

## Policies

There are a number of distinct strands to the employment strategy, reflecting the fact that a range of opportunities are needed if Faringdon is to attract a healthy mix of employment and enterprise.

### Existing sites

The following strategic sites currently provide an important focus for employment activities within the parish:

- 1a. Park Road Industrial Area (Regal Way)
- 1b. Park Road Industrial Area (Old Sawmills Road and Pioneer Road)

These strategic sites are safeguarded for employment use in the Vale's draft Local Plan 2031 (see Core Policy 17). It is suggested that these sites could further support the employment needs of the town through intensification.

### Policy 4.5A: Existing Employment Sites

Intensification or redevelopment of the existing industrial areas along Park Road for employment purposes will be supported where this enhances the quality of employment opportunities available, provided that the Park Road frontages are of a good quality design with an attractive landscape setting, in accordance with Policy 4.7E, and that there would be no adverse impacts on the amenities in the surrounding area.

- 1a. Park Road Industrial Area (Regal Way) - encourage Class B1 uses and trade counter style employment uses.
- 1b. Park Road Industrial Area (Old Sawmills Road and Pioneer Road) - encourage Class B1/B2/BB uses.

### Additional sites

The following sites (see also Figure 8) have been allocated or protected through the Vale of White Horse Local Plan (2011) for employment use and remain in the Local Plan 2031. They form an important basis for future employment growth:

1. 4&20 site adjacent to A420 (site 2). (Although part of this site now has outline planning permission for A1/A5 retail, but will provide ca. 120 full and part time jobs)
2. Rogers Quarry (Land south of Park Road as part of the mixed use strategic allocation - site 3)
3. Volunteer Way (site 6)

Each of these sites is essential to the town's future employment development and must be protected for such growth. Volunteer Way should be retained for B1 employment use.

Local business people feel these allocations will not bring forward the number of jobs needed locally and have therefore assessed the potential of other sites to support the employment land allocation. A set of additional sites (see Figure 8) are therefore proposed for allocation:

1. Wicklesham Quarry (site 4)
2. Land north west of Gloucester Street car park (site 5)
3. Wicklesham Farm (site 7)
4. Land behind Pioneer Road (site 1c)

Each of these sites is essential to the town's future employment development and must be protected for such growth. Some of these sites are already in employment use or allocated for such use, however the intention is to expand the scale of employment they offer.

At the Wicklesham Farm site, limited expansion would be acceptable to help address unmet demand for units here. The site contains a Grade II listed barn and granary; their setting will be conserved or enhanced.

Of the new sites, Wicklesham Quarry is considered by local stakeholders to be a significant opportunity site that would expand the provision of local jobs. Quarrying activities have finished on this site and it is now being restored to agricultural use with some woodland planting and ponds.

This is in accordance with its current permission which requires the removal of the buildings, plant, machinery and structures and the completion of restoration of the site by 30 September 2016.

However, in locational terms it is considered that this site could accommodate some employment use to provide B2/B8 industry in the town with the associated jobs. In addition, it would help to reduce the number of heavy goods vehicles and general traffic currently using Park Road. A site of this scale could also encourage new types of businesses into the parish to help diversify the range of local jobs on offer. The development of the site would need to also deliver a safe crossing over the A420 to serve pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. This is addressed in the first criterion of the policy. There would be an expectation for a pedestrian crossing of the A420 and which would need to be controlled by traffic signals. Such a pedestrian crossing would be required pursuant to a S278 agreement upon a planning application. Any development on the site would need to be sensitively designed so as to be hidden within the landscape; and, as it is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) it could only proceed following completion of a geological assessment in consultation with Natural England.

Any future proposals for employment development would need to ensure a sensitive relationship between the former quarrying restoration conditions and the scale, nature and the location of any proposed employment development within the site. Policy 4.5B requires that any employment development of the site provides access to visiting members of the public with an interest in its geological importance. This will ensure that the special geological interest is better revealed and provision made for the protection and enhancement of the geodiversity interest of Wicklesham Quarry.

The land north west of Gloucester Street car park is considered an appropriate site to be allocated, in part, for employment use (Use Class B1) and, in part, for retail use (Use Class A1) as a mixed employment and retail development bearing in mind the impact of any development on the green aspects of the site and its sensitive heritage location. Adjacent to the town centre, such uses would help support both town centre services and sustainable travel patterns. Proposals that facilitate the provision of new and enhanced pedestrian connections with the town centre will be encouraged. In this context, there is an aspiration to recreate 'Nut Walk', which would link the eastern end of the site through to the north western edge of the Market Place.

In developing the Gloucester Street site the adoption of 'Living Streets' principles will be encouraged.

The Land behind Pioneer Road (site 1c) was allocated in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan (2011) for Use Class B1 employment use and a landscape buffer. However, the emerging Local Plan 2031 does not propose to continue to allocate this site for development. It is important to maintain a variety of employment opportunities in the town and therefore the allocation of this site for B1 employment use is proposed to continue through the Neighbourhood Plan.

The employment land allocations identified in the Local Plan 2011 (as continued through to the Local Plan 2031) should be supplemented with the following sites:

#### Policy 4.5B: Wicklesham Quarry

Wicklesham Quarry will be safeguarded for employment uses (Classes B2 and B8) following the completion of quarrying and restoration activities on the site. Employment development will be supported on this site if no other suitable sites closer to the town centre are available, providing there is demonstrable need and subject to the following criteria:

- i) appropriate transport mitigation is provided; and
- ii) appropriate provision is made within the site for pedestrians and cyclists; and
- iii) the proposed employment development does not have a detrimental impact on the relationship between the site and the wider landscape in which it sits; and
- iv) appropriate ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are incorporated into the proposals; and
- v) any development would not result in demonstrable harm to the geological special interest of the site; and
- vi) employment proposals should incorporate measures to provide access to the protected site for the visiting public.

#### Policy 4.5C: Land North West of Gloucester Street Car Park

Proposals for mixed employment (Class B1) and retail (Class A1) development will be supported on the land to the north of Gloucester Street car park as shown in figure 8.

Proposals that include retail use must demonstrate no suitable and viable town centre site is available.

All proposals should comply with the following criteria:

- i) the development should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and the significance of any other heritage assets in the immediate vicinity; and
- ii) the development should safeguard the amenities of adjacent land uses; and
- iii) the development should incorporate appropriate ecological mitigation measures and compensation; and
- iv) the development should provide an acceptable drainage (surface and foul) solution; and
- v) the development should provide satisfactory access and servicing arrangements (including the provision of high quality pedestrian links to the town centre as requires by policy 4.4D)

#### Policy 4.5D: Wicklesham Farm

Limited expansion of the Wicklesham Farm site (Use Class B1) will be supported where this provides for expansion of existing uses and/or meets an identified need for units of this type in order to support the success of this location. Proposals should incorporate retention of the grade II listed barn and granary and conserve or enhance their setting. Proposals should also respect the rural location of the farm and its relationship to the wider countryside.

#### Policy 4.5E: Land behind Pioneer Road

New employment development (Use Class B1) will be supported on land behind Pioneer Road, as shown on Figure 8. A landscape buffer shall be provided between the site and the housing development to the north at Willes Close, which will be protected as open space.

Other, larger sites were considered for employment use within the town and discounted for the following reasons:

Sandhill - the area of this site next to the A420 forms part of the proposed strategic allocation in the Draft Vale Local Plan 2031 (Part 1) and is needed to protect the landscape setting of Faringdon and to provide informal open space, allotments and noise mitigation for the adjacent housing due to the proximity to the A420 (see draft Local Plan 2029 Appendix A). This Neighbourhood Plan therefore recommends that this site should be retained as a green buffer to the development edge.

There is a strong desire locally to see all potential non-residential sites, whether allocated or not, protected from residential development in the long term. Many previously identified employment sites have been developed for housing in recent years and there is a need to guard against this happening in the future.

#### **Town centre employment development**

Achieving a sustainable and viable town centre in the long term will require greater activity to achieve a critical mass within the town centre. Employment uses in and around the town centre can be important in supporting daytime activity.

The town centre already has a number of smaller businesses and opportunities should be sought to encourage further commercial uses in the town centre as this supports the vitality of the town. It is important to protect and support business growth in the centre as many sites are likely to come under pressure for housing development.

The town centre could provide an attractive location for small businesses and new business start-ups,

hence, it is recommended that opportunities to introduce more offices and employment uses into the town centre should be encouraged as part of the wider mix of uses. This approach would necessarily need to follow on from wider town centre improvements, particularly with respect to retail development, ensuring that the town centre provides an attractive option to new employers.

Where units become vacant or under-used they should be considered for employment uses as and when demand exists. This would not strictly involve allocating units for employment, but operate more as an 'employment first' policy for refurbishment proposals/change of use.

#### **Policy 4.5F: Town Centre Employment**

Subject to policies on town centre development, employment development (Use Class B1) will be supported within the town centre, particularly as part of wider mixed developments or in promoting the use of under-used space. Traffic and parking implications will need to be considered in each case and suitable solutions proposed. Contributions towards improving town centre parking will be sought. Proposals should be consistent with the other policies in the Development Plan.

### Wider parish

A series of opportunities exist in the rural parts of the parish to support enterprise and innovation:

Rural diversification – recognising the importance of local jobs in the wider parish, the policy will be to support appropriate levels of diversification with a particular emphasis on tourism.

Existing farms – existing agricultural businesses will be supported and encouraged to expand/diversify to support long term economic viability.

Redundant farm buildings - the conversion of redundant older farm buildings for enterprise space, workshops and tourism development will be encouraged, provided they can be clearly identified as surplus to agricultural requirements.

### Policy 4.5G: Rural Diversification

Diversification of existing farms will be supported through the reuse, conversion or adaptation of existing buildings and potential new build where economic benefits can be demonstrated, and where proposals do not negatively affect the landscape character or historical or architectural significance. New development must be sensitively designed and be of appropriate character with respect to the local context.







<sup>13</sup>Census 2011 Tenure - Households (QS405EW)

<sup>14</sup>Dwelling stock by Council tax band Mar 2011, last updated April 2012; Valuation Office Agency

## "A parish where all can afford to live on a safe and attractive street in a good sized house with a garden"

### 4.6 FAMILY HOUSING

#### Context

The different phases of housing development through the twentieth century and into the last decade each have a distinct character and built form. Thus, away from Faringdon's historic core, there is generally a predominance of family housing, set within relatively generous streets and with front and rear gardens. It is important that new housing is provided in a manner that meets the needs of the town.

Faringdon is a growing town; the draft Local Plan makes provision for significant new housing development to the south and south-west of the town centre. The planned housing growth is to be accepted if only to support the provision of local services and encourage a more successful town centre. It is hoped that a larger town population will help to sustain a more vibrant mix of shops and services. This will, however, require significant investment in community infrastructure and particularly in the provision of school places.

At the 2011 census, Faringdon had 1.5 times the proportion of affordable/ social housing when compared to the Vale average<sup>13</sup>. This reflects the historic development of public sector housing. Careful consideration needs to be given to the proportion of affordable housing in any new development to ensure that it helps to meet local (Faringdon) needs.

Within the provision of affordable housing, there should also be a broad mix of types to suit local needs, including social rented accommodation and options such as shared equity to enable local people to own their own homes.

Left: Examples of existing suburban housing in Faringdon

Local stakeholders have suggested there is a need for larger homes for private sale, developed to provide the full range of housing in the town. The Evidence Base Review highlights the comparative lack of housing in Council Tax bands F, G and H<sup>14</sup>. Such housing would meet the needs of executives employed in and around the local area.

The ideas of connectivity and integration expressed in other parts of this Neighbourhood Plan should also extend to the provision of all new housing, with a strong preference for much greater 'pepper-potting' of social housing.

Guidance on the design of housing in Faringdon is included in section 4.7.

#### Objectives

The following statements have been drawn from local input to date and define the aspirations for housing in the parish:

- Faringdon should remain a comfortable, quietish, pleasant place and not sprawl outside the proposed boundary of development as set out in the Vale Local Plan 2031.
- Any future residential development outside the town, within the rest of the parish, should be limited to meeting identified rural need or as provided for in the policies of the Development Plan.
- Faringdon should have a good choice of housing that meets local need.

## Policies

There is a strong desire to limit any further residential development in the parish although it is accepted that a number of sites are proposed for residential development in the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031. Future development should be consistent with the Local Plan, and should be delivered at a slow and steady rate of growth to avoid the town getting too big, too quickly.

It is recommended that a review of the town and the services should be carried out every five years. Following the review, an Action Plan will consider the state of the town and the benefits and impact of growth.

The policies set out in Section 4.1 of the Neighbourhood Plan will limit growth in the town and ensure any future residential development is kept within the development boundary except where allocated in the Vale Local Plan 2031.

## Housing balance

The town of Faringdon provides a variety of housing styles ranging from historic cottages around the town centre to suburban type housing in more modern developments. However, there is a need both to achieve a better balance in the overall housing mix in the parish. This involves diversifying the choice of housing to include for a number of larger properties in the town as well as providing for those on lower incomes through affordable housing.

The nature and range of affordable housing has changed significantly since the bulk of social housing was built in the parish.

Today there are the following types of affordable housing:

- Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.
- Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).
- Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

(Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as 'low cost market' housing, are not affordable housing for planning purposes.)

<sup>15</sup>Dwelling stock by Council tax band Mar 2011, last updated April 2012; Valuation Office Agency

<sup>16</sup>Census 2011 Living Arrangements (QS108EW)

<sup>17</sup>42% (34% in the Vale of White Horse)

<sup>18</sup>Census 2011 Age structure (KS102EW)

The comparative lack of housing in Council Tax bands F, G and H<sup>15</sup> means that housing is needed at the larger end of the spectrum to provide a more varied choice for existing and new residents, and to harmonise Faringdon's housing mix with that of the Vale of White Horse.

At the same time there is a need for one and two bedroom homes. The 2011 census reported that 36% of Faringdon's population lived alone<sup>16</sup>; and although less than the national average<sup>17</sup>, this need should be catered for, particularly because of the increased number of service personnel living in Faringdon as a result of the expansion of RAF Brize Norton.

Additionally, the 2011 census showed that Faringdon had a higher proportion of those aged 85-plus than either the District or England<sup>18</sup>; hence, the need for adequate accommodation for the elderly in the form of sheltered housing, extra care housing and other models.

Opportunities exist for both sensitive infill development through to town expansion in delivering new areas of family housing. New developments, therefore, should offer a range of housing to suit all needs and all generations.

#### Policy 4.6A: Housing Balance

New developments should deliver a range of housing types that meet local parish needs. Proposals that provide for a range of housing types including larger houses and accommodation for the elderly will be supported.

The mix of housing should reflect or improve on the character of the immediate area and be based on current and future demographic trends, market trends, and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, service families, people of all ages with disabilities, older people, and people wishing to build their own homes) as specified in the up to date VoWH Housing Needs Assessment and 2014 Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

The following section deals with the design of housing in more detail, but some key factors are noted here:

- Affordable housing should be distributed in sensible management clusters through new developments and should be indistinguishable from market housing.
- The density of new housing is of particular concern and stakeholders would prefer to see lower density development.

Further information and guidance on design is set out in section 4.7.

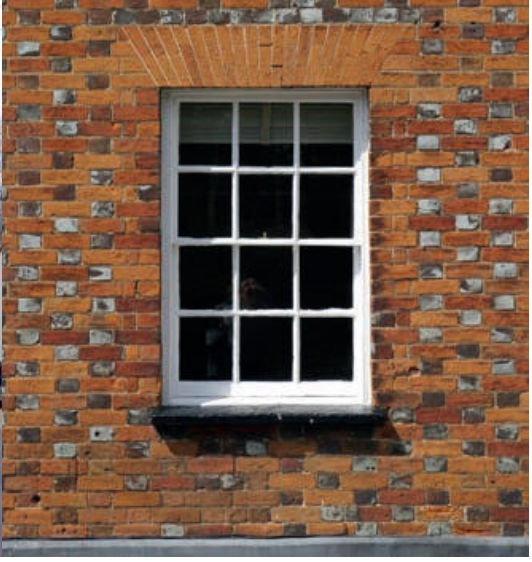
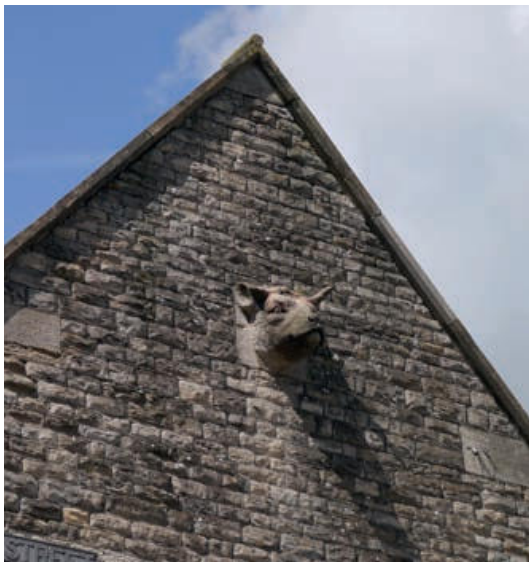
### Facilitating resident aspirations

Stakeholder engagement has identified a need for more encouraging policies towards self-build housing. Local people would prefer to see smaller scale residential developments and the scope for individual or group led self-build projects could give local people a chance to deliver the housing they want to see.

#### Policy 4.6B: Self-build Housing

Self-build housing projects will be supported in appropriate locations and in line with national and local planning policy.





<sup>19</sup><http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/oxfordshire/great+faringdon>

<sup>20</sup><http://towns.org.uk/market-town-awards/market-town-awards-2012/>

## "A parish which values its distinctive character, cherishes its historic assets and demands locally appropriate design"

### 4.7 DESIGN

#### Context

The parish exhibits a strong character with much of the area's history still very evident through an extensive stock of old and listed buildings as well as networks of historic streets and spaces, and attractive countryside. There are 134 listed buildings in Great Faringdon<sup>19</sup> including the landmark Folly Tower. In 2012, the Folly Regeneration Project, including the tower and its associated woodland, was the joint winner of the Environment and Culture Category in the Action for Market Towns' South of England zone. It then went on to win the Action for Market Towns' National Award<sup>20</sup> for the Most Highly Transferable Project, out of the twenty zonal category winners, and over 1000 entrants, at the awards ceremony in Kendal.

A schedule of the Listed Buildings in Great Faringdon is included as Appendix F to the Evidence Base Review. Of these All Saints' Church, Faringdon House and the part of Radcot Bridge in Great Faringdon are Grade I listed; the Old Town Hall and Sudbury House are Grade II\*; the rest are Grade II listed. There are also two scheduled monuments (Radcot Bridge and the Wyke monastic grange and section of 18th century turnpike road). A small part of the adjacent grade II\* Registered Historic Park and Garden (Buscot Park) lies within the parish in Eaton Woods. The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record has a more comprehensive list of archaeological and historical buildings within the parish and an Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment is currently underway.

As yet, no buildings or features of local interest that are important in a local context as nationally listed buildings have been identified in Faringdon. The Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 indicates that the Local Plan Part 2 may provide a set of criteria for identifying non-designated assets. This process can be undertaken as part of the Action Plan.

There is a need to raise the standard of design across the town for both new housing and commercial developments. Any new development must be absolutely appropriate to the Faringdon context, whether location, scale, density, layout, materials or visual appearance.

New housing should be required to respond to the town context. In central areas, and particularly within and close to the Conservation Area, there will be an expectation that housing will closely reflect the nature of the historic buildings in form, materials, scale and massing. In areas away from the town centre, and particularly in new areas of expansion, the expectation is that the character should be more open and spacious with an emphasis on family housing.

New commercial building should be treated similarly. Most commercial building is on Park Road, one of the main approach roads into the town, and displays a variety in both character and quality.

Left: Examples of historic character in Faringdon





In addition to ensuring new development is in keeping with local character, the Conservation Area itself needs attention in terms of maintenance. The street care in the Conservation Area is in some places not as good as it should be. There are weeds on the streets and around trees; verges and open spaces are not always well cared for. All this leads to an uncared-for look to the town, and this needs to be reversed. Some protection is in place through the VWHDC planning guidance for conservation areas, but there are buildings and areas in much need of improvement.

In summary, Faringdon is an historic market town, and as such needs to be developed and maintained appropriately. Its history and buildings are a substantial part of its uniqueness.

### **Objectives**

The following statements have been drawn from local input to date and define the aspirations for housing and non-residential development design in the parish:

- All new development must be in keeping with local character, the design process should be clearly influenced by an analysis of local context.
- Housing developments should be steered by local parish need and form attractive family friendly streets and neighbourhoods.
- New areas of housing must connect clearly with the rest of the town.
- A review of the Conservation Area should inform revisions to the boundary and actions

Left: Large commercial buildings can have a significant impact on the roofscape of the town and key views

to improve the appearance and maintenance of buildings and spaces.

- All new developments should seek to respect the setting of heritage assets in the Parish and to avoid harm to their significance.

### **Policies**

The following policy stances are set out to support high quality design and maintenance in the parish.

#### **Character and identity**

Faringdon sits on the point of transition between two significant geological areas; the soft, warm stone of the Cotswolds that can be seen in towns like Burford to the north, and the chalk downs to the south where towns such as Marlborough are dominated by brick and flint buildings. It also has its own unique geological character from the coral-rich limestone of the Golden Ridge that extends from Swindon towards Oxford. As a consequence, the buildings of Faringdon feature an eclectic mix of materials and treatments with brick and stone alike used for both significant and humble buildings. Render is also common in the town, often painted and sometimes featuring strong colours, which adds vibrancy.

Roof materials also vary. Cotswold Stone roofs are most likely to be found on stone buildings and tend to have a steeper pitch than slate roofs that tend to be more common on brick buildings. As a consequence of having steeper roof pitches, the stone roofs are also more likely than slate roofs to feature small dormer windows for accommodation in the roof space. Roofscape is important to the character of Faringdon, particularly given the views over

the town from surrounding hills. As with most traditional town centres, the varied shapes and pitches of the roofs and also the strong chimneys are important elements in the visual appeal of Faringdon.

Any new development should consider how this mix of local character can be reflected in a convincing way without resorting to pastiche. This should particularly apply to the pairing of appropriate wall and roof materials and consideration of how roof pitch varies in response to the material used.

New developments should be constructed in such a way as to minimize their impact on the environment. Resource efficiency in both construction and operation should be a priority, and minimum standards required by legislation should be exceeded where possible.

#### Policy 4.7A: Materials and Roofscape

New buildings should be constructed using sympathetic building materials in keeping with the local character and styles in the town and parish. The roofscape should be designed with careful regard for the potential impacts on the townscape and the surrounding landscape. In the case of residential development, regard must be had to the up-to-date Residential Design Guide SPD produced by the Vale of White Horse District Council.

#### Policy 4.7B: Resource Consumption

All new buildings and major refurbishments should minimise their energy, water and resource consumption and, where possible, exceed the minimum standards set by legislation. District heating schemes will be strongly supported. New developments should provide sufficient space for recycling and composting containers in order to encourage recycling and composting through the District Council schemes or home composting for garden use.

#### Town centre development

Faringdon benefits from a cohesive town centre with a strong legacy of historic buildings. A large portion of the town centre is covered by a conservation area, hence, there are few opportunities for residential infill development. Any new development should respect the scale, proportions and character of the existing historic fabric.

### Conservation Area

One of Faringdon's most distinctive features is the attractive historic town centre with its market square and charming network of streets. This is reflected in the definition of the Conservation Area, which covers the town centre and extends out to include the Folly and its setting. It is felt that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the quality and management of the Conservation Area to ensure that this is protected and enhanced. In particular a conservation area appraisal is needed along with a management plan to guide any change.

As part of this process the Conservation Area boundary should be reviewed and where the findings indicate that it should be altered, the Town Council will work with the District to facilitate the changes. Local stakeholders have suggested the following areas that may be considered for inclusion in the Conservation Area:

- The part of Coxwell Road including the former Cottage Hospital;
- Bromsgrove, including The Swan Public House;
- Station Road and the old railway station buildings;
- The old school house on Stanford Road;
- The original school building at the Infant School; and parts of Ferndale Street.

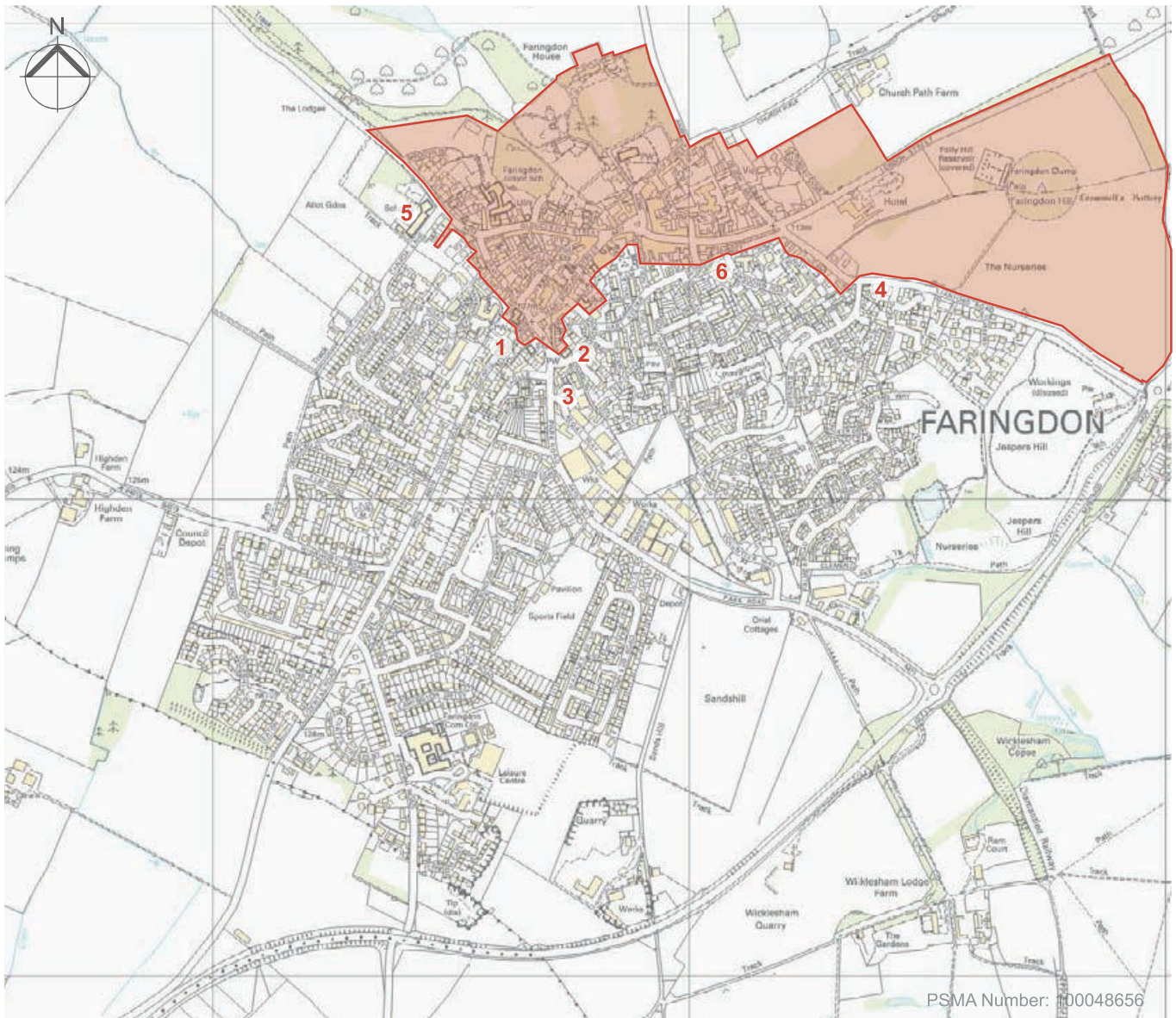
### New areas of housing

New housing development away from the town centre should feel distinctly different from the historic area. The nature of the development should learn from the best suburban forms such as the garden city movement and pre-war suburbs to create attractive environments for family housing. Development should decrease in scale and density closer to the edge of the settlement area to provide a clear transition between the heart of the town and the rural hinterland.

Residential areas should be intimate in scale to promote a sense of community, although they should create a connected network rather than being designed as insular cul-de-sacs. Housing should be laid out in a perimeter block format that creates a clear distinction between the street and the private spaces within the block without leaving rear boundaries exposed.

The creation of pleasant streets should be a priority, with predominantly two storey buildings arranged to face onto them as part of a consistent building line. Homes should usually have front gardens with a clear boundary feature. Rear gardens should be large enough to provide usable family space. Parking should be provided for each dwelling within the plot, and garages should be set back from the building line so that they do not dominate the street scene. Streets should be sufficiently wide to allow for vehicles to pass easily as well as allow for informal on-street parking and some street tree planting.

Figure 9: Faringdon Conservation area and location of potential additional areas



KEY

Faringdon Conservation Area



- 1. Coxwell Street/Road including the former Cottage Hospital
- 2. Bromsgrove including the Swan Public House
- 3. Station Road and the old railway station buildings

- 4. The old school house on Stanford Road
- 5. The original Infant School
- 6. Parts of Ferndale Street

<sup>21</sup>Further details can be found at [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com).

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The buildings should reflect the range of materials and forms found in Faringdon's traditional buildings, but should not resort to pastiche. As with all new developments in the town, each development must make every conceivable effort to reduce resource consumption through the design.

Following the public consultation, Thames Valley Police made a recommendation in which they suggest adoption of principles of Secured by Design (SBD)<sup>21</sup>. SBD is an Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) initiative, which has a proven track record in assisting with the creation of safer places by providing guidance on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), and by requiring a minimum set of standards on physical security measures. Independent academic research shows that it can reduce burglary by up to 75% and vehicle crime by 25%.

The scheme comes in two parts; an SBD Award, which is achieved by whole developments that demonstrate conformity to design principles and security standards across the entire site and, Part Two compliance that is achieved when the physical features (windows, doors, locks etc) of the structures themselves meet specified, Police preferred standards.

Although an award can be more difficult to achieve at times and may require negotiation, achievement of Part Two compliance is simply a matter of supplying and fitting the required features to accepted and tested specifications.

Local stakeholders have indicated a desire to see new housing developed with the following qualities:

- Family homes should ideally have enough space to enable food preparation and storage, and for a family to be able to eat together.
- Family homes should have both front and back gardens and a minimum of two parking spaces. Garages must be of an appropriate size to support both parking and storage.
- The density of housing developments should be consistent with Development Plan policies.
- Housing should be of a mix of sizes and styles appropriate to local need and context.
- Affordable housing should not be distinguishable from market housing.
- Smaller houses and flats should be designed so as to be suitable for an ageing population, with regard for Lifetime Homes standards.
- All new developments should be well linked by foot and cycle to the town centre and schools.
- The scale of new housing should be limited to one or two storeys.

#### Policy 4.7C: Housing Design

Each new housing development should respond to its local context through appropriate use of scale, form, height, detailing and materials. Exceptions will be made for outstanding or innovative design in accordance with paragraph 63 of the NPPF.

The density of development should be consistent with the character of the immediate area and with the Development Plan.

All new development should be well linked by foot and cycle connections to the town centre and schools.

#### Policy 4.7D: Secured by Design

All developments should incorporate the principles of Secured by Design (SBD) and, where appropriate, seek to achieve SBD accreditation to ensure that a safe and sustainable community is maintained.

#### Non-residential development

Development of larger buildings, particularly those for commercial or industrial use, needs to be undertaken both with care and a concern for the wider setting and the impact that they may have on the overall character of the town.

The principal approach into Faringdon from the A420 is along Park Road, the location of significant existing and planned business development. It is, therefore, vital that a high design standard is achieved for these buildings as they will play a substantial part in defining first impressions of Faringdon for many visitors. Whilst large format buildings that try to take on traditional forms are often regarded as unsuccessful, good quality modern design that makes reference to local themes will be expected.

#### Visual impact

Several of the key sites, including the Wicklesham Quarry site and the proposed Sandshill development to the north of the A420, are visible from elevated vantage points such as Folly Hill and the Folly Tower. Protecting views from these locations needs careful management. The integration of any development with the landscape and particularly the nature of the roof forms will play an important role in achieving successful development. Initiatives such as green roofs and photovoltaic arrays will also be encouraged where they do not conflict with key views of the town's roofscape or harm either the setting of listed buildings or the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Householders in the Conservation Area have had requests to install satellite dishes rejected even though they are not visible from the road. This facility is needed because Folly Hill obscures the signal with the result that television and radio reception in certain parts of Faringdon is unobtainable from the Oxford transmitter. (Some residents can only get reception from the Mendip (Bristol) transmitter and FM and DAB radio reception may be only possible with an external aerial.) Because of these reception difficulties in certain parts of the Conservation Area it is recommended that the Local Planning Authority recognises the problem and grants approval in those circumstances where aerials and satellite dishes are not visible from the public highway.

#### Policy 4.7E: Visual Impact

All alterations or new build of commercial buildings, and especially those that are publicly visible or that form gateways to Faringdon, should be of a scale and form appropriate to their location and landscape setting and should create a high quality environment combining the best modern design with local influences.





## 4.8 ENSURING APPROPRIATE SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

An important principle that underlines the acceptance of any further residential development is the need for all types of supporting infrastructure to keep pace with the projected growth in population. Historically, the town has seen significant housing development without the infrastructure to match; this practice must be reversed and guarded against in the future. This section outlines all the required elements including the transport needs highlighted in 4.3. In summary these are principally

- Improvements to bus services including a long distance coach stop.
- Better access to the rail network through the re-opening of a railway station at either Grove or Challow with bus and cycle links
- Provision of new cycle routes and parking.
- Public realm improvements in the town centre / Conservation Area including enhanced pedestrian routes to the Tesco store.
- Improved road, footpath and cycleway linkages to sport and leisure facilities.
- Provision of additional parking facilities, including coach parking
- Enhanced pedestrian access routes into the wider countryside.
- Provision of new school places in line with Faringdon Academy of Schools policy.
- Enhancement and maintenance of Faringdon Country Park in liaison with existing land owners and operators.
- Improved sport and leisure provision
- Additional allotments.
- Increased youth provision in the town including a new facility located more centrally in the town.
- Improved health infrastructure including additional social / health facilities and services to meet the needs of an increasing population.
- Greater provision of extra care accommodation, and enhanced elderly care linked to a new health and well-being centre.
- The provision of intermediate and respite care for local residents.
- New and improved community facilities including a community centre and entertainment venue.
- A new museum or visitor centre to support tourism.
- Infrastructure to support the sale and storage of local produce.

### Policy 4.8A: Improving the Infrastructure

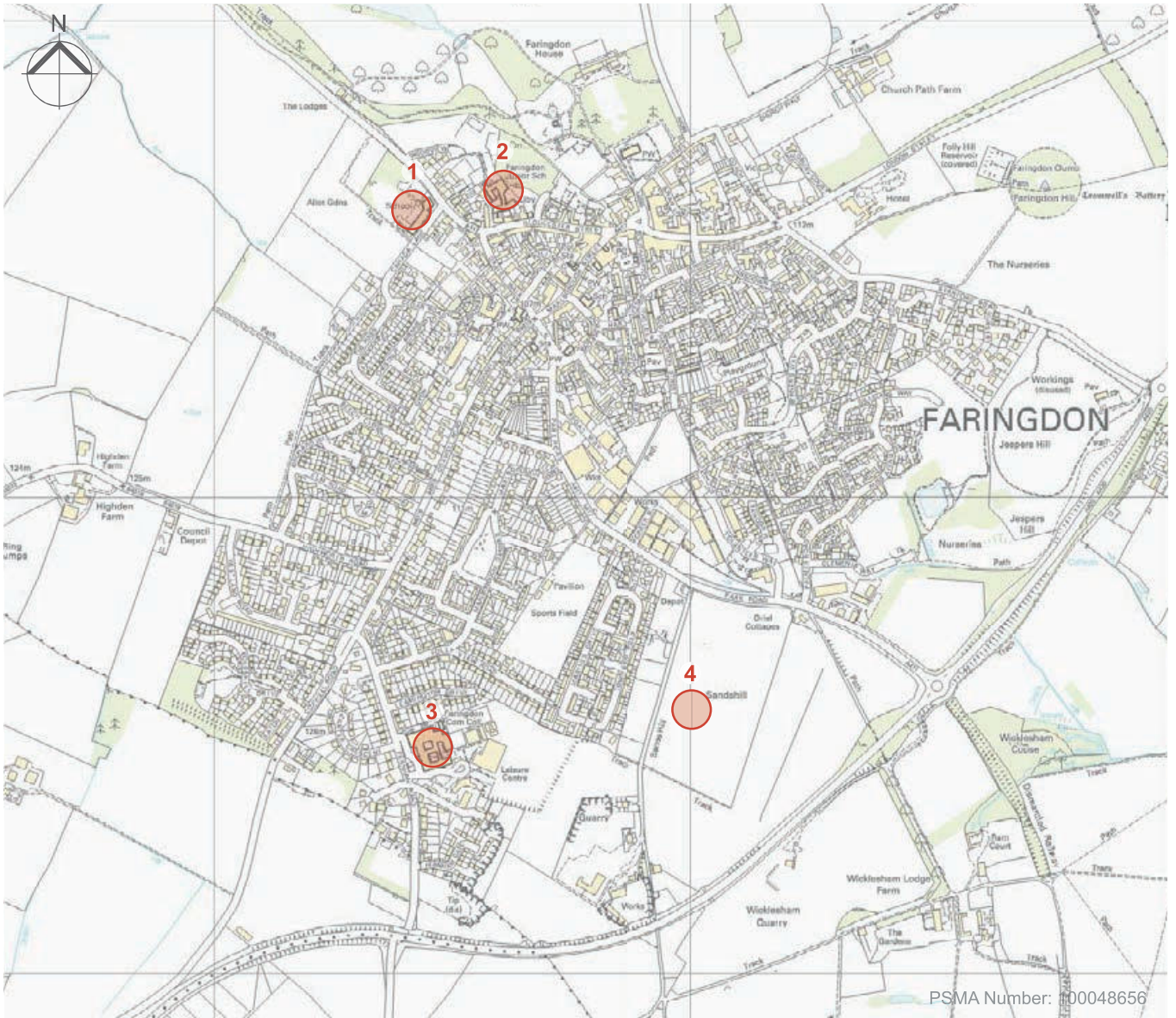
All qualifying developments will be required to demonstrate provision of appropriate new facilities on site and provision of, or contributions towards, off-site facilities in order for the development to be sustainably accommodated. This will be secured through the use of planning conditions, planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy if and when adopted by the Vale of White Horse District Council.

### Utilities Infrastructure

Developers must ensure that they liaise with utility providers at the earliest opportunity in order to discuss existing capacity, additional infrastructure requirements and technical issues so that developments can proceed in a timely fashion and without unplanned delays.

Left: View from Folly Tower looking west

Figure 10: Existing and potential school locations:



KEY

Existing and potential school locations



1. Existing Faringdon Infant School

2. Existing Faringdon Junior School

3. Existing Faringdon Community College

4. Approximate location for potential new primary school

# "A parish where every child can go to school in the town and benefit from a high quality education"

## 4.9 SCHOOL PROVISION

### Context

Faringdon benefits from three schools that provide statutory education from infant school (reception) to sixth form (Year 13). These are managed collectively by the Faringdon Academy of Schools.

At present there is an infant school on Lechlade Road that feeds into a junior school located off Gloucester Street, both of which can be reached easily from the town centre. The Community College is located off Fernham Road on a site shared with the local leisure centre.

As part of the plan to be a family-friendly town, there is a strong desire to ensure that Faringdon provides a school place in the town for every local child that needs one. This is a key objective of the Faringdon Academy of Schools.

The key issue relating to education in Faringdon is the rapid expansion of housing in and around the town and the resulting pressure this puts on the provision of school places at both primary and secondary level.

### Academy Strategy Consultation 2013

In tandem with the Neighbourhood Plan process the Faringdon Academy of Schools carried out a public consultation in 2013 on their long-term strategy, for addressing the issue of expanding school provision to meet the planned growth in population in and around Faringdon. The Academy strategy was supported through this consultation.

The main driver of the Academy strategy is to meet the substantial growth in demand for school places in Faringdon schools that is predicted in the coming years. Following the public consultation that took place between March and June 2013 the preferred option for future educational provision in Faringdon has been set. The educational plans have been developed in close collaboration with Oxfordshire County Council's Schools Organisation and Planning Team and meet Department for Education requirements.

The strategy is based on converting the current Junior School into a Two Form Entry Primary School and transferring the Infant School to a new site on the other end of the town and expanding it to become a second Two Form Entry Primary School. Secondary provision will also be significantly increased and the aim is to have an Eight Form Entry capacity achieved through a staged build programme. The aim is to increase by half the primary provision and increase secondary places by approximately a third over the next 10-15 years.

### Academy Expansion

In November 2013 the Faringdon Academy of Schools expanded to become an eight school multi-academy trust with Shrivenham Primary, Watchfield Primary, John Blandy Primary, Longcot & Fernham Primary and Buckland Primary joining the three Faringdon Schools.

### **Developments since the Strategy Consultation**

The recent growth in potential housing developments in the area has led to further thought being given to the need for expanding schools. It may be that they need to expand beyond that identified in the Faringdon Education Strategy 2013, in particular the expansion of the Community College will need to take into account housing developments not only in Faringdon, but also in other surrounding places. The Academy will continue to work with Oxfordshire County Council's education team and the Vale of White Horse planning team to increase the provision of school places. Funding for the increase in school capacity to meet the significant growth in school places is an area of concern. It will require finance from a number of sources being made available, including developer Section 106 contributions, OCC basic needs funding and central Department of Education grants through the EFA (Education Funding Agency.)

### **Issues that Arise**

At the point that the Infant School moves to a new site, the current site reverts to Oxfordshire County Council ownership. This raises a question of the potential usage of this land within the Neighbourhood Plan scope. A range of uses may be acceptable on the part of the site located within the development boundary although it is accepted that, from an educational perspective, it is desired to have the funding from the site disposal to contribute toward the project costs of developing additional places in our Faringdon schools.

### **Policy 4.9A: Infant School Site**

Should the Infant School on Canada Lane become vacant, proposals to reuse the existing buildings for community use will be supported. The site presents opportunities for additional low key, sensitively designed, development on that part of the site within the development boundary.

All future uses and/or development must pay special regard to the desire to preserve the historic character of the School site and its low density edge of settlement location. Any new development should be complementary to the community use of the principal building. Proposals that enhance the character and setting will be supported.

Faringdon Town Council expects that any proposals for the redevelopment/reuse of the School site (including the playing field and wooded area) will be made in consultation with the local community. There is strong support in the community for a pre-school facility to remain in the town. The Town Council will work with the Academy and other stakeholders to achieve this objective.

Right: View of the Faringdon Infant School site from Highworth Road





<sup>22</sup><http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parkour>: practitioners aim to get from A to B in the most efficient way possible, using only their bodies and their surroundings to propel themselves while maintaining as much momentum as is possible in a safe manner.

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## "A town where you can learn any sport, at any age, choose from a range of attractive walks or simply relax in a local park"

### 4.10 SPORT AND LEISURE

#### Context

##### Existing provision

Faringdon offers a wide range of sport and leisure opportunities to local people, ranging from formal indoor and outdoor sports through to more informal walking and cycling routes that take in the countryside around the town. The town has a Leisure Centre with sports facilities and swimming pool; the Pump House Project provides a Parkour<sup>22</sup> (free-running) facility and other activities for young people in the old Theatre and the Town Council provides a frequent cinema in the Corn Exchange.

Pitches for organised sports are concentrated in various locations - at the Leisure Centre located with the Community College, Tucker Park, the Bowls Club, the Municipal Tennis Courts, and the Country Park to the east of the town centre. The facilities by the A420 include a cricket pitch and clubhouse, rugby pitch, tennis courts and a skate park.

Green spaces are located across the town and are important resources for local residents of all ages. There is a need to protect these resources for future generations. Opportunities to extend green space provision and the facilities they contain should be encouraged, particularly in the face of planned housing growth.

##### Faringdon Country Park / Folly Woodland

It is proposed that the new sports facilities to the south east of the town and the landscape around them should be defined as a new Faringdon Country Park. This would take in a range of landscape types including farmland, sports facilities and uncultivated areas and offer a co-ordinated network of walks and leisure activities with the Folly Tower and Woodland as the centrepiece.

Such a facility would allow the incorporation of activities for older children, such as an adventure playground. This will provide an attractive resource for local people and draw in families from outside the parish, thereby increasing the visitor numbers to the town. Any development of the Country Park would need to happen in close liaison with existing landowners and occupiers to ensure activities such as farming are suitably accommodated.

##### Access to the wider countryside

The Country Park could provide a stepping stone for residents and visitors to enjoy the wider landscape and countryside around Faringdon. Enhancing existing footpaths and promoting circular walking / cycling routes will help to increase the usage and appeal of the attractive countryside on Faringdon's doorstep. The local Farcycles group has promoted a family-friendly 12 mile circular cycle route that should be supported as a future asset. Enhancing the safety of pedestrian and cycle crossing points across the A420 will also support access to the countryside to the south of the town beyond the proposed Country Park.

Left: Rugby on the Country Park below Folly Hill

Figure 11: Faringdon Country Park with Folly Tower, woodland and surrounding fields



KEY

Faringdon Country Park with Folly Tower, woodland and surrounding fields





## Objectives

The following statements have been drawn from local input to date and define the aspirations for sport and leisure facilities in the parish:

- Faringdon should continue to act as the local hub for sports and leisure facilities. Existing facilities should be regularly updated to ensure they keep pace with local demand and maintain a high quality service.
- New facilities should be added to ensure Faringdon provides a high standard provision and a wide choice of sports and leisure opportunities.
- Existing green spaces should be well protected and new spaces provided to support a good level of provision across the town.
- The Faringdon Country Park proposal should be fully explored and delivered as far as possible.
- Young people should be closely consulted and involved in future decisions about provision.
- Provision should cater for all ages and abilities and encourage efficient use throughout the day and evening.

## Policies

### Faringdon Country Park

There is strong local support for the ongoing development of the existing Country Park in Faringdon. It is recommended that some of the key elements of this proposal are taken forward as soon as possible and contributions from developers targeted towards its delivery.



#### Policy 4.10A: Faringdon Country Park

Development proposals that improve leisure, sport, recreation and wildlife habitat and associated facilities at Faringdon Country Park will be supported.

#### Sports

The town is well served with sporting facilities and this forms part of Faringdon's attraction to residents. There is a pressing need to ensure this advantage is maintained as the town grows by ensuring that the facilities keep step both with needs and expectations. Investment in the existing facilities, such as the Leisure Centre, is needed in accordance with the Vale Leisure Facilities Strategy, and current gaps such as the lack of provision for an all-weather pitch need to be addressed. To some extent the town already acts as a hub for leisure facilities, but if these were further enhanced and promoted, it would benefit local footfall and, therefore, businesses.

#### Policy 4.10B: Sports Facilities

Proposals for extension of existing sports facilities, in particular at the Leisure Centre, or new sports facilities in the town, will be supported. Proposals for a floodlit multi-use all-weather pitch will be strongly supported.

<sup>23</sup><http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slacklining>: Slacklining is walking along a slack rope, or webbing, as opposed to tightrope walking.

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### Allotments

Allotments provide a valuable leisure activity for a wide range of people and also help to support the character of Faringdon as a sustainable town. Faringdon Town Council currently manages 26 full size and 12 half-size allotment plots on Lechlade Road. These are very popular with a reported waiting list of 79 people. The National Trust also owns 171 plots on the site, also with a waiting list.

It is proposed that new allotment plots should be identified, with a particular emphasis on provision on the eastern/ southern side of Faringdon to complement the existing plots on the western side of the town. This could be accommodated as part of the Country Park proposals or as part of future housing development.

#### Policy 4.10C: Allotments

The development of new serviced sites for allotments will be supported. New developments in excess of 20 houses will make provision either on-site or off-site at a level of provision to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority based on an assessment of need in a locality and so as not to render a development scheme non-viable.

### Additional provision for young people

Faringdon Town Council took over the provision of the Youth Service after the withdrawal of funding by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in 2011. It runs a youth facility, known as FAZE, from premises on Highworth Road. FAZE has been successful through having dedicated premises although there is a need to extend youth provision in the town. Firstly, utilising the whole of the FAZE site for youth purposes would enable a stronger provision on this site. Secondly, as this operation is located on the edge of the town, there is a need to ensure that there is some form of youth facility more centrally placed as well.

This has been partly addressed through the Pump House Project, which has taken a three year lease on the old theatre in Swan Lane. The Pump House Project, a registered charity financed through donations and fundraising, has transformed the old theatre into a vibrant centre for parkour and other alternative sports and community activities for young people of the town and county. It is the first designated Parkour Centre in Oxfordshire and has a set of specially designed parkour equipment, one of the first sets of this kind in the country. Current activities include: parkour, slacklining<sup>23</sup>, bouldering, media, dance, music, art and craft. It is also home to the Faringdon Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts.

However, there is a wish to re-open the building as a theatre and the project may want to relocate to larger premises. Hence, there needs to be some certainty of provision for these organised youth activities.

The cricket / rugby / tennis facilities and skate park located at the end of Stanford Road do allow some element of youth provision, but there is scope to extend these facilities so that there is proper parking and toilet facilities at the site. There is also a need to improve pavement access to the skate park for young people.

As highlighted earlier in this section, Faringdon should have an all-weather pitch to allow a wider range of sports to be available in the town. At present people have to travel to other towns in the area if they want to play sports like hockey. There is a debate about whether the location of the all-weather pitch should be at the Community College, Tucker Park or near the Skate Park. It is thought that most appropriate location would be in Tucker Park.

### Local Green Spaces

The NPPF sections 76 and 77 permit local communities, through Neighbourhood Plans, to identify for special protection Green Spaces of particular importance to them, subject to certain conditions.

They must be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance and character, for example: because of their beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness in wildlife. The plan below identifies the sites that meet these criteria. In the past, two of these sites have come under threat and one is currently proposed for development; hence, it was the will of the local community to offer as much protection to these sites as Local Green Space designation can afford.

The sites shown in Figure 12 have been chosen for Local Green Space designation and the evidence to support their designation has been prepared using the following guidance:

- The National Planning Policy Framework.
- The National Planning Practice Guidance.
- The Cotswold District Council Local Green Space Designation Toolkit (The Vale of the White Horse District Council does not provide any such document, so the guidance of an adjacent authority was sought).

These documents state that to be suitable for designation a site must:

- Not be subject to an extant planning permission.
- Not be allocated for development in the relevant Neighbourhood or Local Plan.
- Not be an extensive tract of land.
- Be in proximity to the community it serves.
- Be demonstrably special to a local community and hold a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife.

The Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan intends to designate the following areas, shown in Figure 12, and identified in detail as Green Spaces in Appendix 1:

1. Tucker Park Recreation Ground: Policy 4.10D a)
2. Oakwood Park: Policy 4.10D b)
3. Pitts Park and Adjacent Green Space either side of Berners Way: Policy 4.10D c)
4. Town Park: Policy 4.10D d)
5. Faringdon Folly Circular Woodland: Policy 4.10D e)
6. Faringdon Country Park and Adjacent Sports Pitches: Policy 4.10D f)
7. Marlborough Gardens Play Area: Policy 4.10D g)
8. Coleshill Drive Play Area and Open Space and Adjacent Woodland: Policy 4.10D h)

9. Volunteer Way Play Area and Open Space: Policy 4.10D i)

10. Folly Park View Play Area: Policy 4.10D j)

#### Policy 4.10D: Local Green Space Designation

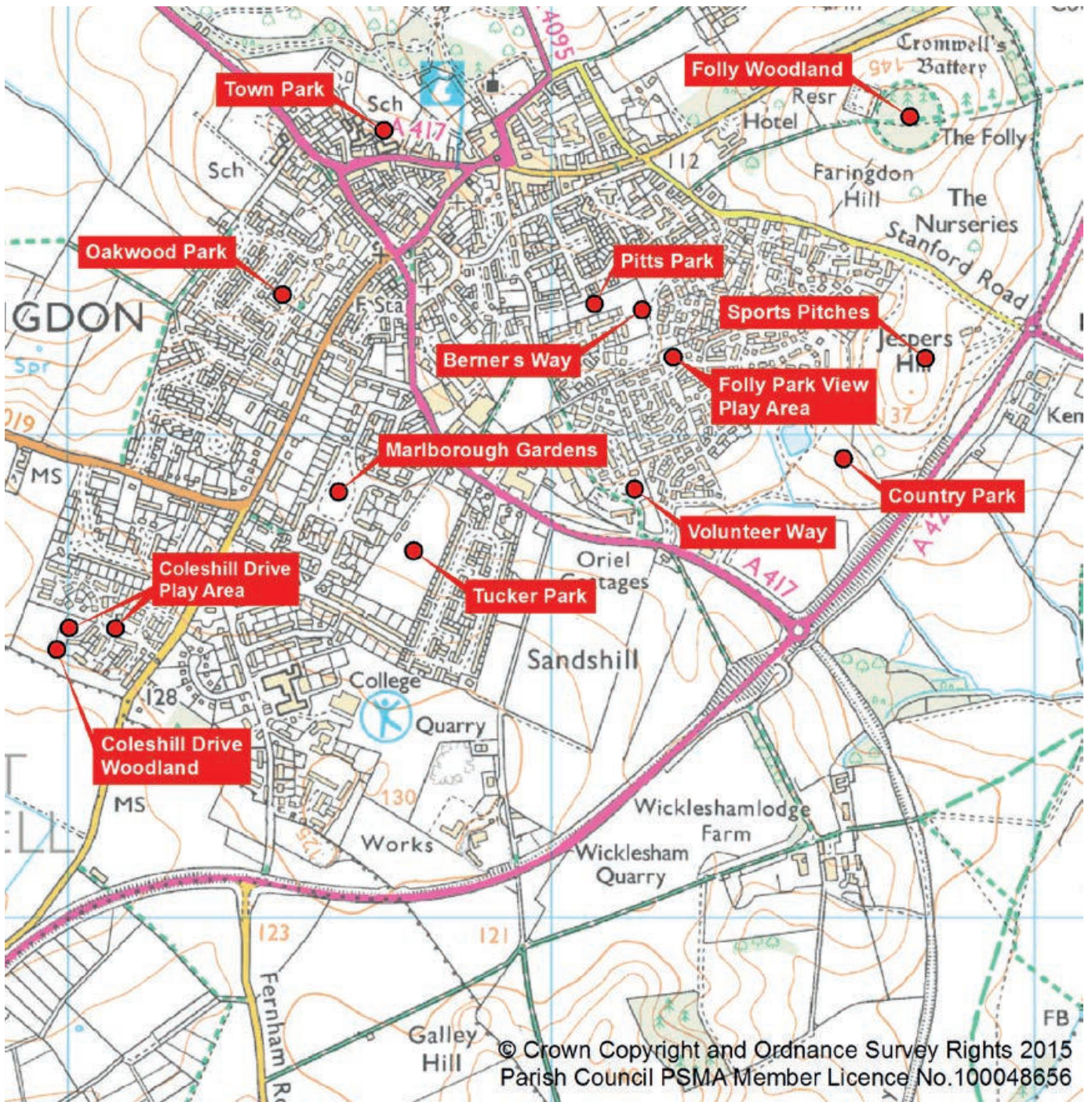
The following areas are designated as local green spaces:

- a. Tucker Park (see Figure TP1)
- b. Oakwood Park (see Figure OP1)
- c. Pitts Park (see Figure PP1)
- d. Town Park (see Figure ToP1)
- e. Faringdon Folly Circular Woodland (see Figure FW1)
- f. Faringdon Country Park and Adjacent Sports Pitches (see Figure CP1)
- g. Marlborough Gardens Play Area (see Figure MG1)
- h. Coleshill Drive Play Area and Open Space and Adjacent Woodland (see Figure CD1)
- i. Volunteer Way Play Area and Open Space (see Figure VW1)
- j. Folly Park View Play Area (see Figure FP1)

Development on land designated as Local Green Space will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it can be clearly demonstrated that the development will not conflict with the purpose of the designation .

Supporting information on each of these sites is contained in Appendices 2-11.

Figure 12: Showing the location of the sites proposed for green space designation.





61 Faringdon Town Circular

HX10 DVC



## "A parish which serves the community well - providing services for local needs and keeping step with demand"

### 4.11 A CARING COMMUNITY

#### Context

In order to support and sustain a growing community it is important that Faringdon provides an appropriate level of care infrastructure to meet the needs of all sections of the community.

Whilst education provision has particularly been covered in section 4.9 of this document it is also important that the health and social care needs of the town are appropriately tackled. The aim is to ensure that Faringdon can provide for the day to day needs of all its residents from early years care through to care and accommodation for elderly residents.

#### Objectives

The following objectives have been identified as needing to be met in order to support local residents:

- Faringdon must provide a strong and high quality range of health services to support the wider parish needs.
- Faringdon must serve its ageing population well, ensuring high quality accommodation and health facilities.
- Enhanced public transport connections must be provided to ensure easy access to larger facilities further afield such as hospitals.
- Social facilities that can accommodate a variety of functions should be provided in the town and provision should keep pace with the growth of the population.
- Future infrastructure requirements will be reviewed periodically in the Action Plan.

Left: Faringdon Community Bus

#### Policies

##### Health infrastructure

Faringdon must maintain local GP and dental care services that meet the needs of the whole town as it continues to grow. In addition, a health and well-being centre should form a new focus for health provision in the town.

Since Ferendune Court ceased the provision, there has been no intermediate or respite care in Faringdon. This means that patients discharged from local hospitals needing intermediate care, or those seeking respite care, have to be accommodated in other locations. There is a serious shortage of intermediate and respite beds in the locality that needs to be addressed.

##### Policy 4.11A: Health and Care Provision

New development must support the expansion of local health and care facilities to meet the need for these services in the town bearing in mind the extra demands on them as a result of increased longevity and the higher proportion of those over 85 in the population. (Census 2001 and 2011).



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### Elderly care

In order to avoid separating families and the consequent possibility of long journeys in order to visit relatives, there should be provision of care places for elderly relatives within Faringdon. Specialist accommodation can take several forms depending on the degree of care required. Examples include:

- Sheltered housing
- Warden controlled housing
- Care/nursing homes
- Extra care housing
- Housing built to Lifetime Homes Standards

New, specialist accommodation should be developed within the town, both as part of major housing developments and through windfall site development close to the town centre and community facilities. Local Plan policy CP23 supports this approach.

#### Policy 4.11B: Care for the Elderly

New development must support the provision of specialist accommodation for the elderly who live in or wish to live in Faringdon. New development will contribute towards a health and wellbeing centre as a central piece in the town's welfare provision.

### Community amenities

There is a thriving Arts scene in Faringdon and it would be of great cultural benefit to have an Arts Centre/theatre/gallery type venue. Faringdon, unlike many of its neighbouring villages, does not have the equivalent of a village hall, with a stage, lighting and changing/back-stage facilities, that can be used as performance space.

Left: Faringdon High Street

The only currently used performance spaces are the Junior School and Community College, which, while good, are obviously school spaces with competing demands. Local stakeholders have identified a need for a large entertainment venue to be used as a theatre or cinema, while the provision of a multi-use community centre that could support local clubs and societies in a single, co-ordinated facility has also been suggested. An entertainment venue that could accommodate a mix of theatre, cinema and live music would make a significant contribution to the cultural and social life of Faringdon. Ideally, such a venue would be located in the town centre to reinforce activity in existing restaurants, cafes and public houses.

It has already been shown that there is a demand for enhanced community facilities. Since November 2012, the Town Council has organised a monthly cinema in the Corn Exchange that has attracted capacity audiences (125+ people) at each showing. As a result the Town Council has received a grant and purchased its own projection equipment and is now able to provide more frequent showings. Films suitable for all ages and abilities, e.g. autism-friendly films, will be shown.

In terms of a community centre, there are three practical options:

- Opportunities may be available for existing buildings used by churches and community groups to be adapted to play a wider community role.
- A new facility could be provided, potentially as part of the Country Park or new development.
- Greater use of the Corn Exchange / Pump House.

Costed proposals and assessment will be included in the Action Plan.



**"A parish which has strong links to countryside, supporting local food production at all levels and becomes known for its local produce"**

## 4.12 LANDSCAPE

### Context

Faringdon benefits from a superb landscape setting. The parish lies on the northern edge of the Mid Vale Ridge National Character Area (NCA 108), with the Upper Thames Vale (NCA 109) to the north. The Midvale Ridge in this area is described as a low, irregular Corallian Limestone escarpment rising up from the upper Thames Valley to the north and with a very gentle dip slope into the Vale of White Horse to the south. The town sits in a slight dip in the limestone escarpment that runs from the southwest to northeast splitting the Thames Valley, to the west, from the Vale of the White Horse to the east. Much of the northern part of the parish is level farmland in the Thames basin whilst the undulating land in the southern part of the parish around the town offers attractive scenery and long views across the Vale.

The landscape is made up of woods and arable fields interspersed by numerous, distinctive small villages. Fields are typically defined by a regular pattern of hedgerows and trees that enclose characteristically large and geometrically spaced fields. The centre of Faringdon sits at an elevation of 105 m. From there the ground rises to the northeast to an elevation of 150 m at Folly Hill affording spectacular views across the Thames to the Cotswold ridge in the north, and to the Berkshire Downs with the Uffington White Horse to the South.

The major estates of Faringdon House and Buscot Park account for significant rural land ownership and the National Trust and Faringdon House Estate are major landowners. This has had a notable effect in limiting the potential for the town to expand to the north. However, this lack of development on the northern side of the town has ensured that Faringdon town centre has retained the strong relationship between the historic town, the church and the landscape beyond.

### Protecting the town's landscape setting

Faringdon's landscape derives from its setting in a dip at the crest of a ridge. It is, therefore, important that Faringdon does not spill over the surrounding hills, or into the Thames Valley, or the Vale of White Horse. At the commencement of the Neighbourhood Plan there was concern that, if unchecked, growth could encompass adjacent villages, particularly Great Coxwell. However, since then proposals for two estates Fernham Fields (approved) and The Steeds (allocated) will mostly bridge the green space between Faringdon and Great Coxwell. Nevertheless, it is essential to protect the landscape setting of the town, particularly the views from highpoints, such as Folly Hill and the top of Folly Tower and Highworth road.

Any new development must take into account Faringdon's historic relationship with its landform and landscape; this can be informed by the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment that is currently underway. It should contribute to improving the quality of the town/ countryside interface as much as possible. As new development occurs in Faringdon consideration needs to be given to the distinct identities of the settlements beyond to avoid any potential for coalescence. Development other than the redevelopment of the Wicklesham Quarry site should particularly not extend to the point where it approaches Great Coxwell and Little Coxwell to the west and residential development would be considered inappropriate to the south of the A420. Section 4.2 emphasises this point and the need to maintain the existing adopted development boundary.

As working patterns and lifestyles have changed through the twentieth century, the intimate links between the town and the landscape beyond have been gradually eroded. However, there are a number of opportunities to reconnect the town with its hinterland, for example:

- Converting surplus older rural buildings to provide attractive business and enterprise space within the countryside as typified by Wicklesham Farm;
- Encouraging sales of high quality local produce to become a major feature of the town centre, both in shops and through the market;
- Reinforcing and extending facilities for walking, cycling and other sports in the countryside.

These opportunities, which have all been included in sections above, should be regarded as important steps for the future of the parish.

### **Objectives**

The Neighbourhood Plan proposes the following aspirations for the wider landscape in the parish:

- The important landscape setting of Faringdon should be protected.
- A stronger connection between the surrounding countryside and Faringdon town should be encouraged.
- Pedestrian and cycle access into the wider countryside and to the Thames from the town should be enhanced.
- The sale and prominence of local produce in the town centre should be improved.

Right: View of Folly Tower







<sup>24</sup><http://www.historytoday.com/stephen-porter/property-destruction-english-civil-wars> 'At Faringdon virtually the entire town was destroyed by the defenders of Faringdon House in 1646; 236 families were made homeless and the losses were valued at almost £57,000.'

## "A welcoming place for visitors, with a wealth of gems to be discovered"

### 4.13 TOURISM

#### Context

Tourism is important to the Faringdon economy. The town has been welcoming visitors for centuries since its days as an important coaching stop on the routes between Oxford, Bristol, Marlborough, Gloucester and London. Faringdon makes a perfect holiday base being ideally placed for exploring Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Berkshire, only a half hour drive from Oxford and on the threshold of the Cotswolds. There are 14 accommodation providers in the Faringdon area and a range of shops, tea-rooms, restaurants, cafés and bars.

Faringdon has had an eventful history of civil wars from the 12C conflict between Stephen and Matilda, through the Wars of the Roses, to the Civil War in the 17C when Faringdon was a Royalist stronghold protecting Oxford; it remained undefeated, but paid heavily<sup>24</sup>, as can still be seen today by the truncated tower on the 13C All Saints' Church. The Market Hall in the town centre (now the Old Town Hall) was built in the late 17C by public subscription.

The wider parish and neighbouring villages house a wealth of tourist assets. These include:

- Folly Hill with its woodland and 1935 Folly Tower, the last major folly built in England;
- The artistic, musical and surrealist legacy of Lord Berners and Faringdon House;
- The River Thames with its oldest bridge at Radcot and a section of the Thames Path;

- Uffington Castle, the White Horse, the Ridgeway and Wayland's Smithy;
- Nearby National Trust and other heritage properties including Buscot House and gardens (NT), William Morris's Kelmscott Manor (Society of Antiquities) and the Great Coxwell Tithe Barn (NT);

All of which form an impressive draw for visitors.

The Community and Tourist Information Centre (CTIC) is funded by the Town Council to support tourism and to promote the town and the surrounding area. The CTIC is open six days a week and has a wealth of information for visitors and local residents including help in finding accommodation.

However, whilst Faringdon and the wider parish have much to interest the visitor, the tourism economy is currently small in scale. There is great potential to boost the number of people visiting the town and local area through enhanced facilities and better promotion.

## Objectives

The following statements have been drawn from local input to date and define the aspirations for tourism in the parish:

- The parish's infrastructure to support visitors must be improved.
- The historic character of the town must be conserved and enhanced to give the very best impression to attract visitors.
- Existing assets such as the Folly Tower, Sudbury House Hotel and Faringdon House should be promoted.
- A co-ordinated programme of promotion will be initiated as part of the Action Plan.
- Access to the River Thames should be enhanced and links between Faringdon and the river promoted.

## Policies

### Museum / Visitor Centre

#### Policy 4.13A: Museum or Visitor Centre

Proposals to develop a Museum or visitor centre to promote tourism will be supported.

### River frontage

#### Policy 4.13B: River Frontage

Tourism activities that promote the section of the River Thames within the parish as an attraction will be encouraged. Appropriate activities could include a cafe, moorings and other activities designed to promote tourism, complement the natural environment and support an active community.

Any riparian development would not occur near the Grafton Lock SSSI.

Within the parish of Great Faringdon we have a river frontage (Policy 4.13B refers) and lock at Radcot. This has the potential for development as a micro hydroelectricity scheme. This would be of low impact to the surroundings and environment and have the potential to supply 60kW of electrical power, subject to Environment Agency permits. A proposal is being prepared to develop this scheme as a community project.

#### Policy 4.13C: Alternative Energy Schemes

A micro hydroelectricity scheme at Radcot on the River Thames will be supported as will other alternative energy schemes.

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