5: VISION AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 The residents of Chipping Norton overwhelmingly want to see a lively, economically active town that continues to support its unique character and community spirit. The vision for the town builds on input from residents.

Our vision

5.2 The agreed vision for the town of Chipping Norton is:

A working Cotswold town thriving economically and socially as a rural hub while maintaining its strong sense of community spirit and conserving and enhancing its character, high-quality historic built and natural environment, local services and facilities.

5.3 In support of this vision the broad objectives in the table below are expressed. The policies and proposals discussed over the coming chapters are derived from these objectives.

5.4 Discussion of the policies and proposals arising from these objectives is grouped under four broad categories for coherence: Masterplanning, Transport and Movement, Town Centre, and Design. Policies are preceded by a general discussion and followed by justification for the policy or policies put forward. Their relevance to the planning framework is then shown.

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<th>Objective</th>
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<tr>
<td>Town centre</td>
<td>OB2: Ensure all new development enhances the town centre’s special character and appearance, making the town a destination in which people wish to spend time.</td>
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<td>Parking</td>
<td>OB3: Support the expansion of town centre car parking capacity and improvements to its functionality.</td>
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<td>Housing type</td>
<td>OB5: Housing supply should meet the overall housing needs in town to include a broad mix of housing types and sufficient provision of affordable homes.</td>
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<td>Community facilities</td>
<td>OB6: Provide high-quality natural and open green space and youth recreation opportunities as an integral part of new developments. Favour development within the town centre that incorporates community facilities.</td>
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<td>OB7: New development, be it traditional or contemporary, should respect the local vernacular.</td>
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<td>OB8: The historic environment of the town should be conserved and enhanced for future generations to enjoy.</td>
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<td>Natural environment</td>
<td>OB9: Developments should conserve the natural environment and where possible enhance it. This includes local green infrastructure and biodiversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>OB10: Ensure all new dwellings and non-domestic buildings are built to exemplary environmental standards.</td>
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6: MASTERPLANNING

Employment policies

6.1 Chipping Norton enjoys low rates of unemployment, with the growth in employment outpacing the growth of economically active residents in the period 2001-2011\(^1\). Despite this there is a call from residents for more local employment opportunities (over a third of residents commute out of town for work) and for a broader variety of roles.

6.2 Residents have expressed concern that unless business is attracted into Chipping Norton it could become a dormitory town. The protection of affordable employment land for job creation is seen as essential, along with the provision of smaller and more flexible industrial units and office space.

6.3 The following policies seek to ensure existing employment land and land allocated for employment uses within the WODC Local Plan remains in employment use while facilitating provision of flexible units. The location of this land can be seen in Figure 6.1.

M1: The provision of new employment land will be encouraged in principle in appropriate, sustainable locations, particularly where this will facilitate the reuse of previously developed (brownfield) land.

Proposed developments should be consistent with the following criteria:

- Be well-related to Chipping Norton in terms of location and relationship to the existing settlement pattern, or elsewhere relate to a diversification proposal which is fully integrated with an existing farm business or where it would meet a specific need which could not otherwise be met;

- With the potential exception of diversification schemes, which may sometimes be in isolated, rural locations, the provision of new employment land should be well-served by a choice of means of transport, including public transport, walking and cycling;
- Avoid any harmful landscape impact;
- Not adversely affect the amenity of any current or prospective neighbouring properties;
- Achieve high standards of sustainable construction;
- Make the most efficient use of the site in terms of minimising the required land-take and maximising the number of job opportunities;
- Re-use existing buildings where feasible.

In accordance with the NPPF, any proposal within the AONB will be expected to conserve landscape and scenic beauty.

Existing employment sites will be safeguarded from redevelopment to non-employment uses unless it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer needed, or is unsuitable for employment use and/or that the replacement use would offer a significant social, economic or environmental benefit. Proposals that would lead to a significant reduction in provision will be resisted. The total area of existing and allocated employment land within Chipping Norton should be retained no lower than the current figure of 15.17 hectares\(^2\) (as of September 2014) and should increase as a minimum in line with the growth of the town’s population.

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\(^1\)ONS 2011 Census
\(^2\)Total employment area calculated from: WODC Economy Study Update, Nov 2012
M2: Proposals that create flexible industrial and office units will be supported, particularly where they are of a high quality design and in a sustainable, accessible location.

Justification

6.4 Page 29 of the West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot³ states: ‘Most employment sites in Chipping Norton appear to be well occupied, with low vacancy. There appear to be few opportunities for expansion’. The report acknowledges the town’s limited land supply, with just 0.5 hectares of undeveloped employment land allocated and only 0.1 hectares available. WODC’s Economy Study Update⁴ expresses a wish to see an increase in land supply for businesses ‘to support key industrial, manufacturing, and engineering sectors’ as well as facilitating investment in the stock of business premises.

6.5 In order to safeguard employment opportunities within Chipping Norton this Plan seeks to protect all currently occupied, vacant and allocated employment land as a minimum, the total area of which currently stands at 15.17 hectares.

6.6 Chipping Norton had a population of 6,337 in 2011⁵. Its population is expected to significantly increase over the coming years. The draft Local Plan proposes the construction of 1,800 in the Chipping Norton sub-area, which includes the town and its surrounding villages and countryside, during the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2031. It is expected that the bulk of these homes will be located within Chipping Norton, with 600 homes proposed for the Strategic Development Area (SDA) to the east of Chipping Norton at Tank Farm.

6.7 New employment land in addition to the current figure is actively encouraged given the population growth that this level of development will bring. Without further allocation of employment land, Chipping Norton will become more dependent on employment opportunities elsewhere, potentially compromising the town’s sustainability and threatening the Neighbourhood Plan’s agreed vision of Chipping Norton as a ‘working Cotswold town thriving economically and socially’.

6.8 Small businesses make up a sizeable proportion of the local economy; 70% of businesses in West Oxfordshire employ fewer than five people⁴.

6.9 Flexible industrial and office units as referred to in policy M2 include premises that satisfy changing working patterns and requirements. This could be facilitated by, for example, flexibility in layout of the unit/s or flexibility in lease arrangements.

Relevance to planning framework

NPPF para 7, 9, 17, 19, 20, 28, 37; WODC Local Plan E3, E6, E7; Pre-submission Local Plan CO7 and paras 6.17, 6.20, 6.24

Relevant Neighbourhood Plan objective

OB1

³CAG Consultants, West Oxfordshire Economic Snapshot, Jan 2015
⁴WODC Economy Study Update, Nov 2012
⁵ONS 2011 Census
Figure 6.1: Location of existing and allocated employment land within Chipping Norton
Play and green space provision policies

6.10 One of the major themes identified by the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire was the perception that the existing supply of play areas and facilities for young people is inadequate. It also found that residents clearly value the landscape setting of the town.

6.11 The town has just over 75 hectares (186 acres) of open space, equating to 11.6 hectares (28.8 acres) per 1,000 residents. However, there are significant shortfalls of amenity green space (around a quarter of the required provision), accessible natural green space and play space for youth (less than a half of the required provision)\(^6\). Figure 6.2 overleaf shows open space provision in Chipping Norton.

6.12 Access to amenity green space and children’s and young people’s play spaces is below existing access standards, as defined in WODC’s West Oxfordshire Open Space Study 2013-2029\(^6\). The access standard for junior provision is 10 minutes straight line walk time, or 480m, while for youth provision it is 12-13 minutes straight line walk time, or 600m. The inaccessibility of play space is particularly acute on the eastern side of town, as shown by Figure 6.3.

**M3:** Proposals for residential development will be required to contribute towards the provision of high-quality play and activity spaces for children and young people, designed in consultation with the local community, with sufficient funding to ensure that the town’s play spaces can be maintained to an appropriate standard.

Larger residential schemes of 50 or more dwellings will be expected to provide play space on-site as an integral part of the development. Smaller residential schemes of less than 50 dwellings will be required to contribute through payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

**M4:** Any proposal for residential development will be required to contribute towards the provision of accessible green spaces designed and maintained to enhance the lives of local residents, wildlife and the landscape.

Larger residential schemes of 50 or more dwellings will be expected to provide natural greenspace on-site as an integral part of the development. Smaller residential schemes of less than 50 dwellings will be required to contribute towards improved provision through payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Natural England standards for Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANGSt) are to provide a benchmark against which proposals are judged.

**M5:** A new park including playing pitches, children’s play space and youth provision, space for informal recreation and natural greenspace will be sought on the eastern side of town. It is envisaged that this will be delivered as an integral part of the proposed Strategic Development Area (SDA), but other opportunities will be explored.

\(^6\)WODC, West Oxon Open Space Study 2013-2029
Figure 6.2: Open space provision in Chipping Norton
Figure 6.3: Access to children’s and youth play spaces in Chipping Norton

Children’s play space provision showing 480m (10 minutes straight line walk time) access standard coverage

Youth play space provision showing 600m (12-13 minutes straight line walk time) access standard coverage
Figure 6.4: East Chipping Norton Strategic Development Area
Justification

6.13 As well as an undersupply of amenity greenspace, accessible natural greenspace and youth play space, the West Oxfordshire Open Space Study\(^7\) ranks Chipping Norton’s three play spaces to the south of town (in Cotswold Crescent, Walterbush Road and Cornish Road) in the District’s bottom half for quality.

6.14 Paragraph 8.6.3 of the study states: ‘There is an existing shortfall of this [amenity green space] typology, and access is limited. It is therefore recommended that existing provision is protected, and new provision (in combination with requirements for natural green space provision) is provided through new development’.

6.15 Paragraph 8.6.5 of the Open Space Study states: ‘There is an under supply of provision of both children and young people’s space and access to both types of facilities also falls below the standard. There is a need for provision of these facilities through new development – for example a major facility within a new park and recreation ground would contribute significantly to meeting needs’. In order to make up for deficiencies in access standards, the best location for any new park, accessible greenspace and major play facilities is likely to be the east of town, particularly in or near to the Strategic Development Area (SDA) proposed in the pre-submission West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. A map of the SDA is shown in figure 6.4 on the previous page.

6.16 Accessible natural and semi-natural greenspace covers a variety of partly or wholly accessible spaces including meadows, woodland and copse, all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment. Communities attach significant value to such spaces for recreation and well-being.

6.17 A sense of ‘closeness to nature’ provides a broad range of benefits for local communities, wildlife and the character of the area. There is a significant body of research evidence to suggest that natural greenspace contributes to mental and physical wellbeing\(^8\).

6.18 Natural green spaces provide opportunities for wildlife to flourish and can help to mitigate against the local effects of a changing climate. They can make important contributions towards local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and can also raise awareness of biodiversity values and issues.

6.19 Natural England’s Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) seek to ensure that natural sites are accessible, within easy reach of people’s homes. Natural does not necessarily mean it has to be rare or notable enough to be designated. Users will find nature in wildlife, open landscapes, seasonal changes and places of tranquility.

6.20 ANGST recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:

- of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home;
- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;
- One accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- One accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand of population.


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\(^7\) WODC, West Oxon Open Space Study 2013-2029

\(^8\) Natural England, Nature Nearby, Mar 2010
6.22 There is a lack of accessible natural green space, as defined by Natural England’s ANGSt standard. Currently there is 1.65 hectares per thousand people while the standard is 2.00 hectares per thousand.

Relevance to planning framework
NPPF paras 7, 9, 17, 58, 73, 109; WODC Local Plan BE1-2, BE4, H3; Pre-submission Local Plan CO9, 11, 12, 14 and paras 8.16, 8.24-8.27, 8.31

Relevant Neighbourhood Plan objectives
OB6, OB9

9Natural England, Nature Nearby, Mar 2010
Previously developed (brownfield) land policy

6.23 With residents responding so positively to the landscape setting of the town it makes sense that as much effort as possible is taken to conserve the natural environment and to avoid undue urban sprawl. Concern about urban sprawl and over-reliance of cars was expressed in the community consultation phase of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

6.24 Chipping Norton is a relatively compact town; even its furthest extremities are no more than one kilometre from the town’s centre. The current approximately oval outline to the town’s urban boundary, with the town centre at its heart, makes for a very walkable scale. Development of brownfield sites that are located within the town’s existing boundary will contribute towards its ongoing walkability.

6.25 While the Town Council recognises that some development will be needed on greenfield sites the priority should be for the redevelopment of previously developed (brownfield) land. There are a number of vacant and soon-to-be-vacant brownfield sites throughout the town. These are indicated in Figure 6.5.

6.27 Its Policy OS2 ‘Locating development in the right places’ specifically restates this general principle. This Plan aims to preserve the unique character of the town.

6.28 The town’s currently vacant and soon-to-be-vacant brownfield sites lie within or on the edge of the current town boundary. A number of these sites constitute strategic locations close to the centre of the town. Their sensitive development could help to meet the needs of Chipping Norton as its population rises. It would also help to ensure a healthier, cleaner, safer urban fabric.

Relevance to planning framework

NPPF paras 7, 9, 17, 51, 109, 111; WODC Local Plan H3; Pre-submission Local Plan CO1-2, 4 and para 4.7

Relevant Neighbourhood Plan objectives

OB2, OB8, OB9

M6: Proposals for development that reuse brownfield land where it is not of high environmental value will be strongly supported.

Justification

6.26 WODC’s pre-submission Local Plan considers sustainable development in the context of West Oxfordshire as likely to maximise ‘the use of previously developed land provided that it is not of high environmental value’.10
Figure 6.5: Vacant and soon-to-be-vacant sites in Chipping Norton*

*As of 26 May 2015. For up-to-date list of sites contact WODC.
Natural environment and landscape protection policies

6.29 As revealed by the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire the residents of Chipping Norton highly value the natural environment and setting of the town. Yet wildlife and the habitats that support it have been lost or are under threat from a range of factors\(^\text{11}\).

6.30 Chipping Norton lies on the eastern edge of the Cotswolds AONB and as such has a rich diversity of wildlife. Immediately to the east of the town lies the Glyme and Dorn Conservation Target Area, incorporating the Glyme Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

M7: Developments should protect and where possible enhance the high quality landscape setting of the town.

M8: Developments should ensure a net gain for biodiversity. Measures to provide new habitat and maintain the existing network of habitats and species are encouraged. Measures to improve landscape quality, scenic beauty and tranquility and to reduce light pollution are encouraged. Development within and affecting the Cotswold AONB must be in accordance with the Cotswold AONB Management Plan and associated guidance.

M9: Development should include measures to retain existing trees, hedgerows and habitats in accordance with current guidance including BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations or its future equivalent and should maintain or enhance boundary treatments between the new development area and adjacent existing urban areas. Strong support is given to the inclusion of new areas of natural planting and habitat between existing and new areas of development to provide wildlife corridors and natural screening.

M10: The inclusion and retention within developments of large, significant and locally important trees or groups of trees in sufficient space to allow them to reach their mature size and with due regard to underground and overhead services will be supported in order to maintain the special character of the town.

M11: The design of new development on the urban fringe should protect and where possible enhance the character of adjacent rural areas and green spaces.

Justification

6.31 Fragmentation and piecemeal degradation of existing habitats is a particular threat to wildlife. New natural and open green spaces with appropriate landscaping within developments can be of benefit by acting as a bridge between more natural elements of the wider countryside. Retaining and enhancing existing biodiversity features within development can help to achieve this\(^\text{12}\).

6.32 The guidance document ‘Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire’ published by BBOWT\(^\text{13}\), Oxfordshire County Council and TVERC\(^\text{14}\) advises that ‘Landscaping should aim to retain and enhance existing biodiversity features, and link up habitats. For example, native hedgerows and strips of species-rich grasslands provide routes along which species such as hedgehogs, butterflies and bats can move... A series of ponds can link with wetland features in the wider countryside.’ It also offers a number of valuable suggestions for developers.

\(^{11}\)Cotswold AONB Management Plan 2013-18, March 2013

\(^{12}\)BBOWT, OCC, TVERC, Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire, March 2014

\(^{13}\)BBOWT = Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust

\(^{14}\)TVERC = Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
6.33 The Cotswold AONB has the highest level of protection of landscape and scenic beauty. The statutory AONB Management Plan has been endorsed by WODC as guidance for development management purposes. The Management Plan policies are amplified by a Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, and Position Statements published by the Cotswold Conservation Board. The Management Plan can be downloaded at [www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=ManagementPlan](http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/?page=ManagementPlan).

6.34 A 2009 landscape assessment of Chipping Norton noted the importance of natural screening alongside developments to ensure a soft edge to the town. The imposing hard edge of the recent Parker Knoll development on the east side of town is noted by the same landscape assessment as an example of where this has not been successful\(^\text{15}\).

6.35 In policy M10 the urban fringe is defined as the landscape interface between the town and surrounding countryside.

6.36 The National Planning Policy Framework explicitly states that the planning system should ‘contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes’ and by ‘minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible’\(^\text{16}\). Ensuring provision for wildlife within development helps to achieve these aims.

**Relevance to planning framework**

NPPF paras 7, 9, 17, 57, 109, 115-116, 118, 123, 125; WODC Local Plan BE2, BE4, NE3-4, NE6, NE13; Pre-submission Local Plan CO9, 13 and paras 8.8, 8.12, 8.16, 8.23

**Relevant Neighbourhood Plan objective**

OB9

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\(^{15}\)Chipping Norton Landscape Assessment 2009, June 2009, para ES41

\(^{16}\)DCLG, NPPF, May 2012, para 109