

HOUSING

INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING CONTEXT

- 8.1 Two functions of the Local Plan are to identify land on which new housing can be built to 2011 and to set out the Council's policies for dealing with the many planning applications for housing development.
- 8.2 The aims of the Local Plan, as set out in Chapter 2, include aim 4: to maintain and improve the quality of life of all members of the local community. This is a particularly important principle for the housing chapter but there are other goals which the housing policies seek to achieve. The goals which are particularly relevant include:
- i) making sufficient land available to enable the Structure Plan housing requirements to 2011 to be met;
 - ii) ensuring a range of housing types is provided to meet the needs of the local community, including affordable housing and homes for those with impaired mobility;
 - iii) securing the provision of local facilities in association with new development;
 - iv) locating most new housing close to existing services and facilities so as to reduce the need to travel by car; and
 - v) reducing the need for development on greenfield sites by re-using vacant and under-used land and buildings in settlements and encouraging higher density developments where appropriate.

The Structure of this Chapter

- 8.3 This chapter follows a structure which is broadly consistent with the local plan strategy set out in Chapter 3. The policies are divided into four broad sections:
- i) the amount and location of new housing development;
 - ii) making the most efficient use of land and buildings;
 - iii) widening housing opportunity and choice; and
 - iv) extending and altering existing residential properties.
- 8.4 Policies in other chapters of the Plan will also be important when considering proposals for housing development including, in particular, the general strategy, development control and leisure chapters. Cross referencing is included in the supporting text to aid understanding of interrelated issues.

- 8.5 In developing the policies for this chapter the Council has taken full account of planning advice from central government, Regional Planning Guidance, the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and the responses to the consultation carried out following publication of the Local Plan Issues Report in August 2000. These are considered briefly below.

Planning Guidance from Central Government

- 8.6 Government planning guidance on housing is set out principally in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: *Housing* (PPG3). The government intends that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home and that local planning authorities should:
- i) meet the housing requirements of the whole community including those in need of affordable and specialist housing, and provide a better mix in the size, type and location of housing;
 - ii) provide sufficient housing land, in the right place at the right time, giving priority to re-using previously developed land in urban areas. The national target is to provide 60% of additional housing on previously developed land and through the conversion of existing buildings. In identifying sites, local planning authorities are advised to follow a search sequence starting with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings (which should be developed before greenfield sites), then urban extensions and finally around nodes in good public transport corridors. Sites should be located so as to be accessible to jobs and services by means other than the car, use spare capacity in existing infrastructure, help to build communities and take account of physical and environmental constraints. The provision of more housing in town centres is encouraged. Local planning authorities are advised to make the best use of land and seek developments of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare and higher densities close to good public transport corridors. Rather than the previous approach of 'predict and provide' for new housing, the guidance encourages a 'plan – monitor – manage' approach, where the housing requirements and the ways in which they are to be met are kept under regular review;
 - iii) promote good design in order to create attractive high quality environments where people will want to live.

Regional Policy Background

- 8.7 Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) carries forward the themes established by central government. Particular emphasis is given to meeting future development needs without perpetuating the trend for dispersed and land-extensive patterns of development, especially as the population is likely to consist of a higher proportion of one and two person households. A key feature of the guidance is to concentrate development in urban areas and achieve urban renaissance, so the

towns and cities are more attractive places in which to live, work and engage in cultural and leisure activities.

- 8.8 RPG9 requires that 39,000 dwellings should be provided each year between 2001 and 2006 in the area of the South East outside London. Oxfordshire is to provide 2,430 dwellings a year. Full use should be made of urban land, and outside London at least 60% of development should be on previously developed sites or should occur through the conversion of existing buildings. A range of house sizes and tenures is to be provided and a provisional indicator is that outside London 18,000–19,000 affordable houses should be provided each year. This is almost 50% of the annual provision. The draft South East Plan to 2026, which is likely to be approved in 2008, proposes a higher level of housing development for Oxfordshire.

The Oxfordshire Structure Plan

- 8.9 The housing policies in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2011, which pre-dated the regional guidance referred to above, required that 35,500 dwellings be provided in the county between 1996 and 2011. This was slightly less than the figure in RPG9. The Vale had to accommodate some 5,750 dwellings over this period, of which 500 were to be located to the west of Didcot as part of a major expansion of the town. In the 2011 and 2016 Structure Plans the main locations for housing in the county are Banbury, Bicester, Didcot and Witney. Elsewhere most new housing development should take place in settlements where a reasonable range of employment services and community facilities exist or can be provided. Significant additional developments should be avoided where they are likely to result in cars commuting to urban areas and where travel needs are unlikely to be well served by public transport. Provision is to be made for a variety of dwellings in terms of location, size and density, including affordable housing. Proposals which make effective use of the housing stock will be encouraged. The Oxfordshire Structure Plan to 2016 requires that some 7,150 homes be provided in the Vale between 2001 and 2016, and names Grove as one of the main locations for housing development in the county where some 2,100 homes should be built.

Local Consultation

- 8.10 The Local Plan Issues Report, published in August 2000, sought the views of local people on a number of housing issues the Council would need to address. The responses showed a majority of people in support of:
- concentrating development at the Vale's five main settlements. However, there was no clear view as to whether the development required on greenfield sites should be spread on a range of sites or concentrated in one location, such as west of Grove;
 - new building not being allowed to extend the built-up areas of villages into the surrounding countryside;
 - allowing groups of up to nine dwellings to be built on sites in the larger villages, but restricting developments to sites for one or two dwellings in the smaller

- villages;
- promoting well designed, higher density developments, although there were concerns that high density housing can harm communities and the environment if they are not planned with care; and
- the provision of more small residential units.

POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

The New Housing to be Provided in the Vale to 2011

The Amount of New Housing

- 8.11 Significant progress has already been made in providing the housing requirements specified for the Vale in the Structure Plan to 2011. Table 8.1 below shows that at April 2005 4456 dwellings had already been built or had planning permission for development. An additional 80 dwellings are also likely to be provided on small sites not identified in the Plan (in accordance with policies H10–H13 below). A further 2126 dwellings are likely to be provided on the new allocations made in policies H2–H9 below. If all the development provided for in the plan was to take place by 2011 the Structure Plan requirement to 2011 would be exceeded. However, there are a number of areas of uncertainty which need to be taken into account. Some 80 dwellings are estimated to result from development on sites which cannot yet be identified, and 1550 dwellings are proposed on four greenfield sites, two of which have a complex package of services, facilities and infrastructure provision to be negotiated before development can commence. Some potential ‘over provision’ is therefore necessary to ensure that the Structure Plan housing provision can actually be met. The additional land identified in the plan will provide certainty and will count towards the housing required in the next plan period. This is consistent with government advice that local plans should identify ten years’ supply of housing land at the date of their adoption. The second and third phases of development on the former airfield at Grove, not included in the figures below, will also count towards the supply of housing land in the longer term.

Table 8.1 The number of dwellings to be provided in the Vale 1996 – 2011			
	Didcot Area (Vale)	Rest of the Vale	Total
Dwellings built 01.04.96 – 01.04.05		2784	2784
Dwellings with planning permission at 01.04.05		1672	1672
Estimate of additional dwellings to be built on small sites		80	80
Estimate of additional dwellings to be built on unidentified sites of 10 or more dwellings		0	0
Additional sites proposed for development in this plan :			
- within the main settlements or on previously developed sites		576	576
- greenfield on the edge of the main settlements	500	1050	1550
Total Supply 1996 - 2011	500	6162	6662
Structure Plan Requirement 1996 - 2011	500	5250	5750

The Distribution of New Housing

- 8.12 The sites proposed for development in this Plan take account of the findings of a detailed study of the capacity of the Vale's five main settlements to absorb more housing. Many of the sites are identified for future housing development within the built-up areas of Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage. All of these sites involve land which can be described as previously developed. Some are already the subject of planning applications or known developer interest and may well be permitted by the time the Plan is adopted. However, these sites do not provide sufficient housing to enable the Structure Plan requirement to be met and therefore additional greenfield land has had to be identified. The Council has decided to do this on the edges of the five main settlements in accordance with the general strategy for the location of development set out in Chapter 3 above. No new greenfield housing sites are identified on the edges of the Vale's villages and housing developments which extend their built-up areas will not be permitted.
- 8.13 The Council has carefully evaluated a range of sites on the edges of the five main settlements, sought the views of its Sustainability Panel and considered the responses to the consultation on the Issues Report and the first deposit Local Plan. As a result it has decided to concentrate most of the greenfield development needed to meet the Structure Plan requirement outside the Didcot area in two locations, on the former airfield west of Grove and the former nursery and existing cricket ground south east of Faringdon. In the Council's view development west of Grove offers an excellent opportunity to provide a high quality, sustainable development, which is reasonably well located in relation to the expanding job

opportunities at Milton Park, Harwell and Grove Technology Park. It offers the opportunity to build a community and support new physical and social infrastructure and will boost the regeneration of Wantage town centre. It is in a location which minimises the damage to natural resources and has the capacity to provide for housing beyond the end date of this Plan (see paragraph 8.16 below). The development of the former nursery and existing cricket ground at Faringdon will widen the choice in the location of new housing development and will support local services, facilities and businesses in the town. This will help maintain the town as a service centre for the western part of the Vale and is consistent with the Healthcheck and Action Plan for Faringdon (2002) supported by the District and Town Councils and the Countryside Agency. The alternative option, of spreading development on a range of smaller sites on the edges of all the five main settlements, was not chosen as it would be more harmful to physical and environmental factors, would be no more sustainable in transport terms and would be less successful in facilitating the provision of additional services and facilities to help build local communities. As a result of the Inspector's conclusions on the local plan inquiry that some limited new allocations are required to ensure that structure plan requirement to 2011 is met, two further sites have been identified for housing development on previously safeguarded land on the edge of Botley. Together these sites will provide an additional 280 dwellings in a highly sustainable location in terms of minimising the need to travel by car.

- 8.14 Table 8.2 below shows that of the houses to be built in the Vale from 1996, 74% will be in the five main settlements of the Vale and on the edge of Didcot. The three settlements taking the largest share of the growth will be Abingdon, Faringdon and Grove. The rural areas will accommodate 26% of the development (some 1736 dwellings) with the majority of this (87%) having already been built or with planning permission.

Table 8.2 The distribution of dwellings to be provided in the Vale 1996 – 2011					
	Dwellings built since 01.04.96 and dwellings permitted at 01.04.05	Dwellings to be provided on unidentified sites	Dwellings on new allocations not permitted as at 01.04.05	Total	% of total
Abingdon	1466		24	1490	22
Botley	150		490	640	10
Faringdon	604		437	1041	16
Grove	255		500	755	11
Wantage	469		0	469	7

Main settlements in the Vale sub total	2944	31	1451	4426 ¹	66
Didcot			500	500	8
The larger villages	1162	34		1196	18
The smaller villages	202	8	100	310	5
Elsewhere	148	7	75	230	3
Total	4456	80	2126	6662	100

¹ Total includes the 31 dwellings be provided on unidentified sites in the main settlements

The Managed Release of Sites

- 8.15 The government's good practice guide on the managed release of housing sites states that local authorities may wish to designate strategic sites which they consider to be essential to their strategy for meeting housing requirements over a longer term. This signals the foundation for future housing development in the area which may extend beyond the life of the plan. The Oxfordshire Structure Plan to 2016 has proposed that Grove should be a location for major housing development to 2016 and beyond. The Council has thought carefully about the longer term potential offered by the Grove airfield site and considers that it should be designated a strategic site, where development will be planned to extend beyond the life of this Plan. The former airfield is a relatively homogenous site with few clear boundaries within it and once development starts in the area it would be difficult to resist its further spread. The Council has decided to identify the whole site, which could accommodate about 2,500 dwellings and associated facilities, so that it can be planned in a comprehensive way at the outset. This will be of benefit to the local community as it will give certainty in the future, and will enable the planned provision of services and infrastructure, which would be more difficult to achieve with a piecemeal approach to development. The airfield site is likely to be developed over a fifteen year period, from 2006 to 2021.

POLICY H1

LAND WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICIES H2–H12 BELOW TO ENABLE THE STRUCTURE PLAN HOUSING REQUIREMENTS TO 2011 TO BE MET. THE SITES IDENTIFIED IN POLICIES H2–H9 ARE DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.

New Housing Sites Identified in the Local Plan

- 8.16 Policies H2–H9 below identify sites for housing development. Some of these were permitted for development at 1 April 2005 (marked with *) and are generally included in the policies to give a more complete picture of where development is likely to occur in the district. If these permissions lapse the Council is likely to permit applications for their renewal, subject to detailed site considerations. The sites without an annotation were not permitted or allocated at April 2005, although some sites have been the subject of planning applications which the Council has resolved to permit, subject to details being finalised or a legal agreement being signed. An estimate of the number of dwellings that could be built on each site is included within the policies. These numbers only provide an indication of the likely scale of development and are not binding on the Council. The figures may be increased or decreased in the light of detailed design considerations when a planning application is made. The sites are shown on the proposals map and more detailed supplementary planning guidance has been prepared for the former nursery site at Faringdon and the strategic site west of Grove.

Housing Sites in Abingdon

- 8.17 The nine sites identified for development in Abingdon under policy H2 below are all on previously developed land within the built-up area of the town. Planning applications have been submitted on all the sites and at 1 April 2005 the Council had resolved to grant permission on all except that to the rear of the Police Station in Colwell Drive. These sites will be expected to provide high quality, high density housing commensurate with a historic market town location.

POLICY H2

THE FOLLOWING SITES IN ABINGDON (AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP) ARE IDENTIFIED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

<i>Site Ref</i>	<i>Estimated Number of Dwellings to 2011</i>
i) PENLON, THE VINEYARD *	90
ii) THE FORMER BRITISH GAS SITE, THE VINEYARD *	49
iii) REAR OF THE POLICE STATION, COLWELL DRIVE	24
iv) THE FORMER MALTINGS, THE VINEYARD *	90
v) CALDECOTT SCHOOL, SAXTON ROAD *	80
vi) THE RED LION, THE VINEYARD *	20
vii) 2 – 12 BERRYCROFT *	10
viii) SOUTH ABINGDON COMMUNITY CENTRE *	12
ix) HALF OF THE THAMES VIEW INDUSTRIAL ESTATE SOUTH OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL CAR PARK AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME FOR A MIXED HOUSING	

* *Sites with planning permission for ten or more dwellings at 1 April 2005*

Housing Sites in Botley

- 8.18 The Timbmet site at Cumnor Hill, Botley, will become available for redevelopment during the Plan period. The site is in a highly sustainable location, being close to a wide range of jobs, services and public transport facilities. Timbmet occupies some 8 hectares of land, of which some 3 hectares are in the Oxford Green Belt and part of the site is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSS1). The Council proposes that the part of the site fronting Cumnor Hill, which is not in the Green Belt or designated an SSS1, should be developed for housing. At an average of 40 dwellings per hectare, this part of the site could accommodate some 180 dwellings. The southern part of the site, which is within the Oxford Green Belt, should be restored to open space with access for the public. The removal of the large sheds and open storage areas will improve the visual amenities of the Green Belt and its openness. The redevelopment of part of the site for housing gives an opportunity for providing much needed affordable housing in the area and will help to redress the imbalance between jobs and housing in the Oxford area. The Council has resolved to permit housing on the nursery school and Timbmet sites. Following the Inspector's report on the Local Plan the Council has accepted his recommendations to allocate the formerly safeguarded land at Tilbury Lane and Lime Road for housing development to provide 280 dwellings in a highly sustainable location in terms of minimising the need to travel by car. The Tilbury Lane site is greenfield land and that at Lime Road is partly previously developed.

POLICY H3

THE FOLLOWING SITES IN BOTLEY (AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP) ARE IDENTIFIED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

	Estimated number of dwellings to 2011
i) THE TIMBMET SITE AT CUMNOR HILL FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND OPEN SPACE	180
ii) THE NURSERY SCHOOL SITE, ELMS ROAD	30
iii) 82 – 86 CUMNOR HILL *	14
iv) LAND SOUTH OF THE A420 (BOTH SIDES OF TILBURY LANE)	150
v) LAND SOUTH OF LIME ROAD	130

* Site with planning permission at April 2005

Housing Sites in Faringdon

- 8.19 Policy H4 below identifies two sites for housing development, at Swan Lane and the Tennis Club, on previously developed land within the built-up area of the town. The policy makes provision for housing development on two sites on the edge of the town. The first includes the properties of Winslow and Coxwell House to the east of Coxwell Road and the second, much larger site, involves land between Stanford Road and Park Road on the cricket pitch and former nursery. On this site B1 business uses will be permitted to the south of the housing, and access will be taken from Park Road. The site will only be permitted as part of a comprehensive scheme for housing and employment in association with an extension to the Folly Park (see policies E3iv and L13). Contributions will need to be made to improve the services and facilities in the town in accordance with policy DC8 of this plan. Supplementary planning guidance sets out detailed development principles and guidance.

POLICY H4

THE FOLLOWING SITES IN FARINGDON (AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP) ARE IDENTIFIED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

<i>Site Ref</i>	<i>Estimated Number of Dwellings to 2011</i>
i) SWAN LANE*	66
ii) THE TENNIS CLUB, PROVIDED AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE SITE IS AVAILABLE *	10
iii) LAND AT WINSLOW AND COXWELL HOUSE, COXWELL ROAD	37

DEVELOPMENT ON THE FOLLOWING SITE WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME INCLUDING HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, AN EXTENSION TO FOLLY PARK AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ACCESS TO THE PARK. NO DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ALLOWED ON THE CRICKET GROUND UNTIL AN ALTERNATIVE FACILITY OF EQUAL OR BETTER QUALITY IS AVAILABLE FOR USE.

iv)	THE CRICKET GROUND AND FORMER NURSERY	400
-----	---------------------------------------	-----

* *Sites with planning permission at April 2005*

Strategic Housing Site West of Grove

- 8.20 Paragraphs 8.13 and 8.15 outline the reasons why the Council has decided to designate the former airfield west of Grove as a strategic housing site to last beyond this plan period. The proposal is in conformity with the Oxfordshire Structure Plan to 2016 which proposes Grove as a location for major housing development. It is envisaged that the development will occur in three broad

phases: 500 dwellings to be built between 2006 and 2011, 1000 dwellings between 2011 and 2016 and 1000 dwellings between 2016 and 2021.

- 8.21 The Council wishes to see a distinctive, high quality, sustainable development on the site where people will be pleased and proud to live. The Council recognises that development of this scale will be a very large addition to the community of Grove and will also impact on people living in Wantage and East Challow. For these reasons the Council will work with the local communities, the developer and those providing and managing the infrastructure and services to plan the new development in a way which integrates with and benefits the existing communities. The Council will seek funding for a community development worker and information centre to aid the process of integration throughout the site's development. Grove is a settlement which has developed in a piecemeal way, particularly as a result of the planning permissions that were granted on appeal in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As a consequence it lacks many of the services and facilities that a settlement of its size (about 8,000 people) could expect and many of the services and facilities it does have, such as primary schools and community centres, are operating at capacity. For these reasons the Council will require that many of the services and facilities detailed in policy H5 below are provided at an early stage of the development. Although it will not be possible to provide everything at the beginning, the Council will be working with the existing community, the developer and the service providers (such as for health, education, libraries, sport and leisure facilities and community buildings) to seek ways of ensuring that the new residents have access to the facilities they need without overburdening the existing facilities in Grove. The phased provision of adequate services and facilities for the new residents must be guaranteed before the Council will grant planning permission for any development on the site. This will be achieved by conditions on the planning permissions and appropriate legal agreements with prospective developers.
- 8.22 In accordance with policy H16 below, the Council will be seeking about 50% of the dwellings on the site to have one or two bedrooms to meet the needs of the increasing number of small households. It will also seek that 10% of the dwellings are developed to lifetime home standards. 40% of the dwellings should be affordable for local people in accordance with the requirements of policy H17 below and the dwellings should be distributed evenly through the site. Further information on this is available in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on affordable housing. Within these requirements the Council would also like to see the provision of housing for the elderly, with warden facilities, that would be suitable to rent or buy.
- 8.23 The Council envisages an attractive and vibrant local centre at the heart of the new development which will provide a range of uses including shops, a library, a civic open space (which could include a paved pedestrian area and garden), an indoor sports hall, a community centre, provision for pre-school children, a primary school, small offices and business premises, live-work units where the commercial use at street level would be linked internally to a dwelling at the upper floor levels and

closed circuit television for security purposes. A pub, wine bar or café would provide a valuable focus for the new development. Where possible, residential units should be provided on upper floors above these buildings where the design requirements indicate this would be appropriate. This could be above the library, shops and offices. Such dwellings would be particularly suitable for single person households and those without children.

- 8.24 The development should provide for the needs of pre-school children in the form of a building that can be used by young children and parents, and the need for crèche and day care facilities for working parents should also be investigated. Two primary schools will be provided, one of which will be required in the early stages of development as the existing primary schools are already operating over capacity. The question of whether the existing schools in Grove could be expanded on a temporary basis to take the very first children will be investigated. The issue of secondary education in the Grove and Wantage area has been the subject of much debate locally. King Alfred's Community and Sport College in Wantage currently operates on three separate sites which is far from ideal. The County Council, as education authority, is currently exploring a number of options to improve the situation, including the provision of a new school campus in Grove or a single new school to serve the needs of both Grove and Wantage pupils. Inevitably, the decision will be influenced by the District Council's decision to propose major development at Grove. It will not be possible for the children of secondary school age from the proposed development to be accommodated satisfactorily within the present form of the King Alfred's school. However, it is not for the Local Plan to express a view or take a decision on one of the options. The task is to ensure that land is identified, as necessary, to meet the future educational needs, in whatever form they are to be addressed, and to make sure that new development in the area makes appropriate financial contributions towards the agreed provision. Policy H5 below requires that a secondary school is provided as part of the new development. The form this should take will be the subject of discussion between the education authority and the local communities. An opinion poll carried out for the County Council in 2003 showed the majority of the community to be in favour of the two secondary schools option with one school located in each community. Ideally the Council would like to see a secondary school located on the edge of the local centre to improve its vitality and diversity. However, if a single new school is to be provided for Grove and Wantage, it would be preferable to locate this closer to Wantage, rather than within the centre of the new development. This will be the subject of further discussion.
- 8.25 The development site should contain a network of open spaces for children's play, playing fields, landscaping areas and a buffer zone to the noisy uses which take place on Grove Technology Park. As the site currently has few trees on it, it will be important for new planting to create smaller, more enclosed spaces to make a comfortable living environment. Opportunities should be taken to create green corridors and new wildlife habitats to benefit the biodiversity of the area. Civic spaces should also be created within the development which could comprise areas

of paved pedestrian areas and public gardens. There is also a need to provide space for informal recreation, such as walking, jogging, picnicking and flying kites, and a need to keep an open area between the two communities of Grove and Wantage to maintain their separate identities. Facilities such as a play wall, a multi-purpose, all-weather ball-game area or hang-out area will be necessary for teenagers, and public art projects should be provided in accordance with policy DC4. The need for allotment land and cemetery space should also be considered.

- 8.26 Policy H5 below seeks a safe and convenient network of movement corridors (for cars, buses, cyclists and pedestrians) within the site. This should be accessible to all users, including those with impaired mobility, in accordance with policy DC5. It will also be important to link the development to existing facilities in Grove and Wantage, including the proposed rail station, the health centre in Mably Way, Grove Technology Park and Wantage town centre. In particular the Council will seek effective measures to minimise traffic using the narrow and congested roads in Grove to gain access to the A338, and those through Charlton village to avoid the town centre. The realignment of Denchworth Road south of Grove to Mably Way, or the provision of an alternative road, to provide a convenient alternative route and an attractive approach to the major new development area will be necessary. Traffic from the site could impact on settlements outside Grove and Wantage, including East Challow, East Hanney and Denchworth, for example. The Council will seek to ensure these communities are not adversely affected by traffic from the development. Financial contributions will be sought for improvements to the A338 north of Grove and the A417 east of Wantage to improve highway safety. Contributions will also be necessary to improve the accesses to the A34 (see the transport chapter on the Didcot Integrated Transport Strategy) and to improve public transport services to Wantage and the surrounding major employment areas.
- 8.27 The existing roads in Grove and Wantage are not capable of accommodating all the traffic from the development without seriously harming the amenities of existing residents or jeopardising highway safety. Significant improvements are likely to be necessary which will need to be the subject of further consultation. Excellent footpath and cycle and public transport links to the rest of Grove will need to be created and improvements to the Mably Way/A338 junction provided to increase the attractiveness of the southern link to the A338 in the first phase of the development to 2011 (500 dwellings). The second phase from 2011 to 2016 (1,000 dwellings) will include traffic management measures to seriously deter vehicles from using the existing roads within Grove. A new road from the site to the A338 north of Grove will be required to be started early in the second phase of development and completed before any more than 1,500 dwellings in total have been built on the site. In the third phase of the development from 2016 to 2021 (1,000 dwellings) it will also be necessary for contributions to be made towards the construction of a new relief road scheme for Wantage, the routing, phasing and timing of which will be determined through the Wantage and Grove Area Strategic Transport Study (see policy TR1 in chapter 5).

- 8.28 Financial contributions will be required to improve off-site facilities such as the transport measures outlined above and other facilities in Grove and Wantage, including for example the swimming pool at Wantage Leisure Centre. Improvements may be needed to Wantage Fire Station unless alternative facilities such as sprinklers, can be provided, or it may be preferable to establish a new base for the emergency services, more conveniently located to serve the new development and the existing communities. The development will also be expected to link to footpaths and cycleways in the surrounding area. This will include to Grove, Wantage and the surrounding villages. Two such links will be along the Letcombe Brook and the Wilts and Berks Canal (see Chapter 10) where contributions will be sought to help with its restoration. Given the amount of land still available for development on Grove Technology Park and the potential for job creation at Milton Park and the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, no new employment land is identified in the Grove and Wantage area in the Plan beyond the small offices and business premises in the mixed-use local centre. However, this will be reviewed when the plan is rolled forward.
- 8.29 To ensure these requirements come together in a way which achieves a high quality, sustainable development, the Council will require that the development takes place in accordance with comprehensive development principles and guidelines which will include such matters as: design quality, accessibility and permeability, integration and inclusion, environmental protection and resource conservation, infrastructure and service provision, timescales and phasing. An outline of the development principles and guidelines is contained in supplementary planning guidance for the site and all planning applications will be expected to comply with it.
- 8.30 The implementation of the comprehensive development principles and guidelines will require all the landowners and developers on the site to work together. Ideally this would be a single body or a consortium of developers that would assume responsibility for all stages of planning, designing and implementing the development. If the site were developed by a number of developers sharing no common purpose it would be difficult to ensure the delivery of a high quality, sustainable development, with the services provided when needed by the new population. Accordingly the Council is committed to working with the developer, the local communities and service providers to achieve these objectives. Within the overall concept, a diversity of design will be sought through the establishment of different character areas. The Council recognises that the site will be built by different developers who will bring their own flavour to the site but this must be consistent with the overall design concept.
- 8.31 The development will be able to fund the majority of the measures outlined above. However, while the development could fund a new secondary school to serve the children on the new development, it could not reasonably be expected to provide the land and fund all the new buildings for major new secondary school to serve the secondary school children in both Grove and Wantage, or the Wantage relief road

scheme. The Council will therefore expect the developers and service providers to enter into partnerships where this is necessary to achieve the proper provision of services for the community as a whole. Most of the facilities on the site should be provided by the developer during the course of building the site or should be funded by the developer in total. A commuted sum will also be sought to cover the on-going maintenance costs of the facilities provided on the site in accordance with policy DC8. For the facilities to be provided away from the site, the Council will seek financial contributions, secured through a legal agreement in accordance with Circular 05/2005.

POLICY H5

THE FORMER AIRFIELD WEST OF GROVE IS IDENTIFIED AS A STRATEGIC HOUSING SITE WHERE DEVELOPMENT WILL LAST BEYOND THE LIFETIME OF THIS PLAN. PROPOSALS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES WHICH ACHIEVE A DISTINCTIVE HIGH QUALITY, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL INTEGRATE SUCCESSFULLY WITH THE EXISTING VILLAGE AND ITS COMMUNITY AND WHERE ALL NECESSARY ON-SITE AND OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET. THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES TO SERVICE THE NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO BE PROVIDED AT THE EARLIEST PRACTICABLE STAGE OF THE DEVELOPMENT. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE WILL INCLUDE THE ON-SITE PROVISION OF:

- i) ABOUT 2500 DWELLINGS TO 2021, OF WHICH SOME 500 DWELLINGS WILL BE BUILT BY 2011. THE LAND DEVELOPED FOR HOUSING (ABOUT 62.5 HECTARES) WILL BE AT 40 DWELLINGS PER HECTARE AVERAGE NET DENSITY OVER THE SITE AS A WHOLE;**
- ii) A MIX OF DWELLING TYPES AND SIZES IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H16 BELOW;**
- iii) 40% OF THE DWELLING UNITS TO BE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H17, WITH THE UNITS DISTRIBUTED EVENLY THROUGHOUT THE AREA USED FOR HOUSING;**
- iv) HOUSING SUITABLE FOR THE ELDERLY, WITH WARDEN CONTROL, IF APPROPRIATE TO THE IDENTIFIED NEED;**
- v) A MIXED USE LOCAL CENTRE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL TO INCLUDE**
 - a) A PRIMARY SCHOOL**
 - b) A COMMUNITY CENTRE OF AT LEAST 1400 SQUARE METRES**
 - c) AN INDOOR COMMUNITY SPORTS HALL AND HARD SURFACED AREAS FOR SPORT**
 - d) A LIBRARY**

- e) LOCAL SHOPS AND RETAIL SERVICES, INCLUDING A SUPERMARKET AND FURTHER SMALL PREMISES INCLUDING AT LEAST A PHARMACY, A POST OFFICE AND A PUBLIC HOUSE, CAFÉ OR WINE BAR (NOT LESS THAN 1000 SQUARE METRES IN TOTAL)
 - f) SMALL PREMISES WITHIN CLASS B1 OF THE USE CLASSES ORDER
 - g) LIVE-WORK UNITS WITH INTERNAL ACCESS BETWEEN THE WORKSPACE AND A DWELLING AT UPPER FLOOR LEVEL
 - h) RESIDENTIAL USES ON THE UPPER STOREYS OF USES d–g) ABOVE, WHERE APPROPRIATE
 - i) A PRIMARY CIVIC SPACE INCLUDING A PAVED PEDESTRIAN AREA AND PUBLIC GARDEN
 - j) FACILITIES FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN
 - k) PARKING FOR CARS, MOTORCYCLES, MOPEDS AND CYCLES AND
 - l) CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION;
- vi) AN ADDITIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL;
- vii) A SECONDARY SCHOOL;
- viii) FACILITIES FOR TEENAGERS;
- ix) A NETWORK OF OPEN SPACES LINKED BY SAFE AND CONVENIENT PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ROUTES TO THE LOCAL CENTRE AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE TO INCLUDE
- a) EQUIPPED AND INFORMAL CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS WITHIN OR CLOSE TO THE LAND DEVELOPED FOR HOUSING (ABOUT 5 HECTARES)
 - b) CIVIC SPACES (ABOUT 3 HECTARES)
 - c) PLAYING FIELDS FOR OUTDOOR COMMUNITY SPORT (ABOUT 11.25 HECTARES)
 - d) A COMMUNITY PARK (OF SOME 23 HECTARES)
 - e) STRUCTURAL LANDSCAPING AREAS AND A BUFFER ZONE TO GROVE TECHNOLOGY PARK (OF SOME 12.5 HECTARES);
- x) A PUBLIC ART PROJECT OR PROJECTS;
- xi) MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE THE EFFICIENT USE OF ENERGY, WATER AND OTHER RESOURCES;
- xii) SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE WORKS;

- xiii) **A NETWORK OF FOOTPATHS, CYCLE TRACKS, ROADS AND BUS ROUTES AND ASSOCIATED PROVISION WITHIN THE SITE WITH CONNECTIONS TO EXISTING AND FUTURE NETWORKS;**
- xiv) **THE REALIGNMENT OF DENCHWORTH ROAD OR AN ALTERNATIVE ROAD SOUTH OF GROVE TO MABLY WAY IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE DEVELOPMENT;**
- xv) **A NEW ROAD FROM THE SITE TO THE A338 NORTH OF GROVE TO BE STARTED EARLY IN THE SECOND PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLETED BEFORE ANY MORE THAN 1,500 DWELLINGS IN TOTAL HAVE BEEN BUILT ON THE SITE;**
- xvi) **FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE SOUGHT TOWARDS THE FOLLOWING MEASURES THAT WILL NOT BE PROVIDED ON THE SITE INCLUDING:**
 - a) **THE PROVISION OF OFF-SITE FOOTPATHS AND CYCLE TRACK LINKS, ROAD IMPROVEMENTS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN GROVE, WANTAGE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA. THESE WILL INCLUDE**
 - **MEASURES TO MINIMISE TRAFFIC FROM THE DEVELOPMENT USING DENCHWORTH ROAD AND OXFORD LANE WITHIN THE CURRENT BUILT-UP AREA OF GROVE TO ACCESS THE A338, AND HARCOURT ROAD, HARCOURT WAY AND CHARLTON VILLAGE ROAD THROUGH WANTAGE**
 - **IMPROVING THE LINKS FROM THE SITE TO FACILITIES IN GROVE AND WANTAGE, INCLUDING TO THE PROPOSED RAIL STATION, THE HEALTH CENTRE IN MABLY WAY, WANTAGE TOWN CENTRE AND GROVE TECHNOLOGY PARK**
 - **IMPROVING CYCLE LINKS TO MILTON PARK AND THE HARWELL SCIENCE AND INNOVATION CAMPUS**
 - **IMPROVING THE A338 NORTH OF GROVE, THE A417 EAST OF WANTAGE AND ACCESSES TO THE A34**
 - **A RELIEF ROAD SCHEME FOR WANTAGE;**
 - b) **THE PROVISION OF IMPROVED PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES (INCLUDING BUS PRIORITY MEASURES AND HIGH QUALITY BUS WAITING FACILITIES) TO**
 - **THE PROPOSED RAIL STATION AT GROVE**
 - **WANTAGE AND THE MAIN EMPLOYMENT AREAS AT THE HARWELL SCIENCE AND INNOVATION CAMPUS, MILTON PARK, ABINGDON AND OXFORD; AND**

- c) **ENHANCING EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES IN GROVE AND WANTAGE INCLUDING WANTAGE SWIMMING POOL AND FIRE STATION AND THE RESTORATION OF THE WILTS AND BERKS CANAL.**

Housing Sites in Wantage

- 8.32 Policy H6 below identifies three sites for housing in Wantage, all of which are on previously developed land within the town. All of the sites had planning permission at April 2005. These sites will be expected to provide high quality developments at densities appropriate to their location close to the town centre. The reorganisation of the secondary school could lead to additional brownfield sites being made available for development in the longer term.

POLICY H6

THE FOLLOWING SITES IN WANTAGE (AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP) ARE IDENTIFIED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

<i>Site Ref</i>	<i>Estimated Number of Dwellings 2011</i>
i) C OF E INFANTS SCHOOL, CHURCH STREET*	20
ii) GARSTON LANE SCHOOL *	65
iii) NORTH OF LIMBOROUGH ROAD*	24
* <i>Sites with planning permission for ten or more dwellings at 1 April 2005</i>	

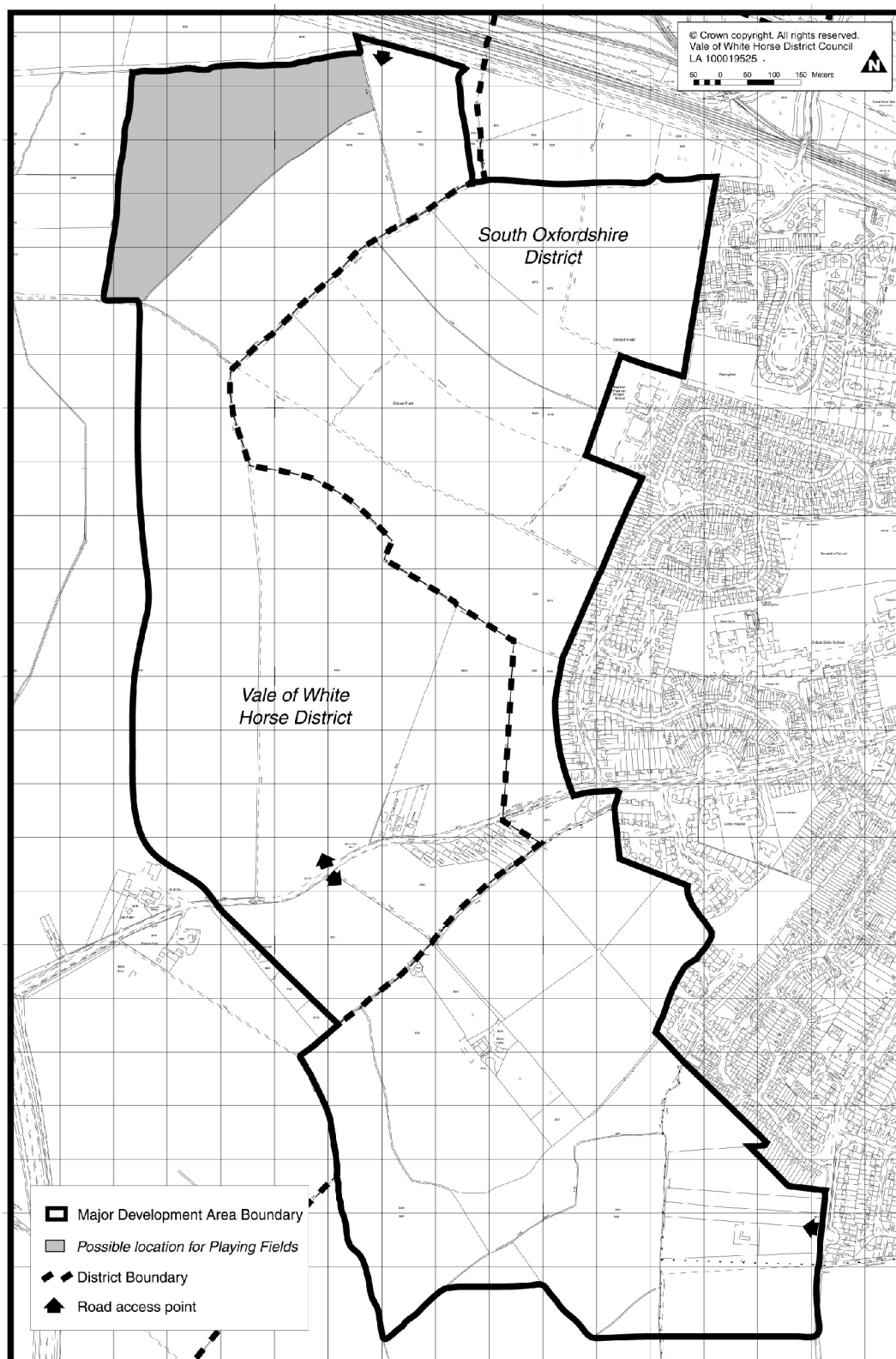
Major Development West of Didcot

- 8.33 The Oxfordshire Structure Plan proposes major housing development at Didcot adjoining the western edge of the town and extending north and south of the Wantage Road (B4493). Although Didcot is in South Oxfordshire, the administrative boundary between the two districts is close to the western edge of the town. In recognition of this, the Structure Plan requires some 500 dwellings of the western expansion of the town to be built in the Vale. In preparing their local plans the two councils worked together to determine the optimum form and layout of the development. The proposals map shows the land allocated for that part of the area which lies within the Vale. Fig 8.1 shows the whole extent of the area including that part which is allocated in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011. It includes a 12 hectare field in the north western corner which is to be considered as a reserve allocation, solely for the purpose of accommodating playing fields, if such a facility cannot be located elsewhere within the area.

- 8.34 The Councils intend to deliver a high quality, sustainable, mixed-use development. This will necessitate landowners and/or developers with a legal interest in the land to work together. Ideally this would be as a single body – 'the Master Developer' or 'Promoter' – that would assume responsibility for all stages of the planning, design and implementation of the site. This is the approach advocated by the Urban Villages Forum as best able to achieve sustainable, high quality development. If the site was developed piecemeal by a number of landowners and developers sharing no common purpose then it would be difficult for the Councils to ensure the delivery of quality, sustainability and services when needed by the new resident population. The Councils will seek a legal agreement that would establish a single body to act as Master Developer.
- 8.35 The comprehensive planning of this major housing development should cover the following: the identity of the Master Developer; a site appraisal; the creation of walkable neighbourhoods; the disposition, function and design of all built development, public buildings, public urban space and public green space networks; a transport strategy; the definition of character areas; energy conservation and resource management; surface water drainage; protecting the historic environment; protecting and enhancing the ecology of the area; and the phased implementation of the development, delivery and management of infrastructure and services. Further details are contained in Appendix 5 to this Local Plan. These requirements are identical to those set out in South Oxfordshire's adopted Local Plan.
- 8.36 The criteria in policy H7 below set out the requirements for the development of the area. The average net housing density specified in criteria (i) is justified having regard to the need to make efficient use of the land and to the large proportion of small dwellings required in the area by criterion (ii). It is also justified by the intended delivery of very good accessibility to a wide range of services, facilities and employment opportunities in the site by all modes of transport.
- 8.37 The proportion of small dwellings in the general market housing sector required by criterion (ii) is justified by the local need for this type and category of dwellings as shown in the Councils' *Housing Needs Assessments*. The Council will seek about 10% 1 bedroom units, 40% 2 bedroom units, 30% 3 bedroom units and 20% 4 bedroom units and larger. As far as the mix of affordable housing is concerned the Councils will seek to ensure that the type and size of housing provided meets the need. The Council will also consider a mix of tenures depending on the identified needs and together with South Oxfordshire District Council will clarify the detailed requirements for different categories of affordable housing in the development area. This mix may change as the development progresses and the position alters.
- 8.38 The Councils will require the affordable housing required by criterion (iii) to be distributed evenly throughout the area in order to encourage the development of a mixed and balanced community as advocated in PPG3.

- 8.39 There will be three new neighbourhoods in the development area with the district centre being the focal point of the central neighbourhood as well as being the focal point of the development as a whole. Neighbourhood centres will be the focal points of the other two neighbourhoods.
- 8.40 These centres will enjoy good accessibility by all modes of transport and as such they are the appropriate locations for local services that generate many trips from new homes. The centres and the main movement corridors linking them are also the preferred locations for higher-density development containing large numbers of small dwellings in accordance with criterion (ii).
- 8.41 The requirement for the provision of new schools is based on information received from the County Council, acting as local education authority, and from the Learning and Skills Council. The school buildings should be focal points and key buildings in the townscape and should not be located away from street frontages in open campus settings where they would not fulfil these urban design functions.
- 8.42 The justification for the provision of three community centres on the site is based on the identified accommodation requirements of those voluntary and local authority bodies that intend to provide valued services to the new community. In planning the three community centres the Master Developer should have regard to the outline planning briefs that these bodies have supplied to South Oxfordshire District Council setting out their accommodation needs. The Councils, however, will seek to ensure by means of legal agreements that accommodation to be provided in all three community centres is not used exclusively by particular bodies. As with schools, the Councils will require the community centre buildings to act as focal points and key buildings in the townscape of the district and neighbourhood centres.
- 8.43 In planning the provision of indoor and outdoor community sports facilities the Councils will require the development to have regard to the background paper entitled *Didcot West Development: Sport and Recreation Facilities Planning Brief*, published by South Oxfordshire District Council. This recommends that all the community sports facilities be located at and adjacent to the new secondary school. This location will enable the provision of a dual-use sports facility maximising the benefits that can be obtained by both the school and the community in terms of the quality of the facilities to be provided and in terms of engaging young people in sports activity.

Fig 8.1 The Major Development Area West of Didcot



- 8.44 In accordance with PPS6, the Councils are proposing the establishment of convenience shops and other service uses in the district centre and two neighbourhood centres to meet people's day-to-day needs for convenience goods and services. The limitations on the number of such shop and service uses and the amount of floorspace to be provided are justified having regard to the position of the district and neighbourhood centres in the local hierarchy of centres. These local centres should be small in scale and the trade generated in them should not be such as to undermine the vitality and viability of Didcot town centre.
- 8.45 In order to enhance their vitality, the Councils will require the provision in the district centre and two neighbourhood centres of a number of two and three storey buildings with a mix of land uses in individual buildings. As a guideline, the Councils suggest the provision of about ten such individual buildings in mixed use in the district centre and three such buildings in each of the two neighbourhood centres. The reason for the limitation on the number and size of commercial uses is explained in paragraph 8.44 above. A proportion of these mixed use buildings will be 'live-work units' where the commercial use at street level would be linked internally to a dwelling at upper floor level. As a guideline, the Councils suggest that 50% of these mixed-use buildings should comprise 'live-work units'. Narrow-fronted buildings (5 to 8 metres wide) are required to create active frontages and a rich variety of buildings in the three centres.
- 8.46 The requirement for the provision of primary health care facilities located in the district centre is based on advice received from the local Primary Care Trust relating to the health care requirements of the new population.
- 8.47 The amount of land to be used for public space is based on the standards contained in the South Oxfordshire design guide and on the particular circumstances of the site. Public urban spaces will comprise focal points in the built-up area. Civic squares will have predominantly paved surfaces providing an open setting for buildings enclosing them. The focal points will also include public gardens with predominantly planted surfaces. The land uses to be accommodated in public greenspace are set out in criterion (vii) and the public realm functions are described in paragraph (iv) of Appendix 5. This requirement is justified particularly having regard to the need to provide generous space for informal recreation in an area containing a high proportion of small dwellings, some of which will lack private gardens. There is also a need to provide wide belts and blocks of woodland around the periphery of the site to screen and soften the landscape impact of buildings on an elevated and prominent site. These open areas will also form a buffer between the new development and nearby villages and the built development on the site will not extend further south than the line of the existing southern built-up limit of Didcot. The Council will seek commuted payments to cover the costs of maintaining the open spaces and other facilities in accordance with policy DC8 and paragraph 4.20. In the case of outdoor playing space this may be required in

perpetuity where the facilities are predominantly for the users of the associated development. The boundary of the major development area shown on figure 8.1 includes a field in the north western corner which may be necessary to accommodate playing fields if suitable land cannot be found elsewhere on the site. If it is not required for this purpose the land should not be developed and should remain in agricultural use.

8.48 It is important that as residents move into their new homes they are afforded the opportunity for ease of movement by all modes of transport from Didcot and within Didcot. Criterion (xi) will secure this objective by providing appropriate on and off-site transport infrastructure. The highway authority and the Highways Agency will advise on the transport measures required. These measures will be identified through the development of an integrated transport strategy for the Didcot area, having regard to the following objectives:

- To reduce reliance on the use of the private car by improving choices available to meet transport needs within Didcot and between Didcot and the surrounding settlements;
- To increase accessibility to facilities for those without cars and/or with mobility impairment;
- To promote the use of public transport (bus and rail);
- To identify and provide a safe, continuous and high quality network of pedestrian and cycle routes;
- To promote road safety and reduce the number and severity of road casualties;
- To promote efficient highway management including the identification of transport infrastructure as appropriate, and parking demand and supply;
- To improve provision for interchange between modes of transport; and
- To relieve traffic congestion where it is causing significant amenity or environmental problems.

8.49 The District Councils and Oxfordshire County Council should urgently consider the detailed options for an A4130 to A417 link, to include a Harwell by-pass. For the section between the A4130 and the B4493, this link should not require additional land outside the boundary of the major development area. The Council, together with South Oxfordshire District Council and the County Council, will be seeking the progression of measures identified in phase 2 of the provisional strategy as a matter of urgency. The provisional strategy proposes a range of transport measures which include a Harwell bypass in order to alleviate the impact of traffic arising from developments in the Didcot area. The Council considers that the provision of a Harwell by-pass is a priority.

POLICY H7

LAND WEST OF DIDCOT IS IDENTIFIED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WHERE DEVELOPMENT CAN START BEFORE 1 APRIL 2006. PROPOSALS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH A COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF AND DESIGN STATEMENTS AND WHERE ALL NECESSARY ON-SITE AND OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE WILL INCLUDE:

- i) PROVISION OF ABOUT 3200 DWELLINGS OF WHICH ABOUT 500 DWELLINGS WILL BE LOCATED IN THE VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT. THE LAND DEVELOPED FOR HOUSING (ABOUT 80 HECTARES) WILL BE AT 40 DWELLINGS PER HECTARE AVERAGE NET DENSITY;**
- ii) A MIX OF DWELLING TYPES AND SIZES OF THE GENERAL MARKET HOUSING WITH ABOUT 50% SMALL (1 OR 2 BEDROOM) UNITS;**
- iii) PROVISION FOR AT LEAST 40% OF DWELLING UNITS TO BE AFFORDABLE HOUSING WITH THE UNITS DISTRIBUTED EVENLY THROUGHOUT THE AREA USED FOR HOUSING;**
- iv) PROVISION OF A DISTRICT CENTRE INCLUDING:**
 - a) A SECONDARY SCHOOL;**
 - b) A PRIMARY SCHOOL;**
 - c) A COMMUNITY CENTRE;**
 - d) AN INDOOR COMMUNITY SPORTS HALL;**
 - e) PLAYING FIELDS FOR OUTDOOR COMMUNITY SPORTS AND AN EQUIPPED CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA;**
 - f) PREMISES FOR A PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PRACTICE;**
 - g) LOCAL SHOPS AND RETAIL SERVICES, LIMITED TO USES WITHIN PART A OF THE USE CLASSES ORDER, INCLUDING A SMALL SUPERMARKET (ABOUT 500 SQUARE METRES) AND FURTHER SMALL UNIT PREMISES (ABOUT 1200 SQUARE METRES IN TOTAL);**
 - h) NARROW-FRONTED, MIXED-USE BUILDINGS GENERALLY MORE THAN TWO STOREYS IN HEIGHT. THE STREET-LEVEL USES IN THESE BUILDINGS WILL INCLUDE THE USES IN (g) ABOVE. A PROPORTION OF THESE MIXED-USE BUILDINGS WILL BE LIVE-WORK UNITS WITH INTERNAL ACCESS BETWEEN THE WORKSPACE AND A DWELLING AT UPPER FLOOR LEVEL; AND**
 - i) BUILDINGS IN RESIDENTIAL USE, WITHIN PART C OF THE USE CLASSES ORDER, GENERALLY NARROW-FRONTED AND MORE THAN TWO STOREYS IN HEIGHT.**

- v) **TWO NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES WITH EACH CENTRE INCLUDING:**
 - a) **A PRIMARY SCHOOL;**
 - b) **A COMMUNITY CENTRE;**
 - c) **LOCAL SHOPS AND RETAIL SERVICES, LIMITED TO USES WITHIN PART A OF THE USE CLASSES ORDER, IN SMALL UNIT PREMISES (ABOUT 500 SQUARE METRES IN TOTAL);**
 - d) **NARROW-FRONTED MIXED-USE BUILDINGS AS DESCRIBED IN H7 (iv) (h) ABOVE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SMALL SUPERMARKETS; AND**
 - e) **BUILDINGS IN RESIDENTIAL USE AS DESCRIBED IN (iv)(i) ABOVE;**
- vi) **PROVISION OF A NETWORK OF PUBLIC URBAN SPACES (NOT LESS THAN 8 HECTARES) INCLUDING A PRIMARY CIVIC SPACE IN THE DISTRICT CENTRE, SECONDARY CIVIC SPACES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES AND OTHER CIVIC SPACES WITHIN THE BUILT-UP AREA LOCATED AT KEY JUNCTIONS IN THE MOVEMENT NETWORK;**
- vii) **PROVISION OF A NETWORK OF PUBLIC GREENSPACES (NOT LESS THAN 62 HECTARES) INCLUDING COMMUNITY OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE, CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS, PUBLIC GARDENS, OPEN GRASSLAND, WOODLAND, HEDGEROWS, WETLAND, PONDS AND WATERCOURSES A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THE PUBLIC GREEN SPACE NETWORK WILL BE LOCATED AROUND THE WESTERN AND SOUTHERN EDGES OF THE BUILT-UP AREAS WITHIN THE SITE;**
- viii) **PROVISION OF CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS WITHIN THE LAND DEVELOPED FOR HOUSING;**
- ix) **PROVISION OF OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES INCLUDING, WHERE APPROPRIATE , FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS IMPROVING LIBRARY, ARTS, CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES IN DIDCOT TOWN CENTRE, IMPROVING COMMUNITY SPORTS FACILITIES AT DIDCOT WAVE LEISURE CENTRE, IMPROVEMENTS TO DIDCOT CIVIC HALL AND IMPROVEMENTS TO WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES IN OR NEAR DIDCOT;**
- x) **PROVISION OF OFF-SITE SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE WORKS; AND**
- xi) **PROVISION OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY TR2 AIMED AT ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRAVEL AND REDUCING THE NEED TO TRAVEL BY CAR INCLUDING:**

- a) **A MOVEMENT NETWORK OF FOOTWAYS, FOOTPATHS, CYCLETRACKS AND ROADS IN THE SITE, CONNECTING TO EXISTING AND PROPOSED NETWORKS AT THE SITE BOUNDARIES. THE INDICATIVE LOCATION OF ROAD NETWORK CONNECTIONS IS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP;**
- b) **FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ENABLE THE PROVISION OF OFF-SITE FOOTWAY, FOOTPATH AND CYCLETRACK LINKS, ROAD IMPROVEMENTS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN DIDCOT AND IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND VILLAGES AROUND DIDCOT AND ON THE A34 TRUNK ROAD MADE NECESSARY BY AND AS A CONSEQUENCE OF DEVELOPMENT ON THE SITE IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF;**
- c) **FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ENABLE THE PROVISION OF BUS SERVICES AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE TO AFFORD RESIDENTS ON THE SITE GOOD PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESS FROM DIDCOT AND WITHIN DIDCOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF.**

Housing on the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus

- 8.50 The Harwell Science and Innovation Campus originally contained two areas of housing each with 100 pre-fabricated houses which have since been demolished. The adopted local plan 2001 allocated a site known as "Chilton Field" within the campus to replace these dwellings and allow for 275 dwellings in total; this is equivalent to a net increase of 75 dwellings. Planning permission was granted for this site, but it has now lapsed. Following the construction of the Diamond Synchrotron involving part of the site permitted for housing, the Council agreed that an alternative housing allocation should be made on land at the southern edge of the campus. It will be important to retain the eastern area, with its important trees, as open space and to provide substantial landscaping within the housing site to soften the impact of development on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the views from the Ridgeway in particular.

POLICY H8

LAND AT CHILTON FIELD FORMING PART OF THE HARWELL SCIENCE AND INNOVATION CAMPUS IS IDENTIFIED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WHICH FOLLOWING THE DEMOLITION OF THE PRE-FABRICATED HOUSING WILL RESULT IN A NET INCREASE OF NO MORE THAN 75 DWELLINGS.

The former Dow Agro Sciences site in Letcombe Regis

- 8.51 The second site allocated for housing outside the towns is at the former Dow Agro Sciences in Letcombe Regis, where the house, lodge, stables and more modern research buildings and greenhouses have stood vacant since 2002. Although Letcombe Regis is one of the Vale's smaller villages with a very limited range of facilities where normally only a maximum of four small dwellings would be allowed, the Council accepts that a limited redevelopment for residential purposes could be more sustainable than a B1 business use on the site. However, great care will have to be taken to ensure that any redevelopment retains and enhances the Letcombe Brook corridor, provides new public open space, retains the existing trees and open paddocks and can be readily integrated into the village in both physical and visual terms. It will also be necessary for any scheme to protect the setting of the surrounding listed buildings and make a positive contribution to the conservation area, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the character and appearance of the village as a whole. Given the sensitivity of the surroundings, residential development on the site will only be permitted as part of a comprehensive scheme containing sufficient details to show that all the concerns raised above will be satisfactorily addressed. In addition to ensure that the redevelopment is no less sustainable than its previous use it will be necessary to contribute to on and off site infrastructure, and the volume of traffic generated should be no greater than if the site was reused for B1 purposes, preferably it should be less. To help achieve this, contributions, secured through a legal agreement, will be needed towards improving the bus service to Wantage. A proposal to redevelop the site as a continuing care retirement community, comprising care bedrooms, care suites and close care units, was permitted in July 2006.

POLICY H9

LAND AT THE FORMER DOW SITE AT LETCOMBE REGIS IS IDENTIFIED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT RESULTING IN A NET INCREASE OF NO MORE THAN 100 DWELLINGS FOLLOWING THE DEMOLITION OF THE FORMER EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURES. PROPOSALS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH A COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME FOR THE WHOLE SITE, INCLUDING LAND SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP TO BE RETAINED AS OPEN SPACE AND WHERE ALL NECESSARY ON SITE AND OFF SITE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET.

New Housing Development on Sites Not Identified in the Local Plan

- 8.52 The Council cannot identify all the sites that will be developed for housing in the coming years. A substantial number of dwellings will be provided on sites of less than 10 dwellings which are too small to allocate in the policies above or through the conversion of existing buildings and the subdivision of existing properties.

Others will be developed on sites which come forward as a result of the existing use ceasing, possibly as the result of the closure of a business, a school or a hospital for example. The redevelopment of the former Morlands Brewery in Abingdon and the former Yoplait Dairy in Grove are two recent examples of this.

- 8.53 The Local Plan makes provision for such unidentified sites to be developed in the plan period, both through a numerical assessment of their contribution (paragraph 8.11 above) and through a series of policies for the different types of settlements in the Vale. These reflect the Council's general strategy for locating most development in the five main settlements and limiting it elsewhere.

Development in the Five Main Settlements

- 8.54 In the five main settlements it is likely that, even though a detailed capacity study has been undertaken, unexpected opportunities will arise on sites that have not been taken into account in the Local Plan. In general the Plan has not identified sites such as private back gardens or where there is an existing, acceptable and well established use. Some sites which come forward may be significant in size but it may be possible to accommodate them successfully without harming the character and amenity of their surroundings if the proposal is sensitively designed. The Council will be keen to ensure that new housing developments within the settlements do not create an impression of town cramming, either because the new buildings are over-dominant or because they will result in the loss of public open space or open space which is important to the character of the neighbourhood. The Council will look carefully at the cumulative effects of infill development on the character of residential areas and may oppose further schemes it considers damaging. Development which would result in the loss of local facilities, including areas of informal open space, will not be permitted. (See also policies GS5, CF1, CF5, L1–L4, L7 and E14).

POLICY H10

WITHIN THE BUILT-UP AREAS OF ABINGDON, BOTLEY, FARINGDON, GROVE AND WANTAGE, AS DEFINED BY THE DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED:

- i) IT WOULD NOT RESULT IN THE LOSS OF FACILITIES IMPORTANT TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, INCLUDING AREAS OF INFORMAL PUBLIC OPEN SPACE; AND**
- ii) IT MAKES EFFICIENT USE OF THE LAND, AND THE LAYOUT, MASS AND DESIGN OF THE DWELLINGS WOULD NOT HARM THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA.**

Development in the Larger Villages

- 8.55 During the Plan period many applications will be made to build a single or a small group of houses in the villages listed in policy H11 below. The size and physical character of these villages and the range of services they possess (generally a

shop, post office, community facilities, a primary school and access to a reasonable public transport service and local employment opportunities) suggest they may be capable of accepting some small-scale development, provided the sites are chosen with care and the housing is designed and laid out with due regard to the character of the village concerned. Many of the villages have conservation areas where the interrelationship between buildings, open spaces and features such as walls, trees and hedgerows is fundamental to the character of the area, and this will limit opportunities for even small-scale development. Some villages have absorbed significant amounts of development and are now reaching their capacity. The Council will carefully consider the impact of new proposals on the character of the village concerned. The policies in the chapters containing the general policies for controlling development and the historic environment will be particularly important in this respect. Carefully designed proposals can have significant benefits where they result in the removal of an unneighbourly use or an unsightly building.

- 8.56 Housing in the villages listed in policy H11 below will be limited to sites within their built-up areas which can be developed in a way which safeguards their character. Applications will not be permitted outside the built-up area of the villages. Development will be limited to no more than fifteen dwellings on sites of up to 0.5 ha in size. This is necessary to ensure that the character of villages is not harmed by large-scale proposals and that significant amounts of development are not located in settlements where people are dependent on the private car when travelling to job opportunities and a wider range of services and facilities. It is also consistent with the Structure Plan policies to restrain the overall level of development in the county. Given the particular importance of community facilities and local jobs to the sustainability of villages care will be taken to ensure that new housing development would not result in the loss of facilities that would otherwise have been retained. This is consistent with policies GS5, CF1, CF5, L1-L4, L7 and E14.

POLICY H11

WITHIN THE BUILT UP AREAS OF THE VILLAGES LISTED BELOW, NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON SITES OF UP TO ABOUT 0.5 HA IN TOTAL SIZE AND NOT MORE THAN 15 DWELLINGS WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED:

- i) THE SCALE, LAYOUT, MASS AND DESIGN OF THE NEW DWELLINGS WOULD NOT MATERIALLY HARM THE FORM, STRUCTURE OR CHARACTER OF THE SETTLEMENT; AND**
- ii) IT WOULD NOT RESULT IN THE LOSS OF FACILITIES IMPORTANT TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, INCLUDING AREAS OF FORMAL OR INFORMAL OPEN SPACE.**

THE VILLAGES ARE:

APPLETON	KINGSTON BAGPUIZE WITH SOUTHMOOR
ASHBURY	MARCHAM
BLEWBURY	MILTON (INCLUDING MILTON HEIGHTS)
CHILDREY	RADLEY
CUMNOR	SHRIVENHAM
DRAYTON	STANFORD-IN-THE-VALE
EAST CHALLOW	STEVENTON
EAST HANNEY	SUTTON COURTENAY
EAST HENDRED	UFFINGTON
HARWELL	WATCHFIELD
KENNINGTON	WOOTTON (BUT NOT WOOTTON OLD VILLAGE)

Development in the Smaller Villages

- 8.57 The Vale's smaller villages in policy H12 below have a lower order of services and facilities, and therefore a greater dependence on the private motor car, than those included in policy H11 above. For these reasons housing development will be limited to schemes for no more than four small dwellings. In the context of this policy schemes may include dwellings which are not overly large of up to three bedrooms where this is consistent with the objective of widening housing opportunity and choice. Restricting the number of dwellings is consistent with policies in the Structure Plan to restrain the overall level of development and avoid significant additional housing development where it is likely to result in people travelling to the urban areas by car. As in policies H10 and H11 above this does not mean that every space within the villages can be developed. The Council recognises that many spaces within settlements are important to their rural character. As in the villages listed in policy H11, the Council will consider the cumulative effects of individual schemes on the structure and character of the settlement and development will not be allowed outside the built-up area of the villages.

POLICY H12

WITHIN THE BUILT-UP AREAS OF THE VILLAGES LISTED BELOW, NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WILL BE LIMITED TO SITES SUITABLE FOR NOT MORE THAN FOUR SMALL DWELLINGS, PROVIDED THE REQUIREMENTS SET OUT IN CRITERIA (i) – (ii) OF POLICY H11 ABOVE CAN BE MET.

THE VILLAGES ARE:

APPLEFORD	LITTLEWORTH
ARDINGTON	LOCKINGE
BUCKLAND	LONGCOT
CHILTON	LONGWORTH
FYFIELD	NORTH HINKSEY VILLAGE

**KINGSTON LISLE
LETCOMBE BASSETT
LETCOMBE REGIS
LITTLE COXWELL**

**ROWSTOCK
SHELLINGFORD
UPTON
WEST HANNEY
WEST HENDRED**

Development Elsewhere

- 8.58 Many of the Vale's smallest villages and hamlets have considerable character and being largely unaffected by change they contribute much to the overall rural character of the District. They also have very few services and facilities so people living there are almost entirely reliant on the private car to gain access to the jobs, services and facilities they need. However, there may be some very limited scope for further housing development in these smallest of the Vale's settlements, provided it is planned carefully. Given the constraints referred to above such development will be restricted to sites suitable for no more than one or two small dwellings. Particular care will be taken to ensure that such development would not cumulatively harm the structure and character of the settlement. The settlements where this policy will apply include the following: Baulking, Bourton, Buscot, Charney Bassett, Coleshill, Compton Beauchamp, Denchworth, Eaton Hastings, Fernham, Frilford, Garford, Goosey, Great Coxwell, Hinton Waldrist, Ildstone, Kingston Winslow, Lyford, Netherton, Pusey, Sparsholt, West Challow and Woolstone. However, the policy will not apply to very small groups of houses and ribbons of development in the rural areas, many of which had their origins in the early part of the twentieth century when planning controls did not exist. The intensification of these small groups and ribbons of housing would serve to exaggerate the effect of undesirable sporadic and ribbon development and new housing in these locations will only be permitted if it meets a clearly identified need in accordance with criterion b) in policy H13 below.
- 8.59 Policy H13 below confirms the approach set out in national guidance and the Structure Plan, that away from established settlements, and in small settlements with few services and facilities, development should be strictly controlled. This is in order to protect the quality of the countryside and the character of the Vale's smaller settlements and to minimise the need to travel, in particular by private car. The policy reflects the fact that these are not sustainable locations in which to build new houses.
- 8.60 With the exception of providing affordable rural housing in accordance with policy H18, the only occasions where permission will be given to build new houses outside existing settlements will be to meet the needs of an established viable rural enterprise genuinely requiring a countryside location (such as an agricultural or equestrian enterprise) which cannot be met in any other way. It will be necessary to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for a full-time worker to be available on-site at most times during the day and night and therefore for a new dwelling to be provided.

- 8.61 Where a new dwelling is justified, it should be carefully sited close to existing buildings and should be of a size commensurate with the established functional requirement. Dwellings which are unusually large in relation to the needs of the enterprise or unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income it can sustain will not be permitted. In some cases the Council may withdraw the permitted development rights attached to the new dwellings to prevent the construction of extensions and ancillary buildings within the curtilage. Conditions will always be imposed to ensure the dwelling meets the purpose for which it was originally justified and the Council will consider imposing occupancy conditions on other dwellings, not so controlled, on the unit. This will help protect the countryside against further pressures for new houses. As new dwellings in the countryside are only permitted where there is an exceptional justification, the Council will only allow the removal of an occupancy condition where it is satisfied that the dwelling is no longer needed, not only for the enterprise which originally justified it but also for the wider area. The Council will require evidence to show that the dwelling has been suitably marketed for a period of six months at a price which reflects its restricted occupancy. Proposals for a new dwelling which replaces an existing dwelling are covered by policy GS6 in the General Strategy Chapter.

POLICY H13

OUTSIDE THE BUILT UP AREAS OF THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES DEFINED IN POLICIES H10-H12 ABOVE, NEW HOUSES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED:

- a) AS INFILLING WITH NO MORE THAN ONE OR TWO SMALL NEW DWELLINGS WITHIN THE EXISTING BUILT UP AREA OF A SETTLEMENT OR;**
- b) IF PROVED TO BE ESSENTIAL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF AN AGRICULTURAL, ESQUESTRIAN OR OTHER RURAL ENTERPRISE GENUINELY REQUIRING A COUNTRYSIDE LOCATION.**

TO BE PERMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH b) ABOVE ANY NEW DWELLING MUST:

- i) BE LOCATED WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO AN EXISTING GROUP OF DWELLINGS, OR FARM OR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, OR IN A WELL SCREENED LANDSCAPE SETTING;**
- ii) BE RELATED IN SIZE TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ENTERPRISE; AND**
- iii) BE SUBJECT TO CONTROLS OVER OCCUPANCY TO ENSURE IT IS RETAINED FOR THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS ORIGINALLY JUSTIFIED.**

APPLICATIONS TO REMOVE SUCH CONTROLS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THEY HAVE OUTLIVED THEIR USEFULNESS IN THE AREA AS A WHOLE.

The Efficient Use of Land and Buildings

8.62 The Council will encourage the efficient use of land and buildings for housing purposes through a range of policies including:

- i) identifying previously developed land for housing development (see policies H2–H4, H6, H8 and H9);
- ii) encouraging higher densities (see policies GS5 and H15);
- iii) enabling the change of use of existing buildings (see policies GS5, GS7 and GS8);
- iv) enabling the subdivision of existing dwellings (see policy H14);
- v) enabling the use of properties in town centres for residential purposes (see policies S4, S5 and S6).

While there are not many empty properties in the Vale, the Council will look at ways of bringing empty housing back into use. Policies for the sub-division of existing dwellings and housing densities are dealt with in more detail below.

The Sub-Division of Dwellings

8.63 With the increasing number of one and two person households and the high price of housing, there is an increasing trend towards the sub-division of existing residential properties into small dwellings (which can be in the form of flats). However, sub-divisions can give rise to significant changes in the external appearance of dwellings and their curtilage, especially where more off-street parking has to be provided and garden areas sub-divided. The Council will resist proposals which would harm the character of the existing building, or the character and appearance of the area, either on its own or cumulatively. To achieve accommodation of a satisfactory standard, particular attention needs to be paid to the provision of adequate living space, the layout of rooms, noise insulation measures, the availability of adequate parking within the site, the provision of garden or other amenity space and measures to minimise any adverse effect on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

POLICY H14

THE SUB-DIVISION OF PROPERTIES TO FORM ADDITIONAL DWELLINGS WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:

- i) **THE ACCOMMODATION WOULD BE COMPLETELY SELF-CONTAINED AND HAVE ADEQUATE LIVING SPACE, GARDEN OR PRIVATE AMENITY SPACE AND CAR PARKING PROVISION;**
- ii) **IT WOULD NOT HARM THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING OR THE SURROUNDING AREA; AND**

- iii) **THERE WOULD BE NO DEMONSTRABLE HARM TO THE OCCUPIERS OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES.**

Housing Densities

- 8.64 In accordance with government advice to seek the efficient use of land and policy GS5 above, houses should generally be built at more than 30 dwellings per hectare, especially in the urban areas where there is good access to a range of jobs, shops, services and other facilities. However, the Council recognises that it may be difficult to achieve higher densities on small and awkwardly shaped sites. Opportunities may also be limited in the rural areas where there is a need to respect the unique character of some villages and where the mechanisms for achieving higher densities, such as reducing off-street car parking, are less appropriate in the absence of good public transport. The policy below seeks a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare throughout the district wherever possible, a minimum of 40 dwellings per hectare in the five main settlements and a minimum of 50 dwellings per hectare in the three town centres and the district centre at Botley. This is consistent with the advice in PPG3: *Housing* and with the Council's own work on the impact of higher density housing. However, it is important that the design of new development is not compromised. High quality living environments must be created for new residents, and the impact of the development on the character of the surrounding area and the amenities of people in adjacent properties must be taken into account.

POLICY H15

DEVELOPMENT MUST PROVIDE FOR NET RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES OF AT LEAST

- i) **50 DWELLINGS PER HECTARE IN AND CLOSE TO THE CENTRES OF ABINGDON, BOTLEY, FARINGDON, AND WANTAGE**
- ii) **40 DWELLINGS PER HECTARE ELSEWHERE IN THE FIVE MAIN SETTLEMENTS AND AT DIDCOT AND**
- iii) **30 DWELLINGS PER HECTARE IN OTHER LOCATIONS**

PROVIDED THAT HIGH QUALITY LIVING ENVIRONMENTS CAN BE CREATED AND THERE WOULD BE NO HARM TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA OR THE AMENITIES OF ADJOINING PROPERTIES. DEVELOPMENTS THAT DO NOT MAKE EFFICIENT USE OF LAND WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.

Widening Housing Opportunity

Size of dwelling and lifetime homes

- 8.65 The government believes it is important to create mixed and inclusive communities which offer a choice of housing and life-style. It does not accept that different types of housing and tenures make bad neighbours. Policies H16–H22 seek to provide a variety of dwelling sizes, tenures and types that will meet the needs of existing and future residents. The number of one and two person households is expected to increase in the future and there is a need to increase the number of small dwellings available. This is especially important in an area of high house prices like the Vale, where people may not be able to afford the home of their aspirations. The Council's *Housing Needs Survey* shows that there will be a shortage of one and two bedroom dwellings in all tenure groups in the coming years. The consultants who prepared the survey considered that the shortage was so acute that the Council should be seeking 97% of the new dwellings in the owner occupied sector to have one or two bedrooms. However, the Council is concerned that this would not create mixed and balanced communities, particularly on larger developments. For these reasons it will generally require that at least 50% of new dwellings have two bedrooms or less, but in town centre locations, on sites which are suitable for higher density living, higher proportions may be appropriate.
- 8.66 In order to create inclusive communities the Council will seek a proportion of housing that is suitable for people with impaired mobility, as this can affect everyone at some stage in their lives. If an increasing proportion of the general housing stock can be easily adapted for people with disabilities, it will enable them to live as independently as possible in the community and reduce the need for costly adaptations to their existing homes when they become disabled. Although building regulations now require that the majority of new dwellings will have disabled access on the ground floor and ground floor toilets, there is no requirement to provide housing which is designed for disabled people throughout. There is very little housing available for people who use wheelchairs and, as the proportion of older people is expected to increase, the Council will require that 10% of housing on all sites over 10 dwellings are designed to meet lifetime homes standards. Such dwellings are suitable for people throughout their lives. Where flats are being provided, consideration should be given to installing lifts to the units above ground level. Only where there are overriding reasons why it is not possible to provide a satisfactory level access to the dwelling will this requirement be waived.

POLICY H16

THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE A VARIETY OF DWELLING TYPES AND SIZES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE EXISTING AND FUTURE POPULATION. IN CONSIDERING PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THE EXPECTATION WILL BE THAT:

- i) **ON SITES REASONABLY CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING 10 OR MORE DWELLINGS IN SETTLEMENTS OF MORE THAN 3,000¹ PEOPLE, OR 5 OR MORE DWELLINGS IN SETTLEMENTS OF 3,000¹ PEOPLE OR LESS, ABOUT 50% OF NEW DWELLINGS SHOULD HAVE TWO BEDROOMS OR LESS; AND**
- ii) **ON SITES CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING 10 OR MORE DWELLINGS, 10% OF DWELLINGS SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO MEET LIFETIME HOMES STANDARDS.**

Affordable Housing

- 8.67 The government accepts that the community's need for affordable housing is a material consideration which the planning system should take into account. Planning Policy Guidance note 3: *Housing* advises that where there is evidence of a need for affordable housing, local plans should include a policy seeking an element of such housing on suitable sites. The policy should define what the authority regards as affordable, indicate how many affordable homes need to be provided throughout the plan area and establish the size of site to which the policy will apply. Government Circular 6/98 *Planning and Affordable Housing* states that generally affordable housing should only be sought on sites of 25 or more dwellings, except in inner London or where exceptional local constraints can be demonstrated, in which case the threshold could be reduced to 15 dwellings. In settlements with populations of 3,000¹ people or less, the government has also indicated that local planning authorities can adopt lower thresholds, based on assessments of local need and the available supply of land for housing.
- 8.68 The Vale is an area of high house prices relative to incomes where many people on low to average incomes find it difficult to rent or buy a house on the open market to meet their needs. The Council's *Housing Needs Survey* (April 2001), undertaken by Fordham Associates, indicated that over the following five years there would be a shortfall of around 860 affordable homes a year in the Vale, or 4,300 over the five year period. This is a substantial figure and it fully justifies the Council seeking a significant proportion of affordable housing throughout the district. On the basis of the *Housing Needs Survey*, and what can reasonably be negotiated, Fordham Associates recommended that the Council should seek to secure 40% affordable housing on all sites of 15 or more dwellings in settlements of over 3,000¹ people and on sites of five or more dwellings in settlements smaller than this. The Housing Needs Assessment Update (March 2005) indicated that over the following five years there would be a shortfall of around 845 affordable homes each year. This is still a substantial figure and is well in excess of the total number of homes to be built in the Vale and it fully justifies the policy. The Council will take into account the viability of the scheme including any exceptional costs in developing the site,

¹Those settlements with more than 3,000 people are Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Grove, Wantage and Kennington.

the availability of public finance and the tenure mix of the affordable housing to be provided.

- 8.69 Affordable housing will be taken to be that which caters for people who are unable to buy or rent a home, suitable for their needs, on the open market. It will be provided with a subsidy to enable the asking price or rent to be substantially lower than prevailing market rates. Affordability can be defined in relation to local incomes and house prices and as a general guide it is reasonable to assume that households should not have to spend more than 30% of their net income on housing costs.
- 8.70 Given the restrictions on public sector housing finance, contributions from the increased land values obtained through the planning system are increasingly important for the delivery of affordable housing in the Vale. Fordham Associates recommended that fully serviced land should be transferred at zero cost. Developers can also sell dwellings at a price significantly below open market value. For the purposes of this plan affordable housing encompasses a range of tenures including that provided through a registered social landlord in the form of housing for rent and shared equity housing (where the occupier owns part of the house). It also includes intermediate housing for rent where the rents charged are lower than open market values and intermediate housing for sale which is substantially below market value to more than the first occupier. Shared equity housing and intermediate housing for rent or sale are particularly appropriate for key workers in the Vale who have a reasonable income but are unable to afford a home of their own. Slightly cheaper market housing, in a high house price area like the Vale, will not be affordable to local people in need and unless there is some form of legal covenant on the dwelling to ensure it remains substantially discounted below market value to more than the first occupier, such provision will not count towards the requirement in policy H17 below. As the interrelationship between the housing market, housing needs and housing finance will change over the lifetime of this Plan, the precise form that the affordable housing will take on each site will be determined when a planning application is made. The Council's objective is to secure the on-site provision of affordable housing. However, supplementary planning guidance will define the limited circumstances under which a commuted payment in lieu of on-site provision may be acceptable.
- 8.71 The Council will require that the affordable housing will be of a size and type to meet local needs and will remain available to local people in the long term. Where a registered social landlord is involved, this will normally be an effective way of controlling occupancy and ensuring it remains available in the long term. However, as the Government has given tenants the right to acquire their properties when any public subsidy has been involved in settlements of over 3,000¹ people, it will not be possible to require that the houses remain affordable in perpetuity. However, in

¹Those settlements with more than 3,000 people are Abingdon, Botley, Faringdon, Grove, Wantage and Kennington.

smaller settlements or where no public subsidy is involved, the Council will impose conditions or seek a legal agreement requiring they remain affordable. To facilitate social inclusion, the affordable housing should be distributed evenly through the site and should be indistinguishable from the market housing in terms of its appearance. Further guidance on the provision of affordable housing is available as supplementary planning guidance.

POLICY H17

40% OF THE DWELLINGS PROVIDED ON THE FOLLOWING SITES WILL BE EXPECTED TO BE AFFORDABLE TO LOCAL PEOPLE WHO ARE UNABLE TO RENT OR BUY A HOUSE APPROPRIATE TO THEIR NEEDS ON THE OPEN MARKET:

- i) IN SETTLEMENTS OF MORE THAN 3,000¹ PEOPLE, ON ALL SITES WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING 15 OR MORE DWELLINGS OR WHICH ARE 0.5 HECTARES OR MORE;**
- ii) IN SETTLEMENTS OF 3,000¹ PEOPLE OR LESS, ON ALL SITES WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING FIVE OR MORE DWELLINGS.**

THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVIDED:

- a) WILL BE OF A SIZE AND TYPE TO MEET LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS;**
- b) WILL HAVE ARRANGEMENTS PUT IN PLACE TO ENSURE THE HOUSING REMAINS AFFORDABLE FOR LOCAL PEOPLE IN THE LONG TERM; AND**
- c) WILL BE DISTRIBUTED EVENLY ACROSS THE SITE AND WILL BE INDISTINGUISHABLE IN APPEARANCE FROM THE MARKET HOUSING.**

Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

8.72 PPG3: *Housing* advises that in rural areas the stock of affordable dwellings can be augmented by an 'exception' policy which enables land within or adjoining villages, which would not normally be released for housing, to be developed provided it is for affordable housing to meet the needs of local people in perpetuity. The Council has been operating a rural exception policy since 1990 and it has enabled a small number of rural schemes to be developed, most notably at East Hendred, Steventon and Marcham. The Council will continue to work closely with local communities, housing providers and landowners to provide affordable housing in rural areas. It is hoped that the rural housing enabler, working across the Vale and South Oxfordshire, will encourage more exception schemes in the future. However, as this policy is aimed at providing local homes for local people, schemes should be supported in principle by the local community, as represented by the parish council.

8.73 Schemes approved under this policy must be for genuinely affordable homes designed to meet a specific local need. The homes must be affordable to people

who are unable to rent or buy a property on the open market. In this context local need will be defined as people living or working in the particular village where the scheme is located, or in an adjacent village. (This excludes people living in the five main settlements and Didcot as there will be opportunities to provide affordable housing within these settlements.) People who have long-standing links with these communities, either because they lived there previously or have relatives living there, will also be considered to have a local need. Officers from the Council's Housing Service will be able to give a preliminary indication whether there is sufficient need in the village to pursue a scheme. Before a planning application is made, a detailed housing needs survey must be carried out following a methodology agreed with the Council. It must include the following information: the present housing circumstances and income levels of those considered to be in need, related to local house prices and rent levels; the connection of the applicants with the village or nearby village; and the type and size of dwellings that would meet their requirements.

- 8.74 The sites chosen for this type of housing development must be small and be within or immediately adjacent to the existing built-up area of the village. Typically schemes will amount to about six houses but the precise number will be influenced by the detailed housing needs survey. For many people seeking affordable housing, access to key local services such as a primary school or shop is important. Rural exception schemes will most often be located within or adjoining the settlements which have a reasonable range of facilities and services, principally those included in policy H11 of this Plan. Schemes should take into account and provide for the need arising from surrounding smaller villages which will ensure these communities are not deprived of the opportunity to benefit from the new housing.
- 8.75 The exceptional release of land to provide affordable housing should take full account of environmental considerations. It is important that the style and character of the housing is in keeping with its surroundings and with local building styles. The effect of new housing on the landscape and rural setting of the village will also be important considerations. PPG3 advises that while the exceptions approach is not intended to apply in most Green Belt areas, very limited affordable housing, within or adjoining existing villages, may be acceptable and consistent with the function of the Green Belt. The villages where the Council would consider such schemes include the villages defined in policy GS3 and those inset in the Green Belt. Early discussion with the Council's planning officers will be essential to establish whether a particular site is likely to be suitable for a rural exceptions housing scheme.
- 8.76 Secure arrangements must be made to ensure that the scheme meets the local needs that have been identified, both initially and in respect of successive occupiers. The precise nature of these arrangements may vary but will most often be achieved through a legal agreement or planning conditions and the involvement of a housing association or village housing trust who can retain a long-term

interest in the housing and thus control subsequent changes of ownership and occupation in accordance with the agreed criteria.

- 8.77 Under the exception policy, schemes consisting of low cost market housing, or partly of market price housing used to cross-subsidise and produce low cost dwellings on the same site, will not be permitted. Such schemes would encourage landowners to promote speculative housing on inappropriate sites. The objective of the policy must remain clear and unambiguous: exceptions to the normal policies for the control of development will only be made for housing which will remain affordable for local people in the long term.

POLICY H18

SMALL-SCALE AFFORDABLE HOUSING SCHEMES MAY BE PERMITTED WITHIN AND ON THE EDGES OF VILLAGES, ON SITES WHICH WOULD NOT OTHERWISE BE ACCEPTABLE, IF ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA CAN BE MET:

- i) **IT WOULD MEET A CLEARLY ESTABLISHED LOCAL NEED WHICH CANNOT BE MET BY DEVELOPMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH OTHER POLICIES IN THIS PLAN;**
- ii) **THE SCHEME IS WITHIN OR ADJACENT TO THE EXISTING BUILT-UP AREA OF THE VILLAGE AND WOULD NOT HARM ITS CHARACTER OR SETTING AND WOULD NOT UNDERMINE THE FUNCTIONS OR VISUAL AMENITIES OF THE GREEN BELT;**
- iii) **THE SCHEME IS DESIGNED TO MEET THE ESTABLISHED NEED IN TERMS OF DWELLING NUMBERS, TYPES, SIZES AND AFFORDABILITY; AND**
- iv) **SECURE ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE TO ENSURE THAT ALL THE HOUSES WILL BE OCCUPIED BY LOCAL PEOPLE IN NEED OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND THAT THE BENEFITS OF THE LOW COST PROVISION WILL REMAIN AVAILABLE TO LOCAL PEOPLE IN THE LONG TERM.**

Special Housing Needs

- 8.78 In requiring the creation of mixed and balanced communities, PPG3 states that local planning authorities should facilitate the provision of housing to meet the needs of special groups including the elderly, the disabled, students, young single people, rough sleepers, the homeless and other groups who may need hostel accommodation. The planning requirements relating to grouped accommodation to meet such needs can be significantly different to general needs housing. The Council considers that such provision should be made in the five main settlements, where a good range of jobs, services, facilities and public transport are available, rather than in the villages and rural areas of the Vale. It will also be important to ensure that such schemes relate well in physical terms to their surroundings, that the car parking and open space within the development are appropriate to the scheme concerned and there would be no demonstrable harm to the quality of life

of neighbouring properties. The Council may be prepared to relax the open space provisions it would normally seek as part of general purpose housing developments, recognising that such provision may be inappropriate in the context of some schemes. Nevertheless it will wish to be satisfied that the needs of the occupiers are adequately provided for. Where schemes are for the elderly or mobility impaired who are able to walk or use wheelchairs, the site should have a suitable level access and be within easy walking distance (no further than 400 metres) of shops, services and public transport so that the residents can retain a reasonably independent life. The policy does not preclude the small-scale development of dwellings suitable for appropriate special needs groups in the larger villages. Where the provision of special needs accommodation provides separate dwelling units, schemes will be expected to make a contribution to meeting affordable housing needs in accordance with policy H17 if a need can be demonstrated for the particular type of property.

POLICY H19

IN THE BUILT-UP AREAS OF ABINGDON, BOTLEY, FARINGDON, GROVE, WANTAGE AND DIDCOT, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, GROUPED ACCOMMODATION TO MEET THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY AND OTHER DEFINED GROUPS WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED:

- i) IN THE CASE OF SCHEMES FOR THE ELDERLY OR MOBILITY-IMPAIRED, THE SITE AND ACCESS TO IT IS LEVEL AND FREE FROM OTHER PHYSICAL IMPEDIMENTS TO MOVEMENT ON FOOT OR BY WHEELCHAIR:**
- ii) WHERE THE SCHEME IS FOR PEOPLE WITH LIMITED INDEPENDENCE, THE SITE IS WITHIN EASY WALKING DISTANCE (NO MORE THAN 400 METRES) OF SHOPS, LOCAL SERVICES AND A PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTE TO A TOWN CENTRE; AND**
- iii) THAT WHERE STANDARDS WHICH WOULD APPLY TO GENERAL HOUSING ARE RELAXED IN RESPONSE TO THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF THE OCCUPIERS OF THE SCHEME, THE OCCUPANCY WILL BE LIMITED TO ACCORD WITH THE NATURE OF THE SCHEME.**

Accommodation for Dependent Relatives

- 8.79 Each year planning applications are made to provide separate accommodation within the curtilages of existing dwellings to house dependent relatives. This can be of considerable help to families in ensuring that dependent relatives receive the care and attention they need. In such cases the Council may be prepared to relax the policies it would normally apply when considering applications to extend or sub-divide an existing dwelling or convert outbuildings to additional living accommodation. Where planning permission would not normally be granted for the proposal the Council will impose conditions, or seek a legal agreement, to ensure that the accommodation is occupied by a dependent relative and that at no time can it be used separately from the main dwelling. The Council is unlikely to relax

its policies to enable the construction of a new free-standing dwelling as it would be almost inevitable that permission would be sought to let or sell the unit on the open market once it was no longer required for its original purpose. Wherever possible it will be expected that the existing and new accommodation will share a single door or entrance hall and that when circumstances change the annex will be incorporated into the original dwelling.

POLICY H20

PROPOSALS TO EXTEND OR SUB-DIVIDE AN EXISTING DWELLING OR CONVERT AN OUTBUILDING WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF A DWELLING, WHICH IN OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE, MAY BE PERMITTED IF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA CAN BE MET:

- i) THE PROPOSAL IS TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION FOR AN AGED OR INFIRM OR DEPENDENT RELATIVE, AND WILL NOT BE USED SEPARATELY FROM THE MAIN RESIDENCE;**
- ii) THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT AMOUNT TO INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT;**
- iii) THE SIZE OF ANY PROPOSED EXTENSION WILL BE SUBORDINATE TO THE EXISTING DWELLING;**
- iv) WHERE POSSIBLE THE PROPOSED ACCOMMODATION WILL BE SERVED BY A SHARED DOOR AND/OR ENTRANCE HALL AND IS CAPABLE OF BEING INCORPORATED INTO THE MAIN HOUSE WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE; AND**
- v) THE PROPOSAL WILL NOT GIVE RISE TO ACCESS PROBLEMS AND IS ACCEPTABLE IN TERMS OF ITS APPEARANCE.**

Mobile Homes Providing Permanent Residential Accommodation

- 8.80 Mobile homes provide an acceptable form of low cost home ownership for a significant number of people in the Vale. The infrastructure requirements of mobile home sites are very similar to those for permanent housing and include good road access, parking space and connections to utilities and services. Sites should be well located in relation to jobs, shops and schools so as to reduce the need to travel by car. For this reason they will be considered in the context of the policies for permanent housing in this Plan. Despite the variety of external finishes that are available for mobile homes, the development of sites will not be appropriate in all locations. Particular care needs to be taken to ensure that mobile home developments are located without harming the character of the area or the amenities of nearby residents. In particular reference should be made to plan policies GS1 – GS3, GS6, GS10 and DC1 – DC10.

Mobile Homes Providing Temporary Residential Accommodation

- 8.81 There are occasions when mobile homes or residential caravans are required for limited periods of time in locations where a permanent planning permission for such a development would not normally be granted. These can include when a person is building their own house, converting an existing building or caring for a dependent relative. It can also occur in association with an agricultural or equestrian enterprise where the justification to build a permanent dwelling has not been fully established (see policy H13). In these cases permission will be granted specifically to the person involved and for a specific period of time, after which the new or converted dwelling should be complete, or the need or otherwise for a new building in the countryside has been fully established. Care will be taken to ensure that the mobile home is sited to minimise the impact on the character of the surrounding area and the amenities of nearby properties.

POLICY H21

WHERE THERE ARE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, PLANNING PERMISSION MAY BE GIVEN FOR A MOBILE HOME OR RESIDENTIAL CARAVAN WHERE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED. IN THESE CASES A PERSONAL PERMISSION MAY BE GRANTED FOR A TEMPORARY PERIOD, PROVIDED THE MOBILE HOME IS SITED SO AS TO MINIMISE THE IMPACT ON THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA AND THE AMENITIES OF NEARBY PROPERTIES.

Sites for Gypsies

- 8.82 The term gypsies refers to people of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, who travel for the purpose of seeking their livelihood. The government expects local plans to identify suitable sites for gypsies or have criteria-based policies for assessing proposals. There are currently four gypsy sites in the Vale at East Challow, Redbridge Hollow (near Kennington), Sutton Courtenay and Fyfield Wick. Together these sites provide for 64 residential caravans and eight transit caravans. The Government's key objective for planning for housing is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home. Circular 1/2006 *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites* provides updated guidance on the planning aspects of finding sites for gypsies and travellers and how local authorities and gypsies and travellers can work together to achieve that aim. The policy below establishes the framework for assessing applications for gypsy sites.

POLICY H22

PROPOSALS FOR CARAVAN SITES FOR GYPSIES, INCLUDING TEMPORARY AND TRANSIT SITES, WILL BE PERMITTED ON SITES WHICH WOULD NOT NORMALLY BE APPROVED FOR HOUSING, WHERE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA CAN BE MET:

- i) **THERE IS AN ESTABLISHED NEED THAT CANNOT BE MET IN ANY OTHER WAY;**

- ii) **THE SITE WILL BE PROVIDED WITH ELECTRICITY, DRINKING WATER, SEWAGE AND WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITIES;**
- iii) **THE SITE IS WITHIN A REASONABLE DISTANCE OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL, SHOPS AND OTHER SERVICES;**
- iv) **THE DEVELOPMENT WILL BE WELL SCREENED AND WILL NOT HARM THE LANDSCAPE, ESPECIALLY IN AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY AND AREAS OF HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE;**
- v) **THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT HARM SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION, HISTORIC OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE INCLUDING CONSERVATION AREAS AND LISTED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SETTING;**
- vi) **THE SITE IS NOT IN THE GREEN BELT; AND**
- vii) **IT WILL NOT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA OR THE AMENITIES OF PEOPLE IN NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES.**

Travelling Show People

- 8.83 Circular 22/91 requires local planning authorities to consider the needs of travelling show people who travel the country holding fairs, chiefly during the summer months. Travelling show people require secure permanent bases for storing and maintaining equipment and for residential use, particularly in winter when the sites are most intensively used. Some family members, particularly retired people and children remaining in uninterrupted education, may live on the sites most of the year.
- 8.84 There are at present no sites for travelling show people in the Vale of White Horse, and there have been no applications for permanent sites since the Council was formed in 1974. No demand, in the form of an application, for such a site has therefore been expressed. If an application is received which makes clear that the need for a site is established, it will be considered in the light of all relevant local plan policies, particularly those relating to mobile homes and employment (because of the storage and maintenance element). Other policies of the Plan will also be relevant, in particular policies in the chapters on the general strategy, the general policies for development and the natural environment chapters.

Other Policies

Open Space in New Housing Development

- 8.85 The provision of adequate open space is essential for the health and well being of the community. In order to ensure that adequate new provision is made and existing deficiencies are not exacerbated, the Council will seek the provision of

open space in association with new development. The National Playing Fields Association recommends a minimum standard of 2.4 hectares of playing space for every 1000 people. This should be provided in the ratio of:

- 0.6–0.8 hectares for children's play space, including equipped playgrounds and informal kick-about areas, which is safely accessible on foot from where they live; and
- 1.6–1.8 hectares for outdoor sport.

Play spaces should be safe, suitably equipped and landscaped and a commuted sum must be provided for their maintenance.

- 8.86 In addition to play space, the provision of open space to provide for a wide variety of informal recreation – such as walking and picnicking – is also important if the community is to achieve a good quality of life. There are no generally accepted standards covering the provision of informal open space and much will depend on the nature and context of the development. Such open spaces, however, are highly valued by local residents and can make a significant contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the development and its environment. Generally the Council will look for 15% of the proposed residential area to be laid out as public open space to provide for children's play and informal recreation. On large schemes, involving 500 or more dwellings for example, the Council will also look for the provision of outdoor sport on the site. On schemes where outdoor sport cannot be provided on the site, contributions to improving off-site provision will be sought in accordance with policy DC8. Areas of landscaping, to help the development be assimilated in the environment, may also be required on the site which may mean that the proportion of open space is higher.
- 8.87 It may not always be appropriate to seek uniform standards of open space provision or for it always to be provided on the site. The amount and type of open space needed will depend on the size and type of the development and the availability, quality, quantity and location of the existing provision. Some housing developments such as that for the elderly, for example, are likely to generate relatively small demand for open space. However, even in these circumstances it will be necessary to provide attractive private sitting areas for communal use by the residents of the schemes. In the towns where high density housing is being proposed, and where there is a good range of easily accessible facilities nearby, the amount of open space required on the site may be reduced. Similarly on small housing sites it may not be appropriate to seek on-site provision of open space. However, cumulatively small developments can generate significant additional demand for outdoor playing space, and in appropriate cases the Council may seek financial contributions from developers to provide or improve off-site open space near to the development.

POLICY H23

NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE SAFE, ATTRACTIVE AND CONVENIENT PUBLIC OPEN SPACE FOR OUTDOOR PLAY AND INFORMAL RECREATION. ALTHOUGH THE AMOUNT AND TYPE OF THE PROVISION WILL DEPEND ON THE NATURE AND SCALE OF THE SCHEME, THE NEEDS OF THE PROSPECTIVE OCCUPIERS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF SUITABLE EXISTING OFF-SITE PROVISION, DEVELOPERS WILL USUALLY BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE:

- i) 15% OF THE RESIDENTIAL AREA LAID OUT AS PUBLIC OPEN SPACE; AND**
- ii) SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUTURE MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE.**

ON SITES OF LESS THAN 15 DWELLINGS, OR LESS THAN 0.5 OF A HECTARE, OR WHERE ON-SITE PROVISION IS NOT APPROPRIATE, FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS PROVIDING OR IMPROVING OFF-SITE PROVISION MAY BE SOUGHT.

Extensions to Dwellings and the Erection of Ancillary Buildings and Structures

- 8.88 In environmental terms, individual extensions or proposals for ancillary buildings or structures may have little impact on the character and appearance of a residential area but the cumulative effect of poorly designed extensions and garages, badly sited walls and fences and reduced off-street parking can, over time, lead to a serious deterioration in the general appearance and highway safety of the area. The enclosure of even small areas of open space can change the format of the area and be harmful to its overall character and appearance. In addition, poorly designed extensions or outbuildings can seriously affect the amenities of adjoining homes. In this respect, care needs to be taken to avoid overlooking and overshadowing and efforts must be made to consider the impact of a proposed extension or ancillary building on all surrounding properties. It is good practice for applicants to consult neighbours before submitting final plans to the Council, so they are fully aware of what is being proposed.
- 8.89 Extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt will not be allowed to increase the volume of the dwelling by more than 30% in accordance with policy GS3. Planning permission is not always required to extend existing dwellings or to build garages within the curtilage and people should check with the Council before alterations are made.

POLICY H24

EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING DWELLINGS, OR THE ERECTION OF ANCILLARY BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF A DWELLING, WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:

- i) **IN THE GREEN BELT THE TOTAL VOLUME OF EXTENSIONS ACCORDS WITH THE LIMIT SET OUT IN POLICY GS3;**
- ii) **THE SCALE, MASSING AND POSITIONING OF THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT RESULT IN A DWELLING OF DESIGN AND APPEARANCE THAT WOULD CAUSE DEMONSTRABLE HARM TO THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF ITS SURROUNDINGS;**
- iii) **THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HARM THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF PRIVACY, OVERLOOKING AND OVERSHADOWING;**
- iv) **ADEQUATE OFF-STREET PARKING, TURNING SPACE AND GARDEN SPACE REMAIN;**
- v) **IN THE CASE OF GARAGES AND CAR PORTS, A SAFE ACCESS CAN BE PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY;**
- vi) **IN THE CASE OF WALLS AND FENCES, THERE IS NO HARM TO THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA AND THE VISIBILITY OF ROAD USERS, INCLUDING PEDESTRIANS, IS NOT IMPAIRED SUCH THAT A HIGHWAY SAFETY PROBLEM IS CREATED.**

Garden Extensions

- 8.90 The Council recognises that the provision of gardens can significantly enhance the quality of people's lives and that occasionally local residents will wish to extend their existing garden areas. Unless the land is in an adjoining residential curtilage, this will normally involve a material change in the use of land and planning permission will be required. There are cases, particularly when the land involved is on the edge of a settlement or when it is valuable open space within a settlement, that permission may be refused. Garden extensions, for example, will not normally be permitted if they involve the loss of areas of woodland or hedgerows which are important to the visual amenity of the area, or where they would encroach onto an area of recognised nature conservation importance.
- 8.91 The extension of gardens can have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the countryside as a result of enclosing the land with walls or fences and constructing sheds, greenhouses, garages, washing lines, swimming pools and tennis courts. When assessing applications the Council will ensure there is no conflict with the general policies for development in Chapter 4, the policies to protect the natural or historic environment in Chapters 6 and 7 of this Plan or with the need to safeguard important open land on the edges of settlements as defined on the proposals map. Proposals which would harm the open and rural nature of the Green Belt or its visual amenities, and those which would result in the loss of important open land within settlements where these contribute to local character,

will not be permitted. Care will also be taken to ensure there is no loss of privacy to adjoining residents and the enjoyment of people using public rights of way is not compromised.

- 8.92 When considering applications, account will be taken of the adequacy of the size of the existing garden. Proposals for garden extensions that seem over-large in relation to the size of the property and neighbouring gardens may be refused as this could lead to subsequent applications for the construction of additional dwellings. When granting planning permission, the Council may withdraw permitted development rights where the construction of new features and structures could have a harmful impact on the character of the area.

POLICY H25

PROPOSALS TO EXTEND RESIDENTIAL GARDENS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON:

- i) THE LANDSCAPE OR SETTING OF THE SETTLEMENT, OR THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA;**
- ii) THE OPENNESS AND VISUAL AMENITIES OF THE GREEN BELT;**
- iii) IMPORTANT OPEN AREAS WITHIN A SETTLEMENT;**
- iv) THE SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING;**
- v) THE CHARACTER OF A CONSERVATION AREA; OR**
- vi) THE AMENITY OF THE ADJOINING RESIDENTS AND USERS OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY.**