

Barton Area Action Plan

Statement of Common Ground between

Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council

August 2012

Introduction

At the hearing sessions held in July 2012 there was much discussion between the City and County Council's and others about the wording of Policies BA1 and BA7. At the close of the week the Inspector requested that the City Council proposed some amendments to these policies to address her concerns. As such, tracked changes to the policies were proposed as Main Modifications MM4 and MM6. The Main Modifications were subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and published alongside an addendum to the SA for public consultation. The period of public consultation began on 27th July 2012 and closes on 7th September 2012 with a view to an additional hearing being held on the issue in the week commencing 24th September.

During the consultation period further discussions have been held between the City and County Councils at senior officer level. These discussions have resulted in agreement that both parties would be satisfied with the policies if some more minor changes were made to the supporting text to Policy BA1 and to Policy BA7 and its supporting text. These are detailed below.

Further proposed change to Policy BA1

The County Council were concerned that Main Modification MM4 does not make it specific that any changes to speed limits and any related physical works to the highway remain to be established and will require the prior approval of the Highway Authority. The City Council has reviewed this and agreed that it can support the addition of a reference to this effect so that any amendments to the ring road can ensure that it serves its strategic function. This will require investment both in the ring road and the links from the new development to the wider urban fabric. The County Council were also concerned that any reference to the proposed changes to the ring road should not be described as "transformational" since this may raise expectations of outcomes that may not be achievable. This would result in some minor changes to the text as identified in the [blue tracked changes](#) below. Please note the black tracked changes are those identified in Main Modification MM4.

Section 5 Integration with surrounding areas and the rest of Oxford

It is important that the new neighbourhood feels part of Oxford.

The place-shaping policies in this Plan aim to foster the sense of community that will be generated by people living in the new and existing homes. [There could be changes to the A40 ring-road to improve the overall environment such as the provision of](#) ~~will be transformed to reduce the sense of segregation it currently creates~~ [into a street that runs through the city rather than dividing it. There will be excellent high quality](#) new links across [over](#) the ring-road for pedestrians and cyclists, and improved public transport links. The local centre and community facilities will be easily accessible and new homes will be well related to existing homes in Barton. [The City Council will work closely with the Highway Authority in pursuit of these aims.](#)

Transforming the A40 ring-road

- 5.1 The A40 ring-road runs immediately to the south of the strategic development site, forming part of the strategic highway network. Our policy for this stretch of the ring-road is [important crucial](#) to achieving the Plan's wider vision and objectives.
- 5.2 Comprising dual carriageway with a maximum speed of 70 mph, the ring-road creates a sense of severance and isolation. It forms a noisy barrier physically separating the strategic development site

from communities in Northway, Headington and the rest of Oxford. Leaving this stretch of the ring-road as it is would make it much harder to integrate old and new. Change would offer opportunities to:

- reduce noise levels for existing communities
- make best use of land, by increasing the amount of land available for development
- improve connectivity.

5.3 The ring-road will be ~~Our aspiration is to seek to amend the ring road to reduce noise, make it more physically attractive and help integrate development with the wider urban fabric. transformed the ring road to ensure it is no longer a noisy and visually dominating physical barrier that separates Barton and its surroundings from the rest of the city. This will be~~ We will seek to achieved this in the following three ways:

- Reducing T~~traffic speeds will be reduced to a maximum of 40 mph.~~

Lower traffic speeds will reduce noise levels for the new development as well as for those living in surrounding communities. The amount of developable land ~~would~~ will be increased by allowing development to take place closer to the ring-road. The lower speeds ~~would~~ will allow traffic management measures in the form of a new signal-controlled junction or roundabout on the A40 ring-road and multiple safe and easy-to-use crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. Physical measures to the A40 to slow down traffic could also include changes to lane widths, the use of surface materials, street lighting and signage. Together these measures would help to transform the look, feel and operation of this stretch of the ring road.

- Building new development facing the ring road

New development ~~could~~ will be built facing the northern side of the ring-road.

~~To avoid any sense of separation between the new neighbourhood and the rest of Oxford, new homes will be built fronting onto the ring road. There will be~~ In such cases a parallel road would allow access to the properties fronting the ring-road. These frontages of new homes will be along the southern edge of the strategic development site (though not necessarily its entire length) and in Barton itself. as shown in illustrations 1 and 2 show how proposed development could face onto the ring road on the strategic development site.

- Landscaping

The landscaping of the central reservation along this stretch of the ring-road ~~could~~ will be reviewed ~~re-landscaped.~~

The central reservation is well planted with mature vegetation but overly dense. This forms another physical – albeit green – barrier between the strategic development site and the rest of Oxford. The planting could be reviewed to support integration ~~should be re-landscaped to be more in keeping with a street running through the city.~~

Any changes to the physical layout of the A40 and/or its speed limit will require the prior approval of the County Council as the Local Highway Authority.

5.4 The changes to the ring-road must consider the setting of the Old Headington Conservation Area, which lies to the south of the ring-road.

¹ Illustrations are indicative

Policy BA1: ~~Transforming~~ the ring-road

Traffic management and safety measures will be put in place and design principles applied to the A40 ring-road between the western approach to the new junction/roundabout and the Headington roundabout to secure a reduction in traffic speeds to a maximum of 40 mph.

~~Planning permission will only be granted for a layout for the strategic development site that maximises the scope to provide homes facing the northern side of the ring road. Such development must not be accessed direct from the ring road.~~

The landscaping of the central reservation ~~may~~ will be ~~reviewed~~ re-landscaped to reduce the density of the existing planting.

Where relevant, any development facing the ring-road and any review of the landscaping re-landscaping of the central reservation must consider views into and out of the Old Headington Conservation Area.

There may be an opportunity to provide homes facing the northern side of the ring-road. Such development must not be accessed direct from the ring-road.

Further proposed changes to Policy BA7

The County Council were concerned that Main Modification MM6 did not remove references to surface-level crossings. The City Council has now reviewed this and agreed that it can support removal of these references. This would result in four minor changes to the policy and its text as identified in **blue tracked changes below**. Please note the black tracked changes are those identified in Main Modification MM6.

Pedestrian and cycle links

- 5.31 The ring-road currently imposes a significant barrier for pedestrians and cyclists, with only one existing grade-separated (differing levels) crossing point – a subway to the south of Barton, which provides a link to Headington.
- 5.32 To improve integration and permeability and to promote maximum usage, a network of safe and easy-to-use pedestrian and cycle routes along desire lines (the routes people are likely to take, with or without a formally designated path) is needed to connect the new homes with facilities in the new neighbourhood and link the new development to its surroundings in Barton, Headington, Northway and the countryside beyond Oxford, and to the rest of the city. There will be multiple safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links across ~~crossing points on~~ the ring-road.
- 5.33 The existing footpath that runs south-north across the strategic development site (and then beyond into the countryside in South Oxfordshire) ~~could~~ will be re-connected with Stoke Place, ~~either as a surface-level crossing or bridge~~, linking the footpath with the public bridleway and byway that continues south into Old Headington along Stoke Place. ~~The~~ A re-connected link would ~~will~~ provide the new development with a direct pedestrian and cycle route to the shops and other facilities in Headington, the John Radcliffe Hospital and Cheney Secondary School. It would ~~will~~ open up access to the countryside in South Oxfordshire for those living in Headington. Stoke Place would ~~will~~ need to be upgraded to an appropriate standard, with changes to the surface, thinning of trees and vegetation and installation of sensitive street lighting. The nature of the changes to Stoke Place, together with the design, ~~and~~ siting and type of the crossing, should respect the character of Old Headington Conservation Area.
- 5.34 The new vehicle junction or roundabout on the ring-road will include pedestrian and cyclist crossing phasing and facilities. The new development is an opportunity to improve the existing crossing to the south of Barton. ~~This could be in the form of further improvements to the subway or a parallel surface-level crossing.~~ There could be at least one other new pedestrian and cycle link across ~~crossing of~~ the ring-road, ~~linking the strategic development site with its surroundings.~~ One potential location ~~crossing point~~ is from the new development to Foxwell Drive in Northway either as a surface-level crossing or

bridge, which would provide direct access to the wider cycle network and the city centre. Map 6 shows how the strategic development site will be accessed by vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

Policy BA7: Pedestrian and cycle links

New direct, safe and attractive cycle and pedestrian links will be provided as part of the strategic development, including:

- ~~re-connecting Stoke Place bridleway with the existing footpath running north-south across the strategic development site~~
- ~~upgrading Stoke Place to an appropriate standard for a cycle route and footpath and in a manner that is sensitive to Stoke Place's role and character in the Old Headington Conservation Area~~
- a crossing of the A40 ring-road included in the new junction or roundabout
- enhancement of the existing crossing between Barton and Headington
- links between the new development and existing rights of way in surrounding countryside
- giving priority to walking and cycling routes in the development, including connections to key destinations such as the local centre, community hub and Barton and the links across the A40 ring-road
- a street network that is designed to be fully cycle and pedestrian friendly.

There may be an opportunity to re-connect Stoke Place bridleway with the existing footpath running north-south across the strategic development site. Any link crossing, whether at grade or via a bridge would need to ensure safety for all users. It would require the upgrading of Stoke Place to an appropriate standard for a cycle route and footpath in a manner that is sensitive to Stoke Place's role and character in the Old Headington Conservation Area.

Conclusion

The County Council consider that the further minor changes set out above are necessary and would satisfy their only outstanding concern with the policies of the Barton Area Action Plan. In the interests of collaboration and to secure the County Council's support the City Council have agreed with these proposed minor changes.

The City Council requests that the Inspector considers making these changes to the Plan alongside the other Proposed Minor Examination Changes. The County Council confirm that they satisfy their concerns and would not be seeking to make representations to the Main Modifications consultation if they are made.

Oxford City Council
Oxfordshire County Council
September 2012