by Network Rail and Highways England indicate that these will only cater for part of the forecast increase in demand for travel. Further options for road and rail investment are therefore being looked at in more detail, and we will need to continue to engage with others to understand and plan for both the economic benefits and environmental impacts of these proposals.



...new development can have a positive role in improving and funding sustainable transport network connections

7.6 At a more local level, new development can have a positive role in improving and funding sustainable transport network connections, and through good urban design, encourage walking and cycling from new development to shops, schools and other facilities. This will be particularly important in significant growth areas including Didcot Garden Town, where we will work with the Vale of White Horse District Council to ensure plans for cross border development and infrastructure are co-ordinated. In neighbourhood plan areas there will also be a need to provide a framework for planning that promotes sustainable transport movement. These improvements will need to be complimented by upgrades to surrounding highway networks to mitigate impacts of development, as well as better approaches to car park provision, recognising that within a rural district such as South Oxfordshire the car will continue to play a key role in providing transport accessibility for many.

7.7 To enable further delivery of key transport infrastructure that will support development within the plan, there may be a need to safeguard land to ensure that any proposals for development do not prejudice their future delivery. Those schemes to be included will be informed by the final transport evidence base for the plan, with detail given at local plan proposed submission stage.

### Infrastructure provision

- 7.8 Infrastructure was one of main topics raised by respondents at the refined options stage. The key points raised were:
- Making sure development was accompanied by adequate infrastructure
  - The need for the provision of transport infrastructure
  - The need for the provision of water infrastructure
  - Current levels of infrastructure are not adequate to support more housing
  - The timing of infrastructure provision is essential
  - There is a concern over the lack of social infrastructure e.g. schools

- 7.9 Successful and sustainable communities and new developments depend on suitable physical and social infrastructure being in place to meet the needs of their residents. These needs include transport, utilities and waste, social infrastructure, environmental and green infrastructure, cultural, education, leisure, faith and community facilities. The level and type of infrastructure can range from major investments such as new schools, to support for community transport schemes.
- 7.10 The need for and importance of providing adequate, appropriate and timely infrastructure is a strong message that comes from local residents during consultations, who are often concerned that the necessary infrastructure is not provided, or not provided quickly enough. In neighbourhood plan areas, local communities will need to carefully consider delivery and funding mechanisms for infrastructure relevant to proposed development. This should take into account strategic infrastructure priorities set out in the forthcoming Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 7.11 To maintain and provide infrastructure and other community services effectively, it is essential that there is partnership working between the public, private and voluntary sector agencies involved. We will continue to work closely with a wide range of infrastructure providers and stakeholders, including Oxfordshire County Council, the Highways Agency, the NHS and Clinical Commissioning Group, town and parish councils, Thames Water and the Environment Agency.
- 7.12 Thames Water have indicated that there is likely to be the strategic need for a reservoir north west of Chinnor. They have identified a need to safeguard land to ensure that any proposals for development do not prejudice the future delivery of the reservoir. The scheme to be included will be informed by their continued evidence collection, with detail given at the next stage of the local plan process.

The need for and importance of providing adequate, appropriate and timely infrastructure is a strong message that comes from local residents during consultations...



### Proposed Policy – Infrastructure Provision

**New development must be served and supported by appropriate on- and off-site infrastructure and services. Planning permission will be granted for developments where the infrastructure and services (including that set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)), required to meet the needs of the new development and/or mitigate the impact of the new development is either already in place or will be provided to an agreed timescale. Infrastructure and services required as a consequence of development and provision for their maintenance, will be sought from developers and secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), by the negotiation of planning obligations, by conditions attached to a planning permission, and/or other agreement, levy or undertaking, all to be agreed before planning permission is granted.**

**If infrastructure requirements could render the development unviable, proposals for major development should be supported by an independent viability assessment on terms agreed by the relevant parties including the Council and County Council, and funded by the developer. Where viability constraints are demonstrated by evidence, the Council will:**

- i. prioritise developer contributions for essential infrastructure in line with those measures set out in the IDP and/or Neighbourhood Plans**
- ii. use an appropriate mechanism to defer part of the developer contributions requirement to a later date, and/ or**
- iii. as a last resort, refuse planning permission if the development would be unsustainable without inclusion of the unfunded infrastructure requirements**

YOUR VIEW

*Q10 Do you agree with our preferred transport strategy? If not, what changes do you suggest?*

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*Q11 Do you agree with our proposed approach towards the provision of infrastructure? If not, what changes do you suggest?*

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## 8 TOWN CENTRES AND SHOPPING

### Introduction

- 8.1 Our vision for 2032 is that everyone will have access to high quality leisure, retail and cultural facilities, that will also attract visitors.
- 8.2 At the refined options consultation you told us:
- That the focus should be on town centres not out-of-town shopping centres
  - The old Waitrose site in Wallingford should be redeveloped
  - There was a reasonable level of support for a retail focus at Didcot
- 8.3 We commissioned a Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment to undertake an assessment of retail and other town centre uses within the district's four centres (Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford) and to forecast the need for new retail floorspace in the district over the plan period. Our preferred retail hierarchy of settlements is set out in the proposed policy below. This is proposed to be unchanged, at this stage, from that in the Core Strategy, subject to our ongoing review of the overall settlement hierarchy itself.
- 8.4 National policy sets a default threshold for requiring an impact assessment for applications for retail developments that are outside town centres, and not in accordance with an up-to-date development plan, of 2,500m<sup>2</sup>. Local planning authorities can consider setting a local threshold for such assessments, where it is felt this is necessary. Analysis undertaken by our retail consultants<sup>15</sup> has demonstrated that Didcot town centre requires improvements to its

<sup>15</sup> Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2016 – Peter Brett Associates



comparison goods (non-food) retail offer in order to meet the growth agenda of the town, and that the other main centres in the district – whilst generally performing strongly – are relatively small and could potentially be adversely impacted by inappropriate out- of-centre development.

- 8.5 Therefore, we propose setting a lower threshold in respect of retail impact assessments. To protect the vitality and viability of our town centres, a local impact threshold of 500m<sup>2</sup> is preferred.
- 8.6 We are reviewing the categorisation of villages within the overall settlement hierarchy and this forms part of this consultation. If any changes are made, this could affect which villages are classed as 'local centres'.
- 8.7 The South Oxfordshire District Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2015 updates the Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2009 (updated 2010) and provides the evidence base for the retail strategy and policies. The retail study does not factor in planned growth, only population forecast projections. The study will need to be reviewed when we know where and when the growth will be located.



## Proposed Policy – Retail Strategy

The vitality and viability of retailing in the district's towns and larger villages will be supported, ensuring all communities have access to the services and facilities they value.

The hierarchy of retail centres in the district is:

- Major town centre: Didcot, Henley
- Town centre: Thame, Wallingford
- Local centre: Berinsfield, Benson, Chalgrove, Chinnor, Cholsey, Crowmarsh Gifford, Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common, Watlington, Wheatley, Woodcote

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

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

As a starting point, we will require proposals for main town centre uses to be sited within town centres. Applications for such uses outside town centres will be required to be in accessible locations well connected to the town centre.

Proposals on sites outside town centres will be subject to the sequential test and, for proposals over 500m<sup>2</sup>, a retail impact assessment will be required to be submitted. Proposals that do not satisfy these tests will not be permitted. Changes of use within defined primary and secondary retail frontages will be managed to maintain the role of the town centres.

Where planning permission is required, proposals for appropriately scaled retail development in rural areas will be supported where it supports an existing agricultural business and it can be demonstrated that it would not have an adverse impact on an existing retail offer.

## Amount and location of new retail floorspace

8.8 Our Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment identifies a need across the district as a whole for both comparison (non-food) and convenience (food) floorspace. Our retail assessment provided data up to 2031 and these figures have therefore been rolled forward pro-rata to 2032.

Our Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment has shown that Henley, Wallingford and Thame would all benefit from additional convenience retail floorspace

### Proposed Policy – Overall Amount of Additional Retail Floorspace

**New comparison and convenience retail floorspace will be provided across the district in line with the following requirements:**

- **Up to 2,100m<sup>2</sup> net additional convenience goods floorspace by 2019, increasing to up to 2,800m<sup>2</sup> by 2024 and 3,830m<sup>2</sup> by 2032**
- **Up to 2,300m<sup>2</sup> net additional comparison goods floorspace by 2019, increasing to up to 7,800m<sup>2</sup> by 2024 and 17,500m<sup>2</sup> by 2032**

**Appropriately-scaled developments on smaller town centre opportunity sites will be supported, to be determined on a case by case basis.**

### Didcot

8.9 The Orchard Centre phase II (OCII) permission (c.7,700m<sup>2</sup>) meets the comparison goods need for the district up to 2024. This approach does not rule out appropriately-scaled developments on smaller town centre opportunity sites elsewhere in the district, but does ensure that we will be able to meet fully our identified comparison floorspace need.

### Henley, Wallingford and Thame

8.10 Our Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment has shown that Henley, Wallingford and Thame would all benefit from additional convenience retail floorspace:

- Henley – between 1,500 to 2,000m<sup>2</sup> foodstore
- Thame – up to 1,500m<sup>2</sup> foodstore
- Wallingford – 2,000m<sup>2</sup> foodstore

Our preferred option is to make appropriate provision for convenience retail floorspace in each of these town centres, with Neighbourhood Plans playing a key delivery role.

## Henley

- 8.11 Our Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment identifies that there is no qualitative need for additional comparison goods floorspace at Henley and therefore it is not recommended to direct a significant amount here. Applications for new comparison goods floorspace in Henley town centre should be treated on individual merits and should be of a scale appropriate to the size of the centre.
- 8.12 The key opportunity site that has potential to accommodate retail floorspace is the 'Empstead Works/Stuart Turner' (Site E) site. The site is allocated for retail development in the Henley - Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan.

### Proposed Policy – Retailing in Henley

**Subject to identification of a suitable site, the council will seek the provision of additional convenience goods floorspace, in the format of a single foodstore in the region of 1,500 to 2,000m<sup>2</sup>.**

## Thame

- 8.13 The Cattle Market site has been identified in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan for a mixed-use redevelopment to include retail and other town centres uses. This allocation specifically excludes a foodstore. A review of the Neighbourhood Plan should consider whether a small-format foodstore would be appropriate in this location to meet the qualitative need for additional convenience floorspace in the town.

### Proposed Policy - Retailing in Thame

**Subject to the identification of a suitable site, proposals for a small format convenience/food store (up to 1,500m<sup>2</sup> net sales area) in Thame will be supported.**

## Wallingford

- 8.14 Wallingford has the lowest convenience goods expenditure retention rate of the four towns in the district (48 per cent) suggesting there is scope for improvement to existing foodstore provision. This would be met if the existing planning permission for a new foodstore at Lupton Road were to be implemented. Should this permission not progress there is a qualitative need for a new foodstore (c. 2,000m<sup>2</sup> net). A priority is to secure the letting of the former Waitrose store on St Martin's Street to a quality retailer. There is no qualitative need for additional comparison goods floorspace.

### Proposed Policy – Retailing in Wallingford

**Proposals for an A1 foodstore (c.2,000m<sup>2</sup> net floorspace) and for the redevelopment of the old Waitrose site to include retail provision will be supported. The need for a new foodstore (c 2000m<sup>2</sup>) will be met if the Lupton Road permission is implemented.**

### Local Centres

8.15 Appropriately scaled retail provision to meet local needs should be provided in the larger villages, and this should be delivered through Neighbourhood Plans.

### Town Centre Boundaries and Primary and Secondary Frontages

8.16 The primary and secondary shopping frontages form the ‘primary shopping area’ and is used to interpret national retail policies (sequential test and retail impact assessment).

8.17 Our Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment makes the following recommendations in respect of shopping frontages in our four towns (see table right).

8.18 We anticipate Neighbourhood Plans playing a key role in defining town centre boundaries and retail frontages. In the case of Didcot, where no neighbourhood plan is envisaged, we will propose the details of a town centre boundary and retail frontages at the next stage of the local plan process or through a potential Garden Town DPD.

### Proposed Policy - Town centre boundary and retail frontages

**Neighbourhood plans, where they exist, are expected to designate town centre boundaries and shopping frontages.**

#### YOUR VIEW

*Q12 Do you agree with our approach towards retailing – the strategy and the amount of floorspace to be provided? If not, what changes would you suggest?*

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*Q13 Do you agree with our approach towards retailing in Henley, Thame and Wallingford, which will be delivered by Neighbourhood Plans?*

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Town	Recommendations for Primary Shopping Frontage (PSF)	Recommendations for Secondary Shopping Frontage (SSF)
Didcot	<p>All of the PSF along Broadway is removed and reclassified as SSF.</p> <p>PSF should be restricted to Orchard Centre and Market Place (units 2 to 6 plus Wilko store)</p> <p>Review and update when Orchard Centre Phase II development comes forward.</p>	<p>All PSF fronting Broadway should be reclassified as SSF</p> <p>Cornerstone Arts Centre and Cineworld should also be classified as SSF.</p> <p>Review and update when Orchard Centre Phase II development comes forward.</p>
Henley	<p>Remove Hart Street (both sides) from PSF</p>	<p>Allocate Hart Street as SSF frontage (both sides, reflecting current PSF allocation)</p> <p>Allocate Reading Road (up to and including number 32, western side, and up to and including number 27, eastern side) as SSF.</p> <p>Allocate Market Place Mews as SSF</p>
Thame	<p>Remove Thame Library (North Street) from PSF;</p> <p>Remove Swan Hotel (9 Upper High Street) from PSF;</p> <p>Review and update if Cattle Market development comes forward.</p>	<p>Consider definition of SSF at High Street (north of number 16, western side) and north of number 92 (eastern side); and at 9 to 13 Upper High Street and 38-39 to 44 Upper High Street.</p> <p>Review and update if Cattle Market development comes forward.</p>
Wallingford	<p>Remove PSF allocation on north side of High Street</p> <p>Remove PSF allocation at 23-24 to 28 High Street (south side)</p>	<p>Allocate current PSF on north side of High Street as SSF; extend westwards (north side only) as far as number 64-65 High Street; extend eastwards to include number 82 High Street (Natwest).</p> <p>Allocate current PSF on south side of High Street (23-24 to 28) as secondary shopping frontage</p>



## 9 DIDCOT AND SCIENCE VALE

### Introduction

- 9.1 Science Vale is an international location for science and technology. From this strong starting point we need to capitalise on Science Vale's opportunity to provide an even better environment for business to flourish.
- 9.2 Our vision for Science Vale and Didcot in 2032 is grounded in continuing this story of economic success and channelling this prosperity into improved social and environmental wellbeing: the area will consist of thriving communities that have benefited from sustainable growth and the successful delivery of major infrastructure.
- 9.3 One of the priorities for Science Vale is to provide an environment in which science-led business can flourish. Part of this is ensuring that we have an attractive and diverse housing offer, set in an area with good transport and communications networks, links to university research, 'big science', the space sector and cutting edge technology. Clustering development in one area gives a critical mass of economic, social and cultural activity to support the delivery of infrastructure and sustain vibrant town centres. It also has well established road and rail networks, that are already the subject of investment and improvement.
- 9.4 Didcot is the gateway to Science Vale, connecting with the rest of the UK through direct train services to Oxford, London, and Bristol. An important part of our strategy for Science Vale is to improve and strengthen its relationship with Didcot, and realise Didcot's full potential as a thriving and attractive location to live, work and visit. We will do this by planning for the homes, jobs, skills, and infrastructure that are needed.

### The Strategy for Didcot and Science Vale

- 9.5 Our strategic approach for Didcot and Science Vale:
- Excellent design throughout Didcot and Science Vale
  - A coordinated approach to new development through an urban design framework
  - Protection for the distinctive character and heritage of Science Vale's market towns, villages and countryside
  - A range of new homes, to balance the new jobs
  - Opportunities for people to build their own homes in appropriate locations

In December 2015, Government announced that Didcot will become a Garden Town, delivering 15,050 new homes and 20,000 high-tech jobs

- Didcot transformed into a well-serviced and well-connected high quality urban hub, including new social infrastructure (such as schools and medical facilities and a new leisure centre) to support the growing population
- A 'step change' in travel choices away from car travel with Didcot at the heart of a fully connected Science Vale
- Didcot's role as a major rail interchange strengthened and aspirations for rail services direct from Wantage and Grove
- A cycle strategy for Science Vale that enables people to reliably travel between their homes and their jobs by means other than the private car
- Improved access onto the A34 and to the M40
- Aspirations for superfast broadband across all of Science Vale by 2032

### Didcot Garden Town

- 9.6 In December 2015, Government announced that Didcot will become a Garden Town, delivering 15,050 new homes and 20,000 high-tech jobs in the greater Didcot area. With strategic partners, we have been awarded funding to facilitate the delivery of the Didcot Garden Town concept.
- 9.7 We are now establishing a vision for Didcot Garden Town, and developing a delivery strategy that sets out how that vision will be realised. It is likely these will be outlined in a Didcot Garden Town Development Plan Document (DPD), that will form part of South Oxfordshire's development plan, complementing and supporting the Local Plan.
- 9.8 Didcot Garden town straddles the boundary of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils. The two councils are working closely together to ensure the delivery of new homes and employment opportunities and also to support what is already flourishing in the area.
- 9.9 The majority of sites for the 15,050 homes are allocated. Most of these are within Vale of White Horse District, and many already have planning consent. Of the sites within this district, the majority were allocated in the Core Strategy.
- 9.10 The potential Garden Town DPD will also explore opportunities to accelerate development and plan further development where it would contribute to the achievement of the Didcot Garden Town vision. Further development will be supported, but only where its principal purpose and effect is to contribute to achieving the vision.

## New Housing

### Proposed Policy – New Housing in Didcot

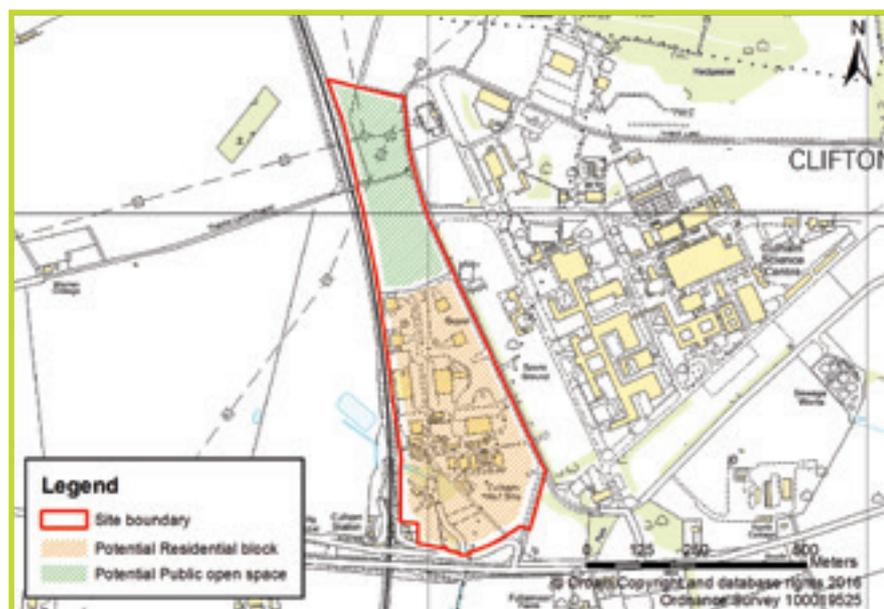
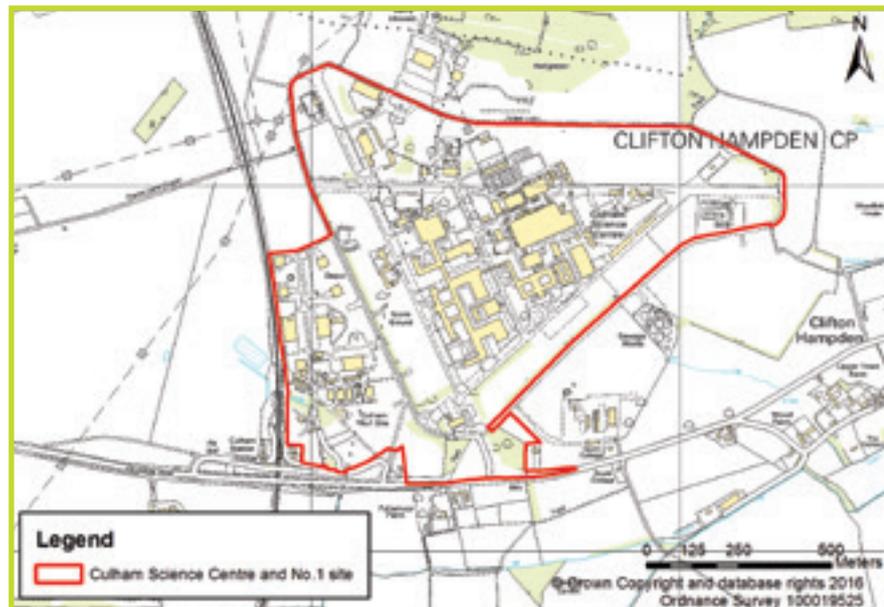
**In Didcot planning permission will be granted for at least 6,500 homes between 2011 and 2032. Some dwellings have already been developed since 2011 and some will be on sites that have consent (including at outline or with a resolution to grant).**

9.11 The supply of sites to deliver about 6,500 homes are outlined in table 9.1 below. The allocated sites also have site specific policies. At this time we are awaiting the outcome of the garden town development plan and will not allocate any further housing in isolation of an overall strategy and plan that will achieve the garden town strategy and aims.

<b>Completed 2011- 2016</b>			<b>1,304</b>
Committed	Great Western Park	1,494	
	Didcot NE	2,030	
	Didcot A	280	
	Gateway	300	
	Hadden Hill	74	
	Park Road	66	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>4,244</b>
Allocated	Ladygrove east	500	
	Orchard Centre Phase 2b	300	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>800</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>6,348</b>

9.12 Elsewhere in Science Vale, at least 800 new homes will be delivered through a proposed allocation adjacent to the Culham Science Centre and also through Neighbourhood Plans and windfall sites. There will also be a specific project in Berinsfield that may lead to new homes being built but this is dependent upon the realisation of specific regeneration aspirations. Further detail on the project is provided later in this chapter.

### Culham Science Centre (& No. 1 Site)



9.13 We intend to continue to support the redevelopment and intensification of Culham Science Centre for research and science based businesses. The adjacent 'No.1 site' provides a redevelopment opportunity for new homes in a sustainable location next to a railway station. It is likely that the redevelopment will coincide with, and be complimented by, the delivery of the Clifton Hampden by-pass. Our preferred approach is to allocate the 'No.1 site' for new homes and relocate the businesses there to another appropriate location. We are in the process of identifying such a site and will consult on this at the next stage of the local plan.

9.14 The Culham Science Centre and No.1 site were previously identified as 'major development sites in the Green Belt.' Given the amount of development on the two sites and the suburban nature of the area we propose to inset the land identified on the plan from the Green Belt.

### Proposed Policy – Culham Science Centre and No.1 site

**Proposals for the redevelopment and intensification of the Culham Science Centre with the creation of about 1,000 new jobs will be supported, together with the re-development of the No.1 site for a mixed use scheme including about 500 new homes.**

**In order to deliver any potential proposal, we will work proactively with the UK Atomic Energy Authority and development partners to create an agreed masterplan that facilitates this growth.**

## Berinsfield

9.15 There are exceptional circumstances justifying a review of the Green Belt at Berinsfield:

- The 'washed over' status of Berinsfield inhibits its ability to achieve necessary regeneration;
- more land may be needed around Berinsfield to improve the mix of housing and to provide further opportunities for employment and service provision; and
- Berinsfield is a local service centre and some further development would be consistent with the overall strategy.

9.16 These issues have been considered in part in the Local Green Belt Study for South Oxfordshire District Council (September 2015) and through the drafting of the Berinsfield Neighbourhood Plan. However, more comprehensive and detailed work is necessary to consider the future of Berinsfield.

9.17 In light of this, we have decided to commission work to explore potential options for the regeneration of Berinsfield. The work will explore whether there is a sufficient case for the release of land at Berinsfield and whether such a release would enable the regeneration of Berinsfield to be delivered. In the meantime, the whole village remains washed over by the Green Belt and subject to the strongest planning policy protection.

9.18 The principal purpose of the recent Green Belt study was to assess the whole district and the extent to which the land within the Green Belt meets the five

purposes of the Green Belt set out in paragraph 80 of the NPPF, in the context of the current need to identify additional land for housing in the district to meet local and Oxford based demand.

- 9.19 The study itself clearly notes that the findings of the Study should: “not be considered in isolation. As a technical piece of work it will be used in conjunction with other evidence to inform future planning policy in South Oxfordshire.” That evidence will include the work we recently commissioned, and all other necessary work that will be undertaken in preparation of the Local Plan. The housing policies of the Local Plan do not rely upon the release of land at Berinsfield, where the release of land will only be contemplated in the circumstances described below.

### Proposed Policy – Regeneration of Berinsfield

**The Council is commencing work on a feasibility study and masterplan to investigate the practicality of and the most appropriate approach to achieving the full scale regeneration of Berinsfield. This work will be developed in close collaboration with the local community. Pending the outcome of that work it is the Council’s policy that:**

- i. The need for housing, alone, at Berinsfield is not considered by the Council to meet the test of exceptional circumstances necessary to justify the release of land from the Green Belt and neither would a residential planning application meet the test of very special circumstances;**
- ii. Apart from small scale development within the village, development at Berinsfield could only be accepted if it was satisfactory to the Council in all respects and if the development met at least the following criteria;**
  - the development formed part of an agreed, comprehensive masterplan for the regeneration of Berinsfield; and**
  - the development funded the entire cost of the necessary regeneration of Berinsfield’s physical, social, sporting, housing and public services infrastructure in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the village; and**
  - the development of land is no greater than is necessary to deliver the necessary regeneration.**

YOUR VIEW

*Q14 Do you agree that no further housing should be allocated to Didcot, given the amount of housing land that is already committed?*

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*Q15 Do you agree with our proposed approach to redevelopment at Culham Science Centre and the No.1 site? If not, what changes would you suggest?*

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*Q16 Do you agree with our proposed approach towards the regeneration of Berinsfield? If not, what changes would you suggest?*

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STARBUCKS COFFEE

MARKET PLACE  
- TO WEST CHURCH



## 10

## HENLEY-ON-THAMES, THAME AND WALLINGFORD

10.1 This part of the Preferred Options document sets out our proposals for Henley, Thame and Wallingford. It includes our preferred strategies for each of the towns, and the proposed approaches towards additional housing and employment land provision.

### Henley-on-Thames

#### Introduction

10.2 Henley-on-Thames has a population of around 11,600. The town lies in the south-east of the district, adjoining Wokingham district in Berkshire and close to Reading. Henley's shopping centre is the largest of our towns; it has local shops and services as well as high end shopping for visitors. Tourism, based on the town's riverside setting, its legacy of historic buildings and the festivals and events that take place, are important to the economy and vitality of Henley.

10.3 Henley's strengths include:

- an international reputation;
- its setting on the Thames and adjacent to the Chilterns AONB;
- well preserved historic features;
- a good range of facilities for education, health and recreation;
- a range of employment opportunities;
- a selection of good shops and restaurants;
- a variety of housing;
- being an important service centre for nearby areas in Oxfordshire and Berkshire;
- events that draw people to the town including markets, festivals and the annual regatta;
- a good range and number of active voluntary groups.

10.4 Issues that need addressing in the town are:

- Henley's shopping centre is performing well but some shopkeepers indicate that business is declining. How to maintain the town's attractiveness and reputation, and develop tourism opportunities are important.

- Traffic congestion causes inconvenience to road users and pedestrians and creates an unpleasant environment in the town. We need to consider how to manage traffic including that generated by new proposals.
- A large proportion of the employment areas in the town are attractive and good quality, but maintaining and enhancing the town's economic vitality is important. We need to identify whether any employment sites should be used for other purposes and whether we need to find any additional employment land.
- The town is tightly constrained by the river and the AONB, but we need to consider whether to allocate land for new housing.
- We need to identify the new services and facilities required to support development and when these should be in place. A number of the town's major facilities have inadequate accommodation, for example Gillotts School, Henley College and Townlands Hospital.
- We need to plan for improvements to recreation facilities.
- We should try to plan for changes that are likely to happen in the town, for example an ageing population.



## The Strategy for Henley-on-Thames

- 10.5 The Local Plan, alongside the recently adopted joint Henley-Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan, will set a strategy for Henley focussing on the issues the town faces in the context of the overall vision and objectives for the district.
- 10.6 At the Refined Options consultation, you told us that:
- Large housing allocations made to Henley could change the nature of the town
  - Most responses suggested new employment should be close to existing towns, including Henley
  - Henley needs adequate amounts of free car parking, and additional car parks. Better enforcement was also suggested though, as congestion and bad parking cause problems.

## Proposed Policy – The Strategy for Henley

### Proposals for development in Henley should:

- i. **strengthen commerce in the town centre through retail-led, mixed-use development and identify additional retail and leisure floorspace**
- ii. **support housing and employment uses above shops**
- iii. **enhance the town's environment**
- iv. **improve the attraction of Henley for visitors**
- v. **improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links**
- vi. **improve the stock of commercial buildings and the environment of the employment areas**
- vii. **support Henley College, Gillotts School and Townlands Hospital and meet their accommodation needs**

## Housing

10.7 In order to maintain a supply of housing, the Henley-Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan has identified land for 500 homes. This figure includes 450 that were identified by the previous Core Strategy. The Neighbourhood Plan is now Made. Due to the constraints to further development of the town, primarily the AONB and flood risk, we do not propose to allocate further homes in this Local Plan. However, we will need to keep the situation under review and ensure that the sites identified in the Neighbourhood Plan are progressing adequately.

## Employment

10.8 The Employment Land Review (ELR) published in September 2015 identifies that at the time of the review, there was approximately 215,000m<sup>2</sup> of gross office floorspace in South Oxfordshire and that Henley is the most predominant office location in the district.

10.9 We do not propose to provide additional employment land at Henley as there is scope to intensify uses on existing sites.

## Community and Infrastructure Requirements

10.10 We are currently progressing studies on open space and leisure provision in the district, that will inform the Infrastructure Delivery plan (IDP). If this identifies a shortfall in Henley we will address this at the next stage of the Local Plan.

# Thame

## Introduction

10.11 Thame is a market town with a strong agricultural base, located on the north-east edge of our district adjacent to Aylesbury Vale district. It has a population of approximately 11,500 and is an important local service centre for nearby villages both in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Thame has close links with nearby larger towns such as Aylesbury and High Wycombe for shopping, work, services and leisure facilities.

10.12 Thame's strengths include:

- Thame is a prosperous place to live, with higher than average household earnings for the district, and a higher proportion of people in managerial positions than the average for the district.
- School children in Thame achieve higher levels of attainment at Key Stage 1 and 2 than on average in the district.
- Journey distances are short, with almost a third of residents travelling less than 2km to work, which is a higher proportion than for the district as a whole.
- Employment centres, a primary school and a supermarket are all within an average of ten minutes' walk or public transport journey, with a further education institution, GP or secondary school within an average of twenty minutes' walk or public transport journey.

10.13 Issues to be addressed in the town are:

- There is high demand for affordable housing in Thame.
- New services and facilities are needed to support development. The secondary school is at or close to capacity, and the provision of health services needs to be improved.
- The lack of leisure and community facilities as an issue affecting social wellbeing.
- Thame's retail function is currently performing quite well but there is growing competition from the expansion of nearby centres such as High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Oxford which means that Thame needs to ensure it continues to perform well. Our Retail Assessment 2016 has shown that Thame would benefit from an improvement in its expenditure retention rate for convenience goods as this is currently slightly lower than other towns in the district.

10.14 During the two previous consultations, comments referred to the level of growth appropriate for the town, the need to locate employment sites

close to the existing town, and the need to link development with the necessary amenities and facilities for local communities.

## The Strategy for Thame

10.15 The preferred strategy for Thame focusses on the issues the town faces in the context of the overall vision and objectives for the district:

### Proposed Policy – The Strategy for Thame

**Proposals for development in Thame should:**

- i. strengthen commerce in the town centre and identify sites suitable for future retail, leisure and community uses;**
- ii. support housing and employment uses above shops;**
- iii. improve the attraction of Thame for visitors and businesses;**
- iv. improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links;**
- v. support schemes that enhance the quality of the town's environment;**
- vi. support schemes that improve the stock of existing commercial buildings and the environment of the employment areas;**
- vii. support the schools, health and other service providers meet their accommodation needs, in particular the amalgamation of the secondary school onto a single site.**

## Housing

10.16 Thame is a popular place to live and as such, we propose that at least 600 new homes will be delivered in Thame to 2032 and that sites are delivered through a review of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan.

### Proposed Policy - Housing in Thame

**In addition to allocations in the made Thame neighbourhood plan, an additional 600 homes will be delivered in Thame. These will be delivered through a review of the neighbourhood plan.**

**If a review of the neighbourhood plan does not adequately progress with allocating sites (and has therefore at least been submitted to the Council) within 12 months of adoption of this local plan 2032, planning applications for housing in Thame will be supported provided that:**

- i. Proposals comply with the overall housing distribution strategy**
- ii. Proposals comply with the housing and other applicable policies in this plan**

## Employment

10.17 Whilst levels of employment are high, some employment sites need upgrading, specifically Thame Industrial Estate, the depot and works on Rycote Lane, Station Yard and at the industrial site on Aylesbury Road. In addition, this local plan provides for a further 2.5 hectares of employment land to be provided in Thame, to be allocated in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### Proposed Policy – New Employment Land in Thame

**In addition to allocations in the made Thame neighbourhood plan, an additional 2.5 hectares of employment land will be delivered in Thame. These will be delivered through a review of the neighbourhood plan.**

**If a review of the neighbourhood plan does not adequately progress with allocating sites (and has therefore at least been submitted to the Council) within 12 months of adoption of this local plan 2032, planning applications for employment provision in Thame will be supported provided that:**

- i. Proposals comply with the overall strategy for Thame**
- ii. Proposals comply with the employment and other applicable policies in this plan**

## Community Facilities and Leisure

10.18 We are currently progressing studies on open space and leisure provision in the district. If this identifies a shortfall in Thame we will address this at the next stage of the Local Plan.

# Wallingford

## Introduction

10.19 Wallingford is the smallest market town in the district, with a population of around 8,000. The town is located 6 miles east of Didcot. Our vision and objectives seek to enhance our market towns and build on the district's economic success. Our strategy for Wallingford will develop the town's role as a local service centre, to complement rather than compete with Didcot, developing Wallingford's particular strengths.

10.20 Wallingford's strengths include:

- its location by the River Thames and proximity to the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- well preserved historic features including a compact medieval central area encircled by Saxon banks and ditches, the castle gardens and meadows and Wallingford Bridge
- a good range of facilities in terms of schools, health and recreation
- a range of employment opportunities and links with the concentration of environmental science organisations at nearby Crowmarsh Gifford
- a number of independent shops and restaurants
- a range of housing
- a bypass taking through traffic out of the town
- hosting events that draw people to the town including markets, festivals and rowing events and
- a number of active and successful voluntary groups.

10.21 Issues that need addressing in the town are:

- the declining retail function of the town centre
- the re-use of the former Waitrose store needs a permanent solution
- the potential of the town to attract visitors is not fully exploited
- some facilities, for example some schools, are at capacity
- the need for affordable housing remains high despite recent new building
- the average overall rating of the Hithercroft Industrial Estate, the town's main employment area
- the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Assessment showed there were areas for improvement
- there are local air quality problems
- a higher percentage of over 65s than the average for the district, county and South East.

## The Strategy for Wallingford

10.22 The Local Plan, alongside the emerging Neighbourhood Plan being prepared by Wallingford Town Council, will set a strategy for Wallingford focussing on the issues the town faces in the context of the overall vision and objectives for the district.

10.23 At the Refined Options consultation, you told us that:

- The former Waitrose site should be developed
- Wallingford needs a better retail offer
- Wallingford needs more parking
- The cycle way on Reading Way to Wallingford should be finished
- Some respondents felt that Wallingford should not have any more housing

## Our preferred strategy for Wallingford is:

### Proposed Policy – The Strategy for Wallingford

#### Proposals for development in Wallingford should:

- i. strengthen the town centre including supporting schemes that allow for the re-use or redevelopment of the former Waitrose site provided that a retail element and car parking is retained
- ii. support housing and employment uses above shops
- iii. support the market place as a local hub
- iv. support measures that improve the attraction of Wallingford for visitors with particular emphasis on the River Thames
- v. improve accessibility, car parking, pedestrian and cycle links and local air quality
- vi. support schemes that enhance the town's environment

## Housing

10.24 Wallingford is a sustainable location for new development, with a good range of existing services and facilities, and is a desirable place to live. Based on the housing distribution strategy, Wallingford is proposed to grow by around 10 per cent, with the neighbourhood plan delivering this growth.

### Proposed Policy – Housing in Wallingford

**At least 430 homes will be delivered in Wallingford. These will be delivered through the neighbourhood plan.**

**If the neighbourhood plan does not adequately progress with allocating site(s) (and has therefore at least been submitted to the Council) within 12 months of adoption of this local plan 2032, planning applications for housing in Wallingford will be supported provided that:**

- i. Proposals comply with the overall housing distribution strategy
- ii. Proposals comply with the housing and other applicable policies in this plan

## Employment

10.25 High-tech and science related industries are attracted to the district and this creates indirect demand for employment floorspace linked to Science Vale.

This includes supply chain firms that seek to be close to but do not have to be within Science Vale. Wallingford/Crowmarsh Gifford is a key location for this type of demand with around a third of the overall South Oxfordshire industrial demand located in this area.

### Proposed Policy – New Employment Land in Wallingford

**At least 4.5 hectares of employment land will be delivered in Wallingford (including Crowmarsh Gifford).**

**Where this is delivered, in whole or in part, in Wallingford and Crowmarsh Gifford, this will be done through the neighbourhood plan. If the neighbourhood plan does not adequately progress with allocating sites (and has therefore at least been submitted to the Council) for employment within 12 months of adoption of this local plan 2032, planning applications for employment provision in Wallingford will be supported provided that:**

- i. Proposals comply with the overall strategy for Wallingford**
- ii. Proposals comply with the employment and other applicable policies in this plan**

**Schemes that improve the stock of existing commercial buildings and the environment of existing employment areas will be supported.**

## Community and Infrastructure Requirements

10.26 We are currently progressing studies on open space and leisure provision in the district. If this identifies a shortfall in Wallingford we will address this at the next stage of the Local Plan.

### YOUR VIEW

*Q17 Do you agree with our strategies for Henley, Thame and Wallingford?*

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*Q18 Should we allocate additional housing land in Henley?*

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*Q19 Do you agree with the level of new housing provision proposed for Thame and Wallingford?*

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*Q20 Do you agree with the level of new employment land proposed for Thame and Wallingford?*

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PENDON  
MUSEUM

APPLEFORD 2 1/4  
DIDCOT 3 1/2  
NORTH MORETON 3 1/4

MPDEN 2 1/2  
RICHMOND 3 1/2

EMERGENCY  
TRUST

SS

## 11

## HOUSING IN OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES

### Introduction

11.1 South Oxfordshire has about 140 rural communities. These vary considerably in size and character reflecting their natural setting and historical development. Our vision and objectives for South Oxfordshire recognise the rural nature of our district and the importance of our rural communities in contributing to what makes South Oxfordshire such a beautiful and prosperous place to live. Our strategy is to continue to ensure that all our communities thrive and that everyone has access to services within a short distance. This is achieved through our network of settlements and the settlement hierarchy, that identifies villages as being either larger villages, with a wide range of services and facilities in sustainable locations, smaller villages that have a more limited range of services and 'other' villages that are generally very small with very limited or no services and facilities.

### Settlement hierarchy

11.2 Having a strong understanding of the nature of the towns and villages in South Oxfordshire is a key part of our evidence base and essential to forming a robust strategy for the future in the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2032.

11.3 We are in the process of reviewing the existing settlement hierarchy (see Appendix 2) by collecting up to date information on the services and facilities available in settlements across our district<sup>16</sup>. This information is used to assess the relative sustainability of various settlements and will be used as the basis for the proposed settlement hierarchy for South Oxfordshire.

11.4 Our work has shown that within the 'smaller villages' category, there is considerable variance between the level of services and facilities available, with some having services similar to those found in the 'larger villages', whilst others have a very limited level of provision.

11.5 We have considered how we could amend the settlement hierarchy to reflect the up to date information. Options we considered are:

1. Do nothing, leave the settlement hierarchy as it is
2. Move some villages from the 'Smaller villages' category into the 'Larger villages' category
3. Introduce a 'Medium sized village' category with an appropriate scale of growth, perhaps at 7.5%

<sup>16</sup> The study was undertaken in April/May 2016 – [www.southoxon.gov.uk/evidence](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/evidence)

We would be interested in your views on developing option 3– to introduce a ‘medium sized village’ category. If this option is supported as our preferred option, it will be developed for inclusion at the Proposed Submission stage of the Local Plan 2032 process.



## Housing

...there was strong support for including smaller villages in the housing distribution strategy

- 11.6 Our preferred option is to base the housing distribution strategy for our rural communities on the settlement hierarchy. We propose to deliver 10 percent growth in the larger villages, and 5 per cent growth in the smaller villages. This will ensure that these places continue to grow and support the services and facilities that sustain them.
- 11.7 In response to the refined options consultation there was strong support for including smaller villages in the housing distribution strategy. There was also support for development in the larger villages, if this is proportional, appropriate and within existing infrastructure capacity. Many responses stated that the most appropriate mechanism for allowing housing in smaller villages was by allocating development through the neighbourhood plan process. Respondents felt that development in smaller villages would help to support local services and facilities and result in a more sustainable distribution of development that would have a more balanced impact on infrastructure. Key concerns that were raised were having adequate infrastructure and maintaining the character of smaller villages.
- 11.8 We propose that where villages are in the process of preparing a neighbourhood plan, the houses allocated to these villages should be delivered through the neighbourhood plan, allowing communities to have their say on where development in their area will go. If a neighbourhood plan does not progress within a specified time frame, we will, as the local planning authority, support acceptable proposals that come forward through the planning application process.
- 11.9 Where a village already has an adopted neighbourhood plan, they will need to review their neighbourhood plan, within the specified timeframe set out in the proposed Contingency Policy.

### Housing in the larger villages where Neighbourhood Plans are being prepared

11.10 There are currently 12 settlements classed as larger villages in the district.

These are:

- Benson
- Berinsfield
- Chalgrove
- Cholsey
- Chinnor
- Crowmarsh Gifford
- Goring
- Nettlebed
- Sonning Common
- Watlington
- Wheatley
- Woodcote

11.11 Ten of these are either in the process of preparing a neighbourhood plan, or already have a 'made' plan. Our proposed strategy for housing distribution in the larger villages is for each settlement to grow proportionally by around 10 percent.

11.12 Some villages are highly constrained, for example by Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and flood zones. In these places a 10 percent growth may not be fully achievable, and if this is the case this will be evidenced through the neighbourhood plan. Some villages are unconstrained and can deliver more than 10 percent growth. This growth should be delivered through Neighbourhood Plans, allowing local communities to help shape the development of their area.

11.13 Berinsfield and Wheatley are in the Green Belt. Berinsfield is dealt with in chapter 9 (Didcot and Science Vale). Wheatley is dealt with in chapter 5



(Housing) where 300 homes are allocated on a brownfield site (Oxford Brookes University).

- 11.14 On the basis of 10 percent growth, based on the 2011 Census number of dwellings, plus completions between 2011 and 2016, and commitments on 31 March 2016, the following provision is proposed to be made (excluding Wheatley):

**Overall Larger Village Provision: 2,465 new homes**

It should be noted that this distribution is proposed on the basis of the current settlement hierarchy (Appendix 2). This categorisation may be revised, with the possible introduction of a 'medium sized village' category.

- 11.15 Our proposed devolution to Neighbourhood Plans is an innovative approach and we will have to convince an independent Planning Inspector at the subsequent Local Plan Examination that this component of the proposed housing supply is, in practice, likely to be delivered. We therefore need to have a policy in the plan that will operate as a contingency in the event that a neighbourhood plan cannot or will not allocate the required level of housing.
- 11.16 The clearest mechanism to put in place is one whereby, in such circumstances, any planning applications that are submitted for housing in such neighbourhood plan areas will be treated favourably, provided that a range of criteria are met.

**Proposed Policy – Contingency Policy for Larger Villages**

**If a neighbourhood plan does not adequately progress with allocating sites (and has therefore at least been submitted to the Council) within 12 months of adoption of this local plan 2032, planning applications for housing in the larger villages will be supported provided that:**

- i. Proposals comply with the overall housing distribution strategy**
- ii. Proposals comply with the housing and other applicable policies in this plan**

## Smaller villages

11.18 There are currently 58 villages in the district that are classed as ‘smaller villages.’ The smaller villages are expected to deliver 5 percent growth, based on the number of dwellings at the 2011 Census, plus completions over the period 2011-16 and outstanding commitments at 31 March 2016. This will be met through small sites of 10 homes or less, and infill development, and will not be allocated by the local planning authority. Where smaller villages are preparing a neighbourhood plan, they may choose to allocate sites for housing in their plan.

11.19 Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.

### YOUR VIEW

*Q21 Do you agree with the level of housing proposed for the rural area and its distribution between the Larger and Smaller Villages?*

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*Q22 Should there be a “medium village” category and, if so, which villages should be included and what would be an appropriate percentage growth level for such a category?*

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*Q23 Do you agree with our proposed Contingency Policy to ensure delivery of housing? If not, what changes to you suggest?*

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# Appendix 1

## The Statutory Process

### The Plan Preparation Process



- 1 The three consultation exercises held to date, including this one, have been undertaken under Regulation 18 of the legislation. This Regulation enables us to undertake one or more consultation on matters that it considers appropriate – i.e. the form of the consultation is not prescribed in law.
- 2 Once the Preferred Option stage is completed, and we wish to move the Local Plan towards adoption, the more prescriptive Regulation 19 comes into effect. This requires us to prepare a Proposed Submission Document and to notify all appropriate parties. This will include those we have consulted in the process to date. The appropriate parties are then able to make formal representation on the Proposed Submission Document. This will be the “Draft Local Plan.” Any person may make representations to a local planning authority about a Local Plan that the local planning authority proposes to submit to the Secretary of State.
- 3 It is currently expected that the Regulation 19 stage (the Proposed Submission Document) will be reached in late 2016 or very early 2017.
- 4 Once we have prepared our Proposed Submission Document, we cannot change it further. Any changes we may seek will be considered at the subsequent Examination, along with the representations made by appropriate parties.
- 5 When the consultation period has been completed on the Proposed Submission document, we will formally submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State, in the form of a formal Submission Document. It is anticipated that this will be achieved early in 2017.
- 6 All representations received will be considered by an independent Planning Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Having considered all representations, the Inspector will

then conduct a formal independent examination into the Local Plan. The Inspector will make recommendations in respect of the Local Plan and, for the Plan to proceed to adoption, the Inspector must find the Local Plan to be “sound.” It is anticipated that the examination is likely to be conducted in the summer of 2017.

- 7 Once a Local Plan is found to be “sound’, it can proceed to adoption. In the case of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, this is expected to be in late 2017.

## Appendix 2 The Settlement Hierarchy

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





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01235 422600

