URS

South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review

Final Report

Prepared for:
South Oxfordshire District Council

UNITED KINGDOM & IRELAND

September 2015

REVISION SCHEDULE					
Rev	**Date**	**Details**	**Prepared by**	**Reviewed by**	**Approved by**
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2	21/07/2015	Draft Final Report	Patrick Deshpande Economist	Rory Brooke Head of Economics and Development	
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GLOSSARY

AONB	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
ELR	Employment Land Review
FEMA	Functional Economic Market Area
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PMA	Property Market Area
SODC	South Oxfordshire District Council
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SV	Science Vale
VOWH	Vale of White Horse

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

URS Infrastructure and Environment UK Ltd (URS) were commissioned by the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) to undertake an Employment Land Review (ELR) of the South Oxfordshire area. This ELR will form an integral part of the evidence base needed to support the review of policies and preparation of the Local Plan. It is compliant with both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG, 2014).

The ELR considers all commercial and industrial uses falling into classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order. The study covers the whole of South Oxfordshire District, focusing on established business and industrial areas as identified in the Core Strategy 2012 and related employment land evidence base (the 2007 and 2008 ELRs). A broad range of land and premises were assessed including industrial estates, business parks, science and technology parks and some office premises, agreed with the Council.

Policy and Literature Review

This study provides an overview of the policies and strategies relevant to employment and employment land in South Oxfordshire. The review frames the context to the research in terms of national, regional and local policy. The position of both the Council and the Oxfordshire LEP is one of continued supported growth, driven in part by the knowledge-based industries located in and around Oxfordshire. The Core Strategy seeks the equivalent of an additional 13.5ha of employment land within South Oxfordshire to support the growth of 5,000 jobs, in part through plans to expand the employment capacity at Culham Science Centre. 6.5 hectares of employment land is to be identified in the Vale of White Horse area to help to meet Didcot's employment needs. Local business benefits from the knowledge-based industries located in and around Oxfordshire, although many of its employment sites are located in rural areas with poor access. The positive projection for future employment indicates the importance of increasing the employment land capacity in South Oxfordshire to retain, create and develop the local business base.

Socio-Economic Context

This analysis of South Oxfordshire's socio-economic characteristics informs our understanding of the District's employment needs as well as the opportunities and constraints which could impact upon the demand and supply for employment land. It finds that South Oxfordshire's residents are highly-qualified, earning more than both the regional and national averages and experiencing a lower rate of unemployment. The proportion of people in professional and managerial positions is accordingly significantly higher than the national average. The industrial structure of the district suggests that the retail, education, and professional, scientific and technical sectors represent approximately 38% of the total jobs within South Oxfordshire.

However, workforce earnings (i.e. those earned by workers in South Oxfordshire) fall below regional and national averages. The significant flow of cross-commuting between South Oxfordshire and neighbouring districts implies that the area suffers from a leakage of highly skilled residents to employment elsewhere. This suggests that the Council could seek to improve employment opportunities and employment land provision, providing high quality local jobs to help retain more of its skilled residents in the local workforce.

Quality and Characteristics of Employment Land

This section provides a summary of the key findings of the field study of South Oxfordshire's strategically important employment sites. It focuses on the sites' condition, utilisation and suitability for their current use, assessing each site against pre-determined appraisal criteria. Due to the different site characteristics required by office and industrial users, our analysis has assessed the suitability of clusters according to the requirements of each use class.

Owing largely to the rural location of many of the significant employment sites, public transport accessibility is either poor or very poor in the majority of clusters surveyed. The field survey identified that access to facilities and amenities could be significantly better in some of these rural locations, and the presence of food retailers on-site improves the suitability of many sites for office use.

The field survey and desk assessment established that many of the sites have characteristics which make them suitable for B2/B8 employment use. All but two of the clusters have adequate facilities to service the businesses located at the site, with all but four having adequate parking facilities. Six clusters were observed to suffer from significant car traffic, although it is likely that the town centre location of five of these sites is a contributing factor, rather than the negative impacts of their employment uses alone. A further six clusters suffered from significant HGV traffic, although many are generated through the functioning of the sites to their employment uses. Only one cluster, Rich's Sidings, suffered from both forms of bad neighbourhood uses, in addition to noise pollution. The surveyed clusters have the capacity to expand employment land by 27.1ha at development sites that are appropriate in terms of the criteria assessed for a mixture of office and industrial employment uses.

Employment Property Market Assessment

This section examines South Oxfordshire's office and industrial land market within the context of the wider property market area (PMA). This corresponds to the NPPG which states that needs should be assessed in relation to the relevant functional economic market area (FEMA), defined as South Oxfordshire and the VOWH. In general South Oxfordshire is a healthy employment market with demand steady and growing. This is demonstrated by the healthy rental values and steady uptake of commercial property in the District.

Two main dynamics were identified. First, there is a local office and industrial market that largely meets the needs of the local population, including local offices such as solicitors, consultants, accountants and other professional firms. Local industrial units supply storage, distribution and maintenance needs to the local market and wider Science Vale (SV) supply chain. The scale of this localised employment is partly limited by the size of the settlements and factors such as the Oxford City greenbelt and the large Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The needs of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are particularly important in this regard as these types of firm require good quality but also affordable and flexible work space.

A second dynamic is the fact that the area is linked in to the higher value national or international high tech manufacturing/science sector particularly at sites such as Culham, Monument Park and those close to SV. In the future there is likely to be an element of demand for firms in the green technologies sector linked to the growth of the sector in Bicester. Although in principle there is potentially high demand for this higher value space in South

Oxfordshire the key issue is the lack of appropriate space given the issues of greenbelt and AONB. Nonetheless, South Oxfordshire has an opportunity to capture some of this latent demand in those sites that are sustainable, to help boost the local economy through providing high value local employment.

Projected Demand for Industrial and Office Space

We have carried out a quantitative assessment of the demand for office floorspace and industrial land across the PMA. This approach synthesises published employment projections with historic floorspace trends and local economic drivers specific to the PMA in which South Oxfordshire's industrial and office markets operate. This allowed us to generate a forecast of demand across the plan period.

This forecast provides the basis for three scenarios for each form of demand, ranging from a baseline forecast (low) to planned economic growth (high). All forecasts suggest a positive additional demand. Office floorspace demand is estimated to increase by between 32,300m^2 to 39,800m^2 until 2031, whereas industrial floorspace demand is forecast to increase by 19,800m^2 to 39,700m^2 over this period.

Gap Analysis

This section estimates the extent to which supply-demand imbalances may exist. The results for office and industrial land are shown in **Table 1** and **Table 2** respectively.

Table 1 Net Office Requirement 2014-2031

Net Requirement for Office Floorspace (m^2)	***Baseline***	***Alternative Population***	***Planned Economic Growth***
		(m^2)	
A. Actual gross office floorspace 2014)	212,800	212,800	212,800
B. Current vacant floorspace (10%)	21,300	21,300	21,300
C. Demand for office floorspace (2031)	32,300	35,000	39,800
D. Floorspace required for frictional demand by 2031 (8% of Line A + Line C)	19,600	19,800	20,200
E. Vacant Floorspace (Line B) in excess of optimum rate (Line D)*	-1,7000	-1,500	-1,100
F. Revised gross demand for office floorspace 2011-2031 (Line A + Line C + Line E)	243,400	246,300	251,500
G. Revised net demand for office floorspace 2014-2031	**30,600**	**33,500**	**38,700**
H. Estimated office land ha (at 57.5% plot ratio)	**5.3**	**5.8**	**6.7**

Source: URS (2014).

Table 2 Net Industrial Land Requirement 2014-2031

Net Requirement for Industrial Land (ha)	*Baseline*	*Alternative Population*	*Planned Economic Growth*
		(hectares)	
A. Supply of occupied industrial land 2014	243.9	243.9	243.9
B. Vacant industrial land 2014 (8%)	21.2	21.2	21.2
C. Gross industrial land 2014 (A+B) [1]	265.1	265.1	265.1
D. Forecast change in land demand to 2031 (at 30% plot ratio)	6.6	10.5	13.2
E. Market equilibrium levels of vacant land for 'friction' in 2031 at 10%	25.1	25.4	25.7
F. Additional requirement for vacant land (market equilibrium levels of frictional land (E) minus current vacant land (B))	3.9	4.2	4.5
G. Gross demand for industrial land 2014-2031: (C)+(D)+(F)	254.4	258.6	261.6
H. Net change (gross demand 2014-2031 (G) minus current gross industrial land supply (C))	**10.5**	**14.7**	**17.7**
I. Net change per annum (ha)	**0.6**	**0.8**	**0.9**

Source: URS (2014).

The implication of this analysis is that there is a requirement for an additional 30,600m^2 to 38,700m^2 of office floorspace (equivalent to 5.3ha to 6.7ha of land) and 10.5ha to 17.7ha of industrial land over the period 2014 to 2031.

Conclusions

Office

There is currently approximately 215,000m^2 of gross office floorspace in South Oxfordshire. The property market analysis indicates that the majority of the district's office stock is located in the main town centres of; Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford. Henley-on-Thames is the most predominant office location in the District, followed by Thame and Wallingford. Didcot is not currently a major office location. The location of the existing office supply in historically conserved towns means that, unlike other areas of Oxfordshire, there are limited out of town business parks. The South Oxfordshire office market is therefore relatively modest in comparison with the more regionally important office markets in neighbouring areas, such

[1] This includes the Culham Science Centre.

as Oxford City and VOWH. A healthy vacancy rate across the District at approximately 8-10% indicates enough capacity in the market for an efficient churn of occupancy, with vacancy lower than across the Science Vale sub-region.

Our forecasting exercise indicates that there will be an additional demand for approximately 32,300m^2 (5.6ha) to 39,800m^2 (6.9ha) of office floorspace/land up to 2031. The positive growth in office demand is driven in part by the benefits to businesses locating in Science Vale, with a number of spillover jobs anticipated within the science research and green technologies sectors in particular.

Approximately 27,400m^2 of office floorspace, representing around 70% of forecasts demand, may be forthcoming through unimplemented permissions. 40% of which is facilitated by growth at Culham Science Centre. In terms of the spatial distribution of the remaining unimplemented floorspace, it is largely focused in rural areas; Thame is the only town centre which would increase its office stock if all permissions were implemented. The remaining shortfall of demand may be facilitated by developing or intensifying employment land uses at the existing strategically significant sites.

Industrial

There is currently approximately 540,000m^2 of gross industrial floorspace in South Oxfordshire, excluding that located at Culham Science Centre[2]. Approximately a third of this space is industrial type (B1c and B2), with the majority characterised by warehousing and distribution use (B8).

The property market analysis indicates that most of the industrial space in South Oxfordshire is focused around Didcot and Thame, with some located in Henley-on-Thames and Wallingford. Industrial space in Didcot in particular is focused around warehousing and distribution activities. Industrial sites in South Oxfordshire benefit from the historic associations with the scientific/research centres at Culham and across the Science Vale. The industrial market is relatively more significant than the office market; approximately 40% of industrial floorspace across the Property Market Area (defined as South Oxfordshire and VOWH) is located in the District. The assessment of quality and characteristics of employment land reflects this, indicating that most of the significant employment clusters contain industrial uses. The site survey analysis shows that the majority of existing sites are generally fit for purpose, with adequate spatial typologies and facilities to meet the needs of occupiers. The consultation with agents suggested that there is a relative need to supply good quality space for SMEs. This should be flexible, affordable space.

Our demand forecast shows that there is projected to be an increase in demand for industrial land of between 10.5ha to 17.7ha in the period 2014 to 2031. Increasing industrial demand in South Oxfordshire, which is typical across the Science Vale, goes against the national trend of de-industrialisation. The critical mass of scientific and research facilities that agglomerate in the sub-region drives a multiplier effect, allowing the local industrial market to benefit as a consequence of supply chain linkages. The success of South Oxfordshire's industrial sites is reflected in an estimated vacancy rate of 5-8%, relatively lower than across the Science Vale sub-region due to its more localised nature and restricted availability of sites largely due to the

[2] This figure is taken from the VOA. However, Culham is not included within the VOA figures.

rural nature of South Oxfordshire District and constraints such as the AONB and Oxford Greenbelt.

Culham Science Centre and No.1 Site

There are proposals to expand employment provision at Culham, contained within the Draft Culham Masterplan SPD (2014) and the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (2012) Policy CSEM2 which states that around 1,000 jobs can be provided at Culham. As part of this ELR study a field survey was undertaken at Culham and a meeting to discuss the proposals with the Culham Estates manager took place. The key proposals are to develop part of the eastern portion of the site as an office led business park (Culham Innovation Centre).

It is understood that enquiries have been made to SODC by the owners of Culham site No. 1 for whether release of the site to housing would be acceptable in planning terms. The site currently includes low intensity general industrial and warehousing units housed in older 'hangar style' buildings. It is likely that in its current format the site would not be appropriate to meet modern businesses needs given the older buildings, site accessibility and layout. Given the overall positive demand for industrial uses over the planning period (10.5 ha to 17.7ha), any loss of industrial floorspace at the site should be compensated at another site to avoid lowering the overall industrial capacity of the District.

Recommendations

Based on the research conducted throughout this study, the following policy recommendations are made.

R1 The demand assessment estimates that there is net additional demand for between around 16 and 25 hectares of employment land (B1, B2 and B8) in South Oxfordshire over the Local Plan period to 2031. Therefore, to help ensure that the needs of business are met and that not too much employment land is released, the Council could update Local Plan Policy E6 to state that existing employment land will only be released if all of the following criteria are met:

- **The existing employment land use causes detrimental effects to the amenity of the nearby area – particularly where residential uses are adversely affected;**
- **There is evidenced to be no market interest in the site following one year of active and effective marketing;**
- **The change of use from employment uses will not lower the employment capacity of the District below that estimated to be necessary to meet projected demand over the planning period as estimated by the most up to date ELR (i.e. this study).**

R2 The demand assessment estimates that there is net additional requirement for between 32,300m^2 (5.5ha) and 40,000m^2 (7ha) of office (B1a/b) floorspace/land in South Oxfordshire over the Local Plan period from 2014 to 2031. There is the potential for 27,000m^2 (4.8ha) of additional office floorspace to come forward as part of existing permissions. The most suitable specific sites in the District to accommodate the remaining additional demand are as follows:

- **Culham (Cluster C1) – Approximately 19,000m^2**
- **Central Didcot (C2-C4) – Approximately 15,000m^2**
- **Monument Business Park (C9) – Approximately 4,000m^2**

The residual additional office demand could be met in the town centres of Henley-on-Thames, Wallingford (including Crowmarsh Gifford) and Thame. The distribution of demand for offices is likely to be spread equally across each of these towns.

According to feedback from the commercial agent and stakeholder consultation exercise there is also an opportunity to promote flexible and smaller size office workspace units to accommodate the needs of smaller and medium size businesses. This affordable and flexible business space should be promoted within the four town centres where possible.

R3 The demand assessment estimates that there is net additional requirement for between 10.5 and 17.7 hectares of industrial (B1c/B2/B8) land in South Oxfordshire over the Local Plan period from 2014 to 2031. At the time of writing there are approximately 0.8ha of additional industrial land that may come forward as part of existing permissions. Any new industrial units gaining planning permission after this point, including those allocated employment use by the Core Strategy, will contribute to meeting this net additional requirement.

To support the requirement for the additional remaining industrial land, the Council should encourage the development of clusters which are currently functioning well as employment locations which have the potential to increase the provision of employment land. There is an opportunity to promote smaller sized units to accommodate the needs of smaller businesses. The Council should also seek to promote suitable premises to ensure adequate grow on space for its industrial businesses.

The remaining additional demand could be met at the following potential development sites:

- **Culham (Cluster C1) – Approximately 1.3ha;**
- **Southmead Industrial Estate (C3) – 2.9ha;**
- **Hithercroft Industrial Estate (C6) – 1.9ha;**
- **Monument Business Park (C9) – 2.5ha;**
- **Thame Industrial Cluster (C11) – 1.6ha;**
- **London Road Industrial Estate (C16) – 0.4ha;**
- **Total land – 10.6 ha**

If the higher growth scenario is followed the residual 6.3ha could be provided at new sites spread across the four main towns.

R4 Monitoring: The Council should monitor changes of employment land through planning permissions to ensure that sufficient land is available for economic growth over the planned period, 2014 to 2031.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and Objectives of this Employment Land Review

URS Infrastructure and Environment UK Ltd (URS) were commissioned by the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) to undertake an Employment Land Review (ELR) of the South Oxfordshire area.

This ELR will form an integral part of the evidence base needed to support the review of policies and preparation of the Local Plan. It is compliant with both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG, 2014).

1.2 Definition of Employment Land

The ELR considers all commercial and industrial uses falling into classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order. It does not consider buildings used for health, education, retail or leisure purposes as the spatial planning requirements for these land uses are assessed separately . Short descriptions of the B use classes are given below in **Table 1-1**.

Table 1-1 Use Class Descriptions

Use Class	*Description*
B1: Business	
B1a	Offices (other than those that fall within A2: Financial and Professional Services)
B1b	Research and development of products and processes
B1c	Light industry (compatible with residential areas)
B2: General Industrial	Use for industrial process other than one falling within class B1 (excluding incineration purposes, chemical treatment or landfill or hazardous waste)
B8: Storage or Distribution	This class includes open-air storage

Throughout this report employment land is referred to as land in office (B1), comprising B1a (Office) and B1b (Research and Development) but not B1c (Light Industry) as this use class shares characteristics more similar to industrial uses; industry (B2) comprising industry (B2) uses and B1c (Light Industry); and warehouse use (B8).

1.3 Study Area

The study area includes the whole of South Oxfordshire focusing on established business and industrial areas as identified in the Core Strategy 2012 and related employment land evidence base (the 2007 and 2008 ELRs). The process for selecting existing and potential employment sites to survey corresponds to the guidance in the NPPG[3]. A broad range of land and premises were assessed including industrial estates, business parks, science and technology parks and some office premises. The sites assessed were agreed with the Council.

[3] NPPG, paragraph 011 reference ID: 2a-011-20140306

1.4 Structure of this Report

This report sets out our final findings and policy recommendations for employment land in South Oxfordshire, taking into account the future economic development potential of the area. The report is structured as follows:

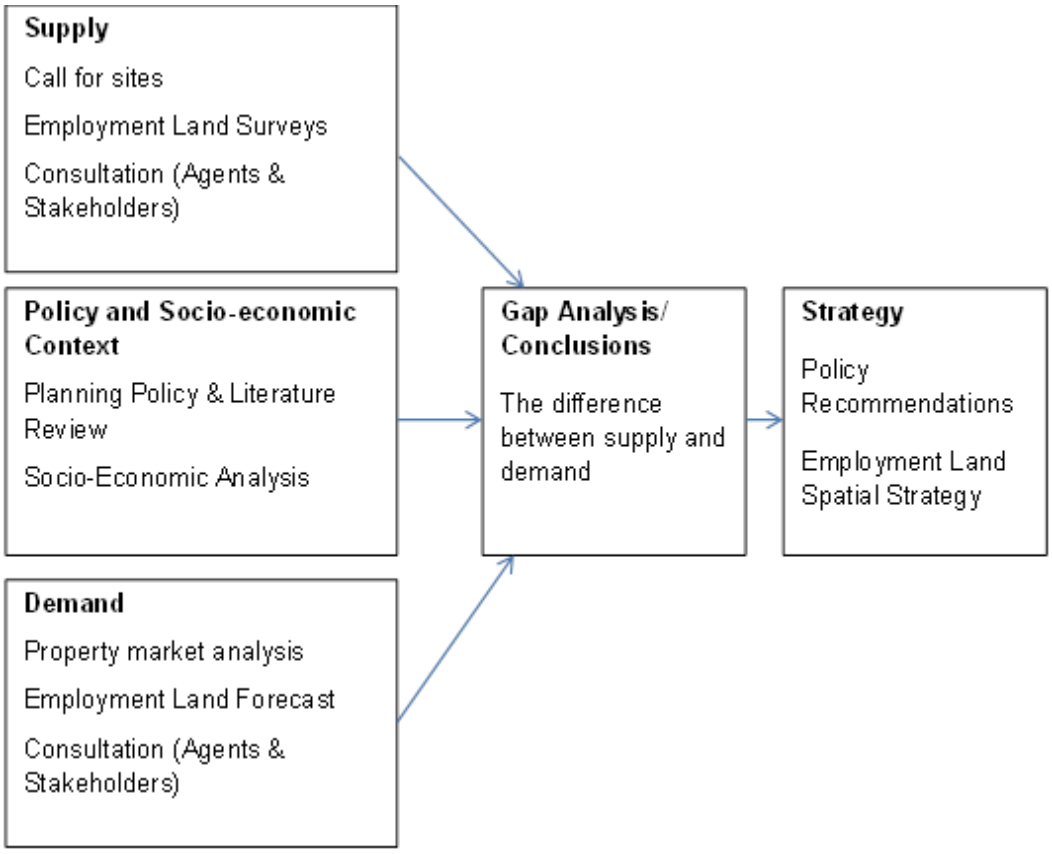
- **Section 2**: sets out the study approach;
- **Section 3**: is a review of the national, regional and local policy context of particular relevance to employment land, the economy regeneration and related issues in South Oxfordshire;
- **Section 4**: includes a comprehensive analysis of socio-economic baseline conditions, and information on key sectors, in South Oxfordshire relative to the rest of Oxfordshire, the South East and nationally;
- **Section 5**: assesses the quality and characteristics of employment land within South Oxfordshire;
- **Section 6**: provides an overview of the employment land market including the historical and expected future trends in the commercial and industrial property sectors based on the views of local market agents and stakeholders gained through a consultation exercise;
- **Section 7**: is a forecast for demand and the growth scenarios in South Oxfordshire;
- **Section 8**: provides a gap analysis, comparing growth scenarios with current supply; and;
- **Section 9**: provides conclusions and recommendations on the employment land strategy that the Council should adopt over the Local Plan timeframe.

2 APPROACH

2.1 Introduction

This section sets out the main research elements of this employment land study as illustrated in **Figure 2-1**. The methodology has been developed to conform to the NPPG. Each element is reviewed briefly in the following sub-sections.

Figure 2-1 Approach to the Employment Land Review



Source: URS (2014)

2.2 Policy and Socio-economic Context

Our employment land review begins with a review of the policy framework and the socio-economic context. The policy review takes account of relevant national and local policies and strategies as these have the potential to influence future supply and demand for employment land. The socio-economic profile is set in context of Oxfordshire, the South East of England and England to provide a picture of the District's economic make-up, and its comparative opportunities and threats. The profile coves a review of historical employment information for the District, including information on workforce characteristics, occupation, earnings and travel to work information, and analysis on key sectors. To develop this profile a number of information sources are reviewed including Census data, ONS Annual Population Survey, Annual Business Inquiry and the Local Labour Force Survey.

2.3 Supply Assessment

A field survey of employment land in South Oxfordshire was carried out to assess its suitability for continued employment use. The list of clusters were selected and agreed in consultation with the Council. In total 16 employment clusters were identified and surveyed. An overview of all clusters is given in **Figure 2-2**: Each cluster was surveyed and appraised against an agreed set of economic, planning and property market criteria in line with National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)[4]. A call for sites was not carried out specifically as part of this ELR at the request of the Council. This is because a call for sites was recently carried out in June 2014 to support the housing evidence base. Any sites appropriate for economic development from that call for sites process were fed into this ELR.

To ensure consistency, surveyors used a survey manual, a structured survey questionnaire with suitability for employment use criteria and a map of each employment cluster. The questionnaire included a series of close-ended and open-ended questions and captured quantitative and qualitative information. Once the surveys were completed (in the week beginning 20th October, 2014) the survey data was entered into a database and written up for analysis.

2.4 Property Market Assessment - Consultation

We consulted with local property market agents, key stakeholders involved in economic development and regeneration in order to better understand the local demand and supply characteristics of the employment land market and the land and premises-related drivers and constraints to businesses operating in the District.

To help enhance the understanding of the supply and demand characteristics of the local employment land market, the views of local property market agents, key land owners and other key stakeholders were sought. It was considered more effective and efficient to speak to a group of commercial property agents rather than speaking only to one commercial agent in order to broaden and moderate the response compared to that which would have been received by contacting just one commercial agent. Approximately 10 local commercial agents and key stakeholders were contacted.

The exercise supplemented desk-based research and survey findings, and sought to test the emerging findings and conclusions relating to the demand and provision of office and industrial sites and premises in South Oxfordshire. Consultation with local property agents took the form of a semi-structured interview by telephone around topics including: South Oxfordshire's employment property market area; the demand and supply of sites and premises, the characteristics of sites and their suitability for employment uses; opportunities and constraints to growth; and inward investment and regeneration. The outputs of the consultation exercise are an important piece of evidence that provides real market intelligence from professionals working day to day with commercial property in South Oxfordshire and is a key consideration to inform the policy recommendations.

[4] NPPG, paragraph 020 reference ID: 3-020-20140306

2.5 Demand Assessment

A number of different techniques can be used for forecasting future demand of employment land. Each has strengths and weaknesses. The decision was therefore taken after consultation with South Oxfordshire to adopt a synthesis approach that is based on the trends of the following factors:

- Sub-regional floorspace trends;
- Historic and forecast employment based on macro-economic forecasting; and
- Assessment of other local factors not contained within existing data such as transport improvements and the effects of the recession.

The NPPG states that needs should be assessed in relation to the relevant functional economic market area (FEMA)[5]. The FEMA as defined in the NPPG can be viewed as the PMA as defined in this study. For the purpose of this study we have used data from the following local authority boundaries of a defined Property Market Area (PMA), as suggested by property market agents and stakeholders, to measure the trends of the above three factors:

- South Oxfordshire; and
- Vale of White Horse (VOWH).

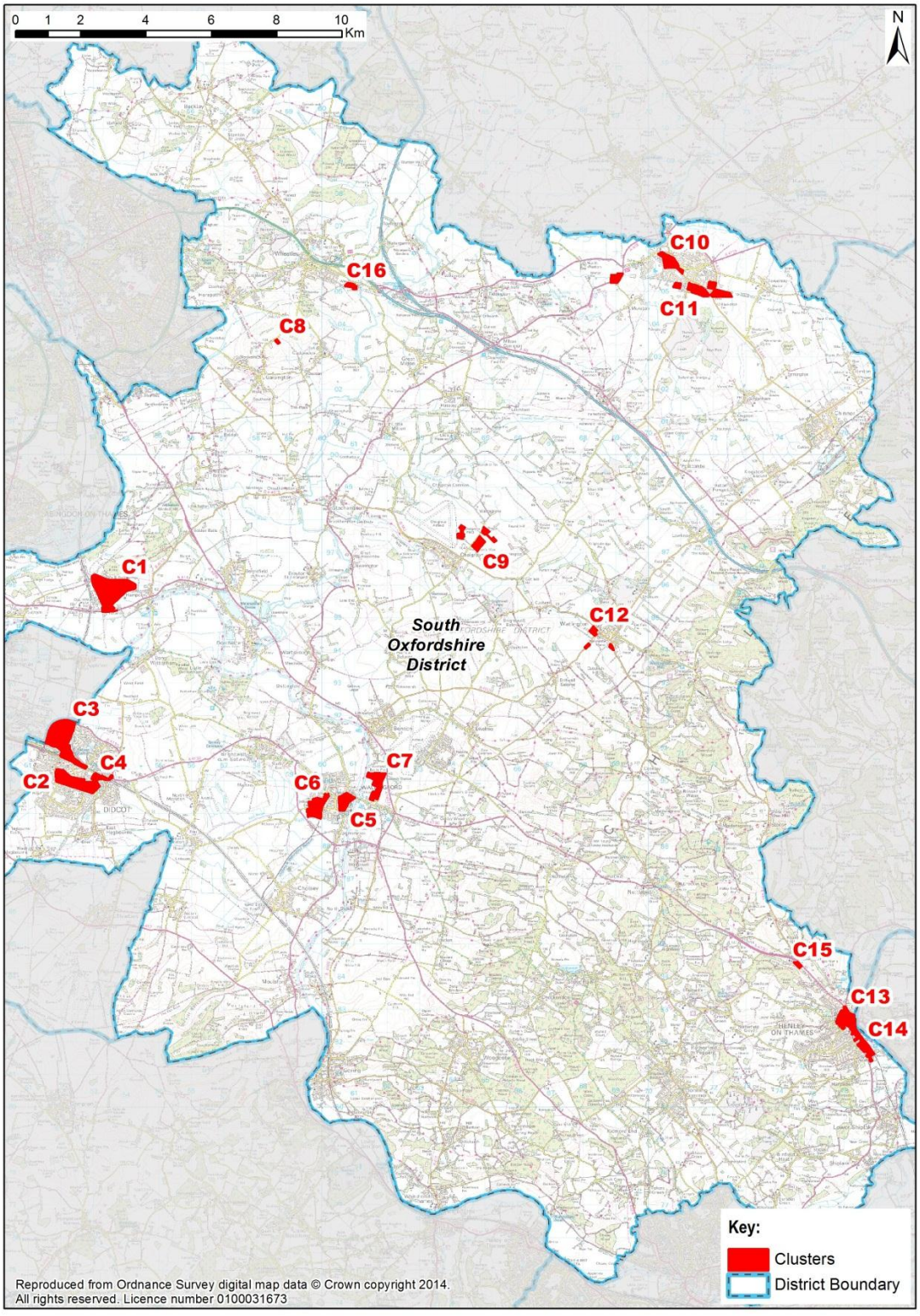
2.6 Gap Analysis, Conclusions and Recommendations

The final section draws together all of the previous research elements and makes a comparison of the current supply of employment land in South Oxfordshire with the projected demand for employment land up to 2031. This involves an assessment of the balance between supply and demand, and informs the position of whether there should be retention or release of employment land.

The recommendations are informed by elements of the preceding analysis. This includes; the socio-economic profile of the District, field surveys, the economic development and planning policy context, property market analysis, demand projections and consultations findings. The recommendations describe by use class type and spatially where land for employment uses should be provided to meet future employment needs. All recommendations are fully justified.

[5] NPPG, paragraph 009 Reference ID: 2a-009-20140306

Figure 2-2 Context Map of Surveyed Employment Clusters in South Oxfordshire



Source: URS (2014)

3 POLICY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the policies and strategies relevant to employment and employment land in South Oxfordshire. The review frames the context to the research in terms of national, regional and local policy.

3.2 National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

At the national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[6] replaced the Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance from March 27th 2012, with the aim to make the planning system less complex and to promote sustainable growth[7].

The NPPF describes the Government's vision for building a strong, competitive economy. It sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the absence of a local plan or where the plan is silent or indeterminate. This means that the Employment Land Review and Local Plan should present robust evidence to support clearly defined allocations of land for employment to avoid applications for alternative use being granted on the basis they are sustainable development.

The NPPF recognises that the planning system plays an important role in promoting economic growth and building a strong, competitive economy. The NPPF sets guidelines for the preparation of local plans which includes setting out a clear economic vision and strategy; identifying strategic sites for investment; supporting existing businesses; and planning positively for the location, promotion and expansion of economic clusters. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances. Plans should avoid the long term protection of employment sites when there is no realistic prospect of them being developed in the planning period.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

On the 6th March 2014 the Government published new National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)[8] on 'Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments' and 'Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments' amongst others. This guidance replaces the ODPM Employment Land Reviews: Guidance Note (2004).

In economic development terms 'need' relates to the amount of economic development floorspace required based on a quantitative assessment and an understanding of the qualitative requirements of market segments. The NPPG requires need assessment to be based on an objective assessment of the facts and should not be biased or influenced by constraints to the overall assessment or limitations imposed by the supply of land for new development, historic under performance, viability, infrastructure or environmental constraints.

To provide an understanding of the underlying requirements for office, general business and warehousing sites the NPPG emphasises the importance of considering projections (based on

[6] Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (March 2012) National Planning Policy Framework
[7] The aim is that the NPPF should be read and considered as a whole. This means that it should not be possible to pick out individual sentences and paragraphs to justify a particular position.
[8] Department for Communities and Local Government, (2014); National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

past trends) and forecasts (based on future scenarios) and identifying occurrences where sites have been developed for specialist economic uses. The NPPG requires plan makers to consider sectoral and employment forecasts and projections, demographically derived assessments of future employment needs, past take-up of employment land and property and/or future property market requirements, consultation and studies of business trends and statistics.

The revised guidance emphasises the following specific requirements for ELRs:

- A need to take account of the wider 'functional economic area' in which the local authority operates;
- Consideration of the opportunities for providing employment space as part of mixed-use developments;
- A more in-depth assessment of the 'achievability' and deliverability/viability of development of available or pipeline sites; and
- Greater consideration of the legal or ownership problems that may affect the availability of sites, and the ways to overcome them.

UK Plan for Growth (2011)

The Government's economic policy objective is to achieve strong, sustainable and balanced growth. In November 2010, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills launched the Growth Review to undertake a thorough assessment of how Government can help create the conditions for growth.

The Growth Review is a rolling programme, to last the whole of this Parliament, calling on business to challenge the Government to remove barriers to growth It is focused on four ambitions for the UK economy:

- To create the most competitive tax system in the G20;
- To make the UK the best place in Europe to start, finance and grow a business;
- To encourage investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy; and
- To create a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe.

Enterprise Zones

In 2011 the Government announced the creation of 24 new Enterprise Zones (EZ). Parts of Milton Park and Harwell Oxford in Vale of White Horse area are designated as EZs. EZ's are specific areas where a combination of financial incentives, reduced planning restrictions and other support is used to encourage the creation of new businesses and jobs – and contribute to the growth of the local and national economies. The specific incentives available to businesses locating in an EZ include the following:

- Subject to eligibility, a business rate discount worth up to £275,000 per business over a five year period (£55,000 a year);
- The retention, for at least 25 years, of the Business Rate growth from the Zone in order to support the relevant local enterprise partnership's economic priorities;
- Radically simplified planning, for example, through the use of Local Development Orders; and

- Government support to ensure that superfast broadband is rolled out throughout each Zone.

Permitted Development Rights

On 30 May 2013 changes were made to the permitted development rights. They permit change of use from:

- B1(a) offices to C3 residential use, subject to prior approval covering flooding, highways and transport issues and contamination (applies between 30 May 2013 and 30 May 2016).
- Premises in B1, C1, C2, C2A and D2 use classes can change use permanently to a state-funded school, subject to prior approval covering highways and transport impacts and noise.
- Buildings with A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, D1 and D2 uses will be permitted to change use for a single period of up two years to A1, A2, A3 and B1 uses.
- Thresholds for business change of use. Thresholds increased from 235 square metres to 500 square metres for permitted development for change of use from B1 or B2 to B8 and from B2 or B8 to B1.

The permitted development rights will only cover change of use: any associated physical development which currently requires a planning application will continue to need one. However, the change potentially makes valuable employment space more vulnerable to a change of use, and its implications are yet to be fully understood in areas such as South Oxfordshire where opportunities for residential development are highly sought-after.

3.3 Regional Strategy

Oxfordshire LEP Strategy for Growth (March 2014)[9]

The Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan outlines the four thematic objectives of the LEP that will fulfil its objectives of being a "vibrant sustainable inclusive world leading economy, driven by innovation, enterprise and research excellence":

- **Innovative Enterprise:** encouraging innovation-led growth underpinned by the strength of Oxfordshire's research and development capacity, business collaboration and supply chain potential;
- **Innovative People:** attracting specialist and flexible skills at all levels, delivering inclusive employment and fulfilling jobs;
- **Innovative Place:** providing a quality environment and choice of homes to support smart growth and capitalise on the vibrant economy and dynamic communities within the county; and
- **Innovative Connectivity:** allowing people to access the services, environment and facilities needed by a dynamic and growing economy.

9 http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/cms/sites/lep/files/folders/Strategic%20Economic%20Plan/Oxford_Strategic_Economic_Plan.pdf?bcsi_scan_AB11CAA0E2721250=x98L2Da3MPzuxsC5zWJZUhPOwRodAAAA0hD7LA==&bcsi_scan_filename=Oxford_Strategic_Economic_Plan.pdf

The Strategic Economic Plan focusses economic growth on the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine, ranging from Science Vale and South Oxfordshire in the south to Bicester in the north (see **Figure 6-1**).

The strategy sets out a target of creating 85,600 new jobs by 2031 (a 1% increase per annum), generating a £6.6bn increase in Gross Value Added over this period, stimulating demand for employment land both within South Oxfordshire and across the wider Knowledge Spine area. It also aims to encourage a minimum of £2.5bn in private sector investment over this period, while building between 93,560 to 106,560 new homes.

3.4 Local Planning Policy and Evidence Base

South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (December 2012)

The 2012 Core Strategy[10] is the key policy document in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. It sets out the key elements of the spatial planning framework for the District over the period up to 2027. The intention is to update the South Oxfordshire Local Development Plan (which includes the Core Strategy and saved policies from the 2011 Local Plan see below) and include it within an updated 'Local Plan' to cover the period to 2031. This ELR will form part of the evidence base to the updated 2031 South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

South Oxfordshire has a mix of strategic employment sites, focused around four towns: Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford. It states the aim to balance the needs for new housing and employment, while supporting the local economy and creating jobs where possible. Policy CSEM2 aims to provide for around 5,000 additional B class jobs to 2027, facilitated by an equivalent of 20 hectares of additional land to be provided for employment uses, 13.5 hectares within South Oxfordshire and a further 6.5 hectares at Didcot (in the Vale of White Horse). It aims to identify a further 2ha of employment land in both Thame and Wallingford for employment uses, while supporting the upgrading of existing employment sites. It also aims to identify 4.2ha of land for employment in rural areas, focussed around the larger villages in the District. The remaining balance is provided through increasing jobs at Culham Science Centre and a masterplan is being prepared for the site.

The Core Strategy defines Henley-on-Thames as having "a reasonable amount of employment premises". It states that the Council should not lose existing sites unless there is clear evidence that they are no longer required for employment purposes. It characterises Henley-on-Thames' employment land as being of good quality but having few sites with the potential for redevelopment to provide better quality premises that can support greater numbers of employment.

Policy CSTHA1 outlines the development strategy for Thame. It aims to improve the existing employment stock in Thame, an area which is observed to have relatively high levels of out-commuting, by providing new employment sites totalling approximately 2ha to encourage people to work locally. Similarly, Policy CSWAL1 aims to provide a similar quantity of employment in Wallingford and Crowmarsh Gifford. The Core Strategy notes a focus on the environmental sciences in this area, and supports upgrading the existing business stock and improving the environment of existing employment areas, particularly at the Hithercroft Estate.

[10] South Oxfordshire District Council, (2012); Core Strategy

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (Adopted January 2006)

The Local Plan 2011 contains some policies relating to employment land that have not been superseded by the Core Strategy. Relevant saved policies include Policy E6 which states that "proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of redundant land or buildings in employment or service trade use to non-employment uses will be permitted if:

- The site is less than 0.25ha and buildings under 500 m^2 and in the towns of Didcot, Henley-on-Thames, Thame or Wallingford; or
- The existing use is no longer economically viable and the site has been marketed at a reasonable price for at least a year for that and any other suitable employment or service trade uses".

South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review (2007)

The South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review[11], published in August 2007, details that B1 and B8 employment land-use in the District makes up the vast majority of occupied land, with B2 uses being of much lesser significance. The study identifies South Oxfordshire as an area that benefits from a good range of employment space typologies, providing flexibility in terms of uses on sites, and the presence of knowledge and R&D-based industries. However, many sites in rural locations suffer from poor access, with the stock of office premises in the District identified as being typically older and therefore of poorer quality.

In terms of demand, the review notes that the moderate demand for B1 sites and premises is generally absorbed by available floorspace at Howbery Business Park, Milton Park (outside South Oxfordshire but caters for a portion of its demand) and at small town centre locations. It was thought that demand levels would be sustained through growth in the business services sector and the continuing expansion of local businesses. The review therefore recommended that long-term demand for B1 employment land was not being met and that action, in the form of policy change, should be undertaken by South Oxfordshire District Council.

Although industrial activity is recognised to be of little overall importance to the increasingly service-based, 'light-industrial' economy of South Oxfordshire, demand for B2 employment space was deemed to exist albeit mainly for small premises, measuring less than 2,500 sq. ft. It was further noted though that this demand was expected to undergo a steady decline and that the renewal of vacant stock would be sufficient to meet this in any case.

Warehouse/distribution parks, supplying B8 employment land, were deemed to be well established in the District, particularly around Didcot and the western portion. However, it was identified that overall demand for B8 space was thought to be relatively muted, except for smaller premises, with Didcot again being an important location for such market activity. Indeed, vacancy of new or refurbished premises was estimated to account for almost 50% of overall vacancy in this use class, strongly indicating that demand was being met by supply. It was however recommended in the review that take-up of land around Didcot is regularly monitored, given the preference for this location, so that the market would remain responsive to changes in circumstance.

[11] DTZ, (2007); South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review

South Oxfordshire Employment Land Review Update (2008)

In 2008, South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) commissioned WM Enterprise (WME) to revisit the employment land needs assessment set out in their Employment Land Review 2007[12]. The principal purpose of the work was to derive new estimates for employment land requirements given the publication of updated employment projections and population forecasts. A combination of the 2007 and 2008 ELRs formed the employment land evidence base to inform the 2012 Core Strategy.

DTZ suggested in 2007 that South Oxfordshire's additional employment land requirements were 27.6 ha, some of which already has permission. Based on assessments using updated Experian employment forecasts, and ONS and OCC/HCA population projections, the WME study concluded that the Council should plan for either:

- 16.8 ha of additional employment land, assuming a rate of population growth consistent with the ONS forecasts; or
- 18.1ha of additional employment land, of the population growth is consistent with the OCC/HCA population forecasts.

The main reason for the difference between the WME findings and DTZ's outputs is the significant difference between the sector forecasts available in 2008 and those used by DTZ in 2007.

Draft Culham Science Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (May 2014)

The Draft Culham Science Centre SPD was put out to consultation between May and June of 2014. The draft masterplan considers the future redevelopment of the Culham Science Centre in relation to Core Strategy Policy CSEM3, which supports the redevelopment and intensification of the centre, with the creation of 1,000 additional jobs at the site. The draft SPD discusses improvements to existing buildings and transport infrastructure, alongside the development of new facilities at the western edge of the site.

Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (April 2014)

The Oxfordshire SHMA[13] aims to develop a robust understanding of housing market dynamics in Oxfordshire, assessing the future needs for both market and affordable housing in the county. The SHMA links the outlook for economic and workforce growth to the level of homes necessary to support this and will develop a set of employment scenarios taking account of key drivers of employment growth, including commuting patterns and historical trends, in producing a forecast for housing need. The SHMA identifies a range of between 725-825 houses per year in South Oxfordshire to meet housing need over the period 2011 to 2031. This need is based on, amongst other things, potential job creation of 11,455 by 2031. Although the housing need range does not constitute a target itself, it represents an overall assessment of need that does not take into account limitations such as the supply of land for new developments.

[12] WM Enterprise, (2008); Revisiting South Oxfordshire's Employment Land Projections

[13] GL Hearn, (2014); Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Oxfordshire SHMA Economic Evidence - Cambridge Econometrics Report (2014)

Cambridge Econometrics published the report 'Economic Forecasting' to Inform the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic Housing Market Assessment[14] in February 2014. Cambridge Econometrics use a top-down approach to forecasting employment, meaning that the forecasts include broad macroeconomic trends, including offshoring, technological change, and the growth and decline of industry sectors. The forecasts are then adjusted to produce three distinct scenarios:

- **Baseline**: assumes a continuation of the historical trends in South Oxfordshire's growth relative to the rest of the South East over the past fifteen years;
- **Alternative Population-Based**: corrects for an anomaly in the baseline population projections, based on ONS Sub-National Population Projections, relating to the student population; and
- **Planned Economic Growth**: the most optimistic of the three forecasts, it reflects policy influences on economic growth, such as proposals relating to the Science Vale (SV) Enterprise Zone and infrastructure investment.

The Planned Economic Growth forecasts provide the most optimistic projection of employment trends in South Oxfordshire. It suggests that employment in South Oxfordshire will grow at a higher rate relative to the South East than has been observed historically. The Cambridge Econometrics report provides some discussion of the influences that might cause this uplift:

- **Science Vale**: the report identifies the capacity for Culham Science Centre to accommodate an additional 1,000 jobs, due to its "strong and distinctive science base". Although job growth is constrained by significant traffic issues in the local road network, the report suggests that this cap may be lifted in the longer term if rail improvements between Didcot and Oxford, as proposed in the City Deal submission, are realised. The report estimates 500 above-trend jobs in South Oxfordshire as a result, in a mix of professional and IT services, electronics and pharmaceuticals; and
- **Environmental Technologies and Green Construction**: the report also identifies an additional 100 above-trend jobs in South Oxfordshire, benefiting from supply-chain linkages as a result of the environmental technologies cluster focused around Bicester.

The Vale of White Horse is also anticipated to benefit from an employment uplift as a result of from factors including the growth of Science Vale, satellite technology, advanced engineering, environment technologies, retail and distribution. The report identifies 27,750 additional above-trend jobs in Oxfordshire from 2011-31, with 10,800 of these jobs located in the PMA (600 in South Oxfordshire, 10,200 in Vale of White Horse).

South Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2013)

The South Oxfordshire SHLAA discusses land for employment uses. It states that based on the findings of the 2007 and 2008 ELR in future there will be a shortage of employment land. This means there will be a need to find new employment sites. The review did not identify any

[14] Cambridge Econometrics, (2014); Economic Forecasting to Inform the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic Housing Market Assessment

unsuitable sites it also assumed that existing employment sites should be protected as they were appropriate for employment uses.

3.5 Summary

The position of both the Council and the Oxfordshire LEP is one of continued supported growth, driven in part by the knowledge-based industries located in and around Oxfordshire. The Core Strategy seeks the equivalent of an additional 13.5ha of employment land within South Oxfordshire to support the growth of 5,000 jobs, in part through plans to expand the employment capacity at Culham Science Centre. 6.5 hectares of employment land is to be provided in the Vale of White Horse close to Didcot, possibly at the former Didcot power station to help meet Didcot's employment needs. Employment land in South Oxfordshire benefits from the knowledge-based industries located in and around Oxfordshire, although many of its employment sites are located in rural areas with poor access. The positive projection for future employment indicates the importance of increasing the employment land capacity in South Oxfordshire to retain, create and develop the local business base.

4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

This analysis of South Oxfordshire's socio-economic characteristics informs our understanding of the District's employment needs as well as the opportunities and constraints which could impact upon the demand and supply for employment land. The analysis will also inform the demand forecasting section by setting out what sectors the District specialises in and thereby what type of space will be needed.

The most up-to-date and relevant Office for National Statistics (ONS) data has been used in producing this analysis. Data for South Oxfordshire is benchmarked against regional and national levels for direct comparison as well as the Oxfordshire LEP area where data is available.

4.2 Population and Demographics

Demand for housing and employment sites and premises will be driven in part by population growth. Between 2001 and 2011 South Oxfordshire's population increased by 4.7% to over 134,000[15]. This growth rate is somewhat lower than within both Oxfordshire and the South East region as a whole (7.9% and 8% respectively). ONS analysis suggests that an additional 11,400 residents are projected to reside in the District by 2031[16]. This represents an increase in population size of 8.4% over the period (compared with 9.9% growth in Oxfordshire and 13% across the South East).

In 2001, 82,700 people in South Oxfordshire (equivalent to 61.6% of the population) were of working age compared with 61.1% in Oxfordshire and 59% across the South East as a whole. In 2011 the proportion of South Oxfordshire residents of working age had slightly increased to 62.5%, a smaller increase than that experienced within Oxfordshire (65.4%), the South East (63.8%) and nationally (64.8%). This is presented in **Table 4-1** below.

Table 4-1 Age Structure of South Oxfordshire's Residents

	South Oxfordshire (%)	*Oxfordshire (%)*	*South East (%)*	*England (%)*
Under 16	19.4	18.7	19.0	18.9
16 to 64	62.5	65.4	63.8	64.8
65 and Over	18.2	15.9	17.2	16.3

Source: ONS, (2012); Census 2011

In 2014, 83.3% of the working age population was economically active, which is slightly more than that observed within Oxfordshire (78.9%), but higher than both the South East and England (79.7% and 77.4% respectively)[17]. In 2013, the unemployment rate in South Oxfordshire was 3.3% which is less than that recorded within Oxfordshire (3.5%), the South East (4.9%) and England as a whole (6.4%).

[15] ONS Census 2001 and 2011.
[16] ONS, 2014; Sub-National Population Projections; compared with 2011 figures
[17] ONS, 2015; Annual Population Survey 2014.

4.3 Supply of Labour and Employment

Business investment decisions are typically based on the availability and accessibility of sites, as well as the availability of capital and labour. Below we consider the labour market by profiling the broad occupational breakdown, earnings and qualifications of residents.

Occupational Structure

The Annual Population Survey indicates that approximately 65.7% of the resident population in South Oxfordshire is employed in managerial, professional and associate professional occupations, which is greater than within Oxfordshire (54.1%), the South East (48.5%) and England as a whole (44.4%). By contrast, only 14% of the resident population is employed in industrial occupations, such as skilled trades, machine operatives and elementary occupations. This is somewhat less than within Oxfordshire (24.2%), across the South East (24.1%) and England (27.3%). This is presented in **Table 4-2** and **Figure 4-1** below.

Table 4-2 Occupational Structure of South Oxfordshire's Residents

	South Oxfordshire (%)	*Oxfordshire (%)*	*South East (%)*	*England (%)*
Managers, directors & senior officials	13.0	13.1	11.5	13.1
Professional occupations	25.1	23.2	21.3	23.2
Associate professional & technical occupations	23.9	15.4	15.7	15.4
Administrative & secretarial occupations	7.6	11.0	10.7	11.0
Skilled trades occupations	6.2	9.6	9.8	9.6
Caring, leisure & other service occupations	9.3	8.2	9.3	8.2
Sales and customer service occupations	6.2	7.0	7.1	7.0
Process, plant & machine operatives	3.4	3.5	4.6	3.5
Elementary occupations	5.3	8.7	9.7	8.7

Source: ONS, (2014); Annual Population Survey, 2013

Figure 4-1 Occupational Structure of South Oxfordshire's Residents

Source: ONS, (2014); Annual Population Survey, 2013

Earnings by Residents and Workers

In 2013, the average (median) gross weekly earnings for residents within South Oxfordshire was £598.3, which is approximately £39 higher than levels recorded within both Oxfordshire and the South East, and £77 higher than recorded across England as a whole. South Oxfordshire residents earned £99 more per week than did workers in the District, on average, suggesting that residents commuting out of the District to work are travelling to higher-skilled, higher-paid jobs (commuting patterns are discussed further in **Section 4.5**). By contrast, workers in VoWH earn on average £613 per week, over £100 greater than within the District, although average resident earnings (£610 per week) are broadly comparable with South Oxfordshire. **Table 4-3** presents earnings data below.

Table 4-3 Average Gross Weekly Earnings of South Oxfordshire's Residents

	Average Gross Weekly Earnings: Residents (£)	***Average Gross Weekly Earnings: Workforce (£)***
South Oxfordshire	598.3	499.3
Oxfordshire	559.1	551.1
South East	559.7	536.6
England	520.7	520.5

Source: ONS, (2014); Annual Population Survey, 2013

Resident Qualifications

In 2013 approximately 95.8% of working age residents within South Oxfordshire had a qualification, in line with that recorded within both the Oxfordshire (95%) and the South East (94%) but slightly higher than across England as a whole (91%). South Oxfordshire also had a higher proportion of working age residents with a degree or higher degree (NVQ4+) (48%) compared to other area comparators. This is shown in **Table 4-4** and **Figure 4-2** below.

Table 4-4 Educational Attainment of South Oxfordshire's Residents (aged 16-64)

	South Oxfordshire (%)	*Oxfordshire (%)*	*South East (%)*	*England (%)*
% with NVQ4+	48.8	46.0	38.3	35.0
% with NVQ3+	70.9	66.2	59.3	55.6
% with NVQ2+	86.0	79.2	76.5	72.5
% with NVQ1+	92.8	88.7	88.4	84.6
% with other qualifications	3.0	5.9	5.2	6.3
% with no qualifications	4.2	5.5	6.5	9.1

Source: ONS, (2014); Annual Population Survey, 2013

Figure 4-2 Educational Attainment of South Oxfordshire's Residents (aged 16-64)

4.4 Employment and Industrial Characteristics

In 2013, total employment in South Oxfordshire stood at 58,423[18], of which 2,531 (4.3%) were self-employed. Employment in South Oxfordshire is predominantly within the Professional, Scientific and Technical (18.3%), Retail (10.5%) and Education (9.4%) sectors. There is a somewhat higher representation of employment within the Professional, Scientific and Technical sector within South Oxfordshire than is the case both regionally and nationally. This is shown below in **Table 4-5**.

[18] ONS, (2014); Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES), 2013 (Employment is defined as employees plus self-employed people)

Table 4-5 Employment by Sector 2013

	South Oxfordshire (%)	*Oxfordshire (%)*	*South East (%)*	*England (%)*
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	0.0	0.1	0.7	0.6
Mining, quarrying & utilities	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.1
Manufacturing	6.1	7.4	6.4	8.4
Construction	4.9	4.1	4.7	4.3
Motor trades	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.7
Wholesale	4.7	3.8	4.7	4.2
Retail	10.5	9.6	10.6	10.0
Transport & storage (including postal)	2.9	3.1	4.1	4.5
Accommodation & food services	8.8	7.5	7.3	6.9
Information & communication	5.1	5.6	6.2	4.2
Financial & insurance	2.2	1.6	3.3	3.8
Property	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.7
Professional, scientific & technical	18.3	11.2	8.0	8.1
Business administration & support services	8.0	6.4	8.0	8.6
Public administration & defence	1.9	3.2	3.6	4.6
Education	9.4	15.7	10.5	9.6
Health	8.0	12.2	12.3	13.1
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	5.1	4.6	5.1	4.5

Source: ONS, (2014); Business Register and Employment Survey, 2013.

4.5 Business Demography

VAT registration and de-registration rates for South Oxfordshire provide an indication of the entrepreneurial characteristics of the District. Published data indicates that in 2012 there were 770 registrations whilst there were 715 de-registrations resulting in a slight net gain in South Oxfordshire's stock of 55 businesses[19]. Comparatively in 2009 there were 705 business registrations compared to 745 business deaths resulting in a net loss in South Oxfordshire's stock of 40 businesses. The 770 new businesses in 2012 accounted for almost 10% of the

[19] ONS, (2013): UK Business: Activity, Size and Location 2012

7,785 businesses in the District; comparatively higher than across Oxfordshire (9.8%) but lower than the South East (10.8%).

Business size provides a useful indication of the make-up of firms operating in South Oxfordshire, and has implications for the type and size of premises businesses tend to occupy. Data from 2014[20] shows that small businesses contribute significantly to employment within the District, with 6,720 businesses defined as 'micro' size (up to nine employees), comprising 90.3% of the stock of 7,445 companies registered within South Oxfordshire. This is a greater share than is observed across Oxfordshire (88.4%), the South East (89.1%) and England (88.4%), and represents an increase from the equivalent figure for South Oxfordshire from 2010 (88.6%). By contrast, the proportion of 'small' (10 to 49 employees) and 'medium-sized' (50 to 249 employees) enterprises are comparatively lower. **Table 4-6** presents a size band analysis of work places in the Borough. The size band refers to the number of employees at each workplace (not the size of the parent company).

Table 4-6 Business Units by Number of Employees 2014

Number of Employees	*South Oxfordshire (%)*	*Oxfordshire (%)*	*South East (%)*	*England (%)*
0-9	90.3	88.4	89.1	88.4
10-49	8.2	9.4	8.9	9.5
50-249	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.7
250+	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4

Source: ONS, (2015); UK Business: Activity, Size and Location 2014. Note: figures may not sum due to rounding.

4.6 Travel to Work Areas and Commuting Patterns

Analysis of the 2011 Census shows that approximately 31.6% of South Oxfordshire's residents worked within South Oxfordshire, while 15.1% worked mainly at or from home. The majority of those who commuted out of South Oxfordshire worked in Oxford, Vale of White Horse or Reading. This is shown below in **Table 4-7**.

Table 4-7 Place of Work of South Oxfordshire's Residents

Location of Work	*Number*	*Percentage*
South Oxfordshire	22,358	31.6
Oxford	7,369	10.4
Vale of White Horse	6,217	8.8
Reading	2,514	3.6
Wycombe	2,236	3.2

[20] ONS, (2015); UK Business: Activity, Size and Location 2014.

Aylesbury Vale	1,586	2.2
City of London/Westminster	1,366	1.9
West Berkshire	1,256	1.8
Wokingham	1,076	1.5
Cherwell	1,014	1.4
Mainly work at or from home	10,709	15.1

Source: ONS, (2014); Census 2011

In 2011: 23,654 residents of other local authorities commuted to South Oxfordshire to work, while 31,807 residents of South Oxfordshire commuted elsewhere to work. Vale of White Horse, the other local authority within the Property Market Area (see **Section 6.2**) hosted 8.8% of all jobs held by South Oxfordshire's residents, and contributed 10.9% of South Oxfordshire's workforce.

In 2011, 10.709 residents worked from home, representing the second largest location of work. Almost a third of all jobs retained in the District are home working. This emphasises the importance of the home-based business sector in South Oxfordshire.

Table 4-8 Place of Residence of South Oxfordshire's Workforce

Location of Residence	***Number***	***Percentage***
South Oxfordshire	22,358	48.6
Vale of White Horse	3,946	8.6
Aylesbury Vale	2,622	5.7
Reading	2,615	5.7
Oxford	2,541	5.5
Wycombe	1,521	3.3
Wokingham	1,336	2.9
West Berkshire	1,170	2.5
Cherwell	1,150	2.5
West Oxfordshire	828	1.8

Source: ONS, (2014); Census 2011

The commuting patterns discussed in **Table 4-7** and **Table 4-8** above help to inform the Property Market Area, defined in **Sections 6.2** and **7.3**.

Alongside commuting trends, the role of home working plays a significant role in the local economy. In 2011, 10,709 individuals worked from home (15.1% of those in employment).

This represents a larger proportion than those commuting to any other location, and is significantly higher than the England average (10.4%). Comparison between Census data shows that rates of home working are significantly higher than in 2001 (11.8%). This suggests that home working is an increasingly important sector in the local economy, and that there may be an increasing need to accommodate and nurture growth of home-based businesses.

4.7 Summary

South Oxfordshire's residents are highly-qualified, earning more than both the regional and national averages and experiencing a lower rate of unemployment. The proportion of people in professional and managerial positions is accordingly significantly higher than the national average. The retail, education, and professional, scientific and technical sectors represent approximately 38% of the total jobs within South Oxfordshire.

However, workforce earnings (i.e. those earned by workers in South Oxfordshire) fall below regional and national averages. The significant flow of cross-commuting between South Oxfordshire and neighbouring districts implies that the area suffers from a leakage of highly skilled residents to employment elsewhere. This suggests that the Council could seek to improve employment opportunities and employment land provision, providing high quality local jobs to help retain more of its skilled residents in the local workforce. The scale and typology of employment space required is discussed in greater depth in **Section 7**.

5 QUALITY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

5.1 Introduction

This section provides a summary of the key findings of the field study of South Oxfordshire's strategically important employment sites. It focuses on the sites' condition, utilisation and suitability for their current use. Our assessment of the supply of employment land has included a review of 16 clusters of employment land.

Below we set out our method for determining the current and potential supply of employment land, and the findings of our supply assessment. This provides an insight into the spatial distribution and quality of South Oxfordshire's employment sites.

5.2 Spatial Distribution of Employment Land

Analysis of VOA floorspace data from 2008 provides an indication of the spatial distribution of South Oxfordshire's employment land. It provides information on the quantity of floorspace within each of the twenty Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOA) in the District. Nine of the MSOAs have been identified as covering one of the four town centres: Didcot, Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford[22]. Although this source does not provide the most up to date information, it provides an indicative insight into the urban-rural distribution of the different types of employment floorspace. Note that a more up to date source is used within **Section 6** of this report.

Table 5-1 Floorspace by Employment Use in South Oxfordshire in 2008

	Urban (%)	*Rural (%)*
Office (B1)	63.0	37.0
Factories (B2)	45.3	54.7
Warehouses (B8)	68.7	31.3

Source: VOA, (2008); Commercial and Industrial Floorspace and Rateable Value Statistics 2008

Table 5-1 indicates that, as anticipated, the majority of office floorspace was located around the four town centres. However, it also shows that the majority of warehouses were also in these areas. This is likely as a result of the presence of notable industrial sites on the fringes of town centres in the District, such as Southmead Industrial Estate in Didcot, Thame Industrial Estate, Reading Road Industrial area in Henley-on-Thames and Hithercroft Industrial Estate in Wallingford.

5.3 Methodology

The survey methodology and criteria are based on factors and issues set out in the NPPG (2014) and the NPPF (2012)[23]. Our site survey assessed the characteristics of land and premises to determine their suitability for office and industrial land uses. We assess each

[22] MSOA Codes: E02005958; E02005960; E02005966; E02005967; E02005969; E02005970; E02005971; E02005973; and E02005974.
[23] The OPDM's Employment Land Review Guidance Note (2004) guidance although superseded is used as the level of detail it offers means it is still useful and relevant as a guidance document.

site's suitability for all criteria as, over the long-term planning period, there could be potential for change of use.

We have assessed the following supply criteria:

- **Impact on Surrounding Amenity:** This determines whether the location and nature of employment uses on each site have an impact on other surrounding land uses. This can include town centres and shopping centres, typically resulting from office premises in central areas, and residential/community uses, more typically as a result of industrial and warehousing activities;
- **Strategic Road Access:** This criterion determines whether the site is directly accessible from, or is in close proximity to, the trunk road network. This is particularly relevant for industrial and warehousing uses;
- **Strategic Access to Public Transport:** Proximity to public transport is an important characteristic for office employment. We consider public transport access in terms of the suitable range of services available across different forms of transport;
- **Servicing of Businesses:** We determine whether there is designated and adequate space for the servicing of businesses at each site. The assessment looks for the presence of loading/unloading facilities either on-street or off-road, and/or loading bays. This criterion is typically associated with industrial and warehouse uses;
- **Parking Provision**: it is important that employment sites provide adequate parking spaces to accommodate the needs of businesses. This criterion is most important in areas with poor public transport accessibility, and is therefore particularly relevant to out-of-town employment sites;
- **Access to Amenities & Facilities**: Employment sites containing office uses in particular should ideally be located in close proximity or with good access to facilities and amenities that can serve the needs of employers and businesses, including shops, cafés/ food retailers and professional services. This criterion is judged in terms of both the location and the range of suitable retailers in relation to each site;
- **Quality of Environment/Public Realm**: The overall quality of each site is assessed, both in terms of the condition of the buildings and the quality of the general environment;
- **Vacant Floorspace**: Although vacancy may be a consequence of various different factors, we nevertheless include this criterion as an indicative measure of each site's suitability.

Our assessment of supply of employment land has included a review of clusters' suitability for office (B1) and industrial (B2/B8) land-uses. As user demands and site specific characteristics for the two types of employment uses differ our analysis has considered site suitability against both sets of criteria. An example of this is that B1 land users usually require better access to public transport than industrial (B2/B8) land users who require better access to A-roads.

5.4 Clusters Identified within South Oxfordshire

For the purposes of the supply assessment, 16 clusters of employment land were identified as being strategically important employment sites. In order to identify these sites, we initially reviewed the data gathered as part of the 2007 ELR, which contained 77 individual

employment sites. We also identified the appropriate employment sites that have subsequently come forward since this survey was undertaken. We then identified a series of clusters of employment sites, grouping together individual sites that share locational proximity and similar characteristics. In consultation with the Council, we agreed a subset of sites to survey. These clusters included sites outside the main strategic areas, such as rural sites of local significance, in accordance with NPPG3 guidance. These clusters comprise a total area of 358.8ha of employment land.

Table 5-2 and **Figure 5-1** show the 16 clusters that were surveyed. Clusters were assessed against site appraisal criteria set by URS (see **Appendix A**).

Table 5-2 Surveyed Clusters of Employment Land

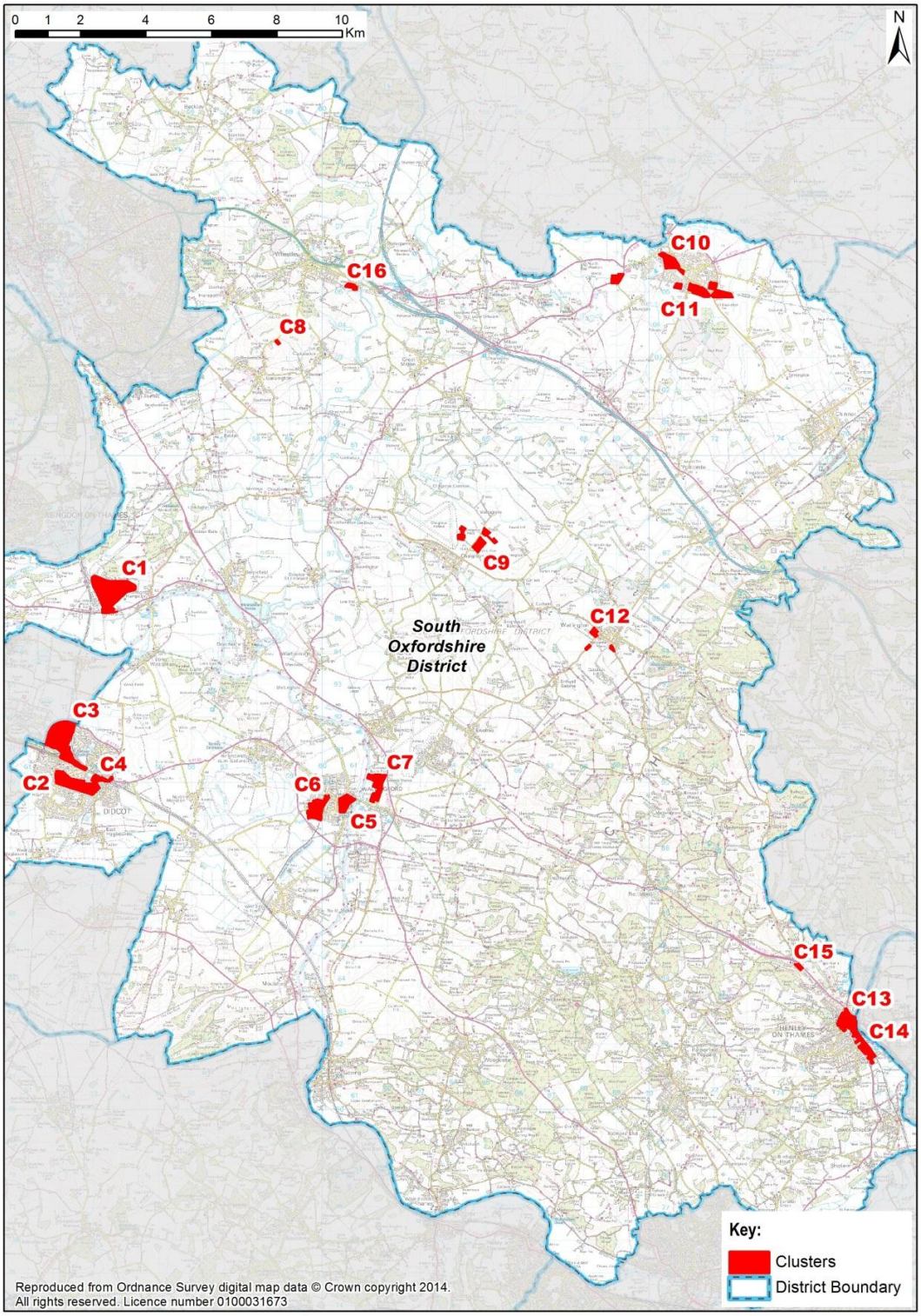
Cluster	*Name*	*Location*	*Typical B Use(s)*	*Land Area (ha)*
C1	Culham Science Centre and Culham No1 Site	Culham	B1, B2	77.3
C2	Didcot Town Centre	Didcot	B1	42.8
C3	Southmead Industrial Estate and Didcot Station Area[24]	Didcot	B2, B8	71.5
C4	Rich's Sidings	Didcot	B2, B8	6.4
C5	Wallingford Town Centre[25]	Wallingford	B1	14.9
C6	Hithercroft Industrial Estate	Wallingford	B1, B2, B8	25.3
C7	Crowmarsh Industrial Cluster – Howberry Park	Crowmarsh	B1	21.9
C8	Boundary Business Park	Garsington	B1	0.9
C9	Monument Business Park	Chalgrove	B1, B8	17.0
C10	Thame Town Centre	Thame	B1	16.8
C11	Thame Industrial Cluster	Thame	B8	38.0
C12	Watlington Industrial Cluster	Watlington	B8	5.3
C13	Henley Town Centre	Henley-on-Thames	B1	24.9
C14	Reading Road Industrial Estate	Henley-on-Thames	B1, B2	17.1
C15	Smith Centre	Henley-on-Thames	B1	2.1
C16	London Road Industrial Estate	Wheatley	B1, B2, B8	3.5
Total	-	-	-	**358.8**

Source: URS (2014)

[24] Incorporating DID9-i and DID9-ii employment allocations defined in the Core Strategy (2012).

[25] Incorporating WAL5-i, WAL5-ii, WAL5-iii, WAL5-iv and WAL5-v employment allocations defined in the Core Strategy (2012).

Figure 5-1 Surveyed Clusters of Employment Land



Source: URS (2014)

5.5 Cluster Suitability for B1a/b (Office) Land Use

This section sets out a summary of the key findings of the cluster field surveys. It is useful as it assesses whether the clusters have the key characteristics necessary for office uses and helps to identify whether any clusters are particularly unsuited for office use. The four main town centres in the District offer significant office employment, although there are several other areas that contain office floorspace.

Some of the clusters are potentially in industrial use at present. However, it is still relevant to assess all clusters suitability for office use as over the long-term planning period there could be potential for change of use.

Drawing upon our field survey and desk research, we have reviewed all employment clusters for their suitability for office uses. The most significant and relevant criteria for determining the suitability of land clusters for office use are listed below:

- Access to public and road transport: office land users usually require better access to public transport than industrial (B2/B8) land users (who require better access to the road network);
- Access to facilities and amenities: to adequately service the needs of employees; and
- Overall quality of environment as employment clusters: the nature of their activities means that the quality of the environment is usually less important to industrial occupiers (B1c/B2/B8) than office occupiers (B1a/b).

The following sections summarise the key findings of the cluster field surveys in relation to their suitability for either office or industrial/warehousing uses.

Access to Public Transport and Facilities & Amenities

Office employment benefits from better workforce mobility, which is closely linked to public transport access. Public transport access is measured through considering the range of transport modes and destinations accessible from the area, the regularity of these services and the proximity of transport nodes to the employment clusters. **Figure 5-2** outlines these criteria.

Figure 5-2 Criteria for Assessing Access to Public Transport

Criteria	*Description*
Very Good	There are a variety of destinations accessible from the site with a regular service. Access to public transport is located within the business location or accessible within a five minute walk of the cluster area.
Good	There are a reasonable number of destinations accessible from the site. Access to public transport is located within a five to ten minute walk.
Poor	There are a limited number of destinations accessible from the site. Access to public transport is located within a ten to fifteen minute walk.
Very Poor	There is a very limited range of destinations accessible from the site. Access to public transport is located more than a fifteen minute walk.

Source: URS (2014).

Clusters' access to facilities and amenities was assessed during the field survey. Developments containing office uses are ideally located in close proximity to/ with good access to facilities and amenities which can serve the needs of employees and businesses, including:

- Shops
- Restaurants
- Cafes/ food retailers; and
- Professional services.

Figure 5-3 outlines the criteria for assessing each cluster's access to facilities and amenities.

Figure 5-3 Criteria for Assessing Access to Facilities & Amenities

Criteria	***Description***
Very Good	There is a selection of food retailers and shops. These are located within the business location or accessible within a five minute walk of the cluster area.
Good	There is some selection of food retailers. These are located within a five to ten minute walk.
Poor	There is a limited selection of food retailers. These are located within a ten to fifteen minute walk.
Very Poor	None or very limited selection of food retailers. These are located more than a fifteen minute walk.

Source: URS (2014).

Table 5-3 below presents the access to public transport and facilities & amenities of each cluster.

Table 5-3 Access to Public Transport and Facilities & Amenities

Cluster	*Name*	*Settlement/Area*	*Access to Public Transport*	*Access to Facilities & Amenities*
C1	Culham Science Centre and Culham No1 Site	Culham	Poor	Good
C2	Didcot Town Centre	Didcot	Very Good	Very Good
C3	Southmead Industrial Estate and Didcot Station Area	Didcot	Good	Poor
C4	Rich's Sidings	Didcot	Good	Good
C5	Wallingford Town Centre	Wallingford	Good	Very Good
C6	Hithercroft Industrial Estate	Wallingford	Poor	Poor
C7	Crowmarsh Industrial Cluster	Crowmarsh Gifford	Good	Very Poor
C8	Boundary Business Park	Garsington	Very Poor	Very Poor
C9	Monument Business Park, Chalgrove	Rural	Very Poor	Poor
C10	Thame Town Centre	Thame	Good	Very Good
C11	Thame Industrial Cluster	Thame	Good	Poor
C12	Watlington Industrial Cluster	Watlington	Poor	Poor
C13	Henley Town Centre	Henley-on-Thames	Very Good	Very Good
C14	Reading Road Industrial Estate	Henley-on-Thames	Good	Good
C15	Smith Centre	Henley-on-Thames	Very Poor	Very Poor
C16	London Road Industrial Estate, Wheatley	Rural	Good	Poor

Source: URS (2014).

Ten of the clusters were considered to have good or very good access to public transport. These clusters tend to be located in or nearby town centres, offering a wider range of destinations. The more rural locations, however, tend to have poorer access to public transport.

Similarly, access to facilities and amenities is generally found to be best in clusters located in or around the four main town centres in the District. For clusters located in more rural locations, poor access to food retailers is common; however, it was observed that some clusters offer a small range of facilities on-site to compensate.

Overall Quality of the Environment

The overall quality of each cluster was assessed against two conditions: the condition of buildings and the quality of the public realm. **Figure 5-4** and **Figure 5-5** outline the criteria for assessing the quality of buildings and public realm respectively.

Figure 5-4 Criteria for Assessing the Quality of Buildings

Criteria	*Description*
Very Good	Buildings in very good state, no signs of paint coming off, windows and window frames in very good condition, immediate surrounding/grounds well kept.
Good	Buildings in good condition, small areas where paint might come off, etc., grounds in reasonable state.
Poor	Paint coming off, cracks and windows in poor state, plus surroundings are poorly kept.
Very Poor	Building still in use but in very poor condition; paint coming off in large areas, some windows broken, surroundings not maintained and/or littered and/or cluttered with rubbish.

Source: URS (2014).

Figure 5-5 Criteria for Assessing the Quality of the Public Realm

Criteria	*Description*
Very Good	The streets and the public realm within and surrounding the cluster are of very good quality. There is sufficient street lighting and no perceived personal safety issues. The business area is not polluted by noise or air pollution from neighbouring uses and/or heavy street traffic.
Good	The streets and public realm within and surrounding the business cluster are of good quality but it does not reach the 'very good' standard (some litter, street furniture shows signs of aging, etc.) There are no perceived safety issues.
Poor	The streets and the public realm within and surrounding the business area are of poor quality (potholes, litter, poorly maintained or damaged street furniture). There is not enough street lighting and some perceived safety issues. The business area might be polluted by noise or air
Very Poor	The streets and the public realm within and surrounding the business area are of very poor quality (potholes, litter on street, not collected rubbish, etc.) There is not enough street lighting and there are perceived safety issues. There is noise and/or air pollution from neighbouring uses and/or heavy street traffic.

Source: URS (2014).

Table 5-4 presents the quality of environment for each cluster.

Table 5-4 Quality of Environment

Cluster	*Name*	*Quality of Buildings*	*Quality of Public Realm*
C1	Culham Science Centre and Culham No1 Site	Good	Good
C2	Didcot Town Centre	Good	Good
C3	Southmead Industrial Estate and Didcot Station Area	Good	Good
C4	Rich's Sidings	Poor	Poor
C5	Wallingford Town Centre	Good	Very Good
C6	Hithercroft Industrial Estate	Good	Good
C7	Crowmarsh Industrial Cluster	Very Good	Very Good
C8	Boundary Business Park	Good	Very Good
C9	Monument Business Park	Good	Very Good
C10	Thame Town Centre	Good	Very Good
C11	Thame Industrial Cluster	Good	Good
C12	Watlington Industrial Cluster	Good	Poor
C13	Henley Town Centre	Good	Very Good
C14	Reading Road Industrial Estate	Good	Good
C15	Smith Centre	Very Good	Very Good
C16	London Road Industrial Estate	Good	Poor

Source: URS (2014).

Of all clusters included in this survey, only Rich's Sidings scores poorly or very poorly for both quality of environment criteria. The quality of public realm is deemed to be either good or very good for all but three of the clusters, with only Rich's Sidings characterised by poor quality of buildings, potentially due to lack of investment and plans to expand the nearby Orchard Centre.

It should be noted that the grading presented above is merely representative of the overall conditions; as the clusters of employment land often cover several sites, in some cases the quality of environment can vary within a given cluster. For instance, many of the buildings on the Culham No.1 Site (C1) are old aircraft hangars which do not generally cater for modern business needs, while more modern units at Culham Science Centre are more likely to cater for modern occupiers

5.6 Cluster Suitability for B2/B8 Land-Use

This section is an assessment of the clusters' suitability for B2/B8 (Industrial/Warehousing) uses. This is based on different criteria than those used to assess cluster suitability for office uses due to the differing requirements associated with B2/B8 uses.

At present, some of the clusters contain office uses. However it is still relevant to assess all clusters' suitability for industrial/warehousing use as over the long-term planning period there could be potential for change of use.

The most relevant and significant factors for the development of land for B2/B8 uses are listed below:

- Transport accessibility: the strategic access to roads and other forms of transport;
- Impacts on surrounding amenity: the presence of sensitive receptors, such as residential uses, that are adversely affected by amenity impacts related to industrial uses;
- Servicing of businesses: the existence of designated and adequate space; and
- Availability of parking: whether adequate to accommodate the needs of businesses.

Transport Accessibility

The strategic transport accessibility of employment clusters was determined both through desk-based research and site visits. Criteria used to assess this included:

- Strategic road access, and
- Ability of businesses to make use of other forms of transport e.g. rail, water.

The assessment found that six of the clusters have good access or are in close proximity to the trunk road network. Sites located to the north east of the District benefit from access to the M40, while locations to the west, in particular those at Didcot, benefit from proximity to the A34, providing access to the M4. Despite good access to the road network in some areas, the majority of clusters did not allow business to make use of alternative forms of transport. Access to waterways and wharves was either deemed to be indirect or inaccessible all but one of the clusters, with only Henley Town Centre (C13) providing direct access. This cluster is characterised by some office uses in a retail and residential area, and thus is not an appropriate location to utilise this transport means. Similarly, none of the clusters have direct access to the railhead. However, for clusters C3 and C4 in Didcot, and C14 in Henley-on-Thames, the railhead runs parallel to parts of each cluster. This layout could potentially be reconfigured to allow these clusters to gain direct access to railheads.

Table 5-5 lists the transport accessibility for each cluster included within this assessment.

Table 5-5 Cluster by Transport Accessibility

Cluster	*Name*	*Strategic Road Access*	*Access to Waterways and Wharfs*	*Access to Railhead*
C1	Culham Science Centre and Culham No1 Site	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
C2	Didcot Town Centre	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
C3	Southmead Industrial Estate and Didcot Station Area	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
C4	Rich's Sidings	Direct	Indirect	Indirect
C5	Wallingford Town Centre	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
C6	Hithercroft Industrial Estate	Direct	Indirect	Indirect
C7	Crowmarsh Industrial Cluster	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
C8	Boundary Business Park	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
C9	Monument Business Park	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
C10	Thame Town Centre	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
C11	Thame Industrial Cluster	Direct	Indirect	Indirect
C12	Watlington Industrial Cluster	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
C13	Henley Town Centre	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
C14	Reading Road Industrial Estate	Indirect	Indirect	Indirect
C15	Smith Centre	Direct	Indirect	Indirect
C16	London Road Industrial Estate	Direct	Indirect	Indirect

Source: URS (2014)

Impact on Surrounding Amenity

A cluster was perceived as having a negative impact on the neighbourhood if its use was assessed as generating/ associated with at least two of the following list of; noise pollution, air pollution, smell, HGV traffic and significant car traffic. These impacts are characteristic of the industrial activities that take place within industrial sites and are not necessarily detrimental to their functioning as employment sites. However, such negative impacts can be an issue for areas adjacent to residential space.

In total, only Rich's Sidings cluster in Didcot was identified as having multiple forms of bad neighbourhood use; in this case, HGV traffic, significant car traffic and noise pollution. A

further five clusters[26] were determined to suffer from significant car traffic, although it is important to note that four of these five clusters are town centre locations. In addition, a further five clusters[27] were observed to suffer from significant HGV traffic. These clusters are all industrial in nature, and hence the presence of significant HGV traffic may be as a by-product of the successful use of these sites for industrial purposes.

Servicing of Businesses

For clusters where B2/B8 land-use predominates, it is important that there is designated and adequate space for the servicing of businesses. The assessment looks for the presence of loading/ unloading facilities either on-street or off-road, and/or loading bays. The suitability of existing servicing arrangements within each cluster was assessed during the field survey.

The field survey identified that loading bays were present within six of the clusters[28], suggesting that these clusters currently have adequate servicing for the existing B2/B8 business' needs. Nine of the remaining ten clusters had some form of off road loading/unloading facilities, although the road side loading/unloading at the remaining cluster, the Smith Centre, is deemed suitable for its office uses. Only Rich's Sidings and Reading Road Industrial Estate in Henley-on-Thames are deemed to have inadequate facilities for the servicing of businesses.

Availability of Parking

B2/B8 uses are more commonly found in out of town areas with poor public transport accessibility; it is therefore important that there is adequate parking space to accommodate the needs of businesses as there is increased likelihood that employees will travel to work by car. Public transport accessibility is poor or very poor in a considerable proportion of the clusters surveyed.

The availability and type of parking within each cluster was assessed during the field survey. The field-survey found that, in all but four of the clusters, current parking is at least adequate, with the vast majority of clusters having dedicated parking on site. Only in the Rich's Sidings, Hithercroft Industrial Estate and Smith Centre clusters was there found to be an insufficient level of parking for the needs of businesses currently located on this cluster.

5.7 Developable Sites

The field survey team identified vacant and developable sites within the clusters, including those with empty buildings in either good or poor condition. Seven of the clusters contain some land that was deemed developable. **Table 5-6** lists the development sites within the clusters that were surveyed that have the potential to be developed for employment uses.

[26] Didcot Town Centre (C2); Wallingford Town Centre (C5); Thame Town Centre (C10); Henley Town Centre (C13); and Reading Road Industrial Estate (C14).
[27] Southmead Industrial Estate and Didcot Station Area (C3); Hithercroft Industrial Estate (C6); Thame Industrial Cluster (C11); Watlington Industrial Cluster (C12); and London Road Industrial Estate (C16).
[28] Southmead Industrial Estate and Didcot Station Area (C3); Rich's Sidings (C4); Hithercroft Industrial Estate (C6); Boundary Business Park (C8); Monument Business Park (C9); and Thame Industrial Cluster (C11).

Table 5-6 Clusters that include Undeveloped/Developable Sites

ID	*Name*	*Settlement/ Area*	*Existing Policy Designation*	*Suitability for Employment Uses*	*Undeveloped Area (ha)*
C1	Culham Science Centre	Culham	CSEM3	Office and Industrial	9.4
C3	Southmead Industrial Estate	Didcot	DID9	Industrial	2.9
C3	Didcot Station Area	Didcot	CSDID1	Office	2.6[29]
C6	Hithercroft Industrial Estate	Wallingford	WAL5	Industrial	1.9[30]
C7	Crowmarsh Industrial Cluster	Crowmarsh Gifford	-	Industrial	2.5[31]
C9	Monument Business Park	Rural	-	Office and Industrial	4.5[32]
C11	Thame Industrial Cluster	Thame	-	Industrial	1.6[33]
C16	London Road Industrial Estate	Rural		Industrial	0.4[34]
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**25.8**

Source: URS (2014)

The site survey indicates that the 8 employment clusters contain significant potential development sites. If developed these could help to increase employment land capacity by approximately 25.8ha. Four of these clusters are designated for employment use under the Core Strategy (see **Section 3.4**), containing 16.8ha of undeveloped/developable land. Based on the site suitability criteria assesed (as described above) all of these clusters were considered appropriate for employment uses. The particular uses that are most appropriate are provided in **Table 5-6**.

5.8 Conclusions

We carried out a qualitative field survey of strategically important employment sites in South Oxfordshire, combined with desktop research. This assessment was carried out against pre-determined site appraisal criteria. Due to the different site characteristics required by office and industrial users, our analysis has assessed the suitability of clusters according to the requirements of each use class.

Owing largely to the rural location of many of the significant employment sites, public transport accessibility is either poor or very poor in the majority of clusters surveyed. The field survey also identified that access to facilities and amenities could be significantly better in some of

[29] Significant additional land could be available if alternative car parking arrangements are pursued.
[30] Land at Lupton Road (1.2ha); Land at Whitley Road (0.4ha); Land at the junction of Whitley Road and Lester Road (0.3ha).
[31] Two undeveloped plots of 1.9 ha and 0.6ha at Howbery Park.
[32] Vacant land towards the north of the site.
[33] Land to the south-east of Howland Road Business Park. It is noted that the Thame Neighbourhood Plan allocates an additional 3ha of land for employment uses in addition to that located within C11.
[34] Land to the south-east of the site.

these rural locations, although the presence of food retailers on-site improves the suitability of many sites for office use.

The field survey and desk assessment established that many of the sites have characteristics which make them suitable for B2/B8 employment use. All but two of the clusters have adequate facilities to service the businesses located at the site, with all but four having adequate parking facilities. Six clusters were observed to suffer from significant car traffic, although it is likely that the town centre location of five of these sites is a contributing factor, rather than the negative impacts of their employment uses alone. A further six clusters further suffered from significant HGV traffic, although many are generated through the functioning of the sites to their employment uses, and as such may be deemed suitable for B2/B8 use. Only one cluster, Rich's Sidings, suffered from both forms of bad neighbourhood uses, in addition to noise pollution. The surveyed clusters have the capacity to expand employment land by 27.1ha at development sites that are appropriate in terms of the criteria assessed for a mixture of office and industrial employment uses.

6 EMPLOYMENT PROPERTY MARKET ASSESSMENT

6.1 Introduction

This section examines South Oxfordshire's office and industrial land market within the context of the wider property market area (PMA). This corresponds to the NPPG which states that needs should be assessed in relation to the relevant functional economic market area (FEMA)[35]. The findings are based on the key conclusions of a consultation exercise with local property market agents and key stakeholders and assessment of market research reports. Perceptions of those working within the office and industrial land market were sought to establish their impressions of the strengths and weaknesses of the commercial property available in South Oxfordshire to potential occupiers[36].

The list of questions they were asked is given at **Appendix C**. This section provides the qualitative market intelligence dimension which is harder to draw out in the long-term 'top down' projections of demand in **Section 7**. It also helps to ensure that the planning policy recommendations of **Section 9** are grounded in market reality. This represents a 'bottom up' perspective on future demand.

6.2 Property Market Areas & Demand Drivers

Although the primary focus of this study is South Oxfordshire, the market area for commercial property is generally not limited by local authority boundaries. Factors relevant to business operations are often more of an influence, such as proximity to labour supply, transport links, site availability and consumer markets. A property market area (PMA) could typically be an area of search for a potential office or industrial occupier. The PMA in this study is the same as the FEMA as defined in the NPPG. This captures cross boundary demand and supply issues.

The demand forecasts in **Section 7** evaluate demand trends of commercial space in South Oxfordshire in the context of the wider PMA; therefore it is important to gain an understanding from commercial property agents of what they consider to be the relevant PMA for industrial and office space in South Oxfordshire.

The research and consultation found that in general South Oxfordshire is mainly a rural district with its four main towns and employment centres; Didcot, Thame, Henley-on-Thames and Wallingford fulfilling many localised employment functions. Over half of the District is protected from development as Green belt or AONB. However, South Oxfordshire is also located within the UK's most buoyant regional economic region – the South East of England – and within one of the fastest growing sub-regional areas within that region – the Oxfordshire and the M4/M3/Thames Valley corridor. This means that it is affected by national and international economic factors. In the national context it means that as a sub-area it has significant positive demand for employment space.

[35] NPPG, paragraph 009 Reference ID: 2a-009-20140306

[36] URS contacted the commercial property agents, developers and property management companies that are most active in South Oxfordshire and asked them to contribute to this study via an informal set of questions.

Commuting patterns and economic linkages to surrounding areas are discussed in detail in Section 4.6. This analysis shows that most people in South Oxfordshire live and work in the District but that a significant number work in VOWH and Oxford. There are relatively weaker linkages to the Reading and Thames Valley employment market to the south. This demonstrates that South Oxfordshire is closely linked to the Oxford City and Vale of White Horse employment markets. This can also be equated to the Science Vale area as explained further in **Section 3** and below.

According to the research and consultation there are three main commercial sub-regional PMAs operating within or close to South Oxfordshire. These are as follows:

- Science Vale - Abingdon/Didcot (South Oxfordshire), containing science/research based institutions and related high tech engineering firms
- Core Thames Valley (Reading). Contains a diverse range of businesses, predominantly in the high technology and science related industries reflecting the importance for B1, B2 and B8 land-uses.
- Oxford City and North Oxfordshire, an area that is closely associated with, and is driven by a sizable office market forms part of the Oxford and Bicester/Banbury sub-regional property market;

The Oxfordshire LEP produced an Economic Plan in 2014, as described in **Section 3**. The main spatial element of the LEP Economic Plan is to promote what they term the 'Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine'. This runs from Bicester and Banbury in the north of Oxfordshire to the Science Vale in the South. Oxford City is the hub. This is shown in **Figure 6-1** below.

Figure 6-1 Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine

Source: LEP Economic Plan (2014)

The evidence suggests that in the future South Oxfordshire could become part of a wider Oxfordshire PMA (The Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine). However, currently it is more integrated with the Science Vale element in the south of the county. Therefore the PMA for office, industry and warehousing in South Oxfordshire is considered by the consultants and property market agents to comprise the following local authority areas:

- South Oxfordshire; and
- Vale of White Horse (VOWH).

This geography has been determined via assessment of accessibility, the primary labour market catchments and locations of comparable premises, and confirmed through our discussions with property market agents active in the South Oxfordshire area. The PMA reflects business occupancy alone and does not consider, nor need to align with markets for other land uses, such as housing. The PMA means that in general commercial occupiers currently looking to locate in the area will have an area of search that covers approximately South Oxfordshire and VOWH.

6.3 Supply and Demand of Employment Land in South Oxfordshire

6.3.1 *Offices (B1a-b) Supply*

According to market agents and the findings of research, South Oxfordshire has a relatively modest office market. Total office floorspace is approximately 215,000m^2 in 2012 (the latest published date). Oxford City is the main sub regional office location with around 370,000m^2. VOWH has a similar but slightly larger office supply at around 250,000m^2. Around 90% of total floorspace in South Oxfordshire is in traditional office (B1a) use[37].

The majority of offices in South Oxfordshire are smaller offices fulfilling a localised demand. This includes for example, solicitors firms, recruitment firms, local financial advisors and brokers, professional services, public and voluntary sector and education linked companies. Approximately 60% of offices are less than 100m^2 (1,080sq.ft). Henley-on-Thames is the main office location followed by Thame and Wallingford. Didcot has a very small office market. Unlike other areas of Oxfordshire, especially on the outskirts and to the north of Oxford City, there are limited out of town business parks. This is partly due to the location of the office supply within historically conserved towns such as Henley-on-Thames. It means that most of South Oxfordshire's office stock is in town centres, either above shops or in small purpose built town centre office buildings.

The key exceptions to this typology are the offices located within Culham and Crowmarsh Gifford. However, the offices at Culham would largely be classified as ancillary office or B1b/c and so in terms of this study are associated with the industrial market. Also it should be noted that VOA data is not collected for Culham and the Draft Culham Masterplan SPD does not quantify the floorspace. Therefore the estimate of total employment floorspace in South Oxfordshire provided is likely to be an under-estimate.

In the future there are plans to develop part of the Culham site for mixed employment uses with some 'out of town' business park style office accommodation to meet the needs of high tech/research and Development companies that require 'move-on' space within Science Vale. This is dealt with further at 6.5 below.

Agents and research suggest that the office vacancy/availability rate is between 10% and 12% in the Science Vale sub-region and slightly lower in South Oxfordshire due to its more localised nature at around 8-10%. Approximate vacancy rates at the various towns were estimated to be as follows:

- Didcot - 12%;

[37] Baseline information taken from VOA 2013 and 2007 ELR and verified and updated through consultation with agents (Nov – Dec 2014) and through observations made during the field survey (Oct 2014).

- Wallingford - 10%;
- Thame - 12%; and
- Henley-on-Thames - 8%.

Average office rental values across the PMA are estimated by agents to be as follows:

- Prime Office - £20.00 to £23.00 per sq.ft (approx. £215 to £250 per m^2);
- Secondary good quality - £16.00 to £19.00 per sq.ft (approx. £172 to £205 per m^2); and
- Secondary poorer quality - £11.00 to £14.00 per sq.ft (approx. £118 to £150 per m^2).

In a national context the rental values for office are high which is indicative of a healthy market[38]. However, it is noted that rental values tend to be lower in South Oxfordshire than VOWH, driven in part by high rents at Milton Park.

6.3.2 *Offices (B1a-b) Demand*

In terms of short term demand for office space, the recovery from the recent economic downturn has been uneven. There has been a very slow start to the year in terms of office space take-up with the lowest ever level of office enquiries recorded in Q1 of 2014 across the PMA. Q2 of 2014 in contrast saw the highest ever level of enquiries. Q3 2014 has seen slightly higher enquiry levels than Q3 2013 and consequently, total enquiries for the year-to-date period are now broadly in line with 2013[39]. Most lettings have been in the smaller office category which reflects the fact that smaller companies are more flexible in responding to upturns in the wider economy than larger companies. **Table 6-1** below shows some of the largest office transactions in the wider Thames valley market in Q3 2014. It shows that confidence is returning to the office market.

[38] Outside of London average prime office rents range from £95 per m^2 in Stoke to £305 per m^2 in Glasgow. Source: VOA (2011) http://www.voa.gov.uk/dvs/_downloads/pmr_2011.pdf

[39] Bidwells Business Space Databook, Autumn 2014. (http://www.bidwells.co.uk/eresearch/business-space-agency-autumn-2014/#/0 - accessed Dec 2014)

Table 6-1 Thames Valley Major Office Transactions Q3 2014

Property	*Size (sq ft)*	*Rent (per sq ft)*	*Lease information*
Flow One, Staines	42,756	£33.00	10 year lease, confidential terms
93 Milton Park, South Oxfordshire	42,506	-	Confidential
Bridge House, Guildford	40,600	£27.00	10 year reversionary lease commencing March 2015 with 19 months rent free
Geneva House, Farnborough	28,340	£17.50	5 year lease
Flow Two, Staines	20,970	£33.00	10 year lease with confidential terms
Imperium, Reading	19,950	£20.00	2 year lease with a 12 month break option
90 Milton Park, Science Vale	16,733	-	Confidential
1 Waterside Drive, Slough	16,386	£100.00	Sold to owner occupier
Spires House, Oxford	14,130	£19.50	10 year lease with 5 year tenant break and 18 months rent free
Minton Place, Windsor	13,358	£25.50	10 year lease with 18 months rent free

Source: LSH Thames Valley Market Pulse (Q3 2014) [40]

In the medium term agents feel that demand for office should return to normal levels i.e. steady growth. Take-up tends to lag behind enquiry levels with a typical three to six month delay. There is currently evidence that the enquiries made at the beginning of 2014 are starting to manifest themselves in much improved take-up.

In the long term agents feel that there is likely to be strong demand for office accommodation in the PMA as a whole. This is mainly related to the success of Science Vale and the multiplier effect of companies linked to the science and technology based supply chain. There is likely to be an increase in demand related to spill over from Oxford City due to the lack of available space and affordability there. Also, the significant planned growth at Bicester related to the Garden City urban extension is likely to generate increased demand throughout the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine. This should have a positive effect on future demand for offices in South Oxfordshire.

[40] http://www.lsh.co.uk/office-pulses/q3-2014/office-market-pulse-thames-valley-q3-2014

6.3.3 *Effect of Change to Permitted Development Rights on Employment Land*

Most property agents feel that the change to the permitted development (PD) rights order allowing conversion of offices to residential uses is a positive step and will have a limited negative effect on employment land supply. This is because in practice it has tended to take out office stock that is not fit for modern business purposes, which is also generally long term vacant stock.

Although it is well known that there is very high demand across the South East of England for residential uses and that developers can make relatively quick profits, commercial office rents are generally higher relative to floorspace than residential. Therefore, in general there has not been a rush to convert all offices to residential. Those units that have been converted generally do not make a positive contribution to the office stock. This is partly due to the high conversion costs. The investment required to bring outdated office stock back to the standards expected by the market (for either residential or office) are generally quite similar. This means the office site owners will often make the decision to convert out of date offices to residential as it has a quicker payback period. The need for prior approval for conversion of offices to residential uses where there might be negative impacts on surrounding areas represents a form of development management. This avoids the potential of harm especially in rural and less densely populated areas such as South Oxfordshire.

Although it is known that two office sites in Thame have been lost to residential uses, overall it was not felt that the change to the PD rights order will negatively impact the supply of office stock in South Oxfordshire. This is conditional on ensuring that lost floorspace is replaced with better stock in more suitable locations where appropriate. Although there is a lack of clarity of the full impacts it is felt that a potential expansion of the PD rights order to allow conversion of light industrial and warehouses to residential uses is likely to cause more problems for the supply of employment land.

6.3.4 *Industrial (B1c, B2, B8) Supply*

The industrial market is relatively more significant in South Oxfordshire than the office market. This reflects the historic associations with the scientific/research centres of Harwell, Milton Park and Culham – an area that collectively now branded as Science Vale. Key sectors in South Oxfordshire and the wider PMA are as follows:

- Life science - bioscience/medical technology/pharmaceuticals
- Physics related specialisms including cryogenics, robotics, instruments and magnets
- Engineering and electronics, including some motorsports
- Telecoms and computer hardware and software
- Environmental Sciences – especially in Wallingford/Crowmarsh Gifford

The key locations for industrial space are Didcot and Thame with some industrial space in Henley-on-Thames. Wallingford is not as significant a location for industrial space. Didcot is the main area of B8 warehousing and distribution space.

In terms of quantities there is approximately 540,000m^2 of industrial floorspace in the District in 2012. This contrasts with around 800,000m^2 in VOWH. Approximately a third or around

180,000m^2 of this is industrial type employment space (130,000m^2 B1c light industry and 50,000m^2 B2 heavy industry). The remaining two thirds or around 360,000m^2 is warehousing and distribution space (B8)[41].

In terms of the quality of industrial supply agents felt the following

- Approximately 85% is second hand good quality stock;
- Approximately 10% is second hand stock of poorer quality; and
- Approximately 5% is Grade A industrial space.

Average industrial rental values across the PMA are estimated by agents to be as follows[42]:

- Prime Industrial - £7.50 to £8.50 per sq.ft (approx. £80.00 to £91.00 per m^2);
- Secondary good quality - £6.00 to £7.00 per sq.ft (approx. £64.00 to £75.00 per m^2); and
- Secondary poorer quality - £2.50 to £4.75 per sq.ft (approx. £27.00 to £51.00 per m^2).

In a national context the rental values for industrial units are high which is indicative of a healthy market[43]. However, this is driven in part by the high rental values across the PMA, in areas such as Milton Park. Values in South Oxfordshire tend to be at the lower end of these ranges.

Agents and research suggest that the industrial vacancy/availability rate is between 5% and 10% in the Science Vale sub-region and slightly lower in South Oxfordshire due to its more localised nature at around 5-8%. Approximate vacancy rates at the various towns were estimated to be as follows:

- Didcot - 8%;
- Wallingford - 6%;
- Thame - 6%; and
- Henley-on-Thames - 7%.

6.3.5 *Industrial (B1c, B2, B8) Demand*

In the short term agents feel that demand is likely to show steady increases. In the first half of 2014 approximately 150,000.sq.ft (14,000m^2) of industrial space was taken up across Oxfordshire. This includes the two largest buildings at the former Ministry of Defence (MOD) site at Culham No.1.

[41] Baseline information taken from VOA 2013 and 2007 ELR and verified and updated through consultation with agents (Nov – Dec 2014) and through observations made during the field survey (Oct 2014).

[42] Source: Bidwells - http://www.bidwells.co.uk/eresearch/business-space-agency-autumn-2014/#/22

[43] Outside of London average prime industrial rents range from £50 per m2 in Stoke to £105 in Reading. Source: VOA (2011) http://www.voa.gov.uk/dvs/_downloads/pmr_2011.pdf

In the medium and long term agents feel that there is likely to be increasingly strong demand for industrial space in the PMA. Increasing industrial demand in Science Vale goes against the national trend of de-industrialisation and falling demand for industrial space. This is because Science Vale is an internationally significant industrial and R&D area. It is home to some of the world's most cutting edge research institutions such as Culham with the JET nuclear fusion experiment. This critical mass means that it is in a good position to grow its industrial base. This will create a multiplier effect for local companies linked to the science and technology based supply chain. Agents are confident that the Science Vale PMA will continue to be one of the leading locations for industrial inquiries from international, national and local supply chain firms linked to the high tech science related manufacturing and R&D sectors. The growth in Oxford and Bicester to the north should also have a positive 'knock-on effect' in terms of demand for industrial space in South Oxfordshire as the whole Oxfordshire area benefits from the economies of agglomeration it creates.

6.4 Potential Growth Sectors

6.4.1 *Science Vale/Culham*

As mentioned above Science Vale, which includes the main sites of Culham in South Oxfordshire and Milton Park and Harwell in VOWH[44], is one the UK's most vibrant industrial areas. The historical legacy of various state backed science research and development institutions being based south of Oxford has led to a concentration of science and technology activity and enterprise in the area. As the UK tries to develop a niche as one of the world's leading economic powers in science led industry and the 'knowledge economy', SV will be increasingly important. The Oxfordshire LEP recognises the opportunity that SV offers to boost the wider economy of the region.

Figure 6-2 below shows some of the development opportunities and interventions proposed at Science Vale. In relation to South Oxfordshire the main projects include expansion of employment at a new Business Park/Innovation Centre at Culham, improvements to Culham station, road improvements between Harwell, Milton Park and Didcot, and development of employment at the NPower site in Didcot as a major new logistics hub (although this is just over the border in VOWH).

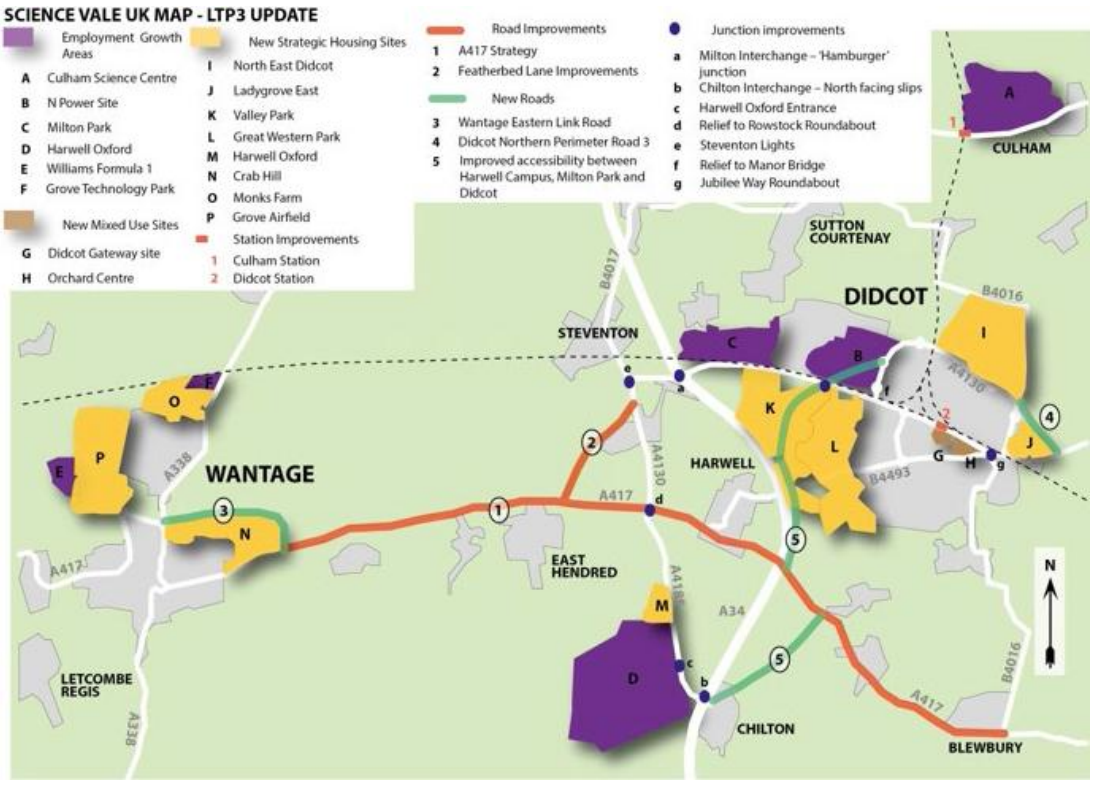
A key consideration agents were asked about was whether the proposals for employment growth at Culham, which includes 1,000 new jobs as outlined in the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy[45] and Draft Culham Masterplan[46] is realistic. Culham currently employs around 2,000 people with two thirds of these public sector and a third private sector. In the future the aim is to reverse this ratio and boost overall employment by 50%. Although there is demand generally for employment uses (both industrial and office) across the Science Vale, the Culham site has some key constraints.

These constraints include the fact the site is in the Greenbelt. There are also significant issues of congestion in Culham village due to its rural and relatively inaccessible location and the single carriage road bridge outside the village. Improvements to the station and rail link will be an important intervention to encourage greater rail travel. However, the site is very large and it

[44] Among numerous other smaller sites
[45] South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (2012), Table 4.1
[46] South Oxfordshire Draft Culham Masterplan (2014)

is likely that many workers will continue to prefer to use their cars to get to work. It is unclear whether a relief road around the village will be developed to minimise the rush hour congestion. Overall, agents feel that the proposed innovation centre at Culham could be a success in the period to 2031 given the high background demand for employment space at SV, especially that close to the main campuses such as Culham. However, the success is to a large extent contingent on the interventions to reduce traffic and planning issues being implemented successfully.

Figure 6-2 Science Vale Opportunities



Source: LEP Economic Plan (2014)

6.4.2 *Sustainable Energy/Green Technologies Sector*

There are proposals within the Cherwell Local Plan for significant growth at Bicester. The Government, in the Autumn Statement 2014, announced it would provide financial support for a Garden City urban extension at Bicester. This would include around 13,000 new homes and significant new employment including especially in the green technologies sector. It is hoped that because the development will be a zero carbon development Bicester will become a centre for green technologies and sustainable energy. Due to the proximity of South Oxfordshire to Bicester and the existing high tech/energy sector industrial base of Science Vale there is the possibility of synergies and spillover jobs from this significant growth at Bicester. Evidence gathered through the site survey supports the presence of this cluster, with Monument Park (C9) observed to house a number of small businesses within this sector.

The 2014 Cambridge Econometrics Economic Forecasting for Oxfordshire report estimates that approximately 100 above trend jobs could fall in the environmental technologies sector in South Oxfordshire. Agents felt that this was a realistic figure. Because of the relatively small

size of the green technologies sector nationally it is difficult to state whether South Oxfordshire could share in the assumed expansion of the sector in Cherwell. However, it is reasonable to assume that it should experience some growth in the planning period.

6.5 Summary

This section has explored key issues around supply and demand for office and industrial space in South Oxfordshire. It was based on the findings of a consultation exercise with local commercial agents and research gained from local commercial property reports. It has established that South Oxfordshire employment land is closely linked to the Science Vale PMA which covers VOWH and South Oxfordshire. In general South Oxfordshire is a healthy employment market with demand steady and growing. This is demonstrated by evidence of healthy rental values, although partly driven by higher values in the VOWH, and steady uptake of commercial property in the District.

Two main dynamics were identified. Firstly, there is a local office and industrial market that largely meets the needs of the local population. For example, local offices such as solicitors, consultants, accountants and other professional firms. Also, local industrial units supplying storage, distribution and maintenance needs to the local market and wider Science Vale supply chain. The scale of this localised employment is partly limited by the size of the settlements and factors such as the Oxford City greenbelt and the large areas of AONB. The needs of SMEs are particularly important in this regard as these types of firm require good quality but also affordable and flexible work space.

A second dynamic is the fact that the area is linked in to the higher value national or international high tech manufacturing/science sector particularly at sites such as Culham, Monument Park in Chalgrove and those close to the SV. Also, in the future there is likely to be an element of demand for firms in the green technologies sector linked to the growth of the sector in Bicester. Although in principle there is potentially high demand for this higher value space in South Oxfordshire the key issue is the lack of appropriate space given the issues mentioned above of greenbelt and AONB. Nonetheless, South Oxfordshire has an opportunity to capture some of this latent demand in those sites that are sustainable, to help boost the local economy through providing high value local employment.

7 PROJECTED DEMAND FOR INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE SPACE

7.1 Introduction

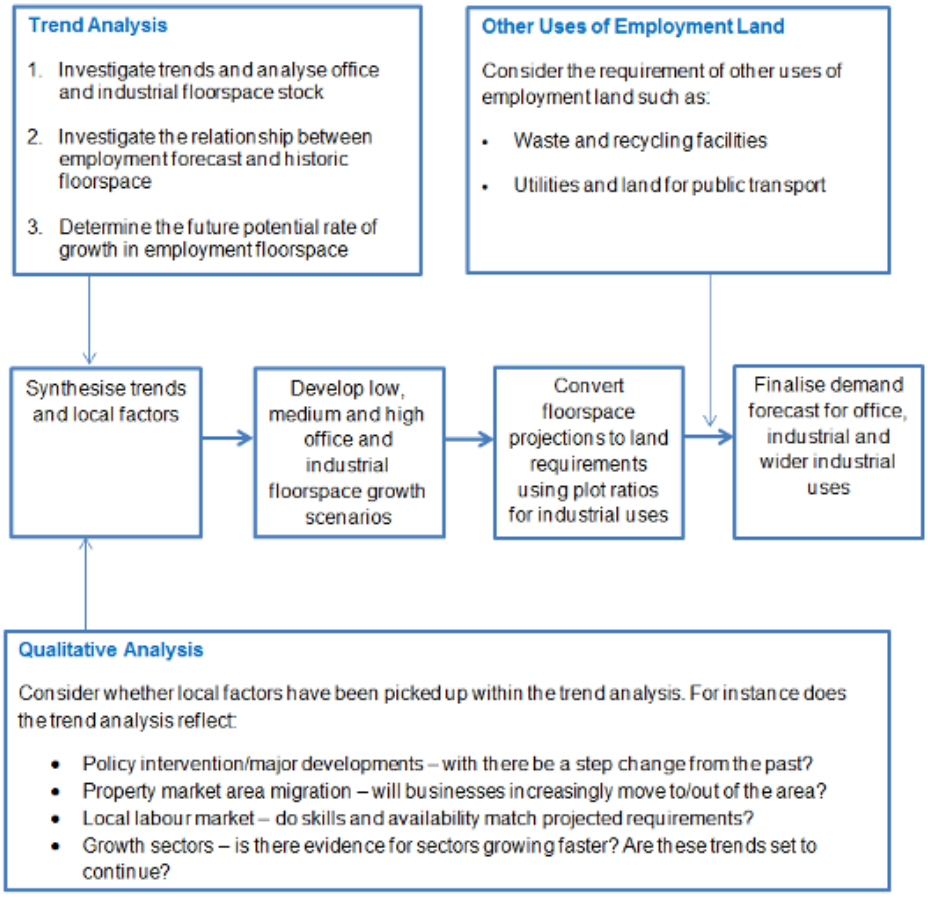
This section forecasts the future demand for industrial and office space in the South Oxfordshire area between 2014 and 2031.

7.2 Methodology

Our approach to estimating demand for industrial land and office space is compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), and ODPM Employment Land Reviews: Guidance Note (2004) which although cancelled by the NPPG still provides a detailed guidance on ELR best practice.

Our approach synthesises published employment projections with historic floorspace trends and local economic drivers of the property market area (PMA) in which South Oxfordshire industrial and office markets operate, to provide a district wide projection of employment floorspace. For industrial uses projected floorspace is converted to land demand using plot ratios. We do not convert the floorspace requirement for office space into land as plot ratios for office vary significantly, in particular storey heights, meaning that the conversion to land can be unreliable. Our methodology is set out below:

Figure 7-1 Industrial and Office Land Demand Forecasting Methodology



7.3 Property Market Areas

Industrial and office property markets rarely correspond to local government administrative boundaries. Businesses searching for sites or premises will typically consider a number of similar locations. We use the concept of a 'property market area' (PMA). A PMA will tend to be the main area of search for its relevant activities.

As discussed in **Section 6**, we define the PMA for office and industrial uses as incorporating the following local authorities:

- South Oxfordshire; and
- Vale of White Horse.

Data on historic business floorspace, historic employment and forecast employment is analysed across each of the PMA districts. The trends across the PMA for each of these factors then feeds into the overall employment land demand forecast.

7.4 Historical Trends

Before presenting our forecasts of demand we present the context of historic trends and activity. One aspect to bear in mind in looking at these trends is whether decline, in particular in more local areas, is due to falling demand and/or a process of industrial uses in particular being pushed out by other higher value uses. If the latter process is taking place then this also raises a question on whether historical trends should be used to project the demand for future employment spaces.

Historical Employment Trends

Historic employment data is drawn from the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) between 2000 and 2008 and the Business Register and Employment Survey between 2008 and 2013. Both datasets are compiled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). They are both expressed at a Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) level, not by use class[47]. Due to a discontinuity in the estimates between 2006 and previous years[48], we will use employment figures from 2006 onwards. By this approach we estimate employment by use class as set out in **Table 7-1** and **Figure 7-2** calculating a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) over the period.

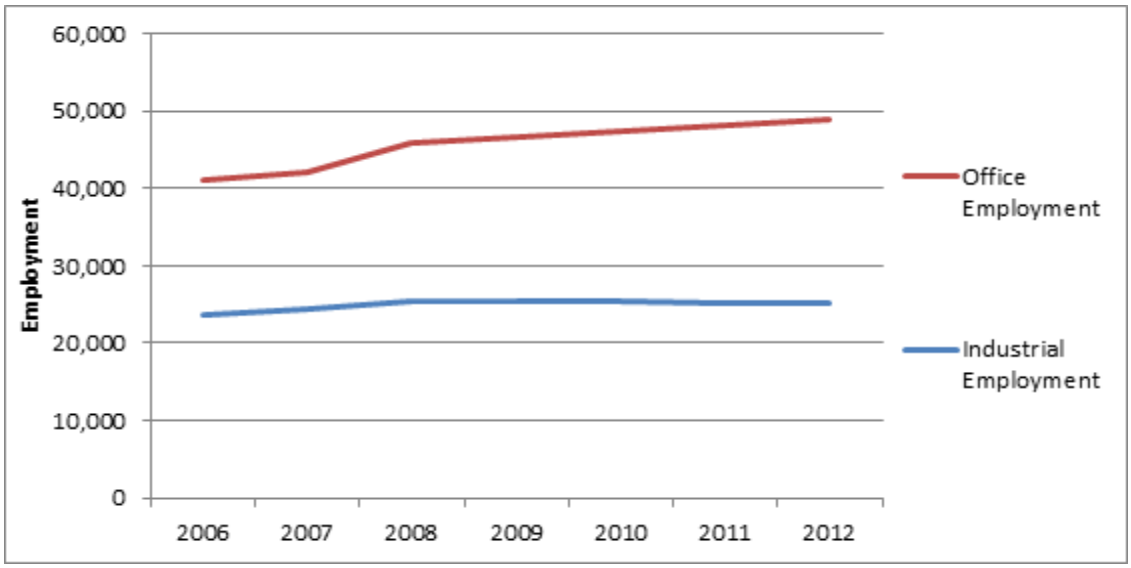
Table 7-1 Historical Employment 2006 to 2012

Area	*Business Type*	*2006*	*2012*	*Diff %*	*CAGR %*
South Oxfordshire	*Office*	15,679	17,605	+12.3	+1.9
	Industrial	9,187	9,258	+0.8	+0.1
PMA	*Office*	40,970	48,999	+19.6	+3.0
	Industrial	23,549	25,204	+7.0	+1.1

Source: URS; ONS 2013. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

[47] We estimate employment by use class (office and industrial uses, as per our ELR definition) in line with the sectors outlined in Appendix A.
[48] Further information on this discontinuity can be found at: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/articles/news/files/ABI2006discontinuities.doc

Figure 7-2 PMA Historical Employment 2006 to 2012



Source: URS; ONS 2013

Although this is only an approximate measure of employment by premises type, **Table 7-1** indicates that historical employment in B Use sectors has been relatively weak in South Oxfordshire over this period. It shows that industrial employment within South Oxfordshire has increased by an average of 0.1% per annum since 2006: a lower rate of growth than the PMA average of 1.1% per annum. For office employment, South Oxfordshire has seen a positive rate of growth, at 1.9% per annum. This is again below the PMA average of 3.0%.

Historical Floorspace Trends

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) records the amount of floorspace in an area for tax purposes (the assessment of business rates) by building type. The VOA released experimental commercial floorspace data in May 2012, covering the period 2000 to 2012[49]. To ensure consistency with the historic employment figures, the historic employment floorspace trend across South Oxfordshire and the PMA from 2006 to 2012 is shown in **Table 7-2** and **Figure 7-4**. Note that VOA floorspace figures are not provided for Culham so the total figures are an underestimate. Assumptions are made in the final gap analysis (**Section 8**) in relation to supply in Culham.

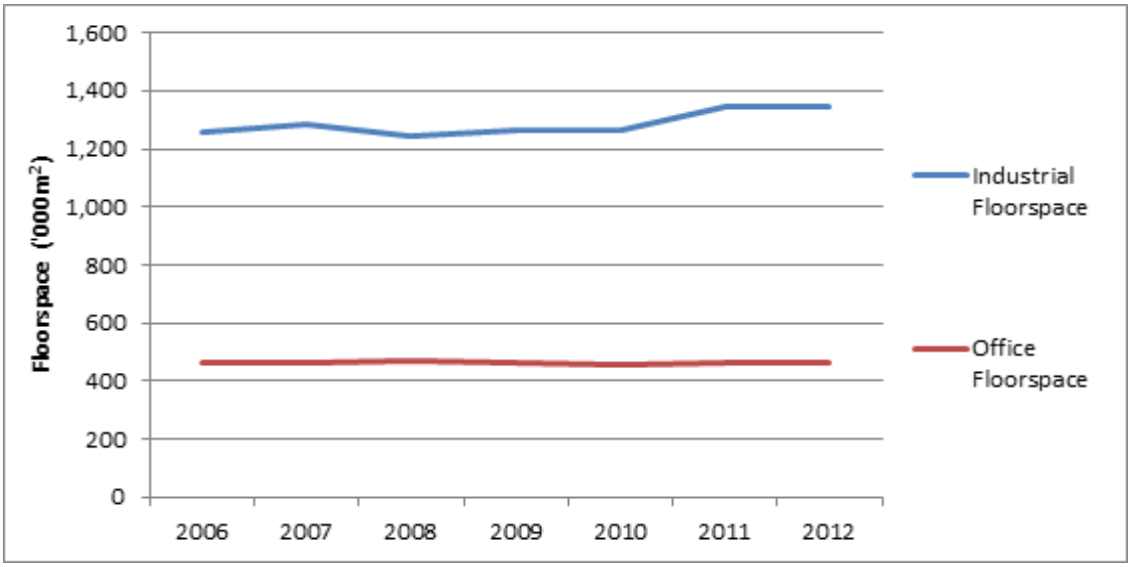
49 Although the VOA states that they are currently evaluating this data set, it is considered a robust enough dataset to analyse trends in employment floorspace across the PMA for the purposes of this ELR. It is available at: http://www.voa.gov.uk/corporate/statisticalReleases/120517_CRLFloorspace.html

Table 7-2 Change in Industrial and Office Floorspace 2006 to 2012

Area	Business Type	2006 '000 m^2	2012 '000 m^2	Diff %	CAGR %
South Oxfordshire	*Office*	210	212	+1.0	+0.2
	Industrial	558	540	-3.2	-0.5
PMA	*Office*	459	464	+1.1	+0.2
	Industrial	1,260	1,347	+6.9	+1.1

Source: URS; VOA 2012 (Figures may not sum due to rounding)

Figure 7-3 Change in PMA Industrial and Office Floorspace 2006 to 2012



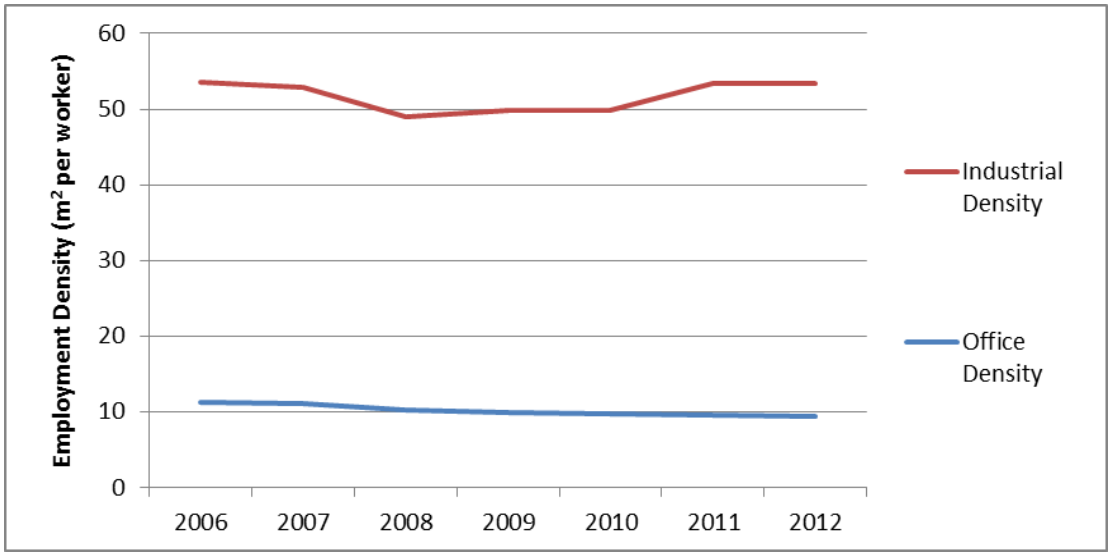
Source: URS; VOA 2012

Table 7-2 shows that the quantum of office floorspace in South Oxfordshire has risen by 0.2% per annum on average since 2006, in line with the PMA average. South Oxfordshire has however seen a contraction of industrial floorspace, equivalent to 0.5% per annum, which is in stark contrast to the average increase of 1.1% across the PMA. It should be noted that the period covers the recent triple recession.

Historical Employment Densities

Comparing the figures presented in **Table 7-1** and **Table 7-2** allow us to explore the changing employment density across the PMA. An employment density is the average floorspace taken up by each employee. The distinction between Use Classes is once again appropriate in investigating this trend; whereas offices tend to have a higher density, with a greater number of employees for a given unit of space, whereas B2 and B8 uses, by nature, require more space per employee. Employment densities are generally expressed as the average number of square metres per employee.

Figure 7-4 Change in Employment Densities 2006 to 2012[50]



Source: VOA (2012); ONS (2013); URS (2014).

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Employment Densities Guide (2010)[51] provides an estimate of employment densities for different B uses. Although these figures are for Full Time Equivalent workers, they are nevertheless representative of the common spatial requirement per employee.

The HCA guidance gives a series of employment densities for B2 and B8 uses, ranging from 36m^2 per employee for general industrial activities to 80 m^2 per employee for large scale and high bay warehousing. In 2012 the employment density for industrial uses was approximately 53.4 m^2 per employee, reflecting large presence of both industrial and warehousing activities across the PMA.

The HCA guidance suggests that the conventional employment density for general office space is 12m^2 per employee. **Figure 7-4** indicates that, although the office employment density was roughly in line with this expected figure in 2006, office employment has become more dense over the period (i.e. less space per employee). In 2012 there was approximately 9.5 m^2 of floorspace per office employee across the PMA. The increasing density of office employment is potentially indicative of a capacity issue, where employers grow their workforces by accommodating new staff in the space they occupy, rather than moving to larger offices. It may have been a consequence of the 2009 recession and subsequent period of slow growth; in a post-recession period, firms tend to delay making large investment decisions, such as an acquisition of new premises, until they are confident the recovery has taken hold. Another driver of this trend may be home working. Firms may be increasing encouraging remote working in order to reduce their formal desk space, and associated costs. Further, the increasing accessibility and ownership of consumer-owned technology may result in a greater propensity for those employed in the office sector in particular to work from home.

[50] The VOA data does not include floorspace located at the Culham Science Centre.

[51] Homes and Communities Agency, (2010); Employment Densities Guide 2nd Edition.

However, it is unrealistic to assume this trend to continue indefinitely. As the efficiencies in space are increasingly exhausted, a critical threshold will be reached whereby additional floorspace will be required to facilitate any increase in employment. The historical relationship between office employment and office floorspace is therefore not an appropriate indicator of future trends.

7.5 Forecasts for the Local Market for Office and Industrial Space

Employment Forecasts

To inform our projections of local employment space and land demand we place this in the context of 2014 work on employment forecasts by Cambridge Econometrics to support the Oxfordshire SHMA, discussed in further detail in **Section 3.4**.

Table 7-3 and **Table 7-4** present the employment forecasts across South Oxfordshire and the PMA respectively.

Table 7-3 South Oxfordshire Employment Forecasts 2014 to 2031

Forecast	Business Type	2014	2031	*CAGR %*
Baseline	*Office*	20,192	23,222	+0.8
	Industrial	9,561	9,896	+0.1
Alternative Population-Based	*Office*	20,230	23,512	+0.8
	Industrial	9,567	10,129	+0.3
Planned Economic Growth	*Office*	20,296	24,027	+1.0
	Industrial	9,621	10,291	+0.4

Source: URS; Cambridge Econometrics (2014).
Figures may not sum due to rounding. Note: The source for defining future industrial and office employment from the Cambridge Econometrics report is slightly different to the historical data as shown above. This explains the differences in employment numbers between 2012 and 2014 as shown in the two tables.

Table 7-4 PMA Employment Forecasts 2014 to 2031

Forecast	Business Type	2014	2031	*CAGR %*
Baseline	*Office*	40,128	46,150	+0.8
	Industrial	19,475	20,200	+0.2
Alternative Population-Based	*Office*	40,203	46,725	+0.9
	Industrial	19,547	20,700	+0.3
Planned Economic Growth	*Office*	40,334	47,750	+1.0
	Industrial	19,596	21,050	+0.4

Source: URS; Cambridge Econometrics (2014).
Figures may not sum due to rounding. Note: The source for defining future industrial and office employment from the Cambridge Econometrics report is slightly different to the historical data as shown above. This explains the differences in employment numbers between 2012 and 2014 as shown in the two tables.

Synthesis of Historical Trends and Projections

Our synthesis forecast approach considers whether the historic relationship between employment and floorspace is a realistic basis for forecasting future demand. As indicated by **Figure 7-4**, the historical relationship between office employment and floorspace is unlikely to continue indefinitely. Assuming the existing office density to remain constant across the planning period, office floorspace is anticipated to grow in line with office employment for each of the three scenarios.

Table 7-5 Forecast for Office Floorspace Growth within the PMA

Forecast	Projected Employment CAGR (%)	Projected Floorspace CAGR (%)
	2014-2031	***2014-2031***
Baseline	0.8%	0.8%
Alternative Population-Based	0.9%	0.9%
Planned Economic Growth	1.0%	1.0%

Source: URS (2014).

Table 7-5 indicates that office floorspace is anticipated to grow at a range of between 0.8% to 1% per annum to 2031.

For industrial trends however, historical floorspace and employment have evolved in line with one another, each growing by an annual rate of 1.1%. Assuming this relationship will continue to hold over the forecast period, the forecast for industrial floorspace equals the forecast for industrial employment for each of the three scenarios.

Table 7-6 Forecast for Industrial Floorspace Growth within the PMA

Forecast	Historic Floorspace CAGR (%)	Historic Employment CAGR (%)	Projected Employment CAGR (%)	Projected Floorspace CAGR (%)
	2006-2012	*2006-2012*	*2014-2031*	*2014-2031*
Baseline	1.1%	1.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Alternative Population-Based	1.1%	1.1%	0.3%	0.3%
Planned Economic Growth	1.1%	1.1%	0.4%	0.4%

Source: URS (2014).

Table 7-6 indicates that industrial floorspace is anticipated to grow at a range of between 0.2% to 0.4% per annum to 2031.

7.6 Office and Industrial Demand Forecast

The net growth in demand for office and industrial floorspace in South Oxfordshire over the planning period, 2014 to 2031, is set out in **Table 7-7**. The table shows that the net requirement for additional employment floorspace in the South Oxfordshire area by 2031 is estimated to be between 32,300 m^2 and 39,800 m^2 for office space, and 19,800 m^2 to 39,700 m^2 for industrial.

Table 7-7 Office and Industrial Floorspace Demand Forecast (2031; '000 m2)

	Additional Floorspace Requirements at 2031		
	Net Baseline Scenario	*Net Alternative Population-Based Scenario*	*Net Planned Economic Growth Scenario*
Local Office	32,300	35,000	39,800
Industrial	19,800	31,500	39,700
Total	**52,200**	**66,500**	**79,500**

Source: URS (2014). Figures may not sum due to rounding.

7.7 Conclusion

We have carried out a quantitative assessment of the demand for office floorspace and industrial land across the PMA. This approach synthesises published employment projections with historic floorspace trends and local economic drivers specific to the PMA in which South Oxfordshire's industrial and office markets operate. This allowed us to generate a forecast of demand across the planning period.

This forecast provides the basis for three scenarios for each form of demand, ranging from a baseline forecast (low) to planned economic growth (high). All forecasts suggest a positive additional demand for office and industrial floorspace. Office floorspace demand is estimated

to increase by between 32,300 m^2 to 39,800 m^2 until 2031, whereas industrial floorspace demand is forecast to increase by 19,800 to 39,700 m^2 over this period.

8 GAP ANALYSIS

In the previous section we analysed potential future demand for industrial and local office space. In this section we bring this information together with the outlook for supply to find to what extent supply-demand imbalances may exist. We consider the following influences on the balance of future demand with current supply:

- Any other users of industrial or office land; and
- Other factors including the need to retain some frictional vacancy and land requirements for different use types.

The outcome of this process is a forecast of net demand across both industrial and local office uses, which can be used to determine the appropriate quantum of land to be released, retained or intensified.

8.1 Other Users of Industrial or Office Land

Waste management and recycling facilities tend to occupy land suitable for industrial employment uses. If there is a requirement for additional such facilities over the planning period, it could impact on the quantum of industrial land available for industrial uses. We therefore consider whether any additional facilities are required to support the population of South Oxfordshire.

The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Plan[52] does not state a waste apportionment figure for South Oxfordshire or a requirement for additional land to meet the needs for waste and recycling facilities. Because it does not identify whether any additional infrastructure is needed, we do not factor in any additional requirement for land within the area. Similarly, we assume that the land requirement for other non-industrial uses that have industrial character and occupy land of an industrial nature, such as transport uses, will not result in a net impact on employment land through the local plan period.

8.2 Net Requirement for Office Floorspace and Land to 2031

The net requirement for office space is presented in terms of floorspace and land below. Using a single plot ratio to translate office floorspace demand into land is difficult as office sites can vary from denser town centre sites with high plot ratios to less dense out of town office parks with much lower plot ratios. The 2007 ELR used a generic plot ratio of 1:0.4 (40%) for all employment sites. The 2008 ELR used a plot ratio of 1:0.75 (75%) for offices. Given the diverse nature of offices in South Oxfordshire as observed during the field survey this study takes a mid-point between the two plot ratios used in the 2007 and 2008 ELRs. Therefore a plot ratio of 1:0.575 (57.5%) is used. The estimate of the net requirements takes account of existing vacancy rates (identified as approximately 10%) and a frictional vacancy rate (8%)[53], the optimum level of surplus capacity in the market at any given time to allow an efficient churn of occupancy.

[52] Oxfordshire County Council, (2013); Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (Fifth Revision) 2013.
[53] Para 3.7 of the GLA Land for Industry and Transport Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (2012). Although a figure for London, this figure provides an appropriate estimate of frictional vacancy in office markets.

Table 8-1 Net Office Floorspace Requirement 2014-2031

Net Requirement for Office Floorspace (m^2)	*Baseline*	*Alternative Population*	*Planned Economic Growth*
		(m^2)	
A. Actual gross office floorspace 2014 (source VOA)[54]	212,800	212,800	212,800
B. Current estimated vacant floorspace (10%) (source: **Section 6** Employment Property Market Assessment)	21,300	21,300	21,300
C. Demand for office floorspace (2031) (source: **Section 7** Projected Demand for Industrial and Office Space)	32,300	35,000	39,800
D. Floorspace required for frictional demand by 2031 (8% of Line A + Line C)	19,600	19,800	20,200
E. Vacant Floorspace (Line B) in excess of optimum rate (Line D)*	-1,7000	-1,500	-1,100
F. Revised gross demand for office floorspace 2011-2031 (Line A + Line C + Line E)	243,400	246,300	251,500
G. Revised net demand for office floorspace 2014-2031(line F – lineA)	**30,600**	**33,500**	**38,700**
H. Estimated office land ha (at 57.5% plot ratio)	**5.3**	**5.8**	**6.7**

Source: URS (2014). Figures may not sum due to rounding. It is assumed that the current vacancy rate of 10% is appropriate so no reduction in demand is assumed even though 10% is higher than the optimum level of 8%.*

Table 8-1 shows that up to 2031 there is additional (net) demand for between approximately 30,600m^2 and 38,700m^2 of office floorspace (5.3ha to 6.7ha of office land) in the South Oxfordshire area. This indicates that an additional 1,800m^2 to 2,300m^2 of office floorspace will be required annually to satisfy demand.

The development pipeline as it currently stands for office space serving the local market suggests that, if all permissioned office developments were to be built, they would provide approximately 27,400m^2 of new office floorspace. Comparing this pipeline with the figures stated in **Table 8-1** suggests that if a reasonable proportion of potential office floorspace is realised, this would represent a substantial proportion of the net additional demand over the planning period.

[54] VOA provide floorspace data from 2000-2012. In the absence of a more recent estimate, we have used this trend to project the stock of floorspace forward to 2014.

8.3 Net Requirement for Industrial Land to 2031

The 2004 ODPM ELR guidance states that where possible employment floorspace should be converted to employment land using plot ratios[55]. The plot ratio and density of employment for office development can vary considerably, with for example significant variation in building heights and car parking provision. In addition office-type development, particularly where smaller scale in nature, has more potential to form a component of mixed use development. For these reasons we do not convert the demand projections from floorspace into office land requirements.

By comparison development density (plot ratio and storeys) tends to be more stable for industry and warehousing premises. Comparing the land use estimate of our surveyed clusters[56] to the VOA floorspace data outlined in **Section 7.4** above indicates that the plot ratio for industrial sites in South Oxfordshire is approximately 1:0.2 (20%). This ratio means that over one hectare of land one can typically expect the footprint of an industrial or warehouse building occupying a footprint of 0.2 hectares. This plot ratio is considered to be very low and may not accurately reflect typical plot ratios in South Oxfordshire. The 2007 ELR used a plot ratio of 1:0.4 (40%) and the 2008 ELR used a plot ratio of 40% for industry and 50% for warehousing. Therefore this study takes a mid-point of the range of ratios (1:0.2 to 1:0.4) to reflect the diversity of industrial plots in South Oxfordshire. This equates to a plot ratio of approximately 30%. Using this ratio we calculate that the additional demand for industrial land is the equivalent of 6.6ha, 10.5ha or 13.2ha (Baseline, Alternative Population and Planned Economic Growth scenarios respectively).

The forecast for net demand should take into account the need to retain an appropriate level of vacant land while sites are prepared for new occupiers and to allow efficient turnover in the market as businesses move between sites and premises (termed frictional vacancy). Based on URS' experience, frictional vacancy for industrial land can range from between 5% to 10%. Applying a precautionary principle, we will use the upper estimate of 10% for the purposes of this calculation. The observed current vacancy rate of land available for industrial employment use is 8%.

[55] Employment Land Reviews: Guidance Note, ODPM, December 2004.

[56] Excluding the four town centres and the Smith Centre, which contain office uses.

Table 8-2 Net Industrial Land Requirement 2014-2031

Net Requirement for Industrial Land (ha)	*Baseline*	*Alternative Population*	*Planned Economic Growth*
		(hectares)	
A. Supply of occupied industrial land 2014	243.9	243.9	243.9
B. Estimate of Vacant industrial land 2014 (8%)	21.2	21.2	21.2
C. Gross industrial land 2014 (A+B) [57]	265.1	265.1	265.1
D. Forecast change in land demand to 2031 (at 30% plot ratio)	6.6	10.5	13.2
E. Market equilibrium levels of vacant land for 'friction' in 2031 at 10%	25.1	25.4	25.7
F. Additional requirement for vacant land (market equilibrium levels of frictional land (E) minus current vacant land (B))	3.9	4.2	4.5
G. Gross demand for industrial land 2014-2031: (C)+(D)+(F)	254.4	258.6	261.6
H. Net change (gross demand 2014-2031 (G) minus current gross industrial land supply (C))	**10.5**	**14.7**	**17.7**
I. Net change per annum (ha)	**0.6**	**0.8**	**0.9**

Source: URS (2014). Figures may not sum due to rounding

The implication of this analysis is that there is a deficit of employment land in South Oxfordshire of between 10.5ha and 17.7ha. The Planned Economic Growth scenario suggests that an additional 0.9ha per annum between 2014 and 2031 will be required.

The development pipeline as it currently stands for office space serving the local market suggests that, if all permissioned office developments were to be built, they would provide approximately 2,400m^2 of new industrial floorspace, equating to approximately 0.8ha of land. Comparing this pipeline with the figures stated in **Table 8-2** suggests that if a reasonable proportion of potential industrial land is realised, this would represent a substantial proportion of the net additional demand over the planning period.

[57] This includes the Culham Science Centre.

8.4 Summary

We have carried out a comparative assessment of the scenarios for demand for strategic and office floorspace/land and industrial land with existing land uses in the South Oxfordshire area. This is shown in **Table 8-3** below. More detail on office and industrial demand is also provided below:

Office Floorspace/Land

There is approximately 212,800m^2 of gross office floorspace in the South Oxfordshire area. Our forecasting exercise estimates positive additional demand for office floorspace throughout the area up to 2031 (see **Table 8-1**). The Baseline scenario predicts net demand for office floorspace to be approximately 32,300m^2 (5.6ha) over the period, with the Alternative Population and Planned Economic Growth scenarios estimating net demand to be 35,000m^2 (6.1ha) and 39,800m^2 (6.9ha) respectively.

Industrial Land

There is a total of approximately 245 ha of industrial land in the South Oxfordshire area. Our demand forecast shows that there is projected to be an increase in demand for industrial land, ranging between 10.5ha under the Baseline scenario to 17.7ha under the Planned Economic Growth scenario over the period 2014 to 2031.

Additional Land Requirement

Table 8-3 provides a summary of total employment land demand 2014 to 2031. This shows that between approximately 16 and 25 hectares will be required during the planning period:

Table 8-3 Estimated Net Employment Land Requirement 2014-2031

Land use	Baseline	Alternative Population	Planned Economic Growth
Office	5.6	6.1	6.9
Industrial	10.5	14.7	17.7
Total Net Land Requirement 2014 - 2031	**16.1**	**20.8**	**24.6**

Source: URS (2014). Figures may not sum due to rounding

9 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

This section sets out our conclusions and recommendations for employment land across the South Oxfordshire area, drawing together the findings presented in this report.

9.2 Conclusions

Office

There is currently approximately 215,000m^2 of gross office floorspace in South Oxfordshire. The property market analysis of **Section 6** indicates that the majority of the district's office stock is located in the main town centres of; Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford. Henley-on-Thames is the most predominant office location in the District, followed by Thame and Wallingford. Didcot is not currently a major office location. The location of the existing office supply in historically conserved towns means that, unlike other areas of Oxfordshire, there are limited out of town business parks. The South Oxfordshire office market is therefore relatively modest in comparison with the more regionally important office markets in neighbouring areas, such as Oxford City and VOWH. A healthy vacancy rate across the District at approximately 8-10% indicates enough capacity in the market for an efficient churn of occupancy, with vacancy lower than across the Science Vale sub-region.

The exception to this typology is at Culham Science Centre, a regionally important site contributing to the Science Vale cluster of research and development institutions across south Oxfordshire. Office uses at Culham would largely be classified as ancillary office to the main science based research and high manufacturing facilities or B1b/c and so in terms of this study is associated with the industrial market. The assessment of quality and characteristics of employment land in **Section 5** indicates that South Oxfordshire's office stock is largely of a good quality and suitable for its occupiers. The minority of rurally located sites suffer from poor access to public transport, while it is also identified that access to facilities and amenities could be significantly better in some of these rural locations. However, many offices in the town centres are typically above shops or in small purpose built facilities, fulfilling the needs of typical occupiers such as solicitors firms and professional services.

Our forecasting exercise indicates that there will be an additional demand for approximately 32,300m^2 (5.6ha) to 39,800m^2 (6.9ha) of office floorspace/land up to 2031 (see **Table 8-1**). The positive growth in office demand is driven in part by the benefits to businesses locating in Science Vale, with a number of spillover jobs anticipated within the science research and green technologies sectors in particular.

Approximately 27,400m^2 of office floorspace, representing around 70% of forecasts demand, may be forthcoming through unimplemented permissions. 40% of which is facilitated by growth at Culham Science Centre. In terms of the spatial distribution of the remaining unimplemented floorspace, it is largely focused in rural areas; Thame is the only town centre which would increase its office stock if all permissions were implemented. The remaining shortfall of demand may be facilitated by developing or intensifying employment land uses at the existing strategically significant sites. The locations for this potential additional office growth are outlined at **Recommendation 2** below.

Based on consultation with agents and assessments made during the field surveys the main locations of future office demand are likely to remain the existing locations of office stock. The

proposals for an office business park (innovation centre) at Culham are likely to be welcomed by the market. This form of large out of town business park is uncommon in South Oxfordshire and so a large part of the forecast demand could be met in Culham. Henley-on-Thames will have the strongest demand for town centre office, followed by Thame and Wallingford. It is likely that with the regeneration of Didcot and expansion of Science Vale that an increasing amount of office demand could be met at Didcot, previously unpopular in office terms. The best location for office growth at Didcot could be next to the station due to its excellent connectivity to London, Swindon, Reading and the South West and proximity to the Science Vale.

The effect of the change to the permitted development rights order allowing conversion of offices to residential uses is not expected to have a significantly negative effect on overall office stock in South Oxfordshire. This is because most of the offices converted are likely to be those offices that are not fit for modern business purposes. The Council should closely monitor the situation and if it is clear that significant amounts of active office stock is being lost then a reappraisal of the position should be made. In the light of the overall positive forecast demand for offices, the office stock that is lost through conversion to residential uses via PD rights should be compensated in other locations to ensure there is sufficient stock to meet the future needs of businesses as per the NPPF paragraph 161.

Industrial

There is currently approximately 261ha of industrial land in South Oxfordshire, excluding that located at Culham Science Centre[58]. Approximately a third of this space is industrial type (B1c and B2), with the majority characterised by warehousing and distribution use (B8).

The property market analysis of **Section 6** indicates that most of the industrial space in South Oxfordshire is focused around Didcot and Thame, with some located in Henley-on-Thames. Industrial space in Didcot in particular is focused around warehousing and distribution activities. Industrial sites in South Oxfordshire benefit from the historic associations with the scientific/research centres at Culham and across the Science Vale. The industrial market is relatively more significant than the office market; approximately 25% of industrial floorspace across the Property Market Area (defined as South Oxfordshire and VOWH) is located in the District. The assessment of quality and characteristics of employment land in **Section** 5 reflects this, indicating that most of the significant employment clusters contain industrial uses. The site survey analysis shows that the majority of existing sites are generally fit for purpose, with adequate spatial typologies and facilities to meet the needs of occupiers. The consultation with agents suggested that there is a relative need to supply good quality space for SMEs. This should be flexible, affordable space.

Our demand forecast shows that there is projected to be an increase in demand for industrial land of between 10.5ha to 17.7ha in the period 2014 to 2031 (see **Table 8-2**). This net additional requirement includes land allocated for employment uses in Thame and Wallingford as per Core Strategy policy CSEM2. Increasing industrial demand in South Oxfordshire, which is typical across the Science Vale, goes against the national trend of de-industrialisation. The critical mass of scientific and research facilities that agglomerate in the sub-region drives a multiplier effect, allowing the local industrial market to benefit as a consequence of supply chain linkages. The success of South Oxfordshire's industrial sites is reflected in an estimated

[58] This figure is taken from the VOA. However, Culham is not included within the VOA figures.

vacancy rate of 5-8%, relatively lower than across the Science Vale sub-region due to its more localised nature and restricted availability of sites largely due to the rural nature of South Oxfordshire District and constraints such as the AONB and Oxford Greenbelt.

Analysis of the pipeline of unimplemented permissions indicates that 2,400m^2 of industrial floorspace could come forward to meet this additional demand. Approximately two thirds of additional floorspace is likely to come forward in Thame, with a small net decrease in Henley-on-Thames and Wallingford. Applying a plot ratio of 1:0.3 (land to floorspace) indicates that 0.8ha of industrial land could come forward, equating to approximately 5% of the unmet demand under the Planned Economic Growth scenario.

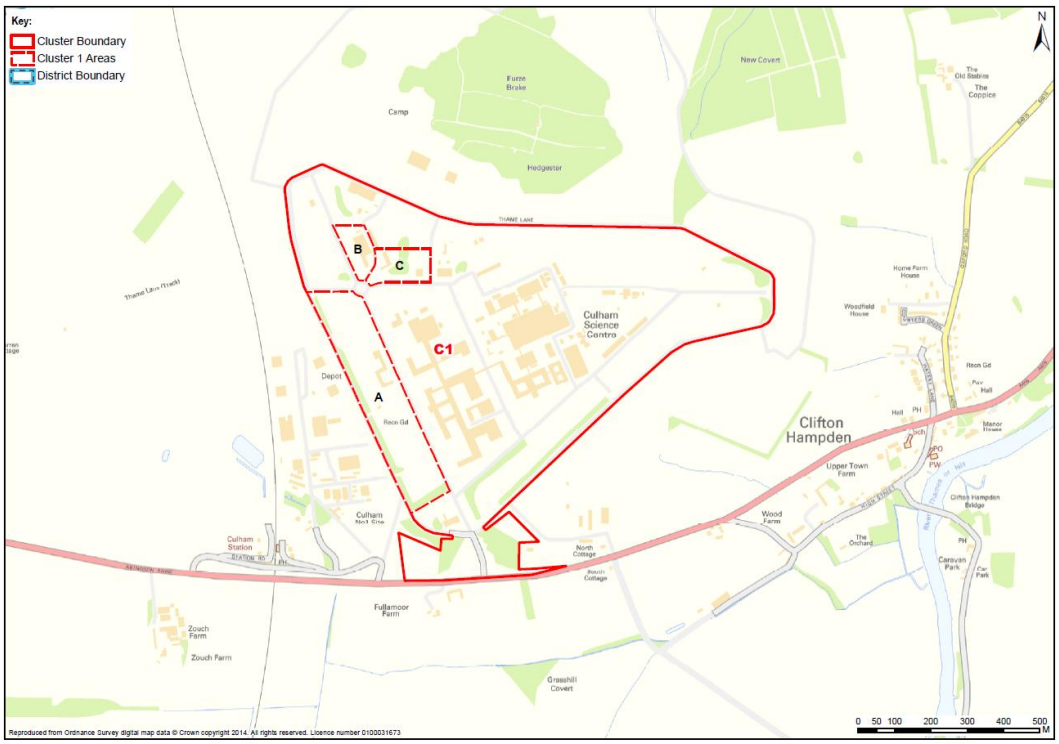
The main driver for industrial demand is Science Vale. This has two elements in terms of spatial distribution of demand. Firstly, there is direct demand from high tech/science related companies that want to be closely associated with Science Vale. This mainly manifests itself in Culham and to a lesser extent Didcot due to the fact Didcot is predominantly a centre of warehousing and distribution. As a result of this approximately a third of the industrial demand is in Culham and Didcot. The other element of demand is indirect demand linked to Science Vale. This includes supply chain firms that seek to be close but do not have to be within Science Vale. Wallingford/Crowmarsh Gifford is a key location for this type of demand with around a third of the overall South Oxfordshire industrial demand located in this area. The remaining third of demand is a mixture, partly linked to Science Vale and partly to local and wider Oxford and Thames Valley industrial demand. Thame and the rural areas can generally meet this type of industrial demand.

Culham

There are proposals to expand employment provision at Culham. These plans are contained within the Draft Culham Masterplan SPD (2014) as discussed in **Section 3**. They are also within the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (2012) Policy CSEM2 which states that around 1,000 jobs can be provided at Culham. As part of this ELR study a field survey was undertaken at Culham and a meeting to discuss the proposals with the Culham Estates manager took place. The key proposals are to develop parcels A and B as seen in the **Figure 9-1** below as an office led business park (Culham Innovation Centre). Parcel A is approximately 8 hectares and parcel B is approximately 1.4 hectares. Parcel C is promoted for industrial uses and is around 1.3 hectares. The indicative Masterplan vision is shown in **Figure 9-2**, which gives an idea of potential massing and layout.

If a plot ratio of 40% is used to derive floorspace, which would be appropriate given the lower density 'out of town' business park type development, this would equate to around 37,600m^2 of office development. If a lower ratio of 20% was used, this would equate to 18,800m^2. If it is assumed that 1,000 additional employees would be employed at Culham this would provide an employment density of 18 to 37m^2 per employee. Based on the findings of the consultation exercise this would appear to be an appropriate assumption. Therefore it is concluded that there is a reasonable expectation that 1,000 additional jobs could be provided at Culham over the planning period. Subject to acceptable planning criteria being met, especially considering the proposed development site is within the greenbelt. These jobs could be provided in the site proposed in the draft Masterplan (parcel A) above.

Figure 9-1 Culham Masterplan Indicative Development Parcels



Source: URS (2014)

Figure 9-2 Culham Masterplan Indicative Vision (Redline shows area A)

Source: Culham Draft Masterplan (2014)

Culham No.1 Site

It is understood that enquiries have been made to SODC by the owners of Culham site No. 1 for whether release of the site to housing would be acceptable in planning terms. The site is to the immediate south west of parcel A as shown in **Figure 9-1** above. The site currently includes low intensity general industrial and warehousing units housed in older 'hangar style' buildings. It is likely that in its current format the site would not be appropriate to meet modern businesses needs given the older buildings, site accessibility and layout.

Given the overall positive demand for industrial uses over the planning period (10.5 ha to 17.7ha), any loss of industrial floorspace at the site should be compensated at another site to avoid lowering the overall industrial capacity of the District. However, although the site is around 10 hectares if it were to be redeveloped it could be intensified. Therefore there is a possibility that the site could be redeveloped for a mixture of uses subject to planning considerations as long as an equivalent amount of employment floorspace is re-provided at the site. A key planning consideration will be that the site is within the green belt and surrounded by open space. Also, normally, residential and industrial uses are not compatible. However, given the size of the site there may be potential for a mixture of office and industrial and residential uses. It is clear that given the location next to Culham and in Science Vale there would be demand for employment uses so it would be detrimental to the local economy to release the site entirely to non-employment uses without compensating for it in another nearby location within or close to Science Vale. As there are limited available sites in the South Oxfordshire element of the Science Vale it is unlikely to be appropriate to release the site to housing in its entirety.

9.3 Policy Recommendations

The employment land use strategy recommendations below are presented in the format of a recommendation and then supporting a justification and rationale. The specific recommendations build upon our conclusions presented above.

Please note that this is one of a number of evidence base documents the Council will be considering that will feed into and inform its Local Plan evidence base. These are URS' independent recommendations and the Council will subsequently consider these before drafting its own Local Plan policies.

9.3.1 *Existing Employment Uses*

R1 The demand assessment estimates that there is net additional demand for between around 16 and 25 hectares of employment land (B1, B2 and B8) in South Oxfordshire over the Local Plan period to 2031 (See Table 8-3 above). Therefore, to help ensure that the needs of business are met and that not too much employment land is released, the Council could update Local Plan Policy E6 to state that existing employment land will only be released if all of the following criteria are met:

- **The existing employment land use causes detrimental effects to the amenity of the nearby area – particularly where residential uses are adversely affected;**
- **There is evidenced to be no market interest in the site following one year of active and effective marketing;**
- **The change of use from employment uses will not lower the employment capacity of the District below that estimated to be necessary to meet projected**

demand over the planning period as estimated by the most up to date ELR (i.e. this study).

Justification

The NPPF, paragraph 161, states that in their Local Development Plans Councils should plan for an appropriate amount of employment land to meet future business needs. This ELR has estimated that there will be net demand for between 16 and 25 hectares of additional employment land over the planning period to 2031. Because employment land is often less viable than uses such as housing there is often pressure put on Councils from land owners to permit change of use from employment to residential uses. The problem is that if too much employment land is released over the planning period then there will not be enough land and floorspace available to meet the needs of business and as a result the local economy will suffer with local people forced to commute out to other areas of employment.

The criteria of Saved South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policy E6 could be amended to ensure that only employment land that is not appropriate and not viable is released. An assessment of the suitability of employment sites should be driven by the active and effective marketing exercise discussed above. An effective monitoring process should be put in place to ensure that the overall level of employment land capacity is not lowered significantly below that estimated by the most recent ELR to be required to meet business needs (See **Recommendation 4** below for further details). If it looks like too much land is being released the Council should either restrict loss of employment land or look to allocate new sites to meet that need.

9.3.2 *Office*

R2 The demand assessment estimates that there is net additional requirement for between 32,300m^2 (5.5ha) and 40,000m^2 (7ha) of office (B1a/b) floorspace/land in South Oxfordshire over the Local Plan period from 2014 to 2031. There is the potential for 27,000m^2 (4.8ha) of additional office floorspace to come forward as part of existing permissions. The most suitable specific sites in the District to accommodate the remaining additional demand are as follows:

- **Culham (Cluster C1) – Approximately 19,000m^2**
- **Central Didcot (C2-C4) – Approximately 15,000m^2**
- **Monument Business Park (C9) – Approximately 4,000m^2**

The residual additional office demand could be met in the town centres of Henley-on-Thames, Wallingford (including Crowmarsh Gifford) and Thame. The distribution of demand for offices is likely to be spread equally across each of these towns.

According to feedback from the commercial agent and stakeholder consultation exercise there is also an opportunity to promote flexible and smaller size office workspace units to accommodate the needs of smaller and medium size businesses. This affordable and flexible business space should be promoted within the four town centres where possible.

Justification

The research found that there is likely to be increasing demand for office floorspace in South Oxfordshire over the planning period. It is estimated that a range of 32,000m^2 (5.5ha) to 40,000m^2 (7ha) should be provided to meet business needs. This figure should be seen as a

guideline to inform planning policy. It is noted that around 27,000m^2 of office could be provided through existing planning permissions if they are all completed as planned. A large proportion of this relates to and is therefore included in the figure for Culham as described above.

Culham is an internationally recognised employment site housing the world's largest fusion experiment (Jet) and around 2,000 employees in the high tech manufacturing and science related industries. However, due to the winding down of the Jet programme and cutting of government funded research jobs there is a need to diversify the employment base. There is a draft Masterplan for Culham which proposes significant development including a business park the Culham Innovation Centre. Subject to planning considerations this would be an appropriate location and would help to meet a large part of the forecast office demand.

Although Didcot is not a traditionally strong office location it is considered that there is potential for it to expand as the Science Vale expands and the regeneration of Didcot continues. There is a site behind the station that has excellent locational characteristics and could be appropriate for office development.

There is an opportunity to expand Monument Business Park to develop an 'out of town' business park. Despite its rural location, Monument Business Park was deemed a very successful location for office use, particularly in providing affordable and flexible space to accommodate the growth of SMEs. Vacancy was observed to be relatively low during the site survey, with high value occupiers attracted to the excellent public realm and good quality stock. This site is deemed suitable for expansion to meet additional rural demand.

The town centres will continue to be attractive locations for office development. When opportunities for development occur the Council could look favourably on office development in the main town centres as there is proven to be local office demand in roughly equal proportions in each of the towns of Henley-on-Thames, Thame and Wallingford.

9.3.3 *B2 and B8 General Industrial, and Storage and Distribution*

R3 The demand assessment estimates that there is net additional requirement for between 10.5 and 17.7 hectares of industrial (B1c/B2/B8) land in South Oxfordshire over the Local Plan period from 2014 to 2031. At the time of writing[59] there are approximately 0.8ha of additional industrial land that may come forward as part of existing permissions. Any new industrial units gaining planning permission after this point, including those allocated employment use by the Core Strategy, will contribute to meeting this net additional requirement.

To support the requirement for the additional remaining industrial land, the Council should encourage the development of clusters which are currently functioning well as employment locations which have the potential to increase the provision of employment land. There is an opportunity to promote smaller sized units to accommodate the needs of smaller businesses. The Council should also seek to promote suitable premises to ensure adequate grow on space for its industrial businesses.

The remaining additional demand could be met at the following potential development sites (see Table 5-6):

[59] Information correct as of December 2014.

- **Culham (Cluster C1) – Approximately 1.3ha;**
- **Southmead Industrial Estate (C3) – 2.9ha;**
- **Hithercroft Industrial Estate (C6) – 1.9ha;**
- **Monument Business Park (C9) – 2.5ha;**
- **Thame Industrial Cluster (C11) – 1.6ha;**
- **London Road Industrial Estate (C16) – 0.4ha;**
- **Total land – 10.6 ha**

If the higher growth scenario is followed the residual 6.3ha could be provided at new sites spread across the four main towns.

Justification

Core Strategy policy CSEM2 supports the provision of 13.5ha of additional employment land across the District, in addition to a further 6.5ha in the Vale of White Horse (at Didcot) up to 2027. The policy allocates 4.2ha of land to larger villages, 2ha each to Thame and Wallingford respectively, with the balance provided through increasing jobs at Culham Science Centre. However, the policy does not allocate specific sites for the provision of additional employment space.

The research found that there is likely to be increasing demand for industrial land in South Oxfordshire over the planning period. It is estimated that a range of 10.5ha to 17.7ha will be required to meet business needs, in addition to the retention of existing provision, from 2014 to 2031. Approximately 0.8ha of this requirement may be met by existing planning permissions. Any new permissions coming forward, including those on the 13.5ha of allocated land as defined by policy CSEM2, will contribute towards meeting this requirement.

The site survey identified a number of undeveloped and developable areas within existing employment areas (see **Table 5-6**) with high rates of occupancy. A number of these locations were deemed suitable to meet any additional requirement for industrial premises, subject to further assessment.

The District has a number of large, successful industrial areas located within segregated areas at fringe locations of the four main towns. These estates are generally well functioning, housing a variety of business activities across different sizes and sectors, while providing opportunities for local employment. Three of these estates, Clusters C3 (Southmead Industrial Estate, Didcot), C6 (Hithercroft Industrial Estate, Wallingford) and C11 (Thame Industrial Cluster) have a collective total of 6.4ha of developable land. Intensification of these sites could therefore contribute approximately a third to a half of the total net additional requirement over the plan period.

In addition to the traditional industrial estates, the provision of medium and larger occupiers may be met by land at C7 (Crowmarsh Industrial Cluster) and C9 (Monument Business Park). These sites could be developed to provide between 2.5ha to 7ha of industrial land. The site survey determined C9 (Monument Business Park) to be a more suitable location for office provision, so the contribution of this site to meeting the additional industrial land requirement is dependent on the extent to which demand for office space comes forward.

9.3.4 *Monitoring*

R4 Monitoring: The Council should monitor changes of employment land through planning permissions to ensure that sufficient land is available for economic growth over the planned period, 2014 to 2031.

Justification

It is important that appropriate and sufficient monitoring mechanisms are embedded within the plan making process in order to record the change in employment land available for economic growth. The aim of the monitoring of employment land is to ensure that overall an approximate quantum of appropriate employment land supply is retained in the district to meet the level of projected demand indicated in this study. As described in **Recommendation 1** above this is to guard against too much industrial land being released to higher value uses such as residential as this could restrict the economic potential of the District. The NPPG states that the ELR should be updated roughly every five years[60]. However in the periods in between ELRs the Council should regularly review how much employment land has been lost. The Annual Monitoring Report is likely to be the most appropriate framework for this monitoring and review exercise.

[60] NPPG, paragraph 037 reference ID: 2a-037-20140306

APPENDIX A: EMPLOYMENT LAND QUESTIONNAIRE

Employment Cluster Survey Questionnaire

Business Cluster Number (URS): **Your Initials: ……** **Date: ……**

Core Strategy or Local Plan Designation

……

Proximity to South Oxfordshire's administrative border

……..

The business premises typologies in the cluster are best described as (multiple ticks possible):

- ❑ Business district
- ❑ General Industrial estate / business areas
- ❑ High Tech Manufacturing
- ❑ Green Technology
- ❑ Warehouse / distribution Park / wholesale
- ❑ Local shopping centre
- ❑ High quality Business Park.
- ❑ Media
- ❑ Arts and Creative Industries……
- ❑ Waste mgmt / Recycling / environmental industrial sites
- ❑ Car Repairs
- ❑ Storage
- ❑ Town centre
- ❑ Incubator / SME cluster
- ❑ Local Office Centre
- ❑ Other (describe any other uses)

What is/are the main employment and/or other significant land-use/s? (Mark land uses on map using key in manual)

Mark clearly and precisely any revisions to cluster boundaries on the map (see manual instructions).

Mark clearly and precisely the building (s) footprint (see manual instructions).

Quality of environment and public realm

- ❑ Very good
- ❑ Good
- ❑ Poor
- ❑ Very poor

Comment on quality of environment

Access to facilities and amenities

❑ Very good ❑ Good ❑ Poor ❑ Very poor

Bad neighbourhood uses
Businesses in the business cluster cause:

- ❑ None
- ❑ Noise pollution

Comments

- ❑ Air pollution
- ❑ Smell
- ❑ HGV traffic
- ❑ Significant car traffic
- ❑ Other (please comment)

Physical site constraints in cluster? (i.e. access from local road, layout issues, incompatible land use, environmental/nature conservation)

Comment (and mark on map)……

The cluster lies within close proximity to / has impact on *(multiple answers possible)*

- ❑ Residential or Community uses
- ❑ Local shopping centre
- ❑ Green Belt
- ❑ Other……
- ❑ Town centre
- ❑ Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Servicing of businesses in cluster
(multiple answers possible)

- ❑ Road side loading/unloading
- ❑ Off road loading/unloading
- ❑ Loading bays

Comment on servicing of businesses

Servicing is adequate for the uses within the cluster ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Don't know

Potential for 24 hour working?

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Comment on suitability for 24 hour working

Parking facilities
(multiple answers possible)

- ❑ Dedicated parking within cluster
- ❑ On street parking
- ❑ Yellow / double yellow lines
- ❑ Red route
- ❑ Controlled parking zone/paid parking

Comment on parking facilities. **Give reasons** for judgment on adequacy of parking provision

Parking provision is: ❑ Adequate ❑ Too little ❑ Too much ❑ Don't know

Strategic road access (trunk roads) (Observation and desk based)……

……

Access to public transport (Observation and desk based PTAL check if possible)……

……

Access to waterways/wharves (Observation and desk based)……..……..

……

Access to railhead (Observation and desk based)……..……

……

Condition of Buildings - % of buildings within Cluster in:

Very Good _____% / Good_____% / Poor_____% / Very Poor_____%

Total vacant and available B1/B2/B8 floorspace quantum actively marketed within cluster (give approximate percentage if uncertain)

B1 …..…… B2 …….…… B8 ……..… (m^2 or %)

(Take note of any property market agent information on vacant and available floorspace and specification)

Are there any Vacant developable sites/ Derelict buildings within cluster

(Y/N):……..If **yes** mark clearly on map. **What % of the cluster** land area do they constitute? …….. %

Is the cluster suitable for accommodating wider industrial uses (wholesale markets, land for transport functions, waste management/recycling or utilities)

If yes please name which use
…….....

Additional possibilities for intensification / redevelopment (Mark clearly on the cluster map, any areas which show potential for intensification and add any additional comments below)

……

Additional possibilities for estate management (Mark clearly on the cluster map, any areas which show potential for estate management and any additional comments)

……

Photographs

Image number(s) _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ / *(min. of 1 image per cluster)*

General description of cluster / comments on business cluster

Always describe the cluster, and include any comments you have**.**

APPENDIX B: CONVERSION OF EMPLOYMENT SECTORS TO USE CLASSES

Sector	*Land Use*	*Proportion of Jobs in B Use (%)*
Agriculture	-	0
Mining and Quarrying	-	0
Manufacturing	Industrial	100
Electricity, Gas & Water	-	0
Construction	-	0
Distribution	Industrial	50
Transport & Storage	Industrial	50
Accommodation & Food Services	-	0
Information & Communications	Office	50
Financial & Business Services	Office	75
Government Services	Office	25
Other Services[61]	-	75

Source: URS; Cambridge Econometrics (2014).

[61] We have not applied the B Use jobs from the Other Services sector to either of land use category.

APPENDIX C: AGENT AND STAKEHODLER CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRES

Commercial Property Agents Consultation

Dear Sir/Madam

South Oxfordshire District Council has instructed URS Infrastructure and Environment Ltd to carry produce an employment land study for the district.

The employment land study will collect information used to inform the development of land use policies and sustainable growth, required as part of South Oxfordshire's Local Development Plan, which is currently being updated. Information will be kept strictly confidential and not released to any other organisation or company.

Basic Information

Agent Name	
Contact Tel/email:	

Questions

Demand and Supply Characteristics of South Oxfordshire's Employment Land/Premises

1. What is the demand outlook (by type i.e. B1, B2, B8)? What is the demand for work-live space, including type and size of unit? What specific demands are there for affordable workspace, space for creative industries and other growth sectors within the District?

2. Are you aware of any particular unmet needs e.g. small start-up space or specific sectors such as the knowledge economy, high tech or pharmaceuticals? Are companies seeking mainly second hand, refurbished or brand new office accommodation (take up levels)?

3. Are you aware of any large developments in the pipeline or companies planning to leave the borough in future?

4. What are the typical rental values, yields and land prices for B1, B2 and B8?

5. What are typical current vacancy rates (industrial/office), by area and/or particular estates if possible.

Didcot -
Wallingford -
Thame –
Henley-on-Thames -

6. What is the likelihood of a conversion of office premises to residential under the new Permitted Development Rights? Do you have any views on particular sites, e.g. sites that should be released for uses other than employment or proposals that are unrealistic?

7. Are 1,000 new jobs at Culham, as outlined in the 2012 South Oxfordshire Core Strategy realistic? What type of jobs are these likely to be – Office or industrial?

8. Any comments for the Council regarding employment land?

Stakeholder Consultation

Dear Sir/Madam

South Oxfordshire District Council has instructed URS Infrastructure and Environment Ltd to carry produce an employment land study for the district.

The employment land study will collect information used to inform the development of land use policies and sustainable growth, required as part of South Oxfordshire's Local Development Plan, which is currently being updated. Information will be kept strictly confidential and not released to any other organisation or company.

Basic Information

Stakeholder Name	
Contact Tel/email:	

Questions

Demand and Supply Characteristics of South Oxfordshire's Employment Land/Premises

1. Are you aware of any particular unmet needs (by sector) or issues with the current supply of employment premises?

2. What is the demand outlook (by type i.e. Industry and Warehouses, Offices)?

Business Support

3. Any suggestions for how to support businesses?

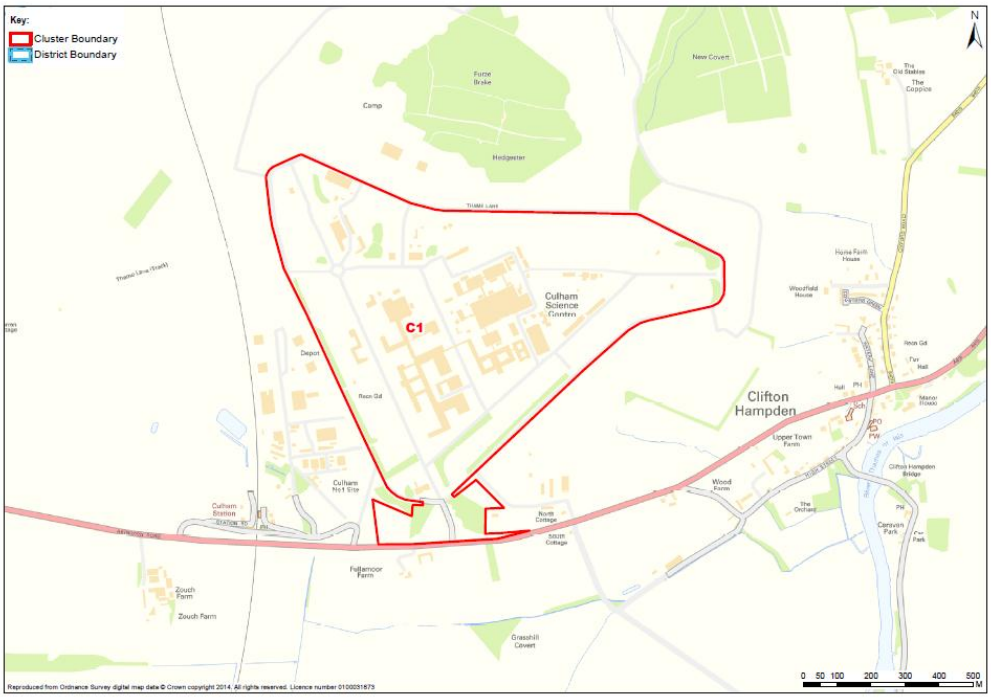
4. Any suggestions for how to promote inward investment?

5. Any suggestions for how to build an entrepreneurial culture in South Oxfordshire?

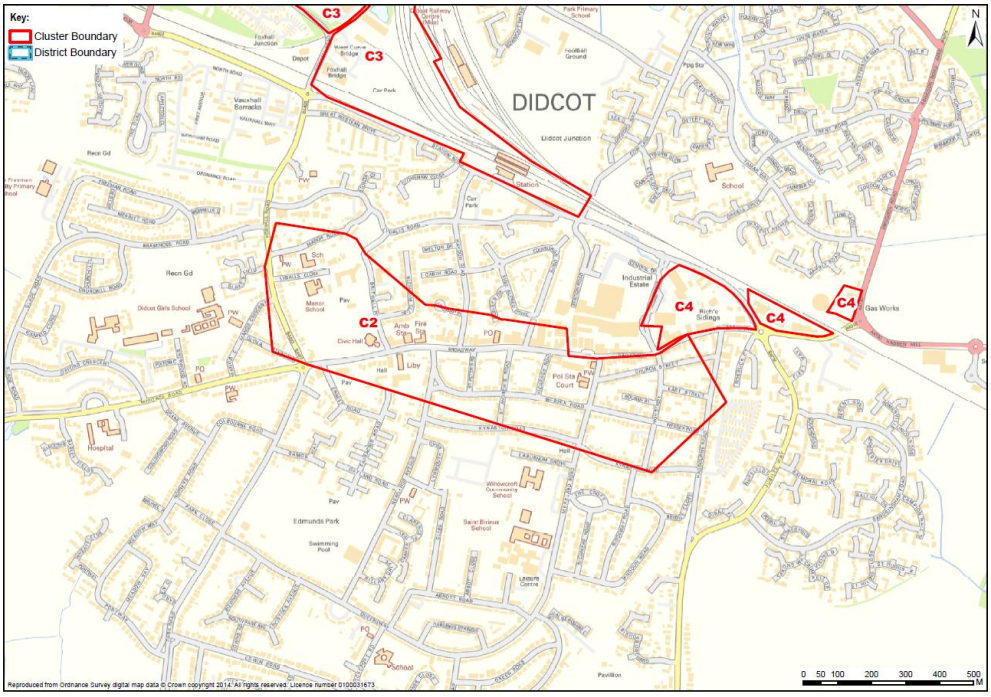
6. Any suggestions for how to improve economic inclusion?

APPENDIX D: EMPLOYMENT CLUSTER MAPS

C1: Culham Science Centre and Culham No1 Site[62]

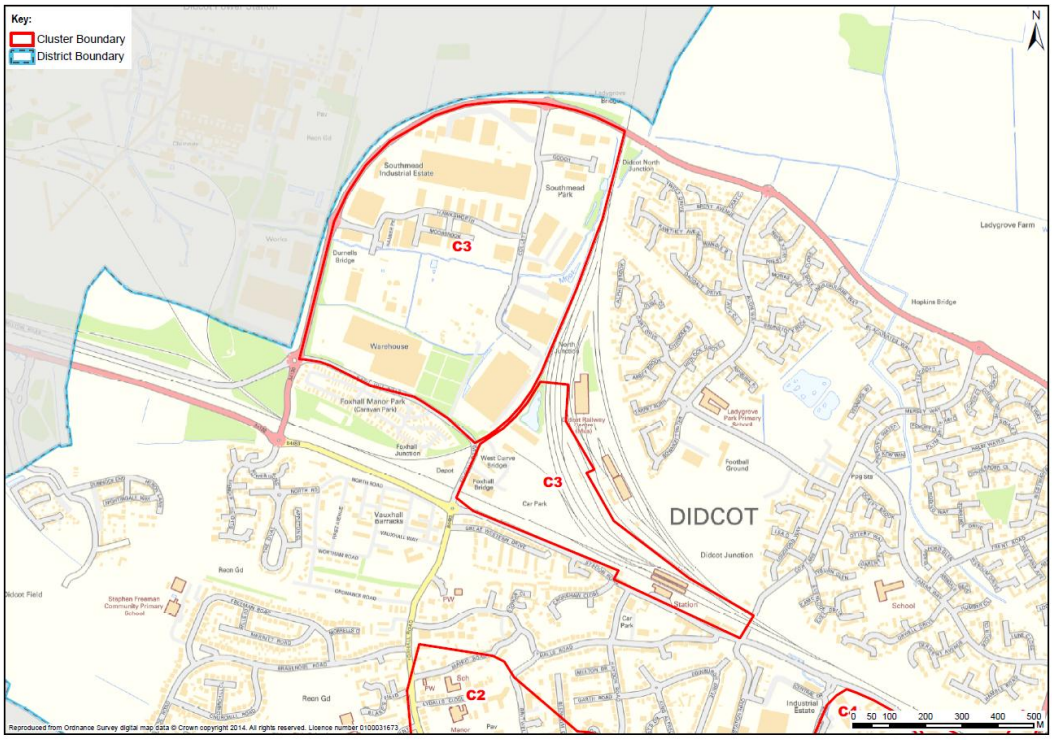


C2: Didcot Town Centre

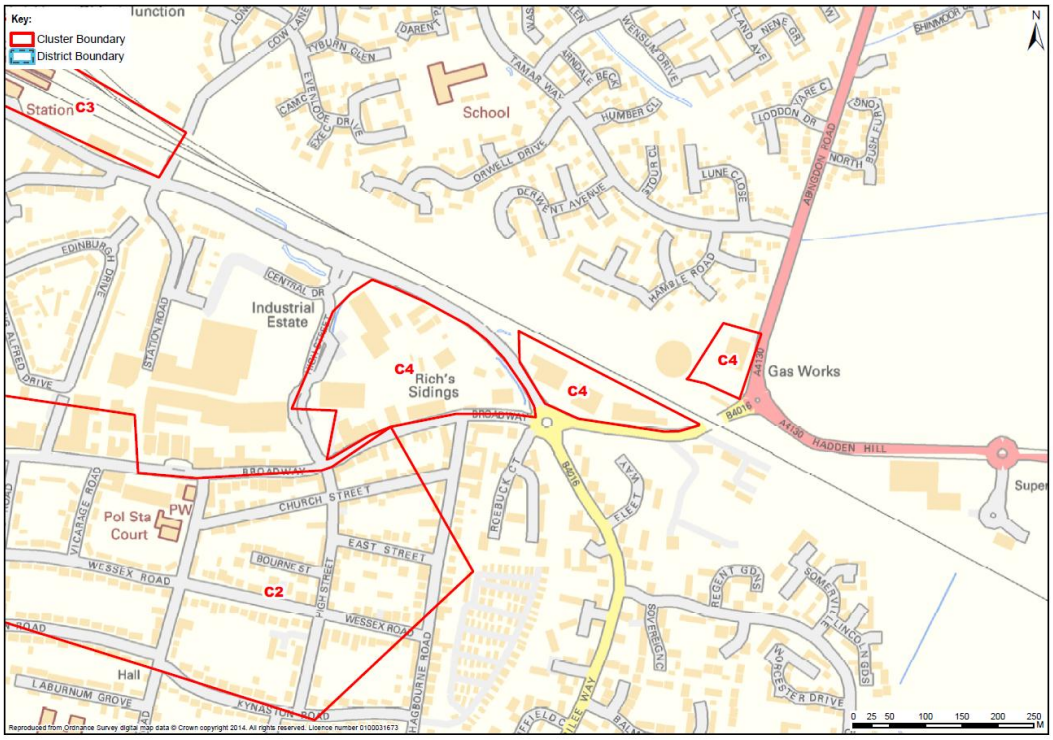


[62] Note that this boundary only includes Culham Science Centre. Culham No 1 site is located directly to the west of this cluster.

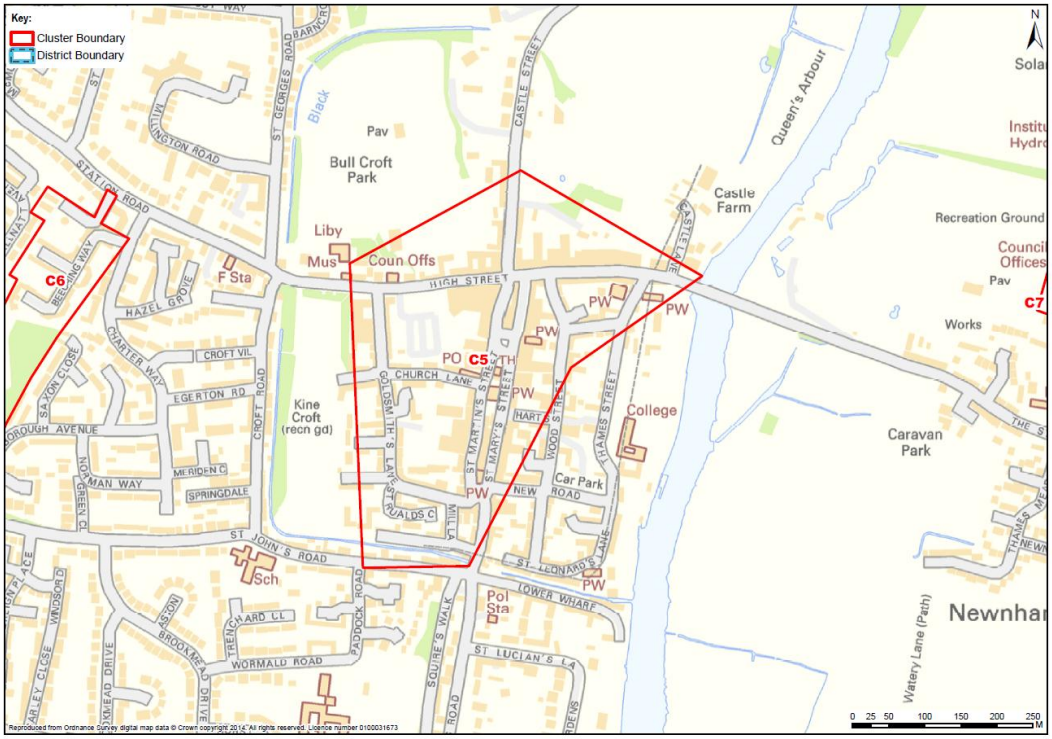
C3: Southmead Industrial Estate and Didcot Station Area



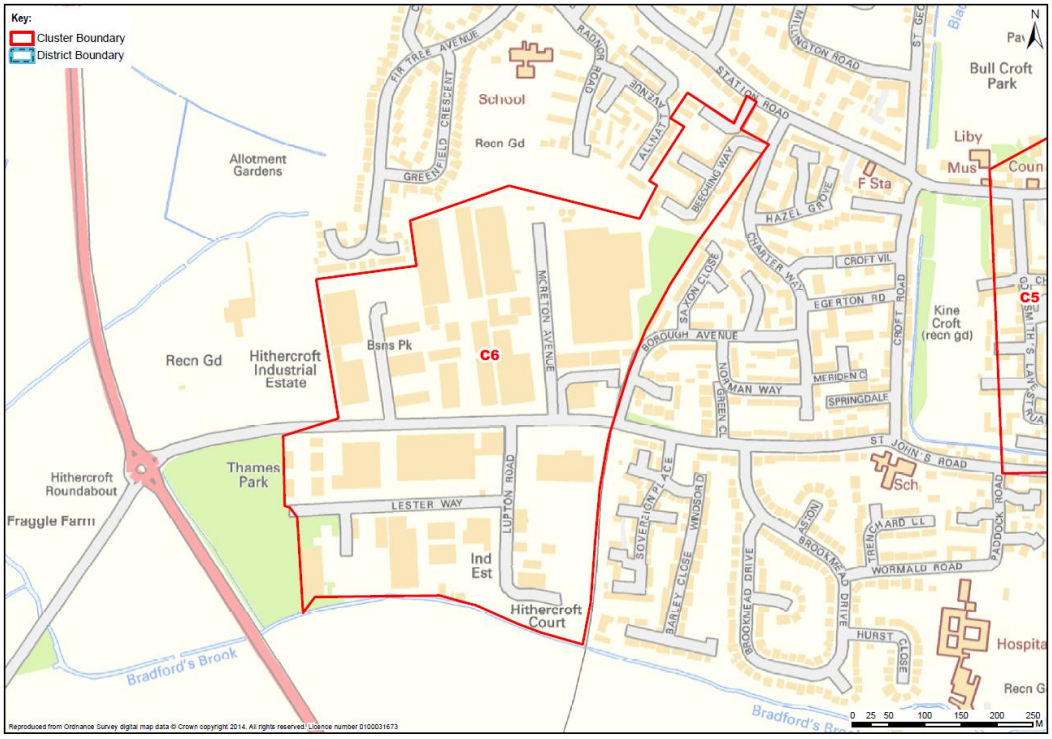
C4: Rich's Sidings, Didcot



C5: Wallingford Town Centre



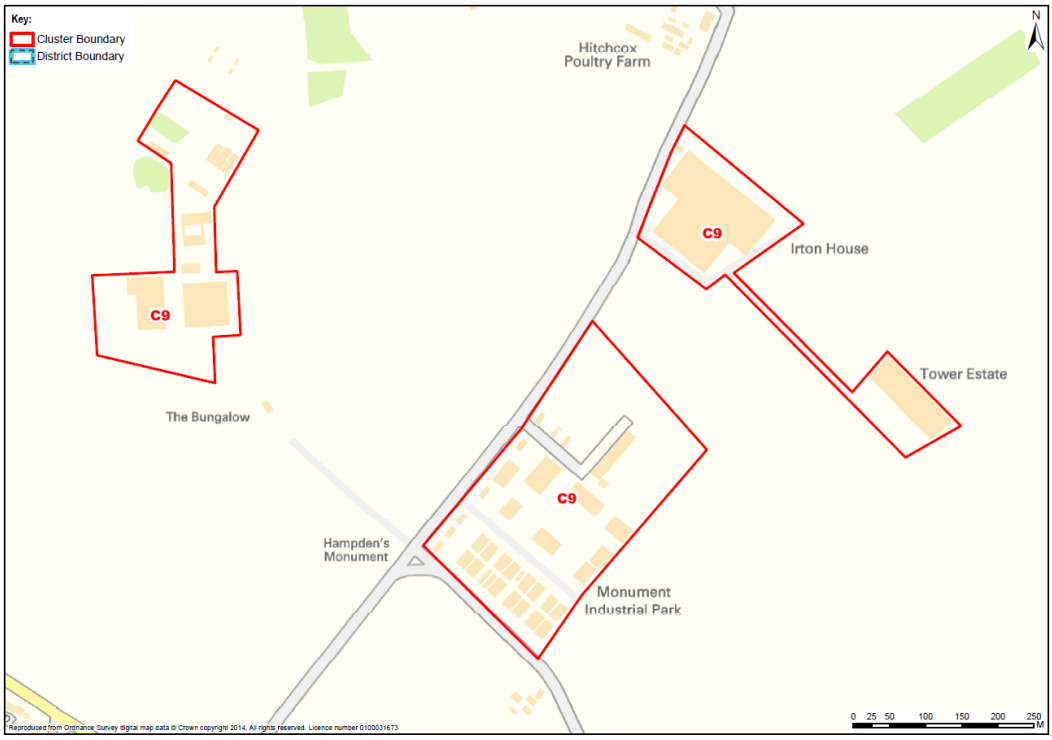
C6: Hithercroft Industrial Estate, Wallingford



C7: Crowmarsh Industrial Cluster – Howberry Park

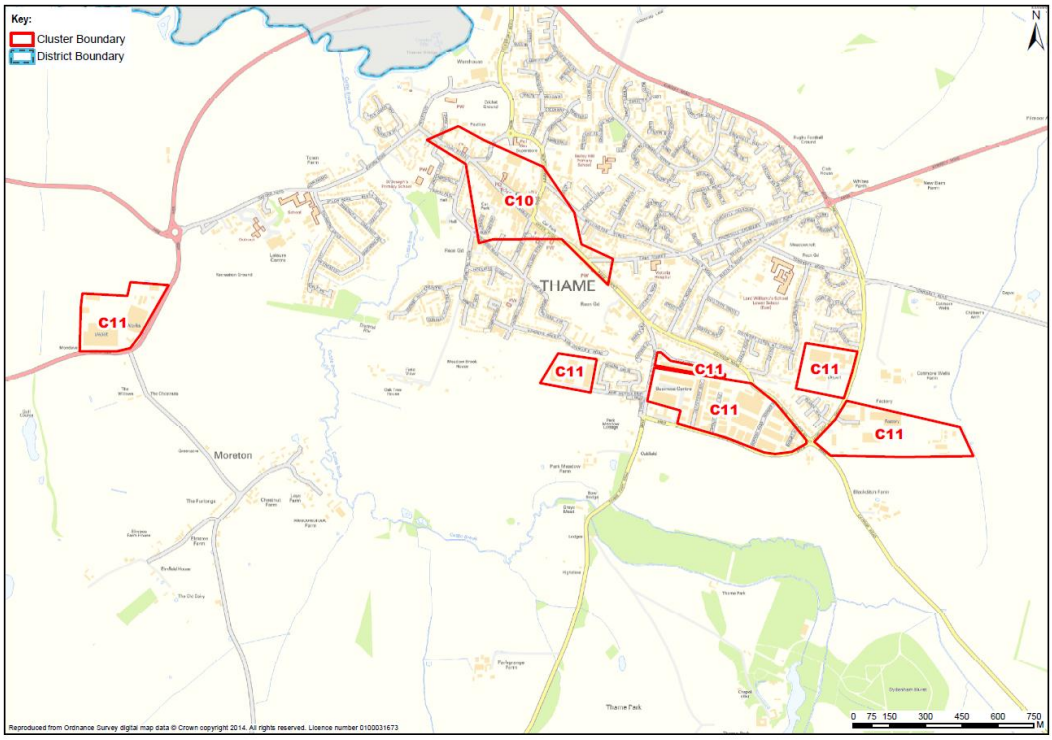
C8: Boundary Business Park, Garsington

C9: Monument Business Park, Chalgrove

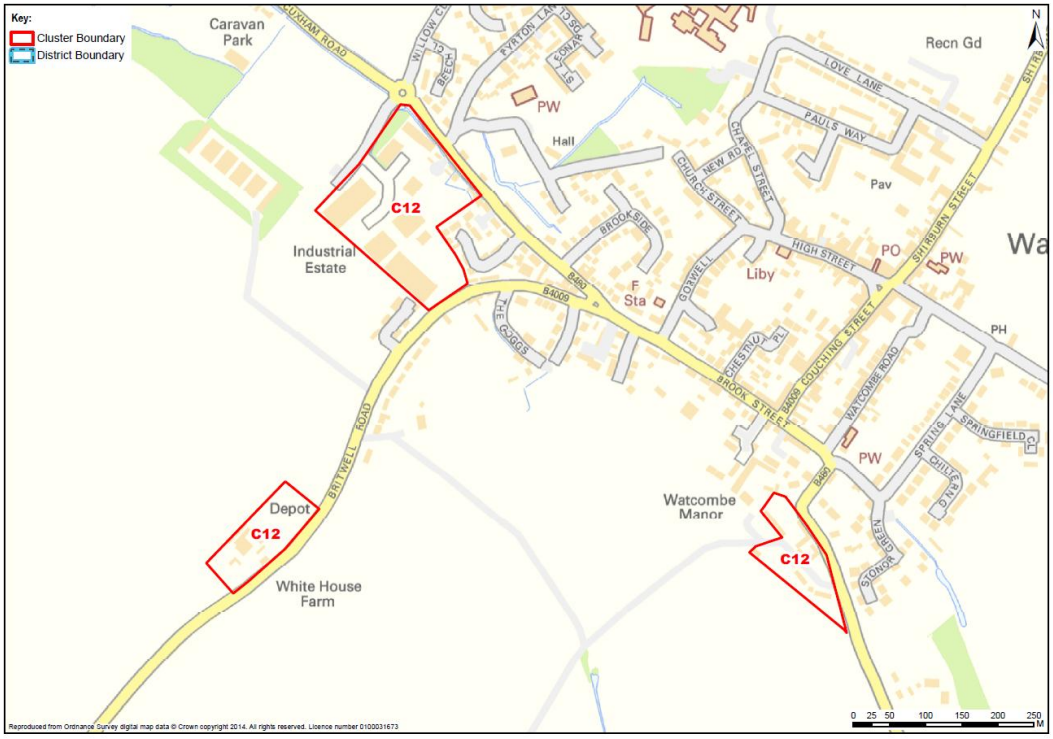


C10: Thame Town Centre

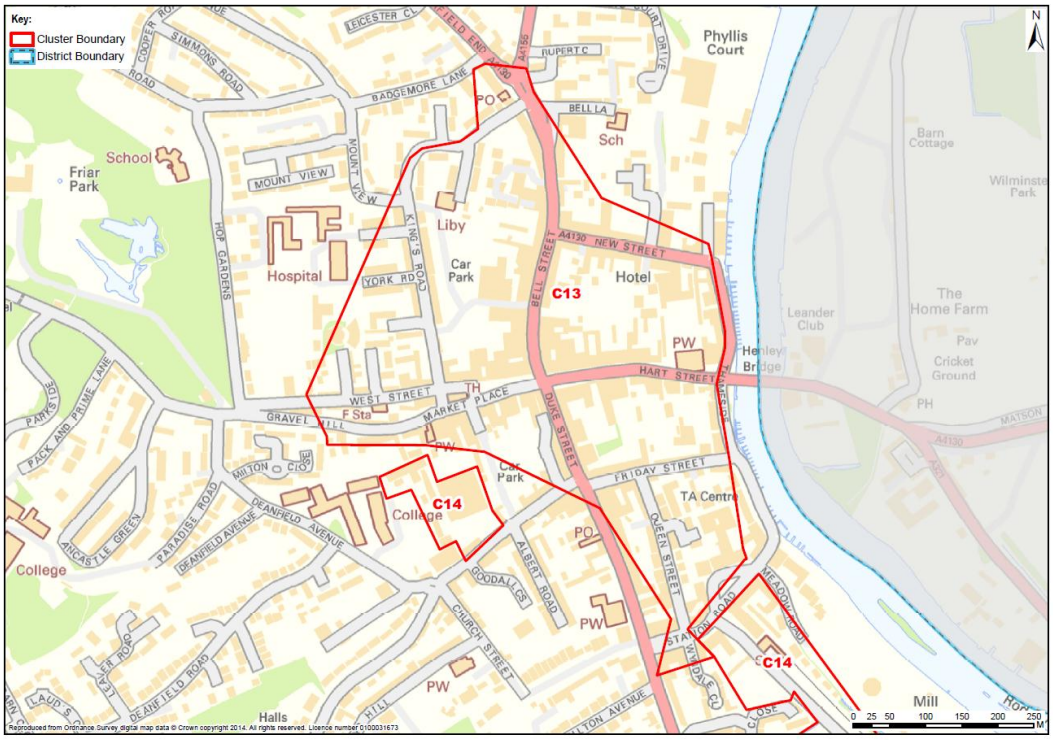
C11: Thame Industrial Cluster



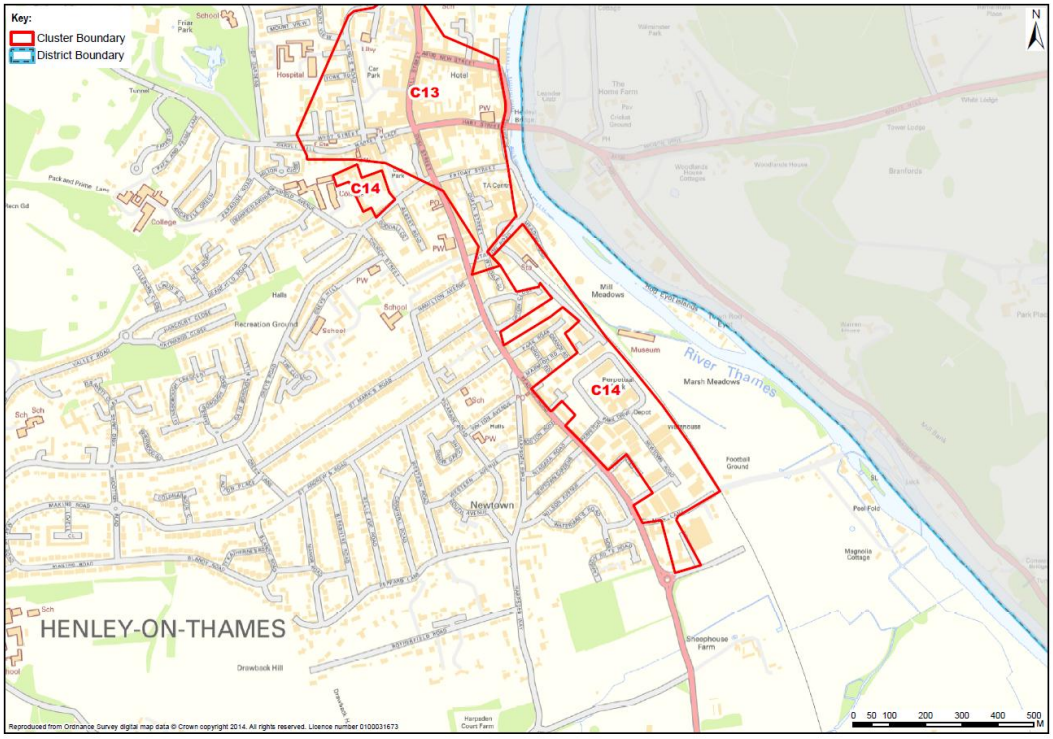
C12: Watlington Industrial Cluster



C13: Henley Town Centre



C14: Reading Road Industrial Estate, Henley-on-Thames



C15: Smith Centre, Henley-on-Thames

C16: London Road Industrial Estate Wheatley