

January 2016

Investing in Oxford's Future

Oxford Growth Strategy

Advocacy Statement



Turley

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Contact

graeme.warriner@turley.co.uk

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Appendices (bound separately)

Appendix 1: Route Map Document

Appendix 2: Constraints Atlas

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Appendix 5: Urban Design Work

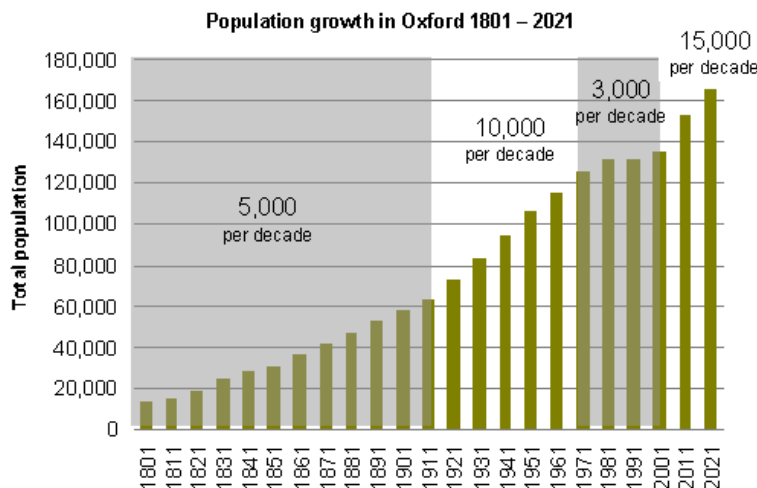
Appendix 6: Transport Appraisal

1. Introduction

Purpose of Strategy

- 1.1 Oxford is an international city, which is successful, vibrant, and a national economic asset. It is at the centre of the world-class knowledge economy of Oxford and Oxfordshire, with one of the most important concentrations of high-value businesses in Europe. However, a severe lack of housing availability, choice and affordability is creating a deepening housing crisis in Oxford, which is significantly undermining its future.
- 1.2 Oxford has overtaken London as the least affordable city to live in across the UK. Oxford average house prices are over 11 times the gross annual earnings in the City.¹ This means there is already severe pressures on the City's housing stock. 6.2% of households in Oxford are classed as overcrowded, compared with an Oxfordshire average of 3.3%².
- 1.3 Oxford's population is growing and increased by 10% over the last decade. It is predicted that the population will continue to grow rapidly. The City has a population profile which is young, diverse and attracted by the opportunities the city offers. The young population means that Oxford continues to experience a strong demand for family housing.

Population growth in Oxford, 1801-2021



- 1.4 Leading businesses report severe difficulty in the recruitment and the retention of staff at all levels, because of a lack of housing choice and affordability.³ Also, a recent report⁴ reveals how our universities are being held back in the global competition for the best research talent, due to the lack of affordable homes and lack of land for expanding

¹ Annual Lloyds Bank Affordable Cities Review (23rd March 2014) and NHF 'Broken Market, Broken Dreams: Home Truths 2014/15' (15 September 2015)

² Census 2011 (www.ons.gov.uk)

³ Withy King Business Barometer (www.withyking.co.uk)

⁴ The Oxford Innovation Engine: Realising the Growth Potential (SQW, October 2013)

business/research. Outcomes in our public services, such as health and education, are compromised through the lack of available affordable housing for key staff.

- 1.5 The recently published Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment, or 'SHMA'⁵ showed that there is a need for between 24,000 and 32,000 new homes in Oxford alone, to meet existing and future housing needs to 2031. There would need to be 988 affordable homes built per year (nearly 20,000 in total) to meet the needs of those who cannot afford to pay open market rents or purchase prices.
- 1.6 In order to ensure informed decisions are made in relation to accommodating housing needs, Oxford City Council commissioned Turley to embark on a programme to objectively consider the various growth options in and around the City. The Council published a 'Route Map' which sets out this process and strategy (**see Appendix 1**). This essentially involves a sequential process whereby the following was considered:
 - (i) the capacity of Oxford to accommodate growth (to determine what additional growth outside of Oxford needs to be accommodated to meet SHMA needs) - this work constitutes the Oxford SHLAA carried out by URS;
 - (ii) the constraints and opportunities for further growth around Oxford including within the Green Belt;
 - (iii) potential development options around Oxford to conclude where best locations for growth exist;
 - (iv) the amount of housing these potential best locations could accommodate (in meeting SHMA needs); and
 - (v) whether these potential growth areas are deliverable and credible propositions.
- 1.7 This Advocacy Statement presents the conclusions and recommendations of this process and takes forward the High Level Review of Opportunities undertaken in October 2014 (part (iii) of the above process) to consider sustainability, development capacity and deliverability of the opportunities identified at that stage.

Working together to deliver a balanced growth solution

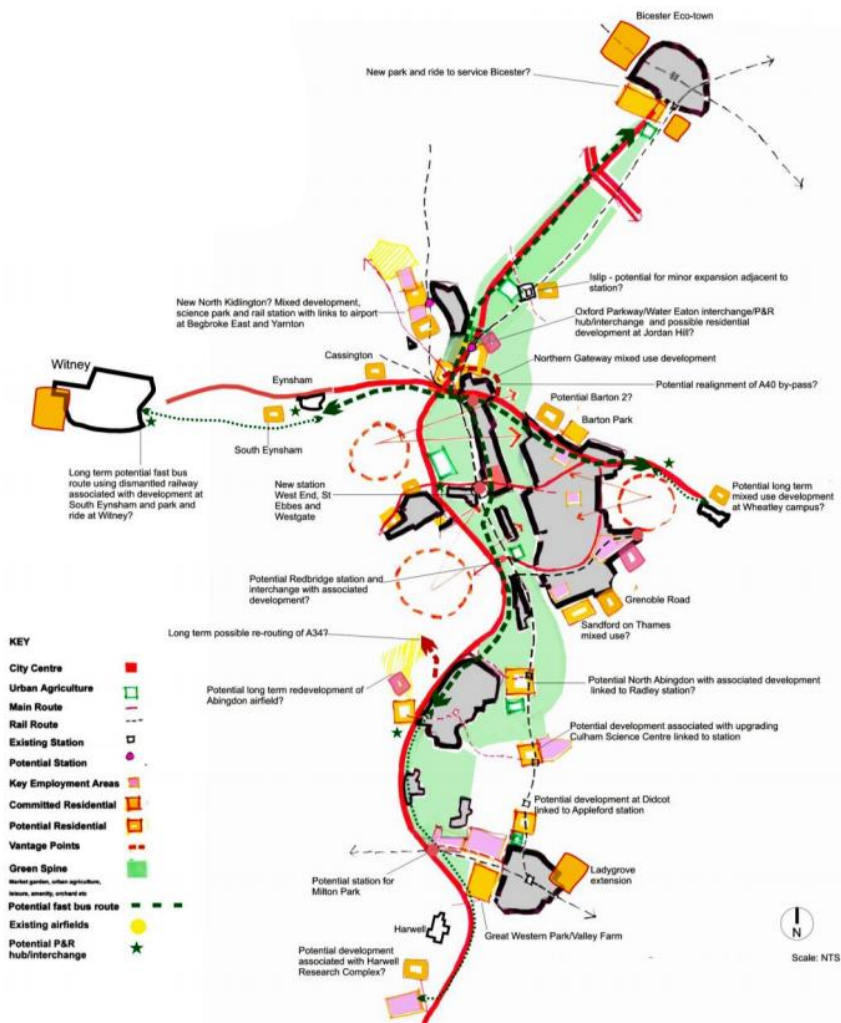
- 1.8 The Oxfordshire local authorities have agreed to work together to address Oxford's unmet housing need through the Oxford Growth Board. This work is therefore intended to inform the Growth Board process and assist in identifying the most appropriate locations for growth.
- 1.9 It is recognised by the Growth Board that the time has come to review the Oxford Green Belt boundary, to allow a re-assessment which properly reflects the purpose of the Green Belt and the need for housing and growth.
- 1.10 This is a positive step. The NPPF (paragraph 84) requires local authorities to review Green Belt boundaries taking into account the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. These include areas that have access to employment and services, landscape and environment and other considerations. Development within Oxford (where it does not impact on the amenity of existing residents and the environment) and

⁵ Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (GL Hearn, March 2014)

through urban extensions around Oxford provide the best opportunities to use Oxford's highly-developed public transport and cycling networks. Locating new homes at a distance from the City will potentially increase and extend commuting.

- 1.11 This approach to accommodating Oxford's growth through sustainable urban extension is not a new concept; rather much previous consideration has been given to this option.
- 1.12 In March 2014, Oxford Civic Society published 'Oxford Futures: A call to action on the development of Central Oxfordshire' which followed the Oxford Futures debates held in 2013. There was broad acceptance of four principles that should underpin growth, including the need to develop in the right place and reduce car use. Given the key role of transport in sustainable development, the best pattern of growth was considered to be north-south along the main transport corridor as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

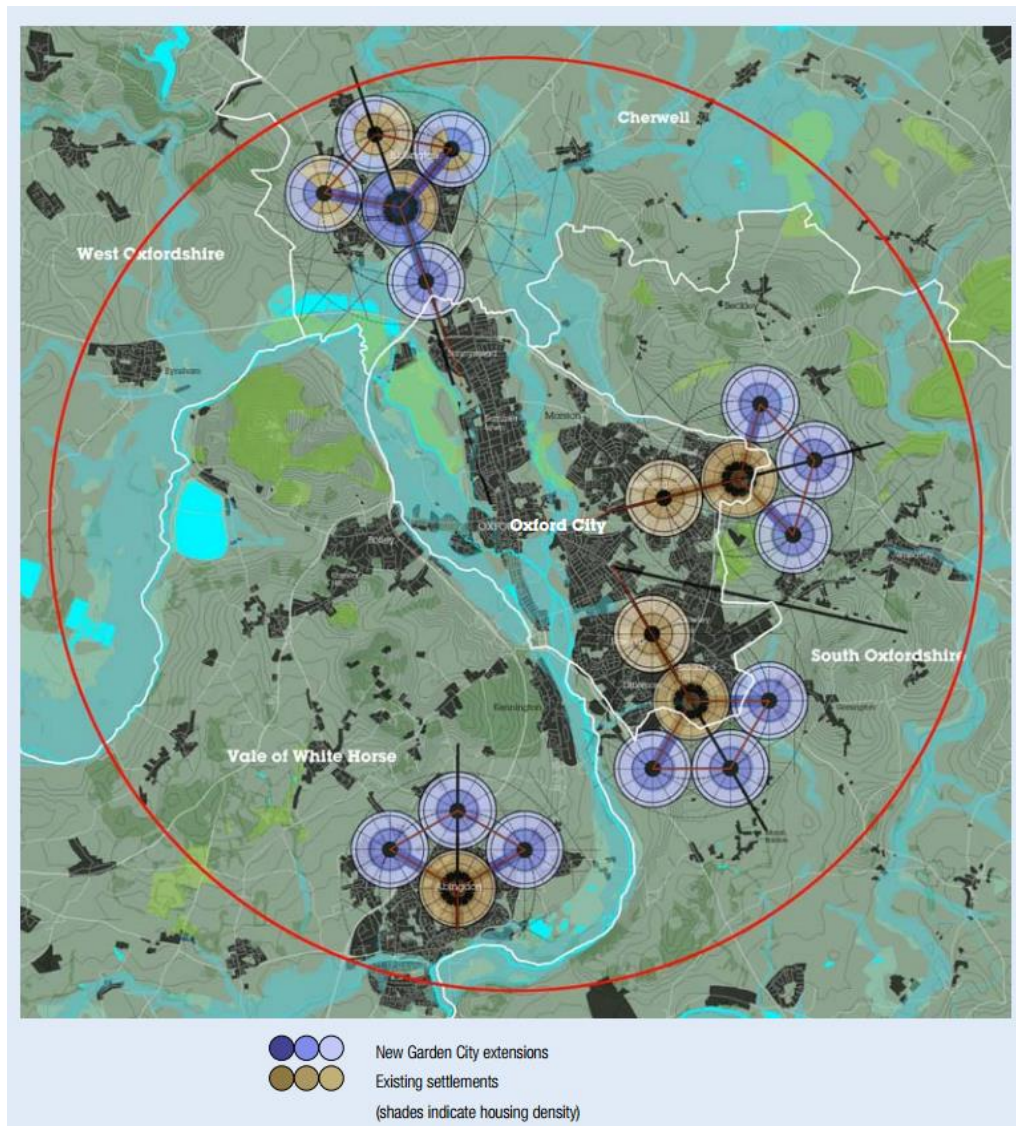
Figure 3.1 Oxford Futures (2014) - Achieving smarter growth in Central Oxfordshire, Oxford Civic Society.



- 1.13 Similarly, URBED's winning entry to Lord Wolfson's economic prize advocates the merits of an urban extension over new standalone settlements. A fictional town called Uxcester is used to show how this would work, and for illustrative purposes, this is applied in detail to Oxford. The rationale behind the model (illustrated in **Figure 3.2**)

relates fundamentally to the availability of infrastructure and facilities which are already present in cities and which can contribute towards supporting new communities from day one.

Figure 3.2. Rudlin D., Falk N et al. (August 2014), Uxcester garden city- Second Stage Submission for the 2014 Wolfsson Economics Prize, Urbed.



- 1.14 In contrast, a free standing settlement would take decades to develop a similar offering. In short, it is argued that 'rather than nibbling into the fields that surround the city and all its satellite villages, we should take a good confident bite out of the green belt to create sustainable urban extensions that can support a tram service and a range of facilities'. It is also contended that by focussing on a small number of large developments, it would arouse less opposition than spreading new homes to the edge of every town and village.
- 1.15 As acknowledged in the Oxford Futures and Urbed work, the need to minimise the need to travel and encourage the adoption of sustainable modes of transport have been consistent threads in national and local transport policy for several years.

- 1.16 The NPPF outlines twelve core principles that should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking, one of which is the need to: “*actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.*”
- 1.17 This broad approach is reflected in the emerging Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), which contains objectives that include:
- Minimise the need to travel
 - Influence the location of development to maximise the use and value of existing and planned strategic transport investment
- 1.18 A review of the current Transport Schemes and related funding context confirms the continued challenge securing the necessary funds for strategic infrastructure improvements necessary to support the scale of growth planned for Oxfordshire over the next 20+ years. Notwithstanding, Oxford is particularly well placed to capitalise on the strategic infrastructure improvements, particularly the Chiltern Evergreen 3 and East-West rail proposals, the new Oxford Parkway station at Water Eaton and proposed redevelopment of Oxford rail station.
- 1.19 Against this background, Oxford provides the opportunity to deliver strategic housing development in accordance with primary transport policy objectives; in a location that has proven and improving trend toward sustainable travel choices thanks to a comprehensive and established network of local bus, walking and cycling routes; and in close proximity to a sustainable transport network benefitting from significant inward investment in the rail network in a period of continued funding uncertainty.
- 1.20 There is therefore a strong argument to suggest that Urban Extensions to Oxford should be considered as one of the most sustainable ways to accommodate the housing and employment needs of Oxford.
- 1.21 Accordingly, further growth around the ‘County Towns’, or a new settlement outside the Green Belt would deliver much needed housing and growth across Oxfordshire, but these options are unlikely to address Oxford’s needs, or be most sustainable in terms of providing a balanced population in the city and supporting and enhancing the economic role of Oxford at the heart of Oxfordshire’s economy.
- 1.22 This view is further supported by the Oxford Strategic Partnership’s Economic Growth Strategy published early 2013, based on independent research by consultants Shared Intelligence, which identified the urgent need to enable housing and employment growth through urban extensions. The report Oxfordshire Innovation Engine: Realising the Growth Potential reported that Oxford has to grow to fulfil its role within the high tech economy, including housing and employment development to the north and south of the existing urban area with necessary Green Belt adjustments. Furthermore, a panel of independent Planning Inspectors⁶ had already accepted the proposal for an urban

⁶ Recommendation 4.5 of the South East Plan Panel Report (August 2007)
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100528142817/http://www.gos.gov.uk/497648/docs/171301/Examination_in_Public_Panel2.pdf

extension for the south of the city at Grenoble Road, within the current Green Belt, concluding that the necessary 'exceptional circumstances' had been demonstrated.

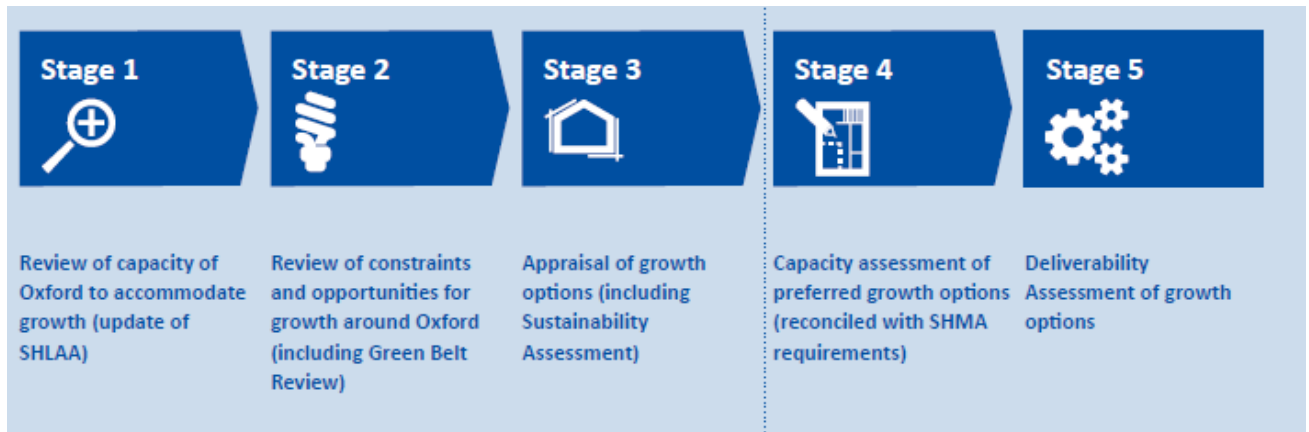
- 1.23 Any growth strategy progressed by the Oxford Growth Board should therefore deliver a balanced approach to development that seeks development within existing settlements, through the delivery of urban extensions as part of a Green Belt review, and development in and around other settlements to support existing services and employment opportunities.

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- 1.24 This Statement firstly considers the assessment process undertaken and summarises the conclusions made in the high level Pro Forma Analysis of development opportunities (October 2014).
- 1.25 It then considers the development capacity of the opportunities identified and the deliverability of these opportunities in seeking to ensure such propositions are credible.
- 1.26 It finally concludes by advocating an approach to development growth in and around Oxford in the context of housing requirements set out in the SHMA. This is intended to complement the Oxford Growth Board work, and inform Duty to Co-operate liaison on local plan preparation, in identifying which local authorities should accommodate growth identified to support Oxford's needs and the amount of development required.

2. The Assessment Process

- 2.1 Having concluded that an urban extension(s) around Oxford is desirable as part of a balanced approach to addressing housing needs, a five stage process for determining where the urban extension(s) should be and what capacity they would have to accommodate development was undertaken.



Stage 1 – Capacity of the City to accommodate housing needs

- 2.2 The initial stage (Stage 1) was an assessment of housing land availability (SHLAA) in the City and was undertaken by URS and Oxford City Council (published in December 2014). This assessment concluded that the City could accommodate 6,422 homes from identified sites and 2,880 from windfall opportunities. Taken together with commitments and completions, the City is shown to have a capacity to accommodate 10,212 homes compared to the SHMA's identified housing requirement for Oxford of between 24,000 and 32,000 homes in the period 2011 to 2031.
- 2.3 The SHLAA was commissioned and carried out in conjunction with the other Oxfordshire authorities in order to ensure transparency in the process and compliance with the Duty to Co-operate. URS provided a 'check and challenge' workshop on the methodology and assumptions being used to assess sites and a draft SHLAA was produced and comments invited from the other authorities before the final document was published in December 2014.
- 2.4 This notwithstanding, the Oxfordshire authorities questioned the conclusions of the SHLAA and a new assessment 'Unlocking Oxford's Development Potential' was prepared by Cundall to investigate the potential of identified and alternative sites within the City to accommodate housing. This study concluded that the City could accommodate 11,644 homes from identified sites and a further 3,520 homes from windfall developments. In total it considered that the City had capacity to accommodate 16,211 homes in the period 2011 – 2031.
- 2.5 It is not for this Report to provide a critique of the varying site assessments and conclusions. It is noted however, that Oxford City Council has considered the Cundall report and sought to update their own SHLAA figures where observations have been

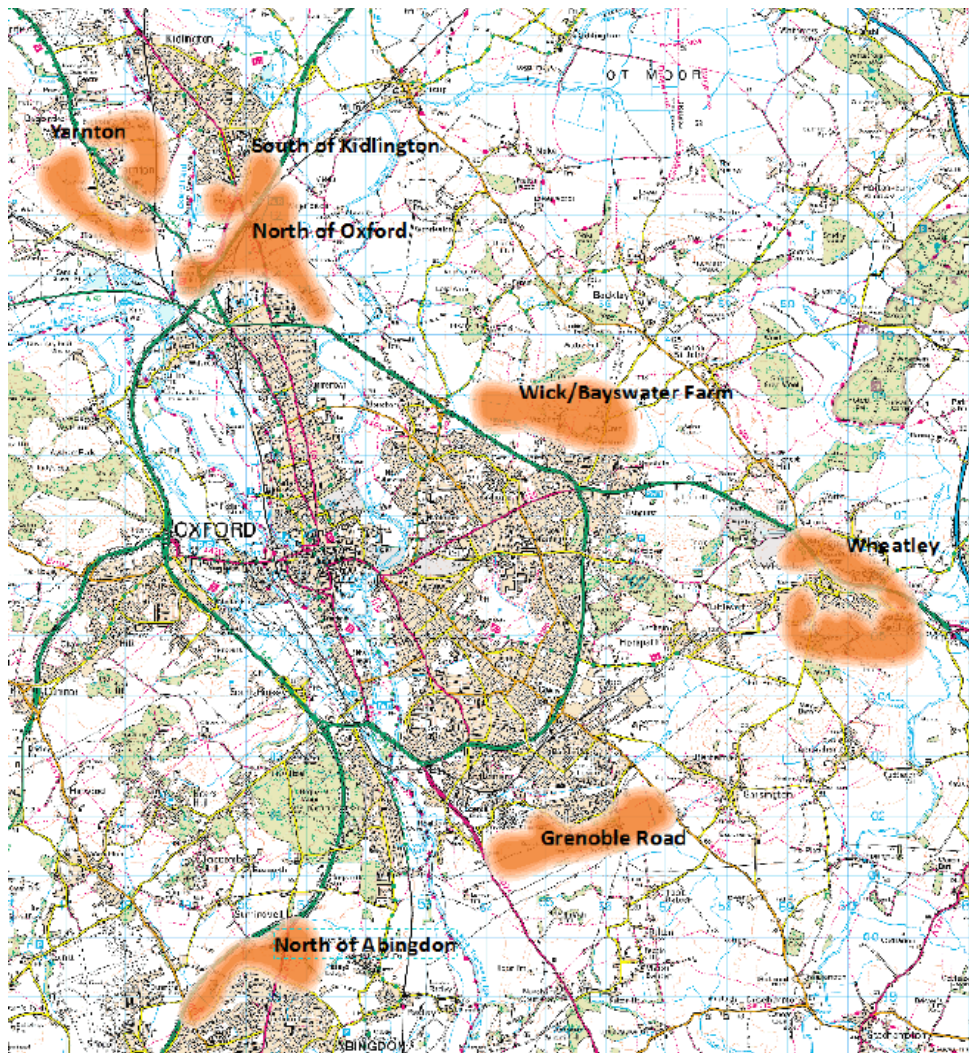
valid. It now concludes that 10,368 homes could be accommodated in the City in the period 2011 – 2031.

- 2.6 As the City Council has set out in some detail (within their ‘Unlocking Oxford’s Development Potential’ – Response of Oxford City Council, May 2015), evidence to why or why not the conclusions of Cundall are right, Turley considers that the City Council’s figures are more robust. For example, it is difficult to reconcile the Cundall conclusions to provide a residential led development at Northern Gateway, with the Oxford Strategic Partnership’s Economic Growth Strategy and the City Deal which identified the Northern Gateway as an important element of the strategy to promote new investment and growth in the City to create 18,600 new jobs. For this reason, this assessment is based on the City Council’s figures.
- 2.7 In any event, what is clear is that there is not sufficient capacity in the City to accommodate the SHMA housing needs, with a likely residual requirement of between circa 13,500 and 21,500 homes, needing to be accommodated in neighbouring authorities.

Stage 2 – Review of opportunities and constraints to growth around Oxford

- 2.8 Given the context that the City cannot accommodate its housing needs, a review of opportunities and constraints to accommodate growth around Oxford was undertaken. This work drew on existing work, most notably the ‘Investigation into the potential to accommodate urban extensions in Oxford’s Green Belt – Informal Assessment’ (May 2014) prepared by the City Council, which reviewed opportunities for growth on the Oxford fringe by considering the appropriateness of areas based on high-level environmental constraints and their Green Belt function.
- 2.9 The City Council work found that many areas around Oxford were significantly constrained by environmental and flood risk issues. Most notably the areas to the west of the City, including Port Meadow, comprise a Special Area of Conservation (SAC); Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Registered Park and Gardens, meaning that they were not appropriate locations for large scale development. Moreover, most of the western side of the city is in high risk flood area. The City Council work therefore concluded that only the following locations should be considered further as potential growth locations:
- Yarnton
 - North of Oxford/South of Kidlington
 - Wick Farm
 - Wheatley
 - South of Grenoble Road
 - North of Abingdon
- 2.10 These locations are shown in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1 Potential Growth Locations Areas of Search



- 2.11 A Constraints Atlas is attached at **Appendix 2** and provides an overview of the constraints affecting development around Oxford. This can be seen to validate the conclusions of the City Council work by showing the environmental constraints to development to the west of the city as well as to the east and parts of the north.
- 2.12 The assessment identified those locations for further consideration. It did not conclude that development in any of these locations would necessarily be appropriate ahead of further investigation, or that it could take place without compromising the Green Belt function. While development would inevitably compromise to some degree or another the purpose of the Green Belt, the purpose of the exercise was to identify locations that development could potentially be accommodated with less compromise to the overall function of the Green Belt than the alternatives looked at.
- 2.13 To be a meaningful exercise, it was also important for the Stage 2 work to consider whether there were exceptional circumstances to justify changes to the Green Belt boundary. This is because whilst national planning policy is clear in providing the scope for review of the Green Belt boundary through the plan-making process, it is also

important to demonstrate exceptional circumstances in accordance with paragraph 82 of the NPPF.

2.14 Demonstrating exceptional circumstances requires the presentation of a set of factors that come together to override the normal presumption that Green Belt boundaries should endure. There is no formal definition or standard set of assessment criteria – it is for the local planning authority (or other statutory decision-makers) to determine whether exceptional circumstances exist to justify removing land from the Green Belt.

2.15 Whether there are exceptional circumstances in Oxford has been previously considered by successive Government Inspectors, having acknowledged that the City's housing needs cannot be met within Oxford's administrative boundaries because of the lack of suitable development land. The Panel appointed to review the South East Plan specifically dealt with the case for a Green Belt Review around Oxford, (paras 22.58-22.76 of the 2007 Panel Report) and concluded *'that there are **exceptional circumstances** to justify a Green Belt review'*.

2.16 The Panel did not come to this conclusion lightly. It considered the importance of the Green Belt and also whether the concept of a new settlement close to Oxford could relieve pressure for growth on the City. However, having regard to the following factors, it concluded that there were exceptional circumstances to justify a Green Belt review and that an urban extension would provide a more sustainable solution than a new settlement, particularly on travel patterns (given that homes and jobs are already supported by a well-developed network of public transport, cycling and pedestrian routes which removes the need for car based commuting).

- A regional imperative for a higher sub-regional housing level, in addition to the following 'Oxford-specific' indicators of need:
 - significant potential within national important science, technology and education sectors;
 - significant excess of jobs already over working population;
 - staff recruitment and retention problems reported by key businesses and public services;
 - housing affordability ratios in excess of the regional average;
 - some of the highest house prices in the region;
 - a large backlog of housing need;
 - worsening traffic congestion.
- Limits to the extent that significantly more development could be accommodated within the urban fabric, without damaging the special character of the City and putting pressure on green spaces.
- The implications for sustainable development including the effects on car travel of channelling development beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. In this respect, the Panel were not convinced that a major new settlement outside the Green Belt

could be sufficiently self-contained as to outweigh the advantages for sustainable travel of an extension to an urban hub.

2.17 On the basis of the evidence presented to the Examination, the Panel recommended a selective review of the Green Belt to the South of Oxford. This was subsequently challenged at the High Court, although the South East Plan was formally revoked before this reached a conclusion. Subsequently, no alternative housing allocation has been secured, so the issues surrounding Oxford's housing shortfall have not been addressed, and there is therefore irrefutable evidence that the factors which were considered by the Panel to demonstrate 'exceptional circumstances' still apply. Furthermore, in failing to address the housing shortage, the significant demand (and associated effects) have heightened over time.

2.18 In revisiting the Panel's conclusions, it is considered that the following exceptional circumstances add further weight to the case for a new Green Belt review:

(vi) **Poor housing affordability in Oxford and imperative to meet backlog of housing needs.** Oxford is currently the least affordable city outside London. With average earnings at £26,500 and average house prices at £427,000 in 2014, house prices are 16.1 times average earnings⁷. This affordability problem has been exacerbated by the limited capacity of the City to accommodate housing growth within its tightly drawn administrative boundary. The Oxford Innovation Engine report identifies the shortage of available housing as constraining the economic potential of the City as it leads to many employees being priced out of the market, leading to staff recruitment and retention issues. A new Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (April 2014) identifies a need for significantly more new housing in Oxford and across the County. Oxford City needs circa 28,000 homes between 2011 and 2031. Yet the latest review of the available sites within the City (Oxford's Housing Land Availability and Unmet Needs Assessment (Draft), October 2014) shows that up to circa 10,000 homes can be accommodated during this period. A sustainable urban extension to Oxford would help to deliver significant new housing close to Oxford where the need and demand are most prevalent and where it will have the most effect in addressing the issues highlighted.

(vii) **The regional imperative to deliver economic growth.** Oxford City Council and surrounding Oxfordshire authorities, the County Council, Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University are signed up partners to the Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal which is committed to accelerating innovation-led economic growth by maximising opportunities to deliver new innovation and incubation centres. Despite a wealth of academic and knowledge based business assets in the area, Oxford has underperformed when compared with other internationally renowned areas such as Cambridge. For example, the Oxford Innovation Engine report by SQW (October 2013) indicated that if Oxford had grown at the same rate as Cambridge between 1997 and 2011, an additional £500m would have been generated in the local economy. The success of the Oxford economy is of national importance and the commitments in City Deal and the subsequent Oxfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan are crucial to this success.

⁷ Cities Outlook 2015 (Centre for Cities, 2015)

Addressing housing shortage, increasing supply and affordability to ensure new business are able to maintain a sufficient and productive workforce is key to delivering this strategy.

- (viii) **Sustainable Patterns of Growth and addressing worsening traffic congestion.** Planning policies in Oxfordshire have historically sought to disperse growth away from Oxford to the other county towns (including Bicester, Didcot and Wantage) in order to protect the historic setting and character of Oxford. Oxford, however, remains the service centre for the wider economy and, as identified in the Oxford Innovation Engine report, has the fastest growing workforce and it is the main centre of research and spin-outs in the county. As a result, commuting pressures on the road network are increasing and the Oxford Innovation Engine report found that the at-capacity road network was constraining the Oxford economy. Furthermore, the 2011 Census Method of Travel to Work data identifies significantly lower levels of car usage in Oxford City (37%) compared to the average across other Oxfordshire Districts (68%), and is the only Authority to have experienced a reduction in car usage since 2001. An urban extension to Oxford, where sustainable modes of travel are already more prevalent, would therefore provide the most sustainable solution.

- 2.19 It is clear that the lack of opportunity for housing and employment growth is now undermining the City and the wider economy to a significant degree. Unless the need for new homes in Oxford is addressed, the issues highlighted above will be further exacerbated (as has been the case to date).
- 2.20 Furthermore, the Oxford Green Belt comprises 67,000 hectares of land. Only a small proportion of this (less than 1%) would need to be affected by development as part of a balanced approach to housing development. On the basis that development would be directed to areas of Green Belt that are less sensitive, it will not compromise the overall function of the Green Belt. Indeed, a review of Green Belt boundaries may identify further areas that should become Green Belt land ensuring that there is no net loss of Green Belt area.
- 2.21 In this context, it is concluded that there are exceptional circumstances to support a review of the Green Belt boundaries around Oxford. Only through a Green Belt review would the City be able to ensure a significant increase in housing supply to support economic growth, which will meaningfully address latent and future demand in a sustainable manner.

Stage 3 – Appraisal of Growth Options

- 2.22 Having established that there are exceptional circumstances to warrant a review of Green Belt boundaries, the next step was to consider the various opportunities for expansion of Oxford. This took forward the Stage 2 analysis and considered the areas of search in terms of heritage, landscape character and visual amenity; proximity to jobs, services and facilities; and transport matters. The results of this exercise were published in the Oxford Strategic Growth Options 'High Level Review of Opportunities' Pro Forma Analysis (October 2014) (see **Appendix 3**). An independent sustainability

appraisal of the growth areas was also undertaken by Environ (November 2014) (see **Appendix 4**). A summary of the conclusions is provided below.

Yarnton

- Yarnton is a village with a population of c.2,500. It offers limited infrastructure in terms of community facilities or key services and any new development would need to look to Kidlington and Oxford to fulfil these needs.
- Areas to the west of the A44 are considered to have potential for major harm to the historic environment and heritage assets and Oxford Meadows SAC. While land to the east of Yarnton is relatively less sensitive in terms of heritage, landscape character and visual amenity, it is questionable whether this presents the best location for growth given its relatively poor accessibility to services and facilities.
- However, the area is well located to benefit from employment growth at Northern Gateway and Begbroke Science Park so should not be discounted at this stage, but it is likely that more sustainable locations to the north of Oxford exist.

North of Oxford/South of Kidlington

- The North of Oxford presents the best location in terms of proximity to services and facilities and jobs. It will also benefit from improved accessibility associated with the development of a new Parkway Station, and be close to new employment opportunities at Northern Gateway and Begbroke Science Park.
- The key constraint to development is the need to protect the Green Belt function in maintaining open gaps between Oxford and Kidlington and preventing coalescence. However, it is considered that by focusing development only in one of the two areas, this could be achieved. Furthermore, the A34 dual carriageway and railway line ensure that a strong boundary would be in place, giving a clear boundary between the edge of any urban extension and the remaining open Green Belt beyond.
- Any development would need to be carefully sited to respect the environmental constraints and heritage and environmental assets, particularly to the east of the A4165 and south of Kidlington.
- This area should be considered further for development as it has the capacity to provide housing and employment opportunities in a very sustainable location, without adversely affecting the historic setting of Oxford.

Wick Farm

- Located to the north of the Northern Bypass, the area contributes to the open countryside character and green backdrop to Oxford that forms such an important part of the city's historic setting.
- There may be potential for development to be delivered on the lower slopes without significant harm to this function. However it is questionable whether the size of development that could be achieved without adversely affecting the environmental value of the area, would be sufficient to allow for a critical mass that could support its own services and facilities.

- Further work would be required in order to establish whether parts of the area could accommodate some carefully sited development, as the area does offer good proximity to key local services and community infrastructure in the Headington area and employment opportunities linked to the area's hospitals and Oxford Brookes University.

Wheatley

- Wheatley is a large village located within South Oxfordshire, approximately eight miles to the east of Oxford city centre. The rise of land around Wheatley means that development in the area would be quite visible and the Council's initial assessment identified potential harm to the setting of the conservation area.
- Prospects for development in this area are also constrained by the open character of the Green Belt and its likely contribution to the setting of the Wheatley conservation area and designated heritage assets. Any development would need to be carefully sited to respect the environmental constraints and assets.
- While the area offers relatively good access to jobs and local services, its distance from the city centre of Oxford and employment opportunities along the north-south A34 axis, is likely to mean greater pressures for commuting than from other locations.

South of Grenoble Road

- Grenoble Road provides the southern boundary to the City. There is potential to accommodate a significant amount of development in the area to the south, whilst ensuring the Green Belt maintains its function. There is some sensitivity in terms of visual impact and heritage. However it is considered that these issues can be mitigated through appropriate design solutions.
- The area provides the best opportunity to deliver the critical mass of development capable of meeting the needs of Oxford over time and in a comprehensive way that can provide important new services and facilities in a sustainable manner.
- The area is being promoted for development and is therefore considered a deliverable solution in a relatively short timeframe.

North of Abingdon

- Abingdon is a market town located approximately eight miles to the south of Oxford city centre. It is one of the principal settlements within the Vale of White Horse District.
- Land to the west of the A4183 has relatively few constraints and offers good potential for development. Subsequent to preparation of the Pro-forma Analysis and sustainability assessment, the Vale of White Horse District Council has allocated part of this area as a strategic development site in its submitted Local Plan (March 2015) (which at the time of writing is undergoing public examination).
- The land to the east of the A4183 is more constrained in heritage, landscape and visual impact terms.

- While Abingdon offers good connectivity to Oxford and key employment sites to the south of the City, the area would not address issues of poverty and social exclusion in Oxford as well as other locations situated closer to the City.

Overall Conclusions

- 2.23 The analysis did not present a formal assessment of options in accordance with SEA Regulations. However it provides a high level consideration of strengths and weaknesses of the areas of search, in order to provide a clear steer to which opportunities present the best prospects for growth.
- 2.24 Overall, it was concluded that North of Oxford/South Kidlington and Grenoble Road should be considered in further detail to understand more thoroughly any design constraints in these locations and the likely development capacity of proposals.
- 2.25 Wick Farm was also considered a good location for growth. However given the constraints to large scale growth in this location, it was decided by the City Council not to consider the potential of this site in further detail through this exercise at the current time. The promoters of this site are however independently carrying out further work to establish the potential and capacity of the site.
- 2.26 Similarly while the assessment suggested further review of North of Abingdon be undertaken, part of the site is being allocated by the Vale of White Horse through their plan making process.
- 2.27 While this assessment did not discount Yarnton and Wheatley as potential urban extension opportunities, it was considered that further work should not be advanced in these locations at this time, but subject to understanding the development capacity of the other sites.

Stage 4 and 5 - Capacity and Deliverability of Growth Options

- 2.28 Stages 4 and 5 are considered separately in Section 3 and 4 below.

3. Capacity of Growth Options

- 3.1 Following the conclusions of the High Level assessment, work has been undertaken to review the North of Oxford and South of Oxford areas to consider the opportunity for development further and the potential capacity of these areas to accommodate development in an appropriate manner.
- 3.2 This analysis has followed a staged approach, having regard to constraints and opportunities presented by local circumstances, likely requirements for key on-site infrastructure and access arrangements, which have framed a high level development framework for each location (see **Appendix 5b**) (A summary version of the development frameworks is provided at **Appendix 5a**). The transport and access requirements have also been informed by the PBA Transport Appraisal Work (**Appendix 6**).
- 3.3 This work has then formed the basis for calculating the size of development (number of houses) that could be developed in these locations, subject to further detailed work.
- 3.4 The design analysis work attached in **Appendix 5** includes a constraints plan and master steps drawings to show how the design work has been informed. Various framework plans that consider land use, density, transport and access, and landscaping are then provided. The work is summarised below.

North of Oxford

- 3.5 Due consideration has been given to the key function of the Green Belt in this area, to prevent the coalescence of Kidlington and Oxford. When experienced on the ground, the current separation (referred to as the 'Kidlington Gap') is considered more tangible to the north of the A34, and has a stronger relationship with Kidlington. Whereas to the south of the A34, the gap is less well defined. As such, south of the A34 offers potential to accommodate development in a way which has less impact upon this key function of the Green Belt.
- 3.6 In addition, the strong radial of Banbury Road / Oxford Road traces the path of a distinct ridge of higher ground which falls away to the River Thames (west) and River Cherwell (east) and their respective flood plains. Oxford's growth has as a result been pushed north along this ridge, but the imposition of the heavily engineered A34 and A40 Northern Bypass has 'cut short' that organic growth leading to the sense of an unresolved urban edge in the Cuttleslowe area, particularly given the presence of dispersed urbanising features such as the Water Eaton Park and Ride and new rail station. To the north of the A34, Kidlington's historic expansion south from its original village centre has also been curtailed. However the edge of the settlement is now very clearly defined by recent suburban growth up to Bicester Road.
- 3.7 The new parkway rail station is also considered to offer clear potential to be a transformative feature that drives growth and development in this area. Cuttleslowe Park is a great asset for the local community, but seems underutilised, not assisted by the severance effect of the A40. There is considered an opportunity to embrace these existing features as key drivers of development whilst aiming to complement existing planned development at Northern Gateway.

- 3.8 Taken together, these observations clearly point to development to the north of Oxford being preferable to South Kidlington.

Identifying the constraints to the developable area

- 3.9 A 'developable area' has been defined having regard to the constraints of the flood plain of the River Cherwell to the east. Overhead powerlines also present a constraint to residential development, although there is an opportunity for the areas beneath to be integrated within the development framework as open space or other suitable non-residential uses.

Establishing an integrated Green Network

- 3.10 There is a recognised opportunity, through the retention of existing landscape elements, including trees and the hedge network, for these features to help integrate the development into the landscape. There is also considered an opportunity to step development away from Oxford Road to maintain the perception of leaving the City; to create a linear green corridor under the power lines; and to maintain a green edge to the countryside.

Responding to Heritage Assets

- 3.11 Two areas of potential archaeology have been identified from the OS plans of the area. It is therefore proposed that these areas be reserved for open space. Heritage assets such as St. Frideswides Farm can be sensitively incorporated into the development framework, whilst the inclusion of the green edge helps to create an appropriate response to the two Listed Buildings to the east, opening up views of the farmhouses and drawing development away from their locations.

Transport

- 3.12 The previous analysis undertaken by PBA identifies the credentials of the land to the North of Oxford in terms of its proximity and potential for strong connectivity with existing facilities and amenities and public transport infrastructure, as well as the opportunity to make best use of future planned investment in local road and rail infrastructure.

- 3.13 Taking this forward, a number of objectives have been identified as part of the site access strategy which seek to embed sustainable movement principles into the masterplan from the outset and to maximise opportunities to manage travel demand arising from new development. These are detailed within PBA's report (**Appendix 6**) and include, *inter alia*:

- Delivering of a mix of land uses providing for a range of day to day services and facilities within the site;
- Providing a well-connected movement framework, maximising permeability and multi-model movement. This should include:
 - Strong east-west transport connection either side of the A4165 linking to Northern Gateway;
 - A 'Main Street' through the core development area east of the A4615; and
 - A network of routes enabling residents to walk and cycle from all parts to access local facilities.

- Ensuring the development is served by a frequent and high quality public transport service (with suitable bus stop facilities in key origin and destination points) using a clearly identifiable bus route which minimises distance covered by vehicles;
- Ensure the majority of residents are within 400m (5 minute walk) to a bus stop / transport interchange.
- Provide on-site cycle hire and car club facilities;
- To operate a site wide parking strategy and framework travel plan.

Establishing the Main Street

- 3.14 Drawing on the PBA objectives, there is an opportunity to create a central spine (supporting community facilities along its length), anchored at one end by Oxford Parkway Station and Park and Ride, and the existing recreational facilities and local centre at Cutteslowe at the other. Pedestrian and cycle connections would create direct links for the existing community to the new facilities and extend the off-road section of the National Cycle Route 5. Reflecting heightened accessibility, higher density residential development and a new local centre could be focused along the spine road, particularly that part closest to the transport hub. There is also an opportunity for potential employment or residential uses to be concentrated adjacent to the Park and Ride station area.

Intuitive, connected circulation

- 3.15 Building on the Main Street, a connected and integrated movement network can be created which, along with existing Public Rights of Way and green infrastructure, helps to shape development parcels within the developable area. Vehicular access could be taken from the existing junction (as part of a range of other access points if required) currently used by the Oxford Parkway station and Park and Ride site. This would allow an existing high capacity junction to be utilised.

Responsive Grain

- 3.16 Drawing these layers together, development parcels are refined into efficient scaled urban blocks.
- 3.17 The output of this work has provided the basis for calculating capacity for new residential development, having also factored in anticipated demand for key on-site infrastructure. The results of this analysis are set out in Table 3.1 below. The figures provided are given as a range, subject to an average 'upper' and 'lower' density.
- 3.18 Overall, land North of Oxford has potential capacity to deliver between 2,878 and 3,628 new homes alongside new primary and secondary school facilities, key local facilities and potential employment opportunities.

Table 3.1: North of Oxford Masterplan Development Capacity

Area	Land Use	Area (Ha)	Average Density	No. Units
Land East of A4165	Residential	52.75	35-45 dph	1,846 - 2,374
	Potential employment / residential	6.13	35-45 dph	22,000 sq m B1 use or 215 – 276 dwellings
	Primary School	2 x 2.4		
	Secondary School	8.14		
	Mixed Use Centre	Assumed incorporation into residential area (i.e. ground floor units with residential above).		
Land West of A4165	Residential	22.20	35-45 dph	777 – 999
Land South of Kidlington	Residential	8.51	30 dph	255
TOTAL Residential Capacity				2,878 – 3,628

*Note: Interchangeable potential employment/residential land is subject to future detailed assessment. These figures are **excluded** from the Total.*

South of Oxford

Identifying the constraints to the developable area

- 3.19 To the south of Oxford there are several areas that are affected by fluvial flood risk which influence the extent of the potential developable area. The presence of the Oxford sewage works (with associated odour and noise issues) and a large sub-station structure (with associated high voltage overhead power lines and lower voltage cables) present physical constraints to development in this area as well. Added to this, there is a substantial woodland area with ecological value surrounding the sub-station; and two small copses of woodland in other parts of the area.

Land Use and Access

- 3.20 Reflecting local circumstances, there is considered an opportunity to define a new gateway to the Oxford Science Park from the A4074; creating a more simplified access arrangement which could solve the currently unsatisfactory slip road arrangement and transform the arrival experience into this key employment site, unlocking opportunity for future employment uses at this gateway location. A new access arrangement would also provide residential development with a dedicated access, avoiding the sewage works. There is scope for the creation of further residential access points from Grenoble Road and Watlington Road.
- 3.21 There is also an opportunity to capitalise on the potential for a new station at Littlemore by combining it with a new Park and Ride facility to serve the new and existing communities.

- 3.22 A new employment location adjacent to the existing Science Park would provide a suitable buffer to residential uses. This could be served by the existing Oxford Road access whilst a new residential access at Watlington Road could serve the residential development and continue onto Garsington (subject to further design consideration).

Strategic Green Infrastructure

- 3.23 Responding to local conditions, development has been drawn back from public views from higher ground to the south and east. The creation of a 'green funnel' either side of the woodland surrounding the sub-station, helps to draw the landscape through the site and reserve development from those areas which are most visually sensitive.
- 3.24 Green components are also located in areas at risk of flood with the creation of a green link along the existing watercourse which runs through the western part of the site from north to south.
- 3.25 This approach to strategic green infrastructure helps to shape distinctive neighbourhoods and character areas. While it is recognised that it also causes a degree of separation between the development area adjacent Watlington Road and the rest of the site, these areas will be connected by routes of pedestrian and cycle movement, to improve the sense of connection, and it is also intended that sports pitches and facilities around the substation area would act as a bridge between the communities in this location.

Local Landscape Structure

- 3.26 Local landscape features such as trees and hedges and Public Rights of Way can be integrated into the structure of proposed neighbourhoods, defining development extent and character. The extent of development to the east of the village north of Watlington Road can be defined by creating a soft landscaping edge to the Northfield Brook. There is also scope to retain existing copses as landscape features within the development; and to enhance woodland links around the substation.

Transport

- 3.27 The previous analysis undertaken by PBA identifies the credentials of the land to the South of Oxford in terms of its proximity and potential for strong connectivity with existing facilities and amenities and an expanding employment offering in the area.
- 3.28 Taking this forward, a number of objectives have been identified as part of the site access strategy which seek to embed sustainable movement principles into the design framework from the outset and to maximise opportunities to manage travel demand arising from new development. These are detailed within PBA's report (**Appendix 6**) and include, *inter alia*:
- Delivering of a mix of land uses providing for a range of day to day services and facilities within the site;
 - Providing a well-connected movement framework, maximising permeability and multi-modal movement. This should be informed by a site wide access strategy and include:
 - A strong sustainable connection to nearby employment opportunities (e.g. BMW, Oxford Business Park; and

- A network of routes enabling residents to walk and cycle from all parts to access local facilities.
- Ensuring the development is served by a frequent and high quality public transport service (with suitable bus stop facilities in key origin and destination points) using a clearly identifiable bus route which minimises distance covered by vehicles;
- Ensure the majority of residents are within 400m (5 minute walk) to a bus stop / transport interchange.
- Provide on-site cycle hire and car club facilities;
- To operate a site wide parking strategy and framework travel plan.

Connected Movement Network

3.29 Main streets are formed to create a connected and integrated movement network. This network, along with existing Public Rights of Way and green infrastructure, help to shape development parcels. There is potential for local centres to be located at key nodal points along major routes through each neighbourhood.

Responsive Grain

3.30 Drawing these layers together, development parcels are refined into efficient scaled urban blocks.

3.31 The output of this work has provided the basis for calculating capacity for new residential development, having also factored in anticipated demand for key on-site infrastructure including schools and local facilities. The result of this analysis is set out in Table 3.2 below. The figures provided are given as a range, subject to an average 'upper' and 'lower' density. Overall, land South of Oxford has potential capacity to deliver between 5,769 and 7,311 new homes alongside new primary and secondary school facilities, key local facilities and potential employment opportunities.

Table 3.2: South of Oxford Masterplan Development Capacity

Area	Land Use	Area (Ha)	Average Density	No. Units
Land South of Grenoble Road	Residential	74.55	40-50 dph	2,982 – 3,728
	Employment	15.77		c56,000 sqm Class B1 use
	Primary School	2 x 2.4		
	Secondary School	11.85		
	Local Centre	1.02 Ha. Assumed incorporation into residential area (i.e. ground floor units with residential above).		
Land West of Watlington	Residential	41.47	35-45 dph	1,451 – 1,866
	Primary School	2.8		

Road	Mixed Use Local Centre	Assumed incorporation into residential area (i.e. ground floor units with residential above).		
Land North East of Watlington Road	Residential	38.16	35-45 dph	1,366 – 1,717
	Employment	9.38		23,000 sq m B2 use and 4,000 sq m B8 use
	Primary School	2.3		
	Mixed Use Local Centre	Assumed incorporation into residential area (i.e. ground floor units with residential above).		
TOTAL Residential Capacity				5,769 – 7,311

Opportunities Elsewhere

- 3.32 Other opportunities have been identified as part of the appraisal of growth options including Wick Farm. However this area is already subject to a willing landowner and developer seeking to bring forward development in this area. Initial proposals put forward by Berkeley Homes indicate potential to deliver 1,200 new homes (including 480 affordable) as part of a mixed use development incorporating provision of educational, recreational and community facilities.

Overall capacity

- 3.33 Overall, the development of land North of Oxford, land South of Oxford and land at Wick Farm has identified potential to deliver between 9,847 to 12,139 new homes. This would present a significant contribution towards meeting the objectively assessed need for between 24,000 and 32,000 new homes in Oxford over the period to 2031, and would meet some 55% to 70% of the circa 17,500 unmet need for which Oxford does not have capacity within its boundaries.

4. Deliverability

- 4.1 Having established the capacity of the areas to deliver housing in an informed way, a high level assessment of likely development costs compared to expected development value has been undertaken to consider whether the development options being promoted are actually deliverable and credible as solutions.
- 4.2 This work has also been informed by Transport Appraisal work undertaken by PBA attached at **Appendix 6**. This considered the capacity of highway infrastructure to accommodate the indicative capacity for residential development to the north and south of the City and if not, what mitigation measures would be required at what cost.
- 4.3 In both cases, the Transport Appraisal work concluded that these locations present an opportunity to deliver strategic housing development, having a proven and improving trend toward sustainable travel choices as a result of proximity to facilities and extensive employment opportunities and an established network of local bus, walking and cycle routes.

Viability Appraisal

- 4.4 Appraisal work has been undertaken by Turley Economics in order to test the viability of the proposed development locations to the North of Oxford and South of Oxford. (This information has been provided to Oxford City Council separately and a summary is provided in this Report only).
- 4.5 Specifically the work undertaken provides a headline assessment of financial viability of the proposed development under current market conditions. The methodology for undertaking this headline appraisal follows the residual appraisal method which is that accepted by the RICS and recommended within the RICS Financial Viability in Planning Guidance. This is a widely accepted approach to testing development viability that is extensively used to inform Local Plan (area wide) viability assessments and site specific financial viability assessments.
- 4.6 The work undertaken has been informed by the Development Frameworks prepared for land to the North of Oxford and South of Oxford which has provided an indicative land budget and accommodation schedule for each.
- 4.7 Residential sales value assumptions have been informed by a high level review of comparable development values locally in the current market. Development costs have been estimated using national cost indices (RICS BCIS) and current market benchmarks, with headline site infrastructure and servicing cost assumptions informed by PBA and reflecting the scale advocated within the relevant guidance document Viability Testing Local Plans, published by the Local Housing Delivery Group.

- 4.8 Development appraisals (inclusive of cashflow) have been prepared for two scenarios (a lower and upper range scenario) reflecting potential variance in development density and hence unit outturn within the proposed development⁸.

Headline Results

- 4.9 Lower and upper range scenarios have been tested and both generate positive residual values that would provide a competitive level of return to land owners and prospective developers in conformity with paragraph 173 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

North of Oxford

- 4.10 The PBA analysis concludes that the highway network can accommodate development to the North of Oxford subject *inter alia* to the following recommendations/mitigation measures:

- Provision of high quality sustainable connections along and across the A4165 Oxford Road to maximise connections between the three development areas;
- Maximisation of connections with a prioritisation toward sustainable modes between the site and adjoining community including Oxford Parkway and the Northern Gateway;
- Delivery of improved pedestrian and cycle crossing of key local roads;
- Delivery of bus priority along key routes to provide improved connections to the southern and eastern parts of the city; and
- Delivery of the appropriate scale of off-site infrastructure improvements to cater for travel demand across all modes.

These costs have been incorporated into the viability work.

- 4.11 The conclusion of the headline viability appraisal work is that the land to the North of Oxford is commercially viable in the current market and is therefore likely to come forward for development, providing a commercial incentive for the land owners to dispose of their interests in the land and enabling a developer (or multiple developers) to deliver the site on a viable and commercially attractive basis.

- 4.12 Further viability appraisal work will be required as detailed master planning for the site is progressed, the accommodation schedule is further refined and detailed scheme infrastructure costs are prepared. However for guidance it is calculated that the development costs v development value is as follows:

Expected Gross Development Value (GDV)⁹ : circa £1.15bn

Expected Infrastructure & Development Costs¹⁰ : circa £0.92bn

⁸ Retail uses within the accommodation schedule have been excluded from the residual appraisal based on the level of information currently available on the nature of retail development

⁹ if built and sold in today's market

¹⁰ total costs including professional fees, disposal fees, finance and assumptions on S106/CIL. Excludes developer's profit.

South of Oxford

4.13 The PBA analysis concludes that the highway network can accommodate development to the South of Oxford subject *inter alia* to the following recommendations/mitigation measures:

- Provision of high quality sustainable connections along Grenoble Road to maximise connections between the three development areas;
- Maximisation of connections with a prioritisation toward sustainable modes between the site and adjoining community including key local employment opportunities;
- Delivery of improved pedestrian and cycle crossings, with specific consideration to crossing the rail line and ring road north of the site;
- Delivery of bus priority along key routes to provide improved connections across the city;
- Provision of new links to new stations on the Cowley Branch Line, should passengers services resume on this line; and
- Delivery of the appropriate scale of off-site infrastructure improvements to cater for travel demand across all modes.

These costs have been incorporated into the viability work.

4.14 Similarly, the conclusion of the headline viability appraisal work is that the land to the South of Oxford is commercially viable in the current market and is therefore likely to come forward for development, providing a commercial incentive for the land owners to dispose of their interests in the land and enabling a developer (or multiple developers) to deliver the site on a viable and commercially attractive basis.

4.15 Further viability appraisal work will be required as detailed master planning for the sites is progressed, the accommodation schedules are further refined and detailed scheme infrastructure costs are prepared. However for guidance it is calculated that the development costs v development value is as follows:

Expected Gross Development Value (GDV)¹¹ : circa £1.73bn

Expected Infrastructure & Development Costs¹² : circa £1.38bn

Landowner Willingness

4.16 Notwithstanding the conclusions that the sites are viable to deliver, it is also important to note that proposals are already being advanced on sites, showing a clear willingness and commitment from landowners to deliver.

4.17 Owners of land south of Grenoble Road are jointly preparing outline development proposals which will in the first instance be promoted through the South Oxfordshire

¹¹ if built and sold in today's market

¹² total costs including professional fees, disposal fees, finance, and assumptions on S106/CIL. Excludes developer's profit.

Local Plan review. It is understood that the promoters are keen to proactively deliver development within as short a timescale as possible.

- 4.18 Land to the north is also being advanced. Landowners are known to be preparing evidence towards achieving a worked-up masterplan for the area.

5. Informing the Growth Strategy

- 5.1 In drawing together the outputs from each stage of analysis, this section advocates an approach to accommodating growth in and around Oxford in the context of housing requirements set out in the SHMA. This is intended to complement the Oxford Growth Board work in identifying which local authorities should accommodate growth identified to support Oxford's needs and the amount of development required.
- 5.2 The SHMA identifies a need for between 24,000 and 32,000 new homes in Oxford alone, to meet existing and future housing needs. The Oxford SHLAA identifies capacity to accommodate around 10,500 homes, which leaves a significant requirement for between 13,500 and 21,500 new homes which cannot be met within the limits of the City. The Oxfordshire local authorities have agreed to work together to address Oxford's unmet housing need.
- 5.3 The need for the local authorities to work together to address the unmet need has been legitimised by the Inspector in the recent examination of the Cherwell Local Plan in requiring *'a formal commitment from the Council, together with other relevant Councils, to undertake a joint review of the boundaries of the Oxford Green Belt, once the specific level of help required by the city of Oxford to meet its needs that cannot reasonably be met within its present confines, is fully and accurately defined'* (Inspector's Report, May 2015). Furthermore the now-adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2031 Part 1 includes a formal commitment to complete a partial review of the Cherwell Local Plan within two years of adoption to address the Oxford unmet need, i.e. by 19th July 2017.

Consideration of Growth Options

- 5.4 Options to meet the unmet need include further growth around the 'County Towns', or a new settlement outside the Green Belt. Whilst these options may help deliver much needed housing and growth across Oxfordshire, they will not, as referenced above, address Oxford's needs in terms of sustainability, a balanced population, and the economic role of Oxford at the heart of Oxfordshire's economy.
- 5.5 A review of the Oxford Green Belt boundary must therefore take place as part of a balanced approach to growth. Exceptional Circumstances exist as evidenced above.
- 5.6 Furthermore, it is important that the review of Green Belt boundaries is undertaken in the context of delivering additional housing needs in a balanced and sustainable manner (paragraph 84-85 of the NPPF). Green Belt reviews must not simply consider how land performs against Green Belt functions when considering its value and whether it should be released. This is illogical as land immediately adjacent urban areas will undoubtedly be ranked valuable in preventing urban sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Yet these areas will most likely to be the best locations to develop as well.
- 5.7 The recent Cambridge Local Plan Examination acknowledged this contradiction. It noted that Green Belt review cannot simply consider sites in terms of their function and environmental qualities without assessing the sustainable merits of its development when assessed against reasonable alternatives.

- 5.8 In the Cambridge example, the Inspectors found that the Green Belt review did *'not take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development, as required by paragraph 85 of the National Planning Policy Framework'* and recommended that the Councils *'revisit the sustainability appraisals so as to appraise all reasonable alternatives (including sites on the urban edge) to the same level as the preferred option'*. The Inspectors went on to add that *'if development is to be directed to new settlements rather than the edge of the urban area, it needs to be clear that the challenges of making such development as sustainable as possible have been addressed, in particular infrastructure requirements and sustainable transport options'*¹³.
- 5.9 Against this background, it is important to consider development options around Oxford in an objective way and review Green Belt boundaries in accordance with their appropriateness for development. A balanced development strategy should be informed by consideration of Green Belt value but it should not be dictated by it.
- 5.10 As referenced earlier, Oxford provides the opportunity to deliver strategic housing development in accordance with primary transport policy objectives; in a location that has a proven and improving trend toward sustainable travel choices thanks to a comprehensive and established network of local bus, walking and cycling routes; and in close proximity to a sustainable transport network benefitting from significant inward investment in the rail network in a period of continued funding uncertainty.
- 5.11 Urban Extensions to Oxford must therefore be considered as one of the most sustainable ways to accommodate the housing and employment needs of Oxford.
- 5.12 In light of the above, and following the comprehensive analysis of potential development sites, land to the North and South of Oxford are considered to represent the best opportunities for delivering sustainable growth.
- 5.13 As has been demonstrated, both sites benefit from close proximity to existing facilities and amenities which offers the potential to foster strong connectivity with existing built settlements, utilising existing infrastructure and making best use of additional investments already planned for these areas.
- 5.14 Together the opportunities to the north and south of Oxford and at Wick Farm (being progressed separately) have potential to deliver a significant contribution towards meeting the City's objectively assessed needs. Our analysis identifies potential capacity to deliver between 9,847 and 12,139 new homes on these sites.
- 5.15 With respect to land to the north and south of the City, the analysis also demonstrates that these sites are deliverable and achievable given strong indications of landowner intention.
- 5.16 With the collaboration of adjacent Local Planning Authorities, the support for new urban extensions to North and South of Oxford will help to deliver much needed new homes alongside other key new infrastructure and facilities and will present a significant contribution towards meeting the SHMA requirements. We therefore recommend that

¹³ Inspector's letter dated 20th May 2015.

these proposals are taken forward in conjunction with a wider balanced approach to housing development in the area.

Turley
graeme.warriner@turley.co.uk