

Development outside settlements

G5 The countryside will be protected from harmful development.

Special consideration will be given to development for agricultural, forestry or outdoor recreational needs or for other uses appropriate to a rural area which cannot reasonably be accommodated in a nearby settlement.

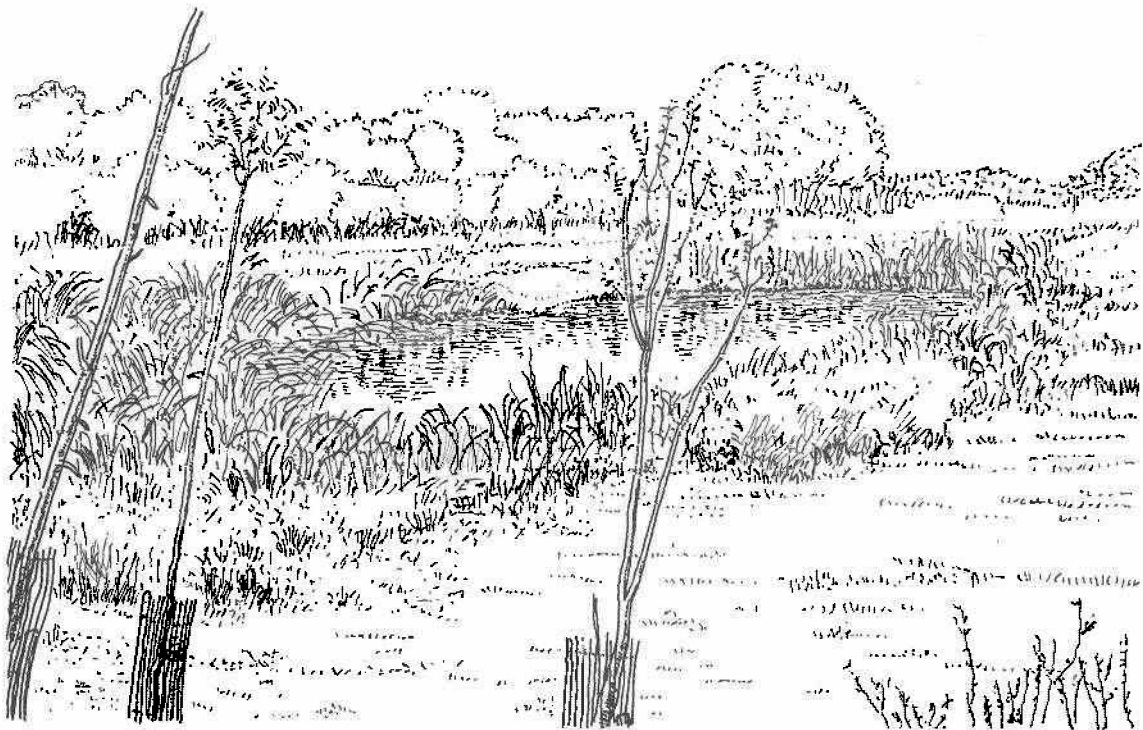
- 3.15 The Government is committed to protecting the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character. Protecting and maintaining the character of the countryside depends on sustainable rural communities. Where development is allowed on sites adjoining settlements it should respect existing settlement patterns, the gaps between them and the character of the countryside. While most development needs should be met within and adjacent to existing settlements, exceptional consideration will be given to proposals in other locations providing they make a positive contribution to sustainability and do not have significant adverse effects on established rural activities, countryside quality and the natural environment. Otherwise new building in the open countryside away from existing settlements will be strictly controlled.
- 3.16 Development which may be permitted by the policy will normally be small in scale and could include such uses as agricultural buildings, farm workers' dwellings, sports changing facilities, pavilions and small clubhouses, and uses which are generally rural in character and need to be located outside a settlement. Significant development in the vicinity of motorway or major road junctions will not be allowed.

Energy and resource conservation

G6 All new developments should incorporate best practice in energy efficiency and resource conservation, in particular through passive solar design, small scale renewable energy, providing high levels of insulation, water conservation measures and by minimising the use of construction materials, maximising use of recycled and secondary materials in place of primary aggregates and minimising production of waste.

New developments should make adequate provision to facilitate storage, re-use, recycling and composting of waste.

- 3.17 A key area in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and climate change is to seek to reduce energy consumption and encourage the use of renewable energy sources such as solar or wind power. Passive solar design aims to reduce the demand for energy for space heating, lighting and air conditioning by making best use of free solar gain to buildings. Landscaping can also play a role, for example by providing screening from winds. To encourage the provision of renewable energy in line with PPS22 (Renewable Energy), local planning authorities may include policies in local plans and local development documents requiring a percentage of the energy to be used in new development to be provided from renewable energy on site. Water is a valuable natural resource and managing it wisely can reduce the need to develop new water resources which can be environmentally damaging. For new housing development best practice will normally be taken to mean achieving at least BREAM Eco-homes standard 'very good' rating, except for developments that are only a very small number of dwellings.



- 3.18 The use of combined heat and power is to be encouraged. Policy guidance on combined heat and power and proposals for the development of renewable energy sources is in Chapter 10, policy EG2.

- 3.19 It is County Council policy to encourage the recycling of materials, which has the benefit of conserving non-renewable mineral resources, reducing the environmental harm caused by mineral extraction and reducing the amount of waste.
- 3.20 Highway schemes should be designed to minimise the production and disposal of waste. The maximum quantities of recycled and secondary materials consistent with the currently prevailing standards should be used in place of primary aggregates.

4. Transport

- 4.1 The way that transport is managed and developed makes an important contribution towards each of the four aims of this Plan. The transport policies will help to protect Oxfordshire's environment by reducing transport emissions; improve the quality of life by improving the range of travel options; and support the development of the local economy. Also, transport aspects of the general policies (relating to the location of development, design and infrastructure requirements) will encourage efficient use of energy through reducing the need to travel and reducing reliance on private car use.
- 4.2 Forecasts of road traffic growth are strongly linked to local housing and employment growth and to growth of the economy. Economic growth is increasing the affordability and the rate of car ownership and the amount of car use. Expansion of the road network to meet forecast demand is usually constrained by the consequences for the environment as well as by the costs of improvements. Road building also contributes to continuing traffic growth. It is generally accepted that road capacity improvements will therefore be limited and will be insufficient to match traffic demand. Unless road traffic growth is constrained, congestion can be expected to increase.
- 4.3 The Government's 10 year plan, announced in July 2000, aims to reduce congestion and pollution through a combination of measures to transfer travel to improved public transport services, to manage traffic so as to make best use of the existing highway infrastructure and to target highway improvements to remove bottlenecks. However, significant improvement to the rail network is proving to be very costly and will take until well beyond the period of the 10 year plan. The Government's July 2004 White Paper, 'The Future of Transport, a network for 2030', acknowledges the challenge that faces the nation as a result of economic growth resulting in an increasing demand for travel, compounded by underinvestment in our transport system. It builds on the strategy of the 10 Year Plan using three themes: sustained investment over the long term; improvements in transport management; and planning ahead. In a report¹³, published at the same time as the White Paper, it is accepted that in a nationwide implementation of road pricing, where we generally pay less to travel on uncongested roads but more on congested roads, people would be influenced to choose to travel and to organise their lives in ways that reduce congestion thus bringing widespread economic benefits. The report estimates that, subject to the Government taking a strong lead on determining the functional requirements for a national road pricing system and promoting relevant standards, this will be available within the next 10 to 15 years. Meanwhile congestion is likely to continue to increase.

¹³ Feasibility Study of Road Pricing in the UK – Full Report, Department of Transport, July 2004.

4.4 Against this background the County Council's long-term aim for improving transport in the county is 'to improve access to jobs and services, particularly for those most in need, in ways which are both safe and sustainable'. The Council has developed a series of long-term objectives to realise their aim:

- To manage the county's system of transport networks in support of a strong local and regional economy;
- To improve access to services, particularly for those without access to a car;
- To improve the safety of travel; and
- To minimise the impact of travel on the environment.

The transport policies, together with the general policies, show how the Council's sustainable transport objectives are to be achieved, particularly following the guidance of PPG13. Transport principles are grouped mainly within policies T1 to T4, while the means of accomplishment, in terms of use and development of the transport networks, are mainly set out within the remaining policies T5 to T8, whilst matters of management feature in various policies.

4.5 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is the principal document for setting out the Council's transport programme. Besides setting out a 5 year transport improvement programme, the LTP provides background and the County Council's views on many transport topics which will be useful to developers. The LTP will be relevant to many major development proposals. The Provisional Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (new LTP) has been produced over a timescale roughly similar to the Structure Plan, which has allowed the work on each to influence the other. It includes the same broad transport aim, and in order to use resources wisely and to focus them on the highest priorities, the new LTP has set the following objectives for the 5 year programme:

- Tackling congestion
- Delivering Accessibility;
- Safer Roads;
- Better Air Quality; and
- Improving the Street Environment.

The final Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 will be produced in early 2006; it will supersede the first Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2001-2006 and come into effect from April 2006. The Transport Networks Review¹⁴ and the integrated transport strategies for a number of urban areas, including continuing development of the Oxford Transport Strategy, has provided important information and guidance for the new LTP.

4.6 The County Council has a commitment within the first LTP to reducing the aggregate traffic growth on county roads in the period 2000 to 2015 to halve the forecast traffic growth for Oxfordshire. The means by which this could be achieved, illustrated in the Council's Road Traffic Reduction Report (part of the first LTP), was based on the programme of transport schemes. Of these, the improvement of public transport for medium distance trips between main urban centres is of considerable significance for traffic reduction. The precise terms of the Council's commitment to traffic reduction will be reviewed during the provisional period of the new LTP.

¹⁴ www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/index/travel/transport_networks_review.htm

Sustainable travel

- T1 Transport measures and development proposals should give emphasis to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and balance these against ease of traffic movement, thereby improving travel choice and reducing dependence on private motorised travel. Suitable provision should be made for servicing, for the needs of disabled people and for promotion of safety.**
- 4.7 The policy aims to reduce dependence on cars and to ensure that those forms of transport that are more environmentally acceptable are fostered. This will mean giving priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport over ease of traffic movement particularly in town centres, local neighbourhoods and other areas where access is significant.
- 4.8 Travel plans are increasingly being used to promote community friendly travel choices and reduce dependence on the private car. A travel plan is a package of measures in which the key objectives are to reduce the need to travel by car, reduce the danger and disruption caused by car travel to the community, reduce the release of greenhouse gases and reduce the harm to air quality associated with car travel. The measures in any given travel plan should be tailored to the organisation, and link into the local authorities' policies and measures to promote walking, public transport and cycling. Proposals for developments involving significant employment use are likely to need a travel plan. Travel plans will be developed, funded and implemented by the employer or developer (see policy T8).
- 4.9 There are many techniques that can be used to manage traffic in ways that will improve the attraction of walking, cycling and use of public transport. Examples for pedestrians and cyclists are providing priority over other road users, reducing traffic speed, improving safety and restricting classes of traffic from using unsuitable routes. Traffic management will be used to improve safety and the environment for pedestrians and cyclists and to give priority to buses over other vehicles, particularly at congestion points so as to improve reliability of bus services. The layout of new development will be arranged to make walking, cycling and public transport attractive travel choices for all users including disabled people. Care in the detailed layout will be required to achieve suitable servicing provision. Where air pollution from traffic remains a problem, traffic orders may be used to limit access, with exemptions for vehicles using alternative fuels that have a low impact on air quality.



- 4.10 Because of increasing problems of congestion and pollution in the larger towns, integrated transport strategies are being devised to introduce measures to make the towns more attractive and accessible by means other than the private car. Transport and development strategies need to be mutually supportive through co-ordination of policies and proposals in local plans with the investment priorities in the Local Transport Plan. Integrated transport strategies have been adopted and are being implemented in Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Henley, Oxford (both in the centre and in the Headington/Marston area) and at Witney. Work is in progress, or soon will be, for preparing transport strategies at Didcot, and for the Wantage and Grove area.

Car parking

- T2 A comprehensive approach will be adopted for the provision and management of car parking space with the aim of promoting sustainable travel choices. Local plans should include appropriate local policies and proposals.**

Maximum standards for parking provision (cars, cycles etc.) will apply to development proposals, taking into account alternative forms of transport (available or to be provided to the site) and the wider transport strategy for the area.

Park and ride schemes will be supported where they support the functions of the principal transport corridors and where they form part of a wider transport strategy for the area.

- 4.11 The availability of car parking has a major influence on the choice of means of transport. Some studies suggest this can be more significant than the level of public transport provision, particularly for the journey to work. Car parking management is, therefore, an effective tool to be included in a transport strategy that seeks to reduce travel within an area. Car parking restraint should be accompanied by complementary measures to provide good alternative choices for means of access. The County Council in October 2002, adopted maximum parking standards which follow the principles of Government advice in PPG13 and recognise that development locations in the county are not equal in their potential to offer alternatives to car travel. The appropriate level of car parking provision will depend on a range of issues including the type of development and ease of access to services by other modes.
- 4.12 Where transport strategies have been adopted with the aim of reducing congestion and traffic, their success will depend on limiting and managing the use of car parking space in sensitive areas. Local authorities should adopt policies that take a comprehensive approach to the provision and management of public and private car parking space in their area, including its charging regime, so as to support transport strategies for their area.