



Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan



Scoping Report

March 2014

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URS Infrastructure and Environment UK Limited
The Crescent Centre
Temple Back
Bristol
BS1 6EZ
United Kingdom

Telephone: 0117 917 1200
Fax: 0117 930 0342

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 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 developed as a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) under the Localism Act 2012, with a view to submission in 2014. Covering the Great Faringdon Parish area, the FNP will provide the local policy framework for development in the parish and set out employment land requirements for the town.
- 1.1.3 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.
- 1.1.4 The Draft Local Plan 1, which underwent 'Regulation 18' 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 (Figure 1.1), 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.
- 1.1.5 When adopted, the Local Plan Part 1 will replace the Saved Policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011.
- 1.1.6 Key information relating to the Faringdon Neighbourhood is as follows:

Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the Faringdon Neighbourhood plan

Name of Responsible Authority	Faringdon Town Council
Title of Plan	Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Spatial plan
Purpose	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.
Timescale	From 2014 to 2029
Area covered by the plan	Great Faringdon Parish (see Figure 1.2)
Summary of content	The Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy and range of policies for the plan area. The plan seeks to “<i>identify and analyse suitable and sustainable locations for the future growth of Faringdon that will both prevent significant adverse effects and maximise the positive benefits of development in the area.</i>” (Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan, Draft Plan for Consultation, March 2013)
Plan contact point	Hilary Sherman, Deputy Town Clerk, Faringdon Town Council, The Corn Exchange, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, SN7 7JA Email address: hilary@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk Telephone number: 01367 240281

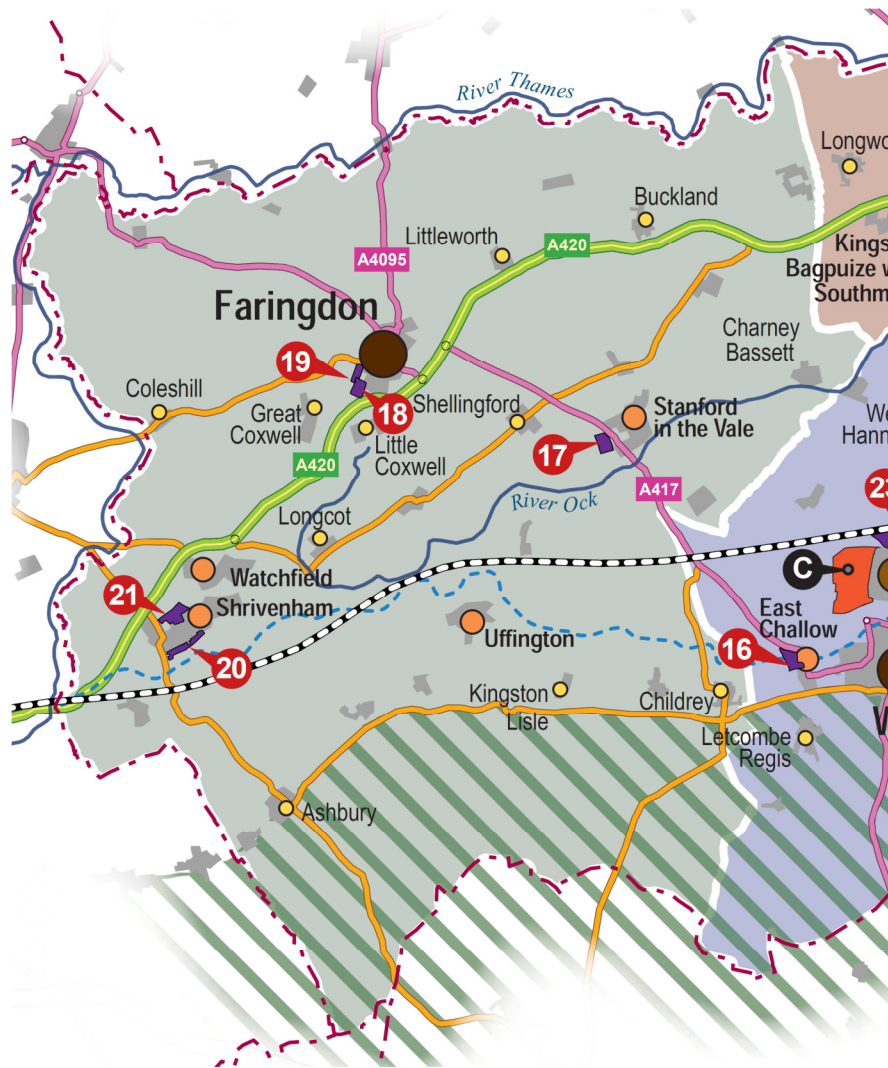


Figure 1.1: Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan: Western Vale Sub Area

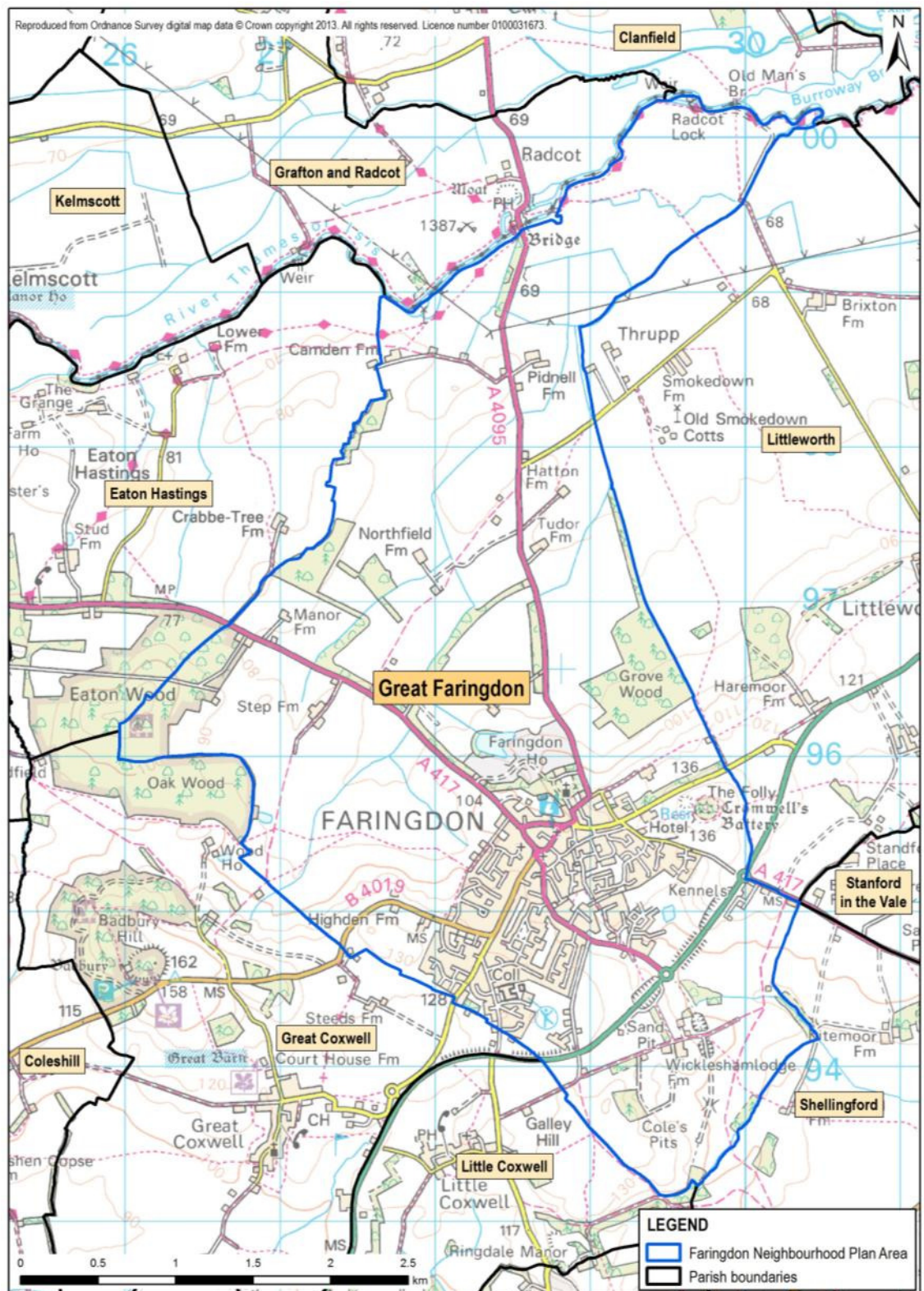


Figure 1.2: Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan area

1.2 SA explained

- 1.2.1 SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the impacts of an emerging plan, and potential 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 and mitigating negative impacts. Through this approach, the SA for the FNP seeks to maximise the sustainability performance of the developing plan.
- 1.2.2 SA is undertaken to address 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) Directive¹. 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 Development Plan Documents (DPDs) included within Local Plans; however a Neighbourhood Plan is not a DPD and SA is not therefore legally required.
- 1.2.3 However, the FNP has been determined to require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. To meet this requirement, the FNP is undergoing an SA process which incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive. This mirrors the approach currently being taken for the emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan.
- 1.2.4 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Directive are that:
- 1) A report (the 'SA Report') is published for **consultation** alongside the Draft Plan that presents an appraisal of the Draft Plan (i.e. discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives; and
 - 2) When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the SA Report there is a **consultation** with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues.

[This scoping report](#)

- 1.2.5 This 'Scoping Report' is concerned with (2) above. It presents a suggested scope for the SA so that the nationally designated authorities (which, in England, are Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage) can provide timely comment.

1.3 SA 'scoping' explained

- 1.3.1 Developing the draft scope presented in this report has involved the following steps:
- 1) Exploring the sustainability 'context', i.e. reviewing high level messages (e.g. from government departments and agencies in particular) with a view to gaining an understanding of *broadly* what the SA needs to focus on.
 - 2) Establishing the 'baseline', i.e. the situation in the area in the absence of the FNP, in order to help identify the plan's likely significant effects.
 - 3) Identifying particular problems or opportunities ('issues') that should be a particular focus of the SA.
 - 4) Developing a SA Framework comprising objectives and appraisal questions on the basis of these issues which can then be used to appraise the draft plan.

1.4 Structure of this report

[Sustainability topics](#)

- 1.4.1 The outcomes of the scoping 'steps' 1–4 introduced above have been presented under a series of eleven sustainability 'topic' headings, as follows:

¹ Directive 2001/42/EC

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

- 1.4.2 The selected topics incorporate the 'SEA topics' suggested by Annex I(f) of the SEA Directive². These were expanded to encompass a fuller range of factors as is required for a Sustainability Appraisal. They also reflect a broad understanding of the anticipated scope of plan effects.
- 1.4.3 It is intended that presenting the scoping information under these topic headings will help enable the reader to easily locate the information of greatest interest to them. Once agreed (i.e. subsequent to the current consultation), the suggested scope presented under the eleven topic headings will provide a methodological 'framework' for the appraisal of the draft plan and alternatives.
- 1.4.4 The discussion of each topic has been presented In Sections 2 to 12.
- [SA Framework to assess policy proposals](#)
- 1.4.5 The SA Framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard 'tests'. Each proposal put forward for the FNP can then be assessed consistently using the framework.
- 1.4.6 The SA objectives and appraisal questions utilised for the SA of the FNP are presented under each of the topic areas in Sections 2 to 12.

² The SEA Directive is 'of a procedural nature' (para 9 of the Directive preamble) and does not set out to prescribe particular issues that should and should not be a focus, beyond requiring a focus 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**' [our emphasis]

2 AIR QUALITY

SA TOPIC	THEMES CONSIDERED
Air quality	- Air pollution sources - Air quality hotspots - Air quality management

2.1 What's the sustainability 'context'?

Internationally established objectives

- 2.1.1 The EU Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution³ 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.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.1.2 Key messages include -

- '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. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan'.*
- 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.

Supplementing the NPPF

- 2.1.3 Further context is provided by a review of the objectives of the Government's Air Quality Strategy and a report by Defra on the links between climate change and air quality (Box 2.1).

Box 2.1: Further policy

The **Air Quality Strategy** for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland⁴ sets health-based objectives for nine main air pollutants⁵. Performance against these objectives is monitored where people are regularly present and might be exposed to air pollution.

The recent Defra report **Action for air quality in a changing climate**⁶ focuses on the synergies between the two issues of air quality and climate change. In particular, it notes the potential for additional health benefits through the 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.

The local context

- 2.1.4 VoWH 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. Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene and particulates.

³ 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)

⁴ 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 11/2013)

⁵ Benzene; 1,3-butadiene; carbon monoxide (CO); lead; nitrogen dioxide (NO₂); ozone; particles (PM₁₀); sulphur dioxide (SO₂); and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

⁶ Defra (2010) Air Pollution: Action in a Changing Climate [online] available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13378-air-pollution.pdf> (accessed 11/2013)

- 2.1.5 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. In view of these exceedances, the council has declared Air Quality Management Areas at these locations and Air Quality Action Plans have been prepared. No district-wide air quality management strategies have been prepared for the Vale of White Horse.
- 2.1.6 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.

2.2 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

Current baseline

- 2.2.1 The main input to air pollutants in Faringdon is road traffic. However, air quality is generally good in the town with no significant issues.
- 2.2.2 Two locations in Faringdon are currently subject to air quality monitoring for nitrogen dioxide:
- Central Faringdon monitoring site**
- 2.2.3 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 $24.3 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ however remain significantly below the air quality objective of $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.
- Folly View Road monitoring site**
- 2.2.4 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 $13.2 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ remain significantly below the air quality objective of $40 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

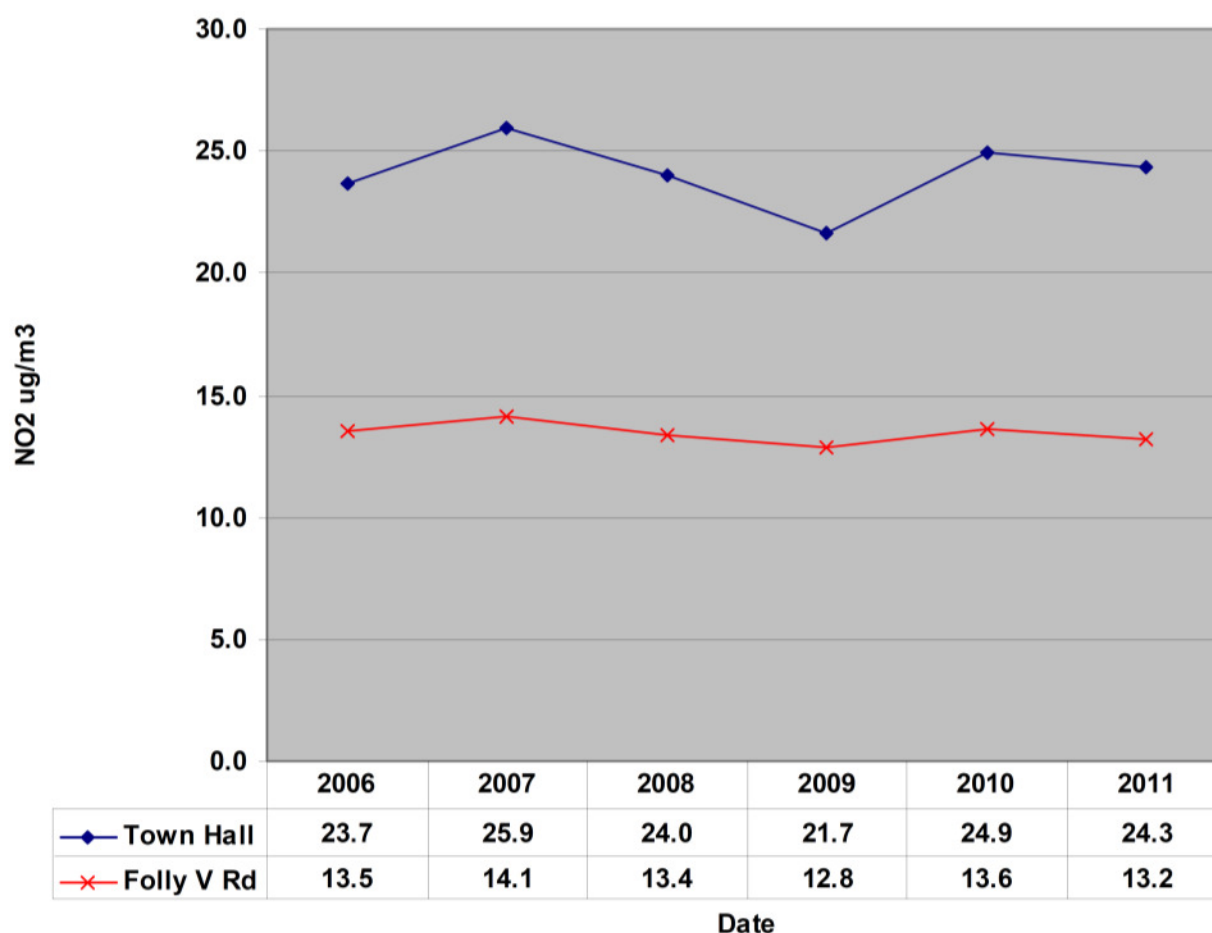


Figure 2.1 Concentrations of nitrogen dioxide at the two monitoring points in Faringdon (adjusted annual NO₂)

Future baseline

2.2.5 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 the routes with highest traffic flows, such as the A417.

2.2.6 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.

2.3 What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

- The FNP should seek to promote appropriate locational policies which reduce the need to travel by the private car and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport use.
- The FNP should seek to facilitate the development of sustainable transport infrastructure, including new and improved pedestrian and cycle links and enhancements to public transport networks.

2.4 What are the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the plan for the Air Quality sustainability topic?

2.4.1 Table 2.1 presents the SA Objective and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the FNP in relation to the Air Quality topic.

Table 2.1: SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions for the Air Quality topic

SA OBJECTIVE	SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: AIR QUALITY
Support improvements to air quality in Faringdon.	Will the option/proposal help to: - Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? - Limit levels of air pollutants and odour?

3 BIODIVERSITY

SA TOPIC	THEMES CONSIDERED
Biodiversity	- Habitats - Species - Nature conservation designations - Geological features

3.1 What's the sustainability 'context'?

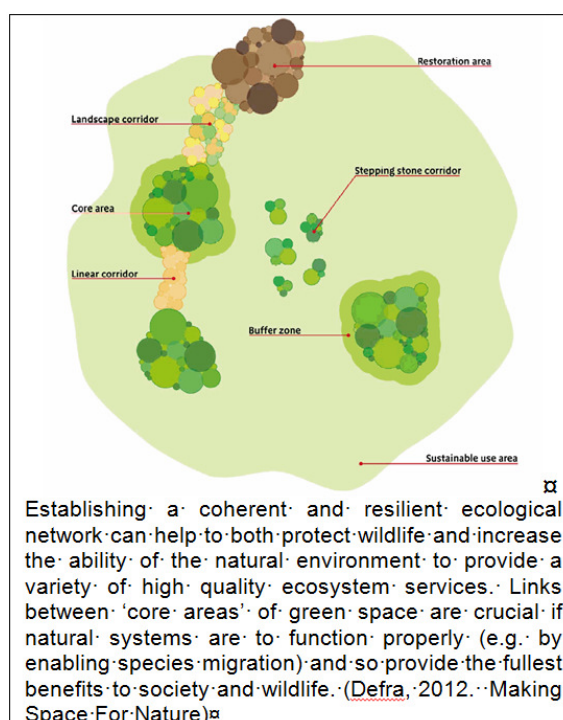
Internationally established objectives

The EU Sustainable Development Strategy⁷, adopted in 2006, included an objective to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. More recently at the European level, a new EU Biodiversity Strategy⁸ was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver on established new Europe-wide target to 'halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020'.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.1.1 Key messages 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 planning 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



⁷ 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)

⁸ 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 (accessed 11/2013)

Supplementing the NPPF

- 3.1.2 Further sustainability context is provided by a review of: additional Government policy (Box 3.1).

Box 3.1: Further policy

The **Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)**⁹ sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It was in part a response to the UK's failure to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2010 and it signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The NEWP also aims to create a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:

- Halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

The NEWP recognises that green infrastructure is 'one of the most effective tools available' to manage 'environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves'. With respect to trees and woodlands, an ambition is to create more opportunities for planting woodlands; for more trees in our towns, cities and villages; and a greater proportion of existing woodlands to be in active management in order to 'enhance the wide range of benefits that woodlands provide' including 'new wildlife habitats and green space for people to use and enjoy' and to help 'mitigate and adapt to the future changing climate.'

The Government has also published '**Biodiversity 2020**'¹⁰, which builds on the Natural Environment White Paper 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*'

The proposals set out in the NEWP are directly linked to the ground breaking research in the **National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA)**¹¹, a major project that was able to draw conclusions on the 'substantial' benefits that ecosystems provide to society directly and through supporting economic prosperity. The NEA 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. Biodiversity offsets are conservation activities that are designed to give biodiversity gain to compensate for residual losses. They are different from other types of ecological compensation as they need to show measurable outcomes that are sustained over time. The Green Paper sets out options for an offsetting scheme tailored for England and its habitats and species. It also highlights the Government's preference for giving developers the choice to use offsetting¹².

⁹ Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf> (accessed 11/2013)

¹⁰ 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)

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

¹² Defra (2013) Biodiversity Offsetting in England Green Paper [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/biodiversity-offsetting-in-england> (accessed 11/2013)

The local context

- 3.1.3 The Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan¹³, adopted in 2010, sets out a Conservation Target Area Approach to biodiversity management in the county. Conservation Target Areas (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. This will help wildlife to survive and be better able to adapt to climate change.
- 3.1.4 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.

3.2 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

Current baseline

- 3.2.1 Figure 3.1 shows the environmental designations within the wider district. The Faringdon parish area contains an area of ancient woodland at Grove Wood (north of Faringdon town) and also, just outside the plan area, Haremoor Wood (to the east) and Buscot Park (to the west).
- 3.2.2 There is a geological SSSI at Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits, split over two sites at Wicklesham Quarry and at Fernham Gate. This is in 100% favourable condition¹⁴ and is designated for its geodiversity¹⁵, providing exposures of a variety of fossils through the Faringdon Sponge gravels. The site is one of Britain's richest paleontological sites. The management of the SSSI requires maintenance of exposure of the rock face (through clearance of vegetation and rock debris) in order to maintain a supply of fresh fossil material¹⁶.
- 3.2.3 The full citation for the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI is as follows:

¹³ 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)

¹⁴ 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)

¹⁵ 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 (accessed 05/03/2014)

¹⁶ Natural England (2004) Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI: Views About Management [online] available at: http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/special/sssi/sssi_details.cfm?sssi_id=1001218 (accessed 05/03/2014)

Box 3.2: Citation for the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI¹⁷

The active quarry and disused pits within this site provide good exposures through the Faringdon Sponge gravels of Lower Cretaceous (Aptian) age. The gravels, laid down under marine conditions some 110 million years ago, are unique to the Faringdon area, and were deposited in an unusual and very localised near-shore sedimentary environment. They contain a very rich and unusual assemblage of fossil sponges, bryozoa, brachiopods and echinoids, with over 150 different species having been found here; many of these are known to occur only at Faringdon. In addition, the Faringdon Sponge Gravels have yielded bones from several different kinds of fossil reptiles (including turtles, ichthyosaurs, plesiosaurs and crocodiles) and Wicklesham Pit is of particular significance as a source of such material. This site is of great historical importance, and is one of Britain's richest palaeontological localities.

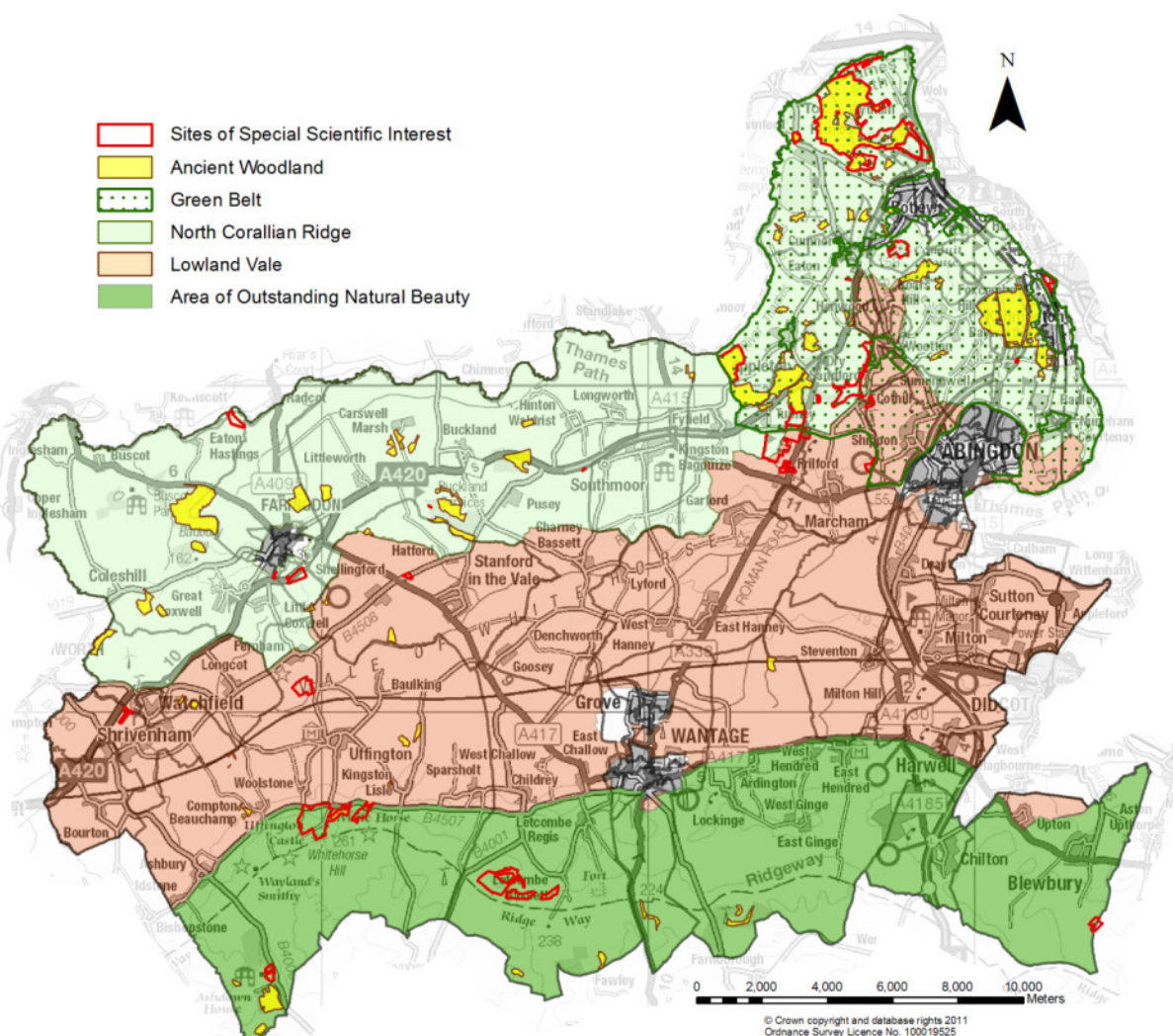


Figure 3.1: Environmental Designations within the Vale of White Horse District¹⁸

¹⁷ Natural England (1996) Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI: Reasons for designating the SSSI [online] available at: http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/special/sssi/details.cfm?sssi_id=1001218 (accessed 05/03/2014)

¹⁸ URS (2012) Vale of White Horse Local Plan Core Strategy SA Scoping Report [online] available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/SA%20Scoping%20Report%20FINAL.pdf> (accessed 04/03/2014)

- 3.2.4 Grafton Lock Meadow SSSI lies outside but adjacent to the northern edge of the plan area and is in 100% favourable condition¹⁹. The Meadow is an area of unimproved grassland adjacent to the Thames and is subject to regular floods. It is designated for its wide and diverse range of wildflowers and grasses; notably the snake's-head fritillary²⁰. Key to managing the site is the annual removal of vegetation to maintain plant diversity²¹.
- 3.2.5 Also within the parish is Faringdon Wet Meadow, a Local Wildlife Site located at the end of Canada Lane. This wet meadow near Faringdon is a steeply 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. The wildflowers include pepper saxifrage and colourful species such as cowslip, cuckooflower and common knapweed. Such grassland is a national priority for nature conservation. The wet areas where the springs rise have many sedges and wetland wildflowers such as meadowsweet and hemp agrimony²².
- 3.2.6 The Faringdon area is recognised by the Local Plan to be deficient in green infrastructure²³. In this context the Local Plan expects new development to contribute towards addressing existing deficiencies. It is anticipated that the strategic sites proposed in Local Plan Part 1 will contribute in this regard.
- 3.2.7 The plan area includes two Conservation Target Areas (CTA) as outlined in the Oxfordshire BAP. These are the Upper Thames²⁴ and West Oxfordshire Heights²⁵ CTAs. These are shown in Figures 3.2 and 3.3 below.
- 3.2.8 The Upper Thames CTA contains lowland meadows, wet grassland and floodplain grazing marsh habitat which is important for wading birds and wildflowers. The targets in this CTA are to manage, restore and create lowland meadows and floodplain grazing marsh and create reedbeds.
- 3.2.9 The West Oxford Heights CTA contains wet woodland, acid grassland, fen, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, lowland meadow, parkland and calcareous grassland habitat. There are also Local Geological Sites around Faringdon. Targets associated with this CTA are to manage the wet woodland, fen and lowland mixed deciduous woodland; and to manage and restore the lowland dry acid grassland and parkland (including veteran trees).

¹⁹ Natural England (2014) Grafton Lock Meadow SSSI [online] available at:

http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/sssi_details.cfm?sssi_id=1001911 (accessed 05/03/2014)

²⁰ Natural England (1977) Grafton Lock Meadow SSSI: Reasons for designating the SSSI [online] available at:

http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/sssi_details.cfm?sssi_id=1001911 (accessed 05/03/2014)

²¹ Natural England (2003) Grafton Lock Meadow SSSI: Views about management [online] available at:

http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/sssi_details.cfm?sssi_id=1001911 (accessed 05/03/2014)

²² 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)

²³ 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)

²⁴ 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)

²⁵ 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)

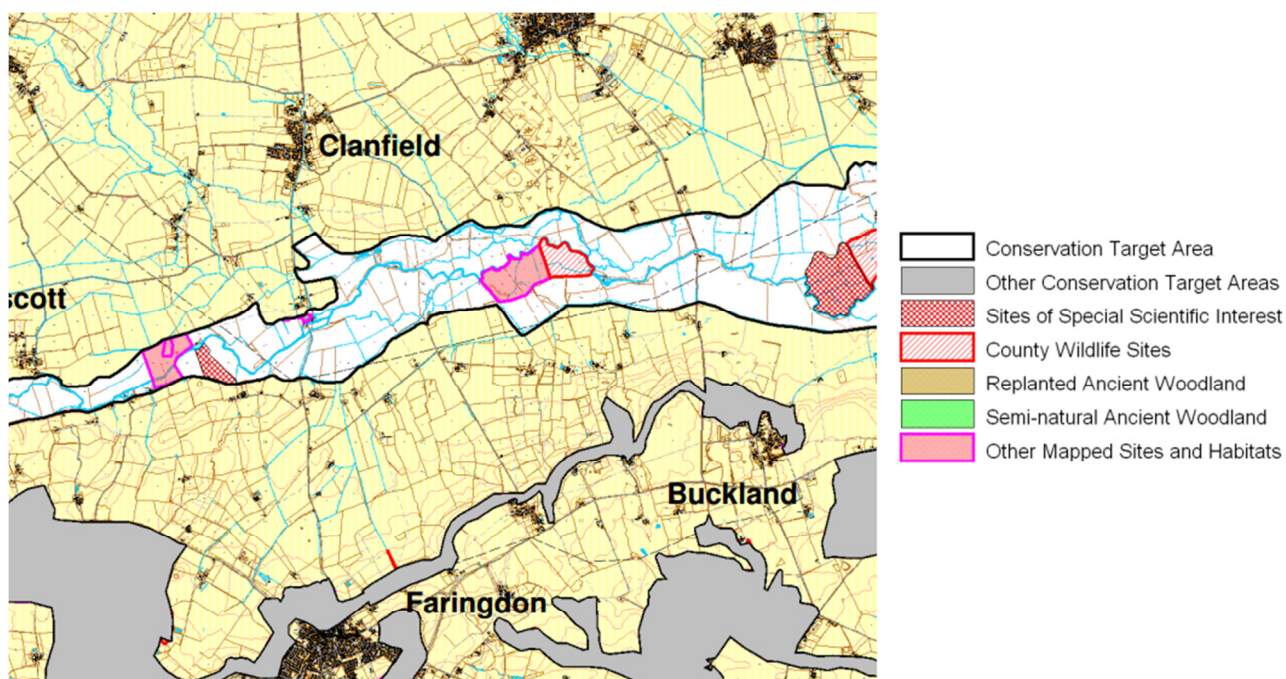


Figure 3.2: Upper Thames Conservation Target Area²⁶

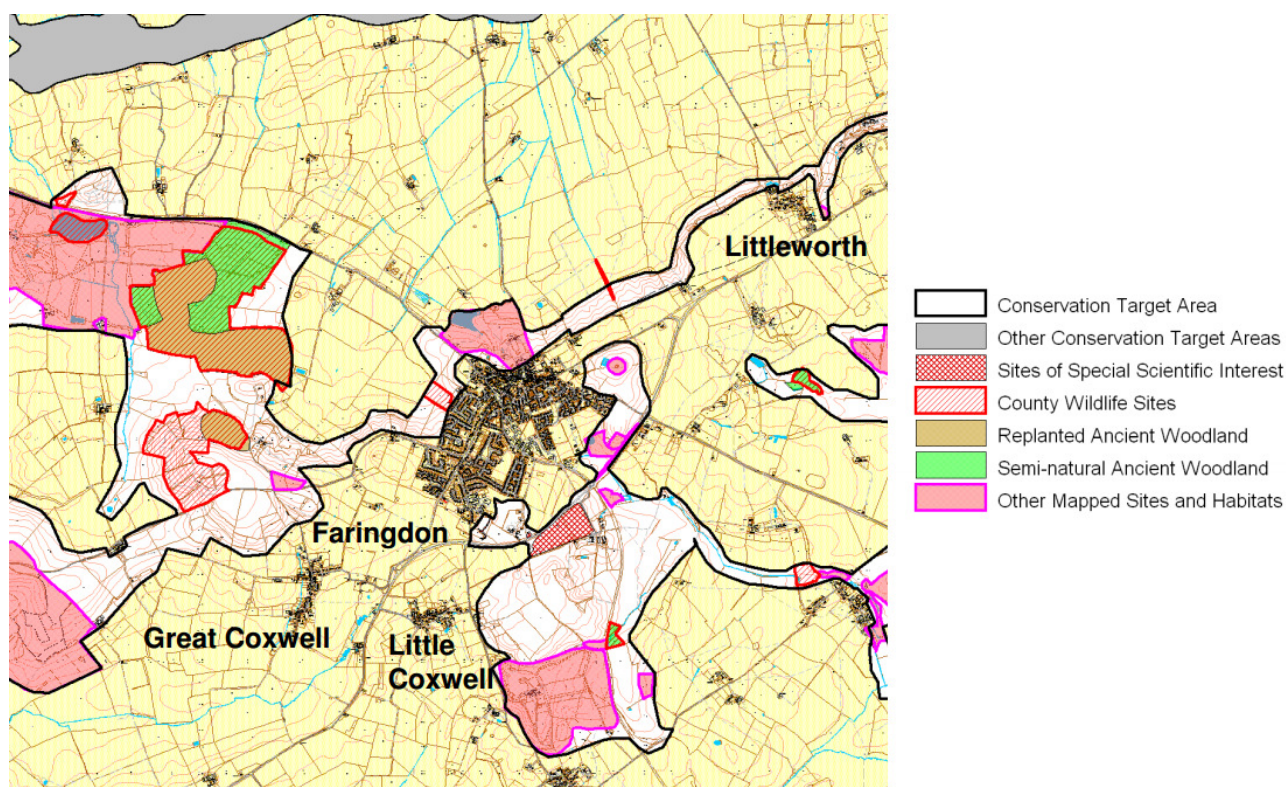


Figure 3.3: West Oxfordshire Heights Conservation Target Area²⁷

²⁶ 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)

²⁷ 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)

Future baseline

3.2.10 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.

3.2.11 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 objectives²⁸.

3.3 What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

- Key sites and areas of biodiversity value, including the SSSI and Local Wildlife Site, and Conservation Target Areas should be protected and enhanced. Their integrity should also be supported through improved ecological connections in the plan area.
- Green infrastructure networks across the plan area should be protected, enhanced and strategically expanded to deliver benefits for people and wildlife.
- Features of biodiversity value such as trees, hedgerows and meadows should be protected from the impacts of future development and where possible enhanced.

3.4 What are the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the plan for the biodiversity sustainability topic?

3.4.1 Table 3.1 presents the SA Objective and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the FNP in relation to the biodiversity topic.

Table 3.1: SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions for the biodiversity topic

SA OBJECTIVE	FARINGDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: BIODIVERSITY
Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features	Will the option/proposal help to: • Protect and enhance the geodiversity value of the Wicklesham and Coxwell Pits SSSI? • Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats? • Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species through meeting the objectives of the Conservation Target Areas? • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity? • Enhance biodiversity through the restoration and creation of well-connected multifunctional green infrastructure? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?

²⁸ 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.

4 CLIMATE CHANGE

SA TOPIC	THEMES CONSIDERED
Climatic factors	- Greenhouse gas emissions by source - Greenhouse gas emissions trends - Effects of climate change - Climate change adaptation

4.1 What's the sustainability 'context'?

Internationally established objectives

- 4.1.1 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.²⁹ 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.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.1.2 Key messages include -

- Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a 'core planning principle'.
- There is a key role for planning in securing radical reductions in greenhouse gases (GHG), including in terms of meeting the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008³⁰. Specifically, planning policy 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.

Supplementing the NPPF

- 4.1.3 Further context is provided by a review of a recent Committee on Climate Change and Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) guidance (Box 4.1) and a recent strategy document prepared by the Department for Transport focused on 'integrated transport' (Box 4.2).

²⁹ 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)

³⁰ The Climate Change Act 2008 sets targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through action in the UK of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO₂ emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

Box 4.1: Committee on Climate Change and DECC guidance

In the guidance document **How local authorities can reduce emissions and manage climate risk**³¹ planning functions are described as being a 'key lever in reducing emissions and adapting localities to a changing climate', with it considered particularly important that local authorities use these to:

- enforce energy efficiency standards in new buildings and extensions;
- reduce transport emissions by concentrating new developments in existing cities and large towns and/or ensuring they are well served by public transport;
- work with developers to make renewable energy projects acceptable to local communities;
- avoid increasing the area's risk to climate change impacts by locating new development in areas of lowest flood risk; and
- plan for infrastructure such as low-carbon district heating networks, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems.

With regards to the latter point on low-carbon district heating networks, the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) report **The future of heating**³² provides further guidance. It points out that around half (46%) of the final energy consumed in the UK is used to provide heat, contributing roughly a third of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions. Renewable heat currently represents 1% of heat generation in the UK, although this is expected to grow significantly if decarbonisation targets are to be met. The Government's vision is of: *'buildings benefiting from a combination of renewable heat in individual buildings, particularly heat pumps, and heat networks distributing low carbon heat to whole communities...focusing first on the energy efficiency of our buildings...'*

Box 4.2: DfT strategy for improving sustainable transport integration

This Department for Transport (DfT) '**Door to Door**' strategy³³ focuses on four core areas which we know need to be addressed so that people can be confident in choosing sustainable transport:

- accurate, accessible and reliable information about the different transport options for their journeys;
- convenient and affordable tickets, for an entire journey;
- regular and straightforward connections at all stages of the journey and between different modes of transport; and
- safe, comfortable transport facilities.

In terms of supporting 'improved connections at different stages of the journey' DfT promote -

- investing in a high-quality cycling and walking environment; and
- delivering more accessible transport.

In terms of transport facilities, DfT promote -

- 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.

³¹ 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 (accessed 11/02/2014)

³² DECC (2012) The Future of Heating: A strategic framework for low carbon heat in the UK [online] available at: <http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/meeting-energy-demand/heat/4805-future-heating-strategic-framework.pdf> (accessed 11/02/2014)

³³ 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 (accessed 11/02/2014)

The local context

4.1.4 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.

4.2 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

Current baseline

4.2.1 The outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team³⁴. UKCP09 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

4.2.2 As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the South East by 2050 for a medium emissions scenario³⁵ 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%.

4.2.3 Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Faringdon area. These include:

- increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer;
- increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g. skin cancer, cataracts);
- increased incidence of pathogen related diseases (e.g. legionella and salmonella);
- increase in health problems related to rise in local ozone levels during summer;
- increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events;
- effects on water resources from climate change;
- reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100 year floods;
- changes in insurance provisions for flood damage;
- a need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;

³⁴ The data was released on 18th June 2009. See: <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk/>

³⁵ UK Climate Projections (2009) South East 2050s Medium Emissions Scenario [online] available at: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/22290> (accessed 11/02/2014)

- a need to upgrade flood defences;
- soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- deterioration in working conditions due to increased temperatures;
- changes to global supply chain;
- increased difficulty of food preparation, handling and storage due to higher temperatures;
- an increased move by the insurance industry towards a more risk-based approach to insurance underwriting, leading to higher cost premiums for business;
- increased demand for air-conditioning;
- increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- flooding of roads.

4.2.4

In relation to GHG emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change³⁶ suggests that the Vale of White Horse district has had consistently higher per capita emissions than regionally and nationally since 2005. The district has however seen greater reductions in emissions per capita between 2005 and 2011 (1.9 t CO₂) compared to Oxfordshire (1.7 t CO₂), the South East (1.7 t CO₂) and England (1.8 t CO₂, a 21% reduction).

Table 4-1: Carbon dioxide emissions and sources, plus emissions per capita 2005-2011

Region name	Industrial and Commercial (t CO ₂)	Domestic (t CO ₂)	Road and Transport (t CO ₂)	Total (t CO ₂)
Vale of White Horse				
2005	3.2	2.6	4.0	9.9
2006	3.2	2.6	4.0	9.9
2007	3.0	2.6	3.9	9.6
2008	3.2	2.6	3.7	9.6
2009	2.9	2.3	3.6	8.8
2010	2.9	2.4	3.5	9.0
2011	2.3	2.1	3.5	8.0
Oxfordshire				
2005	3.5	2.6	3.3	9.4
2006	3.5	2.6	3.3	9.4
2007	3.3	2.5	3.3	9.1

³⁶ 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)

Region name	Industrial and Commercial (t CO ₂)	Domestic (t CO ₂)	Road and Transport (t CO ₂)	Total (t CO ₂)
2008	3.3	2.5	3.1	9.0
2009	2.9	2.2	2.9	8.1
2010	3.0	2.4	2.9	8.4
2011	2.7	2.1	2.9	7.7
South East England				
2005	2.9	2.5	2.6	8.0
2006	2.9	2.5	2.6	8.0
2007	2.8	2.4	2.6	7.8
2008	2.7	2.4	2.4	7.5
2009	2.3	2.1	2.3	6.8
2010	2.4	2.3	2.3	7.0
2011	2.1	2.0	2.2	6.3
England				
2005	3.7	2.5	2.3	8.5
2006	3.7	2.5	2.2	8.4
2007	3.5	2.4	2.2	8.2
2008	3.4	2.4	2.1	8.0
2009	2.9	2.1	2.0	7.1
2010	3.0	2.3	2.0	7.3
2011	2.7	2.0	1.9	6.7

- 4.2.5 In relation to CO₂ emissions by end user, between 2005 and 2011 the proportion of emissions originating from industrial and commercial sources in the district rose from 32% to 33%, then falling to 29%. In the same period the proportion of total emissions from domestic sources stayed constant at around 26%. Road transport is the largest contributor to CO₂ emissions in the district and has seen the lowest reductions since 2005 (0.5 t CO₂). This highlights that reducing emissions from road transport is likely to continue to be a significant challenge for the district.
- 4.2.6 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. In this context Faringdon is recognised to be deficient in green infrastructure³⁷.

³⁷ 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)

4.2.7 Flood risk has been considered in more detail under Section 7 (Water Resources and Flood Risk).

Future baseline

4.2.8 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.

4.2.9 In terms of climate change mitigation, per GHG capita 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.

4.3 What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

- An increase in the built footprint of the plan area (associated with the delivery of new housing and employment land) has the potential to increase overall GHG emissions.
- Road transport is an increasing contributor to GHG emissions and has not declined in line with domestic and industrial and commercial emissions. Per capita emissions for the Vale of White Horse district continue to be higher than regional and national averages.
- The FNP should seek to support adaptation to the risks associated with climate change in the area.

4.4 What are the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the plan for the Climate Change sustainability topic?

4.4.1 Table 4-2 presents the SA Objective and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the FNP in relation to the Climate Change topic.

Table 4-2: SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions for the Climate Change topic

SA OBJECTIVE	FARINGDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: CLIMATE CHANGE
Promote climate change mitigation and adaptation in Faringdon.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Limit the increase in the carbon footprint of the plan area from population growth? • Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport? • Reduce the need to travel? • Increase number of new developments meeting sustainable design criteria? • Improve green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources? • Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Sustainably manage water run-off, ensure that the risk of flooding is not increased (either within the plan area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk? • Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into the likely effects of climate change into account?

5 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

SA TOPIC	THEMES CONSIDERED
Historic environment	- Historic development of the Faringdon area - Designated and non-designated sites and areas - Setting of cultural heritage assets - Archaeological assets

5.1 What's the sustainability 'context'?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.1.1 Key messages include -

- Protect and enhance valued landscapes. Heritage assets should be recognised as an 'irreplaceable resource' that should be conserved in a 'manner appropriate to their significance', taking account of 'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', including those heritage assets that are most at risk.

5.1.2 Key messages include -

- Protect and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance.
- Consider the effects of climate change in the long term, including in terms of landscape. Adopt 'proactive strategies' to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

Supplementing the NPPF

5.1.3 Further context is provided by a review of the European Landscape Convention (Box 5.1) and a recent position statement on green infrastructure prepared by the Landscape Institute (Box 5.2).

Box 5.1: The European Landscape Convention (2000)

The **European Landscape Convention** (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. The ELC defines landscape as: 'An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.' It recognises that the quality of all landscapes matters – not just those designated as 'best' or 'most valued'. Among other things, the ELC commits all signatories to establishing and implementing policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning / integrating landscape into town planning, cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies.

Box 5.2: Landscape Institute position statement on green infrastructure

In '**Green Infrastructure: An integrated approach to land use**' (2013)³⁸ the Landscape Institute (LI) makes a distinction between:

- Elements of the landscape that can represent distinct green infrastructure (GI) 'assets', e.g.
 - Urban area, Business Parks, Suburban Housing, Sustainable Drainage Systems, Community Centres (e.g. with sports pitches), 'main green spines' (e.g. waterways and major pedestrian/cycle routes, allotments, small-holdings and orchards, and country parks
- GI 'functions', e.g.
 - Water management, dealing with waste, climate change adaptation and mitigation, business benefits, local distinctiveness, recreation and health, education, community cohesion, food production, and biodiversity,

Six recommendations are made, two of which are aimed at local authorities:

- **Turn strategic GI thinking into reality** - Ensure that GI is a core requirement in Local Plans, Infrastructure Development Plans and development briefs. Proper consideration should also be given to the potential for multifunctional GI to perform some of the roles that 'grey' infrastructure is used for, particularly water management and waste. Why? Not only does GI tend to be cheaper, but it also provides infrastructure that is resilient to an increasingly unpredictable climate.
- **Promote collaboration on GI across boundaries** - By its nature, GI often crosses administrative boundaries, so it should be addressed through the Duty to Cooperate between local authorities. It should also be part of the remit of Local Enterprise Partnerships.

It is also notable that the position statement references **Trees in the Townscape: A Guide for Decision Makers**. This highlights that trees can contribute to storm-water, management, urban cooling and microclimate control, air-quality improvement, visual amenity and carbon sequestration. Where space is at a premium and the built environment is dominant, trees provide significant natural assets that can be retrofitted into streets and other available spaces with relatively little disturbance to surrounding activities.

Supplementing the NPPF

Further sustainability context is provided by a review of: the 'heritage at risk' register produced by English Heritage (Box 5.3); and Government's vision and strategic aims in relation to the historic environment (Box 5.4).

Box 5.3: English Heritage policy

Heritage at Risk³⁹ lists every heritage asset currently considered to be at risk in the UK according to local planning authority. Heritage assets are split into a number of categories namely; buildings, places of worship, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields, protected wreck sites and conservation areas.

Box 5.4: Other Government policy

The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England⁴⁰ sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life. Also of note is the reference to promoting the role of the historic environment within the Government's response to climate change and the wider sustainable development agenda.

³⁸ Landscape Institute (2013). Green Infrastructure: An integrated approach to land use [online] available at <http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/PDF/Contribute/2013GreenInfrastructureLIPositionStatement.pdf> (accessed 04/13)

³⁹ English Heritage (2012) Heritage at Risk [online] available at: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/publications/publicationsNew/heritage-at-risk/har-2012-lpa/HAR-entries-lpa-2012.pdf> (accessed 11/2013)

⁴⁰ 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 (accessed 11/2013)

The local context

- 5.1.4 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, in particular features such as:
 - trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and water bodies;
 - the landscape setting of settlements; topographical features;
 - features of cultural and historic value;
 - important views and visually sensitive skylines; and
 - tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion.
 - 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.

5.2 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

Current baseline

- 5.2.1 The plan area has a distinctive built and natural environment. Faringdon is a historic market town with a series of landmarks and distinctive buildings including All Saints' Church, Folly Tower/Folly Hill, the Old Town Hall, the Corn Exchange, the Friends' Meeting House, the Portwell, Faringdon House, the Crown Inn and the Bell Hotel⁴¹. The town centre has an interesting history; the Market Square was built across two streams and a series of tunnels dating back to the era of a Cistercian monastery. During Saxon times the town was reputedly the capital of England for a short time⁴².
- 5.2.2 Faringdon has grown from a relatively small historic core outwards to the south-west, 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. The historic evolution of Faringdon is shown in Figure 5.1.

⁴¹ Faringdon Town Council (2014) Evidence Base Review Update

⁴² Faringdon Town Council (2014) Evidence Base Review Update



Figure 5.1: Historic evolution of Faringdon, including historic route of rail connection (dashed line)⁴³

- 5.2.3 Reflecting the historic character of parts of Faringdon, 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. The extent of the Conservation Area is shown in Figure 5.2. There are 134 Listed Buildings in the plan area; the majority of which are located within the town centre and Conservation Area⁴⁴.
- 5.2.4 There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the parish, Radcot Bridge and Wyke monastic grange. Radcot Bridge is noted as one of the oldest bridges crossing the Thames and for being the location of the Battle of Radcot Bridge. The curia (estate centre) of Wyke monastic grange is documented as having been one of the largest and best examples of its type in England⁴⁵.
- 5.2.5 It should be noted that not all of the area's historic environment resource is subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. For example, although not listed, many buildings and areas are of historic interest, and which are seen as important by the local community. Examples of these in the plan area are likely to include parks and the wider historic landscape. Undesignated actual or potential archaeological finds in the area are also of significance.

⁴³ Faringdon Town Council (2014) Evidence Base Review Update

⁴⁴ <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/advancedsearch.aspx> (accessed 21/02/2014)

⁴⁵ English Heritage (2003) Wyke monastic grange and section of 18th century turnpike road [online] available at: http://magic.defra.gov.uk/Metadata_for_magic/rsm/30838.pdf (accessed 21/02/2014)



Figure 5.2: Faringdon Conservation Area⁴⁶

- 5.2.6 The parish of Great Faringdon sits within the Upper Thames Clay Vales National Character Area (National Character Area 108⁴⁷), with the Midvale Ridge immediately to the south (National Character Area 109⁴⁸). The Upper Thames Clay Vales form a broad belt of open, gently undulating lowland farmland. Around Faringdon, the clays support arable farming with some tracts of sheep pasture in medium sizes and regular field patterns with few hedgerows or trees. The open floodplain of the Thames creates a flat 'chequer board' agricultural landscape with occasional copses and hedgerows. Brick built buildings within the area reflect the widespread use of the local clay as a building material. The influences of the Cotswolds to the north are also evident in older stone walled and stone-slatted buildings.
- 5.2.7 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.

⁴⁶ Vale of White Horse District Council (2009) Faringdon Conservation Area [online] available at:

http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/faringdon_tcm4-6782.pdf (accessed 21/02/2014)

⁴⁷ 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 (accessed 21/02/2014)

⁴⁸ Natural England (2013) NCA Profile 109: Midvale Ridge [online] available at:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5431100?category=587130> (accessed 21/02/2014)

- 5.2.8 The Midvale Ridge is a band of low-lying limestone hills stretching east–west from the Vale of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire to Swindon; surrounded by the flat lands of the Oxfordshire clay vales, giving extensive views across the surrounding countryside. The NCA is notably more wooded in character than the surrounding Upper Thames Clay Vales and is renowned for its geological sites. Environmental opportunities include the need to provide green space and recreational opportunities; manage, enhance and expand semi-natural habitats and woodland; and maintain and enhance the NCAs internationally important geological heritage.
- 5.2.9 The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study provides greater granularity of landscape detail at the County Level⁴⁹. A summary for Great Faringdon Parish⁵⁰ reveals that the plan area is dominated by 'Wooded Estatelands' with 'Alluvial Lowlands' and 'River Meadowlands' to the north, as shown by Figure 6.3. The Wooded Estatelands are characterised as 'a wooded estate landscape characterised by arable farming and small villages with a strong vernacular character'. Local character around Faringdon is shown in Box 5.5.

Box 5.5: Local Landscape Character in Faringdon (Faringdon CR/2)⁵¹

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. The main tree species in the plantations are elm, beech, oak, Scots pine and larch. Hedges are mainly thorn and elm, with a few oak trees. 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.

- 5.2.10 Key recommendations in the Wooded Estateland area are to safeguard and enhance landscape character of the ancient woodlands, parklands, species-rich hedgerow network and tree-lined watercourses, and to ensure that all priority habitats are in favourable condition and management. Further recommendations suggest that opportunities for expanding this resource should be promoted through agri-environment schemes and the restoration of mineral sites⁵².

⁴⁹ Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004) Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study [online] available at: <http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/> (accessed 21/02/2014)

⁵⁰ Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004) Great Faringdon Parish [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 21/02/2014)

⁵¹ Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004) Wooded Estatelands [online] available at: <http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/Oxfordshire+Landscape+Types/Wooded+Estatelands/Wooded+Estatelands+Information/#h> (accessed 21/02/2014)

⁵² Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004) Wooded Estatelands [online] available at: <http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/Oxfordshire+Landscape+Types/Wooded+Estatelands/Wooded+Estatelands+Information/#h> (accessed 21/02/2014)

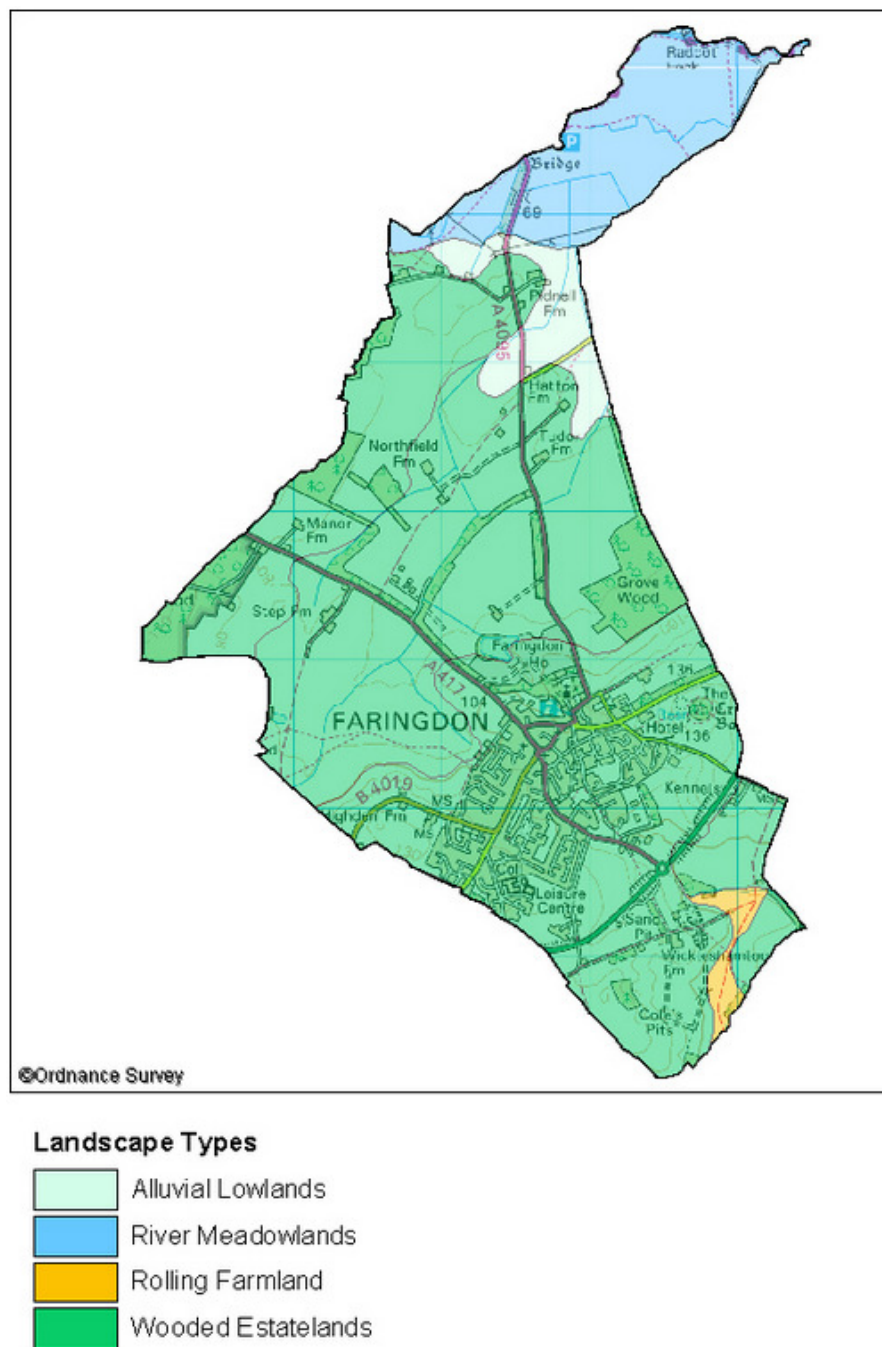


Figure 5.3: Local Landscape Character in Great Faringdon Parish⁵³

Future baseline

- 5.2.11 New development areas in the plan area have the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of cultural heritage assets. This includes through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations and Local Plan policies will offer a degree of protection to cultural heritage assets and their settings.

⁵³ Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004) Great Faringdon Parish [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 21/02/2014)

- 5.2.12 New development has the potential to lead to incremental but small changes in landscape character and quality in and around the plan area. This includes from the 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. The Great Western Community Forest project may contribute to improving landscape quality in the parish.
- 5.2.13 There are likely to be small scale and incremental changes in tranquillity in and around the plan area, affected by changes in the levels of light and noise pollution.
- 5.2.14 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.

5.3 What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

- New development has the potential to lead to effects on the historic environment, including through affecting the setting of cultural heritage assets.
- There is the potential for effects on landscape quality from poor design and layout of new development.
- New development could lead to pressures on non-designated sites and landscapes, including from loss of key landscape features such as woodland and hedgerows.

5.4 What are the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the plan for the Historic Environment and Landscape sustainability topic?

- 5.4.1 Table 5.1 presents the SA Objective and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the FNP in relation to the Historic Environment and Landscape topic.

SA OBJECTIVE	FARINGDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE
Protect, maintain and enhance Faringdon's cultural heritage resource including its historic environment and archaeological assets.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Preserve and enhance the setting of cultural heritage assets? • Support the integrity of the Faringdon Conservation Area? • Preserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest? • Protect the historic settlement pattern of the town and villages in the plan area? • Conserve and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness? • Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?

SA OBJECTIVE	FARINGDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE
Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Contribute towards local and national landscape character objectives for the area? • Promote the development of a high quality green infrastructure network, addressing the green infrastructure deficit in Faringdon? • Protect and enhance landscape and townscape features? • Support the objectives and delivery of the Great Western Community Forest project?

6 LAND AND SOIL RESOURCES

SA TOPIC	THEMES CONSIDERED
Land and soil resources	• Soils resource • Soil quality • Minerals • Waste management

6.1 What's the sustainability 'context'?

Internationally established objectives

6.1.1 EU's **Soil Thematic Strategy**⁵⁴ presents a strategy for protecting soils resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety. It sets out the following: a proposed legislative framework for the protection and sustainable use of soil, in order to integrate soil protection into national and EU policies; measures to improve knowledge of soil functions; and measures to increase public awareness. It also seeks to establish rational land use planning practices at all levels of government to ensure the sustainability of soils, consistent with a "precautionary principle" used by the EU in establishing environmental policy.

6.1.2 The EU's **Thematic Strategy on the Prevention and Recycling of Waste** is long-term strategy which aims to ensure that Europe becomes a recycling society that seeks to avoid waste and which uses waste as a resource.⁵⁵ The strategy proposes that approaches to waste management are modernised and that they promote more and better recycling.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

6.1.3 Key messages 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'. Whilst there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to 'set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances'.
- with regards to waste, the NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy will be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan. Nonetheless, local authorities who are preparing waste related plans should have regard to the NPPF so far as it is relevant. Until then, Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management⁵⁶ remains in force. The overall objective of PPS10 is to reduce the production of waste and use it as a resource where possible.

⁵⁴ European Commission (2006) Soil Thematic Policy [online] available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm (accessed 28/02/2014)

⁵⁵ 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)

⁵⁶ Planning Policy Statement 10: Planning for Sustainable Waste (2011) [online] available at: <http://www.communitites.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1876202.pdf> (accessed 28/02/2014)

Supplementing the NPPF

- 6.1.4 Further sustainability context is provided by a review of further Government guidance.

Box 6.1: Further Government policy

In **Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England**⁵⁷, a vision is set out for the future of soils in the Country. An element of this vision is the condition of soils in urban areas, which are to be 'sufficiently valued for the ecosystem services they provide and given appropriate weight in the planning system'. Good quality soils in urban areas are recognised as being 'vital in supporting ecosystems, facilitating drainage and providing urban green spaces for communities'. That planning decisions take sufficient account of soil quality is a concern of the report, in particular in cases where 'significant areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land are involved'. Preventing the pollution of soils and addressing the historic legacy of contaminated land is another element of the reports vision.

In terms of future trends, the report notes that pressures on soils and competition for land is likely to increase in future as a result of population growth. As a result, the effects of these trends and the 'changing demands on our soils' needs to be better understood and it must be ensured that 'appropriate consideration is given to soils in the planning process'.

Box 6.2: Recent government review of waste policies

This **Government Review of Waste Policy in England**⁵⁸ recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials. As such, it sets out a vision to move beyond our current 'throwaway society' to a 'zero waste economy'. The report recognises that planning will play a critical role in delivering this ambition. In terms of planning for waste the report notes that local authorities should consider the infrastructure needs of their community from the earliest stages of developing their local policies and plans. It also states that local communities should benefit from the hosting of waste facilities.

The local context

- 6.1.5 The current Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted in 1999. Oxfordshire County Council were progressing a Core Strategy however this was withdrawn in 2012 due to the introduction of the NPPF. Work is now underway on a revised Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy. The draft plan⁵⁹ went out to consultation in February 2014 and 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.

- 6.1.6 The vision for minerals planning is to:

- provide a suffice 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.

- 6.1.7 The vision for waste planning is to:

- manage waste in line with the waste hierarchy⁶⁰;
- maintain the self-sufficiency of the County to deal with the waste it generates; and

⁵⁷ 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)

⁵⁸ 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)

⁵⁹ 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)

⁶⁰ See the Waste Regulations 2011 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/988/contents/made>

- 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.

6.1.8 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; however, there is currently no demand for additional crushed rock to be identified. The preference is for additional soft sand and crushed rock (should it be required later in the plan period) to be worked from extensions to existing quarries, as set out in Policy M3. Policy M3 sets out an 'area of search' for soft sand working to the east of Faringdon.

6.1.9 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.

6.2 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

Current baseline

6.2.1 The 'soilscape' for the plan area is shown in Figure 6.1.

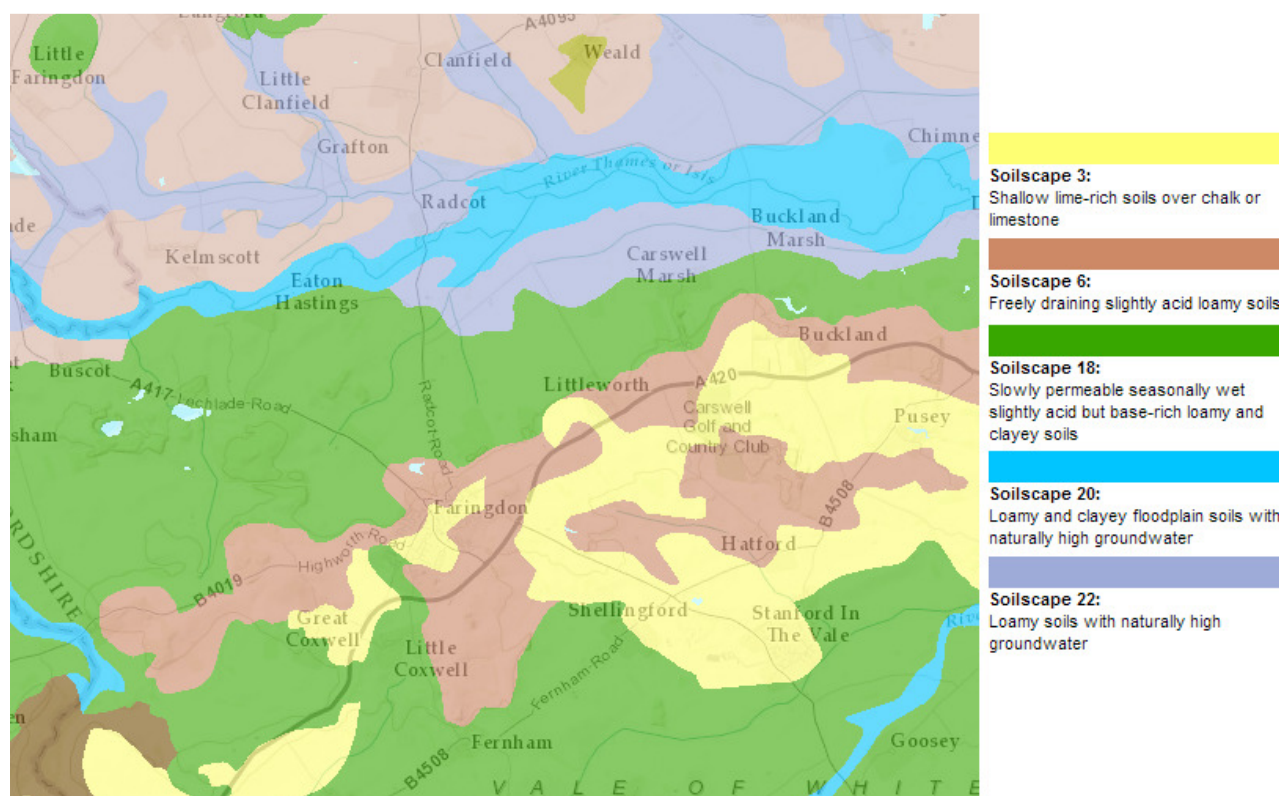


Figure 6.1: Soilscape in the Faringdon area⁶¹

⁶¹ Cranfield University (2014) Landis Soilscales Map [online] available at: <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/#> (accessed 28/02/2014)

- 6.2.2 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.
- 6.2.3 The Agricultural Land Classification classifies land into five grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are the 'best and most versatile' land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality⁶². The classification for the district is shown in Figure 6.2. In the plan area, land towards the Thames is generally of Grade 3 and 4 agricultural land (reflecting poor drainage and its suitability for pasture), whereas agricultural 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.

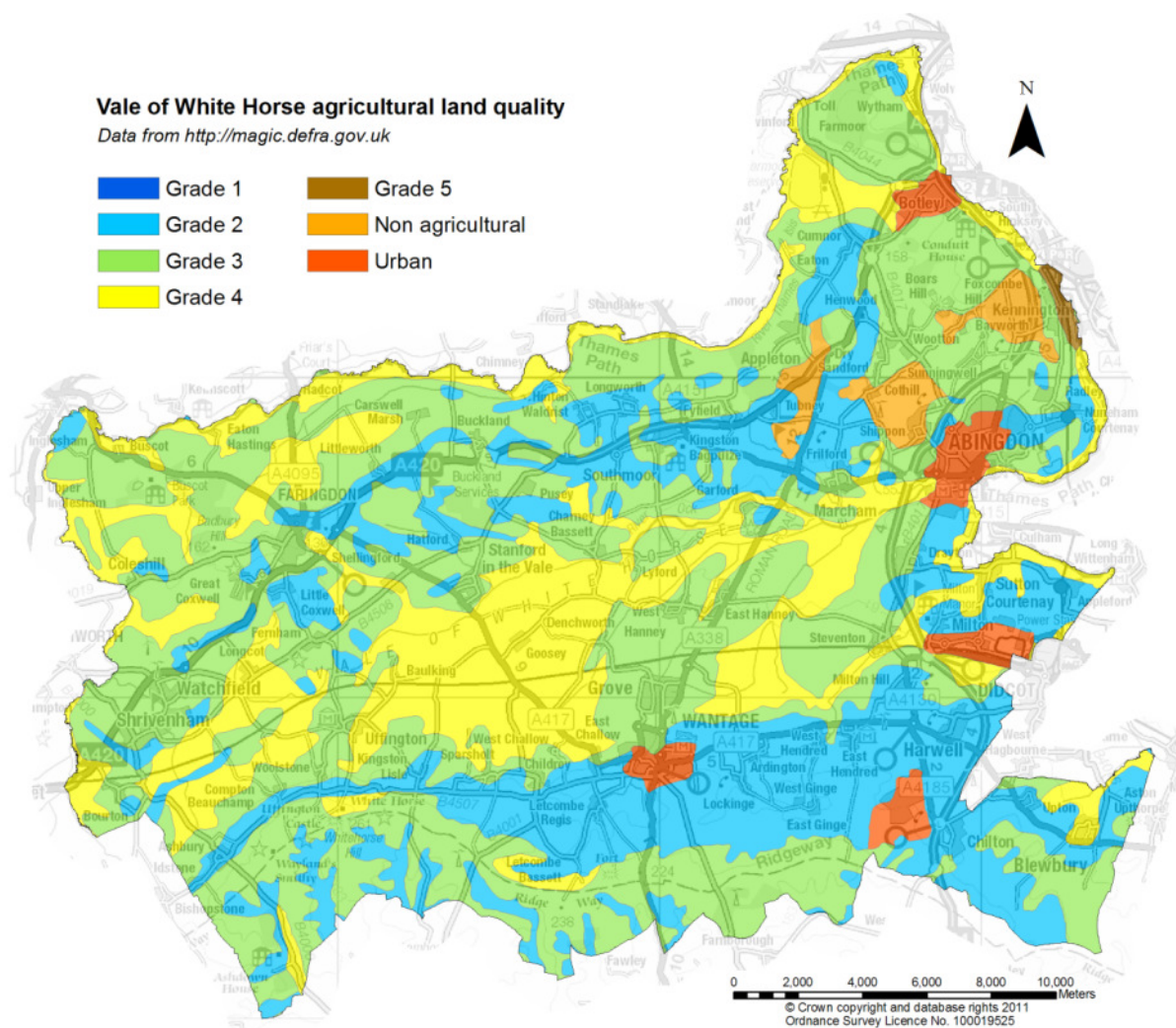


Figure 6.2: Agricultural Land Classification in the Vale of White Horse⁶³

⁶² 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>

⁶³ URS (2012) Vale of White Horse Local Plan Core Strategy SA Scoping Report [online] available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/SA%20Scoping%20Report%20FINAL.pdf> (accessed 28/02/2014)

- 6.2.4 In terms of waste management, 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 the England. However, this is a decrease from 68.7% in 2011/12, when the Vale had the highest recycling rates in England. These rates are a significant improvement from 2010/11 when the percentage was 51.8%⁶⁴. Overall, 39,600 tonnes of municipal waste was collected in the Vale of White Horse in 2012/13, an increase from 39,000 tonnes in 2011/12.
- 6.2.5 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. 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 2015⁶⁵.
- 6.2.6 An 'area of search' for soft sand is designated to the east of the plan area in the draft Oxfordshire County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy (see Figure 6.3). The Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy 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 (such as Wicklesham Quarry).



Figure 6.3: Corallian Ridge between Oxford and Faringdon Area of Search for Crushed Rock⁶⁶

Future baseline

- 6.2.7 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 the best and most versatile agricultural land, including Grade 2 and 3a agricultural land.
- 6.2.8 Due to increasing 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.

⁶⁴ Defra (2014) Local authority collected waste: annual results tables [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env18-local-authority-collected-waste-annual-results-tables> (accessed 28/02/2014)

⁶⁵ Grondon (2012) Restoration and Aftercare Schemes at Wicklesham Quarry [online] available at: <http://myeplanning2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/swiftg/apas/MediaTemp/205014-18282.pdf> (accessed 28/02/2014)

⁶⁶ 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)

- 6.2.9 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).

6.3 What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

- The FNP should seek to promote the integration of recycling and composting facilities within new development areas.
- Developers should be encouraged to adopt sustainable construction practices, including handling waste arisings, recycling, and disposal in a sustainable manner as part of a life cycle approach to resource use.
- Where possible, new development areas should be directed away from areas classified as the best and most versatile agricultural land in the plan area (Grades 2 and 3a). Where this is not possible, new development areas should be directed towards areas of poorer quality land in preference to those of higher quality.
- Minerals development may be required in the plan period and development should where appropriate avoid sterilising potential sites for quarrying.

6.4 What are the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the plan for the Land and Soil Resources sustainability topic?

- 6.4.1 Table 6.1 presents the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the FNP in relation to the Land and Soil Resources topic.

Table 6.1: SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions for the Land and Soil Resources topic

SA OBJECTIVE	FARINGDON AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: LAND AND SOIL RESOURCES
Ensure the more efficient use of land.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Promote the use of previously developed land? • Avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, in particular Grade 2 agricultural land?
Promote sustainable waste management solutions that encourage the reduction, re-use and recycling of waste.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Reduce the amount of waste produced? • Move waste up the waste hierarchy? • Maximise opportunities for local management of waste in order to minimise export of waste to areas outside? • Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction? • Avoid sterilising potentially viable minerals sites?

7 WATER RESOURCES AND FLOOD RISK

SA TOPIC	THEMES CONSIDERED
Water resources and flood risk	- Water bodies to include rivers, streams and lakes - Water availability - Water quality - Flooding

7.1 What's the sustainability 'context'?

Internationally established objectives

- 7.1.1 The EU's 'Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources'⁶⁷ highlights the need for Member States to reduce pressure on water resources, for instance by using green infrastructure such as wetlands, floodplains and buffer strips along water courses. This would also reduce the EU's vulnerability to floods and droughts. It also emphasises the role water efficiency can play in reducing scarcity and water stress.
- 7.1.2 National water policies are primarily driven by the aims of the EC Water Framework Directive, as translated into national law by the Water Framework Regulations 2003. Key objectives include improving the quality of rivers and other water bodies to 'good ecological status' by 2015; considering flood risk at all stages of the plan and development process in order to reduce future damage to property and loss of life; and incorporating water efficiency measures into new developments.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 7.1.3 Key messages include -
- 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.

Supplementing the NPPF

- 7.1.4 Box 7.1 discusses the new approaches to flood risk management brought about through the 2010 Flood and Water Management Act. This is supplemented with additional information on the benefits of using Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) in developments. Further sustainability context is provided by a review of: Government's White Paper on Water (Box 7.2); and the Water Framework Directive - a key legislative driver of water management action (Box 7.3).

⁶⁷ 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 (accessed 11/2013)

Box 7.1: Further Government guidance on flood risk

The **Flood and Water Management Act**⁶⁸ highlights that alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management include:

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting properties at risk (including historic buildings)
- Utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding, for example through the management of land to reduce runoff and through harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water
- Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere
- Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion
- Creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)⁶⁹

Further guidance is provided in the document **Planning for SuDs**.⁷⁰ This report calls for greater recognition of the multiple benefits that water management can present. It suggests that successful SuDS are capable of 'contributing to local quality of life and green infrastructure'.

Box 7.2: Further Government policy

The **Water White Paper**⁷¹ sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector, where water is valued as the precious resource it is. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

Commitments are made in the White Paper to 'encourage and incentivise water efficiency measures' on the demand side. Through these measures and the demand management measures set out in Water Resource Management Plan's for water companies, the Government aspires to reduce average demand to 130 litres per head, per day by 2030.

The avoidance of pollution is also a consideration in the White Paper, which led to a Government consultation on a national strategy on urban diffuse pollution in 2012. The consultation report⁷² notes that pollutants affecting failing waterbodies can be broken down into a number of categories including:

- **Point source pollution:** permitted discharges from factories and wastewater treatment are currently responsible for about 36% of pollution related to failing water bodies.
- **Diffuse pollution:** unplanned pollution from urban and rural activity, arising from sources such as industry, commerce, agriculture, and civil functions is responsible for 49% of the pollution related to failing water bodies. Agricultural diffuse pollution is responsible for 33% of failures; non-agricultural for 14%. In highly urbanised areas the contribution of urban diffuse pollution is much higher.

⁶⁸ Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents> (accessed 11/12)

⁶⁹ 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.

⁷⁰ CIRIA (2010) Planning for SuDs – making it happen [online] available at:

<http://www.ciria.org/service/knowledgebase/AM/ContentManagerNet/ContentDisplay.aspx?Section=knowledgebase&NoTemplate=1&ContentID=18465> (accessed 11/12)

⁷¹ 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)

⁷² Defra (2012) Tackling water pollution from the urban environment: Consultation on a strategy to address diffuse water pollution from the built environment [online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82602/consult-udwp-doc-20121120.pdf (accessed 05/2013)

Box 7.3: The Water Framework Directive

The Directive drives a catchment-based approach to water management. In England and Wales there are 100 water catchments and it is Defra's intention is to establish a 'framework for integrated catchment management' across England. 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. The Plans will seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely:

- Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by 'priority' and 'priority hazardous' substances; and
- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.

The Environment Agency believes that to achieve good status in all water bodies by 2027 (the target of the Water Framework Directive) will not be possible using only current technologies. In fact, achieving 75 per cent good status will require marked changes in land use and water infrastructure.

The local context

7.1.5 The FNP area is covered by the Kennet and Vale of White Horse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy⁷³ and the Thames Corridor Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy⁷⁴. These strategies seek to assess how much water is reliably available in the respective catchments and introduce time-limited licences for water. They also seek to safeguard water resources in accordance with increasing pressures on water availability from climate change and population growth and to ensure catchment management is integrated so that impacts on water resources and the water environment are managed together.

7.1.6 The Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan⁷⁵ provides an overview of flood risk management in the catchment, and contains policies and guidance on managing flood risk. It also seeks to establish flood risk management policies which will deliver sustainable flood risk management for the long term.

7.1.7 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.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Faringdon seeks to deliver, in partnership with Thames Water:

- additional sewerage infrastructure to enhance capacity close to Faringdon Sewage Treatment Works;

⁷³ Environment Agency (December 2012) Kennet and Vale of White Horse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy

⁷⁴ Environment Agency (June 2004) Thames Corridor Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy

⁷⁵ Environment Agency (December 2009) Thames Catchment Flood Management Plan

- sewage Treatment Works capacity enhancement to install new tanks;
- adequate water supply to meet the needs of new development;
- water infrastructure including connections to the water main network;
- a drainage infrastructure and a drainage strategy will be required; and
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) will be required for the disposal of surface water.

7.2 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

Current baseline

- 7.2.1 The main watercourse in the Great Faringdon area is the River Thames to the north of the plan area. Minor watercourses which run into the Thames from Faringdon include the Wadley Stream.
- 7.2.2 The two waterbodies assessed under the Water Framework Directive in the plan area are Wadley Stream (source to Thames at Duxford) and the Thames (Leach to Evenlode). In terms of water quality, according to the Environment Agency⁷⁶, Wadley Stream is assessed as 'moderate' ecological status and the Thames as 'poor'. This is due to pollution from rural areas and waste water, negative effects of invasive, non-native species and physical modifications to the watercourse. It should be noted that Wadley Stream improved from 'poor' to 'moderate' over the period 2009-2011. Both watercourses are predicted to be 'good ecological status' by 2027 due to actions taken to address the causes outlined above.
- 7.2.3 Water supply in the area is provided by Thames Water. The Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies^{77 78} 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'.
- 7.2.4 An updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken in 2013 to support the emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan⁷⁹. Faringdon has suffered from historic surface water flooding in recent years; particularly in 2001 (seven properties flooded) and 2007 (14 properties flooded). This is shown in Figure 7.1.
- 7.2.5 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.

⁷⁶ Environment Agency (2012) Windrush Catchment Engagement Document [online] available at: http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Research/Windrush_CMP.pdf (accessed 02/03/2014)

⁷⁷ Environment Agency (December 2012) Kennet and Vale of White Horse Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy

⁷⁸ Environment Agency (June 2004) Thames Corridor Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy

⁷⁹ 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)

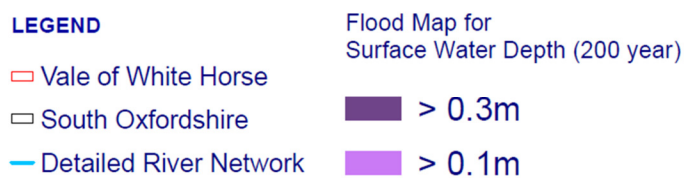
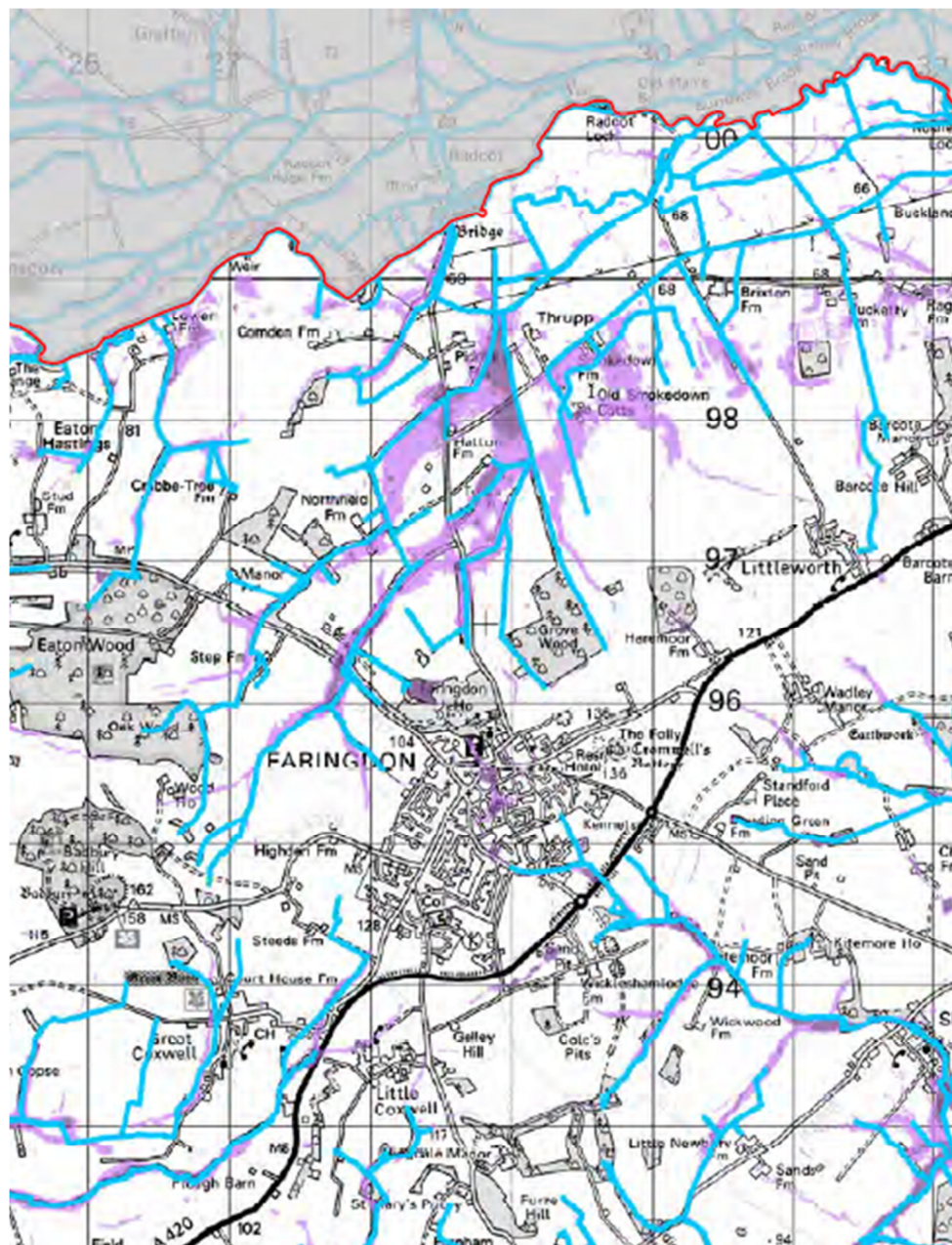


Figure 7.1 Surface Water Flooding

Future baseline

- 7.2.6 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.

7.2.7 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.

7.2.8 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.

7.3 What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

- Whilst the plan area is not at significant risk of flooding, downstream flood risk and issues related to surface water run-off and sewerage flooding will need to be considered and addressed in developing the FNP.
- Watercourses in the plan area are unlikely to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive in terms of water quality. The FNP should seek to support on-going improvements to water quality of watercourses in the area.
- Water conservation and reuse should be supported in lieu of potential future issues linked to the regional availability of water.
- Sewage infrastructure in the town will need to be updated to accompany significant new development

7.4 What are the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the plan for the Water Resources and Flood Risk sustainability topic?

7.4.1 Table 7.1 presents the appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the FNP in relation to the Water Resources and Flood Risk topic.

Table 7.1: SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions for the Water Resources and Flood Risk topic

SA OBJECTIVE	FARINGDON AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: WATER RESOURCES AND FLOOD RISK
Improve water quality	Will the option/proposal help to: • Enhance water quality and help to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive? • Protect groundwater resources?
Improve water resource efficiency	Will the option/proposal help to: • Reduce water consumption?
Increase resilience to climate change and flooding	Will the option/proposal help to: • Sustainably manage water run-off, ensure that the risk of flooding is not increased (either within the plan area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk? • Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into account the likely effects of climate change?

8 POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES

SA TOPIC	THEMES CONSIDERED
Population and communities	- Population size - Population density - Age structure - Ethnicity - Deprivation - House prices and affordability - Homelessness

8.1 What's the sustainability 'context'?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

8.1.1 Key messages include -

- To 'boost significantly the supply of housing', 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 their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period.
- 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. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
- 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, not just in the short term. Good architecture and landscaping are important, with the use of design codes contributing to the delivery of high quality outcomes. Design should reinforce local distinctiveness, raise the standard more generally in the area and address the connections between people and places.
- 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.

Supplementing the NPPF

8.1.2 Further sustainability context is provided by:

- A review of several studies that have sought to analyse how successful the Government's approach to housing has been and/or suggest possible solutions to the problems faced (Boxes 8.1 – 8.4)

Box 8.1: Chartered Institute of Housing analysis

The **'Housing Report'**⁸⁰ collates the official figures available on housing in order to establish whether the Government's approach to housing is succeeding. A challenge identified for the Government is to produce a step change in housing in order to meet the nations needs and aspirations, especially given that: *'Many of the external pressures on the housing market, ranging from a growing and ageing population to falling incomes, are likely to intensify over the coming years'*.

The Government's performance is analysed under a number of headings, including:

- Housing supply: A small increase of new build is recorded, but this is from a historically low base. The number of completions in 2011 was 38% below the 2007 peak.
- Overcrowding: This situation is worsening, and current measures to tackle under-occupation may not necessarily resolve the problem.
- Homelessness: There has been a large increase in homeless acceptances and rough sleepers, with this problem potentially exacerbated by further cuts to Housing benefit during 2013.
- Empty homes: Despite 720,000 homes currently being classed as empty, the situation seems to be an improving one. This is particularly the case with long-term empty homes.
- Home ownership: House prices are relatively steady, sales are up, and affordability is increasing. However, homeownership rates are falling and there is a decline in low cost ownership sales. Home ownership remains out of reach for most people.

Box 8.2 Joseph Rowntree Foundation analysis

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation **International Review of Land Supply and Planning Systems**⁸¹ highlights that, despite record house prices in the early 2000s, the supply of new homes did not increase significantly. This lack of responsiveness to increases in house prices has led to affordability problems. The global financial crisis and resultant recession(s) has only worsened the supply situation.

In England, perceived constraints on the supply of land include: a lack of incentives for local authorities to support new development; the nature of the house-building industry; and existing disincentives to make land available in the light of future price increases. The mechanisms for funding and providing the necessary infrastructure can act as a constraint, as can the availability and cost of finance of development. There are particular risks associated with the re-use of land as compared with greenfield sites with respect to fragmentation of ownership, risks and costs. Market volatility further increases risks and uncertainty.

The JRF study reviewed the situation in other countries and the mechanisms used to ensure sufficient house building, most of which have their equivalent in England. Of key importance are:

- incentives to bring land forward;
- provision of infrastructure in advance of, or alongside, development; and
- growth management boundaries/urban growth limits

In terms of the latter, growth management boundaries/urban growth limits are used by most countries to prevent urban sprawl. To ensure price stability, the limit is normally revisited at regular intervals, but urban containment inherently affects land prices both within and outside the limit. There are some examples of successful urban containment and relative price stability over time, notably Portland, Oregon, but successful management requires planners to be pro-active in monitoring and adjusting land supply. Currently Green Belt cover some 13 percent of the total land area of England (with urban land covers around 10 percent). The Planning Minister has recently stated that increasing this to just 12 percent would meet all identified future requirements and that this could be done while preserving Green Belt. JRF conclude that *'The green belt has successfully prevented urban sprawl – but at a price. Evidence from other countries suggests that it should be operated more flexibly, with boundaries revisited regularly.'*

⁸⁰ 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 (accessed 11/2013)

⁸¹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2013) International Review of Land Supply and Planning Systems [online] available at: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/land-supply-planning-full.pdf> (accessed 11/2013)

Box 8.3 Solutions to 'the housing crisis' suggested by Policy Exchange and the TCPA

In recent position statements both Policy Exchange⁸² (a leading 'think tank') and the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)⁸³ highlight the extent of the housing challenge and identify that a key barrier to addressing the challenge is the poor perception of new development. Policy Exchange state that *'A lot of people object to new development because they assume that the outcome will be buildings that are at best characterless, cheap in everything except price.'* The following solutions are suggested by the two organisations are quite different:

- Policy exchange advocate the need for **'self-build'** to make a much more significant contribution. Self-build is where development involves a discrete project for a specific owner, who will hence input into the design and construction. Currently, in the UK 10% of new homes (less in England) is self-build, with the vast majority of development being undertaken by large developers (who, Policy Exchange suggest, can act as land speculators as much as builders to the detriment of building rates). Councils can support self-build by using land auctions to enable self-builders to procure plot sized areas of land.
- TCPA suggest that **large-scale new communities** (phased over time) should be prominent in *'the portfolio of solutions that will be essential in tackling today's acute housing shortage – a shortage which cannot be addressed exclusively on a plot-by-plot basis.'* TCPA believe that: *'Well planned new communities provide an opportunity to create high-quality sustainable places, allowing for the highest sustainability standards, economies of scale, and better use of infrastructure. A holistic approach to creating new communities provides an opportunity to consider how homes and neighbourhoods can be made attractive places in which to live and work, in environments which are socially inclusive and resilient to climate change.'* In particular, TCPA advocate the idea of developing **Garden Cities and Suburbs** according to a series of agreed principles. Benefits of this approach include –
 - The population of a new Garden City can provide the critical mass to support the necessary facilities for low-carbon lifestyles, such as rapid public transport, low-carbon energy systems, jobs located within walking distance of homes, and a range of cultural and leisure services, including a comprehensive green infrastructure network providing quick access to the wider countryside.
 - Any negative impacts on the environment can be dealt with in a holistic way, with avoidance, mitigation and compensation considered from the outset.

Box 8.4: Implications of an ageing population

The Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change report **Ready for Ageing?**⁸⁴ warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report says that *'longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises'*. Key projections about ageing include 51% more people aged 65 and over and 101% more people aged 85 and over in England in 2030 compared to 2010; and a 90% increase in people with moderate or severe need for social care for the same time period. Organisations involved in urban planning will need to adjust to an older population and will have an important role to play in preventing the social isolation of older citizens.

The report says that the housing market is delivering much less specialist housing for older people than is needed. Central and local government, housing associations and house builders need urgently to plan how to ensure that the housing needs of the older population are better addressed and to give as much priority to promoting an adequate market and social housing for older people as is given to housing for younger people. The report notes that *"if the country had an adequate supply of suitably located, well-designed, supported housing for older people, this could result in an increased release onto the market of currently under-occupied family housing, expanding the supply available for younger generations"*. It recommends that local government should ensure better housing provision for older people by both encouraging private market provision and by making specific mention of older people's needs when drawing up Local Plans.

⁸² Policy Exchange (2013) A right to build: Local homes for local people [online] available at:

<http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/images/publications/a%20right%20to%20build.pdf> (accessed 11/2013)

⁸³ TCPA (2013) Creating garden cities and suburbs today a guide for councils [online] available at:

http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Creating_Garden_Cities_and_Suburbs_Today_-_a_guide_for_councils.pdf (accessed 11/2013)

⁸⁴ 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]

The local context

8.1.3 Key messages from the Vale of White Horse Draft Local Plan include:

- Faringdon is classified in the settlement hierarchy as one of three 'Market Towns' in the Vale. Market Towns have the greatest long-term potential for development, to provide the jobs and homes to help sustain, and where appropriate, enhance their services and facilities to support viable and sustainable communities in a proportionate manner.⁸⁵
- There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the existing built area of Market Towns. The Local Plan will seek to protect and enhance the services and facilities provided by the Market Towns and Local Service Centres and ensure that any new facilities, homes and jobs are mostly focused on these settlements.⁸⁶
- The provision of employment in Faringdon is a key priority for the Sub-Area, helping to improve the self-sufficiency of the town and reduce the need for out-commuting.⁸⁷
- 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.

8.2 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

Current baseline

8.2.1 According to the most recent census data available, in 2011 the total population of the parish of Great Faringdon was 7,121⁸⁸. This was an increase of 932 from the 2001 census, or a 15.1% growth in the plan area's population; significantly higher than local, regional and national comparators. New housing developments since 2011 have extended the built area of the town, increasing the population by a further 13% to an estimated 8,000.⁸⁹

Table 8.1 – Population growth, 2001-2011

Date	Great Faringdon	Vale of White Horse	Oxfordshire	South East	England
2001	6,187	115,629	605,486	8,000,645	49,138,831
2011	7,121	120,988	653,798	8,634,750	53,012,456
Population increase 2001-2011	15.10%	4.63%	7.98%	7.93%	7.88%

8.2.2 Table 8.2 highlights the age structure of the parish, compared with district, Oxfordshire, South East and England averages. Adapted from statistics compiled by the ONS, the data indicates the total population of each age group, and the percentage of that group within the total population of each area.

⁸⁵ Vale of White Horse District Council (2013) Local Plan 2029, Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies, consultation draft

⁸⁶ Vale of White Horse District Council (2013) Local Plan 2029, Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies, consultation draft

⁸⁷ Vale of White Horse District Council (2013) Local Plan 2029, Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies, consultation draft

⁸⁸ Office for National Statistics (2011) Neighbourhood Statistics [online] available at:

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/> (accessed on 21/02/2014)

⁸⁹ Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners (2013) Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base Review

Table 8.2: Age structure (2011)

Age group	Great Faringdon	Vale of White Horse	Oxfordshire	South East	England
0-15	1,455 (20.4%)	23,121 (19.1%)	122,240 (18.7%)	1,642,084 (19.0%)	10,022,836 (18.9%)
16-24	706 (9.9%)	11,728 (9.7%)	82,251 (12.6%)	969,055 (11.2%)	6,284,760 (11.9%)
25-44	1,979 (27.8%)	31,136 (25.7%)	182,110 (27.9%)	2,289,335 (26.5%)	14,645,152 (27.5%)
45-59	1,403 (19.7%)	25,262 (20.9%)	125,441 (19.2%)	1,716,857 (19.9%)	10,276,902 (19.4%)
60+	1,578 (22.2%)	29,741 (24.6%)	141,756 (21.7%)	2,017,419 (23.4%)	11,832,806 (22.3%)
Totals	7,121 (100%)	120,988 (100%)	653,798 (100%)	8,634,750 (100%)	53,012,456 (100%)

8.2.3

Great Faringdon has a higher proportion of individuals in the 0-4 and 85+ age ranges than the District. This has potential impact for school provision and elderly care. Overall the parish has a slightly higher proportion of children under the age of 16 and a slightly lower proportion of people aged 16-24 than England, but is otherwise largely in line with regional and national averages. 20.4% of the population of the parish is aged 0-15, compared with 19.1% in Vale of White Horse, 18.7% in Oxfordshire, 19.0% in the South East and 18.9% across England. The proportion of residents aged 60 or over is slightly lower in Great Faringdon than in Vale of White Horse, and slightly higher than in Oxfordshire. There are 1,578 people aged 60 or over living in Faringdon, which is 22.2% of the population of the parish.

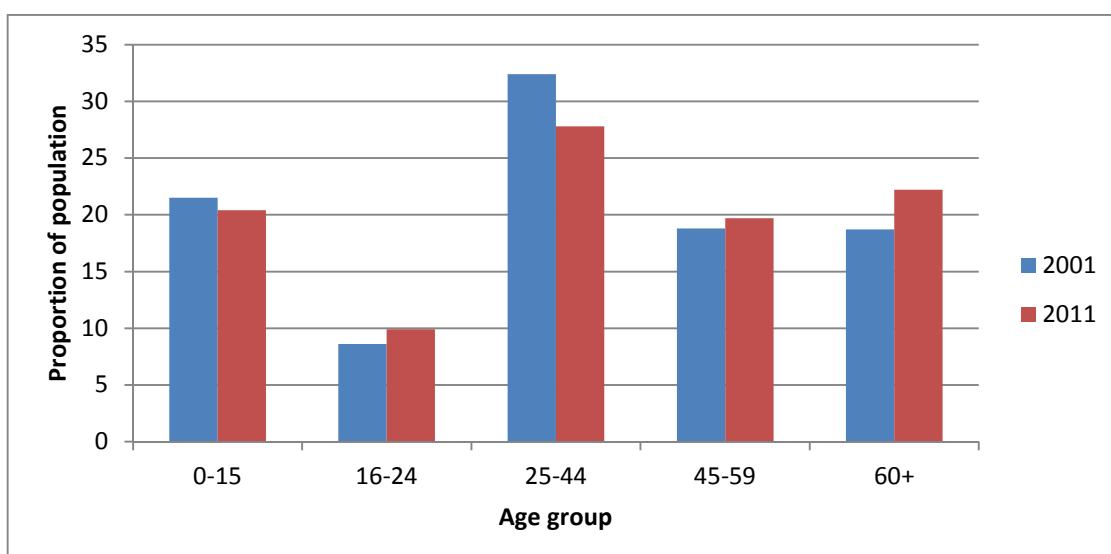


Figure 8.1 – Changes in age structure, Great Faringdon, 2001-2011

- 8.2.4 However, as Figure 8.1 highlights, the proportion of residents of Great Faringdon aged 60 or over grew more rapidly between 2001 and 2011 than any other age group. By contrast, the proportion of residents aged 0-15 or 25-44 fell. There were slight increases in the proportions of residents aged 16-24 and 45-59.
- 8.2.5 8.6% of residents of Great Faringdon have a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activity 'a little'. This is broadly in line with local, regional and national averages, and equates to 610 people. 6.5% of residents, or 465 people, have a long-term health problem or disability that limits their activity 'a lot'; low in comparison to the national average of 8.3%, but higher than the figures for Vale of White Horse and Oxfordshire (both 5.8%).⁹⁰
- 8.2.6 In terms of ethnicity, 92.2% of the population in the plan area is classed as White British. This is a higher proportion than Vale of White Horse (89.8%), Oxfordshire (83.6%), South East (85.2%) and England (79.8%) averages. 2.2% of the population of the parish is Asian, and 1% is Black, significantly lower than the national averages of 7.8% and 3.5% respectively. Figure 8.2 illustrates the population composition by broad ethnic group of Great Faringdon, Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire, the South East and England.

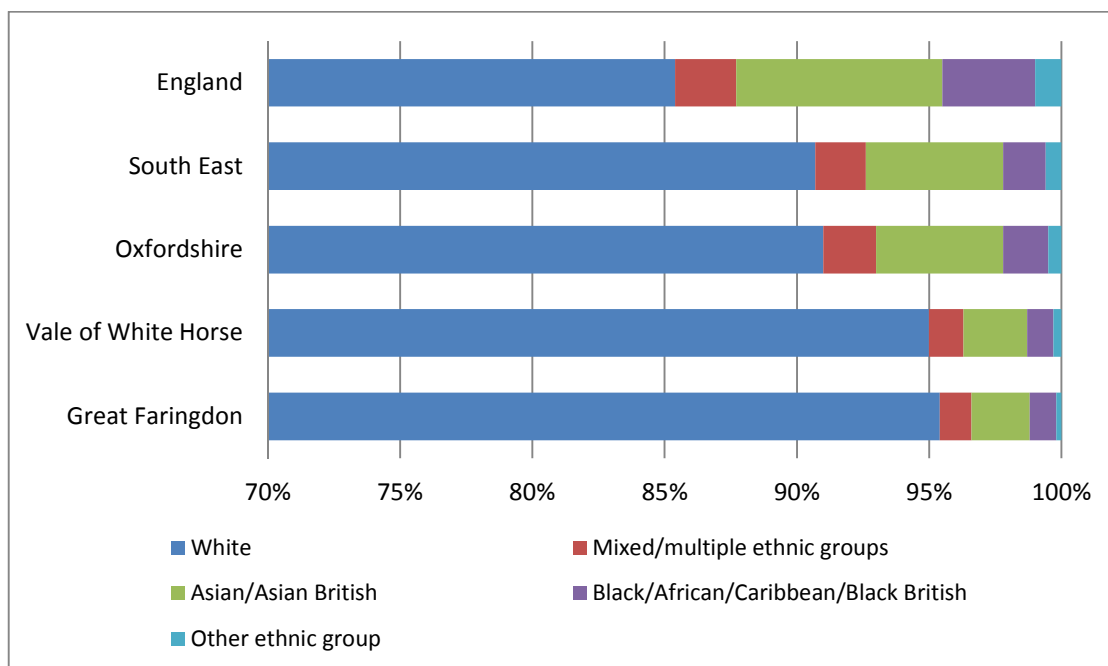


Figure 8.2: Population composition by broad ethnic group

- 8.2.7 At the time of the 2011 census, there were nine Gypsy or Irish Traveller residents in the parish and 109 across Vale of White Horse. A Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Needs Assessment conducted in 2013 reported that there are two authorised public sites in the Vale with a capacity of 36 pitches, and one private site with 12 permanent pitches, six travelling pitches, and eight transit pitches. A further 13 pitches will be required in the district to accommodate new household formation until 2029.⁹¹

⁹⁰ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Long-term health problem or disability (QS303EW)

⁹¹ 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

- 8.2.8 Census statistics which measure deprivation across the four 'dimensions' of deprivation (including: any member of a household not a full-time student is either unemployed or long-term sick); education (no person in the household has at least level 2 education, and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student); health and disability (any person in the household has general health 'bad' or 'very bad' or has a long term health problem); and housing (household's accommodation is either overcrowded, with an occupancy rating -1 or less, or is in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating), show that Faringdon has slightly higher levels of deprivation than the Vale of White Horse overall, but lower than the regional and national averages.

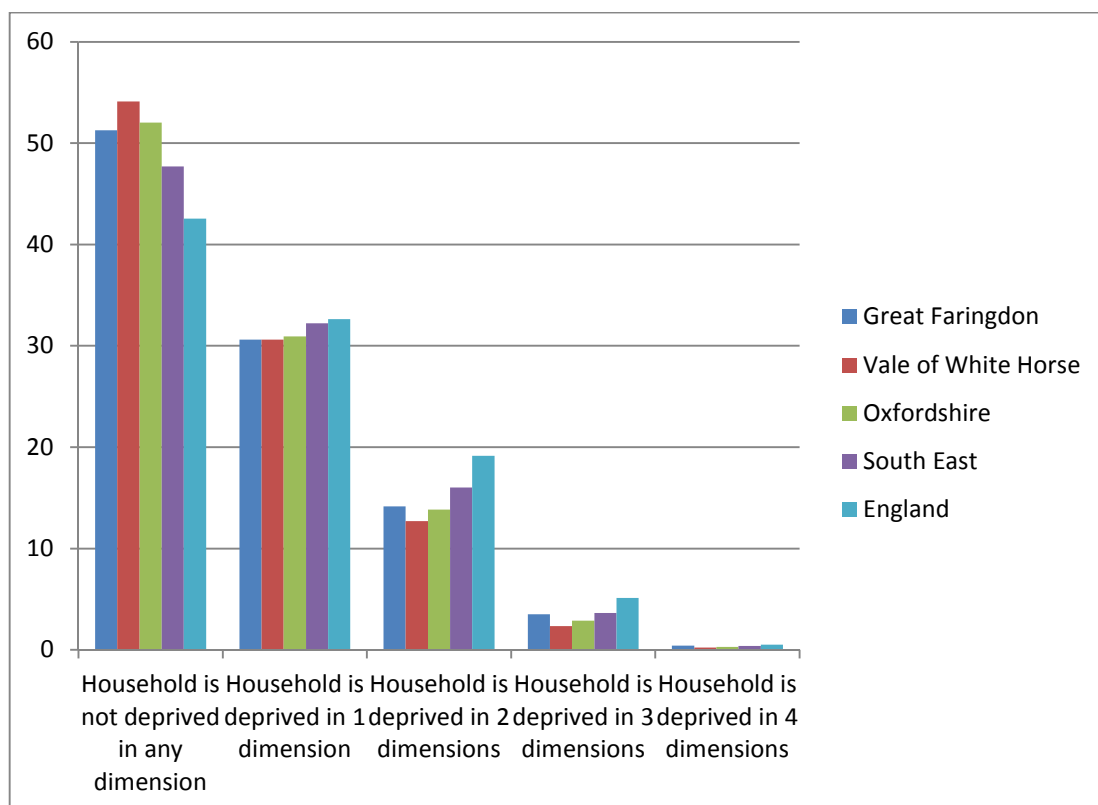


Figure 8.3 – Relative deprivation dimensions

- 8.2.9 Deprivation is slightly higher in Faringdon than in other towns in the Vale of White Horse. For example, 3.52% of households in the parish of Great Faringdon are deprived in three dimensions, compared with 2.89% in Abingdon, 2.5% in Wantage, and 1.92% in Grove.⁹² Levels of overcrowding, although low in comparison to regional and national averages, 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.⁹³
- 8.2.10 Data from DCLG indicates that the median selling price of property in the third quarter of 2012 was £270,000 in Vale of White Horse.⁹⁴ This was higher than both the Oxfordshire median selling price of £250,000, and the England-wide median of £190,000. The median selling price in the Vale has increased from £212,475 in the second quarter of 2009.

⁹² ONS (2011) Census 2011, Households by deprivation dimensions (QS119EW)

⁹³ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Occupancy rating (rooms) (QS408EW)

⁹⁴ This is the latest available data.

8.2.11 In terms of the house price to income ratio, which illustrates the multiple of the average income in the area to average house price, the affordability ratio for Vale of White Horse in 2012 was 7.58, an increase from 7.02 in 2009. This is significantly higher than the ratio for England (6.74), but lower than the ratio for Oxfordshire (8.75).⁹⁵

8.2.12 Figure 8.4 shows the tenure of households in Great Faringdon in comparison with the Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire, the South East, and England. The plan area has a lower proportion of its residents living in housing owned outright or with a mortgage, and a higher proportion in social rented housing than all comparator areas. 20% of households in Great Faringdon are socially rented, including 113 (3.8%) that are rented from the local authority, and 502 (16.7%) that are other social rented. Across Vale of White Horse, 1,230 households (2.5%) are rented from the local authority and 5,353 (10.8%) other social rented. In 2012, the last year for which data is available, there were 2,796 households on local authority housing waiting lists in the Vale of White Horse.⁹⁶

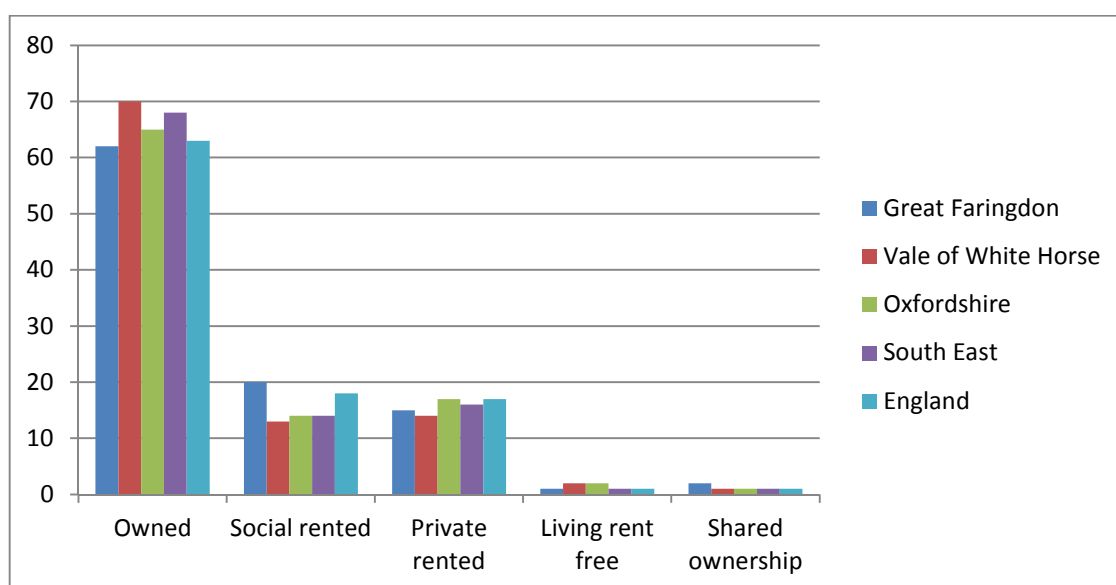


Figure 8.4 – Tenure by household

Future baseline

8.2.13 A significant proportion of deprivation experienced by people living in the plan area is likely to result from barriers to housing and services.

8.2.14 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.

8.3 What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

- Population growth in the plan area will need to be appropriately managed to minimise impacts and maximise accessibility to services, facilities and amenities.
- An ageing population has the potential to lead to implications for service provision

⁹⁵ DCLG, statistics sourced from Shelter Housing Databank website: http://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/housing_databank [accessed 11/13] This data is not available at ward or parish level.

⁹⁶ DCLG (2012) Social rented housing: demand and supply

- New community and employment provision in Faringdon should reflect existing and future needs in the town.

8.4 What are the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the plan for the Population and Communities sustainability topic?

8.4.1 Table 8.3 presents the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the FNP in relation to the Population and Housing topic.

Table 8.3: SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions for the Population and Communities topic

SA OBJECTIVE	FARINGDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES
Reduce poverty and deprivation and promote more inclusive and self-contained communities.	Will the option/proposal help to... • Tackle the causes of poverty and deprivation? • Encourage and promote social cohesion? • Maximise opportunities within the most deprived areas? • Increase the ability of 'hard-to-reach' groups to influence decisions? • Minimise fuel poverty? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents? • Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people? • Encourage active involvement of local people in community activities? • Maintain and enhance rural facilities?
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.	

9 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

SA TOPIC	THEMES CONSIDERED
Healthy communities	• Health indicators • Healthcare inequalities • Sport, fitness and activity levels

9.1 What's the sustainability 'context'?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

9.1.1 Key messages include -

- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities'.
- A core planning principle is to 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all'.
- 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.
- 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.

Supplementing the NPPF

Box 9.1: Further policy in relation to 'health'

Fair Society, Healthy Lives⁹⁷ ('The Marmot Review') investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is: *'overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities'*.

It highlights three main policy actions to ensure that the built environment promotes health and reduces inequalities. These should be applied on a universal basis, but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage. Specifically these actions are to:

- Fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, environmental and health systems to address the social determinants of health in each locality.
- Prioritise policies and interventions that both reduce health inequalities and mitigate climate change by: improving active travel; improving good quality open and green spaces; improving the quality of food in local areas; and improving the energy efficiency of housing.
- Support locally developed and evidence-based community regeneration programmes that remove barriers to community participation and action; and reduce social isolation.

The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in producing health outcomes is well demonstrated by recent Government legislation. **The Health and Social Care Act 2012** transfers responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government⁹⁸, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

Box 9.2: Influence of nature on and community well-being

The report **Natural Solutions** from the New Economics Foundation looks to highlight evidence from recent studies that demonstrates the important role that the natural world can play in delivering well-being and the delivery of key societal goals such as health, education, urban regeneration and crime reduction.

It points to the relationship between access to nature and positive health outcomes, with both physical and mental health benefits on offer through increased physical activity and environmental experience and contact. The natural environment is also described as potentially being a resource to help reduce crime levels and increase community cohesion by providing a neutral space in which people can meet and interact. In addition, green spaces and other outdoor locations can provide key environments for effective learning, with this particularly being the case for children not engaged in formal learning.

The local context

9.1.2 Key messages from the Local Plan Part 1 include:

- Faringdon is classed as a 'Market Town' which has the potential for significant development to increase jobs and homes in order to help sustain and enhance services and facilities, promoting better levels of self-containment and viable sustainable communities.
- Based on the above, two strategic sites are proposed at Faringdon, to the south-west of Faringdon and the south of Faringdon (both 200 dwellings). A further 890 dwellings in total are proposed in Faringdon's hinterland at Shrivenham and Stanford-in-the-Vale; both of which should according to the Local Plan turn to Faringdon for their 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.

⁹⁷ 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)

⁹⁸ Upper tier and unitary local authorities

- 9.1.3 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
 - provide contributions towards redressing the identified green infrastructure deficit in the area surrounding Faringdon.

9.2 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

Current baseline

- 9.2.1 The parish has two GP surgeries: the White Horse Medical Practice and the Fern Hill Practice, both based in the Health Centre on Volunteer Way. The White Horse Practice has nine registered GPs (although not all are full time) and the Fern Hill Practice has three GPs. In October 2012 the patient list sizes were as follows: White Horse Medical Practice, 9,939; and Fern Hill Medical Practice, 4,425⁹⁹.
- 9.2.2 At present, there are two day centre facilities for the elderly in Faringdon: the Faringdon/Bromsgrove Day Centre and Oakwood Day Centre.
- 9.2.3 General health across the plan area is relatively favourable; with 84.4% of people in 'good' or 'very good' health¹⁰⁰. This is broadly comparable to the district, region and national averages; as shown in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1: Health

	Great Faringdon	Vale of White Horse	South East	England
Very Good Health	49.4	51.9	49.0	47.2
Good Health	35.0	34.0	34.6	34.2
Fair Health	11.6	10.8	12.0	13.1
Bad Health	3.2	2.6	3.4	4.2
Very Bad Health	0.9	0.7	1.0	1.2

- 9.2.4 Overall, of the total population of the Great Faringdon area, 15.1% have been classified as suffering from long-term health problems or disability¹⁰¹. This is more than the Vale average (14.2%) but less than for the South East (15.7%) and England (17.6%).
- 9.2.5 No data exists for the plan area for life expectancy and health indicators; however for the district level the 2013 Health Profile¹⁰² shows that life expectancy in the Vale is 83.0 for men and 86.4 for women; above the national average of 73.8 and 79.3, respectively. There is, however, a difference of 4.2 years for men and 3.1 years for women in life expectancy in the Vale between the most and least deprived populations.

⁹⁹ Faringdon Town Council (2014) Evidence Base Review Update

¹⁰⁰ ONS (2013) Census 2011 Health and Provision of Unpaid Care (KS301EW)

¹⁰¹ ONS (2013) Census 2011 Long-Term Health Problem or Disability (QS303EW)

¹⁰² Public Health England (2013) Health Profile 2013 [online] available at: <http://www.afho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=127265> (accessed 02/03/2014)

- 9.2.6 Health is generally better in the Vale than the England average. Priorities in the Vale of White Horse are to reduce obesity in children, increase physical activity and improve access to screening programmes¹⁰³.
- 9.2.7 Allotments are becoming increasingly popular and at present the c.200 allotments in Canada Lane are insufficient for existing demand. As at October 2013, there were 79 individuals on the allotment waiting list¹⁰⁴. The allotments are owned by the National Trust, of which 26 full-size and twelve half-size plots are administered by the Town Council.
- 9.2.8 Faringdon has a Leisure Centre which opened in 1990. The town 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.
- 9.2.9 Faringdon offers a number of leisure opportunities to its residents but is also a local hub for a large rural area. Because of this, it needs to manage the diverse needs of a large number of people and have a large variety of opportunities available. Many people travel to Oxford or Swindon for large entertainment venues or to Wantage, Witney, Abingdon and Didcot for some facilities.
- 9.2.10 A Leisure and Sports Facility Strategy consultation for the Vale¹⁰⁵ reported that Faringdon has a 50% usage and recommends no further development, only improvement to existing facilities, despite the increase in housing. 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.
- 9.2.11 Faringdon has a number of play areas for children: Marlborough Gardens, Pitts Park, Tuckers Park, Oakwood Park, Coleshill Drive and Volunteer Way. These are all relatively small 'town style' parks for younger children with limited scope for teenagers.
- 9.2.12 There is a recognised green infrastructure deficit in the area surrounding Faringdon. 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

- 9.2.13 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.
- 9.2.14 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.
- 9.2.15 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.

¹⁰³ Public Health England (2013) Health Profile 2013 [online] available at: <http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=127265> (accessed 02/03/2014)

¹⁰⁴ Faringdon Town Council (2014) Evidence Base Review Update

¹⁰⁵ 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)

9.3 What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

- The plan area, in common with many other areas, is experiencing an ageing population. This will have implications for health service provision and accessibility to other services, facilities and amenities.
- The population of the plan area is expected to grow in the future, to over 11,000 people. Healthcare provision for an increased population will be key issue.
- Investment in open space, sports facilities and walking and cycling infrastructure should be supported in order to encourage increased physical activity.

9.4 What are the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the plan for the Healthy Communities sustainability topic?

9.4.1 Table 9.1 presents the SA Objective and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the FNP in relation to the Healthy Communities topic.

Table 9.1: SA Objective and appraisal questions for the Healthy Communities topic

SA OBJECTIVE	FARINGDON AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
Improve the health and well-being of Faringdon's residents.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups? • Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities? • Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with national standards? • Improve access to the countryside for recreation?

10 EDUCATION AND SKILLS

SA TOPIC	THEMES CONSIDERED
Education and skills	- Education and skills - Unemployment

10.1 What's the sustainability 'context'?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 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'.

The local context

10.1.1 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.

10.1.2 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.

10.2 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

Current baseline

10.2.1 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 Qualification¹⁰⁶, as shown in Figure 10.1. This is below the district level (37.2%) but higher than both the regional (29.9%) and national (27.4%) averages¹⁰⁷. 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%).

¹⁰⁶ 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).

¹⁰⁷ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Qualifications and Students (KS501EW)

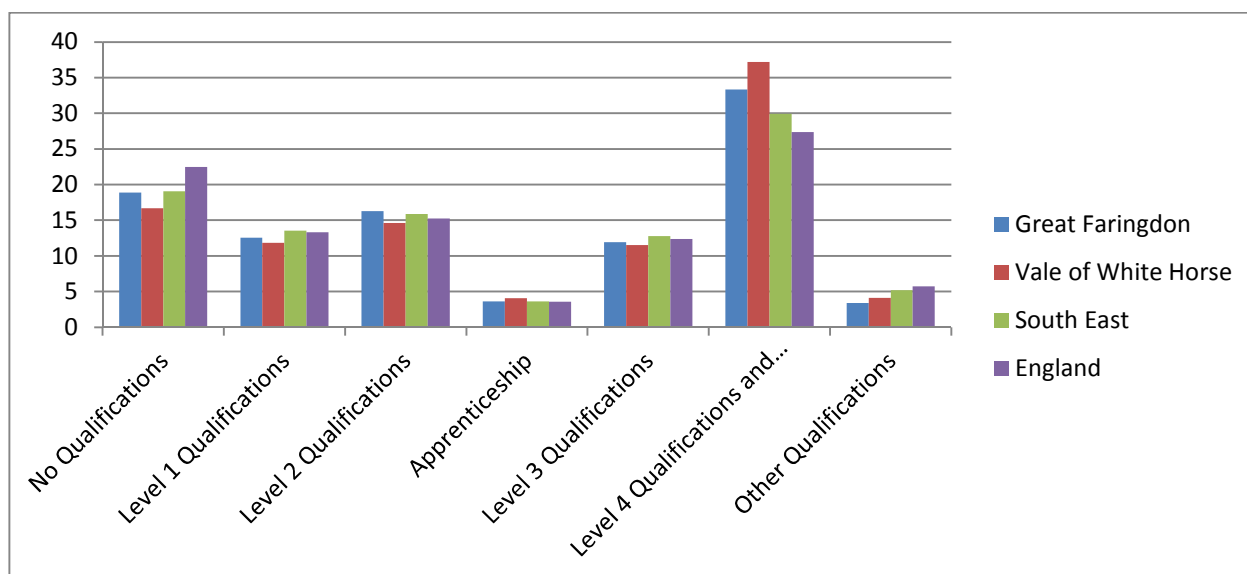


Figure 10.1: Highest Level of Qualification, 2011 (QS501EW)

10.2.2 Figure 10.2 highlights that 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. There are fewer full-time students resident in the parish than elsewhere.

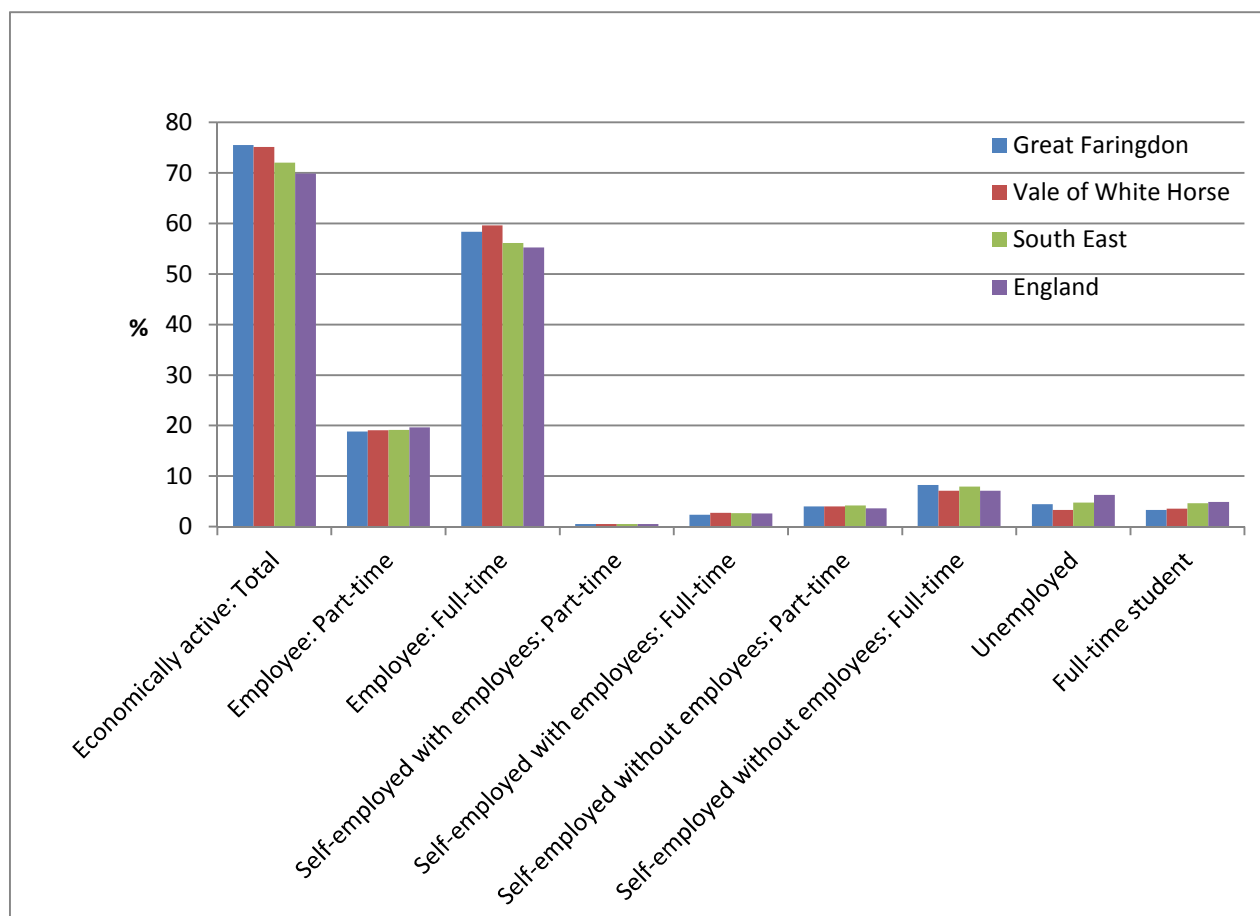


Figure 10.2: Distribution of employment type for the economically active at the 2011 census (QS601EW)

- 10.2.3 Figure 10.3 shows that 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.

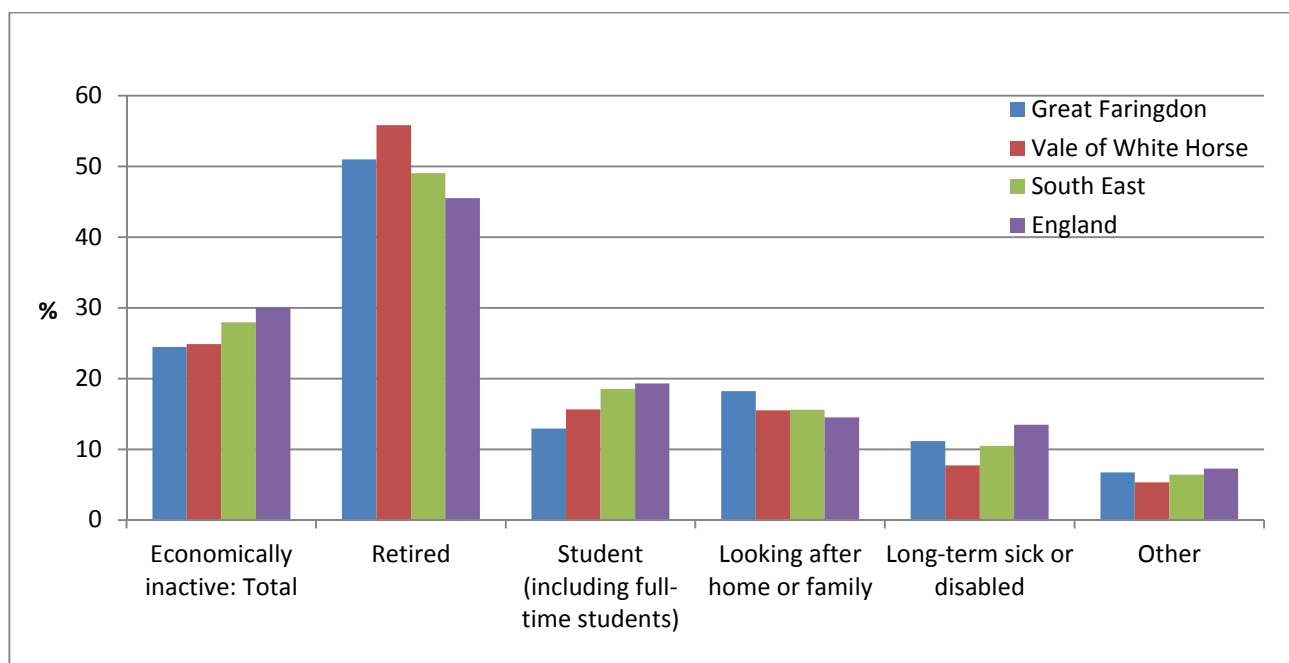


Figure 10.3: Distribution of employment type for the economically inactive at the 2011 census (QS601EW)

- 10.2.4 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). The latter was under threat of closure but an Action Group is organising a new management team to run the school. Figures 10.4 to 10.6 provide the latest available information for key stage educational achievement at each of the town's schools from Ofsted's School Data Dashboard¹⁰⁸.
- 10.2.5 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.
- 10.2.6 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 compared to independent schools¹⁰⁹. 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'. Specialising in engineering, the college offers a range of GCSE, A-level, BTEC and other qualifications. Table 10.1 shows GCSE attainment at Faringdon Community College.

¹⁰⁸ Ofsted (2014) School Data Dashboard [online] available at: <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/> (accessed 02/03/2014)

¹⁰⁹ Faringdon Town Council (2014) Evidence Base Review Update

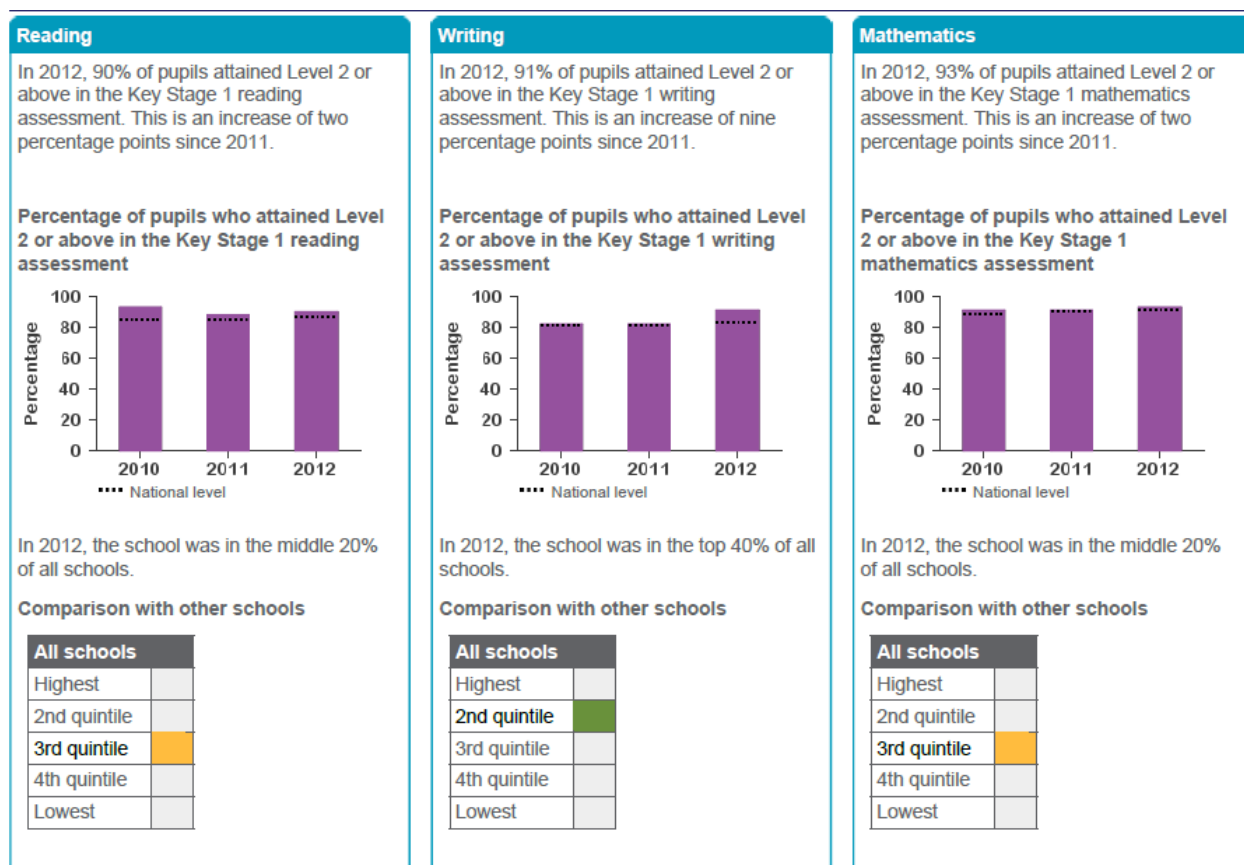


Figure 10.4: Faringdon Infant School¹¹⁰

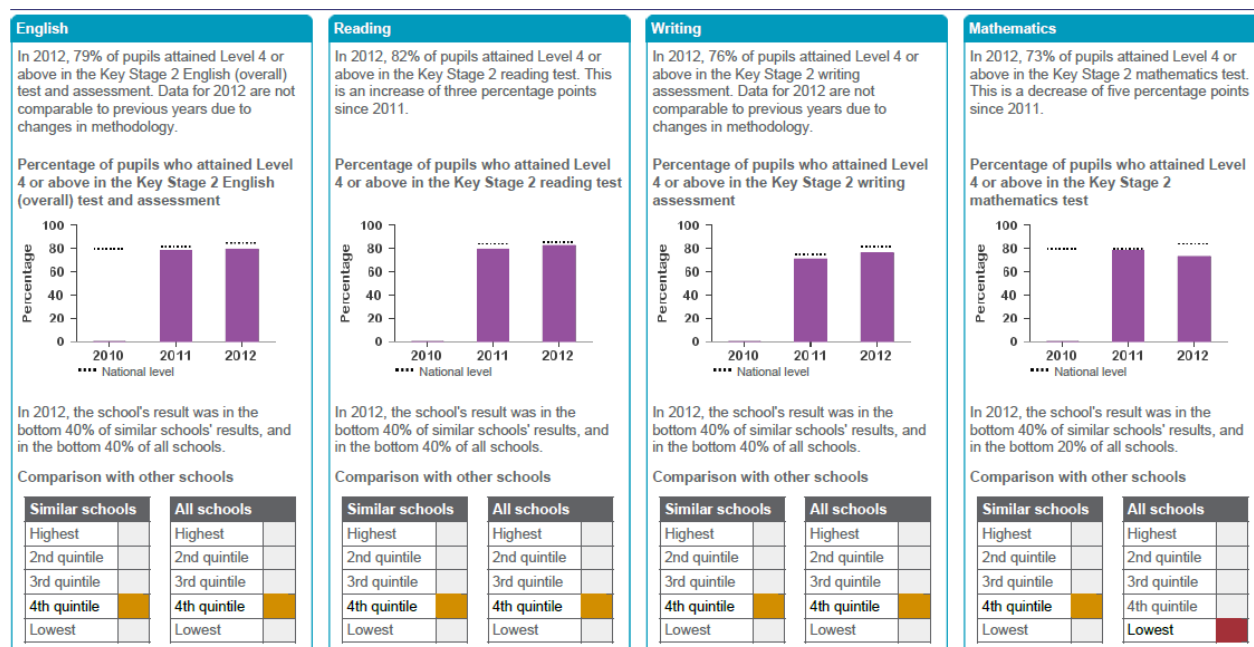


Figure 10.5: Faringdon Junior School¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Ofsted (2014) School Data Dashboard [online] available at: <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/> (accessed 02/03/2014)

¹¹¹ Ofsted (2014) School Data Dashboard [online] available at: <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/> (accessed 02/03/2014)

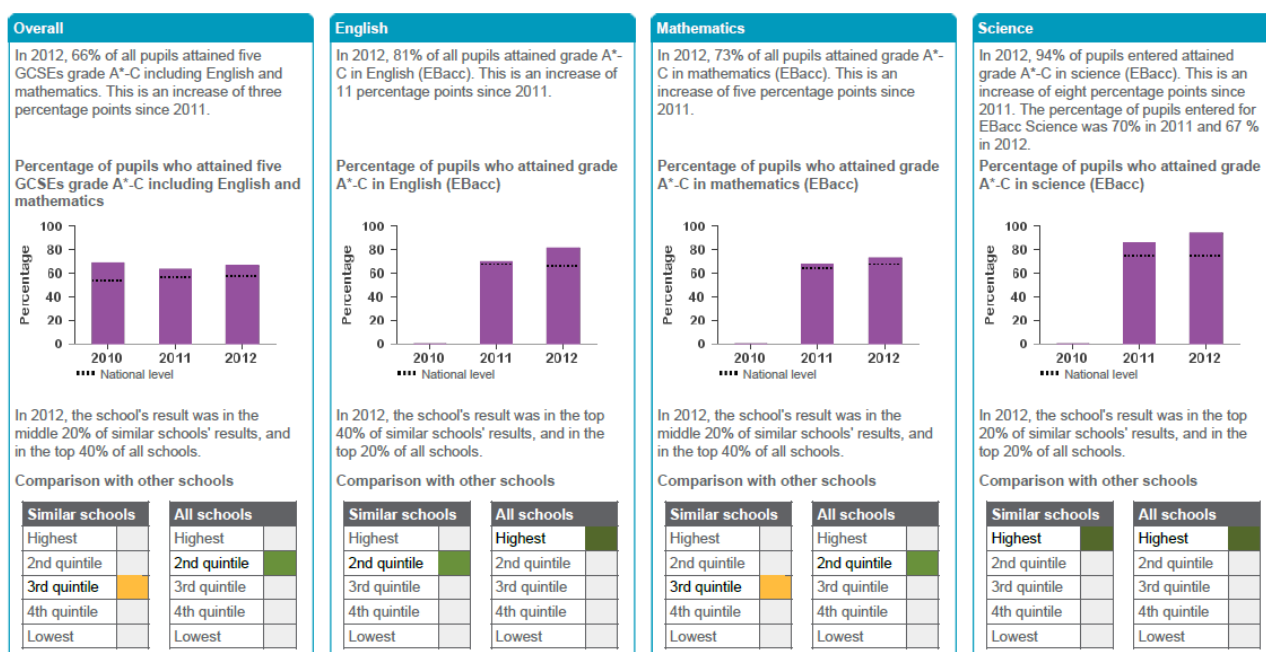


Figure 10.6: Faringdon Community College¹¹²

Table 10.1: GCSE results for Faringdon Community College (Source: DoE and FCC)

Year	Pupils achieving 5 A*- C GCSEs including English and Maths
2013	72%
2012	66%
2011	64%
2010	69%
2009	63%
2008	62%

Future baseline

- 10.2.7 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.

10.3 What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

- Although educational attainment is improving, there is a need to improve attainment at schools in Faringdon.

¹¹² Ofsted (2014) School Data Dashboard [online] available at: <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/> (accessed 02/03/2014)

10.4 What are the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the plan for the Education and Skills sustainability topic?

10.4.1 Table 10.1 presents the appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the FNP in relation to the Education and Skills topic.

Table 10.1: SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions for the Education and Skills topic

SA OBJECTIVE	FARINGDON AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Improve educational attainment and skill levels in Faringdon.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Provide and support high quality educational facilities? • Improve the skills and qualifications of young people? • Help to provide a supply of skilled labour to match the needs of local businesses?

11 TRANSPORTATION

SA TOPIC	THEMES CONSIDERED
Transportation	• Transportation infrastructure • Traffic flows • Walking and cycling • Accessibility

11.1 What's the sustainability 'context'?

- 11.1.1 European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on 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.
- 11.1.2 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 covers the period from 2011 to 2030 and sets out the transport plan for the county.

Box 11.1: Walking and Cycling

The NHS National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) have recently published guidance on **Local measures to promote walking and cycling**.¹¹³ The evidence presented in this report suggests that 'effective support' from local councils plays a key role in increasing rates of walking and cycling. The report emphasises that increasing the numbers of people who walk and cycle, and how often, can reduce the health costs associated with air pollution and inactivity. Relevant recommendations made in the report include:

- Ensure local, high-level strategic policies and plans support and encourage both walking and cycling.
- Develop coordinated, cross-sector programmes to promote walking and cycling for recreation as well as for transport, based on a long-term vision of what can be achieved, taking account of the needs of the whole population.
- Address infrastructure issues that may prevent people from wanting to walk.

Another report - '**Understanding Walking and Cycling**' (2011)¹¹⁴ - looked to understand why sustainable and active travel is relatively uncommon in British towns when, potentially, higher levels of walking and cycling could reduce congestion, improve local environmental quality, improve personal health and reduce transport-related greenhouse gas emissions. It recognises that physical infrastructure alone is not sufficient, with a more holistic approach required to incentivise such journeys. A number of the policy goals set out are issues that can be addressed to some extent through planning. These include: creating a safe physical environment for pedestrians and cyclists – e.g. through fully segregated cycle paths; and restrictions on vehicle access; and reducing trip distances in urban areas – e.g. providing more facilities close to residential areas; restrict out-of-town retail developments.

¹¹³ Available online at: <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH41>

¹¹⁴ 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/UWCReportSept2011.pdf (accessed 11/2013)

The local context

11.1.3 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 through their current levels of facilities, services and employment opportunities. Market Towns have the greatest long-term potential for development, to provide the jobs and homes 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.

11.1.4 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;
- 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.

11.2 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

Current baseline

11.2.1 Figure 11.1 shows the availability of cars and vans in the plan area. Car and van ownership in the plan area is broadly similar to district averages and higher than the averages for England. Ownership is, however, slightly lower than the district average, with more households having no cars or vans and fewer households having two or more cars or vans.

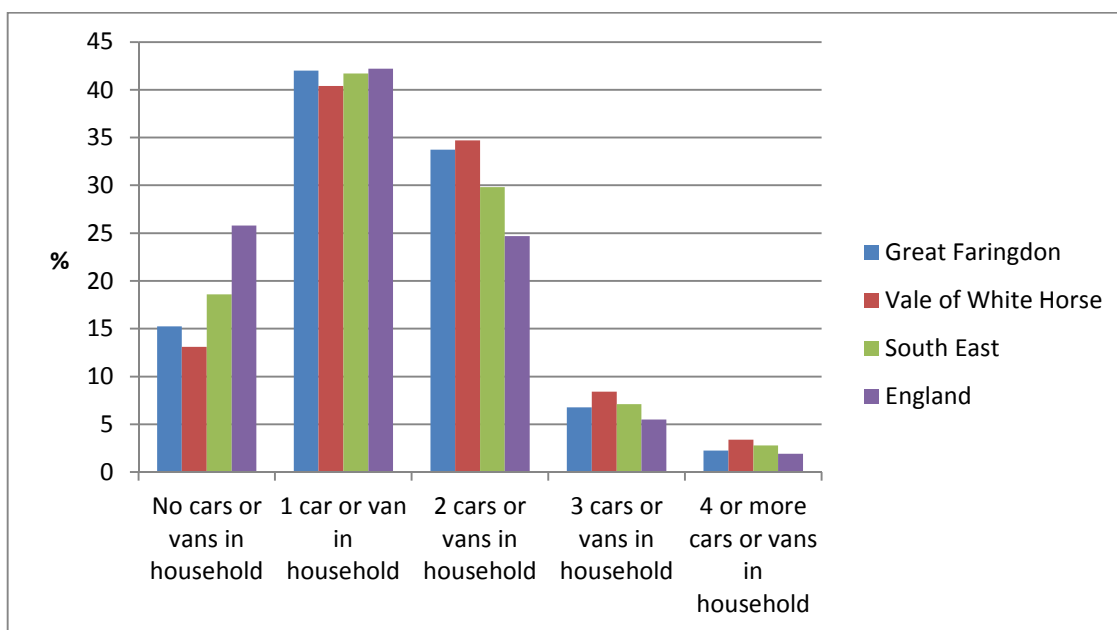


Figure 11.1: Car and van ownership¹¹⁵

11.2.2

Figure 11.2 shows the method of travel to work for residents in the plan area, the district, region and England. As highlighted by the figure, the plan area has higher rates of cycling and walking to work than Vale of White Horse, regional and national averages, with 48.2% of people travelling to work by these modes.

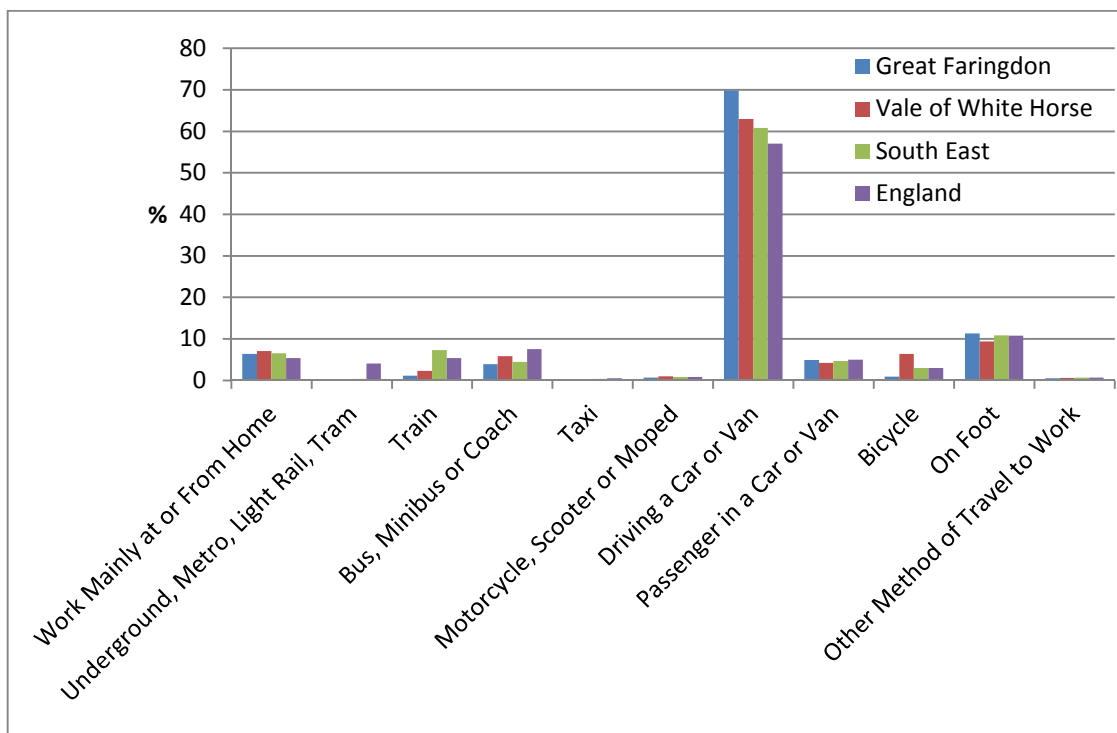


Figure 11.2: Method of Travel to Work¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Car or Van Availability (QS416EW)

¹¹⁶ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Method of Travel to Work (QS701EW)

- 11.2.3 The plan area has low levels of rail use. With the nearest railway stations to the plan area located in Didcot, Swindon and Oxford, this is likely to reflect poor rail access in the area. The branch line from Challow to Faringdon was closed in the 1960s. Reopening Challow station or delivering proposals for a new station north of Wantage are considered as unlikely to be delivered in the near future.
- 11.2.4 Travel by bicycle to work 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. Walking to work is broadly in line with the regional average but higher than the Vale average. 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, as shown by Figure 11.3); there are a large number of cul-de sacs in the town; and there is inadequate cycle infrastructure and poor cycle connections throughout the town. A number of proposed cycle routes have been proposed to encourage cycling in the town, as highlighted in the Farcycles Report¹¹⁷.



Figure 11.3: Walking distances to Faringdon town centre¹¹⁸

- 11.2.5 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 Vale (62.9%), South East (60.8) and national (57.0%) averages.
- 11.2.6 Faringdon is served by the A420 approximately 1.5km away. This road provides the key route to Oxford and Swindon. The A417 also runs through Faringdon, linking the town to Stanford-in-the-Vale and Wantage to the south and Lechlade to the north.

¹¹⁷ Farcycles (2010) Faringdon Cycle Network [online] available at: http://www.faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk/files/resourcesmodule/@random4c12155f58a6f/1276254031_Final_Report_June_2010_Appendix_vii_Faringdon_Cycle_Network.pdf (accessed 03/03/2014)

¹¹⁸ Faringdon Town Council (2014) Evidence Base Review Update

- 11.2.7 Faringdon has a relatively good range of bus services for a town of its size; however, there is scope to improve links to some nearby towns other than those served by the Oxford and Swindon route. The Swindon to Oxford 66 bus service is half-hourly to both Oxford and Swindon during working hours. Section 106 contributions are currently being collected towards improving this service to three buses per hour in each direction. Bus routes to other locations such as Wantage, Fernham, Longcot, Bourton, South Marston and Great Coxwell Cirencester are less frequent. Key destinations not directly accessible by bus include Abingdon, Witney, Highworth, Lechlade, Didcot, Milton Park and Harwell.
- 11.2.8 Road congestion is generally not a significant issue in Faringdon other than during peak periods, largely as a result of the opening of the A420 bypass diverting traffic away from Faringdon town centre. Parking is a particular problem around schools at the start and end of the day; and in the town centre due to both legal and illegal parking, causing congestion at peak times.
- 11.2.9 With the growth of car use, fewer local people use Faringdon as their primary service centre¹¹⁹, with more using out of town supermarkets and centres further afield, such as in Swindon, Oxford, Wantage and, increasingly, Witney since the redevelopment of its shopping area¹²⁰.
- 11.2.10 According to studies undertaken by Vale of White Horse District Council, Faringdon is described by the *Evidence Base Review* as the 'least sustainable' settlement in the district. This is as a result of the high percentages of local residents who are recorded as having to travel farther than 5km for activities including employment, education, main food shopping, top-up food shopping, non-food shopping and recreation. Faringdon scored the lowest out of all the settlements in the district for the ranking of these activities¹²¹.

Future baseline

- 11.2.11 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 corridor (Route 66) is likely to remain at low levels. The viability of bus services may be supported by future population growth.

11.3 What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

- New development areas should be situated in accessible locations which limit the need to travel by the private car. Improving the self-sufficiency of the town is key to reducing out-commuting and reducing the need to travel
- Bus use is low in the plan area but has the potential to grow. New development should seek to support improvements in bus routes and be located in areas accessible by bus.
- Walking and cycling rates are low in the plan area. New development areas should be linked by high quality walking and cycling routes.

11.4 What are the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the plan for the Transport sustainability topic?

- 11.4.1 Table 11.1 presents the SA Objective and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the FNP in relation to the Transport topic.

¹¹⁹ Updated Assessment of Convenience Goods Capacity in Faringdon and Abingdon, for Vale of White Horse District Council, March 2010, Savills Table 3.4

¹²⁰ Faringdon Town Council (2014) Evidence Base Review Update

¹²¹ 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

Table 11.1: SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions for the Transport topic

SA OBJECTIVE	FARINGDON AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: TRANSPORT
Reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable transport.	Will the option/proposal help to: • Reduce the need to travel through more sustainable patterns of land use and development? • Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel? • Increase the self-sufficiency of the town and reduce out-commuting? • Enable transport infrastructure improvements?

12 ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE

FARINGDON SA TOPIC	THEMES CONSIDERED
Economy and enterprise	• Economic sectors • Skills and qualifications • Employment sectors • Sites, premises and travel to work

12.1 What's the sustainability 'context'?

Internationally established objectives

- 12.1.1 In 2010, the European Union published its strategy for achieving growth up until 2020.¹²² This strategy 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.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 12.1.2 Key messages 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.

¹²² 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)

Supplementing the NPPF

Box 12.1: The Local Growth White Paper

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. Places that are currently successful may also wish to prioritise activity to maximise further growth by removing barriers, such as infrastructure constraints. However, the White Paper also emphasises that: ‘This does not mean that every place will grow at the same rate or that everywhere will, or will want to, become an economic powerhouse. Long term economic trends make differences in economic performance inevitable and these can and do change over time’.

Specific examples of areas where it makes sense for Government intervention to tackle market failures include: investment in infrastructure; tackling barriers such as transport congestion and poor connections; other support to areas facing long term growth challenges where this can help them manage their transition to growth industries; and strategic intervention where it can stimulate private sector investment in new green technology in strategic locations.

Finally, the White Paper identifies that economic policy should be judged on the degree to which it delivers strong, sustainable and balanced growth of income and employment over the long-term. More specifically, growth should be: broad-based industrially and geographically, ensuring everyone has access to the opportunities that growth brings (including future generations), whilst also focused on businesses that compete with the best internationally.

Vale of White Horse Draft Local Plan (2013-2014)

12.1.3 Key messages from the Draft Local Plan¹²³ in relation to the Economy and Enterprise topic 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.
- 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.

¹²³ Vale of White Horse District Council (2013) Local Plan 2029, Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies, consultation draft

12.2 What's the sustainability 'baseline'?

Current baseline

- 12.2.1 As Figure 12.1 illustrates, economic activity rates in Great Faringdon are high in comparison to local, regional and national averages. Rates of full-time employment are higher in Faringdon (44.1%), Vale of White Horse (44.8%) and Oxfordshire (42.6%) 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.

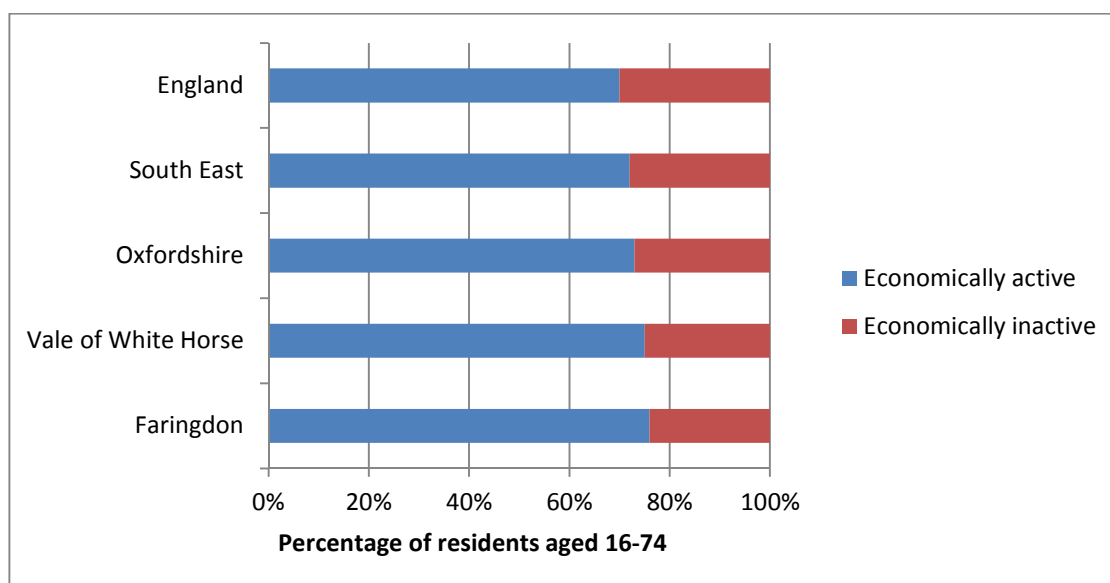


Figure 12.1 – Economic activity

- 12.2.2 Figure 12.2 shows the highest level of qualification attained by residents of the plan area, in comparison with Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire, the South East, and England. The parish of Great Faringdon, in line with the Vale of White Horse and Oxfordshire, has a highly qualified population compared to regional and national averages. 33.3% of working-age residents of the plan area are qualified to NVQ level four or above; this is lower than the figures for Vale of White Horse (37.2%) and Oxfordshire (35.7%), but higher than the figures for the South East (29.9%) and England (27.4%).¹²⁴
- 12.2.3 21.8% of residents of Faringdon are educated to degree level or above; again lower than Vale of White Horse and Oxfordshire (25.6% and 25.8% respectively), but high in comparison to regional and national averages (18.7% and 17.4% respectively).¹²⁵
- 12.2.4 Faringdon (13.2%), in line with Oxfordshire (14.1%), has a significant proportion of the workforce working 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%) and Oxfordshire (9.2%) than across England (6.7%). Faringdon has a slightly higher than average proportion of its workforce working in the construction industry (9.3% compared with 6.9% across Oxfordshire and 7.7% nationally).¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Level 4 qualifications include bachelors degrees, NVQs at Level 4, HNDs and HNCs.

¹²⁵ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Qualifications gained (QS502EW)

¹²⁶ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Industry (QS605EW)

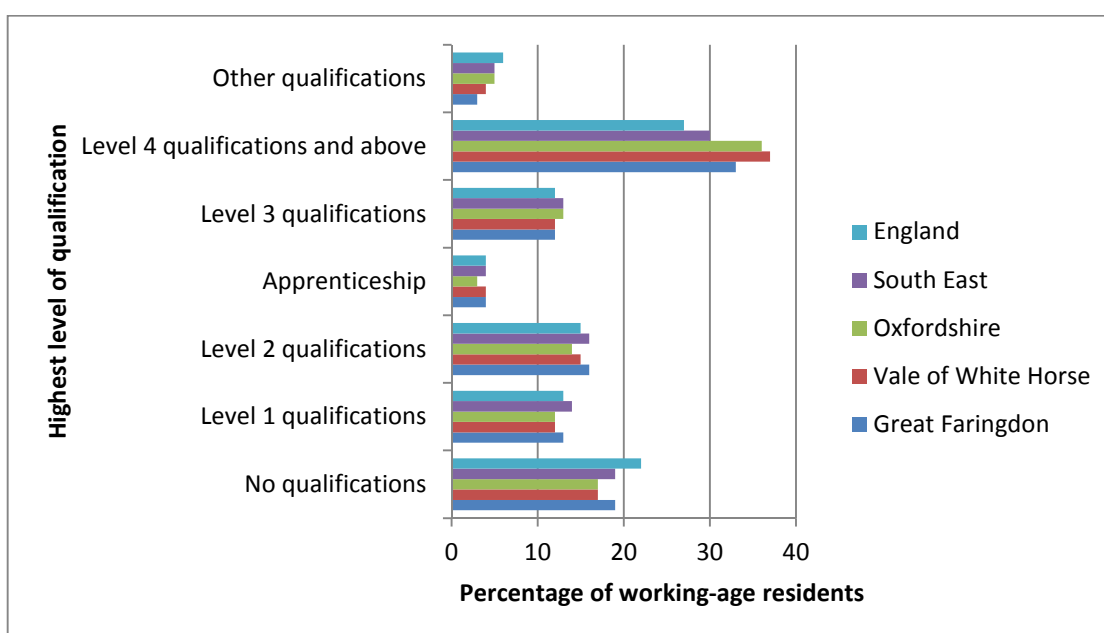


Figure 12.2 – Highest Level of Qualification¹²⁷

12.2.5

Figure 12.3 shows the occupation of working-age residents. Overall, the occupation profile is largely similar to regional and national averages. However, Faringdon, Vale of White Horse and Oxfordshire all have a higher proportion of residents working in professional occupations, and a smaller proportion of residents in sales and customer service occupations than the South East and England. 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.

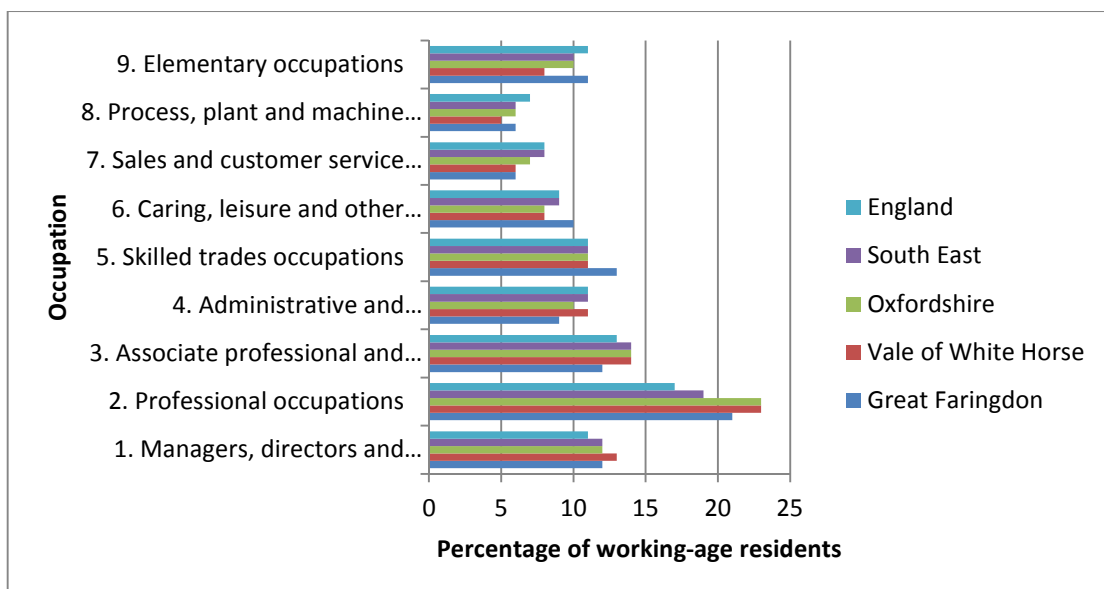


Figure 12.3: Occupation of working-age residents¹²⁸

¹²⁷ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Highest Level of Qualification (QS501EW)

¹²⁸ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Occupation 2011 (KS608EW)

- 12.2.6 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 as problems for the town: residents of Faringdon travel the furthest to work of any of the major settlements in the Vale of White Horse, with 42% travelling the 15-20km to Swindon and 34% travelling more than 30km. 80% of working residents commute by car, the highest in the Vale. In this context, 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

- 12.2.7 The plan area, in common with the wider district, 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.
- 12.2.8 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.
- 12.2.9 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. Given the occupation and skills profile of the plan area, 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.

12.3 What are the key issues that should be a focus of SA?

- There is potential to diversify the employment and industrial base of Faringdon to help ensure that the local economy becomes more self-sufficient and out-commuting is reduced.
- New employment provision in the town should be accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes.
- The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to ensure that Faringdon retains its role as a key service centre for the Western Vale Sub-Area.
- The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to encourage the visitor economy in the town.

12.4 What are the SA Objectives and appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the plan for the Economy and Enterprise sustainability topic?

12.4.1 Table 12.1 presents the appraisal questions that will be used to appraise the FNP in relation to the Economy and Enterprise topic.

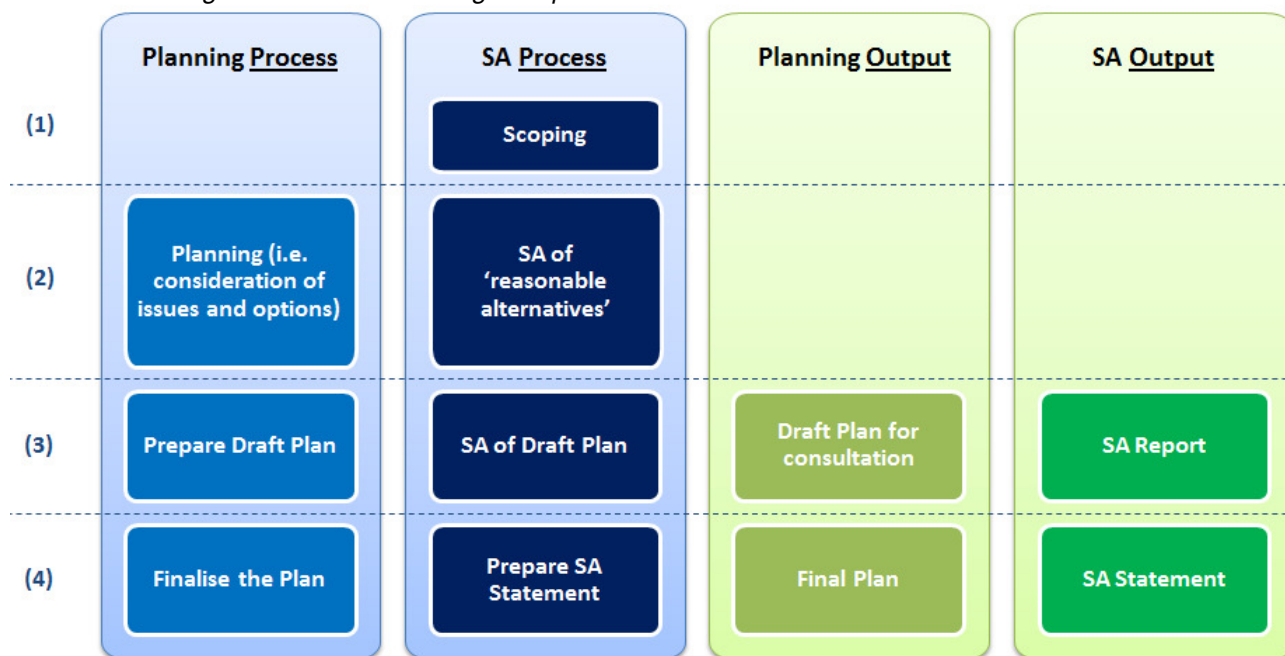
Table 12.1: SA Framework of objectives and appraisal questions for the Economy and Enterprise topic

SA OBJECTIVE	FARINGDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SA APPRAISAL QUESTIONS: ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE
Support a strong and sustainable economy within the plan area.	Will the option/proposal help to... • Provide an appropriate amount of employment land in the plan area and ensure that suitable sites are available? • Retain existing employment sites which make a significant contribution to the overall employment offer, to ensure that the overall quantum for employment is increased? • Support the economy of the plan area and provide a range of employment opportunities close to where people live? • Ensure skills provision meets business requirements, so a greater proportion of the local population can share the benefits of economic success? • Increase the economic impact and value of tourism and take steps to convert day visitors to visitors staying overnight?
Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of Faringdon town centre in order to strengthen its role as a service centre.	• Continue to maintain the vitality and viability of the retail offer in Faringdon, and strengthen its service centre role? • Identify and support suitable roles for the town centre in the face of competition from larger nearby centres outside the plan area? • Create an attractive town centre environment, which appeals to visitors and shoppers alike?

13 NEXT STEPS

13.1.1 SA scoping (the current stage) is the first stage in a four-stage plan-making / SA process (see Figure 13.1).

Figure 13.1: The four stage SA process



13.1.2 The next stage (Stage 2) will involve appraising 'reasonable alternatives' for a range of Neighbourhood Plan issues and feeding back findings to the Council so that they might be taken into account when preparing the Draft Plan.

13.1.3 Once the Draft Plan has been prepared it will be subjected to SA and an SA Report prepared for consultation alongside it.

13.1.4 The SA Report must contain a range of specified information, essentially: 1) an appraisal of the Draft Plan and reasonable alternatives, 2) 'outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with'; and 3) other information including a summary of the SA scope and a description of 'measures envisaged for monitoring'.

13.1.5 The purpose of providing this information in the SA Report is to inform both a) those who might want to make representations on the Draft Plan approach / alternatives; and b) those tasked with finalising the Plan subsequent to the Draft Plan consultation.

13.1.6 Subsequent to consultation on the Draft Plan / SA Report and Examination the Plan will be finalised and undergo referendum. At the time of Plan adoption an 'SA Statement' will be prepared. The role of the SA Statement is essentially twofold:

- 1) It must bring the story of plan-making / SA up to date. Whereas the SA Report must only explain the reasons behind selecting the Draft Plan approach subsequent to a consideration of alternatives, the SA Statement must also explain the reasons behind decisions taken subsequent to the consultation on the Draft Plan (and the influence of the SA Report).
- 2) It must present 'measures decided concerning monitoring' (as opposed to the SA Report, which must present only 'measures envisaged concerning monitoring').

Consultation on the Scoping Report

- 13.1.7 Public involvement through consultation is a key element of the SA process. At this scoping stage, the SA Regulations require consultation with statutory consultation bodies but not full consultation with the public.
- 13.1.8 The statutory consultation bodies are English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England. The Scoping Report has been released to these three statutory consultees.
- 13.1.9 Consultees are invited to comment on the content of this Scoping Report, in particular the evidence base for the SA, the identified key issues and the proposed SA Framework.

Download and Viewing Details

- 13.1.10 The Scoping Report can be downloaded at: <http://faringdonplan.webs.com/>
- 13.1.11 Alternatively hard copies can be viewed at:
- Faringdon Town Council
Corn Exchange
Gloucester Street
Faringdon
Oxfordshire SN7 7JA
- 13.1.12 This consultation period runs from 24th March 2014 until 28th April 2014. Comments on the Scoping Report should be sent to:
- Hilary Sherman
Deputy Town Clerk
Faringdon Town Council
The Corn Exchange
Faringdon
Oxfordshire
SN7 7JA
- Email address: hilary@faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk
- 13.1.13 All comments received on the Scoping Report will be reviewed and will influence the development of the SA where appropriate.