Barton Area Action Plan

Help us shape the new community

Preferred Options Consultation

May 2011

Building a world-class city for everyone
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The maps and illustrations in this document have been prepared by LDA Design with the exception of Maps 10 and 11 which were submitted to Oxford City Council by Ruskin College.
Foreword

Oxford badly needs more homes.

The city has a vibrant economy: a world-class knowledge-based sector centred on two leading universities and medical research, a large visitor economy and an important manufacturing sector. Housing demand – whether it is market or affordable – exceeds supply, placing a severe strain on housing in Oxford.

The 36 hectares known as the ‘Land at Barton’ is the largest residential development opportunity in Oxford for many years. It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to provide a large number of new homes and associated facilities in the form of a thriving and vibrant new community that forms part of our city. Plans and policies do not create communities – people do that. But plans and policies have an important role in shaping places, and the shape of places can foster a sense of community among people.

With this Plan we wish to create a place that has its own distinctive identity and is integrated with the communities around it. We also have the opportunity – and responsibility – to plan in such a way that the existing communities close to the development benefit from the changes that take place. This could be through access to new community facilities and other services, better links to the rest of Oxford and to the surrounding countryside, and by returning pockets of neglected land to good use.

This is an exciting opportunity to help shape the future of Oxford. We look forward to receiving your comments.
Introduction

What is an Area Action Plan?
Oxford City Council is preparing an Area Action Plan (AAP) to guide future development and change associated with new homes proposed on the north-east of the city on land to the north of the ring-road at Barton. The Barton AAP will be a Development Plan Document (DPD) that forms part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Oxford. The adopted Core Strategy – the key document making up the LDF – sets the overall framework for the other DPDs, including this Plan. The AAP is a statutory document that will guide future development and change, with a strong emphasis on implementation and delivery. Once adopted the Barton AAP will set out:

- the vision for the Land at Barton
- how the opportunities presented by the development can be used to ensure that existing neighbouring communities benefit from the changes
- a series of principles and concepts to guide development
- specific policies and infrastructure requirements
- site-specific and area-based proposals to stimulate regeneration.

The adopted policy framework will form the basis against which future planning applications are judged.

Oxford City Council is preparing the AAP in its capacity as planning authority. The City Council also owns most of the Land at Barton, as well as being the housing authority and having regeneration and community development roles. It is important to emphasise that the roles of planning authority and landowner are quite separate. The City Council, as landowner, is seeking a co-investment partner to form a joint venture to deliver the infrastructure needed for the site. The joint venture partner will take part in the planning process, but the AAP’s purpose is to set out the local planning authority’s planning policies and proposals.
What is a preferred options document?

This Preferred Options document is the second formal stage in producing the AAP, setting out a range of options for consultation. These options are based on technical and financial studies, collaboration with the local community and other stakeholders, and responses to the consultation on the first stage of the AAP process during the summer of 2010. That first stage was publication of an Issues document, which identified and invited comments from the community and stakeholders on several objectives and what those might mean for the development site and adjoining areas.

This document includes the most promising options that have been identified for the AAP. It deals, in an appropriate level of detail, only with those issues that need to be covered in the AAP. The options have been assessed in a Sustainability Appraisal report that accompanies this document. The technical and financial background studies have also been published.

How can you influence the process?

This Preferred Options document represents an important opportunity for the public and stakeholders to contribute to the future planning of the Land at Barton and the adjoining communities. It is important to emphasise that this is an early stage in the process: the document is being published to stimulate debate and to invite comments on the realistic options that are available. The City Council hopes that everyone with an interest in the future of the area – residents, community groups, local organisations, businesses, employers, the joint venture partner and providers of infrastructure and services – will take the opportunity to respond to the consultation with their views about the options presented here.

The period for making comments is 13 May to 24 June 2011.

You can let us have your views by visiting the City Council’s website (www.oxford.gov.uk/Barton) or by completing and returning a questionnaire available from the City Council offices.

What happens next?

The responses to this consultation will help inform the draft AAP that the City Council will submit to the Secretary of State. Known as the Proposed Submission document, it will be published in autumn 2011, when there will be another chance for the public and stakeholders to comment. The AAP is due to be submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2012 and adopted in autumn 2012.

Stages of preparation of the Barton AAP
How is this document structured?

Context
This section sets out the strategic policy context and city-wide planning policies that establish the principles of a development site at Barton and associated regeneration in the existing communities of Barton and Northway. It also describes the site and its surroundings.

Spatial vision
This section sets out the aspirations for the area.

Objectives
In line with the spatial vision, this section takes the five objectives identified in the Issues document and explains what each one means for the new development and surrounding communities.

Area Action Plan boundary
This section includes a map showing the boundary for the AAP and explains the underlying rationale.

Options
This part of the document sets out the preferred options for the Land at Barton and the surrounding areas that seek to deliver the spatial vision and five objectives. The options are considered in terms of four different but inter-related themes:
- a vibrant and balanced new community
- integration of the new development with existing communities and the rest of Oxford
- regeneration of Barton and Northway
- innovative and responsive design.

Preferred strategy
This section explains how the preferred options combine to form our suggested preferred strategy or framework for the future development of the Land at Barton and its surroundings.

Ruskin College proposals for Ruskin Fields
The proposals relating to Ruskin Fields have a different status from those set out elsewhere in this document. They have been promoted by the landowner and have not been developed with the same ongoing and close involvement of the local community and other stakeholders that has helped shape the preferred options. We would like to receive comments on the specific proposals put forward by Ruskin College as well as on the principle, scale, nature and location of a smaller-scale development at Ruskin Fields.

Implementation and delivery
The Land at Barton is a priority housing site for the City Council. Significant infrastructure investment will be required before serviced land is ready for the first new homes in 2013. Certainty and timing of delivery are paramount. This section sets out the key issues on implementation and delivery and how we will address them, including identifying a co-investment joint venture partner to provide necessary infrastructure funding.

Next steps
This section explains how you can respond to this consultation document and outlines the remaining stages for preparing this AAP.
Planning and wider context

The city-wide planning policies that form the context for the Area Action Plan are set out in the adopted Oxford Local Plan 2016 and Oxford Core Strategy to 2026.

The adopted Core Strategy allocates ‘Land at Barton’ as a strategic location for mainly residential development. Policy CS7 provides for between 800 and 1,200 homes with supporting infrastructure, including a primary school, public open space and access improvements. The Core Strategy confirms that the land will be brought forward through an AAP. As well as defining the precise mix of uses, means of access and measures to integrate the new neighbourhood with the rest of Oxford, the AAP will provide details of flood mitigation, green infrastructure and biodiversity, and demonstrate how the development will stimulate regeneration in Barton and Northway.

The contribution of new housing from the Land at Barton and associated regeneration is a key priority for the City Council, fundamental to achieving the objectives of the Oxford City Council Corporate Plan, the Oxford Sustainable Community Strategy and the Regeneration Framework for Oxford to 2026. Alongside the AAP will be Area Regeneration Plans for Barton and Northway. Together, the AAP and the Regeneration Plans will address the Regeneration Framework challenges in terms of ‘place and infrastructure’ (physical regeneration), ‘people’ (social) and the economy. The following diagram shows the relationship between this AAP and the Area Regeneration Plans for Barton and Northway.

The Land at Barton is a ‘top priority growth scheme’ in the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan.
Relationship between Barton AAP and Area Regeneration Plan

Land at Barton
The Land at Barton and its surroundings

The area referred to in the Core Strategy as ‘Land at Barton’ is on the north-east of Oxford on land to the north of the A40 dual carriageway (the ring-road) at Barton. There are four areas surrounding the site: Barton (immediately to the east), Old Headington (to the south), Headington, including the John Radcliffe Hospital (to the south-east and south), and Northway (to the south-west). Each of these areas has its own character and local centre, facilities and open spaces.
Map 1: Context

1. Barton Leisure Centre
2. Court Place Farm Sports Ground
3. Sandhills Community Primary School
4. St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School
5. New Marston Primary School
6. St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School
7. Windmill Primary School
8. Bayard's Hill Primary School
9. St. Nicholas Primary School
10. Cheney School
11. Oxford Brookes University
12. University of Oxford Old Road Campus
13. Ruskin College
14. Thomsfield Park & Ride
15. John Radcliffe Hospital
16. Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre

To the north of the site lies Bayswater Brook and, beyond that, open countryside in South Oxfordshire District Council’s administrative area.

With the exception of Barton, the site is separated from its neighbouring communities by the ring-road, which forms part of the strategic highway network. This poses challenges for site access: at the moment the only direct vehicle access is via residential roads in Barton. It means that future plans must overcome the separating effect of the ring-road so that the new development is integrated with the rest of Oxford.

The Land at Barton extends to a total of 36 hectares. It is undeveloped, comprising mainly low-grade agricultural land used for grazing with hedgerows and trees. The Barton Village Recreation Ground – which comprises grass football pitches, children’s play area, clubhouse and hard-surfaced car-parking – lies in the north-east corner of the site. The recreation ground area was raised and levelled using waste materials during the 1950s. The landfill materials are thickest in the northern part of the area (up to 4.4-metres), thinning to grade into the pre-existing ground contours to the west, south and east. There are allotments in active use to the south of the recreation ground and the Barton Village Nature Park is in the far south-east corner.

A primary electricity substation owned by Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) lies in the centre of the site, and the land is traversed by five overhead electricity cables. The substation will remain in use, but about 2 hectares of the SSE land is surplus to the company’s needs.

Existing footpaths run alongside Bayswater Brook on the eastern half of the site and north-south across the site adjacent to the electricity substation. Drainage ditches run from the south of the site to Bayswater Brook.
Map 2: Existing infrastructure
Context
Spatial vision
Objectives
Area Action Plan boundary
Options
Preferred strategy
Ruskin College proposals for Ruskin Fields
Implementation and delivery
Next steps

Key to map 2
- Substation
- Gas pressure reduction site
- Former landfill
- High voltage electricity - overhead
- High voltage electricity - buried
- Intermediate pressure gas main
- Foul water sewer
- Fibre optics
- Bayswater Brook
- A40
Map 3: Landscape and ecology
To the south of the Land at Barton and the ring-road lies the Old Headington Conservation Area. From within the Conservation Area there are views across fields to the south of the ring-road and the development site to landscape beyond Oxford’s boundary. These views form a key feature of the rural character of Old Headington. The green open space also forms the setting of some of Old Headington’s listed buildings in views into the Conservation Area from Elsfield in South Oxfordshire.

The Land at Barton lies on the slope of the Bayswater Brook valley. The valley is enclosed by a ridge to the north that runs through Elsfield and then south-east towards the north of Barton, and to the south by a ridge where Old Headington sits. Barton Village Nature Park and the allotments in the south-east corner are on the highest ground within the site, from where the site slopes away downwards (in a northerly and westerly direction) towards the recreation ground and the electricity sub-station respectively – a 15-metre fall in height. Further west the fields slope gently towards Bayswater Brook, with the valley side becoming steeper immediately south of the ring-road, where it rises towards Old Headington.

The Land at Barton is enclosed by existing mature vegetation on and off the site, which screens it from almost all viewpoints, and is generally not visible from the Old Headington Conservation Area. It should be possible to visually contain the impact of the development on the setting of Old Headington and elsewhere.

**Ecology**

Bayswater Brook is designated as a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC). The stream corridor – together with linear woodland, semi-improved grassland and scrub, a network of hedgerows and mature trees – forms a collection of features of potential ecological interest. Ecological studies have confirmed that while there are no major constraints, some features of the site would merit retention, enhancement or restoration as part of future development. These include Bayswater Brook, which is in poor condition, particularly at the eastern section close to Barton where hedgerows and woodland are unmanaged, but which offers the potential to better support a range of species.

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – Sidlings Copse and College Pond – lies about 600-metres to the north-east of the Land at Barton in South Oxfordshire District Council’s area.

**Flood risk**

The Land at Barton is bounded to the north by Bayswater Brook. The preliminary flood risk assessment shows that none of the site lies in Flood Zone 3b (functional floodplain where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood). An area of almost 3 hectares (8% of the site) is in Flood Zone 3a (high probability of flooding).
Map 4: Flooding and drainage

Opportunities to comprehensively plan for a new community and to use the development to stimulate regeneration of existing areas are rare in Oxford. The development of the Land at Barton offers an important opportunity to bring maximum benefits to Barton, Northway and Oxford as a whole.

The development of the Land at Barton will reflect Oxford’s drive to become a more integrated and sustainable city. Mainly residential, and with efficient use of land providing over 800 new homes of mixed tenure, size and type, it will incorporate the range of land uses that form a complete neighbourhood. The development will be a new piece of the city, distinct from other areas but wholly integrated in the fabric of Oxford. It will have its own identity, with a neighbourhood core and open spaces that link the site together, drawing on the adjoining countryside, Bayswater Brook and the Old Headington Conservation Area to help create its distinctive character.

It will be integrated with the neighbouring communities. The stretch of the ring-road between a new junction and the Headington Roundabout will change in character. Lower speeds and less traffic noise will allow development to front on to the ring-road, reducing its visual dominance and the sense of separation. New development fronting on to the ring-road, Barton Village Road, key open spaces and the countryside will help define and promote a sense of place. Two-sided streets, with new homes facing existing homes, will help integrate old and new. A new linear park along Bayswater Brook,
linking to improved public open space in the form of Play Barton in Barton, will incorporate public open space and habitats to enhance local biodiversity. The new development will help people lead healthy lifestyles by encouraging activity and promoting safety.

There will be strong connections between the new neighbourhood and Barton, Northway, Old Headington and the adjoining countryside. Existing footpaths will be enhanced and re-connected and there will be new ring-road crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. A network of pedestrian and cycle connections will link the new community to existing facilities, adjacent areas and other destinations across Oxford. The network will improve access from Barton to Headington and beyond. Access to schools, community facilities and open space will be improved by ensuring that the facilities in the new neighbourhood are accessible to existing communities.
At the earlier Issues stage (summer 2010) we proposed a set of five objectives for the Barton Area Action Plan. The consultation revealed broad support for those objectives and we have taken them forward to inform the development of this Preferred Options document. This section identifies what each objective means for the new development and the neighbouring communities in Barton and Northway.

1. Deliver a strong and balanced community
   - A mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, in the form of good quality and flexible homes for young and old, families and single people, people with disabilities and older people and a significant proportion of affordable housing
   - A primary school providing a focus for the new and existing communities and with the potential for a range of social and community uses
   - An environment that promotes healthy living and well-being
   - High-quality, linked and safe formal and informal open spaces
   - Retail facilities at a scale that will support and complement those in Barton, Northway and Headington

2. Bring wider regeneration of neighbouring estates
   - Safer and easier-to-use cycle and pedestrian access between Barton and the rest of Oxford
   - Improved bus connections
• New neighbourhood facilities and services shared by residents in existing communities, with the school acting as a focal point for community integration
• Pockets of land that are currently under-used or neglected brought back into use
• Job and training opportunities such as building apprenticeships

3. Improve accessibility and integration
• A network of safe and easy-to-use pedestrian and cycle routes that allow new and existing residents to access and share established and new community facilities
• Improved and additional links across the ring-road, improved connections to places such as Headington and the John Radcliffe Hospital for those currently living in Barton, and better links to the countryside for existing residents in Headington and Northway
• Excellent bus services, with extensions to the existing bus services in Barton and Northway or new frequent and reliable services (or both) connecting the new homes and facilities with neighbouring communities and the rest of Oxford
• Direct vehicle access to the new development from the ring-road, with reduced traffic speeds and therefore noise
• No private car travel between the new development and Northway, and only secondary access through Barton
• New frontages and public open space linking the new neighbourhood to its immediate surroundings and the rest of Oxford

4. Encourage a low-carbon lifestyle
• New homes and buildings that use energy and water efficiently
• Effective use of renewable and low-carbon energy
• A network of safe and easy-to-use footpaths and cycle ways, with frequent and reliable bus services and easy and convenient access to a range of local services and facilities, to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport

5. Introduce design that is responsive and innovative
• A strong sense of place for the new neighbourhood, with attractive new buildings, streets and open spaces
• Character strongly influenced by the setting, topography and natural assets of the area and townscape of the rest of Oxford, with linked green corridors providing open space, pedestrian and cycle routes, sustainable drainage, access to the countryside and enhanced opportunities for biodiversity
Given the objectives for the Area Action Plan, an appropriate boundary for the AAP needs to cover:

- the area where the focus of new development will be
- the areas that will benefit directly from associated regeneration
- those areas that will be sensitive to change and need specific consideration.

The **preferred boundary** therefore includes:

- the development site – the strategic site identified in the Core Strategy as ‘Land at Barton’, where the majority of new development will happen
- Barton and Northway – to allow us to consider how the new development will affect the existing communities and how the benefits can be shared to foster regeneration
- part of Old Headington Conservation Area.
Map 5: Preferred Area Action Plan boundary
This section sets out options for the Land at Barton and the surrounding areas which will deliver the spatial vision and the five objectives identified earlier. The options reflect the responses to the consultation on the Issues document, our ongoing collaborative work, the findings of technical studies and the assessment made by the Sustainability Appraisal.

The Area Action Plan proposals must be viable, and implementation has been a key factor in identifying and testing options – only realistic ones are included.

The document deals only with issues that need to be covered in the AAP, and includes an appropriate level of detail given that the joint venture partner has not yet been identified.

The options are considered in terms of four different themes:
- a vibrant and balanced new neighbourhood
- integration of the new development with surrounding areas and the rest of Oxford
- regeneration in Barton and Northway
- innovative and responsive design.

A separate section of this document deals with potential development on land at Ruskin College.

The options themselves are presented in different ways.
- A set of possible separate options is identified where there are genuine alternative and deliverable ways of achieving the desired outcome. Where it aids explanation, the options are accompanied by a table showing their strengths and weaknesses.
- Where the City Council has identified a preferred option (or, in some cases preferred options) it is clearly identified as such in a text box.
A preferred approach is identified and shown in a text box where either there are no robust and deliverable alternatives or where a particular option is considered so desirable and important to delivering the strategic vision that it should be taken forward as the AAP develops.

In some cases there is no preferred option from the range of possible alternatives, either because they have different strengths and weaknesses or because they have not yet been fully tested.

A vibrant, vital and balanced new neighbourhood

New homes

The development site will accommodate 800 to 1,200 homes.

To create a balanced new community there should be a mix of different types, tenures and sizes of housing suitable for a range of different households, including the elderly and others with specialist housing needs. Homes should be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of residents – sometimes known as ‘lifetime homes’. There may also be scope for ‘live-work’ units specifically designed for residential and business use.

The Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out a policy approach that encourages a mix of types and sizes of accommodation. The Balance of Dwellings mix for strategic sites is:

- 1 bed: 10-15%
- 2 bed: 25-30%
- 3 bed: 40-55%
- 4 bed plus: 10-15%

Affordable housing target

To create a sustainable, inclusive, balanced and mixed community and meet Oxford’s pressing housing needs, the new development should include a significant proportion of affordable homes. The expectation is that the affordable housing will be built to at least the minimum Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) standards.

Given the close proximity of several large public sector employers, housing for key workers could form part of the new development. Any such key worker housing would be additional to the required level of affordable housing.

City-wide policies require generally that at least 50% of any proposed development is affordable, with 80% of that requirement provided as social rented homes and 20% as shared ownership. Where appropriate and the evidence justifies it, the City Council may set a separate target for a particular site. Any such target must be driven by the need for affordable housing and the likely economic viability of the land in question, taking account of risks to delivery.

Viability testing shows that 50% affordable housing is not achievable on the Land at Barton based on likely infrastructure, land remediation and other costs. The infrastructure costs are substantial and include a new on-site primary school as well as a new junction and crossings on the ring-road. The testing also shows that a target of 40% affordable housing (all for social rent) is deliverable alongside infrastructure and other costs.
Our preferred approach for affordable housing provision is a minimum affordable housing target for the development site of 40%, all of it social rented homes. The minimum of 40% would not include homes for affordable rent or shared ownership.

Any affordable housing provided over and above the minimum 40% could include an element of shared ownership or affordable rent, or both.

Local centre

At the heart of the new community should be a local centre that will be expected to include a new primary school, community and recreation facilities and retail units, and some housing above the other uses. To ensure good access and connections, the local centre should be at a point where pedestrian and cycle routes intersect with the primary street.

The new primary school should have excellent pedestrian and cycle links. Innovative solutions will be required to ensure that the primary school acts as a community hub. The buildings and facilities should be designed and managed to allow for flexible and wider use for a range of activities. Simple measures can make shared spaces work well and foster a sense that they are truly shared. These include year-round calls on the space, easy and flexible access, permanent office space, and storage space with simple access. The shared space could also include access to healthcare.

The precise requirements for primary school places will be influenced by the final mix of homes in the new development. Based on the Balance of Dwellings SPD, a new one-and-a-half form entry primary school with pre-school provision will be needed on site with enough land to allow for future expansion to a two-form entry school if necessary.

A one-and-a-half form entry primary school would support 1,000 new homes (assuming a housing mix based on the Balance of Dwellings and 40% affordable housing). Based on the same assumptions, a two-form entry primary school would support 1,300 homes.

The same sizes of schools could also support a higher proportion of affordable housing should that prove viable. A one-and-a-half form entry primary school would support 900 new homes (assuming a housing mix based on the Balance of Dwellings and 50% affordable housing). Based on the same assumptions, a two-form entry primary school would support 1,200 homes.

There may be scope to vertically mix new homes with a high-quality educational environment by providing apartments above the new school. Any such apartments would have to be carefully designed so that they have separate entrances to the school and do not directly overlook the school buildings or play areas. These units may be provided as extra-care housing.

Illustration 1 shows how the elements making up the local centre could work together.

Illustration 1: How the local centre could work
Our preferred approach is that there should be a local centre comprising a primary school, community and recreation facilities, some retail units, and housing. The local centre should be at a point where pedestrian and cycle routes intersect with the primary street.

Our preferred approach is that the location of the school should:
- allow for a developable site area of around 2 hectares, whose shape and contours accommodate playing pitches and informal outside play space associated with classrooms
- help integrate the new neighbourhood with existing communities by offering potential for a range of social and community uses of the school buildings and joint use of the playing pitch outside of school hours
- make the most of the site’s countryside setting
- promote health by encouraging activity in the form of walking and cycling to school
- minimise car trips
- provide access points for pupils and staff, and for maintenance and emergency vehicles
- help promote healthy diet and nutrition by avoiding hot food take-aways and other fast-food outlets.

Retail uses
Just beyond the AAP boundary to the south lies Headington District shopping centre. It is one of four District Centres that serve Oxford, besides the City Centre and Cowley Centre. In addition, within the AAP area are two neighbourhood shopping centres: Underhill Circus provides a limited number of shops and an off-licence and take-away for Barton, and there is a similar range of facilities in Westlands Drive in Northway.

New shops and related uses will help ensure that the new neighbourhood is successful and sustainable. It is important to consider how such new services would affect existing facilities, though a retail impact assessment has not been carried out at this stage. The responses to the Issues document indicated strong support amongst existing residents for new local shops.

There are two potential options for providing retail units within the new development.

Option 1: Local shops and services forming part of a new local centre
This option is less likely to affect the existing neighbourhood shopping centres in Barton and Northway. It would include a food store of around 450m² (gross).

Option 2: Local shops and services, with a larger food store forming part of a new local centre
Introducing a larger food store (at 1,500 to 2,000m² gross) into the scheme to serve the needs of Barton, Northway and the new community could provide existing and new residents with greater choice and reduce the need to travel. It would be important to understand how this option might affect the existing neighbourhood shopping centres in Barton, Northway and, potentially, Headington.

There is no preferred option on retail uses.

Open space
The Land at Barton includes the existing Barton Village Recreation Ground. There is also cultivated and uncultivated statutory allotment land and a nature park. Adopted city-wide policies normally require at least 10% of the site area as open space, but the policies also acknowledge that larger areas of new development such as this provide opportunities to open up access to off-site areas of green space. The surrounding countryside with its network of footpaths offers such potential. Proposals for Play Barton are expected to improve the existing public open space between Bayswater Brook and homes to the north of Stowford Road close to the Neighbourhood Centre in Barton.
Recreation ground

The sports pitches, play area, club-house and associated car parking lie in the north-east corner of the Land at Barton. The land they occupy was raised and levelled using waste materials in the 1950s. A new moveable pavilion is due to replace the existing building in spring/summer 2011.

Formal public open space of at least the same area and equivalent standard to that which currently exists should form part of the new development. It should make the most of opportunities for community use of the school playing pitch outside of school hours.

**Option 1: Retain the recreation ground and the sports pitches in their current location**

This is the most straightforward and least costly option, particularly if the existing raised level is retained. However, the recreation ground could act as a physical barrier between Barton and the new community, by limiting both the scope to provide new homes facing Barton Village Road and options for access between Barton and the new development.

Illustration 2 shows how the proposed development could front onto the sports pitches in their existing location.

**Illustration 2:**
- Proposed development facing a residential street
- Sports pitches retained in their existing location
Option 2: Retain the recreation ground and the sports pitches on their current site, but re-orientate to east-west
Turning the sports pitches through 90 degrees could help reduce the barrier effect of the recreation ground, allowing more scope to create new residential frontages facing Barton Village Road and more options in terms of access to and from Barton. The new homes could be built facing Barton Village Road with the higher levels of the land occupied by the existing sports pitches retained, though these homes would need to be set back from the road because of the height differences. If the level of the sports pitches were lowered, the new frontages could be created closer to Barton Village Road. This option would help with integration, though a north-south orientation is generally preferred for sports pitches. Remediation would bring extra costs.
Illustration 3 shows how proposed development could front onto Barton Village Road with the level of the sports pitches retained. Illustration 4 shows the proposed development with the level of the existing sports pitches lowered. Illustration 5 shows the sports pitches turned through 90 degrees to run alongside Bayswater Brook.

Illustration 3:
- Proposed development facing the stream and Barton Village Road
- Existing drainage ditches and site slope re-aligned

Illustration 4:
- Proposed development facing a residential street
- Sports pitches relocated to run parallel to Bayswater Brook
- Pedestrian and cycleway located next to Bayswater Brook

Illustration 5:
- Proposed development facing a residential street set back from Barton Village Road
- Existing drainage ditches and site slope retained
Option 3: Relocate the recreation ground uses
This option offers the greatest scope to integrate old and new development, freeing the land currently occupied by the recreation ground for new homes. Formal public open space of at least the same area and equivalent standard to that which currently exists would need to be provided as part of the development. Remediation would bring extra costs.

There is no preferred option for the recreation ground.

Allotments
Just over 4 hectares of the Land at Barton is legally protected statutory allotment land. 2.5 hectares is let to an allotment association. The rest of the allotment land is uncultivated and ecological surveys show that this area has a reasonably high biodiversity value. There was public support in the Issues consultation for retention of the allotments.

There are two alternative options for the statutory allotment land. In each case there could be some alteration to the edge(s) of the allotments, depending on the option(s) for vehicle access to the site from Barton.

Option 1: Retain the whole of the allotment land in its current location
This would minimise disruption. However, like the recreation ground, the allotments could act as a physical barrier between Barton and the new community.

Option 2: Retain the currently cultivated allotment land and replace the uncultivated allotments with land of equivalent quality and accessibility
Retaining the cultivated part of the allotment land opens up opportunities to integrate a new part of the city with the old. It would allow for new residential development alongside Barton, and the creation of frontages along the ring-road would help to transform it into a ‘street’. The Secretary of State would have to give consent; such consent would only occur if there were adequate replacement allotments.

Our preferred option for the allotments is option 2: retain the currently cultivated allotment land and replace the uncultivated allotments.

The currently cultivated allotment land should be retained and the uncultivated allotment land replaced to help integrate the new community with the rest of Oxford.

Barton Village Nature Park
Barton Village Nature Park has relatively low ecological value but acts as a recreational green space. Biodiversity assessments indicate that this area need not be protected on the grounds of biodiversity, especially since opening up or creating alternative areas could provide more valuable replacement areas for wildlife elsewhere in the development.

Linear park
Bayswater Brook runs along the northern boundary of the Land at Barton. The Brook forms a natural green corridor or link. It has the potential to help create a sense of local distinctiveness; ‘soften’ the edge between the city and open countryside; incorporate flood attenuation measures; and provide habitats that enhance biodiversity. To make the most of the Brook it would form part of the ‘public realm’ in the form of a linear park. The linear park should include links across the Brook to the open countryside.

The linear park should connect with cycleways and footpaths, with a link to open space in Barton, including the proposed Play Barton scheme. To ensure it is safe and well used, the park should be fronted by residential development, which would thus benefit from attractive views over the open countryside.

Illustrations 6 and 7 show how the proposed development could front onto a linear park and Bayswater Brook.
Map 6: Green infrastructure
Illustration 6:
- Proposed development facing a residential street and existing public right of way built at the level of existing sports pitches
- Pedestrian and cycleway located next to Bayswater Brook

Illustration 7:
- Proposed development facing a residential street
- Linear park designed with opportunities for improved biodiversity and habitat creation and Sustainable Urban Drainage features parallel to Bayswater Brook
- Pedestrian and cycleway located next to Bayswater Brook

Our preferred approach is to develop homes on the land occupied by Barton Village Nature Park and to create a linear park along Bayswater Brook.
Integration with surrounding areas and the rest of Oxford

The Land at Barton has the potential to be a highly sustainable development, reducing the need to travel to and from the new neighbourhood by car and offering the opportunity to reduce car usage from the surrounding areas. By walking, cycling and public transport, the new neighbourhood should be well connected with surrounding communities and the whole area should be better linked to local centres, places of work and education, the city centre and the countryside.

Integration is not just about transport connections: the layout of the new development should contribute by creating new frontages and public open spaces that link the new neighbourhood to its immediate surroundings and the rest of Oxford.

Integration with Barton

The linear park, new local centre, sports pitches and primary school, with a network of safe and easy-to-use cycle and pedestrian links, are designed to integrate the new neighbourhood with Barton. There is an opportunity to foster integration by creating new residential frontages on the Land at Barton that face Barton Village Road. This would mean there would be homes in the existing and new communities facing one another, and active frontages adding to a sense of activity and security in the public realm.

Treatment of the A40 ring-road

The ring-road runs immediately to the south of the Land at Barton. It physically separates the site from Northway, Headington and the rest of Oxford, acting as a barrier and creating a sense of isolation. It is important that the new neighbourhood is and feels part of Oxford. The choices made about this stretch of the ring-road will be a key factor in integrating old and new.

There are three potential options for the way this stretch of the A40 is treated. It is important to note that not all of them can be combined with our preferred option for vehicle access to the Land at Barton.

Option 1: Leave the ring-road as it is, with speeds of 70 mph

The ring-road would stay as it is, with speeds of 70 mph. The associated noise levels would require a noise buffer between the road and the new neighbourhood on the Land at Barton. This buffer would reduce the amount of land available in the development for new homes and community facilities. It would also reinforce the sense of severance and isolation, separating the new neighbourhood from surrounding communities and the rest of Oxford. This option could not be combined with a new junction.

Option 2: Reduce speeds on the ring-road to 40 mph but with no new frontages

Lower speeds along this stretch of the ring-road, which could be associated with a new junction serving the site, would reduce noise levels for the new development as well as for those living in surrounding communities. As a result, a noise buffer to the north of the ring-road would not be needed. This option would increase the amount of developable land by allowing development to take place closer to the ring-road. However, without new frontages on the ring-road there would still be a sense of separation between the new neighbourhood on the Land at Barton and the rest of Oxford.

Option 3: Transform the ring-road into a street with new frontages and speeds reduced to 40 mph

Depending on plans for vehicle access to the Land at Barton, there is an opportunity to adopt a very different approach to this stretch of the A40. We could – by reducing the speed and creating frontages on to the ring-road – transform it from a noisy and visually dominating physical barrier, into an enclosed street or ‘boulevard’. It would be similar to Oxford’s Sunderland Avenue further to the west along the ring-road. The lower speeds would allow new development to front
onto the ring-road, and allow safer and easier-to-use pedestrian and cycle routes. There would be a service road to allow access to the properties fronting the ring-road. These frontages of new homes would be along the southern edges of the Land at Barton (though not necessarily its entire length) and in Barton itself. Similar frontages could also be created to the south of the ring-road using land at Northway to create new homes facing one another.

Illustrations 8 and 9 show how proposed development could front on to the ring-road on the Land at Barton. Illustration 10 shows how proposed development could front on to the ring-road on both sides of the ring-road.

Map 7 shows where new frontages could be created to link the new development to its surroundings.

Illustration 8:
- Proposed development facing a residential street
- Development set in to landscape to enable views across the site
- Open space next to the A40 with informal car parking and pedestrian and cycle way
- Reduced traffic speeds and landscaping along the A40 to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment and allow for pedestrian and cycle crossing points

Illustration 9:
- Proposed development facing a residential street set back from the slope of the A40
- Open space next to the A40 with informal car parking and pedestrian and cycle way
- Reduced traffic speeds and landscaping along the A40 to create a more pedestrian friendly-environment and enable pedestrian and cycle crossing points
Map 7: Potential frontages
Illustration 10:

- Proposed development facing a residential street
- Open space next to the A40 with informal car parking and pedestrian and cycle way
- Reduced traffic speeds and landscaping along the A40 to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment and allow for pedestrian and cycle crossing points
- Opportunity for residential development in Northway facing the A40 and Foxwell Drive

Our preferred option for treatment of the A40 is option 3, transforming this stretch of the ring-road by lowering traffic speeds and developing frontages on to the ring-road.
Vehicle access to the development site from Barton

There is a range of potential options for vehicle access to the new development. These have been tested in technical studies. A full transport assessment will be required as part of the planning application. For a development on this scale, and to ensure security of access, at least two connection points will be required. One of these should be in the form of a secondary access via Barton.

Main vehicle access to the development site from the ring-road

The options for access to the development site from the A40 ring-road are as follows. They are not mutually exclusive.

**Option 1: Signal-controlled junction to ring-road (left and right in and out), incorporating bus-only link into Northway**

Vehicle access would be directly from the ring-road via a signal-controlled junction. To prevent rat-running through Northway, the only vehicle link to Northway would be bus-only. The speed limit would be reduced to 40 mph.

Illustration 11 shows how the junction would work.

**Option 2: Left-in/left-out junction to ring-road**

A limited-movement vehicle access would be provided directly from the ring-road via a left-in/left-out junction. The speed limit would be reduced to 40 mph. This would not allow a direct bus link into Northway.

**Option 3: Roundabout(s) on ring-road**

Access would be provided by a new roundabout or roundabouts.

The technical studies show that any of the above options could be implemented. However, the options do not perform equally well in terms of achieving the objectives of this Plan and their effects on existing communities – see the following table.
Assessment of access options for vehicle traffic

**Secondary access via Barton**

- More than one point of access is required to safely access the new development
- Would allow for extension of existing bus services from Barton
- Would integrate the development site with Barton
- Would have some effect on the existing community in Barton and on the Headington Roundabout

**Option 1: At-grade signal-controlled junction to A40, incorporating bus-only link into Northway**

- Would provide better priority for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport
- Would have least effect on Barton
- Could provide an alternative point of access for residents travelling to and from Barton, potentially improving traffic movements through the Headington Roundabout
- Would provide an opportunity to control traffic movements out of the new development using traffic signals
- Would reduce speeds and therefore noise on the A40, allowing for integration of the new development by changing the nature of this stretch of road
- Would help integrate the development site with Northway, allow for extension of existing bus services and open up the possibility of new services
- Drivers using the A40 would have to stop at the traffic signals

**Option 2: At-grade left-in/left-out junction to A40**

- Could provide an alternative point of access for residents travelling to and from Barton, potentially improving traffic movements through the Headington Roundabout
- Would reduce speeds and therefore noise on the A40
- A separate bus access would be required to connect to Northway
- Adjacent junctions could experience increased queuing and delay due to u-turning vehicles
- Would not contribute to the integration of the new development with the rest of Oxford

**Option 3: At-grade roundabout(s) on A40**

- Could provide an alternative point of access for residents travelling to and from Barton, potentially improving traffic movements through the Headington Roundabout
- Would reduce speeds and noise on the A40, allowing for integration of the new development by changing the nature of this stretch of road
- Would be land-hungry, requiring more land on both sides of the A40 outside the existing highway
- Would be less conducive to movement of non-motorised users across the A40; there would be issues associated with pedestrian/cyclist crossings close to the roundabout
- Would be more difficult to control a bus-only connection to Northway
- Drivers using the A40 would have to stop at the traffic signals
- Likely to be more expensive than a signal-controlled junction
Secondary vehicle access to the development site from Barton

There are four options for locating the access from Barton to the development site, all of which would need to allow bus movements with Barton Village Road.

- **Option 1**: in line with Fettiplace Road, altering the existing T-junction to form a crossroads
- **Option 2**: about 50-metres to the south of Barton Village Road/Fettiplace Road junction, via a priority junction
- **Option 3**: to the north of Barton Village Road/Fettiplace Road junction, via a new junction
- **Option 4**: at the junction of Barton Village Road/North Way, via a new junction

Our preferred option for vehicle access is to combine option 1 with secondary access via Barton.

An at-grade (surface-level) signal-controlled junction should be provided on the ring-road, incorporating bus-only movements to and from Northway. In association with this, the speed limit should be reduced to 40 mph on the ring-road between the Headington Roundabout, the new junction and the Elsfield junction.

Secondary all-vehicle access (accommodating bus movements) should be provided in the form of one or more links between the new development and Barton Village Road.

There is no preferred option for the vehicle access from Barton.

Bus access to the development site

Northway and Barton are both served by regular bus services. In Northway the 13 service connects with the city centre and the John Radcliffe Hospital via Halliday Hill. In Barton the 7c and 8 services connect to Headington and the city centre, both running as clockwise loops around Barton via North Way, Barton Village Road, Fettiplace Road and Waynfleet Road. The need to improve these existing bus services was identified in responses to the Issues document.

There are three potential options for providing public transport services:

- **Option 1: No change to existing bus services**
  Residents from the new development and those using the new primary school and associated neighbourhood facilities would walk to and from the nearest bus stops for the existing services in Barton and Northway.

- **Option 2: Extension of existing bus services from Barton and/or Northway but with no direct connection between the two routes**
  This could create a bigger loop of the 7c and 8 services from Barton using one of the potential vehicle links identified above. A service could be extended from Northway, crossing the ring-road at the new junction and linking to the development site.

- **Option 3: A revised or new service connecting Northway, the development site and Barton with other parts of the city**
  There is potential for a revised or new stand-alone bus service that would run between Northway and Barton through the development site. It could link to Headington, the centre of Oxford or other destinations in the city.

All of these options could be implemented, though options 2 and 3 may not be commercially viable in the short term. Illustration 12 shows how these different options would work. We will look again at the deliverability of bus services before finalising the AAP document. No financial subsidy will be available.
Our preferred option for bus access is option 3, but with sufficient flexibility built in to allow option 2 to be implemented if necessary.

Layout of the site should allow for a revised or new bus service connecting Northway, the development site and Barton with other parts of the city. Layout and phasing should also build in sufficient flexibility to allow for existing bus services to be extended to and from Barton and Northway.

Running north-south across the development site (and then beyond into the countryside in South Oxfordshire) is an existing footpath. Severed by the ring-road, the link continues south as a public bridleway and byway running into Old Headington, along Stoke Place.

To improve integration and ‘permeability’ and to promote maximum usage, a network of safe and easy-to-use pedestrian and cycle routes along desire lines should connect the new homes with facilities in the new neighbourhood and link the new development to its surroundings – Barton, Headington, Northway and the countryside beyond Oxford – and to the rest of the city.

Four options for pedestrian and cycle crossing points have been identified for the ring-road. The preferred option for vehicle access – a signal-controlled at-grade (surface level) junction – would require speed reductions to 40 mph along this stretch of the ring-road. Options 2, 3 and 4 could therefore be provided as surface level crossings or as bridges.
Map 8: Vehicle, pedestrian and cycle access
Option 1: Access as part of a signal-controlled junction
Pedestrian and cyclist crossing phasing and facilities would be incorporated in a new signal-controlled junction.

Option 2: Crossing to Foxwell Drive
A crossing between the development site and Foxwell Drive. This would allow good access to the John Radcliffe Hospital and a direct onward link to the wider local cycle network – Saxon Way, Northway, Copse Lane, Marston Road, Parks Cycle Route and the city centre – and the national cycle network. This would be located close to option 1.

Option 3: Crossing at Stoke Place
A crossing would link the Stoke Place bridleway with the footpath running north-south across the development site, re-establishing the historic link severed by the ring-road. It would enable pedestrian and cycle links from the new neighbourhood to Headington District Centre and destinations such as the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford Brookes University and Cheney and Headington Schools. Re-establishing the historic link would also open up access to the countryside from Old Headington. Stoke Place would need to be upgraded in a manner that is sensitive to its role and character within the Conservation Area. The design of any foot and cycle bridge would also need to be sensitive in relation to the Old Headington Conservation Area.

Option 4: Crossing towards open fields at Barton Lane
This would provide an alternative access to Headington for people living in Barton and for any homes at the eastern end of the new development. It would be close to the existing combined cycleway and footpath subway to the south of Barton.

Rapid transit public transport
The City Council supports in principle the idea of a new high-quality rapid transit public transport system put forward by Oxfordshire County Council. It could use traffic-free infrastructure by running alongside the ring-road and serve park-and-ride sites (e.g. Water Eaton and Redbridge), existing major employment and housing areas such as Marston, Headington, Cowley and Rose Hill, and the proposed rail service to London from Water Eaton. Put forward by the County Council in its soon-to-be-adopted Local Transport Plan (LTP) 3, and serving an area of Oxford that the LTP refers to as the ‘Eastern Arc’, the service could include the new neighbourhood and its surroundings. Although currently a long-term aspiration that will depend on feasibility assessments and the availability of funding, it does offer the potential for even better connections in the future.
Regeneration in Barton and Northway

Development on the Land at Barton could act as catalyst for regeneration in Barton and Northway by:

• integrating the existing communities with the new neighbourhood and the rest of Oxford
• improving access to facilities in the new development and beyond
• making best use of development opportunities in Barton and Northway.

Area Regeneration Plans are currently being prepared for Barton and Northway. Taking as their starting point the Regeneration Framework for Oxford to 2026, the Area Regeneration Plans will allow for the communities in Barton and Northway to get involved in and define the regeneration agenda for their areas. The Area Regeneration Plans will sit alongside this AAP, which has also been prepared with community involvement.

Together the following opportunities could:

• tackle ‘place and infrastructure challenges’ by helping link people to jobs, improving the development of the public realm and adding to the range of community facilities
• tackle ‘people challenges’ by improving educational attainment, skills and access to health facilities, and by contributing to safety and well-being
• tackle ‘economic challenges’ by increasing economic activity rates.

Access to new facilities

The new neighbourhood centre should include a community hub based around the new primary school. These new community facilities, with the sports pitches, linear park, other open space and new shops should be easily accessed by the existing communities in Barton and Northway, increasing the range of choices available. There should also be better access between Northway and the Barton Leisure Centre and improved access to the countryside.

Better integration with the rest of Oxford

For those currently living in Barton, the ring-road forms a dominating physical barrier. New links across the ring-road associated with the development of the Land at Barton would improve accessibility for those currently living in Barton. There would be better connections for pedestrians and cyclists to a wider range and choice of shops, facilities and education and employment opportunities (including major employers) in Headington, at the John Radcliffe Hospital and beyond in the rest of Oxford.

The connections would make it easier for those currently living in Northway to access the range of community and leisure facilities that are already available in Barton.

Northway and Barton are both already served by regular bus services, and more destinations could become available.

The preferred approach to the ring-road, with lower traffic speeds and associated reduced traffic noise, would reduce the sense of severance between Barton and the rest of the city. Pedestrian and cycle crossings would be easier, and new development in Barton and Northway could front onto the ring-road, helping integration by creating new homes facing one another.

Development opportunity sites

There may be opportunities for physical regeneration in Northway and Barton in addition to those that have already been identified. Such opportunities could:

• provide additional housing
• improve the public realm
• create positive and active frontages to help improve the sense of security of public and communal areas
• increase the number of pedestrian and cycle routes.

They would complement planned improvements to the community facilities in Northway. We would like to receive suggestions for potential development opportunities.
### Innovative and responsive design

There is an opportunity to create a new distinct but integrated piece of Oxford and to apply best practice to make efficient use of resources and meet energy-efficiency and low-carbon targets.

The new development should meet the CABE-Home Builders Federation ‘Building for Life’ Standard; the preferred approach is that this should be at gold level.

This section does not set out alternative options for design. Instead, it proposes a set of six principles and indicates how these might be reflected in the design of the development. Taken together these form our preferred approach.

1. **The scale, form, character and design of development should take into account the local topography, setting and natural assets of the site**

   Bayswater Brook, hedgerows and mature trees, combined with the surrounding countryside and topography of the Land at Barton, create a set of natural features. The development should make the most of these assets to create a sense of place by reflecting and – where possible – incorporating them into the development.

   There is potential to enhance and develop linear green corridors or links through the site, making connections within the new development and with neighbouring communities and the open countryside. These could be based on existing green links, including existing hedgerows and Bayswater Brook. As well as allowing movement, the green links also offer opportunities for recreation and amenity space in the form of the linear park along Bayswater Brook; ecological enhancement; Sustainable Urban Drainage; and the creation of a transition from the city to open countryside.

2. **The layout should be accessible, permeable and legible and encourage activity**

   The network of streets and open spaces will play a key role in determining how the new development works and how it relates to the surrounding areas. The development should incorporate a network of streets and spaces that link to and through the area, providing a choice of direct, safe and attractive connections and encouraging walking and cycling. There could be a street hierarchy comprising, for example, a primary street and residential streets. The development and pattern of routes must also be ‘legible’ – easy to understand and navigate. Features such as façades, pavements, rooflines and views can help determine how legible a place is.
3. Active frontages should be incorporated in the new development

As stated earlier, our preferred option is to have residential frontages on the ring-road and Barton Village Road.

Active frontages are created by orienting buildings so that the main entrances and principal windows face the street (or streets) and open spaces. This helps to improve the sense of security of public and communal areas (sometimes known as Secured by Design principles), maximises the proportion of activity that takes place in the public realm and makes it easier for people to find their way around.

Illustrations 13, 14, 15 and 16 show how proposed development could front on to different types of streets.

To help ensure that the linear park along Bayswater Brook is safe, attractive and well used, it should be fronted by residential development with views over the countryside. There should also be residential frontages onto the allotments – shown in illustrations 17 and 18.

On-street car parking can help create strong frontages and make the most efficient use of land.

Illustration 13:
• Commercial development on the ground floor of buildings with residential or commercial uses on upper storeys facing the street
• Opportunity for commercial uses to extend in to the street on south-facing façades to create an active street frontage
• Sustainable Urban Drainage features and trees incorporated into the street scene
• A dedicated pedestrian and cycle route along the street
• On-street car parking

Illustration 14:
• Residential development facing the street, set back from pavements
• Sustainable Urban Drainage features and trees incorporated in the street scene
• A dedicated pedestrian and cycle route along the street
• On-street car parking

Illustration 15:
• Residential development facing the street set back from pavements
• Car parking on street and driveways
• Sustainable Urban Drainage features incorporated in the street scene
4. **The development should make prudent use of natural resources**

The development will be expected to achieve high standards of sustainable construction and design in terms of energy efficiency, water resources, recycled and reclaimed materials and renewable or low-carbon energy. The new homes will be expected to meet the latest sustainability standards as set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes and reflected in Building Regulations. At present the Code is set to level 3, increasing to level 4 in 2013 and level 6 (zero-carbon) in 2016.

There may be scope for a community heating scheme, combined heat and power or small-scale renewable or low carbon energy in the new development. The Natural Resource Impact Analysis SPD sets a minimum city-wide standard for 20% of energy to be provided by on-site renewables such as photovoltaic cells, ground-source heat pumps or bio-mass boilers. There may be the potential for a wind turbine.

Where practicable, streets and buildings should be orientated to get maximum benefit from sunlight. To make the most of sunlight (and shade), the layout, design and orientation of streets and buildings should take into account the slope of the site and the solar path. The development should maximise the use of south-facing elevations.

Where possible, new homes should include charging points for electric vehicles.

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**Illustration 16:**
- Residential development facing directly on to the street
- Workshops and garages with residential development on top, to the rear of the residential street
- On-street car parking
- Sustainable urban drainage features incorporated in the street scene

**Illustration 17:**
- Proposed development facing a primary street with on-street car parking
- Pedestrian and cycle route located next to allotments

**Illustration 18:**
- Proposed development facing a residential street
- Pedestrian and cycle route located next to allotments
5. The development should incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

The development should incorporate SUDS to reduce any increases in surface water drainage. The proposed linear park could incorporate flood attenuation measures such as a basin or ponds. In addition, public and private areas of hard-standing should be permeable wherever possible.

SUDS may be combined with a system to help regulate water flows from roofs to the drainage system and grey water recycling. Installation of green roofs, where soil and plant material are attached to create a living surface, can also reduce water run-off as well as providing insulation and creating a habitat for wildlife.

6. The visual impact of the electricity substation should be minimised

The electricity substation will remain on site in its current location. The other half of the land owned by SSE is surplus to the company’s needs. The substation’s visual impact should be minimised by rationalising, re-aligning and burying the power lines. A 5-metre buffer must be left around the substation for access and maintenance purposes. Beyond that, the substation can either be ‘wrapped’ by built development or screened with landscaping. Illustration 19 shows how the visual impact of the substation could be minimised.

Illustration 19:
- Proposed development facing a residential street
- Widened public right of way to allow for Sustainable Urban Drainage, play and amenity areas and an increased buffer to the substation
- Pedestrian and cycle route next to existing substation along alignment of existing public right of way
Map 9 shows how the preferred options and approaches combine to form our suggested preferred strategy or framework for future development of the Land at Barton. It shows:

- residential frontages along the ring-road, Barton Village Road and a new linear park alongside Bayswater Brook
- a surface-level signal-controlled junction on the A40 ring-road, incorporating bus-only movements to and from Northway and a pedestrian and cycle crossing
- a cycle and pedestrian crossing at Stoke Place and connections to Barton and the surrounding countryside
- secondary all-vehicle access between the new development and Barton
- a primary street linking the western end of the development site with Barton
- retention of the allotment land that is actively cultivated.

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

- a local centre at a point where the pedestrian and cycle routes intersect with the primary street
- a mix of housing types and sizes, with an emphasis on family homes and at least 40% affordable housing (for social rent)
- a speed reduction on the ring-road to 40 mph
- design that responds to the setting and natural assets of the development site to create a unique sense of place; makes efficient use of resources; and meets energy-efficiency and low-carbon targets.

This strategy meets the objectives set for this Area Action Plan, including helping to act as a catalyst for regeneration in Barton and Northway.
Map 9: Preferred strategy
Context

Located in the Area Action Plan boundary is Ruskin College’s main Ruskin Hall site. Comprising about 6.5 hectares, the site sits between Dunstan Road in Old Headington and the ring-road. It comprises academic teaching buildings and accommodation, landscaped gardens, listed buildings (Smith House, the Rookery and the crinkle-crankle wall) and three fields. The whole extent of the Ruskin land falls within the Old Headington Conservation Area. The college occupies the most southerly part of the site closest to Dunstan Road which provides vehicle access. A covenant preventing building is attached to an area in the south-west of the site adjacent to neighbouring properties.

To the north of the land occupied by the college buildings, the Ruskin site slopes down towards the ring-road immediately to the north-west. This land comprises Ruskin Fields. The fields are undeveloped and include hedgerows, mature trees and a pond that collects naturally draining water. The eastern edge of the fields is bounded by the Stoke Place bridleway. To the west, Ruskin Fields border another field. In the north-west the border is with land that forms a buffer to Foxwell Drive in Northway.

Proposals by Ruskin College

Ruskin College has made a proposal for development at Ruskin Fields. These proposals are being considered as part of this AAP process rather than through the City Council’s Sites and Housing DPD.

The college proposes that the field area immediately to the north of its buildings (field A on the map, comprising approximately 1 hectare) will be improved and made more attractive and accessible as an
amenity for the college with the public given controlled access. For the remaining three fields – B, C and D with a combined area of about 3.5 hectares – Ruskin College has proposed development of between 175 and 193 new homes. The proposals indicate that the homes would be a mix of two and three storeys. Field A would provide a landscaped buffer between the proposed development and the college site and Stoke Place. The amenity buffer zone would also continue along the eastern side of field D to minimise effects on the Stoke Place bridleway and the covenanted land.

Ruskin’s proposals indicate that the new development could link to the existing networks of footways and cycleways at:
- Stoke Place
- Foxwell Drive
- the existing cycle track adjacent to the ring-road.

Three alternative options are put forward for vehicle access:
- all vehicle access via Foxwell Drive
- access via a left-in/left-out junction, either direct to the ring-road or from a service road running parallel to it
- (depending on its location) as part of an at-grade all-movement junction associated with the Land at Barton.

**Status of the Ruskin College proposals**

The status of these proposals is different from those set out elsewhere in this document. The proposals have been promoted by the landowner and have not been developed with the same ongoing and close involvement of the local community and other stakeholders that has helped shape the preferred options. Nor are the Ruskin proposals underpinned by comparable specific and up-to-date evidence, particularly in terms of traffic modelling. If the proposals are taken forward, more detailed technical studies would be needed, including a full transport assessment covering trip generation and the suitability of the proposed accesses.

The following factors need to be considered in weighing up the alternative options for vehicle access:
- An objective of this AAP is to ensure there is no private vehicle access between the new development on the Land at Barton and Northway – access via Foxwell Drive would generate more trips through Northway
- Access from the Ruskin Fields onto the ring-road could conflict with the proposed route of the Eastern Arc Rapid Transit
- It would be necessary to consider the implications of the preferred options for accessing the Land at Barton from the ring-road.

Vehicle access from the ring-road (or parallel service road) with vehicle access via Foxwell Drive could cause rat-running in Northway and Old Headington.

The proposals would help deliver some of the objectives of this AAP. In particular, development on Ruskin Fields would deliver more homes. The development would need to comply with the Council’s affordable housing policy, and so could provide around 100 affordable homes. Development on Ruskin Fields could also help integrate the planned new neighbourhood on the Land at Barton with Headington, particularly if homes in the two new residential areas south and north of the A40 were to face onto a road that has a new character.

The scale of the proposal seems likely to affect the character of this part of the Old Headington Conservation Area. Ruskin Fields are identified in the Consultation Draft Conservation Appraisal as contributing to the rural and historic character of Old Headington. The view from Stoke Place across the Ruskin Fields to Elsfield is one of the most sensitive across and out of the Conservation Area. The less sensitive areas in terms of impact on the Conservation Area are those closest to Northway and the ring-road.

This stage of the AAP process is an important opportunity for the public to comment on significant emerging proposals. We would like to receive comments on the specific proposals put forward by Ruskin College. We would also like to hear views on the principle, scale, nature and location of a smaller-scale development at Ruskin Fields. Comments will be considered alongside those we have already received and documented on Ruskin Fields in response to the Sites and Housing DPD Pre-Options consultation at the end of 2010.
Map 10

Ruskin College Proposals for Ruskin Fields

Contextual Analysis

- Main College Boundary
- Site Contours indicate drop towards A40
- Existing Site Covenant - no building
- Cycle and Footway
- Extent of Conservation Area
- Site Features
- Pond and Drainage
- Proximity to A40 and bridgeway
- Buildings within Ruskin College Site Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- New Academic Building to be constructed 2011-2012
- Bowden Building to be demolished 2011-2012

Context
Spatial vision
Objectives
Area Action Plan boundary
Options
Preferred strategy
Implementation and delivery
Next steps

May 2011
Map 11

Ruskin College Proposals for Ruskin Fields

Proposed Masterplan

- Main College Boundary
- Line of Existing Site Covenant
- Existing Cycle and Footway
- Possible Vehicle Access off Forest Drive
- Possible Vehicle Access off Northern By-Pass
- Possible Pedestrian and Cycle Access

The Developable Area is 3.5 ha
175 to 190 new dwellings could be created
Landownership

Most of the Land at Barton is owned by Oxford City Council.

Within the boundary of the development site lies the Headington Primary Substation, which is owned by Scottish & Southern Energy (SSE). SSE’s ownership extends to some 3.9 hectares. SSE has confirmed that about 50% of that area is surplus to its needs. If desired it will be for the joint venture (see below) to engage with SSE to bring the land into the joint venture arrangement. The SSE land is not essential to the development of an integrated new community on the Land at Barton.

Around 4.3 hectares of the Land at Barton is statutory allotment land. Of this, around 2.5 hectares is let to the Trustees of the Headington & District Allotment Association. The Secretary of State’s permission would be needed for any disposal of the uncultivated allotment land.

Minimising uncertainty

The Land at Barton is a priority housing site for the City Council. The Council has an ambitious timetable to start development in 2013. The current development market remains fragile for a range of economic reasons, with lenders shying away from significant upfront investment. Uncertainty in delivery or other areas of risk reduces the marketability of opportunities, and interested parties attach a risk premium to expected returns.

This is a large infrastructure-led project that needs significant investment before serviced land is available for the first new homes. The overall infrastructure and associated costs will be around £25m, and a large part of this funding will be needed before returns can be made in the medium term and at uncertain dates. In the current...
market these projects are more challenging to deliver due to their cash-flow profile: investors need to be even more convinced that this type of scheme is viable before committing to the spending needed to deliver the site.

Developers/investors will particularly consider the following factors before committing funding:

- technical issues/abnormal costs, including landfill/remediation costs, transport provision including providing road access from the A40, burying of electricity cables, removal of pylons
- Section 106 requirements, especially the need to make education provision
- the requirement for affordable housing.

The City Council, as landowner, sought advice from King Sturge and Eversheds on the best way of ensuring that development would start in 2013, concluding that a co-investment partner should be sought to enter a joint venture to deliver the infrastructure and procure the services needed to bring forward the site. This is an innovative structure for a public-sector landowner and is achievable in a timescale that allows the joint venture to contribute to the AAP process.

The City Council agreed this approach in November 2010 and is now seeking an investment partner. The decision on the lead partner is due in May with the joint venture company established in June.

The joint venture is designed to maximise flexibility, with the City Council able to recycle returns into the development to increase the amount of affordable housing or to draw down sites to develop for social rented housing.

Planning obligations

The development of the Land at Barton will create more demands for physical and social infrastructure. Planning obligations will be needed to provide new infrastructure and make improvements to existing infrastructure. The starting point for determining the nature and scale of contributions will be the adopted Oxford Planning Obligations SPD.

The overall viability will be taken into account in the decision on the level of planning obligations to be incorporated into the Section 106 agreement at the planning application(s) stage. A schedule of services, facilities and infrastructure, with a timetable for their provision during the development of the Land at Barton, will be set out in a legal agreement. The joint venture will negotiate the planning obligations.

Education

The costs of providing the on-site primary school will be met by the development as part of the infrastructure costs.

The new development will also increase the demand for secondary school places but will not warrant the construction of a new school. The extra places will be provided by extending buildings within the existing secondary school infrastructure. The developer will be expected to meet the costs of the additional secondary school places generated by the development. The cost will be calculated based on estimated pupil numbers, Department for Education cost multipliers at the time and estimated future capacity in catchment secondary schools.

Where temporary accommodation is required to meet the need for school places generated by the new development, the developer will be expected to pay the costs of providing or relocating temporary classrooms. Temporary accommodation is most economically met through locating it on an existing school site. The most appropriate location for any temporary primary school buildings is likely to be Bayards Hill School in Barton.

Transport

The full cost of the following will be met by the development as part of the infrastructure costs:

- all on-site highways and transport infrastructure
- the A40 junction
- pedestrian and cycle links and associated off-site works to provide appropriate connections or necessary improvements to the existing networks
- ensuring on-site provision for public transport.
Oxfordshire County Council, as the highway authority, has indicated that to ensure that a development is viable, it may be appropriate for the directly required transport infrastructure works and measures to be so extensive that no further Section 106 contributions for transport will be justified.

**Affordable housing**

The preferred approach towards affordable housing on the Land at Barton is a site-specific requirement of at least 40%, consisting wholly of social rented homes. This is because viability testing shows that 50% affordable housing is not achievable on the Land at Barton based on likely infrastructure, land remediation and other costs.

If market conditions improve during the lifetime of the AAP, the initial reduction in the affordable housing target will be recouped by recycling additional funding back into the scheme. This may involve reviewing the percentage target for affordable housing at the start of pre-determined phases or reviewing or recouping any uplift in value at the end of each phase.

**Phasing to ensure delivery**

Certainty and timing of delivery are of paramount importance. The phasing of the development will have regard to the need to create a sustainable community from the outset and as the development progresses.

**Dealing with constraints**

**Flood risk**

A preliminary Flood Risk Assessment shows that an area of almost 3 hectares (8% of the site) is within Flood Zone 3a (high probability of flooding) and a further 3 hectares within Flood Zone 2 (medium probability of flooding). The rest of the site lies in Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of flooding. Planning Policy Statement 25 ‘Development and Flood Risk’ aims to steer development to areas of lower flood risk through the sequential test.
**Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)**

The proposed development will make use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) methods to reduce any increases in surface water run-off, taking into consideration present and future climate change scenarios. SUDS techniques include porous car parking, swales and attenuation ponds in public areas. The masterplanning will consider SUDS based on more detailed information on the layout and type of development, techniques to limit run-off from new development, run-off calculations and the scope to use the site topography to reduce flood risk.

If two or more homes or buildings discharged their surface water to a SUDS feature, the lead flood authority (Oxfordshire County Council) would adopt it. The standard of construction and placement will be agreed with the lead flood authority before construction begins.

**Landfill**

The Land at Barton includes about 3.6 hectares of landfill dating from the late 1950s. The area is used as a sports ground. Preliminary geoenvironmental ground investigation indicates that the landfill is thickest in the northern part of the area (up to 4.4-metres), thinning to grade into the pre-existing ground contours to the west, south and east. Surface topsoil is present as cover over the landfilled material.

**Electricity substation**

Although the primary electricity substation will remain in use, the power lines will be rationalised, re-aligned and buried to minimise their effects on development. A 5-metre buffer must be left around the substation for access and maintenance purposes. An existing footpath is included in the 5-metres.

**Other buffers**

- **Bayswater Brook**: For essential maintenance, the Environment Agency requires a buffer of 8-metres (measured from the top of the bank) along the Brook.
- **Sewer**: A 3-metre buffer is needed on either side (unless diverted – further information will be needed on level, gradient and flow in order to understand its feasibility).
- **Noise**: Planning Policy Guidance 24 ‘Planning and Noise’ Noise Exposure Category (NEC) A applies, ie noise is unlikely to be a determining factor in granting planning permission.
- **Gas main**: 15-metres. There are standard clearances associated with gas mains at this pressure, relating to, among other things, excavations, the laying of services or sewers close to the main, and crossing the main with roads etc. Also, approval must be gained before planting trees and bushes close to the mains, to avoid root damage. The 15-metre clearance incorporates NEC Zone A.
Next Steps

This Preferred Options document is an important opportunity for those with an interest in the future of the Land at Barton and the surrounding communities to contribute their views about the options presented here. The period for making comments is 13 May to 24 June 2011. You can let us have your views by visiting the City Council’s website (www.oxford.gov.uk/Barton) or by completing and returning a questionnaire available from the City Council offices.

The responses to this consultation will help inform the draft AAP that the City Council will submit to the Secretary of State. Known as the Proposed Submission document, it will be published in autumn 2011 when there will be another chance for the public and stakeholders to comment. The AAP is due to be submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2012 and adopted in October 2012.
**Glossary**

**Affordable housing**
Dwellings at a rent or price that can be afforded by people who are in housing need and would otherwise be accommodated by the City Council.

**Affordable rent**
A new affordable housing model, whereby ‘registered providers’ of social housing offer homes at a rent of up to 80% of the local market rent and for a tenancy that can range from two years to a lifetime.

**Area Action Plan (AAP)**
A Development Plan Document that forms part of the Local Development Framework. AAPs are used to provide the planning framework for areas subject to significant change or where conservation is needed. A key feature is a focus on implementation. Once adopted, the AAP forms the planning policy and spatial framework for the development of the area.

**At-grade**
At the same level. An at-grade junction or crossing of the ring-road would occur at surface level.

**Attenuation ponds**
See Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

**Building for Life**
Building for Life is the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. Assessments are scored against 20 Building for Life criteria, covering environment and community; character; streets, parking and pedestrianisation; and design and construction.

**CABE**
Between 1999 and 2011 the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment advised government on architecture, urban design and public space.

**Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH)**
The national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. The Code aims to reduce carbon emissions resulting from fuel usage for lighting, heating and power, and to create homes that are more sustainable. It has been mandatory for all new homes to be rated against the Code since 2008. The standard is currently set to CSH level 3, increasing to CSH level 4 in 2013. The current goal is to achieve zero-carbon homes (CSH level 6) in 2016.

**Combined Heat and Power (CHP)**
Sometimes known as co-generation, Combined Heat and Power is the use of a single piece of plant to generate both heat and electricity. In conventional power generation large quantities of energy in the form of heat are wasted. CHP is much more efficient. Although not a renewable technology, it can be combined with sustainable fuels to provide low-cost heating that has a minimal carbon footprint.

**Core Strategy**
A Development Plan Document that forms part of the Local Development Framework and contains policies against which planning applications are assessed.
Delivery
A term used in Planning Policy Statement 3 ‘Housing’ and Planning Policy Statement 12 ‘Local Development Frameworks’. To be judged ‘sound’ Development Plan policies must (among other things) be deliverable.

Development Plan Document (DPD)
Documents that collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority’s area. They include Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Extra-care housing
A type of specialised housing for older and disabled people. It is purpose-built accommodation in which 24-hour personal care and support can be offered and where various other services are shared. Also known as ‘assisted living’, ‘close care’ and ‘very sheltered housing’.

Grade-separated
At different levels. A new grade-separated (pedestrian/cycle) crossing of the ring-road would be a bridge. The existing subway is grade-separated.

HBF
Home Builders Federation

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
The national housing and regeneration agency. Its role is to create opportunities for people to live in high-quality, sustainable places. It provides funding for affordable housing, brings land back into productive use and improves quality of life by raising standards for the physical and social environment.

Local Development Framework (LDF)
A non-statutory term used to describe the portfolio of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, the Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Report.

Local Investment Plan (LIP)
A non-statutory document that sets out priorities for delivering housing growth, economic development, regeneration and infrastructure. Prepared in Oxfordshire by the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership as result of the ‘Single Conversation’ with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Photovoltaic cells
A renewable source of energy that converts solar energy into electrical energy.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS)
Documents that set out the government’s national policies on different aspects of land use planning in England.
Proposals map
A map of Oxford forming part of the Local Development Framework and illustrating particular areas of land to which Development Plan Document policies apply.

Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC)
A site containing habitats, plants and animals important in the context of Oxford.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
Areas identified by Natural England as being of special interest for their ecological or geological features. Natural England is the government’s advisor on the natural environment.

SSE
Scottish and Southern Energy.

Section 106 agreements (s106)
Section 106 agreements (also known as planning obligations) are created under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. They are legally binding obligations that are attached to a piece of land and are registered as local land charges against that piece of land. They are negotiated, usually in the context of planning applications, between local planning authorities and people with an interest in a piece of land. They are intended to make acceptable development that would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. They enable councils to secure contributions towards services, infrastructure and amenities to support and facilitate a proposed development.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Part of the LDF that supplements and elaborates on policies and proposals in Development Plan Documents. Supplementary Planning Documents do not form part of the statutory development plan.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, or SUDS, are a sequence of water-management practices and facilities designed to drain surface water and protect against flooding. These include porous roads, high-level road drainage, swales, soak aways, filter trenches, wet and dry attenuation ponds and ditches. SUDS helps mimic natural drainage processes and can provide benefits in terms of sustainability, water quality and amenity.

Sustainable Community Strategy
A strategy produced by a Local Strategic Partnership that sets the vision for an area and identifies the key areas where the partnership feels it can add value.

Swales
See Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.
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