

Chapter 4: Spatial Strategy

Housing delivery

4.14 Housing targets have historically been established at a regional level and published within Regional Strategies. These targets were then implemented by local authorities through their local plans, which until recently were referred to as core strategies. For Oxfordshire, housing targets have been set out in the South East Plan, which was adopted in 2009.

4.15 The South East Plan sets out a target of 578 homes to be delivered per annum across the Vale.

4.16 More recently, the government has signaled their intention to abolish Regional Strategies and so it will become the responsibility of local authorities to identify an appropriate housing target for their area, to be set out in their local plan.

4.17 The Government has recently announced that it will shortly revoke the South-East Plan ⁽⁴²⁾, but for the time being, it continues to form part of the development plan for the Vale of White Horse District. This means that we are preparing the Vale Local Plan 2029 Part 1 at a time of transition.

4.18 The housing proposals in this draft plan are based on the South East Plan housing target, as it currently represent an appropriate level of housing provision for the Vale to plan for ⁽⁴³⁾. The draft Sustainability Appraisal report concludes that the South East Plan target remains a sustainable housing supply option. For these reasons, we are taking the following actions:

- we are using the South East Plan target of 578 dwellings per annum rolled forward to 2029 as our working housing target and as a basis for public consultation. This is because it is good practice to plan for a period of at least 15 years (2014 to 2029)
- we are progressing evidence base work including a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal, transport and viability ⁽⁴⁴⁾ assessments to inform a local decision on whether the South East Plan target remains appropriate. The housing figures in the final plan will be based on this evidence and may be different to those we are publishing now.
- as part of developing our evidence base we are also testing reasonable alternative housing supply options. These are set out in the Housing Topic Paper to be ⁽⁴⁵⁾ published as part of the material supporting the local plan consultation.

42 http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/February_2013/14-February/6.DCLG-Regional-Planning.pdf

43 Based on a 2011 review on the evidence informing the South East plan target, reported to Cabinet on 9 Sept 2011 (item 9) available here [http://whitehorsedc.moderngov.co.uk/Published/C00000507/M00001554/\\$\\$\\$Agenda.doc.pdf](http://whitehorsedc.moderngov.co.uk/Published/C00000507/M00001554/$$$Agenda.doc.pdf)

44 The Local Plan Viability Study will test if the proposed strategic housing allocations are financially viable to show if the sites and proposed level of growth is deliverable. The Study will also help us to understand how much development is needed to secure delivery of the essential infrastructure needed to make the development sustainable.

45 www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

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Sources of housing supply

4.19 A number of sources of housing supply have been identified to ensure a continuous supply of housing delivery across the plan period. These sources include:

- strategic allocations made within this plan
- retained Local Plan (2011) allocations
- existing planning commitments
- small scale (non-strategic) sites to be identified through neighbourhood plans, or identified through the Local Plan 2029 Part 2, and
- sites that come forward through the development management process in accordance with the policies set out in the local plan sometimes known as ‘windfalls’.

4.20 The strategic allocations (listed in Core Policy 3 and outlined in more detail within the Sub-Area Strategies) are central to the delivery of the local plan and the strategic objectives for the Vale.

4.21 The site selection process began with a comprehensive assessment of land surrounding each of our main settlements. This helped to identify the broad locations which offered the best scope for additional development. More information is provided within the Strategic Site Selection Topic Paper⁽⁴⁶⁾. Details of our proposed strategic sites are also set out with the Development Templates included in **Appendix A**.

4.22 The scale of development on these strategic sites will enable infrastructure to be provided that offers wider benefits to their local areas. For example, the delivery of the Wantage Eastern Link Road, to be provided, in part, by proposed strategic development at Crab Hill, Wantage. This road forms part of the wider Science Vale UK Infrastructure Package and will help to improve traffic flows from Wantage and Grove to Didcot and Harwell (further details are set out within the South East Vale Sub-Area Strategy).

4.23 To ensure development at a strategic level is directed to the most suitable and sustainable locations a housing requirement is outlined for each of the sub-areas (Table 4.1 and the Sub-Area Strategies set out in Chapter 5).

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Core Policy 3: Housing Delivery

Core Policy 3 identifies the scale and location of housing to ensure growth in the Vale of White Horse is delivered in the most sustainable manner. The proposed housing target is for at least 13,294 homes to be delivered in the plan period between 2006 and 2029.

Strategic Allocations

Development will be supported at strategic sites in accordance with the Sub-Area Strategies where this meets the requirements set out within the Development Templates shown by **Appendix A**. The following table illustrates our proposal for how the level of housing which is required through strategic development could be distributed.

Settlement	Site Name	Number of Dwellings
Harwell Parish east of the A34*	Valley Park	2150
Harwell	Harwell Oxford Campus	400
Faringdon	South of Park Road	350
Wantage and Grove	Monks Farm (North Grove)	750
	Crab Hill (North East Wantage)	1500
Total		5150

*Adjoining Didcot Town.

Development at Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger Villages

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

Development outside of the existing built area of these settlements will be permitted where it is allocated by the Local Plan 2029 Part 1 or has been identified through neighbourhood plans or through the Local Plan 2029 Part 2.

This development must be adjacent, or well related, to the existing built area of the settlement or meet exceptional circumstances set out in the other policies of this plan.

Development at Smaller Villages

At the Smaller Villages, limited development may be appropriate within the existing built areas of these settlements. Proposals for development will be supported where they seek to meet local housing needs, and/ or provide local employment, services and facilities, provided that the development accords with the development plan and respects the existing character and form of the settlement.

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Table 4.1 The proposed housing delivery targets for the Vale of White Horse district for the plan period 2006 to 2029^a

Sub-Area	Settlement	Requirement 2006 to 2029 at 578 homes per annum	Housing already provided for		Housing to be identified	
			Completions 2006 to April 2012	Commitments to April 2012	Proposed strategic sites	Remainder to be identified
Abingdon and Oxford Fringe	Abingdon	2291	740	175	0	299
	Botley		199	459	0	
	Rest of sub-area		287	132	0	
	Sub total		1226	766	0	
South East Vale	Wantage and Grove	9535	495	2665	2250	419
	Harwell parish east of the A34		0	600	2150	
	Rest of sub-area		208	348	400	
	Sub total		703	3613	4800	
Western Vale	Faringdon	1468	388	160	350	337
	Rest of sub-area		141	92	0	
	Sub total		529	252	350	
Total		13294	2458	4631	5150	1055

^a This table will be updated before formal submission of the Vale Local Plan 2029: Part 1 to take account of completions and permissions to April 2013.

Note: Housing proposals are based on the South East Plan which is being revoked but are currently the most appropriate figures available. Final housing figures will be informed by new evidence and may differ.

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Meeting business and employment needs

4.24 This strategy identifies a need for around 143⁽⁴⁷⁾ ha of strategic employment land in accordance with assessed needs⁽⁴⁸⁾ and it is anticipated that this will deliver approximately 14,300 jobs between 2012 and 2029. This land will be provided by a combination of different sites including:

- provision of employment land as part of mixed use urban extensions
- sites covered by the adopted Milton Park Local Development Order
- retained Vale Local Plan 2011 allocations for employment land, and
- re-use of surplus land formerly in employment use.

4.25 Overall demand for employment land in the Vale is strong due to a combination of local assets, including: excellent quality of environment; high-quality research and science facilities; a large catchment pool of skilled labour; and existing science and business parks with growth aspirations and where the demand for growth is expected to remain buoyant throughout the plan period⁽⁴⁹⁾.

4.26 Employment provision within the Vale is led by the Science Vale UK area, and in particular, the Enterprise Zone sites at Milton Park and Harwell Oxford Campus. Milton Park is a large science park and a major regional and national hub for knowledge-intensive industries. Harwell Oxford Campus is home to a number of world leading science research facilities including, for example, the UK Atomic Energy Authority, and the European Space Agency. The Milton Park and Harwell Oxford Campus sites alone account for 92 ha of the identified demand for new employment land.

4.27 There is an adopted Local Development Order (LDO) for Milton Park⁽⁵⁰⁾ that allows for the intensification and expansion of the existing site. The LDO is designed to allow development within the B1, B2 and B8 use classes, and also permits elements of other uses. Policy E5 (Milton Park) of the Local Plan 2011 will continue to be saved alongside the Local Plan 2029 Part 1 until it is reviewed through a future planning document. The saved Policy E5 will apply to any proposals for employment (B1, B2 or B8) development at Milton Park which are not permitted by the LDO. A map showing the area covered by the LDO and the area covered by saved Policy E5 (which is slightly smaller) is provided in **Appendix C**.

4.28 A Local Development Order may also be prepared for the Harwell Oxford Campus. In the meantime, applications for employment uses at this site will be considered against Policy E7 (Harwell Science and Innovation Campus) of the Local Plan 2011, which will continue to be saved until it is reviewed through a future planning policy document. The Local Plan 2029 Part 1 identifies part of the Harwell Oxford Campus for housing (See Core Policy 3: Housing Delivery), and saved Policy E7 will no-longer apply in this section of the site. A map showing the area of the Harwell Oxford Campus where Policy E7 will continue to apply is provided in **Appendix C**.

4.29 Employment land will be provided as part of mixed use strategic sites at Land South of Park Road, Faringdon and Monks Farm, North Grove. This employment land will help to ensure that jobs are available close to people's homes.

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

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

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

50 Milton Park Local Development Order, December 2012, available at:

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/milton-park-local-development-order>

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4.30 The strategy also identifies that the Didcot A Power Station site is an appropriate location for employment development to contribute to the 143 ha to be provided. This site currently consists of a coal fired power station which will be decommissioned after March 2013. The size of this site could also provide additional land over and above the identified requirement, in the latter stages of the plan period. Any development on this site should come forward in accordance with Core Policy 13 (Didcot A Power Station).

4.31 Policy CSEM2 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy⁽⁵¹⁾ indicates that 6.5 hectares of employment land will be provided at Didcot, within the Vale of White Horse District, in order to help meet the town's needs. This 6.5 hectares is included within the 28 hectares to be provided at Milton Park within Harwell Parish and contributes towards the identified requirement of 143 hectares for the Vale of White Horse District.

Core Policy 4: Meeting Business and Employment Needs

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

Site Name	Type of Site	Available Development Land (Hectares)
Milton Park	Saved Local Plan 2011 allocation	28*
Harwell Oxford Campus	Saved Local Plan 2011 allocation	64
Monks Farm – North Grove	New mixed use strategic allocation	6
South of Park Road - Faringdon	New mixed use strategic allocation	3
Didcot A	Identified future potential supply	29**
	Other saved Local Plan 2011 allocations	13
Total		143

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

** The Didcot A Power Station site consists of around 58 hectares for potential redevelopment. The Employment Land Review recommends that 29 ha of this land should be identified for employment development. Further development at this site should be considered in accordance with Core Policy 13 (Didcot A Power Station).

Employment and business development will be supported at strategic sites where this meets the requirements set out within the Strategic Site Development Templates shown by Appendix A, and in accordance with the Sub-Area Strategies.

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Core Policy 4: Continued

The other saved Vale Local Plan 2011 employment allocations are:

Site Name	Available Development Land (Hectares)
Abingdon Business Park at Wyndyke Furlong	0.7
Abingdon Science Park at Barton Lane	0.7
Cumnor Hill	0.3
Land adjacent to A420; '4&20' site	4.2
Land north of Park Road (HCA business centre)	0.2
Grove Technology Park	5.4
Wootton Business Park	1.5
Total	13.0

Proposals for employment related development on other sites will be supported in accordance with Core Policy 24 (New employment development on unallocated sites).

In addition to the sites identified for new employment development, a number of existing strategic employment sites have been identified in the sub-area strategies. These sites will be safeguarded for employment uses in accordance with Core Policy 25 (Change of use of existing employment land and premises).

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Providing supporting infrastructure and services

4.32 Successful infrastructure delivery is important to ensure the wider aims of this strategy can be met. These include delivering balanced and sustainable growth across the Vale.

4.33 Any new development increases the use of, or demand for, existing services and facilities. Where new homes or jobs are developed and there is insufficient capacity to meet additional demand it is essential that new facilities and infrastructure are provided to meet the demand created. Necessary infrastructure can cover a range of services and facilities. These can include:

- physical and transport infrastructure such as roads, bus services, water, drainage, waste management, sewage treatment and utility services
- social infrastructure such as education, health facilities, social services, emergency services and other community facilities such as libraries and cemeteries, and
- green infrastructure such as parks, allotments, footpaths, play areas and natural and amenity green space.

4.34 Infrastructure delivery is important to ensure new development is sustainable. New services and facilities should be planned to meet the demand created by new development and be delivered at appropriate timescales. This will ensure that the needs of both the existing community and future residents are provided for. We will therefore only grant planning permission for new development once the delivery of necessary infrastructure within appropriate timescales has been secured.

4.35 Infrastructure has been traditionally provided or funded by developers through legal agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). This system is being partially replaced by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). CIL provides a tariff that local authorities can impose on new development, thus providing more certainty over costs. The Vale of White District Council is considering the preparation of a CIL charging schedule.

4.36 One of the steps in the process of introducing CIL is to identify the infrastructure that is needed to support future growth and how much it is likely to cost. A draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared in support of the draft local plan (LPP1).

4.37 The requirement to provide new or enhanced infrastructure must not be so onerous as to render development unviable, taking into account other policy requirements such as affordable housing provision. For this reason an independent viability study has been carried out to inform this strategy and the draft IDP⁽⁵²⁾.

4.38 Effective partnership working is essential between public, private and voluntary sectors to ensure infrastructure is efficiently provided and maintained. The Council continues to work closely with a range of stakeholders, including: the Environment Agency, the Highways Agency, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxfordshire Local Economic Partnership (LEP), Thames Water and Town and Parish Councils.

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Core Policy 5: Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services

All new development will be required to provide, in a timely manner, for the on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements necessary for the development to be sustainably accommodated.

Infrastructure requirements will be delivered directly by the developer wherever possible and appropriate, otherwise through an appropriate financial contribution prior to, or in conjunction with, new development.

In identifying infrastructure requirements, development proposals must demonstrate that full regard has been paid to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and all other relevant policies of this plan. Joint working with adjoining authorities will be encouraged to ensure that wider strategic infrastructure requirements are appropriately addressed.

Proposals for major development should be supported by an independent viability assessment. If the viability assessment adequately demonstrates that development proposals are unable to fund the full range of infrastructure requirements, then the Council will:

- i. prioritise the developer contributions sought in accordance with the IDP
- ii. use an appropriate mechanism to defer part of the developer contributions requirement to a later date, as agreed by all parties, and
- iii. as a last resort, refuse planning permission if the development would be unsustainable without inclusion of the unfunded infrastructure requirements.

Infrastructure provision will be delivered through the development management process. Planning conditions and planning obligations will be sought to mitigate the direct impact (s) of development, secure its implementation, control phasing where necessary, and to secure contributions to the delivery of infrastructure necessary to the development.

If a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is adopted, a CIL Charging Schedule will be prepared and CIL revenue will be used to provide new and improved infrastructure necessary to deliver new development.

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

This chapter sets out three Sub-Area Strategies, which show how the Spatial Strategy will be delivered in each part of the Vale. They give spatial expression to the strategy and ensure that it is locally distinct and focused on the needs of each part of the district. The three sub-areas are:

Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe – which covers the northern and north eastern part of the Vale characterized by the strong functional relationship with the City of Oxford. It contains the Market Town of Abingdon on Thames, the Local Service Centre of Botley and several Larger Villages including Kingston Bagpuize, Marcham and Drayton. A large part of this sub-area is located within the Oxford Green Belt.

South East Vale – which includes most of the Science Vale UK area and contains the Market Town of Wantage, the Local Service Centre of Grove as well as a number of significant employment sites, including the Enterprise Zone and Didcot A Power Station sites.

Western Vale – a more rural area stretching from the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the River Thames, containing the Market Town of Faringdon and several Larger Villages including Shrivenham and Watchfield.

Question 15

We have divided the District into three sub areas and devised strategies for each area. Do you agree with this approach and the levels of housing and employment development proposed for each sub area? If you disagree, what would you change?

Our interactive website where you can answer these questions on-line can be found at: <http://whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplanpartone>

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area Strategy

Introduction

5.1 The Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area lies in the north of the Vale District. It has strong functional links with Oxford City and 56 percent of the sub-area is located within the Oxford Green Belt. The sub-area provides housing for residents working in Oxford City and also functions as a significant employment area in its own right. The sub-area has good access to the strategic road network with both the A34 and A420 providing linkages to the M4, Swindon, the M40, and the Midlands. However, the road network is often operating close to its capacity, and any future development in this area needs to be carefully managed.

5.2 The market town of Abingdon on Thames is the largest settlement in the sub-area and in the district. It is England's oldest continuously inhabited town and its attractive frontage to the River Thames and historic core, including the County Hall, Market Place and Abbey Gardens, are important features of its special character.

5.3 Abingdon on Thames is an important employment and service centre both for the wider sub-area and the district and contains major community, cultural, recreational and educational facilities. There are a number of popular independent schools and a further education college in Abingdon on Thames and education forms one of the largest employment sectors in the town. The majority of Abingdon on Thames's residents enjoy a good quality of life, although the town also includes some areas of deprivation⁽⁵³⁾.

5.4 Abingdon on Thames has experienced sustained growth over the last few decades. It is therefore important that any future growth is carefully planned to ensure environmental constraints are carefully managed and highway capacity constraints are appropriately addressed.

5.5 The second largest settlement in the sub-area is Botley, which is located on the south-western edge of Oxford, and consists of parts of the North Hinksey and Cumnor parishes. Botley has strong links with the City of Oxford and also functions as an important local service centre in its own right. It houses the Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill Campus.

5.6 The Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area contains a network of attractive rural villages, which include the larger villages of Kingston Bagpuize, Marcham, Drayton and Sutton Courtenay.

5.7 Strategic housing or employment growth within the sub-area, particularly that located in south Abingdon and Drayton, would only be supported if satisfactory measures to improve highway capacity have been identified and shown to be deliverable.

5.8 The over-arching priority for the area is to maintain the service and employment centre roles for Abingdon on Thames and Botley, whilst ensuring future growth is managed with regard to pressure on the highway network and continues to respect the Oxford Green Belt.

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Local planning issues

5.9. Housing and employment

- There are a number of constraints affecting the scope to allocate strategic growth in the sub-area. For example, Abingdon on Thames is bounded to the north by the Oxford Green Belt, to the west by the A34, and to the south and east by the River Thames and its flood plain.
- The least constrained areas of undeveloped land lie to the south of the town. However, strategic housing growth could only be sustainably accommodated alongside the development of a town centre bypass which would need to be appropriately funded. Current evidence suggests that such a bypass would not be financially viable to be funded solely by development.
- Housing sites may be identified through the Local Plan 2029 Part 2, through community led neighbourhood plans, or through the development management process. It will first be necessary to demonstrate that any impacts on the highway network and local environment can be acceptably managed.
- Future housing development in Botley is also constrained by the Oxford Green Belt and flood risk. Some former Local Plan allocations have been delayed whilst upgrades to the local drainage system have been implemented. These allocations will provide housing supply in the first part of the plan period⁽⁵⁴⁾. It is important that any development in Botley is carefully managed to maintain the character of lower density areas such as Cumnor Hill ⁽⁵⁵⁾.
- The sub-area contains a number of important employment sites, including Abingdon Science Park, Abingdon Business Park, Curtis Industrial Estate, Hinksey Business Park, Minns Business Park and Seacourt Tower. Existing employment sites will be protected in accordance with Core Policy 25. However, due to the constraints identified it is currently not appropriate to allocate any future strategic employment growth in Abingdon on Thames and Botley.

Transport

- There is significant existing highway congestion within the sub-area, especially in peak commuting hours. This includes traffic congestion on the A34 which is operating at or above peak hours capacity, particularly at Abingdon on Thames and Botley⁽⁵⁶⁾. There is also significant congestion along the Drayton and Marcham Roads, and where the A415 Marcham Road runs through the centre of Abingdon on Thames and its junctions with the A34. Work will be essential to identify long-term solutions to the current highway capacity constraints.

Environmental

- The Oxford Green Belt performs an important role in protecting land around the City of Oxford from incremental encroachment and will be maintained in accordance with national policy. Any review of the Green Belt during the plan period will be conducted in accordance with the 'duty-to-cooperate' and national guidance.

54 150 homes at Tilbury Lane, 130 homes at Lime Road and 192 homes on the former Timbmet site

55 Vale of White Horse District Council (2009) Residential Design Guide

56 OCC Local Transport Plan 3, 2011-2030

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- Those parts of Botley closest to the A34 have been declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to the pollution generated by the heavy volume of traffic. The Council will continue to monitor levels of nitrogen dioxide in this area.
- Central Abingdon on Thames was designated as an AQMA for nitrogen dioxide in 2006 and an action plan was approved in 2009. Abingdon's Integrated Transport Strategy (AbITS) was subsequently put in place to alter the flow of traffic within the town centre. Pollution levels in the town will continue to be monitored.

Retailing

- Abingdon on Thames is one of the main shopping and commercial centres within the district. The town offers a mix of national multiple retailers and small independent traders, and provides a good range and choice of services such as banks, cafés and restaurants. Recent enhancements to the Abbey Shopping Centre have improved the attractiveness of the town centre, and proposals for further improvements in the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter area will be supported in line with Core Policy 7.
- Fairacre Retail Park is an out-of-centre retail park located on the western edge of Abingdon on Thames, and includes popular retail warehouses.
- The main shopping centre in Botley is known as West Way. Although popular, offering a range of shops and services including restaurants and a library, the age and condition of its buildings detract from the centre's appearance. Elms Parade is located in close proximity to the West Way centre and includes a number of independent shops. Proposals for the refurbishment of Botley's central area, including the West Way shopping centre and Elms Parade, will be supported in accordance with Core Policy 8.
- The Seacourt Retail Park at Botley is well established and provides a different function to the West Way centre, catering mainly for DIY and bulky goods. These centres should remain distinct from each other in terms of retail offer.

Neighbourhood Planning

- Drayton Parish Council are in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Other parishes in the sub-area are also considering the process. Once neighbourhood plans are adopted they will form part of the Development Plan for the district and will be used in making planning decisions in the identified area. The District Council will support towns and parishes wishing to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan, as well as other forms of community led plans.

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

How will the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area change by 2029?

5.10 The sub-area will continue to provide an attractive place to live, with development having been carefully managed and the Oxford Green Belt protected.

5.11 Abingdon on Thames will continue to function as an important service and employment centre within the district. The historic character of the town centre will have been maintained and the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area will have been comprehensively and attractively redeveloped.

5.12 Botley will continue to function as a thriving community on the western edge of Oxford and new housing will have been sensitively designed to complement the attractive environments of Cumnor Hill and North Hinksey village. The centre of Botley will function as a safe and vibrant local service centre and the Seacourt retail park will have maintained its own identity.

5.13 The Harcourt Campus will be sensitively modernised to continue to provide further education and sports facilities to students and local residents and the area will be successfully linked by public transport and a network of footpaths and cycle routes.

5.14 Joint working with Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, the Highways Agency and other neighbouring authorities will have identified a long-term solution to traffic management around Oxford, the A34, and in Abingdon on Thames and Botley.

5.15 The countryside and villages will have maintained their distinctive character and will be much enjoyed by those living, working and visiting the Vale. Growth within the larger villages will have helped to maintain or enhance their services and to provide for residents day-to-day needs. New residents in the villages will be helping to sustain the services and social life of the rural communities.

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Figure 5.1: Abingdon and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area

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Core Policy 6: Spatial Strategy for Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area

Development in the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Core Policy 2:

Market Town: Abingdon on Thames

Local Service Centre: Botley

Larger Villages: Cumnor, Drayton, Kennington, Kingston Bagpuize and Southmoor, Marcham, Radley, Sutton Courtenay and Wootton

Smaller Villages: Appleton and Frilford

Housing

Over the plan period (2006 to 2029), at least 2291 new homes will be provided in broad accordance with the spatial distribution set out in Table 5.1, sites for 299 of these homes remain to be identified. No strategic housing sites will be allocated within the sub-area in the Local Plan 2029 Part 1. Therefore, first consideration will be given to this sub-area should additional sources of housing supply need to be identified in the plan period, providing growth can be sustainably accommodated.

Employment

3.20 Hectares of employment land are identified for future business and employment growth (Table 5.2). In addition, the following strategic employment sites will be safeguarded for employment use in line with Core Policy 25.

Strategic employment sites:

Abingdon on Thames:

Ashville Trading Estate, Abingdon Business Park, Nuffield Way, Drayton Road Industrial Estate, Fitzharris Trading Estate, Abingdon Science Park, Radley Road Industrial Estate, Barton Mill in Audlett Drive;

Botley:

Curtis Industrial Estate, Hinksey Business Centre, Minns Business Park, Seacourt Tower;

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

Table 5.1: Proposed housing delivery targets for the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area

Area	Housing already provided for			Housing to be identified	
	Requirement 2006-29	Completions April 2012	Commitments April 2012*	Strategic sites	Remainder to be identified
Abingdon on Thames	2291	740	175	0	299
Botley		199	459	0	
Remainder		287	132	0	
Sub-area total		1226	766	0	

Note: Housing proposals are based on the South East Plan which is being revoked but are currently the most appropriate figures available. Final housing figures will be informed by new evidence and may differ.

*Sites allocated in the Vale Local Plan 2011 or with planning permission.

Table 5.2: Proposed employment provision in the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area

Site Name	Type of site	Hectares
Abingdon Business Park	Saved Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 Allocation	0.67
Abingdon Science Park	Saved Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 Allocation	0.74
Cumnor Hill, Botley	Saved Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 Allocation	0.3
Wootton Business Park	Saved Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 Allocation	1.48
Total		3.20

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Abbey Shopping Centre Abingdon on Thames

5.16 The retail offer in Abingdon on Thames consists of the traditional town centre and major edge of town sites located to the western side of the town, including the Fairacres Retail Park and the site occupied by Tesco.

5.17 The Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter Area form a key part of the town centre. Together, they provide a range of shops and community services, along with flats and offices. The Local Plan 2011 identified the need for redevelopment of the area, as the buildings had become dated, and refurbishment of the 1960s shopping precinct was highlighted as a key element of the strategy to enhance the vitality and viability of Abingdon on Thames town centre.

5.18 A supplementary planning document (SPD)⁽⁵⁷⁾ for the area was adopted by the council in 2011 and sets out planning and urban design guidance to guide the design of high quality retail-led redevelopment proposals.

5.19 The first phase of redevelopment, which involves improvements to the Abbey Shopping Centre, is nearing completion. The next phase is on the Charter Area, and could involve provision of a large food store. The redevelopment of this area remains a key objective in seeking to improve Abingdon on Thames town centre, and Core Policy 7 therefore supports proposals for enhancement and refurbishment of the Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter Area

5.20 The most up-to-date retail study⁽⁵⁸⁾ indicates provision of a large foodstore in the Charter Area would meet the need for additional convenience goods floorspace in the town and wider catchment up to 2029. There will be some residual need for comparison floorspace in the Abingdon on Thames catchment between 2024 and 2029, and this could be accommodated within the Abbey Charter development depending on the net increase in comparison floorspace on the site. Options for maximising the provision of comparison floorspace on the site should therefore be considered, in light of the most up-to-date projections of retail need.

5.21 Making the town centre more attractive for cultural and recreational activities will help to ensure the town centre and Fairacres Retail Park maintain their complementary roles.

57 Vale of White Horse District Council (2011) Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon Development Brief

58 Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP) (2012) Retail and Town Centre Study – Vale of White Horse District Council – DRAFT, November 2012

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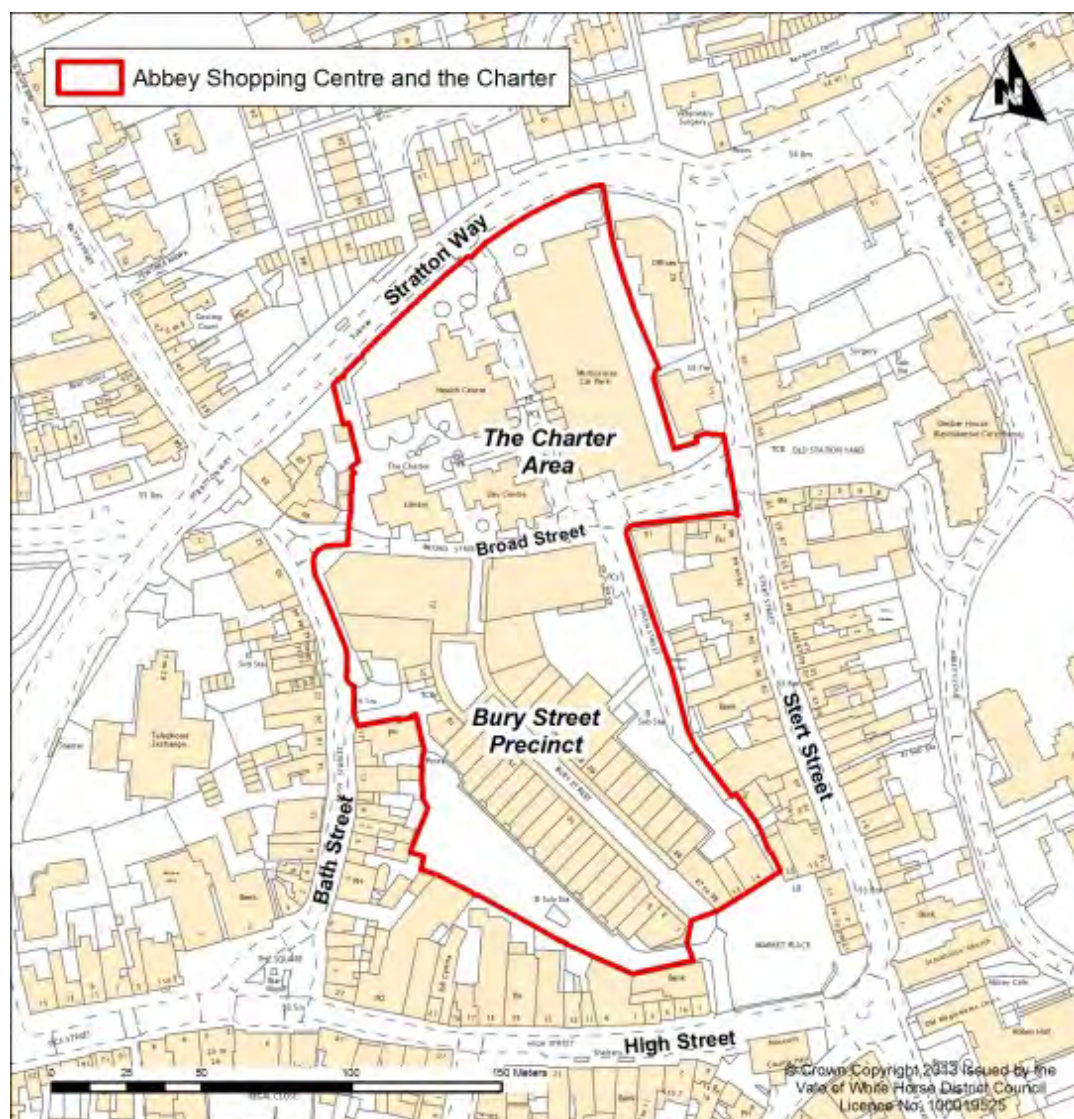


Figure 5.2 :Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Abingdon on Thames

Core Policy 7: Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon on Thames

Within the Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter Area (to be defined on the Adopted Policies Map) proposals which lead to environmental enhancement and major refurbishment or development will be supported. Applicants will need to demonstrate that proposals reflect the planning and urban design guidance set out in the adopted Supplementary Planning Document for the area.

Proposals should demonstrate how they will mitigate their transport impact, including improving facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

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Central Botley

5.22 The West Way shopping centre is a 1960s part-covered shopping centre which forms the main shopping area in Botley. The West Way centre is located to the rear of Elms Parade which contains a number of small independent shops. This shopping area has served Botley well over the years, but the West Way centre is now in need of refurbishment. The latest retail study⁽⁵⁹⁾ notes that the shopping environment in Botley is dated and relatively unattractive. Core Policy 8 therefore supports proposals for the comprehensive redevelopment of the Botley central area (Figure 5.3), including West Way shopping centre and Elms Parade.

5.23 Comprehensive redevelopment of the central area could provide a large supermarket, shops, offices, car parking and other uses to meet the needs of Botley and the surrounding area. The latest retail study indicates that Botley does not adequately cater for main and bulky food shopping trips. The provision of a food superstore could address this deficiency. The retail study also notes that the provision of leisure and entertainment facilities, other than restaurants and pubs, is limited in Botley. Comprehensive redevelopment of the area could include commercial leisure facilities, thereby helping to improve the overall offer and appeal of Botley as a shopping and leisure destination.

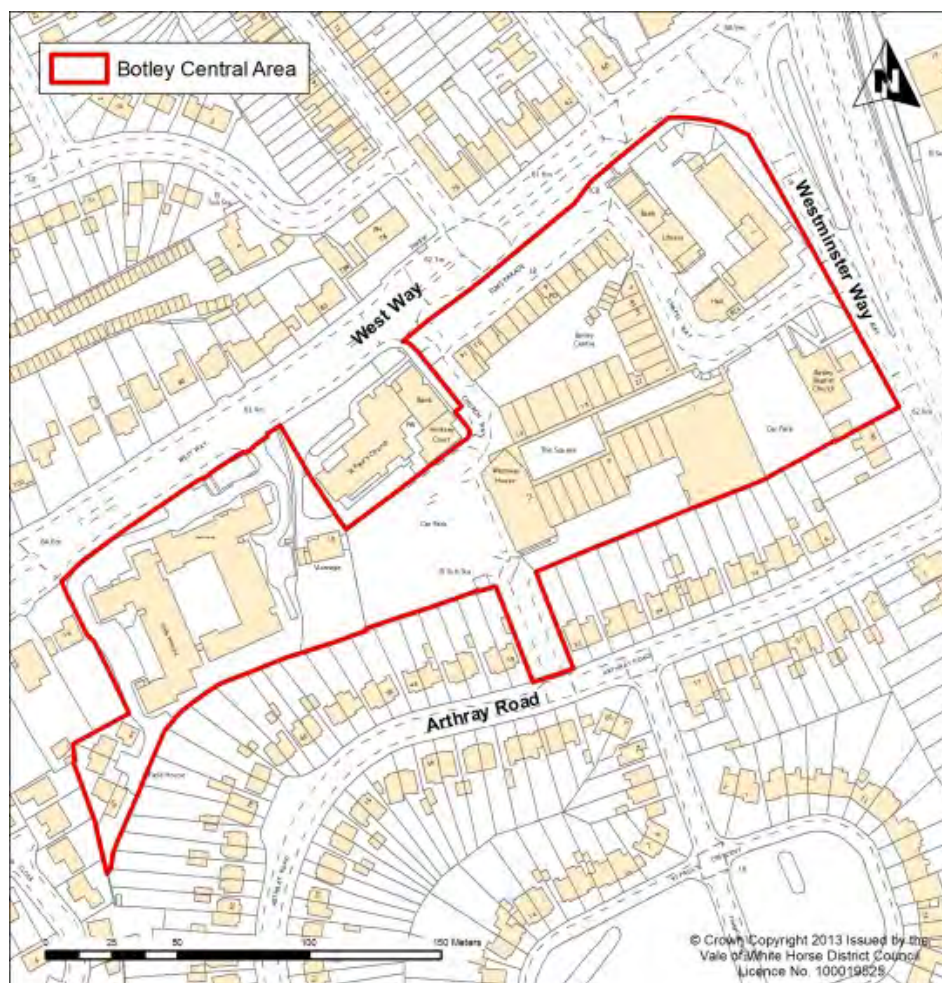


Figure 5.3 : Botley Central Area

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Core Policy 8: Botley Central Area

Proposals for a comprehensive retail-led redevelopment and upgrading of Botley central area, as defined on the Adopted Policies Map, will be supported provided that:

- i. taken as a whole, the proposals support and are appropriately scaled to the role and function of Botley as a Local Service Centre providing a well-integrated mix of shops and services to meet day-to-day shopping needs of the local area.
- ii. effective and proportionate use is made of development potential above ground level and on more peripheral parts of the site for a mix of uses including, but not limited to, office, community, residential, hotel and leisure activities.
- iii. existing community facilities, including the community hall, library and Baptist church are replaced with facilities of an appropriate size and quality to meet current and likely future local needs.
- iv. it can be demonstrated that proposals will not harm the character or appearance of the Botley central area, and will not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of nearby residents, for example by noise pollution from late night opening.
- v. proposals for the site are prepared through a comprehensive master planning process providing an integrated solution to site access, servicing and sufficient car parking whilst prioritising the pedestrian customer environment.

Abingdon on Thames historic character and River Thames

5.24 The Market Town of Abingdon on Thames contains a number of important historic buildings. The historic core, position on the River Thames, and environmental features (including the open meadows and Abbey Gardens) together form part of the town's special character. Development should protect this special character and where possible, opportunities should be sought to deliver enhancements. Any development, which could affect the historic character of Abingdon on Thames, must be in conformity with Core Policy 38.

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The Oxford Green Belt

5.25 The purpose of the Oxford Green Belt in the Vale district is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping the land permanently open and to preserve the setting and special character of Oxford.

5.26 The National Planning Policy Framework states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances⁽⁶⁰⁾. The Vale council has found that there is sufficient land to meet its housing needs at this stage without releasing land from the Green Belt. If the boundary needs to be redrawn in the future this could be considered through a Local Plan Review.

5.27 The existing Local Plan 2011 Policy GS3 will be saved. This policy complements the National Planning Policy Framework by providing local advice and by defining where any exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt may be acceptable.

5.28 Redevelopment of brownfield sites will be permitted in accordance with national guidance. We will support the continued use of the following key brownfield sites within their boundaries to be identified on the Adopted Policies Map. These sites were listed as major development sites in the Local Plan 2011 as follows:

- Dalton Barracks
- Farmoor Water Treatment Works
- Swinford Water Treatment Works
- Radley College
- Templeton College
- Oxford Brookes Harcourt Campus
- Cothill School
- Chandlings Manor, and
- Oaken Holt Nursing Home

Core Policy 9: The Oxford Green Belt

The Oxford Green Belt will continue to be protected to maintain its openness and open character. Inappropriate development that is harmful to the Green Belt will not be approved except where the scheme provides exceptional community benefits that cannot reasonably be provided elsewhere and outweigh the harm from the loss of Green Belt land in very special circumstances.

Development on previously developed sites within the Green Belt should not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land in it than the existing development. Proposals should:

- i. ensure any new buildings would not exceed the height of existing buildings
- ii. not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site, and
- iii. not have an adverse impact on the landscape.

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Oxford Brookes Harcourt Hill Campus, Botley

5.29 The Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill campus is identified as a key previously developed site within the Oxford Green Belt. The site is currently home to the Westminster Institute of Education. The University wishes to improve the quality of the campus and is reviewing its future role.

5.30 A masterplan is currently being prepared to set out the strategy for the long-term development of the site in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders. The masterplan will help to ensure that the campus evolves in a coherent and comprehensive manner to provide improved educational facilities, including student accommodation and academic buildings. The council intends to adopt the masterplan as a supplementary planning document, once it has been satisfactorily completed.

5.31 Core Policy 10 supports the redevelopment of the Harcourt Hill Campus where proposals meet the specific criteria set out in the policy. Transport and access matters will need to be agreed with Oxfordshire County Council and proposals will also need to meet the requirements of Core Policy 9 (the Oxford Green belt) in relation to the development of previously developed land. The boundary of Harcourt Hill Campus remains as shown on the Local Plan 2011 Proposals Map.

Core Policy 10: Harcourt Hill Campus

The council will work proactively with the University to develop a masterplan that meets its business objectives, for adoption as SPD. Proposals for the redevelopment of the Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill campus that accord with the adopted Masterplan SPD will be supported within the key previously developed site boundary provided that:

- i. the scale of development proposed can be safely accommodated on the local road network
- ii. there is an effective strategy in place to manage car parking demand and promote access to the site by sustainable modes of transport, and
- iii. long distance views of the site from Oxford, are safeguarded, and new development does not detract, by reason of its height or form, from views of the existing spires.

Transport

5.31 The Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area is highly constrained in transport terms. The most significant constraints are linked with the challenge of creating appropriate crossings of the River Thames, the historic town centre of Abingdon on Thames (with its narrow roads) and capacity issues associated with the A34.

5.32 The sub-area is subject to two principal barriers to growth related to transport. These are:

- Abingdon on Thames and Botley are constrained by congestion from traffic accessing Oxford via the A34 and Botley Road, and
- Drayton Road (B4017) is a key route into Abingdon on Thames from the south. This road already suffers from significant congestion in both the morning and evening peak periods which, for those living in the existing residential areas on the south side of Abingdon on Thames results in

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long and unreliable journey times. The River Ock bridge and the double mini-roundabouts at the junction with Marcham Road/Ock Street, are also physical pinch-points which restrict vehicle flow.

5.33 The transport constraints at Abingdon on Thames are a key reason why strategic growth is not planned for the town in this document. At present there are no identified solutions to these problems, which are likely to be undeliverable without significant investment.

5.34 One possible long-term approach to alleviating traffic congestion on the south side of Abingdon on Thames would involve the provision of a new southern by-pass for the town, including a second Thames crossing. Without this bypass it is likely that additional development to the south of Abingdon on Thames would be inappropriate.

5.35 A second Thames crossing would be a major infrastructure project requiring significant financial investment. As this is not currently identified as a strategic priority at a county level there is currently no funding identified to support it. Therefore, as further growth would generate the need for a second crossing, it would also have to fund it solely from development.

5.36 Planning and funding of transport infrastructure takes a long time to prepare. It is therefore proposed that the land relating to a possible future southern bypass and second Thames Crossing is safeguarded. The safeguarding of this land is important to protect the land necessary to deliver these schemes from being developed in the interim period. Development of this land in the interim period could prevent larger scale growth in Abingdon on Thames in the future and affect the longer term economic prosperity of the town. Safeguarding the land will enable any future joint working between the District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Highways Agency, and other stakeholders to continue working to identify ways to deliver such a scheme in the future.

5.37 Policy 11 and the accompanying map in **Appendix E** identifies land to be safeguarded. The detailed design of any schemes for which land has been safeguarded has not yet been undertaken. As a result, to enable flexibility, the mapped safeguarded areas have been drawn wider than may eventually be necessary.

Core Policy 11: Safeguarding of land for transport schemes in the Abingdon on Thames and Oxford Fringe Sub-Area

Land is required to be safeguarded, as shown by the map in **Appendix E**. Any proposals for new development should take account of the safeguarded area shown.

The land required, or expected to be required, for these schemes will be safeguarded from development for alternative uses, although some temporary uses may be acceptable.

Planning permission will not be given for development that would prejudice the construction or effective operation of these schemes. New development adjacent to land required for a transport scheme should be carefully designed in relation to that scheme, having regard to matters such as building layout, noise insulation, landscaping and means of access.

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South East Vale Sub-Area Strategy

Introduction

5.38 The main settlements within the sub-area are the market town of Wantage and the nearby large village of Grove. The sub-area also extends within Harwell parish, to the western edge of Didcot, a town located in South Oxfordshire. Didcot has been identified for significant growth and some of this growth is proposed to be located within the Vale. This strategy has therefore been developed in close cooperation with South Oxfordshire District Council.

5.39 The South East Vale Sub-Area also houses a number of significant centres of employment, including several sites located within the Science Vale UK area. These include Harwell Oxford Campus, a growing community of internationally important science and technology enterprises and Milton Park, the location for a cluster of knowledge based and innovation businesses. A number of sites at these locations were designated as an Enterprise Zone in 2011.

5.40 The coal and gas fired power stations at Didcot are located within the sub-area and form a dominant feature on the area's landscape. The coal fired power station, Didcot A, is scheduled to close in March 2013. It will offer a significant opportunity for further expansion of employment within the area in 2017/18 when the site is cleared and remediated.

5.41 The historic market town of Wantage and the nearby large village of Grove are separate settlements with their own unique character and identity, which need to be protected. The settlements also have a strong functional relationship, with many shared services, including for health, education and leisure. It is therefore important that any growth in the area is carefully coordinated to ensure service and infrastructure provision closely matches the needs of the two communities.

5.42 Wantage is the second largest settlement in the district and is a shopping and service centre for a large rural catchment. Its attractive market place and downland setting are essential components of its character. The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) extends to the southern edge of the town. The nearby large village of Grove is the third largest settlement in the district. However, previous housing permissions in the village, granted on appeal, have not delivered the range and quality of services a settlement of this size would normally expect. It is therefore essential that growth is planned to deliver necessary improvements for the village.

5.43 The South East Vale Sub-Area also houses many attractive rural villages and approximately half of the area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. These more rural settlements are an important part of the wider community and their historic character should be protected. Small-scale growth will continue to be supported to help village services continue to be viable and to meet local need.

5.44 The focus of this sub-area strategy is to ensure employment growth centred on the Enterprise Zone and Science Vale UK sites is delivered alongside strategic housing development. A package of both strategic and local infrastructure provision forms an integral feature of the planned housing and employment development to deliver balanced and sustainable growth.

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Local planning issues

5.45 Housing and employment

- Wantage, Grove, Harwell Oxford Campus and Harwell parish east of the A34 have all been identified as sustainable locations for strategic housing development. The provision of new housing will help to improve the self-sufficiency of the South East Vale Sub-Area overall and provide opportunities for living closer to places of work.
- Job growth in the sub-area will be focused at the Science Vale UK sites, which make a nationally significant contribution to the UK economy and provide the area with a positive opportunity for providing more jobs. Local needs will be met with further employment development at Grove, which will help to strengthen the self sufficiency of the area. Existing employment sites will be protected in accordance with Core Policy 25.
- The proposed housing and employment growth at Wantage and Grove will support the vitality and viability of the area, by among other things, increasing the population to support improvements to both services and the retail offer. Improvements are needed to a range of facilities at Wantage and these could include new indoor leisure facilities.

Transport

- The strategic housing and employment growth across the sub-area will contribute to the delivery of important enabling infrastructure improvements, in particular, a package of significant transport measures known as the Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package.
- New transport infrastructure will include delivering the Wantage Eastern Link Road (WELR) and new roads to the west of Didcot, located in Harwell parish, along with improvements to public transport. A new road north of Grove, linking the A338 and development to the west of Grove, is also identified as a local priority, to be referred to as the Grove Northern Link Road (GNLR).
- Primary school places in Wantage and Grove are currently close to full capacity. Strategic growth at these settlements will help to ensure school places can be provided as part of a long term and sustainable strategy for education provision in the area. This will be the subject of a separate County Council consultation with the local community during 2013.

Retailing

- Wantage is one of the main shopping and commercial centres within the district. The centre provides a reasonable range and mix of national and independent comparison retailers, and has a good range and choice of non-retail services. The vitality and viability of Wantage town centre will be maintained and enhanced through the implementation of Core Policy 28.
- Grove functions as a small neighbourhood shopping centre with a limited range of comparison shops and predominantly independent traders serving day to day shopping needs. Grove's role as a local shopping centre will be supported by Core Policy 28. The Local Plan 2011 allocation of 2,500 new homes on the former Grove Airfield site will provide a new local centre, which will help to improve the range of shops available in the village.

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Environment

- Wantage Market Place contains many historic buildings and groups of buildings which are important to the overall 'sense of place' and quality of the town centre. Future development should be of high quality design and well integrated with the existing built form and landscape setting of the town. Heritage assets and their setting should be preserved.
- The sub-area contains many areas important for their environmental or landscape value. These include the Letcombe Brook green corridor, which provides informal recreation, amenity and wildlife value and is an important flood management feature. Other land between East Challow and Wantage and Wantage and Grove helps to preserve the separate and unique identities of these communities and so it is important these areas are protected from development.
- The proposed restoration of the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal provides an opportunity to promote tourism within the area and provide waterside facilities for informal recreation, walking and cycling. Opportunities to maximise the benefit of the canal restoration will be supported in accordance with Core Policy 39.

Neighbourhood Planning

- Any adopted Neighbourhood Plans will form part of the Development Plan and will be used in making planning decisions in the identified area. The District Council will continue to support towns and parishes wishing to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan as well as other forms of community led plans.

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How will the South East Vale Sub-Area change by 2029?

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

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

5.48 The ecological value of the Letcombe Brook will have been enhanced and will continue to function as an important wildlife habitat. The strategic development sites will have successfully extended the network of green spaces in the area for both recreation and wildlife benefits.

5.49 Strategic development in Harwell parish, to the west of Didcot, will have provided a sustainable urban extension of high quality homes and community facilities. The Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package of strategic road improvements will have been delivered and helping to reduce traffic congestion.

5.50 The town centre in Wantage will have been protected and enhanced and the local centre in Grove will have been strengthened. The countryside and villages will have maintained their distinctive character and will be much enjoyed by those living, working and visiting the Vale. The larger villages will have retained their separate identities and their services will provide for residents day to day needs. New residents in the villages will be helping to sustain the services and social life of the rural communities.

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Figure 5.4: South East Vale Sub-Area

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Core Policy 12: Spatial Strategy for South East Vale Sub-Area

Development in the South East Vale Sub-Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Core Policy 2:

Market Town: Wantage

Local Service Centre: Grove

Larger Villages: Blewbury, East Challow, East Hanney, East Hendred, Harwell, Milton, Milton Heights and Steventon

Smaller Villages: Ardington, Chilton, Letcombe Regis, Rowstock, West Hanney, West Hendred and Upton

Housing

Over the plan period (2006 to 2029), at least 9535 new homes will be provided in broad accordance with the spatial distribution set out in Table 5.3. Sites for 419 of these homes remain to be identified. Land identified for strategic growth is shown below.

Wantage and Grove	Crab Hill	1500 dwellings
Wantage and Grove	Monks Farm	750 dwellings
Harwell parish, east of the A34	Valley Park	2150 dwellings
Harwell Oxford	Harwell Oxford Campus	400 dwellings

The strategic allocations will be brought forward through a master planning process involving the community, local planning authority and the developer and should meet any requirements as set out in the Development Templates shown by **Appendix A**.

Employment

132 Hectares of employment land will be provided (Table 5.4). In addition, the following strategic employment sites will be safeguarded for employment use in line with Core Policy 25:

Strategic employment sites:

Grove Technology Park

Grove Road, Wantage

Downsview Road, Grove

Station Road, Grove

Existing Business Premises around Didcot Power Station (not including vacant surplus land)

Milton Park Site

Harwell Oxford Campus.

In addition to the above sites, there is also recognised potential for up to 58 hectares of employment development at the Didcot A Power Station site. Development on this site should be in accordance with Core Policy 13.

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Table 5.3 Proposed housing delivery targets for the South East Vale Sub-Area

Area	Housing already provided for			Housing to be identified	
	Requirement 2006-29	Completions April 2012	Commitments* April 2012	Proposed strategic site allocations	Remainder to be identified
Wantage and Grove,	9535	495	2665	2250	419
Harwell Parish east of the A34		0	600	2150	
Remainder		208	348	400	
Sub-Area Total		703	3613	4800	

Note: Housing proposals are based on the South East Plan which is being revoked but are currently the most appropriate figures available. Final housing figures will be informed by new evidence and may differ.

*Sites allocated in the Vale Local Plan 2011 or with planning permission

Table 5.4 Proposed employment provision in the South East Vale Sub-Area

Site Name	Type of Site	Hectares
Milton Park	Saved Local Plan 2011 allocation	28
Harwell Oxford Campus	Saved Local Plan 2011 allocation	64
Didcot A*	Identified future potential supply	29*
Grove Technology Park	Saved Local Plan 2011 allocation	5.4
North Grove Monks Farm	New mixed use strategic site	6
Total		132

* The Didcot A Power Station site consists of around 58 hectares for potential redevelopment. The Employment Land Review recommends that 29 ha of this land should be identified for employment development. Further development at this site should be considered in accordance with Core Policy 15 (Didcot A Power Station).

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Employment

5.51 Harwell Oxford Campus is one of the largest employment centres in Oxfordshire and is a nationally important hub for research and scientific activity. Milton Park and Harwell Campus form an integral part of the Science Vale UK enterprise and technology area of international significance. The Science Vale UK area spans from Didcot in the east to Wantage and Grove in the west and includes the Science Centre at Culham within South Oxfordshire.

5.52 The Vale of White Horse District Council is committed to the future growth and development of the Science Vale UK area. The area has been identified as a strategic priority of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)⁽⁶¹⁾. Sites at the Harwell Campus and Milton Park were designated as an Enterprise Zone in 2011.

5.53 The Harwell Campus and Milton Park sites are both identified as strategic employment sites in Core Policy 12, providing a combined total of 92 hectares of available employment land. A Local Development Order has been adopted for Milton Park, which will simplify the planning process at the site for a period of 15 years. A Local Development Order may also be appropriate for the Harwell Campus, and the council will work with partners to ensure appropriate future planning for the development of this site.

5.54 There is an ambitious programme of job creation and growth for the Enterprise Zone sites, and for the Science Vale UK area more generally. It is important this growth is delivered alongside new housing and the provision of appropriate housing and infrastructure to help make the area more self-contained.

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

5.56 A key challenge to the continued attractiveness of this rapidly expanding area is the capacity of the local road network and a number of improvements have been identified in the Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package, which is outlined in the transport section of this sub area strategy.

Didcot A Power Station

5.57 The Didcot A and B power stations are located on the western edge of Didcot, lying between the employment areas of Milton Park and Southmead Industrial Estate. Didcot A coal-fired power station is due to close in March 2013, whilst Didcot B gas-fired power station will continue to operate.

5.58 Around 58 ha of land at Didcot A will become available for redevelopment from 2018 onwards, once the power station has been decommissioned, existing buildings demolished, and surplus land remediated for re-use. The location of the Didcot A site is shown on Figure 5.5 . The continuing operation of Didcot B power station will impact on the appropriate uses of the Didcot A site.

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5.59 The Didcot A site is well-located for continued employment use. It is in the heart of the Science Vale UK area surrounded by other employment uses, and separated from residential areas. The site has good links to the strategic road network, and Didcot Parkway station is nearby. It also has a railhead, which could potentially be utilised for distribution purposes. The continuing operation of Didcot B power station will also impact on the appropriate uses of the Didcot A site.

5.60 The Employment Land Review (ELR) forecasts demand for approximately 143 ha employment land in the Vale between 2012 and 2029, and recommends that 29 ha of this land could be provided at the Didcot A site⁽⁶²⁾. However, the ELR also suggests that surplus employment land could be identified at this stage, and protected for employment use, until further information is gained⁽⁶³⁾.

5.61 Core Policy 13 therefore promotes employment development on up to 29 ha employment land on the Didcot A site, and indicates that further employment development will also be supported on the remainder of the site, subject to market demand.

5.62 In terms of the appropriate mix of employment uses on the site, the ELR recommends 17 ha of B1 use, 2 ha of B2 use and 10 ha of B8 use, and notes that this reflects the fact that there is likely to be higher relative demand for B1 uses compared to other employment uses over the plan period⁽⁶⁴⁾. The ELR also recognises that the appropriate mix of uses is subject to more detailed assessment of the suitability of the Didcot A site for office uses⁽⁶⁵⁾. Core Policy 13 therefore indicates that the mix of employment uses will need to reflect demand, suitability of the site, and any transport implications.

Core Policy 13: Didcot A Power Station

Proposals for the redevelopment of up to 29 ha of the Didcot A site for employment uses (B1, B2 or B8) will be supported, especially where effective use can be made of the railhead. The mix of employment uses will need to reflect demand, suitability of the site, and any transport implications to be identified by a detailed transport assessment.

On the remainder of the site, up to 29 ha of further employment uses will be supported subject to the considerations listed above. Complementary uses, such as institutional or community use, will also be supported on the remainder of the site subject to a master planning process, providing the uses are appropriate to the location adjacent to Didcot B Power Station.

Appropriate uses for the remainder of the site will be determined through the Local Plan 2029 Part 2 if not agreed beforehand through a master planning process.

62 URS (July 2012) Vale of White Horse Employment Land Review (ELR) 2012 Update – DRAFT REPORT, p 76.

63 As above: ELR Update 2012 – DRAFT REPORT, p77.

64 URS (July 2012) Vale of White Horse Employment Land Review (ELR) 2012 Update – DRAFT REPORT, p 82.

65 As above: ELR Update 2012 – DRAFT REPORT, p74.

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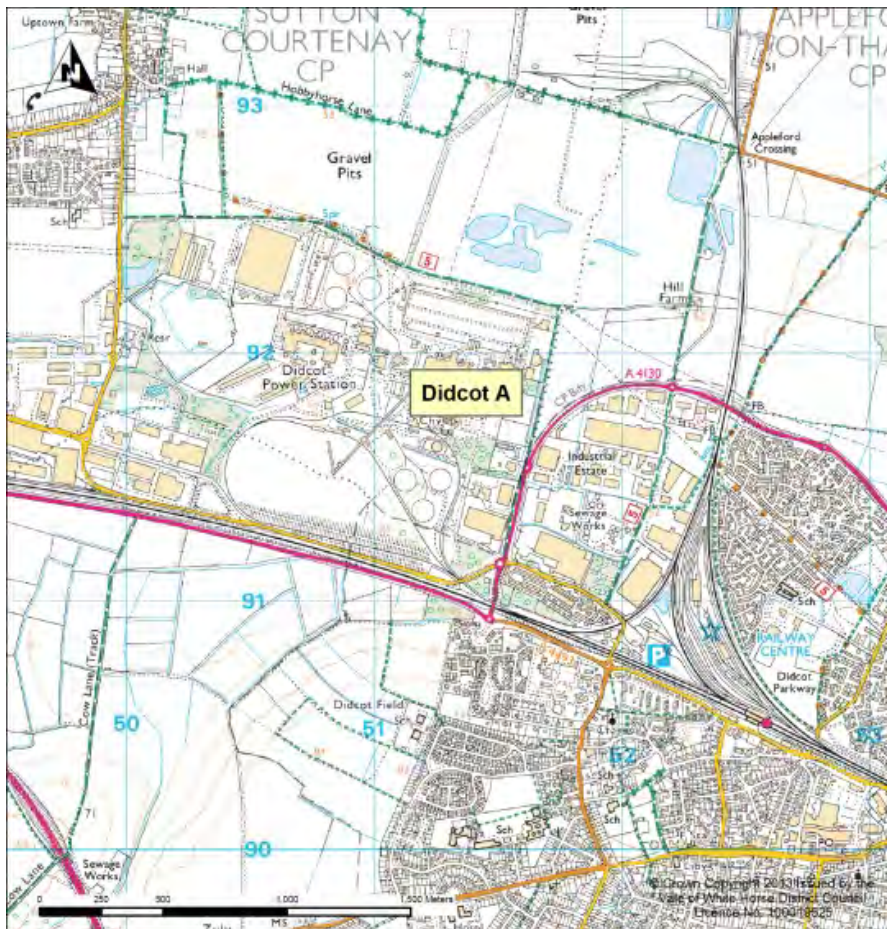


Figure 5.5 :Didcot A

Steventon Storage Facility

5.63 The Steventon Storage Facility, formerly used by the Home Office as a storage depot, is a 30 hectare site used for warehousing and distribution. It is located in the open countryside between Steventon and East Hanney. Although there is relatively little traffic arising from the site now, if used more intensively, it would result in significant amounts of traffic on an unclassified rural road. There is an aspiration for the business use to be relocated to a more sustainable site, at a scale that would generate a similar number of jobs to those currently on the site. Refer to Saved Local Plan 2011 Policy E15. This issue will be reviewed through the Local Plan 2029 Part 2.

Retail

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

5.65 The nearby settlement of Didcot, located in South Oxfordshire, also provides for the shopping needs of residents within the sub-area.

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Transport

5.66 Core Policy 5 sets out the principle that all developments will contribute to infrastructure provision. The Infrastructure Delivery Plans⁽⁶⁶⁾ that support the LPP1 sets out the currently identified requirements for a range of infrastructure providers.

5.67 A key challenge to the continued attractiveness of this rapidly expanding area is the capacity of the local road network. A number of technical evidence documents have identified the constraints and potential solutions to these challenges including the Delivering a Sustainable Transport System⁽⁶⁷⁾ (DaSTS) and the Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Study (SCOTS)

5.68 Working jointly with key partners including Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and the Highways Agency, the recommendations of these studies have been refined into a package of transport measures known as the 'Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package'. The package is required to enable all the growth within this sub area as well as the growth at Didcot and Culham Science Centre within South Oxfordshire.

5.69 The Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package is outlined in detail in the Infrastructure Delivery Plans that accompany this plan. This package also forms part of the Science Vale UK Area Strategy within Oxfordshire's Local Transport Plan⁽⁶⁸⁾.

5.70 The main focus of these improvements is to ensure that there are efficient and effective transport linkages between the major Science Vale UK employment sites and the planned housing growth. Many of the infrastructure improvements relate to upgrading roads and road junctions, but the package also includes improvements to the strategic cycle and public transport network.

5.71 The main schemes within the Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package (Figures 5.6 a to c) include:

- access to the strategic road network, for example improvements to the A34 at the Milton and Chilton junctions
- link road at north east Wantage between the A338 and A417 (Wantage Eastern Link Road)
- relief to the road network at Rowstock and Harwell
- improvement of the strategic cycle network, and
- improvement to the bus network, particularly between the proposed housing and employment sites.

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

67 Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) , 2010, produced on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council by Halcrow

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

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5.72 An important part of this package is the Wantage Eastern Link Road (WELR). This is required to help ensure that the proposed development in Wantage and Grove has good access to the employment sites without increasing significant traffic on already congested existing local roads through Charlton Village. As a result, all the allocated development in Wantage and Grove is required to fully fund the WELR through proportionate contributions in accordance with Core Policy 14.

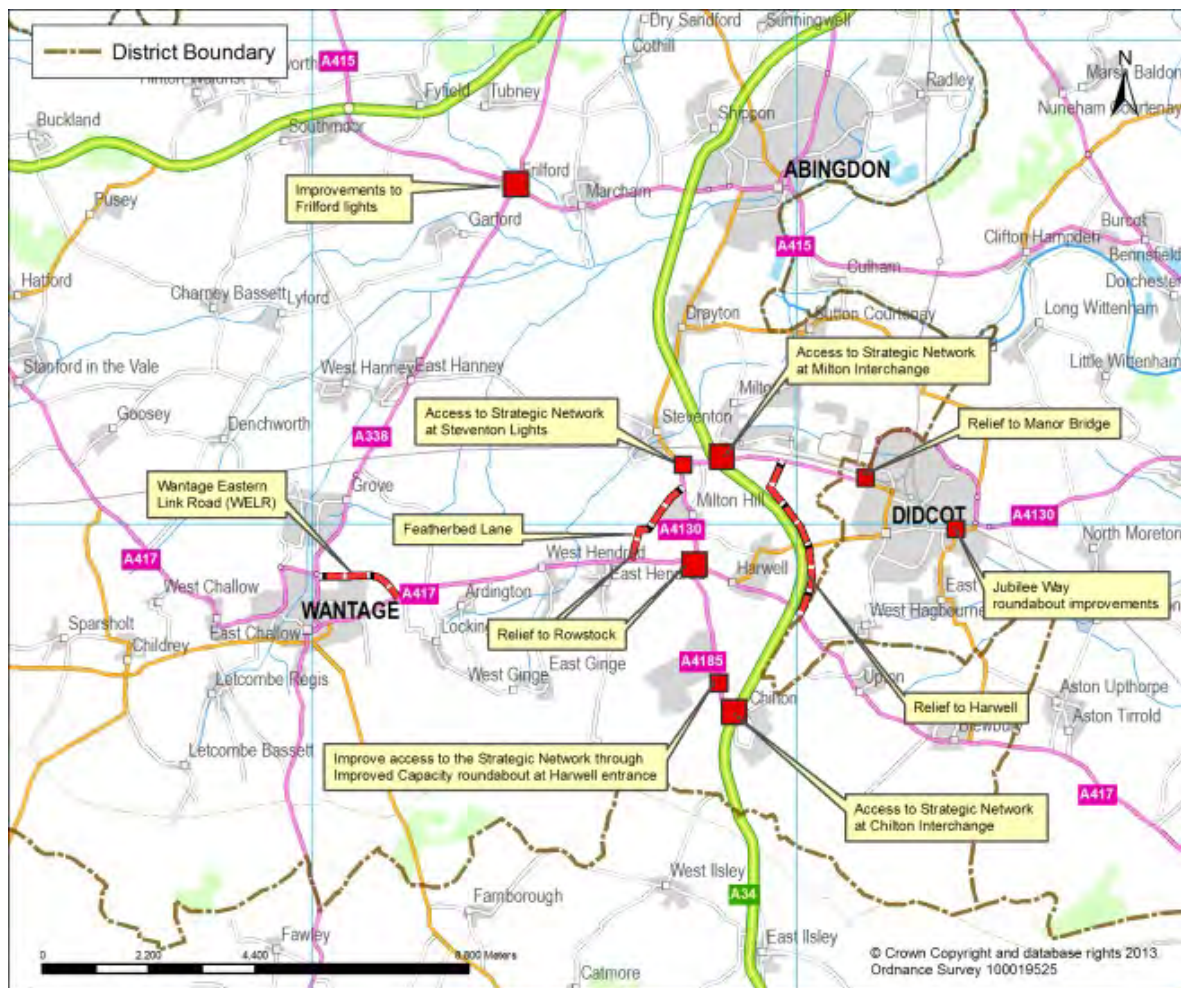


Figure 5.6a : Map showing the proposed road and junction improvements within the SVUK area

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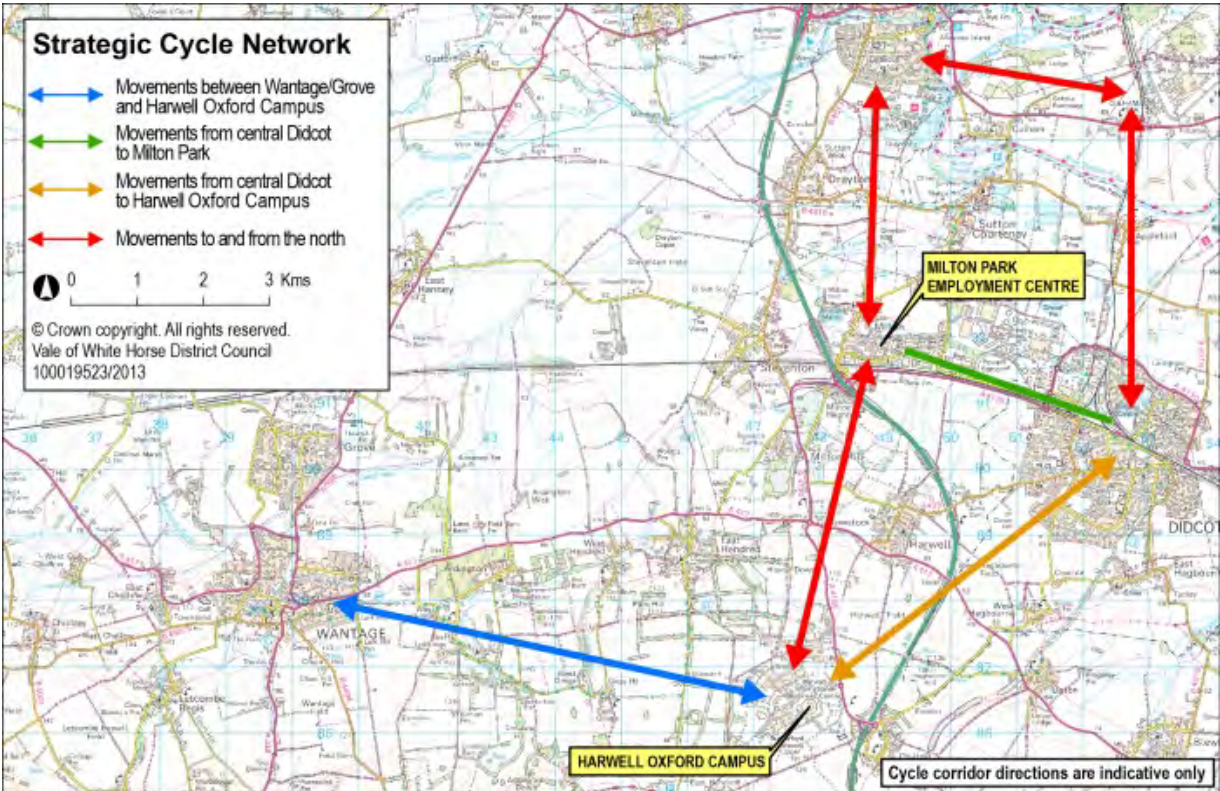


Figure 5.6b : Map showing the proposed SVUK strategic cycle network

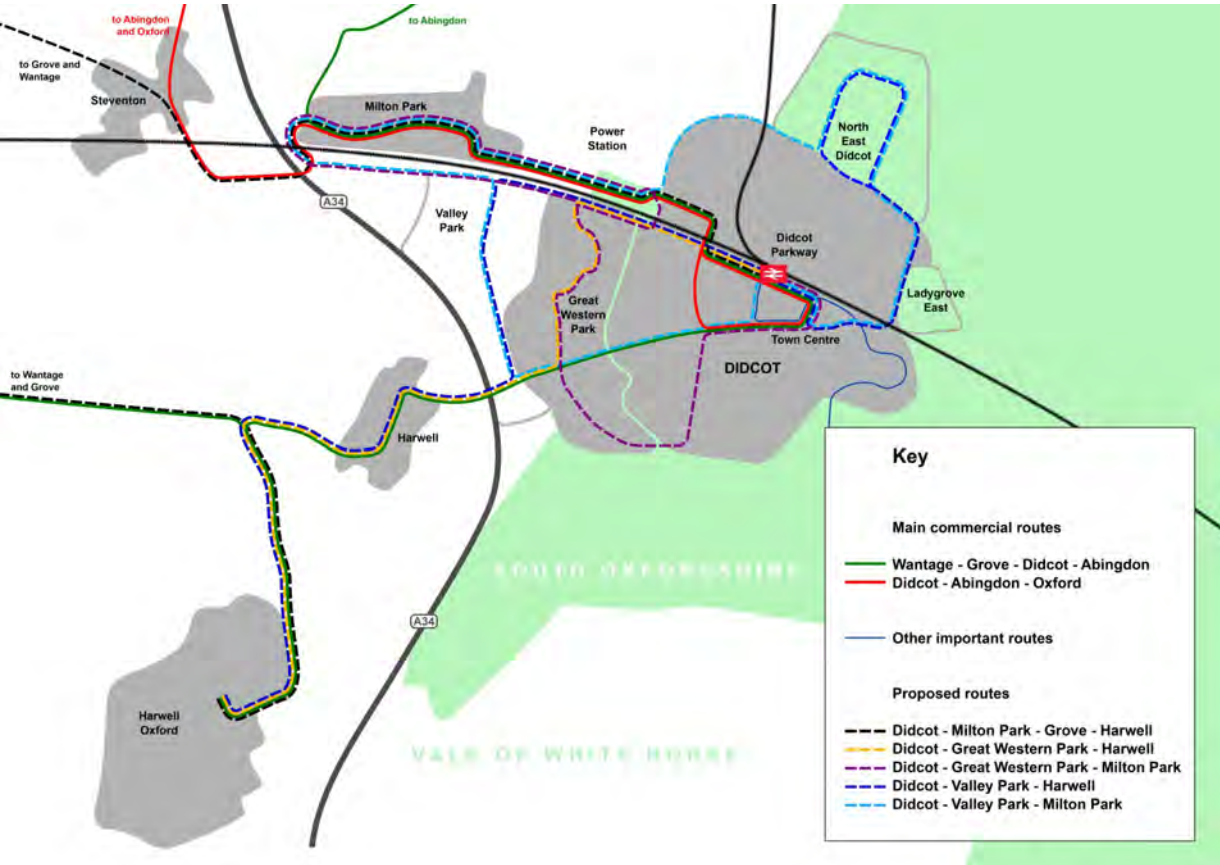


Figure 5.6c : Map showing the proposed improvements to the bus network within the SVUK area

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5.73 As acknowledged in both the Joint Didcot Infrastructure Delivery Plan produced in partnership with SODC and the Rest of Vale Infrastructure Delivery Plan the development in this sub area is dependent upon the delivery of the Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package. The proposed level of growth has the ability to secure the future economic viability of the area and builds on existing economic drivers within the Science Vale UK area. However, the benefits of this growth would be undermined if the transport improvements are not secured.

5.74 Although development can commence prior to the construction of the highway schemes, a funding mechanism to deliver the infrastructure package needs to be in place, and then implemented over the plan period, to allow the full housing and employment provision to be delivered. Without investment into the package of infrastructure, the growth in the Science Vale UK area would be unsustainable and be put at risk. If the full funding for the delivery of this package of infrastructure is not forthcoming then the principle of this level of growth across Science Vale UK would have to be reviewed.

5.75 The strategic importance of these schemes has been acknowledged at a larger than local planning level. Local authorities have been working together through the Oxfordshire Spatial Planning Infrastructure Partnership and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to identify funding mechanisms for this infrastructure to secure its delivery. As part of this work this package has been identified as one of the top priority projects within the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan.

Core Policy 14: Transport Delivery for the South-East Vale Sub-Area

In order to deliver the growth in this sub area and the wider Science Vale UK area, the Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package has been identified as necessary to mitigate the impact of the planned growth across Science Vale UK and secure the future economic viability of the area.

The Wantage Eastern Link Road (WELR) is required to serve the strategic allocations at Wantage and Grove. It will help provide the development in this part of the sub area with good access to the major employment sites without significantly increasing traffic on local roads in Wantage. As a result, all the allocated development in Wantage and Grove is required to fully fund the WELR through proportionate contributions.

The details of the Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package and the Wantage Eastern Link Road are detailed within the Infrastructure Delivery Plans.

All development within the South East Vale Sub-Area will be required to contribute towards the Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package.

5.76 In addition to the Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package there is an existing requirement for a development road to serve the Local Plan 2011 allocation at Grove Airfield. This is known as the Grove Northern Link Road (GNLR) and is required to provide access to the Grove Airfield site from the A338. It does not form part of the Science Vale UK Integrated Transport Package.

5.77 Planning and funding of transport infrastructure takes a long time to prepare. It is therefore important that plans are not thwarted or compromised by inappropriate development occurring in the interim. To ensure the land required to deliver the SVUK Integrated Transport Package and the Grove

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Northern Link Road remains available Core Policy 15 identifies land to be safeguarded.

5.78 Some of this land is within proposed strategic land allocations. In these cases the exact route of the roads will be determined through masterplanning of the site and the land has been safeguarded to help ensure that the relevant infrastructure is provided as part of the proposed development. In these situations, the need for on site provision of elements of the package is also specifically referred to in the Strategic Site Development Templates in **Appendix A**. The detailed design of the schemes for which land has been safeguarded has not yet been undertaken. As a result, to enable flexibility, the mapped safeguarded areas have been drawn wider than may eventually be necessary once the design of the schemes has been completed.

Policy 15: Safeguarding of land for transport schemes in the South East Vale Sub- Area

The land that is required to be safeguarded for transport schemes is shown in the accompanying map (**Appendix E**). New development proposals should take account of all transport schemes listed.

The land required, or expected to be required, for these schemes will be safeguarded against development for alternative uses, although some temporary uses may be acceptable.

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the construction or effective operation of these schemes.

New development adjacent to land required for a transport scheme should be designed having regard to the known details of that scheme and for that to be taken into account on matters such as building layout, noise insulation, landscaping and means of access.

The Upper Thames Reservoir

5.79 Thames Water propose that a major new reservoir may be required in the district between the villages of East Hanney, Steventon and Marcham to help the statutory utility provider manage water supply and ensure current and future needs can be met⁽⁶⁹⁾.

5.80 The Upper Thames Reservoir has been considered as an option for improving water management in the region for several years. It was not included in Thames Water's current Water Resources Management Plan (2010) because it was considered that further work needed to be completed to inform the appropriate scale of the reservoir and to confirm that it was the most suitable option for water resource management in the Upper Thames catchment.

5.81 Thames Water have stated that further work is being carried out to address the issues raised at the examination of the 2010 Water Resources Management Plan and that the Upper Thames Reservoir may again be put forward as a water management solution at the examination of the next Water Resources Management Plan (2014). The Vale's Local Plan Part 1 is likely to be adopted before the outcome of the Water Resources Management Plan 2014 examination is known, and therefore land will need to be safeguarded until the future of the proposed reservoir is known. Following the examination of the Water Resources Management Plan 2014, the council will be guided by the

69 Thames Water, Water Resources Management Plan 2010 to 2015.

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Inspector's conclusions in relation to the continued safeguarding of the land.

Policy 16: Upper Thames Reservoir

Land is safeguarded for a reservoir and ancillary works between the settlements of East Hanney, Drayton and Steventon, until the outcome of the examination of Thames Water's Water Resources Management Plan 2014. Until or subsequently subject to that decision development that might prejudice the implementation of the Upper Thames Reservoir will be refused. The proposed reservoir location is shown on the Adopted Policies Map which will be updated in the Local Plan 2029 Part 2.

The proposed reservoir, if included in an adopted Water Resources Management Plan, must be brought forward through a comprehensive masterplanning process agreed between the community, the local planning authority, the local highway authority and the statutory utility provider. As part of the masterplan the Wiltshire and Berkshire canal should be restored on its original or an appropriate alternative alignment to be agreed in consultation with the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal Trust.

Any proposal for a reservoir must:

1. be demonstrably the best practicable environmental option to meet a clearly identified need, having regard to reasonable alternative options, and
2. be in accordance with a comprehensive planning and development brief, including a masterplan and design statement that:
 - i. mitigates the impact of construction on local people, the environment and roads
 - ii. minimises the effects on the landscape of an embankment reservoir through its design, general configuration and the use of hard and soft landscaping
 - iii. maximizes the creation of wildlife habitats and biodiversity
 - iv. promotes the recreational uses of the reservoir consistent with the landscaping and biodiversity values of the proposal and having regard to the traffic impacts of such uses
 - v. includes a new route for the diverted Hanney to Steventon road, to include provision for an off-road cycle path
 - vi. makes provision for the new route of the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal, and
 - vii. includes measures to avoid and mitigate any other significant impacts identified through the environmental impact assessment of the proposal, including on the local and wider highway networks and on surface water and fluvial flooding.

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

Western Vale Sub-Area Strategy

Introduction

5.82 The Western Vale Sub-Area is predominantly rural in character and extends from the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the River Thames. The historic market town of Faringdon is the largest settlement within the sub-area and functions as the main service centre of the surrounding rural catchment. The area contains many attractive villages, which range in size from small isolated hamlets to large villages.

5.83 The sub-area has good access to the strategic routes of the A420 between Oxford and Swindon, and the A417, which links Faringdon with the Cotswolds to the north-west, and Wantage and Didcot to the south-east. There are regular bus services along these strategic corridors. However, the frequency of bus services to more rural areas can be variable.

5.84 Faringdon is the largest settlement within the sub-area, but is the smallest town in the Vale overall, with a population of 6,187 in 2001⁽⁷⁰⁾ and approximately 8,000 in 2012⁽⁷¹⁾. The town lies within an attractive landscape setting on a limestone ridge overlooking the Thames Valley. It features many fine historic buildings, which include the ancient Market Hall, Norman Church and the more recent Faringdon Folly.

5.85 Faringdon provides a good range of local shops and services, which will be complemented by a new supermarket on Park Road. The town offers a mix of employment opportunities, including at the Park Road Industrial Site and the 4&20 Site. Many residents look to Oxford and Swindon for work and for their higher order goods and services.

5.86 The town has one pre-school, one infant school, one junior school and a community college, which together form a multi-academy trust. The Academy is now planning for the future and is investigating how school provision should be organised to best suit the long-term needs of the town. There is also a health centre and a leisure centre in the town, which both serve the wider rural catchment. A former Local Plan 2011 housing allocation for 400 homes has delivered a new cricket and rugby pitch through developer contributions. A skateboard park has also been provided in the town following local fundraising.

5.87 It is important the service centre role of Faringdon is maintained, whilst protecting and enhancing the town's historic character and strengthening opportunities for retail, employment and tourism. Additional employment opportunities in the town will also help to improve its self-sufficiency and reduce the need for out-commuting. To help achieve these aims, the LPP1 will be complemented by policies set out in the emerging Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan, which is being prepared by Faringdon Town Council working closely with the wider local community and the District Council.

5.88 The wider sub-area contains several larger villages, including Shrivenham and Watchfield. These nearby villages lie on the A420, approximately five miles east of Swindon and house the Shrivenham Hundred Business Park and the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, which includes a campus of Cranfield University. The special character of these and other rural settlements should be preserved, whilst allowing appropriate development, to support local services and facilities or to meet local needs.

70 Office National Statistics 2001

71 Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan – Evidence Base: January 2013.

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

5.89 The overall priority for the Western Vale Sub-Area is to ensure the service centre role of Faringdon is maintained and continues to meet the needs of the town and surrounding rural catchment. Future development should be balanced between housing and employment thus helping to improve the self-sufficiency of the area.

Local Planning Issues

Housing and employment

- Faringdon is the most appropriate location for strategic housing development in the sub-area. This will ensure the housing needs of the area are met, including the provision of affordable housing for the local community. Strategic growth will help to maintain the service centre role of Faringdon by increasing its population and supporting a strengthened retail and service offer.
- Land has been identified for strategic development to the south of Park Road which is well related to the existing built form of Faringdon and provides an opportunity to deliver employment alongside housing and contribute to strengthening community facilities. The employment development to be provided on the site will complement the existing Local Plan 2011 allocation at the 4&20 Business Park of 4.2 hectares.
- The provision of employment in Faringdon is a key priority for the sub-area; helping to improve the self-sufficiency of the town and reduce the need for out-commuting. This matter is also being addressed through the emerging Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan. Further non-strategic employment sites may be allocated in the Local Plan 2029: Part 2 or through the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan.
- A number of former Local Plan employment allocations will be saved. Some other, smaller employment sites are no longer fit for purpose (Pioneer Road/south of Willes Close and north of Park Road / east of Volunteer Way) and it may be appropriate for these sites to be redeveloped in accordance with Core Policy 25⁽⁷²⁾

Retailing

- Faringdon town centre has a mix of shops and services that meet day-to-day and local shopping needs, but the range and choice of shops could be improved. The 2013 retail needs assessment for Faringdon indicates that the need for additional convenience floorspace in the foreseeable future can largely be met by the recently consented food store on Park Road⁽⁷³⁾. Opportunities for further strengthening the wider retail offer in the town will be addressed by the emerging Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan.

Rural areas

- Many of the villages within the Western Vale Sub-Area have retained their attractive rural character and it is important these are preserved. Small scale development may be appropriate within the villages in accordance with the policies set out in this plan, to support rural services, provide much needed affordable housing and also to provide accommodation for the elderly.

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

73 Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (NLP) (2012) Retail and Town Centre Study – Vale of White Horse District Council, DRAFT, November 2012

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

- The larger villages of Watchfield and Shrivenham may have potential to accommodate some housing growth above local needs. This matter will be addressed either through the Local Plan 2029: Part 2 or through a neighbourhood plan.
- The District Council will continue to work positively with both Swindon Borough Council and the rural communities within the Western Vale Sub-Area to help ensure any planned growth to the east of Swindon does not adversely affect the west of the Vale and its rural villages.

Environmental

- The North Wessex Downs AONB extends across part of the sub-area and provides important protection for its high quality landscape and setting. The AONB will continue to be protected in accordance with Core Policy 34.
- The Great Western Community Forest covers an area of 168 square miles around Swindon and extends as far as Faringdon to the west. The project aims to produce long-term environmental improvements by promoting tree planting and woodland management and has supported the regeneration of woodland around Faringdon Folly. Development proposals in the forest area should demonstrate how they will contribute to the objectives of the project.
- The Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal runs through the sub-area from Childrey to Shrivenham and forms an important natural and historic feature, which is now the subject of an ambitious restoration programme. The Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal Trust are progressing with re-watering many rural sections of the canal where they remain intact. The historic route of the canal will be protected in accordance with Core Policy 39.

Neighbourhood planning

- The policy framework for Faringdon, set out in the Western Vale Sub-Area Strategy of the LPP1, will also be complemented by policies set out in the emerging Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan. A Draft Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the local community, led by Faringdon Town Council. This document will be published for consultation on the 28 March and will be available from the council website⁽⁷⁴⁾ The Neighbourhood Plan will provide a more locally focussed policy framework, and once adopted, will form part of the Development Plan for the district. The District Council will support other towns and parishes wishing to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan, as well as other forms of community led plans.

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

How Will the Western Vale Sub-Area Change by 2029?

5.90 The Western Vale Sub-Area will continue to be an attractive and prosperous rural area. Development will have been focused at Faringdon with complementary growth in the large villages, especially Shrivenham and Watchfield. The quality of the rural environment will have been maintained.

5.91 Faringdon will continue to be a thriving market town providing an important service centre role for the surrounding rural catchment. Its historic character and attractive landscape setting will have been maintained. New development will have been successfully integrated with the town and been provided alongside employment, improving the self-sufficiency of the town. The high quality business park at the junction of Park Road and the A420 will be thriving and provide an attractive entrance to the town

5.92 The quality of the public realm in the centre of Faringdon will have been improved, along with the revitalisation of the shopping and tourism offer. The town will attract residents and visitors alike serving as a gateway to the Cotswolds. The landscape setting of Faringdon will have been preserved along with ongoing protection for the AONB and Great Western Community Forest. The adopted Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan will be helping to deliver positive change within the Great Faringdon Parish.

5.93 The countryside and villages will have maintained their distinctive character and will be much enjoyed by those living, working and visiting the Vale. The larger villages will have retained their services and provide for residents' day-to-day needs. New residents in the villages will be helping to sustain the services and social life of the rural communities.

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

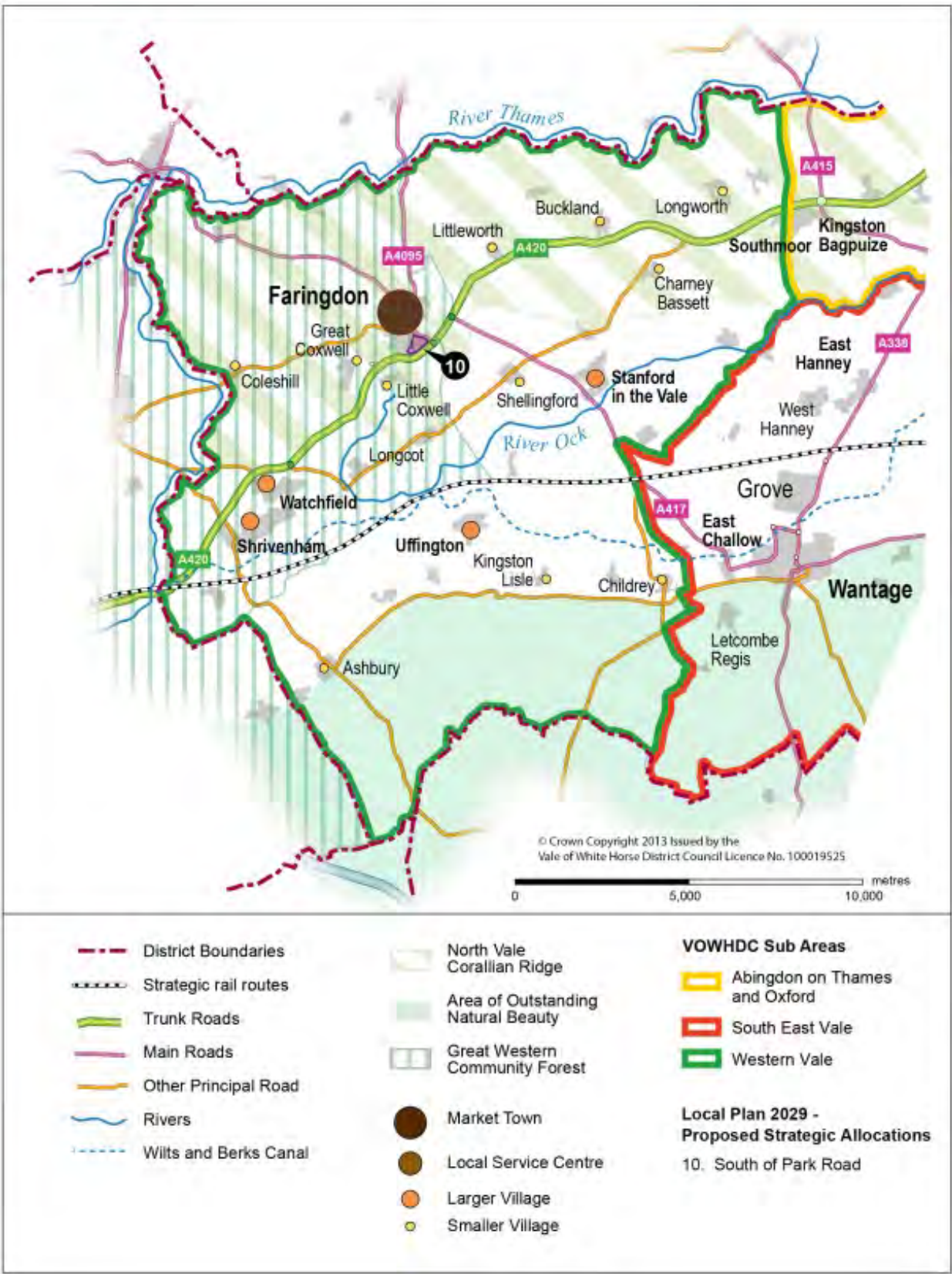


Figure 5.7 :Western Vale Sub-Area

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

Core Policy 17: Spatial Strategy for Western Vale Sub-Area

Development in the Western Vale Sub-Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy set out in Core Policy 2:

Market Town: Faringdon

Larger Villages: Shrivenham, Stanford in the Vale, Uffington and Watchfield

Smaller Villages: Ashbury, Buckland, Charney Bassett, Childrey, Coleshill, Great Coxwell, Kingston Lisle, Little Coxwell, Littleworth, Longcot, Longworth, Shellingford

Housing

Over the plan period (2006 to 2029), at least 1468 new homes will be provided in broad accordance with the spatial distribution set out in Table 5.5, including at land identified south of Park Road for strategic growth.

Sites for 337 of these homes remain to be identified.

The strategic site allocation will be brought forward through a master planning process involving the community, local planning authority and the developer and should meet any requirements as set out in the Development Templates shown by **Appendix A**.

Employment

7.38 Hectares of employment land will be provided (Table 5.6). In addition, the following strategic employment sites will be safeguarded for employment use in line with Core Policy 25:

Strategic employment sites:

Faringdon:

Park road industrial estate

Chapter 5: Sub-Area Strategies

Table 5.5: Proposed housing delivery targets for the Western Vale Sub-Area

Area	Housing already provided for			Housing to be identified	
	Requirement 2006-29	Completions April 2012	Commitments April 2012	Strategic sites	Remainder to be identified
Faringdon Town	1468	388	160	350	337
Remainder		141	92	0	
Sub-Area Total		529	252	350	

Note: Housing proposals are based on the South East Plan which is being revoked but are currently the most appropriate figures available. Final housing figures will be informed by new evidence and may differ.

*Sites allocated in the Vale Local Plan 2011 or with planning permission

Table 5.6: Proposed employment provision in Faringdon

Site Name	Type of site	Hectares
Land adjacent to A420 – 4&20 site	Saved Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 allocation	4.2
Land north of Park Road (HCA Business Centre)	Saved Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 allocation	0.18
Land south of Park Road	New strategic allocation	3.0
Total		7.38

Chapter 6: District Wide Policies

Chapter 6: District Wide Policies

The Local Plan 2029 Part 1 will establish a high-level policy framework to guide development in the Vale up to 2029.

This chapter sets out those strategic policies necessary to complement the Spatial Strategy and Sub-Area Strategies to ensure housing, employment and infrastructure delivery is sustainable. The policies will apply across the Vale and provide greater detail to help ensure a balance is met between supporting economic growth and protecting the Vale's high quality natural and built environment and the quality of life in existing settlements.

- The policies are structured into four thematic areas:
- Building healthy and sustainable communities
- Supporting economic prosperity
- Supporting sustainable transport and accessibility, and
- Protecting the environment and responding to climate change.

Question 16

Do you have any comments on each of the district wide policies 18-40?

Our interactive website where you can answer these questions on-line can be found at: <http://whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence>

Chapter 6: District Wide Policies

Introduction

6.1 The Local Plan 2029 Part 1 (LPP1) will contain strategic high-level policies necessary to help deliver the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives set out in Chapter 3. These will include those policies set out in the Spatial Strategy (Chapter 4) and the Sub-Area Strategies (Chapter 5).

6.2 There are also a number of other matters that need to be addressed through policy, to enable the determination of development proposals in a consistent manner. The policies in this chapter have been developed where national guidance alone is not sufficient to deliver the council's vision. The policies therefore build on, rather than duplicate, national guidance.

6.3 These policies have been developed in relation to four thematic areas:

- building healthy and sustainable communities
- supporting economic prosperity
- supporting sustainable transport and accessibility, and
- protecting the environment and responding to climate change.

6.4 Some of the policies set out in the adopted Vale Local Plan 2011 will continue to be saved and will be used alongside the new policies proposed by the LPP1. The saved policies will continue to be relied upon for day to day decision making on planning applications until they are reviewed as part of the Local Plan 2029 Part 2. A list of policies we propose to save is set out in **Appendix F**. The council has published an assessment of the consistency of local plan policies with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)⁽⁷⁵⁾, which will be used to help ensure that the saved policies are applied appropriately alongside the Framework.

75 Assessment of Saved Local Plan policies for consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework, available at: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/localplan

Chapter 6: District Wide Policies

Building healthy and sustainable communities

Introduction

6.5 The Local Plan 2029 Part 1 has a key role in helping to build healthy, safe and sustainable communities in the Vale, that meet the diverse needs of people living in the area. This will be partly achieved through the Spatial Strategy, set out in Chapter 4, which seeks to direct new development to the most sustainable locations, in communities with the best range of services and facilities.

6.6 Chapter 2 of this plan identified the high cost of housing in the district and the disparity between income levels and housing costs. It showed the trend towards an ageing population and to smaller, including single person, households. Our vision and objectives seek to provide more homes for those on lower incomes can afford. In addition, a key objective is to cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, ensuring that an appropriate and sustainable proportion of new housing falls within the definition of affordable.

6.7 In order to deliver these objectives this section includes policies that:

- set out the approach to the provision of affordable housing as part of new residential development
- identify the circumstances in which affordable housing can be provided on 'exception sites' in the rural areas where residential development would not normally be permitted
- seek to ensure that residential dwellings are provided at an appropriate density to reflect the need to use land efficiently whilst also taking account of local circumstances
- seek to ensure that a mix of housing sizes and types is provided on all residential development sites
- set out that the homes to be provided will meet the needs of future residents and be suitable for people throughout their lives
- set out the council's approach to housing for older people, and
- seek to provide for the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.

Affordable housing

6.8 Affordable housing is provided for rent or purchase on a subsidised basis to eligible⁽⁷⁶⁾ households who cannot meet their housing needs in the open market⁽⁷⁷⁾. Affordable housing tenures include social and affordable rented and intermediate housing.

6.9 Whilst there is some variation across the district, house prices in the Vale are higher than the national average as well as the average for the South East⁽⁷⁸⁾. The disparity between average house prices and income is also above the national average⁽⁷⁹⁾. Our housing needs evidence⁽⁸⁰⁾ showed that most single income households would be unable to secure mortgages to purchase even modest properties.

76 Eligibility for affordable housing is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

77 National Planning Policy Framework, Glossary, March 2012.

78 Land Registry of England and Wales for the period October to December 2012

79 Communities and Local Government live housing tables, table 576 Ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings by district available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-housing-market-and-house-prices

80 Vale of White Horse Housing Needs Assessment, 2011, pages 19 and 20, available at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

Chapter 6: District Wide Policies

6.10 A Housing Needs Assessment has been produced to assess the amount and type of affordable housing required in the district. This identified that based on the life of the plan the need is for 337 affordable homes a year for the plan period. This equates to approximately 55 per cent of the proposed total annual housing requirement. The assessment recommended an overall affordable housing target of 40 per cent of the total of all suitable private development sites throughout the district. It also recommended a tenure mix balance of 75:25 between social/affordable rent and intermediate housing.

6.11 An Affordable Housing Viability Study⁽⁸¹⁾ has also been produced to assess the levels of affordable housing that could be secured from new housing developments. This has tested housing need against the other policy requirements in the plan. The study concludes that the recommendations of the Housing Needs Assessment were reasonable in viability terms. The study also provides evidence to support provision of 40 per cent affordable housing on all sites of three or more units. However, individual site circumstances and the viability of development, will be taken into consideration when agreeing the level of affordable housing to be provided.

6.12 Where the number of dwellings proposed on a site falls below the affordable housing threshold, or the number of dwellings is not specified, the council will consider whether or not the site reasonably has capacity to provide the number of dwellings to trigger the requirement to provide affordable housing, against the other policies in the development plan. This is to ensure that the policy requirement is not being avoided through inappropriate planning such as ineffective or inefficient use of land or a mix of dwellings that does not reflect other housing policies or local needs.

6.13 Securing new affordable housing on site as part of new developments is the most effective way to provide new supply. The on-site provision of completed units by a developer to a registered provider is the council's preferred approach. Where the council agrees that it is more appropriate to provide either part or all affordable housing off-site, the council will seek to secure a level of affordable housing that is of 'broadly equivalent value'⁽⁸²⁾ to that which would have been delivered on-site. Where the alternative site is financially viable to deliver affordable housing in its own right, this level of affordable housing will also be provided on-site, in addition to that to be delivered as off-site provision. If it is not feasible to deliver both requirements on the alternative site, then a financial contribution may be acceptable, for the amount that cannot be delivered.

6.14 Where serviced land is accepted in lieu of affordable housing provision, a further financial contribution will be negotiated to help achieve delivery. Financial contributions in lieu of affordable housing provision is the least preferred approach and will only be accepted where the council agrees that there are robust reasons to do so. For example, where it is accepted that the value of the contribution is of 'broadly equivalent value' to that which would have been delivered on-site. Additionally, where the 40 per cent calculation provides a part unit, a financial contribution will be sought equivalent to that part unit.

6.15 When a new application is submitted on a site with extant or lapsed planning permission for housing that did not need to contribute affordable housing, under previous policy requirements, affordable housing contributions will be sought in accordance with the policy within this plan. To support the creation of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, the council will seek to secure a mix of housing types and sizes.

6.16 The starting point for the mix of affordable housing to be secured is set out by Core Policy 18

81 Affordable Housing Viability Assessment, BNP Paribas Real Estate, 2011

82 National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, paragraph 50