



# Barton Area Action Plan Preferred Options

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## Foreword

*Oxford badly needs more homes.*

*The City has a vibrant economy: a world-class knowledge-based sector centred on two leading universities and medical research, a large visitor economy and an important manufacturing sector. Housing demand – whether it is market or affordable – exceeds supply, placing a severe strain on housing in Oxford.*

*The 38 hectares of land at Barton is the largest residential development opportunity in Oxford for many years. It is a once in a generation opportunity to provide large numbers of new homes and associated facilities in the form of a thriving and vibrant new community that forms part of our City. Plans and policies do not create communities – people do that. But plans and policies have an important role in shaping places, and the shape of places can help people foster a sense of community.*

*With this Plan we wish to create a place with its own distinctive identity and which is integrated with the communities around it. We also have the opportunity – and responsibility – to plan in such a way that the existing communities close to the development benefit from the changes that take place. This could be in the form of access to new community facilities and other services, better links to the rest of Oxford and to the surrounding countryside, and by bringing back in to use pockets of neglected land.*

*This is an exciting opportunity to help shape the future of Oxford. We look forward to receiving your comments.*

## A. Introduction

### What is an Area Action Plan?

Oxford City Council is preparing an Area Action Plan (AAP) to guide future development and change associated with new homes proposed on the north-east of the City on land to the north of the ring-road at Barton. The Barton Area Action Plan will be a Development Plan Document (DPD) that forms part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Oxford. The adopted Core Strategy – the key document making up the LDF – sets the overall framework for the other DPDs, including this Plan. The AAP is a statutory document that will guide future development and change, with a strong emphasis on implementation and delivery. Once adopted the Barton AAP will set out:

- the vision for the Land at Barton and the ways in which the opportunities presented by the development can be seized upon to ensure that existing neighbouring communities benefit from the changes
- a series of principles and concepts to guide development
- specific policies and infrastructure requirements
- site-specific and area-based proposals to stimulate regeneration.

The adopted policy framework will form the basis against which future planning applications are judged.

The Area Action Plan is being prepared by Oxford City Council in its capacity as planning authority. The City Council also owns the great majority of the Land at Barton, as well as being the housing authority and having regeneration and community development roles. It is important to emphasise that the roles of planning authority and landowner are quite separate. The City Council, as landowner, is seeking a co-investment partner to enter into a joint venture vehicle to deliver the infrastructure needed to bring forward the site. The joint venture partner will input to the planning process, but the purpose of the AAP is to set out the local planning authority's planning policies and proposals.

### What is a preferred options document?

This Preferred Options document is the second formal stage in the production of the AAP, setting out a range of options for consultation. These options are based on technical and financial studies, collaboration with the local community and other stakeholders, and on the responses to the consultation on the first stage of the AAP process during summer of 2010. That first stage was publication of an Issues document which identified and invited comments from the community and stakeholders on a number of objectives and what those might mean for the development site and adjoining areas.

The most promising options that have been identified for the AAP are included in this document. It deals only with those issues that need to be covered in the AAP and to an appropriate level of detail. The options have been assessed in a Sustainability Appraisal report which accompanies this document. The technical and financial background studies have also been published.

### How can you influence the process?

This Preferred Options document is an important opportunity for the public and stakeholders to contribute to the future planning of the Land at Barton and the adjoining communities. It is important to emphasise that this is an early stage in the process: the document is being published to stimulate debate and to invite comments on the realistic options that are available. The City Council hopes that everyone with an interest in the future of the area – residents, community groups, local organisations, businesses, employers, the joint venture partner and providers of infrastructure and services – will take the opportunity to respond to the consultation with their views about the options presented in this document.

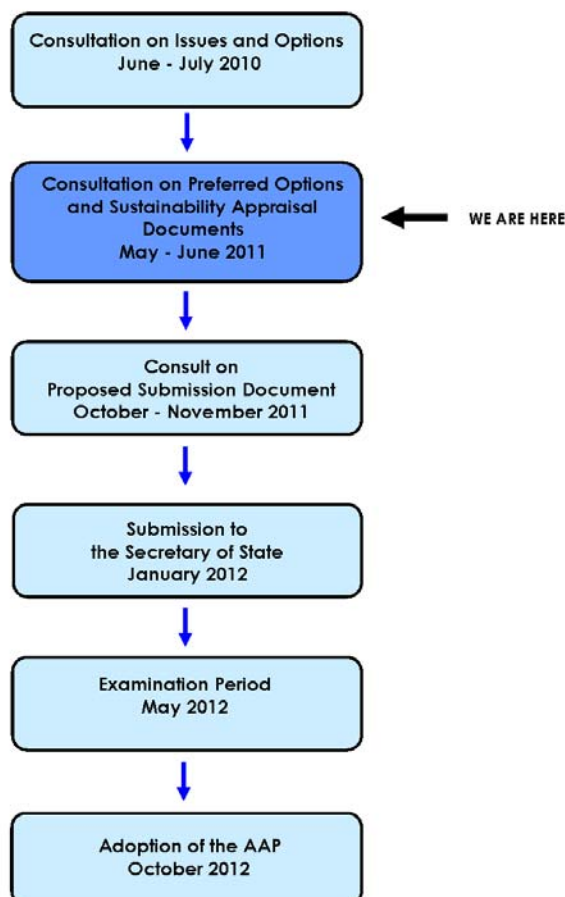
The period for making comments is 6 May to 17 June.

You can let us have your views by visiting the City Council's website ([www.oxford.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/ldf)) or by completing and returning a questionnaire available from the City Council offices.

## What happens next?

The responses to this consultation will help inform the draft AAP that the City Council will submit to the Secretary of State. Known as the Proposed Submission document, it will be published in Autumn 2011 when there will be another chance for the public and stakeholders to comment. The AAP is due to be submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2012 and adopted in Autumn 2012.

### Stages of Preparation of the Barton AAP



## How is this document structured?

### Context:

This section sets out the strategic policy context and City-wide planning policies that establish the principles of a development site at Barton and associated regeneration in the existing communities of Barton and Northway. It also describes the site and its surroundings.

### Spatial Vision:

This section sets out the aspirations for the area.

### Objectives:

Flowing from the Spatial Vision, this section takes the five objectives identified in the Issues document and explains what each one means for the new development and surrounding communities.

### Area Action Plan Boundary:

This section includes a map showing the boundary for the AAP and explains the underlying rationale.



### **Options:**

This part of the document sets out the preferred options for the Land at Barton and the surrounding areas that seek to deliver the spatial vision and five objectives. The options are considered in terms of four different but inter-related themes:

- a vibrant and balanced new community
- integration of the new development with existing communities and the rest of Oxford
- regeneration of Barton and Northway
- innovative and responsive design.

### **Preferred Strategy:**

This section explains how the preferred options combine together to form our suggested preferred strategy or framework for the future development of the Land at Barton and its surroundings.

### **Ruskin College Proposals for Ruskin Fields:**

The status of the proposals relating to the Ruskin Fields are different from those set out elsewhere in this document. They have been promoted by the landowner and have not been developed with the same on-going and close involvement of the local community and other stakeholders that has helped shape the preferred options. We would like to receive comments on the specific proposals put forward by Ruskin College as well as on the principle, scale, nature and/or location of a smaller-scale development at Ruskin Fields.

### **Implementation and Delivery:**

The Land at Barton is a priority housing delivery site for the City Council which will require significant infrastructure investment before serviced land is available to deliver the first new homes in 2013. Certainty and timing of delivery is of paramount importance. This section sets out the key implementation and delivery issues and the ways in which they will be addressed, including the identification of a co-investment joint venture partner to provide necessary infrastructure funding.

### **Next Steps:**

This section explains how you can respond to this consultation document and outlines the remaining stages for preparing this Area Action Plan.

## B. Context

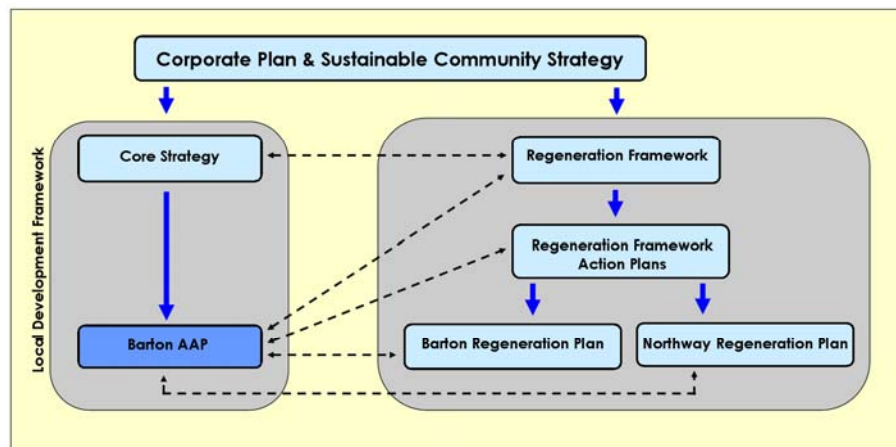
### Planning and wider context

The City-wide planning policies that form the context for the Area Action Plan are set out in the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2016 and Oxford Core Strategy to 2026.

The adopted Core Strategy allocates 'Land at Barton' as a strategic location for predominantly residential development. Policy CS7 indicates that between 800 and 1,200 homes together with supporting infrastructure, including a primary school, public open space and access improvements, will be delivered. The Core Strategy confirms that the land will be brought forward through an AAP. As well as defining the precise mix of uses, means of access and measures to integrate the new neighbourhood with the rest of Oxford, the AAP will provide details of flood mitigation, green infrastructure and biodiversity, and demonstrate how the development will stimulate regeneration in Barton & Northway.

The contribution of new housing from the Land at Barton and associated regeneration is a key priority for the City Council, fundamental to achieving the objectives of the Oxford City Council Corporate Plan, the Oxford Sustainable Community Strategy and the Regeneration Framework for Oxford to 2026. Sitting alongside the AAP will be Area Regeneration Plans for Barton and Northway. Together, the AAP and the Regeneration Plans will address the Regeneration Framework challenges in terms of 'place and infrastructure' (physical regeneration), 'people' (social) and the economy. The following diagram shows the relationship between this Area Action Plan and the Area Regeneration Plans for Barton and Northway.

### Relationship between Barton Area Action Plan and Area Regeneration Plans



The Land at Barton is a 'top priority growth scheme' in the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan.

### The Land at Barton and its surroundings

The area referred to in the Core Strategy as 'Land at Barton' is on the north-east of Oxford on land to the north of the A40 dual carriageway (the ring-road) at Barton. There are four areas surrounding the site: Barton (immediately to the east), Old Headington (to the south), Headington, including the John Radcliffe Hospital (to the south-east and south), and Northway (to the south-west). Each of these areas has its own character and local centre, facilities and open spaces.

To the north of the site lies Bayswater Brook and, beyond that, open countryside within South Oxfordshire District Council's administrative area.

With the exception of Barton, the site is separated from its other neighbouring communities by the ring-road which forms part of the strategic highway network. This poses challenges in terms of site access: at the moment the only direct vehicular access is via residential roads in Barton. It means that future plans must overcome the severance effect of the ring-road to ensure that the new development is integrated with the rest of Oxford.

The Land at Barton extends to a total of 38 hectares. It is undeveloped, comprising predominantly low-grade agricultural land used for grazing and with hedgerows and trees. The Barton Village Recreation Ground – which comprises grass football pitches, children's play area, clubhouse and hard-surfaced car-parking – lies in the north-east corner of the site. The recreation ground area was raised and levelled using waste materials during the 1950s. The landfill materials are thickest in the northern part of the area (up to 4.4 metres), thinning to grade in to the pre-existing ground contours to the west, south and east. There are allotments in active use to the south of the recreation ground and the Barton Village Nature Park is in the far south-east corner.

A primary electricity substation owned by Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) lies within the centre of the site, and the land is traversed by five overhead electricity cables. The substation will remain in use, but approximately 2 hectares of the SSE land is surplus to operational requirements.

Existing footpaths run alongside Bayswater Brook on the eastern half of the site and north-south across the site adjacent to the electricity substation. A number of drainage ditches run from the south of the site to Bayswater Brook.

### **Landscape Context & Character**

To the south of the Land at Barton and the ring-road lies the Old Headington Conservation Area. From within the Conservation Area there are views across fields to the south of the ring-road and the development site to landscape beyond Oxford's boundary. These views form a key feature of the rural character of Old Headington. The green open space also forms the setting of some of Old Headington's listed buildings in views in to the Conservation Area from Elsfield in South Oxfordshire.

The Land at Barton lies on the slope of the valley of the Bayswater Brook. The valley is enclosed by a ridge to the north that runs through Elsfield and then south-east towards the north of Barton, and to the south by a ridge where Old Headington sits. Barton Village Nature Park and the allotments in the south-east corner are on the highest ground within the site, from where the site slopes away downwards (in a northerly and westerly direction) towards the recreation ground and the electricity sub-station respectively – a fall in height of 15 metres. Further west the fields slope gently towards Bayswater Brook, with the valley side becoming steeper immediately south of the ring-road rising up towards Old Headington.

The Land at Barton is enclosed and screened by existing mature vegetation on and off the site from all but a small number of view points and is generally not visible from the Old Headington Conservation Area. It should be possible to visually contain the impact of the development on the setting of Old Headington and elsewhere.

### **Flood Risk**

The Land at Barton is bounded to the north by Bayswater Brook. The preliminary flood risk assessment shows that none of the site lies within Flood Zone 3b (functional floodplain where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood). An area of almost 3 hectares (8% of the site) is within Flood Zone 3a (high probability of flooding).

### **Ecology**

Bayswater Brook is designated as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC). The stream corridor – together with linear woodland, semi-improved grassland and scrub, a network of hedgerows and a number of mature trees – form a collection of features of potential ecological interest. Ecological studies have confirmed that whilst there are no major constraints, some features within the site would merit retention,





enhancement or restoration as part of future development. These include Bayswater Brook which is in poor condition, particularly at the eastern section close to Barton where hedgerows and woodland are unmanaged, but which offers the potential to better support a range of species.

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – Sidlings Copse and College Pond – lies approximately 600 metres to the north-east of the Land at Barton in South Oxfordshire District Council's area.

## C. Spatial Vision

Opportunities to comprehensively plan for a new community and to use the development to stimulate regeneration of existing areas are rare in Oxford. The development of the Land at Barton offers an important opportunity to bring maximum benefits to Barton, Northway and Oxford as a whole.

The development of the Land at Barton will reflect Oxford's drive to become a more integrated and sustainable city. Predominantly residential, and with efficient use of land providing over 800 new homes of mixed tenure, size and type, it will incorporate the range of land uses that constitute a complete neighbourhood. The development will be a new piece of the City, distinct from other areas but wholly integrated within the fabric of Oxford. It will have its own identity with a neighbourhood core and open spaces that link the site together, drawing on the adjoining countryside, Bayswater Brook and the Old Headington Conservation Area to inform its distinctive character.

It will be integrated with the neighbouring communities. The stretch of the ring-road between a new junction and the Headington Roundabout will change in character. Lower speeds and a reduction in traffic noise will allow development to take place fronting on to the ring-road, reducing its visual dominance and the sense of severance. The new development fronting on to the ring-road, Barton Village Road, key open spaces and the countryside will help define and promote a sense of place. Physical integration of old and new will be aided by new development that faces on to existing development, creating two-sided streets. A new linear park along Bayswater Brook and linking to improved public open space in the form of Play Barton in Barton will incorporate public open space and habitats to enhance local biodiversity. The new development will help people keep healthy lifestyles by encouraging activity and promoting safety.

There will be strong connectivity between the new neighbourhood and Barton, Northway, Old Headington and the adjoining countryside. Existing footpaths will be enhanced and re-connected and there will be new ring-road crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. A network of pedestrian and cycle connections will link the new community to existing facilities, adjacent areas and to other destinations across Oxford. The network will improve access from Barton to Headington and beyond. Access to schools, community facilities and open space will be improved by ensuring that the facilities within the new neighbourhood are accessible to existing communities.

## D. Objectives

At the earlier Issues stage (Summer 2010) we proposed a set of five objectives for the Barton Area Action Plan. The consultation revealed broad support for those objectives and we have taken them forward to inform the development of this Preferred Options document. This section identifies what each objective means for the new development and the neighbouring communities in Barton and Northway.

### D1. Deliver a strong and balanced community

- A mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, in the form of good quality and flexible homes for young and old, families and single people, people with disabilities and older people and a significant proportion of affordable housing
- A primary school providing a focus for the new and existing communities and with the potential for a range of social and community uses
- An environment that promotes healthy living and well-being
- High quality, linked and safe formal and informal open spaces
- Retail use at a scale that will support and complement those in Barton, Northway and Headington

### D2. Bring wider regeneration of neighbouring estates

- Safer and easier to use cycle and pedestrian access between Barton and the rest of Oxford
- Improved bus connections
- New neighbourhood facilities and services shared by residents in existing communities, with the school acting as a focal point for community integration
- Pockets of land that are currently under-used or neglected brought back in to use
- Job and training opportunities such as building apprenticeships

### D3. Improve accessibility and integration

- A network of safe and easy to use pedestrian and cycle routes that allow new and existing residents to access and share established and new community facilities
- Improved and additional links across the ring-road, improved connections to places such as Headington and the John Radcliffe Hospital for those currently living in Barton, and better links to the countryside for existing residents in Headington and Northway
- Excellent bus services, with extensions to the existing bus services in Barton and Northway and/or new frequent and reliable services connecting the new homes and facilities with neighbouring communities and the rest of Oxford
- Direct vehicular access to the new development from the ring-road and reduced traffic speeds and therefore noise
- No private car travel between the new development and Northway, and only secondary access through Barton
- New frontages and public open space linking the new neighbourhood to its immediate surroundings and the rest of Oxford

### D4. Encourage a low carbon lifestyle

- A network of safe and easy to use footpaths and cycle ways, together with frequent and reliable bus services, and easy and convenient access to a range of local services and facilities to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport
- New homes and buildings that use energy and water efficiently
- Effective use of renewable and low-carbon energy

### D5. Introduce design that is responsive and innovative

- A strong sense of place for the new neighbourhood, with attractive new buildings, streets and open spaces



- Character strongly influenced by the setting, topography and natural assets of the area and townscape of the rest of Oxford, with linked green corridors providing open space, pedestrian and cycle routes, sustainable drainage, access to the countryside and enhanced opportunities for biodiversity



## E. Area Action Plan Boundary

Given the objectives for the Area Action Plan, an appropriate boundary for the AAP needs to cover:

- the area where the focus of new development will be
- the areas that will benefit directly from associated regeneration
- those areas that will be sensitive to change and need specific consideration.

The **preferred boundary** therefore includes:

- the development site – the strategic site identified in the Core Strategy as 'Land at Barton' where the majority of new development will happen
- Barton and Northway – to allow for consideration of how the new development will impact on the existing communities and how the benefits can be shared to foster regeneration
- part of Old Headington Conservation Area.

*A map showing the AAP boundary is attached as an annex to this draft document.*

## F. Options

This section sets out emerging options for the Land at Barton and the surrounding areas that will deliver the spatial vision and the five objectives identified earlier. The options reflect the responses to the consultation on the Issues document, our on-going collaborative working, the findings of technical studies and the assessment made by the Sustainability Appraisal.

The Area Action Plan proposals must be viable, and deliverability has been a key factor in identifying and testing options – only those that are realistic are included.

The document deals only with those issues that need to be covered in the AAP and has been written to an appropriate level of detail given that the joint venture partner has not yet been identified.

The options are considered in terms of four different themes:

- a vibrant and balanced new neighbourhood
- integration of the new development with surrounding areas and the rest of Oxford
- regeneration in Barton and Northway
- innovative and responsive design.

A separate section of this document deals with potential development on land at Ruskin College.

The options themselves are presented in a number of different ways.

- A set of possible different and discrete **options** is identified where there are genuine alternative and deliverable ways of achieving the desired outcome. Where it aids explanation, the options are accompanied by a table showing their strengths and weaknesses.
- Where the City Council has identified a **preferred option** (or, in some cases **preferred options**) it is clearly identified as such in a text box.
- A **preferred approach** is identified and shown in a text box in those instances where either there are no robust and deliverable alternatives or where a particular option is considered so desirable and important to delivering the strategic vision that it should be taken forward as the Area Action Plan develops.
- In some cases there is no preferred option from the range of possible alternatives, either because they have different strengths and weaknesses or because they have not yet been fully tested.

### F1. A vibrant, vital & balanced new neighbourhood

#### New homes

The development site will accommodate 800 to 1,200 homes.

To create a balanced new community there should be a mix of different types, tenures and sizes of housing suitable for a range of different households, including the elderly and others with specialist housing needs. Homes should be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of residents – sometimes known as 'lifetime homes'. There may also be scope for 'live-work' units specifically designed for residential and business use.

The Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out a policy approach that encourages a mix of types and sizes of accommodation. The Balance of Dwellings mix for strategic sites is:

1 bed	10-15%
2 bed	25-30%
3 bed	40-55%
4 bed plus	10-15%

## Affordable housing target

In order to create a sustainable, inclusive, balanced and mixed community and meet Oxford's pressing housing needs, the new development should include a significant proportion of affordable homes. The expectation is that the affordable housing will be built to at least the minimum Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) standards.

Given the close proximity of a number of large public sector employers, there is the potential to provide housing for key workers as part of the new development. Any such key worker housing would be additional to the required level of affordable housing.

City-wide policies require generally that a minimum of 50% of any proposed development is affordable, with 80% of that requirement provided as social rented homes and 20% as shared ownership. Where appropriate and the evidence justifies it, the City Council may set a separate target for a particular site. Any such target must be driven by the need for affordable housing and the likely economic viability of the land in question, taking account of risks to delivery.

Viability testing shows that 50% affordable housing is not achievable on the Land at Barton based on likely infrastructure, land remediation and other costs. The infrastructure costs are substantial and include a new on-site primary school as well as a new junction and crossings on the ring-road. The testing also shows that a target of 40% affordable housing (100% for social rent) is deliverable alongside infrastructure and other costs.

Our **preferred approach** for affordable housing provision is a minimum affordable housing target for the development site of 40%, with 100% of that requirement social rented homes. The minimum of 40% would not include homes for affordable rent.

Any affordable housing provided over and above the minimum 40% could include an element of shared ownership and/or affordable rent.

## Local centre

At the heart of the new community should be a local centre which will be expected to include a new primary school, community and recreation facilities and retail units, along with some housing above the other uses. To ensure good access and connectivity, the local centre should be located at a point where pedestrian and cycle routes intersect with the primary street.

The new primary school should have excellent pedestrian and cycle links. Innovative solutions will be required to ensure that the primary school acts as a community hub. The buildings and facilities and the way in which they are designed and managed should allow for flexible and wider use for a range of activities. Simple measures can be put in place to make shared spaces work well and to foster a sense that they are truly shared. These include year-round call on the space, easy and flexible access, permanent office space, and storage space with simple access. The shared space could also include access to healthcare.

The precise requirements for primary school places will be influenced by the final mix of homes to be provided within the new development. Based on the Balance of Dwellings SPD, a new one and a half form entry primary school with pre-school provision will need to be provided on site with sufficient land to allow for future expansion to a two form entry school should that prove necessary.

A one and a half form entry primary school would support 1,000 new homes (assuming a housing mix based on the Balance of Dwellings and 40% affordable housing). Based on the same assumptions, a two form entry primary school would support 1,300 homes.

The same size school could also support a higher proportion of affordable housing should that prove viable. A one and a half form entry primary school would support 900 new homes (assuming a housing mix based on the Balance of Dwellings and 50% affordable housing). Based on the same assumptions, a two form entry primary school would support 1,200 homes.

There may be scope to vertically mix new homes with a high quality educational environment by providing apartments above the new school. Any such apartments would have to be carefully designed so that they have separate entrances to the school and do not directly overlook the school buildings or play areas. These units may be provided as extra care housing.

Our **preferred approach** is that there should be a local centre comprising a primary school, community and recreation facilities and some retail units, along with housing. The local centre should be located at a point where pedestrian and cycle routes intersect with the primary street.

Our **preferred approach** is that the location of the school should:

- allow for a developable site area of around 2 hectares, the shape and contours of which accommodate playing pitches and informal outside play space associated with classrooms
- help integrate the new neighbourhood with existing communities by offering potential for a range of social and community uses of the school buildings and joint use of the playing pitch outside of school hours
- make the most of the countryside setting of the site
- promote health by promoting activity in the form of walking and cycling to school
- minimise car trips
- provide access points for pupils and staff, maintenance and emergency vehicles
- help promote healthy diet and nutrition by avoiding hot food take-aways and other fast food outlets.

### Retail uses

Just beyond the AAP boundary to the south lies Headington District shopping centre. It is one of four District Centres which serve Oxford along with the City Centre and Cowley Centre. In addition, within the AAP area are two neighbourhood shopping centres: Underhill Circus provides a limited number of shops and an off-licence and take-away for Barton, with a similar range of facilities in Westlands Drive in Northway.

New shops and related uses will help ensure that the new neighbourhood is successful and sustainable. It is important to consider what impact such new services would have on existing facilities, though a retail impact assessment has not been carried out at this stage. The responses to the Issues document indicated strong support amongst existing residents for new local shops.

There are two potential options for providing retail units within the new development.

#### **Option 1, Local shops and services forming part of a new local centre**

This option is less likely to impact on the existing neighbourhood shopping centres in Barton and Northway. It would include a food store of around 450 m<sup>2</sup> (gross).

#### **Option 2, Local shops and services together with a larger food store forming part of a new local centre**

Introducing a larger food store (of 1,500 to 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> gross) into the scheme to serve the needs of Barton, Northway and the new community could provide existing and new residents with greater choice and reduce the need to travel. It would be important to understand any potential retail impacts of this option on the existing neighbourhood shopping centres in Barton, Northway and, potentially, Headington.

There is no **preferred option** on retail uses.



## Open space

The Land at Barton includes the existing Barton Village Recreation Ground. There is also cultivated and uncultivated statutory allotment land and a nature park. Adopted City-wide policies normally require a minimum of 10% of the site area as open space, but the policies also acknowledge that larger areas of new development such as this provide opportunities to open up access to off-site areas of green space. The surrounding countryside with its network of footpaths offers such potential. Proposals for Play Barton are expected to come forward in the form of improvements to the existing public open space between Bayswater Brook and homes to the north of Stowford Road close to the Neighbourhood Centre in Barton.

## Recreation ground

The sports pitches, play area, club-house and associated car parking lie in the north-east corner of the Land at Barton. The land they occupy was raised and levelled using waste materials in the 1950s. A new moveable pavilion is due to replace the existing building in Spring/Summer 2011.

Formal public open space of at least the same area and equivalent standard to that which currently exists should form part of the new development. It should make the most of opportunities for community use of the school playing pitch outside of school hours.

### **Option 1, Retain the recreation ground and the sports pitches in their current location**

This is the most straightforward and least costly option, particularly if the existing raised level is retained. However, the recreation ground could act as a physical barrier between Barton and the new community, both in terms of the scope to provide new homes facing Barton Village Road and options for access between Barton and the new development.

### **Option 2, Retain the recreation ground and the sports pitches on their current site, but re-orientate to east-west**

Turning the sports pitches through 90 degrees could help reduce the barrier effect of the recreation ground, allowing more scope to create new residential frontages facing Barton Village Road and more options in terms of access to and from Barton. The new homes could be built facing Barton Village Road with the higher levels of the land occupied by the existing sports pitches retained, though these homes would need to be set back from the road because of the height differences. If the level of the sports pitches were to be lowered, the new frontages could be created closer to Barton Village Road. This option would help with integration, though a north-south orientation is generally preferred for sports pitches. There would be additional costs associated with remediation works.

*An illustration showing how proposed development could front on to Barton Village Road with the level of the sports pitches retained is attached as an annex to this draft document.*

### **Option 3, Relocate the recreation ground uses**

This option offers the greatest scope to integrate old and new development, freeing up the land currently occupied by the recreation ground for new homes. Formal public open space of at least the same area and equivalent standard to that which currently exists would need to be provided as part of the development. There would be additional costs associated with remediation works.

There is no **preferred option** for the recreation ground.

## Allotments

Just over 4 hectares of the land at Barton are legally protected statutory allotment land. 2.5 hectares are let to an allotment association. The rest of the allotment land is uncultivated and ecological surveys show that this area has a reasonably high biodiversity value. There was public support in the Issues consultation for retention of the allotments.

There are two alternative options for the statutory allotment land. In each case there could be some alteration to the edge(s) of the allotments, depending on the option(s) for vehicular access to the site from Barton.

### Option 1, Retain the whole of the allotment land in its current location

This would minimise disruption. However, (like the recreation ground) the allotments could act as a physical barrier between Barton and the new community.

### Option 2, Retain the currently cultivated allotment land and replace the uncultivated allotments with land of equivalent quality and accessibility

Retaining that part of the allotment land that is cultivated opens up opportunities to create a new part of the City that is better integrated with the old. It would allow for new residential development alongside Barton and the creation of frontages along the ring-road, helping to transform it in to a 'street'. The Secretary of State would have to give consent; such consent would not be forthcoming unless adequate replacement allotment provision was made.

Our **preferred option** for the allotments is Option 2, retain the currently cultivated allotment land and replace the uncultivated allotments.

The currently cultivated allotment land should be retained and the uncultivated allotment land replaced in order to facilitate integration between the new community and the rest of Oxford.

## Barton Village Nature Park

Barton Village Nature Park has relatively low ecological value but acts as a recreational green space. Biodiversity assessments indicate that this area need not be protected on the grounds of biodiversity, especially since the opening up or creation of alternative areas could provide more valuable replacement areas for wildlife elsewhere within the development.

## Linear Park

Bayswater Brook runs along the northern boundary of the Land at Barton. The Brook forms a natural green corridor or link. It has the potential to: help create a sense of local distinctiveness; 'soften' the edge between the City and open countryside; incorporate flood attenuation measures; and provide habitats that enhance biodiversity. To make the most of the Brook it would form part of the public realm, in the form of a linear park. The linear park should include links across the Brook to the open countryside.

The linear park should connect with cycleways and footpaths with a link to open space in Barton, including the proposed Play Barton scheme. To ensure that it is a safe and well-used, the park should be fronted by residential development which would also benefit from attractive views over the open countryside.

*An illustration showing how proposed development could front on to a linear park and Bayswater Brook is attached as an annex to this draft document.*

Our **preferred approach** is to develop homes on the land occupied by Barton Village Nature Park and to create a linear park along Bayswater Brook.

## F2. Integration with surrounding areas and the rest of Oxford

The Land at Barton has the potential to deliver a highly sustainable development, reducing the need to travel to and from the new neighbourhood by car and offering the opportunity to reduce car usage from the surrounding areas. By walking, cycling and public transport, the new neighbourhood should be well-connected with surrounding communities and the whole area should be better linked to local centres, places of work and education, the City centre and the countryside.

Integration is not just about transport connections: the layout of the new development should contribute by creating new frontages and public open space which link the new neighbourhood to its immediate surroundings and the rest of Oxford.

### Integration with Barton

The linear park, new local centre, sports pitches and primary school, together with a network of safe and easy to use cycle and pedestrian links are designed to integrate the new neighbourhood with Barton. There is an opportunity to foster integration by creating new residential frontages on the Land at Barton that face Barton Village Road. This would mean that there would be homes within the existing and new communities facing one another, and active frontages adding to a sense of activity and security within the public realm.

*An illustration showing how proposed development could front on to Barton Village Road is attached as an annex to this draft document.*

### Treatment of the A40 ring-road

The ring-road runs immediately to the south of the Land at Barton. It physically separates the site from Northway, Headington and the rest of Oxford, acting as a barrier and creating a sense of isolation. It is important that the new neighbourhood is and feels part of Oxford. The choices made about this stretch of the ring-road will be a key factor in achieving integration of old and new.

There are three potential options for the way in which this stretch of the A40 is treated. It is important to note that not all of them can be combined with our preferred option for vehicular access to the Land at Barton.

#### **Option 1, Leave the ring-road as it is, with speeds of 70 mph**

The ring-road would stay as it is, with speeds of 70 mph (50 mph approaching the Headington Roundabout from the west). The associated noise levels would require that a noise buffer is provided between the road and the new neighbourhood on the Land at Barton. Such a buffer would reduce the amount of land available within the development for new homes and community facilities. It would also reinforce the sense of severance and isolation, separating the new neighbourhood from surrounding communities and the rest of Oxford. This option could not be combined with a new junction.

#### **Option 2, Reduce speeds on the ring-road to 40 mph but with no new frontages**

Lower speeds along this stretch of the ring-road, which could be associated with a new junction serving the site, would reduce noise levels for the new development as well as for those living in surrounding communities. As a result, the need for a noise buffer to the north of the ring-road disappears. This option would increase the amount of developable land by allowing development to take place closer to the ring-road. However, without new frontages on the ring-road there would still be a sense of separation between the new neighbourhood on the Land at Barton and the rest of Oxford.

#### **Option 3, Transform the ring-road in to a street with new frontages and speeds reduced to 40 mph**

Depending on the approach towards vehicular access to the Land at Barton, there is an opportunity to adopt a very different approach to this stretch of the A40. We could – by reducing the speed and creating frontages on to the ring-road – transform it from a noisy and visually dominating physical barrier, into a enclosed street or 'boulevard'. It



would be similar to Oxford's Sunderland Avenue further to the west along the ring-road. The lower speeds would allow new development to front on to the ring-road and for safer and easier to use pedestrian and cycle routes. There would be a service road to allow access to the properties fronting the ring-road. These frontages of new homes would be along the southern edges of the Land at Barton (though not necessarily its entire length) and in Barton itself. Similar frontages could also be created to the south of the ring-road using land at Northway to create new homes facing one another.

*Illustrations showing how proposed development could front on to the ring-road are attached as annexes to this draft document.*

Our **preferred option** for treatment of the A40 is Option 3, transforming this stretch of the ring-road by lowering traffic speeds and developing frontages on to the ring-road.

### **Vehicular access to the development site from Barton**

There is a range of potential options for vehicular access to the new development. These have been tested in technical studies. A full Transport Assessment will be required as part of the planning application. For a development of this scale, and to ensure security of access, at least two connection points will be required. One of these should be in the form of a secondary access via Barton.

### **Main vehicular access to the development site from the ring-road**

The options for access to the development site from the A40 ring-road are as follows. They are not mutually exclusive.

#### **Option 1, Signal controlled junction to ring-road (left and right in and out), incorporating bus-only link into Northway:**

Vehicular access would be gained directly from the ring-road via a signal controlled junction. To prevent rat-running through Northway, the only vehicular link to Northway would be bus-only. The speed limit would be reduced to 40 mph.

#### **Option 2, Left-in/left-out junction to ring-road:**

A limited movement vehicular access would be provided directly from the ring-road via a left-in/left-out junction. A speed limit reduction to 40 mph would be implemented. This would not allow a direct bus link in to Northway.

#### **Option 3, Roundabout(s) on ring-road:**

Access would be provided by a new roundabout or roundabouts.

The technical studies show that any of the above options could be implemented. However, the options do not perform equally well in terms of achieving the objectives of this Plan and their impacts on existing communities – see the following table.

### **Secondary vehicular access to the development site from Barton**

There are four options for locating the access from Barton to the development site, all of which would need to be capable of accommodating bus movements with Barton Village Road.

#### **Option 1, in line with Fettiplace Road, altering the existing T junction to form a crossroads**

#### **Option 2, approximately 50 metres to the south of Barton Village Road/Fettiplace Road junction, via a priority junction**

#### **Option 3, to the north of Barton Village Road/Fettiplace Road junction, via a new junction**

**Option 4, at the junction of Barton Village Road/North Way, via a new junction**

Our **preferred option** for vehicular access is to combine Option 1 with secondary access via Barton.

An at-grade signal controlled junction should be provided on the ring-road, incorporating bus-only movements to and from Northway. There should be an associated reduction in the speed limit to 40 mph on the ring-road between the Headington Roundabout, the new junction and the Elsfield junction.

Secondary all-vehicle access (accommodating bus movements) should be provided in the form of one or more links between the new development and Barton Village Road.

There is no **preferred option** for the vehicular access from Barton.

**Assessment of Access Options for Vehicular Traffic**

<p><b>Secondary access via Barton</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ More than one point of access is required to safely access the new development</li> <li>✓ Would allow for extension of existing bus services from Barton</li> <li>✓ Would integrate the development site with Barton</li> <li>✗ Would have some impact on the existing community in Barton and on the Headington Roundabout</li> </ul>	<p><b>Option 1: Signal controlled junction to A40, incorporating bus-only link into Northway</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Would provide better priority for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport</li> <li>✓ Would impact least on Barton</li> <li>✓ Could provide an alternative point of access for residents travelling to and from Barton, potentially improving traffic movements through the Headington Roundabout</li> <li>✓ Would provide an opportunity to control traffic movements out of the new development using traffic signals</li> <li>✓ Would reduce speeds and therefore noise on the A40, allowing for integration of the new development by changing the nature of this stretch of road</li> <li>✓ Would help integrate the development site with Northway, allow for extension of existing bus services and open up possibility of new services</li> <li>✗ Drivers using the A40 would have to stop at the traffic signals</li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 2: At-grade left-in/left-out junction to A40</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Could provide an alternative point of access for residents travelling to and from Barton, potentially improving traffic movements through the Headington Roundabout</li> <li>✓ Would reduce speeds and therefore noise on the A40</li> <li>✗ A separate bus access would be required to connect to Northway</li> <li>✗ Adjacent junctions could experience increased queuing and delay due to u-turning vehicles</li> <li>✗ Would not contribute to integration of the new development with the rest of the City</li> </ul>	<p><b>Option 3: At-grade roundabout(s) on A40</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Could provide an alternative point of access for residents travelling to and from Barton, potentially improving traffic movements through the Headington Roundabout</li> <li>✓ Would reduce speeds and noise on the A40, allowing for integration of the new development by changing the nature of this stretch of road</li> <li>✗ Would be land-hungry, requiring more land on both sides of the A40 outside of the existing highway</li> <li>✗ Would be less conducive to movement of non-motorised users across the A40; issues associated with pedestrian/cyclist crossings in close proximity to the roundabout</li> <li>✗ Would be more difficult to control a bus-only connection to Northway</li> <li>✗ Drivers using the A40 would have to stop at the traffic signals</li> <li>✗ Likely to be more expensive than a signal controlled junction</li> </ul>

### **Bus access to the development site**

Northway and Barton are both served by regular bus services. In Northway the 13 service connects with the City centre and the John Radcliffe Hospital via Halliday Hill. In Barton the 7c and 8 services connect to Headington and the City centre, both running as clockwise loops around Barton via North Way, Barton Village Road, Fettiplace Road and Waynfleet Road. The need for improvements to these existing bus services was identified as a key issue in the responses to the Issues document.

There are three potential options for providing public transport services:

#### **Option 1, No change to existing bus services**

Residents from the new development and those using the new primary school and associated neighbourhood facilities would walk to and from the nearest bus stops for the existing services in Barton and Northway.

#### **Option 2, Extension of existing bus services from Barton and/or Northway but with no direct connection between the two routes**

This could, in effect, create a bigger loop of the 7c and 8 services from Barton using one of the potential vehicular links identified above. A service could be extended from Northway, crossing the ring-road at the new junction and linking to the development site.

#### **Option 3, A revised or new service connecting Northway, the development site and Barton with other parts of the City**

There is potential for a revised or new stand-alone bus service that would run between Northway and Barton through the development site. It could link to Headington, the centre of Oxford and/or other destinations in the City.

All of these options could be implemented, though Options 2 and 3 may not be commercially viable in the short-term. Further work will be undertaken on the deliverability of bus services before the AAP document is finalised. No financial subsidy will be available.

Our **preferred option** for bus access is Option 3, but to build in sufficient flexibility to allow Option 2 to be implemented if necessary.

Layout of the site should allow for a revised or new bus service connecting Northway, the development site and Barton with other parts of the City. Layout and phasing should also build in sufficient flexibility to allow for the extension of existing bus services to/from Barton and Northway.

### **Cycle and pedestrian links across A40**

The ring-road currently imposes a significant barrier to accessibility and integration, with only one existing grade-separated crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists – a subway to the south of Barton which provides a link to Headington.

Running north-south across the development site (and then beyond in to the countryside in South Oxfordshire) is an existing footpath. Severed by the ring-road, the link continues south as a public bridleway and byway running in to Old Headington, along Stoke Place.

To improve integration and 'permeability' and to promote maximum usage, a network of safe and easy to use pedestrian and cycle routes along desire lines should connect the new homes with facilities within the new neighbourhood and link the new development to its surroundings – Barton, Headington, Northway and the countryside beyond Oxford – and to the rest of the City.

Four options for pedestrian and cycle crossing points have been identified for the ring-road. The preferred option for vehicular access – a signal-controlled at-grade junction – would require speed reductions to 40 mph along this stretch of the ring-road. Options 2, 3 & 4 could therefore be provided as surface level crossings or as bridges.



#### **Option 1, Access as part of a signal controlled junction**

Pedestrian and cyclist crossing phasing and facilities would be incorporated within a new signal controlled junction.

#### **Option 2, Crossing to Foxwell Drive**

A crossing between the development site and Foxwell Drive. This would provide for good access to the John Radcliffe Hospital and a direct onward link to the wider local cycle network – Saxon Way, Northway, Copse Lane, Marston Road, Parks Cycle Route and the City Centre – and the national cycle network. This would be located close to Option 1.

#### **Option 3, Crossing at Stoke Place**

A crossing would link the Stoke Place bridleway with the footpath running north-south across the development site, re-establishing the historic link severed by the ring-road. It would enable pedestrian and cycle links from the new neighbourhood to Headington District Centre and destinations such as the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford Brookes University and Cheney and Headington Schools. Re-establishing the historic link would also open up access to the countryside from Old Headington. Stoke Place would need to be up-graded in a manner that is sensitive to its role and character within the Conservation Area. The design of any foot and cycle bridge would also need to be sensitive in relation to the Old Headington Conservation Area.

#### **Option 4, Crossing towards open fields at Barton Lane**

This would provide an alternative access to Headington for people living in Barton and for any homes at the eastern end of the new development. It would be close to the existing combined cycleway and footpath subway to the south of Barton.

Our **preferred option** for pedestrian and cycle links across the ring-road is for primary links in the form of a crossing at Option 3 (Stoke Place), with Option 1 providing an additional but secondary crossing.

### **Rapid transit public transport**

The City Council supports in principle the idea of a new high quality rapid transit public transport system put forward by Oxfordshire County Council. It could use traffic free infrastructure by running alongside the ring-road and serve park and ride sites (eg. Water Eaton and Redbridge), existing major employment and housing areas such as Marston, Headington, Cowley and Rose Hill, and the proposed rail service to London from Water Eaton. Put forward by the County Council in its soon to be adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP) 3, and serving an area of Oxford which the LTP refers to as the 'Eastern Arc', the service could serve the new neighbourhood and its surroundings. Although currently a long-term aspiration that will depend on feasibility assessments and the availability of funding, it does offer the potential for even better connections in the future.

## **F3. Regeneration in Barton & Northway**

Development on the Land at Barton has the potential to act as catalyst for regeneration in Barton and Northway by:

- integrating the existing communities with the new neighbourhood and the rest of Oxford
- improving access to facilities within the new development and beyond
- making best use of development opportunities within Barton and Northway.

Area Regeneration Plans are currently being prepared for Barton and Northway. Taking as their starting point the Regeneration Framework for Oxford to 2026, the Area Regeneration Plans will allow for the communities in Barton and Northway to engage in and define the regeneration agenda for their areas. The Area Regeneration Plans will sit alongside this Area Action Plan which has also been prepared with community involvement.

Together the following opportunities could:

- address 'place and infrastructure challenges' by helping link people to jobs, improving the development of the public realm and adding to the range of community facilities
- address 'people challenges' by improving educational attainment, skills and access to health facilities, and by contributing to safety and well-being
- address 'economic challenges' by increasing economic activity rates.

### **Access to new facilities**

The new neighbourhood centre should include a community hub based around the new primary school. These new community facilities, together with the sports pitches, linear park, other open space and new shops should be easily accessed by the existing communities in Barton and Northway, increasing the range of choices available. There should also be better access between Northway and the Barton Pool and improved access to the countryside.

### **Better integration with the rest of Oxford**

For those currently living in Barton, the ring-road forms a dominating physical barrier. New links across the ring-road associated with the development of the Land at Barton would improve accessibility for those currently living in Barton. There would be better connections for pedestrians and cyclists to a wider range and choice of shops, facilities and education and employment opportunities (including major employers) in Headington, at the John Radcliffe Hospital and beyond in the rest of Oxford.

The connections would make it easier for those currently living in Northway to access the range of community and leisure facilities that are already available in Barton.

Northway and Barton are both already served by regular bus services. There is the potential to further improve the choices of destinations available to those living in Barton and Northway.

The preferred approach to the ring-road, with lower traffic speeds and associated reduced traffic noise, would reduce the sense of severance between Barton and the rest of the City. Pedestrian and cycle crossings would be easier, and new development in Barton and Northway could front on to the ring-road, helping integration by creating new homes facing one another.

### **Development opportunity sites**

There may be opportunities for physical regeneration in Northway and Barton in addition to those that have already been identified. Such opportunities could:

- provide additional housing
- improve the public realm
- create positive and active frontages to help improve the sense of security of public and communal areas
- increase the number of pedestrian and cycle routes.

They would complement planned improvements to the community facilities in Northway. We would like to receive suggestions for potential development opportunities.

## **F4. Innovative & responsive design**

There is an opportunity to create a new distinct but integrated piece of Oxford and to apply best practice to make efficient use of resources and meet energy efficiency and low carbon targets.

The new development should meet the CAGE-Home Builders Federation 'Building for Life' Standard; the **preferred approach** is that this should be at Gold level.





This section does not set out alternative options for design. Instead, it proposes a set of six principles and indicates how these might be reflected in the design of the development. Taken together these form our **preferred approach**.

**1. The scale, form, character and design of development should take into account the local topography, setting and natural assets of the site**

Bayswater Brook, hedgerows and mature trees, combined with the surrounding countryside and topography of the Land at Barton, create a set of natural features. The development should make the most of these assets to create a sense of place by reflecting and – where possible – incorporating them in to the development.

There is potential to enhance and develop linear green corridors or links through the site, making connections within the new development and with neighbouring communities and the open countryside. These could be based on existing green links, including existing hedgerows and Bayswater Brook. As well as movement, the green links also offer opportunities for: recreation and amenity space in the form of the linear park along Bayswater Brook; ecological enhancement; Sustainable Urban Drainage; and creation of a transition from the City to open countryside.

The development should consider issues relating to landform. Wherever possible, building footprints and streets should be aligned to follow slope contours. The development should also consider: the effect of the site slope on the heights of buildings; the relationship between heights of proposed and existing buildings; and, the visual impact of buildings when viewed from streets and properties.

The scale, form, character and design of the development should consider views into and out of the Old Headington Conservation Area and views from the surrounding countryside. The small field lying directly to the west of the allotments has been identified as more sensitive than the rest of the site in terms of roof treatment and other materials.

The development should make the most of opportunities to create or improve habitats. Retention of hedgerows and mature trees, use of native species in landscaping, installation of bird and bat boxes and design of lighting schemes can all encourage habitat creation and enhancement.

**2. The layout should be accessible, permeable and legible and encourage activity**

The network of streets and open spaces will play a key role in determining how the new development works and how it relates to the surrounding areas. The development should incorporate a network of streets and spaces that link to and through the area, providing a choice of direct, safe and attractive connections and encouraging pedestrian and cycle movements. There could be a street hierarchy comprising, for example, a primary street and residential streets. The development and pattern of routes must also be 'legible' – easy to understand and navigate. Features such as the treatment of façades, pavements, rooflines and views can help determine how legible a place is.

**3. Active frontages should be incorporated within the new development**

As set out in earlier sections of this document, our preferred option is that there should be residential frontages on the ring-road and Barton Village Road.

Orienting buildings so that the main entrances and principal windows face the street (or streets) and open spaces creates active frontages. This helps to improve the sense of security of public and communal areas (sometimes known as Secured by Design principles), maximises the amount of activity that takes place in the public realm and helps reinforce legibility.

To help ensure that the linear park along Bayswater Brook is safe, attractive and well-used, it should be fronted by residential development with views over the countryside. There should also be residential frontages on to the allotments.

On-street car parking can help create strong frontages and make the most efficient use of land.

*Illustrations showing active residential frontages along Bayswater Brook, a linear park, Barton Village Road and the ring-road are included as annexes to this draft document.*

**4. The development should make prudent use of natural resources**

The development will be expected to achieve high standards of sustainable construction and design in terms of energy efficiency, water resources, recycled and reclaimed materials and renewable or low carbon energy. The new homes will be expected to meet the latest sustainability standards as set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes and reflected in Building Regulations. At present the Code is set to Level 3, increasing to Level 4 in 2013 and Level 6 (zero-carbon) in 2016.

There may be scope for a community heating scheme, combined heat and power and/or small scale renewable or low carbon energy in the new development. The Natural Resource Impact Analysis SPD sets a minimum City-wide standard for 20% of energy to be provided by on-site renewables such as photovoltaic cells, ground source heat pumps or bio-mass boilers. There may be the potential for a wind turbine.

Where practicable, streets and buildings should be orientated to maximise solar gain. In order to make the most of sunlight (and shade), the layout, design and orientation of streets and buildings should be informed by the slope of the site and the solar path. The development should seek to maximise the use of south facing elevations.

Where possible, new homes should include charging points for electric vehicles.

**5. The development should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)**

The development should incorporate SUDS to reduce any increases in surface water drainage. The proposed linear park could incorporate flood attenuation measures such as a basin or ponds. In addition, public and private areas of hard-standing should be permeable wherever possible.

SUDS may be combined with a system to help regulate water flows from roofs to the drainage system and grey water recycling. Installation of green roofs, where soil and plant material are attached to create a living surface, can also reduce water run-off (as well as providing insulation and creating a habitat for wildlife).

**6. The visual impact of the electricity substation should be minimised**

The electricity substation will remain on site in its current location. The other half of the land owned by SSE is surplus to operational requirements. The impact of the substation on development should be minimised by rationalising, re-aligning and burying the power lines to minimise their impacts on development. A 5 metre buffer must be left around the substation for access and maintenance purposes. Beyond that, the substation can either be 'wrapped' by built development or screened with landscaping.

## G. Preferred Strategy

The following plan (*attached as an annex to this draft document*) shows how the preferred options and approaches combine together to form our suggested preferred strategy or framework for future development of the Land at Barton. It shows:

- residential frontages along the ring-road, Barton Village Road and a new linear park alongside Bayswater Brook
- an at-grade signal controlled junction on the A40 ring-road, incorporating bus-only movements to and from Northway and a pedestrian and cycle crossing
- a cycle and pedestrian crossing at Stoke Place and connections to Barton and the surrounding countryside
- secondary all-vehicle access between the new development and Barton
- retention of the allotment land which is actively cultivated.

In addition, but not shown on the plan, there would be:

- a local centre at a point where the pedestrian and cycle routes intersect with the primary street
- a mix of housing types and sizes, with an emphasis on family homes and at least 40% affordable housing (social rent)
- a speed reduction on the ring-road to 40 mph
- design that: responds to the setting and natural assets of the development site to create a unique sense of place; makes efficient use of resources; and meets energy efficiency and low carbon targets
- a primary street linking the western end of the development site with Barton.

This strategy meets the objectives set for this Area Action Plan, including helping to act as a catalyst for regeneration in Barton and Northway.

## H. Ruskin College Proposals for Ruskin Fields

### Context

Located within the Area Action Plan boundary is Ruskin College's main Ruskin Hall site. Comprising approximately 6.5 hectares, the site sits between Dunstan Road in Old Headington and the ring-road. It comprises academic teaching buildings and accommodation, landscaped gardens, listed buildings (Smith House, the Rookery and the crinkle-crankle wall) and three fields. The whole extent of the Ruskin land falls within the Old Headington Conservation Area. The College occupies the most southerly part of the site closest to Dunstan Road which provides vehicular access. A covenant preventing building is attached to an area in the south-west of the site adjacent to neighbouring properties.

To the north of the land occupied by the College buildings, the Ruskin site slopes down towards the ring-road immediately to the north-west. This land comprises the Ruskin Fields. The fields are undeveloped and include hedgerows, mature trees and a pond that collects naturally draining water. The eastern edge of the Fields is bounded by the Stoke Place bridleway. To the west Ruskin Fields border another field. In the north-west the border is with land that forms a buffer to Foxwell Drive in Northway.

### Proposals by Ruskin College

Ruskin College has brought forward a proposal for development at Ruskin Fields. These proposals are being considered as part of this AAP process rather than through the City Council's Sites and Housing DPD.

The College proposes that the field area immediately to the north of its buildings (Field A, comprising approximately 1 hectare) will be improved and made more attractive and accessible as an amenity for the College with the public given controlled access. For the remaining three fields – B, C & D with a combined area of approximately 3.5 hectares – Ruskin College has brought forward a proposal for development of between 175 and 193 new homes. The proposals indicate that the homes would be a mix of 2 and 3 storeys. Field A would provide a landscaped buffer between the proposed development and the College site and Stoke Place. The amenity buffer zone would also continue along the eastern side of Field D to minimise impacts on the Stoke Place bridleway and the covenanted land.

Ruskin's proposals indicate that the new development could link to the existing networks of footways and cycleways at:

- Stoke Place
- Foxwell Drive
- the existing cycle track adjacent to the ring-road.

Three alternative options are put forward for vehicular access:

- all vehicular access via Foxwell Drive
- access via a left-in/left-out junction, either direct to the ring-road or from a service road running parallel to it
- (depending on its location) as part of an at-grade all-movement junction associated with the Land at Barton.

*Two maps showing the Ruskin College proposals for Ruskin Fields are attached as an annex to this draft document.*

### The status of the Ruskin College proposals

The status of these proposals is different from those set out elsewhere in this document. The proposals have been promoted by the landowner and have not been developed with the same on-going and close involvement of the local community and other stakeholders that has helped shape the preferred options. Nor are the Ruskin proposals underpinned with comparable specific and up-to-date evidence, particularly in terms of traffic modelling. Should the proposals be taken forward, further, more detailed



technical studies would be required, including a full Transport Assessment covering trip generation and the suitability of the proposed accesses.

The following factors need to be considered in weighing up the alternative options for vehicular access:

- an objective of this AAP is to ensure that there is no private vehicular access between the new development on the Land at Barton and Northway – access via Foxwell Drive would generate more trips through Northway
- access from the Ruskin Fields on to the ring-road could conflict with the proposed route of the Eastern Arc Rapid Transit
- it would be necessary to consider the implications on the preferred options for accessing the Land at Barton from the ring-road.

Vehicular access from the ring-road (or parallel service road) together with vehicular access via Foxwell Drive could cause rat-running in Northway and Old Headington.

The proposals would help deliver some of the objectives of this Area Action Plan. In particular, development on Ruskin Fields would deliver more homes. The development would need to comply with the Council's affordable housing policy, and so could provide around 100 affordable homes. Development on Ruskin Fields could also help integrate the planned new neighbourhood on the Land at Barton with Headington, particularly if homes in the two new residential areas south and north of the A40 were to face on to a road that has a new character.

The scale of the proposal seems likely to have an impact on the character of this part of the Old Headington Conservation Area. Ruskin Fields are identified in the Consultation Draft Conservation Appraisal as contributing to the rural and historic character of Old Headington. The view from Stoke Place across the Ruskin Fields to Elsfield is one of the most sensitive across and out of the Conservation Area. The less sensitive areas in terms of impact on the Conservation Area are those closest to Northway and the ring-road.

This stage of the AAP process is an important opportunity for the public to comment on significant emerging proposals. We would like to receive comments on the specific proposals put forward by Ruskin College. We would also like to hear views on the principle, scale, nature and/or location of a smaller-scale development at Ruskin Fields. Comments will be considered alongside those already received and documented by the City Council on Ruskin Fields in response to the Sites and Housing DPD Pre-Options consultation at the end of 2010.

## I. Implementation & Delivery

### Landownership

The great majority of the Land at Barton is owned by Oxford City Council.

Within the boundary of the development site lies the Headington Primary Substation which is owned by Scottish & Southern Energy (SSE). SSE's ownership extends to some 3.9 hectares. SSE has confirmed that approximately 50% of that area is surplus to its operational requirements. If desired it will be for the joint venture (see below) to engage with SSE to bring the land into the joint venture vehicle. The SSE land is not essential to the development and integrated new community on the Land at Barton.

Around 4.3 hectares of the Land at Barton is statutory allotment land. Of this, around 2.5 hectares is let to the Trustees of the Headington & District Allotment Association. Permission would be required from the Secretary of State for any disposal of the uncultivated allotment land.

### Minimising uncertainty

The Land at Barton is a priority housing delivery site for the City Council. The Council has an ambitious timetable to commence development in 2013. The current development market remains fragile for a range of economic reasons with lenders shying away from significant up-front investment. Uncertainty in delivery or other areas of risk reduces the marketability of opportunities, and interested parties attach a risk premium to expected returns.

This is a large infrastructure-led project which requires significant investment before serviced land is available to deliver the first new homes. The overall infrastructure and associated costs will be around £25m, and a large part of this funding will be required before returns can be made in the medium-term and at uncertain dates. In the current market these projects are more challenging to deliver due to their cash-flow profile: investors need to be even more convinced that this type of scheme is viable before committing to the spending required to deliver the site.

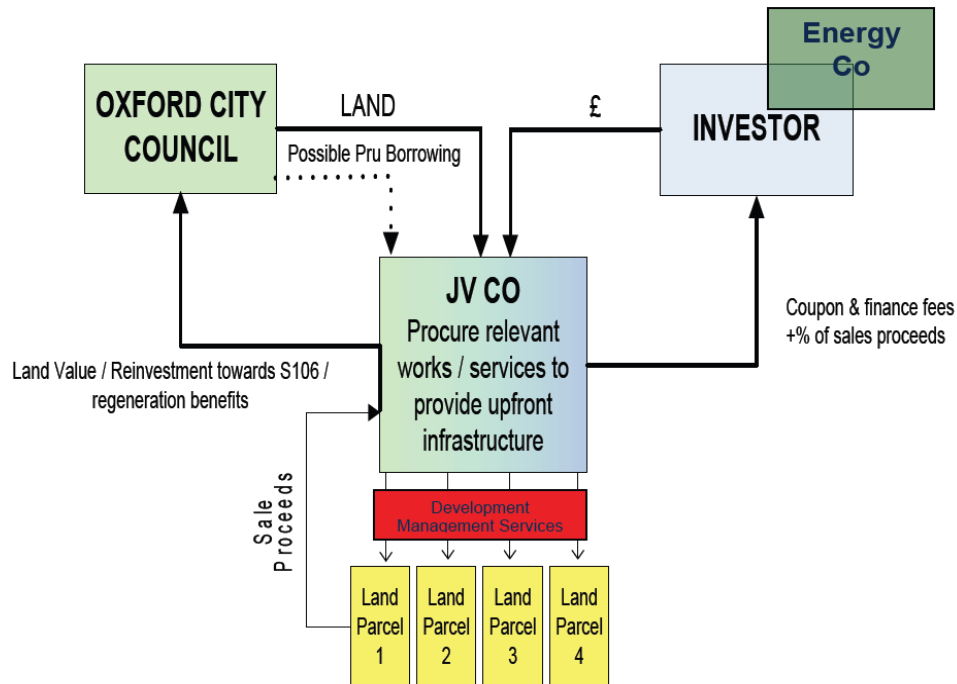
Potential developers/investors will particularly consider the following factors before committing funding:

- technical issues/abnormal costs, including landfill/remediation costs, transport provision including providing road access from the A40, undergrounding of electricity cables, removal of pylons
- Section 106 requirements, especially the need to make education provision
- the requirement for affordable housing.

The City Council, as landowner, commissioned advice from King Sturge and Eversheds on the best delivery method to ensure development commencing in 2013. It was concluded that the delivery option that best met the City Council's objectives was to seek a co-investment partner to enter into a joint venture vehicle to deliver the infrastructure and procure the services needed to bring forward the site. This is an innovative structure for a public sector landowner and is achievable within a timescale that allows the joint venture to input in to the AAP process.

This approach to delivery was agreed by the City Council in November 2010. The City Council is procuring an investment partner. The decision on the lead partner is due to be taken in May with the joint venture company established in June.

The joint venture vehicle is designed to maximise flexibility with the City Council having the ability to recycle returns in to the development to increase the amount of affordable housing or to draw down sites to develop for social rented housing. The following diagram shows how the joint venture structure may be established.



Details of the co-investment partnership for infrastructure funding route  
**The Joint Venture Vehicle and its objectives**

### Planning Obligations

The development of the Land at Barton will create additional demands for physical and social infrastructure. Planning obligations will be required to provide new infrastructure and make improvements to existing infrastructure. The starting point for determining the nature and scale of contributions will be the adopted Oxford Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

The overall viability will be taken into account in the decision on the level of planning obligations to be incorporated into the Section 106 agreement at the planning application(s) stage. A schedule of services, facilities and infrastructure, together with a timetable for their provision during the development of the Land at Barton, will be set out in a legal agreement. The joint venture will negotiate the planning obligations.

Further information is included at this stage on education and transport.

### Education

The costs of providing the on-site primary school will be met by the development as part of the infrastructure costs.

The new development will also increase the demand for secondary school places but will not warrant the construction of a new school. The additional places will be provided by extending buildings within the existing secondary school infrastructure. The developer will be expected to meet the costs of the additional secondary school places generated by the development. The cost will be calculated based on estimated pupil numbers, extant Department for Education cost multipliers and estimated future capacity in catchment secondary schools.

Where temporary accommodation is required to meet the needs for school places generated by the new development, the developer will be expected to pay the costs of providing or relocating temporary classrooms. Temporary accommodation is most economically met through locating upon an existing school site. The most appropriate location for any temporary primary school buildings is likely to be Bayards Hill School in Barton.

## Transport

The full cost of the following will be met by the development as part of the infrastructure costs:

- all on-site highways and transport infrastructure
- the A40 junction
- pedestrian and cycle links and associated off-site works to provide appropriate connections and/or necessary improvements to the existing networks
- ensuring on-site provision for public transport.

Oxfordshire County Council, as the Highway Authority, has indicated that to ensure that a development is viable, it may be appropriate for the directly required transport infrastructure works and measures to be of such a scale as to justify there being no further Section 106 contributions for transport.

## Affordable Housing

The preferred approach towards affordable housing on the Land at Barton is a site-specific requirement of a minimum of 40%, with 100% of that requirement social rented homes. This is because viability testing shows that 50% affordable housing is not achievable on the Land at Barton based on likely infrastructure, land remediation and other costs.

If market conditions improve during the lifetime of the AAP, the initial reduction in the affordable housing target will be recouped by recycling additional funding back in to the scheme. Such mechanisms could include reviewing the percentage target for affordable housing at the start of pre-determined phases or reviewing or recouping any uplift in value at the end of each phase.

## Phasing to ensure delivery

Certainty and timing of delivery is of paramount importance. The phasing of the development will have regard to the need to create a sustainable community from the outset and as the development progresses.

## Dealing with constraints

### Flood Risk:

A preliminary Flood Risk Assessment shows that an area of almost 3 hectares (8% of the site) is within Flood Zone 3a (high probability of flooding) and a further 3 hectares within Flood Zone 2 (medium probability of flooding). The remainder of the site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of flooding. Planning Policy Statement 25 'Development and Flood Risk' aims to steer development to areas of lower flood risk through the sequential test.

### Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS):

The proposed development will make use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) methods to reduce any increases in surface water run-off, taking into consideration present and future climate change scenarios. SUDS techniques include porous car parking, swales and attenuation ponds in public areas. The masterplanning will consider SUDS based on more detailed information on the layout and type of development, techniques to limit run-off from new development, run-off calculations and the scope to use the site topography to reduce flood risk.

If two or more homes or buildings discharge their surface water to a SUDS feature the lead Flood Authority (Oxfordshire County Council) would adopt it. The standard of construction and placement will be agreed with the lead Flood Authority before construction commences.

### Landfill:

The Land at Barton includes approximately 3.6 hectares of landfill dating from the late 1950s. The area is used as a sports ground. Preliminary geoenvironmental ground





investigation indicates that the landfill is thickest in the northern part of the area (up to 4.4 metres), thinning to grade into the pre-existing ground contours to the west, south and east. Surface topsoil is present as cover over the landfilled material.

**Electricity substation:**

Although the primary electricity substation will remain in use, the power lines will be rationalised, re-aligned and buried in order to minimise their impacts on development. A 5 metre buffer must be left around the substation for access and maintenance purposes. An existing footpath is included within the 5 metres.

**Other buffers:**

Bayswater Brook: The Environment Agency requires a buffer of 8 metres (measured from the top of the bank) along the Brook to carry out essential maintenance work.

Sewer: A 3 metre buffer is required on either side (unless diverted – further information will be required on level, gradient and flow in order to understand feasibility).

Noise: Planning Policy Guidance 24 'Planning and Noise' Noise Exposure Category (NEC) A applies, ie. noise is unlikely to be a determining factor in granting planning permission.

Gas main: 15 metres. There are standard clearances associated with this pressure of gas main relating to, amongst other things, excavations, the laying of services or sewers close to the main, and crossing the main with roads etc. There is also a requirement for prior approval for planting trees and bushes close to the mains to ensure that root damage is avoided. The 15 metre clearance incorporates NEC Zone A.



## J. Next Steps

This Preferred Options document is an important opportunity for those with an interest in the future of the Land at Barton and the surrounding communities to contribute their views about the options presented here. The period for making comments is 6 May to 17 June. You can let us have your views by visiting the City Council's website ([www.oxford.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/ldf)) or by completing and returning a questionnaire available from the City Council offices.

The responses to this consultation will help inform the draft AAP that the City Council will submit to the Secretary of State. Known as the Proposed Submission document, it will be published in Autumn 2011 when there will be another chance for the public and stakeholders to comment. The AAP is due to be submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2012 and adopted in October 2012.

## Glossary

### **Affordable housing:**

Dwellings at a rent or price that can be afforded by people who are in housing need and would otherwise be accommodated by the City Council.

### **Affordable rent:**

A new model whereby homes will be offered by Registered Providers of social housing at a rent of up to 80% of the local market rent and for a tenancy that can range from two years to a lifetime.

### **Area Action Plan (AAP):**

A Development Plan Document that forms part of the Local Development Framework. They are used to provide the planning framework for areas subject to significant change and/or where conservation is needed. A key feature of area action plans is a focus on implementation. Once adopted the AAP forms the planning policy and spatial framework for the development of the area.

### **At-grade:**

At the same level. Here, an at-grade junction or crossing of the ring-road would occur at surface level.

### **Building for Life:**

Building for Life is the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. Assessments are scored against 20 Building for Life criteria covering: environment and community; character; streets, parking and pedestrianisation; and design and construction.

### **CABE:**

Between 1999 and 2011 the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment advised government on architecture, urban design and public space.

### **Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH):**

The national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. The Code aims to reduce carbon emissions resulting from fuel usage for lighting, heating and power and create homes that are more sustainable. It has been mandatory for all new homes to be rated against the Code since 2008. The standard is currently set to CSH Level 3, increasing to CSH Level 4 in 2013. The current goal is to achieve zero-carbon homes (CSH Level 6) in 2016.

### **Combined Heat and Power (CHP):**

Sometimes known as Co-generation, Combined Heat and Power is the use of a single piece of plant to generate both heat and electricity. In conventional power generation large quantities of energy in the form of heat are wasted. CHP is much more efficient. Although not a renewable technology, it can be combined with sustainable fuels to provide low cost heating that has a minimal carbon footprint.

### **Core Strategy:**

A Development Plan Document that forms part of the Local Development Framework and contains policies against which planning applications are assessed.

### **Development Plan Document (DPD):**

Documents that collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority's area. They include Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

### **Extra Care Housing:**

A type of specialised housing for older and disabled people. It is purpose-built accommodation in which 24 hour personal care and support can be offered and where various other services are shared. Also known as 'assisted living', 'close care' and 'very sheltered housing'.

### **Grade-separated:**

At different levels. Here, a new grade-separated (pedestrian/cycle) crossing of the ring-road would be a bridge. The existing subway is grade-separated.



**HBF:**

Home Builders Federation

**Homes and Communities Agency (HCA):**

The national housing and regeneration agency. Its role is to create opportunities for people to live in high quality, sustainable places. It provides funding for affordable housing, brings land back into productive use and improves quality of life by raising standards for the physical and social environment.

**Local Development Framework (LDF):**

A non-statutory term used to describe the portfolio of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, the Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Report.

**Local Investment Plan (LIP):**

A non-statutory document that sets out priorities for delivering housing growth, economic development, regeneration and infrastructure. Prepared in Oxfordshire by the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership as result of the 'Single Conversation' with the Homes and Communities Agency.

**Photovoltaic Cells:**

A renewable source of energy that converts solar energy into electrical energy.

**Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS):**

Documents that set out the Government's national policies on different aspects of land use planning in England.

**Proposals Map:**

A map of Oxford forming part of the Local Development Framework and illustrating particular areas of land to which Development Plan Document policies apply.

**Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC):**

A site containing habitats, plants and animals important in the context of Oxford.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

Areas identified by Natural England as being of special interest for their ecological or geological features. Natural England is the government's advisor on the natural environment.

**SSE:**

Scottish and Southern Energy.

**Section 106 Agreements (s106):**

Section 106 agreements (also known as Planning Obligations) are created under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. They are legally binding obligations that are attached to a piece of land and are registered as local land charges against that piece of land. They are negotiated, usually in the context of planning applications, between local planning authorities and persons with an interest in a piece of land. They are intended to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. They enable councils to secure contributions towards services, infrastructure and amenities to support and facilitate a proposed development.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD):**

Part of the LDF that supplements and elaborates on policies and proposals in Development Plan Documents. Supplementary planning documents do not form part of the statutory development plan.

**Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems:**

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, or SUDS, are a sequence of water management practices and facilities designed to drain surface water. These include porous roads, high level road drainage, swales, soak aways, filter trenches, wet and dry ponds and ditches. SUDS helps mimic natural drainage processes and can provide benefits in terms of sustainability, water quality and amenity.



**Sustainable Community Strategy:**

A strategy produced by a Local Strategic Partnership that sets the vision for an area and identifies the key areas where the partnership feels it can add value.

## Background Documents

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- King Sturge, Land at Barton Financial Viability Assessment, 2011
- Oxford City Council, Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document, Jan. 2008
- Oxford City Council, Barton Area Action Plan, Issues document, June 2010
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- Oxford City Council, Old Headington Conservation Area Appraisal: Consultation Draft, March 2011
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- Oxford City Council, Sites and Housing DPD: Pre-Options, Report on Public Consultation, Feb. 2011
- Oxford Strategic Partnership, Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2012
- Oxfordshire Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership, Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan, March 2010
- Peter Brett Associates, Land at Barton Oxford, Preliminary Transport Technical Appraisal Report and Appendices, July 2009
- Peter Brett Associates, Transport Technical Note 1: Site Access Constraints, Opportunities and Preliminary Access Strategy, April 2009
- Peter Brett Associates, Transport Technical Note 2: Summary of Proposed Methodology to Assess Traffic Impacts, Feb. 2010
- Peter Brett Associates, Transport Technical Note 3: Calculation of Person Trip Rates, March 2010
- Peter Brett Associates, Transport Technical Note 4: Outline Travel Demand Management Strategy, May 2010



Peter Brett Associates, Transport Technical Note 5: Trip Distribution, Base Mode Share, Proposed Mode Shift and Future Mode Share, May 2010

Peter Brett Associates, Transport Technical Note 6: Assessment of Site Access Options, Sept. 2010

West Waddy ADP, Ruskin Fields: Development promotion for Ruskin College, Oxford, Jan. 2011