

PSD7



Listening Learning Leading

South Oxfordshire District Council's
Green Belt Topic Paper
April 2020

STRAT 9 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre

54. The Local Plan at Policy STRAT9 criteria iii states:

“appropriate landscaping and an integrated network of green infrastructure throughout the site and in particular along the boundaries of the strategic allocation, which would allow limited through views, creating a permanent defensible edge to protect the Oxford Green Belt. This shall be based on a landscape character, including historic landscape characterisation, that preserve and enhance the surrounding Green Belt Way and River Thames long distance footpaths;

55. The Planning Policy Framework (“the Framework”) states at paragraph 136 that once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of a Local Plan and that at that time, local authorities should consider Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term. It then goes on state at paragraph 138 that when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, local authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.

56. The exceptional circumstances for removing the land from the Green Belt at Culham are provided at paragraph 4.72 of the Submission Local Plan as follows:

“The additional land provides an opportunity to deliver housing adjacent to one of the major employers in southern Oxfordshire; and

Development in this location is at the heart of Science Vale and supports the delivery of much needed significant strategic infrastructure”

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57. There are a large number of existing jobs at Culham, and more planned, as set out in our response to STRAT8 questions of IC4. This is not currently balanced with housing. Although there is a railway station at Culham, stopping services are not frequent and many employees will travel by private car to work at the Culham Science Centre campus and Culham No.1 site. The housing development proposed at Culham will not only stimulate economic growth, it will provide better balance and build a sustainable community. It will help contribute to Oxford’s unmet housing need and is consistent with the Council’s overall vision and strategic objectives.
58. The development adjacent to Culham Science Centre is located in Science Vale, which is a key element of the local plan spatial strategy. Science Vale is an international location for science and technology, being one of the most successful science clusters in the UK. The Local Plan spatial strategy looks to

focus major new development in Science Vale including Didcot Garden Town and Culham so that this area can play an enhanced role in providing homes, jobs and services with improved transport accessibility. A comprehensively planned mixed-use development at Culham, surrounding an enhanced Culham Railway Station will provide opportunities for high quality sustainable living and working.

Development in this location is at the heart of Science Vale and supports the delivery of much needed significant strategic infrastructure.

59. As set out in our response to questions on STRAT8 within IC4, Culham is within Science Vale and the jobs in science and innovation at Culham are crucial. Culham Science Centre is recognised to be a major employment site in South Oxfordshire and county wide, and the work undertaken is of global importance. Strategic infrastructure investment will unlock growth and help address existing congestion hotspots, like the centre of Clifton Hampden village and the Golden Balls roundabout.
60. Benefits that would arise from delivering housing around Culham include the improvement to the existing railway station and support for improved railway services, the opportunity to live and work at Culham minimising the number and length of commuting journeys, support for the economic growth of Science Vale, and facilitating particular priority infrastructure projects such as the Didcot to Culham River Crossing and the Clifton Hampden Bypass. The Council supports delivery of a new Thames crossing between Culham and Didcot Garden Town and the Clifton Hampden by-pass
61. The Oxfordshire's Industrial Strategy (OIS) [ECO07] considers the challenges within the area and specifically identifies the lack of investment in infrastructure within the area as an impediment to growth.
62. Connecting Oxfordshire, the Local Transport Plan 4 for the County [TRA01], acknowledges the issues within the County and in particular contains an area strategy specifically for the Science Vale [TRA01.7]. The document expresses that to support and enhance the planned growth it is vital that new and improved transport infrastructure is delivered.
63. Oxfordshire County Council has been successful in its bid to the Government's Housing and Infrastructure Fund. This will aid the delivery of projects linked to the proposed development at Culham. The projects which are relevant to Policy STRAT 9 are:
 - A new Culham to Didcot river crossing between the A415 and A4130;
 - A Clifton Hampden Bypass

64. The HIF bid was predicated on the ability of the identified infrastructure projects to unlock land for development and accelerate housing delivery. The inclusion of Culham site STRAT9 within the Local Plan directly contributed to the successful outcome of the HIF bid.
65. Policy STRAT9 criterion (vii) requires (amongst other items of necessary infrastructure as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan), the development to provide significant contributions towards the Clifton Hampden bypass, the Thames road crossing between Culham and Didcot Garden Town and upgrading the A4074/B4015 junction at Golden Balls. As such, the development will directly assist in the delivery of much needed strategic infrastructure.
66. Development will help to fund new infrastructure and in turn support the development of Science Vale by unlocking its economic potential which Oxfordshire's Industrial Strategy (OIS) [ECO07] considers had been impeded by the lack of investment in infrastructure within the area.
67. The Council considers that the proposed removal of the site from the Green Belt will provide long-term flexibility and will minimise the likelihood of further Green Belt boundary amendments in the future, securing their permanence beyond the plan period in line with NPPF paragraph 136. The Council considers that local level exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify an inset to the Green Belt adjacent to Culham Science Centre.

STRAT10 – Land at Berinsfield

68. The Local Plan at paragraphs 4.76 – 4.86 states:

“the village of Berinsfield is currently ‘washed over’ by the Green Belt. The Local Plan proposes to inset the built up area of the village and an area of greenfield land to the east of the village from the Green Belt.

Delivering growth and regeneration at Berinsfield promotes a sustainable pattern of development that will address key issues currently facing the village. Development at Berinsfield will deliver the necessary and specific benefits that cannot be achieved by developing elsewhere in the district. The location is also at a distance from the special historic setting of Oxford and does not make a significant contribution towards the purposes of including land in the Green Belt to check the unrestricted sprawl of Oxford.

In April 2016, the council confirmed the Community Investment Scheme for Berinsfield. This initiative identified the challenges that the village is currently facing and set out a range of objectives intended to address these challenges. In particular, it recognised that the village is currently