

The South East Plan

Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England

May 2009

POLICY SP5: GREEN BELTS

The existing broad extent of Green Belts in the region is appropriate and will be retained and supported and the opportunity should be taken to improve their land-use management and access as part of initiatives to improve the rural urban fringe. However, in order to meet regional development needs in the most sustainable locations, selective reviews of Green Belt boundaries are required

- i. in the Metropolitan Green Belt to the north east of Guildford, and possibly to the south of Woking, and
- ii. in the Oxford Green Belt to the south of the City

In addition, a boundary review will be required in the area of the former DERA site at Chertsey.

Smaller-scale local reviews are likely to be required in other locations, including around Redhill-Reigate, and these should be pursued through the local development framework process.

These reviews should satisfy national criteria for Green Belt releases, accord with the spatial strategy, and ensure that sufficient land is safeguarded to avoid the need to further review to meet development needs to at least 2031. Where reviews cover more than one local authority area they should be undertaken through a joint or co-ordinated approach. Where selective reviews are undertaken local authorities should satisfy themselves that there will not be a need for further review before 2031. In undertaking this exercise the same annual rate of development as set out in Table H1b of this strategy should be assumed for the years 2026-2031.

POLICY CC1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The principal objective of the Plan is to achieve and to maintain sustainable development in the region. Sustainable development priorities for the South East are identified as:

- i. achieving sustainable levels of resource use
- ii. ensuring the physical and natural environment of the South East is conserved and enhanced
- iii. reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with the region
- iv. ensuring that the South East is prepared for the inevitable impacts of climate change
- v. achieving safe, secure and socially inclusive communities across the region, and ensuring that the most deprived people also have an equal opportunity to benefit from and contribute to a better quality of life.

All authorities, agencies and individuals responsible for delivering the policies in this Plan shall ensure that their actions contribute to meeting the objectives set out in this policy and in the regional Sustainability Framework.

POLICY CC6: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND CHARACTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Actions and decisions associated with the development and use of land will actively promote the creation of sustainable and distinctive communities. This will be achieved by developing and implementing a local shared vision which:

- i. respects, and where appropriate enhances, the character and distinctiveness of settlements and landscapes throughout the region
- ii. uses innovative design processes to create a high quality built environment which promotes a sense of place. This will include consideration of accessibility, social inclusion, the need for environmentally sensitive development and crime reduction.

POLICY BE5: VILLAGE MANAGEMENT

In preparing local development documents (LDDs), local planning authorities should positively plan to meet the defined local needs of their rural communities for small scale affordable housing, business and service development, taking account of changing patterns of agriculture, economic diversification, and continued viability of local services. LDDs should define their approach to development in villages based on the functions performed, their accessibility, the need to protect or extend key local services and the capacity of the built form and landscape setting of the village. All new development should be subject to rigorous design and sustainability criteria so that the distinctive character of the village is not damaged.

To assist this, local planning authorities should encourage community-led local assessments of need and action planning to inform decision making processes.

POLICY T1: MANAGE AND INVEST

Relevant regional strategies, local development documents and local transport plans should ensure that their management policies and proposals:

- i. are consistent with, and supported by, appropriate mobility management measures
- ii. achieve a re-balancing of the transport system in favour of sustainable modes as a means of access to services and facilities
- iii. foster and promote an improved and integrated network of public transport services in and between both urban and rural areas
- iv. encourage development that is located and designed to reduce average journey lengths
- v. improve the maintenance of the existing transport system

- vi. include measures that reduce the overall number of road casualties]
- vii. include measures to minimise negative environmental impacts of transport and, where possible, to enhance the environment and communities through such interventions
- viii. investment in upgrading the transport system should be prioritised to support delivery of the spatial strategy by:
 - a. supporting the function of the region's international gateways and inter-regional movement corridors (see Diagram T1 at the end of this chapter)
 - b. developing the network of regional hubs and spokes (see Diagram T2 at the end of the chapter)
 - c. facilitating urban renewal and urban renaissance as a means of achieving a more sustainable pattern of development
 - d. improving overall levels of accessibility.

POLICY TRS2: RURAL TOURISM

Opportunities to promote tourism and recreation-based diversification should be encouraged where they provide jobs for local residents and are of a scale and type appropriate to their location.

Local planning authorities in formulating planning policies and taking decisions will:

- i. support proposals which seek to develop the tourism opportunities associated with all types of rural development initiatives
- ii. protect access to, and support proposals for upgrading, inland waterways and associated facilities for recreational use in accordance with relevant management strategies
- iii. in surrounding countryside areas with significant tourism potential, local authorities should identify actions to strengthen linkages between market towns and their hinterlands through the provision of integrated sustainable transport and complementary product development, investment and marketing, including the promotion of locally produced products, such as food and crafts.

POLICY NRM5: CONSERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY

Local planning authorities and other bodies shall avoid a net loss of biodiversity, and actively pursue opportunities to achieve a net gain across the region.

- i. They must give the highest level of protection to sites of international nature conservation importance (European sites). Plans or projects implementing policies in this RSS are subject to the Habitats Directive. Where a likely significant effect of a plan or project on European sites

- cannot be excluded, an appropriate assessment in line with the Habitats Directive and associated regulations will be required.
- ii. If after completing an appropriate assessment of a plan or project local planning authorities and other bodies are unable to conclude that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of any European sites, the plan or project will not be approved, irrespective of conformity with other policies in the RSS, unless otherwise in compliance with 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.
 - iii. For example when deciding on the distribution of housing allocations, local planning authorities should consider a range of alternative distributions within their area and should distribute an allocation in such a way that it avoids adversely affecting the integrity of European sites. In the event that a local planning authority concludes that it cannot distribute an allocation accordingly, or otherwise avoid or adequately mitigate any adverse effect, it should make provision up to the level closest to its original allocation for which it can be concluded that it can be distributed without adversely affecting the integrity of any European sites.
 - iv. They shall avoid damage to nationally important sites of special scientific interest and seek to ensure that damage to county wildlife sites and locally important wildlife and geological sites is avoided, including additional areas outside the boundaries of European sites where these support the species for which that site has been selected.
 - v. They shall ensure appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance, identifying areas of opportunity for biodiversity improvement and setting targets reflecting those in the table headed 'Regional Biodiversity Targets – Summary for 2010 and 2026' below. Opportunities for biodiversity improvement, including connection of sites, large-scale habitat restoration, enhancement and re-creation in the areas of strategic opportunity for biodiversity improvement (Diagram NRM3) should be pursued.
 - vi. They shall influence and applying agri-environment schemes, forestry, flood defence, restoration of mineral extraction sites and other land management practices to:
 - deliver biodiversity targets
 - increase the wildlife value of land
 - reduce diffuse pollution
 - protect soil resources.
 - vii. They shall promote policies that integrate the need to accommodate the changes taking place in agriculture with the potential implications of resultant development in the countryside.
 - viii. They shall require green infrastructure to be identified, developed and implemented in conjunction with new development.

POLICY NRM10: NOISE

Measures to address and reduce noise pollution will be developed at regional and local level through means such as:

- i. locating new residential and other sensitive development away from existing sources of significant noise or away from planned new sources of noise
- ii. traffic management and requiring sound attenuation measures in major transport schemes
- iii. encouraging high levels of sound-proofing and screening as part of sustainable housing design and construction.

POLICY C4: LANDSCAPE AND COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT

Outside nationally designated landscapes, positive and high quality management of the region's open countryside will be encouraged and supported by local authorities and other organisations, agencies, land managers, the private sector and local communities, through a combination of planning policies, grant aid and other measures.

In particular, planning authorities and other agencies in their plans and programmes should recognise, and aim to protect and enhance, the diversity and local distinctiveness of the region's landscape, informed by landscape character assessment.

Positive land management is particularly needed around the edge of London and in other areas subject to most growth and change. In such areas long-term goals for landscape conservation and renewal and habitat improvement should be set, and full advantage taken of agri-environmental funding and other management tools.

Local authorities should develop criteria-based policies to ensure that all development respects and enhances local landscape character, securing appropriate mitigation where damage to local landscape character cannot be avoided.

POLICY S1: SUPPORTING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Local development documents should embrace preventative measures to address the causes of ill health by reflecting the role the planning system can play in developing and shaping healthy sustainable communities, including:

- i. community access to amenities such as parks, open spaces, physical recreation activity, and cultural facilities
- ii. mixed and cohesive communities, with a particular focus on access to housing for socially excluded groups
- iii. healthier forms of transport, by incorporating cycle lanes and safe footpaths in planned developments.

POLICY S3: EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Local planning authorities, taking into account demographic projections, should work with partners to ensure the adequate provision of pre-school, school and community learning facilities. Policies should advocate the widening and deepening of participation through better accessibility, reflecting the role the planning system can play in developing and shaping healthy sustainable communities. Policies should:

- i. take account of the future development needs of the economy and the community sector
- ii. encourage mixed use approaches, that include community facilities alongside 'formal' education facilities
- iii. seek to ensure access for all sections of society to education facilities at locations with good public transport access.

POLICY S5: CULTURAL AND SPORTING ACTIVITY

Increased and sustainable participation in sport, recreation and cultural activity should be encouraged by local authorities, public agencies and their partners through local development documents and other measures in order to improve the overall standard of fitness, enhance cultural diversity and enrich the overall quality of life.

Provision for cultural and sporting activity should:

- i. be based on an up to date strategy for the selected provision which should cover aspects such as the arts, heritage, the museums, libraries and archive sectors and sporting activity
- ii. be based on an audit of current supply and an assessment of this supply against estimated demand/growth. The audits should cover the quantitative, qualitative and accessible nature of provision. Authorities should encourage formal partnership working to put in place effective programmes of provision and management.

Local development documents should include policies relevant to local needs designed to:

- i. encourage participation by disadvantaged and socially excluded persons/groups
- ii. locate facilities sustainably where they can be accessed by a range of modes of transport particularly healthy forms of transport i.e. walking and cycling
- iii. make joint service provisions where appropriate
- iv. give special attention to cultural provision in supporting economic growth and urban regeneration, which may be the subject of area action plans
- v. include policies encouraging workplace and other everyday provision for increased physical activity.

POLICY S6: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The regional planning authority and regional partners, including SEEDA, will work with Government and other agencies to increase investment in physical and social infrastructure and secure co-ordination between development and essential infrastructure provision.

Where appropriate, the mixed use of community facilities should be encouraged by local authorities, public agencies and other providers, through local development documents and other measures in order to make effective use of resources and reduce travel and other impacts.

Local planning authorities, in consultation with those delivering services using community infrastructure (including the Third Sector and Faith organisations), will ensure facilities are located and designed appropriately, taking account of local needs and a whole life costing approach.

Policies should also ensure that:

- i. community infrastructure supports economic growth and regeneration, with particular priority for health and education provision
- ii. creative thinking and action on new mixes of cultural and community facilities is encouraged
- iii. appropriate facilities are made accessible to all sections of the community, in both urban and rural settlements.

POLICY CO4: GREEN BELT

A Green Belt will be maintained around Oxford to:

- i. preserve the special character and landscape setting of Oxford
- ii. check the growth of Oxford and prevent ribbon development and urban sprawl
- iii. prevent the coalescence of settlements
- iv. assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- v. assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

A selective review of Green Belt boundaries will take place on the southern edge of Oxford through one or more co-ordinated development plan documents. It will identify land to be removed from the Green Belt to facilitate a sustainable urban extension to Oxford with minimal impact on village identity and the landscape setting of the city.

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

POLICY W5: TARGETS FOR DIVERSION FROM LANDFILL

A substantial increase in recovery of waste and commensurate reduction in landfill is required in the region. Accordingly, the following targets for diversion from landfill of all waste need to be achieved in the region (Policy W6 targets are a component of these):

Year	Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)	Commercial and Industrial (C&I)	Construction and Demolition (C&D)	All Waste	
	mt/yr	mt/yr	mt/yr	mt/yr	%
2008	2.0	5.2	10.0	17.2	68
2010	2.5	5.8	10.1	18.4	71
2015	3.9	7.4	10.4	21.7	79
2020	4.7	8.7	10.7	24.0	84
2025	5.1	9.4	10.9	25.5	86

Regional Targets for Diversion from Landfill

Source: Regional Waste Management Capacity: Survey, Methodology and Monitoring, Updated Final Report, 2008 (modelled Scenario 1)

Note: Percentage targets for diversion from landfill in the year 2008 have been interpolated.

Waste planning authorities (WPAs) should ensure that policies and proposals are in place to contribute to the delivery of these targets, and waste management companies should take them into account in their commercial decisions. The optimal management solution will vary according to the individual material resource streams and local circumstances and will usually involve one or more of the following processes:

- re-use
- recycling
- mechanical and/or biological processing (to recover materials and produce compost, soil conditioner or inert residue)
- thermal treatment (to recover energy)
- priority will be given to processes higher up this waste hierarchy.

WPAs should continue to provide sufficient landfill capacity to process residues and waste that cannot practicably be recovered.

POLICY W17: LOCATION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

Waste development documents will, in identifying locations for waste management facilities, give priority to safeguarding and expanding suitable sites with an existing waste management use and good transport

connections. The suitability of existing sites and potential new sites should be assessed on the basis of the following characteristics.

- i. good accessibility from existing urban areas or major new or planned development
- ii. good transport connections including, where possible, rail or water
- iii. compatible land uses, namely:
 - active mineral working sites
 - previous or existing industrial land use
 - contaminated or derelict land
 - land adjoining sewage treatment works
 - redundant farm buildings and their cartilages
- iv. be capable of meeting a range of locally based environmental and amenity criteria.

Waste management facilities should not be precluded from the Green Belt. Small-scale waste management facilities for local needs should not be precluded from Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks where the development would not compromise the objectives of the designation.

POLICY M2: RECYCLED AND SECONDARY AGGREGATES

The use of secondary aggregates and recycled materials in the South East should increase from 6.6mtpa (29% of the guidelines for primary aggregate production in the region) to at least 7.7mtpa (34%) by 2016 so as to reduce the need for primary aggregates extraction. To enable this target to be met, and where possible exceeded, mineral planning authorities (MPAs) should ensure that their mineral development frameworks enable provision to be made for the following:

Mineral Planning Authority Area	Apportionment of recycled and secondary aggregate provision (million tonnes per annum) by 2016
Berkshire Unitaries	0.7 mtpa
Buckinghamshire	0.6 mtpa
East Sussex/Brighton and Hove	0.5 mtpa
Hampshire/Portsmouth/Southampton/ New Forest	1.7 mtpa
Isle of Wight	0.1 mtpa
Kent	1.4 mtpa
Medway	0.2 mtpa
Milton Keynes	0.2 mtpa
Oxfordshire	0.9 mtpa
Surrey	0.8 mtpa
West Sussex	0.8 mtpa

MPAs should identify sites to contribute to such provision in minerals development frameworks. Local planning authorities should safeguard these sites through their local development frameworks.

Policy W17 – Location of Waste Management Facilities applies to all proposals for mineral recycling facilities. Where temporary recycling facilities are to be proposed in the Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or National Parks, they should be sited at existing minerals or waste sites wherever possible.

Note

The reference to mineral development frameworks should be taken to embrace mineral, waste or combined mineral and waste development frameworks.

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POLICY BE1 - ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Development will not be permitted unless appropriate supporting transport, service and community infrastructure is available or will be provided and appropriate provision has been made to safeguard the local environment. Contributions will be sought from developers and/or landowners in accordance with Government advice.

POLICY BE2 - GENERAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

New development should respect and, where possible, improve the character and quality of its surroundings and provide a safe, pleasant, convenient and interesting environment.

Proposals for new buildings and land uses should clearly demonstrate how they will relate satisfactorily to the site and its surroundings, incorporating a landscape scheme and incidental open space as appropriate.

A landscape scheme accompanying detailed proposals for development should show, as appropriate, hard and soft landscaping, existing and proposed underground services, a phasing programme for implementation and subsequent maintenance arrangements.

Proposals will only be permitted if all the following criteria are met:

Quality of Development and Impact upon the Area:

- a) the proposal is well-designed and respects the existing scale, pattern and character of the surrounding area;

- b) new buildings or extensions to existing buildings are designed to respect or enhance the form, siting, scale, massing and external materials and colours of adjoining buildings, with local building traditions reflected as appropriate;
- c) the proposal creates or retains a satisfactory environment for people living in or visiting the area, including people with disabilities;
- d) existing features of importance in the local environment are protected and/or enhanced;
- e) the landscape surrounding and providing a setting for existing towns and villages is not adversely affected;
- f) in the open countryside, any appropriate development will be easily assimilated into the landscape and wherever possible, be sited close to an existing group of buildings.

Crime:

- g) good design has been used to help reduce the opportunities for crime.

Energy and Resources:

- h) regard has been given to:
 - i. principles of energy and resource conservation;
 - ii. provision for sorting and storage facilities to facilitate recycling of waste.

POLICY BE3 - PROVISION FOR MOVEMENT AND PARKING

Development should make provision for the safe movement of people and vehicles, whilst minimising impact upon the environment. Within built-up areas priority should be given to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. Proposals will only be permitted if all the following criteria are met:

- a) safe and convenient circulation of pedestrians and cyclists, both within the development and externally to nearby facilities, with provision to meet the needs of people with impaired mobility as appropriate;
- b) safe movement of all vehicular traffic both within the site and on the surrounding highway network;
- c) provision for the increased use of public transport as appropriate to the scale of development;
- d) provision for the parking of vehicles, including bicycles and motorcycles, in accordance with the standards in Appendix 2.

Development which would have a significant impact on the highway network will not be permitted without the prior submission of a Transport Assessment.

POLICY BE4 OPEN SPACE WITHIN AND ADJOINING SETTLEMENTS

Proposals for development within or adjoining the built-up area should not result in the loss or erosion of:

- a) an open area which makes an important contribution to:
 - i. the distinctiveness of a settlement; and/or
 - ii. the visual amenity or character of the locality;
- b) a facility of benefit to local residents;
- c) an area of nature conservation value;
- d) common land or a village green.

When assessing any proposals for development which could affect existing open space, consideration will be given to the opportunity to:

- i) remedy deficiencies in provision, and
- ii) exchange the use of one site for another to substitute for any loss of open space.

POLICY BE5 - CONSERVATION AREAS

The special architectural, historic and environmental character or appearance of the Conservation Areas will be preserved or enhanced. Every effort will be made to ensure that this character or appearance is not eroded by the introduction of unsympathetic development proposals either within or affecting the setting of the designated area.

POLICY BE16 - FEATURE ILLUMINATION

The use of floodlighting on landmark features and buildings will be permitted subject to the following criteria

- a) the means of lighting will be unobtrusively sited;
- b) the level and type of illumination will enhance the feature itself and the character and amenity of the area;
- c) the proposal will not have a detrimental effect on the amenity of \surrounding occupiers;
- d) the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on nature conservation sites designated for their wildlife interest.

POLICY BE18 – POLLUTION

Planning permission will not be permitted for development which could give rise to unacceptable levels of pollution, unless adequate mitigation measures are provided to ensure that any discharge or emissions will not cause harm to users of land, including the effects on health and the natural environment.

POLICY BE19 – NOISE

Planning permission will not be granted for:

- a) housing and other noise sensitive development if the occupants would experience significant noise disturbance from existing or proposed development;
- b) development including the use of land, if because of the noise it will create, the occupants of housing and other noise sensitive development would be exposed to significant noise disturbance, unless there is an overriding need for the proposal which cannot be met elsewhere.

POLICY BE21 - LIGHT POLLUTION

The installation of external lighting and proposals for remote rural buildings will only be permitted where all of the following criteria are satisfied:

- a) the means of lighting is appropriate, unobtrusively sited and would not result in excessive levels of light;;
- b) elevations of buildings, particularly roofs, are designed to limit light spill;
- c) the proposal would not have a detrimental effect on the amenity of surrounding occupiers;
- d) the proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on the character of a town or village and its setting or of the wider countryside;
- e) the proposal will not be detrimental to an area of nature conservation interest.

POLICY C3 – PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The distinctive character of the River Thames and its valley and the settlements on its banks will be maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced. Proposals for any form of development which detracts from its special character will not be permitted.

POLICY NE1 - SAFEGUARDING THE COUNTRYSIDE

Proposals for development in the countryside should maintain or enhance the value of the countryside for its own sake: its beauty, its local character and distinctiveness, the diversity of its natural resources, and its ecological, agricultural, cultural and outdoor recreational values.

POLICY NE3 - LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Development will not be permitted if it would harm the local landscape character of the District. Proposals should respect and, where possible, enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive features of the individual landscape types.

NB. When considering proposals the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment, the Lower Windrush Valley Project Report and the Windrush in Witney Project Report will be taken into account where appropriate.

POLICY NE6 - RETENTION OF TREES, WOODLANDS AND HEDGEROWS

Planning permission will not be granted for proposals that would result in the loss of trees, woodlands or hedgerows, or their settings, which are important for their visual, historic, or biodiversity value. Removal will only be allowed where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development would enhance the landscape quality and nature conservation value of the area.

POLICY NE9 - SURFACE WATER

New development or intensification of existing development will not be permitted where the additional surface water run-off would result in adverse impacts such as an increased risk of flooding, river channel instability or damage to habitats, unless appropriate attenuation and pollution control measures are provided.

POLICY NE13 - BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

In determining planning applications, the Council will seek to safeguard, maintain and enhance priority habitats and species within the District. Development proposals should include measures to mitigate any effects upon features of nature conservation value, including where appropriate the provision of compensatory habitats or management.

POLICY T1 - TRAFFIC GENERATION

Proposals which would generate significant levels of traffic will not be permitted in locations where travel by means other than the private car is not a realistic alternative.

POLICY T6 - TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Traffic management schemes will be sought which:

- a) promote and give priority to the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians and cyclists, particularly on roads with significant or potentially significant pedestrian and cycle flows;
- b) promote safe and convenient movement of buses, particularly on routes into town centres, within town centres and on radial routes;
- c) reduce traffic conflicts, the potential for accidents and alleviate congestion;
- d) reduce environmental damage caused by traffic.

POLICY TLC1 - NEW TOURISM, LEISURE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Permission will be granted for:

- a) visitor-related proposals which respect and enhance the intrinsic qualities of the District;
- b) community facilities to meet local needs;
- c) the recreational and cultural use of land on a small scale to meet local needs;
- d) new recreational and cultural buildings where they are essential to the existing use of the associated land and are appropriate in scale, design and siting.

Proposals for leisure, tourist and community developments will not be allowed where they would have an adverse impact on the character or environment of the countryside or on towns and villages within the District or would generate unacceptable levels of traffic on the local highway network.

POLICY TLC5 - EXISTING OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL SPACE

Development proposals should not result in the loss of existing recreational open space (including school playing fields, allotments and amenity areas) unless:

- a) the development is for buildings and/or facilities ancillary to, or enhancing, the amenity or recreational value of the open space; or
- b) alternative provision of at least equivalent suitability and accessibility, particularly by foot, is made; or
- c) there is clear evidence that now, and in the future, the land will no longer be needed for its current purpose or for recreational uses by the wider community.

POLICY TLC12 - PROTECTION OF EXISTING COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Development proposals should not result in the loss of useful local services and facilities unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a) the existing use is not viable; or
- b) adequate and accessible alternative provision remains or will be provided.

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GENERAL APPROACH

POLICY G2

The district's countryside, settlements and environmental resources will be protected from adverse developments and opportunities sought to enhance the environment wherever they arise.

POLICY G4

The need to protect the countryside for its own sake is an important consideration when assessing proposals for development. Unless permitted by other policies in the plan, new built development in the countryside, in the open gaps between settlements and on the edge of settlements where the built-up area would be extended, will not normally be permitted, except for agriculture and forestry.

POLICY G6

Planning permission will not be granted for proposals which are not of a high quality and inclusive design, which fail to protect and reinforce local distinctiveness, or which are of a scale or type that is inappropriate to the site and its surroundings.

GREEN BELT

POLICY GB2

Within the Green Belt the construction of new buildings will not be permitted except for the following purposes:-

- (i) agriculture and forestry (unless permitted development rights have been withdrawn);
- (ii) essential facilities for outdoor sports and recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- (iii) the limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings where consistent with Policies H12 and H13;
- (iv) limited infilling in existing villages which have an adequate range of services and facilities provided it complies with the requirements of Policy H5; and
- (v) limited affordable housing provided it complies with Policy H10.

The major developed sites of Oxford Brookes University, Culham Science Centre, No 1 Site, Culham and Sandford Sewage Treatment Works are considered in Section 9.

POLICY GB4

Where new development is permitted, either within or where it would be conspicuous from the Green Belt, it should be designed and sited in such a way that its impact on the open nature, rural character and visual amenity of the Green Belt is minimised.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

POLICY CF2

Proposals that would result in the provision of additional community facilities or services within settlements will be permitted, provided that there are no overriding amenity, environmental or traffic objections to the proposals and that there is no conflict with the other policies in this plan.

COUNTRYSIDE

Protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment

POLICY C1

The conservation and where possible, enhancement of the landscape of the district will be sought. Development that would adversely affect the distinctive features of the landscape character areas will not be permitted.

Where development is acceptable in principle it should:

- (i) be integrated into the landscape character of the area;
- (ii) protect important local features; and
- (iii) where possible, contribute to local distinctiveness.

Measures will be sought to integrate new development sensitively, mitigate impacts and where appropriate, enhance local landscape character through conditions and agreements attached to planning permissions.

POLICY C2

In the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty the primary aim is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, special landscape quality and distinctiveness of the area. Development which would harm the beauty or distinctiveness of the area will not be permitted. To be acceptable development must be of a scale and type appropriate to the area, and be sympathetic in terms of its siting, design and materials used.

POLICY C9

Any development that would cause the loss of landscape features will not be permitted where those features make an important contribution to the local scene, and/or provide all or part of an important wildlife habitat and/or have

important historical value. Where features are retained within the development site, conditions will be used to ensure that they are protected during development and have sufficient space to ensure their survival after development.

ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE AND HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

POLICY D1

The principles of good design and the protection and reinforcement of local distinctiveness should be taken into account in all new development through:

- (i) the provision of a clear structure of spaces;
- (ii) respecting existing settlement patterns;
- (iii) providing for a choice of routes and transport modes to, from and within the development;
- (iv) providing a development that users find easy to understand through the use of landmarks, vistas and focal points;
- (v) providing landscape structure as a framework for new development;
- (vi) respecting the character of the existing landscape;
- (vii) respecting distinctive settlement types and their character;
- (viii) providing good quality site and building design and appropriate materials;
and
- (ix) providing well-designed external areas.

PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

POLICY EP2

Proposals which would by reason of noise or vibrations have an adverse effect on existing or proposed occupiers will not be permitted, unless effective mitigation measures will be implemented. In addition, noise sensitive development will not be permitted close to existing or proposed sources of significant noise or vibrations.

SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

POLICY E8

Proposals for the re-use of rural buildings will be permitted provided that:

- (i) they are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;
- (ii) their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings;
- (iii) the fabric and essential character of the buildings are maintained;

- (iv) if the buildings are in the Green Belt, the proposed use does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
- (v) there are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections;
- (vi) in the case of proposals for B1 or B2 uses the floorspace in the building or in the complex of buildings does not exceed 500 square metres; and
- (vii) in the case of proposals for residential use, other uses have been explored and found to be unacceptable in planning terms.

PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

POLICY T1

Proposals for all types of development will, where appropriate:

- (i) provide for a safe and convenient access to the highway network;
- (ii) provide safe and convenient routes for cyclists and pedestrians;
- (iii) be accessible by public transport and have a safe walking route to nearby bus stops or new bus stops and appropriate infrastructure should be provided;
- (iv) be served by an adequate road network which can accommodate traffic without creating traffic hazards or damage to the environment;
- (v) where new roads, pedestrian routes, cycleways and street lighting are to be constructed as part of the development, be constructed to adoptable standards and be completed as soon as they are required to serve the development; and
- (vi) make adequate provision for those whose mobility is impaired.

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POLICY W3

Proposals for re-use/recycling will normally be permitted provided that:

- (a) the site is close to the source of the waste and/or the market for the re-used/recycled material;
- (b) the site is well related to appropriate parts of the transport network, and located where the number and length of motorised journeys is likely to be minimised;
- (c) the proposal will not cause unacceptable nuisance in terms of noise, dust, fumes, smell, visual intrusion or traffic;
- (d) the proposal will not pose an unacceptable risk to the water environment;
- (e) the proposal does not conflict with Structure and Local Plan policies.

POLICY W4

Proposals for re-use/recycling and ancillary processes will not normally be permitted in the open countryside unless:

- (f) there is established overriding need and there is no other suitable site available and/or;
- (g) the development is to form part of a mineral extraction/landfill site and will be removed on completion of extraction/landfill.

POLICY PE3

Appropriate buffer zones will be safeguarded around mineral working or waste disposal sites for protection against unacceptable losses of residential or natural amenity.

POLICY PE18

In determining applications covered by this Plan the County Council will:

- (a) have regard to the appropriate provisions of the Code of Practice in Annex 1, which is part of this Plan, and
- (b) regulate and control development by the imposition of conditions on the grant of permission. Where this cannot satisfactorily be done, appropriate planning obligations will be sought.

Planning Policy Statements

Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas ('PPS7') states that Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. New building should be strictly controlled and priority should be given to the use of brownfield sites. Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing ('PPS3') defines brownfield sites as "previously-developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface Infrastructure". This definition excludes "land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings".

Planning Policy Statement 10: Sustainable Waste Management ('PPS10') sets out the key planning objectives of the government regarding sustainable waste management. One such key objective is to "help deliver sustainable development through driving waste management up the waste hierarchy, addressing waste as a resource and looking to disposal as the last option".