

4. Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 4.1 This Chapter provides an overview of the planning context and sets out the statutory planning policy framework within which the planning application for the Development will be determined. The objective is to demonstrate that relevant policy guidelines at national, regional and local levels were taken into account as part of the EIA. Only relevant policies of environmental concern that were identified during the EIA process are described in this Chapter. Details of all the relevant planning policies are provided in the Planning Statement, which is submitted in support of the planning application. Specific planning policies are also referred to within the technical chapters of this ES, where relevant.
- 4.2 The planning policy framework for assessing the planning application is established by reference to the relevant National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Notes and Planning Policy Statements (PPS). Consideration is also given to the saved policies in the Oxfordshire Structure Plan, the adopted and non-statutory Cherwell Local Plans, the emerging Draft Core Strategy and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The PPGs and PPSs provide strategic guidance whereas the Local Plans and the Draft Core Strategy set out local considerations.

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development, January 2005

- 4.3 PPS1 promotes three themes underpinning the Government's high level policy objectives. These are: sustainable development, which includes maintaining economic growth and the effective promotion of environmental considerations; spatial planning and the need for preparing a vision for future development; and community involvement in planning.
- 4.4 The Development accords with the principles of this guidance by providing a mixed use development on brownfield land (including the reuse of many buildings), where consideration is given to stimulating economic growth, whilst providing appropriate traffic management and enhancement of the site's local environment.

Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth, December 2009

- 4.5 PPS4 sets out national policies to deliver sustainable economic growth. The focus of PPS4 is to achieve prosperous communities by improving economic performance. In particular, PPS4 aims to improve the environment and quality of life of rural communities through encouraging thriving and inclusive communities.
- 4.6 Redevelopment of the Site would seek to provide a new sustainable community, through providing community facilities and services within the Site whilst maintaining the quality of the local environment. The Development seeks to maintain the existing businesses on the Site, together with creating further employment opportunities for local residents.

Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, March 2010

- 4.7 PPS5 sets out national planning policies and principles for the conservation of the historic environment, including architectural and archaeological interests. PPS5 is supported by a number of overarching objectives which aim to facilitate the conservation of heritage assets for future generations. Key to this guidance is the importance of the historical environment contributing to local distinctiveness and cultural identity. PPS5 stipulates that both designated and undesignated heritage assets of interest should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 4.8 The Site is located within the RAF Upper Heyford Airbase Conservation Area and contains heritage assets, including two scheduled monuments. In line with the guidance a qualitative desk-based archaeological and cultural heritage assessment was carried out to ascertain the potential impacts of the Development on any buried archaeological deposits and heritage assets on and near to the Site.

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, August 2005

- 4.9 PPS9 outlines out the Government's objectives for conserving and enhancing biodiversity, emphasising the importance of both designated and undesignated areas for nature conservation. The guidance promotes biodiversity as part of sustainable development.
- 4.10 Although there are no statutory and non-statutory nature conservation designations within the Site, two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Ardley Quarry and Cutting and Ardley Trackways) and a number of non-statutory designations are located within the vicinity of the Site. Protected species (bats and great crested newt) have been recorded within the Site. In accordance with the guidance set out in PPS9, appropriate survey methods were agreed with the ecologist at CDC. The findings of the ecological surveys and assessment are presented in **Chapter 12**.

Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport, April 2001

- 4.11 The broad objectives of PPG13 are to integrate planning and transport at national, regional and local levels in order to:
- promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and moving freight;
 - promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling; and
 - reduce the need to travel, especially by car.
- 4.12 In line with this policy, the Development incorporates measures aiming to limit car use and encourage sustainable modes of travel relevant to the needs of the businesses and residents. A Transport Assessment (TA) was completed in 2007 and supplemented by a further Transport Statement in 2010 for this planning application, which demonstrates how traffic would be adequately managed onsite, including a route for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and public transport provisions. Further details and the transportation assessment are provided in **Chapter 5**.

Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control, November 1994

- 4.13 PPS23 seeks to provide comprehensive guidance on planning and pollution control. Advice is provided on issues such as air quality and the redevelopment of contaminated land, together with liaison between local planning authorities and the environmental protection agencies.

- 4.14 In accordance with this guidance, an assessment of the potential impacts of the Development in relation to air quality, noise and land contamination was undertaken. The findings are given in **Chapters 6, 7 and 8** respectively.

Planning Policy Guidance 24: Planning and Noise, October 1994

- 4.15 PPG24 sets out the Government's policies on noise related planning issues. In particular, the guidance note:
- outlines considerations to be taken into account when determining planning applications for noise sensitive developments;
 - introduces the concept of Noise Exposure Categories for residential development, encourages their use and recommends appropriate levels for noise exposure to different sources of noise; and
 - advises on the use of conditions to minimise the impacts of noise.

- 4.16 Since the Development includes residential uses, a noise assessment was undertaken in accordance with this guidance, and is detailed in **Chapter 6**. This includes an assessment of the suitability of the Site for residential development in accordance with the PPG24 methodology. Consideration is also given to other potential noise impacts during the construction and operational phases, including commercial and industrial noise sources.

Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk, March 2010

- 4.17 The principal requirement of PPS25 is to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. PPS25 advocates that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be carried out for sites where the building footprint would be greater than 1 hectare, regardless of whether the site is located within an area at risk from flooding.
- 4.18 The Site is located within an area considered to be at low risk of tidal and fluvial flooding (Flood Zone 1). An FRA was undertaken in accordance with PPS25 and in consultation with relevant statutory organisations. In conjunction with the FRA, a preliminary Surface Water and Foul Water Drainage Strategy was completed, which includes appropriate mitigation measures. The findings of the FRA are presented in **Chapter 9**.

Planning Policy Statement Consultation: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment, March 2010

- 4.19 The draft Planning Policy Statement on '*Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment*' aims to consolidate policies relating to: biodiversity and geological conservation; landscape protection and green infrastructure. Proposed policy changes principally relate to the protection, creation and maintenance of green infrastructure.
- 4.20 The draft PPS contains policies to conserve and enhance biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape character in rural and urban areas. The draft PPS also supports sustainable developments which provide safe and attractive places to live.
- 4.21 **Chapters 10 and 12** present the assessments on landscape and visual character and ecology, respectively.

Regional Planning Policy

Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England

- 4.22 Strategic guidance for the South East was provided in the South East Plan '*Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England*' (Government Office for the South East, May 2009). However, the South East Plan was revoked by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 6 July 2010. As a result, material consideration is now given to national policies, adopted Local Plans and Development Plan Documents only.

Local Planning Policy

Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016

- 4.23 The '*Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016*' (OCC, 2005), which was adopted in October 2005, was superseded by the South East Plan. However, three policies contained in the '*Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016*' were not replaced by the South East Plan and consequently remain effective.
- 4.24 One of the 'saved' policies relates to the Site: Policy H2 '*Upper Heyford*' provides the overarching policy for the Site and anticipates the provision of a new settlement on the site. Specifically, the policy stipulates that the Site would provide for approximately 1,000 dwellings, together with supporting community infrastructure. The policy requires the conservation of heritage resources and landscape, enhancement of biodiversity and other environmental improvements.

Cherwell Local Plan, 1996

- 4.25 The '*Cherwell Local Plan*' (CDC, 1996), which was adopted in November 1996, provides the current statutory development planning policies for the District. A number of policies have been 'saved' beyond 2007, and remain in effect until the Local Development Framework (LDF) is implemented. A summary of the relevant local planning policies are presented in **Table 4.1** and the full details are presented in **Appendix 4.1**.

Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011

- 4.26 The '*Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan*' (CDC, 2004) was intended to update the adopted '*Cherwell Local Plan*', although the Plan was abandoned by CDC before it reached statutory adoption. However, CDC approved the draft '*Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan*' as an interim policy for development control purposes until the Local Development Framework is implemented.
- 4.27 A summary of the relevant local planning policies contained in the '*Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan*' are presented in **Table 4.1** and the full details are presented in **Appendix 4.1**.

Cherwell Local Development Framework: Draft Core Strategy, February 2010

- 4.28 Although not having the status of being part of the Development Plan or adopted policy, CDC has published the Draft Core Strategy (CDC, 2010) for the purposes of public consultation. This consultation document is presently under review by CDC. Once it is revised, further consulted upon, tested at an examination in public and only then adopted, it will sets out the long-term spatial strategy for Cherwell, which is underpinned by a range of objectives and policies.

4.29 The emerging Core Strategy for Cherwell District recognises Heyford Park as strategic site for growth, which would deliver approximately 1,000 dwellings in accordance with Policy H2 of the former 'Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016'. Consideration of the emerging local planning policies is demonstrated in **Table 4.1** and **Appendix 4.1**.

Table 4.1: Summary of Relevant Key Adopted and Emerging Local Planning Policies

Policy Area	Adopted Policies ^a	Non-Statutory Policies ^b	Emerging Policies ^c	Comments
Flood Risk	-	Policy EN14 Policy EN15	Policy SD6 Policy I2	These policies encourage the use of SuDS. A Flood Risk Assessment was carried for the Site to demonstrate the management and attenuation of surface water runoff (Chapter 9).
Wildlife	Policy C2 Policy C4	Policy EN22 Policy EN25 Policy EN27	Policy SD8 Policy I2	These policies promote the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. Ecology surveys were undertaken and an assessment of the potential impacts of the Development on flora and fauna is provided in Chapter 12 . Where adverse impacts are identified, mitigation measures are proposed.
Landscape	Policy C7 Policy C10 Policy C23 Policy C25	Policy EN34 Policy EN35 Policy D3	Policy I2 Policy SD11 Policy SD13	The Site is located in a Conservation Area and contains a number of heritage assets, together with a number of mature trees. Significant landscape features would be retained and integrated within the Development. The findings of the landscape and visual character assessment are presented in Chapter 10 and the cultural heritage assessment in Chapter 11 .
Contaminated Land	ENV7 ENV12	Policy EN17 Policy EN12	-	Owing to the historical uses of the Site, there is the potential for ground contamination to be present. An assessment of the potential impacts with respect to ground contamination is given in Chapter 8 .
Housing	Policy H5	Policy H1	-	These policies pick up on a number of environmental and social criteria to ensure that residential development is not subject to environmental constraints such as flooding and contaminated land and that appropriate levels of social infrastructure are available. The relevant criteria are addressed in the following Chapters: Chapter 5 (Transportation); Chapter 8 (Ground Conditions and Contamination); Chapter 9 (Water Resources); Chapter 13 (Socio-economics).
Air Quality	-	Policy EN3	-	An assessment of the potential impacts on air quality during construction is provided in Chapter 7 .
Noise	-	Policy EN3 Policy EN7	-	Potential noise impacts during construction of the Development were assessed, together with the suitability of the Site for residential development. The findings are presented in Chapter 6 .

Notes: ^a Saved policies contained within the adopted Cherwell Local Plan. ^b Policies contained in the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan. ^c Emerging policies contained in the Draft Core Strategy.

Supplementary Planning Documents

RAF Upper Heyford Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief, 2007

- 4.30 In accordance with Policy H2 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2016, CDC prepared a Supplementary Planning Brief (SPD). The SPD '*RAF Upper Heyford Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief 2007*' was adopted by CDC in March 2007. The SPD, which applies to the Site and the Flying Field to the north, seeks to achieve a balance between providing a quality new settlement and improving the environment, whilst conserving the heritage of the Site and surrounding area.
- 4.31 The SPD sets out a number of principles and objectives for developing the Site to facilitate the creation of a sustainable community. Key principles set out in the SPD of environmental concern include:
- environmental improvements that are compatible with the preservation of the historical interest;
 - protected buildings should be sensitively integrated and their cartilage and setting must be respected;
 - unlisted buildings that make a contribution to the Conservation Area should be retained where they can be converted to a new suitable use and integrated into the Development;
 - open spaces that are of historic significance or which have the potential to positively contribute to the Development should be retained;
 - significant trees in sound condition should be retained and should be supplemented by tree planting;
 - preservation and enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area;
 - a satisfactory living environment should be created whilst retaining protected buildings;
 - mix of dwelling sizes and tenure to create a balanced community;
 - a range of employment opportunities should be created to meet the needs of the residents; and
 - measures should be included to encourage walking and cycling and the use of public transport.