

## 4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

**4.1.1** This chapter of the Environmental Statement assesses the planning policy background against which the proposed development is to be assessed. The scope of this chapter is to identify the relationship between the proposed development and the relevant policy statements contained within National Planning Policy Guidance and Statements, Regional Planning Guidance for the South East, the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and the Cherwell Local Plan. Full regard is also had to emerging spatial strategies and local development documents such as the draft Development Brief.

**4.1.2** The Government's approach to land use planning indicates that a key role of the planning system is to secure the provision of homes and buildings, investment and jobs in a way which is consistent with the principles of sustainable development. Therefore economic, environmental, social and other factors need to be taken into account when considering the nature and impact of a particular development proposal. This requires the construction of a policy framework which promotes consistent, predictable and prompt decision-making. Development plans seek to provide such an element of certainty within the planning system. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that:

*"In circumstances where the development plan contains relevant policies, applications for development which are in accordance with the plan shall be allowed unless material considerations indicate otherwise".*

**4.1.3** The proposed development comprises the former RAF Air Base at Upper Heyford which represents a significant brownfield opportunity. The entire airfield was also designated as a Conservation Area in April 2006.

**4.1.4** The relationship of the overall development to both current and emerging policy and guidance is addressed in the following sections.

### 4.2 UK GOVERNMENT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: SECURING THE FUTURE

**4.2.1** The latest UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy 'Securing the Future' was published in March 2005. It replaced the previous UK Strategy for Sustainable Development published in 1999 and provides the national strategic policy framework for the achievement of sustainable development.

It emphasises the Government's commitment to sustainable development and builds on the 1999 strategy in the following ways:

- 4.2.2** A new integrated vision, with stronger environmental and societal dimensions;
- Five principles – with a more explicit focus on environmental limits;
  - Four agreed priorities – sustainable consumption and production, climate change, natural resource protection and sustainable communities, and
  - A new indicator set, which is more outcome focussed, with commitments to look at new indicators such as wellbeing.

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**Heyford Park Environmental Statement**

- 4.2.3** The strategy acknowledges that the planning system is the key to achieving the Government's objectives for sustainable development. It makes it clear that sustainable development is at the heart of the planning system:
- Planning policies for housing ensure that brownfield land is developed first for new housing, and that new housing is built at higher densities than previously, reducing the need for development on Greenfield sites;
  - Other national policies ensure that new developments are located in areas such as town centres which are accessible by means of walking, cycling and public transport, thus reducing the reliance on the private car;
  - Policies for the natural and historic environment ensure the conservation and re-use of buildings and the protection of wildlife resources;
  - Policies for rural areas ensure that there are strict controls on development in the open countryside and that our finest countryside and landscapes are protected for everyone.
- 4.2.4** With regard to the need for housing, the Sustainable Development Strategy states that a decent, affordable home is a key requirement of a sustainable community. The Government states it aims to meet this basic need, but that it is done so in a way which respects the principles of sustainable development, creating homes in communities with the infrastructure, jobs and services needed to support them and being sensitive to the needs of the environment. The Sustainable Development Strategy acknowledges the challenge that since the 1960s the country has failed to build enough homes to meet these needs, which has meant that a decent home has become unaffordable for many people.
- 4.2.5** The Government's response to the challenge to build more housing is set out in its five year plan, 'Sustainable Communities: Homes for All' (2005). The Government states it is working to increase the supply of housing in a responsible way by:
- Making best of use of land, by increasing the proportion of housing built on brownfield land, and by raising the densities of new development;
  - Proper management of flood risk;
  - Investing in infrastructure, to ensure long term viable communities;
  - Promoting high standards of construction and design.
- 4.2.6** The proposals for Heyford Park are consistent with this revised UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy as they comprise mixed use development on previously developed land, the provision of a high quality environment as well as significant areas of open and green spaces, in addition to smaller play spaces of varying types. A mixture of low, medium and high density housing including a proportion of affordable housing will contribute to meeting the needs of the wider community. This will be achieved through the delivery of a mixed-use scheme including employment and local facilities that will help to reduce the need to travel. Therefore the proposed development meets the broad objectives of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy. Furthermore it is worth noting that this Strategy is the basis upon which national, regional and local planning policies are prepared.
- 4.2.7** In addition the Government's sustainability agenda has evolved with the publication of the Code for Sustainable Homes in December 2006. The proposed development, by proposing the demolition of existing residential properties of relatively poor sustainable construction will allow for a significant improvement in their design

and thermal efficiency. This is detailed in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and information contained within the Sustainability Statement.

### **4.3 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE**

#### **General**

- 4.3.1** National Planning Policy is laid out in a number of notes either as Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) or more recently Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). These documents outline the Government's policies on the many different aspects of planning. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are required to take their content into account when preparing development plans and, when making decisions on planning applications or appeals, these guidance notes are material considerations.
- 4.3.2** National policy guidance which is particularly relevant to the proposed development are contained in the following guidance notes:
- a) PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)
  - b) PPS3 – Housing (November 2006)
  - c) PPG13 – Transport (September 2001)
  - d) PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment (September 2001)
  - e) PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (July 2002)
- 4.3.3** Other PPG and PPS guidance in respect of the PPG16 (Archaeology), PPS23 (Pollution), PPG24 (Noise) and PPS25 (Flood Risk) are addressed in more detail within the relevant chapters of the ES.

#### **Planning Policy Statement 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development**

- 4.3.4** Planning Policy Statement 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (PPS1) sets out the Government's overarching policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. It replaces Planning Policy Guidance note 1.
- 4.3.5** PPS1 reaffirms the Government's commitment to sustainable development and the creation of sustainable communities. It emphasises the critical role of planning in delivering the Government's wider macroeconomic, social and environmental objectives. It states that the system must be positive and proactive in facilitating sustainable patterns of development, operating in the public interest through a system of plan preparation and control over the development and use of land.

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**Heyford Park Environmental Statement**

- 4.3.6** The planning system should ensure that suitable land is made available for development, which can contribute to economic growth whilst protecting and, where possible, enhancing that natural and historic environment. Development should be of a high quality, and should support safe, sustainable, living communities with good access to jobs and key services (paragraph 5).
- 4.3.7** When planning for sustainable development, Local Planning Authorities are advised to have regard to promoting development that creates socially inclusive communities, including suitable mixes of housing. PPSI supports the objectives of PPS3 in seeking to ensure that everybody has the opportunity of a decent home.
- 4.3.8** The aim of PPSI is to deliver “community cohesion in urban and rural areas, meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal well-being, social cohesion and inclusion and creating equal opportunities for all citizens” (paragraph 14). This is to be achieved by protecting and enhancing the environment prudently using natural resources, sustainable economic development and integrating sustainable development into development plans.
- 4.3.9** Local development documents are to be prepared in place of Development Plans. They should take forward elements of the community strategy that relate to the physical development and use of land in their area. The guidance gives greater emphasis to social inclusion. In particular, planning policies must address accessibility for all to jobs, health, housing, education, shops, and leisure and community facilities.
- 4.3.10** Equally, PPSI states that the planning system should assist in protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environment and ensure that prudent use is made of resources including making most efficient use of land and reducing the need to travel.
- 4.3.11** Paragraph 33 of PPSI states that good design is indivisible from good planning. Design which is inappropriate or fails to take the opportunity of improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions should not be accepted. Design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription and should “concentrate on guiding overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape layout and access of new development” (paragraph 38). Planning authorities should prepare robust policies on design and access and development plans should also contain clear and comprehensive inclusive access policies.
- 4.3.12** Paragraph 40 refers to community involvement and states that it is “vitaly important to planning and the achievement of sustainable development”. A principle of sustainable development is “to involve the community in developing the vision for its area... [they] should be asked to offer ideas about what that vision should be and how it can be achieved [and] should be given the opportunity to participate fully in the process for drawing up specific plans or policies and to be consulted on proposals for development. An inclusive approach should be taken ...planning authorities should build a clear understanding of the make-up, interests and needs of [their] communities...”.
- 4.3.13** The proposed development meets all these objectives by delivering a high quality, sustainable community, protecting and enhancing the environment and reducing the need to travel. Likewise there has been extensive consultation and comments from stakeholders in the drawing up of the proposals.

### **Planning Policy Statement 3 - Housing**

- 4.3.14** The latest advice on the national planning policy framework for delivering the Government's housing objectives is set out in PPS3, issued in November 2006, superseding PPG 3. It incorporates the Government's response to the Barker Review of Housing Supply of 2004, and states in paragraph 2 that this revised PPS is necessary to underpin the necessary step-change to housing delivery through a new, more responsive approach to land supply at the local level.
- 4.3.15** Paragraph 9 affirms the Government's key housing goal as being, "to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live". Amongst the mechanisms highlighted, an increase in the supply of housing is being sought to improve affordability across the housing market. The creation of sustainable, inclusive co-mixed communities is also to be sought in all areas, both rural and urban.
- 4.3.16** In order to achieve these outcomes, paragraph 11 sets out a number of principles. The first of these which informs the others is one of sustainable development, and that housing policies should help to develop sustainable development objectives, in particular seeking to minimise environmental impacts, taking account of climate change and flood risk.
- 4.3.17** Good design is regarded as fundamental to the development of high quality new housing. Design must be appropriate to its context. Paragraph 16 sets out a list of design matters which are either addressed in the Design and Access Statement which accompanies the planning application for the proposed development, or which are more appropriately dealt with at a future detailed Design Codes and Reserved Matters stage.
- 4.3.18** Achieving a variety and mix of housing is also held to be important. Paragraph 23 states that developers should bring forward proposals which reflect demand and profile of households requiring market housing, in order to sustain mixed communities. In planning at site specific level, LPAs should ensure that the proposed mix of housing on large strategic sites reflect the proportions of households that require market or affordable housing and achieves a mix of households as well as a mix of tenure and price.
- 4.3.19** One of the Government's key objectives is to provide a variety of high quality market housing, including addressing any shortfalls in the supply of market housing and the need to deliver low-cost market housing as part of the housing mix as set out in paragraph 24.
- 4.3.20** The Government is also committed to providing high quality housing for people who are unable to access or afford market housing, and defines affordable housing as including social-rented and intermediate housing. Affordable housing is normally to be provided on the application site so that it contributes towards creating a mix of housing.
- 4.3.21** With regard to identifying suitable locations for housing development, paragraph 36 indicates that in support of its objective of creating mixed and sustainable communities, the Government's policy is to ensure that housing is developed in sustainable locations which offer a range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure. Priority should be given to the development of previously developed

## Heyford Park Environmental Statement

land, although all suitable locations should make effective use of land, existing infrastructure and available public and private investment.

**4.3.22** Paragraph 37 sets out the Regional Spatial Strategy policy requirements to identify broad strategic locations for new housing developments, taking into account evidence of existing and future need for housing, focussing development in locations with good public transport accessibility so as to cut carbon emissions, and where energy supply can reliably be drawn from decentralised energy supply systems. The availability, capacity, and accessibility to major infrastructure and the feasibility of delivering the required level of new infrastructure to support the proposed distribution of development are other considerations to take into account.

It is also noted that where need and demand are high, a variety of options should be considered including major urban extensions and where necessary to review any policy constraints.

**4.3.23** Paragraph 38 sets out the Local Development Documents policy requirements. The criteria largely reflect those already established for RSSs as described above, although in addition physical, environmental, land ownership, land-use, investments constraints/risks should also be taken into account.

Density considerations are addressed at paragraphs 45-51. A minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare is advocated as a national indicative minimum standard until such time as local density policies are in place.

**4.3.24** With regard to the delivery of a flexible land supply, paragraph 53 notes that where RSSs are in development (as in Oxfordshire and the South East) LPAs should have regard to the level of housing provision as proposed in the emerging RSS, whilst paragraph 60 confirms that there should be a “continuous five year supply of deliverable sites available for housing”. It is noted that the Heyford Park site is included within CDC’s Housing Delivery Monitor (published at CDC Executive Committee, February 2007) with projected completions over the period 2007/8 to 2011/12.

**4.3.25** In connection with the determination of planning applications, paragraph 60 states that when making decisions on housing developments after 1st April 2007, LPAs should have regard to the policies in PPS3 as material considerations which may supersede the policies in existing ‘adopted’ Development Plans.

In deciding planning applications, LPAs should have regard to achieving high quality housing, ensuring a good mix of housing, the suitability of the site for housing, including its environmental sustainability and using land efficiently and effectively, and reflects the need for housing and the spatial vision for the area and does not undermine wider policy objectives.

**4.3.26** Paragraph 71 states that, amongst other things, where LDDs have not been reviewed to take into account policies in this PPS, or where there is less than 5 years supply of deliverable sites, LPAs should consider favourably planning applications for housing.

**4.3.27** LPAs should not refuse applications solely on the grounds of prematurity, as stated in paragraph 72.

The proposed development is consistent with the policy and guidance as set out within PPS3. It is consistent with the principles of providing a variety of high quality housing for both the general market and affordable

tenures. Heyford Park will involve the development of previously developed land at an appropriate density to ensure the effective use of the site, whilst taking into account the environmental and conservation opportunities and constraints together with achieving sustainability objectives.

### **Planning Policy Statement 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas**

- 4.3.28** Published in 2004, PPS 7 sets out the Government's planning policies for rural areas, including country towns and villages and the wider, largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of larger urban areas. It replaces Planning Policy Guidance Note 7, 'The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development' published in February 1997.
- 4.3.29** In relation to sustainable development in rural areas, PPS 7 identifies four objectives relating to planning, development and rural communities:
- To raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas;
  - To promote more sustainable patterns of development;
  - To promote the development of the English regions by improving their economic performance so that all are able to reach their full potential; and,
  - To promote sustainable, diverse and adaptable agriculture sectors.
- 4.3.30** The overarching key principle of PPS7 is that development proposals should be based on the principles of sustainable development (as enshrined within PPS1).
- 4.3.31** Paragraph 2 affirms this by requiring Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and Local Development Documents (LDDs) to facilitate and promote sustainable patterns of development and sustainable communities in rural areas. These documents should include policies to sustain, enhance and, where appropriate, revitalise country towns and villages (including through the provision of affordable housing) and for strong, diverse, economic activity, whilst maintaining local character and a high quality environment.
- 4.3.32** Paragraph 4 makes it clear that to achieve the growth and sustain rural communities that local authorities should set out policies to allow for some limited development in, or next to, rural settlements that are not designated as local service centres, in order to meet local business and community needs and to maintain the vitality of these communities.
- 4.3.33** PPS 7 makes a clear link between rural economic development and employment. Paragraph 5, requires that Local Development Documents identify suitable sites for future development, particularly in rural areas where there is a demonstrable need for economic regeneration and development through the establishment of criteria for economic development in different locations and set out in LDDs their criteria for permitting economic development in different locations, including the future expansion of business premises, to facilitate healthy and diverse economic activity in rural areas.
- 4.3.34** Although this PPS predates the Barker Review of Housing Supply 2004, the aims and objectives of providing everyone with the opportunity to live in a decent home they can afford, in a community where they want to live, are apparent. Paragraph 8 makes it clear that rural housing need, particularly affordable housing need

## Heyford Park Environmental Statement

should be based on an up to date assessment of local need. While paragraph 9 seeks that local authorities, in planning for housing in their rural areas,

*“should apply the policies in PPG3. They should:*

*“(i) have particular regard to PPG3 guidance on the provision of housing in villages and should make sufficient land available, either within or adjoining existing villages, to meet the needs of local people; and*

*(ii) strictly control new house building (including single dwellings) in the countryside, away from established settlements or from areas allocated for housing in development plan”, (Paragraph 9).*

- 4.3.35** In this instance, Heyford Park is allocated in the development plan via the Oxfordshire Structure Plan as a new settlement and therefore accords with this policy. Although PPG3 has now been superseded, the principle remains that rural communities should have the opportunity for housing provision of both market and affordable housing which creates “mixed and sustainable communities”, in relation to paragraph 36 of PPS 3.
- 4.3.36** With regard to design and the character of rural areas, paragraph 12 recognises that “Many country towns and villages are of considerable historic and architectural value, or make an important contribution to local countryside character”. Therefore, it is important that planning authorities ensure that development respects and, where possible, enhances these particular qualities. Development should also contribute to a sense of local identity and regional diversity and be of an appropriate design and scale for its location. Furthermore, it is important that planning authorities take a positive approach to innovative high quality design. Given the Conservation Area status, the design of the proposed development is a significant consideration at Heyford Park and has been carefully respected in designing the form of the proposed development.
- 4.3.37** With regard to protection of the countryside PPS 7 recognises that whilst much of the land use activity in the countryside is outside the scope of the planning system, planning has an important role in supporting and facilitating development and land uses which enable those who earn a living from and help to maintain the countryside to continue to do so. It is important that development plan documents and the RSS should recognise the environmental, economic and social value of the countryside and seek to maintain and enhance these values, so enabling the countryside to remain an important natural resource, which contributes to the social and economic wealth of the nation.
- 4.3.38** Furthermore, Paragraph 15 makes a requirement that planning policies should provide a positive framework for facilitating sustainable development in the countryside and that planning authorities should continue to ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced. They should have particular regard to any areas that have been statutorily designated for their landscape, wildlife or historic qualities where greater priority should be given to restraint of potentially damaging development.
- 4.3.39** Paragraph 16 reaffirms this asking that when preparing policies for LDDs and determining planning applications for development in the countryside, local planning authorities should:

- *“support development that delivers diverse and sustainable farming enterprises;*



- support other countryside-based enterprises and activities which contribute to rural economies, and/or promote recreation in and the enjoyment of the countryside;
- take account of the need to protect natural resources;
- provide for the sensitive exploitation of renewable energy sources in accordance with the policies set out in PPS22; and
- conserve specific features and sites of landscape, wildlife and historic or architectural value, in accordance with statutory designations.” (paragraph 16).

**4.3.40** Paragraph 17 outlines the support which Government affords to the re-use of buildings in the countryside, particularly where this would meet sustainable development objectives, with economic uses preferable, but the PPS recognises that residential use may be more appropriate in certain scenarios. “Planning authorities should therefore set out in LDDs their policy criteria for permitting the conversion and re-use of buildings in the countryside for economic, residential and any other purposes, including mixed uses,” (paragraph 17). These criteria should take account of:

- the potential impact on the countryside and landscapes and wildlife;
- specific local economic and social needs and opportunities;
- settlement patterns and accessibility to service centres, markets and housing;
- the suitability of different types of buildings, and of different scales, for re-use;
- the need to preserve, or the desirability of preserving, buildings of historic or architectural importance or interest, or which otherwise contribute to local character.

**4.3.41** With further reference to PPS 1 and 3, PPS 7 makes a requirement that local planning authorities should be particularly supportive of the re-use of existing buildings that are adjacent or closely related to country towns and villages, for economic or community uses, or to provide housing, subject to the policies in paragraph 7 of this PPS in relation to the retention of local services. A careful balance has been struck in the form of the proposed development with the creation of a new settlement and the appropriate re-use of certain buildings and structures already present on the site which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.

### **Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 - Transport**

**4.3.42** It is highlighted at Paragraph 3 that land use planning has a key role to play in delivering the Government’s integrated transport strategy. It states that:

*“By shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses, planning can help to reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys and make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities, and services by public transport, walking and cycling.”*

**4.3.43** The key objectives of PPG13, as set out at paragraph 4, are to integrate planning and transportation at the national, regional and local level in order to:

- Promote more sustainable transport choices;
- Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling, and;
- Reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

## Heyford Park Environmental Statement

- 4.3.44** The guidance sets out a number of principles and states that these are to be taken into consideration when preparing development plans, or when determining planning applications. These include:
- Accommodating housing principally within existing urban areas, planning for increased intensity of development for both housing and other uses at locations which are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;
  - Ensuring that development, comprising jobs, shopping, leisure and services, offers a realistic choice of access by public transport, walking and cycling, recognising that this may be less achievable in some rural areas;
  - Giving priority to people over ease of traffic movement, and planning to provide more road space for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport in town centres, local neighbourhoods and other areas with a mixture of land uses.
- 4.3.45** Advice specific to housing development (paragraphs 12-17) has been cancelled with the issue of PPS3 in November 2006.
- 4.3.46** When considering the accessibility of future residents of Heyford Park to shops and other facilities proposed on site, regard should be had to encouraging walking and cycling. The guidance (at paragraphs 75 and 78) states that walking is the most important mode of travel at the local level, offering the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2km. In terms of cycling, it is stated that this also has the potential to aid the reduction in short car trips, particularly those under 5km and to form part of a longer journey utilising public transport. The development proposals take account of this guidance by incorporating locally accessible facilities and amenities.
- 4.3.47** To assist in managing travel demand, paragraph 49 of PPG13 seeks to reduce the amount of parking in new development as part of a package of planning and transport measures aiming to promote sustainable travel choices. It is also acknowledged that car parking takes up a large amount of space in development and reduces residential densities. In addition to reducing the amount of parking, PPG13 advocates increasing the amount of good quality cycle parking to encourage more cycle use. Furthermore, around the local centres, community and recreation areas, secure cycle parking is to be provided.
- 4.3.48** The general principles of PPG13 are incorporated into the planning application. Prospective residents of the development, and indeed those in the neighbouring residential areas, will have access to the proposed employment, shops, community facilities, the extensive countryside area and to public transport to access wider services and facilities. The scale of development and the proposed mix of uses on the site itself offer opportunities for a more self-sustaining community.

### **PPG15 - Historic and Built Environment**

- 4.3.49** PPG 15, published in 1994, provides a statement of Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment. It was issued jointly by the Secretary of State for the Environment (as was) and the Secretary of State for National Heritage. PPG 15 recognises and develops the position that there should be effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment and that the physical survivals of our past should be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of national identity. It comments that the historic

environment adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness.

- 4.3.50** In relation to the role that conservation plays within promoting economic prosperity, the guidance states that conservation plays an important role by, “ensuring that an area offers attractive living and working conditions which will encourage inward investment - environmental quality is playing an increasingly key factor in many commercial decisions” (paragraph 1.5).
- 4.3.51** The guidance urges local authorities to maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment, and to reflect it in their policies, development plan and their allocation of resources. However, it also recognises that stewardship is shared by everyone - by central and local government, but also by business voluntary bodies, churches, and by individual citizens as owners and users of historic environments. To achieve effective preservation of these important environments there must be broad public support and understanding, and it is a key element of Government policy for conservation that there should be adequate processes of consultation and education to facilitate this.
- 4.3.52** Paragraph 2.18 recognises that new uses may often be the key to a building's or area's preservation, and controls over land use, density, plot ratio, day lighting and other planning matters should be exercised sympathetically where this would enable a historic building or area to be given a new lease of life, stating that:  
*“The Secretary of State is not generally in favour of tightening development controls over changes of use as a specific instrument of conservation policy. He considers that, in general, the same provisions on change of use should apply to historic buildings as to all others. Patterns of economic activity inevitably change over time, and it would be unrealistic to seek to prevent such change by the use of planning controls,” (Paragraph, 2.18).*
- 4.3.53** Section 4 of the Guidance makes specific comment on Conservation Areas, and sets out the statutory context. With Section 69 of the Act imposing a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Conservation Area designation is the main instrument available to authorities to give effect to conservation policies for a particular neighbourhood or area. “Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest” (paragraph 4.1).
- 4.3.54** The more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded; the sounder will be the basis for local development plan policies, as well as the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of an area. This advice has been carefully respected in the Heyford Park development, which proposes some demolition of buildings and structures within the Conservation Area whilst seeking appropriate after use for the more significant retained structures.
- 4.3.55** Paragraph 4.9 makes recognition that Section 71 of the Act places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. It is important that designation is not seen as an end in itself and Local Authorities will almost always need to develop policy

## Heyford Park Environmental Statement

which clearly identifies the defining characteristics and key aesthetic appearance of the area which should be preserved or enhanced, and set out the means by which that objective is to be pursued. These principles are reflected in the submitted Conservation Area Management Plan which accompanies the planning application.

**4.3.56** Paragraph 4.14 refers to Section 72 of the Act, whereby local authorities are required to pay special attention to the exercising of planning functions within conservation areas, with particular regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. The desirability of preserving or enhancing the area should, in the Secretary of State's view, also be a material consideration in the planning authority's handling of development proposals which are outside the conservation area but would affect its setting, or views into or out of the area.

**4.3.57** It is important that a conservation area designation does not prevent new development; PPG 15 affirms this stating that the emphasis will generally need to be on a 'controlled and positive management of change'.

*"Policies will need to be designed to allow the area to remain alive and prosperous, and to avoid unnecessarily detailed controls over businesses and householders, but at the same time to ensure that any new development accords with the area's special architectural and historic interest," (Paragraph 4.16).*

**4.3.58** Furthermore, paragraph 4.17 recognises the detrimental impact arising from gap sites, or buildings that make no positive contribution to a conservation area. Their replacement should be a stimulus to imaginative, high quality design, and seen as an opportunity to enhance the area. What is important is not that new buildings should directly imitate earlier styles, but that they should be designed with respect for their context, as part of a larger whole which has a well-established character and appearance and aesthetic of its own. The design process for the proposed development is explained in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

### **Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 - Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

**4.3.59** PPG17 recognises the importance of open spaces, sport and recreation in underpinning people's quality of life. Planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are therefore fundamental to delivering the broader Government objectives set out at the start of the guidance, which include:

- Supporting an urban renaissance;
- Supporting a rural renewal;
- Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion;
- Health and well being; and
- Promoting more sustainable development.

**4.3.60** The proposed development will provide areas of formal and informal open space. In addition, a number of local play areas will be provided in the built up residential areas to support both the objectives of PPG17 and the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) guidelines.

**4.3.61** Paragraph 23 of PPG17 seeks to ensure that adequate provision is made for local sport and recreational facilities (either through an increase in the number of, or improvement to, existing facilities) where planning permission is granted for new housing development. The Heyford Park development makes provision for appropriate informal and recreation open space within the new settlement area.

### **Additional National Policy Guidance**

With regard to further PPG and PPS advice, including PPG16 concerning Archaeology, PPS23 concerning pollution, PPG24 on Noise and PPS25 on Flooding, these are described and assessed in the appropriate technical chapters within in this ES.

## **4.4 REGIONAL POLICY**

### **Regional Planning Guidance for the South East – RPG 9 (March 2001)**

- 4.4.1** Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG 9) is provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and was published in March 2001.
- 4.4.2** With the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act which came into force in September 2004, the RPG is now a statutory part of the development plan framework. It provides a strategic policy framework for the period up to 2011. The primary purpose of this guidance is to provide a regional framework for the preparation of local development plans.
- 4.4.3** The RPG states that it has three main aims:
- To provide a regional spatial strategy within which Local Authority Development Plans and Local Transport Plans in the South East should be prepared;
  - To set out a broad development strategy for the period to 2011 and beyond; and
  - To provide the spatial framework for other strategies and programmes.
- 4.4.4** RPG 9 sets out the following vision of;
- “Encouraging economic success throughout the Region, ensuring a higher quality of environment with management of natural resources, opportunity and equity for the Region’s population, and a more sustainable pattern of development, ” (Paragraph 3.1).*
- 4.4.5** A number of principles for future development support the aims and vision governing development; amongst them are the following principles:
- Greenfield development (namely, on previously undeveloped land) should normally take place only after other alternatives have been considered, and should have regard to the full social, environmental and transport costs of location;
  - Economic opportunities should be increased by raising skills levels and reducing the disparities between different parts of the Region. In particular, by positive investment strategies for the Thames Gateway and Priority Areas for Economic Regeneration to improve the performance of poorer parts of the Region and by managing the localised impacts of development in economically buoyant areas;
  - Sufficient housing, and in particular affordable housing, should be provided for all who need to live and work in the Region, to encourage social inclusion and avoid pressure for housing in adjoining regions;
  - The development of housing should be more sustainable, providing a better mix of sizes, types and tenures, having regard to the structure of households and people’s ability to access homes and jobs;
  - Development should be located and designed to enable more sustainable use of the Region’s natural resources, in the supply of food, water, energy, minerals and timber, in the effective management of waste, the promotion of renewable energy sources and to assist in reducing pollution of air, land and water;

## Heyford Park Environmental Statement

- There should be continued protection and enhancement of the Region's biodiversity, internationally and nationally important nature conservation areas, and enhancement of its landscape and built and historic heritage;
- The life of the countryside and rural communities should be sustained through economic diversification which respects the character of different parts;
- Access to jobs, services, leisure and cultural facilities should be less dependent on longer distance movement and there should be increased ability to meet normal travel needs through safe walking, cycling and public transport with reduced reliance on the car; and
- Transport investment should support the spatial strategy, maintaining the existing network, enhancing access as part of more concentrated forms of development, overcoming bottlenecks and supporting higher capacity and less polluting modes of transport.

- 4.4.6** The proposed development at Heyford Park addresses these principles. The site comprises previously developed land and the proposals will deliver an integrated development through a range of housing types, in close proximity to places of employment, which in turn will aid economic development, regeneration and diversification within the sub-region, all in a manner which will not overly utilise natural resources. The wider redevelopment of the site provides an opportunity for mixed-use development including housing, employment, social and recreational uses in such a way that promotes the reduced use of private transport while encouraging public transport, walking and cycling.
- 4.4.7** Section 5 of RPG9 identifies the issues surrounding quality of life and rural development. Paragraph 5.13 views the promotion of the health and well-being of people in the South East as important to quality of life. The Government's White Paper Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation, recognises that health is affected by a range of factors including the provision of a safe, secure and sustainable environment, reducing pollution, adequate housing provision, access to leisure and recreation, reducing social exclusion and increasing employment opportunities.
- 4.4.8** In respect of education provision, the Government states it is committed to supporting life long learning. In The Learning Age: A Renaissance for A New Britain the Government emphasises the need to increase access for potential learners whether they are individuals or enterprises. With opportunity for learning to take place in many different types of location, whether at home, at work, in local libraries or shopping centres as well as colleges and universities. The RPG identifies that a creative approach is needed in identifying and providing facilities for education and training and this requires co-operation between local authorities and education providers.
- 4.4.9** It is important that rural communities must have access to services such as healthcare, education and also cultural facilities, in order to thrive and develop in a holistic manner. Paragraph 5.17 recognising that, "In view of the distances involved and the smaller population catchments, it is essential for regional partners to continue to develop innovative solutions to ensure the provision of community services and public transport in rural areas, "(paragraph 5.17). This is reinforced in Policy Q.6.
- 4.4.10** Paragraph 5.19 identifies that there are a variety of rural areas throughout the South East and recognises that "the assessment and delivery of rural policy requires a tailored and integrated approach that focuses on people as well as places, to help maintain and enhance the environment whilst encouraging the development".

**4.4.11** Paragraph 5.21 acknowledges that throughout the Region the countryside should fulfil a range of needs including recreation, farming, forestry, military uses and the local economy, while safeguarding landscape and biodiversity and that enhancement of the rural environment requires active countryside management as well as the maintenance of existing rural resources. To support this, Policy Q7 states:

*“A multi-purpose countryside should be secured and where necessary investment and renewal in rural areas should be encouraged. The quality and character of the rural environment should be maintained and enhanced, while securing necessary change to meet the economic and social needs of local people and visitors. Special consideration should be given to the economic and social needs of the Rural Priority Areas, (Paragraph 5.21).*”

**4.4.12** RPG 9 goes on to acknowledge that in sustaining local communities, it is essential for regional and local partners to continue also to develop innovative solutions to ensure the provision of community services and public transport in rural areas. With Paragraph 5.22 commenting that, local people must have access to services such as healthcare, schools and shops, as well as convenient transport, a range of job opportunities and quality housing in order to help rural areas thrive.

**4.4.13** It is crucial for the prosperity of the South East that there are effective measure which protect the environment and lead to prudent use of natural resources in a manner which recognises the predominantly urban nature of the region and the accompanying development pressure. The RPG encourages planning and development agencies to positively care for and aid the management of the Region’s environment. It is important to monitor environmental changes in particular climate change for potential detrimental impacts on species and habitats.

**4.4.14** In addition to international and national nature designations, paragraph 6.6 seeks the recognition of the ‘valuable role’ the wider countryside of the South East plays in providing areas of open space, both as natural habitat and for an increasing leisure use. The tranquillity, quality and variety of the Region’s countryside, including villages, country estates and a range of cultural attractions, provide a major leisure asset for both inhabitants and visitors. If managed appropriately, leisure and recreation can be developed as a complement to safeguarding and enhancing the natural environment. Policy E6 supports this, seeking to provide access to the countryside in a manner which ‘enhances and retains its character’. In particular, “recreational activities need to be directed to sustainable locations and in ways which respect the agricultural, biodiversity, landscape and heritage value of the countryside,” (policy E6).

**4.4.15** Policy H1 and H2 identify the level of housing development required between 2001 and 2006 to meet the demand in this period. The annual number of dwellings that are required to be provided in Oxfordshire is 2,430 dwellings per annum. The number of additional dwellings to be provided in the Rest of the South East (ROSE) is 39,000 dwellings per annum, excluding London. The RPG states that development plans should make provision for these annual average housing completion rates and the Oxfordshire Structure Plan is therefore required to make provision for this number of new homes within its administrative boundaries. The implications of this with regard to the proposed development at Heyford Park are discussed below but in

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**Heyford Park Environmental Statement**

summary this proposed development would contribute towards meeting Oxfordshire's existing and proposed proportion of this regional figure in an appropriate manner.

- 4.4.16** Policy H4 relates to affordable housing. From the results of local housing need assessment and also from feedback from employees, there is strong demand for affordable housing in the South East. It is important that the shortage of affordable housing in the rural areas should be addressed. RPG 9 sets a provisional indicator of 18,000 to 19,000 affordable homes a year in the ROSE area. With a recommendation by the RPG that this indicator should be reviewed in the light of the cumulative result of local need assessments, which inform the framework for Structure and Local Plan policy. The provision of appropriate levels of affordable housing is integrated into the proposed development.
- 4.4.17** Policy H5 relates to development of previously developed land and buildings. It supports the aims and objectives of PPS3 whereby a sequential approach to the identification of sites for housing should be adopted. This means that priority is to be given to the development of new housing on previously developed land before Greenfield sites are identified. This policy also states that Urban Capacity Studies should include appropriate targets for housing on previously developed land. With regard to the proposed development at Heyford Park, the site comprises Previously Developed Land, and as such accords with Policy H5, insofar that the preferred approach seeks a requirement of at least 60% of all new housing development on previously developed sites.
- 4.4.18** The transport policies for the region are set out in the Regional Transport Strategy, which was revised and issued separately July 2004. The RTS seeks to promote development for housing, employment and other uses that reduce the need to travel by private transport, while supporting growth in the existing transportation networks and encouraging safe movement by foot, cycle and public transport in a manner which supports regeneration and the economic use of land. The scheme as proposed aims to provide the residential proportion of a mixed-use development incorporating, educational, local retail and recreational facilities in an area that, while being a self contained mixed-use scheme, will also be incorporated well into the surrounding transport network of Central Oxfordshire. The design of the road layout encourages the use of forms of transport other than the private car as well as making the streets more pedestrian friendly. The transport implications of the proposed development are comprehensively examined as part of the ES within the Transport Assessment.
- 4.4.19** Paragraph 9.19 recognises that 20% of the population of the South East live in rural areas, and that in these areas above average levels of car ownership exist and the private vehicles will continue to be the primary focus of human mobility. However, it is important to provide a 'proportionate amount of public transport' and continue to improve travel choice.
- 4.4.20** Policy T3 specifically relates to the 'rural dimension', it requires Local Transport Plans which cover areas 'not wholly urban' to:
- take a co-ordinated approach to encouraging community based transport;



- look at methods to improve, rural traffic management and look for ways to improve non-car based modes of transport between smaller settlements; and
- develop innovate and adaptable approaches to public transport that reflect the particular social and economic needs of the region.

**4.4.21** Within RPG 9, Chapter 12 distinguishes between different parts of the Region for the purposes of identifying ‘Priority Areas for Economic Regeneration (PAER)’, Heyford Park lies within the Thames Valley, which forms part of the Western Policy Area. Paragraph 12.46 identifies that “In order to achieve sustainable development, further growth in this part of the Region needs to occur in a form which minimises the additional pressures on land and labour resources, particularly in ‘hotspots’ where positive action is required, ” (paragraph 12.46). Paragraph 12.49 identifies that this sub-region is characterised by concentrations of service sector employment, high tech, knowledge-based industries, with an increasing pressure on local infrastructure, land resources and house prices. This sub-region is one of the most prosperous areas in the UK and although transport systems are generally good, there are considerable pressures on the transport network and a need for improved public transport. The transport implications of the development are assessed in detail within the accompanying Transport Assessment and within chapter 6 of this Environmental Statement.

**Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East 2006 - 2026**

**4.4.22** The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is a plan which will take forward the current regional strategy contained in RPG 9 for the next 20 years to 2026. One of the features of the new plan will be to link overall development with basic infrastructure issues such as transport, and to that end the RSS will also contain a Regional Transport Strategy.

**4.4.23** In 2004, the South East Regional Assembly (SWRA) was given the role of Regional Planning Body by Central Government, and as such is responsible for developing the statutory RSS. A draft plan was duly prepared by the Regional Assembly and submitted to Government in March 2006, with a period of statutory consultation then taking place until June of the same year. The RSS has begun its Examination in Public, with the Oxford sub-region being discussed between the end of February 2007 and the beginning of March 2007.

**4.4.24** In the development of the draft RSS, consultation options and scenarios were discussed relating to the preferred growth options for the region. Two basic lines of strategic housing growth were identified, namely the continuation of existing policy, a ‘roll forward’ of the existing pattern as identified in Regional Planning Guidance (RPG9) and a ‘sharper focus’ which focuses development on two policy emphases: firstly, areas with strong economic potential; secondly, areas with a particular need for regeneration to reduce disparities and increase social and economic cohesion.

**4.4.25** In effect for Central Oxfordshire these two options would deliver:

Spatial Option One (Continuation of Existing Policy)			Spatial Option Two (Sharper Focus)		
25,900	28,000	32,000	25,900	28,000	32,000

## Heyford Park Environmental Statement

1,300	1,500	1,700	1,400	1,600	1,900
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(Source: adapted from Table C2 'Summary of Spatial Options presented January 2005' Draft RSS South East) January 2007.

- 4.4.26** After public consultation on the options, the Regional Assembly concluded that the preferred spatial strategy for growth would be to “support an urban emphasis for development with support for the concept of urban renaissance,” (sub-paragraph 3, paragraph 3.4.1). In relation to rural development the decision was made to affirm the position that a provision for appropriate rural development should be made to support the maintenance of thriving, mixed communities.
- 4.4.27** Overall the Regional Assembly concluded that an annual average dwelling requirement level of 28,900 per annum growth would be appropriate. In settling on this figure, the Assembly acknowledged that there are pressing needs such as the housing backlog identified in the 2001 Census which must be addressed, and in setting this figure this would allow ‘early progress being made in eliminating or reducing the backlog’. The Assembly will monitor progress of the development achieved annually against that required for the backlog to be eliminated over the first 10 years of the Plan.
- 4.4.28** In relation to the region wide policies applicable to Heyford Park which seek to address the levels of growth, Policy H1 sets a requirement that Cherwell District delivers a further 590 new dwellings per annum, equating to 11,800 over the 20 year plan period. Policy H3 seeks the provision of 60% of this additional housing on previously developed land and through the conversion of existing buildings, with the policy stating that:
- “New housing needed to meet the district requirements – whether on previously developed land or on Greenfield land – should be in sustainable locations which have the necessary infrastructure, services and community provision, or where this provision is planned. Housing developments should generally be in locations that are, or can be, well served by a choice of transport modes, with higher densities in and near locations well served by public transport.” (Policy H3).*
- 4.4.29** In relation to rural areas, the RSS makes a specific comment through Policy H3 that in some areas housing development will be needed in order to meet identified social or economic needs and provision should be set out in policies in Local Development Documents, placing an emphasis on the development of Parish Plans and local housing assessments which will have an increasingly important role to play in the establishment to the extent and types for housing required in specific communities in line with PPS3 and PPS7.
- 4.4.30** The delivery of the proposed development at Heyford Park allows for both of these policies to be met, with the delivery of approximately 1,000 dwellings into the sub-region and the wider Cherwell housing market, helping to address the requirement placed on Cherwell by the RSS and the draft South East Plan both in terms of addressing dwelling requirements and enabling the delivery of previously developed land for housing in a sustainable manner.
- 4.4.31** The Regional Assembly have developed 7 policy objectives to guide spatial strategy and development in respect of Central Oxfordshire sub-region. The Core Policy CO2, ‘Scale and Distribution of Housing’ requires

that the Local Development Frameworks should make provision for 1,700 additional dwellings per year within Central Oxfordshire and for 660 additional dwellings per year in the Rest of Oxfordshire for the period 2006 to 2026. The entire Cherwell District is required to provide 590 dwellings per annum, with an overall figure for the twenty year plan period of 11,800 dwellings. The proposed development at Heyford Park will contribute towards meeting this housing requirement within the Rest of Oxfordshire Policy area, and within Cherwell district, in a manner which removes the need to have significant quantum's of small scale development in rural areas.

**4.4.32** The proposed development also accords with Policy CO4 relating to affordable housing, and any development will make a proportion of the dwellings constructed affordable including housing for key workers. The Sub-regional policy makes a recommendation that 50% of housing should be affordable or within the economic means of key workers. It would be anticipated that the development of Heyford Park would make a contribution to this figure, to be calculated in conjunction with the Local Authority, based on an assessment of local needs.

## **4.5 OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN**

**4.5.1** The Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016 was adopted in October 2005. Under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Structure Plan's policies are saved for a period of three years from the date of adoption (October 2008), or until the new South East Plan is adopted, whichever is the sooner.

**4.5.2** Of high relevance to the proposed development is a site specific policy for the former RAF Upper Heyford, Policy H2. Structure Plan policy H2 states:

*'(a) Land at RAF Upper Heyford will provide for a new settlement of about 1,000 dwellings and necessary supporting infrastructure, including a primary school and appropriate community, recreational and employment opportunities, as a means of enabling environmental improvements and the heritage interest of the site as a military base with Cold War associations to be conserved, compatible with achieving a satisfactory living environment.*

*(b) Proposals for development must reflect a revised comprehensive planning brief adopted by the district council and demonstrate that the conservation of heritage resources, landscape, restoration, enhancement of biodiversity and other environmental improvements will be achieved across the whole of the former air base in association with the provision of the new settlement.*

*(c) The new settlement should be designed to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport rather than travel by private car. Improvements to bus and rail facilities and measures to minimise the impact of the traffic generated by the development on the surrounding road network will be required.'*

## Heyford Park Environmental Statement

**4.5.3** The explanatory text to the policy notes at paragraph 7.7 that this proposal has been recognised by the First Secretary of State as ‘an exception to normal sustainability objectives as a means of facilitating the remediation of the former airbase to enable the site to present a more environmentally acceptable face than it does now’. The proposed development complies with the 3 policy requirements listed as part of Policy H2. A mixed use development, which will enable environmental improvements, whilst at the same time preserving the character of the Conservation Area is proposed.

**4.5.4** A combination of other, more generic, Structure Plan policies are also relevant to the proposed development.

These include:

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|-------------------------------|--|
| ▪ Policy G2                   | improving the quality and design of the development;       |
| ▪ Policy G3                   | providing infrastructure and services;                     |
| ▪ Policy G6                   | seeking energy and resource conservation;                  |
| ▪ Policies T1-6, T8           | achieving sustainable travel and a good transport network; |
| ▪ Policies EN1-2, EN4, EN6-10 | protecting and enhancing the environment;                  |
| ▪ Policy E1, E4-5, TC2        | developing the local economy;                              |
| ▪ Policy H1, H3-4             | delivery of good quality housing;                          |
| ▪ Policies R1-2               | providing recreation and leisure opportunities;            |
| ▪ Policy EG1, WM2             | making efficient use of resources.                         |

These policies are detailed in the accompanying Planning Supporting Statement. The proposed development complies with the range of policies and will contribute towards achieving their objectives.

## 4.6 CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 1996

**4.6.1** The non-site specific policies of the Cherwell Local Plan, adopted in 1996 have also been saved under the transitional arrangements of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Plan does not contain any site specific policies for the former RAF Upper Heyford, although more general policies which are relevant to considering the proposed development include:

- Policies H2, H4, H5: delivering housing;
- Policies TR1-5, TR7, TR9-10: providing for a satisfactory transportation network;
- Policies R4, R10-12, R15, T1-2: providing recreation and tourism opportunities;
- Policies C7, C10-11, C13, AG1, C14, C18-26, C36: protecting the landscape, countryside, ecology and historic environment including the Rousham Historic Park and Conservation Area;
- Policies C1-C4: protecting and enhancing nature conservation interests;
- Policies C28, C30-C33: seeking good design;
- Policies ENV1, ENV7, ENV 9 –12: protecting the environment.

These policies are detailed in the accompanying Planning Supporting Statement. The proposed development complies with the range of policies and will contribute towards achieving their objectives.

## 4.7 NON-STATUTORY CHERWELL LOCAL PLAN 2011

4.7.1 The 1996 Cherwell Local Plan was in the process of being superseded by the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 until the Council decided to discontinue work on the new Plan in December 2004. As the new Plan had reached the pre-inquiry stage, the Council approved the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 as an interim planning policy for development control purposes.

4.7.2 The Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (as approved for development control purposes in December 2004) contains the following policies relevant to the proposed development at the former RAF Upper Heyford:

- Policies UH1-UH4: site specific policies for RAF Upper Heyford;
- Policies H1a – 7: delivering housing;
- Policies TR1-6, TR8-11, TR16, TR19, TR36: providing a satisfactory transportation network;
- Policies R2, R4, R6, R8 -10a, R11-12, T1: providing for sport, recreation, community and tourism opportunities;
- Policies EN1-3, EN5-7, EN11-12, EN15-28, EN30, EN34-49, EN51: seeking the conservation and enhancement of the environment including the Rousham Historic Park and Conservation Area;
- Policies D1-D10, D12: seeking good design;
- Policies OAI-2, OA5: provision of services and facilities.

These policies are detailed in the accompanying Planning Supporting Statement. The proposed development complies with the range of policies and will contribute towards achieving their objectives.

## 4.8 WEST OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

4.8.1 Rousham Historic Park lies within West Oxfordshire District Council and as such the policies of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan are also relevant in this regard. The character, setting, amenities, historical context and views into or from the Grade I listed park are protected by Policy CO11 of the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2001, and also policy BE11 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 which is emerging.

### RAF Upper Heyford Comprehensive Planning Brief

4.8.2 An earlier Comprehensive Planning Brief had been prepared and published in 1999, which was founded on the previous Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2011. The rationale was to transform the legacy of military use and repair a landscape scarred by military intrusion and activity. However, as this brief predated both the latest Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016, and the recent designation of the entire site as a Conservation Area in 2006, a revised brief was deemed to be necessary.

4.8.3 A revised document was prepared, with eventual adoption by Cherwell District Council in March 2007. This revised document took account of the requirement for a comprehensive brief for development as required by Policy H2 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016. However, the revised brief does not form part of the Statutory Development Plan but expands upon and supplements Structure Plan policy. In synopsis, the Development Brief sets out the vision for the lasting re-development of the entire -516 hectare former airbase

## Heyford Park Environmental Statement

site. The Comprehensive Planning Brief has however not been subject to independent scrutiny, testing or examination prior to its adoption by the Council.

- 4.8.4** In relation to the new settlement area it establishes a set of principles to guide development, these include: location and context; conserving the heritage interest; the provision of a satisfactory living environment; settlement components; transport; the design of the settlement; sustainability and future management.
- 4.8.5** The Flying Field Area is addressed with a similar set of principles for development, namely: environmental improvements; public access; conservation of heritage assets; the provision of a satisfactory living environment; the future of the wider airfield, and; future management.
- 4.8.6** In relation to the lasting delivery of these principles for development within both the new settlement area and the flying field area, the Development Brief outlines seven specific aspects which the lasting arrangement for the planning application should address:
- i. *'Any planning application must provide a comprehensive scheme for the whole of the area occupied by the former airbase. It must clearly demonstrate the enabling works that are required to deliver the environmental improvements and conservation of heritage assets, together with the creation of a satisfactory living environment.*
  - ii. *Any planning application will need to be accompanied by sufficient information to enable the impact of the proposals to be understood and assessed including a master plan for the site.*
  - iii. *An Environmental Statement produced in accordance with an agreed scoping opinion should accompany any planning application for the development of a new settlement at the site.*
  - iv. *As part of the development proposals the Council will seek a Management Plan setting out arrangements for the ownership and management of the site to include proposals to ensure the flying field is managed as a whole to maintain and enhance the site's ecological and historic interest in the long term. The application should include details of how the management plan process will be funded and staffed, how it will be produced and reviewed, and how input from local residents and other interested individuals will be accommodated.*
  - v. *High quality innovative design is sought, respecting the established character of the conservation area and the scheduled and listed buildings, the site's rural location and the need to achieve a satisfactory living and working environment. The detailed design of new development on the site will be guided by design codes to be submitted in advance of Reserve Matter applications.*
  - vi. *The Council will seek appropriate S106 planning obligation agreements as required to secure the provision of facilities to serve the settlement, appropriate phasing of delivery and the delivery of the requirements of Policy H2.*
  - vii. *The Council will require a phased program for the implementation of the development as a whole,' (Upper Heyford Approved Development Brief, Executive Summary, Page 4).*

These 7 principles for development have been fully incorporated into the planning application and have informed the development of the proposals.