



# Contents

	Page
Foreword ... ..	3
1. Introduction ... ..	5
2. A strategy for Oxfordshire ... ..	11
3. General policies for development ... ..	17
4. Transport ... ..	25
5. Protecting and enhancing the environment ... ..	37
6. Developing the local economy ... ..	47
7. Housing ... ..	55
8. Town centres ... ..	63
9. Recreation and leisure ... ..	65
10. Energy ... ..	71
11. Minerals ... ..	75
12. Waste management ... ..	83
13. Monitoring progress ... ..	89
Key diagram ... ..	95
Appendices: ... ..	97
Appendix 1: List of policies ... ..	99
Appendix 2: Glossary ... ..	113
Appendix 3: Designated sites of importance for biodiversity in Oxfordshire ... ..	123

*Line drawings and logo design by Fred Rose*





# Foreword

We want Oxfordshire to be a thriving county which adapts to a changing world but remains a special place to live, work and visit. This Structure Plan is central to that vision.

The Structure Plan is our strategy for the development and use of land in the county and covers a wide range of issues which are vitally important to the everyday life of all in Oxfordshire. These wide range of issues include policies that seek to support economic development, protect, conserve and enhance our natural and built environment, provide homes that people can afford and manage and develop transport in the county. The Plan also includes policies that provide minerals and waste management, help to maintain and enhance our town centres, provide recreation and leisure for all and support energy conservation. Providing the necessary infrastructure needed to support new development is also essential and the Plan has a crucial role in achieving this.

The Plan has been prepared taking account of the views of a wide range of individuals and organisations. I am grateful for their input, which I believe has helped to ensure that this is a Plan that genuinely reflects *Oxfordshire* concerns.

Changes to the planning system mean that this will be the last Structure Plan before it is in time replaced with the regional spatial strategy for the South East – the South East Plan, which is being prepared by the South East England Regional Assembly. Although its shelf life may be limited, the Structure Plan will play a crucial role in guiding development in the county up to 2016.

**Roger Belson**

**Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development**





# 1. Introduction

## What is the Oxfordshire Structure Plan?

- 1.1 The Oxfordshire Structure Plan is the County Council's strategy for the development and use of land in Oxfordshire.
- 1.2 The Structure Plan consists of a written statement of the County Council's policies illustrated by a key diagram. The Plan is supported by explanatory text (the "explanatory memorandum"), which is the remainder of the document. The strategy is in chapter 2 and the policies which support it in the subsequent chapters. The Plan should read as a whole, in conjunction with relevant local plans and local development documents.
- 1.3 This is the last Structure Plan to be adopted for Oxfordshire. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act was enacted in 2004. The Oxfordshire Structure Plan will eventually be replaced under the new system by the South East Plan which will provide the strategic framework to guide development in Oxfordshire<sup>1</sup>.

## The role of the development plan

- 1.4 Structure plans provide the strategic policy framework for the development and use of land. They should ensure that the provision for development is realistic and consistent with national and regional policy.
- 1.5 The County Council in reviewing the Plan has taken account of Government policy set out in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs), Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), Minerals Planning Guidance Notes (MPGs), Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) and other guidance, which are referred to throughout the Plan. The overall aims and objectives of the Plan, which are set out below, have been drawn up taking into account the Government's sustainable development objectives<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.6 In particular it is recognised that climate change is one the major environmental challenges facing the world. The strategy in the Plan seeks at a local level to contribute to the mitigation of the causes and impacts of climate change.

---

<sup>1</sup> The South East Plan is being prepared by the South East of England Regional Assembly. It will contain sub-regional policies for parts of Oxfordshire, covering some of the issues addressed by the structure plans. Local plans will be replaced by local development documents prepared by the district councils for all matters except minerals and waste, which will be covered by a development document prepared by the County Council. Structure plans that had reached the statutory deposit stage by the Act's commencement date continued to adoption with such plans being saved for three years from adoption. Policies will then be replaced by revisions to the new Regional Spatial Strategy.

<sup>2</sup> A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK.



- 1.7 The Government aims to create sustainable communities<sup>3</sup> in which people want to live which:
- are economically prosperous;
  - have decent homes at a price people can afford;
  - safeguard the countryside;
  - enjoy a well-designed, accessible and pleasant living and working environment; and
  - are effectively and fairly governed with a strong sense of community.
- 1.8 Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9)<sup>4</sup> provides the framework for development and the preparation of structure and local plans in the South East region up to 2016.
- 1.9 Key aspects of RPG9 which are relevant to Oxfordshire are:
- urban areas should be the main focus for development;
  - an average of 2,430 new dwellings should be provided in Oxfordshire each year;
  - high value-added activities including business clusters should be encouraged;
  - at the regional level 60% of new development should be on previously developed land;
  - greenfield development should normally take place only after other alternatives have been considered;
  - the development of housing should provide a better mix of sizes, types and tenures;
  - development should be located and designed to enable more sustainable use of natural resources and assist in reducing pollution;
  - there should be continued protection and enhancement of the region's biodiversity, landscape and built and historic heritage;
  - the life of the countryside and rural communities should be sustained through economic diversification; and
  - there should be increased ability to meet travel needs through safe walking, cycling and public transport with reduced reliance on the car.

## Improving the quality of life in Oxfordshire

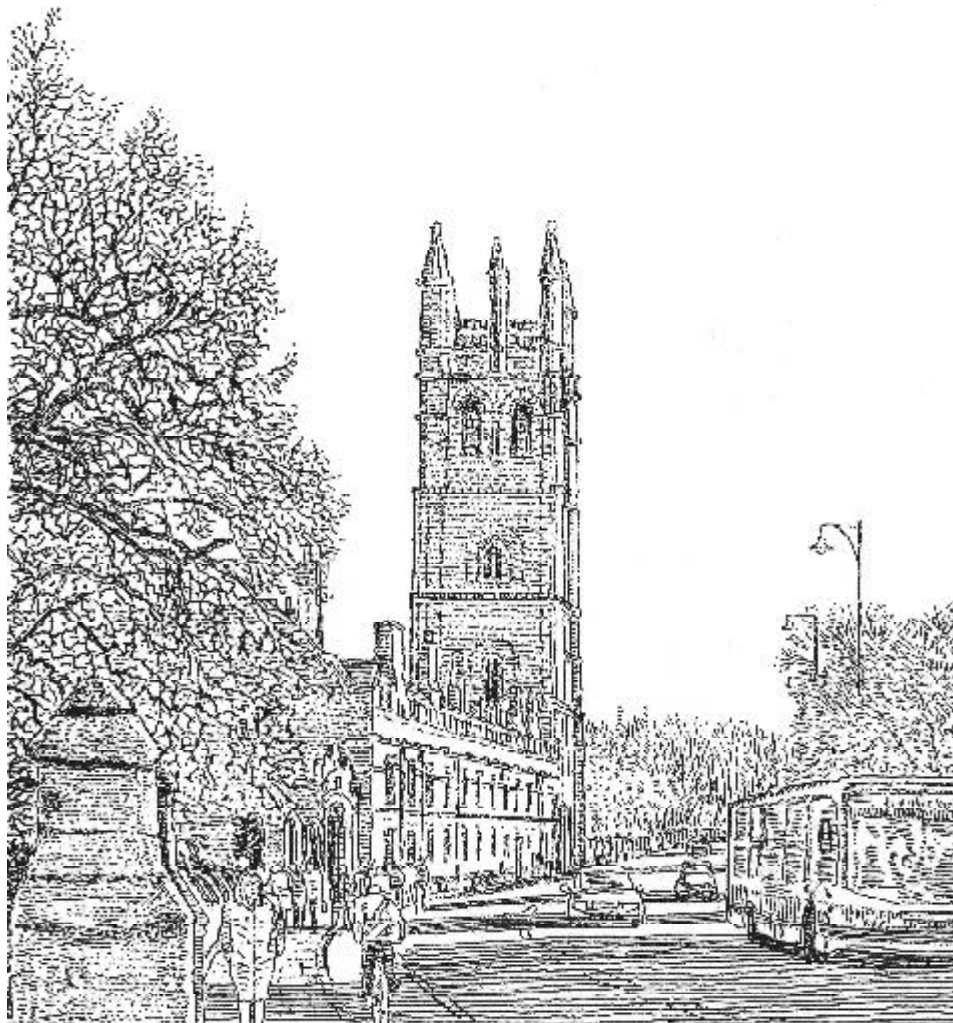
- 1.10 Oxfordshire is a diverse county, recognised as one of Europe's leading centres of enterprise and innovation, as a centre for culture and for the quality of its attractive countryside and historic towns and villages. It is best described as a "city region" in which Oxford and the rest of the county are closely interlinked and interdependent.
- 1.11 The Oxfordshire economy is one of the most successful and dynamic in the country. Oxfordshire is acknowledged globally as a centre of excellence for learning and research, with some of the world's foremost academic institutions and major research and development organisations, with strong linkages between research and business across the county.

<sup>3</sup> "Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future" is a national programme of action setting out how the Government intends to achieve sustainable communities for all. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9), Government Office for the South East, March 2001.



- 1.12 Oxford with its two universities, hospitals and research establishments plays a central role in the economy of Oxfordshire. Many other important research establishments are in other parts of the county, for example Culham Science Centre and the Harwell International Business Centre for Science and Technology. A large number of the companies in the research sector are outside Oxford.
- 1.13 Economic success is fundamental to the quality of life in Oxfordshire. However, it also brings problems such as high house prices, lack of affordable housing, traffic congestion, recruitment and retention problems and pressures on the environment. There are pockets of deprivation and poverty in many communities, including rural areas where there can be greater isolation, limited public transport and poor access to services and jobs.
- 1.14 The County Council's priorities are set out in the Oxfordshire Plan<sup>5</sup>. The aim is to improve the quality of life of Oxfordshire's people by helping them to fulfil their potential; protecting the environment; safeguarding our communities; sustaining prosperity and raising the performance of the Council to improve services and promote Oxfordshire's interests in the region, nationally and in Europe.



<sup>5</sup> Oxfordshire Plan 2005-2006, Oxfordshire County Council.



- 1.15 Healthy, vibrant, sustainable communities can only be achieved with involvement by the people who live and work in those communities. The Government sees local strategic partnerships (LSPs) as key to developing new ways of involving local people, the voluntary sector and business in identifying and implementing changes to improve their quality of life. The Oxfordshire Community Partnership<sup>6</sup> has prepared a Community Strategy for Oxfordshire. Key priorities for action include increasing the provision of affordable housing, transport and safe and supportive communities.
- 1.16 A priority for the County Council is to support sustainable and inclusive economic growth by supporting the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership strategy to sustain and develop the educational, scientific and technological economy, working with major employers and business to provide affordable housing and with the farming community.
- 1.17 The Economic Development Strategy for Oxfordshire<sup>7</sup> aims to raise Oxfordshire's profile as a pioneering, world-class economy that fulfils the potential of its inhabitants through continually developing its capacity for innovation, business and personal development, research and education, and through the effective management of its high quality environmental resources. The Strategy recognises that economic growth can only be sustainable if it goes hand in hand with protecting and enhancing the county's environmental assets, which include three areas of outstanding natural beauty, Oxford – a city of international historic importance, attractive towns and villages, historic buildings and important sites for wildlife and nature conservation.
- 1.18 The Structure Plan will contribute to meeting the County Council's priorities, by providing a land use and transport planning framework which meets the needs of Oxfordshire's people and economy, whilst protecting its environment and heritage, and which contributes to the economic success and prosperity of the county.
- 1.19 The County Council's vision for Oxfordshire over the next twenty to twenty five years is of a county where the natural, historical and cultural environment continues to be protected and enhanced, and where the quality of life of all Oxfordshire's people will be improved. Oxfordshire's role as a centre of excellence for learning and research will be supported by a pattern of development which sustains the prosperity of the economy, meets needs for housing, including affordable housing and provides for a choice of travel options less dependent on the car.

<sup>6</sup> A partnership of all main stakeholders in Oxfordshire from the public, private, voluntary and community sector.

<sup>7</sup> Economic Development Strategy Oxfordshire 2001-2005. Oxfordshire Economic Partnership, December 2001.



1.20 The County Council's overall aims and underlying objectives for the Plan are:

**Aim 1. To protect and enhance the environment and character of Oxfordshire.**

Objectives:

- i. to provide effective protection and enhancement for Oxfordshire's biodiversity, landscape and heritage;
- ii. to reduce pollution and emissions of greenhouse gases;
- iii. to maintain and improve the quality of surface and groundwater;
- iv. to protect the quality of soils and agricultural land.

**Aim 2. To encourage the efficient use of land, energy and resources.**

Objectives:

- i. to locate development where it can reduce the need to travel and encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
- ii. to minimise the use of greenfield land;
- iii. to encourage the location and design and development which makes efficient use of energy and resources, and minimises waste for disposal.

**Aim 3. To support progress towards a better quality of life for all Oxfordshire's people.**

Objectives:

- i. to provide for sufficient new dwellings to meet the requirements of Regional Planning Guidance, of an appropriate size and type for Oxfordshire's residents, and to contribute to meeting affordable housing need;
- ii. to support communities in which people have access to jobs, services, community and leisure facilities;
- iii. to provide for a range of travel options to meet transport needs; and
- iv. to provide safe and attractive places to live and work.

**Aim 4. To sustain prosperity by supporting sustainable and appropriate economic development.**

Objectives:

- i. to support the continued development of Oxfordshire's existing and emerging growth sectors and clusters;
- ii. to provide for development to meet the economic needs of the county's residents and local businesses; and
- iii. to support the diversification of the rural economy in Oxfordshire.

1.21 Finding the right balance between the objectives is at the heart of the Plan.



## Sustainability appraisal

- 1.22 European Directive 2001/42/EC provides for the “assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”, known as Strategic Environmental Assessment. It applies to all plans whose formal preparation began after July 2004, and those which were already in preparation but will not be adopted by July 2006. The directive has now been translated into UK regulations in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The Regulations do not apply to the Oxfordshire Structure Plan because it does not fall within the time limits set out above. However, a broader sustainability appraisal has been carried out as the Structure Plan has been prepared. A summary is provided below, but full details are in the sustainability appraisal background paper<sup>8</sup>.
- 1.23 The sustainability appraisal was carried out by a multidisciplinary, in-house team, with independent expert advice from consultants Levett-Therivel. Appraisal took place at each of the main stages in preparing the draft Structure Plan, starting with the aims and objectives of the Plan to check that they were consistent with each other and with other key national, regional and local objectives. The five broad options for accommodating new development in Oxfordshire published for consultation in April 2002 were appraised against the draft aims and objectives. Subsequently four more detailed options for the locational strategy were appraised in the same way. Finally the policies in the deposit draft Structure Plan were appraised using a matrix of nine environmental, social and economic factors to reflect those in the European SEA Directive.
- 1.24 The appraisal process showed that the draft Oxfordshire Structure Plan overall should contribute towards sustainability principles. It was a valuable tool in identifying negative and positive aspects of development options and the policies and proposals in the draft Plan whilst work was progressing at each stage. While some of the negative impacts can be mitigated when development is implemented there are aspects of the Plan that will have a negative impact in terms of sustainability, for example by using some greenfield land for development. The initial appraisal of the broad options highlighted additional advantages and disadvantages of the options that resulted in amendments before an Issues Paper was published for consultation in 2002. The appraisal of more detailed strategies produced clear and concise positives and negatives that were fed into the informal member/officer working group preparing the Plan and contributed to the decision making process. The appraisal of policies allowed for constructive comments to be taken into account by policy authors before the final draft Plan was produced.

<sup>8</sup> Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 Deposit Draft, Sustainability Appraisal, September 2003.



## 2. A strategy for Oxfordshire

### Introduction

- 2.1 This chapter sets out the proposed pattern of future development for Oxfordshire: it includes firm proposals for the distribution of housing and other development for the period to 2016. The strategy seeks to take forward the aims and objectives of the Plan by:
- providing for the development of new homes, jobs and services and facilities to meet the needs of Oxfordshire's people;
  - concentrating housing development in urban areas where it can be easily accessible to jobs, shops, services, community facilities and public transport;
  - providing for an increased number of affordable houses, including housing for key workers;
  - providing the framework to help sustain prosperity and develop Oxfordshire's economy;
  - protecting the countryside, towns and villages and the landscape setting and character of Oxford city;
  - providing in rural areas for development to support the economic and social well being of communities;
  - ensuring supporting infrastructure and services are provided to support development;
  - encouraging the location and design of development to promote high quality environments, make efficient use of energy and other resources and to help reduce the need to travel; and
  - providing the necessary raw materials, for example minerals to enable development to take place.



## General

- 2.2 The focus for development in the county will be on the existing larger urban areas, where most homes, jobs and services are located. The Plan seeks to maintain and enhance the role of town centres and to improve the range of services and facilities that help to create attractive communities.
- 2.3 A priority is to ensure that best use is made of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas to reduce the need for greenfield development. This priority is supported by a policy to secure higher density housing development, particularly in the main urban areas and close to town centres where there is good public transport. Higher density development must, however, also achieve higher quality of design and add to the attractiveness of the built environment.
- 2.4 Taking account of the regional target that at least 60% of all new housing will be built on previously developed land, the local authorities will monitor the potential for new housing on sites within built up areas and the timing of the release of new greenfield sites will be managed and phased accordingly.
- 2.5 Because of high house prices across Oxfordshire a priority issue is the provision of more affordable housing, including homes for key workers. Policies in the Plan seek to provide a framework for securing higher levels of affordable housing than in the past. Many of the houses to be built on previously developed land will be built on sites in Oxford, which together with policies to secure affordable and key worker housing being pursued by Oxford City Council, could provide more houses in the city for those who cannot afford to buy or rent in the open market.
- 2.6 The strategy and policies support the need to sustain economic prosperity and to build on Oxfordshire's strengths – in particular the development of its educational, scientific and technological economy. The Plan looks to achieve a better balance between homes and jobs across the county to help spread the benefits of Oxfordshire's prosperous economy, to ease pressures on Oxford and to reduce the need for commuting to Oxford.
- 2.7 The Plan reflects Oxford's central role in the life of the county. The County Council wants to see Oxford thrive as a first class vibrant city, modern in outlook with a diverse economy. The Plan promotes Oxford's role as a sub-regional centre for shopping, leisure and cultural activities. Oxford will continue to build on its strengths – education, health and related research and development activities. One of the priorities for the County Council is to progress plans for the urban renaissance of the West End of Oxford for the benefit of everyone who lives in Oxfordshire<sup>9</sup>.
- 2.8 This does not mean that Oxford should grow unchecked, so as to damage its heritage and landscape setting and increase pressures on transport and other services. Because of the substantial imbalance between jobs and workforce in Oxford, the overall growth of employment in the city will continue to be limited. Land is however available within the city to support the development of employment sectors that need to be located there. Other activities will be encouraged to continue to locate outside Oxford. Support is given for small-scale development which helps to maintain the diversity of the Oxford economy.

<sup>9</sup> Oxfordshire Plan 2005-2006, Oxfordshire County Council.



## Rural communities

- 2.9 For the rural areas of Oxfordshire the Plan seeks to ensure that the countryside is protected whilst the needs of rural communities for affordable housing, jobs and services and diversification of the local economy are met.
- 2.10 The role of the smaller towns and villages as service centres needs to be maintained. A particular concern is the decline of some rural centres and the difficulty that young people, for example, face in being able to stay in their local community. It is not always possible to maintain all shops and services in smaller settlements. The Plan, therefore, seeks to channel a limited amount of development to the smaller towns and larger villages in which there is a reasonable range of shops, services and community facilities already and which can serve a group of surrounding villages. Small-scale development on the edge of some villages could help to meet local needs for affordable housing.



## The proposed pattern of development 2001-2016

- 2.11 The Plan emphasises the concentration of development on the main urban areas, including Oxford, where a larger amount of housing growth is provided for compared to previous Plans. A large number of houses and other development are planned already at Oxford, Banbury, Bicester, Didcot and Witney under the previous Structure Plan. This Plan adds Grove to the locations which are planned for significant additional development. The main locations for new employment development will be Banbury, Bicester, Didcot and Witney to encourage a more balanced and diverse range of employment in the towns.
- 2.12 Grove is proposed as a main location for development in the south of the county where it will help to contribute to the needs of the expanding employment base in southern Oxfordshire including major sites at the Harwell complex, Milton Park and Didcot. Development at Grove will require improved secondary school provision and should help to improve the range of shops and services at Grove and the attractiveness of Wantage town centre. Improved public transport services to Didcot, Milton Park and Harwell Campus will be necessary. Substantial improvements on the A417 will be needed to provide priority for public transport at congestion points and to bring the route to an adequate standard of safety. The County Council will continue to press for rail services to call at a reopened Grove station. This Plan supports development at Grove which could extend until 2021. As there are already problems with the transport infrastructure, it is essential that the required improvements are in place before any development is occupied. Before planning permission can be given, it will be necessary to carry out a full environmental assessment into the possible risks of flooding both locally and further downstream.





- 2.13 Provision is also made for relatively modest development in other towns and larger villages where there is a reasonable range of employment, services and community facilities, in particular for affordable housing to meet the needs of people living in the immediate area.
- 2.14 The timing of the release of new greenfield sites in the Plan period will depend on the review of regional planning guidance, the potential for housing development on previously developed land within the built up areas and the delivery of necessary infrastructure and facilities, including transport improvements. The potential need for additional waste water treatment capacity, particularly at Bicester, should be taken into account early in the process of planning land releases for housing.
- 2.15 The deposit draft Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 gave an indication of a possible pattern of development for the period after 2016. However, the South East Plan will now set the development framework for the longer term. In particular, the draft regional spatial strategy, the South East Plan, proposes a development strategy for the Central Oxfordshire sub-region. The Structure Plan will provide an important interim strategic framework to guide the preparation of local development documents until the new South East Plan is adopted. Work to advise the Regional Assembly on a district housing distribution for Central Oxfordshire and the rest of Oxfordshire has been led by the County Council working with the district councils and other stakeholders.



## Implementing the strategy

- 2.16 The delivery of the strategy will require close working between the County Council, the district councils and other partners to ensure essential infrastructure and facilities to support the development of attractive and viable communities. Policies in the Plan look to secure from developers the provision of infrastructure and services from development when it is needed.
- 2.17 Transport infrastructure will be a key factor in implementation. Where development depends on transport provision and management on the strategic routes this will require close working between the County Council, the Government, the Highways Agency and the rail industry to co-ordinate the necessary strategic transport investment.
- 2.18 The definition of the County's principal transport corridors serving Oxford recognises the significance of the north south strategic corridor which serves the principal economic and development areas of the county.
- 2.19 The County Council's transport strategy is set out in the Local Transport Plan<sup>10</sup> (LTP). The review of the LTP is taking account the proposals in the new Structure Plan (see paragraph 4.5).

---

<sup>10</sup> Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2001-2006, Oxfordshire County Council.



## 3. General policies for development

- G1 The general strategy is to provide a framework for development to sustain economic prosperity, meet housing and other requirements and guide the investment decisions of a range of organisations for the period to 2016 in ways which will:
- a) deliver the level of development required to meet the objectives of this Plan while protecting and enhancing the environment, character and natural resources of the county;
  - b) concentrate development in locations where:
    - i. a reasonable range of services and community facilities exist or can be provided; and
    - ii. the need to travel, particularly by private car, can be reduced and walking, cycling and the use of public transport can be encouraged;
  - c) make the best use of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas to reduce the need for the development of greenfield sites, while not permitting development on important open spaces.

The larger urban areas will be the main focus for development.

In smaller towns and villages development will be of an appropriate scale and type to meet the social and economic needs of local communities.

- 3.1 The key elements of the strategy are outlined in chapter 2.
- 3.2 National and regional policy guidance promotes urban areas as the main focus for development. Most development will be located within or adjoining the main urban areas to make best use of previously developed land and put houses close to jobs, shops, services and other facilities. Development should be located where it helps in reducing the need to travel and might encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Developments which generate a lot of journeys should be in locations which are, or are capable of being well served by public transport.
- 3.3 The reuse of previously developed urban land is a key objective of national planning policy. Densities of housing development in many areas will need to increase with good quality design to help achieve this.
- 3.4 A priority for the local planning authorities in determining planning applications and allocating land in local plans will be to first maximise the use of previously developed urban land. In encouraging the development of such sites the Plan includes safeguards to protect the character of towns and villages and important open spaces.
- 3.5 Apart from the larger urban areas, the smaller towns and villages have a role in helping to meet the needs of local communities and businesses. Local needs may be identified by means such as local housing needs assessments, community plans, village appraisals, market town health checks or other such initiatives. The Plan provides a framework which supports this role but which does not encourage unsustainable travel patterns.

## Improving the quality and design of development.

G2 All development should;

- a) be of a scale and type appropriate to the site and its surroundings, and not cause harm to the character and amenities of the area;
- b) incorporate a high quality of layout, design and landscaping; and
- c) be designed so as to reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport and telecommunications as alternatives to the car.

Development which would have an unacceptable impact on the environment because of its nature, scale, location or cumulative effects will not be permitted.

- 3.6 High quality design has a major role to play in improving people's quality of life, enhancing the built environment and making communities safer, for example in designing energy efficient buildings or car-free neighbourhoods. Proposals for mixed use developments and provision for home working can help to reduce travel. Redevelopment of previously developed land and buildings within built up areas will provide opportunities to improve the quality of the built environment. At the same time the best of the cultural and natural heritage needs to be protected.



- 3.7 It will be for local plans and local development frameworks to establish the principles for the design, layout and landscaping of new development to provide high quality, safe environments which encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport and incorporate measures to reduce crime. The County Council's Home Zones design guide<sup>11</sup> shows how road space can be shared. Local planning authorities should work in partnership with the police, and new development should incorporate features to improve community safety.

<sup>11</sup> Home Zone Characteristics for New Housing Developments, Oxfordshire County Council, February 2002.



## Infrastructure and service provision

**G3** Proposals for development will not be permitted unless the planning authorities are satisfied that necessary infrastructure, on- or off-site transport measures, recreation, leisure, educational, health and community facilities, services and environmental improvements are available, or will be provided. Where appropriate phasing will be used to coordinate development with the provision of infrastructure.

In determining infrastructure and other requirements the local planning authorities will take into account the cumulative impacts of development.

Contributions will be sought from developers and/or landowners in accordance with Government advice.

The provision of recreation, leisure, educational, health and community facilities will be encouraged in settlements where there are deficiencies.

3.8 Good quality development can only be provided if the necessary infrastructure and services are available at the right time. Where existing community facilities, infrastructure and services are inadequate to deal with the extra demands made as a result of new development, developers are expected to ensure that the necessary additional provision is made at no extra public cost. Where the proposed development requires new facilities or the upgrading of existing facilities, the planning authorities will seek the provision of the facility or contributions towards the requirements from the developer, in accordance with Government advice. The range of requirements include affordable housing, community facilities and buildings, recreational open space, sport, leisure and cultural facilities, cycle and pedestrian routes, public transport, roads, schools, libraries, health, childcare facilities, water supply and sewage treatment, and environmental improvements. Infrastructure provision may be triggered when development has reached a certain stage, or it may need to be in place before any development commences. In some cases phasing will be used to coordinate development with the provision of infrastructure. The County Council has, in conjunction with the four district councils, produced guidance on its approach to infrastructure and service needs<sup>12</sup>.



<sup>12</sup> Infrastructure and Service Needs for New Development. The approach to planning obligations and agreements for development in Oxfordshire. An information guide for developers and landowners, Summer 2002.



## Green Belt

**G4 A Green Belt will be maintained around Oxford, to:**

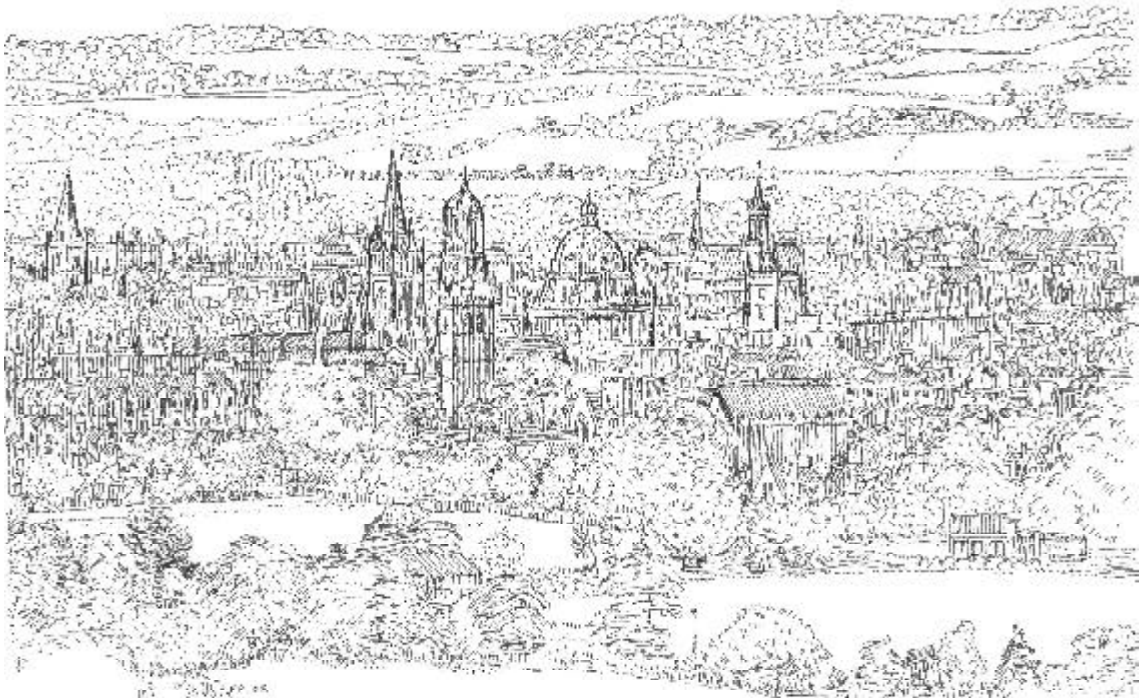
- a) preserve the special character and landscape setting of Oxford;
- b) check the growth of Oxford and prevent ribbon development and urban sprawl;
- c) prevent the coalescence of settlements;
- d) assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- e) assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

**Development in the Green Belt will only be permitted if it maintains its openness and does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt or harm its visual amenities.**

- 3.9 The protection of the character of Oxford in its broadest sense has been an objective of planning policy since the 1940s. The special character of Oxford and its landscape setting means not just the University and the views of the dreaming spires, but a much broader concept including the countryside around the city, the Cherwell and Thames floodplains, and the relationship of nearby settlements to Oxford. Its character also includes the overall scale of activity, since significant growth will generate more traffic and pressures for further development, which could threaten the nature, character and setting of the city.
- 3.10 Government policy on green belts is set out in PPG2 (Green Belts). PPG2 says there is a presumption against inappropriate development within green belts. Development in the Green Belt other than for uses identified in PPG2 will not be permitted except in very special circumstances.
- 3.11 The use of land in the Green Belt may have a role in fulfilling the following objectives which reflect the advice in PPG2:
- provide opportunities for public access to the countryside;
  - provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation;
  - retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes near to where people live;
  - improve damaged and derelict land around Oxford;
  - secure nature conservation interests;
  - retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.
- 3.12 The County Council is keen to pursue opportunities which fulfil these objectives, particularly where they offer opportunities to enhance the appearance of the urban fringe. One example might be the planting of managed woodland which could combine opportunities for public access and nature conservation with landscape enhancement. Another would be to lay underground the electricity cables, particularly to the west of Oxford, which at present spoil views of Oxford's skyline. In many cases these objectives will be consistent with the purposes of the Green Belt set out in policy G4. However, in the event of conflict the purposes of including land in the Green Belt are of paramount importance and will take precedence over these objectives, and proposals will need to demonstrate that very special circumstances exist that outweigh harm to the Green Belt.



- 3.13 Development in the Oxford Green Belt, will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional cases will be treated as departures from the development plan to be referred to the Secretary of State. Proposals for outdoor sport and recreation involving substantial building or “urbanisation” (eg intensive floodlighting) are unacceptable as are those for waste disposal involving landraising. Proposals for mineral working are not necessarily contrary to the objectives of the Green Belt, although working which would damage the landscape setting of Oxford will not be permitted. Examples of exceptions that have been allowed are the Oxford park and ride sites, which are part of a transport strategy which is itself aimed at protecting Oxford’s character, and waste facilities where there was no other suitable site available. It will be for the local planning authorities to judge whether the provision of low cost housing development for local community needs in Green Belt settlements falls within the scope of local plan policies.



- 3.14 Subject to certain criteria, PPG2 allows for the re-use of buildings in the Green Belt provided the proposed use does not have a greater impact than the current use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it. PPG2 also offers guidelines on the future of major developed sites in the Green Belt, and the circumstances in which their redevelopment can be acceptable. Any such sites will be identified in local plans.



## Development outside settlements

**G5 The countryside will be protected from harmful development.**

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

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

## Energy and resource conservation

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

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



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



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



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



## 4. Transport

- 4.1 The way that transport is managed and developed makes an important contribution towards each of the four aims of this Plan. The transport policies will help to protect Oxfordshire's environment by reducing transport emissions; improve the quality of life by improving the range of travel options; and support the development of the local economy. Also, transport aspects of the general policies (relating to the location of development, design and infrastructure requirements) will encourage efficient use of energy through reducing the need to travel and reducing reliance on private car use.
- 4.2 Forecasts of road traffic growth are strongly linked to local housing and employment growth and to growth of the economy. Economic growth is increasing the affordability and the rate of car ownership and the amount of car use. Expansion of the road network to meet forecast demand is usually constrained by the consequences for the environment as well as by the costs of improvements. Road building also contributes to continuing traffic growth. It is generally accepted that road capacity improvements will therefore be limited and will be insufficient to match traffic demand. Unless road traffic growth is constrained, congestion can be expected to increase.
- 4.3 The Government's 10 year plan, announced in July 2000, aims to reduce congestion and pollution through a combination of measures to transfer travel to improved public transport services, to manage traffic so as to make best use of the existing highway infrastructure and to target highway improvements to remove bottlenecks. However, significant improvement to the rail network is proving to be very costly and will take until well beyond the period of the 10 year plan. The Government's July 2004 White Paper, 'The Future of Transport, a network for 2030', acknowledges the challenge that faces the nation as a result of economic growth resulting in an increasing demand for travel, compounded by underinvestment in our transport system. It builds on the strategy of the 10 Year Plan using three themes: sustained investment over the long term; improvements in transport management; and planning ahead. In a report<sup>13</sup>, published at the same time as the White Paper, it is accepted that in a nationwide implementation of road pricing, where we generally pay less to travel on uncongested roads but more on congested roads, people would be influenced to choose to travel and to organise their lives in ways that reduce congestion thus bringing widespread economic benefits. The report estimates that, subject to the Government taking a strong lead on determining the functional requirements for a national road pricing system and promoting relevant standards, this will be available within the next 10 to 15 years. Meanwhile congestion is likely to continue to increase.

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



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

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

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

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

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

The final Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 will be produced in early 2006; it will supersede the first Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2001-2006 and come into effect from April 2006. The Transport Networks Review<sup>14</sup> and the integrated transport strategies for a number of urban areas, including continuing development of the Oxford Transport Strategy, has provided important information and guidance for the new LTP.

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

<sup>14</sup> [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/index/travel/transport\\_networks\\_review.htm](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/index/travel/transport_networks_review.htm)



## Sustainable travel

**T1 Transport measures and development proposals should give emphasis to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and balance these against ease of traffic movement, thereby improving travel choice and reducing dependence on private motorised travel. Suitable provision should be made for servicing, for the needs of disabled people and for promotion of safety.**

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





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

## Car parking

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

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

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

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



- 4.13 Oxford's Park and Ride has been a notable success in transferring car travellers to bus for the final part of their journey. It has allowed more people to travel to the centre of Oxford with no traffic increase on the radial routes and has allowed the redevelopment of valuable land formerly used for car parking. The Transport Networks Review has found that there may be other opportunities for more remote park and ride, particularly related to the principal transport corridors (see Key Diagram) and to the relief of congestion. Such schemes will be investigated in more detail and supported where appropriate. Land may be required for park and ride schemes where these form part of a wider area transport strategy.

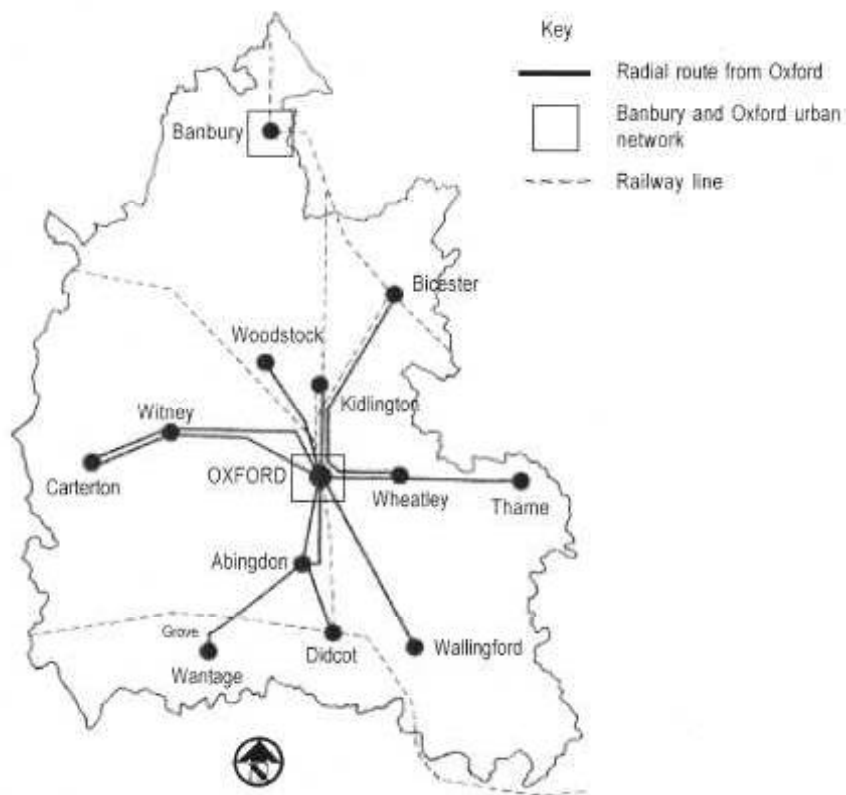


## Public transport

- T3 Increased use of public transport will be sought through the encouragement and promotion of convenient, reliable, secure and high standard public transport services and through improved integration between different modes of transport and improved interchange facilities.**
- 4.14 The County Council will seek improvements to the quality, comfort, reliability and extent of rail and bus services so as to improve the attraction of public transport, improve choice and help to reduce future congestion by reducing the need to travel by private car. The County Council aims through measures in the new LTP to achieve a growth of 2% per year in use of bus services within the county. Currently the opportunities to improve the rail services are limited on most of Oxfordshire's routes by infrastructure capacity. The County Council will continue to press the rail industry to make improvements to rail infrastructure and services. High amongst the Council's aspirations are development of the East-West rail link, expansion or relocation of Oxford Station, a multi-modal interchange at Didcot Parkway, improvement to hourly frequency on the Cotswold Line and reopening of stations at Kidlington and Grove. Progress on such projects will involve consultation and agreement with the rail authorities.

4.15 The County Council adopted a Premium Routes strategy in 2002 (see Figure 4.1) on which commercially viable bus services (after any necessary 'pump-priming') will run at a frequency of at least four buses per hour. The network will be further refined, prioritised and developed during the new LTP period. Priority systems will be required to overcome congestion particularly at junctions and on junction approaches. Traffic management, and in some cases road widening or special track, will be required to provide a priority route. Operators will offer improvements in the quality of service, providing new easy access buses with low emission engines. Improvements to ticketing arrangements, waiting areas, interchange between services and information systems will be introduced to improve comfort and convenience.

**Figure 4.1 Premium Bus Network (adopted in 2002)**



4.16 The County Council is preparing a Bus Strategy within the new LTP which builds upon the past success of Oxfordshire in enabling and encouraging growth in bus use. It describes how the Council creates the conditions in which commercial bus services can thrive, whilst including provision for subsidy to supplement the commercial network where this provides best value for money. In some rural areas where a conventional bus service may not be viable, the strategy will encourage alternatives to conventional bus services e.g. demand responsive services, community transport etc. The strategy identifies a hierarchy of services: 'Premium Routes' (see paragraph 4.15); 'Hourly Services'; and 'Feeder Services'. 'Hourly Services' will run at least hourly to all settlements of over 1,000 population. Whilst some will no doubt require subsidy, the viability of the network will be improved through access and facilities at town centres and principal stops. 'Feeder Services' will be provided in a variety of ways to serve the lightly populated areas off main routes. It is recognised that most feeder services will require subsidies.



## Freight

**T4 The carriage of freight by rail, pipeline or other means rather than road will be encouraged. The impact of freight operations on people and the environment will be reduced through partnership arrangements between the County Council and operators.**

**Freight distribution centres will be permitted only if located with good access to the freight networks and in or adjoining a major settlement.**

- 4.17 The amount of heavy goods traffic using the road network should be reduced by transfer to other modes wherever this is feasible and environmentally advantageous. Assessment of major development proposals should include consideration of opportunities to reduce the impact of heavy goods traffic. For example, this will usually be an important consideration for minerals and waste (chapters 11 and 12). Although Oxfordshire's rail network is limited in its extent and capacity, it plays an important part in moving passengers and freight. Continued use of rail for freight movement will be encouraged and where appropriate rail use should be increased.
- 4.18 Opportunities to use pipeline, conveyor and waterway should be considered. Oxfordshire's waterways, though probably no longer suitable for significant long distance movement of goods, may provide a cost effective alternative to the road network for some short-haul high volume movements.
- 4.19 Freight distribution operations should aim to reduce overall the volume of freight traffic, particularly on the parts of the networks where the greatest environmental disadvantage is caused. Freight distribution centres will need to be carefully located and not in the open countryside.

## Networks for pedestrians and cyclists

**T5 Networks of routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be promoted and developed particularly within and linking to urban areas, so as to improve access to facilities and widen travel choice.**

**Local plans will define comprehensive pedestrian and cycle routes and will promote improvements.**

- 4.20 Walking and cycling are the most energy efficient and least polluting means of travel and can provide a practical and healthy alternative to car travel, particularly for short distance trips. Where destinations are concentrated in a small area, such as in a town centre, the benefits resulting from schemes giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists are most obvious. Consideration should be given to providing separate space for pedestrians and cyclists. Encouraging walking and cycling over a wider area by providing a network of good quality routes with priority measures can extend the benefits of reduced pollution, increased safety and improvement to the environment.

4.21 The County Council has adopted a Walking Strategy<sup>15</sup> and a Cycling Strategy<sup>16</sup>. These strategies aim to increase the proportion of travel in the county on foot and by bicycle by making these modes more attractive through improvements to infrastructure, safety and security. Local plans should define comprehensive walking and cycling networks and provide policy support for their development. The networks should support the wider transport strategy for the area and should be based on good routes serving the town centres, schools, other key sites and routes into the urban areas, also taking into account the national networks and recreational routes. The Walking and Cycling Strategies will be revised to ensure that they are consistent with the new LTP (2006-2011).



<sup>15</sup> Oxfordshire Walking Strategy, Oxfordshire County Council, August 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Oxfordshire Cycling Strategy, Oxfordshire County Council, August 2001.



## Networks for motorised travel

- T6 The County Council will promote and support a comprehensive strategy for the safe and convenient carriage of people and freight by road, rail or special track.

The County Council in partnership with transport infrastructure providers, the operators of public transport services and other agencies will in particular promote the development and management of the following principal transport hubs, corridors and projects related to the Plan's overall development strategy and its regional context, to meet both strategic and key local movement requirements:

- transport measures in and around the City of Oxford to support its role as a regional transport hub;
- the corridor between Oxford and Bicester;
- the corridor between Oxford and Witney;
- the corridor between Oxford and Didcot;
- the corridor between Grove/Wantage and Didcot; and
- the development within the county of the East-West rail link.

The principal transport corridors, the rail and trunk route networks and other projects referred to are defined in the Key Diagram.

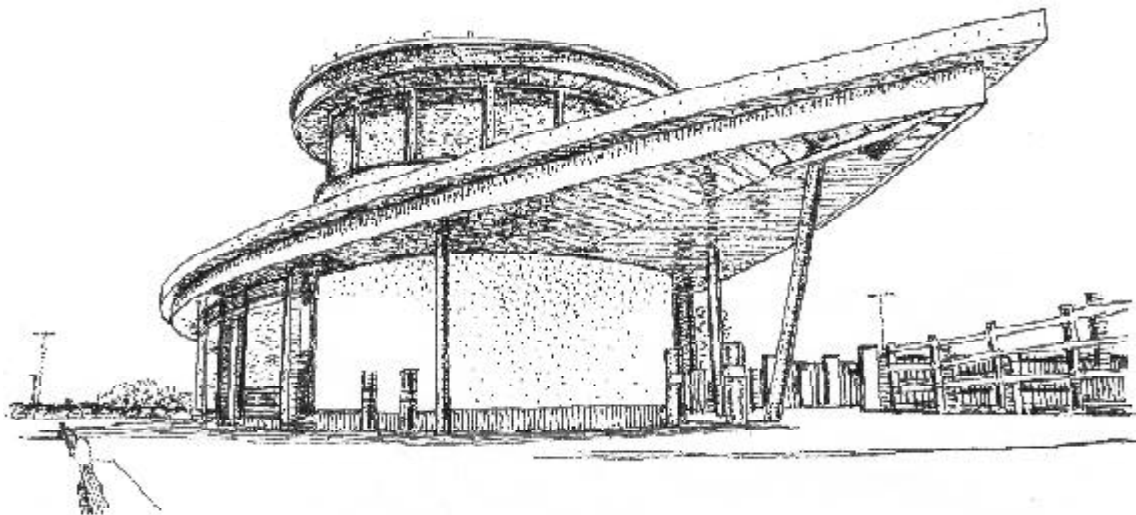
The Local Transport Plan will:

- identify the manner in which the road and rail network and the operation of the premium bus network and other key public transport services will combine to provide an enhanced quality of travel to support the spatial development strategy of the Structure Plan;
- assign roads in the county together with any special track to a hierarchy of networks supporting the spatial strategy of this Plan and identify their function at each level of the hierarchy;
- identify network improvement schemes; and
- identify the potential for integration between networks both for people and freight.

Development proposals that would have a significant adverse affect on the safe and efficient function of a network will not be permitted.

Land required for network development or improvement schemes will be safeguarded in the local plans/local development frameworks.

4.22 The way in which the motorised networks will be managed and developed to accommodate the county's travel demands should support the Plan's development strategy and take into account the other policies. This means recognising the importance of the principal transport corridors in providing access to the main development areas for both strategic and local movement. The corridors will provide links between Oxford and the main towns and between Wantage/Grove and Didcot, including provision to serve major employment sites at Harwell, Milton Park and Culham. Reducing congestion and improving accessibility (including increasing the attraction of public transport) will be a high priority. The new LTP defines the Central Oxfordshire Transport Area within which transport measures will address the worst congestion problems on the main routes in and around Oxford and make public transport faster, more reliable and more welcoming. The East-West rail link is an established regional scheme that would directly support the regional spokes identified in the Regional Transport Strategy linking Oxford with Swindon and Milton Keynes and has the potential to support the principal transport corridors linking Oxford with Bicester, Didcot and Wantage/Grove.



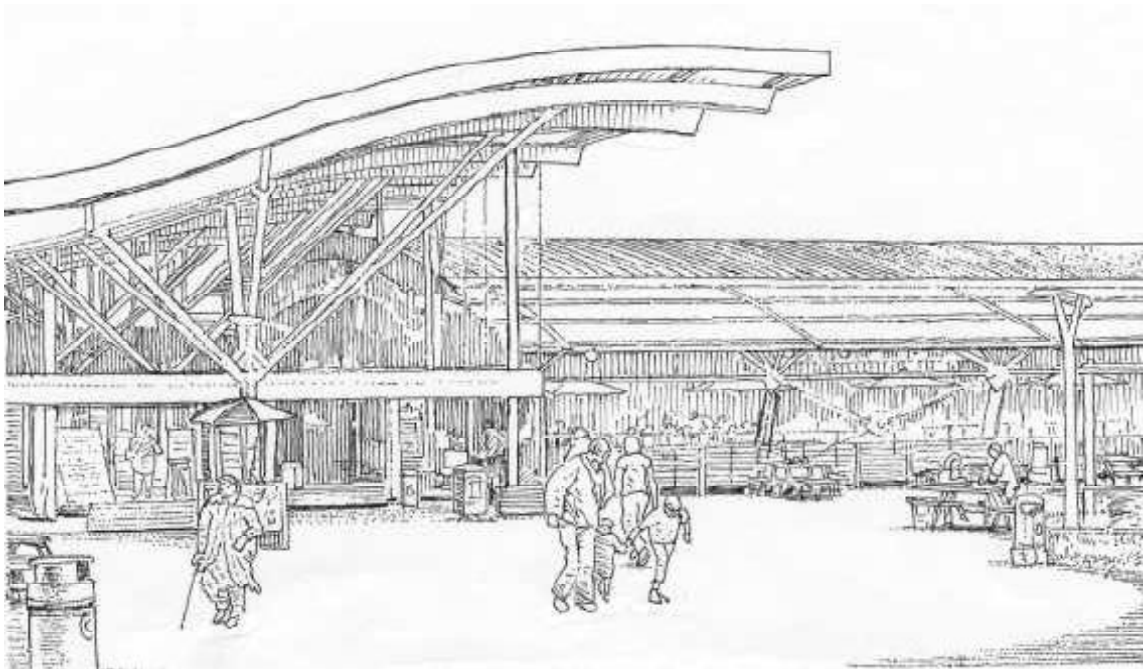
4.23 The County Council being responsible for the highway network, apart from the trunk routes, will be a major player in the process of seeking to coordinate transport operators and those responsible for other networks in the County. Much of the detailed strategy will be worked out through the preparation of the Local Transport Plan, which will include consultations with other transport authorities. The County Council has adopted or is preparing transport strategies for the main urban areas of the county (see para. 4.10). Outside these areas the Council's countywide Transport Networks Review study has investigated the effects of growing traffic on the County's transport networks. The study concludes that the most effective way to meet transport objectives and avoid a slide into extreme congestion and accessibility problems in the future is a strategy based on a combination of highway and public transport improvement alongside measures to influence travel behaviour. The County Council has adopted the findings of the Transport Networks Review as the basis of the long-term Transport Strategy for the County.



- 4.24 Through the process of preparing the Local Transport Plan the County Council will adopt a countywide transport strategy for public transport, freight and road traffic, including a revised road network hierarchy, indicating the roles for elements of the network in supporting public transport, heavy goods vehicle movement and general traffic. The LTP will also include a revised programme for major schemes covering a period to 2021. Land required for these will be protected in the local plans and local development frameworks. Previously approved schemes not included in the programme will be abandoned. This means that all the schemes that were listed as the Council's approved local highway schemes in paragraphs 6.50 to 6.52 of the explanatory memorandum for the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2011 will have been either completed, included within the long-term network strategy of the full LTP or abandoned. Two major schemes are expected to be programmed in the period 2006-2011. Witney Cogges Link Road is to be funded substantially from developer contributions, but it is anticipated that if there is a shortfall this could be met with LTP funds. The Marcham Bypass will be the first part of the wider improvement of the A415 between Witney and Abingdon (agreed by the Council following identification of this route through Transport Networks Review work). Timing of the bypass in this period is dependent on funding through the Regional Transport Prioritisation Process.
- 4.25 In defining the principal transport corridors the policy implicitly recognises the significance of the north-south corridor which serves several of the main economic and development areas of the county. The corridor includes the Oxford to Didcot and Bicester rail lines, parts of the Premium Bus Network, the A34 trunk route and some other roads. The A34 Multi-Modal Study is the responsibility of SEERA and is currently not programmed. The County Council is continuing to press for a proper study of future transport requirements to be done. The Study will need to take into account both strategic and local movements in the corridor and other studies relevant to the area so as to find practical ways of resolving the growth of problems arising on the corridor.

## Service areas

- T7 The frequency of service areas on the major highway network will be limited. New service areas or extensions will be permitted only if they are of a high standard and where there is a transport need for improved roadside services.**
- 4.26 A proliferation of roadside services would damage the countryside and, because they would be unlikely to attract private investment in the more expensive facilities needed for heavy lorries, would not be in the best interest of the road user. The policy seeks to limit environmental intrusion, reduce access onto major roads and encourage developers to make higher standards of provision on a limited number of well-appointed sites. The County Council considers that the motorway service areas (including an overnight lorry park) located at junction 10 (Ardley) and at junction 8, provide all the motorway service areas needed in Oxfordshire.



## Development proposals

### **T8 Proposals for development should be permitted only if they provide adequate access and mitigation of adverse transport impacts.**

- 4.27 Traffic generated by development can place a strain on the surrounding transport networks in terms of safety, capacity and environmental considerations. The policy aims to minimise the transport impact of new development. Developers should have regard to all the policies of the development plan relevant to the development of their site. On transport matters they should in particular consider the design of their development so as to maximise the access potential by walking, cycling and by public transport and to reduce car dependency (policy T1). Travel plans will be required with development proposals in accordance with PPG13.
- 4.28 Development proposals will be expected to be compatible with the transport infrastructure and traffic management arrangements in the area, the aims of a wider area transport strategy and car parking requirements. Highway access and servicing arrangements must be adequate and not detrimental to the safety of other highway users. Developers will be expected to contribute to measures identified in Integrated Transport Strategies, other transport strategies relevant to the area, Local Plans or Local Development Frameworks as well as localised measures required as the result of the development. Contributions to a range of measures, including subsidy or pump-priming of transport services, may be considered to be necessary.
- 4.29 Where the development or the traffic generated would have an adverse effect on the environment, would adversely affect other travellers or have resource implications for the highway authority, the proposal should include measures sufficient to mitigate the adverse effects. Proposals that generate a significant number of trips by all modes of transport must be supported by a transport assessment.



## 5. Protecting and enhancing the environment

- 5.1 The protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment has always been a priority of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan. The policies in this chapter continue to protect and enhance the county's environmental assets in both urban and rural areas, as well as setting out a framework for its effective management.

### Landscape character

**EN1 Local planning authorities will ensure that proposals for development contribute to the protection, maintenance and, where possible, enhancement of Oxfordshire's landscape character, and in particular the natural beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to reflect their national importance. Development will be permitted only if it does not unacceptably damage the local landscape.**

- 5.2 Oxfordshire has an attractive and diverse landscape. Government policy in PPS7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty and diversity of its landscape, heritage and wildlife, and that development plans should seek to protect, and where possible, enhance the character of the landscape.
- 5.3 In line with the character based approach to landscape protection, the County Council has undertaken work on the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)<sup>17</sup>, which provides local planning authorities, developers and other organisations with greater understanding of Oxfordshire's landscape and biodiversity resource, from joint countryside character areas at national level, down to information on wildlife habitats and landscape character at a parish level. Landscape character assessments have also been carried out by the district councils in Oxfordshire and should be taken into account in preparing development plans and considering development proposals.
- 5.4 There are three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in Oxfordshire: the Cotswolds, the Chilterns, and the North Wessex Downs. The primary objective of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape, which includes wildlife, archaeological and cultural heritage. In considering proposals for development, priority will be given to conserving and enhancing the beauty of the landscape within AONBs in accordance with PPG7.

---

<sup>17</sup> This is a national pilot project sponsored by the County Council, English Nature, Countryside Agency and the Northmoor Trust. OWLS is a combined landscape character assessment and biodiversity appraisal of the county which provides strategic and detailed information to better enable the protection, management and expansion of Oxfordshire's landscape and biodiversity resource.

- 5.5 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act placed a statutory duty on local authorities to produce management plans for AONBs. Management plans have been produced for the Chilterns, Cotswolds and North Wessex Downs AONBs.



## Biodiversity

EN2 The following sites of at least national importance will be protected from damaging development:

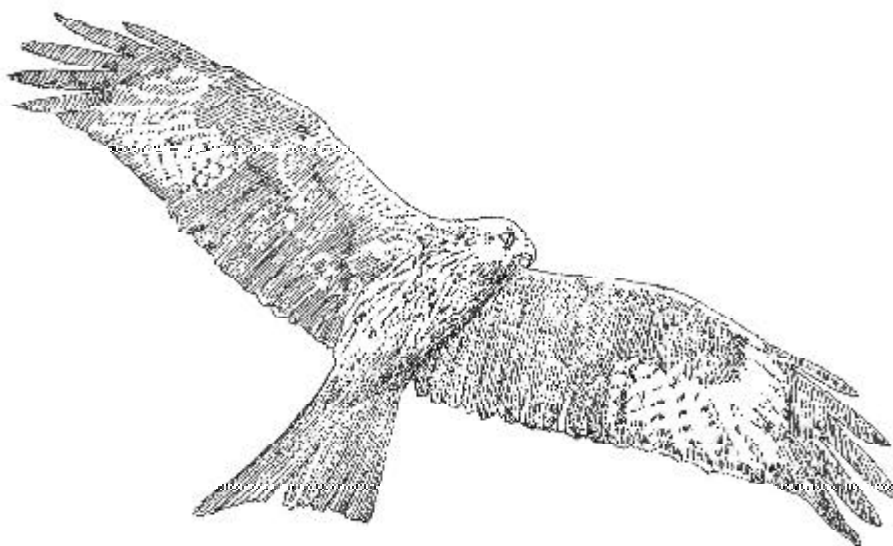
- Special Areas of Conservation;
- National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest; and
- sites which support specially protected species.

On other sites of acknowledged nature conservation importance development will be permitted only if there is an overriding need or if damage to the ecological interest can be prevented by the use of conditions or planning obligations.

In determining proposals for development local planning authorities will seek environmental measures and promote the use of conditions and management agreements to help protect, manage and expand the biodiversity resource of the county, in particular priority habitats and species.



- 5.6 The Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)<sup>18</sup> was prepared in response to the 1992 Earth Summit, at which a convention on biological diversity was signed by the UK and 150 other countries. In 1994 the UK produced a report Biodiversity, The UK Action Plan<sup>19</sup>, which identified a range of priority habitats and species of international importance. The plan also recognised that “biodiversity is ultimately lost or conserved at the local level” and that local BAPs are an essential part of the process. Oxfordshire’s BAP was published in 1998 and it was subsequently followed by a series of more detailed habitat action plans (HAPs) focussing on the protection, management and expansion of the local biodiversity resource. In particular it highlighted those priority habitats relevant to Oxfordshire which fall within the UK action plan. They include:
- woodland;
  - neutral meadows and pastures;
  - chalk and limestone grassland;
  - heathland;
  - wetlands.
- 5.7 At present, much of the biodiversity resource associated with these priority habitats is closely linked to designated sites such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)<sup>20</sup> and county wildlife sites. Appendix 3 shows the distribution of sites of different levels of designation across Oxfordshire. In addition some local authorities have also designated sites of local importance for nature conservation. Their combined total area represents a very small area of the county, probably less than 4%, and it is essential that the planning process includes policies which help to safeguard, maintain and expand this limited resource. The underlying principle should be that there is no further net loss of priority habitats or species within the county.



<sup>18</sup> Action for Wildlife, Oxfordshire’s Biodiversity Plan, Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum, July 1998.

<sup>19</sup> Biodiversity, The UK Action Plan, DOE, HMSO 1994.

<sup>20</sup> SSSIs include nationally important geological sites as well as those which are valuable for their habitats or species. All SSSIs including those of geological importance, are protected by policy EN2.



- 5.8 Local authorities and land managers have a key role to play in relation to the implementation of Oxfordshire's BAP. Joint support of the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre will provide effective definition and monitoring of biodiversity, and through support for the county wildlife sites project, organisations like the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and landowners will be provided with expert guidance on the protection and appropriate management of key habitats. Planning authorities can also make significant contribution to the BAP process through the appropriate use of conditions and management agreements. The restoration and subsequent management of mineral workings can specifically strengthen the status of priority habitats such as heathland, calcareous grassland and wetlands such as reedbeds.

### **Agricultural land quality and soil**

**EN3 Development on the best and most versatile agricultural land shall have a regard to the quality and productiveness of such land alongside other sustainability considerations. Where significant development of agricultural land is unavoidable, areas of poorer quality land shall be used in preference to that of a higher quality, except where this would be inconsistent with other sustainability considerations. Where undeveloped agricultural land is to be developed, any adverse effects on the environment shall be minimised.**

- 5.9 Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9) says that valuable characteristics of soil and land should be protected. Government policy in PPS7 is that the presence of best and most versatile agricultural land (defined by DEFRA as land within grades 1, 2 and 3a) should be taken into account alongside other sustainability considerations such as biodiversity, landscape character, amenity or heritage interest, access to jobs or services, and protection of natural resources. The decision as to whether best and most versatile land should be used for development rests with local planning authorities taking into account relevant factors.
- 5.10 Soil fulfils a wide range of interrelated functions. It is a growing medium for food and fuel crops and for providing animal pasture, a key factor in landscape and habitat diversity, and a source of geological and historical evidence. The Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has published a national strategy for moving towards more sustainable soil use and protection<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> In March 2001 the then Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions published for consultation the Draft Soil Strategy for England. DEFRA published the first Soil Action Plan for England: 2004-2006 in May 2004.



## Historic and cultural heritage

**EN4 The fabric and setting of listed buildings including Blenheim Palace and Park, a World Heritage Site, will be preserved and the character or appearance of conservation areas and their settings will be preserved or enhanced. Other elements of the historic environment, including historic parks and gardens, battlefields and historic landscapes will also be protected from harmful development.**

5.11 Oxfordshire contains many buildings, areas, gardens and landscapes which are an irreplaceable part of the county's heritage which should be conserved. There are nearly 13,000 listed buildings and structures in Oxfordshire and over 220 conservation areas, and Blenheim Palace and Park is designated as a world heritage site. World heritage site status reflects the outstanding international importance of sites. Proposals for development that affect the world heritage site or its setting are not precluded but will be carefully scrutinised. The contribution that development might make to saving historic buildings and their grounds may exceptionally be an additional and significant factor in the consideration of proposals which would otherwise be unacceptable. Where demolition or alteration of listed buildings is to be permitted, local planning authorities should consider the need to ensure recording of features which would be affected or lost. There is not currently an historic landscape character assessment of the county. However, work has been carried out for the Cotswolds AONB, and assessments for the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs are underway in conjunction with the Conservation Board and Council of Partners.

**EN5 The conservation of Oxford's architectural and historic heritage, including its green spaces and its landscape setting, will take priority in considering proposals for development in and around the city.**





- 5.12 A key element in RPG9 is that urban areas should become the main focus for development. At the same time however the best of the region's cultural and natural heritage needs to be protected and preserved. The future development of urban areas must therefore be based on an understanding of their historic character; preserving and adapting historic buildings to accommodate new uses and provide a focus for urban communities; and by enhancing urban rivers, canals, parks and other green spaces. Apart from the need to protect the historic character of Oxford for its own sake, the city is the county's largest urban area and will see significant housing and other development over the next decade. It is also a major tourist destination and its character is an important factor in its attractiveness as a business location. Policy EN5 recognises Oxford's particular importance, and should be read in conjunction with the policy on the Green Belt.

## Archaeology

**EN6 There will be a presumption in favour of preserving in situ nationally and internationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings. Development affecting other archaeological remains should include measures to secure their preservation in situ or where this is not feasible, their recording or removal to another site.**

- 5.13 Archaeological remains are by their nature a finite and non-renewable resource which once destroyed cannot be recreated. Development proposals which would affect Scheduled Ancient Monuments also require scheduled monument consent from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Oxfordshire has a rich archaeological resource with nearly 300 Scheduled Ancient Monuments. However, these represent only about 2% of the known archaeology resource in the county. Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for maintaining the Sites and Monument Record which currently holds information on more than 13,000 archaeological remains.
- 5.14 There is considerable archaeological potential on many sites for which information is presently limited. Historic town and village centres, greenfield and previously developed sites may all contain significant levels of surviving archaeology. In assessing proposals for development local planning authorities will seek to identify this potential by requiring archaeological desk-based assessments and field evaluations in accordance with PPG16. Advice on the implications of development should be sought from the County Archaeologist at an early stage and preferably before planning applications are submitted. Where planning permission is to be sought from Oxford City Council advice should be sought from the City Archaeologist.



## Geology

**EN7 Nationally and regionally important geological features including geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Regionally Important Geological Sites shall be protected from harmful development and retained in situ unless there are exceptional reasons justifying their removal, in which event their presence shall be appropriately recorded.**

- 5.15 Oxfordshire has a rich geological resource, including a full range of limestone rocks from lias clays to chalk. In addition to important geological sites which are designated as SSSIs and protected by policy EN2 and regionally important geological sites (RIGS)<sup>22</sup>, previously unknown geological remains may sometimes be discovered. The County Council considers that where such finds are made, all efforts should be made to protect those of national or international importance and, if this is not possible, they should at least be recorded. The Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum is proposing to prepare a geodiversity action plan (GAP) to help recognise the significance of geological resources and enable their protection.

## Water quality

**EN8 Development that will lead to unacceptable deterioration in water quality will not be permitted.**

- 5.16 Rivers, canals, lakes, ground-water, ponds and wetlands are amongst the areas protected by this policy. New development can have significant effects on the quality of surface and groundwater, and proposals which would place it at risk will not be permitted. Development proposals can offer opportunities to enhance the water environment by increasing public access or improving water-related habitats, landscape or water quality. Such proposals will be welcomed where they comply with other development plan policies.
- 5.17 Achieving a continuing overall improvement in the quality of water through the control of pollution is a principal aim of the Environment Agency, and also British Waterways.

---

<sup>22</sup> The full title of RIGS is Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites.

## Flood risk and surface water drainage

EN9 Development in undeveloped areas at high risk from flooding or in the functional floodplain will not be permitted. A flood risk assessment will be required for proposals for development except where there is little or no flood risk. Proposals for redevelopment of existing buildings and their curtilage within areas of high flood risk should aim to improve conditions locally and not worsen flood risk elsewhere.

New development should not lead to an increase in run-off, which would exacerbate flood risk elsewhere. The use of sustainable drainage systems to regulate run-off will be required as part of development proposals.





- 5.18 Large areas of Oxfordshire within each of the main river catchments are prone to flooding. In recent years Oxfordshire, as with other parts of the country, has experienced significant damage to property due to flooding. The predicted impact of climate change is likely to include increased flood risk as a result of more intense periods of rainfall, hotter drier summers and wetter winters, and a greater incidence of extreme weather. Wetter winters may also result in instances of groundwater flooding. Farmers and land managers can assist the seasonal control of water by providing winter water storage on farms.
- 5.19 Government policy in PPG25: Development and Flood Risk is to reduce the risks to people and the developed and natural environment from flooding. Policy EN8 sets out how the County Council will apply a risk based approach to development proposals in accordance with PPG25. This may result in development being permitted that requires the provision of flood defence and mitigation measures, generally funded by the developer. If agreement cannot be reached on the provision of contributions, the applications for development should be refused in accordance with the precautionary principle. An indication of the extent of land at risk of flooding is available from the Environment Agency.
- 5.20 Development can have an impact on flooding by increasing run-off, even in areas of little or no flood risk, and PPG25 encourages surface water run-off to be controlled as near to the source as possible by encouraging sustainable drainage systems<sup>23</sup>.

## **Water resources and waste water infrastructure**

**EN10 Development will be permitted only where adequate water resources and waste water infrastructure for the development already exist or can readily be provided without risk to existing abstractions, water quality, the water environment or nature conservation.**

- 5.21 Demand for water in Oxfordshire is growing and is likely to become a more significant issue over the next few decades due to climate change. RPG9 says that the need to balance the growing demand for water with the needs of the environment is crucial. It states that new development should be located and its implementation planned in such a way as to allow for sustainable provision of water services and timely investment in sewage treatment and discharge systems to maintain the appropriate standard of water quality. Consultation with the Environment Agency and Thames Water Utilities (or other relevant water utility company) should be carried out at the earliest possible stage in preparing development proposals.

<sup>23</sup> Sustainable drainage systems use techniques to control surface water run-off as close to the source as possible before it enters a watercourse. It includes a range of measures such as preventative measures (e.g. rain water recycling), filter strips and swales, filter drains and permeable and porous pavements, infiltration devices, basins and ponds.



**EN11 Proposals for major new reservoirs in Oxfordshire will be permitted only if there is a proven need for increased water resources which cannot be met in more economical and environmentally less intrusive ways, and all reasonable measures to manage demand for water, including controlling loss through water leakage, have been taken.**

5.22 The demand for water resources in Oxfordshire and the South East is growing. Thames Water continues to undertake studies into the feasibility of developing a new reservoir within Vale of the White Horse district. However, a formal planning application for this proposal has yet to be submitted.



## 6. Developing the local economy

### Economic strategy

- 6.1 The Plan seeks to sustain prosperity by supporting sustainable and appropriate economic development. A successful economy is fundamental to ensuring that the quality of life in Oxfordshire is protected and improved. This does not mean encouraging indiscriminate economic growth but supporting investment in high value sectors that have low environmental impact, or 'smart' growth. The County Council will work with partners, including the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership, to promote economic benefits to all sectors of society and to provide infrastructure that supports the demands of the economy.
- 6.2 This broad approach is reflected in the Regional Economic Strategy for South East England<sup>24</sup>, and in particular, the Oxfordshire Economic Development Strategy<sup>25</sup>. This strategy seeks to sustain and develop the county's educational, scientific and technological economy and to deliver continued economic prosperity through improved competitiveness and productivity, skills development, and job and firm creation, in a way that protects the county's important environmental assets.
- 6.3 Oxfordshire has a well integrated network of support for business, linking together industry, local government, private agencies and research and education institutes. New science, technology and business parks and centres provide a choice of locations for innovative companies and entrepreneurs who wish to benefit from proximity to a world class knowledge base.
- 6.4 The County Council approach is about building steadily on Oxfordshire's strengths and providing employment opportunities for local people, but not of a scale that encourages significant commuting into the area or which attracts large footloose firms or large warehousing and distribution facilities.

<sup>24</sup> Regional Economic Strategy for South East England 2002-2012, SEEDA.

<sup>25</sup> Oxfordshire Economic Development Strategy 2001-2005, Oxfordshire Economic Partnership, December 2001. The County Council is a member of the Partnership.

## Provision for employment development

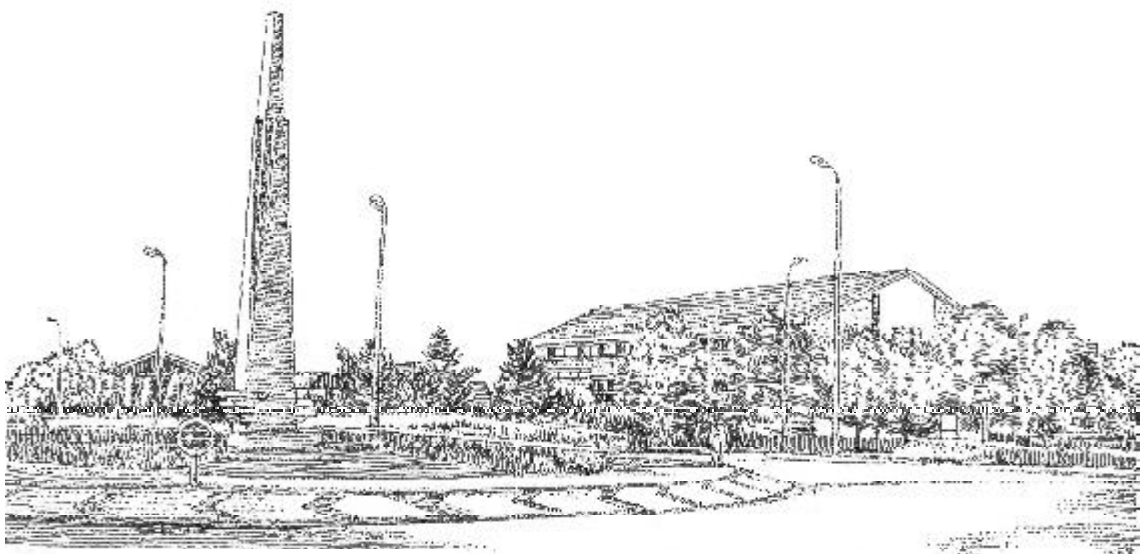
E1 Development for employment purposes should be located so as to meet the objectives and priorities of this Plan. In particular it should:

- provide for the requirements of activities which contribute to the regional and local priorities for economic development. This includes providing a range of accommodation for small businesses and innovation, skills development, business infrastructure and linkages within the knowledge based economy;
- be located mainly in or adjoining urban areas or in existing concentrations of employment with good accessibility from residential areas, particularly by non-car modes of transport;
- as far as practicable incorporate measures to encourage shorter journeys to work and travel on foot, by cycle or public transport;
- not be of a scale or character that gives rise to large increases in commuting in the area or low intensity uses of land which generate heavy traffic on local roads.

Priority should be given to development which supports educational, scientific and technological sectors and responds to the needs of established and emerging clusters within the county.

6.5 Policy E1 sets out the focus of the Plan's approach to economic development in line with the principles described in paragraphs 6.1 to 6.4 above.

6.6 Within the context of the overall strategy as set out in policy G1, the role of the development plan in sustaining prosperity and supporting the local economy is to ensure that sufficient land is available in appropriate locations to meet the needs of small businesses – including for start ups and incubator space, existing firms and firms which need to be in Oxfordshire. This means a focus on development within larger urban areas and where employment generating development can contribute to reducing the need to travel and where walking, cycling and use of public transport can be encouraged.





- 6.7 A key objective is to support the development of Oxfordshire's existing and emerging growth sectors and clusters. The educational, scientific and technological industries and services are important both regionally and locally. To this end, the Plan proposes a strategy that provides for the growth of firms in this sector in the main urban areas, which will assist with the diversification of the economic base of the city and the main towns.
- 6.8 In its wider role, the County Council with its partners will seek to address employment related issues such as increasing the level of educational attainment, supporting learning and skills development and business support.

## Oxford City

**E2 In Oxford, development for employment uses will be expected to take place primarily on previously developed land or in conjunction with redevelopment schemes for mixed uses incorporating housing, town centre or other facilities. Development should have regard to the priorities set out in Policy E1 and to the objective of providing a range of accommodation for businesses in Oxford and contributing to the diversity of local employment opportunities, while maintaining or improving the balance between jobs and resident workforce in the city.**

**Where employment use of a site ceases, its future use should be assessed in the light of the above considerations, its suitability for alternative uses and whether there is a realistic prospect of it being re-used for employment purposes.**

- 6.9 In Oxford, because the number of jobs is much greater than the resident workforce<sup>26</sup> causing substantial in-commuting and housing pressures, new land allocations for employment generating uses are not proposed. Rather, the approach is to make better use of existing developed land, through for example, redevelopment and intensification. Redevelopment schemes in the centre provide an opportunity for a mix of uses including the provision of new retail floorspace but also for employment and housing. The West End area of Oxford represents by far the most significant potential for new mixed use development where already schemes for conversion of the Prison and Castle Mound for hotel and cultural activity, and proposals for redevelopment of the Westgate shopping centre indicate significant intent to rejuvenate the area under the guidance of a partnership project between the County and City Councils with SEEDA.
- 6.10 Oxford is an important economic centre, significant in terms of the types of employment activity and presence of major employers. Policy E2 seeks to enable diversity of employment opportunities while providing for the necessary requirements of key sectors. Land is available in Oxford for new employment development including to meet university and hospital requirements. There is also potential for modernisation, intensification and change of use.
- 6.11 The planned consolidation and modernisation of Oxford's hospital activity over the Plan period will generate new transport pressures in the city. The health authorities should devise and fund measures to reduce car traffic and ensure appropriate access, particularly by public transport, in consultation with the County Council and others.

<sup>26</sup> Resident workforce includes people in employment and unemployed.



- 6.12 Due to the imbalance of jobs to working residents in Oxford, the shortage of affordable housing and the Green Belt around Oxford, the County Council believes consideration should be given to redevelopment for housing or mixed uses on some employment sites when the existing use ceases, and where it is shown that re-use for employment is not required or no longer viable. However, land or premises in use by small businesses should be retained where possible. The loss of sites for small firms from urban areas can result in a loss of local economic diversity. High land values achieved for housing are a main factor resulting in the loss of such sites.

### **Employment land provision in the towns**

- E3 In the main towns of Banbury, Bicester, Didcot and Witney the provision of land for employment will be made:**
- a) to achieve an appropriate balance between the number and type of jobs and the size and skills of the local workforce; and**
  - b) to provide for the expansion and relocation of existing local firms and to accommodate firms which need to be located in the area, including provision to support the development of science based industries or other important business clusters.**

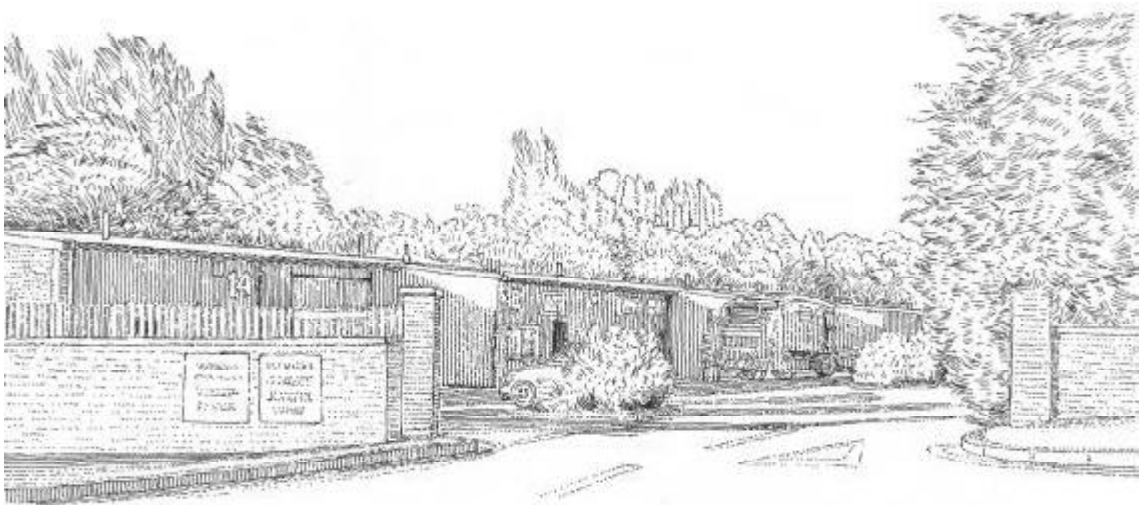
**A limited amount of land for employment will be made available in Abingdon, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Faringdon, Henley, Thame, Wallingford, Wantage and Grove. In deciding on the amount of employment land available in the above towns, weight shall be given to the content of action plans that have been carried out following health checks and other processes. Where such plans show the need for additional land to maintain the vibrancy of market towns, then additional employment land shall be released.**

**Elsewhere the provision of land for employment generating uses will be restrained and limited to activities that do not give rise to excessive or inappropriate traffic.**

- 6.13 Policy E3 emphasises the role of the towns in providing local employment opportunities.
- 6.14 In Banbury, Bicester, Didcot and Witney land for employment is available but new provision for employment, either through new allocations or through making better use of existing employment land and premises, may be required.
- 6.15 In assessing the amount of land required for employment generating development in these towns, local planning authorities should seek to work towards achieving a balance between jobs locally and the needs of the future workforce in the town and surrounding area. Audits of employment land will help determine the range of sites and premises required to meet future needs and that of the local area.
- 6.16 It is expected that some firms which have outgrown their existing premises and are looking to relocate locally, as well as new businesses, may seek to locate in one of the main towns.



- 6.17 Business clusters are companies defined by their geographical concentration and linkages. Government policy stresses the importance of clusters where knowledge transfer and innovation is key because of their role in driving the future of the economy. The County Council sees the benefits of some expanding knowledge and science based companies which may be moving on from research and development to manufacturing, locating in the towns. Local planning authorities should make provision for innovation start up units, small firms and 'grow-on' space for expanding firms. Bicester could in particular benefit from its location within the Oxford-Cambridge arc (a corridor of economic potential stretching from Oxford through Milton Keynes to Cambridge); on the proposed East-West rail link; and also situated close to the hub of research and development activity in the Oxford area.



- 6.18 While the focus of development is on the larger urban areas, Policy E3, together with Policy G1, supports development of an appropriate scale to meet local employment needs. The towns of Abingdon, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Faringdon, Henley, Thame, Wallingford, Wantage and Grove are identified as locations where a limited amount of land should be provided because of their role as important local centres for services and employment. To this end, local authorities should take into account the content of action plans that have been carried out following healthchecks<sup>27</sup> and other processes when determining the supply of land for employment in the above towns.
- 6.19 In recent years a lot of land has been developed for warehousing and distribution in the county, in particular close to the motorway and the trunk road network at Banbury, Bicester and Didcot. Warehousing and distribution facilities use a lot of land, employ relatively few people and generate a lot of heavy goods movement. Local planning authorities should seek to restrict this type of activity to sites with good access to rail and specifically allocated or used for this purpose.

<sup>27</sup> The Countryside Agency developed the Market Towns Healthcheck initiative in 2001 to enable local communities to assess their market town in terms of their social and economic well being and draw up an action plan. To date the towns of Faringdon and Carterton have carried out healthchecks.



## Small firms and local employment diversity

**E4 Proposals for small scale premises (up to about 500 square metres) including proposals that encourage farm or rural diversification will normally be permitted in appropriate locations.**

- 6.20 The County Council recognises the importance of small businesses to the local economy. The majority of firms in the county employ 25 or fewer people and cover a vast range of economic activity.
- 6.21 Policy E4 provides for new small premises of one or more units for occupation by firms of up to 500 square metres where the location is appropriate when considered against the environmental, transport and other policies in the development plan. Key considerations are the overall scale of activity proposed, traffic generation and impact, and the general desire to locate development in locations which serve to reduce travel by the private car. Local planning authorities can make provision for sensitive small scale development in rural settlements where they consider that there is a need and the development is otherwise acceptable.
- 6.22 The farming industry has been subject to considerable change and financial and other pressures in recent years. The Plan seeks to provide local employment opportunities in rural areas in appropriate locations that can promote diversification and support the local economy. Farm diversification schemes (for example, the conversion of former farm buildings) can help to provide additional income and employment. The reuse or adaptation of traditional rural buildings for business use or tourism will generally be encouraged where they offer high quality and well designed conversions and do not cause significant highway or traffic problems.

## Tourism and culture

**E5 Tourism projects which are based on the conservation and enjoyment of the county's inherent qualities and heritage will be encouraged in appropriate locations, particularly where the proposed development is accessible by foot, cycling or public transport.**

- 6.23 Oxfordshire is internationally known as a place of culture. At the heart of the county is Oxford's historic built environment and its standing as a centre of learning. Market towns such as Henley, Woodstock, Banbury and Burford are attractions in their own right. The county's natural heritage includes three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, rivers such as the Thames and Cherwell and networks of nature reserves and sites of special scientific interest, many of which can be visited.
- 6.24 The County Council wants to promote tourism and culture in ways that contribute to, rather than detract from, the quality of the environment and the quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors alike<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> A Cultural Strategy for Oxfordshire 2001-2006, Oxfordshire County Council.



6.25 Policy E5 seeks to ensure that the tourism industry prospers through enterprises which seek to integrate tourism opportunities with schemes which conserve, maintain, upgrade and enhance the wildlife, landscape, cultural and historical interest of the county. This means encouraging projects that are sensitive in scale and design and located so as to be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. The re-use of buildings that contribute to small scale tourism-based rural diversification is supported. The provision of good quality facilities and accommodation to cater for visitors is supported in accordance with the sequential approach set out in Policy TC2. Generally, large scale visitor attractions such as theme parks are unlikely to be acceptable.



6.26 The scale of tourism activity can cause problems in terms of sheer visitor numbers and traffic impacts. Local planning authorities, tourist boards and others involved in promoting and managing tourism can, through visitor management plans and other initiatives, help to minimise impacts and identify ways of maximising the local and environmental benefits, for example, by seeking to increase the numbers of staying visitors.



## **Employment and housing**

**E6** In considering proposals for employment generating development which would generate a demand for housing, account will be taken of the existing or planned housing provision.

6.27 The policy seeks to maintain a balance between employment-generating development and the capacity of the local housing market to absorb any new employment growth generated. Consideration needs to be given, for example, as to whether prospective employers will employ local people or will bring most of their workforce with them and add to pressures in the local housing market.



## 7. Housing

7.1 Government policy for housing is that everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home, that there should be greater choice of housing, and that housing should not reinforce social distinctions. A key objective of the Structure Plan is to provide sufficient new dwellings to meet requirements of Regional Planning Guidance, of an appropriate size and type for Oxfordshire's residents, and to contribute to meeting affordable housing need. This chapter sets out the amount of new housing to be provided, how it will be distributed around the county, and explains in general terms the vision for how new housing development should be provided in the future.

### The amount and distribution of housing

H1 Provision will be made for about 37,300 additional dwellings (net) between 1 April 2001 and 31 March 2016. The provision will be distributed as follows:

	2001 - 2016
Cherwell	9,350
Oxford	6,500
South Oxfordshire	7,500
Vale of White Horse	7,150
West Oxfordshire	6,800
Total	37,300

The main locations for new housing will be within Oxford (about 6,500 dwellings), Banbury (about 3,700 dwellings), Bicester (about 3,300 dwellings), Didcot (about 4,500 dwellings), Witney (about 3,000 dwellings), and Grove (about 2,100 dwellings).

Elsewhere, most development should take place in larger settlements where a reasonable range of employment, services and community facilities exist, are planned or can be provided at reasonable cost. Significant additional housing development, including inappropriate infill, should be avoided where this is likely to result largely in commuting by car to urban centres and where travel needs are unlikely to be well served by public transport. In small settlements and villages housing development will be limited to that required to meet local needs and support balanced communities in villages.

Local planning authorities should seek to maximise the proportion of new dwellings built on previously developed land in accordance with national and regional guidance, while maintaining total housing delivery at the levels required to fulfil the provision set out above.

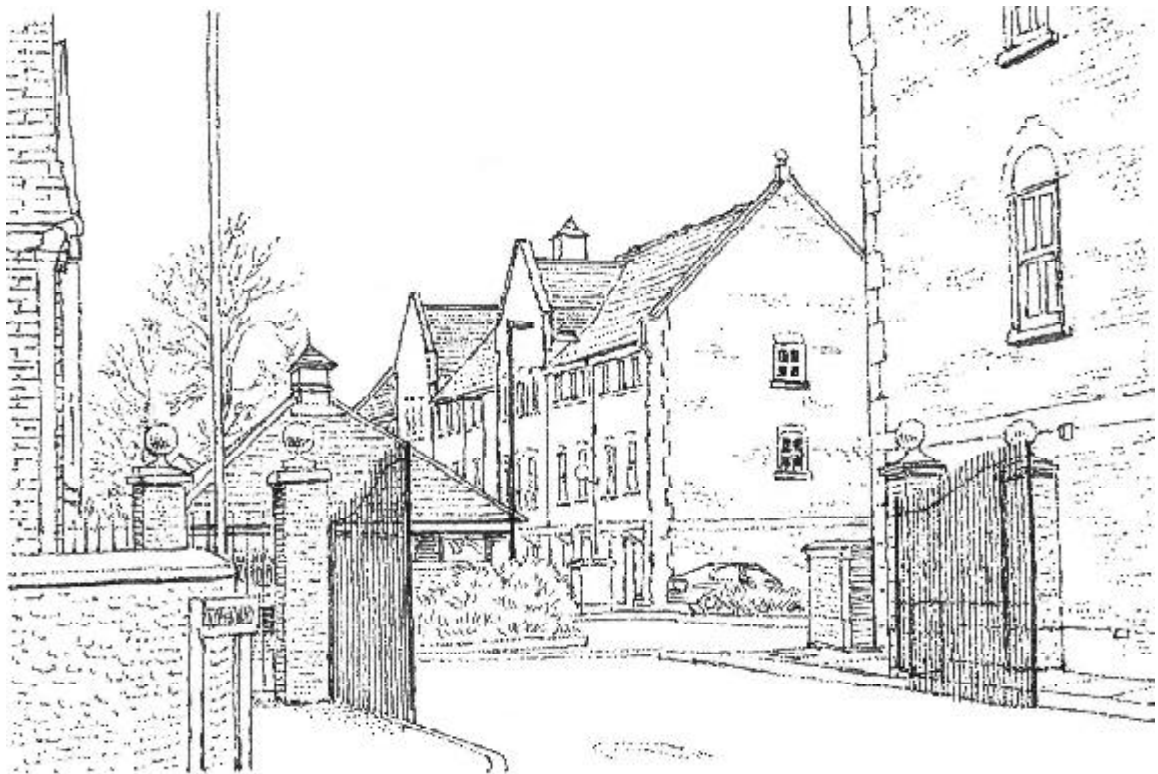
Where appropriate, phasing will be used and the release of large sites managed so that priority is given to the development of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas, and land is released gradually throughout the plan period, and to ensure the provision of necessary supporting infrastructure, services and facilities and other improvements.



- 7.2 The overall amount of housing to be built is broadly in accordance with the annual average number of houses suggested in RPG9 of 2,430 dwellings per year 2001-2006. Regional guidance is being reviewed, and in the meantime the RPG9 building rate has been applied for the whole Plan period in accordance with Government advice.
- 7.3 The main focus for new housing development up to 2016 is the larger settlements which are considered to be the most sustainable locations due to their range of jobs, services and facilities and the opportunities to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport for journeys. A reasonable range of services and facilities will generally be taken to mean at least a primary school, food shop, post office, community facilities and good quality public transport, providing at least an hourly service. In small settlements and villages policy H1 allows for some limited development of an appropriate scale to support the needs of local communities in accordance with PPS7.
- 7.4 Didcot is close to the boundary between South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse districts. The alteration to the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2011 (adopted in April 2001) determined that the direction of growth for major development should be mainly to the west of the town, and divided the number of houses between the districts. The housing allocation for Didcot up to 2016 includes the major development of 3,200 dwellings already planned to the west of the town. The housing figures in policy H1 provide for about 4,000 of the dwellings to be built at Didcot within South Oxfordshire district, and about 500 within the Vale of White Horse district. Within these general parameters, the precise amount, location and boundaries of new development in and around the town is a matter for the district councils to determine.
- 7.5 Government policy is to maximise the amount of development which takes place on previously developed land and existing buildings and in the South East region to accommodate 60% of new housing in this way. A county wide assessment of the potential to accommodate housing on previously developed land and buildings in urban areas in Oxfordshire has estimated capacity to accommodate more than half the planned new housing on previously developed sites within settlements up to 2016. More could be identified in future and potential capacity will be kept under review. However, Oxfordshire is relatively less urbanised than other parts of the South East and does not have large areas of derelict land available which would enable the Government's target to be met. The County Council therefore considers that a target of at least 55% of new housing on previously developed sites within urban areas is appropriate and achievable up to 2016, and will monitor performance against this. This does not mean that important open spaces within towns will be developed – they will be protected, and have not been taken into account in the housing assessment. However, this target is not a maximum and where higher percentages can be achieved in accordance with planning policies local planning authorities should aim to do so. In drawing up development proposals the possibility that previously developed land may be contaminated and any consequent need for remediation measures should be considered.



- 7.6 The location of housing development and rate of building will be monitored throughout the Plan period to assess the progress of the locational strategy and previously developed land target. This information will enable the County Council to advise the planning authorities on phasing to manage the release of larger housing sites to give priority to the re-use of previously developed land within urban areas.



## Upper Heyford

- H2 a) Land at RAF Upper Heyford will provide for a new settlement of about 1000 dwellings and necessary supporting infrastructure, including a primary school and appropriate community, recreational and employment opportunities, as a means of enabling environmental improvements and the heritage interest of the site as a military base with Cold War associations to be conserved, compatible with achieving a satisfactory living environment.
- b) Proposals for development must reflect a revised comprehensive planning brief adopted by the district council and demonstrate that the conservation of heritage resources, landscape, restoration, enhancement of biodiversity and other environmental improvements will be achieved across the whole of the former air base in association with the provision of the new settlement.
- c) The new settlement should be designed to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport rather than travel by private car. Improvements to bus and rail facilities and measures to minimise the impact of traffic generated by the development on the surrounding road network will be required.



- 7.7 Land declared surplus by the Ministry of Defence at the former airbase at Upper Heyford represents an opportunity to achieve an appropriate balance between environmental improvements to a rural part of Oxfordshire, conservation of the heritage interest from the Cold War, and re-use of some existing buildings and previously developed land located in the former technical and residential core area of the base. However, the scale of development must be appropriate to the location and surroundings. The County Council is opposed to the development of a large new settlement due to the site's relatively isolated and unsustainable rural location, the threat of urbanisation in a rural area, the location of the site in relation to Bicester with which it would compete for investment in services and facilities, and conflict with the objectives of Government planning policy in PPG13 to provide accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling and to reduce the need to travel by car<sup>29</sup>. Therefore, the Plan provides for modest development of about 1,000 houses. There are about 300 existing houses on the site of which some or all could be retained or demolished, but the total limit of about 1,000 dwellings will be the determining factor. This proposal has been recognised by the First Secretary of State as 'an exception to normal sustainability objectives as a means of facilitating the remediation of the former airbase to enable the site to present a more environmentally acceptable face than it does now'<sup>30</sup>.
- 7.8 Proposals for development must be in accordance with a revised comprehensive planning brief for the site adopted by Cherwell District Council. Care should be taken to ensure that the heritage interest of the site as an air base with Cold War associations, landscape restoration and biodiversity are all taken into account in deciding appropriate measures. In revising the comprehensive planning brief, the District Council should continue to consult English Heritage and the developer on how heritage conservation issues should be addressed, including treatment of buildings from the Cold War era that English Heritage have recommended for protection. A conservation plan for the whole area of the air base is being prepared by the District Council in partnership with English Heritage, to enable appropriate decisions to be reached in revising the comprehensive planning brief.
- 7.9 In drawing up development proposals attention should be paid to ensure a satisfactory living environment is provided for future residents. Proposals should be designed to a high quality in accordance with policy H3 and will need to provide for appropriate on- and off-site infrastructure to meet the needs of the development in accordance with policy G3, including primary and secondary education, library facilities, and public transport and other highway and transport improvements. Proposals should not provide for any further significant growth beyond that envisaged in policy H2.

<sup>29</sup> In June 2003 the Secretary of State refused permission for proposals for development of a settlement on the site because he considered that the scheme did not comply with the development plan. Cherwell District Council is to review the comprehensive planning brief to bring it up to date and to make it consistent with the Secretary of State's decision.

<sup>30</sup> Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 23 June 2003, reference APP/C3105/A/02/1080800.



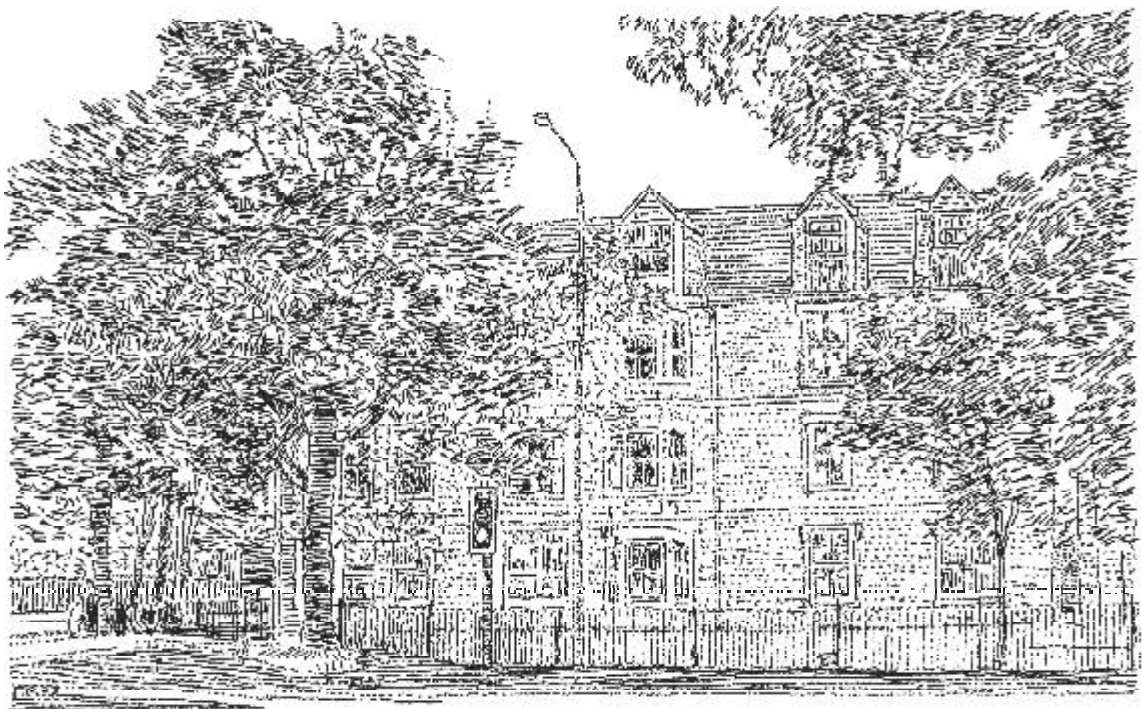
## Design, quality and density of housing development

H3 Housing development should be at a density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. Higher densities will be sought on sites within urban areas, close to town centres or where there is a good range of existing or planned services and facilities. Densities of at least 50 dwellings per hectare will be required in locations which are or can be well served by public transport. New housing development should:

- a) be designed to a high quality, taking into account the character of the site and surroundings; and
- b) include a variety of dwelling types and sizes to help create balanced communities and to meet the needs of all sections of the community, including small households.

Major urban extensions should be planned as mixed communities and should provide the services and facilities needed to support them and create safe and attractive places to live.

7.10 The average density of housing development built or planned in Oxfordshire in recent years has been about 25 dwellings per hectare. This is low compared to the densities of housing development which the Government wishes to see of between 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare. In Oxfordshire, increasing the density of housing development will make better use of land and will help reduce the amount of greenfield land needed for development.





- 7.11 Higher development densities need not mean high rise development or that the design and quality of development should be compromised. All proposals for development should aim for high quality of design and layout in order to raise the quality of urban areas and create attractive and safe areas in which to live. The design of new developments should promote community safety and help to prevent crime, for example through the "Secured by Design" initiative. Well designed and practical proposals for "car-free" housing areas and the creation of "Home Zones" within new residential development will be welcomed. Incorporation of energy efficiency and resource conservation measures including water conservation in new development is encouraged by policy G6.
- 7.12 Policy H3 encourages account to be taken of the needs of local communities for different types and sizes of dwellings, including the need for 2-3 bedroom houses and more dwellings for small households. The type and size of dwellings to be built will be determined by the local planning authorities according to local needs within the overall principles set out in this policy. Assessments of local housing need by the local planning authorities generally indicate that the greatest proportion of need is for smaller houses.
- 7.13 People's needs change over time, and there will always be a proportion of the population who have special requirements. Therefore, developers are encouraged to build a proportion of new housing developments to the "homes for life" standard. This allows people to stay in their homes longer and places less pressure on support services such as health and social care.
- 7.14 A significant number of new dwellings will be built in extensions to existing urban areas. The County Council's vision is that urban extensions should provide attractive and interesting places to live, where residents have access to the day-to-day services and facilities they need, and where they are able to walk, cycle or travel by public transport for at least most local journeys. They should be planned as mixed communities with a range of dwelling types and sizes according to local need. Local planning authorities are encouraged to prepare development briefs to provide more detailed guidance about how this will be achieved on specific sites.

## Affordable housing

- H4 Provision shall be made in local plans or development frameworks and through the determination of applications for planning permission, for affordable housing including housing for key workers, at a level commensurate with the identified need for such housing in each District. The amount and size of site where provision will be sought will be determined by local planning authorities based on assessments of local need. Provision will normally be made on site and be subject to permanent and enforceable arrangements to ensure the benefits will be passed on to subsequent occupiers.**
- 7.15 The need for affordable housing is one of the most important issues currently facing Oxfordshire, and is the top priority of the Oxfordshire Community Partnership. Oxfordshire currently has the third highest house prices of counties in the South East outside London, and low levels of unemployment. The inability to recruit and retain workers threatens the ability to deliver public services and sustain prosperity in Oxfordshire. Being unable to afford suitable housing leads to social deprivation and reduced quality of life for people.



- 7.16 Affordable housing is defined as housing which meets the needs of people who cannot afford accommodation to rent or purchase on the open market which is suitable for their needs, including housing for rent, shared ownership or low cost market housing. People who may not be able to afford housing at market rates include key workers.
- 7.17 RPG9 suggests that about 48% of new dwellings built in the South East region need to be affordable. Local levels of housing need are assessed by the district councils to inform their housing strategies and local plan policies. The most recent surveys indicate levels of need for affordable housing far exceeding total housing supply. It would not be possible for all the new dwellings built in Oxfordshire to be affordable in order to meet the predicted level of need. Between 1996 to 2003, only 20% of dwellings built were affordable. Almost half of these were built in the rural areas of the county.
- 7.18 Given the levels of need in the county and the importance to the local economy and delivery of services of the ability to recruit and retain workers, the delivery of affordable housing will be monitored against the expectation that 50% of the additional housing provided in Oxfordshire should be affordable, including houses for key workers. This is consistent with the overall level of need indicated in RPG9. This will require a significant change from current levels of provision, which in turn will depend on major policy changes by the Government and other agencies and a significant increase in the funding available for affordable housing, over which the planning system has no influence. However, to assist local authorities in the Thames Valley, practical guidance on the delivery of affordable housing through the planning system has been published<sup>31</sup>.



<sup>31</sup> Affordable Housing Practical Guide, Association of Councils in the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR), June 2003.



- 7.19 Circular 6/98 enables local planning authorities to consider whether circumstances in their areas justify seeking lower site size thresholds than 25 dwellings or 1 hectare for the provision of affordable housing. In rural areas in particular, development on small sites is a significant source of supply. The County Council will generally support the application by district councils through their local plans or local development frameworks of site thresholds lower than Circular 6/98 subject to evidence of local need, in order to help meet the overall need to provide more affordable housing in the county. Provision for affordable housing should normally be made on site to help create mixed communities. In considering the type and size of housing to be provided consideration should be given to the need for special needs or supported housing.
- 7.20 The level of need in Oxfordshire together with the limitations on funding available to deliver affordable housing, suggests that more innovative means of providing such housing will need to be found. The local planning authorities should consider whether it is appropriate to seek a contribution to meeting local affordable housing needs from commercial development, as well as from residential development. Consideration should also be given to innovative forms of ownership, such as co-operative housing developments, as a means of increasing the availability of affordable housing.
- 7.21 In rural areas, land within or adjoining settlements which would otherwise be considered inappropriate for development, may be released to provide affordable housing provided it is available in perpetuity to meet local needs, which is normally secured through planning conditions or obligations, and the need is justified by a local needs assessment. At the level of a particular village or parish, a needs assessment may be undertaken by the district council or local council.



## 8. Town centres

### The principal locations for development

**TC1** Development in Oxford city centre will be permitted where it maintains and enhances the sub-regional role and diversity of the centre.

Apart from Oxford city centre, the other main locations for the development of retail and other facilities will be the town centres of Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Witney and Wantage.

Development in other town and district centres will be encouraged to sustain and enhance their vitality and viability.

- 8.1 PPS<sup>32</sup> advises that development plan documents should set out a hierarchy of centres with a strategy for locating employment, shopping, leisure and entertainment, hospitals, higher education and other uses which generate many trips and which should be well served by public transport.
- 8.2 In terms of an overall hierarchy policy TC1 identifies the sub-regional role of Oxford city centre and the towns of Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Witney and Wantage as the other main locations for new retail and other town centre development. The policy recognises the important role of the other towns in the county as employment and service centres and the need to maintain their vitality and viability and also the important function that the district centres in Oxford city perform.
- 8.3 The definition of the hierarchy for centres other than those identified in policy TC1 is a matter to be dealt with as necessary in local plans/local development frameworks. The County Council is keen that rural centres should continue to be viable.

### Maintaining and enhancing centres

**TC2** Major new development should be located on city or town centre sites. If there are no suitable town centre sites then edge-of-centre, followed by out-of-centre sites will be considered where the need for the development can be demonstrated, where there are no other alternatives and the development would no harm the viability of existing centres or local shops.

Proposals should sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of centres by:

- (a) extending the range and quality of shops and other central facilities;
- (b) improving the environment, character and quality of a centre;
- (c) encouraging diversity of uses, including residential accommodation; and
- (d) improving accessibility.

<sup>32</sup> Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005.

- 8.4 PPS6 seeks to ensure that a sequential approach should be applied in selecting appropriate sites for development within centres. Policy TC2 sets out a sequential approach for locating development in centres as set out in PPS6. The sequential approach applies to retail and other key town centre uses which attract a lot of people, including commercial and public offices, entertainment and leisure facilities, hotels and other such uses.
- 8.5 The preferred location for most retail and other key town centre uses is within existing centres, both to boost their vitality and viability and because they provide greater accessibility by modes of transport other than the private car.
- 8.6 Where new edge-of-centre or out-of-centre development is proposed a developer must demonstrate need, that the sequential approach has been followed and that the development is accessible by means of transport other than the private car.
- 8.7 The increase in home shopping through the internet could in the future reduce the number of car trips and space required for parking. Town centre management provides one way of promoting the vitality and viability of existing centres. It can also assist in helping to make town centres safe and secure places, through encouraging safety and crime prevention measures.





## 9. Recreation and leisure

- 9.1 Government policy<sup>33</sup> is to maintain and promote the provision of new open space, sports and recreational facilities.
- 9.2 There is a need to balance the provision of new recreational and leisure facilities with the need to protect the environment and character of Oxfordshire. Policies recognise that conflicts can arise between those who visit the county and those who live and work in the area. The policies also focus on the creation of new facilities in areas such as restored mineral and waste disposal sites and canal and river corridors.

### Proposals for new recreation and leisure facilities

- 9.3 The County Council recognises the important role that recreation plays in the well being of the community and the need to maintain existing facilities. The loss of important open space, including playing fields, is covered by policy G1 in the Plan.
- 9.4 The assessment of need for specific sports or recreation activities will be considered in detail in local plans. The provision of new supporting infrastructure including recreation, leisure, arts and community facilities associated with new development through developer contributions and in areas where there are deficiencies, is covered by policy G3 in the Plan.

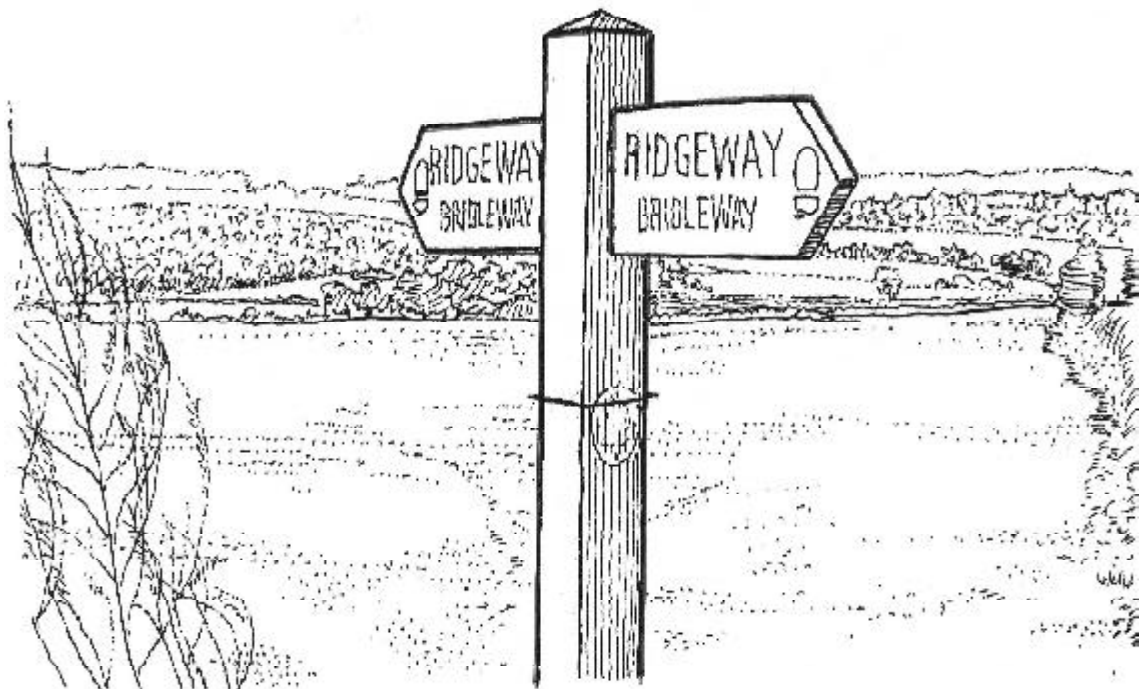
### Countryside recreation

- R1 The local planning authorities will encourage optimum use to be made of existing countryside recreation facilities and resources. Opportunities to create new outdoor facilities which are appropriate in scale and sensitive to a rural location will be supported.**
- 9.5 Recreational activity in the countryside is dominated by informal pursuits such as walking, cycling, outings and picnics. There is, therefore, a continuing need for the best use to be made of existing countryside recreational facilities, including public rights of way<sup>34</sup>, river banks, waterways, towpaths, woodlands and parklands.

<sup>33</sup> Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Rights of way are footpaths, bridleways, byways and roads used as a public path identified on the Definitive Map which is held and maintained by the County Council.

- 9.6 Examples of where there might be potential to create new facilities include:
- restored mineral workings and waste disposal sites, although there is a need to seek a balance between the needs of landscape and wildlife conservation and the demands for recreational water space;
  - initiatives associated with the Great Western Community Forest around Swindon, which partly falls within the Vale of White Horse District;
  - use of disused rail lines where they cannot be reopened for trains and could be developed as pedestrian and/or cycle routes;
  - restoration of canals, such as the historic route of the Wiltshire and Berkshire Canal;
  - improved public access and recreation facilities around waterways such as the rivers Windrush, Cherwell and Thame and the Oxford Canal.
- 9.7 New facilities in the countryside should not threaten rural character and sensitive ecological sites or cause highway problems and, in particular, the generation of an unacceptable volume of private car use. New facilities should be accessible by a range of modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport.





## Access to the countryside and rights of way network

R2 The local planning authorities will seek to increase and improve access to the countryside.

The existing network of public rights of way, including routes in the towns, will be maintained and improved. Development which would damage the rights of way network will be resisted.

9.8 A priority of the County Council is to improve access to and enjoyment of the countryside and heritage, by increasing access to public rights of way, museums and other heritage sites. The County Council is working to improve public access to the countryside by protecting and enhancing the rights of way network. The County Council is also helping to implement the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and is preparing a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The Act will create new rights of access to certain areas of the countryside and reform and improve rights of way in England and Wales.





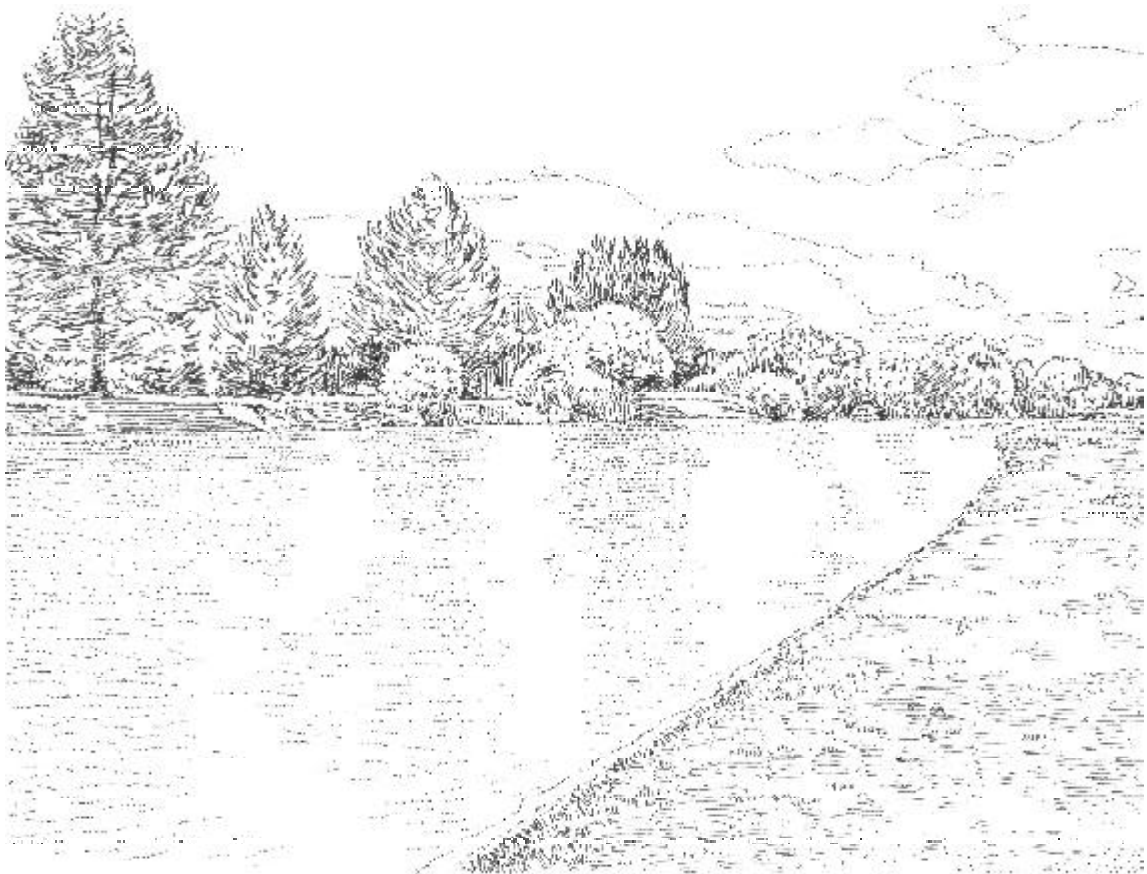
- 9.9 In appropriate cases opportunities will be taken to secure, through planning obligations, new rights of way or improvements to the existing network. Wherever increased access is proposed, care must be taken to avoid harm to adjacent land uses and areas sensitive to increased use, such as certain nature conservation sites.
- 9.10 The County Council recognises the importance of the Ridgeway national trail and is working to protect the route from damage, help ensure that users such as walkers, horse riders and cyclists can use it more easily and also protect the special character of the route. In Oxfordshire the Ridgeway runs through two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (North Wessex Downs and Chilterns).

## The River Thames

**R3 The character and environment of the River Thames and its immediate valley will be protected and where appropriate enhanced.**

**Proposals for development which will adversely affect the character of the river and its setting will not be permitted. Development that would restrict public access alongside the river will not be permitted.**

- 9.11 A priority of the County Council is to promote and enhance the rivers in the county, particularly the River Thames, as a means of travel, as a tourist attraction and as a fine environmental feature. The use of the River Thames for recreational and leisure use should continue to be protected, improved and promoted, particularly where it helps to arrest the decline in the number of boat trips on the river. In appropriate locations permanent moorings on the river may be permitted.
- 9.12 The River Thames is one of Oxfordshire's most important assets in terms of environmental quality and recreational potential. The tranquil nature and character of the river and its setting will continue to be protected. Recreational development associated with the River Thames should be located within nearby towns and villages rather than in the open countryside. Increased public access alongside the river will be encouraged where appropriate.



## Other waterways

**R4** The character and environment of the Oxford Canal will be protected and where appropriate enhanced.

The historic route of the Wilts and Berks Canal and appropriate alternative routes where this is not possible will be safeguarded with a view to its long-term re-establishment as a navigable waterway.

Proposals for development which will adversely affect the character or setting of these canal corridors will not be permitted.

9.13 The County Council is keen to protect and enhance canal corridors in the county, due to their important historical heritage and to support their role in recreation, tourism and nature conservation. The County Council supports enhanced public access and opportunities for recreation amenity provided by these waterway corridors. In appropriate cases opportunities will be taken to secure, through planning obligations, the restoration or enhancement of parts of the waterway corridors. Exact details of the existing or new routes of these canal corridors and the criteria for assessing development proposals that affect them will be addressed in the relevant Local Plans/Local Development Frameworks prepared by the district councils.



- 9.14 The use of waterways for freight transport will also be encouraged. This is covered by policy T4 in the Plan.



## 10. Energy

- 10.1 The Government published an energy white paper in 2003 which sets out its four goals for future energy policy – cutting the UK’s carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050 with real progress by 2020, maintaining the reliability of energy supplies, promoting competitive markets, and ensuring every home is adequately and affordably heated<sup>35</sup>. The Government’s current target is that 10% of UK electricity generation should be met by renewable sources by 2010, and to reduce domestic energy consumption by 30% by 2010. A range of measures has been put in place to help achieve these targets, including the Renewables Obligation, the Climate Change Levy and grant aid for developing renewable energy technologies and markets<sup>36</sup>. Therefore, it is likely that increasing numbers of proposals for renewable energy development will come forward. In addition to supporting renewable energy development, the County Council wishes to encourage energy efficiency in new development which is addressed in policy G6.
- 10.2 RPG9 sets regional and sub-regional targets for electricity generation from renewable sources<sup>37</sup>. Oxfordshire is included in the Thames Valley and Surrey sub-region. Targets proposed for the sub-region are to increase renewable energy capacity to 140 MW by 2010, and 209 MW by 2016<sup>38</sup>.
- 10.3 The greatest potential for developing renewable energy in the sub-region is considered to be from biomass-fuelled electricity generation, wind energy and landfill gas, with a smaller but significant contribution from solar photovoltaics. In Oxfordshire there is currently about 8 MW of existing renewable energy capacity, mostly from landfill and sewage gas sources. The County Council will consider opportunities to work with others in the sub-region to assess potential in more detail and coordinate initiatives to help achieve targets. In particular the County Council is a partner and supporter of TV Energy, a renewable energy agency operating in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire that aims to promote and facilitate practical sustainable energy solutions within the Thames Valley.

<sup>35</sup> Our energy future – creating a low carbon economy, DTI, 24 February 2003.

<sup>36</sup> The Renewables Obligation requires all licensed electricity suppliers to supply part of their electricity from renewable sources on an increasing scale. The Climate Change Levy is charged on most non-domestic energy use. Renewable energy and Combined Heat and Power plants are exempt from the levy.

<sup>37</sup> Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) – Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, November 2004.

<sup>38</sup> As a rule of thumb, 1MW is sufficient to supply the electricity needs of about 1,000 houses.

## Proposals for renewable energy development

**EG1** Proposals for renewable energy development will be encouraged to help meet Oxfordshire's contribution to regional targets, and to support the development of a more dispersed and locally based pattern of energy generation and use. Proposals will be permitted subject to consideration of their impact on the environment, local communities and traffic generation and their wider environmental and economic benefits. New renewable energy generating plant should be located as close to the energy source material as possible.

- 10.4 Policy EG1 applies to all sources of renewable energy and their related development including biomass (wood, agriculture and forestry residues, energy crops and biomass waste), wind, solar (photovoltaics and solar water heating), anaerobic digestion, landfill gas, hydro and ground heat pumps. Although waste management options can also contribute towards meeting renewable energy targets. Decisions on waste management should be driven by the waste hierarchy and consideration of the best practicable environmental option. Proposals for waste management, including waste to energy plants, will be considered against the policies on waste.





- 10.5 The planning implications of different technologies vary considerably, but generally proposals should be close to their energy source to reduce transport distances of fuel (in the case of biomass based technologies) and should not have a detrimental impact on the environment, landscape, biodiversity, or the amenity of local communities, including arising from grid connection. Proposals need not be precluded in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, provided the special character of the landscape is not harmed. In the Green Belt, development for renewable sources of energy will not be permitted unless it maintains its openness and proposals do not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt, and very special circumstances can be demonstrated that outweigh any harm in line with PPG2 and PPS22<sup>39</sup>. In all cases the wider environmental and economic benefits of proposals for renewable energy, such as reducing emissions of carbon and creation of jobs, are material considerations to be given significant weight, whatever the scale of the proposal.
- 10.6 To meet regional renewable energy targets a mix of large and small scale schemes will be needed. In Oxfordshire there could be considerable potential for small scale renewable schemes such as those serving individual farms, businesses and communities. These can contribute to economic diversification in rural areas, enable the benefits to be taken advantage of locally, and have reduced environmental impacts such as shorter distances to transport fuel. Installation of solar energy in new and existing development has potential in both urban and rural areas. Cumulatively small scale projects can provide an important contribution towards achieving regional targets, and proposals should not be rejected because their level of output is small.
- 10.7 Biomass sources of renewable energy are likely to be one of the most significant in Oxfordshire. The County Council wishes to encourage the planting of coppice and energy crops and management of woodlands for energy generation use, and would like to see a market for wood fuel/biomass established in the county. TV Energy are supporting market development for coppice and coppice production through their subsidiaries TV Bioenergy Ltd and TV Bioenergy Coppice. The latter has enabled about 1,000 hectares of coppice to be planted and is aiming for 2,800 hectares by 2008. Proposals for generating plant will be considered against policy EG1.
- 10.8 As an inland county in southern England, Oxfordshire is not a particularly windy area. However, average wind speeds are high enough in some areas to make the development of wind turbines viable with the current state of the technology, and permission was granted in 2004 for a cluster of five 1.3 MW wind turbines at Westmill Farm, near Watchfield. Individual large turbines about 1.5 MW in size, and small clusters of 1-5 turbines are the most likely appropriate scale of development at present, although this does not mean that consideration of larger schemes should be precluded. Individual and clusters of smaller scale wind turbines will also be appropriate for community level developments. As well as the impact of turbines on landscape and biodiversity, local planning authorities should also consider the impact on local communities of factors such as noise, shadow flicker and interference with electromagnetic transmissions.

<sup>39</sup> Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 22: Renewable Energy, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, August 2004.



## Combined heat and power

**EG2** Wherever practical proposals for new energy generation plant should include combined heat and power or the recovery of waste heat for use in other processes. The use of combined heat and power in proposals for major development, including proposals for district heating, will be encouraged.

- 10.9 Combined heat and power (CHP) uses some of the heat produced during the generation of electricity for space or water heating. It can be powered by various fuels including renewable energy. CHP makes considerably more efficient use of primary fuel sources and can lead to reductions in carbon dioxide and other emissions per unit of delivered energy. The Government has set a target for the installation of 10,000 MW of CHP generation by 2010. In Oxfordshire opportunities to install CHP could arise through development of new renewable energy plant, or could be included in proposals for major development such as industry, large scale residential development in association with district heating systems, hospitals, schools, and large scale shopping or leisure development.
- 10.10 There are two conventional power stations at Didcot which have capacities of 2000 MW and 1,360 MW respectively. There is a legal agreement related to Didcot B to enable waste heat to be supplied to the power station boundary for use, for example in district heating. However, Didcot B is a combined cycle gas turbine power station which operates at greater levels of efficiency than its mainly coal fired neighbour Didcot A. The efficiency of the power station would be reduced if waste heat from combustion were used in this way as it already reuses heat from its turbines to generate electricity. The possibility of using low grade heat from water used for cooling could be considered further.

## New generating plant

**EG3** As far as legislation allows, proposals for new large conventional or other non-renewable power stations will be expected to demonstrate that alternatives to additional generating capacity, including investment in energy conservation measures, have been considered and that the proposal represents the best practicable environmental option.

- 10.11 In order to achieve national commitments to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and increase the diversity and security of supply, the County Council believes that alternatives to conventional and other non-renewable power stations should be considered. However, under current legislation the need for additional generating capacity and alternatives such as investment in energy conservation cannot be taken into account in considering proposals for new conventional power stations.



# 11. Minerals

- 11.1 The minerals industry in Oxfordshire provides local employment and raw materials for the construction and maintenance of buildings and roads. Minerals are finite resources. A more sustainable approach to the management of these resources requires that they are only worked when there is a need and are used efficiently, that they are otherwise conserved for possible future use, and that where possible suitable waste and secondary materials (such as concrete, road planings and pulverised fuel ash) are recycled and used in place of primary aggregates.
- 11.2 The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted by the County Council in 1996. It contains more detailed policies for mineral working and supply, including site specific proposals, for the period to 2006. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council is now preparing the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework, with a Core Strategy and Minerals and Waste Sites Proposals Documents proposed to be adopted in 2008. These will reflect changes in Government guidance and cover the period at least to 2016, in line with this Structure Plan and the new South East Plan. The Core Strategy will in due course replace the minerals policies in this Structure Plan and the documents in the new Development Framework will together replace the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan is currently saved (continues in force) until September 2007. The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme was published in May 2005. This sets out the programme for preparation of the Development Framework and explains how this new system of development planning will operate and what each component document will cover.

## The supply of minerals

- 11.3 The minerals worked in Oxfordshire are sharp sand and gravel, soft sand, limestone and ironstone (mainly for aggregate use), chalk, clay and fullers earth. They are worked predominantly to supply local markets. The main exception is fullers earth, which is a nationally scarce mineral.
- 11.4 The Government provides advice on the quantities of aggregate minerals supply for which provision should be made in each region. In June 2003 the Government published new guidelines for aggregates provision<sup>40</sup>. The South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) published a draft sub-regional apportionment of the regional guideline figures for the South East<sup>41</sup>, for consultation in March 2004, as part of its proposed Regional Minerals Strategy<sup>42</sup>. This strategy was the subject of an Examination in Public in October 2004 and the subsequent report of the Panel (December 2004) recommended a revised apportionment. The decision of the Secretary of State on the Regional Minerals Strategy is expected by the end of 2005.

<sup>40</sup> National and Regional Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England, 2001-2016, ODPM, June 2003.

<sup>41</sup> Since April 2001 the South East Region has comprised the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex. Prior to April 2001 the South East Region also included London and the counties of Bedfordshire, Essex and Hertfordshire.

<sup>42</sup> Proposed Alterations to Regional Planning Guidance, South East – Regional Minerals Strategy, March 2004.



- 11.5 Based on the guidance in MPG6<sup>43</sup>, the (former) London and South East Regional Planning Conference (SERPLAN) agreed a sub-regional apportionment of the supply requirement for the South East Region between counties in 1994. Oxfordshire's agreed apportionment for sand and gravel was 2 million tonnes a year. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan subdivided this into 1.8 million tonnes of sharp sand and gravel and 0.2 million tonnes of soft sand. There was no sub-regional apportionment for crushed rock. The draft new apportionment figures for Oxfordshire as recommended by the Regional Minerals Strategy Examination in Public Panel are 1.82 million tonnes a year for sand and gravel and 1.0 million tonnes a year for crushed rock. MPG6 states that Mineral Planning Authorities should aim to maintain landbanks of permitted reserves of aggregate minerals sufficient for at least seven years working.
- 11.6 When finalised, the new apportionment will be included in the South East Plan. The subdivision of the Oxfordshire's figure for sand and gravel between sharp sand and gravel and soft sand will be considered in the preparation of the Minerals and Waste Development Framework.

**M1 Permission will be granted for mineral working at appropriate locations provided it can be demonstrated that any adverse environmental or other impact that the development would be likely to cause is outweighed by the need for the mineral, having regard to:**

- a) the need to maintain landbanks of permitted reserves for aggregate minerals in line with national and regional guidance;
- b) the need to ensure a steady supply of mineral materials for local markets;
- c) the need to supply material for major construction projects from borrow pits; and
- d) national and regional needs for non-aggregate minerals.

**Mineral working will not be permitted unless there are satisfactory provisions for the land to be progressively restored within a reasonable timescale to an acceptable use that is appropriate to its location. The County Council will seek to secure the restoration and long-term management of appropriate mineral working sites for nature conservation, recreation and public access.**

- 11.7 The extraction of minerals has local environmental effects. It is a purpose of the planning system to ensure that necessary supplies of minerals can be obtained whilst the environmental impact of their working and transport is kept to a minimum.

<sup>43</sup> Minerals Planning Guidance: Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England, MPG6, DOE, April 1994.

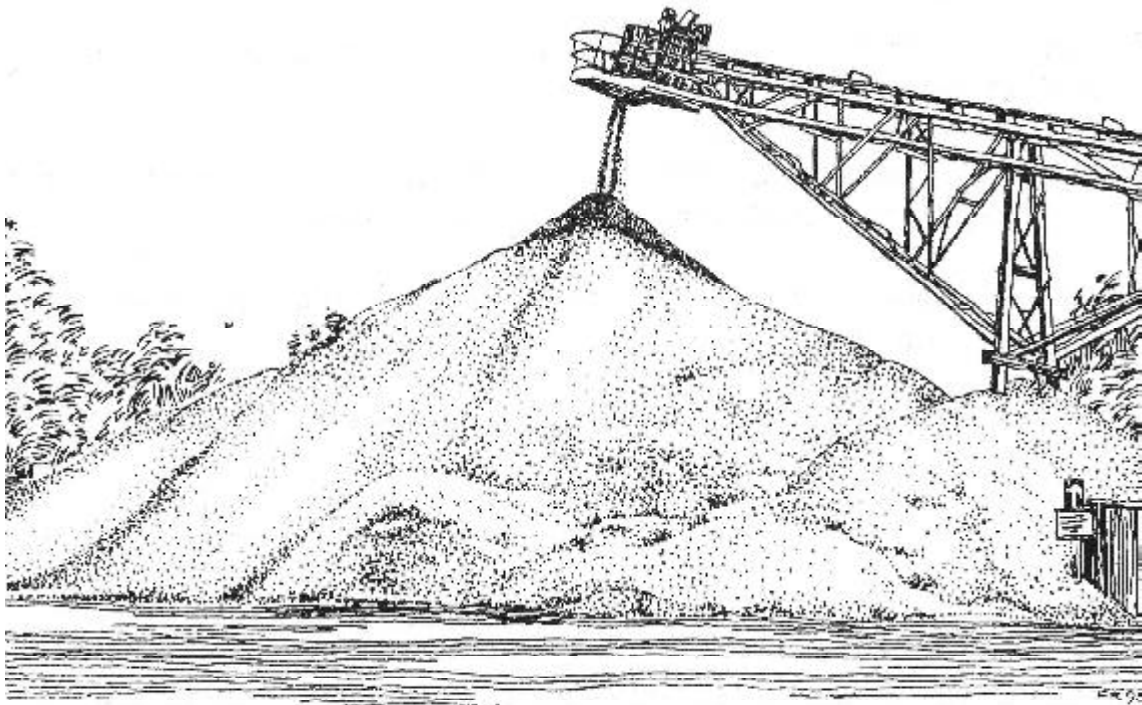


11.8 In deciding whether a location is appropriate for mineral working, the Council will take account of Government guidance, local circumstances, the restoration and after-use proposals for the site, development plan policies (in particular those which seek to safeguard important environmental features and areas) and other important interests such as neighbouring land uses and road users. Development plan policies taken into account will include in particular the following policies of this Plan: EN1 (landscape character); EN2 (biodiversity); EN3 (agricultural land); EN4 (historic and cultural heritage); EN6 (archaeology); EN8 (water quality) and EN9 (flood risk and surface water drainage). In considering the implications of locations for mineral working on landscape character and biodiversity, the Council will take the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (see paragraph 5.3) and landscape character assessments prepared by district councils into account. Mineral working can be acceptable on best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) where high quality restoration back to agricultural land can be achieved or where working of poorer quality land to meet the need for minerals is either not possible or would be inconsistent with other sustainability considerations. Policy G4 sets out policy on development in the Green Belt. Proposals for mineral working need not conflict with the objectives of the Green Belt provided high environmental standards are maintained and sites are well restored.

**M2 Locations for sand and gravel working will be identified in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework. In identifying appropriate locations, the County Council will take account of the distribution of sand and gravel resources; the existing pattern of supply and distribution of workings; proximity to main market areas; accessibility to the main transport routes; risk of birdstrike; restoration and after use potential; and development plan policies, in particular which seek to safeguard:**

- important archaeological remains, historic buildings and areas;
- areas and sites of nature conservation importance, especially Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- features of landscape importance, especially Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- best and most versatile agricultural land;
- the water environment;
- land uses which are sensitive to nuisance; and
- the safety and convenience of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.

11.9 The identification in the development plan of locations for mineral working provides certainty as to where new mineral extraction development is likely to be permitted and where it is not likely within the period of the plan. The Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2011, adopted in 1998, identified four general locations where the principal of sharp sand and gravel working was accepted, at Sutton Courtenay; Sutton Wick; Stanton Harcourt (Lower Windrush Valley); and Eynsham-Cassington-Yarnton. This Structure Plan does not identify locations for mineral working; this will be done in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework.



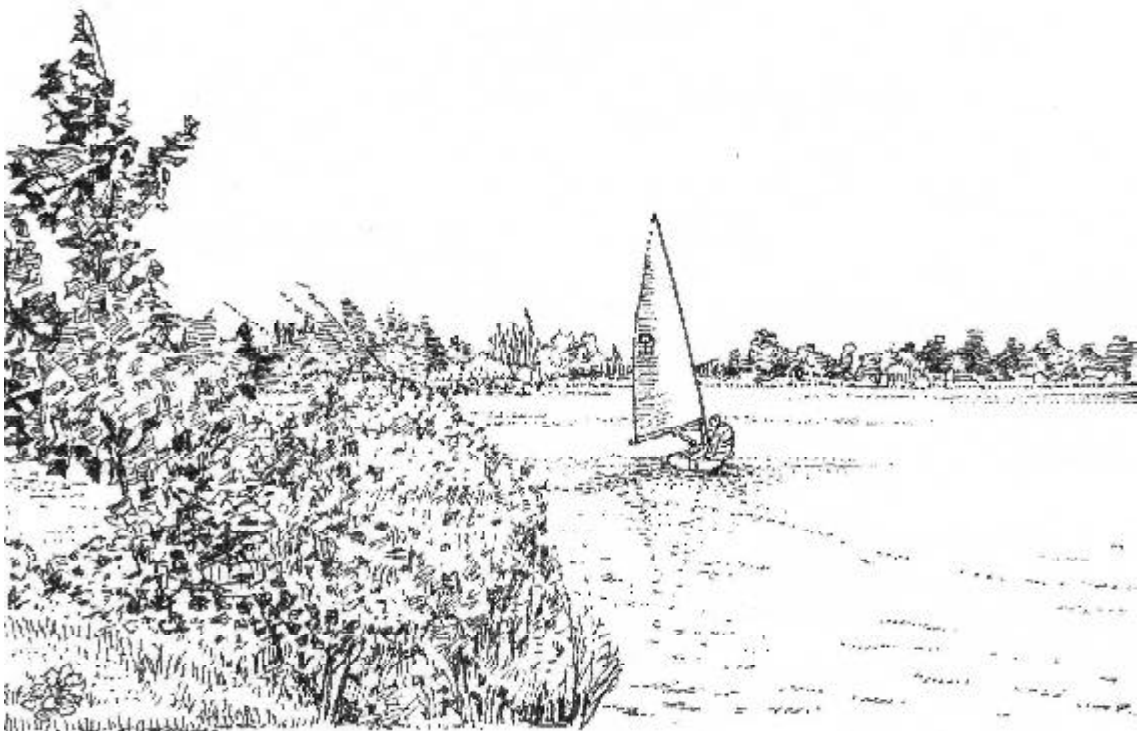
- 11.10 In identifying locations for sand and gravel working in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework, the County Council will seek to make sufficient provision for both soft sand and sharp sand and gravel for Oxfordshire to meet its agreed apportionment of the South East's supply requirement throughout the plan period, to enable continued supply of aggregates to the construction industry at appropriate levels. The assessment of options for locations will include consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of concentrating workings in large strategic resource areas compared with a more dispersed pattern of smaller working areas. It will also consider the scope that different locations offer not only for environmental damage to be minimised or mitigated but also for benefits to be secured, for example, through increased biodiversity or the creation of opportunities for recreation. In assessing the impact of new locations for mineral workings on environmental interests and on residential properties and other sensitive land uses, the Council will consider the cumulative impact of mineral working across an area and the impact of traffic, particularly on routes connecting workings to main transport routes. The potential for material to be transported other than by road will also be taken into account.
- 11.11 Pending preparation of the Minerals and Waste Development Framework Core Strategy and Minerals Site Proposals Document, the factors in policy M2 will be material considerations in the determination of planning applications for sand and gravel working.
- 11.12 The provision of borrow pits to supply materials for major construction projects can reduce the environmental impact caused by transporting large volumes of materials to a single site over a short period. Borrow pits will only be permitted where supply of the material from the borrow pit would have less environmental and traffic impact than if the material was sourced from existing permitted or allocated mineral working sites.



- 11.13 The need to make further provision for the working of other minerals, such as limestone, ironstone, clay and fullers earth will be addressed in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework. The Development Framework will also consider the need for specific policies for other minerals, such as hydrocarbons, which have not previously been worked in Oxfordshire.

## Restoration

- 11.14 One of the most significant impacts of mineral working is the disturbance of the landscape and visual intrusion it can cause. Policy M1 seeks to ensure that the minimum amount of land is taken up by mineral working at any one time and that restoration is carried out to enable an acceptable after-use. An operator's past performance in carrying out restoration may be a material consideration in determining an application for planning permission.
- 11.15 Generally, restoration to agriculture, woodland, nature conservation or recreation are acceptable after-uses. Mineral working can provide opportunities for environmental enhancement and public benefit, such as the creation of new habitats and improved public access, which give local long-term gain to offset the impact of working. The County Council is keen to see an increase in the extent of woodland, nature conservation and general public access to the countryside, and will pursue these aims through the restoration of mineral workings. The Minerals and Waste Development Framework will give guidance on the types of after-uses that may be appropriate in different areas. It is important that agreed after-uses are managed and maintained following restoration. Where appropriate, aftercare schemes and/or long-term management and maintenance agreements will need to be secured.





- 11.16 Because of the generally high water table and a shortage of inert waste material for infilling (due in large part to increased recycling), most new sharp sand and gravel workings in Oxfordshire will have to be restored to water bodies. The issue of risk to aircraft from birdstrike will be an important consideration which may restrict the location of workings and affect the design of restoration schemes.
- 11.17 Where the impact of mineral working affects a significant area, as for instance in the Lower Windrush Valley, the Council will work with landowners, operators and others to secure a coordinated approach to environmental improvements across the whole area.

### **Recycled and secondary aggregates**

- 11.18 It is a Government objective to increase the amount of recycled and secondary aggregate materials used in place of primary aggregates in the construction industry. The Landfill Tax and Aggregates Levy have been introduced in recent years to help achieve this. The Government's guidelines for aggregates provision assume a significant increase in supply and use of recycled and secondary aggregates in the South East. Materials such as crushed concrete from demolition projects, road planings and pulverized fuel ash from Didcot Power Station are already being used in Oxfordshire as substitutes for newly extracted materials. Policy G6 promotes the use of recycled and secondary materials in new developments. The Council will encourage an increase in the supply of these materials by, for example, permitting aggregate recycling plants in appropriate locations under policy WM2. The need for more detailed policy on recycled and secondary aggregates will be considered in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework.
- 11.19 An increase in the use of recycled and secondary aggregates should enable a reduction in the amount of aggregate minerals that need to be extracted and will reduce the quantity of waste materials that are disposed at landfill sites. This will both help conserve valuable mineral resources and reduce the overall environmental impact of mineral working and waste disposal.

### **Transport of minerals**

- 11.20 Under policy T4 the County Council encourages the use of rail, waterways, pipelines, or other non-road means for transporting minerals. Transporting minerals other than on public roads can have advantages in reducing the environmental impact of mineral supply. Rail is an effective way of moving minerals in bulk and can be particularly economic where aggregates are moved long distances from source to market. This reduces long distance lorry traffic. At a more local level, conveyor belts are often used to carry minerals from the working to the processing plant, and haul routes can avoid the need to use public roads and to pass through villages.
- 11.21 The Government's guidelines for aggregates provision envisage that a significant proportion of the South East's requirement for aggregates will be imported from other regions. Hard rock, such as hard limestone and granite, does not occur in the region, which is therefore reliant on imports to meet needs for which this type of material is required. Crushed hard rock is imported into Oxfordshire for use as roadstone and rail ballast.



- 11.22 There are currently four rail depots for the import of minerals into the county although not all are in use. The County Council supports the continued use of rail depots for the import of minerals into Oxfordshire and will grant permission for further depots in appropriate locations under policy T4. Appropriate locations for rail depots will have good access to the major road network and will not have unacceptable local environmental effects. More detailed policies for rail depots are included in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and will be reviewed in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework.
- 11.23 In most cases, minerals worked in Oxfordshire, and minerals delivered by rail into the county, will be transported to their markets by lorry. It is important that minerals traffic should use roads that are suitable for large vehicles and, so far as possible, avoid passing through villages. Under policy T8 the County Council will only permit mineral development where satisfactory access can be provided and suitable routeing between the production site and the main road network can be ensured. Before granting permission the County Council will seek to agree the appropriate routes that mineral traffic will take between the production site and the main road network. The need for more detailed policy on transport of minerals will be considered in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework.

### **Mineral safeguarding**

**M3 Mineral resources of potential economic importance will be safeguarded for possible future use. Development that would prevent or make significantly more difficult their possible future working will not be permitted.**

- 11.24 Minerals can only be worked where they occur. It is a Government objective that minerals should be conserved as far as possible and that the unnecessary sterilization of mineral resources should be prevented. Especially in the case of minerals in relatively short supply or where the number of locations for working is restricted by planning constraints, it is prudent that potentially workable mineral resources are not sterilized by built development. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan describes how this policy is implemented. This will be reviewed in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework.
- 11.25 Most mineral exploration is permitted development and does not require a specific planning permission. When permission is required and granted this does not prejudice any decision on an application to work the mineral. The need for policy on mineral exploration will be considered in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework.



## Old mineral workings

**M4 The County Council will seek to secure the environmental improvement of mineral working sites that are not being worked and restored, or that have not been restored, to modern standards.**

11.26 Some existing and old mineral workings are not being worked and restored, or have not been restored, to the standards that are expected today. The County Council will take advantage of opportunities that may arise to seek improvements, including in particular through the review of mineral planning permissions required by the Environment Act 1995<sup>44</sup>. In considering the imposition of updated planning conditions through applications for the review of mineral planning permissions, the Council will seek to achieve the objectives of relevant Structure Plan and Minerals and Waste Local Plan and Minerals and Waste Development Framework policies.

---

<sup>44</sup> The Environment Act 1995 provides for the periodic review and update of conditions on planning permissions for mineral working, although it does not provide powers to look again at sites that have already been restored, and it is not possible to refuse applications for the review of mineral planning permissions.



## 12. Waste management

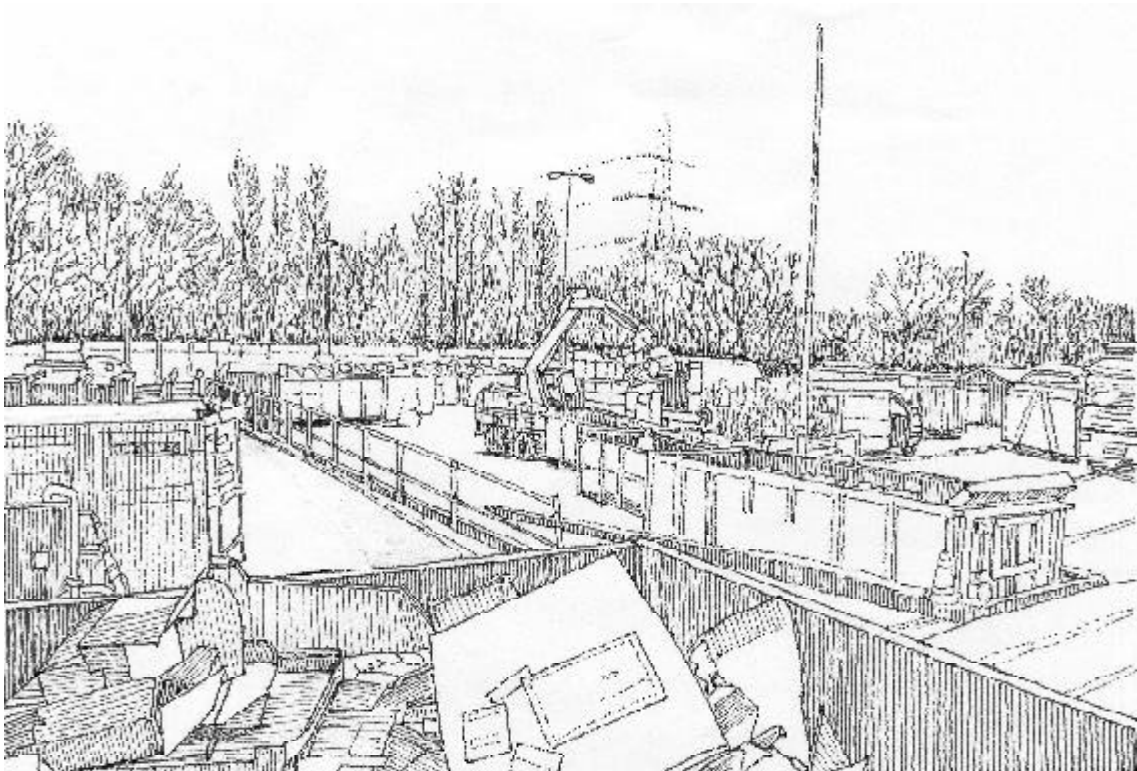
- 12.1 Oxfordshire residents, businesses and public organisations produce approximately 1.6 million tonnes of waste a year, mainly comprising municipal, commercial and industrial, and construction and demolition wastes, with smaller quantities of hazardous wastes. This waste all has to be treated and/or disposed of somewhere. At present the main method of management is disposal at local landfill sites. In addition, Oxfordshire has for many years received waste from London, which at present does not have sufficient facilities to deal with its own waste.
- 12.2 Generation, treatment and disposal of waste on the current scale is not environmentally sustainable. To move towards a more sustainable approach to waste management will require substantial changes, many of which are outside the scope of land use planning.
- 12.3 Since the adoption of the last Structure Plan there has been a considerable amount of new legislation and Government guidance, and a Regional Waste Management Strategy for the South East is being developed. A draft Regional Waste Management Strategy was published for consultation in March 2004<sup>45</sup>. This strategy was the subject of an Examination in Public in October 2004 and the subsequent report of the Panel (December 2004) has recommended some changes. The decision of the Secretary of State on the Regional Waste Management Strategy is expected by the end of 2005.
- 12.4 The Government's Waste Strategy 2000<sup>46</sup> states that waste management decisions should involve choosing the best practicable environmental option (BPEO) in each case. In this way decisions will be taken which minimise damage to the environment as a whole, at an acceptable cost, in both the long and short term. In determining the BPEO the following principles should be taken into account:
- the waste hierarchy: reduction (minimisation); re-use; recovery (recycling, composting, energy recovery); disposal;
  - the proximity principle;
  - regional self-sufficiency.

In applying the waste hierarchy, incineration should not be considered before opportunities for recycling and composting have been explored. The proximity principle requires waste to be managed as close to the place of production as possible. Regional self sufficiency requires that each region provides facilities with sufficient capacity to manage the expected quantity of waste needed to be dealt with in that area for at least ten years.

<sup>45</sup> Proposed Alterations to Regional Planning Guidance, South East – Regional Waste Management Strategy, March 2004.

<sup>46</sup> Waste Strategy 2000 for England and Wales, DETR, 2000

- 12.5 Waste Strategy 2000 sets national targets for the reduction of biodegradable waste sent to landfill over the period to 2020, as required by the EU Landfill Directive<sup>47</sup>. In addition, the Government has set national targets for a reduction in the amount of commercial and industrial waste sent to landfill by 2005, and for increased recovery of value from municipal waste and recycling or composting of household waste over the period to 2015. The Government has also set statutory targets for recycling and composting for each local authority for 2005/06. These targets and the principles set out above, have been taken into account in the Draft Regional Waste Management Strategy.
- 12.6 The County Council and the five District Councils have together developed the Oxfordshire Joint Household Waste Management Strategy, which sets out policies for the management of household waste in Oxfordshire in order to comply with the Government's national waste strategy and associated targets.



## Reduction, re-use and recovery

- 12.7 Policy G6 encourages more efficient use of resources, reduction of waste, increased use of recycled construction materials and increased provision for recycling and composting through new development. However, reduction of waste at source is largely outside the scope of land use planning and relies on actions by individuals, industry and other agencies, including Government. The County Council is implementing waste reduction initiatives to encourage householders and others to reduce the quantities of waste they produce.

<sup>47</sup> Council Directive 99/3/EC on the Landfill of Waste, European Commission, 1999.



- 12.8 The County Council is also working to encourage further re-use and recovery of resources from waste, particularly through recycling and composting. The Joint Household Waste Management Strategy includes provision of an integrated management system for household waste that will achieve the Government's targets for Oxfordshire, which are to recycle or compost at least 33% of household waste by 2005/6.
- 12.9 The Draft Regional Waste Management Strategy, as recommended by the Examination in Public Panel, proposes challenging regional targets for recovery of resources from waste and diversion of waste from landfill, increasing to 79% by 2015. Within these recovery targets, recycling/composting targets are proposed to increase to 50% for municipal waste and construction and demolition waste, and to 55% for commercial and industrial waste. In addition to helping achieve more sustainable management of waste, there are potential business opportunities and economic benefits to be gained from increased recycling and recovery of resources from waste.
- 12.10 Energy can be recovered from non-inert wastes either through decomposition (gas generated by anaerobic bio-processes in purpose built facilities) or by incineration. Waste-to-energy schemes can have the double benefit of providing energy and reducing the amount of waste which has to be disposed of by landfill. Sewage treatment works may be able to play a significant part in the treatment of biodegradable wastes to provide energy. Energy can also be recovered through the collection of landfill gas (primarily methane) at sites where biodegradable waste is or has been tipped. This also has the benefit of reducing the amount of landfill gas (a greenhouse gas) emitted into the atmosphere. There are generating plants fuelled by landfill gas at the Ardley and Sutton Courtenay landfill sites. Recovery of energy from waste can make a contribution towards meeting targets for renewable energy generation (see Chapter 10), but decisions on waste management options should be based primarily on consideration of the BPEO, the waste hierarchy and the proximity principle.

## **Making provision for waste management**

- 12.11 RPG9 requires that waste planning authorities aim to make provision for a sufficient range and number of facilities for the re-use, recovery and disposal of waste that will need to be managed within their areas, and a similar policy is proposed in the Draft Regional Waste Management Strategy. This policy is based on the 1997 SERPLAN guidance on waste planning<sup>48</sup> which also advised that counties should make an appropriate contribution to regional needs, in particular waste exported from London. This is reflected in RPG9 which says it is unlikely London will achieve self-sufficiency in the short term and disposal to landfill sites outside the capital will continue to play an important role, but that London should make provision to meet its needs so there is a progressive reduction in the amount of untreated wastes exported to the adjoining regions for disposal.

<sup>48</sup> SERP 160. A Sustainable Waste Planning Strategy for the South East. SERPLAN 1997.

- 12.12 The Draft Regional Waste Management Strategy, as recommended by the Examination in Public Panel, says provision for London's exports should usually be limited to landfill in line with the Landfill Directive targets, with new provision being made only for residues of waste from recycling or other recovery processes by 2016. Waste planning authorities should make provision for appropriate capacity for waste from London to be landfilled, but the capacities required are not specified at the sub-regional level. Rail and water transport are strongly favoured for longer distance bulk movements of waste materials, particularly for waste imported from London.

**WM1 Provision will be made for the treatment and/or disposal of a quantity of waste equivalent to the total quantity of waste produced in Oxfordshire, except for that waste which requires management at specialised sub-regional, regional or national facilities. Provision will also be made for the reception and treatment and/or disposal of waste from London, provided it is consistent with regional policy and the waste is transported by rail or water for the principal component of its journey.**

- 12.13 Policy WM1 allows for cross-county boundary movements of waste where this accords with the proximity principle, but seeks to ensure Oxfordshire does not become a net importer of waste from elsewhere in the South East or from other regions except London. London is an exception because the current shortage of waste management capacity there necessitates continued but declining reliance on adjoining regions for disposal of untreated waste in the short term, whilst waste treatment capacity is developed in London, and of residues from treatment processes in the longer term. Provision of facilities in Oxfordshire for treatment of waste from London will usually only be appropriate where this would help the development of more sustainable waste management methods for dealing with Oxfordshire's waste.
- 12.14 The provision required in Oxfordshire for waste treatment and disposal, including for waste imported from London, will be established in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework, which will replace the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (see paragraph 11.2). It is considered that there is no need for additional landfill capacity in Oxfordshire at present, but this will be kept under review. Oxfordshire's share of provision for London can be accommodated within the existing permitted Sutton Courtenay landfill site which is served by rail.

## Waste management facilities

**WM2 Permission will be granted for waste management facilities (for re-use, recycling, composting, resource recovery, treatment, transfer, and landfill) to ensure sufficient capacity for the management of that waste which needs to be managed within Oxfordshire, having due regard to the principle of best practicable environmental option, including the waste hierarchy and the proximity principle. Proposals which move waste management up the hierarchy will be encouraged. Permission will only be granted for landfill required for the disposal of waste which remains after reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery policies have been applied.**



12.15 Guidance is given in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan on where waste recycling facilities will be permitted. This will be reviewed in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework, which will consider the need for detailed locational guidance for other types of waste treatment facilities, and whether appropriate sites for waste management development should be identified. In accordance with the proximity principle, waste management facilities should be located close to the main locations where waste is produced. In considering where waste management facilities should be located, the County Council will take account of other relevant policies of this Structure Plan, including in particular the general policies for development (chapter 3), policies on transport (chapter 4) and policies on protecting and enhancing the environment (chapter 5). Policy G4 sets out policy on development in the Green Belt. Recycling and other waste treatment facilities will usually be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which will only be permitted in very special circumstances. Such exceptional cases will be treated as departures from the development plan. Special circumstances may be demonstrated where there is a need for the waste facility, the proposed location is consistent with the proximity principle, there is no suitable alternative site and any adverse environmental impact can be satisfactorily mitigated.

12.16 Even if waste reduction, recycling and recovery policies are fully successful, there will still be residual waste which has to be finally disposed of. For the immediate future at least, landfill is expected to remain the main means for managing Oxfordshire's waste. However, landfill comes at the bottom of the waste hierarchy and, in the light of the Landfill Directive targets for reduction in landfilling of waste, landfill provision will be made only as a last resort. In any case, the provision of further landfill capacity is likely to become more difficult to achieve in the future as the locations where waste, particularly non-inert waste, can be accepted is increasingly restricted by constraints such as the need to protect groundwater. Also, the amount of inert waste needing disposal by landfill is expected to decrease as the recycling of construction and demolition waste increases.

**WM3 Permission for landfill (including land raising) will be granted only where it is required for the restoration of active or unrestored mineral workings to appropriate after-uses or where there would be an overall environmental benefit.**

12.17 As part of the move to making better use of waste and seeing it as a resource, where the disposal of waste by landfill is necessary this should be used in a beneficial way. Therefore, landfill should be used only for the restoration of mineral workings or where the tipping of waste on land would enable an overall environmental benefit to be achieved. In view of the lack of need for additional landfill capacity, it is considered that landraising will not generally be necessary. Developments such as screening bunds, landscaping features, golf courses and country parks which involve a significant element of deposition of waste materials above original ground levels will be considered against policy WM3 and as such are likely to be opposed by the County Council unless there would be an overall environmental benefit.



- 12.18 The provision of borrow tips for the disposal of waste material from nearby major construction projects can reduce the environmental impact caused by transporting large volumes of materials to a single site over a short period. However, borrow tips will only be permitted where the waste material cannot be re-used or recycled and the disposal of waste at the borrow tip would have less environmental and traffic impact than if the material was disposed at existing permitted landfill sites. In addition, the tipping should normally either improve the agricultural quality of the land, enhance landscaping or enable the restoration of a borrow pit excavated to provide materials for the construction project.



# 13. Monitoring progress

## Introduction

- 13.1 This section sets out the monitoring mechanisms which will be used to establish how Oxfordshire's progress compares with the objectives of the Structure Plan. There are many delivery mechanisms and factors which affect the Structure Plan objectives and many of these are not directly influenced by the planning system. In addition, the objectives and policies in the Structure Plan are implemented by a variety of organisations, including national Government, the Highways Agency, utilities, local strategic partnerships, the County Council, local authorities and developers. However, by tracking progress using indicators, the County Council will aim to monitor whether the policies are achieving their objectives and delivering sustainable development, whether the policies are having any unintended consequences, whether the assumptions and objectives behind the policies are still relevant and whether targets are being achieved<sup>49</sup>.
- 13.2 A further aim of this monitoring chapter is to provide feedback to inform future policy making and the production of annual monitoring reports within the new system of regional and local plans. Under the new arrangements County Councils are responsible for keeping under review key social, economic and environmental characteristics of their areas. The County Council is working to develop its monitoring systems and evidence base in response to changes in the planning system including the shift to statutory plans at regional and local level and the emphasis on spatial planning which is concerned with wider social, environmental and economic objectives. The monitoring of Structure Plan objectives that is set out in this chapter therefore forms part of a broader monitoring effort. The County Council expects to revise and update its monitoring to reflect changing circumstances.
- 13.3 Table 13.1 lists the indicators which the County Council will monitor for each objective in the Structure Plan and shows which policies in the Plan relate to each indicator. The indicators correspond to indicators that are monitored at the regional level so as to be consistent and to enable comparison with the rest of the South East region. These indicators are all of strategic importance for Oxfordshire, can be monitored using current data, and in many cases provide information that is relevant across a range of policy areas. Some targets are explicitly stated in this Structure Plan. The County Council will report on progress towards these targets. For those indicators which do not relate to an explicitly stated target, the County Council will monitor baseline data and report on trends in order to inform future strategies.

<sup>49</sup> 'Planning – Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide', ODPM, 2005.



**Aim 1: To protect and enhance the environment and character of Oxfordshire**

		Structure Plan Objective	Indicators	Related policies
Biodiversity	1(i)	To provide effective protection and enhancement for Oxfordshire's biodiversity .....	Change in priority habitats and species (by type).  Number of nationally and internationally importance geological remains disturbed by development.	EN2.  EN6, M2.
Landscape		..... landscape.	Number and type of permissions in AONBs, including mineral working.	M2.
Heritage		..... and heritage.	Number of buildings of Grade I and II at risk of decay.	EN4, EN5.
Green Belt			Land area (hectares) or green belt.	G4.
Pollution	1(ii)	To reduce pollution and emissions of greenhouse gases.	Million vehicle km per day.	G1, G2, T1, T3, T5.
Water quality	1(iii)	To maintain and improve the quality of surface and groundwater.	Rivers of Good or Fair chemical and biological water quality.	G1, EN8, EN10.
Soil and agricultural land	1(iv)	To protect the quality of soils and agricultural land.	Major planned development planned on agricultural land grade 1 and 2 in LDFs and local plans.	G5, EN3.


**Aim 2: To encourage the efficient use of land, energy and natural resources**

		Structure Plan Objective	Indicators	Related policies
Access	2(i)	To locate development where it can reduce the need to travel and encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.	Access to work and hospitals.	G1, G2, T1, E1, T3, T5.
Previously developed land	2(ii)	To minimise the use of greenfield land.	Percentage of new and converted dwellings on previously developed land.	G1, G2, E2, H1, H3, TC2.
Relative location	2(iii)	To encourage the location and design and development which makes efficient use of energy and resources, and minimises waste for disposal.	Bus patronage: million bus journeys per year.	G1, G2, H1, TC1, TC2, T8.
Density			Percentage of new dwellings completed at: (i) less than 30 dwellings per hectare; (ii) between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare; and (iii) above 50 dwellings per hectare.	H1, H3.
Energy			Energy consumption per capita. Million vehicle kilometres per day.  Renewable energy capacity installed by type.	EG3. G1, G2, H1, TC1, TC2, T1, T3, T5. EG1, EG2, EG3, G6.
Water			Water consumption per capita.	EN10, EN11.
Waste			Amount of municipal waste arising, and managed by management type, and the percentage each management type represents of the waste managed.	G6.
Minerals			Production of primary aggregates. Production of secondary/recycled aggregates. Minerals landbank (million tonnes) per year.	M1, M3. M1. M1, M4.



**Aim 3: To support progress towards a better quality of life for all Oxfordshire's people**

		Structure Plan Objective	Indicators	Related policies
Housing	3(i)	To provide for sufficient new dwellings to meet the requirements of Regional Planning Guidance, of an appropriate size and type for Oxfordshire's residents, and to contribute to meeting affordable housing need.	Net additional dwellings completed over the previous five year period or since the start of the relevant development plan document period, whichever is the longer. Net additional dwellings completed for the current year. Net additional dwellings planned or committed in LDFs and Local Plans and planning permissions. Affordable housing completions.	H1.
Size and type			Number of dwellings by type and size.	H4.
Access	3(ii)	To support communities in which people have access to jobs, services, community and leisure facilities.	Access to work and hospitals	G1, G2, E1, T1, T3, T5.
Travel Options	3(iii)	To provide for a range of travel options to meet transport needs.	Bus service satisfaction  Bus patronage: million bus journeys per year.	G1, G2, H1, TC1, TC2, T1, T2, T3, T4. G1, G2, H1, TC1, TC2, T1, T2, T3, T4.
Safe and attractive places	3(iv)	To provide safe and attractive places to live and work.	Percentage of people who are satisfied with their local area.	
Flood risk			Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality.	EN8


















**Aim 4: To sustain prosperity by supporting sustainable and appropriate economic development**

		Structure Plan Objective	Indicators	Related policies
Economic development	4(i)	To support the continued development of Oxfordshire's existing and emerging growth sectors and clusters.	Gross Value Added £ per capita (by business sector).  Average annual increase in GVA per worker for knowledge based sectors. Employment in key clusters.	E1, E3, E4, E5.  E1. E1, E3, E4, E5.
Tourism			Volume and value of tourism activity (by district).	E4.
Skills			Proportion of adults with NVQ level 3 or equivalent.	E1.
Employment			Proportion of people of working age in employment.	E1, E6.
Business development	4(ii)	To provide for development to meet the economic needs of the county's residents and local businesses.	Amount of land developed for employment by type (use class B1, B2, B8). Percentage of land developed for employment which is previously developed. Employment land supply (allocations and permissions) by type. Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development respectively.	E1, E2, E3. E1, E2, E3. E1, E2, E3. TC1.
Economic prosperity/ regeneration	4(ii)	To support the diversification of the rural economy in Oxfordshire.	Permissions for small scale premises for farm of rural deversification.	E3.

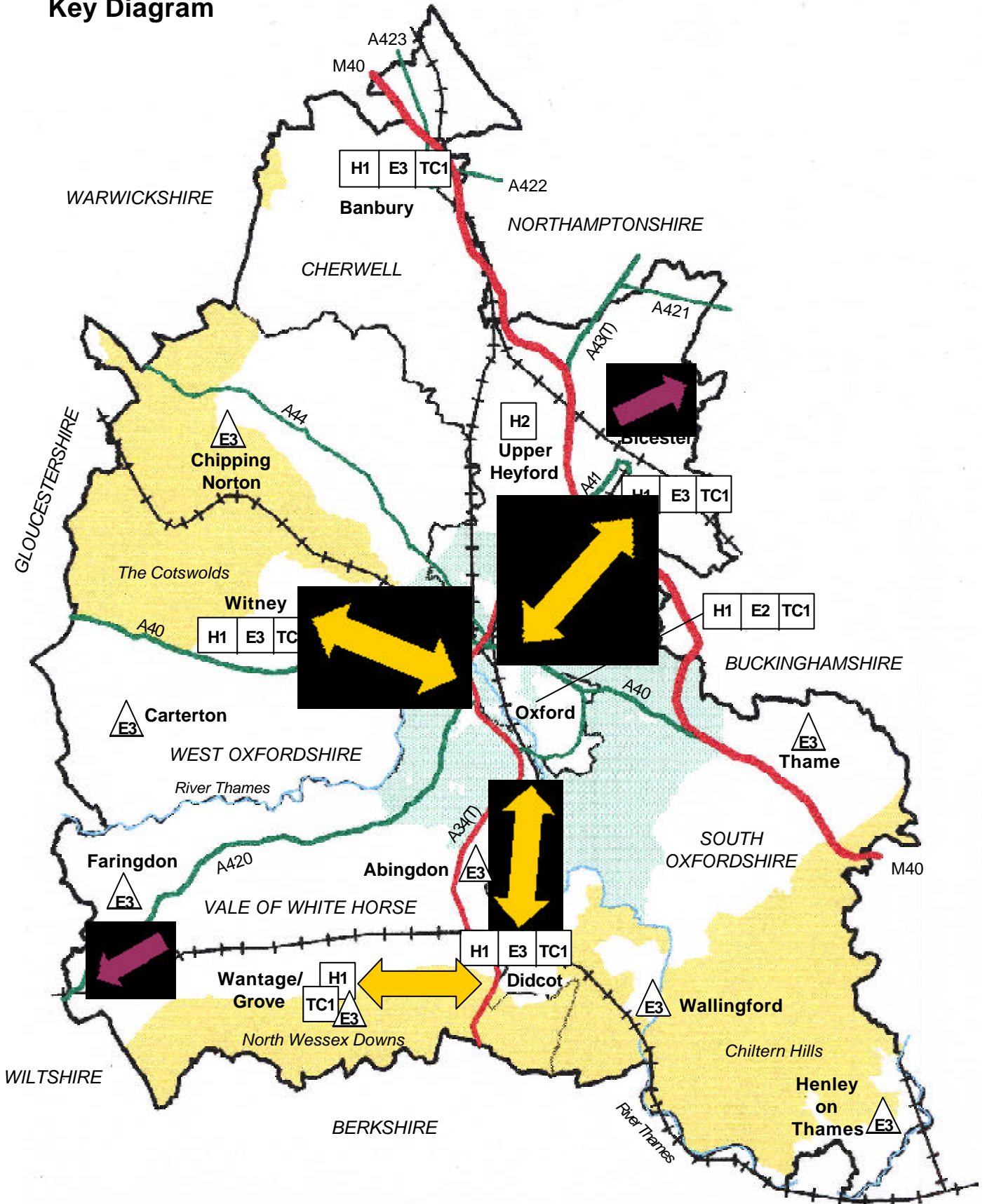


## Key

-  Oxford Green Belt (Policy G4)
-  Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Policy EN1)
-  Principal Transport Corridor (Policy T6)
-  Main Railways (Policies T3, T4 and T6)
-  East West (Swindon-Oxford-Bedford) rail project (Policy T6)
-  Trunk Routes (Policy T6)
-  National Primary Routes
-  River Thames (Policy R3)
-  H1 Principal locations for housing development (Policy H1)
-  H2 Upper Heyford (Policy H2)
-  E2 Provision for employment generating development in Oxford (Policy E2)
-  E3 Principal locations for employment generating development (Policy E3)
-  E3 Locations for limited employment generating development (Policy E3)
-  TC1 Principal locations for town centre development (Policy TC1)
-  District boundaries



### Key Diagram







# Appendices





# Appendix 1

# List of policies

## General policies for development

- G1** The general strategy is to provide a framework for development to sustain economic prosperity, meet housing and other requirements and guide the investment decisions of a range of organisations for the period to 2016 in ways which will:
- a) deliver the level of development required to meet the objectives of this Plan while protecting and enhancing the environment, character and natural resources of the county;
  - b) concentrate development in locations where;
    - i. a reasonable range of services and community facilities exist or can be provided; and
    - ii. the need to travel, particularly by private car, can be reduced and walking, cycling and the use of public transport can be encouraged;
  - c) make the best use of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas to reduce the need for the development of greenfield sites, while not permitting development on important open spaces.

The larger urban areas will be the main focus for development.

In smaller towns and villages development will be of an appropriate scale and type to meet the social and economic needs of local communities.

## Improving the quality and design of development

- G2** All development should:
- a) be of a scale and type appropriate to the site and its surroundings, and not cause harm to the character and amenities of the area;
  - b) incorporate a high quality of layout, design and landscaping; and
  - c) be designed so as to reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of walking, cycling and public transport and telecommunications as alternatives to the car.

Development which would have an unacceptable impact on the environment because of its nature, scale, location or cumulative effects will not be permitted.



### **Infrastructure and service provision**

**G3** Proposals for development will not be permitted unless the planning authorities are satisfied that necessary infrastructure, on- or off-site transport measures, recreation, leisure, educational, health and community facilities, services and environmental improvements are available, or will be provided. Where appropriate phasing will be used to coordinate development with the provision of infrastructure.

In determining infrastructure and other requirements the local planning authorities will take into account the cumulative impacts of development.

Contributions will be sought from developers and/or landowners in accordance with Government advice.

The provision of recreation, leisure, educational, health and community facilities will be encouraged in settlements where there are deficiencies.

### **Green Belt**

**G4** A Green Belt will be maintained around Oxford, to:

- a) preserve the special character and landscape setting of Oxford;
- b) check the growth of Oxford and prevent ribbon development and urban sprawl;
- c) prevent the coalescence of settlements;
- d) assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- e) assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Development in the Green Belt will only be permitted if it maintains its openness and does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt or harm its visual amenities.

### **Development outside settlements**

**G5** The countryside will be protected from harmful development.

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

### **Energy and resource conservation**

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

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



## Transport

### Sustainable travel

- T1 Transport measures and development proposals should give emphasis to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and balance these against ease of traffic movement, thereby improving travel choice and reducing dependence on private motorised travel. Suitable provision should be made for servicing, for the needs of disabled people and for promotion of safety.

### Car parking

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

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

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

### Public transport

- T3 Increased use of public transport will be sought through the encouragement and promotion of convenient, reliable, secure and high standard public transport services and through improved integration between different modes of transport and improved interchange facilities.

### Freight

- T4 The carriage of freight by rail, pipeline or other means rather than road will be encouraged. The impact of freight operations on people and the environment will be reduced through partnership arrangements between the County Council and operators.

Freight distribution centres will be permitted only if located with good access to the freight networks and in or adjoining a major settlement.

### Networks for pedestrians and cyclists

- T5 Networks of routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be promoted and developed particularly within and linking to urban areas, so as to improve access to facilities and widen travel choice.

Local plans will define comprehensive pedestrian and cycle routes and will promote improvements.



## Networks for motorised travel

**T6** The County Council will promote and support a comprehensive strategy for the safe and convenient carriage of people and freight by road, rail or special track.

The County Council in partnership with transport infrastructure providers, the operators of public transport services and other agencies will in particular promote the development and management of the following principal transport hubs, corridors and projects related to the Plan's overall development strategy and its regional context, to meet both strategic and key local movement requirements:

- transport measures in and around the City of Oxford to support its role as a regional transport hub;
- the corridor between Oxford and Bicester;
- the corridor between Oxford and Witney;
- the corridor between Oxford and Didcot;
- the corridor between Grove/Wantage and Didcot; and
- the development within the county of the East-West rail link.

The principal transport corridors, the rail and trunk route networks and other projects referred to are defined in the Key Diagram.

The Local Transport Plan will:

- identify the manner in which the road and rail network and the operation of the premium bus network and other key public transport services will combine to provide an enhanced quality of travel to support the spatial development strategy of the Structure Plan;
- assign roads in the county together with any special track to a hierarchy of networks supporting the spatial strategy of this Plan and identify their function at each level of the hierarchy;
- identify network improvement schemes; and
- identify the potential for integration between networks both for people and freight.

Development proposals that would have a significant adverse affect on the safe and efficient function of a network will not be permitted.

Land required for network development or improvement schemes will be safeguarded in the local plans/local development frameworks.

## Service areas

**T7** The frequency of service areas on the major highway network will be limited. New service areas or extensions will be permitted only if they are of a high standard and where there is a transport need for improved roadside services.

## Development proposals

**T8** Proposals for development should be permitted only if they provide adequate access and mitigation of adverse transport impacts.



## Protecting and enhancing the environment

### Landscape character

**EN1** Local planning authorities will ensure that proposals for development contribute to the protection, maintenance and, where possible, enhancement of Oxfordshire's landscape character, and in particular the natural beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to reflect their national importance. Development will be permitted only if it does not unacceptably damage the local landscape.

### Biodiversity

**EN2** The following sites of at least national importance will be protected from damaging development:

- Special Areas of Conservation;
- National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest; and
- sites which support specially protected species.

On other sites of acknowledged nature conservation importance development will be permitted only if there is an overriding need or if damage to the ecological interest can be prevented by the use of conditions or planning obligations.

In determining proposals for development local planning authorities will seek environmental measures and promote the use of conditions and management agreements to help protect, manage and expand the biodiversity resource of the county, in particular priority habitats and species.

### Agricultural land quality and soil

**EN3** Development of the best and most versatile agricultural land shall have regard to the quality and productiveness of such land alongside other sustainability considerations. Where significant development of agricultural land is unavoidable, areas of poorer quality land shall be used in preference to that of a higher quality, except where this would be inconsistent with other sustainability considerations. Where undeveloped agricultural land is to be developed, any adverse effects on the environment shall be minimised.

### Historic and cultural heritage

**EN4** The fabric and setting of listed buildings including Blenheim Palace and Park, a World Heritage Site, will be preserved and the character or appearance of conservation areas and their settings will be preserved or enhanced. Other elements of the historic environment, including historic parks and gardens, battlefields and historic landscapes will also be protected from harmful development.

**EN5** The conservation of Oxford's architectural and historic heritage, including its green spaces and its landscape setting, will take priority in considering proposals for development in and around the city.



## Archaeology

**EN6** There will be a presumption in favour of preserving in situ nationally and internationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings. Development affecting other archaeological remains should include measures to secure their preservation in situ or where this is not feasible, their recording or removal to another site.

## Geology

**EN7** Nationally and regionally important geological features including geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Regionally Important Geological Sites shall be protected from harmful development and retained in situ unless there are exceptional reasons justifying their removal, in which event their presence shall be appropriately recorded.

## Water quality

**EN8** Development that will lead to unacceptable deterioration in water quality will not be permitted.

## Flood risk and surface water drainage

**EN9** Development in undeveloped areas at high risk from flooding or in the functional floodplain will not be permitted. A flood risk assessment will be required for proposals for development except where there is little or no flood risk. Proposals for redevelopment of existing buildings and their curtilage within areas of high flood risk should aim to improve conditions locally and not worsen flood risk elsewhere.

New development should not lead to an increase in run-off, which would exacerbate flood risk elsewhere. The use of sustainable drainage systems to regulate run-off will be required as part of development proposals.

## Water resources and waste water infrastructure

**EN10** Development will be permitted only where adequate water resources and waste water infrastructure for the development already exist or can readily be provided without risk to existing abstractions, water quality, the water environment or nature conservation.

**EN11** Proposals for major new reservoirs in Oxfordshire will be permitted only if there is a proven need for increased water resources which cannot be met in more economical and environmentally less intrusive ways, and all reasonable measures to manage demand for water, including controlling loss through water leakage, have been taken.



## Developing the local economy

### Provision for employment development

**E1** Development for employment purposes should be located so as to meet the objectives and priorities of this Plan. In particular it should:

- provide for the requirements of activities which contribute to the regional and local priorities for economic development. This includes providing a range of accommodation for small businesses and innovation, skills development, business infrastructure and linkages within the knowledge based economy;
- be located mainly in or adjoining urban areas or in existing concentrations of employment with good accessibility from residential areas, particularly by non-car modes of transport;
- as far as practicable incorporate measures to encourage shorter journeys to work and travel on foot, by cycle or public transport;
- not be of a scale or character that gives rise to large increases in commuting in the area or low intensity uses of land which generate heavy traffic on local roads.

Priority should be given to development which supports educational, scientific and technological sectors and responds to the needs of established and emerging clusters within the county.

### Oxford City

**E2** In Oxford, development for employment uses will be expected to take place primarily on previously developed land or in conjunction with redevelopment schemes for mixed uses incorporating housing, town centre or other facilities. Development should have regard to the priorities set out in Policy E1 and to the objective of providing a range of accommodation for businesses in Oxford and contributing to the diversity of local employment opportunities, while maintaining or improving the balance between jobs and resident workforce in the city.

Where employment use of a site ceases, its future use should be assessed in the light of the above considerations, its suitability for alternative uses and whether there is a realistic prospect of it being re-used for employment purposes.



### **Employment land provision in towns**

- E3** In the main towns of Banbury, Bicester, Didcot and Witney the provision of land for employment will be made:
- a) to achieve an appropriate balance between the number and type of jobs and the size and skills of the local workforce; and
  - b) to provide for the expansion and relocation of existing local firms and to accommodate firms which need to be located in the area, including provision to support the development of science based industries or other important business clusters.

A limited amount of land for employment will be made available in Abingdon, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Faringdon, Henley, Thame, Wallingford, Wantage and Grove. In deciding on the amount of employment land available in the above towns, weight shall be given to the content of action plans that have been carried out following health checks and other processes. Where such plans show the need for additional land to maintain the vibrancy of market towns, then additional employment land shall be released.

Elsewhere the provision of land for employment generating uses will be restrained and limited to activities that do not give rise to excessive or inappropriate traffic.

### **Small firms and local employment diversity**

- E4** Proposals for small scale premises (up to about 500 square metres) including proposals that encourage farm or rural diversification will normally be permitted in appropriate locations.

### **Tourism and culture**

- E5** Tourism projects which are based on the conservation and enjoyment of the county's inherent qualities and heritage will be encouraged in appropriate locations, particularly where the proposed development is accessible by foot, cycling or public transport.

### **Employment and housing**

- E6** In considering proposals for employment generating development which would generate a demand for housing, account will be taken of the existing or planned housing provision.



## Housing

### The amount and distribution of housing

H1 Provision will be made for about 37,300 additional dwellings (net) between 1 April 2001 and 31 March 2016. The provision will be distributed as follows:

	2001 - 2016
Cherwell	9,350
Oxford	6,500
South Oxfordshire	7,500
Vale of White Horse	7,150
West Oxfordshire	6,800
Total	37,300

The main locations for new housing will be within Oxford (about 6,500 dwellings), Banbury (about 3,700 dwellings), Bicester (about 3,300 dwellings), Didcot (about 4,500 dwellings), Witney (about 3,000 dwellings), and Grove (about 2,100 dwellings).

Elsewhere, most development should take place in larger settlements where a reasonable range of employment, services and community facilities exist, are planned or can be provided at reasonable cost. Significant additional housing development, including inappropriate infill, should be avoided where this is likely to result largely in commuting by car to urban centres and where travel needs are unlikely to be well served by public transport. In small settlements and villages housing development will be limited to that required to meet local needs and support balanced communities in villages.

Local planning authorities should seek to maximise the proportion of new dwellings built on previously developed land in accordance with national and regional guidance, while maintaining total housing delivery at the levels required to fulfil the provision set out above.

Where appropriate, phasing will be used and the release of large sites managed so that priority is given to the development of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas, and land is released gradually throughout the plan period, and to ensure the provision of necessary supporting infrastructure, services and facilities and other improvements.



## Upper Heyford

- H2
- a) Land at RAF Upper Heyford will provide for a new settlement of a maximum of about 1000 dwellings and necessary supporting infrastructure, including a primary school and appropriate community, recreational and employment opportunities, as a means of enabling environmental improvements and the heritage interest of the site as a military base with Cold War associations to be conserved, compatible with achieving a satisfactory living environment.
  - b) Proposals for development must reflect a revised comprehensive planning brief adopted by the district council and demonstrate that the conservation of heritage resources, landscape, restoration, enhancement of biodiversity and other environmental improvements will be achieved across the whole of the former air base in association with the provision of the new settlement.
  - c) The new settlement should be designed to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport rather than travel by private car. Improvements to bus and rail facilities and measures to minimise the impact of traffic generated by the development on the surrounding road network will be required.

## Design, quality and density of housing development

- H3
- Housing development should be at a density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. Higher densities will be sought on sites within urban areas, close to town centres or where there is a good range of existing or planned services and facilities. Densities of at least 50 dwellings per hectare will be required in locations which are or can be well served by public transport. New housing development should:
- a) be designed to a high quality, taking into account the character of the site and surroundings; and
  - b) include a variety of dwelling types and sizes to help create balanced communities and to meet the needs of all sections of the community, including small households.

Major urban extensions should be planned as mixed communities and should provide the services and facilities needed to support them and create safe and attractive places to live.

## Affordable housing

- H4
- Provision shall be made in local plans or development frameworks and through the determination of applications for planning permission, for affordable housing including housing for key workers, at a level commensurate with the identified need for such housing in each District. The amount and size of site where provision will be sought will be determined by local planning authorities based on assessments of local need. Provision will normally be made on site and be subject to permanent and enforceable arrangements to ensure the benefits will be passed on to subsequent occupiers.



## Town centres

### The principal locations for development

**TC1** Development in Oxford city centre will be permitted where it maintains and enhances the sub-regional role and diversity of the centre.

Apart from Oxford city centre, the other main locations for the development of retail and other facilities will be the town centres of Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Witney and Wantage.

Development in other town and district centres will be encouraged to sustain and enhance their vitality and viability.

### Maintaining and enhancing centres

**TC2** Major new development should be located on city or town centre sites. If there are no suitable town centre sites then edge-of-centre, followed by out-of-centre sites will be considered where the need for the development can be demonstrated, where there are no alternatives and the development would not harm the viability of existing centres or local shops.

Proposals should sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of centres by:

- (a) extending the range and quality of shops and other central facilities;
- (b) improving the environment, character and quality of a centre;
- (c) encouraging diversity of uses, including residential accommodation; and
- (d) improving accessibility.

## Recreation and leisure

### Countryside recreation

**R1** The local planning authorities will encourage optimum use to be made of existing countryside recreation facilities and resources. Opportunities to create new outdoor facilities which are appropriate in scale and sensitive to a rural location will be supported.

### Access to the countryside and rights of way network

**R2** The local planning authorities will seek to increase and improve access to the countryside.

The existing network of public rights of way, including routes in the towns, will be maintained and improved. Development which would damage the rights of way network will be resisted.

### The River Thames

**R3** The character and environment of the River Thames and its immediate valley will be protected and where appropriate enhanced.

Proposals for development which will adversely affect the character of the river and its setting will not be permitted. Development that would restrict public access alongside the river will not be permitted.



## Other waterways

**R4** The character and environment of the Oxford Canal will be protected and where appropriate enhanced.

The historic route of the Wilts and Berks Canal and appropriate alternative routes where this is not possible will be safeguarded with a view to its long-term re-establishment as a navigable waterway.

Proposals for development which will adversely affect the character or setting of these canal corridors will not be permitted.

## Energy

### Proposals for renewable energy development

**EG1** Proposals for renewable energy development will be encouraged to help meet Oxfordshire's contribution to regional targets, and to support the development of a more dispersed and locally based pattern of energy generation and use. Proposals will be permitted subject to consideration of their impact on the environment, local communities and traffic generation and their wider environmental and economic benefits. New renewable energy generating plant should be located as close to the energy source material as possible.

### Combined heat and power

**EG2** Wherever practical proposals for new energy generation plant should include combined heat and power or the recovery of waste heat for use in other processes. The use of combined heat and power in proposals for major development, including proposals for district heating, will be encouraged.

### New generating plant

**EG3** As far as legislation allows, proposals for new large conventional or other non-renewable power stations will be expected to demonstrate that alternatives to additional generating capacity, including investment in energy conservation measures, have been considered and that the proposal represents the best practicable environmental option.



## Minerals

**M1** Permission will be granted for mineral working at appropriate locations provided it can be demonstrated that any adverse environmental or other impact that the development would be likely to cause is outweighed by the need for the mineral, having regard to:

- a) the need to maintain landbanks of permitted reserves for aggregate minerals in line with national and regional guidance;
- b) the need to ensure a steady supply of mineral materials for local markets;
- c) the need to supply material for major construction projects from borrow pits; and
- d) national and regional needs for non-aggregate minerals.

Mineral working will not be permitted unless there are satisfactory provisions for the land to be progressively restored within a reasonable timescale to an acceptable use that is appropriate to its location. The County Council will seek to secure the restoration and long-term management of appropriate mineral working sites for nature conservation and public access.

**M2** Locations for sand and gravel working will be identified in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework. In identifying appropriate locations, the County Council will take account of the distribution of sand and gravel resources; the existing pattern of supply and distribution of workings; proximity to main market areas; accessibility to the main transport routes; risk of birdstrike; restoration and after use potential; and development plan policies, in particular which seek to safeguard:

- important archaeological remains, historic buildings and areas;
- areas and sites of nature conservation importance, especially Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- features of landscape importance, especially Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- best and most versatile agricultural land;
- the water environment;
- land uses which are sensitive to nuisance; and
- the safety and convenience of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.

### Mineral safeguarding

**M3** Mineral resources of potential economic importance will be safeguarded for possible future use. Development that would prevent or make significantly more difficult their possible future working will not be permitted.

### Old mineral workings

**M4** The County Council will seek to secure the environmental improvement of mineral working sites that are not being worked and restored, or that have not been restored, to modern standards.



## **Waste management**

**WM1** Provision will be made for the treatment and/or disposal of a quantity of waste equivalent to the total quantity of waste produced in Oxfordshire, except for that waste which requires management at specialised sub-regional, regional or national facilities. Provision will also be made for the reception and treatment and/or disposal of waste from London, provided it is consistent with regional policy and the waste is transported by rail or water for the principal component of its journey.

### **Waste management facilities**

**WM2** Permission will be granted for waste management facilities (for re-use, recycling, composting, resource recovery, treatment, transfer, and landfill) to ensure sufficient capacity for the management of that waste which needs to be managed within Oxfordshire, having due regard to the principle of best practicable environmental option, including the waste hierarchy and the proximity principle. Proposals which move waste management up the hierarchy will be encouraged. Permission will only be granted for landfill required for the disposal of waste which remains after reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery policies have been applied.

**WM3** Permission for landfill (including land raising) will be granted only where it is required for the restoration of active or unrestored mineral workings to appropriate after-uses or where there would be an overall environmental benefit.



## Appendix 2

## Glossary

### **Affordable housing**

Housing which meets the needs of people who cannot afford accommodation to rent or purchase on the open market which is suitable for their needs, including housing for rent, shared ownership or low cost market housing.

### **After-use**

The use of former mineral workings and landfill sites once they have been restored.

### **Aggregate**

Materials used in the construction industry for purposes such as concrete, mortar and roadstone.

### **Agricultural land classification**

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) classification of the relative productive value of soils for agricultural use. The highest grades are 1, 2 and 3a (known as best and most versatile agricultural land). Grades 3b, 4 and 5 are known as being of moderate or poor quality.

### **Anaerobic digestion (AD)**

Anaerobic digestion is a process which enables organic matter to be broken down by bacteria in the absence of air. The process produces a biogas which can be used in a furnace, gas engine or turbine or further refined for use in gas powered vehicles and CHP plants.

### **Apportionment**

The county's share of the original demand for aggregate to be met from sand and gravel extracted from the land.

### **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**

Areas of national importance designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, to protect the natural beauty of the landscape including the wildlife, archaeological and cultural heritage.

### **Best practical environmental option (BPEO)**

The outcome of a systematic and consultative decision making procedure which emphasises the protection and conservation of the environment across land, air and water. The BPEO establishes the option that provides the most benefits or the least damage to the environment as a whole, at acceptable cost, in the long term as well as the short term.

### **Biodiversity**

Biodiversity (biological diversity) is defined in PPG9 Nature Conservation as 'the sum total of life's variety on earth'.



### **Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)**

A strategy for conserving, restoring, enhancing and creating habitats of importance. BAPs can be prepared at country-wide level (e.g. the UK Biodiversity Action Plan), county level (e.g. Oxfordshire BAP) or for recognised areas (known as Local Biodiversity Action Plans, LBAPs).

### **Biomass**

Crops which are suitable to be burnt to produce energy. These include, wood from short rotation coppice and forestry waste.

### **Borrow pit**

Mineral working solely to provide materials for specific (large scale) construction projects and normally situated close to the project.

### **Brownfield site**

A brownfield or previously developed site is defined in PPG3 in summary as: ".....land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure." A full definition is contained in PPG3.

### **Bottlenecks**

Constrictions on the highways network at which traffic flow becomes congested on a regular basis.

### **Business clusters**

A geographic concentration of interconnected companies, specialised suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries and associated research and other institutions.

### **Circulars**

Statements issued by the Government setting out policy on a particular topic, for example: DETR, Circular – 6/98 Planning and Affordable Housing.

### **Climate Change Levy**

The Climate Change Levy came into effect on 1 April 2002 and is a tax on the use of energy in industry, commerce and the public sector. The aim of the levy is to encourage these sectors to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

### **CO<sub>2</sub>**

Carbon dioxide: a gas produced from the combustion of fuels containing carbon. It is one of the greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

### **Coalescence**

When existing towns or villages merge together and lose their individual identities.



## **Combined heat and power (CHP)**

When waste heat from power generation is distributed for district heating or where heating is intentionally produced as part of a local power generation scheme, so improving efficiency in use of energy and minimising waste.

## **Commitments**

Sites which already have planning permission or are allocated for development in local plans/local development frameworks.

## **Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW)**

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000 gives people greater freedom to explore the open countryside and gives greater protection of nature conservation, wildlife and the landscape.

## **Development**

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines development as 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land'.

## **Development briefs**

Documents produced by a local planning authority, a developer or jointly, that set out the planning principles for the development of a particular site or sites.

## **Development plans**

Statutory documents produced under Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which set out local planning authorities' adopted policies and proposals for the development and use of land within their area. The development plan in Oxfordshire consists of the county Structure Plan, local plans prepared by the district councils and the Mineral and Waste Local Plan prepared by the County Council. Development decisions must conform with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The current development plan for Oxfordshire will be replaced by the South East Plan (the regional spatial strategy for the south east which will provide the strategic planning framework for the region), local development frameworks prepared by each district authority and the minerals and waste development framework prepared by the County Council.

## **Environmental impact assessment**

Under the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988, scheduled developments are required to submit an environmental statement along with a planning application. This statement evaluates the likely environmental impacts of the development, together with an assessment of how the impacts should be mitigated.

## **Farm diversification**

A change from traditional agricultural activities to non-traditional (such as tourism and farm shops) in order to support an existing agricultural business.



### **Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)**

FWAG provides farmers and landowners with practical advice on making adjustments to farm operations and enhancing farm features in order to support wildlife, landscape, archaeology, access and other conservation issues.

### **Flood plain**

PPG25 Development and Flood Risk, describes flood plains as: “generally flat lying areas adjacent to a watercourse, tidal length of river or the sea where water flows in times of flood or would flow but for the presence of flood defences where they exist”. The functional flood plain consists of unobstructed areas where water regularly flows in times of flooding. A full definition is contained in PPG25.

### **Formal recreation**

Recreational facilities such as sports halls, playing fields and pitches, golf courses, etc.

### **Fossil fuels**

The carbon based fuels such as natural gas, coal and oil.

### **Green Belt**

A designated area around an urban area with the fundamental aim of preventing urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

### **Greenfield sites**

Land that has not been previously developed either inside or outside urban areas.

### **Greenhouse gases**

Gases such as carbon dioxide, CFCs and methane that are produced naturally and by man in industrial processes and particularly by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas. These gases cause the gradual increase in temperature of the earth's climate (known as global warming) by forming an insulating layer in the earth's atmosphere that traps the sun's heat.

### **Groundwater**

Water found in the soil pores, crevices in rocks etc.

### **Habitat Action Plan (HAP)**

A study which sets out the management strategy for the protection, enhancement and restoration of a specific habitat.



### **Home zones**

Home zones are streets where design measures are used to force traffic to move with greater care and at slower speeds. They can be applied to an existing street or built as part of a new development, known respectively as 'retrofit' and 'newbuild'. Their aim is to improve the quality of life for residents by taking away the dominance of cars over people. The Transport Act 2000 (section 268) contains the enabling legislation to introduce them.

### **Inert waste**

General excavation and demolition materials arising from building and construction. Inert waste does not undergo any significant physical, chemical or biological changes when deposited at a landfill site.

### **Informal recreation**

Recreation for amenity including walking, cycling, horse riding along public rights of way within the countryside.

### **Integrated transport and land use strategy**

A strategy that improves the relationship between linked land use activities and the transport system, so as to minimise the need for travel and distances travelled. It also aims to improve the scope to use less environmentally damaging forms of transport to reduce dependence on the private car.

### **Key workers**

Definitions of key workers are varied but are generally described as workers who are essential to the fabric of the local economy who cannot afford to purchase accommodation on the open market. They include professions such as teachers, nurses and police officers.

### **Landbank**

A stock of permitted mineral reserves sufficient to provide for continued extraction over a given time period.

### **Landfill**

The deposit of waste into land and, through restoration, to provide land which may be used for another purpose.

### **Land raising**

The raising of land by depositing material above existing or original ground levels.

### **Local needs assessment**

Documents produced by local authorities that assess the range of needs for different types and sizes of housing across all tenures in their areas. This should include affordable housing and housing to meet the needs of specific groups, e.g. the elderly, the disabled, students, young people and key workers.



### **Megawatt (MW)**

A measure of electrical power as generated by power stations: 1 MW = 1000 KW.

### **Mixed use developments**

Development which consists of a mix of uses including residential, retail and employment uses.

### **Minerals Planning Guidance Notes (MPGs)**

Documents issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister setting out Government policy guidance on mineral extraction and restoration. It is the Government's intention to review all its Minerals Planning Guidance Notes and in due course replace them with Minerals Policy Statements (MPSs).

### **Nation Nature Reserve (NNR)**

Sites of national nature conservation importance that are owned, leased or managed by agreement with English Nature and are designed for protection under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

### **Planning obligations**

Agreements or undertakings under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, specifying certain requirements of the development. For example, this may include financial contributions to improve community facilities and infrastructure and provide affordable housing to meet the extra demands made as a result of the development. Developers are expected to ensure that any necessary additional provision is made at no extra public cost.

### **Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)**

Documents issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister setting out the Government's policy guidance on different planning issues such as housing, employment, shopping and transport. It is the Government's intention to review all its Planning Policy Guidance Notes and in due course replace them with Planning Policy Statements (PPSs).

### **Precautionary principle**

When the environmental effects of development are not fully known, the precautionary principle entails avoiding potential harmful risks to the environment which may be irreversible.

### **Previously developed land and buildings**

See Brownfield site.

### **Primary aggregates**

Minerals used for aggregate, such as sand, gravel and crushed rock.

### **Priority systems**

Highways measures which are designed to give public transport priority over other traffic at congested junctions and stretches of road.



### **Proximity principle**

For example – the disposal of waste as close to the place of production as possible. This can also relate to other sources of supply such as minerals.

### **Recycling**

The recovery of re-usable materials from waste.

### **Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9)**

Document produced by the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) providing the regional framework for the preparation of local authority development plans. SEERA are currently in process of preparing the South East Plan (the regional spatial strategy for the south east) for submission to the Government. Once it is adopted by the Secretary of State it will replace RPG9.

### **Regional Transport Prioritisation Process**

A process used by SEERA to assess the priority of transport schemes.

### **Renewable energy**

Energy generated from: solar energy, wind and wave/hydro electric power, geothermal energy (heat produced within the earth's crust) and biomass.

### **Renewables Obligation**

The Renewables Obligation was introduced in April 2002 and requires all electricity suppliers in England and Wales to supply a specific proportion of their electricity from eligible renewable sources, for example: wind, wave/hydro and geothermal power.

### **Ribbon development**

Development that extends usually along main roads in a line and out of the existing built-up area.

### **Safeguarded land**

Land safeguarded from development during the Plan period.

### **Scheduled Ancient Monuments**

Nationally important monuments and archaeological areas that are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

### **Secondary aggregates**

Reclaimed or recycled material for use as aggregates (e.g. construction waste).



### **Secured by design**

A scheme established in 1989 in which specially trained police officers work with planners, architects and builders to create new housing developments which provide a greater degree of security for occupants. This involves homes being fitted with recommended security installations and the creation of an outside environment that deters potential offenders.

### **Short rotation coppice**

The growing of crops such as willow and poplar which can be harvested on 3-5 year cycle. The crop, when harvested, is chipped and used as fuel in a wood burning power plant.

### **Sites and Monuments Record**

Record of important sites and monuments maintained by the County Archaeologist.

### **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

A site statutorily notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) on account of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features.

### **South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)**

The South East England Development Agency was established by the Government through the Regional Development Agency Act 1998, and came into operation on 1 April 1999. Its objective is to take the strategic lead in promoting the sustainable economic development of the region.

### **South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA)**

A body that comprises representatives from local authorities and other economic, environmental and social organisations from the South East. One of its functions is the preparation of Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) and the South East Plan (the regional spatial strategy for the south east) which once adopted by the Secretary of State will replace RPG9.

### **Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**

An SSSI additionally designated a Special Area of Conservation under the EU's Habitats Directive 1992 (92/43/EEC), in order to maintain or restore priority natural habitats and wild species.

### **Sustainability appraisal**

An appraisal of all policies within the development plan which looks at their global, national and local environmental, economic and social implications.

### **Sustainable development**

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



### **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS)**

Sustainable Drainage Systems use techniques to control surface water run-off as close to its origin as possible, before it enters a watercourse. This involves moving away from traditional piped drainage systems to engineering solutions that mimic natural drainage processes.

### **Urban fringe**

Land surrounding urban areas. Commonly open areas of countryside that can be under pressure for development.

### **Urban sprawl**

Unchecked development that encroaches into the open countryside from urban areas.

### **Waste hierarchy**

The waste hierarchy comprises waste reduction/minimisation (at the top), followed by re-use, then recovery (recycling, energy recovery and composting) and finally disposal.

### **Windfall sites**

Windfall sites are those which have not been specifically identified as available in the local plan process. They comprise previously developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.





# Appendix 3

## Designated sites of importance for biodiversity in Oxfordshire

