Welcome!

Thank you for attending our exhibition. Before you begin, please sign in.

Find out more about the East Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) by working your way around the boards.

What is the purpose of the exhibition?

At this exhibition, our aim is to:

- Provide you with some background information on the East Witney SDA proposal;
- Summarise what a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is and why we are preparing one for East Witney;
- Give an overview of the East Witney SDA site;
- Highlight the key issues to be taken into account in any future development;
- Explore some initial opportunities for the site in terms of providing new homes, jobs, transport and other supporting facilities;
- Listen to your views on the proposals.

Do you have a question or comment?

We’re on hand to answer any queries you may have. Just ask!

How to respond to this consultation

You can respond to this consultation up until 5pm on Friday 17 July 2019.

Comments can be submitted by post or email to:

Planning Policy
West Oxfordshire District Council
Elmfield, New Yatt Road
Witney OX28 1PB
planning.policy@westoxon.gov.uk

Alternatively you can complete a response form and hand it to one of our officers at this exhibition.

Next Steps

Following the close of the issues paper consultation, the responses received will be reviewed and analysed and taken into account in preparing a draft SPD that will be published for consultation in Autumn 2019.
What is a ‘Strategic Development Area (SDA)?

The land east of Witney is designated as a ‘Strategic Development Area’ (SDA) in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. This SDA is anticipated to include around 450 homes to help meet the future housing needs of West Oxfordshire.

The development of the site will be 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.

What is a ‘Supplementary Planning Document’ (SPD)?

SPDs add detail to the policies in the Local Plan and provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. SPDs are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

This consultation aims to gather feedback on a number of issues and opportunities for East Witney leading up to a draft SPD later in 2019.

Site Location

The East Witney SDA is located on the eastern edge of the town and is made up of two main areas. The smaller parcel, ‘Cogges South’, is about 6 hectares and the larger parcel, ‘Cogges Triangle’ is roughly 32ha.
Air quality objectives

The area around Bridge St. suffers from significant traffic congestion and thus poor air quality. It has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to excessive emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide. Thus, a key objective for transportation includes the following:

- Ensure that any increase in nitrogen dioxide associated with vehicle movements is appropriately managed and effectively mitigated.

Transportation Strategy

- Highway infrastructure improvements (primarily at the Shores Green Junction)
- Maximise use of public transportation and active travel

Transportation objectives

- Minimise traffic impact from ~450 new homes
- Identify new key routes and connections to maximise active travel
- Enhance existing active travel routes to Witney and the wider area including the Lower Windrush Valley.
- Assess traffic movements, including at key locations where congestion is already an issue (eg. Staple Hall junction and along Bridge Street)
- Effectively manage impacts of any increase in traffic to avoid adding to existing congestion and where possible improve traffic flow
- Implement complimentary measures to maximise the potential benefits of the Shores Green Junction improvements
The East Witney SDA lies adjacent to the Shores Green/A40 junction. A key priority for both the County and District is to upgrade the junction by providing west facing slip roads so that it becomes 'all movement'.

The East Witney SDA will also be supported by other highway improvements including potential 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 what improvements may be needed and how these are to be delivered.

**Key benefits of the Shores Green Junction Improvements**

- Provide an alternative route from the SDA into the Town Centre via Ducklington Lane.
- Reduce the number of vehicles using the B4022 Oxford Hill.
- Assist with the flow of traffic within and around Witney.
- With other complementary measures achieve a very significant reduction of traffic congestion along Bridge Street and improve air quality.

**Cogges Triangle**

- One primary access point from Cogges Hill Rd.
- Potential secondary/emergency access (location TBD)

**Cogges South**

- Single access near existing entrance and track to sewage pumping station.
- No secondary access proposed due to the small amount of development proposed here

**Highway improvements and vehicular access**

Please let us know if you have any comments regarding:

- Proposed improvements to the Shores Green Junction
- Proposed access arrangements
- Other highway improvements that are likely to be needed?
Active Travel

The East Witney SDA has several existing pedestrian and cycle routes—Cogges Triangle has a number of public rights of way (PROWs) connecting it to adjoining areas but these are generally poorly identified and at times difficult to follow. Cogges South currently has no formal PROWs although there are a number of well-used informal paths. At present, there is only one formal PROW that crosses the River Windrush.

Key benefits of active travel

- Demonstrable health benefits
- Integrate the new development with the Town by providing strong physical connections and encouraging movement.

Maximising the use of public transport

There are a number of bus stops very near the site for the premium S1, S2 and S7 gold services to Oxford City Centre, Headington, Carterton and destinations in between. Witney is also served by routes 15 to Abingdon, 19 to Carterton and 233 Woodstock-Burford. The Witney town bus service (213/214) is also accessible from Cogges Hill Rd, Blakes Ave. and Manor Rd.

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 8km away. The station provides services to a number of destinations including Oxford and London Paddington.
Transportation 4

Active travel strategy

♦ Consider other potential crossing points across the River Windrush (ex. At Farm Mill Lane connecting to Manor Road)
♦ Formalisation of pedestrian and cycle use of the disused railway bridge in the southern part of the site, connecting Stanton Harcourt Road, to the Station Lane employment area via Cogges South, across the valley, and along the dismantled railway. This connection could also help discourage unnecessary car trips from the Cogges area along the B4022 Oxford Hill and into the Town Centre
♦ Improve and upgrade the informal paths 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.
♦ Increase use of the area south of the A40 as a rich leisure resource by creating safe and convenient movement to the south of the A40.

Public transport strategy

♦ Improvements to bus waiting facilities (ex. real-time passenger information and cycle parking)
♦ Improved bus service coverage (ex. diversion of the 213/214 Witney Town Service into the East Witney site)
♦ Provision for cyclists, cycle parking and other facilities at Hanborough Station
♦ Cycle infrastructure improvements along the A4095 to Hanborough Stn.

Public transport and active travel

How can the use of bus and rail be made as attractive as possible (eg. Improved facilities, cycle parking, service coverage)?

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?

How can opportunities for promoting active travel (walking, cycling and riding) be maximised?

Do you have any thoughts on the potential new and enhanced routes and connections identified?
Cogges Triangle
Cogges Triangle is within the Eynsham Vale Character Area and is defined by ‘open rolling vale farmland’. This area is characterised by an undulating valley side, the eastern side of the Madley Brook and Windrush Valleys and forms the end of a very prominent ridge enclosing the eastern side of Witney.

It is a generally open area with some long views north to the wooded Wychwood Uplands, west along the Upper Windrush valley, and south west to the Lower Windrush valley. There are also excellent views of St. Mary’s Church spire and in some places, Cogges church. This landscape area forms an important backdrop to views of Witney looking back to the east and defines the boundary between urban and rural.

Cogges South
This area is within the Lower Windrush Valley and Eastern Thames Fringes Character Area and has an attractive and largely unspoilt rural character with some localised variations. This important and sensitive landscape also has views along the valley and to key local landmarks.

Landscape objectives

♦ Effectively manage and mitigate negative impacts on the landscape and visual amenity, especially those that may impact the setting of the town
♦ Maximise opportunities to improve landscape character and visual amenity ex. enhancement of key views through landscape-led design
Heritage

The East Witney SDA is located near the Witney and Cogges Conservation Area and therefore has the potential to affect its 'setting'. The Witney and Cogges Conservation Area (WCCA) was designated for its considerable architectural, aesthetic and historic merit.

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

Character area #8: Cogges

- Landscape surrounding the Cogges sub-character area retains its historic rural character to an exceptional degree, provides huge amenity value to the town (criss-crossed as it is by public rights of way), and is especially significant for providing the setting for Cogges Manor Farm,
- Cogges Manor Farm is a largely unspoilt cluster of historic farm buildings within their original historic agricultural landscape. The Farm includes a number of listed buildings and structures and is a designated scheduled monument.
- Forms an important transition between the urban and rural and contains key views both towards and out from landmark buildings across the meadowland of the Windrush valley.

Heritage objectives

- Consider the setting of heritage assets within the Witney and Cogges Conservation Area, including the CA itself
- Consider the setting of Listed Buildings near the SDA, including their setting and especially in relation to the A40 Shores Green junction.
**Landscape and heritage strategy**

### 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 on the higher parts of the site. Any development will need to be carefully considered through a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment as part of any planning application
- Retain open backcloth to the town with the exact extent of development guided by a detailed landscape and visual analysis
- Use central, northern and eastern parts of the site as landscape mitigation area and amenity space (retained as open grassland with small copses of trees)
- Careful landscape treatment at the edge of the developable area, integrating with any open space within the development
- Development to maintain the setting and tranquillity of the cemetery and key views over the town.

### Cogges South
- Limit development so that it reads as part of the existing housing at Manor Road and does not intrude into the valley floor,
- Retain the majority of the site as open grassland
- Retain existing hedges and tree cover as appropriate.
- Landscape buffer zone along the western edge of the development to soften the edge of the built form.

### Windrush in Witney Management Strategy
Development at Cogges South should also align with the objectives of the Windrush in Witney Management Strategy, specifically:
- 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.

### Landscape and heritage
Do you support the initial landscape and heritage strategy?
Do you have any other thoughts or observations regarding landscape and heritage impact and how this should be addressed through the SPD?
Flood risk and drainage

The Cogges South site lies in close proximity to an area designated as Flood Zone 2 (medium risk) and Zone 3 (high risk) associated with the River Windrush and Madley Brook. With regard to Cogges Triangle, whilst the site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 (low risk) with regard to river flooding, surface water run-off is an important consideration given historic records of flooding.

Flood risk objectives

- Steer new development towards areas with the lowest risk of flooding using a ‘sequential test’.
- New development should not increase the likelihood of flooding happening elsewhere.
- Reduce rates of run-off to below that which currently occurs on the site.

Flood risk and drainage strategy

- Keep development entirely outside of Flood Zone 2 and 3
- Include appropriate measures to mitigate flood risk including the use of sustainable drainage to achieve a reduction in Greenfield run-off rates.
- Sustainable drainage measures to take account of any potential issues with surface and groundwater for new homes and existing homes to the west of Cogges Triangle
- Sustainable drainage systems also designed to provide biodiversity enhancement.
- 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.

Flood risk and drainage

Do you support the proposed flood risk strategy outlined above?

Do you have any other comments/suggestions to help achieve the flood risk objectives?
Green infrastructure (GI) is a network of multi-functional green space that delivers a wide range of benefits for local communities.

As a network, GI 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.

GI 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.

GI objectives

- Provide well planned and designed high quality GI with sustainable management and maintenance arrangements in place

GI strategy

Cogges Triangle

- Allotments west of the Windrush cemetery where the landscape is sensitive or southern part of the triangle as part of a more general area of green space
- Extend existing green link that runs through the Cogges Estate eastward into Cogges Triangle to form a continuous green corridor from the middle of the site to the town centre
- Additional interspersed woodland cover to mitigate negative impacts on visual amenity
- Area of green space in the southern ‘bowl’, incorporating sustainable drainage measures
- Utilise existing trees and hedgerows as key green corridors

Cogges South

- Potential location of allotment provision west of housing on Manor Road or to the south
- Natural greenspace provision (ex. Managed grassland with informal public access) in line with the Windrush in Witney Project aims and objectives. This would improve access to the valley for leisure and recreation, and also allow wider connections to the town centre and south of the A40

GI: Allotments

Should the East Witney SDA include the provision of additional allotment space as part of the development?

If new allotments were to be provided, where do you think these should be located?
Green infrastructure (GI) 2

Proposed and exciting green infrastructure networks

Green infrastructure

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?

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?

Do you support the concept of utilising existing trees and hedgerows as ‘green corridors’ within the East Witney SDA?

Do you support the concept of managed grassland with informal public access within the Windrush Valley?
**Biodiversity I**

**Designations within East Witney SDA**
- Part of the Windrush in Witney Project (Cogges South) - see figure below
- Protected and notable species at Cogges Triangle (e.g. badgers, hazel dormouse and polecat (ferret))
- Part of the Bug Life’s South East England ‘B-line’ (nationally important network for bees and other pollinating insects)

**Designations near East Witney SDA**
- Ducklington Mead of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - 975m south
- Lower Windrush Valley Conservation Target Area (CTA) - borders western boundary of Cogges South
- Protected and notable species within the CTA, (e.g. skylark (bird), yellow wagtail (bird), kingfisher (bird), otter (mammal), water vole (mammal), corn mint (flowering plant) and river water-crowfoot (flowering plant))

**Biodiversity objectives**
- Achieve a net gain in biodiversity
- Conserve and enhance the natural environment and reduce pollution
- Support the aims and objectives of the Windrush in Witney Project and Lower Windrush Conservation Target Area (CTA)
Higher Windrush CTA

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. Key targets of the CTA include:

1. Mesotrophic / Eutrophic standing waters – management
2. Lowland Meadows – management; restoration; creation
3. Ponds – management; creation (particularly of pond complexes)
4. Reedbed (and swamp) – management; creation
5. Floodplain grazing marsh – management

Apply the principle of a mitigation hierarchy that seeks as a preference to avoid any impact on biodiversity and if those cannot be avoided, to ensure impacts are properly mitigated and then only as a last resort, compensate for any impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated.

Require development proposals to:

- Identify relevant biodiversity constraints and opportunities and show how these will help achieve the aims of the Lower Windrush CTA.
- Be consistent with and contribute towards, relevant objectives of the Windrush in Witney project including those relating to nature conservation.

Agree complementary site specific measures that help bring about benefits for biodiversity (ex. wildlife friendly landscaping, ‘hedgehog highways’, integral bird and bat boxes and planting native trees, shrubs and wildflowers with recognised wildlife value)

Require planning applications to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity where possible, measured in a quantifiable way through the use of a Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator (BIAC).

Ensure sustainable drainage systems take full account of biodiversity considerations and opportunities.

Biodiversity strategy

Do you support the proposed biodiversity strategy outlined above?

Do you have any other comments regarding biodiversity and how the East Witney SDA can most effectively contribute towards any potential opportunities for conservation and enhancement?
The East Witney SDA has been allocated for roughly 450 homes (30 at Cogges South and 420 at Cogges Triangle, subject to landscape impact and hydrology). The limited amount of development at Cogges South is meant to form a logical continuation of the existing built form and provide early revenue to the developer to implement supporting infrastructure.

The Local Plan requires that the homes are made up of ‘a balanced and appropriate mix of residential accommodation to meet identified needs, including affordable housing’. We 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.

Existing housing mix
Witney has a relatively balanced mix of property types (see chart below) with a slightly higher than average proportion of semi-detached and terraced properties.

### Meeting specific housing needs
The East Witney SDA presents an opportunity to provide specialist accommodation for older age groups such as extra-care and sheltered housing. Alternatively, properties of suitable size and price with facilities such as decent garden space, communal recreational space etc. with good accessibility to schooling can help meet the housing needs of families and younger people. Consideration will also be given to the potential needs of travelling communities.

### Housing mix
Should the SPD be more prescriptive about the type of new homes to be provided (detached, semi-detached, terraced, flats etc.)?

Should the development include older people’s housing or is there enough provision already?

How can the type of new homes best meet the needs of young people and households with children?

Is the East Witney SDA is a suitable place to addressing the needs of the travelling community?
Housing mix 2

Affordable Housing
Housing affordability is a major problem in Oxfordshire and Witney is no exception with average house prices except for flats above the national average (see table below). Increasing the affordable housing stock 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 (ex. NHS staff, teachers, police, firefighters, military personnel, care workers etc.).

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<tr>
<th>Beds</th>
<th>Market housing</th>
<th>Affordable housing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-bed</td>
<td>- 10%</td>
<td>20 - 30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-bed</td>
<td>- 30%</td>
<td>30 - 40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-bed</td>
<td>- 45%</td>
<td>30 - 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-bed</td>
<td>20 - 25%</td>
<td>5 - 10%</td>
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Types of affordable housing
♦ Affordable housing for rent (i.e. at least 20% below local market rents)
♦ Starter homes (for first time home buyers under the age of 40 and capped at £250,000)
♦ Discounted market sales housing (i.e. at least 20% below local market value)
♦ Other affordable routes to home ownership (ex. shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale and rent to buy).

Housing strategy
♦ Require a good, balanced mix of dwelling types, with the precise mix left to any subsequent planning application
♦ Provide an indicative range of preferred dwelling sizes for market and affordable housing (for example, as set out in the table below)
♦ Providing 40% of new homes as affordable
♦ 2:1 ratio of affordable rented homes to intermediate housing
♦ Establish an appropriate mix of affordable housing tenures
♦ 25% of new homes to be accessible and adaptable with at least 5% being wheelchair adaptable
♦ 5% of residential plots to be serviced and made available for custom and self-build housing

Housing mix
What types of affordable homes should be provided, and in what proportions?
Should there be an emphasis on meeting the needs of essential local workers? How can this be best achieved?
Sustainable design and construction

To ensure the prudent use of natural resources and to reduce our impact on climate change, the Local Plan is based on a three-step hierarchy:

- Be Lean - using less energy by the use of sustainable design and construction measures
- Be Clean - supplying energy efficiently, giving priority to decentralised energy supply
- Be Green – using renewable energy, especially woodfuel biomass

The Local Plan also requires that all developments will be required to show consideration of the efficient and prudent use and management of natural resources. (OS3) Proposals for SDAs also require an Energy Feasibility Assessment or strategy to assess the viability / practicability of decentralised energy. (EH6) Where assessments show that decentralised energy systems are practicable and viable, such systems will be required as part of the development.

The character and form of development

A key 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.

The West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016) suggests that successful developments must have a strong and distinctive character that also takes particular care to ensure that local character is respected or strengthened. For example, this might mean drawing on locally distinct architectural details or materials to preserve and enhance local character: ‘Dropped-in’ design solutions with little or no relevance to the unique context of the site should be avoided.

Character and form

Should the East Witney SDA be ‘locally inspired’ drawing on the distinctive aspects and features of Witney and the Cogges area?

Alternatively, should the emphasis be on creating a completely new place with a strongly defined character and identity of its own?

Do you have any other general comments or observations on this issue?
A potential ‘community hub’

The scale of the East Witney SDA means that it may be appropriate to include some sort of ‘community hub’ to act as a focal point for the new community, within the development. However, it is not a formal requirement.

The site promoter has identified the potential for a community hub within the Cogges Triangle part of the site. Uses could include a farm shop, country pub, butchery, community centre and space for worship.

A community hub could help facilitate community cohesion and add interest to the area by encouraging movement and activity at different times of the day. The SDA’s location also means that a large number of people in neighbouring areas would be able to easily access any new facilities. It will also be important to consider potential impacts on existing community facilities in the area.

Community Hub
Should a community hub be considered? If so, in what form?
Do you have ideas, concerns or comments regarding this?

Other supporting infrastructure

It is essential that appropriate investment is put towards new and improved infrastructure. In addition to the infrastructure already proposed, additional areas for consideration include:

- **Education**: the development of 450 homes is below the threshold (~600) that would require a new primary school; however, to ensure there is adequate capacity in existing schools in Witney, the developer would be expected to make an appropriate financial contribution

- **Healthcare provision**: 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.

- **Other**: 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. These are within the remit of Oxfordshire County Council and their draft guide to Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions.

Other supporting infrastructure

Do you have any comments to make on the supporting infrastructure outlined above?
What other supporting infrastructure do you think is needed to support the delivery of the East Witney SDA?