

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 – SECTION 77**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT  
PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND)  
RULES 2000**

**APPLICATION BY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FOR THE DUALLING OF  
THE A4130 CARRIAGEWAY, CONSTRUCTION OF THE DIDCOT SCIENCE  
BRIDGE, ROAD BRIDGE OVER THE APPLEFORD RAILWAY SIDINGS AND  
ROAD BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER THAMES AND ASSOCIATED WORKS  
BETWEEN THE A34 MILTON INTERCHANGE AND THE B4015 NORTH OF  
CLIFTON HAMPDEN, OXFORDSHIRE (APPLICATION NO: R3.0138/21)**

**PROOF OF EVIDENCE (PLANNING APPLICATION) -**

**(Topic 6 – planning policy, other material considerations, planning balance):**

Adrian Butler BA (Hons) MRTPI on behalf of the Vale of White Horse District Council

**Appeal reference:** PCU/RTI/U3100/3326455

**Council's reference:** P23/V/2012/CM

January 2024

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1 Qualifications and Experience	2
2 Introduction and Scope of Evidence	2
3 Planning Policy Context	4
4 Assessment Against Development Plan Policies	9
5 The Planning Balance	21
6 Summary and Conclusion (the summary proof)	23

<b>APPENDICES</b>	
1 Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan Projects 2022	25
2 Site plan for the proposed Local Development Order at Hill Farm, Didcot	26

## **1.0 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

- 1.1 My name is Adrian Butler, a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute, with a Bachelor of Arts (honours) Town Planning Degree. I am employed by the Vale of White Horse District Council (the council) as a Principal Major Applications Officer. I have 37 years' experience working in planning in various roles encompassing local government, private practice and with a developer and have been working for this council since January 2015 as a principal major applications officer.
- 1.2 The views and judgements expressed in this evidence represent my professional opinion and have been prepared and are given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution, the Royal Town Planning Institute.

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

### **Introduction**

- 2.1 The council responded on three separate occasions to consultation in relation to the original planning application proposals and two sets of amendments to the application proposals made in November 2022 and April 2023. The council's responses dated 16 June 2023, 22 December 2022 and 4 February 2022, are at appendices 1, 2 and 3 of this council's statement of case (CD L.3). The most relevant and up to date response is that dated 16 June 2023 (appendix 1 of the council's statement of case (CD L.3)) which responded to the April 2023 amendments (CD C), to the planning application.

### **Scope of Evidence**

- 2.2 Paragraph 27 of the Inspector's notes which followed the 9 November 2023 Case Management Conference advises all evidence will be heard in topics

and my evidence will be in response to topic 6 “Planning Policy”. This topic covers:

- a) Planning history
- b) Site and surrounds
- c) Planning policy
- d) Other material considerations
- e) Planning balance.

2.3 The Inspector’s note dated 12 January 2024 identified 14 “likely main issues” and my evidence will be in response to topic 14 in respect of the overall planning balance with particular emphasis on the most important adopted Vale of White Horse District Council’s development management policies.

2.4 The application site within the Vale of White Horse District, is not within the Green Belt and therefore, I shall not cover Green Belt issues. I am not expert on climate change, traffic modelling, traffic assessment or flood risk and drainage and I shall not address them. I will not provide detailed evidence on noise, heritage matters or landscape and visual effects but I will reflect on those matters as necessary.

2.5 Planning history and the site and surrounds are covered in a Statement of Common Ground between the council and the applicant. My proof of evidence will therefore, address points c), d) and e) above with particular emphasis on the most important adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan development management policies.

2.6 Strategic policies are addressed on behalf of the council in Emma Baker’s proof of evidence which will demonstrate that the HIF1 scheme is an integral component of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan strategy.

### **3.0 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

#### **The Development Plan**

- 3.1 Section 70 the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes clear that planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that *“if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”*.
- 3.2 That part of the Development Plan which I shall address comprises:
- The December 2016 adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 (the LPP1); (CD G.2.1) and,
  - The October 2019 adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2 (the LPP2) (CD G.2.7).
- 3.3 A Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 review (five-year review) for the LPP1 was undertaken in 2021 and concluded that, five years on, the LPP1 (together with the LPP2) continues to provide a suitable framework for development in the Vale of White Horse that is in overall conformity with central government policy. The December 2023 National Planning Policy Framework does not alter this conclusion.
- 3.4 The LPP1 and LPP2 set out the spatial strategy and strategic policies for the homes and jobs to be provided in the area and make provision for the infrastructure (in this case highways infrastructure) needed to support them and the detailed development management policies to complement the strategic policies (strategic policies are covered by my colleague Emma

Baker's proof of evidence). The most important development management policies in the LPP1 and LPP2 to the consideration of the proposals are listed below:

LPP1 core policies (CP):

- CP17 – Delivery of Strategic Highway Improvements within the South-East Vale Sub-Area
- CP18 – Safeguarding of Land for Transport Schemes in the South East Vale Sub-Area
- CP33 - Promoting Sustainable Transport and Accessibility
- CP35 - Promoting Public Transport, Cycling and Walking
- CP37 - Design and Local Distinctiveness
- CP40 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- CP42 - Flood Risk
- CP44 - Landscape
- CP46 - Conservation and Improvement of Biodiversity.

LPP2 core policy:

- CP18a – Safeguarding of Land for Strategic Highway Improvements within the South East Vale Sub Area

LPP2 Development policies (DP):

- DP16b – Didcot Garden Town
- DP21 - External Lighting
- DP23 - Impact of Development on Amenity
- DP25 - Noise Pollution
- DP26 - Air Quality
- DP27 - Land Affected by Contamination
- DP30 - Watercourses

- DP31 – Protection of Public Rights of Way, National Trails and Open Access Areas
- DP36 – Heritage Assets
- DP37 – Conservation Areas
- DP38 – Listed Buildings
- DP39 - Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments.

### **Other Material Considerations**

#### The Emerging South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Local Plan

- 3.5 The emerging Joint Local Plan has reached Regulation 18 consultation (its second Regulation 18 consultation) which launched on 10 January 2024 for 6 weeks. The emerging Joint Local Plan contains options, preferred options, and full draft policies. The plan has not reached Regulation 19 stage yet, therefore limited weight can be afforded to the Joint Local Plan. Proposed policy IN3 of the Plan safeguards land for the proposed roads and bridges.

#### The National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF)

- 3.6 The NPPF provides the objective of sustainable development at paragraph 7 and acknowledges *“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner”*. It goes on to add at paragraph 8 that *“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives)”*. The overarching objectives referred to are economic, social and environmental.
- 3.7 These objectives are to *“be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in this Framework;*

*they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area” (paragraph 9 of the NPPF).*

- 3.8 Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states: *“So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11)”*.
- 3.9 Paragraph 11 applies a presumption in favour of sustainable development to decision making, but it is important to recognise that the primacy of the Development Plan in decision-making is not altered. Development that accords with an up-to-date Plan should be approved. The Vale of White Horse Local Plan is up to date.
- 3.10 Paragraph 12 of the NPPF confirms *“The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making”*.
- 3.11 Paragraph 12 adds *“Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date Development Plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the Development Plan), permission should not usually be granted”*. It does permit decisions that depart from an up to date Development Plan but only if material considerations in a case indicate otherwise.
- 3.12 Paragraph 15 of the NPPF expects the planning system to be genuinely Plan led.



- 3.13 Paragraph 47 acknowledges the legal requirement for applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Draft Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan (the draft SCNP)

- 3.14 There are no made Neighbourhood Plans within the Vale of White Horse district which cover the application site but there is a draft Neighbourhood Plan for Sutton Courtenay (CD G.9). The application site includes land in the north eastern part of the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan area. The draft SCNP has been submitted for examination and there are objections to its policies. At this stage I give little weight to the emerging policies.

- 3.15 Relevant draft SCNP policies (CD G.9) include:

- SC2 – Landscape character and value
- SC3 – Key Views and Vistas
- SC6 - Biodiversity
- SC7 – Flooding and Drainage
- SC10 – Design, Heritage and Setting
- SC17 – Traffic Management

Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan

- 3.16 The application site is also within an area covered by the non-statutory Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan (DGTDP) (CD G.6) published in October 2017. It does not set specific policies but is intended to set a vision for Didcot town and a framework for delivering the vision. Part of its vision is infrastructure to support growth. By its own admission at section 1.1.7 of the Plan, it does “*not represent adopted planning policy*” and should be “*treated as a non-statutory planning document.*” Consequently, I give the DGTDP little weight.

- 3.17 A list of proposed DGTDP projects was updated in 2022 (Appendix 1 of my proof of evidence). Project numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 listed at Appendix 1 all relate to and support implementation of the application proposals i.e:
- i. A Science Bridge;
  - ii. Dualling the A4130 from Milton Interchange to a new Science Bridge;
  - iii. A Clifton Hampden by-pass; and,
  - iv. A new river crossing road between the A4130 at Didcot and the A415 at Culham.

#### **4.0 Assessment Against Development Plan Policies (the LPP1 and LPP2)**

##### **Principle of the Proposed Development**

- 4.1 Policy CP17 of the LPP1 identifies highways infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the planned growth across Science Vale. Highways infrastructure identified by the policy includes the Science Bridge and A4130 re-routing through the Didcot A site and A4130 dualling between Milton Interchange and Science Bridge. The proposals include this identified highways infrastructure.
- 4.2 Policy CP18 of the LPP1 safeguards land to support the delivery of the identified transport schemes listed in policy CP17 including land for the Science Bridge, re-routing through the Didcot A site and A4130 dualling. The land is shown on pages 62, 65 and 69 of the appendices to the LPP1 (CD. G.2.2). The application site is largely within safeguarded land.
- 4.3 Policy CP18a of the LPP2 safeguards land to support the delivery of a new Thames river crossing between Culham and Didcot in accordance with core policy 18 of the LPP1. The land safeguarded is shown on the plan on page of 37 of the appendices to the LPP2 (CD. G2.8). The application site is largely within safeguarded land.

- 4.4 The proposals accord with policies CP17 and CP18 of the LPP1, policy CP18a of the LPP2 and paragraph 114 of the NPPF.

### **Sustainable Travel**

- 4.5 Policy CP33 of the LPP1 is compliant with paragraph 114 of the NPPF and confirms the council will work with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to promote sustainable transport and accessibility. The policy identifies six criteria that the councils will seek to achieve as follows:
- i. “actively seek to ensure that the impacts of new development on the strategic and local road network are minimised*
  - ii. ensure that developments are designed in a way to promote sustainable transport access both within new sites, and linking with surrounding facilities and employment*
  - iii. support measures identified in the Local Transport Plan for the district, including within the relevant local area strategies*
  - iv. support improvements for accessing Oxford*
  - v. ensure that transport improvements are designed to minimise any effects on the amenities, character and special qualities of the surrounding area, and*
  - vi. promote and support improvements to the transport network that increase safety, improve air quality and/or make our towns and villages more attractive.”*
- 4.6 The proposals seek to improve the local road network by providing additional capacity to accommodate traffic flows from planned development. The proposals provide for bus services along its route together with pedestrian and cycle paths. In turn these connect with existing and planned housing and commercial developments along the route of the proposals providing existing and future residents and employees with options for sustainable travel rather than being reliant on private motor vehicles for travel. For example the

proposals will provide improved and new sustainable travels links from new housing permitted and planned south of the A4130 and west of Didcot, with commercial developments existing and/or planned at the Didcot A site and Milton Park (north of the A4130 and north west of Didcot), and Culham Science Park (north of the River Thames), which can encourage increased levels of public transport use, walking and cycling thereby reducing private car use. In so doing, cycling and walking can improve health, and cycling, walking and increased public transport use can contribute to the improvement of air quality and reducing congestion. This council's air quality officer has no objections and County Council highway engineers have not raised any safety issues. The proposals comply with criteria i), ii), iii) and vi) of policy CP33 and paragraph 114 of the NPPF.

- 4.7 It is not essential that this proposal supports improvements for accessing Oxford and therefore, criterion iv) of policy CP33 is of little if any weight in the determination of the application. The matters associated with criteria v) (amenities and character) of policy CP33 are dealt with below.
- 4.8 Policy CP35 of the LPP1 complies with paragraph 114 of the NPPF and states the council will work with OCC and others to promote public transport cycling and walking. The policy sets seven criteria of which criteria 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are relevant. The proposal complies with criteria 1 and 2 because it makes provision for sustainable modes of transport including public transport, cycling and walking and can encourage a modal shift to these sustainable forms of travel. Existing public transport corridors are used and new corridors provided (over the Science Bridge and Culham river crossing), allowing for bus services to better connect with destinations and be more reliable with reduced journey time owing to reduced congestion on routes. The delivery of a priority bus lane (condition 8) is welcomed in encouraging a shift to sustainable and active travel modes in accordance with policies CP33 and

CP35 of the LPP1. The proposals comply with criteria 3, 4 and 5 in providing new footways as well as cycleways, and public transport opportunities which provide accessible and sustainable links between existing and planned housing and commercial developments. The proposals comply with policy CP35 and paragraph 114 of the NPPF.

### **Landscape Character and Appearance**

- 4.9 The DGTDP envisages Didcot as a super green town prioritising green infrastructure including tree lined streets. This aligns with the principles of policy CP44 (landscape) of the LPP1.
- 4.10 Policy CP44 of the LPP1 seeks to protect and enhance key features contributing to the nature and quality of the district's landscape. Key features include trees, hedges, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and water bodies, important landscape settings of settlements, topographical features, areas of features of cultural and historic value, important views and visually sensitive skylines, and tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise and motion. Where development is acceptable in principle, which these proposals are, policy CP44 expects measures to integrate it into the landscape character and/or the townscape of the area by incorporating appropriate landscaping, promoting local distinctiveness and diversity and where practical, enhance damaged landscape areas.
- 4.11 In the Vale district, the proposals primarily follow the line of the existing A4130 and pass through urban areas and land with planning permission for or commitments through the LPP1 and LPP2, for commercial and housing development. The council is exploring the possibility of a Local Development Order for commercial buildings on land at Hill Farm which is north of the A4130 and south of Hartwright House and this has reached an advanced stage. The site is shown at appendix 2. The proposed road scheme will bisect

this site. It is only beyond Hartwright House that the proposals enter countryside and, even here, there is a context of minerals workings, landfill, their haul road, and a railway line and siding. The proposals will result in the loss of trees, hedges and field boundaries and some impacts for watercourses and water bodies in the district. The development plan does not recognise any important landscape settings for settlements, topographical features, features of cultural and historic value, important views or visually sensitive skylines in this area (or along any of the route through the Vale of White Horse district). The proposals will have limited impact on tranquillity in areas of countryside given the presence of mineral workings, landfill, haul routes to those workings and the railway line and siding. Light pollution could be mitigated by condition as explained further below. Inevitably traffic using the road will generate noise and motion which need to be considered in the planning balance.

- 4.12 In responding to consultation, the council considered tree and hedge planting is necessary to provide tree lined streets reflecting principles of core policies 44 and 45 of the LPP1 and the DGTDP vision for a *“super green town prioritising green infrastructure including tree lined streets”* and paragraph 136 of the NPPF, to screen the road in views from proposed housing on the southern side of the A4130, to act as a noise buffer and to visually separate the road from cycle and pedestrian paths.
- 4.13 Furthermore, acoustic barriers of an unspecified height were considered visually intrusive by the council. This could be addressed by proposed condition 32. Acoustic barriers could be of an appropriate colour, be screened with climbing plants and could include some clear panels allowing views through them. These should reduce the visual impact of the barriers.
- 4.14 The council’s landscape architect considered the extent of mitigating planting to be inadequate with the scheme needing to mitigate for its impacts, and that insufficient information was available to enable proper understanding of

scheme features such as embankments and cuttings. The landscape architect also considered excessive gravel access paths to SUDS features are proposed. Concern was expressed about lighting in rural areas. The council's forestry officer noted a "*very significant amount of tree removal*" is required with a significant reduction in tree canopy cover. The forestry officer expects considerable amounts of new tree planting to deliver a net increase in canopy cover. These concerns could be addressed by proposed conditions 5 (compensatory tree planting), 9 (CEMP), 12 (LEMP), 17 (landscaping scheme) and 18 (tree survey including retention of tree and tree groups). An approved landscaping scheme could include vertical planting on the approach to bridges, planting on embankments, climbing plants to screen acoustic barriers, green walls on the bridges, tree and hedge planting beside the road to separate and screen cycle and footways and existing and proposed developments.

- 4.15 Nonetheless, landscaping will not fully mitigate the landscape and visual impacts of the proposals with the bridges and viaduct, noise and motion from traffic using the roads and bridges, notable particularly as the proposals cross countryside north of the A4130 to the proposed Culham river crossing. Some conflict with policy CP44 of the LPP1 is identified and this needs to be considered in the planning balance.
- 4.16 Policy SC2 of the draft SCNP (CD.G.9) relates to landscape character and value and proposals should demonstrate how they preserve or enhance the features positively defining the character of the designated neighbourhood area. The draft SCNP identifies that part of the proposals approaching the River Thames crossing as being in character areas 2 and 6 (identified on the plan at page 38 of the SCNP).

- 4.17 Character area 2 is described in paragraph 6.2.7 of the SCNP, as intensively managed arable farmland and intact river flood plain with opportunity for re-creating wet grassland and encouraging regeneration of trees and wetland habitats along the river. The proposals can create wet grassland and provide tree planting and these measures can be part of a landscaping scheme and biodiversity enhancements secured by conditions.
- 4.18 Character area 6 is according to page 39 of the SCNP, disturbed land east of the village. This character area is partially crossed by the proposals at the eastern extremity of the character area. The area is recognised by paragraph 6.2.11 of the SCNP as having been completely changed in character by gravel extraction. Opportunities for creating new more ecologically/visually interesting and accessible landscape is envisaged. The proposals could partially secure these aims for small areas either side of the proposals.
- 4.19 The proposals would impact on the landscape character areas at their eastern extremities whilst the majority of the character areas are retained. There is opportunity for enhancement and screening the development resulting in limited harm which must be weighed in the planning balance.
- 4.20 Policy SC3 of the draft SCNP expects development to maintain or enhance key views and vistas which are identified on the plan at page 43 of the SCNP. The proposals would be seen in view 7 looking east towards Wittenham Clumps over agricultural land from Appleford Road at the edge of the village, and view 13 looking east from a bridleway adjacent to Millennium Common. The proposals will be visible in these views and interrupt views across the open landscape including the view towards Wittenham Clumps. The harm and conflict with this draft policy needs to be considered in the planning balance.
- 4.21 Policy DP21 of the LPP2 permits external lighting where there is no adverse effect on the character of an area, the amenity of neighbours and local



biodiversity, it would not present a hazard to pedestrians or people using any form of transport and the lighting proposed is the minimum necessary to undertake the task for which it is required. In its June 2023 response to OCC, the council expressed concern at lighting in the rural area north of Hartwright House and the proximity of lighting columns to trees which could prevent tree planting. These matters could be addressed by amending condition 28 to prevent street lighting north of Hartwright House to the River Thames. Lighting locations could be secured by condition as could landscaping to ensure tree positions and lighting columns do not conflict. Street lights could be fitted with devices to reduce glare and light spillage which could also be secured by condition. Conditions 17 (landscaping and which refers to lighting) and 28 (lighting and including a requirement for no lighting north of Hartwright House), would make the proposals policy DP21 compliant.

## **Noise**

- 4.22 Policy DP23 requires proposals to demonstrate that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses including impacts of loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight, dominance or visual intrusion, noise or vibration, dust, heat, other emissions, pollution, contamination and external lighting.
- 4.23 In its June 2023 response to OCC, the council's environmental protection team recognised that there will be occupants of dwellings who will experience a significant adverse impact from the development in respect of noise. Policy DP25 addresses noise pollution and expects noise generating development that would have an impact on environmental amenity to be mitigated. The council's environmental protection team advised in the council's June 2023 response to OCC that *"there is little further that can be done to mitigate the noise impacts of the proposed development"*. As noted in the minutes of its

September 2023 Planning and Regulation Committee (CD.7.6), OCC resolved not to oppose the scheme in respect of noise.

- 4.24 I note paragraph 186 of the report to OCC's Planning and Regulation Committee on 27 September 2023 (CD. F.5) explains. *"The proposed development would improve the noise environment for the occupants of 1862 dwellings and 10 other receptors (business and community facilities) in the first year of opening, reducing to 341 dwellings and 3 other receptors in the longer term. However, some 187 dwellings (reducing to 181 in the longer term), and the Culham Science Centre Nursery, would be likely to experience long term adverse effects..... Planning policy at the national and local levels expect that mitigation would be employed to avoid significant noise effects occurring, however the applicant has stated that no further mitigation options are available. Therefore, whilst a significant number of properties would experience an improved noise environment, there would be a detrimental effect to 187 properties and the Culham Science Centre Nursery."*
- 4.25 Condition 6 proposes exploring relocating noise barriers closer to the carriageway although there is no guarantee this would fully address noise impacts. I note that the minutes for the 27 September Planning and Regulation Committee (CD.F.6), advise one of the council's environmental health officers attended the meeting and explained *"Moving the barrier would have an effect but calculations in decibels had not yet been completed and it would be misleading to speculate. Moving the barrier would have a negative effect on 19 properties and 79 properties would benefit significantly"*.
- 4.26 Due to the negative impacts, I conclude on this issue that there is conflict with policies DP23 and DP25 of the LPP2 and criterion v) of policy CP33 of the LPP1. This detrimental impact needs to be considered in the planning balance.

## Design

- 4.25 Policy CP37 of the LPP1 relates to design and local distinctiveness and seeks high quality design in accordance with paragraphs 131, 132 and 135 of the NPPF. In its 16 June 2023 response to OCC the council expressed reservations about the appearance of bridges noting the Science Bridge would be “unspectacular”. Policy CP16b of the LPP2 requires proposals in the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan area to demonstrate how they positively contribute to the Masterplan principles which are detailed on page 55 of the LPP2 (CD G.2.7) and which I summarise as design, local character, density and tenure, transport and movement, heritage, landscape, green infrastructure and social and community benefits.
- 4.26 The DGTDP design principle encourages pioneering architecture and the Science Bridge to be a landmark feature, and this council considered that by reason of concrete materials, massing, unbroken grassed banks, lack of vertical landscaping on the approaches to bridges and on the banks of the bridge, bridges would be unspectacular and visually intrusive. I am not convinced the bridge designs comply with the design principles of the DGTDP as they are not pioneering design but the proposals can subject to imposing condition 23, be made acceptable and compliant with design policy in the LPP1 (policy CP37). As already explained the proposals through proposed public transport, cycling and walking links can reduce reliance on motorised vehicles and strengthen connections to surrounding villages, housing and employment opportunities. Landscaping, green and blue infrastructure provision and biodiversity enhancements can be secured. The proposals can help deliver accessible and vibrant neighbourhoods, realise the density and tenure of new development through releasing land for housing, with links to transport hubs. As explained below heritage impacts of the proposals are considered acceptable. The proposals are largely compliant with the principles of the Didcot Garden Town Masterplan with the exception of design

which can with the imposition of condition 23, be made policy CP37 compliant. As a whole I consider the proposals policy DP16b compliant.

- 4.27 Condition 23 would not require a fundamental redesign of the bridges but would require features to be added. These features could include increased landscaping on the embankments and approaches to the bridges including trees for vertical emphasis, a different finished appearance which may include colour, texture, cladding, green walls and the addition of public art or a combination of these. Such additions could make the bridges more attractive and could reduce their prominence in the rural landscape or make the Science Bridge an attractive landmark. Acoustic barriers could include see-through panel sections allowing views beyond and climbing plants to soften and screen them. Such changes secured by condition 32, would address the council's concerns ensuring the development establishes a distinct identity, provides high quality landscaping/green infrastructure and is visually attractive, making the proposal policy CP37 compliant.

### **Biodiversity**

- 4.28 There are no statutory designated or local wildlife sites within the application site and this council has not identified any harm to any statutory or local wildlife sites. Policy CP46 of the LPP1 permits development that will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity. Biodiversity net gain is encouraged and biodiversity net loss avoided. Loss or deterioration or harm to habitats or species of importance to biodiversity is not permitted unless the need for, and benefits of the development outweighs the adverse effect, the development could not be reasonably located elsewhere and would result in less harm to biodiversity and measures can be provided and secured by condition or legal agreement that would avoid, mitigate or as a last resort, compensate for adverse effects.

- 4.29 In the Vale of White Horse district, application proposals largely pass through areas of land safeguarded for the scheme. Whilst this council's ecologist responded to the original application scheme and the first set of amendments in November 2022, no response was received in respect of the April 2023 amendments. Biodiversity matters did not form a reason for refusal expressed by the County Council's Planning and Regulation Committee. Planning conditions proposed include a requirement for a Construction Environmental Management Plan (condition 9) which includes several measures to avoid and mitigate impacts on species and habitats. Condition 12 would secure a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan, condition 13 secures updated protected species surveys with revised mitigation and enhancement strategies and a biodiversity mitigation and enhancement strategy is proposed under condition 14. A revised Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and updated metric requiring a 10% increase in biodiversity is required by condition 3. Subject to these conditions being imposed I consider the proposals can be made compliant with policy CP46 of the LPP1 and paragraph 180d) of the NPPF.
- 4.30 Policy SC6 requires development proposals to deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least ten per cent for the neighbourhood plan area. The proposal aims to provide a ten percent net gain. The proposals have no adverse impact for identified natural green or blue corridors, existing trees, wetlands, grassland, woodland, parks, orchards and allotments within the Neighbourhood Plan area, or on priority habits or species. There is no conflict with draft policy SC6.

### **Heritage Assets**

- 4.31 Policies DP36, DP37, DP38 and DP39 of the LPP2 which are consistent with section 16 of the NPPF, address heritage assets including conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and archaeology. As confirmed by the council's conservation officer there are no impacts for conservation

areas or listed buildings in the district. Archaeology interest can be mitigated through the imposition of conditions 21 and 22. The proposals are or can be made compliant with policies DP36, DP37, DP38 and DP39 and policy SC10 of the SCNP.

### **Other Matters**

- 4.32 With regards to the planning considerations that I have not touched on, including flooding and drainage, air quality, contamination, watercourses and public rights of way, I have nothing to add that would provide the Inspector with any additional information to that presented in the 17 July 2023 report to Oxfordshire County Council's Planning and Regulation Committee (CD F.1). I am satisfied that the proposed HIF1 scheme is consistent with the development plan in respect of these matters and that there is no conflict with national policy.

## **5.0 THE PLANNING BALANCE (likely main issue 14)**

- 5.1 Emma Baker has demonstrated that the proposals are required to deliver identified growth in this part of the Vale of White Horse District and to mitigate its impacts. My proof of evidence has demonstrated that the principle of this development is in accordance with policies CP17, CP18 and CP18a of the LPP1 and LPP2 which form part of the development plan and which, as up to date policies, can be awarded full weight.
- 5.2 My proof of evidence has identified harm including landscape and visual impacts which are unavoidable with road infrastructure of this scale and which could not be fully mitigated by landscaping or revised design, and there is conflict with policy CP44 of the LPP1 and SC3 of the SCNP. This needs to be considered in the context that the site locality contains urban areas and where the proposal does cross countryside, this locality includes a railway line,

siding, minerals and landfill operations and a haul road. There is some limited conflict with policy DP16b of the LLP2 as the bridges are not pioneering architecture although mitigation can ensure compliance with policy CP37 of the LPP1. There are adverse noise impacts for residents of 187 dwellings and the Culham Science Centre Nursery and the proposals have been identified as contrary to policies DP23 and DP25 of the LPP2 and part of criterion v) of policy CP33 of the LPP1. The harm identified needs to be balanced against the benefits of the proposals and against improvements to *“the noise environment for the occupants of 1862 dwellings and 10 other receptors (business and community facilities) in the first year of opening, reducing to 341 dwellings and 3 other receptors in the longer term”*. (Paragraph 186 of the report to OCC’s Planning and Regulation Committee on 27 September 2023) (CD F.5).

- 5.3 Benefits of the proposal include delivery of a significant amount of development meeting objectively assessed need allocated in the development plan (both the adopted South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse local plans), and identified commercial land. These planned developments will substantially benefit residents of the Districts in providing needed housing and employment opportunities and they are also in the national interest. The benefits are both social and economic and I give them substantial weight. The proposals will provide employment opportunities during the construction period, investment in the local and wider economy through the construction works and new residents and employees through their spending. The benefit of delivering the proposals and their ability to then provide housing including affordable housing, has substantial social benefits. The proposals will deliver sustainable travel links by public transport, cycling and walking between housing and commercial areas encouraging less reliance on journeys by motorised vehicles which can have health benefits, improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions and the causes of climate change and reduce congestion.



New planting has an environmental benefit which has to be balanced against the loss of planting but overall a net gain in planting is expected and a ten percent net gain in biodiversity is required which beneficial.

- 5.4 Overall, I consider the benefits of the proposals outweigh the identified harm.

## **6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION (THE SUMMARY PROOF)**

- 6.1 Section 70 the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes clear that planning decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that *“if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”*. That part of the development plan relevant to my evidence is the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and 2 which is up to date.
- 6.2 Conflict with policies CP44, DP23 and DP25 and parts of two policies (CP33 (v) and CP16b) of the development plan are identified owing to landscape and visual impacts, increased noise for some local residents and bridge design, as they are not pioneering design. Landscape and visual impacts are inevitable with a development of this nature and size and landscaping mitigation is unlikely to fully overcome the impacts but will soften its appearance over time. Noise impacts are unlikely to be mitigated for some residents but there are improvements for other residents. Bridge design can be made acceptable through the addition of condition 23.
- 6.3 There is strong policy support for the principle of the proposals through policies CP17, CP18 and CP18a which also safeguard land for the proposals. Emma Baker in her proof of evidence has identified the significance of the



proposals in delivering housing need and employment growth in the area both of which are identified through the up to date development plan. I have identified substantial economic, environmental and social benefits.

Furthermore, not providing the proposals would undermine the housing and employment strategy of the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan meaning objectively assessed housing need and employment opportunities may not be forthcoming, and permitted housing and employment in the Vale of White Horse District would add to existing road congestion whereas the proposals provide an opportunity to reduce congestion and opportunities for improved sustainable travel between planned and permitted homes, employment opportunities and services. In considering the planning balance, I must give consideration not only to local benefits of the proposal for the Vale of White Horse District but I must balance the wider local and national interests. I conclude the benefits outweigh the harm identified.

- 6.4 I am satisfied that the proposal is in accordance with the development plan as a whole, given the strong support by strategic policies, full compliance with most of the other important policies and the fact that policy conflict is limited and in the case of landscape and visual impacts, inevitable. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight to suggest that the proposals should not be permitted and therefore, I consider planning permission should be granted.

## **Appendix 1 – Revised Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan Projects 2022**

Proposed Project Number (2022)	Project Number (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Objective (2022)	Objective (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Project Name (2022)	Project Name (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Description (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Description (as per new Delivery Plan 2022)	Lead
1	15	Infrastructure and the Built Environment	Infrastructure	A new "Science Bridge" over the A4130, Great Western Railway Line and Milton Road into the former Didcot A Power Station site from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF1)	Science Bridge	Implement the proposed capacity improvements.	The Didcot Garden Town (DGT) HIF1 schemes are constituted of four key pieces of highway infrastructure improvements: widening the A4130, Science Bridge, Didcot to Culham River Crossing and the Clifton Hampden Bypass. Although separate schemes, they must be delivered cohesively for their benefits to be fully realised. All schemes benefit from cycling and pedestrian provisions additionally. Complete design and technical studies for feasibility phase through to planning permission. Subsequently work with partners who will implement the project.	Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)
2	15	Infrastructure and the Built Environment	Infrastructure	A4130 widening from Milton Interchange to a new Science Bridge by making it a dual carriageway (HIF1)	A4130 Capacity Improvements	Implement the proposed capacity improvements.	The Didcot Garden Town HIF1 schemes are constituted of four key pieces of highway infrastructure improvements: widening the A4130, Science Bridge, Didcot to Culham River Crossing and the Clifton Hampden Bypass. Although separate schemes, they must be delivered cohesively for their benefits to be fully realised. All schemes benefit from cycling and pedestrian provisions additionally. Complete design and technical studies for feasibility phase through to planning permission. Subsequently work with partners who will implement the project.	OCC
3	18	Infrastructure and the Built Environment	Infrastructure	A Clifton Hampden Bypass between the A415 at Culham Science Centre and B4015 north of Clifton Hampden. (HIF1)	Access to Culham Science Centre Phase 1	Install first stage of improvements to access to Culham Science Centre.	The Didcot Garden Town HIF1 schemes are constituted of four key pieces of highway infrastructure improvements: widening the A4130, Science Bridge, Didcot to Culham River Crossing and the Clifton Hampden Bypass. Although separate schemes, they must be delivered cohesively for their benefits to be fully realised. All schemes benefit from cycling and pedestrian provisions additionally. Complete design and technical studies for feasibility phase through to planning permission. Subsequently work with partners who will implement the project.	OCC
4	22	Infrastructure and the Built Environment	Infrastructure	A new river crossing and link road between the A4130 at Didcot and A415 at Culham, including two new bridges. (HIF1)	New Thames Crossing	Implement the second stage of improvements to access to Culham Science Centre, including a new crossing over the Thames.	The Didcot Garden Town HIF1 schemes are constituted of four key pieces of highway infrastructure improvements: widening the A4130, Science Bridge, Didcot to Culham River Crossing and the Clifton Hampden Bypass. Although separate schemes, they must be delivered cohesively for their benefits to be fully realised. All schemes benefit from cycling and pedestrian provisions additionally. Complete design and technical studies for feasibility phase through to planning permission. Subsequently work with partners who will implement the project.	OCC
5	16, 45 and 58	Infrastructure and the Built Environment	Infrastructure and design quality	Didcot Central Corridor	Central Didcot Transport Corridor (Cultural spine and Gateway spine). Design briefs for proposals at Rich's Sidings, Station Square and Town Square and feasibility studies.	Provide a package of works for the proposed Cultural Spine and Gateway spine. Develop the public realm brief for series of spaces associated with new build development at each location. Conduct design studies to determine capacity and feasibility of recommendations within the Master plan such as: Station Study, Garden Line Study, Cultural Spine Study, Gateway Spine Study.	To develop a placemaking strategy and prepare an Options Appraisal Report (OAR) for three main routes within Didcot known collectively as Didcot Central Corridor (DCC). These include the Cultural Spine (Broadway), Gateway Spine (Station Road), B4493 Foxhall Road and Jubilee Way roundabout. To transfer a funding contribution from SODC to OCC (subject to agreement) to support advancing the project and the inclusion of Jubilee Way roundabout in the scope. Key outputs for the project are to: 1. Create a joint transport ("movement") and public realm ("place") placemaking strategy for parts of central Didcot with the involvement of residents, businesses and relevant local stakeholders. 2. Produce an Options Appraisal Report (OAR), Stage 1 and 2. 3. Provide recommendations of schemes from short to long term to support future capital funding bids to implement.	OCC (Lead) South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils Project Team (SAV)
6	17	Infrastructure and the Built Environment	Infrastructure	Northern Perimeter Road Phase 3 (NPR3)	Northern perimeter road and East West movement corridor (NPR3)	Providing a package of new highway improvements.	NPR3 forms part of the strategic transport infrastructure in Didcot and will extend the existing A4130 Didcot Northern Perimeter Road (NPR), linking the A4130, Abingdon Road and B4016 junction to the A4130 and Hadden Hill junction. To transfer £6.2m in grant funding from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) to OCC subject to agreement. Complete design and technical studies for feasibility phase through to planning permission. Subsequently work with partners who will implement the project.	OCC SAV
7 and 8	60	Infrastructure and the Built Environment	Regeneration	Didcot Gateway	Gateway Project	Complete financial and technical studies for feasibility phase through to planning permission. Subsequently work with third parties who will implement project.	Undertake a master planning exercise to set out the context for the delivery of individual sites within the wider Didcot Gateway area to support regeneration. Regeneration aims are to provide improvements to the arrival space for the Town and facilitate delivery of mixed use schemes including homes, office space and a café. Support delivery of a regenerated gateway into the Town opposite Didcot Parkway train station and work with partners/third parties to implement it. Design and delivery of a highly sustainable District Council office HQ building incorporating lettable office space, outdoor amenity areas and a public plaza.	SAV Homes England
9	6	Infrastructure and the Built Environment	Design Quality	Wayfinding	Wayfinding Strategy, Design and Installation	Create a Wayfinding Strategy and design the layout and information so that improved signage and navigation aids can be installed. Installation of Wayfinding Totems around Didcot, including interactive maps at the station.	Identify areas to implement wayfinding to enhance user experience in accessing spaces around the Garden Town and helping them find their way to desired destinations. Wayfinding systems should help encourage active travel.	SAV

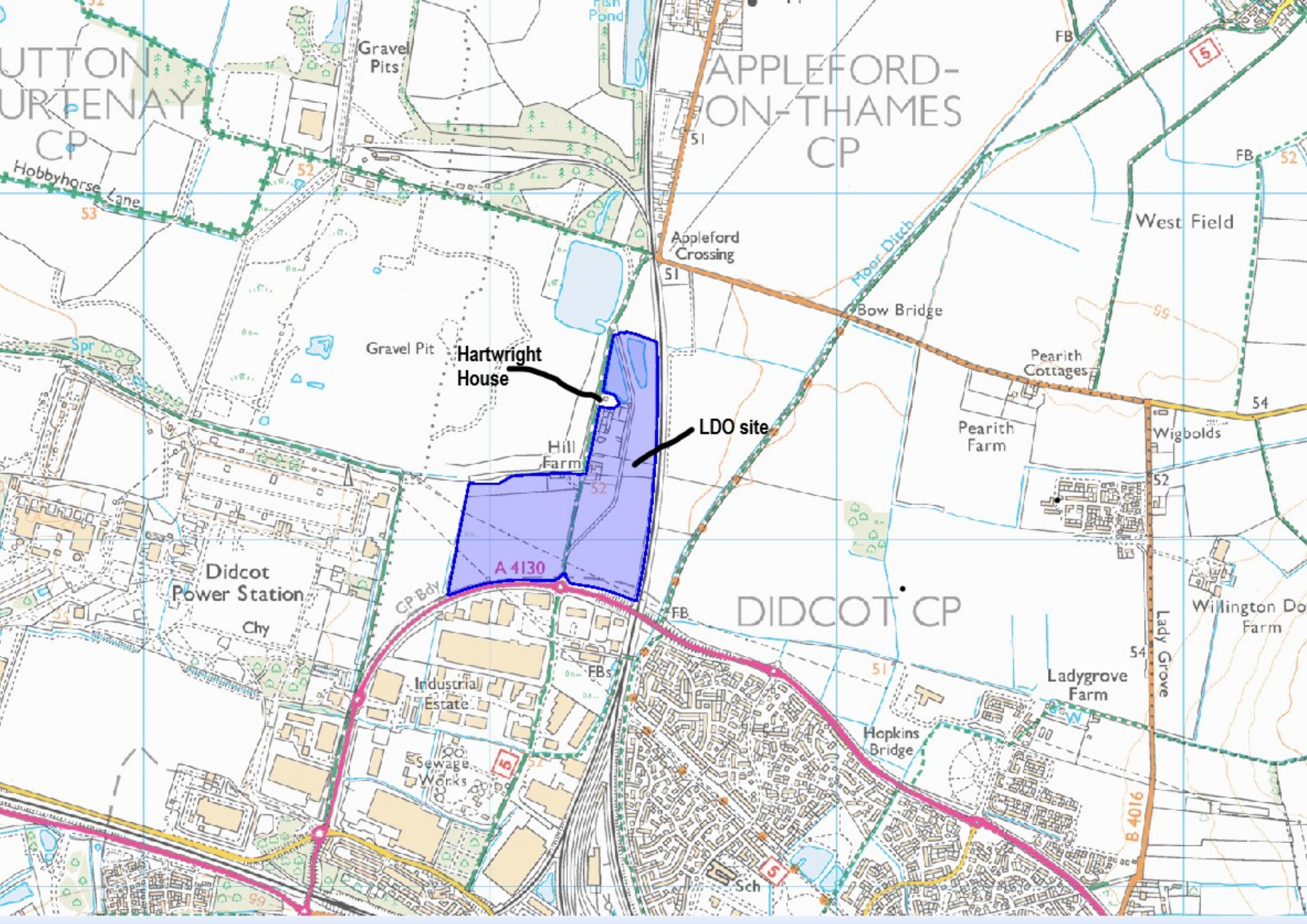
Proposed Project Number (2022)	Project Number (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Objective (2022)	Objective (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Project Name (2022)	Project Name (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Description (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Description (as per new Delivery Plan 2022)	Lead
10	13 and 14	Active Travel	Infrastructure	DGT Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	Cycling network improvements and enhancements	Upgrade to cycling network within the whole Town. Extending and enhancing the cycling network including creating micro hubs.	To develop and adopt an LCWIP for Didcot Garden Town to identify cycling and walking improvements required at the local level.  The geographical scope to cover wards within the Area of Influence of the masterplan additionally to enhance connectivity. Project will consider existing routes that need improvements, as well as identifying new routes for both leisure and commuting purposes. Ensure the vision is community led and provisions cater to all abilities.	SAV (Lead) OCC (Project Team)
11	12 and 46	Active Travel	Infrastructure and design quality	Science Vale Active Travel Network	First and second phase of Garden Line cycle improvements. Detailed strategy for green routes network	Deliver the first and second phase of the cycle improvements for the Garden Line, encouraging the uptake of cycling. The works include upgrade of routes for autonomous vehicles. Develop detailed landscape design for proposed extension of cycle and pedestrian paths. Include design briefs for cycle facilities at Station Square, Town Square, Broadway and Rich's Sidings.	To plan, develop and construct active travel routes across the Science Vale, connecting three main employment zones to Town centres including Didcot. Subsequently work with partners and third parties who will implement the project.  Upon completion ensure wayfinding is integrated and routes are mapped to support accessibility.	OCC OxLEP
12	11	Innovation	Infrastructure	MultiCAV (Autonomous vehicle trials)	Smart travel and new technology	Develop smart travel initiatives to promote sustainable transport options and implement new travel technologies.	Work with a consortium led by UK transport operator FirstGroup to plan and support an autonomous vehicle service travelling to and from Didcot Parkway to Milton Park.	FirstGroup/MEPC
13	20 and 21	Active Travel	Infrastructure	Didcot Garden Town Area Transport Strategy	Public transport strategy and parking strategy.	Develop a strategy for public transport to improve services for users and encourage increase in use. Create a parking strategy for all modes of transport - including cycling - for the Town centre and station to enable efficient use of limited space.	Develop a local transport strategy for the Didcot Garden Town and Area of Influence boundaries, and evaluate how integrated parking for all modes of transport including cycling can complement the increase in public transport use.  Ensure the strategy improves services for users and considers the use of transport connectivity hubs in association with rail infrastructure.	OCC
14	1H, 56 and 55	High quality housing and placemaking	Quality, engagement and design quality	Garden Town Development Principles	Align consents with garden town principles, post consent engagement and design codes.	Liaise with developers working group (see chapter 10) to explore opportunities to retrospectively align extant consents with Garden Town principles. Continued engagement process with consented sites to ensure the key principles and aims of the Garden Town Masterplan are delivered through detailed design. Develop Design Codes which will assist in ensuring that the detailed delivery of the ensuing phases is to a high quality.	Continue to evaluate against the Didcot Garden Town development principles and comment on significant planning applications within the Garden Town boundaries, working with our stakeholders for infrastructure, health and wellbeing to ensure high quality aims are delivered through detailed design.  Work with developers on strategic sites to consider setting up design panels and/or design codes.	SAV
15	1G and 64	High quality housing and placemaking	Planning	Garden Town Planning Policy	Development Plan Documents Development	Develop a programme for development, consultation and adoption of a Garden Town DPD and include it in both Councils' Local Development Schemes. Co-ordinate with Planning Policy team to develop a DPD.	To co-ordinate with Planning Policy workstreams to influence and embed the Didcot Garden Town principles throughout leading strategic plans.  Ensure conformity of the Garden Communities principles is aligned to emerging policy including (but not limited to) the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, Joint South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plans. This will enable the continued implementation of the Didcot Garden Town masterplan and overall development strategy for the area, highlighting core principles including connectivity and open space.	SAV Planning Policy
16	44, 52 and 47	Green Infrastructure	Green Infrastructure	Strengthening and enhancing open - green space	Public realm and landscape strategy. Neighbourhood re-greening strategy. Research project into maintenance of landscape spaces.	Produce a public realm and landscape strategy to provide a comprehensive plan to develop the public realm and integrate it with the landscape strategy for the Town. Conduct a comprehensive review of existing street character and neighbourhoods to provide a phasing plan and detailed replanting proposals including potential for other green infrastructure. Research sources of alternative funding of landscape management and maintenance based on premise of increased health and well-being.	Conduct a review of neighbourhoods to identify areas where green infrastructure can improve the public realm. Assess the access to green/open space on the outskirts of Didcot, and how this can be strengthened to enable leisure and wellbeing benefits. Provide a phasing plan for biodiversity enhancements, including potential for other green infrastructure.  Implement any short-term schemes and identify funding for future recommended improvements.	SAV

Proposed Project Number (2022)	Project Number (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Objective (2022)	Objective (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Project Name (2022)	Project Name (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Description (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Description (as per new Delivery Plan 2022)	Lead
17	48, 54 and 39	Community Programming	Sustainability	Community Programming Environment & Sustainability	Strategy for promotion of growing local food. Community Hub and Feasibility study for a combined recovery hub in Didcot.	Produce strategy to bring together initiatives for growing local food, from community groups, bio-science organisations and landowners to bring about a strategy for projects. Grow, Cook, Eat community gardening and cooking centre. Carry out feasibility and costing for introduction of recycling centre combined with Reuse Shop and community initiatives.	Work with local partners to deliver a series of projects connected with the environment and sustainability.  Consider how to advance or compliment projects set out by the residents sounding board, with reference to the environment. This includes (but not limited to) the garden pledge, community gardens and tree planting.	SAV
18	1D and 1E	Community Programming	Engagement	Community Programming Meanwhile spaces	Meanwhile and Temporary Uses Research and create project plan	Research best practice and support opportunities to deliver for temporary, meanwhile and pop up uses around the Town. Create a plan for meanwhile use projects which will attract interest from potential participants and engage the community.	Identify spaces, (including but not limited to derelict land, unused public realm, retail units), across the Garden Town (including the 116 - 120 Broadway). To plan and deliver a series of temporary to semi-permanent meanwhile and pop up spaces with a variety of thematic backgrounds. Work with local partners and the community to deliver spaces to bring both social and economic benefits.	SAV
19	4 and 5	Community Programming	Engagement	Community Programming Arts & Culture	Arts and Culture Strategy and create Events Plan	Produce a Town wide strategy that sets out how the Town will build its cultural offer across public art, community engagement and cultural amenities, encompassing milestones, partners and funding. Bring together key science, arts and environment stakeholders to create an events plan, this can be an early stage in the commissioning of an arts and cultural strategy.	The masterplan considers the inclusion of public art as a means towards revitalising areas such as underpasses, public spaces, gateways and reinforcement of character areas. Conduct a review of public areas to identify a scheme of public arts improvements across the Garden Town to support placemaking.  Work with Cornerstone and Didcot Civic Hall to reinforce the idea of the Council-owned asset being at the heart of the Cultural Spine. To deliver a series of projects/events to increase outreach and the cultural offering of the Town; encouraging people to use restaurants and bars and to visit Didcot as a destination. This could be implemented through mechanisms such as meanwhile spaces.	SAV
20 and 21	34	Leisure	Social Infrastructure	Leisure and Recreation Strategy. Community Programming Leisure	Cultural, Leisure and Recreational Provision Study	Commission further studies into: opportunities for commercial leisure/ professional team provision; health and leisure; age-friendly design; and annual programme of events across Didcot.	Conduct a local leisure needs review to understand current provisions and future opportunities for leisure, considering the new housing growth in the area. Review should identify recommendations. Work with the district councils' Active Communities team to plan and implement a programme of activities and recreational provisions for all abilities to contribute to improving health statistics in Didcot.	SAV
22	57	Economic Development	Business Support	Town Centre and Retail Strategy	Retail Strategy	Test recommendations such as providing support to independent retailers and small businesses as a balance of retail being delivered as part of Orchard Centre Phase 2.	To build on the findings of the recently commissioned District wide Town Centres and retail study. The commissioned study will inform the updated Joint Local Plan and should allow us to understand the current health of the Districts' Town centres and the future needs for retail and leisure within the area.  The DGT Town centre and retail strategy will focus on establishing a blueprint for vitality and viability. The strategy could include realistic and achievable short, medium and long actions to guide the Council and relevant partners in approaching the complex number of components that influence Town centre success.  It would be preferable that the strategy is adaptable, and offers a degree of flexibility given the ongoing uncertainty around the impact of the pandemic.  The Government's Build Back Better High Streets policy paper published in July 2021, suggested that there were 5 key priorities for high streets, namely:  •Breathing new life into empty buildings; •Supporting high street businesses; •Improving the public realm; •Creating safe and clean spaces; •Celebrating pride in local communities (this point is reiterated in the levelling up white paper)	SAV
23	Making Didcot a Place for Business Chapter 4	Economic Development	Business Support	Apprenticeships, skills and training	N/A	N/A	Work with partners to build on local networks to get the business community to influence programmes.  Identify annual opportunities to hold skills and apprenticeship fairs using such mechanisms as meanwhile spaces to promote outreach. Consider replicating other successful soft interventions such as the pop-up business school delivered in 2019.	SAV (Lead) OxLEP (Project team)

Proposed Project Number (2022)	Project Number (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Objective (2022)	Objective (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Project Name (2022)	Project Name (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Description (as per Delivery Plan 2017)	Proposed Description (as per new Delivery Plan 2022)	Lead
24	7 and 43	Economic Development	Social Infrastructure and technology	Co-working space	Connectivity Hub. Strategies required for technology implementation.	Conduct a feasibility study for the Connectivity Hub and then construct the preferred option. Create strategies to guide the deployment of technology products and solutions in projects. These will be determined with the Councils' technology partners, but may include: Mass Transit Solutions Strategy, Programme Management Frameworks, Digital Platform Strategy.	Work with partners to improve digital inclusion throughout Didcot Garden Town through digital hubs, public Wi-Fi and other interventions.  This work is also being explored through the business sounding board.	OxLEP
25	Making Didcot a Place for Business Chapter 4	Economic Development	Business Support	Local Development Orders	N/A	N/A	Work with partners to support opportunities to increase economic investment and job opportunities within the Garden Town.	SAV Strategic Partnerships and Planning Policy
26	Making Didcot a Place for Business Chapter 4	Economic Development	Business Support	Milton Bio Science Centre	N/A	N/A	Work with partners to support opportunities to increase economic investment and job opportunities within the Garden Town.	SAV Strategic Partnerships
27	1L	High quality housing and placemaking	Governance	Identity/Brand	Governance Structure Brand	Develop a unified brand in order to give Didcot Garden Town a clear identity	Working with communications leads to develop an adopted DGT logo to contribute to placemaking.  Develop a long term legacy plan to ensure Garden Town principles are sustainable.	SAV

## **Appendix 2 – Site Location Plan - Proposed Local Development Order**





UTTON  
URTENAY  
CP

APPLEFORD-  
ON-THAMES  
CP

DIDCOT CP

Hartwright  
House

LDO site

A 4130

Didcot  
Power Station

Industrial  
Estate

Sewage  
Works

Appleford  
Crossing

Bow Bridge

Pearith  
Cottages

Pearith  
Farm

West Field

Wigbolds

Willington Do  
Farm

Ladygrove  
Farm

Lady Grove

Hopkins  
Bridge

Sch