

OXFORD  
**NORTHERN**  
GATEWAY

# Northern Gateway Area Action Plan

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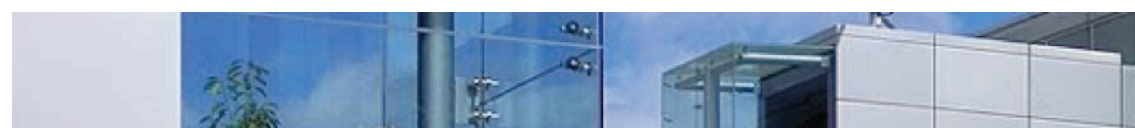
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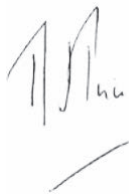
# FOREWORD

Oxford's economy is expected to grow strongly over the next 20 years and the Northern Gateway site is recognised as one of the most important development opportunities in Oxford. It provides the largest single area of employment land for development in the City, and the most easily accessible from Oxford's universities and hospitals which are going to be the main sources of local economic growth for the City and will deliver many jobs for local people. It also represents a substantial opportunity to deliver much-needed housing for residents of the City, and to address traffic and congestion concerns in that part of the City.

The vision for the Northern Gateway set out in the Area Action Plan is to create a world-class employment area which will build on the strengths of Oxford's economy in the key sectors of education, health, research and development, and knowledge-based businesses linked to our two universities and our hospitals. The development of the Northern Gateway offers the opportunity for existing and new firms to relocate, and to ensure that Oxford's economy continues to grow for the benefit of the City and as a vital component in the growth of Oxfordshire more widely.

Northern Gateway will also help to provide affordable new homes and offer more people better housing options, as well as providing other facilities including shops and a hotel. These, and the new jobs provided, will benefit not just the development site itself but also neighbouring communities and people across the City more widely.

The development will also help to unlock funding and resources to improve the local highway and footpath/cycle network to tackle congestion and traffic issues at this important entranceway to the City, and benefit users of all forms of transport. This will include improvements to both the Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts and the provision of a new link road between the A40 and A44, and links to the new Oxford Parkway rail station, so that Oxford remains accessible and well-connected for residents, visitors, and businesses.



**Councillor Bob Price**

Leader of the Council, and Executive Board  
Member for Economic Development



**Councillor Alex Hollingsworth**

Executive Board Member for Planning  
and Regulatory

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Purpose and function of the Area Action Plan (AAP)

- 1.1 The City Council has prepared this AAP to guide the future development and changes at the Northern Gateway. The AAP focuses on the implementation of policy in a specific location; by guiding the types of development to take place it will become the key document through which the vision and objectives for the Northern Gateway can be secured and achieved. When adopted, it will form part of Oxford's Development Plan. The AAP does not seek to masterplan the site but instead to provide a policy framework for the area against which future development proposals will be assessed.
- 1.2 The boundary defines the area that the policies of the AAP relate to. Only planning applications inside the boundary will be assessed against those policies. The Northern Gateway AAP has an end date of 2026 in line with the Core Strategy. It is envisaged that by 2026 the vision and objectives of the plan can be substantially achieved.

## Using the AAP

- 1.3 The AAP policy approach comprises the policy boxes, text and appendices set out in this document. The Plan should be read as a whole, with all text considered an integral part of the policy approach.
- 1.4 It is important to read this document alongside policies within the Development Plan as a whole. Policies contained in other relevant documents of the Development Plan (specifically the Core Strategy, Sites and Housing Plan and saved policies of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016) will continue to apply at the Northern Gateway except where there is a site specific policy set out in the Northern Gateway AAP. In particular attention is drawn to the following policies:
  - **HP3:** Affordable homes from large housing sites (Sites and Housing Plan)
  - **HP11:** Low carbon homes (Sites and Housing Plan)
  - **HP15:** Residential cycle parking (Sites and Housing Plan)
  - **HP16:** Residential car parking (Sites and Housing Plan)
  - **CS9:** Energy and natural resources (Core Strategy)
  - **CS11:** Flooding (Core Strategy)
  - **CS23:** Mix of housing (Core Strategy)
  - **HE7:** Conservation Areas (Oxford Local Plan)
  - **HE10:** View Cones of Oxford (Oxford Local Plan)

## 2. CONTEXT

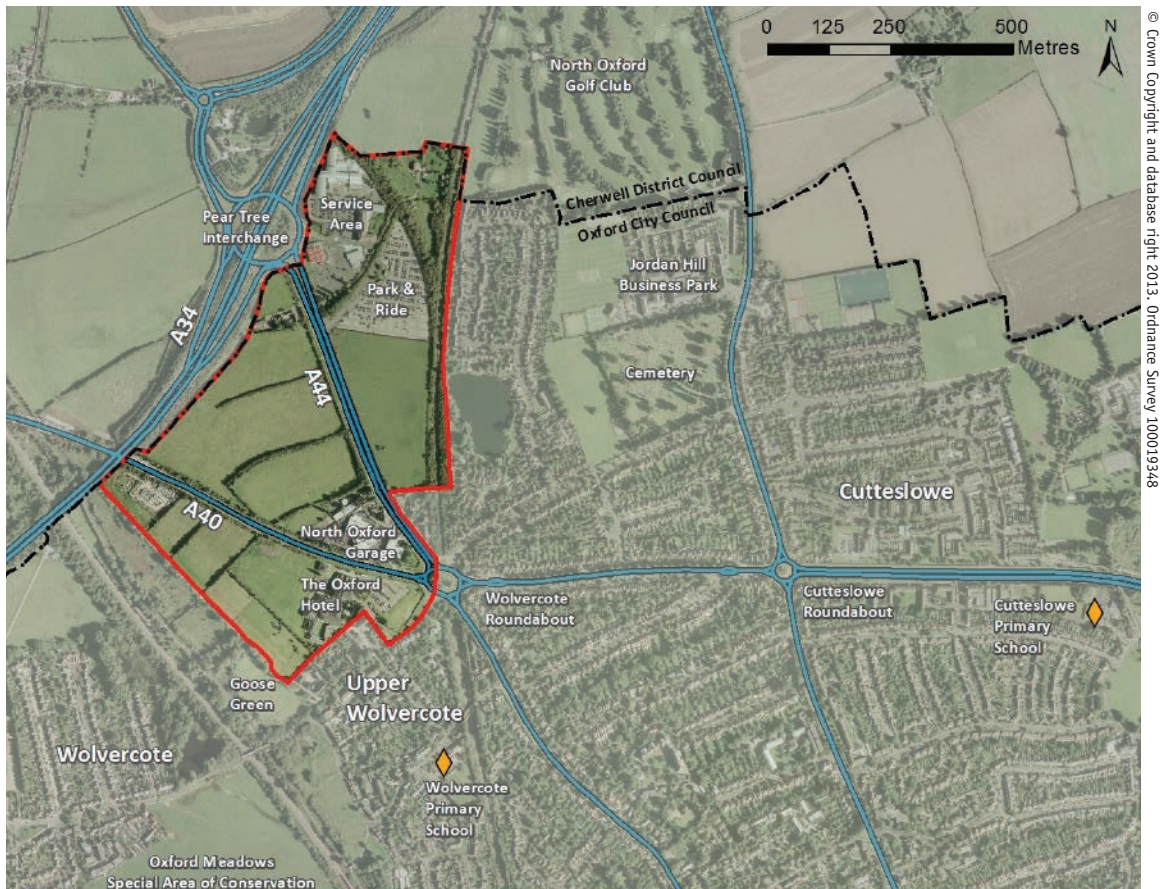


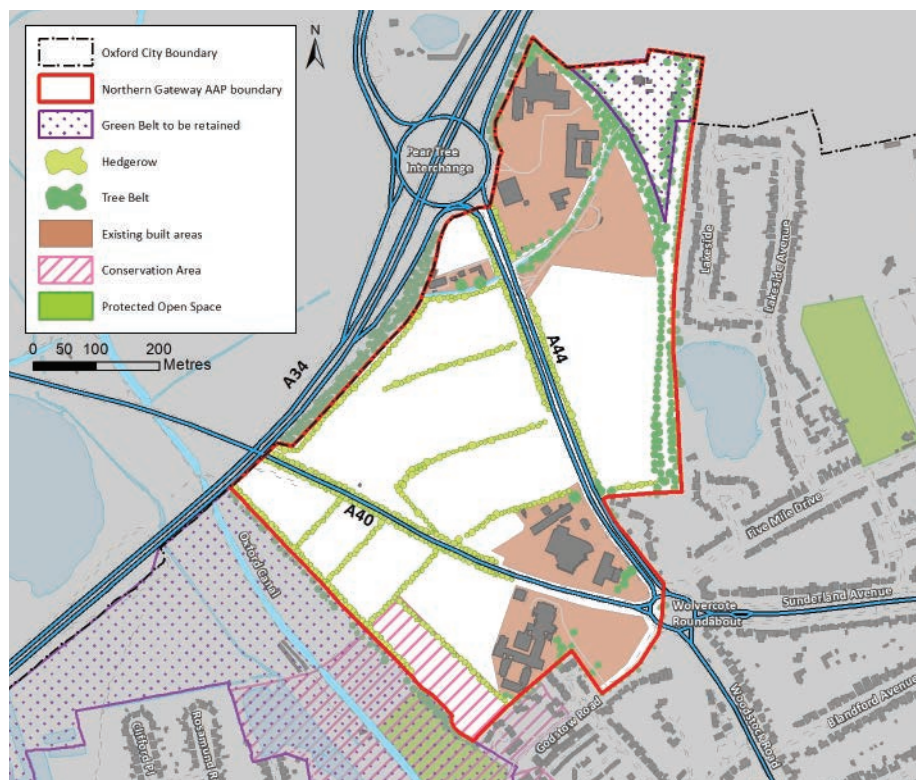
Figure 1: Site Context

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### Site context

- 2.1 The site context map shows the boundary of the site. The site includes the service area at the Pear Tree roundabout and the Peartree Park and Ride, the fields to the south, (including both sides of the A44 and A40), and the commercial properties at the Wolvercote roundabout. Whilst some existing facilities are shown within the site boundary, this does not mean that these facilities will be lost, rather in planning the development, the site needs to be considered as a whole in order to offer the best options for development. The site within the AAP boundary is approximately 44 hectares.
- 2.2 The area has been assessed as having low landscape quality and historic integrity<sup>1</sup>. Despite this, the area is in a visually sensitive location, at the gateway to Oxford from the north. It also forms a setting to Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Area and the historic Goose Green, and for these reasons its sensitivity may be described as moderate. Goose Green is a registered common and is an important open space in the area, which needs to be protected from development.
- 2.3 The land is entirely within Flood Zone 1 however part of the site is prone to surface water flooding. The site itself is of relatively low ecological value, although 500m from the site boundary is the internationally protected Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 2.4 The main constraint to development relates to access and traffic generation. The area around the Northern Gateway experiences significant peak-hour congestion and a package of highways and transport mitigation measures needs to be delivered.

<sup>1</sup> A Character Assessment of Oxford in its Landscape Setting (2002) Land Use Consultants page 283



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**Figure 2: Site Analysis**

## Policy context

- 2.5 The development site at Pear Tree was identified as being capable of providing for long term growth in the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016. This site was then allocated as a strategic development site in the Core Strategy 2026, called the Northern Gateway (Policy CS6). This means that the Northern Gateway is of strategic importance to the delivery of the Core Strategy.
- 2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>2</sup> supports sustainable economic growth and requires local authorities to set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages economic growth.
- 2.7 The Oxford Economic Growth Strategy<sup>3</sup> identifies the elements required to realise its vision, these include expansion of Oxford's knowledge economy using the global connections of Oxford's Universities and major/large employers to attract new companies, and promote start-ups and ensuring sufficient supply of employment land.
- 2.8 The Oxford city region, with Oxford at its heart, was awarded City Deal status by the Government in 2013<sup>4</sup> signed by each of the Oxfordshire authorities. There is a clear recognition of the vision and direction of travel for Oxford's economic growth. The City Deal will accelerate the growth of the city region's knowledge based economy, which is a national economic asset, by creating a new 'knowledge spine', based on a network of centres supported by new enterprise and innovation centres and development in the city region's principal economic nodes which includes Oxford. The Northern Gateway site is identified as critical to creating this 'knowledge spine'.
- 2.9 The Northern Gateway is the only undeveloped strategic employment-led allocation in the city and it is the last opportunity to deliver employment development on this scale as part of the 'knowledge spine'. The site is critical to the delivery of the wider Oxfordshire Strategic Economic

<sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

<sup>3</sup> Oxford Economic Growth Strategy (2013)

<sup>4</sup> Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal (2013)

Plan (SEP), produced by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership<sup>5</sup>. In the context of delivering the economic vision for Oxford and Oxfordshire, as required by the NPPF, an employment-led development on the Northern Gateway remains necessary and entirely appropriate and sustainable.

- 2.10 The Core Strategy clearly states that development on this site will be expected to incorporate a package of transport measures including capacity improvements to roads and junctions and demand management measures to mitigate the impact of the development on the local and strategic road network. Importantly it states that these improvements would be tied to phases of the development to ensure that the infrastructure is provided in a timely manner. These infrastructure requirements remain important and necessary for the delivery of a successful development.
- 2.11 The City Council is being proactive in its approach by trying to facilitate development on this important site through this AAP. The AAP seeks to facilitate the NPPFs approach of delivering sustainable growth without delay. The AAP adds the extra level of site-specific detail to support the Core Strategy allocation to assist developers in the submission of high quality proposals and to ensure the best outcomes for Oxford.
- 2.12 The NPPF is clear that Local Plans (including the AAP) should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development so that it is clear that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay. All plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with clear policies that will guide how the presumption should be applied locally.

### **MP1: Model Policy**

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that applications for sustainable development can be approved where possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with Oxford's Local Plan\* (and, where relevant, with neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and unless:

- any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

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<sup>5</sup> Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan (2014)

\*Oxford's Local Plan at the time of writing comprises the Core Strategy, Sites and Housing Plan, West End Area Action Plan, Barton Area Action Plan, saved policies from the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016.



## Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment

- 2.13 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA)<sup>6</sup> considers the social, economic and environmental impacts of a policy or plan. This Plan is accompanied by an SA which assessed the policies and objectives of the AAP against the SA objectives to help inform the preparation of the document. The SA was produced alongside the AAP to predict and evaluate the effects of the document. It ensured that all aspects of sustainability were properly considered and suggestions were made for improving sustainability. These have been incorporated into the policies where appropriate.
- 2.14 The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is a process used to assess the impacts of policies against the conservation objectives of a European site and to determine whether they would adversely affect the integrity of that site. The City Council undertook a screening process<sup>7</sup> to determine whether or not the AAP will have a significant effect on the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It concluded that an Appropriate Assessment was required to assess the potential impacts of the AAP on the SAC, alone and in combination with other plans or projects. This assessment<sup>8</sup> concluded that the policies of the AAP can be implemented without having an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC.

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<sup>6</sup> Sustainability Appraisal Report for the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan Proposed Submission Document (2014)

<sup>7</sup> Sustainability Appraisal for the Northern Gateway Options Document (2014)

<sup>8</sup> Habitat Regulations Assessment for the AAP Proposed Submission Document (2014)

# 3. VISION AND OBJECTIVES



## Vision

- 3.1 “In 2026, the Northern Gateway has become a vibrant and successful extension to Oxford. It is a flourishing community for knowledge-based industries and plays a key role in Oxfordshire’s “Knowledge Spine”. Co-location of new and growing businesses, close links to the universities and hospitals, and a high quality working environment have helped foster a creative atmosphere where innovation thrives and new jobs have been created which offer opportunities for local people.
- 3.2 Attractive new buildings, streets and open spaces add to its strong local character, making it a distinctive part of the city and a high quality ‘gateway’ point for people coming to the City. The emphasis on quality and sustainability has made it an example for other new communities in the 21st century.
- 3.3 Modern new homes with access to community facilities and open spaces have also made this a desirable place to live. The mix of housing has helped to encourage a balance of residents, with young and old, families and singles living together. New amenities provide a range of facilities and services for local people. This complements the facilities available in neighbouring areas for the benefit of the wider community.
- 3.4 The Northern Gateway development helped deliver key improvements to the local transport network and enabled the securing of funds to provide wider transport improvements to the strategic road network. On foot, bicycle and public transport, the area is now well connected with surrounding communities and the city centre, linking places of work, homes and leisure. Pedestrian routes linking open spaces and community facilities are safe and easy to use.”

## Objectives for the Area Action Plan:

3.5 The objectives are the key aims of the project and a way to measure success or failure.

### Objective 1 – Strengthen Oxford’s knowledge-based economy

Providing additional floor space related to Oxford’s key strengths in science and technology, research and development, and/or non-teaching university development, will strengthen the city’s economy and help deliver a regionally and nationally important ‘knowledge economy spine’ for Oxfordshire.

### Objective 2 – Provide more housing

The project provides the opportunity to deliver additional housing including affordable housing to help address the growing need in Oxford. The housing will need to be designed in a way that provides an attractive living environment and supports a strong community feel with access to the necessary amenities.

### Objective 3 – Improve the local and strategic road network and other transport connections

The site is adjacent to three strategic roads and the area already experiences congestion. Development of the site will help to facilitate a package of improvements to the local and strategic road network whilst also ensuring that the impact of the development is mitigated. It will be important to integrate the development with the rest of the city, particularly with good pedestrian, cycle and bus links to support sustainable travel patterns.

### Objective 4 – Respond to the context of the natural and historic environment

It is important to consider the context of the development in terms of the natural and historic assets of the site and locality. New development should respond positively to its surroundings.

### Objective 5 – Create a gateway to Oxford

The site is at a strategically important position at the northern entrance to the city and offers the opportunity to create a high-quality gateway. Careful attention to the urban design of the site and the architectural design of the individual buildings will be important to help create a positive and distinctive sense of place for visitors and local communities

### Objective 6 – Encourage a low-carbon lifestyle/economy

This development will be planned with the future in mind. It will be important to include features which will encourage new residents and businesses to adopt a “low-carbon” lifestyle. The development should encourage use of sustainable modes of travel and energy efficiency measures and renewable energy.

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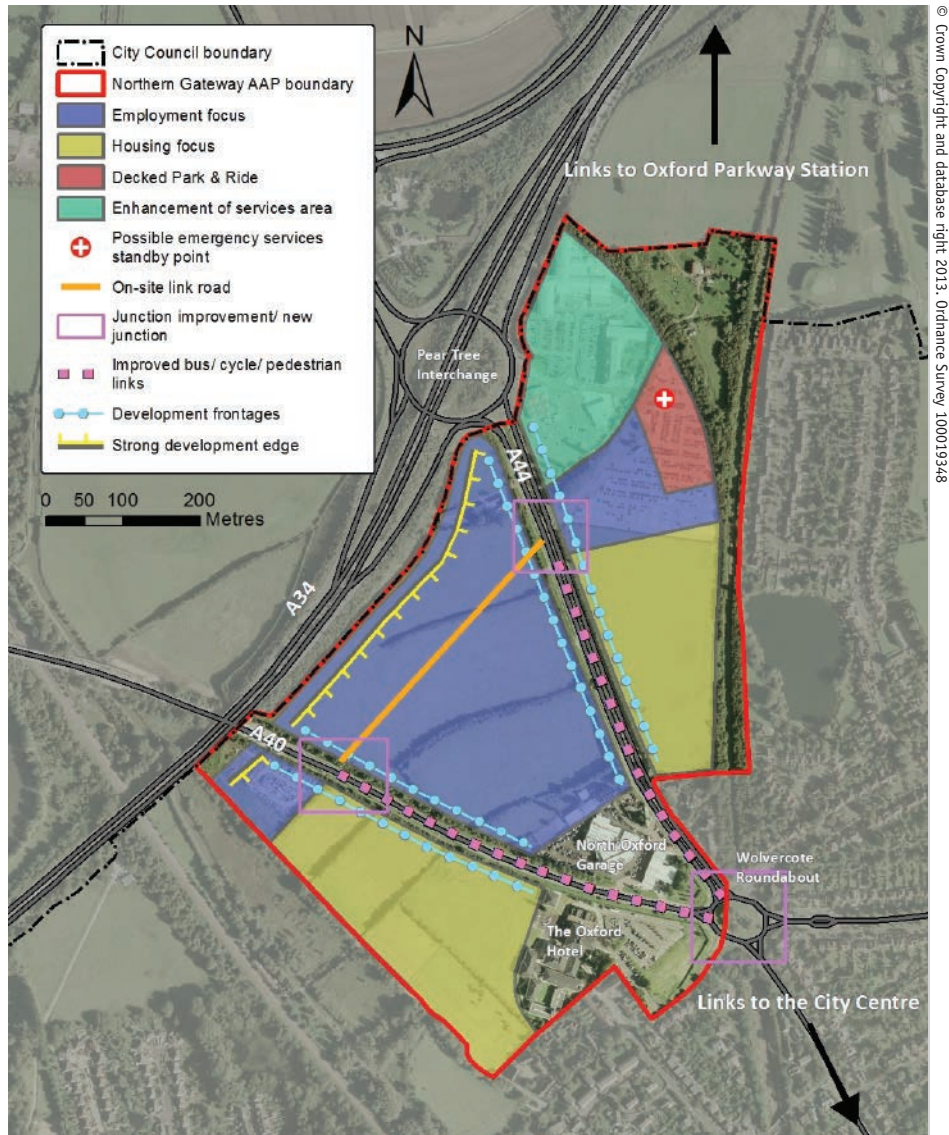
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# 4. SPATIAL STRATEGY



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**Figure 3: Spatial Vision**

## Spatial Vision

4.1 The Spatial Vision diagram indicates how the policies of the AAP combine to form the framework for future development. This diagram shows how the more spatial policies will help physically shape the site. Note - not all the AAP policies are included in the spatial vision as some are not easily illustrated on a plan.

## Green Belt

4.2 At the Core Strategy examination, the Inspector considered that it would be appropriate for the Northern Gateway AAP process to carry out a “highly focussed inner Green Belt boundary review... to consider whether exceptional circumstances exist to justify the release of Green Belt land”<sup>9</sup>. This review has been carried out<sup>10</sup> and concluded that there are ‘exceptional circumstances’ to support a Green Belt review relating to: the regional imperative to deliver economic growth, the lack of

<sup>9</sup> Oxford Core Strategy Inspector’s Report paragraph 4.147

<sup>10</sup> Oxford Northern Gateway Green Belt Review Report (2014)

alternative sites to accommodate economic growth, poor housing affordability in Oxford and the imperative to meet a backlog of housing needs, and worsening traffic congestion as a result of unsustainable patterns of development.

- 4.3 The review also concluded that the release of the larger portion of Green Belt to the south of the A40 (and within the Northern Gateway boundary) could be justified (meeting the criteria of the NPPF<sup>11</sup> and Core Strategy Policy CS4), but that Pear Tree Farm parcel of Green Belt should be retained at this time, due to the lack of a defined boundary to the north. As a result, the AAP retains the portion of Green Belt at Pear Tree Farm and removes the portion south of the A40 from the Green Belt as far as Joe White's Lane. For clarity, development to the east of Joe White's Lane should be designed to minimise the loss of the trees and hedgerow to the north east of the lane.
- 4.4 This AAP amends the Green Belt boundary accordingly in the updated Policies Map.

### NG1: Green Belt

The parcel of land bounded by the A40, the A34 embankment, Joe White's Lane, and the rear boundaries of properties along Godstow Road is taken out of the Green Belt and is allocated for development as part of the Northern Gateway site.

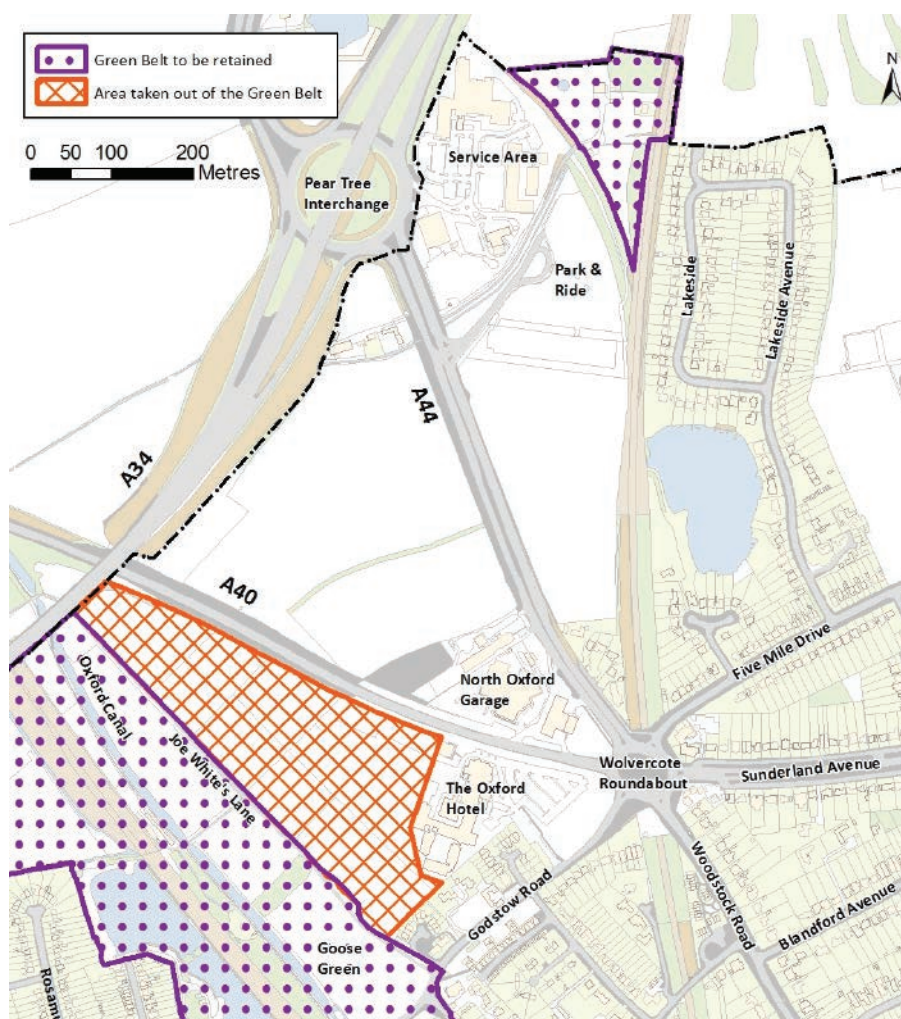


Figure 4: Green Belt

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<sup>11</sup> The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) pages 20-21

# 5. MIX OF USES

## Employment

- 5.1 The primary focus for this site is the provision of significant levels of employment generating uses. The Core Strategy establishes that the site should have an employment focus, building on the strengths of Oxford's economy. The Core Strategy was based on evidence including the Oxford Employment Land Study<sup>12</sup> and on the balance between employment and housing within the city as a whole. In the context of delivering the economic vision for Oxford and Oxfordshire, as required by the NPPF, an employment-led development on the Northern Gateway remains necessary and entirely appropriate and sustainable.
- 5.2 Evidence gathered since the Core Strategy has confirmed the importance of delivering employment uses on this site. The Oxford Economic Growth Strategy provides an up-to-date analysis of the local economy and describes the city as: "the engine of Oxfordshire's economy"<sup>13</sup>. In October 2013 the University of Oxford published a report by SQW which sets out the role and contribution the University makes to the city, regional and national economy. This report states that, "Oxford has to grow to fulfil its role within the high tech economy." The consultants consider the "greatest potential for sustainable growth is to the north of the city around Begbroke, the new Northern Gateway (Peartree) and the planned new rail station at Water Eaton."<sup>14</sup>
- 5.3 The Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal<sup>15</sup> is a bespoke agreement with the Government, signed by all Oxfordshire authorities, to provide greater powers and responsibilities in order to drive forward local economic growth. It acknowledges the region's strong track record of delivering growth and seeks to support those existing, and new, businesses in achieving their full potential. The ambition is to create the conditions that make Oxford and Oxfordshire the location of choice for the world's leading science and technology businesses. The City Deal will bring around £55.5 million of government funding that can be used locally to boost innovation and business growth, create jobs and help secure Oxfordshire's place as a world leader in technology, knowledge and expertise. In total the deal is expected to be worth over £1.2billion when private sector investment is taken into account. The development of the Northern Gateway site is a key element of the City Deal scheme and its delivery is vital in driving forward economic growth in the Oxfordshire region.

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<sup>12</sup> Validity of Employment Land Review Estimates (2010) Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners  
<sup>13</sup> Oxford Economic Growth Strategy (2013) paragraph 1.1  
<sup>14</sup> The Oxfordshire Innovation Engine (2013) SQW paragraph 7.23  
<sup>15</sup> Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal (2013)



- 5.4 The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) produced by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership builds on the City Deal, focussing on the ‘knowledge spine’. The SEP recognises the important contribution of the Northern Gateway to this ambition stating: “The vision for the Northern Gateway is to create an employment area which will build on the strengths of Oxford’s economy in the key sectors of education, health, research and development, and knowledge-based businesses. The development of the Northern Gateway offers the opportunity for existing and new firms to relocate and ensure that Oxford’s economy continues to grow.”<sup>16</sup>
- 5.5 The thread running through all these studies and strategies is that if Oxford is going to continue to have an important role in these sectors nationally, it is important that there are opportunities within the city to provide more floorspace to support them. The development of the Northern Gateway offers the opportunity for existing and new firms to relocate and ensure that Oxford’s economy continues to grow. The amount of employment at the Northern Gateway has been increased to 90,000m<sup>2</sup>, from the Core Strategy allocation of 55,000m<sup>2</sup> (to 2026). 90,000m<sup>2</sup> reflects the level of employment development identified in the supporting text of the Core Strategy of 80,000m<sup>2</sup> beyond 2026<sup>17</sup> with the additional 10,000m<sup>2</sup> made available by not taking forward the emergency services centre. This reflects the NPPF aim to deliver economic growth and will help meet the objectives of the Oxford Economic Strategy, City Deal and Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan. Policy NG2 sets a cap on the scale of development. Planning permission will only be granted for the maximum quantum of development if further detailed evidence supports this.

### Complementary uses

- 5.6 Oxford’s need for more housing is well established and documented<sup>18</sup>. Providing an element of housing on this site will benefit the City as a whole, and go some way towards helping the city meet its housing need. Including some housing at the Northern Gateway will also add to the vibrancy and vitality of the development as a whole that otherwise might be mainly occupied during working hours only. The amount of housing has been increased from the Core Strategy allocation by 150% to 500 dwellings which reflects the NPPF aim to boost housing supply. This amount of housing maximises the opportunity for housing but without compromising the overall balance of uses on the site, maintaining the employment-led focus.
- 5.7 Introducing a range of local scale retail uses (such as shops and cafes) and a hotel with associated leisure facilities will allow new residents and employees (as well as existing ones) with the opportunity to access facilities and services locally, making the new development more sustainable. In line with the Core Strategy allocation the City Council considers it is important to limit the retail uses to a local scale rather than to create more destination shopping facilities which would attract more visits to the area. This approach is in line with the NPPF which seeks to ensure the vitality of existing centres. Limiting the retail uses to a local scale on the Northern Gateway site ensures that the development does not compromise the vitality and viability of the district centre of Summertown.
- 5.8 Whilst there are already hotels within the AAP boundary, there is still unmet need for hotel bedspaces in Oxford and the City Council wishes to support the tourism industry that plays an important role in the local economy<sup>19</sup>. The development of a hotel with leisure facilities provides the opportunity for associated leisure facilities that would be open to non-hotel-residents.
- 5.9 All three emergency services have confirmed that they do not wish to pursue the ambition that was identified in the Core Strategy for a joint emergency services centre at the Northern Gateway. This part of the Core Strategy allocation would therefore be undeliverable so the AAP makes no policy arrangements for such a use. Should a smaller facility such as a stand-by point become desirable in the area, this could be located at the Park and Ride site.

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<sup>16</sup> Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan (2014) page 48

<sup>17</sup> Core Strategy, paragraph 3.4.38

<sup>18</sup> Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014) GL Hearn

<sup>19</sup> Background Paper 5: Other Uses

## Existing built areas

5.10 There are two main areas of existing built development within the AAP boundary. They are the hotel, car showroom, petrol station and BT facility at the Wolvercote Roundabout, and the services area, Park and Ride site and the site currently occupied by TRAX at the Pear Tree Interchange. Several of these properties have seen investment in recent years and for that reason those are unlikely to change significantly in the near future. However together they do occupy prominent positions in the Northern Gateway and may offer further long term opportunities for either redevelopment or refurbishment during the Plan period. The Pear Tree Services Area performs an important function at its location on the A34 Pear Tree interchange, however it currently makes an inefficient use of land and forms a visually low quality gateway to Oxford. The City Council will continue to work with landowners and occupiers of these sites to further improve the urban design of these facilities and enhance the entrances to the wider site.

### NG2: Mix of uses

Planning permission will be granted at the Northern Gateway for:

- up to 90,000m<sup>2</sup> (gross internal area) of employment development; and
- up to 500 new homes; and
- a range of local scale retail uses (up to a total of 2,500m<sup>2</sup> gross internal area); and
- a hotel with associated leisure facilities (up to 180 bedrooms)

5.11 The City Council will work with landowners and occupiers to facilitate the refurbishment or redevelopment of existing built areas of the Northern Gateway site (at the Wolvercote Roundabout and Peartree Interchange) to further enhance the strategic approach to the City.

## Type of Employment

5.12 The Northern Gateway is the city's only remaining opportunity to develop a new strategic employment site, and in that context it is important that it is developed in such a way to address the city's needs as closely as possible. The evidence<sup>20</sup> shows that the city needs employment space to be focussed on Oxford's key strengths in the knowledge economy (science and technology, research, bio-technology and spin off companies from the universities and hospitals). If the site were to be developed as a generic business park this would be in many ways a missed opportunity, instead it will be closely tied to the innovation and knowledge economies.

5.13 To support the objectives of the Northern Gateway, and to ensure that the site delivers the economic vision of creating a 'knowledge spine', the City Council wishes to limit the use of new buildings to science-based and knowledge economy activities directly linked to the key clusters and sectors in Oxford. A gateway process will be used, requiring all proposals to demonstrate their contribution to the knowledge economy of Oxford. Building a cluster of related industries at the site will enable maximum efficiency to be gained from this strategic opportunity to the benefit of the economy of the city and Oxfordshire.

5.14 A range of unit sizes on the site would help to encourage firms of all sizes and offer the opportunity for business growth within the development. This would foster the business community within the site, enabling firms to expand without having to relocate with the disruption that inevitably causes to their labour force and supply chains.

5.15 The focus of the site is on the knowledge economy which could be seen as being quite exclusive, so an element of outreach to demystify the sector and encourage in particular local young people, to consider a future in these fields could be beneficial for the sector and the city as a whole.

5.16 The City Council intends to implement an Article 4 Direction to make it necessary to apply for planning permission for the change of use of offices to residential use on key protected employment sites. It is expected that any review of this Article 4 Direction would include the Northern Gateway.



### NG3: Employment:

Planning permission will be granted for employment development of up to 90,000m<sup>2</sup> where the intended uses directly relate to the knowledge economy of Oxford: science and technology, research, bio-technology, spin-off companies from the universities and hospitals or other intended uses that make a measurable contribution to these sectors. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how their proposals contribute to the knowledge economy of Oxford.

The City Council will ensure that these uses are maintained into the future, through the use of legal agreements/conditions.

## Type of Residential

- 5.17 Whilst there is a huge need for more housing generally in Oxford, it is also important that development of this scale provides the range of housing required to help meet the specific housing needs of the city. The range of housing relates to the size, type and tenure of dwellings to provide for a range of households, such as families with children, single people, older people and people with specialist housing needs. In particular there is a specific and pressing need for affordable housing in the city. As such a minimum of 50% affordable housing will be required, with 80% of those provided as social rented and the remainder intermediate homes, in accordance with the policies of the Sites and Housing Plan<sup>21</sup>. The city's affordable housing policy contains a cascade approach that can be used when this policy requirement can be shown through open-book evidence to make the site unviable.
- 5.18 The mix of housing provided on sites is a key consideration. The City Council has set out a mix of unit sizes that is appropriate on its strategic sites<sup>22</sup>. As part of the AAP process, this mix has been reviewed; it broadly reflects the mix set out for the Oxford sub-area in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment<sup>23</sup>, helps meet the City Council's priorities for housing those in greatest need, and is appropriate in this location. Therefore this strategic mix of homes will be required to be provided at the Northern Gateway in accordance with that policy approach (1 bedroom homes: 10-15%, 2 bedroom homes: 25-30%, 3 bedroom homes: 40-55%, 4+ bedroom homes: 10-15%).

## Education and other Community Uses

- 5.19 When planning for a new community it is clearly important to plan for the necessary supporting amenities that will make the community more sustainable and desirable. There is a range of facilities and services within reach of the site particularly within neighbouring residential areas and Summertown District Centre, including GP surgeries, a library, a leisure centre and retail facilities.
- 5.20 Ease of access to school places for additional children who will be resident in the area needs to be secured. In their role as Local Education Authority the County Council have assessed the likely numbers of pupils that will come forward from the Northern Gateway when developed in accordance with the policies of the AAP. This calculation has then been used in conjunction with an assessment of current school capacities and likely development from other sites in the area, to assess how best to meet the education needs of pupils from the Northern Gateway development. This work<sup>24</sup> indicates that with the development of 500 homes, the new pupils can be accommodated within expansions of existing schools (Wolvercote Primary and Cutteslowe Primary) even taking into account planned development elsewhere, for example at the Wolvercote Paper Mill site. Cutteslowe Primary School has already been approved for expansion to become a 2 form entry school and is gradually increasing its intake to fill those spaces; it would not be expanded further. Wolvercote Primary School will be expanded to become a 1.5 form entry school for September 2014; there is potential for further expansion in the future for it to become a 2 form entry school, this may involve an additional site. As stated in the Core Strategy, educational facilities will be expected to include provision for community use, for example through making multi-use facilities accessible to the wider community.
- 5.21 Access to open space of various types, whether it be formal sports areas or informal natural/landscaped areas is another important community use – this is addressed in the section on Design and Environment.

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<sup>21</sup> Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026 (2013) Policy HP3

<sup>22</sup> Policy CS23 of the Core Strategy and the Balance of Dwellings Supplementary Planning Document

<sup>23</sup> Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014) pages 136 and 137

<sup>24</sup> Background Paper 5: Other Uses

# 6. TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

## Transport context

- 6.1 The area around the Northern Gateway already experiences significant peak-hour congestion due to the volume of traffic, the convergence of the A40 and A44 at the Wolvercote roundabout and close proximity of the A34. There are also concerns with local access and environmental issues such as noise and air pollution.
- 6.2 To support the production of the AAP Oxfordshire County Council has produced a North Oxford Transport Strategy (NOTS)<sup>25</sup>. This provides an overall strategic approach to the wider transport needs of the area and to specifically address the potential transport impacts related to the Northern Gateway development. A co-ordinated and comprehensive package of transport measures will be required to facilitate development of the Northern Gateway and mitigate existing concerns in the area. This package needs to involve travel planning for the new development, provision of good quality and attractive pedestrian and cycle links, high levels of cycle parking, improvements to public transport services and interchange facilities, new road connections, junction improvements and rigorous car parking standards amongst others. These measures will need to work collectively to address the issues faced in the area. They will be expensive and will require funding to be secured from a range of sources including from the development itself, local transport funds and central government funding. They will also need to be delivered early on in the development programme in order to avoid a worsening situation for local communities and businesses. (Also see section on Delivery.)
- 6.3 In the wider context, it is important to consider the separate project to provide a new Oxford Parkway rail station at Water Eaton. Chiltern Railways are progressing with a new rail route between Oxford and London stopping at Oxford Parkway. This new rail service is planned to provide two direct trains every hour from Oxford Parkway to London Marylebone with the journey taking just under an hour. By December 2017 it is planned that Oxford Parkway will be served by the proposed East/West rail link to Bedford, and possibly as a later phase onto Cambridge. It is likely that this new rail station, particularly the direct service to London, will give an added attraction to the businesses and organisations locating at Northern Gateway. To capitalise on this opportunity for sustainable travel the City Council will work closely with partners to establish good quality links to the new station.

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<sup>25</sup> North Oxford  
Transport Strategy  
(2014)

## Travel Planning

- 6.4 Travel planning helps to ensure that new development is sustainable and integrated with local transport strategies. A Travel Plan is a strategy and action plan, specific to a site or development, which leads to fewer journeys by private car to and from the site, and more travel by sustainable means. A Travel Plan should take account of all journeys to and from the site and respond to, and be integrated with, the Transport Assessment to which it relates. Travel Plans also promote wider social and community benefits, such as helping to improve air quality, widening social inclusion through promoting greater travel choice, and promoting healthier lifestyle habits.



- 6.5 At the early stages, a Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan will be required to accompany any outline planning application. Then as the scheme progresses, each detailed planning application/reserved matters application will need to demonstrate how the development will contribute to sustainable travel and the mitigation of any significant traffic impacts.

## Pedestrian and cycle links

- 6.6 Creation of good quality pedestrian and cycle links through the site and on into neighbouring areas will be an important element of the overall transport strategy for the site. Residents and employees will need to be able to access other facilities in the local area and wider city beyond. The creation of this integration will be key to the success of the development. The site is bounded by and bisected by very busy roads that at present do not create a pedestrian and cyclist friendly environment. Providing crossings of these roads at logical points that connect well with the internal site layout and connect to existing cycle and pedestrian routes beyond the site (such as National Cycle Route 5 at Joe White's Lane) will be important in effecting a shift to these sustainable modes of travel. In addition, pedestrian and cycle routes must be provided in such a way that they offer a pleasant environment that is (and is perceived to be) safe. Associated measures such as provision of generous cycle parking will also reinforce this pattern.
- 6.7 Beyond the AAP boundary the new railway station at Oxford Parkway offers a significant opportunity for sustainable longer distance travel, particularly into London. As part of the works to the railway line a new footbridge will be provided offering a safe crossing of the line and reconnection of the existing public right of way to the new station. The City Council will work with partners to facilitate further improvements to this public right of way. An additional cycle link will be provided between the Northern Gateway and the new railway station connecting with the Banbury Road cycle path (National Cycle Route 51) through Five Mile Drive.

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### NG4: Sustainable Travel

The City Council will work with delivery partners to facilitate pedestrian and cycle improvements as shown on Figure 5 including:

- Provision of three convenient cycle and footpath crossings of each of the A40 and A44 (at the new link road junctions, at the Wolvercote Roundabout and at an additional location in between those two);
- Provision of a high quality cycle link to the new Oxford Parkway Railway Station (connecting with the Banbury Road cycle path, through Five Mile Drive);
- Provision of high quality pedestrian and cycle links from the site to nearby residential areas and facilities (including local schools) and connecting with existing Rights of Way;

Planning permission will not be granted for development that compromises the delivery of these pedestrian and cycle improvements.

Planning permission will only be granted for new roads within or serving the site if they are designed to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements and access to public transport.

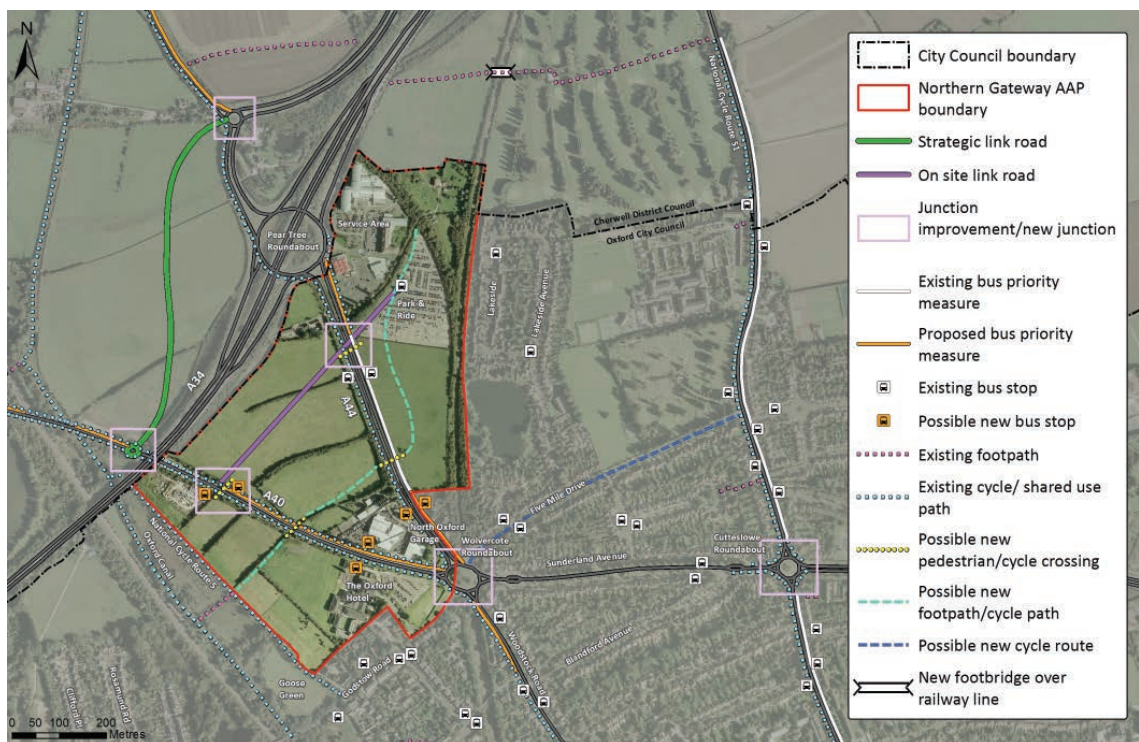
Cycle parking must be provided in accordance with the minimum standards below:

Residential cycle parking	In accordance with Policy HP15 of the Sites and Housing Plan
Employment cycle parking	1 space per 50m <sup>2</sup>
Hotel cycle parking	1 space per 2 non-resident staff plus 1 space per resident staff
Retail cycle parking	1 space per 75m <sup>2</sup> (gross internal area)

## Access and Highway Measures

6.8 The Northern Gateway suffers from peak-hour congestion because of the convergence of several strategic roads and the volume of traffic seeking to pass through the major junctions. Even without development at the Northern Gateway the County Council have been progressing schemes to help alleviate the congestion in the area for example improvements to the Wolvercote and Cutteslowe Roundabouts. Further improvements could be achieved in the wider area through the provision of a strategic link road to the west of the A34, creating a link between an enlarged Loop Farm roundabout and a new roundabout on the A40. Such a scheme could further ease congestion on the A40 approach and the Wolvercote Roundabout. This proposal is beyond the scope of the AAP as it lies within the neighbouring district of Cherwell. It is not required to deliver the development at Northern Gateway.

6.9 Development of the Northern Gateway provides an opportunity to secure greater improvements to the local road network through the creation of new links and junctions as part of the development, as well as through the enhanced opportunities to bid for government funding linked to growth. A package of highways improvements have been identified both to mitigate the impact of the proposed development, and to address some of the existing issues in the area. Detailed design work, including further modelling and the relevant consultation and approvals will be required in finalising the design of these measures. Significant funding has already been secured to deliver many of these measures with several being delivered well before any development at the site. The City Council will continue to work closely with the County Council and Local Enterprise Partnership to pursue other sources of funding in order to facilitate more of these measures at the earliest opportunity and in particular, in advance of built development (see section on Delivery).



**Figure 5: Links and Transport Infrastructure**

6.10 In order to facilitate the increased numbers of pedestrian and cycle journeys being promoted, and connections in the North Oxford area, there may also be a need to consider changes to current speed limits, subject to the appropriate consultation. In particular, this could include the reduction in speed limits on the main Northern Gateway frontages on the A44 and A40, to 30mph.

## Public Transport

6.11 Public transport will have an important role in managing the transport impact of the Northern Gateway. Oxford's bus networks are high quality, high frequency and experiencing continuing passenger growth. The site is well positioned and served by seven existing bus routes which primarily operate on the Woodstock Road corridor to and from the city centre. The development provides the opportunity to build on these services and provide interchange facilities and better quality passenger facilities including at the Park and Ride site. In addition public transport links to the new Oxford Parkway rail station will be supported because it would greatly enhance the potential for public transport interchange.

## Park and Ride

- 6.12 The Park and Ride site at Peartree currently has just over a 1,000 spaces and is very well used serving residents of locations to the north and west. The provision of the on-site link road is likely to make the Park and Ride a more attractive option with access becoming more direct for those travelling into Oxford on the A40.
- 6.13 Whilst the Park and Ride site is a very important element of the transport strategy in the area and the city, it currently takes the form of a very large surface level car park which is not visually attractive and is not an efficient use of land. As part of the development the surface level car park will be replaced with a new decked car park - increasing parking spaces whilst also reducing the land take, making more land available for development of the main development. Additional spaces at the Park and Ride site will also help to remove more of the onward car journeys into the city. There will be a need to ensure that the parking available at Peartree is not used for non-Park and Ride uses. The experiences at Park and Ride sites nationwide demonstrate that it is possible to successfully restrict inappropriate parking through management measures.

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### NG5: Highway Access

The City Council will work with delivery partners to facilitate transport improvement measures including:

- Provision of a new on-site link road between the A40 and A44 towards the northern edge of the development site, accessed by a new four-way junction on the A40 and a new four-way junction on the A44;
- Improvements to the Peartree Interchange;
- Improvements to the Wolvercote and Cutteslowe Roundabouts;
- Provision of enhanced bus services along the A40 and A44 corridors including bus priority, new bus stops, improved waiting facilities and opportunities for interchange;
- Provision of an enhanced Peartree Park and Ride facility with additional spaces, improved waiting facilities, and a decked car park.

Planning permission will not be granted for development that adversely impacts the safe and efficient operation of the local and strategic highway networks or that compromises the delivery of these highways improvements.

Planning applications for built development must be accompanied by details of how proposed development will help facilitate the delivery of transport improvements and mitigation measures. Mitigation measures must be implemented in accordance with the agreed phasing of development, with full implementation prior to the occupation of the final development phase.

Planning permission will only be granted for new roads within the site if they are based on low vehicle speeds giving priority to provision for walking, cycling and easy access to public transport.

## Car Parking

- 6.14 The level of car parking provided within the development will be another factor (along with making provision for walking and cycling and public transport) in determining the travel behaviour and the adoption of more sustainable travel choices.
- 6.15 For the employment uses, relatively challenging parking standards are appropriate because they are destinations. There is a balance to be struck between providing sufficient spaces to allow the uses to function effectively whilst reducing the number of cars on the local road network and the land take for car parking. Opportunities to provide employment parking spaces in a flexible unallocated way, including the use of communal parking facilities, will need to be considered as part of a comprehensive car parking management plan.
- 6.16 The retail uses on the site will be of a local scale to primarily be used by local residents and people working in the area who could walk to the shops so there should be minimal additional car trips generated. On this basis, parking for the retail provision will be restricted.
- 6.17 For new hotel development, some parking will need to be provided however it is intended that upon arrival customers will not need to use their cars for accessing other parts of the city whatever their reason for visiting, and for customers' onwards journeys into the city then public transport options should be encouraged.
- 6.18 Residential parking is dealt with slightly differently because whilst residents will be encouraged to choose other modes particularly for shorter trips, it is still reasonable for residents of the Northern Gateway to own a car particularly for use for longer trips. Car parking must be integrated into the design of the new streets so as not to dominate the local environment. Providing unallocated spaces for visitors also reduces the overall number of spaces required to service homes effectively.
- 6.19 In order that uncontrolled spillover car parking is not allowed to occur, a controlled parking zone will be put in place within the site, this will complement those already in neighbouring residential areas.

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### NG6: Car Parking

Planning permission will only be granted for development where provision does not exceed the maximum car parking standards set out below:

Residential car parking	As set out in the Sites and Housing Plan
Employment car parking	1 space per 50m <sup>2</sup>
Hotel car parking	1 space per 2 bedrooms and 1 space per 2 resident staff
Retail car parking	1 space per 50m <sup>2</sup>

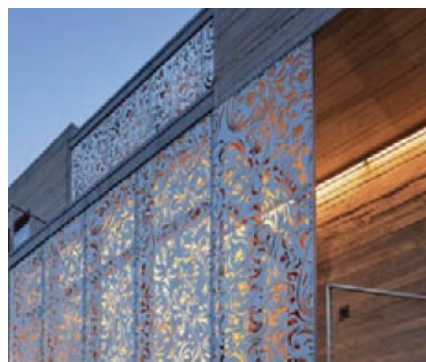
Residential car parking must include unallocated spaces<sup>26</sup>, and non-residential car parking should be designed to maximise the use of shared communal facilities. Car parking should be integrated into the street design as far as possible.

Any planning application for employment development must be accompanied by a full car parking management plan to be agreed with the City and County Councils.

The City Council will support the extension of Controlled Parking Zones to cover the site and neighbouring areas.

<sup>26</sup> Sites and Housing  
Plan 2011-2026  
(2013) Policy HP16

# 7. DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENT



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## Design

7.1 It is important that the Northern Gateway development is laid-out and operates sustainably and effectively. As such the AAP provides a Design Code (Appendix 1) that will act as a framework for the development to ensure that the important principles set out in the AAP are fully considered in the design. The Design Code does not specify a style but sets some broad parameters for the urban design and layout, related to the different uses proposed. It is based on a set of urban design principles:

- 7.2 All development proposals will be required to follow the framework set out in the Design Code. The Northern Gateway should:
- be accessible and permeable, to ensure easy access to and through the area for all users, but particularly for pedestrians and cyclists
  - be legible, a pattern of routes should be established that is easy for people to understand and to find their way around
  - respect the character of natural features of the site
  - have its own identity, create a distinctive and contemporary setting for future investment, uses and activity
  - have high quality streets and open spaces that provide the setting for a lively, attractive, distinctive and safe public realm
  - have continuous and connected streets, with well-defined building frontages
  - have a clear distinction between the public and private realms, to create comfortable and well defined streets and secure, private spaces at the rear of properties
  - have buildings which face onto the street, with doors and windows allowing people to come and go or look out onto the street

- 7.3 The Oxford Design Panel will be asked to provide independent and professional design advice and evaluation on emerging plans for the Northern Gateway. This advice will be sought where appropriate at each stage of the process for example on the draft masterplan, outline planning application and reserved matter or full applications. The design panel has already considered and influenced the content of the Design Code.
- 7.4 The Northern Gateway site is at a strategically important position at the northern entrance to the city. This offers the opportunity to create a high-quality gateway. This could be achieved through the use of high-quality architecture, landmark buildings particularly at entrances and key junctions, by using architectural and landscape design to frame views into the site and through the site to the city beyond, through public art in the street environment and careful selection of the appropriate building heights. Buildings and spaces should demonstrate architectural excellence, in keeping with Oxford's profile and the function of the development as a key part of Oxford's dynamic economy.<sup>27</sup>



## Character and Historic Environment

- 7.5 Successful urban design also involves development retaining a sense of existing local character. Heritage assets (such as buildings, hedgerows, archaeological features) and views can be successfully incorporated into new development, reinforcing legibility and retaining a sense of local character and local distinctiveness. The Northern Gateway forms a setting to Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Area, historic Goose Green and the Thames floodplain and for these reasons its sensitivity has been described as moderate.<sup>28</sup> Development proposals on land south of the A40 should pay particular regard to its character because the Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Area extends into the south west corner of the site (adjacent to Goose Green). There are no listed buildings within the AAP boundary.
- 7.6 A thorough assessment of the visual impact of proposals will form an important part of the planning application process. Planning applications will be required to demonstrate how proposals have considered and addressed any impacts on views of, towards, across and from Port Meadow and impacts on views towards the city centre. Proposals will also need to consider views from outside the city. The City Council has produced a methodology for undertaking this assessment.<sup>29</sup>
- 7.7 The surviving ridge and furrow on the parcel of land to the east of the A44 indicates that the land has not been heavily ploughed since the medieval period. There is potential to incorporate elements of the ridge and furrow within the public open space provided as part of development on that part of the site. Desktop and geophysical (magnetometer) archaeological investigations have not discovered any evidence of remains below this; however at each stage of the development process further investigatory work will be required to inform the decision making process.

<sup>27</sup> More details are found in the Design Code at Appendix 1

<sup>28</sup> A Character Assessment of Oxford in its Landscape Setting (2002) Land Use Consultants page 283

<sup>29</sup> Assessment of Oxford's View Cones (2014)



## Landscape and Open Space

- 7.8 Alongside the design of the urban environment the open space and landscaping that is provided will have an important role in delivering a successful scheme. The detail of some of these issues are dealt with in the Design Code, however there is also a requirement for a particular quantum and type of open space to be provided as part of the development.
- 7.9 The City Council will require 15% of any site area developed for housing to be provided as publicly-accessible green open space for the enjoyment and benefit of residents. This standard is slightly higher than the city-wide standard (10%) given the size and location of the site and the importance of managing the recreational impact of new residents (and particularly their dogs) on the nearby protected habitat of the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC). As such, green open space must be located within or directly adjoining areas of residential development and provide an attractive accessible alternative to the SAC for day-to-day recreational uses to mitigate potential pressure on that protected habitat.
- 7.10 In addition good quality public open space will be required as part of the employment development for employees and visitors to have somewhere to sit or walk at lunchtime, and for the positive effect that the access to, and sight of, open space can have on creating a high quality working environment.
- 7.11 The City Council's Green Spaces Strategy<sup>30</sup> includes an aspiration that people do not have to walk more than 1900 metres to their nearest large park, not more than 750 metres to their nearest medium park and no more than 400 metres to their nearest small park. In the case of Northern Gateway, future residents will be within the specified distance of Cutteslowe Park (large city park), part of the site will be within the specified distance of Goose Green or Five Mile Drive Recreation Ground (medium neighbourhood park), but none of the site will be within the specified distance of a small park. As such, the open space to be provided within the Northern Gateway site should include features associated with medium parks and small parks. These include for example, some sports facilities such as a multi-use games area, children's play areas and flexible space with planting and site furniture. Improvements to the pedestrian and cycle network (set out at Policy NG4) will also offer opportunities for residents and employees to more easily access the large city park at Cutteslowe and the neighbourhood park at Five Mile Drive Recreation Ground. In addition opportunities should be sought to make provision for informal, natural areas to support biodiversity and add variety of open space.

## Air Quality and Noise

- 7.12 It is important that development at the Northern Gateway benefits from a good quality living and working environment. The whole of Oxford is an Air Quality Management Area with the main source of air pollution in the city, and at Northern Gateway, being road traffic. As well as the issues related to poor air quality on human health it is also important to consider its impact on the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (see section on Biodiversity and Oxford Meadows). The primary source of noise at the Northern Gateway site is also road traffic, with the railway as a secondary source. Employment land uses are less sensitive than residential uses to noise for example, so for this reason employment uses will be located in the areas more affected by noise. The design and layout of the employment elements can be used to act as a buffer to help protect the more sensitive residential uses, particularly with a strong development edge to the A34. Every effort will be made to reduce the noise levels and air pollution effects of road traffic in the area. The highways improvements that will take place (Policy NG5) will make a significant contribution to this. Beyond this, the layout of the scheme and the design of buildings will be used to ensure a good quality environment. Detailed assessment of air quality and noise implications will be required at planning application stage; planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal is acceptable.

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<sup>30</sup> Green Spaces

Strategy 2013-2027

## NG7: Design and Amenity

Planning applications will be required to demonstrate that new development has been designed with an understanding of the area's heritage, setting and views. In particular, applications will be required to demonstrate how the Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Area and how views of, into and out of the site have influenced proposals.

Planning permission will only be granted for developments that demonstrate compliance with the Design Code.

Planning permission will only be granted for developments that provide usable, well designed and good-quality publicly-accessible green open space. At least 15% of the total site area must be provided as green public open space; this must be distributed so that at least 15% of any parcel proposed for residential development is green public open space.

Planning permission will only be granted for residential development where it has been demonstrated that it is acceptable in terms of noise and air quality.

## Biodiversity and the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

7.13 The City Council will seek active habitat creation on the site, linked to the provision of green infrastructure. In particular opportunities will be taken to create links between natural habitats, to join up wildlife corridors and to provide a buffer between development and the Local Wildlife Site (the meadow north of Goose Green and west of Joe White's Lane) to reduce disturbance effects and enhance its ecological value. Development should be designed to incorporate existing landscape features that add value to the site where possible, and to minimise loss of trees and hedgerows including in particular, the hedgerow to the east of Joe White's Lane.

7.14 The Northern Gateway lies less than 500 metres from the internationally protected Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Oxford Meadows SAC is made up of four Sites of Special Scientific Interest. These are Cassington Meadows SSSI, Pixey and Yarnton Meads SSSI, Wolvercote Meadows SSSI and Port Meadow with Wolvercote Common and Green SSSI. There are two reasons for this designation; the first is that the lowland hay meadows have benefited from the survival of traditional management, which has been undertaken for several centuries and exhibits good conservation structure and function. The second reason is that Port Meadow is the larger of only two known sites in the UK for a particular plant, the creeping marshwort (*Apium repens*).<sup>31</sup>

7.15 Given the proximity of the SAC, it is particularly important that plans for the Northern Gateway consider its importance. A Habitat Regulations Assessment was carried out for the Core Strategy, and that work has been supplemented by a more detailed assessment to support the AAP<sup>32</sup>. There are three areas that have been assessed in detail in the HRA. These look at the likely impacts of the AAP on the SAC in terms of recreational pressure, hydrological regime (also see section on Drainage), and air quality.

7.16 The HRA concludes that the policies of the AAP can be implemented without having an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC, however further more detailed work will be required to support future planning applications.

## NG8: Oxford Meadows SAC

Unless the applicant for planning permission can demonstrate that the development is not likely to have a significant effect on the Oxford Meadows Special Area of Conservation, the application will be subjected to appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations and permission will be granted only if it is ascertained that the development will not adversely affect the integrity of that Special Area of Conservation, in terms of the following conservation objectives:

- recreational pressure; and
- the hydrological regime; and
- air quality

<sup>31</sup> [http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/ProtectedSites/SACselection/SAC\\_list.asp?Country=E](http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/ProtectedSites/SACselection/SAC_list.asp?Country=E)

<sup>32</sup> Habitat Regulations Assessment for the AAP Proposed Submission Document (2014)

## Drainage

- 7.17 The Northern Gateway lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 which is the lowest risk classification, although the city-wide Strategic Flood Risk Assessment<sup>33</sup> identifies that part of the site is prone to non-fluvial surface water flooding. Ground investigation works have confirmed that almost all of the site lies on the impermeable Oxford Clay which has a very low infiltration potential. This means that the vast majority of precipitation at the site will either go back into the atmosphere or will become surface water runoff that is collected within the on-site drainage system. The investigations also identified two very small pockets of differing geology, one along the very edge of the site with Joe White's Lane and the other in the far south western corner of the site. If these are proposed for development further investigation will be required before planning permission can be granted.<sup>34</sup>
- 7.18 When previously undeveloped land is developed there is potentially a risk of increased run off, and a loss of land that was previously available for the temporary storage of flood water. In order to prevent the problems associated with that risk, development on the Northern Gateway site must be designed to manage surface water through the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), a system that stores the water and then releases it slowly into a watercourse or sewer at a later date.
- 7.19 SUDS techniques include a wide range of potential measures including permeable surfaces (e.g. car parking), swales, basins, attenuation ponds and wetlands with stilling basins. The master planning will consider SUDS based on more detailed information on the layout of development, techniques to limit run-off from new development, run-off calculations and the scope to use the site topography to reduce flood risk. SUDS may be combined with a system to help regulate water flows from roofs to the drainage system and grey water recycling. Installation of green roofs, where soil and plant material are attached to create a living surface, can also reduce water run-off as well as providing insulation and creating a habitat for wildlife. SUDS features should also be designed to provide visual and recreational amenity as much as drainage infrastructure.
- 7.20 Flood Risk Assessments will be required to accompany the outline planning application and qualifying detailed planning applications. The City Council will continue to work with the County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority to find a workable and appropriate SUDS solution for the development. The County Council will have an important role in agreeing the standard of construction and placement of SUDS measures, particularly if, as the government intends, they become responsible for adopting shared SUDS schemes.

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<sup>33</sup> Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Oxford City Final Report (2011) page 34

<sup>34</sup> Background Paper 9: Environment and Sustainability

## Energy and Resources

- 7.21 Energy use in new development can be reduced by appropriate siting, design, landscaping and energy efficiencies within the scheme. The City Council places great emphasis on the use of energy and resources within buildings and requires information on the efficiency, renewable energy and use of materials as part of planning applications. Whilst it is likely that there may be one outline planning application for the Northern Gateway scheme, it is expected that development will take place over a number of years in phases. Traditionally the eco-standards that a development will be built to would be secured at the outline planning application stage however at the Northern Gateway buildings will be required to be constructed to the standards in place at the time of the subsequent reserved matters applications and thereby factoring in any tightening of requirements over time.
- 7.22 In Oxford, large developments are expected to achieve at least 20% of their energy consumption from renewable or low-carbon technologies, such as thermal heat pumps, solar panels, and combined heat and power in addition to meeting Building Regulations. At the Northern Gateway this city wide approach will continue to apply<sup>35</sup>; in addition the scale of this development and the mix of uses proposed lend themselves to the delivery of a central energy centre which individual buildings could link to for their energy needs. This type of scheme is more efficient than multiple, non-linked schemes.

### **NG9: Energy and Resources**

A district/shared energy scheme will be delivered at the Northern Gateway subject to an Appropriate Assessment showing that this would not have a significant air quality impact on the integrity of the Oxford Meadows SAC. Developments will be expected to connect to the scheme unless viability evidence indicates this is not practicable. Development that connects to the scheme will be able to count this contribution towards its on-site renewable energy requirements.

In cases where it is evident that a planned development will be able to connect to a forthcoming but not completed energy scheme, this will be counted towards its on-site renewable energy requirements where the developer undertakes to commit to connection to the scheme.

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## Phasing and Implementation

- 8.1 As is typical with large sites, it is anticipated that development at Northern Gateway will take place over a number of years in phases. A phasing strategy will be required as part of a planning application. Phasing of development will be expected to reflect the aims of the AAP; helping to deliver the employment focus of the site. The diagram below is an indicative phasing plan of the Northern Gateway and other potential projects in the area. This illustrates one way in which development may be phased on this site.
- 8.2 Delivery of the required infrastructure in the area, and the mitigation measures associated with the Northern Gateway development will be key to a successful outcome. The Core Strategy recognises that "...mitigation measures must be implemented in accordance with the agreed phasing, with full implementation prior to the occupation of the final development phase"<sup>36</sup>. The delivery of infrastructure at the earliest possible opportunity will be pursued, and advanced delivery of mitigation measures will be prioritised.
- 8.3 Delivery of measures to encourage sustainable choices such as pedestrian and cycle improvements, an energy centre and on-site open space provision, will be prioritised to ensure that new residents and occupiers are able to exercise those choices from the earliest possible opportunity.
- 8.4 It is important that the delivery of the project on the ground is achieved in a coordinated and timely manner. The City and County Councils and their partners will manage the delivery process to seek to ensure that unnecessary delays are avoided and disruption to the area is minimised.

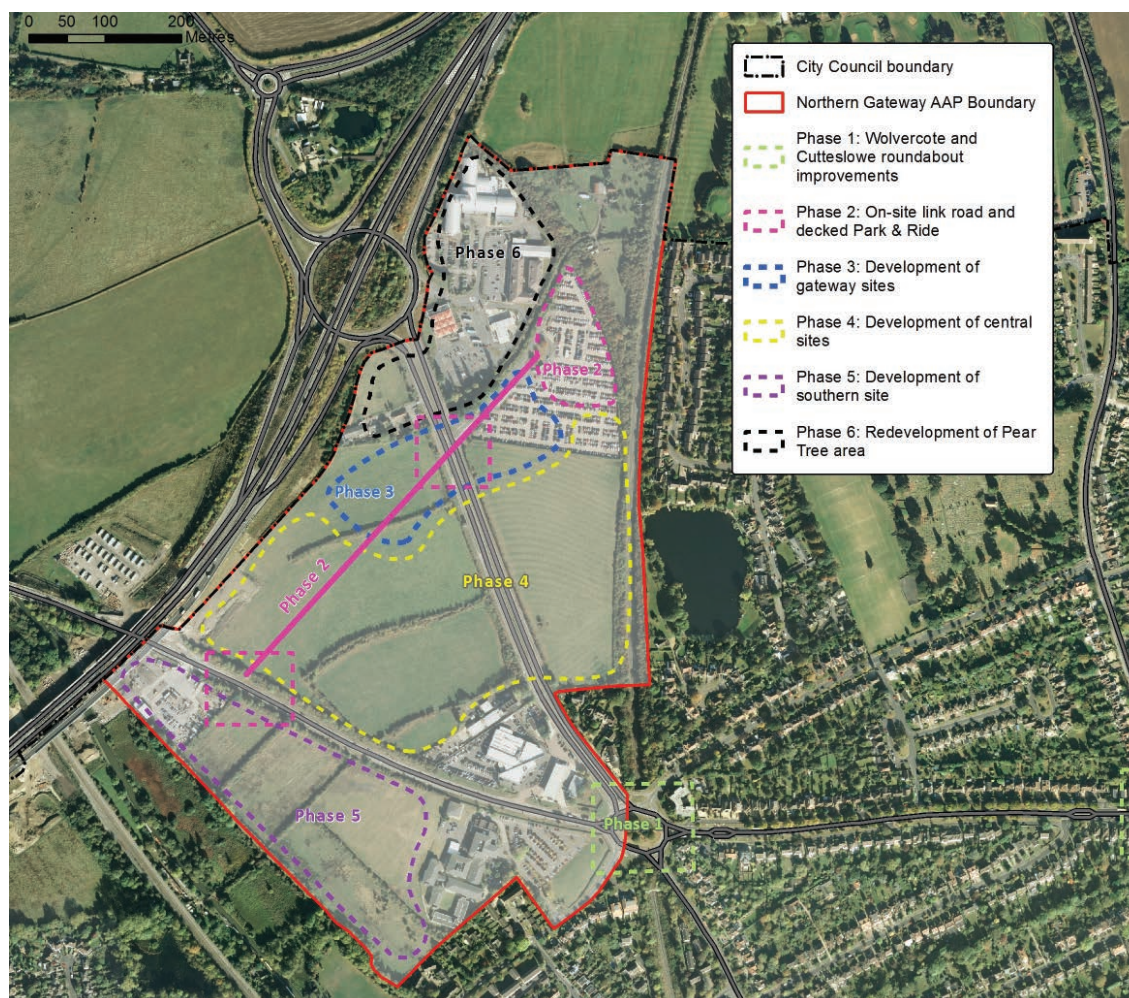


Figure 6: Indicative Phasing Plan

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- 8.5 Large-scale development of this kind will offer a range of training and job opportunities particularly in the construction phase. Where there are chances to link local people and businesses to the economic opportunities arising from the development or associated supply-chains, the City Council will encourage their uptake.

### **NG10: Phasing and Implementation**

Phasing of the site must have regard to the aim of creating a sustainable employment-led development from the outset and as the development progresses. A phasing strategy must be submitted with the outline planning application for approval by the local planning authority.

A Construction Environmental Management Plan covering matters including noise, traffic and dust during the construction phase will be required to support any Reserved Matters planning applications.

### **Delivery Partners**

- 8.6 The City and County Councils will play important roles in the delivery of the Northern Gateway, and mechanisms are already in place to facilitate joint working such as bi-lateral meetings and a regeneration officer working group. Both authorities are committed to delivering the vision set out in the AAP. The Councils will work with landowners, leaseholders and development partners to bring forward development. They also play other roles in fulfilling the vision, including that of the County Council as the Highway Authority and Local Education Authority. Other functions of the Councils will also be important in delivering the best outcomes including parks and leisure, park and ride management and environmental development at the City Council.
- 8.7 Other public bodies and in particular government agencies such as the Highways Agency, Environment Agency and Natural England also have important roles in influencing and informing detailed development plans. Many of these bodies have already been involved in the drafting of the AAP and dialogue will continue to ensure that appropriate solutions are found to facilitate development.
- 8.8 Landowners, their development partners, and leaseholders if appropriate, will bring about new development at the Northern Gateway. Discussions have been held between the landowners in the area and the City and County Councils to ensure that the policies of the AAP are deliverable and based in reality. This dialogue will continue through, for example, pre-application and planning application discussions to ensure a smooth and timely delivery of the vision of the AAP.
- 8.9 Stakeholder involvement has been crucial in developing the AAP. The City and County Councils and, at the appropriate time, landowners and developers will continue to build on this by further involving and consulting on future aspects of the Northern Gateway project. It is important that the community (including existing residents and new residents, employees and employers) continue to have a say in the plans for the future of the area.

### **Funding**

- 8.10 Development of the Northern Gateway requires significant investment in infrastructure and in turn the development provides an opportunity to address current issues through attracting both public and private sector investment. New infrastructure on the scale required in the Northern Gateway comes at a cost and funding will be pursued from a variety of sources including developer contributions towards this. To ensure all possibilities for improvements are explored, and that the highest quality infrastructure is provided, the City Council and partners are pursuing sources of funding to supplement developer contributions. These monies will be used in addition to developer contributions to fund Northern Gateway projects that could not otherwise be delivered.

8.11 The Northern Gateway infrastructure requirements will be funded through a combination of the following:

- **Developer funding secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy**  
The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a tariff in the form of a standard charge on new development set by the City Council to help the funding of infrastructure. CIL is charged at differential rates according to the type of development. Based on the mix of uses proposed at Policy NG2 and the CIL rates at the time of drafting something in the order of £4million will be raised towards infrastructure costs through CIL.
- **Developer funding secured through a Section 106 agreement**  
Since the implementation of CIL the use of Section 106 agreements to secure developer contributions has reduced. However in the case of a large strategic site like the Northern Gateway a Section 106 agreement will be required to secure the delivery of the affordable housing and other facilities listed in Policy NG11 as they are on-site requirements.
- **City Deal funding already secured for the Northern Gateway area**  
The City and County Councils have already been successful in securing £11.1 million of central government funding towards highways and transport infrastructure which will fund the improvements to Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts (and contribute towards the construction of the strategic link road).
- **Local Growth Fund monies bid for via the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership**  
The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership has the opportunity to secure money from the Local Growth Funds from central government to invest in infrastructure in order to secure economic growth. These funds are distributed to priority projects identified in the Strategic Economic Plan. Northern Gateway is one of those priority projects and as such has been identified in the Local Growth Fund bid for £12 million to deliver advanced infrastructure. This money would be used to deliver much of the significant highways infrastructure in advance of the planning application for the development project.
- **City and County Council funding (for example via capital programmes and funds secured from other sources)**

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### NG11: Delivery of Infrastructure

Planning permission will only be granted where there are suitable arrangements to provide and phase the infrastructure, services and facilities that will make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. The provision of infrastructure will be timed to relate to the start of development, to the relevant phase of development, or the first occupation of properties.

A condition or a section 106 agreement will be used to secure the following:

- Affordable housing;
- Restricting the occupation of the employment uses through a 'Gateway Policy Agreement';
- Provision and maintenance of public open space and children's play facilities;
- Highways and transport infrastructure to serve the development, including new junctions on the A40 and the A44, the construction of an on-site link road between the A40 and the A44, and public transport interchange/waiting facilities;
- Pedestrian and cycle links to serve the development;
- Travel Plan;
- A district/shared energy scheme;
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, water and wastewater and any other utilities measures required to serve the development;
- Any specific measures required to prevent or mitigate potential impacts on the Oxford Meadows SAC or on other areas designated for their nature conservation value.

## Monitoring

8.12 The City Council will monitor the implementation of the Area Action Plan, and performance against the Plan's objectives. Appendix 4 sets out a series of indicators and targets against which progress will be monitored. These are then linked (where possible) to the indicators of the City Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) where the monitoring will be reported.



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# Oxford Northern Gateway Design Code

## 1.0 Creating a new Destination

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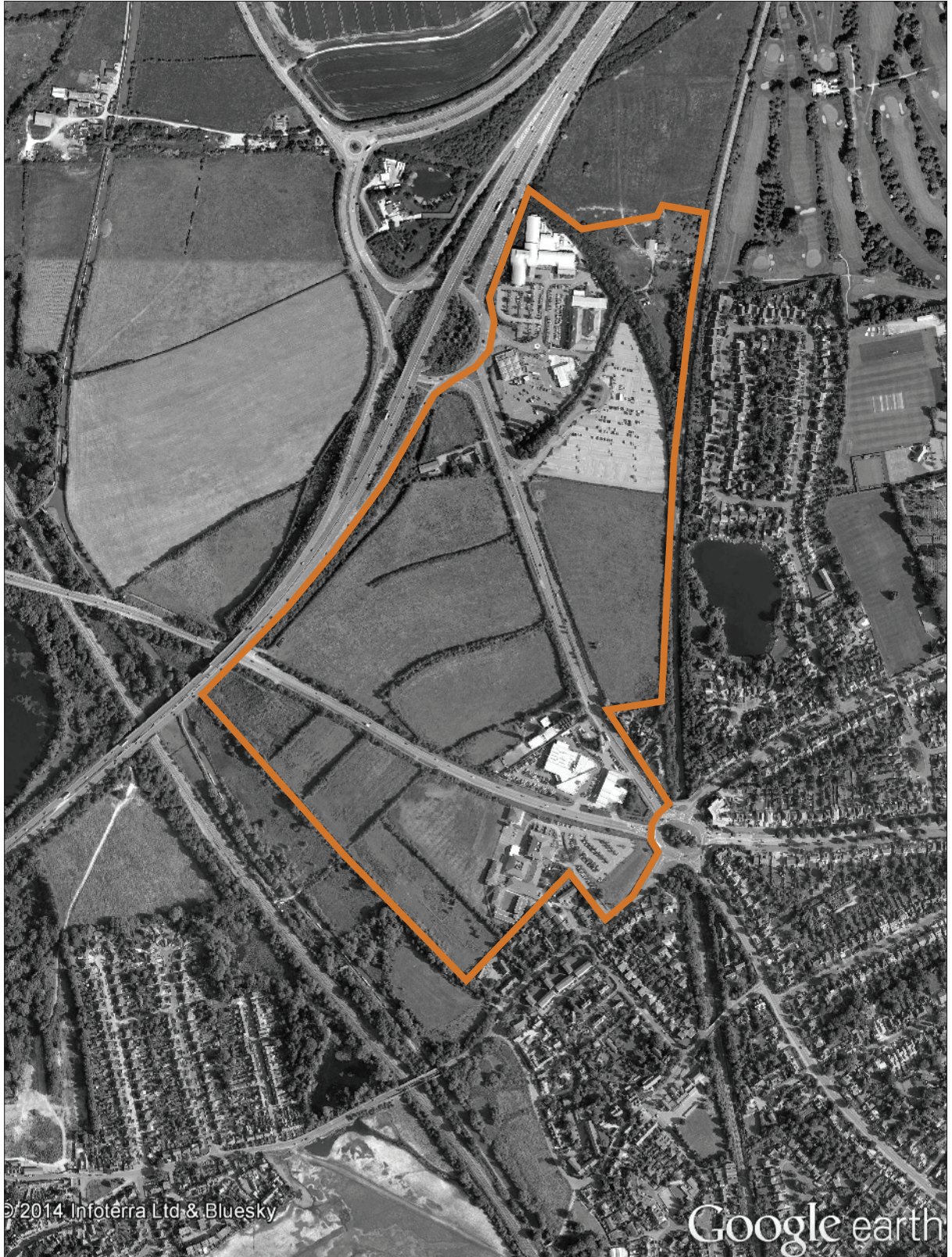


Figure 1.1 AAP Boundary

## Introduction

**The Northern Gateway is an area of mostly undeveloped land on the edge of Oxford. The site lies north of the existing built up area of the city and south of the A34. It includes the existing Peartree service area and Park and Ride as well as some existing commercial activities north of the Wolvercote roundabout. The site has been allocated by the City Council as a strategic development site for employment led development.**

The vision for the Northern Gateway is to create a high quality employment area that builds on the strengths of Oxford's economy in the key sectors of education, health, research and development, and knowledge-based businesses. The development of new commercial floorspace in an attractive setting provides the opportunity to grow Oxford's economy. The inclusion of new residential accommodation will also help meet Oxford's housing needs. Other complementary uses, such as local scale retail and a hotel, will help form a sense of place, as well as sustain the vitality of the development.

## Area Action Plan

The Northern Gateway AAP will guide future development at this location. An AAP outlines planning policy in a specific location so that an appropriate scale, mix and quality of development can be secured and achieved. Planning applications that fall inside the AAP boundary will be assessed against the policies of the AAP.

Given the scale and importance of the Northern Gateway, the AAP places great importance on the quality of urban design. Accordingly this Design Code has been prepared as an appendix to the AAP. The Design Code therefore forms part of the Development Plan for Oxford, against which planning applications will be determined for the site.



Woodstock Road (A44)



View across the site looking south from A34



View across A40 towards the south west

## Using the Design Code

The Design Code is to be used by people who will be designing, developing and managing new development within the Northern Gateway. The Design Code sets the standard for new development and in forming part of the Development Plan for Oxford will be used to refuse poor quality development proposals that do not meet the Council's high aspirations for design and sustainability.

The aim of design coding is to provide clarity as to what constitutes acceptable design quality. It thereby affords a level of certainty for developers and the local community alike, which can help facilitate the delivery of good quality new development. The Design Code is the starting point for developers of the Northern Gateway to engage with Oxford City Council. There is scope for deviation from the code where developers and designers can evidence the highest design standards and innovation.

Good urbanism occurs through the creative assembly of various 'layers' that together form a sense of place. These 'layers' are illustrated in Figure 1.2 and are set out below:

- **Character Areas**  
The role of different parts of the site in meeting the overall vision for the Northern Gateway.
- **Settlement Form**  
The framework of streets and green spaces that will structure the development.
- **Urban Form**  
The design of buildings.
- **Urban Space**  
The design of open spaces.

The Design Code is presented in a logical order. It firstly sets out the overall aspirations for development and describes the character of the site. It then defines a range of general and specific design requirements for the site arranged in these 'layers.' Some are mandatory to ensure that key aspirations for the site are met and some are indicative to allow for design evolution. All guidance applies to both commercial and residential development unless specified. The regulation plan illustrated in Figure 1.3, defines the physical location of specific policies within the Design Code. Diagrams are used to illustrate the principles of the Design Code; they are not intended to indicate architectural style.

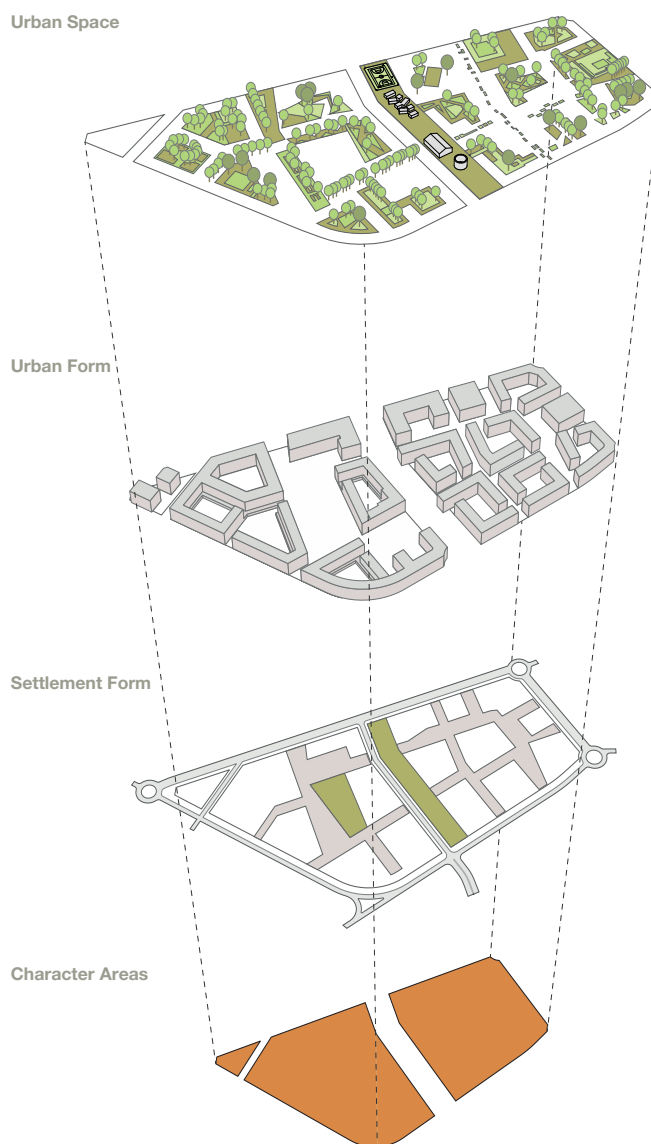
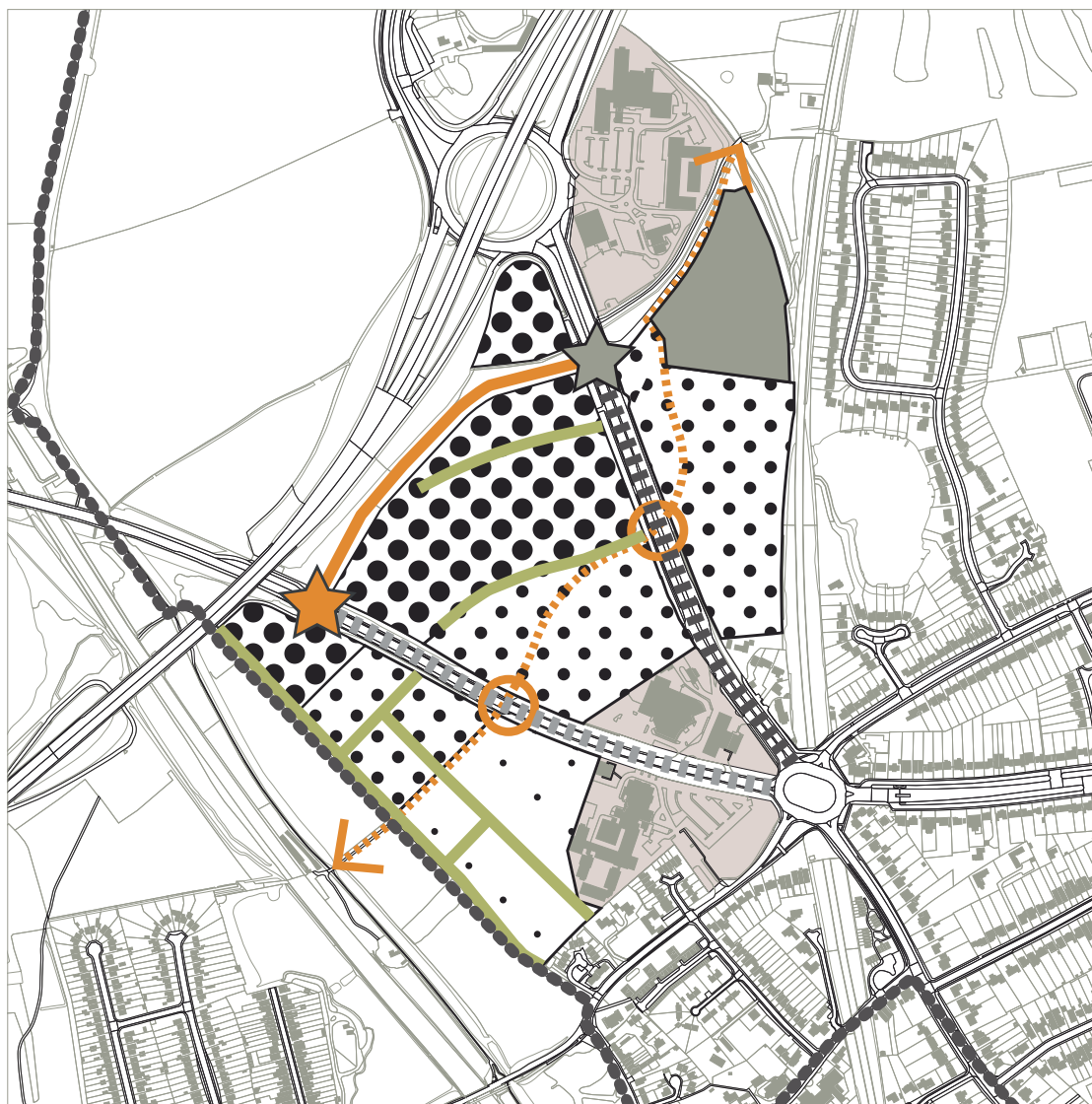


Figure 1.2 The Layers of Urbanism

















- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  A44 (CA05, SF06)                    |  New pedestrian crossing (US05)                  |
|  A40 (CA06, SF07)                    |  Existing development (potential for enhancemer) |
|  New Avenue (SF08)                   |  Employment use only (CA01, CA02)                |
|  A44 junction improvements / upgrade |  Mix of uses (CA01, CA02, CA03)                  |
|  New A40 junction                    |  Mix of uses (CA01)                              |
|  Park and Ride (CA04)                |  Existing Green Infrastructure (SF01, US04)      |
|  Strategic pedestrian route (US05)   |  National Cycle Route 5                          |

Figure 1.3 Regulation Plan

## 2.0 Development Principles

### The Vision

The vision for the Northern Gateway is defined in the AAP. In essence the aspiration is to form a vibrant community for knowledge-based industries that is also a living community. By collocating commercial and residential uses within a new urban setting the development should become a distinctive part of the city with its own character. Indeed, there will be an emphasis on design quality and sustainable development so that the development sets an example for other new communities.

The intention is not to create a new business park but a mixed use urban extension of Oxford. This stress on urban is significant because the density, form and character of the development should be more suited to a township rather than an open landscaped campus. This does not necessarily mean there should not be significant areas of green space, indeed Oxford City Centre and its inner neighbourhoods even at their densest have large areas of public and private open space, but the overall built form of the development should be structured around walkable (and cycle friendly) streets and appropriately scaled open spaces, enclosed and animated by buildings and a mix of uses.

### Design Principles

A number of widely accepted design principles are defined in the AAP and underpin this Design Code. The principles set out below inform the Urban Design Regulation Plan at Figure 1.3 and Design Code policies herein. In order to satisfy these principles, the Northern Gateway should:

- Be accessible and permeable, to ensure easy access to and through the area for all users, but particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Be legible, a pattern of routes should be established that is easy for people to understand and to find their way around.
- Respect the character of natural features of the site.
- Have its own identity, create a distinctive and contemporary setting for future investment, uses and activity.
- Have high quality streets and open spaces that provide the setting for a lively, attractive, distinctive and safe public realm.
- Have continuous and connected streets, with well-defined building frontages.
- Have a clear distinction between the public and private realms, to create comfortable and well defined streets and secure, private spaces at the rear of properties.
- Have buildings which face onto the street, with doors and windows allowing people to come and go or look out onto the street.

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### Planned Infrastructure

A number of transport infrastructure improvements are planned for the Northern Gateway and its environs. These will have significant implications for the character of the area and movement patterns. The infrastructure improvements are identified in Figure 1.4.

A key challenge to the success of the Northern Gateway will be accommodating the planned highway provision without eroding the aspiration for an urban development focused around movement on foot and by bicycle.

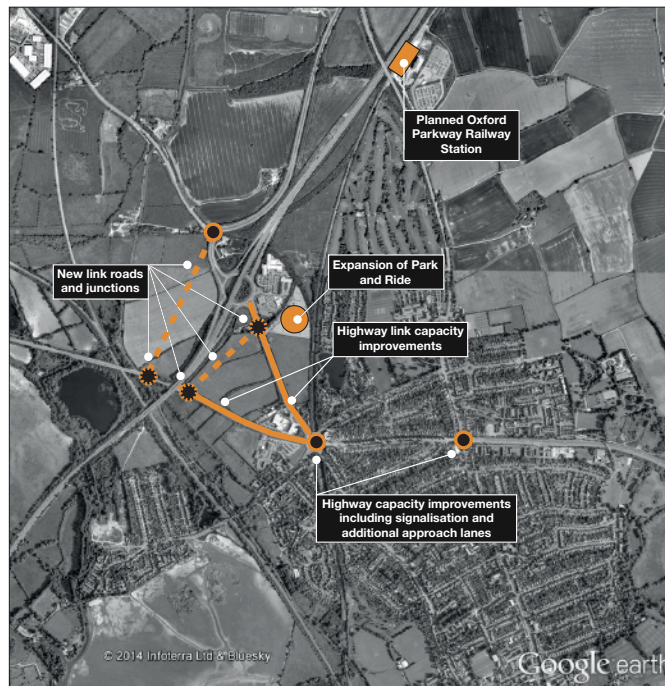


Figure 1.4 Planned Transport Infrastructure (June 2014)





### 3.0 The Site

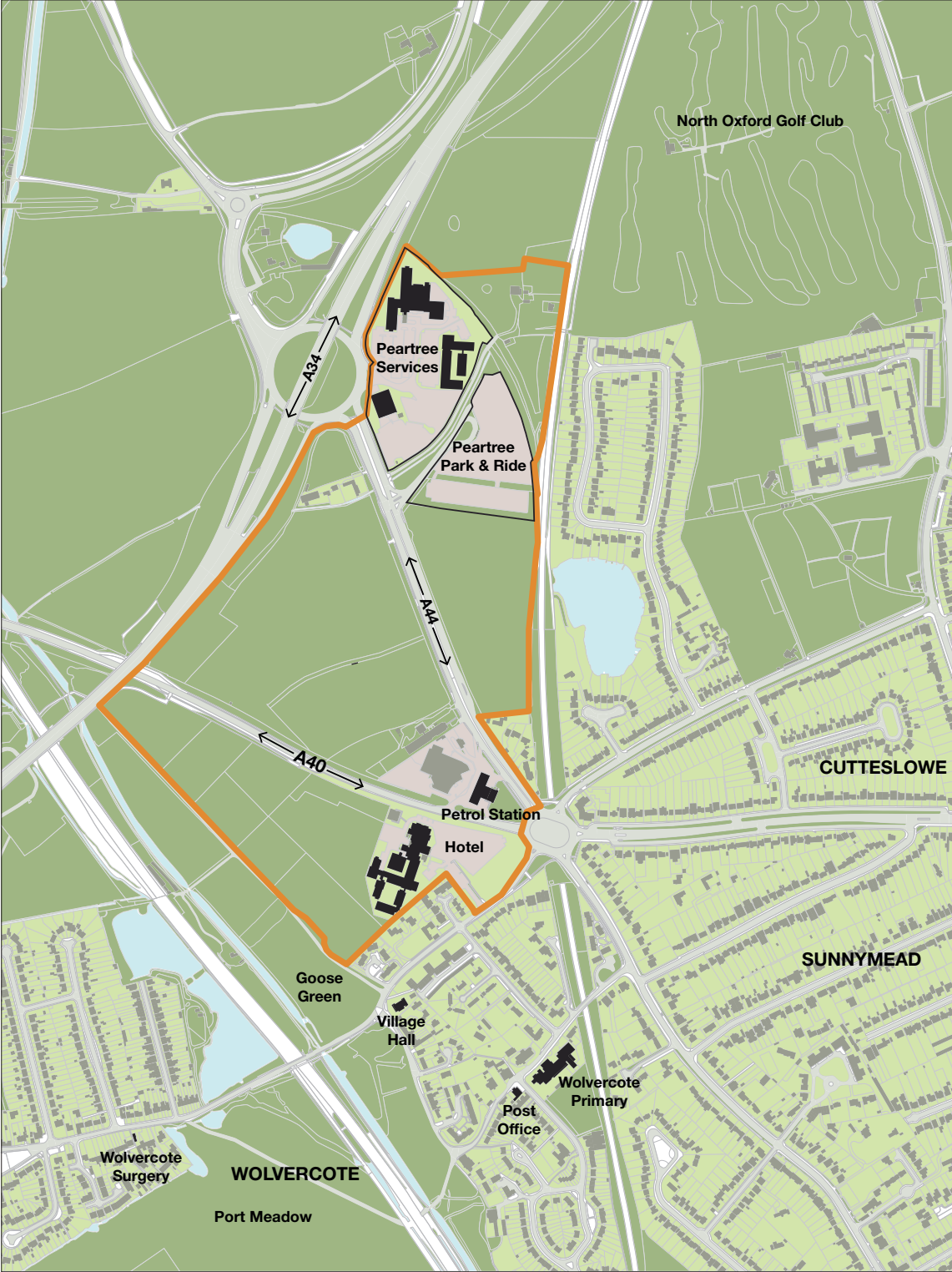


Figure 3.1 Site Plan