



Local Plan 2031

Part 1

Strategic Sites and Policies

TOPIC PAPER 5

Supporting
economic
prosperity

This paper is one of 9 topic papers, listed below, which form part of the evidence base in support of the Publication Version of the Vale Local Plan 2031 Part 1 – Strategic Sites and Policies.

These topic papers have been produced to present a coordinated view of the evidence that has been considered in drafting the local plan. It is hoped that this will make it easier to understand how we have reached our conclusions.

The papers are all available from the council website:

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidencebase

Topic Papers

1. Duty to cooperate and cross boundary issues
2. Spatial strategy
3. Strategic sites selection
4. Housing
5. Supporting economic prosperity
6. Transport and accessibility
7. Responding to climate change
8. The built and historic environment
9. The natural environment

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Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 This topic paper provides a summary of how we have developed our proposals for supporting economic prosperity across the Vale, including providing land for employment, supporting thriving, mixed use town centre and supporting the rural economy.
- 1.2 The evidence summarised in this paper has helped to inform the preparation of the Publication Version of the Vale Local Plan 2031: Part 1 – Strategic Sites and Policies.
- 1.3 The Local Plan 2031: Part 1 sets the strategic priorities for the district to deliver sustainable development. It identifies the number of new homes and jobs to be provided in the area for the plan period up to 2031. It also makes appropriate provision for retail, leisure and commercial development and for the infrastructure needed to support them.
- 1.4 Significant work has been carried out to inform the Local Plan 2031, starting in 2007, and several stages of consultation have been undertaken with the public and stakeholders over the last few years. These stages have informed the preparation of the Local Plan 2031: Part 1 and include:
 - Issues and Options (November 2007) – which identified a range of options for how we should plan for the Vale
 - Preferred Options (January 2009) – which outlined the councils preferred approach for planning for the Vale
 - Additional Consultation (January 2010) – which consulted on a few additional policies relating to specific issues
 - Draft Local Plan Consultation (February 2013) – which consulted on a complete draft of the Local Plan Part 1
 - Housing Delivery Update (February 2014) – which set out the updated housing market target for the district and the strategic sites package needed to meet the new target
- 1.5 The purpose of this topic paper is to summarise key evidence that has informed the drafting of policies to be included in the Local Plan 2031: Part 1 relating to economic prosperity.
- 1.6 It is important that the options we develop for policies are also tested through Sustainability Appraisal (SA). This is a legislative requirement of the plan making process¹ and has taken place alongside the

¹ For more information see the Sustainability Appraisal at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence

preparation of the plan. The SA helps to identify a preferred policy option to inform the preparation of the plan.

1.7 This topic paper is arranged into the following sections:

Section 2: Policy review – a brief summary of how any national, regional and local policies should influence the preparation of the Local Plan 2031

Section 3: Evidence – a short summary of any key issues identified from previous stages of consultation; any key issues identified at a community level; and any other evidence that should inform plan preparation

Section 4: Issues (challenges and opportunities) – a brief summary of any issues identified from Sections 2 and 3 of the paper that the Local Plan 2031 will need to respond to

Section 5: Policy options – an overview of those policy options which have been tested for possible inclusion within the Local Plan 2031

Section 6: Recommendations – the key findings for how this topic area should be addressed in the Local Plan 2031

Section 2: Policy review – national policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

- 2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework² (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF highlights the need for the planning system to perform economic, social and environmental roles in order to promote sustainable development.

Achieving Sustainable Development

- 2.2. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF identifies that the economic role of the planning system involves 'contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure'.
- 2.3. Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out 12 core land-use planning principles, including that planning should 'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs'.

Delivering Sustainable Development

- 2.4. The NPPF identifies that 'building a strong and competitive economy' is a key priority for delivering sustainable development. Paragraph 21 states that, 'in drawing up local plans, Local Planning Authorities should:
- set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth
 - set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period
 - support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances
 - plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries

² CLG (2012) National Planning Policy Framework, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

- identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement, and
- facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit’.

2.5. ‘Ensuring the vitality of town centres’ is identified as another key priority for delivering sustainable development. Paragraph 23 indicates that, ‘in drawing up local plans, Local Planning Authorities should:

- recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality
- define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes
- define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that makes clear which uses will be permitted in such locations
- promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which the individuality of town centres
- retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive
- allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability. Local Planning Authorities should therefore undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable sites
- allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, set policies for meeting the identified needs in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre
- set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres
- recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites, and
- where town centres are in decline, Local Planning Authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity’.

2.6. Paragraph 26 identifies that for assessing proposals for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres, which are not in

accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold. It notes that if there is no locally set threshold, the default threshold is 2,500sq.m.

- 2.7. The NPPF also highlights the need to support a prosperous rural economy in order to deliver sustainable development. Paragraph 28 indicates that ‘to promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:
- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings
 - promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses
 - support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres, and
 - promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”

Plan Making

- 2.8. The NPPF includes guidance as to the use of a proportionate evidence base to support local plans. Paragraph 160 states that ‘Local Planning Authorities should have a clear understanding of business needs within the economic markets operating in and across their area’ and that this should be achieved through joint working with neighbouring authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships, and through working closely with the business community.
- 2.9. Paragraph 161 indicates that this evidence should be used to assess:
- the needs for land or floorspace for economic development, including for retail or leisure development
 - the existing and future supply of land available for economic development and its sufficiency and suitability to meet identified needs
 - the role and function of town centres and the relationship between them
 - the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development
 - locations of deprivation which may benefit from planned remedial action, and

- the needs of the food production industry and any barriers to investment that planning can resolve.
- 2.10. There is a key challenge for the Local Plan 2031 to meet the requirements of the NPPF in relation to building a strong and competitive economy, ensuring the vitality of town centres, and supporting a prosperous rural economy.

National Planning Practice Guidance 2013

- 2.11. On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published online³ its planning practice guidance resources which replaced a wide range of previous planning guidance documents⁴.
- 2.12. There are a number of important sections which are relevant to this topic paper and which have played an important role to the development of a number of core policies with respect to employment, retail and tourism.

Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

- 2.13. This section expands on the contents of Section 2 of the NPPF, and states that Local Planning Authorities should take full account of relevant market signals when planning for town centres and should keep their retail land allocations under regular review⁵. Indicators that should be used to determine the health of town centres include the following:
- diversity of uses
 - proportion of vacant street level property
 - commercial yields on non-domestic property
 - customers' views and behaviours
 - retailer representation and intention to change representation
 - commercial rents
 - pedestrian flows
 - accessibility
 - perception of safety and occurrence of crime
 - state of town centre environmental quality
- 2.14. Paragraph six of the same section⁶ asks the question on what should occur if the required development cannot be accommodated in the town centre. In this, they identify that where the need cannot be

³ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance>

⁴ http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/cancelled-guidance_06032014.pdf

⁵ http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/ensuring-the-vitality-of-town-centres/ensuring-the-vitality-of-town-centres-guidance/#paragraph_004

⁶ http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/ensuring-the-vitality-of-town-centres/ensuring-the-vitality-of-town-centres-guidance/#paragraph_006

accommodated in the centre, by reason of physical or other constraints which make it inappropriate to do so, planning authorities should plan positively to identify the most appropriate alternative strategy for meeting the need for these main town centre uses, having regard to the sequential and impact tests. It continues by saying that alternatives should seek to be located in the best locations to support the vitality and vibrancy of town centres, and that no likely significant adverse impacts on existing town centres arise. This section of the guidance also provides greater detail on the sequential approach and the impact test in addressing new retail and other town centre use developments.

Assessing economic development and main town centre uses

- 2.15. This section sets forward elements that should be considered with respect to assessing present situations with respect to economic and main town centre uses⁷. Such examples include:
- recent patterns of employment land supply and loss to other uses
 - market intelligence
 - market signals, such as levels and change in rental values, and differentials between land values in different uses
 - public information on employment land and premises required.
 - information held by other public sector bodies and utilities in relation to infrastructure constraints
 - the existing stock of employment land. This will indicate the demand for and supply of employment land and determine the likely business needs and future market requirements
 - the locational and premises requirements of particular types of business, and
 - identification of oversupply and evidence of market failure.

Tourism

- 2.16. In addressing tourism, the Guidance⁸ states that Local Planning Authorities, where appropriate, should articulate a vision for tourism in the local plan, including identifying optimal locations for tourism. When planning for tourism, Local Authorities should:
- consider the specific needs of the tourism industry, including particular locational or operational requirements
 - engage with representatives of the tourism industry
 - examine the broader social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism

⁷ http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments/methodology-assessing-economic-development-and-main-town-centre-uses/#paragraph_030

⁸ http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/ensuring-the-vitality-of-town-centres/ensuring-the-vitality-of-town-centres-guidance/#paragraph_007

- analyse the opportunities for tourism to support local services, vibrancy and enhance the built environment, and
- have regard to non-planning guidance produced by other Government Departments.

Housing and economic development needs assessments

2.17. In looking at how such future trends should be forecast, plan makers should consider⁹:

- sectoral and employment forecasts and projections (labour demand)
- demographically derived assessments of future employment needs (labour supply techniques)
- analyses based on the past take-up of employment land and property and/or future property market requirements, and
- consultation with relevant organisations, studies of business trends, and monitoring of business, economic and employment statistics.

2.18. The guidance also states that, when looking at what type of employment land is needed, the increasing diversity of employment generating uses requires different policy responses and an appropriate variety of employment sites. The need for rural employment should not be overlooked¹⁰.

2.19. In looking at who Local Planning Authorities need to work with to robustly identify the need, the guidance states that they should work with other local authorities in their functional economic market area in line with the 'duty-to-cooperate'. In addition to this, Local Planning Authorities need to work with local communities, partner organisations, Local Enterprise Partnerships, businesses and business representative organisations, parish and town councils and designated neighbourhood forums¹¹.

Permitted Development Rights

2.20. The Government has introduced a range of new permitted development rights that allow for greater flexibility of change of use. A number of these rights impact upon economic development uses.

⁹ http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments/methodology-assessing-economic-development-and-main-town-centre-uses/#paragraph_032

¹⁰ http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments/methodology-assessing-economic-development-and-main-town-centre-uses/#paragraph_033

¹¹ http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments/the-approach-to-assessing-need/#paragraph_007

- 2.21. In Spring 2013, Government introduced a permitted development right that allow change of use from B1(a) offices to C3 residential, with the new rights initially applying for a three year period¹². Local authorities have been given an opportunity to seek an exemption to the new rights where this can be justified on economic grounds. There may also be further changes to national policy in relation to this issue.
- 2.22. The Vale of White Horse District Council applied for exemption from this permitted development right for three specific forms of employment sites within the district. The three specific areas where exemption is sought are as follows:
- the internationally significant employment sites of Harwell Campus and Milton Park
 - nine specific rural campuses, which provide a significant contribution to the rural economy, and
 - the town centre areas of Abingdon-on-Thames, Wantage and Faringdon, where commercial properties are a key part of the overall vitality and viability of the market towns.
- 2.23. The district was granted exemption of the rights solely for Harwell Campus and Milton Park strategic employment sites.
- 2.24. In April 2014, the Government introduced five new permitted development rights. These include the change of use of shops and financial services to residential dwellings, shops to be converted into banks and building societies and agricultural buildings converted to residential units.
- 2.25. As part of the consultation document informing the above changes¹³, the Government accepts “that there are circumstances where a particular street or individual shop is unlikely to survive the current challenges facing the retail sector... The online retail offer can be important to many and may well, in some cases, complement rather than replace shops. Therefore [Government] want to support the retail offer that will continue to exist on the high street. This means finding new uses for shops that no longer have a future”¹⁴. Policies have been prepared in the knowledge of what is allowed under permitted development rights.

High streets at the heart of our communities: the Government’s response to the Mary Portas Review, CLG, 2012

¹² CLG (24 January 2013) Letter to chief planning officers about permitted development rights for change of use from commercial to residential, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/planning-guidance-letters-to-chief-planning-officers>

¹³

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/226632/Greater_flexibilities_for_change_of_use.pdf

¹⁴ p.11

- 2.26. This document¹⁵ sets out the Government's response to the Mary Portas Review, an independent review into the future of high streets in the UK. A number of the recommendations in the review have been endorsed by the Government and relate closely to the supporting economic prosperity topic area. Important examples include:
- there should be a focus on making high streets accessible, attractive and safe. Good design should be promoted to improve high streets, the evening and night time economy, and
 - there is a need to ensure the 'Use Class' system is used effectively to provide flexibility for change of use within high streets if this improves viability.
- 2.27. There is a key challenge for the Local Plan 2031 to reflect the content of the Government's response to the Mary Portas Review, and particularly for the Plan to implement the Government's strong policy approach to promoting town centres at the local level in the Vale.
- 2.28. A number of other relevant documents and reports from across the country have been consulted also. Some of the more important ones are summarised in **Appendix B**.

Policy review – regional policy

South East Plan 2009

- 2.29. The South East Plan was revoked on the 25 March 2013 with power being passed on to Local Authorities to determine their own economic targets (employment projections, housing numbers, etc) for their respective local plans.
- 2.30. Local Authorities now have a 'duty-to-cooperate' with other bodies (including neighbouring authorities) to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and reflected in local plans.

¹⁵ High streets at the heart of our communities: the Government's response to the Mary Portas Review, CLG, March 2012, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-streets-at-the-heart-of-our-communities-government-response-to-the-mary-portas-review>

Policy review – local policy

Housing and Economic Market Area – Oxfordshire

- 2.31. As per the Government guidance set out above, a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was produced for the Oxfordshire-wide Housing Market Area (HMA). Part of this strategically important work with neighbouring authorities included gathering evidence on projected economic growth across the county. This is discussed further below:

Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) - April 2014

- 2.32. This document sets out the objectively assessed housing need for the Oxfordshire market area. It looks in detail at how many homes need to be developed in the future; what mix of homes is needed; and the housing needs of specific groups within the population. This is discussed in more detail through the housing topic paper. Its preparation was informed by an economic forecasting model to identify demographic and planned job growth for the market area up to 2031.

Economic Forecasting to Inform the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic Housing Market Assessment¹⁶

- 2.33. The key outcomes of this report identified that, in total across all employment sectors in the Vale of White Horse district, there would be approximately 23,000 additional jobs. Of this, it predicted that 13,800 of these would be located on employment land.
- 2.34. It states that across Oxfordshire, “there is plenty of capacity on allocated [employment] sites to accommodate the forecast jobs growth. There is also sufficient land in all of the districts except South Oxfordshire. However, there is enough additional capacity in the immediately adjacent area of Vale of White Horse to compensate for the small shortfall in South Oxfordshire”¹⁷.

Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, March 2014

- 2.35. The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for Oxfordshire¹⁸ will deliver the vision which is for a county with long-term economic growth which can be sustained for future generations. To support this, the strategy focuses on four key strands:

¹⁶ <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2031/evidence-base/strategi>

¹⁷ Economic Forecasting to Inform the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Cambridge Econometrics and SQW (2014) p.41

¹⁸ Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan, available at:
<http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-strategic-economic-plan>

- Innovative Enterprise
- Innovative People
- Innovative Place, and
- Innovative Connectivity

2.36. Key actions set out within the SEP which relate to supporting economic prosperity include:

- enhancing the Oxfordshire “Knowledge Spine”, which includes Science Vale, Bicester and Oxford City
- the provision of 85,600 new jobs in the county up to 2031, representing a 1% increase per annum
- approximately c£2.2 billion Private sector investment levered
- supporting the development of new major projects in science and technology
- an increased proportion of the working age population qualified to a level 2 and above to 90%
- c£65 million investment to support superfast and ultrafast broadband speeds across the county that support innovative knowledge rich businesses and communities
- growth in Oxfordshire’s Green Economy and Natural Capital
- deliver a c£815 million integrated transport improvement programme across Oxfordshire offering new, direct strategic public transport connections

2.37. There is a key challenge for the Local Plan 2031 to help deliver the vision and actions set out in the Strategic Economic Plan for Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire 2030: a partnership plan for improving quality of life in Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire Partnership, 2008

2.38. Oxfordshire 2030¹⁹ is a Sustainable Community Strategy. Its sets out a long-term vision for Oxfordshire’s future, which is:

“By 2030 we want Oxfordshire to be recognised for its economic success, outstanding environment and quality of life; to be a place where everyone can realise their potential, contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity and where people are actively involved in their local communities”.

2.39. One of the strategic objectives set out within the strategy, entitled ‘World class economy’ is “to build on Oxfordshire’s vibrant economy and make sure that everyone has an opportunity to be included in that success”.

¹⁹ Oxfordshire 2030, Oxfordshire Partnership, 2008, available at: <http://www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OxfordshirePartnership/Oxfordshire+2030/>

2.40. Key issues relating to Oxfordshire's economy include:

- supporting and growing the high technology businesses and increasing high value employment
- the need for Oxfordshire to continue to secure inward investment to help existing business to 'go global'
- the need to provide the best possible business support to grow existing businesses
- improving infrastructure, in particular transport to reduce congestion
- raising educational attainment, improving workforce skills and encouraging lifelong learning
- local regeneration initiatives, and
- improving the sustainability of rural economies.

2.41. Six pledges are made for how the 'world class economy' strategic objective will be met, which are:

- collaborate across public, business and voluntary sectors to build on Oxfordshire's economic success
- create the conditions for everyone to have access to jobs
- ensure that educational attainment and skill levels are amongst the very best in the country so we provide a well qualified, motivated workforce to meet the needs of business
- grow the economy whilst achieving a sustainable balance between jobs, housing and the environment
- tackle traffic congestion across Oxfordshire, particularly on trunk roads and around market towns, Oxford city and other hot spots, and
- reduce the gap between the best and the worst off by targeting our work appropriately.

2.42. The strategy also identifies specific priorities to assist in delivering a world class economy in the Vale of White Horse. These are addressing economic weaknesses, building on our economic strengths, and maintaining and enhancing the health and vitality of the Vale's market town centres.

2.43. The Local Plan 2031 will have a key role in helping to deliver the Oxfordshire 2030 vision, the county-wide pledges relating to delivering a world class economy, and the specific priorities identified for the Vale of White Horse.

Oxfordshire 2030 delivery plan: delivering on our pledges to improve quality of life in the county, Oxfordshire Partnership, 2008

2.44. This delivery plan²⁰ complements the Sustainable Community Strategy (discussed above) and sets out a detailed series of objectives for the partnership area. In relation to the 'world class economy' strategic objective these include:

- increase the GVA per head of Oxfordshire's population to be within the top ten county regions nationally
- increase the economic impact of tourism, increasing the value of tourism activity for local businesses
- reduce the numbers of working age people on out of work benefits, and
- increase the numbers/ percentage of all 16 to 18 year olds who are in education, training or employment.

2.45. There is a key challenge for the Local Plan 2031 to assist in delivering these strategic objectives.

Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (now referred to as the Oxfordshire Growth Board), 2010

2.46. The Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan (LIP)²¹ has been prepared by the Oxfordshire local authorities with other key stakeholders, including the Highways Agency, Network Rail, the Environment Agency, the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups²² and the Homes and Communities Agency, through the pilot 'Single Conversation' project.

2.47. The LIP integrates the existing plans of the stakeholders outlined above to help coordinate the delivery of housing and economic growth and associated strategic infrastructure up to 2030. Supporting economic growth is one of four overall strategic objectives for the LIP with creating a world-class economy for Oxfordshire, building particularly on the high-tech sector, stated as one of four main ambitions for this strategic objective.

2.48. The LIP seeks to maintain a strong and diverse economy, whilst providing opportunities for growth and inward investment. It is stated that more land should be allocated for employment development. One of three priority employment areas identified for Oxfordshire includes Science Vale. Key priorities for this area include the delivery of the 'accessing Science Vale transport package', further roll-out of superfast

²⁰ Oxfordshire 2030 delivery plan, Oxfordshire Partnership, 2008, available at: <http://www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OxfordshirePartnership/Oxfordshire+2030/OP+-+O+2030+00+delivery+plan>

²¹ Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan, Oxfordshire Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership, March 2010, available at: <http://www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OxfordshirePartnership/Partnerships/Spatial+Planning+and+Infrastructure+Partnership/>

²² The Primary Care Trust was abolished on 31 March 2013 as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, with their work taken over by clinical commissioning groups.

broadband and the provision of additional land for economic development. It is stated that additional land could consist of 70 ha (2010 – 2015); 24 ha (2015 – 2020); and 100 ha (2020 – 2030).

- 2.49. There is a key challenge for the Vale Local Plan to assist in delivering the objectives and ambitions of the LIP, and particularly in supporting development within the Science Vale UK area.

Business Plan for Growth 2013, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, 2013

- 2.50. This Business Plan²³ sets out specific issues which ‘need to be addressed in order to unlock the county’s full economic potential’. The plan sets out the Local Enterprise Partnership’s vision ‘to make Oxfordshire a globally competitive, knowledge based, economy open for business and at the heart of UK-wide economic growth, innovation and private sector job creation’.
- 2.51. The plan explains that the Enterprise Partnership will focus on those sectors that have the greatest potential for growth and global competitiveness:
- life sciences and medical instruments
 - high performance technologies including advanced materials, cryogenics, nano-technology and engineering
 - space and satellite applications
 - energy and environmental technologies, and
 - digital, publishing and media.
- 2.52. The plan also explains that the Enterprise Partnership will prioritise the following key issues:
- improving access to finance
 - improve access to business support services
 - securing investment for infrastructure priorities
 - improving the infrastructure and exploitation of improved broadband
 - addressing skills deficiencies
 - increasing inward investment from international businesses, and
 - supporting innovation and growth.
- 2.53. The plan identifies priority locations which the work of the Enterprise Partnership will be focused on, including Science Vale, where the aim is to build on the ‘extensive research infrastructure and the designation of Harwell as the home of the national Satellite Applications ‘Catapult’.

²³ Business Plan for Growth 2013, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, available at: <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/cms/content/about-oxfordshire>

- 2.54. There is an opportunity for the Local Plan 2031 to assist in delivering the vision and priorities of the Local Enterprise Partnership, as set out in the Business Plan.

Vale of White Horse District Council Corporate Plan 2012-2016: vision for the Vale, Vale of White Horse District Council, 2012

- 2.55. The corporate plan²⁴ sets out the council's strategic objectives and corporate priorities. These include the aim of building the local economy. A number of specific actions have been identified to help meet this aim, including:
- continue to invest to improve the viability and attractiveness of our towns
 - develop and implement local development orders to stimulate business growth at Milton Park and Harwell Campus
 - enter into a commercial partnership to secure redevelopment of Abingdon-on-Thames Town Centre
 - enter into a commercial partnership to secure new retail development at Botley and use some of the proceeds to improve Westway shopping centre
 - review the potential for building a new leisure centre in the Wantage/Grove area as Wantage expands
 - roll out faster broadband across the district
 - deliver the benefits of the Science Vale enterprise zone, and
 - improve infrastructure to support business growth.
- 2.56. There is a key challenge for the Local Plan 2031 to help facilitate the delivery of some of these actions.

South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, South Oxfordshire District Council, 2012

- 2.57. Policy CSEM2 of the adopted South Oxfordshire Core Strategy²⁵ 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.
- 2.58. Land to provide these 6.5 hectares will need to be identified in the Vale Local Plan 2031 document.

²⁴ Vale of White Horse District Council Corporate Plan 2012-2016: Vision for the Vale, Vale of White Horse District Council, 2012, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/about-us/how-we-work/corporate-plan>

²⁵ South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, South Oxfordshire District Council, December 2012, available at: <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/core-strategy/adopted-core-strategy>

Milton Park Local Development Order, Vale of White Horse District Council, 2012

- 2.59. The council adopted the Milton Park Local Development Order (LDO)²⁶ in December 2012. The LDO will help to deliver the planned growth at Science Vale Enterprise Zones. It allows a range of types of development to be fast tracked which will enable new and existing businesses to innovate, grow, and adapt to changing market opportunities delivering additional jobs for the local economy.
- 2.60. The LDO's specific development parameters include a range of permitted uses for the business park and an upper-limit on total floor space and maximum height of buildings. The 'LDO area' is zoned, so that greater development controls are retained in more sensitive locations which include those close to residential areas.
- 2.61. The LDO is designed to be effective for a period of 15 years, and will therefore work alongside the Local Plan. Any proposals for Milton Park in the Local Plan will need to take account of the contents of the LDO.

Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011, Vale of White Horse District Council, 2006

- 2.62. The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011²⁷ (LP2011) was adopted in July 2006. The majority of policies in the LP2011 were 'saved' by the Secretary of State in 2009, and these saved policies provide the current planning framework for the district.
- 2.63. A number of saved LP2011 policies relating to supporting economic prosperity have been identified as being either inconsistent or only partially consistent with the NPPF²⁸. It may therefore be appropriate to review and replace these policies through either the Local Plan 2031 Part 1 or through the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 to ensure consistency with the NPPF. This applies to the following policies:
- E9: New development on sites not identified in the local plan
 - E10: key business sites
 - E12: Large campus style sites
 - E14: The retention of small scale commercial premises in settlements
 - E15: Steventon storage facility
 - E17: Farm diversification

²⁶ Milton Park Local Development Order, Vale of White Horse District Council, December 2012, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/milton-park-local-development-order>

²⁷ Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011, Vale of White Horse District Council, July 2006, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-2011>

²⁸ <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/existing-local-plan-2011>

- 2.64. In addition to the review of saved LP2011 policies, non-saved policies which are relevant to supporting economic prosperity have also been reviewed to determine whether there is a need for these policy areas to be incorporated within the Local Plan 2031. The review of saved and non-saved policies is contained in **Appendix A**.

Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Supplementary Planning Document, Vale of White Horse District Council, 2011

- 2.65. The council adopted the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)²⁹ in December 2011. The SPD sets out planning and urban design guidance to guide the design of high quality retail-led redevelopment proposals for this key town centre site.

Emerging Oxford Brookes Harcourt Hill Campus Masterplan

- 2.66. A masterplan is currently being prepared to set out the strategy for the long term development of the Harcourt Hill Campus 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.
- 2.67. Vale of White Horse District Council continues to work with the University, Oxfordshire County Council to deliver a masterplan for this site on the edge of Oxford, keeping in mind the transport implications associated with the A34 and also the setting of the campus within Oxford's Green Belt.

²⁹ Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Supplementary Planning Document (2011) Vale of White Horse District Council, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/supplementar-0>

Section 3: Evidence

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CONSULTATION STAGES AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.1. The council have undertaken several stages of consultation to inform the preparation of the Local Plan 2031. The main stages of consultation, are:
- Issues and options (November 2007)³⁰ – which identified a range of options for how we should plan for the Vale
 - Preferred Options (January 2009)³¹ – which outlined the council's preferred approach for planning for the Vale
 - Additional Consultation (January 2010)³² – which consulted on a few additional policies relating to specific issues
 - Draft Local Plan Consultation (February 2013) – which consulted on a complete draft of the Local Plan Part 1
 - Housing Delivery Update (February 2014) – which set out the updated housing market target for the district and the strategic sites package needed to meet the new target
- 3.2. Key issues relating to supporting economic prosperity arising from these stages of consultation are summarised below.

Issues and Options Consultation 2007

- 3.3. In responding to six broad options for locating new development in the district, people raised the following points which are relevant to this topic paper:
- housing should be located close to the jobs and services that people need
 - new employment should continue to be focussed at Milton Park and the Harwell Campus, and
 - there should be some flexibility for job creation in the towns and larger villages near to where people live.

³⁰ Information about the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation can be accessed online at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/core-strateg-5>

³¹ The Core Strategy Preferred Options document can be accessed online at: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/core-strategy/preferred-options

³² Information about the additional consultation can be accessed online at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/core-strateg-2>

Preferred Options Consultation 2009

- 3.4. The Preferred Options document included a number of proposals relating to the theme of economic prosperity.
- 3.5. The key issues raised relating to economic prosperity are summarised below:
- the majority of comments about Faringdon believe that more jobs are needed but are not being provided, with Wicklesham Quarry the preferred new site for B2 and B8 uses. Other comments suggest that employment land south of the A420 may restrict opportunities in the town itself.
 - the Highways Agency commented that town centre locations should be regenerated for employment, that the policy should require employment development to mitigate effects of expansion on the road network, and that the Vale should work with SODC on the identification of employment sites.
 - some people supported the strategy to promote Harwell Campus and Milton Park as key sites for job growth but others objected on grounds of extra traffic, the location of Harwell within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the need to provide a range of deliverable sites, not just one or two
 - Oxfordshire County Council noted that a key issue should be to balance housing and employment so as to reduce commuting and improve self-containment
 - Concern that the job type associated with the predicted growth will not suit local people who may lack the skills set required
 - the Proteus Report notes that using existing employment sites is important – e.g. Grove Technology Park
 - the location of large numbers of jobs should be taken into account in the location of housing.
 - comments for Abingdon-on-Thames rejected the proposed employment site in the south west of the town due to the constrained nature of traffic in this area
 - concerns that the redevelopment of Botley may lead to the loss of small independent traders. The potential loss of Elms Parade was also a concern to the character of the area.
 - improvements to internet/IT in rural areas to encourage home working
 - general support for town centre development in Wantage
 - concern that leisure and cultural facilities are not recognised enough, with similar concerns for villages to retain their facilities
 - the Proteus Report notes that more facilities should be on offer for tourists

Additional Consultation 2010

- 3.6. Further consultation was undertaken on some additional matters following the preferred options consultation.
- 3.7. The Additional Consultation material included the following main responses relating to economic prosperity.
- competition is needed in Abingdon-on-Thames: need a large supermarket with spending power, with further comparison floorspace also a requirement
 - concern that retail proposals will exacerbate traffic congestion
 - need to keep small units for independent retailers
 - English Heritage emphasised that the proposals in Abingdon-on-Thames must respect the historical context and setting of listed buildings and the conservation area
 - Faringdon Town Council consider that both quantitative and qualitative provision of comparison goods in the town centre need to be significantly improved before any convenience development is allowed outside the centre
 - a number of comments objected to the provision of a supermarket outside of Faringdon town centre.
 - job forecasts have dropped due to the recession. Impacts of the economic situation should be taken into account
 - the proposed core strategy makes no reference to the potential for expanding Grove Technology Park as an alternative to development at Harwell or Milton Park.

Draft Local Plan Consultation (February 2013)

- 3.8. The Draft Local Plan outlined a number of policies intended to support a strong and sustainable economy within the district. This included the prioritisation of Science Vale as an area of job growth and directing new shops and facilities towards the main service centres.
- 3.9. Over 290 comments were made on different aspects of the plan relevant to economic development. Many respondents provided feedback on the strategic employment allocations detailed in the plan. Others related to specific policies and proposals.

Specific comments included:

- concern that barriers to bringing forward the existing allocated employment sites have been inadequately addressed
- support for the redevelopment of the old power station site at Didcot A but concerns raised over the feasibility/viability of the site for certain uses
- concern that there is an imbalance between land allocated for housing and employment in Wantage and Grove

- concern about plans to redevelop Elms Parade in Botley. Many respondents value the existing shops and services this amenity provides
- concern that the value of agricultural land is overlooked
- requests that the plan should place greater emphasis on the promotion of tourism, and
- queries were raised about the evidence base used to inform the council's assessment of housing need. Some respondents questioned the ability to provide robust projections of housing need due to the volatility of the economy

Housing Delivery Update Consultation (February 2014)

3.10. This additional consultation provided an update to Vale's housing target and proposed new development sites which was informed by an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Oxfordshire. While this was very much a focused consultation on addressing housing targets, the revised objectively assessed housing need for Vale of White Horse was influenced by planned economic growth for the district up to 2031, through work prepared by Cambridge Econometrics and SQW. The following points provide a summary of the key economic responses received through this consultation:

- despite there not being any strategic housing site allocations proposed for Botley, a number of objections were received with respect to the redevelopment of the Botley Central area, including West Way and Elms Parade and land in the immediate vicinity for a retail led scheme. These closely matched the comments/objections received through previous consultations, relating to the scale of development, implications for traffic congestions and air quality, etc.
- some responses raised an issue that there was little consideration given to the provision of employment land outside of Science Vale and that this would encourage longer commutes in more rural areas such as Western Vale
- concerns were raised that despite an increase in the total jobs figure for the district, no new employment land was designated alongside the proposed strategic site allocations
- a number of responses were received with respect to the future redevelopment of the Didcot A Power Station site. Some members of the public raised the question on why this site was not being proposed for a significant level of housing, given its brownfield status. Didcot Town Council was not supportive of housing on this site, wishing for it to be predominantly for office use. Some responses by the site promoters and owners of the adjacent Milton Park objected to the site being predominantly used for office and sought other employment uses such as B2 and B8.

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs)

- 3.11. It is important that Vale of White Horse continue to support local communities and parishes with their neighbourhood plans. As the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 deals specifically with strategically important issues, emerging NDPs allow local communities the opportunity to continue to progress detailed local planning strategies and policies for their respective areas provided it is consistent with the emerging local plan.
- 3.12. The National Planning Practice Guidance states that communities *“are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area”*³³.
- 3.13. At the time of publication of our local plan, three NDPs have been submitted for independent examination, with two having received inspector’s reports. Of these, the preparation of the Faringdon Neighbourhood Development Plan has identified key existing and proposed employment sites for the town to serve the local need. They also propose to expand on their retail offering through strategic links with the existing town centre.
- 3.14. With the exception of one policy relating to supporting additional employment, the inspector is content for the other retail and employment policies contained within the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan meet the basic conditions in their current wording or through minor modifications³⁴.
- 3.15. The parishes of Great Coxwell and Drayton have also both submitted their NDPs to the district council and include general policies supporting local employment in these communities.
- 3.16. In addition to this, Wantage and Stanford-in-the-Vale are currently preparing their NDPs and both are exploring options at allocating additional employment land predominantly to address local needs.

Community-led plans

- 3.17. A number of community-led plans (parish plans) have been prepared by town and parish councils across the Vale district. These plans

³³ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/what-is-neighbourhood-planning/>

³⁴ <http://faringdonplan.webs.com/Faringdon%20NDP%20Independent%20Examination%20Report%20221014-2.pdf>

provide a useful summary of community priorities that have been identified at a local level through consultation.

3.18. Although not all communities across the Vale have plans in place, those that have been prepared provide a good indication for priorities and themes that are likely to be important across the wider Vale district. The following priorities and themes relating to economic prosperity can be identified from the review of community-led plans:

- desire to improve broadband access
- desire to support local shops
- interest in adult education
- desire to support local businesses
- importance of encouraging the provision of more premises for employment opportunities, particularly for village/rural businesses
- desire to promote Faringdon as a location for business, and to identify land at the town for commercial use
- desire to extend Faringdon markets
- desire to develop tourism in Faringdon
- need to improve the safety of the walking surface and security in Bury Street Precinct, Botley, and importance of involving the local community in proposals to redevelop the shopping area, and
- concern about illegal use of the Steventon Storage Facility and desire for early closure of the facility

Other Key Evidence Base Documents

- 3.19. The Council have prepared a range of additional evidence base documents to inform the preparation of the Local Plan 2031. A brief summary of the main documents is described below:

Vale of White Horse Retail and Town Centre Study, Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners, 2013 (incl. Addendum, 2014)

- 3.20. This study assesses changes since the 2008 Vale of White Horse Retail Study and the Updated Assessment of Convenience Goods Capacity in Faringdon and Abingdon 2010 (updated again in 2011 to inform the Abbey Shopping Centre and Charter Area Supplementary Planning Document).
- 3.21. An addendum was produced in September 2014, which took account of the predicted population growth arising from the updated Oxfordshire SHMA and the impact it would have on retail needs across the district. It included a new retail zone entitled “Science Vale/West of Didcot” which took a closer look at a number of large sites in Science Vale. The key findings of the study can be summarised as follows:

Total floorspace requirement

- The addendum notes however that it provides a broad overview of the potential need for further retail development in the short-medium term up to 2021, with longer term forecast up to 2026 and 2031. It states that projections *“are subject to uncertainty and forecasts may need to be amended to reflect emerging changes as and when new information becomes available, in particular longer-term projections up to 2031 should be treated with caution”*³⁵.
- If all commitments and proposals are implemented and some vacant units are reoccupied, the study suggests a total net floorspace requirement (Classes A1-A5) of 3,505 sq.m by 2021, and 19,994 sq.m net by 2031.
- The addendum sets out a range of possible options for addressing the needs of the key settlements, keeping in line with the requirements set out in the NPPF. The options are outlined in more detail below.

Abingdon-on-Thames

- maximising the retail offering of the Charter redevelopment area to include a large foodstore and comparison retail units should provide for the retail needs of Abingdon-on-Thames up to 2021
- additional sites would need to be considered for the provision of future retail in the town in the longer term. However, the study/addendum recognises the constrained nature of the town

³⁵ Retail and Town Centre Study Addendum 2014 Para 4.29

centre and the lack of available sites³⁶. It identifies a number of potential sites, such as the BT telephone exchange and car parks between the council offices and Waitrose. Outside of the town centre, the Royal Mail delivery offices and K Knight and Son builder's merchants could also provide alternative options, and

- it concluded by stating that if the need could not be accommodated within the town, then some of the need could potentially be diverted to some of the larger strategic site allocations in close proximity to the town, or other housing developments elsewhere in the District, including Science Vale/West Didcot area.

Wantage/Grove

- the Grove Airfield proposals and reoccupation of vacant units in Wantage town centre will absorb some of the growth up to 2021. The study identifies specific edge of town centre sites which could accommodate residual comparison floorspace up to and beyond 2021, and
- There is a need for 1,823 sq.m of net convenience floorspace in Wantage and Grove, however this may be reduced through future provision in and/or adjacent to Didcot/Science Vale area as such shopping patterns in this area has not quite been determined yet.

Botley

- the proposed redevelopment of the centre to provide a food superstore would address future convenience retail needs in the area and would also help to serve Oxford City and Abingdon-on-Thames. Redevelopment would also help to accommodate additional comparison goods sales floorspace for the plan period.

Faringdon

- the implementation of the Tesco commitment accommodates most of the need up to 2021. Additional growth is expected to be limited again by the constrained nature of the town centre, with development likely to be small scale infill and extensions.

Science Vale/West of Didcot

- The new district centre at Great Western Park will serve new residents within the immediate area. It may be necessary to allocate a larger district centre that would be appropriate to meet a greater proportion of the required needs of the new local residents in this part of the District. This could be accommodated at Valley Park and/or Harwell Campus.
- Didcot A could provide a strategically important area for the provision of some form of retail, particularly the provision of bulky

³⁶ Retail and Town Centre Study Addendum 2014 Para 4.12

goods limited by appropriate controls over type of retail use so that it does not detract from the key existing or planned retail offerings of the existing town centres in the district and that of Didcot also.

Residential Allocations

- There may be potential for some of the retail need to be accommodated within larger strategic housing site allocations in the district. This could come in the shape of new local centres. Such proposals would need to ensure that they complement rather than compete directly with existing centres.

Large Villages

- larger villages with projected population growth could also assist in accommodating growth particularly top-up food shopping and day to day comparison goods. Opportunities for small convenience stores (100 to 200 sq.m net) could be considered.

Commercial leisure uses

- a cinema would be desirable within the district to meet the needs of local residents, but developers would need to demonstrate that this would be viable given the proximity of facilities outside the district
- there is a requirement to provide an additional health and fitness club in the study area to meet demand from existing residents. The study does not identify a specific location for this, and
- additional non-retail uses (classes A3/A5) should be provided in Wantage and Botley in particular in order to complement the retail focus of the centres.

Floorspace thresholds

- the study recommends that local floorspace thresholds are set of 1,000 sq.m gross for Abingdon-on-Thames and Wantage and 500 sq.m gross elsewhere. Above these thresholds all proposals for retail, leisure and office development outside town centres which are not in accordance with an up-to-date local plan would need to be accompanied by an impact assessment.

Vale of White Horse Employment Land Review 2013 Update, URS, 2013 (including Addendum 2014)

- 3.22. This report and subsequent addendum provides an update to the 2008 Vale of White Horse Employment Land Review, and includes updated research, analysis and findings to take account of the economic downturn and the Enterprise Zone (EZ) designation benefiting the district's two most significant employment areas at Harwell Campus and Milton Park.

- 3.23. The addendum produced to inform the publication version of the Local Plan provides greater clarity on the jobs target of 23,000 for the district provided through work to inform the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Oxfordshire. The addendum presents a comprehensive approach to identifying the total number of jobs which require designated employment (B-use class) land in the district. In total, it identifies that through demographic and planned economic growth, there would be a maximum of 18,400 jobs that would require designated employment land.
- 3.24. Using standard assumptions on plot ratios and densities for employment land, the report identifies, with some exceptions set out below, that all employment land identified in policies E1-E13 of the LP2011 should be carried forward and safeguarded for employment uses in the new Local Plan 2031. This will help to ensure that there is adequate land to meet the needs of different types of economic activity over the plan period, as required by the NPPF.
- 3.25. The study recommends that a total of 219 hectares of employment land is identified for development at new sites and saved Local Plan 2011 (LP2011) allocations. This includes the following site specific recommendations:
- Harwell Campus (saved LP2011 allocation) : 94 ha
 - Milton Park (saved LP2011 allocation): 28 ha
 - Other saved LP2011 allocations: 13 ha
 - Didcot A Power Station: 29 ha
 - North Grove Monks Farm: 6 ha
 - Faringdon South Park Road: 3 ha
 - Milton Hill Business and Technology Centre: 11.2 ha
 - Harwell Campus (other land outside of the EZ): 35 ha
- 3.26. The study identifies that there is around 219 ha of vacant and developable employment land available in the district, including 122 ha at the Enterprise Zone, 67 ha in potential future employment sites, and 30 ha in existing employment clusters. The report recommends that surplus land is protected for potential employment uses at this stage, until further information is gained, particularly relating to demand and site assessment of the Didcot A Power Station site. It is recommended that the bulk of this surplus should be apportioned to the Didcot A Power Station site.
- 3.27. The report identifies three sites in Faringdon and one site in Sutton Courtenay that are currently vacant and developable land but do not meet the criteria to satisfy the forecast demand up to 2031³⁷. These sites are as follows:

³⁷ These sites may be considered for alternative uses, but some may be retained for their current use through the progression of Neighbourhood Development Plans, which will primarily seek to provide for local need.

- North of Pioneer Road, Faringdon
 - Strip of land alongside Park Road, Faringdon
 - Land south of the playground, Faringdon
 - Amey, Sutton Courtenay³⁸
- 3.28. The report recommends that these sites are reviewed by the council and that they may be suitable for alternative uses. It is noted that further work would be required to ascertain whether these sites would be suitable for other uses.
- 3.29. Since the completion of this work, the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan has sought to retain the three sites identified above to address the local need of the market town. The inspector's report that was issued in October 2014 had no issue with the retention of these sites to serve the local need and the plan will be put to referendum early in 2015.

Hotel Needs Assessment, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, July 2014

- 3.30. This joint evidence base document assessed the existing visitor accommodation for both local authorities, and looked at how the predicted growth for this area would affect the need for future hotel space provision for the plan period.
- 3.31. It outlined the demand forecasts for the district on a locational basis, looking at specific areas such as Science Vale, the market towns of Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon, the Oxford fringe and more rural areas.
- 3.32. It identified a need for a significant increase in hotel supply in Science Vale through new hotel opening and the expansion of existing hotels, with existing proposals only meeting part of this need over the long term. It identified Abingdon-on-Thames as being a suitable location for new hotel facilities, however it pointed out that the availability of a suitable site was a key issue.
- 3.33. For Wantage, there is an opportunity for additional hotel provision, most likely in the form of a small budget hotel and/or boutique hotel provision. The up-grading and re-positioning of existing inns as small boutique hotels and the expansion of Sudbury house was recommended for Faringdon.

OTHER EVIDENCE

- 3.34. There has been a wide range of supporting information which has assisted in the development of the policies for the Local Plan 2031.

³⁸ There is a resolution to grant outline planning permission for housing on this site subject to S106 / legal agreements.

These documents are listed below. A brief summary of their contents is contained within **Appendix X**.

- ***The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire, Estimates for 2011, County and district results, Tourism South East Research Unit, 2012***
- ***The economic impact of tourism Vale of White Horse 2011, Tourism South East Research Unit***
- ***Abingdon Visitor Research Programme, A study of tourism in Abingdon, Hidden Britain, 2012***
- ***Vale of White Horse District Council Retail Vacancy Survey 2012: Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon, Vale of White Horse District Council***
- ***This is Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire County Council, 2010***
- ***Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone: Infrastructure Strategy, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Science Vale UK Partnership, 2012***
- ***Oxfordshire Economic Assessment: Part One Summary – Key issues and findings, Draft, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, November 2012***
- ***Faringdon and Wantage economic strategy and action plan 2010/ 11 to 2012/13, Vale of White Horse District Council, 2010***
- ***Choose Abingdon Partnership Strategy for 2012 onwards, Choose Abingdon Partnership, 2012***
- ***An action plan for Faringdon, Faringdon Area Project, 2008***
- ***Emerging Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan***
- ***Oxfordshire Skills Strategy 2020***
- ***Vale Communities Strategy 2008-2016, Vale Partnership, 2008***

Section 4: Issues (challenges and opportunities)

- 4.1. A number of challenges and opportunities relating to supporting economic prosperity have been identified through the review of policies and evidence set out in Sections 2 and 3 above.
- 4.2. The key issues to be addressed through planning policy are as follows:
 - providing an appropriate amount and mix/type of employment land across the Vale and ensuring that suitable sites are available
 - continuing to support the development of Milton Park and Harwell Campus as centres for innovation and enterprise so they can make a major contribution to both the Oxfordshire and UK economy
 - nurturing science, research and innovation in Science Vale as well as throughout the district and attracting new high value businesses
 - supporting the economy of the towns and rural areas and providing a range of employment opportunities close to where people live. This is particularly relevant at Faringdon, Grove and Wantage, as the general focus of employment opportunities within the Vale are at the Enterprise Zone sites close to the eastern boundary of the district
 - increasing superfast broadband coverage across the district
 - making best use of the opportunity presented for re-development at the Didcot A Power Station site for further economic growth with the Vale
 - planning appropriately for the possible relocation of the Steventon Storage Facility
 - taking steps to ensure skills provision meets business requirements, for example by supporting further and higher education provision so a greater proportion of the local population can share the benefits of economic success
 - supporting appropriate redevelopment of the Oxford Brookes University Harcourt Hill campus
 - retaining existing employment sites which make a significant contribution to the overall employment offer, to ensure that the overall quantum for employment is increased
 - supporting the sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses
 - supporting the agricultural economy including appropriate farm diversification schemes
 - continuing to maintain the vitality and viability of the retail offer in Abingdon-on-Thames, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage and strengthen their service centre roles
 - identifying and supporting suitable roles for the Market Towns and Local Service Centres in the face of competition from larger nearby centres outside the Vale

- creating attractive town centre environments, which appeal to visitors and shoppers alike and incorporate vibrant evening economies
 - supporting appropriate redevelopment of the Charter area in Abingdon-on-Thames
 - supporting comprehensive redevelopment of Botley Central Area to meet the needs of Botley and the surrounding area
 - supporting provision of appropriate local community-focused enterprises such as village shops and public houses
 - increasing the economic impact and value of tourism and taking steps to convert day visitors to visitors staying overnight, in particular by addressing the shortage of hotel accommodation, and
 - responding to increases in demand for business tourism and conferencing associated with growth across Science Vale and at the Enterprise Zone as and when it arises.
- 4.3. The challenge to increase superfast broadband coverage across the district is considered separately through the transport and accessibility topic paper. The other challenges and opportunities listed above can be addressed through planning policies covering the following topics:
- employment land supply – scale and location
 - Didcot A Power Station
 - clearance of Steventon Storage Facility
 - new employment development on unallocated sites
 - rural employment
 - change of use of existing employment land and premises
 - higher and further education provision
 - Harcourt Hill Campus
 - tourism related development
 - retailing and other main town centre uses
 - Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon-on-Thames, and
 - Botley Central Area
- 4.4. An assessment was undertaken during the preparation of the previous version of this topic paper to determine whether policies relating to these topics should be included in the Local Plan 2031 Part 1, or whether issues would be more appropriately addressed through a different planning policy document. It was considered that all of the above list, with the exception of one challenge relating to the clearance of Steventon Storage Facility, were strategic matters that should be addressed in the Local Plan 2031 Part 1.
- 4.5. A number of possible employment sites were identified through the Preferred Options and Additional Consultation stages. The Local Plan 2031 Part 1 identifies strategic employment sites based on the recommendations of the Employment Land Review, but the additional potential employment sites could be considered for allocation through

the Local Plan 2031 Part 2 if appropriate. They may also be considered through the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Section 5: Strategic policy options

- 5.1. As identified in Section 4, we consider that the following policy areas relating to supporting economic prosperity should be addressed through the Local Plan 2031 Part 1:
- employment land supply – scale and location
 - Didcot A Power Station
 - new employment development on unallocated sites
 - rural employment
 - change of use of existing employment land and premises
 - higher and further education provision
 - Harcourt Hill Campus
 - tourism related development
 - retailing and other main town centre uses
 - Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon-on-Thames, and
 - Botley Central Area
- 5.2. This section sets out an assessment of the policy options considered in relation to each of these policy areas, including a summary of the findings of a Sustainability Appraisal of the options. Full details of the sustainability appraisal are available in the separate report available on the council's website³⁹.
- 5.3. In the cases of higher and further education provision, Harcourt Hill Campus, and the Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon-on-Thames, we consider that there is only one reasonable policy option to address each of the challenges and opportunities identified. In these cases the policy option has not been subject to Sustainability Appraisal at this stage. However, Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken for all draft policy wording, and details of this assessment are provided in the Sustainability Appraisal Report⁴⁰.
- 5.4. An assessment of policy appraisals was conducted in the early stages of the local plan process as part of the Sustainability Appraisal report. The assessments of policy options are presented for each policy area in turn in Tables 5.1-5.11.

³⁹ Sustainability Appraisal of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies (2014) URS, available online at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence>

⁴⁰ See link above.

Table 5.1: assessment of policy options relating to employment land supply – scale⁴¹

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option A	Identify sites to provide 143 ha employment land during the plan period (including the 105 ha at the Enterprise Zones and allocated Local Plan 2011 sites).	Option A provides the least social and economic benefits, but also performs strongest for environmental objectives.	This would meet the anticipated need (under a medium growth scenario) over the plan period. However, options B and C would meet the needs of the NPPF more fully, as they would allow more flexibility to respond to changes in economic circumstances.	Yes. The Employment Land Review identifies sufficient sites to provide around 143 ha employment land.	Yes. Would ensure that suitable sites are available for business development, in line with the Vale Community Strategy 2008-2016.	This option is not preferred as it offers the least flexibility of the three options, and does not address the specific opportunity for redevelopment of the Didcot A Power Station site.
Option B	Identify sites to meet the forecast demand (143 ha) plus a surplus of approximately 40 ha to provide for uncertainties around when some of the sites will be delivered. Total of 183 ha.	Option B provides the greatest positive benefits for economic and social objectives, but it is also the worst option for all the environmental objectives. If significant negative effects can be successfully mitigated then option B is the best option, but it is noted that there are too many uncertainties to make the appraisal meaningful at this stage.	Yes. This option offers the most flexibility to respond to changes in circumstances.	Yes. Sites could be identified to provide a surplus of around 40 ha over and above the forecast demand of 143 ha.	Yes. Would ensure that suitable sites are available for business development, in line with the Vale Community Strategy 2008-2016.	This option is not preferred as it is not considered necessary to identify further employment land, over and above the 143 ha to meet demand and the potential further 29 ha at the Didcot A site, in the LPP1. Additional sites could come forward through neighbourhood planning or through the development management process.
Option C	Identify sites to provide 143 ha plus a surplus to include the whole of Didcot A Power Station site – total 173 ha.	Option C provides a higher level of employment land than option A, but lower than option B. It is reasonable to assume that option C is sustainable, if not preferred, provided mitigation is implemented robustly.	Yes. This option offers an element of flexibility to respond to changes in circumstances.	Yes. Approximately 58 ha land will become available at the Didcot A Power Station site from 2018 onwards.	Yes. Would ensure that suitable sites are available for business development, in line with the Vale Community Strategy 2008-2016.	Option C is preferred as it meets the need identified in the Employment Land Review and also includes an element of flexibility for further employment land to come forward on the Didcot A site subject to more detailed site assessment work.

⁴¹ Since the preparation of the original reasonable alternatives appraisal, the Council has changes its approach to a higher amount of employment land (219ha), and includes 29ha at Didcot A. This is an increase in employment land however it does not change the spatial distribution of employment sites. Please refer to the Sustainability Appraisal Final Report for more detail on this update, located at <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence>

Table 5.2: assessment of policy options relating to employment land supply – location

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option A	Allocate additional sites for employment development at Faringdon and Wantage/Grove, and identify land at Didcot A to provide for the remaining balance of the employment land requirement.	Option A outperforms Option B for all the significant positive effects, and additionally ranks higher in terms of sustainable transport. Providing employment land is not built in areas of flood risk and any flood risk is mitigated, there would likely be no significant negative effect for flooding for Option A. In light of this mitigation, and the other factors set out above, Option A is considered the more sustainable option.	Yes. National policy requires that Local Plans set criteria or identify strategic sites to meet anticipated needs over the plan period. It also places significant weight on the need to support economic growth.	Yes. Additional employment land could be provided as part of mixed use development at the proposed Monks Farm strategic site in Grove and at Land South of Park Road, Faringdon. The Didcot A Power Station site will become available for redevelopment from 2018 onwards.	Yes. Would assist in addressing local concerns about the need for employment in Wantage/Grove and Faringdon, as identified through the core strategy preferred options consultation.	Option A is preferred as it will provide local employment opportunities, particularly in the western Vale which is furthest from the Science Vale UK area, and offers the opportunity to help improve the self-containment of the settlements.
Option B	Do not allocate additional sites for employment development at Faringdon and Wantage/Grove, and instead identify land at Didcot A to provide for the whole balance of the employment land requirement.	Option B is identified as the less sustainable option, as set out above.	This approach would comply with national policy as it would still identify sufficient sites to meet anticipated needs. However, it would not take the specific opportunity to support economic growth at Wantage/Grove and Faringdon.	Yes. The Didcot A Power Station site will become available for redevelopment from 2018 onwards.	No. Would not address the specific local concerns about the need for employment in Wantage/Grove and Faringdon.	Option B is not preferred as it would not address the aspiration for local employment opportunities, particularly in the western part of the Vale.

Table 5.3: Assessment of policy options relating to Didcot A Power Station

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option A	Policy for the Didcot A site which is broadly supportive of B-class uses on the whole of the site, subject to market demand	Option A would likely lead to more employment land, having a greater positive impact on the economy. However, Option B is considered more sustainable overall (see below).	Yes. The policy approach would be broadly supportive of employment uses without safeguarding the site, and hence would comply with paragraph 22 of the NPPF.	Yes. The Didcot A Power Station site will become available for redevelopment from 2018 onwards. However, a slightly more flexible approach would be appropriate at this stage, as detailed site master planning has not yet been undertaken.	The review of local policies and previous consultation responses does not identify any specific local priorities or aspirations in relation to this site. The policy will however assist in addressing a specific local issue around the need to plan appropriately for the future use of the site.	Option A is not preferred as it is less flexible than option B. A more flexible approach is considered appropriate at this stage, as set out below.
Option B	Policy for the Didcot A site which is broadly supportive of B-class uses on half of the site. Further employment uses to be supported on the remainder of the site subject to market demand. Complementary alternative uses (such as institutional or community uses) also to be supported on the remainder of the site, subject to a masterplanning process, and subject to these uses being compatible with the neighbouring Didcot B power station.	Option B may lead to less employment land than Option A, but it would, subject to demand, provide more community facilities which could reduce social exclusion and provide for a wider array of services, whilst having less of an impact on congestion at peak times. Option B is more flexible over uses and is therefore more likely to fill the site and ensure efficient use of land. Option B is considered the most sustainable option.	Yes. The policy approach would be broadly supportive of employment and complementary uses without safeguarding the site, and hence would comply with paragraph 22 of the NPPF.	Yes. This approach allows some scope for appropriate uses to be determined through the master planning process.	As above, the policy will assist in addressing a specific local issue around the need to plan appropriately for the future use of the site.	Option B is preferred as it offers a more flexible approach to potential uses on the remaining half of the Didcot A Power Station site. A flexible approach is considered appropriate at this stage as detailed site master planning has not yet been undertaken.

Table 5.4: assessment of policy options relating to new employment development on unallocated sites

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option A	Policy which supports proposals for additional employment development (B class uses), subject to certain criteria, within the Market Towns and Local Service Centres (Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage), and for development or redevelopment for B-class uses within the strategic employment sites and the rural multi-use sites (with the exception of Wootton Business Park where only B1 use would be supported). Policy would also support employment development or redevelopment on those sites identified as strategic employment allocations. Applications for employment development or redevelopment within the existing site boundaries of the Large Campus Style Sites to be subject to specific criteria to demonstrate that the resultant overall use of the site would be at least as sustainable as the existing use (following the approach set out in policy E12 of the Local Plan 2011).	Results of the SA are mixed. Option A results in positive effects in terms of reducing the need to travel; ensuring a strong economy; reducing inequalities and poverty; and providing quality accessible services. Option A scored the worst of the three options in terms of flooding, as it would constrain the number of sites that could be developed for employment land. However, if development does not occur in the flood zone areas of Botley, Grove and Wantage this can in part be mitigated. Overall, option A presents the best approach to the distribution of additional employment land.	Yes. Paragraph 21 of the National Planning Policy NPPF states that 'policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances'. However, options B and C would offer greater flexibility as to the potential location of employment sites.	Yes. The policy would enable delivery of employment land on unallocated sites through the development management process.	No. This approach would not address the desire to encourage the provision of more premises for employment opportunities for village/rural businesses, as identified through the review of community-led plans.	This approach is not preferred as it would be too restrictive in terms of potential locations for new employment development, and would not deliver local aspirations to support employment development in the villages. Although this option is identified as the best overall approach through the SA, it is noted that the results of the SA were mixed.

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option B	As option A above but policy also supports employment development within the larger villages.	Results of the SA are mixed. Options B and C scored positively against some of the same objectives as option A. However, they scored worse than option A for reducing the need to travel.	Yes. This approach offers more flexibility than Option A as to the location of future employment sites.	Yes. The policy would enable delivery of employment land on unallocated sites through the development management process.	This approach would be preferable to option A in terms of supporting provision of business premises in the larger villages. However, it would not support employment development in the smaller villages.	The preferred approach is a broad combination of option B (new employment development on unallocated sites) together with option C for rural employment, as described in table 5.5 below. This approach is preferred as it offers the most flexible approach to new employment development on unallocated sites, which reflects the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The policy can be drafted to require proposals to include measures to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport where possible.
Option C	As option B above but policy also supports employment development within the smaller villages.	As set out above, options B and C scored worse than option A for reducing the need to travel.	Yes. This approach offers the greatest level of flexibility of the three options in regard to the location of future employment sites.	Yes. The policy would enable delivery of employment land on unallocated sites through the development management process.	Yes. This option would support employment development in both larger and smaller villages.	This approach is not preferred as it would be too relaxed in terms of potential locations for new employment development. Potential for smaller villages to expand is limited due to a lack of facilities and services. The policy allows for development of rural employment subject to a number of conditions including that it predominantly serves local need and cannot be reasonably accommodated on any of the strategic employment sites.

Table 5.5: assessment of policy options relating to rural employment

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option A	Criteria based policy which supports economic growth in the rural areas (subject to appropriate scale and design). Policy to include support for proposals that seek to retain or expand businesses (on their current sites) where these are currently located within or adjacent to the Market Towns, Local Service Centres, and Larger and Smaller Villages. Outside the main settlements proposals for new buildings would only be supported if they related to farming or the diversification of agriculture and other land-based rural businesses. Proposals for the re-use, conversion or adaptation of existing buildings would be supported for all types of business and enterprise.	<p>Results are mixed. Option A results in significant positive effects in terms of reducing the need to travel; ensuring a strong economy; reducing inequalities and poverty; and providing quality accessible services.</p> <p>For flooding, option A was ranked the worst as it constrained the number of sites that could be developed for rural employment land however if development does not occur in the flood zone areas of Botley, Grove and Wantage this can in part be mitigated.</p> <p>Overall option A is the best option for rural employment.</p>	Yes. Paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework indicates that local plans should support the 'sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings'. This option would define 'sustainable' in the local context, and hence would be consistent with the NPPF.	Yes. The policy would enable delivery of employment in the rural areas through the development management process.	The Vale Community Strategy 2008-2016 identifies a priority to make sure that 'suitable sites are available (in our towns and rural areas) for business development that will result in economic and job opportunities'. This option is the least flexible in terms of identifying appropriate locations for rural employment development, and hence would do the least to facilitate the identification of suitable sites for business development in the rural areas.	This option is not preferred as it would be too restrictive. Although this option is identified as the best overall approach through the SA, it is noted that the results of the SA were mixed.

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option B	As option A, but policy also supports proposals for new business premises on new sites adjacent to the main settlements where this facilitates the retention or expansion of a business currently located within that settlement.	Results of the SA are mixed. Options B and C also scored positively for some of the same objectives as option A however they scored worse than option A for reducing the need to travel and for all of the environmental issues with the exception of flooding.	Yes. As with option A, this option would define 'sustainable' in the local context.	Yes. The policy would enable delivery of employment in the rural areas through the development management process.	This option offers more flexibility than option A, and hence would go further in terms of facilitating the identification of suitable sites for business development in the rural areas.	This option is not preferred because it would also be too restrictive.
Option C	More permissive criteria based policy which supports new premises for small scale businesses in all locations (subject to appropriate design, scale being proportionate to the character of the area, satisfactory resolution of any transport issues, and meeting the requirements of other local plan policies).	Results of the SA are mixed. Options B and C also scored positively for some of the same objectives as option A however they scored worse than option A for reducing the need to travel and for all of the environmental issues with the exception of flooding.	Yes. This approach offers the greatest level of flexibility in regard to the location of new business premises in the rural areas. It would directly reflect the guidance in paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework.	Yes. The policy would enable delivery of employment in the rural areas through the development management process.	Yes. This is option offers the most flexible approach, and hence would be the best approach in terms of facilitating identification of suitable sites for business development in the rural areas.	As set out in table 5.4 above, the preferred approach is a broad combination of option B (rural employment) together with option C for new employment development on unallocated sites. This approach is preferred as it offers the most flexible approach to new employment development in the rural areas.

Table 5.6: assessment of policy options relating to change of use of existing employment land and premises

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option A	Protect all employment sites with criteria to assess their value to the local economy. The wording of the policy will need to reflect the requirements of paragraph 22 of the NPPF, allowing applications for alternative uses to be treated on their merits where there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment use. Policy to set out how the local planning authority will assess whether or not there is a reasonable prospect of the site being used for employment.	All four options scored positively for most, if not all objectives, with no negative effects.	Yes, as the wording of the policy would be drafted to reflect the requirements of paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework.	Yes. The policy would set out clear criteria to judge applications for change of use.	This option would help ensure that the overall employment provision in the district is increased over the plan period, hence assisting in delivering the local aspiration to ensure communities have good access to a range of jobs ⁴² . However, it would not address the specific need to identify and protect key strategic business sites.	This option is not preferred as the Local Plan 2011 identifies a number of key business sites in the Vale where it will be particularly important to retain the business use. This option would not differentiate these key sites, and hence would not address a specific local issue.
Option B	Protect only strategic employment sites which are fundamental to the economic role of the strategy. Again use criteria to allow flexibility to reflect circumstances, as required by the NPPF.	Option B scored highest because it offers the greatest flexibility to adapt to market conditions (short and long term); allows for the efficient use of land and prevents unnecessary land take and risk of flooding and landscape impacts. It is noted that there are uncertainties at this stage over the impact on townscape and cultural heritage, however if this forms part of the criteria in the policy then this can be mitigated.	Yes, as the wording of the policy would be drafted to reflect the requirements of paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework.	Yes. The policy would set out clear criteria to judge applications for change of use.	This option would not address the need to protect non-strategic employment sites such as the rural multi-user sites identified in the Local Plan 2011. It would not therefore deliver the local aspiration of ensuring communities have good access to a range of jobs.	This option is not preferred as there are a number of rural employment sites and rural based businesses which make an important contribution to the local economy but which are not necessarily identified as strategic employment sites. Examples of these include the rural multi-user sites identified in the Local Plan 2011. This option would offer any protection to these sites.

⁴² As set out in the Vale Partnership's vision for the Vale within the Vale Community Strategy 2008-2016

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option C	Protect strategic employment sites, rural multi-user sites and large campus style sites. Use criteria to allow flexibility to reflect circumstances, as required by the NPPF.	All four options scored positively for most, if not all objectives, with no negative effects.	Yes, as the wording of the policy would be drafted to reflect the requirements of paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework.	Yes. The policy would set out clear criteria to judge applications for change of use.	This option would help to deliver the local aspiration to ensure communities have good access to a range of jobs.	This option is not preferred as it does not differentiate between strategic and non-strategic employment sites.
Option D	Include a policy which seeks to protect all employment sites (but with criteria to indicate when changes of use will be appropriate) and give strategic employment sites a higher level of protection. (Combination of options A and B).	All four options scored positively for most, if not all objectives, with no negative effects.	Yes, as the wording of the policy would be drafted to reflect the requirements of paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework.	Yes. The policy would set out clear criteria to judge applications for change of use.	This option would help to deliver the local aspiration to ensure communities have good access to a range of jobs.	Option D is preferred because it offers an appropriate balance by seeking to protect employment land whilst still allowing flexibility for changes of use where it is clear that employment land or premises are no longer needed or suitable for this purpose. There are a number of rural employment sites and rural based businesses which make an important contribution to the local economy, and it is important to protect these sites from changes of use unless one of the criteria in the policy is met. This will help ensure that the overall employment provision in the district is increased over the plan period.

Table 5.7: assessment of policy options relating to higher and further education provision, including Harcourt Hill Campus

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option A	Include a policy which is generally supportive of extensions and improvements to existing further and higher education provision providing that certain criteria are met. Include support for modernisation of the Oxford Brookes Harcourt Hill campus, with details to be provided in a Supplementary Planning Document.	Sustainability Appraisal was not carried out at the options stage, as there are no reasonable alternative options other than 'business as usual'.	The National Planning Policy Framework does not include specific guidance in relation to higher and further education facilities.	Yes. The policy would provide a clear framework to assess applications for further and higher education provision and the redevelopment of Harcourt Hill campus.	Yes. This option would assist in meeting the pledge for Oxfordshire to 'ensure that educational attainment and skills levels are amongst the very best in the country so we provide a well qualified, motivated workforce to meet the needs of business' ⁴³ .	A policy should be included in the LPP1 to support further and higher education provision, and to support redevelopment of the Oxford Brookes Harcourt Hill campus. It may be appropriate for this to be covered by two separate policies, with one applying across the district and the other focusing on the Harcourt Hill campus.

⁴³ Oxfordshire 2030: a partnership plan for improving quality of life in Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire Partnership, 2008

Table 5.8: assessment of policy options relating to development to support the visitor economy

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option A	Include a policy which reflects approach in policy T1 of the Local Plan 2011 (update to refer to Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Larger and Smaller Villages), but with amendment to indicate that hotels will also be supported outside the market towns, local service centres and larger and smaller villages where these are well related to established tourist attractions or main transport corridors.	The results of the appraisal are mixed. Both options are expected to result in a number of social and economic benefits through enhancing the provision and accessibility of high quality services and facilities in the Vale, increasing access to employment, and supporting the growth of the Vale's tourism economy. Both options may have some negative effects in terms of the environmental objectives by increasing the number of visitors travelling to rural areas which in turn would increase pressure on the natural environment and increase the number of car journeys to more remote parts of the Vale that are less well served by public transport.	Yes. Paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that local plans should 'support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres'. The policy would identify appropriate locations for tourism development outside the main settlements. The policy would also follow the approach in policy T1 of the Local Plan 2011 which supports the re-use, conversion or adaptation of suitable existing buildings in the rural areas to hotel, guest house or youth hostel accommodation, self-catering accommodation and countryside craft centres.	Yes. The policy would provide a clear framework to assess applications for tourism related development.	Yes. Responses to the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation indicated that tourism should be promoted in the Vale, and that more facilities should be on offer for tourists. The policy would also help address a specific issue identified through the evidence in that the Vale currently attracts fewer overnight trips than other areas of the county ⁴⁴ .	Option A is not preferred as it does not address the specific need to support small-scale tourism development in rural areas.

⁴⁴ The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire, Estimates for 2011, County and district results, Tourism South East Research Unit, 2012

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option B	As option A, but also include amendment to indicate that proposals for small scale rural tourism and leisure developments (on new sites) will be supported outside the settlements where it can be demonstrated that the development will benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, will respect the character of the countryside, meets an identified need which is not met by existing facilities in the Larger and Smaller Villages, will not cause unacceptable highways issues, and will be in accordance with the other policies of the plan.	The results of the appraisal are mixed, as set out above.	Yes. This option offers a more flexible approach to small scale rural tourism development, and hence more fully reflects the guidance in paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework as compared to option A.	Yes. The policy would provide a clear framework to assess applications for tourism related development.	<p>Yes. Responses to the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation indicated that tourism should be promoted in the Vale, and that more facilities should be on offer for tourists.</p> <p>The policy would also help address a specific issue identified through the evidence in that the Vale currently attracts fewer overnight trips than other areas of the county⁴⁵.</p> <p>The policy wording should also include support for ancillary business hotel and conference facilities at Milton Park and Harwell Oxford, to reflect specific local opportunities.</p>	Option B is preferred as it offers a more flexible approach to small-scale tourism development in the rural areas. This is appropriate to support the rural economy in the Vale, and reflects the approach in the National Planning Policy Framework which indicates that local plans should "support sustainable rural tourism ... developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside" (paragraph 28). The specific criteria to be included in the policy will be developed through the policy drafting process, and may not reflect the precise wording of option B.

⁴⁵ The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire, Estimates for 2011, County and district results, Tourism South East Research Unit, 2012

Table 5.9: assessment of policy options relating to retailing and other main town centre uses

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option A	<p>Include policy which sets out the retail hierarchy and indicates that proposals for new retail development within the town centres and local shopping centres will be supported provided they are in keeping with the scale and character of the area and do not create unacceptable traffic or environmental problems, and are in accordance with the other policies of the local plan. Policy to also indicate that proposals for retail development in the villages will be supported where these meet the criteria above and meet the needs of the local community.</p> <p>Policy to also state that applications for main town centre uses which are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with the Local Plan, will need to follow the sequential approach (with the exception of small scale rural offices and other small scale rural development) and that impact assessments will be required for applications for retail, leisure and office development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with the plan, where the development is over the nationally set threshold of 2,500 sq m.</p>	Option A was appraised to lead to less positive effects with regards to reducing the need to travel and supporting a strong economy, however given that the sequential test would still need to be satisfied for non-town centre uses outside of town centres, this would mitigate significant negative effects.	Yes. Paragraph 23 of the NPPF indicates that in drawing up local plans, local planning authorities should (amongst other things) pursue policies to support the viability and vitality of town centres, define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes, define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations, and promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice.	Yes. The policy would provide a clear framework to assess applications for retailing and other main town centre uses.	No. Developments smaller than the nationally set floorspace threshold of 2,500 sq.m could have a significant adverse impact on the smaller town centres in the Vale. This approach would not therefore deliver the priority identified in the Vale Community Strategy ⁴⁶ to maintain and enhance the health and vitality of the Vale's market town centres.	Option A is not preferred as developments smaller than 2,500 sq.m could have a significant adverse impact on the smaller town centres in the Vale.

⁴⁶ Vale Community Strategy 2008-2016, Vale Partnership, 2008

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option B	As option A but with floorspace threshold set at 500 sq m (following example of West Oxfordshire).	Option B was consistently ranked the better option in terms of every applicable objective and would lead to significant positive effects through reinforcing existing settlements, encourage sustainable transport, ensure the efficient use of land. Overall Option B is considered the best option as it affords the Council more control over the spatial distribution of town centre uses.	Yes. Paragraph 26 of the National Planning Policy Framework indicates that local planning authorities can set local floorspace thresholds above which impact assessments will be required for applications for retail, leisure and office development outside town centres and which are not in accordance with an up-to-date local plan.	Yes. The policy would provide a clear framework to assess applications for retailing and other main town centre uses.	Yes. This option offers greater control over development outside the town centres. It will therefore assist in delivering the priority identified in the Vale Community Strategy to maintain and enhance the health and vitality of the Vale's market town centres.	A revised Option B is preferred, taking account of the recommended floorspace thresholds set out in the Retail and Town Centre Study. Local floorspace thresholds to be set at 1,000 sq.m for development likely to have an impact on Abingdon-on-Thames or Wantage town centres, and 500 sq.m elsewhere. This option is preferred because the nationally set impact assessment threshold of 2,500 sq.m would be inappropriate in the Vale, as this scale of development would represent a significant proportion of the overall retail need in the area. Developments smaller than 2,500 sq.m could have a significant adverse impact on the smaller town centres.

Table 5.10: assessment of policy options relating to Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon-on-Thames

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option A	Policy to support proposals for environmental enhancement and major refurbishment or development of the Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter.	Sustainability Appraisal was not carried out at the options stage, as there are no reasonable alternative options. The policy will essentially take forward an existing policy approach from the Local Plan 2011 (policy S7).	Yes. The NPPF indicates that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period (paragraph 23).	Yes. The first phase of redevelopment, which involves improvements to the Abbey Shopping Centre, is nearing completion. The policy would provide a clear framework to assess applications for redevelopment of the Charter area.	Yes. This policy would assist in maintaining and enhancing the health and vitality of the town centre, thus helping to deliver a priority identified in the Vale Community Strategy ⁴⁷ .	A policy should be included in the LPP1 to support environmental enhancement and major refurbishment or development of the Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter.

Table 5.11: assessment of policy options relating to Botley Central Area

Policy ID	Description of Policy	SA Outcome	Does the policy option conform to national policy?	Is the policy option deliverable and effective?	Does the policy option deliver local priorities and community aspirations?	Conclusion
Option A	Policy to support refurbishment of the existing centre for retail uses.	Both options are expected to result in significant positive effects in terms of economic and social objectives.	Yes. The NPPF indicates that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period (paragraph 23).	Uncertain. Limiting refurbishment to the existing centre may lead to issues with deliverability.	Uncertain due to potential issues with deliverability.	Option A is not preferred because supporting only refurbishment of the existing centre for retail uses would be unnecessarily restrictive, and would not fully realise the opportunity to improve and enhance Botley's central area.
Option B	Policy to support comprehensive redevelopment and upgrading of the Botley central area to cover a range of retail and supporting uses.	Option B is expected to result in greater positive benefits than option A, due to the greater scale of redevelopment this option would involve.	Yes. The NPPF indicates that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period (paragraph 23).	Yes. This option covers a wider area and hence is more likely to be deliverable. The policy would provide a clear framework to assess applications for redevelopment of the central area	Yes. Option would facilitate improvement of the Westway centre, hence helping to deliver an action identified in the Corporate Plan ⁴⁸ .	Option B is preferred because this approach will facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of a wider area, hence having greater potential benefits for Botley and the local area.

⁴⁷ Vale Community Strategy 2008-2016, Vale Partnership, 2008

⁴⁸ Vale of White Horse District Council Corporate Plan 2012-2016: vision for the Vale, Vale of White Horse District Council, 2012

Section 6: Recommendations

6.1. This section sets out the recommended policy approaches relating to supporting economic prosperity for inclusion within the Vale Local Plan 2031 Part 1. The recommended policy approaches for each policy area are summarised in turn below.

- **employment land supply – scale and location:** Identify sites to provide 219 ha which includes 29 ha of land at Didcot A Power Station site. The focus for employment growth will be at Science Vale while there is sufficient vacant/developable land identified to meet the strategic employment need of the district up to 2031.
- **Didcot A Power Station:** Include a policy for the Didcot A site which is broadly supportive of B-class uses on half of the site. Further employment uses to be supported on the remainder of the site subject to market demand. Complementary alternative uses (such as retail (bulky goods), institutional or community uses) also to be supported on the remainder of the site, subject to a masterplanning process, and subject to these uses being compatible with the neighbouring Didcot B power station.
- **new employment development on unallocated sites and rural employment:** Include a policy which is broadly supportive of new employment development on unallocated sites in towns and large villages providing that certain criteria are met. Employment development in more rural locations will be subject to a more stringent set of criteria to ensure that it serves the local need and cannot reasonably be located on strategic employment land which is deemed vacant and/or developable.
- **change of use of existing employment land and premises:** Include a policy which seeks to protect all employment sites (but with criteria to indicate when changes of use will be appropriate) and give strategic employment sites a higher level of protection.
- **higher and further education provision and Harcourt Hill campus:** Include a policy to support further and higher education provision, and to support redevelopment of the Oxford Brookes Harcourt Hill campus. It may be appropriate for this to be covered by two separate policies, with one applying across the district and the other focusing on the Harcourt Hill campus.
- **Development to Support the Visitor Economy:** Include a policy which sets out the approach to tourism related development in the Market Towns, Local Service Centres, Larger and Smaller Villages, at Harwell Oxford and Milton Park, and at service areas on the main transport corridors. Include support for small-scale tourism development outside these locations providing that certain criteria

are met, and explain exceptional circumstances when larger developments may be supported outside the named locations.

- **retailing and other main town centre uses:** Include a policy which sets out the retail hierarchy and directs new retail and other main town centres uses to sites within the existing town centres. Policy to also set out circumstances in which town centre uses may be supported elsewhere. Include local floorspace thresholds for impact assessment to reflect the recommendations in the Retail and Town Centre study. Local floorspace thresholds to be set at 1,000 sq.m for development likely to have an impact on Abingdon-on-Thames or Wantage town centres, and 500 sq.m elsewhere.
- **Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter, Abingdon-on-Thames:** Include a policy to support proposals for environmental enhancement and major refurbishment or development of the Abbey Shopping Centre and the Charter.
- **Botley Central Area:** Include a policy which supports comprehensive redevelopment and upgrading of the Botley central area, to cover a range of retail and supporting uses, providing that certain criteria are met.

Glossary of terms

Term	Acronym	Explanation
Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL	A levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure.
Development Planning Document	DPD	Documents that make up the Local Plan constitute Local Development Documents and have Development Plan status. DPDs must include the Local Plan and adopted Proposals Map. All DPDs are subject to public consultation and independent examination
Employment Land Review	ELR	An evidence base study to assess the quantity, quality and viability of the district's employment land supply and forecast the future demand for employment land over the next planning period. For more information please visit: www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/evidence
Enterprise Zones	EZ	Areas around the country that support both new and expanding businesses by offering incentives through means such as business rates relief and simplified planning procedures.
Gross value added	GVA	Gross value added is the value of output less the value of intermediate consumption; it is a measure of the contribution to GDP made by an individual producer, industry or sector; gross value added is the source from which the primary incomes of the SNA are generated and is therefore carried forward into the primary distribution of income account.
Homes and Communities and Agency	HCA	The Homes and Communities Agency is the national housing and regeneration agency for England. provide investment for new affordable housing and to improve existing social housing, as well as for regenerating land
Inward investment		direct investment in the reporting economy.
Local Development Framework	LDF	This term has been replaced by the term 'Local Plan'. It was used to describe a portfolio of Local Development Documents that provide a framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the area. It also contains a number of other documents, including the Authority Monitoring Report, and any 'saved' plans that affect the area.
Local Development Order	LDO	An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.
Local Enterprise Partnership	LEP	A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area
Local Plan Part One	LPP1	This document contains long-term spatial vision and strategic policies that guide growth in the district
Local Plan Part Two	LPP2	This document will contain the more detailed development management policies and site allocations for non-strategic sites.

Mary Portas Review		<p>This document identifies what government, local authorities and businesses can do to promote the development of more prosperous and diverse high streets.</p> <p>Available at: http://www.maryportas.com/wp-content/uploads/The_Portas_Review.pdf</p>
National Planning Policy Framework	NPPF	This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied at a local level.
Neighbourhood Development Order	NDO	Communities can use neighbourhood planning to permit the development they want to see - in full or in outline – without the need for planning applications.
Neighbourhood Plan	NP	A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan		<p>For more information please visit:</p> <p>http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/OxfordshireLocalInvestmentPlan.pdf</p>
Permitted development rights		Allows you to make certain types of minor changes to your house without needing to apply for planning permission
Planning Policy Statement	PPS	Produced by central Government setting out national planning guidance. These have been replaced by the NPPF.
Primary Care Trust	PCT	This covers all parts of England and takes control of local health care.
Regional Spatial Strategy	RSS	They establish the broad spatial requirements for the region which are interpreted and applied at the local level
Science Vale		An area of economic growth in southern central Oxfordshire that is defined by a number of locations: Didcot and Culham Science Centre (in South Oxfordshire), Harwell Campus, Milton Park and Grove (all in the Vale of White Horse District).
Strategic site		A broad location considered as having potential for significant development that contributes to achieving the spatial vision of an area. In the context of the Vale Local Plan 2029, it refers to sites of 200+ dwellings.
Supplementary Planning Documents	SPD	<p>Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design.</p> <p>Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.</p>
Sustainability Appraisal	SA	The process of assessing the economic, social and environmental effects of a proposed plan. This process implements the requirements of the SEA Directive. Required to be undertaken for all DPDs.
Sustainable	SCS	A strategy produced by a Local Strategic Partnership that sets the

Community Strategy		vision for an area and states the key issues where the partnership feels it can add value.
Sustainable development		A widely used definition drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The NPPF taken as a whole constitutes the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system.
Science Vale Area Strategy		Transport related measures to facilitate growth in the Science Vale
Vale Community Strategy		Government guidance requires the strategy to have regard to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Vale and to identify key priorities for action which will help secure that well being for the future.
Viability		The potential to exist successfully or survive.
Vitality		The liveliness and energy of a place or area reflected in the level and variety of activities taking place.

Vale of White Horse District Council

Local Plan 2031 Part 1

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Topic Paper 5 – Supporting Economic Prosperity

Appendices

Appendix A – Assessment of saved and non-saved policies relating to economic prosperity from the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011

Appendix B – Summary of other documents which have informed this topic paper

Appendix A – Assessment of saved and non-saved policies relating to economic prosperity from the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011

Policies relating to economic prosperity set out within the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011^{1,2}

Policy	Summary	Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework	Identified Issues
E1: Abingdon	Identifies sites in Abingdon where new business development will be permitted, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abingdon Business Park: B1, B2 and B8 Abingdon Science Park: B1 uses only. Where appropriate proposals will need to include measures for the control of landfill gas. Half of the Thames View Industrial Estate south of the district council car park for industrial use, subject to any B2 uses being located so as not to harm the amenity of existing or perspective residents, as part of a comprehensive scheme for a mixed housing and employment development. 	Fully Consistent	
E2: Botley Area	Identifies sites in the Botley area for development or redevelopment for business purposes, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumnor Hill on land to the west of Timbmet Timber Yard for B1 use only. Minns Business Park at North Hinksey for B1 use only. 	Fully Consistent	
E3: Faringdon	Identifies sites in Faringdon where new business development will be permitted, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> South of Willes Close and North of Pioneer Road for B1 use only. North of Park Road for B1 use only. Part of the former nursery for B1 use only. Land adjacent to Park Road and the A420 bypass for 	Fully Consistent	

¹ Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011, Vale of White Horse District Council, July 2006.

² Assessment of Saved Local Plan policies for consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework, Vale of White Horse District Council, January 2013

Policy	Summary	Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework	Identified Issues
	B1 or B2 employment use.		
E4: Grove Technology Park	Indicates that new business development will be permitted at Grove Technology Park for B1 and B2 uses. Development for B8 use will only be permitted on up to 1.6 ha of the site in total.	Fully Consistent	
E5: Milton Park	Indicates that new business development and the redevelopment of land for business purposes will be permitted within Milton Park for B1, B2 and B8 uses subject to specific criteria.	Fully Consistent	
E6: West of Didcot Power Station	Indicates that new business development to the west of Didcot Power Station at the disused Milton reservoir and pumping station site in Sutton Courtenay Lane, will be permitted for B1, B2 and B8 uses subject to specific criteria.	Fully Consistent	
E7: Harwell Science and Innovation Campus	Indicates that new business development or redevelopment for business purposes will be permitted at the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus (now known as the Harwell Oxford Campus) for B1 and B2 purposes subject to specific criteria.	Fully Consistent	
E8: Local Rural Sites	<p>Identifies local rural business sites where new business development on vacant land or redevelopment of existing premises for business purposes will be permitted. The local rural business sites identified are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingston Business Park for B1, B2 and B8 uses • White Horse Business Park for B1, B2 and B8 uses • Uffington Station for B1, B2 and B8 uses • Wootton Business Park for B1 use only • Shrivenham Hundred Business Park for B1 use only. <p>The policy states that any site identified under this policy will be limited to the creation of premises of up to 500 square metres gross floor area for occupation by a single business</p>	<p>Fully Consistent</p> <p>However, premises over 500 square metres may also be acceptable where these meet the requirements of the Framework and the other policies of the Local Plan.</p>	

Policy	Summary	Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework	Identified Issues
	enterprise, apart from in specific exceptional circumstances.		
E9: New development on sites not identified in the local plan	<p>This policy sets out the approach to proposals for development or redevelopment for business purposes on sites not identified in the Local Plan. It indicates that such proposals will be permitted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On sites within the development boundaries of the five main settlements (Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage). For small firms requiring no more than 500 square metres gross floorspace within the built-up area of a village listed under policy H11 of the Local Plan. In locations outside the built-up areas of the five main settlements and the villages, proposals for the expansion, on its existing site, of an existing industrial or commercial enterprise in specific circumstances as outlined in the policy. <p>In all cases the policy requires that the proposals do not generate a demand for housing which cannot be met by existing or planned housing provision.</p>	<p>Not Consistent</p> <p>The policy is not in conformity with paragraph 28 (point 1) of the Framework where planning policies should support sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings, and well designed new buildings.</p>	Consider revising to ensure compliance with the Framework.
E10: key business sites	Identifies strategic employment sites where proposals which would lead to the loss of existing business land and premises to other uses will not be permitted, other than for ancillary uses referred to under policy E13.	<p>Consistent, in part, with the Framework</p> <p>The policy is consistent with the Framework insofar as the employment sites are in active economic use.</p>	Consider revising to ensure compliance with the Framework.
E11: Rural multi-user sites	Identifies rural sites where proposals which would lead to the loss of existing business land and premises to other uses will not be permitted, other than for ancillary uses referred to under policy E13.	<p>Consistent, in part, with the Framework</p> <p>The policy is consistent with the Framework insofar as the employment sites are in active</p>	Consider revising to ensure compliance with the Framework.

Policy	Summary	Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework	Identified Issues
		economic use.	
E12: Large campus style sites	<p>Sets out the policy approach to the following large campus style sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milton Hill Business and Technology Centre, Milton Hill • Amey, Sutton Courtenay • Oxford Instruments, Tubney Wood <p>Indicates that proposals which would lead to the loss of existing business land and premises to other non-business uses will not be permitted apart from ancillary uses referred to under policy E13. Proposals for new business development or redevelopment will only be permitted if the resultant overall use of the site as a whole can be demonstrated to be at least as sustainable as the existing use, taking into account specific factors listed in the policy.</p>	<p>Consistent, in part, with the Framework</p> <p>The policy is consistent with the Framework insofar as the employment sites are in active economic use.</p>	Consider revising to ensure compliance with the Framework.
E13: Ancillary uses on key employment sites	Sets out criteria to be met for proposals for uses other than business uses, including crèche facilities, restaurants/cafes, recreation and sports facilities, medical facilities and shops, on the sites identified under policies E10 to E12.	Fully Consistent	
E14: The retention of small scale commercial premises in settlements	<p>Indicates that proposals which would lead to the loss of appropriately located small-scale commercial premises within settlements will not be permitted where they would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce employment in locations where other local job opportunities are limited; • harm the character and appearance of the area, including the diversity of uses and local community needs; • result in inappropriate levels of traffic where travel by modes other than the private car cannot be provided. 	<p>Not Consistent</p> <p>The policy is not consistent with paragraph 22 of the Framework where sites should not be protected for employment if there are no reasonable prospects of the sites being used for that purpose.</p> <p>The policy is not consistent</p>	Consider revising to ensure compliance with the Framework.

Policy	Summary	Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework	Identified Issues
	The policy also indicates that proposals will be permitted where the premises are occupied by an enterprise known to be un-neighbourly or badly sited and the proposal would result in its relocation to a more appropriate location.	with Framework at paragraph 51 where change of use from B class uses to residential should be approved where there is an identified need for additional housing in the area, provided there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate.	
E15: Steventon storage facility	Indicates that proposals for new buildings, increases in overall floorspace or changes of use will not be permitted at Steventon Storage Facility. The council will seek the complete cessation of business uses and clearance and restoration of the site.	Not Consistent The policy is not in conformity with paragraph 22 of the Framework where applications for alternative uses should be considered on their merits if there are no reasonable prospects of the site being used for the allocated employment use.	Consider revising to ensure compliance with the Framework.
E16: New buildings required for agricultural purposes	Indicates that proposals for new buildings and development necessary for the operation of agriculture or forestry will be permitted provided that certain criteria are met.	Fully Consistent	
E17: Farm diversification	Indicates that proposals for farm diversification which are small-scale will be permitted provided they are ancillary and related to the continued farming use of the holding. Where a new building is proposed, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate that it is not possible or appropriate to use an existing building on the farm or nearby.	Not Consistent The policy is not in conformity with paragraph 28 (point 1) of the Framework where planning policies should support sustainable growth and	Consider revising to ensure compliance with the Framework.

Policy	Summary	Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework	Identified Issues
		expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings, and well designed new buildings.	
E18: Farm shops	Indicates that proposals for farm shops or for the direct sale of crafts and other locally produced goods will be permitted provided they are small scale and certain specific criteria are met.	Fully Consistent	
E19: Farm shops	Indicates that proposals for the modest expansion or extension of farm and craft shops will be permitted subject to certain specific criteria.	Fully Consistent	
E20: The keeping. Rearing and training of horses	This policy sets out circumstances in which proposals for the keeping, rearing, training and livery of horses on a commercial basis will be permitted.	Fully Consistent	
E21: Loss of facilities for the keeping, rearing and training of horses	Indicates that proposals for the change of use or re-development of existing and suitably located large-scale establishments for the keeping, training and breeding of horses will not be permitted.	Fully Consistent	
S1: New retail provision	Sets out the retail hierarchy for the district. Indicates that proposals for retail development will generally be permitted in the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the town centre areas of Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon, subject to policies S2, S3 and TR6 • Within the local shopping centres at Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Grove and Wantage, subject to policies S12 and TR6 • In villages, to meet the needs of the local community 	Fully Consistent	

Policy	Summary	Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework	Identified Issues
	in accordance with policy S13. Also indicates that proposals for new retail development outside these locations will not be permitted, other than in accordance with policies H5, H7, S15, E13, E18 or E19.		
S2: Primary shopping uses in Abingdon and Wantage Town Centres	Indicates that proposals which involve a net loss of class A1 shopping floorspace at ground floor level in the primary shopping frontages will not be permitted.	Fully Consistent	
S3: Secondary shopping frontages for Abingdon and Wantage	Indicates that permission will be granted within the secondary frontages for uses within classes A2, A3 and for amusement / entertainment uses provided that certain criteria are met.	Fully Consistent	
S4: non retail uses in Abingdon and Wantage Town Centres	Indicates that proposals for use classes A2, A3, B1 (offices), healthcare facilities (within D1), amusement / entertainment uses and for residential accommodation (C3) will be permitted within the town centres (other than on the ground floor of premises within the primary and secondary frontages) provided that there would be no demonstrable harm caused to the living conditions of any neighbouring residents.	Fully Consistent	
S5: Non retail uses in Faringdon Town Centre	Indicates that, within the town centre area of Faringdon, permission will be granted for uses within classes A2 and A3 provided that certain criteria are met. Changes of use from classes A1, A2 and A3 to other uses will not be permitted on ground floor frontages. New residential, healthcare or B1 uses will be permitted on upper floors subject to there being no demonstrable harm to the living conditions of any neighbouring residents.	Fully Consistent	
S6: Upper floors in	Indicates that new shopping and commercial development	Fully Consistent	

Policy	Summary	Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework	Identified Issues
Town Centres	within the town centres shall, where possible, incorporate specific provision to maintain or improve the means of access to upper floors.		
S7: The Bury Street Precinct, Abingdon	States that, within the Bury Street and Charter areas, proposals which lead to environmental enhancement and major refurbishment will be permitted.	Fully Consistent	
S8: The Limborough Road Area, Wantage	Indicates that the Limborough Road area is proposed as the site for any major new shopping provision for Wantage. Requires a comprehensive approach to development or redevelopment, to include retail uses (subject to policy S1) and parking provision. Residential or B1 office uses will be allowed on upper floor levels.	Fully Consistent	
S10: Ock Street, Abingdon	Indicates that proposals which lead to environmental improvements within the Ock Street Policy Area will be permitted. Proposals which have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the Ock Street approach to the town centre will be refused.	Fully Consistent	
S11: Park Road, Faringdon	Indicates that proposals which lead to environmental improvements on the Park Road frontage by means of screening, landscaping or building design will be permitted. Proposals which have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the Park Road approach to the town centre will be refused.	Fully Consistent	
S12: Policies for local shopping centres	Indicates that, within the existing local shopping centres, changes of use from class A1 (retail) to classes A2 and A3 will only be permitted if certain criteria are met. Changes of use to residential (class C3) or office (class B1) uses will not be permitted at ground floor level. Such uses will be permitted on upper floors subject to certain criteria being met.	Fully Consistent	

Policy	Summary	Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework	Identified Issues
S13: Development on village shops	Indicates that proposals for the development or extension of village and other small shops designed to meet the day-to-day needs of the local population will be permitted provided they do not give rise to planning or highway problems.	Fully Consistent	
S14: Loss of village and other local shops	Indicates that proposals involving the loss of village and other local shops to other uses will not be permitted unless the council is satisfied that there are other similar facilities of equivalent community benefit available in the area, and other specific criteria are met.	Fully Consistent	
S15: Garages and garage shops	Indicates that proposals for new service/petrol filling stations including those with ancillary shops will be permitted in the main settlements and villages provided certain criteria are met. Proposals for the extension of petrol filling stations or garage shops or the redevelopment of existing stations within the same use will be permitted provided that certain criteria are met.	Fully Consistent	
T1: New tourist related development	<p>Policy supports new tourist-related developments as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the main settlements: larger scale tourist developments, museums, heritage centres, hotels, guest houses and associated tourist facilities. • Within the villages: smaller scale tourist developments, museums, heritage centres, hotels, guest houses, self-catering accommodation and associated tourist facilities. • Elsewhere: re-use, conversion or adaptation of suitable existing buildings to hotel, guest house or youth hostel accommodation, self-catering accommodation and countryside craft centres subject to policies GS3, GS7, GS8 and GS9. 	Fully Consistent	

Policy	Summary	Consistency with National Planning Policy Framework	Identified Issues
T2: Tourist facilities on existing sites	Policy supports new associated tourist related development which serves the need of visitors to existing tourist sites where it complies with the general policies for development; and where the range, scale and nature of provision is limited to that commensurate with established visitor numbers to the tourist site concerned.	Fully Consistent	
T4: Camping and caravanning	Policy indicates that proposals for touring caravans and camping sites will be permitted provided that certain specific criteria are met. Criteria include that the site is not in the Green Belt, and that proposals are limited in scale in general not involving more than 10 caravans/camping pitches.	Fully Consistent	

Assessment of non-saved policies relating to economic prosperity in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011³

Policy	Summary	Why not saved	Is the reason still relevant?	Is a new policy required?
DC 19: Shopfronts	Indicates that proposals for new shopfronts, or for the alteration of existing shopfronts, will be permitted provided that certain specific criteria are met.	Covered by other local plan policies, e.g. DC1 and DC5.	Yes	No
E22: Working from Home	Indicates that where planning permission for working at home is required, permission will be granted provided that certain criteria are met.	Covered by other local plan policies, e.g. DC5 and DC9.	Uncertain Whilst Policy DC9 protects against harmful development it does not promote home working directly	Consider if home working should be promoted through a new policy. Paragraph 21 of the Framework states that local planning authorities should facilitate flexible working practices, e.g. residential and commercial uses within the same unit. This is a matter which can be considered through the Local Plan 2029 Part 2 (LPP2).
S9: Faringdon Market Place	Identifies Faringdon Market Place for an environmental enhancement scheme.	Works carried out. Policy can be deleted.	Yes	No
T3: Hotels, Guest Houses and Public Houses	Indicates that extensions to existing hotels, guest houses or to provide overnight visitor accommodation at public houses will be permitted provided that certain criteria are met.	Covered by other local plan policies, e.g. E9.	No Policy E9 is not consistent with the Framework.	Consider if a dedicated policy is needed addressing hotels, guest houses and public houses.

³ Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011, Vale of White Horse District Council, July 2006.

Appendix B - Summary of other evidence base documents which have informed this topic paper

The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire, Estimates for 2011, County and district results, Tourism South East Research Unit, 2012

- 1.1. This report examines the volume, value and resultant economic impact of tourism on the county of Oxfordshire, with results presented at district and county level.
- 1.2. The report indicates that the Vale attracts fewer overnight trips than the other areas of the county (12 per cent of total domestic overnight trips across the county in 2011 and 5 per cent of overseas staying trips). The district correspondingly gains less overnight trip expenditure (10 per cent of domestic overnight trip spend across the county and 5 per cent of overseas overnight trip spend). The distribution of tourism day trips was more even across the county, with the Vale and South Oxfordshire each receiving 17 per cent of the county total, and West Oxfordshire receiving 15 per cent.

The economic impact of tourism Vale of White Horse 2011, Tourism South East Research Unit

- 1.3. This report provides indicative estimates of the volume, value and resultant economic impact of tourism on the Vale of White Horse in 2011.
- 1.4. The report indicates that the tourism industry generated approximately £202 million worth of income for local businesses in the Vale in 2011, representing a marginal increase of 0.7 per cent in total tourism value since 2010.
- 1.5. This tourism-related expenditure is estimated to have supported 2,420 full time equivalent jobs spread across a wide ranges of service sectors from catering and retail to public service jobs such as in local government. Once part-time and seasonal employment is added, the total number of jobs supported increased to 3,346 actual jobs, approximately 5 per cent of the total jobs in the district in 2011.

Abingdon Visitor Research Programme, A study of tourism in Abingdon, Hidden Britain, 2012

- 1.6. This report was commissioned by the Choose Abingdon Partnership to provide understanding and a solid evidence base for future economic and tourism derived planning and decision making in the town.
- 1.7. The conclusions of the study include that 'Abingdon offers a good experience to visitors once they have arrived, and that there is a high degree of satisfaction which leads to recommendations and return visits'. Recommendations include that 'new developments, infrastructure and facilities should be prioritised to complement and improve the Abingdon visitor offer'.

***Vale of White Horse District Council Retail Vacancy Survey 2012:
Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon, Vale of White Horse District Council***

- 1.8. This report⁴ indicates that the retail vacancy rate across the Vale's market towns of Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage as of September 2012 was 8.2 per cent. This vacancy rate represents an increase of nearly a percentage point over the previous year, but remains low compared to the national average of 11.4 per cent.
- 1.9. The vacancy rates for Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon are reported as follows:
- Overall vacancy rate in Abingdon: 8.7%
 - Overall vacancy rate in Wantage: 14.2%
 - Overall vacancy rate in Faringdon: 1.5%

This is Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire County Council, 2010

- 1.10. This report provides a summary of the social, economic and environmental conditions in Oxfordshire using the latest data available in April 2010, with particular emphasis on challenges facing the county.
- 1.11. Key findings set out in the report relating to supporting economic prosperity include the following:
- The economy is robust: the county has a successful economy built around the universities and high tech industries and businesses.
 - Education, health and other public sector organisations are major employers in the county.
 - Following the recession, the county remains one of the strongest economies in the South East.
 - The county has a wealth of highly skilled residents and high levels of employment in knowledge based industries.
 - Oxfordshire's skills profile and above average labour productivity should continue to attract business investment.
- 1.12. Economic challenges facing the county are identified as follows:
- Before the recession, Oxfordshire's employment growth rate was the third lowest of the South East counties. Despite improvements in labour productivity, economic growth remains constrained by labour supply.
 - Unemployment doubled during the recession and there are concerns nationally that unemployment will remain high for some

⁴ Vale of White Horse District Council Retail Vacancy Survey 2012, available online at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/business/support-businesses/market-research-and-data-0>

time. The numbers of young people who have not found jobs and are not in education or training is a particular concern.

- Some small urban areas have high levels of deprivation and have been so for many years, although the county is predominantly wealthy.
- House prices are among the highest in the country making it difficult for key workers such as nurses and teachers to live and work here.

Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone: Infrastructure Strategy, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Science Vale UK Partnership, 2012

- 1.13. This report⁵ indicates that the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership has decided to prioritise the use of Enterprise Zone business rates to fund the infrastructure needed in the Enterprise Zone. The main requirements are for strategic transport, focussing on east west movements across the area.

Oxfordshire Economic Assessment: Part One Summary – Key issues and findings, Draft, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, November 2012

- 1.14. Key messages in this report⁶ include that ‘the success of Oxfordshire’s scientific and technologically based economy ... is inextricably linked to: i) the presence and activities of its two universities ... and one of the largest hospital teaching and research trusts in the UK, located in Oxford; ii) the concentration of science and research activity to the south of the county at Harwell and Culham’.
- 1.15. The report also notes that ‘the Oxfordshire economy, on balance, is proving resilient with niche clusters such as bio-technology, space and cryogenics delivering growth’.
- 1.16. Barriers to economic growth identified in the report include ‘the big issues of supply and access to affordable housing, educational attainment and skills development, tackling congestion and improving communication links’. ‘Other issues include – access to finance, encouraging an enterprising culture, ensuring delivery of infrastructure to enable superfast broadband’.

⁵ Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone: Infrastructure Strategy (March 2012) Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Science Vale UK Partnership, available at: <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/cms/sites/lep/files/folders/documents/meetings/SVUKinfrastructureplan.pdf>

⁶ Oxfordshire Economic Assessment Part One: Summary – Key issues and findings, Draft (November 2012) Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, available at: <http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/cms/content/about-oxfordshire>

Faringdon and Wantage economic strategy and action plan 2010/ 11 to 2012/13, Vale of White Horse District Council, 2010

1.17. The strategy and action plan for Faringdon and Wantage is designed to help improve town centre vitality in these towns. A number of strategic aims are included which are:

- SA1: Building for the future
- SA2: Great shops
- SA3: market place hub
- SA4: High quality services
- SA5: Easy to get to
- SA6: Attractive and clean
- SA7: To enhance the distinctiveness of our towns
- SA8: Safe and secure

1.18. In addition, a series of detailed actions have been developed. These include:

- Shop front improvement initiative in Wantage.
- Market place improvement scheme and gateway treatments in Wantage.

Choose Abingdon Partnership Strategy for 2012 onwards, Choose Abingdon Partnership, 2012

1.19. This strategy outlines a series of projects which will help the partnership to deliver their mission, which is:

“To support and improve the economic, social and cultural vitality of the town for all its businesses, residents and visitors”.

1.20. Specific projects which are being taken forward relating to the economic prosperity topic area include:

- Loyalty card scheme.
- Local excellence market.
- Promotional campaign to support current independent retailers.
- Christmas shopping events and support for extravaganza.
- Support both business organisations.
- Promote local business to business activity.

An action plan for Faringdon, Faringdon Area Project, 2008

1.21. The Faringdon Action Plan builds on a comprehensive assessment of the town and identifies key actions to be delivered in the short term. The work to prepare the plan included completing a detailed SWOT analysis relating to employment, business support, training and

education, learning and skills, retail and town centre services, commercial and industrial property needs and tourism and visitor services.

- 1.22. The identified actions include making provision for coach parking to make the town more accessible to tourists visiting the nearby Cotswolds, Thames Valley or North Wessex Downs areas.

Emerging Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan, Faringdon Town Council, 2014

- 1.23. A neighbourhood plan is being prepared for Faringdon by a team of local people working with Faringdon Town Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and consultants appointed to assist with the process.
- 1.24. The emerging neighbourhood plan identifies the following local issues relating to supporting economic prosperity:
- Whilst Faringdon town centre experiences low vacancy rates, footfall is dropping significantly and the future vitality of the town centre is under pressure.
 - The size and amount of shops offer a limited range which is felt to be the primary reason for lack of footfall.
 - Opportunities for parish residents to work locally are limited, and therefore existing employment land is available for businesses to grow and residents to work locally is important.
 - Faringdon has a low profile for tourism despite its proximity to key attractions, and having its own historic assets.
 - A high proportion of residents travel more than 30 miles from the parish to work. Key employment destinations are Swindon and Oxford.
 - The quality of the streets and public spaces in and around the historic core has deteriorated and needs real improvement to support the success of the town centre and attract new commercial investment and visitors.

Oxford Skills Strategy 2020, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, 2014

- 1.25. The strategy has been prepared by the Oxfordshire LEP with one clear aim, to improve skills locally to the benefit of local residents and businesses alike. The strategy has incorporated a range of other documents such as “the Oxfordshire Innovation Engine: Realising Growth Potential”, the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), the European Structural and Investment Plan and City Deal. These provide access to sources of funding to deliver targeted programmes that improve skills and employment prospects.

- 1.26. The Skills Strategy sets out the key priorities for skills development and provides a clear direction to skills commissioners, providers and employers on the skills required to drive sustainable growth. The strategic priorities are set out as follows⁷:

SP1: To meet the needs of local employers through a more integrated and responsive approach to education and training

SP2: Creating the 'skills continuum' to support young people through their learning journey

SP3: Up-skilling and improving the changes of young people and adults marginalised or disadvantaged from work

SP4: To increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities

SP5: To explore how we can better retain graduates within Oxfordshire to meet the demand for the higher level skills our businesses need.

Vale Communities Strategy 2008-2016, Vale Partnership, 2008

- 1.27. The Vale Communities Strategy⁸ sets out the vision for the future of the Vale, identifies the issues that will affect the future of the area, and identifies priority actions that will help to shape the area and deliver the vision.

- 1.28. Key issues identified relating to the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment include:

- traffic congestion, particularly on the A34, will continue to affect the competitiveness of local business. There is a need to improve the transport infrastructure as a means of assisting employment growth
- the Vale has six times the national average of research and development jobs but China, India and other emerging economies are investing heavily in the skills needed to compete with the UK economy. The need for well paid and skilled jobs was supported
- the town centres in the Vale are not all enjoying the full benefits of the Vale's economic success. The need to maintain and improve the vitality and viability of town centres was identified, and
- farming continues to change, with higher grain prices making livestock farming difficult and an increased interest in growing biomass or crops for bio-fuel. The importance of agriculture as part of the rural economy is recognised.

- 1.29. The Vale Partnership's vision for the future is:

⁷ Oxford Skills Strategy 2020, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, 2014, p.7

⁸ Vale Community Strategy 2008-2016, Vale Partnership, 2008, available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/about-us/how-we-work/partnerships/vale-community-strategy>

“A Sustainable Vale

- with prosperous, inclusive and thriving communities that have good access to a range of housing, jobs and services
- where everyone can feel safe and enjoy life, and
- where our needs can be met without compromising the natural and built heritage or the ability of future generations to meet their needs”.

1.30. Identified priorities relating to supporting economic prosperity set out within the strategy include:

- addressing economic weaknesses
- building on our economic strengths. This should include; planning for appropriate housing and amenities that will support innovation and enterprise and attract new high value business to the district, in particular to the Science Vale growth area; and making sure that suitable sites are available (in our towns and rural areas) for business development that will result in economic and job opportunities, and
- maintaining and enhancing the health and vitality of the Vale’s market town centres. This should include: resisting retail and other commercial development where this would damage town centre health and vitality; and encouraging retail and other commercial development in town centres that will support town centre health and vitality.

1.31. The Local Plan 2031 will have a key role in helping to deliver the vision and priorities of the Vale Community Strategy. In particular, local plan policies relating to supporting economic prosperity should seek to address economic weaknesses, build on our economic strengths, and maintain and enhance the health and vitality of the Vale’s market town centres.

Other national and regional documents of note

Supporting local growth, CLG and Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), 2011

1.32. The Government published this paper⁹ in December 2011 to set out progress made in relation to the promotion of strong, sustainable and balanced growth. The paper highlights initiatives such as Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), the new homes bonus, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), changes to the planning system, city deals, enterprise zones, and the Mary Portas review of high streets.

⁹ Supporting local growth, CLG and BIS, December 2011, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-local-growth>

- 1.33. The paper emphasises the Government's commitment to supporting business and encouraging growth. There is a key challenge to respond to this at the local level in the Vale through the inclusion of appropriate planning policies in the Local Plan 2031.

Parades to be proud of: strategies to support local shops, CLG, 2012

- 1.34. The Government published this document¹⁰ in June 2012 to highlight the important role of local parades of shops, which affect what local communities look and feel like, how communities interact, and how local economies perform. The report aims to 'set out the latest data on how parades of shops are faring; identify strategies that might help parades of shops; and signpost businesses, landlords, local authorities, communities and other interested parties to useful tools'.
- 1.35. The report identifies that neighbourhood stores have seen an increase in retail expenditure over and above inflation in the period from 2002 to 2012, that neighbourhood retail has maintained a steady share of the retail market, and that there has been a trend towards fewer but slightly bigger stores over the last 10 years.
- 1.36. Other key trends are that sales densities in neighbourhood retail facilities have increased significantly and there has been an increase in local format multiple convenience stores (e.g. Tesco Metro). Convenience stores have the highest number of stores in neighbourhood locations, but 'research has also identified the possibility for local parades of shops to become a 'hub' for communities, through a combination of retail, services and social provision, including health centres, community centres and libraries'.
- 1.37. The report suggests strategies for shop owners, businesses, landlords, local residents and local authorities to use to make positive changes to their local parades. These include strategies relating to building a collective identity, flexibility and responsiveness, and planning together for the future. The report also sets out useful tools to help local parades, including planning tools such as neighbourhood plans, Local Development Orders, and the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 1.38. There is a key challenge to respond to the findings of this report and support local parades of shops through appropriate planning policies in the Vale.

¹⁰ Parades to be proud of: Strategies to support local shops, CLG, June 2012, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategies-to-support-local-shops>

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