

**BASE MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR FLYING FIELD**

HEYFORD PARK

DRAFT - UPDATED VERSION 3

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CONTENTS:

Page No:

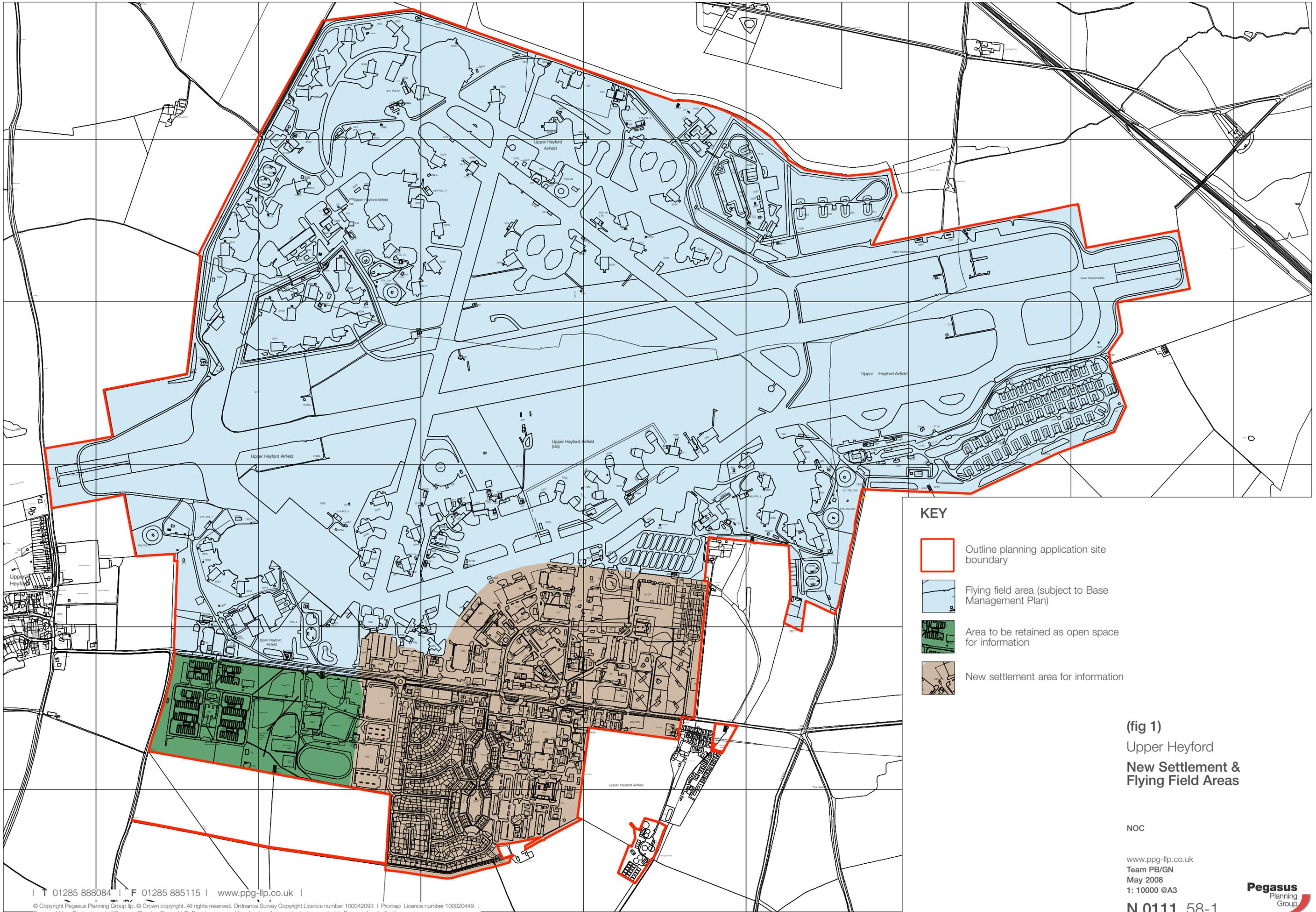
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	STATUS AND PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN	3
3.	CONTEXT AND GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE	5
	Historical Context	5
	Relationship to Surroundings	5
	Geographical Coverage of Management Plan	6
4.	HISTORIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE	8
	Aim	8
	Rationale for Objectives	8
5.	LANDSCAPE	15
	Aim	15
6.	ECOLOGY	18
	Aim	18
	Rationale for Objectives	18
7.	PUBLIC ACCESS AND MOVEMENT WITHIN THE FLYING FIELD	21
	Aim	21
	Rationale for Objectives	21
8.	DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS	24
	Management Company Role and Function	24
	Management Company Structure	27
9.	SUMMARY	29

APPENDICES:

1. **PRINCIPAL HERITAGE FEATURES PLAN**
2. **SPATIAL CONTEXT PLAN**
3. **BUILDING STATUS (RETAINED AND DEMOLISHED) PLAN & TABLE**
4. **CHANGE OF USE PLAN & TABLE**
5. **COUNTY WILDLIFE SITE & AREA OF ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE PLAN**
6. **MANAGEMENT REGIME SCOPE**
7. **IMPROVED FOOTPATH LINKS AND PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN**
8. **HERITAGE CENTRE'S PROPOSED OPERATION**
9. **PARKING AND CIRCULATORY VEHICLE MOVEMENT PLAN**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Base Management Plan for Upper Heyford has been prepared by Pegasus Planning Group, in conjunction with Cooper Partnership, Roger Evans Associates Limited, Trench Farrow, Ecological Planning and Research and Oxford Archaeology on behalf of the land owners, North Oxfordshire Consortium Limited (NOC), in order to provide all relevant parties with guidance on the future conservation, management and enhancement in respect of the former Flying Field which comprises a significant part of the site of the former RAF Upper Heyford Air Base (see Figure 1).
- 1.2 The Management Plan aims to secure a sustainable and positive future for the Flying Field that suitably reflects its historical importance and ecological interest.
- 1.3 The document outlines objectives derived from the overarching policy (Policy H2) in the Oxfordshire County Structure Plan and seeks to deliver most of the Council's stated objectives as set out in the Revised Comprehensive Development Brief for Upper Heyford, adopted by Cherwell District Council as a Supplementary Planning document (SPD) in 2007.
- 1.4 Since the Base ceased operations in 1994, a variety of temporary uses have been accommodated within the existing buildings and the associated open areas. The existing housing stock within the base has been utilised for short term tenancies with the result that the 315 dwellings are currently accommodating nearly 300 families within the family housing originally occupied by service personnel. Circa 900 persons are employed in a variety of Class B1, B2 and B8 uses. NOC has managed these uses within the Base for the last 11 years, including the retention of two secure access points into the former operational areas to the north of Camp Road on the Flying Field. Such management not only involves the letting agreements in relation to the residential properties and the marketing and leasing of commercial properties, it has also involved the setting up of the requisite security arrangements and maintaining the fabric of all the existing buildings (until such time as decisions are made about their long term future), as well as the large areas of open space within the curtilage, especially on the Flying Field.
- 1.5 With regard to the proposed New Settlement Area located in the south-eastern corner of the Air Base, it is NOC's intention to dispose of individual residential freeholds and to a certain extent this will also apply to the support facilities e.g. retail, places of worship, and other land uses. Some areas of public open space may



KEY

-  Outline planning application site boundary
-  Flying field area (subject to Base Management Plan)
-  Area to be retained as open space for information
-  New settlement area for information

(fig 1)
Upper Heyford
New Settlement & Flying Field Areas

NOC

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remain as well as some existing buildings where no uses are proposed, but for the most part it is not anticipated that the New Settlement Area will need to be the subject of Management Plan arrangements.

- 1.6 So far as the Flying Field is concerned, it is NOC's intention to retain control over the freehold of the buildings, as well as retaining the freehold of the runways and taxiways which are used to access the individual buildings.
- 1.7 This Management Plan forms part of the outline planning application setting out NOC's "lasting arrangement" for the former Air Base. It will be incorporated within a Section 106 obligation for the site to ensure that its contents are implemented in a way which secures:-
 - i. Management, protection and enhancement of cultural heritage features;
 - ii. Landscape protection, management and enhancement;
 - iii. Ecological protection, management and improvement; and
 - iv. Creation and management of public access through and around the site.

2. STATUS AND PURPOSE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 2.1 Conservation Management Plans have a non statutory basis, although they do provide an advisory policy framework for guiding and influencing management initiatives in a positive manner.
- 2.2 The Management Plan is based upon the development proposals as set out in the NOC's outline planning application which in turn has been prepared to accord with the key policy in the Structure Plan (Policy H2). Furthermore, the Conservation Area designation (which was approved by the District Council in April 2006) has been regarded a 'key material consideration' in assessing and implementing relevant planning policies and proposals.
- 2.3 This Management Plan is intended to set out the day to day working arrangements necessary to secure various historic and natural environmental objectives within the Flying Field whilst at the same time ensuring that the site performs its allotted role as a location for a new settlement of 1,075 dwellings together with appropriate levels of employment, infrastructure and facilities.
- 2.4 The Management Plan is designed to be a practical document produced by the landowners as an accompaniment to the comprehensive outline planning application, it is designed so as to enable and where possible deliver the various objectives required by the LPA. It is a document that is proposed to be implemented as part of the Section 106 documentation and therefore will assist in ensuring a lasting arrangement.
- 2.5 The Management Plan should be read in conjunction with the approved documents and plans which form part of the outline planning application.
- 2.6 It is important to appreciate that as this Management Plan accompanies a comprehensive planning application, the latter will also be capable of being the subject of planning conditions to achieve a number of objectives set out in this document where such conditions comply with the relevant tests set out in Circular 11/95. It may be appropriate for conditions and s106 requirements to be duplicated to assist in monitoring and taking action against any breaches.
- 2.7 The intention is that the requirements of the Management Plan will be enforced through covenants imposed through a S106 obligation and that day-to-day

implementation will be undertaken by a Management Company on behalf of the freeholders¹.

¹ The functions and structure of the management Company are set out in more detail in Section 8 of this Management Plan.

3. CONTEXT AND GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

Historical Context

- 3.1 RAF Upper Heyford was first established in 1915 as a Royal Flying Corps station and remained in use for much of the last Century. A major rebuilding programme started in 1950 when the US military arrived to convert the base into a Very Heavy Bomber Station for Strategic Air Command as part of its offensive capability against the Soviet Union. Significant new infrastructure was constructed at the base during the Cold War period until the start of the American withdrawal in 1991. The United States Air Force finally ceased operations from RAF Upper Heyford in 1993. The base closed for military purposes in 1994.
- 3.2 The former Air Base extends to over 505 hectares and is surrounded by a 14 kilometre long security fence. It is subdivided between a technical site and Flying Field to the north with a domestic area to the south-east which is to form the basis of the New Settlement.
- 3.3 The Base contains approximately 279,000 square metres of buildings together with runways, hardstandings and roadways which include the 3.4 kilometre main runway. It demonstrates many features of a Cold War military installation and in this respect is unique within the UK. This later development overlays the 1920's RAF development of which numerous features are still evident.
- 3.4 The whole Base was designated as a Conservation Area in April 2006 but also contains smaller areas included within it designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments together with a number of listed and unlisted buildings of national and local significance. Furthermore, an area of land around the eastern section of the runway is designated as a County Wildlife Site. The principal heritage features of the site are shown at Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 – Principal Heritage Features Plan

Relationship to Surroundings

- 3.5 The site lies within a predominantly rural area, including hamlets and villages. It occupies a gently domed limestone plateau overlooking the Cherwell Valley and the North Oxford Canal. The landscape character of the plateau is largely open and exposed, with little tree cover. Other than a fragment of woodland at Kennel Copse to the north-eastern boundary of the site, it is surrounded by a network of generally

large arable fields with few hedgerows. The villages of Steeple Aston, Middle Aston and North Aston lie on the west slope of the Cherwell Valley and look towards the plateau and former Air Base. Rousham Park, which is a Grade I Registered within the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, lies on the lower western slopes of the Cherwell valley close to the south-western boundary of the site. Only the Base water towers and the telecom masts are visible from the key viewpoints in Rousham.

- 3.6 The surrounding area is crossed by a network of public rights of way, some of which used to run across the site of the former Air Base but which were closed as the base developed. A number of minor roads run to the north, west and south of the site and offer limited views to some of the existing built development at the site. The spatial context can be seen at Appendix 2.

Appendix 2 – Spatial Context Plan

Geographical Coverage of Management Plan

- 3.7 The red line plan associated with the outline planning application is for the most part co-terminous with the Conservation Area and addresses the whole of the former Air Base site.
- 3.8 Much of the former Technical Core and residential areas, on land to the south-east of Camp Road, is proposed for new residential and community development where individual residential curtilages will be created and sold off to private individuals. This 'New Settlement Area', which is identified in Figure 1, will include open space and other communal areas which NOC intends should be maintained in the normal manner – either by agreement with Cherwell District Council to adopt, or by the creation of a special maintenance company for the residential part of the site.
- 3.9 This Base Management Plan is not intended to address management issues within the New Settlement Area (NSA) and only applies to the Flying Field as defined in Figure 1.
- 3.10 The area outside the NSA to which the Base Management Plan relates is referred to as the Flying Field; it contains a relatively low density of development with the buildings and structures set in extensive open areas that contain few natural or man-made boundaries. This Plan will focus primarily on the maintenance and management of this Flying Field, having particular regard to:

- *the ecological interest and opportunities for biodiversity;*
- *the landscape character and the need to retain the openness of the plateau;*
- *the historic and cultural significance as a Cold War Airfield;*
- *delivering public access, whilst also retaining security;*
- *creating an appropriate boundary treatment at the edge of the Conservation Area and between the Flying Field and the New Settlement Area.*

3.11 Apart from allowing for the introduction of appropriate new uses into the protected buildings, the general aim of the comprehensive planning application is to minimise physical change on the Flying Field whilst delivering the objectives set out above.

4. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Aim

4.1 To facilitate a management regime that allows:

- *The character and appearance of the Flying Field to be preserved and enhanced;*
- *The fabric of all retained buildings and structures to be maintained;*
- *Retention of the functional relationship between buildings and structures;*
- *Public access to parts of the site with historic significance, commensurate with the need to maintain adequate security.*

Rationale for Objectives

4.2 The designation of the whole Base as a Conservation Area generates important statutory responsibilities.

4.3 The most important of these is that all buildings/structures should be retained and maintained unless Conservation Area Consent is granted for the demolition of buildings or other structures².

4.4 In addition, there are specific Cold War structures within the Site that have Scheduled Ancient Monument status (December 2006):-

- **OA14A.4** The Battle Command Centre (building number 126) (SAM 30906-05)
- **OA14B.2** The Hardened Telephone Exchange (building number 129) (SAM 30906-04)
- **OA8B.1** The Avionics Maintenance Facility (building number 299) (SAM 30906-03)
- **OA5A** The Northern Bomb Store and Special Weapons Area: this is contained within a security fence and includes 'special' and conventional bomb stores (building numbers 1001-1008, 1011, 1032-1048, 1050, 1060, 1870) (SAM 30906-02)
- **OA1C** The Quick Reaction Alert Area (QRAA): this includes hardened aircraft shelters, security fence, watch tower, fuel supply point and hardened crew buildings (building numbers 3001-3009, 2010, 3104 & 3105) (SAM 30906-01)

² For the Conservation Area implications for trees present on the site, refer to Section 5 of this Management Plan

4.5 Further structures have been afforded statutory protection as listed buildings. The following have been afforded Grade II status (designated April 2008):-

- **OA1D.3** *The Control Tower (building number 340)*
- **OA1B.1** *Squadron Headquarters (building number 234)*
- **OA8A.1** *Nose Docking Sheds (building numbers 325, 327 & 328)*

4.6 It is also important to recognise that there are further aspects which contribute to its character as a Cold War airfield including:-

- the openness of the Flying Field as experienced by the lack of tree cover and the open spacing of building/structures in order to minimise the effects of an attack.
- the sharply defined physical and functional separation of the expansive open space of the Flying Field from the surrounding agricultural land, not just by the security fence but also in terms of obvious character differences.
- the military and slightly 'menacing' atmosphere associated with the structures and their former uses.

4.7 However, the separation from the surrounding rural area should not be equated with low levels of activity, as the Air Base was occupied by nearly 10,000 personnel when it was fully operational; therefore the amount of activity within the former Air Base was significantly greater than that in the surrounding rural area.

Heritage Objectives in the Flying Field

Heritage Objectives – Flying Field

HO.4. Maintain appropriate controls over uses involving external storage or activity across the Flying Field to preserve the austere military character.

HO.5. Ensure that any re-use of retained buildings is compatible with conserving their historic and cultural interest.

4.8 The major part of the Airfield lies within a central Core Area of Historic Significance based upon the runway which is of national significance due to its Cold War associations. In particular, this Core Area contains the Quick Reaction Alert Area, the

Avionics Maintenance Facility (of international significance), and the Northern Bomb Store and Special Weapons Area (of national significance).

- 4.9 The Flying Field has an austere military character dominated by grassland and hard surfacing, punctuated by buildings that also include the 56 Hardened Aircraft Shelters (HAS).
- 4.10 Some buildings and structures within the Flying Field are proposed to be demolished; the majority are however to be retained.

Appendix 3 – Building Demolition Schedule and Plan

- 4.11 Most of the buildings on the Flying Field are appropriate for a range of “low-key” employment uses which can in principle be accommodated without detriment to the Conservation Area’s character. Many of the current activities can potentially be accommodated without having any adverse effect on the structure of the protected buildings or their surroundings in accordance with the advice in PPG15. A plan showing the extent of the proposed uses within the retained buildings on the Flying Field is attached as Appendix 4.

Appendix 4 – Change of Use Schedule and Plan

- 4.12 The reuse of many of the Hardened Aircraft Shelters and other structures on the Flying Field needs to be carefully controlled so that potential physical changes which could occur do not materialise, including:-

- 1) No external storage of materials that might otherwise detract from the character of the buildings on the Airfield as a Conservation Area;
- 2) Minimising and controlling the impact of car parking associated with the use of these buildings;
- 3) Preserving the significant internal fixtures and fittings within the structures, in particular, war art, by managing internal changes;
- 4) Ensuring that movement to and from businesses operating from the historic buildings within the Flying Field are concentrated on existing surfaced areas in a way which allows a safe means of access;
- 5) Signage is only to be permitted in accordance with an approved signage strategy;
- 6) External lighting is only to be permitted in accordance with an approved lighting strategy;
- 7) Provision and locations of external waste bins will only be permitted in accordance with an approved waste storage strategy;

- 8) Minimising subdivision of the Flying Field either by fencing or inappropriate planting (with the exception of temporary stock proof fencing to allow for grazing); and
 - 9) Ensuring retention of historic significance by regular maintenance (repair, decoration and removal of damaging or intrusive plant growth).
- 4.13 All of these issues are matters which will be controlled by way of the imposition of planning conditions. [ACTIONS HA5, HA6].
- 4.14 In addition, identical controlling provisions will be contained within the leases to tenants and occupiers that are granted in respect of all buildings within the Flying Field³. It is imperative that tenants' maintain the integrity of their component features for example the winches and ventilation systems within the HASs. Otherwise, there is significant risk that features which might contribute to the future understanding of the heritage asset could be inadvertently destroyed. All of the Management Company leases will prohibit structural alterations without prior written agreement with the Management Company. Where structural alterations are proposed, the District Council and English Heritage will be consulted by the Management Company, prior to authorising any such works. All tenants will also be reminded of the need to obtain planning approval (where necessary) in addition to obtaining the Management Company's approval.
- 4.15 The freeholder will agree not to dispose of the freehold of the flying field other than as a single entity without the Council's prior approval. This will ensure that the Council has a single body against whom they will always be able to enforce any breaches of this Management Plan. The NOC will also place a restriction on their registered title preventing the sale of the freehold of the flying field otherwise than in accordance with these conditions.
- 4.16 The single large open area of the Flying Field will not, for the most part, be divided into separate curtilages or areas by means of physical delineation i.e. fences, in order to protect the overall character of the Conservation Area, except where specified on the approved plans, or to allow for temporary stock proof fencing to implement an appropriate grazing regime. As a consequence the Management Company will be responsible for protecting and maintaining the open nature of the Flying Field, subject only to improving public access along defined routes and ensuring security for proposed occupants [ACTIONS HA4, HA12].

³ These lease requirements are outlined in sub section 8 of this Plan. Further details on movement and car parking across the Flying Field are outlined in sub section 7.

- 4.17 The Management Plan will retain the majority of the boundary fence around the Flying Field, partly as a means of securing the perimeter of the Airfield but, following discussion with English Heritage and others, primarily because it is seen as a significant component in establishing the overall character of the Conservation Area [ACTION HA1]. However, in the following locations, it is proposed to remove certain sections of the fence [ACTION HA2]:-
- at the western end of the runway, where the Air Base most closely abuts Upper Heyford village; and
 - along sections of the Northern side and for the length of the Southern side of Camp Road around the southern and eastern boundaries of the New Settlement Area.
- 4.18 Where it is necessary to provide additional security, for example to the remaining car processing areas, this will be achieved by a low level 'car proof' barrier, not by fencing.
- 4.19 Fencing will be provided to protect the ground nesting bird population on the grassland comprising most of the Flying Field⁴.
- 4.20 A baseline survey of the historic structures on the flying field, based on the enhancement of existing surveys, will provide a record of current appearance and the reference point for future maintenance. Any further demolitions will be preceded by an agreed programme of investigation and record to preserve their historic interest [ACTION HA7, HA8].
- 4.21 The preservation and recording of "wall art" undertaken by military personnel is also a key consideration. Prior to the demolition of any structures, the Management Company will undertake an internal visual inspection to record all such wall art photographically in accordance with a specification provided by English Heritage. On those buildings which are to be retained any "wall art" or other culturally significant features which should be retained will be recorded within 6 months of consent and measures introduced to ensure their protection. Tenants of retained structures will be prohibited from making any alterations which adversely affect these features through the operation of the lease [ACTION HA8].

⁴ Much of the Flying Field is designated as a County Wildlife Site, see Section 6 of this Management Plan.

- 4.22 One of the other features contributing to the overall military character of the Flying Field relates to the external paint scheme for the buildings. The Management Company will operate a standard external paint scheme for all previously painted structures which will be submitted to English Heritage and the District Council prior to the permanent occupation of any buildings. All tenants will be prohibited from using other colours on the exterior of their buildings as part of the Lease terms [ACTION HA9].
- 4.23 Similar uniformity will apply to any signage on the Flying Field. A detailed signage strategy is to be agreed with the Council [ACTION HA10].
- 4.24 Likewise, a lighting strategy and also waste strategy is to be agreed with the Council [ACTIONS HA13, HA14].
- 4.25 Any buildings identified to be in a poor state in the Buildings Survey in 2005 (which are not already proposed for demolition) to be retained, will be put in a weatherproof condition within one year of implementing the outline planning permission for the new settlement. Prior to this the Management Company will undertake a review of the 2005 Building Condition Survey. In order to prevent deterioration in the structure of the retained buildings, all occupied buildings on the Flying Field will then be subject to a quinquennial inspection both internally and externally by a suitably qualified Surveyor⁵ [ACTION HA11].

Summary of Actions to Retain Buildings and Structures of Historic and Cultural Significance on the Flying Field

- HA1 Retention and regular maintenance of boundary fence (save as 2) below.
- HA2 Removal of fencing at western end of the Flying Field and replacement 1.5m fences along approved alignments (within 12 months of implementation of the New Settlement Area).
- HA3 Removal of main runway at western end of the Flying Field (within 12 months of implementation of Outline Planning Permission).
- HA4 No erection of fences or hedgerows within the Flying Field, except with agreement of the District Council.
- HA5 Prevention of external storage of materials.

⁵ Further details of the condition survey and management measures are set out in Section 8 of this Management Plan. Details of the independent surveyors report including the impending Building Condition Review will be made available to the District Council and English Heritage representatives, together with a programme of works to be undertaken by the Management Company to make the building weatherproof.

- HA6 Limiting external car parking within the Flying Field to areas identified on submitted plan.
- HA7 Survey of initial Building Condition to be submitted to District Council and English Heritage before implementation of New Settlement Area proposals and programme of identified works undertaken. This will be associated with the baseline survey of historic structures which will provide a record of historic structures which will provide a record of historic features and interest.
- HA8 Agreed programme of investigation and record to preserve historic interest of structures prior to demolitions. Retention and photographic record of all wall art (within 9 months of implementation of Outline Planning Permission).
- HA9 Preparation and submission of external paint scheme/schedule (within 9 months of grant of Outline Planning Permission, with implementation in accordance with an agreed programme).
- HA10 Preparation and submission of signage strategy (within 9 months of grant of Outline Planning Permission).
- HA11 Commission and undertake quinquennial reviews of the fabric of the buildings on the Flying Field, and prepare a schedule of works and programme for those identified works.
- HA12 Retain the freehold of the Flying Field and other retained structures within a single ownership.
- HA13 Submission of an external lighting strategy for the Flying Field (within 9 months of grant of outline planning permission).
- HA14 Submission of a external waste storage strategy for the Flying Field (within 9 months of grant of outline planning permission).

5. LANDSCAPE

Aim

- 5.1 To provide a management and planting regime that allows:
- *The retention of visual openness for the Flying Field*
 - *Achievement of the aims of landscape character guidance*
 - *Achievement of the proper management of the existing woodland and hedgerows*
 - *Use of the of indigenous species, including ash, oak and beech where appropriate*
 - *The conservation and enhancement of indigenous grassland*
 - *The avoidance of visually intrusive development*

Rationale for Objectives

Objectives – Landscape

- LO.1. Provide a landscape management regime for the Flying Field which ensures the growth to maturity of existing planting**
- LO.2 To manage the site and grassland to maintain visual openness, including the continuation of the grass management regime.**
- LO.2 Remove inappropriate alien conifers from the former air base as a whole.**
- LO.3 Ensure that any new planting accords with the retention of openness and the objectives of the Farmland Plateau defined by the County Council in Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Strategy 2004.**

- 5.2 Particular attention will be paid to ensure that any existing or new landscape treatment for the site conforms to the appropriate landscape character guidance for the area. This principle has already guided the preparation of the Master Plan and Landscape key Plan where the introduction of structural landscaping on the Flying Field has been deliberately avoided.

5.3 The Oxford Wildlife and Landscape Strategy identifies the relevant landscape type as being Farmland Plateau. The relevant strategy guidelines are summarised below:

- *To conserve the open spacious character of the landscape by limiting the amount of planting on the exposed higher land;*
- *To establish tree planting or manage existing planting around the edges of the Flying Field, where this does not damage the species rich grassland, or buried archaeological remains, in order to reduce the visual impact on the Flying Field;*
- *To reduce the visual impact of structures where appropriate;*
- *To encourage the conversion of arable to pasture land;*
- *To maintain a sparse settled character by concentrating development in association with existing built form, particularly on the plateau which is sensitive to visually intrusive development, large buildings and communication masts;*
- *To use local materials; and*
- *To promote a scale of development appropriate to the landscape type.*

5.4 The defining character of the Flying Field is largely one of an open nature with few trees, (particularly in relation to the Flying Field). No new planting will be permitted within the Flying Field, other than in the select areas proposed in the planning application [ACTIONS LA2, LA4].

5.5 The Management Company will undertake the landscaping management regime for the Flying Field as a whole. As such individual tenants will not be permitted to carry out their own planting or management schemes in order to protect the established character. This will be secured via the leases with tenants and occupiers [ACTIONS LA2, LA4, LA5].

5.6 Inappropriate non-native trees will be removed and are specifically identified in the plans accompanying the planning application [ACTION LA1].

5.7 To achieve the above aims and objectives, the following actions are proposed:-.

Summary of Actions to Improve Landscape

LA1 Removal of inappropriate non native species within the Flying Field: submit to District Council a plan and programme of work within 12 months of implementation of Outline Planning Permission.

LA2 Prevent planting or subdivision of Flying Field.

- LA3 Ensure retention and protection of retained trees within 20 metres of construction activities.
- LA4 Submit a long term landscape and ecological management plan including actions on a yearly, five and then fifty year cycle (within 6 months of implementation of Outline Planning Permission).
- LA5 Submit a schedule of retained trees, trees to be felled and an arboricultural impact assessment for the retained trees, as set out in BS5837 (within 6 months of implementation of Outline Planning Permission).

6. ECOLOGY

Aim

- 6.1 To provide a management regime that allows:
- *The enhancement of biodiversity across the Flying Field;*
 - *Protection and enhancement of the County Wildlife Site and Ecologically Important Landscape.*

Rationale for Objectives

Objectives – Ecology

- EO.1. Monitor the nature conservation interest of the grassland through regular vegetation and habitat surveys and adapt management regimes where practicable to maximise ecological interest.**
- EO.2. Manage the restoration of land where buildings/structures are removed to allow further colonisation from the County Wildlife Site and Ecologically Important Landscape.**
- EO.3. To restrict disturbance in sensitive locations to protect the habitat of ground-nesting birds and other species.**
- EO.4. To manage retained buildings and structures to facilitate continued use by protected species, particularly Great Crested Newts and Bats.**

- 6.2 The majority of the open land within the former Air Base has escaped agricultural improvement. This has resulted in significant areas of limestone grassland such that it is the largest expanse of such habitat in the District. This type of grassland and its associated flora and fauna are of considerable ecological interest. A large area at the eastern end of the former Airfield is species rich and has accordingly been designated a County Wildlife Site (CWS) (see Appendix 5). Beyond these areas the grassland within the former Airfield is largely ecologically neutral with low species diversity. However, land to the north and south of the CWS together with the grassland either side of the main runway is designated as an Ecologically Important Landscape with scope for ecological improvement.

Appendix 5 – County Wildlife Site and Area of Ecological Importance Plan

- 6.3 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) sets targets for the protection, restoration and management of limestone grassland. Within Oxfordshire, relevant objectives of the BAP are to halt the loss of existing areas of limestone grassland and to maintain and restore populations of key species associated with the habitat.
- 6.4 Extension of the species rich areas will be achieved through appropriate alterations to the current management regime to increase the biodiversity value of the site, to create and maintain wildlife links and incorporate features to encourage wildlife to return to the site. Any such changes must also be compatible with the operation of other uses on the site. The limestone grassland and other ecology will be monitored on annual basis by an independent ecologist [ACTIONS EA1, EA2].
- 6.5 A baseline ecological management regime has been prepared and this is attached as Appendix 6.

Appendix 6 –Management Regime Scope

- 6.6 To ensure that ground nesting birds are not disturbed, public access will need to be restricted and a sympathetic farming regime can be continued on these open areas. Consequently widespread access will not be allowed onto the Flying Field and the current agricultural management methods in the open areas will be continued (subject to annual monitoring recommendations as described above) [ACTIONS EA4, EA5].
- 6.7 In order to protect the large population of Great Crested Newts on site, the emergency water storage tanks and oils interception tanks will be maintained on site for their use [ACTION EA4].
- 6.8 The northern and southern bomb stores lie within the EIL designation either side of the CWS at the eastern end of the Airfield. The bomb stores are generally earthed over and covered with grass on three sides and otherwise set within grassland of importance for ground nesting birds. Within these areas are the highest populations of Great Crested Newts on site that occur within artificial water bodies. Any risk of disturbance critical to the nature conservation interest will be dealt with by suitable provisions within the lease arrangements relevant to these buildings and structures (where these incorporate open land) [ACTION EA4].

- 6.9 Similarly, a number of the buildings and structures across the site are host to bats and other protected species. These are to be managed in such a way as to avoid unnecessary disturbance [ACTIONS EA4, EA5].

Summary of Ecological Actions

- EA1 Monitor ecology and biodiversity by financing an annual visit and preparation of monitoring report for submission to the County ecologist and for consideration by the Board.
- EA2 Continue existing pasturing regime on Flying Field and extend where District and County Councils are satisfied that there is no ecological harm.
- EA3 Prepare ecological improvement plan to extend limestone grassland habitat outside County Wildlife Site.
- EA4 Prevent any potentially damaging non-agricultural use of open grassland.
- EA5 Control public access to extended areas of ecological interest.

7. PUBLIC ACCESS AND MOVEMENT WITHIN THE FLYING FIELD

Aim

- 7.1 To provide a management regime that allows:
- *Improved public access across the Air Base and to the facilities within the New Settlement;*
 - *Interpretation of the site's history and ecology;*
 - *Controlled access to the site's historic and cultural assets;*
 - *Safe access for occupants of buildings within the Flying Field.*

Rationale for Objectives

Objectives - Public Access and Movement within the Flying Field

- PO.1 To reinstate and maintain Portway and Aves Ditch as public rights of way through the former Flying Field.**
- PO.2 To allow interpretation of the site's history and ecology along public rights of way around the site.**
- PO.3 To fund improved footpath links between the site and the surrounding villages.**
- PO.4 To allow for approved tours with visits to selected areas on the Flying Field.**
- PO.5 To formulate an Access and Parking Strategy to control safe entrance and egress to the Flying Field.**

- 7.2 During development of the Air Base the ancient routes of Portway and Aves Ditch were severed and stopped up. The development proposals will allow for their reinstatement to connect to other existing rights of way outside the site. Since the line of both routes is no longer present within the Air Base, the route of these re-opened footpaths will need to take into account existing structures on the airfield. Moreover, both paths cross areas of grassland towards the eastern and western ends of the runway, including that area to the east designated as a County Wildlife Site. Consequently, whilst they will be maintained as public rights of way, an appropriate

means of security will be needed to prevent public and animal disturbance to the ecologically sensitive areas on the Flying Field [ACTION PA1]

- 7.3 Fencing is required to prevent potentially damaging trespass and the misuse of the runway, as well as for health and safety requirements of the commercial uses on the Flying Field; therefore wider public access onto the main Flying Field (except in respect of tours by interested parties) is not facilitated.
- 7.4 Where public rights of way cross or pass close to the site, there is the opportunity to enhance the interpretation of the site's history and ecology. A circular walking route will be provided around the Airfield (the Upper Heyford Trail), including information and interpretation boards highlighting relevant features of interest within the Airfield. Two new vantage points will be introduced to allow appreciation of the size and stature of the runway [ACTION PA2].
- 7.5 Additionally there are opportunities to link the New Settlement to adjoining settlements such as Ardley. The NOC will fund the creation of such links by means of a contribution or by the provision of professional services [ACTION PA6].

Appendix 7 – Improved Footpath Links and Public Access Plan

- 7.6 A Heritage Centre is to be established in Building 315, including a permanent exhibition of material from the Air Base. This facility will be linked with the Hardened Battle Command Centre and Hardened Telephone Exchange (SAMs) with dedicated access from Camp Road and associated car parking [ACTIONS PA3, PA4].
- 7.7 In addition to this visitor facility, limited demand for public tours of the Flying Field is likely to continue over the longer-term. Future management of the Flying Field will therefore allow for organised tours, (associated with the ticketing and entry system for the proposed Heritage Centre) compatible with the need to maintain the overall security for commercial uses on the site [ACTIONS PA3, PA4].
- 7.8 The Heritage Centre could also perform as a multi function education centre for the benefit of the new community and visiting users and it is envisaged that the facility would be capable of being used for lecture programmes and for school and higher education projects relating to the airfield. Further details of the Heritage Centre's proposed operation are set out in Appendix 8.

Appendix 8 – Heritage Centre's Proposed Operation

- 7.9 Appendix 9 of this Management Plan indicates a number of parking areas on the Flying Field which replicate facilities already in place when the Air Base was operational. A very limited amount of additional parking may be required alongside existing re-used buildings which would not exceed OCC parking standards, but typically up to 4 (no more than 3-4 marked spaces per building, utilising existing vehicle parking already in place as a remnant of their former military use).

APPENDIX 9 – PARKING AND CIRCULATORY VEHICLE MOVEMENT PLAN

- 7.10 In order to minimise the visual effect of parking, a parking and access strategy is to be put in place to identify suitable locations for parking adjacent to individual buildings which will respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and also ecological interests. Parking within the Flying Field is to be strictly controlled.
- 7.11 Access to the Flying Field will be through a security control as shown at Appendix 9. A one way circular route will provide access to all buildings with the only exit being through gated security control [ACTION PA5].

Summary of Public Access Actions

- PA1 Reinststate Aves Ditch and Portway footpath links together with appropriate means of security (within 18 months of implementation of Outline Planning Permission).
- PA2 Create circular footpath walk around the former Air Base with a minimum of 6 interpretation boards and 2 new vantage points (within 18 months of implementation of Outline Planning Permission).
- PA3 Refurbish and open Building 315 as Heritage Centre with optional vehicular tours of Flying Field at least two weekends per month (to be undertaken within 18 months of implementation of Outline Planning Permission).
- PA4 Building 315 to be open to the public as a Heritage Centre for a minimum of 5 years.
- PA5 Prepare and submit Access and Parking Strategy for Flying Field (within 9 months of implementation of Outline Planning permission).
- PA6 Provide a financial contribution of £xx for the formation and upgrading of footpath links in the vicinity of the Air Base.

8. DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 In order to ensure delivery of the objectives and actions outlined above, the freeholder will appoint a Management Company. This will primarily look after the open land and buildings on the Flying Field.

Management Company Role and Function

8.2 The purpose of the Management Company will be to control and manage those objectives outlined in this Management Plan which will not be subject to direct planning control and to ensure that all planning conditions relating to historic/cultural, ecological and public access issues on the Flying Field are appropriately discharged. The Management Company will also ensure compliance with all covenants in the Section 106 and that conditions in Leases are implemented.

8.3 The former Air Base is already subject to a strict regime of both built environment management and ecological management which keeps it from deteriorating, commensurate with its status as a Conservation Area. The delivery of the cultural heritage, landscape, ecological and public access arrangements will be achieved by modifying and formalizing these existing, successful, arrangements.

8.4 The Management Company will have the following functions:

- 10) To manage and control access to the whole of the Flying Field north of Camp Road including the operation of a single manned access point with the retention of a perimeter security fence;
- 11) To ensure the maintenance of the existing buildings and structures within the Flying Field in a consistent manner;
- 12) To ensure the maintenance of the open land on the Flying Field in a manner commensurate with ecological enhancement of the grassland;
- 13) To manage controlled public access onto the site by means of guided bus tours;
- 14) To maintain a safe means of access to all the buildings within the site utilizing the existing runways and roads within the Flying Field;
- 15) To undertake all landscape actions as approved by the local planning authority.
- 16) In the first instance to police all planning conditions, Section 106 requirements (as these apply to the Flying Field), and all conditions in Leases.

- 8.5 Occupation of buildings will ensure that maintenance will occur on a regular basis as part of the standard arrangements under a full repairing and insuring lease. All leases on the Flying Field will include requirements indicating that:-
- v. No external storage of materials will be permitted, except where expressly consented by the Planning Authority.
 - vi. No form of signage will be permitted, without landlord consent and without advertisement consent being granted. Full regard must be had to the requirements of the approved signage strategy for the Flying Field.
 - vii. No external lighting will be permitted, save for that which already exists or that which is consistent with the requirements of the approved lighting strategy for the Flying Field.
 - viii. No car parking will be permitted except in designated areas.
 - ix. No HGVs, lorries or trailers will be kept externally within the Flying Field for more than xx hours.
- 8.6 Occupation of buildings will be controlled through conditions imposed on any planning permission granted on the site. In addition, at the end of the tenancy, lease provisions will allow for the Management Company to review dilapidations and to ensure that the buildings are left in as good a condition as they were let at the commencement of the lease.
- 8.7 To facilitate this, the Management Company will be responsible for a programme of advertising and letting properties to appropriate companies. The outline planning application involves primarily low-key Class B8 uses within the Flying Field, the aim of which is to limit the level of activity, in particular the need for substantial numbers of HGV movements. In order to ensure that this objective is met, there will be a limit on the average number of HGV movements per building on the Flying Field to no more than an average of 4 HGV movements per day (measured on a monthly basis). These movements will be monitored by checks through the security point. All HGVs will be subject to an off site Routeing Agreement (as currently exists) with the County Highway Authority.
- 8.8 The Management Company will co-ordinate planning applications on behalf of potential tenants.
- 8.9 Any buildings identified to be in a poor state in the Buildings Survey in 2005 or in the impending update Survey (which are not already proposed for demolition) to be

retained will be put in a weatherproof condition within two years of implementing the outline planning permission for the New Settlement Area.

- 8.10 In order to prevent deterioration in the structure of the retained buildings, all occupied buildings on the Flying Field will be subject to a quinquennial inspection both internally and externally by a suitably qualified Surveyor. The inspection will take as its baseline position the building's condition as established in the 2005 Building Survey (or in the impending update survey). Representatives from English Heritage (or their nominees) will be given four weeks notice of all inspections and invited to attend. A schedule of all relevant repairs will be issued and copies circulated to the Management Company and the Liaison Group following each inspection (see below). In addition, the Management Company will undertake more regular checks of the properties and will identify any significant issues and will notify tenants of failure to observe any stipulations in the lease or breaches of planning conditions. In the event that tenants make unauthorized changes to the structures these will also be identified so that such changes are either re-instated or formally approved.
- 8.11 All unoccupied buildings will also be subject to an inspection on the same basis starting from the first year from when outline planning permission is implemented. The Management Company will be responsible for distributing copies of the '*Schedule of Repairs*' to all lessees within four weeks of completion and will notify the Liaison Group and the District Council when such repairs are completed (see below). In respect of all Schedules of repairs on unoccupied buildings, the Management Company will be responsible for drawing up a programme of works to be discussed and approved with the District Council within six months.
- 8.12 In addition to the main structures, the Management Company will be responsible for the runway, taxiways and roadways within the Flying Field, except where these are specifically leased to individual tenants and subject to full repairing and insuring requirements. The Company will be responsible for the maintenance of the runways, taxiways and other structures within the Airfield, together with the open grassed areas between. These grassed areas will remain open and will not be subdivided by tree and hedge planting, or new man made structures so as to retain the openness of the Cold War Airfield, save for those means of enclosure included within the outline planning application. The grassland areas are already maintained by means of Farm Business Tenancies with local farmers and it is expected that this modus operandi will continue. Whilst this is likely to continue to involve the pasturing of stock on a

rotational basis, the Liaison Group may recommend changes to the agricultural regime on the basis of best ecological practice appropriate to the site, specifically with a view to improving biodiversity.

- 8.13 In addition to securing rents from occupants of the Flying Field, the Management Company will also levy a service charge on all commercial tenants which will provide for the maintenance of the open areas, security and access arrangements. The Management Company will also be responsible for ensuring that various covenants in leases i.e. preventing external storage, controlling signage etc are properly complied with (see above).
- 8.14 The District Council has reserve powers to undertake works to protect Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and to recharge freeholders the costs, under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 2004, as a last resort. A separate fund of £300,000 will be provided by NOC and held in an escrow account to provide against any failure of the Management Company to fulfil its obligations. These funds will be available for essential repairs and maintenance in the event of default by the Management Company. If the freeholders can demonstrate over the period to 2018 that self-financing arrangements through the service charge are acceptable, and no substantive call has been made on the escrow account within this period, then this sum can be recovered by the NOC/freeholder at that time.
- 8.15 NOC will set up the Management Company with responsibilities for the overall maintenance of the Flying Field together with residual retained interests within the New Settlement Area. This includes the proposed Heritage Centre and associated buildings (the two Scheduled Ancient Monuments).

Management Company Structure

- 8.16 The Management Company will comprise a Board appointed by the freeholders with powers to subcontract the collection of rents and service charges, security aspects of the Base, and other day-to-day operational issues.
- 8.17 The Management Company will meet on a quarterly basis and receive representations from a Liaison Group. The Liaison Group will include representatives from:
- x. The freeholders (up to 3 persons)
 - xi. The management agents and other subcontractors (2 persons)

- xii. English Heritage (1 person)
 - xiii. County Wildlife Sites Officer (1 person)
 - xiv. A representative from Upper Heyford Parish, Cherwell District and/or Oxfordshire County Council representatives (1 from each).
- 8.18 The Liaison Group will meet four times a year (prior to the Management Company Board) with minutes to be submitted to the Management Company. The Liaison Group will have the ability to recommend projects for inclusion in the annual Business Plan, although the Management Company will ultimately bear responsibility for its inclusion and implementation within the Business Plan. The Management Company will provide in the Business Plan for a cost for the running of the Liaison Group including a budget for specific expenditure up to a total of **£xx**. Expenditure in excess of this will require specific approval from the Management Company and/or will need to be incorporated within the Business Plan.
- 8.19 The Liaison Group will also monitor the grazing arrangements and promote amendments to this regime (including proposals for improved biodiversity) through their normal reporting arrangements to the Management Company. In agreeing to an appropriate management regime for the area of the site covered by the County Wildlife designation, the Management Company will seek professional ecological advice and follow an appropriate agricultural regime for maximum biodiversity.
- 8.20 The Management Company will, *inter alia*, be initially responsible for ensuring that all the planning obligations and conditions are met but ultimately the statutory responsibility for monitoring/policing these lies within the local planning authority. As the scheme involves a number of aspects, NOC propose funding a quarterly visit to the Air Base by an appropriate District Council officer or representative.

9. SUMMARY

9.1 Arising from this Management Plan, NOC covenants with the Council to undertake the following tasks:-

- 17) To retain all the identified structures within the Flying Field not subject to a Conservation Area Consent for demolition.
- 18) To appoint a Management Company to oversee the day-to-day running of the Flying Field and commercial area including collection of rents and service charges.
- 19) To ensure that all leases with occupants of buildings/structures on the Flying Field incorporate controls over:-
 - a) External storage of materials;
 - b) Car parking in accordance with a plan to be approved by the Local Planning Authority;
 - c) The use of all new external lighting;
 - d) The introduction of any signage;
 - e) The location of waste storage bins;
 - f) Access and parking of Heavy Goods Vehicles;
 - g) Restrict recreational use of the grassland on site.
- 20) To collect service charges from all tenants to maintain the retained buildings and structures.
- 21) To introduce a system of defined footpaths and cycleways across and around the Base and to support the County Council's efforts to restore former links to adjoining villages.
- 22) To introduce a Heritage Centre adjacent to the Flying Field to be open to members of the public, together with controlled access for organised tours within the Flying Field and information boards at key points on the surrounding footpaths.
- 23) To introduce security measures to control all access onto the Flying Field and to monitor HGV movements to individual buildings on the Flying Field.
- 24) To set up a Liaison Group with an annual budget of £xx to report to the Management Company with recommendations on the protection of retained buildings and ecological enhancement; the Group shall meet quarterly and have representatives from the freeholders, managing agents, English Heritage, wildlife organisations and from the Parish, District, and County Councils.
- 25) To undertake quinquennial reviews of the fabric of the buildings and structures within the Flying Field.

- 26) To continue an agricultural regime within the grassed areas of the Flying Field which encourages greater biodiversity.
- 27) To establish a landscape management regime which seeks to retain the openness of the plateau and to accord with landscape character guidance for the area.
- 28) To deposit a sum of £300,000 in an escrow account to be drawn down only in the event that the Management Company defaults on its obligations to undertake repair of the retained buildings within the Flying Field and the management of the ecologically important parts of the same area.
- 29) To fund a quarterly visit by a District Council officer (or representative) to monitor compliance with planning conditions and the requirements of this Base Management Plan.
- 30) To commit to the retention of the Flying Field and the Heritage Centre in a single freeholder ownership.

A P P E N D I X O N E

P R I N C I P A L H E R I T A G E F E A T U R E S P L A N

APPENDIX TWO
SPATIAL CONTEXT PLAN

APPENDIX THREE

BUILDING STATUS (RETAINED AND DEMOLISHED) PLAN & TABLE

APPENDIX FOUR
CHANGE OF USE PLAN

APPENDIX FIVE

**COUNTY WILDLIFE SITE & AREA OF ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE
PLAN**

APPENDIX SIX
MANAGEMENT REGIME SCOPE

A P P E N D I X S E V E N

I M P R O V E D F O O T P A T H L I N K S A N D P U B L I C A C C E S S P L A N

APPENDIX EIGHT
HERITAGE CENTRE'S PROPOSED OPERATION

A P P E N D I X N I N E

PARKING AND CIRCULATORY VEHICLE MOVMENT PLAN