

Ms L Palmer
The Planning Inspectorate
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Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

22 September 2023

Dear Ms Palmer

OCC Ref: R3.0138/21

Appeal Ref: APP/U3100/V/23/3326625

Site Address: Land between A34 Milton Interchange, and B4015 north of Clifton Hampden, Oxfordshire

Could you please submit the following points to Mr Gilbert-Wooldridge as regards the planning application by Oxfordshire County Council.

We own, both as Trustees and as an individual, land bordering the A4130 that has been earmarked for the first Phase of this scheme: Phase One.

#### Point 1

The Vale of the White Horse District Council allocated our land at New Farm for 800 houses many years ago now. We have finally produced a Masterplan, which we enclose and which we hope the Inspector will have the time and patience to read.

The main point – which is why we have called the Masterplan *Innovative, Sustainable and Exemplary* – is that the proposed development will be car free.

Clearly the dualling of the carriageway (the A4130) would generate, in the medium and longer term, a vast increase in traffic and in particular, of heavy lorries – the so-called "induced demand". This would, quite apart from the noise, pollution and impact on health, clearly ruin the whole point of this development which is to maintain a pleasant, peaceful, relaxed, pollution-free and noise-free environment. We would therefore appeal to the Inspector to reject Phase One of the Planning Application put forward by Aecom on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council on these grounds alone.

#### Point 2

The second major point that we would like to make is this:-

The rationale for the whole scheme of HIF1 is that it is essential for house building.

This is so obviously not the case with Phase One that it seems hardly worth arguing – except to state that there is already a perfectly good road along which building materials can be carried – as has been amply proved by the building of Great Western Park.

#### Point 3

Our third and final point is this:-

Among the 10,000 plus pages of the Planning Application submitted by Aecom (which we have read in its printed form at the offices of Oxfordshire County Council, though we would not claim to have read every single page) there is a Design and Access Statement which we do beg the Inspector to study in detail. Why? Because it lists 17 possible options for improving transport on pages 137/8/9. Not surprisingly, the Option Assessment Report that follows, rejects Option 0 which it entitles Do Minimum – not surprisingly because, of course, if Aecom had recommended this option, it would automatically have put itself out of a job! But of the remaining 16 options it chooses – again not surprisingly – the first 4 and rejects on very spurious grounds the remaining 12.

Our view is that these ought to be much more carefully studied and assessed, not just by Aecom or indeed by the Planning Officers of OCC, but by all interested parties with a view to reaching an eventual consensus; otherwise this clearly risks becoming Oxfordshire County Council's HS2 – dragging on and on for years, possibly decades, with spiralling costs and very possibly failing to achieve any of its initial goals.

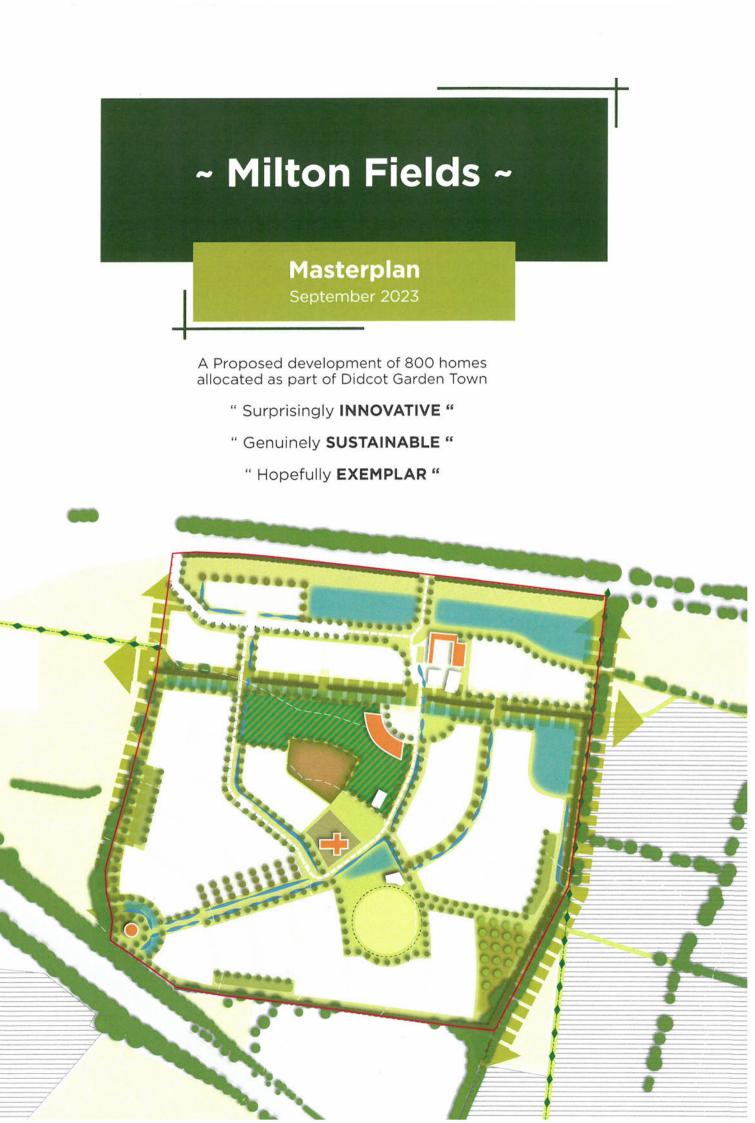
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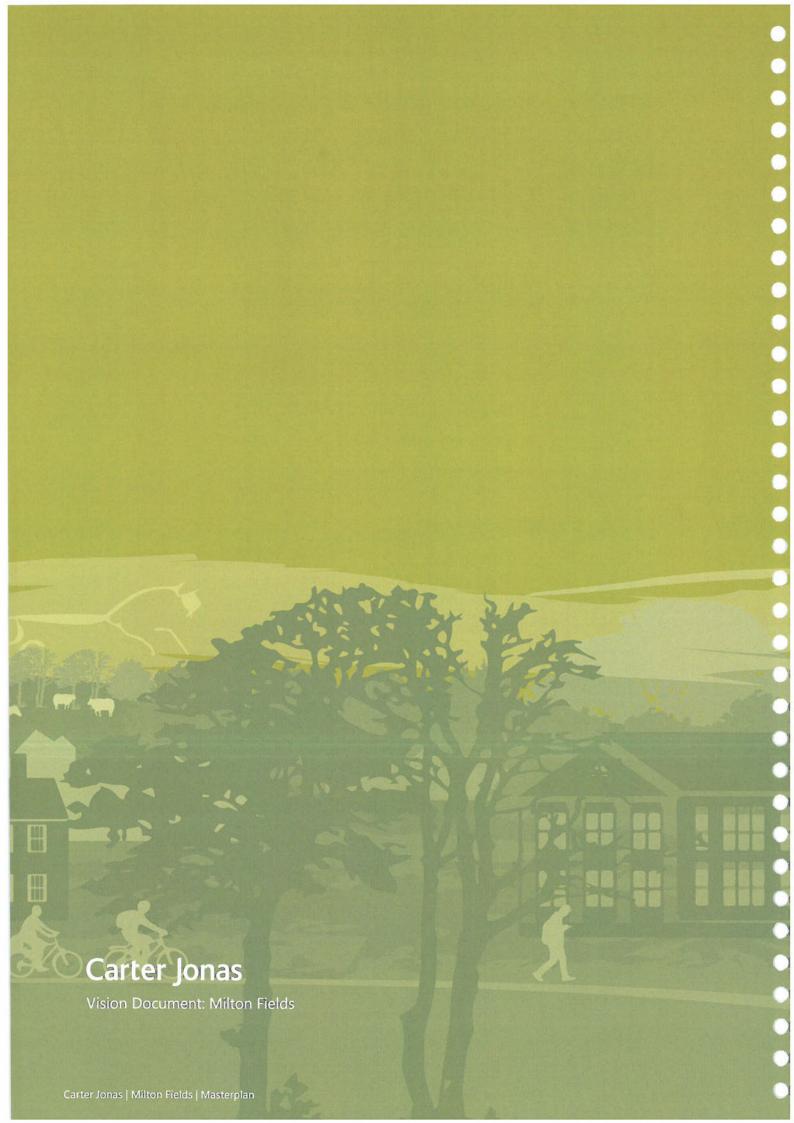
Finally – though we realise this may not be directly part of the Inspector's role – we do ask him to consider whether he can use his influence in this way. We would like to suggest that the Highways Department of OCC be rechristened as the Sustainable Transport Department – if only because Highways Department seems almost inevitably to mean that its employees think in terms of roads, roads and only roads.

Yours sincerely

Anthony & Gwendoline Mockler

PS One copy enclosed as this is the only printed copy of the Masterplan. Two more copies to follow by post with two more copies of this letter.





## Contents

1.0	Introduction	4
1.1	Introduction	4
1.2	Why Here?	6
2.0	Vision & Masterplan	8
2.1	Vision for Milton Fields	10
2.2	Existing Site Influences	12
2.3	A Landscape-led Response - Working with Nature	14
2.4	Access and Movement	16
2.5	Emerging Concept Masterplan	18
2.6	Sustainability Objectives	20
2.7	Sustainable Housing	22
3.0	The Site	24
3.1	West Didcot - A Well Connected Place	26
3.2	West Didcot - A Sustainable Place	28
3.3	The Opportunity	30
3.4	The Site	32
3.5	Site Considerations	34
4.0	Summary	36
4.1	Summary and Key Benefits	38
Appendices		42
Appendix A: List of Figures		44

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## 1.1 Introduction

This document has been prepared by Carter Jonas LLP on behalf of the Trustees of the LA Barrett Will Trust to implement the allocation of 800 houses at "Milton Fields".

The site has one major significant advantage – it is all within single ownership (unlike neighbouring Valley Park and Great Western Park which were in multiple and varied ownership).

The owner is Mr Anthony Mockler as Tenant for Life of the LA Barrett Will Trust referred to above. He lives nearby at (a Grade I Listed Building, famous for its Strawberry Hill Gothic interior designs). Therefore, decision making with only one owner to consult is much simpler than in the case of most major developments.

The landowner has always rejected very financially tempting offers from numerous developers, both large and small. However, at long last, he's in a position to produce his own Masterplan, with the assistance of his land agents, Carter Jonas LLP.

CHERWELL WEST OXFORDSHIRE OXFORD VALE OF THE SOUTH WHITE HORSE OXFORDSHIRE

Fig 01: Vale of White Horse District Council location plan

## 1.2 Why Here?

## Accessibility

The Site is conveniently positioned directly to the west of Didcot, with access to direct bus links, cycleways and footpaths leading to the centre of the town.

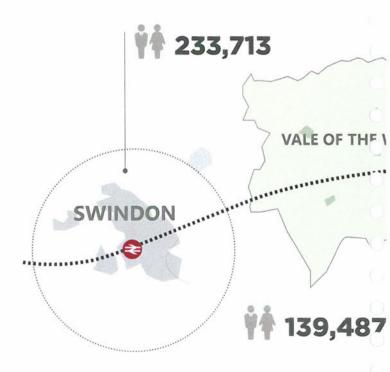
#### **Public Transport**

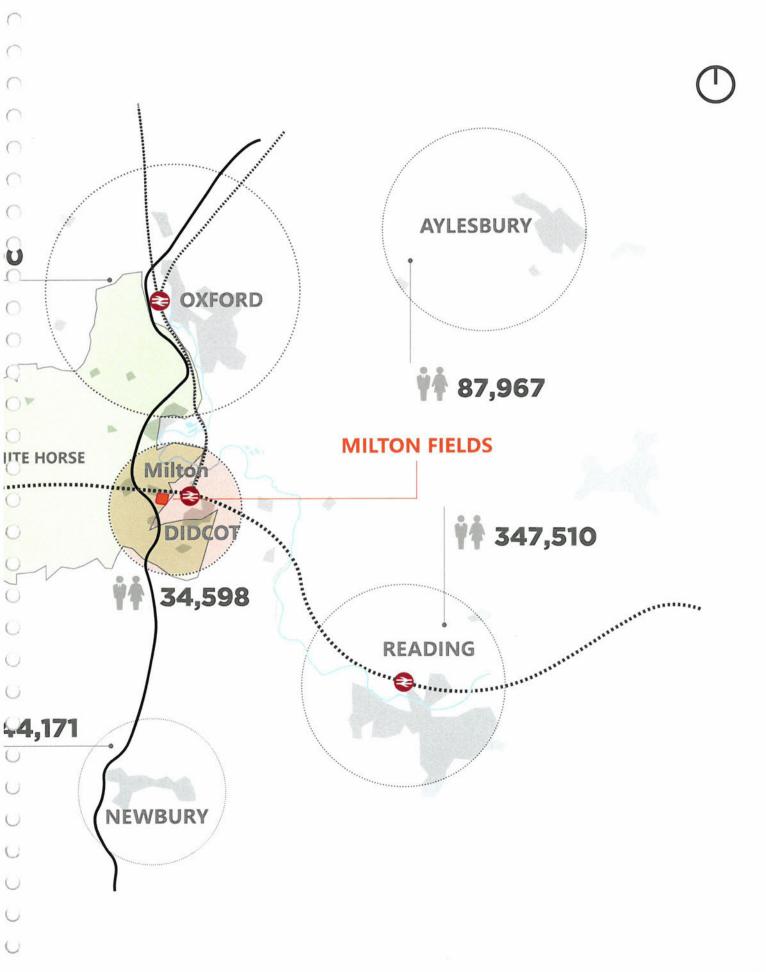
Didcot Train Station provides onwards rail services into Oxford, Bristol and London, affording an excellent, sustainable public transport connection.

#### **Enclosure**

The Site is well enclosed by existing hedgerows and tree lines, which ensure the development is physically and visually contained and has defensible boundaries.

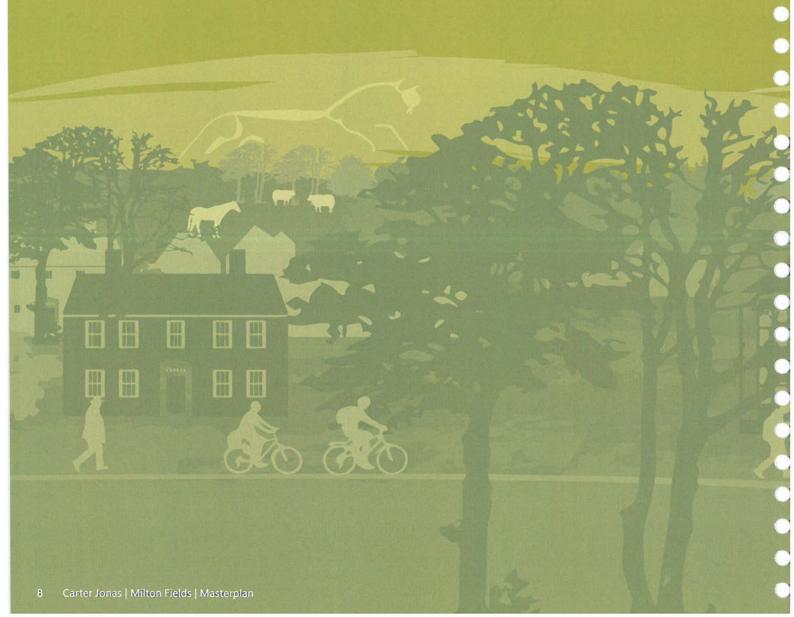


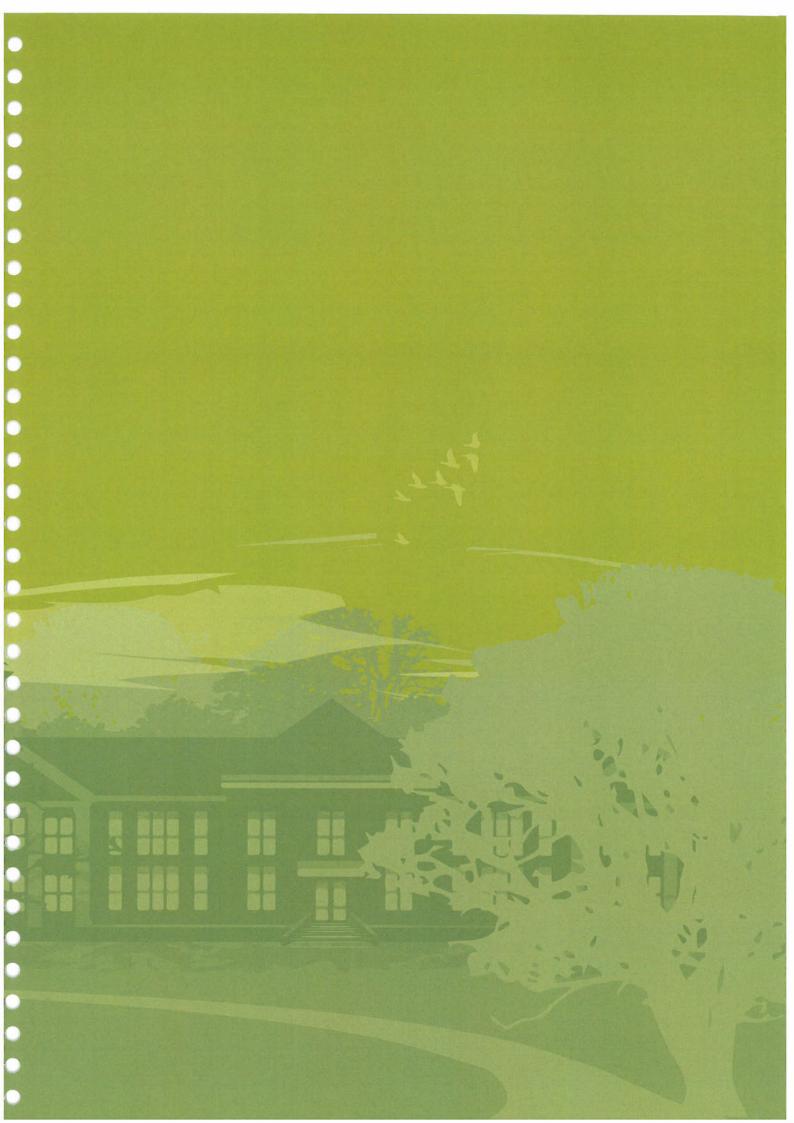




## 2.0 Vision & Masterplan

- 2.1 Vision for Milton Fields
- 2.2 Existing Site Influences
- 2.3 A Landscape-led Response Working with Nature
- 2.4 Access & Movement
- 2.5 Emerging Concept Masterplan
- 2.6 Sustainability Objectives
- 2.7 Sustainable Housing





## 2.1 Vision for Milton Fields



1. The single, most striking, most innovative and therefore most surprising element of the vision is this:

## Milton Fields is to be a car free development.

It perhaps ought to be stressed here that this is not a new idea. The Trust first proposed it a quarter of a century ago - much before its time. However, now it is very much of the time - and indeed in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's general philosophy.

The concept is of course very far from new in the sense that car free developments, both on a small and larger scale, exist in many countries of the world; and solutions to the obvious problems that will occur to planners and councillors have been found in both modern car free developments such as Freiburg as well as ancient settlements such as Rhodes. In England the only current example appears to be the North Devon village of Clovelly.

Therefore, we describe this proposal as

## " Surprisingly INNOVATIVE".

2. So how are people to get around? Obviously on foot and by bicycle; but also by much improved means of public transport including, very possibly, S Bahns, light railways and trams, all of which are now being reintroduced in cities such as Dublin and Paris; and which will be much less expensive to construct in comparatively open countryside rather than built-up city centres.

However, the Masterplan does include provision for shared car use (which is already very popular in Oxford) in the form of electric cars stationed adjoining the present A4130.

3. Milton Fields is part of Didcot Garden Town.

The proposed Delivery Plan for Didcot Garden Town was published in the autumn of 2017 - almost six years ago!

Very little seems to have been achieved since then. This will change entirely with Milton Fields. Its traffic free environment, open green spaces and green corridors, walkable community shopping and recreation centre, and nearby primary school, lack of noise and pollution, will genuinely form "a Super Green Town" as originally proposed.

It will therefore be

## " Genuinely SUSTAINABLE "

4. As regards the types and tenures of houses, of which TEN versions were proposed in the *Delivery Plan*, all these are enthusiastically supported; in particular, Self-Build which we would propose to incorporate in partnership with the Vale of the White Horse District Council.

Milton Fields will also follow the Vale of White Horse's Joint Design Guide (of 211 pages!); and set up its own Design Council to oversee construction so that the end result is not only attractive but will indeed follow Government guidelines in being beautiful in design as well as affordable and sustainable.

5. The *Delivery Plan* refers (page 208) to a "unique site with potential for a new specialist neighbourhood comprising 800 homes and associated green space"; and indeed to Milton Fields as an "Exemplar Site".

This description we are determined in every way to justify. Our hope therefore is that this will become an example of inspirational development, not only for Oxfordshire, but indeed, for the country as a whole. Hence Milton Fields will be

" Hopefully EXEMPLAR ".

"

## 2.2 Existing Site Influences

### 1. Land, buildings and rights of way

There are three aspects of the Site that need preserving, and integrating into the layout.

First: two areas of high grade farmland on the first of which a City Farm will be located close to a new primary school; the second will be the site of a bosquette.

Second: the carefully designed re-use of existing farm buildings into a community centre including retail, crafts, hospitality and entertainment.

Third: the integration of two public rights of way which run along the eastern boundary of the site and perpendicular into the western boundary.

#### 2. Access

The site abuts the A4130 along its northerly edge. Access is proposed to be taken from the northwest corner of the Site with the A4130, approximately where an arrow is shown on the accompanying plan.

#### 3. Topography & Drainage

The Site has clearly pronounced topography and patterns of drainage. This includes the highest point located at the southwest corner and the lowest point at the opposite, northeast corner. The site layout has been very strongly guided by this change in topography which includes the location of a 'belvedere' at the highest point on the Site as an exemplar landmark.

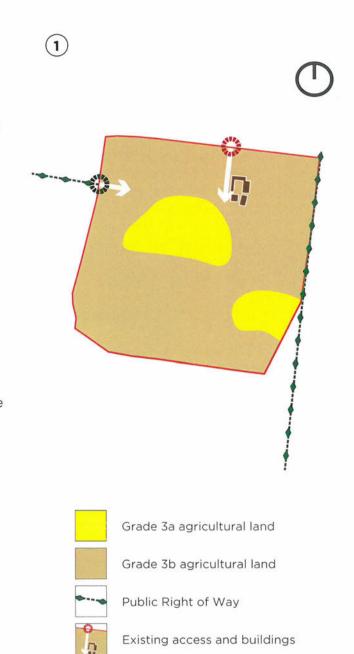


Fig 03: Land, building and rights of way site driver

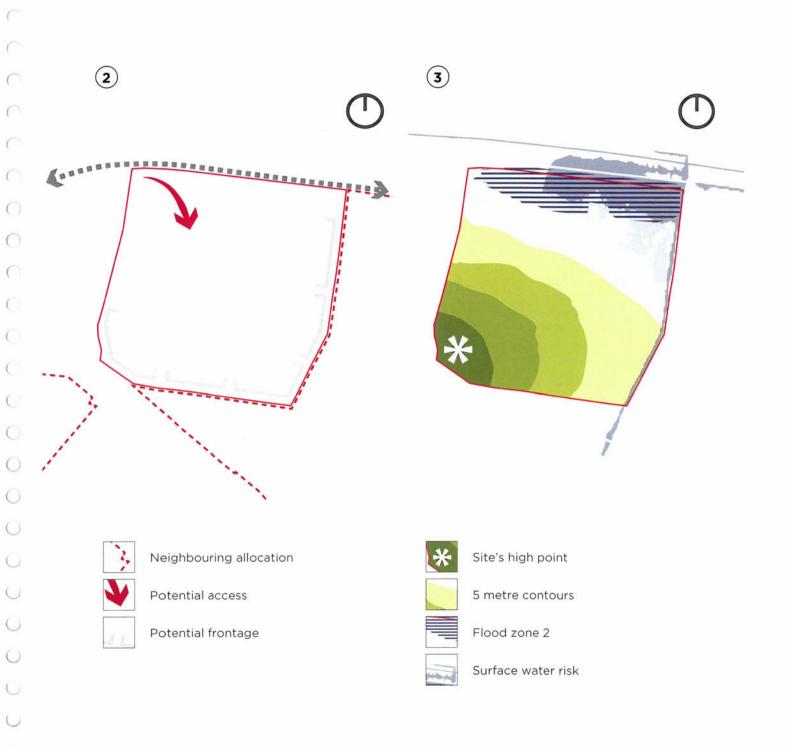


Fig 04: Access and allocations site driver Fig 05: Topography and drainage site driver

# 2.3 A Landscape-led Response - Working With Nature

The masterplan concept presented in this document is strongly influenced by both existing site conditions and landscape together with an arrangement of blocks and spaces which seeks to create landscape at its heart.

On the plan opposite, white blocks indicate space for future homes and crescent-shaped streets. There is also a variety of green spaces as denoted in green. Blue is indicative of drainage, and principal buildings are depicted in an orange colour.

There is a pavilion positioned to overlook the open space and cricket pitch in the southern part of the Site. A bosquette is provided - formal plantation of trees as a public garden, very much a formal planting area but inviting residents to linger and enjoy. There is a MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area) to be used by both the school and the local community, as well as an orchard in the southeast corner at arrival from the east. A City Farm located on higher grade agricultural land and adjacent to the primary school will provide a key role for food growing within the development and help facilitate meetings and greetings for local residents. Finally, the site layout helps ease of movement through the creation of a modified grid, and allowing for the positioning of a belvedere at the highest, southwestern point of the Site. All in all, the design supports, creates and enhances both landscape and nature.

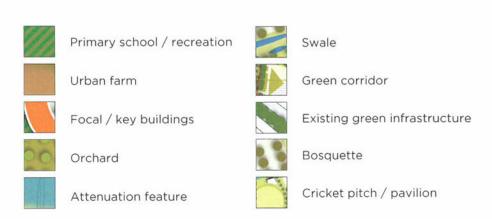
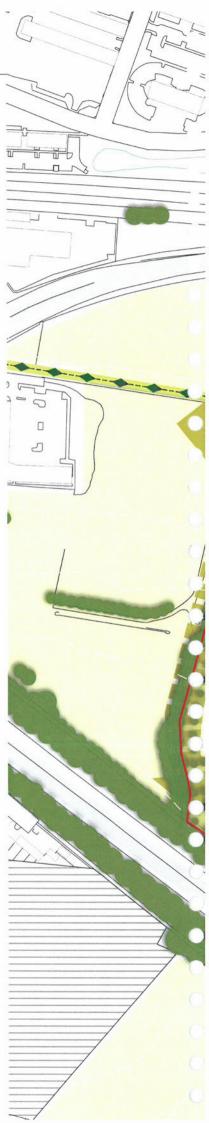


Fig 06: Landscape-led response plan





## 2.4 Access and Movement

## The development will truly be an exemplar of sustainable travel.

The movement network will comprise a series of walking and cycling routes connected by a modified grid pattern of routes. "Micro mobility hubs" will be provided in various locations.

Overall, the Site will have a highly connected network of spaces and amenities, enhanced above all by the absence of vehicles parked along the roads and obstructing pedestrians, cyclists, and indeed, social encounters - as happens only too often in neighbouring villages throughout Oxfordshire.

2



Fig 07: Access and movement plan



## 2.5 Emerging Concept Masterplan

- Re-development of existing farm buildings (New Farm) into a central community shopping, craft and entertainment centre
- 2 The primary school - very close to the community centre
- A multi-use games area for the use of both the school and the local 3 community
- City Farm located on high grade agricultural land adjacent to the 4 primary school
- 5 Catholic church and cloister
- 6 Cricket pavilion overlooking the open space and cricket pitch
- 7 Orchard in the south-east corner
- 8 Bosquette - formal plantation of trees, as a public garden
- A belvedere situated at the Site's highest point as a landmark for the 9 whole development; visible from both the A34 and Didcot town centre
- 10 Shared semi-private gardens for residential blocks
- 11 Informal parkland in the North as a buffer from the A4130
- 12 Primary vehicular access point from A4130 with street planting
- 13 Electric car club - charging points
- 14 Emergency access entrance utilising the cycle / pedestrian link
- 15 Major pedestrian route / gateway into Didcot
- Major mobility hub for the Site public bus stop, bike shelter and 16 turning facility for vehicles

The images shown on this page are purely indicative and are not by any Note: means definitive of what will be developed.



Residential parcel

Key building

Attenuation basin

Existing hedgerow



Access loop



Pedestrian / Cycle route



Primary pedestrian route



Secondary pedestrian route



Equipped play area



Swale route (drainage)



Public Right of Way







## 2.6 Sustainability Objectives

The Site's location provides for ease of walking and cycling into the centre of Didcot to the east. The new community of up to 800 new homes (1,920 people) will have direct access to public transport; Didcot Rail Station is a 20 minute walk / 8 minute cycle and bus stops are located at a mobility hub to the north of the Site offering regular and direct access to central Didcot.

Other key considerations for the masterplan design include: drainage and ecology / biodiversity. Existing trees and landscape features are carefully integrated within the masterplan.

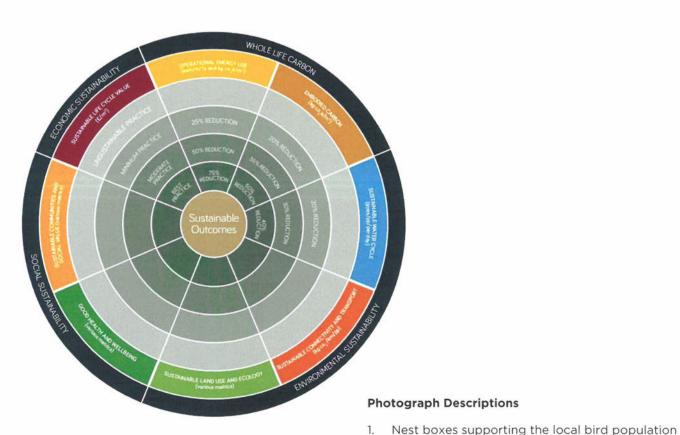
On-site habitats have the potential to support local native species of mammal and bird.

#### **RIBA Sustainable Outcomes**

In line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, the RIBA have developed 8 Sustainable Outcomes (the "Outcomes"):

- Net zero operational carbon
- Net zero embodied carbon
- Sustainable water cycle
- Sustainable connectivity and transport
- Sustainable land use and biodiversity
- Good health and wellbeing
- Sustainable communities and social value
- Sustainable life cycle cost

Given the holistic nature of the RIBA Sustainable Outcomes 2030 framework, these 'outcomes' would need to be adopted by the whole design team.



Native deciduous woodland Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems 4. EV charging points

Attenuation basins as wildlife habitats

Fig 09: Diagram from RIBA Sustainable Outcomes Guide (December 2019).



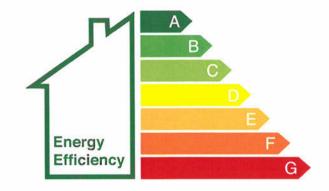
Fig 10: Environmental and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) features

## 2.7 Sustainable Housing

New homes at Milton Fields will be designed to meet the highest of sustainability criteria, in the following ways.

## **Energy Efficient Homes**

A commitment to promote new developments and communities that incorporate new low carbon technologies and ideas that help minimise the impact of development on our changing climate and helping home buyers to reduce their energy costs.



### EV Charging Hub

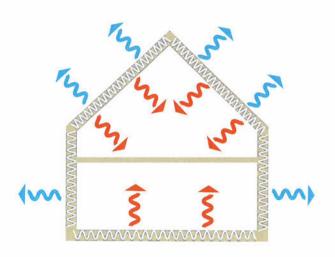
Homes will be 'car free', however an EV charging Hub is proposed next to the main entrance which will be home to car club vehicles available for use by all residents.



Fig 11: Sustainable housing diagrams

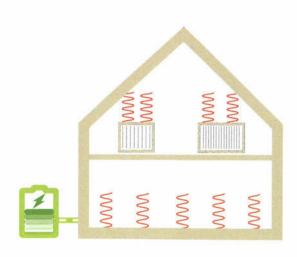
### **Fully Insulated Homes**

New homes will be fully insulated, meaning more heating is kept inside, helping to keep pleasant temperatures all year round and reducing carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere.



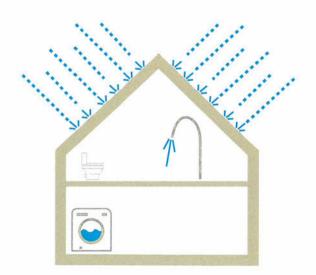
### **Heat Pumps**

Homes fitted with air source heat pumps. Air source heat pumps are a great source of renewable energy because they use renewable heat from the environment. They can assist in lowering energy bills and are better for the environment by lowering our carbon footprint.



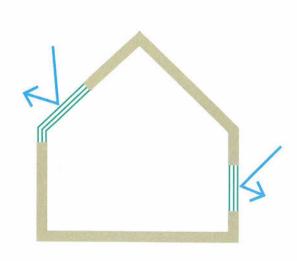
## Energy Efficient Appliances

Energy and water efficient appliances installed reducing energy and water consumption.



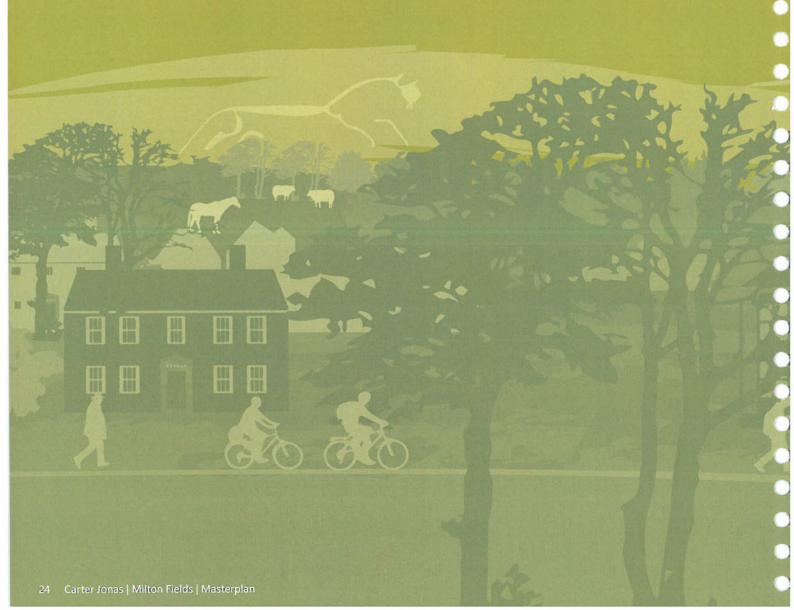
## High Performance Windows

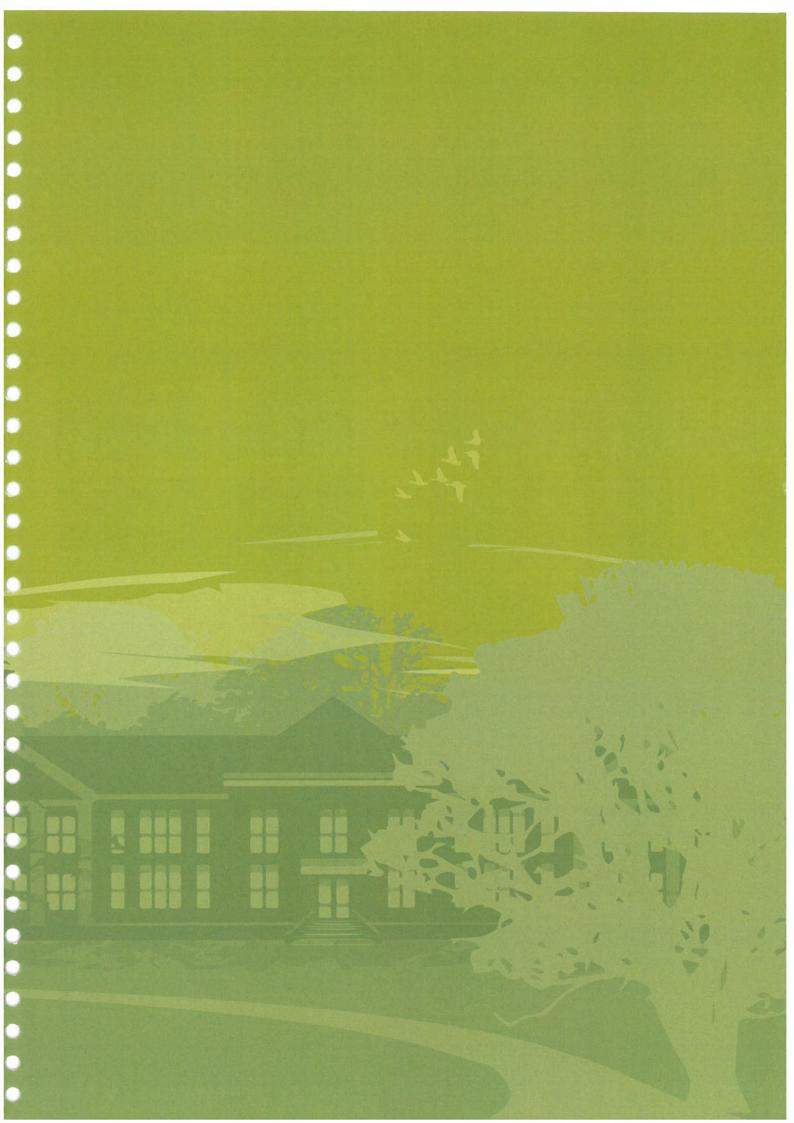
Windows and doors will be fitted with high performance glazing and seals, delivering high thermal performance and reducing external noise transmission into homes.



## 3.0 The Site

- 3.1 West Didcot A Well Connected Place
- 3.2 West Didcot A Sustainable Place
- 3.3 The Opportunity
- 3.4 The Site
- 3.5 Site Considerations





# 3.1 West Didcot A Well Connected Place

The Site is located in the Vale of the White Horse District. The Site is located within the boundary of the parish of Milton, approximately 3.0 miles (4.8 km) west of the town of Didcot.

The Site is rectangular in shape and is bound by the A4130 to the north and the A34 to the south and south west.

The wider context of the Site includes Milton Park to the north, open fields to the east and south (though these are part of Valley Park and will one day be developed; indeed Valley Park has planning permission for 4,254 homes).



Oxford - 45 mins Swindon - 15 mins Reading - 13 mins

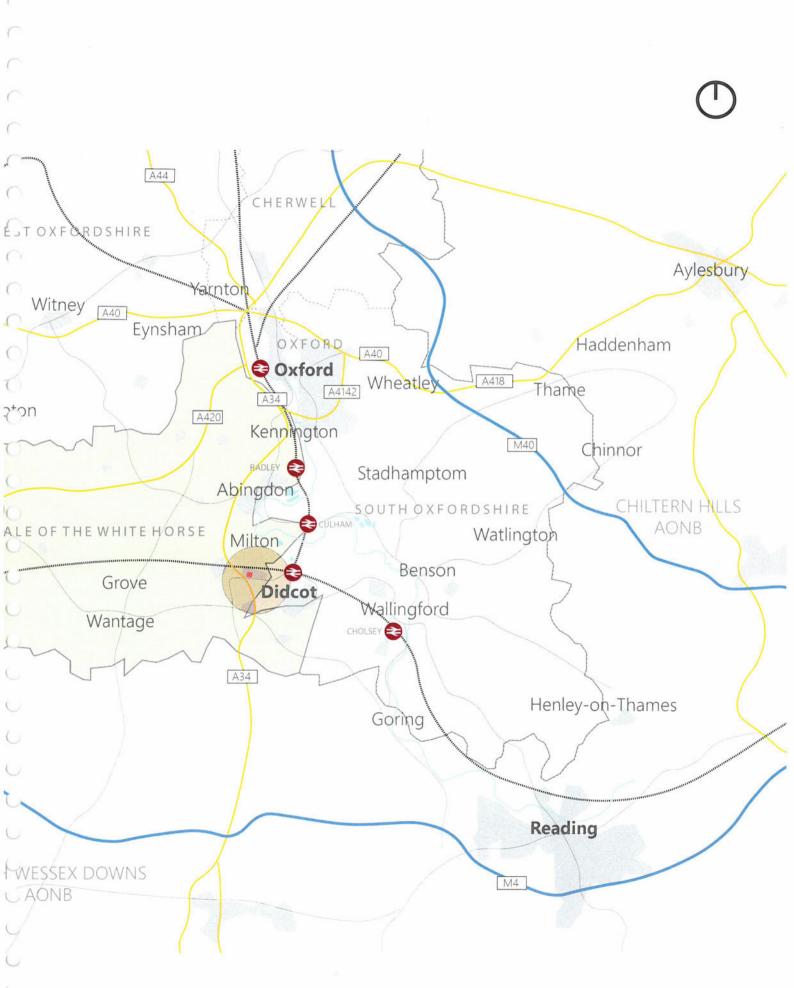


Oxford - 23 mins via A34 Swindon - 45 mins via M4 Reading - 40 mins via A34 & M4



Fig 12: Regional Context Map





# 3.2 West Didcot A Sustainable Location For Growth

The Site is well served by a range of facilities located in Milton, Didcot and Harwell. These existing services and facilities are shown on Figure 13 opposite and include:

- 1) St Blaise's Church
- (2) Milton Manor House (Catholic Chapel)
- (3) Milton Methodist Church
- (4) Apollo Pharmacy (Milton Park)
- 5 St Blaise C of E Primary School & Milton United Football Club (Milton Heights)

Surrounding residential Local Plan allocations in the Vale of White Horse district are noted below:

- 6 'The Site' Milton Fields for 800 dwellings
- 7 Milton Heights for 400 dwellings
- 8 Valley Park for 4,254 dwellings
- West of Harwell for 207 dwellings



The closest primary school is St Blaise C of E Primary School located on Midwinter Avenue in Milton.



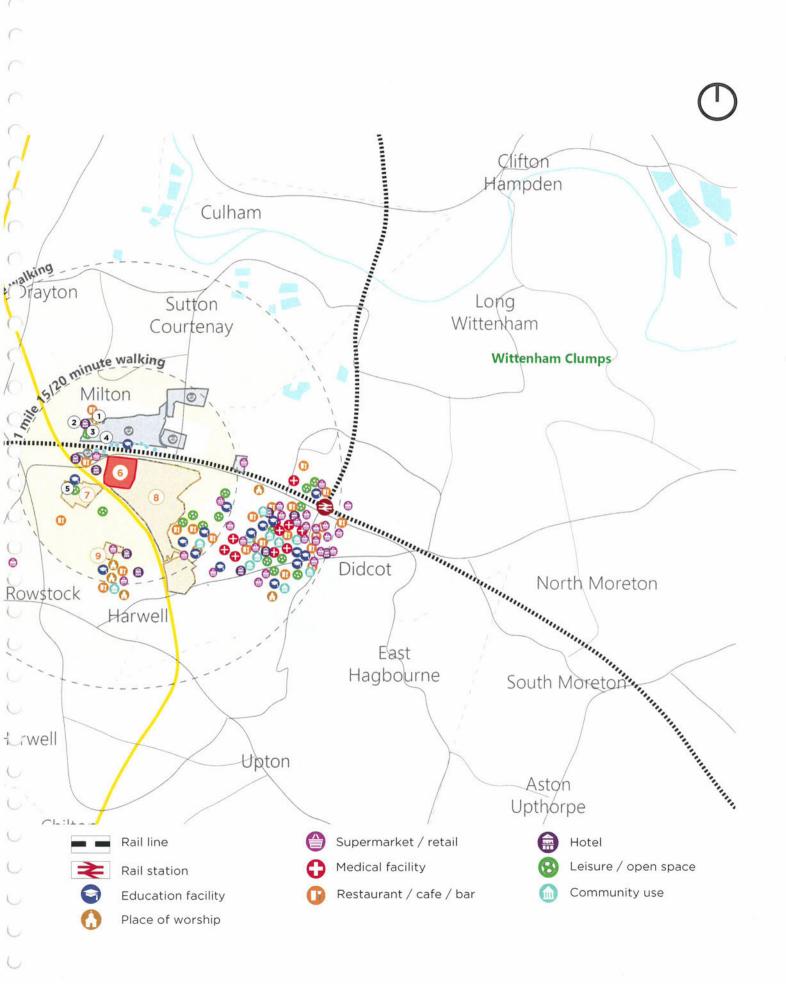
Bus stops are located along the A4130, outside of Milton Service Area. The X32 bus passes in front of the site along the A4130 and connects the development with Oxford and Abingdon via Didcot



Didcot Parkway Rail Station is located approximately 2.1 miles (3.5km) east, accessible via the X2 Connector bus which runs to Oxford City Centre.



Fig 13: Community facilities plan



## 3.3 The Opportunity

Milton Fields provides an excellent opportunity to help create a comprehensive extension to the west side of Didcot as part of other sites earmarked for development in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan as shown on the plan opposite. It is therefore right and proper to plan for the development of Milton Fields as part and parcel of this area of expansion.

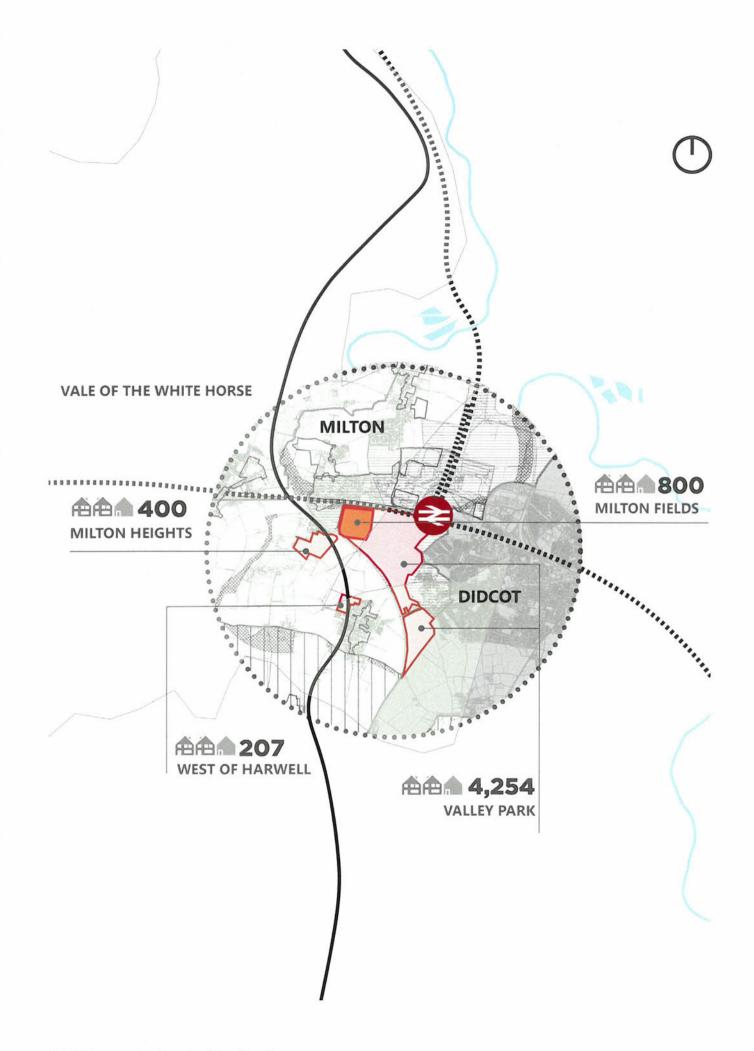


Fig 14: Surrounding Housing Allocation Map

## 3.4 The Site

The Site is square in shape and comprises approximately 33.3 Hectares (82.3 acres). To the north of the Site is Milton Park, separated from the Site by the A4130.

To the west of the Site is a road interchange between the A34 and A4130 and an area planned for warehousing. To the south is the A34, including a field between the Site and the A34 that belongs to Valley Park. Finally to the immediate east is Valley Park, a large mixed use urban extension to Didcot.







The photos on the opposite page were taken from Google Street View:

- View of the existing access taken from the A4130
- View looking south west across the Site, showing the existing buildings within the red line.
- looking east from the Premier Inn parking area to the west of the Site

Fig 15: Site photographs



## 3.5 Site Considerations

The following are a series of key site considerations we have identified which need to be considered through the masterplan design process:

- There is an existing minor access point off the A4130.
- Part of the Site to the north and north east falls within Flood Zone 3. Close to this area, the land also falls within Flood Zone 2.
- (3) Existing hedgerows transect the Site centrally from east to west.
- (4) The Site falls from around 75m AOD at the south west corner to around 60m AOD to the north eastern corner
- (5) There are a cluster of existing buildings on the Site, including a small farmhouse, which have been used for agricultural purposes but are now mainly redundant.
- (6) Two Public Rights of Ways (ProW's) border the Site to the east (running north to south) and to the west (running east to west). There is the potential to link new footpaths across the Site to these existing ProW's. (This will clearly need the co-operation of Valley Park to the east - which we would urge the Council to insist on as part of their Section 106 agreements).
- (7) The adjacent site to the east (Valley Park) has planning permission for up to 4,252 homes,

Site boundary (33.3 ha / 82.3 acres) Existing access from the A4130 Sensitive boundary to noise Existing hedgerow 5m contours EA Flood Zone 2 EA Flood Zone 3 Adjacent planning permission for 4,254 dwellings

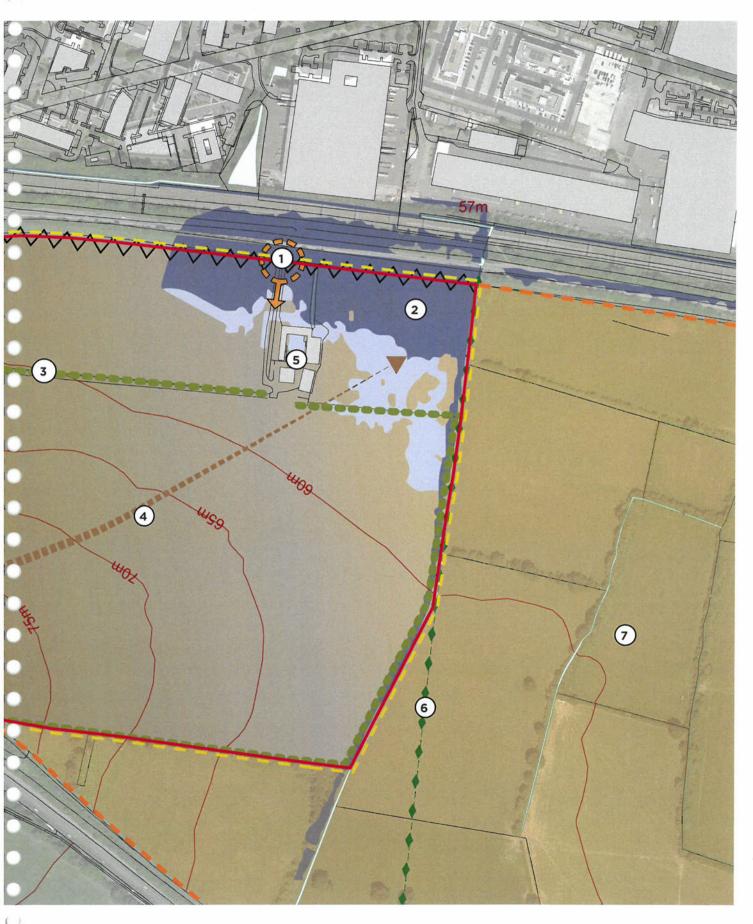
Public Right of Way (PRoW)





Fig 17: Site Considerations Plan

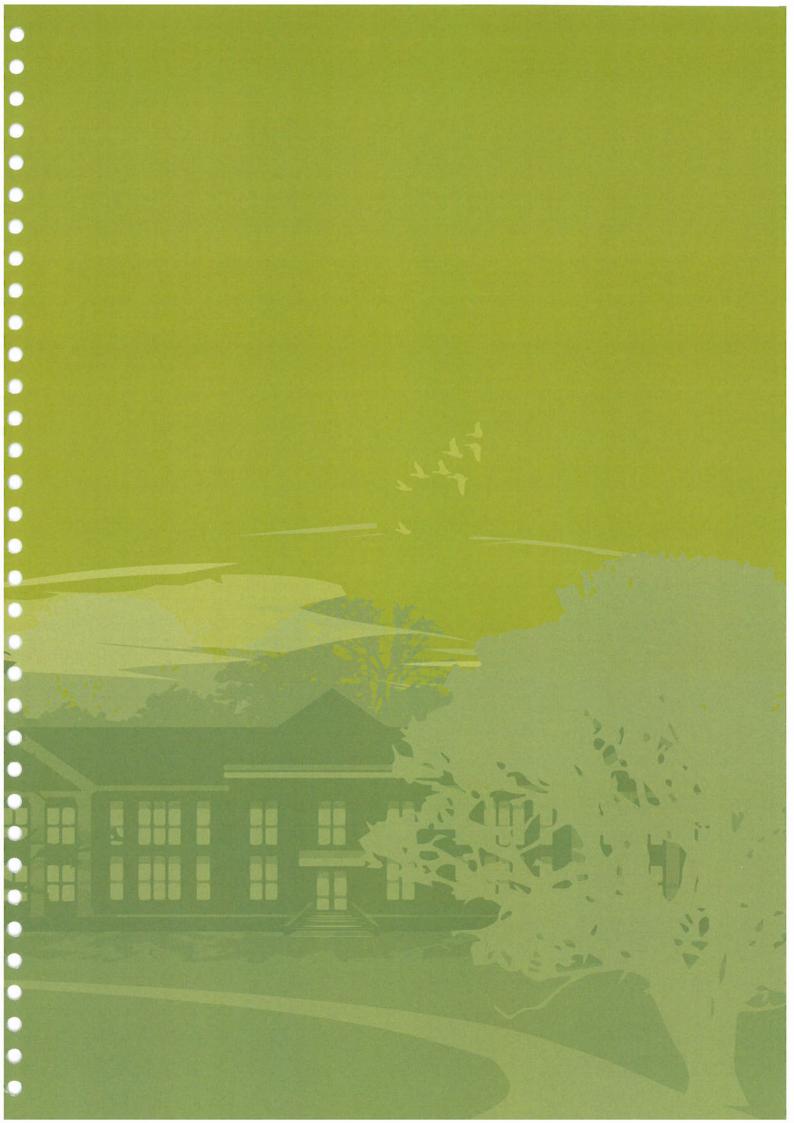




# 4.0 Summary

4.1 Summary and Key Benefits





### 4.1 Summary and Key Benefits

### **Summary Of Proposals**

The concept plan for up to 800 new homes and a range of facilities seeks to respond to the landscape and emerging context of the Site and surroundings through the creation of a highly integrated network of walkable / cyclable routes including proposals to reduce traffic and improve public transport - on the lines proposed by Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet member for Health and Transport, Oxford City Council in September 2022.

Milton Fields will emerge as an environment of conviviality that promotes a healthy living and learning lifestyle.

#### **Next Steps**

Once the Masterplan has been discussed and agreed, it is proposed to involve at least three medium sized developers who will be offered a share in the eventual profits; as well as, most importantly, an area set aside in consultation with the Vale of the White Horse for Self Build - a vital feature.

This will be on the lines of the development at Romsey in Hampshire which is well under way (though on a much larger scale) under the aegis of the Mountbatten Estate.

# Milton Fields, Didcot:

## Key Benefits for the Community



A car free development



Renewable energy systems to all new homes



Access to over 10 hectares of new Public Open Space, including childrens play areas



A diverse range of up to 800 new homes catering for all, including self build



30% of all new homes will be affordable



An urban farm



A new two form entry primary school



Direct cycling and walking routes into neighbouring Didcot in 10 minutes



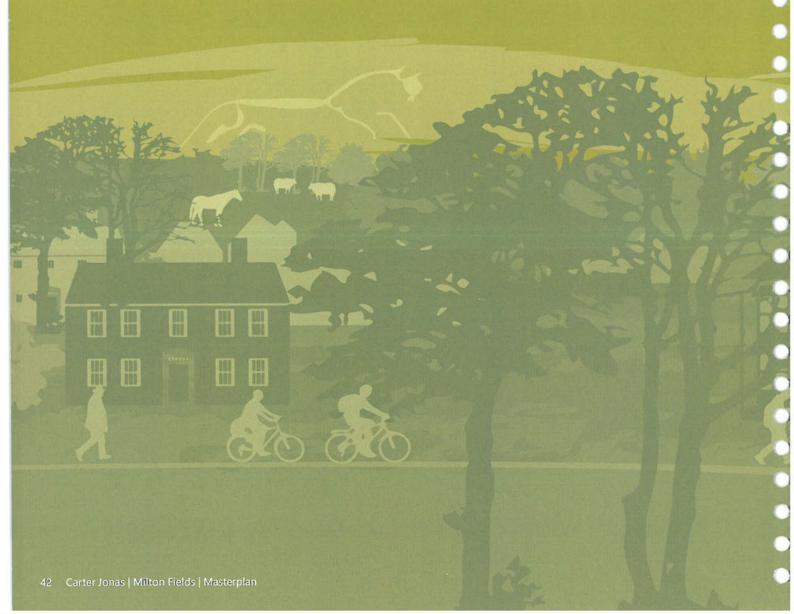
Creation of new habitats to achieve biodiversity net gain

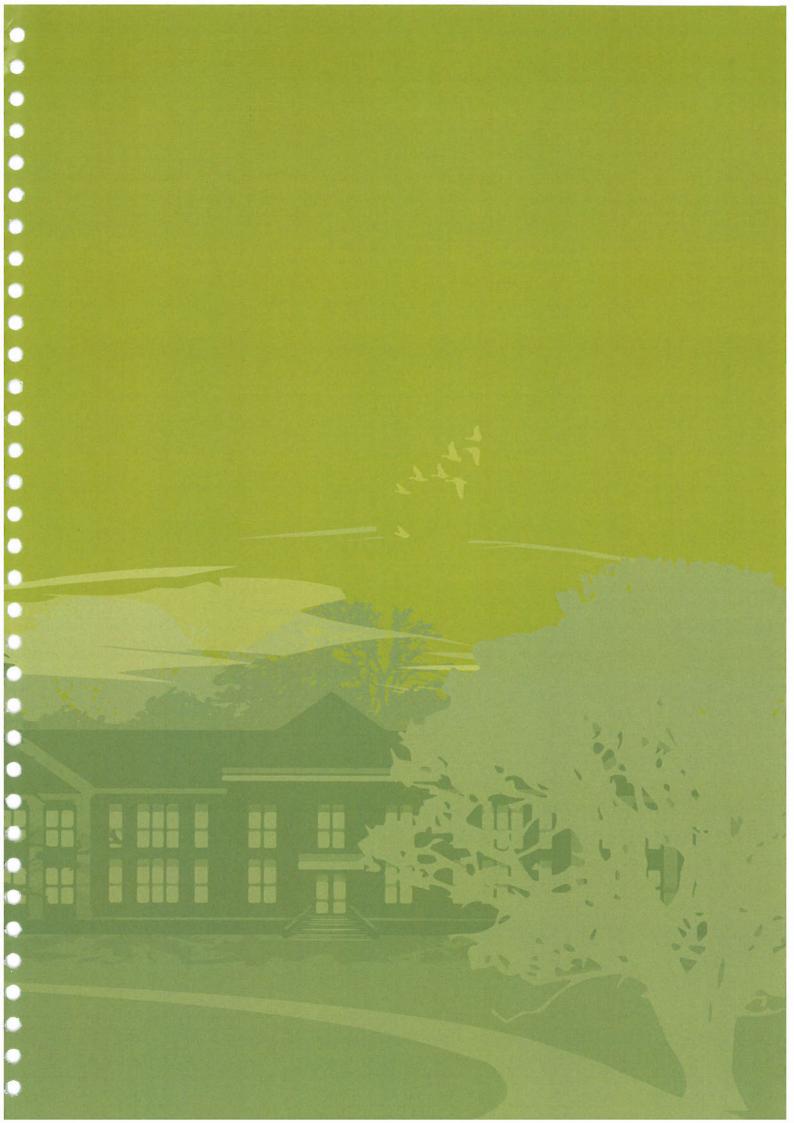




# **Appendices**

Appendix A - List of Figures





## **Appendix A - List of Figures**

Fig 01:	Vale Of White Horse District Council Location Plan
Fig 02:	Wider Context Plan
Fig 03:	Land, Building And Rights Of Way Site Driver
Fig 04:	Access And Allocations Site Driver
Fig 05:	Topography And Drainage Site Driver
Fig 06:	Landscape-Led Response Plan
Fig 07:	Access And Movement Plan
Fig 08:	Emerging Concept Plan
Fig 09:	Diagram From Riba Sustainable Outcomes Guide (December 2019)
Fig 10:	Environmental And Biodiversity Net Gain (Bng) Features
Fig 11:	Sustainable Housing Diagrams
Fig 12:	Regional Context Map
Fig 13:	Community Facilities Plan
Fig 14:	Surrounding Housing Allocation Map
Fig 15:	Site Photographs
Fig 16:	Aerial Plan Of The Site With The Site Boundary Highlighted In Red

Fig 17: Site Considerations Plan Fig 18: Key Benefits Infographics 

## Carter Jonas

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