

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
THURSDAY 4 JULY 2019
PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION ON THE EAST WITNEY DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

(Contact: Keith Butler, Tel: (01993) 861521)

1. PURPOSE

To consider submitting a response to the preliminary consultation on the East Witney Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee agrees a response to the above consultation.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The Committee previously expressed a desire to consider this consultation, and the deadline for responses is 5 pm on Friday 17 July.
- 3.2. The associated report considered by Cabinet on 22 May 2019 is included at [Appendix A](#) and the issues paper published for consultation is included at [Appendix B](#)
- 3.3. The Committee will see that the consultation document identifies a number of key opportunities for the East Witney SDA seeking views on a number of issues including:
 - The potential provision of a new ‘community hub’;
 - The type and mix of new homes that should be provided;
 - What type of character and form the development should take;
 - How the site should be accessed and how walking and cycling can be encouraged;
 - Mitigating potential harm to the landscape and heritage assets;
 - Green infrastructure and biodiversity;
 - Reducing flood risk;
 - Sustainable design and construction; and
 - The provision of other supporting infrastructure
- 3.4. The Committee is invited to make comment on the document as part of the consultation process.

4. NEXT STEPS

It is currently anticipated that the SPD will be further considered by Cabinet in the autumn.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report has no financial implications.

Keith Butler

Head of Democratic Services

(Author: Paul Cracknell, Tel: (01993) 861523; EMail: paul.cracknell@westoxon.gov.uk)

Date: 17 June 2019

Background Papers:

None.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

WEDNESDAY 22 MAY 2019

**APPROVAL OF EAST WITNEY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) PRELIMINARY
CONSULTATION**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND STRATEGIC HOUSING

(Contact: Giles Hughes, Tel: (01993) 861000)

(The Cabinet's decision on this matter will be a resolution)

1. PURPOSE

To consider a preliminary consultation paper regarding the proposed East Witney Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the 'issues paper' attached in the Appendix be approved, for the purposes of a six week period of public consultation.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Members will be aware that the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 allocates land at East Witney as a Strategic Development Area (SDA) to include the provision of about 450 new homes, together with supporting infrastructure, including improvements to the Shores Green junction onto the A40.
- 3.2. Policy WITI applies and stipulates a number of criteria which development of the site will be expected to comply with. This includes the comprehensive development of the whole site to be led by an agreed masterplan.
- 3.3. To ensure the site is brought forward in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner, Officers are proposing to prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to guide development.
- 3.4. The purpose of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to build upon and add more detailed guidance or advice on the policies set out in the Local Plan. SPDs are often used to provide guidance on specific sites or on particular issues such as design and affordable housing.
- 3.5. It is anticipated that the SPD will take the form of a Development Framework, setting out the key parameters and objectives for development of the site within which any subsequent masterplan and planning application would need to sit.

4. EAST WITNEY SPD ISSUES PAPER

- 4.1. Attached at Appendix I is an initial consultation paper which is intended to stimulate early debate and discussion about the East Witney SDA and the key issues and priorities to be addressed as the site is taken forward.
- 4.2. The first half of the issues paper (Sections 1 – 4) sets out the scope and purpose of the consultation paper, what a supplementary planning document is and why the Council is proposing one for the site.
- 4.3. It also explains how the site was identified and the anticipated benefits of the proposal, as well as providing an overview of the site, its main physical characteristics and the key considerations for development including traffic impact, landscape and heritage, flood risk, noise and biodiversity.
- 4.4. The main part of the document - Section 5 - then outlines a number of key opportunities for the East Witney SDA seeking views on a number of issues including:
 - The potential provision of a new 'community hub';
 - The type and mix of new homes that should be provided;
 - What type of character and form the development should take;
 - How the site should be accessed and how walking and cycling can be encouraged;
 - Mitigating potential harm to the landscape and heritage assets;
 - Green infrastructure and biodiversity;
 - Reducing flood risk;
 - Sustainable design and construction; and
 - The provision of other supporting infrastructure
- 4.5. Section 6 briefly summarises these key issues and explains that comments on these and other more general issues are welcome and will feed into development of the draft SPD later in 2019.
- 4.6. Sections 7 and 8 then explain how to respond to the consultation and what happens next.
- 4.7. Members will note that as with other similar documents prepared recently, the consultation paper includes a number of consultation questions throughout.
- 4.8. These are included to stimulate thought and discussion only and those responding will not be expected to answer them unless they wish to. More general consultation responses will be accepted alongside.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1. Subject to the approval of Members, the preliminary 'issues paper' attached at Appendix I will be published for a 6-week period of public consultation.
- 5.2. All responses received will be taken into account and used to inform the preparation of a draft SPD for the East Witney SDA which will be published for consultation later in 2019.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct cost implications associated with this report other than modest costs associated with the proposed public consultation. These are able to be met from existing budgets.

7. RISKS

There are no direct risks associated with this report.

8. REASONS

The development and adoption of the SPD will help to guide the development of the East Witney (SDA) in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner and will enable effective and ongoing stakeholder engagement in the process.

Giles Hughes

Head of Planning and Strategic Housing

(Author: Chris Hargraves, Tel: (01993) 861686; EMail: chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk)

Date: 7 May 2019

Background Papers:

None.

East Witney Strategic Development Area

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Issues Paper



June 2019

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Appendices

Appendix I – Excerpt from Local Plan 2031

I. Introduction

- I.1. Land to the east of Witney is allocated in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 for the provision of about 450 new homes (Policy WITI – East Witney Strategic Development Area).
- I.2. To help guide the development of this important site, the Council intends to prepare a supplementary planning document (SPD) in the form of a ‘Development Framework’ setting out the key objectives and principles to be addressed as the site is taken forward.
- I.3. Once adopted the SPD will be a material consideration in the determination of any future planning applications for the site.
- I.4. This initial ‘issues paper’ is the first step in preparing the Development Framework SPD and its purpose is to:

- Briefly explain the background to the proposal and how we have arrived at this point;
- Provide an overview of the East Witney site;
- Highlight the key considerations for bringing the site forward; and
- Seek initial views on some potential opportunities that could be addressed through the SPD and the development of the site.

- I.5. The issues paper consultation runs for 6 weeks from **5 June to 17 July 2019**. You can respond in the following ways:
Email: planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk
Write to: Planning Policy, West Oxfordshire District Council
New Yatt Road, Witney, OX28 1PB
- I.6. All responses received will be taken into account by the Council in preparing the draft SPD for further consultation later in the year.
- I.7. If you require any further information or assistance regarding the consultation please telephone the Council’s Planning Policy Team on **01993 861667**.

2. Background context

2.1. In this section we provide some background information on the following:

- What a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is and why we are preparing one for East Witney;
- What the Local Plan 2031 says about East Witney;
- How and why the East Witney site was identified; and
- The anticipated benefits of the proposal.

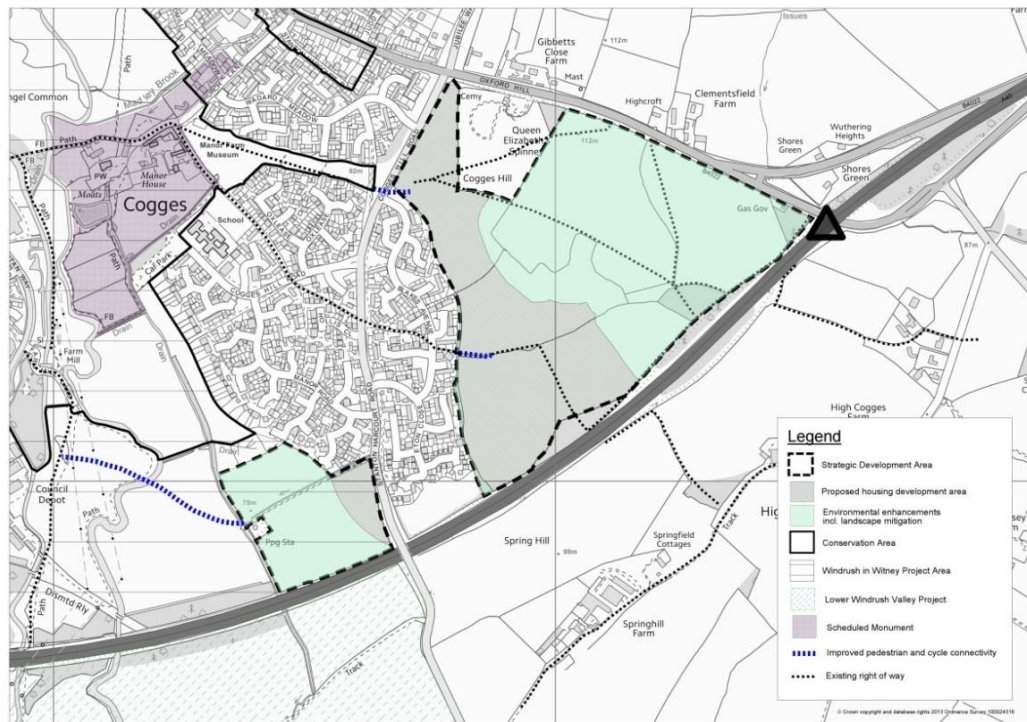
What is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and why prepare one for East Witney?

- 2.2. A supplementary planning document (SPD) essentially builds upon and adds more detailed guidance or advice on the policies set out in the Local Plan. They are often used to provide guidance on specific sites or on particular issues such as design and affordable housing.
- 2.3. In particular, SPDs should be used where they can help applicants make successful applications or assist with the delivery of infrastructure. They are a material consideration in planning decisions but do not form part of the statutory development plan.
- 2.4. Whilst the East Witney site is smaller than the other strategic sites allocated in the Local Plan, it is a suitable candidate for SPD as there are a number of important issues to address as the site is taken forward.
- 2.5. These include the amount and distribution of development across the two parts of the site ('Cogges Triangle' and 'Cogges South'), landscape and heritage impact, flood risk, ecology, noise, access arrangements including the A40 Shores Green junction and the provision of effective pedestrian and cycle connections into Witney.

What does the Local Plan 2031 say about East Witney?

- 2.6. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (the Local Plan) allocates the East Witney site for development under Policy WIT1 – East Witney Strategic Development Area. A copy of the policy and relevant supporting text is attached in full at Appendix 1. A plan of the site is shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 – East Witney SDA



- 2.7. In summary, the site has been identified as a ‘Strategic Development Area’ (SDA) which will accommodate a sustainable, integrated community that forms a positive addition to Witney. The allocation envisages the provision of about 450 homes with a balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs.
- 2.8. The supporting text to Policy WIT1 explains that the smaller part of the site ‘Cogges South’ is expected to accommodate limited development of around 30 homes with the remaining homes (c. 420) provided on the larger part of the site known as ‘Cogges Triangle’. The precise quantum on each site will however depend on a number of factors.
- 2.9. Development of the site is required to be taken forward in a comprehensive manner, led by an agreed masterplan and must be phased in accordance with supporting infrastructure and facilities including the essential improvements to the Shores Green junction onto the A40.

How and why was the East Witney site identified?

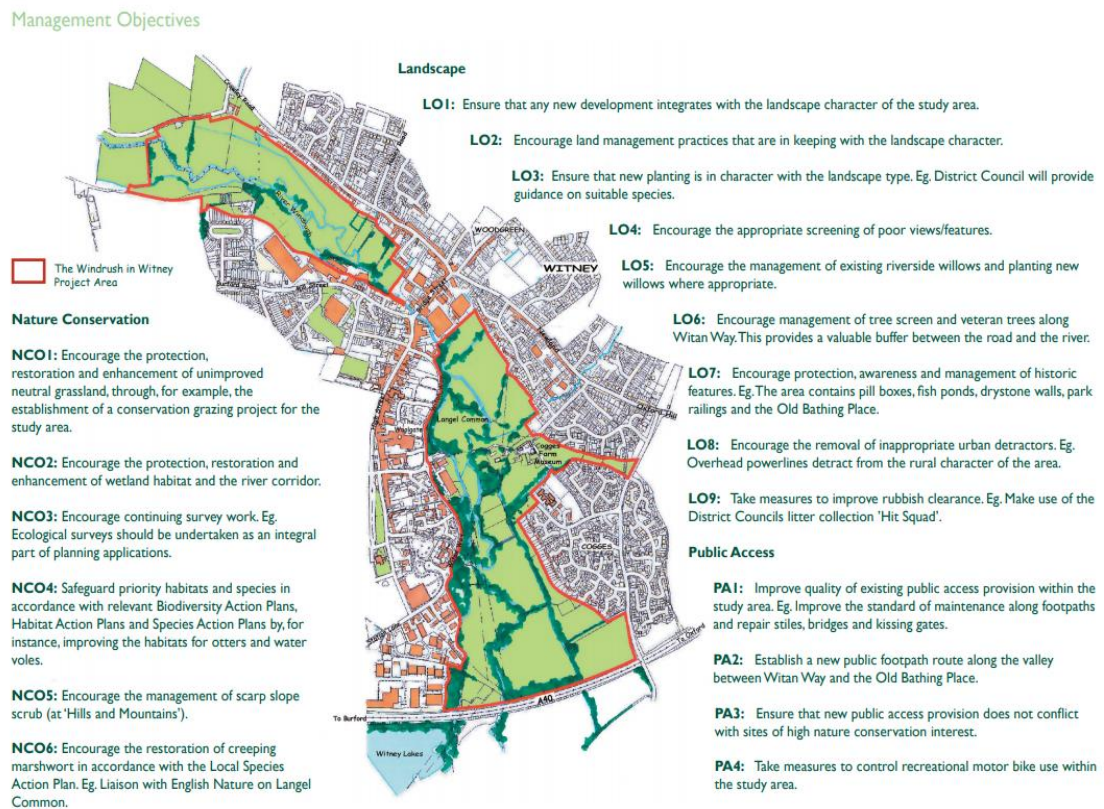
- 2.10. A key part of the overall Local Plan strategy is to focus a significant proportion of new homes, jobs and supporting services within and on the edge of the District’s main service centres including Witney, Carterton and Chipping Norton.
- 2.11. Witney is the District’s largest town and acts as the main service centre. It offers a broad range of housing and employment opportunities as well as key services and facilities including retailing health care, leisure and culture.
- 2.12. The land to the east of Witney was originally submitted to the Council for consideration in 2007. At that time the site was not needed to meet identified housing needs and was also constrained by the route of the proposed Cogges Link Road (CLR) the County Council’s previously preferred highway scheme for Witney.
- 2.13. However, in June 2012 the Secretary of State for Transport rejected the Compulsory Purchase Order needed for the CLR scheme to go ahead and following this decision, the District Council re-evaluated the potential options for growth to the east, west and north of Witney.

- 2.14. As a result, the land to the east of Witney was allocated for 300 homes in the Council's initial draft Local Plan (October 2012). This was increased to 400 homes in the submission draft Local Plan (March 2015) and subsequently to 'about 450 homes' through proposed Main Modifications (November 2016).
- 2.15. Following examination hearings held in 2017 the Local Plan Inspector published his final report in August 2018 and concluded that the allocation of the East Witney SDA is sound. The Local Plan was subsequently adopted on 27 September 2018.

The anticipated benefits of the East Witney SDA

- 2.16. The East Witney SDA will deliver a number of positive benefits.
- 2.17. Importantly, it will provide a large number of new homes in close proximity to the centre of Witney which offers an excellent range of services and facilities within a comfortable walking and cycling distance of the site. The proposed SPD provides the opportunity to consider the type, mix and style of new homes and how these can best be integrated with the existing town and help to meet identified needs.
- 2.18. The size of the proposal creates an excellent opportunity to provide a diverse range of dwelling types and tenures including affordable housing for those who cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market. The Local Plan also requires 5% of the plots to be made available for those who wish to self-build.
- 2.19. A further key benefit of the proposal is the associated improvements to be made to the Shores Green junction onto the A40, detailed further below. At present, the junction is well-used but only allows for eastward movement of vehicles away from Witney and towards Oxford and westward onto Oxford Hill. Importantly, it is not possible for traffic to access the A40 at this point and travel west towards Cheltenham, leading some drivers to use the nearby farm bridge to the east as an informal alternative.
- 2.20. The provision of new 'on' and 'off' slip roads will effectively create an 'all movements' junction at Shores Green, allowing east and west travel. This will significantly improve traffic flow and help to take a large proportion of unnecessary 'through-traffic' out of the centre of Witney which currently suffers from poor air quality.
- 2.21. A financial contribution towards the Shores Green junction improvements has already been secured from another large housing development north of Burford Road in Witney. The Local Plan identifies that the East Witney SDA is able to deliver the 'off-slip' through a planning obligation and that an appropriate financial contribution will be sought towards the 'on-slip' potentially as part of a wider strategic transport infrastructure fund/package for Witney.
- 2.22. The development also offers the potential to help enhance the Windrush Valley which forms a key recreational resource and 'green wedge' into the heart of the town. The 'Windrush in Witney Project' identifies a series of management objectives relating to nature conservation, landscape and public access and the East Witney site provides an excellent opportunity to help deliver a number of these for the benefit of new residents and the wider community.

Figure 2.2 – Windrush in Witney Project Area and Management Objectives



- 2.23. The development also provides an opportunity to help mitigate flood risk in the locality. Due to its sloping topography, the Cogges Triangle site suffers from surface water run-off and the development offers the potential to help address this through appropriate forms of sustainable drainage.
- 2.24. Other potential benefits of the scheme include wider transport improvements, the provision of new and enhanced Green Infrastructure including green space and allotments, opportunities for enhancements to the adjacent Lower Windrush Valley Conservation Target Area (CTA) and financial contributions towards primary and secondary education capacity. In addition, the scheme will be required to demonstrate the use of renewable energy and sustainable design and construction.
- 2.25. These are explored in more detail in Section 5.

3. The East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)

3.1. The East Witney SDA is located on the eastern edge of the town and comprises two main land parcels either side of the existing Cogges Housing estate.

'Cogges South'

3.2. The smaller parcel 'Cogges South' covers an area of around 6 ha and is located between an area of existing housing in Manor Road and the A40. The eastern boundary of the site is formed by the Stanton Harcourt Road whilst the western boundary is formed by a thick hedgerow interspersed with a number of mature trees. This screens a small sewage pumping station.

Figure 3.1 – Cogges South



3.3. The site is divided into two separate field parcels by the access track to the pumping station. Both fields are in agricultural use (arable).

3.4. The site is generally flat, forming part of a distinctive and open river valley landscape. The southern field is visible to passing traffic along the A40 and in particular when travelling north along the Stanton Harcourt Road, with key views across the site to St. Mary's Church Spire – a key local landmark.

Figure 3.2 – Cogges South viewed from Stanton Harcourt Road/A40 bridge

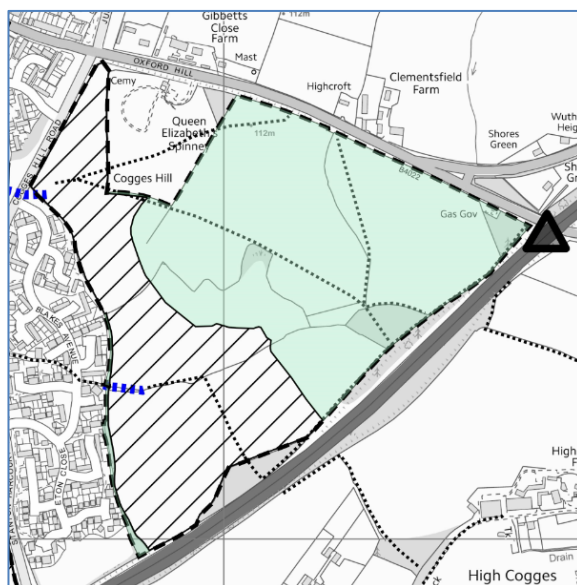


- 3.5. To the west is a further area of agricultural land (arable) and some broadleaved woodland adjacent to the A40. To the south of the site is the A40 and beyond that, a mixture of agricultural land and mineral extraction/restoration. To the east of the site is an area of existing housing and recreational space at Eton Close and to the north, existing housing at Manor Road and a small attenuation pond.

'Cogges Triangle'

- 3.6. The larger parcel 'Cogges Triangle' covers an area of around 32 ha and lies to the east of the Cogges Manor housing estate. The site comprises an area of semi-enclosed agricultural land divided into five main parcels which gradually rises in an easterly direction from a point just below 85m AOD immediately adjacent to the east of the Cogges Estate to a high point on Oxford Hill at about 112m AOD. The site then begins to fall away again to the east towards the Shores Green junction.

Figure 3.3 – Cogges Triangle



- 3.7. From the more elevated parts of the site, views out and across the town are available, as can be seen in the photographs below.

Figure 3.4 – View west from Cogges Triangle



Figure 3.5 – View south west from Cogges Triangle



- 3.8. The southern boundary of the site is formed by the A40 with mature trees and hedgerows restricting views into the site from passing vehicles. Beyond the A40 is further agricultural land with a number of farmsteads at High Cogges which can be clearly seen from the higher parts of the Cogges Triangle site.
- 3.9. The western boundary of the site is formed by the existing mature vegetation which runs along the edge of the existing housing in Blakes Avenue and Eton Close and also Cogges Hill Road itself up to the point that it joins the B4022 Oxford Hill. To the west is the remainder of the Cogges estate with a multitude of pedestrian and cycle routes enabling convenient access towards the Town Centre and other amenities.

- 3.10. The northern boundary of the site is largely formed by the B4022 Oxford Hill Road and skirts around the boundary of the Windrush cemetery. Again, mature vegetation generally restricts views into the site although some glimpsed views are possible. To the north are a number of farmsteads and further areas of agricultural land.
- 3.11. The eastern boundary of the site is effectively formed by the convergence of the A40 and the B4022 Oxford Hill at Shores Green.

Figure 3.6 – View east towards A40 from Cogges Triangle



4. Key Considerations

4.1. There are a number of important issues that will need to be addressed in taking the East Witney SDA forward in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

4.2. These include:

- Traffic impact
- Air quality
- Landscape and visual impact
- Heritage
- The quantum and distribution of development
- Flood risk and drainage
- Noise
- Biodiversity
- Ground conditions

4.3. These issues are explored in more detail below. We would welcome your views on these and any other key considerations you feel are important for the development of the site.

Traffic impact

4.4. The provision of about 450 new homes will generate additional traffic movements. The impact of this will need to be appropriately assessed including at locations where congestion is currently experienced in the town such as Staple Hall junction and along Bridge Street which is a designated Area Quality Management Area (AQMA).

4.5. A key consideration is how to effectively manage the impact of any increase in traffic in order to avoid exacerbating existing problems on the local highway network and where possible to try and improve the current situation.

4.6. Physical highway improvements including the A40 Shores Green junction will help to reduce the number of vehicles from the site that choose to use the B4022 Oxford Hill route into the Town Centre, by providing an alternative option via Ducklington Lane.

4.7. The Shores Green junction improvements will not only benefit the East Witney SDA but will also assist with the flow of traffic around Witney more generally. Complementary measures will be required to maximise the benefits of the scheme.

4.8. The East Witney SDA is well placed to encourage sustainable travel to the Town Centre and this must be promoted as an alternative to the private car. The site is convenient for public transport including bus and rail. Premium bus services (S1 and S2) run along the B4022 Oxford Hill adjacent to the site and Hanborough Station is a relatively short distance away via Jubilee Way and the A4095.

4.9. In taking the site forward, it will be important to consider how to maximise people's propensity to travel by bus and rail in order to reduce the number of additional private vehicular trips on the highway network.

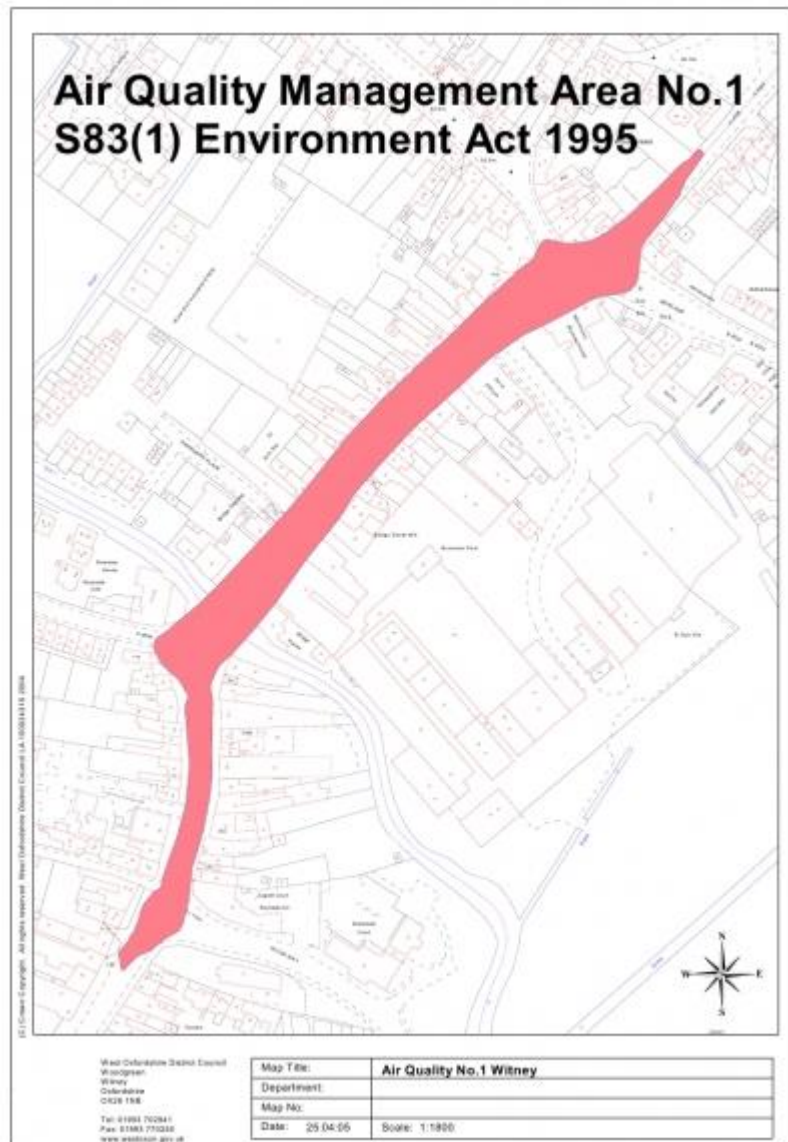
4.10. A further key consideration is the movement of people by active forms of travel such as walking, cycling and riding. The proximity of the site to the Town Centre is a key asset and it will be essential to maximise the available opportunities through new and enhanced routes not only to the Town Centre but also into the wider area including the Lower Windrush Valley south of the A40 for leisure purposes.

4.11. The proposed SPD has a key role to play in helping to identify key routes and connections.

Air Quality

- 4.12. The central area of Witney suffers from significant traffic congestion and as a result, poor air quality. An area incorporating Bridge Street, and the junctions with New Yatt Road, Newland, Mill Street and High Street was designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2005 due to excessive emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂).
- 4.13. It was concluded that as there was no other significant source of nitrogen dioxide in the area, traffic was the main source of this pollution.

Figure 4.1 – Witney AQMA



- 4.14. There are approximately 50 residential properties in Bridge Street and High Street, a significant number of which fall within the predicted NO₂ contours exceeding the objective standard. There are further residential properties in the adjoining roads and a number of these are also predicted to fall within areas of exposure above the objective standards.
- 4.15. Given the anticipated increase in traffic associated with the East Witney SDA, a key consideration for the site is how to ensure that any increase in nitrogen dioxide associated with vehicle movements is appropriately managed and effectively mitigated.

- 4.16. Evidence¹ prepared in support of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 demonstrates that the provision of an all-movements junction at Shores Green has the potential to reduce the amount of traffic in Bridge Street thereby helping to address the current problems of poor air quality experienced.
- 4.17. More recent evidence² prepared on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council demonstrates that when coupled with changes to the physical highway infrastructure in the central area of Witney (e.g. the introduction of a partial gyratory system) very significant reductions in the amount of traffic using Bridge Street are potentially achievable.

Landscape and visual impact

- 4.18. Landscape impact relates to the potential change that development can have on individual landscape elements or features, and landscape character and designations whereas visual impact relates to potential changes to views and visual amenity.
- 4.19. The East Witney SDA is sensitive in both landscape and visual terms for a number of reasons. A key consideration in taking the site forward is how this impact can most effectively be managed and mitigated to reduce the degree of harm that may be caused and to maximise on any available opportunities such as the enhancement of key views.

Cogges South

- 4.20. Cogges South falls within the Lower Windrush Valley and Eastern Thames Fringes Character Area³ which has an attractive and largely unspoilt, rural character but with some localised variations in quality and condition.
- 4.21. The site itself is classed as 'semi-enclosed flat vale farmland' with the adjoining land to the west classed as 'floodplain pasture'.

Figure 4.2 – Cogges South



- 4.22. The area is noted as being important and sensitive in landscape and visual terms and unless carefully planned and properly mitigated, development here has the potential to affect important views along the valley floor and to key local landmarks.

¹ Witney Area Transport Strategy Refresh (July 2017)

² Witney Transport Strategy 2017 - Bridge Street Option Generation Study (October 2017)

³ As defined in the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (1998)

Cogges Triangle

- 4.23. Cogges Triangle has a different nature to Cogges South. In terms of landscape character it falls within the Eynsham Vale⁴ and is defined as ‘open rolling vale farmland,’ comprising an undulating valley side, the eastern side of the Madley Brook and Windrush Valleys and forming the end of a very prominent ridge enclosing the eastern side of the town.

Figure 4.3 – Cogges Triangle



- 4.24. The area is generally open, and there are some long views north to the wooded Wychwood Uplands, west along the Upper Windrush valley, and south west to the low lying Lower Windrush valley. There are also fine views of St. Mary’s Church spire, from both north and south of the A40, and in places of Cogges church. It forms an important backdrop to views of the town looking back to the east, from both lower and higher ground.
- 4.25. Importantly, the landform in this location defines the boundary between urban and rural with Cogges Hill forming an important landmark feature on the south east approach into Witney.
- 4.26. The site is therefore of high landscape sensitivity and importance and unless development in this location is carefully planned and properly mitigated there is a potential for detrimental harm to be caused to this important backdrop to the town.

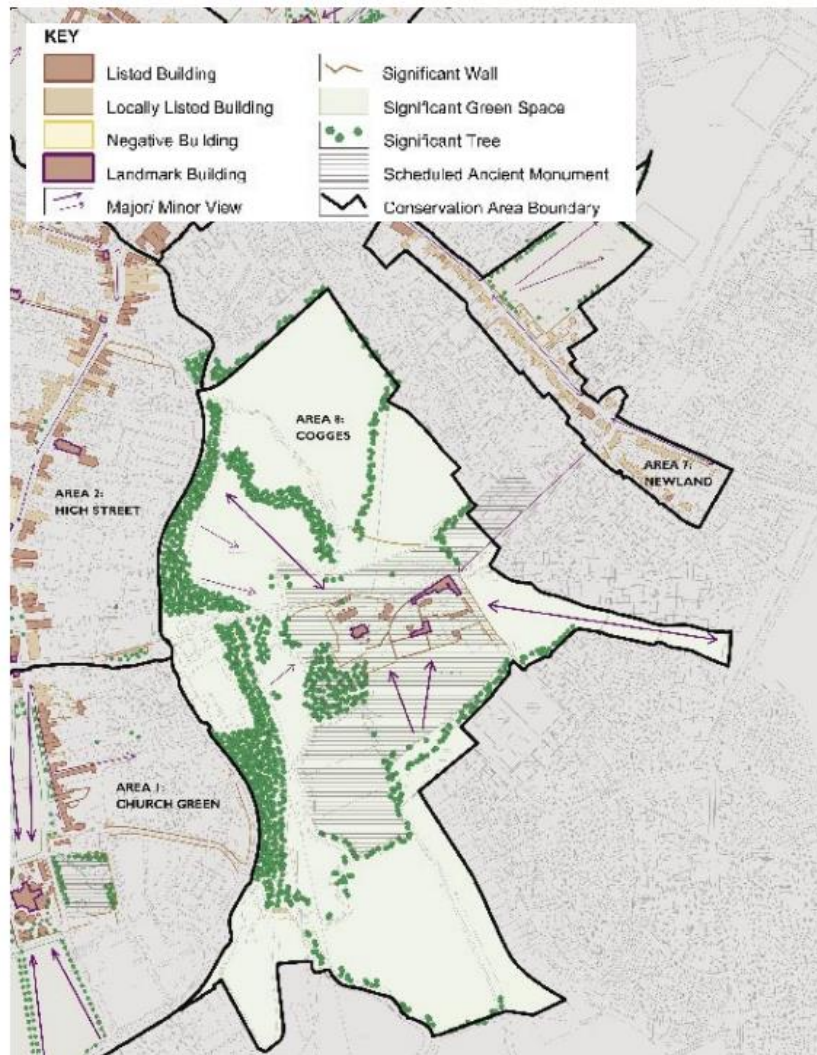
Heritage

- 4.27. The East Witney SDA is located near to the boundary of the Witney and Cogges Conservation Area and therefore has the potential to affect its ‘setting’.
- 4.28. Witney Conservation Area was designated in 1970, making it the first to be designated in West Oxfordshire, and reflecting the considerable architectural, aesthetic and historic merit of the Town. Extensions to the conservation area were added in 1980, 1988 and 1990. Cogges Conservation Area was designated in 1976, with an extension added in 1981. The two were amalgamated to form the Witney and Cogges Conservation Area in 1990.

⁴ As defined in the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (1998)

- 4.29. The Witney & Cogges Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2013⁵) identifies eight character areas, the most relevant of which to the East Witney SDA are Cogges and to a lesser extent, Newland.

Figure 4.4 – Area 8: Cogges (Witney and Cogges Conservation Area)



- 4.30. The appraisal highlights the importance of the landscape surrounding Cogges which has retained to an exceptional degree, its historic rural character.
- 4.31. This large area of open space is identified as being precious in its own right, being of huge amenity value to the town (criss-crossed as it is by public rights of way) – but is especially significant for providing the setting for Cogges Manor Farm, a largely unspoilt cluster of historic farm buildings surviving within its original historic agricultural landscape. Cogges Manor Farm includes a number of listed buildings and structures and is a designated scheduled monument.
- 4.32. The appraisal also highlights the importance of the Cogges area in terms of the transition from urban to rural with important views both towards and out from landmark buildings across the meadowland of the Windrush valley. It suggests that the low-lying nature of the area and the dense urban character of the surrounding areas, make Cogges especially vulnerable to change.

⁵ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/501448/WITNEY-CA-APP-2013.pdf>

- 4.33. To the east and south east of the site are a number of listed buildings at High Cogges, the setting of which will also need to be taken into account including in relation to the proposed improvements to the A40 Shores Green junction.

Amount and distribution of development

- 4.34. Policy WIT1 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 allocates the site for ‘about 450 homes’ with an indicative split of about 30 homes on Cogges South (subject to landscape impact and flood risk) and about 420 homes on Cogges Triangle (subject to landscape impact and surface water run-off).
- 4.35. The rationale for this is that a relatively small amount of development on the Cogges South site will form a logical continuation of the existing housing at Manor Road without incurring too significantly into the open valley floor, whilst helping to integrate the development with the built area and provide early revenue to the developer to bring forward supporting infrastructure.
- 4.36. Subject to more detailed assessment of traffic, landscape, noise and surface water run-off, the Cogges Triangle site is able to accommodate a much larger number of homes, particularly in the lower western and southern parts of the site which relate well to the existing housing in Blakes Avenue and Eton Close and also sit relatively low in the landscape compared to the more elevated northern and eastern parts of the site.

Flood risk and drainage

- 4.37. A further key consideration for the East Witney SDA is flood risk and drainage, including surface water run-off.
- 4.38. As shown on the plan below, the Cogges South site lies in close proximity to an area of designated Flood Zone 2 (medium risk) and Zone 3 (high risk) associated with the River Windrush and Madley Brook that flows into it.

Figure 4.5 – Cogges South extent of Flood Zone 2 and 3



- 4.39. National policy⁶ states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas of highest risk (whether existing or future) through application of a ‘sequential test’ which aims to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding.

⁶ National Planning Policy Framework – NPPF (February 2019)

- 4.40. Part of the District Council’s rationale for suggesting a relatively small number of homes on the Cogges South site is to ensure that any built development is kept entirely outside of Flood Zone 2 and 3.
- 4.41. With regard to Cogges Triangle, whilst the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 with regard to fluvial (river) flooding (low risk) due to the sloping nature of the site, surface water run-off is an important consideration with incidences of historic flooding having been recorded.
- 4.42. A key requirement of the Local Plan 2031 is to ensure that appropriate measures are included to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage to achieve a reduction in Greenfield run-off rates. Any sustainable drainage system should also be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.

Noise

- 4.43. The southern boundaries of Cogges South and Cogges Triangle adjoin the A40 and traffic noise is an important consideration for the development of both sites. Noise from the A40 is very apparent within the sites even with the mature vegetation that exists along the southern boundary. As such, it will be necessary to consider appropriate mitigation to ensure an acceptable living environment and quality of life for new residents.

Biodiversity

- 4.44. Whilst there are no locally designated sites within the site, Ducklington Mead Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located 975m south of the site beyond the A40 and is designated primarily for its unimproved meadow habitat. In addition, the Lower Windrush Valley Conservation Target Area (CTA) borders the western boundary of the Cogges South site.
- 4.45. Cogges Triangle contains records of several protected and notable species including badgers, hazel dormouse and polecat (ferret). While there are no current records of protected or notable species within the Cogges South site, there are numerous records near the site boundaries along the River Windrush and within the Lower Windrush Valley Conservation Target Area (CTA).
- 4.46. Here, protected and notable species include for example, skylark (bird), yellow wagtail (bird), kingfisher (bird), otter (mammal), water vole (mammal), corn mint (flowering plant) and river water-crowfoot (flowering plant).
- 4.47. The Windrush in Witney Management Strategy⁷ identifies a number of management objectives relating to nature conservation including the protection, restoration and enhancement of unimproved neutral grassland, wetland habitat and the river corridor.
- 4.48. The East Witney SDA also falls within Bug Life’s South East England ‘B-line’ as part of a nationally important network for bees and other pollinating insects⁸.

Ground Conditions

- 4.49. Given the proximity of the Cogges Triangle site to existing properties in Blakes Avenue and Eton Close, a key consideration for the development of the site is ground conditions and how to most appropriately address the underlying geology of the site which is Oxford Clay and thus relatively impermeable. This is of relevance to a number of issues including potential subsidence and sustainable drainage solutions.

⁷ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/329154/Windrush-in-Witney-project-Summary-leaflet.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.buglife.org.uk/b-lines-hub/south-east>

Summary

4.50. The table below summarises the key considerations outlined above and identifies how the proposed SPD can play a potential role in addressing these.

Table 4.1 – Summary of Key Considerations for the East Witney SDA

Key Consideration	Implication/s for SPD
<p>Traffic impact – in particular the potential for additional vehicle movements along the B4022 Oxford Hill and into Witney Town Centre via Bridge Street – a designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clarity in relation to the delivery mechanism/s for improvements to the A40 Shores Green junction. • Identify appropriate complementary highway measures. • Ensure that opportunities for the use of public transport including bus and rail are maximised. • Ensure that opportunities for ‘active travel’ including walking, cycling and riding, are maximised, in particular connections into the Town Centre and into the Lower Windrush Valley for leisure purposes.
<p>Air quality – in particular the fact that the area of Bridge Street, and the junctions with New Yatt Road, Newland, Mill Street and High Street are designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to excessive emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above in relation to traffic impact.
<p>Landscape and visual impact – both Cogges South and Cogges Triangle are sensitive to development for different reasons including the tranquil river valley floor setting of Cogges South and the important backdrop and approach to Witney provided by the Cogges Triangle site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the most appropriate extent of any ‘developable’ area across the two sites. • Identify the most appropriate character and form of development. • Identify appropriate and robust mitigation measures to limit the degree of potential landscape and visual harm caused by the development. • Identify opportunities for positive enhancements including key views.

Key Consideration	Implication/s for SPD
<p>Heritage – the site lies in close proximity to the Witney and Cogges Conservation Area, being identified as exceptionally important in terms of its historic rural character setting for Cogges Manor Farm – a designated scheduled monument including a number of listed buildings and structures. To the south east of the site are a number of listed buildings at High Cogges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that development conserves and/or enhances the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of the historic environment. • Take account of the setting and significance of designated heritage assets, in particular the Witney and Cogges Conservation Area and Cogges Manor Farm. • To identify, respect and potentially enhance key views within and in/out of the Conservation Area.
<p>Amount and distribution of development – in particular how many homes are provided as part of the East Witney SDA and how these are apportioned across the two parts of the site – Cogges South and Cogges Triangle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the most appropriate ‘split’ of development across the two parts of the site having regard to relevant considerations including landscape and visual impact, flood risk, heritage and traffic impact. • Consider any potential necessary phasing of development in accordance with the delivery of essential supporting infrastructure.
<p>Flood risk and drainage – close proximity of the Cogges South site to designated Flood Zone 2 (medium risk) and Flood Zone 3 (high risk) resulting in potential risk from fluvial (river) flooding associated with the River Windrush and Madley Brook.</p> <p>Sloping topography of the Cogges Triangle site creating potential difficulties in terms of surface water run-off.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the most appropriate extent of any ‘developable area’ on the Cogges Triangle site having regard to the potential for flood risk. • Ensure that development is steered away from the areas at highest risk of flooding in accordance with national policy. • Consider the most appropriate form and extent of sustainable drainage on the Cogges Triangle site to help achieve a reduction in Greenfield run-off rates.
<p>Noise – close proximity of the site to the A40 means that noise from passing traffic has the potential to detrimentally affect the amenity of new occupants unless properly mitigated. Also of relevance in terms of air quality.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the need for appropriate noise mitigation e.g. distance buffer, building design and sound proofing, acoustic screening etc.

Key Consideration	Implication/s for SPD
<p>Biodiversity – no designated sites within the SDA boundary but several nearby including the Lower Windrush Valley Conservation Target Area (CTA). Records of several protected species recorded within the SDA boundary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify how the proposed development can best contribute towards a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with national and local policy. • Consider ways in which the development can most effectively contribute towards the aims and objectives of the Windrush in Witney Management Strategy, particularly identified nature conservation objectives. • Consider ways in which the development can most effectively contribute towards the aims and objectives of the Lower Windrush Valley Conservation Target Area (CTA).
<p>Ground conditions – relatively impermeable underlying geology on the Cogges Triangle site (Oxford Clay). Close proximity of existing vegetation along western edge of the site boundary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the most appropriate form of sustainable drainage. • Ensure that new development does not create any issues in terms of potential subsidence.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 1: Key Considerations

- 1a)** Do you have any comments to make on the key considerations outlined above and how they might be addressed through the SPD?
- 1b)** Are there any other particularly important considerations not mentioned that you think need to be addressed through the SPD?

5. Opportunities for the East Witney SDA

- 5.1. To help take the East Witney site forward, we would welcome your views on a number of issues and opportunities which will help to inform the draft SPD as it is worked up for further consultation later in the year.
- 5.2. These include:
- A potential ‘community hub’
 - Housing mix
 - The character and form of the development
 - Access and movement
 - Landscape and heritage
 - Green infrastructure and biodiversity
 - Reducing flood risk
 - Sustainable design and construction
 - Provision of supporting infrastructure
- 5.3. These issues are based on a number of considerations including:
- The requirements of Policy WIT1 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (see Appendix 1) ;
 - The site description, constraints analysis and background documentation referred to in Sections 3 and 4 of this issues paper;
 - Evidence commissioned by the Council in support of the Local Plan 2031; and
 - Submissions made on behalf of the landowner.
- 5.4. It should be noted that a number of the issues outlined above will be influenced by further work being prepared by the site promoter including constraints analysis and subsequent master planning work.
- 5.5. However, as the SPD is intended to provide the overall development framework within which any masterplan and planning application would need to sit, we would welcome your thoughts at this early stage.
- 5.6. In addition to the specific issues discussed below, we would welcome any other general comments you wish to make about the East Witney site to help inform our approach moving forward.

A potential 'community hub'

- 5.7. The scale of development at East Witney is such that it may be appropriate to include within the development some sort of 'community hub' to act as a focal point for the new community.
- 5.8. As part of initial master planning work, the site promoter has identified the potential for a community hub within the Cogges Triangle part of the site. This could include uses such as a farm shop, country pub, butchery, community centre and space for worship.



- 5.9. The provision of a cluster of different uses would help to provide a focal point within the development, helping to engender community cohesion and would also add interest by encouraging movement and activity at different times of the day.
- 5.10. As the site is within comfortable walking distance of areas of existing housing within the Cogges Estate, a large number of people would be able to easily access any new facilities, thus assisting with their ongoing commercial viability. Consideration would however need to be given to the potential impact on other existing community facilities in the locality.
- 5.11. Although a small community hub is not a requirement of the East Witney allocation within the Local Plan, we would welcome your views on whether this is something that should be considered further.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 2: A Community Hub?

- 2a)** Do you support the concept of a 'community hub' being provided at Cogges Triangle? Would this raise any concerns for you and if so, why?
- 2b)** If a community hub were to be provided, do you support the site promoter's initial thoughts which include uses such as a farm shop, country pub, butchery, community centre and space for worship?
- 2c)** Do you have any other thoughts or comments on this issue?

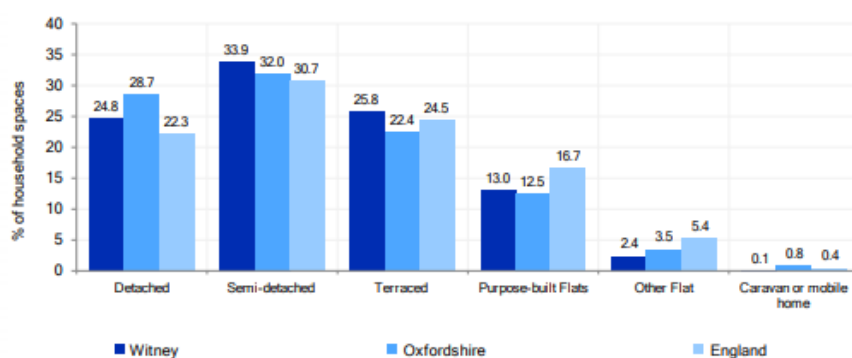
Housing mix

- 5.12. The Local Plan allocates the East Witney SDA for the provision of about 450 homes requiring a *'balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing'*.
- 5.13. We would therefore welcome your views on a number of issues including the type and size of new homes, the delivery of affordable housing and how the development could help to meet any specific housing needs.

The Type of New Homes

- 5.14. Witney is characterised by a relatively balanced mix of property types as shown on the chart below although there is a slightly higher than average proportion of semi-detached and terraced properties.

Figure 5.1 – Proportion of Existing House Types in Witney



- 5.15. The SPD provides an opportunity to consider the most appropriate mix of property types that could come forward at East Witney. It could for example seek to reflect the current overall position seen at Witney which has a good balance of different property types.
- 5.16. The main source of housing evidence in Oxfordshire is the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) published in 2014. However, whilst it considers overall housing need and the size of new homes that may be needed, it does not provide specific guidance on the type of new homes required (detached, semi-detached, terraced etc.)
- 5.17. In light of this and the currently well-balanced mix of property types available in Witney, our initial view is that whilst the East Witney SPD should clearly seek to ensure a good, balanced mix of dwelling types, the precise mix should be left to any subsequent planning application.
- 5.18. This would be consistent with the approach set out in Policy H4 of the Local Plan 2031 however we would welcome your thoughts on this matter.

The Size of New Homes

- 5.19. In terms of the size of new homes needed, some indication can be taken from the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014) as summarised in the table below.

Table 5.1 – SHMA Property Size Recommendations

Property size	West Oxfordshire		Oxfordshire		
	Market	Affordable	Market	Affordable	All dwellings
1-bed	4.8%	23.0%	5%	25 – 30%	15%
2-bed	27.9%	43.7%	25%	30 – 35%	30%
3-bed	43.4%	30.4%	45%	30 – 35%	40%
4-bed	23.9%	2.6%	25%	5 – 10%	15%

- 5.20. The SHMA emphasises that these figures should not be used prescriptively and that there are a number of factors which will influence demand for different sizes of homes. It also emphasises that regard should be had to the nature of the development site and character of the area, up-to-date evidence of need as well as the existing mix and turnover of properties at the local level.
- 5.21. One option is for the SPD to provide an indicative ‘range’ of preferred dwelling sizes for market and affordable housing along the following lines:

Table 5.2 – Potential ‘range’ of dwelling sizes market and affordable housing

Beds	Market housing	Affordable housing
1-bed	5 - 10%	20 - 30%
2-bed	25 - 30%	30 - 40%
3-bed	35 - 45%	30 - 35%
4-bed	20 - 25%	5 - 10%

CONSULTATION QUESTION 3: Type and Size of New Homes Needed

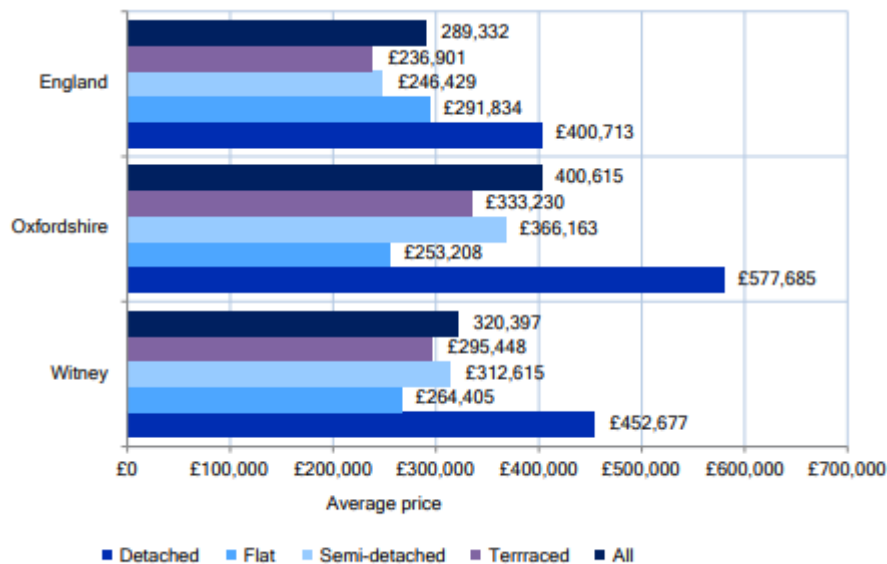
- 3a)** Do you consider that the SPD should seek a good balanced mix of property types but leave the detailed mix to any subsequent planning application or, should it be more prescriptive in terms of the type of new homes to be provided (detached, semi-detached, terraced, flats etc.)?
- 3b)** Do you consider that the SPD should provide an indicative range of dwelling sizes along the lines of that set out in Table 5.2 above? Or, do you think the SPD should be more prescriptive about the size of new homes needed? Alternatively, should this matter be left to the planning application stage?
- 3c)** Do you think we should be looking to focus on any particular size of property? If so, why?

3d) Do you have any other views on the type and size of new homes that should be built at East Witney?

Affordable Housing

5.22. Housing affordability is a major problem in Oxfordshire and Witney is no exception with average house prices for detached, semi-detached and terraced properties all above the national average as shown on the chart below.

Figure 5.2 – Average House Prices, Witney, Oxfordshire and England



5.23. Increasing the availability of affordable housing will help to meet the needs of those who cannot afford market priced housing locally to rent or purchase including for example essential local workers such as NHS staff, teachers, police, firefighters and military personnel, social care and childcare workers.

5.24. There are a number of different forms of affordable housing. The NPPF⁹ identifies the following:

- Affordable housing for rent (i.e. rent set in accordance with Government’s rent policy or at least 20% below local market rents)
- Starter homes (offered to people who have not previously been a home buyer and who are below the age of 40 at the time of purchase capped at no more than £250,000 outside London and £450,000 in London)
- Discounted market sales housing (i.e. sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value)
- Other affordable routes to home ownership (i.e. housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale and rent to buy).

⁹ National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

- 5.25. The Local Plan requires 40% affordable housing in the Witney area which, based on about 450 homes would equate to about 180 affordable homes. An initial viability assessment carried out in support of the Local Plan¹⁰ suggests this should be possible from a financial perspective but further assessment will be needed as the development costs and infrastructure requirements are more fully understood.
- 5.26. In terms of the type of affordable housing provided, the West Oxfordshire Local Plan identifies a significantly greater need for rented accommodation than for the various forms of intermediate housing (shared ownership, other low cost homes, rent to buy etc). As such a ratio of 2:1 in favour of affordable rented homes will be generally sought however this is a general guide only and the precise mix will be determined on a case by case basis.
- 5.27. Through the SPD, we will seek to establish an appropriate mix of affordable housing tenures for the East Witney SDA. To help inform this we would welcome your initial views on the type of affordable homes that should be provided.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 4: Affordable Housing

- 4a)** What sort of affordable homes do you think should be provided at the East Witney SDA?
- 4b)** Do you support the Council's overall preferred ratio of two thirds affordable rent to one third intermediate housing or do you think there should be a more balanced mix of different affordable property types?
- 4c)** Should there be a particular emphasis on meeting the needs of essential local workers (i.e. those who provide frontline services in areas including health, education and community safety)? How can this best be achieved?
- 4d)** Do you have any other comments or observations on the issue of affordable housing needs and how these should be met?

Meeting Specific Housing Needs

- 5.28. The East Witney SDA provides the opportunity to meet the housing needs of a number of different groups. This is consistent with the NPPF and Core Objective 6 of the Local Plan 2031.
- 5.29. To help meet the needs of older people and those with reduced mobility, Policy H4 of the Local Plan requires 25% of new homes to be accessible and adaptable¹¹ with at least 5% being wheelchair adaptable.¹² This equates to about 113 units.
- 5.30. In addition, Policy H5 requires the provision of 5% of the residential plots to be serviced and made available for the purpose of custom and self-build housing. This equates to about 23 units.

¹⁰ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1572239/VIAB5-Strategic-Development-Area-SDA-Viability-Update-November-2016-.pdf>

¹¹ Formerly known as 'lifetime homes'

¹² Note: where provided, the 5% wheelchair adaptable dwellings will count towards the overall 25% accessible and adaptable requirement.

- 5.31. The East Witney SDA also presents an opportunity to consider the provision of specialist accommodation for older age groups such as extra-care and sheltered housing. There are already a number of existing schemes of this type in Witney and we would welcome views on whether further provision is needed or desirable in terms of maintaining a balanced population within the Town.
- 5.32. The SDA also provides an opportunity for families and younger people. Thus for example properties of suitable size and price with facilities such as decent garden space, communal recreational space etc. with good accessibility to schooling will contribute towards this objective.
- 5.33. In accordance with the Local Plan, consideration will also be given to the potential needs of travelling communities (a requirement for all strategic sites under Policy H7 – Travelling Communities). We would therefore welcome your initial thoughts on the potential suitability of the East Witney site in terms of meeting the needs of travelling communities.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 5: Meeting specific housing needs

- 5a) Do you think the 5% of self-build plots to be provided as part of the SDA should be located in a single part of the site or dispersed throughout?
- 5b) Should the development include any specialist accommodation such as sheltered or extra-care housing, or do you think there is already sufficient existing provision in Witney and the surrounding area?
- 5c) How can the type of new homes provided best meet the needs of young people and households with children (e.g. garden space, dwelling size/type, access to schools and recreation facilities)?
- 5d) Do you think the East Witney SDA is a suitable site for addressing the needs of the travelling community?
- 5e) Do you have any other general comments or observations in terms of specific housing needs and how these can be met through the development?

The character and form of development

- 5.34. A fundamental issue for the East Witney SDA is the character and form of development – what it looks like, how it feels and functions and how it responds to its local and wider surroundings. This is a particularly important issue as the SDA will essentially comprise an ‘extension’ of Witney and we would welcome early views on how this can best be achieved.
- 5.35. Witney is an historic market town located in the west of Oxfordshire. The settlement was established in the 13th century by the Bishops of Winchester, and developed over time into a thriving local centre for the wool trade in particular. From the 17th century until the second half of the 20th century, Witney was renowned throughout the world for its woollen blankets, the industry peaking in the 19th century. The wool industry has left an indelible mark on the character and buildings of Witney and Cogges, with mills, workers’ houses and associated structures scattered throughout the settlement.



- 5.36. Up until the early 20th century, Witney had a distinctive linear form comprising a principal long axis curving from the church in the south, up to Woodgreen in the north-east. A number of streets branched off this main axis at right angles, most notably Corn Street and West End. In the second half of the 20th century and into the 21st century, this historic settlement pattern was subsumed by an explosion of mainly residential growth to the west and north-east. Today, Witney is a vibrant and bustling market town, and the largest settlement in West Oxfordshire, with about 27,000 residents.
- 5.37. The overarching objective in the second half of the 20th century and into the 21st century has been for buildings that reflect the local vernacular traditions, both in terms of design and materials. The most conspicuous legacy of this approach has been the overwhelming use of grey limestone (and modern alternatives) rather than red brick in the construction of new housing in Witney (e.g. at Madley Park in north-east Witney, and in several smaller developments, such as Chichester House on Woodgreen).
- 5.38. With regard to new development, the West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016) emphasises that larger developments such as the East Witney SDA offer great potential for the creation of distinctive and characterful new places.
- 5.39. The guide sets out a step by step process beginning with a thorough understanding of the site and the context within which it sits. It emphasises that whatever the scale or nature of the proposed development, particular care should be taken to ensure that local character is respected or strengthened for example drawing on locally distinctive aspects of design such as architectural details or materials to preserve and enhance local character.

- 5.40. Where no positive or meaningful precedents exist in terms of local settlement character or design upon which to draw, it is important that new development is nonetheless made as distinctive as possible – in order to create a clear, strong and locally resonant sense of place and identity. ‘Dropped-in’ design solutions with little or no relevance to the unique context of the site should be avoided.
- 5.41. For any development to be successful, it must have a strong and distinctive character. In the case of a site adjoining a settlement with a distinctive, established character, it may be most appropriate to develop a scheme that echoes and builds sympathetically upon distinctive aspects and features of the settlement, in order to create a place whose character meaningfully relates to that of its context.
- 5.42. In the case of edge-of-settlement or more removed sites, or where the adjoining settlement does not have a distinctive established character, there may be greater scope for the creation of a place with a new and strongly defined character and identity of its own.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 6: Character and form of development

- 6a)** Do you consider that the East Witney SDA should be ‘locally inspired’ drawing upon the distinctive aspects and features of Witney and the Cogges area specifically?
- 6b)** Alternatively, should the emphasis be on creating a completely new place with a strongly defined character and identity of its own?
- 6c)** Do you have any other general comments or observations on this issue?

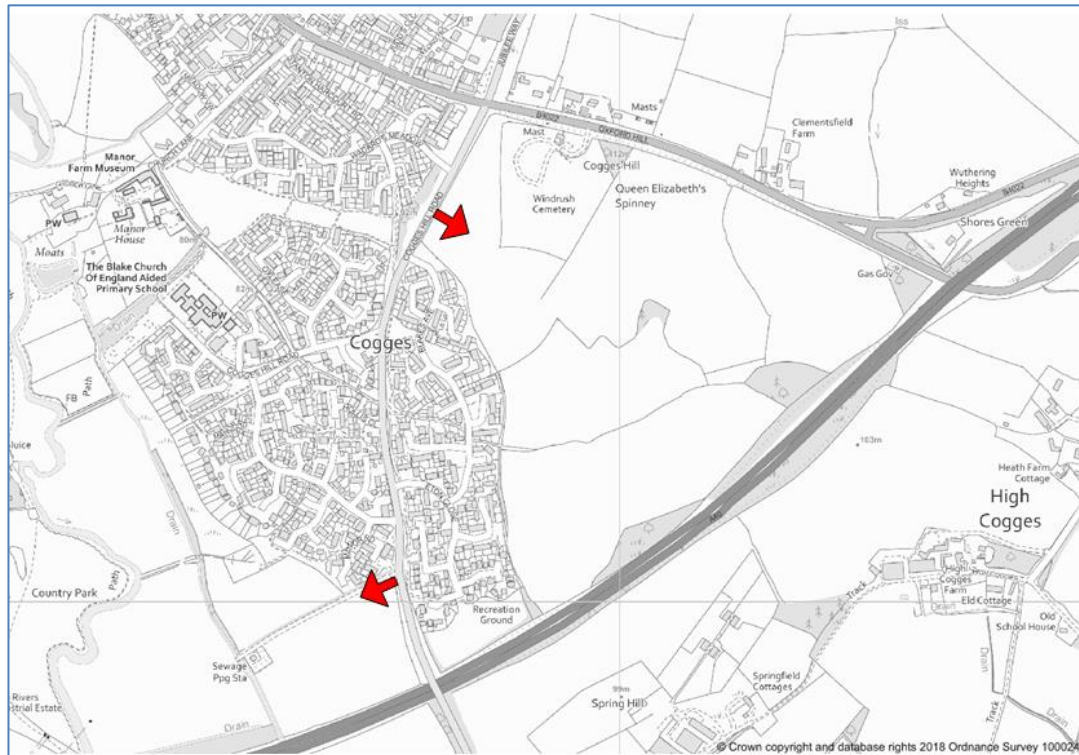
Access and movement

- 5.43. There a number of issues relating to access and movement that we would welcome views on as we take the East Witney SDA forward. These include the main points of vehicular access into the site, improvements to highway infrastructure including the Shores Green/A40 junction, maximising opportunities to use public transport and providing for active forms of travel such as walking, cycling and riding. These issues are explored further below.

Site Access - Vehicles

- 5.44. With regard to Cogges Triangle, the current thinking of both the District Council and the site promoter is that there will be one primary point of vehicular access into the site from Cogges Hill Road plus a potential secondary (emergency) access, the location of which is yet to be determined.
- 5.45. With regard to Cogges South, the current thinking is that there would be a single primary access point into the site, close to the existing entrance and track to the sewage pumping station as shown on the plan below. The scale of development envisaged in this location is such that there would be no need for a secondary (emergency) access point.

Figure 5.3 – Proposed Site Access Points



Highway Infrastructure Improvements

- 5.46. The East Witney SDA lies adjacent to the Shores Green/A40 junction as depicted on the aerial photograph at Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4 – Shores Green / A40 junction (existing)



- 5.47. A key priority for both the County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan is to upgrade the junction by providing west facing slip roads so that it becomes 'all movement'. This will have significant benefits in terms of traffic movements in and around Witney.
- 5.48. The District Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan¹³ (IDP) identifies the Shores Green scheme as part of a package of preferred transport measures for Witney, with an estimated cost (in 2011) of around £5.6m.
- 5.49. A contribution of £1.16m towards the Shores Green improvements has already been secured as part of the residential development currently underway north of Burford Road, Witney and the East Witney SDA provides another mechanism by which the slip roads can be delivered.
- 5.50. The Local Plan identifies that the East Witney SDA is able to deliver the 'off-slip' through a planning obligation and that an appropriate financial contribution will be sought towards the 'on-slip' potentially as part of a wider strategic transport infrastructure fund/package for Witney. This reflects the current position in terms of land ownership as the site promoter does not own all of the land needed to deliver the entire scheme.
- 5.51. Local Plan Policy WIT1 requires development of the site to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities including the improvements to the Shores Green junction and related highway measures.
- 5.52. In recognition of the importance of the Shores Green improvements, the scheme is now included as part of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal under the Year 2-5 schedule of infrastructure projects. Additionally, Oxfordshire County Council has agreed to delegate the use of compulsory purchase powers for a number of major infrastructure projects including the Shores Green junction improvements should land negotiations prove to be unsuccessful.

¹³ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/1572230/SD15-West-Oxfordshire-Infrastructure-Delivery-Plan-IDP-Update-November-2016-.pdf>

- 5.53. In addition to the Shores Green junction improvements, the East Witney SDA will be supported by other highway improvements including potentially improvements to the Oxford Hill/Cogges Hill Road/Jubilee Way junction and wider measures in the central area of the town e.g. Bridge Street. Further work will be required to determine in more detail what improvements may be needed and how these are to be delivered.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 7: Vehicular access and highway infrastructure improvements

- 7a)** Do you agree that the East Witney SDA should have one primary point of vehicular access on Cogges Hill Road (serving Cogges Triangle) and one primary point of vehicular access on Stanton Harcourt Road (serving Cogges South)?
- 7b)** Do you have any specific observations to make on the proposed improvements to the Shores Green A40 junction that are needed to bring the East Witney SDA forward?
- 7c)** Do you have any comments to make on other highway improvements that are likely to be needed to facilitate the East Witney development?
- 7d)** Do you have any other comments or observations on the issues of vehicular access and highway infrastructure?

Maximising the use of public transport

- 5.54. As outlined earlier, the East Witney SDA is well placed for travel by bus and rail and a key consideration for the development of the site is how to maximise the use of public transport to help reduce use of the private car.
- 5.55. There are a number of bus stops very near the site including the B4022 Oxford Hill where the premium S1 gold and S2 gold services to Oxford City Centre can be accessed along with the S7 service to Headington. There are also bus stops on Cogges Hill Road, Blakes Avenue and Manor Road from which the Witney Town Service (213/214) can be accessed.
- 5.56. The nearest rail link to East Witney is Hanborough Station on the Cotswold Line which can be accessed via Jubilee Way and the A4095 around 8.3km (5.18 miles away). The station provides services to a number of destinations including Oxford and London Paddington.
- 5.57. The SPD has a key role to play in helping to identify potential measures to encourage the use of public transport. This could include for example improvements to bus waiting facilities including real-time passenger information, secure cycle parking and frequency and coverage of services.
- 5.58. It may also be possible to divert the 213/214 Witney Town Service into the East Witney site to enable ease of access.
- 5.59. With regard to Hanborough Station there is the potential to consider issues such as the A4095 and provision for cyclists, cycle parking and other facilities at the station and other potential measures through which the use of Hanborough Station is likely to become a more attractive option.

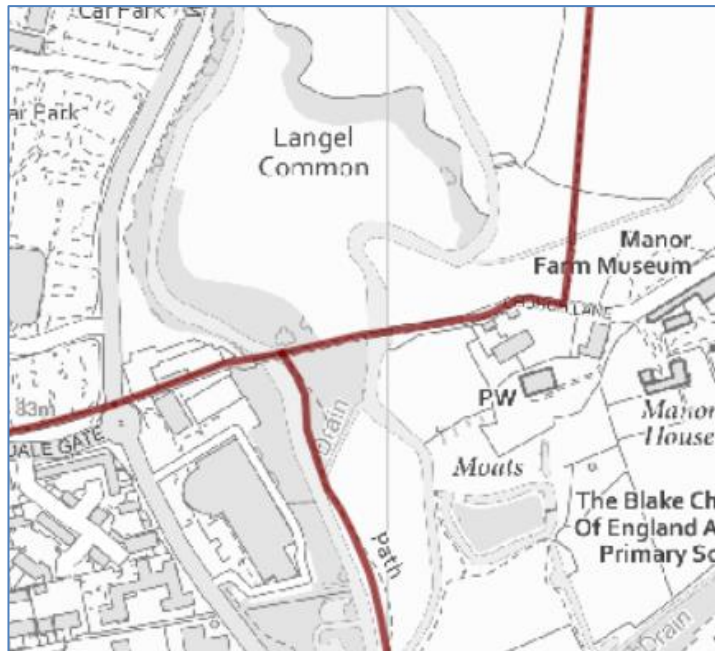
Active Travel

- 5.60. The East Witney site is very close to the Town Centre with a number of existing pedestrian and cycle routes running through the Cogges Estate, many of these leading towards Cogges Manor Farm and on towards the Town Centre across the Windrush Valley just south of Langel Common.



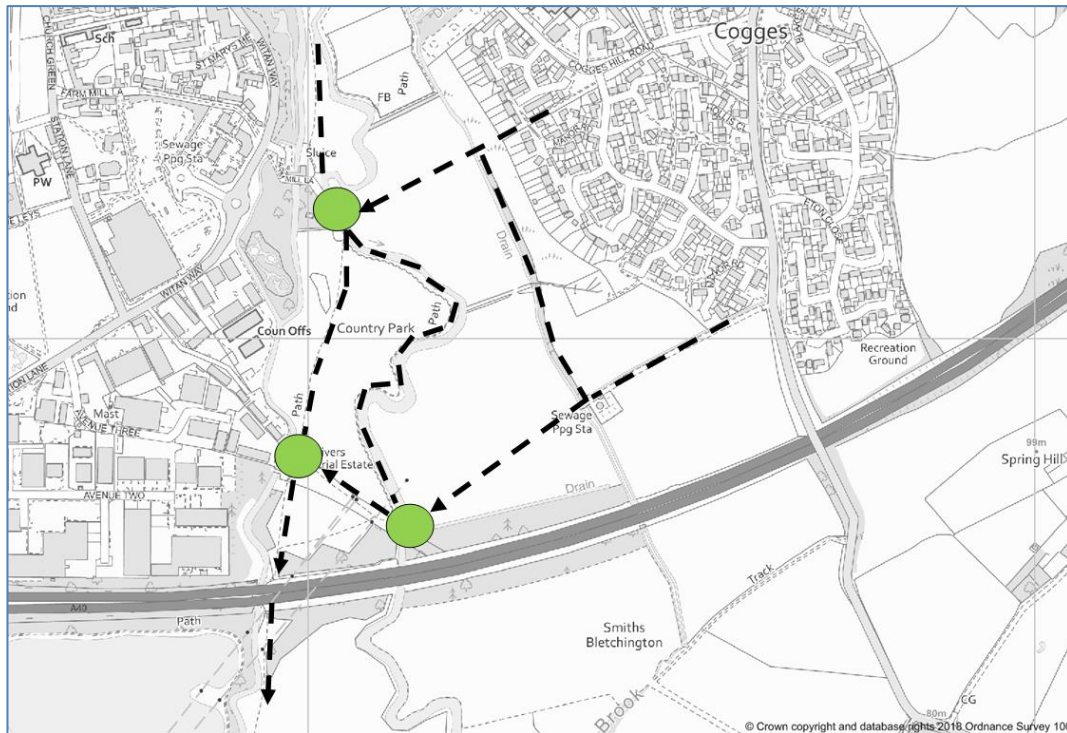
- 5.61. The Cogges Triangle site itself has a number of public rights of way crossing it and into adjoining areas but these are generally poorly identified and at times difficult to follow. The Cogges South site currently has no formal public rights of way in the immediate locality although there are a number of well-used informal paths.
- 5.62. Development of the East Witney site presents an excellent opportunity to promote active travel which will not only have demonstrable health benefits but will also help to integrate the new development with the Town by providing strong physical connections and encouraging movement.
- 5.63. At present, despite the strong network of walking and cycling connections through the Cogges estate, there is only one formal public right of way at which the River Windrush can be crossed - the footpath/cycleway from Church Lane to Witan Way / Langdale Gate

Figure 5.5 – Public Right of Way Church Lane – Langdale Gate



- 5.64. Development of the East Witney site presents an opportunity to consider other potential crossing points within the Windrush Valley. One potential option is at Farm Mill Lane which could be linked directly to Manor Road via a new east-west pedestrian/cycle link.
- 5.65. A further potential option is to formalise pedestrian and cycle use of the disused railway bridge in the southern part of the site allowing a connection from the Stanton Harcourt Road, through the Cogges South site, across the valley, along the dismantled railway and into the Station Lane employment area.
- 5.66. This would allow a direct connection from the Stanton Harcourt Road through the Cogges South site and across the valley and help to discourage unnecessary car trips from the Cogges area along the B4022 Oxford Hill and into the Town Centre.
- 5.67. Another potential option is to improve and upgrade the paths which currently run south through the Windrush Valley from Langel Common to the A40 and then allow to the south via an underpass to the Witney Lake and Country Park and surrounding area. The paths are well-used but can be muddy in the winter months. If upgraded (e.g. to a resin bound surface) they would become a more attractive option throughout the year.
- 5.68. The area south of the A40 is a rich leisure resource and is vastly underused. It will therefore be important in taking the East Witney site forward to consider how safe and convenient movement to the south of the A40 can be achieved.
- 5.69. The various options outlined above are illustrated on the plan below and we would welcome your thoughts on these potential improvements.

Figure 5.6 – Potential Walking / Cycling Improvements



CONSULTATION QUESTION 8: Public transport and active travel (e.g. walking, cycling, riding)

- 8a)** Do you have any views on how the use of bus and rail can be made as attractive as possible for new residents of the East Witney SDA (e.g. improved waiting facilities, cycle parking, frequency and coverage of bus services?)
- 8b)** Do you have any views on the possible diversion of the Witney Town Bus Service (213/214) into the East Witney SDA at Cogges Triangle?
- 8c)** How can opportunities for promoting active travel (walking, cycling and riding) be maximised?
- 8d)** Do you have any thoughts on the potential new and enhanced routes and connections identified on the plan at Figure 5.6?
- 8e)** Do you have any other comments or observations on the issue of public transport and active travel?

Landscape and heritage

- 5.70. As outlined earlier, the East Witney SDA is sensitive in landscape and heritage terms for a number of reasons. Cogges South forms an important part of the Upper Windrush Valley with high intervisibility and key views to a number of important local landmarks. Cogges Triangle forms the end of a very prominent ridge enclosing and forming an important backdrop to the east of the town.
- 5.71. Both sites are close to the Witney and Cogges Conservation Area and have the potential to affect its setting. There are also a number of key views to important heritage assets including Cogges Manor Farm and St. Mary's Church Spire.
- 5.72. The SPD has a role to play in terms of ensuring that the East Witney development minimises any potentially harmful in landscape and heritage terms and maximises any potential benefits such as the enhancement of key views. Some initial thoughts are outlined below and we would welcome your comments.

Cogges Triangle

- 5.73. The western and southern parts of the Cogges Triangle site are relatively low lying and built development here is able to be accommodated without any significant landscape, visual and heritage impact. However, the topography of the site is variable sloping up towards a higher central point before falling away again towards the eastern boundary.
- 5.74. This means that built development on the higher parts of the site has the potential to be more harmful and visually prominent. The Council's proposed approach is therefore to focus the majority of development on the less elevated parts of the site including within the natural 'bowl' in the south.
- 5.75. Any built development on the higher parts of the site above the 95m contour will be limited and will need to be carefully considered through a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment as part of any planning application.
- 5.76. This general approach will help to ensure that the open backcloth to the town is retained with the precise extent of development guided by more detailed landscape and visual analysis.
- 5.77. The central, northern and eastern parts of the site will be kept free from development and will instead be used as an area of landscape mitigation and amenity space. The site promoter has previously suggested an area of community woodland could be provided in the central part of the site but evidence prepared in support of the Local Plan¹⁴ suggests that heavy screen planting should not be necessary, would not respect the local landscape character and would sever landscape connectivity with the Eynsham Vale.
- 5.78. The Council's initial view is that this should be retained as open grassland with small copses of trees, designed to reflect the on-site landscape pattern and retaining key views westwards including to the Town Centre and St. Mary's Church.
- 5.79. A combination of woodland and open space would contribute to Witney's Green Infrastructure and maintain the landscape and visual setting of High Cogges, the eastern approach to Witney and the Cemetery, which is of particular value in maintaining a sense of calm and tranquillity.

¹⁴ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/726806/Kirkham-landscape-and-visual-review-of-strategic-site-options-2012.pdf>

- 5.80. This approach will be complemented by careful landscape treatment at the edge of the developable area, integrating with any open space within the development. As a general principle, the layout of development will be expected to respect existing field boundaries and hedgerows.
- 5.81. The Council's evidence also highlights the importance of the cemetery and the potential harm that could be caused by development to its open rural character and the loss of key views including towards St. Mary's Church in particular.
- 5.82. The Council's approach will therefore be to ensure that development maintains the setting and tranquillity of the cemetery and key views over the town. This means the amount and type of development west and immediately south of the cemetery will need to be carefully considered.

Cogges South

- 5.83. Cogges South is sensitive in landscape, visual and heritage terms for different reasons. It is much flatter, low lying and less visually prominent than Cogges Triangle but forms an important part of the open flat valley landscape associated with the River Windrush, acting as a key transition point from the wider Windrush lower valley to the south and the town river setting to the north.
- 5.84. The Council's initial view is that development should be limited so that it reads as part of the existing housing at Manor Road and does not intrude harmfully into the valley floor, with the majority of the site likely to be retained as open grassland in accordance with Windrush in Witney Landscape Management Strategy. Existing hedges and tree cover which form important landscape features of the Windrush Valley will be retained as appropriate.
- 5.85. A landscape buffer zone along the western edge of the development will also help to ensure that a soft edge is provided to the built form.
- 5.86. As a general principle, the Council will also expect development at Cogges South to accord with relevant landscape objectives contained in the Windrush in Witney Management Strategy. These include:
- Ensuring new development integrates with the landscape character of the area;
 - Encouraging land management practices that are in keeping with the landscape character;
 - Ensuring that new planting is in character with the landscape type;
 - Encouraging the appropriate screening of poor views/features;
 - Encouraging the management of existing riverside willows and planting new willows where appropriate;
 - Encouraging protection, awareness and management of historic features
- 5.87. To summarise, the Council's initial thoughts on addressing potential landscape and heritage harm are as follows:

Cogges Triangle

- Focus the majority of development on the less elevated parts of the site including within the natural 'bowl' in the south;
- Limited development above the 95m contour to be carefully considered through a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment as part of any planning application;

- Central, northern and eastern parts of the site kept free from development and used for landscape mitigation / amenity space most likely in the form of open grassland with some woodland;
- Careful landscape treatment at the edge of the developable area;
- Layout of development expected to respect existing field boundaries and hedgerows; and
- Ensuring that any development west and immediately south of the cemetery is carefully considered to ensure the setting and tranquillity of the cemetery and key views over the town are retained.

Cogges South

- Limited development to read as part of the existing housing at Manor Road and not intrude harmfully into the valley floor;
- Protect important views across the valley landscape including to Cogges Church;
- Majority of site to be retained as open grassland
- Existing hedges and tree cover retained as appropriate;
- Landscape buffer zone along the western edge of the development to ensure a soft edge is provided to the built form; and
- Development to accord with relevant landscape objectives contained in the Windrush in Witney Management Strategy.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 9: Landscape and heritage

- 9a)** Do you support the Council's initial approach in respect of the Cogges Triangle site summarised at paragraph 5.87 above?
- 9b)** Do you support the Council's initial approach in respect of the Cogges South site summarised at paragraph 5.87 above?
- 9c)** Do you have any other thoughts or observations on the issue of landscape and heritage impact and how this should be addressed through the SPD for East Witney?

Green Infrastructure (GI)

- 5.88. Green infrastructure (GI) is defined as a network of multi-functional green space (both urban and rural) which can deliver a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure is not simply an alternative description for conventional open space. As a network, it includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, but also street trees, allotments and private gardens. It can also include streams, canals and other water bodies and features such as green roofs and walls.
- 5.89. The provision of high quality green infrastructure offers multiple benefits. It can help drive economic growth and regeneration by creating high quality environments that are attractive to investors; it can enhance quality of life, providing opportunities for recreation, social interaction and play and it can reinforce and enhance local landscape character, contributing to a sense of place. It can also help create safe and accessible environments and help reduce air pollution, noise and the impacts of extreme heat and extreme rainfall events.
- 5.90. To lock in these benefits over the long-term, as with other forms of infrastructure, Green Infrastructure must be well planned and designed and have sustainable management and maintenance arrangements in place.
- 5.91. The location and nature of the East Witney SDA is such that it presents a number of positive opportunities in relation to Green Infrastructure and we would welcome your thoughts on these.
- Cogges Triangle*
- 5.92. The Local Plan identifies the potential provision of allotments at the East Witney SDA but doesn't specify where this should be or how many 'plots' are needed. One option would be to accommodate allotments in the area to the west of the Windrush cemetery. This part of the site is relatively sensitive in landscape terms, gently sloping and a 'low impact' use such as allotments would be able to be accommodated with less impact than built development.
- 5.93. Alternatively, there is likely to be scope to provide some allotment space in the southern, lower lying part of the Cogges Triangle site as part of a more general area of green space.
- 5.94. A further GI opportunity we would welcome your thoughts on is the concept of extending the existing green link that runs through the Cogges Estate into Cogges Triangle.
- 5.95. As shown on the photo below, the current link provides a significant asset in terms of open space and leisure and also acts as a key connection towards Cogges Manor and onto the town centre.

Figure 5.7 – Existing Green Link from Cogges Hill Road to Cogges Manor Farm and beyond



- 5.96. Potentially this green link could be extended to the east into the Cogges Triangle site to form a continuous green connection from the middle of the site through to Witney Town Centre - thereby promoting active travel including walking and cycling. We would welcome your thoughts on this.
- 5.97. In terms of the wider Cogges Triangle site, as we outlined earlier, the higher parts of the site are more sensitive in landscape and visual terms and the provision of open space in this location interspersed with some woodland cover would be consistent with the Council's landscape advice for the site. It would also provide an important area of green space for the benefit of new and existing residents.
- 5.98. There is also likely to be potential for green space provision in the lower lying, natural 'bowl' that occurs in the southern part of the site. This could incorporate provision for sustainable drainage and as outlined above, potentially allotments.
- 5.99. The site also provides an opportunity to utilise the existing trees and hedgerows that currently sub-divides the site into a number of separate field parcels. Subject to appropriate design and layout, these offer the potential to act as key green corridors.
- 5.100. These various opportunities are illustrated on the plan at Figure 5.8 and we would welcome your thoughts.

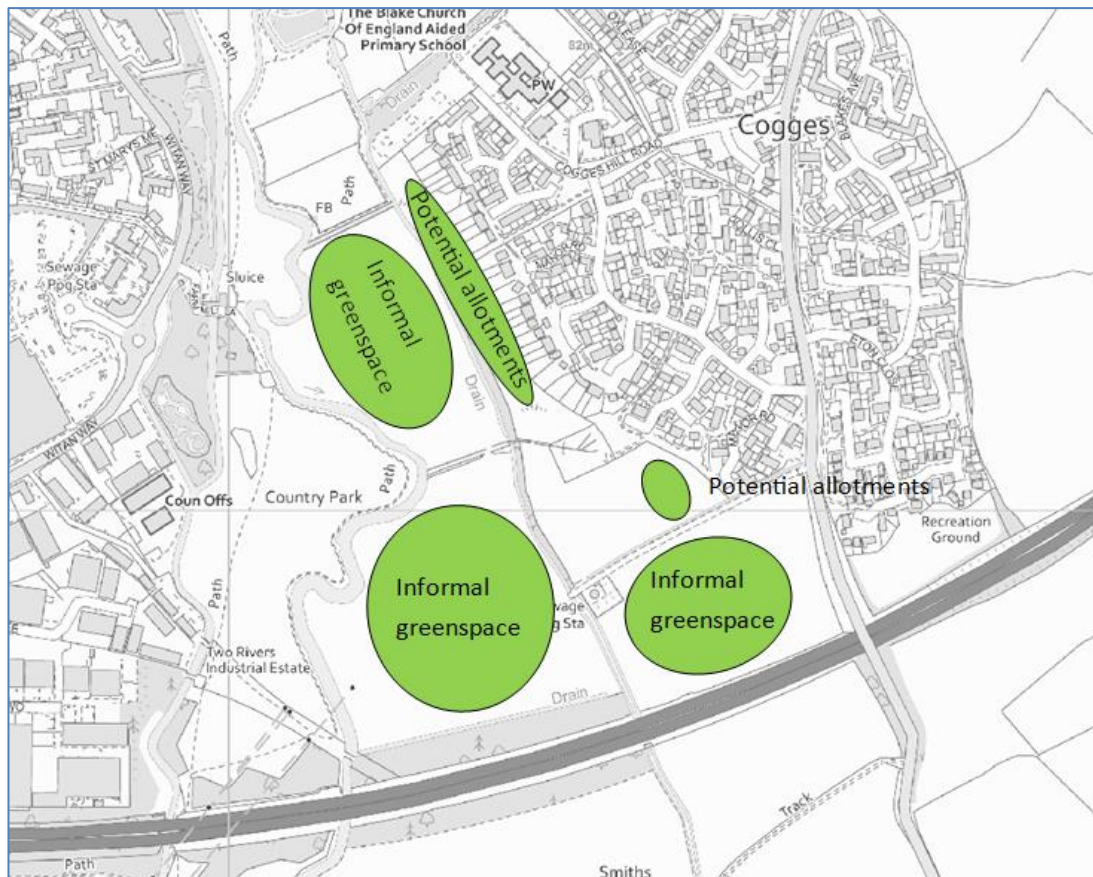
Figure 5.8 – GI opportunities Cogges Triangle



Cogges South

- 5.101. The smaller Cogges South site also presents a number of excellent opportunities for green infrastructure. As outlined above, the Local Plan requires provision to be made for allotment space as part of the East Witney SDA and it may be that the flatter Cogges South site is considered more suitable.
- 5.102. The site promoter has previously identified land to the west of the existing housing on Manor Road as a possible location for allotments as shown on the plan below. Alternatively, these could be provided on land to the south as shown on the plan below.
- 5.103. In addition to potential allotment provision, the Cogges South site presents other positive opportunities for green space provision. In keeping with the overall aims and objectives of the Windrush in Witney Project, the Council’s initial view is that this should be in the form of natural greenspace such as managed grassland with informal public access.
- 5.104. This would enable and encourage residents to use the valley not only for leisure and recreation purposes but also allow for wider connections to be made in relation to the Windrush Valley and on towards the town centre and to the south of the A40.
- 5.105. We would welcome your thoughts on these potential opportunities as illustrated on the plan at Figure 5.9.

Figure 5.9 – GI opportunities Cogges South



CONSULTATION QUESTION 10: Green Infrastructure

- 10a)** Do you agree that the East Witney SDA should include the provision of additional allotment space as part of the development?
- 10b)** If new allotments were to be provided, where do you think these should be located?
 - West of Manor Road
 - South of Manor Road
 - West of the Windrush Cemetery
 - East of Eton Close
 - Somewhere else (please specify)
- 10c)** Do you support the concept of providing a continuous ‘green link’ from the Cogges Triangle site through the Cogges Estate and on towards the Town Centre?

- 10d)** Do you support the concept of open space and woodland copses being provided on the higher parts of the Cogges Triangle site together with open space in the lower lying, southern part of the site?
- 10e)** Do you support the concept of utilising existing trees and hedgerows as 'green corridors' within the East Witney SDA?
- 10f)** Do you support the concept of managed grassland with informal public access within the Windrush Valley?
- 10g)** Do you have any other, more general comments you wish to make on this issue?

Biodiversity

- 5.106. Biodiversity can be defined in a number of ways but essentially relates to the variety of plant and animal life that may exist in a particular area. Legally, public authorities in England and Wales must have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.
- 5.107. The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that pursuing sustainable development includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, and a core principle for planning is that it should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution.
- 5.108. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 is based on the now widely accepted 'mitigation hierarchy' which seeks as a preference to avoid any impact on biodiversity and if those cannot be avoided, to ensure those impacts are properly mitigated and then only as a last resort, compensate for any impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated. This general principle will be applied in relation to the East Witney SDA.
- 5.109. In addition, Policy EH3 requires all major developments such as the East Witney SDA to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity where possible. This should be demonstrated in a quantifiable way through the use of a Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator (BIAC).
- 5.110. The location and nature of the East Witney SDA is such that it presents a number of positive opportunities for biodiversity and we would welcome your thoughts on how these can be most effectively realised.
- 5.111. The Cogges South site lies adjacent to the Lower Windrush Conservation Target Area (CTA). CTAs are areas that have been defined as being particularly important within Oxfordshire in terms of their key strategic habitats and species.
- 5.112. The Lower Windrush Valley has been transformed by mineral extraction over the last 60 years and so the landscape of this CTA is characterised by a mosaic of water filled gravel pits and riverside meadowland stretching south from the centre of Witney.
- 5.113. The main aim within CTAs is to restore biodiversity at a landscape-scale through maintenance, restoration and creation of UK priority habitats and areas for priority species.

- 5.114. Particular targets associated with the Lower Windrush CTA include:
1. Mesotrophic / Eutrophic standing waters – management
 2. Lowland Meadows – management, restoration and creation.
 3. Ponds – management and creation (particularly of pond complexes).
 4. Reedbed (and swamp) – management and creation.
 5. Floodplain grazing marsh – management.
- 5.115. In accordance with the Local Plan, development of the East Witney SDA will be required to identify relevant biodiversity constraints and opportunities and show how the proposal will help to achieve the aims of the CTA.
- 5.116. The Cogges South site also lies within the Windrush in Witney Project Area established by the District Council a number of years ago. The project provides guidance for the management of the area in order to protect and enhance its special landscape, character, ecological, cultural and recreational value.
- 5.117. The strategy contains a series of objectives including in relation to nature conservation. The objectives for nature conservation are as follows:
- NCO1: Encourage the protection, restoration and enhancement of unimproved neutral grassland, through, for example, the establishment of a conservation grazing project for the study area.
 - NCO2: Encourage the protection, restoration and enhancement of wetland habitat and the river corridor.
 - NCO3: Encourage continuing survey work e.g. ecological surveys should be undertaken as an integral part of planning applications.
 - NCO4: Safeguard priority habitats and species in accordance with relevant Biodiversity Action Plans, Habitat Action Plans and Species Action Plans by, for instance, improving the habitats for otters and water voles.
 - NCO5: Encourage the management of scarp slope scrub (at ‘Hills and Mountains’).
 - NCO6: Encourage the restoration of creeping marshwort in accordance with the Local Species Action Plan.
- 5.118. The Council’s general approach will be for development of the East Witney SDA to be consistent with and contribute towards the objectives of the Windrush in Witney Project including the nature conservation objectives listed above.
- 5.119. In addition to the more strategic approaches to habitat enhancement and creation outlined above, there are relatively small measures that can be undertaken through the development process that cumulatively will bring benefits for biodiversity, including incorporating integral bird and bat boxes into buildings, planting native trees, shrubs and wildflowers, planting ornamental plants with recognised wildlife value and providing wildlife friendly landscaping such as green walls, roofs and balconies and establishing ‘hedgehog highways’.
- 5.120. British Standards BS 42020: 2013 ‘Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development’ provides clear guidance on biodiversity conservation and enhancement, which the Council expects will be applied as good practice. In accordance with the Local Plan, the Council will seek to ensure that sustainable drainage systems capitalise on any available opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

- 5.121. To summarise, the Council's proposed approach in respect of conserving and enhancing biodiversity through the East Witney SDA will be as follows:
- Applying the mitigation hierarchy as a matter of general principle, which seeks as a preference to avoid any impact on biodiversity and if those cannot be avoided, to ensure those impacts are properly mitigated and then only as a last resort, compensate for any impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated.
 - Requiring any development proposal to identify relevant biodiversity constraints and opportunities and demonstrate how it will help to achieve the aims of the Lower Windrush Conservation Target Area (CTA).
 - Requiring any development proposal to be consistent with and contribute towards, relevant objectives of the Windrush in Witney project including those relating to nature conservation.
 - Agreeing with the developer and other relevant consultees, how to complement these strategic approaches with site specific measures within the development to help cumulatively bring about benefits for biodiversity such as wildlife friendly landscaping, 'hedgehog highways', integral bird and bat boxes and planting native trees, shrubs and wildflowers with recognised wildlife value.
 - Requiring any planning application to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity where possible, measured in a quantifiable way through the use of a Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator (BIAC).
 - Ensuring that sustainable drainage systems take full account of biodiversity considerations and opportunities.
- 5.122. We would welcome your initial thoughts on this overall approach.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 11: Biodiversity

- 11 a)** Do you support the Council's proposed approach in respect of conserving and enhancing biodiversity as outlined above?
- 11 b)** Do you have any other specific comments you wish to make on the issue of biodiversity and how the development of the East Witney SDA can most effectively contribute towards any potential opportunities for conservation and enhancement?

Reducing Flood Risk

- 5.123. As outlined earlier, flood risk is a key consideration for both parts of the East Witney SDA but for different reasons. The boundary of the Cogges South site as defined in the Local Plan includes a proportion of Flood Zone 2 (medium risk) and Flood Zone 3 (high risk) as shown on the plan below. This is fluvial (river) flooding associated with the River Windrush which runs nearby to the west.

Figure 5.10 - Cogges South extent of Flood Zone 2 and 3



- 5.124. The Cogges Triangle site is not affected by fluvial (river) flooding but is susceptible to surface water flooding by virtue of the sloping nature of the site.
- 5.125. Ensuring that new development is steered towards areas with the lowest risk of flooding is a central tenet of national planning policy and also the West Oxfordshire Local Plan. Not only should the new development be as free from flood risk as possible, but it should not in itself increase the likelihood of flooding happening elsewhere.
- 5.126. The Council's proposed approach is essentially two fold.
- 5.127. In respect of Cogges South where fluvial (river) flooding is a key consideration, the Council's approach will be to ensure that the 'sequential approach' is applied and that any built development is provided on the eastern part of the site in Flood Zone 1 (low risk) with no development taking place in the higher risk Flood Zones 2 and 3 that affect the western parts of the site.
- 5.128. Sustainable drainage measures will also be required to take account of any potential issues with surface and groundwater. In accordance with the Local Plan, these will be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.
- 5.129. The Cogges Triangle site is unaffected by fluvial (river) flooding and is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 (low risk). As such it is not necessary to apply the sequential test and the extent of built development will instead be influenced by factors such as landscape and visual impact.
- 5.130. Because surface water run-off is a consideration for the site, sustainable drainage measures will be required to ensure that there is no risk of surface water flooding both in respect of any new homes built and also the existing houses to the west of the site.

- 5.131. The objective will be to reduce rates of run-off to below that which currently occurs on the site in its current agricultural use thereby providing a degree of 'betterment'. Again, in accordance with the Local Plan, any sustainable drainage measures will be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.
- 5.132. A detailed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required in support of any planning application for the East Witney SDA to allow these issues to be considered in more detail.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 12: Reducing Flood Risk

12a) Do you support the Council's proposed approach to addressing flood risk at the East Witney SDA?

12b) Are there any other specific comments you wish to make on this issue?

Sustainable Design and Construction

- 5.133. A key aspect of the Council's Local Plan strategy is to ensure that prudent use is made of natural resources to reduce our impact on climate change. In particular, the Local Plan is based on a three-step hierarchy:
- **Lean** – using less energy by the use of sustainable design and construction measures;
 - **Clean** – supplying energy efficiently, giving priority to decentralised energy supply;
 - **Green** – using renewable energy, especially woodfuel biomass
- 5.134. In respect of the first step – sustainable design and construction, Policy OS2 – Prudent Use of Natural Resources requires all development proposals to show consideration of the efficient and prudent use and management of natural resources.
- 5.135. This includes making the most efficient use of land and buildings, minimising the use of non-renewable resources, and minimising energy demands and energy loss through design, layout, orientation, landscaping materials and the use of technology.
- 5.136. It also includes minimising summer solar gain, maximising passive winter solar heating, lighting, natural ventilation, energy and water efficiency¹⁵ and re-use of materials, use of recycled and energy efficient materials and minimising waste.
- 5.137. This approach is consistent with the NPPF which requires new development to take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.
- 5.138. Policy EH6 of the Local Plan states that the use of decentralised energy systems, including Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and District Heating (DH), especially woody biomass fuelled, will be encouraged in all developments.
- 5.139. In respect of strategic housing sites such as East Witney the policy requires an energy feasibility assessment or strategy to be undertaken to assess the viability and practicability of decentralised energy including consideration of the use of local wood fuel biomass and other renewable energy initiatives.

¹⁵ Including the optional building regulations requirement for water efficiency of 110 litres/person/day

- 5.140. Where such an assessment demonstrates that decentralised energy systems are practicable and viable, such systems will be required as part of the development, unless an alternative solution would deliver the same or increased energy benefits.
- 5.141. The 'Vision for East Witney' document prepared on behalf of the East Witney consortium in 2012 highlighted a number of opportunities for sustainable building design and construction and the promotion of energy and resource efficiency.
- 5.142. It also identified the potential to site and orientate buildings so as to maximise solar gain as well as the potential to incorporate renewable energy technologies such as wind, solar water heating, air/ground source heat pumps and biomass energy.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 13: Sustainable design and construction

- I3a)** Do you have any specific observations on the East Witney SDA and the ways in which opportunities for sustainable design and construction should be further considered?
- I3b)** Do you have any comments to make on the issue of renewable and low carbon energy and the opportunities presented by the East Witney SDA?
- I3c)** Do you have any other comments to make on this issue?

Supporting Infrastructure

- 5.143. In bringing forward large-scale housing sites such as East Witney, it is essential that appropriate investment is put into new and improved infrastructure. We have already outlined some of the infrastructure that will be needed to support the scheme including:
- Highway infrastructure such as the Shores Green junction improvements and other potential complementary measures;
 - Measures to promote greater use of public transport and active travel;
 - Green infrastructure such as open space, allotments etc;
 - Flood risk management including sustainable drainage systems; and
 - Energy generation
- 5.144. In addition to these, we would welcome your thoughts on whether any other key infrastructure is needed to support the delivery of the East Witney SDA.
- 5.145. In terms of education, the scale of development at about 450 homes is such that the scheme does not trigger a requirement for a new primary school (the minimum threshold normally being around 600 homes). However, in order to ensure there is adequate capacity in existing primary schools in Witney, the developer would be expected to make an appropriate financial contribution which could then be spent on increased capacity. A financial contribution would also be sought towards secondary school capacity.
- 5.146. The amount sought would depend on the anticipated 'pupil generation' associated with the development which in turn will be dependent on factors such as the mix and size of new homes provided. This will be a matter for negotiation with Oxfordshire County Council as education authority once the details of the scheme are further worked up.

- 5.147. In terms of health care provision, the Council understands that the initial view of the NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group is that there is adequate primary health care capacity (GP services) available in Witney to accommodate the scale of housing growth set out in the Local Plan – including the East Witney SDA.
- 5.148. Oxfordshire County Council has published a draft guide to Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions¹⁶ which sets out their position on a number of other types of supporting infrastructure including special educational needs schools provision, extra-care housing, travel planning, strategic waste management, fire and rescue and community services such as libraries, museums, adult day care.
- 5.149. We would welcome your thoughts on the provision of supporting infrastructure for the East Witney SDA and whether there are any particular infrastructure projects/types that you think are needed to support the delivery of the scheme.

CONSULTATION QUESTION 14: Supporting infrastructure

14a) Do you have any comments to make on the supporting infrastructure outlined above including:

- Highway infrastructure including Shores Green junction improvements and other potential complementary measures;
- Measures to promote public transport and ‘active travel’;
- Green infrastructure such as open space and allotments;
- Flood risk management measures;
- Energy generation; and
- Financial contributions towards primary and secondary school capacity.

14b) What other supporting infrastructure do you think is needed to support the delivery of the East Witney SDA?

14c) Do you have any other comments you wish to make on this issue?

¹⁶ https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/Developer_Guide/consultationHome

6. Summary

6.1. We have in this paper sought to identify a number of key issues which require careful consideration in taking the East Witney SDA forward.

6.2. These include:

- The provision of a new ‘community hub’ including potentially a farm shop, butchery, country pub, community facilities and space for worship;
- The type and mix of new homes that should be provided including affordable housing and other specific housing needs;
- The character and form of development and whether it should draw on the distinctive aspects and features of Witney and Cogges or should have a new character and identity of its own;
- Access and movement including vehicular access and essential highway improvements and how opportunities for public transport and active travel can be maximised;
- Landscape and heritage and how the impact of development can be minimised and opportunities for enhancement maximised;
- Green infrastructure including the type and nature of green space that should be provided as part of the development;
- How the development could potentially seek to achieve a net biodiversity ‘gain’;
- How flood risk can be reduced and any opportunities for ‘betterment’ maximised;
- Sustainable design and construction and how the East Witney SDA could potentially contribute towards tackling and adapting to climate change;
- The provision of other supporting infrastructure needed to support the East Witney SDA, for example primary school capacity.

6.3. We would welcome your thoughts on these issues as well as any other important considerations you would like to highlight. This will enable us to take those comments on board as the draft SPD is worked up for further consultation later in 2019.

7. How to respond to the consultation

7.1. The deadline for responding to the consultation is **5pm on 17 July 2019**.

7.2. Comments may be submitted in writing either electronically via email or by post:

Email: planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk

Write to: Planning Policy, West Oxfordshire District Council, New Yatt Road, Witney, OX28 1PB

7.3. Please note that in responding to the consultation you do not have to answer all or even any of the consultation questions set out throughout the issues paper.

7.4. These are merely intended to stimulate thought and discussion - you do not have to respond to them unless you think it would be useful to do so in giving us your views.

8. Next steps

8.1. Following the close of the issues paper consultation, the responses received will be reviewed and analysed and taken into account as the draft SPD is worked up ahead of further consultation later in the year.

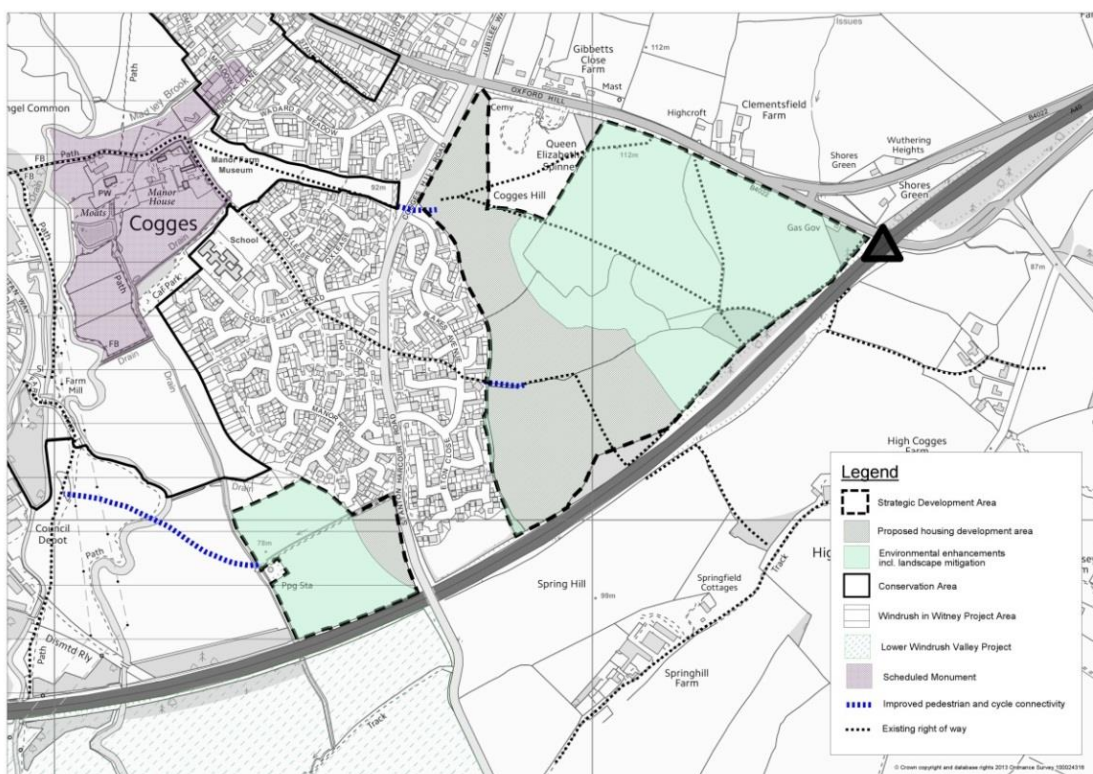
East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) – 450 homes (Witney Parish)

9.2.32 Land to the east of Witney is allocated for the delivery of 450 new homes. The site has no significant environmental or heritage constraints, is well-located in relation to the Town Centre and provided the extent, scale and design of development is sensitively controlled, will not have a significant landscape impact. Importantly, the west facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction onto the A40 will need to be delivered alongside the development in order to help manage the impact of the development.

9.2.33 The Shores Green improvements allow traffic using the junction to travel both east and west. A financial contribution towards the slip roads has already been secured from another housing development north of Burford Road in Witney and the East Witney SDA provides another mechanism by which the slip roads can be delivered. The development itself is able to deliver the ‘off-slip’ through a planning obligation and an appropriate financial contribution will be sought towards the ‘on-slip’ potentially as part of a wider strategic transport infrastructure fund/package for Witney.

9.2.34 The proposed allocation is shown in Figure 9.2c (note: the extent of the developable area shown is indicative only).

Figure 9.2c – East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA)



- 9.2.35 The allocation is split across two separate sites. A small parcel of land served off the Stanton Harcourt Road will provide a limited development of around 30 homes. The inclusion of this land within the allocation will help to facilitate the provision of links to the Town Centre across the Windrush Valley thereby increasing the integration of the overall development with the existing built area. It will also provide early revenue for the developer to help fund the infrastructure needed to bring forward the larger part of the site.
- 9.2.36 The remaining homes (c. 420) will be provided on the land known as Cogges Triangle, subject to consideration of the likely traffic impact on Witney in particular Bridge Street and an agreed strategy for the delivery of the Shores Green junction improvements. The precise quantum of development on both sites will depend on a number of issues including landscape and heritage impact, surface water run-off and traffic impact. A balanced mix of housing types including affordable housing will be sought together with the provision of essential supporting infrastructure to mitigate the impact of the development.

Policy WITI – East Witney Strategic Development Area (450 homes)

Land to the east of Witney to accommodate a sustainable, integrated community that forms a positive addition to Witney, including:

- a) about 450 homes with a balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing. This will include c.30 homes on land adjacent to Stanton Harcourt Road (subject to landscape impact and flood risk) and c. 420 homes on land at Cogges Triangle (subject to landscape impact and surface water run-off).**
- b) comprehensive development to be led by an agreed masterplan.**
- c) development to be phased in accordance with the timing of provision of supporting infrastructure and facilities including the essential improvements to the Shore’s Green junction onto the A40 and related highway measures.**
- d) the provision of other supporting transport infrastructure, including mitigating the impact of traffic associated with the development; the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards LTP4 transport schemes; provision of appropriate public transport (services and infrastructure) serving the site; and provision of a comprehensive network for pedestrians and cyclists with good connectivity provided to adjoining areas, including a particular emphasis on improving the linkages across the Windrush Valley into the town centre consistent with the aims and objectives of the Windrush in Witney Project and to Hanborough Station.**
- e) the provision of appropriate landscaping measures to mitigate the potential impact of development and associated infrastructure.**
- f) the provision of appropriate financial contributions towards primary and secondary education capacity enhancements.**
- g) biodiversity, landscape and public access enhancements within the Lower Windrush Valley including arrangements for future maintenance.**

- h) provision of appropriate green infrastructure including allotments.**
- i) appropriate measures to mitigate traffic noise.**
- j) the conservation, and enhancement where possible, of the setting of the Cogges Scheduled Monument and the Witney and Cogges Conservation Area.**
- k) the investigation, recording and safeguarding of the known and potential archaeological significance of the Area prior to any development taking place. The results of the investigation and recording should inform the final layout of the development and be deposited in a public archive.**
- l) appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage methods to ensure that post-development surface water run-off rates are attenuated to achieve a reduction in greenfield run-off rates. The sustainable drainage systems should be designed to provide a biodiversity enhancement.**
- m) connection to the mains sewerage network which includes infrastructure upgrades where required including any necessary phasing arrangements.**
- n) demonstrate the use of renewable energy, sustainable design and construction methods, with a high level of energy efficiency in new buildings.**
- o) the developer will be required to set aside 5% of the developable plots for those wishing to undertake custom/self-build.**