

**THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  
FOR THE PARISH OF  
GREAT FARINGDON  
2015-2031**

**BASIC CONDITIONS STATEMENT**

**February 2015**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Basic Conditions**

This Basic Conditions Statement (BCS) has been prepared to accompany the Faringdon Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNP)

Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 1990, requires that Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) must meet the following basic conditions:

- i. having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the order;
- ii. the making of the order contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- iii. the making of the order is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (in this case the Vale of White Horse District Council (VoWHDC) adopted Local Plan 2011<sup>1</sup>);
- iv. the making of the order does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations;
- v. prescribed conditions are met in relation to the order and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposals for the order
- vi. the making of the FNP is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects). (See Schedule 2 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) in relation to the examination of Neighbourhood Development Plans.)

This Basic Conditions Statement addresses these requirements in four sections:

- Section 1 demonstrates the conformity of the FNP with the NPPF;
- Section 2 shows how the FNP will contribute to sustainable development;
- Section 3 demonstrates the conformity of the FNP with the VoWHDC adopted Local Plan 2011;
- Section 4 demonstrates compliance with the appropriate EU obligations.

### **Submitting Body**

The Faringdon Neighbourhood Development Plan is submitted by Faringdon Town Council, which is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011.

### **Neighbourhood Plan Area**

The Plan applies to the Parish of Great Faringdon in the Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire.

In accordance with part 2 of the Regulations the Vale of White Horse District Council, the local planning authority, publicised the application from Faringdon Town Council to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan and advertised a consultation period beginning on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012 and ending on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Policy H2 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan and Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan are also part of the development plan. However neither of these policies is relevant to the Vale of White Horse and therefore policies in Neighbourhood Plans in the district do not need to be in general conformity with these policies.

<sup>2</sup> BCS Appendix 1 Faringdon Consultation Statement\_v1.0.pdf

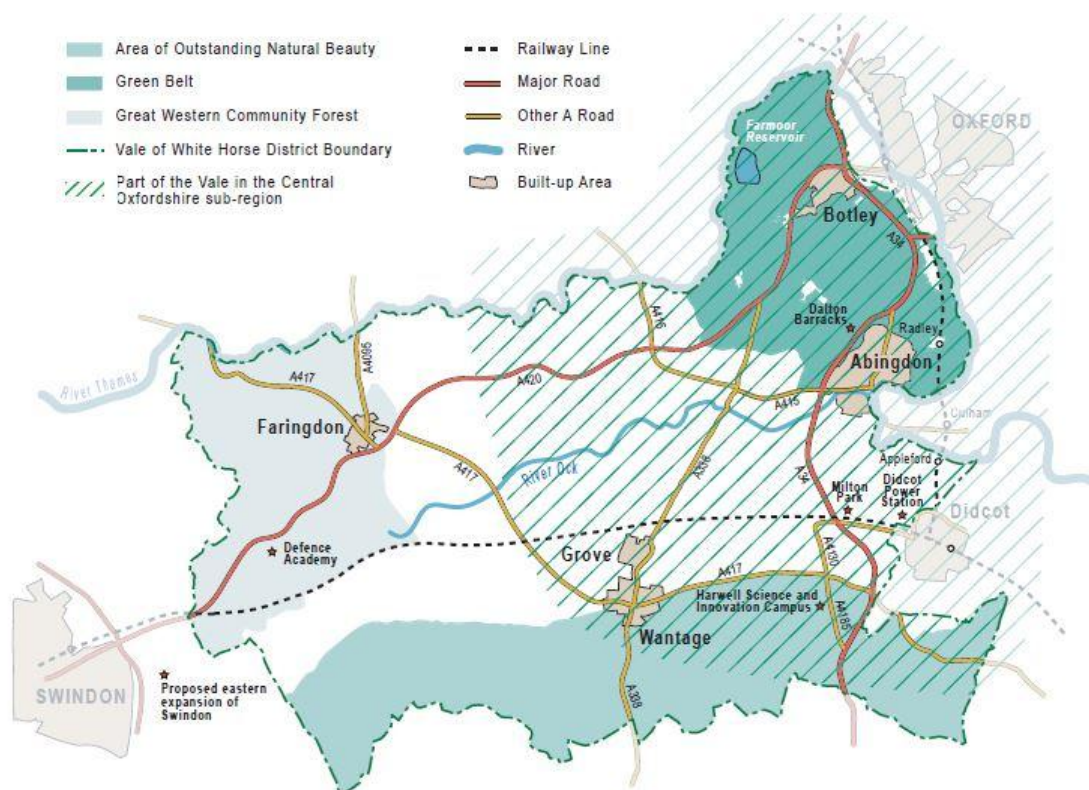
The NDP has been prepared by the Town Council for the Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the parish of Great Faringdon, as designated by a Vale of White Horse District Council Cabinet Decision dated 12 July 2012<sup>3</sup> and confirmed<sup>4</sup> 19 July 2014. A report of the process is shown in BCS Appendix 4.

Faringdon Town Council confirms that this Faringdon Neighbourhood Development Plan:

- i. relates only to the Parish of Great Faringdon and to no other Neighbourhood Areas; and
- ii. is the only Neighbourhood Development Plan in the designated area. No other Neighbourhood Development Plan exists nor is in development for part or all of the designated area.

### Faringdon: Location

Faringdon is located in the south west of the District of Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire. The maps in Figures 1 and 2 show both the general location of the district and the parish within it.



**Figure 1. The Vale of White Horse**

### Background

At a well-attended public meeting on 12 June 2012 the Town Council announced that it intended to co-ordinate the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The key drivers of that decision were:

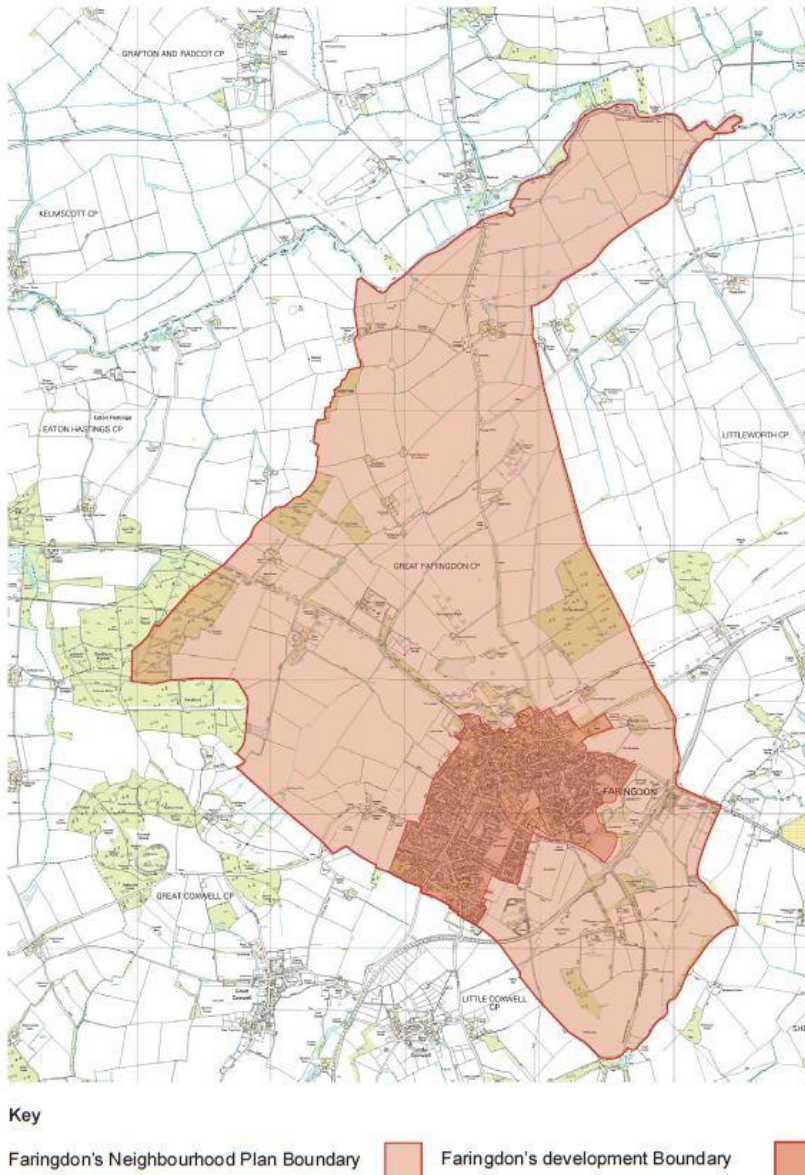
- the desire of the Town Council to influence local development in the parish, particularly employment;

<sup>3</sup> BCS Appendix 2 Minutes12-Jul-2012 14.00 Cabinet.pdf

<sup>4</sup> BCS Appendix 3 Confirmation of area designation.doc

- local community concern over what was perceived to be uncontrolled future housing development in the town;
- the encouragement of the District Council who wished the Town Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan as a ‘front runner’.

The Town Council instructed its Planning and Highways Committee to form a Steering Group (SG) comprising members of Town Council, District Councillors, local business organisations, a representative sample of concerned residents and other community groups.



**Figure 2. Great Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Area**

The SG was delegated authority by the Planning and Highways Committee to make decisions on the contents of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan, the Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan including a draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA); and the Submission Neighbourhood Plan, including the SEA as the project reached specific approval milestones.

The SG, in turn, established a number of themed sub-groups to collect data, highlight issues and provide reports to inform the strategy options for the agreed major topic areas.

Officers of the District Council have met regularly with the SG to review emerging policies and to ensure the district policy facilitates the desired local strategy wherever possible and to ensure that the emerging Local Plan, which together with the FNP, proposes to establish a clear policy framework for area development plans, has informed all stages of the preparation of the FNP.

One early decision taken by the SG was to exclude from the FNP policies on setting either the size of the town's additional housing requirement or a population target. It believes that if a population target were set it would merely encourage developers to use it as a tool to gain planning permission. Therefore, the decision was taken that any application for development outside the proposed strategic site allocations set out in the emerging Local Plan would have to be considered at the time of each application and strictly on its merits.

The FNP, therefore, contains a series of policies covering all aspects of the future development of the town and wider parish with the exception of housing supply.

## **SECTION 1: National Planning Policy Framework Obligation**

### **1.1 National Policy**

The FNP must have regard to national policy and guidance. The following section describes how the FNP proposal relates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was published in February 2014. By this time, the FNP had already been through one public consultation and was being worked up for pre-submission consultation. However, the relevant sections of the NPPG have been reviewed and the FNP is consistent with the advice contained in it.

#### ***Sustainable Development***

The central theme of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this context sustainable development is broadly defined internationally<sup>5</sup> as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The NPPF uses three ‘dimensions’ to describe sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, and requires the planning system, and thus the FNP, where appropriate:

- to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and by improving the local supporting infrastructure;
- to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment; helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

The NPPF specifies that delivery of sustainable development by the planning system is to be through the application of 12 core planning principles and the pursuit of 13 sustainability objectives supporting the economic, social and environmental dimensions described above.

The FNP has been prepared with regard to national policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and is mindful of the draft National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) in respect of formulating neighbourhood plans.

In overall terms, there are four NPPF paragraphs that provide general guidance on neighbourhood planning, each of which the FNP has taken account:

- Para 16 – the Town Council believes the FNP is supporting the strategic development needs of the district by making allocations which accord with a clear spatial vision for the town. It also believes that the Plan seeks to protect and enhance leisure, community and transport assets that benefit a wider rural population.
- Para 183 – the Town Council believes the FNP establishes a shared vision for the town borne out of a series of public and themed sub-group meetings that will deliver sustainable development for the town, through setting planning policies to determine decisions on planning applications.
- Para 184 – the Town Council believes the FNP is in general conformity with all the strategic housing and other relevant policies in the emerging Local Plan. More specifically, the Neighbourhood Plan makes provision for the housing development

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<sup>5</sup> Resolution 24/187 of the United Nations General Assembly

sought by the emerging Local Plan by recognising that employment, retail and leisure facilities, and the whole of the economic, social and environmental infrastructure must match any increase in population.

- Para 185 – the FNP seeks to avoid duplicating Local Plan policies by focusing on site-specific policies that translate the general requirements therein into a Faringdon context. Once made, the FNP should sit alongside the Local Plan (to form the Development Plan for Faringdon) and together with any other material considerations be used to determine the outcome of planning applications.

## 1.2 FNP Fit with the NPPF Core Planning Principles

There are 12 core planning principles put forward in the NPPF (Paragraph 17). Table 1, below, lists these core planning principles and maps them to the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan’s Goals and Policies.

<b>National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 1</b>
Planning should be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date, and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. They should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency
<b>Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response</b>
The FNP has been driven by local people, through meetings and consultations, culminating in a considered series of objectives and policies that create a vision (FNP Section 3) of how they would like to see their town and wider parish develop. The FNP has been drawn up in general conformity with the emerging Local Plan and has helped to influence it. An Action Plan will follow to ensure the implementation and realisation of the FNP’s objectives and policies throughout the lifetime of the FNP.
<b>National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 2</b>
Planning should be not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives.
<b>Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response</b>
<i>Sections 4.2 A Well Proportioned Town and Sections 4.6 Family Housing</i> address the concerns of local people of how they see the town developing. The general wish is that Faringdon remains a small market town, and <i>Policy 4.2A: Residential Development Within the Development Boundary</i> aims to manage growth within the development boundary in compliance with the Development Plan and its exception policies. <i>Policy 4.2B Planning Gain</i> states the expectation that planning gain mechanisms will contribute to meeting the objectives set out in the FNP. There is a desire to match housing to local need by re-balancing the mix of houses to include more in Council Tax Bands F, G and H, while recognising the need for smaller and affordable dwellings to meet growing local need. This is laid out in <i>Policy 4.6A: Housing Balance</i> and <i>Policy 4.6B: Self-build Housing</i> encourages self build so that local people can deliver the houses they want. Specific aspects of enhancing and improving quality of life for local residents are dealt with in the responses to NPPF Principles 3-12 below.



**National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 3**

Planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities.

**Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response**

A main tenet of the FNP is in securing sufficient employment land to enable 38% of the working age population to be employed in Faringdon. *Section 4.5 Local Jobs* addresses this need through *Policy 4.5A: Existing Employment Sites*, which recommends intensification or redevelopment of the existing industrial areas. Policies 4.5B-G variously refer to the allocation of new employment sites (Policies 4.5B and C), existing sites for limited further development (Policy 4.5D) and sites previously, but no longer included in the emerging Local Plan 2031 (Policy 4.5E). Policies 4.5F-G are discussed in more detail in NPPF Principles 7 and 9 below.

*Policy 4.6A: Housing Balance* supports the need for a range of housing types that meet the needs of the existing and future workforce.

**National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 4**

Planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

**Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response**

Section 4.7 of the FNP is specifically concerned with design for housing. *Policy 4.7A: Materials and Roofscape* states that new buildings should use sympathetic building materials in keeping with the local character and styles and that roofscapes should be designed with careful regard for the potential impacts on the townscape and the surrounding landscape.

*Policy 4.7C: Housing Design* requires that new housing development should respond to its local context through appropriate use of scale, form, height, detailing and materials.

However, it does include a statement that ‘Exceptions will be made for outstanding or innovative design in accordance with paragraph 63 of the NPPF’. Developments should be of a density consistent with the Development Plan and well linked by foot and cycle connections to the town centre and schools.

The District Council is producing a new Residential Design Guide to inform developers of higher expected standards.

*Policy 4.7D: Adoption of ‘Secured by Design’* came from a recommendation by Thames Valley Police, that developments should incorporate the principles of Secured by Design (SBD) and, where appropriate, seek to achieve SBD accreditation to ensure that a safe and sustainable community is maintained.

The importance of good design is also extended to commercial buildings. *Policy 4.7E: Visual Impact* requires that commercial buildings, and especially those which are publicly visible or which form gateways to Faringdon, should be of a scale and form appropriate to their location and landscape setting and will be expected to create a high quality environment combining the best modern design with local influences.

**National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 5**

Planning should take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it.

**Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response**

*Section 4.4 Town Centre Shopping and Services* sets out policies to protect and develop the vitality of the town centre. *Policy 4.4A: Minimising the Loss of Retail Space* aims to maintain the retail offer by preventing the loss of retail space without conclusive evidence to the contrary, while *Policies 4.4B: Extending the Town Centre Retail Offer* and *4.4C: Extending the Wider Retail Offer* aim to extend the retail offer by the change of use or redevelopment of sites currently not in retail use or encouraging other uses that support the retail function of the town centre.

Although Faringdon does not have a designated green belt *Section 4.12 Landscape* sets out the importance of Faringdon’s landscape setting and the need to protect the green corridors between neighbouring settlements. This is reinforced in *Policy 4.2C: Residential Development Beyond the Development Boundary* which states that, with the exception of policies set out in the Development Plan, any additional development that adversely affects the setting of the Town or the green corridors leading to nearby villages will be resisted.

**National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 6**

Planning should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy).

**Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response**

*Policy 4.13C Alternative Energy Schemes* encourages the development of renewable energy resources; specifically, a potential scheme for micro-hydroelectric generation at one of the Thames weirs and other schemes for solar photovoltaic electricity generation. Faringdon has a proven track record for encouraging the use of renewable resources through its award winning ECOweek (Evidence Base ref 21). *Policy 4.7B: Resource Consumption* states that all new buildings and major refurbishments should minimise their energy consumption and resource use and, where possible, exceed the minimum standards set by legislation. The point that district heating schemes will be strongly supported is to encourage new developments to incorporate this larger scale technology for space heating (with the co-generation of electricity) on a communal basis where energy efficiencies are greater than for individual dwellings.

The conversion of existing buildings to new use is described in *Policy 4.4C: Extending the Wider Retail Offer* that favourable consideration will be given to the redevelopment or change of use of sites that could become available on the edge of the town centre for Class A1 use; an example could be the police station should it relocate.

<b>National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 7</b>
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Planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework.
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<b>Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response</b>
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<p><i>Section 4.12 Landscape</i> sets out the requirement of new developments to protect the landscape setting of the town and the avoidance of coalescence with neighbouring villages. Stronger connections with the surrounding countryside through cycling and walking are encouraged. The FNP's main concern is in providing sufficient employment land to enable Faringdon's growing working age population to work in Faringdon and not to have to commute to external centres of employment, thereby increasing car-miles on already busy roads. <i>Section 4.5 Local Jobs</i>, sets out this argument and identifies existing and additional employment sites with the aim of achieving local employment for 38% of the working age population are set out in policies 4.5A to 4.5E. <i>Policy 4.5F Town Centre Employment</i> encourages the development of B1 employment in the town centre by either mixed use development or making better use of under-used space (e.g. spaces above shops); <i>Policy 4.5G Rural Diversification</i> is concerned with re-use or adaptation of existing farm buildings or new build for employment provided there are no adverse environmental impacts.</p>
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<b>National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 8</b>
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Planning should encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.
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<b>Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response</b>
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<p>Although housing site allocation is not considered in the FNP, <i>Section 4.2</i> and specifically <i>Policy 4.2A Residential Development Within the Development Boundary</i>, that apart from the proposed strategic site allocations set out in the Local Plan 2011, and the emerging Local Plan 2031, further residential development should be within the existing development boundary. As there is little undeveloped space within the development boundary, apart from protected green spaces, this implies that development will require the re-use of existing sites as in the former factory site at 5 Lechlade Road.</p>
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<p>Of more importance in <i>Section 5 Local Jobs</i> is the allocation of two worked out quarries for employment use. Rogers Quarry is allocated as employment land as is Wicklesham Quarry. The latter is specified in <i>Policy 4.5B: Wicklesham Quarry</i> for B2/B8 use with various caveats (the quarry walls are a SSSI) rather than returning it to agricultural use.</p>
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**National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 9**

Planning should promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production).

**Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response**

*Section 4.5, Local Jobs* encourages mixed use development in *Policy 4.5C: Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park*; this site is provisionally identified as being appropriate for development for mixed employment (Use Class B1) and retail (Use Class A1) provided it meets strict environmental and heritage criteria and has high quality pedestrian link(s) to the town centre as required by *Policy 4.3A: Connections*. Also, *Policy 4.5G: Rural Diversification* promotes the re-use, conversion or adaptation of existing farm buildings and potential new build where economic benefits can be demonstrated, and where proposals do not negatively affect the landscape character.

In *Section 4.4. Town Centre Shopping and Services*. The sub section on *Local Produce* gives strong support for opportunities that promote the integration of local produce with the town centre and that give high quality choice for local shoppers as well as helping to draw in visitors from further afield. The potential contribution to this from the 16 local organic farms is identified.

The emerging Local Plan recognises that Faringdon has a deficit of green space, hence, *Section 4.10 Sport and Leisure* identifies existing green spaces that should be protected as defined in *Policy 4.10D: Local Green Space Designation*.

**National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 10**

Planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

**Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response**

*Section 4.7 Conservation Area* requires a Town Characterisation Study to be undertaken to inform a Conservation Area Boundary Review followed by a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. Opportunities within the town centre and conservation area for public realm improvement will be identified and interventions prioritised. Six sites are nominated for possible inclusion in the Conservation Area. See also the Non-Statutory Appendix.

**National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 11**

Planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

**Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response**

Transport matters are considered in *Section 4.3 Connections*. Here, *Policy 4.3A: Connections* states that new developments should create attractive street connections into the town centre that encourage walking and cycling. Concern for the safety of pedestrians and cyclists is bound up in *Policy 4.3C: Shared Surfaces*, which states that on shared surfaces in new developments, priority for pedestrians and cyclists must be clearly indicated. In order to support the active cycling and walking groups, *Policy 4.3E: Footpaths and Cycleways* requests that new developments contribute to improving the quality and extent of the pedestrian and cycle network both within the town and to adjoining parishes and towards the provision of new lockable cycle parking facilities close to local amenities. *Section 4.3* also highlights the need for bus links to the nearby towns that provide essential health and social services, not currently accessible without lengthy or expensive bus connections, and for easier accessibility to rail links.

### **National Planning Policy Framework Core Planning Principle 12**

Planning should take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

### **Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan Response**

Health and Care are discussed in *Section 4.11, A Caring Community*. Here, *Policy 4.11A: Health and Care Provision* states that new development must support the expansion of local health and care facilities and there should be particular attention to the care of the elderly as a result of increased longevity. This is reinforced in *Policy 4.11B: Care for the Elderly*, which requests that new development incorporates specialist accommodation and developer contributions towards a Health and Well Being Centre.

*Section 4.10 Sport and Leisure* includes discussion on the need for good community facilities, including those for young people, to meet the need for a growing population and for better use to be made of existing meeting places. *Policy 4.10A Faringdon Country Park*, supports proposals that develop of the Country Park to improve leisure, sport, recreation and wildlife habitat and associated facilities; see also Non-Statutory Appendix regarding community facility space for use by local groups. *Policy 4.10B Sports Facilities*, strongly supports proposals for extending the existing sport and leisure facilities, including a floodlit, multi-use all-weather pitch and new sports facilities. *Policy 4.10C: Allotments*, specifies that, where viable, developments of more than 20 dwellings should contribute to the provision of allotments to meet an assessed need as agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

*Section 4.8* outlines the infrastructure improvements needed to support these objectives.

*Policy 4.8: Improving the Infrastructure* requires all qualifying developments to demonstrate provision of appropriate new facilities on site and provision of, or contributions towards, off-site facilities through either S106 or CIL contributions.

Because of their contribution to the vitality of social life, *Section 4.4 Services, Policy 4.4E Public Houses* requires robust economic and societal evidence for justifying the conversion or redevelopment of public houses for other uses.

## **1.3 FNP Fit with the NPPF Sustainability Policies**

### **NPPF Section Policy 1: Building a strong, competitive economy**

NPPF paragraph 19 states that: ‘Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Paragraph 21 states that ‘Planning policies should recognise and seek to address potential barriers to investment, including a poor environment or any lack of infrastructure, services or housing. In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should:

- identify strategic sites ... to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;
- support existing business sectors;
- identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement; and
- facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses in the same unit.

NPPF paragraph 22 states that: ‘Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose.’ Also, ‘Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.’

As stated in Section 1.1 of this document, the basic tenet of the FNP is to enable up to 38% of the working age population to find employment in Faringdon in order to redress the drift towards its becoming a dormitory town. This would translate to a minimum aspiration of ~2,500 jobs based on a final population figure of ~11,000. In order to do this, the FNP identifies existing and potential employment sites to meet that need; and while the emphasis in the emerging Local Plan is on promoting employment at Science Vale Oxford, 20 miles away, the emerging Local Plan also emphasises the need to allocate land for strategic employment growth at Faringdon to complement the Science Vale Oxford sites. It is also recognised that the type of jobs required in Faringdon may be different from those available at Science Vale Oxford because of Faringdon's different demographic; hence, the need for some B8 type employment.

### **FNP Objectives**

The following statements define the FNP's aspirations and actions required for building a strong, competitive economy:

- Support existing businesses in the parish and help facilitate expansion where required;
- Ensure that the total number of jobs in Faringdon matches 38% - 44% of the working age (18-65) population of the Faringdon parish<sup>6</sup>;
- Allocate enough employment land to meet the requirements of at least 38% of the working age population of the Faringdon parish within a 5 km radius of the centre of the town;
- Resist the existing trend of B1, B2 or B8 employment sites being lost to residential or retail development;
- Provide an allocation of four and five bedroom executive homes to attract business leaders to the town;
- Provide incubation and small business start-up facilities, always ensuring that enough employment land is available to meet the subsequent needs of a growing business
- Establish a sustainable level of employment that matches the town's residential growth and that also allows Faringdon's existing economy to expand;
- Through greater employment land allocations give local residents the option to work locally within the parish;
- Resist the existing trend of employment sites being lost to residential development;
- Reduce the scale of out-commuting to support greater vitality during the day and a more self-sufficient town;
- Encourage new types of B1 and B2 business into the town;
- Attract and support entrepreneurs and new business start-ups; and
- Support the full range of employment activities across the parish including rural jobs, whether traditional agriculture or diversified business activities.

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<sup>6</sup> The 2011 census defines working age as 17-74

## **FNP Policies**

The FNP sets out the following policies for building a strong, competitive economy:

### **Policy 4.5A: Existing Employment Sites**

Intensification or redevelopment of the existing industrial areas along Park Road for employment purposes will be supported where this enhances the quality of employment opportunities available, provided that the Park Road frontages are of a good quality design with an attractive landscape setting, in accordance with Policy 4.7E, and that there would be no adverse impacts on the amenities in the surrounding area.

The following uses will be encouraged:

- 1a. Park Road Industrial Area (Regal Way) - encourage Class B1 uses and trade counter style employment uses.
- 1b. Park Road Industrial Area (Old Sawmills Road and Pioneer Road) - encourage Class B1/B2 uses.

### **Policy 4.5B: Wicklesham Quarry**

Wicklesham Quarry will be safeguarded for employment uses (Classes B2 and B8) following the completion of quarrying activities, although any development would be required to deliver safe access across the A420, principally for pedestrian and cycle use. Employment development would be supported on this site if no other suitable sites closer to the town centre are available, providing there is demonstrable need and the following criteria have been satisfactorily addressed:

- i) appropriate transport mitigation is proposed following completion of a transport assessment to the satisfaction of the Highways Authority and District Council;
- ii) a landscape assessment is completed with any appropriate mitigation agreed with the District Council and other stakeholders;
- iii) appropriate ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are incorporated into the proposal and
- iv) given its site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation, there is a clear demonstration that any development would not harm the geological special interest of the site in consultation with Natural England and the District Council. The proposals shall incorporate measures to provide access to the protected site for the visiting public so that the special geological interest is better revealed and provision made for the protection and enhancement of the geodiversity interest of Wicklesham Quarry.

### **Policy 4.5C: Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park**

Land north west of Gloucester Street car park may be appropriate for development for mixed employment (Use Class B1) and retail (Use Class A1) uses. Proposals that include retail use must demonstrate no suitable and viable town centre site is available.

The development of the site will be contingent upon demonstrating that the proposal can be achieved by:

- i) avoiding harm to the special character and quality of the Faringdon Conservation Area and the significance of other, nearby, heritage assets and to the amenity of adjoining use;
- ii) incorporating appropriate ecological mitigation measures and compensation;
- iii) providing an acceptable drainage (surface and foul) solution; and
- iv) providing satisfactory access and servicing arrangements (including the provision of high quality pedestrian link(s) to the town centre as required by Policy 4.4D).

**Policy 4.5D: Wicklesham Farm**

Limited expansion of the Wicklesham Farm site (Use Class B1) will be permitted to occur in order to help meet some of the demand for units of this type and support the success of this location. Proposals should incorporate retention of the grade II listed barn and granary and conserve or enhance their setting.

**Policy 4.5E: Land behind Pioneer Road**

New employment development (Use Class B1) will be permitted on land behind Pioneer Road. A landscape buffer shall be provided between the site and the housing development to the north at Willes Close, which will be protected as open space.

These policies also link to NPPF paragraph 37 in aiming to minimise the distance travelled to work.

Policy 4.5A is concerned with making the best use of the existing major employment sites safeguarded in the draft Local Plan 2031, Core Policy 17, with an additional request for a high quality of design to maintain the attractive appearance of the site situated on a principal access route into the town. Other sites identified for employment in the Local Plan 2031 are considered in Section 4.5 of the FNP; these are the 4&20 site, Rogers Quarry and Volunteer Way.

However, Section 4.5 of the FNP does not consider that these sites alone would provide the number of jobs required to achieve the target for local employment, hence, Policies 4.5B and C recommend the allocation of two new sites for employment, provided they meet strict environmental and access caveats.

Policy 4.5E refers to a site (adjacent to site 1b listed in Policy 4.5A) that was designated as employment land in the previous Local Plan, but is not so proposed in the emerging Local Plan 2031. The Evidence Base Review of the FNP contests the accuracy of the consultants' reports of 2008 and 2013 that have informed the emerging Local Plan 2031; however, the FNP appreciates the sentiment of NPPF paragraph 22.

Policy 4.5F encourages the development of under used space in the town centre and links to NPPF Section 2 Ensuring the vitality of town centres.

Policies 4.5D and 4.5G are dealt with in NPPF Section 3 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy' below; however, the rural economy is also an important source of local employment. Historically, farming was the major source of employment in the parish with town itself being a centre for market gardening because of its situation on the potassium-rich lower green sand. Agricultural trades themselves now constitute 2.1% of the parish's working age population, but this is significantly higher than the national average of 1.5% [2011 Census QS606EW - Occupation (Minor Groups)]. Hence, the retention and development of jobs by re-using farm buildings is of relevance to the local economy.

Policy 4.5H requests that developers on new sites consider the employment needs of their new, and existing, residents by providing sites either on the development or contributing to sites elsewhere. The provision of mixed-use housing with home-working capacity would be encouraged as was agreed in planning application P13/V0344/FUL.

**NPPF Section 2: Ensuring the vitality of town centres**

NPPF paragraph 23 states that: 'Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period.' The NPPF issues of particular relevance to Faringdon are to:

- recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;



- define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;
- promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres;
- allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability;
- allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, set policies for meeting the identified needs in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre; and
- recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites.

NPPF Paragraph 24 states that Local Planning Authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan.

### **FNP Objectives**

Having been almost completely rebuilt after the Civil War, Faringdon's town centre was built for the horse and not for motorised traffic. The by-passing of the town, increase in car ownership and lack of proximal parking space has resulted in a decrease in both the number of shops and footfall in the town centre.

The following statements define the FNP's aspirations and actions required for improving the vitality of the town centre and, in particular, the town's retail offer:

- Support the town's existing retail businesses;
- Support the town's "destination shops" and ensure these are promoted as part of the town's visitor appeal;
- Extend the range of shops in the town - working towards meeting the bulk of local residents' weekly shopping needs within the town;
- Support the town centre as a hub for shops, services, community and leisure activities; and
- Continue to promote the market square as the heart of the town and encourage its role both as a location for businesses, community activities and markets.

### **FNP Policies**

The FNP sets out the following policies to ensure the vitality of the town centre:

#### **Policy 4.4A: Minimising the Loss of Retail Space**

Any net loss of retail (Use Class A1) space in the defined town centre will not be permitted other than where one or more of the following circumstances can be demonstrated:

- a) The site has been marketed for retail (Class A1) use for a period of one year with no viable offers received; or
- b) A replacement premises of equivalent size, function and accessibility is to be provided in the town centre in exchange so that there is no net loss; or
- c) The loss of the retail (Class A1) use is facilitated by the General Permitted Development Order 1995 (as amended) or by the policies in the Development Plan.

**Policy 4.4B: Extending the Town Centre Retail Offer**

Within the Town Centre Boundary, as defined in Figure 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan, planning permission will be granted for the change of use or redevelopment of sites currently not in retail use (Use Class A1) to retail use. Other uses that support the retail function of the town centre will be encouraged.

**Policy 4.4C: Extending the Wider Retail Offer**

Where sites become available on the edge of the town centre, or on the main routes between the town centre and the Tesco Park Road site, following the sequential approach, favourable consideration will be given to the redevelopment or change of use of those sites to retail (Use Class A1) and other uses that support the retail function of the town centre providing more suitable sites are not available within the town centre.

**Policy 4.4D: Improving Pedestrian and Cycle Links**

New developments between the town centre and the Tesco Park Road site will be expected to contribute to an enhanced pedestrian and cycle environment. Additionally, any development of the land north west of the Gloucester Street car park should contribute towards providing a high quality pedestrian link between the site and the town centre (see also Policy 4.5C).

**Policy 4.4E: Public Houses**

The retention of the town's public houses will be strongly supported and their conversion or redevelopment for other uses opposed because of the important role they play in contributing to the liveliness and vitality of the street scene, promoting a competitive environment, offering services of particular local value, and, in some cases, including important historic features. Planning applications for change of use or redevelopment for other uses will be refused unless robust evidence can be provided to show that the public house is not economically viable and is no longer required to meet the needs of the local community.

In order for the town centre to be vibrant the town centre must have an attractive retail offer and reverse the trend for local people to shop in larger nearby towns. Policy 4.4.A sets out to stem the conversion of shops to dwellings that has occurred over recent years (whilst recognising permitted development rights relating to this) and Policy 4.4B to reverse this trend. A common comment by local people is that they avoid the town centre because of the difficulty of parking. The Tesco supermarket on Park Road has a free car park, but is located in the geographical centre of the town about five minutes walk from the town centre (which is located on the northern edge of the town). Policy 4.4C is designed to persuade shoppers using the Tesco supermarket to walk to the town centre and encourage some retail development on the edge of the town centre on this route, should sites become available; e.g. the Police Station, BT telephone exchange, etc. or the land north west of Gloucester Street car park, in a sequential approach. However, it is not the wish of the FNP to encourage further retail development on the industrial estate; the intention that any retail here should remain as trade-counter type activities, car repair, etc. activities so as not to draw custom from the town centre. As stated in Policy 4.4D, new developments are expected to contribute to safe and attractive cycling and walking links to the town centre.

Recent years have seen a marked decline in the number of public houses in Faringdon. As public houses contribute to the social life of the town, especially through games and sports teams, Policy 4.4E sets out to address this decline by requiring robust evidence of non-viability.

### **NPPF Section 3: Supporting a prosperous rural economy**

NPPF paragraph 28 states: ‘Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.’

The FNP sets out the following action and objective for supporting a prosperous rural economy:

#### **FNP Objective**

The following statement defines the FNP’s aspiration and action required for supporting a prosperous rural economy:

- Support the full range of employment activities across the parish including rural jobs, whether traditional agriculture or diversified business activities.

#### **FNP Policies**

The FNP sets out the following policies for supporting a prosperous rural economy:

##### **Policy 4.5D: Wicklesham Farm**

Limited expansion of the Wicklesham Farm site (Use Class B1) will be permitted to occur in order to help meet some of the demand for units of this type and support the success of this location. Proposals should incorporate retention of the grade II listed barn and granary and conserve or enhance their setting.

##### **Policy 4.5G: Rural Diversification**

Diversification of existing farms will be supported through the reuse, conversion or adaptation of existing buildings and potential new build where economic benefits can be demonstrated, and where proposals do not negatively affect the landscape character or historical or architectural significance. New development must be sensitively designed and be of appropriate character with respect to the local context.

##### **Policy 4.13B: River Frontage**

Tourism activities that promote the section of the River Thames within the parish as an attraction will be encouraged. Appropriate activities could include moorings and other activities designed to promote tourism, complement the natural environment and support an active community.

Most of the land area covered by the FNP is rural; hence, Policy 4.5G encourages the sympathetic development of redundant farm buildings for employment in business, tourism and leisure activities (e.g. equestrianism) to secure more local employment. Wicklesham Farm, as specified in Policy 4.5D, is a good example of this kind of development and there is a high

demand for business units of this type; hence, an expansion of Wicklesham Farm is recommended although limited by its potential capacity.

Rural tourism, bullet point 3, is supported in Policy 4.13B.

#### **NPPF Section 4: Promoting sustainable transport**

NPPF paragraph 29 states that: ‘The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel.

NPPF paragraph 30 states that: ‘In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.’

NPPF paragraph 35 states that: ‘Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people.’ The NPPF advises that, where practical, development should be located and designed to take a number of issues into account, including:

- accommodating the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;
- giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities; and
- creating safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones;
- considering the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.

The NPPF also notes in paragraph 37 that ‘Planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.’

In this respect a survey of the distances travelled by residents of new house in the Vale of White Horse<sup>7</sup> showed that Faringdon residents travelled the farthest to work and shop. Hence, in addition to policies on travel within the parish Section 4.3 of the FNP requests improved bus connections particularly direct connections to towns that provide essential health and social services, such as Abingdon and Witney. Transport is closely linked to jobs, hence, the need for more local employment to avoid commuting long distances by car.

#### **FNP Objectives**

The following statements define the aspirations and actions required for promoting sustainable transport:

- Faringdon should be a safe and pleasant place for everyone - pedestrians, cyclists, old and young - to move around and spend time in.
- Faringdon should be easy to get to and from, whichever mode of transport is chosen, so that people are encouraged to live, work, shop and visit the town.
- The wider parish should be well connected to Faringdon via public transport services to enable its use as their primary service centre.
- Traffic in the town should be better managed, without inhibiting traffic flows.
- Cycling in and around the town should be encouraged.
- There should be easy bus access to neighbouring towns and villages.

#### **FNP Policies**

The FNP sets out the following policies for promoting sustainable transport:

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<sup>7</sup> Analysis of travel patterns of people living in new homes built between 2001 and 2007 in the Vale of White Horse, July 2008

**Policy 4.3A: Connections**

Ensure that new developments create attractive street connections into the town centre that encourage walking and cycling. Opportunities to create or improve routes between existing parts of the town should be maximised.

**Policy 4.3B: Streets and Spaces**

Streets and spaces, including street paving, soft landscaping, lighting and street furniture in and around the town centre should be designed to Conservation Area standards, as set out in District Council policy.

**Policy 4.3C: Shared Surfaces**

Any shared surfaces in new developments must give priority to pedestrians and cyclists over motorised vehicles with that priority clearly indicated.

**Policy 4.3D: Parking**

Proposals for delivering more off-street parking for visitors and workers in the town centre, together with a coach park outside the town centre, will be supported where they accord with other policies in this plan.

**Policy 4.3E: Footpaths and Cycleways**

New developments should contribute to the delivery of improvements to the quality and extent of the pedestrian and cycle network in and around Faringdon and connecting with the adjoining parishes (including those identified in the 2009 Farcycles' report). In addition they should contribute towards the provision of new lockable cycle parking facilities close to local amenities. These will be sought through developer contributions.

Walking and cycling are key aspects in these policies and should be encouraged. Policy 4.3A requests easy and safe connections for cyclists and pedestrians for new developments both within the town and especially to schools. In new developments, parents and children should be able to access Faringdon Community College and the proposed new primary school on Sandhill directly by walking or cycling so avoiding lengthy and tortuous car journeys because of their cul-de-sac locations.

Supporting Policy 4.3B is a statement about the poor quality of pavements and the need for better signage in accordance with the District Council's conservation area standards to create an attractive and safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians, particularly, given the narrowness of some of the streets.

Policy 4.3C is a request that clear priority is given to pedestrians and cyclists on developments with shared surfaces. Local experience is that parents with children feel unsafe on roads without defined pavements, particularly on developments with long access roads that are shared with lorries and public service vehicles. The principles of 'Living Streets' should be adopted when shared surfaces are employed.

Parking, Policy 4.3D is a perennial problem with no easy solutions. The apparent lack of easy parking is a disincentive for visitors and shoppers and impairs town centre vitality, although car parks are underused. A parking survey is being undertaken and the recommendations are awaited. However, the concept of an out-of-centre coach park to enable visitors to the town to be dropped off and collected without the coach having to stay in the town centre would improve tourism.

Faringdon has a very active cycling and walking community. Policy 4.3E supports the need for improved cycle links to adjoining parishes for both work and leisure that avoid using the busy main roads, and for safe bicycle storage; both to be supported through developer contributions.

## **NPPF Section 5: Supporting high quality communications infrastructure**

There are no specific policies in the FNP regarding telecommunications as defined in NPPF policy 5. Optical fibre connections are being laid in the town and these are considered essential for employment opportunities and home connection. Mobile phone, radio and television reception in the town is patchy because of the topology of the landscape, principally the shadowing effect of Folly Hill. Consequently, there is a comment in Section 4.7 of the FNP requesting the LPA to consider the need for householders in the conservation area to fit satellite dishes provided they are not visible from the public highway.

## **NPPF Section 6: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes**

NPPF paragraph 47 states: ‘To boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in this Framework.

NPPF paragraph 49 states: ‘Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.’

The FNP does not allocate housing sites nor does it set a population target. Because the Vale of White Horse District Council has neither an up-to-date Local Plan nor a five year supply of deliverable housing sites the FNP policies are stated to be in accord with the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 or its successor documents. However, the FNP is keen to maintain its development boundary where this is in accord with the Local Plan 2031.

Consequently, the FNP sets out the following policies and objectives in order to control growth and prevent sprawl and encroachment towards neighbouring parishes.

### **FNP Objectives**

- Additional residents would help support the critical mass of the town and help it become more self-sustaining.
- Additional population would boost the number of potential customers to the town centre, helping to reverse declining footfall and support a greater range of shops.
- Additional population would help support the business case for better public transport services, thus supporting better connections for all.
- A larger population might support the case for better community facilities within the town, including the scale and scope of health care provision.

### **FNP Policies**

The FNP sets out the following policies for delivering a wide choice of high quality homes:

#### **Policy 4.2A: Residential Development Within the Development Boundary**

Residential development within the existing development boundary of the town will be supported in principle, subject to compliance with the policies in the Development Plan. All development in Faringdon should be carefully planned to respect the special character of the town.

**Policy 4.2B: Planning Gain**

Qualifying development proposals will be expected to contribute to achieving the objectives in the Neighbourhood Plan through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions made in accordance with the Vale's CIL Strategy (once adopted, or any equivalent policies in the Local Plan 2031), planning obligations or other relevant mechanisms. The Town Council will seek to have full representation in negotiations between developers and the District and County Councils in this regard. Any planning gain requests will need to meet the tests and total impact requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 204 and 173. For developments that are capable of being charged the levy, the tests are put on a statutory basis set down in The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 Regulation 122.

In addition to Policy 4.2A regarding residential development within the existing development boundary of the town, Policy 4.2B states the expectation that developer contributions will be sought to fund the objectives stated in the FNP.

NPPF paragraph 50 states: 'To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:

- plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes);'

These aspects are dealt with in Section 4.6 *Family Housing* of the FNP. Of particular concern has been the imbalance in housing provision and range between Faringdon and the rest of the Vale of White Horse as shown by the census of 2011 and analysed in the FNP Evidence Base Review. This reveals that Faringdon had 1.5 times the Vale average of affordable/social housing, for which there is great need, and a comparative deficiency of housing in Council Tax Bands F, G, and H. A number of developments have been proposed over and above the strategic allocation proposal in the Vale of White Horse District Council Core Strategy Preferred Options 2009<sup>8</sup> including those sites previously rejected. If realised, these sites will add a further 600 houses to the combined 500 or so expected as a result of the previous strategic allocation (~380) plus known applications and completions of smaller sites (~120). These proposals have happened over the period of preparation of the FNP, hence the need to influence further development in terms of housing type to meet the needs of the Faringdon demographic distribution, which accurately matches the NPPF description of 'families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes.'

The FNP proposes the following objectives, key factors and policies for delivering a wide choice of high quality homes:

**FNP Objectives**

- Faringdon should remain a comfortable, quietish, pleasant place and not sprawl outside the proposed boundary of development as set out in the Vale Local Plan 2031.
- Any future residential development outside the town, within the rest of the parish, should be limited to meeting identified rural need or as provided for in the policies of the Development Plan.
- Faringdon should have a good choice of housing that meets local need.

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<sup>8</sup> Vale of White Horse District Council Core Strategy Preferred Options 2009 appendix\_6\_tcm4-4728[1] Faringdon sites.pdf

### Other key factors

- Affordable housing should be ‘pepper potted’ through new developments and should be indistinguishable from market housing.
- The density of new housing is of particular concern and stakeholders would prefer to see lower density development.

### FNP Policies

The FNP sets out the following additional policies for delivering a wide choice of high quality homes:

#### **Policy 4.6A: Housing Balance**

New developments should deliver a range of housing types that meet local parish needs. Proposals that provide for a range of housing types including larger houses and accommodation for the elderly will be supported.

The mix of housing should be based on current and future demographic trends, market trends, and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, service families, people of all ages with disabilities, older people, and people wishing to build their own homes), as specified in the up to date VoWH Housing Needs Assessment and 2014 Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

#### **Policy 4.6B: Self-build Housing**

Self-build housing projects will be supported in appropriate locations and in line with national and local planning policy.

### NPPF Section 7: Requiring good design

NPPF paragraph 56 states: ‘Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.’

NPPF paragraph 58 states: ‘Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

NPPF paragraph 60 states: ‘Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.’



NPPF paragraph 61 states: Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

NPPF paragraph 63 states: ‘In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.’

### **FNP Context**

There is a need to raise the standard of design across the town for both new housing and commercial developments. Any new development must be absolutely appropriate to the Faringdon context, whether location, scale, density, layout, materials or visual appearance. In this context roofscape is of paramount importance because of the highpoints in the town from which it can be seen. The text in Section 4.6 of the FNP argues for good design and that buildings should reflect the range of materials and forms found in Faringdon's traditional buildings, but should not resort to pastiche.

NPPF paragraph 61 is also dealt with above in Policies 4.3A and E in the discussion on NPPF Sustainability Policy 4 Promoting sustainable transport.

### **FNP Objectives**

The following statements define the aspirations and actions for housing and non-residential development design in the parish:

- All new development must be in keeping with local character, the design process should be clearly influenced by an analysis of local context.
- Housing developments should be steered by local parish need and form attractive family friendly streets and neighbourhoods. (NPPF paragraph 69)
- New areas of housing must connect clearly with the rest of the town. (NPPF paragraph 61)
- A review of the conservation area should inform revisions to the boundary and actions to improve the appearance and maintenance of buildings and spaces.
- All new developments should seek to respect the setting of heritage assets in the Parish and to avoid harm to their significance.

### **FNP Policies**

#### **Policy 4.7A: Materials and Roofscape**

New buildings should be constructed using sympathetic building materials in keeping with the local character and styles in the town and parish. The roofscape should be designed with careful regard for the potential impacts on the townscape and the surrounding landscape. In the case of residential development, regard must be given to the up-to-date Residential Design Guide SPD produced by the District Council.

#### **Policy 4.7B: Resource Consumption**

All new buildings and major refurbishments should minimise their energy, water and resource consumption and, where possible, exceed the minimum standards set by legislation. District heating schemes will be strongly supported. New developments should provide sufficient space for recycling and composting containers in order to encourage recycling and composting through the District Council schemes or home composting for garden use.

**Policy 4.7C: Housing Design**

Each new housing development should respond to its local context through appropriate use of scale, form, height, detailing and materials. Exceptions will be made for outstanding or innovative design in accordance with paragraph 63 of the NPPF.

The density of development should be consistent with the Development Plan.

All new development should be well linked by foot and cycle connections to the town centre and schools.

**Policy 4.7D: Secured by Design**

All developments should incorporate the principles of *Secured by Design* (SBD) and, where appropriate, seek to achieve SBD accreditation to ensure that a safe and sustainable community is maintained.

**Policy 4.7E: Visual Impact**

All alterations or new build of commercial buildings, and especially those that are publicly visible or that form gateways to Faringdon, should be of a scale and form appropriate to their location and landscape setting and will be expected to create a high quality environment combining the best modern design with local influences.

Policy 4.7A relates to NPPF paragraph 58 particularly bullet point 4.

Policy 4.7B relates to NPPF paragraph 58 particularly bullet point 1, considering a lifetime of use including energy use. The FNP requires that each development must make every conceivable effort to reduce resource consumption through the design.

Policy 4.7C relates to NPPF paragraph 58, but with due recognition of paragraph 63.

Policy 4.7D relates to NPPF paragraph 58 bullet point 5 (and paragraph 69 bullet point 2); it was included by the request of Thames Valley Police.

Policy 4.7E relates to NPPF paragraph 58 bullet point 6.

**NPPF Section 8: Promoting healthy communities*****Promoting healthy communities***

NPPF paragraph 69 states: ‘Planning policies and decisions, in turn, should aim to achieve places which promote:

- opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity;
- safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.

NPPF paragraph 70 states: ‘To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
- guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community’s ability to meet its day-to-day needs;

- ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community; and
- ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.’

### **FNP Context**

Most of the issues made in NPPF paragraphs 69 and 70 are dealt with in FNP Sections 4.8 Ensuring Appropriate Supportive Infrastructure and 4.10 Sport and Leisure, although some are considered elsewhere.

NPPF paragraph 69 bullet point 1 is dealt with in FNP Section 4.7 bullet point 2 above ‘Housing developments should be steered by local parish need and form attractive family friendly streets and neighbourhoods.’

NPPF paragraph 69 bullet point 2 is dealt with in FNP Policy 4.7E Secured by Design.

NPPF paragraph 69 bullet point 3 is dealt with in FNP Policies 4.3A, 4.3C and 4.3D discussed in NPPF Sustainability Policy 4: Promoting sustainable transport.

In addition, the following NPF policy addresses the points made in NPPF paragraph 70 bullet point 1. It identifies a potential site for community use should it become available.

#### **Policy 4.9A: Infant School Site Redevelopment**

Should the Infant School on Canada Lane become vacant, proposals to reuse the existing buildings for community use will be encouraged. The site may present opportunities for additional low key, sensitively designed, development on that part of the site within the development boundary.

All future uses and/or development must pay special regard to the desire to preserve the historic character of the School site and its low density edge of settlement location. Proposals that enhance the character and setting will be encouraged.

FNP Section 4.8 lists the following infrastructural requirements to support the requirements of a healthy community some of which have been discussed in the relevant sections above:

- Improvements to bus services including a long distance coach stop.
- Better access to the rail network through the re-opening of a railway station at either Grove or Challow with bus and cycle links
- Provision of new cycle routes and parking.
- Public realm improvements in the town centre / conservation area including enhanced pedestrian routes to the Tesco store.
- Improved road, footpath and cycleway linkages to sport and leisure facilities.
- Provision of additional parking facilities, including coach parking
- Enhanced pedestrian access routes into the wider countryside.
- Enhancement and maintenance of Faringdon Country Park in liaison with existing land owners and operators.
- Improved sport and leisure provision
- Additional allotments.
- Increased youth provision in the town including an extension of activities at the existing FAZE site and a new facility located more centrally in the town.
- Improved health infrastructure including additional social / health facilities and services to meet the needs of an increasing population, a new health and well-being centre in the town.
- Greater provision of extra care accommodation, and enhanced elderly care linked to a new health and well-being centre.
- The provision of intermediate and respite care for local residents.

- New and improved community facilities including a community centre and entertainment venue.
- A new museum or visitor centre to support tourism.
- Infrastructure to support the sale and storage of local produce.

The following FNP policy sets out the mechanism for funding the requirements of a healthy community:

**Policy 4.8A: Improving the Infrastructure**

All qualifying developments will be required to demonstrate provision of appropriate new facilities on site and provision of, or contributions towards, off-site facilities. This will be secured through the use of planning conditions, planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy if and when adopted by the Vale of White Horse District Council.

With respect to the social and recreational aspects of NPPF paragraph 70, NPF Section 4.10 sets out the following objectives to promote a healthy community:

**FNP Objectives**

Faringdon should continue to act as the local hub for sports and leisure facilities. Existing facilities should be regularly updated to ensure they keep pace with local demand and maintain a high quality service.

- New facilities should be added to ensure Faringdon provides a high standard provision and a wide choice of sports and leisure opportunities.
- Existing green spaces should be well protected and new spaces provided to support a good level of provision across the town.
- The Faringdon Country Park proposal should be fully explored and delivered as far as possible.
- Young people should be closely consulted and involved in future decisions about provision.
- Provision should cater for all ages and abilities and encourage efficient use throughout the day and evening.

## **FNP Policies**

The following FNP policies are designed to meet the objectives of NPPF paragraphs 69 and 70 with the aim of promoting a healthy community:

### **Policy 4.10A: Faringdon Country Park**

Development proposals that improve leisure, sport, recreation and wildlife habitat and associated facilities at Faringdon Country Park will be supported.

### **Policy 4.10B: Sports Facilities**

Proposals for extension of existing sports facilities, in particular at the Leisure Centre, or new sports facilities in the town, will be supported. Proposals for a floodlit multi-use all-weather pitch will be strongly supported.

### **Policy 4.10C: Allotments**

The development of new serviced sites for allotments will be supported. New developments in excess of 20 houses will make provision either on-site or off-site at a level of provision to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority based on an assessment of need in a locality and so as not to render a development scheme non-viable.

### **Policy 4.10D: Local Green Space Designation**

To ensure local green spaces are protected and enhanced. The areas listed below and defined in the Appendix to the Neighbourhood Plan are designated as local green spaces:

- a) Tucker Park (see Figure TP1)
- b) Oakwood Park (see Figure OP1)
- c) Pitts Park (see Figure PP1)
- d) Town Park (see Figure ToP1)
- e) Faringdon Folly Circular Woodland (see Figure FW1)
- f) Faringdon Country Park and Adjacent Sports Pitches (see Figure CP1)
- g) The Site Known as Humpty Hill: (see Figure HH1)
- h) Marlborough Gardens Play Area (see Figure MG1)
- i) Coleshill Drive Play Area and Open Space and Adjacent Woodland (see Figure CD1)
- j) Volunteer Way Play Area and Open Space (see Figure VW1)
- k) Folly Park View Play Area (see Figure FP1)

Policy 4.10A sets out the need to improve the existing Country Park into a more comprehensive facility. This is developed in the Non-Statutory Appendix. Policy 4.10B supports the extension of sports facilities or development of new sports facilities with particular emphasis on the need for an all-weather pitch.

Policy 4.10C recognises the unfulfilled demand for allotments.

Policy 4.10D designates open spaces that are of importance to the community as Green Spaces.

## **Schools**

NPPF paragraph 72 states: ‘The Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools; and
- work with schools promoters to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

### **FNP context**

State school provision in Faringdon is provided through the Faringdon Academy of Schools which undertook a strategy consultation in parallel with the FNP. Section 4.10 School Provision of the FNP states that a key objective of the Faringdon Academy of Schools is to ensure that Faringdon provides a school place in the town for every local child that needs one. Hence an important objective of FNP Section 4.8 Ensuring Appropriate Supportive Infrastructure is:

- Provision of new school places in line with Faringdon Academy of Schools policy.

### ***Access to open spaces***

NPPF paragraph 73 states: ‘Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.’

NPPF paragraph 74 states: ‘Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.’

NPPF paragraph 76 states: ‘Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.’

NPPF paragraph 77 states: ‘The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.’

### **FNP Context**

NPPF sections 76 and 77 permit local communities through Neighbourhood Plans to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them subject to certain conditions.

The FNP intends to designate the following areas as Green Spaces under these provisions:

1. Tucker Park Recreation Ground: Policy 4.10D a)
2. Oakwood Park: Policy 4.10D b)
3. Pitts Park and Adjacent Green Space either side of Berners Way: Policy 4.10D c)
4. Town Park: Policy 4.10D d)
5. Faringdon Folly Circular Woodland: Policy 4.10D e)
6. Faringdon Country Park and Adjacent Sports Pitches: Policy 4.10D f)
7. The Site Known as Humpty Hill: Policy 4.10D g)
8. Marlborough Gardens Play Area: Policy 4.10D h)
9. Coleshill Drive Play Area and Open Space and Adjacent Woodland: Policy 4.10D i)
10. Volunteer Way Play Area and Open Space: Policy 4.10D j)
11. Folly Park View Play Area: Policy 4.10D k)

### ***Public rights of way***

NPPF paragraph 75 states: ‘Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.’

### **FNP Context**

A major theme of the FNP is for improved connectivity through walking and cycling both within the town and to the wider country side. This has been discussed in NPPF Sustainability Policy 4: Promoting sustainable transport above with particular reference to FNP Policy 4.3E.

### **NPPF Section 9 Protecting Green Belt land**

Faringdon does not have any formally designated Green Belt land.

### **NPPF Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change**

NPPF paragraph 95 states: ‘To support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should:

- plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; and
- when setting any local requirement for a building’s sustainability, do so in a way consistent with the Government’s zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards.’

NPPF paragraph 96 states: ‘In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:

- comply with adopted Local Plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and
- take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.’

NPPF paragraph 97 states: ‘To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should:

- have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;

- design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;
- consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources;
- support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside such areas being taken forward through neighbourhood planning; and
- identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.’

### **FNP Context**

Regarding NPPF paragraph 95, FNP Policy 4.7B: Resource Consumption states ‘All new buildings and major refurbishments should minimise their energy consumption and resource use and, where possible, exceed the minimum standards set by legislation.’

Regarding NPPF paragraph 96 and 97 bullet point 5, FNP Policy 4.7B: Resource Consumption states ‘District heating schemes will be strongly supported.’

Regarding NPPF paragraph 97 bullet point 4: The Thames at Radcot has the potential for development as a micro hydroelectricity scheme of low impact to the surroundings and environment and have the potential to supply 30-60 kW of electrical power, subject to Environment Agency permits. A proposal is being prepared to develop this scheme as a community project. This is supported along with other alternative energy schemes in the following FNP policy.

### **FNP Policy**

#### **Policy 4.13C: Alternative Energy Schemes**

A micro hydroelectricity scheme at Radcot on the River Thames will be supported as will other alternative energy schemes.

### ***Flood risk***

NPPF paragraph 99 states: ‘Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.’

Flood risk is considered in the FNP Sustainability Appraisal Section 6.7. There are no specific policies regarding flood risk in the FNP.

### **NPPF Section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment**

NPPF paragraph 109 states: ‘The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in



biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

- preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and
- remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

With regard to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), paragraph 118 states that ‘proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest... should not normally be permitted’.

### **FNP Context**

Regarding NPPF paragraph 109, FNP Section 4.12 *Landscape*, sets out the importance of the following:

- Converting surplus older rural buildings to provide attractive business and enterprise space within the countryside as typified by Wicklesham Farm;
- Encouraging sales of high quality local produce to become a major feature of the town centre, both in shops and through the market;
- Reinforcing and extending facilities for walking, cycling and other sports in the countryside.

These opportunities, which have all been included in sections above, should be regarded as important steps for the future of the parish.

### **Objectives**

The Neighbourhood Plan proposes the following aspirations for the wider landscape in the parish:

- The important landscape setting of Faringdon should be protected
- A stronger connection between the surrounding countryside and Faringdon town should be encouraged.
- Pedestrian and cycle access into the wider countryside and to the Thames from the town should be enhanced.
- The sale and prominence of local produce in the town centre should be improved.

As with the discussion of NPPF sections 76 and 77 above, in NPPF Sustainability Policy 8: Promoting healthy communities, the FNP intends to designate existing open spaces as Green Spaces under these provisions:

With regard to NPPF paragraph 109, bullet point 5, FNP Policy 4.5B Wicklesham Quarry advocates the conversion of the worked-out Wicklesham Quarry for employment, but with a landscape assessment, appropriate mitigation agreed with the District Council and other stakeholders; appropriate ecological mitigation and enhancement measures and a clear demonstration that any development would not harm the geological special interest of the site in consultation with Natural England and the District Council. As part of the site is an SSSI (principally, the quarry walls) and of great significance to geologists, especially those involved in petroleum exploration, access to the protected site will be guaranteed. It is considered that sympathetic development for employment use with a defined buffer, rather than its reversion to farmland, would afford better access to the SSSI.

Another potential employment site where environmental considerations are paramount is presented for consideration in FNP Policy 4.5C Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park provided there is appropriate ecological mitigation.

## **NPPF Section 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**

NPPF paragraph 126 states: ‘Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

### **FNP Context**

English Heritage have commented that ‘the 2013 Heritage at Risk records show no Grade I or II\* buildings or scheduled monuments at risk in Faringdon. The Conservation Area is also not considered to be at risk in the 2013 Register, although we note the Town Council’s concerns about the condition of the streets.’

In FNP Section 4.3 Connections, there is a statement: ‘For any schemes that are considered in the conservation area it is important that appropriate design standards are applied to signage, street furniture and elements such as tactile paving to create an appropriate context for the historic buildings.’ Most of the text relating to the conservation area is in FNP Section 4.7 Design. Regarding new developments it states: ‘New housing should be required to respond to the town context. In central areas, and particularly within and close to the conservation area, there will be an expectation that housing will closely reflect the nature of the historic buildings in form, materials, scale and massing.’ ‘Faringdon is an historic market town, and as such needs to be developed and maintained appropriately. Its history and buildings are a substantial part of its uniqueness.’

The following objectives are set out concerning conserving and enhancing the historic environment:

### **FNP Objectives**

- All new development must be in keeping with local character, the design process should be clearly influenced by an analysis of local context.
- A review of the conservation area should inform revisions to the boundary and actions to improve the appearance and maintenance of buildings and spaces.
- All new developments should seek to respect the setting of heritage assets in the Parish and to avoid harm to their significance.

The FNP recommends that greater emphasis be placed on the quality and management of the conservation area to ensure that it is protected and enhanced and that a conservation area appraisal and management plan are required. Also, the conservation area boundary should be reviewed; local stakeholders have suggested the following areas for possible inclusion in the conservation area:

- The part of Coxwell Road including the former Cottage Hospital;
- Bromsgrove, including The Swan Public House;

- Station Road and the old railway station buildings;
- The old school house on Stanford Road;
- The original school building at the Infant School; and
- Parts of Ferndale Street.

An issue of concern to English Heritage is the recommendation that the land north west of Gloucester Street car park, in the conservation area, described above in Policy 4.5C, be considered an appropriate site to be allocated as a mixed employment and retail development. This site was previously the subject of an application for a supermarket, supported by the District Council, but rejected as a sequential on site on inspection<sup>9</sup>.

### **NPPF Section 13 Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals**

Minerals are not within the remit of Neighbourhood Plans; however, the district is an important source of soft sand and gravel and Faringdon Town Council has taken an active part in Oxfordshire County Council's consultations on mineral requirements. There are currently no active quarries in the parish, but there is quarrying in neighbouring parishes with a new quarry planned on the edge of Little Coxwell parish of which only a small part is in Great Faringdon. The main concern is the impact of quarry traffic on local roads.

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<sup>9</sup> Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/A/10/2143419; 19-25 Park Road, Faringdon, SN7 7BP; <http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk>.

## **SECTION 2: Delivering Sustainable Development**

### **2.1 Requirement**

The FNP must contribute to sustainable development as defined in the NPPF and summarised in section 1.1 of this Basic Conditions Statement.

NPPF paragraph 7 states: ‘There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.’

To support the development of the FNP, a Sustainability Appraisal process has been carried out. This has considered the social, economic and environmental elements of the plan, and has sought to maximise the FNP’s contribution to sustainable development.

### **2.2 Fit of FNP Objectives and Policies with Sustainable Development**

#### ***Delivering Economic Sustainability***

The FNP aims to enable at least 38% of the working age population to find employment in Faringdon by increasing the allocation of employment land.

#### **FNP Objectives**

Employment objectives are listed in section 1.3 above, under NPPF Section 1: Building a strong, competitive economy.

Infrastructure objectives are listed in section 1.3 above, under NPPF Section 8: Promoting healthy communities.

#### **FNP Policies**

FNP Policies 4.5A-G will deliver economic sustainability by:

Making the best use of existing employment sites in Policy 4.5A: Existing Employment Sites and Policy 4.5D: Wicklesham Farm;

Allocating new employment sites in Policy 4.5B: Wicklesham Quarry and Policy 4.5C: Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park, or securing previously allocated employment sites in Policy 4.5E: Land Behind Pioneer Road;

Encouraging better use of town centre space in Policy 4.5F: Town Centre Employment;

Supporting the redevelopment of underused or new farm buildings in Policy 4.5G: Rural Diversification;

Securing planning gain contributions through Policy 4.8A: Improving the Infrastructure.

Policies supporting a vibrant town centre include: Policy 4.4A: Minimising the Loss of Retail Space, Policy 4.4B: Extending the Town Centre Retail Offer and Policy 4.4C: Extending the Wider Retail Offer.

### ***Delivering Social Sustainability***

The FNP does not allocate housing, but supports the emerging Local Plan 2031 in Policy 4.2A on residential development within the Development Boundary.

### **FNP Objectives**

Objectives supporting social sustainability are listed in section 1.3 above, under NPPF Section 2: Ensuring the vitality of town centres, NPPF Section 4: Promoting sustainable transport, NPPF Section 6: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes, NPPF Section 7: Requiring good design and NPPF Section 8: Promoting healthy communities.

In addition, FNP *Section 4.10 A Caring Community*, advocates the following objectives regarding health and care provision acknowledging Faringdon's higher proportion over those over 85 than the district and national average:

- Faringdon must provide a strong and high quality range of health services to support the wider parish needs.
- Faringdon must serve its ageing population well, ensuring high quality accommodation and health facilities.
- Enhanced public transport connections must be provided to ensure easy access to larger facilities further afield such as hospitals.
- Social facilities that can accommodate a variety of functions should be provided in the town and provision should keep pace with the growth of the population.
- Future infrastructure requirements will be reviewed periodically in the Action Plan

### **FNP Policies**

Policy 4.4D: Improving Pedestrian and Cycle Links advocates improved links to the Tesco site and Policy 4.4E: Public Houses is designed to avoid the closure of public houses without robust evidence to the contrary.

In addition to Policy 4.4D, policies to promote sustainable transport and accessible local services include: Policy 4.3A: Connections, Policy 4.3B: Streets and Spaces, Policy 4.3C: Shared Surfaces, Policy 4.3D: Parking, Policy 4.3E: Footpaths and Cycleways.

FNP policies supporting the delivery of a high quality built environment include: Policy 4.6A: Housing Balance, Policy 4.6B: Self-build Housing, Policy 4.7A: Materials and Roofscape, Policy 4.7B: Resource Consumption, Policy 4.7C: Housing Design, Policy 4.7D: Adoption of 'Secured by Design' and Policy 4.7E: Visual Impact.

FNP policies supporting social and cultural well-being include: Policy 4.9A: Infant School Site Redevelopment, Policy 4.10A: Faringdon Country Park, Policy 4.10B: Sports Facilities and Policy 4.10C: Allotments and Policy 4.10D Local Green Space Designation.

Finally, policies supporting health and care provision are shown below:

#### **Policy 4.11A: Health and Care Provision**

New development must support the expansion of local health and care facilities to meet the need for these services in the town bearing in mind the extra demands on them as a result of increased longevity and the higher proportion of those over 85 in the population. (Census 2001 and 2011)

**Policy 4.11B: Care for the Elderly**

New development must support the provision of specialist accommodation for the elderly who live in or wish to live in Faringdon. New development will contribute towards a health and wellbeing centre as a central piece in the town's welfare provision.

***Delivering Environmental Sustainability*****FNP Objectives**

FNP objectives supporting social sustainability are listed in section 1.3 above, under Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, NPPF Section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, NPPF Section 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

**FNP Policies**

FNP policies supporting environmental sustainability include: Policy 4.7B: Resource Consumption and, Policy 4.13C: Alternative Energy Schemes

**2.3 FNP Sustainability Appraisal*****Screening Report***

A Screening Report was undertaken by URS to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the emerging (FNP), and prepared in accordance with European Directive 2001/42/EC ('the SEA Directive') and the transposing Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ('the SEA Regulations').

***Habitats Directive***

The Screening Report stated: 'In terms of the Habitats Directive, the closest European designated site to the plan area is located 11 km away to the south east of the plan area at Hackpen Hill Special Area of Conservation. Potential impacts on the site, including through recreational pressures, have been considered through the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process carried out for Vale of White Horse Local Plan. This has established that most issues are likely to arise from households living within 4-5km of the site, including in Wantage. As such, in the context of the HRA carried out for the Local Plan, the FNP is unlikely to lead to additional pressures on the Hackpen Hill SAC.'

***Screening Report Conclusions***

The Screening Report stated that: 'the FNP sets a framework for four new employment sites in the plan area and two additional residential sites over and above the Strategic Sites proposed by the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 1. It also proposes a Country Park in the plan area. As the sites are unlikely to be allocated as Strategic or Local Sites within the Vale of White Horse Local Plan, they are less likely to be assessed through the higher level SEA processes carried out for the Vale of White Horse Local Plan.'

Of particular significance were Policies 4.5B and C relating to the allocation of Wicklesham Quarry as an employment (B2/B8) site and of the Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park as a mixed use (A1/B1) site, respectively.

For this reason the Screening Report concluded that these additional proposals should be assessed through an SEA-compliant process for the FNP.

***FNP Sustainability Appraisal Conclusions***

A Sustainability Appraisal was undertaken by URS. It concluded in paragraph 15.1.1 that: '*the draft plan is likely to lead to positive effects in terms of the 'historic environment and landscape', 'population and communities', 'health and wellbeing', 'transportation' and 'economy and enterprise' sustainability objectives. These benefits largely relate to the strong*

*focus of the FNP on improving the vitality and self-containment of Faringdon, improving employment and economic opportunities, supporting enhancements to green infrastructure provision, and the plan's focus on protecting the town's distinctive characteristics.'*

Paragraph 15.1.1 continued: *'the FNP will help initiate a range of beneficial approaches in relation to 'air quality', 'climate change' and 'water resources and flood risk'. However these are not considered as significant positive effects as the delivery of the employment allocations through the FNP will inevitably lead to some adverse effects in relation to these sustainability topics. For these topics therefore, the draft plan approach will limit the potential magnitude of adverse effects linked to the delivery of new and intensified employment uses in Faringdon.'*

Paragraph 15.1.3 concluded: *'Whilst it is anticipated that the potential negative effects of the development of employment sites can in most cases be minimised (including at the nationally designated Wicklesham Quarry) the development of employment uses at the site north west of Gloucester Street Car Park has the potential to lead to **adverse effects** in relation to biodiversity and the historic environment. These effects will therefore need to be carefully managed with appropriate mitigation and avoidance measures if the site is taken forward.'*

### ***Sustainability Appraisal Recommendations for consideration during the implementation of the FNP***

Following the conclusions listed above, paragraph 15.1.4 of the Sustainability Appraisal makes five recommendations for consideration during the implementation of the FNP. These are summarised as follows:

1. The development of employment uses at the north west of Gloucester Street Car Park site should seek to limit the loss of existing areas of woodland.
2. A coordinated and joined up approach to green infrastructure provision in Faringdon should be undertaken in conjunction with existing green infrastructure work being carried out by VWHDC and at the county level.
3. All development in and adjacent to the Faringdon Conservation Area should be carried out in conjunction with, once prepared, the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.
4. Faringdon-wide ecological enhancements should be promoted as part of the development of a coordinated green infrastructure strategy for the area. Biodiversity improvements can also be carried out in conjunction with the aims of the Conservation Target Areas present in the parish.
5. To further support the aim to create a foot/cycle bridge across the A420, there is potential for the provision of a high quality pedestrian and cycle link to these sites to be an explicit condition of planning permission.

### ***Responses to SA recommendations for consideration during implementation of the FNP Recommendation 1)***

It is considered that FNP Policy 4.5C: Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park contains adequate protection for the existing areas of woodland in condition ii) 'incorporating appropriate ecological mitigation measures and compensation'. Should this site be brought forward for development, conditions limiting the loss of woodland will be imposed in the planning process as this site is in the Conservation Area.

**Recommendation 2)**

Policies 4.8A, 4.10A, 4.10C, 4.10D and the site designations in Section 4.10 of the FNP will deliver open space provision in accordance with Core Policy 35 *Green Infrastructure* of the emerging VoWHDC Local Plan 2031 once it is implemented.

**Recommendation 3)**

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, will be undertaken when funding is available. Development in and adjacent to the Faringdon Conservation Area will be carried out in conjunction with the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and in accordance with Core Policy 38 *The Historic Environment* of the emerging VoWHDC Local Plan 2031.

**Recommendation 4)**

The FNP will promote both Faringdon-wide ecological enhancements and the development of a coordinated green infrastructure strategy in accordance with Core Policy 35 *Green Infrastructure* of the emerging VoWHDC Local Plan 2031; and biodiversity improvements in conjunction with the Conservation Target Area in accordance with Core Policy 38 *The Historic Environment* of the emerging VoWHDC Local Plan 2031.

**Recommendation 5)**

Rather than specify the means of crossing the A420, Policy 4.5B specifies ‘any development would require to deliver *safe access* over the A420’, as other means of crossing the A420 in a safe manner could be applicable. This would be done in accordance with Core Policy 29 *Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility* of the emerging VoWHDC Local Plan 2031.



### SECTION 3: General Conformity with the Strategic Policies of the Area Development Plan

#### Strategic Policies in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan, Adopted 2011

**Table 1: Assessment of the general conformity of the FNP with the relevant strategic policies in the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011**

All FNP policies are designed to be in general conformity with the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 and the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031(parts 1 and 2) or its successor document(s).

Policy Number	Policy Description	Relevance to FNP policies
GS1	Developments in Existing Settlement	GS1 is out of date whilst there is no five year housing land supply. Until this is adopted NPPF paragraph 14 applies. The FNP does not allocate housing sites. Policy 4.2A is in accord with that identified in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031(parts 1 and 2) or its successor document(s).
GS2	Development in the Countryside	GS2 is out of date whilst there is no five year housing land supply. The FNP does not allocate housing sites, but is in conformity with GS2. FNP Policy 4.5G is in accord with the Development Plan. Until this is adopted NPPF paragraphs 14 and 55 apply.
GS6	Redevelopment of buildings outside settlements	The principle of redevelopment of buildings outside settlements contained in GS6 is not consistent with NPPF. Therefore paragraphs 22, 28, 51 and 55 of the NPPF constitute the strategic policy in relation to this issue., FNP Policy 4.5G supports the redevelopment of redundant farm buildings, with local context caveats, for employment, in conformity with these paragraphs
GS7	Re-use of vernacular buildings outside settlements	The principle of redevelopment of buildings outside settlements contained in GS7 is not consistent with NPPF. Therefore paragraphs 22, 28, 51 and 55 of the NPPF constitute the strategic policy in relation to this issue., FNP Policy 4.5G supports the redevelopment of redundant farm buildings, with local context caveats, for employment, in conformity with these paragraphs .
GS8	Re-use of non vernacular buildings outside settlements	The principle of redevelopment of buildings outside settlements contained in GS8 is not consistent with NPPF. Therefore paragraphs 22, 28, 51 and 55 of the NPPF constitute the strategic policy in relation to this issue., FNP Policy 4.5G supports the redevelopment of redundant farm buildings, with local context caveats, for employment, in conformity with these paragraphs
DC1	Design	FNP Policies 4.7 A-E advocate good design in regard to the up-to-date Residential Design Guide SPD and NPPF paragraphs 59-66. Policy 4.7A requires new buildings to use materials that are in keeping with local character, which is in direct conformity with DC1. Policy 4.7C refers to responding to the local context in respect of scale, form, height, detailing and materials, again, in direct conformity with DC1.
DC3	Design against crime	FNP Policy 4.7D specifically advocates the principle of ‘Secured by Design’ recommended by Thames Valley Police in accordance with NPPF paragraph 58, bullet point 5 and in conformity with DC3.

DC4	Public art	The National Planning Practice Guidance suggests that contributions to public art are not compliant with the CIL tests. Policy 4.2B Expects that qualifying development proposals will contribute to achieving the objectives in the FNP through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions made in accordance with the Vale's CIL Strategy (once adopted, or any equivalent policies in the Local Plan 2031), planning obligations or other relevant mechanisms but there is no reference to contributions for public art in the FNP.
DC5	Access	FNP Policies 4.3A, C and E, 4.4D, 4.5B and 4.7C all promote encouraging safe pedestrian and cyclist connections throughout the town. These policies and many of the objectives of the FNP are in conformity with DC5 and NPPF paragraphs 35, 59 and 75.
DC6	Landscaping	FNP Policy 4.3B encourages appropriate hard and soft landscaping in and around the town centre. This is in direct conformity with DC6.
DC7	Waste collection and recycling	FNP Policy 4.7B requires new developments to provide sufficient space for recycling and composting, in direct conformity with DC7.
DC8	The provision of infrastructure and services	FNP Policy 4.8A requires provision of, or contribution towards, new facilities, which is in conformity with DC8. A list of recommended infrastructure improvements is included in FNP Section 4.8.
DC9	The impact of development on neighbouring uses	FNP Policies 4.5B and C advocate the development of sites for mixed B1/A1 or industrial use B1/B8, respectively. The environmental constraints are identified as being paramount in respect of the development of these sites in conformity with DC9.
DC10	The effect of neighbouring or previous uses on new development	The FNP Policies 4.5B and C advocate the development of sites for mixed B1/A1 or industrial use B1/B8, respectively in conformity with DC10 for those occupying the site. The FNP does not allocate housing sites, but it would be expected that developments would be in conformity with DC10.
DC12	Water quality and resources	FNP Policies 4.5B and C advocate the development of sites for mixed B1/A1 or industrial use B1/B8, respectively. Environmental constraints are identified as being paramount in respect of the development of these sites. This would include the impact on water resources in conformity with DC12.
DC13	Flood risk and water run-off	DC13 is not consistent with the NPPF; therefore, paragraphs 100 – 104 of the NPPF constitute the strategic policy in relation to this issue. Flood risk is reviewed in the FNP Sustainability Appraisal. There are no specific policies relating to flood risk or water run-off in the FNP.
DC14	Flood risk and water run-off	DC14 is not consistent with the NPPF; therefore, paragraphs 103 of the NPPF constitute the strategic policy in relation to this issue. Flood risk is reviewed in the FNP Sustainability Appraisal. There are no specific policies relating to flood risk or water run-off in the FNP.
TR5	The National Cycle network	The FNP does not advocate inhibiting the use of any part of the existing footpath or cycle network and therefore is in conformity with TR5. Furthermore, the FNP actively promotes cycling as sustainable transport and proposes an enhanced cycle path network around Faringdon through Policies 4.3A, C and E and 4.4D.

TR7	Rail Services-Grove Station	The FNP supports the reopening of either Grove or Challow stations, in Sections 4.3 and 4.8, in conformity with TR7, and specifies the provision of good bus and cycle links between Faringdon and the new station.
HE1	Preservation and enhancement: implications for development	Section 2 of the Non-Statutory Appendix refers to the plan for a Town Characterisation Study to inform a Conservation Area Boundary Review and Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the Faringdon Town Centre Conservation Area. FNP Policy 4.5C emphasises that development of the site (NW of Gloucester St. car park) <i>must avoid harm to the significance of nearby heritage assets and to the amenity of adjoining uses</i> . Also any development or redevelopment on sites 1, 4 and 5, as shown in Figure 6, <i>should conserve or enhance the special architectural and historic character of the Conservation Area</i> . This is in conformity with HE1.
HE4	Preservation and enhancement: implications for development	The FNP is in conformity with HE4. An objective of FNP Section 4.7 is <i>that all new developments should seek to respect the setting of heritage assets in the Parish and to avoid harm to their significance</i> . Also FNP Section 4.7E paragraph <i>Visual Impact</i> states that <i>initiatives such as green roofs and photovoltaic arrays will also be encouraged where they do not conflict with key views of the town's roofscape or harm either the setting of listed buildings</i> .
HE5	Development involving alterations to a listed building	No developments to listed buildings are proposed in the FNP.
HE7	Change of use of listed building	No change of use to a listed building is proposed in the FNP. FNP Policy 4.5C emphasises that development of the site (NW of Gloucester St. car park) which may lie within the curtilage of a listed building <i>must avoid harm to the significance of nearby heritage assets and to the amenity of adjoining uses</i> in conformity with HE7.
HE8	Historic parks and gardens	There are no proposals for developments within an historic park or garden. The only such is Buscot Park and Garden, only an extremely small part of which lies within the FNP area and is remote from the development boundary.
HE9, 10, 11	Archaeology	There are no proposals for developments with known archaeological remains. All new developments must conform with HE9-11.
NE3	Geologically important sites	Policy 4.5B regarding Wicklesham Quarry specifies that <i>employment development would be supported on this site if no other suitable sites closer to the town centre are available, providing there is demonstrable need and the following criteria have been satisfactorily addressed there is a clear demonstration that any development would not harm the geological special interest of the site in consultation with Natural England and the District Council. The proposals shall incorporate measures to provide access to the protected site for the visiting public so that the special geological interest is better revealed and provision made for the protection and enhancement of the geodiversity interest of Wicklesham Quarry</i> . This is in conformity with NE3.
NE4	Other sites of nature conservation value	FNP Policy 4.5C emphasises that any development of this site (NW of Gloucester St car park) must incorporate appropriate ecological mitigation measures and compensation in conformity with NE4.

NE7	The North Vale Corallian Ridge	Policy 4.7E requires development to be sensitive to its landscape setting. Section 4.12 gives further information about the importance of the Corallian Ridge setting to the town and sets objectives to ensure the important landscape setting is protected. This is in conformity with NE7.
NE12	Great Western Community Forest	Good housing design is encouraged in Section 4.7. Tree planting on new developments is expected in accordance with NE12.
H4	Housing sites in Faringdon	These sites have all been completed or are under construction.
H10	Development in the five main settlements	The FNP is in conformity as it applies to Faringdon. No new housing developments are proposed in the FNP.
H15	Housing densities	FNP Policy 4.7C requires that densities should be consistent with the Development Plan.
H16	Size of dwelling and lifetime homes	FNP Policy 4.6A advocates that developments should deliver a range of housing types to meet local needs, with a range of housing types including larger houses and accommodation for the elderly. There is a desire that smaller houses and flats should be designed so as to be suitable for an ageing population, with regard for Lifetime Homes standards. This is conformity with H16 and Core Policies 21 and 23 of the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part 1.
H17	Affordable housing	Policy 4.6A requires a mix of housing based on the most up to date Housing Needs Assessment, which is in general conformity with H17 and Core Policy 18 of the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part 1.
H19	Special housing needs	FNP Policy 4.6A supports the concept of Lifetime Homes standards. Policy 4.11B states that new development must support the provision of specialist accommodation for the elderly The FNP is in conformity with H19 and Core Policy 23 of the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part 1.
H23	Open space in new housing development	There isn't a policy in the FNP that refers to open space within developments, but Policy 4.10D aims to protect existing green spaces in existing developments.
CF1	Protection of existing services and facilities	The FNP does not propose the loss of any land or buildings in community use and actually seeks to protect and retain such uses such as Policy 4.4E, which seeks retention of public houses. Policy 4.9A only suggests redevelopment of the Infant School site for community use but only once the site has become vacant.
CF2	Provision of new community services and facilities	Proposed new and updated community services and facilities listed in Section 4.8A and supported in Policy 4.8A will be in conformity with CF2.
L1	Playing space	The FNP has no proposals that would result in the loss of playing space in conformity with L1. Policy 4.10B: proposes the extension of sports facilities in the town and Policy 4.10D aims to protect existing playing and recreation spaces.

L17	The River Thames	Policy 4.13B encourages better use of the Thames frontage for Tourism activities provided they complement the natural environment
E3	Faringdon	The FNP supports fully the sites proposed in E3 for industrial use. The loss of two of these sites, based on misleading assessments by consultants, is contested in the FNP as described in the Evidence Base Review pp11-14. Additional sites have been proposed for industrial development in conformity with proposed Core Policy 24 of the emerging Local Plan 2031 Part 1.
E10	Key business sites	The FNP is in conformity with E10. Policy 4.5A directly supports Park Road Industrial Estate for intensification or redevelopment for employment use.
S1	New retail provision	The FNP is in conformity with S1 (i) and (ii). FNP Policy 4.4B: proposes that within the Town Centre Boundary planning permission be granted for the change of use or redevelopment of sites currently not in retail use (Use Class A1) to retail use. Other uses that support the retail function of the town centre will be encouraged. S1 states that proposals for new retail development will not be permitted outside the town centre or local service centre in Faringdon. This is not entirely consistent with paragraphs 23 and 24 of the NPPF, which set out the sequential approach for locating retail development 1) in the town centre boundary and if no sites are available then 2) on the edge of the town centre and if no sites are available 3) out of the town centre. The emerging Local Plan Core Policy 28 reflects a more up-to-date approach to retail development and advocates the sequential approach where town centre sites are not available. FNP Policy 4.4C shows the areas that will be supported for retail development following the sequential approach and is therefore in general conformity with this strategic policy.
T1	New tourist related development	FNP Policy 4.13A supports a museum or visitor centre. Such a centre could be located in accordance with the most appropriate policy in the Development Plan (either T1 or Core Policy 27 in the emerging Local Plan) and is therefore in conformity with T1. Policy 4.13B also supports tourism activities associated with the River Thames provided they complement the natural environment, This is in general conformity with T1.

Table 2 lists the Core Policies proposed in the emerging Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031. Some of these are referred to in the FNP responses in Table 1, particularly Core Policy 24 *New employment development on unallocated sites*

**Table 2 Local Plan 2031 Part 1: List of relevant policies**

Core Policy No.	Title
Policy 1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
Policy 2	Settlement hierarchy
Policy 3	Housing delivery
Policy 4	Meeting Business and Employment Needs
Policy 5	Providing Supporting Infrastructure and Services
Policy 17	Spatial Strategy for Western Vale Sub-Area
Policy 18	Affordable Housing Vale
Policy 19	Rural exception sites
Policy 20	Density
Policy 21	Housing mix
Policy 22	Meeting the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling show people
Policy 23	Accommodating current and future needs of the ageing population
Policy 24	New employment development on unallocated sites
Policy 25	Change of use of existing employment land and premises
Policy 26	Further and higher education
Policy 27	Tourism-related development
Policy 28	Retailing and other main town centre uses
Policy 29	Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
Policy 30	Sustainable design and construction
Policy 31	Renewable energy
Policy 32	Flood risk
Policy 33	Natural resources
Policy 34	Landscape
Policy 35	Green Infrastructure
Policy 36	Conservation and improvement of biodiversity
Policy 37	Design
Policy 38	The Historic Environment

Of the proposed Core Policies listed in Table 2, the FNP is in general agreement with CPs 1, 3, 4, 5, 17, 18, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 and 38.

Core Policies 24, 35 and 36 are mentioned specifically in Sections 2 and 3.

## **SECTION 4: FNP Compliance with the Appropriate EU Obligations**

### **4.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment**

The Screening Report reported that the closest European designated site to the plan area is the Hackpen Hill Special Area of Conservation located 11 km away to the south east of the FNP area.

Potential impacts on the site, including recreational pressures, have been considered through the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process carried out for Vale of White Horse Local Plan. This has established that most issues are likely to arise from households living within 4-5 km of the site, including in Wantage.

As such, in the context of the HRA carried out for the Local Plan, the FNP is unlikely to lead to additional pressures on the Hackpen Hill SAC.

As highlighted above, a Sustainability Appraisal, which incorporates the requirements of Directive 2001/42/EC (the SEA Directive), has been carried out to accompany the development of the FNP.

### **4.2 Equality Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached to this Statement.

A J T Marsden  
M L H Wise  
for Faringdon Town Council, February 2015