



## Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan



SA Report

May 2014

Revision schedule					
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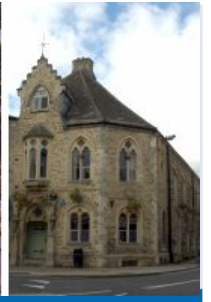
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## Introduction



## 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 URS has been commissioned to undertake an independent Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of Faringdon Town Council's emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.1.2 The Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) under the Localism Act 2012. The FNP, which covers Great Faringdon Parish, is being prepared in the context of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031. It is currently anticipated that the FNP will be submitted in July 2014, with a view to undergoing referendum in early 2015.
- 1.1.3 Key information relating to the FNP is as follows:

*Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the Faringdon Neighbourhood plan*

<b>Name of Responsible Authority</b>	Faringdon Town Council
<b>Title of Plan</b>	Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan
<b>Subject</b>	Spatial plan
<b>Purpose</b>	The Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in conformity with the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031.
<b>Timescale</b>	To 2031
<b>Area covered by the plan</b>	Great Faringdon Parish (see Figure 1.1)
<b>Summary of content</b>	<p>The Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, objectives and range of policies for guiding the future of the plan area to 2031.</p> <p>The plan vision for Faringdon <i>"is of an inherently sustainable town with a high degree of self-containment. One that enables a wide range of people, families, individuals and couples to live, work and socialise and that meets their day-to-day needs."</i> (Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan for Consultation, April 2014).</p>
<b>Plan contact point</b>	<p>Hilary Sherman, Deputy Town Clerk, Faringdon Town Council, The Corn Exchange, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, SN7 7JA</p> <p>Email address: <a href="mailto:hilary@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk">hilary@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Telephone number: 01367 240281</p>

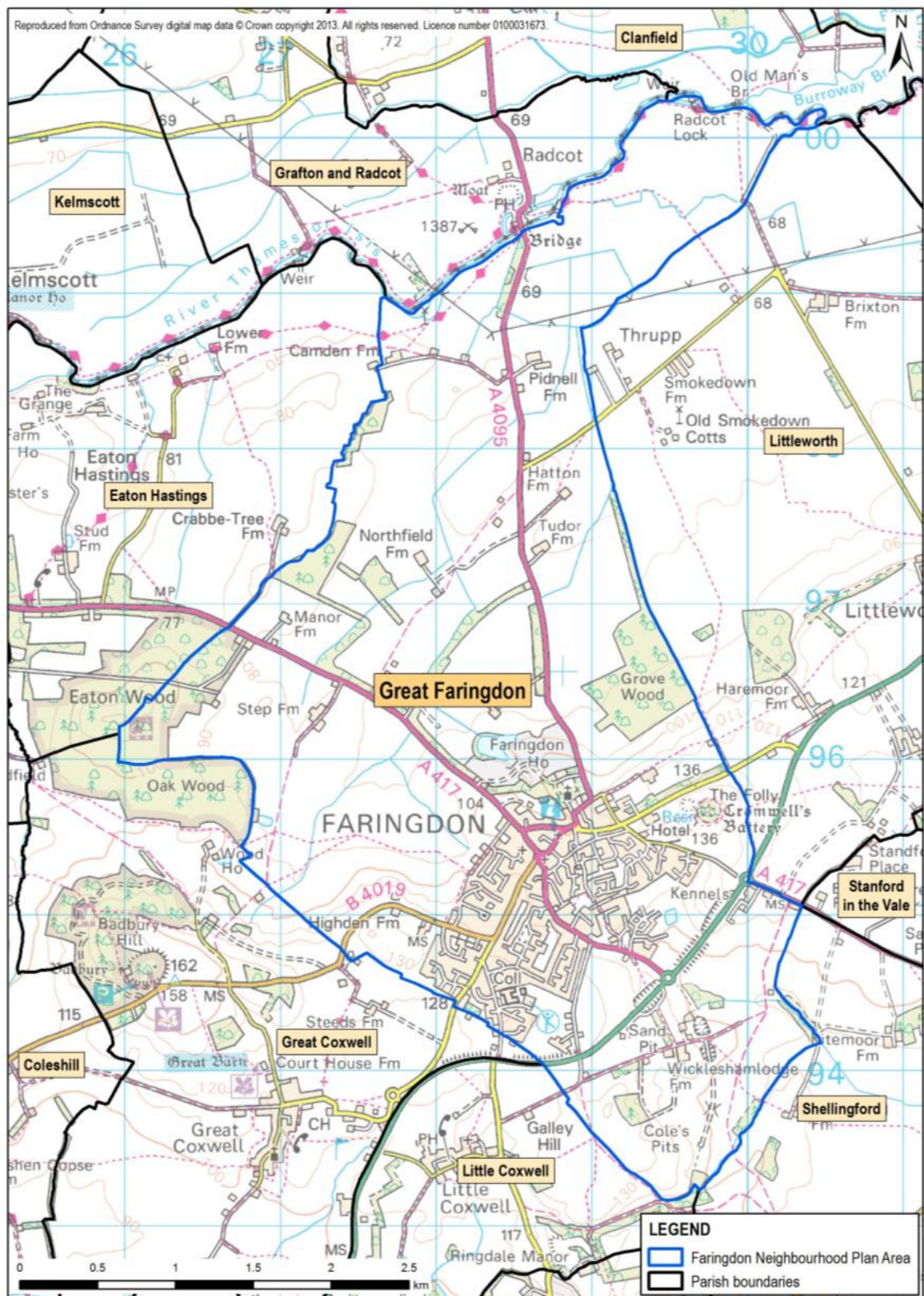


Figure 1.1: Area covered by the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan

## 2 SA EXPLAINED

- 2.1.1 SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding or mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. Through this approach, the SA for the FNP seeks to maximise the sustainability performance of the developing plan.
- 2.1.2 SA is in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive<sup>1</sup>. It also widens the scope of the assessment from focussing on environmental issues to also include social and economic issues. SA is a legal requirement for the Local Plan; however a Neighbourhood Development Plan does not require a SEA through planning legislation.
- 2.1.3 The FNP has been determined to require SEA by Faringdon Town Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council. To meet this requirement, the FNP is undergoing an SA process which incorporates the requirements of the SEA Regulations. This mirrors the approach currently being taken for the emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan.
- 2.1.4 The SEA Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that *'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'*. The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 2.1.5 In line with the SEA Regulations the report - which for the purposes of SA is known as **the 'SA Report'** – must essentially answer **four questions**:
1. What's the scope of the SA?
  2. What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?
    - Preparation of the draft plan must have been informed by at least one earlier plan-making / SA iteration. 'Reasonable alternatives' must have been appraised.
  3. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?
    - i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
  4. What happens next?
- 2.1.6 These questions are derived from Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, which present 'the information to be provided within the report. Table 3.1 presents the linkages between the regulatory requirements and the four SA questions.

## 3 STRUCTURE OF THIS SA REPORT

- 3.1.1 This document is the SA Report for the FNP and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed above with a view to providing the information required by the Regulations. **Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:**

<sup>1</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC



Table 3.1: Questions that must be answered by the SA Report in order to meet Regulatory<sup>2</sup> requirements

SA REPORT QUESTION		IN LINE WITH SCHEDULE II THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE...
<b>Part 1: What's the scope of the SA?</b>	What's the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes</li> </ul>
	What's the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relevant environmental protection <b>objectives</b>, established at international or national level</li> <li>Any existing environmental <b>problems</b> which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance</li> </ul>
	What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan</li> <li>The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected</li> <li>Any existing environmental <b>problems</b> which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance</li> </ul>
	What are the key issues & objectives that should be a focus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key <b>problems / issues</b> and <b>objectives</b> that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) appraisal</li> </ul>
<b>Part 2: What has plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the <b>alternatives</b> dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach)</li> <li>The likely significant effects associated with <b>alternatives</b></li> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of <b>alternatives</b> appraisal / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Part 3: What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The likely significant effects associated with <b>the draft plan</b></li> <li>The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing <b>the draft plan</b></li> </ul>
<b>Part 4: What happens next?</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A description of the <b>monitoring</b> measures envisaged</li> </ul>

N.B. The right-hand column of Table 3.1 does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation. This interpretation is explained in **Appendix I** of this report.

<sup>2</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

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## Part 1: What is the Scope of the SA?

## 4 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 1)

4.1.1 This is Part 1 of the SA Report, the aim of which is to introduce the reader to the scope of the SA. In particular, and as required by the SEA Regulations<sup>3</sup>, this Part of the SA Report answers the series of questions below.

- What's the Plan seeking to achieve?
- What's the sustainability 'context'?
- What's the sustainability 'baseline'?
- What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus of SA?

4.1.2 **Chapter 5** answers the first question by outlining the FNP's vision and objectives.

4.1.3 The other three scoping questions are answered in **Chapters 6 - 8**, with each question answered for the following eleven sustainability 'topics':

- |                                      |                              |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Air quality                        | • Population and communities |
| • Biodiversity                       | • Health and wellbeing       |
| • Climate change                     | • Education and skills       |
| • Land and soil resources            | • Transportation             |
| • Water resources and flood risk     | • Economy and enterprise     |
| • Historic environment and landscape |                              |

## 4.2 Consultation on the scope

4.2.1 The SEA Regulations require that: "When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies". In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, The Environment Agency and English Heritage.<sup>4</sup> As such, these authorities were consulted on the scope of the FNP SA between March and April 2014. The Scoping Report, which was subsequently agreed by the consultation bodies as providing an appropriate 'basis' for appraisal is available at the FNP website:

<http://faringdonplan.webs.com/>.

<sup>3</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>4</sup> In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because 'by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme'.



## 5 WHAT IS THE PLAN SEEKING TO ACHIEVE?

The SA Report must include...

- An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes

- 5.1.1 The FNP is currently being developed as a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) under the Localism Act 2012, with a view to submission in July 2014.
- 5.1.2 The FNP will be prepared in the context of the Vale of White Horse District Local Plan 2031. The Local Plan will provide a framework for how future development across the district will be planned and delivered. It will replace the Local Plan 2011 and will comprise the following documents:
- Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies;
  - Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Local Sites; and
  - Adopted Proposals Map.
- 5.1.3 The Draft Local Plan 1, which underwent 'Regulation 18'<sup>5</sup> consultation between February and May 2013, is currently in preparation, with a proposed adoption date of late 2014. The Local Plan 1 currently identifies 1,290 additional dwellings to be delivered across the wider Western Vale Sub-Area between 2011 and 2031, with 400 dwellings to be delivered to the south and south west of Faringdon. This is in addition to the 697 dwellings already allocated, approved or under construction in the town. Faringdon is also identified in the Local Plan as a location for 7.38 hectares of strategic employment land.
- 5.1.4 When adopted, the Local Plan Part 1 will replace the Saved Policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011.
- 5.1.5 The FNP does not seek to allocate housing in the parish. A central element of the FNP is a focus on the self-containment and economic and community vitality of Faringdon. To support this, the plan sets out potential sites for employment uses over and above those put forward by the Local Plan Part 1, and proposes a series of policies for guiding new development in the town.

### 5.2 Vision and objectives for the plan

- 5.2.1 The Vision for the FNP was developed following the review of extensive consultation exercises carried out by the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The overarching vision for the town as put forward by the FNP is as follows:

<sup>5</sup> This refers to the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 18 specifies the consultation a local planning authority must undertake on a local plan before it can proceed to publish a pre-submission version of the plan. The current consultation on the FNP is "Regulation 14" consultation under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

*The vision for Faringdon is of an inherently sustainable town with a high degree of self-containment. One that enables a wide range of people, families, individuals and couples to live, work and socialise and that meets their day-to-day needs.*

*Faringdon is a small market town and it should stay that way, retaining its character and culture with an intimate and friendly feel.*

*Faringdon has a strong historic character and sense of place. This will continue to be protected and enhanced through the careful design of new developments, streets and spaces. The town will be an attractive, clean and pleasant place in which to live and spend time.*

*The market square will be the bustling heart of the parish.*

*Faringdon will act as a strong centre for the local parishes and a hub for public transport connections to all surrounding towns.*

5.2.2 A range of issues and opportunities for Faringdon were identified by local stakeholders through Neighbourhood Plan consultation. Drawing on these issues and opportunities, a number of key themes have been identified for the purposes of the FNP.

5.2.3 The key themes, which are presented under four groupings, are as follows:

**Core Parameters**

- A well proportioned town
- Connections

**Development**

- Town centre shopping and services
- Local jobs
- Family housing
- Design

**Supporting infrastructure**

- Ensuring appropriate infrastructure
- School Provision
- Sport and leisure
- Caring community

**Enhancing the attraction**

- Landscape
- Tourism

5.2.4 For each of these key themes, the FNP sets out a range of objectives, which have been further developed through Neighbourhood Plan policies.

5.2.5 The latest iteration (May 2014) of these policies has been appraised in Chapter 14 of this SA Report.

### **5.3 What's the plan not trying to achieve?**

- 5.3.1 It is important to emphasise that the plan is be strategic in nature. Even the allocation of sites should be considered a strategic undertaking, i.e. a process that omits consideration of some detailed issues in the knowledge that these can be addressed further down the line (through the planning application process). The strategic nature of the plan is reflected by the scope of the SA.

## 6 WHAT'S THE SUSTAINABILITY 'CONTEXT'?

The SA Report must include...

- The relevant sustainability objectives, established at international / national level
- Any existing sustainability problems / issues which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas / populations etc. of particular importance

### 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 An important step when seeking to establish the appropriate 'scope' of an SA involves reviewing 'sustainability context' messages. From the SEA Regulations it is understood that there is a need to focus on context messages relating to:

- Broad problems / issues; and
- Objectives
  - i.e. 'things that are aimed at or sought'.

6.1.2 Set out below is a summary and update to the context review presented within the 2013 Scoping Report.

### 6.2 Air quality

6.2.1 The EU Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution<sup>6</sup> aims to cut the annual number of premature deaths from air pollution-related diseases by almost 40% by 2020 (using 2000 as the base year), as well as substantially reducing the area of forests and other ecosystems suffering damage from airborne pollutants.

6.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that '*planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas.*' New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

6.2.3 The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland<sup>7</sup> sets health-based objectives for nine main air pollutants<sup>8</sup> and monitors performance against these objectives. The recent Defra report Action for Air Quality in a Changing Climate<sup>9</sup> focuses on the synergies between air quality and climate change, and notes the potential for additional health benefits through closer integration of climate and air pollution policy. It is suggested that co-benefits can be realised through a variety of means, including promoting low-carbon vehicles and renewable energy.

6.2.4 Vale of White Horse District Council is required to monitor air quality across the district, report regularly to Defra, and take action where nationally set levels are likely to be exceeded. Concentrations in the district exceed the national air quality objective levels at two locations, in central Abingdon and near the A34 in Botley, due to levels of nitrogen dioxide from vehicle emissions. The council has declared Air Quality Management Areas at these locations and Air Quality Action Plans have been prepared.

<sup>6</sup> Commission of the European Communities (2005) Thematic Strategy on air pollution [online] available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0446:FIN:EN:PDF> (accessed 11/2013)

<sup>7</sup> Defra (2007) Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland [online] available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/air/air-quality/approach/> (accessed 07/2013)

<sup>8</sup> Benzene; 1,3-butadiene; carbon monoxide (CO); lead; nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>); ozone; particles (PM<sub>10</sub>); sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>); and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

<sup>9</sup> Defra (2010) Air Pollution: Action in a Changing Climate [online] available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13378-air-pollution.pdf> (accessed 07/2013)



- 6.2.5 No district-wide air quality management strategies have been prepared for the Vale of White Horse, but the emerging Local Plan Part 1 sets out a number of considerations in relation to air quality. Proposals for new development will be required to cause no deterioration and, where possible, achieve improvements in air quality; the Council will work with the County Council and others to promote sustainable transport that improves air quality; and new development will be required to incorporate sustainable design and construction that increases natural ventilation using fresh air.

### 6.3 Biodiversity

- 6.3.1 The EU Sustainable Development Strategy<sup>10</sup>, adopted in 2006, included an objective to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. A new EU Biodiversity Strategy<sup>11</sup> was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver on a new Europe-wide target to 'halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020'.

- 6.3.2 Key messages from the NPPF include:

- Contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible.
- Promote the 'preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks' and the 'protection and recovery of priority species'. Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.
- Set criteria based policies for the protection of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, giving weight to their importance not just individually but as a part of a wider ecological network.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including green infrastructure (i.e. 'a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities').
- Plan positively for 'green infrastructure' as part of planning for 'ecological networks'. High quality open spaces should be protected or their loss mitigated, unless a lack of need is established.

- 6.3.3 The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. Biodiversity 2020<sup>12</sup> builds on the NEWP and sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade. In relation to planning, it states that the objective should be to: 'guide development to the best locations, encourage greener design and enable development to enhance natural networks'.

- 6.3.4 The National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA)<sup>13</sup> identified development as a key driver of loss, and biodiversity offsets as a possible means of increasing 'private sector involvement in conservation and habitat creation'. The Biodiversity Offsetting Green Paper was released in September 2013, and sets out options for an offsetting scheme tailored for England and its habitats and species<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Council of the European Union (2006) The EU Sustainable Development Strategy [online] available at:

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/06/st10/st10117.en06.pdf> (accessed 11/2013)

<sup>11</sup> European Commission (2011) Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 [online] available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v7%5b1%5d.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/1_EN_ACT_part1_v7%5b1%5d.pdf) (accessed 11/2013)

<sup>12</sup> Defra (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services [online] available at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf> (accessed 11/2013)

<sup>13</sup> 12 UNEP-WCMC (2011) UK National Ecosystem Assessment [online] available at: <http://uknea.unepwcmc.org/Resources/tabid/82/Default.aspx> (accessed 11/2013)

<sup>14</sup> Defra (2013) Biodiversity Offsetting in England Green Paper [online] available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/biodiversity-offsetting-in-england> (accessed 11/2013)

- 6.3.5 The Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan<sup>15</sup>, adopted in 2010, sets out a Conservation Target Area (CTA) Approach to biodiversity management in the county. CTAs identify the most important areas for wildlife, and aim to restore biodiversity landscape-scale through the maintenance, restoration and creation of BAP priority habitats.
- 6.3.6 The emerging Local Plan Part 1 sets out a number of considerations in relation to biodiversity:
- net gains in biodiversity and green infrastructure will be sought, contributing towards a coherent ecological network in the Vale;
  - the connection and restoration of sites of biodiversity importance will be sought, with a primary focus on Conservation Target Areas;
  - the highest level of protection will be given to sites and species of international conservation importance (Special Areas of Conservation and European Protected Species);
  - damage to nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Priority Habitats, Ancient Woodland, Protected or Priority Species and Locally Important Geological Sites must be avoided; and
  - site templates for strategic sites at Faringdon require new development to deliver a net gain for biodiversity; provide tree and hedgerow planting and contributions towards identified green infrastructure deficit in Faringdon.

## 6.4 Climate change

- 6.4.1 In its 2007 strategy on climate change, the European Commission assesses the costs and benefits of combating climate change and recommends a package of measures to limit global warming to 2° Celsius.<sup>16</sup> In relation to energy, the Commission recommends that the EU's energy efficiency improves by 20% and the share of renewable energy grows to 20% by 2020.
- 6.4.2 Key messages from the NPPF include:
- Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a 'core planning principle'.
  - Planning policy can play a key role in securing reductions in greenhouse gases (GHGs) and meeting the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008, and should support the move to a low carbon future through:
    - planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce GHG emissions;
    - actively supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings;
    - setting local requirements for building's sustainability in a way that is consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy;
    - positively promoting renewable energy technologies and considering identifying suitable areas for their construction; and
    - encouraging those transport solutions that support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.

<sup>15</sup> Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum (2010) Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan [online] available at: <http://www.oncf.org.uk/pdfs/Oxfordshires%20BAP%20%20CTAs.pdf> (accessed 04/03/2014)

<sup>16</sup> Commission of the European Communities (2007) Limiting Global Climate Change to two degrees Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond [online] available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0002:FIN:EN:PDF> (accessed 11/02/2014)

- 6.4.3 The Committee on Climate Change guidance document *How Local Authorities Can Reduce Emissions and Manage Climate Risk*<sup>17</sup> describes planning as a 'key lever in reducing emissions and adapting localities to a changing climate'. It is considered particularly important that local authorities use their planning powers to enforce energy efficiency standards; reduce transport emissions; work with developers to make renewable energy projects acceptable to local communities; avoid increasing the risk of climate change impacts; and plan for infrastructure such as low-carbon district heating networks, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems.
- 6.4.4 The Department for Transport (DfT) 'Door to Door' strategy<sup>18</sup> encourages investment in a high-quality cycling and walking environment, and delivering more accessible transport. DfT promotes creating high-quality stations and interchange hubs, investing in cycling and walking facilities and putting stations at the heart of the committed 'plug-in hybrid vehicle programme', and ensuring transport is part of longer-term planning and development.
- 6.4.5 The emerging Local Plan Part 1 sets out a number of considerations in relation to climate change:
- there is a need to promote sustainable transport to reduce transport-related emissions;
  - the plan requires new development to be energy efficient and encourage retrofitting of existing buildings;
  - the plan supports the development of renewable and low carbon energy; and
  - sustainable design and construction will be encouraged to adapt to extremes in temperature and rainfall.

## 6.5 Historic environment and landscape

- 6.5.1 Key messages from the NPPF include -
- Protect and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance. Heritage assets should be recognised as an 'irreplaceable resource' that should be conserved whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
  - Consider the effects of climate change in the long term, including in terms of landscape. Set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', and put in place adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.
- 6.5.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. The ELC commits all signatories to establishing and implementing policies aimed at landscape protection and management, and integrating landscape into town planning, cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies.
- 6.5.3 The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England<sup>19</sup> sets out its vision for the historic environment, and calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.

<sup>17</sup> Committee on Climate Change (2012) *How local authorities can reduce emissions and manage climate risk* [online] available at: [http://hmccc.s3.amazonaws.com/Local%20Authorities/1584\\_CCC\\_LA%20Report\\_bookmarked\\_1b.pdf](http://hmccc.s3.amazonaws.com/Local%20Authorities/1584_CCC_LA%20Report_bookmarked_1b.pdf) (accessed 11/02/2014)

<sup>18</sup> DfT (2013). *Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration* [online] available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/142539/door-to-door-strategy.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/142539/door-to-door-strategy.pdf) (accessed 11/02/2014)

<sup>19</sup> HM Government (2010) *The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England* [online] available at: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/6763.aspx](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx) (accessed 11/2013)

6.5.4 The emerging Local Plan Part 1 sets out a number of considerations in relation to the historic environment and landscape:

- New proposals will be required to connect and relate well to the surrounding area and existing development; sensitively incorporate any existing distinctive features on-site and provide a suitable level of new landscaping;
- New development must sustain and enhance the historic environment and not detract from the significance of heritage assets or their settings, including non-designated assets;
- Locally valued landscape and features will be protected, maintained and where possible, enhanced; and
- Development in the Great Western Community Forest area should support the delivery of the project, which aims to produce long-term environmental improvements by promoting tree planting and woodland management.

## 6.6 Land and soil resources

6.6.1 The EU's Soil Thematic Strategy<sup>20</sup> presents a strategy for protecting soils resources in Europe, which aims to minimise soil degradation, limit associated detrimental effects, and establish rational land use planning practices at all levels of government. The Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and Recycling of Waste is long-term strategy which aims to ensure that Europe becomes a recycling society that avoids waste and uses waste as a resource.<sup>21</sup>

6.6.2 Key messages from the NPPF include:

- Protect and enhance soils. The value of best and most versatile agricultural land should also be taken into account.
- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.
- Encourage the effective use of land through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, 'provided that this is not of high environmental value'.
- The NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy will be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan. Until then, Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management<sup>22</sup> remains in force. The overall objective of PPS10 is to reduce the production of waste and use it as a resource where possible.

6.6.3 Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England<sup>23</sup> sets out a vision for the future of soils. Pressures on soils are likely to increase in future as a result of population growth, and appropriate consideration should be given to soils in the planning process. The Government Review of Waste Policy in England<sup>24</sup> sets out a vision to move towards a 'zero waste economy' and recognises that planning will play a critical role in delivering this ambition.

<sup>20</sup> European Commission (2006) Soil Thematic Policy [online] available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm) (accessed 28/02/2014)

<sup>21</sup> European Commission (2011) Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and Recycling of Waste [online] available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0013:FIN:EN:PDF> (accessed 28/02/2014)

<sup>22</sup> Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste (2011) [online] available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1876202.pdf> (accessed 28/02/2014)

<sup>23</sup> Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/land/soil/documents/soil-strategy.pdf> (accessed 28/02/2014)

<sup>24</sup> Defra (2011) Government Review of Waste Policy in England [online] available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf> (accessed 28/02/2014)



- 6.6.4 Faringdon is situated on the Corallian Ridge which contains soft sand and crushed rock mineral resources. The Local Aggregates Assessment states that there is a demand for more soft sand to be worked. The preference is for additional soft sand and crushed rock to be worked from extensions to existing quarries, as set out in Policy M3.
- 6.6.5 Work is underway on a revised Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy. The draft plan<sup>25</sup> sets out the strategic planning policy framework for waste management for the period up to 2030. The strategy will set out policies to guide minerals and waste development over the plan period and common core policies which address development management issues relevant to both minerals and waste.
- 6.6.6 The vision for minerals planning is to:
- provide a sufficient supply of aggregate materials to meet development needs;
  - locate and manage mineral working to minimise harmful impacts; and
  - restore mineral working to enhance the quality of the environment, creating new habitats and improving access to the countryside and recreation activity.
- 6.6.7 The vision for waste planning is to:
- manage waste in line with the waste hierarchy<sup>26</sup>;
  - maintain the self-sufficiency of the County to deal with the waste it generates; and
  - ensure that waste management facilities are distributed across the county at or close to large towns and main transport links to reduce the distance that waste travels.
- 6.6.8 The emerging Local Plan Part 1 sets out a number of considerations in relation to land and soil:
- all development proposals will be required to make provision for the efficient use of natural resources, notably through minimising waste and encouraging recycling using recycled materials and minimising waste;
  - ensuring that the contaminated land is remediated where necessary; and
  - re-using previously developed land.

## 6.7 Water resources and flood risk

- 6.7.1 The EU's 'Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources'<sup>27</sup> highlights the need for Member States to reduce pressure on water resources, for instance by using green infrastructure. It also emphasises the role water efficiency can play in reducing scarcity and water stress.
- 6.7.2 National water policies are primarily driven by the aims of the EU Water Framework Directive, which drives a catchment-based approach to water management. It is Defra's intention to establish a 'framework for integrated catchment management', and the Environment Agency is currently seeking to establish 'Significant Water Management Issues' within catchments with a view to presenting second River Basin Management Plans to ministers in 2015.
- 6.7.3 Key messages from the NPPF include:

<sup>25</sup> Oxfordshire County Council (2014) Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy: Consultation Draft [online] available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/minerals-and-waste-core-strategy> (accessed 28/02/2014)

<sup>26</sup> See the Waste Regulations 2011 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/988/contents/made>

<sup>27</sup> European Commission (2012) A Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources [online] available at [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/blueprint/pdf/COM-2012-673final\\_EN\\_ACT-cov.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/blueprint/pdf/COM-2012-673final_EN_ACT-cov.pdf) (accessed 11/2013)

- Direct development away from areas highest at risk of flooding, with development 'not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding'. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere.
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.
- Produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply.

6.7.4 The Water White Paper<sup>28</sup> sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector, and includes commitments to 'encourage and incentivise water efficiency measures' on the demand side. The Flood and Water Management Act<sup>29</sup> highlights alternative to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management<sup>30</sup>.

6.7.5 The plan area is covered by the Kennet and Vale of White Horse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy<sup>31</sup> and the Thames Corridor Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy<sup>32</sup>. The Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan<sup>33</sup> provides an overview of flood risk management in the catchment, and contains policies and guidance on managing flood risk. In partnership with Thames Water, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Faringdon seeks to deliver additional sewerage, water and drainage infrastructure.

6.7.6 The emerging Local Plan Part 1 sets out a number of considerations in relation to water resources and flood risk. In terms of water resources LPP1 states:

- All new residential development will meet a minimum standard of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 in full. Achieving higher Code levels in the 'Water' and 'Surface Water Run-off' categories will be particularly encouraged.
- The sequential approach will be strictly applied across the district in accordance with national guidance; guiding development to areas at lower risk of flooding.
- For all developments over 1ha and/or in any area of flood risk from rivers or other sources; a full Flood Risk Assessment must be undertaken.
- Unless it is shown to not be feasible, all developments will be expected to incorporate sustainable drainage systems or techniques to limit surface water runoff from new development, and reduce the existing rate of run-off.
- All development proposals will be required to make provision for the efficient use of water, and to cause no deterioration and, where possible, achieve improvements in water quality.

## 6.8 Population and communities

6.8.1 Key messages from the NPPF include:

<sup>28</sup> Defra (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper) [online] available at <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf> (accessed 11/2013)

<sup>29</sup> Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents> (accessed 11/12)

<sup>30</sup> N.B. The government proposes that the provisions of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 will come into force on the 1st of October 2012 and will make it mandatory for any development in England or Wales to incorporate SuDs.

<sup>31</sup> Environment Agency (December 2012) Kennet and Vale of White Horse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy

<sup>32</sup> Environment Agency (June 2004) Thames Corridor Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy

<sup>33</sup> Environment Agency (December 2009) Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan

- Local planning authorities should meet the ‘full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing’ in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries, to identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need.
- With a view to creating ‘sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities’, authorities should ensure provision of affordable housing onsite or externally where robustly justified.
- In rural areas, when exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate.
- The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It explains how good design is a key aspect in sustainable development, and how development should improve the quality of the area over its lifetime.
- The social role of the planning system involves ‘supporting vibrant and healthy communities’. The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.

6.8.2 The Chartered Institute of Housing produces a ‘Housing Report’<sup>34</sup> which collates official figures on housing. A challenge identified for the Government is to meet the nation’s changing housing needs and aspirations in the context of a growing and ageing population. The Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change report Ready for Ageing?<sup>35</sup> warns that the market is delivering less specialist housing for older people than is needed, and recommends that local government should ensure better provision by encouraging private market provision and making specific mention of older people’s needs in Local Plans.

6.8.3 Key messages from the Draft Local Plan include:

- Faringdon is classified as one of three ‘Market Towns’ in the Vale. The Local Plan will seek to protect and enhance the services and facilities provided by Market Towns and ensure that any new facilities, homes and jobs are focused on these settlements.<sup>36</sup>
- 400 homes are proposed by the Local Plan to the south and south west of Faringdon. 200 homes are proposed at the South West of Faringdon site and a further 200 homes are proposed at the South Faringdon site in Great Coxwell parish, adjoining Faringdon. A further 890 dwellings are proposed at two sites in Faringdon’s hinterland.

## 6.9 Health and wellbeing

6.9.1 Key messages from the NPPF include:

<sup>34</sup> The Chartered Institute of Housing, National Housing Federation & Shelter (2012) The Housing Report: Edition 2 [online] available at: [http://england.shelter.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/435653/Housing\\_Report\\_2\\_-\\_May\\_2012.pdf](http://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/435653/Housing_Report_2_-_May_2012.pdf) (accessed 11/2013)

<sup>35</sup> Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) Ready for Ageing? [online] available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/> [accessed 15/03/2012]

<sup>36</sup> Vale of White Horse District Council (2013) Local Plan 2029, Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies, consultation draft

- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'. The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.
- A core planning principle is to 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all'.
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Set out the strategic policies to deliver the provision of health facilities.
- Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.
- Planning policies should aim to avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.

6.9.2 Fair Society, Healthy Lives<sup>37</sup> ('The Marmot Review') investigated health inequalities in England, and a supplementary report identifies policy actions to ensure that the built environment promotes health and reduces inequalities. The Health and Social Care Act 2012<sup>38</sup> transfers responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas.

6.9.3 Key messages from the Local Plan Part 1 include:

- Faringdon is classed as a 'Market Town' which has the potential for significant development to help sustain and enhance services and facilities. Two strategic sites are proposed, to the south-west of Faringdon and the south of Faringdon (both 200 dwellings). A further 890 dwellings are proposed at two sites in Faringdon's hinterland; both of which should turn to the town for recreational and leisure needs.
- Open space and green infrastructure can play an important role in improving health and wellbeing by providing accessible space for recreation.
- New development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal.

6.9.4 Relevant infrastructure listed in the 'site templates' for the strategic sites at Faringdon and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan include:

- provision of public open space and recreational facilities on site;
- contributions to be provided towards health care and leisure provision; and
- contributions towards redressing the identified green infrastructure deficit in the area surrounding Faringdon.

## 6.10 Education and skills

6.10.1 Key messages from the NPPF include:

- Ensuring that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' is of 'great importance' and there is a need to take a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.

<sup>37</sup> The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12111/53895/53895.pdf> (accessed 11/2013)

<sup>38</sup> Upper tier and unitary local authorities

- 6.10.2 Local Plan Part 1 highlights that new development will be required to provide for the necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal. The council supports the development and enhancement of further and higher education facilities in appropriate locations by the extension or more intensive use of existing education or community facilities and main settlements with good pedestrian, cycling and public transport connections.
- 6.10.3 Relevant infrastructure listed in the 'site templates' for the strategic sites at Faringdon and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan include:
- a primary school equivalent to two forms of entry;
  - a children's centre;
  - an extension to Faringdon Community College; and
  - special needs school enhancements.
- 6.11 Transportation**
- 6.11.1 European and UK transport policies and plans emphasise the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth.
- 6.11.2 Recent guidance published by the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence<sup>39</sup> recommends local strategic policies to support and encourage walking and cycling. Another recent report – 'Understanding Walking and Cycling'<sup>40</sup> – highlights the importance of creating a safe physical environment for pedestrians and cyclists, and reducing trip distances in urban areas by providing facilities close to residential areas and restricting out-of-town development.
- 6.11.3 Sub-regional and local plans focus on appropriate design, location and layout of development, increasing investment in infrastructure, improving the quality and accessibility of public transport, supporting walking and cycling, and enhancing road safety. The Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 3 sets out the transport plan for the county for the period from 2011 to 2030.
- 6.11.4 Key messages from Local Plan Part 1 include:
- Faringdon is classed as a 'Market Town' which has the ability to support the most sustainable patterns of living within the Vale. Market Towns have the greatest long-term potential to help sustain, and where appropriate, enhance their services and facilities to support viable and sustainable communities in a proportionate manner.
  - All new development will be required to provide, in a timely manner, for the on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements necessary for the development to be sustainably accommodated.
  - There is a need to ensure that the impacts of new development on the strategic and local road network are adequately mitigated; designed to minimise effects on the amenities of the surrounding area; encourage sustainable transport and ensure adequate parking is delivered.
- 6.11.5 Relevant infrastructure for the Faringdon Area from the Infrastructure Delivery Plan includes:
- to contribute towards upgrading the A420 junction at Coxwell Road and wider improvements along the A420 corridor;

<sup>39</sup> Available online at: <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH41>

<sup>40</sup> Lancaster University, University of Leeds & Oxford Brookes University (2011) Understanding Walking and Cycling: Summary of Key Findings and Recommendations [online] available at: [http://www.its.leeds.ac.uk/fileadmin/user\\_upload/UWCRReportSept2011.pdf](http://www.its.leeds.ac.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/UWCRReportSept2011.pdf) (accessed 11/2013)

- improvements to the 66 bus route;
- provide a network of footpaths and cycle ways giving access from new homes to the countryside and from the site to the adjoining external network; and
- provide a network of safe and attractive footpaths and cycle tracks on the site that will connect to Faringdon centre and other areas where infrastructure and services are located, including to the secondary school.

## 6.12 Economy and enterprise

6.12.1 In 2010, the European Union published its strategy for achieving growth up until 2020.<sup>41</sup> This focuses on smart growth, through the development of knowledge and innovation; sustainable growth, based on a greener, more resource efficient and more competitive economy; and inclusive growth, aimed at strengthening employment, and social and territorial cohesion.

6.12.2 Key messages from the NPPF include -

- The planning system can make a contribution to building a strong, responsive economy by 'ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure'.
- Capitalise on 'inherent strengths', and to meet the 'twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future'.
- Support new and emerging business sectors, including positively planning for 'clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries'.
- Support competitive town centre environments.
  - Edge of town developments should only be considered where they have good access. This should be followed with an impact assessment to ensure the town centre remains viable in the long term.
  - Enhance and retain markets is also outlined.
- Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas and promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

6.12.3 The Local Growth White Paper notes that Government interventions should support investment that will have a long term impact on growth, working with markets rather than seeking to create artificial and unsustainable growth. In some cases this means focusing investment at areas with long term growth challenges, so that these areas can undergo transition to an economy that responds to a local demand.

6.12.4 Key messages from Local Plan Part 1<sup>42</sup> include:

- A number of research and development companies are located in the district, predominantly within Science Vale UK (SVUK) which includes the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus and Milton Park business area. The district has a strong knowledge economy and a highly skilled labour force.
- Faringdon is the largest settlement in the predominantly rural Western Vale Sub-Area, and acts as the main centre for the surrounding rural catchment. It has a good range of shops and community facilities, but many of its residents use Oxford or Swindon for work and higher order goods and services.

<sup>41</sup> European Commission (2010) Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth [online] available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF> (accessed 11/12)

<sup>42</sup> Vale of White Horse District Council (2013) Local Plan 2029, Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies, consultation draft



- The overall priority for the Sub-Area is to maintain the service centre role of Faringdon, whilst strengthening opportunities for retail, employment and tourism, and ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the town and surrounding area. Additional employment is needed in the town to improve its self-sufficiency and reduce the need for out-commuting.
- 30 ha of land south of Park Road in Faringdon has been identified to provide an additional 380 dwellings. This site is well-related to the existing built form of Faringdon, and has good road and public transport links. It could accommodate a mixed use scheme including employment alongside housing and community facilities.

## 7 WHAT'S THE SUSTAINABILITY 'BASELINE'?

The SA Report must include...

- The relevant aspects of the current state of the sustainability baseline and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'
- The characteristics of areas / populations etc. likely to be significantly affected.
- Any existing sustainability problems / issues which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas / populations etc. of particular importance

### 7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The baseline review is about tailoring and developing the problems/issues identified through context review so that they are locally specific. A detailed understanding of the baseline can aid the identification and evaluation of 'likely significant effects' associated with the plan / alternatives.

7.1.2 Set out below is a summary and update to the baseline review presented within the March 2014 Scoping Report.

### 7.2 Air quality

#### Current baseline

7.2.1 The main input to air pollutants in Faringdon is road traffic. However, air quality is generally good in the town with no significant issues.

7.2.2 Two locations in Faringdon are currently subject to air quality monitoring for nitrogen dioxide:

#### Central Faringdon monitoring site

7.2.3 Located at the Town Hall, the Central Faringdon site is a roadside monitoring site. The site has seen slight increases in nitrogen dioxide levels since 2006. Recent (2011) annual mean levels of 24.3 µg/m<sup>3</sup> however remain significantly below the air quality objective of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

#### Folly View Road monitoring site

7.2.4 The Folly View Road site is a background monitoring site and is located away from primary routes in the town. Since 2006 nitrogen dioxide levels have remained relatively constant and the recent (2011) annual mean levels of 13.2 µg/m<sup>3</sup> remain significantly below the air quality objective of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

#### Future baseline

7.2.5 New housing and employment provision in the town has the potential to have adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated levels of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide. Areas of particular sensitivity to increased traffic flows are likely to be within the more congested parts of the town and routes with highest traffic flows, such as the A417.

7.2.6 This may be offset in part by factors such as measures implemented through the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2011-30 to encourage modal shift from the private car and the improved fuel economy and efficiency of vehicles.

### 7.3 Biodiversity

#### Current baseline

7.3.1 The Faringdon parish area contains an area of ancient woodland at Grove Wood. Just outside the plan area are Haremoor Wood (to the east) and Buscot Park (to the west).

- 7.3.2 There is a geological SSSI at Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits, split over two sites at Wicklesham Quarry and Fernham Gate. This is in 100% favourable condition<sup>43</sup> and is designated for its geodiversity<sup>44</sup>. The site is one of Britain's richest paleontological sites. Grafton Lock Meadow SSSI lies outside but adjacent to the northern edge of the plan area and is in 100% favourable condition<sup>45</sup>. The Meadow is an area of unimproved grassland adjacent to the Thames, designated for its wide and diverse range of wildflowers and grasses.
- 7.3.3 Also within the parish is Faringdon Wet Meadow, a Local Wildlife Site located at the end of Canada Lane. This is a sloping field with a line of springs across the slope. The grassland has a good range of wildflowers and has not been agriculturally improved through the use of herbicides or fertilizers. Such grassland is a national priority for nature conservation. The wet areas where the springs rise have many sedges and wetland wildflowers<sup>46</sup>.
- 7.3.4 The Faringdon area is recognised by the Local Plan to be deficient in green infrastructure<sup>47</sup>. The Local Plan expects new development to contribute towards addressing existing deficiencies and it is anticipated that the strategic sites proposed in Local Plan Part 1 will contribute in this regard.
- 7.3.5 The plan area includes two Conservation Target Areas (CTA); the Upper Thames<sup>48</sup> and West Oxfordshire Heights<sup>49</sup> CTAs. The Upper Thames CTA contains lowland meadows, wet grassland and floodplain grazing marsh habitat. Targets are to manage, restore and create lowland meadows and floodplain grazing marsh and create reedbeds. The West Oxford Heights CTA contains wet woodland, acid grassland, fen, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, lowland meadow, parkland and calcareous grassland habitat. Targets are to manage wet woodland, fen and lowland mixed deciduous woodland; and to manage and restore the lowland dry acid grassland and parkland.

#### Future baseline

- 7.3.6 Sites of biodiversity importance have the potential to come under increasing pressure from an increase in the plan area's population and associated development. This includes through a loss of habitats and impacts on sites of biodiversity importance. This may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition and character of habitats.
- 7.3.7 The green infrastructure network around Faringdon has the potential to be enhanced in the vicinity of Faringdon as a result of the requirements of the Local Plan Part 1; however, there is a need to further support measures to help meet targets in the Conservation Target Areas. Improvements to the Country Park in the plan area could contribute towards meeting these objectives<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> Natural England (2014) Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI Condition Summary [online] available at: <http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/special/sssi/reportAction.cfm?report=sdr18&category=S&reference=1001218> (accessed 05/03/2014)

<sup>44</sup> Natural England (1996) Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI: Reasons for designating the SSSI [online] available at: [http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/special/sssi/sssi\\_details.cfm?sssi\\_id=1001218](http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/special/sssi/sssi_details.cfm?sssi_id=1001218) (accessed 05/03/2014)

<sup>45</sup> Natural England (2014) Grafton Lock Meadow SSSI [online] available at: [http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/sssi\\_details.cfm?sssi\\_id=1001911](http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/sssi_details.cfm?sssi_id=1001911) (accessed 05/03/2014)

<sup>46</sup> Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (undated) Vale of White Horse Parishes: Great Faringdon [online] available at: <http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/Oxfordshire+Districts/Oxfordshire+Districts+-+Parishes/Vale+of+White+Horse+Parishes/Great+Faringdon/> (accessed 05/03/2014)

<sup>47</sup> Vale of White Horse District Council (2014) Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Appendix A (Development Site Templates) [online] available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Appendix%20A%20Development%20Site%20Templates%20February%202014.pdf> (accessed 05/03/2014)

<sup>48</sup> Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Partnership (2010) Upper Thames CTA [online] available at: <http://www.oncf.org.uk/pdfs/Upper%20Thames%20CTA.pdf> (accessed 04/03/2014)

<sup>49</sup> Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Partnership (2010) West Oxfordshire Heights CTA [online] available at: <http://www.oncf.org.uk/pdfs/West%20Oxfordshire%20Heights%20CTA.pdf> (accessed 04/03/2014)

<sup>50</sup> A key element of the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be the enhancement of the new Country Park in Faringdon to the north and east of the town.

## 7.4 Climate change

### Current baseline

7.4.1 The outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team<sup>51</sup>. UKCP09 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and provides projections of future changes to the climate, based on simulations from climate models. The effects of climate change for the South East region by 2050 for a medium emissions scenario<sup>52</sup> are likely to be as follows:

- the central estimate of increase in winter mean temperature is 2.2°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.8°C; and
- the central estimate of change in winter mean precipitation is 16% and summer mean precipitation is –19%.

7.4.2 In relation to GHG emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change<sup>53</sup> suggests that the Vale of White Horse district has had consistently higher per capita emissions than regionally and nationally since 2005. Road transport is the largest contributor to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the district and has seen the lowest reductions since 2005 (0.5 t CO<sub>2</sub>). Reducing emissions from road transport is likely to continue to be a significant challenge.

7.4.3 Multifunctional green infrastructure can play a key role in reducing vulnerability to the effects of climate change, for example through mitigating the urban heat island effect, reducing surface water flood risk and providing wildlife corridors to enable species migration. Faringdon is recognised to be deficient in green infrastructure<sup>54</sup>.

### Future baseline

7.4.4 Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the Faringdon area, and lead to increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change with an increased need for adaptation.

7.4.5 In terms of climate change mitigation, per capita GHG emissions are likely to continue to decrease as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies become more widely adopted. Road transport has the potential to continue to be the largest contributor to GHG emissions in the wider area.

## 7.5 Historic environment and landscape

### Current baseline

7.5.1 Faringdon is a historic market town which has grown outwards from a relatively small historic core, with newer residential neighbourhoods expanding further into the surrounding rural areas. The town is set within a natural ridge which ‘contains’ Faringdon’s built-up area. A Conservation Area covers the town centre and extends to the north of the town, covering an area from Faringdon Folly in the east to Faringdon House in the west. There are 134 Listed Buildings in the plan area, most of which are located within the town centre and Conservation Area<sup>55</sup>, and two Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Radcot Bridge and Wyke monastic grange.

<sup>51</sup> The data was released on 18th June 2009. See: <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>52</sup> UK Climate Projections (2009) South East 2050s Medium Emissions Scenario [online] available at: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/22290> (accessed 11/02/2014)

<sup>53</sup> Department of Energy and Climate Change (2011) Official statistics: Local Authority carbon dioxide emissions [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-emissions-estimates> (accessed on 11/02/2014)

<sup>54</sup> Vale of White Horse District Council (2014) Local Plan 2031 Part 1 Appendix A (Development Site Templates) [online] available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Appendix%20A%20Development%20Site%20Templates%20February%202014.pdf> (accessed 05/03/2014)

<sup>55</sup> <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/advancedsearch.aspx> (accessed 21/02/2014)

7.5.2 The parish of Great Faringdon sits within the Upper Thames Clay Vales National Character Area<sup>56</sup>, with the Midvale Ridge immediately to the south<sup>57</sup>. The area is dominated by medium to large-sized arable fields. On the steeper slopes there is some semi-improved pasture and some gorse nearer the top. Fields are generally enclosed by hedges, woods and narrow winding lanes. Large blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland and different sized mixed plantations are characteristic. Most of the hedges are intact and well-maintained, but a few are quite low, particularly where they are associated with areas of arable farming. Parkland features, including mature trees, can be found around Faringdon House and St Mary's Priory.

7.5.3 Pressures on landscape character include the loss of hedgerows to field enlargements; pressures from new roads and road improvements; and localised recreation pressures. Opportunities to enhance the landscape character area include woodland planting and the restoration and replanting of hedgerows.

#### Future baseline

7.5.4 New development areas in the plan area have the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of cultural heritage assets, including through inappropriate design and layout. Existing historic environment designations and Local Plan policies will, however, offer a degree of protection.

7.5.5 New development has the potential to lead to incremental but small changes in landscape character and quality in and around the plan area, including from loss of landscape features and visual impact. There are also likely to be potential effects on landscape character and quality in the vicinity of the road network due to an incremental growth in traffic flows, and small scale and incremental changes in tranquillity, affected by changes in the levels of light and noise pollution. The Great Western Community Forest project may contribute to improving landscape quality in the parish.

7.5.6 Whilst some development is inevitably likely to take place in the town, in the absence of a Neighbourhood Plan it is likely to be less regulated in terms of potential effects on the historic environment and landscape quality.

## 7.6 Land and soil resources

#### Current baseline

7.6.1 The soils to the north of the plan area are loam and clay-based with high groundwater content. Southwards, the soils become drier and more acidic, with a pocket of shallow, lime-rich soils underlying the majority of the built footprint of Faringdon town. The land to the north of the town has impeded drainage and is better suited to pasture.

7.6.2 The Agricultural Land Classification classifies land into five grades, where Grades 1 to 3a are the 'best and most versatile' land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality<sup>58</sup>. In the plan area, land towards the Thames is generally of Grade 3 and 4 agricultural land, whereas land is of higher quality (Grade 2 and 3) along the Corallian Ridge. A further area of Grade 2 quality land is located outside of the existing settlement boundary south east of the A420.

7.6.3 In Vale of White Horse district, 65.1% of household waste was recycled or composted in 2012/13. This was the third highest proportion in England. Overall, 39,600 tonnes of municipal waste was collected in the Vale in 2012/13, an increase from 39,000 tonnes in 2011/12. There is no Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Faringdon; however there is one to the south east of the plan area, along the A417 towards Stanford-in-the-Vale.

<sup>56</sup> Natural England (2012) NCA 108: Upper Thames Clay Vale Key Facts and Data [online] available at: [http://www.naturalengland.co.uk/Images/108\\_Upper\\_Thames\\_Vale\\_tcm6-32124.pdf](http://www.naturalengland.co.uk/Images/108_Upper_Thames_Vale_tcm6-32124.pdf) (accessed 21/02/2014)

<sup>57</sup> Natural England (2013) NCA Profile 109: Midvale Ridge [online] available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5431100?category=587130> (accessed 21/02/2014)

<sup>58</sup> It should be noted that the data is from prior to 1976 when the distinction between Grades 3a and 3b was introduced. The maps are intended for strategic use and Natural England state "these maps are not sufficiently accurate for use in assessment of individual fields or sites and any enlargement could be misleading". A soil survey should be undertaken to verify the actual classification 'on the ground' – see <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/141047?category=2595819>

- 7.6.4 There is an active minerals site in the plan area at Wicklesham Quarry. This is currently producing sand and gravel but is due to end on or before 30 September 2014. Existing plans are for the site to be completely restored to agriculture by 30 April 2015<sup>59</sup>. An 'area of search' for soft sand is designated to the east of the plan area in the draft Oxfordshire Country Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy, which may require additional crushed rock to be 'won' during the plan period, subject to demand. The preferred approach is to meet this potential demand by extensions to existing minerals sites.

#### Future baseline

- 7.6.5 In the absence of the plan, a higher proportion of development has the potential to take place on greenfield land. This is especially the case given the greater availability of such land in the plan area and the likely growth in the local population and economy which will make such development attractive. Development in the plan area also has the potential to lead to the loss of some areas of versatile agricultural land, including Grade 2 and 3a land.
- 7.6.6 Due to legislative and regulatory requirements, there are increasing pressures to improve recycling and composting rates. Performance in the Vale of White Horse has been amongst the best in the country; however, there is still room for improvement. For this reason minor increases in recycling and composting rates are likely to continue.
- 7.6.7 There is the potential for a soft sand minerals site to come forward to the east of the plan area during the plan period; and there is also the potential for Wicklesham Quarry to be extended in-line with the emerging Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy (subject to demand).

## 7.7 Water resources and flood risk

#### Current baseline

- 7.7.1 The two waterbodies assessed under the Water Framework Directive in the plan area are Wadley Stream (source to Thames at Duxford) and the River Thames (Leach to Evenlode, north of the plan area). In terms of water quality, Wadley Stream is assessed by the Environment Agency as 'moderate' ecological status and the Thames as 'poor'<sup>60</sup>. This is due to pollution, negative effects of invasive species, and physical modifications to the watercourse. Wadley Stream improved from 'poor' to 'moderate' over the period 2009-2011, and both watercourses are predicted to be 'good' by 2027.
- 7.7.2 Water supply in the area is provided by Thames Water. The Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies<sup>61,62</sup> for the Faringdon area both state that, due to the flow requirements of the Thames that is water stressed, the status in the area is 'Water not available for licensing'.
- 7.7.3 An updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken in 2013 to support the emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan<sup>63</sup>. Faringdon has suffered from historic surface water flooding in recent years; particularly in 2001 and 2007. Whilst the main area of flood risk in the plan area is to the north of Faringdon towards the Thames, small areas immediately to the north west (West Brook) and south east (Holywell Brook) of the town are deemed to be at risk and located in Flood Zone 3. Sewer flooding has also historically affected the south of the town.

<sup>59</sup> Grundon (2012) Restoration and Aftercare Schemes at Wicklesham Quarry [online] available at: <http://myeplanning2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/swiftlg/apas/MediaTemp/205014-18282.pdf> (accessed 28/02/2014)

<sup>60</sup> Environment Agency (2012) Windrush Catchment Engagement Document [online] available at: [http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Research/Windrush\\_CMP.pdf](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Research/Windrush_CMP.pdf) (accessed 02/03/2014)

<sup>61</sup> Environment Agency (December 2012) Kennet and Vale of White Horse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy

<sup>62</sup> Environment Agency (June 2004) Thames Corridor Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy

<sup>63</sup> JBA Consulting (2013) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment [online] available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan-2029/evidence-base/strategi> (accessed 02/03/2014)



### Future baseline

- 7.7.4 In the future, flooding from surface water runoff may become an increasing issue due to an increased incidence of extreme weather events and an increase of the built footprint in the plan area. Due to the presence of the Thames, fluvial flood risk is likely to increase in the northern part of the plan area.
- 7.7.5 In terms of water quality, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality in watercourses in the area. Water quality is also likely to continue to be affected by pollution incidents in the area, the presence of non-native species and physical modifications to water bodies.
- 7.7.6 Water availability in the wider area may be affected by regional increases in population and an increased occurrence of drought exacerbated by the effects of climate change.

## 7.8 Population and communities

### Current baseline

- 7.8.1 In 2011 the total population of Faringdon was 7,121<sup>64</sup>. This was an increase of 15.1% from the 2001 census; significantly higher than local, regional and national comparators. The proportion of Faringdon residents aged 60 or over grew more rapidly over this period than any other age group. By contrast, the proportion of residents aged 0-15 or 25-44 fell. This has potential impact for school provision and elderly care.
- 7.8.2 Census statistics which measure deprivation across the four 'dimensions' of deprivation (employment, education, health and disability, and housing) show that Faringdon has slightly higher levels of deprivation than the Vale of White Horse overall, but lower than the regional and national averages. Levels of overcrowding are slightly higher in Faringdon than across the Vale. 5.9% of households in Faringdon have an occupancy rating of -1, meaning that they have at least one room fewer than required, compared with 4.1% across the Vale.<sup>65</sup>
- 7.8.3 The median selling price of property in the third quarter of 2012 was £270,000 in Vale of White Horse,<sup>66</sup> higher than the England-wide median. In terms of the house price to income ratio, which illustrates the multiple of the average income to average house price, the affordability ratio for Vale of White Horse in 2012 was 7.58, higher than the ratio for England (6.74).<sup>67</sup>
- 7.8.4 The plan area has a lower proportion of residents living in housing owned either outright or with a mortgage, and a higher proportion in social rented housing than all comparator areas. 20% of households in Faringdon are socially rented, including 3.8% rented from the local authority, and 16.7% that are other social rented. Across Vale of White Horse, 2.5% are rented from the local authority and 10.8% other social rented. In 2012, there were 2,796 households on local authority housing waiting lists in the Vale of White Horse.<sup>68</sup>
- 7.8.5 A Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Needs Assessment conducted in 2013 reported that a further 13 pitches will be required in the district to accommodate new household formation until 2029.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Office for National Statistics (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics [online] available at: <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/> (accessed on 21/02/2014)

<sup>65</sup> ONS (2011) Census 2011, Occupancy rating (rooms) (QS408EW)

<sup>66</sup> This is the latest available data.

<sup>67</sup> DCLG, statistics sourced from Shelter Housing Databank website:

[http://england.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/housing\\_databank](http://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/housing_databank) [accessed 11/13] This data is not available at ward or parish level.

<sup>68</sup> DCLG (2012) Social rented housing: demand and supply

<sup>69</sup> Opinion Research Services (2013) Oxford City, South Oxfordshire District and vale of White Horse District Councils, Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment 2012/13

### Future baseline

- 7.8.6 A significant proportion of deprivation experienced by people living in the plan area is likely to result from barriers to housing and services. The suitability (e.g. size and design) and affordability of this housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies through the Local Plan. In addition, unplanned development may have wider implications, for instance in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment.

## 7.9 Health and wellbeing

### Current baseline

- 7.9.1 The parish has two GP surgeries, both based in the Health Centre. The White Horse Practice has nine registered GPs and the Fern Hill Practice has three<sup>70</sup>. At present, there are two day centre facilities for the elderly in Faringdon: the Faringdon/Bromsgrove Day Centre and Oakwood Day Centre.
- 7.9.2 General health across the plan area is relatively favourable; with 84.4% of people in 'good' or 'very good' health<sup>71</sup>. This is broadly comparable to the district, regional and national averages. Of the total population of the Great Faringdon area, 15.1% have been classified as suffering from long-term health problems or disability<sup>72</sup>. This is more than the Vale average (14.2%) but less than the South East and England. Life expectancy in the Vale is 83.0 for men and 86.4 for women; above the national average<sup>73</sup>. There is, however, a difference of 4.2 years for men and 3.1 years for women between the most and least deprived populations.
- 7.9.3 Faringdon is reasonably well supplied with sporting facilities: new cricket and rugby pitches, tennis courts, a skate park on the Folly Park site, football pitches at Tuckers Park (Faringdon Town Football Club), a Bowls Club, and the Leisure Centre with swimming pool, gym, squash and badminton courts. There are a number of play areas for children, all of which are relatively small 'town style' parks for younger children with limited scope for teenagers.
- 7.9.4 A Leisure and Sports Facility Strategy consultation for the Vale<sup>74</sup> reported that Faringdon has a 50% usage and recommends improvement to existing facilities rather than any further development. It does, however, recommend the construction of an artificial grass pitch as part of developer contributions. Given the increase in development outlined in the latest version of the Local Plan Part 1, there may be a need to revisit this assumption.
- 7.9.5 There is a recognised green infrastructure deficit in the area. Faringdon Town Council has proposed that a Country Park could be a way of addressing this problem. A project to deliver a Faringdon Folly Country Park, linked with the recent new sports facilities could help to provide spaces for families and older children.

### Future baseline

- 7.9.6 The population of the plan area is predicted to grow and age in the future. This will place pressure on existing health and community facilities that are likely to face greater demand from residents; although it should be noted that Local Plan Part 1 makes provision for health facilities to support growth. A 64 unit Extra Care Home is planned for the Sandhill development.

<sup>70</sup> Faringdon Town Council (2014) Evidence Base Review Update

<sup>71</sup> ONS (2013) Census 2011 Health and Provision of Unpaid Care (KS301EW)

<sup>72</sup> ONS (2013) Census 2011 Long-Term Health Problem or Disability (QS303EW)

<sup>73</sup> Public Health England (2013) Health Profile 2013 [online] available at: <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=127265> (accessed 02/03/2014)

<sup>74</sup> Nortoft (2012) Draft Leisure and Sports Facilities Strategy [online] available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/VoWH%20Main%20Report%20CONSULTATION%20DRAFT%20141112.pdf> (accessed 02/03/2014)

- 7.9.7 Obesity is seen as an increasing issue by health professionals, and one that will contribute to significant health impacts on individuals, including increasing the risk of a range of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer.
- 7.9.8 There is generally good sports provision in the area but there are opportunities for further consolidation and improvement. The town lacks facilities for older children and existing facilities for young people are in very peripheral locations. Without the plan there is a danger that children and young people may not participate in as much sport and recreation.

## **7.10 Education and skills**

### **Current baseline**

- 7.10.1 The population of the plan area is generally well qualified, with 33.3% of residents aged 16 and above having at least a Level 4 Qualification<sup>75</sup>. This is below the district level (37.2%) but higher than both the regional (29.9%) and national (27.4%) averages<sup>76</sup>. Fewer people in the plan area have no qualifications (18.9%) than the regional (19.1%) and national average (22.5%); this is however higher than the figure for the Vale (16.7%).
- 7.10.2 Faringdon has a higher proportion of economically active residents than the district, regional or national averages, but with more full-time, self-employed, sole trader operations. The unemployment rate in the plan area is higher than in the Vale, but lower than for England. Faringdon has fewer economically inactive residents than the district, regional or national averages. Faringdon has a higher proportion of retired residents than the SE or England; far fewer students, but more carers than elsewhere.
- 7.10.3 Within the parish of Great Faringdon there are three non-fee paying schools (Faringdon Infant School, Faringdon Junior School and Faringdon Community College) and one private preparatory school (Ferndale 2½ to 11). Faringdon Infant School was rated 'satisfactory' in the 2011 Ofsted inspection, but 'good' in the 2013 inspection. Faringdon Junior School was rated 'good' in the 2007 Ofsted inspection but 'satisfactory' in the 2011 Ofsted inspection.<sup>77</sup>
- 7.10.4 Faringdon Community College is the only secondary school in the parish and is well regarded. In 2012 it was rated as the best state school in the county at GCSE level and the best bar one including independent schools<sup>78</sup>. At A-Level stage it was the second best state school and the ninth best when including independent schools. At the last Ofsted inspection in 2008 it was rated 'outstanding'.

### **Future baseline**

- 7.10.5 The adult population in Faringdon is largely well educated; however the number of people with degree level qualifications is below the district average. Economic activity rates are higher than the district, regional and national averages; however the trend for fewer students in the plan area has the potential to lead to lower levels of qualifications in Faringdon. The trend in GCSE qualifications is improving which has the potential to lead to an increase in qualified students leaving the plan area to gain further skills or find employment.

<sup>75</sup> Level 4 and above qualifications cover: Degree (BA, BSc), Higher Degree (MA, PhD, PGCE), NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level, Professional Qualifications (Teaching, Nursing, Accountancy).

<sup>76</sup> ONS (2011) Census 2011, Qualifications and Students (KS501EW)

<sup>77</sup> Ofsted (2014) School Data Dashboard [online] available at: <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/> (accessed 02/03/2014)

<sup>78</sup> Faringdon Town Council (2014) Evidence Base Review Update

## 7.11 Transportation

### Current baseline

- 7.11.1 The dominant mode of travel to work in the plan area is driving a car or van, with 69.9% of people travelling to work via these modes. This is higher than the district, regional and national averages. The plan area has low levels of rail use, reflecting poor rail access in the area: the branch line from Challow to Faringdon was closed in the 1960s, and the nearest railway stations are located in Didcot, Swindon and Oxford. Reopening Challow station or creating a new station north of Wantage are considered unlikely to be delivered in the near future.
- 7.11.2 Travel to work by bicycle is also low in the plan area and at 0.9% is significantly lower than district (6.4%) regional (3.0%) and national (3.0%) averages. Reasons stated by the Neighbourhood Plan *Evidence Base Review* for these figures include: the town centre being 'off-centre' (i.e. the majority of residential development is to the south and south-west of the centre); a large number of cul-de sacs in the town; and inadequate cycle infrastructure. A number of cycle routes have been proposed to encourage cycling<sup>79</sup>.
- 7.11.3 Faringdon is served by the A420, approximately 1.5km away, providing the key route to Oxford and Swindon. The A417 runs through the town, linking it to Stanford-in-the-Vale and Wantage to the south and Lechlade to the north. Congestion is generally not a significant issue outside peak periods, largely as a result of the A420 diverting traffic away from the town centre. Parking is a problem around schools at the start and end of the day, and in the town centre.
- 7.11.4 Faringdon has a relatively good range of bus services; however, there is scope to improve links to nearby towns other than those served by the half-hourly service to Oxford and Swindon. Buses to locations such as Wantage, Fernham, Longcot, Bourton, South Marston, Great Coxwell and Cirencester are less frequent, and destinations including Abingdon, Witney, Highworth, Lechlade, Didcot, Milton Park and Harwell are not directly accessible by bus.
- 7.11.5 With the growth of car use, fewer local people use Faringdon as their primary service centre<sup>80</sup>, with more using out of town supermarkets and centres in Swindon, Oxford, Wantage and Witney<sup>81</sup>. According to studies undertaken by Vale of White Horse District Council, Faringdon is the 'least sustainable' settlement in the district, as a high percentage of local residents travel farther than 5km for activities including employment, education, shopping and recreation<sup>82</sup>.

### Future baseline

- 7.11.6 An increase in population and housing growth may lead to increased traffic in the plan area, although this has the potential to be mitigated by measures outlined in the Local Plan and Local Transport Plan, and improvements to the bus network and walking and cycling infrastructure. Without further investment in bus transport and disincentives to the use of the private car, bus use on routes other than the A420 Oxford-Swindon corridor is likely to remain at low levels. The viability of bus services may be supported by future population growth.

<sup>79</sup> Farcycles (2010) Faringdon Cycle Network [online] available at: [http://www.faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk/files/resourcesmodule/@random4c12155f58a6f/1276254031\\_Final\\_Report\\_June\\_2010\\_Appendix\\_vi\\_Faringdon\\_Cycle\\_Network.pdf](http://www.faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk/files/resourcesmodule/@random4c12155f58a6f/1276254031_Final_Report_June_2010_Appendix_vi_Faringdon_Cycle_Network.pdf) (accessed 03/03/2014)

<sup>80</sup> Updated Assessment of Convenience Goods Capacity in Faringdon and Abingdon, for Vale of White Horse District Council, March 2010, Savills Table 3.4

<sup>81</sup> Faringdon Town Council (2014) Evidence Base Review Update

<sup>82</sup> Analysis of Travel Patterns Analysis of travel patterns of people living in new homes built between 2001 and 2007 in the Vale of White Horse' document, July 2008

## 7.12 Economy and enterprise

### Current baseline

- 7.12.1 Economic activity is relatively high in Faringdon, and rates of full-time employment are higher in Faringdon (44.1%) and the Vale of White Horse (44.8%) than across the South East (40.4%) and England (38.6%). Rates of part-time employment and self-employment are broadly in line with regional and national averages. The proportion of Faringdon residents who are unemployed, retired, looking after home or family, or long-term sick or disabled are again in line with the local, regional and national figures.
- 7.12.2 Faringdon has a highly qualified population. 33.3% of working-age residents of the plan area are qualified to NVQ level four or above, compared with 29.9% in the South East and 27.4% across England.<sup>83</sup> 21.8% of residents of Faringdon are educated to degree level or above; again high in comparison to regional and national averages (18.7% and 17.4% respectively).<sup>84</sup>
- 7.12.3 The occupational and industrial profile of the plan area is largely similar to regional and national averages. However, Faringdon and the Vale of White Horse have higher proportions of residents working in professional occupations, and smaller proportions in sales and customer service occupations than the South East and England. Faringdon (13.2%) has a significant proportion of the workforce in education relative to the national average (9.9%). The proportion of residents working in professional, scientific and technical activities is also slightly higher in Faringdon (9.1%) than across England (6.7%).
- 7.12.4 The plan area is also notable for a high proportion of residents in caring, leisure and other service occupations, and skilled trades occupations, relative to local, regional and national comparators. In particular, Faringdon has a slightly higher than average proportion of its workforce working in the construction industry (9.3% compared with 7.7% nationally).<sup>85</sup>
- 7.12.5 The percentage of the working-age population of Faringdon that is able to work within a set radius of the town is 27%, suggesting that it functions as a dormitory town. Out-commuting for work and shopping are recognised problems: 42% of residents travel the 15-20km to Swindon for work, and 34% travel more than 30km. To meet the town council's aspiration of 44% of the working-age population able to work within a set radius of the town, the creation of an additional 897 jobs will be required.

### Future baseline

- 7.12.6 The plan area has a highly skilled workforce, with higher than average proportions of residents educated to degree level. Employment growth in the Vale will be focussed on the Science Vale UK area, and particularly the Enterprise Zones at Harwell and Milton Park in the east of the District.
- 7.12.7 Faringdon is likely to continue to operate as a dormitory town, with a large proportion of its residents travelling long distances by car to access employment. This out-commuting has the potential to lead to continued negative effects in terms of the local economy, as well as contributing to congestion and carbon emissions.
- 7.12.8 There is a need to diversify the local employment base in order to provide employment for residents within the plan area, reduce out-commuting and reliance on cars, and reinforce the role of Faringdon as a key service centre. New employment provision within the plan area has the potential to provide opportunities for skilled trades and service industries as well as technical and scientific activities.

<sup>83</sup> Level 4 qualifications include bachelors degrees, NVQs at Level 4, HNDs and HNCs.

<sup>84</sup> ONS (2011) Census 2011, Qualifications gained (QS502EW)

<sup>85</sup> ONS (2011) Census 2011, Industry (QS605EW)

## 8 WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES & OBJECTIVES THAT SHOULD BE A FOCUS?

The SA Report must include...

- Key problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of / provide a framework for appraisal

### 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the SA Scoping Report (2014) was able to identify a range of sustainability problems / issues that should be a particular focus of SA, ensuring it remains focused. These issues were then 'converted' into sustainability 'objectives'. These objectives provide a methodological framework for the appraisal of likely significant effects on the baseline.

### 8.2 Sustainability topics / objectives

Topic	Objectives
Air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support improvements to air quality in Faringdon.</li> </ul>
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features.</li> </ul>
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote climate change mitigation and adaptation in Faringdon.</li> </ul>
Historic Environment and Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect, maintain and enhance Faringdon's cultural heritage resource including its historic environment and archaeological assets.</li> <li>• Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.</li> </ul>
Land and Soil Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the more efficient use of land.</li> <li>• Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.</li> </ul>
Water Resources and Flood Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve water quality.</li> <li>• Improve water resource efficiency.</li> <li>• Increase resilience to climate change and flooding.</li> </ul>
Population and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive and self-contained communities.</li> <li>• Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve equality of access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.</li> </ul>
Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the health and well-being of Faringdon's residents.</li> </ul>
Education and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve educational attainment and skill levels in Faringdon.</li> </ul>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable transport.</li> </ul>
Economy and Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support a strong and sustainable economy within the plan area.</li> <li>• Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Faringdon town centre in order to strengthen its role as a service centre.</li> </ul>

8.2.1 The full SA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during the scoping stage of the SA and against which the plan has been appraised are presented in **Appendix II**.





**Part 2: What has plan making / SA involved up to this point?**

## 9 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 2)

The SA Report must include...

- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with
- The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal (and hence, by proxy, a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan)

9.1.1 The 'story' of plan-making / SA up to this point is told within this part of the SA Report. Specifically, this section explains how preparation of the draft Plan has been informed by an appraisal of a number of alternative sites relating to employment uses in Faringdon.

## 10 OVERVIEW OF PLAN-MAKING / SA WORK UNDERTAKEN SINCE 2012

10.1.1 Plan-making for the FNP has been underway since June 2012. Initial work incorporated an extensive number of informal and formal consultation exercises carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, including stakeholder meetings and workshops, engagement with local organisations (including youth groups), and market stall consultation. This was accompanied by the collation of baseline information from existing surveys and studies and engagement with various groups and organisations in the town and wider district.

10.1.2 The culmination of these initial stages of plan-making was the development of an *Evidence Base Review*<sup>86</sup> for the FNP, which brought together the baseline information and analysis together with comments and suggestions made through the various consultation events. This was accompanied by an identification of a range of key issues for the plan. From this evidence, early iterations of elements of the plan were developed.

10.1.3 To support the early development of the plan, the sustainability performance of potential approaches to the plan were considered. This was presented in the document *Sustainability Assessment- Sites and Land Use Strategies*, prepared by Allies and Morrison in March 2013. The purpose of this document was to provide initial input into the development of the plan through providing context on potential thematic and spatial approaches from a sustainability perspective.

10.1.4 This included approaches for the following themes:

- Population growth
- Local employment
- Rural diversification
- Social housing re-balancing
- Allotment development
- Social infrastructure provision
- Connections
- Public realm improvements
- Design
- Anti-coalescence / development boundary

<sup>86</sup> Allies and Morrisons? (March 2013, updated January 2014) *Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base Review*

10.1.5 The *Sustainability Assessment* was subsequently released with an early draft of the FNP for consultation by the Neighbourhood Steering Group in March 2013. Following this initial consultation, policy approaches to the plan were further developed to take into account consultation responses, further engagement with stakeholders, the availability of new baseline information and the SA process.

10.1.6 The following chapter discusses in more detail the evolution of sites and policies for the FNP in association with the SA process.

## 11 APPRAISAL OF REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### Initial sustainability assessment of plan elements

11.1.1 The initial sustainability assessment prepared in early 2013 (section 10.1.3) considered a range of potential policy approaches for the FNP. This included an assessment of options for potential uses of various sites, including housing, retail, employment or school development and an assessment of different policy approaches which could be taken forward through the FNP. The purpose of this was to provide context for the initial iterations of plan-making<sup>87</sup>.

11.1.2 The key findings of the initial sustainability assessment can be summarised as follows:

- There is good potential for the expansion of employment uses to support a stronger town centre. In this context the location of sites will have an important bearing on the degree to which such growth contributes to town centre vitality, and as a general rule those sites located closer to the town centre contribute the most;
- A number of sites currently in use as employment land have been put forward as opportunities for an intensification of employment uses with a greater density of job creation. Where these sites are located within the existing developed town boundary they perform more strongly against sustainability objectives;
- The protection and development of education, community and retail activities within or adjacent to the town centre is likely to support social and economic objectives;
- Proposals which increase the number of visitors to the parish will also support economic and social sustainability objectives; and
- Improvements to Faringdon Country Park will bring a range of environment and socio-economic benefits for the town.

11.1.3 The initial sustainability assessment can be viewed at: <http://faringdonplan.webs.com>

### Appraisal of Employment Site Options

11.1.4 Following the initial stages of preparation of the FNP, the vision and objectives for the plan (section 5.2) were developed to reflect consultation, stakeholder engagement and the evidence base for the plan.

11.1.5 A central element of the FNP is a focus on the self-containment and economic and community vitality of Faringdon. To support this, it was considered by plan-makers that a range of potential employment sites should be put forward by the FNP over and above the strategic sites included in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (LPP1). A key element of the FNP preparation process has therefore been to identify potential additional sites in Faringdon which, in the period to 2031, may be appropriate for the development and/or intensification of employment uses.

<sup>87</sup> The initial sustainability assessment was designed to provide initial input into the plan-making process; as such this initial work was not designed to address the requirements of the SEA Regulations.

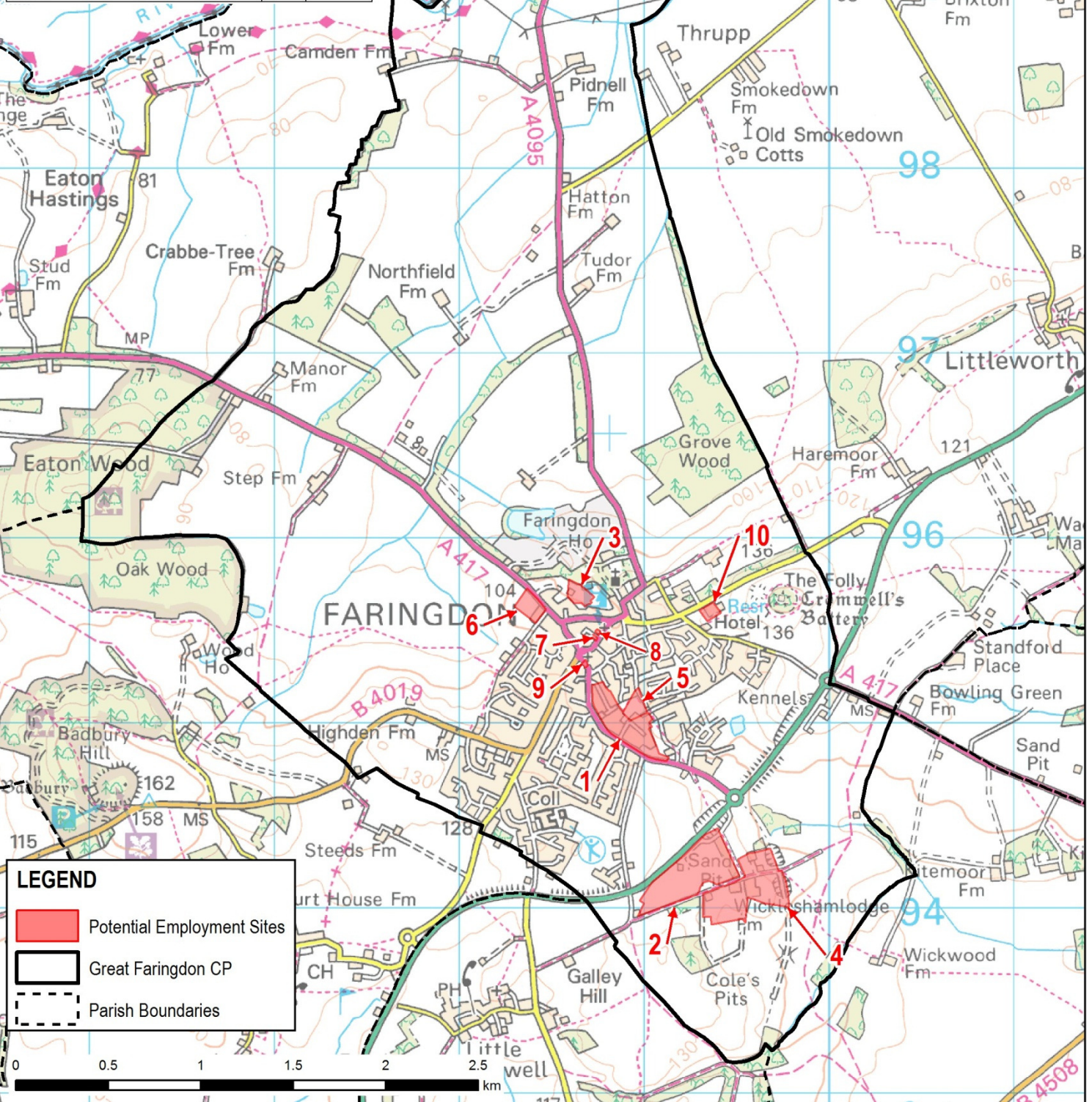
11.1.6 Further to extensive consultation with the local community and stakeholders, and discussion within the FNP Steering Group, a 'long list' of sites was proposed for consideration through the FNP development process. The sites, and their location, are presented below and in Figure 11.1.

- Industrial areas along Park Road x2
- Wicklesham Quarry
- Gloucester Street Car Park
- Wicklesham Farm
- Land behind Pioneer Road
- Infant School Canada Lane
- BT Exchange
- Police Station
- Fire Station
- Sudbury House.



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Name	Label	Area (ha)
Industrial Areas Along Park Road	1	6.35
Wicklesham Quarry	2	10.67
Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park	3	1.21
Wicklesham Farm	4	10.22
Land Behind Pioneer Road	5	1.23
Faringdon Infant School	6	0.39
BT Exchange	7	0.06
Police Station	8	0.05
Fire Station	9	0.09
Sudbury House	10	0.60



#### LEGEND

- Potential Employment Sites
- Great Faringdon CP
- Parish Boundaries

Project Title/Drawing Title

SA OF THE FARINGDON  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

LOCATION OF SITE OPTIONS  
IN FARINGDON

Client

FARINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Drawn  
BB

Checked  
AW

Approved  
NCB

Date  
09/05/2014

Scale @ A4  
NOT TO SCALE

Purpose of Issue  
FINAL

Drawing Number

FIGURE 11.1

Rev

0

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- 11.1.7 To inform the choice of sites to be taken forward in the draft plan, the relative sustainability performance of the eleven sites highlighted above were considered by the SA process as reasonable alternatives as it was not necessary to develop all the sites and therefore a choice between them was necessary. As well as providing a sustainability context to aid plan-makers' choice of sites, a further purpose of this exercise was to highlight the likely mitigation measures that would be required to minimise the potential adverse sustainability effects of the sites taken forward.
- 11.1.8 In addition to the above sites, a number of strategic allocations in Faringdon incorporating an element of employment use have been proposed by the LPP1. These are:
- 4&20 site adjacent to A420;
  - Rogers Quarry (Land south of Park Road as part of the mixed use strategic allocation); and
  - Volunteer Way.
- 11.1.9 These strategic allocations have not been considered as reasonable alternatives through the current SA process for two reasons. Firstly the FNP has been prepared to be in conformity with the LPP1 and, as such, the FNP does not seek to offer alternatives to these strategic sites. Secondly, the strategic sites have already been appraised through the SA undertaken to accompany the LPP1.
- 11.1.10 For these reasons the three strategic sites have not been appraised as reasonable alternatives for the SA of the FNP.
- [Reasonable alternatives: Summary of appraisal findings](#)
- 11.1.11 **Appendix III** presents the detailed findings of the appraisal of the eleven sites proposed for employment uses outlined above. Each site has been appraised against the SA Framework (see **Appendix II**).
- 11.1.12 A summary of the appraisal of the sites is as follows, presented by the eleven sustainability topics discussed in section 4.1.3.



Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects	

### Industrial areas on Park Road

Air quality	Biodiversity	Climate change	Historic environment and landscape	Land and soil resources	Water resources and flood risk	Population and Communities	Health and wellbeing	Education and skills	Transportation	Economy and enterprise
-------------	--------------	----------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------	------------------------

The intensification of employment uses at these sites will increase the number and range of businesses located in the Park Road area. This will support the clustering of businesses in the area and local job opportunities. An intensification of employment activities at this location is also an efficient use of land, potentially reducing the need for additional development on greenfield sites elsewhere in the plan area.

In terms of potential effects on the historic environment and townscape quality, the redevelopment of the existing industrial areas along Park Road provides opportunities to improve the quality of the built environment through the introduction of high quality design and appropriate layout. This will help improve the setting of cultural heritage assets in the area, including the Old Station.

Whilst an intensification of employment use at these sites has the potential to increase traffic flows in the local area, with potential effects in air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, the area is less sensitive to congestion than other parts of Faringdon. This will limit the magnitude of any impacts.

### Wicklesham Quarry

Air quality	Biodiversity	Climate change	Historic environment and landscape	Land and soil resources	Water resources and flood risk	Population and Communities	Health and wellbeing	Education and skills	Transportation	Economy and enterprise
-------------	--------------	----------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------	------------------------

Located within the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits geological SSSI, the site is currently in a 100% favourable condition and is designated for its geodiversity, providing exposures of a variety of fossils through the Faringdon Sponge gravels. It is therefore important that proposals for the site actively support the effective management of the SSSI in consultation with Natural England, Oxfordshire County Council and other stakeholders with an interest in the geodiversity of the site.

The site is poorly linked to the rest of the town by public transport and walking and cycling networks. The development of employment uses at the site therefore has the potential to encourage private car use and stimulate an increase in greenhouse gas emissions from transport.

Development of the site for employment use has the potential to impact on landscape quality and character if designed poorly. As the quarry is located in an area classified as Grade 2 agricultural land, the site's development for employment uses also has the potential to reduce the future availability of the best and most versatile agricultural land in the area. However developing the quarry as employment land has the potential to increase economic and employment opportunities, promote business investment and support the self-sufficiency of the town.

### Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park

Air quality	Biodiversity	Climate change	Historic environment and landscape	Land and soil resources	Water resources and flood risk	Population and Communities	Health and wellbeing	Education and skills	Transportation	Economy and enterprise
-------------	--------------	----------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------	------------------------

The proposed development site is currently an area of deciduous woodland which has been classified as a Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat. The development of employment uses at this site therefore has the potential to have adverse effects on biodiversity networks in the town. The likely loss of wooded areas also reduces the scope for the site to help regulate extreme temperatures and limit the urban heat island effect, as well as limiting the regulation of surface water run-off. This will do less to support adaptation to the effects of climate change.

The site is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area. The loss of trees and woodland at this location therefore has the potential to have significant effects on the setting of the historic environment and townscape quality. This has the potential to undermine the integrity of the conservation area.

The location of the site in the town centre will maximise its access by walking, cycling and public transport networks, helping to limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport and promoting healthier modes of travel. The development of the site has the potential to lead to support the vitality and viability of the town centre.

### Wicklesham Farm

Air quality	Biodiversity	Climate Change	Historic environment and landscape	Land and soil resources	Water resources and flood risk	Population and Communities	Health and Wellbeing	Education and skills	Transportation	Economy and enterprise
-------------	--------------	----------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------	------------------------

Whilst Wicklesham Farm is located within an area of Grade 2 agricultural land and within 100m of the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits geological SSSI, the scope for expansion at the site is limited and likely to be small scale. Similarly potential effects on biodiversity/geodiversity assets and effects on landscape quality will be limited by the restricted capacity of the site for expansion.

Wicklesham Farm currently has poor access to pedestrian and cycle networks and the A420 acts as a barrier for walkers and cyclists to the rest of Faringdon. The location of the site and current linkages to the site therefore discourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car.

### Land behind Pioneer Road

Air quality	Biodiversity	Climate Change	Historic environment and landscape	Land and soil resources	Water resources and flood risk	Population and Communities	Health and Wellbeing	Education and skills	Transportation	Economy and enterprise
-------------	--------------	----------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------	------------------------

The development of employment uses at the site will increase the number and range of businesses located in the wider Park Road area. This will support clustering of businesses in the area. The site also currently has good access to Park Road, including bus routes, is also relatively accessible from residential areas in Faringdon

The development of previously undeveloped land at this location has the potential to increase surface water run-off and increase the effect of extreme temperatures. Whilst the site is not designated for its biodiversity interest and no Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats are present on the site, the loss of an area of vegetated open space has the potential to have some effects on the integrity of biodiversity networks in the area. The loss of open space at this location may also reduce opportunities for local recreational activities (although it should be noted that the area has relatively low value as a multifunctional green infrastructure asset).

Redevelopment of the site for employment uses may increase local educational and training opportunities; thus increasing the potential for local job opportunities.

### Infant School Canada Lane

Air quality	Biodiversity	Climate Change	Historic environment and landscape	Land and soil resources	Water resources and flood risk	Population and Communities	Health and Wellbeing	Education and skills	Transportation	Economy and enterprise
-------------	--------------	----------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------	------------------------

The Infant School's location on the north western edge of the town provides the site with poor access to the A420 and as such has the potential to contribute to an increase in traffic flows and congestion through the town centre. The site is also located away from key bus routes.

Due to the edge-of-settlement location of the Infant School, there is potential for development at the site to affect the landscape setting of the town when viewed from the north west. The development of employment uses also has the potential to affect the integrity of the adjacent Faringdon Conservation Area. Effects however depend on the design and layout of any new employment development which takes place on the site.

The loss of the Infant School site to employment uses will lead to the loss of community uses at this site.

### BT Exchange

Air quality	Biodiversity	Climate change	Historic environment and landscape	Land and soil resources	Water resources and flood risk	Population and Communities	Health and wellbeing	Education and skills	Transportation	Economy and enterprise
-------------	--------------	----------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------	------------------------

The BT Exchange site is in a town centre location with good access to pedestrian and public transport networks. This will support the use of sustainable modes of transport. The site also has good access to residential areas in the town, which will help reduce the need to travel.

The BT Exchange is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area. Existing buildings and structures associated with the site however have limited heritage value. Redevelopment of the site for employment uses has the potential to support the historic townscape of the area if designed appropriately. For this reason, any development of the site should be sensitive to the conservation area through appropriate design and layout and complement existing heritage assets.

The expansion of town centre employment uses at the site has the potential to support the economic vitality and viability of the town centre and increase its role as a service centre.

### Police Station

Air quality	Biodiversity	Climate change	Historic environment and landscape	Land and soil resources	Water resources and flood risk	Population and Communities	Health and wellbeing	Education and skills	Transportation	Economy and enterprise
-------------	--------------	----------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------	------------------------

The Police Station is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area. Existing buildings and structures associated with the site however have limited heritage value. Redevelopment of the site for employment uses therefore has the potential to support the historic townscape of the area if designed appropriately. For this reason, any development of the site should be sensitive to the conservation area through appropriate design and layout and complement existing heritage assets.

The site is in a town centre location with good access to pedestrian and public transport networks. This will support the use of sustainable modes of transport. The site also has good access to residential areas in the town, which will help reduce the need to travel.

The development of the site for employment uses has the potential to lead to the loss of a key community asset in the town centre, however it is likely that the police station would be relocated under such an option. Whilst this will have potential effects on the community offer of the town centre, the expansion of town centre employment uses at the site has the potential to support the economic viability of the town centre.

## Fire Station

Air quality	Biodiversity	Climate change	Historic environment and landscape	Land and soil resources	Water resources and flood risk	Population and Communities	Health and wellbeing	Education and skills	Transportation	Economy and enterprise
-------------	--------------	----------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------	------------------------

The development of the Fire Station site for employment uses will contribute to an increase in economic and employment opportunities in the town. The site has good access to key bus routes in the town and has relative proximity to the town centre. This will promote the use of sustainable modes of transport.

Development of the Fire Station site for employment uses has the potential to lead to the loss of a key community asset. However it is likely that the town's fire station would be relocated rather than closed under this option.

Whilst the Fire Station is located on the edge of the Faringdon Conservation Area, existing buildings and structures associated with the site have limited heritage value. Redevelopment of the site for employment uses has the potential to support the historic townscape of the area if designed appropriately.

## Sudbury House

Air quality	Biodiversity	Climate change	Historic environment and landscape	Land and soil resources	Water resources and flood risk	Population and Communities	Health and wellbeing	Education and skills	Transportation	Economy and enterprise
-------------	--------------	----------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------	------------------------

Sudbury House, which is currently a hotel, is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area, and the hotel and grounds provides a key landscape link between the folly and the town. The original building is Grade II\* listed. The effect of the development of employment uses of the site on the historic environment interest of the area and landscape and townscape quality depends on the scale, design and layout of new development at the site.

The development of employment uses at Sudbury House has the potential to weaken the visitor and tourism offer of Faringdon through affecting the use of the site from a hotel. This has the potential to undermine the town's visitor/tourism economy.

In terms of air quality, congestion and greenhouse gas emissions there are unlikely to be significant effects as a result of the development of employment uses at the site.

## 11.2 Selecting a preferred spatial strategy

### Introduction

- 11.2.1 This section presents an overview of Faringdon Town Council's reasons for selecting the preferred spatial approach in light of the findings of the appraisal of reasonable alternatives.

### Overview of reasons for selecting the preferred spatial strategy

- 11.2.2 Table 11.1 presents the reasons for taking forward the employment sites promoted by the current plan.

*Table 11.1: Sites taken forward as employment sites to the current stage of development for the FNP*

Site	Taken forward by FNP?	Comments
Industrial areas along Park Road x2	Yes	Through intensification, it is considered that these sites are appropriate locations for supporting the employment needs of the town.
Wicklesham Quarry	Yes	This is considered by local stakeholders to be a significant opportunity site that would expand the provision of local jobs and could be redeveloped for employment use to provide B2/B8 industry in the town. A site of this scale could also encourage new types of businesses into the parish to help diversify the range of local jobs on offer
Land north west of Gloucester Street Car Park	Yes	This site is considered an appropriate site to be allocated, in part, for employment use (Use Class B1) and, in part, for retail use (Use Class A1) as a mixed employment and retail development. Adjacent to the town centre, such uses would help support both town centre services and sustainable travel patterns.
Wicklesham Farm	Yes	This site is a thriving business centre in an attractive location that has made use of redundant farm building. Minimal expansion would be acceptable to help address unmet demand for units here
Land behind Pioneer Road	Yes	This site was allocated in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan (2011) for Use Class B1 employment use and a landscape buffer. However, the emerging Local Plan 2031 does not propose to continue to allocate this site for development. It is important to maintain a variety of employment opportunities in the town and, therefore, the allocation of this site for B1 employment use is proposed to continue through the Neighbourhood Plan.
Infant School Canada Lane	Not as employment use	The site has been viewed as unsuited for employment uses and is instead viewed to be appropriate for community uses. On this basis, the current iteration of the plan seeks to encourage community uses for the site should the site become available.
BT Exchange	Potentially	As a town centre location, the site is deemed appropriate for retail uses, if the site becomes available.



Site	Taken forward by FNP?	Comments
Police Station	Potentially	As a town centre location, the site is deemed appropriate for retail uses, if the site becomes available.
Fire Station	Potentially	Due to its location on the edge of the town centre, with good accessibility, the site is deemed appropriate for retail uses, if the site becomes available.
Sudbury House	No	The site has not been included in the current iteration of the plan as the site is no longer available and is deemed appropriate for continued use as a hotel/conference facility. The continuation of this use will support the town's visitor and tourism economy.

## 12 DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

12.1.1 To support the implementation of the Objectives and Key themes for the Neighbourhood Plan discussed in section 5.2, the current version of the FNP puts forward 40 policies to guide development in Faringdon in the period to 2031.

12.1.2 The policies have been grouped into the following categories:

- A Well-Proportioned Town
- Connections
- Town Centre Shopping and Services
- Local Jobs
- Family Housing
- Design
- Ensuring Appropriate Supportive Infrastructure
- School Provision
- Sport and Leisure
- A Caring Community
- Landscape
- Tourism

12.1.3 **Part 3** of this SA Report considers these policies through appraising the current version of the FNP.



### **Part 3: What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?**

## 13 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 3)

The report must include...

- The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan approach
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan approach

13.1.1 The aim of Part 3 is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the draft (submission version) of the FNP. Part 3 is structured as follows:

- Chapter 14 presents an appraisal of the draft plan under eleven 'sustainability topic' headings
- Chapter 15 discusses overall conclusions at this current stage

## 14 APPRAISAL OF THE DRAFT PLAN

### 14.1 Methodology

14.1.1 The appraisal is structured under the eleven 'topic' headings discussed. For each topic a range of sustainability objectives are listed, which are further supported by the decision-making questions developed during scoping. Taken together, these provide the assessment framework for the appraisal of likely significant effects on the baseline (**Appendix II**).

14.1.2 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the FNP. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline as a result of incomplete data. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure assumptions are explained in full.<sup>88</sup> In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

14.1.3 It is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations.<sup>89</sup> So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered (i.e. where the effects of the Plan may combine with the effects of other planned or on-going activity that is outside the control of the FNP). These effect 'characteristics' are described within the appraisal as appropriate.

<sup>88</sup> As stated by Government Guidance (The Plan Making Manual, see <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=156210>):

*"Ultimately, the significance of an effect is a matter of judgment and should require no more than a clear and reasonable justification."*

<sup>89</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

## 14.2 Air Quality

### Sustainability Objective and decision making questions

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Support improvements to air quality in Faringdon.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>Limit levels of air pollutants and odour?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 14.2.1 Air quality is not a significant issue in Faringdon; however with the anticipated growth proposed in the LPP1 there is the potential for localised pollution along road corridors and in congestion 'hotspots' such as the town centre.
- 14.2.2 The plan allocates a number of sites for employment (**Policies 4.4A to H**) which have the potential to lead to increases in emissions from employment use and associated transport movements. Whilst this may lead to cumulative and synergistic effects on air quality, this is likely to be in part offset though by the increased self-sufficiency of the town promoted by the FNP (including a limitation of out-commuting) and enhancements to sustainable transport networks such as walking and cycling infrastructure (**Policies 4.2A to E**).
- 14.2.3 In terms of the proposed sites, both Wicklesham Farm (**Policy 4.4D**) and Wicklesham Quarry (**Policy 4.4B**) are likely to lead to an increase in car use due to their distance from the town centre, and existing inaccessibility by walking and cycling networks. However, given the sites' location next to the A420 and lack of existing air quality issues in the area, this is unlikely to lead to significant adverse effects. Due to the scale of the proposed development sites, the in-combination effects of an intensification and development of the sites on Park Road (Policy 4.4A) and Pioneer Road (Policy 4.4E) may lead to some increased on traffic flows. Impacts on air quality will however be limited by the location of the sites close to the A417 away from more sensitive town centre locations. In relation to the proposed town centre sites, the allocation of appropriate uses (including class A1) by the FNP rather than B2 uses will help limit effects on air quality.

### Recommendation

- 14.2.4 To further support the aim to create a foot/cycle bridge across the A420, there is potential for **Policy 4.4B** and **D** to be strengthened through seeking to ensure that the provision of footbridge and cycle lane to Wicklesham Quarry and Wicklesham Farm is an explicit condition of planning permission.

## 14.3 Biodiversity

### Sustainability Objective and decision making questions

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance the geodiversity value of the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species through meeting the objectives of the Conservation Target Areas?</li> <li>• Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?</li> <li>• Enhance biodiversity through the restoration and creation of well-connected multifunctional green infrastructure?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 14.3.1 A number of the proposed sites have the potential to lead to adverse effects on biodiversity and geodiversity interest without the introduction of appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures.
- 14.3.2 Wicklesham Quarry (**Policy 4.4B**) proposes employment uses in the major part of the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits geological SSSI. The site is currently in a 100% favourable condition and is designated for its geodiversity, providing exposures of a variety of fossils through the Faringdon Sponge gravels. The site is one of Britain's richest paleontological sites. In this context insensitive development of the site has the potential to lead to a reduction in accessibility to features of geodiversity interest at the SSSI, including geological exposures.
- 14.3.3 This is recognised by the FNP, which seeks to ensure that any proposals for the site demonstrate that the special geological interest of the site is not harmed in conjunction with Natural England and the district council. It also seeks to ensure that access to features of geological interest at the site is maintained for visitors. This will support the integrity of the SSSI and reflect the reasons for its designation.
- 14.3.4 The proposed development of the Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park (**Policy 4.4C**) is likely to lead to the loss of woodland which has been classified as a Deciduous Woodland Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat. The loss of this important habitat, which has the potential to support numerous species of flora and fauna and provides important ecological linkages between the built up area of the town and the surrounding areas, is likely to have adverse effects on biodiversity networks. Whilst the policy seeks to incorporate "appropriate ecological mitigation measures and compensation", there is potential for the policy to be further strengthened to protect the biodiversity interest of the site.
- 14.3.5 Pioneer Road (**Policy 4.4E**) would result in a loss of an area open space. Whilst the site is not designated for its biodiversity interest and no BAP Priority Habitats are present on the site, the loss of an area of vegetated open space may lead to some loss of biodiversity interest. However this will in part be mitigated by the provision of a landscape buffer between the site and the housing development to the north at Willes Close, which will be protected as open space.

- 14.3.6 Tourism development by the Thames is encouraged by **Policy 4.12B**. This is likely to take place in close proximity to Grafton Lock Meadow SSSI, an area of unimproved grassland and wildflowers which lies just to the west of the plan area. In this context there is the potential for inappropriate development or increased visitor impact to affect the integrity of the site. It is noted that higher-level LPP1 policy would apply and protect this site, so no negative effects are envisaged; however it is recommended that policy wording is amended to highlight the potential issue.
- 14.3.7 The draft FNP recognises that there is a recognised Green Infrastructure deficit in Faringdon through providing protection for existing open spaces valued by the local community by enabling the designation of selected sites as Green Spaces. **Policy 4.9A** also seeks to develop the Faringdon Country Park. This will support ecological networks in the plan area. It is also important to note that LPP1 policies provide a strong level of protection for biodiversity and ecological networks in the district; as such any development in the plan area will need to be undertaken in the context of the biodiversity policies of the Local Plan.

#### Recommendations

- 14.3.8 The Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan sets out a Conservation Target Area (CTA) approach to biodiversity management in the county. CTAs identify the most important areas for wildlife and therefore where targeted conservation work will have the greatest benefit. The main aim within CTAs is to restore biodiversity at a landscape-scale through the maintenance, restoration and creation of BAP priority habitats. For this reason there is potential for the FNP to support the delivery of biodiversity improvements in the town in conjunction with the two CTAs present in the town. There is also potential for the FNP to promote Faringdon-wide ecological enhancements as part of the development of a coordinated green infrastructure strategy for the town.
- 14.3.9 There is potential for the Wicklesham Quarry policy (**Policy 4.4B**) to be expanded with the aim of further protecting and enhancing the geodiversity interest of the site. This includes through promoting geological assessments, ensuring that existing exposures are maintained (such as through the clearance of vegetation and rock debris) and ensuring that a supply of fresh fossil material is available through new development proposals. It is also recommended that the policy highlights that all proposals for the site should also be developed in consultation with geodiversity officers at Oxfordshire County Council and local geological societies (in addition to Natural England and the district council as currently proposed by the plan).
- 14.3.10 If taken forward, the policy for North West Gloucester Street Car Park (**Policy 4.4C**) should be expanded to ensure that the development of employment uses at the site limits the loss of existing areas of woodland at the site and incorporates ecological features. There is also potential for the policy to encourage a 'like for like' replacement of deciduous woodland where such habitat is lost.
- 14.3.11 It is recommended that that **Policy 4.12B** includes reference to Grafton Lock Meadow SSSI, including the need for development proposals to be sensitive to this nationally designated biodiversity site.



## 14.4 Climate Change

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Promote climate change mitigation and adaptation in Faringdon.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit the increase in the carbon footprint of the plan area from population growth?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Reduce the need to travel?</li> <li>• Increase number of new developments meeting sustainable design criteria?</li> <li>• Improve green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?</li> <li>• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage surface water run-off, ensure that the risk of surface water flooding is not increased (either within the plan area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk?</li> <li>• Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into the likely effects of climate change into account?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 14.4.1 Vale of White Horse District has higher per capita emissions than the regional and national average; with emissions from road transport a significant contributor. Reducing the need to travel and promoting sustainable transport (**Policies 4.2A to E**) is therefore likely to have a positive effect in this regard. The development of renewable energy provision (**Policy 4.12C**) would further support climate change mitigation and the promotion of sustainable construction methods and low carbon energy (**Policy 4.6B**) would support both climate change adaptation and mitigation. **Policy 4.6B** also seeks to limit resource consumption associated with new development and promote the integration of energy efficiency within the refurbishment of existing structures.
- 14.4.2 Enhancements to green infrastructure networks promote climate change mitigation through supporting carbon sequestration and promoting sustainable modes of transport and climate change adaptation through helping to limit the effects of extreme weather events and regulating surface water run-off. In this context the proposals for the development of the Country Park (**Policy 4.9A**) and the protection and enhancement of open space in the town will support these aims.
- 14.4.3 The development of greenfield sites at Wicklesham Quarry, North West of Gloucester Street and land behind Pioneer Road (**Policies 4.4B, 4.4C and 4.4E**) have the potential to increase the risk of surface water flooding and reduce carbon sequestration; and tourist development at the Thames (**Policy 4.12B**) is likely to be within a flood zone. However the provisions of the NPPF and the flood risk, SuDS and surface water flooding policies proposed by the LPP1 would help limit adverse effects in this regard.

- 14.4.4 In terms of mitigating climate change, the redevelopment of existing sites (**Policies 4.4A to H**) provides an opportunity to integrate energy efficient design and low carbon technologies. Alongside, the BT, Police Station and Fire Station sites (**Policies 4.3B and C**) are all in accessible locations in the town centre that would encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The accessibility of sites by public transport in the Park Road area would also help limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport. However Wicklesham Quarry and Wicklesham Farm (**Policies 4.4B and D**) are relatively distant from Faringdon town centre and residential areas and are poorly linked in terms of public transport, walking and cycling. For these reasons these sites have the potential to increase emissions from transport through encouraging car use.

#### Recommendations

- 14.4.5 **Policy 4.4C** should seek to ensure that like-for-like replacement of deciduous woodland takes place in order to ensure that a reduction in the capacity of carbon sequestration in the area is limited.

### 14.5 Historic Environment and Landscape

#### Relevant sustainability objectives

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Protect, maintain and enhance Faringdon's cultural heritage resource including its historic environment and archaeological assets.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve and enhance the setting of cultural heritage assets?</li> <li>• Support the integrity of the Faringdon Conservation Area?</li> <li>• Preserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest?</li> <li>• Protect the historic settlement pattern of the town and villages in the plan area?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?</li> </ul>
Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute towards local and national landscape character objectives for the area?</li> <li>• Promote the development of a high quality green infrastructure network, addressing the green infrastructure deficit in Faringdon?</li> <li>• Avoid impacting on the existing GI assets, including public rights of way and public open space?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance landscape and townscape features?</li> <li>• Support the objectives and delivery of the Great Western Community Forest project?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 14.5.1 The policies proposed for the FNP have a strong focus on protecting and enhancing landscape and townscape quality in the plan area. For example, supporting the landscape setting of the town, the plan seeks to ensure that any additional development within the parish that adversely affects the setting of the town or green corridors to nearby villages will be resisted (**Policy 4.1c**). Likewise the designation of Tuckers Park Recreation Ground, Oakwood Park, Pitts Park, Town Park, Faringdon Folly Area, Faringdon Country Park and Humpty Hill as Green Spaces and the further development of Faringdon Country Park (**Policy 4.9A**) will support landscape and townscape quality.
- 14.5.2 **Policy 4.6C** seeks to support the integrity of the Faringdon Conservation Area through promoting enhancements to the built environment and seeking to secure funding for such improvements. It also supports the delivery of a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, which will be an important element of the protection and enhancement of the conservation area. The townscape quality and the setting of the historic environment in the conservation area will also be supported by **Policy 4.2B**, which promotes high quality design of streets and spaces, and the redevelopment of BT Exchange, Police Station and Fire Station sites will also provide opportunities for improving the setting of historic buildings in the conservation area.
- 14.5.3 Whilst, in conjunction with the LPP1, the draft plan policies provide a high degree of protection for the historic environment and townscape/landscape quality in Faringdon, the proposed development of the Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park site (**Policy 4.4C**) has the potential to have significant effects on the setting of the Faringdon Conservation Area. In this context the site is currently undeveloped and provides a 'green aspect' to the area through the presence of woodland. Although the Conservation Area Appraisal has not yet been carried out by VWHDC, and as such the significance of the site for the conservation area has not been evaluated and defined, it is likely that the loss of trees and woodland at the site would potentially have significant effects on the setting of historic environment assets and townscape quality. In this context, whilst Policy 4.4c seeks to avoid "*harm to the significance of nearby heritage assets and to the amenity of adjoining uses*" inevitable effects are likely to occur, potentially undermining the integrity of the conservation area.
- 14.5.4 **Policy 4.12B** promotes tourism development at the Thames. This is has the potential to be visible for long distances from Faringdon and other settlements along the Corallian Ridge.

### Recommendations

- 14.5.5 The FNP should seek to ensure that all development within the Faringdon Conservation Area is carried out in conjunction with, once prepared, the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

## 14.6 Land and Soil Resources

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Ensure the more efficient use of land.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the use of previously developed land?</li> <li>Avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, in particular Grade 2 agricultural land?</li> </ul>
Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the amount of waste produced?</li> <li>Move waste up the waste hierarchy?</li> <li>Maximise opportunities for local management of waste in order to minimise export of waste to areas outside?</li> <li>Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?</li> <li>Avoid sterilising potentially viable minerals sites?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 14.6.1 The Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan allocates a mix of brownfield and greenfield sites. In this context greenfield land would be lost to development at Gloucester Street (**Policy 4.4C**) and Pioneer Road (**Policy 4.4E**). As Wicklesham Quarry is not in planning terms classified as previously developed land (as provision has been made for its restoration to agriculture following completion of quarrying through development control procedures), the development of employment uses at this location (**Policy 4.4B**) would lead to the loss of greenfield land at the site. The intensification of land use at Park Road Industrial Estate (**Policy 4.4A**) and development at the Police Station, Fire Station, BT Exchange (**Policy 4.3A and B**) and Infant school (**Policy 4.8A**) promotes the efficient use of land.
- 14.6.2 In terms of the availability of agricultural land, there would be loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land at Wicklesham Quarry and potentially a minor loss of Grade 2 agricultural land at Wicklesham Farm (**Policy 4.4D**). Development at Wicklesham Quarry or Wicklesham Farm could also preclude further minerals development adjacent to the site due to operational and/or amenity impacts.

## 14.7 Water Resources and Flood Risk

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Improve water quality.	Will the option/proposal help to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance water quality and help to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive?</li> <li>Protect groundwater resources?</li> </ul>
Improve water resource efficiency.	Will the option/proposal help to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce water consumption?</li> </ul>
Increase resilience to climate change and flooding.	Will the option/proposal help to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainably manage surface water run-off, ensure that the risk of surface water flooding is not increased (either within the plan area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk?</li> <li>Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into account the likely effects of climate change?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 14.7.1 No significant effects are anticipated in terms of fluvial or surface water flood risk due to the low risk of flooding in most parts of the plan area and the relatively small-scale level of development proposed. In addition new development areas will be subject to the flood risk management provisions of the NPPF and LPP1.
- 14.7.2 In terms of water availability and use, **Policy 4.6B** supports the provisions of the LPP1 through requiring a limitation of resource consumption through new development and the refurbishment of existing properties. This has the potential to support water resource availability and quality.

## 14.8 Population and Communities

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive and self-contained communities.	Will the option/proposal help to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tackle the causes of poverty and deprivation?</li> <li>Encourage and promote social cohesion?</li> <li>Maximise opportunities within the most deprived areas?</li> <li>Increase the ability of 'hard-to-reach' groups to influence decisions?</li> <li>Minimise fuel poverty?</li> <li>Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents?</li> <li>Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities?</li> <li>Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?</li> <li>Encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>Maintain and enhance rural facilities?</li> </ul>
Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve equality of access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.	

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 14.8.1 The FNP has a close focus on increasing the self-containment of Faringdon and improving employment opportunities in the town. This is supported by the proposed policy approaches to retail (**Policies 4.3A to E**) and employment (**Policies 4.4A to H**), which seek to support the self-sufficiency of the town and maintain and enhance Faringdon's role as a 'hub' for the wider area. This will help improve the availability of key local facilities and services.
- 14.8.2 This will be supported by policies' focus on the development of new and improved sustainable transport networks, including pedestrian, cycle and public transport links (**Policies 4.1D and 4.2A to E**). This will support inclusive communities through improving accessibility to services and facilities, promoting the quality of life both for those living in Faringdon and in the rural hinterland of the town.
- 14.8.3 Whilst the FNP does not focus on housing provision, or allocate additional sites for housing, **Policy 4.5A** seeks to promote the delivery of a range of housing types and tenures to meet the needs of the town's residents. It also seeks to promote self-build housing (**Policy 4.5B**) and the provision of specialist accommodation for older people (**Policy 4.10B**).
- 14.8.4 The FNP's focus on high quality design, including through **Policy 4.6A-E**, will support the quality of life of residents through enhancing the quality of their neighbourhoods as a place to live, improving perceptions of security and promoting health and wellbeing. Whilst the redevelopment of the Fire Station and Police Station sites for employment uses (**Policies 4.3B and C**) has the potential to lead to the loss of key community assets, it is assumed that this will be offset by the appropriate re-provisioning of these services elsewhere in the town.

## 14.9 Health and Wellbeing

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Improve the health and well-being of Faringdon's residents.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups?</li> <li>Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities?</li> <li>Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with national standards?</li> <li>Improve access to the countryside for recreation?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 14.9.1 The FNP's focus on enhancing the self-containment of Faringdon will support access to health, recreational and community facilities, with benefits for the health and wellbeing of residents. This will be supported by policies' focus on the development of new and improved sustainable transport networks, including pedestrian, cycle and public transport links (**Policies 4.1D and 4.2A to E**) and the encouragement of new health and care provision (**Policy 4.10A**) and elderly care facilities (**Policy 4.10B**) in the town.
- 14.9.2 The FNP has a close focus on protecting and enhancing green infrastructure assets in the town. This includes through designating existing open spaces as "Green Spaces" (including Tuckers Park Recreation Ground, Oakwood Park, Pitts Park, Town Park, Faringdon Folly Area, Faringdon Country Park and Humpty Hill) and the further development of Faringdon Country Park (**Policy 4.9A**). With the provision of new allotments through **Policy 4.9C**, and improvements to play facilities in the town, the FNP will through this focus support outdoor recreation and healthier lifestyles.



- 14.9.3 Health and wellbeing will be further supported by the FNP's promotion of improvements to sports and recreation facilities, including upgraded facilities at the Leisure Centre and enhancements to playing field and all-weather pitch provision (**Policy 4.9B**). The promotion of new and improved walking and cycling networks in the town and the development of town centre sites will also encourage the use of healthier modes of travel and lifestyles.

## 14.10 Education and Skills

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Improve educational attainment and skill levels in Faringdon.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide and support high quality educational facilities?</li> <li>• Improve the skills and qualifications of young people?</li> <li>• Help to provide a supply of skilled labour to match the needs of local businesses?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 14.10.1 Whilst the FNP does not seek to allocate additional educational provision above that proposed through Academy expansion, it supports the consolidation of local educational provision to meet anticipated demand linked to housing growth in the town. It also reiterates the aim of ensuring that a school place is available in the town for every resident of school age.
- 14.10.2 In terms of wider educational opportunities, the FNP promotes the provision of community facilities and the self-containment of the town. This will help increase opportunities for learning and skills development. The FNP is also likely to support the development of skills through promoting the diversity of businesses and employment opportunities in the town (**Policies 4.4A to H**).

## 14.11 Transportation

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable transport.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the need to travel through more sustainable patterns of land use and development?</li> <li>• Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel?</li> <li>• Increase the self-sufficiency of the town and reduce out-commuting?</li> <li>• Enable transport infrastructure improvements?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 14.11.1 The FNP seeks to promote and facilitate the development of new and improved sustainable transport networks in the town including pedestrian, cycle and public transport links (**Policies 4.1D and 4.2A to E**). Improvements to Faringdon's green infrastructure networks will also promote walking and cycling in the town. This will support alternative modes of transport to the private car.

- 14.11.2 The FNP has a close focus on enhancing the self-containment of Faringdon and improving employment opportunities in the town. This is supported by the policy approach to retail (**Policies 4.3A to E**) and employment (**Policies 4.4A to H**), which seek to support the self-sufficiency of the town and maintain and enhance Faringdon's role as a 'hub' for the wider area. This will help reduce the need to travel and help limit the scale of out-commuting from the town.
- 14.11.3 In terms of the proposed sites for employment uses, the majority of development sites are within the settlement boundary of Faringdon or near the town centre. The proposed sites located in the town centre (including Gloucester St (**Policy 4.4C**) and the BT and Police Station (**Policies 4.3B and C**) are in good locations for walking, cycling and bus access. Likewise, whilst not located the town centre, the Fire Station, the sites at Park Road and the site at Pioneer Road are located on or close to the town's primary bus routes along the A417.
- 14.11.4 Wicklesham Quarry (**Policy 4.4B**) and Wicklesham Farm (**Policy 4.4D**) currently have poor access to pedestrian and cycle networks and the A420 forms a barrier for walkers and cyclists to the rest of Faringdon. Therefore, without new pedestrian and cycle links, the location of the sites will discourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car. This is recognised by the policies for the site, which seek to create a foot/cycle bridge across the A420.

#### Recommendation

- 14.11.5 To further support the aim to create a foot/cycle bridge across the A420, there is potential for **Policy 4.4B** and **4.4D** to be strengthened through seeking to ensure that the provision of a footbridge and cycle lane to Wicklesham Quarry and Wicklesham Farm is an explicit condition of planning permission.

## 14.12 Economy and Enterprise

### Relevant sustainability objectives

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Support a strong and sustainable economy within the plan area.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an appropriate amount of employment land in the plan area and ensure that suitable sites are available?</li> <li>• Retain existing employment sites which make a significant contribution to the overall employment offer, to ensure that the overall quantum for employment is increased?</li> <li>• Support the economy of the plan area and provide a range of employment opportunities close to where people live?</li> <li>• Ensure skills provision meets business requirements, so a greater proportion of the local population can share the benefits of economic success?</li> <li>• Increase the economic impact and value of tourism and take steps to convert day visitors to visitors staying overnight?</li> </ul>

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES	SA DECISION-MAKING QUESTIONS
Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Faringdon town centre in order to strengthen its role as a service centre.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to maintain the vitality and viability of the retail offer in Faringdon, and strengthen its service centre role?</li> <li>Identify and support suitable roles for the town centre in the face of competition from larger nearby centres outside the plan area?</li> <li>Create an attractive town centre environment, which appeals to visitors and shoppers alike?</li> </ul>

### Summary of the appraisal of the Draft Plan

- 14.12.1 Key issues in Faringdon that the plan seeks to address are: the need to reduce out-commuting to other centres for employment and leisure purposes; increasing the self-sufficiency of the town; improving the mix of jobs; and reinforcing the role of Faringdon as a service centre. In this regard, **Policies 4.4A to H** have the potential to lead to significant positive effects through encouraging additional employment development over and above that put forward through the Local Plan strategic allocations.
- 14.12.2 Retail provision is another consideration to support the economic self-sufficiency of the town and to reduce the outflow of economic activity to nearby competing centres such as Swindon, Oxford, Wantage and Witney. In this context **Policies 4.4C, 4.3A, B and C** seek to support retail development in Faringdon town centre. This has the potential to improve local offer in the town and strengthen its role as a service centre. An increase in employment provision in Faringdon town centre will also promote its vitality and viability through supporting local shops and services.
- 14.12.3 In terms of tourism and the visitor economy, **Policies 4.12A and B** seek to improve visitor offer. This has the potential to benefit the local economy through encouraging increased visitor spend and increasing the profile of the town. This will be supported by the FNP policies which seek to improve the appearance of the town (**Policies 4.2A and B, 4.3D, 4.6A to F**). **Policies 4.1D and 4.2A to E**, through promoting accessibility, also have the potential to further encourage visitors to Faringdon, as well as help encourage prospective employers and businesses to locate in the town.

## 15 CONCLUSIONS AT THIS CURRENT STAGE

### Potential significant effects

- 15.1.1 The appraisal has concluded that the draft plan is likely to lead to **significant positive effects** in terms of the 'historic environment and landscape', 'population and communities', 'health and wellbeing', 'transportation' and 'economy and enterprise' sustainability objectives. These benefits largely relate to the strong focus of the FNP on improving the vitality and self-containment of Faringdon, improving employment and economic opportunities, supporting enhancements to green infrastructure provision, and the plan's focus on protecting the town's distinctive characteristics.
- 15.1.2 The draft plan approach will help initiate a range of beneficial approaches in relation to 'air quality', 'climate change' and 'water resources and flood risk'. However these are not considered as significant positive effects as the delivery of the employment allocations through the FNP will inevitably lead to some adverse effects in relation to these sustainability topics. For these topics therefore, the draft plan approach will limit the potential magnitude of adverse effects linked to the delivery of new and intensified employment uses in Faringdon.
- 15.1.3 Whilst it is anticipated that the potential negative effects of the development of employment sites can in most cases be minimised (including at the nationally designated Wicklesham Quarry) the development of employment uses at the site north west of Gloucester Street Car Park has the potential to lead to **significant adverse effects** in relation to biodiversity and the historic environment. These effects will therefore need to be carefully managed with appropriate mitigation and avoidance measures if the site is taken forward.

### Recommendations at this current stage

- 15.1.4 A number of recommendations have been made in Chapter 14 for improving the sustainability performance of the draft plan. These can be summarised as follows:
- Whilst the draft plan has a close focus on protecting and enhancing open space provision in the plan area, there is further potential for the FNP to set out how this can be delivered through a coordinated approach to green infrastructure planning. In this context the delivery of new and improved green infrastructure provision is most effective when it is planned at a range of scales, including at the regional, sub-regional and local level. This enables a coordinated approach to be taken which can seek to ensure the full range of benefits from a high quality green infrastructure network are realised. For this reason it is recommended that the FNP provides further clarification as to how open space provision should be delivered in the parish through a coordinated and joined up approach to green infrastructure, including in conjunction with existing green infrastructure work being carried out by VWHDC.
  - The FNP should seek to ensure that all development in and adjacent to the Faringdon Conservation Area is carried out in conjunction with, once prepared, the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.
  - To further support the aim to create a foot/cycle bridge across the A420, there is potential for the Wicklesham Quarry and Wicklesham Farm policies to be strengthened through seeking to ensure that the provision of high quality pedestrian and cycle links to these sites is an explicit condition of planning permission.
  - The FNP should seek to promote Faringdon-wide ecological enhancements as part of the development of a coordinated green infrastructure strategy for the town. The FNP should also seek to support the delivery of biodiversity improvements in conjunction with the Conservation Target Areas present in the parish.

- There is potential for the policy relating to Wicklesham Quarry to be further expanded to provide additional provisions for the protection and enhancement of the geodiversity interest of the site.
- If taken forward, the policy for site north west of Gloucester Street Car Park should be developed further to ensure that the development of employment uses at the site limits the loss of existing areas of woodland and incorporates ecological features. There is also potential for the policy to encourage a 'like for like' replacement of deciduous woodland where such habitat is lost.
- The policy relating to the part of the parish along the River Thames should incorporate reference to Grafton Lock Meadow SSSI, including the need for riverside development proposals to be sensitive to this nationally designated biodiversity site.



**Part 4: What are the next steps?**



## 16 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 4)

- 16.1.1 This Part of the SA Report explains the next steps that will be taken as part of the plan-making / SA process.

## 17 PLAN FINALISATION

- 17.1.1 Subsequent to the current consultation on the draft plan, the FNP will be updated to reflect comments received. This SA Report will be updated to reflect the changes made to the FNP.
- 17.1.2 The draft FNP (and the updated SA Report) will then be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC), for its consideration. In particular VWHDC will consider whether the plan is suitable to go forward to Independent Examination in terms of the FNP meeting legal requirements and its compatibility with the Local Plan.
- 17.1.3 Subject to the VWHDC's agreement, the draft FNP will then be subject to independent examination. The Examiner will consider whether the plan is appropriate having regard to national policy and whether it is in general conformity with the Local Plan.
- 17.1.4 The Examiner will be able to recommend that the FNP is put forward for a referendum, or that it should be modified or that the proposal should be refused. VWHDC will then decide what should be done in light of the Examiner's report. Where the report recommends modifications to the plan, VWHDC will invite the FNP Steering Group to make modifications to the plan, which will be reflected in an updated SA Report. Where the Examiner's Report recommends that the proposal is to be refused, VWHDC will do so.
- 17.1.5 Where the examination is favourable, the FNP will then be subject to a referendum, organised by VWHDC. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the plan, then it will be passed to VWHDC with a request it is adopted. Once adopted, the FNP will become part of the Development Plan for the area. At the time of Adoption an 'SA Statement' will be published that sets out (amongst other things) *'the measures decided concerning monitoring'*.

## APPENDIX I: REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Annex I of the SEA Directive prescribes the information that must be contained in the SA Report; however, interpretation of Annex I is not straightforward. The table below 'interprets' Annex I requirements.

### Annex 1

#### The report must include...

(a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;
(b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan
(c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
(d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;
(e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;
(f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;
(g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;
(h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information
(i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.

### Interpretation of Annex I

#### The report must include...

An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the Plan seeking to achieve?</i>	i.e. answer – <i>What's the scope of the SA?</i>
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>	
The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>	
The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'		
The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected		
Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance		
Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues &amp; objectives?</i>	
An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach')	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i>	
The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as ... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.		
The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?</i>	
The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan		
A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i>	

## APPENDIX II: SA FRAMEWORK

Topic	Objectives	Decision-making questions
<b>Air quality</b>	Support improvements to air quality in Faringdon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Limit levels of air pollutants and odour?</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance the geodiversity value of the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species through meeting the objectives of the Conservation Target Areas?</li> <li>• Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?</li> <li>• Enhance biodiversity through the restoration and creation of well-connected multifunctional green infrastructure?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?</li> </ul>
<b>Climate Change</b>	Promote climate change mitigation and adaptation in Faringdon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit the increase in the carbon footprint of the plan area from population growth?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Reduce the need to travel?</li> <li>• Increase number of new developments meeting sustainable design criteria?</li> <li>• Improve green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?</li> <li>• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage surface water run-off, ensure that the risk of surface water flooding is not increased (either within the plan area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk?</li> <li>• Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into the likely effects of climate change into account?</li> </ul>

Topic	Objectives	Decision-making questions
<b>Historic Environment and Landscape</b>	Protect, maintain and enhance Faringdon's cultural heritage resource including its historic environment and archaeological assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve and enhance the setting of cultural heritage assets?</li> <li>• Support the integrity of the Faringdon Conservation Area?</li> <li>• Preserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest?</li> <li>• Protect the historic settlement pattern of the town and villages in the plan area?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?</li> </ul>
	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute towards local and national landscape character objectives for the area?</li> <li>• Promote the development of a high quality green infrastructure network, addressing the green infrastructure deficit in Faringdon?</li> <li>• Avoid impacting on the existing GI assets, including public rights of way and public open space?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance landscape and townscape features?</li> <li>• Support the objectives and delivery of the Great Western Community Forest project?</li> </ul>
<b>Land and Soil Resources</b>	Ensure the more efficient use of land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the use of previously developed land?</li> <li>• Avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, in particular Grade 2 agricultural land?</li> </ul>
	Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the amount of waste produced?</li> <li>• Move waste up the waste hierarchy?</li> <li>• Maximise opportunities for local management of waste in order to minimise export of waste to areas outside?</li> <li>• Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction?</li> <li>• Avoid sterilising potentially viable minerals sites?</li> </ul>
<b>Water Resources and Flood Risk</b>	Improve water quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance water quality and help to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive?</li> <li>• Protect groundwater resources?</li> </ul>

Topic	Objectives	Decision-making questions
	<p>Improve water resource efficiency.</p> <p>Increase resilience to climate change and flooding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce water consumption?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage surface water run-off, ensure that the risk of surface water flooding is not increased (either within the plan area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk?</li> <li>• Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into account the likely effects of climate change?</li> </ul>
<b>Population and Communities</b>	<p>Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive and self-contained communities.</p> <p>Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve equality of access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle the causes of poverty and deprivation?</li> <li>• Encourage and promote social cohesion?</li> <li>• Maximise opportunities within the most deprived areas?</li> <li>• Increase the ability of 'hard-to-reach' groups to influence decisions?</li> <li>• Minimise fuel poverty?</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents?</li> <li>• Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities?</li> <li>• Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?</li> <li>• Encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>• Maintain and enhance rural facilities?</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	<p>Improve the health and well-being of Faringdon's residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups?</li> <li>• Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities?</li> <li>• Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with national standards?</li> <li>• Improve access to the countryside for recreation?</li> </ul>
<b>Education and Skills</b>	<p>Improve educational attainment and skill levels in Faringdon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide and support high quality educational facilities?</li> <li>• Improve the skills and qualifications of young people?</li> <li>• Help to provide a supply of skilled labour to match the needs of local businesses?</li> </ul>

Topic	Objectives	Decision-making questions
<b>Transportation</b>	Reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the need to travel through more sustainable patterns of land use and development?</li> <li>• Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel?</li> <li>• Increase the self-sufficiency of the town and reduce out-commuting?</li> <li>• Enable transport infrastructure improvements?</li> </ul>
<b>Economy and Enterprise</b>	Support a strong and sustainable economy within the plan area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an appropriate amount of employment land in the plan area and ensure that suitable sites are available?</li> <li>• Retain existing employment sites which make a significant contribution to the overall employment offer, to ensure that the overall quantum for employment is increased?</li> <li>• Support the economy of the plan area and provide a range of employment opportunities close to where people live?</li> <li>• Ensure skills provision meets business requirements, so a greater proportion of the local population can share the benefits of economic success?</li> <li>• Increase the economic impact and value of tourism and take steps to convert day visitors to visitors staying overnight?</li> </ul>
	Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Faringdon town centre in order to strengthen its role as a service centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to maintain the vitality and viability of the retail offer in Faringdon, and strengthen its service centre role?</li> <li>• Identify and support suitable roles for the town centre in the face of competition from larger nearby centres outside the plan area?</li> <li>• Create an attractive town centre environment, which appeals to visitors and shoppers alike?</li> </ul>



## APPENDIX III: APPRAISAL OF SITE OPTIONS

### Introduction

As described within Part 2, an interim stage of plan-making / SA involved appraising ten site alternatives for delivering additional employment land in Faringdon above and beyond that put forward by the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

### Site options appraisal methodology

For each of the sites, the appraisal identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability topics and objectives identified through scoping (**see Part 1**) as a methodological framework. These are considered against the SA "framework" of objectives and decision making questions (**Appendix II**)

Effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Regulations.<sup>90</sup> So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the appraisal as appropriate. The potential for 'cumulative' effects is also considered.

Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the FNP. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario). In light of this, there is a need to make considerable assumptions regarding how the Plan will be implemented 'on the ground' and what the effect on particular receptors will be. Where there is a need to rely on assumptions, this is made explicit in the appraisal text.<sup>91</sup> In many instances, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict likely significant effects, but it is possible to comment on the merits of an option in more general terms. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'

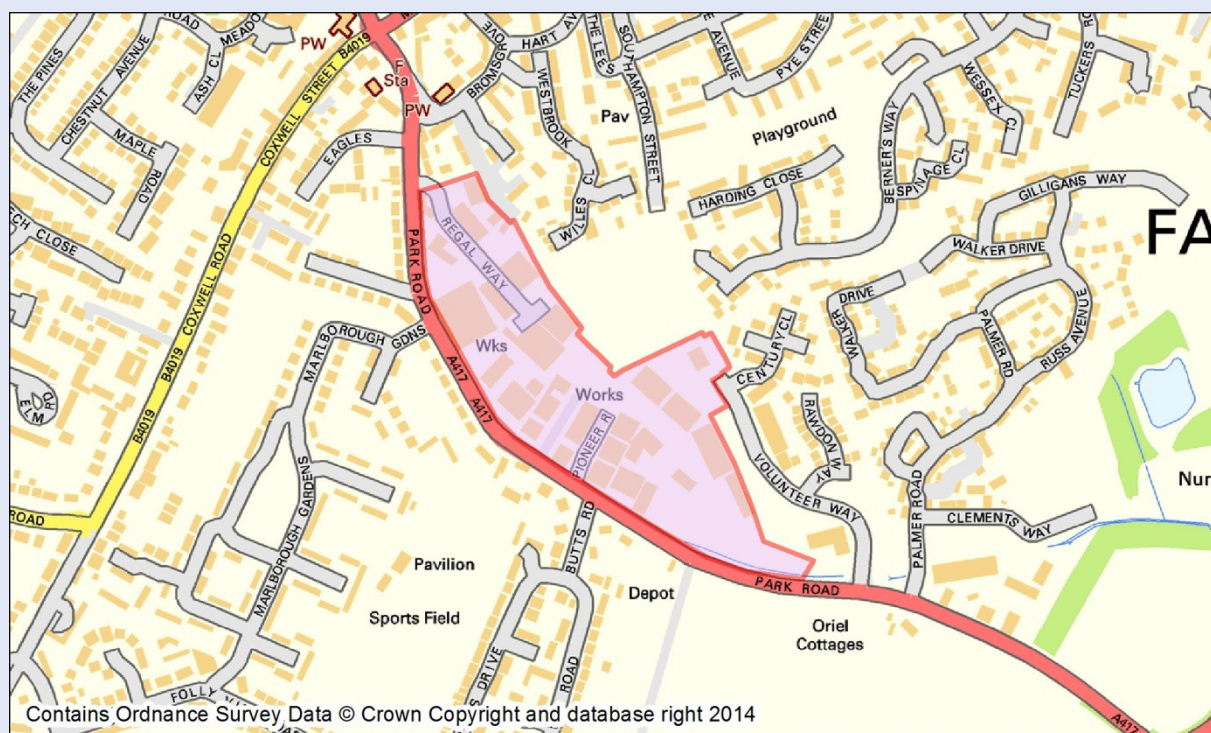
This appendix presents ten appraisal tables incorporating:

- Maps showing the location of site options;
- Further information about the sites, including size; and
- Appraisal findings.

<sup>90</sup> Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>91</sup> It is worth noting that, as stated by Government Guidance (The Plan Making Manual, see <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelid=156210>): "Ultimately, the significance of an effect is a matter of judgment and should require no more than a clear and reasonable justification."

Site 1 – Industrial areas along Park Road x2



Approximate size of site: 6.35 ha

SA Topic	Rating	Commentary
Air quality		An intensification of employment activities at these locations is likely to increase traffic flows in the local area, with potential implications for air quality. However the area is less sensitive to congestion than other parts of Faringdon (including the town centre). The development of this site is therefore unlikely to have significant effects on air quality locally.
Biodiversity		No designated sites or priority habitats are present within the area. Whilst an intensification of employment activities may lead to some impacts on brownfield biodiversity at these sites, most areas are in existing use and have limited biodiversity value.
Climate change		<p>An intensification of employment activities at these locations is likely to increase traffic flows in the local area. This may lead to increases in greenhouse gas emissions from transport. However redevelopment of existing industrial areas increases opportunities for integrating energy efficient design and low carbon technologies.</p> <p>Similarly, in terms of climate change adaptation, redevelopment of the existing industrial areas along Park Road brings opportunities for increasing the resilience of the area to extreme weather events. This includes through appropriate design and layout and the integration of relevant features which support effective adaptation.</p>

Historic environment and landscape		<p>The current design and layout of the sites and surrounding areas limit their existing value in terms of their contribution to townscape quality. The redevelopment of the existing industrial areas along Park Road therefore provides opportunities to improve the quality of the built environment through the introduction of high quality design and appropriate layout.</p> <p>One site is designated for its historic environment value in these areas- the Grade II listed Old Station. With high quality design and layout, the redevelopment of these sites has the potential to improve the setting of this important cultural heritage asset.</p>
Land and soil resources		An intensification of employment activities at these locations is an efficient use of land and has the potential to reduce the need additional development on greenfield sites.
Water resources and flood risk		The sites are not located in an area of flood risk. Redevelopment of the site provides opportunities to improve the management of surface water run-off in the area.
Population and Communities		The redevelopment of the existing industrial areas along Park Road has the potential to lead to an increase in local job opportunities.
Health and wellbeing		No significant effects at this level of detail.
Education and skills		Through encouraging new businesses to locate in the town, the intensification of the sites for employment uses may support an enhancement of local education and training opportunities.
Transportation		The sites currently have good access to Park Road, including bus routes. They are also relatively accessible from residential areas in Faringdon. This will support the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car.
Economy and enterprise		The intensification of employment uses at the sites will increase the number and range of businesses located in the wider Park Road area. This will support clustering of businesses in the area.

## Summary

The intensification of employment uses at these sites will increase the number and range of businesses located in the Park Road area. This will support the clustering of businesses in the area and local job opportunities. An intensification of employment activities at this location is also an efficient use of land, potentially reducing the need for additional development on greenfield sites elsewhere in the plan area.

In terms of potential effects on the historic environment and townscape quality, the redevelopment of the existing industrial areas along Park Road provides opportunities to improve the quality of the built environment through the introduction of high quality design and appropriate layout. This will help improve the setting of cultural heritage assets in the area, including the Old Station.

Whilst an intensification of employment use at these sites has the potential to increase traffic flows in the local area, with potential effects in air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, the area is less sensitive to congestion than other parts of Faringdon. This will limit the magnitude of any impacts.

## Key

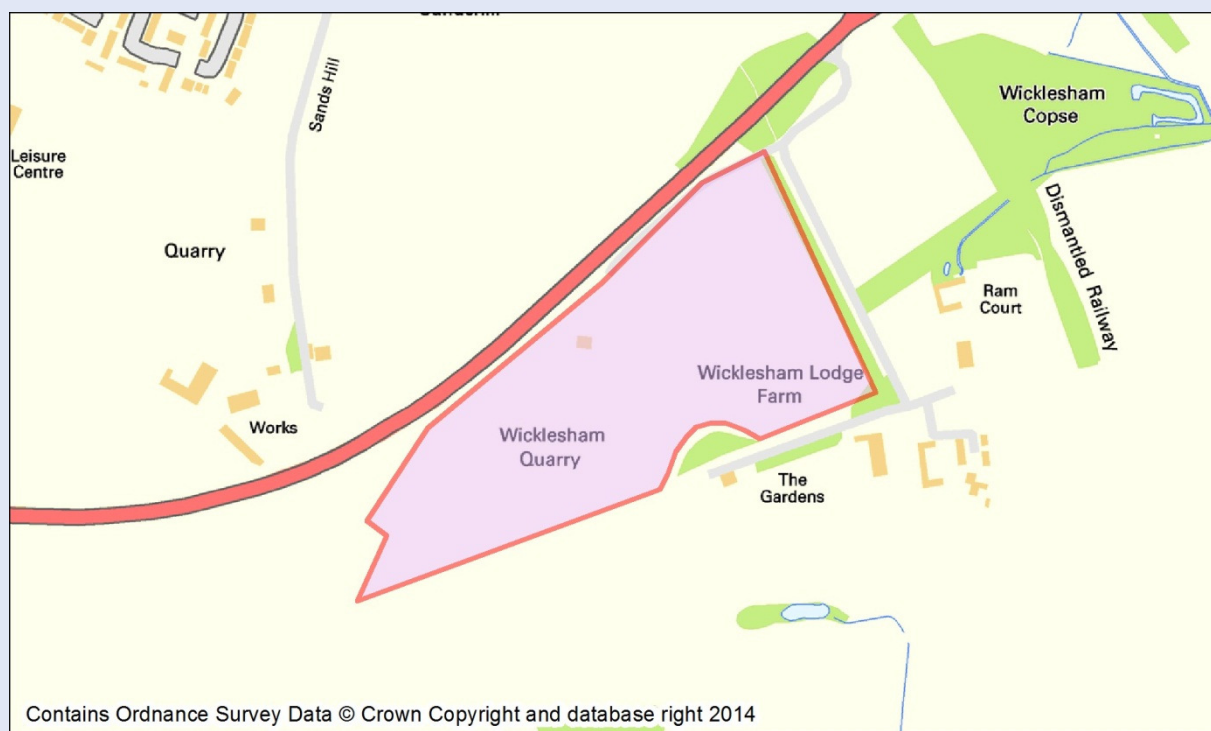
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)

Neutral/no effect

Likely positive effect

Uncertain effects

Site 2 – Wicklesham Quarry



Approximate size of site: 10.67 ha

SA Topic	Rating	Commentary
Air quality		The site is located close to the A420, and as such traffic is unlikely to affect the areas of Faringdon with the largest sensitivity to congestion (including the town centre). Therefore there are unlikely to be significant effects on local air quality from the development of this location as employment land.
Biodiversity		<p>The site is located in the major part of the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits geological SSSI. The site is currently in a 100% favourable condition and is designated for its geodiversity, providing exposures of a variety of fossils through the Faringdon Sponge gravels. The site is one of Britain's richest paleontological sites.</p> <p>Insensitive development of the site has the potential to lead to a reduction in accessibility to features of geodiversity interest at the SSSI, including geological exposures.</p> <p>Therefore if taken forward, proposals for the site should seek to actively support the effective management of the SSSI, including through geological assessments, ensuring that existing exposures are maintained (such as through the clearance of vegetation and rock debris) and ensuring that a supply of fresh fossil material is available. All proposals for the site should also be developed in consultation with Natural England, geodiversity officers at Oxfordshire County Council and local geological societies.</p>
Climate change		The site is poorly linked to the rest of the town by public transport and walking and cycling networks. This has the potential to encourage car use and stimulate an increase in greenhouse gas emissions from transport.

Historic environment and landscape		The site is currently due to be restored to agricultural land following the cessation of quarrying activities. Development of the site for employment use therefore may have impacts on landscape quality and character if designed inappropriately. No designated features of areas of historic environment value are located at or adjacent to Wicklesham Quarry.
Land and soil resources		The site is currently due to be restored to agricultural land in 2015 following the cessation of quarrying activities. The quarry is located in an area classified as Grade 2 agricultural land. The development of the site for employment uses therefore has the potential to lead to a reduction in the future availability of the best and most versatile agricultural land in the area.
Water resources and flood risk		The quarry is not located in an area of flood risk. The site is also not located within a groundwater protection zone.
Population and Communities		The development of the site as employment land has the potential to increase local job opportunities and support the diversification of the town's employment base.
Health and wellbeing		The site currently has poor access to pedestrian and cycle networks. The location of the site is therefore unlikely to promote healthier modes of travel and increases road safety issues for more vulnerable road users.
Education and skills		Through encouraging new businesses to locate in the town, the development of the site as employment land may support an increase in local education and training opportunities.
Transportation		The site currently has poor access to pedestrian and cycle networks and the A420 forms a barrier for walkers and cyclists to the rest of Faringdon. Therefore, without new pedestrian and cycle links, the location of the site will discourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car.
Economy and enterprise		The development of the quarry as employment land has the potential to increase economic and employment opportunities in Faringdon, promote business investment and support the self-sufficiency of the town.

## Summary

Located within the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits geological SSSI, the site is currently in a 100% favourable condition and is designated for its geodiversity, providing exposures of a variety of fossils through the Faringdon Sponge gravels. It is therefore important that proposals for the site actively support the effective management of the SSSI in consultation with Natural England, Oxfordshire County Council and other stakeholders with an interest in the geodiversity of the site.

The site is poorly linked to the rest of the town by public transport and walking and cycling networks. The development of employment uses at the site therefore has the potential to encourage private car use and stimulate an increase in greenhouse gas emissions from transport.

Development of the site for employment use has the potential to impact on landscape quality and character if designed poorly. As the quarry is located in an area classified as Grade 2 agricultural land, the site's development for employment uses also has the potential to reduce the future availability of the best and most versatile agricultural land in the area. However developing the quarry as employment land has the potential to increase economic and employment opportunities, promote business investment and support the self-sufficiency of the town.

### Key

Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)

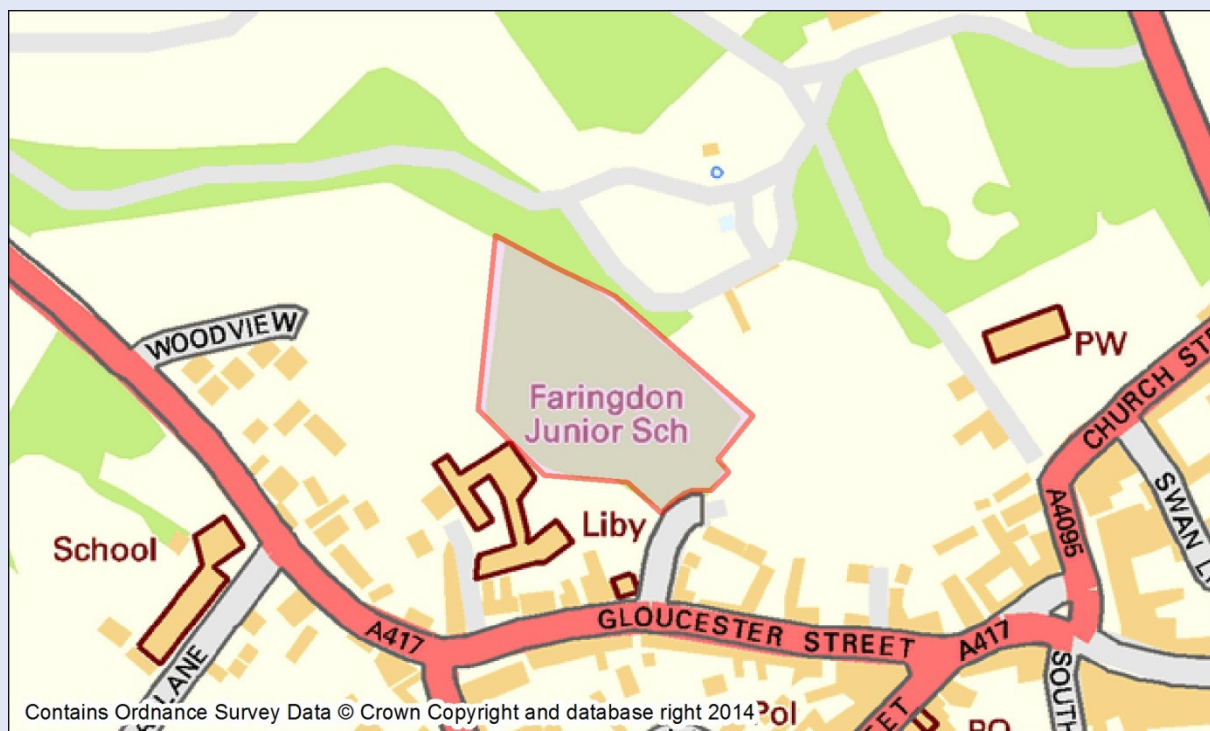
Neutral/no effect

Likely positive effect

Uncertain effects



Site 3 – Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park



Approximate size of site: 1.21 ha

SA Topic	Rating	Commentary
Air quality		<p>The effect on air quality depends on the extent to which the development stimulates traffic growth in the local area. In this context effects on air quality is linked to the extent to which sustainable modes of transport are promoted through the development and new parking provision is be provided as part of the site.</p> <p>The site is however located within a town centre site with good access by public transport links and walking and cycling networks. This will promote alternatives to the private car, with the potential to support air quality.</p>
Biodiversity		<p>The proposed development site is currently an area of woodland which has been designated as a Deciduous Woodland Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat. The loss of this important habitat, which has the potential to support numerous species of flora and fauna, and provides important ecological linkages between the built up area of the town and the surrounding areas, is likely to have adverse effects on biodiversity networks in the town.</p>
Climate change		<p>The town centre location of the site will maximise its access by walking and cycling and public transport. This will help limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport. The loss of areas of woodland at this location will however reduce the capacity of the site to support carbon sequestration.</p> <p>In terms of adaptation to the effects of climate change, the likely loss of wooded areas reduces the scope for the site to help regulate extreme temperatures and limit the urban heat island effect. The loss of woodland also has the potential to limit the regulation of surface water run-off and increase the risk of surface water flooding following extreme weather events.</p>



Historic environment and landscape		The site is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area adjacent to the Gloucester Street car park. The site is currently undeveloped and provides a 'green aspect' to the area through the presence of a woodland. Whilst a Conservation Area Appraisal has not been carried out by VoWHDC, and as such the significance of the site for the conservation area has not been evaluated and defined, it is likely that the loss of trees and woodland at the site would potentially have significant effects on the setting of the historic environment assets and townscape quality. This has the potential to undermine the integrity of the conservation area.
Land and soil resources		As an area of woodland, the site is not located on previously developed land. This will do less to support the efficient use of land.
Water resources and flood risk		Whilst the site not located within an area of existing fluvial flood risk, the development of previously undeveloped land at this location has the potential to increase surface water run-off. In this context the loss of woodland at this location has the potential to limit the regulation of surface water run-off and increase the risk of surface water flooding.
Population and Communities		The development of the site has the potential to lead to an increase in employment opportunities in the town centre. It will also support the vitality and viability of the town centre, with benefits for the local community.
Health and wellbeing		The site is within a town centre location with good access to residential areas and pedestrian and cycle networks. The location of the site therefore has the potential to promote healthier modes of travel.
Education and skills		Through encouraging new businesses to locate in the town, the development of the site as employment land may support an increase in local training and educational opportunities.
Transportation		The location is a town centre site with good access by walking and cycling and to public transport networks. This will support the use of sustainable modes of transport. The site also has good access to residential areas in the town, reducing the need to travel.  There is some additional scope for walking links to be improved to the site from the rest of the town centre.
Economy and enterprise		The expansion of town centre employment uses at the site has the potential to support the vitality and viability of the town centre and increase its role as a service centre. It will also help increase economic and employment opportunities in the town.

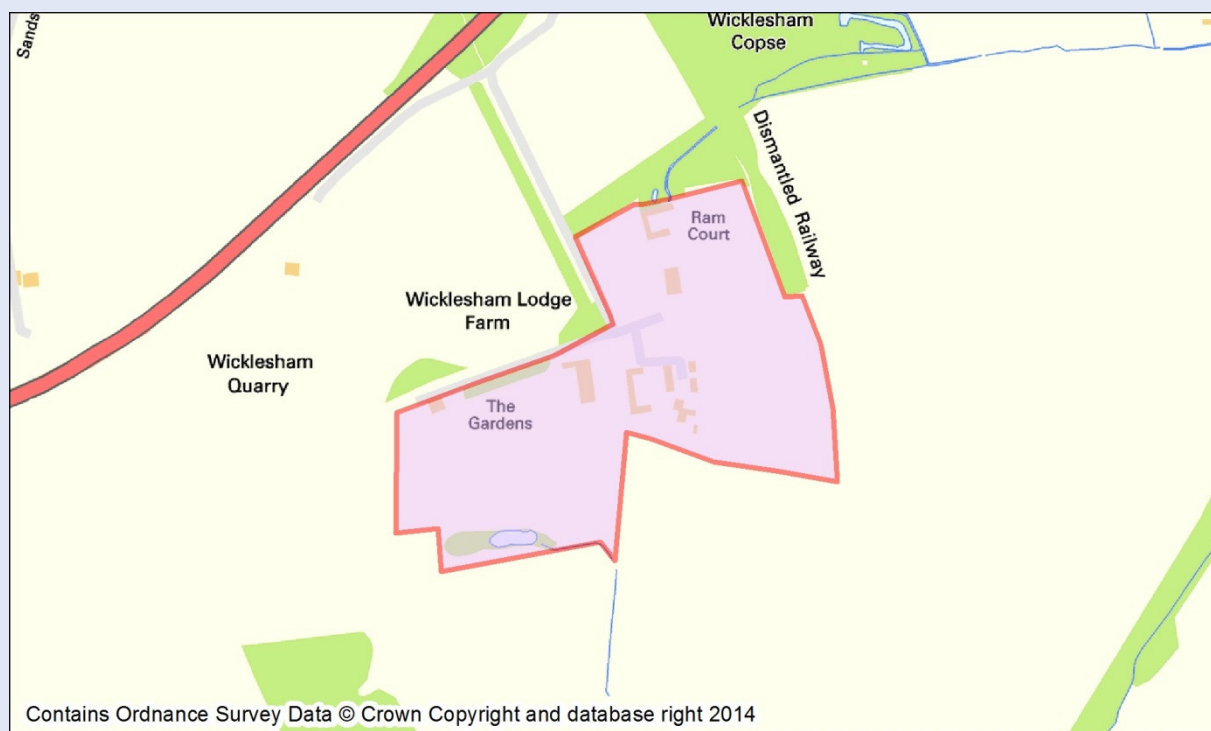
## Summary

The proposed development site is currently an area of deciduous woodland which has been classified as a Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat. The development of employment uses at this site therefore has the potential to have adverse effects on biodiversity networks in the town. The likely loss of wooded areas also reduces the scope for the site to help regulate extreme temperatures and limit the urban heat island effect, as well as limiting the regulation of surface water run-off. This will do less to support adaptation to the effects of climate change.

The site is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area. The loss of trees and woodland at this location therefore has the potential to have significant effects on the setting of the historic environment and townscape quality. This has the potential to undermine the integrity of the conservation area.

The location of the site in the town centre will maximise its access by walking, cycling and public transport networks, helping to limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport and promoting healthier modes of travel. The development of the site has the potential to lead to support the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Site 4 – Wicklesham Farm



Approximate size of site: 10.22 ha

SA Topic	Rating	Commentary
Air quality		Wicklesham Farm is located close to the A420, and as such traffic is unlikely to affect the areas of Faringdon with the largest sensitivity to congestion (including the town centre). Therefore there are unlikely to be significant effects on local air quality from the small-scale expansion of this site as employment land.
Biodiversity		The site is located within 100m of the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits geological SSSI. Due to the nature of the SSSI designation relating to its geological exposures, the expansion of Wicklesham Farm as an employment site is unlikely to impact on the features on which the SSSI has been designated. Wider effects on biodiversity/geodiversity assets would also be limited by the restricted capacity of the site for expansion.
Climate change		The site is poorly linked to the rest of the town by public transport and walking and cycling networks. This has the potential to encourage car use and increase greenhouse gas emissions from transport. An increase in greenhouse gas emissions would be limited by the small scale of expansion that is likely to take place through this option.
Historic environment and landscape		Effects on landscape quality would be limited by the restricted capacity of the site for expansion and the presence of the quarry nearby. Effects on the Grade II listed barn and adjoining granary east of Wicklesham Lodge farmhouse are likely to be limited by the existing employment uses at the site.
Land and soil resources		Whilst Wicklesham Farm is located in an area classified as Grade 2 agricultural land, any development of the site is likely to be small scale and lead to a minimal loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Water resources and flood risk		Wicklesham Farm is not located in an area of flood risk. The site is also not located within a groundwater protection zone.
Population and Communities		The expansion of the site has the potential to lead to a limited increase in local job opportunities. Potential effects are likely to be limited by the restricted capacity of the site for expansion.
Health and wellbeing		The site currently has poor access to pedestrian and cycle networks. The location of the site is therefore unlikely to promote healthier modes of transport and has the potential to lead to road safety issues for more vulnerable road users.
Education and skills		Through encouraging new businesses to locate in the town, the development of the site as employment land may support an increase in local education and training opportunities.
Transportation		The site currently has poor access to pedestrian and cycle networks and the A420 forms a barrier for walkers and cyclists to the rest of Faringdon. Therefore, without new pedestrian and cycle links, the location of the site will discourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car.
Economy and enterprise		The expansion of employment uses at the site has the potential to lead to a limited increase economic and employment opportunities.

### Summary

Whilst Wicklesham Farm is located within an area of Grade 2 agricultural land and within 100m of the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits geological SSSI, the scope for expansion at the site is limited and likely to be small scale. Similarly potential effects on biodiversity/geodiversity assets and effects on landscape quality will be limited by the restricted capacity of the site for expansion.

Wicklesham Farm currently has poor access to pedestrian and cycle networks and the A420 acts as a barrier for walkers and cyclists to the rest of Faringdon. The location of the site and current linkages to the site therefore discourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car.

### Key

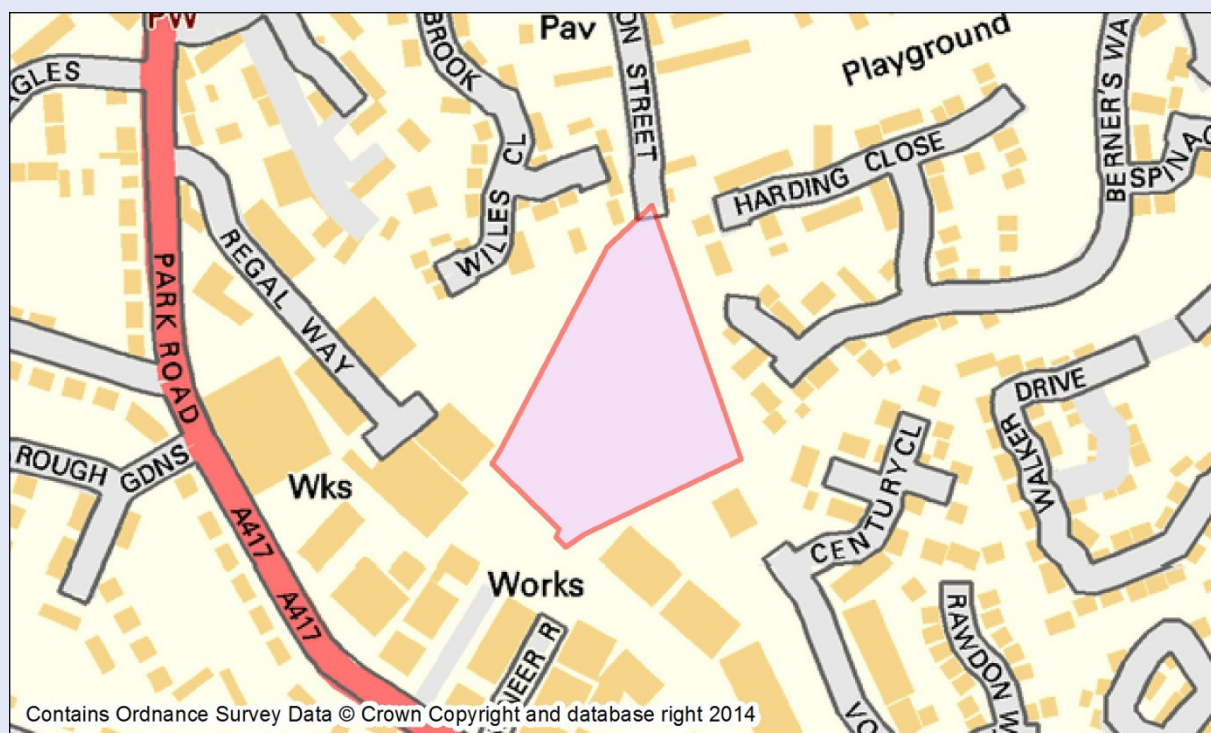
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)

Neutral/no effect

Likely positive effect

Uncertain effects

Site 5 – Land behind Pioneer Road



Approximate size of site: 1.23 ha

SA Topic	Rating	Commentary
Air quality		Whilst development at this location will take place on previously undeveloped land, the area is less sensitive to congestion than other parts of the town (including the town centre). The development of this site is therefore unlikely to have significant effects on air quality in the area due to its location off Park Road.
Biodiversity		Whilst the site is not designated for its biodiversity interest and no Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats are present on the site, the loss of an area of vegetated open space is likely to have some effects on biodiversity networks in the area.
Climate change		<p>The undeveloped nature of the site currently helps regulate surface water run-off in the area and as open space, it also has the potential to help regulate extreme temperatures. The development of the site therefore has the potential to undermine the likely resilience of the area to an increase in extreme weather events that have the potential to take place through climate change.</p> <p>To help limit effects, new development at this location should incorporate features which support a regulation of surface water run-off and appropriate planting to help limit the urban heat island effect.</p>
Historic environment and landscape		<p>The current nature of the site and surrounding area limits its existing value in terms of its contribution to townscape quality. With high quality design and appropriate layout, development of the site is therefore unlikely to have significant impacts on townscape quality.</p> <p>No sites designated for their historic environment value are located in the immediate area.</p>

Land and soil resources		The site is not located on previously developed land. This will do less to support the efficient use of land.
Water resources and flood risk		Whilst the site not located within an area of existing fluvial flood risk, the development of previously undeveloped land at this location has the potential to increase surface water run-off and increase the risk of surface water flooding.
Population and Communities		The development of the site has the potential to lead to an increase in local job opportunities. Whilst the area has relatively low value as a multifunctional green infrastructure asset, the loss of open space at this location may reduce opportunities for recreational activities locally.
Health and wellbeing		No significant effects at this level of detail.
Education and skills		Through encouraging new businesses to locate in the town, the development of the site as employment land may support an increase in local educational and training opportunities.
Transportation		The site currently has good access to Park Road, including bus routes. It is also relatively accessible from residential areas in Faringdon. This will support the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car.
Economy and enterprise		The development of employment uses at the site will increase the number and range of businesses located in the wider Park Road area. This will support clustering of businesses in the area.

## Summary

The development of employment uses at the site will increase the number and range of businesses located in the wider Park Road area. This will support clustering of businesses in the area. The site also currently has good access to Park Road, including bus routes, is also relatively accessible from residential areas in Faringdon

The development of previously undeveloped land at this location has the potential to increase surface water run-off and increase the effect of extreme temperatures. Whilst the site is not designated for its biodiversity interest and no Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats are present on the site, the loss of an area of vegetated open space has the potential to have some effects on the integrity of biodiversity networks in the area. The loss of open space at this location may also reduce opportunities for local recreational activities (although it should be noted that the area has relatively low value as a multifunctional green infrastructure asset).

Redevelopment of the site for employment uses may increase local educational and training opportunities; thus increasing the potential for local job opportunities.

## Key

Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)

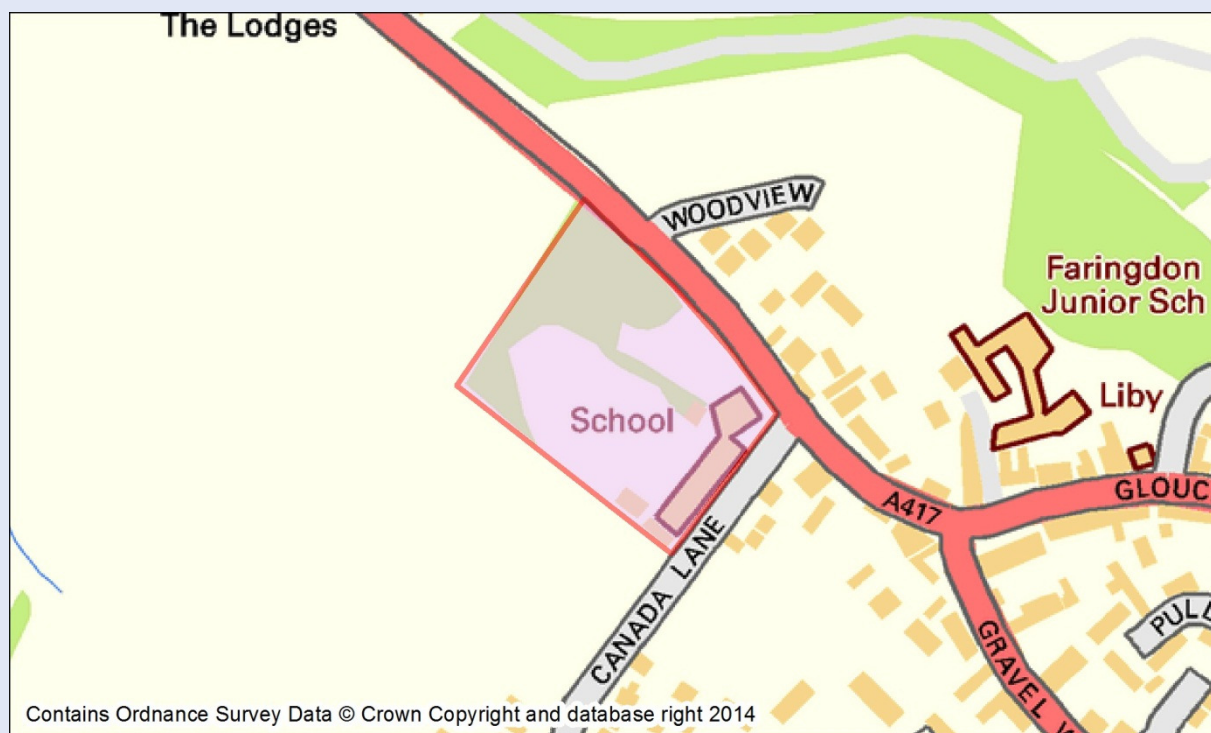
Neutral/no effect

Likely positive effect

Uncertain effects



Site 6 – Infant School Canada Lane



Approximate size of site: 0.39 ha

SA Topic	Rating	Commentary
Air quality		The Infant School's location on the north western edge of the town has the potential to stimulate an increase in traffic flows through the town centre, which is the most sensitive location in Faringdon in terms of congestion and air quality. Due to the site's location, the redevelopment of the infant school as employment land therefore has the potential to have adverse effects on air quality in the town centre.
Biodiversity		No designated sites or Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats are present on the site. Unlikely to be significant effects on biodiversity assets.
Climate change		No significant effects at this level of detail.
Historic environment and landscape		No features designated for their historic environment value are located on the site. The nearest designated feature is the Grade II listed Duke of Wellington House.  Due to the edge-of-settlement location of the Infant School, there is potential for development at the site to affect the landscape setting of the town when viewed from the north west. Employment development also has the potential to affect the integrity of the adjacent Faringdon Conservation Area. Effects however depend on the design and layout of any new employment development which takes place on the site.
Land and soil resources		The site is on previously developed land, supporting the efficient use of land.
Water resources and flood risk		The site is not located within a flood risk area.



Population and Communities		The development of the site for employment uses has the potential to lead to an increase in local job opportunities. Potential effects are likely to be limited by the restricted capacity of the site for expansion.
Health and wellbeing		No significant effects at this level of detail.
Education and skills		Through encouraging new businesses to locate in the town, the development of the site as employment land may support an increase in local education and training opportunities. However the replacement of the Infant School with non-community uses is less likely to increase educational offer in the town.
Transportation		The site has poor access to the A420 and as such has the potential to contribute to an increase in traffic flows and congestion through the town centre. The site is also located away from key bus routes.
Economy and enterprise		The development of employment uses at the site has the potential to lead to a limited increase in economic and employment opportunities.

### Summary

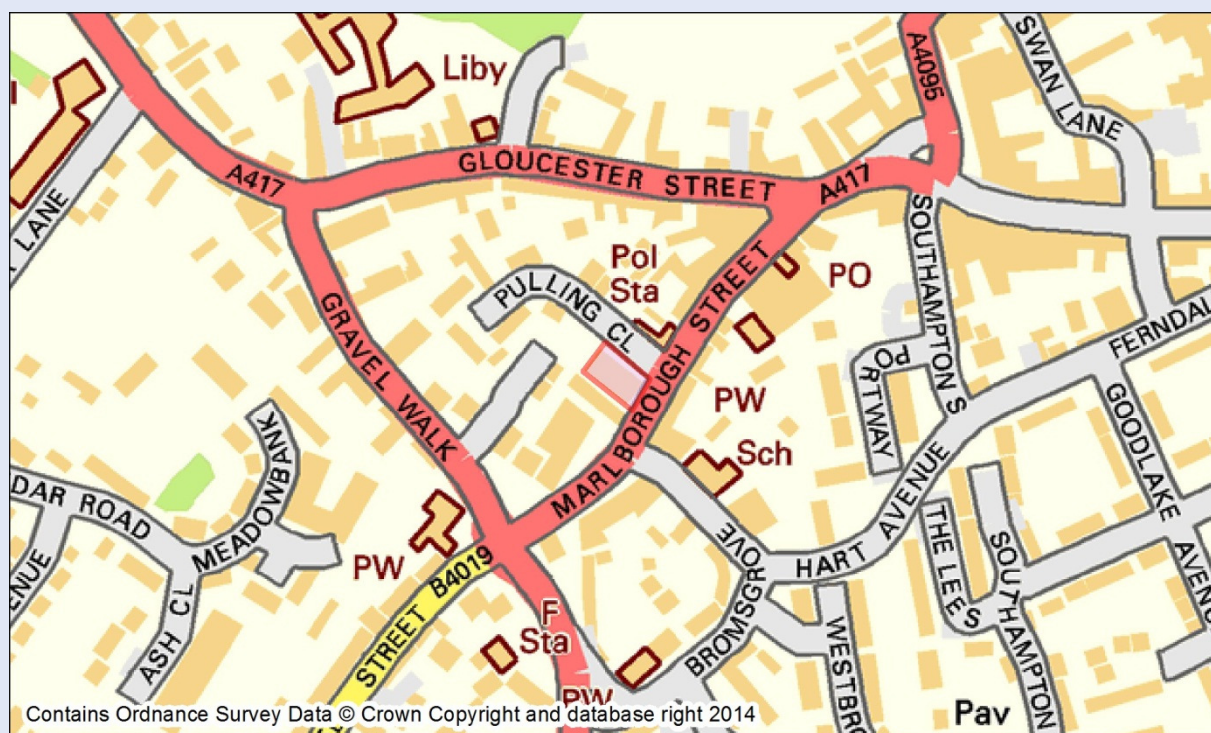
The Infant School's location on the north western edge of the town provides the site with poor access to the A420 and as such has the potential to contribute to an increase in traffic flows and congestion through the town centre. The site is also located away from key bus routes.

Due to the edge-of-settlement location of the Infant School, there is potential for development at the site to affect the landscape setting of the town when viewed from the north west. The development of employment uses also has the potential to affect the integrity of the adjacent Faringdon Conservation Area. Effects however depend on the design and layout of any new employment development which takes place on the site.

The loss of the Infant School site to employment uses will lead to the loss of community uses at this site.

Key	
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)	
Neutral/no effect	
Likely positive effect	
Uncertain effects	

Site 7 – BT Exchange



Approximate size of site: 0.06 ha

SA Topic	Rating	Commentary
Air quality		Due to its limited size, employment development at the BT Exchange site is unlikely to lead to significant effects on air quality.
Biodiversity		No designated biodiversity sites or Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats are located in the vicinity of the site. The development of the BT Exchange site as employment land is unlikely to lead to significant effects on biodiversity assets.
Climate change		The town centre location of the site will maximise its access by walking and cycling and public transport. This will help limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport
Historic environment and landscape		The BT Exchange is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area. However existing buildings and structures associated with the site have limited heritage value. Redevelopment of the site for employment uses has the potential to support the historic townscape of the area if designed appropriately. For this reason, development of the site should be sensitive to the conservation area through appropriate design and layout and complement existing heritage assets (such as the Grade II listed Poulton House, 17 Marlborough Street, Richmond House and Betterton House located close to the site on Marlborough Street).
Land and soil resources		The development of the site as employment land has the potential to intensify current uses, supporting the efficiency of land uses at this location.
Water resources and flood risk		The BT Exchange site is not located within a flood risk area.

Population and Communities		The development of the site has the potential to lead to an increase in employment opportunities in the town centre. It will also support the vitality and viability of the town centre, with benefits for the local community.
Health and wellbeing		The site is within a town centre location with good access to residential areas and pedestrian and cycle networks. The location of the site therefore has the potential to promote healthier modes of travel.
Education and skills		Through encouraging new businesses to locate in the town, the development of the site as employment land may support an increase in local training and educational opportunities.
Transportation		The location is a town centre site with good access to pedestrian and public transport networks. This will support the use of sustainable modes of transport. The site also has good access to residential areas in the town, reducing the need to travel.
Economy and enterprise		The expansion of town centre employment uses at the site has the potential to support the economic vitality and viability of the town centre and increase its role as a service centre. It will also help increase economic and employment opportunities in the town.

### Summary

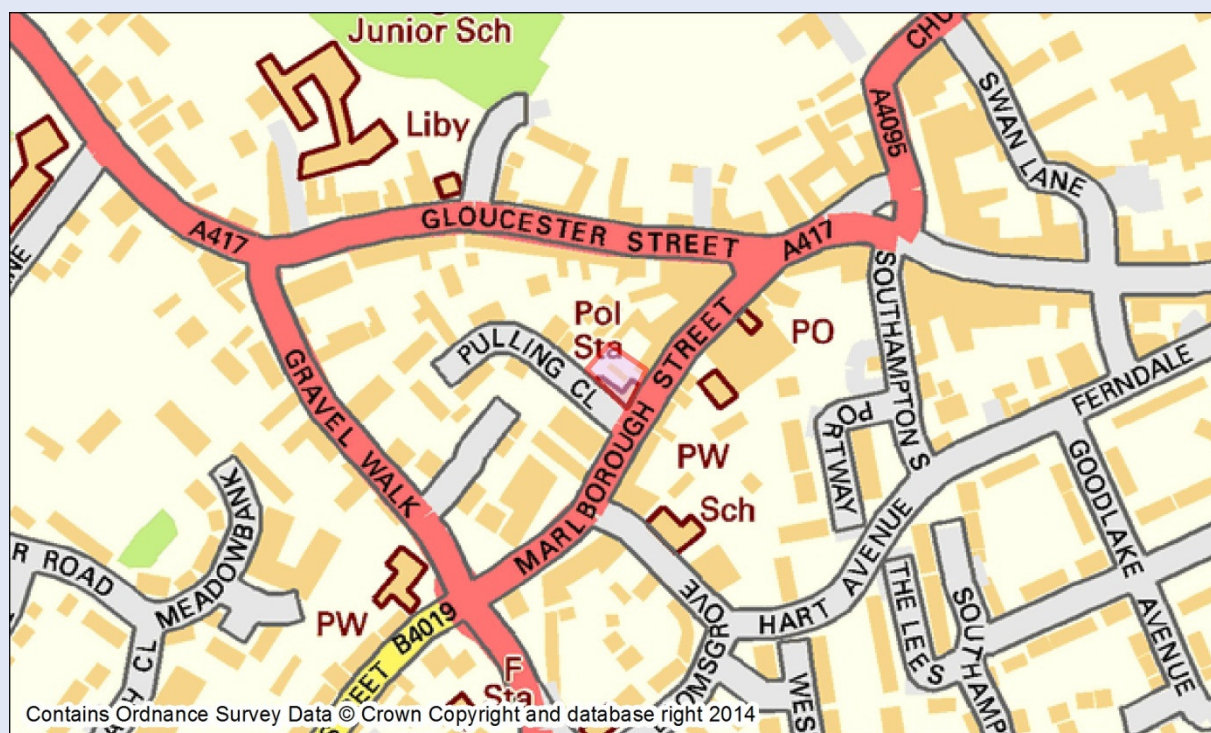
The BT Exchange site is in a town centre location with good access to pedestrian and public transport networks. This will support the use of sustainable modes of transport. The site also has good access to residential areas in the town, which will help reduce the need to travel.

The BT Exchange is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area. Existing buildings and structures associated with the site however have limited heritage value. Redevelopment of the site for employment uses has the potential to support the historic townscape of the area if designed appropriately. For this reason, any development of the site should be sensitive to the conservation area through appropriate design and layout and complement existing heritage assets.

The expansion of town centre employment uses at the site has the potential to support the economic vitality and viability of the town centre and increase its role as a service centre.

Key	
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)	
Neutral/no effect	
Likely positive effect	
Uncertain effects	

Site 8 – Police Station



Approximate size of site: 0.05 ha

SA Topic	Rating	Commentary
Air quality		Due to its limited size, the development of employment uses at the Police Station site is unlikely to lead to significant effects on air quality.
Biodiversity		The development of the Police Station site for employment uses is unlikely to lead to significant effects on biodiversity assets. No designated biodiversity sites or Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats are located in the vicinity of the site.
Climate change		The town centre location of the site will maximise its access by walking and cycling and public transport. This will help limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport
Historic environment and landscape		The Police Station is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area. However existing buildings and structures associated with the site have limited heritage value. Redevelopment of the site for employment uses has the potential to support the historic townscape of the area if designed appropriately. For this reason, development of the site should be sensitive to the conservation area through appropriate design and layout and complement existing heritage assets (such as the Grade II listed Poulton House, 17 Marlborough Street, Richmond House and Betterton House located close to the site on Marlborough Street).
Land and soil resources		The development of the site as employment land has the potential to intensify current uses, supporting the efficiency of land uses at this location.
Water resources and flood risk		The site is not located within a flood risk area.



Population and Communities		Development of the site for employment uses has the potential to lead to the loss of a key community asset. However it is likely that the police station would be relocated rather than removed under such an option. Overall however, there are uncertain effects on the community offer of the town centre.
Health and wellbeing		The site is within a town centre location with good access to residential areas and pedestrian and cycle networks. The location of the site therefore has the potential to promote healthier modes of travel.
Education and skills		Through encouraging new businesses to locate in the town, the development of the site as employment land may support an increase in local training and educational opportunities.
Transportation		The site is in a town centre location with good access to pedestrian and public transport networks. This will support the use of sustainable modes of transport. The site also has good access to residential areas in the town, which will help reduce the need to travel.
Economy and enterprise		The expansion of town centre employment uses at the site has the potential to support the economic vitality and viability of the town centre. It will also help increase economic and employment opportunities in the town.

### Summary

The Police Station is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area. Existing buildings and structures associated with the site however have limited heritage value. Redevelopment of the site for employment uses therefore has the potential to support the historic townscape of the area if designed appropriately. For this reason, any development of the site should be sensitive to the conservation area through appropriate design and layout and complement existing heritage assets.

The site is in a town centre location with good access to pedestrian and public transport networks. This will support the use of sustainable modes of transport. The site also has good access to residential areas in the town, which will help reduce the need to travel.

The development of the site for employment uses has the potential to lead to the loss of a key community asset in the town centre, however it is likely that the police station would be relocated under such an option. Whilst this will have potential effects on the community offer of the town centre, the expansion of town centre employment uses at the site has the potential to support the economic viability of the town centre.

### Key

Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)

Neutral/no effect

Likely positive effect

Uncertain effects

Site 9 – Fire Station



Approximate size of site: 0.09 ha

SA Topic	Rating	Commentary
Air quality		The development of the site as employment land is likely to some increases in traffic flows in the local area, with potential implications for air quality. However the location is less sensitive to air quality issues than other parts of Faringdon (including the town centre).
Biodiversity		No designated biodiversity sites or Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats are located in the vicinity of the site. The development of the Fire Station site as employment land is therefore unlikely to lead to significant effects on biodiversity.
Climate change		The location of the on key bus routes and relative proximity to the town centre maximise its access by public transport and walking and cycling. This will help limit greenhouse gas emissions from transport
Historic environment and landscape		The Fire Station is located on the edge of the Faringdon Conservation Area. However existing buildings and structures associated with the site have limited heritage value. Redevelopment of the site for employment uses has the potential to support the historic townscape of the area if designed appropriately. For this reason, development of the site should be sensitive to the conservation area through appropriate design and layout.
Land and soil resources		The development of the site as employment land has the potential to intensify current uses, supporting the efficiency of land uses at this location.
Water resources and flood risk		The site is not located within a flood risk area.
Population and Communities		Development of the Fire Station site for employment uses has the potential to lead to the loss of a key community asset. However it is likely that the town's fire station would be relocated rather than closed under this option.



Health and wellbeing		No significant effects at this level of detail.
Education and skills		Through encouraging new businesses to locate in the town, the development of the site for employment uses may support an enhancement of local education and training opportunities.
Transportation		The site currently has good access to primary bus routes on Station Road. It is also relatively accessible from residential areas in Faringdon. This will support the use of alternative modes of transport to the private car.
Economy and enterprise		The development of the site for employment uses will contribute to an increase in economic and employment opportunities in the town.

### Summary

The development of the Fire Station site for employment uses will contribute to an increase in economic and employment opportunities in the town. The site has good access to key bus routes in the town and has relative proximity to the town centre. This will promote the use of sustainable modes of transport.

Development of the Fire Station site for employment uses has the potential to lead to the loss of a key community asset. However it is likely that the town's fire station would be relocated rather than closed under this option.

Whilst the Fire Station is located on the edge of the Faringdon Conservation Area, existing buildings and structures associated with the site have limited heritage value. Redevelopment of the site for employment uses has the potential to support the historic townscape of the area if designed appropriately.

### Key

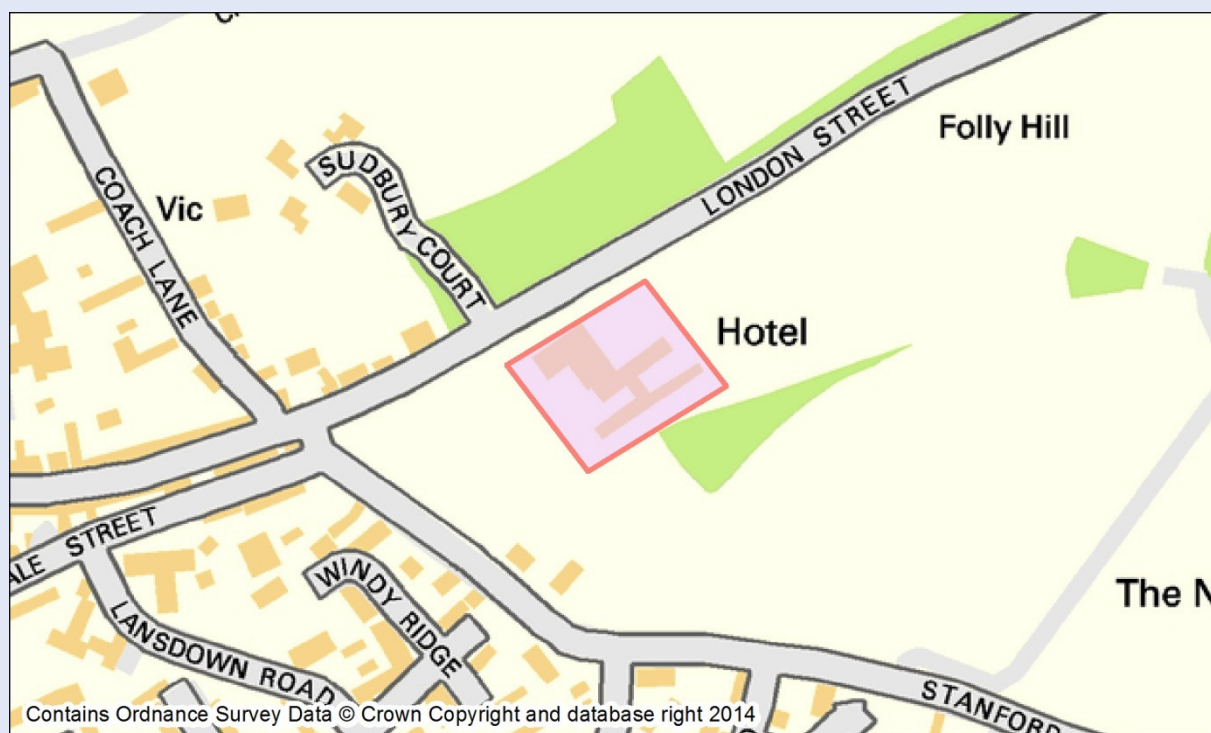
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)

Neutral/no effect

Likely positive effect

Uncertain effects

Site 10 – Sudbury House



Approximate size of site: 0.60 ha

SA Topic	Rating	Commentary
Air quality		Development of employment uses at Sudbury House has the potential to lead to small increases in traffic flows in the local area. However the location is less sensitive to air quality issues than other parts of Faringdon (including the town centre) and the hotel is currently a traffic generator. As such likely implications for air quality are likely to be minimal.
Biodiversity		
Climate change		Whilst the development of employment uses at Sudbury House has the potential to lead to limited increases in traffic flows in the local area, this is unlikely to lead to a significant growth in greenhouse gas emissions.
Historic environment and landscape		Sudbury House, which is currently a hotel, is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area and the hotel and grounds provide a key landscape link between the folly and the town. The original building is Grade II* listed. The effect of the development of employment uses at this location on the cultural heritage interest of the area and landscape and townscape quality therefore depends on the scale, design and layout of new development at the site.
Land and soil resources		Due to the existing buildings present on the site, and the historic environment constraints present in the area, the built footprint of the site is unlikely to increase significantly. The development of employment uses at Sudbury House is therefore unlikely to lead to the loss of greenfield land at this location.

Water resources and flood risk		The site is not located within a flood risk area. Due to the limitations relating to an increase of the built footprint of the site, the development of employment uses is unlikely to lead to an increased risk of surface water flooding locally.
Population and Communities		The development of employment uses of the site may limit the role of Sudbury House as a community asset.
Health and wellbeing		No significant effects at this level of detail.
Education and skills		Through encouraging new businesses to locate in the town, the development of the site as employment land may support an increase in local training and educational opportunities.
Transportation		The site is located at some distance from the town's main public transport routes. However it is linked to the town centre and nearby residential areas by the established walking route between the town and the folly.
Economy and enterprise		The redevelopment of the site for employment uses has the potential to undermine the visitor economy of Faringdon through reducing accommodation offer in the town.

### Summary

Sudbury House, which is currently a hotel, is located within the Faringdon Conservation Area, and the hotel and grounds provides a key landscape link between the folly and the town. The original building is Grade II\* listed. The effect of the development of employment uses of the site on the historic environment interest of the area and landscape and townscape quality depends on the scale, design and layout of new development at the site.

The development of employment uses at Sudbury House has the potential to weaken the visitor and tourism offer of Faringdon through affecting the use of the site from a hotel. This has the potential to undermine the town's visitor/tourism economy.

In terms of air quality, congestion and greenhouse gas emissions there are unlikely to be significant effects as a result of the development of employment uses at the site.

Key	
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)	
Neutral/no effect	
Likely positive effect	
Uncertain effects	