

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Local Development Order?

Local planning authorities, such as the Vale of White Horse, can adopt Local Development Orders (LDO) to create a positive planning environment, which can help to make an identified area more attractive to investors.

LDOs can help to speed up the granting of planning permission, which helps to ensure the right type of development is built in the right location.

Why is the current LDO for Milton Park being reviewed?

The current LDO was adopted in 2012 and the council is reviewing the order so that it aligns with Didcot Garden Town principles, the Vale of White Horse District Council's Local Plan and Corporate Plan, as well as changes in national planning legislation and regulations. You can find all the information on the current LDO for Milton Park on our [website](#).

The review is also looking at how changes to the LDO can support [Milton Park's 2040 Vision](#), which is a plan to sustainably grow and continue to evolve Milton Park as it welcomes new businesses and people.

Is there a need for more office/workplaces/laboratories in a post COVID-19 world?

Good quality office and laboratory space throughout the UK is still in demand and the work that has taken place in Oxfordshire in response to COVID-19, has been very much in the lead globally. This means the demand for laboratory space is likely to increase.

According to a [Savills report](#), the majority of the UK's 1,226 life sciences firms are located in the Oxford, Cambridge and London areas. Despite the pandemic last year, investment into sciences companies amounted to a nearly £20bn and the report predicts investments will reach a new high in 2021.

Will the new buildings be more sustainable?

One of the most important changes of the proposal is to introduce more sustainable materials, minimise energy consumption and introduce renewable energy.

Where are the highest buildings going to be built?

Milton Park is proposing to be able to build some taller buildings to help create [new neighbourhood areas](#) within the LDO boundary. The new areas could see a laboratory building being up to five storeys in height. To put this in context, the Marriot Courtyard Hotel next to the A34 is six storeys high.

What are you doing to avoid traffic congestion?

Milton Park continue to encourage people to travel into the park by using public transport or to cycle into work. They do this by providing free bike use scheme and subsidised travel by bus between the railway station and the park.

Milton Park has introduced free bikes and e-bikes to and from Didcot Parkway via a [new rental scheme](#). Improvements have also been made to cycle networks throughout the [Science Vale](#). These paths provide greater cycle and pedestrian connectivity between Milton Park and key urban centres such as Didcot, Abingdon, Oxford, surrounding villages, and the other local business parks.

[Thames Travel](#) recently unveiled three newly branded Milton Park buses that run from Didcot Parkway every few minutes. Substantial improvements to bus services has been introduced with new direct connections to Headington, Wantage and Grove and an improved service to Oxford, Didcot Parkway and Abingdon. There's also a new local direct service to southern areas and Great Western Park in Didcot. People working on the park can take advantage of the Didcot to Milton Park bus service by using a subsidised season ticket, priced at just £20 per year.

The infrastructure needed to support electric vehicles and other sustainable transport options could be encouraged by changes to the LDO.

Are Milton Park planning on building on Kelaart's Field?

There are no plans to build on any areas Kelaart's Field – on the northern boundary of Milton Park, near Sutton Courtenay – outside of that covered by the current LDO. Milton Park is proposing to look after part of the field to ensure it remains an informal green space that protects the biodiversity and natural environment for everyone to access and enjoy.

What sort of landscaping and facilities are going being proposed in the park?

Other new facilities and landscaped gardens could be built. New food outlets and shops with outdoor furniture could be added to create new meeting spaces for Milton Park residents.

Is this the only chance I will have to comment on any changes to the LDO?

It is very important that the council listens to the views of residents, commuters and businesses about possible changes to the LDO at an early stage in the review process.

Your feedback and technical assessments that we will carry out will inform the list of proposed changes to the current LDO.

Before the proposed changes are considered for adoption by a full Council meeting, we will need to complete a statutory public consultation. This formal consultation will provide you with another opportunity to view and comment on the outcome of the review.

Who is paying for the LDO review?

The review is being led by the council. At the request of the council, MEPC Milton Park is paying the costs of the technical advice and community consultation that is needed for the review.

Will the LDO review result in any contributions for improvements to local infrastructure such as roads and cycleways?

In accordance with the terms of the existing LDO, Milton Park is required to make financial contributions when certain milestones are reached when a new development takes place at Milton Park. If the LDO review allows additional development to be permitted at Milton Park, the need for further improvements to local infrastructure, such as roads, shops and other facilities, will also need to be agreed between the council and MEPC Milton Park.