

# Agenda

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## City Executive Board

Date: **Wednesday 22 January 2014**

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Time: **5.00 pm**

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Place: **Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford**

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For any further information please contact:

**William Reed, Democratic Services Manager**

Telephone: 01865 252230

Email: [wreed@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:wreed@oxford.gov.uk)

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If you would like help to understand this document please call William Reed, Democratic Services Manager or in advance of the meeting.

# City Executive Board

## Membership

### Chair

<b>Councillor Bob Price</b>	Corporate Governance, Strategic Partnerships and Economic Development
<b>Councillor Ed Turner</b>	Finance, Efficiency and Strategic Asset Management
<b>Councillor Susan Brown</b>	Benefits and Customer Services
<b>Councillor Colin Cook</b>	City Development
<b>Councillor Steven Curran</b>	Youth and Communities
<b>Councillor Pat Kennedy</b>	Education, Crime and Community Safety
<b>Councillor Mark Lygo</b>	Parks and Sports
<b>Councillor Mike Rowley</b>	Leisure Services
<b>Councillor Scott Seamons</b>	Housing
<b>Councillor John Tanner</b>	Cleaner, Greener Oxford

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# AGENDA

## PART ONE PUBLIC BUSINESS

Pages

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Board Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in any of the following agenda items. Guidance is contained at the end of these agenda pages.

**3 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

When the chair agrees, questions from the public for up to 15 minutes – these must be about the items for decision at the meeting (excluding the minutes) and must have been given to the Head of Law and Governance by 9.30 am on a day so that there are two clear working days before the meeting (email [executiveboard@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:executiveboard@oxford.gov.uk) or telephone the person named as staff contact). No supplementary questions or questioning will be permitted. Questions by the public will be taken as read and, when the Chair agrees, be responded to at the meeting.

**4 COUNCILLOR ADDRESSES ON ANY ITEM FOR DECISION ON THE BOARD'S AGENDA**

**5 NORTHERN GATEWAY AREA ACTION PLAN - OPTIONS DOCUMENT**

1 - 32

Lead Member: Councillor Cook, Executive Board Member for City Development

Report of the Head of City Development

The Northern Gateway Area Action Plan (AAP) Options Document is the first major stage towards producing an action plan for this important City Council project. Information that is gathered through the consultation that will follow will be used to shape the proposed Submission Document that will follow in the summer.

City Executive Board is recommended to:-

- (1) Approve the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan Options Document for consultation;
- (2) Approve the proposed amendment to the Local Development Scheme; and;

- (3) Authorise the Head of City Development, in consultation with the Executive Board Member, to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document and to agree the design version before publication

## **6 NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM DESIGNATIONS**

33 - 54

Lead Member: Councillor Cook, Executive Board Member for City Development

Report of the Head of City Development

The Localism Act has introduced new rights and powers to enable communities to get directly involved in planning for their areas. Interested communities will be able to come together through a neighbourhood forum and produce a neighbourhood plan.

The report asks City Executive Board to consider two proposed neighbourhood forums for designation. Neighbourhood forum applications must link to a designed neighbourhood area. The neighbourhood areas the forum applications relate to are Wolvercote (following the ward boundary) and Summertown and St Margaret's (following both ward boundaries). Maps of the areas are shown in Appendix 1.

City Executive Board is recommended to designate the two proposed neighbourhood forums.

## **7 23-25 BROAD STREET - LETTING**

55 - 62

Lead Member: Councillor Turner, Executive Board Member for Finance, Efficiency and Strategic Asset Management

Report of the Regeneration and Major Projects Team Manager.  
There is not for publication appendix attached at item 11

This report seeks approval to the letting of the retail premises, 23-25 Broad Street, shown hatched on the plan attached at Appendix 1.

City Executive Board is recommended to:-

- (1) Approve the proposed letting of 23-25 Broad Street, Oxford on the terms as detailed in the Not for Publication Appendix 4 of this report and otherwise on terms and conditions to be approved by the Service Manager, Regeneration and Major Projects.
- (2) Give authority to the Service Manager, Regeneration and Major Projects, to vary the proposed letting or tenant party as detailed in the report provided the transaction continues to represent best consideration.

## **8 FUTURE ITEMS**

This item is included on the agenda to give members the opportunity to raise

issues on the Forward Plan or update the Board about future agenda items.

**9 MINUTES**

63 - 70

Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013

**10 MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION**

If the Board wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for the Board to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Board may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**PART TWO**  
**MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION**

**11 23-25 BROAD STREET OXFORD - LETTING**

71 - 72

This paper is a not for publication appendix to the report at agenda item 7

It contains information concerning the terms of the proposed lease.

The public interest in maintaining the exemption from publication is in order not to compromise commercially sensitive information.

## **DECLARING INTERESTS**

### **General duty**

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

### **What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?**

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your\* employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licences for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

### **Declaring an interest**

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest.

If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

### **Members' Code of Conduct and public perception**

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". What this means is that the matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

\*Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those of the member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

**To: City Executive Board**

**Date: 22 January 2014**

**Report of: Head of City Development**

**Title of Report: NORTHERN GATEWAY AREA ACTION PLAN: OPTIONS DOCUMENT**

## Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** City Executive Board is requested to approve the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan Options Document for public consultation.

**Key decision?** No

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Colin Cook

**Policy Framework:**

**Recommendation(s):**

1. approve the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan Options Document for consultation;
2. approve the proposed amendment to the Local Development Scheme; and
3. authorise the Head of City Development, in consultation with the Executive Board Member, to make any necessary editorial corrections to the document and to agree the designed version before publication.

Appendix 1 – Options Document

Appendix 2 – Proposed amendment to the Local Development Scheme

Appendix 3 – Risk Register

Appendix 4 – Initial EqIA Screening

## **Summary**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan (AAP) Options Document for consultation. The document is the first major stage towards producing an AAP for this important City Council project. Information that is gathered through the consultation will be used to shape the Proposed Submission Document that will follow in the Summer.

## **Background to the Northern Gateway project**

2. The Core Strategy allocates the Northern Gateway as a strategic employment-led development site. The Core Strategy states that an Area Action Plan will be produced to bring forward development on this site. Situated at Pear Tree in the north of the city, the site is a rare opportunity to provide significant new

floorspace within the city for the innovation and knowledge-based sector that is so important to Oxford's and the regional/national economy. The development also offers the opportunity to provide additional new homes and associated facilities in the form of a thriving and vibrant new community that forms part of Oxford.

3. The Core Strategy is the starting point for the work on the Northern Gateway AAP. However as time has moved on since the Core Strategy was adopted, the AAP will need to be based on up to date evidence and reflect additional factors such as City Deal and the emerging Strategic Housing Market Assessment work, that have arisen in the meantime. In the AAP Options Document we are therefore testing a range of options for size and mix of development which include those in the Core Strategy but are not confined to them.

### The Options Document

4. This Options Document is the first 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 and collaboration with the local community and other stakeholders.
5. The Northern Gateway AAP has six objectives:
  - Strengthen Oxford's knowledge-based economy
  - Provide more housing
  - Improve the local and strategic road network
  - Respond to the context of the natural and historic environment
  - Create a gateway to Oxford
  - Encourage a low-carbon lifestyle/economy
6. The document is structured as follows:

Context:	the strategic policy and site context
Vision & Objectives:	vision for the development and objectives for the AAP
Options:	the preferred options for the AAP based on four themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance and mix of uses</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Environment and sustainability</li> </ul>
Preferred Strategy:	how the preferred options combine together to form the preferred strategy for the AAP
Implementation & delivery:	the key implementation and delivery issues and the ways in which they will be addressed to create certainty
Next steps:	The on-going AAP process

7. The preferred options combine together to form the preferred strategy or framework for future development of the Northern Gateway. The components include:

- Focus of the site to be on providing employment development to support the knowledge economy
  - Provision of around 500 new homes
  - Provision of a package of access and highway measures including improvements to Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts and provision of new link road between the A40 and A44
  - Provision of additional spaces at the Park and Ride by decking the site
  - Provision of improved public transport interchange and passenger facilities
  - Provision of a design code to inform the detailed design of the development
  - Carry out a review of the inner Green Belt boundary (only within the AAP area)
  - Provision of a good quality living environment for new residents
  - A mix of housing types and sizes and seek at 50% affordable housing
8. Behind this document sits an evidence base that has been compiled to provide background information and studies of the area to inform the AAP process. The background documents will be available on the City Council website during (and after) the period of consultation.
9. Alongside production of the AAP a Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out to ensure that the plan considers the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of policies and proposals. This is available for Members to view in the Members Room and will be published alongside the AAP.
10. The version of the document attached to this report as appendix 1 is not in its final designed format. Included with the text are several maps and illustrations which will form part of the Options Document when fully designed.

### **Public Involvement**

11. It is important to note that whilst the Options Document is the first document produced during the AAP process, public involvement and consultation has already begun on the Northern Gateway project. The main elements of early consultation have included meetings with stakeholders (e.g. Environment Agency, Highways Agency), service providers (e.g. Local Education Authority, Emergency Services), and neighbouring authorities (e.g. Cherwell and South Oxfordshire District Councils; meetings with local groups and organisations (e.g. representatives of Wolvercote Commoners and Engage Oxford) and, importantly, close working with the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan group.
12. Officers have attended meetings of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan group and assisted them in running their public workshop, which over 100 members of the public attended. At that meeting there was a series of brief presentations setting the context of the AAP project and the remainder of the evening was structured as a workshop with table discussions facilitated by members of Wolvercote Steering Group and officers of the City and County Councils. This meeting was well received and forms a good basis for moving forward with further public involvement.

### Consultation approach

13. This is the first formal stage of consultation; the Options Document is an important opportunity for the public and stakeholders to contribute to the future planning of the Northern Gateway. It is being published to stimulate debate and to invite comments on the realistic options that are available. It is hoped that everyone with an interest in the future of the area – residents, community groups, local organisations, businesses, employers, and providers of infrastructure and services – will take the opportunity to respond to the consultation with their views about the options presented.
14. The Options Document will be subject to a six-week consultation period programmed to run between 14<sup>th</sup> February and 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013. To commence this consultation, notification will be sent to everyone that has registered an interest in planning and regeneration issues on the City Council's consultation database; those groups and organisations that have been identified as having an interest in the future of the area; and statutory consultees.
15. A wide range of different tools will be used to publicise the consultation and gather views from the community and stakeholders. These may include exhibitions, drop-in sessions, a summary leaflet, questionnaires, the City Council website and newsletter, press release, posters, attendance at meetings with local groups and organisations and with partners and stakeholders. The Options Document will be made available online, in local and the central libraries and sent to the statutory consultees.
16. Information that is gathered through the consultation will help inform the draft AAP that the City Council will submit to the Secretary of State. A Proposed Submission Document will be published in Summer 2013 when there will be another opportunity for the public and stakeholders to comment.

### AAP timetable

17. The following timetable reflects the City Council's ambition to progress the AAP swiftly in order to see development commence promptly.

Early work to develop Options	September 2013 – January 2014
Consult on Options Document	February – March 2014
Consult on Proposed Submission document	July 2014
Submit the AAP to the Secretary of State	September 2014
Hold examination hearing sessions	January 2015
Receive Inspector's Report	May 2015
Adopt AAP	May 2015

18. The Council's Local Development Scheme sets out a three-year work programme for producing planning policy documents. In order to keep the LDS up-to-date it is proposed that an amendment is made to reflect the

timetable for the Northern Gateway AAP. CEB is also requested to approve the proposed amendment to the LDS as set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

### **Level of risk**

19. The contribution of new development at the Northern Gateway is a key priority for the City Council, fundamental to achieving the objectives of the Oxford Corporate Plan, the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Core Strategy and the Economic Strategy for Oxford. Failure to deliver this development will lead to problems in delivering the Core Strategy and hamper the potential for economic growth.
20. The production of the AAP will require resources in terms of staff time, the commissioning of specialist studies and examination costs.
21. The risk register is attached as Appendix 3.

### **Climate change and environmental impact**

22. The AAP objectives seek to encourage a low carbon lifestyle/economy by: encouraging people to walk, cycle and use public transport; providing new homes and buildings that use energy and water efficiently; and, by making effective use of renewable and low-carbon energy.
23. The AAP, like all other planning policy documents, is subject to the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment process. That process uses sustainability indicators to assess the potential impact of development options emerging from the AAP.

### **Equalities impact**

24. A key theme of the Core Strategy is the focus on providing employment and housing opportunities and this is reflected in the Northern Gateway AAP objectives. An Initial EqIA Screening is attached at Appendix 4.

### **Financial implications**

25. The costs associated with the production of the AAP are being met through the current resources of the Planning Policy team and budget.

### **Legal Implications**

26. There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report. There are legal requirements that must be followed through the production of the AAP which will be considered by the Inspector at examination.

### **Name and contact details of author:-**

Name Rachel Williams  
Job title Principal Planning Officer  
Service Area / Department City Development  
Tel: 01865 252170 e-mail: [rwilliams@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:rwilliams@oxford.gov.uk)

List of background papers: None

Version number: 1

# Northern Gateway Area Action Plan – Options Document



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## Foreword

The vision for the Northern Gateway is to create an employment area which will build on the strengths of Oxford's economy in the key sectors of education, health, research and development, and knowledge-based businesses. The development of the Northern Gateway offers the opportunity for existing and new firms to relocate and ensure that Oxford's economy continues to grow. There is scope for the provision of new residential accommodation to help meet Oxford's housing needs and also some complementary uses, which may include retail and hotel use, to enhance the sense of place and add vitality and sustainability.

This development provides an opportunity to bring benefits to neighbouring communities. Significant resources will be directed to improving the local highway and footpath/cycle network to benefit users of all forms of transport. This will include capacity improvements to both the Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts and the provision of a new link road between the A40 and A44 to remove much of the through traffic from the area and to improve the character and local environment along these main roads. The new employment opportunities and community facilities will benefit new and existing residents alike.

To take this project forwards we are working closely with a range of stakeholders and importantly with the County Council. We are very keen to involve the local community in drawing up plans for the area. We want to hear the ideas of as many people as possible so that the best solution is found, not just for the new residents but for the existing communities too.

## Introduction

### What is an Area Action Plan?

We will be producing an Area Action Plan (AAP) to guide the future development and changes at the Northern Gateway. AAPs focus on the implementation of policy in a specific location. They are an important way of ensuring development of an appropriate scale, mix, and quality for key sites. The AAP will look at things such as what transport improvements will be required, what mix of flats and houses there should be, and what community facilities will be needed. It will also look at how the development relates to, and links with, neighbouring communities. By guiding the types of development to take

place, and setting out when and how the development will take place, the Area Action Plan will become the key document through which the vision and objectives for the Northern Gateway can be secured and achieved. The boundary will define the area that the policies of the AAP will relate to; planning applications inside the boundary will be assessed against them. Inclusion within the boundary does not signify that a property will necessarily be subject to change; the boundary has no impact on land ownerships for example.

### **What is an Options Document?**

An Options Document is one of the steps along the way towards an AAP. This document details and offers for consultation the options and suggestions generated so far in the production of the AAP. The City Council has already undertaken a considerable amount of background work and collaboration with partners, local people, businesses, and others with an interest in the future of Oxford. This background work has enabled the City Council to put forward draft development principles, policies and options for consultation. The most promising options that were identified for the AAP have been included in this document. They have been assessed in a Sustainability Appraisal report, which accompanies this document. However, it is still necessary to assess which options or combination of options is most appropriate for the Northern Gateway. Alongside the consultation on this document, and the Sustainability Appraisal work, technical studies will be carried out to determine which options to pursue in the final AAP.

### **How is the document structured?**

- Context: describes the current situation in the area and the proposed role of the site in the wider city context
- Vision and objectives: identifies aims for the project
- Options: the document examines the options for development and options for the ways to meet the objectives
- Delivery: considers how to implement the strategy and outlines what infrastructure would be needed

## **Context**

### **Policy Context:**

The City Council has to provide more housing and employment, so it produced a Core Strategy to work out where and when this can be built. The development site at Pear Tree has been identified for some time as being capable of providing for long term growth. This site was allocated as a strategic development site in the Core Strategy called the Northern Gateway, this means that the Northern Gateway must be developed in order to deliver the Core Strategy and that no development on this site is not an option that can be taken forward.

The Core Strategy allocates the site for an employment-led development providing around 55,000m<sup>2</sup> of space for science, research and development and/or university spin-off companies up to 2026 (the end date of the Core Strategy) but up to 80,000m<sup>2</sup> in total including development after that date. In addition the allocation would allow any of the following: an emergency services centre, 200 residential dwellings, small retail units and a hotel.

The Core Strategy clearly states that development will be expected to incorporate a package of transport measures including capacity improvements to roads and junctions and demand management measures to mitigate the impact of the development on the local and strategic road network. Importantly these improvements would be tied to phases of the development to ensure that the infrastructure is provided in advance and alongside the development.

In addition, the residential element of the development would be required to be planned in such a way as to ensure that future residents benefit from a good quality living environment and that the new community is supported with the required amenities such as provision of school places and open space.

### **Site Context:**

The aerial photograph on the cover shows the site. It includes the service area at the Pear Tree roundabout and the Park and Ride site, the fields to the south, (including both sides of the A44 and A40), and the commercial properties at the Wolvercote roundabout. This does not mean that these facilities will be lost, rather that in planning the development, the site needs to be considered as a whole in order to offer the best options for development. The site within the AAP boundary is approximately 44 hectares.

The main land uses in the area include; agricultural grazing, the Pear Tree Park and Ride site, and the service area. The wider area also includes a range of commercial enterprises, close to the Wolvercote roundabout. There is a small area of Green Belt land at Pear Tree Hill Farm and a larger area of Green Belt land to the south of the A40.

The area has been assessed as having low landscape quality, biodiversity interest and historic integrity<sup>1</sup>. Despite this, the area is in a visually sensitive location, at the gateway to Oxford from the north. It also forms a setting to Wolvercote Conservation Area, the historic Goose Green and the Thames floodplain, and for these reasons its sensitivity may be described as moderate. Goose Green is a registered common and is an important open space in the area, which needs to be protected from development.

The land is entirely within Flood Zone 1. The city-wide Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was reviewed in 2011. As a result of this review, a part of the site is suspected to be prone to surface water flooding. The site itself is of relatively low ecological value however 500m from the site boundary is the internationally protected Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Oxford Meadows SAC is protected because of the habitats, (lowland hay meadows), and rare plant species, (creeping marshwort *Apium repens*).

The main constraint to development relates to access and traffic generation. The area around the Northern Gateway experiences significant peak-hour congestion and a package of highways and transport mitigation measures will need to be found and funded.

## Vision and Objectives

### The vision:

In 2030, the Northern Gateway has become a vibrant and successful extension to Oxford. It is a flourishing community for knowledge-based industries. Co-location of new and growing businesses, close links to the universities and hospitals and a high quality working environment have helped foster a creative atmosphere where innovation thrives.

Attractive new buildings, streets and open spaces add to its strong local character, making it a distinctive part of the city. The emphasis on quality and sustainability has made it an example for other new communities in the 21st century.

Modern new homes with access to community facilities and open spaces have also made this a desirable place to live. The mix of housing has helped to encourage a balance of residents, with young and old, families and singles living together. New amenities provide a focus for the community, providing a range of facilities and services for local people. This complements the facilities available in neighbouring areas for the benefit of the wider community.

The Northern Gateway development helped deliver key improvements to the local transport network and enabled the securing of funds to provide wider transport improvements to the strategic network. On foot, bicycle and public transport, the area is now well connected with surrounding communities and the city centre, linking places of work and homes.. Pedestrian routes linking open spaces and community facilities are safe and easy to use.

### Objectives for the Area Action Plan:

The objectives will be the key aims of the project and a way to measure success or failure.

#### Objective 1 – Strengthen Oxford’s knowledge-based economy

Providing additional floor space related to Oxford’s key strengths in science and technology, research and development, and/or non-teaching university development, will strengthen the city’s economy and help deliver a nationally important ‘knowledge economy spine’ for Oxfordshire.

#### Objective 2 – Provide more housing

The project provides the opportunity to deliver additional housing including affordable housing to help address the need in Oxford. The housing will need to be designed in a way that provides an attractive living environment and supports a strong community feel with access to the necessary amenities.

#### Objective 3 – Improve the local and strategic road network

The site is adjacent to three strategic roads and the area already experiences congestion. Development of the site will help to facilitate a package of improvements to the local and strategic road network whilst also ensuring that the impact of the development is mitigated. It will be important to integrate the development with the rest of the city, particularly with good pedestrian, cycle and bus links.

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<sup>1</sup>A Character Assessment of Oxford in its Landscape Setting (2002) Land Use Consultants ([www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway)) page 283

**Objective 4 – Respond to the context of the natural and historic environment**

It is important to consider the context of the development in terms of the natural and historic assets of the site and locality. New development should respond positively to its surroundings.

**Objective 5 – Create a gateway to Oxford**

The site is at a strategically important position at the northern entrance to the city and offers the opportunity to create a high-quality gateway. Careful attention to the urban design of the site and the architectural design of the individual buildings will be important to help create a positive and distinctive sense of place.

**Objective 6 – Encourage a low-carbon lifestyle/economy**

This development will be planned with the future in mind. It will be important to include features which will encourage new residents and businesses to adopt a “low-carbon” lifestyle. The development should encourage use of sustainable modes of travel and energy efficiency measures and renewable energy.

# Options

## **Balance and mix of uses:**

One of the key decisions that the AAP will make will be about the type of land uses that will be permitted at Northern Gateway and the balance to be struck between those uses.

## **Type of employment**

The starting point for this decision is the Core Strategy allocation. Within the context of the city as a whole, it has already been established that the Northern Gateway site should have an employment focus. This in turn should build on the strengths of Oxford's economy in the key sectors of education, health, research and development, and knowledge-based businesses. It will be important that this is not a generic business park, but one that is closely tied to the innovation and knowledge economy.

The Oxford Employment Land Study identified the safeguarded land at Pear Tree as the *"principal opportunity to meet Oxford's future employment needs"*. Whilst this study is now seven years old and pre-dates the credit-crunch, the authors' state: *"this longer timescale would be expected to cover different economic cycles, including periods of both economic downturn and stronger growth, the forecasts have reflected this."*<sup>2</sup> The Oxford Economic Growth Strategy was produced earlier this year to provide an updated analysis of Oxford's economy, it states: *"Oxford is a national asset and essential to the future of the UK and the regional economy as a whole."* and describes the city as *"the engine of Oxfordshire's economy"*. In October 2013 the University of Oxford published a report by SQW which sets out the role and contribution the University makes to the city, regional and national economy. This report states that, *"Oxford has to grow to fulfil its role within the high tech economy."* The consultants consider the, *"greatest potential for sustainable growth is to the north of the city around Begbroke, the new Northern Gateway (Peartree) and the planned new rail station at Water Eaton."*<sup>3</sup>

The thread running through all these studies is that if Oxford is going to continue to have an important role in these sectors nationally, it is important that there are opportunities within the city to provide more floor space to support them. The development of the Northern Gateway offers the opportunity for existing and new firms to relocate and ensure that Oxford's economy continues to grow.

## **Type of employment:**

Preferred Option	Ensure the employment development directly relates to the knowledge economy of Oxford (science and technology research, bio-technology and spin-off companies from the universities and hospitals)
Alternative Option	Ensure that a set proportion (for example 85%) of the development directly relates to the knowledge economy of Oxford

## **Primary uses**

The primary focus for this site is to provide significant levels of employment generating uses, with complimentary housing. It will be particularly important to create the right balance and mix of these uses to ensure that it contributes effectively towards meeting the city's varied needs but also forms a sustainable and vibrant new area of the city in its own right – an area that people will want to live and/or work in.

Oxford's need for more housing is well established and documented; the Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment<sup>4</sup> concludes that there is a need for 64,189 new dwellings in Oxford over the next 10 years in order to meet demand. This equates to an annual average demand of 6,418 dwellings. Considering that the current number of dwellings in Oxford is 54,546 dwellings, to meet demand would mean at least doubling the size of Oxford as it currently stands. Oxford would never be able to match this need within its boundaries due to its scale. The Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment is currently under review and when complete will provide an up-to-date picture of the housing need of the city (and more widely, the county). This new work is likely to demonstrate that the housing need is far greater than Oxford can physically provide in a sustainable manner.

Whilst the focus is on employment development, given the scale of the need for additional housing in the city it is clear that if an element of housing can be provided alongside the employment uses it would be of benefit to the city as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> Validity of Employment Land Review Estimates (2010) Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners

(<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/CoreStrategyCD1427aOxfordEmploymentLandStudyUpdateNote.pdf>)

<sup>3</sup> The Oxfordshire Innovation Engine (2013) SQW ([http://www.sqw.co.uk/file\\_download/411](http://www.sqw.co.uk/file_download/411)); paragraph 7.23

<sup>4</sup> Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment (2007) (<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/7709527OxfordshireHousingMarketAssessment.pdf>)

Beyond this strategic objective, introducing an element of residential use to a site that is mainly occupied during office hours would add to the vibrancy and vitality of the development.

**Primary mix:**

Preferred Option	Maintain an employment focus for the site whilst achieving good levels of housing provision
Alternative Option 1	Reduce focus on employment uses and increase the levels of housing provision
Alternative Option 2	Reduce provision of housing and maximise development of employment uses

Detailed design work will be required to establish the actual capacity of the site and how much of each of these uses can be delivered without compromising the quality or functionality of the development. This work will follow at later stages of the AAP process. However looking at each of these uses in principle we can start to explore the likely scale of provision even if framed within ranges.

**Scale of employment uses:**

Preferred Option	Place no upper limit on the quantum of employment development but leave it to design constraints to determine the appropriate level
Alternative Option 1	Provide up to 80,000m <sup>2</sup> of employment development (based on that indicated in the Core Strategy)
Alternative Option 2	Provide up to 55,000m <sup>2</sup> of employment development (based on policy allocation up to 2026 in the Core Strategy but without the indicated development beyond that)
Alternative Option 3	Provide up to 90,000m <sup>2</sup> of employment development (based on the Core Strategy indication and an additional 10,000m <sup>2</sup> as alternative to emergency services centre)

**Scale of residential uses:**

Preferred Option	Provide a mid-sized residential development (e.g. up to 500 homes)
Alternative Option 1	Provide a smaller number of homes (e.g. up to 200 homes, based on the policy allocation up to 2026 in the Core Strategy)
Alternative Option 2	Provide a larger number of homes (e.g. up to 800 homes)

**Secondary uses**

A secondary consideration is what additional or supporting uses should be provided. The Core Strategy allocation would permit any of the following: an emergency services centre, hotel with leisure uses and small scale retail facilities. Introducing other small scale uses alongside the primary mix would offer new employees and residents the opportunity to access facilities and services locally. This would help to make the main development more sustainable and also add extra vitality to the site.

**Retail uses:**

Preferred Option	Provide small retail units of an appropriate local scale on the site (e.g. up to 2,500m <sup>2</sup> gross floorspace)
Alternative Option 1	Remove the retail uses to facilitate more development of the primary uses
Alternative Option 2	Provide for a mid-sized supermarket on the site (e.g. around 4,000m <sup>2</sup> gross floorspace)
Alternative Option 3	Provide for a mid-sized supermarket (e.g. around 4,000m <sup>2</sup> gross floorspace) and some smaller retail units (e.g. up to 2,500m <sup>2</sup> gross floorspace)

**Hotel with leisure uses:**

Preferred Option	Provide for a hotel on the site (e.g. up to 180 bedrooms) with associated leisure facilities (e.g. restaurant and gym)
Alternative Option	Remove the hotel to facilitate more development of primary uses

**Emergency Services Centre:**

Preferred Option	Remove the emergency services centre to facilitate more development of primary uses
Alternative Option	Provide for an emergency services centre on the site (e.g. up to 10,000m <sup>2</sup> ). Make policy provision for this allocation to revert to employment use if not delivered by a particular phase of the development.

**Education**

When planning for a new community it is clearly important to plan for the necessary supporting amenities that will make the community more sustainable and desirable. There is a range of facilities and services within reach of the site

particularly within neighbouring residential areas and Summertown District Centre. Ease of access to school places for additional children who will be resident in the area needs to be secured. In their role as Local Education Authority the County Council have assessed the likely numbers of pupils that will come forward from the Northern Gateway in a range of development scenarios. This calculation has then been used in conjunction with an assessment of current school capacities and likely development from other sites in the area, to assess whether pupils from the Northern Gateway could be accommodated in existing schools (albeit expanded) or whether an additional school will be required. This work indicates that only if 800 homes are provided within the site will a new on-site primary school be required. With development of 200 or 500 homes, the new pupils can be accommodated within expansions of existing schools (Wolvercote Primary and Cutteslowe Primary) even taking into account development elsewhere, for example at the Wolvercote Paper Mill site. Cutteslowe Primary School has already been approved for expansion to become a 2 form entry school, and would not be expanded further. Wolvercote Primary School has existing approval for expansion to become a 1.5 form entry school and there is potential for further expansion in the future for it to become a 2 form entry school.

**Existing built areas of the site**

Within the AAP boundary there are two main areas of existing built development, the hotel, showroom and petrol station at the Wolvercote roundabout, and the services area on the Pear Tree Interchange. The fact that these areas are within the AAP boundary does not necessarily mean that these facilities will be lost, but that in order to find the best solution for development, the whole site needs to be considered.

The commercial properties at the Wolvercote roundabout have seen investment in recent years and it is unlikely that these properties will come forward for redevelopment in the near future. However they clearly occupy prominent positions on the edge of the Northern Gateway site and may come forward for redevelopment or further refurbishment in the long term and therefore may offer further opportunities for the future.

The Pear Tree Services Area performs an important function at its location on the A34 Pear Tree interchange. It consists of a range of buildings and facilities that have been developed incrementally over the years, including two hotels, a petrol station and the services building. It is unlikely that either of the hotels will come forward for development in the near future. It may be possible however, to redevelop the services building and the associated car park area. Redevelopment would be beneficial to improve the facilities and help enhance the “gateway” effect of the Northern Gateway development.

**Services Area:**

Preferred Approach	Encourage refurbishment of the services area to further enhance the approach to the city
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**Housing mix**

In addition to the need for new housing in Oxford, there is a specific additional need for more affordable housing (whether social rented, intermediate, shared ownership or affordable rented housing<sup>5</sup>). Across the city the approach is taken to require a minimum of 50% of dwellings to be provided as affordable homes, with 80% of those provided as social rented with the remainder as intermediate housing. This policy contains a cascade approach that can be used when this policy requirement makes the development unviable.

**Affordable housing:**

Preferred Approach	Use the existing planning policies of requiring at least 50% of homes to be affordable
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**Dwelling sizes**

In order to ensure that there is not a mismatch between the type of housing that is developed and the identified need in the city, the City Council also applies a balance of dwellings policy. This takes the form of specifying a percentage range for each size of home. A specific mix of housing has been established for large strategic sites as set out in the Preferred Option below.

**Dwelling sizes:**

Preferred Option	Use existing policy approach (as set out in Balance of Dwellings SPD) 1 bedroom homes: 10-15% 2 bedroom homes: 25-30% 3 bedroom homes: 40-55% 4+ bedroom homes: 10-15%
Alternative Option 1	Increase the proportion of smaller (1 and 2 bedroom) homes
Alternative Option 2	Increase the proportion of larger (3 and 4+ bedroom) homes

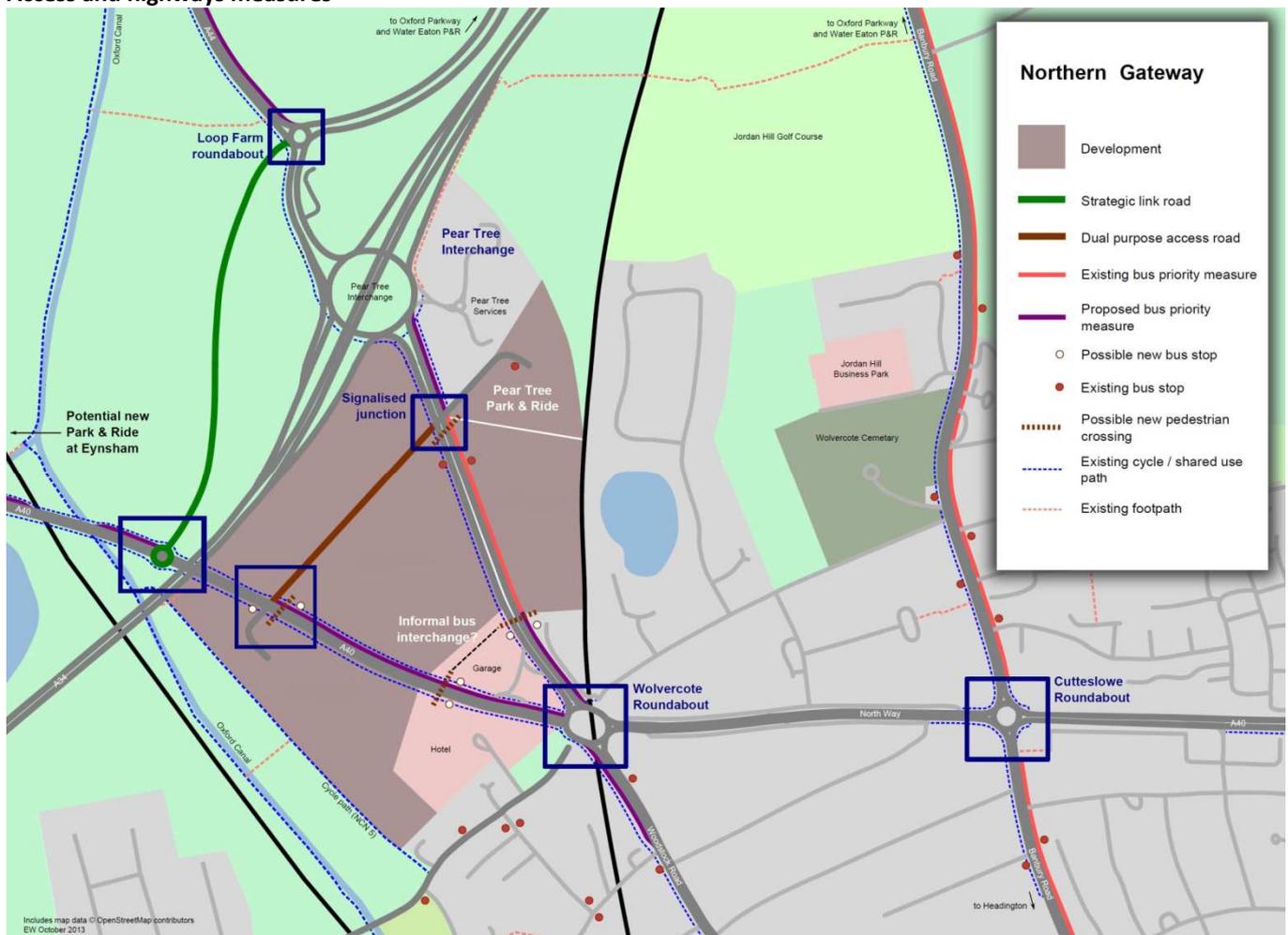
<sup>5</sup> For more details see Sites and Housing Plan ([www.oxford.gov.uk/sitesandhousing](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/sitesandhousing))

## Transport:

The area around the Northern Gateway already experiences significant peak-hour congestion due to the volume of traffic and the convergence of the A40 and A44 at the Wolvercote roundabout and close proximity of the A34. There are also concerns with local access and environmental issues such as noise and air pollution. A Baseline Transport Report<sup>6</sup> has been produced to assess the existing transport situation in terms of traffic counts, queue lengths, bus service provision and accident data for example.

Work to support the Core Strategy and an earlier project called “Access to Oxford” sought to develop a package of highway improvements for the area. That work is being reassessed as part of the AAP process. In essence a large package of transport measures will be required to work together to facilitate development of the Northern Gateway and mitigate existing concerns in the area. This package of measures will be expensive and will require funding to be secured from a range of sources including the development itself, local transport funds and central government funding. (Also see section on implementation and delivery below.)

### Access and highways measures



The A40 and the A44 run through the Northern Gateway site and currently act as barriers to integrating the individual areas of the site. Both these roads are important elements of the highway network and are currently only designed with vehicle users in mind. These roads bisect the Northern Gateway site, acting as barriers to pedestrians and cyclists in particular. The character and barrier effect of these roads need to be addressed as part of the development without compromising their roles in the highway network.

One aspect of changing this character will be providing an alternative route for longer distance through traffic, removing it from much of the length of the existing roads through the site. At present traffic from the Witney direction on the A40 wanting to join the A34 has to travel to the Wolvercote roundabout and then travel back out on the A44 to the Pear Tree

<sup>6</sup> Northern Gateway Baseline Transport Report (2013) PBA ([www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway))

Interchange. As part of the Northern Gateway development there is the opportunity to provide a link road through the northern part of the site between the A40 and A44. The effect of this would be to remove much of the through traffic from both roads and to reduce traffic flows at the Wolvercote roundabout. The form of development provided along the length of these roads will also have an important impact on the character of the area. Further improvements could be achieved in the wider area through the provision of a strategic link road to the West of the A34, creating a link between an enlarged Loop Farm roundabout and a new roundabout on the A40. Such a scheme could further ease congestion on the A40 approach and the Wolvercote Roundabout.

The major cause of congestion on the A40 is the volume of traffic compared to the capacity of the junctions at Wolvercote and Cutteslowe. Significant congestion occurs on the approaches to Wolvercote roundabout, particularly eastbound during the morning peak. Cutteslowe roundabout is also at capacity but due to the congestion at Wolvercote, eastbound A40 traffic is held up on its approach to Cutteslowe roundabout, limiting the length of queues building up here. If additional capacity is provided at Wolvercote roundabout, congestion could worsen at Cutteslowe. This highlights that access and highway improvements in the vicinity of the Northern Gateway need to be treated as an integrated package, as set out in the options below. The Preferred Option identifies a package of measures that would provide a full transport solution to the wider area (including Northern Gateway mitigation measures); the Alternative Option identifies those measures that would be required to mitigate the impact of the Northern Gateway development but excludes those wider strategic measures.

#### Access and highways measures:

Proposal	Preferred Option (full transport solution, subject to funding)	Alternative Option (mitigates impact of development)
Cutteslowe roundabout improvements	✓	✓
Wolvercote roundabout improvements	✓	✓
Full signalisation of Pear Tree roundabout	✓	✗
Partial signalisation of Pear Tree roundabout	✗	✓
Construction of off-site strategic link road between the A40 and A44 (Loop Farm roundabout)	✓	✗
Construction of dual-carriageway on-site link road and site access road with junctions to A40 and A44	✗	✓
Construction of single-carriageway site access road with junctions to A40 and A44	✓	✗
Secondary site access from A40 & A44	✓	✓
Public realm and environmental improvements to A40 and A44	✓	✓

#### Park and Ride

The Park & Ride site at Peartree has just over a 1,000 spaces and is very well used. Users of the Peartree site are likely to originate from locations to the north such as Woodstock, Chipping Norton, Kidlington and Bicester and to the west, such as Witney, Carterton and Burford, – a large catchment area with a significant population. Beyond the scope of the AAP, but in terms of a wider park and ride strategy, providing additional capacity to the west of the city on the A40 corridor could potentially remove more car traffic from the area.

Data<sup>7</sup> shows that there is a maximum of 268 people using the Park and Ride in an hour in the AM peak, and 271 people using the service in the peak PM hour. Further analysis of the data has confirmed that the majority of users access Peartree Park & Ride off the A44 corridor with a relatively small proportion via the A40 corridor which reflects the differences in accessibility from these two routes. Additional spaces at the Park and Ride site are likely to be used and this should remove more of the onward journeys into the city. The provision of the link road is likely to make the Park and Ride a more attractive option for those travelling in on the A40 who will no longer have to double-back on themselves to reach it. Whilst the Park and Ride site is a very important element of the transport strategy in the area and the city, it currently takes the form of a very large surface level car park which is not visually attractive and is a very space-hungry use of land. As part of the development it would be possible to replace the surface-level car park with a new multi-storey car park which could increase parking spaces whilst also reducing the land take, making more land available for commercial or residential development.

<sup>7</sup> Northern Gateway Baseline Transport Report (2013) PBA ([www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway)) page 27

**Park and Ride capacity:**

Preferred Option	Provide a multi-storey Park and Ride site with around 500 additional spaces
Alternative Option 1	Extend the Park and Ride provision at surface level with around 500 additional spaces
Alternative Option 2	Extend the Park and Ride provision further, with around 750 additional spaces in a multi-storey
Alternative Option 3	Extend the Park and Ride provision further, with around 750 additional spaces at surface level
Alternative Option 4	Maintain the existing level of parking provided (around 1,050 spaces)

**Park and Ride location:**

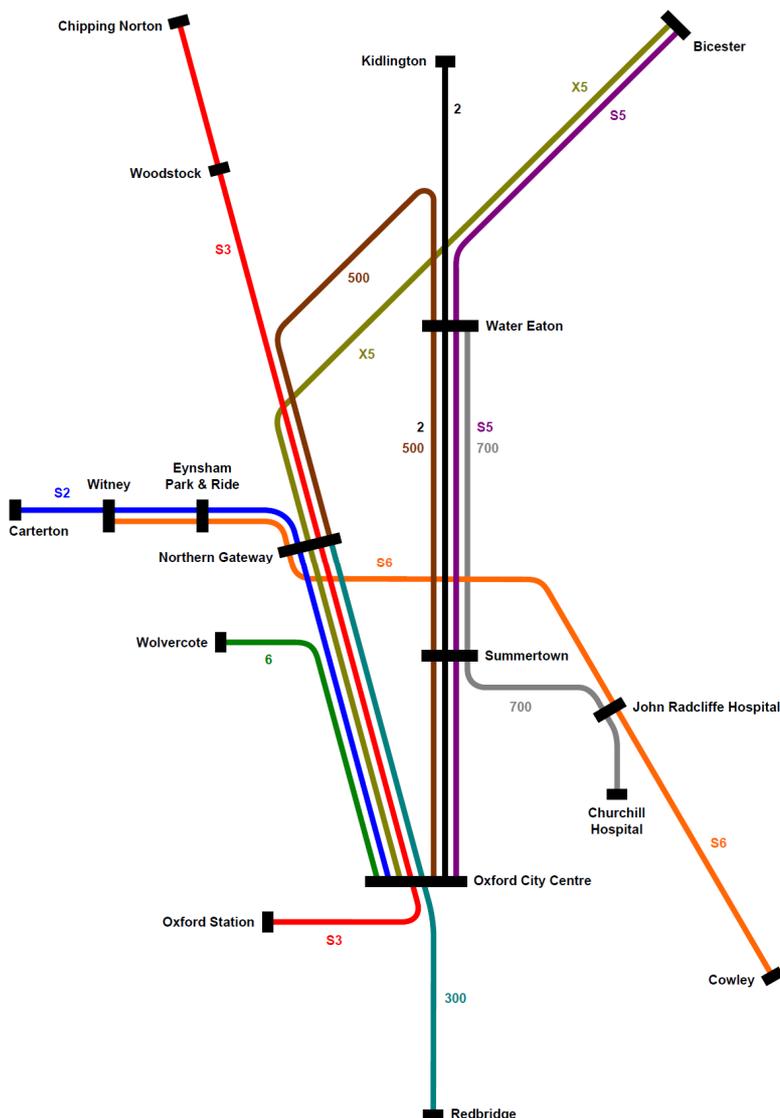
Preferred Option	Retain the Park and Ride facilities at the current location
Alternative Option 1	Relocate the existing Park and Ride within the site (to opposite side of A44)

**Public Transport**

Clearly public transport will have an important role in managing the transport impact of the proposed development. The site is well positioned and served by seven existing bus routes which primarily operate on the Woodstock Road corridor to and from the city centre. Oxford’s urban and inter-urban bus networks are known for being high quality, high frequency and experiencing continuing passenger growth. The development could provide the opportunity to build on these services and provide interchange facilities and better quality passenger facilities. In addition public transport links to the new Oxford Parkway rail station could be provided and would greatly enhance the potential for public transport interchange.

The Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 contains a policy at TR.8 which safeguards a route through the city for the development of a guided bus/local rail service. Part of this safeguarded route lies within the Northern Gateway area; the City Council intends to remove the safeguarding of this portion of the route through the AAP process.

**Diagram of a potential public transport network**



**Public Transport:**

Proposal	Preferred Option (full transport solution, subject to funding)	Alternative Option (mitigates impact of development)
Provision of enhanced bus services along A40 and A44 corridors, with connection to Oxford Parkway rail station	✓	✓
Provide interchange facility/bus hub in combination potentially in combination with Park and Ride improvements	✓	✗
Provide new bus stops/lay-by's and covered waiting facilities with Real Time Passenger Information(along the A40 and A44)	✓	✓
Widen and/or reallocate road space along the A40 fronting the site to provide priority for buses	✓	✓
Widen and/or reallocate road space along the A44 fronting the site to provide priority for buses	✓	✓
Provide for further selected bus priority measures at junctions with pre-signals	✓	✗
Provide bus priority measures northbound on Woodstock Road to Wolvercote roundabout	✓	✗

**Pedestrian and cycle links**

Whilst the site is likely to provide employment, residential and various supporting amenities, employees and residents in particular, will need to access other facilities and communities in the local area and wider city beyond. How this integration is handled will be important so that it benefits new residents and is accepted by existing residents.Improvements to the cycle and pedestrian network in particular high quality attractive crossings of the busy roads and junctions will be an essential element of the overall transport strategy.

In considering plans and transport implications for the Northern Gateway, it is important to factor in the separate project to provide a new Oxford Parkway rail station at Water Eaton. Chiltern Railways are progressing with a new rail route between Oxford and London stopping at Oxford Parkway. This new rail service is planned to provide two direct trains every hour from Oxford Parkway to London Marylebone with the journey taking just under an hour. By December 2017 it is planned that Oxford Parkway will be served by the proposed East/West rail link to Bedford, and possibly as a later phase onto Cambridge.

It is likely that this new rail station, particularly the direct service to London will give an added attraction to the businesses and organisations locating at Northern Gateway. Given that Oxford Parkway will be less than 2 miles away from the Northern Gateway it is important to consider how passengers can easily make the journey between the site and the station. The County Council are looking at ways to secure a safe and easy pedestrian and cycle link between the two.

Provision of cycle parking is an important element in encouraging cycling as an alternative mode of travel. Cycle parking needs to be provided in the right locations, at the right levels and to a good standard to encourage cycle use. There may be an opportunity for increased cycle parking to be provided at the Park and Ride site for those who wish to park their cars and use their bikes for what is traditionally the bus leg of the journey.

**Pedestrian and cycle links:**

Preferred Option	Provision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high-quality, convenient cycle/footpath routes to nearby residential areas and to the service station area</li> <li>• improved and additional crossings of the A40 and A44 (either at surface level or grade-separated) to link development areas</li> <li>• good-quality, convenient routes within the development site and alongside the A40/A44</li> <li>• a high-quality, convenient cycle/footpath link to the new Oxford Parkway station</li> </ul>
Alternative Option	Provision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high-quality, convenient cycle/footpath routes to nearby residential areas and to the service station area</li> <li>• improved and additional crossings of the A40 and A44 (either at surface level or grade-separated) to link development areas</li> <li>• good-quality, convenient routes within the development site and alongside the A40/A44</li> </ul>

## Car parking

Dependant on the final balance of uses and how the development is planned there could be a pressure to provide potentially a very large number of additional car parking spaces. Parking will need to be provided to support the employment, residential, hotel and retail uses as well as at the Park and Ride site. Given this potential pressure for a large number of parking spaces on the site it is important to consider the parking ratios that will be permitted for each of the uses.

Good practice examples show that an efficient way to provide workplace parking is communally, where several companies share parking areas for example. This can result in a reduced number of spaces overall by providing spaces in a more flexible (unallocated) way. Similarly there may be opportunities to provide shared parking facilities for other commercial uses.

Taking the commercial uses first, providing people with a good range of alternative modes of travel can have a significant impact on travel choices. Providing easy to access, safe and desirable pedestrian and cycle links, (and facilities), together with reliable, frequent and direct public transport options, can help significantly with moving trips from private cars to these alternative and more sustainable modes. When this approach is also combined with a limit on workplace parking provision it is likely to be even more effective. It will be important to find a level of parking that allows the various commercial uses to function effectively whilst minimising the number of cars on the local road network and also the land take for parking provision.

Residential parking needs a slightly different approach. In a similar way to that outlined above, every effort must be made to influence the level of car use; encouraging residents to choose other modes particularly for shorter trips. The difference is that residents of the Northern Gateway are likely to still want to own a car (especially for use for longer journeys and leisure trips) and those cars will need to be parked on the site. Again it will be important to establish maximum parking standards that allow the new residential areas to operate well, (without uncontrolled overspill parking on public areas for example), without allowing parking levels to dominate the local environment and reduce the number of homes or level of open space that can be provided. Providing unallocated spaces (e.g. on the new streets) for the use of visitors can also be used to reduce the number of allocated spaces for residential properties. To manage this parking it may be necessary to introduce a Controlled Parking Zone across the site and potentially into neighbouring areas. Opportunities will also be taken to explore the potential for car clubs (for existing and new residents) as part of the development of the Northern Gateway.

## Travel Planning

Travel planning helps to ensure that new development is sustainable and integrated with local transport strategies. A Travel Plan is a strategy and action plan, specific to a site or development, which leads to fewer journeys by private car to and from the site, and more travel by sustainable means. A Travel Plan should take account of all journeys to and from the site and respond to, and be integrated with, the Transport Assessment to which it relates. Travel Plans also promote wider social and community benefits, such as helping to improve air quality, widening social inclusion through promoting greater travel choice, and promoting healthier lifestyle habits.

### Travel planning:

Preferred Approach	Require a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan as part of any planning application to demonstrate how the development will contribute to sustainable travel and the mitigation of any significant traffic impacts if the Transport Assessment shows this to be necessary
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### Operation of car parking:

(Note: these options are not necessarily mutually exclusive; the final choice of management approach may take the form of a combination of these options.)

Option 1	Provide workplace parking in shared communal facilities for efficiency
Option 2	Encourage charging for workplace parking across the site
Option 3	Introduce a Controlled Parking Zone within the site and in neighbouring residential areas

### Parking standards:

Preferred Option	Compared to the standard policy approach, be more restrictive on parking standards for employment and retail uses (destination parking) but not on residential parking (use city-wide standards to reflect car ownership)
Alternative Option 1	Tighten up parking standards for all uses across the site (beyond the city-wide standards)
Alternative Option 2	Use existing city-wide parking standards (see appendix)

## **Design**

### **Urban design**

The AAP will also seek to address the way the Northern Gateway development is laid-out, operates and looks. Given the scale of this project and the importance of this site for the city, the AAP will guide the development to seek to ensure that the layout and urban design of the site results in an attractive and desirable new area of the city. There is a widely accepted set of general urban design principles for good place making<sup>8</sup>. Here these principles are summarised in relation to the Northern Gateway:

The Northern Gateway should:

- be accessible and permeable, to ensure easy access to and through the area for all users, but particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.
- be legible, a pattern of routes should be established that is easy for people to understand and to find their way around.
- respect the character of natural features of the site
- have its own identity, create a distinctive and contemporary setting for future investment, uses and activity.
- have high quality streets and open spaces that provide the setting for a lively, attractive, distinctive and safe public realm.
- have continuous and connected streets, with well-defined building frontages.
- have a clear distinction between the public and private realms, to create comfortable and well defined streets and secure, private spaces at the rear of properties.
- have buildings which face onto the street, with doors and windows allowing people to come and go or look out onto the street.

One method of promoting a high standard in the design of new proposals is through the development of a design code. A design code would be a document for the people who will be designing, developing and building at the Northern Gateway. It would present the aspirations and requirements for new buildings and spaces. It would become a tool for describing the kind of place the Northern Gateway should become. The design code would not be about imposing style, but rather about setting parameters, a framework within which to work. It is proposed to produce a design code to help stimulate innovation and quality. The design code will draw on the principles set out above.

In addition, full use will be made of the Oxford Design Panel. The design panel will be asked to provide independent and professional design advice and evaluation on emerging plans for the Northern Gateway. This advice will be sought where appropriate at each stage of the process for example on the draft masterplan, outline planning application and reserved matter applications.

### **Urban design:**

Preferred Approach	A design code for the Northern Gateway will be produced that will set out the broad parameters for the urban design and layout, related to the different uses proposed
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### **Scale and massing**

Building on these principles, the AAP will also need to consider issues such as the scale and massing of the buildings to be provided on the Northern Gateway. It will be important to ensure that that final solution flows from a visual impact analysis and that there is a variety of heights within the site. Height can be used as a design feature and also as a means to help visitors navigate around a scheme. In broad terms, the options for scale and massing range from providing the required floorspace in fewer buildings of more storeys and therefore height, or keeping the building heights low and therefore with more site coverage. It is not intended to provide a policy on density for the scheme, the City Council has long taken the approach that residential density should be a function of the mix of house sizes and the requirement for open space, the same approach can also be used with regard to commercial development.

### **Scale and massing:**

Option 1	Permit taller buildings (especially at particular locations) to provide the required development and maintain larger areas of the site as open space/landscaping
Option 2	Restrict building heights to a lower level acknowledging that more of the site would need to be built out to provide the levels of development

<sup>8</sup> Found for example in By Design, Better Places to Live by Design and the Oxford Local Plan

## Landscape and open space

Getting the design of the built development right will not in itself deliver a successful scheme; the other element to consider is the open space provided and the landscaping. This includes natural features and designed ones, and both hard, (urban), elements such as streets and squares, and soft, (green), elements such as green spaces and planted areas. There will be a requirement for the residential development to be provided with public open space for the benefit of the new residents. The city-wide requirement for such space is that 10% of the site area developed for housing is to be provided as public open space. In addition open spaces will be important for the employees and visitors to the employment uses whether that be somewhere to sit or walk at lunchtime, or for the positive effect that access to, and sight of, open space has on the working environment.

### Landscape and open space:

Preferred Approach	Provide useable and good quality open space around the office/employment buildings
Option 1	Use city-wide standard of providing at least 10% of the site area that is developed for housing, as public open space
Option 2	Make provision for a greater proportion of residential site area as open space (e.g. 15%)

## Gateway

The Northern Gateway site is at a strategically important position at the northern entrance to the city. This offers the opportunity to create a high-quality gateway. This could be achieved through the use of high-quality architecture, landmark buildings particularly at entrances and key junctions, and by using architectural and landscape design to frame views into the site and through the site to the city beyond. Buildings and spaces should demonstrate architectural excellence, in keeping with Oxford's profile and the function of the development as a key part of Oxford's dynamic economy.

### Gateway:

Preferred Option	Provide opportunities for landmark buildings (at particular locations) within the development and frame views to help create a gateway feel
Alternative Option	Do not pursue the gateway concept for the development

## Green Belt

Within the AAP boundary there are two parcels of land within the Green Belt. The larger of these is the portion of the site to the south of the A40; the other is a smaller portion which includes Pear Tree Hill Farm at the north of the site. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open<sup>9</sup>. Oxford's Green Belt was formally designated in 1975 to preserve the historic setting of Oxford and to prevent the urban sprawl of Oxford. It protects the individual towns and villages around Oxford, allowing them to retain their separate identities. Part of the importance of the Green Belt is the impression of permanence. Nevertheless, Green Belt boundaries are not set in stone; the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a mechanism for the review of boundaries.

At the Core Strategy examination, the Inspector considered that it would be appropriate for the Northern Gateway AAP process to carry out a "highly focussed inner Green Belt boundary review...to consider whether exceptional circumstances exist to justify the release of Green belt land".<sup>10</sup> Core Strategy Policy CS4 states that "Land here [that is at the Northern Gateway] will only be released from the Green Belt if exceptional circumstances are shown to exist and all the following criteria are met:

- the need to do so has been justified
- the site is not in the undeveloped floodplain
- development would not result in the loss of a designated ecological feature
- development would not result in the loss of land in active recreational use
- development would relate well to the existing development pattern
- development would not lead physically distinct built-up areas to merge
- development would not detract from the landscape setting or special character of Oxford"

The preferred approach is to carry out this highly focussed review of those two parcels of Green Belt to establish whether there are "exceptional circumstances" to justify their release from the Green Belt.

<sup>9</sup> paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework

<sup>10</sup> Inspector's Report paragraph 4.147 ([www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/CoreStrategyFinalInspectorsReport.pdf](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/CoreStrategyFinalInspectorsReport.pdf))



**Green Belt:**

Preferred Approach	Carry out a highly focussed review of the inner Green Belt boundary to identify whether exceptional circumstances exist to justify removing those portions within the AAP boundary from the Green Belt
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The larger portion of Green Belt within the AAP boundary is the section to the south of the A40. The fields along the AAP’s western boundary adjacent to the Oxford Canal have additional planning policy designations, the northern fields along this edge are designated under Core Strategy Policy CS12 as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation, and Goose Green to the south is designated under Policy SR5 of the Local Plan as an area of Protected Public Open Space. The area between these fields and the A40 do not have any additional landscape or nature conservation designations; however one field adjacent to Goose Green lies within the Wolvercote Conservation Area.

**Green Belt South of A40:**

Option 1	Move the inner Green Belt boundary back to the track that runs along the AAP boundary so that there is no Green Belt to the east of the track but that the fields designated as a Site of Local Importance Nature Conservation and Public Open Space (Goose Green) are maintained within the Green Belt
Option 2	Move the inner Green Belt boundary back to the canal corridor so that there is no Green Belt to the east of the canal (although other designations would be retained; note: if this option is taken forward the AAP boundary would be amended to include this area)

The second parcel of Green Belt land within the AAP boundary is at Pear Tree Farm; only part of the farm is within the City’s administrative area, with the majority of the associated fields lying within Cherwell District Council’s area. The Northern Gateway AAP cannot look beyond the city boundary and therefore whichever of the options outlined below are taken forward the majority of the farm’s area will remain within the Green Belt.

**Green Belt at Pear Tree Farm:**

Option 1	Maintain the inner Green Belt boundary at the current position so that Pear Tree Farm continues to be within the Green Belt
Option 2	Move the inner Green Belt boundary back to the administrative boundary of the City Council so that, that part of, Pear Tree Farm is no longer within the Green Belt

## **Environment and sustainability:**

### **Drainage**

The development at Northern Gateway must incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to manage any increases in surface water drainage. SUDS techniques include a wide range of potential measures including permeable surfaces (e.g. car parking), swales, trenches, basins, attenuation ponds and wetlands. 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. 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.

The City Council will continue to work with the County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority to find a workable and appropriate SUDS solution for the development. The County Council will have an important role in agreeing the standard of construction and placement of SUDS measures, particularly if, as the government intends, they become responsible for adopting shared SUDS schemes.

### **Drainage:**

Preferred Approach	<p>Only permit development where it has been shown:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that it will not result in changes to the hydrological regime of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation; and:</li> <li>• where it has been shown through a Flood Risk Assessment that it will not increase flood risk either on the site or elsewhere</li> </ul>
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### **Energy and resources**

Energy use in new development can be reduced by appropriate siting, design, landscaping and energy efficiencies within the scheme. Statutory building regulations are not part of the planning system, but have an increasingly important impact on the sustainability of new buildings. 'Part L' of these regulations sets minimum standards for energy efficiency in new buildings. The government's plan is to gradually tighten building regulations requirements over the coming years to make buildings ever more energy efficient.

Whilst it is likely that there will be one outline planning application for the Northern Gateway scheme, it is expected that development will take place over a number of years in phases. Traditionally the eco-standards that a development will be built to would be secured at the outline planning application stage however, there may be an opportunity to introduce a policy that would require buildings to be constructed to the standards in place at the time of the subsequent reserved matters applications and thereby factor in this tightening of requirements over time.

In Oxford, an additional requirement for 20% of total energy use to be provided through on-site renewable/ low carbon technologies has been a feature of new developments across the city since 2006. Large developments are expected to achieve at least 20% of their energy consumption from renewable or low-carbon technologies, such as thermal heat pumps, solar panels, and combined heat and power. This requirement is in addition to meeting Building Regulations in relation to energy efficiency. At the Northern Gateway there is a real opportunity to pursue the idea of a shared/district renewable or low-carbon energy scheme. The scale of this development and the mix of uses proposed would seem to lend themselves to the delivery of a central energy centre which individual buildings could link to for their energy needs. This type of scheme is more efficient than multiple, non-linked schemes.

### **Energy and resources:**

Preferred Approach	Use existing planning policies energy and resource efficiency. Require buildings to meet the current standards of energy efficiency and renewable energy in place at the time of reserved matters applications
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Preferred Approach	Support the development of a shared/district renewable energy scheme within the site
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### **Biodiversity**

In terms of on-site biodiversity interest, the site was assessed at the Core Strategy stage (Phase 1 Habitat Survey) and was deemed to support habitats of between negligible and low ecological value. However a number of biodiversity surveys are being carried out to support the AAP. The timing of biodiversity studies is very dependent on the particular species being surveyed and as such it takes some time to complete a full suite of studies. Already completed are a reptile survey, bat activity survey and breeding bird and wintering bird surveys. Further investigatory work will include updating the Phase 1

Habitat Survey, hedgerow and botanical surveys. The results of these studies will feed into the AAP project at the appropriate stages. Opportunities will be taken to enhance the biodiversity of the site through the development.

The Northern Gateway lies less than 500m from the internationally protected Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Oxford Meadows SAC is made up of four Sites of Special Scientific Interest. These are Pixey Mead, Yarnton Mead, Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common. There are two reasons for this designation, the first is that the lowland hay meadows have benefited from the survival of traditional management, which has been undertaken for several centuries and exhibits good conservation structure and function. The second reason is that Port Meadow is the larger of only two known sites in the UK for a particular plant, the creeping marshwort (*Apiumrepens*).<sup>11</sup>

Oxford City Council has produced a Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening to support this stage of the production of the Area Action Plan. The HRA Screening assesses the options for development against the nature conservation objectives for the site and screens out those options that are not likely to have an impact on the conservation objectives for the Oxford Meadows SAC. Further assessment of those policy options that are screened into the assessment will be carried out to support subsequent stages in the production of the Area Action Plan.

### Character and historic environment

The site forms a setting to Wolvercote Conservation Area, historic Goose Green and the Thames floodplain and for these reasons its sensitivity is described in 'A Landscape Character Assessment of Oxford' as moderate.<sup>12</sup>

The AAP boundary comprises former open fields within the Wolvercote Parish. The open fields have been subject to various phases of enclosure through to the modern period, with some survival of pre-Parliamentary Enclosure boundaries. The Wolvercote Conservation Area extends to the south west of the site (adjacent to Goose Green). There are no listed buildings within the AAP boundary and the nearest listed structure is a Grade II listed building, Manor Farm, which is located along Godstow Road. Other listed buildings in close proximity to the area include canal bridges and there are a number of listed buildings within 500m of the AAP boundary.

The surviving ridge and furrow on the parcel of land to the east of the A44 indicates that the land has not been heavily ploughed since the medieval period; remains from earlier periods are likely to survive below this. Potential exists for archaeological evidence at the site ranging in significance from national to low depending on the time period and location. Further investigatory work will be carried out to inform the next stage of the AAP.

### Air quality and noise

Road transport is a key source of air pollution, particularly in urban areas. Roads within the centre of Oxford have been declared as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) since 2001; an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was jointly developed with Oxfordshire County Council in 2006 and a city-wide AQMA was declared in 2010. Without appropriate mitigation the likely increases in road traffic as a result of the proposed development could increase pollutant concentrations within the Oxford City-wide AQMA.

As well as the issues related to poor air quality on human health it is also important to consider its impact on the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Current baseline information indicates that pollutant concentrations and deposition levels are lower than the site relevant critical level and loads respectively for the Oxford Meadows SAC.

A baseline noise study undertaken in 2006, observed that the primary source of noise on site to be road traffic noise with railway noise considered a secondary source. There is an opportunity to locate commercial uses in the areas most affected by noise as the less sensitive use. It is also possible to use the design and layout of the commercial scheme to act as a noise buffer to protect the residential elements from the worst effects of the noise. As a first step every effort should be made to reduce the noise levels as part of the transport improvements that take place. The next step will be to use the layout of the scheme to minimise the impact of the noise and then to use specific design solutions to ensure a good quality living environment for residents.

### Air quality and noise:

Preferred Approach	Only permit residential development where it can be shown that future residents will benefit from a good quality living environment both in terms of noise and air quality.
Preferred Approach	Only permit development that does not have an impact on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation

<sup>11</sup> ([www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0012845](http://www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?EUCode=UK0012845))

<sup>12</sup> A Character Assessment of Oxford in its Landscape Setting (2002) Land Use Consultants ([www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway)) p283

## Preferred Strategy

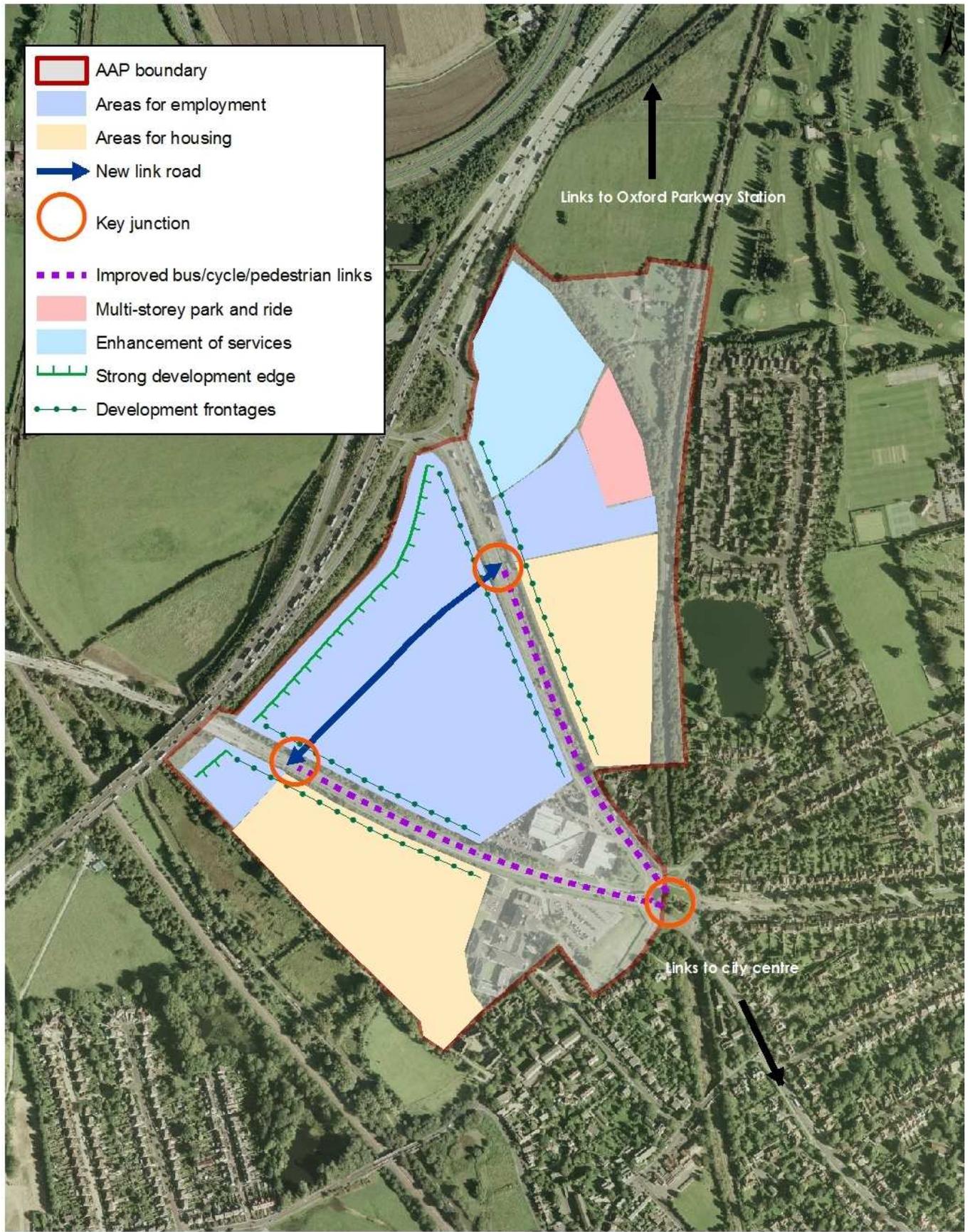
The following plan shows how the preferred options and approaches combine to form our suggested preferred strategy or framework for development of the Northern Gateway. It shows:

- areas for employment development
- areas for housing development
- link road between the A40 and A44
- junctions where there will need to be redesign/improvements
- key pedestrian and cycle links

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

- focus on the knowledge economy
- mix of housing tenure and type
- maximum parking allocations
- a design code to set the broad parameters for the design and layout
- design that responds to the natural context (biodiversity, drainage, trees etc.)
- design that responds to the historic environment (archaeology, conservation area etc.)
- provision of a good quality living and working environment (air quality, noise, outlook etc.)
- details around the timing, funding and phasing of implementation

This preferred strategy meets the objectives set for this Area Action Plan (strengthening Oxford's knowledge-based economy, providing more housing, improving the local and strategic road network, responding to the context of the natural and historic environment, creating a gateway to Oxford and encouraging a low-carbon lifestyle/economy).



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## Implementation and Delivery

The AAP will address issues of phasing. Development on this scale will be delivered over a period of years in phases. The timing of those phases and the links between phases of development and the delivery of supporting infrastructure will be key to the successful development of the Northern Gateway. It will not be possible for development to take place on this site without the supporting infrastructure (particularly transport measures).

Even after the adoption of the AAP the developers will still be required to submit a planning application for the scheme. It is typical on schemes of this size that an outline planning application will be made for the whole site and then a series of detailed applications are made for individual phases of the development. At each planning application stage there will be a requirement for the submission of more details of the scheme and for additional background evidence on the wide range of topics and there will be additional opportunities for public consultation on those details.

It is important that a range of interests and bodies are involved in planning for, and the development of, the Northern Gateway. These include the City Council and County Council, the various landowners and their development partners, statutory agencies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, service providers and other stakeholders as well as neighbours and the wider public. The City Council will continue to work closely with the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum as they work to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for the wider Wolvercote area.

A partnership approach will be important to finding solutions and identifying packages of mitigation measures to meet the challenges that lay ahead. Equally, working in partnership offers opportunities to bid for funding from a wide range of sources (for example through City Deal) that can be used to collectively pay for the various infrastructure needs of the site and the wider area.

## Next steps

### How can you influence the process?

The Options Document offers an opportunity for stakeholders and the general public to contribute to the planning of the Northern Gateway. It is being published to stimulate debate and to invite comments on the options that have been drawn up by the City Council. The City Council hopes that everyone with an interest in the future of the Northern Gateway and the surrounding area – residents, businesses, employees and local organisations – will take the opportunity to respond to this consultation and say what they think about the options contained in this document. We very much welcome your feedback as we are keen that we get the details of this project right and to make the most of the opportunities it offers.

The period for making comments is: 14th February to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Please make your representations on the form available on the City Council's website: ([www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway)), at the council offices and at libraries.

### What happens next?

Following the consultation, the responses will be considered alongside some further evidence based studies. They will feed into the draft AAP (or Proposed Submission Document) which will also be made available for public and stakeholder comment in July 2014. Following that consultation and any amendments that follow, the AAP will be submitted for examination to the Secretary of State and a public examination of the document will be held, chaired by an independent Planning Inspector.

### How can I keep in touch with progress?

If you would like to be kept informed of progress towards the AAP you will find regular updates in the following locations:

- In the City Council's "Your Oxford" magazine
- In the local press
- Through the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum
- On the City Council's website: [www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/northerngateway)

You can also register for email or letter updates by joining our consultation database at: [www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation) or by phoning: 01865 252847.

## Appendix – Existing city-wide parking standards

### Residential parking standards (Policy HP6 of the Sites and Housing Plan)

Number of bedrooms per dwelling	1		2			3			4+		
Number of allocated spaces (bold numbers = maximum)	0	<b>1</b>	0	1	<b>2</b>	0	1	<b>2</b>	0	1	<b>2</b>
Number of unallocated spaces (in addition to allocated spaces)*	1.0	0.4	1.5	0.7	0.3	1.8	0.9	0.4	2.1	1.2	0.5

\*These figures are maxima but are recommended for all developments that involve the creation of a new access road. The minimum requirement for unallocated visitor parking is 0.2 spaces per dwelling.

### Retail parking standards (Policy TR.3 of the Oxford Local Plan)

Food retail (A1 shops)	1 space per 50 sq.m. up to 1,000 sq.m; 1 space per 14 sq.m. thereafter
Non-food retail: A1 (shops) and A2 (financial and professional services)	1 space per 50 sq.m.
Pubs/ Restaurants/ Cafe's (A3 food and drink)	1 space per 20 sq.m. public floor space plus, 1 space for resident staff
Take-aways/laundrettes/off-licences	2 spaces

### Business parking standards (Policy TR.3 of the Oxford Local Plan)

Offices (B1)	1 space per 35 sq.m. or 1 space per 2 staff
General Industry (B2)/Storage and distribution (B8)	1 space per 35 sq.m. up to 235 sq.m; 1 space per 300 sq.m. thereafter

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## Appendix 2: Proposed amendment to the Local Development Scheme

### LDD PROFILE

<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Northern Gateway AAP</b>		
<b>Lead Section</b>	<b>Planning Policy team</b>		
<b>Scope</b>	<b>Area based</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>DPD</b>
<b>Priority</b>	<b>High</b>		
<b>Synopsis</b>	<p>A document that sets out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a vision for the land at the Northern Gateway</li> <li>2. a series of principles and concepts to guide development</li> <li>3. specific policies and infrastructure requirements;</li> <li>4. identifies timing and delivery mechanisms for site-specific proposals;</li> <li>5. updates the Proposals Map</li> </ol>		
<b>Timetable</b>			
<b>Key Milestones</b>		<b>Timescale</b>	
<b>Commencement.</b> Evidence gathering and pre-production including early stakeholder & community engagement		<b>September 2013</b>	
Publish options document		February 2014	
<b>Publication of Proposed Submission</b>		<b>July 2014</b>	
<b>Submission of DPD to Secretary of State</b>		<b>September 2014</b>	
Pre-hearing meeting		November 2014	
Hearing sessions		January 2015	
Receipt of final Inspector's report		May 2015	
<b>Estimated date of adoption and publication</b>		<b>May 2015</b>	
<b>Management arrangements</b>	Head of City Development → Board Member → City Executive Board → Council		
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Internal:</b> The Planning Policy team (excludes time devoted to other team core activities).</li> <li>▪ Also internal administration and technical support.</li> <li>▪ LDF budget to cover consultation, printing and design costs, examination costs.</li> <li>▪ Other City Council officers and members time and input.</li> <li>▪ <b>External resources:</b> Specific LDF budget allows for possible use of consultants for other aspects of preparation.</li> <li>▪ <b>Stakeholder Resources:</b></li> <li>▪ Representatives of stakeholder groups to attend meetings, contribute to preparation etc.</li> <li>▪ Development Industry expertise.</li> </ul>		
<b>Approach to involving stakeholders and community</b>	Wide stakeholder and community involvement using a range of consultation methods as described in the adopted SCI.		

### Appendix 3: Risk Register

Risk ID	Risk						Corporate Objective	Gross Risk		Residual Risk		Current Risk		Owner	Date Risk Reviewed	Proximity of Risk (Projects/Contracts Only)
Category-000-Service Area Code	Risk Title	Opportunity/Threat	Risk Description	Risk Cause	Consequence	Date raised	1 to 6	I	P	I	P	I	P			
CEB-001-CD	Option not tested	Options Document doesn't contain an option for the final policy	Options Document does not contain options that will eventually be taken forward	Final policy approach was not identified as a potential option at this stage	May need to re-run part of the options testing process including Sustainability Appraisal if not already covered	9.12.13	3 and 1	4	3	4	2	4	2	Michael Crofton Briggs		
CEB-002-CD	Delays	Delays to process	The timetable for the AAP production is very tight – any delay may have knock-on consequences	Delays could result from lack of access to evidence, delay to input from outside bodies	If delay cannot be absorbed, may need to review the timetable moving forward	9.12.13	3 and 1	3	3	3	2	3	2	Michael Crofton Briggs		

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Risk ID	Risk Title	Action Owner	Accept, Contingency, Transfer, Reduce or Avoid	Details of Action	Key Milestone	Milestone Delivery Date	%Action Complete	Date Reviewed
CEB-001-CD	Option not tested	Michael Crofton Briggs	Reduce	Reduced risk by taking team approach to identifying options and using the SA process as further check. Close working with key stakeholders to sense check options				
CEB-002-CD	Delays	Michael Crofton Briggs	Reduce	Make all parties aware of timetable and key dates well in advance and monitor progress				

## Appendix 4: Initial screening EqIA

1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group (s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

The Northern Gateway site is already allocated in City Council policy (Core Strategy – adopted March 2011) for an employment-led site with supporting infrastructure and complementary amenities. The Core Strategy policy envisages the site being developed to provide employment floorspace to support Oxford's knowledge economy with any of the following: housing, emergency services centre, small retail units, hotel.

The Core Strategy makes provision for an Area Action Plan (AAP) to add further detail to that policy and provide a framework for the masterplanning of the area. The AAP will set out matters such as the mix of uses and the form and layout of the development. It will also address issues such as the delivery of the required infrastructure and mitigation measures.

At this stage of the AAP production process an Options Document has been produced to identify the possible options for the site. These options are published for public consultation so that stakeholder and public comments can be used to inform the choice of draft policies at the next stage.

The AAP provides opportunities to provide environmental, social and economic benefits to this part of the city and the area more widely. The following elements of the Options Document illustrate this:

1. Provision of new job opportunities in the long-term through development of employment space and in the shorter term through construction for example. This will help those economically disadvantaged either directly through job opportunities or indirectly through growth of the city more generally.
2. Provision of new housing. The City Council's normal requirement for 50% on site affordable housing will be expected. In addition all the proposed new dwellings will be expected to meet the Lifetime Homes standard, and at least 5% of all new dwellings must be either fully wheelchair accessible or easily adapted for full wheelchair use. Deviation from this would have led to the potential for people on the housing register and for people with disabilities to have been disadvantaged.
3. Provision of a package of access and highways measures to mitigate the development and help mitigate existing problems in the area. This will help to address the concerns of local people and road users in the area.
4. Provision of public transport and pedestrian and cycle improvements to help with accessibility. Provision of good alternatives to car travel will help make this a sustainable development.
5. Ensuring that there is a good quality living environment for new and existing residents (e.g. noise and air quality). This will ensure that new residents are not disadvantaged in living in the new development.

As the project progresses detailed policies will be drafted to ensure that the benefits are secured for the community as a whole.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

No further changes are required at this stage. Equalities issues will also be considered at the next stage of the AAP process.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

There will be a wide and open public consultation period for people to comment on the options. These will then be collated and used to inform the draft policies at the next stage.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

N/A

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

The effectiveness of the final policies of the AAP will be monitored as part of the Local Plan monitoring regime.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Rachel Williams

Role: Principal Planning Officer

Date: 9.12.2013

**To: City Executive Board**

**Date: 22<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

**Report of: Head of City Development**

**Title of Report: DESIGNATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS**

### **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To designate two neighbourhood forums (Summertown/St Margaret's and Wolvercote).

**Key decision?** Yes

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Colin Cook

**Policy Framework:** Designation of neighbourhood forums will be able to produce neighbourhood plans. Adopted neighbourhood plans will contain statutory planning policies to guide development in the neighbourhood plan areas.

**Recommendation(s):** That City Executive Board:

1. Designates the two proposed neighbourhood forums.

**Appendix 1- Maps of the designated neighbourhood areas that the forum applications relate to**

**Appendix 2- Applications received**

### **Introduction**

1. The Localism Act has introduced new rights and powers to enable communities to get directly involved in planning for their areas. Interested communities will be able to come together through a neighbourhood forum and produce a neighbourhood plan. The contents of the neighbourhood plans will be shaped by the local communities. They are about being able to say where new houses, businesses, shops and so on should go and what they should look like. Once plans are adopted they will become part of the statutory development plan, and therefore an important consideration when making decisions on planning applications.
2. City Executive Board is asked to consider two proposed neighbourhood forums for designation. Neighbourhood forum applications must link to a

designed neighbourhood area. The neighbourhood areas the forum applications relate to are Wolvercote (following the ward boundary) and Summertown and St Margaret's (following both ward boundaries). Maps of the areas are shown in Appendix 1.

3. Planning Regulations set out the requirements for designation of a neighbourhood forum. The neighbourhood forum applications received (see Appendix 2) should be judged against these criteria. The proposed neighbourhood forums have been advertised for a statutory period of six weeks (31<sup>st</sup> October- 12<sup>th</sup> December) and comments were invited. A summary of comments received is shown in Appendix 3.

### **Compliance with planning regulations**

4. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 include the criteria that must be met in neighbourhood area applications. The application all include the following, as required by the Regulations:
  - a name of the proposed neighbourhood forum;
  - a name and contact details of one key member of the proposed forum ;
  - a copy of the written constitution of the proposed neighbourhood forum ;
  - the name of the neighbourhood area to which the application relates and a map of this area;
  - a statement which explains how the proposed neighbourhood forum meets the conditions contained in section 61F(5) of the 1990 Act.
5. The Regulations say that a local planning authority may designate an organisation or body as a neighbourhood forum if the authority are satisfied that it meets the following conditions—
  - It is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of an area that consists of or includes the neighbourhood area concerned (whether or not it is also established for the express purpose of promoting the carrying on of trades, professions or other businesses in such an area).
  - Its membership is open to—
    - individuals who live in the neighbourhood area concerned;
    - individuals who work there (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise); and
    - individuals who are elected members of a county council, district council or London borough council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned.
  - Its membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom—
    - lives in the neighbourhood area concerned;
    - works there (whether for a business carried on there or otherwise); or

- is an elected member of a county council, district council or London borough council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned.
  - it has a written constitution.
6. The applications received are attached in Appendix 2. Maps are provided that show the designated neighbourhood areas the forum applications relate to (Appendix 1). Information is provided for each application to show the conditions outlined above are met. Each is established for the purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area; has an open membership; includes more than 21 members (ward councillors having all been involved) and has a written constitution.

### **Consultation responses**

7. The City Council has a statutory requirement to publicise for 6 weeks any qualifying applications we receive to designate a neighbourhood forum (which gives qualifying groups the status they need in order to develop a neighbourhood plan).
8. The receipt of the forum applications was publicised with the intention of raising awareness within and around the relevant areas. Comments were invited, giving people the opportunity to raise objections. Known local groups were contacted directly by letter or email.
9. Only one organisation or body can be designated as a neighbourhood forum in each neighbourhood area. If a designation is made, no other organisation or body may be designated for that neighbourhood area until that designation expires or is withdrawn. This was made clear on the consultation material.
10. Few representations were made during the publicity period. English Heritage sent a general letter about how they may be involved in neighbourhood planning and English Nature confirmed that they had no comments.

### **Environmental impact**

14. This stage of the neighbourhood planning process only involves the designation of a forum. No Sustainability Appraisal is required for this stage; however, as plans are drafted it may be necessary to carry out Sustainability Appraisals for any plan assessed as having potentially significant environmental effects.

### **Equalities impact**

15. Consideration has been given to the public sector equality duty imposed by s149 of the Equality Act 2010. Having paid due regard to the need to meet the objectives of that duty the view is taken that the duty is met.

**Financial implications**

16. The City Council is obliged to offer a certain degree of help to groups as they produce their plans. As well as this, the City Council must consult on draft plans, organise an examination and run the referendum. These requirements will be met from the current resources of the Planning Policy team, supplemented by grants available from central government to district councils for each neighbourhood plan.

**Legal implications**

17. Officers consider that the information provided by the neighbourhood groups is adequate to show that the statutory requirements for the designation of neighbourhood forums are met.

**Risk assessment**

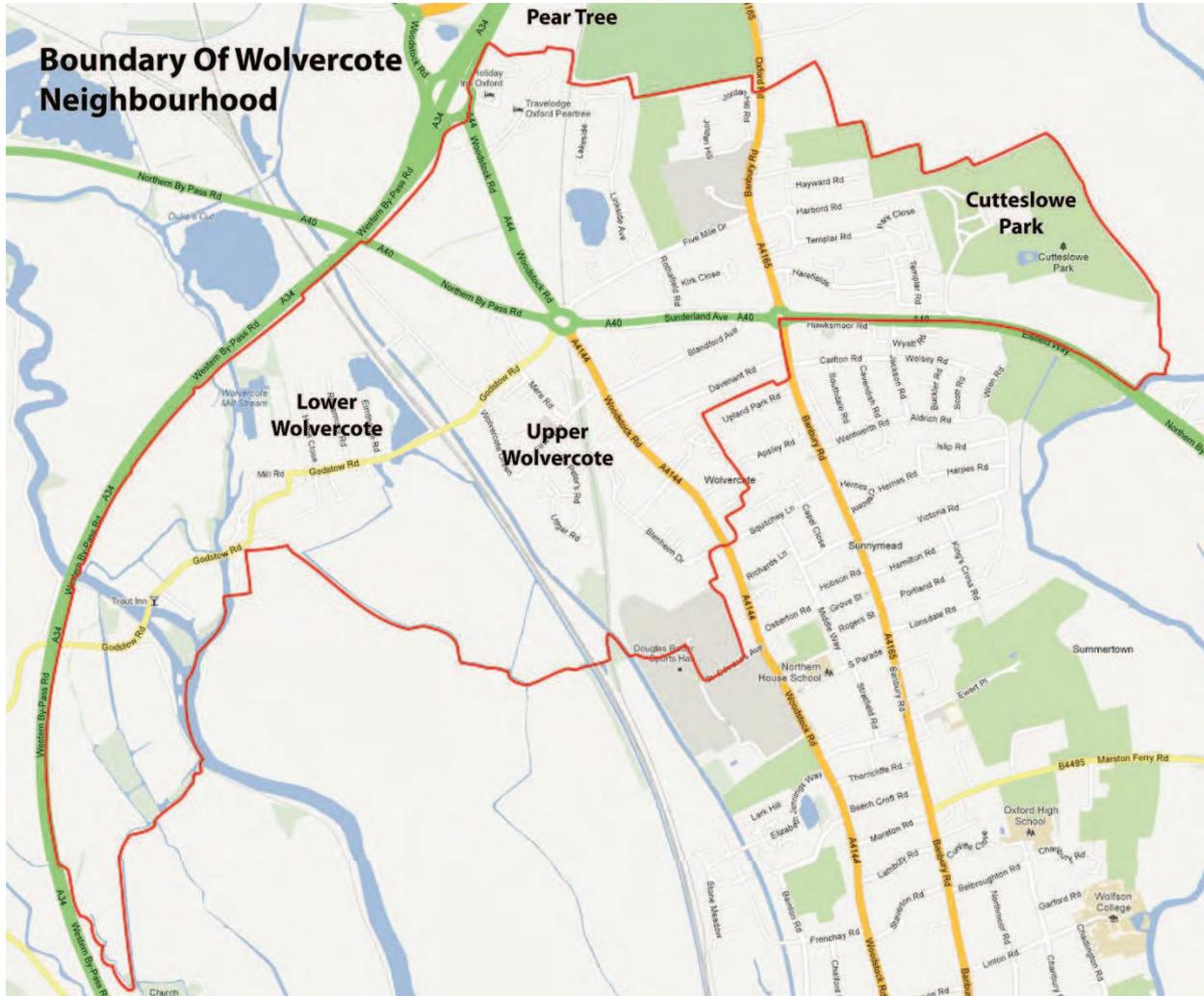
18. A risk assessment has been undertaken. No significant risks were identified.

**Name and contact details of author:-**  
  
Name Sarah Harrison  
Job title Senior Planning Officer  
Service Area / Department City Development  
Tel: 01865 252170 e-mail: sbharrison@oxford.gov.uk

**List of background papers:** None

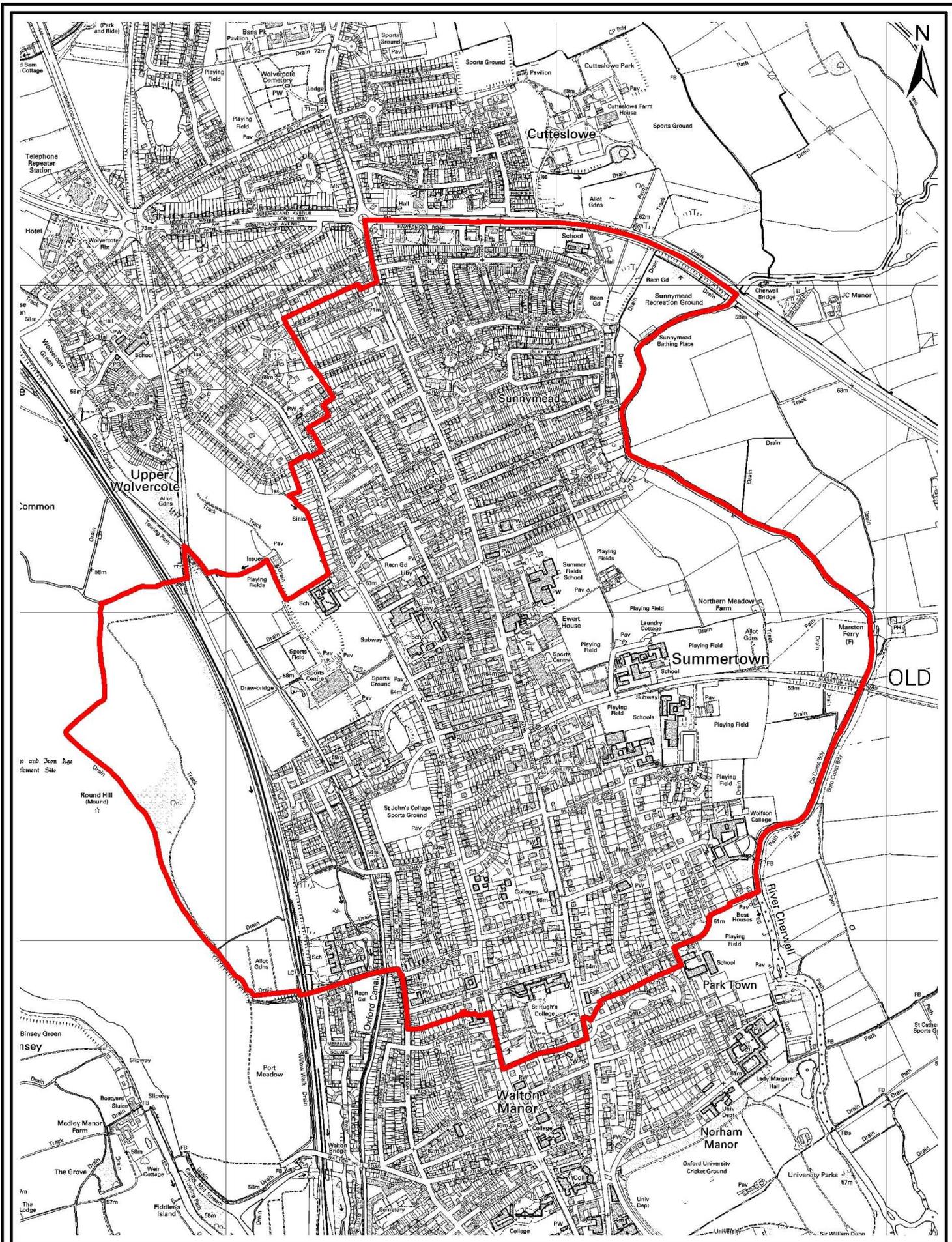
Applications for designation

## Wolvercote Neighbourhood Area and Forum

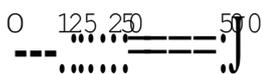


This map shows the boundary of the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Area, the same line as the Ward Boundary of Wolvercote Ward.

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**Map of Summertown and St Margaret's Neighbourhood Area**



Metres

39

1:15,000



CITY COUNCIL

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29Frenchay Road, Oxford OX2 6TG  
Martinroberts44@btinternet.com

17 December 2012

Dear Mr Crofton-Briggs,

**Re: Application to the City Council for the establishment a Neighbourhood Forum for the Summertown and St Margaret's wards of the City.**

After a number of residents' meetings to discuss the desirability of establishing a Neighbourhood Forum in this area, we think that the time has come to make this formal application.

At our last meeting on 6 November we had the unanimous support from the more than 80 present that we should proceed.

The name of the Forum should be the Summertown and St Margaret's Neighbourhood Forum

The area this covers is the Summertown and St Margaret's wards as outlined on the City Council website.

We attach our Constitution which we hope we have drafted to meet the requirements of the latest regulations. The Aims set out in the Constitution describes our intentions which we understand to be compatible with the intentions of the Localism Act.

We also attach the names and addresses of the residents of the two wards who have both expressed support for the Neighbourhood Forum and are ready to help us get it established.

All our ward councillors support this application.

I am happy for my address to be made public in any consultation about this application.

Please let me know if there are any other steps we need to take. Your advice would be much appreciated.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Martin Roberts (Chair of the SStMNF Working Party)  
**Summertown/St Margaret's Neighbourhood Forum (SStMNF)**  
**Constitution**

**The Name of the Forum**

The Summertown/St Margaret's Neighbourhood Forum,

**Area Covered**

The application relates to the designated Summertown/St Margaret's Neighbourhood Area, which is defined by the boundaries of the City Council wards of Summertown and St Margaret's.

**Its Aims and Objectives**

- 1) To enable all inhabitants of the ward and those with active interests in the area to meet to discuss common concerns with the intention of maintaining and improving the social, environmental and economic well-being of the neighbourhood.
- 2) To create a Neighbourhood Plan that secures, by referendum, the support of the neighbourhood.

**Its Membership**

Membership of the Forum will be open to all residents of the two wards and also local business people, individuals who work in the area and elected city and/or county councillors representing the area.

Membership includes more than 21 individuals, representing a cross-section of the community, each of whom either lives in the neighbourhood area, works in the neighbourhood area or is an elected member whose ward falls within the neighbourhood area.

**Meetings**

Forum meetings will be held at least three times a year to discuss issues raised by members. While the Neighbourhood Plan is being drafted and in due course revised that is likely to be a major item on the Forum's agenda.

The most important meeting will be the Annual General Meeting which will be held during the month of October. That meeting will decide on the management of the Forum.

**Committee and Officers**

For the day to day running of the Forum there will be elected, at the AGM, a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Normally their term of office should be three years. They will be supported by a Steering Committee consisting of another four members who will be elected at the AGM. That Committee will organise the Forum meetings and drive forward the Neighbourhood Plan and/or Neighbourhood Development Order(s). For these latter they will call in expert assistance wherever necessary.

All local City and County Councillors representing the two wards will be *ex officio* members of the Committee but will not normally hold office. A quorum for the Steering Committee will be four.

**Finance**

The Treasurer, supported by the Committee, will explore possible sources of external funding and, from time to time, members will be asked to donate for particular expenses

**Alterations and Dissolution**

This Constitution can be amended at the AGM by a majority vote. Should a majority at an AGM vote in favour of dissolving the Forum that vote will be binding. A quorum for the AGM will be 21. In the case of dissolution any assets which the Forum has secured will be handed over to the City Council.

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John Bleach, Chair  
Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan  
47, Rosamund Road  
Wolvercote  
OX2 8NU

30<sup>th</sup> October 2013

Dear Mr Crofton-Briggs

**Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum**

As you are aware, a group has been established for many months to work towards the formal establishment of a Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum. A first public meeting was held in January 2012 and since then all households and businesses in the proposed area have been consulted. There have been several further well-attended public meetings, some of which were helpfully attended by members of your staff.

We now wish to make a formal application to the City Council for the designation of Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum .

You provided a tabular format for this application and I enclose a completed copy, together with the required documents, including a map of the designated Wolvercote Neighbourhood Area.

If you require any supplementary information, please do let me know.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

John Bleach, Chair  
Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Michael Crofton Briggs  
Head of City Development  
Oxford City Council  
St Aldate's Chambers  
Oxford OX1 1DS

Application for designation of

**Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum**

	Name of the Applicant	Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum
	Name of the proposed neighbourhood forum	Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum
	Contact details	John Bleach, Chair, Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan, 47, Rosamund Road, Wolvercote, OX2 8NU
	Neighbourhood area to which the application relates	The Neighbourhood Area to which the application relates is the designated Wolvercote Neighbourhood area, which is the electoral area of Wolvercote Ward, Oxford City Council. A map is appended.
	A statement that the proposed neighbourhood forum meets the conditions of section 61F of the 1990 Act (Section 61G)	The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum has been established as an organisation whose purpose is to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of Wolvercote Ward. Membership is free and open to all living or working in Wolvercote Ward, and to all businesses in the ward. All local groups operating in the ward and owners of land within the ward but not resident or working in the ward have been invited to be represented. The Forum's membership represents a full cross-section of the local community, including more than 21 members who either live in, work in or are an elected member representing the area

# WOLVERCOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

## CONSTITUTION

### 1. Aim

The aim of the Forum is to bring together the people within the boundaries of Wolvercote Ward to influence the future of the area and of their community.

### 2. Objective

The Forum's objective, established after public consultation, is to promote or improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the ward, primarily through the development and implementation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

### 3. The neighbourhood area ("the area")

The area is the Wolvercote Ward of Oxford City in 2012. The boundary has been confirmed at public meetings.

### 4. Membership and Associate Membership

4.1. The Forum must have a minimum of 21 members. Membership is open to all who live or work in the area.

4.2. City and County Councillors who represent the area are invited to be members whether or not they are otherwise eligible.

4.3. The aim is to ensure that Forum membership represents the population of the area in terms of both geography and diversity.

4.4. Owners of businesses or land within the area, if they are not residents, are each invited to nominate a representative to be an associate member of the Forum. Associate members may attend meetings and take part in discussions but shall not be entitled to vote.

### 5. Meetings

5.1 Open public meetings of the Forum are to be held at least twice a year. A public meeting in May or June will be designated as the AGM.

5.2 The AGM will be called with at least 15 working days' notice by informing all residential properties in the area, and all associate members.

5.3 The AGM has the power to both elect, and remove by a vote of no confidence, any member of the Forum Steering Committee.

5.4 At each AGM the Chair will provide a written report, the Treasurer will provide a set of accounts for the previous year and the Secretary will record the proceedings.

5.5 Public meetings other than the AGM will be publicised on notice boards and on the Forum website (<http://www.wolvercoteplan.org.uk>)

### 6 Voting

Discussions will aim at consensus. If a vote is taken, voting will be restricted to members as defined above.

### 7 Code of Conduct

Everyone is to be treated with respect and members of the Forum will observe the seven principles of public life (see appendix).

### 8 Communication

The Forum will communicate with the local community through the web and printed materials, and where possible by email.

## 9 Forum Steering Group, Steering Committee and officers

- 9.1 The Steering Group (SG) is a working committee of Forum members, from which its officers are elected. It exists to co-ordinate, implement and monitor the work of the Forum including obtaining official recognition and developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Wolvercote. It will prioritise, schedule and publicise the work of the Forum. At the first AGM of the Forum the Steering Group will become the Steering Committee (SC) of the Forum. SC members and officers will be elected at that meeting.
- 9.2 Any member of the Forum may stand for the SG and SC and should be nominated by a member or associate member. SC members to be elected by vote of Forum members at the AGM are the Forum Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary and Treasurer, plus a maximum of seven additional members.
- 9.3 SC members are to be elected for a period of two years and may subsequently be re-elected twice, serving a maximum of six years after which they shall not be eligible to stand for re-election until a year has passed.
- 9.4 The SC may co-opt a local councillor and a member of any local area group (see below) that is not already represented by an elected SC member.
- 9.5 Other Forum members with specialist skills may be co-opted onto the SC and the SC may set up Working Groups of Forum members for specific projects or tasks to be undertaken.
- 9.6 SC decision-making will aim at consensus. If a vote is taken, the Chair will have a casting vote.
- 9.7 The quorum for meetings of the SC is five elected members.
- 9.8 The SC has the power to hold votes of no confidence in any member by simple vote.

## 10 Local area groups

- 10.1 The Forum will encourage and support the establishment of local area groups to focus on the needs and wishes of constituent parts of the area.
- 10.2 A local area group must adopt the constitution of the Forum and share the principles of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 10.3 A local area group will include at least one elected or co-opted member of the Forum Steering Committee, who will report regularly to the SC.
- 10.4 Local area groups must operate their finances through the Forum Treasurer.

## 11 Funds and winding up

- 11.1 Any assets of the Forum may not be used or disposed of except in a manner that the Forum considers benefits the area.
- 11.2 Proceeds from the Forum's activities may only be used to benefit the area. Payments directly to members of the Forum are not to be considered such a benefit.
- 11.3 In the event of the winding up of the Forum or in any other circumstances where the Forum ceases to exist, its assets must be transferred to another body corporate that has similar objectives.

## 12 Liaison with other groups

- 12.1 The Forum must liaise closely with existing groups in the area and any other community groups that may be formed.
- 12.2 The Forum will establish and maintain contact with other community groups or Forums that represent adjacent areas.

### 13 Standing orders

- 13.1 Detailed standing orders for the governance of the Forum and area groups will be developed and appended to this constitution.

## Appendix

### THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

#### **SELFLESSNESS**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

#### **INTEGRITY**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### **OBJECTIVITY**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

#### **OPENNESS**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### **HONESTY**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

#### **LEADERSHIP**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## Initial screening EqIA template

*Prior to making the decision, the Council's decision makers considered the following: guide to decision making under the Equality Act 2010:*

*The Council is a public authority. All public authorities when exercising public functions are caught by the Equality Act 2010 which became law in December 2011. In making any decisions and proposals, the Council - specifically members and officers - are required to have **due regard** to the **9** protected characteristics defined under the Act. These protected characteristics are: **age, disability, race, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage & civil partnership***

*The decision maker(s) must specifically consider those protected by the above characteristics:*

- (a) to seek to ensure equality of treatment towards service users and employees;*
- (b) to identify the potential impact of the proposal or decision upon them.*

*The Council will also ask that officers consider whether the policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults*

*If the Council fails to give 'due regard', the Council is likely to face a Court challenge. This will either be through a judicial review of its decision making, the decision may be quashed and/or returned for it to have to be made again, which can be costly and time-consuming diversion for the Council. When considering 'due regard', decision makers must consider the following principles:*

- 1. **the decision maker is responsible for identifying whether there is an issue and discharging it.** The threshold for one of the duties to be triggered is low and will be triggered where there is any issue which needs at least to be addressed.*
- 2. **the duties arise before the decision or proposal is made, and not after and are ongoing.** They require **advance** consideration by the policy decision maker with conscientiousness, rigour and an open mind. The duty is similar to an open consultation process.*
- 3. the decision maker must be **aware of the needs of the duty.***
- 4. the **impact of the proposal or decision must be properly understood first.** The amount of regard due will depend on the individual circumstances of each case. The greater the potential impact, the greater the regard.*
- 5. **Get your facts straight first!** There will be no due regard at all if the decision maker or those advising it make a fundamental error of fact (e.g. because of failing to properly inform yourself about the impact of a particular decision).*
- 6. What does 'due regard' entail?*
  - a. **Collection and consideration of data and information;***
  - b. **ensuring data is sufficient to assess the decision/any potential discrimination/ensure equality of opportunity;***
  - c. **proper appreciation of the extent, nature and duration of the proposal or decision.***
- 7. **Responsibility** for discharging can't be delegated or sub-contracted (although an equality impact assessment ("EIA") can be undertaken by officers, decision makers must be sufficiently aware of the outcome).*
- 8. **Document the process** of having due regard! Keep records and make it transparent! If in any doubt carry out an equality impact assessment ("EIA"),*

*to test whether a policy will impact differentially or not. Evidentially an EIA will be the best way of defending a legal challenge. See hyperlink for the questions you should consider*  
<http://occweb/files/seealsodocs/93561/Equalities%20-%20Initial%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20screening%20template.doc>

1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group (s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

The CEB report recommends designation of two neighbourhood forums. Although these forums will be able to develop neighbourhood plans with policies, at present there are no policies or strategies to consider. Each neighbourhood forum includes members from across the neighbourhood area. A wide range of individuals and groups in each area were consulted on the proposed forums. It will be important to ensure that consultation on neighbourhood forums aims to involve a wide range of individuals and interests. All residents of an area will be asked to vote for or against any final draft neighbourhood plan in a referendum.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

No changes are required at this stage.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

N/A

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

N/A

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place

N/A

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA:

Role:

Date:

Note, please consider & include the following areas:

- Summary of the impacts of any individual policies
- Specific impact tests (e.g. statutory equality duties, social, regeneration and sustainability)

- Post implementation review plan (consider the basis for the review, objectives and how these will be measured, impacts and outcomes including the “unknown”)
- Potential data sources (attach hyperlinks including Government impact assessments where relevant)

**To: City Executive Board**

**Date: 22 January 2013**

**Report of: Jane Winfield**

**Title of Report: LETTING OF BASEMENT, GROUND AND FIRST FLOOR  
OF 23-25 BROAD STREET, OXFORD**

## Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To seek approval to the letting as detailed herein.

**Key decision?** No

**Executive lead member:** David Edwards, Executive Director, City  
Regeneration

**Policy Framework:** Vibrant and Sustainable Economy  
An Efficient and Effective Council

### Recommendation(s)

1. To approve the proposed letting of 23-25 Broad Street, Oxford on the terms as detailed in the Not for Publication confidential Appendix 4 of this report and otherwise on terms and conditions to be approved by the Service Manager, Regeneration and Major Projects.
2. Give authority to the Service Manager, Regeneration and Major Projects, to vary the proposed letting or tenant party as detailed herein provided the transaction continues to represent best consideration.

Appendices to report:

Appendix 1 - Plan of Site

Appendix 2 - Risk Register

Appendix 3 - Not for publication confidential appendix

Appendix 4 – Not for publication confidential appendix

## Background

1. This report seeks approval to the letting of the retail premises shown hatched on the plan attached at Appendix 1, and known 23-25 Broad Street, Oxford
2. The property was vacated in June 2013 when the previous occupier, Blackwells Music, moved out to consolidate the operation into their existing shop. Since this time, the retail element of the building, basement, ground and first floors have been marketed for a new retail occupier by appointed agents KLM Property.
3. Marketing undertaken includes:
  - a. Posters on site
  - b. Brochure
  - c. Mailing
  - d. Email web marketing on Shop Property and Completely Retail as well as Oxford City Council's own web site.
4. Bids were sought for 18 September with the matter being concluded with a best bid deadline of 11 October.
5. The offers received for the site are attached in the not for publication Appendix 3

## Planning Implications

6. There are no implications for this retail letting, the retained 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors are to be converted for residential use which may require consent.

## Risk Implications

7. A risk assessment has been undertaken and the risk register is attached at Appendix 2.

## Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

8. No implications; the property was previously occupied for the same use.

## Equalities Implications

9. No implications arising

## Financial Implications

10. This disposal will generate a significant rental income the details of which are given in the confidential appendix
11. The tenant will pay the Council's reasonable legal and surveyor's fees incurred.

12. Current accounts have been provided by the new occupier to demonstrate its ability to meet the rental commitment.

Legal Implications

13. The lease to be granted is considered to be a disposal of land for the purposes of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972. Under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has an obligation when disposing of property to do so for the best consideration reasonably obtainable.
14. The appointed agent has provided a statement that the requirements of the above Act are met.

**Name and contact details of author:-**

Julia Castle  
Disposals and Letting Surveyor  
Corporate Property  
Tel: 01865 252223 e-mail: [jcastle@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:jcastle@oxford.gov.uk)

**List of background papers: none**

**Version number: 1**

## Appendix 1 – Plan of Premises



**23-25 Broad Street, Oxford**

**Appendix 2 CEB Report Risk Register – Letting of 23-25 Broad Street**

Risk Score **Impact Score:** 1 = Insignificant; 2 = Minor; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Major; 5 = Catastrophic  
**Probability Score:** 1 = Rare; 2 = Unlikely; 3 = Possible; 4 = Likely; 5 = Almost Certain

No.	Risk Description Link to Corporate Objectives	Gross Risk		Cause of Risk	Mitigation	Net Risk		Further Management of Risk: Transfer/Accept/Reduce/Avoid		Monitoring Effectiveness				Current Risk	
1	Lease does not complete	3	3	Lease terms Changes terms from initial agreement Timings	Aim to complete the legal documentation as quickly as possible. Resolve any queries which arise	3	3								
2	Tenant looks to renegotiate rent	4	3	Tenant takes opportunity to renegotiate rent level close to completion of transaction	Aim to complete the legal documentation as quickly as possible	4	3								





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## CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

Wednesday 11 December 2013

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillors Price (Leader), Turner (Deputy Leader), Brown, Cook, Curran, Kennedy, Rowley, Seamons and Tanner.

### **99. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Lygo.

### **100. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Brown declared an interest in minute 109 (Jericho Canalside Supplementary Planning Document – Adoption) and withdrew from the meeting whilst the matter was discussed (*minute to be amplified later*).

### **101. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

### **102. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The following reports from Scrutiny were submitted (now appended):-

- Treasury Management – Mid Term Review 2013/14
- Housing Action Plan – Refresh

The reports were taken with the related reports elsewhere on the agenda (minutes 105 and 111 refer).

The Board also received an oral report on scrutiny consideration of the report at minute 110 (Community Engagement Plan 2014-2017 – Draft for Consultation).

### **103. COUNCILLOR ADDRESSES ON ANY ITEM FOR DECISION ON THE BOARD'S AGENDA**

With the agreement of the Chair, Councillor Campbell addressed the Board on the subject of minute 110 (Community Engagement Plan 2014-2017 – Draft for Consultation). A summary of the addresses is contained in minute 110.

### **104. FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK - QUARTER 2 PROGRESS 2012/13**

The Head of Finance and the Head of Business Improvement and Technology submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended).

Resolved to note:-

- (1) The financial position and performance of the Council for the second quarter of 2013/14 and also the position of risks outstanding as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013;
- (2) Note a virement, approved by the Head of Finance under delegated authority, being the introduction into the 2013/14 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme of a £0.250 million budget for “Green Energy”, and further funding associated with the project being included in the 2014/15 Budget consultation;
- (2) That it would be a priority to transfer at year-end the reported £2.262m General Fund projected surplus, together with the £0.800m previously transferred from the in-year risk contingency budget, to a specific Earmarked Reserve to fund the Capital Programme in the absence of further planned capital receipts.

#### **105. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - MID-TERM REVIEW 2013/14**

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended). The Board also had before it a Scrutiny report (previously circulated, now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) To note:-
  - (a) The half year performance to the end of September 2013;
  - (b) The Council’s Investment Strategy for the remainder of the current financial year;
- (2) In relation to the Scrutiny recommendations:-
  - (a) To note advice given by the Head of Finance that the Council would, all things being equal, seek to retender its banking requirements in April 2015;
  - (b) That ethical standards should be part of the specifications in a retender invitation;
  - (c) To ask the Head of Finance in six months time to provide to Scrutiny a review of performance of the Council’s non-specified investments considering in particular diversity and mix and a benchmark across the public sector for the percentage of funds allocated to this type of investment.

#### **106. BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014/15 TO 2017/18 AND 2014/15 BUDGET**

The Head of Finance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended).

The Board Member, Finance, Efficiency and Asset Management referred to some aspects of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement that might affect local authority budgets, namely employer national insurance contributions, New Homes Bonus and business rate concessions.

The Leader and the Chief Executive thanked Finance staff for their work in preparing the draft consultation Budget.

Resolved to approve for consultation the draft Budget for the financial year 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2015/16 to 2017/18 and in particular to approve:-

- (1) The Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £23.471 million for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 1.99% or £5.34 per annum representing a Band D Council Tax of £273.53 per annum;
- (2) The continuance of the Council's Council Tax Support scheme (formerly Council Tax Benefit) as referred to in paragraph 25 of the report;
- (3) The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix 4 to the report and an increase in average dwelling rent of 5.42% or £5.25 per week an annual average rent of £102.08 as set out in Appendix 5
- (4) The Capital Programme for 2014/15 -2017/18 as set out in Appendix 6 to the report;
- (5) The fees and charges schedule as set out in Appendix 7 to the report;
- (6) The proposed level of exemptions and discounts on empty homes and unoccupied properties as outlined in paragraph 44 of the report.

## **107. CORPORATE PLAN 2014-18 - CONSULTATION**

The Head of Policy, Culture and Communications submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended).

Resolved to approve for consultation the draft Corporate Plan for 2014 – 2018.

## **108. AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN - CONSULTATION OUTCOME AND ADOPTION**

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended).

In response to questions concerning enforcement of the Low Emission Zone once it came into effect in January 2014, the Head of Environmental Development explained that the Council held a database of compliant PSVs that operated in the area of the LEZ. Vehicles not on the database, that were registered with the Traffic Commissioner as UK law required (vehicles bearing foreign number plates were not so required) and which were not compliant with

LEZ requirements would be reported to the Traffic Commissioner who had the power to take action.

Resolved:-

- (1) to adopt the Air Quality Action Plan as contained in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) to ask the Head of Environmental Development to discuss with County Council colleagues and the Traffic Commissioner a system of checking for compliance and taking action in cases of non-compliance.

#### **109. JERICHO CANALSIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - ADOPTION**

The Head of City Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) (a) To adopt the Jericho Canalside Supplementary Planning Document as contained in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (b) To authorise the Head of City Development, after consultation with the Board Member for City Development to make editorial corrections to the Document prior to final publication;
- (2) To endorse the strategic environmental assessment screening report and the equalities impact assessment relating to the Supplementary Planning Document.

*(Note: Councillor Brown declared an interest in this item and withdrew from the meeting whilst the matter was discussed). Note to be amplified later.*

#### **110. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2014-2017 - DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

The Head of Policy, Culture and Communications submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended).

With the Chair's agreement Councillor Campbell addressed the meeting. Councillor Campbell suggested that in the context of the consultation on the Plan, Council officers should develop a list of key stakeholders with whom the Council would consult as a matter of course.

The Board Member, Youth and Communities referred to the Scrutiny discussion of the report and commented upon the recommendations that flowed from it. The recommendations were all adopted by the Board in the terms set out in resolution (2) below.

Resolved:-

- (1) Subject to the Board's decisions in resolution (2) below on the outcome of the Scrutiny deliberations, to issue the draft Community Engagement Plan for consultation;
- (2) In relation to the Scrutiny recommendations:-
  - (a) That a clear statement be provided in the Plan, supported by guidance to Service Areas, of the need for all engagement activity to link together in order to deliver the overall aims of the Plan;
  - (b) To ask the Head of Policy, Culture and Communications to ensure that the guidance and toolkit were fit for purpose for the diverse groups with whom the Council was seeking to engage;
  - (c) To ask that the Plan reflected the role played by councillors and how this was supported through advice and training and was linked to democratic processes;
  - (d) To ask officers:-
    - (i) In the context of the consultation on the Plan, to develop a list of key stakeholders with whom the Council would consult as a matter of course;
    - (ii) In the context of consultation, to ask that a questionnaire be issued, built around the main areas upon which consultation feedback on the Plan was wanted;
    - (iii) To report back on examples of good and poor engagement activities;
  - (e) To ask the Head of Policy, Culture and Communications to emphasise and give more weight in the Plan to seeking and encouraging engagement at a very local level to ensure communities can help shape decisions and issues that affect them;
  - (f) That the Plan and toolkit should recognise the importance of defining as broadly as possible and on a case by case basis what might constitute a 'hard to reach' group.

## **111. HOUSING ACTION PLAN- REFRESH**

The Head of Housing and Property submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended). The Board also had before it a Scrutiny report (previously circulated, now appended)

Resolved to agree to the updated Housing Strategy Action Plan targets described in and set out in Appendix A to the report and to ask that the new Landlord and Lettings Agencies Accreditation Scheme be publicised as widely as possible to achieve greatest impact so that the number of landlords in the Scheme be maximised.

## **112. HOUSING STOCK - ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT**

The Head of Housing and Property submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended).

The Head of Housing and Property updated the Board on matters relating to the subject of the report in relation to the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, as follows:-

- the amount of total funding available had been diluted due to the first ECO programme being extended for two years to March 2017
- changes to funding streams meant a move towards funding the 25% most deprived areas
- there would be a reduced emphasis on solid wall insulation and an increased emphasis on cavity and loft insulation
- active support was required to mix green deal and ECO. Companies had indicated this required a mix of private and social housing on an area by area basis.

Energy companies remained keen to continue discussions with the Council on the initiative.

Resolved to:-

- (1) Grant project approval for the Council's involvement in the project to utilise Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding, in combination with funding supplied by the Council, to improve the energy efficiency of the Council's hard to heat housing;
- (2) Note the officer virement of £250k from the underspend in the 2013/14 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme and the inclusion of a further £250k in the draft 2014/15 HRA budget to fund the Council's contribution to the project;
- (3) Grant delegated authority to the Executive Director, Housing and Regeneration, to authorise the Council's entry into all appropriate contracts required to implement the project;
- (4) Agree that if ECO funding is not successful, alternative proposals for the work to proceed be brought back for consideration;
- (5) Ask that a report back on progress be brought to the Board's first meeting in the Council Year 2014/15.

## **113. LIVING WAGE - OXFORD**

The Head of Human Resources and Facilities submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended).

Resolved:-

- (1) To agree Option 3 in the report as the basis for determining any increase in the Oxford Living Wage;

- (2) That any changes in the Oxford Living Wage be applied in April each year following notification in November each year of changes to the London Living Wage.

#### **114. OUTSIDE BODIES - APPOINTMENTS**

The Head of Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended).

Resolved that:-

- (1) Mrs Elizabeth Wade be appointed to the Susan Kidd Charity for the period 13th December 2013 to 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015;
- (2) Councillor Graham Jones be appointed to the City of Oxford Charity for the period 13th December 2013 to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

#### **115. FUTURE ITEMS**

Nothing was raised under this item.

#### **116. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013 were approved as a correct record.

**The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 6.10 pm**

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